

**Marine Fisheries Commission Special Meeting Minutes
Virtual Meeting via WebEx
March 31, 2021**

Due to COVID-19, the commission held a one-day special meeting via WebEx webinar on March 31. Members of the public submitted public comment online or via U.S. mail. To view the public comment, go to: <https://files.nc.gov/ncdeq/Marine-Fisheries/03-31-2021-mfc-special-meeting/March-31-MFC-Online-Comments-and-Letters.pdf>

The briefing book, presentations and audio from this meeting can be found at: <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries/marine-fisheries-commission/marine-fisheries-commission-meetings#special-meeting---march-31,-2021>

Actions and motions from the meeting are listed in **bolded** type.

SPECIAL MEETING - MOTIONS AND ACTIONS

On March 31 at 1 p.m. Chairman Rob Bizzell called the meeting to order and reminded commissioners of their conflict of interest and ethics requirements.

The following commission members were in attendance: Rob Bizzell-Chairman, Mike Blanton, Doug Cross, Tom Hendrickson, James Kornegay, Robert McNeill, Dr. Martin Posey Tom Roller and Sam Romano.

Motion by Tom Roller to approve the meeting agenda.

Second by Robert McNeill.

ROLL CALL VOTE				
Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Doug Cross	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mike Blanton	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tom Hendrickson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
James Kornegay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Robert McNeill	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dr. Martin Posey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tom Roller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sam Romano	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Chairman Rob Bizzell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Motion carries 5-4

REVISITING THE SOUTHERN FLOUNDER SECTOR ALLOCATION ISSUE

Motion by Tom Roller to amend the previously adopted southern flounder allocation to adjust the allocation to 70/30 in 2021 and 2022 to 60% commercial and 40% recreational in 2023 and achieve a 50/50 parity in allocation in 2024

Second by Pete Kornegay

ROLL CALL VOTE				
Commissioner	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Doug Cross	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mike Blanton	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tom Hendrickson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
James Kornegay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Robert McNeill	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dr. Martin Posey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tom Roller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sam Romano	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chairman Rob Bizzell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Motion carries 5-4

Issues from Commissioners

Commissioner Hendrickson stated he would like to forward to public comment options of a 13-16” and a 13-17” slot for southern flounder as well as corresponding increase in the bag limit for the hook-and-line fishery.

Commissioner Kornegay stated he has some management options he would like explored in Amendment 3 to the Southern Flounder FMP:

- Phase out large mesh flounder gill nets at the end of current ITP
- Begin observer program for pound nets- currently no estimates on discards

- Account for flounder discards from the shrimp trawl fishery in the TAL
- Identify unreported flounder landings- \$100 permit for gill net and gig fishers
- Develop daily, real-time flounder landings reporting
- Develop reporting app for recreational flounder fishers
- Inlet Migration Corridors
 - No gill nets
 - No gigging
 - Season and distance from inlets to be determined in proclamations

Commissioner McNeill would like to look for the potential for summer and gulf flounder seasons with the recently approved allocations and how that could affect the southern flounder rebuilding process.

Commissioner Roller commented on Commissioner Kornegay's management options. He stated that we need to think big, we can do some additional things to be more progressive in our fisheries management. He agrees with Commissioner Kornegay's idea of phasing out large mesh flounder gill nets at the end of current ITP. He would like to add some items to the observer program for pound nets: Quantify discards in the fishery as they are currently an unknown. Acquire data for a more accurate flounder species composition in the fishery. As a means for additional quota monitoring, further catch composition, scientific information and as a means to determine when to implement inlet corridors by proclamation. Regarding concerns about underreported commercial landings, flounder are one of our most coveted species by anyone. We all know people who use SCFLs to be able to gig well past their recreational limit and to gig smaller fish as well. Most of those fish don't make it onto the trip tickets because they are being kept for personal consumption or their being donated. Same goes for hook-and-line. Regarding the estuarine gill net permit. There are 2400 permits issued, but only 1800 active commercial fishermen in the state and only 600 recording gill net landings. It would be beneficial to the protected resources division to weed out some of them by beginning to charge an administrative fee of \$100 for the permit. Look into creating a separate permit for other mobile gears and charge an administrative fee of \$100. Establishing a hail-in/hail-out program to better account for who is using SCGL licenses for reasons other than selling fish. We also need to make sure we have alternative management measures that allow the commission to make annual adjustments to the total allowable catch if the best available science says we need to. Need to avoid an ASMA striped bass situation like we have seen.

The meeting adjourned at 2:22 pm.