



*Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan  
Draft Amendment 2*

*DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY*

Marine Fisheries

Marine Fisheries Commission | Michael S. Loeffler and Anne L. Markwith | June 6, 2019



## *Issue*

- Select preferred management strategy for draft Amendment 2 to the N.C. Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan (FMP)
- Vote to send a revised draft Amendment 2 to the Secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality.



# Public Comment Summary

Issue	Method of Public Comment Received			
		Mail	Online	Public Comment*
		Response (number; %)	Response (number; %)	Response (number; %)
Do you support Draft Amendment 2	Yes	0 (0%)	91 (38%)	3 (23%)
	No	11 (100%)	150 (62%)	10 (77%)
	Total	11 (100%)	241 (100%)	13 (100%)
If you support Draft Amendment 2 which option do you recommend for 2019?	Option A (31%)		8 (9%)	
	Option B (52%)		9 (10%)	
	Option C (62%)		34 (38%)	
	Option D (72%)		11 (12%)	
	Option E (Partial Moratorium)		20 (22%)	
	No Preference		7 (8%)	
	Total		89	
If you support Draft Amendment 2 which option do you recommend beginning in 2020?	Option A (31%)	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Option B (52%)		14 (16%)	
	Option C (62%)		10 (11%)	
	Option D (72%)		39 (44%)	
	Option E (Partial Moratorium)		19 (22%)	
	No Preference		6 (7%)	
	Total		88	
Do you support additional non-quantifiable measures?	Trip Limits		59 (31%)	
	Fishing Times		50 (26%)	
	Gear Changes		74 (38%)	
	None		5 (3%)	
	No Preference		5 (3%)	
Total		193		



## *Southern Advisory Committee Recommendation*

The Southern Advisory Committee met on June 3, 2019 and failed to reach consensus on a recommendation for draft Amendment 2.



## *Northern Advisory Committee Recommendation*

- Motion to support the Divisions recommendation of 62% reduction in 2019 and 72% reduction beginning in 2020.
  - Includes management carried forward from Amendment 1, Supplement A , and Addendum XXVIII
  - Continued development of Amendment 3
- In addition, a motion was made asking the MFC to consider dividing the allowable days for gill netting amongst allowable fishing months for a given area due to the Sea Turtle ITP.



## *Finfish Advisory Committee Recommendation*

- Recommended a reduced harvest of 52%, not to exceed 52%, until Amendment 3 is completed.
- Includes management carried forward from Amendment 1, Supplement A, Addendum XXVIII
- Continued development of Amendment 3
- Additional recommendation to the MFC to ask the Secretary of DEQ to allow the Director of DMF to go out of compliance with ASMFC Summer Flounder Plan and adopt a 12-inch size limit and a 4-fish bag limit for southern flounder in North Carolina waters.
- The committee also asked to have the Southern Flounder AC look at recommending a moratorium on all southern flounder harvest from Nov. 1, 2019 to Sept. 1, 2022.





# *Southern Flounder FMP Advisory Committee Recommendation*

The Southern Flounder Advisory Committee recommends that starting Jan. 1, 2019 a 52% reduction ( $F=0.34$ ) be adopted with the following changes for the commercial fishery, calculated for the Northern, Central, and Southern areas:

- 40% reduction for the pound net fishery, with a start date of Sept. 15:
  - Northern - Sept. 15 through Oct. 28;
  - Central - Sept. 15 through Nov. 2; and
  - Southern - Sept. 15 through Nov. 3.
- 40% reduction for the gig fishery, with a start date of April 1:
  - Northern - April 1 through Oct. 24;
  - Central - April 1 through Nov. 11; and
  - Southern - April 1 through Aug. 25.
- For the large-mesh gill net fishery a reduction to make up the difference to yield a 52% reduction for the commercial fishery overall, with a start date of Sept. 15 recognizing that the division proposal for the Recreational Commercial Gear License large-mesh gill net season of Sept. 15-Sept. 30 may be changed by this final percent reduction.



# *Southern Flounder FMP Advisory Committee Recommendation*

- The percent reduction for the large-mesh gill net fishery, based on the Southern Flounder Advisory Committee recommendation, would be approximately 71% compared to the 2017 removals. This reduction to the large-mesh gill net fishery is equal to 162,770 pounds in total removals. A start date of Sept. 15 results in the following seasons:
  - Northern - Sept. 15 through Oct. 12;
  - Central - Sept. 15 through Oct. 5; and
  - Southern - Sept. 15 through Oct. 21.
- In addition, as of Jan. 1, 2020, the committee recommends implementing a 1,500-yard limit for large mesh gill nets in Management Unit A and implement a 1,000-yard limit Management Units B and C and 750-yard limit for large mesh gill nets in Management Units D and E.
- Prohibiting the use picks, gaffs, gigs, and spears when removing flounder from pound nets
- Finally, the committee recommends a 52% reduction be applied to the recreational fisheries. The season for the recreational hook-and-line and gig fisheries will be July 16 through Sept. 30.





# *Southern Flounder FMP Advisory Committee Recommendation*

- Includes management carried forward from Amendment 1, Supplement A , and Addendum XXVIII
- Adoption of Amendment 2 authorizes concurrent development of Amendment 3 and more robust management strategies and



# *Division Recommendation*

## *Regulations Carried Over From Amendment 1*

The following management measures from Amendment 1 and Supplement A to Amendment 1 will be incorporated upon adoption of Amendment 2.

- From the Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Amendment 1:
  - Management measures, including restrictions that limit the number of days per week and the amount of yardage allowed for large mesh gill nets in various areas of the state;
  - A minimum distance (area dependent) between gill net and pound net sets, per rule 15A NCAC 03J .0103 (d); and
  - A recreational minimum size limit of 15 inches total length.



## *Division Recommendation*

### *Regulations Carried Over From Supplement A and Addendum XXVIII*

- From Supplement A to the Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Amendment 1:
  - A commercial minimum size limit of 15 inches;
  - A minimum mesh size of 6-inch stretch mesh to harvest southern flounder from a gill net; and
  - A minimum mesh size of 5.75-inch stretch mesh for flounder pound net escape panels.
- From N.C. Fishery Management Plan for Interjurisdictional Fisheries to maintain compliance with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan Addendum XXVIII:
  - The recreational bag limit of no more than four flounder per person per day is maintained in Amendment 2.



## *Department and Division Recommendation*

- The N.C. Department of Environmental Quality and the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries recommend a management strategy be implemented in Amendment 2 to reduce fishing mortality in the commercial and recreational fisheries to a level that ends overfishing within two years and allows the SSB to increase to between the threshold and the target within 10 years via a 62% reduction ( $F=0.26$ ) in total removals in 2019 and beginning in 2020, via a 72% reduction ( $F=0.18$ ) in total removals.
- The commercial harvest season will close by proclamation immediately following the August 2019 MFC meeting and will re-open with the following seasons:
  - 2019 commercial seasons (62% reduction)
    - Northern – Sept. 15 through Oct. 13;
    - Central – Sept. 15 through Oct. 17; and
    - Southern – Sept. 15 through Nov. 2.
  - 2020 commercial seasons (72% reduction)
    - Northern – Sept. 15 through Oct. 6;
    - Central – Sept 15 through Oct. 11; and
    - Southern – Sept 15 through Oct. 20.



## *Department and Division Recommendation*

- 2019 recreational seasons (62% reduction)
  - The recreational hook-and-line and gig harvest season will close by proclamation immediately following the August 2019 MFC meeting and will not re-open until the identified season in 2020.
  - Upon the closure of the recreational hook-and-line fishery, the RCGL large mesh gill net harvest season will also close as the recreational and commercial seasons must both be open to allow this gear.
- 2020 recreational seasons (72% reduction)
  - Allow an Aug. 16 through Sept. 30 recreational hook-and-line and gig harvest season;
  - Allow RCGL large mesh gill nets to operate from Sept. 15 through Sept. 30
- Removal of all gears that target southern flounder from the water (e.g., commercial and Recreational Commercial Gear License anchored large mesh gill nets, gigs) or make them inoperable (flounder pound nets) is necessary in areas and times outside of seasons implemented where southern flounder discards are likely to occur, with exceptions for the shad and catfish fisheries.
- Adoption of Amendment 2 authorizes concurrent development of Amendment 3 and more robust management strategies.



## *Division Recommendation*

The division also recommends the following non-quantifiable measures:

- Reduce commercial anchored large-mesh gill net soak times to single overnight soaks where nets may be set no sooner than one hour before sunset and must be retrieved no later than one hour after sunrise the next morning in the Neuse, Tar/Pamlico rivers and the Albemarle Sound areas that have previously been exempt;
- Reduce the maximum yardage allowed in the commercial anchored large mesh gill net fishery by 25% for each Management Unit; allowing a maximum of 1,500-yards in Management Units A, B, and C, and a maximum of 750-yards in Management Units D and E unless more restrictive yardage is specified through adaptive management through the sea turtle or sturgeon Incidental Take Permits; and
- Prohibit use of any method of retrieving live flounder from pound nets that cause injury to released fish (no picks, gigs, gaffs, spears, etc.).





## *Reduction Options*

- Option A – 31% reduction
- Option B – 52% reduction
- Option C – 62% reduction
- Option D – 72% reduction
- Option E – Partial Moratorium



## *Additional Non-Quantifiable Considerations*

- **Option A - Trip Limits**
  - Limiting numbers per trip in the commercial gig fishery
  - Limiting pounds per trip in the commercial flounder pound net fishery
- **Option B - Fishing Days**
  - Limiting days per week allowed in the Neuse, Tar/Pamlico rivers and the Albemarle Sound areas that have been previously exempt
- **Option C - Fishing Times**
  - Limiting fishing times allowed in the Neuse, Tar/Pamlico rivers and the Albemarle Sound areas that have been previously exempt
- **Option D - Gear Modifications**
  - Prohibiting the use of picks, gaffs, gigs, and spears when removing flounder from pound nets
  - Reducing the maximum yardage allowed in the large mesh gill net fishery



# *Amendment 1, Supplement A, and Addendum XXVIII*

- From the Southern Flounder FMP Amendment 1:
  - Management measures limiting the number of fishing days per week and the amount of yardage allowed for large mesh gill nets in various areas of the state;
  - A minimum distance (area dependent) between gill net and pound net sets, per NCMFC Rule 15A NCAC 03J .0103 (d); and
  - A recreational minimum size limit of 15 inches TL.
- From Supplement A to the Southern Flounder FMP Amendment 1, as modified by the Aug. 17, 2017 settlement agreement:
  - A commercial minimum size limit of 15 inches TL;
  - A minimum mesh size of 6.0-ISM to harvest southern flounder from a gill net; and
  - A minimum mesh size of 5.75-ISM for pound net escape panels.
- From ASMFC Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Addendum XXVIII
  - A recreational bag limit of no more than four fish per person per day.



# Questions?

