

NCMFC,

I was planning to give public comments in person this week, but it looks like we will be working. The continued mismanagement of federal quotas has made it illegal for us to keep many of the fish that offshore fishermen historically depended on this time of year to make a living during short weather windows. This mismanagement causes us to stay at sea longer and in worse weather as we try to put a trip together with the few legal species that are worth targeting while running from illegal fish and discarding those we accidentally catch. I have repeatedly asked this commission to support the proper management of federal snapper/grouper quotas with appropriate possession limits to avoid extended closures and excessive regulatory discards. Speaking up on behalf of NC offshore fishermen and seafood consumers does not seem to be a priority. It doesn't even seem to matter that federal fishery managers plan ahead to waste millions of pounds of seafood rather than taking simple steps to greatly reduce regulatory discards and discard mortality.

Please accept the previous paragraph along with the comments below as my public comments since I probably will not be back in time to give them in person.

November 2016 NCMFC Meeting Public Comments

People have told me for years that giving public comments is a waste of time. It is understandable why they feel that way, but I still believe it is important to make them even if nothing changes right away. These comments will consist of 4 issues I would like the commission to work on and our elected officials to support.

1. Please focus more on enhancing our fisheries and food supply than restricting our freedom to access them by stocking some native seafood and making habitat improvements.
2. Please ask the National Marine Fisheries Service to give back the 5.2% of our Bluefin Tuna quota that had been set aside for North Carolina's December fishery or at least manage future quotas with appropriate possession limits to keep the season open through December.
3. Please ask the South Atlantic Fishery Management Fishery Council to properly manage consumer quotas with appropriate possession limits to avoid extended closures and excessive regulatory discards.
4. Please ask the Governor to let fishermen pick who represents us on the commission and give seafood consumers representation.

I am always happy to answer any questions.

Thank you,
Chris McCaffity