TRADEWINDS: We decided to go ahead and print Tradewinds next week, as we just don't know when the General Assembly will adjourn.

AFFILIATE NEWS:

CARTERET COUNTY FISHERMEN’S ASSOCIATION: Next meeting to be announced.

PAMLICO COUNTY FISHERMEN’S ASSOCIATION: Their next meeting will be scheduled when the General Assembly adjourns so Jerry can attend, so stay tuned for more information.

ALBEMARLE FISHERMEN’S ASSOCIATION next meeting will be on Tuesday, August 19th at Leon Nixon’s Catering facility in Edenton. For more info call Terry Pratt:

BRUNSWICK COUNTY FISHERMEN’S ASSOCIATION has not scheduled their August meeting yet.

Jerry’s comments:

Another frustrating week in Raleigh, although it was a relatively short week for me. As I write this, I'm listening to the House session on Friday while I'm in Manteo. Our Air Force son returned from Korea and while visiting his next assignment, Langley AFB in Virginia. From there, he drove to Manteo at our daughter's place. Listening to the legislative session from our daughter's is much more relaxing than doing so from Raleigh.

I'm not even going to project when the legislative session might end. It could be next week. It could be Christmas. Since the Senate is reconvening on Monday morning at 9:30am, that is a positive sign that this coming week may be the last for the short session, although the week may be a very long one before they adjourn.

There are fisheries issues outside of what's going on in the General Assembly, however. While the work in Raleigh is very important, NCFA is, (or should be), engaged in many other issues.

A couple of significant events took place this week, both involving the Endangered Species Act. One for sturgeon and the other for turtles. An ITP or Incidental Take Permit has been issued for sturgeon. NOAA Fisheries, or the National Marine Fisheries Service, announced in 2012 that several sturgeon populations would be listed as endangered. The press release they issues included the following statement: "The listing decisions will not have an immediate effect on fishing." Well, that could now change with the issuance of the ITP. Most people, including many commercial fishermen, have no idea of how tough the Endangered Species Act, (ESA), can be. The following quote is also from the NMFS press release about sturgeon: "The Endangered Species Act requires species listed as endangered to receive the full protection under the Act to prevent extinction, including a prohibition against “take,” which includes harassing, harming, pursuing, wounding, killing, trapping, capturing, or collecting. These protections may also be established for threatened species to prevent them from becoming endangered."

Tourists, for example, who go out of their way on a boat to watch a sea turtle swimming could be violating federal law by "harassing" an endangered species. To keep from violating the law, application can be made to
the feds for an Incidental Take Permit, or ITP. If issued, it allows fishermen to continue fishing for others species and if a turtle or sturgeon is caught "incidental" to the fishing operation, they do not violate the law. Along with the ITP there are certain criteria that can modify fishing operations or shut it down if the agency deems that further activity may further harm the populations of the endangered or threatened species.

This old man isn't the only person that believes the ESA is being used to further other agendas, like severely restricting or eventual banning of gillnets.

A proclamation resulting in Increased restrictions for the large mesh gillnet fishery in the Albemarle area due to sea turtles has been issued. Again, this has been done under the guise of compliance with the ITP for sea turtles. We're currently looking at the data before the upcoming Marine Fisheries Commission in August.

Once again, it seems when it comes to fishing restrictions, it's been all one-sided with commercial fishermen mandated to protect the species. Remember the "60-day letter". It wasn't a bluff as folks will soon see!

God bless,
Jerry

MEETINGS:
NOTE: 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.

Aug 4NCFA Board of Directors; Hampton Inn; Washington NC; 2:00pm
Aug 4-8Sedar workshop on Red Snapper and Gray Triggerfish
Aug 5-7ASMFC Meeting; Alexandria VA
Aug 7SAFMC Public Hearing & Scoping meeting on a variety of issues; Joslyn Hall, MC, 4-7pm
Aug 12-14Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council; Washington DC
Aug 19Albemarle Fishermen’s Association; Leon Nixon’s Catering in Edenton; 6:30pm
Aug 20-22Marine Fisheries Commission meeting; Brownstone in Raleigh

DMF/MFC Meeting Schedule

GILL NETS – ALBEMARLE SOUND AREA

SPANISH MACKEREL COMMERCIAL/RECREATIONAL

LARGE MESH GILL NETS: INTERNAL COASTAL WATERS

COMMERCIAL SHARK CLOSURE: SMALL COASTAL SHARKS