

To Fisheries management 2-14-2016 Page 1

How to "fix" a jammed sound estuarine system and create a healthier fishery.

It's my responsibility as a fisherman to help this system to survive for generations to come.

I have a lot of knowledge in fishing, because I have 30 years experience in commercial fishing and 60 years in sportfishing, One hundred percent of my work income come from, The second largest estuarine system in country,

and it is Backbone North Carolina fishery, because it the second largest nursery in United State.

I and other commercial fishermen at one time depend on finfish for our living, The recreational fishermen that got any experience fishing in jammed sound estuarine. We all know this system is not as healthy today in many different marine species, as it was several decades ago. Some of the declines species are spot, Croaker, Butterflyfish, southern flounder, summer flounder, gray trout, and oysters.

What's can fisheries management do in 2016 to improve these marine species, In jammed sound estuarine, That will benefit the resources for the long-term. They need to make it a primary nursery area. It will protect the most productive marine bottom habitats in U.S.

It will protect thousand of acres of prime oyster bottom, It will improve water quality, because it will stop these trawl boats from dragging their heavy nets across bottom and spend thousand of tons bottom sediment that put back in water column. It's having a negative impact on our marine life living in this waters, they need a healthy place to breed, spawn, and mature.



It will stop the killing of millions pounds of baby fish and adult finfish, and other marine species that are now destroyed as by-catch in shrimp trawl fishery. We all know these millions pounds wasted resources, it's resources we can no longer depend on for commercial or recreation fishing. It's also having a negative impact on our finfish populations.

My common sense tell me you cannot keep on killing all these millions pounds baby finfish year after year, expect the populations stay healthy. We all know these baby fish are our future. If fisheries management will protect these important baby finfish, and their bottoms habitats the populations will promptly recove. And will stop these species from being overfish. It will help fisheries management from putting restrictions on fishermen they don't deserve. There are more people today in North Carolina who depend on these marine species, that are being wasted by the shrimp trawl fishery. Than they do on shrimp that are being caught in our estuarine waters. What a shame. Our fisheries managers could have taken action decades ago to eliminate this wasted resource. They ignored ~~stop~~ this major problem while paying attention to the demands of a few shrimp fishermen.

Our new politicians and the new Marine Fisheries Commission. If they are going to allow these baby fish and our baby oysters to survive. They got to make public sound estuarine system, a primary nursery areas,



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Miss Nancy Fish

Please give a copies of my letter to all people that management our Public Inland Coastal Fisheries Resources in North Carolina. My concern are this unacceptable wasted of our public resources you know I know their no benefits to help the fishermen that depend on it or our fishery. Please feel free to contact me with any further questions or concern they may have  
Sincerely on this issue,

Dallas Ormond Sr.  
125, Mantor Ave  
Math N.C. 27808  
phone 252-945-8348



To Whom It May Concern:

As a resident of Oriental, and an avid fisherman, I feel obligated to comment on what I see happening to our fishery in the Neuse River, and to suggest some policy changes to correct the abuses to our public resource that are currently occurring.

I would like to start by describing what I have seen of late on the river. It is well known that we have had two consecutive and significant cold stun events over our past two winters that severely damaged our trout population. However, it was evident this fall that those that remained had a great spawn as our waters were FULL of millions of small fish. Because of the mild conditions that lasted through the month of December, many of those fish reached a length of 14" to become keeper trout. Also, because of the conditions, they remained scattered throughout the river shore and the entire lengths of the creeks where they spend the winter. Now that we have had some extended cold weather, they have concentrated in the backs of the creeks as they always do.

As the trout have now concentrated deep in their wintering holes, the strike netters have also come out in force, and they are doing a number on those fish. These netters are not following the rules and restrictions as they should. I have seen them running trips at night, with no lights on the boat. Both of which are violations. They frequently do not cull their hauls, taking hundreds, possibly thousands of trout out at one time, far above the 75/day limit. If the nets are culled, the trout and other non-targeted species like redfish that are too small to keep and still alive are bashed on the head on the motor of the boat and tossed back dead. While it is true that not every netter does this, enough of them do to make it a notable problem.

Obviously, the solution to this problem is to remove all nets from inshore estuarine waters. The only place that commercial fishing should be allowed is in the open ocean. Gill nets, strike nets, and trawl nets have no place in our rivers and creeks!!

Realistically, I know that will not happen in the near future. Therefore, my first suggestion is that an emphasis be placed on enforcement. More officers should be hired to monitor our waters. Joint enforcement should be recommended once again, and the penalties for violations should be significantly stiffened.

Secondly, in part because of the observations mentioned above, but more importantly because of what we know about the science and behavior of the

speckled trout, I would like to propose that we alter the management plan for this species. Our trout has an age distribution that is severely skewed in that 98% of them are fish that are in their first or second year. Based on average growth rates, that means that almost all of our fish are 18" or smaller. Less than 1% of our speckled trout are 24" or larger. Like the red drum, large, mature trout are much more efficient spawners than younger fish, and should be managed similarly.

While it is true that trout are somewhat migratory, it is clear that these fish DO NOT MOVE more than a few hundred yards when in their winter habitat. That lack of movement makes them particularly easy targets for the netters in the winter months, a fact that emphasizes why netting regulations should, at minimum, be more strictly enforced.

Furthermore, the current model used by fisheries management does a POOR job of estimating natural mortality of our trout, which could be as high as 50% during periods of severe cold weather.

Because of what we know about the science and behavior of our trout population, and because of what is happening to them in the creeks right now, I would also like to suggest that we change the way we manage this species.

**For emphasis, I reiterate that the most appropriate solution is that all nets should be removed from our inshore waters.**

Since that remains unlikely, I would suggest the following for more properly managing our speckled trout:

1. Since larger trout are much more effective spawners, NO TROUT over 24" can be kept by any fisherman, commercial or recreational.
2. Commercial fishermen will be allowed only in certain creeks for a particular river system, and allowable creeks will rotate on a two year cycle. I will use some of the creeks in the Neuse River as an example below.

MIDDLE: Beard\*, Slocum, Hancock\*, Clubfoot, Back\*, Cedar, Dawson\*

LOWER: Garbaccon, Green's\*, Kershaw\*, Smith, Pierce\*, Orchard, Brown's\*, Lower Broad\*

Creeks that have a \* would be closed to commercial fishing on the first year, the following year would open those creeks and close the others.

Recreational fishing would be allowed in all creeks.

When all is said and done, North Carolina MUST join the rest of the region and nation by removing all nets: gill, strike, and trawl from our inshore waters. All of the species that commercial fisherman target are fully available to them in the

ocean and that is where they should practice their trade. If it is in the interest of fairness, let us first be fair to the resource!!

Sincerely,

Stuart Creighton





**From:** Chris McCaffity [<mailto:freefish7@hotmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 11, 2016 10:15 AM  
**To:** Fish, Nancy <[nancy.fish@ncdenr.gov](mailto:nancy.fish@ncdenr.gov)>  
**Cc:** [HouseE-mail@ncleg.net](mailto:HouseE-mail@ncleg.net); [SenateE-mail@ncleg.net](mailto:SenateE-mail@ncleg.net)  
**Subject:** February 2016 NCMFC Meeting Public Comments

## February 2016 NCMFC Meeting Public Comments

Thank you for taking the time to read my public comments since I will not be able to give them at the meeting. Please keep an open heart and mind as you consider the solutions offered in these comments.

With regards to the oyster and clam management plans, please include the one solution that will benefit everyone and the resource. Stocking native bivalves would help clean our waters while creating habitat and providing a sustainable supply of wild-caught shellfish for consumers to enjoy forever.

Please consider letting stakeholders pick our representatives on the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. An official online forum could be set up to nominate candidates, discuss who will best represent us, and hold votes that would be binding once a 2/3 majority of stakeholders agree on someone.

The online forum should also be used to let licensed commercial fishermen vote on how the Commercial Fishing Resource Funds will be allocated. Recreational fishermen could use the forum to vote on how their license fees will be used.

I respectfully ask this commission to reinstate the 4,000 pound discretionary harvest of River Herring this spring to collect data and provide the NC River Herring Festival with local herring. A popular television show has contacted me about doing an episode featuring culturally important and unusual NC seafood. They are interested in River Herring, but without a fishery it is just a management failure story. It could be a story of rebuilding a collapsed fishery back to historical highs with hatcheries and habitat enhancement. Allowing some harvest for consumers would help the festival and an economically depressed area of our state. Why kill thousands of herring for research and waste this food when these iconic fish could be used for so much more? Thousands of people have signed petitions in support of harvesting some herring while we work to rebuild NC's oldest fishery.

Quotas, hatcheries, and habitat enhancement are solutions that benefit everyone and the resource. It is time we started focusing more on enhancing our fisheries and food supply than restricting our freedom to access them. Please manage our public resources in ways that feed more people and create more recreational opportunity while protecting our fisheries for future generations.

Sincerely,

Chris McCaffity

[freefish7@hotmail.com](mailto:freefish7@hotmail.com)