

**WEEKLY UPDATE: 5/15/2015**  
**NORTH CAROLINA FISHERIES ASSOCIATION**  
**"Serving the Commercial Fishing Families of North Carolina since 1952"**  
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**IMPORTANT MFC DECISION NEXT WEEK - FISHERMEN SHOULD ATTEND!**

The MFC will meet May 20-22 at the DoubleTree New Bern Riverfront Hotel located at 100 Middle Street in New Bern for its quarterly business meeting. For a complete overview of the meeting, see the [briefing book](#).

At this meeting the commission will decide whether to approve draft [Supplement A](#) to the Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Amendment 1 for public comment, move into an amendment or end the process. This emergency measure is being considered although the stock status of southern flounder is currently unknown. If the supplement is moved forward at this meeting, harvest reductions ranging from 25-60 percent could be in place by Sept. 1. These new restrictions will likely result in increased minimum size limits, decreased recreational bag limits, and season closures.

All commercial fishermen are affected by this decision. If the commission sets a precedent for using this process, which requires little stakeholder input or oversight, any fishery could be subject to a similar crisis. Please attend the meeting and ask the MFC to begin the amendment process for southern flounder. Encourage any of the industry's friends you know to do the same.

**SHRIMP TRAWLS REQUIRED TO USE ADDITIONAL BRD STARTING JUNE 1**

Currently, North Carolina requires shrimp fishermen to use one, state-certified bycatch reduction device in shrimp trawls and skimmer trawls. Beginning June 1, shrimp fishermen will also be allowed to use any federally certified bycatch reduction device.

The new regulations will also require shrimp fishermen to use a second bycatch reduction device in shrimp trawls and skimmer trawls, in addition to a state or federally certified bycatch reduction device. Fishermen may use any of the following bycatch reduction devices as a second device:

- Any state certified bycatch reduction device;
- Any federally certified bycatch reduction device;
- A T-90 or square mesh tailbag or other applications of square mesh panels, such as a skylight panel;
- Reduced bar spacing in a turtle excluder device.

Fishermen who are already using a second Florida fish eye, a square mesh application or a turtle excluder device with reduced bar spacing of 3 inches or less are already compliant and will not need to make any further changes. See the [news release](#) for more information.

**JERRY'S LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

The emphasis this past week has been mostly on the upcoming Marine Fisheries Commission meeting and southern flounder. There wasn't a lot of activity in the General Assembly regarding fishing, but one thing did come to light on Thursday that I'll be looking into and have a meeting on Tuesday about it. In an effort to fund the dredging of our inlets, S-160 "[Enhance Safety of Ports/Inlets](#)" was introduced and is working its way through the Senate. The bill requires that all vessels that use coastal fishing waters, acquire a Coastal Waterways User Identification Number, which requires a fee. The fee would be calculated by the length of the vessel. Anyone holding a commercial or recreational fishing license and has a vessel of 24 feet or larger would be required to pay the fee. In the current version of the legislation, the fee would be calculated as follows:

Vessel length divided by 8 and multiplying the result by the vessel length. For example, the annual fee for a 40 foot vessel would be \$200.

I'll report on this in more detail after the Tuesday meeting.

The bill sponsored by Senator Bill Cook, "Strengthen Oyster Industry", that was scheduled for a committee hearing on Wednesday, was postponed at the request of Senator Cook for more discussion. It is now scheduled for this coming Wednesday at 10 a.m.

The House releases its version of the budget on Tuesday, so it will be a busy week in Raleigh. I plan to leave Raleigh sometime Wednesday to attend the public comments session of the MFC on Wednesday evening.

We strongly encourage commercial fishing folks to attend this coming week's MFC meeting.

**Carteret County Fishermen's Association**



Skeeter Saunders, CCFA fish fry, we miss you!

**FISH FRY**

**Saturday, May 30<sup>th</sup>**

**11am – 6pm**

**Crissie Wright Lodge**

**Smyrna**

**Plates \$10.00**

**Dessert & Drink included**

For more information contact: 252-723-8046 or [ccfaofnc@gmail.com](mailto:ccfaofnc@gmail.com)

#### **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.

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.

#### **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.

**May 20-22** - Marine Fisheries Commission Meeting, Doubletree New Bern Riverfront Hotel, 100 Middle St., New Bern

**May 23 at 6 p.m.** - Carteret County Fishermen's Association Meeting, Community Center, Marshallberg

**May 28** - Pamlico County Fishermen's Association Meeting

**PROCLAMATIONS:**

[RED DRUM - COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FISHING OPERATIONS](#)

[SHRIMP TRAWL BRD REQUIREMENTS](#)

[CRAB TRAWLING AND TAKING SHRIMP WITH NETS](#) (SH-3-2015)

[CRAB TRAWLING AND TAKING SHRIMP WITH NETS](#) (SH-4-2015)

[RULE SUSPENSION - GILL NET RESTRICTIONS: INTERNAL COASTAL WATERS](#)

[GILL NETS - ALBEMARLE SOUND AREA- MANAGEMENT UNIT A](#)

[CRAB TRAWLING AND TAKING SHRIMP WITH NETS](#) (SH-3-2015 Revised)