

NC Marine Fisheries Commission

## **Preliminary Matters**

**August 2025 Quarterly Business Meeting**

# **Documents**

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Meeting Agenda

Draft May 2025 Meeting Minutes

# Marine Fisheries Commission Business Meeting

## AGENDA

Hilton Raleigh North Hills; Raleigh, NC

August 20-21, 2025

*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 20, 2025

#### 1:00 p.m. Preliminary Matters

- Swearing in of New Commissioners
- Commission Call to Order\* – *Sammy Corbett, 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 Wilson
- **Approval of Agenda \*\***
- **Approval of Meeting Minutes \*\***

#### 1:15 p.m. Chairman's Report

- Letters and Online Comments
- Ethics Training and Statement of Economic Interest Reminder
- 2026 Proposed Meeting Schedule
- **Elect Vice Chair \*\***

#### 1:30 p.m. Director's Report – *Kathy Rawls*

- Informational Materials
- Rule Suspension Memo

#### 2:00 p.m. Rulemaking – *Catherine Blum*

- 2024-2025 Rulemaking Cycle Update

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

**\*\*Probable Action Items**

## Marine Fisheries Commission Business Meeting Agenda

- 2025-2026 Rulemaking Cycle Update

2:15 p.m. Independent Sampling – *Jacqui Degan*  
2:45 p.m. Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan Amendment 3 Adaptive Management – *Robert Corbett*  
3:15 p.m. Break  
6:00 p.m. Return for Public Comment Period

### Thursday, August 21, 2025

9:00 a.m. Public Comment Period  
9:30 a.m. Atlantic Bonito Information Update – *Jacqui Degan*  
10:00 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\*\***

10:30 a.m. FMP Annual Review – *Charlton Godwin*  
11:30 a.m. Characterization of North Carolina’s Sheepshead Fisheries– *Anne Markwith*  
12:00 p.m. Lunch Break  
1:30 p.m. Characterization of North Carolina’s Black Drum Fisheries – *Chris Stewart*  
2:00 p.m. Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Amendment 4 – *Jeff Dobbs, Anne Markwith*

- **Vote on Final Adoption of Amendment 4**

2:30 p.m. Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Amendment 5 – *Jeff Dobbs*

- Commission input on management issues/topics for inclusion in draft plan

3:30 p.m. Central/Southern Management Area Striped Bass Data Analysis – *Dan Zapf, Todd Mathes, Charlton Godwin*  
4:30 p.m. Issues from Commissioners  
5:00 p.m. Meeting Assignments and Preview of Agenda Items for Next Meeting – *Jesse Bissette*  
5:15 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**

**Beaufort Hotel**

**Beaufort, North Carolina**

**May 21-23, 2025**

The Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) held a business meeting May 21-23, 2025, at the Beaufort Hotel in Beaufort, North Carolina. In addition to the public comment sessions, members of the public submitted public comment online or via U.S. mail. The written comments, briefing materials, presentations, and full audio from this meeting are available [here](#).

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

## **BUSINESS MEETING**

May 21, 2025

### Public Comment Period

Chairman Sammy Corbett held a public comment session that began at 6:00 p.m. The following members of the public provided comments to the commission: Gregory Judy, Tim Hergenrader, Joe Romano. With no one else wishing to speak, Chairman Corbett ended the public comment period at 6:09 p.m.

[View the video recording of the May 21, 2025, 6:00 p.m. public comment session](#)

May 22, 2025

### Public Comment Period

Chairman Sammy Corbett held a public comment session that began at 9:00 a.m. The following members of the public provided comments to the commission: Lisa Rider, Dan Mose, Robert Pike, Chris Elkins, Stuart Creighton, Richard Newman, Tara Foreman. With no one else wishing to speak, Chairman Corbett ended the public comment period at 9:18 a.m.

[View the video recording of the May 22, 2025, 9:00 a.m. public comment session](#)

### Preliminary Matters

Chairman Corbett called the May 21-23, 2025, business meeting to order.

Chairman Corbett began the meeting with a moment of silence, followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Next, Chairman Corbett reminded all commissioners of N.C. General Statute § 138A-15(e), which 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. There were no stated conflicts of interest from any commissioner.

The following MFC members were in attendance: Sammy Corbett – Chairman, Ryan Bethea, Mike Blanton, Willie Closs, Sarah Gardner, Alfred Hobgood, Doug Rader, Tom Roller, and William Service.

Chairman Corbett asked for any corrections or additions to the meeting agenda and then requested a motion to approve the agenda.

**Motion by Commissioner Roller to approve the meeting agenda.**

**Second by Commissioner Hobgood.**

**Motion passed by unanimous consent.**

Chairman Corbett asked for any corrections, additions or deletions that need to be made to the March 2025 MFC Quarterly Business Meeting minutes.

Commissioner Roller inquired about the recent change in the meeting minute format, specifically with the public comment portion of the minutes. After MFC Liaison Jesse Bissette and MFC Counsel Phillip Reynolds explained the change, Chairman Corbett called for a motion.

**Motion by Commissioner Hobgood to approve the March 2025 business meeting minutes.**

**Second by Commissioner Rader.**

**Motion passed with one objection.**

[View the recording of the motions and surrounding discussion](#)

[Chairman's Report](#)

[Letters and Online Comments](#)

Chairman Corbett asked MFC Liaison Jesse Bissette to refer commissioners to the written comments provided in the briefing materials.

### Ethics Training and Statement of Economic Interest Reminder

Chairman Corbett reminded commissioners to work with MFC Liaison Jesse Bisette to stay up to date on their ethics training and Statement of Economic Interest.

### Committee Reports

Chairman Corbett asked MFC Liaison Jesse Bisette to refer commissioners to the committee reports provided in the briefing materials.

[View the video recording of the Chairman's Report and surrounding discussion](#)

### Director's Report

Director Kathy Rawls began her report by acknowledging the presence of the DEQ General Counsel Dan Hirschman. She provided an overview of proposed legislative bills with potential impacts on North Carolina's fisheries. Updates were also given on both state and federal budgets, including anticipated effects on Division operations and ongoing programs. Director Rawls reported on staffing updates within the Division, noting several vacancies have been filled, including the Stock Assessment Program Manager and Stock Assessment Biologist positions. She also discussed progress on Mandatory Harvest Reporting, highlighting outreach and education initiatives and a redesign of relevant webpages. An update was provided on the status of the CCA lawsuit, which has experienced a delay, as well as on other active legal matters, including litigation and hearings related to shellfish leases. Director Rawls referenced the Cold Stun Update and Rule Suspension memos included in the briefing materials. She concluded by announcing that Division-issued cellphones have been provided to Commissioners, and associated contact information has been posted online.

[View the video recording of the Director's Report and surrounding discussion](#)

### Economic Analysis Presentation

DMF Economist Jason Walsh gave a presentation on the Economic Analysis of Rulemaking and Fishery Management Plans.

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

[View the video recording of the presentation and surrounding discussion](#)

## Rulemaking

Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) Rulemaking Coordinator Catherine Blum provided updates on the 2023-2024 rulemaking cycle, 2024-2025 rulemaking cycle, and 2025-2026 rulemaking cycle.

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

[View the video recording of the presentation and surrounding discussion](#)

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

- **15A NCAC 03I .0101, .0114, 03O .0501-.0503 for Permit-Related Rules; and**
- **15A NCAC 03I .0101, 03O .0201, .0207, .0208, .0210 for Franchises and Shellfish Leases.**

**Second by Commissioner Gardner.**

ROLL CALL VOTE					
Member	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Bethea	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blanton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Closs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hobgood	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corbett	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Motion passed unanimously.**

[View the video recording of the motions and surrounding discussion](#)

## Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan Amendment 3 Adaptive Management

DMF Biologists Robert Corbett and McLean Seward gave a presentation on the Blue Crab FMP Amendment 3 Adaptive Management.

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

[View the video recording of the presentation and surrounding discussion](#)

#### CSMA Striped Bass Analysis Update Presentation

DMF Biologists Dan Zapf, Charlton Godwin, and Todd Mathes gave a presentation on the Central Southern Management Area Striped Bass.

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

[View the video recording of the presentation and surrounding discussion](#)

#### Spotted Seatrout Cold Stun Update

DMF Biologist Lucas Pensinger gave a presentation on the Spotted Seatrout Cold Stun Update.

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

[View the video recording of the presentation and surrounding discussion](#)

#### Eastern Oyster Fishery Management Plan Amendment 5

DMF Biologists Bennett Paradis and Joe Facendola gave a presentation on the Oyster FMP Amendment 5.

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

[View the video recording of the presentation and surrounding discussion](#)

**Motion by Commissioner Roller for the MFC to approve final adoption of the N.C. Eastern Oyster Fishery Management Plan Amendment 5 consistent with the preferred management options the MFC selected at its March 2025 business meeting.**

**Second by Commissioner Rader.**



ROLL CALL VOTE					
Member	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Bethea	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blanton	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Closs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gardner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hobgood	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corbett	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Motion passed 5-4.**

[View the video recording of the motion and surrounding discussion](#)

#### Hard Clam Fishery Management Plan Amendment 3

DMF Biologists Lorena de la Garza and Jeff Dobbs gave a presentation on the Clam FMP Amendment 3.

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

[View the video recording of the presentation and surrounding discussion](#)

**Motion by Commissioner Roller for the MFC to approve final adoption of the N.C. Hard Clam Fishery Management Plan Amendment 3 consistent with the preferred management options the MFC selected at its March 2025 business meeting.**

**Second by Commissioner Service.**

ROLL CALL VOTE					
Member	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Bethea	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blanton	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Closs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hobgood	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corbett	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Motion passed 6-3.**

[View the video recording of the motion and surrounding discussion](#)

#### Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Amendment 4

DMF Biologists Jeff Dobbs, Holly White, and Anne Markwith gave a presentation on the Southern Flounder FMP Amendment 4 with a review of the public comment and Advisory Committee recommendations.

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

[View the video recording of the presentation and surrounding discussion](#)

**Motion by Commissioner Roller to select the following as the MFC's preferred management option for the draft N.C. Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Amendment 4:**

- **EXPEDITED ALLOCATION SHIFT: Expedite the sector allocation transition to 50% commercial and 50% recreational in 2025 rather than in 2026 as prescribed by Amendment 3.**

**Second by Commissioner Hobgood.**

ROLL CALL VOTE					
Member	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Recuse	Absent
Bethea	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blanton	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Closs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hobgood	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corbett	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Motion passed 6-3.**

[View the video recording of the motion and surrounding discussion](#)

#### Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Amendment 5

DMF Biologists Jeff Dobbs, Holly White, and Anne Markwith gave a presentation on the Southern Flounder FMP Amendment 5.

After the presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

[View the video recording of the presentation and surrounding discussion](#)

May 23, 2025

Chairman Corbett convened the MFC business meeting at 9:00 a.m. on May 23, 2025.

#### Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Presentation

DMF Biologist Charlie Deaton introduced the presentations on Submerged Aquatic Vegetation. Dr. Joel Fodrie, from the University of North Carolina's Institute of Marine Sciences, presented on the dynamics of fish-habitat relationships within North Carolina's seagrass meadows. Biologist Madeline Payne, a graduate student at the University of North Carolina, gave a presentation on the economic valuation of fisheries production enhancement associated with seagrass in a temperate estuary.

After each presentation, Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments and questions.

[View the video recording of the presentations and surrounding discussion](#)

### Issues from Commissioners

Chairman Corbett opened the floor to commissioners for comments, questions, and other discussion.

Commissioner Hobgood raised a concern regarding the increasing number of landings of Atlantic Bonito and requested to receive data regarding that fishery.

Commissioner Blanton raised a concern regarding the implementation and issues with the Observer Trip Scheduling System.

Commissioner Service requested a presentation regarding the implementation of the Deep-water Oyster Recovery Areas at an upcoming meeting.

[View the video recording of the Issues from Commissioners and surrounding discussion](#)

### Meeting Assignments and Preview of Agenda Items for Next Meeting

The DMF's MFC Liaison Jesse Bisette reviewed meeting assignments and provided an overview of the August 2025 meeting items.

[View the video recording of the discussion](#)

Having no further business to conduct, Chairman Corbett adjourned the meeting at 11:03 a.m.