



# ONLINE PUBLIC COMMENT

#	Name	State	<u>Please type your comments in the box below.</u>
312	Andy Scott	North Carolina	This would hurt so many families, Not just the fisherman, but all that work in the industry. The regulations that are now in place with the use of big marsh tailbags, and fish eyes are working. I have seen very little bycatch while shrimping this summer.
311	Charles Anderson	North Carolina	I am very concerned with the past fishery management in NC I have seen drastic reductions in quantity and quality of numerous finfish in the Pamlico Sound and tributary waters. The state constitution says these fisheries are to be managed for the citizens of NC and future residents. We have failed. Just this past week I saw 8 large shrimp trawlers near Ocacroke Island (all within 2 miles of each other) Citing prior state studies where the bycatch is 4 to one it is easy to see where the finfish have gone. They are being sacrificed for the exploitation of the resource by 1 industry ..killed as juveniles. The management of inshore waters such as this MUST STOP if we are ever to have a healthy fishery again
310	Steve Smith Steve Smith	North Carolina	If anything it could be 1 fish per day
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308	Tim Gestwicki	North Carolina	November 15, 2021 Via Email and U.S. Mail  Chairman Rob Bizzell Marine Fisheries Commission P.O Box 769 Morehead City, N.C. 28557  Re: DMF Recommendations for Shrimp FMP Amendment 2

#	Name	State	<b><u>Please type your comments in the box below.</u></b>
			<p data-bbox="447 196 751 228">Dear Chairman Bizzell:</p> <p data-bbox="447 282 1976 695">The North Carolina Wildlife Federation ("NCWF") has reviewed the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries' ("DMF") October 2021 Decision Document for Amendment 2 to the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan ("Draft Amendment 2") and submits these comments for consideration by the Marine Fisheries Commission ("MFC"). We are discouraged that only minor adjustments to the fishery have been suggested when compared to the suite of bycatch reduction options provided by our petition(s) for rule-making, and we remain concerned that no measures have been proposed that can be quantitatively assessed in the future. By maintaining the status quo in terms of days fished, gear parameters, tow times, and season openings, any reduction in bycatch, the focus of Amendment 2, is insufficient at best. The current proposals from DMF simply delay mortality in the rivers until juvenile fishes reach the open sound where shrimping effort and resultant bycatch will remain unchanged.</p> <p data-bbox="447 748 2007 987">Furthermore, DMF provides no substantive rebuttal or explanation for its choice to ignore or dismiss the technical issues analyzed by NCWF. Instead, DMF repeatedly claims that more comprehensive data is needed to support measures that may impact the commercial harvest. We continue to review the documents and supporting science and provide science-based support for further reductions in effort. The Decision Document relies on economics as the primary driver for the recommendations as opposed to sustainability of the resource.</p> <p data-bbox="447 1040 1976 1284">The Decision Document touts all of the management efforts in the past that only allow trawling in 53% of the internal coastal waters and the efforts to reduce bycatch. Clearly those efforts have failed to address the problem, as evidenced by the development of Amendment 2. Closing 47% of the internal waters does little to protect juvenile fishes from mortality if the primary pathways for their exits to the ocean are still trawled at maximum levels. If any of the efforts thus far had any measurable benefits to the stocks, we would expect to see some positive response by the fishes and other organisms, but we have not.</p> <p data-bbox="447 1338 1104 1370"><b>I. DECISION DOCUMENT RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p> <p data-bbox="447 1382 716 1414"><b>A. Area Restrictions</b></p> <p data-bbox="447 1425 1961 1500">The additional area restrictions and closures proposed are reasonable first steps, but are a fraction of what is needed to accomplish the goals and objectives of Amendment 2. While any closure to trawl activity should</p>

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			<p>certainly help rebuild lost habitats, any reductions in mortality, however, are short-lived until the fishes move into the open areas.</p> <p>NCWF has repeatedly stated that it supports maintaining a viable shrimp trawl fishery in North Carolina that is responsible and protects the local, family shrimpers. Our petition(s) provide mechanisms for such a scenario. The closures proposed in the Decision Document disproportionately impact those smaller, local fishermen in favor of maintaining status quo for the large offshore trawlers and out-of-state vessels that will operate unrestricted in Pamlico Sound, sweeping up shrimp and juvenile finfishes saved from any river closures. The Decision Document recommends the exact opposite of what was proposed in the NCWF petition(s), and approved at one point, by the MFC.</p> <p>Again, while we feel compelled to support the closures presented in the Decision Document from a habitat perspective, they only serve to delay mortality until protected fishes reach open trawl grounds, either in open sounds or the nearshore coastal ocean where protection ends.</p> <p><b>B. Effort and Gear Modifications</b></p> <p>The Decision Document states that “the goal of bycatch reductions is generally to increase availability of fish to other fisheries.” The State appears to discount the critical ecosystem benefits of reduced bycatch. Further, the document suggests that “the results and benefits of shrimp trawl bycatch reductions are uncertain” based on the life history of the fishes involved. The document seems to indicate that DMF and the MFC cannot say, unequivocally, that reducing bycatch is a positive thing. We can find no literature that suggests anything other than the fact that bycatch is a problem and that reduction is critical in all our world’s fisheries. This statement is very concerning from a resource management perspective and flies in the face of decades of research. The remainder of the bullets on page 8 of the Decision Document discuss minor adjustments to current practices that avoid impacts to the shrimp trawl industry or purport to reduce bycatch.</p> <p>The Decision Document states that “[p]rotecting [submerged aquatic vegetation (“SAV”) and shell bottom] habitats from shrimp trawls also results in bycatch reduction.” However, this reduction would be only temporary. Shell bottom and SAV utilization by juvenile fishes is ephemeral. Once juveniles move from the protected areas, they are subjected to status quo trawl effort in the open areas. We are unaware of any mechanism that the State’s hypothesis can be tested.</p>

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			<p>The areas proposed in the Southern area may actually reduce bycatch mortality in the estuary; however, open areas adjacent to the inlets in the Atlantic Ocean will offset many of those gains through nearshore ocean trawling.</p> <p>The region-specific recommendations will likely have the greatest impact on the smaller, local shrimpers who must now travel longer distances to shrimp in open areas. Forcing the smaller shrimpers into direct competition with the large offshore trawlers and out-of-state vessels in the open sound raises concerns for their economics and safety at sea. It appears that the larger, more influential trawlers will be virtually unaffected by Amendment 2, if adopted as proposed.</p> <p><b>II. DRAFT AMENDMENT 2–ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION</b></p> <p>Draft Amendment 2 fails to reduce bycatch and, if approved, will result in five more years of extraordinary bycatch that we do not believe these resources can withstand.</p> <p>NCWF is concerned that the substantive actions proposed in our petition were summarily dismissed by DMF staff based on anecdotal social and economic information rather than peer-reviewed science. Despite numerous documents and supporting science provided by NCWF, the opportunity to discuss these issues with staff has been rejected or ignored by leadership of DMF and the Department of Environmental Quality.</p> <p>After reviewing the Decision Document, we have continued to develop information based on the science that contradicts the statements and recommendations provided by DMF to the MFC. A final issue we would like to address relates to the continued debate over the magnitude and fate of juvenile finfish and other marine resources that are sacrificed for every pound of shrimp harvested.</p> <p>We know that brown shrimp are the primary target species taken in shrimp trawls in the estuarine nursery grounds of North Carolina. Undisputable, however, is the fact that unmarketable, juvenile fishes and crabs that would be of great potential value to commercial and recreational fisheries if allowed to grow are the primary catch.</p> <p>Brown (2015) conducted the most robust characterization of the North Carolina shrimp trawl fishery and its bycatch from 2012–2015. Brown (2015), however, did not provide any expanded estimates from his findings. A simple expansion of Brown’s data, however, reveals enormous numbers. In 2014, 361.6 million fishes, crabs,</p>

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			<p>mollusks, and jellyfishes weighing 21.7 million pounds were taken as bycatch in the 2014 shrimp trawl fishery while using BRDs. The total landings of shrimp harvested in 2014 based on Brown 2015 was 4.6 million pounds and DMF trip ticket data verifies that 4.7 million pounds of shrimp were harvested in 2014. Consequently, the expanded bycatch estimates presented here are credible.</p> <p>Based on the data, for every pound of shrimp landed (heads on) in 2014, there were 4.7 pounds of bycatch brought on board. Consistent with the ASMFC findings for bycatch mortality from trawl fisheries and the fact that the study did not consider delayed mortality of bycatch that came onboard, we must assume 100% mortality of the 361.6 million animals taken as bycatch. Though there may theoretically be some survival of discarded bycatch, we find that survival of even a small fraction is highly unlikely, given our own and others' observations of the predation that occurs by marine mammal, avian, and other fish predators that routinely follow trawlers to take advantage of the both the discarded bycatch and the organisms that manage to escape the trawl interior through a BRD.</p> <p>Numerous studies have shown that approximately 50% of the juvenile fishes, and perhaps some of the other marine resources, escape through certified BRDs during a shrimp trawl tow. During 2014, tow times ranged from 40 minutes to 6 hours, with an average of 3 hours. Tow times of this length would result in high mortality rates of fish brought on deck. A missing piece of the puzzle, however, is the mortality of the bycatch escaping via the BRDs and not brought on board the vessel. If one assumes that the BRDs reduce bycatch by 50%, then an additional 21.7 million pounds of potential bycatch were encountered by shrimp trawls in 2014. The mortality associated with those fishes that escaped or those fishes that were crushed when extruded from the meshes of the trawl is unknown. It is well established, however, that numerous predators follow shrimp trawls throughout the fishing effort. Bottlenose dolphins, sharks, rays, birds, and numerous fishes such as bluefish, the mackerels and cobia follow the shrimp trawls from start to finish. Fishes squeezed through the meshes or that escape through BRDs are easy prey. On haul back, especially when the net is "washing" behind the boat just prior to bringing on deck, numerous fishes are extruded and consumed or picked from nets by birds. While the number is unknown, a large percentage of the fishes that escape via the BRD and are not brought on deck perish; yet the current, faulty, assumption is that they all survive.</p> <p>Another mortality factor, often not considered, is that most fishes encounter multiple trawls every day, week, and month throughout the seven- to eight-month shrimping season. Each encounter further increases an individual fish's chance of mortality. Consequently, the actual impacts of the shrimp trawl fishery to juvenile</p>

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			<p data-bbox="436 154 2016 316">fishes over the course of the season is likely much higher than values from a single tow, but are unknown. For example, if one million weakfish recruit into Pamlico Sound at the beginning of the shrimp season in May, it is unknown how many will likely survive until their November/December migration out of the sound. The role that shrimp trawling plays in reducing this survival rate is a critical, but unacknowledged, issue.</p> <p data-bbox="436 365 2016 527">Based on the ratio method data that DMF disputes as valid, the actual amount of bycatch and/or non-target species mortality associated with a single pound of shrimp may be as high as 4.7 pounds x 2 = 9.4 pounds of non-target species to 1 pound of shrimp. While some may assert this value is extreme, no data are available that indicate the total bycatch is significantly less.</p> <p data-bbox="436 576 2016 690">During 2014, shrimp (brown, white, and pink) comprised 18.2% of the observed catches in the estuary while the remaining 81.8% of mostly unmarketable finfish was discarded. During the only other full year of sampling in 2013, a similar value of 20.2% of the observed catches were shrimp.</p> <p data-bbox="436 738 2016 990">Brown (2015) states that expanding estimates of bycatch to the fleet level “should be done with caution” but did not make the attempt. Draft Amendment 2 to the Shrimp FMP discusses the ratio method of assessing bycatch, as presented here, and indicates that the ratio method is not as informative as the actual catch rate of the bycatch species (the catch per unit effort, or CPUE, method). Unfortunately, Draft Amendment 2 finds that the “in most cases the data needed to calculate reliable CPUE estimates for bycatch species are lacking,” thereby making estimates using the ratio method the best available science.</p> <p data-bbox="436 1039 2016 1372">Brown (2016, 2017) continued the characterization work in 2016 and the fall of 2017. While these studies did not have the coverage of the 2015 study, they provide similar results. The majority of the harvest from estuarine and ocean trawl observations was juvenile fishes, primarily Atlantic croaker, spot, weakfish, and other commercial and recreationally important species. The Brown 2016 study also examined bycatch in the skimmer trawl fishery and reports that the dominant catch in that fishery is shrimp, providing a great alternative to the shrimp trawl and its primary harvest of juvenile fishes. The decline in the abundance of spot in trawl observations between the 2013-2014 time period (Brown 2015) and 2016-2017 time period (Brown 2016, 2017) is concerning.</p> <p data-bbox="436 1421 2016 1494">The best available data collected from Brown (2015) indicates that each pound of shrimp harvested generates between five to ten pounds of bycatch of finfish and other important marine resources. If one accepts the basic</p>



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			<p>premise that many of the fishes that escape through BRDs or are squeezed through meshes during fishing succumb to injury or predation, the total mortality from shrimp trawl activity is likely closer to ten pounds than five pounds.</p> <p>DMF presents no data to refute these ratio-based numbers, yet Draft Amendment 2 states that the ratio method is more biased than the CPUE method. As a result, the State appears to simply discount the ratio method and its damning results in hopes that the other method may, someday, indicate that encountering over 43 million pounds of finfish and other marine resources in 2014 to harvest 4.6 million pounds of shrimp is sustainable and not a significant cause of the catastrophic decline in the species encountered in that fishery. Draft Amendment 2 does indicate, however, that the ratio method is used to determine how “clean” a fishery is. The results clearly show that the shrimp trawl fishery is not “clean” when the target species only make up approximately 20% of the catch.</p> <p>The section on discarded bycatch in shrimp trawls in Draft Amendment 2 contains none of this information. Interestingly, however, Draft Amendment 2 states that southern flounder, summer flounder, and weakfish “only account for a small portion of the total catch by weight.” A reasonable interpretation based on this statement would be that bycatch of these species has little biological impact or consequence. A closer look suggests the contrary is true.</p> <p>In 2013, 23,663 weakfish weighing 2,004 pounds were observed by Brown. Observed catches in 2013 represented 0.66% of the total estuarine effort of the fleet. Expanding the observed weakfish catch to the fleet yields 303,666 pounds of weakfish brought on deck. The overall mortality must have been higher due to weakfish that perished during the trawl effort but did not reach the deck of the vessel. The commercial harvest of weakfish in 2013 was merely 120,191 pounds—60% less than the estimated fleetwide bycatch from shrimp trawling.</p> <p>In 2014, 232,170 weakfish weighing 20,604 pounds were observed as bycatch from commercial shrimp trawls. Observer coverage in 2014 was 1.28% of the total estuarine effort, yielding a conservative estimate of 1.1 million pounds of weakfish bycatch. Commercial landings of weakfish in 2014 were 105,247 pounds.</p> <p>The estuarine shrimp trawl bycatch of southern flounder was estimated at 188,000 pounds in 2013 and 140,250 pounds in 2014—this is nearly half the current allowable harvest for the commercial southern flounder fishery</p>

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			<p>in 2021.</p> <p>When compared to bycatch of Atlantic croaker (conservatively estimated as 4.1 million pounds in 2013 and 10.5 million pounds in 2014), weakfish and southern flounder may be a relatively smaller portion of shrimp trawl bycatch, but not inconsequential as suggested by DMF. Furthermore, total bycatch of each of these species is even higher than the estimates provided here, since these data do not include the bycatch of these species taken in the Atlantic Ocean component of the fishery.</p> <p>When compared to the overall bycatch in shrimp trawls, the bycatch of southern flounder, weakfish, and Atlantic croaker may indeed only "account for a small portion of the total catch." However, DMF's characterization of this bycatch as inconsequential to the species concerned, and to the fisheries for them, is misleading. The loss of these species at the juvenile stage translates to future losses in both reproductive capacity of their populations, as well as reduced recruitment to both the commercial and recreational fisheries for them.</p> <p>III. CONCLUSION</p> <p>In conclusion, the data from Brown 2015 are the best available and most extensive but have not been adequately analyzed and presented to the public. Management measures contained in Draft Amendment 2 to address bycatch only nibble around the edges and avoid any real progress towards bycatch reduction. Only a significant reduction in the capacity of the fleet and expansion of no trawl areas within the estuarine nursery grounds where the shrimp fleet operates, including within the Pamlico Sound, will address this problem for North Carolina and many other south and mid-Atlantic states that historically depended on the productivity of Pamlico sound to support fisheries production.</p> <p>The DMF Decision Document suggests that "the results and benefits of shrimp trawl bycatch reductions are uncertain." This mindset has resulted in a North Carolina shrimp management plan that has failed our public trust resources, the east coast ecosystem, our citizens, and the citizens of our sister and partner states. Draft Amendment 2, as recommended by the Decision Document, continues this tradition.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>

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			<p>Tim Gestwicki CEO North Carolina Wildlife Federation</p>
307	Steve Troxler NCDA&CS	North Carolina	<p>The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&amp;CS) respectfully requests that the Marine Fisheries Commission either take a negative vote or a no action on Amendment 2 to the Shrimp Fisheries Management Plan. NCDA&amp;CS believes that regulatory approaches which would protect the abundance and safety of North Carolina’s food systems should be grounded in sound science with due consideration to the food systems in North Carolina and economic impacts. In the case of Amendment 2, the science does not support the proposal and the overall impact has not been adequately considered.</p> <p>Closing additional North Carolina waters to shrimping should only be considered if there is a measurable positive impact to marine species. By its own acknowledgement, the NC Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) cannot quantify the effect of previous permanent closures of approximately 1 million acres of estuarine waters and an additional 200,000+ acres of seasonal closures on increases of abundance of any particular finfish or critical fish habitats in the closure areas. Moreover, DMF is not able to predict with any certainty that the proposed additional closures to shrimp trawling will have any more positive effect than previous closures.</p> <p>The report provides information on a previous closure in South Carolina on page 70 of Amendment 2. and outlines the This two-year closure of South Carolina inland waters to shrimp trawling and 1987 proved that after studying the effects of the closure, South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resource Department (now the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources) reached several conclusions. Notably, “it was concluded that shrimp and fish stocks had not been negatively affected from a biological standpoint by commercial shrimp trawling.” It should also be noted that this study was conducted prior to the implementation of regulations for gear that are designed to reduce bycatch.</p> <p>Additional closures of North Carolina waters to shrimping will have a negative effect on the commercial seafood industry, increase our reliance on imported seafood. Seafood is a major food source in North Carolina and of critical economic importance to the state, especially coastal counties, of which many are designated as Tier 1 economically challenged counties. Shrimp is the number one seafood preferred by American consumers and has an estimated \$100 million economic impact. Policies which continue to restrict consumer access to domestic seafood contributes to national food insecurity and can present food safety issues. Doing so without a sound scientific basis is bad policy.</p>

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			<p>The stated objectives of Amendment 2 omit any mention of the economic impact to the commercial seafood industry or the contribution of North Carolina seafood to the state's food systems. NCDA&amp;CS believes that these factors should be considered for a more holistic approach before moving forward with further regulation of the marine fisheries.</p> <p>Currently available data does not support such a broad closure of commercial shrimping in North Carolina. Further, the economic impact to the commercial fishing industry and the food systems in North Carolina should be evaluated and accounted for before implementing regulations such as Amendment 2.</p> <p>NCDA&amp;CS thanks the DMF and MFC for the opportunity to comment on this matter and would welcome questions and dialogue regarding this matter.</p> <p>Sincerely,  Steven W. Troxler  N.C. Commissioner of Agriculture</p>
306	John Leggett	North Carolina	<p>I feel very strongly against the proposal that would close all trawling in our inland waters as recreational shrimping has put many a meal on the table throughout winter months, Not to mention the small commercial guys investments they have made over the years in boats,gear and jobs for many local people who really have never done anything but fished for a living. Thank you for reconsidering.</p>
305	Steve Corriher	North Carolina	<p>Habitat destruction and bycatch waste and overfishing have been occurring in NC for decades due to a lack of designation and protection of nursery areas and by the inadequate oversight and regulation by the NC Marine Fisheries Commission. As a result NC fisheries is in trouble and the responsibility for the solutions to these issues will need to be shared equally by all parties-commercial, recreation and the Commission to ensure equitable results.</p> <p>Here are a few of the issues and possible solutions:</p> <p>The use of large mesh gill nets has caused issues with bycatch waste and death and the destruction of endangered sea turtles and as a result the use of large mesh gill nets should be eliminated period. But if continued, all licensees should be required to report their catch each year or their license be revoked.</p> <p>Shrimp trawling in the sounds, rivers and estuaries that serve as nurseries for many species including spot, croaker, weakfish, black and red drum and flounder should be eliminated to minimize the negative impacts it has on these and other species. Constant shrimp trolling through these important habitats is preventing recovery of these species. These species must be designated forage fish and protected. The designated season</p>

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			<p>for trawling should apply throughout NC not to each individual area in order to prevent trawlers lengthening the season of trawling all areas. Flounder seems to be available for sale in local fish markets even when seasons are closed - are they reported and included in annual quotas?</p> <p>The use of bottom disturbing gear should be more closely regulated and controlled due to their negative impacts on water quality. disruption and destruction of aquatic vegetation along with the dead by catch of crabs, sponges and juvenile fish.</p> <p>There are concerns with this gear and the reintroduction of pollutions that are in the sediments and mud bottoms these devices are dragged over and thru.</p> <p>As you are working thru possible solutions please remember the burden should fall equally and equitable on commercial and recreational fisheries. Both these areas have a large economic impacts on the sate of NC with recreational fishers estimated at well over 200 million dollars annually.</p> <p>The ocean, sounds, bays and estuaries along with their bounty belongs to everyone and the responsibility for the revival and renewal of these areas should fall equally across all the citizens of NC-no one area should be shouldering the burden for these decades of overfishing and inadequate oversight.</p> <p>Recreational only hook and line slot limit on flounder should not be put in place unless the same is applied equally to both user groups.</p>
304	Bobby Benton	North Carolina	<p>I'm a nc commerical and recreational fisherman,I believe flounder season should be a little earlier in the year.....commerical season should be before oyster and spot season to allow commerical fisherman the chance to be more diverse in there fishing.....recreation fishing should be earlier to allow kids to also be able to go fishing.....they go back to school in august!.....thank you</p>
303	Paul Graham	North Carolina	<p>I understand that the committee are meeting to review and vote on sending the draft Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Amendment 3.. Please note that I support a rebuilding plan for Southern flounder that maximizes recovery of the fishery and is equitable for both Commercial fishermen and recreational anglers. However, I am concerned that it is proposed to decrease the creel limit to 1 fish per person per day and possibly decreasing the length of flounder season. This proposal would have a bad impact on the Outer Banks economy as many recreational fishermen will not go fishing for flounder which would decreases the lodging, marina sales, restaurant sales, grocery sales, merchandise sales, etc.</p>

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			<p>I have been going to the Outer Banks for over 30 years fishing mainly for flounder as we drift fish by boat with 4 anglers on the boat. I had the pleasure to go fishing for flounder for 1 week of the last year 2 week fishing season and never caught our 4 fish per day creel limit. It is difficult to understand how the recreational fisherman are depleting the stock when we cannot even catch a daily bag limit. Please vote to not decrease the recreational fisherman creel limit of 4 fish per day when most of the flounder is clearly being harvested by the commercial fisherman.</p> <p>It has been stated that historically that the commercial industry was responsible for 80% of the harvest which means that the recreational fisherman is responsible for 20%. It is my opinion that the flounder is being overfished is due to the Commercial Industry and the Shrimp Trawlers. It is a known fact that the pound nets capture thousands of pounds of flounder in each net each week with some mortality bycatch of smaller flounder. Also the gill nets are a source of fishing mortality-bycatch which greatly impede or prevent recovery. Shrimp trawlers with their mortality bycatch for juvenile species, including spot, croaker, weakfish, southern and summer flounder are also preventing the recovery of flounder. If the shrimp trawlers were not allowed to work the sound area during the summer (May – October), the flounder stock and other species would probably recover at a quicker pace.</p> <p>Please consider all of these factors when your committee are deciding on this Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Amendment 3. Please vote to keep the 2022 recreational flounder season will open Aug. 16 and close Sept. 30 or longer, the minimum size limit remains 15 inches total length, and the creel limit remains at four fish per person per day during the open recreational season.</p> <p>You are welcome to contact me to discuss this matter.</p>
302	Thomas Newman III	North Carolina	<p>I do support any more area closures on the NC commercial shrimping industry. The majority of the closures being discussed are mainly used earlier in the season and would greatly disadvantage the few smaller shrimp vessels still active in this fishery.</p> <p>Let's support our local seafood industry and let them work without having to fight every quarterly commission meeting to keep our jobs and support our families.</p> <p>Thomas E Newman III</p>

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301	KEITH Lambert KEITH Lambert	North Carolina	Please permit our local small boats continue to work fish and shrimp. This is so important to keep our fishermen working for their families and communities!! Willie and Keith Lambert- Beaufort, NC
300	John Steffens	North Carolina	<p>Southern Flounder FMP: I strongly support abolition of the RCGL for flounder (and for all other species). If recreational fishers want to use commercial gear they should be licensed as commercial fishermen and be subject to all the regulations pertaining to commercial pursuit of fish and shellfish in NC.</p> <p>I also support rapid phasing out use of large mesh gillnets prior to 2023 expiry of the ITP. Reporting of incidental take of endangered species under the ITP has been a sham, and this makes the State vulnerable to another lawsuit that will likely impose more severe remedies. With flounder populations so severely depleted, TAC for flounder will be easily met by pound nets, and in this situation it makes no sense to continue taking endangered species in large mesh gill nets, nor to continue losing a significant number of gamefish species to regulatory discard.</p> <p>Finally, all SCFLs that have reported no landings should be cancelled. They're either not reporting their catches or not fishing. In either case the privilege of holding this license is not being earned.</p> <p>Shrimp FMP Amendment 2: Closing of rivers and selected portions of Pamlico Sound to trawling is an inadequate measure to meet recovery targets. The entire Pamlico Sound should be closed to trawling until populations recover, and the question of whether to reopen limited areas of the Sound to trawling should be revisited once populations have been demonstrated to have recovered. We've kicked this can down the road for far too long.</p> <p>Thanks for your service.</p>
299	Bob Dillard	North Carolina	<p>Flounder - I support eliminating large mesh gill nets and give those gill net fishermen priority in obtaining a pound net license when additional pound net licenses are authorized. Additional pound net licenses should not be issued until the flounder stock is completely restored.</p> <p>Shrimp - Ban all trawling in the Pamlico and Albemarle sounds, the rivers feeding these sounds and the ICW. These areas are nurseries for species such as spot, weakfish, croaker and southern and summer flounder.</p>

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298	Mitch Peele	North Carolina	<p data-bbox="436 196 716 228">November 15, 2021</p> <p data-bbox="436 280 1062 396">Mr. Rob Bizzell Chairman North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission</p> <p data-bbox="436 448 1780 526">RE: Comments regarding Amendment 2 to the Shrimp FMP Decision Document Submitted electronically via <a href="https://deq.nc.gov/nc-marine-fisheries-commission-comment-form">https://deq.nc.gov/nc-marine-fisheries-commission-comment-form</a></p> <p data-bbox="436 578 663 610">Dear Mr. Bizzell:</p> <p data-bbox="436 662 1906 777">Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding Amendment 2 to the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan Decision Document that is scheduled on the NC Marine Fisheries Commission agenda during your November 17-19, 2021 Business Meeting.</p> <p data-bbox="436 829 1976 992">North Carolina Farm Bureau is our state's largest general farm organization with more than 590,000 member families. The men and women that comprise our membership work the land and waters of the state, forming the economic backbone for most of rural North Carolina. They are integral to a safe, plentiful and secure food supply.</p> <p data-bbox="436 1044 1940 1206">Our organization supports access to the state's fishery resources by commercial and recreational fishermen based on sound science or the best available data. Proposals in Amendment 2 to the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan Decision Document to close an additional 344,746 acres of our state's inland waters to shrimp trawling are not based on sound science.</p> <p data-bbox="436 1258 1997 1458">North Carolina's inland waters provide a rich resource for our coastal counties. At 2.1 million acres, our estuarine system is the second largest in the country. Of the state's estuarine acres, about 60% is already either permanently (1 million acres) or seasonally (200,000 acres) closed to shrimp trawling. The Division acknowledges that even though more than half of our estuaries are already closed to shrimp trawling, they do not have an understanding of how those closures have affected shrimp stock and fishery status.</p>



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			<p>Amendment 2 would close 344,746 additional acres to shrimp trawling: 29,541 acres of crab nursery area; 228,733 acres in the Northern Area; 68,919 acres in the Central Area and 17,553 acres in the Southern Region.</p> <p>The additional closures would mean that 71% of inland waters would be permanently or seasonally closed to shrimp trawling. However, the Division acknowledges that they are unable to quantify how such closures would impact the fishery. From page 5 of Amendment 2: "The division is unable to estimate precise economic impacts to the shrimp trawl fishery from area closure options in Amendment 2."</p> <p>Page 2  Comments regarding Amendment 2 to the Shrimp FMP Decision Document  Submitted electronically via <a href="https://deq.nc.gov/nc-marine-fisheries-commission-comment-form">https://deq.nc.gov/nc-marine-fisheries-commission-comment-form</a></p> <p>Economic impact</p> <p>The North Carolina Fisheries Reform Act of 1997 requires the Division of Marine Fisheries to "prepare fishery management plans for adoption by the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission for all commercially and recreationally significant species or fisheries that comprise state marine or estuarine resources. The goal of these plans is to ensure long-term viability of the fisheries," according to the Division's FMP webpage.</p> <p>However, Amendment 2 is purported to reduce bycatch of non-target species; protect, restore and enhance habitat; and evaluate nursery areas. Viability of the fishery is not an identified goal of Amendment 2. As a result, hundreds of families relying on commercial fishing will be harmed if recommended closures were to be adopted.</p> <p>North Carolina's shrimp fishery has an economic impact of approximately \$100 million, with about 500 vessels a year consistently active. The areas proposed for closure would adversely impact hundreds of small to medium sized commercial fishermen, especially in the Central and Southern Areas, where additional closed acres would virtually eliminate shrimp trawling as an income source. The fishery, valued at about \$700,000 in receipts for 119 participants in the Central Area, and \$447,000 for 96 participants in the Southern Area, is the anchor that</p>

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			<p>supports fishing families in multiple coastal counties. While some larger fishermen blocked from estuarine waters may be able to fish in ocean waters, many of our state's smaller fishermen have equipment and gear sized for fishing the state's internal waters. To fish in the open ocean using vessels and equipment designed for inland waters is unsafe.</p> <p>Fishing industry bycatch reduction</p> <p>The Division acknowledges "differing levels of data richness for the issues covered in Amendment 2" and that "recommendations were primarily influenced by options with more supporting data and existing research where cumulative impacts are better understood," on page 7. Rather than include reasonable accommodation for those North Carolinians earning livelihood from the state's shrimp trawling fishery resource using information and data, Amendment 2 focusses simply on additional access restrictions without understanding how the current regulatory framework is functioning. As the Marine Fisheries Commission is aware, North Carolina's commercial fishermen are mandated to protect non-target species through the use of bycatch reduction devices and techniques.</p> <p>North Carolina's commercial fishermen have been leaders in working with regulators to test and implement bycatch reduction devices. As a matter of fact, in 2019 the industry implemented bycatch reduction measures that far exceeded federal requirements, making North Carolina the most progressive coastal state in protection of non-target species.</p> <p>The goal of the Fishery Management Plan is to ensure the long-term viability of the fishery. The measures proposed in Amendment 2 would unduly harm the state's coastal fishermen/women working inland waters. The plan focusses on closures, because, as the Division acknowledges, available science to inform a full suite of management decisions is lacking. Because of the lack of data, Amendment 2 recommendations focus almost exclusively on closing additional estuarine waters to shrimp trawling.</p> <p>Page 3 Comments regarding Amendment 2 to the Shrimp FMP Decision Document</p>

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			<p data-bbox="436 154 1780 186">Submitted electronically via <a href="https://deq.nc.gov/nc-marine-fisheries-commission-comment-form">https://deq.nc.gov/nc-marine-fisheries-commission-comment-form</a></p> <p data-bbox="436 284 2003 479">North Carolina's men and women working our state's waters have demonstrated commitment through cooperation, research and communication with the regulatory community to protect our state's vital shrimp fisheries today and tomorrow. As presented, Amendment 2 defaults to closing more area to shrimp trawling for the simple hypothesis that closing more waters will protect the fishery without regard to the economic component of the Fishery Management Plan.</p> <p data-bbox="436 535 2003 641">North Carolina's fisheries resources are best served by making decisions on science that provides a multi-dimensional understanding and quantification of how current mandated regulation is impacting shrimp fishery status.</p> <p data-bbox="436 706 2003 771">We strongly urge the Marine Fisheries Commission to reject unquantifiable recommendations in Amendment 2 that will restrict access to the fishery.</p> <p data-bbox="436 828 577 860">Sincerely,</p> <p data-bbox="436 1047 871 1153">Mitch Peele Senior Director of Public Policy NC Farm Bureau Federation</p>
297	John Carl Bradsher	North Carolina	I fully support CCA NC on their effort for recreational flounder issues, inshore shrimp trawling and the use of equipment that disturbs the sounds bottom. Please make good decisions that support fish and their habitats.
296	John Carl Bradsher	North Carolina	I fully support CCA NC on their effort for recreational flounder issues, inshore shrimp trawling and the use of equipment that disturbs the sounds bottom. Please make good decisions that support fish and their habitats.
295	Stephen Raeburn	North Carolina	As an ex-commercial fisherman and fish dealer starting back in the early 70's, I have witnessed the number of regulations grow larger and larger as the number of fishermen grow smaller and smaller. The closure you are considering will put many small boat shrimpers out of business to what end. You are constantly working for net bands for who? In the 70's there were 11 crews of long haulers from Cedar Island to Davis and now there are

#	Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
			<p>none. Under the theory that nets hurt fish populations, we should have tons of fish with out those long haul nets still being pulled. It's time the DMF did something to help a dying way of life on the NC coast instead of driving nails into the coffin of commercial fishing. Do not close the areas that you are considering.</p>
294	Zachary Davis	North Carolina	<p>Hi my name is Zack Davis, I am a part time shrimper from Carteret County. I will start by saying I am in complete opposition to the advisory committee's recommendation for Amendment 2 trawl closures. The lack of data justifying these vast closures has been skewed against the commercial fishing sector by a stacked advisory committee which was assembled by the commission chairman. Mr. Bizzell, I would dare say would like to see gill nets and trawling banned in North Carolina waters. When digging into the issuance papers given by the DMF there are many flaws in the data collected and used by the advisory committee. There was NO input from anyone familiar with the proposed area closures. NO communication as to what would be beneficial but also manageable to the habitat as well as the fishing industry. What I see happening is a systematic agenda being pushed over the past decade to eliminate trawls and gill nets. Regardless of what the fishing industry and public consumers think, this proposal will most likely be passed on to be fought in the legislature just like the last proposal the commission passed, even with the advisory committee's remediation for denial. I feel that the commercial fishermen would be more than willing to work with the DMF for the benefit of our North Carolina resource. This does not seem to be the Commission's goal. Their current goal as a stacked deck is to ban inside trawling and gill nets.</p> <p>The last proposal failed to pass the legislature because of the economic impact study. So now the DMF has formed the ultimate goal of the CCA. An advisory committee that is willing to put forward drastic closures that are unjustified, closures that do not exceed the economic impact which would allow a legislative approval because they have targeted the "little man and recreational shrimpers", and a Fisheries commission that is stacked enough to carry the process forward to a legislative vote. The commission and advisory committee are willing to put rural eastern NC families out of business to satisfy the wants of special interest groups.</p> <p>The SSNA designation shift to PNA is not necessary. The DMF has the option to keep these areas closed to trawling if the need is necessary. None of these areas MUST be opened to trawling. However, these areas MAY be opened if certain environmental factors arise which would justify the decision. For instance, an abundant crop of large shrimp with an impending hurricane..... Furthermore, this decision has already been put forward for 5 bays and river areas that have historically remained closed over long periods of time. The only thing this proposal does in the long run has nothing to do with trawling. The change to PNA would eliminate gill nets in these areas for another two months out of the year. It changes the gill net laws from ending in September 30th to November. Again, this change does NOTHING to change trawling potential closures from the DMF but it does eliminate gill nets, notice the Agenda.</p>

#	Name	State	<b><u>Please type your comments in the box below.</u></b>
			<p>The SAV area closures are not needed in my mind as a shrimper. Personally I do not trawl across these areas because I do not want to catch grass. I do not know of any captains that do not share this same mentality. However, if the DMF desires to alter these current boundary lines I feel that local fisherman input is essential. There are areas that are currently open to trawling that are not used by local fishermen but the recommended closures go far beyond the actual SAV areas given in the Images complied by the DMF which included the SAV. I feel that the advisory committee as well as the Fisheries Commission has failed to account for the current trend in the fishing industry. The industry, as a whole, has been in decline for the past 20 years. Though the remaining industry remains a very strong and vital role in the economy of eastern NC, it is a known fact that participants have been in a steady decline. I feel this is an important aspect as to the current issue, Using the fisheries statistics given in the issuance papers over a 5 year average from 1994 to 1999 compared to the past 5 years here are the facts.</p> <p>Statewide from 1995 to 2019 trips have decrease by 75% and participants have decrease by 65%  Pamlico Sound decreased in trips 23% and participants 20%  The areas from Core Sound to White Oak decreased by Trips 82%, Participants 70%</p> <p>When comparing the highest year of 1995 to the Latest year on data 2019  All reductions  Pamlico sound: Trips 65%, Participants 44%  Neuse River Trips 70%, Participants 60%  Bay River trips 95%, Participants 80%  Pamlico/Pungo River trips 80%, Participants 90%</p> <p>My question is when is enough, enough? What is the Commission looking for in these areas? Total elimination seems to be their only mindset, as 80-90% reductions have not been satisfying. This also points to whether stocks of finfish are even in question of being reduced. As stock assessments for most species involved are based off of trip landing data. It seems that looking at trip and participant reductions should be taken into account as a comparable percentage of expected landing reductions over the long term data recording for stocks.</p> <p>The end result of these closures does nothing more than put the small vessels and recreational fisherman out of business. These fishermen do not have the vessels with the fuel and ice capacity to go into the open ocean or Pamlico Sound even if the weather was permitting. Furthermore, when forced to fish these areas as a last resort of earning a livelihood, they will be potentially putting lives at risk putting their vessels in areas they have</p>

#	Name	State	<p><b>Please type your comments in the box below.</b></p> <p>no business being in. I speak from experience on that issue. The proposal eliminates the recreational shrimping options for three counties and severely restricts the capabilities in Carteret County.</p> <p>As a citizen of North Carolina I expect the Fisheries management decisions to be based on sound scientific data that supports all user groups without the exclusion of others. This proposal does nothing to support the commercial sector nor the recreational sector of the shrimp trawl fishery. There are no bycatch reduction device changes only net elimination. This proposal is nothing short of a partial net ban for internal waters in NC.</p> <p>Thank you Zack Davis [REDACTED] NC</p>
293	Diane Gillikin	North Carolina	<p>Stop the madness. There are enough regulations now. Dont put the local fisherman out of business.</p>
292	Anne Bane	North Carolina	<p>The NC-based local, commercial, fishing community should be given precedence and be allowed to continue fishing the waters of their Native state. This is an industry with long, deep, roots here along the Coast of Carolina and most assuredly Down East. My maternal Grandfather was a waterman who came from a very long line of folks Down East and further up our beautiful coast.</p> <p>While I do believe certain guidelines may protect our natural resources: both environmental and animal, this is not a situation that should occur with the certain demise LOCAL industries. This is not a NAFTA situation where the industry may move because it is less expensive in other locations NOR is it an industry that should be shut down because it may infringe on the rights of sports fishermen.</p> <p>This is about the proper stewardship of all our North Carolina coastal resources: local, natural, and community. Please do not stop our local fishing communities from maintaining their collective livelihoods. Allow them the opportunities to work along with the State on the preservation of life as they know it and the environment they belong to and maintain.</p> <p>Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. Anne E. Bane (Huff, Burch, Mason, Pittman, Styron, Lewis, Gould, Willis, Nelson, Barrington, Smith, Frost, Williston, etc.)</p>

**NC CATCH**  
**REAL LOCAL SEAFOOD**  
**WWW.NCCATCH.ORG**

PO Box 2066 • Elizabeth City, NC 27909 • info@nccatch.org

November 9, 2021

Dear Marine Fisheries Commission Members:

NC Catch is a nonprofit organization that works with local seafood-branding groups. Our outreach touches more than 31,000 people a month, and 6,400 directly support our mission, which is to raise consumer awareness about the health and ecological benefits of eating local seafood.

We oppose the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries preferred options for Amendment 2 of the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan. Proposed closures eliminate the safest and most productive fishing grounds for our small-boat fishermen who work hard to provide seafood to all consumers. You are managing not just a natural resource, but a valuable and precious food source that is central to food security, our food supply chain, and the \$300 million local seafood food economy.

Seafood consumers, an untold subset of North Carolina's 10.5 million citizens, are an important stakeholder group. In a 2021 Sea Grant-led economic impact analysis, 1,600 N.C. residents were surveyed across the state. 83% said shrimp was by far their favorite seafood; 98% preferred local over imported seafood. 94% said that buying local helps support coastal livelihoods, and 70% believed that it was *good for the environment* to purchase seafood from NC fishermen (Nash, Harrison, Whitehead 2021).

Consumers are increasingly savvy regarding sustainability. They are hungry to know where, how, and by whom their seafood was sourced. They want the least amount of distance between boat and plate.

These proposed closures set us in the wrong direction by disadvantaging the very fishermen who feed consumers with minimal carbon footprint, traveling the shortest distance and burning the least amount of fuel to get shrimp to the dock. Our state's shrimpers (their numbers down by half since the mid 2000s) are small-boat operators: 70% of the vessels are less than 50 feet long and according to the shrimp FMP most of the fleet is in the 20–29-foot range. Fishermen abide by the rules, comply with regulations, and have cooperated to protect sea turtles and reduce bycatch by more than 40%.

We urge you to broaden your understanding of conservation to include the whole system. Targeting small-boat fishermen only weakens our local food supply chain. It increases our reliance on shrimp imported from distant countries with little or no conservation measures. Global supply chain disruptions during the pandemic taught us that it is a matter of national security to *strengthen* our local food economy.

Amendment 2 cites the concept of ecological connectivity. A broader, systems view accounts for social and economic connectivity as well. Our fishermen are connected to, and embedded in, the very social and economic fabric of coastal communities, enabling them to give consumers access to the most sustainable, delicious, and nutritious shrimp available.

Sincerely,

  
Barbara J. Garrity-Blake, President

#	Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
291	Kim Tavasso	North Carolina	<p>Four points: 1) if you must reduce the recreational flounder creel limit, reduce it to two or three per day but NOT one. One flounder per day is unfair and demonstrates a bias by the MFC toward the recreational fisherman. 2) large mesh gill nets need to go, the sooner, the better. 3) any slot limit adopted should be applied to both the commercial and recreational sectors 4) the recreational mortality numbers for released flounder are way off base, way too high...over the last two years, my fishing partners and I have kept a record of every flounder caught, kept and released. Our numbers show the mortality rate for released flounder at less than 3.0 %. I would really like to discuss this with your flounder biologist if possible, I can be reached at [REDACTED]. Thanks for considering my comments and I look forward to speaking with your NCDMF flounder biologist. Respectfully, Kim Tavasso</p>
290	David Merriman	North Carolina	<p>I am writing as a resident of Raleigh and a property owner in New Hanover and Hyde County but really as someone who thinks we need to do more to protect overall fish populations and coastal habitat. I urge the commission to protect the long-term integrity of the Pamlico sound for both commercial and recreational fisherman and also to protect the integrity of the coast line by limiting inshore trawling. We all(commercial and recreational) have to sacrifice to protect a coastlines and fisheries that are in decline. I've highlighted certain points below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I would recommend a slightly longer recreational flounder season but would limit the creel to one fish per fisherman and recommend a slot for harvested fish of 15 inches to 20 inches so that larger fish are released to breed. I've witnessed first hand the number of folks that fish twice a day and harvest their flounder limits both times for multiple days of the flounder season; limiting the creel limit maintains recreational interest in the species but should help prevent over fishing and excessive targeting of the species when the season is open. On a slightly unrelated note I also support a slot for speckled trout where the creel limit is maintained at 4 fish per person and the minimum length remains the same with a maximum length of 20 inches added.</li> <li>2. I encourage the prohibition of large mesh gill nets because the practice results in the death of undersized flounder and large incidental takes of other species like red drum. If the commission elects not to ban gill nets I encourage the idea of a poundage limit for flounder harvest in NC(as set by biologist to increase stocks) irrespective of means(gill nets, gigging, pound nets) or location (inshore or ocean) and once that poundage is reached all forms of harvest need to stop by the year including any form of harvest that involves incidental take (ie all forms of netting except those that produce 100% live fish and a means to cull those fish without incidental mortality). Said differently, once the chosen tonnage was reached all forms of netting except pound nets would be prohibited and all flounder secured through</li> </ol>



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			<p>pound nets would be released. I also encourage a careful study of the speckled trout population and a prescribed tonnage limit for that species that once reached requires the removal of all gear that targets the species or results in incidental taking.</p> <p>3. I encourage the commission to eliminate in shore trawling for shrimp in its entirety as the extensive by catch has outsized implications on the ecosystem and populations of spot, croaker, weakfish, sheepshead, black drum and weak fish. Additionally large trawlers with bottom disturbing gear harm the integrity of the bottom creating excessive suspended sediments and substantially impacting the health of aquatic vegetation and shellfish which serves as important water filters, reduce erosion and provide critical protection during storm events for coastal residents. If inshore trawling is not prohibited please consider limiting shrimp gear to skimmer rigs that don't impact the bottom, require all shrimpers to pay income tax in NC and all shrimp boats to pay property tax in NC (no other states provide reciprocity for our commercial fisherman to fish their inshore waters) and require that shrimping occurs further than one nautical mile of shore to protect marine nursery areas and critical aquatic vegetation and shellfish habitats.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration of my ideas. I value the notion of protecting commercial fishing as a way of life and having the opportunity to consume locally sources food but we all need to make sure we achieve those goals in a way that supports the growth and prosperity of the overall resource. As noted on my proposed limits to recreational flounder and speckled trout fishing; we all have to do our part. Thank you for your service to the State.</p>
289	Gary Blumenthal	North Carolina	Please manage fisheries according to the science and not politics. Imported fish should be subjected to the same relative sustainability standards as domestic product (see catfish, carbon emissions, MFN, etc.).
288	Donald Beaver	North Carolina	It is time to get the nets out of the sound!!!
287	Bennie Spencer	North Carolina	<p>Please remember the young kids, like my grand kids, that are not going to stand and stand for a bite. This is future of recreational fishing. This is the money maker for our state. Two things will stop this money maker, one-letting the commerical fishery come within a four oz. weight cast of the shore and pull out everything in the water, second raiseing the cost of a small fishing boat to the point it's to expensive to have one. Now what do you think is best for our industry. You want to help the commrical guys go up to the northeast and see what a struggle is, not in the southeast.</p>

#	Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
286	John Kaplan	North Carolina	<p>I support the division recommendation for the phasing out of large mesh gill nets when the current Incidental Take Permit (ITP) expires in 2023. Faced with at least a decade of these restrictions, any commercially harvested southern flounder can (and should) be taken by gears that are cleaner and more sustainable, those being pound nets and gigs.</p> <p>The phase out of the use of large mesh gill nets would eliminate the need for the sea turtle and sturgeon ITPs and with it the expense of observers and the headaches associated with non-compliance. Commissioners have to be questioning why the DMF is even considering a renewal application for a permit to allow endangered sea turtles to be killed in large mesh gill nets when the gear is no longer needed to harvest the allowable commercial harvest limit? Moreover, the removal of large mesh gill nets would minimize dead discards of important species such as red drum, black drum, and sheepshead. With the severity of the restrictions that lie ahead, DMF should not allow any new pound nets until the stock has sufficiently recovered. Once recovered, a limited entry system should be employed when issuing any new pound net permits with priority given to displaced gill netters.</p> <p>A recreational ONLY hook and line slot limit on flounder should be immediately rejected as arbitrary and capricious. If a slot limit is applied, it should be applied equally to both user groups.</p> <p>I fully support the removal of the RCGL flounder fishery.</p> <p>Commercial discards of southern flounder throughout the industry need to be accounted for comprehensively. Discards from trawling, pots, dredging, and other such wasteful gear must be more thoroughly investigated; most importantly, discards must be accounted for in future modeling and stock assessments.</p> <p>In the terminal year of 2017, there were 713 participants that reported trips and landings in the Southern flounder gill net fishery, yet there were 2672 estuarine gill net permits issued, which is roughly 60% of all Standard Commercial Fishing Licenses (SCFLs). The Division must account for SCFLs that report no landings in each FMP and report its findings.</p> <p>Shrimp FMP Amendment 2</p> <p>The data from DMF found in the proposed Shrimp FMP Amendment 2 speaks for itself. P195 trawl data from June and</p>

#	Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
			<p>September CLEARLY shows that the ENTIRE Pamlico Sound functions as a nursery area for important species that are in severe decline. Juvenile spot, Atlantic croaker, weakfish, Southern and summer flounder, as well as others, depend on nursery areas in the Pamlico Sound to grow to maturity. Constant shrimp trawling through these important habitats is preventing the recovery of these species.</p> <p>Moreover, the discussion and role of spot, croaker, weakfish and shrimp as a forage base for predators is largely ignored. Forage are a part of habitat, and most management agencies are addressing this. These species must be designated forage fish and protected.</p> <p>In the text of Amendment 2, DMF staff recognizes that status quo management will not meet the goals of amendment 2. DMF staff also state that closing the sound to trawling is the only way to guarantee the necessary reduction in bycatch and protect the habitat each of these juvenile finfish.</p> <p>I recommend that the Pamlico Sound be closed to trawling.</p> <p>The current divisional recommendation for closing all rivers to trawling is an important first step that CCA NC fully endorses. Likewise, the conversion of all Special Secondary Nursery Area (SSNA) designations to that of Secondary Nursery Area (SNA), and the associated trawling closure in them, is also a positive step that CCA NC again, fully endorses.</p> <p>However, these closures do not go far enough to protect key juvenile finfish nursery areas, and other options should be considered by the MFC. Short of the MFC adapting this optimum management option (closure), the next best choices are those highlighted in several issue papers that accompany Amendment 2. They include: closing the northern and western half of Pamlico Sound, along with all of the rivers.</p> <p>All of the day restrictions, headrope reductions, decreasing tow times, etc...are effective management measures. They should also be incorporated into this management plan.</p> <p>To more accurately quantify bycatch, an observer program for the shrimp industry should be initiated. These observers should be: independent (potentially out of state), neutral, randomly assigned, and required with no "outs" by vessel captains. Observers should be industry-funded. A phase out of large mesh gill nets under the Southern flounder FMP would allow funding that is already in place from the SCFL to be redirected to a shrimp trawl observer program.</p>

#	Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
			<p>CHPP – Bottom Disturbing Gear</p> <p>I am disappointed with the decision by the Coastal Habitat Protection Plan (CHPP) Steering Committee to pass the buck on the impacts of bottom disturbing gear on water quality. Their lack of a decision requires that the MFC take a stand on this issue.</p> <p>Gears such as shrimp and crab trawls, along with oyster dredges and clam kickers, all re-suspend sediments laced with pollutants, such as heavy metals, from areas upriver that have been secured in soft bottom areas by various filter feeders and scavengers that live in this habitat. Such activity reduces water clarity, which, in turn, damages areas of subaquatic vegetation (SAV). Re-suspended sediments can settle on shell beds, choking out what little remaining oyster reefs we have. Re-releasing toxins in our sounds can only harm the multitude of "critters" that live in these areas.</p> <p>Commercial fishermen and DMF staff often state that the damage done to these areas of soft bottom is temporary and minimal. Yet satellite imaging shows numerous regions where deep scarring and channelization have occurred in areas where bottom disturbing gears are allowed.</p> <p>Running these gears over areas of soft bottom also strips them of the typical diverse benthic communities full of juvenile fish, crabs, sponges, barnacles, and more. Leaving behind nothing but the dead bycatch that was shoveled overboard and some bristleworms to feast on the buffet raining down on a once fertile bottom.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment.</p> <p>On an unrelated subject I would like to see gill netting for all species eliminated in NC.</p>
285	Bennie Spencer		
284	Connor Dunn	North Carolina	<p>I am writing as a recreational fisherman but principally as someone who values the protection of the broader marine resource associated with coastal habitat. I implore the commission to protect the long-term integrity of the Pamlico sound for both commercial and recreational fisherman and for all citizens of North Carolina. We all (commercial and</p>

#	Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
			<p>recreational) have to sacrifice to protect a body of water and a fishery that are in decline. I've highlighted certain points below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I would recommend a slightly longer recreational flounder season but would limit the creel to one fish per fisherman and recommend a slot for harvested fish of 15 inches to 20 inches so that larger fish are released to breed. I've witnessed first hand the number of folks that fish twice a day and harvest their flounder limits both times for multiple days of the flounder season; limiting the creel limit maintains recreational interest in the species but should help prevent over fishing and excessive targeting of the species when the season is open. On a slightly unrelated note I also support a slot for speckled trout where the creel limit is maintained at 4 fish per person and the minimum length remains the same with a maximum length of 20 inches added.</li> <li>2. I encourage the prohibition of large mesh gill nets because the practice results in the death of undersized flounder and large incidental takes of other species like red drum. If the commission elects not to ban gill nets I encourage the idea of a poundage limit for flounder harvest in NC(as set by biologist to increase stocks) irrespective of means(gill nets, gigging, pound nets) or location (inshore or ocean) and once that poundage is reached all forms of harvest need to stop by the year including any form of harvest that involves incidental take (ie all forms of netting except those that produce 100% live fish and a means to cull those fish without incidental mortality). Said differently, once the chosen tonnage was reached all forms of netting except pound nets would be prohibited and all flounder secured through pound nets would be released. I also encourage a careful study of the speckled trout population and a prescribed tonnage limit for that species that once reached requires the removal of all gear that targets the species or results in incidental taking.</li> <li>3. I encourage the commission to eliminate in shore trawling for shrimp in its entirety as the extensive by catch has outsized implications on the ecosystem and populations of spot, croaker, weakfish, sheepshead, black drum and weak fish. Additionally large trawlers with bottom disturbing gear harm the integrity of the bottom creating excessive suspended sediments and substantially impacting the health of aquatic vegetation and shellfish which serves as important water filters, reduce erosion and provide critical protection during storm events for coastal residents. If inshore trawling is not prohibited please consider limiting shrimp gear to skimmer rigs that don't impact the bottom, require all shrimpers to pay income tax in NC and all shrimp boats to pay property tax in NC (no other states provide reciprocity for our commercial fisherman to fish their inshore waters) and require that shrimping occurs further than one nautical mile of shore to protect marine nursery areas and critical aquatic vegetation and shellfish habitats.</li> </ol>

#	Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
			Thank you for your consideration of my ideas. I value the notion of protecting commercial fishing as a way of life and having the opportunity to consume locally sources food but we all need to make sure we achieve those goals in a way that supports the growth and prosperity of the overall resource. As noted on my proposed limits to recreational flounder and speckled trout fishing; all fisherman are going to have to sacrifice to get our marine ecology in balance. Thank you for your service to the State.
<u>283</u>	Simon Briggs	North Carolina	Time to follow the lead of every other southern state and push all trawling out of the sounds.
<u>282</u>	Ralph Mazza	North Carolina	<p>I support the FMP amendment recommendation. I do not support further regulations that only limit recreational hook and line fishing unless those regulations also apply to all commercial fishing as well. If it is a good rule it should apply to all. I do support removal of commercial gear for recreational sport as that is typically not sport but rather meat fishing and there are enough other means for recreational people to obtain enough to eat without using commercial gear. It is called commercial gear for a reason.</p> <p>Lastly I think the governance of the southern flounder should still allow for open seasons of gulf and summer flounder for a longer period in the open ocean during periods of time that are fish able by more recreational people. March - April are not very good times to be sending 20 ft boats into the ocean.</p>
<u>281</u>	Anita Francis	North Carolina	Please do not shut down Miss Gina's Fresh Shrimp! Having this and other established coastal businesses for fresh local seafood to feed our communities remains ultimately important for the well-being of our families and visitors to North Carolina. We need to come from the heart about this important issue, folks.
<u>280</u>	Ron Dorsey	North Carolina	<p>As a recreational fisherman I have witnessed the decrease in the amount of fish available to catch due to overfishing and destructive fishing gear. I fully support the removal of gill nets! They are indiscriminate killers of fish, turtles and birds. Please implement the Southern Flounder FMP Amendment 3! I also fully support the Shrimp FMP amendment 2. Close Pamlico Sound to shrimping!!! Please explain to me how killing millions of juvenile fish is beneficial to fisheries management?? The shrimping can be done in the ocean!</p> <p>It is your job to manage the fishery for all users not just commercial. There is no legacy for being a commercial fisherman. Do your job and manage for the benefit of the fishery!!</p>

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279	Charles Mabe	North Carolina	Recreational coastal fishing must be maintained as a viable resource for North Carolina residents. The detrimental aspects of the commercial and netting sectors should not be placed as an undue burden on the recreational fishing residents. Recreational fishing limits and opportunities should not be curtailed due to the detrimental impacts of other sectors. Coastal fishery resources should be protected by judicious and fair practices that addresses the true problem areas.
278	Dwain Elmore	North Carolina	I have made a comment on I think trawling should be removed totally from Pamlico sound because of juvenile dead fish by catch. I still stand behind that. I also think gill netting should be removed from all bays and adjoining waters of Pamlico sound. There is also by catch in these too including sea turtles. Hard decision must be made if we are to rebuild our fish stocks of North Carolina. Thanks.
277	Runt Peaden	North Carolina	Open the rock fishing back up In all salt waters
276	Mike Johnson	North Carolina	<p>Saltwater fisheries management has always been a bit of a joke in NC. Commercial fishing interests have reigned king with regulations that promote over-fishing in NC waters. Gill nets destroy fish regardless of species. Trawlers destroy fish along with their habitats - a recipe for disaster.</p> <p>In 1995 Florida initiated wildlly-successful fisheries management. This, over time, has resulted in more fish and a long-term viable industry.</p> <p>The time is now. Learn from those that have gone before. End gill netting and get trawlers out of the crown jewel, the Pamlico Sound.</p>
275	Clifton Smith	North Carolina	<p>TO THE NORTH CAROLINA MFC:</p> <p>I fully endorse and support all actions and programs proposed by CCA-NC to achieve the goal of all fisheries management to restore, rebuild, and create a sustainable fishery for all citizens of North Carolina, including our children and grandchildren</p> <p>Your consideration and positive actions to achieve this would be very much appreciated.</p> <p>Regards, Cliff Smith</p>

#	Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
			NC
274	Jack Jollingsworth	North Carolina	<p>NC DMF</p> <p>I support the proposed amendments and CHPP purposeal. It is limited but is a start for increasing opportunities for all in sharing and protecting the commons. Idea for non reporting commercial liscence holders is to reflect that in stats and decrease the numbers of non used liscences. Stats appear to be horrible skued. This is no longer grandpa's waters when there was more sea life. The only state which continues to invest in a doomed industry unless you invest in the future.</p>
273	Don Dali	North Carolina	<p>Please consider the publics (recreational) "right" to harvest the States resources vs. the commercial sectors "privilege" to harvest and sell. The recreational sector always seems to bear the blunt of moratoriums while the privileged few get to carry on as they were. Science has proven the flounder fishery in NC is being overfished and my suggestion would be to close the inshore fishery to all user groups for at least 2 years to allow for stock recovery. The State has an obligation to manage the resource beyond anything else. Please consider this when you vote.</p>
272	Anastasia Maddox	North Carolina	<p>Small, family owned fishing business should continue to have access to our waters. Keep the big guys out and let us have our sustainably harvested seafood.</p>
271	Tom Waller	North Carolina	<p>Do NOT close OUR waters to local fishermen. There is no need to do this!</p>
270	Lenny Smathers	North Carolina	<p>I fully support the positions as put forward by the NC Coastal Conservation Association which I have posted below for reference....</p> <p>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." With that mission statement in mind, the goal of all fisheries management plans should be to restore, rebuild, and create a sustainable fishery for all citizens of North Carolina, including our children and grandchildren. Historic fisheries' management in NC has ignored conservation in favor of maximum exploitation, and we are paying the price for it now with numerous finfish and shellfish species listed as overfished with overfishing occurring. State fisheries managers have failed to properly identify and delineate nursery</p>



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			<p>areas and have allowed the overcapitalization of our coastal resources through the use of highly effective, yet destructive and wasteful gear. This has led to decades of habitat destruction, bycatch waste, and overfishing of many important species managed by the state.</p> <p>Southern Flounder Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) Amendment 3</p> <p>CCA NC supports the division recommendation for the phasing out of large mesh gill nets when the current Incidental Take Permit (ITP) expires in 2023. Efforts to rebuild a severely depleted stock will result in dramatically reduced quotas, overage paybacks, and short harvest seasons for both user groups. Faced with at least a decade of these restrictions, any commercially harvested southern flounder can (and should) be taken by gears that are cleaner and more sustainable, those being pound nets and gigs.</p> <p>Prior to the proliferation of the use of cheap, monofilament gill nets, the pound net fishery was the dominant source of harvest and can easily capture the proposed total allowable catch of southern flounder. Despite the warnings of many, pound nets have been allowed to increase as the southern flounder harvest has dramatically decreased.</p> <p>The phase out of the use of large mesh gill nets would eliminate the need for the sea turtle and sturgeon ITPs and with it the expense of observers and the headaches associated with non-compliance. Commissioners have to be questioning why the DMF is even considering a renewal application for a permit to allow endangered sea turtles to be killed in large mesh gill nets when the gear is no longer needed to harvest the allowable commercial harvest limit? Moreover, the removal of large mesh gill nets would minimize dead discards of important species such as red drum, black drum, and sheephead. With the severity of the restrictions that lie ahead, DMF should not allow any new pound nets until the stock has sufficiently recovered. Once recovered, a limited entry system should be employed when issuing any new pound net permits with priority given to displaced gill netters.</p> <p>Any thought of a recreational ONLY hook and line slot limit on flounder should be immediately rejected as arbitrary and capricious. If a slot limit is applied, it should be applied equally to both user groups.</p> <p>CCA NC fully supports the removal of the RCGL flounder fishery.</p> <p>Unfortunately, recreational anglers throughout the state are facing a quota with a likely one fish per day creel limit in a</p>

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			<p>fall season during a window from August 16 – September 30. To “increase recreational access”, the DMF is proposing a spring season from March 1 – April 15 where one ocellated (gulf or summer) flounder may be harvested. This is a poor choice for a number of reasons, the most important of which is angler safety as the weather during this time of year is very unsettled and not conducive to fishing in the ocean. Also, Southern flounder are migrating from the ocean back into the rivers and sounds in the spring, so waiting until later in the year should minimize interactions with these migrating fish.</p> <p>Since North Carolina manages all three of its flounder species under a single FMP, recreational access to the ocean flounder fishery will be unfairly curtailed. During the last two decades a recreational fishery has evolved in North Carolina for flounder on nearshore wrecks and reefs in the EEZ (federal waters). This is a fishery almost completely dominated by gulf and summer flounder. In this fishery, catches of Southern flounder are almost non-existent during the spring and summer seasons. In addition, it is a very clean fishery with no discards reported in 2019-2020 from this sector. For these and other reasons, recreational access to this fishery should continue AT LEAST in a season from late spring through fall. According to the latest DMF economic impact figures, recreational flounder fishing alone provides \$240 million to the state’s economy. Increased recreational access to summer and gulf flounder will help mitigate potentially substantial losses to the economy of Eastern NC as a result of continued Southern flounder seasonal closures.</p> <p>In addition, because of how dead discards are estimated, the recreational Southern flounder season could be shortened or closed based on discard estimates alone. This is another reason why increased ocean access to the other flounder species is so important.</p> <p>If anglers need to be educated on how to identify each of the flounder species, that is an easy task for Division staff, as education is one of their central tenets. Mobile recording apps currently under development can only help in real-time data collection, and CCA NC fully supports their use.</p> <p>If there are compliance issues with a federal quota for additional recreational harvest of summer and gulf flounder, the MFC and DMF should work to resolve them to prevent the recreational angling community from being shut out of this ocean fishery.</p> <p>Establishing conservation equivalencies are supported by CCA.</p>

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			<p>Commercial discards of southern flounder throughout the industry need to be accounted for comprehensively. Discards from trawling, pots, dredging, and other such wasteful gear must be more thoroughly investigated; most importantly, discards must be accounted for in future modeling and stock assessments.</p> <p>In the terminal year of 2017, there were 713 participants that reported trips and landings in the Southern flounder gill net fishery, yet there were 2672 estuarine gill net permits issued, which is roughly 60% of all Standard Commercial Fishing Licenses (SCFLs). The Division must account for SCFLs that report no landings in each FMP and report its findings.</p> <p>Shrimp FMP Amendment 2</p> <p>The data from DMF found in the proposed Shrimp FMP Amendment 2 speaks for itself. P195 trawl data from June and September CLEARLY shows that the ENTIRE Pamlico Sound functions as a nursery area for important species that are in severe decline. Juvenile spot, Atlantic croaker, weakfish, Southern and summer flounder, as well as others, depend on nursery areas in the Pamlico Sound to grow to maturity. Constant shrimp trawling through these important habitats is preventing the recovery of these species.</p> <p>Moreover, the discussion and role of spot, croaker, weakfish and shrimp as a forage base for predators is largely ignored. Forage are a part of habitat, and most management agencies are addressing this. These species must be designated forage fish and protected.</p> <p>In the text of Amendment 2, DMF staff recognizes that status quo management will not meet the goals of amendment 2. DMF staff also state that closing the sound to trawling is the only way to guarantee the necessary reduction in bycatch and protect the habitat each of these juvenile finfish.</p> <p>With that in mind, CCA NC recommends that the Pamlico Sound be closed to trawling.</p> <p>The current divisional recommendation for closing all rivers to trawling is an important first step that CCA NC fully endorses. Likewise, the conversion of all Special Secondary Nursery Area (SSNA) designations to that of Secondary Nursery Area (SNA), and the associated trawling closure in them, is also a positive step that CCA NC again, fully endorses.</p>

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			<p>However, these closures do not go far enough to protect key juvenile finfish nursery areas, and other options should be considered by the MFC. Short of the MFC adapting this optimum management option (closure), the next best choices are those highlighted in several issue papers that accompany Amendment 2. They include: closing the northern and western half of Pamlico Sound, along with all of the rivers.</p> <p>All of the day restrictions, headrope reductions, decreasing tow times, etc...are effective management measures. They should also be incorporated into this management plan.</p> <p>To more accurately quantify bycatch, an observer program for the shrimp industry should be initiated. These observers should be: independent (potentially out of state), neutral, randomly assigned, and required with no "outs" by vessel captains. Observers should be industry-funded. A phase out of large mesh gill nets under the Southern flounder FMP would allow funding that is already in place from the SCFL to be redirected to a shrimp trawl observer program.</p> <p>CHPP – Bottom Disturbing Gear</p> <p>CCA NC was disappointed with the decision by the Coastal Habitat Protection Plan (CHPP) Steering Committee to pass the buck on the impacts of bottom disturbing gear on water quality. Their lack of a decision requires that the MFC take a stand on this issue.</p> <p>Gears such as shrimp and crab trawls, along with oyster dredges and clam kickers, all re-suspend sediments laced with pollutants, such as heavy metals, from areas upriver that have been secured in soft bottom areas by various filter feeders and scavengers that live in this habitat. Such activity reduces water clarity, which, in turn, damages areas of subaquatic vegetation (SAV). Re-suspended sediments can settle on shell beds, choking out what little remaining oyster reefs we have. Re-releasing toxins in our sounds can only harm the multitude of "critters" that live in these areas.</p> <p>Commercial fishermen and DMF staff often state that the damage done to these areas of soft bottom is temporary and minimal. Yet satellite imaging shows numerous regions where deep scarring and channelization have occurred in areas where bottom disturbing gears are allowed.</p>

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			Running these gears over areas of soft bottom also strips them of the typical diverse benthic communities full of juvenile fish, crabs, sponges, barnacles, and more. Leaving behind nothing but the dead bycatch that was shoved overboard and some bristleworms to feast on the buffet raining down on a once fertile bottom.
269	Jonathan Peebles	North Carolina	The flounder season for recreational fisherman needs to be extended beyond 2 weeks for the whole year. I caught more flounder last year than I ever have in my entire life. The people that abuse the flounder fishing is the giggers and gill netters. Recreational fishing is not a threat to their population, but going out every night to gig is. Please extend the recreational flounder season and change the current laws on gigging and your flounder population with increase.
268	Kenneth Coley	North Carolina	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I would like to voice my strong support as a North Carolina citizen and coastal property owner.</p> <p>Regarding Southern Flounder Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) Amendment 3, I support the division recommendation for the phasing out of large mesh gill nets when the current Incidental Take Permit (ITP) expires in 2023.</p> <p>Regarding the Shrimp FMP Amendment 2, the P195 trawl data from June to September shows that the entire Pamlico Sound functions as a nursery area for critical species that are in decline. Constant shrimp trawling is preventing the recovery of these critical species. I strongly urge and recommend that that the Pamlico Sound be closed to trawling.</p> <p>Thank you for considering the resource and all stakeholders of these complicated decisions.</p> <p>Cameron Coley</p>
267	William Long William Long	North Carolina	Please don't take this tradition away from these hard working families.
266	Eb Pesci	North Carolina	This broken record continues to play and y'all know exactly how to fix it. Stop gillnetting - stop inshore trawling - ban bottom disturbing gear. It's that simple. If you don't fix it, you are not doing your job and the stocks will just keep decreasing. Show some courage -- do something BIG and positive for the resource.

#	Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
265	Peter Boettger	North Carolina	I am completely in favor closing of the recent proposed areas to shrimp trawling. Captain Peter Boettger Machapunga Ecotours
264	Donna Boone Donna Boone	North Carolina	Please support our Shrimper this is their lively hood we depend on them for our local shrimp.Stop this from happening now! Thanks Donna Boone [REDACTED] NC
263	James Mabry	North Carolina	Am confused as to why you think recreational fisherman are the cause of flounder decline. I would think nets do far more damage stop the nets!
262	Kenneth Kramer	North Carolina	This proposal is the worst example of fisheries "management" that I have ever witnessed! It will negatively impact hundreds of fishing families and related support businesses. For what???
			If you want to improve fin fisheries in NC START WITH THE WATER QUALITY ISSUES OF OVER DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURAL RUNOFF!!!!!! That is if you can find the guts needed to take on people who have access to the funding needed to put up a fight!
			Remember, CCA stands for Can't Catch Anything!!!!
			If management in NC continues on this path there will be no local seafood! Is that your intention?????
261	Bill Ward		Leave the industry alone! You(fisheries) have all but destroyed it. Let the fishermen make a living.
260	Cynthia Cash	North Carolina	Please do not close more local North Carolina waters to hard working local fishing and shrimping families. These families are the backbone of local, sustainable fresh catches which feed North Carolinians in the healthiest possible way. We do not need or want more imported farmed shrimp from Asia.
			Please allow these already heavily regulated folks to do their jobs without driving them into more dangerous waters further from home. That would be bad for them, and bad for the local economy, and bad for the carbon footprint of their entire industry.

#	Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
			Support hard working local fishing families. Please!
259	Sid collins	North Carolina	Please....at least split the season between giggers and hook and Line fisherman. And let us who hook and line fish have our season first, It's not right for us to have to compete against the giggers at the exact same time!!! The season should be later Than September and definitely not over a holiday weekend..... And come on 1 fish really? But overall... Get the Trawlers And gill nets out of our ensure waters
258	Rob Zampardi	North Carolina	Extend flounder season and raise limits!

#	Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
257	Danny Clodfelter	North Carolina	How long will you continue to pander to the commercial interests, and ignore the facts? Allowing commercial fisherman to decimate the flounder stock, while preventing recreational fisherman a fair chance has got to stop!. You are corrupt!
256	Eric Sexton	North Carolina	Why do you completely disregard the recreational fisherman's requests of a fair flounder season. A two week season is absolutely ridiculous, and now they are discussing shortening it even more and a 1 fish creel limit. Unbelievable! Looks as if the money the commercial fishermen fill the politicians pockets with matter more than a fair season and creel limit for us recreational guys. Maybe if all of us recreational people quit buying fishing license someone will get the message, but then again that probably wouldn't matter either. North Carolina is a joke. And don't get me started on gillnets. Three out of the five trout caught in the New River last week had gillnet marks on them. Y'all better fix this mess before it's too late.
255	Dennis Gan	North Carolina	As per your disclosure forms on file, some of your board members own or have a vested interest in seafood restaurants, seafood retail markets and commercial fishermen in general. and should NOT be voting. Fairness to ALL should be a major priority! Short seasons and bias doesn't help when you still allow inshore netting and special consideration for the commercial sector.
254	JR Morning	North Carolina	I am respectfully submitting my opinion on the southern flounder issue at hand. I believe our commercial fishermen are the direct cause of our current decline in those species along with poor regulated shrimping practices. I have seen literally first hand where a shrimper offered me by catch to fish with. Before accepting, I looked to see what it was. Surprisingly most of it was small Crocker, mixed with spot, and sea mullet, but there was dozens of small flounder killed by his nets, Fearing legal persecution I declined his offerings and went about my way. With this being said, better management of commercial fishers would have a direct correlation on the improvement of flounder populations.  Thank you!
253	Lou Wilson	North Carolina	Be fair to all Fishermen and make the rules the same for all if you truly want to bring the flounder population. The commercial guys are laughing all the way to the bank! Maybe you politicians are doing the same.



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252	Jim Ingraham	North Carolina	There should never be a single day commercial fisherman can keep a fish and recreational can't. Cut out the gill nets, put limits on the pound nets, problem solved with least users negatively affected. Stop penalizing people that want to take a few fish home to their family!
251	Kent Raynor Kent Raynor	North Carolina	It looks like South Carolina and Virginia has it figured out, just a thought. I would look at the difference, not penalize the people with a one fish a day limit, if that is your solution you do not speak for me.
250	Allen Jernigan	North Carolina	Here we go again.....Division staff has already ignored 1000s of public comments during this entire process. Why are we managing this fishery for peanuts? The past 2 years the price of southern flounder has fell as low as \$1.50 a pound to the boat during the commercial season. This fishery is much more valuable than this to the recreational Angling community. It's time to eliminate large mesh gill nets forever. We should NOT be looking to renew the ITP for that fishery. It should expire and that fishery go away forever. Pound nets should have a forever moratorium on new sets. Existing sets should be remain but be managed with a limited entry system and a quota. If a fisherman ages out these sets should be allowed to bought and sold. It's time to manage this fishery for the largest economic return and for the health of the fishery. Ban the gill nets.
249	Gary Cowan	North Carolina	The season is to short and the creel limit is ridiculous!
248	Buddy Christy Buddy Christy	North Carolina	This is so backwards. The recreational fishermen do not effect the southern flounder. The problem is all the commercial fishing. You need to look at the state's like Virginia, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. These states have better saltwater fishing than NC. People in NC have stopped fishing. In NC waters. I have license for va, SC ,and GA. I am to the point to stop fishing NC. The fishing is not getting better it is getting worse. The recreational fishermen put more money in the state than the commercial fishing industry. The Commission needs to stop leaning to the commercial industry and start fixing the salt fishing in NC.
247	Jason Ginn	North Carolina	Please stop inshore netting. Please use common sense when regulating flounder. You know that recreational fishermen are not the issue.  Thanks Jason Ginn

#	Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
246	Clifton Noe	North Carolina	I am opposed to this proposal to close more bottom to shrimping. You have taken enough away from the hard working Commercial Fishermen. If you continue to take away and putting Commercial Fishermen out of buisness what are you going for a job? Go sell fishing lures to the hook and liners.
245	Kathryn Chadwick	North Carolina	Shrimping in North Carolina is already using bycatch methods and closing additional bottoms is going to destroy these areas. Please keep small boats shrimping and shrimp available for all North Carolinians. This closure will be detrimental to Coastal North Carolina's economy. I also have no desire to eat imported shrimp.
244	Mary Gray	North Carolina	The shrimp regulations that are being considered should be unconstitutional. This infringes on our right to pursue happiness. This stops the generations of my people that have fished these waters for over a century. First the government took our homeland, now the government is trying to take our livelihood. There have been so many regulation put on the small fisherman there are hardly any left. Enough!
243	Suzanne LaPalme	North Carolina	Please do not close our Eastern NC waters to shrimping. It is the livelihood of so many people in this area. Our local shrimp are far superior to "imported" shrimp.
242	Stuart Creighton	North Carolina	<p>Good afternoon all,</p> <p>The management measures you will be selecting today are absolutely critical. You have the opportunity to begin to reverse decades of mismanagement that has led to depleted stocks and damaged habitat. We are at a critical juncture, one where status quo management can no longer be a selection. You simply can not afford to kick the can down the road anymore as you choose management options for the new shrimp and flounder amendments.</p> <p>FLOUNDER</p> <p>One southern flounder per person per day during a short fall season will be a tough pill to swallow for the recreational angling industry. Especially when the commercial industry has historically harvested 80% of the southern flounder in this state, and, to protect their interests, they have fought off previous management measures that were much less restrictive than what must be chosen today. Now, we are facing a decade of limited harvests with a highly restrictive quota on both industries. So, you have some very difficult choices to make, and I hope you will consider what follows in your decision making.</p> <p>First, the Southern Flounder Advisory Committee suggested phasing out large mesh gill nets as the current ITP expires. Removing this gear, including RCGL nets, should certainly happen as the current ITP expires in 2023. Removal of large mesh gill nets will dramatically reduce bycatch of numerous important species such as red drum, sheepshead, and black drum. In fact, red drum are already making a noticeable comeback now that the use of large</p>

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			<p>mesh gill nets has been restricted. Endangered sea turtles, sturgeon, marine mammals, and others will be afforded greater protection as their often frequent interactions with this gear are curtailed. Cleaner gear types, specifically pound nets and gigs will easily be able to harvest the available flounder. As the fishery recovers, displaced gill netters can be given priority for the use of pound nets. But, no new pound net permits should be issued until the flounder fishery recovers. Furthermore, the required observer program, which is an abject failure, will no longer be necessary. Those funds can be used to kick start a shrimp trawl observer program.</p> <p>Next, change the ocean access. Current divisional recommendations for "increased recreational access" call for a season from March 1 - April 15 where one ocellated (gulf or summer) flounder may be harvested. This time period just doesn't work. Access will be difficult if not impossible during this time frame as weather conditions are often unfavorable. Also, southern flounder may still be migrating inshore at this time, making interactions with them more likely, not less likely as the division suggests. Waiting to start this season would be more appropriate. Since neither gulf nor summer flounder are overfished and since overfishing is not occurring, I would suggest a summer/fall season from July 1 - September 30 where 4 ocellated flounder per person per day could still be caught. The fishery is very clean on the nearshore hard bottom and wrecks in the EEZ, so interactions with southern flounder should be minimal. Any southern flounder takes will certainly be counted against the quota, and, if excessive, can be deducted as paybacks the following season.</p> <p>If the reason for not allowing full ocean access is because the division is concerned over the angling public mis-identifying flounder species, that can be easily rectified as angler education is one of the central tenets of DMF. If the reason for not allowing full ocean access has to do with the allowable summer/gulf flounder quota, the division should make a request with the appropriate federal council for reallocation and/or conservation equivalency. Failure to do so means that DMF and the MFC is turning its back on a recreational industry that has an economic impact of \$240 MILLION annually, based on divisional analysis. If you are going to continue to fight to protect a \$300 million shrimping industry, it would be very disingenuous to not fight for the same for the recreational industry.</p> <p>SHRIMP</p> <p>The current shrimp amendment has several important goals, and it should be noted immediately that STATUS QUO WILL NOT MEET THOSE OBJECTIVES. Each management goal centers around two ideas: reducing bycatch and, from the CHPP, restore and enhance critical habitat while reviewing and identifying current and potential nursery areas for designation. Initial studies and guidance from DMF indicated that this could be accomplished through closing the northern and western half of Pamlico Sound along with most of the other inside waters. However, in the decision document, the division has backed off of that guidance and, instead, recommended closing the rivers, selected smaller waters, and areas currently designated as SSNAs. While this is an important first step that should be</p>

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			<p>completely supported, it does leave much to be desired. Why? That answer seems to be to preserve the industry. The industry workgroup claims that recent modifications to the trawling gear is producing a 40-57% reduction in bycatch through addition of a second BRD. That reduction is made suspect by the fact that during trial runs, the control net used a smaller mesh (1.5") than what is used by the industry (1.75" or 1.875"). The smaller mesh in the control net artificially inflated the amount of bycatch in the control net, making the claimed reductions, suspect, at best.</p> <p>Divisional staff also claim that effort is down because effort is measured by the number of trips. By this logic, a one day tow is the same effort as a five day tow. CLEARLY, this is not true. In addition, the number of tows on a given trip, tow length, # of tail bags towed are not considered as effort. Harvest statistics clearly indicate that real effort is NOT reduced.</p> <p>Throughout the document, bycatch is said to be significant. Yet it is also stated that bycatch can't really be measured, nor can its effects on a given finfish population be accurately established. Industry leaders often tout that more data is needed on bycatch, and until that additional data is collected and determined to be "robust enough", then no management decisions should be made based on bycatch. So, there is one clear answer to this conundrum: establish a shrimp trawl observer program. It should be funded through commercial funds (like those from the ITP observer program, when the ITP is not renewed). Observers should be highly trained, completely neutral (no connection to the commercial industry), and randomly assigned to vessels with no "opt outs" allowed. Place observers on a sufficient percentage of trips (5-10%), and get an accurate count of what is actually being thrown overboard. That is the only way to settle the argument over bycatch in the industry.</p> <p>Protecting habitat and reviewing or establishing nursery areas is also listed as a priority in the goals of this amendment. Again, in its initial guidance, the division had a minimally proper closure established with the parts of the sound it was considering making off limits to trawlers. The division has several hotspots throughout Pamlico Sound where juvenile finfish are abundant. In fact, it has 30 years of P195 data taken throughout the sound where juvenile spot, croaker, weakfish, and southern flounder congregate. This is not about bycatch, this is about divisional data, and it has PLENTY to show that something IMPORTANT is going on throughout the sound. It is clear that juvenile weakfish use the area of the sound north and east of Bluff Shoal as a nursery area, just as southern flounder use the western part of the Sound near the mouths of the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers in the same manner. I have heard division staff say, repeatedly, that this is nothing more than a measure of where the fish are, and it is not a nursery area. Several things are wrong with that assessment. First, the very definition of a nursery area used by DMF comes from Beck and Peterson. That "harvest friendly" idea of a nursery area has been widely and repeatedly refuted, bringing its validity into question. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, it is important to remember that these are JUVENILE fish. If thirty years of data exists to show that they are using an area, you can count on the fact</p>

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			<p>that the various biotic and abiotic conditions in these regions are such that it functions as a nursery area for these fish as they grow to maturity.</p> <p>The reason they have not been declared as a primary or secondary nursery area is self evident, it would affect the profits of the shrimp industry.</p> <p>In conclusion, it is obvious from the draft amendments of both shrimp and southern flounder that the reason past management measures have failed is because they have not sufficiently addressed the real source of the problem. We allow too much commercial gear in our estuarine nursery areas. The recent recommendation to phase out large mesh gill nets, to allow an ITP to expire, and the publication of the existence of numerous finfish hotspots in Pamlico Sound are all leading to the same undeniable conclusion. Commercial fishing in North Carolina must transition from the use of wasteful, destructive, damaging gear and move toward methods of harvest that are truly sustainable. NO ONE WANTS TO SEE COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN HARMED!!! Removing nets and bottom disturbing gear and replacing it with skimmer trawls, small oyster farms, channel nets, pounds, pots, and hook and line fishing will allow them to continue to do business profitably while removing excessive waste and allowing our damaged habitats the chance to heal.</p> <p>Sincerely, Stuart Creighton</p>
241	jay LITTLETON	North Carolina	
240	Verna Davis/Berarducci	North Carolina	<p>NC Marine Fisheries, You need to take into consideration the livelihood of our folks who have spent generations of working in the river as their sole income and most of the time, food for their table. I was born and raised in Sneads Ferry, NC and brought up on shrimp trawlers. It's a very hard job and yet it put food on our tables each night. With jobs being in high demand, I would reconsider what you're attempting to do against these folks who will end up closing down business, losing their homes and everything in the process with your intentions. This has been their life for centuries and no need to step in and ruin it for the local Fishermen.</p>
239	Ishmael Mason	North Carolina	<p>No more closing more areas to shrimping! Why must it always be "no compromise" with the regulators. North Carolinians want fresh North Carolina shrimp from North Carolina's coast. That will not come from the polluted Orient, where "slave labor" drives almost all industries and where there is very little pollution control. It looks to me like another attempt at destroying more small business in the U. S. A., including North Carolina. Closing more areas to shrimping is overkill. It seems that you would rather be cursed than praised by North Carolina's citizens.</p>

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238	Myron Smith	North Carolina	<p>No More Closed water areas to COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN! NC already has 1 MILLION ACRES OR 1,582 SQUARE MILES are PERMANENTLY CLOSED TO SHRIMP TRAWLING ACCOUNTING WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR 47% OF THE STATE'S ESTUARY. Over 200,000 additional acres are seasonally closed to Shrimp Trawling! With a combined total of 1,207,463 acres or 1,886 square miles are permanently or seasonally closed to shrimp trawling. OVER 143,313 ACRES OR 224 SQUARE MILES OF NORTH CAROLINA OCEAN waters ARE permanently or seasonally CLOSED TO SHRIMP TRAWLING.</p> <p>IN ALL, SLIGHTLY OVER 3.5% OF THE STATE OF NC HAS BEEN CLOSED TO SHRIMP TRAWLING IN ORDER TO PROTECT CRITICAL ESTUARINE HABITAT AND PROVIDE A SAFE HAVEN OR 'NURSERY AREA' FOR FINFISH AND OTHER MARINE SPECIES.</p>
237	Jeff Gore	North Carolina	This is ridiculous. This will crush so many businesses and peoples livelihood. Flounder season is already absurd. Keep shrimping open
236	Kelly Styron	North Carolina	Let trawlers stay in our sounds. Keep our heritage alive! Please don't close the sounds. Shrimp trawlers are not the problem, there are less trawlers in our sounds than ever before. Smaller fish such as juvenile croakers and spots do however have more predators such as turtles, sharks, flounder and cormorant. I am opposed to making any more changes and regulations to the shrimpers trying to make a living. Listen to the people! The majority vote is for fresh local seafood and that means keeping the sound open!
235	Carlos Sanderson	North Carolina	NO TO CLOSING THE INLAND SHRIMPING IN COASTAL NC! FRIENDS DON'T LET FREINDS EAT IMORTED SEAFOOD! WE MUST SUPPORT OUR LOCAL FISHERMAN!
234	Herbie Tayloe Herbie Tayloe	North Carolina	I support closure of inshore shrimp trawling to help restore the declining populations of shrimp and several fish species to include flounder. Even with devices a number of game fish species are inadvertently affected causing populations to decline. Punishing commercial fishermen and recreational fishing while allowing inshore shrimping is not only unfair but helps defeat the goal of restoring game fish populations
233	Joseph Randazzo	North Carolina	I just finished reading an article in The County Compass regarding massive closures to areas now worked by the states shrimp fleet. Please note that a battle between the netters, hookers and recreational fishing groups has been on going for decades. If this Proposed Plan is pushed through and passes I fear the shrimp fleet will be forced to move and those businesses relying by inferior product from other countries as the big box stores do now or close their doors as others have done on others on the east coast - Long Island, New Jersey, and Maryland. Yes, party due to pollution and over fishing, but regulations such as this have played a great part in the closures. As a retired

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			<p>member of the United States Coast Guard, one of the areas that we monitored was RDB's (bycatch reduction devices), another was the right type and size of fish or crustacean was being caught. We need to keep our fishing and shrimp fleet working, we as a country have lost way too many businesses to other countries, I thought that we learned our lesson this past year by not receiving goods from over seas or other parts of the world in which we are still affected. My Family and I will try not to purchase items that are not made, processed or caught here in the United States event though many of the big guys claim the use local farmers, producers and fishing. I suggested to one organization that they review the dictionary. I wish I had the time to have this letter summited with names and addresses of those that feel the way that I do.</p> <p>Please take this letter as a no vote and plead with you to not have this proposal pass. It will have a negative effect on too many people and fear a number of towns that rely on these people will be in trouble financially. I hope that someone will read this at the meeting when comments from the public are opened. [REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED] or [REDACTED] -- Address, [REDACTED]</p> <p>Thank you</p> <p>Joseph P. Randazzo MKC USCG Retired</p>
232	Sally Boyd	North Carolina	<p>To the NC Marine Fisheries Commission:</p> <p>Your recommendations for closures to the shrimp trawl fishery will have devastating effects on rural fishing communities, small boat fisherman, and the fishing families who ensure access to local, wild-caught shrimp. Moreover, these decisions appear to be unsupported by your own data, as reported in the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan Amendment 2. For example (taken directly from your draft):</p> <p>--"In North Carolina, there is no quantitative measure of the amount of bycatch in the shrimp trawl fishery and obtaining such data is costly and still may not provide the information needed to generate a value."</p> <p>--"While the goal of bycatch reductions is generally to increase availability of fish to other fisheries, the results and benefits of shrimp trawl bycatch reductions are uncertain given current abundance, stock status, and life history characteristics of most species of concern (e.g., Atlantic croaker, spot, weakfish)."</p>

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			<p>--"The division is unable to estimate precise economic impacts to the shrimp trawl fishery from area closure options in Amendment 2....The stock assessments or FMPs for Atlantic croaker, spot, weakfish, and southern flounder do not provide specific recommendations for bycatch reductions from shrimp trawls. Due to bycatch species coastwide or regional stock units, it is unknown if bycatch reductions solely in North Carolina will improve a specie's stock status." (See Appendix 1, Pages 32-50 and Appendix 2.1, Pages 219-223).</p> <p>I have considerable understanding and background in the use of data for decision-making. Before my retirement, I was a social scientist who collected, analyzed, and reported data for use by local, state, and national policymakers. I urge you to collect additional data before taking such drastic measures that so severely limit the shrimp trawl industry in North Carolina.</p>
231	KEVIN KEELER	North Carolina	<p>The proposed closer of inland waters will have negative affect on the availability of fresh shrimp for the region. Economic hardship will be put upon the small commercial fisherman who is already having difficulties in earning a living. Do NOT implement these proposed rules.</p>
230	Carol Murphy	North Carolina	<p>Please do not close our inside waters to shrimping. Regulations have already put a lot of commercial fishermen out of business. This proposed closure would be detrimental to a lot more fishermen and their families. There are a lot of boats in this state that are small and not ocean worthy. Taking this kind of action would either force the "small" commercial fishermen out of business or force them to take chances on going places their boats were not built to go, which could easily cause harm or even death to these wonderful people. I personally will pay the price to eat fresh local shrimp vs imported shrimp, any day.</p> <p>It has long been my belief that this Commission only care about the money and pressure from organizations such as the CCA and other recreational fisherman groups and could care less about about the commercial fishermen. PLEASE, PROVE ME WRONG!!</p>
229	Ida Martin	North Carolina	<p>Dear Commission ,</p> <p>As a girl spending summers on the coast of Brunswick County I watched and assisted my late Grandpa using a wooden john boat with shrimp nets. Once the net was pulled up and dumped into a wooden tray I was to pick through and immediately put all the baby fish, hermit crabs, seaweed and etc. back into the water. We were conservationists even then because my Grandpa understood the resources we were privilege too.</p> <p>Sixty years later, I believe the small commercial fisherman still adhere to understanding our valuable resource.</p> <p>During the last year or so lots of us have depended on our local shrimpers to supply us with a food source. They</p>



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			<p>came through.</p> <p>I can't understand why they are being chastised when the mega boats from foreign countries are whipping us clean off our coast, thus depleting our food source.</p> <p>Please regulate the mega boats and leave our NC small commercial fisherman to do the job they have done for generations.</p> <p>Respectfully, Ida Martin</p> <p>[REDACTED], NC</p>
228	William Brown	North Carolina	I'm trying to understand the agenda of the NCMFC . Do not close local waters to shrimping. What possible legitimate purpose would doing so have? Do you want everyone on welfare?
227	randy batts	North Carolina	The shrimpers of this area have been messed with enough. Leave them alone so they can make a living and provide us with quality wild caught shrimp
226	Travis Saunders	North Carolina	If this passes its going to literally cripple the commercial fishing industry in the state of NC. This has nothing to do with by catch it has everything to do with certain groups who think if fishing is closed there will be fish everywhere. It's a about greed open your eyes people and please dont let this pass. Commercial fishermen are the real conservative people who respect the waters and want fishing to be around for years to come
225	Raymond Grice	North Carolina	I find it hard to believe that a public resource can be threatened to be taken away from the public without proper studies of harm being done to the environment in the location. There are not even a tenth of the full time fishermen there were 15 years ago . I want my God and state giving right to catch and buy wild caught shrimp and fish from public trust waters not forced to buy foreign farm raised junk , what is this great country coming to. Please don't side with the big money contributors. Thanks for the chance to comment
224	Rhonda Dixon	North Carolina	Support our fisherman
223	Carrie Riccio Carrie Riccio	North Carolina	Please keep the families in Sneads Ferry in your hearts as this is their job and passion

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222	Lynda Euchner	North Carolina	Please vote NO to closing local fishing waters to shrimpers Down East. What I know is this - closing these waters will force small business closures in that fishermen with smaller vessels will be unable to go further out to ply their craft. Also, our state prides itself on eating locally harvested seafood. Closing these waters will force our food producers to source shrimp from outside "eating local". Support our shrimpers and preserve this shrimping tradition. It is the right thing for North Carolina.
221	John Anderson	North Carolina	I don't understand the MFD in the limiting the shrimping in NC. This if approved will run the small shrimper out of business. Once again it appears as though lobbyists are at it again !!!
220	George Wynne	North Carolina	So you can't punish the recreational fisherman for issues with our shrimp so you're going straight for the jugular on the commercial shrimpers?
219	Emmy Salsbury	North Carolina	Please Support local fisherman that provide our family with local fresh caught seafood from our safe and productive coastal waters. It is vital that we stand to keep fishing a viable industry for generations to come. How can you possibly think that closing our waters and forcing seafood to be increasingly imported from other countries to be in our citizens best interest? Please do what is right! Support NC Fishermen!
218	nancy hillmer	North Carolina	I purchase shrimp straight from the marina on Harkers Island by a small shrimper and care about other small fisherfolk with their small, likely fleet of one boat. Please support these people.
217	David King	North Carolina	The amount of damage that is being done to the juvenile gamefish and base species for years needs to come to an end. Don't stop here move to the Pamlico sound and keep trawlers outside of the inlets only. No ocean going vessel should be pulling nets in the nursery areas destroying whole populations of fish.
216	Hollie Battista	North Carolina	
215	Elizabeth Blot	North Carolina	Allow inside shrimping.
214	Rhonda Hunter	North Carolina	Please stop this unfair attack on our local fishing industry. It would be devastating for the fishermen and a loss for our community. Protect our fishermen and keep NC Fresh Seafood on our tables!
213	John Jay	North Carolina	Please let local fishermen provide the shrimp we love. I do not want to eat foreign raised or harvested shrimp. They have no controls on the contents of the product. I will not eat shrimp from another country if I know where they

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			came from Thanks
212	Bonnie Harvell	North Carolina	Do not impose closures on shrimping areas. We love our local shrimp!

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<u>211</u>	Christy Shi Day	North Carolina	I am writing to oppose the proposed Amendment 2 of the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan. I am a strong proponent for ecological protection, and I recognize that humans are part of that ecosystem. I do not feel that this plan takes into account a whole systems view, and is looking for a technical fix. In complex adaptive systems, like a fishery, current problems are often the result of previous 'solutions'. It does not appear to me that there has been sufficient engagement of the whole system in preparing this plan, and as such, I anticipate significant unintended consequences, shifting the burden - not just within the social or economic impacts which are obvious, but ultimately to the very ecosystem which we this plan attempts to protect. This plan is too narrowly focused, and I think we can do better to meet not only the ecological protection needs but also those of our commercial fisherman and local food supply chain.
<u>210</u>	Tiffany Way Tiffany Way	North Carolina	If this closure takes place you are essentially putting and end to an era of Down East Heritage and the one craft they have all learned from their forefathers. This is one of the many reasons Down East should oppose this closure. We depend on our seafood suppliers to bring fresh and local to our tables and this community has always been there to provide. We shouldn't bite the hand that feeds us just for profit when it will cost us their heritage and our health in the long run. Buy local and stay local.
<u>209</u>	Christopher Mayer	Virginia	The local NC shrimp that my sister brings when she visits VA are the best I have ever had. I would really hate it if it was much harder to get.
<u>208</u>	Samantha Campbell	North Carolina	Commercial fishermen already practice sustainable fishing methods to include fish excluder devices and turtle excluder devices to minimize bycatch. It's been proven that these methods have decreased the bycatch significantly to a percentage to maintain healthy numbers. Primary nursery areas are closed to trawling to allow juvenile fish and shellfish to grow before heading to deeper waters. Shrimping industry is a highly regulated industry and this proposal will close the local areas economy along with locals & visitors access to locally sourced shrimp. Shrimp are an annual crop that is sustainably harvested and has been for centuries in our area. Imported shrimp are raised in cesspools of chemicals and contaminates. Importing shrimp requires a larger pollution footprint over the local fleet utilizing these bodies of waters, you propose to close.

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207	Luther Salter	North Carolina	I stand against the attempts against inside shrimp trawling. Im not a commercial fisherman but respect the resource for our fishermen and families. Like many, i wantbto know where my shrimp come from. I do not want imported, nor does anyone with knowledge...
206	Dale Bocker	North Carolina	Shrimp and other seafood found in our waters are our natural resource. The owners of these fishing boats depend on the state government to protect their rights to freely fish North Carolina waters and NOT be restricted by over-legislated laws. Local residents and some restaurants enjoy the opportunity to reely purchase such seafood thereby supporting not only themselves and their family but the fishermen's business and the restaurants customers. DO NOT restrict our God Given rights to use or limit our local natural resources.
205	Margery Misenheimer	North Carolina	<p>I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed closures of inshore coastal waters to trawling. The commercial fishing industry is a highly regulated industry. Commercial fishermen practice sustainable fishing methods including the use of fish excluder devices and turtle excluder devices to minimize bycatch. Primary nursery areas are already closed to trawling to allow for juvenile fish and shellfish to grow before moving to deeper waters. Shrimp is an annual crop that is currently harvested at a sustainable level.</p> <p>Citizens rely on the availability of fresh, NC seafood, and the proposed closures will devastate the NC shrimping industry. These closures will have a detrimental impact on the coastal economy that will reverberate across NC and into other states. Tourists come to the coast to eat fresh, local seafood. Restaurants rely on the superior product caught in our coastal waters. Imported shrimp raised in farm ponds come from water full of harmful chemicals.</p> <p>What is the data that supports the closures? As a retired science teacher who studied the impact of trawling with my students, I am concerned that the proposed closures are not based on scientific data. NC citizens deserve access to fresh, wild-caught seafood from our waters. Please vote against the proposed closures of inshore waters to trawling.</p> <p>Thank you, Margery Misenheimer</p>
204	David Burney	North Carolina	Where is the scientific evidence to support the notion that these closures will improve the fish populations? These proposed regulations are based on theoretical connections between fish populations that are somehow critical to these resources. Yet no information is being presented as far as I can tell that support this notion. This is not about that, I suspect. This is simply politicians bowing to pressure from the sports fishing industry, which uses its considerable economic clout to squeeze out the commercial fishing industry whenever possible in hopes of taking an even large

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			<p>share of the resources. If small-scale shrimp boats are banned from these inshore waters, the big winners on the economic front will be the large shrimp boats, generally not locally owned, that can safely fish the offshore waters. The other beneficiary will be foreign shrimp industries, which often work with few if any regulations to limit their catch or choice of gear. I know local shrimpers well from working in the industry in past decades. One consequence will be that smaller boats will take greater risks in order to continue fishing, by working farther offshore. This is dangerous to the fishermen and wastes more fossil fuel. Please reconsider this ill-advised proposal, and instead concentrate on collecting needed data and completing a properly documented plan for regulating the shrimping industry.</p>
203	Brittany Piner	North Carolina	<p>I think it's safe to say that "y'all" don't have anyone in your family that is a commercial fisherman. Or this would t even be an issue.</p>
202	Teresa Brown	North Carolina	<p>Don't do it</p>

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201	Tim Gestwicki	North Carolina	<p>The North Carolina Wildlife Federation (NCWF) is submitting the following comments related to Amendment #3 to the Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan (FMP). To illustrate our concerns, we reference a May 5, 2021 memo to the Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) from the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) in which an update of southern flounder Amendment 2 was provided.</p> <p>As background, the coast-wide, peer-reviewed stock assessment was published in January 2019 and assessed the southern flounder population through 2017. Results of the 2019 stock assessment form the basis for Amendments #2 and #3 and include the following direct statements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Estimates of fishing mortality for the U.S. south Atlantic coast are largely a function of the commercial fishery operating in North Carolina.</li> <li>2) The predicted fisheries-independent indices of relative abundance that were available were either flat or declining and show no substantial evidence of strong year classes entering the population in recent years.</li> <li>3) The probability that the fishing mortality is above the threshold is 64%.</li> <li>4) The probability that the that the Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) is below the threshold is 100%</li> <li>5) To reach the SSB target by 2028, total catch would need to be reduced by 72%.</li> </ol> <p>The statutory and public expectation for Amendment #2 was that overfishing would end in two years and measures would be put in place to rebuild by 2028. Amendment #3 is intended to provide the framework to continue progress from Amendment #2 towards the rebuilding goal in 2028.</p> <p>At present (late 2021) Amendment #2 did not achieve its goals and Amendment #3, that is expected to address 2021 and beyond, was delayed because of a simple shift in the allocation that doesn't begin for two years.</p> <p>The DMF memo referenced above states that the harvest reductions recommended by DMF were more conservative than the statutorily required minimum of a 31% harvest reduction to end overfishing and a 52% reduction to rebuild SSB in 10 years. Nowhere, however, does the stock assessment indicate that a 52% reduction will rebuild SSB to the target biomass in 10 years. The stock assessment actually states that a 72% reduction in harvest is required to reach the SSB target by 2028. The claim that the 31% reduction ended overfishing is meaningless with regard to the rebuilding goal and is unsubstantiated.</p> <p>DMF indicates in the memo that total allowable removals include the observed landings and the estimated dead discard values. This claim also appears to be unsubstantiated.</p> <p>The DMF reports that actual overall landings that include "landings plus discards from all fleets" totaled 1,265,705 pounds. This value is 526,694 pounds greater than the 739,011 pound quota needed to reduce harvest by just 62% in</p>

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			<p>2019. Recall that the stock assessment stated a 72% reduction was required. There has been no justification given for the State failing to recommend the 72% reduction in 2019. The DMF has indicated that it was known that harvest reductions in 2019 would not be met before the season started, yet moved forward with an open season that significantly surpassed the allowable harvest.</p> <p>Additionally, the commercial landings do not account for "landings plus discards from all fleets" as reported. Specifically, the 804,117 pounds of commercial landings in 2019 are only a fraction of total commercial removals. The DMF's estimate appears to have only added 4,500 pounds of discards in all fisheries. The data contradict the DMF's numbers.</p> <p>The commercial landings reported do not include accurate discards from shrimp trawls, crab trawls, crab pots, seines, gill nets, and other fisheries during both closed and open seasons. Likewise, the landings do not include any southern flounder landed by holders of a Standard Commercial Fishing License who do not sell their catch, a number that is unknown but likely high. While the absolute magnitude of these removals is unknown, a best estimate would conservatively place the discards and unreported catches between an additional 250,000 to 300,000 pounds, bringing the total commercial removals to greater than 1.1 million pounds in 2019.</p> <p>The recreational removals also appear underestimated. The memo indicates recreational landings in 2019 were 461,588 pounds. The recreational landings underestimate the mortality associated with released southern flounder and do not appear to include the harvest from Recreational Commercial Gear License holders. We also question how the gig harvest and discards are addressed and incorporated in to these estimates. The estimate of total recreational removals appears to be far greater than the reported 461,588 pounds.</p> <p>As a result, the total harvest reductions reported by the DMF to the MFC are substantially less than the reductions calculated by DMF at 34.9% in 2019 and 51.7% in 2020. The recommended, peer-reviewed target was 72%.</p> <p>Discards in many of the fisheries that have been omitted can be estimated. For example, landings of legal southern flounder from crab trawls or crab pots would all be discarded as that fishery mostly occurs outside the current season. Bycatch of undersized fishes will continue in these fisheries and likely increase as the population rebuilds. Additionally, small and large mesh gill nets, seines, shrimp trawls, etc., will continue, but all southern flounder must be discarded. No evidence suggests discard mortality is less than 100% in these fisheries but data do show that southern flounder is a primary bycatch species in some fisheries and common in others. Reviews of the shrimp, blue crab, and other FMPs actually contain some of the omitted information. Unfortunately, as the stock rebuilds, even from the reductions achieved thus far, bycatch and discard mortality will increase as will the continued overages from a directed fishery.</p> <p>The peer-reviewed stock assessment is clear that the North Carolina commercial fishery has driven the assessment and the population towards collapse. Unfortunately, recreational catches have now increased due to greater abundance and concentrated effort during an open season. Yet the state continues to raise concerns about what other states are doing to curb harvest. It is important to note that the states of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida have virtually no</p>



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			<p>commercial southern flounder harvest and only a fraction of the commercial discards from shrimp trawls in the Atlantic Ocean.</p> <p>Amendment #2 failed, and Amendment #3 is delayed. The North Carolina harvest reductions realized so far are not even close to the target. Yet the DMF memo states "that the harvest reductions recommended by DMF were more conservative than the statutorily required minimum." The facts do not support that statement.</p> <p>Bottom line: The total removals, based on the peer-reviewed assessment for 2019 and 2020 combined, should have been approximately 1.1 million pounds to achieve rebuilding by 2028. The DMF recommended 1.3 million pounds and indicates that overages in 2019 were expected. They should not have been. The reported removals were 2.20 million pounds, twice the recommended removals.</p> <p>Based on our review, total removals were likely closer to 3.0 million pounds, yet no adjustments to total harvest has been made and an open, directed fishery was established for 2021. This action is inconsistent with best management practices. The 72% reduction is now obsolete as a result of the significant overages in 2019 and 2020. Consequently, even if the 72% is finally achieved in 2021, the fishery can no longer meet the statutory rebuilding deadline by 2028. Bycatch and resultant discards in the recreational angling, recreational gig, recreational commercial gear license, commercial gill net, shrimp trawl, seine, crab pot, crab trawl, pound net, and other fisheries during the closed seasons will now remove more fish than is required to meet the rebuilding target. As a result, significant reductions in gear, especially shrimp trawls and gill nets, coupled with a complete moratorium on southern flounder harvest is the only remaining solution because we waited too long to take appropriate action.</p> <p>Since this memo was constructed, we have reviewed answers to questions posed to the lead southern flounder biologist at DMF on or about August 12. The following statements were taken from DMF responses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Commercial dead discards was less than 0.3% of the total removals in 2017.</li> <li>2) Gill net discard mortality is 23%.</li> <li>3) Bycatch estimates are only available for shrimp trawls and gill nets.</li> <li>4) The current estimate used by DMF for shrimp trawl bycatch is 59,525 pounds for the entire south Atlantic fishery from NC to FL.</li> <li>5) The DMF has estimated 15,682 dead discards for the commercial and recreational fishery combined.</li> </ol> <p>These responses solidify our concerns. Commercial dead discards at 0.3% appears two orders of that is used to estimate a 23% discard mortality rate.</p> <p>The estimated bycatch in the south Atlantic shrimp trawl fishery at 59,525 pounds is a fraction of the discards from North Carolina alone. Based on Brown (2015), a DMF shrimp trawl characterization study and the best data available, southern flounder discards were in excess of 150,000 pounds in 2014. Because the stock has likely improved since 2014, albeit slightly, shrimp trawl bycatch will only increase going forward.</p>

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			<p>The combined dead discards of 15,682 fish is confounding. The dead discards estimated from the recreational fishery alone exceeded 100,000 fish or 75,000 pounds and Recreational Commercial Gear License landings are not counted. Due to failures over many MFC meetings and decisions over the years, a moratorium on southern flounder harvest may very well be the only option moving forward if the second rebuilding deadline is expected to be met in 2028, 13 years after the original deadline. Subsequently, we urge a concerted effort to reduce capacity in the commercial fishery through license reform that protects and preserves fishermen who land and sell seafood and ends the ability to use commercial gear for personal use or obtain commercial licenses to avoid recreational limits as previous MFC recommendations supported. Finally, the upcoming decisions on Amendment #2 to the Shrimp FMP may be the single most critical reform needed in our state to rebuild and preserve fisheries for the future. The NCWF has submitted voluminous comments on that subject for your review.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Tim Gestwicki Chief Executive Officer North Carolina Wildlife Federation</p>
200	Rachel Tritt	North Carolina	<p>Our local fishermen NEED these waters to remain open. Already so many areas are closed. Local restaurants depend on local fishermen for their businesses. Our county depends on tourists and that means restaurants and fresh local seafood and especially shrimp. We have suffered enough shutdowns through hurricanes, covid and now ridiculous inflation. Our economy needs these areas to stay open in order to support local families and businesses.</p>
199	Emily LaBranche	North Carolina	<p>Hello, I request to encourage locally caught fish including shrimp be the priority in the local fish markets. We have to sustain our residents and small businesses. Thank you, Emily</p>
198	Rachel Johnson	North Carolina	<p>I oppose closing the waters around Carteret County.</p>
197	Mary Kathryn Cooper	North Carolina	<p>Please allow the local fisherman to continue to fish our waters. I want to eat local. I want to support local. Thank you</p>

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196	Anne Noyes	North Carolina	I am opposed to the shrimp closures you have proposed ... seems like you are deliberately trying to put the already overworked underpaid fishermen that make a living on the water. I don't see any proposed closures at Emerald Isle or that area where the richer people live. Leave the poor folks down east alone and let them make a living.
195	Bobby Ballou Bobby Ballou	North Carolina	SHAME ON ALL YOU INVOLVED IN NMF NOAA ...YOUR THE MAIN REASON IVE SOLD MY BOAT AND SAID TO HELL WITH YOU SOBS!
194	Michelle Tosto	North Carolina	I am totally against the proposed closures due to the following: It is based on politics and not on scientific data. The economic impact will be detrimental to many small businesses and the families that depend on them to survive. I see signs all around the county proclaiming Support local fisherman and Eat Local!! How can we achieve this if we are shut down?!?!?! Support local fisherman!!! Don't shut down the small man. We may be small but we produce. Thank you for your consideration in this extremely important topic.
193	Lilly Rose	North Carolina	It is inconceivable to think that the fisherman in Eastern North Carolina are going to be put out of business and denied yet another source of livelihood as well as another wholesome food source for their table and the restaurants and visitors of our beautiful area because of regulations made up by people who have never fished these waters in their lives and who know nothing about the cycles of the different sea life that the fishermen have been catching long before they were born! Now no more shrimping in inside waters? Do the Powers That Be ever consult with the real "Experts", who have the most to gain or lose from preserving the resources of our precious fisheries? Not that I can recall, and as the wife of a retired commercial fisherman I would have remembered any serious consultation they had had with the "Decision Makers" whoever they are. A couple examples are, shutting down scolloping, strictly limiting the flounder season. They allowed the Sports Fishermen to go before the Commercial Fishermen, even shortening the time when they are allowed to catch the species with no regard to how the weather might impact if they were even able to go on those few days! Of course the weather was bad several of the days when it was time for the Commercial guy. It is very discouraging for them. Their very livelihood is at stake and they are regulated to death!! Yes some regulations are necessary but there seems to be no end! And no one in charge really seems to care! It is so controlled that A 70 year old woman needs a license to throw a hook in the water these days if she gets lucky enough to go out on the boat with her son on a beautiful fall day! Or a young boy can't go to the end of a dock and throw out a line without a fishing permit!! And it is probably for just that one time! Get ready for unregulated overseas imported or farm grown shrimp and other seafood at our local restaurants!

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			Please do not shut down our fishermen! They are NOT DESTROYING THE RESOURCE. Pollution from excess building and run off just might be your problem but no one wants to look in that direction!
192	Paula OMalley	North Carolina	I oppose further limiting our local families and fishermen's abilities to survive. Our families have survived this way since 1578 for some of us, over-regulation is destroying our way of life. And in our remote location on Core and Pamlico Sounds, you leave a culture losing it's identity and gaining drug addicted and isolated youth. I strongly oppose.
191	Sharon Silva	Virginia	I have property on ██████ Island and enjoy the fresh shrimp provided by hard working local fishermen. I cannot navigate these waters to get my own and prefer to support small business and buy American. Please do not cut out the livelihood of these folks when there is no call for it. Shrimp are more abundant than ever and so many rely on them to stock their freezers with fresh seafood.
190	Myron A Smith	North Carolina	Vote No to Close Any Sounds, Oceans, Creeks, Rivers used for NC Commercial Fishing and by NC Commercial Fishermen! Main Tourist Attraction to North Carolina is Eating Local Natural Seafood from the NC Coast when study was done by NC State Tourist Department! Great lose to Commercial Fishermen and Businesses on the Coast! Is Exxon Gas and Oil funding the Closing of Coastal waters as they did in Florida years ago, and with NC Legislatures by donating lots of money to them! Louisiana Fishermen and the State Government told them to Get the Hell out of their state!
189	Tom Potter	North Carolina	I do not support the closure. It's always close close close. It's time to open up more inland areas for the smaller boats.
188	Anna Willis	North Carolina	People have always used nets to catch shrimp here!! This has never depleted the small fish in our area as shrimpers know and do place the fish back in the water. Their not killing them!!!! People depend on shrimping to make a living as well!!! I'm honestly SO SICK of everything being controlled by the hook and liners around here!!!! Not to mention since hook and lining became the number 1 way of doing things here, Has ANYONE noticed how much fishing line is in our waters and our marsh????? The TRASH around our waters!!! Bet no one complains about this do they????? How many turtles and birds do you think get caught up in this mess??? Not to mention hooks caught in birds wings. Yeah I've seen it all and helped it all!! These people want to talk concern about our ocean and all what's in it??? They don't care!!! It's all about making sure they can throw the hooks and lines out there to kill what's in our ocean!!! I'm SO sick of money talking and common since going down the toilet!!! Leave the shrimpers alone and take a good look at what the real problems are. Sports fishing does more damage to all that's in our ocean than a net ever could catching shrimp!! You wanna take food out of people's mouths for some idiot who has NO clue what their talking about. How common can you get!!! I've cried at all the trash I've seen and picked up from a stupid fishing line!!! Stupid hooks!!! Yeah take a good simple minded look at what's going on and you will see where ALL the damage is coming from!! Stop letting MONEY talk if your so

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			concerned about our waters and what lives in it. It's NOT the shrimpers that have been here for years and years!! They really do respect our waters while they make their living!!! Stop the hook and liner SPORT fishing if you really care about our waters and what lives in it.
187	James Willis	North Carolina	I totally disagree with the decision to shut down inshore shrimping I do not do it but I will only by local caught because it supports the people in our communities that do this for a living.This is how people pay there bill buy Christmas for their kids I stole hardily support these people that do this for a living.
186	Travis Hansen	North Carolina	As a resident of North Carolina I respectfully ask that you not close any additional areas to shrimp trawling; this due to the 47% that is already restricted. Thank you!
185	RAE GUTHRIE	North Carolina	This would be detrimental to the smaller boats. They could not safety navigate deeper waters yet must shrimp for their livelihoods. This would cause untold economic hardship for them and our town,
184	Gail Cannon	North Carolina	Our commercial fisherman know how to concerve their fishing grounds. It's to their benefit to take care of them. It's the recreational fishermen who are are destroying the fishing grounds with their carelessness and greed. DO NOT DEPRIVE the local fishermen of their way of living and us of the wonderful shrimp they provide!!!
183	Ann Lewis	North Carolina	My husband and I shrimp inshore during the summer in our 24 foot skiff. We do this entirely for recreation for ourselves and to share our catch with family. It would be impossible for us to go offshore shrimping safely in our boat. We are very meticulous in returning as many fish as possible back to the water as quickly as possible. We do not intentionally neglect this gift God has given us. While this is not a form of livelihood for us, it is for many families in our community. These families depend on shrimp trawling to survive. Not all are equipped for offshore shrimping. Please consider this when voting for this change.
182	David Sneed	North Carolina	As the executive director, I would like to submit the following comments on behalf of the Coastal Conservation Association North Carolina:  "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." With that mission statement in mind, the goal of all fisheries management plans should be to restore, rebuild, and create a sustainable fishery for all citizens of North Carolina, including our children and grandchildren. Historic fisheries management in NC has ignored conservation in favor of maximum exploitation, and we are paying the price for that now with numerous finfish and shellfish species listed as overfished with overfishing occurring. State fisheries managers have failed to properly identify and delineate nursery

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			<p>areas and have allowed the overcapitalization of our coastal resources through the use of highly effective, yet destructive and wasteful gear. This has led to decades of habitat destruction, bycatch waste, and overfishing of many important species managed by the state.</p> <p>Southern Flounder CCA NC supports the division recommendation for the phasing out of large mesh gill nets when the current ITP expires in 2023. Efforts to rebuild a severely depleted stock will result in dramatically reduced quotas, overage paybacks, and short harvest seasons for both user groups. Faced with at least a decade of these restrictions, any commercially harvested southern flounder can (and should) be taken by gears that are cleaner and more sustainable, those being pound nets and gigs.</p> <p>Prior to the proliferation of the use of cheap, monofilament gill nets, the pound net fishery was the dominant source of harvest and can easily capture the proposed total allowable catch of southern flounder. Despite the warnings of many, pound nets have been allowed to increase as the southern flounder harvest has dramatically decreased.</p> <p>The phase out of the use of large mesh gill nets would eliminate the need for the sea turtle and sturgeon ITPs and with it the expense of observers and the headaches associated with non-compliance. Commissioners have to be questioning why the DMF is even considering a renewal application for a permit to allow endangered sea turtles to be killed in large mesh gill nets when the gear is no longer needed to harvest the allowable commercial harvest limit? Moreover, it would minimize dead discards of important species such as red drum, black drum, and sheepshead. With the severity of the restrictions that lie ahead, DMF should not allow any new pound nets until the stock has sufficiently recovered. Once recovered, a limited entry system should be employed when issuing any new pound net permits with priority given to displaced gill netters.</p> <p>Any thought of a recreational ONLY hook and line slot limit on flounder should be immediately rejected as arbitrary and capricious. If a slot limit is applied, it should be applied equally to both user groups.</p> <p>CCA NC fully supports the removal of the RCGL flounder fishery.</p> <p>Unfortunately, recreational anglers throughout the state are facing a quota with a likely one fish per day creel limit in a fall season during a window from August 16 – September 30. To “increase recreational access”, the DMF is proposing a spring season from March 1 – April 15 where one ocellated (gulf or summer) flounder may be harvested. This is a poor</p>

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			<p>choice for a number of reasons, the most important of which is angler safety as the weather during this time of year is very unsettled and not conducive to fishing in the ocean. Also, southern flounder are migrating from the ocean back into the rivers and sounds in the spring, so waiting until later in the year should minimize interactions with these fish.</p> <p>Since North Carolina manages all three of its flounder species under a single FMP, recreational access to the ocean flounder fishery will be unfairly curtailed. During the last two decades a recreational fishery has evolved in North Carolina for flounder on nearshore wrecks and reefs in the EEZ (federal waters). This is a fishery almost completely dominated by gulf and summer flounder. In this fishery, catches of southern flounder are almost non-existent during the spring and summer seasons. In addition, it is a very clean fishery with no discards reported in 2019-2020 from this sector. For these and other reasons, recreational access to this fishery should continue AT LEAST in a season from late spring through fall. According to the latest DMF economic impact figures, recreational flounder fishing alone provides \$240 million to the state's economy. Increased recreational access to summer and gulf flounder will help mitigate potentially substantial losses to the economy of Eastern NC as a result of continued southern flounder seasonal closures.</p> <p>In addition, because of how dead discards are estimated, the recreational Southern flounder season could be shortened or closed based on discard estimates alone. This is another reason why increased ocean access to the other flounder species is so important.</p> <p>If anglers need to be educated on how to identify each of the flounder species, that is an easy task for division staff, as education is one of their central tenets. Recording apps currently under development can only help in real-time data collection, and CCA NC fully supports their use.</p> <p>If there are compliance issues with a federal quota for additional recreational harvest of summer and gulf flounder, the MFC and DMF should work to resolve them to prevent the recreational angling community from being shut out of this ocean fishery.</p> <p>Establishing conservation equivalencies are supported by CCA.</p> <p>Commercial discards of southern flounder throughout the industry need to be accounted for comprehensively. Discards from trawling, pots, dredging, and other such wasteful gear must be more thoroughly investigated; most importantly, discards must be accounted for in future modeling and stock assessments.</p> <p>In the terminal year of 2017, there were 713 participants that reported trips and landings in the Southern flounder gill net fishery, yet there were 2672 estuarine gill net permits issued, which is roughly 60% of all SCFLs. The Division must</p>

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			<p>account for SCFLs that report no landings in each FMP and report its findings.</p> <p>SHRIMP</p> <p>The data from DMF found in proposed shrimp amendment 2 speaks for itself. P195 trawl data from June and September CLEARLY shows that the ENTIRE Pamlico Sound functions as a nursery area for important species that are in severe decline. Juvenile spot, croaker, weakfish, southern and summer flounder, as well as others, depend on Pamlico Sound to grow to maturity, and constant trawling through these important habitats is preventing the recovery of these species. Moreover, the discussion and role of spot, croaker, weakfish and shrimp as a forage base for predators is largely ignored. Forage are a part of habitat, and most management agencies are addressing this. These species must be designated forage fish and protected.</p> <p>In the text of amendment 2, division staff recognizes that status quo management will not meet the goals of amendment 2. Division staff also state that closing the sound to trawling is the only way to guarantee the necessary reduction in bycatch and protect the habitat each of these juvenile finfish.</p> <p>With that in mind, CCA NC recommends that Pamlico Sound be closed to trawling.</p> <p>The current divisional recommendation of closing all rivers to trawling is an important first step that CCA NC fully endorses. Likewise, the conversion of all SSNA designations to that of SNA, and the associated trawling closure in them is also a positive step that CCA NC again, fully endorses.</p> <p>However, these closures do not go far enough to protect key juvenile finfish nursery areas, and other options should be considered by the MFC. Why is the Division ignoring its own P195 Juvenile Index trawl survey data that was used to identify nursery area "hot spots" in the Pamlico Sound? Short of the MFC adapting this optimum management option (closure), the next best choices are those highlighted in several issue papers that accompany Amendment 2. They include: closing the northern and western half of Pamlico Sound, along with all of the rivers.</p> <p>All of the day restrictions, headrope reductions, decreasing tow times, etc...are effective management measures. They should be incorporated into this management plan.</p> <p>To more accurately quantify bycatch, an observer program for the shrimp industry should be initiated. These observers should be: independent (potentially out of state), neutral, randomly assigned, and required with no "outs" by vessel</p>



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			<p>captains. Observers should be industry-funded. A phase out of large mesh gill nets under the Southern flounder FMP would provide funding that is already in place from the SCFL to be redirected to a shrimp trawl observer program.</p> <p>Stripers  As the striped bass population continues to struggle, CCA NC recommends that, regardless of any other suite of management options chosen, the gill net ban currently in effect above the ferry lines in the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico Rivers MUST BE MAINTAINED! Furthermore, net free areas should be established on the Cape Fear, Roanoke, Bay, and other river systems with significant striper populations.</p> <p>Since stocking will continue, and likely increase, recreational access ONLY should be returned to the CSMA where striper fishing has been closed for an extended period. Stocked striped bass come from USFWS and the WRC. Stocked stripers are designed to enhance recreational access and to help endangered species recover. Stocking is not intended to supplement commercial harvest, and to that end, commercial access should not be allowed on a "put-grow-take" fishery.</p> <p>With the striper population crashing AGAIN on the ASMA/RRMA, a full closure is, unfortunately, the best management option. Data from over a decade ago forecast this decline, but fisheries managers failed to act in time to prevent the current dilemma.</p> <p>Short of that, very brief recreational and commercial seasons, with reduced bag limits, should be enacted. In addition, ANY commercial harvest should be single hook and line ONLY. With the exception of blue catfishing on the Chowan, gill nets should be prohibited during the striper recovery period.</p> <p>CHPP – Bottom Disturbing Gear  CCA NC was disappointed with the decision by the CHPP Steering Committee to pass the buck on the impacts of bottom disturbing gear to water quality (clarity). Their lack of a decision requires that the MFC make a ruling on this issue.</p> <p>Gears such as shrimp and crab trawls, along with oyster dredges and clam kickers all re-suspend sediments laced with pollutants, such as heavy metals, from areas upriver that have ben secured in soft bottom areas by various filter feeders and scavengers that live in this habitat. Such activity reduces water clarity, which, in turn, damages areas of SAV. Re-suspended sediments can settle on shell beds, choking out what little remaining oyster reefs we have. Re-releasing toxins in our sounds can only harm the multitude of "critters" that live in these areas.</p>

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			<p>Commercial fishermen and division staff often state that the damage done to these areas of soft bottom is temporary and minimal. Yet satellite imaging shows numerous regions where deep scarring and channelization have occurred in areas where bottom disturbing gears are allowed.</p> <p>Running these gears over areas of soft bottom also strips them of the typical diverse benthic communities full of juvenile fish, crabs, sponges, barnacles, and more. Leaving behind nothing but the dead bycatch that was shoveled overboard and some bristleworms to feast on the buffet raining down on a once fertile bottom.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>
181	Stephen Garrity	North Carolina	The shrimping community is already heavily regulated, and bycatch has been significantly reduced. There are no credible data on the need for further closures. Local NC shrimpers provide a valuable resource to us all, help the economy, and are a historical part of the ecosystem. I strongly urge the commission to maintain the status quo in regards to trawling, and oppose further "blind" regulations. I speak as a retired certified ESA marine ecologist. Thank you.
180	Kelly Quate	North Carolina	I prefer local seafood NOT imported. Do not impend the legal harvesting of shrimp.
179	Paige Humphreys	North Carolina	I heavily apples the potential closures that would prohibit our already HEAVILY regulated fishermen from local waters and make us more dependent on inferior shrimp imported from distant countries that do not practice conservation measures! This idea is completely wrong and will devastate our community and our health!
178	Tony P	North Carolina	We need our local shirmp fisherman. I hooe they will be here to stay.
177	Lauren Hewton	North Carolina	Stop taking away from the hardworking commercial fishing industry to cater to the elites of the recreation and sports minded fisherman. Commercial fisherman feed the masses. And who, in their right mind, wants seafood IMPORTED, from other countries when we have the freshest of the fresh, here, in our own backyards. Stop being so damn stupid, greedy and selfish. The waters are for all to enjoy, it is God given, not man given ! Stop taking from those that work hard, most of you couldn't even make a dime doing what these professional commercial fishing people do, on the daily. Enjoy the fruits of their labor, and buy and eat local seafood. It's common sense for crying out loud.

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176	Dena Ferrell	North Carolina	We are blessed with a responsible, environmentally conscious and hardworking fleet of small business fisherman. I think it is disgraceful that these closures are even being considered. We need to support this industry and these small businesses and their families.
175	Jill Thompson	North Carolina	I am asking you to restructure your proposal. Lots of families on the coast of the Carolinas have been running small production shrimp boats their whole lives. Instead of taking away their livelihoods, lets think about limiting catch and inhumane methods on the larger more aggressive commercial vessels. Also, put more money into the officials monitoring the activity on our waterways.  Thank you for listening.
174	Jaxson Hartsough	North Carolina	I oppose to adopt and changes mentioned in the Shrimp FMP. I want a sustainable resource but there in no science in presented plan and I want to be a commercial fisherman when I grow up and support the local community.
173	John Hartsough	North Carolina	I oppose all unquantifiable restrictions and demand fair and equitable treatment for all! Commercial, recreational and the consumer. I enjoy fresh local NC seafood. Eat fresh local seafood and demand it.
172	Felicia Hartsough	North Carolina	I oppose all unquantifiable restrictions and demand fair and equitable treatment for all, commercial ,recreational, and consumers. There are fewer and fewer in this industry and yet it remains so large in NC contributing millions of dollars to our local economy and 1000's of jobs.  SUPPORT FRESH LOCAL SEAFOOD in NC
171	billy willis	North Carolina	yall are a bunch of damn communist is what yall are you don't do shit but make things worse don't you idiots no you can't play mother nature with wild fish and shrimp. instead of helping fisherman you do everything you can to shut it down
170	Ryan Young	North Carolina	Please remove all fill nets and trawlers from North Carolina's inland waterways. I hold a Valid NCCFL however I see the need to protect our resources for everyone to enjoy.
169	Lan Nguyen	North Carolina	Please save our Shrimp Industry!!plz, plz

#	Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
168	Steve Reynolds	North Carolina	I am from Alamance County but have fished coastal waters all of my life. The decline in the fish population is appalling. The flounder restrictions must go forward but in an equitable share for all North Carolinians and not certain commercial interests. The seas belong to us all. Having worked on a shrimp boat, the bycatch losses are unacceptable. The key nursery areas in the Pamlico must be closed at the very least. The overall financial impact for the coast when the habitats and fish are restored will provide jobs and income for all who are willing to adjust to the new norms just as people in my neighborhood had to adjust to the closing of textile mills and furniture plants. It is time for the DMF to fulfill its charge to protect our estuaries and marine environments for the benefit of all North Carolinians.
167	Peter Carraway	North Carolina	Some may say at 31 years old, you are still too young and haven't garnered enough life experience to make life changing decisions, or know about important matters. As a teacher, coach, athletic director, husband, son, brother, and soon to be father, one of the titles I am most proud of is being called "the son and grandson of commercial fisherman". Growing up in eastern North Carolina and more specifically Carteret county was an immense blessing. We often tend to forget the beauty that surrounds us, and what makes this area so different, that people are willing to travel for hours to spend a week at the beach. A large and vital part of that is our commercial fishing industry, the men and women that work long hours and brave foul weather to provide fresh seafood to the locals and visitors alike. Our ocean and waters provide life, not only to the animals that dwell there, but to us, the ones who reside beside it and rely on it daily. I could not imagine a day when looking out and not being able to see a shrimp trawler gliding through the water, or hear the cry of excitement from sea gulls and porpoises trailing these vessels. Such serenity and majesty most will never understand, except those who have lived the life and loved every minute of it. Growing up, my dad instilled character traits in me that I did not even realize were happening, I thought I was just getting to spend time on the water with him and I loved it. Not many middle school kids would be happy to get up throughout their summer break at 3 am every day to go shrimping with their dad. Little did I know that dad was teaching me about hard work, not being afraid to get my hands dirty, always help others in need, and never quit until the job was done. At the ripe age of 12 I was holding my own as the deckhand on his 60 foot trawler and together we worked many areas including Adam's Creek, South River, Neuse River, Bay River, and all over Pamlico Sound. Almost all of these areas are on the list for closure, or have already been partially closed. The seafood caught in these locations went directly towards putting food on our table growing up and paying the bills. It was never enough to get ahead thanks to low shrimp prices from increased competition with imported shrimp and high fuel prices, but my mother was a magician at making ends meet each month and we were blessed, with or without a big bank account. Whether we got ahead that year, or fell behind, we always ate fresh seafood that we had caught, cleaned and cooked, and I wouldn't dare trade those memories and days for anything. As I stated earlier I am a 31 year old teacher and coach, and my wife works in the medical field, and although we are young, we both make life altering decisions daily in our careers and that is what this board has before them. A life altering decision, that could

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			continue the heritage and legacy of quality, local seafood that is freshly caught, pumping money back into local communities, fish houses and restaurants, and drawing tourists to our shores year after year. Or this board could decide to cripple this county, destroying the infrastructure of communities and families, putting hard working American people out of work. I then question what the draw would be for the tourists? To come eat overseas shrimp and seafood and visit an area that has no respect for its local people and is more concerned with padding their pockets on "under the table" deals and hidden agendas with other power hungry Raleighites that are concerned with the health of coastal waters they know nothing about. I implore you to think about the decision before you, and imagine a time when you can no longer eat a plate of freshly caught shrimp and are left with the rubbery, tasteless, and chemically preserved imported brand that has been on the back of a frozen truck or ship for weeks before hitting the frozen section of the grocery store. I dread that day.
166	Michael Clemmons	North Carolina	Please don't change the shrimping rules. This whole state depends on local shrimp. Not only are you hurting the people who sell local shrimp, your also hurting the fishermen getting the shrimp. Not to mention all the locals who have always only bought local shrimp.
165	Gary Nowell	North Carolina	What data do you have on bycatch none that I know of I guess yall will never stop until yall put all Commercial fishermen out of business leave it alone
164	James Hunnings	North Carolina	I am absolutely opposed.to ANY further closures of shrimping and net fishing areas in North Carolina waters. The push to close areas and ban netting is all political, and there is no solid evidence that additional closures are needed or would really be effective in changing fish stock numbers. Trawl fishermen already employ effective measures to limit by-catch and turtle catches. The proposed closures would be another economic disaster to this State, especially while we are dealing with the economic disaster brought upon us by the pandemic and current administration. There are too many families that make their living from fishing, seafood marketing, and support services to the industry, to be further shutting down the industry.
163	Davis Barnes	North Carolina	I have lived in NC for the last 8 years, and fish as often as weather and life permit. The last year has been the best since I have lived here, until the recent Commercial Flounder season. I am not a scientist and don't sleep at a Holiday Inn, but I bet the decline in Red Drum fishing, and the advent of commercial gill netting in our area are related. I know there are many voices to be heard, and I doubt mine will be, but please for the sake of our grandchildren remember the mission statement of the NCMFC.  The Division of Marine Fisheries is dedicated to ensuring sustainable marine and estuarine fisheries and habitats for the

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			<p>benefit and health of the people of North Carolina</p> <p>There is no mention of corporations, or commercial fishermen. Just us poor old folks that make up the people of North Carolina. Small mesh gill nets are not sustainable, they are outdated, and have no benefit for the people of North Carolina.</p> <p>Thank you for your attention and service.</p> <p>Davis Barnes</p>
162	Michael Casstevens	North Carolina	<p>I support this closure for the sake of our coastal fisheries. I realize this has potential to strain a small number of commercial fishermen, but feel the good of the overall fisheries is more important.</p>
161	William Wyckoff	North Carolina	<p>This is the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard. They have been shrimping in these waters for as long as I have been alive. The people that are trying to do this don't have a clue what this would do to thousand of people and be jobs. Not only the people but all of the fish houses would have to shot down because they would not have enough fish or shrimp to keep them open. Twenty years I clam in Bogue sound and was catching 1500 clams day the marine fisheries sad we were destroying the grass and closed. Now there is no grass and no clams everything has sanded over great job marine fisheries. Now they are trying to destroy peoples livey hood.you people have never had to make a living off the water and you don't know how hard it is to do that and if you close the shrimping all we will have is imported junk from over seas great job marine fisheries 😞😞😞😞😞😞</p>

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160	Lynne Griffin	North Carolina	These closures will make a negative impact to a portion of my county. Job availability is in retail, hospitality and is often seasonal. To take their lively hood away it to take the roof over their heads and food from their table. This industry has complied to regulations over and over again. These folks are stewards of these waters not robbers. They can't just go out and buy a bigger boat to go further to earn their living. Let them continue to support their families.
159	Louis Midgett	North Carolina	I don't you Realize how much this Closer would impact the fisherman. And I don't think you care. But this will hurt the Shrimpers who been at this Job for decades. It has been dropped down from generations of fisherman.we need this lively hood to live and feed our family's. I hope you reconsider this because it will kill the Shrimping for North Carolina. Leave it alone and let us work.
158	Louis Midgett	North Carolina	I don't you Realize how much this Closer would impact the fisherman. And I don't think you care. But this will hurt the Shrimpers who been at this job for decades. It has been dropped down from generations of fisherman.we need this lively hood to live and feed our family's. I hope you reconsider this because it will kill the Shrimping for North Carolina. Leave it alone and let us work.
157	ERIC FLEEK	North Carolina	As a professional invertebrate and fisheries biologist with NCDEQ for over 27 years, and having been formally trained in Marine Biology (UNCW, B.S., 1992; Nova Southeastern University, M.S., 1994) and Fisheries and Wildlife Science (NCSU, M.S., 2001), and having been an avid coastal angler for over 40 years, I have some professional and personal experience in these issues. As a result, I am in favor of phasing out large mesh gill nets when the ITP expires in 2023 and reject the notion of a recreational only angling (i.e., hook and line) slot limit on flounder. If one is decided upon, it should be enforced equally for all resource using groups. In short, the RCGL for the flounder fishery should be removed. In addition, discards from the commercial fishing sector needs to be more definitively accounted for (i.e., accurate data is imperative for models) and therefore the DMF must better account for SCFLs that have reported no landing in each FMP. As it pertains to the Shrimp FMP Amendment (2), based on DMF's own data, it appears closing Pamlico Sound to trawling is strongly supported by the data. Additionally, I support the Division's recommendation for closing rivers to trawling and I would support the conversion of SSNA's to SNAs. Failing these measures, at a minimum the data accompanying Amendment 2 (i.e., closing the western and northern half of Pamlico sound, plus all the rivers) should be executed. Additional management additions should also include a shrimp industry observer program. As a formal panel member on the CHPP, I was disappointed in their recent decision on Bottom

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			Disturbing Gear (BDG). Having personally sampled many areas disturbed by these gear types, I can personally attest to the (short and long-term) damage caused to these habitats by these methods. Some attempts at managing these impacts must be undertaken by the Division in light of the CHPP's decision. Thanks for your consideration.
156	Mary Culpepper		<p>Please let the commercial fishermen work on the water to make a living. This as been done since Jesus time. God provides the shrimp, fish, oysters, clams, scallops,etc. I know one year there was an abundance of spots, we caught them as fast as you put a line over board there was a Spot or two on your line, Another year the same thing with bluefish. God is in control of what is in the water. My husband did commercial fishing. Please, don't close Adams Creek or Neuse River. First they close Florida, then South Carolina from working in the rivers, now they are hoping to do the same to NC. It is not right, know the sports fishing would like it closed.</p>
155	Loni Doshier	North Carolina	<p>Once again, here we are fighting for our livelihoods. Y'all must not enjoy fresh seafood and supporting commercial fisherman as much as I do. These men and women work day and night to provide for their families in these hard times we are in and now YOU are making this harder for them. Why? Why are YOU banning/shutting down parts of the sound that have feed the mouths of kids and provided for families for so many years? I'm sure all of our concerns are going to the side lines and this is gonna happen either way, but at least I can say I tried. Stop the nonsense. Stop ruining lives just so you can make more money behind your desk while eating imported shrimp that's been infested with God knows what and sipping on \$80 bottles of Champagne.</p>
154	Pamela Clark	North Carolina	<p>Our shrimpers are already doing a lot to avoid catching fin fish. The locations chosen to be placed "out of bounds" seem to me to be a thinly veiled action against small business owners in order to allow mega corporations to take over and destroy our right to harvest local seafood. I do not support this proposal.</p>
153	William Smith	North Carolina	<p>This will put so many people out of business. Vote no!</p>
152	Robert Hughes	North Carolina	<p>I am a 58 year old coastal recreational fisherman from NC. I have enjoyed that pleasure in NC my entire life. I am not a typical recreational fisherman in that I have responsibly harvested only minimal fish that entire time. I do not need to fill the boat or cooler just because...they are biting.</p> <p>Good stewardship of public natural trusts has steadily been declining for years now. Larger and less vested</p>



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			<p>populations with easier access to all locations, politically motivated commercial and recreational entities, general unhealthy environmental decline, and misguided or mismanaged fisheries overseen by the various commissions has without question led to reduced fish stocks across the board. I and everyone else that spends time on the water has watched it happen.</p> <p>Without question there is significant financial impact from both commercial and recreational fishing within this state. The time of listening to whichever group can resonate the loudest mouthpiece and basing fishing directives on the political winds of the day is over. IT DOES NOT WORK. There is always going to be a group that will be negatively impacted regardless of the decisions made. It is time to make some very hard decisions that frankly...will make everyone not happy.</p> <p>Please consider that without purposeful and drastic measures now...there will be NO fishery to manage in the future. I have read some of the...putting it nicely,,,verbose, academically sound studies. Clearly someone is getting credit by the word count. I don't discount anything said within them. Yes...there are some very complex issues impacting coastal areas and fisheries. It's pretty simple though really. There are too many people doing too many negative things to allow normal positive life cycles of all fish stocks. Yes...too much trash in the environment...too much fresh water runoff due to development...too many/much ...insert your own here...the list is endless.</p> <p>Close the flounder fishery for three years...commercial and recreational. Zero recreational creel limit and zero commercial landings of any kind...inshore...ocean...anywhere. Yes... will lose money, cost some jobs, anger a lot of people...just generally all around...not be pleasant. Imagine however...taking this drastic step now. Imagine a time in the future where you get to gradually increase the creel limits and landing tonnage because drastic actions were taken way back in 2022 that saved the public fish stocks of this state. I hope this is not the fairy tale of what could have been. I have seen with my own eyes for too long what has...simply not worked. The path of...business as usual...is a truly sad and scary one. My hope is that some can find the way to make the hard decisions now to find the happy ending to this story.</p>
151	Dwain Elmore	North Carolina	<p>I have fished Pamlico sound and it's adjoining bays,rivers and creeks since the early 1970's. I have seen a large increase in the trawling on the sound and a large decrease in the amount of fish available in the sound and adjoining waters. When I was fishing in the sound I personally saw the by catch being discarded from these trawlers. That is juvenile fish of all species being shoveled back into the water dead. This is the direct result of the fish decrease. This problem will not go away until trawlers are removed from the sound totally. This is my</p>

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			request. Even if recreational and commercial is to be stopped to fix this I will support it. Being a recreational fisherman I dislike that decision but will support it. Bottom line!! REMOVE THE TRAWLERS!! Thank you!
150	Barry Baker	North Carolina	<p>Hello hello,</p> <p>I just wanted to express my concern for the conservation of North Carolina's coastal resources and also to voice my support for the approach to conservation as indicated in the November 8th email generated by CCA NC.</p> <p>Thank you very much and I wish all parties the best in preserving these wonderful and valuable public resources.</p> <p>Barry</p>
149	Sherrie Styron	North Carolina	<p>I'm 58 years old shrimped most of my life in core sound and Pamlico. Never caught a turtle for 28 years of shrimping. Today you are slowly putting my family out of business. You all need to do more surveys on this and not go by what the CCA IS DOING! Give or take there is 1.5 million Recreational fishermen And 4500 commercial fishermen and most of them are the sports Fishman that hold a commercial fishing license.. For 1 sports fisherman should hold a different kind of license than a commercial fisherman he is taken out people and getting paid for it plus selling their catch and having commercial fishing license so they can catch more.. With that being said who do you think is catching more. How about the cast netters in North River catching all the shrimp everyday. I have never seen so many shrimp like I have the past 5 years or fish.. for one there's less commercial fisherman cause you have made it hard to make a living. how is a man to make a living this day and time . North Carolina is known for the best seafood right now our restaurants can't keep up with supply and demand because you are putting us out of business. Its ashame our restaurants serve 98% imported seafood. I have never seen so many shrimp because they are less commercial fishermen that needs to be considered at the meeting also. Please help us commercial fishermen we have enough closed bottoms now...</p>
148	Keith Coughlin	North Carolina	<p>Keep it Local we dont want any nasty China shrimp, Let our local shrimpers do what they do best , which is shrimp. God Bless America</p>
147	P. Brandon Kelley	Maryland	<p>My family vacations in the Carteret County area every year. We drive from Maryland to do so, willingly spending large amounts of money in the process.. One of the major reasons we do so is because of the availability of sustainably caught local seafood. Last year alone, we purchased more than 50 pounds of locally caught shrimp from Miss Gina's because we know them from experience and trust the quality of the product and know that they sustainably catch their product and provide it to us at the absolute lowest price. They and others just like them are a credit to Carteret County and North Carolina.</p>

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			<p>The proposed regulations go too far in excluding local fishermen from being able to fish. By-catch exclusion devices and techniques, TEDs and the knowledge and ability of the watermen and waterwomen have served to decrease by-catch dramatically and the science proves this. Don't ignore the science and don't ruin a good thing. By so severely restricting the area in which they can shrimp, you will drive off even more fishermen than you have already lost. By doing so, you will also drive off tourists, like my family, who come to the area specifically for the locally caught seafood. I can buy overpriced, mediocre quality seafood in my home state. I would hate to think that your adoption of overly restrictive regulations that do not follow the science would make me do so.</p> <p>Best,</p> <p>P. Brandon Kelley, JD and family</p>
146	Jerry James	North Carolina	Please consider limiting headropes to 30 feet in the shrimp trawl industry or ban trawling in all internal waters.

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145	Jennings Wright	North Carolina	Keep our shrimp fisheries open!
144	Michael Stramiello	North Carolina	<p>There aren't many shrimp fisherman left out there and I know of a few guys that go out alone or with a bare bones crew that really on the shrimp to earn a living and feed their families.</p> <p>Stop making laws and changes that always hurt the little guy! I'm tired of seeing foreign seafood in big stores like Walmart. Unfortunately, that's all you see anymore. We're destroying our local economy with policies like this that have irreversible outcomes.</p> <p>North Carolina needs to start taking care of North Carolina again. Our local fisherman need their right to earn a living and to feed their families. Not everyone has the opportunities others may have and fishing is all done of these men know</p> <p>Keep North Carolina's workers and money in north Carolina.</p> <p>When the fish migrate here, that's when it's our turn.</p>
143	Cathie Styron	North Carolina	Why do you want to destroy our heritage,take jobs from people. Seafood is great for you..fresh that is . God put seafood out there for everyone. You have destroyed families income from taking around pound nets and now shrimping. One day you will have to answer to God!!
142	Mandi Willis	North Carolina	I 110% disagree with this ban. It is putting the commercial fisherman who work hard to make a living out of work practically in the whole entire Core Sound. Coming from a family of commercial fisherman this ban is a disgrace.
141	Chris Smith	North Carolina	I do not support any closing of waters now open to shrimping.
140	Brenda Sadler	North Carolina	Shrimp and all seafood for that matter, is God given and are plentiful. Our local fisherman/shrimpers should be left alone - this is their livelihood, and to hurt their business by over catching would be ridiculous for them to do, as they would put themselves out of business. YOU should be helping them, by preventing non-local fisherman/shrimpers from coming into our waters and taking all they want - they DON"T care how many they take or that they are taking from the local business, because if they hurt the local population of seafood they just move on to other waters! The local fisherman/shrimper cannot afford to do that! Don't side with big business - do what is RIGHT!
139	Corbett Johnson	North Carolina	Shrimping is a way of life and how many people make their living in this area the remaining waters that are open should not be closed.

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138	Bear Eyre	North Carolina	Please stop trying to pass restrictions that only hurt the small shrimpers - the large commercial shrimpers are not being adversely affected by the small independent shrimpers.
137	Andrew Gould	North Carolina	I believe your data it incorrect about how many fish and seafood in general there really is. I am against these closures.
136	Troy Guthrie		Please do not close shrimping for the smaller boats it is the only thing I know how to do please leave it alone
135	Gene Mack	North Carolina	How much longer are those in charge going to permit the rape and pillage of the nurseries? Shame on you. Grow a set!
134	Roger Qualman	North Carolina	I totally support the new shrimping restrictions recommended. Commercial shrimping on inland NC waterways should be eliminated. Inland waters are Nursery grounds for small fish and need to be protected instead of being killed during shrimp culling. Also, shrimp boats pollute inland waters and create navigational hazards.
133	Kris Oglesby	North Carolina	Those waters that people are trying to close are very important to the fisherman feeding their families and paying their bills. If they don't keep working the bottoms and keep it clean nothing will be living there. The clams,oysters,shrimp etc.will die. Please don't close these waters that are their livelihoods... Everyone's not able to sit behind a computer or in a bank etc.
132	Debbie Gibson	North Carolina	There are already less areas to shrimp. Where will you be able to buy Fresh local shrimp I am OPPOSED to closing any other areas to shrimping
131	A. Greg Thompson	North Carolina	Commissioners, I am a 77 yr-old resident of North Carolina. The Marine Fisheries Commission is continuing to ignore the failing trajectory of our coastal fisheries. Are we going to delay until the system has collapsed?? Protect the resource NOW! Time has run out.
130	Adam Dietz	North Carolina	Its completely crazy you want to shut down the areas with the least amount of bycatch and leave the areas with the most bycatch. not to mention how far every boat will have to travel to get to shrimp. double fuel usage. it says there is no data to support but ask any commercial shrimper for pictures of bycatch from the areas you want to close. you will see there is plenty of data that it should stay open.
129	Robert Bennett	North Carolina	I do not commercial fish, But I have lived in Pamlico County all my life...I see first hand how the commercial fishing industry as well as recreational fishing helps support our local citizens and communities....to stop Commercial or Recreational shrimping in the Neuse and or the Bay river system would not only destroy

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			people's ability to catch or buy fresh LOCAL shrimp but also destroy traditions and heritage that have been in place for centuries....let it be.
128	Benjamin Warren	North Carolina	Please preserve our local shrimp and fishing industry,that is also our heritage and our rightful current and future resource.
127	Willis Nelson Willis Nelson	North Carolina	I am a Daughter of a Fishman about 60 years , I still family members still that it's their livelihood, enjoy what they do, make a living every year , it would be a great loss if they close these waters a devastation for our our State.
126	Steve Williamson	North Carolina	I am not in favor of closing off shrimping grounds down east carteret county. Nor do I support closing the Neuse River or adams creek areas. Shrimping is an important part of the area's economy, and is already heavily regulated.
125	Wendy Lurye	North Carolina	This proposal should NOT be passed ..The schrimp in our waters dont need to be protected by this ridiculous proposal. The trickle down effect will be catastrophic for the livelihoods of families who pay there taxes and keep our waters from being oversaturated. GOD made bottomfeeders and those voting should know that these sanctions dont serve any purpose other then giving the big red tape politicians something to do..... Get drugs away from our neighborhoods...do something useful...LEAVE OUR SCHRIMP TRAWLERS ALONE...THEY'VE BEEN DOING JUST FINE .
124	Kerry Lupton	North Carolina	Please dont ban shrimping in NC.
123	Janie Hanna	North Carolina	Having lived on the Neuse and Pamlico Sound area for 11 years, I am dumbfounded as to why the state North Carolina has been making no effort to support and preserve its biggest and historical commodity, Commercial Fishing and its marine environment. Why does this state want to ruin coastal tourism? Why does this state want to destroy watermen and their families' lives and their livelihood? Lots of questions and currently no answers. What has happened here, our local Coastal Federation is functioning as a game warden and our very influential Sports Fisherman lobby wants no fishing competition on THEIR ocean. At this point, it seems these two groups are doing the state's job and making the accepted suggestions to better the marine environment. That does seem helpful but now we are seeing some catastrophic exaggerated claims that intend to shut down traditional shrimping beds. Not one but pretty much ALL the inland beds for an undetermined time. Forcing watermen families out on to the open ocean. Where shrimp might be scarcer.

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			<p>What is missing from this scheme of things; what is the state of North Carolina actually doing to preserve North Carolina's inland marine environment? I have never seen one state official making their presence known on the Neuse River or the Pamlico Sound. We have at least four, including NOAA, local marine labs who deploy to ocean beds around the world. What it seems like here for Carteret County's marine ecology, the state is relying on opinions from groups of volunteers led by salaried doctorates from a non profit organization and the Sports Fisherman's lobby.</p> <p>North Carolina could do so much better and take pride in insuring that their Coastal history and traditions remain intact for future generations. That fishing is well managed so that environment thrives as well as Commercial and Sports fishing. American consumers do not want to buy cheap frozen foreign grown seafood. They want locally caught fresh seafood. Tourists come to North Carolina's coast from all over the country and world to enjoy fresh caught seafood dinners.</p> <p>Commercial Fishing does not belong in politics. And it seems that the right to fish wherever you want has become political. And whose lobby is the best financed. Sport Fishermen are exactly what the label says, people who pay to go fishing for sport. Generations of Commercial fishermen have successfully lived in and managed their fishing environment for hundreds of years while depending on their marine environment to raise a family and bring seafood to your table. Spend a week with a waterman if you dare. Their days are long and some times the weather doesn't always cooperate.</p> <p>Lastly, North Carolina needs to take note of what makes North Carolina's Crystal Coast a sought after vacation destination. Heritage, traditions and a pristine well managed natural environment great for all types of fishing and water sports should be the state's number one goal. One way to achieve this goal is to value the opinions of the people who know our coastal marine environment best, generations of Commercial Fishermen who make the coast home.</p> <p>Janie Hanna</p>
122	Ann Church	North Carolina	Nc only state that allows commercial inshore fishing and trolling. It is raping our waters. Recreational fisherman is not the problem. Go further out like most states.
121	MaryLena Anderegg	North Carolina	Fresh shrimp have been a resource for households in the OBX for generations. It is available for the poorest as a self-caught protein source or a delightful protein substitute for red and white meats which require large amounts of land to raise and cannot be harvested in the wild.

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			The idea of restricting harvesting, as is being promoted currently is inhumane. For those who do not know the history of the shrimping industry, at one time, shrimp were a disdained cull from a catch and were a mainstay for the poor. It is a sustainable protein source which should continue to be available to LI whether they harvest it themselves in small family sized catches or buy it at the fish market from commercially caught sources.
120	Jeremy Williamson	North Carolina	My name is Jeremy Williamson and my family and I have been fishing these waters for over 40 years. I believe it would be a huge disservice to the fishing community to close the shrimp fishery to the extent of the current proposal. This closure would not only put many shrimpers and markets out of business, but would also deeply impact the recreational fisherman who reside in our great state. I would suggest that if any closures are needed that they would be limited in scale and maybe done in rotation so the shrimpers can have a fighting chance. Thank you for your time and consideration.
119	Ann Rose	North Carolina	Please do not close these grounds. The local folks that harvest these shrimp are already struggling to eke out a living with the existing limits. They use nets that reduce bycatch significantly, but what is the point of their efforts if you continue to paint them into a corner? If you must regulate further, then keep shrimping limited to local folks and not allow boats from outside this area. Thank you.
118	Eleanor Holland Eleanor Holland		Why are you restricting shrimp fisherman from making a living? Please rethink your new rules as I don't feel safe eating foreign-raised shrimp. I've seen first hand how and where they raise their seafood. It's not sanitary. Locally grown is always better.
117	Rose Rose Tankard	North Carolina	Please rethink your proposal on banning shrimping. Some of the best shrimp in the world and supports many families.



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116	McDonald Tanjalenale avev McDonald Tanjalena		Leave our Lively hood alone
115	John Hudnall	North Carolina	<p>I have been a full-time commercial fisherman for over fifty years, primarily in Core Sound. I had a trawler built in 1980, and on the full moon of July that year the man who was on deck counted 100 other shrimp boats in Core Sound. This year, 2021, on the full moon of July, I counted 6.</p> <p>In your assessment of the number of only 119 participants in shrimping, I believe you failed to include the crew members that can range from 2 to 5 or 6, depending on the size of the boat. And for the most part the shrimping season in Core Sound lasts only 6 to 8 weeks.</p> <p>Some of the recommendations that have been made do not seem to have been carefully researched. For example, the tributaries of Core Sound are already closed, and they have become stagnant and septic. There has been no mechanical clam harvesting in Core Sound in years, and there is no shrimping allowed in clam kicking areas.</p> <p>Shrimpers have complied with regulations for reducing bi-catch, installing the turtle excluders that have saved turtles and the flounders that also escape through them and the two required fish excluders. The reduced bi-catch also reduces the amount of time that the shrimpers spend culling and getting their catch on ice.</p> <p>Even though there are fewer of us utilizing the shrimping in Core Sound, we need it in order to survive in our chosen and dearly loved profession. I sincerely hope you will take seriously all of the factors I have presented.</p>
114	Chris England	North Carolina	I urge you to please take into account foremost what is in the best interest of the resource. Not what is in the best interest of the recreational or commercial fisherman. The resource must come first. If we manage in the best interest of the resource then everyone in the state will benefit in the long run.
113	Jonathan Edwards	North Carolina	<p>Shrimp FMP Amendment 2</p> <p>In the text of Amendment 2, DMF staff recognizes that status quo management will not meet the goals of amendment 2. DMF staff also state that closing the sound to trawling is the only way to guarantee the</p>

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			necessary reduction in bycatch and protect the habitat each of these juvenile finfish.  With that in mind, I recommend that the Pamlico Sound be closed to trawling.
112	Kinsey Price		Shrimp are tasty and an economic source for some but shrimp trawling nets are harmful to the environment. There is too much bycatch which negatively impacts the ecosystem. There should be less shrimping days or more closures.
111	Carl Taylor	North Carolina	Please preserve the natural resources of our state for future generations.
110	K G	North Carolina	Many people have poured their lives into shrimping, invested lots and lots of money, and put most their time into it. Small boats are not equipped to go in open waters therefore, the small boat fisheries will be wiped out, the people that rely on shrimping for a living will have nothing to get income from. This will shut down businesses that have been in business for decades. Closing more coastal waters will make the shrimp population rise dramatically, which will affect everything in the same ecosystem. This will affect everything. Closing the waterways and not allowing trawling is not a good idea at all, it affects so much. Thank you.
109	Clifford Owens	North Carolina	Please keep commercial fishermen shrimping, without burdening them and the public by forcing new regulations time and time again. Taking away our lively hoods and cutting off locally harvested shrimp is not the way to resolve your issues, it's just the easy way out, not the responsible way.
108	Bobby Ballou Bobby Ballou	North Carolina	HOW MUCH MORE DOES NCMF WANT IN DESTROYING THE OLDEST PROFESSION IN THE WORLD! LEAVE HONEST WATERMEN ALONE ALREADY..... SHAME ON ALL YOU S O B's!
107	Bobby Ballou Bobby Ballou	North Carolina	HOW MUCH MORE DOES NCMF WANT IN DESTROYING THE OLDEST PROFESSION IN THE WORLD! LEAVE HONEST WATERMEN ALONE ALREADY..... SHAME ON ALL YOU S O B's!
106	John Warren	North Carolina	Hello All  I grew up in Carteret County and still call it home. I will be 41 in December and have spent my entire life enjoying what Eastern NC has to offer, especially the fishing. My family relied on commercial fishing to supplement our needs and I have stood picking gill nets alongside my dad many times. I myself have held a license in the past. These nets were always very good at catching fish, but at a young age I recognized that

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			<p>they caused unnecessary death to other fish in the food chain. I fully understand what it means to make a living. Industries must evolve. Much like the factories workers that have been replaced by automation or more effective processes, the commercial fishing industry must evolve and do more to protect our estuaries. I fully support the elimination of gill nets. You need look no further than the Gulf Coast to see the benefit.</p> <p>I also fully support limits and teach my own children to adhere to them. I even support the closure of fisheries, however we MUST close them for both RECS and COMMS. It makes zero sense to do anything other, I also believe our stock assessment processes need to become better. The new app that has been developed is a good start.</p> <p>I want fresh locally caught seafood to be available, however it should not be at the cost of the sustainability of the fishery. Bottom trawling and by catch should not be allowed so someone can profit from freezing and shipping our seafood. People live at and have moved to the Coasts in record numbers. The recreational fishing pressure is real and the affect on water quality is real from overdevelopment. Big money seafood should not be allowed to exploit our resources.</p> <p>The fishery does not stand a chance unless the MFC puts the best interest of the fishery first. The fishery is under attack from tourism, development, and commercial fishing pressure/practices. I do not agree that one side or the other should get preference. The dollar bill should not reign supreme. The protection of the resources should win. I will do my part and I am asking you to do yours and help me make sure my children can enjoy the fisheries and our coast many years down the road. It can be done. 1. Ban destructive commercial fishing methods 2. Accurately assess stocks 3. Apply restrictions fairly to RECS and COMMS.</p> <p>Thanks for your time and dedication to our great state -John Warren</p>
105	Tyler Chadwick	North Carolina	<p>As a citizen of North Carolina I'm 100% against the proposed shrimp closures. Ever citizen in this great state should have the opportunity to harvest or purchase fresh North Carolina Shrimp. With this closure you will be denying citizens of North Carolina that opportunity. People that don't live on the coast depend on commercial fisherman to supply them with fresh shrimp. Everyone should have this right, not just people that can afford to buy a boat and go catch the seafood there self.</p>
104	Susan Becker		<p>I do not support the latest proposal to close down our local shrimping areas. I support local shrimpers who depend on r these waters to earn a living and supply us with the best shrimp in the world.</p>

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103	April Taylor	North Carolina	What are you trying to do! You are killing our livelihood! We do this for a living !!! We are complying with regulations what more can we do ! Enough is enough ! Stop ! These waters do not need to be closed !!
102	Rusty Brooks	North Carolina	When will the harassment ever STOP...? NC commercial watermen have fully adhered to all by-catch reduction mandates put forth by NCMF by incorporating TEDS, FEDS, net size reductions, etc. When will the rights of the commercial watermen ever be protected? When will emphasis ever be re-focused towards improving water quality due to pollution run-off that results in massive fish kills yearly that never receives any attention? When will you start harassing developers that continuing to introduce toxic salt treated materials in estuaries/nurseries? The number of true commercial fisherman are 90% less than what they were 10 yrs ago. Your agenda has/continues to only focus towards such an easy target.
101	Ben Laurens	North Carolina	Shrimping is a major industry in and around Carteret county. It would be a serious error to further restrict our shrimpers ability to make a living, particularly to support reduction of bycatch which is NOT a major issue in the waters that the Fisheries commission is attempting to close. Leave the current shrimping map alone, not only to support the fishermen, but to include the citizens of our county and surrounding area.
100	Arthur Honeycutt	West Virginia	We travel to N.C. a couple times a year for fresh shrimp as well as other friends & families, If you close down that many area's and slow the shrimp catch down that bad, You can pretty much count on losing a lot of tourist, vacationers & revenue.
99	James Byrd	North Carolina	<p>Not only do I speak for myself but I am also writing this comment representing the thousands of charter guests that I carry fishing and come in contact with every year who enjoy eating local, fresh caught, sustainable seafood and shrimp while on vacation at local restaurants on the Outer Banks and purchase shrimp in bulk to carry home and freeze to enjoy later. The proposed areas should NOT be further closed to inshore commercial fishing. These areas provide local fresh caught shrimp that are passing through on the way to exit the inlet. Many of these shrimp never return and will die at sea because of their short life spans. These areas also provide tourism to a number of shrimping and crabbing charters whose families depend on for survival. Additionally many local families have small LEGAL shrimp nets they use to fill their own freezers with each year. A great deal of commerce comes from the shrimping in these waters and it should be continued.</p> <p>If you want to improve fishing in NC consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduce the number of predatory birds, mainly cormorants. I'll gladly send videos showing tens of thousands of these birds that are gobbling up juvenile fish stocks daily.</li> <li>- Monitor and address water quality. Pollution from the Tar, Neuse, and other rivers that feed into our estuaries needs to be dealt with! Also Chemical run off from farms spraying chemicals and foreign owned</li> </ul>

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			<p>livestock farms needs to be addressed.            -Educate the public of some of these other factors instead of putting the crosshairs on commercial fishermen.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and again myself and thousands of others are AGAINST further restrictions on inshore trawling. I can be contacted at: hitmansportfishing@gmail.com if you would like a copy of the list of people that signed my logbook aboard my vessel with all their contact information that feel the same way as I do and whom I speak on behalf of.</p> <p>James Byrd            [REDACTED]            [REDACTED]            NC            Mathematics and Statistics Professor            Previously ECU &amp; UNCW. Currently [REDACTED]</p>
98	Robert Newkirk Robert Newkirk	North Carolina	<p>Commercial fishing is a source of income for many families along the coastal area. Year after year people try to put and end to it and want to blame them for shortages. If you would take the time to do something about the invasive sea bird such as cormorand that eat 5 times their body weight in fish a day and it number of said bird you will see were all the fish are going.</p>
97	Kenneth Smith	North Carolina	<p>I live in Carteret county and there is no reason there should be any limit for commercial fisherman trying to make a living. There's more concern where this country is going.</p>
96	Lindsay Lewis	North Carolina	<p>Regarding Shrimp FMP Amendment 2:            I formally protest this amendment.</p> <p>This amendment will destroy small-time shrimp fishermen like my father. My father has harvested shrimp in NC waters his entire life, like his father before him. And consumers like myself want FRESH seafood, not seafood that has been frozen for ANY length of time. I personally enjoy eating Newport River shrimp far better than shrimp from Pamlico Sound or deeper waters.</p> <p>Keep the closures you have in place now, but don't restrict the remaining waters from shrimp trawling, from a multi-million dollar and unique industry that my father has relied on his entire life. And it's not just his way of life— he enjoys it. He is proud to be one of the few people able to provide fresh shrimp to local</p>

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			<p>consumers like me. Not many people are able or willing to harvest those shrimp we enjoy so much, and I'm grateful that he's one of them.</p> <p>Trawling restrictions already protect the necessary nursery areas for the shrimp to grow. Instead of spending time, energy, and money trying to restrict our shrimp industry, why not put those resources towards more equipment like turtle extruders to prevent by-catch? Towards promoting quality and growth within those already-protected areas? From what was presented in the Amendment, it seems to me that we're not even sure that shrimp trawling is to blame for over-fishing or too much by-catch.</p> <p>Work on amendments that will be helpful, instead of harmful, to our local fishermen AND to our aquatic life.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
<u>95</u>	Joel Norris	North Carolina	<p>Everyone knows that the CCA and NC wildlife have teamed up against the commercial fisherman of NC and I don't think it's right to ruin commercial shrimping in NC. That's what it will do to. The places that are trying to get closed to trawlers off the coast of NC are the only places for trawlers to work. The coast of NC is nothing but rocky bottom with a few spots along the coast close to shore where trawlers can drag. Also them saying trawlers are devastating the fishing industry it so far from the truth. I've personally talked to a few sport fisherman that want it closed to shrimpers along the coast and Pamlico sound and they try to say it is not right for commercial fisherman to catch fish or shrimp for financial gain. The funny thing is everyone of them have charter businesses. So unless I am a complete idiot I thing that fishing for financial gain. My point is I really hope nobody votes to end a industry that employees so many people along the coast of NC because it will be pointless and for no good reason. People only hear the lies the CCA puts out there because I know for a fact it's all lies.</p>
<u>94</u>	Sherree Burton Sherree Burton	North Carolina	<p>Shrimp are a natural resource and should be harvested .Please allow Commercial harvesting</p>
<u>93</u>	Judy Beaman	North Carolina	<p>I am strongly opposed to the proposed shrimping closures. The restrictions on fishing and shrimping are a direct cause for loss of income to people in the county I live in, and they are struggling as it is.</p>
<u>92</u>	Shannon Martin	North Carolina	<p>Your proposed closures will put untold numbers of hard working families out of business, as well as choking off access to fresh shrimp for consumption or use as bait. We travel 6 hours to vacation along the Outer</p>

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			Banks several times a year. Fishing is our family hobby. No bait, no tourists who fish. Please reconsider these closures.
91	Emerson Dickey	North Carolina	<p>I have fished in the Topsail area since 1974. The decline in the fishery, especially flounder, has been dramatic. I believe that restrictions on recreational catch are certainly needed, but the real issue is the impact of commercial fishing. Allowing trawlers to work our sounds impacts the success of spawning areas. By-catch is another huge issue and should be managed. Allowing the purchase of fishing rights by people from other states is something that should be managed. When other states restrict fishing, the boats come to NC. Apparently Georgia, Virginia and Florida are fine with us having open waters.</p> <p>Please follow the science and don't be swayed by those with short-term interests. What we've been doing doesn't work</p>
90	Renee Norris	North Carolina	<p>I believe that the proposal that is being brought forward will negatively affect NC. I also believe that it is a decision that is being made without research to support the reasoning for the closures. Other states that have made similar closures have not shown healthier waters, in fact it seems to have created the opposite outcome. I truly believe this is just a decision based on the amount of rec fishermen making noise compared to the amount of commercial fishermen. The fact is, even with the small amount of commercial fishermen on the coast, the amount of equipment, licenses, sales tax on product, sale and tax on \$1500 worth of fuel every week, and the amount of jobs created all outweigh what rec fishermen will bring to NC. They also create lives here in which they continue to support the NC economy. Most of the recreation fishermen don't live in the state. They aren't contributing the state economy. Their livelihoods aren't being effected by this decision. Do you know whose lives will be greatly impacted by your decision? My family. My husband, myself and my three children. My parents, and my husbands parents who haven't reached retirement age yet. And there are many other families that will be making difficult decisions if this proposal goes through. We will most likely move to other states that support their commercial fishing industry and have to uproot our children's whole lives. What doesn't seem to be understood is that shrimp isn't caught further than three miles off the coast. You will be almost eliminating fresh seafood from NC. Not to mention the boats that are big enough to work outside of the proposed closures will be taking a much bigger risk. Seafood will be available, mostly through farms, that will not only create more pollution, but will be selling an unhealthy option.</p>
89	Josh Craddock	West Virginia	<p>We purchase shrimp from the NC area. Your not only effecting the NC area with this proposal. Your effecting seafood lovers in WV/PA/MD. Our market support NC fisherman monthly with fish and shrimp purchases</p>

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			Josh Craddock
88	Mary Frankle	North Carolina	How many more National, State, and Local jobs is the government going to hand over to foreign countries? Shrimping is a local industry that has provided local families with a livelihood for generations. The NC marine fisheries commission has been reducing the area shrimpers can harvest from a little at a time to the point of putting people out of work. This new proposal will be the death knell for many more. I, for one, do not want to eat imported shrimp!
87	Philip Snell	North Carolina	Many years ago there were hundreds of small shrimp boats in Core Sound shrimping every night. There was never a shortage of fish. Now there are just a handful out there at night and you say they are causing a shortage of fish. Nets now have 2 feds on them and most are using skimmer rigs so there is little bycatch. Instead of destroying a way of life and jobs why don't you look at the real science. Right now there are millions of cormarants in the sounds and rivers. They eat an average of 3 lbs of small fish a day, That's 3 million pounds of baby fish every day, year round. They destroy thousands of tons of fish a year. Do like most states have done and get a hunting season declared on them. Up north commerants have completely devoided some lakes of fish. Please let them keep shrimping.
86	Leslie McCombs Porter Leslie McCombs Porter	North Carolina	I have lived down east in [REDACTED] for 20 years right on the water. I taught 8th grade science and am raising a six year old and eleven year old. I am very concerned about your proposal to limit shrimping areas. I believe your plan will not only damage the economy of this area but also damage the fabric of the communities that have relied on shrimping for generations. Children I have taught have pride in and hopes for being shrimpers. They want to continue living here and value being the next generation to shrimp. The values and ethics they have learned are greatly needed in our world. Both of my children have learned so much about life here that they could never haved learned any where else. Not everyone wants to live in Raleigh and be part of what is defined as "progress". It is not up to You to limit the choices for the future of those who live here and want to continue to shrimp.
85	Rachel Sanders	Alabama	My grandparents lived in Cape Carteret and my uncle engaged in recreational fishing using a smaller vessel. Given the size of his boat it would be unsafe for him to fish further out at sea. I highly recommend that the opportunity afforded previous generations of my family be continued so as to enable my sons to access areas closer to the shore. Yet more than the occasional opportunity we take to fish, I want those whose livelihoods are dependent on the fishing to be able to continue to earn a living by being able to trawl for shrimp closer to the shore. The negative impact of the decision to prohibit fishing in areas closer to the shore would have a far reaching impact on the NC coastal communities by eliminating a sustainable form of income for many individuals and families. Please reconsider this decision.



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<u>84</u>	Jeff Chadwick	North Carolina	My family has lived in the Down East area of North Carolina (near Beaufort) for generations. They came to this area to make their living off the water, as did so many of their neighbors, and many have consistently worked hard to do so since then. Please do not enact these proposed restrictions that will remove from them their ability to continue to do so. They respect the water, care for it, and contribute to the local and state wide economy in tangible ways. Allow them to continue to do so for future generations, as well.
<u>83</u>	Tyler Robson	North Carolina	I believe the problem is the limit size is 15" and the female is mature enough to have eggs at 15" where at the male same as is roughly around 13" which puts the female for likely to be taken at 15" before she can populate. I believe the limit size should change to atleast 17". Also I believe if most of the board members were not commercial giggers then the rules would be more fair for the 98 percent of the recreational fisherman. A few of y'all have ruined it for so many locals because you only see your point of view. Your trying to make it a monopoly for your pockets. Why not change limit size keep it at 2-4 fish per licensee and let the ocean trollers supply the market. Supply and demand would stay the same except commercial inshore giggers wouldn't be able to get 2-400lbs a night during the open season. Their the problem along with nets. I'm a recreational fisher myself if anyone was wondering. Nice article and thank you to the ones that are in this for the fisheries and not a inshore monopoly.
<u>82</u>	Stella Salter	North Carolina	There's just been about everything shut down to our NC Commercial Fisherman & Women. You have taken away almost everything away, from our local hardworking & honest living people. Not only are you taking taking away families income that is to pay their bills, clothes off of their backs, food off their tables but, also our Heritage! If it doesn't make any of you a paycheck for you to pay your bills and, provide your families with clothes and food you definitely are quick enough to shut it down. Y'all are greedy and, don't give a damn about anyone else trying to make ends meet. All of you make me sick. Their is such a thing called Karma and she's a big ass bitch and it will bite everyone of you in your ass.
<u>81</u>	Rodney Taylor	North Carolina	Please enact the recommendations of CCA NC! I have grown up fishing the costal waters of NC and have witnessed the severe decline personally. This should have been addressed many years ago but it always seems to get lost in the shuffle between the many different agency's. Consolidation there would probably be very beneficial and definitely more cost effective for the taxpayers of this State. That savings could then be used for the betterment of our resource. The studies I've read in Louisiana indicated that after enacting similar legislation, not only did their resource become on of the best in the country but the commercial industry thrived by moving their operations off shore. Why are we one of the only states that have failed to protect our resources!
<u>80</u>	Kenneth Humphries	North Carolina	This proposal is another nail in the coffin from an already over-regulated industry that has been a staple and a livelihood of NC for many years. Don't allow the well funded efforts of one group decide the fate of

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	Kenneth Humphries		many that are trying to make a living in the fishing industry. Removing this part of our heritage is removing what MAKES North Carolina, North Carolina!!! - Ken Humphries.
<u>79</u>	George Urban	North Carolina	You won't be happy until you put local water men out of business, do you want to import everything from China?? My question is WHY??
<u>78</u>	Barbara Toepfer	North Carolina	These fisherman supply a service to us all in bringing us food from our local waters as well as providing a living for their families. We as US citizens do not want to rely on foreign food and fisherman to place food on our tables and take food from the mouths of dedicated fisherman and their families. They are voters as well and taking away their livelihoods will cause them to vote accordingly.
<u>77</u>	Rosemary Daniels	North Carolina	Please do not do this. This will put many of our local fishermen out of business. How will they feed their families? These

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76	Johnny Clark	North Carolina	Do not vote to close those areas off. People are struggling enough as it is. More regulation is not the answer. You are going to drive everyone to the poor house.
75	Kendall Lawrence	North Carolina	Please consider the negative impact this could have on our local community. My family would be DIRECTLY impacted by this decision to close our waters to shrimping. SAVE our local shrimp industry.
74	Lannie Belangia jr	North Carolina	I am 7th generation commercial fishermen in my family I have a young family of my own. You people do more damage than good by not listening to we the commercial Fisherman who are on the water everyday, instead you choose to turn biologist loose to gather data and they don't even have the slightest idea how to find and catch. You also do more harm than good by over regulation there are less working commercial licenses now than ever thanks to NCDMF and we are more restricted than ever I struggle to feed my family and pay my bills and there is more than enough seafood in the sound I shouldn't have this problem I own and operate a 40ft trawler and pushing us offshore will only make my job more dangerous significantly. By closing areas close to shore that we currently work the bottom will die and you will be doing the opposite of preserving habitat for shrimp and fish if you want to actually help this natural recourse you need to stop paying attention to the money you gain from sport fishermen by putting us out of and concentrate on cleaning up our water. There are more people which means more pollution the salt water marshes are being developed again more pollution plus mother natures natural filter gone every golf course in the are backs up to marshes with creeks that fish and shrimp use to grow in but chemicals from run off ruin them this applies to farmers to stop blaming us for things we do not do we love our jobs and the water we make our living on we are the last people that want to see these natural resources suffer and definitely would never want to over fish any fishery because we would be out of work withe there being less fishermen now than ever and more bull shit restrictions that do more harm than good why regulate us so strongly it obviously does no good because we aren't the damn problem. Recreational fishermen are more of a threat than we are at this point. Why do we have trip tickets to keep track of landings and they don't have to report their's yall need to tighten up on that they can call and tag fish just like hunters tag deer
73	Debbie Martin	North Carolina	The proposed areas for closure will only drive small shrimpers out of business. The large suppliers that ship their catches are the ones who need regulating. Please vote to keep these shrimpers who supply local needs in business- keep these areas available

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			To them. Many seafood boats ship everything up north- they need to be only offshore. Help our local economy get better- not sunk.
<u>72</u>	NEAL LEWIS	North Carolina	<p>Closing Pamlico Sound for ALL trawling is a draconian measure that is not necessary. North Carolina is a leader in the development of by-catch reduction. This fishery is sustainable under the current supervisory auspices of NCDMF. I feel that this discussion has not adequately taken into account the natural cyclical patterns of the species found in this area. An entire economic culture will be jeopardized - if not eliminated - by this action. And, this would push consumers further in the direction of consuming foreign, farm-raised - and unhealthy - seafood...</p> <p>It is obvious that the push from the well-funded recreational fishing organizations is being heard the loudest. Their bias stretches the evidence found in the data to advance their long-standing animus toward the commercial fishery.</p> <p>Your actions have historical environmental, economic and cultural consequences. Please act wisely. Thank you.</p>
<u>71</u>	PATTI SAFRIT	North Carolina	Support small business, right? This includes the "small" family owned fishermen and farmers. If anyone needs a longer season, it is them. One storm can wipe out their source of income. DON'T BE THAT STORM!
<u>70</u>	Heather Gaskill	North Carolina	<p>This is beyond ridiculous, it's right down SICKENING! There has been so much taken from our commercial fishermen already and these latest restrictions would be the final nail in their coffin. This is more than a heritage, it's money in their bank accounts, food on their tables, presents under their trees and it is being taken away little by little. My husband is no longer a commercial fishermen but we love fresh local seafood as much as anyone else, how about all these restaurants and people coming here wanting fresh local seafood, where is it going to come from when everyone has had to quit because they forced out?? Fisherman have been around since the Bible, it's a natural way of survival and these bans and restrictions are absurd!! Let these men work and make a living to put roofs over their heads and food on our tables!!!!</p>
<u>69</u>	Linda Gaskins Linda Gaskins	North Carolina	<p>I am a lifelong resident of Pamlico County with ancestral roots in Cedar Island and have real concerns for the impact this closure will make on the economics of this area. My grandfather was a poor skiff fisherman from Carteret County who raised a large family because of availability of seafood from the waters near home as not only income but a food source.</p> <p>Coastal fishermen still depend on the harvest of seafood for their livelihood, and the residents depend on it for food source. What is better than fresh shrimp from the waters surrounding us? What is better than knowing that the season will open soon and funds can be replenished in the households of these hardworking fishermen to keep their families' needs supplied, to keep food on their tables, and their</p>

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			<p>mortgages out of foreclosure.</p> <p>In the times we all have endured since the beginning of 2020, it seems our governing officials would consider the economic effect on so many who already in trouble and struggling to survive. This is a slap in the face to these NC residents. I ask that you reconsider, modify this plan, and keep waters open for easy accessibility to our people. Remember those families who have kept dreams alive through the bounties offered in our coastal waters.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to express my views.</p>
68	John Romano John Romano	North Carolina	Why are you trying to kill people's livelihoods????? I hope you enjoy your imported shit feed farm raised shrimp!!!!
67	Cat Hamidi	North Carolina	My husband and I fully support limiting where shrimp boats have access. Neighboring states have stricter regulations which protect the estuaries. NC should do the same.
66	Percy Houchens	North Carolina	Drag nets should be limited or band from all sounds due to the damage to the nursery bycatch. Plenty of shrimp run to the Ocean. Last few years I've never seen so many shrimp boats for so long in the season in the Ocean.
65	Norma Christine Guthrie	North Carolina	My family is a commercial fishing family. I serve the public by working as a nurse in Carteret County and I am a Shrimp Dealer. My husband is a full time Commercial Fisherman. My husband, Doug Guthrie Jr., is a Fourth Generation Fisherman, as his family always used the local inside waters to provide a means of income and food to eat for their family as well as others. My husband channel nets for shrimp as well as uses butterfly nets and shrimp trawls to catch shrimp in Core Sound and the Adam's Creek area. There are a lot of factors that determines whether he catches shrimp. Those factors are weather, breakdowns of equipment/boat, tide, personal health, and regulations, just to name a few. Most of what I named no one has any control over. However, regulations is something that you do have control. If you regulate shrimping as proposed, you will put my husband and those just like him completely out of business. My husband is nearing 50 years old with no other means of making an income for his family. Just imagine for a minute, how you would feel if someone told you that you had to stop doing what you were born to do, what your forefathers taught you to do, and the only job you know how to do at age 50. How would you throw down the only job that you know and try to find/learn another? My husband has no other means of work, knows no other trade, and why should he have to be forced to learn anything else when he is working now, paying taxes now, and providing the most pure form of food available to the public; wild caught shrimp. There is absolutely no

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			reason at all that anyone should regulate the proposed waters to the point that it puts a fisherman out of business. It's absurd and there is no concrete evidence of why to close shrimping for my husband and for others like him. I go shrimping with my husband every chance I get. My sons go with my husband to help him out when they can. It's a way of life and it has sustained us through our 26 years of marriage. There are good and bad times, as with many self employed jobs, but regulating it to the point of extinction is the wrong thing to do for the industry and for others like us. You mustn't shut us down and put my husband out of work. Haven't we been through enough over the past 22 months? So many Americans last year that couldn't work for one reason or another, namely Covid. If anyone really reads my comments, I wish they would stop for one minute and think about what I've written and put themselves in our shoes. We cannot possibly start over with a new occupation at this point in our lives. Where is the logic that this proposal would be a good decision for all?
<u>64</u>	Timothy Mills		Please do not close the waters to shrimping .
<u>63</u>	Paula Gillikin	North Carolina	Our shrimp are a God given natural resource & we deserve the right to catch them, buy them fresh & enjoy them. And our fishermen deserve to be able to make a living off them!
<u>62</u>	Benton Eubanks Eubanks	North Carolina	Shrimping has been away of life for the downcast community's for many of years. Limiting this resource u r taking away peoples lively hood all because a bunch of people from some where else has moved here and want to stop the commercial fisherman.
<u>61</u>	CA Pittman	North Carolina	<p>As a lifelong NC resident, and coastal resident, I am appalled at the continued mismanagement of our saltwater finfish species. It is TIME for a change. Change in the status quo. Change in the ability if nets to decimate our fish stocks. Change in management philosophy.</p> <p>The inshore nets have to go. PERIOD. At least until our fish stocks recover. If the inshore netting is not ended, we risk losing some stocks forever. For my children, and their children.</p> <p>End the RCGL category. Why should we allow recreational fishermen to use commercial gear that is indiscriminate. We MUST end inshore trawling, as well as the use of gillnets in inshore waters.</p> <p>At the very least, manage the State's geographies separately. The areas of Brunswick County for instance - all fairly narrow and relatively shallow, should be managed differently than other larger bodies of water such as the NURSERY areas of Pamlico and Albemarle. All commercial netting in nursery areas MUST be ended ASAP.</p> <p>Regarding the flounder FMP - why in the world would you force the citizens and residents of NC to go to SC</p>

#	Name	State	<p><b>Please type your comments in the box below.</b></p> <p>or Va to fish for flounder? Why would you want NC dollars to go to other states for fish readily available now. I urge you to implement a 1 fish per day creel limit for flounder suitable to the spawning pattern of flounder. Why would a family pay \$400 for an inshore charter in NC when they can only keep 4 trout, 1 drum, ZERO flounder, and maybe throw in a black drum. It's not worth it. These charter captains are going to go out of business. The pier operators lose business daily when no one believes they have a chance to catch fish.</p> <p>Prior to the proliferation of the use of cheap, monofilament gill nets, the pound net fishery was the dominant source of harvest and can easily capture the proposed total allowable catch of southern flounder. Despite the warnings of many, pound nets have been allowed to increase as the southern flounder harvest has dramatically decreased.</p> <p>The phase out of the use of large mesh gill nets would eliminate the need for the sea turtle and sturgeon ITPs and with it the expense of observers and the headaches associated with non-compliance. Commissioners have to be questioning why the DMF is even considering a renewal application for a permit to allow endangered sea turtles to be killed in large mesh gill nets when the gear is no longer needed to harvest the allowable commercial harvest limit? Moreover, the removal of large mesh gill nets would minimize dead discards of important species such as red drum, black drum, and sheepshead. With the severity of the restrictions that lie ahead, DMF should not allow any new pound nets until the stock has sufficiently recovered. Once recovered, a limited entry system should be employed when issuing any new pound net permits with priority given to displaced gill netters.</p> <p>Any thought of a recreational ONLY hook and line slot limit on flounder should be immediately rejected as arbitrary and capricious. If a slot limit is applied, it should be applied equally to both user groups.</p> <p>Regarding trawling - push the out of NC boats off the beaches - 3 miles. Eliminate trawling in nursery areas and the ICW. Why in the world would we allow netting of juvenile fish species before they have even had a chance to spawn one single time. Forget the mesh size argument. The nets must go.</p> <p>Gears such as shrimp and crab trawls, along with oyster dredges and clam kickers, all re-suspend sediments laced with pollutants, such as heavy metals, from areas upriver that have been secured in soft bottom areas by various filter feeders and scavengers that live in this habitat. Such activity reduces water clarity, which, in</p>
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#	Name	State	<b><u>Please type your comments in the box below.</u></b>
			<p>turn, damages areas of subaquatic vegetation (SAV). Re-suspended sediments can settle on shell beds, choking out what little remaining oyster reefs we have. Re-releasing toxins in our sounds can only harm the multitude of "critters" that live in these areas.</p> <p>Commercial fishermen and DMF staff often state that the damage done to these areas of soft bottom is temporary and minimal. Yet satellite imaging shows numerous regions where deep scarring and channelization have occurred in areas where bottom disturbing gears are allowed.</p> <p>Running these gears over areas of soft bottom also strips them of the typical diverse benthic communities full of juvenile fish, crabs, sponges, barnacles, and more. Leaving behind nothing but the dead bycatch that was shoveled overboard and some bristleworms to feast on the buffet raining down on a once fertile bottom.</p> <p>Compare the monetary impact of recreational fishing in NC to the economic impact of commercial fishing in NC. it's not even close. Recreational economic impact FAR outpaces anything provided by commercial fishing.</p> <p>No one wants to see commercial fishermen go out of business. NC is the ONLY remaining Southern or Gulf state to allow inshore netting to the extent we do, and EVERY other state still have commercial fisheries. NC could and should have a world class inshore fishery, but we are prevented from having that by an increasingly small group of commercial fishermen and their allies who refuse to compromise even one single fish.</p> <p>PLEASE consider reasonable fisheries reforms before our finfish stocks collapse as they have done in New England to never recover again in any of our lifetimes.</p>
60	Clifford Rice	North Carolina	<p>I was dismayed to see the proposed shrimp trawling closures and feel you should NOT implement them. If you do some checking, you will find that the number of commercial fishermen who do this work continues to decline and over time, the impact of shrimping in these areas will greatly diminish. In the meantime, if this closure is implemented, the few fishermen who rely on this to support their families will suffer greatly and with little resulting benefit to the other fish stocks you proclaim to be protecting.</p>



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59	Danny Lewis	North Carolina	There is no reason that we the people should not be able to get in a boat walk on a pier or on the beach and catch some flounder when you're allowing thousands and thousands of pounds of them to be drug in by nets out there in the ocean.
58	Samantha Simmons	North Carolina	Shrimp are a natural resource we are entitled to harvest or buy locally. Your regulations are unjust, and are negatively affecting our communities.
57	Savannah Miller	North Carolina	Shrimping in the proposed closed areas is part of my family's heritage and many others in the community. I grew up on fresh local shrimp and I would love for my children to do the same. If this is passed that wouldn't be possible. Not to mention there is no true scientific data that would grant such a drastic closure. I hate imported shrimp and this would make it so that would be all I could get. It will ruin people's livelihoods and cause a lot of the down east communities to suffer. Families will suffer if this is passed. I urge you to not grant these closures. For the sake of the community and for families that rely on shrimping to pay their bills.
56	Tracy Merkley	North Carolina	<p>"The commercial fishing industry is what built eastern nc. It built and paid for our schools, court houses, fire departments, churches, etc. and we will settle for nothing less than that in the future...."</p> <p>-Jonathon Robinson ENC Commercial fisherman and county commissioner</p> <p>There are no truer words than his! It has provided food for our community and provided a way of life for the men and women who are called to work on the water. It has been a way of life for literally centuries in eastern NC. Abolishing this will only make matters worse for folks who depend on commercial fishing to make a living. I support rules and regulation as I do believe we have to have some boundaries, but totally abolishing it is absolutely ridiculous. Our towns, counties, and state DEPEND on the commercial fishing industry to survive. Just like the saying says, "if you ate today, thank a farmer," I say "if you ate seafood today, thank a commercial fisherman!" We are AS DEPENDENT on the commercial fishing industry as we are the farming industry. The answer isn't to just buy frozen seafood caught somewhere in Asia and just get another job, the answer is to support the industry that has BUILT our community! Eastern NC would not be where it is today had it not been for the commercial fishing industry. To me it seems that the real reason people don't want commercial fishing around is because they believe it ruins their view at their "beach house!" I'm more concerned about folks making a pay check and having a way of life to support their families, than someone's view at their beach hour. The politicians that support this should be removed from office, because they have betrayed the folks that they swore to work for and help!</p>


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			-Tracy Merkley Son of a commercial fisherman
55	Michael Piner	North Carolina	The closing of these areas would affect what I do for a living drastically. I enjoy being able to provide fresh shrimp/fish for my community, but since I am in a small boat I can only work in specific places and the ocean will not be an option for me. Please take in consideration the smaller boats that provide fresh shrimp/fish for our community. Thank you.
54	Carl Toepfer	North Carolina	I do not support he closer of the Sound or any inland waterways
53	Sammy Meadows	North Carolina	NO! This is a terrible idea. There is absolutely no reason to do this. Do not close anymore areas for shrimping.
52	Cameron Whitaker	North Carolina	I enjoy local North Carolina caught shrimp. I support NC Shrimpers and the fresh local sustainable product they provide to the consumers across this great state.
51	Sammy Meadows	North Carolina	NO! This is a terrible idea. There is absolutely no reason to do this. Do not close anymore areas for shrimping.
50	thomas lawrence	North Carolina	theres no need to close inside waters theres only dragging a few months out of the year and thats not hurting anything the commision only wants to close these water to shut the cca assholes up and to be honest the commission isnt much better than they are you sold the licenses to fish these waters now you want to do away with it maybe a class action suit will be more in line with things in the near future the commision is working on behalf of the cca and you dont care who you hurt in the process
49	Devin Daniels	North Carolina	The proposed closure will be devastating to our local commercial fishermen. These are people who have been making a living working these water for generations. These are people with small operations that will be put out of business that are just trying to provide for their families. Personally I enjoy locally caught seafood. I don't order seafood unless I know it comes from our waters. These closures are going to make that more difficult. These proposed changes are also going to push people farther out, not only is more hazardous to the fishermen, it also increases the risk of nets getting caught in artificial reefs and wrecks. As a local diver, that not only poses a risk to those habitats, but also the diving industry. It is hazardous and time consuming to remove these nets and NOAA refuses to get involved with it. This is a complex issue with a lot of variables, but I believe that the closures as proposed is not the answer.

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48	James Cogdell	North Carolina	this is long overdue, please support this problem we must not let the fish down i have been on WRC for a long period of time please stay your course and stay on the watch while you sail the waters of nc for facts and remove the fiction love to all who help us god bless Jim Cogdell
47	Michelle Pitman	North Carolina	I am strongly opposed to the proposed shrimping closures. If passed, not only will smaller commercial shrimpers be out of business and lose their livelihood, the recreational shrimper will be gone as well. Fresh, local shrimp are also important to the local economy. Local restaurants will be forced to serve imported or farm-raised shrimp that can be served anywhere, These shrimp are also not as good as local wild caught shrimp which locals and tourists alike so enjoy. Do not, I repeat, do not approve these closures!
46	Molly Neal Molly Neal	North Carolina	I believe this is wrong. You are taking the way of making a living from the little man. This isn't your way of making your money so obviously you don't care. If this was your resource and the tables were turned how would you feel.
45	Brian West Brian West	Virginia	I live in Virginia but shrimp for a living in nc if these areas are closed since I'm in a small boat I will not be able to provide for my family as well as a lot of other guys and gals that work in smaller boats
44	Richard Gibson		I am against any areas being closed to shrimping. Already 47 percent on inland waters are closed to shrimping. The number of people shrimping has dropped steadily over the past 20 years. By catch has been reduced over the last 25 years. Don't put the commercial fisherman out of business.
43	Glenn Page Glenn Page	North Carolina	What is the reason for putting our hard working people out of business
42	Gene Springle Springle	North Carolina	By shutting down inshore shrimping your causing a bunch of problems. Killing the economy. Putting Commercial fishing families into poverty Even more so than what they already are.and how bout jobs in the area...plus marine fisheries won't be selling commercial licenses like they were so it's a lose lose situation all the way around.
41	John Buck	North Carolina	Just why do we the people of the fishing industry have to keep fighting for our way of life?
40	Kayla Becton	North Carolina	It's sad that it has nothing to do about the seafood but all about how to destroy the working middle class that have dedicated their lives to the Industry that feeds you clean,healthy and edible seafood.  Before long there won't be Jobs or local food sources, amazing what the mighty dollar does right?

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39	Erik Rasmussen	North Carolina	Gill nets and trawlers are taking our fish. At the same time we're stocking lakes and rivers inland. Too bad nobody in Raleigh cares about our salt water fishing. We will be a desert soon.
38	Garrett Taylor	North Carolina	I agree we need to manage the fisheries so our children have the opportunity to enjoy the fisheries also. I have been saltwater fishing for 25 years inshore and have seen a big change in the stocks. There needs to be more regulations on commercial fishing quotas and shrimpers, netting etc. I believe if we cut back on commercial quotas and shrimpers, the stocks will rebound in no time. I just don't understand why it is always about the commercial guys. All the ones at the top of marine fisheries and state care about is the money that the commercial is making for them. It truly is sad. We need to keep the recreational sector open for the fact that if we close down recreational fishery there will be no interest for kids and families to go. Also the red drum, trout have been declining since these closers were put into effect on flounder. Garrett Taylor
37	William Hill	North Carolina	I would appreciate not being insulted by opening flounder season in NC for only two weeks. Please review the flounder seasons and limits other bordering states have or put in place when fishing for summer flounder. It doesn't seem that you are accomplishing much if SC and VA have more extensive seasons and limits. Please convince me that our recreational fishermen/and women are truly depleting the flounder population. Do your best to open a flounder season that is fair and equitable to NC residence.
36	KEITH TOSTO	North Carolina	To whom it may concern, I was born and raised in the community of ██████████ located in the northeast corner of Carteret County. I have lived here my entire life. I have been involved with commercial fishing from a very early age. I started working on a shrimp boat at the age of 12. I am now 63 years old. With over 50 years' experience of being involved I have seen a lot of changes and I think my opinion matters simply because I know what I am talking about. I "joined" the first two public meetings and listened as the three biologists gave their presentation. I was quickly reminded of the adage "if you can't baffle them with brilliance, befuddle them with BS". I could see right through what they were attempting to do. They have no regard for the industry which they are trying to control. They completely disrespect the people, the tradition and the heritage they are attempting to destroy. They are quick to use their fancy-colored graphs and use of acronyms to create their version of the facts. But here is the truth: People shrimping for a living do not want to catch fish. Plain and simple. We use try nets to check to see what is there and if there are too many fish we move on. The use of larger BRDs and larger tail bag size reduces the amount of bycatch. I have witnessed that, although it does appear that it reduces the amount of shrimp also but the amount of fish being caught in shrimp trawls is WAY less than it was just a few years

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			<p>ago.</p> <p>People shrimping for a living do not want to catch grass (SAV). It clogs the net and makes for more work. It is my experience that the larger more adult shrimp do not stay in the grass beds. Also, SAV does not occur in water deeper than 6 foot deep. This was stated by Anne Deaton, Habitat Assessment Program Manager DMF, in one of the two meetings I observed. I personally do not know of anyone that trawls in 6 foot of water or less. In my area it is illegal to trawl in 6 foot or less. It is illegal to set crab pots in water that is over 6 foot deep. Thus, theoretically ending gear conflicts. I heard comments that enforcing the 6-foot depth would be difficult. Really? The necessary high-tech equipment is currently being used to check the 6-foot depth for crab pots. It consists of a section of PVC pipe with the 6-foot mark shown on the pipe. The officer sticks the pipe in the water until it reaches bottom. If it goes over the mark, it is deeper than 6 feet. If it does not, then it is less than 6 feet. Now how difficult is that?</p> <p>Here are my suggestions: To protect the SAV areas, close all areas to trawling that are 6-foot or less. I am sure that if you mark these areas on your charts, you will see that this will take in an exceptionally large area. And thus, satisfying the need to protect SAV areas. This will affect very few shrimpers.</p> <p>To reduce by catch, enlarge the areas that only allow 90 feet of headrope to include Neuse River, Bay River, and Pamlico River. Do not close these areas to trawling. This will allow the smaller boats to operate. The larger boats that trawl with 220 feet of headrope could pull 90 feet of headrope if they so desire to work in these areas. Make the 1 ¾" tail bag size the statewide law to include the ocean. As it is now, I can pull 1 ½" tail bag in the tributaries but not in the sound. I can also pull the smaller mesh in the ocean. To a lot of people in the industry this is backwards and makes no sense.</p> <p>These are the only two measures that I could agree to. It has been made clear that the Division lacks the data to justify the closures that have been suggested. The economic impact alone would be devastating to the coastal communities.</p> <p>I hope this letter is read by someone with enough insight to realize the closures suggested are not what this industry needs right now. Do more studies, gather better data and make good decisions based on facts.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Keith Tosto</p>
35	Hank Myers	North Carolina	<p>I'm a recreational fisherman in Brunswick County the time I have to fish is limited so when I do fish it's really nice when I catch some fish I've noticed a steady decline over the last 20 years of being a resident of [REDACTED] Island that the fishing has gotten considerably worse over the years I'm totally for all the conservation efforts that you guys have explained and I hope that the proper decisions can be made by the higher ups that</p>

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			<p>control these fisheries I can only hope that my grand children will be able to experience some of the fishing that I did as a kid on the North Carolina coast I'm 65 years old now and have serious concerns of whether that's gonna happen or not</p> <p>Respectfully submitted HANK myers</p>
34	Arnold Murray	North Carolina	<p>At 72 years of age, I am so disappointed that I cannot take my grandchildren fishing with rod and reels for flounders and catch enough to have a backyard fish fry with the family. I have bought fishing license , boat registration, and trailer tags, etc. and obeyed the laws since I was 16. only to be told I can't catch fish now that I have the time to go. There are more fish, shrimp, and oysters, that are sold unreported by the "legal commercial" fishermen than the amount of decline that the harvest record reflects. Just the water pollution from countless boats that remain in the water is enough to cause marine life to decline in any area. Just look at the grass stems along our waterways, sludge and rainbow oil scum everywhere. Mullet and spot runs bypass our shorelines for a reason.</p>
33	Eddie Stallings	North Carolina	<p>I fully support all the CCA recommendations!</p>
32	Bill Wallace	North Carolina	<p>NC is a disgrace and national embarrassment concerning our coastal fisheries management. The use of destructive gear must be stopped. The two week recreational flounder season this year was a total insult to the recreational fisherman. The evil greedy corrupt politicians and commercial fisherman responsible must be stopped. It is incredibly irresponsible to continue these destructive practices. I pray to God Almighty that these problems will go away.</p>
31	Bennie Spencer	North Carolina	<p>The fish are not endangered or over fished by us recreational fisherpersons, IT IS the ones dragging the nets with in yards of the shore and keep fish the recreational people have to through back. I see a menue that has "Baby Flounder", I want to through the menue away and walk out.</p>
30	Jason Salter	North Carolina	<p>I am 100% against the recommended changes concerning the shrimp fishery. In fact, I am appalled that such recommendations would even be given a second glance. Commercial fisherman have been attacked enough over the years for no reason. Your purpose states the changes "focus on management to further reduce bycatch and protect critical habitat." The reality is, the changes will eliminate the industry and have a negative effect on our local economy. The shrimp fishery is one of the top two commercial fisheries year</p>

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			<p>after year. To add to the closed area, which is already 47% of inland waters, is not the answer. It might not be felt in the communities that rely on tourism, but most definitely will in communities that rely on commercial fishing.</p> <p>The report noted that the number of trips landing shrimp has declined since 1994. I agree with this simply because the number of commercial fisherman has declined. The reason behind the reduction of any of the landing of any species is the fact that many fisherman have already been put out of business as a result of emotion, instead of science. The interpretation of much of the data is flawed/biased and really not based on science at all. If it were, why would be changing our strategies on such short notice. BRDs, TEDS, and other modifications have already reduced bycatch by up to 57% according to your data. If it's not broken don't try to fix it. This is yet another example of "We are the government and we are here to help." Please do not implement these changes!</p>
29	Joe Bubenzer	North Carolina	<p>I support the Coastal Conservation Association position regarding the southern Flounder FMP review, ie</p> <p>Faced with at least a decade of these restrictions, any commercially harvested southern flounder can (and should) be taken by gears that are cleaner and more sustainable, those being pound nets and gigs.</p> <p>Regards, Joe Bubenzer</p> 
28	Alan Moore	North Carolina	<p>I have been a recreational fisherman in coastal NC waters, mostly in the Oak Island area, for more than sixty years. My strong impression is that fish populations have declined dramatically. I urge the Commission to protect recreational fishing in NC, and I support the positions of the CCA NC.</p>
27	Ken Redman	North Carolina	<p>Obviously, with all the data that has been submitted to the MFC, North Carolina's fish resources problem is simply a politically induced holocaust where the commercial netting fishermen pay or subsidize their elected politicians to further sustain the pillage with their lack of legislative policies to help replenish the depleted stocks. The depleted stocks need the current litigation to force the NC government to recognize the data and aggressively work to replenish this natural resource since the elected politicians are too ignorant or greedy to get the job done correctly. Shame, shame, shame on those elected officials for their ignorance and/or greed which always wins over common sense!!!!!!!!!!</p>
26	Taylor Koch	North Carolina	<p>Please make readily available an explanation as to why 2 weeks of flounder, specifically related to having a lower limit for more weeks. Eg. 4 fish for 2 weeks. Rather, 1 fish for 4 weeks or something a little more friendly to the average fisher-person. I fish the inshore often through the summer and fall, and occasionally</p>

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25	Jack Dunn	North Carolina	<p data-bbox="478 154 1999 267">gut hook a flounder, only to watch it float down in death. If we could keep ONE per day, this would limit this senseless waste of our resources; and w/ the many inshore fish to keep, having ONE flounder per day for a longer season would create a greater chance as a mixed back and some fresh fish for dinner.</p> <p data-bbox="478 284 1999 446">I am writing as a recreational fisherman but principally as someone who values the protection of the broader resource. I implore the commission to protect the long-term integrity of the Pamlico sound for both commercial and recreational fisherman and for all citizens of North Carolina. We all have to sacrifice to protect a body of water and a fishery that are in decline. I've highlighted certain points below:</p> <ol data-bbox="478 495 1999 1494" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="478 495 1999 787">1. I would recommend a slightly longer recreational season but would limit the creel to one fish per fisherman and recommend a slot for harvested fish of 15 inches to 20 inches so that larger fish are released to breed. I've witnessed first hand the number of folks that fish twice a day and harvest their flounder limits both times for multiple days of the flounder system; limiting the creel limit maintains recreational interest in the species but should help prevent over fishing and excessive targeting of the species when the season is open. On a slightly unrelated note I also support a slot for speckled trout where the creel limit is maintained at 4 fish per person and the minimum length remains the same with a maximum length of 20 inches added.</li> <li data-bbox="478 836 1999 1258">2. I encourage the prohibition of large mesh gill nets because the practice results in the death of undersized flounder and large incidental takes of other species like red drum. If the commission elects not to ban gill nets I encourage the idea of a poundage limit for flounder harvest in NC(as set by biologist to increase stocks) irrespective of means(gill nets, gigging, pound nets) or location (inshore or ocean) and once that poundage is reached all forms of harvest need to stop by the year including any form of harvest that involves incidental take (ie all forms of netting except those that produce 100% live fish and a means to cull those fish without death). Said differently, once the chosen tonnage was reached all forms of netting except pound nets would be prohibited and all fish secured through pound nets would be released. I also encourage a careful study of the speckled trout population and a prescribed tonnage limit for that species that once reached requires the removal of all gear that targets the species or results in incidental taking.</li> <li data-bbox="478 1307 1999 1494">3. I encourage the commission to eliminate in shore trawling for shrimp in its entirety as the extensive by catch has outsized implications on the ecosystem and populations of spot, croaker, weakfish, sheepshead, black drum and weak fish. Additionally large trawlers with bottom disturbing gear harm the integrity of the bottom creating excessive suspended sediments and substantially impacting the health of aquatic vegetation and shellfish which serves as important water filters, reduce erosion and provide critical protection</li> </ol>



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			<p data-bbox="470 154 2022 357">during storm events. If inshore trawling is not prohibited please consider limiting shrimp gear to skimmer rigs that don't impact the bottom, require all shrimpers to pay income tax in NC and all shrimp boats to pay property tax in NC (no other states provide reciprocity for our commercial fisherman) and require that shrimping occurs within one nautical mile of shore to protect marine nursery areas and critical aquatic vegetation and shellfish habitats.</p> <p data-bbox="470 406 2022 479">Thank you for your consideration of my ideas. I value the notion of protecting commercial fishing as a way of life and having the opportunit</p>

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<u>24</u>	James Hall	North Carolina	With the subject being management of the southern flounder population, why would the marine fisheries commission elect to have both recreational and commercial seasons open during the peak of the southern flounder breeding season. This seems contradictory to sound management practices.
<u>23</u>	julianna olsen	North Carolina	Please stop gigging for flounder. I have seen soooo many people gigging this year. They gig anything they see whether regulation or under-sized. The intracoastal waterway down in Sunset Beach looked like a highway with all the lights at night. I totally understand limiting the catch so we can build back the stock but the people destroying the stock are the giggers and the commercial fishermen. Please put some restrictions on them or stop them completely for a while. The recreational fisherman needs more than 2 weeks. Thank you!
<u>22</u>	Larry Kellum	North Carolina	The NCDMF proposed changes to the shrimp fishery management plan are, for lack of a better description, insane. These changes, if approved, would effectively kill the shrimp industry in North Carolina. This action, if carried out, would have a ripple effect on the economy of coastal North Carolina that would be a devastating blow to coastal communities. A time honored livelihood would be cast aside in favor of a special interest group who seek the demise of an industry that they do not fully understand, nor do they care to comprehend. It would also deny consumers a valuable, healthy food commodity. Do not allow the greed of a few to destroy the livelihoods of many. Back in the eighties, the marine habitat was robust, and there were several hundred boats working in Core Sound. Now, there are approximately fifteen or twenty boats working this same area. Needless to say, effort has dropped off dramatically. Herein lies proof that habitat degradation is not attributable to trawling. If you truly want to conserve marine habitat, put your efforts on coastal development. There were no coastal ecological concerns prior to the escalation of development. In conclusion, the only entity in need of protection in this scenario is the fisherman himself,
<u>21</u>	Logan Hanner	North Carolina	Please begin limiting commercial haul to ensure long term sustainability of this fishery!
<u>20</u>	Sarah Smith	North Carolina	Hi there - as a member of the NC seafood industry and a concerned consumer I must oppose the closure of proposed areas of Carteret County to shrimp trawling. These closures will force smaller boats farther out to sea or out of business. North Carolina shrimp is a powerful economic driver to our coastal communities and they have already implemented bycatch reduction techniques. Commercial fishermen are just as concerned about the vitality of our marine species populations as anyone - their lives depend on it. Additionally, to close these areas would essentially take away access of NC shrimp to NC taxpayers further inland. All taxpayers in the state pay to manage those waters & populations. They have a right to the end product. Thank you.

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			<p>I am happy to provide more information and/or answer any questions.</p> <p>Thank you, Chris McCaffity</p>
19	Chris Mccaffity	North Carolina	<p>Please use some our funds from recreational and commercial fishing licenses sales to regionally stock larval-stage Southern Flounder from existing hatchery facilities. Please create Hatchery Supported Quotas for Southern Flounder based on a percentage of projected survival rates. Please consider options for letting license holders vote on how each sector's share of Hatchery Supported Quotas will be managed. This could be the perfect blend of public water mariculture and wild-caught seafood that lives wild and free until harvested. This solution would benefit everyone and the environment.</p> <p>I am happy to provide more information and/or answer any questions.</p> <p>Thank you, Chris McCaffity</p>

#	Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
15	Felix Weinhold	North Carolina	<p>I am opposed to the proposed closures for shrimp trawling. I am a recreational gear license holder and while I currently do not own a shrimp trawl, I do have friends who do and we enjoy the activity and sharing our catch with family and friends. I live off of [REDACTED] Sound and just this year have shrimped in [REDACTED] Sound and [REDACTED] River.</p> <p>Felix "Bill" Weinhold [REDACTED] [REDACTED] NC [REDACTED]</p>
16	Tiffany Wade	North Carolina	<p>As a local resident who loves our local shrimp more than most this seems like devastating news. Our local fleet of fisherman do not have big enough boats to go offshore to find shrimp. Going out in too small a boat is dangerous and can be deadly under the wrong conditions. Plus the carbon footprint of local fisherman is smaller than those of larger boats that have to go further out.</p> <p>I truly hope this committee factors in the impact this closure will have on local fisherman, local seafood markets, local restaurants who try to serve only local seafood, and locals who prefer to support their neighbors.</p> <p>I look forward to read all your reasoning and hope that you do the same for all of us opposed to this closure.</p> <p>Thank you all.</p>
17	Rebecca Bowler	North Carolina	<p>I oppose the proposed closures until more information is shared with the public and, following that, until we have time to learn why the closures are needed. Please do not put small NC shrimp boat operators - like Miss Ginas Fresh Shrimp - at a disadvantage or out of business.</p>
18	Chris Mccaffity	North Carolina	<p>November 2021 Marine Fisheries Commission Public Comment</p> <p>Please consider options for shrimp management that include allowing retention of by-catch to be used for food, bait, and other products. This would allow us to get a much more accurate count of what is being caught in shrimp trawls. Please also consider options for using some of our Commercial Fishing Resource Fund to help pay for regionally stocking a variety of native seafood that can naturally reproduce. This solution would offset harvest of juveniles and the negative impacts of habitat degradation on spawning success. Making full use of harvested seafood along with wise use of existing hatchery facilities would feed more people and create more recreational opportunity while generating more revenue. This would be a winning solution for everyone and the environment.</p>

#	Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
10	Wesley Potter	North Carolina	I'm a full time commercial fisherman. Closing the Bay and Neuse rivers would impact my family and I because this is where I've been shrimping for 30+ years. This area is close to my home and where I work traditionally. Please consider that the small local boats depend on these areas and we work only a small part of this area that is productive. Also industry has taken action to reduce bycatch via TEDS and BYRDS.
11	johnnie burgess	North Carolina	I strongly feel the DMF has not given enough consideration on their recommendation concerning shrimpers and shrimping. North Carolina was the first state to implement the "excluder device" on shrimp trawlers. There is no evidence that the devices aren't working correctly or at all. The area involved in the DMF's proposal is too broad and creates a devastating impact on the local shrimping community. Consider that 65% of the state's shrimpers use boats that are less than 30 feet in length and cannot safely navigate deeper water in open areas if inclement weather conditions prevail. Due to the DMF's untimely announcement of this propaganda, DMF has not allowed enough time to study the impact or devastation that it will create on the statewide shrimping industry. I feel the DMF should create an exploratory committee to study the proposed amendment. I would be more than happy to Chair this committee to help the DMF do better at creating better understanding, solutions, and communication for the public and shrimping industry.
12	Linda Davis	North Carolina	We the people of Carteret County are totally against closing the waters surrounded by our county and the coast of NC for small shrimp trawlers and fisherman! This tradition has been a way of life from the beginning of people settling here! Our county depends on it!! This is so wrong!! DO NOT SHUT DOWN THE SMALL FISHERMAN'S WAY OF LIFE!!
13	Robert Heist, Jr	North Carolina	I live in [REDACTED] and buy all of my seafood local especially shrimp. The shrimpers that I buy from all have smaller boats and are not suited to off shore or Pamlico Sound areas. Most use either Core Sound, the Straits or North River which would be off limits if this were passed. They would be out of business and probably have to rely on Government handouts, not their skills and experiences. I do not and will not eat imported seafood period. My health and taste are of concern!
14	Steve King	North Carolina	NC MFC and the various divisions need to: 1) quit kicking cans down the road, voting for more study need. MAKE A DECISION 2) the science shows clear evidence of declining finfish populations - as stewards of the environment what are you doing for any user base besides commercial shrimp trawlers and the industry in general? The answer appears to be, "nothing."  If your child received failing grades year after year after year, would you think a change is needed?

#	Name	State	<b><u>Please type your comments in the box below.</u></b>
<u>1</u>	Holly Lawson	North Carolina	Commercial fishing is a huge part of Carteret County's history and is still an industry that many families in our community rely on for their livelihood. This is particularly true for the economically depressed eastern end of the county. There has to be a better solution - a compromise - that balances the livelihood of our fishermen and protecting our natural resources. Please do not close all of the proposed areas in the central region because it will decimate many small businesses in our area and lead to hardship for many.
<u>2</u>	Terry Metts	North Carolina	Leave the smaller shrimp boats alone they do very little damage as compared to the large shrimp boats pulling a lot of net. The small boat shrimpers are family operated and local and provide a fresh product for us to purchase STOP destroying the commercial fishing industry in NC We need LESS GOVERNMENT and Your REGULATIONS
<u>3</u>	Marc Boettger	North Carolina	Start managing for the benefit of the public Instead of worrying about the profits of a select few. I will be calling for and supporting any measure to get rid of the NCDMF and the MFC. Put coastal fisheries under the management of the NCWRC, they actually follow the science and use common sense to manage our resources. The MFC is a disgrace to public resource management. We allow practices in NC that have been banned or severally limited along the entire east coast and Gulf of Mexico for decades. It is a joke at this point.
<u>4</u>	Paula Shinn	North Carolina	Please vote AGAINST the proposed shrimp trawling regulations.
<u>5</u>	Dawn Simpsons	North Carolina	Please do NOT close any further coastal NC watered for shrimping.
<u>6</u>	Rosie Davis	North Carolina	Please do not make this change. It'll devastate a lot of families, fishermen. And consumers.
<u>7</u>	Sandra Hill	North Carolina	Please do not follow thru with the closures, You will hurt our local fishermen. Support our local fisherman, it is their livelihood. It be devastating to them and their families. We need to continue to provide NC residents with local seafood, not from a foreign country. Stand up for America.
<u>8</u>	Marklan Meadows	North Carolina	Please consider changing the Flounder season for 2022 so that we can target them during the "cheaper" off season. Oct - Nov. Even if it means lowering the creel to have a longer season. (Living on a tight retirement budget) Thank you
<u>9</u>	Steven Rowe	North Carolina	Why do you people keep restricting local people from catching seafood from our waters. We keep having to find new ways of hiding and getting our catches on shore but we are doing it. It is not fair.