

# ***CHAIRMAN'S REPORT***

*LETTERS*

*GILL NETS*

**From:** [Klibansky, Lara](#)  
**To:** [Gillikin, Dana](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [External] Fisheries Conservation  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 4, 2020 4:19:32 PM

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**From:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 3, 2020 5:40 PM  
**To:** Klibansky, Lara <Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov>  
**Subject:** Fwd: [External] Fisheries Conservation

Another, probably many more to come!  
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**From:** Andra Halnon [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 3, 2020 3:21 PM  
**To:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Subject:** [External] Fisheries Conservation

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Greetings Rob,

I am a member of the Salt Strong Fishing Community. I also live along the [REDACTED] Texas. I read today Wyatt Parcel's presentation on North Carolina fishing practices and needless to say, I felt kind of sick after learning that gill nets are still legally acceptable for use within your state. Gill nets are illegal in Texas due to, among other things, the high mortality rate of the bycatch.

As I grow as a recreational fisherman I have become more and more sensitive to taking a life. Even if it happens to be that of a fish. Once hooked, they fight like crazy to escape capture. At the risk of sounding sanctimonious, the fish wants to LIVE and like all God's creatures they have a right to live.

Limits of catches imposed by my state have become more restrictive over the years - one of the most recent has been decreasing the speckled trout haul from 10 (15" - 25") per person to 5 per individual angler for the upper Texas coast. This limit had already been put in place for the lower Texas coast in previous years. I am actually GLAD about this because I hope to see a healthy fish stock in my state for many years to come.

So I guess the points I am trying to make are these... 1) While I don't live in North Carolina and only briefly crossed over into your state while hiking a portion of the Appalachian Trail, I still care about fishery conservation all across the globe. 2) Texas conservation laws are far from perfect but I applaud the efforts made and the thoughts behind them. 3) I readily ACCEPT these laws and am happy to see them in place because as a recreational angler I do worry about the health of Texas fisheries. 4) And perhaps most importantly, I think most anglers have a conservative mindset and I truly believe a majority of North Carolina fishermen will be relieved, if not happy, to see restrictions put in place that will take pressure off the North Carolina fisheries.

My apologies if I have overstepped.

Regards,

Andra Halnon

**From:** [Klibansky, Lara](#)  
**To:** [Bizzell, Rob](#)  
**Cc:** [Gillikin, Dana](#)  
**Subject:** RE: [External] Gill nets  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 10, 2020 2:52:41 PM

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Thank you, Rob.

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**From:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2020 2:51 PM  
**To:** Klibansky, Lara <Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov>  
**Subject:** Fwd: [External] Gill nets

Another, more to come I am sure!  
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**From:** Bob Chilson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2020 1:53 PM  
**To:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Subject:** [External] Gill nets

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Dear Mr. Bizzell please stop the use of gill nets in North Carolina!!! Save the fish!!! What fisherman catch compared to commercial gill netting is minimal. It is ruining the fishing and stopping people from moving to North Carolina who love to fish in the ocean. I was planning on moving to NC this summer, but will now wait until the gill net law hopefully changes. Thank you, Bob Chilson

PS, i am a member of Surfcaster's Journal and Saltstrong and we all respect fishing too much to see the use of gill nets continue!!!

**From:** [Klibansky, Lara](#)  
**To:** [Gillikin, Dana](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [External] Thank you for voting YES to "catch and release" tarpon rule  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 10, 2020 11:42:21 AM

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**From:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Sent:** Friday, March 6, 2020 4:10 PM  
**To:** Klibansky, Lara <Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov>  
**Subject:** Fwd: [External] Thank you for voting YES to "catch and release" tarpon rule

Another  
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**From:** Chuck Fuller [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 6, 2020 3:31 PM  
**To:** Kornegay, K; Bizzell, Rob; McNeill, Robert; Posey, Martin H; Roller, Thomas N  
**Subject:** [External] Thank you for voting YES to "catch and release" tarpon rule

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North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission  
Chairman Rob Bizzell, and Commissions Pete Kornegay, Robert McNeil, Dr. Martin Posey,  
and Tom Roller

We have long anticipated the day Tarpon would be a "catch and release" only fishery in North Carolina, and because of you, that day has finally arrived. Your commitment to sustaining our fishery will not go unnoticed, as future generations of anglers enjoy battling Tarpon in our waters. Although they are not caught for the table, Tarpon are always enjoyable on the line. Abundant tarpon in our waters increases economic activity related to the fishing economy for which everyone in Eastern North Carolina benefits.

As the rule (15A NCAC 03M .0509) moves forward through the process, please hold firm and do not compromise. Our coastal fishery and habitats depend on your support.

Thank you for promoting this improvement and allowing Atlantic Tarpon to flourish in North Carolina.

Regards,  
Charles F. Fuller

[REDACTED]

**From:** [Klibansky, Lara](#)  
**To:** [Gillikin, Dana](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [External] Gill nets and regulations  
**Date:** Thursday, March 5, 2020 3:26:43 PM

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**From:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 5, 2020 2:33 PM  
**To:** Klibansky, Lara <Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov>  
**Subject:** Fwd: [External] Gill nets and regulations

Another  
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**From:** tCharles carte [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 5, 2020 2:21 PM  
**To:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Subject:** [External] Gill nets and regulations

**CAUTION:** External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify. Send all suspicious email as an attachment to [report.spam@nc.gov](mailto:report.spam@nc.gov)

I worked till retiring in in NC looking forward to being able to fish an enjoy what life I have left. What happens then? They shut down flounder fishing, place limits that seem to me will never work. They allow gill nets which anybody whose ever been near one knows they kill fish of any kind. Sure you say well they have holes to only catch certain sizes but I'm sure you know that's not true. Don't believe me, go look! Recreational fishermen pay far more than commercial fisherman but every year our needs an wants go last place. How about doing something for us equally for a change. If you stop us then stop them as well. Its there lively hood sure but we have all made great sacrifices for our families to do whats needed to take care of them. It's a choice! I'd be content to fish an only keep a couple flounder with a size limit of 18". Speckled trout limit 3 with size limit between 18" an 22". EVERYTHING ELSE GOES BACK IN THE WATER. Red drum stays the same. I don't understand the limits on Blue fish. Anyway stop Gill Nets an do something about shrimp by-catch. They kill millions of the fish you're not allowing us to fish for anymore. We have earned a right to fish an I'm fed up useless actions an regulations that are never fair to all! Thank you for your time.

**From:** [Klibansky, Lara](#)  
**To:** [Gillikin, Dana](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [External] Gill nets  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 4, 2020 4:19:11 PM

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**From:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 3, 2020 9:54 PM  
**Subject:** Fwd: [External] Gill nets

Another  
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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 3, 2020 9:44 PM  
**To:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Subject:** [External] Gill nets

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Mr. Bizzell

My name is Jack Dunn and I am a resident of North Carolina. I am writing to encourage additional modifications to fill net regulations. First I would encourage the state to restrict netting within 500 feet of any shore line so that fish estuaries are protected and stocks can build back. Second, ever fish caught in a gill net should be kept and the state should limit total tonnage and prohibit netting in its entirety once appropriate tonnage has been removed from the stock on an annual basis.

Thanks for your service to the state

Jack Dunn

Sent from my iPhone



**From:** [Klibansky, Lara](#)  
**To:** [Gillikin, Dana](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [External] Netting fish  
**Date:** Thursday, March 5, 2020 3:27:02 PM

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**From:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 5, 2020 2:34 PM  
**To:** Klibansky, Lara <Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov>  
**Subject:** Fwd: [External] Netting fish

Another  
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**From:** Joe Baldwin [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 5, 2020 1:31 PM  
**To:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Subject:** [External] Netting fish

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To whom it may concern we have to stop the injustice of these random killing devices of fish, and other ocean wildlife. In most of the other states on the east coast a recreational fisherman can keep 15 trout, 5 red drum, 10 flounder and other high limits on other fish. While here in north Carolina we can only keep 1 red drum, 4 trout, and 0, flounder. We are also one of the only states on the east coast who allow gill nets and shrimp nets inside the 3 mile zone. I am personally in a wheelchair and it very hard for me to find places I can fish where I can actually have a chance of catching anything and I will say I'm very blessed to have a few places like that. That is until the net boats come in the tiny private marina that is considered a closed area and drop there nets in the cover of darkness. We are doing a injustice to all the hard working men and women who pay the extremely expensive dues for a lifetime license or those who buy them annually. It's just not fair. I remember when I was a kid you could catch fish nonstop 24 at the time. Now your lucky if you get your tiny daily limit at all. Thank you for your time

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Klibansky, Lara](#)  
**To:** [Gillikin, Dana](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [External] Stop The Insanity Of Gill Nets  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 4, 2020 4:20:25 PM

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**From:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 3, 2020 1:50 PM  
**To:** Klibansky, Lara <Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov>  
**Subject:** Fwd: [External] Stop The Insanity Of Gill Nets

For the books. Rob  
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**From:** John Lenzmeier [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 3, 2020 12:20 PM  
**To:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Subject:** [External] Stop The Insanity Of Gill Nets

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Dear Mr. Bizzell,

You are a leading steward of our coastal water fishery.

I implore you to be courageous and act in what is in the best interest for the fishery, and to not be overly influenced by a single historically powerful constituency.

As a recreational angler I am appalled at the horrific devastation that gill nets impose on our coastal waters.

This resource is under an extensional threat because of the use of gill nets which exacerbates the over fishing by the commercial community. This threat is validated by the closing of the Flounder fishery since September of 2019.

I do not believe it was the intent of the commercial fishing constituency to over fish to the point where the fishery collapses. However, that is what has happened.

In most cases, I believe the commercial fisherman follow the rules and laws as written.

The salient point is that although the laws were followed, the laws are fundamentally flawed.

The statistics of harvest unequivocally prove that gill nets are slaughtering the fishery.

In 2017 gill nets harvested 186,000 lbs of red drum - recreational harvest = 25,000 lbs.

In 2017 gill nets harvested 1.3 million pounds of flounder vs the recreational harvest of approximately 140,000 lbs.

The decline in the stock lays directly at the feet of the rule makers. Therefore, the opportunity to rebuild the stock is also within your direct purview.

The numbers for speckled trout follow a similar pattern.

It bears repeating - the closure of the flounder fishery in NC is a direct result of the over harvest because of gill nets.

It is past time time to ban gill nets in NC waters.

In fact commercial limits should be dramatically reduced to allow our fishing stock to rebuild.

Sincerely,

John Lenzmeier

██████ NC

CC Gov Roy Cooper

**From:** [Klibansky, Lara](#)  
**To:** [Gillikin, Dana](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [External] NC Fisheries  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 4, 2020 4:19:56 PM

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**From:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 3, 2020 5:36 PM  
**To:** Klibansky, Lara <Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov>  
**Subject:** Fwd: [External] NC Fisheries

Another  
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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 3, 2020 5:23 PM  
**To:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Subject:** [External] NC Fisheries

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Please cut out Gill netting and please cut back on commercial Flounder catches.

Sincerely,

Kevin Sikorski

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] NC [REDACTED]

**From:** [Klibansky, Lara](#)  
**To:** [Gillikin, Dana](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [External] Stop Gill netting  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 10, 2020 8:16:43 AM

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**From:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2020 7:06 PM  
**To:** Klibansky, Lara <Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov>  
**Subject:** Fwd: [External] Stop Gill netting

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**From:** Michael Bishop [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2020 12:20 PM  
**To:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Subject:** [External] Stop Gill netting

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I have been going to the Outer Banks and inshore locations in North Carolina on fishing vacations for decades. I've also seen gill netting in action. I've often wondered how it makes sense to allow such an indiscriminately destructive commercial fishing method in an environment where the state, and in some cases the Federal government has deemed it necessary to enact regulations to protect wildlife. The steps the state has taken to ensure responsible and sound fishery management are, in most cases, perfectly reasonable, and recreational fishermen, for the most part, understand why these regulations are in place and follow them. But it obviously undermines the state's efforts to allow protected wildlife to perish in gill nets. Please consider banning or at least, enacting reasonable regulations for gill netting that complement your own efforts at fishery management.

Thank you,  
Michael Bishop Ph.D

**From:** [Klibansky, Lara](#)  
**To:** [Gillikin, Dana](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [External] Gill Net Ban  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 4, 2020 4:20:41 PM

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**From:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 3, 2020 1:49 PM  
**To:** Klibansky, Lara <Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov>  
**Subject:** Fwd: [External] Gill Net Ban

For the books. Rob  
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**From:** Mickey Johnson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 3, 2020 1:18 PM  
**To:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Subject:** [External] Gill Net Ban

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Rob,

Living in Florida and fishing before, during and after the gill net bans, I can attest to the dramatic change the ban had on our fisheries. Not only did I see a change in the recreational fishing action, but also the positive effect it has on the marsh coast line we have in the "Big Bend" area of Florida. Before the ban, you would find balls of line left along the shore that effects all the wildlife, not just the fish.

Please allow this email to serve as my support to institute a gill net fish ban in the state of North Carolina.

Mickey Johnson  
Director of Operations

[REDACTED]

**From:** [Klibansky, Lara](#)  
**To:** [Gillikin, Dana](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [External] Is The Mission Of The DMF Being Realized?  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 10, 2020 11:41:33 AM

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-----Original Message-----

From: Paul Wright [REDACTED]  
Sent: Friday, March 6, 2020 3:47 PM  
To: Bizzell, Rob <r.bizzell.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Roller, Thomas N <Tom.Roller.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Hendrickson, Tom <t.hendrickson.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Kornegay, K <j.kornegay.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Posey, Martin H <Martin.Posey.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; McNeill, Robert <Robert.B.McNeill.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Blanton, Mike <m.blanton.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Cross, Doug <d.cross.mfc@ncdenr.gov>; Romano, Sam <s.romano.mfc@ncdenr.gov>  
Cc: Murphey, Steve <steve.murphey@ncdenr.gov>; Hamilton, Cindi B <Cindi.Hamilton@ncdenr.gov>; Bianchi, Alan <alan.bianchi@ncdenr.gov>; Klibansky, Lara <Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov>; Lewis, Jennifer R <Jennifer.Lewis@ncdenr.gov>; Lee, Laura <laura.lee@ncdenr.gov>; Stewart, Chris <chris.stewart@ncdenr.gov>; Bryan-Millush, Erin <erin.bryan-millush@ncdenr.gov>; Wilson, Chris <chris.wilson@ncdenr.gov>; Klibansky, Lara <Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov>; Clark, Brenda <brenda.clark@ncdenr.gov>; Paramore, Lee <lee.paramore@ncdenr.gov>; Loeffler, Michael <michael.loeffler@ncdenr.gov>; Bauer, Tracey C <Tracey.Bauer@ncdenr.gov>; VanMiddlesworth, Todd D <Todd.VanMiddlesworth@ncdenr.gov>; Lupton, Dee <dee.lupton@ncdenr.gov>; Poland, Steve <Steve.Poland@ncdenr.gov>; Blum, Catherine <catherine.blum@ncdenr.gov>  
Subject: [External] Is The Mission Of The DMF Being Realized?

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To Members of the MFC:

Below is a letter I penned yesterday to the DMF. One of the DMF recipients responded to me and pointed out that it is the MFC's responsibility to regulate. They also mentioned that the DMF was solely responsible for relaying science based information to the MFC. Furthermore that the DMF was not for implementing policy.

The reality is you are all collectively responsible. Substitute the DMF acronym for MFC wherever any of you feel its appropriate in my original letter. However deflecting this crisis from one related party organization to another is unacceptable. Is the MFC aware of the DMF's stated mission? Moreover is the MFC in its responsibility to implement the DMF's stated mission actually doing so?

To learn more I have waded through the MFC board meeting materials. I read agendas, letters, minutes, etc. The ravages of gill net fishing have been raised to the MFC and DMF for years. Yet there is no cohesive thought nor actionable response to address this crisis. Not a single measure whatsoever has been proposed let alone implemented to combat the indiscriminate destruction of marine life from gill net fishing. It appears that the DMF and MFC organizations have categorically ignored the crisis and the public will on these points.

The MFC February meeting materials included a gill net map of the Central Southern Management Area. A picture tells a thousand words. I only came up with one word- nauseating. When the entirety of our coastal fishery is destroyed how will I explain that to my young sons? Do I show them your map?

The DMF/MFC's mission is failing and it doesn't have to. Don't take offense to my words. Instead take action. You are collectively empowered to do so. Do so and all of you will be able to proudly recite the DMF's mission statement. You will be able to recite the mission statement because you actually brought it to realization.

Yesterday's letter to DMF below. I encourage all of you to read on with an open mind and heart. Evidently only the MFC can institute the change that is needed immediately. That change is a permanent ban on inshore coastal gill net fishing in our state.

All-

By way of introduction I am a native North Carolinian and father of three. Like many in our state I consider our coastal lands and waters to be part of my very heart and soul. In fact I believe its fair to assume that all of you feel this way in some fashion. So let me preface my letter with a strong appreciation for all of the good and challenging work that all of you do for the entirety of our marine fishery everyday.

Your mission statement reads "The Department 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".

Sadly this stated mission is failing with no clear DMF action in sight. It is failing in the context of our state continuing to allow legal inshore gill net fishing. The indiscriminate destruction of marine life by inshore gill netting has reached catastrophic proportions. Whether its juvenile fish, over slot, 80% + bycatch...the gill net death trap doesn't care. Red drum, trout, sheepshead no species is spared. The gill net kills everything.

Look around. How many other states still allow the indiscriminate destruction of marine life aka unbridled inshore gill net fishing? I know the answer does the DMF? Is NC considered to be a prime locale for destination fishing? Hardly. By comparison South Carolina, Louisiana, Florida, and others have thriving and sustainable fisheries. Furthermore they continue to take sensible measures to grow their fisheries. Those fisheries successfully support both commercial and recreational interests. Our inshore coastal waters should be teeming with fish stock. Instead the DMF had to put a full year moratorium on flounder fishing. Your own flounder stock assessment is beyond saddening. Flounder was once one of our most bountiful species. The DMF's mission is failing.

The only analogy to draw is to have a bunch of hunters enter a rich forest armed with automatic weapons, flame throwers, and grenades. After killing every living animal and destroying the ecosystem they are able to harvest the 3 deer they were "targeting". Then they do it again the very next day.

The commercial fisherman argument that its their heritage and "right" to inshore gill net fish is just ridiculous. It reeks of decades of commercial fishing industry financial lobbyists and political cronyism. That a tiny minority of people in our state singularly benefit economically by the gross exploitation and destruction of public resources should be criminal. At a minimum inshore gill net fishing should be aggressively regulated. Who's accountable for this? The DMF's mission is failing.

The data is increasingly proving the point. We all sensed it. We all felt it in our activities in the coastal waters. Now we all factually know it. Recreational fisherman and guides cant stop talking about it because they experience it everyday of every year. The longevity of our fishery is at a cross roads. A multi billion dollar economic resource for our state is being irrevocably destroyed. Our fishery should be thriving. The DMF's mission is failing.

What are the solutions? Start with banning inshore gill netting full stop. If not an immediate and permanent ban then regulate it for 2 years prior to instituting the permanent ban. I cant believe that any commercial fisherman can just gill net if they choose to. It's insane. Not even a license needed? Is that correct? It's dumbfounding. The DMF should immediately declare a \$10,000 annual individual license fee to inshore gill net fish. There should be a \$25,000 fine if an individual is caught inshore gill net fishing without a license. If caught twice its revocation of the full commercial fishing license and \$50,000 fine. The entirety of the proceeds goes back to funding larval stage marine life stocking to help replenish our depleted fishery. Specify only 1 or 2 days per month of legal inshore gill net fishing. Perhaps shorten the length of legal inshore gill nets themselves. Load the waters with enforcement officers to monitor the new policy on approved gill net days. After the two year grace period is over the permanent ban kicks in. Forever.



Inshore gill netters need to evolve. No one wants to strip away their livelihood without providing alternatives. The DMF should help them. We should help them. They should help themselves and be the strongest stewards of the resource. Pound nets? Retool the flounder gigging regulatory framework? Both are cleaner ways to fish. Have the DMF sponsor a contest for commercial fisherman to develop new methods of cleaner, sustainable targeted inshore fishing. They haven't done it because they have been properly incentivized to do so.

The DMF is accountable to the state's greater good not a narrow commercial lobby.  
The DMF is empowered and owns this responsibility.

I implore all of you. Work with haste and purpose. With passion and determination. You have the support of everyone. Let the current DMF succeed in delivering on its own stated mission. Deliver on the DMF'S mission while your predecessors have failed before you. Deliver on it for all current and future North Carolinians.

Maybe then your mission statement will proudly become the lead banner on the front page of the DMF website as opposed to being relegated to the fourth paragraph.

Yours in coastal soulfulness,  
Paul Wright

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [Klibansky, Lara](#)  
**To:** [Gillikin, Dana](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [External] Gill netting  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 4, 2020 4:19:19 PM

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**From:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 3, 2020 7:45 PM  
**To:** Klibansky, Lara <Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov>  
**Subject:** Fwd: [External] Gill netting

Another  
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**From:** Robert Johnson III [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 3, 2020 7:43 PM  
**To:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Subject:** [External] Gill netting

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Sirs  
I am a recreational surf fisherman. I come to the coast several times a year.  
I have enjoyed this sport for 50 years.  
I am deeply concern about this gill netting problem that goes unaddressed.  
There has to be a better alternative to fish with nets.

Thank you

Robert Johnson

**From:** Bizzell, Rob

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 3, 2020 1:52 PM

**To:** Klibansky, Lara <Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov>

**Subject:** Fwd: [External] A concerned new coastal resident

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**From:** Scott Sessomes

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 3, 2020 11:44 AM

**To:** Bizzell, Rob

**Subject:** [External] A concerned new coastal resident

Hello!

After being married and promising my wife of 25 years that we would one day move to the beach from Fayetteville, NC, we finally did so in March of 2019. She and I both love fishing. She is currently experiencing a recurrence of her breast cancer and it is now terminal. She is most happy when I take her to the beach and set her up a rod to do some surf fishing with me. Here she is a few months back...

I am concerned about our fishery. In just under a year, we have caught "keeper" fish only a handful or two of times. And yes, we abide by the laws and regs set forth as well... I caught my two largest flounder of my life in October and threw them promptly back due to the closure. They were caught on a bottom rig with cut mullet 10 feet from the sand. Talk about a sad thing. My wife would have loved to see those for dinner. Haha. In any case, I don't understand why we allow gill netting, trawlers so close to the beach and the bycatch that's allowed that would feed smaller families by way of regular fishing by recreational anglers. Why does North Carolina allow different practices from other states? My wife and I eat bluefish occasionally because it's one of the few things we can consistently catch and now those are being limited federally ( I think that's what I've heard ).

I COMPLETELY understand that commercial guys have to make a living. I'm guessing they are doing alright given the seafood costs I pay (because I'm simply not great at fishing) and they have so many options to catch fish that I can't try without a commercial license. If I had a preference, I'd outlaw flounder gigging every other season. I know it's typically a recreational angler that participates in gigging but when they load a boat full of guys and multiply their limits as a result, it's just overkill. I'd make our commercial guys do what every other state does, at least our neighboring states. No trawling 3 miles in. No gill nets from anyone. If prices go up at fish markets then that might be a good thing for the commercial guys as a result. We simply shouldn't have a no flounder season. Reduce the numbers on the recreational guys if you must, but I don't think that if we are being honest that the recreational guys are the ones to blame here.

A whole lot of facts here that are hard to ignore...

[https://www.saltstrong.com/articles/north-carolina-gill-net-problem/?fbclid=IwAR37bohy90D3Dh3hPdDQayhMhPR8-GmTzKp2Q6kZRT5\\_6Gr02byqgVxMje0](https://www.saltstrong.com/articles/north-carolina-gill-net-problem/?fbclid=IwAR37bohy90D3Dh3hPdDQayhMhPR8-GmTzKp2Q6kZRT5_6Gr02byqgVxMje0)

What is our local economic effects from constantly reducing/closing fish limits? Seems to me like the recreational guys spend more money on gas, food, lodging, bait, boats and everything and that pays a lot of people and keeps a lot of families happy. Commercial guys need their place in the economy too and they can have it, but why not like every other state? Let's let fair be fair. Common sense can be a good approach and let's fall in line with states that have things figured out better than we have.

Scott Sessoms

██████████, NC

**From:** [Klibansky, Lara](#)  
**To:** [Gillikin, Dana](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [External] Interesting NC made it on Salt Strong  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 4, 2020 4:19:43 PM

---

**From:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 3, 2020 5:38 PM  
**To:** Klibansky, Lara <Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov>  
**Subject:** Fwd: [External] Interesting NC made it on Salt Strong

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)  
Another

---

**From:** Saltwater [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 3, 2020 4:01 PM  
**To:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Subject:** [External] Interesting NC made it on Salt Strong

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FYI Im sure you have been forwarded the article. The link as posted on the Hull Truth

<https://www.thehulltruth.com/carolinas/1064800-state-nc-review-small-mesh-gill-net-regulations-6.html>

Post # 106 on [state-nc-review-small-mesh-gill-net-regulation](#)

<https://www.saltstrong.com/articles/...nfZBlaFZ9Txh0s>

Article with proposed solution to the gillnet problem in NC.

[https://www.saltstrong.com/articles/north-carolina-gill-net-problem/?fbclid=IwAR3e76c857vcivqR8HXUXfa7UN8t\\_FLPZqpO2ZtEVFXkKnfZBlaFZ9Txh0s](https://www.saltstrong.com/articles/north-carolina-gill-net-problem/?fbclid=IwAR3e76c857vcivqR8HXUXfa7UN8t_FLPZqpO2ZtEVFXkKnfZBlaFZ9Txh0s)

You probably already seen it but there is a lot of chatter on the forums about this.

SW



**From:** [Klibansky, Lara](#)  
**To:** [Gillikin, Dana](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [External] NC Gill Net Problem  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 10, 2020 8:16:48 AM

---

**From:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2020 9:27 PM  
**To:** Klibansky, Lara <Lara.Klibansky@ncdenr.gov>  
**Subject:** Fwd: [External] NC Gill Net Problem

Another  
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---

**From:** Wilson McGraw [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 9, 2020 9:04 PM  
**To:** Bizzell, Rob  
**Subject:** [External] NC Gill Net Problem

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Mr. Bizzell,

I am writing to express my deep concern about our fishery here in NC due to the continued legality of inshore gill nets. In short, our fishery cannot sustain the detrimental practice of using gill nets in our estuaries.

As the only state in the South East that allows gill nets, NC should take immediate steps to discontinue their use. Any other course of action will lead to NC's fishery continuing a down trend towards collapse. If we care about the long term health of our fishery, allowing gill nets is as illogical as if NC had not instituted a slot limit for our state fish, Redfish, in order to better manage the harvest of that species. Like other states in the South East, NC has a slot limit for Redfish, which has had positive benefits to population levels....Now NC needs to follow suit with other states and ban inshore gill nets.

Even our shellfish regulations limit geographic portions of the estuaries to harvest. This creates an area that remains free of harvest to provide a breeding ground that provides sustainability to the resource. Fish need to similarly be protected by limiting the fishing technique of gill netting, since gill nets indiscriminately kill both juvenile and breeder aged fish. Closing the flounder season only has limited value when gill net-caught flounder have a high mortality even if released.

The recreational fishermen in NC provide a greater level of financial input to the economy than the commercial fishermen. I would never propose to outlaw commercial fishing, but the technique of using gill nets is damaging the fishery for all fishermen. Gill nets do not provide a "fair chase" manner of taking fish in our estuaries, thereby creating an unsustainable burden

on our natural resource.

In addition to the over harvest of target species, gill nets also destroy the fishery due to the high levels of by catch. Every non-target fish, undersized target fish, turtle, dolphin, and bird that gets caught in a gill net runs a high risk of mortality while caught in the net or after removal. The cost to the overall resource great outweighs the benefit of the gill net harvest. Gill netters will eventually find themselves without fish in their nets due to the negative impact of their own fishing technique.

I have personally witness the use of gill nets in salt water marshes near where I live in [REDACTED]. In one night, the nets are able to ruin miles of waterways for recreational or charter fishing for a matter of weeks when they are placed at choke points to the marsh and creek system.

Below are two links that I highly encourage you to view. First is a link to a Salt Strong article on NC gill nets. It provides shocking statistics on how gill net use in NC is destroying our fishery in comparison to other states. Second is a link to a CCA NC video on gill nets. Any discussion on the use of gill nets should use this or similar videos to illustrate their negative impact on the environment.

Salt Strong article: <https://www.saltstrong.com/articles/north-carolina-gill-net-problem/> [[saltstrong.com](https://www.saltstrong.com/)]

CCA NC video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCrJFn8wig0> [[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/)]

I ask you to read this email and show the CCA NC video at the next public meeting.

NC must immediately ban the use of inshore gill nets if we want to stop decimating our fishery, continue benefiting from the large economic impact of recreational fishermen, and provide a sustainable natural resource for future generations.

I also request comment and feedback directly in response to this email.

Thank you for your diligent attention to this issue.

Sincerely,  
Wilson McGraw

*DIAMONDBACK TERRAPIN  
MANAGEMENT AREAS*



**From:** [Smith, Tricia](#)  
**To:** [Gillikin, Dana](#); [Klibansky, Lara](#); [Batsavage, Chris](#); [Poland, Steve](#)  
**Subject:** FW: [External] Re: [DENR.DMF.NewsRelease] Marine Fisheries accepting comments on two diamondback terrapin management areas; Southern Regional Advisory Committee will meet by teleconference on April 8  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 25, 2020 10:19:03 AM  
**Attachments:** [Patricia Smith.vcf](#)  
[image001.png](#)  
[Patricia Smith2.vcf](#)

---

Forwarding.

Patricia Smith  
Communications Director  
Division of Marine Fisheries/Division of Coastal Management  
252-808-8025 (Work)  
252-342-0642 (Mobile)  
[Tricia.Smith@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Tricia.Smith@ncdenr.gov)

<http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/>  
<https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/coastal-management>

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---

**From:** Smith, Tricia  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 25, 2020 10:18 AM  
**To:** Dr. Robert Y. George [REDACTED]; Johnson, Jimmy <[jimmy.johnson@ncdenr.gov](mailto:jimmy.johnson@ncdenr.gov)>; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: [External] Re: [DENR.DMF.NewsRelease] Marine Fisheries accepting comments on two diamondback terrapin management areas; Southern Regional Advisory Committee will meet by teleconference on April 8

Thank you, Dr. George. I will forward your comments.

Patricia Smith  
Communications Director  
Division of Marine Fisheries/Division of Coastal Management  
252-808-8025 (Work)  
252-342-0642 (Mobile)  
[Tricia.Smith@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Tricia.Smith@ncdenr.gov)

<http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/>  
<https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/coastal-management>

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---

**From:** Dr. Robert Y. George [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 25, 2020 10:15 AM  
**To:** Smith, Tricia <[tricia.smith@ncdenr.gov](mailto:tricia.smith@ncdenr.gov)>; Johnson, Jimmy <[jimmy.johnson@ncdenr.gov](mailto:jimmy.johnson@ncdenr.gov)>; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** [External] Re: [DENR.DMF.NewsRelease] Marine Fisheries accepting comments on two diamondback terrapin management areas; Southern Regional Advisory Committee will meet by teleconference on April 8

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Hi Tricia,

I firmly recommend that we in NC do not indulge in "piece-meal" management. NOAA National Marine Fisheries has been for years exploring to expand MONITOR Sanctuary coastward and I work with Dr Paul Ticco (copied) at the Sanctuaries Office in Norfolk, Virginia.

I am willing to come as a person with concern about our coast, its resilience and conservation of natural resources to speak before the Fisheries Commission. I am afraid I am at age 83, do not wish to come every 2 months as an advisor. My doctor and family,

despite the present awkward circumstances of coronavirus threats, ask me to be low-keyed, Please tell folks our best bet is to get the MONITOR Sanctuary established and funded o protect cultural and fisheries resources (Sports fishing and Commercial fishing). Period.

Bob

Robert Y. George, Ph.D

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

-----Original Message-----

From: Smith, Tricia <[tricia.smith@ncdenr.gov](mailto:tricia.smith@ncdenr.gov)>

To: Smith, Tricia <[tricia.smith@ncdenr.gov](mailto:tricia.smith@ncdenr.gov)>

Sent: Wed, Mar 25, 2020 9:40 am

Subject: [DENR.DMF.NewsRelease] Marine Fisheries accepting comments on two diamondback terrapin management areas; Southern Regional Advisory Committee will meet by teleconference on April 8

**Roy Cooper**

*Governor*

**Michael S. Regan**

*Secretary*



**Steve Murphey**

*Director*

---

Release: Immediate  
Date: March 25, 2020

Contact: [Patricia Smith](mailto:Patricia.Smith@ncdenr.gov)  
Phone: 252-726-7021

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**Marine Fisheries accepting comments on two diamondback terrapin management areas;  
Southern Regional Advisory Committee will meet by teleconference on April 8**

**MOREHEAD CITY** – The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries is accepting public comments on [two proposed diamondback terrapin management areas \[portal.ncdenr.org\]](https://portal.ncdenr.org) in the southern coastal area of the state, where fishermen will be required to use turtle excluders in crab pots.

The public may provide comment to the division (which will be submitted to the Marine Fisheries Commission) in the following two ways:

1. **Online Comments** – Public comments will be accepted until 5 p.m. April 23 through an online format that can be accessed through a link on the [Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan Information webpage \[portal.ncdenr.org\]](https://portal.ncdenr.org).
2. **Mailed Comments** – Written comments may be mailed to Diamondback Terrapin Management Area Comments, P.O. Box 769, Morehead City, N.C. 28557. Comments must be received by the division by 5 p.m. April 23.

Emailed comments will not be accepted.

The Southern Regional Advisory Committee is scheduled to discuss and vote on the proposed areas at a meeting to be held at 6 p.m., April 8. The proposed areas must receive final approval by the Marine Fisheries Commission before being implemented.

Based on the current guidance to help minimize the spread of COVID-19, the April 8 meeting will be held by teleconference. The public may listen to the committee discussions online. A link to the webcast, as well as information on system requirements and testing, can be found [here \[portal.ncdenr.org\]](https://portal.ncdenr.org). Public comment will not be taken during the meeting; however, the public may provide written comments to the advisory committee in the following two ways:

1. **Online Comments** – Public comments will be accepted until 5 p.m. April 6 through an online format by [clicking here](https://portal.ncdenr.org) (online comments may be submitted in both places, for the advisory committee and for the division/Marine Fisheries Commission).

2. **Mailed Comments** – Written comments may be mailed to Southern Regional Advisory Committee Comments, P.O. Box 769, Morehead City, N.C. 28557. Comments must be received by the division by 5 p.m. April 6.

Emailed comments will not be accepted.

The proposed management areas are:

1. **The Masonboro Island Diamondback Terrapin Management Area**, which lies entirely within, and shares nearly the entire boundary with, the Masonboro Island Estuarine Research Reserve and Natural Area. This area is also naturally bounded on the east by Masonboro Island, and on the west by the Intracoastal Waterway.
2. **The Bald Head Island Diamondback Terrapin Management Area**, which is comprised of Zeke’s Island Estuarine Research Reserve in the northern portion of the management area and the Bald Head Island State Natural Area as the southern portion. This area is also naturally bounded by a barrier island to the east, and Bald Head island to the south. The western boundary of this management area follows “the wall,” which is a rock structure that separates the Cape Fear River from Buzzard Bay and serves as the boundary for the Zeke’s Island Estuarine Research Reserve. At the end of the wall, the boundary runs on a line southwesterly to the northern tip of Bald Head Island.

A meeting agenda and more specifics on the proposed management areas can be found on the [Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan Information webpage \[portal.ncdenr.org\]](#). For more information contact division biologists [Corrin Flora](#) at 252-264-3911 or [Joe Facendola](#) at 910-796-7291.

<b>WHO:</b>	Southern Regional Advisory Committee
<b>WHAT:</b>	Meeting on Diamondback Terrapin Management Areas
<b>WHEN:</b>	April 8 at 6 p.m.
<b>WHERE:</b>	Meeting by Teleconference <a href="#">Click Here for Link and Instructions [portal.ncdenr.org]</a>

###

**Website:** <http://www.ncmarinefisheries.net> [[ncmarinefisheries.net](#)]

**Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com/ncdeq> [[facebook.com](#)]

**Twitter:** <http://www.twitter.com/NCDEQ> [[www](#)]

**RSS Feed:** <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/opa/news-releases-rss> [[portal.ncdenr.org](#)]

P.O. Box 769, 3441 Arendell St., Morehead City N.C. 28557

Patricia Smith  
 Communications Director  
 Division of Marine Fisheries/Division of Coastal Management  
 252-808-8025 (Work)  
 252-342-0642 (Mobile)  
[Tricia.Smith@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Tricia.Smith@ncdenr.gov)

<http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/> [[portal.ncdenr.org](#)]  
<https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/coastal-management>

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DENR.DMF.NewsRelease mailing list  
[DENR.DMF.NewsRelease@lists.ncmail.net](mailto:DENR.DMF.NewsRelease@lists.ncmail.net)



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MICHAEL S. REGAN  
*Secretary*

BRAXTON C. DAVIS  
*Director*

April 21, 2020

N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries  
PO Box 769  
Morehead City, NC 28557

Marine Fisheries Staff and Commission Members,

These comments are submitted in support of the proposal to adopt Diamondback Terrapin Management Areas (DTMA) in North Carolina and to reinforce statements contained in the March 23, 2020 issue paper addressing the designation of DMTAs in Masonboro Sound and the Lower Cape Fear River.

The North Carolina Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve (Reserve), a program in the Division of Coastal Management, is supportive of the proposed approach and the initial two locations under consideration for this designation. The Reserve protects ten representative sites along North Carolina's coast for research, education, and compatible traditional uses. In accordance with the Reserve's authorizing legislation, the Coastal Area Management Act, our agency is both supportive of traditional fishing activities that occur within Reserve boundaries and responsible for the ongoing protection of the habitats and organisms found at the sites under our management. We appreciate the efforts of the Division of Marine Fisheries to develop a proactive approach to reduce bycatch and mortality of diamondback terrapins that occur as a result of interactions with the blue crab fishery by establishing DMTAs.

We feel that the proposed approach of utilizing the best available science to identify potential interaction zones is well-founded and will result in meaningful reduction in bycatch by focusing on areas of known terrapin presence, the season of greatest terrapin activity, and areas with habitat characteristics that can support healthy diamondback terrapin populations. In addition, we are supportive of the recommendation to utilize existing natural and demarcated conservation area boundaries to simplify public understanding and enforcement.

We anticipate that implementation of the recommended DMTAs will enhance the Reserve's ability to carry out its mission to protect the natural character of two Reserve sites– the Masonboro Island and Zeke's Island Reserves. These sites, which fall entirely within the proposed Masonboro Island DTMA and the Bald Head Island DTMA are also part of the N.C. National Estuarine Research Reserve and are Dedicated State Nature Preserves.

Designation and management of these DMTAs will complement the protection of these locations under these additional long-term management requirements.

Adoption of this approach will also ensure that valuable research efforts related to diamondback terrapins continue uncompromised at the Masonboro Island site. Multiple independent researchers have conducted research projects at the Masonboro Island Reserve; studies have resulted in publications with implications for management and conservation strategies for this species of concern, including several that are referenced in the Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan Amendment 3, adopted in February 2020. The Reserve has also partnered with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission to develop and implement a popular project utilizing citizen science-based surveying methods to address priority goals listed in the N.C. Wildlife Action Plan to collect diamondback terrapin population data to better understand population dynamics.

Establishment of DMTAs will result in reduction of diamondback terrapin bycatch, preservation of study populations, and long-term maintenance of terrapin populations in the state. The Reserve looks forward to working with the Division of Marine Fisheries to balance the shared goals of supporting the blue crab fishery while ensuring the protection of a priority wildlife species.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hope Sutton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hope Sutton, Stewardship Coordinator & Southern Sites Manager  
North Carolina Coastal Reserve and National Estuarine Research Reserve

*MFC ADVISORY  
COMMITTEES*



**NORTH CAROLINA MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

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Wilmington  
**TOM ROLLER**  
Beaufort  
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Wilmington

March 18, 2020

Cane Faircloth  
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Faircloth:

I am pleased to welcome you as a member of the Southern Regional Advisory Committee, which makes recommendations to the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission on various fisheries issues.

The committee is comprised of 11 members representing the scientific, recreational, commercial, and conservation communities. Meetings usually last two or three hours, and are scheduled only when the commission refers an issue to the committee. Also, please be aware that advisers are required to attend at least 75 percent of the meetings of their committee.

Please find an orientation package enclosed. If you have any questions concerning your orientation to the advisory committee process, feel free to contact Dana Gillikin at [Dana.Gillikin@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Dana.Gillikin@ncdenr.gov) or 252-808-8022.

Speaking for the Marine Fisheries Commission, I want to thank you for your interest in managing our state's resources. I look forward to seeing you at a meeting in the near future.

Sincerely,

W. Robert Bizzell, Chairman  
N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission

WB/dg

cc: Marine Fisheries Commission  
Lara Klibansky



**NORTH CAROLINA MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

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**SAM ROMANO**  
Wilmington

March 27, 2020

Christopher Matteo

Dear Mr. Matteo:

I am pleased to welcome you as a member of the Shellfish Cultivation Lease Review Committee that will hear appeals of agency decisions regarding shellfish leases.

The three-member committee, authorized by the Shellfish Aquaculture Bill (S. L. 2019-37), has been appointed by the chair of the Marine Fisheries Commission and is comprised of one commission member, who will serve as the hearing officer, and two public members. Please be aware, given the nature of the review committee, attendance is required at all meetings. As such, the commission office staff will work with committee members to ensure schedules are planned and noticed well in advance of the meeting date.

Please find an orientation package enclosed. If you have any questions concerning your orientation to the advisory committee process, feel free to contact Dana Gillikin at [Dana.Gillikin@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Dana.Gillikin@ncdenr.gov) or 252-808-8022.

Speaking for the Marine Fisheries Commission, I want to thank you for your action in managing our state's resources. I look forward to seeing you at a meeting in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Robert Bizzell".

W. Robert Bizzell, Chairman  
N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission

WB/dg

cc: Marine Fisheries Commission  
Lara Klibansky





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Wilmington  
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Wilmington  
**TOM ROLLER**  
Beaufort  
**SAM ROMANO**  
Wilmington

March 18, 2020

Pamela Morris  


Dear Ms. Morris:

I have reappointed you to the Southern Regional Advisory Committee. Please remember that you are required to attend 75 percent of the meetings of your committee. I would like to thank you for continuing to sacrifice your time and provide your input to help us effectively manage the marine resources of our state.

Sincerely,



W. Robert Bizzell, Chairman  
N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission

WB/lk

cc: Lara Klibansky, Marine Fisheries Commission Liaison



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**DR. MARTIN POSEY**  
Wilmington  
**ROBERT McNEILL**  
Wilmington  
**TOM ROLLER**  
Beaufort  
**SAM ROMANO**  
Wilmington

April 13, 2020

Danny Navey  
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Navey:

Thank you for your application to serve as a Shellfish Cultivation Lease Review Committee member. Unfortunately, I am unable to appoint you to the committee at this time; however, please do not be discouraged from participating in the process as a member of the public. Your input is invaluable, and I encourage you to attend the committee meetings.

Please visit the Division of Marine Fisheries website at [www.ncfisheries.net](http://www.ncfisheries.net) for meeting schedules, proclamations, fisheries hot topics, and various fishing information. You may also contact Dana Gillikin at 252-808-8022 for meeting information.

Again, thank you for your interest in the conservation of our state's resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Robert Bizzell".

W. Robert Bizzell, Chairman  
N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission

WB/dg

cc: Marine Fisheries Commission  
Lara Klibansky



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Wilmington  
**ROBERT McNEILL**  
Wilmington  
**TOM ROLLER**  
Beaufort  
**SAM ROMANO**  
Wilmington

April 13, 2020

Jason Self  
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Self:

Thank you for your application to serve as a Shellfish Cultivation Lease Review Committee member. Unfortunately, I am unable to appoint you to the committee at this time; however, please do not be discouraged from participating in the process as a member of the public. Your input is invaluable, and I encourage you to attend the committee meetings.

Please visit the Division of Marine Fisheries website at [www.ncfisheries.net](http://www.ncfisheries.net) for meeting schedules, proclamations, fisheries hot topics, and various fishing information. You may also contact Dana Gillikin at 252-808-8022 for meeting information.

Again, thank you for your interest in the conservation of our state's resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Robert Bizzell".

W. Robert Bizzell, Chairman  
N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission

WB/dg

cc: Marine Fisheries Commission  
Lara Klibansky



**NORTH CAROLINA MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

COMMISSIONERS

**ROY COOPER**  
Governor

**MICHAEL S. REGAN**  
Secretary

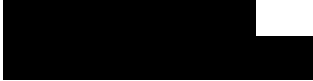
**ROB BIZZELL**  
Chairman

**MIKE BLANTON**  
Elizabeth City  
**DOUG CROSS**  
Grantsboro  
**TOM HENDRICKSON**  
Zebulon  
**PETE KORNEGAY**  
Camden

**DR. MARTIN POSEY**  
Wilmington  
**ROBERT McNEILL**  
Wilmington  
**TOM ROLLER**  
Beaufort  
**SAM ROMANO**  
Wilmington

April 13, 2020

Jay Styron



Dear Mr. Styron:

Thank you for your application to serve as a Shellfish Cultivation Lease Review Committee member. Unfortunately, I am unable to appoint you to the committee at this time; however, please do not be discouraged from participating in the process as a member of the public. Your input is invaluable, and I encourage you to attend the committee meetings.

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N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission

WB/dg

cc: Marine Fisheries Commission  
Lara Klibansky



**NORTH CAROLINA MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

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**PETE KORNEGAY**  
Camden

**DR. MARTIN POSEY**  
Wilmington  
**ROBERT McNEILL**  
Wilmington  
**TOM ROLLER**  
Beaufort  
**SAM ROMANO**  
Wilmington

April 13, 2020

Thomas Todd  


Dear Mr. Todd:

Thank you for your application to serve as a Shellfish Cultivation Lease Review Committee member. Unfortunately, I am unable to appoint you to the committee at this time; however, please do not be discouraged from participating in the process as a member of the public. Your input is invaluable, and I encourage you to attend the committee meetings.

Please visit the Division of Marine Fisheries website at [www.ncfisheries.net](http://www.ncfisheries.net) for meeting schedules, proclamations, fisheries hot topics, and various fishing information. You may also contact Dana Gillikin at 252-808-8022 for meeting information.

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Sincerely,

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W. Robert Bizzell, Chairman  
N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission

WB/dg

cc: Marine Fisheries Commission  
Lara Klibansky



# NORTH CAROLINA

State Board of Elections & Ethics Enforcement

Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 27255  
Raleigh, NC 27611-7255

Phone: (919) 814-0700  
Fax: (919) 715-0135

## Ethics & Lobbying Education

The following information applies to public servants, legislators, legislative employees, and ethics liaisons. For information on lobbying education and awareness presentations for lobbyists and lobbyist principals.

**Mandatory Education.** The N.C. State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement provides mandatory ethics and lobbying education for *public servants, legislators, legislative employees* and *ethics liaisons*. Topics covered include:

- Filing a Statement of Economic Interest ("SEI")
- Monitoring and avoiding conflicts of interest
- The gift ban and its exceptions
- Prohibition on use of public position for private gain
- Lobbying and how it affects individuals covered by the State Government Ethics Act

Ethics education is the primary way individuals subject to the State Government Ethics Act are made aware of their public duties and responsibilities as well as the consequences for violating the ethics laws.

## Who Must Participate

- **Public Servants & Ethics Liaisons.** All public servants and ethics liaisons are required to attend a Commission-approved basic ethics and lobbying education presentation within six (6) months of the person's election appointment, or employment and attend a refresher presentation at least every two (2) years thereafter.
- **Legislators & Legislative Employees.** The Commission, jointly with the Legislative Ethics Committee, makes mandatory ethics education and lobbying presentations to all legislators within two (2) months of the legislator assuming his or her office. Legislative employees must also participate in ethics education within three (3) months of employment and attend a refresher at least every two (2) years.
- **Education Presentations & Schedule.** Ethics and lobbying education presentations for public servants and ethics liaisons are offered [online](#) and [live at Raleigh-only and distance education sites](#). Completing an online presentation or attending a live session meets either the basic or refresher mandatory education requirements. Visit <https://www.ncsbe.gov/Ethics/Education> to access online and live training options.

Ethics education for **legislators** is conducted in live sessions. Legislative employees may participate in ethics education online through the General Assembly.

- **Consequences for Failure to Attend.** Failure to attend an ethics and lobbying education presentation is a violation of the State Government Ethics Act and may result in the individual being recommended for removal from his or her public position or disciplined in his or her State job.

## Contact Information

For education related questions, contact:  
NC State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement  
Phone: (919) 814-3600  
E-mail: [Education.Ethics@doa.nc.gov](mailto:Education.Ethics@doa.nc.gov)

## **2019 STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTEREST REMINDERS:**

Completed SEIs must be filed on or before April 15, 2019. If you have already filed a 2019 SEI, do not refile. The forms and instructions can be found at <https://ethics.ncsbe.gov/sei/blankForm.aspx>.

If you filed a 2018 SEI ***and*** you have had ***no changes*** since your 2018 filing, you may file a 2019 SEI No Change Form, located on the website.

### **You must file a 2019 Long Form if any of the following apply to you:**

- a. You filed a 2018 SEI ***but*** you have had changes since your 2018 filing;
- b. You did not file a 2018 SEI; or
- c. You are a first-time filer or have been appointed to a new or additional position/board.

This year, the State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement will roll out a new electronic process for filing SEIs. That electronic filing option will be available in **early February**.

You are encouraged to file your SEI electronically. However, if you want to file your SEIs before the updated electronic version is available, hard copies are available for filing now at the link above.

New commissioners will need to file a 2019 SEI; however, if you have not had any changes since you last filed, you can use the No Change Form, which is fairly easy to complete.

Please file by April 15th to avoid fines and other penalties.

## **SEI HELPFUL TIPS**

**1. PUBLIC RECORDS.** The State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement (State Board) is required to collect and maintain disclosures from certain persons covered by the State Elections and Ethics Enforcement Act Government Ethics Act (Elections and Ethics Act). By law, the information requested is public record and available to the public upon request. As public records, Statements of Economic Interest (SEI) are available on the Commission's website. Personal contact information, however, is not.

**2. CONTACT INFORMATION PAGE.** The Contact Information page, which includes your personal contact information, will not be available on the Commission's website, but is a public record.

**3. CHILDREN'S INITIALS.** Only list minor children's INITIALS on the SEI. List each child's full legal name on the Confidential Unemancipated Children's Form. If you are filing electronically, the form will be generated at the end of the SEI from the information that you provided on your electronic SEI. The Confidential Form is not a public record, and the State Board will not make it available to the public.

**4. READ EACH QUESTION CAREFULLY.** Read each question carefully and pay close attention to the time periods in each question as they do vary.

**5. ANSWER EACH QUESTION.** It is important to answer each question, including all applicable subparts. Even if your answer is "no" or "not applicable," make certain you answer each question. Many of the questions have "yes" and "no" boxes to check for your convenience. Incomplete SEIs may cause delays and negatively impact your public service on a covered board or as an employee.

**6. WHY ARE YOU FILING.** You must list the complete name of the state board or state agency employer for which you are filing the SEI. Without this information, your SEI may be delayed and negatively impact your public service on a covered board or as an employee.

**7. HOW TO FILE.** The State Board strongly recommends electronic on-line filing as it is secure, allows easy information updates, and gives you access to your electronic SEIs previously filed. Filing your SEI on-line is easy, quick, convenient, and reduces the chance of reporting errors. Getting started is easy. Follow the simple steps to create your own account and get access today: <https://EFILE.ncsbe.gov/> To file a paper version of the SEI, you must provide the State Board with a signed, original SEI form. Each SEI includes an "affirmation" and is a legally binding document. Faxed or emailed copies of your SEI CANNOT be accepted.

SEI Helpful Tips, continued

**8. INCOME.** List each source of income as requested on the SEI. The actual dollar amount is not required. Be sure to list your employer as a source of income in Question # 6 of the SEI.

**9. READ CAREFULLY.** Read each question carefully, as the Elections and Ethics Act requires that you disclose your financial holdings and obligations, personal property, and real property and may also include your knowledge of the holdings of both your immediate family and your extended family. "Immediate family" and "extended family" are defined terms in the Elections and Ethics Act, and those definitions are included with this document.

**10. REFLECT.** Think carefully about WHY you are filing, and whether it has any relationship to your position. Does your board or commission license or regulate you? For many of the boards, a subject matter expert like a licensee is needed. Answering "yes" does not prohibit your service on the board, and your perspective is valued.

**11. MAKE A COPY.** Make a copy of the SEI for your own records, and make a note in your calendar when you submit it, whether on-line or by mail or hand delivery. When you successfully submit your SEI electronically on-line, the final screen will provide a confirmation number and will be proof that you have satisfied your filing obligation. Please print the **confirmation screen for your records.**

**12. ETHICS LIAISON.** Contact your Ethics Liaison to assist you in your obligations under the Elections and Ethics Act. Your Ethics Liaison is good source of information about how to fill out your SEI.

**13. ON-LINE HELP.** The State Board has on-line resources to answer questions you may have about your SEI. For more information, please visit the State Board website which has education offerings.



**14. DEFINITIONS.** As noted above, certain terms are defined in the Elections and Ethics Act (“immediate family”). These definitions may be helpful to you in completing your SEI. A complete list of all definitions used in the Elections and Ethics Act is available on the State Board’s website, under “Ethics”. Some of the more common ones are attached to this document.

**15. YOUR INTERNET BROWSER.** Consider using Internet Explorer or Chrome to submit your SEI. Some users have had trouble using other browsers. **16. WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU.** In addition to on-line resources and written materials, the State Board has expert staff ready to answer any questions you might have and assist you in completing and filing your SEI. Do not hesitate to contact us at [sei@ncsbee.gov](mailto:sei@ncsbee.gov) (919) 814-3600.

## 2020 Meeting Planning Calendar

January						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

February						
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March						
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29	30	31				

April						
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May						
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31						

June						
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28	29	30				

July						
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August						
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30	31					

September						
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October						
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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November						
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29	30					

December						
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

- MFC
- ASMFC
- SAFMC
- MAFMC
- ASMFC/MAFMC Joint Meeting

- Southern Regional AC
- Northern Regional AC
- Finfish AC
- Habitat and Water Quality AC
- Shellfish/Crustacean AC
- State Holiday

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## 2020 Committee Assignments for Marine Fisheries Commissioners

02/26/2020

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### **FINFISH ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

*Statutorily required standing committee comprised of commissioners and advisers that considers matters related to finfish.*

**Commissioners:** Tom Roller – chair, Sam Romano – vice chair

**DMF Staff Lead:** Lee Paramore - [lee.paramore@ncdenr.gov](mailto:lee.paramore@ncdenr.gov)

**Meeting Frequency:** Can meet quarterly, depending on assignments from MFC

### **HABITAT AND WATER QUALITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE & COASTAL HABITAT PROTECTION PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE**

*Statutorily required standing committee comprised of commissioners and advisers that considers matters concerning habitat and water quality that may affect coastal fisheries resources.*

**Commissioners:** Pete Kornegay – chair, Dr. Martin Posey – vice chair

**DMF Staff Lead:** Anne Deaton - [anne.deaton@ncdenr.gov](mailto:anne.deaton@ncdenr.gov)

**Meeting Frequency:** Committee can meet quarterly, depending on assignments from MFC. CHPP Steering Committee can meet a couple of times a year.

### **SHELLFISH/CRUSTACEAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

*Statutorily required standing committee comprised of commissioners and advisers that considers matters concerning oysters, clams, scallops and other molluscan shellfish, shrimp and crabs.*

**Commissioners:** Sam Romano – chair, Pete Kornegay – co-vice chair, Dr. Martin Posey – co-vice chair

**DMF Staff Lead:** Tina Moore - [tina.moore@ncdenr.gov](mailto:tina.moore@ncdenr.gov)

**Meeting Frequency:** Can meet quarterly, depending on assignments from MFC

### **CONSERVATION FUND COMMITTEE**

*Committee comprised of commissioners that makes recommendations to the MFC for administering funds to be used for marine and estuarine resources management, including education about the importance of conservation.*

**Commissioners:** Sam Romano - chair, Tom Hendrickson and Robert McNeill

**DMF Staff Lead:** Randy Gregory - [randy.gregory@ncdenr.gov](mailto:randy.gregory@ncdenr.gov)

**Meeting Frequency:** Meets as needed

### **LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CIVIL PENALTY COMMITTEE**

*Statutorily required committee comprised of commissioners that makes final agency decisions on civil penalty remission requests.*

**Commissioners:** Rob Bizzell - chair, Doug Cross and Tom Hendrickson

**DMF Staff Lead:** Col. Carter Witten – [carter.witten@ncdenr.gov](mailto:carter.witten@ncdenr.gov)

**Meeting Frequency:** Meets as needed

### **COASTAL RECREATIONAL FISHING LICENSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

*Committee consisting of the three recreational seats and the science seat to provide the DMF advice on the projects and grants issued using Coastal Recreational Fishing License trust funds.*

**Commissioners:** Pete Kornegay – chair, Rob Bizzell, Tom Roller, and Robert McNeill

**DMF Staff Lead:** Jamie Botinovch - [jamie.botinovch@ncdenr.gov](mailto:jamie.botinovch@ncdenr.gov)

**Meeting Frequency:** Meets as needed

## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

*Committee comprised of commissioners that makes recommendations to the MFC on at-large and obligatory nominees for the Mid- and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils.*

**Commissioners:** Robert McNeill – chair, Pete Kornegay, Tom Roller and Mike Blanton

**DMF Staff Lead:** Chris Batsavage - [chris.batsavage@ncdenr.gov](mailto:chris.batsavage@ncdenr.gov)

**Meeting Frequency:** Typically meets once a year

## **STANDARD COMMERCIAL FISHING LICENSE ELIGIBILITY BOARD**

*Statutorily required three-person board consisting of DEQ, DMF and MFC designees who apply eligibility criteria to determine whether an applicant is eligible for a SCFL.*

**Commission Designee:** Mike Blanton

**DMF Staff Lead:** Marine Patrol Capt. Garland Yopp – [garland.yopp@ncdenr.gov](mailto:garland.yopp@ncdenr.gov)

**Meeting Frequency:** Meets two to three times a year, could need to meet more often depending on volume of applications

## **N.C. COMMERCIAL FISHING RESOURCE FUND COMMITTEE**

*Committee comprised of commissioners that the commission has given authority to make funding decisions on projects to develop and support sustainable commercial fishing in the state.*

**Commissioners:** Doug Cross – chair, Mike Blanton and Sam Romano

**DMF Staff Lead:** William Brantley – [william.brantley@ncdenr.gov](mailto:william.brantley@ncdenr.gov)

**Meeting Frequency:** Meets two to three times a year

## **WRC/MFC JOINT COMMITTEE ON DELINEATION OF FISHING WATERS**

*Committee formed to help integrate the work of the two commissions as they fulfill their statutory responsibilities to jointly determine the boundaries that define North Carolina's Inland, Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters as the agencies go through a statutorily defined periodic review of existing rules.*

**MFC Commissioners:** Rob Bizzell, Dr. Martin Posey and Pete Kornegay

**DMF Staff Lead:** Anne Deaton - [anne.deaton@ncdenr.gov](mailto:anne.deaton@ncdenr.gov)

**Meeting Frequency:** Meets as needed

*COMMITTEE REPORTS*



ROY COOPER  
*Governor*

MICHAEL S. REGAN  
*Secretary*

STEPHEN W. MURPHEY  
*Director*

April 24, 2020

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission  
Southern Regional Advisory Committee

**FROM:** Tina Moore, Southern District Manager  
Chris Stewart, Biologist Supervisor  
Fisheries Management Section

**SUBJECT:** Southern Regional Advisory Committee Meeting and Recommendations for  
Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan Amendment 3

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The Southern Regional Advisory Committee met at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, April 8, 2020. Based on the current guidance to help minimize the spread of COVID-19, the meeting was held by videoconference (WebEx). The public was able to view the staff presentation and listen to the committee discussions online. Public comment was not taken during the meeting; however, the public was able to provide written comments to the advisory committee online or by U.S. mail prior to the meeting with a deadline of 5 p.m. April 6. The following participated in the meeting:

Advisors: Dr. Fred Scharf (Chair), Edwin Bebb, Cane Faircloth, Jason Fowler, Pam Morris, Tom Smith, Adam Tyler

Absent: Jerry James, Ron McCoy, Tim Wilson

Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) Staff: (leads) Tina Moore, Chris Stewart, Ashley Bishop, Jordan Brookshire, Nico Craig, Joe Facendola, Corrin Flora; (other staff) Alan Bianchi, Jesse Bissette, Catherine Blum, Meghan Gahm, Dana Gillikin, Charlton Godwin, Kim Harding, Morgan Klein, Lara Klibansky, Anne Markwith, Kathy Rawls, Greg Reger, Brandi Salmon, Katy West, Garland Yopp, Dan Zapf

Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC): Rob Bizzell (Chair), Dr. Martin Posey

Others: Wilson Laney

Division staff member Dana Gillikin served as WebEx host for the meeting. She reviewed how the meeting would operate via WebEx. She read the names of the advisors in attendance into the

record; a quorum was achieved. Ms. Gillikin introduced Dr. Fred Scharf, chair of the committee, and lead staff.

Dr. Scharf called the meeting to order. The meeting began with each advisor introducing themselves to the committee.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Jason Fowler moved to approve the agenda; Cane Faircloth seconded the motion. The motion passed without dissent.**

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Cane Faircloth moved to approve the Sept. 24, 2019 minutes as presented; Jason Fowler seconded the motion. The motion passed without dissent.**

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED THROUGH APRIL 6, 2020 TO THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Four online comments were provided to the advisory committee through April 6, 2020. All online comments supported Diamondback Terrapin Management Areas (DTMAs) and gear modifications in crab pots to reduce interactions with diamondback terrapins. Expansion of DTMA's to other areas of the state beyond what was presented to the advisory committee was also a common subject brought forward online. There were no public comments submitted via U.S. mail. The comments received are provided here.

**Andres DelVillar (submitted 3/25/2020):** "I am all in for trying to improve gear any way we can to save the turtles and also to stop harvesting female blue crabs of any size in NC."

**Bert Owens (submitted 3/26/2020):** "The North River in Carteret County should also be added to the list requiring excluders on pots. Above the marshes near the lower end of the river there are diamondback terrapins throughout. I have seen as many as 10 dead ones in a single crab trap that was half exposed at low tide."

**Sam Heller (submitted 3/26/20):** "I am 110% in favor of the conservation measures proposed to protect diamondback terrapins in our state. I think the establishment of management areas which require turtle excluders in crab pots is sorely needed, as this has been identified as their number one threat, in addition to many other challenges, including development, pollution, habitat loss, predation by non-historical/non-native species, capture for sale and export, road deaths, and sea level rise. Please approve this ruling; acting now could save them, as sometimes we don't act until it's too late."

**Wilson Laney (submitted 4/6/2020):**

"1) Diamondback terrapins were historically the focus of a substantial and valuable commercial fishery in NC and throughout their range.

2) They are no longer a viable commercial fishery, due largely to historic overfishing, continuing bycatch in commercial gear and habitat alteration (bulkheading of nesting habitat) of this long-

lived, slow-reproducing species. For many decades, there has been a significant bycatch in crab pots, eel pots and gill nets set in habitats the terrapins use, with resultant continuing high mortality, especially of males and juvenile females.

3) Many states throughout the species range, including NC, have elected to designate the species as of conservation concern within their State Wildlife Action Plans.

4) The technology (effective excluder devices designed for crab pots and designed to minimize crab catch loss) to eliminate crab pot bycatch has been available for YEARS and has proven effectiveness, with strong supporting science in the form of dozens of peer-reviewed papers throughout the range of the species in general, but also within NC.

5) While I support the proposed management measures, and management areas, I view them as a minimal measure and see no reason why the NCMFC should not take appropriate Diamondback Terrapin conservation action throughout the range of Diamondback Terrapins within North Carolina.”

### **DIAMONDBACK TERRAPIN MANAGEMENT AREAS**

Division staff member Joe Facendola provided a presentation to the committee about proposed DTMA's. The MFC recognized diamondback terrapins as a wildlife resource in need of protection from crab pot fishing activities and sought to proactively implement conservation measures to prevent localized depletion or extirpation in Amendment 2 to the Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan in November 2013. The division was granted proclamation authority to require terrapin excluder devices in crab pots. Prior to use of proclamation authority, the MFC needed to approve a framework for implementation.

In February 2020, the MFC adopted Amendment 3 to the Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan, which established a framework to implement the use of terrapin excluder devices in crab pots. As part of the framework, the division is to present an information paper on proposed DTMA's to the appropriate regional advisory committee for input. The framework also includes final approval of any DTMA by the MFC at their next regularly scheduled MFC meeting.

The purpose of this meeting was for the advisory committee to provide input to the MFC on proposed DTMA's in Masonboro Sound and the lower Cape Fear River, specifically Bald Head Island. These areas were chosen to be the first DTMA's based on known populations of diamondback terrapins, as well as meeting depth and distance from shore criteria identifying them as potential interaction zones. Additional areas meeting criteria laid out in the Amendment 3 framework will be considered for DTMA status in the future.

Mr. Facendola explained the public comment opportunities for this issue. The deadline for submitting comments is 5 p.m. April 23, 2020.

The committee discussed whether other areas should be taken into consideration as DTMA's and noted that this is just a small start in diamondback terrapin protection in North Carolina. They talked about diamondback terrapins in particular locations along the Elizabeth River and Lockwoods Folly behind Davis Island that have declined. The North Carolina blue crab pot fishery has also been listed by seafood watch groups as a product to avoid because of the interactions with terrapin. The cost may be prohibitive to some fishermen to add excluder



devices to their pots was brought forward by some committee members who asked if some sort of cost sharing could occur to help offset the burden during these hard times.

It was re-iterated the two areas proposed in the issue paper have been well-studied and that the framework that is set up could eventually have a network of DTMAs as well as allow interconnection to diamondback terrapins to South Carolina and beyond.

Questions continued on whether DMF is opposed to other designs and testing to exclude terrapins from pots. Mr. Facendola determined that if a design works and passes testing then the division would consider its use. For example, the reduced throat funnel design has potential, but has not been tested. As long as the design's opening is no larger than the specified dimensions and maintains its structural rigidity, then it would be considered for use. Corrin Flora, blue crab lead, acknowledged that the criteria purposely give fishermen leeway to create new designs and DMF encourages the testing of new designs.

The conversation shifted back to why DMF had not looked into other areas. Diamondback terrapin interactions in pots have been an ongoing issue for many years; Ms. Flora confirmed the longevity of this issue and the DMF will continue to look at other areas that fall under the criteria in the plan. Dr. Scharf noted there have been design issues as well. The new S.C. design is promising and does not show crab loss, and it is considered an approved device for use. While South Carolina has an approved device, it is not required for use. Ms. Flora explained an algorithm was used to study the morphology of blue crabs and terrapins in South Carolina to come up with the design. Mr. Facendola added DMF provided researchers with measurements and there is a student at UNCW that is looking further into a N.C. design. DMF is encouraging voluntary use of the devices as well.

Some committee members suggested that should fishermen try out the devices for a few years to see how they work, possibly in all areas south of the ones presented in the issue paper. Mr. Facendola explained that ongoing monitoring in Masonboro Sound will help identify if they are working or not. There is an ongoing project with National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERR) staff, Wildlife Resources Commission, and UNCW researchers to test a number of the designs. Questions arose about the validity of the data collected by citizen science groups participating in this project. Mr. Facendola explained that the sampling design is used by other researchers in other states and the entire framework is not based just on this data, further noting that the sampling design meets the concerns of the site managers. Ms. Flora went into further detail on the sample design, two trained participants work in pairs to confirm a diamondback terrapin siting. Both individuals must have the siting for it to count and they are trained by seasoned observers.

Further discussion occurred about the cost of the devices and potential funding sources as well as the need to test the effectiveness of other designs in North Carolina, such as the narrowed throat design. It was further noted by DMF staff that this is a proactive step that allows fishing to continue and opens the door for more DTMAs. Dr. Scharf noted the S.C. design has been proven to minimally impact fishermen and that by adjusting the design by a few millimeters it was shown to keep terrapins out of the pots and crabs in the pots. Dr. Scharf also noted that we should explore designs and promote more areas to be included as DTMAs. Some members stated that if we do not do something now, future mitigation may require the statewide use of excluders in all pots without knowing what works. There were concerns that no commercial fishermen were present on this committee from the Masonboro Sound and Lower Cape Fear River area.

**VOTE ON RECOMMENDATIONS ON DIAMONDBACK TERRAPIN MANAGEMENT AREAS IN MASONBORO SOUND AND THE LOWER CAPE FEAR RIVER**

**Tom Smith moved to support the Diamondback Terrapin Management Areas in Masonboro Sound and the Lower Cape Fear River, as presented by the division, explore options for funding for offsetting the cost of excluder devices for current fishermen, and to explore options for research on new and additional designs for excluder devices. Jason Fowler seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION UPDATE**

Division staff member Chris Stewart provided an update to the committee via a handout on recent actions of the MFC at its Feb. 19-20, 2020 business meeting. The next MFC meeting will be held via WebEx on May 14, 2020 due to continuing guidance to help minimize the spread of COVID-19. Information about the meeting and how to join will be in a forthcoming news release and on the division's website.

**PLAN AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

The next committee meeting will be upon request of the MFC.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.