

# DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

ASMFC

MAFMC

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HMS

PROTECTED RESOURCES UPDATE

LANDINGS UPDATE

RULES SUSPENSION UPDATE



# ASMFC

**ASMFC SUMMER SUMMARY WILL BE ADDED AS  
SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL PRIOR TO THE  
AUGUST MEETING**



# MAFMC



## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 20, 2020

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### Council Approves Changes to Management of *Illex* Fishery

Last week the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council approved an amendment that proposes modifications to the permitting and management of the *Illex* squid fishery. These changes are intended to both reduce excess capacity in the fishery and mitigate the rapid use of the quota seen in recent years. The amendment also revises the goals and objectives of the Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish (MSB) Fishery Management Plan (FMP). After considerable discussion and consideration of public comments, the Council selected preferred alternatives and adopted the amendment for Secretarial review and implementation. Below are summaries of the issues and the Council’s preferred alternatives.

#### *Illex* Permitting

In June 2017, the Council considered, but did not adopt, revisions to *Illex* squid permits as part of Amendment 20 to the MSB FMP. Since then, effort and landings have substantially increased, and the fishery closed early in 2017-2019 after harvesting the *Illex* squid quota. Given recent fishery performance, the Council initiated this amendment to evaluate whether permitted access to the *Illex* fishery should be modified based on present and historical participation, and/or other considerations. The amendment considered a range of permitting alternatives, including various time periods and thresholds for permit re-qualification and options for a tiered permitting system.

During last week’s meeting, the Council reviewed analyses and public comments and heard additional public testimony from fishery participants both in favor of, and opposed to, potential changes to *Illex* permitting. The Council ultimately voted to implement a tiered permitting system. The proposed tiers, qualification criteria, and trip limits are described in the table below.

	<b>Qualification Criteria</b>	<b>Trip Limit</b>
<b>Tier 1</b>	<i>Either:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landed at least 500,000 pounds in one year between 1997 and 2013</li> <li><u>OR</u></li> <li>• Purchased and installed a refrigerated seawater system, plate freezing system, or blast freezer between January 1, 2012 and August 2, 2013 and landed a minimum of 200,000 pounds of <i>Illex</i> in the 2013 fishing year</li> </ul>	None
<b>Tier 2</b>	• Landed at least 100,000 pounds in one year between 1997 and 2018	62,000 pounds
<b>Tier 3</b>	• Landed at least 50,000 pounds in one year between 1997 and 2018	20,000 pounds

Under this tiered permitting system, of the 75 current limited access moratorium permits, it is estimated that 35 would qualify for Tier 1, 13 would qualify for Tier 2, 2 would qualify for Tier 3, and 25 would not qualify for any Tier. The Council acknowledged that this action would have positive and negative

economic consequences for some fishery participants but ultimately concluded that the selected alternative best balanced the needs of historic participants, present participants, and dependent fishing communities.

### ***Other Illex Management Measures***

The Council also voted to require that Tier 1 permit holders obtain a baseline measurement of their vessel fish hold volume. These permit holders would then be subject to a 10% upgrade restriction. This measure is intended to help freeze the footprint of the fishery and avoid additional over-capitalization. The amendment would also clarify that daily catch reporting of *Illex* is required via Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) for vessels with limited access *Illex* permits.

### ***Next Steps and Additional Information***

The Council will submit this amendment to the Secretary of Commerce for approval and implementation. Updates will be posted on the Council's website at <http://www.mafmc.org/actions/illex-permitting-msb-goals-amendment>. For additional information about this action, contact Jason Didden at [jdidden@mafmc.org](mailto:jdidden@mafmc.org) or (302) 526-5254.

## June 2020 Council Meeting Report

The following summary highlights actions taken and issues considered at the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's meeting June 16-18, 2020. This meeting was conducted by webinar due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Presentations, briefing materials, and webinar recordings are available at <http://www.mafmc.org/briefing/june-2020>.

During this meeting, the Council:

- Reviewed scoping comments and provided input on draft alternatives for the Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocation Amendment\*
- Received preliminary results of an updated summer flounder commercial/recreational allocation model\*
- Provided input on the range of alternatives to be considered in the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment\*
- Reviewed a draft outline of topics under consideration through the Recreational Reform Initiative and directed staff to determine which items could be addressed through a framework/addendum and which would require an amendment\*
- Revised the range of alternatives to be considered in the Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment and directed the Fishery Management Action Team to incorporate alternatives that would allow states to have a minimum default allocation\*
- Adopted *Illex* squid specifications for 2021, including an Acceptable Biological Catch of 30,000 metric tons and a quota of 28,644 metric tons, and recommended additional measures to help avoid overages
- Received four presentations on habitat-related updates and activities within the region
- Reviewed a report on commercial landings of unmanaged species from Maine through North Carolina and commercial landings of the species managed through the Council's Unmanaged Forage Omnibus Amendment
- Approved changes to the Overfishing Limit Coefficient of Variation guidance document as recommended by the Scientific and Statistical Committee
- Received an update on planning for a Research Set-Aside Workshop and discussed the feasibility of holding an in-person workshop in the fall
- Directed staff to draft a letter expressing concern about the redeployment of observers and at-sea monitors on fishing vessels beginning July 1 during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic
- Reviewed several hybrid meeting options and agreed to continue meeting via webinar for the near term to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19
- Reviewed Executive Order 13921 on Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth and briefly discussed next steps for developing a response

*\* Items denoted with an asterisk (\*) were undertaken during joint meetings with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board and Bluefish Management Board.*

### Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocation Amendment

The Council met jointly with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board (Board) to review scoping comments and draft management alternatives for a joint amendment and addendum which will consider changes to the allocations of the black sea bass commercial quota among states. This action will also consider whether these allocations should be added to the Council's fishery management plan (FMP) or if they should remain only in the Commission's FMP. The Council and Board agreed to remove hybrid approaches from further consideration in this action. They

also modified the range of sub-options considered under the trigger approach and added an alternative to consider federal in-season closures when the coastwide quota plus an additional buffer is projected to be reached. The appropriate buffer will be further considered during the next joint meeting. They agreed to continue development of all other management approaches presented. The Council and Board will consider approval of a final range of management alternatives and a draft document for public comment during a joint meeting in August, which would allow public hearings to take place in the fall.

### Summer Flounder Commercial/Recreational Allocation Study Model Update

The Council and Board received preliminary results of an updated economic model, developed by Dr. Kurt Schnier (University of California, Merced) and Dr. Rob Hicks (College of William & Mary), to evaluate the allocation of total allowable landings between the commercial and recreational summer flounder fisheries. The model, first developed in 2016, was updated to include revised Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) data as well as revised commercial data through 2018. The model evaluates the marginal economic benefits of various allocation levels to the commercial and recreational sectors. A final report on the update is still in development, but preliminary results suggest that changes in allocations between sectors in either direction could potentially be supported due to the large overlap of uncertainty bounds for the marginal willingness to pay for each sector. The model developers found that it is likely, but not statistically significant, that increasing the recreational allocation from the current 40% allocation of landings would increase overall benefits from the fisheries. The Council and Board will consider the final results when developing and analyzing potential summer flounder allocation changes through the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment.

### Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment

The Council and Board reviewed recommendations from the Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT) on the range of alternatives to be considered in the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment. This amendment will review and potentially modify the allocations of total allowable catch or landings between the commercial and recreational sectors for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass. The Council and Board agreed to move forward with the FMAT's recommendation for a refined range of management alternatives. Approaches retained for further consideration include:

- Updating existing base years with revised data
- Options for revised base years
- An alternative that aims to maintain approximately status quo harvest by sector from 2018-2019 under the current ABCs
- Approaches with different allocations above and below a specified trigger
- Options for averaging several different allocation options
- Recreational sector separation between the for-hire and private/shore recreational modes
- Allocation transfers
- Options for future allocation changes to be made through a framework or addendum process.

The Council and Board expect to approve a final range of alternatives during a joint meeting in August. Additional information regarding the amendment process and timeline is available at:

<https://www.mafmc.org/actions/sfsbsb-allocation-amendment>.

The Council and Board agreed that three of the issues removed from this amendment warrant further consideration through a separate process. These items are briefly described below.



- **"Harvest control rule" based approaches:** This conceptual approach was submitted by six recreational organizations during the scoping process. After reviewing a number of concerns raised by the FMAT, including possible inconsistency with Magnuson-Stevens Act requirements as currently configured, the Council and Board agreed that the concepts in this proposal would be more appropriate to explore through a separate action such as the Recreational Reform Initiative (see the following section).
- **Recreational accountability alternatives:** The Council and Board agreed that recreational accountability could be addressed within the other management alternatives being considered and that major changes to the system of accountability measures are beyond current scope of this action.
- **Recreational catch accounting alternatives:** The Council and Board agreed that this is an important issue, especially in terms of reducing uncertainty in the recreational data, but concluded that it falls outside the scope of this allocation action. It was also noted that recreational catch accounting may be more appropriate to pursue for all recreationally managed species, including those under other FMPs, outside of this amendment.

After discussing how to best address these issues, the Council and Board agreed to consider initiating a joint action by the end of 2020 to consider recreational accountability and catch accounting. As described below, some of these topics may be addressed through a management action associated with the Recreational Reform Initiative.

### Recreational Reform Initiative

The Council and Board reviewed a draft outline of topics under consideration through the Recreational Reform Initiative. This initiative addresses summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish, all of which are managed jointly by the Council and Commission. After considering the topics currently under consideration in this initiative, as well as items removed from further consideration through the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment (see above), the Council and Board tasked staff with determining which items could be addressed through a joint framework/addendum and which changes would require an amendment. The Council and Board plan to further consider all potential recreational management approaches discussed through this action to date and will consider initiating a joint management action to address priority topics before the end of 2020.

### Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment

The Council met jointly with the ASMFC's Bluefish Management Board to review recommendations from the FMAT on the range of alternatives to be considered in the Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment. The Council and Board voted to remove several alternatives which would use the Northeast Fishery Science Center's recreational discard estimation method for developing allocations. The Council and Board also requested that the FMAT include a new set of alternatives to explore the ability for states to have a minimum default allocation. The following issues will continue to be further developed and will be presented to the Council and Board at a joint meeting in August:

- Fishery management plan goals and objectives
- Recreational/commercial sector allocations
- Commercial allocations to the states (including minimum default allocations)
- Regional commercial quotas
- Commercial state-to-state quota transfers
- Recreational/commercial sector transfers
- Rebuilding plan
- Sector specific management uncertainty
- Recreational sector separation between the for-hire and private/shore recreational modes

- *De minimis* provision to relieve states from having to adopt fishery regulations

The Council and Board expect to approve a final range of alternatives at the joint December meeting, with the goal of submitting the final environmental assessment to NOAA fisheries by September 2021 (which is within the rebuilding timeline). For more detailed information regarding the amendment process and timeline visit <https://www.mafmc.org/actions/bluefish-allocation-amendment>.

### **Illex 2020-2021 Specifications**

The Council adopted 2021 *Illex* squid specifications of a 30,000 MT (66.1 million pounds) Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) and a 28,644 MT (63.1 million pounds) quota (the lower quota accounts for discards). This represents a 15% increase. The Council also adopted a 48-hour *Illex* reporting requirement for dealers after July 15 until a directed fishery closure, and a lowered directed fishery closure threshold of 94%, both to help avoid overages in 2021. The Council also requested NOAA Fisheries use its in-season adjustment authority to raise the 2020 quota in the same manner and will request that dealers voluntarily report 2020 *Illex* landings within 48-hours. Improved projection approaches by NOAA Fisheries will also help avoid overages in 2020 and 2021.

### **Update on Habitat Activities**

The Council received presentations on two projects occurring within the region that support work related to the Council's habitat and ecosystem priorities as identified in its Strategic Plan. Victoria Kentner (NOAA Fisheries Northeast Fisheries Science Center) and Chris Haak (NOAA Fisheries NEFSC/Monmouth University) presented on the Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment and Emily Farr (NOAA Fisheries) presented on the recently completed Northeast Habitat Climate Vulnerability Assessment. In addition, NOAA Fisheries Habitat Conservation Division Staff (Karen Green and Sue Tuxbury) provided the Council with a bi-annual update on projects of interest occurring in the Northeast region. This update included topics such as the status of offshore wind development projects, oil and gas exploratory surveys, and noted the new Presidential Executive Order as it relates to aquaculture. Finally, the Executive Director of the Responsible Offshore Science Alliance, Lyndie Hice-Dunton, provided the Council with an update on their work to date.

### **Unmanaged Landings Update**

The Council reviewed a report on commercial landings from Maine through North Carolina of species that are not managed at the state or federal level, as well as commercial landings of the species managed through the Council's Unmanaged Forage Omnibus Amendment as Ecosystem Components. The goal of this report is to look for signs of developing unmanaged commercial fisheries in the northeast region. The Council agreed that this report did not show any noteworthy increases in unmanaged commercial landings, or landings of Ecosystem Component species, over the past 5 years. They agreed that this report is useful and will continue to receive annual updates of this information.

### **Committee Reports**

#### ***SSC Report***

Dr. Paul Rago, SSC chair, provided a summary of the SSC's meeting on May 12-13, 2020. Dr. Michael Wilberg, University of Maryland, was elected vice-chair of the SSC and replaces Dr. Tom Miller who served as SSC vice-chair for over 10 years. The SSC also reviewed and made suggested revisions of the Overfishing Limit (OFL) Coefficient of Variation (CV) guidance document that was initially approved by the Council in 2019. This document is used by the SSC when considering scientific uncertainty when making ABC recommendations. The changes made to the document help clarify and provide additional rationale when evaluating nine different decision criteria used to determine the appropriate OFL CV. The Council approved the revised OFL CV guidance document with the suggested revisions from the SSC.

### ***Research Steering Committee***

The Council reviewed a summary of the Research Steering Committee's meeting on April 28 to discuss redevelopment of the RSA program and a possible workshop later this fall. Following the committee report, the Council discussed the feasibility of holding an in-person workshop this fall given the continued health risks associated with COVID-19. After some discussion, the Council tasked staff to continue exploring venues and dates that may be able to accommodate an in-person workshop. If an in-person workshop is not feasible this fall due to social distancing protocols, the Council recommended waiting to host the workshop until 2021. A decision on whether to postpone will be made by Council/Committee leadership within the next few months.

### **Other Business**

#### ***Redeployment of Observers and At-Sea Monitors on July 1***

The Council received an update from the NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) on plans to redeploy observers and at-sea monitors on July 1 for vessels with Greater Atlantic Region fishing permits. Observer requirements have been waived since March 20 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Council members and members of the public voiced concern that this action will threaten the health of fishing crews as well as observers. It was noted that the risk of transmission is particularly high given the close quarters on most vessels and the transience of observers who travel around the region. The Council tasked staff with writing a letter to communicate these concerns. This letter was sent on June 23 and is available at <https://www.mafmc.org/correspondence>.

#### ***2020 Meeting Planning***

The Council discussed how and when to resume in-person meetings and considered several options for holding "hybrid" meetings, which could allow a combination of in-person and remote participation. Given the continued public health risk posed by COVID-19, the Council plans to continue meeting via webinar for the near future.

#### ***Executive Order on Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth***

Last month, the President signed Executive Order 13921 on Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth and tasked the regional fishery management councils with developing prioritized lists of recommended actions to reduce burdens on domestic fishing and to increase production within sustainable fisheries. The Council briefly discussed next steps for generating a list of recommendations. Council staff will be circulating feedback forms for Council members and members of the public within the coming weeks.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the full Council will be held via webinar on **July 16, 2020**. The purpose of this meeting is to take final action on the Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish FMP Goals/Objectives and *Illex* Permits Amendment. Details will be posted at: <https://www.mafmc.org/council-events/2020/july16-council-meeting-webinar>. A complete list of upcoming meetings can be found at <https://www.mafmc.org/council-events>.



# SAFMC



# South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 12, 2020

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### **Council Addresses Broad Range of Federal Fisheries Issues During Meeting Week**

*Best fishing practices; new stock assessments for King Mackerel, Red Porgy, and Greater Amberjack, Special Management Zones; and COVID-19 impacts top the agenda*

Members of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council held their quarterly June meeting this week via webinar due to COVID-19 and public health concerns. The meeting, originally scheduled to take place in Key West, Florida, began with a discussion of best fishing practices, emphasizing the Council's outreach campaign and new resources for fishermen now available from the [Council's website](#). Information includes proper handling techniques, identifying signs of barotrauma, how-to videos demonstrating effectiveness of descending devices, and an online tutorial. Links to state-level resources for the region are also available through the new webpage. Council members have consistently supported the use of best practices to help improve survival of released fish. In September 2019, the Council approved Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 29 requiring descending devices be onboard and readily available when fishing for snapper grouper species and other measures promoting best practices. NOAA Fisheries announced the [Final Rule for Regulatory Amendment 29](#) earlier today, implementing the best fishing practice measures effective July 15, 2020.

NOAA Fisheries recently announced the opening of the Red Snapper season for both recreational and commercial fishermen, with a recreational season scheduled for the weekend of July 10, 11, 12, and the following Friday, July 17, 2020. "We encourage fishermen to take advantage of instructional videos and other best fishing practices information available online prior to the opening of this year's Red Snapper season," explained Council Chair, Jessica McCawley. During the Council meeting state agency representatives provided updates on sampling efforts planned for the recreational opening, including carcass collections and dockside sampling, dependent upon restrictions in place for COVID-19.

### **COVID-19 Impacts**

The Council discussed the impacts of COVID-19 on fisheries and fishing communities after receiving input from its advisory panels, updates from state agencies, and public comment, most noting the detrimental effects on fishing-related businesses including for-hire and commercial fishermen. There was much discussion about the economic importance of the Red Snapper fishery and the benefit of additional fishing days. However, under the mandates of Magnuson-Stevens Act, the Council must adhere to the current annual catch limit and cannot simply add additional fishing days. The Council agreed to send a letter to the Secretary of Commerce addressing Red Snapper concerns and the effects of the pandemic, as well as expressing their willingness to work with NOAA Fisheries to expand access to the fishery.

In an effort to help mitigate some of the negative impacts of COVID-19, the Council will request that NOAA Fisheries take emergency action to increase the federal recreational bag limit for Atlantic King Mackerel to 4 fish per person/day off east Florida through the Mid-Atlantic and request emergency action to increase the

federal commercial trip limit for Vermilion Snapper to 1,500 pounds gutted weight. If approved, the emergency actions would be effective for 180 days and could be extended for an additional 185 days. It is anticipated the new regulations could be implemented within the next three months. The Council will consider requesting emergency action during its September meeting to allow the carry-over of unused annual catch limits from 2020 into 2021 after reviewing additional analyses.

### **Stock Assessments**

There was good news regarding Atlantic King Mackerel and Greater Amberjack stocks following recent assessments that found neither stock overfished nor undergoing overfishing. Council members received the results of recent stock assessments from NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center and recommendations from its Scientific and Statistical Committee during this week's meeting. Harvest has remained relatively consistent and both the King Mackerel and Greater Amberjack stocks have benefited from strong recruitment years (lots of fish born within the year). The Council will develop amendments to adjust catch levels and allocations as needed based on the recent assessments and recommendations.

The Red Porgy stock continues to face challenges. Despite a rebuilding plan being in place for almost 3 decades, the stock assessment finds Red Porgy remains overfished and is undergoing overfishing, with chronically low recruitment. The Council will begin work on an amendment to end overfishing and address rebuilding the stock.

### **Special Management Zones**

The Council approved the designation of specified artificial reefs in federal waters off the North Carolina and South Carolina coasts as Special Management Zones, addressing concerns from members of the Council's Law Enforcement Advisory Panel regarding how the circular shape of areas complicates enforcement. At the states' request, the Council approved Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 34 that would designate 30 artificial reef sites off of North Carolina and 4 sites off of South Carolina as Special Management Zones. The designations would limit fishing gear types when targeting snapper grouper species and restrict harvest by spear to recreational bag limits for the SMZs in North Carolina. In South Carolina, the harvest of snapper grouper species in the designated SMZs would be limited to recreational bag limits. The amendment must be approved by the Secretary of Commerce before implementation.

### **Other Business**

Council members continued to develop management actions for Dolphin and Wahoo through draft Amendment 10 to the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plan. The Council received fishing level recommendations for both species from its Scientific and Statistical Committee using recalibrated recreational fishing effort estimates from NOAA Fisheries' Marine Recreational Information Program. The new catch levels will be included in the amendment as the Council considers management actions that include modifications to accountability measures, allocations, and current vessel limits for Dolphin. The Council received numerous public comments from recreational fishermen and for-hire captains in South Florida and the Florida Keys expressing concerns about the decline of the Dolphin fishery in their area.

Additional information about this week's meeting, including a Story Map highlighting actions, Committee Reports, and Summary Motions are available from the Council's website at: <https://safmc.net/june-2020-council-meeting-details/>. The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for September 14-18, 2020 in Charleston, South Carolina.

**The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, one of eight regional councils, conserves and manages fish stocks from three to 200 miles offshore of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and east Florida.**

**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council**  
**SUMMARY OF APPROVED COUNCIL MOTIONS**

June 8-11, 2020

This is a summary of the motions approved by the Council. Motions addressing actions and alternatives for FMP amendments are followed by text showing the result of the approved motion. Complete details on motions and other committee recommendations are provided in the Committee Reports available on the SAFMC website.

**Information & Education Committee**

MOTION 1: CHANGE THE NAME OF THE INFORMATION & EDUCATION COMMITTEE TO THE OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

MOTION 2: CHANGE THE NAME OF THE INFORMATION AND EDUCATION ADVISORY PANELO TO THE OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIOS ADVISORY PANEL.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

**Dolphin Wahoo Committee**

MOTION 1: APPROVE THE IPT'S SUGGESTED EDITS TO ACTION 1 IN AMENDMENT 10.

Action 1. Revise total annual catch limit for dolphin to reflect the updated acceptable biological catch level.

Alternative 1 (No Action). The total annual catch limit for dolphin is set equal to the current acceptable biological catch level. The current total annual catch limit for dolphin is 15,344,846 pounds whole weight.

Alternative 2. The total annual catch limit for dolphin is equal to the updated acceptable biological catch level.

Alternative 3. The total annual catch limit for dolphin is equal to 95% of the updated acceptable biological catch level.

Alternative 4. The total annual catch limit for dolphin is equal to 90% of the updated acceptable biological catch level.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 2: APPROVE THE IPT'S SUGGESTED EDITS TO ACTION 2 IN AMENDMENT 10.

Action 2. Revise total annual catch limit for wahoo to reflect the updated acceptable biological catch level.

Alternative 1 (No Action). The total annual catch limit for wahoo is set equal to the acceptable biological catch level. The current total annual catch limit for wahoo is 1,794,960 pounds whole weight.

Alternative 2. The total annual catch limit for wahoo is equal to the updated acceptable biological catch level.

Alternative 3. The total annual catch limit for wahoo is equal to 95% of the updated acceptable biological catch level.

Alternative 4. The total annual catch limit for wahoo is equal to 90% of the updated acceptable biological catch level.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 3: APPROVE ACTION 3 AND THE PROPOSED RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION IN AMENDMENT 10 WITH ASSOCIATED DIRECTION TO STAFF.

Action 3. Revise sector allocations and sector annual catch limits for dolphin.

Alternative 1 (No Action). The recreational sector allocation for dolphin is 90% of the total annual catch limit. The commercial sector allocation for dolphin is 10% of the total annual catch limit. This is based on the total catch between 2008 and 2012 as reported in 2014 and does not incorporate recreational landings from Monroe County, Florida.

Alternative 2. Allocate 93.95% of the total annual catch limit for dolphin to the recreational sector. Allocate 6.05% of the total annual catch limit for dolphin to the commercial sector. This is based on the total catch between 2008 and 2012 as reported in 2019 and does incorporate recreational landings from Monroe County, Florida.

Alternative 6. Allocate 93.75% of the total annual catch limit for dolphin to the recreational sector. Allocate 6.25% of the total annual catch limit for dolphin to the commercial sector. This is based on maintaining the current commercial annual catch limit of 1,534,485 pounds whole weight and allocating the remaining total annual catch limit to the recreational sector.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 4: APPROVE ACTION 4 AND THE PROPOSED RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION IN AMENDMENT 10 WITH INCLUSION OF DIRECTION TO STAFF.

Action 4. Revise sector allocations and sector annual catch limits for wahoo.

Alternative 1 (No Action). The recreational sector allocation for wahoo is 96.07% of the total annual catch limit. The commercial sector allocation for wahoo is 3.93% of the total annual catch limit. This is based on the following formula for each sector using landings data as reported in 2013 and does not incorporate recreational landings from Monroe County, Florida.



Sector apportionment = (50% \* average of long-term catch (pounds whole weight)) + (50% \* average of recent catch (pounds whole weight)).

Long-term catch = 1999 through 2008; Recent catch = 2006 through 2008

Alternative 2. Allocate 97.45% of the total annual catch limit for wahoo to the recreational sector. Allocate 2.55% of the total annual catch limit for wahoo to the commercial sector. This is based on the following formula for each sector using landings data as reported in 2019 and does incorporate recreational landings from Monroe County, Florida.

Sector apportionment = (50% \* average of long-term catch (pounds whole weight)) + (50% \* average of recent catch (pounds whole weight)).

Long-term catch = 1999 through 2008; Recent catch = 2006 through 2008

Alternative 5. Allocate 97.56% of the total annual catch limit for wahoo to the recreational sector. Allocate 2.44% of the total annual catch limit for wahoo to the commercial sector. This is based on maintaining the current commercial annual catch limit of 70,542 pounds whole weight and allocating the remaining total annual catch limit to the recreational sector.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 5: REMOVE ACTIONS 5, 6, AND 7 FROM AMENDMENT 10.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 6: REMOVE ALTERNATIVES 2 THROUGH 5 IN PROPOSED ACTION 8 AND ADD AN ALTERNATIVE THAT WOULD REFLECT THE CURRENT AM BUT REMOVE THE POST SEASON ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURE THAT INCLUDES A PAYBACK.

Proposed Action 8. Revise the commercial accountability measures for dolphin.

Alternative 1 (No Action). The current commercial accountability measure includes an in-season closure to take place if the commercial annual catch limit is met or projected to be met. If the commercial annual catch limit is exceeded, it will be reduced by the amount of the commercial overage in the following fishing year only if the species is overfished and the total annual catch limit is exceeded.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 7: SPLIT ACTION 9 INTO TWO ACTIONS, ONE FOR THE AM TRIGGER AND THE OTHER FOR THE POST-SEASON AM. ALTERNATIVE 4 AND ITS SUB-ALTERNATIVES BECOME THE ACTION FOR THE TRIGGER. ALTERNATIVE 5 BECOMES THE ACTION FOR THE POST-SEASON AM, AND TO ALTERNATIVE 5, ADD SUB-ALTERNATIVES THAT WOULD REDUCE THE RECREATIONAL BAG LIMIT AND REDUCE THE RECREATIONAL VESSEL LIMIT.

Action 9. Revise the recreational accountability measures for dolphin .

Alternative 1 (No action). If recreational landings exceed the recreational annual catch limit, then during the following fishing year, recreational landings will be monitored for persistence in increased landings. If the recreational annual catch limit is exceeded, it will be reduced by the amount of the recreational overage in the following fishing year and the recreational season will be reduced by the amount necessary to ensure that recreational landings do not exceed the reduced annual catch limit only if the species is overfished and the total annual catch limit is exceeded. However, the recreational annual catch limit and length of the recreational season will not be reduced if the Regional Administrator determines, using the best available science, that it is not necessary.

Alternative 4. Only implement post season accountability measures if:

Sub-alternative 4a. The recreational annual catch limits are constant and the 3-year geometric mean of landings exceed the recreational sector annual catch limit. If in any year the recreational sector annual catch limit is changed, the moving multi-year geometric mean of landings will start over.

Sub-alternative 4b. The recreational annual catch limits are constant and the summed total of the most recent past three years of recreational landings exceeds the sum of the past three years recreational sector annual catch limits.

Sub-alternative 4c. The recreational annual catch limits are constant and recreational landings exceed the recreational sector annual catch limit in two of the previous three fishing years or exceeds the total acceptable biological catch in any one year.

Sub-alternative 4d. The total (commercial and recreational combined) annual catch limit is exceeded.

Alternative 5. If the post-season accountability measure is triggered, reduce the length of the following recreational fishing season by the amount necessary to prevent the annual catch limit from being exceeded in the following year.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 8: SPLIT ACTION 10 INTO TWO ACTIONS, ONE FOR THE AM TRIGGER AND THE OTHER FOR THE POST-SEASON AM. ALTERNATIVE 2 AND ITS SUB-ALTERNATIVES BECOME THE ACTION FOR THE TRIGGER. ALTERNATIVES 3 AND 4 BECOME THE ACTION FOR THE POST-SEASON AM. ADD TO THE NEW ACTION ALTERNATIVES THAT WOULD ESTABLISH A VESSEL LIMIT AND A REDUCED BAG LIMIT.

Alternatives that would establish a vessel limit and a reduced bag limit.

Action 10. Revise the recreational accountability measures for wahoo.

Alternative 1 (No action). If recreational landings exceed the recreational annual catch limit, then during the following fishing year recreational landings will be monitored for persistence in increased landings. If the recreational annual catch limit is exceeded, it will be reduced by the amount of the recreational overage in the following fishing only if the species is overfished and the total annual catch limit is exceeded. However, the

recreational annual catch limit will not be reduced if the Regional Administrator determines, using the best available science, that it is not necessary.

Alternative 2. Only specify post-season accountability measures if:

Sub-alternative 2a. The recreational annual catch limits are constant and the 3-year geometric mean of landings exceed the recreational sector annual catch limit. If in any year the recreational sector annual catch limit is changed, the moving multi-year geometric mean of landings will start over.

Sub-alternative 2b. The recreational annual catch limits are constant and the summed total of the most recent past three years of recreational landings exceeds the sum of the past three years recreational sector annual catch limits.

Sub-alternative 2c. The recreational annual catch limits are constant and recreational landings exceed the recreational sector annual catch limit in two of the previous three fishing years or exceeds the total acceptable biological catch in any one year.

Sub-alternative 2d. The total (commercial and recreational combined) annual catch limit is exceeded.

Alternative 3. If the post-season accountability measure is triggered, reduce the recreational sector annual catch limit by the amount of the overage in the following fishing season.

Alternative 4. If the post-season accountability measure is triggered, reduce the length of the following recreational fishing season by the amount necessary to prevent the annual catch limit from being exceeded in the following year.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 9: APPROVE THE IPT'S SUGGESTED EDITS TO ACTION 13 IN AMENDMENT 10.

Action 13. Reduce the recreational vessel limit for dolphin.

Alternative 1 (No Action). The recreational daily bag limit is 10 dolphin per person, not to exceed 60 dolphin per vessel, whichever is less, except on board a headboat where the limit is 10 dolphin per paying passenger.

Alternative 2. The recreational daily bag limit is 10 dolphin per person, not to exceed:

Sub-alternative 2a. 40 dolphin per vessel, whichever is less, except on board a headboat where the limit is 10 dolphin per paying passenger.

Sub-alternative 2b. 42 dolphin per vessel, whichever is less, except on board a headboat where the limit is 10 dolphin per paying passenger.

Sub-alternative 2c. 48 dolphin per vessel, whichever is less, except on board a headboat where the limit is 10 dolphin per paying passenger.

Sub-alternative 2d. 54 dolphin per vessel, whichever is less, except on board a headboat where the limit is 10 dolphin per paying passenger.

Alternative 3. In Florida only, the recreational daily bag limit is 10 dolphin per person, not to exceed:

Sub-alternative 3a. 40 dolphin per vessel, whichever is less, except on board a headboat where the limit is 10 dolphin per paying passenger.

Sub-alternative 3b. 42 dolphin per vessel, whichever is less, except on board a headboat where the limit is 10 dolphin per paying passenger.

Sub-alternative 3c. 48 dolphin per vessel, whichever is less, except on board a headboat where the limit is 10 dolphin per paying passenger.

Sub-alternative 3d. 54 dolphin per vessel, whichever is less, except on board a headboat where the limit is 10 dolphin per paying passenger.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 10: ADD AN ALTERNATIVE THAT WOULD REMOVE PELAGIC LONGLINE GEAR AS AN ALLOWABLE GEAR IN THE DOLPHIN WAHOO FISHERY UNLESS YOU HOLD A HMS LIMITED ENTRY PERMIT.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 11: MOVE PROPOSED ACTION 14 AND PROPOSED ACTION 15, ALONG WITH THE NEW ALTERANTIVE TO A NEW AMENDMENT THAT WILL BE DISCUSSED IN MARCH 2021.

Proposed Action 14. Establish a permit endorsement requirement for dolphin and wahoo when using pelagic longline gear.

Alternative 1 (No Action). Currently there is no permit endorsement required to use pelagic longline gear in the Dolphin Wahoo fishery. Do not establish permit endorsement requirement for vessels issued an Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo Commercial Permit to use pelagic longline gear.

Alternative 2. In order to use pelagic longline gear onboard a vessel, require a longline endorsement to the Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo Commercial Permit.

Proposed Action 15. Modify gear, bait, and training requirements in the commercial longline fishery for dolphin and wahoo to align with Highly Migratory Species requirements.

Sub-action 15A: Protected species handling and release training requirements for dolphin and wahoo when using pelagic longline gear.

Alternative 1A (No Action). The owner or operator of a vessel for which an Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo Commercial Permit has been issued and that has on board a pelagic longline must post inside the wheelhouse the sea turtle handling and release guidelines. Such owner or operator must also comply with the sea turtle bycatch mitigation measures, including gear requirements and sea turtle handling requirements, as specified in 50 C.F.R. §635.21(c)(5)(i) and (ii). These

requirements are a reference to the Highly Migratory Species regulations for pelagic longlines. Currently there are no protected species handling and release training requirements to use pelagic longline gear in the Dolphin Wahoo fishery. Do not establish protected species handling and release training requirements for vessels issued an Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo Commercial Permit and/or endorsement to use pelagic longline gear.

Alternative 2A. In order to use pelagic longline gear on board a vessel, require a valid Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshop certificate on board for both the owner and operator of a vessel issued an Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo Commercial Permit and/or endorsement.

Alternative 3A. In order to use pelagic longline gear on board a vessel, require a valid Safe Handling, Release, and Identification Workshop certificate be supplied when renewing an Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo Commercial Permit and/or endorsement.

Sub-action 15B: Rigging and deployment requirements for dolphin and wahoo when using pelagic longline gear.

Alternative 1B (No Action). Currently there are no rigging or deployment requirements to use pelagic longline gear in the Dolphin Wahoo fishery. Do not establish requirements for rigging or deployment of pelagic longline gear on board vessels issued an Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo Commercial Permit and/or endorsement.

Alternative 2B. If the total length of any gangion plus the length of any floatline is less than 100 meters, then the length of all gangions must be at least 10 percent longer than the length of the floatlines on board vessels issued an Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo Commercial Permit and/or endorsement.

Alternative 3B. Cannot deploy a pelagic longline that exceeds 20 nautical miles in length in the Mid-Atlantic Bight as defined at 50 CFR §635.2 on board vessels issued an Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo Commercial Permit and/or endorsement.

Sub-action 15C: Hook requirements for dolphin and wahoo when using pelagic longline gear.

Alternative 1C (No Action). Currently there are no hook requirements to use pelagic longline gear in the Dolphin Wahoo fishery. Do not establish hook requirements on board vessels with an Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo Commercial Permit and/or endorsement when using pelagic longline gear.

Alternative 2C. Vessels with an Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo Commercial Permit and/or endorsement must possess and/or use only corrodible (i.e., non-stainless steel) circle hooks when using pelagic longline gear.

Alternative 3C. Vessels with an Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo Commercial Permit and/or endorsement must possess and/or use only 18/0 or larger corrodible (i.e.,

non-stainless steel) circle hooks with an offset not to exceed 10 degrees, and/or 16/0 or larger non-offset corrodible circle hooks when using pelagic longline gear.

Alternative 4C. Vessels with an Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo Commercial Permit and/or endorsement must possess and/or use only 12/0 or larger non-offset circle hooks when using pelagic longline gear.

Alternative 5C. Vessels with an Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo Commercial Permit and/or endorsement must possess and/or use only 14/0 or larger non-offset circle hooks when using pelagic longline gear.

Alternative 6C. Vessels with an Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo Commercial Permit and/or endorsement must possess and/or use only 16/0 or larger non-offset circle hooks when using pelagic longline gear.

Sub-action 15D: Bait requirements for dolphin and wahoo when using pelagic longline gear.

Alternative 1D (No Action). Currently there are no bait requirements to use pelagic longline gear in the Dolphin Wahoo fishery. Do not establish bait requirements on board vessels with an Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo Commercial Permit and/or endorsement when using pelagic longline gear.

Alternative 2D. Require the use of whole finfish and/or squid as bait on board vessels that are issued an Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo Commercial Permit and/or endorsement when using pelagic longline gear.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

*Motions 12-14 apply to Amendment 12: Adding Bullet and Frigate Mackerel to the FMP as Ecosystem Component Species.*

MOTION 12: APPROVE THE IPT'S SUGGESTED PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENT.

The purpose and need is to add bullet mackerel and frigate mackerel to the Fishery Management Plan for the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery of the Atlantic as ecosystem component (EC) species to acknowledge their ecological role as forage fish.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 13: APPROVE THE IPT'S SUGGESTED EDITS TO THE OPTIONS.

Option (No Action). There are no ecosystem component species in the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plan of the Atlantic.

Preferred Option 2. Add bullet mackerel and frigate mackerel to the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plan of the Atlantic and designate the two mackerel species as ecosystem component species.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 14: APPROVE DOLPHIN WAHOO AMENDMENT 12 FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS TO BE HELD AT THE SEPTEMBER MEETING WITH COMMENTS BROUGHT

BACK AT THE SEPTEMBER COUNCIL MEETING WITH THE INTENT OF A VOTE ON FORMAL APPROVAL OF THE AMENDMENT.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 15: ADD TWO MEMBERS TO THE DOLPHIN WAHOO AP THAT ARE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MID-ATLANTIC AND THAT WE WOULD ENCOURAGE A COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL MEMBER.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 16: APPROVE THE FOLLOWING TIMING AND TASKS:

- Continue work on Amendment 10 for review at the September 2020 meeting.
- Continue work on Amendment 12 for review at the September 2020 meeting with the intent of holding public hearings and potentially voting on formal approval of the amendment.
- Work with Mid-Atlantic Council staff to identify two new Dolphin Wahoo AP members from the Mid-Atlantic region.
- Work on developing a new Dolphin Wahoo Amendment that focuses on proposed Actions 14 and 15 in Amendment 10.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

### **SNAPPER GROUPE COMMITTEE**

MOTION 1: DIRECT STAFF TO BRING BACK AN OPTIONS PAPER TO THE SEPTEMBER MEETING INCLUDING SECTOR ALLOCATIONS FOR GREATER AMBERJACK AND CATCH LEVEL ADJUSTMENTS BASED ON SSC RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE LATEST ASSESSMENT.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 2: ACCEPT THE IPT'S SUGGESTED EDITS TO ACTION 2 IN REGULATORY AMENDMENT 34.

Alternative 1 (No Action). There are currently 28 artificial reef sites in the exclusive economic zone off South Carolina designated as special management zones. The allowable gear for the snapper grouper fishery management plan for the commercial and recreational sectors are handline, rod and reel, spear (excluding powerheads), bandit gear, pot, and longline (the last two are commercial sector only). Do not designate additional artificial reef sites as special management zones or implement new restrictions on fishing gear used to harvest snapper grouper species from artificial reef sites in the exclusive economic zone off South Carolina.

Preferred Alternative 2. Designate four additional artificial reef sites in the exclusive economic zone off South Carolina as special management zones. Within the special management zones, harvest of snapper grouper species would only be allowed with handline, rod and reel, and spear (excluding powerheads). All harvest would be limited to the applicable recreational bag limit.

Alternative 3. Designate four additional artificial reef sites in the exclusive economic zone off South Carolina as special management zones. Within the special management zones, harvest of snapper grouper species would only be allowed with handline, rod and reel, and spear (excluding powerheads). All harvest by spear would be limited to the applicable recreational bag limit.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 3: APPROVE SNAPPER GROUPER REGULATORY AMENDMENT 34 FOR FORMAL SECRETARIAL REVIEW AND DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT AS NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE. GIVE STAFF EDITORIAL LICENSE TO MAKE ANY NECESSARY EDITORIAL CHANGES TO THE DOCUMENT/CODIFIED TEXT AND GIVE THE COUNCIL CHAIR AUTHORITY TO APPROVE THE REVISIONS AND RE-DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 4: DIRECT STAFF TO BEGIN WORK ON A PLAN AMENDMENT TO END OVERFISHING, TO ADDRESS REBUILDING AND ALLOCATIONS, ETC. FOR RED PORGY FOR REVIEW AT THE SEPTEMBER 2020 MEETING.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 5: DIRECT STAFF TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

- Initiate a plan amendment to address modifications to management of Greater Amberjack in response to the results of the new assessment. Prepare an options paper for the September meeting.
- Initiate development of a plan amendment to address overfishing, rebuilding of Red Porgy and other management modifications. Bring an options paper to the Council in September.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

### **SEDAR COMMITTEE**

MOTION 1: CONVENE A WORKING GROUP INCLUDING SSC REPRESENTATIVES TO MEET VIA WEBINAR OR IN-PERSON, AS NEEDED TO REVIEW MODEL DEVELOPMENT RELATIVE TO TERMS OF REFERENCE 1 THROUGH 4.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 2: APPROVE RED SNAPPER SEDAR 73 TERMS OF REFERENCE AS MODIFIED.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 3: APPROVE THE SOUTH ATLANTIC SELECTIVITY WORKGROUP STATEMENT OF WORK.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 4: APPROVE BLACK SEA BASS STOCK ASSESSMENT TERMS OF



REFERENCE AS MODIFIED.

MOTION 5: APPROVE SOUTH ATLANTIC SPANISH MACKEREL TERMS OF REFERENCE AS MODIFIED.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 6: DIRECT STAFF TO COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING TASK:

- Work with FWRI to convene a Selectivity Workgroup in the fall so that the report will be available by November 16, 2020 for SEDAR 73 and other upcoming South Atlantic stock assessments.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

### **Mackerel Cobia Committee**

MOTION 1: DIRECT STAFF TO BRING BACK AN OPTIONS PAPER TO THE SEPTEMBER MEETING INCLUDING CONSIDERATION OF SECTOR ALLOCATIONS AND CATCH LEVEL ADJUSTMENTS BASED ON SSC RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE RECENT STOCK ASSESSMENT UPDATE.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 2: ADOPT THE FOLLOWING TIMING AND TASKS:

- Prepare an options paper considering sector allocations and catch level adjustments based on SSC recommendations and the updated SEDAR 38 assessment for review at the September 2020 Council meeting.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

### **Executive Committee**

MOTION 1: APPROVE THE INTERNAL RESEARCH FUNDING AND PROJECT SELECTION PROCESS AS MODIFIED.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 2: APPROVE THE STAFF PERFORMANCE EVALAUTION PROCESS AS MODIFIED.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 3: MOVE TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING TIMING and TASKS:

- Plan an Executive Committee meeting, via webinar prior to the September Council Meeting, to discuss Council FMP priorities and workload management.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

**SSC Selection Committee**

MOTION 1: REAPPOINT ALL 6 SSC MEMBERS WHO HAVE REAPPLIED FOR THE SSC (Scott Crosson, Eric Johnson, Anne Lange, Amy Schueller, Tracy Yandle, and Fred Scharf).

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 2: APPOINT DR. JIE CAO TO THE SSC.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 3: REAPPOINT ALL 6 MEMBERS WHO HAVE REAPPLIED FOR THE SEP (Scott Crosson, Chris Dumas, Jason Murray, Kurt Schnier, John Whitehead, and Tracy Yandle).

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 4: APPOINT ANDREW ROPICKI TO THE SEP.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 5: APPOINT DAVID DIETZ AND ADAM STEMLE TO THE SEP.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 6: APPOINT DR. WALTER BUBLEY TO THE DESIGNATED SC SEAT ON THE SSC.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 7: ADOPT THE FOLLOWING TIMING AND TASK(S):

- Draft and send letters to all the SSC and SEP members that were reappointed for another term.
- Draft and send a letter to Dr. Jie Cao announcing his appoint to the SSC for a 3-year term.
- Draft and send letters to David Dietz, Adam Stemle, and Andrew Ropicki announcing their appointments to the SEP for 5-year terms.
- Draft and send letters to all the other applicants who applied for positions on the SSC and the SEP but were not appointed, thanking them for their applications.
- Draft and send letters recognizing the contributions of Marcel Reichert and Rob Ahrens to the SSC.
- Consider adding another seat to the SSC at the September Council meeting, evaluating the need of the SSC for any additional expertise.
- Draft and send a letter to Dr. Walter Bublely announcing his appoint to the SSC for a 3-year term.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

## **Full Council**

MOTION 1: MOVE TO SUBMIT A LETTER TO THE SECRETARY ADDRESSING RED SNAPPER CONCERNS AND PANDEMIC EFFECTS. ITEMS TO ADDRESS INCLUDE:

- Descending devices effects
- Thanks for approving (*Snapper Grouper FMP*) Amendment 29
- Importance of Assessment getting approved on time
- Importance of Red Snapper to the fishery
- Importance to address pandemic impacts
- Willingness to work with NMFS to maximize harvest and access
- Consider aggregate impacts of abundance, best practices, COVID impacts

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 3: MOVE TO DIRECT STAFF TO PREPARE AN EMERGENCY ACTION REQUEST TO INCREASE THE ATLANTIC RECREATIONAL KING MACKEREL POSSESSION LIMIT TO 4 PER PERSON COASTWIDE.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 4: MOVE TO DIRECT STAFF TO PREPARE AN EMERGENCY ACTION REQUEST TO INCREASE THE VERMILION SNAPPER COMMERCIAL TRIP LIMIT TO 1500 POUNDS GW FOR 180 DAYS.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 5: MOVE TO DIRECT STAFF TO BRING AN EMERGENCY ACTION REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION IN SEPTEMBER TO ALLOW CARRY-OVER OF UNUSED 2020 ACL INTO 2021.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 6: MOVE TO SEND A LETTER IN SUPPORT OF THE BLACK SEA BASS EFP.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 7: SOUTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL DOES NOT INTEND TO MANAGE SUMMER, SOUTHERN, FRINGE, OR GULF FLOUNDER SPECIES IN FEDERAL WATERS OFF FLORIDA AND WRITE A LETTER TO THE FWC AND NOAA OF THE INTENTION.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL



# HMS



ROY COOPER  
*Governor*

MICHAEL S. REGAN  
*Secretary*

STEPHEN W. MURPHEY  
*Director*

July 31, 2020

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission  
**FROM:** Randy Gregory, Fisheries Biologist  
Fisheries Management Section  
**SUBJECT:** Highly Migratory Species Update

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**Issue**

Highly Migratory Species activity update.

**Overview**

The Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel met on May 19, 2020 via conference call/webinar. The Advisory Panel discussed Highly Migratory Species fishery management plan objectives, draft Amendment 13 to consider options for modifications to bluefin tuna management, retention limits for swordfish, and efforts to collect data to quantify and help mitigate the problems with shark depredation.

Swordfish

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries is adjusting the Swordfish General Commercial permit retention limits in the Northwest Atlantic region (North Carolina is included in this region). Effective July 1 through December 31, 2020, the default retention limit of three swordfish per vessel is increased to six per vessel per day. These limit changes should provide additional harvest opportunities, while not exceeding the available U.S. North Atlantic swordfish quota, and to collect data for stock monitoring purposes.

Sharks

On June 19, 2020, the NOAA Fisheries increased the retention limit for non-sandbar commercial aggregated large coastal sharks and hammerhead shark management groups in the Atlantic region from 36 to 55 large coastal sharks per vessel per trip through December 31, 2020 unless another adjustment or fishery closure is announced in the Federal Register. In mid-June, approximately 83 percent of the non-sandbar commercial aggregated large coastal shark quota remained and approximately 64 percent of the hammerhead shark quota remains available. The NOAA Fisheries increased the retention limit to promote the use of available quota.

**Action Needed**

For informational purposes only, **no action is needed at this time.**



# PROTECTED RESOURCES UPDATE



ROY COOPER  
*Governor*

MICHAEL S. REGAN  
*Secretary*

STEPHEN W. MURPHEY  
*Director*

July 31, 2020

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Marine Fisheries Commission

**FROM:** Barbie Byrd, Biologist Supervisor  
Protected Resources Program, Fisheries Management Section

**SUBJECT:** Protected Resources Program Update

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### Issues

Summary information is provided from the division's Protected Resources Program, specifically highlighting some of the impacts from COVID-19 and bottlenose dolphin entanglements.

### Overview

#### *Spring 2020 Seasonal Report*

The spring 2020 seasonal report for the Sea Turtle Incidental Take Permit (ITP) is provided from the division's Protected Resources Program. A seasonal report is not required for the Atlantic Sturgeon ITP. Observer effort during spring 2020 was hampered due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to protective measures to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Observer Program received a waiver from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) for maintaining observer coverage until further notice. Although the last observer-led trip was on March 18, Marine Patrol continued field activities and observed a limited number of gill net trips. All indications are that fishing effort decreased during the spring due to COVID-19.

There were no observed or reported incidental takes of sea turtles during the 2020 spring season. There were three live Atlantic sturgeon interactions in large mesh gill nets in management unit A during March 2020.

The spring 2020 seasonal report can be found at the following link:

[Spring 2020 Seasonal Sea Turtle ITP Report](#)

#### *COVID-19 Impacts on Observer Coverage*

Observers resumed efforts using the alternative platform method on June 6 after suspending operations March 24 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the NCDMF's waiver for observer coverage is still in place, observers resumed efforts using the alternative platform method once COVID-19 safety protocols were in place.

### *Bottlenose Dolphin Entanglements*

In early June, four bottlenose dolphins became entangled in a single operation of beach seine gear operating on the ocean-side of the Outer Banks. Two were released alive; two died. The NCDMF consulted with the National Marine Fisheries Service, who in turn reached out to the fisherman for more information. The issue will be discussed at the next Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Team meeting (date TBD).

In late June, two dolphins were recovered dead ocean-side near Cape Hatteras. Both dolphins had their flukes removed (clean cuts indicative of a knife) and both had apparent entanglement lesions. Assessment of potential gear type is ongoing by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

#### **Action Needed**

For informational purposes only, **no action is needed at this time.**



2020 Spring Seasonal Progress Report  
Incidental Take Permit No. 16230  
March 1 – May 31, 2020  
(ITP Year 2020)



John McConnaughey  
Protected Species Biologist  
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

June 30, 2020  
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## SUMMARY

The 2020 spring season for anchored large and small mesh gill nets in North Carolina was March 1, 2020 through May 31, 2020 for Incidental Take Permit (ITP) Year 2020 (September 1, 2019 – August 31, 2020) as defined in ITP No. 16230. At the beginning of the 2020 spring season the COVID-19 pandemic was just starting to seriously affect the United States. On March 20, 2020, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) waived the requirement for boats fishing in federally managed fisheries to carry observers or at sea monitors due to concerns about the transmission of COVID -19. The NMFS extended this waiver to the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) Observer Program on March 23, 2020; the waiver was in place throughout the spring season.

Due to the impending quarantines, the NCDMF Observer Program's last observer trip occurred on March 18, 2020. Marine Patrol (MP) continued field activities and managed to observe some gill net trips. Reports from other Division staff indicated that fishing effort had decreased due to COVID-19. As a result, the number of gill net trips observed by MP were low compared to the efforts made to find and observe fishing effort. Data are not yet available for actual number of reported fishing trips. As a result, observer coverage estimates based on the previous five-year average do not account for reduced fishing effort due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, estimates of observer coverage are likely to be biased low. Overall observer coverage during spring 2020 was 1.2% of the large-mesh gill-net fishery and 1.1% of the small-mesh gill-net fishery (Tables 1-2)

There were no observed or reported incidental takes of sea turtles during the 2020 spring season. Because of the lack of fishing effort and federal waiver for observer coverage, some tables included in past reports are not provided in this spring seasonal report and other tables will be incomplete.

Seasonal gill net openings and closings continued even though all indications were that fishing effort was low. A list of relevant proclamations is provided in Table 3. Maps to accompany certain proclamations are provided in Figures 1 – 4.

During spring 2020, Marine Patrol made 405 attempts to find gill net effort for alternative platform observations. Prior to the March 23<sup>rd</sup> waiver, Marine Patrol made 77 attempts to find gill net effort and were successful 25 times for a success rate of 32%. After the March 23<sup>rd</sup> waiver 284 attempts were made with 19 successful observations for a 7% success rate. These comparisons reinforce information that suggested fishing effort was low and therefore observer coverage rates based on the 5-year average would be biased low. During the course of Marine Patrol efforts to observe gill net fishing effort there were 12 citations issued (Table 4).

As per the ITP, the division established a permit in September 2014 to register all fishermen participating in the anchored large and small mesh gill net fisheries (Estuarine Gill Net Permit – EGNP). This multifaceted permit allows the division to closely monitor for compliance with the permit system already in place. As of May 31, 2020, there had been 2,457 EGNPs issued for Fiscal Year (FY) 20 (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020). Permits are renewed on an annual basis,

based on the fiscal year for licenses. During the 2020 spring season there was one Notice of Violations (NOV) written for violations of the EGNP (Table 5).

During the 2020 spring season, observers employed various ways to contact fishermen to set up trips (i.e., alternative platform trips, calling the fisherman, waiting at boat ramps) before the waiver was provided. Observed logged 76 phone calls to fishermen with only one call successfully setting up an observable trip (Table 6). For the other 75 calls, the fisherman said they were not fishing or no contact was made.

**TABLES**

Table 1. For large mesh gill nets, estimated percent observer coverage calculated from observer trips ( $\geq 4$  inch) and estimated fishing trips from the Trip Ticket Program ( $\geq 5$  inch) by management unit for spring 2020 (March - May). Estimated fishing trips were calculated as the 5-yr average from 2015-2019 and do not account for reduced fishing effort due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Management Unit <sup>1</sup>	Estimated Fishing Trips	Observed Trips	Percent Coverage
A	1,662	35	2.1
B	301	0	0.0
C	795	0	0.0
D1 <sup>2</sup>	2	closed	closed
D2	80	0	0.0
E	279	1	0.4
Total	3,119	36	1.2

<sup>1</sup> Table 1 contains all of the openings and closings for each management unit

<sup>2</sup> D1 closed to large mesh for entire 2019 spring season

Table 2. For small mesh gill nets, estimated percent observer coverage calculated from observer trips ( $< 4$  inch) and estimated fishing trips from the Trip Ticket Program ( $< 5$  inch) by management unit for spring 2020 (March - May). Estimated fishing trips were calculated as the 5-yr average from 2015-2019 and do not account for reduced fishing effort due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Management Unit <sup>1</sup>	Estimated Fishing Trips	Observed Trips	Percent Coverage
A	743	2	0.3
B	1,347	11	0.8
C	197	4	2.0
D1	32	1	3.1
D2	29	1	3.4
E	126	7	5.6
Total	2,474	26	1.1

<sup>1</sup> Table 1 contains all of the openings and closings for each management unit

Table 3. Openings and closings of management units by date and regulation change from the spring 2020 season (March - May) for anchored large and small mesh gill nets for ITP Year 2020.

Year	Date(s)	Regulation change
2020	March 2	This proclamation opens a portion of Management Unit A to the use of floating gill nets configured for harvesting American shad by removing vertical height restrictions for all gill nets with stretched mesh lengths of 5 ¼ through 6 ½ inches. (M-3-2020)
2020	March 25	This proclamation supersedes Proclamation M-3-2020 dated February 28, 2020. In Management Unit A, it removes gill nets configured for harvesting American shad. It maintains restrictions on the use of fixed, stationary, or unattended gill nets and allows the use of run-around, strike, drop, and trammel gill nets and with a stretched mesh length of 5 ½ inches through 6 ½ inches in portions of Management Unit A. (M-5-2020)
2020	April 15	This proclamation maintains closures in all other management units south of Management Unit A and closes Management Unit C to the use of gill nets with a stretched mesh length of 4 inches through 6 ½ inches (except as described in Section II.; coincides with the commercial shad fishery closure) in accordance with Amendment 2 to the N.C. Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan. (M-6-2020)
2020	April 20	This proclamation implements yardage and time setting restrictions for gill nets with a stretched mesh length less than 4 inches and attendance restrictions for gill nets with a stretched mesh length less than 5 inches in the Internal Coastal Waters of the state, south of Management Unit A. Yardage limit increases will be considered for the May-October Spanish mackerel drift gill net fishery. Those increases will be implemented by proclamation at a later time. (M-4-2020)
2020	May 1	This proclamation implements attendance requirements for gill nets with a stretched mesh length less than 4 inches in Subunit B.1. (M-9-2020)
2020	May 1	This proclamation implements small mesh gill net attendance requirements. It maintains restrictions on the use of run-around, strike, drop, and trammel gill nets and with a stretched mesh length of 5 ½ inches through 6 ½ inches in portions of Management Unit A. (M-10-2020)
2020	May 8	This proclamation increases yardage limits for the commercial Spanish mackerel drift gill net fishery in Management Unit B. (M-11-2020)



Table 4. Citations written by Marine Patrol for anchored large and small mesh gill nets by date and violation code during the spring 2020 season (March - May) for ITP Year 2020.

Date	Code	Description
4/03/2020	NETG01	Leave gill net in coastal waters unattended
4/03/2020	NETG03	Using gill net with improper buoys or identification
4/03/2020	NETG01	Leave gill net in coastal waters unattended
4/03/2020	NETG03	Using gill net with improper buoys or identification
4/07/2020	NETG22	Improperly set gill net
4/11/2020	NETG30	Leave RCGL gill net unattended
4/23/2020	NETG01	Leave gill net in coastal waters unattended
4/23/2020	NETG06	Gill net causing hazard to navigation
5/03/2020	NETG04	Leave gill net in waters when could not be legally fished
5/10/2020	NETG02	Using gill net without buoys or identification
5/10/2020	NETG37	Leave small mesh gill nets unattended
5/26/2020	NETG01	Leave gill net in coastal waters unattended

Table 5. Notice of Violations (NOV) written by Marine Patrol for anchored large and small mesh gill nets by date and violation code during the spring 2020 season (March - May) for ITP Year 2020.

Date	Code	Description
3/30/2020	EGNP99	Failure to comply with statute(s), rule(s), and/or proclamation(s)

Table 6. Categories and descriptions of fishermen responses for the Observer Program's contact logs.

Categories	Category description
1	Left message with someone else
2	Not fishing general
3	Fishing other gear
4	Not fishing because of weather
5	Not fishing because of boat issues
6	Not fishing because of medical issues
7	Booked trip
8	Hung up, got angry, trip refusal
9	Call back later time/date
10	Saw in person
11	Disconnected
12	Wrong number
13	No answer
14	No answer, left voicemail
15	Not fishing because of natural disaster (e.g., hurricane)

# FIGURES

Maps are provided for illustrative purposes to assist the public. Maps do not supersede existing rules or proclamations.

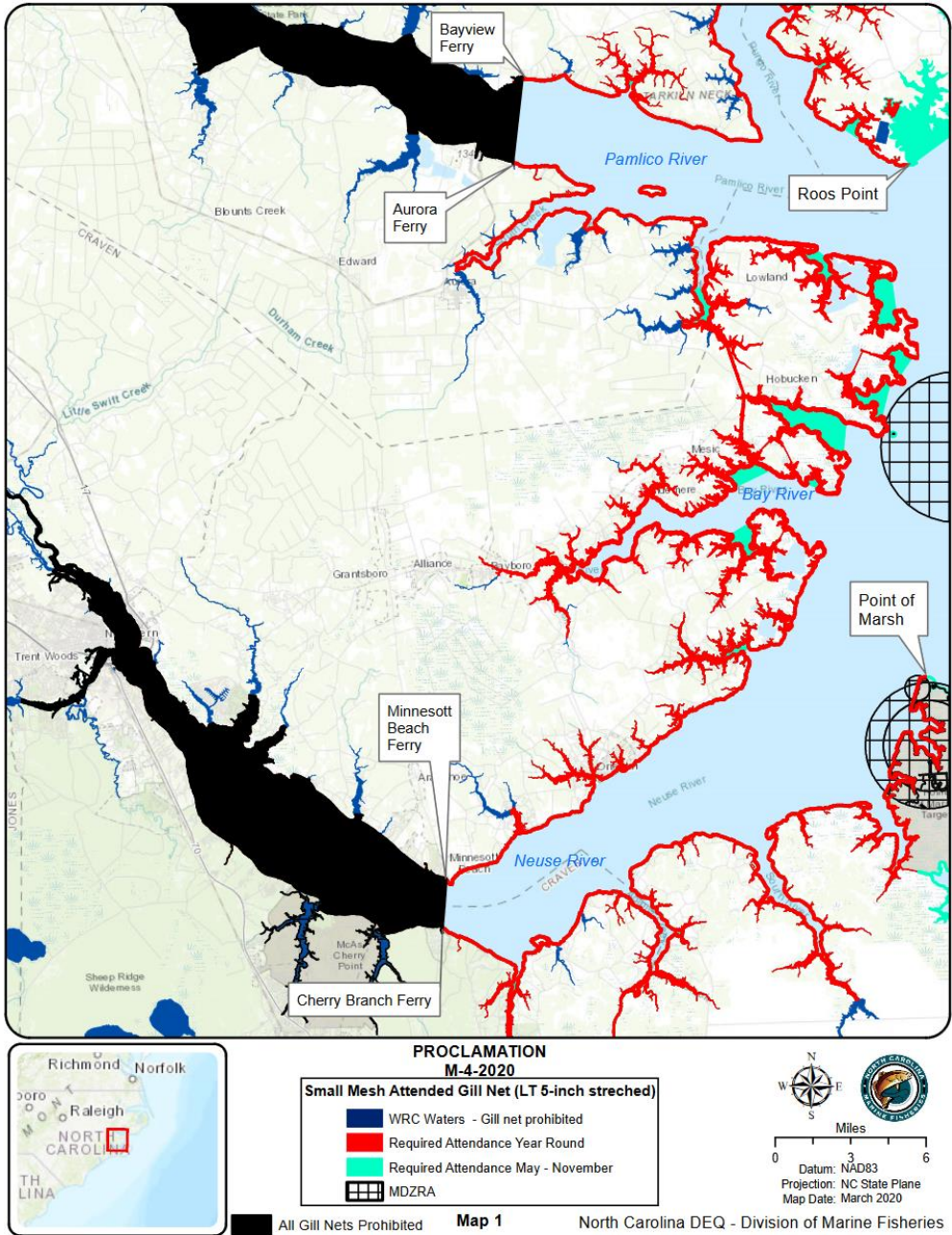


Figure 1. Map for proclamation M-4-2020. See Table 1 for full proclamation description.

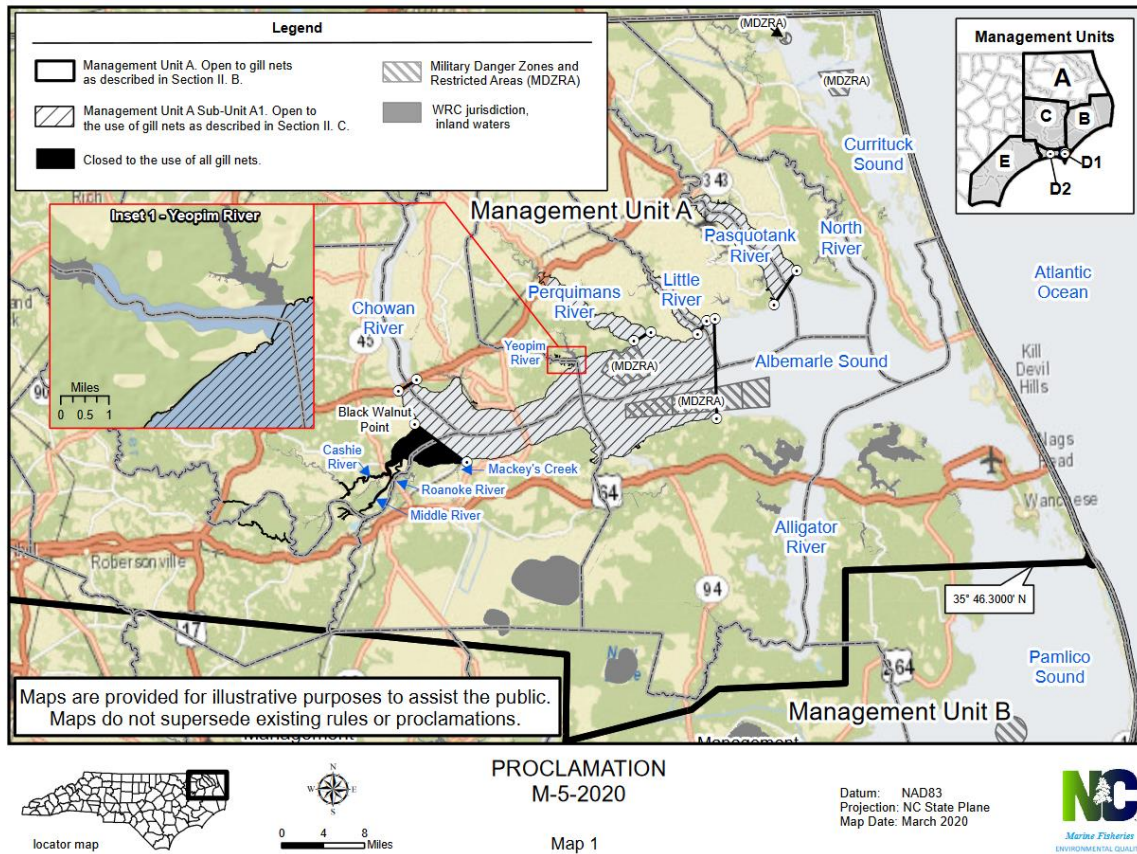


Figure 2. Map for proclamation M-5-2020. See Table 1 for full proclamation description.

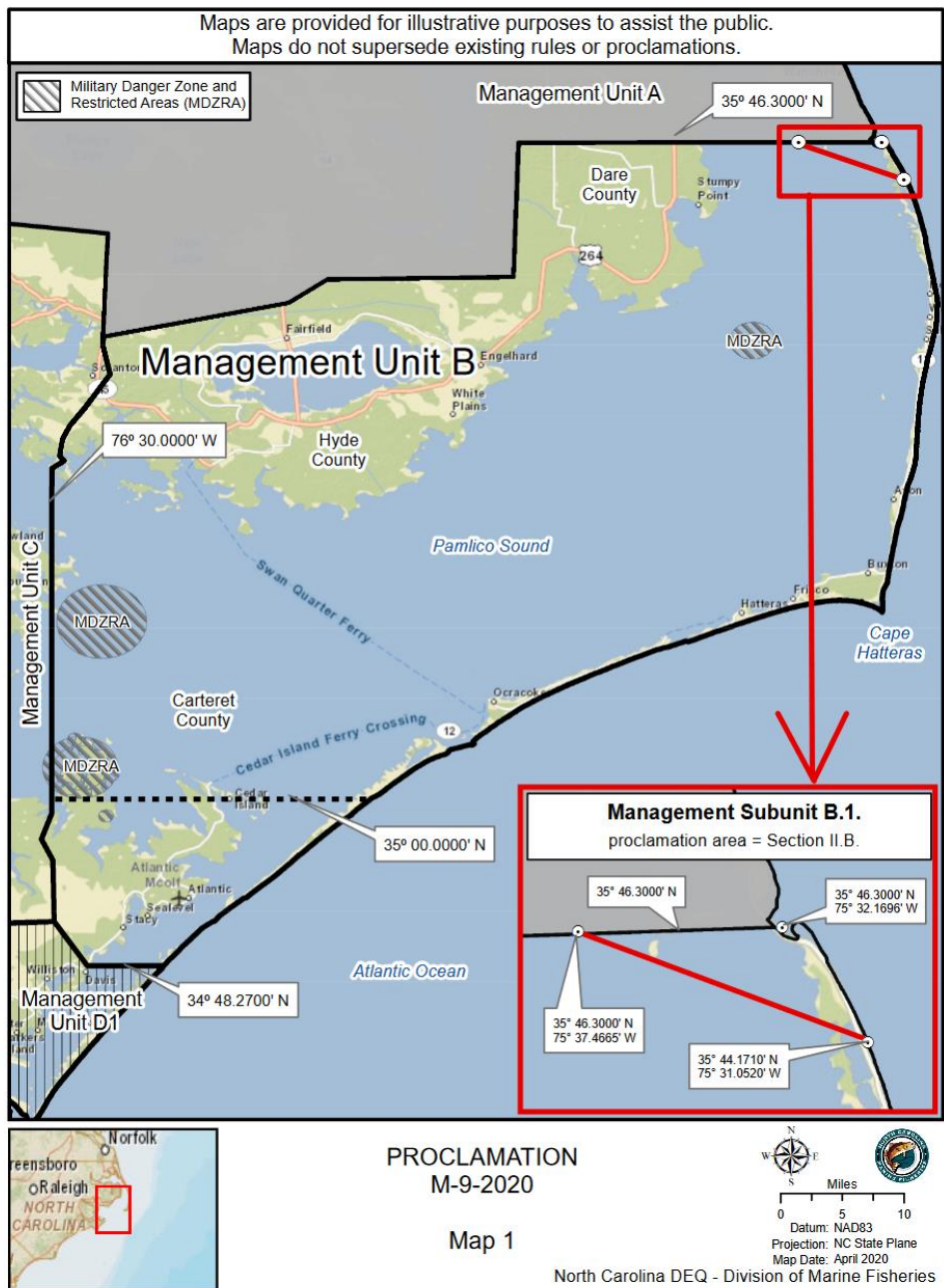


Figure 3. Map for proclamation M-9-2020. See Table 1 for full proclamation description.

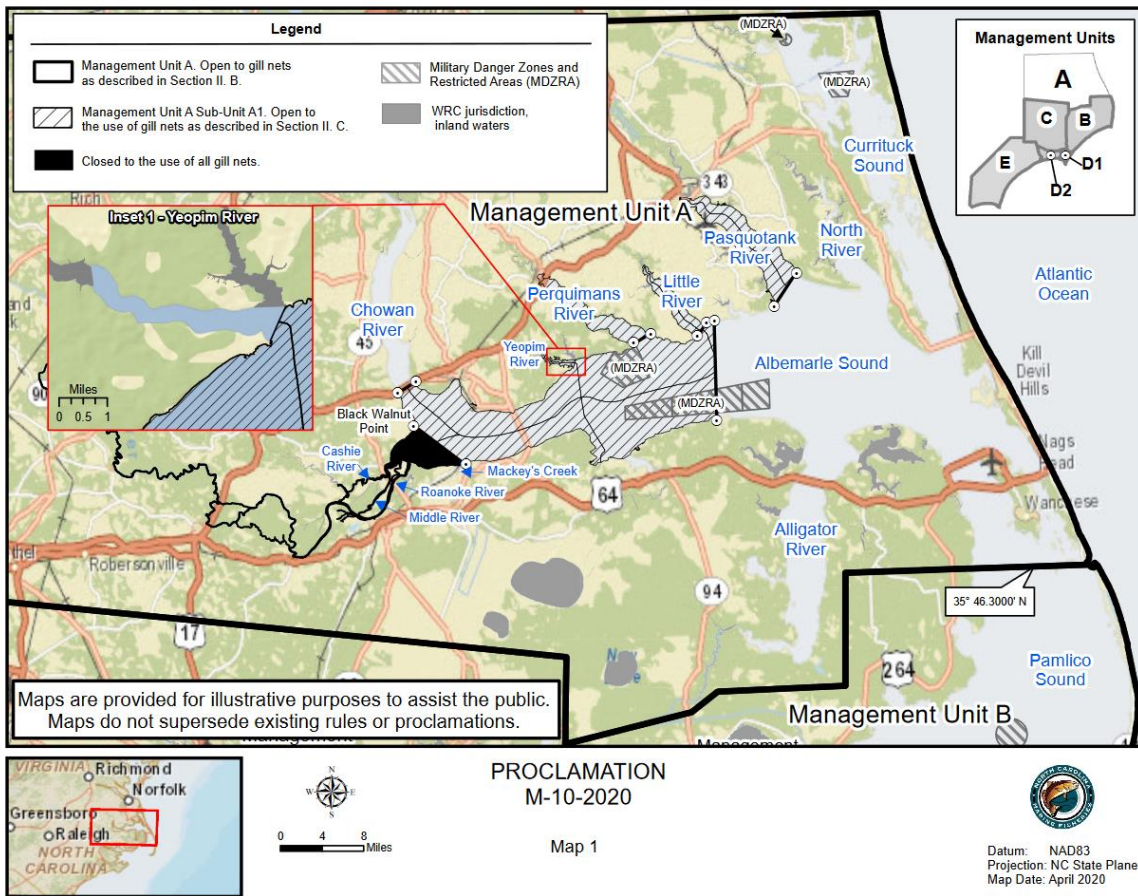


Figure 4. Map for proclamation M-10-2020. See Table 1 for full proclamation description.



# LANDINGS UPDATE FOR RED DRUM & SOUTHERN FLOUNDER

## Red Drum Landings 2018-2020

Landings are complete through July 16, 2020.

2018 landings are final. 2019 and 2020 landings are preliminary.

Year	Month	Species	Pounds	2009-2011 Average	2013-2015 Average
2018	9	Red Drum	11,149	28,991	35,003
2018	10	Red Drum	42,805	43,644	63,659
2018	11	Red Drum	10,076	14,318	27,646
2018	12	Red Drum	2,052	3,428	2,197
2019	1	Red Drum	2,101	5,885	1,700
2019	2	Red Drum	1,952	3,448	3,996
2019	3	Red Drum	1,563	5,699	3,971
2019	4	Red Drum	5,571	7,848	6,528
2019	5	Red Drum	11,315	13,730	9,661
2019	6	Red Drum	6,259	12,681	6,985
2019	7	Red Drum	5,709	13,777	15,618
2019	8	Red Drum	5,217	21,252	15,846

**Fishing Year (Sept 1, 2018 - Aug 31, 2019) Landings 105,768**

Year	Month	Species	Pounds	2009-2011 Average	2013-2015 Average
2019	9	Red Drum	1,508	28,991	35,003
2019	10	Red Drum	8,080	43,644	63,659
2019	11	Red Drum	5,357	14,318	27,646
2019	12	Red Drum	1,763	3,428	2,197
2020	1	Red Drum	1,853	5,885	1,700
2020	2	Red Drum	1,322	3,448	3,996
2020	3	Red Drum	1,040	5,699	3,971
2020	4	Red Drum	2,425	7,848	6,528
2020	5	Red Drum	4,473	13,730	9,661 *
2020	6	Red Drum	5,643	12,681	6,985 *

**Fishing Year (Sept 1, 2019 - Aug 31, 2020) Landings 33,464**

\*partial trip ticket landings only


\*\*\*landings are confidential



Year	Month	Species	Pounds	Dealers	Trips	Average (2007-2009)
2016	1	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	2,625	33	264	7,713
2016	2	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	1,643	31	291	4,617
2016	3	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	9,260	58	915	23,512
2016	4	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	10,558	72	628	68,389
2016	5	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	24,522	90	821	122,514
2016	6	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	44,952	100	1,242	154,090
2016	7	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	43,574	102	1,132	170,387
2016	8	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	53,057	106	1,409	201,862
2016	9	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	246,269	131	3,011	396,301
2016	10	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	280,689	117	2,181	781,717
2016	11	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	182,768	102	1,479	392,150
2016	12	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	14	5	5	37,303
2017	1	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	1,677	38	122	7,713
2017	2	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	2,758	55	215	4,617
2017	3	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	8,254	67	874	23,512
2017	4	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	9,591	83	787	68,389
2017	5	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	33,105	105	1,121	122,514
2017	6	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	74,785	115	1,904	154,090
2017	7	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	74,879	108	1,755	170,387
2017	8	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	102,751	116	2,364	201,862
2017	9	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	235,915	128	2,849	396,301
2017	10	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	548,740	142	3,971	781,717
2017	11	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	302,286	123	2,003	392,150
2017	12	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	166	7	8	37,303
2018	1	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	610	14	43	7,713
2018	2	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	1,833	34	154	4,617
2018	3	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	2,815	43	387	23,512
2018	4	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	8,142	74	769	68,389
2018	5	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	18,342	90	951	122,514
2018	6	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	42,501	105	1,407	154,090
2018	7	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	57,273	117	1,495	170,387
2018	8	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	72,495	121	1,916	201,862
2018	9	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	109,125	114	1,776	396,301
2018	10	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	363,339	109	3,062	781,717
2018	11	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	226,832	89	1,352	392,150
2018	12	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	471	5	5	37,303
2019	1	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	524	25	74	7,713
2019	2	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	558	23	69	4,617
2019	3	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	1,412	44	216	23,512
2019	4	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	5,966	66	448	68,389
2019	5	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	36,666	92	1,038	122,514
2019	6	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	61,035	109	1,437	154,090
2019	7	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	59,404	109	1,554	170,387
2019	8	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	95,588	109	1,778	201,862
2019	9	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	51,734	59	551	396,301
2019	10	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	327,291	119	2,333	781,717
2019	11	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	159,595	58	537	392,150
2020	2	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	***	1	1	4,617 ***
2020	3	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	***	1	1	23,512 ***
2020	4	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	***	2	3	68,389 ***
2020	5	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	***	1	1	122,514 ***

\*2019 and 2020 data are preliminary. Data are complete through January 2020.

\*\*\*data are confidential



# **RULE**

## **SUSPENSIONS**



ROY COOPER  
*Governor*

MICHAEL S. REGAN  
*Secretary*

STEPHEN W. MURPHEY  
*Director*

July 31, 2020

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission  
**FROM:** Kathy Rawls, Fisheries Management Section Chief  
**SUBJECT:** Temporary Rule Suspension

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### Issue

In accordance with the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries Resource Management Policy Number 2014-2, Temporary Rule Suspension, the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission will vote on any new rule suspensions that have occurred since the last meeting of the commission.

### Findings

No new rule suspensions have occurred since the May 2020 meeting.

### Overview

In accordance with policy, the division will report current rule suspensions previously approved by the commission as non-action, items. The current rule suspensions previously approved by the commission are as follows:

#### **NCMFC RULE 15A NCAC 03M .0511 Bluefish**

Suspension of this rule is for an indefinite period. Suspension of this rule allows the division to reduce bluefish creel limits in compliance with the requirements of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council/Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Bluefish Fishery Management Plan to reduce recreational harvest of bluefish. This suspension was implemented in Proclamation FF-1-2020.

#### **NCMFC Rule 15A NCAC 03J .0103 (h) Gill Nets, Seines, Identification, Restrictions**

Suspension of portion of this rule is for an indefinite period. Suspension of this rule allows the division to implement year around small mesh gill net attendance requirements in certain areas of the Tar, Pamlico and Neuse River systems. This action was taken as part of a department initiative to review existing small mesh gill net rules to limit yardage and address attendance requirements in certain “hot spot” areas of the state. This suspension continues in Proclamation M-11-2020.

#### **NCMFC Rule 15A NCAC 03R .0110 (4)(5) Crab Spawning Sanctuaries**

Suspension of portions of this rule is for an indefinite period. Suspension of this rule allows the division to revise the boundaries for the Drum Inlet and Barden Inlet crab spawning

sanctuaries in accordance with Amendment 3 to the N.C. Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan. This suspension was implemented in Proclamation M-7-2020.

**NCMFC Rules 15A NCAC 03L .0201 (a)(b) Crab Harvest Restrictions, 03L .0203 (a) Crab Dredging and 03J .0301 (g)(h) Pots**

Suspension of portions of these rules is for an indefinite period. Suspension of these rules allows the division to implement requirements for the blue crab fishery in accordance with Amendment 3 to the N.C. Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan. These suspensions were implemented in Proclamation M-8-2020.

**NCMFC Rule 15A NCAC 03L .0103 (a)(1) Prohibited Nets, Mesh Lengths and Areas**

Continued suspension of portions of this rule is for an indefinite period. This allows the division to adjust trawl net minimum mesh size requirements in accordance with the May 2018 Revision to Amendment 1 to the North Carolina Shrimp Fishery Management Plan. This suspension was implemented in proclamation SH-3-2019.

**NCMFC 15A NCAC 03M .0516 Cobia**

Continued suspension of this rule is for an indefinite period. This allows the division to manage the commercial and recreational cobia fisheries in accordance with management actions taken by the commission and in accordance with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Interstate Cobia Fishery Management Plan. This suspension was continued in Proclamation FF-15-2020.

**NCMFC Rule 15A NCAC 03J .0501 Definitions and Standards for Pound Nets and Pound Net Sets**

Continued suspension of portions of this rule is for an indefinite period. This allows the division to increase the minimum mesh size of escape panels for flounder pound nets in accordance with Amendment 2 of the North Carolina Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan. This suspension was implemented in Proclamation M-34-2015.

**NCMFC Rule 15A NCAC 03M .0519 Shad & 03Q .0107 Special Regulations: Joint Waters**

Continued suspension of portions of these rules is for an indefinite period. This allows the division to change the season and creel limit for American shad under the management framework of the North Carolina American Shad Sustainable Fishery Plan. These suspensions were continued in Proclamation FF-55-2019.

**Action Needed**

For informational purposes only, **no action is needed at this time.**