



ONLINE PUBLIC COMMENT

#▼	SUBMITTED	FIRST NAME:	LAST NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW:
109	03/29/2021 - 11:59am	Freeman	Callie	North Carolina	<p>Dear Commission Members:</p> <p>I am a recreational angler and own a small business along the NC coast. My husband's profession as an active duty Marine has afforded us the opportunity to travel across the country and experience diverse fisheries that have been equally diverse in their public trust management priorities. My husband retires in two years and we as a family have to make a decision as to where we will finally put down roots. The status of fisheries and more importantly the mindset of those responsible for them is high on our list of determining factors. We have lived off and on in NC for over 16 years. My husband is a native North Carolinian, our children were born here and we are invested in the community that we love. That being said, after personally witnessing over a decade of declining fish stocks and painfully slow reactive measurements, the North Carolina coast is not high on the list. While I applaud management measures being put into place for southern flounder, the proposed 70/30 allocation of a public trust resource is just another slap in the face for recreational anglers and the many businesses/guides that depend on them. Please take time to consider a more equitable approach to the rebuilding of these stocks of which you are a caretaker of for all citizens.</p> <p>Respectfully,</p> <p>Callie Freeman, PhD</p>
108	03/29/2021 - 11:55am	David	Call	NC	The flounder season is too short for us that work! Explain why it's a month and a half
107	03/29/2021 - 11:39am	Kevin	Stone	Nc	Season needs to be lengthened and limit remain at 4. Have a shorter season for nets and gigging. 6to8 weeks and after recreational season
106	03/29/2021 - 11:34am	David	Sneed	North Carolina	The public trust resources, including our coastal waters and the fish that swim in them, belong by right to all of the citizens of North Carolina and not just to the select few who seek to profit from these resources. As the people's representatives, please consider the words of President Theodore Roosevelt as you deliberate on Wednesday, "Our duty to the whole, including the unborn generations, bids us restrain an unprincipled present-day minority from wasting

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					<p>the heritage of these unborn generations."</p> <p>Our current Commission should learn from the past mismanagement that has allowed decades of overfishing in the pursuit of maximum exploitation to bring our fish stocks, including Southern flounder, to the brink of collapse, and embrace instead a new conservation paradigm that is more strongly focused on preservation, environmental protection and growing our fish stocks back to their historic levels.</p> <p>We could have avoided the current crisis over Southern flounder had any of the past commissions considered any amount of conservation threshold instead of allowing commercial harvest to continue on at a maximum allowable yield threshold. Conservation simply means taking enough pressure off of our resource to allow it to grow and reproduce so there will be an abundance of fish available for our future generations. If you continue to ignore this simple concept, we will not see recovery of our fish stocks in my lifetime.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>
105	03/29/2021 - 10:56am	Jeremy	Ridenhour	North Carolina	Make the season longer and limit the fish to two per day. Per person or 8 per boat. Only one fish over 20" per person

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104	03/29/2021 - 10:50am	Jeff	Crouch	NC	<p>I would like to suggest a more equal distribution of the flounder quota between the recreational and commercial fisherman. The proposed rule changes will directly affect the recreational flounder fisherman who boost our local Economy through fuel sales, tackle, boat sales etc. and have a very small impact on the flounder stock. You cannot extinct a species with a rod and reel using a single hook. One suggestion would be to limit commercial and residential fisherman to one 18" or larger flounder per boat since this is our female laying eggs. I respectfully ask that you take this into consideration as this will kill the recreational flounder fisheries in our area because it will no longer be feasible under the proposed restrictions. I do feel a more equitable balance can be achieved.</p> <p>Thank you for considering all opinions before making the final rulings.</p>
103	03/29/2021 - 10:40am	William	Bryan	Alabama (property owner [REDACTED] County, NC)	<p>I am a part-time NC resident, and non-resident licensed recreational(rec) fisherman. I purchased my property in [REDACTED] County primarily to pursue inshore and nearshore fishing. I also purchased and registered a boat in NC.</p> <p>The proposed flounder quotas are patently unfair to recreational fishermen. Daily limits, size slot/restrictions are acceptable to most recs, however, the proposed 70/30 commercial(comm)/rec allotment is not. There are about eight to ten times more licensed recs than comms, with a significantly greater economic impact. Current commercial fishing practices can not only decimate targeted fish populations, but also non-targeted species.</p> <p>Also, based on my personal observations, inshore trawling has negatively impacted fish populations through excessive bycatch discards and habitat destruction. Nursery areas need protection from destructive practices. We have the means, we now need the will to protect OUR resource.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
102	03/29/2021 - 10:40am	Charles	Laughridge	NC	<p>Good morning and thanks for the opportunity to comment online! The Southern Flounder has been in trouble for years and this 70/30 (commercial/rec) allocations simply reward the fishermen that have caused most of the damage to the fishery and strongly opposed ANY</p>

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					<p>restrictions whatsoever. The SE population's only real commercial takes occur in "different NC" and have for decades with no quotas. The time of seasonal closures without quotas with "paybacks" if way overdue, as is the impact of shrimp trawl by-catch of flounder. Recreational anglers have been denied the opportunity to fish the ocean flounder, primarily summer flounder, by NCDMF, even when our quota was never exceeded, while commercial fishermen are allowed to do so, based solely on the hypothesis that recs cannot identify flounder species, but they can identify grouper, mackerel, snapper and amberjacks??? Please feel free to enlighten the public on how a net can identify one flounder species from another.</p> <p>Thanks again for the opportunity to comment. Good Fishing & God Bless!!!</p>
101	03/29/2021 - 10:33am	Anderson	Tran	North Carolina	Split the allocations however you see fit. Total removal needs to be drastically reduced--and that should include discarded bycatch. It's well past time to realize the damage of extensive inshore netting.
100	03/29/2021 - 10:19am	George	Hutnik	NC	50/50 Split for Southern Flounder Catch. This is a public resource.
99	03/29/2021 - 9:19am	Mark	Wilkins	NC	<p>Please reconsider percentage allocation of quotas for southern flounder and reconsider recreational bag limits in Amendment 3 based on the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More equitably distribute quota. Although precise data is lacking, based on data previously presented during to the MFC, a larger percentage of recreational fishermen than commercial are from minority groups. 2. Based on the agreed upon quota, establish a shorter season with reduced bag limit for southern flounder so that Amendment 3 goals can be met. However, establish a separate, longer season with larger bag limits for other flounder species. Provide significant outreach effort (for example, require businesses that sell licenses to post a flyer with the info, etc.) to ensure fishermen can tell the difference in species, but enforce regulations if southern flounder are kept out of season and/or above of bag limits. Recreational fishermen are easily capable of recognizing the different species. But if they violate the regulation they should face the consequences. 3. There could be an argument that reducing the commercial quota will harm those commercial fishermen that are members of a minority or lower income group. This is an issue separate and apart from the

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					distribution of quota between recreational and commercial interests. I would suggest the commercial industry work within itself to sort out issues of equity and catch distribution among commercial flounder fishermen.
98	03/29/2021 - 8:42am	Eric	Williams	North Carolina	<p>STOP DESTRUCTIVE GILL NETTING!!!!!!!</p> <p>We're the only state on the eastern seaboard that allows this destructive harvest method, and we're the only state with no Flounder? coincidence???? I think not.</p> <p>Stop letting big money ruin our fishery! The recreational Fisherman is not the problem!!!</p> <p>Stand up, do your job. Do whats right!!!</p>
97	03/29/2021 - 8:38am	Josh	Norris	NC	<p>I appreciate you giving folks the chance to voice their opinions on a state resource. While I don't envy your position in trying to responsibly manage the state's flounder harvest, and setting the catch limits that are deemed necessary to not deplete the stock, I do wish to speak up and ask for an equitable split between commercial and recreational fishermen and women. I hope that Inshore trawling and gill nets are also addressed, but that is a discussion for folks smarter and more educated than me. Id also like to say that Id be in favor of a move where we'd get less fish/day for a longer season. Again, thank you for letting us voice our opinions. Have a good day.</p>
96	03/29/2021 - 8:24am	Kenneth	Beasley	North Carolina	<p>Please solve this problem by addressing the root cause of netting practices that are destroying the populations for all. It's fully justified to to baseline netting practices of neighboring states and adopting these practices. I understand it will affect the bottom line of businesses, but the bottom line of other businesses are being affected by your current policy that are not as obvious. Our summer vacation with several other families will be in SC this year, so when we catch a flounder we can actually take it back and enjoy it for dinner. There's no reason this needs to happen. Please address the root cause.</p>
95	03/29/2021 - 8:20am	Charles	Wood	NC	<p>All other states have banned gill netting in their internal waters, why haven't we. It is in insane that the commercial group that has statistically always taken more, should receive more of the quota. Its is also crazy that the recs have no more voice than we do in the nc legislature. I bet if we followed the money, the NCFCA and Jerry Schill have been buying politicians for years to benefit their commercial fishing agendas. In NC we need big changes in destructive gears that</p>

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					are allowed in NC and in no other state. Until we address the gear, nothing will change.
94	03/29/2021 - 7:58am	Sue	King	NC	Thank you in advance for reconsidering your rules and regulations on the flounder in NC. The dividing of the quota and limits per person Needs to be increased.
93	03/29/2021 - 7:48am	Robert	White	North Carolina	Nets need to be band from inshore waters
92	03/29/2021 - 7:45am	Robert	White	North Carolina	DUPLICATE
91	03/29/2021 - 7:44am	Devin	Anderson	North Carolina	How is this fair as a charter captain a lot of my customers book me for flounder fishing and now your taking even more resources from the public to the commercial industry
90	03/29/2021 - 7:41am	Dearl	Roughton	North Carolina	I have fished the waters of NC all my life. This resource belongs to all the citizens of NC just not the commercial industry. The allotment of fish should be 50/50 and not 30/70. I will take this a step further, the gill nets need to be removed from our waters! Look at other states that have removed all inshore gill netting. Their fishery is booming. SC has taken steps to ensure their fishery is protected from outsiders by increasing their out of state license fees but yet you allow outsiders to come into our inshore waters and commercially take fish. Also think about the economic impact this is having on our businesses in Eastern NC. More money is brought into this state by the recreation side than any netter will ever bring. Our voices will be heard and I will never let up on this issue until it is resolved! Sincerely Dearl Roughton
89	03/29/2021 - 7:41am	Mike	King	North Carolina	I thin k you are being unfair with the limits on flounder. You are giving the commercial to much of the total. I do not know what needs to be done but this is not it. I am 75 years old and have a new boat to flounder fish on so I guess this means to say in the rocking chair at home.
88	03/29/2021 - 7:31am	Mike	King	North Carolin a	Closing flounder season and the limits you are putting on the recreation fishermen is not right. I do not know what limits should be but it needs to be divided up better than you have it. You are only looking at the commercial side. I am 75 years old and have a \$70,000 boat to fish for the flounder in so

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					you are killing what fishing I do. So what do I do give my boat away and set in the rocking chair?
87	03/29/2021 - 6:59am	Kyle	Peters	North carolina	Let the recreational people like myself keep a few flounder its bullshit
86	03/29/2021 - 6:34am	Bryan	Armstrong	NC	<p>Hello my name is Capt. Bryan Armstrong I am from ████████ nc I am owner and operator of Port city inshore fishing charters. I do not totally rely on flounder fishing for my business but it is a huge part come summer time! My father and grandfather commercial fished my whole life growing up. I am 27 years old and I have watched flounder limits and sizes change drastically in just a short period of time. I do agree there needs to be something done as more and more people are wanting and catching more flounder then ever. I do also believe that raising such a fuss about limits and seasons for flounder is making it worse I am in the water almost everyday and I have never seen so many people flounder fishing in my life! I also travel and fish a lot of tournaments and get to see different fisheries and the way other states do things. And keep in mind my family is all commercial fishermen so I have nothing against those guys but I believe if we cut out inshore trawling it would help drastically in the next couple years with not just flounder but every kinda fish we have! I do not wanna see wanna see the same thing happen to flounder as it did to red fish. I could go on for days about this it's about time to stop worrying about politics and worry about the habitat! Four fish a day is totally fine your average flounder fisherman May not even catch one flounder let alone 4!! Leave it alone open the season back up and let nature take care of itself and quit inshore trawling lv seen what what it kills to many times to not say anything. I know how many flounder a female Produces every year at a mature age 18inches..... My suggestion is take out tweaking inshore move it to one mile off the beach! Open flounder season for recreational change the size to 18 inches to 23 inch slot with one fish able to be over 23inches. This is not only hurting recreational but it's killing all the inshore and near shore guides in NC. We bring thousands of people every year to come catch flounder and spend money in these towns fishing. I know I wouldn't drive miles and miles to come catch one fish to take home....</p> <p>Thanks for the opportunity to voice just a little bit of my mind.</p> <p>Capt.Bryan</p>

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85	03/29/2021 - 5:18am	Harley	Phillips	North carolina	The recreational fisherman not the trouble with the flounder. Until the fishery commission address the commercial fishery the flounder will continue to decline. Healthy fishery would be good for all involved. Continue letting commercial interest dictate regulation then we have not address the one who are abusing this fishery.b
84	03/29/2021 - 5:01am	Jeff	Smith	NC	First off the 70 30 split is not fair. The dollar impact for the state is 500m comm. And 4 billion rec. That should sway your votes to even up the allocations. Now, how to fix it. First off protect the breeders. 4 or 2 fish rec. Limit and only 1 fish over 18 inches. No closed season if you want money spent going fishing. My boat is on my trailer and covered up. I'm eating steak and buying stock with the money I'm saving. I'd rather be fishing.
83	03/29/2021 - 4:29am	Jared	Sasnett	NC	Recs shouldn't have to buy a saltwater license if we are not allowed to keep any fish. Let the commercials pay and see how long that last. Damn shame what this state allows, look at every other state on east coast there is a reason certain gear is not allowed
82	03/28/2021 - 10:47pm	Tony	Pendergrass	NC	If in fact rec fishing brings in billions and we cut that out, plus the money they spent just to get there; will the just the millions that commercial guys bring to the table be enough to support further growth or will the board have to make more cuts because the money has came up short? Rec guys are your backbone and pocketbook to have the money to support a better solution
81	03/28/2021 - 9:29pm	Jeff	Smith	NC	OPEN GULF AND SUMMER year round. The stock is fine so it should not be closed!!! If you are professionals, you should be able educate on the difference and let the angler assume the risk of not identifying correctly just like all species. It's time to follow the economic contribution to our state in our allocation of southern flounder instead of poorly managed history dictating things. We have allowed commercial fishing to dominate the allocation when they have far less economic impact than rec fishing. If we allocated based on economic impact commercial would be lucky to get 25%!
80	03/28/2021 - 9:19pm	Matthew	lovenshimer	NC	I am a young recreational fisherman here in North Carolina. I believe in both science and equity. The additional proposed restrictions on recreational flounder fishing consider neither. I want to put my hard earned money to work in the local community through rental trips, bait shops, and guides. The decision is clear to any casual observer. Efforts to pander to

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					<p>lobbyists are cynical and damaging. The harvest should be restricted to protect this important resource, but the allocation should be to the benefit of those that invest their own time and resources into the water, the recreational fishermen.</p>
79	03/28/2021 - 9:05pm	Stuart	Creighton	NC	<p>It is well known that the Southern flounder stock is severely depleted and that difficult choices must be made in order to preserve and rebuild the fishery. None of the comments that follow will argue the science that has been presented to demonstrate the scope of the problem and how critical the situation is, however, the preferred management options that are being considered, as well as the allocation that was chosen at the last MFC meeting, do leave much to be desired.</p> <p>As a quick recap, the proceedings at the February MFC meeting reeked of political gamesmanship. After the presentation on allocation options from DMF staff, Chairman Bizzell opened the floor for discussion. BEFORE ANY COULD TAKE PLACE, Commissioner Cross with a second from Commissioner Romano, motioned to set the allocation at 70/30 for the commercial sector. Commissioner Roller immediately protested and tried to stop the motion, reminding all of the MFC members that hundreds of public comments had been offered on the issue favoring an equitable 50/50 split. After a few minutes of banter, where the topic switched primarily to ocean flounder access, the vote was held and passed 5-4 with the two at large commissioners, Posey and Hendrickson, voting in favor with the commercial commissioners. While this may have been procedurally correct, the process was clearly rushed, and public comment ignored. What was also ignored is that the recreational access has been cut and cut and cut again, to the point that we are now staring at a one fish per day creel limit. With the decision on allocation, you are ignoring economic data that shows, from Division analysis, the recreational sector adds 240 million per year, while the commercial sector adds 20 million. With such a large difference in economic value, why would you disproportionately cripple that contribution from the recreational sector?</p> <p>I also think it worth a reminder that the Southern flounder stock is in such dire shape because of decades of willful overfishing by the commercial industry. The data has shown that flounder have been constantly overfished since 1989. For that amount of time, the commercial industry has forestalled every attempt to mitigate the problem. Delay tactics, decisions from previous MFC members, even a</p>

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lawsuit during this time has kept the commercial industry fishing without a quota. The latest decision to reward them the lion's share of the pending quota was, quite frankly, insulting.

It is also important to remember that shrimp trawling has had a deleterious effect on the population of Southern flounder. While Division data may be highly variable, juvenile Southern flounder have been shown to make up as much as 33% of trawler bycatch during certain tows. Removing trawlers from Pamlico Sound, or at least significantly reducing effort, is also an important component to flounder management. There is much more trawling effort for white shrimp in the nearshore ocean just outside the inlets that Southern flounder use as a migration corridor. How carefully is bycatch from those trawlers being monitored for Southern flounder interactions? Waiting to address bycatch issues in the shrimp FMP risks no action being taken in dealing with another source of loss of Southern flounder.

Now, if amendment 3 is passed with the current divisional recommendations, you are offering a token spring season when the ocean will be opened for 45 days, beginning March 1, for a single ocellated flounder per person per day. Realistically, this is bogus, as weather conditions and the location of the fish will prevent anglers from accessing them. Then, recreational anglers will be allowed one flounder, regardless of species, during the 45-day fall season. Of course, that is IF we get a full 45-day season, without paybacks from the proposed spring season.

Why can't the ocean be opened during such a time when anglers can actually have access to the fish when the weather is more permissible? Why limit ocellated flounder to only one fish? The population is healthy, so keep the limit at 4 fish. If the DMF is concerned about misidentification of flounder species, then why not educate the angling public properly? If the DMF is concerned about Southern flounder incidental harvest in the spring, then monitor recreational anglers carefully and ticket those that illegally take a Southern flounder.

Again, these comments are not about arguing the genuine need to reduce harvest of Southern flounder to rebuild the stock. Severe reductions must occur, and they must happen now. Recreational anglers are happy to do their fair share. However, these management measures fall short of that equity, and they should be revised before

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					<p>they are enacted. Specifically, the recently approved 70/30 split should be re-examined, with genuine discussion this time, and an equitable 50/50 split should be approved. A one fish daily creel limit for Southern flounder would be more palatable if the ocean were opened up in an extended summer/fall season for ocellated flounder with a 2-4 fish per day creel limit. The removal of RCGL gill nets is entirely appropriate, as is the requirement that all commercial gear targeting flounder be removed or made inoperable outside the commercial season. Complete removal of large mesh gill nets should be seriously considered, especially with the fact that commercial red drum harvest has already been closed less than three months into the year. Bycatch of that species (our state fish) will be excessive during the proposed flounder season.</p>
78	03/28/2021 - 8:29pm	Lynsi	Stewart	NC	50/50 split and get the Gill nets out of our inshore waters
77	03/28/2021 - 8:26pm	Thomas	Stewart	NC	It's about time for North Carolina to join other states and get the Gill nets out the waters and stop inshore shrimp trolling
76	03/28/2021 - 7:44pm	Michelle	Sessoms	NC	<p>I don't understand. My husband and I moved to █████ Island NC and I enjoy fishing with him. We pay for our licenses and have to stand aside while we watch commercial fishing boats and flounder giggers take the bulk of all flounder catches while we are allowed 45 days a year. It's wrong and it seems as though NC's laws and regulations allow the commercial fishing industry to do almost what it wants while no other state permits the same behavior. My husband recently found out from a Captain of the NC Marine Patrol that net boats can troll as close as 100 yards of our beaches? No wonder we only catch whiting, pufferfish and "trash" fish. Never caught a red drum on the beach. Never caught a keeper flounder on the beach during the 5 day season. Why does NC allow the commercial fishing industry to do what they want and we don't get much chance at dinner? It's just wrong...</p> <p>Michelle Sessoms</p>
75	03/28/2021 - 7:38pm	James	Sessoms	NC	<p>It's sad that comments are needed from recreational fisherman to encourage our Fisheries Commission to do what is plain and simply common sense. Our state allows what no other state allows to commercial fisherman, so much so that other state's commercial fisherman want to join in. YOU ARE ALLOWING commercial fishing to destroy our natural resources. I am a lifelong fisherman. I caught four</p>

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					<p>keeper flounder last year ALL OUTSIDE the season. Painful to throw them back while I watch net boats drag the bottom of our seashores along our beaches with protection of rules and regs of the NCDMF and others. I recently learned that shrimp nets boats can troll as close as 100 YARDS of the shore. That came ffrom a Captain of the NC Marine Patrol and I have the email to prove it. What in the heck are y'all doing? Oh, and let's reward them with 70% of the total allowable catch for 2021? Why do we even buy a license? Why did I even move to Oak Island? I think the ultimate disgrace is that we are somehow having to enforce a 3 bluefish limit per day? What is this world coming to? It's not the recreation guys (UNLESS you'd like to talk about flounder gigging which I have a major problem with). Giggers are bringing in ridiculous catches and that industry should be regulated harder. Commercial guys should be moved off our beaches and share in the 50/50 split that makes the most sense. Giggers should honestly take two years off as well. Shooting fish in a barrel..... Recreational anglers are already stuck with 45 days and a tightened limit that NO OTHER STATE regulates.... Come on now!!!</p> <p>James Scott Sessoms</p>
74	03/28/2021 - 7:12pm	Sarah	Morgan	NC	<p>In a huge fight the only way to be fair between two competing sides is to split it 50/50. Anything else would be considered biased to one side or the other.</p> <p>Thanks</p>
73	03/28/2021 - 3:50pm	Josephwe	Davenport	North Carolina	<p>We are so far behind every eastern state in fishing regs. Follow successful states . No commercial fishing and nets in the sounds.</p>
72	03/28/2021 - 3:33pm	Mijey	Gurley	North carolina	<p>I spend way to much money traveling to the coast a couple of times a year contributing to the states tourist industry to be penalized on catch limits and time limits! Put it at 50/50 and keep the season open a little longer. Flounder stock will recover with less commercial catch. Have the season between July and October for now.</p>
71	03/28/2021 - 3:13pm	Elvy	Forrest	North Carolina	<p>The flounder resource belong to the people of North Carolina. There should be no favoritism towards commercial or recreational fishermen. Make it a fifty / fifty split or just shut down the entire fishery. North Carolina fisheries management needs to step up and do what's right for all citizens.</p>

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70	03/28/2021 - 3:03pm	Jackie	Freeman	North Carolina	<p>As a native to NC and retired at the coast we are supportive on equal sharing of flounder allocation at 50% recreational and 50% commercial. Open the season June 1 through October 31 with a 3 day fishing allowance each week. Creel limit 2 fish per person. One over 20 inches and short length of 17 inches up. Fish on Mondays, Wednesday and Thursday. Last season was a devastating blow to boat ramps for 6 weeks. Totally unable to park after 7 am. Many fishermen were angry. Tempers were flying. Other boaters were angry at the overload of vehicles. We don't need this again. Live and dead bait requires circle hooks. Jig fishing J hook as normal. Allowing ocean species all year would ease the pressure as well. Spanish and kings are alike but can be identified. Start with canceling all out of state trawler vessels. If a vessel is not registered to a NC resident they should be considered trespassing. Dead 4 inch flounder we're washing up on Oak island the year after trawlers came through. Trawlers are bulldozers at best. DMF must support commercial industry with other ways to harvest fish without killing offspring. HB 483 let the spawn let them live, enforce it. Giggling should be banned. A neighbor has commercial license and said 20 giggers can wipe a creek out in a few hours. Netting should be banned as well. Recreational fishermen support the economy far more than commercial does. Don't take us wrong, we like our commercial guys. Just have to help them find better ways to achieve fish without destroying our fishery.</p>

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69	03/28/2021 - 1:48pm	thomas	ludwick	NC	It should be the right of every recreational fisherman to be considered as important as commercial fishing. We bring in a lot more money to the economies of the area. If we are made to carry the burden of falling fish stock and you do not hold the commercial fishing just as accountable and continue cutting recreational fishing then it will become to expensive to fish for a catch of a few fish a day. I drive over 200 miles to the coast and spend money on a place to stay, food and supplies. A lot of recreational fisherman due and neither I or others will continue to due so.
68	03/28/2021 - 12:09pm	John	Black	North Carolina	It's time for the recreational fishing to get recognized. Get the shrimp trawlers three miles out. There are tons of out of State shrimp trawlers within four hundred yards of the coast. No doubt someone's pocket is being padded by commercial industry here in NC. The average surf fisherman don't come close on the limits of flounder during the short season. The people of the state are being screwed by legislators and commercial industries and marine fisheries. Look at your own facts.
67	03/28/2021 - 11:48am	Adam	Berkowitz	North Carolina	NC Commercial fisherman are killing our recreational Flounder fishing, this needs to stop. Recreational fisherman should be given FULL YEAR access to fish these waters responsibly with reasonable size and bag limits such as 4/15". Commercial gill nets must be banned. Commercial fisherman should not be allowed closer than 3 miles.
66	03/28/2021 - 11:06am	Alana	Jernigan	NC	I am 10 years old and I like to flounder gig and go fishing with my daddy. I like catching minnows with my net when we go flounder giggering. We also see birds and alligators. I like to eat the flounder we catch. They are good. My daddy says we can't go flounder giggering. I really miss it. I saw a alligator and a sea turtle one night in a net. He says that is why we can't gig anymore. When can we go again?
65	03/28/2021 - 10:57am	Allen	Jernigan	NC	I do not agree with a 70/30 allocation. It should be 50/50 if not 10/90 in favor of the recreational sector. I do not agree with senior staff's "stop and go management" idea for commercial southern flounder. Large mesh gill nets have gotten us where we are today. Is not time to address the issue and totally ban gill nets? Especially when you take into account how unbelievably messy the large mesh fishery is killing non targeted species including alligators and turtles. Pound nets have also gotten us to this point. Why are we still approving new pound sets to fish on a depleted stock??? There should be a moratorium on new pound nets, that fishery should be monitored by a quota moving forward with daily reporting. No more new sets ever. Existing sets can be bought and sold just like oyster leases. Why are we not discussing shrimp trawl discards when we talk about southern flounder?? I don't see anything in the supplement

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64	03/28/2021 - 9:51am	Ian	Perna	NC	<p>about shrimp trawl discards?? I've stood at the culling table on boats of all sizes all over the state and I know first hand how many die in an otter trawl inshore. I'm not making an anti shrimping statement here, but just proving a point that senior staff at NCDMF conveniently left these discards out of the formula. These discards should be immediately deducted from whatever quota the commercial sector receives. The recreational man with a rod and reel and a pointed stick is not the reason why we are where we are at today. I know it and senior staff knows it. How about we address the actual problems and problem gears? Is it not time?</p>
63	03/28/2021 - 9:21am	Michael	OConnor	North Carolina	<p>I believe that our natural resources are for everyone. With the current situation with the commercial side dominating our resources a change must happen. Even with a 50/50 split I believe we are moving in the right direction. It should be 30/70 in favor of the people because it is our state natural resource not commercial resource. If it comes down to money the recreational brings 8X the amount of money compared to the commercial side. Please make changes because we all deserve to benefit from our state natural resources not just the one side.</p>
62	03/28/2021 - 8:04am	Briab	Page	North Carolina	<p>The allocation of Southern Flounder is disproportionate to the revenue generated by source. Recreational fisheries contribute billions to the North Carolina economy and support hundreds if not thousands of jobs. Aside from corruption and graft there is no logical reason for this disparity. Do the right thing for North Carolinian's.</p>
61	03/28/2021 - 7:12am	William	Neff	NC	<p>Would be in this problem if something was done about it 30 years ago.,but here we are so the resource belongs to the citizens of nc.Rec people i think dont mind sharing but when it is all one sided its not right .It should be divided 50/50</p>
61	03/28/2021 - 7:12am	William	Neff	NC	<p>I just want to bring to your attention a bi-product of this state's inability to properly manage its resources as well as the lack of accountability within its Government. I am currently on the tail end of my military career here at Fort ██████. I am simultaneously finishing up my undergrad degree in environmental science with a focus on wildlife management. My wife and I deeply desire to stay here in NC when I retire and find a job in the wildlife management field. Unfortunately I am more and more tempted to move to SC or VA in order to enjoy the same natural resources that are better managed in those states. I don't want to work in and be a part of such a broken system that is so obviously not a priority to the state administration. If NC continues to improperly manage it's natural resources than I will have nothing motivating me to stay here and dedicate the rest of my life to it. Thank you for your time.</p>

#	SUBMITTED	FIRST NAME:	LAST NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW:
					Very Respectfully, William Neff
60	03/28/2021 - 6:26am	Tom	Barbee	NC	Stop in shore commercial netting of flounder. Allow tax paying citizen recreational fishermen to enjoy the resource. Listen to the citizens not the lobbyists (money) for commercial interests.
59	03/28/2021 - 1:22am	Brian	Mohr	North carolina	Please protect our fisheries!
58	03/27/2021 - 11:30pm	DUPLICATE		North Carolina	
57	03/27/2021 - 11:10pm	Michael	Eubanks	NC	Level the playing field by imposing limits on the netters and giggers. The recreational fisherman has been taking the short straw for years, and your decisions perpetuate the demise of the fishery. Take notes from all the rest of the southern states. Ban the nets.
56	03/27/2021 - 10:01pm	Tracey	Patterson	North Carolina	What has been allowed to happen to our fisheries over the last Thirty years is ridiculous. Frank White warned us in the late eighties what was going to happen when the boats and gear changed! The hook and line fishermen pump way more money into the economy and get nothing for all our license money and tax dollars. Put the damn shrimp trawlers out of our sounds and a mile off of the beach!
55	03/27/2021 - 9:54pm	David	Bishop	North Carolina	We want the nets gone from the ICW, our sounds, our creeks, our estuaries..... Ban net with in 1.5 miles of the low tide line.... Wake up DMF!!!! You're killing our fishery with your simple minded garbage..... The commercial industry will survive in open water, out of the estuaries, sounds, and creeks..... all other states on the gulf and east coast have thriving commercial industries, and the recreational has an abundance of fish as well.... Ban gill nets!!!!!! Put the commercial man in the open water before of resources are gone.....
54	03/27/2021 - 9:54pm	DUPLICATE		North Carolina	We want the nets gone from the ICW, our sounds, our creeks, our estuaries..... Ban net with in 1.5 miles of the low tide line.... Wake up DMF!!!! You're killing our fishery with your simple minded garbage..... The commercial industry will survive in open water, out of the estuaries, sounds, and creeks..... all other states on the gulf and east coast have thriving commercial industries, and the recreational has an abundance of fish as well....

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53	03/27/2021 - 5:15pm	Brent	Gurganious	NC	<p>Ban gill nets!!!!!! Put the commercial man in the open water before of resources are gone.....</p> <p>This 70/30 allocation the the commercial sector is unfair to the recreational fishery. I am for conservation of the southern flounder and feel there are other options that should be considered. I am fully aware that the commercial fishermen need to make a living, just not at the public's expense. I truly believe that the gill nets in the water are a serious issue that our management officials refuse to address. With bycatch and undersized fish being caught in large numbers, it seems to be a real issue that seems to go on without much consideration. Also, the trawling in our estuaries and inland waterways is also an issue that seems to get slid under the rug. We all know of all the large number of juvenile spots, croakers, red drum and flounder bycatch that is caught and killed on a daily basis, but yet they want to limit the recreational fishery to 1 flounder per day for only 45 days. It's hardly worth buying a salt water license. I'm ok with the season of 4 flounder per person per day, like what we had last year as it lets us, the recreational fisherman, catch and enjoy flounder while conserving at the same time.</p>
52	03/27/2021 - 3:26pm	John	Lenzmeier	North Carolina	<p>03/27/21 To: Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) Public Comments Cc: Terrence Everitt, Jay Chaudhuri, Stephen Bryant</p> <p>Flounder harvest allocation percentages in our NC waters is a contentious issue- all sides agree on this point.</p> <p>For decades the commercial interests have had more political clout than the recreational interests. The commercial interests/NCFA have used their political advantage to influence laws and massage allocations of harvest to their decided advantage. Any objective person should be able to agree on this. If you ask the NCFA they will readily admit they are fantastic at lobbying for their commercial clients. The commercial interests- who are in constant contact with the rule makers- raise money, host dinners, and contribute to political campaigns. The commercial interests greatly influence who gets appointed to this commission. The commercial interests are superb at keeping the status quo of this commission at 5/4 (5 for the commercial, 4 for the recreational). The NCFA should get a medal, or perhaps be inducted into the lobbyist hall of fame, for capturing control of the regulators. Masters they are.</p> <p>Herein lies the problem- the Flounder stock has been decimated. So too the river herring and the stripers. The croakers and spot are struggling. The entire</p>

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fishery is under enormous stress.

Here is what the MFC says they are committed to doing:
The North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) is responsible for the stewardship of the state's marine and estuarine resources.

Mission – The Division of Marine Fisheries is dedicated to ensuring sustainable marine and estuarine fisheries and habitats for the benefit and health of the people of North Carolina.

Notice those last few words: “for the benefit and health of the people of North Carolina.” It does not say “predominantly for the benefit and health of the commercial fishing industry in North Carolina.”

The commercial interests will say all is fine. I am speculating here, but I imagine they might say something like “the complaints are coming from some malcontents who don’t know anything. Just a bunch of suburban “libtards” with nothing better to do than try to take jobs away from some hard-working commercial fishing folks.”

If all is fine, why is the state of SC contemplating legislation that exclusively targets recreational flounder fishing by NC residents? Our neighbors in SC, whose laws do not allow trawlers in the estuary and severely restrict gill nets, know what the problem is.

If all is fine, why does the science and the data say there is a huge problem? The data empirically state stocks are way down, and very near collapse.

I don’t think it helps to place complete blame on any one group. Each of the different parties (the small commercial fisherman, the recreational charter captains, the weekend warriors, and the mega vertically integrated commercial fishing enterprises) are playing by the current rule set.

The problem and the solution lie in adjusting the current rules.

Ultimately the responsibility resides in the hands of this Commission. I encourage each commissioner to read and reflect on the Commissions’ mission statement. Is each commissioner, on an individual basis, in alignment with the mission statement?

The over-fishing has persisted for decades.

#	SUBMITTED	FIRST NAME:	LAST NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW:
					<p>For decades, the allocations have been decidedly in favor of the commercial sector. The best way to begin to correct the previous misguided decisions is to take the small step forward to split the allocation evenly (50/50) between the recreational and commercial interests.</p> <p>It is past time to stand up to the NCFA and put forth regulations that do not favor the commercial sector so blatantly.</p> <p>It is worth noting that a judge in Raleigh will also be weighing in on this topic soon.</p> <p>John Lenzmeier [REDACTED], NC</p>
51	03/27/2021 - 10:40am	Pete	Boelte	NC	<p>As a Recreational fisherman I would love to see a science-based rebuilding of the fishery for flounder I will support a complete ban a slot limit a reduction in harvest for everyone</p> <p>Thanks Pete boelte</p>
50	03/27/2021 - 8:11am	Larry	Ward	North Carolina	<p>I don't understand how the NC Marine Fisheries Commission can pretend to represent the people of our state. Perhaps that's not your responsibility...it is to protect certain of our resources, right? I've fished the waters around the Outer Banks since 1984. During that time there have been numerous restrictions put on recreational fishermen under the guise of protecting the flounder fisheries. Obviously none have worked, yet you continue to ignore advice from people who understand the science and who, like myself, witness the trawlers raping our sounds and gill nets strung everywhere. How can almost all other states figure it out but ours can't? I love our coast. So much so that even though I live in [REDACTED] I bought a home on the [REDACTED] Sound to be near my favorite place in the world, Cape [REDACTED]. It is flounder fishing that brought me here and now, because of (apparently) political pressure, I've essentially been robbed by your commission of the opportunity to do what I love. One thing that you and the commercial fishing community need to understand is that what you're allowing them to do (gill nets and sound trawling) is slowly killing their livelihood. It's not those of us who cast a bait or a lure into the water, hoping to get a bite. Please do your job. Look at the states with healthy flounder fisheries and enact rules that actually work.</p>
49	03/27/2021 - 7:57am	Lane	Tucker	NC	<p>I encourage you to rethink your decision for the 30% allocation for recreational fishing.</p>

#	SUBMITTED	FIRST NAME:	LAST NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW:
48	03/27/2021 - 7:57am	Dennis	Bost	North Carolina	Hi. I am a lifetime sportsman license holder. My son also. I have 3 grand daughters that are lifetime sportsman license holders also. Our favorite activity together is flounder gigging. We manage to go 2 or three times a year. We then get together for a fish fry. It's like a tradition. I think it's a tough decision to choose for commercial interests or recreational people. My opinion is we have to do something to try to bring back flounder stocks. But I think it should be even between commercial and recreational fishermen. Most states do not allow commercial netting inshore. Also a fish hatchery sounds reasonable. Works for striped bass. Thank you for your time!
47	03/27/2021 - 6:33am	Eric	Bregman	NC	Southern Flounder should be allocated 50/50 between recreational fisherman and commercial fisherman. Plain and simple. All fisheries should be allocated 50/50.
46	03/27/2021 - 12:58am	Frank	Schmidhamer	PA	<p>Hello, I am writing as sportsman and as a North Carolina property owner and tax payer. I am writing to ask the commission to come up with fair and equitable allocation of the southern flounder fishery. The current proposal of a 30% allocation for the recreational sector is not a fair distribution of the resource. Study after study has shown the economic impact of recreational angling is far more beneficial to the state of North Carolina in regards to revenue, retail sales, lodging, taxes and jobs. I implore the commission to come up with a better plan, that is fair and best benefits North Carolina.</p> <p>Thanks for your time; Frank Schmidhamer</p>
45	03/26/2021 - 7:28pm	David	Bishop		<p>Get the nets out of the creeks, estuaries, sounds, and ICW's..... Wake up before the commercial greed kills the fishery..... The recreational fishermen are fed up with the short end of the stick.</p>
44	03/26/2021 - 7:20pm	Toni	Jernigan	North Carolina	Address the issue and quit putting bandaids on the problem. Get the nets out of our estuaries and the fish will recover. All nets including shrimp trawlers do not belong in our inshore waters where fish come to spawn and grow. I have witnessed thousands of baby flounders dead and dying from shrimp trawling with my father in law. I may not know one flounder from another flounder but that has nothing to do with thousands of juvenile flounders and other species dying in the nets. Once the fish recover there will be plenty of fish our commercial guys can harvest with rod and reel and gigs. It's time to address the issue and quit favoring commercial over recreational. Quit putting one against the other.

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NAME:](#)[LAST NAME:](#)[STATE:](#)[PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW:](#)[43](#)03/26/2021 -
6:36pm

John

Tedder

NC

To whom it may concern,

The proposal on the table once again show a trend, comm guys get what they want and rec guys get the shaft. From my understanding there were over 700 public responses ignored for the proposed flounder season. For years now I have seen nets kill more than what they intended to kill, wether it was in a gill net or trawl net. The poor practices and shotty gear is a big problem in our inland waters. We can't keep using this destructive gear and expect the problem to just go away by robbing from the recs. Another problem we have is the weekend commercial guy. These licenses should be used to fill quota for an income for the comm guy and not the weekend warrior. If they are not used in that manor, the licenses should be collected up and retired. 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 the season was closed all but two months in 2020 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.

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. Why are we the only state that still allows gill nets or trawl nets for that matter in our inland water ways to make a dollar?

My opinion Giggig is a way better option than nets. You can selectively take legal fish without harming other species.

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. We have a ton of tourism, most come here solely to fish or charter a guide to fish. They don't want to buy flounder at a market, when they can go catch the same fish. There is a lot money generated from our tourist folks, we don't want that to go away.

In the end we can't keep punishing our rec fishermen while allowing the comm guys to still use destructive gear. The rec guys have been taking cuts for the past 20 years while the comm guys have been taking 90% of the flounder stocks. We need to protect our fishery, the season should be open or closed period. It should not be open for one and not the other, this shows an unfair agenda.

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Thank you
Capt. John

Chad Denny

I'm writing as a VERY frustrated wildlife life time license holder rec. fishermen. After the vote at the DMFC meeting of the 70/30 reduction in favor of the commercial fishing harvest on the southern flounder. I have to ask how is this in any way fair to the rec. fishermen? The rec. fishermen has a 45 day window as of now to fish for flounder So for the average rec. fishermen who like myself works a Mon-Fri. Job. That's six weekends we got and I promise you, you'll be luck to get all 6 weekends that the weather or wind is not bad. So I have to ask with the limit a person possibly going to one flounder. Is it really worth the money and time, knowing the commercial side can keep twice the amount of fish in the same water while the rec. fishermen is taking such a harsh regulation. I have a few points and questions I would really hope to hear feedback on and hope the rec. fishermen regulation is reconsidered.

1: since N.C. is the only state on the east coast the allows inshore commercial netting, trawlers, etc. And us rec. fishermen have the harsh regulation of any other state when it comes to flounder and other species of fish. Wouldn't make sense to follow suit with the other states? Other states Manage a lot better with Commercial fishing outside inland waters

2: Before the DMFC meeting of Feb. 25-26 there was a time period for public comment. I know there was over 700, could have been more public comments submitted. Why was these comments not even considered before this vote was made? If this many people have an interest in this, it's pretty much a slap in the face for there opinions were not even brought to the table.

3: So right now I would say the average inshore rec. fishermen targets Trout,drum,flounder. That means

4 spec. Trout

1 drum

1 gray Trout

Possibly 1 flounder

I have to ask when you read that how can you honestly say the regulation on the rec. fishermen is fair? Not a lot there for the rec. fishermen and we take cut after cut

4: I guess for me and I know plenty of others who feel the same way. It's just

[42](#)03/26/2021 -
5:20pm

Chad

Denny

North
Carolina

#	SUBMITTED	FIRST NAME:	LAST NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW:
					<p>hard to accept these actions when the average rec fishermen has six weekends. With that said, I would like to point out if Two rec. fishermen go once a weekend and limit out each trip that's 48 flounder with limit at 4 person. For the whole 6 week season. I seen pictures of commercial giggers and netters that catch that many flounder in one trip. So again I have to ask how is it fair for another cut to the rec. fishermen.</p> <p>I have been a fishermen all my life and hope to pass this tradition and love for fish to my son. But very year it's more cut to the rec. fishermen side which is really taking the fun and interest in going fishing out.</p> <p>I hope to hear some form if feedback and I hope my thoughts as well as the many other concerned and frustrated fishermen is taking in to consideration because this change will have a huge affect on many rec. fishermen</p> <p>Thanks for your time</p>
41	03/26/2021 - 4:20pm	William	Harris Jr	NC	This has gone on for way too long. NC only state on east coast with this kind of problem. 70/30 allocation is ridiculous. Not fair to recreational fisherman or riggers. Should be 50/50 split and do away with the net boats in these waters.
40	03/26/2021 - 4:09pm	MICHAEL	KOSZULINSKI	NC	We are relying on you to be a fair and impartial and make the best decision for the NC fisheries. This is not what's best for the commercial industry. This is the problem the nets killing all of the fish that you swear to uphold in the best interest. Letting the lobbyists dictate which way you vote is unfair to the recreational fishermen. Take time and look how other states regulate the nets and commercial fishing. They are looking out for all of the fishing industry unlike the current board. Take time and correct the problem in front of you.
39	03/26/2021 - 2:02pm	Anthony	Pate	NC	I feel as if us recreational fisherman are getting shat on by ncdmf.
38	03/26/2021 - 1:28pm	Anthony	Jackson	NC	I do not support the 70/30 commercial/recreational split for flounder. Furthermore I do not support managing a fishery to benefit approximately 200 commercial fishermen while simultaneously punishing the nearly 1 million recreational fishermen. The state of NC and by that I mean the NC Marine Fisheries Commission has done such a poor job a managing our resource, the state of South Carolina has taken measures to help prevent NC residents from fishing in their waters. It is time that you do what is right for our fisheries and remove gill nets and shrimp trawls from our creeks, rivers, and sounds. Your own data on your very own website indicates that NC Commercial fishermen have harvested 38 percent of all flounder from VA to FL, if that's not clear as to

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who and where the cuts need to be made I don't know what is. Do the right thing, keep recreational limits at four fish and take the fish away from the group that's doing the most harm. Remove the destructive gear from our waters.

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37	03/26/2021 - 12:36pm	Michael	Miller	NC	Just need to someone to look at other states season and what hey have done. Number one thing is they put commercial on outside. NC could be the best place to fish in the United States and the money for that could help the state .
36	03/26/2021 - 12:16pm	William	Cummings	North Carolina	I can't see how you think a rod and reel are hurting the fishery , get rid of the nets with in 3 miles of the beach they are killing the estuary
35	03/26/2021 - 11:53am	Mike	McLean	NC	<p>The flounder population in North Carolina has been drastically declining, as the scientific data clearly shows. It is now to the point where catching a nice flounder is very rare. It doesn't need to be that way.</p> <p>I want my three grandkids to have the joy of catching a keeper flounder, just like I used to have when I began fishing in NC about 50 years ago.</p> <p>I want to see a rebuilding plan for Southern flounder that puts the health of the resource first and is equitable to the fishing public. It's your job to make that happen. Please vote for the resource that the people of North Carolina own.</p> <p>Thanks.</p>
34	03/26/2021 - 11:51am	Scott	Griffith	North Carolina	<p>Flounder generally, and Ocean summer flounder specifically, should be split more equitably between commercial and recreational fisheries. It seems almost un-american that I'm forced to purchase a public resource that I can easily catch on my own.</p> <p>Commercial fishing vessels destroy more resource in one trips "by-catch" than I could in a life time of poaching....and yet you seem to think it appropriate that I'm forced to purchase flounder for \$20 a pound...with the price only surely to increase as commercial vessels continue to destroy way more of their share of our public resource.</p>
33	03/26/2021 - 11:47am	Johnny	Stancil	NC	As you may have guessed by now... The tax paying, North Carolina Wildlife Endowment funding, voting Recreational fishermen are tired of our self indulging Governor and his hand picked senior staff at the NCDMF constantly selling out our Coastal fisheries to the commercial industries LOBBYIST for top dollar. It obvious by now you could cut out all recreational floundering and it would not change the outcome!! STOP the real problem cut out ALL netting inshore PERIOD!! North Carolina's sounds,rivers and estuaries should not have the first net of any design in them. It's not recreational fishing causing the depletion of our coastal resources. South Carolina has already applied measures to restrict North Carolina anglers because they know our Marine Fisheries are selling out our resources. PROVE me wrong because as it stands this will go down in history as one of the most self

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					opportunistic Governor and senior staff to sell us out for a buck we've had yet! If it's voted anything other than a 50% allocation across the board then it shows you've chosen the commercial Lobbyists payoff! I hope the TRUTH hurts.. By the way Senior staff you can get your lobbyist friends to fact check this since you can't seem to use your own brains.
32	03/26/2021 - 11:43am	Larry	Mann	NC	Once again we are here deciding the fate of our fishery! I believe it is time to let the people of North Carolina decide what we want to do with our fishery instead of Politicians that are being paid by the Commercial sector. We all see it! Let's put it to vote a by the people who own the Fisheries. Times have changed and Nets and Trawling have no business in State waters! I have seen both sides and I can say the reason for our Fishery decline is because of Over Fishing and By-Catch from Trawlers from the Commercial Sector. WAKE UP AND DO WHAT'S RIGHT! MY CHILDREN DESERVE TO HAVE A FISHERY TO USE!
31	03/26/2021 - 11:40am	L Ray	Brown	NC	Shut down the entire southern flounder fishery in 2021 to rebuild the stock and then and ask the NC legislature to provide allocation instructions beginning in 2022 for all future years. FRA '97 does not give authority to the MFC to allocate any fishery to any user group. If it does, please point that authority out in a public venue.
30	03/26/2021 - 11:37am	Gary	Holmes	North Carolina	First thing needs to be done is take the nets and trawls out of our sounds and rivers. They do not recognize size or creel limit, Tge by catch rule is a loop whole for catch and kill whatever you get in the nets. For the amount of money on the commercial side has no comparison to what the recreational anglers impact is all the way around. These guys no longer make a full time job at floundering. So it needs to be divided 50/50 that's would be the fairest way. Until you get to the root of the problem with trawls and nets there will be no rebound in our fisheries due to the years of neglect due to NCDMF this didn't just happened overnight. This is the only state that allows this...look at how great the fisheries are in other states , you would think North Carolina would want to lead in these efforts instead of being the ignorant one. That's why our neighboring state is imposing a 275.00 license fee for folks from North Carolina because they care about there fisheries. So it's time for us to do right by our fisheries and millions of recreational anglers
29	03/26/2021 - 11:27am	James	Powell	NC	The fact that I have to comment again tells me this is useless because you evidently don't care what the public thinks. But until the destructive gear is removed from the water (gill nets) and the inshore trawling stops before the bycatch catches all the small underage fish, you'll never stop the decline of our fisheries. It's the commercial side that's gotten us here. Cut their percentages. It's time for penalizing the rec side to stop. It's our resource, it belongs to everyone, not just the guys making money from it. It's my right to catch enough to feed my

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					family. One flounder isn't going to do that. And with low prices per lb of flounder, the commercial side isn't losing enough to even worry about. Do the right thing and save our fisheries while preserving the right of the common man to catch a fish.
28	03/26/2021 - 11:23am	Ralph	Haddock	NC	<p>I am a eastern nc recreational fisherman and am dismayed at what I see as a target by DMF to drive us out of the water to keep the commercial side the preferred entity. How can you conclude that the decline in the flounder population will increase by allowing the same entity that caused the shortage, commercial fishing, to continue to harvest as usual with no limits added? Specifically, no daily or seasonal limit. Can ice them down and take them to another state and market them.</p> <p>Also:</p> <p>-remove gill nets as a capture method, because it waste the resource and entangles by catching other species of fish, marine mammals, and endangered species.</p> <p>We, recreational fishermen, know that the southern flounder population is overfished and want to do our part to help restore the fishery, but to address the issue the leading cause of the decline must be addressed, that being the commercial take of flounder.</p>
27	03/26/2021 - 11:15am	Eric	Sexton	NC	<p>It looks as though you guys are still going to ignore the fact that the commercial fisherman are taking up the bulk of the quota! Seems as if you could care less about the recreational angler. You know, the ones who provide the most money to improve the fisheries! Now SC is going to charge NC residents a ridiculous price to purchase SC licenses because you folk in Raleigh don't give 2 craps about the recreational anglers. I hope you're pleased with your disregard to all emails, texts, phone calls, and important data that's been provided!</p> <p>Sincerely, Ex NC Recreational License Holder</p>
26	03/26/2021 - 11:14am	Chad	Schreiner	North carolina	<p>Thank you for taking the time to read this message. I buy my saltwater license every year and have sense 2005. I would like you to strongly consider giving recreational fishing a fair shot at their fair share of fish. The proposed 70/30 Split is completely unfair and biased.</p>
25	03/26/2021 - 11:13am	Mike	Todd	Nc	<p>Sounds like you guys better get it together on letting the peasants have some of king coopers flounder.the corruption is astounding. People cant catch a flounder but you can go buy one from the market? Nc commercial fishing has had a flounder industry for what 100 years? But you guys want to blame everybody but the culprit...nc deq is a joke. Heres a tip...Remove and ban nets in estuaries stop inshore trawling amd maybe the flounder population will thrive like our southern state counterparts...wow what a thought. How come nobody talks about the</p>

#	SUBMITTED	FIRST NAME:	LAST NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW:
					elephant in the room? Oh wait, But that would put the crunch on you guys kickback paychecks now wouldnt it? How about the statement issued by south Carolina on calling yall out on your gross mismanagement? You guys are derelict in your duty and everyone knows.
24	03/26/2021 - 11:12am	Jonathan	Edwards	NC	<p>Can we join the 21st century like all of our neighboring states and remove large mesh gill nets and shrimp trawlers from our estuaries? These gears kill too many non-targeted species and marine life and have no place in our coastal sounds and rivers.</p> <p>Also, if you are going to split the southern flounder quota between the recreational and commercial sectors, it should be an even 50/50 split. There is no reason to go with the proposed 70/30 split in favor of the commercial sector. The commercial harvest is the main reason our southern flounder fishery is in the state it is in now.</p> <p>In my honest opinion, people that profit from a resource should not be allowed to make harvest decisions of that resource. For example. Why can you not be on the ABC board in NC if you or a family member own an ABC permit? Why can you not be on the DOT board in NC if you build roads? The answer to both is obvious; a conflict of financial interest in managing state assets. So then ask, if conflict of interest is that important, why do five members of the 9 MFC have to have a financial interest in the use or study of what they regulate just to be on the commission? Three commercial members, one recreational industry member whose income is dependent on harvest, and a scientist whose vote to study an issue rather than deal with it puts money in a peers pocket and historically in NC our scientists careers generate income from studying marine life. 5 out of 9 members have a financial interest in what they are managing for the state. Other commissions forbid financial interests to participate.</p> <p>In closing, I ask that you first and foremost put the resource first. Not the user groups. If the southern flounder fishery is as bad as NCDMF/DEQ/MFC data says it is, just close the fishery completely to all user groups. Zero harvest in 2021, perform a stock assessment, and report findings in 2022.</p>
23	03/26/2021 - 10:16am	Joseph	Balazsi	North Carolina	Limiting recreational fisherman has no effect on stock increase when commercial fisher can net everything that swims. Call South Carolina and ask how to manage our marine resources.
22	03/26/2021 - 10:11am	John	Peebles	North Carolina	I would think that a 50/50 split is much more equitable.

#	SUBMITTED	FIRST NAME:	LAST NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW:	
21	03/26/2021 - 10:10am	DUPLICATE			North Carolina	
20	03/26/2021 - 9:36am	Chris	Sparrow	North Carolina	Why is it that neighboring states have much larger creel limits and longer seasons? Why am I paying for a saltwater fishing license but can hardly keep any fish when I go? Why are nets allowed to be set in small creeks? Why is trawling allowed when it tears up the bottom? Why doesn't it matter when millions of pounds of bycatch are killed?	
19	03/26/2021 - 9:31am	alex	ames	NC	<p>It is an insult that any harvest allocation other than 50/50 is even being considered. Why should one fisherman be granted more of a public resource than another fisherman? To say commercial fisherman should be allocated more because it's their profession is an absurd reason. A person's profession is their choice, if what they have chosen does not provide the income they want or need then they need to change professions. This is an unfortunate reality that millions of people have had to deal with, and adjust to, over the course of history.</p> <p>If the commercial industry wants to increase flounder quota they should be working with industry groups to increase the population. The commercial industry should be the biggest proponent for research to reduce bycatch, they should be staunch critics of fishing methods that destroy the estuarine ecosystem, they should be leading the fight against coastal pollution, but instead their focus is on increasing quota no matter the long-term consequence.</p> <p>The entire commercial fishing situation in NC is absolutely unbelievable, the focus of so few is destroying a public resource that belongs to so many.</p>	
18	03/26/2021 - 9:21am	Doug	Neal	North Carolina	This letter is in support of modifying the sector harvest allocation to an equitable 50/50 split between commercial and recreational sectors.	
17	03/26/2021 - 9:20am	Ray	peaden	nc	leave the flounder alone and us enjoy the fishing and i like to yall to open the Rock fishing back. Their no seems to keep the rock season closed theirs plenty of rock out their and theirs a plenty of flounder out their.	
16	03/26/2021 - 9:16am	Martin	Davidson	NC	Please implement a rebuilding plan for Southern flounder that puts the health of the resource first and is equitable to the fishing public. The commercial sector has been favored for far too long, with disastrous results!	
15	03/26/2021 - 9:10am	Kenny	Doyle	NC	Based off recreational flounder fishing being a 10x value to the state of NC VS commercial with decreasing harvests. Seems the 1+ billion fishing recreational 2million anglers deserve a much much larger piece of the pie!!	
14	03/26/2021 - 8:59am	Donald	Beaver	North Carolina	It is past time to work to save our fishery by removing the trawlers and nets from our the estuaries of NC.	

#	SUBMITTED	FIRST NAME:	LAST NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW:
13	03/26/2021 - 8:47am	Cecil	Lee	NC	<p>As an avid 70 year old life long surf fisherman, I implore you to please reconsider the limitations placed on recreational fishermen. It is impossible for recreational fishermen to catch enough flounder to have an impact on the flounder population. If you are serious about solving the problem then do something about the commercial fishermen limits. Also the shrimpers kill more by accident than all recreation fishermen combined. You could also limit the gigging of flounders. (gigging is not fishing) Many flounders are destroyed by giggers because they are to small to keep and people abusing the gigging limits.</p> <p>PLEASE HELP THE TRUE RECREATIONAL FISHERMEN with your rulings. Thanks.</p>
12	03/26/2021 - 8:30am	Glenn	Wheeler	North Carolina	<p>It's a shame the fishery commission is sticking to th recreational fisher so your saying I can't keep enough flounder to feed my family But the commercial fisher can sale me enough to feed my family everyone that's voted for this allotment should be investigated to see what ties you have with the commercial fishing industry</p>
11	03/26/2021 - 8:10am	Kim	Tavasso	NC	<p>A 50/50 split is the only fair allocation of the southern flounder that is equitable to both sectors, commercial and recreational. Anything less will only further demonstrate the continuing bias shown by the NC Marine Fisheries Commission that favors the commercial sector.</p>
10	03/26/2021 - 8:10am	David	Benson	NC	<p>why would the recreational fisherman not receive an equitable share (50/50)for southern flounder? The revenue from tourism far outweighs the revenue from the sale of the fish. Gigging should be limited to a smaller allotment than hook and line as nets and gigs are depleting the population. When is the DMF going to work on the root cause of the problem, which is shrimp trawling. Both recreational and commercial fishermen stand to benefit from population increases if you can come up with a plan to address the fish kill from trawling. Seasons for the trawlers could be established to lessen the kills of many Fin Fish species besides the flounder. Why is it the recreational fishermen always seems to be disadvantaged in this process? Because it's all about the money. Its time you use your voice for the good of the fishery instead of caving to political pressure from the fish houses.</p>
9	03/26/2021 - 7:59am	James	Hayes	North Carolina	<p>I am a 63 year old native and lifetime sportsman of North carolina. I have watched the state of our coastal fisheries deteriorate since my childhood. When i was young we could come to the coast and catch all the fish we wanted each day. That has not been the case for many years now. I now realize it is predominately due to the mismanagement of the resource particularly the overfishing by commercial fishing, the netting of shrimp and by catch in our waters, and other factors. Please due</p>

<u>#</u>	<u>SUBMITTED</u>	<u>FIRST NAME:</u>	<u>LAST NAME:</u>	<u>STATE:</u>	<u>PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW:</u>
					your duty and reduce the commercial harvest and allow sportsman like myself to have some chance to see the fishery as it existed in my childhood years.
8	03/26/2021 - 7:56am	Johnny	Burke	NC	The proposed 70/30 split for flounder is not at all fair to the recreational fisherman. 50/50 is fair. Please reconsider. Thank you.
7	03/26/2021 - 7:54am	Lenny	Smathers	North Carolina	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First the harvest allocation should insure that flounder resource is rebuilt from prior overfishing If this means substantial reduction of the harvest, so be it. 2. Any harvest reduction should be shared equally by the commercial and the recreational sectors. Historically the recreational sector has borne the brunt of reductions. 3. Allocation to the recreational sector is much more valuable than to the commercial. The allocation should be 70 recreational and 30 commercial. This is absolutely the best way to support all the businesses of NC. 4. An independent commission should be chartered to show the Marine Fisheries Commission the true value of the recreational fishery.
6	03/26/2021 - 7:46am	John	Maness	NC	I am a recreational fisherman and fish in Brunswick County exclusively. The limited season on flounder has already ruined my favorite hobby. The damage to the fishery is due almost exclusively to netting and gigging activities. To give 70% of the harvest quota to commercial fisherman is to reward the terrible management practices that NC has allowed forever. All inshore netting should be discontinued until the fishery recovers. The quota should be split 50/50 between recreational and commercial. Separate action for summer flounder vs southern flounder should also taken. I recommend tripling the fines for people who take the wrong fish. Please take reasonable and fair action now, before it is too late.
5	03/26/2021 - 7:17am	John	Boyte	NC	I encourage a Southern Flounder rebuilding plan that places top priority on the health of the resource - if that means pain for all fishermen then so be it. I also I feel a 70/30 landings split in not fair to recreational fishermen - should be more even .
4	03/26/2021 - 6:50am	David	McFadyen	North carolina	I do not agree with th 73/27 split on the flounder I think it needs to be more even. I also would be in favor of a longer rec season with a reduce fish rate 3 per day, per person and even a boat limit of 6 per day. Normal rec fishermen in my option only get a few days every two weeks to fish.

#	SUBMITTED	FIRST NAME:	LAST NAME:	STATE:	PLEASE TYPE YOUR COMMENTS IN THE BOX BELOW:
3	03/25/2021 - 8:54am	RANDY	WOOD	NC	<p>Please reconsider your split for flounder allocation. The recreational fishermen provide 10 times contribution to NC prosperity. Capitalization of a public trust resource is not something that should be addressed lightly. Analogy; Allow loggers, for a small fee, to harvest trees from a state park, while the rest of public gets to harvest dead firewood. Reverse your split, or at least consider a 50/50 split. This could possibly raise the price of flounder for commercial, with enough added market price to offset previous harvests. Make the flounder be a lobster of the south for our restaurants.</p>
2	03/25/2021 - 7:56am	John	McQuaid	NC	<p>I have fished the waters around Beaufort, NC since 1998, and I have experienced Flounder getting more and more scarce. I support all restrictions to return Flounder to abundance, especially banning inshore trawling and inshore gill nets.</p> <p>As far as allocation of a dying resource, I propose allocating 25% to recreational, 25% commercial, and leaving 50% in the water to reproduce.</p>
1	03/24/2021 - 4:32pm	Clint	Midkiff	North Carolina	<p>For 70 of my 74 years, I have been a recreational fisherman. At no time have I protested the possession limits on the species that I targeted. I understand that fishery science is important to our marine species. Despite my recreational leanings, I understand that the commercial fishery is crucial to us "fish eaters" here in NC! As I no longer own a boat and am limited to a few charter trips, I rely on the commercial fishery for fresh NC seafood year round. It is amazing to check the sources of seafood in our grocery stores. Shrimp from third world countries with open defecation due to lack of sanitation, is prevalent in our local groceries. Reports of mislabeling of seafood, particularly in restaurants is also troubling.</p> <p>I appreciate the difficulty facing commissioners who are sworn to protect the public trust fishery. I do suggest that there are likely more seafood consumers who rely on our commercial fishermen for fresh product, than there are recreational fishermen and charter captains that enjoy our waters and its fish.</p> <p>The fact that the commission voted on a 70% commercial/30% recreation split of flounder and then has reneged, "smells fishy."</p>

From: [Batsavage, Chris](#)
To: [Klibansky, Lara](#); [Gillikin, Dana](#); [Loeffler, Michael](#); [Markwith, Anne](#)
Subject: Fw: [External] FW: 2021 NC Flounder Regulations
Date: Monday, March 29, 2021 8:05:51 AM

FYI

Chris

Chris Batsavage
Fisheries Biologist
NC Division of Marine Fisheries
Fisheries Management Section
Central District Office
5285 Hwy. 70 West
Morehead City, NC 28557
1 (800) 682-2632 x 8088 (in state)
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Chris.Batsavage@ncdenr.gov

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, March 28, 2021 7:24 PM
To: Bizzell, Rob <r.bizzell.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Kornegay, K <j.kornegay.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Hendrickson, Tom <t.hendrickson.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; McNeill, Robert <Robert.B.McNeill.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Posey, Martin H <Martin.Posey.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Cross, Doug <d.cross.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Blanton, Mike <m.blanton.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Roller, Thomas N <Tom.Roller.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Romano, Sam <s.romano.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Godwin, Charlton <charlton.godwin@ncdenr.gov>; Batsavage, Chris <chris.batsavage@ncdenr.gov>; Rawls, Kathy <kathy.rawls@ncdenr.gov>; West, Katy <katy.west@ncdenr.gov>
Subject: [External] FW: 2021 NC Flounder Regulations

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I understand that the committee are meeting to review and vote on sending the draft Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Amendment 3. After the announcement by the Division late last week that the 2021 recreational flounder season will open Aug. 16 and close Sept. 30, the minimum size limit remains 15 inches total length, and the creel limit remains at four fish per person per day during the open recreational season. Please note that I support a rebuilding plan for Southern flounder that maximizes recovery of the fishery and is equitable for both Commercial fishermen and recreational anglers. However, I am concerned that it is proposed to decrease the creel limit to 1 fish per person per day and possibly decreasing the length of flounder season. This proposal would have a bad impact on the Outer Banks economy as many recreational fishermen will not go fishing for flounder which would decrease the lodging, marina sales, restaurant sales, grocery sales, merchandise sales, etc.

I have been going to the Outer Banks for over 30 years fishing mainly for flounder as we drift fish by boat with 4 anglers on the boat. I had the pleasure to go fishing for flounder for 2 weekends of the last year 6 week fishing season and never caught our 4 fish per day creel limit. It is difficult to understand how the recreational fisherman are depleting the stock when we cannot even catch a daily bag limit. Please vote to not decrease the recreational fisherman creel limit of 4 fish per day when most of the flounder is clearly being harvested by the commercial fisherman.

It has been stated that historically that the commercial industry was responsible for 80% of the harvest which means that the recreational fisherman is responsible for 20%. It is my opinion that the flounder is being overfished is due to the Commercial Industry and the Shrimp Trawlers. It is a known fact that the pound nets capture thousands of pounds of flounder in each net each week with some mortality bycatch of smaller flounder. Also the gill nets are a source of fishing mortality- bycatch which greatly impede or prevent recovery. Shrimp trawlers with their mortality bycatch for juvenile species, including spot, croaker, weakfish, southern and summer flounder are also preventing the recovery of flounder. If the shrimp trawlers were not allowed to work the sound area during the summer (May – October), the flounder stock and other species would probably recover at a quicker pace.

Please consider all of these factors when your committee are deciding on this Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Amendment 3. Please vote to keep the 2021 recreational flounder season will open Aug. 16 and close Sept. 30, the minimum size limit remains 15 inches total length, and the creel limit remains at four fish per person per day during the open recreational season.

You are welcome to contact me to discuss this matter.

Thank you,

Paul Graham

██████████.
██████████ NC ██████████
██████████

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] 70/30 split
Date: Sunday, March 28, 2021 9:42:34 AM

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From: Don Beaver [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, March 28, 2021 9:24 AM
To: Bizzell, Rob; Kornegay, K; Hendrickson, Tom; McNeill, Robert; Posey, Martin H; Cross, Doug; Blanton, Mike; Roller, Thomas N; Romano, Sam
Subject: [External] 70/30 split

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N.C. once had a wonderful coastal fishery which has been depleted mostly by the commercial fishery. It is past time we follow the lead of other states and remove the nets and trawlers from our estuaries and sounds. For too many years the state had tried to manage this resource on the back of recreational fishermen. It is up to you to decide whether we continue to destroy this resource by staying with the policies of the past!!
Don Beaver

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Flounder
Date: Saturday, March 27, 2021 12:29:24 PM

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From: Darrell Beam [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 27, 2021 11:39 AM
To: Bizzell, Rob; Kornegay, K; Hendrickson, Tom; McNeill, Robert; Posey, Martin H; Cross, Doug; Blanton, Mike; Roller, Thomas N; Romano, Sam
Subject: [External] Flounder

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30% of the catch for Rec anglers is disgusting and totally unacceptable. Rec should get at least 50% of the catch.

Harlan Beam
[REDACTED] NC

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Flounder Amendment 3
Date: Sunday, March 28, 2021 9:42:59 AM

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From: Jack Jackson [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, March 28, 2021 9:21 AM
To: Bizzell, Rob; Kornegay, K; Hendrickson, Tom; McNeill, Robert; Posey, Martin H; Cross, Doug; Blanton, Mike; Roller, Thomas N; Romano, Sam
Subject: [External] Flounder Amendment 3

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Greetings, I am writing in regards to the current state of our southern flounder and how the NC Marine Fisheries Commission has chose to handle/comply with the cutbacks called for by the SAFMC. While I agree actions must take place to save our southern flounder, I disagree with the way it has been handled. According to NC Marine fisheries, over 38 percent of all flounder from VA to FL from 2008-2017 have been harvested by NC commercial fishermen. Reading and seeing that, it seems ludicrous to allow commercials 70 percent while recreational only gets 30 percent. That doesn't seem to me like it's going to achieve the desired effect. To me, a 50/50 split would be a much better starting point.

Once we've done that, we can start focusing on doing away with destructive fishing methods such as gill nets and shrimp trawls. Allow commercial fishermen to harvest via hook and line and gig allow current pound net owners to work their nets under the same blanket commercial quota, but do not approve any new permits.

Thank you for your time,

Regards,
Anthony Jackson



Sent from my iPhone

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Flounder fishery
Date: Saturday, March 27, 2021 12:29:49 PM

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From: Frank Schmidhamer [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 27, 2021 1:04 AM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] Flounder fishery

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Hello Mr Bizzell,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing as sportsman and as a North Carolina property owner and tax payer. I am writing to ask the commission to come up with fair and equitable allocation of the southern flounder fishery. The current proposal of a 30% allocation for the recreational sector is not a fair distribution of the resource. Study after study has shown the economic impact of recreational angling is far more beneficial to the state of North Carolina in regards to revenue, retail sales, lodging, taxes and jobs. I implore the commission to come up with a better plan, that is fair and best benefits the fishery, North Carolina and it recreational anglers.

Thanks for your time;
Frank Schmidhamer

Sent from my iPad

From: [John Lenzmeier](#)
To: [Wade, Hope](#); [Klibansky, Lara](#); [Rawls, Kathy](#); [Bizzell, Rob](#); [Kornegay, K](#); [McNeill, Robert](#); [Roller, Thomas N](#)
Subject: [External] Flounder Harvest Regulations
Date: Saturday, March 27, 2021 4:56:16 PM

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Hi

Below are my public comments for the MFC meeting next week.

Flounder harvest allocation percentages in our NC waters is a contentious issue- all sides agree on this point.

For decades the commercial interests have had more political clout than the recreational interests. The commercial interests/NCFA have used their political advantage to influence laws and manage allocations of harvest to their decided advantage. Any objective person should be able to agree on this. If you ask the NCFA they will readily admit they are fantastic at lobbying for their commercial clients. The commercial interests- who are in constant contact with the rule makers- raise money, host dinners, and contribute to political campaigns. The commercial interests greatly influence who gets appointed to this commission. The commercial interests are superb at keeping the status quo of this commission at 5/4 (5 for the commercial, 4 for the recreational). The NCFA should get a medal, or perhaps be inducted into the lobbyist hall of fame, for capturing control of the regulators. Masters they are.

Herein lies the problem- the Flounder stock has been decimated. So too the river herring and the stripers. The croakers and spot are struggling. The entire fishery is under enormous stress.

Here is what the MFC says they are committed to doing:

The North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) is responsible for the stewardship of the state's marine and estuarine resources.

Mission – The Division of Marine Fisheries is dedicated to ensuring sustainable marine and estuarine fisheries and habitats for the benefit and health of the people of North Carolina (emphasis mine).

Notice those last few words: “for the benefit and health of the people of North Carolina.” It does not say “predominantly for the benefit and health of the commercial fishing industry in North Carolina.”

The commercial interests will say all is fine. I am speculating here, but I imagine they might say something like “the complaints are coming from some malcontents who don't know anything. Just a bunch of suburban “libtards” with nothing better to do than try to take jobs away from some hard-working commercial fishing folks.”

If all is fine, why is the state of SC contemplating legislation that exclusively targets recreational flounder fishing by NC residents? Our neighbors in SC, whose laws do not allow trawlers in the estuary and severely restrict gill nets, know what the problem is.

If all is fine, why does the science and the data say there is a huge problem? The data empirically state stocks are way down, and very near collapse.

I don't think it helps to place complete blame on any one group. Each of the different parties (the small commercial fisherman, the recreational charter captains, the weekend warriors, and the mega vertically integrated commercial fishing enterprises) are playing by the current rule set.

The problem and the solution lie in adjusting the current rules.

Ultimately the responsibility resides in the hands of this Commission. I encourage each commissioner to read and reflect on the Commissions' mission statement. Is each commissioner, on an individual basis, in alignment with the mission statement?

The over-fishing has persisted for decades. For decades, the allocations have been decidedly in favor of the commercial sector. The best way to begin to correct the previous misguided decisions is to take the small step forward to split the allocation evenly (50/50) between the recreational and commercial interests.

It is past time to stand up to the NCFA and put forth regulations that do not favor the commercial sector so blatantly.

It is worth noting that a judge in Raleigh will also be weighing in on this topic soon.

John Lenzmeier

██████, NC

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Flounder
Date: Saturday, March 27, 2021 12:29:12 PM

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From: harlan beam [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, March 27, 2021 11:41 AM
To: Bizzell, Rob; Kornegay, K; Hendrickson, Tom; McNeill, Robert; Posey, Martin H; Cross, Doug; Blanton, Mike; Roller, Thomas N; Romano, Sam
Subject: [External] Flounder

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30% of the catch for Rec Anglers is insulting to every hook and line fisherman in NC

Darrell Beam
[REDACTED] NC

May the road rise up to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face; the rains fall soft upon your fields and may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

To:

[REDACTED]
T.Hendrickson.MFC@ncdenr.gov
Martin.Posey.MFC@ncdenr.gov
R.Bizzell.MFC@ncdenr.gov
D.Cross.MFC@ncdenr.gov
M.Blanton.MFC@ncdenr.gov
J.Kornegay.MFC@ncdenr.gov
Robert.B.McNeill.MFC@ncdenr.gov
Tom.roller.MFC@ncdenr.gov
S.Romano.MFC@ncdenr.gov
Roy.cooper@nc.gov

From:

Richard R. Gray
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] NC [REDACTED]

Date:

March 28, 2021

Reference:

Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Amendment 3

The State of North Carolina passed legislation in 2004 to create a saltwater recreational fishing license, and Governor Mike Easley signed it into law in 2005. This was partially sold to the citizens as a way to give the recreational fisherpersons a larger voice in how the NC Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) regulated and managed the resource. Sadly, this has been nothing more than another tax on the citizens of our state and has not resulted in giving the recreational fisherpersons an equal voice. The February 24, 2021 recent ruling by the NCDMF regarding the Southern Flounder shows that the commission is still ruling against the citizens of our state in favor of the commercial fishing industry.

The NCDMF ignored overwhelming public comment in approving a 70/30 commercial versus recreational allocation in the Southern Flounder Fisheries Management Plan targeted for adoption later this year. Both at-large commissioners, Tom Hendrickson and Martin Posey, along with the three commercial commissioners, voted for the allocation that chose to ignore public comments supporting an equitable 50/50 allocation.

The recreational fisherman will have only a 45-day season with a one fish per day flounder limit. This is blatantly unfair to the larger-voting block of NC recreational fisherpersons. The science is in; the Southern Flounder is in trouble, but closing the catch recreationally while allowing commercial fishing shows the bias of the NCDMF.

The main reason the flounder and other species are in decline or on the stage of collapse is and always has been obvious. It's the trawling in our inland waters that kills juvenile fish before they are old enough to breed or to be legally kept. Trawling also

scrubs the vegetation clean from the bottom of the sounds where small fish hide and grow.

The commercial industry is allowed to harm our resources in the name of jobs and money. Why do we issue permits to commercial fishermen from other states that allow them to come here and take what their own states don't allow when they don't generate enough revenue to offset the cost to our fishery?

Not only do recreational fisherpersons pay more to fish, they generate more revenue. In 2020, 498,000 recreational licenses versus 20,000 commercial licenses were sold. Over \$5 million in the State coffers came from recreational fisherpeople in licensing. In addition, it is estimated that recreational fisherpeople spend \$1.5 billion in lodging, food, transportation, bait, tackle, etc. In 2019 (latest statistics) commercial fishing brought about \$500 million into the State while recreational fishing brought in \$3.13 billion.

It seems that promoting resources for recreational fishing would be more monetarily advantageous for North Carolina. South Carolina, Florida and the Gulf States have now realized that it is more valuable to support recreational interests.

Recreational fisherpeople love to catch and eat flounder. Please consider the increased revenue for North Carolina by allowing recreationalists to catch and keep more than one fish per 45 days per year.

Thank you, in advance, for changing this

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] 4 billion to 500 million???
Date: Monday, March 29, 2021 9:44:17 AM

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From: Jeff fish [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 29, 2021 9:43 AM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] 4 billion to 500 million???

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Simple math. Basic economics. If recreation brings 4 billion to the table then why does the commercial guy even get skin in the game. Sometimes an industry has to know when to change their business model. If they know where the fish are, they should become charter boat captains and be able to put the other captains out of business in no time. Such a crock. Ban all gill netting and the resources will be back in no time. Quit playing their mind games and feeling sorry for them. They have had two generations to send their kids to college for different careers. If they hadn't killed the resources in the 80's and 90's and fattened their wallet only to drink it down a fifth at a time they wouldn't be where we all are today. Time to move on. Make your vote match the economics. Thank you.

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Klibansky, Lara](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Southern Flounder inequities: Publix Comment from a 20 year NC Charter Captain
Date: Monday, March 29, 2021 9:43:11 AM

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From: Seth Vernon [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 29, 2021 9:36 AM
To: Bizzell, Rob; McNeill, Robert; Cross, Doug; Kornegay, K; Blanton, Mike; Posey, Martin H; Romano, Sam; Bryant, Stephen; Roller, Thomas N; Hendrickson, Tom
Cc: Ted.Davis@ncleg.gov; Michael.Lee@ncleg.gov; Phil.Berger@ncleg.gov; Ralph.Hise@ncleg.gov; Kathy.Harrington@ncleg.gov
Subject: [External] Southern Flounder inequities: Publix Comment from a 20 year NC Charter Captain

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Dear Commissioners,

It is with great concern that I am writing to you each **again** today regarding the state of our Southern Flounder Fishery in North Carolina's coastal waters. I am deeply disappointed in the most recent MFC meetings vote to disproportionately allocate the majority of southern flounder harvest to the commercial industry.

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 look closely at the science and consider how we've come to this crossroads in the health of our flounder stocks; why is the fishery decimated; **gillnets, pound nets and trawls**, what decisions were made in the last thirty years of MFC management to bring us to the brink, **status quo fishing practices that encourage over harvest by commercial operations**, 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 Souther Flounder in our state waters but also to hold yourselves accountable to making better decisions about the **future** of our fisheries

than your predecessors have before you.

Take a look at the economics of our public trust resources if the science isn't motivation enough. The state of NC has a **sport fishery** worth over **4 Billion** dollars, compare that to the entirety of the commercial fishing industry at roughly 500 million of which flounder makes up less than 2 million to the commercial industry harvest and our state has to **subsidize** the southern flounder fishery with an **incidental take permit** (a federal permit requiring NCDMF to spend about **1 million dollars to obtain** and staff), for all the sea turtles and marine mammals killed in the Gill net and pound net fisheries.

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. Until you eliminate the destructive gear practices the flounder fishery and other species that use our primary nursery areas will not recover. The flounder fishery definitely will not recover by allocating the majority percentage of harvest to the very hands that brought his fishery to the brink! 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".

Tight Lines,
Capt Seth Vernon



Sent from my iPhone