

**Online Public Comment  
Marine Fisheries Commission  
Aug. 17-18, 2022 Business meeting**

Name	State	Please type your comments in the box below.
Tim Chalmers	North Carolina	I support the continued gill net restrictions above the ferry lines. This is an important tool for restoration of our depleted striped bass fish stock.
Stephen Greenhut	North Carolina	<p>Keep in place the gill net restriction above the ferry lines on the Neuse and Pamlico rivers.</p> <p>I am originally from southwestern CT and experienced the amazing benefits of the moratorium that was placed upon stripes bass in the late 1970s/early 1980s. Do not allow the fishery to get to the point where "catching" a striped bass becomes a rare event. Keep the fishery alive and thriving so that the recreational and commercial fisherman can enjoy and reap the benefits.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
Eb Pesci	North Carolina	The gillnet restrictions that were put in place to help rebuild the striped bass stock should remain in place. All of the effort put forth to start this rebuilding process will be destroyed in one season if you allow gillnets to return where they are currently not permitted.
Steven Craven	North Carolina	All restrictions on gill nets should not only remain in effect but they should be banned completely
JERRY WAGONER	North Carolina	Gill net ban in the Neuse should remain in place without doubt. Increase in stripe bass and other game fish is proof it is working
Billy Trivette	North Carolina	<p>Please keep the gill net restrictions IN PLACE.</p> <p>Please give the regular public an opportunity to enjoy our natural resources!</p>
Peter Peroutka	North Carolina	I strongly support keeping the gill net restrictions in place. It works!
Chris England		Please leave the gill net restrictions in place for the striped bass estuarine waters. We cannot continue to allow such commercial fishing methods as gill netting to destroy our resources in this state. We should know by looking at the status of our flounder that these methods do not support a sustainable resource for the future. It is clear that the management efforts of the past have only been in favor of the commercial industry and not the benefit of all citizens of the state of NC. This must STOP.

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Frederick Kruske	North Carolina	I am confident that the gill net band in the Neuse River has made a big difference in the Strippers come back in size and quantity, not only Strippers but the trout and drum are the best I have seen since this gill net band has been in place for the past couple of years. We are on the right track for this sports fishery to have a much needed come back. Let's try to do more it is working.
George (G.W.) Atkinson	North Carolina	I understand that there may be some attempts to remove the gill net restrictions above the ferry lines on the Neuse and Pamlico rivers. I'm taking the time to comment to let you know that I support the continuation of these restrictions and support you in the continuation of these gill net bans. I would also support you in expanding those gill net bans to cover larger areas so that our public resources aren't allowed to be exploited by a few commercial fisherman for their own benefit. While I am not against properly managed commercial fishing, it's appalling that North Carolina remains the only state that allows inshore gill nets. Please continue your restriction on these nets and expand the areas they are banned. Thank you. G.W. Atkinson
Scot Bannerman	North Carolina	Please do not remove the restrictions on gill nets in the Pamlico and Neuse rivers. From the data I see the gill net restrictions have contributed to the strenghtening of fish stocks. Please do not give in to special interests, and do what is right for all the sportsment and recreational anglers that want to see our fish stocks managed for the long term.
Chris Feleppa	North Carolina	I support keeping the gill net restrictions in place. They seem to be working.
Chris McCaffity	North Carolina	One of the biggest threats to our freedom to fish and eat wild-caught seafood is the privatization of our public waters and resources. Please put a moratorium on any new private leases of North Carolina's public waters. Please stop allowing genetically sterilized or otherwise modified species to be placed in public waters. Please limit new public water aquaculture to stocking native seafood that can naturally reproduce. Please submit a request to BOEM and NOAA asking that the base of any new windmills in public waters be designed as permanent artificial reef habitat that can be dismantled to a safe navigational depth after being decommissioned. Please also support giving state and local governments the Right of First Refusal on any new public water leases adjacent to their borders that are being offered by our federal government.
Lenny Smathers	North Carolina	Please do not remove the gill net restrictions above the ferry lines on the Neuse and Pamlico rivers.
DEMPSEY BARWICK	North Carolina	My comment is re the Estuarine Striped Bass FMP and concerns the removal of gill-net restrictions above the ferry lines on the Neuse and Pamlico rivers. After the DMF commissioners voted not to remove the above

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		<p>restrictions at their last meeting, I am unsure why this issue has resurfaced. Removal of the restrictions above the ferry lines was a bad idea then and continues to be one today. I thought a three-year study was underway to determine the impacts of no gillnetting in the restricted area. If netters are allowed back into the area prior to the end of the study period, test results will be confounded and the DMF will never be able to assess the response of fishery resources in the area to no gillnetting. At this time, it appears from fishing results that striped bass (and other fishery resources) in the restricted area are improving in the absence of gill nets. Thus, there is no good reason to allow netters into the area until the study is completed and the results known, unless DMF does not really want to know the response of the fishery resources to no netting in the restricted area. If this true, the DMF has lost all integrity and credibility, and our coastal fishery resources are in more jeopardy than anyone can imagine. Thank you for allowing me to comment on this issue.</p>
Stuart Creighton	North Carolina	<p>As we begin a new cycle with several new commissioners, I would like to point out that there are numerous errors in chosen management options for recently adopted FMPs that, moving forward, need to be addressed. Most obviously, is the recently adopted plan for southern flounder. There is a lack of ocean access to two healthy fisheries of summer and gulf flounder. The recreational quota has been set so low that any significant effort on flounder will result in overages so large that the angling public will be shut out of the fishery for years to come. In addition, we are attempting to manage a quota driven fishery with MRIP data that was never intended for such a purpose.</p> <p>As the flounder fishery recovers, and as angling interactions increase, the estimates of discard mortality will increase to the point of further reductions or closures to the recreational fishery. The writing is on the wall that anglers will get caught in a recovery trap, not unlike what we are currently seeing for red snapper. Furthermore, while the commercial industry is dealing with the same hard reductions and shorter seasons, the MFC took a pass on dealing with the largest source of wastage in the industry, shrimp trawl bycatch in Pamlico Sound.</p> <p>DMF data clearly shows a juvenile southern flounder hotspot in the Western Pamlico Sound near the mouths of the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers where all trawling should be stopped while flounder populations recover. Since no action was taken to deal with this problem, potentially hundreds of thousands of JUVENILE flounder will be lost as bycatch. Any fishery will have a tough time recovering when managers ignore such wastage.</p> <p>In addition, with the severely reduced commercial quota, southern flounder could be harvested cleanly through the use of pound nets and gigs. Large mesh gill nets are no longer necessary in this fishery. However, NC and DMF have continued the process of renewing the ITP which allows the gear to remain in the water; a practice</p>

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		<p>that kills sea turtles in addition to other Finfish, birds, and reptiles. Perhaps this commission will find the courage to reverse an unfair flounder amendment.</p> <p>Reducing bycatch and protecting habitat were two central tenets to the latest amendment to the shrimp plan. However, the MFC voted, once again, to maintain status quo. The restrictions on trawling that were passed were merely window dressing and will do nothing to meet the bycatch and habitat goals that had been set forth. Divisional guidance that recommended closing the northern and western half of Pamlico Sound was ignored, as was the recommendation to close the rivers to trawling. The prospect of removing the large, ocean going four baggers wasn't even discussed; so we ended up with more of the same, a whole lot of nothing.</p> <p>The one appropriate measure taken thus far, was to maintain the gill net ban above the ferry lines. Both in February and in May, the previous commission voted by a SUPERMAJORITY to maintain that closure. With the final vote scheduled for this week, I urge this new commission to maintain that vote.</p> <p>In conclusion, NC has a long history of waiting until it is too late to make any significant management decisions that will help the resource recover. I would ask this iteration of the MFC to buck that trend and make the difficult decisions necessary to bring back our resource!!</p>