

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

Name	State/Province	Please type your comments in the box below.
Sean Mulligan	North Carolina	I am of the opinion that the NCDMF limits on inshore species are making a lot of people poachers. Your limits are stringent when compared to the bordering states. Everyone know that inshore shrimping take a heavy toll on the fish. Since you obviously do not want to do anything about it you should at least reduce the limits on recreational limits especially but not inclusive to Red Drum and Flounder. If there are the shortages of fish that your regulations imply then do not blame the recreational fisherman. I would like to see a 10 year chart showing how many saltwater licenses are issued to NC residents. The Red Drum and Flounder we catch on the Northern beaches have nothing to do with NC backwaters. They are Chesapeake bay fish as well as the Fall Speckled Trout run. We had a great late run of Reds last winter. Once again they are Chesapeake Bay fish. Sincerely Sean Mulligan Southern Shores resident
Philip C. Midkiff	North Carolina	As a former MFC member I recognize the effort to protect our fisheries. That said, I don't understand the complete closure of the striped bass harvest in the Albemarle Sound and tributaries, yet allowing the recreational harvests on the Roanoke River by recreational fisheries. It smacks of favoring the CCA members and guides.
THOMAS S COLTRAIN	North Carolina	I would like to see the Spotted Sea Trout season closed till at least Sept. 1st or even better Oct. 1st. This closure will give them a chance to spawn all summer long. They have taken a major kill this year and they need a chance to spawn as long as they can.
Kenneth I wilson	North Carolina	Many including myself, believe the reporting on the phone is too onerous and shouldn't be implemented on recreational fishermen.. It is also a "catch 22", meaning if you report they will say you are overharvesting, if you don't report, they has been overharvesting. Either way, more regulations. Many regulations are absolutely necessary, although a regulation that EVEN FLORIDA hasn't implemented, is over the top! Many regulations are good, as in the regulation on big drum, and the new sheepshead regulation.. It may be an idea to actually do some enforcement on commercials as well. For example, if they were to catch too many juvenile red drum, they can just cooler them up for the next day and report then, same for cobia..
Holly Vest	North Carolina	We fish out of Wrightsville Beach NC. Bonito are a migratory fish and we have very healthy levels that migrate through on a consistent seasonly basis. There is no reason to place

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		restrictions at this time unless you are wanting to place limits like 50 fish a day or something but I think most anglers know better.
Chris McCaffity	North Carolina	<p data-bbox="611 250 976 293">Make Fishing Fun Again</p> <p data-bbox="611 293 1995 667">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.</p> <p data-bbox="611 667 1995 1198">A long-term solution for sustainably supporting historically high abundance and harvest levels is stocking 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.</p> <p data-bbox="611 1198 1995 1492">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</p>

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		<p>wild-caught seafood forever.</p> <p>I am happy to talk with anyone about these ideas. Contact Chris at: [REDACTED]</p> <p>Thank you for taking time to think about realistic ways we can Make Fishing Fun Again.</p>
Kevin Cagle	North Carolina	<p>Good evening members of the commission,</p> <p>My name is Captain Kevin Cagle. I'm from Sneads Ferry, a small fishing village, where as a boy my father operated a fishing and diving charter business and my grandfather commercial fished for grouper and snapper. I now operate a fishing charter business in the same location. I have seen a lot of changes in the fishery, management and the economy within my lifetime. In my opinion, there are some good changes and some bad. I don't envy your job or responsibility for our fishery. I understand that in politics, you are always making somebody mad no matter what decision you make. I fully support logical, science-based management of our fishery. I'm here today to speak on the proposed management options for Atlantic Bonito. I want to reiterate that I greatly respect our fishery and I want to help ensure there is a healthy fishery for my son's and for generations to come. I also recognize that most people with opinions on this proposed regulation have not spent much significant first person experience Atlantic Bonito fishing. While many people see the highlights posted on social media from charter captains and recreational fisherman alike, I can assure, you that within the average of 4 weeks we get to effectively target these Atlantic Bonito, the success of these efforts vary drastically. There are days that I can catch many Atlantic Bonito and there are days that I work all day, just to send my clients home with a respectable catch. This doesn't even begin to factor in bad weather days that fishing isn't even an option.</p> <p>Secondly, these fish primarily bite for a couple hours after sunup and a couple hours before sundown. They can be at any depth of water from 30 feet to 90 feet. At times they are very aggressive, but I have personally sight casted at schools of hundreds of fish without one bite. The point I'm trying to convey is that there are a lot of variables to understand when setting these proposed regulations. All I ask, is that you consider the economic impact of the possibility of overregulation on charter captains and recreational fisherman in the future. This includes bait and tackle stores, marinas, gas stations, outboard mechanics, restaurants and many others. Including my ability to provide for my wife and kids.</p> <p>I conclude my time with an understanding of the 10 fish per person limit, it seems reasonable enough. Although, I feel as though most anglers will rarely hit their 10 fish per person limit. This makes me believe that this regulation is only foundational to further regulation of Atlantic</p>

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		<p>Bonito limits in the future. 10 per person this year, 8 per person in the next couple years, then 5 and so on. Because of the variability in the location and aggressiveness of the bite, the limited migration period we experience, weather variability and the lack of similar regulations along the south Atlantic, I am suggesting we don't move forward with this regulation unless we have reliable statistics of the need to further protect the species.</p> <p>Thank you, Captain Kevin Cagle</p>
Will Anders	North Carolina	<p>I am very glad that the commission is considering bonito regulations. These fish are lots of fun to catch and great to eat, but they also don't freeze well so there's no reason for people to be keeping the amount of fish that they have recently (I've seen people with pictures of 40-50+ fish from one trip). I had never caught bonito before about 7-8 years ago, and in my admittedly unscientific research I've heard plenty of others who are similar to myself in terms of recently coming to this fishery. This is a great resource that folks haven't historically targeted as much, possibly because they're only around for a few weeks each year, and I think it would be shameful for the commission to avoid doing something to protect that resource for the future especially when we don't know much about the resource because folks historically haven't targeted them as much and they're only here for a short time each year. My opinion is that the resource is relatively healthy and well stocked now and I'd rather start measures to protect the resource now relative to waiting until we've depleted the resource like we've seen with gray trout, spot, flounder, etc.</p>
Kevin Cagle	North Carolina	<p>Good evening members of the commission,</p> <p>My name is Captain Kevin Cagle. I'm from Sneads Ferry, a small fishing village, where as a boy my father operated a fishing and diving charter business and my grandfather commercial fished for grouper and snapper. I now operate a fishing charter business in the same location. I have seen a lot of changes in the fishery, management and the economy within my lifetime. In my opinion, there are some good changes and some bad. I don't envy your job or responsibility for our fishery. I understand that in politics, you are always making somebody mad no matter what decision you make. I fully support logical, science-based management of our fishery. I'm here today to speak on the proposed management options for Atlantic Bonito. I want to reiterate that I greatly respect our fishery and I want to help ensure there is a healthy fishery for my son's and for generations to come. I also recognize that most people with opinions on this</p>

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		<p>proposed regulation do not have much first-person experience with Atlantic Bonito fishing. While many people see the highlights posted on social media from charter captains and recreational fisherman alike, I can assure, you that within the average of 4 weeks we get to effectively target these Atlantic Bonito, the success of these efforts vary drastically. There are days that I can catch many Atlantic Bonito and there are days that I work all day, just to send my clients home with a respectable catch. This doesn't even begin to factor in bad weather days where fishing isn't even an option.</p> <p>Secondly, these fish primarily bite for a couple hours after sunup and a couple hours before sundown. They can be at any depth of water from 30 feet to 90 feet. At times they are very aggressive, but I have personally sight casted at schools of hundreds of fish without one bite. The point I'm trying to convey is that there are a lot of variables to consider when setting these proposed regulations. All I ask, is that you consider the economic impact of the possibility of overregulation on charter captains and recreational fisherman in the future. This includes bait and tackle stores, marinas, gas stations, outboard mechanics, restaurants and many others; Including my business, which impacts my ability to provide for my wife and kids.</p> <p>I want to conclude by saying I think the proposed five fish per person limit is unreasonable. That's the current limit for Massachusetts, a place these fish live for much of the year. I believe there should be no regulation on Atlantic Bonito. I believe this limitation is purely based on assumptions of impact and no valid statistical facts. Because of the variability in the location, variety in aggressiveness of the bite, the limited migration period we experience, weather variability and the lack of similar regulations along the south Atlantic, I am suggesting we don't move forward with this regulation unless we have reliable statistics indicating we need to.</p> <p>Thank you, Captain Kevin Cagle</p>
Shannon Richards	New York	<p>Thank you NCMFC, for this opportunity to share perspectives from outside the state. These fish know no map boards and how one state leads has bearing on us all. Thank you for NC's leadership. I encourage North Carolina to vote for Option 4 for Atlantic Bonito!</p> <p>I support Option 4 because it puts the five-fish recreational bag limit directly into permanent rule, so it can't quietly drift upward over time without critical review. Option 4 still preserves the flexibility needed to manage the fishery responsibly. Option 4 keeps formal monitoring in</p>

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		place and maintains the requirement for NCMFC consent before proclamations are issued, but it limits proclamation authority over “quantity” to the commercial side. In short, Option 4 protects recreational angling opportunities with a clear, enforceable standard, while ensuring the commercial fishery doesn’t grow rapidly without NCMFC having opportunities to evaluate checks and balances.
Lars McCarter	Virginia	<p>Regarding Atlantic Bonito, I support Option 4. Broadly speaking, these fish are at risk from exploitation given the renewed focus on them up and down the eastern seaboard. Option 4 provides a sensible management lever to reduce the probability of overfishing while science on the stock catches up. As an individual who travels robustly to many states on the East Coast, I appreciate North Carolina's willingness to balance the needs of all communities with a stake in the long-term health of this stock. From a purely financial perspective, the proliferation of Atlantic Bonito will provide significant economic rewards to the states who protect them given significant focus on them.</p> <p>I caught my first Atlantic Bonito in New England over 20 years ago while in college. I would love to be able to bring my children to catch them in North Carolina well into the future. Please help us protect those experiences for all.</p>
Will Anders	North Carolina	I am writing in support of management for Atlantic Bonito, specifically option 4 which I think is a good step in the right direction to help preserve this resource that is a really fun fish to catch, is relatively easily accessible when they're here, and tastes great fresh but doesn't freeze well. I have seen and heard of plenty of folks taking many multiples of the proposed limits which feels extremely wasteful and shortsighted, especially given the short amount of time these fish are in our waters, and I want to see NC take a leadership role in putting in place policies to protect this resource before it gets decimated like we've seen with other species.
chad plumly	Georgia	I'm with ASGA on this. ASGA supports Option 4 because it’s the cleanest, most durable approach: it puts the five-fish recreational bag limit directly into permanent rule, so it can’t quietly drift upward over time depending on future directors or commissions. Thank you.
Scott Davis	South Carolina	As a retired guide and fly shop owner from Charleston SC the number of anglers I know chasing Albies and Bonito in NC every year is mind blowing. While we have a good fishery here, NC has always been deemed as "holy land" for these fish. Protecting them from

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		exploitation now will ensure our kids will have the same opportunities as we do. I fully support option 4. Thank you
Jeff Amberson	Massachusetts	<p>Sir,</p> <p>I would like to urge the adoption of Option 4 in order to place commonsense regulations on bonito. Bonito are a valuable resource up and down the east coast and deserve to be treated as such. The time to act is now, before they become threatened. All too often we wait until a species in trouble rather than action proactively. We have a unique opportunity to get ahead of the curb and act responsibly.</p> <p>Thank you for your time</p> <p>Jeff Amberson Northborough, MA 01532</p>
James Edwards	North Carolina	Please support option 4.; regarding Atlantic Bonito and False Albacore. Thank you for protecting these species.
Stacy C	North Carolina	If recreational fishers in NC are lucky we get about a month of seeing Atlantic Bonito. If you work a full time job, you're lucky to be able to fish maybe 2 weekends (or 4 days) out of the month they are here, due to poor weather conditions. I do hope that if a limit is issued, commercial fishers have to adhere to this limit as well.
Blane Chocklett	Virginia	Thank you for allowing me from Virginia to make a public comment on the Atlantic Bonito. These fish know no state lines as they travel up and down our Atlantic coast, North Carolina has a chance to set a precedent for these fish , I encourage you to vote option 4 for Atlantic Bonito. Thank you for your time
Lo Horiuchi	Virginia	I along with ASGA supports Option 4 because it's the cleanest, most durable approach: it puts the five-fish recreational bag limit directly into permanent rule, so it can't quietly drift upward over time depending on future directors or commissions, while still preserving the flexibility needed to manage the fishery responsibly. Option 4 keeps formal monitoring in place and maintains the requirement for NCMFC consent before proclamations are issued, but it limits proclamation authority over "quantity" to the commercial side, where rapid changes and expansion risk are most likely. In short, Option 4 protects recreational angling opportunities

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		<p>with a clear, enforceable standard, while ensuring the commercial fishery can't grow rapidly without checks and balances. I thank you for your consideration.</p>
Paul Kameen	Pennsylvania	<p>I am writing in support of Option 4 for Atlantic bonito.</p> <p>I say that not just as an angler, but as someone who has worked as a fishery biologist and has watched how unmanaged abundance can quickly become reactive regulation. Effort does not disappear; it shifts. As striped bass recruitment struggles and regulations tighten, pressure will inevitably move toward the next available species. Bonito are already seeing increasing attention, and that trend is unlikely to reverse.</p> <p>Atlantic bonito represent a classic pulse fishery in North Carolina. They arrive in dense, predictable schools and provide a short but intense angling opportunity. That same accessibility makes them especially vulnerable. When fish are concentrated and catch rates are high, harvest can escalate rapidly. Without durable guardrails, management risks falling behind the fishery.</p> <p>Option 4 offers the clearest and most stable approach. Placing the five-fish recreational bag limit directly into permanent rule prevents quiet upward drift over time while maintaining Commission oversight and necessary flexibility. Limiting proclamation authority over recreational quantity while retaining responsiveness where commercial expansion risk is highest strikes a reasonable balance.</p> <p>This is not about restricting anglers. It is about preventing avoidable problems. Keeping extreme numbers of bonito simply because they are abundant in a moment does not reflect long-term stewardship. Responsible anglers already understand that opportunity and sustainability are not in conflict.</p> <p>We have seen too many Atlantic fisheries move from abundance to depletion because managers waited for decline before acting. Precautionary management is not pessimism; it is discipline.</p> <p>North Carolina has an opportunity to lead by establishing clear, enforceable standards while the fishery is healthy. I respectfully urge the Commission to adopt Option 4.</p>

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Henry Hagan	Florida	<p>I have fished the coast of NC for Albies every year since 2001. Our Albie catch has dropped annually over the last 6 years to the point where this past late October, ten fishermen fishing for 5 days did not catch a single Albie.</p> <p>While I am sure there are loads of causes, limiting the daily catch/keep via proposal #4 will do a great deal to help.</p> <p>Thanks! Henry Hagan Core Banks Club, Davis NC</p>
Thomas Kosinski	New Jersey	<p>As an avid fisherman and professional guide I support Option 4 because it protects recreational angling opportunities with a clear, enforceable standard, while ensuring the commercial fishery can't grow rapidly without checks and balances. I appreciate your time.</p> <p>Best, Capt. Tom Kosinski Sandy Hook Outfitters</p>
Brandon Younger	Maryland	<p>Please support controls on False Albacore! Opinion 4 needs to be in play. Wait and you'll be right where stripers are season is a joke. No stripers in bay breeding grounds disseminated.</p>
Brian Sittlow	Rhode Island	<p>I support Option 4 for Atlantic Bonito. This option provides conservation measures to positively impact the coast wide fishery - including Rhode Island - where I live.</p> <p>Thank you for considering my recommendation, and for North Carolina's conservation leadership on False Albacore and Atlantic Bonito regulations.</p> <p>All the best, Brian Sittlow Captain, US Navy (Retired) Westerly, RI USA</p>
Patrick Huban	Connecticut	<p>I am charter captain based in Connecticut, it's established at this point that all Atlantic states share the same populations of many species. As a business owner whose livelihood is directly</p>

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		connected to healthh fisheries, I support option 4 in North Carolina. This manages the risk of these fish populations being exploited and protects an important resource. Thank you.
Chris Thompson	North Carolina	<p>First, I'd like to thank the Commission for considering North Carolina for a leadership role in preserving our Atlantic Bonito fishery. Atlantic Bonito offer North Carolina anglers exciting opportunities: they show up fast and provide a short, exhilarating season each year. They are especially vulnerable to exploitation when abundant. When Bonito show up in dense, predictable schools, it doesn't take much effort for harvest to scale quickly. That's why Atlantic Bonito deserve management.</p> <p>Although I fully support anglers keeping fish for the table, Atlantic Bonito should be bled, iced and consumed early and don't freeze well. Therefore, unrestricted harvesting is wasteful and not in the best interest of the species or the anglers who target them. I encourage voting for Option 4 as it provides a reasonable, enforceable recreational standard while ensuring a sustainable commercial fishery.</p>
Justin Cordonnier	Massachusetts	Hi, I am a recreational angler, writing in support of Option 4, 5 fish recreational bag limit (combined for bonito and false albacore). Albies and bonito are amazing fish to pursue, and I appreciate your conservation efforts on their behalf. Thank you for your consideration.
Kurt Freund	Massachusetts	I am writing to express my support for the proposed North Carolina regulations on the recreational and commercial harvest of atlantic bonito and false albacore. I think we can all agree on how valuable these two species are as a resource, and how important it is to protect and preserve that resource with responsible stewardship. As a fisherman, and as a fishing charter captain, these two species have enormous value to me, personally and professionally. That is why I had always been surprised and, frankly, dismayed that there were absolutely no limits on their recreational or commercial harvest. That is, until 2024, when Massachusetts adopted retention limits on the size and number of these fish. I welcomed these regulations as a much-needed safeguard against over-harvest of this valuable resource. Of course, in order for regulations on migratory species to be effective, they need to be consistent across the range of the fish. So, cooperation among all the states of New England, the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast regions is essential. I hope North Carolina will adopt the proposed regulations and help protect these two magnificent gamefish species.
Bobby Brewer	North Carolina	Please vote for option 4 regarding the bonito creel limit

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Dan Ruede	New York	<p>Hello,</p> <p>Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak up as a concerned citizen for the management and the harvest regulations of Atlantic bonito. I would like to encourage North Carolina to vote for Option 4 for Atlantic Bonito.</p> <p>Not only am I a concerned citizen, but as an angler of the southern waters, and a former fishing guide, I know how critical this species is, not only environmentally but for the revenue they bring in for all the coastal states through fishing opportunities. I personally have several trips planned on visiting the beautiful coastline of North Carolina this April for its healthy waters, in pursuit of these fish.</p> <p>The narrative for most coastal species is grim, numbers of fish at unsustainable levels because of poor management and over harvesting. Fortunately for Atlantic bonito we have a chance to sustainably harvest these fish from the water and support a future stock by these regulations. With the current no size or bag limit, it is irresponsible and extremely detrimental to the future economy of North Carolina, and shared waters.</p> <p>Please have North Carolina continue to represent a growing recognition of the need for conservation in a rapidly evolving fishery.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p> <p>Best,</p> <p>Dan Ruede</p>
Bob Lewis	Massachusetts	<p>I strongly recommend NC choose option 4 to protect the Atlantic Bonito fishery. As an avid fly fisherman, I strongly believe the idea of a management policy is critical to make this a sustainable fishery. I have heard horror stories of party boats coming back to the docks with 1000+ bonito. What NC should realize is that fish are FAR more valuable alive than dead. Anglers such as myself travel to various states and spend money on tackle, restaurants, hotels, guides, etc. We have seen too many species literally wiped out with no management policies in place. I fish for False Albacore and Atlantic Bonito on Cape Cod (my hometown), Rhode</p>

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		<p>Island, Montauk NY, Harker's Island NC and West Palm FL. I know many fellow fisherman friends that do the same. Many fishing destinations such as the Bahamas and Belize have concluded catch and release has MUCH more positive impact on their local economies. We all know the striped bass fishery is in real trouble. There are basically no young class schoolie fish to be found. It is VERY important to have management policies in place for both False Albacore and Atlantic Bonito. I wrote the following article in Tail Magazine that will give you an idea of the amazing False Albacore fishery this has become. Thank you for your consideration on this important issue to protect the economy in NC by protecting the Atlantic Bonito fishery.</p> <p>https://www.tailflyfishing.com/chasing-albies-down-the-coast/</p> <p>Bob Lewis Cotuit, MA</p>
Christopher Elkins PhD	North Carolina	<p>To: Chairman Sammy Corbett From: Chris Elkins PhD Gloucester, NC Re: Public comment for Feb MFC meeting</p> <p>Sir,</p> <p>I have comments on two issues before the Commission, Atlantic Bonito and the proposed Exempted Fishing Permits for Red Snapper from NC, SC, GA and FL.</p> <p>Atlantic Bonito</p> <p>The Division has properly given much background into in the meeting docs. I would like to emphasize a few points that may not be apparent. First, as traditional stocks in NC decline, there has been a change in public fishermen's and commercial fishing habits resulting in them seeking new targets to harvest or increasing effort on some fish. Atlantic bonito comprise one of these new targets and safeguards need to implemented and fishing carefully monitored.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I support option 4. 2. As this fishery is multistate, Atlantic Bonito should be managed by ASMFC

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		<p>Red Snapper EFPs.</p> <p>I encourage and support the EFPs, IF the primary objective is to improve data collection as OPPOSED to merely increase harvest by recreational fishermen. Clearly, recreational fishermen are being shut out of a fishery that appears to be healthy. The issue is how healthy and opening it up to widespread harvest without the necessary parameters measured is a mistake.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More accurately measuring the harvest and fishing effort is critical to sustainable harvest. State-managed fishing permits, if effectively implemented, will be a huge step in the right direction. 2. As these EFPs are on an annual basis, the harvest and effort data must be evaluated and the decision to continue the EFP brought before the MFC for approval. 3. Self-reporting is not quantitative. It is not in the self-interest of fishermen to report harvest (or bycatch). Reporting can/will impact present/future quotas. Increasing Marine Patrol monitoring of the proposed two month season could vastly improve data. MRIP data is presently suspect and not designed for short, pulse fisheries. I believe in the long term, better data collection can solve this problem. <p>Thank you for your service, Chris</p>
Norm Staunton	Vermont	<p>Dear Chairman and Commissioners,</p> <p>I am writing in support of Option 4 for Atlantic bonito.</p> <p>This is not just a North Carolina issue. Atlantic bonito are not a “state fishery.” They are a coastwide resource. Decisions made here ripple north and south.</p> <p>I split my time between Maine and Rhode Island. I own a home and boat in Maine. There are no meaningful bonito fisheries there. Bluefish are scarce. Striped bass are a shadow of what they once were.</p> <p>In Rhode Island, where I travel to fish, there is still a vibrant albie and bonito fishery. But it exists only if there are fish to be caught. These pulse fisheries are fragile. When bonito arrive in dense, predictable schools, harvest can scale very quickly. Without durable rules, abundance</p>

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		<p>can disappear faster than managers can respond.</p> <p>We have seen this movie before.</p> <p>North Carolina has the opportunity to lead — not just for itself, but for the entire Atlantic coast. A strong rule here strengthens conservation momentum in Rhode Island and other states currently working on similar measures.</p> <p>Option 4 is the right choice because it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places the five-fish recreational bag limit directly into permanent rule • Prevents quiet upward drift through proclamation authority • Maintains monitoring and NCMFC oversight • Limits rapid commercial expansion without checks and balances <p>This is not anti-commercial. It is precautionary. It recognizes that once dock value increases, pressure follows — and rebuilding is far harder than preventing decline.</p> <p>A fish in the water is more valuable than one on the deck. Recreational access to healthy bonito stocks supports guides, marinas, tackle shops, tourism, and long-term public trust in fisheries management across multiple states.</p> <p>Please work with neighboring states like Rhode Island and adopt Option 4. Protect this fishery before it becomes another rebuilding story.</p> <p>Respectfully,</p> <p>Norm Staunton</p>
Mike Roberds	North Carolina	I support option 4. 5 fish limit
Jon pershke	North Carolina	I'm for the 5 fish limit on bonitos
Janice Patten	North Carolina	Please put common sense limits on Atlantic bonito fishing. I like the plan that puts the five-fish recreational bag limit directly into permanent rule, so it can't quietly drift upward over time

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		depending on future directors or commissions, while still preserving the flexibility needed to manage this fishery responsibly.
James Cameron	North Carolina	I support Option 4 establishing a 5-fish daily bag limit for recreational Atlantic bonito
Jim Jones	North Carolina	I support option four.
Robert Shepherd	North Carolina	I fully support capping the bonito limit to 5. I fish for them here out of Wilmington about 10 times each spring with good success. It sickens me to see guides post pics of 100 bonito when you know they only keep a few days and don't freeze well.
Greg Hurt	North Carolina	Please take care of Bonita and support Option 4
Tom Monschein	North Carolina	I'm in favor of Option 4.
Caleb Hofer	North Carolina	I am all for this. As a charter captain myself I have seen far too many gluttonous dock shots of bonito shots. These captains simply can't be ignorant to the waste that is occurring but just want the pictures to prove that they have had a good day. Please afford bonito the same protections that false albacore get
Timothy Register	North Carolina	I'm in favor of option 4.
Brian Blinco	North Carolina	I am a strong supporter of the proposed option 4 (5 bonito daily limit) for recreational fishing regulation change. We need to be strong in promoting a healthy fish population while also advocating for a sustainable fishery for future generations. Your study indicates a tipping point and by making a small (and low impact) to regulations, we can protect our fishery.
Lloyd Wruble	North Carolina	I agree with the pressing need for number limits of bonito to maintain a healthy population!
Courtney Hutson	South Carolina	Getting ahead of the ball is important in all land sports and the same goes for aquatic sports like fishing. We are in an era that should not longer include filling up fish boxes and coolers to the brim. Sustainable fishing practices are being utilized up and down the coast and Atlantic Bonito need to be included in this practice. I strongly recommend and stand behind the five per bag limit. Please heed the information that scientists are presenting and help to preserve fisheries for the future generations. Thank you for your time and consideration!
Kristi Flowers	North Carolina	I'm in favor of option #4 for the Bonito restrictions
Carolina Jewett	South Carolina	Put a bag limit of 5 fish on the Atlantic bonito
Pat Palmer	North Carolina	I think there should be a maximum of no more than ten. This fish needs to be protected It is a delicious fish of course but we should not over fish it.

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Thomas Oertel	Massachusetts	<p>I am a coastal fisher and I Urge North Carolina to adopt Option 4 to limit false albacore and bonito massive harvesting as it currently stands.</p> <p>In taking such an aggressive conservation-minded step, North Carolina shows it honors the entire North Atlantic fishing community by helping to conserve and protect the growth of these fishes so ALL STATES' communities of fishers will benefit.</p> <p>Neglecting to take the Option 4 step shows a lack of concern... and would reflect on the plight of literally limitless offshore herring netting which effected All coastal states in the huge decrease of that baitfish biomass which NC could have chosen to protected years ago. Kindly make the best universal decision being suggested by those recreation fishrrs who will be impacted the most, and also benefit the sport fishing industry of your state, instead of risking it. Thank you for listening.</p>
Patrick Cassidy	Massachusetts	<p>I am a saltwater fly fishing guide on Cape Cod in Massachusetts. The four species we primarily target are striped bass, bluefish, false albacore, and bonito. North Carolina led the way in protecting the hard tails on this list by establishing guardrails for albies last year. Massachusetts quickly followed suit by limiting the number of albies and Atlantic bonito that can be harvested. North Carolina is now in a position to take this same step for Atlantic bonito. This past season's bonito run in our region shows the economic, ecological, and social benefits of an abundant population of this species. Not only is it a fantastic fishery in its own right and one that can be enjoyed by the entire coast, its successful management can help alleviate pressure on and fill gaps left when other fisheries struggle, e.g. striped bass. The abundance of a maturing bonito population we experienced in the Northeast in recent years also highlighted the potential pitfalls of increased effort and harvest prompted by easy availability. Managers must take care to not be reactive but rather proactive and preventative when it comes to regulating harvest. For these reasons, I encourage North Carolina fisheries managers to select Option 4 for Atlantic bonito, limiting the number of fish that can be harvested and providing methods for controlling the commercial fishery's growth in a reasonable and fair way. Thank you for your attention and for the actions North Carolina has already taken to date.</p>
Philip Midkiff	North Carolina	<p>Where may I view the research on the striped bass population that results in the total shutdown of the fishery by NCMFC?</p>
Kyle Schaefer	Maine	<p>Good Morning,</p> <p>I am in support of Option 4 due to the clarity and possibility for this regulation to endure. It's</p>

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		<p>essential that we proactively manage our coastal fisheries - we have a much better possibility of avoiding overfishing if we are proactive. Thank you for your leadership and we look forward to great work on the NC coast and thriving fisheries!</p> <p>Best, Kyle</p>
David Sneed	North Carolina	<p>For the upcoming MFC meeting this week, there are two topics of particular importance and Coastal Conservation Association North Carolina offers comments on each below:</p> <p>Atlantic Bonito The Division is presenting four options on Atlantic Bonito management to the MFC this week. The purpose of the presentation being to establish guiderails on a fishery that is currently healthy but experiencing a dramatic increase in fishing effort. Several commissioners asked for action as more and more "dock shots" of 30, 40 and even 50 fish began appearing on social media.</p> <p>As access to many other fisheries continues to decline with populations struggling to recover, fishermen are seeking new targets as they are forced to fish down the food chain. Atlantic Bonito are a data poor fishery and in the face of uncertain data, stocks should be managed to err on the side of conservation. Option 4 is the only substantial option presented that addresses this concept. It allows anglers access to the fishery while at the same time allowing a responsible daily limit. Since Atlantic bonito do not keep long after harvest, nor freeze well, this makes common sense. The recommendation of 5 bonito/person/day should certainly keep the population healthy while permitting fishermen to take home a "nice mess of fish" on each outing.</p> <p>Red Snapper North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida have prepared Red Snapper Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) proposals whose primary objective is to obtain better data from another data poor fishery. A central theme among these states (with some variations) includes state management and permitting, a short (60-day season), and self-reporting. Recreational fishermen have limited access, and employing an EFP should improve access to red snapper and data</p>

Name	State/Province	Please type your comments in the box below.
		<p>collection.</p> <p>It is of paramount importance that the data collected under the EFPs be closely monitored annually and have MFC approval for reapplying (with or without modification). MRIP data is currently suspect, and it is not well suited for short, pulse fisheries, which red snapper certainly qualifies. Data generated by EFP could be helpful if the quantitative short comings of self-reporting are augmented by increased monitoring from Marine Patrol and DMF personnel.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>The MFC has an opportunity this week to be proactive in the making of two management decisions. CCA NC hopes they will vote in support of Option 4 with regard to Atlantic Bonito. A five fish per person per day creel limit is a responsible decision that will keep this coastwide fishery healthy well into the future. In addition, endorsing the EFPs for red snapper harvest should both increase public access to this fishery as well as improve the collection of data on red snapper.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>
John Boyte	North Carolina	I kept (1) Bonito 50 years ago - not fit to eat - released every one since. Guys in the Gulf use them as swordfish bait, but even at that you only need to keep 2 or 3. I'm in favor of the proposed limit.
Ben willis	North Carolina	<p>Based on my search. Sc or va does not have a creel limit for bonito. See pasted info below.</p> <p>So why are we the redhead step child of the east Coast?</p> <p>It's not going to make a difference for Nc fish since these fish are not residents. But are only here for a few weeks.</p> <p>We are just sending our catch to other states</p> <p>Pasted search</p>

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		Neither South Carolina nor Virginia currently has a specific recreational creel (daily bag) or size limit for Atlantic bonito (<i>Sarda sarda</i>) as of early 2026.
Kelly E. Maxwell	North Carolina	<p>NCDMF</p> <p>When trying to figure one of your great plans for sea mullet, you MUST take into consideration how much the weather affects the landings. When the sink netters cannot get out because of the weather, sometimes days or weeks at a time, the landings will of course be down. You cannot judge fish stocks without taking this into consideration, unless you make up your own data, as you usually do when you make your calculations concerning any type of fisheries in this state. Quit trying to please special interest groups and politicians and use common sense and be honest. I am pure ashamed that the division acts in such a manner in this state when making laws and FMPs , especially when the division knows, or should know better. A good example is the great plan put in place for striped mullet. We know, and you should know also, when we have a tropical storm, hurricane, or even a 3 week Northeaster in September - October, that a goodly portion of mullet move South early, making the roe mullet landings for the season lower. Also, the prices of fish at the market naturally vary the landings greatly, as a lot of fishermen stay with crabbing, clamming, oystering, etc. because it's not worth fishing for little or nothing.</p> <p>I pray that you will be honest in your calculations and management plans. Anything less is shameful, dishonest, and downright sinful.</p> <p>North Carolina WAS a great state to live and work in until you adopted these abominable practices. If you want to cater to the CCA and politicians, just tell the public what your intentions are and stop the lies and subterfuge for the good of the public, the fishermen, and the state.</p>
John Mauser	North Carolina	<p>I want to commend the commission for considering placing a limit on Atlantic Bonito in North Carolina waters. As a fishing guide who targets them each spring, I have watched how technology and techniques have improved to the point where certain recreational fishing methods can now produce incredible catch rates of up to 100 Atlantic Bonito per trip. I have with my own eyes witnessed overfishing and overkeeping, since there are currently no limits. Personally, I see no valid reason for a boat (rec or guide) to harvest, 40, 60, 80, or even more Bonito. There is absolutely no need for that amount of waste on a very cool resource that NC anglers look forward to each spring. Obviously more research should be done on population health, but when you have a fish that orients to structure, and is receiving more and more</p>

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		boating/fishing pressure daily, it's not that hard to overfish a local population with no limits. 5 Bonito is more than enough for an angler. Thank you for making the right decision and doing the work to provide NC anglers a future healthy Atlantic Bonito stock.
Terry Nugent	North Carolina	<p>I'm a saltwater fishing guide that has moved my business from new england to north carolina. Bonito and false abalcor are more than half of my charters. I strongly support the conservation of both of these fish. It was appalling last spring watching boats lay fifty to a hundred benito on the dock.Only to be wasted. I have hundreds of clients each year. Fly to coastal North Carolina, stay at local businesses and eat at local restaurants. Just to catch these fish. The revenue that it brings into my business. And the state as a whole is substantial. The more abundant the fish are, the more the clients want to come. And continue spending money in tourism and lodging.</p> <p>Please vote for the strictest conservation measures. Available for both of these species</p> <p>Respectfully cap and terry nugent</p>
Peyton Hale	North Carolina	Please consider limits on bonito as a means to support a stable fishery and adequate recruitment for future generations of anglers.
Anthony Jackson	North Carolina	I'm asking that you please support the 5 fish recreational limit for Atlantic Bonito so we can ensure we are able to enjoy this fishery in the future. I would also like to see a sustainable commercial limit imposed.
Michael Scales	North Carolina	<p>I am writing to express my support for Option 4 for the proposed Bonito management plan: "Formal Monitoring with a Five-Fish Bag Limit and Delegation of Proclamation Authority." Given the broad declines in pelagic sport fish populations in recent years and the lack of reliable population data for Bonito, I am concerned that continued unregulated harvest could threaten the future of the fishery, and lead to a situation where we identify a population crisis past the point of no return. Personally, I would much rather ensure that recreational anglers maintain an opportunity to harvest five fish at a time (with the ability to increase bag limits in the future, if the population is stable), than have to close recreational angler seasons in the future due to the "wait and see" option not slowing the population decline in time. I believe this option strikes the best balance between conservation of the species, data collection of the population, and maintain recreational opportunities for NC anglers.</p>

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Gordon Rose	North Carolina	With regards to the Atlantic Bonito Management Issue Paper, I would urge adoption of Option 4: Formal Monitoring with a Five-Fish Bag Limit and Delegation of Proclamation Authority.
Wilson Greene IV	North Carolina	I support the proposal for a five fish limit per person for Atlantic Bonito.
Tony Friedrich (ASGA)	Maryland	<p>The American Saltwater Guides Association supports Option 4 for the Atlantic bonito management measures outlined in the issue paper. We appreciate the Division of Marine Fisheries taking the initiative to develop this and present options to the Commission ahead of any major concerns arising.</p> <p>As other species decline, available species experience greater effort across all stakeholder groups. In 2020, there were under 8000 directed trips in the Mid-Atlantic. Fast forward to 2025, and there were over 79,000 directed trips. That is a 10x increase in half a decade. The data in the graphs, particularly Figure 1 showing North Carolina commercial and recreational landings trending upward since 2017 and exceeding the long term average, and Figure 6 illustrating the increasing coastwide recreational harvest, highlight why a proactive step like a five-fish recreational bag limit makes sense for conservation.</p> <p>Atlantic bonito provides a unique pulse fishery in North Carolina, where they can appear in dense schools for short periods, making them especially vulnerable to rapid exploitation if harvest scales up unchecked. Keeping extreme numbers, whether fifty or more, is neither ethical nor necessary, as these fish are best consumed fresh and do not freeze well, leading to waste that undermines responsible angling.</p> <p>Option 4 offers the cleanest and most durable path by embedding the five fish recreational bag limit into a permanent rule, preventing it from drifting upward over time, while still allowing flexibility through proclamation for commercial adjustments where expansion risks are higher. This protects recreational opportunities with an enforceable standard and ensures commercial growth faces proper checks.</p> <p>Massachusetts adopted regulations for Atlantic bonito and false albacore in September 2025, implementing a 16-inch minimum size limit and a combined five-fish recreational bag limit to constrain harvest preemptively and prevent directed commercial growth without better data. Rhode Island is holding a public hearing on this issue this Tuesday, February 17, 2026, to consider similar guardrails amid rising pressure on these species.</p> <p>By adopting Option 4, North Carolina would match and support the conservation efforts of neighboring states on this shared migratory resource, promoting consistent, coastwide stewardship. As we have seen dozens of fisheries along the mid-Atlantic collapse due to</p>

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		<p>overharvest and delayed action, we cannot afford to lose this one, too, especially when proactive measures can sustain it for future generations. Investing in ongoing research, better monitoring of migration patterns, and improved life history studies will further inform adaptive management and help avoid the regrets of past losses. The American Saltwater Guides Association believes this strikes a good balance between sustainability and harvest, and we urge the Commission to adopt Option 4 to keep the conservation momentum going and set a positive example for the region.</p>
Lee Quist	North Carolina	<p>Hello, my name is Lee Quist. I've been living along the crystal coast for almost 2 years now, which is far fewer than many others who appreciate the beauty and life these waters have to offer. However, I'm sure I speak for more than just myself when I say that protecting the Bonito population will provide the best chance to ensure this pelagic species continues to exist, thrive, and provide crystal coast residents and visitors, as well as their children/children's children, the opportunity to call (and continue to call) these waters special.</p> <p>Given that North Carolina currently operates under an effective unlimited retention framework for Atlantic bonito in state waters and is a relatively data-limited fishery, enforcing such an approach would be inconsistent with precautionary management principles. As you might know, Atlantic bonito are generally short-lived (max age ~5 years) and reach maturity at moderate sizes, which are characteristics that can make populations sensitive to strong year-class variability and concentrated harvest pressure (ICCAT, 2008).</p> <p>These Bonito lack a formal stock assessment with defined biological reference points, limiting managers' ability to quantify sustainable harvest levels (NCDMF, 2023). In such circumstances, fisheries science supports conservative input controls—particularly moderate bag limits—to reduce risk while maintaining access. Recreational effort targeting coastal pelagics has increased substantially in recent decades (ASMFC, 2023). Without a bag cap, episodic “blitz” events allow high individual harvest in short periods, increasing the risk of localized depletion and inequitable allocation.</p> <p>Other Atlantic states (eg, Massachusetts) have adopted precautionary measures for Atlantic bonito, including a 5-fish bag limit and minimum size requirement (MADMF, 2024). A</p>

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		<p>comparable 5-fish per person per day limit in North Carolina would help preserve recreational opportunity, discourage derby-style harvest during high-abundance/blitz-style events, and align state policy with science-based, precautionary fisheries management.</p> <p>I acknowledge that I'm just one person speaking among many. However, I'm a firm believer that decisions for the betterment of society (fish species included) should be grounded in well controlled quantitative research whenever possible and if lacking, even partially, should rely on a comparable precedent, whether that be another species in a similar jurisdiction and/or a similar species in a different jurisdiction. If not already apparent, I support imposing 5 fish limit for Atlantic Bonito, as there is credible justifications for doing so. If, one day, future research reveals that a modification of this limit is warranted, then that is a topic and decision for a later date. For today, imposing the 5 fish limit is the best course of action, and not doing so would continue erode a population, potentially making it nothing more than a memory. Hopefully, years from now you'll be catching bonito with your kids and grandkids, feeling grateful that you were still able to and just as grateful that you made a well informed decision here today.</p> <p>Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. (2023). ISFMP policy board supplemental materials. https://asmfc.org</p> <p>International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas. (2008). Atlantic bonito (Sarda sarda) species summary. https://www.iccat.int</p> <p>Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries. (2024). New recreational regulations for Atlantic bonito. https://www.mass.gov/orgs/division-of-marine-fisheries</p> <p>North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries. (2023). False albacore and Atlantic bonito information paper. https://www.deq.nc.gov</p>
Hunter Graham	North Carolina	I support Option 4: Formal Monitoring with a Five-Fish Bag Limit and Delegation of Proclamation Authority in regards to proposed rule changes for the Atlantic Bonito fishery.
Scott Key	Virginia	Regulation is needed as no limits opens the door to unethical overharvest with no way to constrain damaging parties.

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Germain Cloutier	Maine	I support Option 4 for False Albacore, these fish make up a lot of gap for the lack of fish species in the northeast as well as the entire east coast.
Capt. J Moore	North Carolina	<p>Strongly recommend conservative management to allow for the stronger coastline ecosystem and better fishing!. Option 4 please.</p> <p>Capt. J Moore</p>
Parker Davidson	North Carolina	Keep these beautiful fish plentiful for future generations to enjoy.
Cape Lookout Albacore Foundation	North Carolina	<p>Dear North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission:</p> <p>The Cape Lookout Albacore Foundation was founded for charitable and educational purposes, specifically aimed at conserving and understanding the coastal fisheries of North Carolina. We serve a community of recreational anglers and guides who are devoted to those fisheries and desire they be maintained for future generations' enjoyment. We are pleased the Commission is considering management action for Atlantic Bonito.</p> <p>Atlantic Bonito offer North Carolina anglers a unique fishery: they show up fast, depart faster, and provide a short but exciting angling opportunity each year. That they typically arrive en masse for short duration makes them especially vulnerable to exploitation. Based on the Commission's Atlantic Bonito Management Issue Paper, harvests are increasing in the State. Without responsible management, any species is at risk. Atlantic Bonito, and the many anglers that enjoy them, deserve appropriate action. We support Option 4: Formal Monitoring with a Five-Fish Bag Limit and Delegation of Proclamation Authority.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to present our position for consideration.</p> <p>Respectfully, N. Christian Thompson President, Cape Lookout Albacore Foundation</p>
Eddie Nickens	North Carolina	I am a recreational angler in strong favor of Option 4 for bonito management. I have fished for Atlantic bonito off of Atlantic Beach for nearly a decade, and the scene over the last 2 years has

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		<p>been nothing short of horrific. Easily, angler effort has increased by 4X. The number of "dock shots" of 30, 40, 50 and more bonito arranged on a dock for hero photos has been appalling. Unfortunately, a few guides are the primary culprits, but it is not difficult to imagine that some of these operations are taking hundreds if not >1,000 bonito in the brief season. Keeping 5 bonito a day is plenty. And the argument that this would be a financial burden on guides does not hold water as this type of pressure on the fishery is just a few years old. Please put common sense limits on these fish before they go the way of other overpressured species.</p>
Zachary Porcello		<p>Please vote Option 4: Formal Monitoring with a Five-Fish Bag Limit and Delegation of Proclamation Authority.</p>
Cody Rubner	Florida	<p>I support Option 4 for management of Atlantic bonito. This is a shared resource along the coast. We are watching many of our inshore fisheries trend to rock bottom. Please lead the charge and conserve what we have while we have it.</p>
Dave Flanagan	New York	<p>I support option 4 for Atlantic Bonito management to help sustain the fishery and enforce limits.</p>
Sarah Machesko	Florida	<p>Please support conservation of Atlantic bonito! I am a recreational angler and our household income relies on a productive angling economy. Please conserve our fisheries while they are healthy!</p>
Allen Cain	North Carolina	<p>I fully support a 5 fish catch limit on Atlantic Bonito!</p>
Eric Spicer	Rhode Island	<p>I support option 4. As an angler who travels to target false albacore and bonito I hope that North Carolina will protect them.</p>
Gregg Williamson	North Carolina	<p>I support the 5 fish limit on Atlantic Bonito. It should not only help preserve this valuable fish but also allow generous harvesting.</p>
Catalano	New York	<p>I support Option 4 , we need to protect these fish</p>
Thomas Wilson	North Carolina	<p>Red snapper have taken over our most productive trigger fish and Black Sea bass spots! They're eating them out of house and home! Please allow us to harvest a few to balance out the fishery. A 3 day season in the Graveyard of the Atlantic is a joke. Rarely are we able to fish even 2 of the 3 days.</p>
Henry Marchetti	Maine	<p>As a professional inshore fishing guide, I believe option 4 is the best route to responsibly maintain the future of this fishery. Thank you!</p>

Name	State/Province	Please type your comments in the box below.
Adam Hortenberry	Georgia	As a traveling angler to various parts of the east coast these species are a great gamefish and should be treated as such. Better management on bag limits are needed to protect them and ensure they are able to be here for generations to come. Thank you.
Ryan Kerry	North Carolina	We are not a reckless state like Florida. Please use common sense and think of our fishies and future generations. Put a limit! You did a great job passing legislation like this for our flounder and inland fisheries. Continue this work!
ANDREW A CAMPBELL	North Carolina	<p>Atlantic Bonito need our protection.</p> <p>Too many times I've seen people take many more fish than they can use for personal consumption.</p> <p>I'm for a 5 fish limit.</p> <p>That's more than plenty for anyone.</p> <p>Thanks for your consideration.</p>