



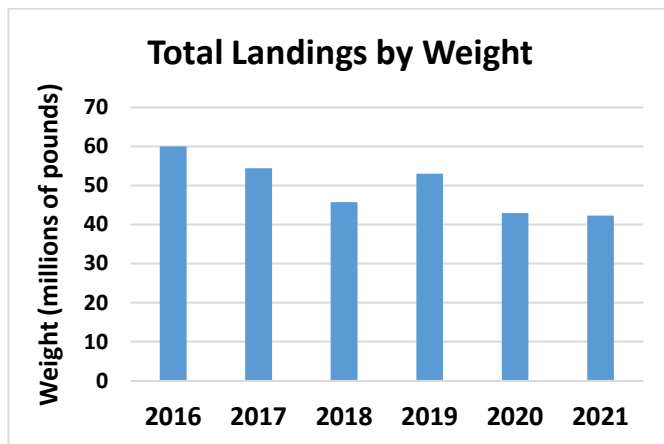
Fish Dealer Report

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

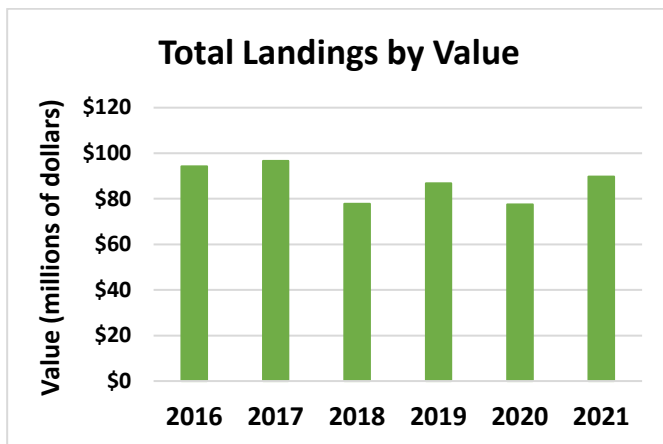
June 2022

2021 COMMERCIAL LANDINGS REVIEW

Commercial fishermen landed 42.3 million pounds of seafood in North Carolina in 2021. This was a 1.5% decrease from the 2020 landings of 43.0 million pounds and a 17.4% decrease from the five-year average (2016-2020) of 51.2 million pounds.



The estimated value for landings in 2021 was \$89.7 million, an increase of 15.7% from the 2020 estimated value of \$77.6 million and an increase of 3.6% from the five-year average of \$86.6 million.



The top five species landed by weight were Blue Crab (hard crabs only), 12.0 million pounds; shrimp, 9.2 million

pounds; Striped Mullet, 2.1 million pounds; Summer Flounder, 2.1 million pounds; and Catfishes, 2.0 million pounds. The top five species landed by value were shrimp, \$24.7 million; Blue Crab (hard crabs only), \$20.5 million; Eastern Oyster, \$6.9 million; Summer Flounder, \$5.8 million; and Bigeye Tuna, \$2.8 million.

Following the semi-annual report, catfish continue to be among the top five species landed by weight as landings increased to 2 million pounds in 2021, a 72.3% increase as compared to the previous 5-year average of 1.2 million pounds. Catfish landings increased by 61.7% from 2020 to 2021 alone. Corresponding with the increase in catfish landings, trotline trips increased by a dramatic 1,264.6% in 2021 as compared to the previous 5-year average, or about 13-fold, increasing from a 5-year average of 173 to 2,238 trips in 2021.

Values in this report are summarized. To see actual 2021 landings and value, please see the [2021 Annual Landings Bulletin](#).

NORTH CAROLINA CARES ACT FISHERIES RELIEF PROGRAMS

In May 2020, North Carolina received \$5.4 million in federal CARES Act funds to distribute to qualified applicants, which included commercial fishermen, aquaculture operations, seafood dealers and processors, and for-hire operators. Required qualifications included North Carolina residency and a demonstrated revenue reduction of greater than 35% during the March to May 2020 period as compared to the average of the previous five years for the same time period. Checks were distributed to approved applicants in April 2021.

In March 2021, North Carolina received an additional \$4.6 million through the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act. The eligibility requirements remained the same as those from the original CARES Act, but the time period was shifted to include all months from March to December to cover all potential 2020 losses related to COVID-19. To distribute funds more quickly, commercial fishermen and

seafood dealers were pre-qualified based on the estimated ex-vessel values of landings reported in their North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) trip tickets and were given the option of using those NCDMF values or providing their own revenue documentation. Checks were mailed to approved applicants in February 2022.

FEDERAL HURRICANE FLORENCE FISHERIES RELIEF PROGRAM

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, an applicant was 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 time period. The open application period closed on March 31, 2022, and NCDMF staff are currently reviewing applications. Checks are expected to be mailed to approved applicants by fall 2022. If you have any questions about the relief program, email hurricanerelief@ncdenr.gov or call NCDMF staff in Morehead City, NC at 252-723-5177 or 1-800-682-2632 (toll-free in North Carolina only).

STAFF CHANGES

The License and Statistics Section has welcomed a new Economist, Jason Walsh (Jason.Walsh@ncdenr.gov, 252-269-9299), a Conversion Factor Study Technician, Sam McNeely (Samuel.McNeely@ncdenr.gov, 252-725-2667) and a Hurricane Florence Program Technician, Garrett Newman (Garrett.Newman@ncdenr.gov, 252-723-5177).

Sadly, Port Agent Chris Kelly passed away earlier this year. NCDMF staff are currently in the hiring process for this position.

Additionally, NCDMF staff are holding interviews to fill the Assistant Quota Monitoring Biologist position.

UPCOMING FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN REMINDERS

There have been several updates to some of North Carolina's Fisheries Management Plans this year. In February 2022, the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission (NCMFC) voted for final adoption of Amendment 2 of the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan. Measures approved included prohibiting trawling in the Carolina Yacht Basin and Bogue Sound (except for inside the Intracoastal Waterway), prohibiting trawling in crab spawning sanctuaries, and setting a statewide recreational cast net creel limit of 48-quarts head on shrimp or 30-quarts head off shrimp. NCDMF also received direction to continue to work with the industry workgroup to test ways to reduce bycatch. NCDMF was also directed to work collaboratively with stakeholders through adaptive management to reduce trawling impacts on submerged aquatic vegetation if needed and to adopt adaptive management strategies to address any user conflicts concerning headrope size. Lastly, NCDMF was directed to look into a dedicated shrimp trawl observer program.

In May 2022, the NCMFC adopted Amendment 3 to the Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan. This includes managing the commercial fishery under a quota with the commercial quota divided between two gear sectors, the pound net fishery and the mobile gear fishery (includes all gears except pound nets). Each gear sector will then be subdivided into area components, with the pound net fishery split between northern, central, and southern regions and the mobile gear component divided into northern and southern regions. Beginning with the 2023 license year, dealers who intend to buy Southern Flounder from commercial fishermen will be required to obtain an Estuarine Flounder Dealer Permit. This permit is free to licensed dealers, but it will require daily dealer reporting during the Southern Flounder season. The 2022 commercial fishing season has yet to be announced. For the recreational fishery, a one fish bag limit was established with a minimum size limit of 15-inches total

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length. Harvest under the Recreational Commercial Gear License was also prohibited. The 2022 recreational flounder season will be Sept. 1-30.

The NCMFC also voted in May for its preferred management options for Amendment 2 to the Estuarine Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. This plan has been forwarded to the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality Secretary and to the General Assembly's appropriate legislative committees for review. The NCMFC is expected to vote on final adoption of this plan in August 2022. The next amendment for the Striped Mullet Fisheries Management Plan is also underway. The NCDMF will open a public scoping period soon to receive input from stakeholders about potential issues to address in the amendment. NCDMF is interested in seafood dealer and fishermen input during this time. There will be in-person and virtual ways to contribute.

RULE UPDATES

The NCMFC continues to readopt many of its rules under a state-mandated periodic review schedule. Forty-three readopted rules became effective on April 1, with only minor updates and changes. NCDMF anticipates additional rules will become effective over the summer. Remember to check the Commission's "Rules" [webpage](#) for the latest copy of the rules. You can also find information about the Commission's "Proposed Rules" where you can sign up to receive electronic notification of public comment opportunities for rulemaking and when rules become effective. Per North Carolina General Statute § 113-221, all persons who may be affected by rules adopted by the Marine Fisheries Commission are under a duty to keep themselves informed of the current rules.

TRIP TICKET REMINDERS

Transaction Numbers: Trip Tickets include a field for "Transaction #" or "Trans #," and there has been some confusion about what this field means. The transaction number is used when multiple trip tickets are written for fish caught on a single trip. The transaction number is basically a way of counting the number of tickets written

out for a particular trip to avoid counting a single trip multiple times when NCDMF compiles landings data.

For example, when a fisherman harvests crabs and finfish in the same trip and sells the crabs at one dealer and the finfish at a second dealer, the first dealer should complete a trip ticket for the crabs with a transaction number of 1, but the second dealer should complete a trip ticket for the finfish with a transaction number of 2. Another example is if a crew of two licensed commercial fishermen were working together to fish a gill net and caught 100 pounds of fish that they split in half to sell to the dealer individually, then the first ticket written to the first fisherman would show transaction number 1 with 50 pounds, and the second ticket for the second fisherman would show transaction number 2 with the remaining 50 pounds.

When the Trip Ticket Program (TTP) counts the number of trips for a particular species or gear type, only the trips with a transaction number of 1 are counted as individual trips. In this example, both fishermen would receive full credit for their landings, but because the second transaction number was entered as a 2, the TTP would not overestimate the number of trips and effort in the gill-net fishery.

Crew Numbers: Although each trip ticket is assigned to only one commercial fishing license, fishing trips often include more than one fisherman. To capture this information, the number of people in the crew for that trip should be written in the "No. of Crew" box on paper trip tickets or the "# Crew" box in the software. Accurately recording the crew size helps the TTP and NCDMF understand how many individuals participate in each respective fishery and could be impacted by management decisions. It also helps NCDMF estimate the value of commercial fisheries to local economies.

Trip Tickets: When filling out paper trip tickets, please take steps to ensure that the data are transferred onto the additional carbon copies in the trip ticket booklets. Newer trip tickets require you to press harder than before when writing, and the use of a ball point pen will help ensure the data transfers between sheets. Also, please remember to give fishermen a copy of their trip tickets, even if reporting electronically. E-dealers can print out copies of the trip tickets for fishermen or provide them with handwritten

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dock tickets. Providing fishermen with their tickets helps them tremendously when applying for economic relief programs through NCDMF.

Gill Nets: The Trip Ticket Program currently has five gear codes for gill nets: anchored small-mesh gill net (426); anchored large-mesh gill net (427); drift gill net (470); run-around gill net (475); and trammel net (530). While all gill nets have large and small mesh sizes, anchored gill nets are the only type defined by mesh size on trip tickets. On paper tickets, small mesh gill nets are designated as "< 5 in." and large mesh gill nets are designated as ">= 5 in." Additionally, in certain areas of the state, there are growing 'strike net' and 'drop net' fisheries. These trips should be recorded as run-around gill net (475) trips. It is important to verify the type of gill net fished with the fisherman and record the information correctly on the trip ticket, especially for anchored nets since they are regulated by seasons and waterbodies.

CONVERSION FACTOR STUDY

NCDMF presents fisheries statistics collected via the TTP as whole weights, but in reality, seafood is landed in gutted, headed, or dressed conditions or in different units such as bushels, bags, or by the piece. As a result, whole weight conversion factors must be determined for each species landed. To determine these conversion factors, TTP staff conduct conversion factor studies.

The last conversion factor study was completed in 2010. In November 2021, TTP staff began a new study to update conversion factors. TTP staff have been collecting samples of Snowy Grouper, Atlantic Menhaden, Blue Crab, and other species to determine current processed to whole weight conversion factors. The NCDMF appreciates the assistance the commercial fishing industry has provided to this project.

The NCDMF would appreciate help from dealers who would allow TTP staff to collect measurements for this study at their fish houses. If you have questions about the Conversion Factor Project or have interest in providing sampling opportunities, please contact Sam McNeely at Samuel.McNeely@ncdenr.gov or call 252-725-2667.

TECH TIPS

In addition to enabling seafood dealers to record and send their Trip Tickets electronically, the NC Trip Ticket System software allows users to generate several different reports. One of these reports is the Quota Monitoring Report. Seafood dealers who hold permits that allow them to purchase and possess certain species managed using annual harvest quotas (Striped Bass, Atlantic Ocean Flounder, Spiny Dogfish, Black Sea Bass North of Cape Hatteras, and Estuarine Flounder) are required to fill out and submit Daily Quota Monitoring Logs to report all landings of permitted species, while the seasons are open. The NC Trip Ticket System software makes this task easy by using information recorded in Trip Tickets to automatically fill out Quota Monitoring Logs, eliminating the tedious task of going through Trip Tickets and adding up the landings for the day.

To create a Quota Monitoring Log, open the NC Trip Ticket System and select "REPORTS" in the top left corner of the screen, above the "DEALER INFO" button. Select "QUOTA MONITORING REPORT." A small window will appear, where the desired date for the report can be entered. Once the date is entered, select "OK." A Daily Quota Monitoring Log will appear on the screen, showing all landings of permitted species that were recorded in Trip Tickets for that day. This report can be printed by selecting the PRINT button in the top left corner of the screen (printer icon) or saved to the computer by selecting the EXPORT button (small envelope icon with an arrow pointing down), next to the PRINT button. If using the EXPORT button, select "RTF" for the FORMAT and "DISK FILE" for the DESTINATION before clicking "OK."

QUOTA MONITORING UPDATES

In May 2022, Southern Flounder was added to the NCDMF's Quota Monitoring Program for daily harvest monitoring. The Southern Flounder commercial fishery annual harvest quota will be divided into two gear categories and split by harvest areas for monitoring purposes. Moving forward, seafood dealers will be required to hold a Permit for Monitoring Fisheries under a Quota/Allocation in order to purchase any number of

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Southern Flounder from commercial fishermen. This new permit is called the Estuarine Flounder Dealer Permit (ESFLDEAL) and was made available to licensed Seafood Dealers on June 13, free of charge.

The ESFLDEAL requires seafood dealers to complete and submit Quota Monitoring Logs daily while the fishery is open. These logs must be submitted to the Quota Monitoring Biologist via fax or electronic mail by 12 PM (noon) each day, to report the previous day's landings. Daily reporting is required regardless of whether a Southern Flounder transaction occurred. If the dealer is unable to send their logs by fax or electronic mail, the seafood dealer may call in the previous day's landings, but they still must submit the completed paper logs by fax, electronic mail, or mail within five days of the commercial fishing season closing.

Seafood dealers already familiar with reporting to the Quota Monitoring Program will notice that a reporting section for Estuarine Flounder has been added to the log. This new log must be used to meet the reporting requirements of all Permits for Monitoring Fisheries under a Quota/Allocation moving forward. For seafood dealers using the NC Trip Ticket System software to create their Quota Monitoring Logs, the new log will be available through a software update and will appear when the Quota Monitoring Report tool is used. Please contact Willow Patten at Willow.Patten@ncdenr.gov or call 252-808-8109 for assistance if needed.

TRIP TICKET CONTACTS

For questions regarding rules, procedures, or requirements, please contact a port agent at your local NCDMF office.

Elizabeth City	Michael Thompson (Port Agent Supervisor)	252-269-1847 (cell) Michael.Thompson@ncdenr.gov
Manteo	Marty Brill	252-342-0156 (cell) 252-473-2158 (office) Martin.Brill@ncdenr.gov
Morehead City	Chuck Davis	252-808-7935 (cell) 252-808-8029 (office) Chuck.Davis@ncdenr.gov
Washington	Jon Anglemyer	252-908-6786 (office/cell) Jon.Anglemyer@ncdenr.gov
Wilmington	Pam Zuaboni	252-241-0118 (cell) 910-796-7216 (office) Pam.Zuaboni@ncdenr.gov

For supplies, please contact the TTP's data clerks at 252-808-8104.

If you have any questions regarding use of the NC Trip Ticket System software, please contact Willow Patten at Willow.Patten@ncdenr.gov or call 252-808-8109.

If you are interested in accessing commercial fisheries data or would like to request a summary of your trip ticket landings, please contact Meredith Whitten at Meredith.Whitten@ncdenr.gov or call 252-808-8020.

UPCOMING NC MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION MEETING

August 17-19, 2022

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

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REPORT CRAB KILLS

Why? Fishermen are often the first to see dead or dying crabs. Such events may occur due to weather or human-induced causes. Water quality conditions that can contribute to crab kills include low dissolved oxygen, rapid salinity change and elevated levels of pesticides in the water. Distress or mortality of peeler crabs in shedders can be an early sign of water quality problems. Rapid reporting of kills helps state agencies determine the cause and how to prevent them in the future.

What to look for: Blue crabs exposed to pesticides may exhibit unusual behavior, such as difficulty moving (flipping over, legs falling off) prior to dying. Crabs stressed by low oxygen or extreme changes in temperature or salinity are more likely to become inactive.



What to do: Immediately report crab or fish kills when observed at your shedder or on the water. Calls may be anonymous. When abnormal behavior is observed, freeze several crabs and collect water samples. Store the water sample in a clean jar or bag and keep cold.

Who to contact:

Weekdays: N.C. Department of Environmental Quality
Washington Office: 252-946-6481; 800-338-7804
Wilmington Office: 910-796-7215; 800-248-4536

Weekends/evening: **Environmental Emergency hotline: 800-858-0368**

