



ONLINE PUBLIC COMMENT

NC Marine Fisheries Commission
Feb. 23-25, 2022
Online Comments

#	Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
1	CHRIS MCCAFFITY	North Carolina	Habitat degradation negatively impacts spawning success for many species including Striped Bass, Southern Flounder, and River Herring. Please consider options for regionally stocking these fish to create Hatchery Supported Quotas based on a percentage of hatchery releases. Stocking River Herring would create more food for bass, flounder, and people while restoring a historic fishery. It is time we focused more on enhancing our fisheries and food supply than restricting our freedom to access public resources. Does anyone have a better idea for sustainably creating more seafood and recreational opportunity in ways that benefit everyone and our resources?
2	jerry james	North Carolina	How can a fish be overfished (flounder) when the rec can harvest more in a 2 week period than the average of the last 4 years with a 52 week season. Apparently the fish is not in as bad a shape as the division would have us believe. Even the commercial interest say the fish is not overfished. Division is creating a derby fishery which is not good for the fish. Please deny the Amendment 3 to the Flounder fishery and send it back for more review. (accurate fish stock assesment). With a one fish creel you are shutting down the rec gig fishery and possibly the hook and line fishery. This make absolutely no sense!
3	David Drach	North Carolina	The gill net fishery in Eastern NC has destroyed the fishing as we know it. Keeping the nets in the waters of NC will be a travesty to the fish and to the anglers of NC. With the current state of flounder and what has happened to the striped bass over the last 10 years there is no need to keep the nets in the water. Using nets during shad season is a joke and it's time for NC recreational anglers to see through the loopholes that the DMF is trying to pull. I would one day love to be able to catch a rock or a flounder with my children, as it was a fond childhood memory of mine. Please start making changes for the future generation. Commercial fishing is not the only "tradition" that has taken place in eastern NC for the last 50 years.
4	Steve Reynolds	North Carolina	As a long-term recreational fishermen in North Carolina and former RCGL license holder, I strongly urge the Commission to eliminate the large mesh netting of flounder and trawling in the nursery areas of the Pamlico Sound for the benefit of all North Carolinians including the thousands of coastal inhabitants who are not commercial fishermen but would benefit greatly from a sustainable fishery. The many are being held captive by the few. I gave up my nets for the good of the resource and so can they. Follow the real science and preserve our natural resources which is supposed to be the Commission's purpose.
5	Mike McLean	North Carolina	I was born in NC and have been fishing on the NC coast my entire adult life, more than 40 years. I began fishing at the coast while I was getting my engineering degree at NC State in 1973. At that time, flounder fishing was excellent. But since then, I have seen the continual decline of the fishery. Now, I love to take my three grandkids fishing from my 2nd home in Holden Beach, or at the Outer Banks. When we catch a flounder, it is a rare delight for us. And sadly, we have to throw them back. They want to know "Where are the flounders?" They don't understand that flounders are now an endangered species, That situation was created by commercial overfishing and entanglements in gill nets. As the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission, you have the opportunity to begin to turn this sad situation around with the Amendment 3 to the Southern Flounder FMP. I encourage you to phase out the use of large mesh gill

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			<p>nets immediately, before the renewal of the Sea Turtle Incidental Take Permit (ITP). The Division of Marine Fisheries (Division) is recommending continued usage of large mesh gill nets in the flounder fishery. The Division's recommendation says that phasing out large mesh gill nets would affect about 800 commercial users that harvest Southern flounder. These users have an annual economic impact of about only \$4 million to NC.</p> <p>However, the recreational flounder fishing impact of \$240 million vastly outweighs that. There are nearly 500,000 Coastal Recreational Fishing License holders, and 328,000 are NC residents. Their \$240 million economic impact by just flounder fishing alone is tremendous to NC, far more than \$4 million.</p> <p>The science of this sad situation is clear. There is a better alternative than large mesh gill nets for flounder. That is using pound nets. It is a relatively clean gear and has a lower mortality rate according to the Division's own data.</p> <p>I strongly encourage you to follow the science and economic impact, and to create a better fishing experience for the generations to follow us. It's your job to achieve a self-sustaining flounder population that provides sustainable harvest using science-based decision-making processes.</p> <p>My 14, 12, and 8 year old grandkids thank you. And so do I.</p> <p>Mike McLean</p>
6	John Baker	North Carolina	<p>Dear Commission, For far too long we've watched our North Carolina fisheries stocks continue to be depleted. We have the natural resource protections and policies to better manage our marine resources. Sitting back and watching the tragedy of the commons unfold before my child's eyes is not good stewardship. Allowing overexploitation of the resource is good for no one. It is imperative we place further restrictions on large mesh gill netting and shrimp trawling operations within our marine estuary systems. Bycatch and indiscriminatory take methods impact non-target species, violate endangered species protections, and further exacerbates poor recruitment of nursery stocks. Our marine resources are part of the public domain and not owned by private interests. We owe it to future generations and the citizens of North Carolina to manage our marine resources with scientific based policy rather than political and economic desires of commercial interests. It is proven throughout the southeast United States that when gamefish stocks are allowed to flourish economic incentives through tourism, travel, sales, and recreational fishing, boost local economies and further promote awareness and education of estuary and marine systems that are so precious on our Carolina coast. These are a billion dollar industries directly linked to the accessibility of public waters, habitat protections, and the marine systems within. State agencies throughout the country have made amazing strides in conservation and resource management of terrestrial species, yet the Commission still seems to be managing marine resources with policies equivalent to market hunting in the late 1800s. Allocation for take is far too lopsided towards the special interests of commercial fishing industry while leaving other users and conservation considerations as secondary. At the end of the day I can only think of the children and I question, are we leaving them a legacy marine resource or a version of a crippled overexploited resource.</p> <p>Best Regards, Garrett Baker, [REDACTED], NC</p>

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7	Brian Saunders	North Carolina	<p>Could we PLEASE maybe cut the creel to two fish and up the size limit to maybe 16 or 17 inches? As a Charter Captain, Victory Fishing custom Charters, it is hard to maintain clients when all you can offer them is four trout and a puppy drum. It's disheartening to have clients upset and mad because they have to release 18-22" flounder and trust me, My clients catch plenty that size all the time.</p> <p>The second thing I would love to address is the striper situation on the Neuse. We argued against the two year moratorium because of the very thing that has been going on for now what, 13 years on the Cape Fear River. Two turns into ten, which turns into twenty, which then turns into forever. Y'all have to do something other than close everything down.</p> <p>Im not opposed to regulations, we have to have em, but maybe just maybe, our state resources need to be poured into hiring more Fishery Officers and Wildlife Officers to enforce said regulations rather than shut everything down. Y'all have caused the shut down of an inshore fishing trail, thus costing families in need from receiving donations from said trail. And if that isn't enough, you have cost the people of Belhaven, Washington, Blount's Creek, and Swain Quarter revenue for gas, food, rentals and retail. Please, PLEASE enact a little COMMAN SENCE and do what's right. I have caught more flounder and stripers than you can shake a stick at the last couple years. Your decisions affect livelihoods for both the REC guys and the Commercial folks.</p> <p>Thank you for hearing me out.</p> <p>Brian Saunders</p>
8	Donald Beaver	North Carolina	Get the nets out of the sound!!!!
9	Freddy Kruske	North Carolina	So, you have limited the recreational fisherman's limits for trout and strippers that have been in place for quit sometime and have not changed I have no problem. You limited the use of gill nets beyond the ferry line and know you are already changing that regulation for shad fisherman. Shad can be harvested way before the ferry line. you need to leave the gill net regulation in place as is.
10	Richard Odom	Virginia	As I have done in Virginia, I am asking that large gill nets be eliminated in NC. The damage of Incidental bycatch is most often under reported and the value of the net catch is significantly less than the value of recreational catch to the state.
11	Bill Wallace	North Carolina	This is what you get when you mix corrupt politicians, greed, irresponsibility, and just down right stupidity. It's way past time for a change in political leadership. If allowed to continue man will destroy our fishery. It makes me mad as heck. How am I going to explain to my grandchildren why there are no fish for us to catch on a Saturday afternoon? Shame on you people. NC is a national disgrace and embarrassment.
12	Connie Boyette	North Carolina	The idea of a creel limit of 1 fish per day is ridiculous and will please no one. Shorten the spring and summer proposal and raise the limit to 2 per day.
13	Ken Redman	North Carolina	Will someone in our state organization step up and do the right thing. Protecting the commercial fishing organizations at the expense of depleting our natural resources and infringing on the recreational fishing industry's monetary input to the state is simply ludicrous. Stop the bays' shrimp trawling like all the other states on the eastcoast do. Recreational fishing provides needed tourist money and we don't harvest near the amount

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			of fish stocks that commercial fishing does. It's a no brainer. Why are our governmental guiding bodies the last to learn?? Someone with intelligence please step up. We've talked about it long enough.
14	Lyndell Hearne	North Carolina	<p>In order to satisfy both the gill netters and the recreational fisherman who want to harvest Southern Flounder. I suggest a buyout of the gill netters over the next five years to eliminate all gill netting at the end of five years. The income per gill netter (714 netters) is less than \$1,000 per year, The amount would decrease by \$200 per year and stop at year five. The total payout would be \$2,142,000. Without doing something similar to a buyout, the recreational fishing for Southern Flounder will cease.</p> <p>I am a 74 man who has worked all of my life and finally retired at the coast to enjoy flounder fishing. Only being allowed to catch and keep one flounder per person and per day, is not worth the effort and expense of recreational flounder fishing.</p>
15	Robert Leeman	North Carolina	<p>I cannot understand why the commission continues to allow gill and pound net fishing for flounder when turtles continue to be entangled and die. Also when sport fishermen can only catch flounder for a very short period because the stock is in trouble. A very small number of net fishermen catch and kill a disproportionate amount of the allowable catch when it is obvious that this is bonus money and not enough to make a living, on average less than a thousand dollars per year.</p> <p>The shorten recreational flounder season hurts many more people that make their living from tourists at the coast.</p> <p>Do the right thing and quit risking endangered species for a a very small special interest group!</p>
16	AV Woods	North Carolina	<p>The Division has told us that cleaner gears such as pound nets can harvest the total allocation if gill nets were eliminated. Why are you pursuing the renewal of an Incidental Take Permit to allow the continued killing of endangered sea turtles, when the gear is not needed to land the total allowable catch of the Southern flounder quota? The turtles and the people of N.C. deserve better, rational decision making from you.</p>
17	Ron Brooks	Florida	<p>I live in ██████████, Florida. I follow the North Carolina fiasco called the Marine Fisheries Commission because I lived in Morehead City in the 60s and 70s. I continue to be appalled at how your state caters to the commercial industry and essentially ignores the recreational anglers.</p> <p>Commercial anglers seem to live in a world of their own with no regard for the future. Their "take what I can get today" attitudes are going to have to change if your fisheries are going to survive.</p> <p>I also realize that the majority of commercial fishermen come from a long family line of commercial fishing. They essentially feel like they will starve if a fishery is closed. I saw it in Florida when we enacted the gillnet ban. Our state offered free education to show them other fish harvesting methods. We established a viable clam farming initiative. But most of the commercial boys ignored it - and the ones that tried to participate were harassed and threatened by those that ignored the effort.</p> <p>A few of our small coastal towns saw their elected government positions - like city council members - taken over by commercial fishermen who were affected by the net ban. The recreational boat ramps and facilities were allowed to deteriorate to the point that anglers avoided the area. It has improved somewhat, but don't plan on finding tackle or bait any longer in some of these places.</p>

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			<p>I fish out of Mayport, Florida, often around the St Johns River jetties. Many times, even as late as last week, I see a commercial net boat picking up a gill net in the predawn hours. The boat has no numbers, no lights, and is painted jet black. The net is run parallel to the rocks and it takes a lot of sheepshead off those rocks. To my knowledge, they have been doing this undetected for several years.</p> <p>I made the mistake of challenging the two boat occupants on one occasion, only to be shown a firearm pointed in my direction. Today I never head out to fish unarmed.</p> <p>If North Carolina ever manages to enact a gillnet ban, there will always be nets run under the radar. But our Florida ban has worked. Even with the dramatic increase in recreational anglers, our mullet population has come back. Redfish continue to thrive. Recreational flounder limits have stabilized at five fish per angler.</p> <p>I fear that the days of eating whole fried flounder at the Sanitary Fish Market will never return. I also fear that on-the-water altercations between commercial and recreational anglers will increase. Someone will eventually be badly hurt.</p>
18	Tom Everly	North Carolina	<p>Please consider the monetary impact of recreational fisherpeople in your analysis for Southern Flounder. Commercial fishing has its place but it is destroying the fishery that they depend on and the use of nets is impacting other species of marine life.</p> <p>Analysis shows the negative impact of commercial fishing in its current form and I expect you to use your authority to protect our marine waters and fisheries for all to use and enjoy.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
19	Howard Hink	North Carolina	<p>I am insulted as a citizen of this state that there continues to be a debate over the use of nets. Or the economics of the recreational fisheries. While driving down 70 east, I saw a restaurant advertising baby flounder.</p> <p>Do the right thing. It would be a surprise.</p>
20	Richard Allebach	North Carolina	<p>Ban large gill nets and stop allowing shrimp trawling in the western area of Pamlico Sound near the mouths of the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers. I don't see why it is such a big deal to ban shrimping in the fish spawning areas on Pamlico Sound. It's not as if the shrimp are only catchable in those areas!!!</p> <p>Also extend the gill net restrictions to the mouths of both the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers for at least one year to see what effect this has on the fish populations.</p> <p>Consider using license funds to buy out commercial fisherman.</p>
21	CJ Bouchard	North Carolina	<p>To the Fisheries Commission.....</p> <p>The real question is:</p> <p>Why doesn't NC have a better fishery than Louisiana, if we don't have anything wrong with our estuaries?</p> <p>You're shutting down more species to fishing than we're opening (flounder, Hogfish and possibly grouper?) and</p>

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			<p>you want to continue the same path of gill netting and killing a massive amount of bycatch? Not to mention the stress you will put on other fish as more people will keep them as table fare (trout, red and black drum).</p> <p>You're all an embarrassment to this great state if you can't figure this out ASAP.</p> <p>REGARDLESS IF YOU'RE A COMMERCIAL OR RECREATIONAL FISHERMAN.</p>
22	Stephen Moore	North Carolina	<p>Why, why, why do you still allow large mesh gill nets when they are not required to reach the quota. They are destroying the recreational fishery. 714 gill net fishermen make \$953 per person if you average it out. Give me a break! You allow that and potentially kill the \$240M recreational fishery? Please change! Thanks</p>
23	Richard Allebach	North Carolina	<p>It's time to recognize the importance of we recreational fisherman and pass regulations that favor those who are most responsible for adding the most dollars to the state economy and at the same time protect those species most threatened. BAN GILL NETS NOW!!!</p>
24	Wade Howell	North Carolina	<p>Gill nets should be banned in all coastal waters. It is not only a matter of how many fish are caught in these nets ; the biggest concern is how many fish and other species that are killed by these devices.</p>
25	Tom hollinshed	North Carolina	<p>It seems incomprehensible that a body of appointed persons charged with the responsibility of managing a resource, provided with results from studies from indisputable scientific and empirical data collected by a group supposedly collaterally engaged, would fail to act as need to effect the needed result. The appearance of impropriety has become so glaringly clear that one or more elected officials continuing to ignore the action of those chosen as their proxy should now recognize the potential for the voting public to question the elected officials motives?</p> <p>Ignorance or apathy???</p>
26	David Blakewood	North Carolina	<p>I have been fishing in NC for over 35 years and have seen the reduction in fish of all kinds during this period. I have also seen other states like Florida fishing become much better during this period. We need to wake up so my 4 Grandchildren can enjoy fishing as I did when I was young Please vote to remove gill nets and netting in general in the estuaries. Please do your job and wake up!!!!</p>
27	Steven Benson	North Carolina	<p>I ask that you disallow gill netting of any regulated fish. For flounder it defies logic as to why a relative handful of people can take quantities of an exhausted fish supply for so little income while thousands of other contributing millions to the fishing industry are so restricted. It forces people to wonder what other agenda is work and undermines the respect for the regulatory authorities. If that sounds like an unfair statement than just justify why NC still has the gill netting and one of the largest relative commercial catches.</p>
28	Danny Gregory	North Carolina	<p>It is a shame that after a man pays for fishing licenses and all his equipment and state taxes that he can only keep flounder for one month out of the year. All our state government is concerned with is the commercial fishermen. All the citizens of this state should be treated equally.</p>
29	Reese Stecher	North Carolina	<p>I respect Dr. Kornegy and I respect Charlton Godwin. But I do not agree with either that the North Carolina Striped Bass population is on the verge of collapsing. I have run a center console charter boat and fished the waters of the Albemarle Sound Management Area for Striped Bass full time since 1997. I am seeing something totally different on the water than what they are telling me. We have had what I would consider to be really good fishing over the past several years. When you can just about count on catching them daily, that is good fishing.</p>

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			<p>If it is deemed by the MFC that there is a problem, the solution to start with is a no brainer. The solution starts with the elimination of quota going to the Roanoke Rapids Management Area. Fact: The RRMA is the only place in The United States of America where there is a catch season for Striped Bass on the spawning grounds during the spawn.</p> <p>Fact: The Albemarle Sound management area is 667,674 acres with a 6 month season that is not during or on the spawning grounds. Fact: The Roanoke River management area is 6,420 acres with a 1 to 3 week season that is during and on the spawning grounds. One season during the spawn and one not during the spawn. Both with the same exact poundage quota. Fact: The Albemarle Sound management area is not 10X larger, not 50X larger, but 103.999X larger than the Roanoke Rapids Management area.</p> <p>The Albemarle Sound Management Area's Striped Bass recreational quota was just cut by over 81.376%. That went into effect on January 1st 2021. Fact: The Albemarle Sound management area came in 4,546 lbs. under quota in 2021. Fact: The Roanoke Rapids Management Area had the same quota and in 1 week last year(2021) they went 14,742 lbs. over quota. Does that seem fair and equitable? Why isn't the quota allocated based on overall water area? 667,664 acres versus 6,420 acres with the same quota seems a little out of line, especially considering the user group getting the short end of the stick is not fishing during the spawn on spawning grounds while the other user group is.</p> <p>The goal of the charter boat captains that I know that fish the RRMA is to have to triple digit days. Goto any of their web or Instagram sites and they all talk about the 100+ fish days. Again, I respect Dr. Kornegy and I respect Charlton Godwin. But I do not agree with mortality rates. I believe them to be lower that what we are told. But if the mortality rates based on water temperature are true then the triple digit days during the RRMA season are certainly not helping with the stock. Every time Tom Roller, Richard Andrews or anyone else for that matter catches 100 fish in a day, there are 6 to 10 fish that day(depending on water temperature) dying based on NCDMF science. In fact, The Roanoke Rapids Management area had more dead discards in the three week seasons in 2018(11,982) & 2019(11,980) than the ASMA had in total landings in 2021(8,258). Fact: There have been 182,521 in dead discards from RRMA versus 53,880 dead discards in ASMA since 1997. RRMA dead discarded 128,641 more than ASMA in that time period while fishing an area that is 104 times smaller than the area of ASMA. And they dead discarded those 128,641 fish fishing 88.34% less days(6 months. vs. 3 weeks) than ASMA. Quota allocation is far from being equitable. Especially, given that RRMA fishing is during and on the spawning grounds for fish that have swum 200 miles with eggs to spawn at the finish line.</p> <p>All of the above are facts that cannot be disputed. Are we worried about the resource(we should be) or are we worried about one to three weeks of the economy of Roanoke Rapids? If we are looking out for the economy, then what about the Albemarle Sound management area season which supports Dare, Currituck, Camden, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Washington, Bertie, and Tyrell counties for six months out of the year?</p> <p>If there is indeed a problem with the Striped Bass population in North Carolina's internal waters, the very first place you start would be to eliminate a catch season during the spawn on the spawning grounds. If you are not going to eliminate that, then at the very least, the quota allocation should be based on the water area that is being fished for the Striped Bass. I am hoping that the NCMFC considers re-allocation on the recreational side</p>

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			<p>quota and adds that to the agenda as an FMP option. Thank You.</p> <p>Reese Stecher Beach Bum Fishing [REDACTED] North Carolina [REDACTED] Office: [REDACTED] Home: [REDACTED]</p>
30	Scot Bannerman	North Carolina	<p>I support restrictions on the use of large mesh gill nets in NC resources waters. I also support restrictions on shrimp trawling in nursery areas of Pamlico sound. As I life long resident of NC, and someone who has seen the decline of recreational fishing in NC resources waters, it is time to consider the overall health of the fisheries, not just the health of the select few commercial fisherman. Proper maintenance of fish stocks benefits both commercial fisherman and recreational fisherman.</p> <p>Look at the data. Look at the science.</p>
31	Randy Perry	North Carolina	<p>The health of our fisheries will be much healthier if you would match our neighboring States with limiting commercial fishing net catches. There is way to much by-catch, leading to the loss of turtles and small gamefish. There is much more money spent by recreational fisherman than the commercial fisherman. The commercial fishery and recreational fishery split should be more equably divided.</p>
32	donnie davis	North Carolina	<p>How can managers justify fishing on a species while they are spawning if there is concern for the stability of the stock?</p>
33	Aaron Kelly		<p>I would like to see no decrease in the meager limits we are already reduced to in the Albermarle management area. The pressure that is being put on spawning fish in the headwaters of the Roanoke behooves me and the political hubaloo involved will not change I am assured for years to come. Catching a keeping or releasing fish post spawn seems to be a logical answer. To cast a jig into milking fish seems selfish in its very nature. Thank you</p>
34	roger mitchell	North Carolina	<p>it is unbilivable what youall are doing cant youall see your mistakes of the past my grand kids want get to catch a15 inch flouder in there life time total unblivable</p>
35	Donald Fletcher	North Carolina	<p>Please save our fishery, it has been raped for far too long by a certain few powerful commercial fishermen families. I travel 4 hours each way to fish at the coast, me and my wife haven't been home an hour from Beaufort county. We go every chance we can. We have a camper and boat we leave there year round. We constantly put our money in your your area...constantly. We left about 400 dollars there this weekend. I pay taxes, eat out, buy groceries, power bill, lot rent, fuel for vehicles and boat on a regular basis in your area. We come to fish and relax, our little getaway. There's plenty of us that come there to fish....or used to that I know put way more money in coastal communities than the commercial guys do, way more. What if even more of us move our little getaways to SC with there much more recreational friendly seasons and limits. Get the nets out of our rivers and creeks before it's too late. Take the ocean and some of the sounds for the netters, leave the rivers and creeks for the fish to grow and mature and reproduce. Let the science produce the laws and limits not</p>

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			the politics. Tighten up the bycatch rules and you'll probably find that there could be enough for everyone to enjoy here in NC.
36	Chris England	North Carolina	As a lifelong resident and recreational fisherman in NC I have witnessed our saltwater fisheries being abused for years. The fact that we are so far behind other states in managing our resources is embarrassing. I cannot believe that we still allow gill nets in NC waters. There are so many other forms of take that are much less wasteful. Pound nets are by far the best option. I understand that some commercial fishermen use gill nets as a form of take for their income. However, all industries have to adapt to changes and commercial fishing should be no different. It seems to me that right now we are not managing for the restoration of our species. We are simply trying to prolong the loss of the species. Management should be for the benefit of the species not the benefit of commercial or recreational anglers. It makes no sense whatsoever to renew the Sea Turtle ITP when we don't even need gill nets to meet the take quota for flounder. We must start thinking about what we are leaving for future generations not just what we are going to do to keep a few people happy for a few years.
37	Eric Sexton	North Carolina	Why does NC continue to ignore the problem of gill nets, and at the same time, reduce the limit on flounder every year? Commercial fisherman are obviously the ones to blame for the flounder problem in NC now. I fish the coastal area of NC 2-3 times a year, and at least 1/2 the time we see dead fish in nets in the backwaters. Drum, flounder, spots, etc... NCDMF needs to remove their heads from their butts and fix this before our entire fishery is ruined. I know many people, myself included, are choosing to fish in SC and are no longer buying license in NC. Not driving 3.5 to 4 hours to the coast to catch 1 flounder. I'll just purchase one of the 10,000 per day from these commercial guys rite off the boat. You know, The ones they sale before filling out their trip tickets. Enough is enough. Get it right NCDMF. Stop taking money from the commercial guys and think about the private people who actually pay your salaries. Your system is broken and we all know it. Don't try to tell everyone the commercial guys aren't mostly to blame. That's like pissing on my head and telling me it's raining. SMH!!! Eric Sexton [REDACTED] NC
38	James Buie	North Carolina	Please consider better flounder allotments and longer seasons for the average recreational citizen of NC. We have been patient and understanding but the time has come for a more favorable recreational allotment. Thank you for your time and consideration on behalf of millions of us doing the right thing. James Buie
39	Nicholas Maraveyias	North Carolina	Please remove inshore gill nets and allow longer recreational flounder seasons and creel limits. Tired of paying for saltwater licensing we can hardly use any more....
40	Christopher Waters	North Carolina	I'm a lifetime sportsman that has always lived and fished in Eastern Nc. I target flounder in the Pamlico sound and around Morehead city and in the ocean out of Beaufort Inlet. The flounder fishing has been the best I've seen over the last 4 to 5 seasons. I released 12 citations this past summer. My son released a 10lb 2 oz flounder In Morehead city this past summer. I spend on average 4 to 5000 a year fishing in NC. I took 1 of the 2 flounder weeks off for vacation and stayed at Atlantic beach. I estimated I spent 2000 in 1 week to recreationally fish for flounder that week along with many other anglers. Everyone I spoke to said the fishing was fantastic. I can't see how limiting flounder season could be beneficial to anyone except someone corrupt that might profit from it. I was never inspected at the boat ramp so how do yall even agave a clue to how many fish were landed

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			<p>or harvested? The state of NC will lose millions of dollars because of the restrictions on flounder season if you continue to restrict more and more.</p> <p>Please consider the mass majority of NC not just a few with money.</p> <p>Sincerely Chris Waters</p>
41	Mike Lyerly	North Carolina	<p>Please don't shut the flounder season down or cut the limit to one per day. I'm a resident of a coastal area and enjoy flounder fishing myself and with my family (grandchildren). You really should look at the commercial limits and netting that is allowed!</p> <p>Recreational fishermen spend a lot of money every year coming to our coastal areas to fish. The continued short seasons and limits will crush our economy even more. I know of a lot of people that are currently not coming to our area in the fall especially because of rule changes like this</p>
42	Joel Strickland	North Carolina	<p>Please reconsider your plan to maintain Status Quo on the ITP program. The use of large mesh gill nets is harmful to endangered species and continues an outdated and unnecessary harvest method. Additionally, the continued allowance of shrimp trawlers in sensitive Southern flounder nursery areas is benefiting "the few" (a relatively small number of commercial fishermen) over "the many" (recreational fishermen who contribute tens of millions to North Carolina's economy each year).</p>
43	Todd Cox	North Carolina	<p>Lifting the net ban in the Neuse River above the DOT Ferry is simply a bad idea. Doing so will basically sound a death knell to the already tenuous Striper fishery.</p>
44	Felton Thompson	North Carolina	<p>Please don't shut the flounder fishery down again this year, my grandchildren and I really enjoy going flounder gigging and seeing the sealife at night, and due to weather and tides and schedule can only go a couple times in a 6 week window, I fought for this state and our country in Vietnam and do not have the option of another ten years and cannot see from my observations around Harkers island and core sound any problem with the flounder numbers, the past five years have been great so I don't see the problem, please allow 4 per person in this short season or 2 per person in a 3 month season, I really question the motive behind the crack down on this and am prepared to give up my residency in North Carolina and go to another state because I probably will not live to see a resolution whether it is political or whatever. I do not agree with the numbers that are based on assumptions and algorithms that may put a feather in someone's cap trying to move up the environmental ladder. And please if you want to regulate something, protect the nursery area's and baby fish, Thanks , Felton Thompson</p>
45	Eric Bregman	North Carolina	<p>Southern Flounder - No to Amendment 3. No further recreational restrictions on SOUTHERN FLOUNDER. No more shotgun seasons/ 2 week killing sprees. Spread it out</p> <p>Need to have a SUMMER and GULF flounder season that is actually during a time where they are on nearshore wrecks. Technically you should never close summer and gulf flounder as there is no shortage of those species. It doesn't matter if you think people can't identify summer and gulf, it's your job to ensure people are educated.</p>
46	Lora Sharkey	North Carolina	<p>Why is the Marine Fisheries Commission pursuing the renewal of an Incidental Take Permit to allow the continued killing of endangered sea turtles when the gear is not needed to land the total allowable catch of the Southern flounder quota? It has been stated by the Marine Fisheries Division that cleaner gears such as pound nets can harvest the total allocation if gill nets were eliminated.</p>

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47	Charles Hansen	North Carolina	<p>It is common knowledge the costly observer program required by the Incidental Take Permit has been an abject failure. Commercial gill net fishermen refuse to cooperate with observers trying to schedule trips, or Covid restrictions keep observers off of boats, so we are left with Marine Patrol trying to provide observer coverage of gill nets but only from a distance. This leaves the Division at less than 3% observer coverage, well short of the 10% goal in the permit. We really have no confident number of how many sea turtles are being harmed or killed in gill nets each year.</p> <p>It is time to adopt standards for flounder fishing that is less lethal to sea turtles. Decisions like this can no longer be passed on to the next year or to the next group of Marine Fisheries Commissioners.</p> <p>Re:Southern Flounder Alternatives: The option of a March to mid April season is not a good alternative. It's too early in the season based on average water temperatures and more difficult for small boat anglers to access the ocean based on weather. Thus your record/catch/fishery data will be poor data at best. Would recommend a later May - June season and fall season OR a longer fall season. Thanks for the opportunity to comment and listen to your Rec. fishers as this relates to their access to fisheries, the NC economy and sustainable fish stocks. I would also question your data as being way too high on dead discards for Recs.</p>
48	Ralph Haddock	North Carolina	<p>It is in the best interest of the southern flounder species to reduce, eliminate, by catch capture by otter trawls and gill nets. Based on known science and data, the eastern regions of the Pamlico River, and the western regions bordering the mouth of the river and extending eastward is an important nursery area for flounder. Shrimp trawling should be eliminated in that area as a minimum.</p> <p>Do not allow Shad netting upstream from the ferry line on the Neuse or the Pamlico. It is totally unnecessary and will result in bycatch issues.</p>
49	Jim Tobin	North Carolina	<p>I am the owner of Pirates Cove Yacht Club and Marina and I encourage a fair and equitable split of Stripper fishery. Albemarle sound has a much larger acreage than Roanoke Rapids and the allocation should reflect those numbers. Thank you</p>
50	Robert Woodard, Sr., Chairman Dare County	North Carolina	<p>The Albemarle Sound Management Area's (Dare County) Striped Bass recreational quota was just cut by 81.376%. That went into effect on January 1st 2021. The Albemarle Sound management area came in 4,546 lbs. under quota in 2021. The Roanoke Rapids Management Area had the same quota and in 1 week last year(2021) they went 14,742 lbs. over quota. Does that seem fair and equitable? Why isn't the quota allocated based on overall water area? 667,664 acres versus 6,420 acres with the same quota seems a little out of line, especially considering the user group getting the short end of the stick is not fishing during the spawn on spawning grounds while the other user group is. The allocations or ratios should be about the same as the acreage of the Sound compared to Roanoke Rapids</p> <p>Are we worried about the resource(we should be) or are we worried about one to three weeks of the economy of Roanoke Rapids? If we are looking out for the economy, then what about the Albemarle Sound management area season which supports Dare, Currituck, Camden, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Washington, Bertie, and Tyrell counties for six months out of the year?</p> <p>If there is indeed a problem with the Striped Bass population in North Carolina's internal waters, the very first</p>

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			place you start would be to eliminate a catch season during the spawn on the spawning grounds. If you are not going to eliminate that, then at the very least, the quota allocation should be based on the water area that is being fished for the Striped Bass. I am hoping that the NCMFC considers re-allocation on the recreational side quota and adds that to the agenda as an FMP option. Thank You.
51	Jeffrey Cronk	North Carolina	<p>- FOR OPTION 2 OF INCREASED RECREATIONAL CATCH - I DO NOT SUPPORT AN OCEAN FLOUNDER FISHERY SEASON OF MARCH 1ST THRU APRIL 15TH FOR THREE REASONS. HAVING OVER 25 YEARS EXPERIENCE PROFESSIONALLY TARGETING FLOUNDER IN THE OCEAN FISHERY IT IS VERY APPARENT THAT 1 - THIS TIME FRAME WILL CREATE MORE INTERACTIONS WITH THE BIO-MASS OF ADULT SPAWNING SOUTHERN FLOUNDER WHICH OCCUPY THE OCEAN FROM DECEMBER THRU APRIL. 2 - THE PRIME WATER TEMPERATURE FOR FLOUNDER TO FEED WELL IN THE OCEAN IS 60 PLUS DEGREES AND ACCORDING TO NOAA THE WATER TEMPS NEARSHORE IN ONSLOW BAY DO NOT MAINTAIN 60 PLUS DEGRESS UNTIL SOMETIME IN APRIL. 3 - THE MARCH WEATHER ALONG THE NC COAST IS USUALLY VERY UNSETTLING WITH ROUGH SEAS AND NOT CONDUCIVE FOR THE AVG. SMALL BOAT ANGLER TO ACCESS.</p> <p>-THE OCEAN FISHERY SEASON WOULD BE MUCH MORE USEFUL TO ANGLERS IF IT WERE OPEN MAY THRU THE FIRST PART OF JUNE WHILE STILL ALLOWING THE NCDMF TIME TO EXTRAPOLATE DATA. ANOTHER SOLUTION WOULD BE TO DO AWAY WITH THE MARCH-APRIL OCEAN SEASON AND LENGTHEN THE FALL SEASON FOR ACCESS TO BOTH OCEAN AND INTERNAL WATERS.</p> <p>- i DO NOT SUPPORT THE CREEL LIMIT OF 1 FLOUNDER PER PERSON PER DAY IN THE OCEAN FISHERY. THE OCEAN FISHERY IS PREDOMINANTLY SUMMER AND GULF FLOUNDER, ESPECIALLY IN THE SUMMER AND FALL. THIS FISHERY IN FEDERAL WATERS AND STATE WATERS IS COMPLETELY VIABLE AND BY REDUCING ACCESS AND REDUCING THE CREEL LIMIT ON THE SUMMER AND GULF FISHERY, THE NCDMF WILL BE CREATING A CATASTROPHIC LOSS OF REVENUE FOR THE NC COAST.</p> <p>-i WOULD ALSO LIKE TO QUESTION AS TO WHY THE FLOUNDER BYCATCH FROM THE SHRIMP TRAWL FISHERY IN OUR SOUNDS AND RIVERS IS NOT FACTORED INTO THE FMP DATA AND WHY THERE ARE NO RESTRICTIONS TO THIS FISHERY TO PREVENT LOSS OF POTENTIALLY HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OR MORE JUVENILLE FLOUNDER.</p>
52	Thomas Daniels	North Carolina	As a recreational fisherman, it makes no sense not having more than a two week flounder season. I understand the size limits but not the season. When the commercial fishermen can keep the same fish that I had to release makes no sense. Up the size limit but have a year round season.
53	george Beckwith	North Carolina	<p>"Put-grow-take" and "Supplemental" stocking the answer for North Carolina striped bass</p> <p>The rains no longer fall the same on Mother Nature's scarred face and the waters no longer flow the same through her straightened veins. Rivulets and creeks through long leaf pine forests are now drainage ditches for fields and culverts for parking lots. We have built too many roads, too many bridges, drained too many wetlands, planted too many farms and houses to expect our rivers to produce at "historical levels". We can and should attempt to mitigate or buffer these effects, but we cannot undo what has been done. Because of the</p>

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			<p>burdens laid upon her, Mother Nature is simply no longer capable of bringing back striped bass on her own. Cape Fear River striped bass season may open after 20 year closure.</p> <p>After a 20 year moratorium of harvest in the attempt to rebuild stocks to sustainable levels on the Cape Fear River, biologists with the NCWRC have finally come to the conclusion that the effort is in vain and have recommended opening a harvest season.</p> <p>“Current mortality rates and deficient upstream passage likely precludes any possibility of population recovery. Establishing an open harvest season would increase angling opportunities until spawning grounds access is restored.”--1</p> <p>The fish ladders and rock archways do not work. Locks and dams are not going to be removed in the foreseeable future, so the public might as well be able to keep a few.</p> <p>The Cape Fear is not the only river in NC that has been manipulated by man’s hand. In fact, every river with historical spawning populations of striped bass has been dammed or has migration impediments. Most of those dams do not offer the luxury of controlling water flows for the benefit of fish.</p> <p>Roanoke River needs supplemental stocking</p> <p>The Roanoke River is an exception with a series of hydroelectric dams controlling the flow of water downstream into reservoirs by the names of Smith Mountain, Kerr/Jordan and Roanoke Rapids. The banks of these reservoirs wrap their arms around millions of gallons of water that can be “held” or released depending on man’s needs.</p> <p>Interagency agreements with Dominion Power and weekly meetings with NCWRC and USFWS attempt to control release of water at optimal times for striped bass spawning success.</p> <p>For a decade the Roanoke River was an example of this interagency cooperation and fisheries management success. Pickup trucks, trailers and “tin boats” swelled boat landing and revitalized small rural communities all along the river basin. The economic benefits were felt from Weldon to Manteo and Mann’s Harbor.</p> <p>But mankind cannot control the rains and the reservoirs can only hold so much water before fields, roads and homes are flooded. During times of flood, striped bass are the losers. Release of large amounts of water can wash eggs and fry onto the flood plain jeopardizing an entire year class.</p> <p>The economic boom of a keeper season that once lasted several months has now been reduced to only a few days. There is talk of future closures, shorter seasons, more regulations, even a natural/live bait ban.</p> <p>“Poor Recruitment is the Primary Reason for the Population Decline” -2</p> <p>“Recruitment failures have been observed for the last four years (2017-2020), a result of inopportune flood releases during critical Striped Bass spawning periods”.-3</p> <p>There is no superior to a natural, wild-spawned striped bass. However, supplemental stocking should be considered on the Roanoke River when environmental conditions, specifically flood events jeopardize a year class. During those years or series of years with little or no production, supplemental stocking can provide hatchery fish that would be expected to contribute to natural spawning by age 3 or age 4. -4</p> <p>Softening these gaps in natural production would negate the need for draconian restrictions stifling the recreational fishing economic engine. A more stable fishery equates to consistent regulations and longer seasons extending the economic benefit to rural communities.</p> <p>Time Table should be set for doubtful Neuse River and Tar River striped bass recovery</p> <p>Removal of some dams and the observation of a few fish on the spawning grounds of the Neuse have</p>

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			<p>increased hopes for striped bass recovery there. Unfortunately, inconsistent flows on the Neuse will prevent a long term viable fishery and according to one prominent striped bass biologist the "Flows in the Tar River are so variable that I also don't hold out much faith for real production there either. " -5</p> <p>After 20 years of trying, fisheries managers have admitted defeat on the Cape Fear. Supplemental stocking is needed to sustain the Roanoke and there is doubtful chance of recovery in other NC rivers. So what are the future plans for striped bass management in North Carolina? More of the same.</p> <p>The current management objective is to promote self-sustaining populations, such that stocking would not be needed. This goal cannot be achieved and there is not a time line for success or failure, just throwing more money and wasting more time going down the same path.</p> <p>Write the NCWRC (https://www.ncwildlife.org/Contacts#551694-h2commissionersh2) asking them to set a hard time line of 5 years to evaluate natural reproduction before implementing "put-take- grow" options that would allow angler harvest.</p> <p>This is not a new concept for NCWRC, consider the ongoing stocking of striped bass and Bodie bass (hybrid striped bass) into our lakes, trout in all of our mountain streams and stocking of largemouth bass and other local species in coastal rivers after hurricane events.</p> <p>The biggest obstacle to this new stocking strategy is lack of public support and opposition from some fisheries managers. That's right, one fishery biologist claimed that he did not support stocking because "they'll just end up stuck in gill nets. " -(5)</p>
54	Paul Beaumont		
55	Paul Beaumont	North Carolina	The striper quota allocation should be based on the water area that is being fished for the Striped Bass. I am hoping that the NCMFC considers re-allocation on the recreational side quota and adds that to the agenda as an FMP option. Thank You.
56	Ronald Baucom	North Carolina	<p>Subject: upcoming flounder season for year 2022.</p> <p>My suggestion is increase size limit to 16 inches creel limits to 3 per person per day.extend season from June 1,2022 to October 1, 2022.</p> <p>This would be more favorable to all concerned.</p> <p>That would help the business, like bait and tackle shops. Economy that it would generate income to the area.plus allowing the NC Marine Fisheries to achieve there goals.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and you hard work.</p> <p>Ronald Baucom</p>
57	Jonathan Edwards	North Carolina	<p>Why are we in this mess to start with? The answer is simple. Over-harvest from the commercial fishing industry. Should the largest user group that spends upwards of 200 million dollars a year on this fishery be punished for something they did not do? No.</p> <p>If the southern flounder stocks are in as bad a shape as we are being told by the state, please close it for all user groups for a period of 2 years. Perform a stock assessment after year 2. If they have improved, then we can discuss opening a season.</p> <p>Also, the Pamlico sound is a nursery for many fish species including southern flounder. The shrimp trawlers kill god knows how many. Let's put these big ocean going vessels back in the ocean where they belong.</p>

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			On another note, the "commercial shad fishery" that is being discussed opening above the ferry lines will not only catch shad. They will catch striped bass which will be discarded. The striped bass fishery on the Pamlico and Neuse are already in trouble. Why make it harder for these fish?
58	Ellis Peaden iii	North Carolina	Please keep the flounder alone theirs flounder in water and open the rock back season up for the tar Pamlico an



Cape Fear River Watch (CFRW) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the 2022 Draft Fishery Management Plan for Striped Bass in North Carolina and would like to submit the following comments on management of the Striped Bass stock in the Cape Fear River.

CFRW is a nonprofit environmental organization founded in 1994 whose mission is to protect and improve the water quality of the Cape Fear River Basin for all people through education, advocacy and action. We have been involved with issues that affect the water quality of the River such as concentrated animal farming operations (CAFOs), toxic chemicals present in the system and issues related to the aquatic resources of the River.

CFRW has devoted a great deal of effort to rebuilding the fish stocks of the Cape Fear and was involved with the building of a rock arch weir to improve fish passage over Lock and Dam #1 above Riegelwood. We also participated in monitoring studies to assess the effectiveness of the structure. The rock arch rapid was effective in passing smaller fish such as American Shad and river herring but was not as effective in passing larger species such as Atlantic Sturgeon and Striped Bass. Subsequent research in other systems found that passage for larger fish could be facilitated by modifications to the rock arch weir. CFRW led an effort to modify the structure at L&D#1 which was completed in the fall of 2021. Starting in the Spring of 2022 a consortium of organizations, universities and agencies led by Clemson University will conduct tagging studies and sonic tracking of fish movement to assess the effectiveness of the modifications in passing fish. Allowing harvest of fish presents the possibility that tagged fish could be taken, compromising the studies and causing the loss of expensive sonic tags. The Corps of Engineers is planning to alter the river flow, so water levels top the dams at L&D#2 and 3 upstream of L&D#1 potentially allowing easier access for Striped Bass to reach their traditional spawning grounds. CFRW feels that it is not in the best interest of the stock or to the upcoming studies to allow any harvest at this time.

Striped Bass in the Cape Fear have elevated levels of heavy metals, per and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and dioxin in their tissues. Allowing harvest of fish for consumption before more is known about the health effects of these substances is unwise.

High mortality of Striped Bass occurred after Hurricane Florence due to low levels of dissolved oxygen thus decreasing a severely depleted stock even further. Adding harvest pressure is not in keeping with rebuilding the population.

If harvest is allowed in the Cape Fear, it would be the only water body in the Central Southern Management Area where harvest would be allowed. This opens the possibility for increased fishing pressure by users from outside the Cape Fear area on a depleted stock.

The objective of CFRW is to rebuild the stock of Striped Bass to levels that would support a fishery in the Cape Fear but opening harvest at this time is premature and contrary to rebuilding the stock. CFRW recommends continuation of the harvest moratorium in the Cape Fear River.