



## **Supplement A to Amendment 1 of the N.C. Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan**

November 19, 2015

*Department of Environmental Quality*



# Supplement Justification

## Stock Concerns

- Coastwide, decadal decline in some indices of abundance
- Majority of catch consists of immature fish
- Unknown fate of fish that emigrate out of N.C. waters was major source of uncertainty
- Reliable biological reference point estimates could not be established (i.e., overfished/overfishing)
- Not able to estimate stock size and fishing mortality using N.C. data only

# Timeline Highlights

MILESTONE	DATE
1. Division presents stock assessment results to commission; commission votes on status quo, development of supplement, or initiation of review/amendment	February 2015
2. Commission approves pursuing supplement	February 2015
3. Secretary approves development of supplement	March 2015
4. Division drafts supplement and presents it to commission	March-May 2015
5. Commission approves proposals for public review	May 2015
6. Formal public comment period	June-July 2015
7. Commission vote on supplement delayed	August 2015
<b>8. Commission selects preferred management options and implementation schedule, and votes on final approval of supplement</b>	<b>November 2015</b>

# Draft Supplement Suggested Management Options

- Season closures
- Size limit
- Recreational bag limit
- Combinations of these measures, including gear modifications

# Marine Fisheries Commission Proposals

MFC Proposal	Size Limit	Season	Total Allowable Catch	Gear	Trip Limit	Pound Net Fishery	Gill Net Fishery	Gig Fishery	Estimated Catch Reduction (percent)*
1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	48-50
2	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	23-38
3	X	X		X					18-25
4	X								**
5	X	X		X					15-23
6		X		X					n/a

*\*Estimates rely on assumptions about harvest, discards and population dynamics*

*\*\*Approximately 1 percent increase*

# Formal Comment on Commission Proposals

## Public Meeting: New Bern - June 17, 2015

- Approximately 150 members of public attended (66 spoke)
- Support for supplement, status quo and/or amendment
- Proposal 1 received the most support in its entirety
- Commonly suggested management measures also included:
  - Increase the commercial size limit to 15 inches
  - Total allowable catch and/or quota for some portion of the fishery
  - Reduce commercial harvest (unspecified)
  - Prohibit harvest of flounder (or all species) by some or all forms of gill nets

# Formal Comment on Commission Proposals

## Written Comment: June 10 - July 10, 2015

- 1,246 written comments (986 emails, 260 letters)
  - Proposal 1 received the most comments of support
  - Proposal 1 without gig restrictions also received support
  - Proposals 1, 2, and 4 received opposition
- 2 Petitions
  - Coastal Conservation Association of N.C. (1,654 signatures): supported pound net and gig fishery, 15-inch size limit, 6-fish recreational creel limit, commercial TAC, prohibition of large mesh gill nets in estuarine waters
  - Cape Fear Chapter of N.C. Kayak Association (8 signatures): Supported Proposal 1
- 3 Resolutions
  - Nash County and Town of Carolina Beach supported use of supplement
  - Pamlico County opposed use of supplement

# Additional Public Comment on Commission Proposals

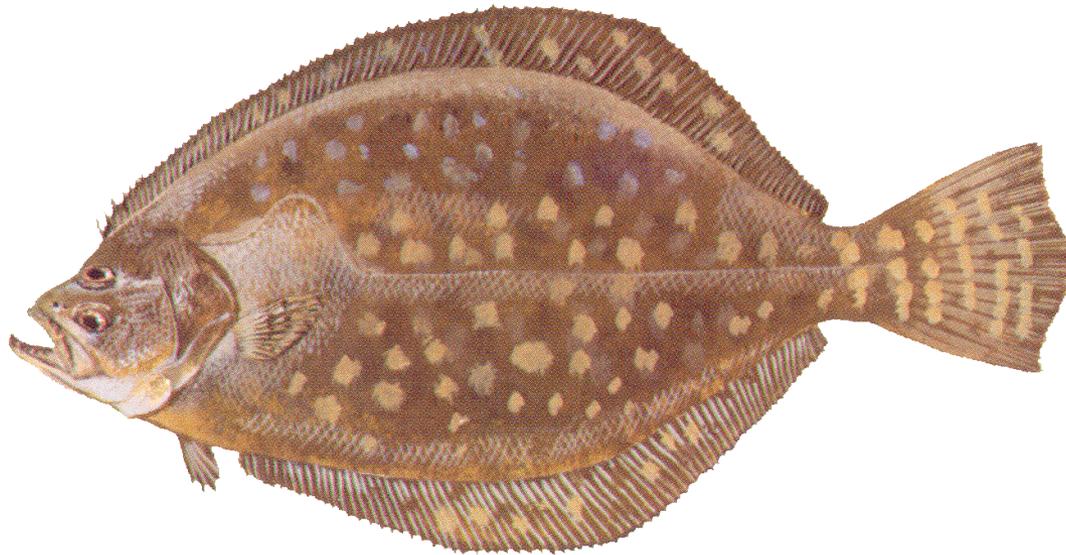
## Received Outside of Formal Comment Period

- 59 written comments (51 emails, 8 letters)
  - Support for supplement, status quo and/or amendment
  - Increase the commercial size limit to 15 inches with gear modifications
  - Total allowable catch and/or quota for fishery (50/50 allocation)
  - Implement seasonal closures
  - Prohibit harvest of flounder by some or all forms of gill nets
  - Moratorium on pound net permits
- 1 Petition
  - Andrew Berry (25 signatures): Opposed significant reductions without data to support reductions and/or closures
- 19 Resolutions
  - Supported use of supplement: Alamance, Brunswick, Johnston, Lenoir, Pitt, Wayne Counties; Towns of Beulaville, Rose Hill, Wallace and Warsaw; Village of Walnut Creek
  - Opposed use of supplement: Bertie, Camden, Carteret, Currituck, Dare, Hyde, Pasquotank, and Tyrrell Counties

# Next Steps

1. Vote on preferred management options and final approval of Supplement A to Amendment 1 of the Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan
2. Schedule implementation of selected management measures

# *Questions?*



*Department of Environmental Quality*

