

**WEEKLY UPDATE: 4/10/2015**  
**NORTH CAROLINA FISHERIES ASSOCIATION**  
**"Serving the Commercial Fishing Families of North Carolina since 1952"**  
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**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FROM JERRY**

The General Assembly took this week off so there's not much to report. The deadline for the introduction of most bills in the Senate has passed and the House deadline is coming up soon. However, amendments can be made to bills already introduced and language can also be added to the budget, as we know very well. We will keep tabs on any suggested changes and keep our members advised.

**NC COASTAL CONFERENCE HOSTED BY SEAGRANT SET FOR APRIL 14**

SeaGrant will host the NC Coastal Conference with the aim of advancing research, education, and economic development opportunities related to the coast. The conference will be held at the McKimmon Center on the NC State University campus from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. with a reception to follow from 6-8:30 p.m. at the Natural Sciences Museum. Louis Daniel, Alison Willis, and Secretary van der Vaart will lead discussions. You can view the [agenda](#) for details. For more information or to register to attend, see the [meeting notice](#).

**LICENSE FEES INCREASE BEGINNING APRIL 15**

The price of the Standard Commercial Fishing License, Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License, Shellfish License, Land and Sell License, Fish Dealer License and Recreational Commercial Gear License will go up by 60 percent for the 2015-2016 license year. The Commercial Vessel Registration fee will not go up this year.

The increased fees, which will go into a Commercial Fishing Resource Fund, were proposed by the commercial fishing industry as part of a plan to fund the Division of Marine Fisheries Observer Program in order for the state to meet its obligations of the incidental take permit under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Spending from the fund must be approved by both the Marine Fisheries Commission and the Funding Committee, which is comprised of six commercial representatives. Additional money from the fund will be used to fund industry initiatives to support sustainable commercial fishing in the state.

**DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES REMINDS SHRIMPERS OF NEW REQUIREMENTS**

The 2015 Shrimp Fishery Management Plan Amendment 1 and associated rules were approved by the Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) at its meeting on Feb. 19, 2015. This amendment addressed bycatch issues in the shrimp fishery as directed by the MFC in 2012. One of the management strategies in the plan is to allow any federally certified BRD in state waters. Another management strategy is to require either a T-90/square mesh tailbag or other applications of square mesh panels (e.g., skylight panel), reduced bar spacing in a TED, or another federal or state certified BRD in addition to existing TED and BRD requirements in all skimmer and otter trawls.

**What does this mean to shrimp trawl and skimmer trawl fishermen? First, beginning June 1, 2015, fishermen will be able to use any of the federally certified BRDs in state waters. Before the Shrimp FMP Amendment 1, only state certified BRDs were allowed in state waters. Second, this also means that all otter trawls and skimmer trawls will be required to have either:**

1. **A second BRD that may be a state certified BRD or a federally certified BRD; or**
2. **A T-90 (square mesh) tailbag; or**
3. **Another application of a square mesh panel, such as a skylight panel; or**
4. **A TED with a reduced bar spacing of 3 inches or less (measured inside edge to inside edge).**

The Division of Marine Fisheries is developing a proclamation to address these changes in bycatch reduction device requirements and plans to issue this proclamation soon. The proclamation will include specifications for square mesh applications. These management changes will allow the use of a wider range of choices of certified devices that reduce bycatch and enhance current TED and BRD requirements that fishermen may use to reduce bycatch.

If you are using a otter or skimmer trawl and are currently using a second Florida fish eye, a square mesh application, or a TED with reduced bar spacing of at least 3 inches or less, you are already compliant and will not need to make any further changes.

#### **AMENDMENT A-7 SURVIVAL FUND**

Members of the pelagic longline fleet and other related businesses have filed suit challenging aspects of Amendment 7 to the Highly Migratory Species FMP fearing further decline of domestic fisheries for rebuilt stocks and the possible resulting transfer of the United States' international quota to foreign fleets.

In its rulemaking, NOAA refused to consider scientific advice and industry input to open certain closed areas that would mitigate the bycatch of concern, and take measures to further reduce the number of participants in the fishery, despite the fact that quotas are not being caught. NOAA claims to create a workable individual quota system to address bycatch, but allocates insufficient quota with no prospect that there will be any quota to transfer. Additionally, NOAA imposes fishery wide closures if quotas are exceeded. Finally, the plan requires expensive and unreliable monitoring systems on the HMS pelagic longline fishery which will not reduce bycatch, despite the fact that it is allocated only about 8 percent of the United States' bluefin tuna quota.

If you would like to donate to this legal fund, please make checks payable to A-7 Survival Fund and send to: Etheridge Seafood Company PO Box 77, Wanchese NC, 27981. Please include your contact information, best phone number to reach you, and email.

#### **BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT GEOLOGICAL AND GEOPHYSICAL PUBLIC MEETINGS**

BOEM has scheduled public meetings in several states beginning March 31 to answer questions and provide stakeholders with information on Geological and Geophysical activities in the Atlantic. For more information see the [news release](#). The remaining North Carolina meeting is scheduled:

Monday, April 27, 2015 (3:00 to 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.)  
Ramada Plaza Nags Head Oceanfront  
1701 S. Virginia Dare Trail  
Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948

#### **SAMFC SEEKS INPUT ON SPAWNING SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS**

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is holding a series of public hearings and a workshop to solicit public input on areas that could be considered for designation as Spawning Special Management Zones in federal waters (ranging from 3 to 200 miles offshore) off the coasts of the Carolinas, Georgia, and the east coast of Florida. The Spawning Special Management Zones (SMZs) are being considered in Amendment 36 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan. For more information on these meetings or how to submit written comment see the [news release](#).

#### **NOAA FISHERIES ANNOUNCES \$2.5 MILLION AVAILABLE FOR INNOVATIVE BYCATCH SOLUTIONS**

The Bycatch Reduction Engineering Program is now accepting project proposals for your ideas to reduce bycatch in our nation's marine fisheries. Approximately \$2.5 million is available to fishermen, academics, and other interested groups for projects that offer practical engineering and technological solutions to reduce

bycatch. Pre-proposals are due by April 16 with full applications due by May 28, 2015. For more information see the [news release](#).

**MEETINGS:**

*If you are aware of ANY meetings that should be of interest to commercial fishing that is not on this list, please contact us so we can include it here.*

**April 14-16** - Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Meeting, Ocean Place Resort, 1 Ocean Blvd, Long Branch, NJ

**April 15** - MFC Finfish Advisory Committee Meeting, DMF Central District Office, 5285 Hwy. 70 W, Morehead City

**April 20 at 2 p.m.** - NCFA Board of Directors Meeting, N.C. Estuarium, 223 E. Water St., Washington, NC

**PROCLAMATIONS:**

[SNAPPER-GROUPER COMPLEX-COMMERCIAL PURPOSES](#)