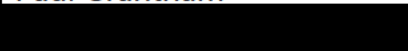


Online Public Comments # 1-24
Final
May 2023 MFC Business Meeting

Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
Charles Locke	North Carolina	<p>Thank you marine fisheries commission for giving me the opportunity to comment on little Tunny management. This issue has been brought up by many councils in the recent year at the last ASMFC meeting it was agreed that no management should take place, which was also the result of discussions at the South Atlantic Council. This is a Atlantic wide large ranging species that has no recent stock assessment And no indicators showing that there is anything wrong or overfishing happening. As a directed little Tunny harvester when I saw that the saltwater guides Association was talking about pushing management measures. I contacted them last year. I set up a phone call with Willy Goldsmith and the Director of the guides association, Tony. I was very open and honest with them about my fishery how it operated the gear I used the amount of volume I harvested and the price we received. They told me that Tom Roller was a member and that he would be at the south Atlantic counsel Spanish AP meeting if I wanted to discuss it further with him. last fall I was open and honest with Commissioner Roller just like I was with the guides association, letting him know all the ins and outs of how I harvested little Tooney as well as the price I received at the market and that it was a niche market, a small market, and I was really one of the only guys starting a relatively new fishery for them. when the South Atlantic Council decided at that AP meeting that they did not see a need for management. I was criticized by Tony at the salt water guys association saying that I had thrown them under the bus and many other messages he sent me through social media complaining how disappointed he was that I didn't go along with what they wanted to do. And I'm all for management when management is needed but no one and no counsel sees any need for management and as this commission knows as a commercial fisherman we are over managed as it is already! I was in agreement and I am still in agreement at watching the stock watching the landings and possibly re-addressing it every three years but when commissioner Roller tried to impose 1000 pound trip limit on a fishery that I told him I harvest up to 3 to 4000 pounds in a day sometimes in the winter months it was like a slap in my face. Especially when the Harvest is actually higher in the recreational community. But he was literally giving recreational fisherman a five fish bag limit. I have nothing personally against commissioner Roller, but he has continued to use my words and take them out of context. At least two times he has been quoted, saying that fisherman receive up to four dollars in Wanchese for their little Tooney. I never told him that I told him the most I ever received was \$2.25 and that was a very small limited market. I want the record to be clarified that he has miss spoken at least two different times and also the fact that one at the last meeting he asked a question who had a problem with a little Tooney was it Charlie Locke? I wasn't even at the meeting he was talking about or</p>

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		<p>knew anything about it. I just want this commission to know the miss trust I feel as a commercial Harvester when I took the initial step to go to an organization and a commission member, trying to work with them to only have them treat me the way they have. I want healthy stocks and healthy fisheries and the fact that commissioner Roller and the saltwater guides association is worried about an expanding fishery, but only worrying about the commercial side of it is a joke. Every species I harvest now that is experiencing overfishing is experiencing it from the recreational fisheries not the commercial. Why is this fact eluding so many people and why as a sustainable fisherman in the state of North Carolina do I still continue to feel like I'm being attacked by these organizations When I'm not the problem? I ask this commission to use some common sense when looking at little Tunny management and really ask yourself is this something that is needed or warranted at this time or is this just another allocation grab by a recreational organization that really at the heart of it, hates any commercial harvest of any species. Thank you for your time. Charlie Locke [REDACTED]</p>
Rick Sasser	North Carolina	<p>I encourage this commission to come to the table in good faith to pass the striped mullet supplement as it was unanimously passed at the November-2022 meeting.</p> <p>At the November MFC meeting staff at the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) presented Supplement A to the Striped Mullet FMP. In Supplement A the DMF recommended a 20-33% reduction in mullet landings by closing the harvest season in late October or early November through December 31st for at least one year. The preferred option of a November 7th to December 31st closure was selected by the MFC.</p> <p>Fisheries management by doing too little, too late has failed for twenty years.</p> <p>The commission's responsibility is defined in its mission statement.</p> <p>Mission The Division of Marine Fisheries is dedicated to ensuring sustainable marine and estuarine fisheries and habitats for the benefit and health of the people of North Carolina.</p> <p>Please vote for sustainable fisheries by passing the Striped Mullet Supplement.</p>
Paul Grantham	North Carolina	<p>I have lived in North Carolina my entire life, and I have fished coastal waters since I was big enough to hold a rod. While I am proud to call this state my home, I am ashamed that our state continues allow trawling in estuaries that serve as the breeding grounds for many of most prized fish species. We have one of the most ideal coastal environments for trout, red drum, flounder, and striped bass. And these resources are being</p>

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		<p>decimated by the trawling industry.</p> <p>If the Commission is truly interested in reducing discard mortality, you should address bycatch in the shrimp trawl industry. The shrimp trawl industry in North Carolina is responsible for the killing of more finfish on an annual basis than the total harvest (landings and dead discards) by public anglers and commercial fishers COMBINED.</p> <p>Please stop adding restrictions on recreational fishing that have only a modest impact on bycatch mortality and spend your efforts on the more effective strategy of addressing this real problem.</p> <p>-Paul Grantham </p>
Ralph Haddock	North Carolina	<p>My concern is the need to reduce the harvest of striped mullet and the methods used to capture these fish. Understanding that these fish are used as bait to capture other species and their row is a delicacy necessitates a through fact finding study to ensure that effective methods are in place to keep them viable. My belief is that inshore netting should be suspended except for cast netting to capture bait. Other types of netting not only harms striped mullet populations , but also harms other overfished species populations, too.</p>
charles nixon	North Carolina	<p>As recreational fishermen and North Carolinians, most of us feel like our fishing heritage is being stripped from us by unnecessary regulations. We feel we are being forced into buying our fish from fish markets instead of being able to catch our own food from our native waters by a few who are economically and politically motivated.</p>
Wesley Deal	North Carolina	<p>I have heard overfishing til I am sick of hearing it. You can go trout fishing east of mouth Pamlico and Neuse rivers and find very few fishermen but lots of trout. Outer banks is loaded. People are going to travel that far to catch trout. So they stay close to more populated areas. Your ridiculous fake facts from and a desk sitting idiot at NCSU about release mortality by recreational anglers is not surprising. I expect most of you are members of the Biden family business or the Obama cartel. Why don't you face the real trout mortality that comes from nets. It's real but you choose or are being told by the Soros/biden/Obama foundation to ignore the facts and any recreational anglers. We have the most ignorant DMF group in the nation. Just look at what other states are doing. Makes us look bad. Just make them a sport fish. Simple. That would solve all your worries and having to listen to anglers any more. How great would that be for you. You can then go back and hang out with all the rest of the anti America, anti freedom loving people you like to hang out with. Just one time make a smart decision. I dare you. Make specs a sport fish since you don't want me or my grandchildren to be able to eat a</p>

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		<p>other trout or flounder or rockfish or most any rod reel caught fish. You would rather us get them from a net only. The financial impact to this state and all across the country will be devastating when you keep reducing what recreational anglers can keep. You already made up your mind. Why have a fake meeting to act you are genuinely interested in fish stocks. Why not just grab your fishing rod and go have a good time! No wait, you have to go home after you catch first fish. That's so stupid for you to suggest that. Let the lawsuits begin!! There will be many</p>
David Buffington	North Carolina	<p>I wanted to comment on the speckled trout review. I do not believe a catch and quit is the right approach. Anglers should be allowed to fish for these species in C&R. I fully support changing hooks away from trebles or circle hooks with live bait. Slot limit are a good measure as well to me if can insure the fish in not injured. Please address the shrimp boats in our inshore waters. We need the juvenile fish to grow up and not be killed while shrimping.</p>
Steve Corriher	North Carolina	<p>After attending several meetings during the scoping period, we observed that the The Cross Proposal, which featured a drastically reduced public fishing quota combined with a "catch and quit" philosophy, was OVERWHELMINGLY rejected by all those participating in scoping. We believe any proposals put forth need scientific verifiable evidence before formulating a plan. For example it was stated the recreational fishermen are overwhelmingly causing dead discards, which we know is not true. The real problem is the discards due to gill nets and shrimp trolling, which need to be monitored more closely.</p> <p>We are waiting on issue papers from the Division regarding possible management measures on seasons, closures, slot limits, creel limits, etc...before recommendations are made on these possibilities.</p> <p>Ultimately, granting speckled trout gamefish status would provide the needed protections for this extremely important public fishing resource.</p> <p>If the Commission is truly interested in reducing discard mortality, they should make good on numerous commitments to address bycatch in the shrimp trawl industry. The shrimp trawl industry in North Carolina is responsible for the killing of more finfish on an annual basis than the total harvest (landings and dead discards) by public anglers and commercial fishers COMBINED.</p> <p>Since overfishing must be ended within two years, speckled trout populations MUST be monitored annually to ensure that any restrictions enacted would be lifted as soon as possible. North Carolina needs to make sure all North Carolinians have equal access to our natural resources and fair regulations to manage them for the future. The decisions shouldn't be made by several individuals who aren't considering all citizens. Thanks.</p>
Ed Mondello	North Carolina	<p>Please consider banning in shore trawling for shrimp like the rest of the states on the east coast. We have seen the results of the bycatch on the fin fish population. All the rivers and basins should be off limits as well as the sounds. This is already been done by other states and the results have been dramatic.</p>

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John Redmond	North Carolina	If you really want to help the fish population then stop the inshore shrimp trawls. Put them atleast a mile off the beach. Also remove the gillnets from inshore .
Jonathan Edwards	North Carolina	<p>Speckled trout should receive game fish status.</p> <p>If the Commission is truly interested in reducing discard mortality, they should make good on numerous commitments to address bycatch in the shrimp trawl industry. The shrimp trawl industry in North Carolina is responsible for the killing of more finfish on an annual basis than the total harvest (landings and dead discards) by public anglers and commercial fishers COMBINED.</p> <p>Since overfishing must be ended within two years, speckled trout populations MUST be monitored annually to ensure that any restrictions enacted would be lifted as soon as possible.</p>
Charles Mabe	North Carolina	The recreational fishing for spotted sea trout is very important to me and I would like to see the recreational harvest be reasonable with limited restrictions. Data supports the fact that commercial trawler operations are very detrimental to all fisheries, therefore any further restrictions should be implemented where the harm is being made. Thank you for your attention to this matter.
Jack Dunn	North Carolina	<p>I am writing to encourage thoughtful and meaningful reforms that benefit the natural resource, recreational fisherman and actual commercial fisherman(as opposed to fish distributors).</p> <p>I am a recreational fisherman and acknowledge my bias to that class of fisherman but I also apply my experience owning a business and feedback from numerous friends that are commercial fisherman by trade.</p> <p>First, I urge additional limits on shrimp trawling with the primary reform being blocking the use of fish house licenses that allow out of state boats to harvest shrimp in North Carolinas in shore waters. Our fisherman have no capacity to fish any other states in shore waters and no fisherman from another state should ever fish the in shore waters of North Carolina. Presently fish house allow out of state operators to operate under their license or using licenses acquired by the fish house. If a boat is not registered in North Carolina, if every owner of the boat (not an LLC but traced to the actual owner of the LLC) does not pay state income tax in North Carolina and registered to vote in North Carolina then the boat should never be allowed to fish in shore waters in our state. North Carolinas in shore resources should be reserved exclusively for residents of North Carolina. Any captain found skirting these regulations should forfeit their vessel to the state and any fish house found buying their product should be fined \$25,000 per occurrence.</p>

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		<p>I further suggest that all trawling in the sounds either require skim nets that do not damage the bottom or that the activity of non skim nets should require a distance of 1 mile from the nearest body of land (anywhere land is above the water line at low tide)to better protect coastal habitat, nursery areas and grass/oyster beds that have meaningful impacts on water quality, erosion control and protection from weather events.</p> <p>I further urge the Commission to require any person who holds a commercial license to derive 50% of their annual income from commercial fishing practices and to grandfather in current license holders but to make the first time cost of a new license at least \$2,500 so that we eliminate recreational commercial fisherman who use that license to skirt recreational bag limits and negatively impact the margins of true commercial fisherman. To that end, any person who fails to show 50% of their income from commercial fishing for consecutive years would lose their license and be required to purchase a new \$2,500 license.</p> <p>I also support new recreational limits on spotted sea trout. 3 fish per angler is plenty and a requirement to use circle hooks for live bait or an outright ban on live bait would also be acceptable as it limits mortality rates.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration</p> <p>Jack Dunn</p>
Stephen Lamm	North Carolina	<p>Thank you for your service to North Carolina and our fragile fishery. I would like to state that the allowable use of gill nets and inshore shrimp trawling must come to an end immediately. Gill nets kill indiscriminately and inshore shrimp trawling is responsible for the killing of more finfish on an annual basis than the total harvest (landings and dead discards) by public anglers and commercial fishers COMBINED. The data is clear and available. Why are we not paying attention to it? When are we going to wake up and protect the resource for future generations? I have been fortunate enough to travel the East and Gulf Coasts and when I tell the people I meet the challenges we face in NC, they look at me like I told them we do not have indoor plumbing. It's time to wake up and stop justifying these destructive fishing habits as heritage and tradition. Thank you for your time and attention.</p>
Chris England	North Carolina	<p>In regards to the Speckled Trout FMP I believe that we need to finally use some common sense management. If we need to go to single hooks then do it. If we need a slot limit then do it. If we need to provide training for the recreational fishing public on proper catch and release methods then do it. What we do not need is some convoluted way to give the commercial industry all of our speckled trout like we have with flounder. We do not need a season on speckled trout or any type of quota system. This is simply another way for the commercial</p>

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		industry to try and take more trout to make up for the flounder industry that they has been destroyed by lack of management.
DEMPSEY BARWICK	North Carolina	Re the development of the Spotted Seatrout Fishery Management Plan (FMP). I would hope the Commission would be open-minded enough to reject Commissioner Cross's proposed FMP and rely on the DMF's technical staff to produce a science-based FMP. The Cross proposal, which preceeded the Scoping Period, was apparently his attempt to hijack from recreational fishermen a larger portion of the Spotted Seatrout harvest for commerical fishermen. Or, it may have simply been a diversion to cover Senator Sanderson's Senate Bill 686 (Section 7.(a)). Senator Sanderson and probably Commissioner Cross now seem to be attempting to bypass the DMF staff and pass legislation that would significantly impact recreational fishing in NC. Keep politics, money, and emotions out of the process.
Stephen Hargrove	North Carolina	I've seen your commercial, it's horse crap. Your commercial fisherman have ruined the Bay River. They string nets on both sides of the little creeks so there's no way a fish can swim there without getting caught. I've seen them set nets then drive around and herd the fish into the net. You people are doing nothing but lining your pockets. Where you going to get your pocket money when your fisherman have killed off all the fish? Needless to say, I think y'all are doing an incredibly poor job.
Wilson McGraw	North Carolina	Commissioners, First, we all must put the resource of our fisheries first. All user groups should support measures to ensure our fisheries remain for years to come. We need to look hard at adopting multi-species management plans. It only makes sense to manage with multiple species in mind when the fisheries interact. Anglers react towards one-species FMPs in ways that have to be considered in others. For example: Flounder closures have increase pressure on red fish -- but when flounder closures were implemented, I doubt that the red fish plans were updated. We can't solely manage one species alone without considering species that prey on the first. We must use common sense and caution with the Spotted Sea Trout FMP. We need to protect the resource, bring it back to stronger levels, and provide opportunity for all users. Sensible adoption of slightly reduced bag limits, slot limits (with trophy opportunity of one larger fish), outreach for use of circle hooks, and proper fish handling all make sense. We also need to end inshore gill netting and inshore industrial shrimp trawls. We can't expect a fishery to be healthy when we remove whole schools of fish without even a hint of fair chase or to

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		<p>allow the bottom of the food chain and juvenile fish to be decimated as by catch for another fishery. We absolutely do not need a quota system. Anyone suggesting this for an FMP has hidden ulterior motives and are not looking out for the resource and all user groups. Spotted Sea Trout do not need season closures. Any limitations should also consider whether regional limitations could be enacted, instead of going statewide. The coast could be split into at least three sections if regional regulation is needed.</p> <p>Our resource must come first, not special interest groups. Close loop holes like commercial license personal consumption and crack down on those that don't turn in trip tickets.</p> <p>Thank you for your service to our community.</p> <p>Wilson McGraw</p>
Daniel Barber	North Carolina	<p>NC recreational angler that targets spotted trout, flounder, reddish and sheepshead.</p> <p>For the spotted sea trout FMP, please consider impleminting a slot size to protect the mature fish population. Also broadcasting proper handling techniques and appropriate terminal tackle usage with recreational catch limits should be considered.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
Jared Kennish	North Carolina	<p>I strongly urge the commission to stop all commercial netting in estuary waters. We are the only State that allows this practice. It is one of the primary reasons that our stocks are so low. I do not support any change to existing trout regulations other than to ban all commercial netting in estuaries.</p>
Ray Fields	North Carolina	<p>The MF always takes limits away, but never gives back . You are to pro commercial and not at all for the recreational fisherman. These meetings are just for show, you already have the plan that you are going to use.</p>
Graysen Pack	North Carolina	<p>Until we stop undermining our inshore waterways with gillnetting, North Carolina will continue to see a significantly weaker, less appealing, and disappointing inshore fishery. Unless this foundational problem is addressed, we will continue to lag behind every other Atlantic fishery in sustainability, catch size, and catch quality.</p>
James Reilly	North Carolina	<p>As one who is actively and utterly dedicated to the pursuit of the speckled trout, and having tagged thousands of them over the last decade, I can state with confidence that the majority of Mr. Cross' proposal is completely nonsensical. Spending on average, over a thousand hours a year on North Carolina water, exclusively chasing</p>

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		<p>trout, and releasing the vast majority of them healthy, it offends me that he would presume to imply that dead discard mortality in the recreational fishery is occurring at epidemic proportions. I would concede that the recreational release mortality is certainly higher among young of the year class fish, but this has always been factored into overall mortality, as in all marine species. Having sat through multiple NOAA provided fisheries science workshops on the subject, ALL species have dramatically higher juvenile mortality and that's why fish, especially speckled trout, are such prolific spawners. I have also sat on the water and watched net fishermen haul over the gunnels, pile nets on their decks and power away from a set with no regard for minimum size or total harvest limits. I have also, on numerous occasions, watched netters rip fish from their nets and throw them back in the water with no effort to ensure any of the fish actually survive being culled.</p> <p>Mr. Cross' statements are in direct contradiction with the data provided by NC DMF AND all other coastal states that actually effectively manage and protect their public trust resources. His sole concern is clearly the maximum financial extraction from the resource, not actually protecting and preserving them for future generations. It disgusts me to be subjected to such spurious and derogatory accusations from a person who clearly has an agenda that is solely focused on a goal that is clearly not in the best interests of the citizens of North Carolina or their public trust marine resources. I would be happy to take the time to assist in developing solutions that first and foremost protect our resources while also ensuring access in perpetuity to all citizens without the financial gain of a select few being a consideration.</p>
Chris McCaffity	North Carolina	<p>Please send an official letter to the National Marine Fisheries Service asking them not to approve Amendment 35 from the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. This amendment will harm North Carolina fishermen and our offshore fisheries by planning to waste millions of pounds of Red Snapper that are assumed to die after being discarded. The latest stock assessment shows there are more Red Snapper than ever before. This overpopulation is negatively impacting many species as aggressive snapper eat their young and outcompete them for food. Please reconsider the wisdom of using regulatory discards as the preferred management tool since it is so wasteful and leads to assumptions in data collection rather than fact-based landings. Regional hatcheries that stock a variety of local seafood could help many species thrive at historically high levels even as we sustainably harvest more. This would create more seafood and recreational opportunity while generating more revenue. It is time we started to focus more on enhancing our fisheries and food supply than restricting our freedom to access them. I am happy to answer any questions and/or provide more details. Thank you.</p>