

Preliminary Matters

August 2023 Business Meeting

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Marine Fisheries Commission Business Meeting

AGENDA

Hilton North Hills Raleigh, NC
August 23 - 25, 2023

N.C.G.S. 138A-15(e) mandates at the beginning of any meeting of a board, the chair shall remind all members of their duty to avoid conflicts of interest under Chapter 138. The chair also shall inquire as to whether there is any known conflict of interest with respect to any matters coming before the board at that time.

N.C.G.S. 143B-289.54.(g)(2) states a member of the Marine Fisheries Commission shall not vote on any issue before the Commission that would have a "significant and predictable effect" on the member's financial interest. For purposes of this subdivision, "significant and predictable effect" means there is or may be a close causal link between the decision of the Commission and an expected disproportionate financial benefit to the member that is shared only by a minority of persons within the same industry sector or gear group. A member of the Commission shall also abstain from voting on any petition submitted by an advocacy group of which the member is an officer or sits as a member of the advocacy group's board of directors. A member of the Commission shall not use the member's official position as a member of the Commission to secure any special privilege or exemption of substantial value for any person. No member of the Commission shall, by the member's conduct, create an appearance that any person could improperly influence the member in the performance of the member's official duties.

Commissioners having questions about a conflict of interest or appearance of conflict should consult with counsel to the Marine Fisheries Commission or the secretary's ethics liaison. Upon discovering a conflict, the commissioner should inform the chair of the commission in accordance with N.C.G.S. 138A-15(e).

Wednesday, August 23rd

4:00 p.m. Commissioner Orientation – Lara Klibansky

6:00 p.m. Public Comment Period

Thursday, August 24th

9:00 a.m. Public Comment Period

9:30 a.m. Preliminary Matters

- Swearing in of New Commissioners
- Commission Call to Order* – Rob Bizzell, Chairman
- Moment of Silence and Pledge of Allegiance
- Review Ethics Evaluations of New Commissioners
- Conflict of Interest Reminder
- Roll Call
- Remarks by Department of Environmental Quality Secretary Biser
- **Approval of Agenda ****
- **Approval of Meeting Minutes****

9:50 a.m. Chairman's Report

- Letters and Online Comments
- Ethics Training and Statement of Economic Interest Reminder
- 2023 Meeting Schedule
- 2024 Proposed Meeting Schedule
- **Elect Vice Chair****
- Advisory Committee Workshop Update – Lara Klibansky

** Times indicated are merely for guidance. The commission will proceed through the agenda until completed.*

***Probable Action Items*

Marine Fisheries Commission Business Meeting Agenda

- 10:30 a.m. Director's Report – Director Kathy Rawls
Reports and updates on recent Division of Marine Fisheries activities
- Division of Marine Fisheries Quarterly Update
 - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Update – Chris Batsavage
 - Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Update – Chris Batsavage
 - South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Update – Trish Murphey
 - License and Statistics Section Update – Brandi Salmon
 - Shellfish Sanitation and Recreational Water Quality Update – Shannon Jenkins
 - Habitat and Enhancement Section Update – Jacob Boyd
 - Shellfish Lease Program Update – Owen Mulvey-McFerron
 - Coastal Habitat Protection Plan Updates – Anne Deaton
 - OTSS Progress Report & ITP Update – Barbie Byrd
 - Marine Patrol Update – Carter Witten
 - Informational Materials:
 - Protected Resources Memo & Reports
 - Rule Suspensions
- 11: 30 a.m. Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Report– Capt. Garland Yopp, Chearin Lewis
- **Vote on setting temporary cap on the number of licenses in the Eligibility Pool****
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch Break**
- 1:30 p.m. Shellfish Rehabilitation Program Overview – Jason Peters
- 2:00 p.m. Annual Fisheries Management Plan Review – Brandi Salmon, Lee Paramore, Steve Poland
- 2:30 p.m. Fishery Management Plans
- Status of ongoing plans – Corrin Flora
 - Striped Mullet FMP Update – Jeff Dobbs, Willow Patten, Dan Zapf
 - Amendment 1 to the Spotted Seatrout FMP – Lucas Pensinger, Jason Rock, Laura Lee
 - Update on FMP Development
- 4:00 p.m. Recess
- Friday, August 25th**
- 9:00 a.m. Fishery Management Plans Continued
- Amendment 2 to the Estuarine Striped Bass FMP Update – Nathaniel Hancock, Charlton Godwin
- 10:00 a.m. Rulemaking Issues - Phillip Reynolds
- **CRC Floating Structure Rule****
 - **Mutilated Finfish Rule****
 - **Joint Rules****
- 11:00 a.m. Rulemaking Update – Catherine Blum
- 2023-2024 Annual Rulemaking Cycle Update
 - 2024-2025 Annual Rulemaking Cycle Preview
- 11:30 a.m. Issues from Commissioners
- 12:15 p.m. Meeting Assignments and Preview of Agenda Items for Next Meeting – Lara Klibansky
- 12:30 p.m. Adjourn**

** Times indicated are merely for guidance. The commission will proceed through the agenda until completed.*

***Probable Action Items*

Marine Fisheries Commission Business Meeting Minutes
DRAFT
The Beaufort Hotel
Beaufort, North Carolina
May 24-26, 2023

The commission held a business meeting May 24-26 at the Beaufort Hotel in Beaufort, North Carolina. In addition to the public comment session, members of the public submitted public comment online or via U.S. mail. To view the public comment, go to: <https://www.deq.nc.gov/marine-fisheries/marine-fisheries-commission/may-2023/online-public-comments/open>

The briefing materials, presentations, and full audio from this meeting are available at: <https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries/marine-fisheries-commission/mfc-meetings/past-marine-fisheries-commission-meetings#QuarterlyBusinessMeeting-May24-262023-13047>

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

BUSINESS MEETING - MOTIONS AND ACTIONS

On May 24, a public comment session was held beginning at 6 p.m. and ended at 6:28 p.m. and the following comments were received:

Public Comment Period

Donald Willis, owner of Custom Marine Fabrication since the 1980s, said for striped mullet we really need to step it up and make sure this fish is taken care of. He said striped mullet is a very important forage fish for all our game fish. Spotted seatrout, red drum, bluefish, striped bass, tarpon, and king mackerel all feed on these fish. He said we need these fish in a big way. A lot of our juvenile finfish that these fish fed on in years past are gone due to mismanagement, like spot, croaker, and weakfish. He said we need to step it up and have a great management plan to keep these fish here for all our gamefish. In the bay in Virginia, you can see what Omega Protein did by taking all the menhaden out; it has destroyed striped bass. He said we will do the same thing here if we do not protect our mullet. It is important to all of us, because without these predator fish, none of us are making money. He said inaction is an action, but it is not the right action at any time. We need to step it up and come up with a plan for mullet and everything that feeds on mullet and not let it be the next southern flounder. He said let's make this happen and do it right.

Stuart Creighton said the meeting agenda is light, but there are numerous important issues, some emerging recently, that require the commission's full attention and we need to get ahead of these right now. The issue of greatest concern is the condition of the striped bass population in the Albemarle Sound Management Area and the Roanoke River Management Area. He said from the 2021 update, spawning stock biomass is down to about 10 percent of the target level. Juvenile

abundance indices for 2021 and 2022 are near zero. This means there have been two more years of failed spawns despite good flow levels. He reminded the commission we are managing these fish from a year behind. He said work is being done on a 2021 update in 2023. He asked what the preliminary numbers of spawning stock biomass indicate for 2022. He said the DMF is going to recommend further reduction of the total allowable level to just over 8,000 pounds. He said we cannot do that; regrettably, it is time to close this fishery and aggressively attack the factors that are contributing to the demise of our last native spawning population of striped bass. If flow is the problem, reverse the rule change that happened several years ago and make sure the flows are correct during spawning season. If blue catfish are the problem, aggressively remove them with trotlines and hoop nets, not gill nets. He said he watched frequent spawning aggregates in the Roanoke this year and noticed the spawning fish were all small. We have so drastically removed large mature females that effective spawning will be impossible. He said we have to allow the fishery the time it needs to grow these large fish. Net-free areas similar to those established on the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico rivers will be an effective tool in allowing that to happen. He said the commission cannot delay any longer and must act now to save these important fish. Due to time constraints, he said he will email his concerns on proposed studies for spotted seatrout and striped mullet to the commission.

Sam Romano, commercial fisherman and co-owner of Seaview Crabbing Company in Wilmington, N.C., said it seems with each fishery management plan the public hears "overfished" and "overfishing" and it makes the public feel like we may have caught our last fish in the ocean. He said this has never been more deceiving than with striped mullet. Our fishermen know that natural cycles dictate stock levels rather than fishing pressure. Stock assessments focus solely on fishing pressure as the ultimate indicator of whether a stock is viable or not. He said stock assessments cannot accurately incorporate predation or environmental factors, so they are left out. Mullet grow to maturity in a year, mix genetically with mullet from other states, and spawn miles offshore with four million larvae per spawn. Mullet populations are built robustly to support our ecosystems, and fishing regulations will have very little measurable effects on these stocks. He said our experienced mullet fishermen in our state are perplexed because as this stock assessment was coming out, they were having one of the best years they can remember. When you have this sort of disagreement between stakeholders and fisheries managers, it is time to pause and reflect; it is time to lean on the most experienced commercial mullet fishermen and seek to understand rather than regulate. He said the pursuit of science involves asking questions, self-scrutiny, and out-of-the-box thinking. We are continuing our breakneck pace of drafting rules and politically cutting up the pie and ignoring stakeholders. He said this amendment seeks to close mullet fishing during the end of the year, which means the southern area will bear the regulatory burden for the rest of the state. Anyone in favor of this rule should have the guts to go to the fishermen in the southern area and explain to them why their livelihoods are being targeted for this closure. He said this arbitrary judgment is unfair and follows a pile of regulations that is cutting the seafood industry apart more every year. So many rules are passed that our state does not even have enough resources to go back and see if we have accomplished anything with these rules. He said his main concern as a stakeholder and a citizen is that we are losing seafood security with every new rule that is drafted. We should be encouraging eating healthy local seafood and encouraging young people to become fishing stewards of the environment, but instead we are making seafood jobs more risky and local seafood more expensive and less available. He said the commission has the opportunity to say no to these regulations because they do not have enough information. This is not a "sky is falling"

event, this is something the commission can do something about now. He urged the commission to ask the state to give the commission more information so the commissioners can do their job as fisheries managers.

Joe Romano, commercial fisherman, co-owner of Seaview Crabbing Company in Wilmington, N.C., and part of N.C. seafood as a commercial fisherman, fish monger, fisheries adviser, and local seafood advocate for over 15 years, said he has grown hardened towards the politics and unchecked bureaucracy that determines fisheries management in our state. He spoke to domestic food security and the gentrification of our seafood. With increasing frequency, the DMF has a new emergency that needs a new set of rules to combat that emergency. He said in most cases, this new perceived scarcity has scientific data gaps, and rarely takes into consideration how predation, ecosystem cycles, weather events, and warming waters affect the annual abundance of most high fecundity species, such as mullet, spot, croaker, flounder, and spotted seatrout. In the end, the DMF offers more rules and the MFC determines if those rules pass. He said what rarely happens is those rules lead back to more harvest or more commercial participation in the fishery. These rules discourage young commercial fishermen from investing in gear, boats, and the time it takes to learn a fishery. He said this means less and significantly more expensive N.C. seafood, which is slowly gentrifying our public trust resource. He asked if this affects the wealthy sport fisherman who has the time and money to boat, and fish and answered, no. He said it affects all those families with limited fixed budgets that do not have access to seafood. This becomes particularly troublesome when one considers how much money is spent by sportfishing and conservation groups to lobby for more Draconian regulations and less public access to seafood. He said the silent majority of working-class seafood consumers are rarely considered in these fisheries meetings and are in the dark about the reality of the ugly fishery politics. The gentrification of seafood is also leading to less domestic food security. He said one would think that after two years of severe supply chain shortages, labor issues with large meat processing plants, and increasingly poor quality of manufactured food that our state would be doing all it could to encourage the N.C. seafood industry to produce more seafood. Instead, from behind computer screens and working from home we continue to make it harder for fishers to bring seafood to the dock. He said he found it incredibly ironic and absurd that our fish mongers and fishermen are working to fill food gaps in the supply chain throughout the pandemic while bureaucrats and unelected officials were making it more difficult to do so from behind computer screens and Zoom meetings. Scientific bureaucracies tend to consolidate power and become echo chambers over time. He said if all the DMF is there to do is chop up the pile of perceived scarcity by creating new rules that gentrify access to seafood and create more stakeholder conflict then we are failing as a state. We must find a better way to minimize conflicts and optimize seafood yield by supporting the communities and fishermen that feed us and provide unpaid scientific data collection to the state. He said our fragmented but strong coastal fishing communities have fed us for over 150 years and we should get behind them now more than ever.

Taylor Barefoot, a full-time commercial fisherman from Wilmington, said if there is concern about striped mullet, get rid of cast nets or doing something about them. They are the number one enemy of mullet. He said the commission needs to look at the size of the mullet and adopt a plan; if the gill net fishermen can only use one and a half-inch mesh as the smallest size, then the cast nets should have to go to that too. If you do not have juvenile fish, they cannot grow up to be big ones. He said the fish they catch have already spawned two or three times. Little fish have to grow into large fish to spawn. He said he is from the south and he pays the same dues as fishermen from the

north, and he deserves as much fishing time as northern area fishermen. He said he thinks what the commission has done and what it is trying to do is wrong. He said he based his life off what he does now; he has a wife and kids and asked how he is supposed to grow his income when the flip of a pen can take the fishery away from him. The commissioners are the ones that have to think about this at night with their decision to cut out fishermen. He said they are not just affecting the fishermen, but also their families.

Rocky Carter, Coastal Conservation Association of North Carolina Chairman, said we have always heard how time flies: 25 years ago, when Bill Clinton was president, you could keep 10 flounder per day with a minimum size of 14 ½ inches, 365 days per year. For both spotted seatrout and weakfish, you could keep 10 fish per day with a minimum size of 12 inches. For red drum, you could keep five fish over 18 inches. He said in the mid-1990s there was growing concern about the future of our fisheries. The N.C. legislature stepped up and passed a bill that was designed to protect our fisheries for future generations. He said over 25 years ago, in 1997, the Fisheries Reform Act was passed, giving North Carolina hope our fisheries would be managed for sustainability as outlined in the Act. Over the past 25 years, our once abundant fisheries have continued to decline. He asked why that was allowed and said ignoring the facts has never changed the facts. He said one of the most accepted means of evaluating fisheries is trending; if a particular species is trending up or trending down. Looking over the past 25 years he said we would all agree many species are trending downward. He said with that in mind, we look to the MFC to make tough decisions to protect our fisheries and not simply say "status quo." He suggested we pretend it is 25 years from now in 2048 and asked what the stock assessments will show then and if we will have abundant and robust spotted seatrout, weakfish, red drum, and spot. If not, then the commission should decide today to protect these fish for future generations, and not ask how to feed everyone in North Carolina fresh seafood, but instead ask how we can see that our grandchildren eat fresh seafood. He said we must take care of these fisheries.

Tim Hergenrader said for striped mullet, we are taking pregnant females out of the population before they can spawn. He said the fish are on their way to the ocean to spawn and we are taking them out of the fishery. He asked what could go wrong and answered, when we take females out of the population when they are trying to spawn, the commission is asking for trouble and it is coming home to roost. He said striped mullet is very important for our fishery, it is a prey species for almost everything and without it, we have more trouble. He said there are a couple of studies that the commission and the division are remiss in not doing, like trawling in the sounds. He said a lot of money has been spent on bycatch reduction devices to stem the tide, but to no avail. We have not studied the bottom and we do not really know what is happening out there. He said some people say you have to plow the bottom to make it right and others say you cannot do it. He said he knows trawling destroys oyster rocks and seagrasses, but there has been no comprehensive study. We have had the moratorium in the Tar-Pamlico and Neuse rivers for four years now, but no studies have been conducted on the impact of those closures. He asked what we are waiting for. He said nothing has been done. We have hollered and screamed at each other, and commissioners have debated it, but there has been no comprehensive study since the moratorium to see what is happening in those three river systems. He asked if we are afraid to find out and said it is about time somebody does something.

John McQuaid, of Raleigh, said he has fished in Morehead City, Beaufort, and Atlantic Beach since 1998. He said he has experienced firsthand the decline in our fisheries, our stocks, and fishing opportunities. He said he used to find abundant weakfish, red drum, striped bass, and croaker, but today we have witnessed declines in most of these and with every species that diminishes, there is increased pressure on the remaining species. Today the inshore fishermen are left with red drum, spotted seatrout, and Spanish mackerel. He said the commission needs to address the destructive fishing practices that affect all these species and protect the forage species. He urged the commission to err on the side of conservation, not maximum sustainable yield, but on conserving fish for the future. He said he is willing to have restrictions on size limits, bag limits, and gears for the spotted seatrout fishery and he favors gamefish status for it. He is strongly opposed to relaxing restrictions on trawling above the ferry lines. For striped bass, he recommends closing harvest. He said he would like to follow the common-sense practices that other southern states have implemented to restore their fisheries, banning inshore gill nets and stopping inshore trawling.

Jim Thompson said he is a lawyer that has practiced in Carteret County for almost 50 years. He spoke on behalf of many recreational fishermen and various fishing clubs he spoke to about recreational fishing at Cape Lookout. He said the data related to the striped mullet recreational fishery does not appear to be based on science. As a lawyer, he is mindful that rules and regulations cannot be arbitrary or capricious; they have to be based on science. He said he extracted material that was posted online and then read it to the commission. From a paragraph about the decision to select the preferred management strategy, he cited a question about what the estimated recreational harvest reduction is, which was answered that we cannot calculate a reduction for recreational harvest because the data available for the recreational harvest are not captured with enough precision to accurately calculate daily landings, and the recreational harvest for both white and striped mullet is for bait. He said the next cited question was about why the recreational harvest is being closed, which was answered, to be equitable across all fisheries and to reduce management complexity to improve enforceability. He said the three-to-five-inch finger mullet need to be kept out of this restriction because there is no data to support that they should be restricted. He said his email speaks for itself.

Brent Fulcher, N.C. Fisheries Association chairman, said the supplement should not be used in situation like this for striped mullet where last year's harvest was the fifth largest harvest in North Carolina. A supplement is for emergency management when the fishery is collapsing, so this is way out of bounds. He said the harvest was within five percent of the year with the largest harvest when there were five times the number of participants. There are a lot of things you can get out of the staff if you ask. He said there were a lot of fish sampled at his facility and they saw large fish early in the season and a big percent of male fish, which we do not usually see. Things have changed and this is different than what the stock assessment shows. He said he understands the division has to use what they have, but he thinks the division can add in some things. The supplement is the wrong action to take, and the commission should do an amendment, which is already on the schedule. He said another speaker said to exclude the three-to-five-inch finger mullet, but on the other side you do not typically catch juvenile fish because you try to protect them. Everybody always wants something a little different. He said the briefing materials show there would be a reduction of \$3,000 per fisherman from a season reduction under the supplement. He questioned this figure because he paid fishermen \$10,000-\$15,000 per fisherman just in that two-week period last year. He said for the MRIP program, recreational discards of southern flounder show 241,000 fish released in 2022,

with an average weight of 50,000 pounds, which is 0.21 pound per fish. He said this is not reality, just like the loss of income estimated by the division is not reality. He said every southern fisherman is very frustrated because they took the brunt of the closures for croaker and spot. He urged the commission if they do something, to do it equitably. He said it is not fair for southern fishermen to bear the brunt.

End 6:28 p.m.

May 25

Chairman Rob Bizzell convened the Marine Fisheries Commission business meeting at 9 a.m. on May 25 with the Public comment Period. The Public comment session was held beginning at 9:00 a.m. until 9:29 a.m. and the following comments were received:

Public Comment Period

Hugh Barwick said he cannot stay home and be silent when a commissioner suggests a management proposal prior to the scoping process like happened for the Spotted Seatrout FMP. Then a local senator introduced Senate Bill 686, which was similar to the commissioner's proposal. And then, when he thought things could not get worse, he saw the DMF director in a television commercial extolling the resource sustainability by commercial fishermen. He said he is shocked and amazed by these events because it all seems somewhat crazy to him. It is as if fisheries management's common sense has vanished from Arendell Street. He said he agrees that spotted seatrout are experiencing overfishing, and maybe more so in 2022 and 2023 than is indicated by the 2022 stock assessment report. He can say this because the previous inaction to successfully manage other species have basically left both recreational and commercial fishermen with only spotted seatrout to harvest. So, he came to voice his objections to Commissioner Cross's proposal, Senator Sanderson's bill, and Ms. Rawls doing television commercials, and hopefully to offer a suggestion on how to move forward because the time has come to stop allowing emotion, money, and politics to drive the commission's decisions. He said he attended one of the earlier scoping meetings and it appeared to him recreational fishermen, who were the majority at these meetings, were very willing to offer a number of suggestions that were beneficial to managing spotted seatrout. In closing, he said he hopes the commission can see that if they fail again regarding the future management of spotted seatrout and allow this species to become overfished as they have for other species, then both recreational and commercial fishermen lose. He asked the commission to be open-minded, forget their differences, and listen to their technical staff and let them develop the management strategies to successfully manage this resource. That is their job.

Thomas Coltrain said he would like to be speaking and supporting the commission on a job well done about fisheries management in North Carolina, but he has seen the results first hand. The commission has managed to have a closed or limited season with limits of one or less for weakfish, striped bass, red drum, flounder, and now they are working on mullet and spotted seatrout. He said the people that fish for money and pleasure have followed the rules, limits, and proclamations, but he asked where that has gotten us. More people are fishing with larger and modern equipment. He said managers must use every tool that is available to them to make the correct decision to protect the resource before total collapse. He has listened to the commission and their comments as to why

the commission votes like it does: kicking the can down the road, "I will never vote for anything that has a negative effect on my livelihood," "I cannot stand to see my friends and neighbors mad at me," "I have seen big schools of mullet; the shrimp bycatch is cleaner than ever with almost no bycatch," and "we are not doing our job." He asked the commissioners if they had ever seen two hydraulic reel nets surround a school of mullet or trout and seen what is left. He said the shrimp bycatch will be cleaner than ever when all the bycatch has been depleted. He said he cannot imagine how the marine biologists and the data analysts feel when they present their data, and all the commission does is point out what was not included and then vote down their recommendations every time. After attending a spotted seatrout scoping meeting, he said he came away with several observations. He said recreational fishermen were willing to do what it takes to save these fish, including a closed season to let the fish spawn, barbless hooks, single hooks, slot limits, and a bag limit reduction if needed. The fishermen who fish for money, like the trout tournament fishermen, guides, and commercial fishermen were willing to give up nothing to save these fish. He told the commission they cannot manage with their emotions; they cannot manage the resource for a dollar when the dollar is more important than the resource. All this may be for nothing if the Senate and House bills pass in Raleigh because of the dollar and politics. He said time has run out for many fish in North Carolina; the commission cannot stop time, but they can stop the depletion of what fish are left.

Willard Rouse, manager in the fishing department of a retail store, said from September through April every year, 60-70 percent of their business is due to spotted seatrout fishing. That is a lot of dollars every year. He said from talking to customers, a lot of recreational fishermen are concerned about what is going on and a lot of them are willing to take cuts in the limits, but not too much. In a retail business, my boss has said, if spotted seatrout harvest is cut back to only one or two fish, we will do away with our store's fishing department. He said they are not the only retail store that feels that way. He urged the commission to think about the fact that there are several businesses in eastern North Carolina that are affected by spotted seatrout fishing.

Chris Elkins spoke about forage fish. He said next week, there will be a presentation of the new Coastal Habitat Protection Plan (CHHP), a plan that the Marine Fisheries Commission approved. In it is a conspicuous absence of any discussion of "forage fish." He said forage fish are a critical component of habitat that the state of North Carolina continues to ignore by approval of this CHPP by the secretary of DEQ, and the Coastal Resources Commission, Environmental Management Commission, and the Marine Fisheries Commission. In contrast, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and their habitat advisory committees and panels, not only embrace the important ecosystem function of forage fish, but act to protect forage species. He said for example, the ASMFC recently began work on the Atlantic menhaden ecological reference point benchmark stock assessment, in addition to their usual single-species assessment for menhaden. He asked if North Carolina has done any ecological studies or if North Carolina knows the absolute number of these juvenile species killed each year as bycatch. He asked how North Carolina prepares a single-species management plan if it does not know how many of these forage fish are killed. He asked how North Carolina prepares an ecological plan, such as the CHPP, ignoring the role of forage species as an important component of habitat. It is past time for North Carolina to get up to speed on forage fish.

Glen Skinner, commercial fisherman and Executive Director of the N.C. Fisheries Association (NCFA), spoke regarding the striped mullet supplement. He said the NCFA prefers the amendment process, which provides more stakeholder input and the chance to consider multiple options rather than the one option in the supplement. The NCFA does not believe this is an emergency situation demanding emergency action. Next, he spoke on comments given at the public comment session the day before. He said commenters talked about having problems anytime fishermen target female fish on the spawning grounds, in reference to striped mullet. He reminded the commission that in the large red drum fishery, recreational fishermen target those fish on their spawning run, specifically on the spawning grounds. This is the same thing for the striped bass fishery that occurs in the spring, hickory shad and white shad in the spring, weakfish in the spring, and southern flounder in the fall. He said every one of those recreational fisheries is targeting a fish on its spawning run, most of them on the spawning grounds. He asked how the commenters do not see those recreational fisheries as a problem if they see gill netting for striped mullet as a problem. He reminded the commission they are tasked with considering not only food production and harvest, but also recreational opportunity. Dead discards are becoming the major source of removals in every one of these fisheries. He said every one of these fisheries has been managed for years and the commission has adopted multiple harvest reductions, but never once has the commission adopted a management measure that controls recreational effort, total recreational catch, or recreational dead discards; not once. The commission has never achieved a reduction in any of those. He said if there is still a problem with those fisheries, the commission is tasked with managing both sectors fairly and they need to start looking at recreational dead discards and total recreational effort and start controlling it. He said the commission needs to start right now with striped bass. Everyone talks doom and gloom and says this population has gone to hell in a hand basket; recreational fishermen are fishing in the Roanoke River on the spawning grounds every spring with catch and release, killing who knows how many fish, and all they can say is reduce harvest, but harvest is only one source of mortality. He said if the commission does not deal with both sources of mortality, the other source recoups what is given up in harvest. He said this is the commission's job; they not only have the power to do this through statute, the commission is mandated by statute to address this. There is no question about that, he said the only question is if the commission has the nerve to do it. He said it is the commission's job and now they must make the hard decisions. The commission must control recreational discards in these fisheries to rebuild them and recover them for everyone.

Thomas Newman commercial fisherman and part-time employee for the N.C. Fisheries Association, thanked the commissioners for voting down the striped mullet supplement in February and said he hopes the commission does the same thing at this meeting. He also spoke about false albacore, otherwise known as little tunny. He said he hopes the commission votes that down as well. No management action was taken for this species by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council or the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council took this species off its forage species list. This species occurs all over the world, is short-lived, and is sexually mature at 15 inches. He said the landings have been consistent for decades and there is no reason to put any limitations or restrictions on this fishery. The fishery is healthy, and the division has lots of other things on its plate and there is no reason to waste time to try and manage false albacore within zero to three miles in the ocean waters of our state.

David Sneed, Executive Director of the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) of North Carolina. He said he comes to the meetings every three months to be part of a process that never changes. We have been following this process for the last 26 years, yet our fish stocks continue to dwindle more and more as the years pass, and still, no one on this commission is advocating for a better process. He said there have been some good comments by the public on the specific issues the commission is dealing with, but he also hears a lot of frustration with the process. For this meeting, the process is about management of striped mullet. The division has based its recommendations on a stock assessment with 2019 as the terminal year. The commission is being asked to make management decisions based on that stock assessment even though it is not required by the N.C. Fisheries Reform Act, and that data is now four years old. He said the commercial industry is here once again questioning that process. While the public angler may not feel as much of the burden of this process on managing striped mullet, we are all bracing for the coming spotted seatrout process. He said the next Spotted Seatrout FMP will also be based on a 2019 stock assessment with final adoption scheduled for August of 2024. We will be almost five years from the terminal year of the stock assessment. He said he thinks we can all agree that a lot can happen in five years when a plan is finally adopted and then we are locked into management measures for another five years. He said we also know the management measures have a high degree of uncertainty, as admitted by division staff, and as evidenced by the 26 years of southern flounder management plans. So, people come to the meetings every quarter, year after year, doing the same things and hoping for different results. He asked where the plan is for a better management process or are we content to come to the meetings year after year and listen to the same rhetoric. He said the only voice for change right now is coming from the CCA. There is no leadership from this commission for a better process and we only get periodic attempts from the N.C. General Assembly to put a band-aid on the problem like the current legislation proposed in Senate Bill 686. He said it is time to admit that the current process is not adequately serving the fishing public of North Carolina. He said the commission should endeavor to do better in their duty to manage our coastal fisheries under the public trust doctrine and our state constitution, that being an affirmative duty to keep our fisheries safe from injury, harm, and destruction for all time.

Bert Owens provided a document to the commission showing outstanding resource waters in North Carolina up and down our coast. He said water quality is a real issue that is referred to in passing at the commission meetings occasionally, in fact, at almost every meeting. He said he thought it would be good to have some actual information on it. It is good to see we still have some good quality waters for our fish to grow and thrive in, if given the chance. He said the commission's duty here is serious in managing the people's fish and should be treated as such. Commissioner Cross's recent proposal on spotted seatrout was anything but serious: quadruple the commercial catch, take that from recreational anglers, then shut down all hook and line fishing for anything when recreational anglers reach their decreased quota. He said the proposal is too ridiculous even for a starting point for any real management and at best, it is an insult to the intelligence of the other eight commissioners. He said regarding flounder, the commission continues the rhetoric of managing fisheries equitably, and yet recreational anglers have been shut out of the Gulf and summer flounder fishery for years. Identification is easy: if the fish has three or more spots with a white circle around it, it is not a southern flounder. He said if that is not good enough, the commission could have someone develop an app to take a picture of the fish for it to tell the angler what it is. He said he has a "picture this" app on his phone that identifies a fish in a matter of seconds. Surely someone could identify between three fish. He said the N.C. Fisheries Reform Act

says the commission must manage fisheries for both groups, but shutting recreational anglers out of viable fisheries while continuing to allow commercial access is a knowing violation of the Act and it should stop. He said the excuse that opening up these fish to recreational anglers may result in southern flounder bycatch is bogus, as long as bycatch in the trawl and crab pot fisheries are ignored. He suggested giving back to the citizens of North Carolina, the working men and women and their families, a legitimate fishery they never should have been shut out of in the first place. He urged the commission to be as equitable as it claims to be. He said spotted seatrout is getting a lot of pressure because fishermen can catch so little of everything else. Let people take their small boats on a nice day and go on our near-shore artificial reefs and catch some ocellated flounder; then the commission will be doing something for both groups, which would be novel.

Matthew Wallin, a recreational fisherman, said regarding the Fisheries Reform Act of 1997, he was four years old the year this groundbreaking legislation was passed. He did not know then he would speak now about the shortcomings of this outdated legislation and the need for updated fisheries reform. Overfished, depleted, and declining fish stocks were as much of a concern 26 years ago as they are now. He said unfortunately, since 1997 the majority of our finfish stocks have steadily declined, in some cases as high as 80 percent. He asked how we got to this point and who is really to blame other than the management process and the guidelines set forth within the Act. He said most college football coaches do not make it three years on a losing record, but here we are 26 years later managing our fisheries under guidelines with a failed track record. The blueprint within the Act makes sense, but it must be followed. He said time and time again, the division proposes management measures to meet the statutory deadlines set forth within the Act, only for the commission to vote against those recommendations, kicking the can down the road while also putting the resource at risk of further declines. He said enforcement and accountability measures are a major issue. The rules that are in place today need to be strictly enforced and those who break them need to be held accountable. He said he knows the commission cannot change the process today, but they can vote with the resource in mind. If the commission takes care of the resource as a whole, it will support its stakeholders. He urged the commission to base its decisions on what is needed to improve our fisheries for the future. It is time we enact an ecosystem-wide approach, including adaptive conservation measures that help us manage for abundance rather than maximum exploitation. He said after all, we all want the same thing: more fish in the water.

Woody Joyner, of Hatteras Village, represented the N.C. Watermen United board of directors. He spoke about the Striped Mullet FMP supplement to Amendment 1. Although a large percentage of their membership are from the charter and headboat sector they have a significant number of members who are commercial fishermen who are apprehensive about the specifics of the proposed supplement. He said the stock assessment does not include data from 2020, 2021, or 2022, and these last few years reflected very good harvest, with 2022 being one of the largest years on record. The stock assessment with a terminal year of 2019 followed two devastating October hurricanes in 2016 and 2018. He said any supplement should be viewed as an emergency action after the season is in progress, not in May to anticipate a possible stock status in November. He spoke about Table 8 of the supplement that shows a 35.4% harvest reduction in the northern region would equate to a loss, based on 2019 data, valued at only \$1278 per fisherman for being off the water from a proposed November and December closure. He said from talking to striped mullet fishermen, this figure is woefully low. The financial impact would be much greater for not only the watermen, but also the regional fishing community surrounding the striped mullet fishery. He said his experience

with commercial fishermen has proven that they are conservationists, contrary to what seems to be pushed to the general public. They fully understand the need for sustainability; they fish for many species throughout the calendar year, to provide for their families and supply our residents with fresh, North Carolina seafood. He asked why commercial fishermen would intentionally deplete striped mullet that serves as a food fish for the other species they fish throughout the calendar year. He said the striped mullet decision document in the briefing materials states there are no current management measures directly limiting harvest on striped mullet commercially. Now is the time to ensure that any action taken that would so adversely affect our hardworking watermen should be tabled. He said Watermen United continue to stand behind the gathering of data throughout the 2023 season with no supplement closing and proceed with the management measures to address the stock status through Amendment 2. He thanked the commission for any consideration that promotes continuing efforts to protect their right to fish.

End 9:29 a.m.

Preliminary Matters

Following the public comment period the Chairman called the meeting to order.

The following commission members were in attendance: Rob Bizzell-Chairman, Doug Cross – Vice Chair, Mike Blanton, Sarah Gardner, Donald Huggins, Tom Roller, Ana Shellem, Doug Rader, and Robert McNeill.

Chairman Bizzell reminded fellow Commissioners of North Carolina general Statute 138A-15E, which mandates at the beginning of any meeting of a board, the Chair shall remind all members of their duties to avoid conflicts of interest under Chapter 138 and the Chair shall also inquire as to whether there is any known conflict of interest with respect to any matters coming before the board at that time.

Chairman Bizzell asked for any corrections or anything that needs to be commented on regarding the meeting agenda and then requested a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion by Commissioner Roller to approve the agenda.

Second by Commissioner Shellem.

Motion passes unanimously.

Chairman Bizzell asked for there any corrections, additions or deletions that need to be made to the February 2023 MFC Quarterly Business Meeting minutes. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve the minutes.

Motion by Commissioner Roller to approve the minutes of the February 2023 meeting.

Second by Commissioner Cross

Motion passes unanimously.

Chairman's Report

Ethics Training and Statement of Economic Interest Reminder

The MFC Liaison, Lara Klibansky, provided an update on Commissioner compliance with state ethics training and SEI reminders. She reported that everyone is up to date or is actively working on it.

Director's Report

Marine Patrol Colonel Carter Witten presented a Lifesaving Award to Marine Patrol Sgt. Brian Long.

Director Kathy Rawls gave an update regarding recent work by the Division including updates about the current legislative session including updates on House Bill 655 Coastal Fishing License Reform, House Bill 617 River Herring Limited Harvest, House Bill 544 Limited Shark Fishing Moratorium and Senate Bill 686 Regulatory Reform Act of 2023. Director Rawls then provided an update on comments recently submitted by the Division to Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch regarding their assessment on the Eastern Oyster fishery. She described the recent For-Hire meetings that were held at various locations along the coast to speak with for-hire stakeholders and provided information about the recreational data collection and programs. Updates on the Observer Trip Scheduling System (OTSS) were provided with additional information about the continuing renewal process for the Incidental Take Permit. Director Rawls also provided updates on upcoming outreach events celebrating 200 years of fisheries management in North Carolina, and various staff accomplishments.

Chris Batsavage gave updates from the recent meetings of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the South-Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

Colonel Carter Witten gave an update regarding Marine Patrol activities and accomplishments since the previous commission meeting.

Owen Mulvey-McFerron gave an update on the shellfish lease and aquaculture program.

Anne Deaton provided an update on the Coastal Habitat Protection Plan, specifically regarding implementation of the recently approved plan.

False Albacore Data Update

McLean Seward gave a presentation about the False Albacore fishery, specifically data in response to the February 2023 motion regarding False Albacore management. The presentation included data regarding current fishery information and potential percentage points that could

trigger management. Following extensive discussion among the Commission members a consensus was reached that the status quo as defined by staff and growth of up to 200% of that status quo should be used by Division staff to continue developing the issue paper.

To view the presentation go to: <https://www.deq.nc.gov/marine-fisheries/marine-fisheries-commission/may-2023/fa-memo/open>

Salt Marsh Action Plan Presentation

Claire Rapp, Salt Marsh Campaign Coordinator with the North Carolina Coastal Federation, gave a presentation regarding NC and regional salt marsh action plan development. (also link to video if possible)?

To view the presentation, go to: <https://www.deq.nc.gov/marine-fisheries/marine-fisheries-commission/may-2023/regional-and-state-salt-marsh-conservation/open>

Allocation as a Management Tool

Chris Batsavage gave a presentation on allocation in fisheries management.

To view the presentation, go to: <https://www.deq.nc.gov/marine-fisheries/marine-fisheries-commission/may-2023/allocation-presentation/open>

Fishery Management Plans

Corrin Flora gave a presentation on the status of current FMPs.

To view the presentation, go to: <https://www.deq.nc.gov/marine-fisheries/marine-fisheries-commission/may-2023/fmp-memo/open>

Blue Crab FMP Amendment 3 Adaptive Management Revision Update

Joe Facendola and Robert Corbett gave a presentation on the latest adaptive management revisions in Amendment 3 of the Blue Crab FMP. The revision relates to Diamondback Terrapin Excluder Devices for crab pots.

To view the presentation, go to: <https://www.deq.nc.gov/marine-fisheries/marine-fisheries-commission/may-2023/blue-crab-amendment-3-adaptive-managment-revision/open>

Estuarine Striped Bass Stock Assessment Update Overview

Laura Lee and Charlton Godwin gave a presentation on the Estuarine Striped Bass Stock Assessment update relating to the Albemarle-Roanoke Striped Bass stock.

To view the presentation, go to: <https://www.deq.nc.gov/marine-fisheries/marine-fisheries-commission/may-2023/and-rr-striped-bass-stock-assessment/open>

Spotted Seatrout FMP Amendment 1

Lucas Pensinger and Jason Rock gave a presentation about the development of Amendment 1 for the Spotted Seatrout FMP. The presentation focused on an overview of the recent scoping period as well as the goal and objectives for the FMP.

To view the presentation, go to: <https://www.deq.nc.gov/marine-fisheries/marine-fisheries-commission/may-2023/sst-goal-and-objectives/open>

VOTE ON GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Motion by Commissioner Roller to approve Amendment 1 Goal and Objectives of the Spotted Seatrout FMP.

Second by Commissioner Huggins.

Motion passes unanimously.

Meeting recessed until 9:00 a.m. on May 26.

May 26

Chairman reconvened the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

Fishery Management Plans cont'd

Striped Mullet FMP

Dan Zapf, Jeff Dobbs, and Willow Patten gave a presentation regarding potential regional management strategies for Supplement A to Amendment 1 of the Striped Mullet FMP.

To view the presentation go to: <https://www.deq.nc.gov/marine-fisheries/marine-fisheries-commission/may-2023/stmsupplementa/open>

VOTE ON SUPPLEMENT A

Motion by Commissioner Roller to approve Option 4 of Supplement A to Amendment 1 of the Striped Mullet FMP

Second by Commissioner McNeill

Substitute motion by Commissioner Cross to approve option 6 of Supplement A to Amendment 1 of the Striped Mullet FMP for one year.

Second by Commissioner Huggins

Amendment to substitute motion by Commissioner McNeill to approve option 5 of Supplement A to Amendment 1 of the Striped Mullet FMP and strike one year limitation.

**Second by Commissioner Gardner
Vote on Amendment to Substitute Motion**

ROLL CALL VOTE				
Member	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Cross	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blanton	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gardner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Huggins	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
McNeill	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rader	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shellem	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bizzell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Motion passes 6 to 3

Vote on Substitute Motion as Amended

ROLL CALL VOTE				
Member	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Cross	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blanton	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gardner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Huggins	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
McNeill	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rader	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shellem	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bizzell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Motion passes 6 to 3

Vote on Motion as Substituted.

ROLL CALL VOTE				
Member	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Cross	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blanton	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gardner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Huggins	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
McNeill	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rader	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shellem	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bizzell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Motion passes 6 to 3

Rulemaking Update

Fisheries Management Section Chief, Steve Poland, gave a brief verbal update regarding recent rule suspensions and requested the Commission approve additional suspensions.

Motion by Commissioner Rader to suspend Subparagraph (e)(4) of NCMFC Rule 15A NCAC 03O .0501 PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS TO OBTAIN PERMITS for an indefinite period.

Second by Commissioner Roller

ROLL CALL VOTE				
Member	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Cross	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blanton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gardner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Huggins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
McNeill	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rader	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shellem	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bizzell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Motion passes without dissension

The Division's Rulemaking Coordinator, Catherine Blum, provided updates on three rulemaking cycles, including an update of ongoing rulemaking for the 2022 – 2023 rulemaking cycles. She also provided a preview on upcoming items for the 2023-2024 rulemaking cycle.

Motion by Commissioner Roller to approve Notice of Text for Rulemaking to:

- **Readopt per G.S. 150B-21.3A, amend, adopt, and repeal 15A NCAC 03K .0110, 18A .0301, .0302, .0305, .0401-.0424, .0426-.0430, .0432-.0439, .0501-.0504, .0601-.0621, .0701-.0713, .0801-.0806 and approve the associated fiscal analysis;**
- **Amend 15A NCAC 03I .0113, 03O .0101, .0109, .0112, .0301 for Data Collection and Harassment Prevention for the Conservation of Marine and Estuarine Resources and associated fiscal analysis and approve the associated fiscal analysis;**
- **Amend 15A NCAC 03R .0117 for Oyster Sanctuary Changes and approve the associated fiscal analysis; and**
- **Amend and repeal 15A NCAC 03I .0101, 03K .0101, .0104, .0301, .0401, .0403, .0405, 03O .0201, .0501, .0503, 18A .0901, .0906 for Conforming Changes for Shellfish Relay Program and Shellfish Leases and Franchises and approve the associated fiscal analysis.**

Second by Commissioner Huggins.

Motion passes unanimously.

Issues from Commissioners

Commissioner Shellem – oyster farmers, wetland protection and water quality

Commissioner Roller – Enforcement of federal permits in State waters; captain and crew limits – SST, but also others, more broad authority.

Commissioner Blanton – identifying marks on buoys – crab pots etc. Fishermen didn't realize the change until March 15th news release. Trying to align marking rules so pots aligned with other gears...industry reached out to him and other leaders regarding discrepancies in the rule change. Commissioner Blanton made a motion for the Division to reassess these changes and to proceed with rulemaking to remove the requirement to include vessel id on crab pot buoys.

Motion by Commissioner Blanton to authorize staff to proceed with the necessary rulemaking steps related to 15A NCAC 03J.0301(c) to remove or otherwise address the overlapping pot identification requirements unintentionally created by the most recent rule amendment as soon as possible.

Second by Commissioner Shellem

Motion passes unanimously.

Commissioner Cross – Requested the Director to consider increasing harvest limits of Red Drum to address blue crab predation; Consider a proclamation to implement a harvest moratorium on the spawning grounds in the Roanoke River and in the Tar-Pam and Neuse Rivers.

Review of MFC Workplan, Meeting Assignments and Preview of Agenda Items for Next Meeting
Lara Klibansky reviewed meeting assignments and provided an overview of the February meeting items.

Having no further business to conduct, the meeting adjourned at 11:02 a.m.

DRAFT