

NCFA UPDATE: 06/04/2021  
NORTH CAROLINA FISHERIES ASSOCIATION  
"Serving the Commercial Fishing Families of North Carolina since 1952"  
PO Box 86; Morehead City, NC 28557  
Phone: (252) 726-NCFA (6232)  
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## **Marine Fisheries Commission moves forward with amendment to Shrimp Plan**

**MOREHEAD CITY** – The N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission voted on Thursday to take [Draft Shrimp Fishery Management Plan Amendment 2](#) out for public comment and advisory committee review.

The draft amendment focuses on reducing bycatch of non-target species and minimizing habitat impacts. It includes a suite of options ranging broadly from status quo to a complete closure of all inside waters, including Pamlico Sound, to shrimp trawling.

The Division of Marine Fisheries will announce the public comment period and advisory committee meetings by news release in the next couple of weeks.

Also, the Marine Fisheries Commission received an update on southern flounder. Division Director Kathy Rawls reviewed the updated timeline for Amendment 3 to the Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan. Following the amended allocation decision by the commission at their March special meeting the revised draft Amendment 3 is scheduled to be reviewed and potentially approved for public and advisory committee review in November. As a result, the seasonal management adopted under Amendment 2 will continue through 2021.

Rawls told the commission the division plans to shorten the commercial and recreational flounder seasons for 2021 because flounder harvest in both sectors in 2019 and 2020 did not meet the reductions approved in the Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Amendment 2.

The division will announce the shortened seasons by news release soon so that flounder fishermen can make plans.

In other business, the commission voted to:

- Send a letter to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council expressing its support for maintaining the dolphin for-hire bag limit at

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60 fish per vessel and 10 fish per person, using regional bag limits if needed for North Carolina for-hire vessels.

- Approve notice of text to begin the rulemaking process for readopting a slate of rules under a state-mandated periodic review schedule.
- Approve notice of text to begin the rulemaking process for rules to prohibit repacking of foreign crab meat in North Carolina.
- Develop rules to require that any repacked crab meat container used for sale in the State of North Carolina that does not contain 100% domestic crab meat must have a country of origin statement in bolded 18-point type or larger permanently printed on the lid and on two sides of the cup, and that a checkoff panel or stamped country of origin not be allowed.

## **Division of Marine Fisheries public comment period open on Shrimp Fishery Management**

**MOREHEAD CITY** – The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries is accepting public comment on proposed management changes to further reduce bycatch of non-target species and minimize ecosystem impacts.

[Draft Amendment 2 to the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan](#) contains a suite of management options that range broadly from status quo to a complete closure of all inside waters, including Pamlico Sound, to shrimp trawling. They include:

- Area closures to protect submerged aquatic vegetation or oyster beds;
- Shrimp management of Special Secondary Nursery Areas;
- Creating permanent or seasonal closures in the Pamlico Sound region;
- Shrimp trawl gear modifications; and
- Shrimp trawl effort limitations.

Draft Shrimp Amendment 2 also includes a shrimp trawl bycatch information paper which discusses data needs to estimate the amount of bycatch from the shrimp trawl fishery, methods for estimating bycatch reduction and impacts on common bycatch species.

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Additionally, one objective of the plan is to evaluate and address nursery area designations through the Coastal Habitat Protection Plan.

The public may comment on Draft Shrimp Amendment 2 in three ways:

1. **Sign Up to Speak at an Advisory Committee Meeting** – Public comment will be accepted at the three Marine Fisheries Commission Advisory Committee meetings listed below. Those who wish to speak at the meetings must register by 5 p.m. the day before the meeting.
2. **Submit Online Comments** – Public comments will be accepted through an online form until 5 p.m. on June 30. [Click here](#) to submit comments online.
3. **Mail Comments** – Written comments may be mailed to Draft Shrimp FMP Amendment 2 Comments, P.O Box 769, Morehead City, N.C. 28557. Comments must be received by the division 5 p.m. on June 30.

Emailed comments will not be accepted.

Five Marine Fisheries Commission Advisory Committees are scheduled to review and accept public comment on Draft Shrimp Amendment 2. The committees will meet by web conference as follows:

Joint Northern and Southern Regional Advisory Committees	Joint Shellfish/Crustacean and Finfish Advisory Committees	Habitat and Water Quality Advisory Committee
June 15 at 6 p.m.	June 16 at 6 p.m.	June 17 at 6 p.m.
<a href="#">Register to speak</a> by 5 p.m.	<a href="#">Register to speak</a> by 5 p.m.	<a href="#">Register to speak</a> by 5 p.m.
June 14	June 15	June 16

Meeting links and agendas are available on the [Marine Fisheries Commission Advisory Committees Meetings webpage](#).

More specifics on the Draft Shrimp Amendment 2 can be found on the [Shrimp Fishery Management Plan Amendment 2 Information webpage](#).

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The Marine Fisheries Commission is scheduled to consider public comment and advisory committee input and select its preferred management measures for departmental and legislative review at its August business meeting and give final approval of the amendment in November 2021.

For more information contact division biologists [Chris Stewart](#) at 910-796-7291, [Jason Rock](#) at 252-808-8091, or [Daniel Zapf](#) at 252-946-6481.

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for 6/4/2021:

### NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

Only one fish bills this week in the House Finance Committee. H-181 WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION AMENDMENTS was heard the morning of June 3<sup>rd</sup>, with a PCS or substitute discussed and given a favorable report. The only discussion was concerns from Rep. Keith Kidwell about the constitutionality of an enforcement provision. The sponsors agreed to discuss his concerns before the bill makes it to the House floor. You may recall we had major concerns with the original bill that would have given the Wildlife Resources Director proclamation authority. That provision was taken out by the Marine Resources Committee.

On the Senate side, there was a contentious partisan debate on the confirmation of DEQ Secretary Dionne Delli-Gatti, resulting in the Senate rejecting her confirmation. However, shortly after the Senate vote, Governor Roy Cooper announced a new job for her to focus on "administrative efforts to promote clean energy in North Carolina". Her new salary will be the same at \$155,526 a year.

The governor's office said DEQ Chief Deputy John Nicholson will serve as the department's interim secretary.

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God bless,

Jerry