

From: [Ryan Speckman](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Cc: [Lin Peterson](#); [Justin Pasfield](#)
Subject: [External] Southern Flounder Amendment 2
Date: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 12:32:52 PM
Attachments: [MFC - Amend 2.pdf](#)

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Chairman Bizzell and Marine Fisheries Commissioners,

With the impending Marine Fisheries Commission meeting in Raleigh next week, we would like to offer our concerns and opinion on the direction of the southern flounder fishery. Please see our attached letter, and feel free to reach out if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you!

Ryan Speckman





Fresh From NC Fishermen



August 14, 2019

To: NC Marine Fisheries Commission

Subject: Concerns regarding Southern Flounder draft Amendment 2

Locals Seafood, a processor and distributor of North Carolina seafood in the [REDACTED] acknowledges the desire for N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) to reduce landings of southern flounder via the draft Amendment 2 of the Southern Flounder Fisheries Management Plan. Since our inception, we have strongly believed that our state needs to manage fisheries in a sustainable way so that our citizens can enjoy their public trust resource now and for future generations. We have major concerns with the proposed reductions and the resulting impact on commercial fishermen and North Carolina taxpayers.

While we acknowledge the need to take measures to ensure the long-term viability of the southern flounder population, we fear the proposed 62% and 72% reductions are too dramatic for our local seafood industry to withstand. The actual reductions will likely be greater than the intended outcome, due to attrition of fishermen that realize it is no longer economically viable to target flounder with such drastically reduced seasons. In addition, we will lose more access to the southern flounder fishery's "by-catch" species (notably red drum, black drum, speckled trout and sheepshead), which have as much value to the seafood consumer as the flounder themselves.

These reductions will ultimately have the broadest impact on the resource's *largest* user group, the taxpaying seafood consumer. Working with NC commercial fishermen and fish-houses, Locals Seafood has been integral to providing truly local seafood to restaurants, grocery stores, and retail consumers of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] counties. But, with measures such as Amendment 2, it will *quickly* become more difficult to provide local seafood options to our customers on a year-round basis.

We hope that you will take our concerns into consideration, and help navigate the future of the southern flounder fishery in an economically friendly way.

Ryan Speckman
Co-founder
Locals Seafood

Lin Peterson
Co-founder
Locals Seafood

From: [Roger Winstead](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: [External] Southern Flounder Fisheries Management Plan
Date: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 3:02:13 PM
Attachments: [Pasted Graphic 3.tiff](#)

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Dana,

My name is Roger Winstead and I am a born and bred North Carolinian. I am also an avid saltwater sports fisherman, a longtime consumer of North Carolina seafood and a loyal customer of [REDACTED] here in [REDACTED] NC.

I am concerned about the drastic measures being recommended in Amendment 2 of the Southern Flounder Fisheries Management Plan. The sharp reduction in landings over two years will impact my access to North Carolina seafood and I'm concerned about the long term viability of the industry itself if these reductions go into place.

Please consider an expanded timeline for implementing the reductions. I fear a 62% reduction in 2019 and a 72% reduction in 2020 may put some in the seafood industry out of business.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Roger W Winstead
[REDACTED]

From: [Tom P](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: [External] Southern Flounder
Date: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 10:43:39 PM

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Dana

I am 100% opposed to the plan to close flounder fishing. I live on the water and fish on the weekends. I catch plenty of flounder in the Pamlico river. I normally keep one for my dinner each weekend.

I can't see why the state would want to impose such a rule, other than just wanting to flex control on people.

If the state is dead set on flexing its muscles. Do it another way. Don't close flounder fishing. That's just cruel to those of us that like to eat them.

Tom Potter

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Amendment 2
Date: Thursday, August 15, 2019 11:15:47 AM

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From: Dustin Pugh [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 10:35:27 AM
To: Bizzell, Rob <r.bizzell.mfc@ncdenr.gov>
Subject: [External] Amendment 2

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I'm sure you've had a lot of emails regarding this topic, but I feel like one more won't hurt. I am asking for the commission to please take a little more time to really look into options other than a complete closure. The southern flounder population may be lower than recent years but the economical impact this bill will carry will devastate many areas of local business. I'm not opposed to stricter rules and regulations on flounder nor is most people I've talked to, but a complete closure will hurt a lot of hard working people just trying to make a living.

From: [Carla Hoffman](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: [External] Amendment 2 of Southern Flounder Fisheries Management Plan
Date: Thursday, August 15, 2019 9:56:08 AM

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My name is Carla Hoffman and I am a consumer of North Carolina seafood and a customer of [REDACTED] here in [REDACTED], NC.

I am concerned about the drastic measures being recommended in Amendment 2 of the Southern Flounder Fisheries Management Plan. The sharp reduction in landings over two years will impact my access to North Carolina seafood and I'm concerned about the long term viability of the industry itself if these reductions go into place.

Please consider an expanded timeline for implementing the reductions. I fear a 62% reduction in 2019 and a 72% reduction in 2020 may put some in the seafood industry out of business. Thank you.

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Flounder closure
Date: Thursday, August 15, 2019 11:15:26 AM

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 11:08 AM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] Flounder closure

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Mr. Bizzell, On the Commission's vote on the closure of the flounder fishery. Please consider the impact a complete closure would have on tourism in eastern N.C. I think better options are obtainable by limiting inshore netting to certain periods of the year and end commercial gigging all together or impose a creel limit. A total closure for the recreational hook and line fishery could cause a major impact to businesses along our coastline. Thank you for your time and effort on this issue. W Rogers.

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

From: [Aundrea O'Neal](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: [External] Fwd: flounder meeting august 21st
Date: Wednesday, August 14, 2019 8:22:50 AM

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Bob McBride** [REDACTED]
Date: Tue, Aug 13, 2019 at 5:19 PM
Subject: flounder meeting august 21st
To: r.bizzell.mfc@ncdenr.gov <r.bizzell.mfc@ncdenr.gov>, s.romano.mfc@ncdenr.gov <s.romano.mfc@ncdenr.gov>, roy.cooper@nc.gov <roy.cooper@nc.gov>, martin.posey.mfc@denr.gov <martin.posey.mfc@denr.gov>, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

I am writing to you concerning the upcoming decisions to be made at the august 21st meeting. I appeal to you all as those who have authority over many peoples livelihood to seek true wisdom . you need wisdom for these decisions; not reactionary rules but institute changes that will show a responsibility for the authority you've been given and that will benefit all.

there are certain things i would like to bring to your attention. First, because of the dissemination of information that has come forth concerning draconian restrictions proposed, I would dare say between one third and one half of the pound net fishermen are not setting. I think you have no clue as to the amount of preparation it takes, let alone finances, to be ready to set on time. the lack of clarity and the late date for announcing changes has totally discouraged most of us from doing the necessary preparations . So you will see a big reduction in landings irregardless if any restrictions i are put in place. Second, to be fair, a plan needs to be put in place at the FIRST OF THE YEAR before all preparation is made. net and materials are purchased then as all webbing must be ordered in advance. Plans are made at the first of the year not in August. Third, To achieve a reduction in landings you MUST use gear reduction as the chief means to achieve the goal. Without question it is the best solution for DMF and for fishermen. It would be the easiest way to achieve a reduction from managerial as well as for the fisherman. Less gear , without question , makes for less landings. Fourth, the season needs to stay open for the entire time allotment. We have other species of fish besides flounders that we take at different times of the season. Star butterflyfish will move early while sheephead move from mid october on. These are valuable to fishermen and part of the catch that can't be overlooked. By putting time allotments on for flounder , you are prohibiting the catch of other valuable fish . Fifth, No more new participation. No more new people coming into the fishery. Sixth and last. An observer program needs to be put in place . I have fished flounder nets for over forty years and not once has an observer rode with me to document the amount of fish released . This is incredible when you think about it.

How could the perfect opportunity to see firsthand in any given local the sheer numbers of fish returned to the water?

If at all possible, I would like and appreciate if this is read during the upcoming meetings. I can't be there personally . I will be praying for the kind of wisdom that comes from above for you. regards Robert McBride

--

Aundrea E. O'Neal

Office:



From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Flounder Season
Date: Thursday, August 15, 2019 11:16:15 AM

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From: Josey's Communications
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 10:09 AM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] Flounder Season

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Sir,

I live in the area. North of . My family makes the trip to the Morehead City area a few times a month to fish. We don't just fish for flounder. We fish for pretty much everything. But the best time to flounder fish as a recreational angle is in the fall as I'm sure you know.

Here is my issue with the current situation regarding flounder in the state of North Carolina. I love my state by the way. But we as a state have a serious issue with what is allowed for commercial fishermen versus recreational anglers. The commercial fishing vessels are allowed to keep pretty much any flounder they catch. Where as I have a size limit. Not to mention that NC is the only state that allows the trawlers inside to fish. That's the biggest damage to the fish and the environment. If NC wants to make a difference and a step in the right direction they should hold commercial fishermen to a higher standard than a recreational angler. I mean it makes sense to me. A commercial fishermen is a paid professional at his job. So he should have to adhere to a higher standard than a guy that's out in the weekend with his family. We are out spending thousands of dollars in the economy on the coast of NC and we will never get out what we put in. Sure I may catch a few fish to eat. But stop at think about it. How many pounds of flounder would I have to take to even equal the expense of my hotel stay? I don't go to the beach to put my toes in the sand. I go for one reason. To fish. If I can't fish I'm not going. I see boats out every time I'm there, dragging nets killing fish, and pushing them straight back into ocean. A single boat will kill and throw back more fish in one drag than I could catch I'm a lifetime. So the true issue is not the recreational anglers. It's the waste of commercial fishermen trying to get all they can. I know for a fact that every recreational angler in the state of NC combined will not catch in a year what a single commercial fishermen will in a week. It's not possible. Instead of punishing the

people that are paying to fish in our state, maybe y'all should punish the ones getting paid to destroy our resources. There are bad apples in every barrel. I think that NC is behind the times on the real issue and needs to update it's commercial practices. I understand that commercial fishing is a big industry down east but tourism is too. I have friends all over the Eastern half of the country that used to make the trip to the coast of NC to flounder fish in the fall. Now SC gets their money.

I could take days telling you stories form my trips in NC waters and things I've seen from commercial boats. But I think it's time that the commissioners went and saw for themselves. It's not the little guys with a few lines in the water.

Thank you
Josey Joyce

Josey's Communications, LLC

From: [willfish2](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: [External] Flounder
Date: Thursday, August 15, 2019 10:00:37 AM

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Please do not close flounder next week, I feel that there has not been sufficient evidence to suggest that this needs to happen. The past 3 times I have been fishing out of Atlantic Beach, I caught an abundance of fish that were 1 to 2 inches to short and several that were large enough to keep. The fish are here and plentiful for that matter. I feel if anything it would be beneficial to have more wildlife officers checking for undersized fish than to cut it off completely.

Thank you for your time,
William Rogers

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

From: [Lyman Smith](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: [External] petition
Date: Thursday, August 15, 2019 1:36:25 PM

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Marine Fisheries Commission, as a concerned citizen and fisherman (woman), I support the proposed Petition from the NC Wildlife Federation that is before you today to adopt Rules to reduce shrimp trawling bycatch of juvenile fish, which will improve survival of these fish to the age of maturity and allow them to spawn at least once. This will improve the status of finfish generally and begin the move toward sustainability. Thank you for your consideration,
___Lyman Smith_____

Regards,

Lyman Smith
Vice President

Gillikin, Dana

From: rick sasser
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 3:06 PM
To: Bizzell, Rob; Boltes, C; Kornegay, K; Hendrickson, Tom; McNeill, Robert B; Cross, Doug; Posey, Martin H; Blanton, Mike; Romano, Sam; Gillikin, Dana; Murphey, Steve; Nicholson, John A.; Tim Gestwicki; Daniel, Louis
Subject: [External] Shrimp Trawl Bycatch- The Need For True Reductions

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Dear Chairman Bizzell and Commissioners-

The MFC voted in February 2015, as part of the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan, to require that the industry test various gear configurations to reduce shrimp trawl bycatch to the greatest extent practicable, with a 40-percent target reduction being the goal. Three years of testing was conducted by an industry lead stakeholder group consisting of fishermen, net and/or gear manufacturers and scientific and/or gear specialists. Those trials occurred in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

At your August-2019 meeting you will hear the NCWF present their Petition for Rule Making to address measures necessary to immediately reduce bycatch in the shrimp trawl fishery. I am sure that you will also hear others state that the Petition measures are unnecessary- that bycatch has been reduced through the addition of a second BRD...that the industry made more than a 40% reduction in bycatch after implementing gears tested during the bycatch reduction trials.

What the MFC asked for in 2015 was a 40% reduction from the perceived "normal" level of bycatch at the time, which was approximately 4:1.

The Division issued a news release on May 18, 2018 declaring that the trials were a success and that the a 40% or greater reduction had been accomplished-

http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/nr-40-2018-trawls?p_p_id=56_INSTANCE_2GPr&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=exclusive&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-2&p_p_col_count=2&_56_INSTANCE_2GPr_struts_action=%2Fjournal_content%2Fview&_56_INSTANCE_2GPr_groupId=38337&_56_INSTANCE_2GPr_articleId=31853274&_56_INSTANCE_2GPr_viewMode=print

That 40% reduction didn't happen. It was a false reduction accomplished by dumbing down the control net.

You can find a copy of the Division's presentation of the 2016 Bycatch Reduction Trial at this link- https://1drv.ms/b/s!ArHvxdSx-xlqggaSTVI8eiH2Jn_x?e=m7Wn26

The following slide from the presentation shows the gear configuration that provided the greatest reduction.

Let's do some simple math-

In the control net the study found 27.7 kg of shrimp and 175 kg of bycatch. That is a 175 to 27.7 ratio or 6.3:1.

In the test net the study found 23.3 kg of shrimp and 83.7 kg of bycatch. That is a 83.7 to 23.3 ratio or 3.6:1.

In 2010 Kevin Brown conducted extensive bycatch characterization studies on the Pamlico Sound- <https://1drv.ms/b/s!ArHvxdSx-xlgjCKKBbEKpKkpsVt?e=GhNZur>

Those studies for NOAA were published as Characterization of the inshore commercial shrimp trawl fishery in the Pamlico Sound and its tributaries, North Carolina. Brown found a total bycatch ratio (by weight) of 3.3 pounds of bycatch to 1 pound of shrimp in 2010.

Below is my analysis of Brown's 2010 findings-

Kevin Brown Study: All Nets.		Number		
Top Twelve Non-Target Specie Landed		Of Fish	Weight	# Fish
		Landed	Pounds	Per Pound
1	Atlantic Croaker	787,633	40,493	19.5
2	Spot	404,076	15,495	26.1
3	Weakfish	213,578	7,783	27.4
4	Mantis Shrimp	185,545	5,033	36.9
5	Atlantic Brief Squid	148,065	3,226	45.9
6	Blue Crab	14,585	2,006	7.3
7	Atlantic Menhaden	10,532	1,421	7.4
8	Southern Kingfish	6,314	957	6.6
9	Pinfish	10,058	894	11.2
10	Summer Flounder	5,275	877	6.0
11	Atlantic Cutlassfish	1,862	716	2.6
12	Atlantic Thread Herring	8,305	537	15.5
	Total	1,795,828	79,440	22.6
	Other Non-Target Species	196,706	11,923	16.5
	Total Non-Target Species	1,992,534	91,363	21.8
Kevin Brown Study: All Nets.		Number		
Targeted Shrimp Specie Landed		Of Shrimp	Weight	Shrimp
		Landed	Pounds	Per Pound
	White Shrimp	16,274	753	21.6
	Pink Shrimp	50,884	1,605	31.7
	Brown Shrimp	511,395	25,590	20.0
	Total	578,553	27,948	20.7
Grand Total- Target and Non-Target Species		2,571,087	119,311	

Let's again do some simple math-

Brown found 91,363 pounds of non-target species and 27,948 pounds of shrimp which is a 3.3:1 bycatch ratio, which is pretty much equal to the 3.6 ratio that the 2016 industry bycatch reduction trial found in the "TEST NET".

The industry dumbed down the trials by running a non-standard 1.5" mesh tail bag on the control net, which artificially increased bycatch to 6.3. The industry standard bycatch ratio was already in the 3 to 4 range because the industry was already using the 1-3/4" and 1-7/8" tail bags that the trials "tested". The "test gear" took bycatch back to what the industry had been doing since at least 2010.

I sat in the 2016 meeting in New Bern where the trial results were discussed. The late Steve Parrish was a member of the reduction team as a net maker/gear manufacturer. Parrish warned the group at the time that the reductions were overstated due the control net having a smaller mesh size for the tail bag than gears the industry was already using.

There was NO REDUCTION.

We know from years of bycatch trials that bycatch is highly variable from tow to tow and season to season, but on average it is about 4:1.

For the industry to meet a 40% reduction, the average ratio should have be reduced to 2.4 to 1. That didn't happen.

Please vote to move the NCWF Petition forward to address bycatch issues.

Thank you,
Rick Sasser

August 11, 2019

Patricia Smith
Communications Director
Division of Marine Fisheries
Division of coastal Management
N. C. Department of Environmental Quality

Dear Ms. Smith,

I am sending you a list of over 160 signatures of people that feel it is wrong to cut the flounder catch by 72% and have a short season on flounder.

We feel this is unfair to the recreational fishermen and also the charter boat captains that are trying to keep their clients, which are mostly tourist, happy. Flounder is the main fish that are caught in our area during the summer in the Inter-coastal waterway, inlets and canals. The tourist looks forward to coming to our area to have a fun and successful day of fishing for flounder and to take those memories home with them.

I respectfully ask that you give this your sincere consideration before voting on this proposal. If you want to contact me I can be reached at

Thank you for your time,

Charles (Buster) Gillis

*Capt Buster Gillis
Ketch BASTER Charters*

Save Flounder Fishing

PLEASE SIGN TO KEEP THE DNR FROM CUTTING
FLOUNDER CATCH BY 72% STARTING IN AUGUST

THEY WANT TO PUT A SHORT SEASON ON
FLOUNDER, FISHING ONLY FROM MAY THROUGH
SEPTEMBER. THE WANT TO RAISE THE LENGTH
TO 19 INCHES

BUSTER GILLIS
BUSTERS OUTDOORS GUIDE SERVICE

(Please Read Back) →

New Rules attached To Back
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NAME	Address
Buster Gillis	
James Murrough	
Pat Murrough	
Coel Logge	
BILLY CHENIER	
Tommy Livingston	
John Nancy	
Jimmy DeWitt	
Jim Oliver	
Anthony Rinehart	
Austin Robbins	
Kenneth Cox	
Randy Harris	
Mike Shorette	

NAME

Address

Adam Bergson

Jim McMurphy

Hunter McLean

Lagan Jurn

Casey Pyatte

~~John Olin~~

Nancy Skyrre

JACK PAYNE

Chuck Deaton

Amarda Deaton

Douglas Straining

Chris Helms

~~Don Down~~

Doug CORDING

Randall

Alyssa Edwards

Orac Stevens

Heather Martin

Chris Latta

Webb White

RADY SMITH

Eddie McCray

Kim Styles

Tyler Wong

Mac Season

Nelson Powell

Jerry Merrill

Wesley Spivey

Earl Blash

Frank J. Hurdon

~~Stan Hill~~

Terese & McCray

Jude James

Brian Cobble

NAME

John Williams

David Harrington

Carson Everts

Vance Pitter

John Pitt

Breanna Young

Jim Strickland

Haley Harp

Justin Brim

Donivan Parral

AUSTIN Thigpen

MARTIN Shackleton

Chad Jenkins

Capt. Care Faircloth

Dawn Bush

James Carnes

BOB GALLETTO

Ben Galletto

Johnny Jones

Jay Stroud

Danny Hall

Eddie Connell

Laney Connell

Kate Hester

Murray Critcher

D.B. Mee

Leroy Scott Jr

Ronnie Mitchell

Justin Mc

M.A. Gifford

Steven A. Rogers

Michael Davenport

NAME

Address

JOHNNIE WALKER

WILLOW MEADOW

Save Flounder Fishing

PLEASE SIGN TO KEEP THE DNR FROM CUTTING
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BUSTER GILLIS
BUSTERS OUTDOORS GUIDE SERVICE

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75

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Buster Gillis	
Kim Sneed	
Emily Stapleton	
Shane Britt	
Deven Britt	
Fidlynn Britt	
Faye Britt	
Fia Britt	
Van Johnson	
Pan Johnson	
John Smith	
Doug Smith	
Charles Stapleton	
Ken [unclear]	
Bobby Mills	

NAME

Address

Julie Gore

Mike Gore Jr.

Kimberly Gore

Stephanie Gore

Diana Boldan

Linda Maxwell

Hackney Deans

Colin Shaw

TIM GARNER

GENE MONROE

Eric Long

Christian Cannock

J.C. Myers

Diane Bailey

Chris Heafner

Justin Sipe

Randy Honeycutt

Jason Taylor

Dan Gudrum

John Thompson

Clinton Peep

Teresa Stork

~~John D. Gray~~

Scott A. Eyle

~~John D. Gray~~

Al Fulford

~~John D. Gray~~

Nathan Martin

Maria Martin

Wendi Keehey

Claude Keehey

Chuck Lewis

Amanda Lewis

Wesley Lewis

MARK - ADAMS

Richard Wisel

Ths will be

NAME

Address

WAYNE CORNELIUS

BERNIE LIBERTON

VALERIE LIBERTON

~~Will L. Gray~~
~~Paul D. Gray~~

Janie Dixon

Gregory Hanford

Conner Martin L

Schleper Daugherty

Chase Soyars

Billy Larson

Gary Wagner

Ram Lantz

Bruno Long

Lee Saly

Phil Ommet

Derosse Way

Jamie Morris

Trish Hodge

Aaron Medlin

Joe medlin

Amber Allison

[DENR.DMF.NewsRelease] Marine Fisheries Commission moves toward commercial and recreational flounder seasons

From : Smith, Tricia <tricia.smith@ncdenr.gov>
Sender : denr dmf newsrelease-bounces <denr.dmf.newsrelease-bounces@lists.ncmail.net>
Subject : [DENR.DMF.NewsRelease] Marine Fisheries Commission moves toward commercial and recreational flounder seasons
To : NCDENR.DENR.DMF.NewsRelease <DENR.DMF.NewsRelease@lists.ncmail.net>
Cc : NCDENR.Denr.dmf <Denr.dmf@lists.ncmail.net>

Mon, Jun 10, 2019 05:01 PM
1 attachment

Roy Cooper
Governor

Michael S. Regan
Secretary



Steve Murphey
Director

Release: Immediate
Date: June 10, 2019

Contact: [Patricia Smith](#)
Phone: 252-726-7021

Marine Fisheries Commission moves toward commercial and recreational flounder seasons

MOREHEAD CITY – The N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission is moving toward implementing commercial and recreational flounder seasons to end overfishing and rebuild the overfished southern flounder stock.

The commission voted last week to accept the recommendations of the Division of Marine Fisheries in their entirety as its preferred management options for Draft Amendment 2 to the Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan.

The division proposes a 62% reduction in southern flounder harvest (compared to 2017) in North Carolina this year and a 72% reduction in harvest beginning in 2020 to be achieved through commercial and recreational season closures. The division also proposes yardage and time restrictions for gill nets and prohibiting the use of puncturing devices, such as gaffs, in the pound net fishery.

The [specific Marine Fisheries Commission preferred management options](#) can be found on the [southern flounder information page](#) on the division's website.

Draft Amendment 2 to the Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan is now in the departmental and legislative review portion of the fishery management plan process.

The commission is scheduled to vote on final approval of the draft amendment and its management measures at its Aug. 21-23 meeting. If approved, the management measures would become effective immediately following the meeting and stay in place until adoption and implementation of Amendment 3 to the Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan, scheduled for completion in 2021.

Southern flounder is one of three main species of flounder landed on the North Carolina coast. The other two species are summer flounder and Gulf flounder.

Reductions in harvest are required because a 2019 South Atlantic Southern Flounder Stock Assessment found that southern flounder is overfished and overfishing is occurring throughout the region (North Carolina through the

eastern coast of Florida). Overfished means the population is too small. Overfishing means the removal rate is too high.

North Carolina law mandates that fishery management plans include measures to end overfishing within two years of adoption and rebuild the stock to achieve sustainable harvest within 10 years of adoption of a fishery management plan.

###

Website: <http://www.ncmarinefisheries.net>
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/ncdeq>
Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/NCDEQ>
RSS Feed: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/opa/news-releases-rss>
P.O. Box 769, 3441 Arendell St., Morehead City N.C. 28557

Patricia Smith
Communications Director
Division of Marine Fisheries
Division of Coastal Management
N.C. Department of Environmental Quality
252-808-8025 office
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Email correspondence to and from this address is subject to the North Carolina Public Records Law and may be disclosed to third parties.

DENR.DMF.NewsRelease mailing list
DENR.DMF.NewsRelease@lists.ncmail.net

*DMF Headquarter
App PO Box 769
Morehead City office*

From: [David Sneed](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Cc: [Nicholson, John A.](#); [Murphey, Steve](#); [Boltes, C](#); [Cross, Doug](#); [Posey, Martin H](#); [Blanton, Mike](#); [Kornegay, K](#); [Bizzell, Rob](#); [McNeill, Robert B](#); [Romano, Sam](#); [Hendrickson, Tom](#)
Subject: [External] MFC August Meeting Public Comments
Date: Thursday, August 15, 2019 4:57:37 PM
Attachments: [2019 August MFC meeting messaging.pdf](#)

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Good Afternoon Dana,

Please see the attached MFC Notes for inclusion in the MFC Meeting Briefing Book for the upcoming August meeting.

Thank you,

David A. Sneed
Executive Director
Coastal Conservation Association North Carolina



Major Policy Issues Ahead of August 2019 Meeting of the NC Marine Fisheries Commission

The NC Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) will consider an amendment to the Southern flounder Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) during their August meeting that includes severe cuts to both commercial and recreational harvest through seasonal closures. These management changes have been developed and proposed by the NC Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) scientists in response to the 2018 stock assessment for Southern flounder that indicates the fishery is overfished and is continuing to experience overfishing. It is expected that the recreational harvest of flounder will be closed after the August MFC meeting and will not reopen until the summer of 2020. The commercial harvest will be closed at varying times this fall based on gear and geographic location. The back story behind this seemingly disparate closure is that recreational fishermen have been fishing all year with harvest historically peaking in late summer, while much of the commercial harvest occurs in the fall. The scheduled closures for the different sectors will then result in approximately equal percentage reductions.

Despite years of warnings of overfishing from DMF scientists, the MFC has been unable to implement any meaningful harvest reductions of Southern flounder over the last 20 years because of continued denials, and the threat of lawsuits, from the commercial industry. We have reached the point where DMF scientists are now advising that the harvest of Southern flounder must be reduced by 72% to save the stock and begin rebuilding. The fact that we have allowed our resource to get to the point where our fisheries managers are now having to close harvest is an indictment of NC's history of poor fisheries management decisions. While many in the recreational community are just now realizing the magnitude of these pending closures, CCA NC has never wavered from our support of conservation measures needed to stop the decline of Southern flounder in North Carolina. Active support from the recreational community led to the 2015 Southern flounder supplement only to have it thrown out by a judge in 2017 as a result of a lawsuit filed by the NC Fisheries Association (NCFA) to block the needed harvest reductions. The 32% harvest reductions recommended in the 2015 supplement, denied and fought by the NCFA, do not look so bad now, do they? And in 2018 as DMF scientists began to express their concerns that Southern flounder stocks were now on the verge of collapse, recreational anglers were the first to call for immediate action to save the fishery, including a moratorium, if necessary. Any angst being expressed now by fishermen is simply an indictment of the apathy that has allowed them to ignore this coming storm.

The DMF insisted from the beginning of Amendment 2 that any harvest reductions had to be “equitable” across all sectors, commercial and recreational, despite the fact that Southern flounder harvest is not, nor has it ever been, equitable. Many recreational anglers joined with CCA NC to object to this distribution of the harvest reductions, supporting instead the premise that the commercial sector that took the most harvest, and contributed the most bycatch waste, should bear the heaviest cuts. In fact, the Southern Flounder Advisory Committee put forth a proposal, supported by CCA NC, that would have seen the commercial gill net fishery take the majority of the harvest reductions and the remaining reductions distributed between the cleaner commercial fisheries – pound nets and giggers.

From the DMF Commercial and Recreational Fishery Section presentation to the Southern Flounder Advisory Committee on January 9, 2019, the commercial fishing ex-vessel value landings of Southern flounder have averaged \$4.5 million annually between 2008-2017. During that same time period, commercial trips have averaged 84 pounds per trip at an average price paid to the fisherman of \$2.64

per pound. This amounts to an average of \$222 per trip. 76% of vessels land less than 1,000 pounds of Southern flounder per year. Recreational anglers averaged 2.5 million trips per year targeting Southern flounder during the same time period with an average annual expenditure of \$438 million.

On May 6, 2019, the DMF Southern Flounder FMP Plan Development Team presented their management options to the MFC based on their findings that, the most recent coast-wide stock assessment determined the stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring, and that reductions in total coast-wide removals are necessary to end overfishing within two years and recover the stock from an overfished state within a 10-year period. We have attended all of the Southern flounder Advisory Committee meetings and wish everyone could have attended any of the Southern Flounder meetings to hear the presentations by the DMF scientists on the status of the stock firsthand. We wish more people could have been at the MFC meeting when DMF Director Steve Murphey stated that he fears the stock is on the verge of collapse. Has any collapsed fishery ever been returned to commercial viability?

CCA NC supports the scientific findings of the DMF Plan Development Team and their efforts to end overfishing in two years and recover the stock from an overfished state within a 10-year period. This is a recognition that those of us who fish for sport can no longer simply be focused on our daily bag limit.

The NCFA, in its capacity of "Serving Commercial Fishing Families of North Carolina since 1952", has maintained their opposition to the Southern Flounder FMP Amendment stating in part that "the North Carolina Fisheries Association is opposed to any further action being taken by the Commission on 'Amendment 2' to the Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan." These proposed harvest reductions will be hard on both the commercial and recreational industries, but we will never have sustainable fisheries until we are willing to move our thinking beyond economic agendas. We need to fix this before it is too late.

Conservation of fish and wildlife in North Carolina and across the country has always been led by the sportsmen and sportswomen of North Carolina. This begins with our purchase of licenses and continues with the payment of excise taxes dedicated to wildlife conservation and is affirmed in our commitment to conservation through ethical angling and best harvest and release practices. Recreational anglers were the first to support harvest closures on Estuarine striped bass and Southern flounder if it was what was needed to save the fisheries from total collapse and begin to rebuild. We do not have a stock assessment on striped bass, but the best available science indicates nearly extirpated native fish, thus we were overfishing, and the fish are obviously overfished. CCA NC has called for an end to the commercial harvest of this put and take fishery for years to try to save what native Estuarine striped bass remained but the DMF would only support a complete moratorium. CCA NC continued to advocate for the removal of gill nets in the Tar-Pamlico and Neuse rivers as a condition of the moratorium and the ultimate action by the MFC to remove these nets was justified. The current stock assessment science for Southern flounder indicated that past management measures to reverse declining stocks were insufficient and guess what, the fish did not recover. If the science is not followed presently, it is likely Southern flounder will be in the same or worse position in 5 years at the next FMP.

Currently, we have been experiencing some good fishing in many parts of the state. The Southern flounder recreational catch has been good this season in many areas and if flounder stocks had a decent age structure these catches would be commonplace. The pictures showing up on social media have led

many in the recreational community to question the need for the more conservative management measures implemented for striped bass and under consideration for Southern flounder. But let's consider what has happened to bring about this positive change. A combination of a little management and a lot of two natural disasters – Matthew and Florence – took pressure off of these fish allowing them to escape harvest, grow and spawn another season.

In 2016 we saw the MFC vote for a universal 15" size limit for Southern flounder increasing the commercial size limit from 14" to 15". Due to a truncated age structure of small fish that did not meet the 15" size limit, more fish escaped harvest. We also had Hurricane Matthew in 2016, so effort was down again, and more fish escaped harvest. In 2018, we had Hurricane Florence, effort was down again, and fish escaped.

The Division is on the right track with Amendment 2 if you stop to consider how the “seasonal closure” due to Hurricanes Matthew and Florence took the pressure off of these fish and led to the outstanding fishing season for flounder we have experienced this year. The escapement from the 2016 and 2018 “closures” will help jump start the recovery that Amendment 2 will bring. We can then get Amendment 3 right.

It was also CCA NC that highlighted the disparity on harvest of ocean-caught flounder by commercial fishermen with a closure for recreational fishermen and must now insist that this disparity be addressed and corrected in Amendment 2 without delay. According to DMF biologists, only 3% of ocean-caught flounder are Southern flounder, the remaining 97% being Summer and Gulf flounder. We feel that access to the ocean flounder fishery should remain independent from inside Southern flounder management. Thus, both the non-Federally permitted SCFL holders and recreational fishermen should have access to these fish. Regulations for both sectors should remain in compliance with current and future ASMFC/MAFMC Summer flounder fisheries plans. It would be unfair to allow commercial flounder fishing and not allow recreational fishing or vice versa.

Nature has also played a role in helping us get the management of speckled trout back on track. We had Hurricane Matthew in October 2016. Effort was down and fish escaped to grow and spawn. We had a cold-stun event in late December 2017. Director Murphey followed FMP protocol taking appropriate management measures to close the fishery until June 15, 2018. Effort was down and fish escaped to grow and spawn. Then Hurricane Florence hit in September 2018 causing widespread devastation to coastal areas due to wind and historical flooding. Effort was down and fish escaped to grow and spawn.

We need to get the next Speckled Trout FMP right. We cannot expect to manage by natural disasters. We need to continue to take the pressure off of speckled trout to allow them the chance to grow and spawn. One way to assure strong annual year classes would be to ban all netting of speckled trout in the creeks where they go during the winter. The MFC should implement an annual seasonal prohibition on netting in the creeks and tributaries of all coastal rivers from January 1 to March 31 to protect the large, highly fecund female trout that overwinter in these creeks and canals.

The fact that the DMF scientists are now recommending the closure of important recreational fisheries, including estuarine striped bass and flounder, highlights the historical failure of past Marine Fisheries Commissions to protect the public's interest in our public trust resources. Past MFC's have deferred to the mandate from the commercial industry for "maximum sustainable harvest" and ignored the best available science in favor of denials and anecdotal evidence of stock status by the commercial industry. The NC General Assembly (NCGA) has also ignored the overwhelming evidence of declining fish stocks since the passage of the 1997 Fisheries Reform Act in deference to maximum harvest by the commercial net industries. Commercial harvest of Atlantic Croaker has declined 91% since 1997. Spot has declined 84%. Weakfish has declined 98%! CCA NC led the effort to introduce meaningful reform of the 1997 Fisheries Reform Act in 2017 with House Bill 867 in 2017, but it was defeated in large part because legislators felt it was "too big" to take on all at one time. This year, CCA NC helped push for passage of House Bill 483, a bill that would set minimum size limits for fish based on at least 75% of the stock reaching spawning size before they would be harvested. The concept behind H483 was from one minor section of HB 867, yet it has been criticized by some legislators because it "did not do enough" to address the real problems leading to our declining fish stocks. Bills like H483 are attempts to fix the failed FMP process. Unfortunately, they are last attempts. This bill, like all bills, is not perfect, but continuing on the current path is unacceptable.

The Commission is also scheduled to hear a Petition for Rulemaking from the NC Wildlife Federation on shrimp trawl bycatch reduction. Sport Fishing Magazine recently wrote about the effects of shrimp trawling on fish stocks stating, "The toll of this bycatch from tens of thousands of shrimp tows every year is a devastating, hidden impact on our ocean ecosystem." We urge the Commission to continue to look at how we can reduce the impact of shrimp trawling on our finfish populations, including Southern flounder, croaker and spot. And we continue to encourage the Commission to implement a Fisheries Management Plan for Spot. As was mentioned earlier, this once popular recreational fishery has been reduced by over 80% since 1997 and Atlantic Croaker and Spot continue to be the top two species impacted in shrimp trawl bycatch studies. Spot used to draw thousands of visitors to our coast every year with families that planned their vacations around our famous Spot runs. Those days are gone.

In his new book, "Fishing, Gone?" by Sid Dobrin, the author writes about what it really means to be a recreational angler, acknowledging from the start that recreational saltwater fishing is big business and big culture. **But the challenge is that if we are to move toward sustainable practices, we must first move toward ways of thinking about fish and fisheries beyond mere economic agendas.**

The speckled trout and flounder fisheries we are seeing today indicate we have a good start on recovery. Now is not the time to question the science and allow our MFC to repeat the sins of the past commissions. We encourage the Commission to continue to manage by putting the health of the resource first.

David Sneed, Executive Director
Coastal Conservation Association North Carolina

From: [Rona Johnson](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: [External] Admendment 2: Southern Flounder Fisheries Management Plan
Date: Thursday, August 15, 2019 7:10:15 PM

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Hello, Ms. Gillikin.

My name is Rona Johnson and I am a consumer of NC seafood and customer of Local Seafood in Raleigh. My family and I have been coming to North Carolina for over 30 years. We've purchased our retirement home a few years ago on . Our in-laws both work in the pound-net fishing industry at . I am very, very concerned about the drastic measures being recommended in Amendment 2 of the Southern Flounder Fisheries Management Plan. The sharp reduction in landings over two years will impact my access to NC seafood and I'm concerned about the long term viability of the industry itself if these reductions go into place. Please consider an expanded timeline for implementing the reductions. I fear a 62% reduction in 2019 and a 72% reduction in 2020 may put some in the seafood industry out of business.

Thank you.

Rona Johnson
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Paul Kizen](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: [External] Petition
Date: Thursday, August 15, 2019 8:39:59 PM

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I support the petition to protect juvenile fish from shrimp Trawling. Paul Kizen

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Flounder
Date: Thursday, August 15, 2019 10:38:59 PM

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From: Spooby .
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 10:24 PM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] Flounder

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Hello sir. My name is Michael Guthrie. I live in North Carolina. My family has been in county for decades now. We are promise lenders. We all fish for work or play. Flounder fishing is one of the best fish a person could eat which u know that. I grow up gigging and catching them. When I heard about the closure of the flounder my jaw dropped. See not only do I fish but I love taking my big family (6) to radio island to hangout and play. Well the last few times when went I personally counted 200 baby flounder on the banks of radio island. Furthermore if u go to the south or north of NC they still catch the same fish we do so if they aren't on board how is that helping the fisheries. I dont see how closing flounder fishing off is helping anything.

From: [Eddie Summers](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: [External] flounder
Date: Friday, August 16, 2019 6:00:45 AM

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I fish just about every weekend & sometimes a day or two during the week. Over the last 5 years (including this year), I have averaged 31 keeper flounders. Compared to what the commercial harvest is this is a very small drop in the bucket. Do away with internal nets & reduce the commercial harvest to replenish stocks of flounder, & leave the recreational limits as is. I know commercial have to make a living, but if season closes for all we all lose out. We're catching plenty of small flounder so they are there.

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If you as intended recipient have received this e-mail incorrectly, please notify the sender (via e-mail) immediately.

From: [Elizabeth Wiegand](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: [External] FlounderAmendments2
Date: Thursday, August 15, 2019 3:12:43 PM

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My name is Elizabeth Wiegand and I am a consumer of North Carolina seafood and a customer of Locals Seafood here in _____, NC.

I am concerned about the drastic measures being recommended in Amendment 2 of the Southern Flounder Fisheries Management Plan. The sharp reduction in landings over two years will impact my access to North Carolina seafood and I'm concerned about the long term viability of the industry itself if these reductions go into place.

Please consider an expanded timeline for implementing the reductions. I fear a 62% reduction in 2019 and a 72% reduction in 2020 may put some in the seafood industry out of business. Thank you.

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] The proposed closing of flounder for recreational fishermen
Date: Friday, August 16, 2019 9:48:49 AM

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From: Bryant, Stephen [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 11:02 PM
To: Nicholson, John A.; Bizzell, Rob
Subject: Fwd: [External] The proposed closing of flounder for recreational fishermen

FYI

Begin forwarded message:

From: Todd Lawson [REDACTED]
Date: August 15, 2019 at 9:44:54 AM EDT
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: [External] The proposed closing of flounder for recreational fishermen

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Do you actually think banning recreational flounder fishing while allowing commercial flounder fishing to continue will sit well at all with any of us? For years we have been throwing back shorts, just to have the comms come behind us and net them, keep them, and sell them. Now you say (using flawed science at best) there is a shortage of flounder, but we want the comms to be allowed to keep catching, while stopping the recs from fishing. So now, if I want a flounder dinner, I have to throw back what I caught, let the comm catch it, and then go to the fish market and pay \$13.00 a pound for it. REALLY? REALLY? I grew up here in NC, and NOBODY will take this right away from me, unless it is taken away from EVERYBODY. If it is true that there is a shortage, then it MUST be closed for EVERYBODY.

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Proposed flounder rules
Date: Friday, August 16, 2019 9:49:10 AM

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From: Stevie Yates [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 16, 2019 7:17 AM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] Proposed flounder rules

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Sir,

I urge you and your committee to vote NO on the new flounder rules. I agree that we need new regulations but stopping a person from catching 4 flounder a day is not the answer. Unless the South Carolina, Georgia, Florida and other southern states adopt the same regulations then we are trying to keep the flounder population recovered on the backs of NC anglers. All of the Southern states should be following the same regulations. Until that happens the other states will continue to benefit from the sacrifice of NC anglers.

Thanks for your time,
Stevie Yates

Sent from my iPad

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] flounder closing
Date: Friday, August 16, 2019 9:49:28 AM

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From: Warren Wisnewski [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 10:42 PM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] flounder closing

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When licenses were started years ago it was said the funds would be used to manage the fisheries and regulate the catches by hiring more staff to monitor the catches, nothing has changed. I have seen that recreational catches are greater than commercial (something I question), cut the harvest by decreasing the limit to 2 per day and outlaw gigging. Because gigging is done at night, it cannot be regulated and many think gigging is not 'sporting'. I doubt I will be renewing my license, flounder is my only target species.

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External]
Date: Friday, August 16, 2019 9:49:46 AM

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From: James Guthrie Jr [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 9:32 PM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External]

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This is James Guthrie. I am a spearfishing diver and I gig flounder on the wrecks and reefs and other fish as well. I think they need to leave it open maybe drop the limit or sizes myself I have seen a lot of flounder on the reefs and wreck. Maybe just leave it open to sport fishing. For diving and spearfishing and sport fishing please don't close it we need the sea food.

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Flounder Fishing
Date: Friday, August 16, 2019 9:50:25 AM

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From: Daniel Stephens [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 7:37 PM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] Flounder Fishing

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My thoughts.....

Closure of the season will do more harm than good. More people have been targeting flounder with anticipation of the closure. During the closure we can consider the fish “safe” from anglers. When/if the season opens back there will be a bounty on the flounder like it or not.

With the regulations going from a limit of 4 to a closure seems extreme. Coming from a lifetime license holder that enjoys recreational flounder fishing as well as them as table fare. This closure is absolute nonsense and I should have the right to keep at least one fish to eat for myself.

Thanks,

Daniel

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Flounder regulation
Date: Friday, August 16, 2019 9:50:39 AM

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From: Mike [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 7:29 PM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] Flounder regulation

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Please do not punish the recreational fisherman by closing the flounder season.

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Flounder closure
Date: Friday, August 16, 2019 9:50:53 AM

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From: Tim JONES [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 7:24 PM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] Flounder closure

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Sir

Please carefully weigh the proposals at hand. I read that commercial fishing accounts for 73 percent of the catch. If this is true please don't hit the hook and line people in an unfair manner. I respect the commercial fisherman making a living but please push for a fair settlement.

Thank you

Tim Jones

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Flounder Season
Date: Friday, August 16, 2019 9:51:06 AM

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From: Bruce Dail [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 5:19 PM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] Flounder Season

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Sir,

I'd like to start by thanking you for serving on this committee and also for taking the time to read my thoughts and opinions. I am a recreational fisherman from [REDACTED] Co. I do have family that are commercial fishermen. Rarely, if ever have I fished out of state; who would need to with the gifts we have right here at home! I do think we have a problem with fish stocks and overfishing in our state and I do think something needs to be done now to head off any further problems. I try to look at the situation from both sides of the table (rec vs commercial). The last thing I want to see is a new regulation that would effect people's pocketbook on either side of the equation; however, I think that is unavoidable! I'm sure you have more data at your disposal that I do; however, seeing fishing from both sides as I have, it's hard for me to believe that the recreational angler is having as large an impact on fish stocks as the commercial angler (be it flounder/trout/whatever species). For the recreational angler, I believe the best solution would be to utilize the "slot limit" type approach used with other species. This would keep the recreational fisherman (the vast majority of them) on the water, in the bait/tackle shops, on charters, at gas stations, hotels, etc. It would allow a selected harvest to ensure each fish reaches maturity and those larger fish (I'm presuming producing more eggs) to live and breed, while also allowing the recreational guy to enjoy the fruits of his labor and investment. While the rec guy would be giving up some of his fish, he'd still be able to keep some. I think most sportsman in the state would support/understand this approach. I realize there isn't much you can do on the commercial side that won't affect the bottom line of people trying to support themselves and their families. We know we need to reduce the harvest and the only way to do that is to cut the quota, which it turn hurts the bottom line for these families. I would hate for that to happen; however, if that's the only way, then that's the only way. The one thing I would offer on this; is that I believe we have out of state commercial fisherman, fishing our waters. Maybe not with their own license, but fishing under an in state commercial fisherman's license (not sure how all that works, or if it happens enough to amount to anything); but the fact remains, if your NC commercial guys were the only ones allowed to fish NC

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Proposed flounder closure
Date: Friday, August 16, 2019 9:52:09 AM

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 4:49 PM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] Proposed flounder closure

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Mr. Bizzell, to close flounder fishing for a year to recreational fishermen is to extreme. I don't understand how we can go from a 15 inch size limit and 4 per person daily creel limit to completely shutting it down. Then to allow comercial fishermen to set out their gill nets for a short season this fall seems biased. I'm all for a man making a living and feel that the comercial fishermen have a place as well as recreational fishermen but there has to be some middle ground. Instead of a complete closure maybe increase the size limit, decrease daily creel limit, make tighter restrictions for the gill nets, ect.

Thank you for your time.

Jared Snell

[REDACTED], Nc

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Proposed flounder closure
Date: Friday, August 16, 2019 9:55:04 AM

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From: Kyle Warren [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 4:34 PM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] Proposed flounder closure

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I urge you to please consider the repercussions of the proposed closure and kick this to the proposal to the curb where it belongs. The local waterman of this state and their families who have been doing commercial fishing for flounder for generations and our heritage are what you are targeting. This closure will wipe the very few waterman that still remain in this challenging line of work and the history and heritage go with it. Let's stop promoting imported seafood that is terrible for our people and start working towards helping local fisherman that have fed generations of North Carolinians fresh local wild caught seafood. You all are always targeting the small guy, not ever the mega corporations that actually have a negative impact on our fisheries, or the protected cormorants that eat pounds of fish per day that we are infested with. Please I urge you to reconsider voting in favor of this bill, for the waterman that taught me everything. None of us have done anything to deserve seeing this cherished fishery taken from us. Anyone who has fished commercially for flounders will tell you this fishery is healthy. If you are seeing deflated numbers its only because fisherman have been going out of business for decades because every new committee brings new regulations that make it harder to stay in this business. Please look out for the small guy for once.

- [REDACTED] Native, [REDACTED] resident.



KYLE WARREN

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
Office [REDACTED] | Cell [REDACTED]
Off The Hook Yacht Sales, NC, LLC
[REDACTED]

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Proposed Flounder Restrictions
Date: Friday, August 16, 2019 9:57:05 AM

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From: backthepack83 [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 2:26 PM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] Proposed Flounder Restrictions

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I am emailing in hopes that you strongly reconsider the actions you have proposed on flounder. I live in the morehead city area and can tell you this year has been a great year so far for flounder fishing. What you have proposed is an extreme measure that will greatly hurt my community and the great people that live in it. There are a lot of guides that make there money by taking people flounder fishing and this could quite possibly put some of those guys out of business and hurt other local businesses by not getting the customers that visit our area for the flounder fishing. There has to be a compromise, what you have proposed is ridiculous & absurd. I can take you on my boat just about any time and guarantee you we can catch flounder. If there is a shortage this is not the way to rebound, cut the limit to two and make a slot like the redfish have so the big females can lay eggs for a few years, anything like that would work but to just about completely shut down the fishery is not the answer. I am asking for myself, my community and my fellow anglers that you don't take these drastic measures and come up with a reasonable solution.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Flounder
Date: Friday, August 16, 2019 9:57:25 AM

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From: shawn tutor [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 2:03 PM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] Flounder

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Can you tell me how the proposed flounder closing will affect the commercial fisherman? From what I have read I do not see where they will be affected in anyway. They set net from September till November now and do not set them in our months. North Carolina would be better served if they would ban nets in all sounds. All states that have band nets in inshore waters have a thriving Fishery.

Thanks you

Shawn Tutor

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Ralph Lassiter](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: [External] Opposing Amendment 2 of the Southern Flounder Fisheries Management Plan
Date: Friday, August 16, 2019 10:20:37 AM

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My name is Ralph Lassiter and I am a recreational fisherman, a consumer of North Carolina seafood, and a customer of [Locals Seafood](#) here in [REDACTED], NC.

I am concerned about the drastic measures being recommended in Amendment 2 of the Southern Flounder Fisheries Management Plan. The sharp reduction in landings over two years will impact my access to North Carolina seafood and I'm concerned about the long term viability of the industry itself if these reductions go into place.

Please consider an expanded timeline for implementing the reductions. I fear a 62% reduction in 2019 and a 72% reduction in 2020 may put some in the seafood industry out of business.

Thank you.

Ralph Lassiter
[REDACTED]

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Flounder season
Date: Friday, August 16, 2019 12:04:57 PM

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From: Michael Bass [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 16, 2019 10:20 AM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] Flounder season

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Mr. Bizzell, I'm emailing you concerning the upcoming rumor of Flounder season closure for NC. I want you to consider an alternative as this decision will affect a lot of people and communities. I don't live at the beach but I travel there to fish every chance I get, I was looking forward to Flounder fishing this coming Fall but if the season closes I, along with many others, will be spending our money going to South Carolina or Virginia. This means a decrease in our state's eastern communities revenue. In return I fear this will increase prices and make it harder for their families. The current limit is 4 flounder per person not to be less than 15" total length. It makes more sense to me to drop the daily limit to 3 flounder with total length no less than 18". That's just my idea, at least that way it keeps revenue flowing through our state instead of sending it to another state. However the bigger problem is the nets, they need to be pushed offshore otherwise a season closure will do nothing to protect the Flounder population in our state. My biggest question to you is this, why is North Carolina the only state that allows gill nets to be used this close to shore?

Thank you for your time.

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] up coming Flounder proposal
Date: Friday, August 16, 2019 2:31:10 PM

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From: matthew lamb [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 16, 2019 2:20 PM
To: Bizzell, Rob; Boltos, C; Hendrickson, Tom; Kornegay, K; Posey, Martin H; McNeill, Robert B; Blanton, Mike; Cross, Doug; Romano, Sam
Subject: [External] up coming Flounder proposal

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Hello, we wanted to touch base with you all on the up coming Flounder meeting and the proposal that's on the table.

1. We have and will continue to stand for smart management actions that promote fish abundance and fair access for current and future generations.
 2. Like our shop, many up and down the coast are independently owned and operated, we get to see a glimpse of each fishery in our area through our customers, staff, and charters. Our opinions are a reflection of what we see daily, and thankfully we are entitled to them.
 3. The flounder fishery for our shop is a large portion of our yearly sales, each seasonal fishery plays a role in the bottom line. However, our options are not solely based on money and reject those who wish to disregard any options we may have by claiming such. We can assure those who may question, that we would support regulations if we to the best of our knowledge felt they were justified to insure healthy stocks and resulting business.
 4. We have been told that in part the reductions come due to a statute in state law that requires when a state managed fish, with a state fisheries management plan, is deemed to be overfished and overfishing is occurring, that actions must be taken to end it within two years and rebuild the stock within 10 years.
- This two and ten year requirement is not based on any science related to flounder life history we are aware of.
 - We are unaware of any other state that has this same legal requirement. It should be noted that SC GA and FL, states that make up southern flounder stock do not have this requirement and we are told will not be taking any management action.

This in our opinion is unacceptable, it appears we are forced to take action within a timeline not based on science while being unable to take other actions some scientists feel we should (like a slot size, that actually might work for the fishery)

Thanks, For Your Time.

Capt. Matt Lamb (Owner)

Chasin Tails Outdoors Bait & Tackle



From: [Justin Pasfield](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#); [Ryan Speckman](#); [Walker Bradham](#)
Subject: [External] Amendment 2 Southern Flounder
Date: Friday, August 16, 2019 3:57:20 PM
Attachments: [LOB letter to NCMFC.pdf](#)

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Hello Chairman Bizzell and Marine Fisheries Commissioners,

Attached is a letter submitted on behalf of Locals Seafood Market and Oyster Bar. We are very concerned about the impact that this bill will have on coastal communities and small businesses.

We appreciate your consideration of our point of view. Please let me know if we can be of further assistance.

Respectfully,

Justin Pasfield


August 16, 2019

To: NC Marine Fisheries Commission

Subject: Draft Amendment 2's impact on families and small businesses

Locals Seafood Market and Oyster Bar ("Locals") is located in [REDACTED] in [REDACTED], NC. We are affiliated with our seafood distributor, Locals Seafood. We are a growing business, and employ 80+ people between the two companies. Locals' serves as a flagship location for the North Carolina seafood industry in the [REDACTED]. We connect the people of North Carolina to the seafood harvested in this state. We also shine a light on the coastal communities and educate citizens about our state's public trust resources. We share common goals of advancing responsible fisheries management, and protecting our resources for future generations. With that mission in mind, we are deeply concerned about the adverse impact that the heavy handed restrictions of Amendment 2 will have on those most vulnerable: coastal families and small businesses. Therefore, we **oppose** the implementation of Amendment 2 as written.

Our coastal communities have a rich history of independent watermen and women harvesting and caring for our waters. This small business tradition has kept these communities vibrant, authentic, and has played a large part in preserving our coastlines. For generations, many of these families and small businesses have fought off other market and natural forces while struggling to survive. This important piece of North Carolina culture has endured, and has seen signs of renewed support. We are deeply connected to these communities, and feel an obligation to speak out on their behalf. We fear that a well-intentioned, but mis-informed, effort to protect the southern flounder will unnecessarily jeopardize the future of these families and small businesses.

For example, the broad closures proposed include all fishing methods. Amendment 2 would essentially eliminate the long tradition of pound net fishing in North Carolina. Dating back to Native Americans inhabiting the Ocracoke areas, this method involves building strategically placed nets to corral fish so that they can be harvested live. Already tightly regulated, fishermen work within the corral to sort the daily catch, harvest the targeted species and release by-catch.

These broad and simplistic closures proposed will inevitably result in attrition in the fishing industry. The larger, deep-pocketed commercial ventures will likely increase their market share as a result. This will lead to an increased percentage of fish being exported outside the state of North Carolina. Due to these market forces, this bill will ironically result in denying our residents access to our state's resources. This unintended result should be seriously examined. There is cultural value in keeping a significant portion of North Carolina's seafood in-state. This is accomplished through these smaller scale fish houses and businesses.

It is worth noting that, just as important as the southern flounder, this bill will have an impact on other less-targeted species such as red drum, black drum, speckled trout, and sheepshead. Many of these small fisheries have carved out a regional market. The broad regulations

LOCALS Oyster BAR

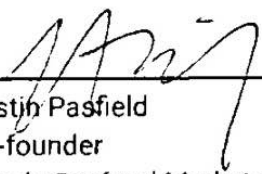
proposed in Amendment 2 will greatly reduce the viability of this growing area of the local fishing industry.

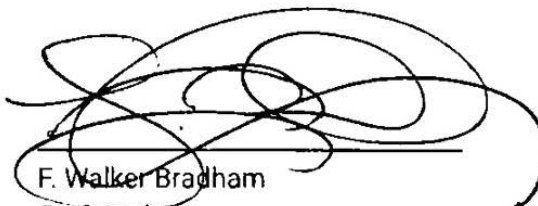
As noted above, we share the same goals of preservation and sustainability. We believe that it is possible to ensure the long-term viability of both the southern flounder population, and the small businesses and communities that are also worth protecting. More strategic and narrowly-tailored approaches should be considered to accomplish the same objective. We encourage the NCDMF to explore alternative strategies to accomplish these goals.

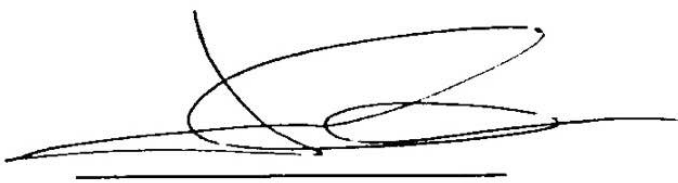
Most notably, we believe that a far greater threat to the coastal ecosystem is the decline in water quality brought on by uncontrolled coastal development and run-off. If unchecked, our inland waters will go the way of Florida, New Jersey, and Louisiana. We feel that more resources need to be devoted to improving water quality for future generations, for reasons that go beyond just the fishing industry. At the very least, we believe that an expanded timeline for implementing the reductions could help ease the sudden impact that these regulations will have on the small businesses.

We hope that you will take our concerns into consideration. We are genuinely concerned about the impact that these regulations will have on coastal working families, who have often fallen through the cracks. If you would like to get a deeper understanding of our perspective, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,


Justin Pasfield
Co-founder
Locals Seafood Market and Oyster Bar


F. Walker Bradham
Co-founder
Locals Seafood Market and Oyster Bar


Jeff Clarke
Co-founder
Locals Seafood Market and Oyster Bar

From: [Bizzell, Rob](#)
To: [Gillikin, Dana](#)
Subject: Fwd: [External] Flounder Fishing
Date: Friday, August 16, 2019 9:50:11 AM

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From: Larry Elmore [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2019 7:55 PM
To: Bizzell, Rob
Subject: [External] Flounder Fishing

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Mr. Bizzell

My name is Larry Elmore and I live in [REDACTED] NC. I have been fishing the area around Harkers Island and Cape Lookout for about 55 years. I started work with Gulf Oil Company and was responsible for an annual fall fishing trip for all the employees at the terminal in [REDACTED] NC. For about 5 years before being transferred to the Charlotte Office. We would drift fish for Flounder then and I thought fishing was very good. I now fish a lot more since I am retired and truly love this area. Since being here full time and fishing a lot more I can speak with authority in saying that Flounder fishing is the best it's ever been. I see no shortage in Flounder. The numbers have been great this year for me as well as the size. I have boated some great fish this year.

I suggest maybe increasing the length to maybe 16 inches instead of 15 inches and change the limit to 3 per day or even 2 per day. Please don't take this fish away from us completely. I take a lot of Kids fishing with me and They truly love the Flounder fishing.

Thanks for your help in this very important decision.

Larry Elmore
[REDACTED]

Please call me if you have time.

Sent from my iPhone