



LETTERS & ONLINE COMMENTS



SOUTHERN FLOUNDER

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Flounder
Date: Sunday, February 21, 2021 6:29:05 PM

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Gary Dewayne [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, February 21, 2021 7:11 AM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] Flounder

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify. Send all suspicious email as an attachment to [Report Spam](#).

I would like to start out with a concern of many recreational anglers in NC, there about to try and take the great flounder from us rec. guys, and give it all to the commercial guys. We'll this has to stop , they lied about the 72% and 58% reduction so they could pass the closure last year. Wow then said there numbers weren't right so now there going try 73/27 , which gives rec anglers who are over a million strong on the salt water license. That puts us at 1 flounder a day in our already 45 day season. Then next year will try to cut the recreational guys all together. We've seen this with both grey trout and red drum. That our state has the poorest representative for our fisheries, look how long our red drum been at one fish and it can't rebound. Well because noone wants to speak of the root of the problem only to bandaid it and blame on the recreational guys. We all know it's coming from commercial, pound nets gill nets and trawls that rape our entire river and sound so many fish in danger in NC, But yet you all allow for this to happen by turning a blind eye, and I am forwarding this message to many more. Why do you continue to blame the recreational guys.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] flounder
Date: Friday, February 19, 2021 10:46:34 PM

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: lynn [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 19, 2021 7:53 PM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] flounder

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify. Send all suspicious email as an attachment to [Report Spam](#).

I am very upset to see yet another public resource get depleted for commercial money. I grew up going to Harkers Island. I watched the shrimp then the scallops disappear. Next came the red drum. Then the grey trout. Now here we go with flounder. Why is it the NCDMF thinks it can sell our natural resource around the world and across the nation. Why do commercial fisherman that make up such a small percentage of fishermen get not only the quota but get to profit from it. It is the only industry I know that you dont have to rent or own the area yet can take every resource for profit out of it. When is it going to stop?

Enough is enough. You have the quotas totally reversed from what they should be.
Sincerely,

Lynn Hinnant
[REDACTED] NC

Sent from my U.S. Cellular® Smartphone

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Flounder
Date: Thursday, February 18, 2021 8:27:37 PM

For the books, more to come
Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: David Mcfadyen [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 5:05 PM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] Flounder

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify. Send all suspicious email as an attachment to Report Spam.<<mailto:report.spam@nc.gov>>

I am a avid beach and fishers user I am apposed to the 73/ 27 splits is flounder season this is not fair or does it make Scientific sense.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] flounder regs
Date: Friday, February 19, 2021 10:46:02 PM

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: rhogge5 [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 19, 2021 8:17 PM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] flounder regs

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify. Send all suspicious email as an attachment to [Report Spam](#).

Good Evening,

My name is Brian Hogge and I'm a resident of Virginia. My family and I have come down to the [REDACTED] City area for the last 10 years and we plan our vacation around the Flounder season as we like to hire a guide that takes us gigging. I've recently learned that NC is proposing cutting the recreational limits to (1) fish and if this happens it's going force me to stop our trip(s) to [REDACTED] City because it wouldn't be worth spending money on lodging and hiring a guide to only be able to take 1 Flounder each, which would equate to 3 fish with 3 anglers. We used to come down 2 times a year or more but the last couple years with the shorter season we cut back to one trip.

I ask that you consider giving more quota to the recreational anglers so that my family and all the other anglers that enjoy fishing and gigging for Flounder along the coast of NC would be able to continue to vacation in your wonderful state. I think that by giving more quota to the recreational side and allowing (3) fish per recreational angler would allow us to continue our vacations to NC.

The financial impact to the hotels and restaurants and guides would be hard to look past by cutting back the recreational limits so drastically to only 1 fish. There must be another way to even the playing field between the recreational and commercial industries.

Thank you for your time.

Brian Hogge
[REDACTED]

From: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: FW: [External] NC Flounder Inequities and Management
Date: Monday, February 22, 2021 2:42:49 PM

Lara K. J. Klibansky
Marine Fisheries Commission Liaison
Executive Assistant for Councils and Commissions
NC Division of Marine Fisheries
Department of Environmental Quality



252 515 6020 mobile (direct)
252 726 7021 main office
Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov

P.O. Box 769
3441 Arendell Street
Morehead City, NC 28557

Email correspondence to and from this address is subject to the North Carolina Public Records Law and may be disclosed to third parties

From: Bizzell, Rob <r.bizzell.mfc@ncdenr.gov>
Sent: Monday, February 22, 2021 2:41 PM
To: Klibansky, Lara <Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov>
Subject: Fwd: [External] NC Flounder Inequities and Management

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: seth vernon [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 22, 2021 9:43 AM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Cc: Cross, Doug; Blanton, Mike; Hendrickson, Tom; Kornegay, K; McNeill, Robert; Posey, Martin H; Roller, Thomas N; Romano, Sam
Subject: [External] NC Flounder Inequities and Management

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify. Send all suspicious email as an attachment to [Report Spam](#).

Dear Commissioners,

It is with great concern that I am writing to you each today regarding the state of our Southern Flounder Fishery in North Carolina's coastal waters. Like so many anglers I have watched the precipitous decline of our Flounder fishing, the stocks and size ranges of fish in our ecosystem over the last two decades. I'd like to ask that you each search your hearts and minds about how we've come to this crossroads in the health of our flounder stocks; why is the fishery decimated, what decisions were made in the last thirty years of MFC management to bring us to the brink and how are you going to end overfishing of what was once a vibrant fishery.

I've been fortunate to call the waters of North Carolina my home for the last twenty years making my living as a professional guide, tackle retailer and passionate steward of our resources. I've served on the SEAC to my home waters of the Cape Fear Coast and volunteered countless hours working towards a better brighter future for our coastal economies, the resource it relies on and the promise of a healthier ecosystem for our children to enjoy. I would like to ask that you each consider not only what your legacy will be regarding the decisions you make in the management of Southern Flounder in our state waters but also hold yourselves accountable to making better decisions about the future of our fisheries than your predecessors have before you.

There's no debating the facts gentlemen. The fishery is at a tipping point. Will this be a time we look back on with regret that we allowed the last proverbial Bison to be killed for a hide price or will you make the more difficult, more informed and equitable decision to work to restore the stocks of these fish and the livelihoods that depend on them? I was appalled to learn that there was even the remotest possibility that our public trust resources would be carved up and allocated in a much greater percentage to the Commercial Fishing Industry. The very industry that is responsible for the demise of this fishery and all that profited by the culpable decisions made by past MFC members like yourselves. The optics of a decision such as this amid the troubles of Covid, an overfished resource and the Governor's office insistently claiming to work towards fair, equitable and just practices for its citizens is damning. On the low end of the spectrum our state will experience a displacement of effort from flounder onto other fisheries that face the same troubles as flounder due to the thousands of miles of gill net lining our waters. On the high end of the spectrum you face the problem of further dividing fisheries user groups stoking a powder keg of conflict based off of a history of inequitable allocation. This is not a warning but rather an objective look at what is going to occur if you decide to give the commercial industry more than its fair allotment of the fishery.

It's time to move past special interests. The time is now to make amends, control over fishing, recover the stock and vote for a 50/50 equitable use of the southern flounder fishery

as a public trust resource managed for "all users".

Regards,
Captain Seth Vernon

[REDACTED] NC
[REDACTED]

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Southern Flounder
Date: Sunday, February 21, 2021 9:20:32 PM

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Bounty Hunter Guide Service [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, February 21, 2021 7:07 PM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] Southern Flounder

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify. Send all suspicious email as an attachment to [Report Spam](#).

Dear Commisioner,

I am a concerned citizen of NC and a professional inshore fishing guide who is worried about the future of our flounder fishery, as well as other fisheries in this state. Obviously, as an inshore guide, the flounder fishery is important to my business, and through my lifetime and even during my short career, I have noticed a large decline in the fishery. More than anything, I am mainly concerned with the health of our public trust resource and I don't think the status quo is acceptable management of the issues we face in our fisheries. It has come to my attention that if action is not taken now, the current unfair ratio of the southern flounder allocation - 73% commercial to 27% recreational will continue. To achieve the necessary harvest reductions with this current allocation, the rec limit will have to be lowered to 1 per person per day because the fishery will recover during the closed season and the rec fishermen will catch more fish. Additionally, if the recreational quota is blown, there will have to be either shorter seasons or entire year closures for the rec fishery, while the commercial fishery keeps their season. This would be necessary to pay back the overages.

The outrage that a one fish recreational limit or an outright year(s) long closure will cause will be epic, for the lack of a better word. Many fishermen will no longer see a reason to participate and this will cause many negative effects in the recreational fishing industry, that I won't address here, but have been detailed at length in the public forum. For these reasons, I think the allocation has to be adjusted. It's not fair or feasible to keep the 73/27 split. In the interest of fairness, the ratio should be at least 50/50, if not skewed heavier in favor of the recreational fishery. Let us not forget the decades and decades of abuse this fishery has faced at the hands of the commercial fishery, while the recreational fishery suffers with decreased limits and uneven minimum size requirements (15" recreational limit vs 14" commercial limit from just a few years ago for example).

On another note, the fact that there can't be a year long recreational gulf and summer flounder season in the ocean, is extremely unfair considering the importance of that fishery to small vessel ocean fishermen and the small amount of southern flounder that are actually caught out there. The concerns of fishermen not being able to tell the difference between the three could be easily mitigated with education on the issue.

I, and I believe, most recreational fishermen want what is best for the resource and will take whatever reductions or closures necessary to ensure the future of our fisheries, but the same cannot be said for the commercial industry that has lobbied for protection against reductions for as long as the fishery has been established. I will be fully supportive of any necessary restrictions or closures, but not under the current allocations. We, as participants in the recreational fishery, are fed up with the way the state has managed the fishery vastly in favor of the commercial fishery, to the point where at times, you cannot catch a flounder to eat, but you can go buy one caught in a gill net, pound net or by gig, earlier that day.

I hope that you and your fellow commissioners will do what is right for the resource.

Tight lines,
Will Jones

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Southern Flounder
Date: Thursday, February 18, 2021 8:30:59 PM

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Eric Bregman [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 7:01 AM
To: Batsavage, Chris; Rawls, Kathy; West, Katy; Godwin, Charlton; Bizzell, Rob; Kornegay, K; Hendrickson, Tom; Robert.b.Mcneil.mfc@ncdenr.gov; martin.posey@ncdenr.gov; Cross, Doug; Blanton, Mike; Roller, Thomas N; Romano, Sam
Subject: [External] Southern Flounder

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify. Send all suspicious email as an attachment to [Report Spam](#).

I am writing this note to express my concern at the DMF and the MFC as it pertains to its complete failure of the management of the southern flounder, the issues with 2020, and the expected allocation between commercial and the recreational sector moving forward. Here are my points that I want noted for the record

- 1) Anything less than a 50/50 allocation between commercial and recreational is completely unacceptable.
- 2) There needs to be separate regulations between Summer, Gulf, and Southern Flounder. It is not the DMF and MFC's decision as to whether people are too stupid to tell the difference between species. It is you all's job to provide education. If people keep the wrong fish then they get a ticket, but those who can tell the difference should be allowed to keep summer and gulf.
- 3) Why is it that I had to release keeper flounder from the pier this past fall, but I could go to the fish house and buy one? How does that make any sense?
- 4) Do you all have any consideration of the economic impact of your regulations? Eventually people are going to stop spending money here, you are going to regulate people out of fishing.
- 5) Why are pound nets operating without a yearly quota? but I couldn't keep a flounder for most of the year
- 6) Why was there a trawling bycatch allowance in 2020 but I wasn't able to keep flounder? It is insane that as a rec angler I could have recieved a ticket for keeping a flounder but you all allowed who knows how much bycatch to float away.

You all need to fix this and get this right for the recreational fisherman. Rec fisherman are being treated as the fall guy while you allow business as usual on the commercial side which will continue to destroy this fishery, which is not the fault of commercial fisherman...its your fault.

This is a fishery that belongs to all...Not 70/30.

--

Eric D. Bregman, CPA

[REDACTED]

NC 2

[REDACTED]

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Southern Flounder Mismanagement
Date: Saturday, February 20, 2021 9:17:03 PM

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Toni Jernigan [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, February 20, 2021 2:59 PM
To: Bizzell, Rob; Cross, Doug; Blanton, Mike; Hendrickson, Tom; Kornegay, K; McNeill, Robert; Posey, Martin H; Roller, Thomas N; Romano, Sam; Batsavage, Chris; Rawls, Kathy; West, Katy; Godwin, Charlton; Nicholson, John A.; Larry.Yarborough@ncleg.gov; Cynthia.Ball@ncleg.gov; Hugh.Blackwell@ncleg.gov; John.Bell@ncleg.gov; George.Cleveland@ncleg.gov; Linda.Cooper-Suggs@ncleg.gov; Jimmy.Dixon@ncleg.gov; Bobby.Hanig@ncleg.gov; Phil.Shepard@ncleg.gov; Carson.Smith@ncleg.gov
Subject: [External] Southern Flounder Mismanagement

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify. Send all suspicious email as an attachment to [Report Spam](#).

The 73/27 allocation in favor of the commercial sector is not fair to the public. We should have rights to a public resource. I have been around commercial fishing for the last 20 years. I have been on a shrimp boat and have witnessed all the baby flounder, spots, croakers, etc fish caught in the nets. I knew seeing all those fish that they had no chance of ever growing up as I threw many of them back dead while trying to cull the shrimp. That is a huge part of our fish numbers dwindling as a shrimp net does not pick out the juvenile fish, they take all. I have also witnessed, while commercial flounder gigging, the miles and miles of nets in the water with dead fish. I don't know one net from another, true, however I have witnessed the wasteful destruction this type of fishing has caused. I have spent many days on the water fishing with rod and reel. Some days were better than others. I have thrown back fish and watched them swim off. I have seen the commercial side say that this catch and release by the many recreational anglers causes fish to die. I am no expert, but I can assure you those fish have a better chance of survival being let loose from a rec angler than by being caught in a net or shrimp trawl. There has to be a better way to deal with this issue. Other states who have banned the nets have commercial fishermen still working and bringing in much fresher seafood with a rod and reel or gig. Meanwhile our "fresh" seafood has been lying dead in a net for several hours. Not to mention the fact that we can't go catch our own flounder, but we can buy a not fresh flounder from a fish house. Why can't our commercial sector change the way they are harvesting? No one is wanting the commercial sector to disappear, just change the gear.

Thank you for your time.
Toni Jernigan



MISCELLANEOUS

From: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: FW: [External] CCA NC Issues for Commissioners
Date: Friday, February 19, 2021 8:02:00 AM

For the briefing materials...

Lara K. J. Klibansky
Marine Fisheries Commission Liaison
Executive Assistant for Councils and Commissions
NC Division of Marine Fisheries
Department of Environmental Quality



252 515 6020 mobile (direct)
252 726 7021 main office
Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov

P.O. Box 769
3441 Arendell Street
Morehead City, NC 28557

Email correspondence to and from this address is subject to the North Carolina Public Records Law and may be disclosed to third parties

From: David Sneed [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 9:54 PM
To: Cross, Doug <d.cross.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Posey, Martin H <Martin.Posey.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Blanton, Mike <m.blanton.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Kornegay, K <j.kornegay.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Bizzell, Rob <r.bizzell.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Robert McNeill <robert.mcneill.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Romano, Sam <s.romano.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Hendrickson, Tom <t.hendrickson.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Roller, Thomas N <Tom.Roller.mfc@ncdenr.gov>
Cc: Klibansky, Lara <Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov>
Subject: [External] CCA NC Issues for Commissioners

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify. Send all suspicious email as an attachment to [Report Spam](#).

Good Evening Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to present public comment on behalf of the Coastal Conservation Association North Carolina. The following are our *Issues for Commissioners* ahead of the February 2021 MFC Meeting.

1. Estuarine Striped Bass FMP – The dreadful condition of the striped bass stock statewide is caused by three problems: directed fishing and bycatch mortality, environmental conditions and dams. While the MFC has no control over the environment or damming rivers, it can control fishing mortality.

The ASMA/RRMA stock assessment indicates overfishing is occurring and the stock is overfished, and it calls for a moratorium or at least a greatly reduced quota. CCA NC supports these measures as necessary to relieve fishing pressure, however, failure to address the other source of fishing mortality – bycatch in gill nets – will greatly impede or prevent recovery. While bycatch estimates are controversial, there is no doubt that as a stock recovers bycatch will increase.

Expanding the current gill net restrictions to include the following would be the most effective option: (a) all of the Albemarle Sound and connecting river systems with the exception of those used in the blue catfish fishery, (b) for the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico Rivers of the CSMA, move the restrictions out to the tie-down lines, and (c) for the Cape Fear River region of the CSMA, add in gill net restrictions sufficiently below Wilmington to protect the range of stripers present there. If striped bass range increases upon recovery, removal of additional areas should be implemented.

Once the DMF and MFC endorse these areas, CCA NC will support stocking striped bass to either enhance the spawning stock biomass in regions where the fishery can recover OR to establish a put/grow/take recreational ONLY fishery in areas where the fishery will not be able to sustain a natural population.

We need collaboration NOW between the WRC, DMF and the U.S. Corps of Engineers to create a plan that better manages the water flow on the Roanoke River. And throughout all coastal river systems, the plan should control harvest, remove destructive gear to reduce both recreational and commercial discard mortality, and introduce supplemental stocking measures. Any plan needs to include more public involvement from the people of N.C. who own these resources while the DMF must stop trying to manage our coastal resources in a vacuum.

2. Southern Flounder FMP – The proposed allocation and certain rules proposed by DMF are patently unfair to recreational fishermen. If the Southern flounder is to become a quota-managed fishery, then the current commercial/recreational split of 73/27 should be changed to a 50/50 allocation just like the AS/RR striped bass fishery. The use of “historical” landings to establish a quota-managed fishery further highlights the fact that the commercial industry exploited Southern flounder for three decades.

When Division biologists were insisting that a 72% harvest reduction was needed to save the stock from collapse, they insisted that the cuts had to be “equitable.” “Historically,” the commercial industry was responsible for 80% of the harvest so they should have been responsible for the brunt of the reductions. No, it had to be equitable. Now the stock has to be managed by quota and DMF biologists want to use “historical” numbers instead of “equitable” numbers.

Recreational harvest limits should be based on this new TAL and **the ocean should be**

opened to give recreational anglers an opportunity to harvest summer and Gulf flounder during the time of year when they can be accessed. The proposed ocean access during March/April needs to be shifted in such a manner that the current recreational flounder season is lengthened in areas of the ocean where interactions with Southern flounder will be minimal. Opening the ocean fishing in March/April is another "feel good" measure that accomplishes little conservation and just locks rec anglers out. No one is fishing for them then. The ocean should be open all year for ocellated flounder. If fishermen cannot tell the difference, they should not keep any flounder. If they screw up, they get ticketed. Hook and line mortality is a lot less than net mortality. Also, dead discards DO have value in the rec fishery. Dead discards in gill nets do not. When rec anglers go fishing and do not get a keeper, money is still spent.

Since these two ocean stocks are currently healthy, a daily creel limit of 2 - 4 fish with the same 15" minimum length should be allowed. Finally, with this specific fishery under such stress, gill nets allowed under the RCGL should be discontinued, just as large mesh gill nets should be removed as an acceptable commercial gear.

3. Shrimp FMP – Ultimately, trawlers must be removed from Pamlico Sound. **Several current management measures under consideration for the next FMP are beneficial to the resource and CCA NC supports them.** The area closures under consideration by DMF scientists should have minimal impact on the ability to harvest shrimp while still addressing bycatch hotspots for some juvenile species, including spot, croaker, weakfish, Southern and summer flounder.

Other proposed restrictions to reduce effort such as minimizing headrope length, closing trawling for an extra day (that should be added consecutively to the current weekend ban on trawling), and reducing tow times should be supported by the MFC. Each of these options has the potential to benefit the resource as a whole and help restore numerous habitats damaged by trawling; CCA NC sees them as a start to recovery of many troubled finfish species.

4. Circle Hooks – Circle hooks should be required when fishing with live or cut bait for specific fisheries such as: cobia, redfish, speckled trout, flounder, and striped bass (already required in the Albemarle Sound per ASMFC). Doing so will clearly reduce mortality of released fish and endangered sea turtles.

5. Management – Many inshore species (speckled trout, redfish, striped bass) have tremendous economic impact generated by recreational anglers and should be managed accordingly, similar to how commercial crab and shrimp fisheries are managed for that sector. Since each of these specific fisheries is driven by the recreational sector, management measures should be taken to recover and enhance them. Destructive gear should be removed while habitats are reclaimed and enriched to guarantee these key inshore gamefish flourish to maximize access by recreational fishermen.

The tremendous pressure on speckled trout in 2020 should highlight the need for more proactive management. Fishing effort for speckled trout increased at a remarkable rate during 2020 from a number of factors including the "Covid effect," which allowed more

recreational anglers time on the water because of lockdowns elsewhere.

Why is this important?

- a. The management strategies developed through the FMP process do not account for the magnitude of the increase in this fishing effort.
- b. The Division's ability to monitor activities at these sites relies on accurately predicting fishing effort. It's all part of the survey mechanics. It would have been impossible to predict these increases. Estimates of catch will be made but there was no way to catch up with what was going on.
- c. Current management strategies have basically halted fishing for inshore species like striped bass and flounder. Along with the pitiful status of spot, croaker and weakfish, the result is nearly everyone fishes for trout. Inshore finfish stocks have been managed into a "hole" of sorts that is going to be extremely difficult to escape. Just think of what would happen if we had a cold kill.
- d. We also need to think about what surely happened to DMF's commercial sampling. We suspect that due to Covid there was a significant period without any fish house sampling and observer work.
- e. **The Commission would be wise to ask the DMF to brief them on how Covid impacted its ability to collect information needed to manage fisheries.**

6. Legislative Issues — Several issues of importance to our resource will require legislative action. Among them are:

- a. Latent Licenses: This hidden fishing effort and its lack of reporting must be addressed. **In 2020, 66% of SCFL holders never filed a trip ticket.** This is a systemic problem that impacts all FMPs because harvest and bycatch are grossly underestimated. All SCFL fishing trips should be required to report catch on a trip ticket regardless of whether any of the catch is sold. The result of underreporting is that stock assessments estimate a rosier picture of the stocks and lead to overfishing.
- b. Enforcement: Funding should be increased to support more agents and full policing powers should be granted to DMF agents, so they have the tools to crack down on poachers 24/7.
- c. Recreational Commercial Gear License (RCGL): This licensing category should be abolished. **Using bona fide commercial gear such as gill nets to catch recreational limits (one red drum, one flounder, four speckled trout) is impossible.** Recreational gill nets should be removed, and other allowed gear should either require a SCFL (small trawlers, perch pots) or be reclassified as recreational gear (minnow traps, crab pots).
- d. Misuse of SCFL: A small number of commercial fishermen locally are licensed also as for-hire recreational guides. They are running "heritage trips" that encompass a morning duck hunt followed by an afternoon of gill netting, primarily for trout. This type of dual use should be prohibited. **No recreational for-hire licenses should be used in conjunction with a SCFL.**

Recreational anglers should be held to recreational bag limits regardless of whether the for-hire trip is using commercial gear.

7. Small mesh issue paper – As mentioned repeatedly throughout this paper, North Carolina's marine resources can only fully recover when large and small-mesh gill nets are removed. Since this paper is being considered for action, however, CCA endorses those options that most effectively limit yardage, allowable times of usage, areas where they can be set and done so in such a manner that minimizes bycatch and user conflict.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Best Regards,

David A. Sneed, Executive Director
Coastal Conservation Association North Carolina
Mobile [REDACTED]
Office [REDACTED]

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Circle Hook Letter
Date: Friday, February 19, 2021 8:51:48 PM

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Eric Bregman [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 19, 2021 8:58 AM
To: Bizzell, Rob; Kornegay, K; Hendrickson, Tom; Robert.b.Mcneil.mfc@ncdenr.gov; martin.posey@ncdenr.gov; Cross, Doug; Blanton, Mike; Roller, Thomas N; Romano, Sam
Subject: [External] Circle Hook Letter

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify. Send all suspicious email as an attachment to [Report Spam](#).

Dear members of the MFC

Wanted to send a note expressing my concerns related to the circle hook letter. (most of these contents were included in public comment)

Lets start big picture. With all the problems with our fisheries between destructive commercial gear, water quality/pollution, and any climate change considerations...focusing your time and energy on what size and type of hook recreational fisherman use does not seem to make any sense. As a tax payer and a citizen of this great state, I think its kind of ridiculous that the DMF and MFC are essentially saying is that the decline in our fisheries is due to the types of hooks people use so we need to do something about that. You do not need to be a rocket scientist to figure out that something doesn't make sense here.

So lets talk about some fishery specific areas where none of this would work. The average working man who fishes from a pier or the beach is often overlooked and clearly this letter once again does not take any of this into consideration.

1) Fishing for citation size red drum from the beach in the spring and from the piers and beaches in the fall - this is a cut bait fishery which utilizes large , 8/0-10/0 circle hooks (from the beach and piers) and sometimes large, 8/0-10/) J hooks (piers). you will often hear the term " 8 and bait" . The quest to hook and catch these monsters brings people from all over the country each year with those people spending 100's of thousands of dollars in our local economies each year. These proposed regulations would not work for the following reason. These hooks must have a barb for 2 reasons, 1) to keep bait on the hook and 2) to keep a fish pinned as to land it. Remember from a pier and beach you are fighting not only the fish, but you are fighting current, waves. You are in a fixed position and cant chase a fish down. Furthermore, selling bait to anglers is bread and butter to many tackle shops. I have personally seen hundreds of citation drum from the beach and piers caught and I never have seen a single gut hooked BIG red drum in my whole life, all have been right in the corner of the mouth. That is the whole point behind the science of circle hooks isn't it? We have a world class catch and release fishery because of sound regulations and now you want to cut us off from it and cost local business and piers thousands of dollars because of

a hook?

I would add that using a Lupton rig in the Neuse and Pamlico works for that fishery because you are fishing from a boat. But it is not the same as from the beach and piers. Additionally, you are more likely to kill a large red drum by fighting it on a popping cork and trout rod for 20 minutes in 85 degree water then using a barbed circle hook with a heavy duty rod with cut mullet that you get a fish to the boat in 3 minutes and release back quickly. But I don't see any one concerned about that.

Lastly - our population of over slot drum has grown and they have been fished for the same way for years so why would it be necessary to change it. Large barbed circle hooks actually prevent gut hooking. Those of us who target these fish each year care more about these fish then anyone. Our gear is specifically made to get the fish in and back in the water as quickly as possible.

2) Live bait trolley rig fishing from piers - having to use barbless treble hooks would completely ruin this type of fishing. You need to have a barbed treble hook to keep the bait hooked and if you hook into a king mackerel, to keep the fish hooked. This type of fishing typically targets migratory species and pelagic species. But once again you need a barbed hooks to keep the bait on and to keep the fish on.

3) Sheepshead fishing - this would completely ruin peoples ability to sheepshead fish. Period, end of story. You need a barbed J Hook to catch them

4) Bottom fishing/pan fish - A favorite pastime of rec anglers is to come down to the coast, stick some shrimp on a 2 way rig and try and catch whiting, spots, and pompano. barbless hooks don't work. because you need the bait to stay on. small circle hooks can work but they need to be barbed. Also...when you are bottom fishing you can still catch puppy drum. Fish don't know what type of hook you are using. So you going to give someone a ticket if they catch a puppy drum with the wrong hook?!

In conclusion, I do not support this at all in its current format. If you want to make hook mandates for INSHORE/inside inlets fishing to protect our fish and allow them to spawn...fine (striper hook regs and Lupton rig regs for example are fine). But none of this makes sense to do as a blanket regulation for piers and surf as the economic impacts would be horrific to tackle shops and manufactures.

I would encourage the MFC to look at this from a big picture as to why we are even discussing this in the first place. What are we trying to accomplish?

Lastly I would ask the Commission to do something that , on the surface, doesn't appear to happen often. Look at this through the lense of your average everyday working men and women who fish recreationally from the piers and surf. Kids going fishing with their dads and granddads. These are not rich folks, they don't own boats, they get a few days a year to come fish. These people aren't political they are just trying to get away from the struggles of life for a day sitting on the planks or on the sand.

I also want to apologize for some past comments that were counterproductive and not constructive. I am not angry at anyone personally. I am just frustrated at the SYSTEM that got us here.

Thank you for your time.

--

Eric D. Bregman, CPA



From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Fishery
Date: Thursday, February 18, 2021 8:30:15 PM

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Don Beaver [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 9:39 AM
To: Bizzell, Rob; Cross, Doug; Blanton, Mike; Hendrickson, Tom; Kornegay, K; McNeill, Robert; Posey, Martin H; Roller, Thomas N; Romano, Sam
Subject: [External] Fishery

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify. Send all suspicious email as an attachment to [Report Spam](#).

I am a 74 year sportsman who has fished the coastal waters of NC for many years, During that time I have watched the fishery be abused and decline to the point it is almost worthless for the average person to catch enough fish to make the trip enjoyable. It is tem that we wake up and do as other states have done, stop the trawling in the estuaries and get the nets out of the sound. I understand that there are people who make a living on the fishery that supposedly belong to all of us, not just the commercial fishermen. It is now time to act not keep cutting back the recreational fisherman to the benefit of the few Commercial fishermen.

Don Beaver
[REDACTED]

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Gill netting
Date: Friday, February 19, 2021 8:52:28 PM

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Sebastian Lehner [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 19, 2021 7:50 AM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] Gill netting

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify. Send all suspicious email as an attachment to Report Spam.<<mailto:report.spam@nc.gov>>

The North American conservation model is an exemplary method of species and habitat management that allows wild life to thrive, while allowing humans to ethically harvest wild food, and enjoy wild places. Sustainable methods of harvest are key in ensuring the health and longevity of an ecosystem. Gill netting is a non selective method of harvest, which results in significant numbers of by catch. This by catch includes many different species at many different life stages. Some of these species could be threatened or endangered. Some are crucial to the survival of their species either because they are mature breeding members of their species or juveniles with a naturally low chance of reaching adulthood due to predation. If we want to continue harvesting wild food and enjoying wild places, and we want to secure these resources for future generations we must practice sustainable methods of harvest. We must put an end to gill netting.

From: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: FW: [External] Comments
Date: Monday, February 22, 2021 2:42:33 PM

Lara K. J. Klibansky
Marine Fisheries Commission Liaison
Executive Assistant for Councils and Commissions
NC Division of Marine Fisheries
Department of Environmental Quality



252 515 6020 mobile (direct)
252 726 7021 main office
Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov

P.O. Box 769
3441 Arendell Street
Morehead City, NC 28557

Email correspondence to and from this address is subject to the North Carolina Public Records Law and may be disclosed to third parties

From: Bizzell, Rob <r.bizzell.mfc@ncdenr.gov>
Sent: Monday, February 22, 2021 2:41 PM
To: Klibansky, Lara <Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov>
Subject: Fwd: [External] Comments

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Jerry Schill <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, February 22, 2021 10:16 AM
To: Cross, Doug; Posey, Martin H; Blanton, Mike; Kornegay, K; Bizzell, Rob; McNeill, Robert; Romano, Sam; Hendrickson, Tom; Roller, Thomas N
Subject: [External] Comments

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify. Send all suspicious email as an attachment to [Report Spam](#).

February 22, 2021

Mr. Chairman and Commission members:

These comments are based on process rather than any particular issue on your agenda, although a couple of the issues relate to the process involved with said issues.

VIRTUAL MEETINGS: I think it's safe to say we have all had our fill of virtual meetings. It's time to get back to in-person meetings using safeguards as appropriate. In the case of commercial fishermen, this isn't fun and games that are being considered, but livelihoods. Stakeholders can best give their thoughts on important issues by doing so in person rather than via phone or computer. No decisions on important issues should be made via a virtual meeting, but should be done in-person. Many fishermen do not use computers and/or email.

CONTACT INFORMATION: The website for the Marine Fisheries Commission only shows email addresses for Commissioners. It should also include phone numbers. If someone wants to sit on a Commission where they decide the fate of another's livelihood, they should make themselves available. There are quite a few fishermen who don't mess with a computer or email as noted previously.

DRACONIAN PROPOSALS: While it's within any commissioner's prerogative to offer suggestions for management measures in any fishery at any time, the Commission should use discretion before putting outlandish measures on the agenda. The fishing public will key on that one measure even though it's only for discussion and/or has little possibility of adoption while ignoring other important issues on your agenda. The striped bass proposal on your agenda for discussion on Friday morning fits that description.

Best regards and God bless,

Jerry Schill
Director of Government Relations
N.C. Fisheries Association, Inc.

[REDACTED]

--

Jerry Schill
Director of Government Relations
N.C. Fisheries Association, Inc.

[REDACTED]

Dear Marine Fisheries Commissioners:

I understand that for this quarterly meeting there are several things on the agenda that affect the future of large mesh gillnets, specifically as they relate to striped bass and flounder, but due to potential management measures that might be taken, would also affect our ability to fish for shad. I believe that for multiple reasons action should not be taken to accept the “Ten-Year Prescription for the Recovery of the Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River Striped Bass Stock”, including the fact that the peer review of the AS-RR Striped Bass Stock Assessment was only accepted the second attempt and only for a five year period, with the understanding that more information/data was needed on multiple fronts (creel surveys, catch and release data, mortality data, predation data, river flow data, etc.). Further, I believe that towards the end of the data provided (which ended in 2017) the trend showed the less fish were being harvested each year than allowed, and that discard numbers were on a downward trend. Finally, I also believe that for the period for which COVID has caused all meetings to be held virtually by webinar, it is in effect prohibiting individuals from certain geographical areas or socio-economic statuses from participation. For instance, I am from a very rural area in NC, [REDACTED], where high speed internet connections are not available to everyone in the area (some entire roads or portions of roads may have DSL access, and others (like my house) were skipped for a few miles in each direction) so you must resort to using things like a US Cellular Hot Spot that is limited by monthly data constraints. To participate in a webinar would use a large portion of the data allotted for the month, and if the household has school aged children who need that data for virtual classes or people who need that data allotment to work from home, it would be unwise to use it for a multi-hour webinar. To make decisions that affect people from this area (and other remote areas like it) without them being able to fully participate would be wholly prejudicial.

As it stands now, in the ASMA we are only allowed a 3 week large mesh season in the spring (for Shad) and 3 weeks in the fall (for Flounder). Several years ago, we had 11 months of the year available for large mesh fisheries (closed in December). Since the closures have started for one reason or another (i.e. “too many” turtle or sturgeon interactions in the nets, a “shortage” of shad, etc.) the stock assessments continue to look dismal, leading me to believe that it is not the gill nets that are the problem. I think we would see a more positive result in future stock assessments if we hold off on changing management measures so often (i.e. trip limits, seasons closures, manipulating gill net proclamations, etc.) and instead concentrated on fixing the issues with our water– like having too much nitrogen in our waterways from run off, controlling the invasive blue catfish (natural predators to baby Rockfish), and better controlling our water flow to allow for successful fish migration up the rivers and streams. Fixing our water quality issues in general, such as lowering pollution levels and stopping the high number of sewage spills, would make a huge impact.

I recently read the “Assessment of the Albemarle Sound-Roanoke River Striped Bass in North Carolina, 1991-2017” Report from August of 2020 in order to see what data was available that is stating that Striped Bass were overfished and overfishing was occurring, because it is baffling how many Striped Bass (as well as many other species that are categorized this way – i.e. herring, etc.) that fishermen are seeing in large numbers on a daily basis.

In the report, Table 1.6 details the Total Allowable Landings (TAL) for both commercial and recreational harvest. I have provided a screenshot of this information below.

Table 1.6. Changes in the total allowable landings (TAL) in metric tons and pounds (in parentheses) for the ASMA-RRMA, 1991–2017.

Regulatory Period	ASMA Commercial	ASMA Recreational	RRMA Recreational	Combined TAL
1991–1997	44.45 (98,000)	13.34 (29,400)	13.34 (29,400)	71.12 (156,800)
1998	56.88 (125,400)	28.44 (62,700)	28.44 (62,700)	113.8 (250,800)
1999	62.57 (137,940)	31.28 (68,970)	31.28 (68,970)	125.2 (275,968)
2000–2002	102.1 (225,000)	51.03 (112,500)	51.03 (112,500)	204.1 (450,000)
2003–2014	124.7 (275,000)	62.37 (137,500)	62.37 (137,500)	249.5 (550,000)
2015–2017	62.37 (137,500)	31.18 (68,750)	31.18 (68,750)	124.7 (275,000)

In later tables, including 1.7, and 2.1-2.3, additional details are provided, such as the commercial and recreational landings/harvest and discard numbers. Comparison of this data gets a little tricky at this point because the commercial landings are provided in metric tons, but discards are done in numbers of fish. For the recreational harvest, everything is calculated by number of fish, except for TAL. Then, the recreational tables of data specify that it pertains to *dead* fish discards, but commercial data only states that it is for discards (it does not state if those were dead or alive). In order to make a table of comparable numbers, I took the commercial harvest numbers and multiplied the provided number of metric tons by 2204.62 (number of pounds per metric ton) and then divided the result by 4. With the number 4 coming from the average number pounds a striped bass 18 inches of longer typically weighs (of course longer fish weigh more, but I just used a 4 pound average for the entirety of the data review). I took data from Table 1.7 at the years that marked parts of the regulatory periods shown above, i.e. 1991, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2014, and 2017 and then standardized the data to have comparable units, as shown below.

Year	Commercial ASMA Harvest (in metric tons)	Commercial ASMA Harvest (in Standardized #s of Fish)	Discard #	% of Fish Discarded in ASMA Commercial Harvest*	% of Dead Fish Discard in ASMA Commercial Harvest
1991	49.24	27138.8722	10267	38%	16%
1997	43.64	24052.4042	3967	16%	7%
1998	56.26	31007.9803	5817	19%	8%
1999	73.94	40752.4007	7401	18%	8%
2000	97.17	53555.73135	10500	20%	8%
2002	101.2	55776.886	6633	12%	5%
2014	32.23	17763.72565	2794	16%	7%
2017	34.5	19014.8475	2762	15%	6%

*Assuming only dead discards were included in the report. If the stock assessment determined discard mortality rate of 43% is accepted as accurate, and the number provided in the report is

total discards (which is likely, since these are not specified as dead discards), these numbers change to the final column percentages.

On the recreational harvest numbers, I took the tables data and combined the ASMA and Roanoke River data (no commercial fishing allowed in Roanoke River area, so those numbers would be zero). This data was already presented as number of fish, so I took the number of discards (dead – as stated in the table summary) and divided by the number of harvested fish for each year shown.

Year	# of Recreationally Harvested Fish	# of Dead Discards	% of Fish Discarded in Recreational Harvest
1991	41329	11023	27%
1997	16265	20642	127%
1998	42675	18040	42%
1999	39446	13049	33%
2000	76291	11013	14%
2002	54318	6870	13%
2014	16587	12072	73%
2017	14114	6599	47%

Now, each one of these years brackets in some form the years from the original table I provided a screen capture of (Table 1.6) where the TAL is provided for each sector. If we take the commercial quota, and the sum of the recreational allowance for the two areas and compare it to the actual landings, the following table of data is what is obtained. Once again, I had to standardize the units for comparison, so I took recreational harvest numbers and converted them to metric tons (following the same principles I outlined earlier, assuming each fish weighs four pounds, and that a metric ton=2204.62 pounds). The results are as follows:

Year	Commercial ASMA Harvest (in metric tons)	Discard #	Discard # with Discard Mortality Rate Applied (43%)	Total Commercial ASMA Harvest (in Standardized #s of Fish)	Striped Bass Removed From Stock (# Dead + # Harvested)	Allowed TAL for year (in Metric Tons)	Allowed TAL in pounds (1 Metric Ton = 2204.62 pound)	# of Fish in TAL (assuming 4 # avg)	Commercial % TAL used (included discards)
1991	49.24	10267	4414.81	27138.8722	31553.6822	44.5	98105.59	24526.4	129%
1997	43.64	3967	1705.81	24052.4042	25758.2142	44.5	98105.59	24526.4	105%
1998	56.26	5817	2501.31	31007.9803	33509.2903	56.88	125398.786	31349.7	107%
1999	73.94	7401	3182.43	40752.4007	43934.8307	62.57	137943.073	34485.77	127%
2000	97.17	10500	4515	53555.7314	58070.73135	102.1	225091.702	56272.93	103%

2002	101.2	6633	2852.19	55776.886	58629.076	102.1	225091.702	56272.93	104%
2014	32.23	2794	1201.42	17763.7257	18965.14565	124.7	274916.114	68729.03	28%
2017	34.5	2762	1187.66	19014.8475	20202.5075	62.37	137502.149	34375.54	59%

Year	# of Recreationally Fish Harvested	# of Dead Discards	Total SB removed (dead +harvested)	Recreational Allowable TAL (expressed in #s) for ASMA and RRMA	Recreation TAL (expressed as # of fish, assuming 4# avg)	Recreation % of TAL Used (with discards)
1991	41329	11023	52352	138229.7	34557.42	151%
1997	16265	20642	36907	138229.7	34557.42	107%
1998	42675	18040	60715	200929.1	50232.27	121%
1999	39446	13049	52495	221013.2	55253.29	95%
2000	76291	11013	87304	360521.5	90130.38	97%
2002	54318	6870	61188	360521.5	90130.38	68%
2014	16587	12072	28659	440637.4	110159.3	26%
2017	14114	6599	20713	220307.7	55076.92	38%

I believe that this data shows that at least since 2014, both sectors have been properly managed to stay within the parameters of the yearly allowances (lately perhaps over-managed), and that it would be irresponsible to use this stock assessment to potentially shut down the commercial industry to all large mesh fisheries. Further, this data fairly accurately represents all of the Striped Bass removed by commercial fishermen, due to the implementation of the Trip Ticket Program in 1991. In order to sell our catch, we must sell it to a fish house/dealer with a Striped Bass license and have our weights, numbers, and gear information, etc. included on each report. I cannot speak for all commercial fishermen, but personally I cannot afford to miss out on selling every striped bass I am allowed to catch by saving one back for supper, therefore, my trip ticket numbers accurately reflect my entire harvest. However, we have a long way to go before we can even begin to state that our recreational data is accurate. First of all, the data from that sector is counting on creel surveys at boat ramps (this misses out on individuals that depart from their private dock), and calculating effort by the number of boat trailers that are in the boat ramp lot (and not identified as commercial or hunter or for other usage). We are also assuming that the creel surveys, while well designed for what they are – but still lacking, are talking to a statistically significant number of fishermen on a given day/time, and getting *accurate* information. Meanwhile, commercial data is collected not only by trip tickets, but by the observer programs where they either work directly on our boats to collect data and visualize discards, or by observing us from a nearby vessel. It is also important to bear in mind that they are calculating commercial discard numbers (at least for 1991-2011) by taking the median ratio for live/dead discards and multiplying it by the commercial gill net landings for that day, not by shear observations or reported numbers. I am not certain from the report if that is the current policy as well. For the discard numbers in the recreational industry, there is indeed growth to be made because according to the current policies used and the process of adding smooths to the linear regression generated from the discard model,

occasionally the model produced a negative number of discards, which analysts then truncated to zero. Since it is highly unlikely that recreational fishermen can generate baby rock fish while hooking an adult striped bass to remove from the water, this model definitely needs work. It is also unlikely that the recreational post release mortality rate is 6.4% (as identified in the report) while the commercial rate is 43%. The reality is it is hard to say what this number would be because while a fish that is hooked has a bleeding injury and expelled copious amounts of energy during the fight to the boat and then was removed from the water for a period of time for hook removal, measurement (and a possible selfie), the fish that was held in a gill net experiences a different scenario. It could have been in the net since it was first set or as soon as seconds before it was pulled on the boat. It could be hung in the net because it has a hook protruding somewhere around its mouth and it got caught up in the monofilament. It also could be a very healthy fish in cold water and survive just fine, or it could be caught on a warmer day and have underlying issues and die. The issue is if the fish is alive when you release it (recreational or commercial) it is hard to know the fate of it after that moment where it dives back underwater.

The peer review process and stock assessment did state that additional work needed to be done in more accurately identifying the discard mortality rates (catch and release and in gill nets), and as stated earlier in evaluating the effects of river flow and the effects of catfish predation. However the report also states the peer reviewers agreed to the fact that Striped Bass were overfished and overfishing was occurring, but did not agree to the cause of the decline (i.e. harvest numbers alone were not responsible for the decline, there are other factors in play). Further the report also states that Striped Bass commonly migrate out of the management unit and possibly even join the ocean migratory stock, which account for their removal from AS-RR management area, and that this is happening in increasing numbers, but there is no current way to quantify this. It does seem unfair and irresponsible to potentially decimate an entire management unit's commercial fleet (and the industries/individual businesses that support it) by closing their shad season while there is no guarantee that a) there is a harvest-related decline in population, and b) the closure would result in any quantifiable differences in future stock assessments.

Lastly, I believe that a stock assessment for all species for which there is commercial involvement in North Carolina managed waterways should be repeated. In the stock assessment it details that juvenile abundance is calculated by running an 18 foot semi-balloon trawl with a 0.75 inch bar mesh and added tail bag for 15 minute increments on a biweekly basis for an 8 week period, resulting in 56 data points. This is done at pre-determined sites (7 of them) in the Western Albemarle Sound, along the edges of "breaks and contours" within a depth of 8 to 12 feet. Then, to collect data on Striped Bass that are greater than one year, a gill net survey is conducted. The ASMA is divided into six zones and then those six zones are turned into 1-mile quadrant squares for a total of 22 quadrants in each of the 6 zones within the Albemarle Sound, Croatan Sound, and Alligator River (which for the purposes of this study were identified as Striped Bass zones). Then, biologists were deployed and using "4 gangs of 12 meshes" of nets (from 2.5 – 7 inches at every ½ inch, then 8 inches, and 10 inches) they measured the number of Striped Bass caught. They did this by calculating the number of fish caught per effort unit (per 40 yards of net over a 24 hour period). For each set, two gangs of nets were sunk, while the remaining two were floated. The study also stated that for mesh sizes up to 4 inches, monofilament weight of 104 was used, then 139 was used for 5-7 inches, and the heavy 277 nets were used for 8 and 10 inch nets. These nets were hung taken up by half, and allowed to soak for a total of 48 hours. It stated that the study was focused in the springtime in the Western Albemarle Sound (and the mouth of

the Roanoke River) and for the fall the daily locations for fishing was alternated. I believe that an even better representation of calculating the Striped Bass stock should be undertaken by taking the data collected as described above, and having a number of commercial fishermen complete the study as well. In this manner, you could generate much more sample data using the exact net configurations that we use for harvest. If you use the Trip Ticket data in the upcoming 2021 season, identify a statistically significant number of active, daily shad season participants and have a system set up for after the season ends in 2021 or for the season that starts in 2022 where we (the commercial fishermen who are signed up for the sampling program) provide the exact data the DMF needs to supplement their own data to complete a stock assessment. We can provide our net size (inches and weight), the number of fish (of each species) caught in each 100 yard section of net, and provide the depth and coordinates of our set as well as numerous other pieces of information that would be valuable to DMF. If provided training and equipment we could also provide the salinity and dissolved oxygen content of the water in that location as well.

I believe that both the recreational and commercial sectors involved in fishing the waters of the ASMA should work together, in tandem with DMF, to create a more robust data set from which to take information to form a stock assessment. You would undoubtedly increase your R-values across the board, as well as improve CV values, and it would provide a more realistic picture of the fish stocks in North Carolina. Instead of being a state that changes management measures on a whim based on pressures from special interest groups, we could become the model state for abundant fisheries stocks with two sectors that work together to have clean waterways and plenty of fish for those who want to harvest it themselves (for meals and for sport), and for those who harvest it as a means of feeding those who want access to fresh, clean seafood while providing numerous jobs across the state.

In conclusion, and to reiterate my earlier points, I believe that action should not be taken to end our shad fishery (and further decimate the large mesh gill net industry) in the ASMA based on this Striped Bass stock assessment. I believe we should collect additional data points with input from the commercial (and possible recreational) sectors) and we should not take further punitive action until we can compile that data in a useable manner and present it at in-person meetings.

Sincerely,

J. L. Winslow

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Ten-Year Prescription
Date: Thursday, February 18, 2021 8:29:46 PM

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Julie Howard [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 10:32 AM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] Ten-Year Prescription

CAUTION: External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify. Send all suspicious email as an attachment to [Report Spam](#).

I would like to comment on the Ten-Year Prescription for the Recovery of the Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River Striped Bass Stock. My husband is a recreational fisherman who has fished the Roanoke River for two months for the last nineteen years. It is true that the numbers of Striped Bass have declined from nineteen years ago but 2020 was one of the best years in the last ten. This was discussed with the biologists that talk to the fishermen at the 258 ramp.

I agree that the bycatch discards greatly exceed the numbers of Striped Bass harvested. Why weren't they allowed to keep and sell the bycatch and count that towards their quota? Please explain why you would allow gill nets to continue to be used for the next two years but change the season for striped bass now and consider implementing a moratorium in 2021.

If you feel the stock is as diminished as you say why wait until 2026 to begin supplemental fingerling stocking. Shouldn't that be started immediately?

Your Costs of this 10-Year Plan does not take into consideration the impact on the recreational fishermen and their families. Scotland Neck has based their recovery model for the town on the outdoors. Hunting and fishing are some of the main attractions for our town. Roanoke Rapids and Weldon have signs that state Rock Fish Capital. Small towns along the Roanoke River count on rockfish season for the incomes from gasoline, food, lodging and the normal benefits from tourists. The people that live in these small towns depend on the fish for eating. Most of the people freeze fish to supplement their food budget. Now that the pandemic is here many are having a hard time financially and this hurts even more. The families count on these fish to feed their families.

Not allowing live bait also reduces catching any fish. Many fishermen cannot afford artificial baits. If you have fished the Roanoke River you know the likelihood of losing your rigs. Not everyone can afford to lose ten to twelve dollars a day trying to catch a catfish or catch and release striped bass.

In 2007 a moratorium was established for herring. This was only supposed to last a few years and was going to be closely monitored. Last year the herring kill in the Meherrin River proved the stock has increased. The moratorium is still in effect.

My suggestion for the Ten-Year Prescription for the Recovery of the Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River

Striped Bass Stock is this

2021- Stop the use of gill nets immediately. Allow the recreational fisherman to continue as they have for the last 5 years. Do stock assessment. Do fingerling stocking.

2022- Allow recreational fishermen a reduced season. Do stock assessment Continue fingerling stocking.

2023- Do stock assessment then decide if a moratorium needs to be implemented.

Julie Howard

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED], NC [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



ONLINE PUBLIC COMMENT

Online Comments for February 2021 MFC Meeting
2/18/21 12:30 p.m.

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
02/18/2021 - 6:26am	Chris McCaffity	North Carolina	<p>Please do not approve any Commercial Fishing Resource Fund projects until an official website is set up for the fund so license holders can pick who represents us in the committee and vote on how our money will be allocated. The website should also offer a safe and convenient way for us to purchase the license to work that pays for this fund.</p> <p>Please reopen North Carolina's historic River Herring fishery. Ten thousand North Carolinians have signed petitions in support of keeping this spring tradition going. Previous commission members promised to let the Discretionary Harvest continue if harvested herring were used as intended the year they voted to abolish that ancient fishery. I personally coordinated efforts with herring fishermen, local markets, and Jamesville's River Herring Festival staff to ensure harvested herring were used as intended. Please honor the agreement that was made and broken by previous commission members.</p> <p>Please focus more on enhancing our fisheries and food supply than restricting the public's freedom to access them by using proven management tools that create more seafood for everyone. Wise use of hatcheries and habitat enhancements can be the perfect blend of open-water aquaculture and wild-caught seafood that lives free and self-sufficient until harvested by independent fishermen. This is a much better solution on every level for producing more seafood than leasing public waters for private production. Public water leases restrict the public's freedom to access public waters and consolidate control of our food supply. Please support a moratorium on farming fish in public waters and focus on keeping fish and fishermen wild and free.</p>
02/17/2021 - 2:52pm	Dr. Steve Reynolds	North Carolina	<p>I grew up in NC and have been a licensed lifetime Sportsmen since my teen years in the 1980's. I bought lifetime licenses for my two boys as babies. My ancestors have lived in NC since the 1700's. The destruction of the fish population in our bays and estuaries is inexcusable. Too many people watched the plunder and did nothing. Now something is being done and must continue in spite of objections from Commercial interests. The public waters belong to all North Carolinians by law. The shrimp trawling should be stopped in all inner waters, I have seen firsthand the awful bycatch destruction for a few pounds of shrimp. There are plenty of shrimp in the ocean where the bycatch issue is bad but not devastating. The flounder FMP must continue the limitations but on a fair basis of 50/50 between commercial and recreational which is not really fair at all because there are millions more recreational users than commercial interests. The commercial interests must be brought to account for failing to report accurately. The resource has plummeted in numbers and must be restored for future generations.</p>
02/17/2021 - 10:54am	Celeste Edwards	North Carolina	<p>Southern Flounder FMP - The proposed allocation and certain rules proposed by DMF are patently unfair to recreational fishermen. If the Southern flounder is to become a quota-managed fishery, then the current commercial/recreational split of 73/27 should be changed to a 50/50 allocation just like the AS/RR striped bass fishery. The use of "historical" landings to establish a quota-managed fishery further highlights the fact that the commercial industry exploited Southern flounder for three decades.</p> <p>When Division biologists were insisting that a 72% harvest reduction was needed to save the stock from collapse, they insisted that the cuts had to be "equitable." "Historically," the commercial industry was responsible for 80% of the harvest so they should have been responsible for the brunt of the reductions. No, it had to be equitable. Now the stock has to be managed by quota and DMF biologists want to use "historical" numbers instead of "equitable" numbers.</p> <p>Recreational harvest limits should be based on this new TAL and the ocean should be opened to give recreational anglers an opportunity to harvest summer and Gulf flounder during the time of year when they can be accessed. The proposed ocean access during March/April needs to be shifted in such a manner that the current recreational flounder season is lengthened in</p>

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
			<p>areas of the ocean where interactions with Southern flounder will be minimal. Opening the ocean fishing in March/April is another "feel good" measure that accomplishes little conservation and just locks rec anglers out. No one is fishing for them then. The ocean should be open all year for oscillated flounder.</p> <p>Since these two ocean stocks are currently healthy, a daily creel limit of 2 - 4 fish with the same 15" minimum length should be allowed. Finally, with this specific fishery under such stress, gill nets allowed under the RCGL should be discontinued, just as large mesh gill nets should be removed as an acceptable commercial gear.</p>
02/17/2021 - 10:30am	THOMAS S COLTRAIN	North Carolina	Need to stop people that target fish where there is a closed season. This includes GUIDES that target fish the season is closed on. You see it every day on the internet on the Guides web page. Closed is closed for everyone. Instead of fines take their license for several years this will have more to do with stopping this than some small fine.
02/17/2021 - 9:06am	vinson bridgers	North Carolina	AS A RESIDENT OF * WE HAD WONDERFUL ENJOYMENT OF ROCK FISHING HERE IN THE SPRING. POSSESSION WAS STOPPED TWO OR SO YEARS AGO. PARTICIPATION DROPPED TO ALMOST NOTHING. WE LOST OUR TOURNAMENT WHICH FUNDED A SCHOLARSHIP AT THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE. WHY CAN'T WE HAVE "PUT AND TAKE" ON ROCK FISH IN THE TAR RIVER. YOU DO IT IN THE MOUNTAINS WITH TROUT. I THINK FISHERMAN WOULD BE WILLING TO BUY A ROCK FISH STAMP IF WE COULD GET FISHING BACK ON THE TAR LIKE A FEW YEARS AGO. VINSON BRIDGERS
02/17/2021 - 7:46am	Jerry James	North Carolina	Please consider a 50/50 split on the southern flounder allocation. For so long the commercial allocation has been one sided. It is about time that we consider an equal allocation. Small commercial and rec can't fish but the big rigs can go off shore and trawl for flounder. No wonder they were for a closed season. Almost have a corner on the flounder market. Talked with a fish dealer last commercial season and they flooded the market within the first week (southern area). this is not fair. thanks for your consideration. Jerry
02/16/2021 - 12:45pm	Catherine Whitney	Michigan	I visit the NC coastal area a few times a year. I'm concerned that the sounds, estuaries, waterways become cordoned off from use, no public access. I want to be able to swim, wade, kayak in these areas, have them remain open to be enjoyed by people. This is called sharing.
02/15/2021 - 11:04pm	Ronnie Faircloth	North Carolina	Please tell me how you think that you want to help the flounder and other fish species out, by giving the commercial fishermen the best times to fish, over the anglers. Yoi give them the best time of the year for flounder and no real limit and want o hold back the common fisherman. A lot of anglers fish to feed their family so they don't have to pay high market prices and have fish on the table several times a month. What you are doing is contriling a market. Communism or socialism, not much difference.
02/15/2021 - 6:56pm	Jonathan Edwards	North Carolina	Please remove harmful, wasteful gear from our estuaries. There is too much wasted by catch caused by shrimp trawling and gill nets. NC is the only state on the east coast that still allows some of these ancient fishing practices. Why?
02/15/2021 - 5:06pm	Ray Peaden	North Carolina	please open back stripped bass fishing in all coastal waters and open the flounder season too. Thanks
02/15/2021 - 4:58pm	Douglas Jernigan	North Carolina	It is past time to remove gill nets from our inshore waters. It is not fair to penalize the recreational anglers of NC because of the gross mismanagement of NCDMF staff. Status quo can only continue for so long and we are at the end of that road. It's time to outlaw large mesh gill nets and put a quota on pound nets in the southern flounder fishery. Rec anglers should not receive any more cuts. I would also like to ask the MFC to make a motion for a vote of no confidence in senior NCDMF staff.
02/15/2021 - 4:54pm	Donald Beaver	North Carolina	We need to get the trawlers and gill nets out of the sounds to protect the remaining fishery.

<p>2/18/2021 14:50</p>	<p>Keegan Postema</p>	<p>North Carolina</p>	<p>I'd like to comment, and keep it short and sweet. I am a recreational fisherman and absolutely love everything about it... but I have to say that the nets are killing the sport terribly and I have witnessed first hand my favorite areas to fish become completely cleared out and left lifeless after the netters do their thing. I personally know some netters and after hearing the things they do and the insane weights of fish they bring in is insane as well and after hearing these things I completely understand and see why our fish populations is dwindling every year. I'm sending you this message in hopes that something will change on the commercial side so I can teach my son the art of fishing and show him why I have such a true love for it. Going out and getting skunked is not the best way to teach my kids to love fishing. Thank you for your time, Keegan Postema</p>
			<p>The banning of live bait is unnecessary and has nothing to do with delayed mortality. CIRCLE HOOKS ARE THE KEY.....period. The second step should be the instruction EVERYWHERE on how to remove a deep hook (https://www.in-fisherman.com/editorial/through-the-gill-hook-removal/155024).</p> <p>Banning live bait does nothing but create unnecessary restrictions on use of OUR resource. When you start determining the method that people can use to catch fish you are overthinking things. I doubt there is another human being that has caught more Stripers on live bait than myself on the upper Roanoke in the last 20 years. Out of the thousands I unhook each season, there are probably 30-40 deep hooked and of those I can remove the hook safely in every single fish. The ones that die are usually from gill strikes....any hook will do that if the fish is unlucky during the hook up process. They also tend to die from redneckitus and googanitus, which are both conditions of ignorance (handling the fish with towels, letting them bang around in the boat and just being generally careless with the resource). This is your constituency though and has to be considered a constant to work around. When using jigs, deep hooking is just as common if not more common. I do use artificial baits a lot there as well.</p> <p>Fishing with live bait is a natural, enjoyable way to catch many species including Stripers. I guarantee you, 100% that if circle hooks are mandatory (3/0 and up) delayed mortality would be negligible.</p> <p>3/0 circle hooks, leaders 12" or less and a BIG part of your problem goes away immediately.</p> <p>With the Moratorium talk.....which is usually a death knell for a fishery (see herring) this probably does not matter but anyway I already typed this much</p>

2/18/2021 16:58	Capt. Greg Griffin	North Carolina	<p>The other two things you should do without question:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove the over 27" keeper from the creel limit. Should have never been there in the first place. 2. Provide limit of 2 fish/per person with a maximum of 4 fish per vessel. 3. Keeper sized fish may be 20"-22". <p>The Striper run in Weldon has been a big part of my life and a HUGE part of my career. I have seen the good and seen the bad. I will be fine either way, but as bad as a moratorium would be to some folks, not allowing people to catch and release using ANY legal bait would be ridiculous, heavy handed, unnecessary and I would say if it does pass, influenced by people who definitely think they know more than they do and/or have other motives.</p> <p>Thanks for letting folks post comments online.....all input, I believe is valuable one way or another.</p>
2/18/2021 18:51	Ryan Medric	North Carolina	<p>The fact that we are the only state on the east coast that allows shrimp trawling inside is absolutely despicable. We have so much potential. The data is there, you all just need to make the right decisions. Ban shrimp trawling inside and ban gillnets too while you're at it!</p>
2/18/2021 21:31	Johnny Stancil	North Carolina	<p>To whom it may concern a lot of the recreational fishermen feel as I do I have invested too much in this State's wildlife and Fisheries to be treated as we are I personally have purchased two unified sportsman lifetime licence. And like all the other recreational fishermen spend thousands every year which equals millions spent by us stimulating North Carolina's economy most of the Seafood as you know is sold out of state / country and doesn't benefit the people of this state. We are tired of the abuse of our ecosystem by the greedy individuals running the commercial fishing industry and the Department of Marine Fisheries that get lobbied to keep allowing the destruction of our fisheries. It is my greatest hope that this organization is disbanded and turned over to North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. You've had decades of facts and data so you already know that recreational fishing is a drop in the bucket to what commercial fishermen take from our waters also you might want to consider as a start restocking as flounder can be grown and introduced back into the wild. I hope what I've stated has struck a nerve because you definitely have not given a thought to our feelings in this matter... Just your greedy wallets.</p>
2/18/2021 21:34	Craig Welniak	North Carolina	<p>Please ban the use of gill nets, in addition to placing zero bag limit restrictions on recreational gamefish, including seatrout, redfish, and flounder.</p>
2/18/2021 21:39	Greg Barnes	North Carolina	<p>We need to protect our estuaries from gill nets. Please, do something to protect fishing for future generations. While this is often posed as a recreational vs commercial issue, if fish stocks further decline there won't be much to fight over. Make fishing great again!</p>

2/18/2021 21:41	brent baker	North Carolina	<p>Inshore Commercial fishing is a long past way of life. NC no longer has the resources to support this corrupt industry. Allowing methods that are detrimental to all fish populations, poor monitoring of catch due to so many "locals" knowing how to dodge the logs, use private ramps, sell to individuals directly, or back door sales to seafood markets, and take far far more fish than the numbers show just doesn't work. Add to that the fact this state allows boats from other states to equally harvest from out waters, and all you can see is loss.</p> <p>Hook and line fishermen are far more able to cull their catch, do little damage to habitat and have far less reason to "cheat" the system. They also are more likely to see the advantages of a lot of catch and release fishing, along with enjoying some of their catch as food. Recreational anglers support a wide variety of commerce from tackle and equipment sales, boat and kayak sales, lodging, fuel, food and general shopping. Far more money than Commercial anglers spend maintaining and running their lines and nets.</p> <p>The numbers made available to you are far from accurate. Enforcement is lacking to non existent. I hear almost daily about Recreational anglers who call in unauthorized, or improperly, set/managed gear only to get the run around, the cold shoulder, or a promise to send out an officer that never shows.</p> <p>Other states have embraced the recreational angler, and they prosper. In NC we hear the cries of "legacy" from our commercial watermen who have no regard for the long term effects of what they do. So tell me how destroying a resource leaves behind any "legacy" for their families? Maybe 100yrs ago but with today's popularity of recreational fishing it is as ridiculous as trying to sell newspapers door to door. It's time has passed. Let it go gracefully, and push for better practices and healthier waters. Many ways of making a living in the past are long gone, and people always found a way to get past it...</p>
2/18/2021 21:53	Ryan Kirkendall	North Carolina	Stop Gill Nets!
2/18/2021 21:53	Jacob meier	North Carolina	Stop gill netting !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
2/18/2021 21:55	Will Eaton	North Carolina	Please ban gill nets in NC. They destroy the local fishery and are inhumane

2/18/2021 21:59	Bradley Smith	North Carolina	<p>Hello, I hope all of you are well during this time we are facing now.</p> <p>I'm writing to you folks out of some frustration and concern on how our NC coastal resources are being managed now and for the last few years. NC has some great potential to be world class fishery, but we are lacking the management behind this to keep it from happening. Lot of people point fingers at the commercial nets and trawlers. Most others point them at the recreational person. As people depend on fishing as a living, things need to be fixed. For example the upcoming flounder season where it's being looked at a 73%/27% in favor of the commercial side. This is just not right. Us recreational guys need the fish just as much. The study that anyone has yet to do is really on the recreational guys. There is no way your average fisherman puts a dent in any stock on these fish. Yes we may have more but look at what they fish for, how they fish, and what they actually catch. Any given weekend during the summer when the ramps are packed, I'd be willing to bet that 90% of those fishing don't catch or keep a single fish.</p> <p>These are just some other concerns I have:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why are the recreational anglers always being punished for the years of mismanagement by senior staff in this state? We are always taking the brunt of regulation changes and recreational guys are not the problem in this fishery. 2. Nets need to be better managed or completely gone. NC kills and waste way too much money on killing protected species due to allowing nets in the water. NC is the only state to do this, why is that? 3. How is it that a guy cannot keep a fish, but go to a market and buy the same fish? This just seems wrong in every area of life. 4. The recreational person takes all the cuts when the commercial side still gets to fish and keep and destroy more fish. 5. Shrimp Trawls kill thousands of fish a day as bycatch. This has even been seen and reported by NCDMF officers and yet nothing is still done about this. So much waste is going on in this state. <p>NC cannot fix the problem until these problems are even addressed. NC is keeping itself from a great fishery and until the management is fixed IT WILL BE AN ONGOING ISSUE.</p> <p>WE NEED A BETTER FISHERIES MANAGMENT AND NOT WASTE MONEY</p>
2/18/2021 22:05	Alan Price	North Carolina	<p>We need to stop using gill nets commercially. Especially in shallow areas around NC's coast. They're killing game fish below the legal size limits, they're unattended for far too long, they're dangerous to more than just game fish, and simply put they're destroying our coast. There's better alternatives. Stop being lazy. Make it right.</p>
2/18/2021 22:08	Noah smith	North Carolina	<p>Please no longer allow gill netting on our coast.</p>
2/18/2021 22:15	Alec kunkel	North Carolina	<p>Please stop the gill nets!!</p>

2/18/2021 22:18	Dan George	North Carolina	<p>To whom it may concern. I am a recreational fisherman living in * County, NC. My concerns are in regard to the ongoing mismanagement of the southern flounder. I have come to understand that yet once again the recreational sector will take the brunt of reductions in harvests while the pound nets, gill nets, and shrimp trawlers continue to reap havoc virtually unaffected. Have you not learned from the past several limit reductions for recs that this doesn't seem to work for a better fishery? Our state waters are a public trust resource as are the fish that swim in them. The time has come to stop treating it as a private farm for those that wish to harvest for profit. We have a right to our three fish limit, no more and no less. The closed and open seasons appear to be the first improvement with any positive effect to date and I am all for keeping with the current trend for sustainability. I do not, however, feel that further restrictions on tax paying state residents would help one bit. If you sincerely want to help the peril of the southern flounder then you need to focus on the largest harvesters which are not the recreational fishermen with a hook and line. Please consider carefully the decisions you make and make them based on flounder, not people.</p> <p>Regards, Dan George</p>
2/18/2021 22:21	Ben Smith	Wyoming	Please stop the gill netting.
2/18/2021 22:28	Robert stair	North Carolina	
2/18/2021 22:45	David Shackelford	Georgia	
2/18/2021 22:50	Elyse Fornefeld	North Carolina	In order to keep our fisheries healthy and full of life, I am asking you ban the use of Gill nets.
2/19/2021 8:41	David McFadyen	North Carolina	<p>The proposed One a day limit on flounder for the recreational fisherman is preposterous. To overwhelmingly allow a commercial industry to take three times the flounder poundage is thievery. For a recreational fisherman to spend the amount of money to take one flounder home a day when one day a year might be all they can fish is very unfair. Without doubt it would be my guess that in North Carolina the recreational fisherman impacts on the states budget outweighs any contribution made by the commercial side of the industry. Over the years this organization has continually punished recreational fishing trying to get the limits in a manageable area. I was inspected five times last year by the biologist team at the ramps at no time Did I have any flounder on board during the season This is not a recreational problem if the recreational fisherman cannot keep 4 flounder a day in a 45 day season then all flounder limits should be shut down. You need to shut down dragnet in all inshore areas that will go along way into fixing your overall problem.</p>

			<p>This is an additional comment related to my first one submitted yesterday (Feb. 18). If multiple comments are not allowed, please disregard this one.</p> <p>In my other comment I referred to a document on the agenda that will be up for discussion (10 year plan). I wanted to add/clarify the reasons I think a live bait ban on those systems is pointless and overly aggressive and reeks of "partisan anglers" that have a view regarding live/natural bait anglers as lesser than's and a big part of the problem. There is no reference on where that document came from, I would be interested to know.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Live bait does not kill fish.....hooks do, regardless of what they are impaling or are attached to. Banning a certain type of bait is addressing a symptom and not the problem. The solution is simple and addressed in my first comment. 2. Delayed mortality from deep hooked fish as it stands now is certainly almost immeasurable in the big scheme of things and most likely falls to the bottom of reasons why these stocks are diminished. This can't be disputed scientifically and if it can I would like to see where it has been proven. Regardless, deep hooking fish falls in the same category as bycatch in my mind and everything that can be done to reduce it, should be done. 3. The Blue Catfish and Channel Catfish fisheries are outstanding in these areas and many anglers enjoy this resource. Eliminating live/natural bait effectively erases this opportunity not to mention all of the White and Yellow Perch anglers, Crappie, various sunfish species, etc. <p>If a live bait ban in these areas passes as law.....I expect to not see anyone, including locals up and down the river enjoying a nice day of bank fishing using anything but artificial lures. If so, they would have to be reported immediately. I would also expect that this new law be applied to Flounder as well during the times they are under a moratorium and for that matter ANY fish that is under a moratorium. (Definition of Pandora's Box)</p>
2/19/2021 8:47	Capt. Greg Griffin	North Carolina	<p>Responsible angling (rec. and comm.) should be the FIRST and ONLY line of defense in the effort to recover a fishery. It really is that simple. If there are no environmental factors causing the decline, this will always fix the problem. Periods of no harvest, size and creel adjustments, required fishing GEAR, etc. are all great tools.....mandating the type of attractant on a hook is something that should have never even been mentioned unless it was mentioned out of ignorance or was agenda driven.</p> <p>I feel confident still that the groups involved in this process have the fisheries best interest in mind I am not sure anymore that the anglers receive the same courtesy, even though we are the driving force behind it all. Please don't reduce the joy of fishing for current anglers and all of the next generation anglers (who have enough things stacked against them as it is) by even considering this heavy handed and unnecessary approach.</p> <p>Thanks for your time and I promise, last comment!</p>
2/19/2021 8:51	Eric Bregman	North Carolina	
2/19/2021 9:43	Connor Luckey-Smith	North Carolina	<p>I feel confident still that the groups involved in this process have the fisheries best interest in mind I am not sure anymore that the anglers receive the same courtesy, even though we are the driving force behind it all. Please don't reduce the joy of fishing for current anglers and all of the next generation anglers (who have enough things stacked against them as it is) by even considering this heavy handed and unnecessary approach.</p>

2/19/2021 9:47	Palmer Loggins	Georgia	
2/19/2021 10:24	John Murphy	Florida	Thanks for your time and I promise, last comment!
2/19/2021 10:25	Woody	South Carolina	Vote no for inshore Gill Nets!! How is this even a thing. It's 2021, look at the success other states have with this ban concerning redfish and other important inshore species! No inshore Gill netting period!
2/19/2021 10:27	Chad Meier	Florida	Stop gill netting!!!!
2/19/2021 10:28	Cathy carron	Florida	Stop gill netting
2/19/2021 10:28	Lisa woody	Florida	Stop gill netting
2/19/2021 10:31	Macalister Bunbury	North Carolina	Please ban the use of Gill nets. It is horrible for the sea life and fisheries health
2/19/2021 10:31	Erik Paules	Pennsylvania	Inshore Gill nets need to be stopped the by catch is killing fisherys that drive people like myself to NC for fishing trips in your state
2/19/2021 10:32	Rusty Bridges	North Carolina	Please remove gill nets for the future of the fishery.
2/19/2021 10:32	William Tapscott	Alabama	Your estuaries matter to me all the way down in Alabama, and I've never even gotten the chance to fish there before. It's on my bucketlist though, and I would like to see it managed well for the future so that we can enjoy one of the greatest and most unique redfisheries in the world.
2/19/2021 10:34	Kevin Reynolds	Florida	Gill nets should be ban in every state.
2/19/2021 10:34	Tristan Bradsher	North Carolina	This does not need to be in estuaries. The economic impact would be minimal compared to the populations saved from being bycatch.
2/19/2021 10:42	Dante Curcio	North Carolina	Please ban gill nets!!!
2/19/2021 10:52	Brandon	Virginia	Commercial netting in the sound needs to stop. Hurting red drum and speckled trout fisheries. I get it's someone lively hood but commercial fishing is hurting the sound side drastically
2/19/2021 10:54	Jamieson craske	Florida	NO INSHORE GILL NETS!!!
2/19/2021 10:58	Edward Santeli	Pennsylvania	Gil betting should be banned in North Carolina estuaries
2/19/2021 10:59	Casey Brown	South Carolina	I'd like to see Gill netting banned in NC estuaries. It is thought that many saltwater species migrate and so the netting will affect other fisheries outside of NC. For this reason the ban should be enacted.

2/19/2021 11:01	Hank Haen	Colorado	Projecting our fisheries is of paramount importance in our modern world. Not just for the benefit of Angler's, but for the sake of the wildlife's wellbeing. Human impact on these recourse needs to me minimized at all costs.
2/19/2021 11:07	Drake Presley	South Carolina	
2/19/2021 11:08	Dawn Walters	North Carolina	Stop the use of gill nets!!! Gill net fishing is a non selective type of fishing. Sadly other species can be caught in the net such a sea turtles, water fowl, marine mammals and other threatened endangered fish. Gill netting is the Wall of Death!!!!
2/19/2021 12:01	Garret Jones	North Carolina	PLEASE get rid of gill nets in NC. These nets are hurting our fisheries. There's no way to stop them from catching and killing minimum size requirement fish. If an angler did this it would be illegal, would love to see consistency here. Not to mention the number of non-fish wildlife it damages like dolphins and turtles. Do the right thing.
2/19/2021 12:12	William T. Shuion	Virginia	Ban the use of gill nets. They're destroying the natural resources and impact the ecosystem
2/19/2021 12:13	Jeff Fey	North Carolina	Gill netting in estuaries is simply unacceptable. Please reconsider this harmful practice that will benefit all outdoors loving citizens and not a small group benefitting financially at the expense of the rest
2/19/2021 12:15	Baxter Boggs	South Carolina	
2/19/2021 12:27	Max Hare	South Carolina	I spend time and money In most south eastern states fishing throughout the year, but North Carolina has become an exception. I have family with a house in ***** but I rarely take my boat to fish because the inshore fishing is so poor. When any bay or creek can be netted, there's often not much left for a recreational angler. Not fishing on my trips to NC, I'm not buying licenses, gas, bait, tackle, etc while visiting. If you don't see the impacts from an ecological standpoint, you certainly have to see it from an economic standpoint.

2/19/2021 12:43	Grey Littlewood	North Carolina	<p>I am an attorney in *****, native and lifelong North Carolinian. I'm a passionate inshore angler, outdoorsman and active conservationist. The current state of affairs surrounding the continued degradation of North Carolina's estuaries and inshore fisheries is devastating, especially when the solution is so readily apparent. North Carolina is significantly behind the curve with regulations regarding gillnets and inshore dredging/trawling. The absolute disregard for ethical commercial harvesting and environmental responsibility that I see on a monthly basis from the commercial fishing industry in this state is appalling. Existing regulations are insufficient and frankly not adequately enforced to ensure the longevity and sustainability of our estuaries. Its time for the marine fisheries commission to step in and ensure the restoration of our fisheries. This will be vital to protecting an economic asset which far outweighs the commercial interests that have hamstrung this Commission to date and prevented it from competent and responsible regulation. GILL NETS MUST BE BANNED. NC is in the minority of State's that allow this destructive practice to continue. What is the justification for this?!</p> <p>The future of the marine economy in this state is a recreational one. In addition, the commercial harvests will continue to suffer drastically if we allow the continuation of these irresponsible and unethical practices. DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT PLEASE! My greatest fear is that my children and their children will not have the opportunity to experience the natural wonders of our coastal habitats. Things are getting worse and worse. I see it every year. The government must be accountable to its citizens and ensure that the public trust and wealth are maintained. Talk to any recreational captain on the water and they can tell you dozens of stories of illegal harvesting and washed up nets full of prized gamefish. I see it all the time and your law enforcement is unable to deal with it. Even the fish hawkers are complicit in these crimes. The only answer is to ban gillnetting. Ban it now! Please, please, please ban it now.</p>
2/19/2021 12:57	Chris Koontz	Virginia	Gill nets need to be outlawed in all estuaries. These are not only a barbaric form of taking fish, they are non species specific and much more than the target species are killed as well as burds of prey, otters and other animals that feed on the fish. It is long past due to stand up for the wildlife instead of industries.
2/19/2021 13:04	Bryce crooke	North Carolina	The use of Gillnets on any water body has proven to be detrimental to the fisheries health in both long and short term. This behavior must be banned by and large due to the negative affects on by catch which are often sport fish which drive the local economy and promote a healthy ecosystem.
2/19/2021 13:05	Jake	North Carolina	I have fished in NC for over 25 years and can say with certainty that our fishery has declined to a very serious degree. The scarcity of many species that where plentiful when I was younger is both saddening and frightening. Please act on behalf of NC residents and ban the large netting vessels that are killing target fin species through bycatch. Commercial fishing is an important industry in NC and I fully support those who make a living through it but it must be done in a sustainable way. We owe it to future generations to ensure they have the opportunity to enjoy our fishery in the way we could. Now is the time. We can take small and easy steps that will make a huge difference for our future.
2/19/2021 13:33	David Zmijewski	Pennsylvania	I was born in NC and continue to fish JC waters several months a year and spend a tremendous amount of money in NC recreational fishing. Please ban gill nets. They ruining NCs fishery and have no place in the marshes of NC. NC needs to get out of the dark ages and stop catering to the commercial fishermen who provide very little value to the state. Please do the right thing and ban gill nets!
2/19/2021 13:38	Prentiss Berry	Florida	There is no reason to have gill nets. They do great harm to the fisheries which in turn hurts the local ecosystem. They should be outlawed.

2/19/2021 15:19	John Muir	North Carolina	I am in favor of banning gill netting in North Carolina. The state needs to take a better approach to conservation and also to the value of the recreational fisheries we have in our state. Both commercial and recreational fishing as a whole suffers from gill netting.
2/19/2021 16:03	Lucas Jenkins	North Carolina	
2/19/2021 16:15	Maddie O'Beirne	North Carolina	We cannot continue to allow the use of commercial fishing gear to overharvest our natural resources off the coast of NC. The coastal fisheries have been significantly impacted by these insidious acts. The NC coastal fisheries will not be able to sustainably thrive in future years if this continues. Shrimp trawling in estuaries has caused a collapse in NC fish populations, most harmful to bycatch caught in shrimp trawling gear. The state of NC is failing to protect the coastal fisheries that deserve the same protection as other coastal states.
			<p>I have read the January 29 letter and feel compelled to submit my opinion.</p> <p>First it is a travesty that the stock has been allowed to become this depleted. This is a natural resource that we are all stewards of. The data tells us that our stewardship is lacking. I am certain there are lots of good reasons for the past decisions that do not need to be rehashed here.</p> <p>From my understanding there is a decision to be made quickly for one of six allocation options. My preference is for the 50/50 option. I am also in favor of reducing the recreational flounder limit from 4 to 2. If this decreases the amount of flounder harvested on the recreational side, that in my mind is a positive.</p> <p>In 1991 the MFC made the correct decision to bring parity to the commercial and recreational allocation of striped bass. This bold step allowed the stock to rebuild. From what I have read, that stock is in good shape today. However, at the time I am very confident there was a cacophony of protest.</p> <p>From my review of the numbers, recreational fishing contributes substantially more economically than the commercial fishery does. Therefore, splitting the allowable allocation 50/50 is fair and just. In fact, if economic dollars were the only criteria, a mathematical case could be made for an even further reduction of the commercial percentage.</p> <p>Furthermore, as the January 29 letter states, and basic economics validates, if the supply of commercial flounder is reduced, the price per pound will rise. Therefore, while the commercial fishery may harvest less, their actual net profit will most likely not suffer as greatly because they will be able to get more top line dollars with less expense (and effort) of production.</p>
2/19/2021 16:58	John Lenzmeier	North Carolina	<p>However, I do believe that the commercial fishing industry will suffer some economic dislocation. Just as the tourism industry has suffered from less recreational flounder fishing activity.</p> <p>But, the fact remains that the stock has been over harvested for decades and now the proverbial bill is due.</p> <p>You have the ability to set this problem on a course of permanent solution.</p> <p>Take the bold step to do it.</p>

2/19/2021 17:49	Andrew Polson	North Carolina	It has been shown that stopping Gil netting will help improve wildlife, please ban Gil netting and help conserve our wildlife
2/19/2021 18:25	Ralph Haddock	North Carolina	I have read the options for flounder regulation and believe that the 50/50 option is the best for the resource and fishermen. Also, bar large mesh gill nets, all recreational gill nets and use barbless hooks. Consider a recreation slot size for flounder also ie., 12-20, one over 20.
2/19/2021 19:48	Locke Walker	North Carolina	We need to do more for managing red drum for recreational anglers. Gill nets should be banned following the example of our neighbor states.
2/19/2021 20:47	Joe Kayafas	Colorado	
2/19/2021 21:29	Jared	North Carolina	Do away with gill nets period, all for commercial but make them use hook and line
2/19/2021 21:33	Michael todd	Virginia	Stop gill nets to save the southern flounder
2/19/2021 21:35	Read Samples	North Carolina	In state harvest limits for fishing industry should be split 50/50 between commercial and recreation sectors. Revenue base for area guides and tackle shops will be directly effected by reduced limits. Truth of environmental impacts of high impact commercial fishing means is another issue. How North Carolina still allows antiquated fishing practices is beyond reason.
2/19/2021 21:35	Dale Collins	North Carolina	If your gonna do a size and creek limit it needs to be done the same on both side of rec and commercial. Y'all have done nothing but pit the 2 sides against each other more and more and they care the ones that can fix it. So come up with something that works for both sides and stop being one sided. I am run a inshore charter and I told a commercial lic. So get it together and do it fair for us all!
2/19/2021 21:35	Dennis Spangler	North Carolina	
2/19/2021 21:35	Mike Bell	North Carolina	
2/19/2021 21:36	Jim Morgan	North Carolina	Get rid of Gill nets! Protect the recreational fisherman who pump millions into the fishing economy.
2/19/2021 21:37	Mike Bell	North Carolina	No more gill nets in inshore waters. Killing our fishery.
2/19/2021 21:40	Darryl Mitchell	North Carolina	I have been fishing Pamlico sound and its tributaries for 30 years. 20 years ago nets weren't a big deal because there seemed to be plenty of water and plenty of fish. Now there are hundreds of recreational fisherman on the water almost everyday. Those fisherman pour tons of money into our economy! It just doesn't make sense to me to allow Commercial fisherman who are way fewer in numbers and declining every year, to get the upper hand in our fishery management every year! I have no problem with limiting recs to a couple fish per angler for dinner but completely closing it most of the year isn't necessary! If the stock is really in that bad of shape just close it completely for ALL until stock recovers. Thanks.

2/19/2021 21:44	Dj Tyndall	North Carolina	The biggest problem is not recreational fishing, it's the gill nets in the inland waters. Seen it first hand all the undersized fish, turtles, gators and more that's found dead. Need the removal of nets and leave the recreational fishing alone.
2/19/2021 21:44	David Mercer	North Carolina	There needs to be 50/50 allocation. The problems have existed for years and it is a shame that it has come to this point.
2/19/2021 21:44	Hannah Bailey	North Carolina	Stop gill netting save the southern flounder
2/19/2021 21:45	Jermey marlow	North Carolina	
2/19/2021 21:45	Ryan Dolph	North Carolina	
2/19/2021 21:45	Justin	North Carolina	Flounder season needs to open back up for more than a month and the nets need to be stopped. Rec fishermen and guides are the ones being hurt while the nets are killing small flounder and other fish and then just thrown back into the water.
2/19/2021 21:47	Katrina McIntire	Florida	Ban Gillnets! Gillnet fishing is nonspecific to fish species which means they often catch or tangle other species other than the being targeted. We need to get rid of the nets so many species can benefit!
2/19/2021 21:48	Ryan Dolph	North Carolina	Take gill nets out the water and all the problems will be solved it's a crying shame we're the only state that allows it look how good other stars fishery's are
2/19/2021 21:51	Jeremy Hill	North Carolina	Recreational fisherman are not the problem with the NC fishery. Its all these so called commercial fishermams nets and bye catch thats killing the fishing. A commercial boat does more harm than 1000 anglers who are allowed to only keep a certain quota per day.
2/19/2021 21:55	Neal Williams	North Carolina	I'm quite sure than I'm wasting my time complaining about this. Clearly commercial fisherman with gill nets are allowed to keep fish that I can't keep. They do it DAILY! Most rec fisherman can't fish or gig everyday, whether it is a weather issue or they actually work a job that the same state that tells me I can't keep fish, charges me taxes! The commercial fisherman should be allowed to make a living, but do it like the rest of us!! It seems like common sense to most that since NC is the only state to allow gill nets, plus tell me I can't even keep a flounder.... Ignorance!! There is NO shortage of flounder to begin with, but if you are worried about that then ban gill nets, NOT rec. fisherman. I can't keep flounder, but I can promise you I won't buy a single one from anywhere, since they shouldn't be allowed to keep them either.. So simple, until you add politics into it... And clearly the commercial fisherman in control here isn't going to get rid of gill nets, their going to keep raping our water who we all pay to use. When the rec anglers in this state get pissed enough and sell our boats and quit fishing, and spending money at many local businesses, who then will they say is to "blame"... I have seen the creek limit decline year after year all my life and NOTHING is done about gill nets... Look around at all the other state rules and regulations and fisheries and learn what common sense could do if you actually used it!! Numbers don't lie, people do! And crooks just manipulate the numbers like our crooked governor and the guy living in the white house just did! Do you actually think this governor had more votes than either presidential candidate?? Not hardly... Do the right thing for once! Or it will cost us ALL for a long time to come! Use common sense!

2/19/2021 21:58	Johnny fields	North Carolina	We understand that you all think that the problem for flounder is coming from all of us who fish for them. But the real problem is that your data is very wrong, the problem if its a problem is when a man strings a gill net down a bank for thousand yards and a recreational man can even fish the same bank because of a net that takes no prisoners. Lots of fishermen can't catch fish but every net catches fish. But we as recreational fishermen put more in the local economy than any other type of fishermen,. Maybe its the commercial industry putting money into the corrupt government that looks after our waters and we as recreational fishermen aren't going to take you under the table bribes. Do your research correctly and stop the trawlers and gill nutters and you will fix your so called problem. Just think of the businesses that will lose because of the greed from commercial and corrupt government officials.
2/19/2021 22:10	Dale Silance	North Carolina	Please do away with inland gill nets. I've grown up fishing in the New River, it's nothing like it used to be. I fish with my daughter now. It's nothing to find 1K yd nets running right up the middle of the best spots during prime fishing season. Help me pass this to my family. Thank you.
2/19/2021 22:13	Dishon Allen	North Carolina	Please allow our recreational flounder fishing to remain, no resident of North Carolina should be able to buy a flounder that they are not allowed to harvest themselves. Thank you.
2/19/2021 22:16	Tyler Hamm	North Carolina	Please please give the rec guys a break. Take a step back and look at other joining state fishery habits... proofs in the pudding
2/19/2021 22:18	Lou Holt	North Carolina	Please consider the recreation fishermen/women when making decisions. I'm 67 and my only enjoyment is fishing. A hook against a net doesn't compare. Of all the many times I've fished never caught but 1 flounder
2/19/2021 22:23	Eric Sato	North Carolina	I think a 73/27 split is not fair for the recreational fisherman. I would first try a 50/50 split and see how the flounder population come back. Using Gill nets is a travesty that must be stopped or at least controlled!
2/19/2021 22:23	Charles Van Salisbury	North Carolina	The commercial fishing efforts are a all time low , every lb. of fish are accountable thru daily trip tickets while the recreational fishing efforts have exploded and can only be estimated, the commercial gillnet fishermen have had their fisheries reduced to a fraction of what it was in the 90's ... it's not fair to the commercial fishermen and fish eating public (people not capable to catch their own) , restaurants and fish markets to lose any of the small quota available... **** County commercial fishermen are struggling to survive ... please be fair.
2/19/2021 22:24	Efren Saenz	North Carolina	
2/19/2021 22:26	Efren Saenz	North Carolina	The Gill net fisherman are really hurting not only the intended species but turtles, gators and undersized fish. I love a flounder to eat and it's unfair to punish the recreational fisherman in lieu of better guideline for commercial fisherman.
2/19/2021 22:29	Jesse Pulley	North Carolina	I am totally against this allocation of flounder to the commercial people. It makes no sense at all. I look at South Carolina and think why not follow their lead.
2/19/2021 22:29	William Harris	North Carolina	This crap is ridiculous year after year. Why does the recreational fisherman get the blunt of this year after year. Only state on entire east coast doing this crap nobody else has this problem. Must be democrats controlling this issue as well. Tired of it

2/19/2021 22:32	Ryan Taylor	North Carolina	<p>73/27 is a joke. Make it 50/50. Open the ocean to flounder from May 1, - Aug 30 at the very least. Put boat limits not just per person limits. It's 2021 let's act intelligent about recreational and commercial limits. Every species should have a per boat limit not just a per man limit. And limiting recreation flounder to 45 days is a joke.</p> <p>Get smarter about commercial regulations. The amount of recreational fisherman on the water these days is 100x what it was 10 years ago.</p>
2/19/2021 22:33	Gary Holmes	North Carolina	<p>I've been fishing off the coast basically my entire life as a kid and now take my kids every chance I get, I fish almost every weekend from March thru November, and floundering fishing has been our number 1 .Until last year and I've seen good years and years that were off, but in all how can you take a fisheries from recreational guys and give more and more to commercial guys just like the offshore guys , until you control these trawlers , pound and gill nets you will never have as you all call it (a sustainable fisheries). Why don't for once you listen to the folks that are out here fishing and not some lobbyist or someone that's raping our rivers and estuaries. Instead of taking and taking from rec guys shut down all inshore nets and see what happens its pretty much a no Brainer what or where the problem lies. Someone needs to actually rise up and do the jobs for right reason not personal gain</p>
2/19/2021 22:41	Jordan Baker	North Carolina	<p>Commercial fishermen with gill nets catch and kill all species of fish of all sizes . The fish don't stand a chance. When one commercial boat can set multiple nets and then drive around the same area as recreational guys in circles and up against the bank to run the fish into their nets it's not fair game for the species. I agree commercial fishermen deserve their share but they do not have to ruin it for recreational guys . Commercial fishermen have gotten greedy and careless. I've accidentally caught a net before and pulled it up to get my bait off and I found dead fish being ate by crabs . That fish is now wasted . Commercial guys have unlimited limits and have way more days they can kill a species than recreational guys. We as in recreational guys should get the same amount of days to keep fish as commercial guys.</p>

2/19/2021 22:46	John Tedder	North Carolina	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>The proposal on the table once again show a trend, comm guys get what they want and rec guys get the shaft. For years now I have seen nets kill more than what they intended to kill. I feel the weekend commercial guy needs to go and you need to remove licenses not being used. It's these people who are taking from the true comm guys. Also out of state licenses fishermen taking from our waters, doesn't help the problem. The fact that you closed the season all but a month put more pressure on other species such as speckled trout and red drum. As many of us seen the trout fishing wasn't great this winter so far, this could be because they didn't move down from up north or the resident fish were netted up before they had a chance to get into the creeks.</p> <p>Some other issues I have were, comm guys had a very short season for flounder and we're paid peanuts to do so?!?! If no flounder were aloud to be taken from our waters, why were the comm guys paid so little? It seems we want to keep using destructive gear to sell fish not even in our own state. That should have a light bulb going off in heads, we are the only state that still allows gill nets or any nets for that matter in our inland water ways to make a dollar. On that same note, we can do better as rec fisherman as well, ie using circle hooks while using any bait, live or dead to ensure mortality kills don't happen.</p> <p>In the end we can't keep punishing our rec fishermen while allowing the comm guys to still use destructive gear. The rec guys are doing less damage all the while bringing in a lot more money to our state then our comm fishery.</p> <p>Thank you Capt. John</p>
2/19/2021 22:47	Stephen Smith	North Carolina	<p>Stop gill nets for flounder Stop punishing the recreational fishing for the 20% harvest and look at the 80% harvest by commercial fishing. You can go to SC and get 10 flounder per person or 20 per boat and can gig red drum Get reel NC'!</p>
2/19/2021 22:47	Jerry Suggs.	North Carolina	<p>I used to go to our coast once a week at least. I'd spend on tackle, dinner and breakfast. My boat is deteriorating in my yard because of the recent laws targeting the sport fisher while the nets ruin the fishery. I wasn't interested in getting the most flounder. I only wanted a few and would often leave them where they lay and enjoy the night and the marine life. If I had a few in the box the hunt was over. The laws we have now are not only unjust they don't work. The fishery will continue to spiral as long as we don't address nets.</p>
2/19/2021 22:47	James	North Carolina	<p>We appreciate good sensible science to preserve our resource for a continued balance for our future. However, you must at this point realize that your proposed number for the average NC fishing citizen is tremendously unfair. I'm 65, born and raised here, and would prefer a sensible alternative to net restrictions, and commercial landings. I too have nets that I'd gladly give up. Everyone knows where the proportions favor and we need your fair assistance immediately in keeping this from becoming a more magnified battle of the two sectors. We the average fishing citizens are fed up and have been. Thank you for serving, but you are responsible to yourself for years to come with a haunting conscience if you overlook us average guys trying to spend time in the water with our grandchildren.</p> <p>May God bless you. JB</p>
2/19/2021 22:52	Akira S Min	North Carolina	<p>Nets more selective than hook and line? Yeah right. If you want to cut the quota, cut it 50/50 rec comm</p>

2/19/2021 22:53	Robert Goodman	North Carolina	All.allocation on the Southern Flounder sh ould be allocated 50/50 for commercial and recreation and all large meas gill nets should be banned .we are the o ly state that allows.
2/19/2021 22:56	Christopher	North Carolina	I wish to keep the limit on flounder in North Carolina were it is at 4. I have always put in the effort to only keep legal flounder bags and size.
2/19/2021 22:57	Brian Hogge	Virginia	I ask that NC give more quota of Flounder to the recreational anglers so that my family and others will be able to plan our vacation around our annual gig trips at *** City. Thank you.
2/19/2021 23:04	William Harris	North Carolina	Only state on east coast with this problem. It is time for change
2/19/2021 23:51	Terry Watson	North Carolina	I gave up gigging and sold my boat and gear because the flounder season for recreation fishermen were ridiculous low limits and short seasons keyed to benefit commercials. The money generated for the state by recreational fishing far out ways the money commercials pay put. At least 50/50 allocation would be fair. Too late for me but still might catch one on the pier. Just be FAIR!
2/19/2021 23:55	John Dickerson	North Carolina	Please stop picking on the recreational fisherman an get rid of the gill nets an pound nets.
			<p>Greetings members of the Marine Fisheries Commission,</p> <p>I moved to this great state a year ago and I am proud to call myself a North Carolinian.</p> <p>I want to preface this by saying that I have no ill will towards the commercial fishermen / women of North Carolina. The lifestyle is demanding and I understand that generations of these families have relied on fishing to support their families. I also want to preface this by stating that I am not some social justice warrior just looking for a cause. I have fished recreationally since the age of five and I was fortunate to have had the benefits of wildlife conservation instilled in me at an early age.</p> <p>When I first moved here and began fishing regularly, I noticed a recurring dialogue among many of the local recreational fishermen I would talk to. The talk first centered around the moratorium on the flounder or the one month flounder season and then the talk turned to commercial shrimp trawlers coming into the estuaries and killing / harvesting much of the smaller finfish. Almost every one of these dozens of anglers that I spoke with had a sense of hopelessness and reservation that these big commercial shrimp boats had all of the money and power to influence the state legislators and there was nothing we could do about it.</p> <p>At first, I didn't believe that it could be that bad until I started to look into the matter further myself. I was shocked by many of the videos and very disappointed to learn that North Carolina regulations allowed for such outdated and harmful conservation practices. How can someone not be affected after watching any number of videos on Youtube that depict pounds and pounds of fish bycatch dying and/or rotting on the deck of a trawler or in the ocean while the deckhands sift through to pick out a dozen or so shrimp. The sheer waste of all these fish should put a pit in anyone's stomach. It goes without saying that the gill net videos are even more disturbing.</p>

		<p>How can a rational person look at all of the footage, scientific evidence and sheer numbers of decline and not sense that there is a major problem and realize that something must be done before the population declines become irreversible? The legislation of this state has allowed these detrimental and outdated practices go on for far too long. The commercial fishermen (at least most I hope) are simply working within the realms of these antiquated laws.</p> <p>Yes, I am an outsider to this state and this industry, but with that said, sometimes an outsider comes with a fresh perspective. At the expense of sounding naive, I pose these questions;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why is it that every other state along the Eastern Seaboard and the Gulf States banned the practice of trawling in estuaries years ago? 2. Why do 70 or so shrimping operations have more influence than the other 11 million people of the State of North Carolina? No one has more rights to the water more than anyone else, regardless of whether they paid for a commercial license or not. 3. Why, out of 6,500 outstanding commercial fishing licenses, do less than 40 % report catching anything in a year. Who keeps up with these inactive licenses?
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Why can't shrimp trawlers in North Carolina operate three miles off the coast and stay out of the estuaries when every other state has been successful with this practice and have both thriving commercial and recreational fishing industries? 5. Why is North Carolina to the only state to still allow the use of gill nets? <p>I used to work in government, so I understand that most things come down to limited staff, budgets and fiscal restraints, but for everyone to just keep shrugging their shoulders and say "that's just the way it's always been done" is no longer acceptable. There is too much at stake in the future of our waters. In the words of Edmund Burke, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." I am not claiming there is a hero or a villain in this plot, but I do believe that if we continue on this current trajectory, whether it's due to apathy, political gridlock, special interests or something else, the future of recreational fishing for our children and grandchildren will look very different from what we enjoyed growing up. Amending these laws would likely have little impact on the local seafood industry, To the contrary, think of all the local revenue lost when thousands of tourists come annually to this beautiful state and the novice anglers no longer fish on their vacations, because all they ever catch are lizardfish or pinfish and what few flounder they catch, they have to throw back. This can adversely affect the local economies to include bait and tackle shops, fishing guides and the like throughout the summer months when they rely on that income to get them through the rest of the year.</p>

2/20/2021 0:34	JR Hardy	North Carolina	<p>When I was growing up, North Carolina held a reputation as a premier fishing destination for anglers all over the world. I believe that by simply implementing a few changes, namely banning gill nets and adopting the same trawling laws adopted by every other state on the coast that North Carolina will once again be considered an anglers paradise.</p> <p>I thank you for your time and consideration.</p> <p>Best regards,</p> <p>J.R. Hardy</p>
2/20/2021 0:57	THomas Garris Jr.	North Carolina	<p>North Carolina has a natural resource within the rivers, sounds, and estuaries throughout the eastern part of the state that I live. This natural resources includes all species of fin fish, shell fish and other sea creatures that dwell in these areas.</p> <p>When not working, I fish and hunt on both pubic and private land/waters. The animal resources on my 160 acre of tract of land are managed by the state and cannot be sold commercially, only for personal consumption.</p> <p>The fish that dwell in North Carolina's public waterways are managed by the state and are sold commercially as well as caught for personal consumption.</p> <p>My point here is how can a state resource that belongs to everyone be sold commercially but recreational use of the resources not be allowed or diminished severely?</p> <p>I feel that North Carolina is exploiting a public resource for special interest commercial groups.</p>
2/20/2021 1:14	Daniel Bullock	North Carolina	<p>To whom this may concern:</p> <p>Flounder fishing is fun for my whole family and !! Doesn't matter if we by hook and line or gigging! We spend time together and my kids, nieces, and nephews get to see how beautiful the water is at night and all the fishes. It's a family tradition we are passing on. We do everything legal and do not over take nothing. If a flounder is 15 inches we do not keep and put him back to grow. When gigging you can tell how big a flounder is, and which ones to let grow because there is plenty of fish out there in water way. The Gill nets are destroying our fisheries. horrible at night seeing fish with Gill net marks because they are helpless and can't survive after injury. Including our sea turtles and porpes dying from Gill nets! Please have it in your hearts to let use pass on generations of tradition and sit around eating flounder, red drum, or sheepshead as a family.</p>
2/20/2021 1:40	James Jacobs	North Carolina	<p>As much as i pay in taxes it is a shame that the one week I go on vacation at the beach and happen to catch a couple flounder I can't keep them, but can go to the market and buy them. Killing the little man</p>
2/20/2021 1:58	Aaron Hill	North Carolina	<p>We must stop allowing the commercial fisheries destruction of our fishery while disallowing recreational, tax paying fisherman to pay for their overfishing</p>
2/20/2021 3:02	Eugene Garris	North Carolina	<p>Need to open flounder fishing and gigging back up there is no shortage of fish. I run a charter service and yall cut my income alot to support my family. Please open it back up with a 15" 4 fish limit. Get rid of your gill nets in the inland waters.</p>

2/20/2021 5:28	Michael King	North Carolina	It is unfortunate that my home state of NC refuses to get with the times. How much longer are you going to allow gill nets to rape our natural resources. By far the recreational anglers contribute more to the economy than the netters, but you continue to punish us and turn a blind eye to the absolute destruction they are causing. Bycatch. Shame on you. Follow the money.
2/20/2021 6:11	JOANN BASS	North Carolina	Why should I have to pay for flounder that my family and I could catch? You are taking food from our freezer and making the limits such that a family will never have enough. Please stop this insanity
2/20/2021 6:22	Rodney Blackburn	North Carolina	You guys Are taking the Fun out of Fishing With the bag limit on red drum Only one It needs to be at least 2 And the season on flounder is to short the working class people do not even have time to go if you have bad weather for a couple of weeks. You guys need ot put the blame where it needs to go on the commercial fisherman not the recreational fisherman please stop this crap and make it fun to go fishing.
2/20/2021 6:33	Jason Ginn	North Carolina	Please stop all gill nets and pound nets in our inland waters. Nets are destroying our fishery.
2/20/2021 6:35	Dennis Bost	North Carolina	I am a lifetime sportsman licence holder. My son is a lifetime holder. My 2 grand daughters are lifetime holders also. We all agree that we would like to see at least a 50% share so we can share in the flounder resource. Thank you!
2/20/2021 6:35	Michael Thigpen	North Carolina	
2/20/2021 6:40	Darryl Price	North Carolina	Why don't you all fix the real problem. Everyone knows what it is but you guys apparently and it's not the guy with a rod and reel in his hand! Before long there won't be anything left to save! GOOD JOB!
2/20/2021 6:50	Nick Chapman	North Carolina	Stop the commercial sector bias in allocation of flounder! All nets need to be banned from inshore waters.
2/20/2021 6:55	Robert Owens	North Carolina	Why are the commercial fisherman allowed to harvest more flounder than those with rod and reel? Netting catches and kills more flounder in a week than what every rod and reel fisherman can catch in a season. The balance should be equal for both.
2/20/2021 6:57	William Wuester	North Carolina	We strongly disagree with this proposal. This is by no means fair or balanced. We will be watching and taking note on how you vote on this matter this year.
2/20/2021 7:15	Ty friend	North Carolina	Nc commercial fisheries has devastated our fisheries for centuries, we are the only state that still allows these kill all gill nets. Only state with a closed flounder season. One of a few states with a 1 red drum 4 speckled trout limit. We've lost millions in revenue from competition fishing because of gill nets. It's time to stop punishing the majority for the absolute destruction of a few! Ban nets!!! Equal quotas 50/50 of give recreational the 75. We do not need gill nets in our waters!

2/20/2021 7:17	Jon bulluck	North Carolina	Please help me explain to my 2 young sons (3 and 7) why they have to throw back flounder but the guys in the big boats(commercial fishing) "get to keep all they want" in the words of a child. why do I even fish in nc when I can go to va or sc and keep plenty for my family. Also, who up here is going to take responsibility for killing local economies in these small fishing towns when folks are tired of a 1 fish limit or closed season and stop supporting the economies by not fishing anymore, not to mention the children that will not get the chance to go, learn, enjoy, and become the next generation. Do not let money wipe out a tradition for thousands on north Carolinians and kill local business. I will bet alot that if everything was brought to the light, the one single problem would be money and who gets it. Thanks for your time whoever reads this. Feel free to respond to*@gmail.com or call me at *
2/20/2021 7:25	Dale Goff	North Carolina	Please leave the flounder season like it is if you really want to help our fishers out stop all of the nets .Any body with any since at all knows they are the real problem and until something is done our fishery will always be in trouble
2/20/2021 7:30	Daniel Stephens	North Carolina	Keep flounder season open, last year during the open season I kept 4 flounder. They had a bulls-eye on their back when the season came open. Open flounder reduce limit to two fish, increase fines for anyone over the limit. Closing the season altogether places a larger target on trout and redfish. Do away with gill nets period....we are NC and we should be better than that, we are the joke of fisheries on the coast. Some one with a gill net shouldn't be allowed to keep more flounder than a recreational fisherman. Complete bullshit and whoever is reading this knows it.
2/20/2021 7:30	Daniel Ervin	North Carolina	After decades of mismanagement, I am not sure why a step to remove the economic benefits of recreational flounder fishing, compounded by further mismanagement, is considered a good idea supported by science. The 73/27 proposal is an embarrassment and an affront to the public who shares the resource that has been allowed to be so depleted.
2/20/2021 7:43	Tommy mungo	North Carolina	Im a full time charter Captain and im 4th generation wilmington and raising two 5th generation boys. Fishing is my livelihood my family were commercial shrimper/oyster men. The allocation of flounder needs to be 50/50 just slit in the middle. Middle is fair
2/20/2021 7:45	Rick Tudor	North Carolina	I seldom fish, however if I caught a legal flounder it would be nice to keep it and eat it
2/20/2021 7:51	Chad	North Carolina	I would like the DMF to really reconsider this proposal on the southern flounder. By taking the limit to one a person would not even be worth the time and money spent to go. For one I fish for flounder around the Swanquarter area. That's a two hour drive and to drive two hours for one fish that's not worth it. If this passes and flounder is taking down from 4 limit to 1 or none. What does the a Rec. fishermen have. Red drum is 1, trout is 4, flounder could be 1. Wow not a lot to go for. It's just hard for to see these changes too rec. fishermen. And commercial guys can keep the numbers and pounds of flounder that they keep every year. If you going to do for one group of fishermen do the same for all. I really hope this proposal is reconsider and looked at differently cause if it passes you're taking a lot away from people.
2/20/2021 7:56	Chase Williams	North Carolina	Please reconsider the proposed commercial allocation. I am a rec fisherman and have seen first hand how destructive commercial nets and pressure can be in an area. This is a public resource and should be treated as such. I am very disappointed with the current fisheries management
2/20/2021 8:06	Cary powell	North Carolina	This is ridiculous. The commercial sector got us to this point. Make them take the cuts to get us out of this mess. Ban gill nets. Look at the science and not the dollars going to political campaigns!

2/20/2021 8:12	Steve Prutsman	North Carolina	As a recreational fisherman I feel like we contribute more to the local economy than commercial fishermen, and are being unfairly treated
2/20/2021 8:26	Tony de Lima	North Carolina	Hello, Thank you for taking the time to read comments from the concerned public. As a recreational angler in the * region, I am concerned with the use of commercial gill nets. North Carolina is the only state that still allows this outdated and harmful practice. I urge the committee to ban the use of gill nets for commercial fishing. Jobs can be preserved while transitioning away from gill nets. Recreational fishing is negatively impacted by the use of commercial gill nets. The NC coast is a huge tourist draw for inshore fishing and they help inject the region with much needed income. Again, I urge you to ban commercial gill nets. Thank you.
2/20/2021 8:28	Larry Mann	North Carolina	I have fished at the coast in various areas for most of my 45 years. I have watched the fishery for many species be depleted by commercial netting in the sounds, creeks and near shore. I am very concerned and angry how the State has managed the fisheries! I believe if nets and trawling are allowed to keep operating in state waters as they do now my kids will not have any fish to catch. We are a family of 4 Lifetime License holders and we feel that we are not being heard by the Politicians that make Fisheries decisions because of Lobbyists from the Commercial side with deep pockets! It is time to make a change and look at how every other State on the east coast and Gulf of Mexico has gone away from harmful commercial practices. DO THE RIGHT THING FOR MY CHILDREN!!!
2/20/2021 8:36	Michael miller	North Carolina	Off shore netting should be done to help like all other states . Recreational fishing should not suffer. Maybe vote in of new members is what we need.
2/20/2021 8:36	James Hammond	North Carolina	I fully oppose the 73/27 allocation of southern flounder to commercial fishing. The recreational fisherman provides far more economical impact to Eastern North Carolina and should have at least an equal allocation. I agree we must reduce southern flounder harvest across the board but recreational fishing has not caused the decline. Commercial gill netting and inshore trawling have had a severe impact on all fisheries. North Carolina is one of the only states on the eastern seaboard where these practices are still legal methods of commercial catch. Please address the root of this problem and restrict/ban gill netting and inshore trawling.
2/20/2021 8:43	Don marcum	North Carolina	Why we are the only state killing fish with gill nets rec guys spend more money for the economy than commercial why do so many commercial guys in nc go to sc to buy shrimp??not fair ban the nets and inshore trawler s
2/20/2021 8:49	Janie MacIntyre	North Carolina	Given the major changes to catches from surf fishing over the last 50 years, it appears our sounds and estuaries are being negatively impacted, perhaps by types of nets being used. I have witnessed the detrimental effect on a number of fish species including spot, croaker, flounder, and sea mullet that are comparatively scarce. While I'm sure you are already aware of this, please examine current remedies, as they are clearly not sufficient to restore fish populations.

2/20/2021 8:52	David Slaughter	North Carolina	I would like to think that the NCDMF was working diligently to do the very best it can in order to manage our coastal fisheries for the benefit of all North Carolinians. In reality what they have done time a time again is to decrease the recreational catch, flounder included. It is way past time to manage the fishery for all. I am in favor of the 50/50 allocation, fair to all. I also say that in NC we need to take the indiscriminate Gill net out of the equation. Replace the Gil net with pound nets, it's a "no-brainer ", but you already know that. Thank you for your time.
2/20/2021 9:05	Clinton Peele	North Carolina	I have two small children. I recently moved to the coast to raise them on the water. I've paid the higher fee for the lifetime sportsman licenses. I just have a hard time explaining to them: Why do those of us that live here and want to teach our kids how to provide for themselves have to instead teach them how to buy instead of Catch? My kids won't use nets and will only keep what they eat. Perhaps you can take this into consideration if you plan to vote to put more of one of the best eating fish in the state in stores instead of in the hands of those who want to use the license you provide so that they don't have to.
2/20/2021 9:07	Kevin Adams	North Carolina	I am against the 73/27 allocation, this is not fair to the recreational fisherman that pour a lot of money into the economy.
2/20/2021 9:09	Lynn Hinnant	North Carolina	Why do the majority of fishermen get less than a third of the allocation? Money? I thought this was suppose to be about a resource. What gives someone the right to make a profit while limiting the right of another to simply catch to eat? When are you actually going to do what is best for our fishery. Just like we don't have buffalo burgers in NC grocery stores, there should not be NC flounder at a Red Lobster in California. We have to stop depleting a public resource for private profit. At what point will you do the right thing and stop being bought for profit? I watched Harkers Island go by the waste side as I grew up. First the croakers, then redfish, next the shrimp, then scallops, then the grey trout, and now flounder. Do you really not see what is going on? I'm afraid an industry for profit is in control over commonsense practice. Nets out of internal waters is the solution. Keep them out of the estuaries. Do away with the sale of bycatch. Stop making excuses and do the right thing!
2/20/2021 9:19	Danny Durham	North Carolina	
2/20/2021 9:22	Thomas	North Carolina	One flounder per day is absolutely ridiculous. There are an abundance of flounder, particularly in the ocean, and shutting down because those without skills locating the fish think there is a "shortage" is insane. My crew and I catch our limit of flounder easily nearly every trip because we know how to locate them. The regulations are insane and are completely unfair to recreational fisherman.
2/20/2021 9:22	Josh Spangler	North Carolina	I do not support the continuing mismanagement of our public fisheries. Remove nets from inshore waters. Flounder and all inshore fisheries will collapse under the current and proposed policies. Please realize that we can have a world class fishery with overwhelming economic benefits. For the sake of future generations we must change. We are better than this. Thank you.
2/20/2021 9:23	Robert Carr	North Carolina	Please ensure equitable rules for both commercial and recreational fishermen. Please consider the impact and use of Gill nets and the positive outcomes for other states who have banned this practice and how well their fishery has done since the ban- that's real data!!

2/20/2021 9:32	Gary Pope	North Carolina	I saw first hand how the 2020 season flounder harvest helped our fishery. 2019 limit of 4 per/person took us 8 hours to gig 2020 season took 2 hours and we gilled the same exact locations. Larger flounder and of course more. If you continue to slam the recreational fisherman you will reduce fishing license sales and harm local businesses at our coast. I myself and many others are saying we will not go and will not purchase a salt water fishing license for 1 flounder oh but you can go to fish house and buy flounder the commercial guys just unloaded. Do something with the nets and commercial end stop slamming recs or you will see \$\$\$ disappear
2/20/2021 9:35	Robert Kosinski	North Carolina	The madness needs to stop. This is not a sustainable solution and favors commercial and destructive gear. No other state manages this way.
2/20/2021 9:46	Steve smith	North Carolina	I feel the weekend angler has no choice but to go against the law harvest one every now and then
2/20/2021 9:47	Brad Smith	North Carolina	It should be 50/50 and the ocean waters should be open year round. There is no shortage there. Please look into stoping the netting and trawling in inshore waters
2/20/2021 9:50	Buddy Christy	North Carolina	The percentages the board is proposing is wrong. The commercial fishing is doing more damage than recreational fishing. The data is not correct. This is so one sided. The numbers need to be more for the recreational people. This state needs to look at reforming the state commercial fishing industry in a whole. The state needs to look at standard's from Louisiana, Texas, and other states around. Last I would say this needs looked at by people from the recreational side and the commercial side in an even fair for everyone.
2/20/2021 9:51	Nevina Christy	North Carolina	The percentages the board is proposing is wrong. The commercial fishing is doing more damage than recreational fishing. The data is not correct. This is so one sided. The numbers need to be more for the recreational people. This state needs to look at reforming the state commercial fishing industry in a whole. The state needs to look at standard's from Louisiana, Texas, and other states around. Last I would say this needs looked at by people from the recreational side and the commercial side in an even fair for everyone.
2/20/2021 9:51	Ashlyn Christy	North Carolina	The percentages the board is proposing is wrong. The commercial fishing is doing more damage than recreational fishing. The data is not correct. This is so one sided. The numbers need to be more for the recreational people. This state needs to look at reforming the state commercial fishing industry in a whole. The state needs to look at standard's from Louisiana, Texas, and other states around. Last I would say this needs looked at by people from the recreational side and the commercial side in an even fair for everyone
2/20/2021 9:52	Aleighta Christy	North Carolina	The percentages the board is proposing is wrong. The commercial fishing is doing more damage than recreational fishing. The data is not correct. This is so one sided. The numbers need to be more for the recreational people. This state needs to look at reforming the state commercial fishing industry in a whole. The state needs to look at standard's from Louisiana, Texas, and other states around. Last I would say this needs looked at by people from the recreational side and the commercial side in an even fair for everyone
2/20/2021 10:03	Michael Miller	North Carolina	It is not fair what y'all are going to do. Y'all continue to shut the recreational people out. Get rid of the Gill nets or any kind of net and problem solved. Rec hook and line is not the problem.

2/20/2021 10:11	Chris Christy	North Carolina	The percentages the board is proposing is wrong. The commercial fishing is doing more damage than recreational fishing. The data is not correct. This is so one sided. The numbers need to be more for the recreational people. This state needs to look at reforming the state commercial fishing industry in a whole. The state needs to look at standard's from Louisiana, Texas, and other states around. Last I would say this needs looked at by people from the recreational side and the commercial side in an even fair for everyone
2/20/2021 10:12	Randy Christy	North Carolina	The percentages the board is proposing is wrong. The commercial fishing is doing more damage than recreational fishing. The data is not correct. This is so one sided. The numbers need to be more for the recreational people. This state needs to look at reforming the state commercial fishing industry in a whole. The state needs to look at standard's from Louisiana, Texas, and other states around. Last I would say this needs looked at by people from the recreational side and the commercial side in an even fair for everyone
2/20/2021 10:21	Jackie Futrell	North Carolina	I have been fishing the waters of eastern North Carolina since I was two years old the Neuse River and Bay river I think it is not fair to punish us recreational fishing residents. I remember catching several with no limits now there are limits. I am ok with limits but not ok with not letting us catch flounder for two years. I am even ok with a seasonal time to catch flounder. Please consider Thanks Jackie.
2/20/2021 10:26	Daniel Neal	North Carolina	I continue to be disappointed by the restrictions placed on recreational anglers. I'm afraid I have to consider taking my tourism dollars to other states with better fisheries and other passions altogether. You all have failed to protect and develop North Carolina's resources. Your blindness to the impact on the recreational fishing community is disturbing. I hope you all try to do a better job than you have done to date.
			<p>The statistical evidence tells us that the Flounder stock in NC is in horrific shape and has been over fished for decades. No one is disputing this fact.</p> <p>When managing risk, which is what I do, you determine a root cause of a problem. Why? Because until you address the root cause, the problem will not be solved.</p> <p>For instance if you have multiple DUI's the answer is not to moderate your drinking and driving. The answer is to not drink and drive. We know that drinking and driving is bad. It kills people. We know their is a direct statistical correlation between drinking and driving and bad things happening. In the 60/70's society did not fully comprehend the direct correlation- but now everyone knows that the root cause of these events is the drinking and that getting behind the wheel is criminal.</p> <p>So why is the Flounder stock in NC not only decimated, but also in the worst shape of the entire east coast? What is it about the waters of NC that would case such decimation? What are other states doing that we are not? What are we doing that other states are not?</p> <p>The simple answer is gill nets. We allow them, and the rest of the country does. It's as if NC is allows a certain level of drinking and driving and then wonders why our highway fatality rates are so much higher than our peers.</p> <p>Gill nets kill an inordinate / disproportionate amount of flounder and other by catch. Our outdated laws allow this. There is direct statistical evidence that correlates these facts.</p>

2/20/2021 10:30	John Lenzmeier	North Carolina	<p>In the 70's America woke up to the fact that bad laws allowed bad outcomes in regards to pollution. The laws were changed to protect our common resource. The new laws addressed the root cause. These revised laws stopped a behavior that was causing the problem.</p> <p>As the decision makers of our public policy you have the ultimate responsibility to protect the resource. You are the stewards. The stock is decimated, that we all agree on (at least I assume we agree on this?) There is direct statistical evidence that proves gill nets are a huge part of the problem.</p> <p>The question that I have is -</p> <p>Do you, as stewards of a decimated resource, have the courage to cut the chains of the outdated laws that are killing our once great fishery?</p> <p>Or will you settle for half measures that will not address the root cause and continue the decimation? If it's the latter, then we you will be do the same thing and expecting a different outcome. Einstein had something to say about this.</p> <p>If you do have the courage to change - then let's make the decision to address the root cause.</p>
2/20/2021 10:32	Matthew Dunham	North Carolina	I am against this 73/27 allocation of southern flounder to the commercial sector
2/20/2021 10:49	Don Midgett	North Carolina	Make it right 50/50 I am aCommercial fisherman
2/20/2021 11:17	Jared O'Neal	New Jersey	The southern flounder commercial efforts are lower then they been for many years. Every pound caught by commercial fisherman is registered with trip tickets. Recreational fishing for southern flounder has increased greatly with no records of how many actually get caught Commercial fisherman of NC are struggling please give us our quota . The commercial fisherman restaurants , and those who by fish would be unrightfully hurt
2/20/2021 11:39	Matthew Taylor	North Carolina	Our fisheries have been abused for too long. Gill netting and high bag limits are unnecessary and wasteful and a relic of the past. We are playing with fire here with our most precious resources. Responsible conservation measures are needed urgently!
2/20/2021 11:45	Keith Lohr	North Carolina	Would like to see red drum limit increased to at least 2 fish now since the fish population seems more abundant. Next we would like to see flounder season expanded. This short season has really put a damper on recreational fishermen. I would not be opposed to a longer season every other year.
2/20/2021 11:50	Kenneth Kornegay	North Carolina	Stop the two year restriction
2/20/2021 12:01	Garrett Lambert	Ohio	Hi I have been vacationing in NC my whole life. I have seen a drop in fishing quality and would NEVER recommend a light tackle back country trip to NC for trout or redfish. Anyone who asks me I point them tho Louisiana and I personally only fish in NC because that's where my extended family vacation. Also every year I hire a charter for a day or two.
2/20/2021 12:03	Jon Domann	North Carolina	Ban gill nets PLEASE!!!!!!!!!!

2/20/2021 12:11	Scott Simmons	North Carolina	We caught some of the biggest flounder we've ever caught in July and October last year. If there are going to be new refs, I would prefer the season to be open longer and just reduce the keepers to 2 and/or increase the size limit. Just give us a chance to keep one or two fish during the summer months.
2/20/2021 12:14	Jerry Mace jr	North Carolina	First and foremost we need to take a very close look at conservation of our fisheries for future generations. With this being said we need to outlaw gill nets! Nc inshore fisheries could be world class if gill nets were terminated and shrimp trawlers were limited to off shore. Gill nets kill more undersized fish than anglers. It is very important that we take a look at all the states that have ban gill nets and follow there lead. Nc is one of the last states to ban gill nets. PLEASE WAKE UP AND SEE THIS!!!!
2/20/2021 12:15	Will Oblak	North Carolina	This is a horrible idea. I believe we need ride the low country of bad fishing practices rather than evict a portion of the population
2/20/2021 12:22	Gary Pope	North Carolina	Stop the gill nets from depleting our fishery!!!!
2/20/2021 12:23	Katherine Brown-Hammond	North Carolina	I am not in favor of a 73/27 allocation of southern flounder catch in favor of commercial fishermen. Recreational fishing contributes far more to the economy of Eastern North Carolina than commercial fishing and is not responsible for the southern flounder decline. Commercial gill netting and inshore trawling are to blame. All other states on the eastern seaboard have banned these two practices and are not experiencing similar fin fish declines.
2/20/2021 12:41	Michael Turner	North Carolina	It is not fair in my opinion giving more quota to the commercial and taking quota from recreational fisherman. Why don't you put it to the vote and include recreational fisherman in that vote???
2/20/2021 12:46	Paula Orrell	North Carolina	
2/20/2021 13:12	Scott Clay	North Carolina	It's time to stop the commercial fishing industry from raping our natural resources. If their a loud to continue fishing the way it has gone it will completely shut down.If it is aloud to continue fishing all fish caught should have to stay inside the state of North Carolina. Damn if I'm going to keep spending thousands of dollars a week and not be able to keep anything. Basinight is gone it's time for someone to stand up for the recreational fishmen is this state. Thank God Cooper can't run again maybe someone will stand up against the fishing industry and the NCDMf.
2/20/2021 13:25	Mike Wood	North Carolina	Something must be done to open the season longer for the recreational fisherman. I was able to get to the coast only 1 weekend during the flounder season of 2020 due to work obligations. Lengthen the season even if you have to cut the limit. Push commercial offshore, increase recreational before the local merchants don't have enough tourist business to survive.
2/20/2021 13:26	Brad Bridgeman	North Carolina	It's not going to help the the flounder to recover. If you don't cut back on the commercial fishery. You need to move the shrimpers out of the in shore.
2/20/2021 13:28	Brett Anderson	North Carolina	I am against the 73/27 split of commercial to recreational allocation of flounder limit
2/20/2021 13:28	Mike Lyerly	North Carolina	Please remember the recreational fishermen! We pay the taxes, support local business! Do not shut down or severely limit or flounder fishing! If you do this you will surely affect the local economy! You should spend more time reducing the inshore nets that are taking all of the juvenile fish!

2/20/2021 13:40	Jose Nieto	North Carolina	Please be considerate of the sports fisherman who fish for Flounder. Our take is minimal compared to the commercial fishermen who may have overfished this species. Many of us rely on this for subsistence and those of us that don't are still responsible fishermen.
2/20/2021 13:59	Beth Pope	North Carolina	As a tax paying citizen of North Carolina, I am urging you to reconsider your decisions on Southern Flounder limits! The waters of this state belong to all of us! The commercial netting is decimating the fish not the recreational fisherman! You are taking away the rights of all the people that want to use the waters fish for recreation! Certainly, there should be enough for commercial and recreational fisherman to all have a chance! The nets are horrible for all the fish. I just went into my local butcher shop and there they were trying to sell a southern flounder filet that was no more than 8" long and nearly see through because the fish was so tiny! This comes from netting! Get rid of the netting and let the fish populations recover! Fishing and water is for all the people of our state and country not just commercial. Do your job and do the right thing for the people of this state!
2/20/2021 14:08	Justin Davis	North Carolina	Gill nets are the issue, not recreational fishing!
2/20/2021 14:17	John Lucas	West Virginia	We come down a few times a year to fish and also do some flounder gigging if you keep putting more restrictions on the flounder we will have to go to other states to spend vacation
2/20/2021 14:19	Zach basinger	North Carolina	Weekend fishermen are not the cause of our fisheries problem Nets are Texas Solved the same problem in half the time They did it so can we, and it wasn't by punishing the rod and reel fishermen of their great state
2/20/2021 14:26	Andy Smith	North Carolina	The allocation of this state resource should be 50/50. We all share in the resource depletion and we all pay taxes. This is a state resource that has been mismanaged and the brunt of recovery is suffered by recreational fishermen. Increasing the flounder length limit for both commercial and recreational catch is also justified. There should also be a different season for summer flounder, restricted to only ocean caught fish.
2/20/2021 14:30	Ryan clark	North Carolina	This is complete bull shit. Ways to control population with out this shit.
2/20/2021 14:34	Clifton	North Carolina	Need at least a 50/50 split. Simply not right to allocate a public resource to a few hundred fisherman to sell for profit vs. tens of thousands of fisherman fishing recreationally that support local economies all over eastern NC
2/20/2021 14:37	Scott Clay	North Carolina	What's the NCDMF have to hide I can find nothing about this on its web site. Looks like it would be on front page. Forgot NCDMF does not want comments from recreational fisherman only commercial. It does not want recreational fisherman catching fish or spending money on hotel rooms eating out buying gas for trucks and boats. NC fish are only for commercial fisherman to sell outside the state.
2/20/2021 14:44	Jason Baker	North Carolina	It is a "public trust" resource that you are allowing to be destroyed. How is it I h e the means to fish for myself yet I'm not allowed to keep enough fish to feed a family of four on the inshore? You know what the root of the problem is without question yet you choose instead to line your pockets with special interests money; string work. Least I live my life knowing my integrity cannot be bought.

2/20/2021 14:44	Keith Kolischak	North Carolina	Ban gill netting! now! Need to overhaul commercial fishing regulations in NC, get with a progressive management policy and eliminate the devastation of Gill netting !
2/20/2021 15:15	Matthew Evans	North Carolina	As a commercial fisherman and now a recreational flounder gigging guide I am concerned that the 10 year plan to end flounder overfishing has become more about upholding an implemented plan then benefiting the resource and the waterman that rely on them. I understand and completely agree with the numbers of fish I was seeing that the fishery was in decline for the last 5 years and something needed to be done. I didn't agree with the plan as most others didn't. I think it would have inflicted much less pain and suffering if DMF would have just completely closed the fishery for the last 2 years and moved on to having a decent reasonable flounder season for the future. The short season and immense numbers of fish on the market didn't even make it a profitable fishery commercially. This 30 days and 45 days for a season was just pointless and is continuing to hamper the recovery that DMF says is needed. With that being said I've gilled flounder the majority of my life and saw numbers as good if not better then the numbers seen 15 years ago. That included the commercial season in October. When I can gig a flounder every 5 feet in the waterway for an hour there isn't a flounder population problem. There were many nights I could have walked on flounder and never touched the ground. On guided trips last year my clients limited out on probably 90 percent of my charters. Oystering this year in December flounder were everywhere like I've never seen before. I'm sorry but that doesn't happen in a fishery that's overfished. I just hope that whatever steps are taken DMF will conduct reliable fish survey numbers and take them into consideration when implementing regulations for this year and the future. I'm hearing a recommendation of a 1 fish creel limit.....If that's the case....if any of your scientists want to take a ride with me the end of may I'll show you there isn't a shortage of flounder and the 1 fish proposed limit is just absurd. If you do decide to implement harsher restrictions then last years debacle I suggest a full season closure instead of a slow painful process that in the end helps no one! Thank You!
2/20/2021 15:42	Paul Davis	North Carolina	I do not agree with increasing the quotas for flounder harvest for commercial fishing! I think the state needs to follow other states and outlaw all kinds of net fishing inside the inlets of NC. When the CRFL was started, it was sold to the public as helping the recreational fishing, but all that has happened is more restrictions on the recreational fisherman. Why hasn't any saltwater fish hatcheries been built? Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi have saltwater hatcheries for red drum, flounder, and speckled trout. NC can do the same with CRFL fees!!!
2/20/2021 15:53	William Wester	North Carolina	Stop the netting and let me fish with a hook and line
2/20/2021 16:14	Andy Riewestahl	North Carolina	I have noticed over the years rec fishing is not the problem I've seen pictures from shrimp boats and netting of all the dead fish just swept back overboard into the water as they say "bicatch" thousand of baby fish wasted and it hurts everyone I'm all about people making money but damn. The shrimp trollers and netting needs to be stopped in inland waters if you're gonna fix the problem. The marine fishery needs to get there head out of there asses and do the right thing. The ocean is not yours or anybody else's for that matter it is everyone's to enjoy I pay a lot of taxes and ought to be able to go catch a fish and keep and eat him. A one fish per person limit fo 45 days that's the craziest thing I've heard while commercial fishing can rape and kill everything in the ocean. A one fish limit hah just close it period and save all the rec fishermen a lot of money and time because it's not worth going and spending money to do make it fair across the board and make it fair 50/50 on the quata

2/20/2021 16:25	Benjamin Massey	North Carolina	No inland nets
2/20/2021 16:33	Tot Reeves	North Carolina	Please keep all commercial trawlers and all types of gill nets away from the sounds and all areas of inland coastal waters for at least ten years to allow nature to naturally rebuild and refresh aquatic life of all species. God gives people many chances to live and survive, can you please at least give nature ten years. Thank you so much for letting me add my input and concern. God bless everyone, Tot Reeves
2/20/2021 16:35	April Gardner	North Carolina	Recreational fishers like flounder to flounder fish also. The commercial guys shouldn't be able to do it if we can't. They are the ones killing all the flounder in the nets.
2/20/2021 16:40	Toni Jernigan	North Carolina	The 73/27 allocation in favor of the commercial sector is not fair to the public. We should have rights to a public resource. I have been around commercial fishing for the last 20 years. I have been on a shrimp boat and have witnessed all the baby flounder, spots, croakers, etc fish caught in the nets. I knew seeing all those fish that they had no chance of ever growing up as I threw many of them back dead while trying to cull the shrimp. That is a huge part of our fish numbers dwindling as a shrimp net does not pick out the juvenile fish, they take all. I have also witnessed, while commercial flounder gigging, the miles and miles of nets in the water with dead fish. I don't know one net from another, true, however I have witnessed the wasteful destruction this type of fishing has caused. I have spent many days on the water fishing with rod and reel. Some days were better than others. I have thrown back fish and watched them swim off. I have seen the commercial side say that this catch and release by the many recreational anglers causes fish to die. I am no expert, but I can assure you those fish have a better chance of survival being let loose from a rec angler than by being caught in a net or shrimp trawl. There has to be a better way to deal with this issue. Other states who have banned the nets have commercial fishermen still working and bringing in much fresher seafood with a rod and reel or gig. Meanwhile our "fresh" seafood have been laying dead in a net for several hours. Why can't our commercial sector change the way they are harvesting? No one is wanting the commercial sector to disappear, just change the gear.
2/20/2021 16:53	Aaron Horton	North Carolina	This is crazy. I absolutely think we should have more allocated to the rec anglers. We deserve better leadership in this matter. Why should the commercial guys have more right to the flounder than the rec anglers. If you really were trying to help the southern flounder it would be more of a 50/50 split. We wouldn't be worried about the \$\$\$\$. We aren't hurting the southern flounder population as anglers as I might catch one southern flounder to every 100 flounder I catch and I average catching over 300 a year. Please think this through guys. 6 weeks is already BS considering most folks can't fish but a few days out of the 6 weeks and citing our flounder limit to 1 is corruption at its finest.
2/20/2021 17:09	Heather Horton	North Carolina	
2/20/2021 17:17	Roger Bynum	North Carolina	I am opposed to the new proposed flounder regulations. Recreational fishermen are being negatively affected again by over regulation. We pay a license fee to fish in coastal waters and our financial expenditure provides more income per pound of flounder harvested to the state economy than does the the commercial sector. I encourage you not to adopt the new regulations.
2/20/2021 17:18	Lily Horton	North Carolina	

2/20/2021 17:20	Keith Bruno	North Carolina	<p>Good evening, My name is Keith Bruno and I am a * River fisherman and seafood dealer. I have always been a fan of common sense fisheries law. That said, I am not a fan of our current flounder law. It makes so little sense that I think it was the vengeful work of a few people who just set out to hurt the commercial community. The pound netters need a fall season, the Gill netters don't. The Gill netters would be better off working a couple of days a week all year rather than 19 days in October when prices are at their lowest. Even a daily quota would be a good idea if we could fish when the fish were all in demand and the prices higher. I have brought this up before and was told " good idea, too bad you're too late. We are going to go with the short season!" I have little faith in the process these days. Keith Bruno.</p>
2/20/2021 17:21	Kelly Fritz	North Carolina	<p>Please, consider the impact your decision will have to the recreational fisherman. First, NC is the only state that allows ICW netting. We all know it is only a matter of time before this will finally be outlawed. Let's do the right thing for our resources. Recreational fishing accounts for the largest percentage of tax revenue for conservation so why would penalize their catch allocation? I hope you vote for what's right and not because of the heritage you feel you must protect.</p>
2/20/2021 17:48	Ricky Baker	North Carolina	<p>This is not right. We have every right to keep fish just as the next person.</p>
2/20/2021 17:53	Cesar Collazo	North Carolina	<p>2008-2017 Avg. Yearly Economic Impact info thru NCDMF Recreational - 2,153 Jobs \$133,192,104 to the Economy Commercial - 1,387 Jobs \$14,665,220 to the Economy The Recreational Sector has a much larger impact on the economy and a 73/27 allocation to the commercial sector resulting in a 1 fish/trip bag limit recreationally will have a very negative effect on money spent in our economy thru a reduced number of recreational trips, reduced guided trips, reduced other related tackle/travel/hotel expenditures resulting in a greater negative impact to the economy. Meanwhile, a slightly reduced allocation on the commercial end will result in increased market prices for the commercial sector to make up for a slightly lower allocation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My family rather visit other states in the summer now because of so many limitations on catching fish on our area. 2. It made me super mad that during the fall of 2020 if you caught a southern flounder while surf fishing, boating or pier fishing you had to throw it back. BUT YOU COULD GO BUY THAT SAME SOUTHERN FLOUNDER AT THE FISH HOUSE 3. Why are pound nets for flounder operating without a yearly quota? Shouldn't this be addressed before a man with a hook and line? 4. Why are large mesh gill nets for flounder still allowed? Shouldn't that outdated gear be permanently banned like all other states before a man with a hook and line should be looked at? 5. Why should the Commercial Sector receive a 73% allocation and the Recreational Sector only receive a 27% allocation and only 1 fish per day. 6. Since the Majority of recreational anglers fish on the weekends, why can't a recreational season be friday-Sunday throughout a longer portion of the year rather than 45 consecutive days where the average recreational angler works and can only take advantage of 6 weekends. 7. Why can't I catch my own summer flounder and gulf flounder oceanside from the beach out 3+ miles during the summer/fall (outside the COLREGS) Since there are very few Southern Flounder in the ocean during this time of year and there is NO problem with the stock status of these two species? 8. Why was there a trawling bycatch allowance for flounder in 2020 but you couldn't catch and keep you own? That's a real head scratcher. 9. Why did inshore shrimp trawlers get a free pass on southern flounder? Why was there southern

			flounder bycatch not addressed? Shouldn't that be looked at before a man standing on the beach with a hook and line?
2/20/2021 18:05	Jeffrey Benton	North Carolina	This is the reason why people don't trust the government. Regular tax paying citizens can't even feed a family now. You only cater to the commercial fishing industry. Recs can only keep 1 grey trout 1 drum and now 1 flounder. You cannot tell me or anyone else that it is fair for the commercial industry to keep 73 percent and while recs only keep 27 percent . I was fine with a 45 day season (even that only allows a working man 5 to 6 fishing days per year, assuming the weather cooperates), but this proposal is a joke. Do you think people are stupid? You people cannot even use common sense to see that recs are not the problem. Get the nets out of the water or suspend fishing for flounder for everyone for a year or two. Make it fair across the board and stop catering to one group. We all know once you go this route it will never go back up like the grey trout and red drum.
2/20/2021 18:06	Orlando Garcia	North Carolina	Gill netters are the issue with founders

2/20/2021 18:09	James Reilly	North Carolina	<p>As an avid angler and sportsman, husband and parent of a houseful of lifetime license holders, I am deeply concerned with continued downward spiral the management of our public trust resources continue to follow. As a veteran and longtime resident of eastern NC, I have watched the population of Southern Flounder fade to a mere shadow of the bounty of the mid to late 90's. And sadly, acknowledging the fact that it was exponentially better twenty years before that. But the biggest tragedy is the fact that through all of this, in spite of almost 30 years of harvest data, collected and analyzed by our DMF, this was public knowledge THE ENTIRE TIME!</p> <p>Now, after another five years of failed attempts to rectify the problem, NC DMF would try to solve it by virtually eliminating access to this very popular, public trust resource for the largest user group, recreational anglers, and continuing to allow the largest threat to the viability our Southern Flounder population, the pound net fishery, to harvest virtually without restriction or supervision, over three quarters of the total annual take. If you want to have a truly measurable impact on the health of a species, you cannot focus on the users who take literally less than twenty percent of actual harvest, but the one who has consistently been handed the lion's share, health of the species be damned.</p> <p>Please, as a retired Marine Corps veteran, who chose to make our state his permanent home, use the powers granted to the commission by state law and find a better way to manage and allocate the public trust resources you've been charged with overseeing. I am a willing supporter of commercial fishing and fishermen, I just struggle with the manner in which the system they operate in takes advantage of the individual who makes their living as a fulltime waterman and profits from their effort, offering minimal compensation while making a killing off their work. Do the right thing, take care of the southern flounder, and direct the DMF to enact a more equitable distribution of the allowable harvest, now and in years to come. Thank you for your time and effort, it does not go unnoticed or unappreciated.</p> <p>Respectfully,</p> <p>GySgt Jim Reilly USMC (ret) *, NC</p>
2/20/2021 18:32	Janey Barnes	North Carolina	Science based fish management, please.
2/20/2021 18:43	Marcia Sawyer Bryant	North Carolina	<p>Please do not take anything else from the commercial fisherman. In 1992 when I started working at then MIKE KELLER LTD, I was in charge of publishing our commercial fishing supplies catalog and I used coastal states commercial fishing license holders as my database to send catalogs to. At that point there were approximately 22000 license holders in Nc and we know many of them were individuals who held more than one. Now; we have far less than 5000 in our whole state! Many of these have never fished a gill net ever! In the Pamlico and Albemarle Mgt areas that I am most familiar with as the owner of Keller Fishing Supply; you require permits for Flounder fishermen so you have complete control. There are an unchecked numbers of rec fishermen even tho you could simply apply the same method to them as you do to commercial fishermen... that is total # x set amount of fish per person and you will see the numbers of rec far surpass commercial. The bottom line is our state needs commercial fishermen to provide for those who can't fish. There is room in our waters for both.</p> <p>The Gill net is not our enemy; it's a clean fishery. When 1/16th of an inch makes a difference in catch; then there's no way a fisherman catches "everything that swims!" Fishermen don't want to catch undersized fish,; it's a waste of their time. Do not take away this fishery or cut it anymore;</p>

			enough has been done. Give these most recent sanctions an opportunity to prove the juice is with the squeeze.
2/20/2021 19:08	Frank Couch	North Carolina	Payoffs must be in play. Please protect the fisheries. Not the people that profit from them.
2/20/2021 19:12	Thomas Snyder	North Carolina	Please keep Flounder Season alive!
2/20/2021 19:13	James smith	South Carolina	I would like to see the flounder limit increase and restrict the Commercial fisheries.
2/20/2021 19:13	Matthew Carroll	North Carolina	As a recreational angular I am against the proposed rec to commercial limits for flounder! We pay for a license and do it with hook and lines and not fill nets and should be able to catch our fair share!
2/20/2021 19:15	Ryan Gleason	North Carolina	The current flounder regulations are disgusting. The fact that inshore netting is still allowed and blame for a declining fishery is pushed onto recreational fishermen is insane. STOP NETTING AND SUPPORT OUR ECOSYSTEM
2/20/2021 19:19	Angry fisherman	North Carolina	Y'all are political hacks, this is BS. Looks like it's time for fillet and release!!!
2/20/2021 19:20	Malcolm Carmichael II	North Carolina	I am against the current southern flounder limit change for recreational fishermen, we are already limited to a small amount as opposed to commercial fishermen. Recreational fishermen take a very small number of flounder compared to commercial fishermen and the commission is now considering restricting us even more. Its ok for us to buy flounder caught by some commercial fisherman, but not catch them for our own family use, this makes no sense. When is the state going to start looking out for the little guy and not the for profit guy. Hook and line fishermen will never hurt the fish population like the commercial fishermen will, look at the states that surround us, no way close to the regulations we have on recreational fishing.
2/20/2021 19:23	Michael Huskey	North Carolina	I don't believe a 73/27% is fair for the recreational fisherman
2/20/2021 19:27	73%/27%	North Carolina	Your proposal to regulate the flounder daily limit for recreational fishermen is going to get you fired. The commercial guys already have plenty of access to fish.
2/20/2021 19:33	Brayden slaughter	North Carolina	

2/20/2021 19:37	Brandon Morris	North Carolina	This is an outrage!! As a sport fisherman who pays for a saltwater fishing license I should have the privilege to keep what I catch and not buy from commercial stores or fishermen! Raising a child and teaching him how to use the resources provided responsibly so he can teach his children is threatening to be taken away.
2/20/2021 19:38	Edward Longshore	North Carolina	It's sad we are having to fight for our children to eat the food we catch. This bill does nothing for the struggling families that are just trying to survive.
2/20/2021 19:39	Shawn tew	North Carolina	
2/20/2021 19:42	Joey Worrells	North Carolina	To whom it may concern, The time has come for your ludicrous way of managing our fishery to stop. Put an end to inshore gill netting now!! Stop the idea of the 73/27 quota on flounder and allowing the commercial guys harvest all the fish all. The while killing other species with their gear. I have lived and fished in NC my entire life and have fished commercially and Rec. Times have changed our finery can't stand anymore gill nets!
2/20/2021 19:45	Peter Licavoli	North Carolina	STOP THIS!! 73/27??!! Y'all have to be getting Rich off this deal. Let the tax paying recreational fisherman feed their families!
2/20/2021 19:53	Mike Larson	North Carolina	What needs to be done is the stopping of inshore netting and shrimping. They are killing our hatcheries. Look at the states to the north and south. They have stopped both and fishing is much better. Stop punishing the rec. People.
2/20/2021 19:57	Garrett G	North Carolina	
2/20/2021 20:00	Raymond Pridgen Jr.	North Carolina	Last year was the first year I did not catch a flounder. I fish the ocean for my flounder fishing a was not able to go but 2 times during the short season because of weather and work. Stopping rec fisherman from fishing in the Ocean is not going to help southern flounder. In all the years I have fished in the ocean I can count on my 2 hands the number of southern flounder I have caught. I work 6 to 7 days a week and don't have a lot of time to fish and have to have calm seas. In a 45 day season with me being able to fish 2 to 3 times and a 1 fish limit I might as well sell my boat and just quit fishing. If all the recs quit the commercial guys won't have anyone blame lack of fish on.
2/20/2021 20:03	Joey	North Carolina	Please implement a 50/50 share and do away with large mesh Gill nets. This only makes most sense to all parties involved. Thank you.
2/20/2021 20:07	Ron himsworth	North Carolina	Priority needs to be given to recreational fisherman over commercial fisherman. Too many times, the commercial fisherman gets more privileges that are not afforded to recreational people. Recreational fisherman account for more revenue from lisenca sales, gear and job creation.
2/20/2021 20:07	Robert Courie	North Carolina	Absolutely not right what you plan on doing. My family and I have just as much right to these fish as any commercial fisherman. Bought a lifetime license and now have been regulated so much that can't keep anything to eat.
2/20/2021 20:19	Ryan anderson	North Carolina	The fisheries should be for all not just commercial. This should not be that way.

2/20/2021 20:40	Ricky Manley	North Carolina	Reduce commercial fishing and allow more recreational fishing.
2/20/2021 20:46	Gregory Terranova	North Carolina	I started commercial fishing in 2015 and have seen how many fish are truly out in our sounds. It's a shame that a department of the state cares so little for the commercial fishing community. We have an abundance of fish in our waters, these fish are a resource that commercial, recreational, and the consumer have a right to that the department of marine fisheries is withholding from the residence of North Carolina. The DMF has done a poor job of representing the actual problems that face the fish that live in the Albemarle sound and its tributaries, polluted water, uncontrolled farm runoff, and a most total loss of aquatic vegetation. Without addressing these issues, no amount of fishing regulations will ever result in any kind of expanding fish population. Not allowing commercial fishermen to harvest striped bass and other fish species out of the Albemarle sound and its tributaries by use of gill net would be nothing short of an absolute waste of resources and a massive blow to our constitution and fishing communities, and our rights to use the resource. Furthermore the notion that the invasive blue catfish species is only contained to the Waters of the chowan sound is completely absurd. I have been small mesh fishing recently in the currituck sound and are catching 3 to 400 lb of large adult blue catfish ranging from 5 to 30 lb fish. I have seen from cleaning these invasive catfish that they are not a scavenger and are a predatory fish that eats everything from juvenile rockfish to blue Crabs. If the DMF does not allow commercial fishermen to actively catch these blue cats their population will only explode until a food source is no longer available for them to grow. this would undoubtedly cause a severe decline in striped bass White and yellow perch sturgeon blue crabs and any other juvenile species that can be eaten by the blue cats.
2/20/2021 21:23	Heather	North Carolina	Commercial fisherman feed everyone. Recreational fisherman feed themselves. Commercial fisherman should, for this very fact be allocated more. Not because they are greedy, but because they are catching seafood to feed everyone. 73/27 is more than fair to recreational fishermen. A 50/50 allocation would make half of the seafood unavailable to the public. Reduced availability will drive up prices, so that those in N.C. who don't have the access or ability to catch their own won't be able to enjoy fresh N.C. seafood.
2/20/2021 21:48	Leslie Lanier	North Carolina	Commercial fishermen work hard to provide fish for all. Please do not reduce the amount they are able to catch.
2/20/2021 21:50	Robert	Tennessee	How can North Carolina be so behind on Coastal Conservation?! S T O P netting now and S T A R T protecting your resources ...

MFC Online Comments

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
573	02/22/2021 - 9:42am	E Jot Owens		North Carolina	<p>I am a full-time Inshore/near shore fishing guide and I've been fishing the North Carolina waters my entire life. The 73 to 27% commercial/recreational allocation proposed for southern Flounder in North Carolina in my opinion is ridiculous. The recreational and charter angling interest bring millions of dollars to the state of NC. This has been largely overlooked for decades. It's time for North Carolina start reaping the benefits from the recreational fisheries. The bottom line is fishing guides like myself, tackle shops, hotels gas stations, boat dealers etc. need the economical impact of recreational anglers. I believe it is far past time for a 50/50% allocation of southern Flounder. This is the only fair way to go about this.</p> <p>cart</p> <p>As far as the ocean Flounder fishery, summer and gulf flounder ocean fishing should be opened. I believe recreational harvest limit should be based on this new TAL. The ocean Flounder fishery should be open all year for oscillated Flounder. If Anglers cannot tell the difference between the different species then they should be ticketed. Hook and line mortality is a lot less than commercial gear mortality.</p> <p>Thank you very much for your time and serving on the commission board.</p>
572	02/22/2021 - 9:38am	Keith Hendrickson		North Carolina	<p>Biologists are constantly neglecting the one fisher that takes more fish of all types than any other predator...the common cormorant. These birds have spread across all of North America, both land a sea, by the hundreds of thousands. They are present on just about every body of water be it natural or man made. They are even present on our fish hatchery ponds. I once watched a presentation at the AFS annual conference where there was a presentation on the decline of white bass and they blamed it on sport fishing even though they could not find enough fishermen to interview for the paper...but in every single photo in their presentation there were hundreds of cormorants in the shots. Sport fishermen for a large part follow regulations and practice catch and release. Cormorants do not. They eat anything in their paths. They destroy their rookery habitats and then move on to the next healthy batch of trees they nest in, leaving the dead habitat for nature to eventually recover. The Federal Government allows for a take season on cormorants but states are not allowing sportsmen to harvest these fish predators. It is time for states to take action in reducing the cormorant populations using every means possible to save our fisheries, and it is time for you to stop blaming sportsmen for the reduced fish populations when there is another predator out there that takes far more fish on a daily basis than any fisherman ever thought about taking.</p>
571	02/22/2021 - 9:37am	Kenneth Coley		North Carolina	<p>Estuarine Striped Bass: The ASMA/RRMA stock assessment indicates that overfishing is occurring and that the stock is overfished. This is a failure of our management policies. The assessment calls for a moratorium. It's hard for me to read that and not make the connection to the bycatch associated with gill nets. Based on what I understand from the information available, the gill net fishery that exists in NC is a failure of policy driven by data and science. It exists due to political dealings. The public, all of North Carolina, need collaboration between WRC, DMF, and the U.S. Corps of Engineers to create a plan that better manages the water flow on the Roanoke River, controls harvest, removes destructive gear to reduce both recreational and commercial discard mortality, and introduces supplemental stocking measures. Any plan needs to include more public involvement from the people of N.C. who own these resources while the DMF must stop trying to manage our coastal resources in a vacuum.</p> <p>Shrimp FMP: I support any efforts to remove trawlers from Pamlico Sound. I support all management measures under consideration for the next FMP related to area closures, minimizing headrope length, closing trawling for an extra day, and reducing tow times. These are all steps in the direction of restoring a resource that has been badly mismanaged and abused.</p>
570	02/22/2021 - 9:36am	Brandon Cartrette		North Carolina	<p>I want to see the Summer and Gulf Flounder Fishery OPEN all Summer and Fall in the ocean as this fishery has almost no effect on the Southern Flounder population you are trying to manage! We should also be allowed a 4 fish bag limit in this fishery as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has these species listed as "Not Overfished." and NC is allowing the Commercial Flounder Trawl Fishery to continue to harvest up to 15,000 lbs of flounder in the ocean per trip both last Summer (April-June) and already this Jan.-Feb 2021. But you want to only allow the recreational fishermen a 45 day season with a proposed 1 fish per day.</p>
569	02/22/2021 - 9:34am	Christopher Wickline		North Carolina	<p>I am commenting to oppose the proposed circle hook rule. I mainly bait fish for large red drum in the surf and can count on one hand, how many drum I have gut hooked and hooked deep in the crushers and they were all with circle hook. All my J hook fish were in the corner of the jaw or lips. Also, to go along with the barbless treble hook, I fish the pier for king mackerel and cobia as well as boat fish for kings with live bait. We need the barbs to be able to keep out baits in the water and also be able to keep a hook in our fish. Those fish are not going to be released so mortality rates are a non issue.</p> <p>The proposed rulings are going to have far wider consequences for anglers that were never thought about when this was brought to the table. While I understand the issues with trout and stripers, I don't think the benefits outweigh the consequences</p>

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
568	02/22/2021 - 9:31am	Terry Plumblee		North Carolina	Concerning the circle hook/treble hook proposal: I own and manage * Pier on * Island. I see that there is a possible exemption for trolling natural baits for king mackerel due to low hookup ratio. This exemption needs to be extended to live bait fishing for king mackerel from fishing piers. The terminal tackle used on a pier is essentially identical to that used in trolling live baits for king mackerel. The hookup ratio is fairly low even with J-hooks and treble hooks on a pier. Please consider making this change before approving this proposal.
567	02/22/2021 - 9:26am	Scott Williams		North Carolina	I believe that the proposed circle hook requirements are unnecessary and frankly will not improve mortality rates. In my personal experience fishing for citation class red drum the last 10 years, i have seen more fish deep hooked with a circle than a J style hook. I generally see anywhere from 300 -500 citation drum caught every year, and I average 20-30 a year myself. I am no expert, but with no real case studies done, i feel that this regulations do absolutely no good for the health of our fisheries. Also. Barbless treble hooks while fishing a live bait will severely reduce hook up ratios on the targeted species, most of all King mackerel, which 98% of the time will be harvested for food, and not released, so it also will have no affect on release mortality. Thank you for your time Scott Williams
566	02/22/2021 - 9:25am	Barron T Glenn		North Carolina	Anyone with actual first hand experience with the fishery will tell you any regulation in favor of a gill net fishery is absurd. Please do not approve a decreased recreational flounder harvest and increased commercial harvest of southern flounder via gill nets. close the gig fishery to both, close the gill net fishery to both, hook and line only for both. there is no enforcement of the regulations in the commercial fishery, the problems are endless
565	02/22/2021 - 9:20am	Bryan Armstrong		North Carolina	To make flounder for recreational one fish per person per day is just insane. I'm a full time guide and along with a lot of others we depend on the flounder fishing to make our living. people do not wanna travel from hours away to be able keep one flounder and one drum that's just crazy there gott to be a different way. Make flounder a slot fish and leave it at 4 fish per person with one being able to be over per day
564	02/22/2021 - 9:19am	Mike Wilkerson		North Carolina	Please dont cut the flounder limit or season. It's getting to the point where its not worth it for me to drive 5 hours to fish with all the restrictive limits.
563	02/22/2021 - 9:12am	Veronica Stallings		North Carolina	A 45 day season with a 1 fish limit a day is a slap in the face of recreational anglers across the state. Commercial fishing is depleting the population, not recreational fisherman! How am I supposed to feed my family on 1 fish a day?! Fishing helps to supplement my families food! I pay my taxes and do as I am supposed to and year by year the recreational fisherman is shit on more and more. Stop catering to the industries.
562	02/22/2021 - 9:07am	Thaddeus Banks		North Carolina	Please allow recreational fishermen to keep at least 4 Flounder 15 inches and larger this June through October.
561	02/22/2021 - 9:07am	Jordan		North Carolina	Hello, I would first like to say thank you for your time. Some of the fondest memories that I have were made on the beach's and around the waters of the Crystal Coast. Among those were fishing. I pains me to see all the new regulations and decrease limits for recreational fishermen. I understand that these fisheries need to be protected in order to ensure they are here for many years to come, however I feel that more common sense measures can be taken. For instance, getting rid of gigging, gill nets and trawlers in the sounds would do more to protect the fish population than banning recreational fishermen from keeping any fish with traditional hook and line. This past year, I tried to go fishing during the small window for flounder. However, I had other obligations come up and sometimes when I wanted to go, the weather would not cooperate. I think this is the same across the board for most recreational guys. Just because the season is open, not everyone is gonna be catching. And most people that live out of town can only fish the weekends so that means the actual season for them is drastically shorter. This does not take into account the proposed hook changes that have been thrown around. If that were to take affect, 99% of all the recreational fishermen's tackle would be illegal. I don't agree with this, but I do fear that some of the unintended consequences of severely reducing what recreational fishermen can keep, this would drive some people to illegally keep anything they catch and not report legal fish. I'm sure like everything in government/ politics that there is big money/ pressure coming from the commercial fishing industry. However, I believe that if true conservation is the goal then the 73/27 lopsided spilt would not help the population continue to grow. This past year I purchased my 1 year old daughter and my self lifetime hunting and fishing licenses. Such severe restrictions like these make me regret buying those lifetime licenses because if these were to continue, there would be nothing recreational guys can keep. This would also mean the millions of others that continue to buy fishing licenses and pay fees would just stop buying licenses because there is nothing to keep. I believe this would have a far greater financial and economic impact on areas that thrive and build there business around the water. I was super excited about teaching my daughter to fish and teaching her how to respect and be good stewards of our great fishery, now I wonder if there will be anything we will be allowed to keep when she grows older. All the while, commercial trawlers throw out millions of pounds of bycatch. Which is why the bluefish limits is drastically reduced in my humble opinion. In closing, I would ask that you just stop and think about all the small recreational fishermen that these policies really hurt. I would suggest more common sense measures like extending the season longer but maybe upping the minimum size limit or something to that nature. Again, thank you for your time.

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
560	02/22/2021 - 9:06am	Mona Hoppe		North Carolina	<p>I moved to N. C. almost 2 yrs ago from Nevada. I immediately fell in love with Surf Fishing.</p> <p>I find it COMPLETELY wrong that you are allowing commercial fisheriesto decimate our flounder fisheries, while blaming it on the weekend fisherman. Who thinks of this?</p> <p>I fished all year last year at caught a total of 5 flounder, all would have been under length. And YES I put them back. Yet, the Trawlers are making sweep after sweep decimating these fish.</p> <p>Open up the Flounder fishing to the average weekender & limit the Trawlers. I can't imagine the dead miscellaneous fish that are tossed back due to these large kill nets....</p> <p>Please open the flounder fishing back up to surf fishers.. some of us depend on what we catch to help feed our family.</p>
559	02/22/2021 - 9:05am	Dennis Smith		North Carolina	<p>I understand your concern to help restore the striped bass (rock fish) population in roanoke river / albermarle sound region. I however disagree with the recommendation to not allow any natural bait and require single barbless hooks until further notice. I feel that this would hurt other fishermen.</p> <p>Under this recommendation a father or mother could no longer take their child fishing for bream using crickets or worms. Catfishermen could not use crickets, worms, or cut bait either. The white perch population would explode worse than it is now. Most recreational fishermen use natural bait and would be punished by this recommendation far greater than the striper fishermen.</p>
558	02/22/2021 - 9:04am	Dave Timpy		North Carolina	<p>This comment regards the proposed management options being considered by the commission for the Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Amendment 3. For decades the allocation of this fishery has been heavily biased towards the commercial sector, resulting in an average actual harvest of about 80% of all flounder by the commercial sector. Overwhelming public comment over the last decade on this issue has strongly OBJECTED to allowed lopsided harvest by the commercial sector. I refer you to the 5,000 or so comments submitted to the commission in 2016. Allocation of Southern Flounder must be equitable. I fully support the proposed 50/50 allocation of Southern Flounder; Option 6. thanks</p> <p>One last note. The Amendment 3 memo dated 2/3/21 states "Increasing allocation to the recreational fishery provides additional harvest to the sector with the least precise estimates." as a negative impact. I would like to recommend that the MFC establish a committee on this issue and that this committee consider utilizing the NCWRC to collect recreational harvest data, as they check each boat/fisherman. I would be glad to serve on such a committee.</p>
557	02/22/2021 - 8:57am	Lenny Smathers		North Carolina	<p>I strongly support the following items as recommended to the Commission by the CCA-NC.</p> <p>1. Estuarine Striped Bass FMP - The ASMA/RRMA stock assessment indicates overfishing is occurring and the stock is overfished, and it calls for a moratorium or at least a greatly reduced quota. CCA NC supports these measures as necessary to relieve fishing pressure, however, failure to address the other source of fishing mortality-bycatch in gill nets-will greatly impede or prevent recovery. While bycatch estimates are controversial, there is no doubt that as a stock recovers bycatch will increase.</p> <p>Expanding the current gill net restrictions to include the following would be the most effective option: (a) all of the Albemarle Sound and connecting river systems with the exception of those used in the blue catfish fishery, (b) for the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico Rivers of the CSMA, move the restrictions out to the tie-down lines, and (c) for the Cape Fear River region of the CSMA, add in gill net restrictions sufficiently below Wilmington to protect the range of stripers present there. If striped bass range increases upon recovery, removal of additional areas should be implemented.</p> <p>Once the DMF and MFC endorse these areas, CCA NC will support stocking striped bass to either enhance the spawning stock biomass in regions where the fishery can recover OR to establish a put/grow/take recreational ONLY fishery in areas where the fishery will not be able to sustain a natural population.</p> <p>We need collaboration NOW between the WRC, DMF and the U.S. Corps of Engineers to create a plan that better manages the water flow on the Roanoke River. And throughout all coastal river systems, the plan should control harvest, remove destructive gear to reduce both recreational and commercial discard mortality, and introduce supplemental stocking measures. Any plan needs to include more public involvement from the people of N.C. who own these resources while the DMF must stop trying to manage our coastal resources in a vacuum.</p> <p>2. Southern Flounder FMP-The proposed allocation and certain rules proposed by DMF are patently unfair to recreational fishermen. If the Southern flounder is to become a quota-managed fishery, then the current commercial/recreational split of 73/27 should be changed to a 50/50 allocation just like the AS/RR striped bass fishery. The use of "historical" landings to establish a quota-managed fishery further highlights the fact</p>

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
					<p>that the commercial industry exploited Southern flounder for three decades.</p> <p>When Division biologists were insisting that a 72% harvest reduction was needed to save the stock from collapse, they insisted that the cuts had to be "equitable." "Historically," the commercial industry was responsible for 80% of the harvest so they should have been responsible for the brunt of the reductions. No, it had to be equitable. Now the stock has to be managed by quota and DMF biologists want to use "historical" numbers instead of "equitable" numbers.</p> <p>Recreational harvest limits should be based on this new TAL and the ocean should be opened to give recreational anglers an opportunity to harvest summer and Gulf flounder during the time of year when they can be accessed. The proposed ocean access during March/April needs to be shifted in such a manner that the current recreational flounder season is lengthened in areas of the ocean where interactions with Southern flounder will be minimal. Opening the ocean fishing in March/April is another "feel good" measure that accomplishes little conservation and just locks rec anglers out. No one is fishing for them then. The ocean should be open all year for ocellated flounder. If fishermen cannot tell the difference, they should not keep any flounder. If they screw up, they get ticketed. Hook and line mortality is a lot less than net mortality. Also, dead discards DO have value in the rec fishery. Dead discards in gill nets do not. When rec anglers go fishing and do not get a keeper, money is still spent.</p> <p>3. Shrimp FMP - Ultimately, trawlers must be removed from Pamlico Sound. Several current management measures under consideration for the next FMP are beneficial to the resource and CCA NC supports them. The area closures under consideration by DMF scientists should have minimal impact on the ability to harvest shrimp while still addressing bycatch hotspots for some juvenile species, including spot, croaker, weakfish, Southern and summer flounder.</p> <p>Other proposed restrictions to reduce effort such as minimizing headrope length, closing trawling for an extra day (that should be added consecutively to the current weekend ban on trawling), and reducing tow times should be supported by the MFC. Each of these options has the potential to benefit the resource as a whole and help restore numerous habitats damaged by trawling; CCA NC sees them as a start to recovery of many troubled finfish species.</p> <p>4. Circle Hooks - Circle hooks should be required when fishing with live or cut bait for specific fisheries such as: cobia, redfish, speckled trout, flounder, and striped bass (already required in the Albemarle Sound per ASMFC). Doing so will clearly reduce mortality of released fish and endangered sea turtles.</p>
556	02/22/2021 - 8:30am	Kenneth A Redman		North Carolina	Limiting the recreational flounder catch too low will hurt the coastal economy long term. Limit flounder gigging catches. Limit the commercial catch proportionally to their total catch relative to the recreational smaller catch and keep. Also, it is a no brainer to keep the shrimp trawlers out of the sounds and estuaries where they damage too much of the fin fish population. Also, put more recreational fishermen on the board of representatives of the MFC rather than mostly commercial representatives because recreational fishermen actually financially support the coastal community while the commercial fisherman will destroy their own livelihood if left unchecked. Lastly, enforce the commercial data recording where so many report zero when we all know better. For those who don't report their catch if they are big companies figure it out how to catch them cheating.
555	02/22/2021 - 8:17am	Philip Eames		North Carolina	Please allow a 4 bag Limit for summer flounder during the summer and fall in 2021. This fishery is NOT overfished!
554	02/22/2021 - 8:13am	Chris Carroll		North Carolina	Recreational flounder fishing should be open longer than 45 days. Commercial fisherman are killing the population not recreational fisherman.
553	02/22/2021 - 8:13am	Ethan bush		North Carolina	Flounder season should be open during the summer and the fall and the bagimit should remain at 4 per person.
552	02/22/2021 - 8:11am	Lewis Dunn		North Carolina	Recreational anglers should not be penalized over this issues, especially in the ocean where stock is healthier. Allow a season open in the summer and fall. Limit quota to 2 fish per angler, and if catch restrictions need to be issued, put restrictions on commercial net fishing.
551	02/22/2021 - 8:04am	Michael Counselman		North Carolina	Want to see Summer and Gulf flounder open all summer and fall in the ocean. 4 bag limit.
550	02/22/2021 - 7:58am	Ray Carter		North Carolina	The limit on flounder should be 4 per day all year.

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
549	02/22/2021 - 7:52am	Charles Stone		North Carolina	You are KILLING recreational fishing! 45 days with a bag limit of one, meanwhile you allow trawlers to rape the ICW, of every species of fish? We are the only state that allows trawlers in back waters, and then you propose limits on recreational fishermen as an answer? IT IS NOT THE REC FISHERMEN THAT ARE DESTROYING THE FISHERY, and YOU ALL KNOW IT.
548	02/22/2021 - 7:51am	Glenn Barnes		North Carolina	It is passed the time North Carolina stopped using nets in inshore and near shore waters. All of our fish start in the marshes and grow to try to make it to the ocean but get swept up in the nets mostly of the shrimpers and also gill nets. North Carolina Fisheries could be the best fishing place on the east coast if we would eliminate almost all netting and stop the MFC from there old broken ways of going for maximum fish catch vs let the fish grow in the ocean.
547	02/22/2021 - 7:47am	Mike Kucich		North Carolina	We spend all this money or license's, boats that creat revenue sells for many businesses in the surrounding counties, fishing tackle, repairs shops, plus the chance to take your kids fishing and teach them the proper way to fish and take care of fish. All of these create so much money but you give over 70% to the the commercial fishermen. It should be 50-50. How many jobs would be lost if you take away people fishing. Recreational fisherman spend a lot of money. Plus the nets kill so many other fish and small fish turtles.
546	02/22/2021 - 7:43am	Kenneth Ray Doyle Jr		North Carolina	Shrimp trawlers need to be closed to ALL NC inshore & estuary waters!! Trawling allowed in ocean only! Too much destruction of spots croaker crab gray trout taking place with trawling inshore!
545	02/22/2021 - 7:42am	Dan Kibler		North Carolina	Commercial fishermen catch almost 80 percent of the southern flounder taken in North Carolina waters. With populations plummeting and the need to restrict harvest clear, commercial fishermen should bear 80 percent of the reduction in catch. Restrictions on recreational fishermen should be in the form of smaller bag limits, not a wholesale closure of the fishery for 46 weeks a year. Drop the limit to two or three a day.
544	02/22/2021 - 7:33am	Wes Overton		North Carolina	
543	02/22/2021 - 7:32am	Michael Higgs, Jr		North Carolina	<p>1. Southern Flounder FMP-The proposed allocation and certain rules proposed by DMF are patently unfair to recreational fishermen. If the Southern flounder is to become a quota-managed fishery, then the current commercial/recreational split of 73/27 should be changed to a 50/50 allocation just like the AS/RR striped bass fishery. The use of "historical" landings to establish a quota-managed fishery further highlights the fact that the commercial industry exploited Southern flounder for three decades.</p> <p>When Division biologists were insisting that a 72% harvest reduction was needed to save the stock from collapse, they insisted that the cuts had to be "equitable." "Historically," the commercial industry was responsible for 80% of the harvest so they should have been responsible for the brunt of the reductions. No, it had to be equitable. Now the stock has to be managed by quota and DMF biologists want to use "historical" numbers instead of "equitable" numbers.</p> <p>Recreational harvest limits should be based on this new TAL and the ocean should be opened to give recreational anglers an opportunity to harvest summer and Gulf flounder during the time of year when they can be accessed. The proposed ocean access during March/April needs to be shifted in such a manner that the current recreational flounder season is lengthened in areas of the ocean where interactions with Southern flounder will be minimal. Opening the ocean fishing in March/April is another "feel good" measure that accomplishes little conservation and just locks rec anglers out. No one is fishing for them then. The ocean should be open all year for ocellated flounder. If fishermen cannot tell the difference, they should not keep any flounder. If they screw up, they get ticketed. Hook and line mortality is a lot less than net mortality. Also, dead discards DO have value in the rec fishery. Dead discards in gill nets do not. When rec anglers go fishing and do not get a keeper, money is still spent.</p> <p>2. Shrimp FMP - Ultimately, trawlers must be removed from Pamlico Sound. Several current management measures under consideration for the next FMP are beneficial to the resource and CCA NC supports them. The area closures under consideration by DMF scientists should have minimal impact on the ability to harvest shrimp while still addressing bycatch hotspots for some juvenile species, including spot, croaker, weakfish, Southern and summer flounder.</p> <p>Other proposed restrictions to reduce effort such as minimizing headrope length, closing trawling for an extra day (that should be added consecutively to the current weekend ban on trawling), and reducing tow times should be supported by the MFC. Each of these options has the potential to benefit the resource as a whole and help restore numerous habitats damaged by trawling; CCA NC sees them as a start to recovery of many troubled finfish species.</p> <p>3. Circle Hooks - Circle hooks should be required when fishing with live or cut bait for specific fisheries such as: cobia, redfish, speckled trout,</p>

SUBMITTED NAME: CITY: STATE: PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

flounder, and striped bass (already required in the Albemarle Sound per ASMFC). Doing so will clearly reduce mortality of released fish and endangered sea turtles.

542 02/22/2021 - 7:31am Savannah Higgs North Carolina

1. Southern Flounder FMP-The proposed allocation and certain rules proposed by DMF are patently unfair to recreational fishermen. If the Southern flounder is to become a quota-managed fishery, then the current commercial/recreational split of 73/27 should be changed to a 50/50 allocation just like the AS/RR striped bass fishery. The use of "historical" landings to establish a quota-managed fishery further highlights the fact that the commercial industry exploited Southern flounder for three decades.

When Division biologists were insisting that a 72% harvest reduction was needed to save the stock from collapse, they insisted that the cuts had to be "equitable." "Historically," the commercial industry was responsible for 80% of the harvest so they should have been responsible for the brunt of the reductions. No, it had to be equitable. Now the stock has to be managed by quota and DMF biologists want to use "historical" numbers instead of "equitable" numbers.

Recreational harvest limits should be based on this new TAL and the ocean should be opened to give recreational anglers an opportunity to harvest summer and Gulf flounder during the time of year when they can be accessed. The proposed ocean access during March/April needs to be shifted in such a manner that the current recreational flounder season is lengthened in areas of the ocean where interactions with Southern flounder will be minimal. Opening the ocean fishing in March/April is another "feel good" measure that accomplishes little conservation and just locks rec anglers out. No one is fishing for them then. The ocean should be open all year for ocellated flounder. If fishermen cannot tell the difference, they should not keep any flounder. If they screw up, they get ticketed. Hook and line mortality is a lot less than net mortality. Also, dead discards DO have value in the rec fishery. Dead discards in gill nets do not. When rec anglers go fishing and do not get a keeper, money is still spent.

2. Shrimp FMP - Ultimately, trawlers must be removed from Pamlico Sound. Several current management measures under consideration for the next FMP are beneficial to the resource and CCA NC supports them. The area closures under consideration by DMF scientists should have minimal impact on the ability to harvest shrimp while still addressing bycatch hotspots for some juvenile species, including spot, croaker, weakfish, Southern and summer flounder.

Other proposed restrictions to reduce effort such as minimizing headrope length, closing trawling for an extra day (that should be added consecutively to the current weekend ban on trawling), and reducing tow times should be supported by the MFC. Each of these options has the potential to benefit the resource as a whole and help restore numerous habitats damaged by trawling; CCA NC sees them as a start to recovery of many troubled finfish species.

3. Circle Hooks - Circle hooks should be required when fishing with live or cut bait for specific fisheries such as: cobia, redfish, speckled trout, flounder, and striped bass (already required in the Albemarle Sound per ASMFC). Doing so will clearly reduce mortality of released fish and endangered sea turtles.

541 02/22/2021 - 7:31am Leah Higgs North Carolina

1. Southern Flounder FMP-The proposed allocation and certain rules proposed by DMF are patently unfair to recreational fishermen. If the Southern flounder is to become a quota-managed fishery, then the current commercial/recreational split of 73/27 should be changed to a 50/50 allocation just like the AS/RR striped bass fishery. The use of "historical" landings to establish a quota-managed fishery further highlights the fact that the commercial industry exploited Southern flounder for three decades.

When Division biologists were insisting that a 72% harvest reduction was needed to save the stock from collapse, they insisted that the cuts had to be "equitable." "Historically," the commercial industry was responsible for 80% of the harvest so they should have been responsible for the brunt of the reductions. No, it had to be equitable. Now the stock has to be managed by quota and DMF biologists want to use "historical" numbers instead of "equitable" numbers.

Recreational harvest limits should be based on this new TAL and the ocean should be opened to give recreational anglers an opportunity to harvest summer and Gulf flounder during the time of year when they can be accessed. The proposed ocean access during March/April needs to be shifted in such a manner that the current recreational flounder season is lengthened in areas of the ocean where interactions with Southern flounder will be minimal. Opening the ocean fishing in March/April is another "feel good" measure that accomplishes little conservation and just locks rec anglers out. No one is fishing for them then. The ocean should be open all year for ocellated flounder. If fishermen cannot tell the difference, they should not keep any flounder. If they screw up, they get ticketed. Hook and line mortality is a lot less than net mortality. Also, dead discards DO have value in the rec fishery. Dead discards in gill nets do not. When rec anglers go fishing and do not get a keeper, money is still spent.

#	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
					<p>2. Shrimp FMP - Ultimately, trawlers must be removed from Pamlico Sound. Several current management measures under consideration for the next FMP are beneficial to the resource and CCA NC supports them. The area closures under consideration by DMF scientists should have minimal impact on the ability to harvest shrimp while still addressing bycatch hotspots for some juvenile species, including spot, croaker, weakfish, Southern and summer flounder.</p> <p>Other proposed restrictions to reduce effort such as minimizing headrope length, closing trawling for an extra day (that should be added consecutively to the current weekend ban on trawling), and reducing tow times should be supported by the MFC. Each of these options has the potential to benefit the resource as a whole and help restore numerous habitats damaged by trawling; CCA NC sees them as a start to recovery of many troubled finfish species.</p> <p>3. Circle Hooks - Circle hooks should be required when fishing with live or cut bait for specific fisheries such as: cobia, redfish, speckled trout, flounder, and striped bass (already required in the Albemarle Sound per ASMFC). Doing so will clearly reduce mortality of released fish and endangered sea turtles.</p>
540	02/22/2021 - 7:31am	Michael Higgs, Sr.		North Carolina	<p>1. Southern Flounder FMP-The proposed allocation and certain rules proposed by DMF are patently unfair to recreational fishermen. If the Southern flounder is to become a quota-managed fishery, then the current commercial/recreational split of 73/27 should be changed to a 50/50 allocation just like the AS/RR striped bass fishery. The use of "historical" landings to establish a quota-managed fishery further highlights the fact that the commercial industry exploited Southern flounder for three decades.</p> <p>When Division biologists were insisting that a 72% harvest reduction was needed to save the stock from collapse, they insisted that the cuts had to be "equitable." "Historically," the commercial industry was responsible for 80% of the harvest so they should have been responsible for the brunt of the reductions. No, it had to be equitable. Now the stock has to be managed by quota and DMF biologists want to use "historical" numbers instead of "equitable" numbers.</p> <p>Recreational harvest limits should be based on this new TAL and the ocean should be opened to give recreational anglers an opportunity to harvest summer and Gulf flounder during the time of year when they can be accessed. The proposed ocean access during March/April needs to be shifted in such a manner that the current recreational flounder season is lengthened in areas of the ocean where interactions with Southern flounder will be minimal. Opening the ocean fishing in March/April is another "feel good" measure that accomplishes little conservation and just locks rec anglers out. No one is fishing for them then. The ocean should be open all year for ocellated flounder. If fishermen cannot tell the difference, they should not keep any flounder. If they screw up, they get ticketed. Hook and line mortality is a lot less than net mortality. Also, dead discards DO have value in the rec fishery. Dead discards in gill nets do not. When rec anglers go fishing and do not get a keeper, money is still spent.</p> <p>2. Shrimp FMP - Ultimately, trawlers must be removed from Pamlico Sound. Several current management measures under consideration for the next FMP are beneficial to the resource and CCA NC supports them. The area closures under consideration by DMF scientists should have minimal impact on the ability to harvest shrimp while still addressing bycatch hotspots for some juvenile species, including spot, croaker, weakfish, Southern and summer flounder.</p> <p>Other proposed restrictions to reduce effort such as minimizing headrope length, closing trawling for an extra day (that should be added consecutively to the current weekend ban on trawling), and reducing tow times should be supported by the MFC. Each of these options has the potential to benefit the resource as a whole and help restore numerous habitats damaged by trawling; CCA NC sees them as a start to recovery of many troubled finfish species.</p> <p>3. Circle Hooks - Circle hooks should be required when fishing with live or cut bait for specific fisheries such as: cobia, redfish, speckled trout, flounder, and striped bass (already required in the Albemarle Sound per ASMFC). Doing so will clearly reduce mortality of released fish and endangered sea turtles.</p>
539	02/22/2021 - 7:20am	Michael E Albertson		North Carolina	I am against the Flounder regulations you are planning to put forth for recreational fisherman. Hook and Line fishing effects the numbers very little in everyone's opinion and A one fish per day and a 45 day season in absurd.
538	02/22/2021 - 7:18am	Jack Dunn		North Carolina	I grew up in *, North Carolina and presently spend a good deal of time on the Pamlico Sound. I encourage the commissioners to eliminate or further restrict shrimp trawling in the Pamlico Sound. The by-catch and impact on juvenile species has to broad an impact on the overall health of numerous sport fishing species and the broader ecosystem including sea grasses that are critical to water quality and lessening storm impact. If we have not already passed a law that prevents shrimping by any party where the corporation that owns the boat and the captain are not

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
					<p>registered and paying property and income tax in the state of North Carolina I propose you create legislation that does so; no other state allows in shore trawling and we should not allow any individual or corporation to take advantage of North Carolina's resource when our fisherman are not afforded reciprocity. Additionally, I support a 50/50 split between recreational anglers and commercial fisherman in the flounder fishery.</p> <p>thanks for your service to the state</p>
537	02/22/2021 - 7:17am	Shan repols		North Carolina	Rec flounder season should be open all rear. Please don't limit it to 45 days. There is no population issue.
536	02/22/2021 - 7:17am	Shan repols		North Carolina	Rec flounder season should be open all rear. Please don't limit it to 45 days. There is no population issue.
535	02/22/2021 - 7:10am	Moe biggsley		North Carolina	Make cuts to pound nets!!! They decimate southern flounder.
534	02/22/2021 - 7:09am	ROBIN TILLET		North Carolina	Let people put food on the table for gods sake...we are in a pandemic and people need to work and make money !!!
533	02/22/2021 - 7:08am	Steve		North Carolina	<p>Please open flounder season for the whole year!</p> <p>Thanks Steve</p>
532	02/22/2021 - 6:59am	Brian Hampton		North Carolina	<p>Summer/Gulf Flounder - not overfished by the recreational anglers. Recreational Flounder Season - please reconsider. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has the these species listed as NOT OVERFISHED.</p> <p>Please think about how much more North Carolina's tax base could grow if you did not shorten the flounder season as you are proposing. The tax revenue from what you are doing to the recreational fisherman who pay taxes on their boat/trailer, purchase fishing licenses, frequent local tackle shops for supplies, pay for hotel rooms, buy fuel and other taxable sources will continue to decline with a shortened season. Please consider putting millions if not billions back into the state's economy due to having a longer flounder season.</p>
531	02/22/2021 - 6:53am	Rick lehman		North Carolina	The problem is commercial fisherman are raping our waters and the recreational fishermen are paying for it by not being allowed to keep fish. This is sickening. Limit commercial fishermen's limits and increase recreational fishermen's limits!!
530	02/22/2021 - 6:53am	Aaron Linder		North Carolina	Please do not put a "season" on Gulf or summer flounder. Us rec anglers should not be punished for the damage caused by commercial netting. Get the trawlers and netters out of the ICW and creeks and you will see a big jump in fish population. I have had several biologist tell me that NC could have the best fishery on the east coast if they would just manage it right. Put a ban on inshore netting.
529	02/22/2021 - 6:43am	Ricky Miller		North Carolina	I'm all for preserving and doing what is right for the flounder resource. I've been flounder fishing, and catching, for over twenty five years. I've continually watched my rights as a recreational fisherman be taken away while the commercial side, which has the most effect on populations be basically untouched and certainly not policed. I am more than willing to do what is best for the resource on my end as a recreational fisherman, I just want the commercial side to have to do their part and do what is right for the resource so my grandchildren can enjoy what I have over my lifetime.
528	02/22/2021 - 6:40am	Charles Williams		North Carolina	What you are doing to the recreation fisherman in lieu of benefiting the commercial industry is just plain wrong. The mismanagement you guys have done to our fisheries is disappointing and down right sickening. I hope that you have finally upset enough of the fine citizens of NC that the commercial lobbyist and the long-standing love affair will be exposed and terminated. You folks need to start listening to the people and not the corporations. I truly hope the CCA lawsuit is just the first of many that will be filed if things don't change. I caught more flounder last year and striped bass than I have the past five years.
527	02/22/2021 - 6:40am	Charles Williams		North Carolina	What you are doing to the recreation fisherman in lieu of benefiting the commercial industry is just plain wrong. The mismanagement you guys have done to our fisheries is disappointing and down right sickening. I hope that you have finally upset enough of the fine citizens of NC that the commercial lobbyist and the long-standing love affair will be exposed and terminated. You folks need to start listening to the people and not the corporations. I truly hope the CCA lawsuit is just the first of many that will be filed if things don't change. I caught more flounder last year and striped bass than I have the past five years.
526	02/22/2021 - 6:40am	Charles Williams		North Carolina	What you are doing to the recreation fisherman in lieu of benefiting the commercial industry is just plain wrong. The mismanagement you guys have done to our fisheries is disappointing and down right sickening. I hope that you have finally upset enough of the fine citizens of NC that the

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
					commercial lobbyist and the long-standing love affair will be exposed and terminated. You folks need to start listening to the people and not the corporations. I truly hope the CCA lawsuit is just the first of many that will be filed if things don't change. I caught more flounder last year and striped bass than I have the past five years.
525	02/22/2021 - 6:40am	Charles Williams		North Carolina	What you are doing to the recreation fisherman in lieu of benefiting the commercial industry is just plain wrong. The mismanagement you guys have done to our fisheries is disappointing and down right sickening. I hope that you have finally upset enough of the fine citizens of NC that the commercial lobbyist and the long-standing love affair will be exposed and terminated. You folks need to start listening to the people and not the corporations. I truly hope the CCA lawsuit is just the first of many that will be filed if things don't change. I caught more flounder last year and striped bass than I have the past five years.
524	02/22/2021 - 6:40am	Charles Williams		North Carolina	What you are doing to the recreation fisherman in lieu of benefiting the commercial industry is just plain wrong. The mismanagement you guys have done to our fisheries is disappointing and down right sickening. I hope that you have finally upset enough of the fine citizens of NC that the commercial lobbyist and the long-standing love affair will be exposed and terminated. You folks need to start listening to the people and not the corporations. I truly hope the CCA lawsuit is just the first of many that will be filed if things don't change. I caught more flounder last year and striped bass than I have the past five years.
523	02/22/2021 - 6:32am	Marc Strauss		North Carolina	Ocean flounder fishing should not be so limiting, Small season and bag limit should be increased...
522	02/22/2021 - 6:22am	Bill chapman		North Carolina	Please research and understand that the impact caused by the commercial fishing industry is destroying our fisheries. Adversely, the people privately fishing has little to no impact. It is blatant corruption and a show to the lack of care to people. Please make fishing a fun and productive activity again. Stop these idiotic and pointless laws against recreational fishing, while supporting the raping and pillaging of commercial.
521	02/22/2021 - 6:19am	Bill chapman		North Carolina	
520	02/22/2021 - 6:17am	David Mcfadyen		North Carolina	I am opposed to the 73/27 split for flounder. it is beyond unfair to allow a industry to take advantage of allowing lobbyists to to persuade biologists, employees and commission members to allow such a blow to the Recreational side of the fishery to allow a few to profit for a natural resource. The marine commission had failed everyone by poor management by continued kicking the can down the road.
519	02/22/2021 - 6:17am	Kenneth M Elliott		North Carolina	
518	02/22/2021 - 6:07am	Dennis Gan		North Carolina	Summer flounder recreational fishing should be open all summer and fall in the ocean as they are NOT endangered. The limit should also remain at 4 fish. You allow trawl fishing, but want to limit the rec sector. Rec fishing generates more money and jobs than the commercial does. Ocean fishing does not impact the Southern flounder and should be seperate. Flounder are a resource for all, not just the commercial sector that contributes money to politicians!
517	02/22/2021 - 6:02am	Justin Shortt		North Carolina	I feel like recreational flounder season needs to back to the way it was with the 4 fish limit staying in place, possible size increase or even a slot similar to redfish. But I KNOW the inshore gillnets need to go, I am an avid fisherman and have fished several of our neighboring states that dont have inshore gillnets and their fisheries make NC look stupid, the bycatch from these nets are killing NC's waters and need to go
516	02/22/2021 - 5:49am	Andy hodes		North Carolina	You politicians have lost your minds. IF flounder are in distress then close the season for everyone. No netting or killing of flounder should be allowed period. How can you justify allowing a select few to harvest and not allow recs to harvest? How? Makes NO sense at all. Shut it ALL down and quit favoring those who are doing nothing more than profiting off your decisions. You are all pocketing money, being bought. You should go hide your faces!
515	02/22/2021 - 5:16am	Joshua Graves		North Carolina	
514	02/22/2021 - 5:03am	Michael Turner		North Carolina	I want to see the Summer and Gulf Flounder Fishery OPEN all Summer and Fall in the ocean as this fishery has almost no effect on the Southern Flounder population they are trying to manage! We should also be allowed a 4 fish bag limit in this fishery as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has these species listed as "Not Overfished." and NC is allowing the Commercial Flounder Trawl Fishery to continue to harvest up to 15,000 lbs of flounder in the ocean per trip both last Summer (April-June) and already this Jan.-Feb 2021. But you want to only allow the recreational fishermen a 45 day season with a proposed 1 fish per day limit. This is crap. If we get a 45 day limit give the commercial guys a 45 day limit with one fish per day!!!!

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
513	02/22/2021 - 4:57am	Andrew DiMauro		North Carolina	73/27 is ridiculous! Try to manage the species that you are having issues with not the other two. Raise our rec min size to 17" or 18" but shutting it down isn't the answer. Being 100 percent in favor with the commercial guys is not fair for us weekend anglers who care about our fishery. Oh and not to mention the gill nets!
512	02/22/2021 - 2:54am	William Lewis		North Carolina	I personally spend at least \$300 each time I travel to the coast. I fish at least 12 times a year for flounder. The fishery should support recreational flounder fishing summer and fall as it brings in significantly more revenue than commercial fishing and also provides more jobs in the coastal communities of NC. I imagine those small businesses along the coast rely on the recreational fishermen. As to the offshore flounder season, I cannot imagine most recreational flounder fisherman affording the larger, limited purpose boats required to safely flounder fish offshore. Sounds prejudice to not allow recreational fisherman without means the opportunity to enjoy flounder fishing too. "Even the field or loose the players!"
511	02/22/2021 - 2:09am	John Thomas William's jr		North Carolina	Glad to see something being done with the flounder problem and I don't have a problem with only one flounder if the season was open longer but yawl should have done something years ago and I don't agree with the reductions yawls have made on the commercial side it should be MORE. its clear who's in yawls pockets. BEING A WHEELCHAIR USER I want yawl to know yawl have made it extremely dangerous for someone like me on the water during flounder season. I cant even fish in my kayak cause the traffic is so bad. Hell you cant even find a place to park if you not at the landings by 4 30 am. Hell I even got WAKED OUT AND PUT ON THE BOTTEM by one of your DMF Officers last year after he checked me and I told him I was a paraplegic. WTF. LUCKILY I was only in 8" of water and had someone with me that day that helped pull me up on the hill and get most of the water outta my kayak. You people and the NCWRC suck when it comes to access for wheelchair users. not one...Not One.....NOT ONE ADA ACCESSIBLE KAYAK LAUNCH. IAM ASK YA JUSS LIKE I HAVE BEFORE.COME KAYAK WITH ME ILL SHOW YA THE PROBLEM. I HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO GO. EVEN HAVE ACCESS TO 3 OTHER KAYAKS. All you need is what ever pdf you use. come I'll meet ya at any landing from NH co to Bruns.co. COME KAYAK with me ..no uniforms... no extra enforcement in the area COME see what the [REDACTED] yawl have done. COME see how dangerous it is since you've put every one here at the same time to catch a flounder.
510	02/22/2021 - 1:50am	Josh Rowland		North Carolina	Please open the flounder season for recreational fisherman for summer and fall. Even if summer flounder are excluded. My sons and I travel to Wrightsville from Durham a few times a year to fish for them. I'd love for them to be able to bring one home over summer vacation.
509	02/21/2021 - 11:46pm	Hoang phan		North Carolina	I want to see the Summer and Gulf Flounder Fishery OPEN all Summer and Fall in the ocean as this fishery has almost no effect on the Southern Flounder population they are trying to manage! We should also be allowed a 4 fish bag limit in this fishery as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has these species listed as "Not Overfished."
508	02/21/2021 - 11:28pm	John Selwanes		North Carolina	I would like to see the summer and gulf flounder seasons open this summer through fall with a 4 per person bag limit.
507	02/21/2021 - 11:26pm	Doug Childs		North Carolina	Please consider less Commercial and more recreational fishing and raised the bag limit to five.
506	02/21/2021 - 11:24pm	Mike		North Carolina	I want to see the Summer and Gulf Flounder Fishery OPEN all Summer and Fall in the ocean as this fishery has almost no effect on the Southern Flounder population they are trying to manage! We should also be allowed a 4 fish bag limit in this fishery as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has these species listed as "Not Overfished."
505	02/21/2021 - 11:08pm	Rodney Jones		North Carolina	Please allow NC to have open season for recreational fishermen all summer for flounder as they are deemed not overfished in our state... bag limit should stay at four fish per person...
504	02/21/2021 - 11:01pm	Anthony Kiger		North Carolina	The regulations on rec fishing are 100% waste of time if you are going to allow commercial gill betterers in our bays. I believe NC is one of the only states that allow gill nets and that is a huge problem. It's a joke, of course most government is so this is right on par with the government standard of excellence
503	02/21/2021 - 10:45pm	Jeff Cronk		North Carolina	The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has Summer Flounder and Gulf Flounder listed as "Not Overfished." and NC is allowing the Commercial Flounder Trawl Fishery to continue to harvest up to 15,000 lbs of flounder in the ocean per trip both last Summer (April-June) and already this Jan.-Feb 2021. I have been targeting the state waters 1-3 miles off our beaches with my charters for over 20years and we rarely ever catch a Southern Flounder between June and October in the ocean. The recreational Sector should not be limited to a 45 day season in the ocean or another creel limit reduction in these waters. It is the NCDMF's job to manage the resource and allow use and access to these resources. When these resources are listed as not overfished the user groups should not be further restricted. It is also the job of the NCDMF's to use data to help make decisions. The NCDMF does not have any significant Southern Flounder data for the 1-3 mile range in the ocean to shut this fishery down. Choosing to manage our three flounder species as one because the Division doesn't feel anglers can tell the difference isn't an excuse. I understand the internal waters, especially our sounds and rivers are holding the majority of our Southern Flounder in the Summer/Fall months and this is the major concern of the NCDMF as regards identifying the species. But, as regards the Ocean, the COLREGS demarcation line at the

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
					<p>inlets should be used as a boundary line to allow access to this public resource (Summer/Gulf Flounder) during the Summer and Fall months. This would have almost no impact on the southern flounder fishery while turning quite a bit of the recreational focus away from Southern Flounder interactions and allow for an increased positive recreational economic impact. It is currently senseless to keep this Summer/Gulf Flounder fishery so limited to the recreational user group, especially with the commercial trawl fishery continuing to have full access to it.</p> <p>I do not feel that a 73%/27% allocation in favor of the Commercial Southern Flounder Fishery is equitable. This results in a 1 fish bag limit for recreational anglers. This much of a reduction in the daily creel limit from 4 to 1 will have major negative impacts on the economy through reduced trips in the Charter Industry and recreational trips as well as major loss to our economy through loss of income for Tackle Shops, Hotels, Gas Stations and more. The majority of the focused recreational fishing efforts for flounder are in the high salinity waters closer to the coast (ie, ICW, around inlets and nearby deeper channels and in the ocean) which has much less of an impact on the Southern Flounder Population than the Pound Net fisheries. Those commercial pound nets are allowed to operate in large open sounds and rivers during the time frame of the major migration of Southern Flounder heading towards the Oceans to winter over. This fishery is doing more damage to the Southern Flounder Fishery than any other user group and the 73%/27% proposed allocation would equate to about 50% of the entire allowable Flounder quota for the state to be awarded to this one user group. And the pound net fishery consists of about 100 commercial fishermen. The NCDMF economic data from 2008-2017 shows that the recreational positive impact to the economy is approximately 10 times greater than the entire commercial flounder fisheries positive impact to the economy. 100 commercial fishermen and their pound net operations shouldn't take precedence over our state southern flounder fishery management. A shift in the allocation of the quota to 60/40 or 50/50 would allow for less negative economic impact recreationally and the commercial fishery would receive higher dock prices per pound for their flounder which would help reduce the negative economic impact commercially.</p> <p>The overfishing of the Southern Flounder is due to a variety of reasons but the commercial efforts have contributed much more significantly to this problem. A few major concerns I have seen with a lifetime on NC waters as both a commercial fisherman as well as a Charter Capt. include the commercial Shrimp (Otter Trawl) bycatch in the internal waters, the commercial pound net focus on Southern Flounder during migrational times, the commercial gill net focus in the low salinity upper river areas and more. And the bycatch/dead discards of these forms of fishing are having major negative impacts to not only Southern Flounder but all of our inshore species. The NCDMF needs to focus efforts on fixing, adjusting or eliminating these fishing methods to allow our fisheries to flourish. The recreational fisherman and charter industry (the user group with the most positive economic Impact and the least negative impact on the resource) shouldn't be paying the price for all of the years of commercial overfishing and bycatch and the NCDMF's mismanagement of the public resource.</p>
502	02/21/2021 - 10:23pm	David strickland		North Carolina	Why close the flounder season and virginia and south Carolina doesn't maybe should limit netting and commercial fishers as the average recreational fisher does it for sport not money ?
501	02/21/2021 - 10:20pm	Josh Sutton		North Carolina	I want to see the Summer and Gulf Flounder Fishery OPEN all Summer and Fall in the ocean as this fishery has almost no effect on the Southern Flounder population you are trying to manage! We should also be allowed a 4 fish bag limit in this fishery as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has these species listed as "Not Overfished." and NC is allowing the Commercial Flounder Trawl Fishery to continue to harvest up to 15,000 lbs of flounder in the ocean per trip both last Summer (April-June) and already this Jan.-Feb 2021. But you want to only allow the recreational fishermen a 45 day season with a proposed 1 fish per day.
500	02/21/2021 - 10:19pm	Andrew Willis		North Carolina	Continuing to kill the amount of fish recreational guys can keep will kill the economy for the state as they will go else where. This is absolutely ridiculous, the CCA must have you all by the purse strings to continue to push this nonsense. After the "trout kill" from a few years ago from the cold you killed the season. Then people were catching large ones and in large numbers. You guys rival the DOT with the most mismanaged state department.
499	02/21/2021 - 10:16pm	Chris Coley		North Carolina	I don't see how you can tell a man like me that drives over 2 hours spends 60.00 in gas buys fishing license has a boat payment boat gas and has got to catch one fish and go back home. I caught more fish the last 3 years that I ever have. Everyone should quit buying licenses if this nonsense vote gets passed
498	02/21/2021 - 10:10pm	Worth Elliott		North Carolina	Seeing more flounder than I ever have before. I am a commercial fishermen in the pasquotank river. Mainly juvenile flounder in my small mesh nets. The CCA has a private interest in keeping North Carolina's fish on lock down for purely recreational purposes. North Carolinians value home caught seafood and fishing communities. I have done an internship with the DMF office of Elizabeth City North Carolina, and I value a sustainable fishery. I do not believe that the flounder season was fair for the commercial fishermen or the consumers and reducing it even more with little to no evidence of bad flounder stocks is the moral or economical thing to do. Thank you.

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
497	02/21/2021 - 10:09pm	Randall D Janutolo		North Carolina	Please restore recreational flounder fishing in the ocean year around and allow you to keep at least 4 a day. Each year our group of friends spend time and money at the coast to surf fish. It would be nice to at least get to grill up some legal size flounder. Using a rod and reel should in no way affect the flounder population.
496	02/21/2021 - 10:08pm	J Carlton Williams		North Carolina	I am a recreational fisherman, i spend tens of thousands of dollars yearly to pursue my passion. There are many like me who don't want to travel out of state to keep flounder. Commercial fishing of these flounder should be regulated more and the recreational fishermen should be able to keep at least 3 a day throughout the summer and fall especially offshore. Y'all are going to over regulate the public from fishing here and hand it over to out of state commercial fishermen who take there money and our resources out of state with them. Do what is right for North Carolinians!
495	02/21/2021 - 10:05pm	CHRISTIAN LACHER		North Carolina	
494	02/21/2021 - 10:04pm	James Woodward		North Carolina	<p>I am Ocean Flounder fisherman. The rules set in place created a major problem for me in 2020. I was not able to fish for the fish that I enjoy most, Worst of all, the data for Ocean Flounder seems to me extremely in accurate and inconclusive. I would image that the economic impact for fisherman like myself, may have a great tax imprecation that most of the commercial trawling that occurs in some of the state. By limiting the catch to a few weeks, created a situation where I did not go to the coast and fish -- thus - limiting the my ability to spend my money locally in our state. Rather - I found alternatives -- IE - fishing in South Carolina and Virginia -- given these states my money intended to fish in NC. I am not sure why the commercial fishery takes precedent in NC in regards to Flounder. I believe their needs to be equal footing. I am not against the commercial folks that need this fishery to survive. But, to take away both the inshore and the offshore, to the recreational fisherman is intolerable. Please allow the recreational fisherman more of a greater chance to partake in this resource more through the fishing year, and not limited to a few weeks -- where presume is enormous. I want my voice to be heard and listened to. If you would like to discuss or ask me any questions, please feel free to call me at * or by email at *@yahoo.com.</p> <p>Thank you James Woodward</p>
493	02/21/2021 - 10:04pm	Joe		North Carolina	Like so many people I believe that the NC flounder fishing has no down fall by the average recreational fisherman. But like so many recreational fishermen I don't have a padded wallet. Myself and my family enjoy fishing the coast of Carolina beach area every year and not to be able to enjoy your catch well that just seems fruitless if you really won't to control something keep an eye on you commercial giggers and such
492	02/21/2021 - 10:00pm	Worth Elliott		North Carolina	
491	02/21/2021 - 9:59pm	William smith		North Carolina	<p>I'm 66 years old and finally retired. Have looked forward to spending my retirement years enjoying inshore fishing. Like most recreational guys, we fish for fun and an occasional fresh flounder meal. I understand the commission is seriously considering reducing our season to a few weeks with 2 fish per day harvest. Certainly doesn't sound equitable to me.</p> <p>I want to see the Summer and Gulf Flounder Fishery OPEN all Summer and Fall in the ocean as this fishery has almost no effect on the Southern Flounder population they are trying to manage! We should also be allowed a 4 fish bag limit in this fishery as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has these species listed as "Not Overfished." and NC is allowing the Commercial Flounder Trawl Fishery to continue to harvest up to 15,000 lbs of flounder in the ocean per trip both last Summer (April-June) and already this Jan.-Feb 2021. But they want to only allow the recreational fishermen a 45 day season with a proposed 1 fish per day.</p> <p>Please use common sense and protect the sportsmen who respect the natural resources.</p> <p>Thank you</p>

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
490	02/21/2021 - 9:52pm	Jeb Clay		North Carolina	Open the flounder season, what going on is crazy. The commercial guys are the ones doing all the damage - A man or woman with one fishing rod in their hands isn't fishing them out . Use your head
489	02/21/2021 - 9:44pm	Shannon Dillon		Virginia	This is totally unacceptable I have been coming to North Carolina to fish several times a year. I fish with local guides and on my own boat. I rent property and spend valuable dollars in your state. I buy a license, fishing equipment and supplies in your state as do many other recreational fisherman. I estimate my family alone spent 10000 dollars in your state last year. I can promise I will not be doing it in 2021 or again until this is rectified. I have no problem with conservation and highly support it but it must be fair to all concerned. What your saying is that the commercial fishing industry is more important than the tourism industry or recreational fisherman. Make the limits fair. Thank you Shannon Dillon
488	02/21/2021 - 9:42pm	Sheldon Richardson		North Carolina	The flounder season needs to be year round with a decent limit of at least four fish daily. As a recreational fisherman and limited time to fish, this would be reasonable
487	02/21/2021 - 9:39pm	Ashley Jones		North Carolina	<p>Dear Commisioners,</p> <p>I am a concerned resident of North Carolina and wife to a professional inshore fishing guide who is worried about the future of our flounder fishery, as well as other fisheries in this state. My family and I have grown up fishing in the area and have always enjoyed the sport. I take very seriously being able to share this passion with my future children someday. Now that I am the wife of a fishing guide the issues that we face in the management of fisheries in NC has even more of an impact on my family's future. Our financial future is at risk and it has come to my attention that if action is not taken now, the current unfair ratio of the southern flounder allocation - 73% commercial to 27% recreational will continue. To achieve the necessary harvest reductions with this current allocation, the rec limit will have to be lowered to 1 per person per day because the fishery will recover during the closed season and the rec fishermen will catch more fish. Additionally, if the recreational quota is blown, there will have to be either shorter seasons or entire year closures for the rec fishery, while the commercial fishery keeps their season. This would be necessary to pay back the overages.</p> <p>The outrage that a one fish recreational limit or an outright year(s) long closure will cause will be epic, for the lack of a better word. Many fishermen will no longer see a reason to participate and this will cause many negative effects in the recreational fishing industry.. For these reasons, I think the allocation has to be adjusted. It's not fair or feasible to keep the 73/27 split. In the interest of fairness, the ratio should be at least 50/50, if not skewed heavier in favor of the recreational fishery. Let us not forget the decades and decades of abuse this fishery has faced at the hands of the commercial fishery, while the recreational fishery suffers with decreased limits and uneven minimum size requirements (15" recreational limit vs 14" commercial limit from just a few years ago for example).</p> <p>On another note, the fact that there can't be a year long recreational gulf and summer flounder season in the ocean, is extremely unfair considering the importance of that fishery to small vessel ocean fishermen and the small amount of southern flounder that are actually harvested. The concerns of fishermen not being able to tell the difference between the three could be easily mitigated with education on the issue.</p> <p>I, and I believe, most recreational fishermen want what is best for the resource and will take whatever reductions or closures necessary to ensure the future of our fisheries, but the same cannot be said for the commercial industry that has lobbied for protection against reductions for as long as the fishery has been established. I will be fully supportive of any necessary restrictions or closures, but not under the current allocations. We, as those with livelihoods at stake in the recreational fishery, are disheartened with the way the state has managed the fishery vastly in favor of the commercial fishery, to the point where at times, you cannot catch a flounder to eat, but you can go buy one caught in a gill net, pound net or by gig, earlier that day. It does not make sense to continue to be treated with injustice and have to suffer the consequences that present themselves both today, tomorrow, and in the years to come at the hands of the mismanagement of the fisheries here in our state.</p> <p>Tight lines,</p> <p>Ashley Jones</p>
486	02/21/2021 - 9:36pm	Mike Tutor		North Carolina	Open Summer an Gulf Flounder thx

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
485	02/21/2021 - 9:32pm	Dominic Genzano		North Carolina	We recreational fishermen shall be aloud to fish flounder legally. Bare minimum all year and at least 4 fish limit
484	02/21/2021 - 9:30pm	john walker		North Carolina	I would like to see the Summer and Gulf Flounder Fishery OPEN all Summer and Fall in the ocean as this fishery has almost no effect on the Southern Flounder population you are trying to manage! We should also be allowed a 4 fish bag limit in this fishery as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has these species listed as "Not Overfished." and NC is allowing the Commercial Flounder Trawl Fishery to continue to harvest up to 15,000 lbs of flounder in the ocean per trip both last Summer (April-June) and already this Jan.-Feb 2021. But you want to only allow the recreational fishermen a 45 day season with a proposed 1 fish per day. Please consider changing the proposal
483	02/21/2021 - 9:24pm	Susan von Hasseln		North Carolina	Please stop commercial fisherman from Net Raping our waterways. Lets get flounder back for all. Give our waterways a chance to heal for all species.
482	02/21/2021 - 9:18pm	James canady		North Carolina	The ocean fishery is not effected by the recreational fishing of anglers and I believe it should stay open all summer and fall with a 4 fish limit and I don't understand how the commercial guys can keep unlimited and we can only keep 4!
481	02/21/2021 - 9:18pm	JB		North Carolina	I pay for sportsmans NC CRFL fishing licenses each year to be able to catch a few fish for my family and friends to eat. I do not get to go fishing but maybe once every other weekend during my favorite months Aug - Nov. I live over an hour from the nearest boat saltwater ramp. I did not even go to NC water last year until our short flounder season was opened for a short time. Trout, drum, and flounder all have their best season to find them (for me its September time frame). Trout for me are extremely hard to catch late spring throughout the summer. Red Drum are scattered through these seasons also. Flounder for me usually show up in decent numbers in August through September. The limits/seasons on our recreational fishery are to a point that i've about decided TO NOT buy NC licenses to justify trying to catch a already slim creel limit. I purchased SC saltwater licenses last year. I fished there more to be able to actually catch something worth traveling for. I felt I had to do this to have a chance to bring a decent creel home. I honestly wish giggering flounder of both commercial and recreational would be outlawed. You take every commercial gigger killing every small flounder they come across because they are allowed to take as many as they can plus kill shorter fish than the rec guy can. Then you take the recreational gigger killing everything that looks like a legal flounder only to pull shorts off a gig and throw it back killing it. Those flounder will never get a chance to get full grown to spawn. Those small flounder aren't big enough to make a sandwich with the whole 4 fillets. There needs to be a larger length limit on the flounder for hook/line and something similsr done with giggering. The DNR is not going to enforce as much after dark and midnight and early mornings like they would in the day and the giggers know it. Our waters are being overly giggered and taking above limits. The gill nets, flounder nets and pound nets of any size should be out of our inlets. Ive seen numerous short black drum that were killed in small mesh gill nets and thrown back to waste 2 years ago on a few occasions. Keep the giggering, set nets and trawlers out of the inlet waters and off of our beach fronts. Commercial and Recreational limits and seasons must be fair to justify buying these overly expensive licenses to catch the slim creel limit that has been set and what is being proposed. Last years flounder season and limits hurt. When flounder season opened, the waterways were lit up like a Christmas tree with giggering. Killed alot of flounder. At least with a hook/line you can measure and release. Once a gig is stuck in the fish its dead crab food. Fair is fair
480	02/21/2021 - 9:15pm	Eric Sexton		North Carolina	Please open the flounder fishing season up year round. And set a decent limit. Us recreational fishermen don't get to fish too often, and when we do, we'd love to be able to keep more than one lousy fish! If things don't change, I know a ton of people are going to quit buying licenses. That's gonna hurt the fisheries even more. We can buy flounder in the stores cheaper than we can buy licenses.
479	02/21/2021 - 9:07pm	Cayton Daniels		North Carolina	I am strongly opposed to any further regulations being placed in the flounder fishery. There has got to be a stopping point to the unreasonable taking away from the fisherman of this state, recreational and commercial. Any person who is on the water day in and day out can testify there is no problem in the status quo of the southern flounder population. Using trip tickets is an unethical way of proving stock in my opinion. I back this opinion in saying I believe the information is one sided. For example if there is only a third as many pounds of flounder landed the last five years as in a five year span in the 80s.I do not think the number of gear in the water or number of active fisherman in the state is used along side the landing data. The real endangered species is the North Carolina fisherman. The way this state has handled this situation is absolutely absurd. This has hurt every fisherman in this state and the family's of every charter or commercial fisherman. You are stealing from the hardest working group of people on the planet who are willing to fight against all odds in dangerous conditions to make their livelihood and heritage live on. At a time when everyone in this country seems to be looking for a handout why not hand these boys a chance to go to work, talk about a stimulus check! Sincerely, Cayton Daniel's
478	02/21/2021 - 9:04pm	Josh Wright		North Carolina	
477	02/21/2021 - 8:59pm	William Jones		North Carolina	NC Marine Fisheries Commissioners,



SUBMITTED

NAME:

CITY:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

I am a concerned citizen of NC and a professional inshore fishing guide who is worried about the future of our flounder fishery, as well as other fisheries in this state. Obviously, as an inshore guide, the flounder fishery is important to my business, and through my lifetime and even during my short career, I have noticed a large decline in the fishery. More than anything, I am mainly concerned with the health of our public trust resource and I don't think the status quo is acceptable management of the issues we face in our fisheries. It has come to my attention that if action is not taken now, the current unfair ratio of the southern flounder allocation - 73% commercial to 27% recreational will continue. To achieve the necessary harvest reductions with this current allocation, the rec limit will have to be lowered to 1 per person per day because the fishery will recover during the closed season and the rec fishermen will catch more fish. Additionally, if the recreational quota is blown, there will have to be either shorter seasons or entire year closures for the rec fishery, while the commercial fishery keeps their season. This would be necessary to pay back the overages.

The outrage that a one fish recreational limit or an outright year(s) long closure will cause will be epic, for the lack of a better word. Many fishermen will no longer see a reason to participate and this will cause many negative effects in the recreational fishing industry, that I won't address here, but have been detailed at length in the public forum. For these reasons, I think the allocation has to be adjusted. It's not fair or feasible to keep the 73/27 split. In the interest of fairness, the ratio should be at least 50/50, if not skewed heavier in favor of the recreational fishery. Let us not forget the decades and decades of abuse this fishery has faced at the hands of the commercial fishery, while the recreational fishery suffers with decreased limits and uneven minimum size requirements (15" recreational limit vs 14" commercial limit from just a few years ago for example).

On another note, the fact that there can't be a year long recreational gulf and summer flounder season in the ocean, is extremely unfair considering the importance of that fishery to small vessel ocean fishermen and the small amount of southern flounder that are actually caught out there. The concerns of fishermen not being able to tell the difference between the three could be easily mitigated with education on the issue.

I, and I believe, most recreational fishermen want what is best for the resource and will take whatever reductions or closures necessary to ensure the future of our fisheries, but the same cannot be said for the commercial industry that has lobbied for protection against reductions for as long as the fishery has been established. I will be fully supportive of any necessary restrictions or closures, but not under the current allocations. We, as participants in the recreational fishery, are fed up with the way the state has managed the fishery vastly in favor of the commercial fishery, to the point where at times, you cannot catch a flounder to eat, but you can go buy one caught in a gill net, pound net or by gig, earlier that day.

476

02/21/2021 - 8:29pm

Jerry Pate

North Carolina

Need longer flounder fishing season in ocean

475

02/21/2021 - 8:15pm

Stuart Creighton

North Carolina

Thank you all for the opportunity to speak with you this evening.

How do I adequately express my concerns in three minutes? How can I convey with enough conviction that our fisheries are in serious trouble, principally because this commission and this division will not manage in a timely and proactive manner? During this meeting, perhaps more than others, all of the issues that I, and many others, have brought to your attention in the past are once again staring at you, still demanding action, the kind of action that you have been unwilling to take, but the kind of action that you must take, and take now in order to recover our dwindling stocks.

First, our striped bass continue to decline. Evidence shows that in EVERY major river system, the fish are depleted and overfished, with overfishing continuing to occur. The reasons cited are numerous...physical factors such as locks and dams in the Cape Fear, incorrect flows on the Neuse, Tar-Pamlico, and Roanoke Rivers; and overfishing with excessive bycatch from both user groups. The news is especially troubling on the RR/ASMA because this has been the one area of the state where natural spawning occurs regularly. Now, five consecutive years of excessive flows during the spawn have resulted in little to no recruitment. Yet during that time, harvest continued with no action by the division. No adjustments were made to allowable landings, no changes were called for to recreational or commercial gears. The only thought seemed to be: just keep harvesting, it'll be better next year. Now, once again, the angling community is forced to consider drastic choices if we are to recover the stock. Realistically, and unfortunately, another long-term closure is the best option. Recreational discard mortality could have been minimized by requiring the use of barbless or circle hooks much sooner. Yes, it is up for consideration now, but will it pass? Or will action be delayed again unnecessarily? Striper bycatch in shad nets is high, as it is in large mesh flounder nets. When will these gears be removed? Stripers can easily be caught with hook and line (as can shad) and commercial fishermen would be very successful catching their daily limit if hook and line fishing replaced gill nets. According to the Division, adaptive management measures were built into the striper FMP. Why did it take four years for them to be proposed for the RR/ASMA?

New management measures are now up for consideration in the southern flounder fishery, another one that has been severely overfished for decades. So now, to recover the stock, both recreational and commercial anglers will have a short season in which to catch them. Both user



SUBMITTED

NAME:

CITY:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

groups will be under a quota that is designed to reduce harvest by 72%. The Division is pushing for the allotment to fall along the "historical" averages of 73/27 commercial/recreational. I find this split inequitable because the commercial industry is doubtlessly the cause of this problem. Recent history shows that every time the DMF proposed cuts to the fishery, the commercial lobby prevented any and all substantive actions from happening. Simple logic tells you that the group that is most directly responsible for the problem should bear the brunt of the restrictions. We also cannot forget that every significant change to the harvest of southern flounder has been dumped on the recreational fisherman while the commercial industry continued to harvest with no limits. It is time for the commercial industry to take the brunt of the cuts, therefore, a 50/50 split would be most appropriate.

The Division is also pushing for a one fish per person per day recreational creel limit for southern flounder. I get the logic behind that. I don't like it for the reasons mentioned above, but I could accept it IF AND ONLY IF recreational anglers had access to the gulf and summer flounder that are found in the nearshore regions of the ocean. The proposed "increased access" in March and April is honestly ludicrous. No one fishes for them during that time of the year, the weather is too unstable. The 45 days should be instead be added to the summer season. In addition, since ocellated flounder stocks are healthy, a daily limit of 2-4 fish per person per day should be allowed.

The new shrimp amendment will also be examined. What I find pleasantly surprising in this proposal is that the management measures under consideration are very much resource friendly. While they do fall short of what must ultimately happen, which is that trawlers must be removed from Pamlico Sound, they do provide options that will help the resource in numerous ways. Every single one of them needs to be approved. Area closures, reducing headrope length, adding a third day to the weekend restrictions currently in place, et al should be enacted to reduce bycatch and to protect and restore critical habitat.

While not on the docket for this meeting, the latest updates for the speckled trout FMP will be undertaken this year. We all know that the trout fishery was robustly healthy in 2019. However, since then, the effort on trout has been absolutely incredible. Closures in other fisheries forced both recreational and commercial fishermen to target trout in such a manner that effort skyrocketed. Both user groups will show a record harvest for 2019 and 2020. What the numbers will not show is that the latent commercial harvest for "personal consumption" was also stunning. A full 60% (66% in 2020) of SCFL holders registered no trip tickets during this time. However, that effort was still present, and on a scale much larger than the Division will acknowledge. The Covid pandemic has also significantly affected the DMF's ability to monitor harvest and collect data. How has that affected the numbers for trout and other species? How will that drive future management decisions for trout?

The continuing litany of problems facing North Carolina's estuarine fisheries demonstrates one thing: the long-held philosophy of maximum extraction is not working. It is the wrong way to approach management because it is reactionary. It is the wrong way to approach management because it is political and full of bias. Furthermore, the process of incorporating changes to any FMP is awkward, cumbersome, lengthy, and favors status quo. Recent divisional changes to the management process claim to have streamlined things. In actuality, they have further minimized public input to a public trust resource. That action has only led to more distrust and frustration from those to whom the resource belongs. The time to manage our resources proactively is now. The time to manage our resources to favor conservation and sustainability is now. At this meeting, this commission has the chance to put us on the road to recovery. The question is: will you?

Sincerely,
Stuart Creighton
CCA NC

474

02/21/2021 - 8:09pm

Matthew Maddox

North Carolina

I am writing In opposition of the proposed flounder regulations. It's time this state stopped babying the commercial fisherman and give recreational anglers the same access to OUR resources! Commercial fishermen are no different than any other worker in this state that doesn't have the state taking care of them.

473

02/21/2021 - 8:09pm

Stephen Thomas

North Carolina

Rec fishing benefits to the state are so much more than commercial. We have to move on from unsustainable policies and the old way of thinking... We are blessed with a remarkable resource and we are squandering it.. I don't understand why.

472

02/21/2021 - 8:03pm

Dewayne Holmes

North Carolina

Why is it there only about a 100 pound netters but yet they make up for half the commercial fisheries in fall, why is these 100 folks part time job more important than us recreational guys

471

02/21/2021 - 7:46pm

Chris

North Carolina

It saddens me to know that people in positions for the state and especially NCDMF are pushing to keep putting a ridiculous amount of regulation on the family or charter Captain Hook and line guys. Trust me I totally agree with some regulation to preserve the best interest of the fishery numbers. The sad part is, the weekend fisherman as well as the charter captain that may take 3 people out for hire on a half day or less trip is the one that gets slammed to the ground every time. I appreciate the commercial fishermen but the regulation has to go to them. A ridiculous amount of poundage for specific species a day which don't include the bycatch that takes place. Some one has to step back visit coastal locations, get on boats, do ride along or something before these decisions are made. One simple decision like this additional regulation affects people's jobs as

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
					Charter captain clear down to the boat builder. If a man can't keep enough fish to feed his family when he goes he's not going to continue purchasing boats, fishing supplies, fuel, on and on. Please re consider these thoughts and decisions on how it affects the guys that are not the real problem. Also sadly enough all these regulations that are being put in place to not affect commercial fishermen/trawlers but most of our seafood is exported so we aren't even able to enjoy what comes from our own waters. Before you make these decisions, please consider limiting gigging, and commercial limits. Aside from that gulf and northern flounder species have nothing to do with southern flounder. It's not right to regulate all species to protect one. Again please consider other options on the process of preserving the fishery. Hook and line guys, we are already to the point of it's not worth even going to enjoy a day on the water because we can't even catch and keep enough to feed our family a meal. Thanks for this consideration and please think outside the box.
470	02/21/2021 - 7:37pm	Chad		North Carolina	I have been flounder fishing in the ocean for around 5 years now and as far as I can remember I have not caught any Southern Flounder. Everything is gulf or summer. Please do not punish recreational fishermen who only get to fish for them a few times a year. Love taking my family out there to catch them and enjoy them for dinner as well.
469	02/21/2021 - 7:36pm	Joe mazurek		North Carolina	I am a avid fisherman for recreational flounder, I fish the Hampstead area and hardly catch a limit but enjoy keeping them when I do. My suggestion would be to make the limit of at least 2 fish at 18" and keep the rec season open all year. I would also stop the gigging even though I love to do it, i think the fish are over gigged in my area.
468	02/21/2021 - 7:21pm	Brian Page		North Carolina	Cut both commercial and recreational limits back with a 50/50 share .If u would enforce the rules maybe we would not be in the mess it is in how that i watch for the last 20 years or so
467	02/21/2021 - 7:21pm	Brian Page		North Carolina	Cut both commercial and recreational limits back with a 50/50 share .If u would enforce the rules maybe we would not be in the mess it is in how that i watch for the last 20 years or so
466	02/21/2021 - 7:19pm	Nathan Counts		North Carolina	Please allow our fisherman to have a longer flounder season. I think it is unfair for recreational fisherman to only be allowed a 45 day season. This limits clients for charter trips. Other states have great fisheries and commercial fisherman that can make a living without inshore trawling. Ban inshore trawling and make commercial fishermen adapt. Stop "punishing" recreational fishermen and better regulate commercial fishing. also gill netting trout on white oak river makes it essentially in fish able once gill nets are used. Follow other states, ban gill nets and make commercial fishers adapt
465	02/21/2021 - 7:17pm	Amanda King		North Carolina	My name is Amanda King; I am a fishing guide in * Beach. I'm writing to express concern over our Flounder fishery and proposed changes for this year. My customers are predominately Flounder fishermen. Last year, on top of COVID, I lost additional income from customers not booking trips. I understand our Southern Flounder populations are not acceptable, however, I strongly feel recreational hook and line fishermen are getting cheated with such short seasons and if you add a one fish limit on top of that this year, I may lose my final few customers. I say this because it's not worth a \$350 half day trip fee to be able to keep and eat 1 fish. Any Flounder that have to be released will be caught by a commercial net and sold at the seafood dealer - so it upsets me that my customers have to release a fish from their \$350 trip but if they wanted to eat Flounder that night they would then have to go spend another \$15-20+ on a Flounder at a local seafood store. These strict limits on recreational fishermen are hurting wallets and local tourism, and doing little to conserving populations when nets are allowed a higher quota. I believe in conservation and catch & release practices but I do feel the current / proposed Flounder fishery regulations being imposed on recreational boats is detrimental to both myself and the economy. Please reconsider.
464	02/21/2021 - 6:59pm	Heather horton		North Carolina	Some additional points that make me mad! I have to release these fish but can buy them over the counter at all the local fish houses. Just curious pound nets don't have a yearly quota why is that? Shouldn't this be addressed before a man with a hook and line? Also why is it large mesh gill nets for flounder are still allowed? Shouldn't that outdated gear be permanently banned like all other states. As a business owner the effect on the local economy is much great than the effect on southern flounder. Why was there a trawling bycatch allowance for flounder in 2020 but you couldn't catch and keep you own? Just stupid stuff right here. Why did inshore shrimp trawlers get a free pass on southern flounder? Why was there southern flounder bycatch not addressed? Shouldn't that be looked at before a man standing on the beach or a boat with a hook and line? Let's be real and make educated decision. The rec anglers deserve better.
463	02/21/2021 - 6:58pm	Heather horton		North Carolina	

#	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
462	02/21/2021 - 6:57pm	Bobby Dey		North Carolina	<p>The statistical evidence tells us that the Flounder stock in NC is in horrific shape and has been over fished for decades. No one is disputing this fact.</p> <p>When managing risk, which is what I do, you determine a root cause of a problem. Why? Because until you address the root cause, the problem will not be solved.</p> <p>For instance if you have multiple DUI's the answer is not to moderate your drinking and driving. The answer is to not drink and drive. We know that drinking and driving is bad. It kills people. We know there is a direct statistical correlation between drinking and driving and bad things happening. In the 60/70's society did not fully comprehend the direct correlation- but now everyone knows that the root cause of these events is the drinking and that getting behind the wheel is criminal.</p> <p>So why is the Flounder stock in NC not only decimated, but also in the worst shape of the entire east coast? What is it about the waters of NC that would cause such decimation? What are other states doing that we are not? What are we doing that other states are not?</p> <p>The simple answer is gill nets. We allow them, and the rest of the country does. It's as if NC allows a certain level of drinking and driving and then wonders why our highway fatality rates are so much higher than our peers.</p> <p>Gill nets kill an inordinate / disproportionate amount of flounder and other by catch. Our outdated laws allow this. There is direct statistical evidence that correlates these facts.</p> <p>In the 70's America woke up to the fact that bad laws allowed bad outcomes in regards to pollution. The laws were changed to protect our common resource. The new laws addressed the root cause. These revised laws stopped a behavior that was causing the problem.</p> <p>As the decision makers of our public policy you have the ultimate responsibility to protect the resource. You are the stewards. The stock is decimated, that we all agree on (at least I assume we agree on this?) There is direct statistical evidence that proves gill nets are a huge part of the problem.</p> <p>The question that I have is -</p> <p>Do you, as stewards of a decimated resource, have the courage to cut the chains of the outdated laws that are killing our once great fishery?</p> <p>Or will you settle for half measures that will not address the root cause and continue the decimation?</p> <p>If it's the latter, then we you will be do the same thing and expecting a different outcome. Einstein had something to say about this.</p> <p>If you do have the courage to change - then let's make the decision to address the root cause.</p>
461	02/21/2021 - 6:55pm	Curtis Smith		South Carolina	<p>As a charter guide on the border of North Carolina and South Carolina, I find this proposed regulation of 70/30 in favor of commercial fishing an absolute joke. I attended the meetings last year when it was proposed by other captains to allow us as recreation guys to keep one per customer, and watched as it fell on deaf ears. Now the commission wants to take even more from the average everyday people to line the pockets of the few commercial fishermen. North Carolina has the largest estuary system on the east coast and has got to do a better job of protecting it from nets, traps, etc not only for themselves, but as well as for South Carolina and Virginia as they too depend on that estuary to raise the fish that they enjoy catching. I feel that allowing netting to continue along with the higher catch limits of commercial fisherman will continue to deplete an already stressed resource. No other state on the east coast allows inshore gill netting and the benefits of that, as well as a stocking program, are easily seen in other states.</p>
460	02/21/2021 - 6:55pm	Nolan Drylie		North Carolina	<p>Reduce limits on gill netting, whether it be seasonal restrictions or over all creel limitations. Commercial fishing is destroying our fisheries Gill netting as a whole is a nuisance.</p>
459	02/21/2021 - 6:53pm	Jackie Freeman		North Carolina	<p>DMF, We live in * County, N.C. The proposed allocation and certain rules proposed by DMF are patently unfair to recreational fishermen. If the Southern flounder is to become a quota-managed fishery, then the current commercial/recreational split of 73/27 should be changed to a 50/50 allocation just like the AS/RR striped bass fishery. The use of "historical" landings to establish a quota-managed fishery further highlights the fact that the commercial industry exploited Southern flounder for three decades.</p>



SUBMITTED

NAME:

CITY:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

When Division biologists were insisting that a 72% harvest reduction was needed to save the stock from collapse, they insisted that the cuts had to be "equitable." "Historically," the commercial industry was responsible for 80% of the harvest so they should have been responsible for the brunt of the reductions. No, it had to be equitable. Now the stock has to be managed by quota and DMF biologists want to use "historical" numbers instead of "equitable" numbers.

Recreational harvest limits should be based on this new TAL and the ocean should be opened to give recreational anglers an opportunity to harvest summer and Gulf flounder during the time of year when they can be accessed. The proposed ocean access during March/April needs to be shifted in such a manner that the current recreational flounder season is lengthened in areas of the ocean where interactions with Southern flounder will be minimal. Opening the ocean fishing in March/April is another "feel good" measure that accomplishes little conservation and just locks rec anglers out. No one is fishing for them then. The ocean should be open all year for oscillated flounder.

Since these two ocean stocks are currently healthy, a daily creel limit of 2 - 4 fish with the same 15" minimum length should be allowed. Finally, with this specific fishery under such stress, gill nets allowed under the RCGL should be discontinued, just as large mesh gill nets should be removed as an acceptable commercial gear.

Talking with an angler from New Orleans, he said N.C. should do as Louisiana and remove gill nets as stated above and the trawlers from our estuaries. less than 10 years fisheries were back strong. This same statement was also made by George Poveromo world known professional fisherman and guide January 2019 in Wilmington N.C. during a seminar with 400 anglers and other local charter captains.

Some of the above was taken from Carolina Tidelines and we could have not said it any better. We did speak at the open session Dec, 9th 2019 in Morehead City. As stated then and now, limit the southern flounder fishing to 18 inch size. One fish a day, open season June 1st to October 15th. Ocean fishing open the same seasons with above, 2-4 per angler, 15 inch limit or 16 inch. Circle hooks for live and cut bait. Flounder, trout, reds. Anglers should be required to have flounder identification photos of the summer and gulf flounder to ensure accuracy of legal fish. Maybe a flounder stamp of \$5 per angler for identification guide cost.

Respectfully,
Jackie Freeman

458

02/21/2021 - 6:51pm

John Harris

North Carolina

I am recreational fisherman. Summer and gulf flounder should be opened and the Southern flounder can be still be regulated differently. Education can help fisherman learn the difference between the species.

The harm to the tourism and recreation fishing industry take a massive blow by these unnecessary restrictions on Summer flounder

457

02/21/2021 - 6:47pm

Douglas Harris

North Carolina

Please open the recreational flounder season all year in NC with a 4 per person bag limit. If you are going to limit anything limit commercial fishing .

456

02/21/2021 - 6:40pm

Randy Wood

North Carolina

Please consider the effect of severely limiting the taking of flounder by recreational fishermen. I have a home and boat in * county for 14 years. My yearly cost is \$10,000 per year. This does not include tackle, gas and food. In past 4 years, I have spent over \$5000 with * on boat accessories and service. If I am reduced to one flounder and a 45 day season, what may I keep? Georgetown, SC is closer. Will be time to make a change. Do the right thing. Be on the correct side of history.

455

02/21/2021 - 6:30pm

Chris wright

North Carolina

Your new proposal is utter bullshit. The flounder are plentiful as is. What marine fisheries are doing should be illegal and probably is.

454

02/21/2021 - 6:27pm

Matthew Paylor

North Carolina

I strongly support recreational and commercial flounder fishing, but increasing commercial allocation while simultaneously decreasing rec is appalling. The 45 day season was ridiculous and hurts. Most recs are probably fishing 1 or 2 days each week due to weather and non-fishing jobs. My estimate is that means these folks probably only had 12 chances to flounder fish, but likely less due to weather, etc. for this past year (2020) Inshore fishing for flounder is not only a favorite hobby for many recs, but also a god-given right. At a minimum, it would make sense to allow flounder fishing nearshore in the ocean for recs year round with the similar bag limits we've had in the past decade. Keep the nets and gigs out of nurseries and you will see the inshore southern population bounce back quickly. Perhaps only allow gigging commercially if 75% or more of a person's annual income comes from commercial fishing. Feel free to contact me via phone/email/text/Facebook and I can elaborate. Thank you

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
453	02/21/2021 - 6:21pm	Anthony Stokes		North Carolina	It is a shame your agency allows the needs of a few commercial boats dictate the people's resources..The DMF should be abolished and the merged with the NC Wildlife division..Maybe the feds should take over since the State is incapable of fairly overseeing the "people's" resources not the commercial fishing resources. Recreational fishing generates way more revenue than does the commercial guys. Also it is possible to have both. Just look at Texas and Louisiana. Time to ban both gill nets and inshore trawling.
452	02/21/2021 - 6:16pm	Nick Bolton		North Carolina	The proposed allocation of the southern flounder is absolutely absurd. Recreational anglers only allowed 1 flounder? How does this help when commercial anglers are still allowed to net at the rate they are. Netting is the entire problem of our fishery. Summer and gulf flounder should be open all summer and fall to recreational fishermen with a 4 fish limit. Stop allowing commercial fishermen to destroy our fishery all the while punishing us recreational guys. It is time to ban netting now!
451	02/21/2021 - 6:14pm	Steve Haynes		North Carolina	45 days and one flounder per person/day is ridiculous for recreational fishermen. And you keep increasing fishing license prices. Crooks is what you all are. Complete bullshit!!!!
450	02/21/2021 - 6:13pm	Kurt Bowles		Virginia	I'm not from NC, but visit very often. Your flounder regulations are absurd. I will be considering other locations rather than NC. From what I've seen, the revenue numbers are a lot more in favor of the tourist and recreational fishermen than commercial fishermen.
449	02/21/2021 - 5:43pm	Jerry lee		North Carolina	I fished the summer flounder season last year and had the best season of my life. I have flounder fished creeks my whole life and the fish we are catching in the ocean is not having an effect on the creeks what so ever. You are trying to hurt the conservationists while allowing the commercial guys all the benefits. We can handle a summer and fall flounder season with a big fish limit of 16 inches or better in the ocean and try it for two years and see how it affects the population. You need to get on board and help the little guys and not taking money in your political pockets to help other people push their vote and get rich.
448	02/21/2021 - 5:22pm	Johnny Stancil		North Carolina	I feel like netting for flounder should be outlawed. It's a shame and disgraceful for you to continually allow this method of fishing of such a damaged resource. It's your fault after decades of allowing commercial fishing to lobby and continue to buy your allegiances to their destructive methods. YOUR names will forever be remembered as the people who created the destruction of our flounder population along with other species of fish and mammals for personal profit. SHAME ON YOU. HISTORY WON'T FORGET!!!
447	02/21/2021 - 5:03pm	Brittany Bridgeman		North Carolina	The commercial fishing needs to be more restricted than the normal every day fishermen.the commercial gigging needs to stop. That's where all the flounder is going. I've seen pictures of commercial gigging boats with 100 flounder in one night that's wrong for them to be able to do that and I can't even keep one when I come down to Carolina Beach for vacation. Now I have to go to South Carolina beach so I can fish for flounder.you will be losing my money for the fishing license. You need to do something for the us so we can fish not just the commercial fishing.
446	02/21/2021 - 4:57pm	John Lenzmeier	Raleigh	North Carolina	<p>I made a comment on Saturday and 2/20 - there was a typo in the 4th paragraph - here is the amended version.</p> <p>The statistical evidence tells us that the Flounder stock in NC is in horrific shape and has been over fished for decades. No one is disputing this fact.</p> <p>When managing risk, which is what I do, you determine a root cause of a problem. Why? Because until you address the root cause, the problem will not be solved.</p> <p>For instance if you have multiple DUI's the answer is not to moderate your drinking and driving. The answer is to not drink and drive. We know that drinking and driving is bad. It kills people. We know there is a direct statistical correlation between drinking and driving and bad things happening. In the 60/70's society did not fully comprehend the direct correlation- but now everyone knows that the root cause of these events is the drinking and that getting behind the wheel is criminal.</p> <p>So why is the Flounder stock in NC not only decimated, but also in the worst shape of the entire east coast? What is it about the waters of NC that would cause such decimation? What are other states doing that we are not? What are we doing that other states are not?</p> <p>The simple answer is gill nets. We allow them, and the rest of the country does not. It's as if NC allows a certain level of drinking and driving and then wonders why our highway fatality rates are so much higher than our peers.</p> <p>Gill nets kill an inordinate / disproportionate amount of flounder and other by catch. Our outdated laws allow this. There is direct statistical evidence that correlates these facts.</p> <p>In the 70's America woke up to the fact that bad laws allowed bad outcomes in regards to pollution. The laws were changed to protect our common resource. The new laws addressed the root cause. These revised laws stopped a behavior that was causing the problem.</p>

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
					<p>As the decision makers of our public policy you have the ultimate responsibility to protect the resource. You are the stewards. The stock is decimated, that we all agree on (at least I assume we agree on this?) There is direct statistical evidence that proves gill nets are a huge part of the problem.</p> <p>The question that I have is -</p> <p>Do you, as stewards of a decimated resource, have the courage to cut the chains of the outdated laws that are killing our once great fishery?</p> <p>Or will you settle for half measures that will not address the root cause and continue the decimation?</p> <p>If it's the latter, then you will be doing the same thing and expecting a different outcome. Einstein had something to say about this.</p> <p>If you do have the courage to change - then let's make the decision to address the root cause.</p>
445	02/21/2021 - 4:38pm	Debbie Lovick		North Carolina	
444	02/21/2021 - 4:35pm	Louis Midgett jr		North Carolina	Why would you separate Commercial and Recreation.. it makes them against each other. And you need more of a season than 1 month.
443	02/21/2021 - 4:14pm	Tim Stroud		North Carolina	Please stop the overfishing of flounder and all other species by banning these gill nets as other states with much healthier have already done. How many undersized fish die each year by this means of harvest?
442	02/21/2021 - 4:10pm	Wayne		North Carolina	Rec fishermen need to be watched closer i had 5 or 6 come in to my shop and brag about how many flounder they had giggered this passed season going home and dropping off one limit and getting two or 3 more not rite never see a officer at any of the boat ramps
441	02/21/2021 - 4:08pm	Cary Powell		North Carolina	To reduce the rec fisherman when they aren't the problem is utter stupidity. The commercial part timers who set gill nets that kill everything they touch are the problem. Why is nc the only state that still allows this on the east coast? Why is the rec fisherman having to shoulder so much of the burden? This is everyone's resource,
440	02/21/2021 - 3:42pm	John M Rhodes		North Carolina	The practice of allowing multi-species gill nets in the bays, rivers, and creeks cannot be in the best interest of the stripped bass recover effort. Why is it that Gill nets are allowed in the back of creeks, which is a nursery area for many fish, is such a confusing practice. Are we sure we are protecting anything?
439	02/21/2021 - 3:32pm	Grant Wilson		North Carolina	<p>My name is Grant Wilson and I am 27 years old. For my entire life the outerbanks has been a special place to me and my family because we are so heavily into fishing. I'm writing you to urge for a change. I love our North Carolina wildlife so so much and I would do anything to help preserve its future. Whether it's new regulations or whatever is needed we have to save our fishery here in this state.</p> <p>Please consider a fair, uniform approach to manage our flounder stock both recreational and commercial. A 73/27 split just isn't fair. We need new regulations on traw nets and just the enormous amount of bicatch that is killed from nets in our waters. Recreational fishing is my life and what I love. I currently am in the process of getting my captains license so I can guide fishing charters so I can't sit idly by and let my future be destroyed.</p> <p>Thank you so much for reading! - Grant</p>
438	02/21/2021 - 3:27pm	John M Rhodes		North Carolina	The current proposal of allocation of 73/27% for North Carolina flounder harvest is an unfair distribution of the flounder resource. The allocation should be 50/50%.
437	02/21/2021 - 3:21pm	John Rhodes		North Carolina	It is my understanding that less than 150 individuals operate pound nets in North Carolina. I have personally witnessed sea turtles trapped in these pound nets. Pound nets are set out during the fall migration for flounder. So while the entire population of North Carolina is not allowed to keep one flounder, this small group of pound net owners are allowed to harvest thousands of flounders. This does not seem like a fair distribution of the resource.
436	02/21/2021 - 3:01pm	Michael		North Carolina	I am against the 73/27 allocation of southern flounder to the commercial sector. It is time to address the real problem, nets. Quit punishing recreational fisherman for what Gill nets are doing. Quit worrying about your bank accounts and wake up before it is too late.

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
435	02/21/2021 - 2:45pm	Christopher Johnson		North Carolina	I urge you to consider opening flounder season for recreational anglers. Summer and gulf flounder especially can be managed separate from the Southern flounder. Please consider allowing recs to jig on the outside for these species. I would also urge you to consider the four fish limit again.
434	02/21/2021 - 2:40pm	Mitchell Hardee		North Carolina	It's unfair to put commercial above personal. The amount we catch is a drop in the bucket to the commercial industry. It's unfair to the fishermen who have invested so much.
433	02/21/2021 - 2:40pm	Rupert Brown		North Carolina	The 73/27 ratio is killing the everyday fishermen. I see more gill nets than rid nd reels. This need to stop. They talk about sharing our experience with young children and show them why we live to fish. How can this happen if you stop or come flounder season? Please reconsider your actions. Thanks
432	02/21/2021 - 2:36pm	Donald Beaver		North Carolina	I have fished the coast of NC for over 50 years and have witness the decline of our fishery. It is time we remove the nets and trawlers from the sounds. If we do not do take the need measures to protect the decline of the fishery there will be nothing left to pass along to our grandchildren. For many years you have tried to slow down the decline on the backs of the Recreational fisherman while you supported the commercial fisherman. That has not worked. GET THE NETS AND TRAWLERS OUT OF THE NURSERY !!!
431	02/21/2021 - 2:17pm	Jonathan Weeks		North Carolina	I'm a commercial fisherman with a local seafood market. My livelyhood family and customers depends on us being able to harvest flounder. We have already took a major hit on flounder and any further action will close my business and cripple my family. We depend on flounder harvest to make it through the summer months. Please do not take any further action to the commercial sector.
430	02/21/2021 - 2:15pm	Albert Beaujean Jr		North Carolina	I'am in favor of the MFC 50/50 allocation plan. Today we do not know where Sourthern flounder go to spawn offshore but we do know they migrate. I propose the 50/50 plan to give the ECU scientist using the acoustic wave glider (BlackBeard) time to study the offshore habits of southern flounder. Limiting the commercial harvest offshore will provide the scientist time to do further study of the southern flounder. Also provide both parties the same amount of fishing days. We as giggers are at the merci of the weather and 45 days we were only gigging six of the 45 days. The only other option I support is closing the season entirely until stock rebounds and rules are in place when it re-opens. I hope it doesn't come to this as father time is not on my side. I totally support the MF commission funding more research through ECU to understand Southern Flounder better and their migratory paths.
429	02/21/2021 - 2:10pm	Chris medlin		North Carolina	Dear commissioners, I own a tackle shop here in *City. The closure has certainly affected my bottom line. Since the closure I have lost sales on tons of flounder gear. The cuts need to be equitable. There should never be a time when it is illegal for a man to catch a fish for himself when it is legal for another man to catch the same fish and sell to the man who can not catch his own. That sounds a lot like communism to me. If a fishery needs to be shut down it should be shut down for all. The cuts should at the least be 50% on the Rec side and 50% on the commercial side. The 70/30 split is absolutely appalling. Once again we see the commission deciding to let the average man take the hit while the folks with the better lobbyist get to continue fishing. Shut it down for everyone if the stock is in that bad of shape. Better yet how about we learn from every other state and ban nets from interior waters.
428	02/21/2021 - 1:35pm	Bill Worthington		North Carolina	You need to start considering sport fisherman more seriously. We are constantly having limits reduced (flounder and trout to name two), while you continue to let commercial fishermen have a free reign. I am not against commercial fishermen, but when you consider our sister stars to the south and their liberal limits, it seems you would be able to recognize there is a huge problem here. Stop the inshore trawling and get the better out of the creeks. This should be about the health of the fishery and not who has the best lobbyists. We are the only state that allows inshore commercial trawling and we allow them to pull directly through the flounder spawning grounds in the sounds. Do the right thing for once!
427	02/21/2021 - 1:31pm	Kyle Angell		North Carolina	You need to get rid of the inshore nets and trawlers out of the Pamlico. Get the politicians out of the fishery and all of the bribes from the commercial lobbyist!!!!
426	02/21/2021 - 1:20pm	Daniel Early		North Carolina	I have friends and family members in the commercial fishing industry, and all these excess regulations are driving them out of business.
425	02/21/2021 - 1:14pm	Michael Fitzpatrick		North Carolina	Recreational fishermen are being unduly penalized due to Southern flounder impact by commercial inshore netting. The recreational fishing season for Southern flounder should be extended and Summer flounder season should be year round with a 4 fish daily bag limit and 15" size

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
					limit. It is unfair to the recreational fishermen to limit the season to 45 days while continuing to allow commercial fishing offshore. The commercial fishing should be more restrictive for Southern flounder and Southern and Summer flounder limits differentiated.
424	02/21/2021 - 1:02pm	Christopher Exley		North Carolina	I will not stand by while Recreational angler's voices are ignored. The recreational facet of NC's fisheries are being steered incorrectly. Recreational trips, tourism, fishing charters, and sporting goods sales all feed from the benefits of a healthy fishery. NC's fishery is becoming a joke, I am a licensed Capt. and Fishing Charter Guide and this fishery is in need of much overdue care to the entire ecosystem (farming runoff, plastic waste, channels that need credit, inlets that need jetties and actual safe passage to and from the ocean. All of which feeds the draw of both the fish and the anglers that pursue them outdoors. Take the commercial and recreational nets out of our inshore waters, no exceptions. Change methods of shrimping to reduce the bycatch mortality rates of juvenile fish. Think cast net use and shrimp harvested off of dough and clay dough mats marked by PVC posts that have to be labeled with the owners information. I've been met by DMF survey folks at the docks on many occasions so I know you have proof that recreational fishing trips don't yield the number or quality of fish a healthy ecosystem can sustain. It's time for action, whether or not you are the start of a good, and right, and just change in our waters needs to be seen by the recreational sector. Capt Christopher J Exley
423	02/21/2021 - 1:00pm	Jason Crews		North Carolina	Why are recreational fisherman the only ones who get cut...why not 1 fish per day, with a 45 day "season " that allows multiple fish per day?
422	02/21/2021 - 12:46pm	Nikki		North Carolina	To whom it may concern, The CCA would like nothing more than to put all commercial fishermen out of business. They have already gotten so many rules and regulations put on the fishermen. If it continues, the fishing families will not be able to survive. Many fishing families are just scraping by and desperately trying to hold onto their jobs. A lot of fishermen have given up their work that has been passed down in their families for generations upon generations to find different jobs, because of the over-regulation of the industry. Those of us who have no choice but to fight until the end for our rights to fish and make a living would appreciate if you would not allow conservation associations to take away more of our freedoms. They want us to have to jump through so many hoops until we finally feel like it isn't worth it anymore and give up. Those of us who love the commercial fishing industry and rely on it for our sole income to support our families and children are in it for the long-haul, and it isn't in our nature to give up easily. The CCA is relentless and we, the little people need someone to listen to our voices, so that we can have a fighting chance against them. If there's anything you can do to stop their latest scheme, please take this into consideration. Thank you. Sincerely, A commercial fisherman's wife
421	02/21/2021 - 12:34pm	Will Funderburk		North Carolina	Please open recreational flounder season from June 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021 with a bag limit of 2 per person. There is plenty of allocation to give the recreational fisherman more of the quota.
420	02/21/2021 - 12:14pm	James Clark		North Carolina	When making decisions on flounder this year please please consider Pound Netting on a different scale. It is far far more sustainable means of fishing and should be giving more leeway and be so strictly penalized. Let them fish earlier so they catch Pompano, Blk Drum and flounder. Please look at their regulations from a different perspective.
419	02/21/2021 - 12:06pm	Dan Turner		North Carolina	Im not in favor of limiting the flounder season and bag limits. Flounder fishing is my passion as with others and this fishery has not been overfished in my and other fishermen's opinion. I believe in having a bag limit of 4 with size limitations of course and an open season during the summer and fall. If anything commercial fisherman should be restricted not the recreational fisherman. Thanks for the opportunity to voice my concerns. Dan Turner
418	02/21/2021 - 12:02pm	Gregory Fulcher		North Carolina	Need to open ocean flounder season in North Carolina and up limit to 4 per person per day. This has no impact on inland flounder population.
417	02/21/2021 - 11:59am	Steve Warren		North Carolina	Recreational fishermen are being unfairly treated. Further restrictions will make it not worth wetting a hook, while commercial fishermen jeopardize large populations, non-selectively, harvesting and the waste of young fish. Save our fishing rights as citizens and don't give in to big business. Thank you for listening. Re get
416	02/21/2021 - 11:53am	Jennifer mason		North Carolina	To whom it may concern. I would like the scientists to take into consideration that flounder landings went down because the number of fishermen still working has been cut by 2/3ds over the years from being run out the business because of restrictions. There are plenty of flounder but very few fishermen to land them to have the same numbers put on the dock. Use real numbers and data instead of fictitious numbers.
415	02/21/2021 - 11:44am	Tommy Sports		North Carolina	I ask that you please consider the fishery you are trying to manage and the consequences that comes from this decision. Bottom line in the Summer and Gulf Flounder populations are not in decline. I don't believe Southern flounder is hurting as bad as is stated but it does need to be

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
					<p>managed. The financial impacts to your decision are very real and are felt in every direction the fishery supports. I feel harvesting Summer and Gulf should be allowed to continue. Please consider keeping the oceans open for harvesting these fish for recreation fishing and not just allow trawling methods to harvest them. You know it's not right. Take ownership in your decision and represent everyone that contributes to the recovery of the Southern Flounder.</p> <p>I am both a guide for recreation fisherman and I harvest Flounder Commercially when the season is open primarily through gigging. I first hand see the impacts this fishery has and want to support the recovery of the Southern Flounder. Please work on recovery of this species specific fishery without penalizing the healthy fishery as a whole. Spend time money and effort educating the public and hold stiff penalties for those that violate it. Hire more Marine Patrol enforcement officers. The funds are there to support this as part of the recovery plan.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration</p> <p>Tommy Sports</p>
414	02/21/2021 - 11:37am	Steven Stone		North Carolina	Please allow flounder fishing in the ocean for recreation fisherman, not only commercial.
413	02/21/2021 - 11:32am	Todd bolick		North Carolina	It's funny how other states don't have a problem with flounder numbers . Guess their fisheries are doing their job . Kinda make you look bad, Starve recreational fisherman and women and let commercial fishery do what ever they want . Bycatch is a joke guess we know who you are working for .
412	02/21/2021 - 11:32am	James T Hunter		North Carolina	Message in support of no further limits against Recreational Southern Flounder Fisheries.
411	02/21/2021 - 11:30am	Theron Hunter		North Carolina	Message for consideration and support of not further limiting Recreational Limits on Southern Flounder. Thank you.
410	02/21/2021 - 11:21am	Heather Horton		North Carolina	
409	02/21/2021 - 11:20am	Jeff Young		North Carolina	I would like to request we see the Summer and Gulf Flounder Fishery OPEN all Summer and Fall in the ocean as this fishery has almost no effect on the Southern Flounder population they are trying to manage! We should also be allowed a 4 fish bag limit in this fishery as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has these species listed as "Not Overfished." and NC is allowing the Commercial Flounder Trawl Fishery to continue to harvest up to 15,000 lbs of flounder in the ocean per trip both last Summer (April-June) and already this Jan.-Feb 2021. Thank you for your time and consideration.
408	02/21/2021 - 11:19am	Jerry Dilsaver		North Carolina	<p>First - As has been done with other species, the flounder allocation needs to be divided equitably, not historically. The value of the recreational fishery has grown exponentially for many people and businesses along the NC Coast and is too valuable on only allow recreational fishermen a 45 day season with a single fish per day limit.</p> <p>Second - The ocean summer and gulf flounder fishery should be OPEN all Summer and Fall, as this fishery has almost no effect on the Southern Flounder population. Recreational fishermen should also be allowed a 4 fish bag limit in this fishery as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has these species listed as "Not Overfished." and NC is allowing the Commercial Flounder Trawl Fishery to continue to harvest up to 15,000 pounds of flounder in the ocean per trip both last summer and already this year.</p> <p>Thank you,</p>
407	02/21/2021 - 11:11am	Patrick		North Carolina	Don't let the cca and other recreational groups have enough influence to change the lives of working watermen. 30 years ago there where at least twice as many people involved in this fishery as there is now and the fishery was ok. Now we have a very abbreviated season, quotas, gear restrictions, time restrictions, observer coverage, etc. and it doesn't seem to be helping according to some groups. Maybe it's just that the commercial fisherman is the easiest component to point your finger at, not the hog farms, fertilizer runoff, bulkheading of wetlands, coal ash, building up of wetlands, ect. Maybe y'all should look at the environment in which the fish lives and see if there is something wrong with that instead of spending all your time and money trying to squeeze the last fisherman enough he just quits.
406	02/21/2021 - 11:10am	Thomas Daniels		North Carolina	We should allow recreational fishermen to be able to fish for flounder in the ocean from April to November and keep the bag limit to a minimum of 4. The biologists have said that this fishery is sustainable to accommodate this recommendation. The commercial limit should be reduced to accommodate this suggestion. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
405	02/21/2021 - 11:10am	Heather Horton		North Carolina	
404	02/21/2021 - 11:07am	Jeff Mead		Georgia	We all know better. Human exceptionalism is not an excuse. This is disgusting and these type of fisheries deserve much more respect and revision.
403	02/21/2021 - 11:02am	Amber Coleman		North Carolina	Open our flounder season. SC let's us keep 10 and you won't let us keep any! There's no gate at the state line, not even a sign marking it. Crooked politicians messing with our resources they know nothing about. You should all be ashamed. Stop the nets and let our fishery thrive
402	02/21/2021 - 11:00am	Hunter		North Carolina	Summer of 2020 we had more flounder in the area than we have seen in about 4-6 years taking away the southern flounder fishery would hurt so many people for jobs an food on their table
401	02/21/2021 - 11:00am	Ben Atwater		North Carolina	The proposed regulations are ridiculous. Keeping the recreational season open in the ocean for Summer and Gulf flounder will have very little effect on the Southern Flounder. More importantly the division between commercial and recreational is completely inequitable. One flounder per day for 45 days is ludicrous when you are allowing trawlers and pound nets to completely dominate the harvest. The recreational season should take into consideration that most is done on the weekends, and set the seasons along those lines. The limit should be 4 fish per day per person. Recreational fishing brings more money to the state than the commercial industry and you are going to kill the recreational expenditures in NC if you pursue your current proposals
400	02/21/2021 - 10:44am	Jeff Manley		North Carolina	Open flounder fishing for entire summer and allow at least 3 fish per day, for recreational fisherman! You're allowing commercial 10,000 lbs per trip, yet, You're killing the recreational guys. Also, get the gill nets out of inshore waters, just like all our surrounding states. Plenty of us moved here in retirement, for the fishing, and many of us WILL move, to find better fishing! That's a lot of out of state fishers you'll lose, also, because they won't be visiting any longer. The big \$\$ from commercial into your personal pockets, will be investigated!
399	02/21/2021 - 10:42am	Robert Dermer		North Carolina	Please consider opening the NC flounder recreational season for the entire spring through the fall with a four fish limit. The scientific data has shown that summer flounder are not over fished. Other species of flounder have never been considered over fished and continue to thrive up and down the Atlantic seaboard or states as well as the gulf. This will only put us in line or more conservative than our neighboring states up down the coast. Thank you for your consideration. Robert Dermer, North Carolina Resident, fisherman.
398	02/21/2021 - 10:41am	Andrea		North Carolina	
397	02/21/2021 - 10:40am	Hudson Haines		North Carolina	I support science-based fisheries management and really hope North Carolina can get it together before it's too late. For too long now we have allowed the rights a few to outweigh the rights of many, and allowed commercial overfishing to go on unchecked and to do damage to our inshore and nearshore fisheries. The economic impact alone to a thriving recreational fishery could be tremendous for the state. Please do the right thing and follow science-based fishery management and bring our states fisheries back to what they once were.
396	02/21/2021 - 10:37am	Eric Bregman		North Carolina	If the science says that we need to reduce harvest of Rockfish...that's fine but 2 things needs to be considered. 1) eliminating a natural bait catch and release fishery is unacceptable. If you want to make it barbless circle hook fishery that's fine. But to eliminate something that has an immaterial impact on overall fish populations, something that has a huge economic impact on the town of Weldon, and something that is a tradition in our state, just does not make sense. 2) it's not the fault of the fisherman that the people controlling the dam can't do it right
395	02/21/2021 - 10:34am	Ken Doyle		North Carolina	73/27 split is way wrong! Recreational fishing is a 5 billion nc business. Wake up & quite trying to save a dying aging industry!
394	02/21/2021 - 10:34am	Bryce Eatmon		North Carolina	Destructive fishing gear (inshore shrimp trawls) and gill nets have ruined fish populations in NC. I have witnessed small inshore shrimp trawls kill 100s of baby souther flounder, croaker, spot, and gray trout each tow and I cant imagine how many the industrial sized trawlers are killing every day. I have witnessed gill nets crush the undersized red drum and rock fish in the OBX and not to mention the piles of undersized flounder and rotten flounder that are killed and never accounted for. I'm not saying commercial fishing should end but "destructive practices" have to end or all this so called management you are trying to do with worthless.
393	02/21/2021 - 10:32am	Hudson Haines		North Carolina	I support science based fisheries management and really hope North Carolina can get it together before it's too late. For too long now we have allowed the needs of the few to outweigh the needs of the many, and allowed comercial fishing to go unchecked and do damage to our inshore

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
					and bear shore fisheries. The economic impact of a thriving recreational fishery could be tremendous for this state and the costal towns and industries. Please, do the right thing and follow the science and bring our fisheries back to what they once were.
392	02/21/2021 - 10:32am	Rick Coleman		North Carolina	Open flounder season for hook and line this year
391	02/21/2021 - 10:28am	Bryce Eatmon		North Carolina	
390	02/21/2021 - 10:28am	Hudson Haines		North Carolina	
389	02/21/2021 - 10:27am	Joseph Fierimonte		North Carolina	73/27 allocation of southern flounder to the commercial sector is taking fishing away from the public, I'm against it.
388	02/21/2021 - 10:24am	Keith Dodson		North Carolina	<p>Please open up flounder fishing to us recreation Angler's. Commercial fishing harvest thousands of pounds, get to fish all year. We get to fish only a few days with such small limit? Rec Angler's for flounder will never over fish this species. It makes no sense! Obviously money is involved from lobbying or favors to those making these decisions. I eat what I catch and would like fish all year. Please change the rules.</p> <p>Sincerely Keith Dodson</p>
387	02/21/2021 - 10:24am	David Sneed		North Carolina	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on behalf of the Coastal Conservation Association North Carolina. Please see below our Issues for Commissioners – February 2021:</p> <p>1. Estuarine Striped Bass FMP — The dreadful condition of the striped bass stock statewide is caused by three problems: directed fishing and bycatch mortality, environmental conditions and dams. While the MFC has no control over the environment or damming rivers, it can control fishing mortality.</p> <p>The ASMA/RRMA stock assessment indicates overfishing is occurring and the stock is overfished, and it calls for a moratorium or at least a greatly reduced quota. CCA NC supports these measures as necessary to relieve fishing pressure, however, failure to address the other source of fishing mortality—bycatch in gill nets—will greatly impede or prevent recovery. While bycatch estimates are controversial, there is no doubt that as a stock recovers bycatch will increase.</p> <p>Expanding the current gill net restrictions to include the following would be the most effective option: (a) all of the Albemarle Sound and connecting river systems with the exception of those used in the blue catfish fishery, (b) for the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico Rivers of the CSMA, move the restrictions out to the tie-down lines, and (c) for the Cape Fear River region of the CSMA, add in gill net restrictions sufficiently below Wilmington to protect the range of stripers present there. If striped bass range increases upon recovery, removal of additional areas should be implemented.</p> <p>Once the DMF and MFC endorse these areas, CCA NC will support stocking striped bass to either enhance the spawning stock biomass in regions where the fishery can recover OR to establish a put/grow/take recreational ONLY fishery in areas where the fishery will not be able to sustain a natural population.</p> <p>We need collaboration NOW between the WRC, DMF and the U.S. Corps of Engineers to create a plan that better manages the water flow on the Roanoke River. And throughout all coastal river systems, the plan should control harvest, remove destructive gear to reduce both recreational and commercial discard mortality, and introduce supplemental stocking measures. Any plan needs to include more public involvement from the people of N.C. who own these resources while the DMF must stop trying to manage our coastal resources in a vacuum.</p> <p>2. Southern Flounder FMP—The proposed allocation and certain rules proposed by DMF are patently unfair to recreational fishermen. If the Southern flounder is to become a quota-managed fishery, then the current commercial/recreational split of 73/27 should be changed to a 50/50</p>



SUBMITTED

NAME:

CITY:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

allocation just like the AS/RR striped bass fishery. The use of "historical" landings to establish a quota-managed fishery further highlights the fact that the commercial industry exploited Southern flounder for three decades.

When Division biologists were insisting that a 72% harvest reduction was needed to save the stock from collapse, they insisted that the cuts had to be "equitable." "Historically," the commercial industry was responsible for 80% of the harvest so they should have been responsible for the brunt of the reductions. No, it had to be equitable. Now the stock has to be managed by quota and DMF biologists want to use "historical" numbers instead of "equitable" numbers.

Recreational harvest limits should be based on this new TAL and the ocean should be opened to give recreational anglers an opportunity to harvest summer and Gulf flounder during the time of year when they can be accessed. The proposed ocean access during March/April needs to be shifted in such a manner that the current recreational flounder season is lengthened in areas of the ocean where interactions with Southern flounder will be minimal. Opening the ocean fishing in March/April is another "feel good" measure that accomplishes little conservation and just locks rec anglers out. No one is fishing for them then. The ocean should be open all year for ocellated flounder. If fishermen cannot tell the difference, they should not keep any flounder. If they screw up, they get ticketed. Hook and line mortality is a lot less than net mortality. Also, dead discards DO have value in the rec fishery. Dead discards in gill nets do not. When rec anglers go fishing and do not get a keeper, money is still spent.

Since these two ocean stocks are currently healthy, a daily creel limit of 2 - 4 fish with the same 15" minimum length should be allowed. Finally, with this specific fishery under such stress, gill nets allowed under the RCGL should be discontinued, just as large mesh gill nets should be removed as an acceptable commercial gear.

3. Shrimp FMP — Ultimately, trawlers must be removed from Pamlico Sound. Several current management measures under consideration for the next FMP are beneficial to the resource and CCA NC supports them. The area closures under consideration by DMF scientists should have minimal impact on the ability to harvest shrimp while still addressing bycatch hotspots for some juvenile species, including spot, croaker, weakfish, Southern and summer flounder.

Other proposed restrictions to reduce effort such as minimizing headrope length, closing trawling for an extra day (that should be added consecutively to the current weekend ban on trawling), and reducing tow times should be supported by the MFC. Each of these options has the potential to benefit the resource as a whole and help restore numerous habitats damaged by trawling; CCA NC sees them as a start to recovery of many troubled finfish species.

4. Circle Hooks — Circle hooks should be required when fishing with live or cut bait for specific fisheries such as: cobia, redfish, speckled trout, flounder, and striped bass (already required in the Albemarle Sound per ASMFC). Doing so will clearly reduce mortality of released fish and endangered sea turtles.

5. Management — Many inshore species (speckled trout, redfish, striped bass) have tremendous economic impact generated by recreational anglers and should be managed accordingly, similar to how commercial crab and shrimp fisheries are managed for that sector. Since each of these specific fisheries is driven by the recreational sector, management measures should be taken to recover and enhance them. Destructive gear should be removed while habitats are reclaimed and enriched to guarantee these key inshore gamefish flourish to maximize access by recreational fishermen.

The tremendous pressure on speckled trout in 2020 should highlight the need for more proactive management. Fishing effort for speckled trout increased at a remarkable rate during 2020 from a number of factors including the "Covid effect," which allowed more recreational anglers time on the water because of lockdowns elsewhere.

Why is this important?

- a) The management strategies developed through the FMP process do not account for the magnitude of the increase in this fishing effort.
- b) The Division's ability to monitor activities at these sites relies on accurately predicting fishing effort. It's all part of the survey mechanics. It would have been impossible to predict these increases. Estimates of catch will be made but there was no way to catch up with what was going on.
- c) Current management strategies have basically halted fishing for inshore species like striped bass and flounder. Along with the pitiful status of

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
					<p>spot, croaker and weakfish, the result is nearly everyone fishes for trout. Inshore finfish stocks have been managed into a "hole" of sorts that is going to be extremely difficult to escape. Just think of what would happen if we had a cold kill.</p> <p>d) We also need to think about what surely happened to DMF's commercial sampling. We suspect that due to Covid there was a significant period without any fish house sampling and observer work.</p> <p>e) The Commission would be wise to ask the DMF to brief them on how Covid impacted its ability to collect information needed to manage fisheries.</p> <p>6. Legislative Issues — Several issues of importance to our resource will require legislative action. Among them are:</p> <p>a. Latent Licenses: This hidden fishing effort and its lack of reporting must be addressed. In 2020, 66% of SCFL holders never filed a trip ticket. This is a systemic problem that impacts all FMPs because harvest and bycatch are grossly underestimated. All SCFL fishing trips should be required to report catch on a trip ticket regardless of whether any of the catch is sold. The result of underreporting is that stock assessments estimate a rosier picture of the stocks and lead to overfishing.</p> <p>b. Enforcement: Funding should be increased to support more agents and full policing powers should be granted to DMF agents, so they have the tools to crack down on poachers 24/7.</p> <p>c. Recreational Commercial Gear License (RCGL): This licensing category should be abolished. Using bona fide commercial gear such as gill nets to catch recreational limits (one red drum, one flounder, four speckled trout) is impossible. Recreational gill nets should be removed, and other allowed gear should either require a SCFL (small trawlers, perch pots) or be reclassified as recreational gear (minnow traps, crab pots).</p> <p>d. Misuse of SCFL: A small number of commercial fishermen locally are licensed also as for-hire recreational guides. They are running "heritage trips" that encompass a morning duck hunt followed by an afternoon of gill netting, primarily for trout. This type of dual use should be prohibited. No recreational for-hire licenses should be used in conjunction with a SCFL. Recreational anglers should be held to recreational bag limits regardless of whether the for-hire trip is using commercial gear.</p> <p>7. Small mesh issue paper — As mentioned repeatedly throughout this paper, North Carolina's marine resources can only fully recover when large and small-mesh gill nets are removed. Since this paper is being considered for action, however, CCA endorses those options that most effectively limit yardage, allowable times of usage, areas where they can be set and done so in such a manner that minimizes bycatch and user conflict.</p> <p>Thank you for your service and your consideration,</p> <p>David Sneed, Executive Director</p>
386	02/21/2021 - 10:20am	Evan Crisco		North Carolina	Quit punishing the recreational anglers!!!!
385	02/21/2021 - 10:17am	Britt		North Carolina	Rec fishermen are not harming flounder density or population. Ban commercial gill nets in NC waters. Immature fish get entangled and released dead.
384	02/21/2021 - 10:16am	Staton Dupree		North Carolina	
383	02/21/2021 - 10:16am	Earl Sadler		North Carolina	<p>I have been involved in commercial fishing for at least 40 years. I have been a public school teacher at * County High School for 28 years. I understand the importance of analysis of data to make decisions regarding sustainability of Fisheries, quotas etc. However, there are other factors that need to be taken into consideration when making decisions regarding commercial fishing issues.</p> <p>I trust that the commission keeps these other considerations in mind when making all decisions regarding commercial fishing and specifically with the issue of flounder quota.</p> <p>Supplying fresh local caught seafood to restaurants and grocery stores is important. When a tourist purchases a flounder plate in Morehead city it's important that they have the highest quality product available to them.</p> <p>The preservation of the lifestyle of commercial fishing is also important. As our numbers dwindle due to a variety of reasons we should be attempting to preserve this vocation instead of making it more difficult to stay in and even enter the profession. As a society we need independent businessmen like commercial fisherman to remind everyone that America is truly the land of opportunity and that hard work can result in success for a person willing to put it forth.</p> <p>I could go on with other reasons we need to do everything we can to preserve the commercial fishing industry. At the end of the day we must</p>

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
					remember we can work together using common sense and science to make our waters a place where we can all enjoy and benefit from. If I can be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.
382	02/21/2021 - 10:13am	John Pletl		North Carolina	We want to see the Summer and Gulf Flounder Fishery OPEN all Summer and Fall in the ocean as this fishery has almost no effect on the Southern Flounder population they are trying to manage! We should also be allowed a 4 fish bag limit in this fishery as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has these species listed as "Not Overfished." and NC is allowing the Commercial Flounder Trawl Fishery to continue to harvest up to 15,000 lbs of flounder in the ocean per trip both last Summer (April-June) and already this Jan.-Feb 2021. But you want to only allow the recreational fishermen a 45 day season with a proposed 1 fish per day.
381	02/21/2021 - 10:08am	Matt D.		North Carolina	As a new angler I was excited to get out on the water and beginning fishing. As I learned where and how to catch fish I also learned about gill netting. I learned the NC is the only state that still allows gill netting inshore! I am just a catch and release angler but it is disheartening to know that Marine Fisheries Commission cares more about money than the fisheries.
380	02/21/2021 - 10:08am	Jesse Coleman		North Carolina	Open flounder season! I have to go to SC to get fish to feed my family. 10 flounder limit there year round and you guys won't let me keep a single one in my own state. That's ridiculous and you know it. How's about cutting the backwater nets out like everyone else. You idiots play politics with peoples lives, livelihoods and rights. Where's the rights for the nets to rape our waters but my kids have to throw their fish back instead of being able to enjoy it on the dinner table? Give us more red fish and trout while you're at it too. Again look at South Carolina. No nets, more fish. Pretty simple. Guess that's why a bunch of politicians can't figure it out.
379	02/21/2021 - 10:06am	Denny Bell		North Carolina	N.C. Needs to let recicational fishermen have a open season all summer and fall. Because this does not have any effect on the Southern Flounder and need to keep a 4 fish bag limit. Need to put more limits on the Commercial Flounder Trawl Fishery.
378	02/21/2021 - 10:04am	Luke Donat		North Carolina	In regards to southern flounder regulations, if you plan to restrict catches disproportionately from rec/ com, I urge you to not do so. This only leaves a bad taste in the mouths of rec anglers. It gives no purpose but to say on group can have, and one group can't. There is no purpose for it! If you are going to restrict, be equal in doing so. If the species is truly struggling, we get it. If you are biased in the way you allot the catch quotas, which this proposal seems to do, you are doing nothing but truly hurting our fishery even more. I am a fishing guide out of * Beach, and rely on flounder as one of my key species to catch. Please take heed in your decision. Thanks. Luke Donat
377	02/21/2021 - 9:57am	Jacob Ledford		North Carolina	I have been stationed at Camp Lejeune 3 times since 2004. In that time I have also been stationed in SC twice. It is utterly amazing how much the fishery changes when you cross the SC line and the inshore netting stops. The NC fishery could be something truly special if we didn't abuse it. How much longer will it be abused? The flounder situation is all but an utter disaster. Do we have to wait until the redfish and trout are completely gone too? NC is the only state left in the country that abuses the fishery in the manner that it does. How many more fish, turtles, alligators, birds, have to die using this archaic system? Will my kids have fish to catch? Will their kids? The North American Conservation model has been a huge success story. Turkey, elk, deer, bear, all brought back from the brink and yet our fisheries still get managed like it is 1879. It is time for change. It is time we truly act like conservationists and preserve our fishery for future generations.
376	02/21/2021 - 9:56am	Earl Sadler		North Carolina	
375	02/21/2021 - 9:51am	David Drach		North Carolina	The reason the flounder fishery is in the state it's in is because of the commercial fisherman. Makes no sense to drop the recreational fisherman down to 1 fish for 45 days when the commercial fisherman can continue to set nets. They are catching more of the flounder than any recreational fisherman could. The recreational fisherman is not hurting the population of flounder, when even on a good day we can potentially only keep 4 fish per person. For the most part it's hard to even catch a keeper above 15 inches to start off with. The reason for that is the nets in our estuarine waters. Gill nets and shrimp trawls need to go and then we can have a sustainable fishery, just like the rest of the country. All recreational

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
					fisherman know that once you drop it to 1 fish, we will never get the opportunity to raise the limit again. Just as you have done with the red drum, striped bass and grey trout. There's a reason why so many of our inshore fish are in trouble and the common theme between all of them are the nets and trawlers. It's time for a change before it's too late. I am all for a reduction in flounder limits so we can build the population of flounder back up. But it has to be across the whole spectrum of fishermen. The one sided favoritism needs to stop so future generations of North Carolinians can enjoy our wonderful coast and opportunities.
374	02/21/2021 - 9:49am	Justin Ranson		North Carolina	<p>Good morning,</p> <p>In response to the upcoming meeting regarding the Flounder Fishery, I would like to add some comments and opinion. I usually only have 2-3 opportunities to fish coastal waters each year. With that, we try to maximize our catch as we love to eat fish all while preserving the fishery so it is just as healthy the next trip. We primarily target Spanish Mackerel while trolling nearshore and redfish, flounder, bluefish, and black drum while bottom fishing nearshore. We run offshore once a year to target pelagic species. We fish primarily out of *, and occasionally * Island. Last year (2020), we were fortunate enough to schedule 2 chartered trips during the short recreational flounder season, both in September, out of * and * Island. Both trips were great as we had 14 flounder on 4 anglers the first trip and 12 flounder on 4 anglers the second. These trips provided the best bottom fishing and best table fare that we have had per trip easily ever, most credit to our Captains and a healthy fishery. The Summer and Gulf Flounder Fishery should be open for Summer and Fall because the recreational side has little to no effect on the Southern population, for which is the species you are attempting to manage. It clearly states on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission report that these flounder are "Not Overfished". NC is allowing the Commercial Flounder Trawl Fishery to continue to harvest up to 15,000 lbs. of flounder in the ocean per trip, both last Summer (April-June) and already this Jan-Feb 2021. NC wants to only allow the recreational fishermen a 45 day season with a proposed 1 fish per day. The data doesn't show that the recreational fisherman is causing population issues, especially after you gave a 4 fish limit for a month and a half last fall which caused no impact. As a lifelong coastal angler in this state, I am asking you to open recreational flounder season to the Summer and Fall with a 4 fish limit, per day. Review the data again at the end of next year to see that there was no negative impact to the population.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration. Justin Ranson</p>
373	02/21/2021 - 9:45am	Jason Frivance		North Carolina	I just recently retired from the USCG to chase my dream of becoming a Fishing Charter Captain but now I don't know how I'm going to do it with the these regulations your looking to enforcing with flounder fishing. It will make my job tuff for clients to only catch red drum in the summer months. Why are you enforcing Summer and Gulf Flounder the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has these species listed as "Not overfished" Please reconsider keeping this fishery open all summer and fall in the ocean. NC is allowing the Commercial Flounder Trawl Fishery to continue to harvest up to 15,000 lbs of flounder in the ocean per trip both last Summer (April-June) and already this Jan.-Feb 2021.
372	02/21/2021 - 9:44am	John Rouse		North Carolina	It is absolutely absurd to allow almost the whole ocean flounder catch to commercial fishing interest. Doesn't all citizens of NC share a right to this resource. At a minimum the catch and season should be split equally. Come on NC. It's tome to show some common sense with fisheries issue.
371	02/21/2021 - 9:44am	Kent Hedgepeth		North Carolina	The recreational fishermen & women of this state support people's livelihoods from Piedmont boat dealerships, to coastal plain grocery stores, restaurants, and hotels....and everywhere in between. Someone taking their kids fishing for a weekend spends their hard earned money all the way across the state & back again.....We should be allowed to at least take home a decent catch on the rare weekend we can take our families and friends fishing. One flounder a day for a month and a half season is a slap in the face to hard working tax payers of this state. One commercial boat taking 15,000 lbs in one trip is more flounder than I'll harvest in a lifetime
370	02/21/2021 - 9:40am	Jason martin		North Carolina	It is not acceptable to allow commercial harvest of flounder at all if the stocks are as bad as you all say they are. Continued closure of the rec fishing for flounder will hurt the coastal communities. Please consider a responsible creel limit for recreational fisherman that allows us to utilize the summer and fall season for the ocean population of flounder which includes very few southern flounder at that time of year. I might get to visit the coast 2-3 times a year and love to target flounder. If the closure continues i will be forced to take my money to communities in SC or VA where i a actually able to keep a couple flounder for dinner. Nc will loose tons of revenue as other other anglers do the same. I have lived and fished in NC all my life and I am appalled at the miss management of our fisheries.
369	02/21/2021 - 9:31am	Brent Gurganious		North Carolina	Sub-option 3B of the commercial trip limit, it states where the mortality rate is the highest (Gill nets). I don't understand why this isn't more of a concern. We just seem to overlook it. Please at least leave the flounder season the way it is. Saw more numbers and quality fish this past season after the closure last year.
368	02/21/2021 - 9:28am	Mike Sinnett		North Carolina	Please allow flounder fishing In the ocean . And a 4 fish limit. Not fair that the commercial fishermen get 15000 pounds and we cant keep 4 fish. Other state near by do not have closed season.

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
367	02/21/2021 - 9:20am	Cody		North Carolina	Please don't decrease our limit on flounder from 4 per person to 1 per person. The season is short enough as it is. If you are going to save the flounder commercial fisherman who are the real problem should be limited heavier than recreational fisherman.
366	02/21/2021 - 9:17am	Ward Bradshaw		North Carolina	Please open for recreational fishing!
365	02/21/2021 - 9:09am	Bryan C. Pate		North Carolina	<p>Please effectively manage the public trust resource set forth. Allow summer flounder harvest in ocean waters, along with commercial timelines/allotments, which has zero to do with southern flounder in our sounds, rivers, and creeks.</p> <p>Put trawls and gillnets where they belong out of our sounds/rivers [trawls] and sounds/rivers/creeks [gillnets]. Wake up like other states have and open your eyes to the destruction of both land, water, and resource. When I see the lines for where gillnets abilities to be set I just shake my head in disbelief as to how our decision makers can live with their ridiculous allowances. Same for trawlers... Get it right!</p> <p>Warmly, Public trust citizen from * County, NC</p>
364	02/21/2021 - 9:05am	Eric		North Carolina	I believe it is no fair to those who spend thousands of dollars a year to have a boat and all the gear to go with it paying taxes on boat ramps just to be told we can harvest from a fisheries that are not in harms way. If you truly was a bounce back in numbers of the southern flounder then remove nets and gigs from our inland waters. Off shore fishing has no affect on the species that is "over fished"
363	02/21/2021 - 9:02am	Scott Munn		North Carolina	<p>* NC resident that fishes out of * City throughout summer and fall. I pay taxes in both cities and I bring friends and family that spend money throughout * City. I want to see the Summer and Gulf Flounder Fishery OPEN all Summer and Fall in the ocean as this fishery has almost no effect on the Southern Flounder population you are trying to manage! We should also be allowed a 4 fish bag limit in this fishery as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has these species listed as NOT OVERFISHED and NC is allowing the Commercial Flounder Trawl Fishery to continue to harvest up to 15,000 lbs of flounder in the ocean per trip both last Summer (April-June) and already this Jan.-Feb 2021. You want to only allow the recreational fishermen a 45 day season with a proposed 1 fish per day which is rubbing salt into a wound you are creating by continuing to allow commercial fisherman to trawl our estuaries. Your decision affects a lot of people including all the local bait shops, restaurants, hotels, etc. and with what COVID has done many of these are on the precipice of extinction much more than the Summer and Gulf flounder. KEEP THE SUMMER AND GULF FLOUNDER SEASON OPEN ALL SUMMER AND FALL FOR RECREATIONAL FISHERMEN AND ALLOW A 4 fish per day limit due to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries finding them NOT OVERFISHED.</p>
362	02/21/2021 - 8:59am	Steven giberson		North Carolina	just saw the post about holding up 2 smaller flounder. I dont understand why the CCA always talks about the negative agenda to flounder. There are alot of positives to the commercial catch of any fish species. The public is provided with substantial FRESH fish that isn't from overseas. Creates jobs from gas to making nets and through and through.
361	02/21/2021 - 8:57am	Dwight Buck		North Carolina	After 70+ years in eastern NC I am saddened by the condition of our fishery. Look around people! Other states logically manage nets and look at their results. 1 flounder is a farce.
360	02/21/2021 - 8:49am	Chris Byers		North Carolina	Open up the recreational flounder fishing. I caught a ton last year by accident so the population can't be that bad. If anything stop commercial fishing in the inter coastal. No other state allows this and their fish are plentiful
359	02/21/2021 - 8:47am	Eric Lemmond		North Carolina	Please allow the inshore/ nearshore angler to have a flounder creel limit of at least 3-4 fish and a season longer than a few weeks.
358	02/21/2021 - 8:47am	Kenneth M. Edwards		North Carolina	Please reconsider your policy of a shortened flounder season with a single fish per day creel limit. States south of North Carolina have a sustainable flounder population with higher creel limits per day. Why should the NC recreational fisherman be the only source to maintain a healthy flounder population if others do not. Consider what the fisheries in other states are doing and we might learn a trick or two. I'm totally against NCMF consideration of there current proposed policy. There should be a balance between commercial and recreational fishing limits.
357	02/21/2021 - 8:41am	Andrew Mike. Gould		North Carolina	I'm a charter captain and commercial fisherman out of * inlet,im writing you in regards to the Southern flounder fishery. There's no shortage of the species, the season should stay open year round at a 4 fish per day,16 inch size limiit. Please reconsider this closure.
356	02/21/2021 - 8:40am	Sterling keith		North Carolina	

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
355	02/21/2021 - 8:40am	Marty Lamm		North Carolina	Please open flounder season all summer and fall to recreational fishermen with a MINIMUM of 3 or 4 per person. Both Virginia and South Carolina have open flounder seasons. Having a limited season for recreational fishermen while not tightening the limits on commercial fishermen is not fair. There are still some of us that use fishing as family time and providing a means to put food on our table. Thank you .
354	02/21/2021 - 8:39am	Jim bouie		North Carolina	Please be more realistic as we would like to see eight fish limit in flounder this season and to be open all summer through fall for recreational fisherman. We are aware of the large number of fish allowed to be caught in the ocean all year long. Fishing in the ocean has nothing to do with The endangered southern flounder which resides mostly inside or inshore. These realistic suggestions make sense to the North Carolina citizens and this is our legacy and resource. Not just commercial fisherman. Thank you for accommodating us with this realistic value and we appreciate your understanding at this time. Thanks in advance.
353	02/21/2021 - 8:38am	Jim bouie		North Carolina	Please be more realistic as we would like to see eight fish limit in flounder this season and to be open all summer through fall for recreational fisherman. We are aware of the large number of fish allowed to be caught in the ocean all year long. Fishing in the ocean has nothing to do with The endangered southern flounder which resides mostly inside or inshore. These realistic suggestions make sense to the North Carolina citizens and this is our legacy and resource. Not just commercial fisherman. Thank you for accommodating us with this realistic value and we appreciate your understanding at this time.
352	02/21/2021 - 8:35am	Jimmy Kirkman		North Carolina	Good morning, id like for you to know that the current path the state is on with the management of the flounders by a season is wrong. I flounder gig and before the season opened I would go look before the season opened and watch these fish. On those scouting trips I would see as many as 25 to 30 flounders a trip. When the season opened I counted 15 to 17 boats on average each night I would go. Within the first 2 days with all that pressure the flounders were go 1 or 2 each night. In my opinion I thinkthe fish population would be better if left open all year. Increase the size limit to 18in allow the limit to 5 per boat. Also elliminate all net fishing to within 3 miles of the beach. Folks the net fishing ie pound nets and trawling are really putting a hurt on the fish. Ive been fish all of my life and have been a net fishermen. I have seen first hand the damage the nets have done. I have stopped doing the net fishermen. Please help this fisherie. Please ellimate the net fishing inside of 3 miles of the beach. Please eliminate the season as it has created eccesive preasure on the the fish. *. Call me if you're interested in talking. I appreciate your efforts!
351	02/21/2021 - 8:33am	Brian Parris		North Carolina	This fishery is not overfished. Commercial harvest rates are already out the roof. Recreational fisherman should get at least a 4 fish limit. Please think this through.
350	02/21/2021 - 8:32am	Christopher Bradshaw		North Carolina	To who it may concern. The news of more NC flounder regulations is appalling. I am a 40 year fisherman and a 20 plus year commercial fisherman of these waters and have seen the ups and downs with the flounder population. So reading that NCDMF has done research of the flounder population and it is dangerously low and not sufficient. Well from someone who has based their business off of flounder this makes me concerned of course. I see no evidence of the flounder population being that much lower than it was 20 years ago but the number of recreational fisherman has gotten out of control. This is where you have been making all the money from license sales but the extra amount of fish removed by recreational fisherman are and can not be counted the way you're running it now. As a commercial flounder man I have to report every pound of fish I process. Trip tickets are numbers you received for population. Well in my area we have less than 10 commercial flounder fisherman and competition with millions of recreational fisherman and out of state fisherman coming here to NC thinking this is the only place to find flounder. This is where if you want to understand flounder population you should require all fish to be ticketed one year this could give e you the correct number of fish that are around because your numbers are not real. I work these waters every year and since this stink you have started have had to see more fisherman take more fish than ever but on my boat have seen more than enough fish to suport no change in regulations. What is killing us it you allow trawl net flounder to be sold here all year dropping the flounder price at the market from \$5 lb down to less than 3. They can get this cheap fish that you are allowing to be sold here in NC and this is hurting the fisherman that have been working their hole lives to get their own business out of work. It's hard to take that kind of blow market is giving you half the money yall shorting the season so much we may of had 15 safe nights to harvest fish during this short season you've made up. Ia the laws you are passing helping anyone other than the guys filling their pockets with our money and laughing in our faces knowing this is scamming and there is not a shortage of fish just you are making more money from more fisherman and quality fishery. There needs to be a more accurate way to give you a better number of the fish in NC. You need to ride qith some of the real fisherman that are on the fish every day and night. Not the guys you have hired to research that don't seem to have a clue as to where ND how to find and count the flounder each year. I hope to see some good news before you put me our of business as a commercial fisherman and I've had to charge the Tourist to make my money on guides.
349	02/21/2021 - 8:32am	Brian parris		North Carolina	

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
348	02/21/2021 - 8:29am	Sam Glenn		North Carolina	I am here to express my concern that I believe it is important to have the SUMMER and GULF Flounder fishery open all Summer. Just like last year we should be limited to 4 per person. Last years fishery was incredible and hardly affected.
347	02/21/2021 - 8:29am	Les Hoff		North Carolina	North Carolina already has too many restrictions on salt water fish for recreational fisherman. Why pay so much for a license, boat registration, gas and lures to have to throw everything back. Please stop trawling and gill netting in inshore waters fish will recover.
346	02/21/2021 - 8:26am	Kenneth M Elliott		North Carolina	
345	02/21/2021 - 8:22am	Sean Bird		North Carolina	Please allow the Summer and Gulf Flounder Fishery OPEN all Summer and Fall in the ocean as this fishery has almost no effect on the Southern Flounder population! We should also be allowed a 4 fish bag limit in this fishery as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has these species listed as "Not Overfished." and NC is allowing the Commercial Flounder Trawl Fishery to continue to harvest up to 15,000 lbs of flounder in the ocean per trip both last Summer (April-June) and already this Jan.-Feb 2021. Please, please, please protect the fishery first, but find the balance between commercial and recreational fisherman who both have rights to this wonderful resource.
344	02/21/2021 - 8:19am	Colby		North Carolina	Please do not limit the recreational fisherman to 1 per person! If anything slow the commercial fishing down as one boat catches more flounder than the average person will in a lift time!! In just one trip!! Please stop making it worse on the recreational fisherman and put the effort where it counts...commercial fishing!
343	02/21/2021 - 8:18am	Lindon southerland		North Carolina	I'm in favor of recreational anglers being able to keep southern flounder.
342	02/21/2021 - 8:16am	Rick		North Carolina	Open flounder
341	02/21/2021 - 8:06am	Jeff Oden		North Carolina	It is lost on most what the true self serving nature of the few negative forces that view commercial fishing as anything but an asset to those unable to procure their own. Simply put the value on local economies that supply our bountiful natural resources cannot be valued in terms of just money and will not be truly understood until these forces have shamefully deprived the majority of their rightful access!
340	02/21/2021 - 8:03am	Andrew Rogers		North Carolina	I am strongly against the flounder proposal. Recreational fishermen should not be penalized for poor commercial practices and enforcement
339	02/21/2021 - 7:58am	Kelly Padilla		North Carolina	Money an greed
338	02/21/2021 - 7:46am	gregory biggs		North Carolina	your proposal to cut recreational fishers out of flounder is terrible , never understand why the commercial fishery has such control over the the nc dmf and gets favorable laws , the net is a perfect fish catching device when compared to a rod and reel , apparently the can convince yall that all is fair with the new rule, when in fact its a slam against nc recreational fisherpeople
337	02/21/2021 - 7:21am	Robert Oldfield		North Carolina	Closing recreational flounder season for everyone except commercial fishermen (gill netters) would be the absolute worst mistake. Gill netters already destroy or inland/coastal waters. If you want to see fish populations rise again stop allowing netting inside coastal waters.
336	02/21/2021 - 7:15am	Wayne Shumate		Virginia	Wow. I spend a lot of time and money In North Carolina saltwater fishing especially Flounder fishing. Just reading the stats and literature how the recreational fisherman are being punished verses the commercial. Let's put it like this I'm travel to Carolina to fish because of the piss poor management we have please don't ruin this and Force me to go further south
335	02/21/2021 - 7:11am	Jason Staton		North Carolina	Let the public fish the flounder. Commercial guys are killing it not the public angler
334	02/21/2021 - 6:57am	Thomas Lackey		North Carolina	The commercial quota needs to be reduced
333	02/21/2021 - 6:50am	Tyler Egan		North Carolina	Good Afternoon, My name is Tyler Egan a commercial fisherman from * County. Thank you for the opportunity to share my opinion on the management of southern flounder. If you are a commercial fisherman or a recreational angler please set your opinions to the side and hear me out. For over half a decade these fish have been harvest 15" and greater. In recent research it has been found that these fish are 90% female flounder. That means For every million pounds harvested there are 900,000 pounds of female flounder never to spawn again. I feel this issue we are in right now should be handled in a different fashion, very much so how the wildlife federation would handle wild game. Why can't we agree on a slot size. This way these

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
					female flounder will continue to spawn and everyone can still enjoy their flounder fishing. From recreational hook and liner to the commercial man trying to get by. It does not make sense to dispute a 4,5, or 6 week season out of the year when still in that time frame 90% of the fish harvested are female flounder. If our issue here is to fix the overfishing situation, then let's handle it like the wildlife would. Let the females go. Please keep in mind these data numbers that we are using to give us our overfishing conclusion are solely based on commercial trip tickets and a computer based algorithm for recreational. There's roughly 3,000 commercial licenses renewed this year and roughly 800,000 recreational licenses sold. That being said for commercial catches by law have to be reported. I feel a tagging program for recreational anglers would be extremely beneficial to our data numbers and more concrete than a computer based algorithm. In example: each recreational license holder gets 16 tags for southern flounder, that's 4 fishing trips limiting out each trip. While swinging by your local tackle shop or any location that sells a recreational license, turn in your used tags and get replenished with new tags. with the used tags entered into the computer which is then sent into the state. If financial cost on the state seems to be a concern for such a program, by increasing the cost of a recreational license by 2\$ gives the state 1.6 million dollars that could be used to get more accurate data to save this fishery along with many others fisheries.
332	02/21/2021 - 6:46am	Matt sewell		North Carolina	Stop with the flounder season closing. Close it to everyone or no one. Stop your pandering to the commercial fleet. YOU MADE YOUR BED SO GO LAY IN UT
331	02/21/2021 - 5:44am	Graham Alexander		North Carolina	Stop putting commercial fisherman out of business with no research data.
330	02/21/2021 - 5:19am	Doug Mathis		North Carolina	What face was certain trying times as commercial fisherman! We always have and we always will pandemic just made it harder and in the recent closures a flounder from from October to November 2nd is an enough time! And now we're going to be governed again! Why is it so hard to live in the area to produce fresh local seafood and the government is always against you! But government officials like to eat seafood though! Never really understand? It seems like legislation would be passed to protect commercial fisherman! Of all my life as being a commercial fisherman I've never heard of commercial fishing Aid!?
329	02/21/2021 - 5:11am	jay tansy		North Carolina	How is lining the pockets of a few licensed commercial fisherman help recreational fishing and guides ? This is insane and is taking away from my right to harvest the same catch as a gill netter!!! Unsatisfactory!!!
328	02/21/2021 - 4:58am	Maxwell Turner		North Carolina	Stop trying to control something you know nothing about, your bullshit is ██████ up NC's fisheries in all aspects.
327	02/21/2021 - 1:36am	Kris Stone		North Carolina	We couldn't even make a paycheck last year. I had to change my entire life over this crap. It was a struggle for my family to make ends meet.
326	02/21/2021 - 1:33am	Michael Willis		North Carolina	I run charters for a living and love taking people fishing, I'm a 8th generation from * city and my clients pay me good money to put them on fish I feel charter captain should be able to keep a fish for a paying customer
325	02/21/2021 - 1:24am	Crystal. Brown		North Carolina	I think the public should be able to catch flouder cause we are enjoying the great outdoors with our children if we dont teach them how to fish they will never know cause all the commerical fishers are goin to take that away by using nettings to take all they want and pollute our waters with nets and also kill our sealife that are protected like our turtles with ragged out nets so let us have a chance to beable to get our kids out there to enjoy the fishing life instead of paying high prices at a market
324	02/21/2021 - 12:22am	Robert Thompson		South Carolina	Please remember that these fish belong to all US citizens and commercial guys help provide these fish to those that can't catch thier own
323	02/21/2021 - 12:08am	Colin		North Carolina	
322	02/20/2021 - 11:26pm	Nick Maraveyias		North Carolina	After more than 10 years of increasingly restrictive recreational flounder creel and size limits, we ended up with a 4 fish per day 45 day recreational season for all of 2020. It is now speculated that there will be further reduction in the creel limit to a single fish per day for a 45 day season in 2021. In the meantime, NC is the only state in the SE Atlantic and GOM which permits flounder harvest by the highly destructive and indiscriminate large mess inshore gill nets, allowed the commercial quota harvest to be exceeded in 2020 and even continued issuing new pound net permits. Truly shameful way to manage a public trust resource! Summer and gulf flounder populations are not in trouble and the recreational harvest thereof should be permitted again year round in NC. The NCDMF bias favoring the disproportionate allocation of our public trust resources to commercial fishing interests while increasingly limiting access to the resource for all other citizens must stop

#▼	SUBMITTED	NAME:	CITY:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
321	02/20/2021 - 11:15pm	Bradley Richart		North Carolina	Further restricting recreational harvest of inshore fish species is not the answer to conserving fish populations. I understand the need for commercial fisherman to make a living, but inshore gill netting does much more harm to populations than recreational fisherman. If you outlaw inshore gill nets I believe you will see the population of flounder, speckled trout, and red drum return to sustainable levels within a couple years
320	02/20/2021 - 11:14pm	Jeremy Hathaway		North Carolina	Always screwing the recreational fishermen.
319	02/20/2021 - 11:05pm	Brock Barbour		Alabama	We need to work together to keep gill net fishing my sons and grandkids love gill net fishing
318	02/20/2021 - 10:48pm	Jarred Moore		North Carolina	Reopen flounder for rec! Quit allowing all the resources to be used by businesses and give us our rights back as citizens of the state! The commercial guys should absolutely not be the ones allowed to keep flounder and the recreational fisherman not. This is by far the wrong way to regulate the species
317	02/20/2021 - 10:47pm	Jacob styron		North Carolina	I strongly disagree with any more regulation on the fisheries. It has not been a long enough period to even see if the last regulations put in place for days fished had a impact on the fisheries. The cca has pushed this since my father and his father was in the industry. They are a relentless group of elitists that apparently want it all for themselves. In which in today's fisheries there are far fewer commercial guys even commercial vessels compared to recreational fishing vessels engaging in the act of fishing at any given day during fishing seasons. So I can not stand to put more regulations or to even take another way a man provides for his or her family from them.
316	02/20/2021 - 10:37pm	Capt. Seth Bernon		North Carolina	<p>I've maintained good standing in all aspects of life as a fishing guide in this state since 1997. I attended college here, owned a retail tackle business in * and have guided inshore and offshore along the coast of North Carolina for 20 years now.</p> <p>In all this time the one constant allowing the degradation of our public trust resources has been the countless MFC members who continued down the path of status quo management practices. Practices like inshore trawling for shrimp and the wanton waste bycatch that occurs in juvenile fin fish habitats where shrimp boats mow the bottom night and day...practices like inshore gill netting and strike netting which destroy or fish stocks, waterfowl and endangered species like sea turtles and sturgeon. Now because of decades of mismanagement the fox is guarding the hen house and you've allowed commercial fishing interests and their lobby to write your regulations for you and you have carried their water so far for them it leads us here; to the eventual collapse of the southern flounder fishery at the hands of destructive commercial fishing practices protected by your culpable hands.</p> <p>The idea that you now want to manage our public trust resources and the fishery again in favor of the commercial fishing industry by penalizing the recreational sector proves how completely tone def you are to the plight of the resources, your inability to manage them and the user groups and gear responsible for this degradation.</p> <p>You should be ashamed of yourselves. You should be ashamed of the "heritage" that has carried us to the brink and for greed continues to ask for more.</p> <p>The recreational fishermen of this state, the responsible stewards and anglers all across this state are fed up with the back door deals, empty promises and misguided mismanagement of the public trust resources that are the lifeblood of our small coastal communities. It's time for a complete ban on the destructive commercial gear in our primary nursery waters. It's time for you the members of the MFC to do more than the members before you to stand up for the future of our resources.</p>
315	02/20/2021 - 10:34pm	Justin		North Carolina	<p>To the DMF Director, Chairman and Committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to comment. I have a few comments:</p> <p>1) Flounder. I understand and believe the science saying that our Flounder stocks are in terrible shape in NC. I believe that we must do whatever is needed to save the fishery, including a moratorium or partial moratorium. It bothers me terribly that we allowed it to get to this point. Why is it that the rule makers for NC saw the writing on the wall, and waited to take action until there was no other option than to close the fishery 10 months of the year. What is done, is done, but I hope that those in charge of the fishery regulations will be more preemptive in making needed adjustments to size and bag limits...and more importantly in figuring out why we seem to have such a problem with flounder populations compared to our neighboring states. We have fantastic flounder habitat, acceptable water quality...the only thing that stands out to me is the allowance of overfishing by certain extremely productive and extremely non-species specific "gear". Gear that has been long ago eliminated by most other states. I am also confused as to why there is a discussion of a 73/27 split between the commercial sector and recreational anglers. Why is it that the commercial fishery gets 3X the favoritism over recreational anglers??? So when us recreational anglers anglers harvest 27% of the total allotment of flounder, our fishery is closed down and we have to go pay for a gillnetted flounder rather than being able to hook and line one using</p>



SUBMITTED

NAME:

CITY:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

the fishing license that we paid for? How is this fair?

2) Striped Bass Moratorium. I have read the proposed 10 year moratorium on the striped bass fishery in the Roanoke, Albemarle Sound and it's tributaries. Once again, I support doing whatever it takes to protect the fishery and the brood stock. I have seen the ups and downs of the Albemarle Sound fishery since I started fishing it around 1990 and I have seen the steady decline of the Roanoke River fishery over the last 15 years. Again, I ask why are we waiting until a fishery is nearly decimated before we take action. We could have tightened our belts and also restricted the highly efficient gear years ago and we wouldn't be in this situation. It sounds like a broken record...striped bass moratorium, river herring moratorium, flounder moratorium, another striped bass moratorium...are we asleep at the wheel when it comes to fishery management in this state?

3) Inshore Trawling. Speaking of destroying a fishery, I've been behind a trawler when they've dumped their 90% bycatch. Hundreds, if not thousands of juvenile spot, croaker, trout, red drum, flounder, baitfish, etc...and that's just one haul. Dozens and dozens of these trawlers doing this day and night, time after time, in one of the largest estuarine nurseries in the USA. But I guess we may as well destroy all the juvenile fish...since we are destroying their habitat, digging up miles and miles of oysters and seagrasses as we harvest shrimp in inshore waters. Sure I like a shrimp burger...but not badly enough to destroy our natural resources.

4) Gill Net Bycatch. I have fished along the inshore waters of Bogue Banks for the last 15 years and gill nets have always been a topic of concern. I have witnessed first-hand, time after time, the non-species specific destruction caused by this type of gear. It's especially a concern during the winter fishery. Cold water temps have Red Drum and Speckled Trout schooled in large schools in close quarters as they try to survive the winter. I have watched gill netters completely wipe out entire schools, sometimes over a hundred fish at a time, by taking advantage of the schooled fish. I have watched giant schools of Red Drum overwinter in the same spot for weeks at a time, to return to the area and see all of the fish missing except for a few with slash marks around their necks from being entangled in a net. I have navigated down a waterway multiple times over the years as a gill netter has pulled dozens of Red Drum from their nets, as the Drum bob on the surface with cut throats from being wrapped in the net. How many of those fish illegally go to market and how many are released to die, I don't know for sure, but I know it's no way to manage our State Saltwater Fish.

I love NC and all of the wonderful resources she provides us, it's time that we all stand up for what's right and be good stewards of these natural resources. Thank you for your time.

314

02/20/2021 - 10:18pm

Tobin E Miller

North Carolina

Do not limit recreational fisherman to 1 flounder a day.

313

02/20/2021 - 9:59pm

Charles carter

North Carolina

The statistical evidence tells us that the Flounder stock in NC is in horrific shape and has been over fished for decades. No one is disputing this fact.

When managing risk, which is what I do, you determine a root cause of a problem. Why? Because until you address the root cause, the problem will not be solved.

For instance if you have multiple DUI's the answer is not to moderate your drinking and driving. The answer is to not drink and drive. We know that drinking and driving is bad. It kills people. We know there is a direct statistical correlation between drinking and driving and bad things happening. In the 60/70's society did not fully comprehend the direct correlation- but now everyone knows that the root cause of these events is the drinking and that getting behind the wheel is criminal.

So why is the Flounder stock in NC not only decimated, but also in the worst shape of the entire east coast? What is it about the waters of NC that would cause such decimation? What are other states doing that we are not? What are we doing that other states are not?

The simple answer is gill nets. We allow them, and the rest of the country does. It's as if NC allows a certain level of drinking and driving and then wonders why our highway fatality rates are so much higher than our peers.

Gill nets kill an inordinate / disproportionate amount of flounder and other by catch. Our outdated laws allow this. There is direct statistical evidence that correlates these facts.

#▼

SUBMITTED

NAME:

CITY:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

In the 70's America woke up to the fact that bad laws allowed bad outcomes in regards to pollution. The laws were changed to protect our common resource. The new laws addressed the root cause. These revised laws stopped a behavior that was causing the problem.

As the decision makers of our public policy you have the ultimate responsibility to protect the resource. You are the stewards. The stock is decimated, that we all agree on (at least I assume we agree on this?) There is direct statistical evidence that proves gill nets are a huge part of the problem.

The question that I have is -

Do you, as stewards of a decimated resource, have the courage to cut the chains of the outdated laws that are killing our once great fishery?

Or will you settle for half measures that will not address the root cause and continue the decimation?

If it's the latter, then we you will be do the same thing and expecting a different outcome. Einstein had something to say about this.

If you do have the courage to change - then let's make the decision to address the root cause.

SUBMITTED

NAME:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

02/22/2021 -
3:08pm

David Parker

North
Carolina

Dear Marine Fisheries Commissioners:

I understand that for this quarterly meeting there are several things on the agenda that affect the future of large mesh gillnets, specifically as they relate to striped bass and flounder, but due to potential management measures that might be taken, would also affect our ability to fish for shad. I believe that for multiple reasons action should not be taken to accept the “Ten-Year Prescription for the Recovery of the Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River Striped Bass Stock”, including the fact that the peer review of the AS-RR Striped Bass Stock Assessment was only accepted the second attempt and only for a five year period, with the understanding that more information/data was needed on multiple fronts (creel surveys, catch and release data, mortality data, predation data, river flow data, etc.). Further, I believe that towards the end of the data provided (which ended in 2017) the trend showed the less fish were being harvested each year than allowed, and that discard numbers were on a downward trend. Finally, I also believe that for the period for which COVID has caused all meetings to be held virtually by webinar, it is in effect prohibiting individuals from certain geographical areas or socio-economic statuses from participation. For instance, I am from a very rural area in NC, [REDACTED] where high speed internet connections are not available to everyone in the area (some entire roads or portions of roads may have DSL access, and others (like my house) were skipped for a few miles in each direction) so you must resort to using things like a US Cellular Hot Spot that is limited by monthly data constraints. To participate in a webinar would use a large portion of the data allotted for the month, and if the household has school aged children who need that data for virtual classes or people who need that data allotment to work from home, it would be unwise to use it for a multi-hour webinar. To make decisions that affect people from this area (and other remote areas like it) without them being able to fully participate would be wholly prejudicial.

02/22/2021 -
3:05pm

Jamie Winslow

North
Carolina

As it stands now, in the ASMA we are only allowed a 3 week large mesh season in the spring (for Shad) and 3 weeks in the fall (for Flounder). Several years ago, we had 11 months of the year available for large mesh fisheries (closed in December). Since the closures have started for one reason or another (i.e. “too many” turtle or sturgeon interactions in the nets, a “shortage” of shad, etc.) the stock assessments continue to look dismal, leading me to believe that it is not the gill nets that are the problem. I think we would see a more positive result in future stock assessments if we hold off on changing management measures so often (i.e. trip limits, seasons closures, manipulating gill net proclamations, etc.) and instead concentrated on fixing the issues with our water– like having too much nitrogen in our waterways from run off, controlling the invasive blue catfish (natural predators to baby Rockfish), and better controlling our water flow to allow for successful fish migration up the rivers and streams. Fixing our water quality issues in general, such as lowering pollution levels and stopping the high number of sewage spills, would make a huge impact.

I recently read the “Assessment of the Albemarle Sound-Roanoke River Striped Bass in North Carolina, 1991-2017” Report from August of 2020 in order to see what data was available that is stating that Striped Bass were overfished and overfishing was occurring, because it is baffling how many Striped Bass (as well as many other species that are categorized this way – i.e. herring, etc.) that fishermen are seeing in large numbers on a daily basis.

SUBMITTED

NAME:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

In the report, Table 1.6 details the Total Allowable Landings (TAL) for both commercial and recreational harvest. I have provided a screenshot of this information below.

In later tables, including 1.7, and 2.1-2.3, additional details are provided, such as the commercial and recreational landings/harvest and discard numbers. Comparison of this data gets a little tricky at this point because the commercial landings are provided in metric tons, but discards are done in numbers of fish. For the recreational harvest, everything is calculated by number of fish, except for TAL. Then, the recreational tables of data specify that it pertains to dead fish discards, but commercial data only states that it is for discards (it does not state if those were dead or alive). In order to make a table of comparable numbers, I took the commercial harvest numbers and multiplied the provided number of metric tons by 2204.62 (number of pounds per metric ton) and then divided the result by 4. With the number 4 coming from the average number pounds a striped bass 18 inches or longer typically weighs (of course longer fish weigh more, but I just used a 4 pound average for the entirety of the data review). I took data from Table 1.7 at the years that marked parts of the regulatory periods shown above, i.e. 1991, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2014, and 2017 and then standardized the data to have comparable units, as shown below.

Year Commercial ASMA Harvest

(in metric tons) Commercial ASMA Harvest

(in Standardized #s of Fish) Discard # % of Fish Discarded in ASMA Commercial Harvest* % of Dead Fish Discard in ASMA Commercial Harvest

1991	49.24	27138.8722	10267	38%	16%
1997	43.64	24052.4042	3967	16%	7%
1998	56.26	31007.9803	5817	19%	8%
1999	73.94	40752.4007	7401	18%	8%
2000	97.17	53555.73135	10500	20%	8%
2002	101.2	55776.886	6633	12%	5%
2014	32.23	17763.72565	2794	16%	7%
2017	34.5	19014.8475	2762	15%	6%

*Assuming only dead discards were included in the report. If the stock assessment determined discard mortality rate of 43% is accepted as accurate, and the number provided in the report is total discards (which is likely, since these are not specified as dead discards), these numbers change to the final column percentages.

On the recreational harvest numbers, I took the tables data and combined the ASMA and Roanoke River data (no commercial fishing allowed in Roanoke River area, so those numbers would be zero). This data was already presented as number of fish, so I took the number of discards (dead – as stated in the table summary) and divided by the number of harvested fish for each year shown.

SUBMITTED

NAME:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

Year # of Recreationally Fish Harvested # of Dead Discards % of Fish Discarded in Recreational Harvest

1991 41329 11023 27%
 1997 16265 20642 127%
 1998 42675 18040 42%
 1999 39446 13049 33%
 2000 76291 11013 14%
 2002 54318 6870 13%
 2014 16587 12072 73%
 2017 14114 6599 47%

Now, each one of these years brackets in some form the years from the original table I provided a screen capture of (Table 1.6) where the TAL is provided for each sector. If we take the commercial quota, and the sum of the recreational allowance for the two areas and compare it to the actual landings, the following table of data is what is obtained. Once again, I had to standardize the units for comparison, so I took recreational harvest numbers and converted them to metric tons (following the same principles I outlined earlier, assuming each fish weighs four pounds, and that a metric ton=2204.62 pounds). The results are as follows:

Year Commercial ASMA Harvest

(in metric tons) Discard # Discard # with Discard Mortality Rate Applied (43%) Total Commercial ASMA Harvest
 (in Standardized #s of Fish) Striped Bass Removed From Stock (# Dead + # Harvested) Allowed TAL for year (in Metric Tons)
 Allowed TAL in pounds (1 Metric Ton = 2204.62 pound) # of Fish in TAL (assuming 4 # avg) Commercial % TAL used (included discards)

1991 49.24 10267 4414.81 27138.8722 31553.6822 44.5 98105.59 24526.4 129%
 1997 43.64 3967 1705.81 24052.4042 25758.2142 44.5 98105.59 24526.4 105%
 1998 56.26 5817 2501.31 31007.9803 33509.2903 56.88 125398.786 31349.7 107%
 1999 73.94 7401 3182.43 40752.4007 43934.8307 62.57 137943.073 34485.77 127%
 2000 97.17 10500 4515 53555.7314 58070.73135 102.1 225091.702 56272.93 103%
 2002 101.2 6633 2852.19 55776.886 58629.076 102.1 225091.702 56272.93 104%
 2014 32.23 2794 1201.42 17763.7257 18965.14565 124.7 274916.114 68729.03 28%
 2017 34.5 2762 1187.66 19014.8475 20202.5075 62.37 137502.149 34375.54 59%

Year # of Recreationally Fish Harvested # of Dead Discards Total SB removed (dead +harvested) Recreational Allowable TAL
 (expressed in #s) for ASMA and RRMA Recreation TAL (expressed as # of fish, assuming 4# avg) Recreation % of TAL Used
 (with discards)

1991 41329 11023 52352 138229.7 34557.42 151%
 1997 16265 20642 36907 138229.7 34557.42 107%
 1998 42675 18040 60715 200929.1 50232.27 121%

SUBMITTED

NAME:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

1999 39446 13049 52495 221013.2 55253.29 95%
2000 76291 11013 87304 360521.5 90130.38 97%
2002 54318 6870 61188 360521.5 90130.38 68%
2014 16587 12072 28659 440637.4 110159.3 26%
2017 14114 6599 20713 220307.7 55076.92 38%

I believe that this data shows that at least since 2014, both sectors have been properly managed to stay within the parameters of the yearly allowances (lately perhaps over-managed), and that it would be irresponsible to use this stock assessment to potentially shut down the commercial industry to all large mesh fisheries. Further, this data fairly accurately represents all of the Striped Bass removed by commercial fishermen, due to the implementation of the Trip Ticket Program in 1991. In order to sell our catch, we must sell it to a fish house/dealer with a Striped Bass license and have our weights, numbers, and gear information, etc. included on each report. I cannot speak for all commercial fishermen, but personally I cannot afford to miss out on selling every striped bass I am allowed to catch by saving one back for supper, therefore, my trip ticket numbers accurately reflect my entire harvest. However, we have a long way to go before we can even begin to state that our recreational data is accurate. First of all, the data from that sector is counting on creel surveys at boat ramps (this misses out on individuals that depart from their private dock), and calculating effort by the number of boat trailers that are in the boat ramp lot (and not identified as commercial or hunter or for other usage). We are also assuming that the creel surveys, while well designed for what they are – but still lacking, are talking to a statistically significant number of fishermen on a given day/time, and getting accurate information. Meanwhile, commercial data is collected not only by trip tickets, but by the observer programs where they either work directly on our boats to collect data and visualize discards, or by observing us from a nearby vessel. It is also important to bear in mind that they are calculating commercial discard numbers (at least for 1991-2011) by taking the median ratio for live/dead discards and multiplying it by the commercial gill net landings for that day, not by shear observations or reported numbers. I am not certain from the report if that is the current policy as well. For the discard numbers in the recreational industry, there is indeed growth to be made because according to the current policies used and the process of adding a "smooth" to the linear regression generated from the discard model, occasionally the model produced a negative number of discards, which analysts then truncated to zero. Since it is highly unlikely that recreational fishermen can generate baby rock fish while hooking an adult striped bass to remove from the water, this model definitely needs work. It is also unlikely that the recreational post release mortality rate is 6.4% (as identified in the report) while the commercial rate is 43%. The reality is it is hard to say what this number would be because while a fish that is hooked has a bleeding injury and expelled copious amounts of energy during the fight to the boat and then was removed from the water for a period of time for hook removal, measurement (and a possible selfie), the fish that was held in a gill net experiences a different scenario. It could have been in the net since it was first set or as soon as seconds before it was pulled on the boat. It could be hung in the net because it has a hook protruding somewhere around its mouth and it got caught up in the monofilament. It also could be a very healthy fish in cold water and survive just fine, or it could be caught on a warmer day and have underlying issues and die. The issue is if the fish is alive when you release it (recreational or commercial) it is hard to know the fate of it after that moment where it dives back underwater.

SUBMITTED

NAME:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

The peer review process and stock assessment did state that additional work needed to be done in more accurately identifying the discard mortality rates (catch and release and in gill nets), and as stated earlier in evaluating the effects of river flow and the effects of catfish predation. However the report also states the peer reviewers agreed to the fact that Striped Bass were overfished and overfishing was occurring, but did not agree to the cause of the decline (i.e. harvest numbers alone were not responsible for the decline, there are other factors in play). Further the report also states that Striped Bass commonly migrate out of the management unit and possibly even join the ocean migratory stock, which account for their removal from AS-RR management area, and that this is happening in increasing numbers, but there is no current way to quantify this. It does seem unfair and irresponsible to potentially decimate an entire management unit's commercial fleet (and the industries/individual businesses that support it) by closing their shad season while there is no guarantee that a) there is a harvest-related decline in population, and b) the closure would result in any quantifiable differences in future stock assessments.

Lastly, I believe that a stock assessment for all species for which there is commercial involvement in North Carolina managed waterways should be repeated. In the stock assessment it details that juvenile abundance is calculated by running an 18 foot semi-balloon trawl with a 0.75 inch bar mesh and added tail bag for 15 minute increments on a biweekly basis for an 8 week period, resulting in 56 data points. This is done at pre-determined sites (7 of them) in the Western Albemarle Sound, along the edges of "breaks and contours" within a depth of 8 to 12 feet. Then, to collect data on Striped Bass that are greater than one year, a gill net survey is conducted. The ASMA is divided into six zones and then those six zones are turned into 1-mile quadrant squares for a total of 22 quadrants in each of the 6 zones within the Albemarle Sound, Croatan Sound, and Alligator River (which for the purposes of this study were identified as Striped Bass zones). Then, biologists were deployed and using "4 gangs of 12 meshes" of nets (from 2.5 – 7 inches at every ½ inch, then 8 inches, and 10 inches) they measured the number of Striped Bass caught. They did this by calculating the number of fish caught per effort unit (per 40 yards of net over a 24 hour period). For each set, two gangs of nets were sunk, while the remaining two were floated. The study also stated that for mesh sizes up to 4 inches, monofilament weight of 104 was used, then 139 was used for 5-7 inches, and the heavy 277 nets were used for 8 and 10 inch nets. These nets were hung taken up by half, and allowed to soak for a total of 48 hours. It stated that the study was focused in the springtime in the Western Albemarle Sound (and the mouth of the Roanoke River) and for the fall the daily locations for fishing was alternated. I believe that an even better representation of calculating the Striped Bass stock should be undertaken by taking the data collected as described above, and having a number of commercial fishermen complete the study as well. In this manner, you could generate much more sample data using the exact net configurations that we use for harvest. If you use the Trip Ticket data in the upcoming 2021 season, identify a statistically significant number of active, daily shad season participants and have a system set up for after the season ends in 2021 or for the season that starts in 2022 where we (the commercial fishermen who are signed up for the sampling program) provide the exact data the DMF needs to supplement their own data to complete a stock assessment. We can provide our net size (inches and weight), the number of fish (of each species) caught in each 100 yard section of net, and provide the depth and coordinates of our set as well as numerous other pieces of information that would be valuable to DMF. If provided training and equipment we could also provide the salinity and dissolved oxygen content of the water in that location as well.

I believe that both the recreational and commercial sectors involved in fishing the waters of the ASMA should work together, in tandem with DMF, to create a more robust data set from which to take information to form a stock assessment. You would

SUBMITTED

NAME:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

			<p>undoubtedly increase your R-values across the board, as well as improve CV values, and it would provide a more realistic picture of the fish stocks in North Carolina. Instead of being a state that changes management measures on a whim based on pressures from special interest groups, we could become the model state for abundant fisheries stocks with two sectors that work together to have clean waterways and plenty of fish for those who want to harvest it themselves (for meals and for sport), and for those who harvest it as a means of feeding those who want access to fresh, clean seafood while providing numerous jobs across the state.</p> <p>In conclusion, and to reiterate my earlier points, I believe that action should not be taken to end our shad fishery (and further decimate the large mesh gill net industry) in the ASMA based on this Striped Bass stock assessment. I believe we should collect additional data points with input from the commercial (and possible recreational) sectors) and we should not take further punitive action until we can compile that data in a useable manner and present it at in-person meetings.</p> <p>Sincerely, J. L. Winslow</p> <p>*My tables did not paste well, so I will email this as well.</p>
02/22/2021 - 3:04pm	Gordon Deno	North Carolina	Allow recreational fishermen more than one flounder per day. Leave the season open throughout the summer. I understand the importance of commercial fishing to NC. However, logic says that taking thousands of pounds per day per boat is causing much more damage than recreational fishing.
02/22/2021 - 2:48pm	lynn baker	North Carolina	I reduced my trips to the beach last year to 2 times because no flounder fishing. Thats alot of money not spent on my usual 6 to 8 trips a year , renting a room, buying bait, eating out, buying tackle, pier pass and so on. I dont mind anybodys way of making a living. I do think the gigging portion is out of control, 2 trips a nite by commercial boats of 4 to 5 people per trip and keeping 20 to 25 per nite, per boat by how many boats. NO nets in the intercoastal would help also. thank you for reading this
02/22/2021 - 2:46pm	Chris williams	North Carolina	Need to open season longer than 45 days. Leave the limit at 4. If you have to cut anything cut the commercial side.
02/22/2021 - 2:46pm	William Wolfe	North Carolina	As a avid fisherman I feel we must protect our natural resources for all North Carolina citizens. This includes recreational and commercial alike as we all have a stake in our fishery resources and part to play. It really sickens me to see the waste and needless destruction of juvenile fish in our nursery areas and sounds while trawling for shrimp. I love shrimp as much as anyone but the end does not justify the means in this case. Honestly even if we didn't have diminishing stock this is a wasteful practice and certainly not good stewardship of what's been in-trusted us. I'm also opposed to gill nets in our sounds and estuaries as it is non selective for the target species and these areas should be protected to allow fish to spawn and mature not to mention the bycatch of endangered species such as turtles. Way to wrong for way to long and we need our leaders to step up and represent everyone.

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
02/22/2021 - 2:45pm	Jeff Smith	North Carolina	<p>Ive been a real estate and boat owner at the coast for 4 years and I can tell you that I would not make the decision or recommend to buy on the North Carolina coast for anyone that wants to recreationally fished based on what I have witnessed from the MFC during that time. The proposed options for southern flounder are a slap in the face to those of us who spend our dollars at the coast as recreational anglers. First off, if the stock is challenged on southern flounder, this should have no impact or restrictions on gulf or summer flounder. These are the predominant species I catch in the ocean during the summer months anyway. Identification is already provided on the NCDMF website. Imposing restrictions on a species that is not overfished makes absolutely no sense, Summer and Gulf should be fully open with a 4 fish limit. A the 45 day season for southern flounder is ridiculous for recs, when most people can't fish anytime but the weekend. It's effectively a 12-13 day season? Make it open longer from Friday to Sunday.</p> <p>The bias toward commercial fishing from this group continues to occur with zero shame at all. If you truly care about the resource and the mission, then take action to ban gill nets and pound nets from inside waters. The continued action that unfairly targets the rec sector will long lasting impacts on the economy that dwarf any impact on commercial sector. From retail, to guides, to lodging, to real estate, people don't want to spend their hard earned dollars somewhere that clearly shows they don't care about their passions are determined to make it less attractive. The coastal economy is just run on commercial fishing and to ignore that is a disgrace to the entire population your serve.</p> <p>Finally, NO REGULATIONS ON GULF AND SUMMER FLOUNDER! other than size and limit of 4.</p>
02/22/2021 - 2:33pm	Wyatt Minor	North Carolina	<p>There is too much false reports coming in and not enough true reports from fisherman out on the waters experiencing what is going on. Daily reports should not come from what the biologists believe, it should come from the information they gather from the fisherman. Flounder are not overfished and the season has created a rush to keep as many as you can at once and disrupts the population severely in a short period of time. Allowing smaller recreational bag limits when they are spawning, or imposing a slot limit is the direction the NC wildlife commission needs to take. Don't mess up these fisheries anymore than they already have and please SET A WEIGHT LIMIT FOR COMMERCIAL SPEARFISHING. Rod and reel fisherman struggle to catch the big breeder fish and that helps maintain the population of grouper. In the past 5 years the population and fishing has decreased dramatically.</p>
02/22/2021 - 2:32pm	David Honeycutt	North Carolina	<p>Me and my family and friends are very much against the proposal for barbless hooks. Fishing is a sport that promised good times and food to our family and barbless hooks will result in less food and less food times enjoying to outdoors due to the sport becoming more difficult. Barbed hooks are not unfair to the fish because they can still unhook themselves. It is called a sport because it is a competition be the fisherman and the fish. Barbless hooks put the fisherman at a very large disadvantage.</p>
02/22/2021 - 2:32pm	Capt. Tripp Phillips	North Carolina	<p>Just consider the families that rely on their husbands to fish for a living that need business to support their families. Really hope you guys understand that, thanks. There's a life outside of your city and your household.</p>

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
02/22/2021 - 2:26pm	Liam Telfer	North Carolina	I strongly oppose the proposed recreational flounder limitations for 2021. If you wish to make an impact curtail commercial fishing, the numbers indicate the recreational fishing impact is small. Recreational flounder fishing also supports local business.
02/22/2021 - 2:20pm	Brian Shields	North Carolina	I am typing in regards to the proposed flounder management. I do not understand the reasoning behind giving the commercial sector a much larger catch allowance when the economic impact of recreational fisherman far outweighs the commercial. Secondly, the use of large mesh gill nets in landing these fish is not specific to any one species and therefore leads to by catch hurting several different species of fish. Lastly, anglers should still be able to catch and keep other species of flounder that are not currently of concern. It is not that difficult to differentiate between the species. If an angler is too lazy to learn how to differentiate between the species than they can be ticketed.
02/22/2021 - 2:19pm	Tim Chalmers	North Carolina	By reading the reports, it is clear to me the Striped Bass FMP has not been sufficiently effective in addressing the declines in stock status. Reports of commercial landings data is incomplete due to the imbalance of commercial licenses held by North Carolina citizens and the number harvest trip tickets reported by dealers. Stock declines that result in by-catch mortality from the permissive inshore regulations on gill nets and shrimp trawling must be changed. Recreational mortality must be addressed through gear restrictions such as the requirement for the use of circle hooks.
02/22/2021 - 2:16pm	JC PRICE	North Carolina	I don't think a 1 fish and a longer season helps the fish much. It will only benefit the guides more people will be chartering with them and taking many more large flounder out of the breeding population. Some of us that come down only to flounder fish will not think about coming down spending so much money on a weekend trip for 2 flounder. You should look at pushing the shrimp boats out a little. They should not be allowed in the rivers or waterways. The commercial fishermen and guides are all you are helping it is definitely not the normal fishermen or the flounder.
02/22/2021 - 2:13pm	Angela Daughtridge	North Carolina	The proposed circle hook regulation is absurd and overreaching. Although evidence suggests that circle hooks reduce release mortality in some species and in some circumstances, studies have repeatedly shown that circle hooks actually can increase release mortality in smaller species particularly those that are popular surf fishing targets like whiting, spot, and pompano. In addition, the regulation of treble hooks would severely impact the ability of NC sportsmen to target species like bluefish, Spanish mackerel, and speckled trout using artificial lures.
02/22/2021 - 2:11pm	Daniel Daughtridge	North Carolina	<p>I don't usually take the time to go out of my way and put forth my thoughts regarding an issue of fishing regulations but given some of the recent proposals put forth I feel compelled to address the subject.</p> <p>I hear many people talk regularly about leaving behind a plentiful resource/fishery and their hopes that it will be there for the next generation. I myself am 19 years old and look forward to hopefully spending the remainder of my life fishing the sounds and offshore waters of North Carolina. So accordingly, this is something that I feel as passionate about and as qualified to speak as any.</p> <p>For years I have seen regulatory decisions made by the commission that seem to contradict repeatedly the trend we as</p>

SUBMITTED

NAME:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

fishermen see going on in our public waters. Additionally, repeatedly these decisions have no consideration for the fishermen they affect or the resource they address. Stock assessments often convey a different message than what us as fishermen are seeing. Because of this I feel strongly that the measures implemented by the commission for the next few years should center around finding more accurate ways of conducting stock assessments.

This brings me to my first grievance, recent dolphin and Wahoo regulations have been proposed which would to my understanding cut our limits on both fish and possibly in the long run result in size limits on dolphin. My first issue with this measure is it lumps two completely different fisheries into one action when both fisheries are very different and both species are very different. My next grievance is that these measures are being implemented without an accurate stock assessment and merely off of here say from inexperienced fishermen who feel the dolphin fishery in particular is going downhill. The issue as I have repeatedly seen fishing revolves around two key points. The areas people are attempting to catch dolphin and their methods. We have done better the past three years dolphin fishing than we have in all years prior. This is due to a change of tactics and fishing areas we previously wouldn't. One day in particular this past summer, July 4th, 2020 to be exact, my father, a friend of mine, and I got on no less than 8 schools of dolphin ranging in size from peanuts to gaffer dolphin. While they weren't as feisty as normal due to the full moon I felt after that day our dolphin resource was as healthy as ever. However, we were one of the only boats to bring in dolphin that day. The reason being that none of the other boats wanted to fish in the sargassum where we were and preferred to not have to clean off their baits and accordingly they didn't get dolphin bites. This brings me to my next point which is that our dolphin fishery is impacted heavily by the movement of sargassum from down south up the Gulf Stream and off our coast. This movement when good brings large amounts of dolphin and when not as good we tend to have slower years dolphin fishing. This is believe as well as the varying location of the fish is not being accounted for by the complaints of some fishermen and what poorly conducted stock assessments are being done. The past few years our dolphin bite has often times been later towards early fall when fewer boats fish in a time typically not thought of for dolphin fishing. This is because the water that the fish have been residing in for the past few years has been 100 miles offshore on the far side of the Gulf Stream where only the commercial boats can reach them. Simply put, we as recreational fishermen and charter fishermen are not going to make a 100 mile run to fish.

This brings me to my thoughts on what SHOULD be done for the dolphin fishery. I do believe some measures need to be taken but nothing close to what is being proposed. I support a reduction in the cap limit from 60 which I feel is ridiculous to 40 which I feel is fair and reasonable. Additionally, while I wouldn't be happy I could tolerate the individual dolphin limit being dropped from 10 to 8. Any lower and serious damage is likely to be posed to charter fishermen and the greater interest in offshore fishing as dolphin are a staple of offshore fishing. Further measures I feel should be conducted after stock assessments have been done and the charter catch database has been up and running and providing data for the commission to consider. I feel this as a whole is fair to fishermen and the resource and should be considered over what I understand to be a drop to a 5 fish limit.

My final point of grievance is one which I cannot believe is even a proposal being put forth. I recently was made aware of a proposal to implement regulations to require barbless circle hooks for live and dead bait fishing and barbless treble hooks.

SUBMITTED

NAME:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

These proposed measures will kill the sport of fishing as people will no longer have interest in fishing if they cannot even catch a fish. We already have our hands tied behind our backs in terms of what we can keep and this measure would mean your average father wanting to introduce his son to fishing off an ocean pier with a bottom rig and a rental rod would have trouble getting his sons interest as these measures making it far tougher to 1) hook and 2) bring the fish to the angler without the fish throwing the hook or the hook popping loose. Additionally, this would make some forms off fishing all but impossible. Billfish and other pelagic's which jump regularly would be near impossible to catch. Furthermore, it would be almost impossible to hook some species of fish given a circle hook requirement for dead bait. Finally this proposal would do irreparable damage to the businesses which rely on sport fishing as this would almost certainly diminish interest. With this is mind I feel this proposal has absolutely ZERO respect for the fishermen who take to the water to pursue fish and take part in the sport they love.

Over the years I have found that Marine fisheries, a government agency supposed to be in the best interests of our coastal resources and those who enjoy them, has strayed further and further from actually implementing measures which promote sustainable fishing. My cousins wife worked for Marine fisheries for a period of time before switching to a job with FWC and the mismanagement and inaction of Marine Fisheries I feel played a part in that move. For example, implementing regulations based off years old stock assessments which as previously mentioned may or may not be accurate. The issue with our fisheries lies squarely with marine fisheries and not the fishermen. The mismanagement is appalling and measures need to be correct the poor processes in place that lead to the creation of the regulations we must abide by.

Remember, you work for one group and one reason. You work for THE PEOPLE, and your pay check is paid for by THE PEOPLE. And the reason that you have a job is to properly management our coastal resources so they are there for us, THE PEOPLE.

02/22/2021 -
2:03pm

Mark Duncan

North
Carolina

Recreational flounder fishing should be open year round. And a 1 fish limit is crazy. We. Don't hurt the population of the fish much as trawlers or gill net commercial fisherman do

02/22/2021 -
1:58pm

Bruce Lee

North
Carolina

NCDMF needs to take a completely different course in how they are managing our inshore and near shore fisheries. First and foremost, cease all inshore trawling and gill netting. Fiddling around with circle hooks and barbless trebles is a complete waste of time when these two elephants in the room continue to decimate our fisheries. It is long overdue NC adopt the practices all other coastal states have.

Specific to flounder, nearshore and offshore flounder fishing should be open year round and have a 4 fish limit. It is well documented this fishery has almost nothing to do with the Southern Flounder population you have allowed to be decimated. The fact you still allow flounder trawls in the ocean pretty much validates my previous statement. Also, any and all allocations should be a 75% recreational and 25% commercial This only makes sense based on the overall economic benefits recreational fishing brings to the state versus the commercial sector.

SUBMITTED

NAME:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

It is high time NCDMF start acting like a true manager of our public trust resource and not a crony for the commercial sector.

02/22/2021 -
1:57pm

Joseph Briley

North
Carolina

Please give us a summer and fall recreational season on flounder. Please give us a four fish limit per person. Thank you

02/22/2021 -
1:57pm

James Stanley

North
Carolina

I've been a recreational fisherman for 40+ yrs. Always supported NC fishing rules a regulations. The new policies of the past 2 yrs. has me taking my support to other states. Please reconsider you rulings on NC fishing. Like me and others are taking our tax dollars out of state. It is NOT the recreational fisherman causing some spieces to become over fisher. This time of year when the netters claim their target fish the rest is by-catch and leave it thrown on banks in the waterway. Take all fish netting 2 miles out in the ocean and let the recreational fisherman have the inland waterways. Then in a couple of years reaccess the stock.

02/22/2021 -
1:53pm

Edwin Briel IV

North
Carolina

I would like to thank NCDMF for allowing public input in the coming matters. Also, I would like to thank NCDMF for taking proactive measures to protect our flounder populations for future generations to enjoy, I noticed a large difference in numbers of fish during the recreational season in 2020. I have grown up on Bogue Sound for most of my life, today I am 31 years old, during my short time of life here I have noticed a lot of change. Change in fish sizes and population, changes in the ecosystem like marsh erosion, live bottom erosion (eel grass, oyster rocks), bay scallop decimation and other things as well. (I'm trying to keep this short). We are facing an ever changing environment here in NC, the water quality of our sounds and rivers is suffering from pollution on all fronts, inland and coastal. Not only is pollution contributing to the demise of our resource but our constant human need to harvest fish/shellfish is hurting the resource as well. The sheer number of boaters and recreational anglers on the water grows each and every year. I noticed this change in my early 20's and can remember back in 2001-2003 when my best friend and I would race home from school to beat the same two old dudes to the local trout hole every afternoon. Life was simple then and limits were completely different as well, but what I remember is...Lucas and I racing those same two old men every afternoon in October to be the first ones there when the tide switched. Now, that entire area is overran during the fall run, I am willing to bet there is 4 times as many anglers out there in October. I think our current speckled trout limit mirrors the influx of recreational fisherman, which is perfectly fine with me, I enjoy catching the fish, I enjoy it so much that I rarely harvest speckled trout and if I do harvest any its between the sizes of 14"-19", I use to kill a few big ones until I saw how many eggs they carry and realized the need for those big ones to spawn. If we look on social media today there is a big push to release over 20" and it is gaining popularity rapidly, but it is not enough to reach everyone on social media, we need NCDMF and NCWRC to help protect this fishery and make it a protected gamefish. I'm willing to bet recreational money spent on speckled trout brings more to our economy than commercial harvest does. I ask that y'all look into making a slot size on speckled trout and banning the use of gill nets for the species, and maybe allowing 1 trout over 20" in the event that one is mortally wounded and will not survive if released. Make it a commercially hook and line fishery, no netting, gigging/spearing. If we can't do that to help protect the future of the fishery, I ask that we put restrictions on where gill netting takes place. Restricted to open bays and sounds only, no netting narrow water ways like creeks and rivers. The white oak river in stella is a prime example of overfishing

SUBMITTED

NAME:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

with gill nets, and I know for a fact NCDMF is well aware of what goes on there. It will not be popular regulations among the commercial fisherman at first but in a decades time when a commercial fisherman can harvest their quota on hook and line with no problem, it will no longer be an issue. How are we the last state that still allows decimation of our fishery with nets? One day I envision our fishery being world class, but we cannot get there with the current management of our resources. By the way, my best friend and I use to be commercial fisherman, but we saw the need for change long ago...

02/22/2021 -
1:45pm

Donald Willis

North
Carolina

Estuarine striped bass

I support all efforts in the recovery of the estuarine striped bass including a recreational moratorium even though I make a good percentage of my income form this fishery. Moving all large and small mesh nets that could have any interaction with estuarine striped bass is a must if the stock is going to recover. This is a shared stock and it should be treated as such. All the states entities who share in the management of this stock should work together to come up with the best solution to this problem.

Southern flounder

We need to bring flounder to a even allocation between commercial and recreational fisheries. As in most fisheries in our state that are in trouble it has not been the recreational fisherman who have put us in these situations but NCDMF has gone with a 50/50 shared pain approach but has turned a blind eye to the shared approach when it comes to stock allocation. I know that not all stocks will be a even split but this is one that should.

Shrimp

Otter trawls and other methods that produce more bycatch than targeted species should be banned from all North Carolina waters. The bycatch has only gone down because there is less biomass than twenty or thirty years ago. These things are way to effect at killing everything it comes in contact with. Please stop spending money on trying to fix these killing machines and look at alternative ways to harvest shrimp. Something that we can all live with including the fish.

I only want to see our fishery stocks recover. I hope that this is a shared vision with all who read this.

02/22/2021 -
1:38pm

Andy Evans

North
Carolina

I am a recreational fisherman that enjoys the chance to catch flounder. Last year, we were placed on a 45 day season with a limit of 4 per day. Now you want to reduce to 1 per day...it costs me on average \$150 per trip and that is not a way to sustain the recreational fisherman! It is time to quit blaming the recreational fisherman for commercial and government failures for sound trawling and netting in the estuaries. No other state allows trawling or netting like North Carolina. Please consider the revenue recreational fishermen puts back into stores, gas pumps, and equipment....we are tired of being held accountable for everyone's failures or deficiencies!

02/22/2021 -
1:33pm

Tony Bridgeman

North
Carolina

It's not fair that you keep working with the commercial fisherman but not working with the recreational fisherman the commercial fisherman keep harvesting all the flounder and gigging them. But you keep giving them more and more time to fish and taking it away from the recreational fisherman we do pay your salary for hunting and fishing so when it all goes to South Carolina it's on y'all

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
02/22/2021 - 1:24pm	Jeff Martin	North Carolina	This comment is directed to the Striped Bass season closures on the Neuse and Trent Rivers. My family has owned a place on the Neuse River between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] since the 1960's. I've caught Rock in the Neuse & Trent Rivers all my life, long before they were stocking Rock in the Neuse from the hatchery in Edenton. Just like most things with nature some years the fishing was better than others so I just don't see an adequate justification for the closure. We've gone from being able to keep three fish over 18 inches several years ago to being able to keep none presently. I sincerely hope my fellow recreational anglers take a few minutes to voice their opinions on how poorly our fisheries are managed here in NC.
02/22/2021 - 1:24pm	Joseph Sylvia	North Carolina	I believe the size limit for flounder for both recreational and commercial fisherman needs to be increased. The size of 15 inches recreationally does not allow for many fish to spawn maturely more than once in their lifetime. Flounder reach this size around age 3, which is approximately the same size females will begin to spawn. Allowing a limit of 15 inches, does not give the fish more than one generation to reproduce, which with the likelihood of those eggs reaching another adult fish being very slim. The size for commercial and recreational fisherman needs to be increased to 17 inches, at a minimum. I know this will upset and disrupt commercial fishing industries, which are vital in NC, but realistically if the flounder population is to begin an upwards growth curve for decades to come, this needs to be enforced. Once the population reaches an amount where it is sustainable and not classified as being overfishing, these limits could be reduced again, but for now, that is what needs to happen to support a healthier population in the future.
02/22/2021 - 1:20pm	Robert Brogden	North Carolina	Open flounder in the ocean all summer and fall
02/22/2021 - 1:10pm	Cameron Smith	North Carolina	As a young adult, it pains me to see how bad we are managing our fisheries here in NC. Inshore netting, shrimp trawling and other forms of destructive fishing have hurt the ecosystem to the point where if it continues, I don't think the future generations will be able to enjoy fishing here like I have. North Carolina has the potential to be a world class fishery, if it was managed correctly.
02/22/2021 - 1:06pm	Cameron Smith	North Carolina	As a lifelong flounder fisherman who specifically targets the species for sport, I am disappointed that more has not been done to limit the commercial depletion of the stocks. Now, the recreational fishermen are bearing the brunt of restrictions on stocks we did not decimate. Residents of NC and saltwater enthusiasts spend a lot of money to fish for flounder but that will soon be a lost tradition and lost business revenue for many because a few commercial businessmen felt like selling fish to restaurants was worth destroying the population of flounder. Please make the bold choice to protect the many small businesses that benefit from recreational fishing instead of the few that benefit from commercial harvesting. Additionally, please do not restrict summer and gulf flounder catches under a southern flounder management plan.
02/22/2021 - 12:47pm	Evan Hockenberger	North Carolina	The proposed circle hook regulation is absurd and overreaching. Although evidence suggests that circle books reduce release mortality in some species and in some circumstances, studies have repeatedly shown that circle hooks actually can increase

SUBMITTED

NAME:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

02/22/2021 -
12:44pm

TERRY L
HACKETT

North
Carolina

release mortality in smaller species particularly those that are popular surf fishing targets like whiting, spot, and pompano. In addition, the regulation of treble hooks would severely impact the ability of NC sportsmen to target species like bluefish, Spanish mackerel, and speckled trout using artificial lures.

The ongoing pandemic is--unfortunately--an example where science based management of medical emergency has been politicized to the detriment of this country's citizens. Another example, the management of North Carolina's marine fisheries resources. It is time to allow sound scientific principals--not political agendas--dictate how this public trust resource is managed. The pandemic has in fact, put more pressure on our marine fisheries and it is time for the Marine Fisheries Commission make significant changes before these resources are gone all together.

For instance, the dreadful condition of the state's striped bass stock is alarming. The recovery of spawning striped bass stocks was something North Carolinians were proud of, but now thanks to directed fishing and bycatch mortality, environmental conditions and dams, stocks are dangerously low. While I know that the MFC cannot control climate impact nor force dam removal, they can and should do something about striped bass fishing mortality.

The ASMA/RRMA stock assessment indicates overfishing is occurring and the stock is overfished, and it calls for a moratorium or at least a greatly reduced quota. However, failure to address fishing mortality-bycatch from gill nets will greatly impede or even prevent recovery. While bycatch estimates are controversial, there is no doubt that as a stock recovers bycatch will increase. For this reason I support the North Carolina Coastal Conservation Association's position regarding gill net restrictions. I also support NCCCA's position on striped bass stocking and collaboration between MFC and NC Wildlife Resource Commission. Collaboration between these agencies will carry more weight when addressing flows during spawning with the US Army Corps of Engineers.

However, the striped bass fishery is but one fish stock in decline. Again, science points to the answer. Active, science based management when implemented as recommended will not only provide more fish for both commercial and recreational fishermen, but we will have viable stocks that can be enjoyed for generations to come.

However, if sound science isn't enough to sway the MFC, then perhaps economics may be a better approach. According to the NOAA technical memo detailing the Fisheries Economics of the United States in 2016, recreational fishing accounted for more jobs, sales, income and value added to the North Carolina economy.

According to that report, commercial fishing accounted for 10,156 jobs, \$984,700 in sales, \$275,651 in income with a value added of \$410,851. Conversely recreational fishing in NC accounted for 16,811 jobs, \$1,699,040 in sales, \$655,798 in income and had a value added to our economy of \$1,020,499. But what I found very interesting in that report is that nationally, BOTH commercial fishing and recreational fishing are HUGELY important to the economy. In fact, another report suggest that if recreational fishing was a single business, it would be ranked 51st on the Fortune 500 list!

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
02/22/2021 - 12:40pm	Neil	South Carolina	<p>What's upsetting to me is the fact that North Carolina doesn't even make it into the top 10 list of states for either commercial or recreational fishing dollars. That tells me that we are ignoring economics and science. It's time for the MFC to change.</p> <p>Simply put, this is absurd. There's only a handful of applications in which to utilize a circle hook. In those instances, they are being used already. There's just no way to to make a circle hook work in situations that call for a J hook. The whole barb thing is also a joke. These aren't fragile rainbow trout. Fish are far more resilient than you are giving them credit for, and a small barb is not going to make a difference when it comes to a hole that's already in their mouth.</p>
02/22/2021 - 12:26pm	Zakkary Kirby	North Carolina	<p>I think its obvious what the real issues are and it baffles myself and others what we are allowing to happen to our coastal resources.</p> <p>I am speaking about gill nets, Millions of pounds of juvenile fish are killed and discarded every year based on your own reporting.</p> <p>I honestly don't know how you are able to meet with other state officials and keep a straight face. And then I have to wonder maybe these other states do not want to say anything as if we are pillaging our waterways they dont have to pillage theirs and can enforce common sense regulations.</p> <p>If someone killed a dolphin they would be in hot water. If someone killed a turtle they would be in hot water. If someone killed an under sized fish they would be in hot water so why do we allow a small percentage of fisherman the ability to do this on a mass scale.</p> <p>It hurts me to think my future children may not experience the same fisheries as myself. I hear stories about the striped bass runs and it hurts me to think North Carolina will never experience that again as we pillaged that fishery beyond repair.</p> <p>We should be leading the way, but instead we are decades in the past and hopefully not decades too late.</p> <p>One of the biggest arguments for inshore gill netting and this destructive type of harvesting are its how we have always done it. And its their lively hood. Open a history book and look back 50 years. Things have change drastically why can't you.</p>
02/22/2021 - 12:26pm	Jonathan French	Virginia	<p>Please note- you can not use circle hooks for presenting a live bait on a pin rig for king mackerel AND COBIA! Pin rigging is a long time staple of pier business up and down the entire coast. While pin riggers south of Cape Hatteras focus on king mackerel, cobia is the primary target and catch of those anglers on piers in the Outer Banks.</p>
02/22/2021 - 12:26pm	John (Steve) Corriher	North Carolina	<p>Here are the areas that need addressing/changed (in order of importance)</p>

SUBMITTED

NAME:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

1. Change sector allotment to an equitable 50/50 split commercial/recreational
2. Close all estuaries to trawling
3. Ban gill nets in estuaries
4. Change flounder size/bag limits- 3 fish a day -with a 17" min size.
5. Close trawling an additional day that is consecutively to the current weekend closure
6. Ocean opened all year long to flounder fishing with additional enforcement (Opening ocean in March/April has not effect because flounder are not accelerable then)
7. Enforced commercial trip/data required reporting - if a license holder reports no data for two consecutive years their license is suspected pending re-application.

Thanks and please feel free to contact me at:

Steve Corriher

██████████@gmail.com

02/22/2021 -
12:03pm

Matthew austin

North
Carolina

Circle hooks are going to put our fisheries back 30 years. Putting this in place will KILL the tourist revenue during fishing tournaments and normal fishing along our coastline!

02/22/2021 -
11:57am

Alan Rucker

North
Carolina

Please review shrimp trawling in the Bogue Sound. I watch hundreds of dead juvenile fin fish sorted out of nets from my yard and commercial trawlers dragging nets at the end of docks. The population of adult fish has dropped precipitously since I was a kid. In my teens (1980s), my dad and I would drive down to ██████████ from ██████████ for a day fishing trip. Now, catches are so poor, it is rarely worth it for us to walk two blocks to the beach. Spot fishermen on the piers used to stand shoulder-to-shoulder fishing. Now, even the few remaining piers are scarcely populated. Flounder we would release to "grow up" in the early 80s became pier records by the late 90s to almost absent today. Most of the drop off seems timed with commercial shrimp fishing in the sounds. Our bycatch rate in NC is massive compared to nearby states. Overall landing for fish are also down and seemingly unsustainable. Recreational fishing is nothing like it was in the 70s and early 80s. Also consider the impact on disparity—the only way to land fish now is to own or charter a boat. Gone are the days of just needing a rod, a hook, and some bait you find in the surf.

North Carolina used to be a place to come and fish. It used to be a family tradition to take the kids fishing—a place you could pass on knowledge and develop bonds. My kids never developed an interest since we generally got one bite every two hours. They are now 24 and 22. I am hopeful that a better way to manage fish stocks (and aid in recovery) can be found so that we just skip a generation vs let the tradition completely die out.

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
02/22/2021 - 11:33am	Joshua Walker	West Virginia	<p>As someone who comes down for 3 or 4 weeks a year and who is also looking to move to NC in the neat future this concerns me. I use both circle and j hooks along with trebles. This is a solution to a problem that I feel is not nearly as bad as I believe it is being made out to be. With all the changes in recreational regulations lately if things continue I may need to rethink my vacation destination and future place of residency to a state that respects the recreational fishermen better. Thank you for the opportunity to be heard.</p>
02/22/2021 - 11:31am	Chris Sutton	North Carolina	<p>Believe it's time we start looking at the other changes occurring here instead of placing the blame at our commercial and rec fisherman's feet.</p> <p>We are seeing fish we didn't use to see while out flounder gigging....like dozens of sea robbins. I grew up on these waters, we barely saw maybe one or two a season, now seeing them every trip</p> <p>Same with the Cormorants. Growing up hunting and fishing these waters I can definitively state that we have had an unprecedented explosion in Cormorant population that directly affects our fragile ecosystem.</p> <p>This year I had the opportunity to watch no less than 20,000 Cormorants drop into a creek after a harsh cold snap to completely decimate any fish that were inside there all lethargic from from cold.</p> <p>I also do my fair share of diving off our coast and I the fish species sre changing drastically. We have more of some species and less of others.....and I'm speaking about species that are not kept by humans so it isn't like recreational or commercial guys are to blame.</p> <p>If changes are to be made please at least entertain the idea that we are the citizens of NC are not affecting all these resources and we are not taking into account some sort of change to our natural environment.</p> <p>Thank you</p>
02/22/2021 - 11:29am	Todd Rowe	North Carolina	<p>As a recreational fisherman, I find it appalling that the NCDMF would consider a 73/27 split for Southern Flounder on limits for commercial vs recreational fisherman. This should be at least a 50/50 split between commercial and recreational. Previously, your division Biologists suggested a 72% harvest reduction on Southern flounder to save the stock from collapse and insisted that cuts had to be "equitable". Now, you want to go back and utilize historical quota numbers to assess a limit and not utilize "equitable" cuts. So, if we go by historical landings, then you are admitting that commercial fishing is responsible for the majority of harvest within NC waters by utilizing a 73/27 split, commercial/recreational. Just more double talk from our NCDMF that should look out for the State's resource for all parties involved and not just one group of constituents.</p>

SUBMITTED

NAME:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

In addition, the proposed opening of ocean waters from March/April is another attempt to try and appease the recreational fisherman. This time frame for opening ocean fishing for flounder is unacceptable and should be extended through the summer and fall seasons when actual flounder fishing occurs in these waters. The ocean waters are primarily Summer and Gulf species with little impact on Southern flounder limits. If the recreational fisherman does not know the difference then he/she should not keep the flounder or if they do risk being ticketed for the offense.

Respectfully,

Todd Rowe

02/22/2021 -
11:28am

Charles Powell

North
Carolina

My name is Charles Powell I run [REDACTED] out of [REDACTED]. I've been in this area my whole life and have been a inshore, near shore charter cpt going on 25 years now . I mostly fish inshore on a 24 ft skiff. After last year's change too the season of which flounder could be caught I thought that was the end of my business but I managed too make it work through the pandemic and all I lost 50 percent of my business last year because of covid and I'm not the only one .I understand that you have too do something but taking us too a 1 fish limit will devastate my business I'm already loosing customers too south Carolina and that takes money away from tourism here in our area . I'm asking that you look at the for hire small guys like me that depend on this fisherer. Flounder fishing has been my lively hood my whole career and if you do this my customers aren't coming back. Devastating to me and the small business in our area
Thanks for your time
Cpt Charles Powell
[REDACTED]@gmail.com

02/22/2021 -
11:27am

Deb Alpert

North
Carolina

I am a [REDACTED] native who has been fishing all my life. Now that I'm retired I would like to enjoy fishing even more! I want to see the summer & Gulf Flounder fishing open all summer & fall in the ocean and the sounds. We should always be allowed a 4 fish bag limit per day. If the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has these species listed as " NOT OVERFISHED" why would you want to limit recreational fishermen-women to a proposed 45 day season & one fish per day? It's extremely shocking to me that NC continues to allow commercial flounder trawling fishing 15,000lbs. of flounder per trip!!! That's what is affecting the flounder population NOT RECREATIONAL FISHER FOLKS. Thank you for your consideration and please do not continue to hurt sport fishing.

02/22/2021 -
11:27am

Neal Jordan

North
Carolina

To whom it may concern:

I am a 47 year old lifelong NC resident and have fished (~30 days a year) in and around Carteret County for my entire life.

It is an undeniable fact that over my lifetime our southern flounder fishery has deteriorated significantly. I would argue that the deterioration has accelerated sharply over the last decade or so.

SUBMITTED

NAME:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

I understand that there are many reasons for the decline, and that if we are to fix it we will all need to work together and use all tools at our disposal. We need to do all that we can to ensure that our children and their children can enjoy a quality fishery, just like I did when I was young.

To that end, we need an equitable solution. If the Southern flounder is to become a quota-managed fishery, then the current commercial/recreational split of 73/27 should be changed to a 50/50 allocation. A 73/27 split makes no sense at all.

In addition, the ocean should be opened to give recreational anglers an opportunity to harvest Summer and Gulf flounder. The proposed ocean access during March/April needs to be shifted in such a manner that the current recreational flounder season is lengthened in areas of the ocean where interactions with Southern flounder will be minimal.

If fishermen cannot tell the difference or misclassify the species they should be ticketed (if they keep the fish). We do not close the gray trout fishery to harvest when we have a cold stun that drives a need to close for speckled trout. Flounder should be no different.

Thank you for the work that you are doing to support and rebuild our Southern Flounder fishery. I sincerely appreciate it!

Neal Jordan

Southern Flounder public comment, Chris Elkins Feb. 2021 MFC

1. Error(s) in document. Table 10, the average was presented but it is wrong in column 3.
 2. Economic data lacking. Why was there no direct comparison of economics between commercial and recreational sectors for each of the allocation options?
 3. Economic data is ignored in Divisions argument for historical allocations. The economics favors a larger allocation to the recreational sector. Comparing the economic value-added parameter, the value per pound is \$12.67 for commercially caught Southern flounder and \$39.18 for recreationally caught Southern flounder. Other parameters are similar to this comparison. This alone justifies a 50/50 allocation, if not a complete reversal of allocation.
 4. Conclusions/statements made without evidence. Many of the statements made by the Division in the flounder briefing are speculations without evidence provided.
-

02/22/2021 -
11:26am

Christopher
Elkins

North
Carolina

SUBMITTED

NAME:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

5. MFC failed to take substantive measures to end overfishing and recover an overfished stock. Throughout the flounder FMPs since 2005, recreational fishermen called for reducing harvest and commercial fishermen fought any cuts saying that there were plenty of fish and that they were going to be put out of business. Indeed, they went so far as to go to court to continue overfishing. DMF told everyone the turtle rules would fix Southern flounder and said we didn't need to do anything. I was on the Commission when Louis preached this) and then had us (the MFC) cut recreationals again. If the MFC had listened to the recreational conservation messages in beginning in 2005 we would all be flounder fishing now.

6. Recreational fishermen allocations. Since 2005, the MFC rules boxed in Recreational fishermen. Commercial fishermen were allowed to overfish even modest restrictions that were set way too generous. Using such data for allocation is not equitable and totally unjustified.

7. Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (and in NC, unenforced) Fishing (so called IUU fishing) results in an underestimated harvest. In many of the NC fisheries, including the commercial Southern flounder fishery, there is an incentive not to report catches as the quota can be met and exceeded resulting in more restrictive measures implemented. In addition to this motivation, 66% of commercial license holders have no trip tickets associated with their license adding to the underestimated harvest. To further complicate this there were little to no fish house surveys, creel checks and enforcement this past year. Its resulted in a year without credible data and chaos for fisheries managers.

8. Southern flounder are overfished, so DMF closes Summer and Gulf flounder for recreational fishermen. Really?

In conclusion, the Division and MFC have repeatedly demonstrated their inability to regulate this fishery. Some have suggested a complete closure of the fishery and if one considers only allocation, it is the only option that results in equity that both sectors agree is equal-zero for both. Advocates of a closure state that closing the fishery will stop overfishing, give the Commission time to carefully study the benefits of new sector allocations, and study appropriate gear changes. However, CCA NC and I personally support a 50/50 allocation between sectors with paybacks and ending overfishing as opposed to a complete moratorium. We also support opening the summer and gulf flounder fisheries to recreational fishermen. If they wish to keep a flounder they need to learn to identify it, it's not that hard. If they can't identify the fish throw it back or get a ticket, just as we do for other species.

02/22/2021 -
11:25am

Charlie church

Virginia

I am hoping NC does something to address gil netting. A majority of Trout and reds from Virginia winter in NC and protecting those is key to building strong fisheries than can support recreational angling as well as guide businesses.

Maintaining a maximum population for those species also protects us during cold stuns.

02/22/2021 -
11:25am

Keith wilson

North
Carolina

From what I've seen over the years is that a lot of fish especially with a circle hook get gut hooked and die. J hooks on the other hand every drum I've ever caught with a j hook has either been hooked in the corner of the mouth or in the tongue a very very

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
			<p>small percentage gets gut hooked. So much so that in the 15 years that I've been drum fishing with countless numbers of fish under my belt and seeing others catch them I've never seen one gut hooked with a J. But I can say I've seen 2 gut hooked with a circle hook. I think you guys need to either do more actual research in the field and not sitting on your butt behind a desk or talk to the people who have been doing it for 15 plus years. What your trying to do will ruin the fishery.</p>
02/22/2021 - 11:25am	William Kevin Brooks	North Carolina	<p>Greetings:</p> <p>As a Citizen Sportsman I'm NOT in support of the % proposal. I support a more evened % for recreational fisherman.</p> <p>Thank you for your service to N.C.</p> <p>Best regards, W. Kevin Brooks [REDACTED]</p>
02/22/2021 - 11:23am	Kevin Tedder	North Carolina	<p>With a struggling economy already, why consider taking this away from recreational fishermen and businesses in our state? Covid-19 has already put a damaging impact on our state! Please take this in consideration. Do your part and give our state something positive! Thanks!</p>
02/22/2021 - 11:21am	James Morton	North Carolina	<p>I am a 50 year old with wife and 2 children. My parents live in onslow county on the coast. I want to ask that you not reduce the number of flounder that you can keep this upcoming year. I was only able to make one trip this past year and only able to gig three between myself and my dad and my two children.</p> <p>If you change the quota, I can only think you do not want anyone other than commercial fisherman being able to catch flounder. Please consider at least keeping it to four.</p> <p>Thank you</p>
02/22/2021 - 11:18am	Brad Lucas	North Carolina	<p>Your data states that Striped Bass populations are down because of high water and overfishing. There is nothing that can realistically be done about the high water levels during the spawn. There is something that can be done about overfishing, which by the way is not due to sport fishing. We all know overfishing in this case is caused by netting/commercial fishing. ALL nets must be banned from all US and North Carolina waters.</p> <p>This leads me to the most logical question: Why is NC the only state among Gulf and Atlantic states that still allows netting in the sounds and estuaries? It is an obvious fact, supported by data, that these states have experienced greatly increased fish stocks since banning nets. Why has NC not done the same? I can tell you that the majority of sport fishermen think that politics is involved. I will also say that if you continue to make it harder for people to enjoy fishing, they will stop fishing. This will lead to fewer boats being sold, fewer tackle shops being open, less restaurant and hotel business, ect..... It will be a chain reaction that will hurt the economy and will lead to less taxes used to help the environment and fisheries management. You cause more</p>

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
			harm than good with your political policies. In short; stop playing politics and use logic and common sense.
02/22/2021 - 11:16am	Rob Green	North Carolina	As always, the proposed regulations are put forward with very little thought. You want to fix the fisheries? How about taking the steps to remove gill nets like every other southern fishery has. That's a start. Hooks, really?
02/22/2021 - 11:16am	Blake huling	North Carolina	What sense does it make for back water fisherman to try and create a law that shows they've clearly never fish the surf/pier
02/22/2021 - 11:04am	Justin Ragsdale	North Carolina	<p>I am against the proposed 73/27 split in flounder landings for commercial vs recreational, respectively. At best it should be a 50/50 split or a reversal of 73 %rec and 27% comm. Trickle down economics pursuing recreational flounder, i.e. gas, ice, hotels, restaurants, groceries, bait, tackle, has a greater economic impact on our coastal economies, than a handful of fish houses prospering and centralizing flounder related money. Recreational anglers have taken multiple cuts from 8 to 6 to 4 to only 45 days of fishing, but commercial interests have seen no reductions til 2020 and have never been held to any kind of TAC. It is clear which sector overfished the southern flounder stocks. Just look at the rest of our southern neighbors that are still wide open year round for recreational fishing. What's different, they dont allow wholesale commercial slaughter of southern flounder, they protect their common public resources for the sake of the resource. NCDMF has failed due to biased management for decades in favor of commercial interests, it's a fact! Additionally 100% of commercial landings should be reported, close the self sustenance loopholes.</p> <p>NCDMF needs to open flounder fishing in the ocean year round to recreational fishing for the oceallated flounder species. Blocking our access to federal resources is wrong and unjustified especially as the southern flounder management plan is for state waters. But again, NC commercial interests are allowed to access these stocks even though the trawler fishing has migrated north from its historical range off our coast to north of New York. The blanket management of flounder species is laziness, pure and simple resulting in management to the lowest common denominator. Gulf and summer flounder should not be included in the plan as they are both healthy stocks, and clearly not southern flounder. How is it possible that I can watch a 10 minute video to be qualified on identifying sharks for an HMS permit but NCDMF cannot put out a 10 minute video for the 3 species of flounder. They are not that hard to tell apart especially at the time of catch. NCDMF job is to educate the public, do it. With social media and just about everyone having access it doesnt seem to be that daunting of a task to disseminate the needed information. Make it so you cant get a recreation coastal license without watching the video. Advertise and place heavy fines on the out of season harvest of southern flounder, whether caught inshore or in the ocean, actually have marine patrol do their job and be present in the ocean. Promote, if you dont know, let it go or face heavy fines.</p> <p>I make my living fishing and pursuing flounder is a large portion of my livelihood. I am all for rebuilding southern flounder stocks, but demand that it be done equitably amongst the shareholders and be poignant enough to not include species that are not overfished.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration, Captain Justin Ragsdale</p>

SUBMITTED

NAME:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

02/22/2021 -
11:03am

Lee

North
Carolina

I want to see the Summer and Gulf Flounder Fishery OPEN all Summer and Fall in the ocean as this fishery has almost no effect on the Southern Flounder population they are trying to manage! We should also be allowed a 4 fish bag limit in this fishery as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has these species listed as "Not Overfished." and NC is allowing the Commercial Flounder Trawl Fishery to continue to harvest up to 15,000 lbs of flounder in the ocean per trip both last Summer (April-June) and already this Jan.-Feb 2021. But they want to only allow the recreational fishermen a 45 day season with a proposed 1 fish per day.

02/22/2021 -
11:02am

Bruce Morton

North
Carolina

I am 76 years old and have been flounder gigging my entire life. Its sad to know that you are considering reducing the number of flounder to only one per day. Please keep in mind that many of us that live on the coast depend on being able to have fish to eat and are on very limited income. Last year i was only able to go gigging six times due to the weather conditions during 45 days.
I remember going shrimping with my dad with his shrimp trawl and hated to see all of the small fish that were in the tail bag when he dumped it. I can only speculate that shrimp trawls would be the most important concern when it comes to maintaining the fish population.
Can you imagine going fishing and only being able to bring only one fish home to you family? At least keep it to the four that was allowed last year.
I ask that you try to put yourself in our shoes when making your decisions.

02/22/2021 -
10:59am

Josh Hamberg

North
Carolina

I completely disagree with the assessment that that recreational fishing is the problem. If you want to limit something about recreational flounder fishing it should be gigging. Ban it. 1 fish per day limit on recreational pole fisherman is ridiculous.

02/22/2021 -
10:55am

Bobby
Anderson

North
Carolina

I speaking against the 1 founder per day proposal for Recreational fisherman. I do agree that there needs to be regulations put on both sides. But until the Commercial side is reduced with net usage and reduced to the amount of flounder they can gig in a night all this is in vain.
My thoughts are:
* limit Recreational fisherman to 2 per day per person 6 per boat Max. . From June- Oct. with 16-17" limit.
* Limit Commercial fisherman to all nets to 1 day per week. Gigging to 6 per trip with a 16-17" limit.
These 70/30 mix isn't working. the numbers are 3 years behind. And I know your saying the Commercial side will be hit the worst. That's where most of the abuse of the fishing resources of NC are going. They are making a living off a public and State own resource. The majority doesn't not belong to just one segment. Just because they have been doing that all their lives doesn't mean its ok. People loose their jobs everyday, and they have to find another means to make a living. I realize these folks work hard. But that isn't any excuse to allow this to continue. It's time NC got with the programs of other states and get

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
			nets out of our inland waters. Thank you for your time.
02/22/2021 - 10:54am	Jack Davis	Virginia	<p>Option 1 on hook and line modifications. Most people use circle hooks anyway when using bigger bait. Release mortality is low. Barbless treble hooks would make trout fishing extremely difficult with how soft their mouths are. I rarely hook one deep. That is the main cause of mortality is gut hooking which I don't think these rules are helping.</p> <p>Get gill nets out of our waters to get rid of by catch. Commercial can have high limits but make them catch it by hook and line or pound nets. We are the only state that still allows this. All the other fisheries have improved with gill nets out of their waters.</p> <p>Inshore trawling also has a ton of by catch and needs to be only in use in the ocean or not at all. There's a reason other states boats move to our waters to over fish our water. There needs to be a way to eliminate most by catch for shrimping.</p>
02/22/2021 - 10:47am	Tim Matthews	North Carolina	As A recreational fisherman we are being limited to the amount where it is almost unjustifiable to even make a trip to catch fish to have a nice dinner. At least give us a chance to keep 4 flounder to have a meal when we come home and a few more months out of the year to do so.
02/22/2021 - 10:47am	Dylan dunbar	North Carolina	There are more flounder now than there has ever been.
02/22/2021 - 10:40am	Troy Smart Sr	North Carolina	<p>The flounder limit and season for recreational fishermen is absurd!</p> <p>The most Detrimental part of our flounder fishery, is commercial fishing inshore in our estuaries and trawling inshore. Until you move commercial guys out, you may as well close our fishery all together. Close it all, 100%, or move commercial guys off shore.</p> <p>Until they are off shore, our fishery will not rebound. It's time to stop the lobbying and catering to commercial guys. Let's get serious.</p>
02/22/2021 - 10:39am	Gardner Sheffield	North Carolina	The proposed flounder regulations for recreational fisherman are draconian and unfair. Last year the 45 day season occurred when most of the flounder were inshore and accessible almost exclusively by people who fished in a boat. For those us surf fisherman, we were not afforded the opportunity to harvest flounder during the prime season when the fish migrate out of the inlets and move up and down the beaches. I don't like the proposed one fish per day limit, but I could live with that if I could harvest a few fish from September through November.
02/22/2021 - 10:38am	dan mcdaniel	North Carolina	Shrimp trawlers must be prohibited in the Pamlico sound or fish stocks will never return to reasonable levels. The commercial fishery composed of a small group of individuals and corporations has for too long been given power to severely damage this estuary and its fish stocks. The voice of recreational fisherman, who contribute much more to our economy than commercial fisheries, have been because they don't have lobbyists or large corporate donors representing them. The resources of our coast belong to everyone not just a few rich and heavily funded corporations.

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
02/22/2021 - 10:35am	Chuck Reihl	North Carolina	Stop the commercial fishing of Flounder,
02/22/2021 - 10:27am	Johnathan Denton	North Carolina	This has to be a joke for the recreational fisherman. It's a slap in the face to those of us that fish a few days a week and fisheries wants to place more restrictions on the recreational guy? Get with the program and hit the commercial trawlers and fill netters that seem to be above the law.
02/22/2021 - 10:26am	Travis Ackerman	North Carolina	Why are we protecting flounder that are not in danger. We have three different species in our waters. Only one is declining. Nobody should be allowed to keep the declining population but taking a few of the other two might create better habitats and more food for the species we are trying to protect. Time to try a different approach to the situation since you have been failing for years doing the same thing.
02/22/2021 - 10:23am	A E Jones	North Carolina	It is past time that we do something about the equality of the commercial flounder industry. The money generated by the recreational fisherman has many total rewards for the costal communities. Where as the commercial fishing industry just continues to rape the coastal resources. It is also time that we do completely away with inshore gill netting and the trawls . There are ways that is available to catch the shrimp with trawls and gill nets for the fish !
02/22/2021 - 10:23am	Bob Dillard	North Carolina	Shrimp FMP - I would like to see more protection from trawlers in the Pamlico Sound and it's connecting rivers for juvenile spot, weakfish, flounder and croaker. Trawler should be restricted from working the nursery areas. Circle Hooks: I support required use of circle hooks for live and cut bait for cobra, speckled trout, redfish, flounder and striped bass. Southern Flounder FMP: The current commercial/recreational split (73/27) should be changed to a 50/50 split. Estuarine Striped Bass FMP: Expand the current gill net restrictions to include moving the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico rivers restrictions out to the tie-down lines. Gill net restrictions on the Cape Fear river well below Wilmington.
02/22/2021 - 10:23am	Dearl Roughton	North Carolina	As a life long resident of North Carolina I have been seen both sides of the our fisheries. I come from a family that has strong ties to the commercial industry and I have seen the damaging effects of gill nets first hand. The amount of by catch, unattended nets and disregard for the resource is staggering. I did not follow the footsteps of my family history in gill netting but I still love to fish so I recreational fish. I have invested time and money to include a new boat at the cost of \$36000.00, expensive rod and reels, baits to include hard baits and plastics. I have made my purchases from local businesses in Eastern NC. Now that I have invested all this money and supported local businesses the NCDMF is wanting to take away our privilege to keep 4 flounder and give it to the commercial sector. The quota should be divided 50/50 and not 73/27. Keep our limit at 4 per person per day. Giving the recreational sector an "offshore season" is not a great pacifier. Most of the recreational fisherman are not setup to go offshore. My rig is setup for recreational inshore fishing. I am asking you to keep the four per person. I am also asking you to consider banning inshore gill netting. Follow the lead of East Coast states that have banned gill netting and watched their fishery flourish.

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
			Thank you, Dearl Roughton
02/22/2021 - 10:22am	Michael hawkins	North Carolina	Using barbless hooks and small circle hooks would greatly affect the recreational catch ratio and force anglers to get frustrated and quit. We must find another way... also we must create some unity between recreational and commercial fisherman
02/22/2021 - 10:22am	Zakkary Kirby	North Carolina	
02/22/2021 - 10:18am	A E Jones	North Carolina	It is past time that we do away with these long
02/22/2021 - 10:13am	Cameron Pappas	North Carolina	<p>We cannot continue to allow our fisheries to be brutalized the way that they have been for years and years. We could have an absolutely world class fishery, not unlike South Carolina, that would bring in people from all over the country to fish. Yet we still continue to allow the use of destructive commercial fishing techniques that are diminishing our resource YOY. Why are we one of the only states in the east coast that still allows this? Is that not reason within itself to question why we are still doing it? Is it not obvious that if our fishery was better that the state as a whole would benefit it from it economically? Many other states on the east coast still have commercial fishing, why are we not adopting their tactics to more selective and less deadly ways of harvesting our fish? I have fished a lot of places on the east coast and everywhere I have been people know that NC is backwards on their fishery and the laws that protect it. We have to do something to better our fishery. Don't you all want the fishery to be better for the future? If it keeps going the way it is why would anyone be fishing inshore anymore? It is your duty to protect the marine life and keep a watchful eye on the health of it's ecosystem. It is obvious that it is suffering and nothing is being done. It is about time to stand up and make some changes.</p>
			<p>STRIPED BASS The season on striped bass should be closed to recreational and commercial fishermen in the Albermarle region until the stock is no longer overfished with overfishing continuing.</p>
02/22/2021 - 10:06am	Tim Hergenrader	North Carolina	<p>The areas closed to netting in the Neuse, Tar and Pamlico rivers must be extended to the tie down lines with the no keep moratorium continued.</p> <p>On the Cape Fear, extend the no gill net restrictions downstream to protect the stripers whose range extends there.</p> <p>Once the DMF and MFC endorse these areas, I will support stocking striped bass to either enhance the spawning stock biomass in regions where the fishery can recover OR to establish a put/grow/take recreational ONLY fishery in areas where the fishery will not be able to sustain a natural population.</p>

SUBMITTED

NAME:

STATE:

PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.

FLOUNDER

The flounder allocation must be changed to an equal 50/50 split between recreational and commercial fishermen.

SHRIMP

I support eliminating Shrimp trawling in inshore NC waters out to three miles offshore. Everyone knows the damage being inflicted on all aquatic organisms in our waters, especially juvenile fin fish, including weakfish, spots, croakers and southern flounder. Included in the destruction are blue crabs.

Short of that in the interim, reduce head rope size to no more than 50 feet and include closure areas where that delineate nursery areas. This should also improve sea grass growth and allow more oyster production.

Our Fisheries Reform Act states that it is the duty of the Marine Fisheries Commission to manage our fisheries fairly for recreational and commercial fishing groups.

With that said, let's talk Flounder. Amendment 2 of the Southern Flounder management plan passed in 2019 started managing the 2 groups by seasons, with a plan to cut each group by up to 72%. Both groups were supposedly cut equally to end its overfished status. CCA and others stated at the time that it wasn't fair or equal because anglers were fully shut out of the ocean Flounder fishery, while commercial interests retained the same full access they had before amendment 2. This was emphasized again recently when the commercial ocean Flounder fishery season was extended 2 days beyond the closing date with the same 15,000 pounds per landing allowed.

North Carolina has the largest share of the Summer Flounder allotment at about 3.2 million pounds, and our anglers are allowed no fish.

Virginia has the second largest allotment at about 2.5 million pounds and her anglers are allowed 4 fish per day at 16 1/2 inches open year round.

New Jersey has the third largest allotment at about 2 million pounds and her anglers get 3 fish per day May through September.

You would be fulfilling your legislated duty by opening our ocean fishery back up to anglers as other states have continued to do. Fortunately, these fish occur on nearshore reefs and structure making them available to the small boat fisherman. This would be a welcomed and warranted relief to the small boat fisherman that is limited to one Red Drum, one Gray Trout and recently cut to three Bluefish.

The Division has a very good color brochure which effectively explains by word and pictures the difference between Southern Flounder and the more oceanic Summer and Gulf Flounders. These species are not overfished. Anglers would return the

02/22/2021 -
10:05am

Bert Owens

North
Carolina

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
			occasional Southern Flounder caught to the water or risk a being cited.
			Do the right thing and open the ocean Flounder fishery back up to our state's anglers. Thank you.
02/22/2021 - 10:03am	Scott Starnes	North Carolina	The recreational flounder limits proposed by this commission will cause fishermen to not only loose interest in the sport but will greatly reduce the amount of money spent by fishermen in our state. Consideration should be given on the financial impacts to all the coastal communities.
02/22/2021 - 10:03am	Dwayne Sholar	North Carolina	I would like to see the Summer and Gulf Flounder Fishery OPEN all Summer and Fall in the ocean as this fishery has almost no effect on the Southern Flounder population! I would also like to be allowed a 4 fish bag limit in this fishery as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has these species listed as "Not Overfished."
02/22/2021 - 10:02am	Michael Lassiter	North Carolina	We need our commercial fisherman to be able to do there jobs and bring in fresh local flounder. Yall are making it damn near impossible to make a living from it. And that's unamerican
02/22/2021 - 9:54am	Steve	North Carolina	Recreational anglers should have a longer season than 45 days and a 1 fish limit and a 73% harvest for commercial! CRAZY! WHY does NC allow to much netting unlike other southern states? Their fisheries are in far better shape than ours! Wake up NCDMF!
02/22/2021 - 9:54am	Steven Craven	North Carolina	Ocean flounder season and limits should be opened and different then southern flounder limits and I would suggest that the quotas for commercial fishing and recreational fishing be 50/50.
02/22/2021 - 9:53am	Lloyd Watkins	North Carolina	I had a discussion with Mark Basnight 20 years ago and told him then that we are losing the fisheries. He and his people said - No, all is OK. Now see where we are. I believe the NCDMF needs to reduce the poundage limit for commercial fishing of flounder, get all the gill nets (commercial and recreational) out of the water and reduce commercial gigging to restore the fisheries in North Carolina. Thanks for taking input. Please save the fish for future generations (and my grandchildren)! Lloyd Watkins

Marine Fisheries Commission Online Comments

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
02/22/2021 - 5:00pm	Timothy Barrier	North Carolina	As a person who has been king mackerel fishing off of piers for well over three decades and who owns a business that specializes in that sport I have to say I hope this does not fall into suit where we would have to follow this ridiculous law. This is not something that should be held any differently than live bait trolling on a vessel, we are doing the exact same thing and 90% of us use hooks that will rot and out and fall out of any fish's mouth or gill plate within a matter of a week or two. if there was a mandate to stop using stainless steel fishing hooks I would backed that up because I feel that those hooks last a very long time and can stay in a fish's mouth or gill plate for a time period it could be detrimental. So I for one hope that you will include all fishing pier king mackerel fisherman in with the group of boat fishermen that slow troll live baits. Even though we're not on a boat on our baits don't have unlimited access to swim we are still doing no different than me anchoring my boat up and tossing a live bait in to swim freely. Thank you for reading my petition and I hope to see that this falls on the side of the king mackerel fisherman
02/22/2021 - 4:59pm	David Bruchstein	North Carolina	I am just a recreational angler, and I've never participated in your meetings nor sent in any comments. I'm writing to voice my utter disappointment with the North Carolina Fisheries Commission. I travel all over the country, and fish in many coastal states, and I'd have to say that my home state of NC probably has the WORST fisheries management in the country! It's pretty sad that I have to travel to California, Washington, Florida and New Jersey, when the best fisheries SHOULD be in my back yard. I really don't understand why our fisheries folks cater to our small commercial industry, while protecting the fisheries resources would benefit everybody, commercial and recreational alike. It's pathetic that we are the only state left not eliminating gill nets and actually allowing large trawlers to destroy our sounds and wipe out a large portion of juveniles in nursery waters. I'm embarrassed to tell fisherman in other states what things are like in NC. It's time to get on board with the rest of the country in regards to out fisheries management.
02/22/2021 - 4:59pm	Matt	North Carolina	How is it that we have some of the most amazing fisheries in the country and we cannot keep a flounder for most of the year? Idiots in charge allowing inshore gill nets and trawlers, there is your answer. To allow that is of the uppermost stupidity in government.
02/22/2021 - 4:59pm	Timothy C Reagan Jr	North Carolina	As a recreational fisherman of NC coastal waters, I believe the issues facing southern flounder are easily resolved, albeit painful, by closing flounder fishing for ALL no less than two years. Additionally remove any destructive gear (live/cut bait by circle hook only and large mesh Gill nets) from the waters during that period. Additionally strong consideration should be given to closing the season during prespawn movement to inshore waters and most importantly during spawn to better protect the females who are targeted most.
02/22/2021 - 4:58pm	Frank Roepcke	North Carolina	I have caught at least 120 different stripers this summer. I also did not keep a single one.
02/22/2021 - 4:58pm	Meredith Dunnigan	North Carolina	As the booking agent for a very busy Marina who offers charter fishing, I know how important it is to keep the striped bass season open. Their livelihoods depend on it.

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
02/22/2021 - 4:58pm	Jason Hall	North Carolina	Not really sure how it is considered as logical reasoning that me and my sons which have lifetime hunting and fishing license are limited by the decisions of people that have mismanaged the fishery for so long already. We will not be able to go and keep flounder that we have invested money into the economy for to use as table fair to feed ourselves but yet we can go buy it from another. Please reconsider this option.
02/22/2021 - 4:57pm	Brad	North Carolina	How is it that NC allows netters to keep 73% of the fish when only 100ish people use pound nets. That seems crazy, how many flounder are killed and wasted by inshore trawling?
			<p>This is insanity. First and foremost, this is a huge issue that we should have the opportunity for in person public comment. Not having an advertised public in person public comment is detrimental to this process. Most of the folks in Northeastern North Carolina are unaware of this today. And, a large portion of these folks have never used Zoom, nor know how to use Zoom.</p> <p>I have been charter boat fishing for fishing for Striped Bass FULL TIME since 1997. I fished for them not for a living prior to 1997. I have seen some ups and downs with the Albemarle Sound fishery. I can tell you without a doubt that there are plenty of Striped Bass in the Albemarle Sound at the moment. We have had great seasons the past several years. I have seen far worse than what we have now. It blows my mind, that we are on the verge of having a 10 year moratorium on the Striped Bass. It has completely blown my mind for years that the recreation quota is split right down the middle between the Albemarle Sound and the Roanoke Rapids region. 50/50 when one region(Albemarle Sound) is 922 square miles versus the other(Roanoke Rapids) 13.8 square miles. And, one season(Albemarle Sound) is a 6 month season and the other (Roanoke Rapids) is a 3 week season. And the kicker, one season is during the spawning run in an area that is concentrated with fish that have made a 200 mile swim that are ready to drop eggs. You guys say we have a problem, yet it is perfectly legal to go to the Roanoke Rapids region during this 3 week season and kill fish with eggs that have made it all the way to the finish line. It is like aborting a baby a week before it is born. THE HYPOCRACY OF THIS FROM A SCIENCE STANDPOINT IS ASTOUNDING. For the 24 years that I have been in this business, year after year, the biologists that are supposed to be protecting the resource have allowed this. A biologist that blindly goes along with this ought to lose their license. Cutting out the Roanoke Rapids fishery would be the first place to start. That is how all other states on the east coast that have a Striper fishery do it. You cannot target the fish during a spawn. Simple logic.</p> <p>Enough of that. Yes, we have had Speckled Trout and Red Drum around the past couple of years later than normal and they have shown up earlier. That does not seem to be the case this year in Northeastern North Carolina. On the average over the 24 years that I have made a made a living doing, this Striped Bass are what we target in the sound waters with center console charters in North Eastern North Carolina the months of March, April, October, November, & December. If someone from the northern Outer Banks tells you different, they are lying. Without the Striped Bass, we have no business. We need to find another job. As mentioned there was a period of time that you could have made a case for this proposal, but not now. Our fishing for the Stiped Bass the past several years has been what I would consider to be pretty good. When we catch 25+ fish on two trips(50+fish) the day before Thanksgiving I would not call that a poor fishery that needs a 10 year moratorium. It is not as good fishing for them in the Spring than it is in the Fall, but we catch enough to keep people on the boat happy enough to come back the next Spring. Odds are that we will never see it as good as it was in the late 90's</p>
02/22/2021 - 4:56pm	Reese Stecher	North Carolina	

[SUBMITTED](#)

[NAME:](#)

[STATE:](#)

[PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.](#)

early 2000's, but what we have now is pretty damn good. A 10 year moratorium puts me into early retirement with my fishing career. At the very least it turns a lot of full time charter fishermen into part time fishermen in the offseason looking for jobs.

In regards to telling us what kind of hooks to use and not being able to use live bait are two other issues that I strongly disagree with. This makes me think that some of you have too much time on your hands. I fish for Red Drum as much as I fish for Striped Bass with my customers. When they are biting they swallow a circle hook just as easy as they do a J hook. I have heard the experts says a million times on the circle hooks, "just let them take it until the pole bends over and reel." Good way to have to cut a line attached to a hook that is inside the belly of a fish. Live bait fishing for Speckled Trout is also done by almost every guide that I know. That would harm that business sector as well. Barbless hooks makes me think of a new term called politically correct fishing. You might as well make us wear a dress and try to catch them with rubber hooks. This is getting ridiculous. The object is to catch fish and not to hook them and miss every other bite you get.

And finally, not having an in person public hearing on these proposals is not right. A vast majority of the public has never used Zoom once in their life. Zoom meetings will eliminate a lot of folks that have the right to have their voices heard. We have Spectrum internet in Northeastern North Carolina. Spectrum internet is terrible. If it can go out during the national championship, it can certainly go out during a Zoom meeting that without being a part of can cost us our livelihood. This needs to be an in person public hearing.

I could go on forever, but I have things to do. I certainly hope that the North Carolina division of Marine Fisheries Commission can remember that part of the job is that you are supposed to be listening to the stakeholders while protecting the resource.

Reese Stecher
Beach Bum Fishing

Office: [REDACTED]
Cell: [REDACTED]

02/22/2021 -
4:55pm

Scott Walters

Pennsylvania

My family I take yearly trips down to [REDACTED]. We love to go out flounder gigging with one of the local captians there. If this reduction happens we are going to have to change our vactions or fishing trips. Wake up NC and fix the net problems.

02/22/2021 -
4:53pm

Capt. Tim
Disano

North
Carolina

I'm sure the inbox will be flooded with anglers pointing fingers at one industry or another for the decline in our states fisheries. I however would much rather see us try to work together because at its core we all seek the same thing; a healthy eco system that we can all enjoy. As a full time charter captain, it is not lost on me to share the importance of conservation. I day in and day out feel as if my anglers leave my boat with a better understanding of how special our waters are. Being able to paint the entire picture is important. With regards to the flounder closure, I don't believe anyone will disagree with change for the better, but the opportunity to be able to harvest at least one flounder for longer than 45 days is important to a wide group of anglers. I believe the goal

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
			can be achieved if we show a little more give and take from all sides. Thanks for the continued hard work. Capt. Tim Disano Tideline Charter Fishing, LLC
02/22/2021 - 4:52pm	Tim Shull	Pennsylvania	I look forward to my yearly trip to go floundering with a local captian in NC. If in favored of a 27% for the Rec side. Looks like I'll have to vaction else where.
02/22/2021 - 4:50pm	Conner Roberts	North Carolina	Please take more time to reconsider any final decisions concerning striped bass in eastern North Carolina.
02/22/2021 - 4:50pm	Bradley Smith	North Carolina	How the charter captian who depends on floundering for helping make ends meet run a business one 1 fish?
02/22/2021 - 4:49pm	Evan Wienert	North Carolina	
02/22/2021 - 4:49pm	David Woodlief	North Carolina	I'm a recreational fisherman and ask you open flounder fishing to all summer and limit at 4 for all species except southern. Not fair to allow commercial fisherman to take all the fish.
02/22/2021 - 4:47pm	Matt	North Carolina	Further regulations on the NC recreational fishing community is a bad move that Reflects poorly on NCDMF NCDNR. Legalize flounder legalize <2/0 circle hooks legalize more than one drum and one trout per person per day. [REDACTED] regulation.
02/22/2021 - 4:46pm	Albert Richards	North Carolina	In pier fishing for kings with live bait crushing barbs on #4 trebles will drastically reduce hook ups! And seeing how this is not a catch and release fishery the circle hook proposal doesn't work for all styles of fishing
02/22/2021 - 4:45pm	Joey VanDyke	North Carolina	I do not agree with the proposal for rockfish in the albemarle and Roanoke River basin. Natural Bait fishing is a traditional way of fishing for not only rockfish but for the evasive blue caffish that is ruining our waters. I can agree with circle hooks usage during the migration of rockfish for spawning time but this act is restricting other targeted species on the water that the ncdmf is trying to control Wich there is no true documentation that circle hooks actually will reduce mortality. I would like to know what kind of economic study you all have done on this complete area in order to close this fishery? As I am a captain and run charters every spring targeting several species but my main species is striper. This would be very detremental to my livelyhood and many others that have not been accounted for as your data collection is flawed in the surveys ncdmf call about. I would like you all to know Tom roller does not represent me nor many of other captains in the northeast sector along with very little knowledge of the impact this will effect the people and the access to the public recreational fishing that goes on along the Roanoke River. Thank you Captain Joey vandyke
02/22/2021 - 4:45pm	Tyler Sylvia	North Carolina	I am a local fisherman her in the outer banks. This past year I have caught and released more striper than that of any other year I have been fishing here. Please take this into consideration and further your study before enforcing these new regulations.
02/22/2021 - 4:41pm	timothy a taramelli	North Carolina	i want to see the Summer and Gulf Flounder Fishery OPEN all Summer and Fall in the ocean as this fishery has almost no effect on the Southern Flounder population they are trying to manage!

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
			<p>flounder should be kept at 4 bag limit, in this fishery as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has these species listed as "Not Overfished." and NC is allowing the Commercial Flounder Trawl Fishery to continue to harvest up to 15,000 lbs of flounder in the ocean per trip both last Summer (April-June) and already this Jan.-Feb 2021, But they want to only allow the recreational fishermen a 45 day season with a proposed 1 fish per day. i personally don't fish for flounder that much but when i do i would like to keep what i catch every now and again i am a lifetime liscense holder and it this rate it will have been a waist of my hard earned money,better yet get the nets that KILL everything that gets tangled up in it out of the creeks and estuary's i have personally seen the havoc these nets do in our creeks and sounds. thank you sincerely timothy a taramelli.</p>
02/22/2021 - 4:38pm	Henry Stecher	North Carolina	<p>There is no shortage of striped bass in the waters around the Outer Banks. My father depends on fishing for striped bass during the later mother's of the year. If he isn't able to fish for them anymore than a large amount of his income is gone. This means more then just not being able to fish for striped bass. For me and my sister this means we might not be able to go to college anymore.</p>
02/22/2021 - 4:35pm	Tyler batten	North Carolina	<p>As an inshore guide living on the east coast, the closed flounder season has negatively impacted my business. During the summer, we have a very tough fishery and can only rely on catching flounder June-September. A season that includes the whole summer would be greatly appreciated. As long as it is open all summer, the bag or size limits could be changed to help the population. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Also, the fishery is not hurting as I caught just as many this year than I have in my whole life. Captain Tyler batten</p>
02/22/2021 - 4:31pm	David Rouse	North Carolina	<p>In regards to the upcoming vote on the allocations for Southern Flounder it is more apparent than ever that this organization strongly favors the Commercial Fishermen over the Recreational Fishermen. A 73/27 split is a slap in the face to the Recreational guys. I am all in favor of doing what is necessary to rebuild the stock but we all need to have a balanced and even part in this battle. I would favor more a complete moratorium vs this one sided ridiculousness that is being proposed. I could take this statement into the no longer refutable fact that the nets and trawls are destroying our estuarine waters but it's pointless...everyone knows it yet no one is doing anything about it. So here we are again with new changes and restrictions, lower limits and shortened seasons with the majority of the load falling on the backs of Recreational fishermen. Take note of all the release the big fish initiatives that are taking hold within the Recreational community and ask your selves this...what Commercial fishermen would do the same in the name of conservation. I can answer that question....none, not a single one. Fish are a commodity to them and that's it, obviously your organization feels the same way. I really wish that I could convince every licensed fisherman in the state to go one year without renewing their license. Maybe then you all would see how valuable we are and take our concerns and frustrations to heart. Again it's obvious from the proposed split that we are not favored or fall anywhere near to the same level of the beloved Commercial Fishing Industry. The leadership with the DMF disgusts me and I hope to see the day that NC Wildlife takes over and the DMF is completely dissolved.</p>
02/22/2021 - 4:31pm	Michael Holcombe	North Carolina	<p>I only use circle hooks fishing live bait, and have never had a fish I couldn't release on a circle hook. With the treble hook, and offset hooks, it's very easy for fish to swallow them, and for the fish to die. I have no issues, but am confused as you mention barbless circle hooks, and I don't see a reason for that.</p>

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
			I also would like to see more being done to nets, and commercial fishing in the creeks, and sounds. If the recreational fisher must adapt, and reduce death, you also need to focus on getting our nurseries at an acceptable level. Commercial fisherman should not be allowed to fish these areas.
02/22/2021 - 4:29pm	Ken Terry	North Carolina	In regards to the upcoming vote on the allocations for Southern Flounder it is more apparent than ever that this organization strongly favors the Commercial Fishermen over the Recreational Fishermen. A 73/27 split is a slap in the face to the Recreational guys. I am all in favor of doing what is necessary to rebuild the stock but we all need to have a balanced and even part in this battle. I could take this statement into the no longer refutable fact that the nets and trawls are destroying our estuarine waters but it's pointless....everyone knows it yet no one does anything about it. So here we are again with new changes and restrictions, lower limits and shortened seasons with the majority of the load falling on the backs of Recreational fishermen. Take note of all the "release the big fish initiatives" that are taking hold within the Recreational community and ask yourselves this...what Commercial fishermen would do the same in the name of conservation? I can answer that question....none, not a single one. Fish are a commodity to them and that's it; obviously your organization feels the same way. I really wish that I could convince every licensed fisherman in the state to go one year without renewing their license. Maybe then you all would see how valuable we are and take our concerns and frustrations seriously. Again it's obvious from the proposed split that we are not favored or even fall anywhere near even to the beloved Commercial Fishing Industry. Who's paying how much to whom to get that preferred status? With the past and current decisions being made how could anyone ever trust DMF? I hope to see the day that NC Wildlife takes over and the DMF is completely dissolved.
02/22/2021 - 4:28pm	James Russ	North Carolina	Please don't destroy the striped bass fishery. This fishery feeds my family and has for over 19 years. I use circle hooks and release 80 percent of stripers caught on my vessel.
02/22/2021 - 4:28pm	Hagen blake	North Carolina	
02/22/2021 - 4:27pm	Aaron Kelly	North Carolina	I am concerned on the economic impact on this area and my business with a full closure. I am all for conservation but this seems a bit extreme especially when I personally feel the fish are not being overfished but we unfortunately have had feeble years of sequential successful spawns. That truly is the source of the problem not the 25 fish I took from the fishery this fall. Bringing in many vacationers, rentals, tackle and fuel purchases. That being said I have been using 4/0 circle hooks on stripers for over twenty years guiding. Most folks already do. The barbless and the offset is what concerns me that is in my minds eye. That is too much as 95 percent of the circle hooks on the market do have a small offset. Barbless just means no good way to keep you bait on the hook. Catching these fish in hot summer months does more damage. I am all for fish staying in the water and a quick dehooking with a dehooker. Water temps in the 80s even with a quick picture and lip hooked fish spells the end. Cooler waters from the deeper water around Oregon inlet those fish swim off very strongly. Year round. So I feel a few changes in those practices would be more valuable to the resource. Thanks you for you time. Regards capt Aaron Kelly of rocksolidfishing, advisor on south Atlantic Fishery Management Council
02/22/2021 - 4:24pm	Debbie Kennedy	North Carolina	Please open flounder season for us recreational fishermen/women during the summer and fall! We retired to be able to fish and there are plenty of flounder here. We should be able to get at least 8 per person per day!!!

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
02/22/2021 - 4:24pm	Captain Michael Hill	North Carolina	<p>My name is Captain Michael Hill I appreciate the opportunity to submit a comment today I would like to start by saying some of the proposals that I've read are completely absurd and I'm very disappointed how mismanaged our Marine fisheries division is I'm a lifelong North Carolina coastal resident I live on a saltwater estuary and see this estuary destroyed on a daily basis by New developments golf courses etc. over the past 15 years the creek I live on is no longer navigable on low tide because of silt runoff from these developments these developments go unrestricted and unchallenged its the Marine fisheries responsibility to take care of our salt marsh And estuaries and this goes unrecognized without estuaries once again there are no fish please marine fisheries commission address the real problem it's not over fishing it's mismanaged coastal development no recreational fisherman nor commercial fisherman should be willing to support these proposals unless you're getting paid or your pockets getting stuff by Bureaucrats own up to your coastal responsibility thank you</p>
			<p>Regarding the possibility of hook and line modifications, as it pertains to the proposed changes and modifications in the use of certain types of hooks, it is a vast overreach of the freedoms to which North Carolina's residents and visitors are allowed to enjoy and harvest the public trust. This proposal has numerous concerns in which should be addressed before becoming any form of regulations.</p>
			<p>The State of has the privilege of being a sought after destination for anglers across the country. This means that the state has an influx of anglers of varying skill levels that these proposed regulations can and will impact whether they are attempting to target a species on their own via surf, pier, private boat or hiring a guide/charter. The possible effect on North Carolina's sport fishing tourism could potentially be devastating as anglers look to other coastal states to visit will less stringent regulations. Regulating your way out of one issue will not solve any others. One main factor in this disgruntled attitude will be due in part that circle hooks have been noted in the Hook and Line Modifications Proposal to significantly reduce catch rates when targeting certain species with certain techniques.</p>
02/22/2021 - 4:23pm	Jake Worthington	North Carolina	<p>In the State of Florida circle hooks are mandated when targeting various species including the state's prized game fish, tarpon. I have been privileged to participate in this fishery and have witnessed the complete disregard for the use of circle hooks with natural and live bait with zero enforcement action. This is a trend in other fisheries with other species as well in the State of FL. It is safe to say the same will happen in North Carolina. Furthermore, to justify the integrity of the regulations will tackle retailers be forced to ditch product that does not fit within the guidelines of the proposed regulations? Otherwise it would appear to be a moot point. This begs the point of whether the State of North Carolina can enforce these proposed regulations in a manner that would be financially feasible to angling taxpayers in the state? Finally, the amount of exemptions for example, trolling for king mackerel with j hooks, creates a regulatory soup impacting the understanding of the regulations and how they would be enforced furthering the concerns of the State's reputation as a sport fishing tourism destination.</p> <p>North Carolina's vast fishery interactions as it regards to a multitude of species makes varying hook modifications difficult, if not impossible. For example, when fishing for king mackerel with live bait, anglers have caught the following, but not limited to: blue marlin, white marlin, sailfish, dolphinfish, various members of the tuna family, red drum and other species that would fall under the hook and line modifications proposals. Would an angler who accidentally interacts with one of these species be subject to enforcement? Furthermore, the use of barbless treble hooks when targeting king mackerel appears to be a good measure with the exception that the nature of</p>

[SUBMITTED](#)

[NAME:](#)

[STATE:](#)

[PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.](#)

the fishery is almost exclusively harvest with very few releases given that members of the mackerel family have a high mortality rate.

Some additional concerns include the j hook jig head analysis in the Hook and Line Modifications Proposal. The analysis of jig head hook gap width appears to be a possible regulatory step regarding the ever-growing popularity of light tackle artificial lure use in the targeting red drum in the Pamlico Sound region. If so, and even if not, the Commission should consider the implications that the light tackle fishery in the Pamlico is a threat to the well being of the fish due to the nature of the harsh nature of the fishery. The harsh nature includes conditions such as extreme water temperatures and the length at which those fish are being fought in aforementioned conditions. Regulating tackle size regarding light tackle appears to be about as obtuse as the hook modifications to which this comment is pertaining.

The final concern pertains to the “DMF staff [has] distributed over 500 red drum short leader rigs (with circle hook) obtained through its partnership with FishSmart”. These rigs were not only poorly constructed but use of this type of rig even with the circle hook would gut hook (if hook at all) a red drum in the specific fishery which it was distributed due to a combination of crimping in lieu of snelling and leader length. Alternatively, the MFC could put forth better effort than handing out a few hundred rigs and pamphlets promoting ethical angling. Workshops promoting these practices brought forth in the Hook and Line Modifications Proposal would be a much better alternative than the iron fist treatment through regulatory action.

In conclusion, it is in the best interests of the MFC to retain the status quo in lieu of the other options due to a wealth of issues and concerns that the aforementioned options will bring to the State, visitors, residents, and Marine Fisheries Council of North Carolina. Finally, regulations can actually be measured to benefit the fishery. If current dead discard mortality of a species is 20% bottom line, then the regulations won't impact that by 1% and it doesn't matter how it is presented.

02/22/2021 -
4:20pm

Daniel

North
Carolina

I'd like to add to my statement earlier, According to the CCA North Carolina division. Shrimp trawlers exceeded sales the prior year of merely 12 million dollars. And that if none of the shrimp were exported it would still on fulfill around 25% of shrimp consumed in North Carolina. Meanwhile according the US fish and wildlife service “Almost \$3 Billion dollars are spent on wildlife activities like hunting, fishing, and bird watching every year in North Carolina” yet we allow all of these animals to be killed as bycatch in trawlers and gill nets. Animals such as birds and turtles are commonly killed by nets, including lots of fish species like red drum. Trawlers may not be killing mature adult 50” redfish but they are killing their food sources. Not everything is a direct actions. The unsustainable methods have ripple effects to go beyond our knowledge and data.

02/22/2021 -
4:20pm

Daniel

North
Carolina

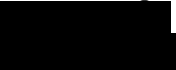
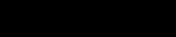
I'd like to add to my statement earlier, According to the CCA North Carolina division. Shrimp trawlers exceeded sales the prior year of merely 12 million dollars. And that if none of the shrimp were exported it would still on fulfill around 25% of shrimp consumed in North Carolina. Meanwhile according the US fish and wildlife service “Almost \$3 Billion dollars are spent on wildlife activities like hunting, fishing, and bird watching every year in North Carolina” yet we allow all of these animals to be killed as bycatch in trawlers and gill nets. Animals such as birds and turtles are commonly killed by nets, including lots of fish species like red drum. Trawlers may not be killing

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
			mature adult 50" redfish but they are killing their food sources. Not everything is a direct actions. The unsustainable methods have ripple effects to go beyond our knowledge and data.
02/22/2021 - 4:15pm	Michael P.	North Carolina	As a recreational fisherman who works full time and is limited to fishing on weekends, I find Flounder Amendment 3 to be extremely troublesome. Why would I only be allowed to keep one fish a day when the charter captains are allowed to to run multiple trips per day, potentially 5 - 7 days a week? Please consider the amount of fish they can kill while profiting off of them compared to taking my own boat out and being allowed to keep one fish. Frankly, I'm tired of so many charter captains preaching conservation of our fishery while they advertise pictures of full 5 man limits on their boat's deck in order to book more trips. Of course this doesn't apply to every charter captain out there but I firmly believe that many of my fellow recreational anglers can attest to this blight on our fishery. If this mentality of "NO CATCH" is going to punish the rec fishermen, then it is only fair that charter captains not be considered recreational fishermen and placed into a separate category all together. Better yet, why not consider proposing a reasonable plan like setting the flounder limit to 5 per boat in a single day? Then the recreational fishermen are able to keep enough to feed their family and the charter captains can still please their clients. But the reality of this whole situation is that until the Marine Fisheries Commission does something about the shrimp trawlers that are crippling the entire ecosystem from the bottom up, this entire flounder regulation fiasco has been nothing but a slap in the face of recreational fishermen. It will be considered an utter failure by not addressing the real culprits behind the decline of our state's flounder fishery - and rather than being stewards of OUR public resource, the MFC continues to allow private entities to maintain profits amidst a collapsing fishery. Just another example of our country's new political order: "Rules for thee, but not for me". I urge those that have proposed this amendment to abandon it immediately and work towards creating a per boat fish limit, not disenfranchising the recreational fishermen that seeks to simply enjoy this tremendous resource while providing meals for their families. Thank you for your consideration.
02/22/2021 - 4:12pm	David Beresoff	North Carolina	If considering a quota with a recreational and commercial split consider the ratio that's historical . The recreational bycatch mortality is high enough now please don't make it worse going to a 50/50 split . Please consider a split season for commercial fishermen. Our fish have value. When the demand is high we could double our pay then having the season jammed up in just October.
02/22/2021 - 4:07pm	William Tracy Pope	North Carolina	As a recreational fisherman, I believe that natural resources should be allocated to achieve the best economic return. Nets that catch flounder to sell for 50 cents per pound hardly achieve that goal. I highly doubt I've ever harvested a flounder for less than 50 dollars per pound!(license,tackle, bait, gas,etc.) If flounder must be closed, then close it. After they have rebounded, then open recreationally with appropriate limits. There is no reason for this resource to be depleted for benefit of so few North Carolinians. No nets!
02/22/2021 - 4:06pm	Edwin Wheeler	North Carolina	NC is getting way more income from recreational fishing than commercial. Please vote to make it fair to .ALL and stop catering to commercial fishing
02/22/2021 - 4:05pm	Jackson Burr	Virginia	There is no way to catch kings with barbless treble. They are a fast striking fish that can pop a standard treble no problem, The use of barbless treble will cause more breakoffs which will waste hooks and cause trash to enter the water. There is no reason to ban barbs on trebles due to the inability to half of the fishing community not able to catch fish regardless of the hooks they use.

<u>SUBMITTED</u>	<u>NAME:</u>	<u>STATE:</u>	<u>PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.</u>
02/22/2021 - 4:05pm	Jackson Burr	Virginia	There is no way to catch kings with barbless treble. They are a fast striking fish that can pop a standard treble no problem, The use of barbless treble will cause more breakoffs which will waste hooks and cause trash to enter the water. There is no reason to ban barbs on trebles due to the inability to half of the fishing community not able to catch fish regardless of the hooks they use.
02/22/2021 - 4:03pm	Robert	North Carolina	Fishing with a rod should be open year round on flounder when fishing in the surf anywhere on our nc beaches.i would agree on a 5 or 6 per day limit per person
02/22/2021 - 4:01pm	John	North Carolina	Do not change live bait hook requirements. Not too many kings caught using a circle hook... There isn't a hook problem but rather an issue of balance. Balance the rec and commercial industries and you'll see a better fishery.
02/22/2021 - 4:00pm	Jackson Burr	Virginia	
02/22/2021 - 4:00pm	Jeffrey gaskins	North Carolina	Only thing I think there should be rules on with circle hooks is for drum across the board and sharks as for everything else it should stay the way it is I king from peirs and people have used circle hooks before with so many lost fish it does not work may be land 1 out of 10 fish also it makes no sense to change it because all it going to is hurt ur revenue even more because people are going to start going other place with less restrictions
02/22/2021 - 3:59pm	Michael High	North Carolina	Please allow us recreational fishermen and women to fish for Flounder this summer. Give a full season along with a 4 fish per day limit as you continue to allow the commercial fisherman to fish. Why do you want to limit us recreational fisherman?
02/22/2021 - 3:59pm	Michael High	North Carolina	Please allow us recreational fishermen and women to fish for Flounder this summer. Give a full season along with a 4 fish per day limit as you continue to allow the commercial fisherman to fish. Why do you want to limit us recreational fisherman?
02/22/2021 - 3:57pm	Anderson Tran	North Carolina	We have to get our Southern Flounder stocks rebuilt--and that starts with more effective regulations. Not only does the damage to our stocks harm our own state, but it is causing other states to have to change their regulations as well (ie. South Carolina). A hard look needs to be taken at gill net regulations. Completely removing the nets may not be possible, but we are the ONLY state in the southeast that allows extensive gillnetting inshore. Florida has it in their State Constitution that gill nets will not be allowed in their waters. The destructive impacts of gillnets is no secret. If we want sustainable fish stocks, we are going to have to start with reducing bycatch. Catch allocations are worthless when so many fish are being caught and hurt/killed "on accident." We can't shut commercial fishermen down, but we have to find a better way for more selective harvest or we are going to see a lot more years--like last year--where the whole fishery has to shut down.
02/22/2021 - 3:49pm	John	North Carolina	The state can setup a fund such as other states have done to supply income to commercial fisherman that would be impacted by the removal of gill nets as well as stopping trawlers from shrimping in inshore waters. The amount of bycatch is enormous and clearly not worth it. Our fisher sucks compared to many other states because of the nets and trawlers
02/22/2021 - 3:48pm	Captain Michael Hill	North Carolina	

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
02/22/2021 - 3:48pm	Christopher peek	North Carolina	
02/22/2021 - 3:46pm	Brandon Whitfield	North Carolina	Why are recreational anglers continually thrown under the bus when it comes to fishing regulations. There is no science to support shutting down all 3 species of flounder fishing just to manage southern flounder. If you keep recreational anglers to a 1 fish limit that equals to a 75% reduction. If that is to be then the commercial fishing should be reduced by at least 75% also. I think most recreational anglers would support measures to support the southern flounder population if they were fair on both sides being recreational vs. commercial. The biggest gains to be made are in removal of netting in nursery areas and eliminating folks shutting off creeks completely with nets. Have traveled ICW numerous times and seen nets side to side and question folks setting and claim no worries its deep enough you won't bother it with your boat. Do the fish know to swim above? Would be truly enjoyable to be able to teach my children the beauties of fishing and being able to enjoy what we catch on the table at night.
02/22/2021 - 3:46pm	Matt	North Carolina	We need the gill nets are shrimp boats out of our waterways and creeks immediately
02/22/2021 - 3:45pm	Daniel	North Carolina	The Pamlico Sound and its rivers are the second largest estuary in the United States. That's not including the white oak river, new river, or cape fear river. Yet we allow the most destructive methods of commercial fishing in the country. The trawlers wreck havoc on the sea bed grass in the Pamlico that many fish use as a home and breeding grounds. Not to mention the flattening of the sea floor and the many other consequences. The gill nets kill more unintended species than what they are targeting. Gill nets kill marine mammals, federal migratory birds, turtles, and a abundance of gamefish by catch that cannot even be kept. The U.S. fish and wildlife service has also noted many species of birds that are gill in large amounts by gill nets, apart of the reason for the migratory bird treaty act of 1918. The revenue generated by these fishing methods is minuscule compared to the tax revenue generated by recreational fisherman annually. North Carolina has the resources to be one of the best fisheries if not the best fishery in the country if it's fishery was managed properly. The environment favors inshore gamefish species much more than that of Texas and Louisiana. Yet those states fisheries are far greater than our own, only because of the way they are managed. Millions in revenue that could have been collected by North Carolina will go else where because of this. I do not know the exact numbers but I'm sure a quick comparison of the taxes collected from commercial fishing to the reconvene that could be generated in 4-5 years from now after the fishery recover would be more than substantial. We are not only destroying our own fishery but the fishery of other states as well. North Carolina is home to many tropical fish and migratory fish in the summer. I have personally found a large group of juvenile mutton snapper around the dock at Wrightsville beach in late fall that will migrate back to Florida. All of these fish suffer as being killed thru trawler bycatch. In Australia gill nets are considered "highly illegal" in all bodies of water. In Brazil's water they have banned all forms of shrimp trawling. It's is astounding and disappointing as a native North Carolinian to see how North Carolina can be so poorly mismanaged within our fisheries. We cannot allow these methods of fishing in our inshore waters, estuaries, and rivers to go on any longer. For it will one day be the commercial fisherman themselves who will no longer have fish to catch. The try the is a few hundred commercial fisherman are ruining it for hundreds of thousands of fishermen, conservationists, marine mammal enthusiasts and tourism itself. Accordingly to the scientific data we are reaching a threshold where we cannot turn back of drastic measures are not taken. Please heavily consider all of the species that are in danger when determining the fate of North Carolina's future fishery.

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
02/22/2021 - 3:42pm	Johnnie Sheppard	North Carolina	I've personally fished for flounder for 55 years. I saw the best and largest flounder catches last year I've seen since the 80's. Where does your data or lack of come from. That is a question most recreational always ask? Most commercial license holders are not supporting themselves solely from fishing. Commercial licenses are freely bought and sold with no proof of validity. Hook and line fisherman will never affect the population. Do you realize that it would take 1500 recreational fishermen catching 10 lbs a day to equal the daily limit of one commercial trawler. And why is it if the gulf flounder are in no danger why does the ocean fishery close to both species? Do trawlers know the difference, no! I can understand a limited gigging season as well as netting but hook and line closures are absurd. Last year in the Snead's Ferry area commercial netters caught so many flounder they got down to \$1 a lb during their 30 day season Commercial giggers were getting 30 to 50 per night. I fished 14 trips last year landing a total of 21 flounder. And I catch as many as most recreational fishermen. What about charter boats catching recreational limits, way more of them than netters. Are their livelihoods less important? Why is a resource owned by everyone just limited to a select few? I have the right to buy a fish but not catch one? Keep the gigging season for recreational at 45 days with a four fish limit. Hook and line should never be closed especially in the offshore waters. We can live with a 4 fish limit if that is what it takes, but for 1 fish, it needs to be closed for both sides
02/22/2021 - 3:35pm	gavin niven	North Carolina	the population of flounder is defiantly not low anymore
02/22/2021 - 3:35pm	Austin Kerr	North Carolina	As an inshore guide living on the east coast, the closed flounder season has negatively impacted my business. During the summer, we have a very tough fishery and can only rely on catching flounder during June-September. A season that includes the whole summer would be greatly appreciated. As long as it is open all summer, the bag or size limits could be changed to help the population. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Also, the fishery is not hurting as I caught just as many this year than I have in my whole life. Captain Austin Kerr
02/22/2021 - 3:35pm	Jason Rutledge	North Carolina	I want to see the Summer and Gulf Flounder Fishery OPEN all Summer and Fall in the ocean as this fishery has almost no effect on the Southern Flounder population you are trying to manage! We should also be allowed a 4 fish bag limit in this fishery as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has these species listed as "Not Overfished." and You are allowing the Commercial Flounder Trawl Fishery to continue to harvest up to 15,000 lbs of flounder in the ocean per trip both last Summer (April-June) and already this Jan.-Feb 2021. But you want to only allow the recreational fishermen a 45 day season with a proposed 1 fish per day. Your rules have no common sense involved. You cannot keep allowing the commercial fisherman to continue fishing if this species is so over fished. These regulations should effect everyone equally!
02/22/2021 - 3:34pm	Bobby Garris	North Carolina	I want to see the Summer and Gulf Flounder Fishery OPEN all Summer and Fall in the ocean as this fishery has almost no effect on the Southern Flounder population you are trying to manage! Recreational Fishermen should also be allowed a 4 fish bag limit in this fishery as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has these species listed as "Not Overfished." and NC is allowing the Commercial Flounder Trawl Fishery to continue to harvest up to 15,000 lbs of flounder in the ocean per trip both last Summer (April-June) and already this Jan.-Feb 2021. But, Marine Fisheries only allow the recreational fishermen a 45 day season with a proposed 1 fish per

SUBMITTED	NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW.
02/22/2021 - 3:33pm	Hunter williams	North Carolina	<p>day. What a slap in the face to even call that a Season for flounder fishing. I strongly object to this unfair decision for the recreational fishermen & fisherwomen.</p>
02/22/2021 - 3:30pm	Greer Hughes	North Carolina	<p>As a charter fisherman I would like to see the same rules as of last year. If I was to change it I would put a slot size on the flounders. Still keep 4 per person and just put slots on them. Either way we had a great year of fishing and love flounder fishing. I have charters booked for just flounder and would hate to tell my clients that they can only keep just one. Is it really worth the time and money to go catch one flounder? Please do the best you can with this. Thanks</p> <p>Please Don't take away the flounder. Last year was hard enough with a short season now we are hearing that it might be the same short season and maybe one fish please do not do that. I think most everyone is on board with some regulations but full closure is a weird way to look at it been fishing my whole life numbers go up and down we are never asked how many fish we catch a season how many days we go pretty good fishery I've always thought.</p> <p>Thanks for hearing the opinions and comments hopefully you consider us. Lots of people put lots of money time and effort into trying to catch a flounder and if you put it on a season again it just becomes a big Derby more fisherman everywhere you look talk about pressure on a fish give them a certain amount of days to fish for it. Maybe two or three fish per angler for the whole season don't know but please give us a few fish thank you.</p>
02/22/2021 - 3:27pm	Tripp Hooks	North Carolina	<p>As an inshore guide living on the east coast, the closed flounder season has negatively impacted my business. During the summer, we have a very tough fishery and can only rely on catching flounder during June-September. A season that includes the whole summer would be greatly appreciated. As long as it is open all summer, the bag or size limits could be changed to help the population. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Also, the fishery is not hurting as I caught just as many this year than I have in my whole life.</p> <p>Captain Tripp Hooks</p>
02/22/2021 - 3:22pm	Jeff Mooring	North Carolina	<p>I am respectfully, requesting the North Carolina flounder season be open from the first calendar day of Summer until the first calendar day of winter. It is absolutely absurd to allow commercial fishing vessels in recreational waters to harvest up to 15,000lbs on average of flounder per trip. The State of North Carolina will benefit further revenues by allowing recreational fisherman a longe season without unusual limits of a few fish per person. Again, with the use of gill nets and other methods used by commercial fisherman this is severely detrimental to not only the fishery, but the environment. I would like to thank and show my respect to the state and it's attempts to manage our fisheries but, please use better judgement.</p> <p>Respectfully,</p> <p>Jeff Mooring  @gmail.com</p>