

EMERGENCY MEETING of the MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
Lenoir County Courthouse
130 S. Queen St., Kinston
County Commissioners' Meeting Room
Kinston, N.C.
March 13, 2019

N.C.G.S. 138A-15(e) mandates at the beginning of any meeting of a board, the chair shall remind all members of their duty to avoid conflicts of interest under Chapter 138. The chair also shall inquire as to whether there is any known conflict of interest with respect to any matters coming before the board at that time.

N.C.G.S. 143B-289.54.(g)(2) states a member of the Marine Fisheries Commission shall not vote on any issue before the Commission that would have a "significant and predictable effect" on the member's financial interest. For purposes of this subdivision, "significant and predictable effect" means there is or may be a close causal link between the decision of the Commission and an expected disproportionate financial benefit to the member that is shared only by a minority of persons within the same industry sector or gear group. A member of the Commission shall also abstain from voting on any petition submitted by an advocacy group of which the member is an officer or sits as a member of the advocacy group's board of directors. A member of the Commission shall not use the member's official position as a member of the Commission to secure any special privilege or exemption of substantial value for any person. No member of the Commission shall, by the member's conduct, create an appearance that any person could improperly influence the member in the performance of the member's official duties.

Commissioners having questions about a conflict of interest or appearance of conflict should consult with counsel to the Marine Fisheries Commission or the secretary's ethics liaison. Upon discovering a conflict, the commissioner should inform the chair of the commission in accordance with N.C.G.S. 138A-15(e).

March 13

- 10 a.m. Call to Order*
 Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance
 Conflict of Interest Reminder
 Roll Call
 Approval of Agenda**
- 10:10 a.m. Purpose of Emergency Meeting – Chairman Rob Bizzell
- 10:20 a.m. Overview of **G.S. 113-221.1. Proclamations; emergency review** – Shawn Maier
- 10:30 a.m. Discussion on Directing the Division of Marine Fisheries Director to Issue a Proclamation Regarding Gill Nets, Similar if Not Identical to the one Requested at the Commission's February Meeting***
 • **Vote on issuance of proclamation****
- 11 a.m. Discussion on Requesting the Wildlife Resources Commission Adopt Concurrent Regulations Regarding Recreational Harvest of Striped Bass in the Joint Waters of the State
 • **Vote to ask Wildlife Resources Commission to adopt concurrent regulations****
- 11:15 a.m. Adjourn

** Times indicated are merely for guidance. The commission will proceed through the agenda until completed.*

***Potential Action Items*

**** Motion by Cameron Boltes to ask the director of the DMF to issue a proclamation, effective in conjunction with the supplement, that restricts the use of gill nets that interact with striped bass upstream of the ferry lines and requires attendance of gill nets that interact with striped bass upstream of the tie-down lines. Second by Pete Kornegay.*

Motion carries 5-4.

Rob Bizzell, Chairman
North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission
3441 Arendell Street
Morehead City, NC 28557

March 10, 2019

Dear Chairman Bizzell,

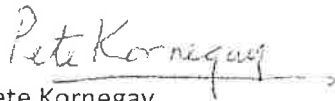
At our meeting on February 22, 2019, the Marine Fisheries Commission enacted Supplement A to the North Carolina Estuarine Striped Bass Management Plan which included a no-possession limit for striped bass in the Central Southern Striped Bass Management Area. Subsequently, Commissioner Cameron Boltes made a motion, seconded by Pete Kornegay, to ask the Director of N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries to issue a proclamation, effective in conjunction with Supplement A, that restricts the use of gill nets that interact with striped bass upstream of the ferry travel lines (Bayview to Aurora on the Pamlico River and Minnesott Beach to Cherry Point on the Neuse River) and requires attendance of gill nets that interact with striped bass upstream of the boundaries at which gill net tie-downs are required. The purpose of the motion was, in view of the no-possession limit, to reduce bycatch and regulatory discards of striped bass. The motion passed on a five to four vote.

After several days of consideration, Division of Marine Fisheries Steve Murphy announced that he would not issue a proclamation to further restrict gill nets in the Central Southern Striped Bass Management Area citing a lack of scientific data to support such a proclamation.

Because anything other than removal or other severe restrictions on gill nets in these areas will result in continued capture and mortality of striped bass, their remaining in place is unacceptable. This unabated gill net mortality of striped bass will thwart any efforts to conserve the naturally spawned 2014 and 2015 year classes as well as those striped bass that are stocked.

Because of the time sensitive nature of this activity and the time required to resolve same, I am requesting an emergency meeting of the full Marine Fisheries Commission pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 113.221.1(d). At this meeting, I request that the Commission reconsider Commissioner Boltes' motion and, upon appropriate vote, we direct Director Murphy to enact by proclamation those restrictions on gill nets that interact with striped bass.

Sincerely,



Pete Kornegay

NC Marine Fisheries Commission

Request For Emergency Meeting To Address CSMA Striped Bass Proclamation

From: Laughridge, Charles H c.laughridge.mfc@ncdcmr.gov

To: Bizzell, Rob r.bizzell.mfc@ncdcmr.gov

Cc: Maier, Shawn s.maier@ncdcmr.gov

Date: Sunday, March 10, 8:14 PM

March 10, 2019

Dear Chairman Bizzell,

At our meeting on February 22, 2019, the Marine Fisheries Commission enacted Supplement A to the North Carolina Estuarine Striped Bass Management Plan which included a no-possession limit for for striped bass in the Central Southern Striped Bass Management Area. Subsequently, Commissioner Cameron Boltes made a motion, seconded by Pete Kornegay, to ask Director of N. C. Division of Marine Fisheries to issue a proclamation, effective in conjunction with Supplement A, that restricts the use of gills nets that interacts with striped bass upstream of the ferry travel lines (Bayview to Aurora on the Pamlico River and Minnesott Beach to Cherry Point on the Neuse River) and requires attendance of gill nets that interacts with striped bass upstream of the boundaries at which gill net tie-down are required. The purpose of the motion was, in view of the no-possession limit, to reduce by-catch and regulatory discards of striped bass. The motion passed on a five to four vote.

After several days of consideration, Division of Marine Fisheries Steve Murphy announced that he would not issue a proclamation to further restrict gill nets in the Central Southern Striped Bass Management Area citing a lack of scientific data to support such a proclamation.

Because anything other than removal or other severe restriction on gill nets in these areas will result in continued capture and mortality of striped bass, their remaining in place is unacceptable. The unabated gill net mortality of striped bass will thwart any efforts to conserve the naturally spawned 2014 and 2015 year classes as well as those striped bass that are stocked.

Because of the time sensitive nature of this activity and time required to resolve same, i am requesting an emergency meeting of the full Marine Fisheries Commission pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 113.221.1(d). At this meeting, I request that we reconsider Commissioner Boltes's motion and, upon appropriate vote, we direct Director Murphy to enact by proclamation those restrictions on gill nets that interact with striped bass.

Good Fishing!!!

Chuck Laughridge

Rob Bizzell, Chairman

North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission
3441 Arendell Street
Morehead City, NC 28557

March 10th, 2019

Dear Chairman Bizzell,

At this time I would like to request an emergency meeting of the full Marine Fisheries Commission pursuant to NCGS 113.221.1(d). The purpose of the meeting is to ask the Commission to consider the motion I made during our February 22nd, 2019 meeting. I would like to request that the Commission consider and vote on directing Director Murphy to enact by proclamation the motion I established during our February meeting. The motion, which passed 5-4, asked the Director to issue a proclamation, effective in conjunction with Supplement A, that restricts the use of gill nets that interact with Striped Bass upstream of the ferry lines in the CSMA, and requires attendance of gill nets that interact with Striped Bass upstream of the tie-down lines.

We must take immediate action to protect these two years of naturally spawned fish (2014-2015) in addition to the stocked Striped Bass. Gill nets will continue to interact and have negative impacts on the conservation of these fish unless we take immediate action to further restrict their usage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Boltes', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cameron Boltes
North Carolina Fisheries Commission

Rob Bizzell, Chairman
North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission
3441 Arendell Street
Morehead City, NC 28557

March 10, 2019

Dear Chairman Bizzell,

At our meeting on February 22, 2019, the Marine Fisheries Commission enacted Supplement A to the North Carolina Estuarine Striped Bass Management Plan which included a no-possession limit for striped bass in the Central Southern Striped Bass Management Area. Subsequently, Commissioner Cameron Boltes made a motion, seconded by Pete Kornegay, to ask the Director of N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries to issue a proclamation, effective in conjunction with Supplement A, that restricts the use of gill nets that interact with striped bass upstream of the ferry travel lines (Bayview to Aurora on the Pamlico River and Minnesott Beach to Cherry Point on the Neuse River) and requires attendance of gill nets that interact with striped bass upstream of the boundaries at which gill net tie-downs are required. The purpose of the motion was, in view of the no-possession limit, to reduce bycatch and regulatory discards of striped bass. The motion passed on a five to four vote.

After several days of consideration, Division of Marine Fisheries Steve Murphy announced that he would not issue a proclamation to further restrict gill nets in the Central Southern Striped Bass Management Area citing a lack of scientific data to support such a proclamation.

Because anything other than removal or other severe restrictions on gill nets in these areas will result in continued capture and mortality of striped bass, their remaining in place is unacceptable. This unabated gill net mortality of striped bass will thwart any efforts to conserve the naturally spawned 2014 and 2015 year classes as well as those striped bass that are stocked.

Because of the time sensitive nature of this activity and the time required to resolve same, I am requesting an emergency meeting of the full Marine Fisheries Commission pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 113.221.1(d). At this meeting, I request that the Commission reconsider Commissioner Boltes' motion and, upon appropriate vote, we direct Director Murphy to enact by proclamation those restrictions on gill nets that interact with striped bass.

Sincerely,



NC Marine Fisheries Commission

Rob Bizzell, Chairman
North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission
3441 Arendell Street
Morehead City, NC 28557

March 10, 2019

Dear Chairman Bizzell,

At our meeting on February 22, 2019, the Marine Fisheries Commission enacted Supplement A to the North Carolina Estuarine Striped Bass Management Plan which included a no-possession limit for striped bass in the Central Southern Striped Bass Management Area. Subsequently, Commissioner Cameron Boltes made a motion, seconded by Pete Kornegay, to ask the Director of N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries to issue a proclamation, effective in conjunction with Supplement A, that restricts the use of gill nets that interact with striped bass upstream of the ferry travel lines (Bayview to Aurora on the Pamlico River and Minnesott Beach to Cherry Point on the Neuse River) and requires attendance of gill nets that interact with striped bass upstream of the boundaries at which gill net tie-downs are required. The purpose of the motion was, in view of the no-possession limit, to reduce bycatch and regulatory discards of striped bass. The motion passed on a five to four vote.

After several days of consideration, Division of Marine Fisheries Steve Murphy announced that he would not issue a proclamation to further restrict gill nets in the Central Southern Striped Bass Management Area citing a lack of scientific data to support such a proclamation.

Because anything other than removal or other severe restrictions on gill nets in these areas will result in continued capture and mortality of striped bass, their remaining in place is unacceptable. This unabated gill net mortality of striped bass will thwart any efforts to conserve the naturally spawned 2014 and 2015 year classes as well as those striped bass that are stocked.

Because of the time sensitive nature of this activity and the time required to resolve same, I am requesting an emergency meeting of the full Marine Fisheries Commission pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 113.221.1(d). At this meeting, I request that the Commission reconsider Commissioner Boltes' motion and, upon appropriate vote, we direct Director Murphy to enact by proclamation those restrictions on gill nets that interact with striped bass.

Sincerely,



W. Robert Bizzell,

N C Marine Fisheries Commission.

Motions
N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission
Business Meeting
Feb. 20-22, 2019

Motion by Tom Hendrickson to approve the meeting agenda. Second by Chuck Laughridge.
Motion carries unanimously.

Motion by Chuck Laughridge to approve the minutes of the November 2018 meeting. Second by Brad Koury.
Motion carries unanimously.

Legislative Request

Motion by Chuck Laughridge to support the concept of legislation to require reporting of all catch with commercial gear, except for RCGL, and through tournaments. Second by Mike Blanton.

Amendment by Doug Cross to add general statute to original motion. Second by Tom Hendrickson.
Motion carries with no opposition.

Motion as amended

Motion by Chuck Laughridge to support the concept of legislation to amend GS 113-168.2 (i) to require reporting of all catch with commercial gear, except for RCGL, and through tournaments. Second by Mike Blanton.

Motion carries with no opposition.

Tabled Motion on Shrimp Fishery Management Plan Goals and Objectives

Motion by Chuck Laughridge to withdraw the motion tabled from the November meeting. Second by Doug Cross.

Motion carries unanimously.

Striped Bass

Motion by Doug Cross to adopt Supplement A to Amendment 1 to the N.C. Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan as presented and recommended by the Division of Marine Fisheries. Second by Pete Kornegay.

Motion carries 7-2.

Motion by Cameron Boltes to ask the director of the DMF to issue a proclamation, effective in conjunction with the supplement, that restricts the use of gill nets that interact with striped bass upstream of the ferry lines and requires attendance of gill nets that interact with striped bass upstream of the tie-down lines. Second by Pete Kornegay.

Motion carries 5-4.

Amendment 2 to the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan

Motion by Chuck Laughridge to refer the Wildlife Federation's Petition for Rulemaking (excluding spot and croaker) to the Shrimp FMP Advisory Committee for consideration in developing Amendment 2 to the FMP and that the goals and objectives for the Shrimp FMP include:

- Reduce takes and interactions of non-targeted species and threatened species.
- Improve the survival of non-target and threatened species at the population level.
- Continue to minimize bycatch and enhance the economic value of shrimp.

- Promote habitat enhancement and provide environmental quality necessary to improve the shrimp resource.
- Review nursery areas with an updated look at secondary nursery areas.
- Implement research and education programs to allow a better understanding of the public, industry and consumers of shrimp bycatch impact on fish population dynamics.

Second by Brad Koury.

Motion by Tom Hendrickson to strike the wording in reference to referring the Wildlife Federation Petition to the Advisory Committee, and pick up at “the goals and objectives for the Shrimp FMP include.” Second by Doug Cross.

Motion fails 4-4.

Motion by Chuck Laughridge to refer the Wildlife Federation’s Petition for Rulemaking (excluding spot and croaker) to the Shrimp FMP Advisory Committee for consideration in developing Amendment 2 to the FMP and to consider the following goals and objectives for the Shrimp FMP:

- Reduce takes and interactions of non-targeted species and threatened species.
- Improve the survival of non-target and threatened species at the population level.
- Continue to minimize bycatch and enhance the economic value of shrimp.
- Promote habitat enhancement and provide environmental quality necessary to improve the shrimp resource.
- Review nursery areas with an updated look at secondary nursery areas.
- Implement research and education programs to allow a better understanding of the public, industry and consumers of shrimp bycatch impact on fish population dynamics.

Second by Brad Koury.

Motion carries 5-3, with one abstention.

Study Trawl Impacts

Motion by Doug Cross that the Division of Marine Fisheries look at alternated openings of now closed areas to trawling be considered as test sites to observe if trawling and the cultivation of bottom can improve general bottom conditions and improve recruitment of bait fishes and general food sources. Second by Sam Romano. Motion withdrawn.

Tarpon

Motion by Cameron Boltes to accept Option 2 of the proposed Tarpon Rule. Second by Brad Koury.

Motion carries unanimously.



ROY COOPER
Governor

MICHAEL S. REGAN
Secretary

STEPHEN W. MURPHEY
Director

March 4, 2019

Dear Chairman Bizzell,

At the February 2019 Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) meeting the MFC passed Supplement A to Amendment 1 of the Estuarine Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. As approved, Supplement A specifies a no-possession limit, essentially a closed season for striped bass, in the Central Southern Management Area (CSMA). There are, however, complicating jurisdictional issues between MFC and the Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC).

Last week, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) staff met with the Director and staff of the WRC. The WRC Director indicated that because of the joint jurisdictional language in N.C.G.S. §113-132 that the Supplement A measure would be inconsistent with existing WRC recreational limits in joint waters of the CSMA. After consulting with WRC and with legal counsel for both Commissions and DEQ it was decided that the best approach forward would be to convene a special meeting of the MFC to formally request that the WRC implement management measures consistent with Supplement A for the joint coastal waters of the CSMA to harmoniously resolve the jurisdictional conflict. I think this could be done over the phone with at least one listening station and it would be up to you to decide if any additional public comment would be warranted.

If a special meeting is not called, then it is important to have this on the May agenda for the MFC meeting. The recreational season closes April 30 by rule (15A NCAC 03M .0202) so if we do hold a special meeting it would only buy a brief period with the no-possession limit was in place for the recreational spring season. However, it is important to address it to implement the no-possession limit in the fall recreational fishery. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the WRC is in April.

Considering this, I plan to issue proclamations this week to implement the following:

1. Close the remainder of the recreational season on striped bass in the coastal waters of the CSMA. This closes the season year-round.
2. Allowing the joint coastal water recreational season to remain open with current catch limits until the MFC can request from concurrence from the WRC and they concur.
3. Implementing in the coastal and joint coastal waters 36-inch tie-down and 50-yard distance from shore regulations in the western Pamlico Sound including the Tar-Pamlico and Neuse rivers and their tributaries. This is required under the management measures of the FMP whenever the striped bass season is closed. The MFC, in the adoption of the Supplement confirmed that action.
4. The CSMA commercial season which opens by proclamation will not be opened due to the adoption of Supplement A.

This will present a situation where our coastal waters include stronger recreational conservation measures for striped bass than the joint coastal waters until this consistency issue is resolved. It

is likely the recreational season for spring 2019 will close before this can happen (April 30). Because WRC does not regulate any commercial gear, there is not an inconsistency with existing rule to prevent our implementing the commercial no-possession and gill net measures in the joint coastal waters as well.

Finally, after the passage of Supplement A, the MFC approved a motion to “ask” the DMF Director to issue a proclamation, effective in conjunction with the supplement, that restricts the use of gill nets that interact with striped bass upstream of the ferry lines and requires attendance of gill nets that interact with striped bass upstream of the tie-down lines. I have received dozens of emails supporting this measure both in form letters and in original letters.

While I respect the concerns of both the public and the MFC, after careful consideration I have concluded that such a measure is not supported by the scientific data that support gill nets as the primary or even the most significant source of discard mortality. As you are aware, recreational effort will not be controlled under the Supplement and catch and release will be a source of discard mortality as well. The motion to remove nets was also not a part of the supplement measure approved by the DEQ Secretary. The DMF Director’s proclamation authority acts within the bounds of the FMP.

Therefore, I respectfully decline to act on this request to issue a proclamation further restricting gill nets beyond those measures outlined in Supplement A. I would, however, like to provide some supporting information underlying the basis for this decision.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR DECISION

The journal article by Rachels and Ricks (2018), explores causal factors of spawning stock mortality sources in the N.C. riverine striped bass fishery, and notes that their inability to include recreational angling as an exploitation factor reduces the amount of variability in spawning stock mortality that can be accounted for in their study. The authors go on to include that it is likely that the inclusion of recreational harvest and discard would perform comparably to the results of the commercial harvest in their modeling.

In Supplement A, the DMF used the CSMA creel survey data, (not a part of MRIP), to determine recreational harvest, discards and discard mortality. From 2012-2017 all but the last two years’ total removals of striped bass (harvest + dead discards) were nearly equal between the recreational and commercial sector. The increase in recreational discard mortality in the last two years is due to what appears to be a successful natural spawning event in the rivers during 2014 and possibly 2015.

Moreover, the following is a list of gill net regulations that are either already in place or will be implemented by proclamation in the areas upstream of the tie down lines. The purpose of these regulations is to reduce regulatory discards of striped bass and important estuarine finfish and protected species. On-board observer data and empirical *in-situ* field studies by the DMF has shown these large mesh regulations have decreased striped bass discards significantly (potentially up to 75%) compared to pre-2008 estimates of striped bass discards before the tie-downs and distance from shore regulations were implemented. Striped bass gill-net discards mortality estimates for 2012-2017 in the Tar-Pamlico and Neuse rivers combined, range from 507 to 986 fish annually.

Regulations for gill nets with stretched mesh of 5 inches and greater:

- It is unlawful to fail to equip gill-nets with tie-downs spaced no farther apart than 10 yards to restrict the vertical distance between the top and bottom lines to 36 inches or less. If the vertical height of the net (distance between the top and bottom line) is 36 inches or less, no tie-downs are required. Nets must be set to fish on the bottom and not exceed a vertical height of 36 inches. (Tie-down regulation see map)
- It is unlawful for any portion of the net to be within 50 yards of any point on shore when set or deployed in the following river areas: (distance from shore regulation - see map)

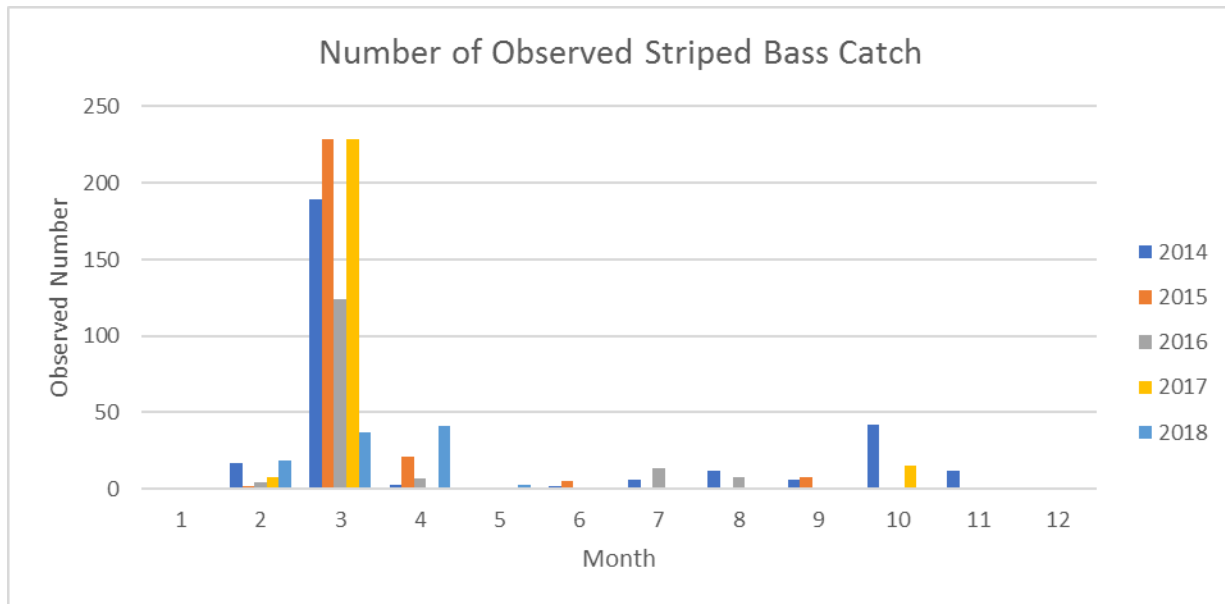
The previous years estuarine striped bass commercial seasons in the CSMA have been as follows:

Year	Day Open	Day Closed*
2014	03/01/14	03/20/14
2015	03/01/15	03/18/15
2016	03/01/16	03/21/16
2017	03/01/17	04/03/17
2018	03/01/18	04/30/18

*Closings before 4/30 of a year are early closures due to the 25,000 lb. quota being met or exceeded.

In the figure below, interactions with striped bass drop significantly in the large mesh gill net fishery above the tie-down line following the closure of the commercial striped bass season. Remember that the tie-down requirement and distance from shore requirements are not in place when the commercial season is open. With a no possession limit under Supplement A, the commercial season will not open and tie-down and distance from shore requirements will be in effect year-round. Gill net bycatch is anticipated to be more reflective of the May-February figures.

Figure 1. All striped bass (striped bass and hybrid bass) observed during Program 466 trips on the Pamlico, Neuse, Trent, and Pungo rivers. Data are from the previous 5-year period, 2014 to 2018. These data were selected to mirror the area that would be affected by the Proclamation requested at the February 2019 MFC meeting.



Regulations for gill nets with stretched mesh of less than 5 inches:

- Attendance of small mesh gill-nets (<5 ISM) is required year-round in the following areas

based on NCMFC rule 15A NCAC 3R.0112 (a):

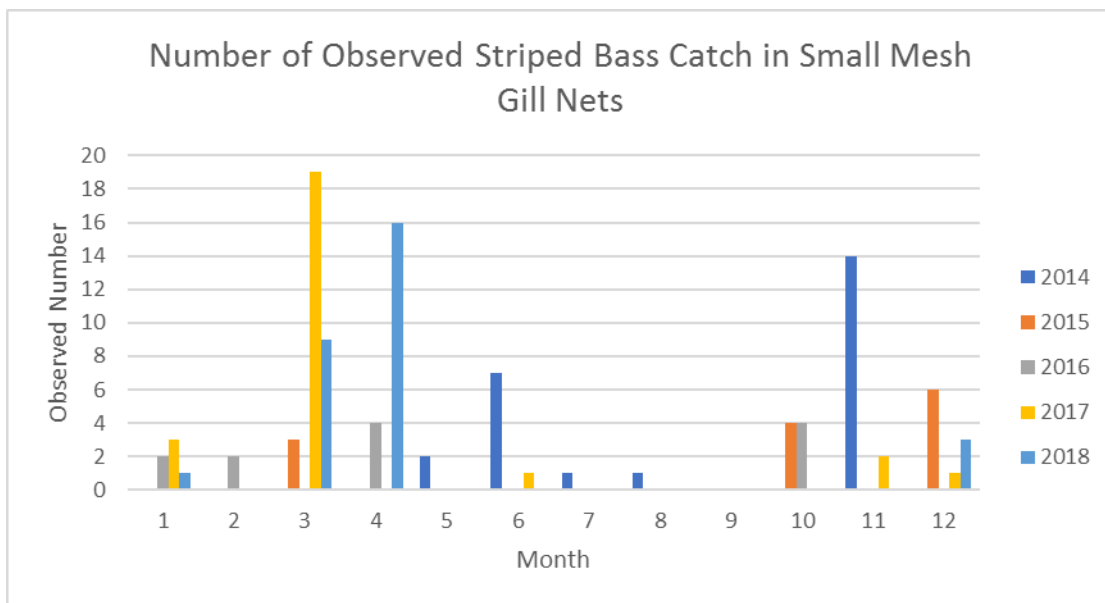
- Upper portions of the Pamlico, Pungo, Neuse, and Trent rivers
- Within 200 yards of shore in the lower portions of the Pamlico, Pungo, Neuse, and Trent rivers

Regulations in effect statewide, large and small mesh gill nets:

- All unattended gill-nets ≥ 5 ISM must be at least 10 feet from shore from June through November (NCDMF 2008).
- Gill-nets with a mesh size ≥ 5 ISM and $< 5 \frac{1}{2}$ ISM is prohibited from April 15 through December 15 (NCDMF 2005).
- 2,000 yard/vessel limit on gill-nets ≥ 5 ISM (NCDMF 2005).
- Gill-nets with a mesh size < 5 ISM must be attended in all primary and secondary nursery areas and no-trawl areas described in NCMFC Rule 15A NCAC 3R.0106(2), (4), (5), (7), (8), (10), (11), and (12) from May 1 through November 30 (NCDMF 2001).
- It is unlawful to set gill-nets in joint waters from midnight on Friday to midnight on Sunday each week, except in Albemarle Sound and Currituck Sound north of the Highway 158 Wright Memorial Bridge (NCDMF 2012).
- The use of gill-nets $> 6 \frac{1}{2}$ ISM stretch mesh is prohibited in all waters.
- It is unlawful to use gill-nets with a mesh size $< 2 \frac{1}{2}$ inches ISM stretch mesh.

In the figure below, interactions with striped bass are more mixed in the small mesh gill net fishery above the tie-down line. This data is less robust due to lower observation numbers in the small mesh fishery and these data do not indicate whether fish were alive or dead. However, there are attendance requirements in place for small mesh nets above the tie-down line which are put in place to reduce dead discards in the small mesh fishery as outlined above (see map – attachment 1).

Figure 3. Data included are all striped bass (striped bass and hybrid bass) observed during Program 466 trips on the Pamlico, Neuse, Trent, and Pungo rivers. Data are from the previous 5-year period, 2014 to 2018 and are for small mesh gill nets. These data were selected to mirror the area that would be affected by the Proclamation requested at the most recent MFC meeting.



In conclusion, the implementation of gill net restrictions is best served through the continued development of the Estuarine Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. The Supplement A measures will certainly not stop discards and dead discards from occurring in the commercial or recreational fishery. However, the DMF's data supports that Supplement A will reduce the overall number of fish being removed from the stock, thereby providing additional and more conservative protection to the two successful spawning year classes moving through the area of the CSMA. Observer coverage will continue, and we will try to increase observer coverage as much as is feasible during 2019. If significant spikes of discards are observed, I certainly reserve the right to consider additional measures if warranted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Murphey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "S".

Steve Murphey, Director
NC Division of Marine Fisheries

Cc: Marine Fisheries Commission
John Nicholson
Shawn Maier
John Batherson
Gordon Myers

Attachment 1

Gill-net regulation map for various gill-net types and seasons in the Central Southern Management Area.

