



Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan:

Amendment 5 Scoping Overview

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Marine Fisheries

Marine Fisheries Commission Meeting | Jeffrey Dobbs, Anne Markwith, Holly White | May 21-23, 2025



Outline

- Goal and Objectives
- Scoping Overview
 - Meeting Feedback
 - Online Comment
- Topics to be Addressed
- MFC Input
- Next Steps



Goal and Objectives

The goal of this plan is to manage Southern Flounder (*Paralichthys lethostigma*) to achieve a self-sustaining population that provides opportunities for sustainable harvest using science-based decision-making processes. The following objectives will be used to achieve this goal:

- Implement management strategies within North Carolina that maintain/restore the Southern Flounder population with adequate abundance to prevent overfishing while balancing access to the resource.
- Monitor and manage the Southern Flounder fishery in a manner that utilizes biological, socioeconomic, fishery, habitat, and environmental data.
- Promote outreach and interjurisdictional cooperation regarding the status and management of Southern Flounder in the South Atlantic, including practices that minimize bycatch and discard mortality.
- Ensure efforts to maintain or increase growth, survival, and reproduction of the Southern Flounder stock are consistent with the Coastal Habitat Protection Plan regarding critical habitat and environmental quality.



Scoping Overview

- Scoping period March 1–31, 2025
- Online comments
 - 93 comments
- Four open house meetings
 - Raleigh – March 4 (6 attendees)
 - Manteo – March 6 (4 attendees)
 - Morehead City – March 11 (8 attendees)
 - Wilmington – March 27 (20 attendees)



Scoping Overview: Meeting Feedback

Recreational

- Strong support for single species management
- Support for non-southern flounder ocean season prior to fall
- Prevent full year closures at all cost

General

- Frustration about inconsistent management between states

Commercial

- Maintain access for all fishery segments
- Re-evaluate commercial sub-allocations and seasons
- Support for commercial only gigs
- Replace Fall set gill net season with Summer runaround gill net season



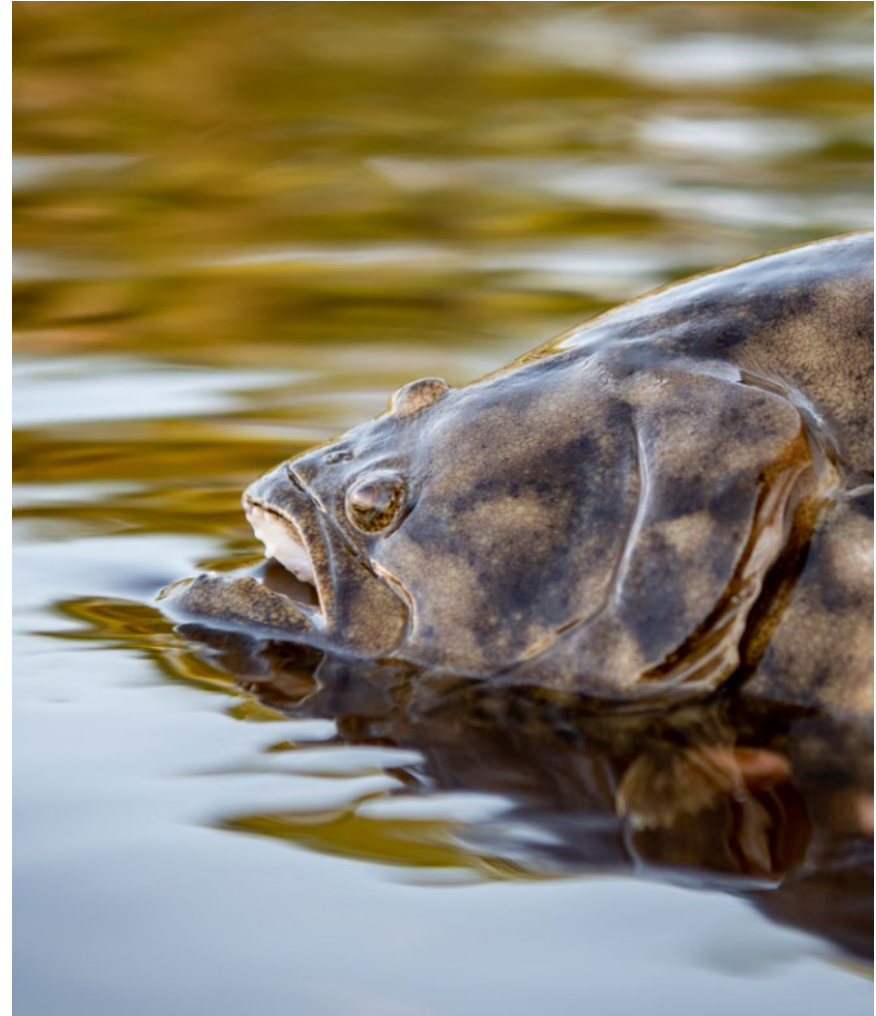
Scoping Overview: Online Comment

Recreational

- Strong support for single species management
- Support for non-southern flounder ocean season prior to fall
- Prevent full year closures at all cost
- Frustration about inconsistent management between states

Commercial

- Support for phase out of gill nets



Topics to be Addressed in Amendment 5

Recreational Topics

- Managing Southern Flounder Separate From Other Species
 - Both ocellated flounder (Summer & Gulf flounder) combined
 - Single species (Summer flounder and Gulf flounder separately)
- Timing of Southern Flounder Season
 - Optimize access and season length



Topics to be Addressed in Amendment 5

- **Commercial Changes**

- How to manage shrinking mobile gear allocation
- Phase out anchored large-mesh gill nets
- Trip limits and gear restrictions
- Seasonality

- **Adaptive Management**

- Adjust management to rebuilding stock



Next Steps

- Division will develop timeline
- Division will develop management options and write first draft of Amendment 5
- Solicit FMP AC members
- Hold FMP AC workshop to refine Plan



MFC Input

- Now is your first and best opportunity to provide input
- Comments and ideas
- Changes later in process can result in delays



Questions?

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