



ROY COOPER
Governor

ELIZABETH S. BISER
Secretary

KATHY B. RAWLS
Director

February 1, 2022

MEMORANDUM

TO: N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission

FROM: Corrin Flora, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator
Fisheries Management Section

SUBJECT: Fishery Management Plan Update and Schedule Review

Issue

Update the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) on the status of North Carolina fishery management plans (FMPs).

Action Needed

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

Overview

This memo provides an overview on the status of six North Carolina FMPs for the February 2022 MFC business meeting.

Shrimp FMP

At the November 2021 business meeting, the MFC selected preferred management options for Amendment 2 to the Shrimp FMP. The plan was updated with the preferred management and sent to the DEQ Secretary and legislative committees for reviews. At the February 2022 business meeting, the MFC will vote on final adoption of the Shrimp FMP Amendment 2.

Southern Flounder FMP

At the November 2021 business meeting, the MFC voted to send draft Amendment 3 for public and MFC Advisory Committee review. The division held a 30-day public comment period from December 15, 2021, through January 14, 2022, including a public listening session and Northern, Southern, and Finfish Advisory Committees meetings. Recommendations from the division, public, and Advisory Committees were added to the draft plan. At the February 2022 business meeting, lead staff will present an overview of recommendations and the MFC will select preferred management options for the Southern Flounder FMP Amendment 3. Once MFC preferred management options are selected, the plan will be sent to the DEQ Secretary and appropriate legislative committees for 30-day reviews.

Estuarine Striped Bass FMP

At the February 2021 business meeting, the MFC approved the Goal and Objectives and advised the division on management strategies to be considered in Amendment 2. Division and Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) staff developed the full draft Amendment 2. A Workshop was held with the Estuarine Striped Bass FMP Advisory Committee, division, and WRC staff in September and October 2021. At the February 2022 business meeting, lead staff will present the draft Estuarine Striped Bass FMP Amendment 2 for the MFC to vote to send for public and MFC Advisory Committees review.

Interjurisdictional FMP

At the November 2021 business meeting, the MFC approved the Goal and Objectives of the NC FMP for Interjurisdictional Fisheries Amendment 2. This unique state FMP adopts, by reference, management measures appropriate for North Carolina contained in finfish FMPs approved by the federal Councils or the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) as minimum standard. Division staff developed draft Amendment 2 and a Workshop was held in December 2021 with the Finfish Advisory Committee serving as the FMP Advisory Committee. Division staff are revising the plan based on Advisory Committee considerations.

Striped Mullet FMP

A benchmark stock assessment for striped mullet is underway coinciding with the scheduled Striped Mullet FMP review. The peer review process began in November 2021 and is ongoing. The previous stock assessment update, through terminal year 2017, indicated the stock is not experiencing overfishing. Due to a poor relationship between spawning stock biomass and juvenile abundance, overfished status was unable to be determined.

Spotted Seatrout FMP

A benchmark stock assessment for spotted seatrout is underway coinciding with the scheduled Spotted Seatrout FMP review. The prior stock assessment from 2014 indicated the stock is not overfished and is not experiencing overfishing. The benchmark stock assessment will be completed in 2022.