

N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission
August 2026 Quarterly Business Meeting
Written Public Comment

Name	State/Province	Please type your comments in the box below.
Bryan Brinkley	North Carolina	41 years old, fished in NC since I could walk. Every year since birth the commercial fisherman get more say and the recreational fisherman get less. Cant keep any fish anymore, and when I buy it in the store half of it is imported or the prices are twice what they should be. You wonder why license sales are down. You are the problem. Time to fix it.
Wayne G Henry	North Carolina	Salt water fish limits are way to few for recreational fisherman.
Joseph J Francis	North Carolina	Why should NC MFC or DMF have a roll in managing Atlantic Bonito as a migratory fish species with a brief stay along the NC Coast in the spring? It's not like either agency has a proven track record of properly managing our NC Fisheries over the last couple of decades or longer. Other than being poorly managed ! If any management is to be done on Atlantic Bonito it should be done as groups of states along the Southeast Atlantic and also the Northeast.
Bennie L Braswell	North Carolina	I agree with the limit on Bonito. But not the overall policies currently in place Apparently regulations implemented over many years have not had positive outcome, with exception of redfish stocks. North Carolina has 2 regulatory agencies that do not work together. N. C. Division of Marine Fisheries has provides recommendations from scientific studies that are mostly ignored by the N. C. Marine Fisheries Commission that makes the regulations. I'm sincerely disappointed to see regulations dictated so biased in favor of big commercial entities. This mismanagement arrangement has produced regulations with a distinct bias in favor of commercial fisheries, at the expense of the recreational fishermen and N.C. General Public. 1. Recreational fisherman have bycatch counted against their quota of harvested fish. 2. Commercial fisheries bycatch is not counted against their quota of harvested fish.

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		3. I read deeply into the commercial regulations that stated harvested catch sold outside of the state do not count against their quota. 4. NC is the only state on the east coast that allows trawling and gill netting in our inshore waters. Other states have recognized that this practice destroys the emerging young fishes and fish biomass, fish stocks do not recover due to this practice. 5. Rockfish are not allowed to be harvested by recreational fishermen for the last 3 years in my area. 6. Flounder are now not allowed to be harvested by recreational fishermen after several years of reductions. Commercial harvesting continues. 7. Speckled trout are now being overfished. Reductions in harvesting are starting with commercial bias being proposed. Going back 20 years or so, people fishing the lower Neuse River, Pamlico Sound were able to catch plenty of fish species. Spot, Croaker, Grey Trout, Striped Bass and other species. These areas are now void of bottom fishes worth catching, Striped Bass, Flounder, are not allowed to be harvested by recreational fishing. Grey Trout, one per day. Now Speckled trout are technically being overharvested. I am reminded of the definition of insanity, and plead with you as my representative to discontinue allowing mismanagement of our fisheries in this manner. The inland commercial trawling and gill netting will continue to deplete our states fisheries for everyone. Including themselves!
North Carolina Resident	North Carolina	Dear Commissioners, I am submitting these comments as a North Carolina resident to request that the Commission prioritize long-term stock recovery, critical nursery habitat, and fair public access across the following agenda items: SCFL Commercial License Pool (2026–2027 Year): Cap the eligibility pool at zero (0) new licenses. Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 143B-289.52, management must ensure sustainable yields. Adding commercial licenses while core stocks remain under recovery pressure dilutes existing livelihoods and hinders species recovery.

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		Small Mesh Gill Net Rule Suspension (15A NCAC 03J .0103(h)): Vote YES to indefinitely maintain mandatory, year-round net attendance rules in the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico rivers. Constant attendance is a necessary safeguard to minimize unmonitored net mortality and juvenile bycatch in key estuarine waters. Fishery Management Plan Reviews (Red Drum, Southern Flounder, Kingfish): Prioritize equitable public allocation. Marine resources belong to all citizens of North Carolina. Management frameworks must protect public trust access and reflect the significant economic contribution of recreational anglers. Coastal Habitat Protection Plan (CHPP) 2026 Amendment: Vote YES to release the draft amendment for public review, and push for stricter safeguards against bottom-disturbing gear in designated primary and secondary nursery habitats.
Robert Walker	North Carolina	The problem with closing season on certain fish off shore. If you can't tell the fish not to bite they usually die . That is a sad way to increase population.
Andrew Czanderna	North Carolina	I'm against changes tho the two for one sg1. This would dramatically reduce equity in my corporation.
Chris McCaffity	North Carolina	Make Fishing Fun Again Please take time to read about how we can Make Fishing Fun Again by focusing more on enhancement than enforcement. The first thing we should do to help immediately is remove hard deadlines for rebuilding fisheries that have been mismanaged for decades. This would give managers the flexibility to reopen fisheries for flounder, snapper, and other seafood that is currently illegal to eat most of the time. Millions of pounds of quota that is allocated to assumed dead discards during annual closures could be reallocated to harvestable quota that allows recreational and commercial fishermen to responsibly harvest some of each species most of the time. The same number of fish would die with the only difference being that we could eat the fish rather than discarding them to slowly die from their wounds. A long-term solution for sustainably supporting historically high abundance and harvest levels is stocking

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		native seafood for everyone to enjoy. We can help nature overcome habitat-related spawning obstacles that are causing many stocks to struggle despite stricter regulations that only seem to create more waste and frustration with failed policies. Existing facilities along the coast could incubate fertilized eggs from local specimens and release hatchlings by the billions to live wild and free as Natural Selection ensures survival of the fittest. This cost-effective approach could be funded with our fishing license fees along with a realignment of management priorities. Overcomplicated, ever-changing, and often counterproductive regulations could be replaced with easy-to-follow bag limits that prevent overfishing. Focusing more on enhancement than enforcement would generate new revenue by increasing recreational opportunities and promoting food production. This should finally put an end to the constant fighting between recreational and commercial fishermen while protecting consumer access to our Public Trust Seafood. Fishermen and fishery managers could work together toward what should be our common goal of healthy fisheries that are responsibly harvested with minimal waste. We could put fish cleaning/data collection stations at public boat ramps where landings can be accurately documented without risky interactions between boats on the water. Dangerous derby fisheries during short openings could be replaced with the freedom to fish when it is safe and convenient throughout the year. These practical solutions that will benefit everyone and the environment would Make Fishing Fun Again while securing our freedom to fish responsibly and eat local wild-caught seafood forever.
Jefferson Rives.	North Carolina	I support sending the Coastal Habitat Protection Plan 2026 Amendment out for public and advisory review, and urge the Commission to strengthen it before final approval. Since the Fisheries Reform Act of 1997, the MFC has adopted numerous rules under its 13 FMPs, but has never used its parallel authority to adopt rules implementing the CHPP. Twenty-nine years, zero habitat rules. This amendment is the opportunity to close that gap, not describe it again. The draft proposes habitat-based rulemaking “beginning in 2027” — an aspiration, not a commitment. This is not a hypothetical risk. In February 2024, a similar SAV place-based management proposal was brought to the Regional and Shellfish/Crustacean Advisory Committees, opposed by those committees and by shrimp fishery participants, and dropped by the MFC before adoption. The same advisory committees will

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		review this framework. Without a fixed date and a specific deliverable attached now, this proposal risks the same outcome. I fish Bogue and Core Sounds out of Morehead City. Region 3 has 48 nominated Strategic Habitat Areas covering 134,547 acres — 19% of the region. DMF’s own 252-site field study found these areas carry roughly double the structured habitat of non-SHA sites, higher Spartina stem density, higher live oyster cover, and significantly less eroded and hardened shoreline. Priority species identified for Region 3 include oyster, blue crab, shrimp, southern flounder, red drum, and spotted seatrout — the species I and thousands of other anglers target in these waters. Region 3 and 4 SHA validation is already complete. Regions 1 and 2 are not. Final designation should proceed for Region 3 and 4 now rather than wait on a statewide timeline. The SAV chapter’s own data shows why urgency matters. Statewide high-salinity SAV fell from 99,398 acres in 2006-07 to 83,269 acres in 2020 — a 16.2% loss, roughly 1.16% per year. Continuous meadow acreage, the healthiest SAV structure, fell from 44,978 to 20,804 acres over the same period. My own zone, Barden Inlet to Bogue Inlet, is not uniformly declining — western Bogue Sound gained SAV over that period while the eastern sound lost it. Local water quality and management conditions measurably change outcomes. This is not an unmanageable, coastwide phenomenon. The plan’s own recommended action is a water clarity standard to protect SAV, which goes to the Environmental Management Commission for a vote anticipated in 2027. The document itself states that even after passage, restoration in impaired waters takes 8 to 10 years. Every year this amendment’s implementation slips is a year added directly onto that clock. None of this is possible without monitoring this plan does not currently fund. The document states water quality sondes were discontinued in 2021 for lack of staff and funding. The oyster fishery-independent survey, designed jointly with NC State and The Nature Conservancy, remains unfunded. Hard-bottom habitat mapping is unfunded. Cultch monitoring stops after three years. The 2021 CHPP’s Action 8.3 was never implemented, and the stated reason is simply “no capacity.” A plan that cannot fund its own

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		monitoring cannot be evaluated, adjusted, or enforced. I ask the Commission to take four concrete actions within its own authority: 1. Adopt a firm date and specific deliverable for habitat-based rulemaking under N.C.G.S. § 113-129(11), replacing the current aspirational “beginning in 2027” language. 2. Approve final Strategic Habitat Area designation for Region 3 and Region 4 now, independent of the Region 1 and 2 validation timeline. 3. Direct DMF to submit a specific, itemized funding request to the General Assembly for the monitoring programs this plan depends on, including restoration of the discontinued water quality sondes and funding for the NCSU/TNC oyster survey. 4. Formally request that the Coastal Resources Commission clarify the permitting pathway for thin layer placement pilot projects, since the technique remains prohibited as wetland fill under current CAMA rules despite being one of only two restoration tools this amendment recommends. Thank you for your consideration.