NC Marine Fisheries Commission

Preliminary Matters

March 2025 Quarterly Business Meeting

Documents

Meeting Agenda

Draft November 2024 Meeting Minutes

Marine Fisheries Commission Business Meeting MEETING AGENDA

Hilton Garden Inn; Kitty Hawk, NC March 12-13, 2025

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).

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

- 2:00 p.m. Public Comment Period
- 2:30 p.m. Preliminary Matters
 - Commission Call to Order* Sammy Corbett, Chairman
 - Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance
 - Conflict of Interest Reminder
 - Roll Call
 - Approval of Agenda **
 - Approval of Meeting Minutes **
- 2:40 p.m. Chairman's Report
 - Letters and Online Comments
 - Ethics Training and Statement of Economic Interest Reminder
- 2:45 p.m. Director's Report *Kathy Rawls*
- 3:00 p.m. Rulemaking *Catherine Blum*
 - 2023-2024 Rulemaking Cycle Update
 - 2024-2025 Rulemaking Cycle
 - Vote on final adoption of amendment of 15A NCAC 03J .0301 to Simplify Pot Marking Requirements **
 - Vote on final adoption of 15A NCAC 03M .0523 for False Albacore Management **

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

^{**}Probable Action Items

Vote on final adoption of 15A NCAC 03O .0601-.0606 for Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact **

- 4:00 p.m. Oyster Fishery Management Plan Amendment 5
 - Review public comment and AC recommendations *Joe Facendola, Bennett Paradis*
 - Select preferred management options **
- 5:00 p.m. Hard Clam Fishery Management Plan Amendment 3
 - Review public comment and AC recommendations Lorena de la Garza, Jeff Dobbs
 - Select preferred management options **
- 6:00 p.m. Public Comment Period

Thursday, March 13, 2025

- 9:00 a.m. 2024 Southern Flounder Preliminary Landings Update Anne Markwith, Holly White
- 9:30 a.m. Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Amendment 4
 - Presentation of Draft Amendment 4 *Jeff Dobbs*
 - Vote on approval of draft Amendment 4 for Public and Advisory Committee Review **
- 10:30 p.m. Spotted Seatrout Fishery Management Plan Amendment 1 *Lucas Pensinger, Melinda Lambert*
 - Vote on Final Adoption of Amendment 1 **
- 12:00 p.m. Issues from Commissioners
- 12:30 p.m. Meeting Assignments and Preview of Agenda Items for Next Meeting Jesse Bissette
- 12:45 p.m. Adjourn

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

^{**}Probable Action Items

Marine Fisheries Commission Business Meeting Minutes DRAFT

The Islander Emerald isle, North Carolina November 20-22, 2024

The Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) held a business meeting November 20-22, 2024, at the Islander hotel in Emerald Isle, North Carolina. In addition to the public comment session, members of the public submitted comment online or via U.S. mail. To view the public comment, go to: https://www.deq.nc.gov/marine-fisheries/marine-fisheries-commission/november-2024-written-public-comment/open

The briefing materials, presentations, and full audio from this meeting are available at: https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries/marine-fisheries-commission/past-marine-fisheries-commission-meetings#QuarterlyBusinessMeeting-November20-222024-17220

Actions and motions from the business meeting are listed in **bold** type.

BUSINESS MEETING – MOTIONS AND ACTIONS

November 20, 2024

Public Comment Period

Chairman Sammy Corbett held a public comment session that began at 6:00 p.m. The following members of the public provided comment to the commission: John McQuaid, Herb Schmidt, Dan Moses, Chris Matteo, Steve Anderman, Evan Gadow, Jim Hardin, Van Parrish, Mike Mulchi, Steve Brewster, Ken Pacitto, Becky Garrett, Sean Scully. With no one else wishing to speak, Chairman Corbett ended the public comment period at 06:25 p.m.

View the video recording of the November 20, 2024 public comment session.

November 21, 2024

Public Comment Period

Chairman Corbett convened the MFC business meeting at 9:00 a.m. on November 21, 2024, with the public comment period. The following members of the public provided comment to the commission: Hugh Barwick, Thomas Coltrain, Thomas Newman, Jess Hawkins, Wilbur Vitols, David Sneed, Bert Ownes, Stuart Creighton, Donald Willis, Tim Hergenrader, Ken Seigler, Alan Jernagin, Buddy Garrett. With no one else wishing to speak, Chairman Corbett ended the public comment period at 09:41 a.m.

View the video recording of the November 21, 2024 public comment session.

Preliminary Matters

Prior to the business meeting, there was a presentation of awards by Kathy Rawls and Colonel Carter Witten.

View the video recording of the awards presentation.

New MFC member William Service was sworn in. Commissioner Service replaced Rob Bizzell in the recreational fisherman seat. At Chairman Corbett's request, Commissioner Service introduced himself.

View the video recording of the swearing-in of Commissioner Service.

Chairman Corbett called the November 20-22, 2024, business meeting to order.

Chairman Corbett began the meeting with a moment of silence, followed by the pledge of allegiance.

The Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) MFC Liaison Jesse Bissette read into the record Commissioner Service's Statement of Economic Interest (SEI) for actual and potential conflicts of interest pursuant to Chapter 138A of the N.C. General Statutes.

For William Service:

"The State Ethics Commission office has reviewed Commissioner Service's Statement of Economic Interest for actual and potential conflicts of interest pursuant to Chapter 138A of the N.C. General Statutes and did not find an actual conflict of interest but found the potential for a conflict of interest. The potential conflict identified does not prohibit service on the Commission. Mr. Service will fill the role of a person actively engaged in recreational sports fishing who may not derive more than 10% of annual earned income from sports fishing activities. He is a senior environmental toxicologist for Mid-Atlantic Associates, but has advised that as an hourly paid contractor, he has not billed any hours in over a year and has plans to retire. As such, Mr. Service has the potential for a conflict of interest and should exercise appropriate caution in the performance of his public duties, should the business of Mid-Atlantic Associates come before the Commission for official action."

The evaluation of statement of economic interest for each appointee to the MFC is kept on record at the DMF.

Next, Chairman Corbett reminded all commissioners of N.C. General Statute § 138A-15(e), which 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. There were no stated conflicts of interest from any commissioner.

The following MFC members were in attendance: Sammy Corbett – Chairman, Ryan Bethea, Mike Blanton, Willie Closs, Sarah Gardner, Alfred Hobgood, Doug Rader, Tom Roller, and William Service.

NC Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Secretary Mary Penny Kelley introduced herself, welcomed Sammy Corbett into the role as MFC Chair, and thanked Rob Bizzell for his service as chairman. She then thanked Marine Patrol for their service across the state to the public.

View the video recording of Secretary Kelley's remarks.

Chairman Corbett asked for any corrections or additions to the meeting agenda, of which there were none, and then requested a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion by Commissioner Rader to approve the meeting agenda.

Second by Commissioner Hobgood.

ROLL CALL VOTE						
Member	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Recuse	Absent	
Bethea	\boxtimes					
Blanton	\boxtimes					
Closs	\boxtimes					
Gardner	\boxtimes					
Hobgood	\boxtimes					
Rader	\boxtimes					
Roller	\boxtimes					
Service	\boxtimes					
Corbett	\boxtimes					

Motion passed unanimously.

View the video recording of the motion and surrounding discussion.

Chairman Corbett asked for any corrections, additions or deletions that need to be made to the November 2024 MFC Quarterly Business Meeting minutes. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve the minutes.

Motion by Commissioner Roller to approve the August 2024 business meeting minutes.

Second by Commissioner Hobgood.

ROLL CALL VOTE						
Member	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Recuse	Absent	
Bethea	\boxtimes					
Blanton	\boxtimes					
Closs	\boxtimes					
Gardner	\boxtimes					
Hobgood	\boxtimes					
Rader	\boxtimes					
Roller	\boxtimes					
Service	\boxtimes					
Corbett	\boxtimes					

Motion passed unanimously.

View the video recording of the motion and surrounding discussion.

Chairman's Report

Letters and Online Comments

Chairman Corbett referred commissioners to letters and comments provided in the briefing materials.

Ethics Training and Statement of Economic Interest Reminder

Chairman Corbett reminded commissioners to work with MFC Liaison Jesse Bissette to stay up to date on their ethics training and Statement of Economic Interest

Election of Vice Chair

Motion by Commissioner Blanton to nominate Commissioner Gardner for Marine Fisheries Commission Vice Chair.

Second by Commissioner Rader.

ROLL CALL VOTE						
Member	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Recuse	Absent	
Bethea	\boxtimes	\boxtimes				
Blanton	\boxtimes					
Closs	\boxtimes					
Gardner			\boxtimes			
Hobgood	\boxtimes					
Rader	\boxtimes					
Roller	\boxtimes					
Service	\boxtimes					
Corbett	\boxtimes					

Motion passed 8-0-1.

Commissioner Garder was elected as Marine Fisheries Commission Vice Chair.

View the video recording of the motion and surrounding discussion.

Committee Reports

Chairman Corbett referred commissioners to the committee reports provided in the briefing materials.

Nominating Committee

Chris Batsavage presented nominees for the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) obligatory seat. Tim Greiner held an obligatory seat on the SAFMC and is not eligible for reappointment. Nominees for approval by the MFC are Scott Buff, Jack Cox, Alana Harrison, Dewey Hemilright, and Thomas Newman.

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

View the video recording of the presentation and surrounding discussion.

Motion by Commissioner Gardner to approve the slate of nominees as presented in the briefing materials for the obligatory seat for the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

Second by Commissioner Blanton.

ROLL CALL VOTE						
Member	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Recuse	Absent	
Bethea	\boxtimes					
Blanton	\boxtimes					
Closs	\boxtimes					
Gardner	\boxtimes					
Hobgood	\boxtimes					
Rader	\boxtimes					
Roller			\boxtimes			
Service	\boxtimes					
Corbett	\boxtimes					

Motion passed 8-0-1.

View the video recording of the motion and surrounding discussion.

Director's Report

Director Kathy Rawls began her report by addressing public comments concerning shellfish leases. Director Rawls then gave an update on the implementation and outreach efforts regarding the mandatory harvest reporting requirements that were set out in session law. Director Rawls also gave an update regarding the ongoing Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) lawsuit, and Chairman Corbett informed the commission of his potential involvement in the mediation process.

Director Rawls then gave an update on the MFC's request to modify the Annual FMP Review Schedule to amend the Southern Flounder FMP for the review of the plan to begin in 2024.

View the video recording of the Director's Report and discussion.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Update

DMF Special Assistant for Councils Chris Batsavage gave updates from the recent meeting of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

View the video recording of the ASMFC Update and surrounding discussion.

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Update

DMF Special Assistant for Councils Chris Batsavage gave updates from the recent meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC).

After the update, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

View the video recording of the MAFMC Update and surrounding discussion.

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Update

DMF Executive Assistant for Councils Trish Murphy provided an update from the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (SAFMC) September meeting in Charleston, South Carolina. This update included a discussion regarding a Federal For-Hire Permit.

After the update, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

View the video recording of the SAFMC Update and surrounding discussion.

For-Hire Information Paper Presentation

DMF Executive Assistant for Councils Trish Murphy gave a verbal presentation regarding the SAFMC Federal For-Hire Permit Enforcement Review information paper.

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

View the video recording of the For-Hire Information Paper presentation and surrounding discussion.

Section Updates

Updates were given by License and Statistics Section Chief Brandi Salmon, Fisheries Management Section Chief Jason Rock, Habitat and Enhancement Section Chief Zach Harrison, Shellfish Sanitation and Recreational Water Quality Section Chief Shannon Jenkins, and Marine Patrol Colonel Carter Witten.

After the updates, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

View the video recording of the Section Updates and surrounding discussion.

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Lunch Break

Marine Recreational Information Program Presentation

Brad Johnson and Jeff Moore of DMF's Coastal Angling Program gave a presentation introducing the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) survey and outlining how it is used by the Division.

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

View the video recording of the presentation and surrounding discussion.

Fishery Management Plans

Spotted Seatrout Fishery Management Plan Amendment 1

DMF Biologists Lucas Pesinger and Melinda Lambert gave a presentation on the Spotted Seatrout FMP Amendment 1.

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

View the video recording of the presentation and surrounding discussion.

Motion by Commissioner Hobgood to select the following recommendations as the MFC's preferred management options for the draft N.C. Spotted Seatrout Fishery Management Plan Amendment 1 for:

• SUSTAINABLE HARVEST:

- o Recreational:
 - 14"-20" slot limit with allowance for one fish over 26"
 - 3-fish bag limit
- Commercial:
 - 14"-22" slot limit
 - Saturday-Monday closure October-December
 - Saturday-Sunday closure January-September
- **o** Stop Net: Formalize management in FMP
- Adaptive Management: Adopt Adaptive Management Framework, with the caveat that adaptive management measures be brought to the MFC for review prior to implementation
- SUPPLEMENTAL MANAGEMENT:
 - Eliminate captain/crew limit on for-hire trips
- COLD STUN MANAGEMENT:
 - Extend fishery closure until June 30th following a cold stun
 - o Adopt Cold Stun Adaptive Management Framework

Second by Commissioner Gardner.

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ROLL C	ROLL CALL VOTE						
Member	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Recuse	Absent		
Bethea	\boxtimes						
Blanton	×						
Closs	\boxtimes						
Gardner	\boxtimes						
Hobgood	\boxtimes						
Rader			×				
Roller	\boxtimes						
Service	\boxtimes						
Corbett	\boxtimes						

Motion passed 8-0-1.

View the video recording of the motion and surrounding discussion.

Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan Amendment 3

DMF Biologists Robert Corbett and McLean Seward gave an update regarding the Blue Crab FMP Amendment 3.

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

View the video recording of the presentation and surrounding discussion.

Oyster Fishery Management Plan Amendment 5

DMF Biologists Joe Facendola and Bennett Paradis gave a presentation on the Eastern Oyster FMP Amendment 5.

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

View the video recording of the presentation and surrounding discussion.

Motion by Commissioner Blanton to approve the draft N.C. Eastern Oyster Fishery Management Plan Amendment 5 for public and MFC advisory committee review.

Second by Commissioner Rader.

ROLL CALL VOTE						
Member	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Recuse	Absent	
Bethea	\boxtimes					
Blanton	×					
Closs	×					
Gardner	\boxtimes					
Hobgood	\boxtimes					
Rader	\boxtimes					
Roller	\boxtimes					
Service	\boxtimes					
Corbett	×					

Motion passed unanimously.

View the video recording of the motion and surrounding discussion.

Chairman Corbett recessed the business meeting at approximately 5:41 p.m.

November 22, 2024

Chairman Corbett reconvened the MFC business meeting at 09:00 a.m.

Hard Clam Fishery Management Plan Amendment 3

DMF Biologists Jeff Dobbs and Lorena de la Garza Lambert gave a presentation on the Hard Clam FMP Amendment 3.

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

View the video recording of the presentation and surrounding discussion.

Motion by Commissioner Rader to approve the draft N.C. Hard Clam Fishery Management Plan Amendment 3 for public and MFC advisory committee review.

Second by Commissioner Gardner.

ROLL CALL VOTE						
Member	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Recuse	Absent	
Bethea	\boxtimes					
Blanton	\boxtimes					
Closs	\boxtimes					
Gardner	\boxtimes					
Hobgood	\boxtimes					
Rader	\boxtimes					
Roller	\boxtimes					
Service	×					
Corbett	\boxtimes					

Motion Passed unanimously.

View the video recording of the motion and surrounding discussion.

Overview of the ESA Section 10 Incidental Take Permit

Barbie Byrd gave a presentation updating the Commission on the new ESA Section 10 Incidental Take Permit (ITP), as well as the new Observer Trip Scheduling System (OTSS).

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

View the video recording of the presentation and surrounding discussion.

Rule Suspensions

Jason Rock informed the commission that there have not been any new rule suspensions since the August 2024 meeting.

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

View the video recording of the presentation and surrounding discussion.

Rulemaking

DMF Rulemaking Coordinator Catherine Blum provided updates on 2023-2024 rulemaking cycle and the 2024-2025 rulemaking cycle.

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

View the video recording of the presentation and surrounding discussion.

Environmental Permit Review Presentation

DMF Biologist Kimberlee Harding gave a presentation on the Environmental Permit Review Program.

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

View the video recording of the presentation and surrounding discussion.

Issues from Commissioners

Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments, questions, and other discussion.

View the video recording of the Issues from Commissioners.

Meeting Assignments and Preview of Agenda Items for Next Meeting

The DMF's MFC Liaison Jesse Bissette reviewed meeting assignments and provided an overview of the February 2025 meeting items.

View the video recording of the presentation.

Having no further business to conduct, Chairman Corbett adjourned the meeting at 11:50 a.m.