

WEEKLY UPDATE: 11/23/2015
NORTH CAROLINA FISHERIES ASSOCIATION
"Serving the Commercial Fishing Families of North Carolina since 1952"
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THOUGHTS FROM JERRY

I've attended a lot of fisheries meetings since getting involved in this 28 years ago. Meetings of the Mid-Atlantic Council, South Atlantic Council, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, fisheries hearings in Washington, D.C. and Raleigh and of course, the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission. Last week ranks at the top of the list. What list? Well, if you have to ask that question, it's because you haven't been paying attention!

For those that are aware of the southern flounder debate that has been raging since February, you probably assume that is the issue I am referring to. And you would be correct, at least partially. Many of us that have been part of the dialogue on southern flounder feel that the process is as important as the science. If one has no faith in the process, it doesn't bode very well for the future of fisheries management.

The flounder discussion ended about 7 p.m. on Thursday night, taking up about seven hours. Prior to that, North Carolina Watermen United, (NCWU), and the North Carolina Fisheries Association, (NCFA), presented petitions with about 4,500 names opposing the use of the "supplement" as a means to adopt further restrictions on the fishery. During the ensuing debate on flounder by the MFC, the petitions weren't even mentioned by the commissioners.

The provisions that were adopted by the MFC last week will have a tremendous negative impact on commercial fishing families. By extension, those negative impacts will be felt by consumers. So, we are being asked what options do commercial fishermen have? Several! Stay tuned, and see my final comment below!

If anyone needs proof of how toxic the fisheries management environment has become, you need to be aware of the debate by the MFC on Friday morning concerning the nominations for the South Atlantic Council's obligatory seat. Although the actual appointment is made by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Governor McCrory submits the nominations from a list that is originated by the Marine Fisheries Commission. The seat is currently held by Jack Cox, who is finishing his first three-year term and is interested in being nominated for a second term. NCFA is supporting Jack for reappointment, but by law three names must be submitted to the Secretary of Commerce. We recommended Jack Cox, Kenny Fex and David Bush.

For over 30 years, there has been a gentleman's agreement that the obligatory seat should be filled by a commercial representative and the at-large seat by a recreational representative. (The at-large seat is currently held by Anna Beckwith.) For the first time, this Marine Fisheries Commission decided to include a recreational person on the list of nominees! Why? Because they can!

This MFC believes the way to alleviate the harsh edges in these contentious debates is to throw gasoline on a fire! For over 30 years there has been agreement that commercial interests would be nominated for the obligatory seat and recreational for at-large. Until now!
What should you do?

Plan to attend NCFA's Annual Meeting in January! Let's talk about southern flounder and some possible actions and other issues that commercial fishermen are facing in 2016 and beyond! We need YOU to help us with a plan of action!

NMFS ANNOUNCES FINAL RULE TO IMPLEMENT AMENDMENT 9 TO THE 2006 CONSOLIDATED HMS FMP

The final rule to implement Amendment 9 to the 2006 Consolidated Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) is now available. This Amendment implements management measures in the shark fisheries and could affect fishermen who fish for smoothhound sharks (e.g., smooth dogfish, Florida smoothhound, and Gulf smoothhound) and fishermen who fish for sharks with gillnet gear.

Additionally, NMFS will hold an operator-assisted, public conference call and webinar on December 15, 2015, from 2:00 p.m. to 4 p.m. EST, to discuss the methodology used to calculate the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico smoothhound shark quotas. The conference call-in phone number is 1- 800-857-9816; participant pass code is 9776014. Participants are strongly encouraged to log/dial in 15 minutes prior to the meeting. NMFS will show a brief presentation via webinar followed by public questions. For more details and instructions on joining the webinar see the [news release](#).

[SAFMC UPDATE - FALL 2015](#)

NC MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION SEEKS ADVISERS

The N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission is looking for commercial and recreational fishermen and scientists to advise it on various fisheries issues. For information on the types of committees, requirements and how to apply see the [news release](#). Applications are due by Dec. 15.

DEADLINES:

Dec. 15 - MFC Adviser Applications

Dec. 16 - NMFS [Draft Ecosystem-based Fishery Management Policy](#) Comments

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.

Nov. 23 at 1 p.m. - MAFMC River Herring and Shad Committee via [webinar](#)

Nov. 24 at 1 p.m. - MAFMC Science and Statistical Committee Meeting (Spiny Dogfish) via [webinar](#)

Nov. 30 at 12:30 p.m. - NCFA Board of Directors Meeting, Washington Civic Center, 110 Gladden St., Washington

Dec. 7-10 - [MAFMC Meeting](#), The Westin Annapolis, 100 Westgate Circle, Annapolis, MD

Dec. 7-11 - [SAFMC Meeting](#), DoubleTree by Hilton Oceanfront Hotel, 2717 W. Fort Macon Rd., Atlantic Beach, NC

PROCLAMATIONS:

[FLOUNDER - COMMERCIAL FISHING OPERATIONS - ATLANTIC OCEAN](#)

[BLACK SEA BASS - COMMERCIAL FISHING OPERATIONS - ATLANTIC OCEAN - NORTH OF CAPE HATTERAS](#)

[GILL NETS - ALBEMARLE SOUND AREA- MANAGEMENT UNIT A - REMOVING SMALL MESH GILL NET ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS](#)

[GILL NETS - ALBEMARLE SOUND AREA- MANAGEMENT UNIT A - DECEMBER COMMERCIAL LARGE MESH GILL NET FISHERY CLOSURE](#)

[FLOUNDER - COMMERCIAL HARVEST INTERNAL COASTAL WATERS - DECEMBER CLOSURE](#)