

# Director's Report

November 2022 Business Meeting

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Summary Report

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## October 2022 Council Meeting Summary

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council met October 4-6, 2022, in Dewey Beach, Delaware. This was a hybrid meeting, with virtual and in-person participation options. Presentations, briefing materials, motions, and webinar recordings are available at <http://www.mafmc.org/briefing/october-2022>.

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

During this meeting, the Council:

- Approved for public comment a draft amendment to modify the species separation requirements in the Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries
- Initiated an Omnibus (all Council-managed species) Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Amendment
- Set 2023 spiny dogfish specifications including a 55% reduction in the Acceptable Biological Catch and a 59% reduction in the commercial quota, compared to 2022
- Received an update on private recreational tilefish permitting and reporting and discussed additional outreach needed to improve angler awareness and compliance
- Received an update on the East Coast Scenario Planning Initiative
- Met jointly with the Scientific and Statistical Committee to discuss topics of mutual interest
- Received presentations on NOAA Fisheries Draft Ropeless Roadmap Report, NEFSC Fishery Monitoring and Research Division Update, and NOAA Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy
- Received a refresher on the Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Excessive Shares Amendment
- Provided input on proposed actions and deliverables for the 2023 Implementation Plan (Executive Committee)
- Agreed with the Protected Resource Committee's recommendation to send a comment letter on the Proposed North Atlantic Right Whale Vessel Strike Reduction Rule
- Presented the 2021 Ricks E Savage Award to Mr. Steve Heins

### **Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Species Separation Requirements Amendment**

The Council approved for public comment a draft amendment to modify the species separation requirements in the Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries. Comments may be submitted at any of three public hearings to be held on November 10, 14, and 17. Written comments will also be accepted through November 23. A hearing schedule and public comment instructions are available [here](#).

This action is intended to address the increased occurrence of mixed catches in the Atlantic surfclam and ocean quahog fisheries. Current regulations do not allow for surfclam and ocean quahog to be landed on the same trip or placed in the same cages. Industry has reported that it has become increasingly difficult to avoid mixed catches due to changes in the species' distributions. The draft amendment contains a range of management approaches ("alternatives") that would modify current regulations to allow for mixed catches onboard vessels. Details about these management alternatives can be found in the [Public Hearing Document](#).

Following a review of comments received, the Council will choose a preferred alternative and submit the amendment to the Secretary of Commerce for approval and publication of proposed and final rules, both of which have additional comment periods. The Council may consider final action at its [December 12-15, 2022](#) meeting.

## Essential Fish Habitat Amendment

The Council initiated an Omnibus (all Council-managed species) Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Amendment that will concurrently conduct the 5-year EFH review required under the Magnuson Stevens Act while amending fishery management plans for the Council, as needed. This action is an opportunity to utilize the best available fish habitat science to improve EFH designations and support the Council's fish habitat conservation efforts while supporting the EFH consultation process. The consultation process plays an important role in addressing the impacts of non-fishing projects (such as wind energy projects) on fish habitat.

## Spiny Dogfish 2023 Specifications

Due to delays with the ongoing spiny dogfish research track assessment, the Council had to set 2023 spiny dogfish specifications without the benefit of a current assessment. The Council will consider the assessment results when they become available. The Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) recommended an Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) reduction from 17,498 metric tons (MT) to 7,788 MT, a 55.5% reduction. The SSC's rationale for the reduction included observations of declining trends in several indicators including survey abundance, catch per unit of effort (CPUE), pup production, and dogfish growth. After other sources of catches are accounted for (discards, recreational landings, and Canadian landings), the 2023 commercial quota (beginning May 1, 2023) would be 12.0 million pounds, a 59% reduction from 2022. The 2021 fishery landed about 10.4 million pounds, and the first half of the 2022 fishery has followed a similar weekly pattern as 2021. The Council discussed that these specifications involve a higher risk of overages due to the lack of a management uncertainty buffer and uncertainty about expected discards, but industry input indicated they were willing to risk future paybacks because a 2023 quota below 12 million pounds could lead to the closure of the last remaining spiny dogfish processing facility. The New England Fishery Management Council will consider its spiny dogfish recommendations in December 2022 for this jointly-managed stock.

## Private Recreational Tilefish Permitting and Reporting

In August 2020, recreational permitting and reporting requirements were implemented for private tilefish anglers. During this meeting the Council received a presentation from the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) on the status of private recreational tilefish (golden and blue) permitting and reporting. The [update](#) included information related to the number of permits issued, recreational trips, and landings reported since the requirements were initially implemented.

Council staff also gave a presentation on what outreach has been accomplished to date, provided a summary of the Joint Tilefish and Communication and Outreach Advisory Panel meeting, and a list of future outreach efforts. As a result of the presentations and subsequent discussion, the Council recommended additional outreach be conducted in Spring 2023 when offshore angler activity for golden and blue tilefish recreational fishing increases. The goal of this outreach is to increase awareness of the tilefish permitting and reporting requirements, as well as to educate anglers on the reporting systems available to submit electronic vessel trip reports and the benefits of accurate reporting. Current outreach materials and other resources are available on the Council's Tilefish Permitting and Reporting Webpage.

## Climate Change Scenario Planning

The Council received an update on the East Coast Scenario Planning Initiative. Since the August Council meeting, the core team has worked to refine the draft scenario narratives and begin the Applications Phase of the initiative. Three manager "brainstorming sessions" were recently held via webinar to generate ideas issues, ideas and options that should be discussed during the Applications Phase. At their respective upcoming November and December meetings, each East Coast Council and the ASMFC will develop ideas and recommendations from each management body. These ideas will feed into an in-person summit meeting to be held in February 2023. The summit meeting will serve as a venue to develop a final set of governance, management, and monitoring

recommendations from the scenario planning process. Additional updates will be posted to the [Climate Change Scenario Planning website](#) as they are available.

## Joint Council-SSC Meeting

The Council and its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) met jointly to discuss ongoing and planned SSC activities in support of Council priorities. The Council and SSC have been holding these joint meetings annually since 2019 to provide an opportunity to discuss pertinent issues and foster greater dialogue and build relationships between the Council and SSC given the limited interaction between the two groups. Three topics were discussed in detail: (1) the anticipated topics and issues the SSC will address in 2023, (2) an update of the ongoing work by the SSC Ecosystem Work Group in developing and utilizing integrated ecosystem-level indicators within existing or new Council processes, and (3) future engagement and activities of the SSC Economic Work Group. The Council also discussed potential changes to future joint meetings to ensure meetings remain productive and achieve the intended goals.

## NOAA Fisheries Presentations

### ***NOAA Fisheries Draft Ropeless Roadmap Report***

Dr. Michael Asaro (NEFSC) provided an overview of the Draft Ropeless Roadmap which describes the current state of on-demand fishing and outlines a path for adoption of this technology in commercial fisheries. This roadmap is an important step towards reducing the risk of right whale entanglement in fishing gear. The technology involved in this on-demand or ropeless fishing is still in development, and public input is being sought at this time to help guide the future of the program. The Council discussed the capabilities of the current technology and where it is expected to progress in the future. They also discussed concerns over the current costs and the potential for gear conflicts.

### ***NEFSC Fishery Monitoring and Research Division Update***

KB McArdle (NEFSC) presented an update on activities at the Fishery Monitoring and Research Division. This Division focuses on the data collection and integration of information from Mid-Atlantic and New England commercial fisheries into the science and management process. They oversee programs such as the observer operations and training, dockside monitoring, the study fleet, and data modernization. The update included information on recent changes to the data review process to redistribute observer coverage, the planned 2022-2023 sea day coverage for the standardized bycatch reporting methodology, and current activities within the cooperative research program.

### ***NOAA Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Policy***

Russ Dunn (NOAA Fisheries) briefed the Council on plans to update NOAA's 2015 National Policy for Saltwater Recreational Fisheries. Goals of the current policy include supporting relevant natural resources, promoting saltwater fishing for the benefit of the nation, and enabling enduring participation through science-based conservation and management. NOAA Fisheries intends to update the Policy to ensure that it adapts with changing ocean and fishery conditions, scientific understanding, and the evolving needs of the fishing public. The public comment period is open through December 31, 2022. [Learn more here](#).

## Other Business

### ***Excessive Shares Amendment Proposed Rule***

The Council received a refresher on the history of the development of Amendment 20 to the Atlantic Surfclam and Ocean Quahog Fishery Management Plan. The Council initiated work on this action in 2004, and after many years of work and deliberations it approved the amendment for submission to NMFS in December 2019. The Council developed this action to limit the amount of surfclam or ocean quahog individual transferable quota share, or annual allocation in the form of cage tags, that an individual or their family members could hold. In addition,

this action will adjust the maximum duration of multi-year specifications actions to match the stock assessment schedule. NMFS published a [proposed rule](#) to implement Amendment 20 on August 24, 2022.

### ***2023 Implementation Plan***

The Executive Committee met to discuss the 2023 Implementation Plan. The Council develops Implementation Plans each year to ensure progress toward achieving the goals and objectives of its 5-year strategic plan. First, the Committee received a progress update on the 2022 Implementation Plan. The Committee then reviewed and provided feedback on a draft list of deliverables that had been developed by staff for 2023. The Executive Committee agreed to move an action to address sturgeon bycatch from “possible additions” to the proposed deliverables for 2023.

### ***Proposed North Atlantic Right Whale Vessel Strike Reduction Rule***

The Council received a report from the Protected Resources Committee and agreed with the Committee’s recommendation to send a comment letter on the [Proposed North Atlantic Right Whale Vessel Strike Reduction Rule](#) before the October 31 comment deadline. The comment letter will include the points discussed during the September 14 Protected Resources Committee meeting.

### ***2021 Ricks E Savage Award***

Mr. Stephen (Steve) Heins was named the 2021 recipient of the Ricks E Savage Award. The award is given each year to a person who has added value to the MAFMC process and management goals through significant scientific, legislative, enforcement, or management activities. Mr. Heins retired in 2017 following 29 years of employment with the New York Department of Environmental Conservation. Early in his career, he headed New York State’s artificial reef and fishing access programs. During his last 11 years at DEC, he served as the Chief of Marine Fisheries and coordinator of finfish and crustacean programs. In this role, he also served as the department’s designee to the Mid-Atlantic Council. After his retirement, Mr. Heins was appointed to New York’s obligatory seat on the Council and served for one additional term. Throughout his 14-year tenure on the Council, Mr. Heins contributed a wealth of knowledge and experience for every MAFMC-managed species as well as NEFMC-managed species such as groundfish. Mr. Heins has a B.S. in Marine Science from Southampton College and an M.S. in Marine Environmental Science from the State University of New York. He proudly served in the U.S. Marine Corps. He is an avid recreational angler.

### ***Next Meeting***

The next Council meeting will be held **December 12-15, 2022 in Annapolis, Maryland**. A complete list of upcoming meetings can be found at <https://www.mafmc.org/council-events>.



# South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 21, 2022

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### Council Fishery Managers Consider Options for Red Snapper Management

There were many agenda items affecting federal fisheries management for the September meeting of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, but a single issue dominated interest from the public – the potential use of time/area closures for the snapper grouper fishery. The Council received a total of 1,047 online written comments, with the majority opposing time and area closures to address release mortality in the Red Snapper fishery. The opposition continued as the Council received comments during the meeting in Charleston, SC from charter captains, recreational fishermen, regional business leaders, boat and fishing gear manufacturers, and Florida Congressman John Rutherford.

Managing Red Snapper as the stock continues to rebuild remains a challenge. As the number of Red Snapper increase, so do the number of fish released that die, driven primarily by the recreational sector targeting co-occurring snapper grouper species. Frustration levels also are also high because the stock remains listed as “undergoing overfishing” due to release mortality and its impacts on the larger breeding populations. As a result, harvest remains strictly limited.

During its June 2022 meeting, the Council requested a comprehensive list of data analyses to consider options for time/area closures to address release mortality as it develops Regulatory Amendment 35 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan. The draft amendment currently includes an action to reduce the Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) and Annual Catch Limits (ACL) for Red Snapper to address overfishing as required, and options to reduce release mortality by allowing only single hook rigs and prohibiting the use of automatic (electric) reels in the recreational snapper grouper fishery. “You still have year-round *access* to the Red Snapper fishery,” said NOAA Fisheries Regional Administrator Andy Strelcheck during a presentation at the meeting. “While the Council is taking positive steps to reduce release mortality, more has to be done. There’s a changing baseline – drivers 10-20 years ago are different than today,” explained Strelchek, noting the increase in the numbers of offshore recreational fishermen, access to highly improved electronics, and other factors.

After considering public input, data concerns, and need for additional analyses, Council members were quick to oppose considering area closures in Regulatory Amendment 35, and discussed options for addressing management through short-term, mid-term, and long-term solutions. The Council agreed to move forward with the amendment, considered a “short-term” measure to immediately address the overfishing condition, until additional mid-term and long-term management measures could be considered and put into place. Regulatory Amendment 35 includes an outreach component, stressing the importance of best fishing practices in improving survivability of all snapper grouper species. “Recreational fishermen can certainly do their part in reducing release mortality,” said Council Chair Mel Bell during discussions. “We’ve heard from business and industry leaders and will depend on their support as we move forward. If you educate fishermen, I think they will do the

(Continued)

right thing. I've watched this happen at the state level with amazing results." The Council's Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel will provide recommendations during its October 18-20 meeting in Charleston. Regulatory Amendment 35 is scheduled for approval during the Council's March 2023 meeting, with public hearings anticipated in early 2023.

## **Other Actions**

### **Greater Amberjack (Snapper Grouper Amendment 49)**

The Council approved Snapper Grouper Amendment 49 for submission to the Secretary of Commerce during their meeting. The amendment addresses changes in management for Greater Amberjack after the latest assessment, completed in 2020, indicated the stock is not overfished or undergoing overfishing. If approved by the Secretary of Commerce, the amendment would: increase the Annual Catch Limit (ACL); revise sector allocations with 65% of the total ACL recreational and 35% commercial; reduce the commercial minimum size limit from 36" fork length to 34" fork length (the recreational minimal size limit is 28" fork length); increase the commercial trip limit during Season 2 (September 1 through end of February) to 1,200 pounds gutted or whole weight; apply the current April spawning season closure to both commercial and recreational fishermen; and remove recreational annual catch targets from the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan. The amendment would also adopt revised goals and objectives for the Snapper Grouper FMP.

### **Spanish Mackerel**

The recent stock assessment for Spanish Mackerel was reviewed by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee in August 2022. The SSC had numerous concerns with the assessment and input data, such as the recent recreational estimates from NOAA Fisheries Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) and concluded that additional work was needed before the assessment could be accepted. New landings will be incorporated into the stock assessment model to address the uncertainty and the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee will review the outcomes during its October 25-27, 2022, meeting. The Council's Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel will also provide input on increased recreational shore-based landings and overall increase in recreational effort during the COVID-19 pandemic, effects of a lower commercial trip limit on market price, and other fishery issues during its October 5-6, 2022, meeting in Charleston.

## **Elections**

The Council elected Dr. Carolyn Belcher to serve as its new Chair. Dr. Belcher is the Council representative for the GA Department of Natural Resources and is currently the Chief of Fisheries for the Coastal Resources Division. She was serving as Vice Chair when elected to replace Mel Bell with the SC Department of Natural Resources as Chair. Trish Murphey, the agency designee for the NC Division of Marine Fisheries was elected Vice Chair.

Information about the September Council meeting, including final committee reports, public comments, and meeting materials is available from the Council's website at: <https://safmc.net/events/september-2022-council-meeting/>. The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for December 5-9, 2022, in Wrightsville Beach, NC.

The online version of this news release is available at: <https://safmc.net/posts/federal-fishery-managers-consider-options-for-red-snapper-management/>.

**The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, one of eight regional councils, conserves and manages fish stocks from three to 200 miles offshore of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and east Florida.**



**South Atlantic Fishery Management Council**  
**Full Council and Committee Reports**  
**SUMMARY MOTIONS**  
**September 12-16, 2022**

This is a summary of the motions approved by the Council. Motions addressing actions and alternatives for FMP amendments are followed by text showing the result of the approved motion. Complete details on motions and other committee recommendations are provided in the Committee Reports available on the SAFMC website.

**Full Council Session I**

**Acceptable Biological Catch Control Rule Amendment**

**MOTION 1: APPROVE THE PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENTS.**

***Purpose for Actions***

The purpose of this amendment is to revise the acceptable biological catch control rule by clarifying the incorporation of scientific uncertainty and management risk, modifying the approach used to determine the acceptable risk of overfishing, and prioritizing the use of stock rebuilding plans for overfished stocks. Additionally, this amendment will specify conditions and procedures for using carry-overs and phase-ins in setting catch limits, including modification of framework procedures to accommodate implementation of carry-overs when applicable.

***Need for Actions***

The need for this amendment is to ensure catch level recommendations are based on the best scientific information available, prevent overfishing while achieving optimum yield, and include flexibility in setting catch limits as allowed by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and particularly in accordance with 2020 NMFS guidance on carry-over and phase-in provisions.

**MOTION 2: CONFIRM ALTERNATIVE 2 UNDER ACTION 1 AS PREFERRED, WITH PREFERRED SUB-ALTERNATIVES 2B AND 2C.**

**Action 1. Modify the Acceptable Biological Catch Control Rule**

***\*\*\*Refer to Full Council I Summary Report for language of preferred alternative(s)\*\*\****

**MOTION 3: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2-SUB-ALTERNATIVE 2C UNDER SUB-ACTION 2.1 AND ALTERNATIVE 2 UNDER SUB-ACTION 2.2 AS PREFERRED.**

**Action 2. Allow phase-in of acceptable biological catch changes under the acceptable biological catch control rule**

**Sub-Action 2.1. Establish criteria specifying when phase-in is allowed.**

***\*\*\*Refer to Full Council I Summary Report for language of preferred alternative(s)\*\*\****

**MOTION 4: UNDER SUB-ACTION 3.1, SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 AS PREFERRED WITH SUB-ALTERNATIVES 2D AND 2E AS AMENDED.**

**Action 3. Allow carry-over of unharvested portion of the annual catch limit under the acceptable biological catch control rule**



**Sub-Action 3.1. Establish criteria specifying circumstances when an unharvested portion of the originally specified sector ACL can be carried over from one year to increase the available harvest in the immediate next year. Carry-overs may not be delayed, and only amounts from the originally specified sector ACL may be carried over.**

*\*\*\*Refer to Full Council I Summary Report for language of preferred alternative(s)\*\*\**

**MOTION 5: UNDER SUB-ACTION 3.2, SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 AS PREFERRED.**

**Sub-Action 3.2. Specify limits on how much of the unharvested portion of a sector annual catch limit may be carried over from one year to increase the sector annual catch limit in the next year.**

*\*\*\*Refer to Full Council I Summary Report for language of preferred alternative(s)\*\*\**

**MOTION 6: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 UNDER SUB-ACTION 4.1, SUB-ACTION 4.2, AND SUB-ACTION 4.3 AS PREFERRED.**

**Action 4. Modify framework procedures for the Snapper Grouper, Dolphin Wahoo, and Golden Crab Fishery Management Plans**

*\*\*\*Refer to Full Council I Summary Report for language of sub-actions and preferred alternative(s)\*\*\**

**MOTION 7: APPROVE ALL ACTIONS IN THE ABC CONTROL RULE AMENDMENT.**

### **Snapper Grouper Committee**

**MOTION 8: RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE EFP.**

### **Release Mortality Reduction & Red Snapper Catch Levels (Regulatory Amendment 35)**

**MOTION 9: CONTINUE WORK ON REGULATORY AMENDMENT 35 TO REDUCE SNAPPER GROUPEL DISCARDS AND MODIFY THE RED SNAPPER ACL WITH THE GOAL OF TAKING FINAL ACTION NO LATER THAN MARCH 2023.**

**MOTION 10: ADD AN APPENDIX TO REGULATORY AMENDMENT 35 TO PROMOTE BEST FISHING PRACTICES THAT REDUCE RECREATIONAL DEAD RELEASES IN THE SNAPPER GROUPEL FISHERY.**

**MOTION 11: TO REQUEST THE SEFSC PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING SOUTH ATLANTIC RED SNAPPER STOCK ASSESSMENT SENSITIVITY RUN AT THE DECEMBER 2022 COUNCIL MEETING:**

- REDUCE ANNUAL DISCARD ESTIMATES BY 50% RELATIVE TO CURRENT ESTIMATES USED IN THE ASSESSMENT.
- ASSUME 100% COMPLIANCE WITH DESCENDING DEVICE REQUIREMENTS.

THIS SENSITIVITY RUN IS HYPOTHETICAL BUT INTENDED TO INFORM THE COUNCIL ON HOW REDUCED DISCARDS AND DISCARD MORTALITY ESTIMATES WOULD AFFECT STOCK STATUS AND MANAGEMENT BENCHMARKS.

**MOTION 12:** TO DIRECT STAFF TO BEGIN DEVELOPMENT A WHITE PAPER, FOR REVIEW AT THE MARCH 2023 COUNCIL MEETING, TO EVALUATE ADDITIONAL LONGER-TERM OPTIONS TO FURTHER AVOID/MINIMIZE, TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE, DISCARDS OF SNAPPER-GROUPER SPECIES IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE STOCK REBUILDING GOALS, REDUCE WASTE, PROTECT MARINE ECOSYSTEMS, INCREASE SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS, ENHANCE ANGLER OPPORTUNITIES, AND/OR PROMOTE MORE EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF THE RESOURCE (E.G, SHIFT DEAD DISCARDS TO LANDED CATCH).

#### **Yellowtail Snapper (Amendment 44)**

**MOTION 13:** REINITIATE SNAPPER GROUPER AMENDMENT 44.

#### **Gag (Amendment 53)**

**MOTION 14:** APPROVE THE PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENT, AS REVISED

The purpose of this fishery management plan amendment is to establish a rebuilding plan, set an acceptable biological catch, revise annual catch limits, and sector allocations, and make modifications to management measures and accountability measures for South Atlantic gag based on the results of the most recent stock assessment.

The need for this fishery management plan amendment is to end overfishing of South Atlantic gag, rebuild the stock, and achieve optimum yield while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse social and economic effects.

**MOTION 15:** RETAIN ALTERNATIVE 1 AS PREFERRED UNDER SUB-ACTION 4B FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS.

**Sub-Action 4b. Modify the commercial spawning season closure for gag.**

**Preferred Alternative 1 (No Action):** The annual commercial gag spawning season closure is from January 1 through April 30.

**MOTION 16:** INCLUDE ACTIONS THAT WOULD MODIFY THE BLACK GROUPER VESSEL LIMIT, SPAWNING SEASON CLOSURE, AND CAPTAIN AND CREW BAG LIMIT AND ALTER THE PURPOSE AND NEED ACCORDINGLY.

**MOTION 17:** REMOVE ALTERNATIVE 4 FROM SUB-ACTION 5A.

**Action 5. Modify the recreational management measures for gag**

**Sub-Action 5a. Establish a recreational vessel limit for gag.**

**Alternative 4.** Retain the current bag limit. Establish a recreational gag vessel limit of 6 fish per vessel per day, not to exceed the daily bag limit, whichever is more restrictive, for the:

**Sub-Alternative 4a.** private recreational component.

**Sub-Alternative 4b.** for-hire component.

**MOTION 18:** ADD AN ALTERNATIVE UNDER SUB-ACTION 5A TO PROHIBIT THE RETENTION OF THE BAG LIMIT FOR CAPTAIN AND CREW

**Sub-Action 5a. Establish a recreational vessel limit for gag**

**MOTION 19:** RETAIN ALTERNATIVE 1 AS PREFERRED UNDER SUB-ACTION 5B FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS.

**Sub-action 5b. Modify the recreational spawning season closure for gag.**

**Preferred Alternative 1 (No Action):** The annual recreational gag spawning season closure is from January 1 through April 30.

**MOTION 20:** APPROVE AMENDMENT 53 AND ALL ACTIONS, AS REVISED, FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS.

### **Wreckfish (Amendment 48)**

**MOTION 21:** APPROVE THE PURPOSE AND NEED AS MODIFIED.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this action is to modernize the wreckfish individual transferable quota (ITQ) program, revise management measures.

**Need:** The need for this action is to improve program monitoring and enforcement, as well as data collection and management, provide more flexibility for fishers and increase profitability in the wreckfish ITQ program.

**MOTION 22:** SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 AS PREFERRED UNDER ACTION 1.

**Action 1. Revise sector allocations and sector annual catch limits for wreckfish.**

**Alternative 2.** Allocate 98% of the total annual catch limit for wreckfish to the commercial sector. Allocate 2% of the total annual catch limit for wreckfish to the recreational sector

**MOTION 23:** SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 AS PREFERRED UNDER ACTION 2.

**Action 2. Implement an electronic reporting system for the wreckfish individual transferable quota (ITQ) program**

**Alternative 2.** Implement an electronic system of reporting for the wreckfish ITQ program to electronically track ownership and transfers of quota shares, distribution, and transfers of annual allocation (quota pounds), and electronically record wreckfish landing information.

**MOTION 24:** SELECT ALTERNATIVE 3 AS PREFERRED UNDER ACTION 3.

**Action 3. Modify the requirement to possess a commercial vessel permit for wreckfish.**

**Alternative 3.** To commercially harvest or sell wreckfish, a commercial permit for South Atlantic snapper grouper (unlimited) must have been issued to the vessel, the permit must be on board, and the permit holder must be a wreckfish shareholder.

**MOTION 25:** ADD AN ALTERNATIVE THAT ALLOWS FOR HARVEST OR SALE OF WRECKFISH WITH A PERMIT FOR SOUTH ATLANTIC SNAPPER GROUPE, REMOVING THE REQUIREMENT TO BE A WRECKFISH SHAREHOLDER.

**MOTION 26:** SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 AS PREFERRED UNDER ACTION 4.

**Action 4. Modify the commercial fishing year for wreckfish.**

**Alternative 2.** The commercial fishing year for wreckfish begins on January 1 and ends on December 31. From January 15 through April 15, each year, no person may harvest or possess wreckfish on a fishing vessel, in or from the exclusive economic zone.

**MOTION 27:** MOVE ACTION 5 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX.

**Action 5. Modify the spawning season closure for wreckfish.**

**MOTION 28:** SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 AS PREFERRED UNDER ACTION 8.1.

**Sub-Action 8-1. Implement a cost recovery plan for the wreckfish individual transferable quota program.**

**Alternative 2.** Implement an individual transferable quota cost recovery plan. The transferable quota shareholder landing wreckfish would be responsible for collection and submission of the cost recovery fee to NMFS.

**MOTION 29:** SELECT ALTERNATIVE 3 AS PREFERRED UNDER ACTION 8.2.

**Sub-Action 8-2. Collection of wreckfish individual transferable quota program cost recovery fees.**

**Alternative 3.** Fees will be collected upon the sale of such fish during a fishing season.

**MOTION 30:** SELECT ALTERNATIVE 4 AS PREFERRED UNDER ACTION 8.3.

**Sub-Action 8-3. Frequency of wreckfish individual transferable quota program cost recovery fee collection.**

**Alternative 4.** Cost recovery fee will be submitted four times per year.

**MOTION 31:** SELECT ALTERNATIVE 3 AS PREFERRED UNDER ACTION 8.4.

**Sub-Action 8-4. Determination of wreckfish individual transferable quota program cost recovery fees.**

**Alternative 3.** The cost recovery fee will be based on standard\*\* ex-vessel value of the wreckfish landings as calculated by NMFS.

**MOTION 32:** APPROVE SNAPPER GROUPER AMENDMENT 48 FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS AT THE MARCH 2023 COUNCIL MEETING.

### **Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish (Amendment 52)**

**MOTION 33:** CHANGE THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE UNDER ACTION 6 TO ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION).

**Action 6. Modify blueline tilefish recreational season.**

**Preferred Alternative 1 (No Action).** Do not modify the blueline tilefish recreational season. The current recreational season is May 1-August 31

**MOTION 34:** APPROVE ALL ACTIONS FOR SNAPPER GROUPER AMENDMENT 52.

## Snowy Grouper (Amendment 51)

**MOTION 35:** APPROVE ALL ACTIONS AS MODIFIED IN SNAPPER GROUPE AMENDMENT 51.

## Greater Amberjack (Amendment 49)

**MOTION 36:** APPROVE THE PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENTS AS REVISED.

**Purpose:** The *purpose* of this amendment is to revise the acceptable biological catch and catch limits for greater amberjack in the South Atlantic based on the results of the latest stock assessment; revise sector allocations, the commercial minimum size limits, commercial trip limits, and the April spawning closure for greater amberjack; and remove recreational annual catch targets for the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

**Need:** The *need* for this amendment is to ensure catch limits are based on the best scientific information available and to ensure overfishing does not occur for the South Atlantic greater amberjack stock, while increasing social and economic benefits through sustainable and profitable harvest of South Atlantic greater amberjack, consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and its National Standards. This amendment is also needed to make administrative efforts more efficient by removing recreational annual catch targets, which are not actively used in management, from the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

**MOTION 37:** APPROVE MODIFIED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVE LANGUAGE IN ACTION 1.

**Action 1. Revise the greater amberjack acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield**

*\*\*\*Refer to Snapper Grouper Committee Summary Report for language of preferred alternative(s)\*\*\**

**MOTION 38:** CHANGE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE UNDER ACTION 3 TO ALTERNATIVE 2 (34 INCH COMMERCIAL MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT).

**Action 3. Reduce the commercial minimum size limit for greater amberjack**

**Preferred Alternative 2.** Reduce the commercial minimum size limit to 34 inches fork length.

**MOTION 39:** APPROVE AMENDMENT 49 TO THE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE SNAPPER GROUPE FISHERY OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION FOR FORMAL SECRETARIAL REVIEW AND DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT AS NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE. GIVE STAFF EDITORIAL LICENSE TO MAKE ANY NECESSARY EDITORIAL CHANGES TO THE DOCUMENT/CODIFIED TEXT AND GIVE THE COUNCIL CHAIR AUTHORITY TO APPROVE THE REVISIONS AND RE-DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT.

**MOTION 40: DIRECT STAFF TO DO THE FOLLOWING:**

- Continue to develop actions for Regulatory Amendment 35 (Snapper Grouper Release Mortality Reduction and Red Snapper Catch Levels) for the Committee’s consideration of approval for public hearings at the December 2022 meeting.
- Remove overfishing limits from purpose and need and action language in amendments considering revisions to catch levels, including Amendment 49 (Greater Amberjack), Amendment 51 (Snowy Grouper), Amendment 52 (Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish), Amendment 53 (Gag Grouper), and Regulatory Amendment 35 (Red Snapper and Release Mortality Reduction).
- Conduct public comment for Amendment 53 (Gag Grouper) prior to the December 2022 Council meeting. Coordinate with states to conduct hearings via listening stations.
- Develop Amendment 48 (Wreckfish) in preparation for public hearings to be held at the March 2023 Council meeting.
- Prepare Amendment 51 (Snowy Grouper) and Amendment 52 (Golden Tilefish Blueline Tilefish) for consideration of final approval at the December 2022 Council meeting.
- Convene a meeting of the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel in October.

**Mackerel Cobia Committee**

**MOTION 41: ADD THE FOLLOWING LANGUAGE TO THE JOINT CMP FMP OBJECTIVES: TO ACHIEVE ROBUST FISHERY REPORTING AND DATA COLLECTION SYSTEMS ACROSS ALL SECTORS FOR MONITORING THE COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGIC FISHERY WHICH MINIMIZES SCIENTIFIC, MANAGEMENT, AND RISK UNCERTAINTY.**

**MOTION 42: REMOVE CURRENT OBJECTIVE 3 FROM THE CMP FMP OBJECTIVES.**  
Objective 3: To provide necessary information for effective management and establish a mandatory reporting system for monitoring catch.

**MOTION 43: AMEND THE LANGUAGE OF OBJECTIVE 1 TO READ AS FOLLOWS:**  
Objective 1 reads as follows: The primary objective of this FMP is to ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN OPTIMUM yield at the maximum sustainable yield (MSY), TO allow recovery of overfished populations, and maintain population levels sufficient to ensure adequate recruitment.

**MOTION 44: ADOPT THE FOLLOWING TIMING AND TASKS:**

1. Work with Gulf Council staff, as needed, to continue work on Coastal Migratory Pelagics Amendment 33.
2. Add a review of the revised SEDAR 78 stock assessment to the SSC’s October 2022 meeting agenda.
3. Convene a meeting of the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel to discuss the agenda items as listed above in October 2022.
4. Develop a white paper that examines false albacore relative to the ten criteria outlined in the Magnuson-Stevens act to determine if they may be in need of conservation and management.
5. Prepare the allocation decision tool for Atlantic Spanish mackerel to be reviewed at the December 2022 meeting.

**SEDAR Committee**

**MOTION 45:** THE COMMITTEE APPROVED SCOPES OF WORK FOR GAG, KING MACKEREL, AND RED PORGY AS MODIFIED.

**Full Council Session II**

**MOTION 46:** RESUBMIT CORAL AMENDMENT 10 AFTER MODIFICATIONS.



# MP Quarterly Update Memo

October 25, 2022

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission  
**FROM:** Steve Poland, Fisheries Management Section Chief  
**SUBJECT:** Highly Migratory Species Update

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**Issue**

Highly Migratory Species activity update.

**Action Needed**

For informational purposes only, **no action is needed at this time.**

**Overview**

Bluefin Tuna

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has [closed the Bluefin Tuna general category commercial fishery](#) through November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 based off of projected landings. This closure prohibits the retention, possession, and landing of large-medium or giant Bluefin Tuna by commercial fisherman aboard vessels with a general category or charter/headboat permit. The general category fishery should re-open December 1<sup>st</sup> under the December sub-quota period.

The [final rule was published for Amendment 13 to the Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan](#) which implemented various measures adopted through the amendment to the FMP. Included in these measures is a significant modification to the Individual Bluefin Tuna Quota (IBQ) program and a reallocation of bluefin tuna quotas across categories with the phasing out of the Purse Seine category. Changes to the IBQ program include employing a dynamic system for determining IBQ shares where a shareholder's shares will be based on the proportion of their pelagic longline sets legally made in a calendar year to the total number of legal longline sets made by all IBQ shareholders. Additionally, there is a IBQ cap of 25% that can be held by any individual or entity. For the reallocation of quota across gear categories, the Purse Seine category (18.6% of total baseline Bluefin Tuna quota) was redistributed across the remaining categories with the majority going to the General, Angling, and Longline categories. More information on the specific measures implemented through Amendment 13 including a table of the current and new Bluefin quota category percentages can be found in the final rule published in the Federal Register [here](#).

October 21, 2022

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission  
**FROM:** Barbie Byrd, Biologist Supervisor  
Protected Resources Program, Fisheries Management Section  
**SUBJECT:** Protected Resources Program Update

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**Issue**

Summary information is provided from the division’s Protected Resources Program for observer program activities during summer (June-August) 2022. Seasonal reports to National Marine Fisheries Service are required for the Sea Turtle Incidental Take Permit (ITP) and monthly reports, if there is an observed take, are required for the Atlantic Sturgeon ITP. The summer seasonal report can be found in the briefing materials.

**Action Needed**

For informational purposes only; **no action is needed at this time.**

**Overview**

During summer 2022, estuarine waters were closed to anchored large-mesh gill nets statewide and closed to anchored small-mesh gill nets in Management Unit A due to Atlantic sturgeon interactions the previous spring. Observers and Marine Patrol officers conducted 30 observations of estuarine anchored gill nets (seven onboard observations and 27 alternative platform observations). Estimated observer coverage of the estuarine anchored small-mesh gill-net fishery exceeded 1% in all management units (Table 1). During summer, there were also 328 No-Contact trips, unsuccessful trips looking for estuarine anchored gill-net effort to observe (Table 2).

Observers logged 151 contacts or contact attempts during summer 2022. Observers spoke with a fisherman on 59 occasions to try to arrange a trip, but only arranged five trips in advance (8.5%). Out of 60 times observers left a message (either voicemail or with another person), observers received 17 returned calls from fishermen.

There were no sea turtle or Atlantic sturgeon interactions documented from observed trips during summer 2022.

**Table 1.** For estuarine anchored small-mesh gill nets, estimated percent observer coverage calculated from observer trips (<4 inch) and estimated fishing trips using Trip Ticket

Program data (<5 inch) by management unit during summer (June–August) 2022 for Incidental Take Permit Year 2022. Management Unit A was closed to anchored gill nets of all sizes during summer.

Management Unit	Estimated Fishing Trips	Observed Trips	Percent Observer Coverage
A	closed	closed	closed
B	896	15	1.7
C	66	2	3.0
D1	8	1	12.7
D2	22	2	9.3
E	189	10	5.3
Total	1,180	30	2.5

**Table 2.** Number of “No-Contact” trips by management unit completed by Marine Patrol and observers during summer (June–August) 2022 for Incidental Take Permit Year 2022. “No Contact” refers to unsuccessful attempts to find and observe estuarine anchored gill-net effort. Management Unit A was closed to anchored gill nets of all sizes during summer.

Management Unit	Marine Patrol No-Contact Trips	Observer No-Contact Trips	Total No-Contact Trips
A	closed	closed	closed
B	44	24	68
C	57	10	67
D1	13	1	14
D2	8	6	14
E	165	0	165
Overall	287	41	328

2022 Summer Seasonal Progress Report  
for Activities under Endangered Species Act  
Section 10 Incidental Take Permit No. 16230  
June 1–August 31, 2022  
ITP Year 2022



Barbie L. Byrd and Matthew Doster  
North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality  
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries  
Protected Resources Program  
3441 Arendell Street  
Morehead City, NC 28557

September 2022

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## SUMMARY

This report summarizes activities of the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) Observer Program during summer (June–August) 2022 of the Incidental Take Permit (ITP) Year 2022 (September 1, 2021–August 31, 2022) for ITP No. 16230. Throughout this document, all references to gill nets are for estuarine anchored gill nets only unless stated otherwise. Data used in this seasonal report are preliminary and subject to change for the annual report to be submitted February 2023. See Figure 1 for a map of management units outlined in the ITP Conservation Plan.

During summer 2022, the estuarine anchored large-mesh gill-net fishery was closed state-wide. For the estuarine anchored small-mesh gill-net fishery, the projected number of observer trips needed to obtain 2% observer coverage was calculated from the average of reported estuarine anchored small-mesh gill-net trips by month and management unit from the previous five years. The exception was for Management Unit A where the estuarine anchored small-mesh gill-net fishery was closed due to estimated dead Atlantic sturgeon interactions approaching the authorized number in the management unit (Table 1). See Table 1 for other proclamations affecting anchored gill nets during summer 2022.

There were no sea turtle interactions documented from observed trips during summer 2022. Observers and Marine Patrol officers conducted 30 observations (seven onboard observations and 27 alternative platform observations). Estimated observer coverage of the estuarine anchored small-mesh gill-net fishery exceeded 1% in all management units (range: 1.7-12.7; Table 2).

Observers and Marine Patrol officers occasionally observed estuarine runaround (also called a drop/strike) gill net trips and documented unsuccessful trips looking for estuarine anchored gill-net effort to observe (referred to as No-Contact trips). During summer 2022, observers and Marine Patrol officers conducted observations of 20 runaround gill net trips: five trips in Management Unit B, 13 trips in Management Unit C, one trip in Management Unit D, and one trip in Management Unit E. There were also 328 No-Contact trips (Table 3).

As part of their regular duties, Marine Patrol officers checked gill nets for compliance. Occasionally, citations and/or Notice of Violations (NOVs) were issued to fishermen when gear or fishing practices were out of compliance. A citation is an enforcement action taken by a Marine Patrol officer for person(s) found to be in violation of general statutes, rules, or proclamations under the authority of the NCDMF and is considered a proceeding for district court. An NOV is the NCDMF's administrative process to suspend a permit and is initiated by an officer or division employee when a permit holder is found to be in violation of general or specific permit conditions. A citation and an NOV may both be initiated by the same permit condition violation; however, they are two separate actions. For this report, NOVs or citations associated with gill-net activities or the Estuarine Gill Net Permit (ENGP) (database codes "NETG" and "EGNP") were compiled. Marine Patrol issued three citations and one NOV for estuarine anchored gill nets during summer 2022 (Tables 4 & 5).

As per the ITP, the NCDMF established the ENGP in September 2014 to register all fishermen participating in anchored large- and small-mesh gill-net fisheries. Permits are renewed on an annual basis, based on the fiscal year for licenses. Contact information associated with the ENGP's

is used by observers to call fishermen to schedule trips. To help arrange trips, the Observer Program worked with the NCDMF License & Statistics Section to distill the list of fishermen with active EGNPs to those that have actually reported landings with anchored gear (by mesh-size category) during the last three years. Observers also attempted to talk with fishermen in person at boat ramps and on the water when possible. Observers logged contact attempts and returned phone calls from fishermen into a database with categories of the response: 1) Left message with someone else; 2) Not fishing general; 3) Fishing other gear; 4) Not fishing because of weather; 5) Not fishing because of boat issues; 6) Not fishing because of medical issues; 7) Booked trip; 8) Hung up, got angry, trip refused; 9) Call back later time/date; 10) Saw in person; 11) Disconnected; 12) Wrong number; 13) No answer; 14) No answer, left voicemail; 15) Not fishing because of natural disaster (e.g., hurricane) (Figure 2). During summer 2022, observers logged 151 contacts or contact attempts. Observers spoke with a fisherman on 59 occasions to try to arrange a trip, but only arranged five trips in advance (8.5%). Out of 60 times observers left a message (either voicemail or with another person), observers received 17 returned calls from fishermen. For one of the returned calls, the observer was unable to take the call and the fisherman left a message. The observer called the same fisherman back and left another voicemail, but the fisherman never called back a second time during summer months. The Observer Program followed up on phone numbers that were disconnected or incorrect; some of them have already been updated.

## TABLES

**Table 1.** Proclamations (Proc.) issued for summer (June–August) 2022 affecting estuarine anchored large- and small-mesh gill-net fisheries.

Effective Date	Proc. Number	Regulation change
4/28/2022	M-10-2022	This proclamation supersedes proclamation M-9-2022 dated April 26, 2022. This proclamation makes it unlawful to use fixed or stationary gill nets of any mesh size in Management Unit A due to dead sturgeon takes nearing the authorized amount for Management Unit A. A portion of Management Unit A remains open to the use of run-around, strike and drop gill nets with a stretched mesh length of 5 ½ inches through 6 ½ inches for harvesting blue catfish. Run-around, strike and drop gill nets with a stretched mesh length of 3 inches through 4 inches may also still be used in portions of Management Unit A. This action is being taken to comply with the NC Division of Marine Fisheries’ Federal Incidental Take Permit for endangered Atlantic sturgeon.
6/21/2022	M-13-2022	This proclamation supersedes proclamation M-11-2022 dated April 29, 2022. It decreases the yardage limits for the commercial Spanish mackerel drift gill net fishery in Management Unit B.

**Table 2.** For estuarine anchored small-mesh gill nets, estimated percent observer coverage calculated from observer trips (<4 inch) and estimated fishing trips using Trip Ticket Program data (<5 inch) by management unit during summer (June–August) 2022 for Incidental Take Permit Year 2022. Management Unit A was closed to anchored gill nets of all sizes during summer.

Management Unit	Estimated Fishing Trips	Observed Trips	Percent Observer Coverage
A	closed	closed	closed
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**Table 3.** Number of “No-Contact” trips by management unit completed by Marine Patrol and observers during summer (June–August) 2022 for Incidental Take Permit Year 2022. “No Contact” refers to unsuccessful attempts to find and observe estuarine anchored gill-net effort. Management Unit A was closed to anchored gill nets of all sizes during summer.

Management Unit	Marine Patrol No-Contact Trips	Observer No-Contact Trips	Total No-Contact Trips
A	closed	closed	closed
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D2	8	6	14
E	165	0	165
Total	287	41	328

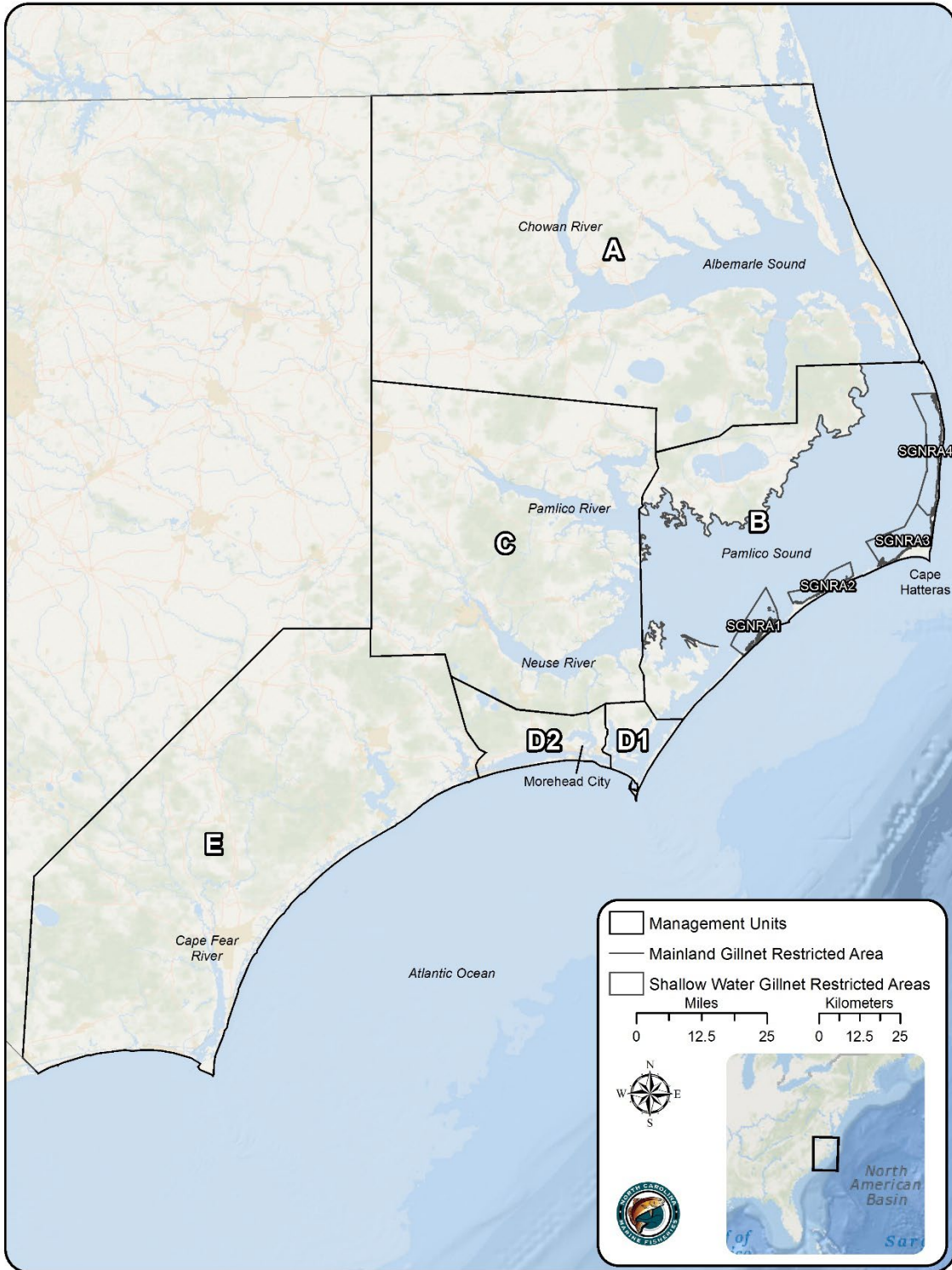
**Table 4.** Citations written by Marine Patrol officers for estuarine anchored gill nets by date and violation code during summer (June–August) 2022 for Incidental Take Permit Year 2022.

Date	Code	Description
6/1/2022	NETG12	Net in middle third of marked navigational channel
8/12/2022	NETG27	Gill Net set within 50 yards from shore 3H.0103 M-9-2008
8/13/2022	NETG29	RCGL gear without proper buoys 3J.0103(c)

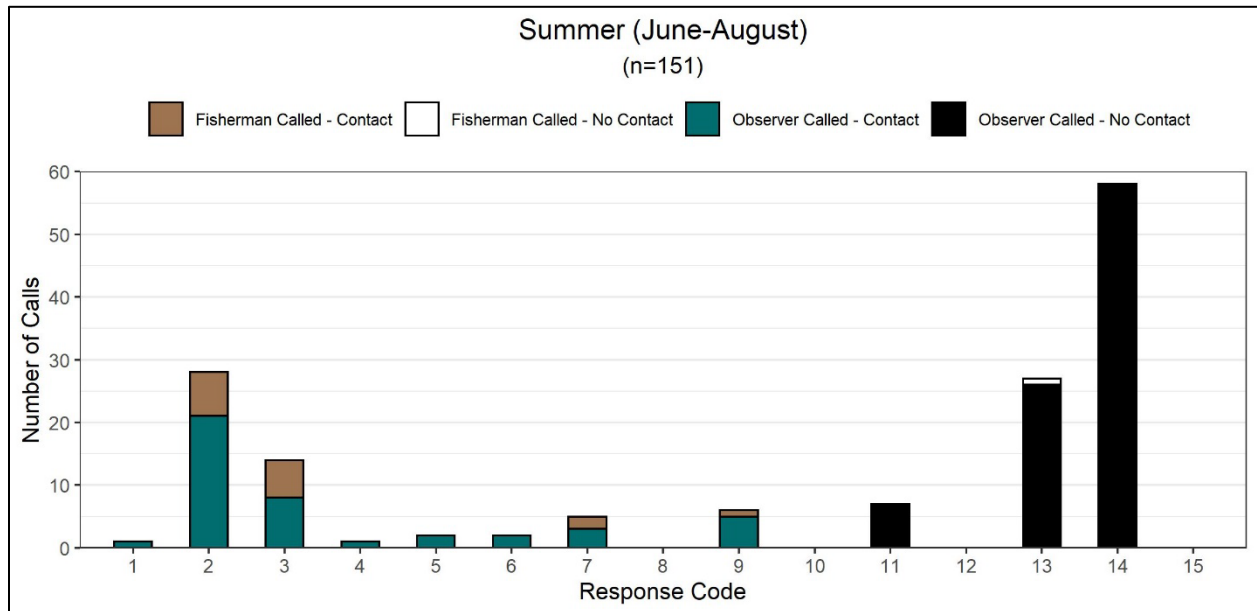
**Table 5.** Notice of Violations (NOV) for Estuarine Gill Net Permit (EGNP) holders using estuarine anchored gill nets by date and violation code during summer (June–August) 2022 for Incidental Take Permit Year 2022.

Date	Code	Description
6/14/2022	EGNP01	Fishing gill net without a valid Estuarine Gill Net Permit

# FIGURES



**Figure 1.** Management units (A, B, C, D1, D2, and E) as outlined in the Incidental Take Permit Conservation Plan.



**Figure 2.** Number of contacts or contact attempts (n=151) during summer (June–August) 2022 to schedule trips. Contact response categories include the following: 1) Left message with someone else; 2) Not fishing general; 3) Fishing other gear; 4) Not fishing because of weather; 5) Not fishing because of boat issues; 6) Not fishing because of medical issues; 7) Booked trip; 8) Hung up, got angry, trip refused; 9) Call back later time/date; 10) Saw in person; 11) Disconnected; 12) Wrong number; 13) No answer; 14) No answer, left voicemail; 15) Not fishing because of natural disaster (e.g., hurricane). Contact responses are shown as those when the observer talked with a fisherman (teal), when the observer did not (black), and when the fisherman returned an observer’s call and spoke to an observer (bronze) or left a message (white). For the single time a fisherman called but did not leave a message, an observer called him back and left another message.



## Red Drum Landings 2021-2023

Landings are complete through July 15, 2022.

2021 landings are final. 2022 landings are preliminary.

Year	Month	Species	Pounds	2009-2011 Average	2013-2015 Average
2021	9	Red Drum	28,365	28,991	35,003
2021	10	Red Drum	52,629	43,644	63,659
2021	11	Red Drum	20,820	14,318	27,646
2021	12	Red Drum	19,514	3,428	2,197
2022	1	Red Drum	12,506	5,885	1,700
2022	2	Red Drum	23,447	3,448	3,996
2022	3	Red Drum	14,568	5,699	3,971
2022	4	Red Drum	413	7,848	6,528
2022	5	Red Drum	10,805	13,730	9,661
2022	6	Red Drum	11,069	12,681	6,985
2022	7	Red Drum	7,474	13,777	15,618
2022	8	Red Drum	14,868	21,252	15,846

**FY22 Fishing Year (Sept 1, 2021 - Aug 31, 2022) Landings 201,610**

Year	Month	Species	Pounds	2009-2011 Average	2013-2015 Average
2022	9	Red Drum	25,752	28,991	35,003
2022	10	Red Drum	***	***	***
2022	11	Red Drum		14,318	27,646
2022	12	Red Drum		3,428	2,197
2023	1	Red Drum		5,885	1,700
2023	2	Red Drum		3,448	3,996
2023	3	Red Drum		5,699	3,971
2023	4	Red Drum		7,848	6,528
2023	5	Red Drum		13,730	9,661

2023	6	Red Drum	12,681	6,985
2023	7	Red Drum	13,777	15,618
2023	8	Red Drum	21,252	15,846

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**FY23 Fishing Year (Sept 1, 2022 - Aug 31, 2023) Landings 25,752**

\*\*\*landings are confidential

YEAR	MONTH	SPECIES	POUNDS	DEALERS	TRIPS	AVERAGE	CONF
2018	1	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	610	14	43	7,713	
2018	2	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	1,833	34	154	4,617	
2018	3	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	2,815	43	387	23,512	
2018	4	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	8,142	74	769	68,389	
2018	5	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	18,350	90	952	122,514	
2018	6	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	42,501	105	1,407	154,090	
2018	7	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	57,283	117	1,496	170,387	
2018	8	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	72,496	121	1,917	201,862	
2018	9	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	109,125	114	1,776	396,263	
2018	10	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	363,361	109	3,064	781,717	
2018	11	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	226,856	89	1,355	392,150	
2018	12	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	471	5	5	37,303	
2019	1	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	524	25	74	7,713	
2019	2	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	558	23	69	4,617	
2019	3	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	1,412	44	216	23,512	
2019	4	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	5,966	66	448	68,389	
2019	5	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	36,666	92	1,038	122,514	
2019	6	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	61,199	109	1,438	154,090	
2019	7	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	59,404	109	1,554	170,387	
2019	8	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	95,629	109	1,779	201,862	
2019	9	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	51,734	59	551	396,263	
2019	10	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	327,394	120	2,337	781,717	
2019	11	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	159,595	58	537	392,150	
2020	3	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	***	***	***	***	
2020	4	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	***	***	***	***	
2020	8	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	***	***	***	***	
2020	9	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	86,549	30	788	396,263	
2020	10	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	340,711	138	2,623	781,717	
2020	11	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	52,602	25	68	392,150	
2021	3	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	***	***	***	***	
2021	4	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	***	***	***	***	
2021	5	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	***	***	***	***	
2021	6	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	***	***	***	***	
2021	7	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	***	***	***	***	
2021	8	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	***	***	***	***	
2021	9	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	68,089	28	735	396,263	
2021	10	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	416,838	130	2,383	781,717	
2021	11	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	***	***	***	***	
2022	5	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	***	***	***	***	
2022	7	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	***	***	***	***	
2022	9	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	150,998	94	1,298	396,263	
2022	10	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	***	***	***	***	

**NOTE: 2022 data are preliminary. 2018-2021 data are complete.**

**\*\*\*Data are confidential**

YEAR	SPECIES	GEAR	POUNDS	DEALERS	TRIPS	CONF
2018	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	GIGS	92,302	88	2,089	
2018	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	GILLNETS	365,189	122	9,131	
2018	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	OTHER	6,432	79	562	
2018	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	POUND NET	439,919	37	1,545	
2019	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	GIGS	91,330	81	1,836	
2019	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	GILLNETS	324,822	119	6,834	
2019	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	OTHER	4,727	65	354	
2019	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	POUND NET	379,201	34	1,017	
2020	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	GIGS	33,192	49	369	
2020	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	GILLNETS	187,312	105	2,474	
2020	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	OTHER	1,288	21	83	
2020	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	POUND NET	258,089	27	559	
2021	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	GIGS	31,898	46	358	
2021	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	GILLNETS	253,468	101	2,420	
2021	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	OTHER	949	23	72	
2021	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	POUND NET	198,709	23	292	
2022	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	GIGS	29,220	39	264	
2022	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	GILLNETS	107,256	69	966	
2022	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	OTHER	1,143	14	21	
2022	SOUTHERN FLOUNDER	POUND NET	16,591	6	53	

**NOTE: 2022 data are preliminary. 2018-2021 data are complete.**

**\*\*\*Data are confidential**



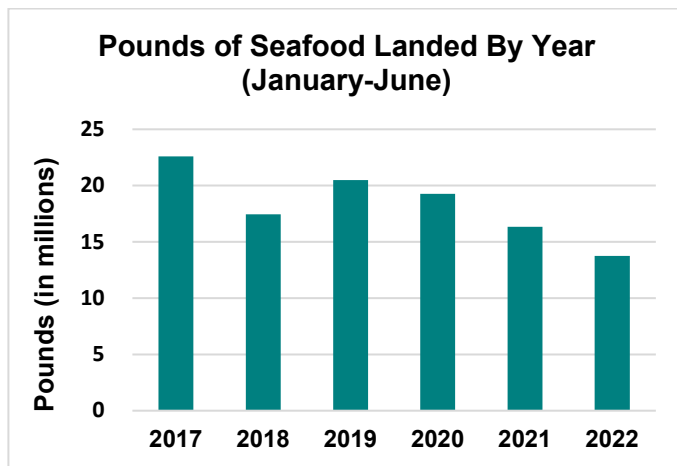
# Fish Dealer Report

License & Statistics Section, PO Box 769, Morehead City, NC 28557

November 2022

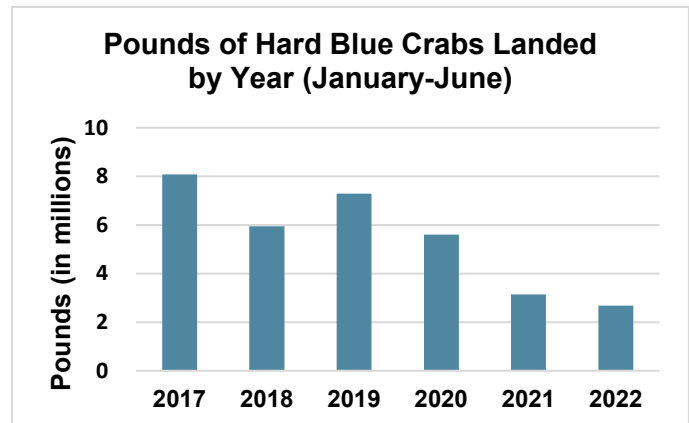
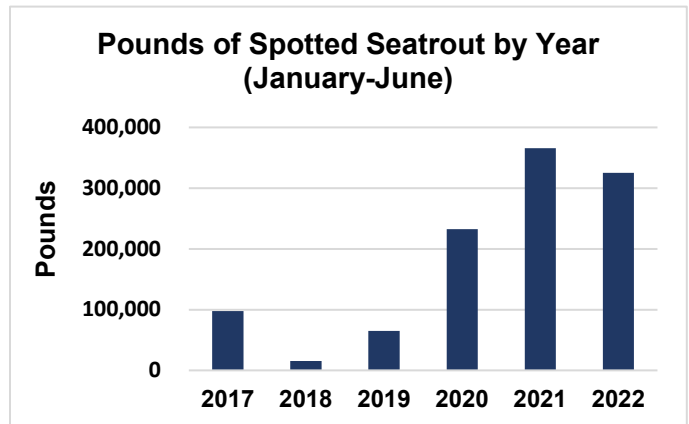
## 2022 COMMERCIAL LANDINGS REVIEW

Preliminary data collected by the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries reveals that fishermen landed 13.8 million pounds of seafood from January to June 2022. This was a 28.5% decrease from the previous 5-year average for the same time period.



The top five species landed were Hard Blue Crab (2.7 million pounds), Catfishes (1.6 million pounds), Summer Flounder (1.3 million pounds), Atlantic Cutlassfish (Ribbonfish) (879,398 pounds), and Shrimp (634,759 pounds).

Despite being the top landed species in the state this year, Hard Blue Crab landings have decreased to about 55% compared to the previous 5-year average. Additionally, shrimp (heads on and Brown, White, and Pink shrimp combined) and Bluefish landings decreased 67% and 59%, respectively, compared to their previous 5-year averages. In contrast, Spotted Seatrout and Spot landings substantially increased compared to their previous 5-year averages, by 110% and 95%, respectively.



Landings in this report are summarized. To see actual 2022 landings, please see the [2022 Semi-Annual Landings Bulletin](#)

## COMMERCIAL STATISTICS PROGRAM 5-YEAR COMPLETION REPORT

In the late 1970s, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) began developing the Commercial Statistics Program (CSP) with the mission to “cooperatively collect, manage, and disseminate landings (including finfish and shellfish) and bioprofile information for marine commercial fisheries in the Southeast Region.” Bioprofile information collected by this program included the species harvested, the total landings for that species, the market grade/size

of the species, and the condition (whole, gutted, etc.) of the landings. North Carolina became a member of the CSP in 1978, allowing the state to receive a federal grant each year on a 5-year funding cycles. Currently, the CSP funds a full-time Data Entry Clerk and Commercial Port Agent within the North Carolina Trip Ticket Program (NCTTP).

Annual Performance Reports and a 5-year Completion Report must be submitted to NMFS to continue receiving CSP funds. The NCTTP staff completed the most recent [5-year Completion Report](#) in October 2022 and will receive another 5-year cycle of CSP funds.

## **FEDERAL HURRICANE FLORENCE FISHERIES RELIEF PROGRAM**

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In December 2021, North Carolina received \$7.7 million in federal Hurricane Florence relief funds to distribute to qualified applicants, which included seafood dealers and processors, ocean fishing piers, bait and tackle shops, and for-hire operators. Commercial fishermen were not included in this program because they received aid via a separate, state-funded relief program in 2019 called the [North Carolina Hurricane Florence Fisheries Relief Program](#).

To qualify for the federal relief program, applicants were required to be a North Carolina resident who suffered damages caused by the storm or demonstrated a loss in revenue during the September to November 2018 period as compared to the average of the previous three years for the same period. Checks were distributed to approved applicants in September 2022.

## **STAFF CHANGES**

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Deputy Director Dee Lupton retired from the Division of Marine Fisheries after 28 years of dedicated service. The application period for the Deputy Director position is currently open.

Within the Trip Ticket Program, Sam McNeely, the technician working on the Program 405 Conversion Factor Project, left the Division and has been replaced by Lily Zeller ([Lily.Zeller@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Lily.Zeller@ncdenr.gov), 252-725-2667). Marisa Ponte ([Marisa.Ponte@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Marisa.Ponte@ncdenr.gov), 252-808-8107) is the

new Assistant Quota Monitoring Biologist within the Quota Monitoring Program. Finally, Alexis Rakestraw ([Alexis.Rakestraw@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Alexis.Rakestraw@ncdenr.gov), 252-337-5362) is the new Commercial Port Agent in Elizabeth City.

## **TRIP TICKET TEMPLATE UPDATE**

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Upon receiving feedback from the fishing industry and our Commercial Port Agents, Trip Ticket Program staff updated the paper trip ticket templates. You can expect to see these new trip tickets within the next year. If you have questions about these changes, please contact Michael Thompson ([Michael.Thompson@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Michael.Thompson@ncdenr.gov), 252-269-1847).

## **TRIP TICKET REMINDERS**

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When purchasing Atlantic Menhaden for bait, please note that Menhaden has its own bait code. When filling out the trip ticket, use species code 4200 (mixed Menhaden bait) instead of species code 7900 (mixed bait).

## **TECH TIPS**

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Dealers with permits to deal in quota-monitored species, such as Striped Bass, Summer and Southern Flounder, Black Sea Bass, and Spiny Dogfish can now use the Trip Ticket software to electronically submit daily Quota Monitoring Logs in the same way as trip tickets. First, update the software by clicking “Check for Update” in the bottom right corner of the Trip Ticket System screen. Once the software is updated, send the daily reports by clicking “Reports” at the top of the screen, above the “Dealer Info” button, then selecting “Quota Monitoring Report.”

On the Quota Monitoring Report screen, simply set the unload date for the report and click “Send QM Report to Agency”. The report will automatically pull any landings from trip tickets that have been entered for the unload date selected and will include them in the Quota Monitoring Log that is sent to the Division. When the file sends successfully, a record will show at the bottom of the screen in the “QM Files Sent to Agency” box. These reports must be submitted by noon daily for the previous day.

## UPCOMING NC MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION MEETING

November 17-19, 2022

The public may access the meeting virtually. Please visit the [MFC webpage](#) for updates and details.

### TRIP TICKET CONTACTS

For questions regarding rules, procedures, or requirements, please contact a port agent at your local Division of Marine Fisheries office.

Elizabeth City	Alexis Rakestraw	252-337-5362 (office/cell) <a href="mailto:Alexis.Rakestraw@ncdenr.gov">Alexis.Rakestraw@ncdenr.gov</a>
Manteo	Marty Brill	252-342-0156 (cell) 252-473-2158 (office) <a href="mailto:Martin.Brill@ncdenr.gov">Martin.Brill@ncdenr.gov</a>
Morehead City	Chuck Davis	252-808-7935 (cell) 252-808-8029 (office) <a href="mailto:Chuck.Davis@ncdenr.gov">Chuck.Davis@ncdenr.gov</a>
Washington	Jon Anglemyer	252-908-6786 (office/cell) <a href="mailto:Jon.Anglemyer@ncdenr.gov">Jon.Anglemyer@ncdenr.gov</a>
Wilmington	Pam Zuaboni	252-241-0118 (cell) 910-796-7216 (office) <a href="mailto:Pam.Zuaboni@ncdenr.gov">Pam.Zuaboni@ncdenr.gov</a>

For supplies, please contact our data clerks at 252-808-8104.

If you have any questions regarding use of the NC Trip Ticket System software, please contact Willow Patten ([Willow.Patten@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Willow.Patten@ncdenr.gov), 252-904-7810) or Marisa Ponte ([Marisa.Ponte@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Marisa.Ponte@ncdenr.gov), 252-808-8107).





# Semiannual Fisheries Bulletin

## 2022 Commercial Statistics

License and Statistics Section, PO Box 769, Morehead City, NC 28557

November 2022

### Preliminary North Carolina Commercial Landings January - June 2017-2022

FINFISH	January – June (Pounds – rounded)					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Amberjacks <sup>1</sup>	58,948	63,247	76,163	54,171	64,263	64,470
Anglerfish (Monkfish & Monkfish livers)	51,791	40,205	38,294	25,653	19,736	11,476
Bluefish	1,119,042	470,193	526,497	631,509	568,499	269,427
Bonito	9,391	12,311	12,368	12,646	6,145	4,997
Butterfish	31,680	23,861	30,619	10,432	22,488	32,028
Carp	14,819	17,265	32,125	8,194	6,849	3,312
Catfishes	705,211	722,707	763,031	663,048	1,164,594	1,558,939
Cobia	17,633	17,695	19,901	16,159	11,851	11,495
Croaker, Atlantic	869,373	1,574,302	1,214,880	470,948	467,683	263,266
Cutlassfish, Atlantic	41,751	25,055	210,198	397,831	900,620	879,398
Dolphinfish	189,255	128,922	198,310	48,787	22,858	25,500
Drum, Black	43,362	41,121	19,848	19,035	55,765	45,836
Drum, Red	34,186	53,458	28,786	17,003	56,805	72,803
Eel, American	4,393	2,336	2,178	434	524	1,025
Flounder, Southern	130,183	74,241	106,324	*	*	*
Flounder, Summer	1,191,430	1,385,287	1,258,138	912,846	1,123,341	1,260,594
Flounders, Other	*	*	*	*	*	*
Garfish	19,641	12,623	24,608	15,029	7,085	4,079
Grouper, Gag	25,497	33,488	66,857	35,012	23,252	21,990
Grouper, Red	8,326	6,596	11,621	1,133	1,543	884
Grouper, Scamp	15,957	20,352	17,747	8,083	5,930	5,246
Grouper, Snowy	65,044	70,100	78,250	48,600	55,831	40,168
Groupers, Other	4,775	5,211	13,352	6,493	9,692	8,082
Grunts	16,871	14,032	23,663	14,168	12,475	7,715
Hakes	2,506	974	2,067	1,899	2,193	2,039
Harvestfish (Starbutters)	36,472	73,485	55,934	30,527	89,492	73,202
Hogfish (Hog Snapper)	5,069	3,161	7,500	4,110	4,580	5,256
Jacks (Crevalle, Rainbow Runner, Blue Runner)	833	316	1,894	1,883	1,165	2,075
Mackerel, Atlantic (Boston)	629	1,418	799	431	282	190
Mackerel, King	137,608	91,191	175,169	125,131	98,360	90,045
Mackerel, Spanish	248,664	253,065	357,278	497,620	474,301	483,669
Menhaden, Atlantic	532,323	420,421	405,683	435,823	283,725	334,880
Mullet, Sea (Kingfishes)	356,193	227,466	392,881	284,955	392,438	404,601
Mullet, Striped	189,321	238,572	262,913	252,289	538,697	507,743
Perch, White	159,796	118,547	72,721	173,654	136,761	297,216
Perch, Yellow	15,562	12,298	6,160	5,894	6,805	10,285
Pigfish	2,465	2,780	2,278	2,695	5,426	4,483
Pinfish	79	207	343	255	*	10
Pompano	1,166	1,890	6,150	1,507	2,737	1,863
Porgies	22,057	22,591	23,632	14,106	14,165	10,702
Pufferfish	1,955	261	2,197	522	154	19
Scup	165,567	64,138	171,502	35,119	46,849	17,933
Sea Basses	376,302	334,513	262,785	210,967	186,517	135,110
SeatROUT, Spotted	97,732	15,389	64,854	232,443	365,618	325,246
Shad, American	90,868	52,081	40,972	134,576	58,884	36 9,371



	January – June (Pounds – rounded)					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Shad, Gizzard	121,783	209,605	207,563	229,970	173,857	121,997
Shad, Hickory	73,627	75,402	111,716	68,876	95,346	92,244
Sharks	559,296	433,412	503,170	368,352	266,813	289,919
Sharks, Dogfish, Smooth	152,938	198,810	101,594	47,044	28,827	12,635
Sharks, Dogfish, Spiny	390,805	755,015	1,000,130	1,500,853	131,383	54,076
Sheepshead	14,455	11,240	21,227	6,035	13,844	12,043
Skates	39,454	32,527	64,839	35,303	*	*
Skippers	9,147	11,937	8,932	7,195	8,150	7,655
Snapper, Vermilion (Beeliner)	105,757	105,130	188,260	94,353	65,829	66,197
Snappers, Other	2,157	7,262	17,755	12,473	15,617	28,715
Spadefish	7,969	4,807	4,914	7,527	9,567	6,751
Spot	29,685	42,015	19,324	57,084	56,827	79,815
Striped Bass	84,076	94,841	130,992	114,421	27,930	24,476
Swordfish	291,170	332,961	249,433	269,338	172,089	241,162
Tilefish, Blueline	41,943	32,282	42,167	35,794	52,029	40,633
Tilefish, Other	29,661	11,387	12,094	11,317	18,620	6,692
Triggerfish	53,137	82,275	72,889	56,410	29,284	34,230
Tuna, Bigeye	41,052	62,330	54,988	89,846	79,697	168,540
Tuna, Bluefin	303,781	200,423	323,901	371,371	270,159	276,346
Tuna, Yellowfin	509,674	329,979	154,717	271,770	257,596	267,707
Tunas, Other	52,705	38,120	8,115	16,367	9,320	11,286
Tunny, Little (False Albacore)	88,374	56,799	176,058	119,642	34,800	72,497
Wahoo	14,546	9,642	18,098	4,953	3,543	2,200
Weakfish (Gray Trout)	34,507	13,602	85,173	39,799	29,603	22,434
Unclassified Fish for Food <sup>2</sup>	46,091	48,944	48,665	31,587	52,968	34,470
Unclassified Fish for Industrial/Bait <sup>2</sup>	80,614	60,615	52,983	31,326	23,815	51,854
<b>TOTAL FINFISH</b>	<b>10,290,132</b>	<b>10,010,732</b>	<b>10,769,162</b>	<b>9,762,624</b>	<b>9,244,491</b>	<b>9,335,239</b>
<b>SHELLFISH</b>						
Blue Crabs, Hard	8,084,106	5,952,576	7,284,705	5,606,541	3,147,184	2,677,513
Blue Crabs, Peeler	717,038	327,855	401,122	258,147	409,695	268,268
Blue Crabs, Soft	407,962	225,796	172,311	114,339	209,288	126,506
Clams, Hard (Meats)	152,208	130,891	70,840	37,835	40,387	62,405
Clams, Hard (Number)	7,971,372	6,902,125	3,625,100	1,965,720	2,162,538	3,194,561
Octopus	124	123	178	86	81	70
Oysters (Meats)	414,315	322,777	361,521	329,641	525,266	525,084
Oysters (Bushels)	78,320	61,016	68,340	62,314	99,294	99,260
Scallop, Sea (Meats)	92,827	55,331	126,445	76,666	8,318	*
Shrimp (Heads On) <sup>3</sup>	2,281,795	318,464	1,211,922	3,043,672	2,632,642	634,759
Squid	18,406	25,173	16,826	12,645	19,605	10,974
Stone Crabs	3,658	2,918	2,990	3,074	4,631	3,677
Whelks/Conchs (Meats)	47,820	48,890	37,267	17,855	47,353	70,377
Unclassified Shellfish	81,175	35,255	44,338	12,779	40,086	40,530
<b>TOTAL SHELLFISH</b>	<b>12,301,433</b>	<b>7,446,048</b>	<b>9,730,465</b>	<b>9,513,279</b>	<b>7,084,536</b>	<b>4,420,163</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>22,591,565</b>	<b>17,456,780</b>	<b>20,499,628</b>	<b>19,275,904</b>	<b>16,329,027</b>	<b>13,755,403</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes species from genus *Seriola* (Greater Amberjack, Lesser Amberjack, Almaco Jack, and Banded Rudderfish).

<sup>2</sup> Prior to 2021, minnows were included in the Unclassified Fish for Food category but were moved to the Unclassified Fish for Industrial/Bait in this report.

<sup>3</sup> Includes brown, pink, and white shrimp.

\* Units not shown to avoid disclosure of private enterprise. Quantities were included in the “Unclassified Fish for Food” or “Unclassified Shellfish” categories.

NOTE: Landings collected by North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries Trip Ticket Program (November 2022).