

**North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission**  
**May 18-20, 2016**  
**Motions**

Motion by Chuck Laughridge to approve agenda. Second by Joe Shute.  
Motion passes unanimously.

Motion by Alison Willis to approve February 2016 minutes. Second by Mark Gorges.  
Motion passes with no opposition.

**Cobia**

Motion by Joe Shute to keep the 1-fish cobia bag limit with a Sept. 30 closure date and to readdress the issue at the August meeting. Second by Chuck Laughridge.  
Motion fails 2-4 with one abstention.

Motion by Chuck Laughridge to adopt the following recreational cobia management measures for the May 23-Sept. 30, 2016 season: private boats will be allowed to fish Monday, Wednesday and Saturday only; all other recreational fishing modes will be allowed to fish 7 days a week; bag limits will be 4-fish-per vessel for charter boats; 2-fish per vessel for private boats; and 1-fish per person for shore based fishing (including pier and surf fishing). This does not impact catch-and-release fishing. Second by Rick Smith.  
Motion passes 3-2 with two abstentions.

Motion by Chuck Laughridge to include a 37-inch fork length minimum size limit on cobia to the previously adopted recreational cobia management measures at the May 19, 2016 commission meeting. Second by Rick Smith.  
Motion passes 5-0 with 2 abstentions.

**Blue Crab Adaptive Management Measures**

Motion by Mike Wicker to eliminate the harvest of sponge crabs and immature V-apron hard crab females with a 5 percent tolerance for all crab harvest (excluding V-apron peelers). Second by Mark Gorges.

Substitute motion by Alison Willis to strike Mike Wicker's motion and adopt the Division of Marine Fisheries recommendation with below amendments. Second by Janet Rose.  
Motion passes 6-1.

- Add ~~two~~ one additional cull rings to crab pots, ~~one~~ of which must be located within one full mesh of the corner of the pot and within one full mesh of the bottom of the apron/stairs (divider) of the upper chamber of the pot.
- Eliminate the harvest of v-apron immature female hard crabs (excluding peeler crabs) and that v-apron immature hard crab females ~~be added to the current 10 in~~ have a be included in the 5 percent culling tolerance (currently only includes sublegal male and immature female hard crabs).

- Prohibit ~~sponge crab~~ harvest (all stages) of dark sponge crabs (brown and black) from April 1 – April 30. Include dark sponge crabs in the ~~40~~ 5 percent cull tolerance.
- Lower cull tolerance to 5 percent for all crabs, except mature females.
- Prohibit crab harvest with dredges except incidental to lawful oyster dredging as outlined in North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03L .0203(a)(2).

Motion by Chuck Laughridge to adopt the Division of Marine Fisheries recommendation, as amended above. Second by Alison Willis.

Motion passes 6-0 with one abstention.

### **Blue Crab Sampling Gear**

Motion by Joe Shute to request that the Division of Marine Fisheries include crab pots in its blue crab sampling gear. Second by Janet Rose.

Motion passes 6-0 with one abstention.

### **Oyster and Clam Fishery Management Plans**

Motion by Chuck Laughridge to approve the draft Oyster and Hard Clam Fishery Management Plans to send to the Department of Environmental Quality and the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations for review and comment. Second by Joe Shute.

Motion passes 7-0.

### **Rule Suspensions**

Motion by Chuck Laughridge to continue suspension Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03M .0516 Section (b) to allow the division to continue the recreational harvest limit of cobia at one fish per person per day. Second by Joe Shute.

Motion passes 7-0.

Motion by Alison Willis to suspend Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03M .0503 Section (i)(1) to allow the division to extend the Atlantic Ocean summer flounder season. Second by Chuck Laughridge.

Motion passes 7-0.

### **Striped Bass**

Motion by Rick Smith to direct division staff to meet with the Wildlife Resources Commission staff, and bring joint recommendations to the August meeting in regards to addressing problems with striped bass reproduction in the Neuse and Tar rivers. Also, direct staff to expedite analysis of fin clip data on fin chip samples currently possessed by the division. The division should also provide a method of determining whether or not the old strain of stripers still exist in the Neuse and Tar rivers. Second by Mike Wicker.

Motion passes 5-1 with one abstention.

### **Conservation Fund Committee**

Motion by Chuck Laughridge to request the Conservation Fund Committee to meet within the next 30 days to consider providing funding for DNA testing of fin clips already taken from the Central Southern Management Area in 2016 of striped bass 24 inches and smaller. Second by Rick Smith.

Motion passes 5-0 with two abstentions.

### **Gear Sampling**

Motion by Janet Rose to request that future Division of Marine Fisheries sampling for stock assessments include various gears used by commercial fishermen in various areas fished by all user groups. When possible, division staff should be encouraged to work hand-in-hand with both commercial and recreational user groups for portions of the sampling process. Second by Chuck Laughridge.

Motion passes 7-0.

### **Eco-system Component Species**

Motion by Chuck Laughridge that the Marine Fisheries Commission, through both letter and email from the Marine Fisheries Commission chairman to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council chair and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council members showing support for including little tunny (false albacore) and Atlantic bonito in the list of Eco-system Component Species. The Marine Fisheries Commission should also express support for Alternative 2B: Designate unmanaged forage species as Eco-system Component Species and implement an incidental possession limit with 1,700 pounds total cap and a 1,500 cap on individual species. Second by Joe Shute.

Motion passes 5-0 with two abstentions.