



Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan:

Draft Amendment 4

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Marine Fisheries

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

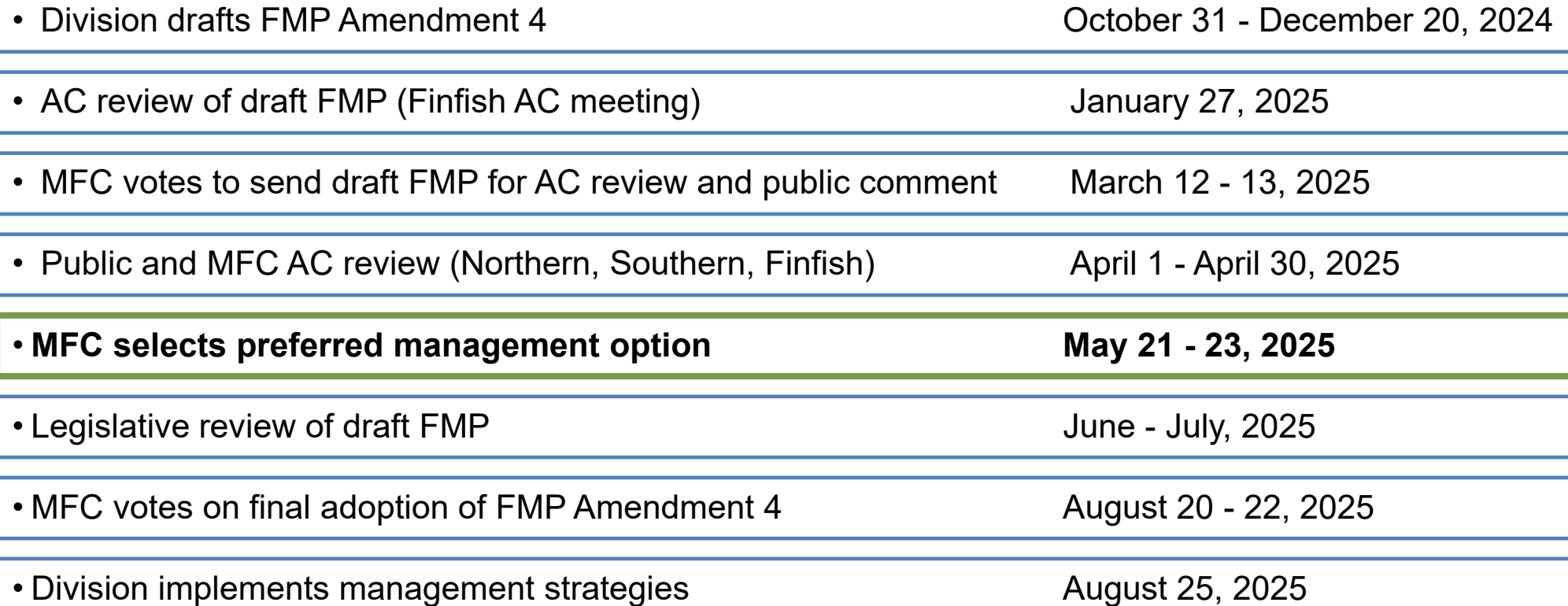


Outline

- Timeline
- Issue Paper
 - Origination
 - Background
 - Management Options
- Public and AC Review
- Action Item
 - Select preferred management



Southern Flounder FMP Amendment 4 Timeline

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- Division drafts FMP Amendment 4 October 31 - December 20, 2024
 - AC review of draft FMP (Finfish AC meeting) January 27, 2025
 - MFC votes to send draft FMP for AC review and public comment March 12 - 13, 2025
 - Public and MFC AC review (Northern, Southern, Finfish) April 1 - April 30, 2025
 - MFC selects preferred management option May 21 - 23, 2025**
 - Legislative review of draft FMP June - July, 2025
 - MFC votes on final adoption of FMP Amendment 4 August 20 - 22, 2025
 - Division implements management strategies August 25, 2025

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Issue

Increasing Recreational Access to Southern Flounder Through Sector Allocation Parity



Origination

WHEN: August 2024

WHERE: NCMFC business meeting

WHAT: NCMFC passed a motion...

“...to ask the DMF Director to ask the DEQ Secretary to modify the Annual FMP Review Schedule to amend the Southern Flounder FMP for the review of the plan to begin in 2024. The intent is to allow for more recreational access while maintaining the rebuilding requirements of the North Carolina Southern Flounder FMP Amendment 3”.



Background

- Currently managed under Southern Flounder Amendment 3
 - 72% reduction in Total Allowable Catch (TAC)
 - Quota based approach
 - Includes paybacks for overages



Background

Current Allocation Schedule

Year	Allocation	Total Allowable Catch (TAC)	Dead Discards	Total Allowable Landings (TAL)	Total Allowable Commercial Landings	Total Allowable Recreational Landings
2021-2024	70/30	548,034	15,682	532,352	372,646	159,706
2025	60/40	548,034	15,682	532,352	319,411	212,941
2026	50/50	548,034	15,682	532,352	266,176	266,176



Background

Landings, Discards, and Reductions

Year	Total Landings	Dead Discards	Total Removals	2017 Total Removals	Target reduction	Actual reduction
2017	1,901,256	56,008	1,957,264	1,957,264		
2018	1,452,590	36,670	1,489,259	1,957,264		
2019	1,233,695	41,309	1,275,003	1,957,264	62%	
2020	905,149	45,266	950,415	1,957,264	72%	
2021	1,071,541	52,132	1,123,673	1,957,264	72%	
2022	540,494	62,668	603,162	1,957,264	72%	
2023	576,013	48,457	624,470	1,957,264	72%	-----

Amend. 2

Amend. 3

Landings, Discards, and Reductions: Recreational

Year	Total Allowable Catch (TAC)	Adjusted Total Allowable Catch (TAC)	MRIP Landings	Gig Landings	Total Landings	MRIP Dead Discard	Gig Dead Discard	Total Dead Discard	Total Removals	Overage deducted from next year's TAC
2022	170,655	170,655	166,091	7,882	173,973	52,771	251	53,022	226,995	56,340
2023	170,655	114,315	192,168	7,882*	200,050	41,308	251*	41,559	241,609	127,294
2024	170,655	43,361	Awaiting Final Analysis							

* Data are not available, value estimated from the previous year.



Expedited Allocation Shift

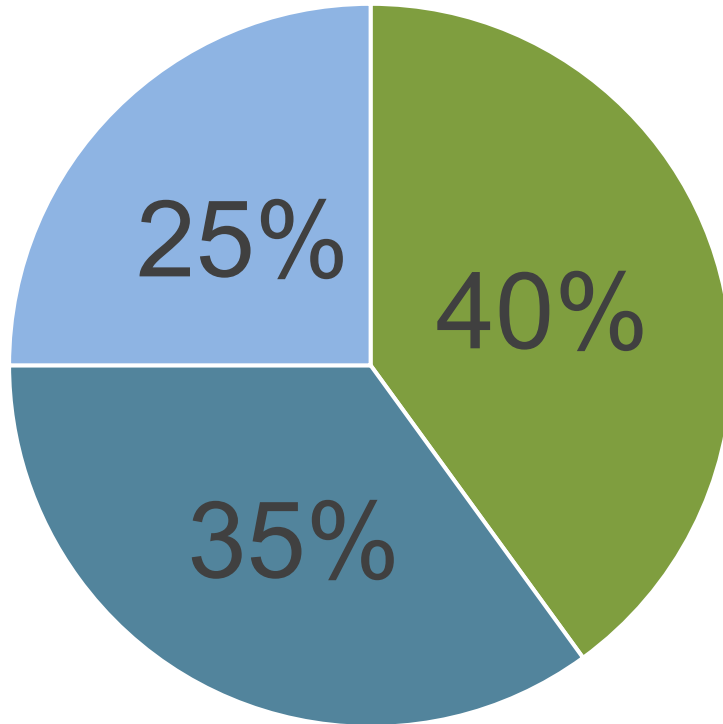
- Expedite sector parity by fall 2025
 - 66.7% increase in recreational TAL
 - Reduces likelihood of recreational overages
 - Short term approach

Allocation	Total Allowable Landings	Total Allowable Commercial Landings	Total Allowable Recreational Landings
50/50	532,352	266,176	266,176

Allocation Issue

60/40 Allocation

Total TAL = 532,352

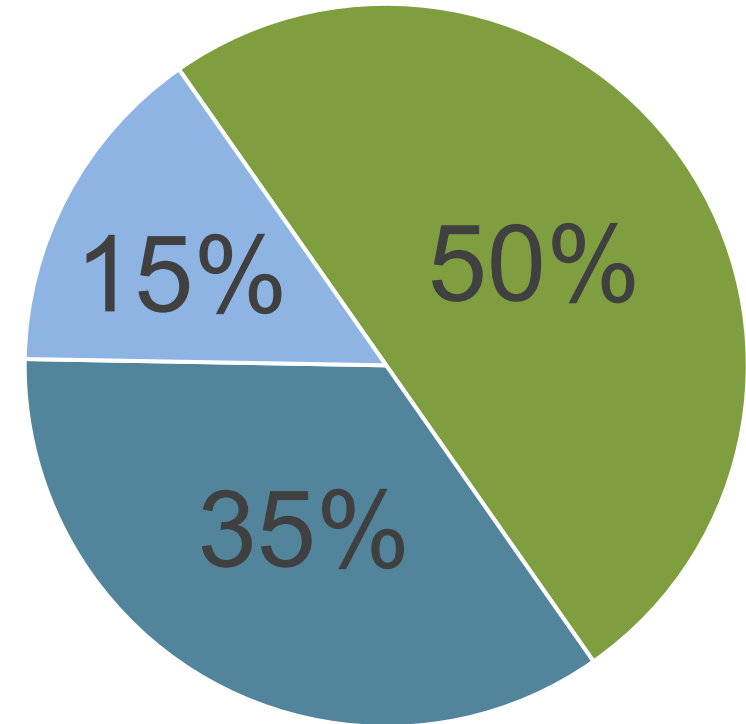


- Recreational
- Pound Nets
- Mobile Gears



50/50 Allocation

Total TAL = 532,352



- Recreational
- Pound Nets
- Mobile Gears



Recreational Season

Year	Hook-and-line Landings	Gig Landings	Total Landings	Hook-and-line Dead Discard	Gig Dead Discard	Total Dead Discard	Total Catch	Season length
2022	166,091	7,882	173,973	52,771	251	53,022	226,995	4 weeks
2023	192,168	7,882*	200,050	41,308	251*	41,559	241,609	2 weeks

* Data are not available, value estimated from the previous year.



Commercial Implications

- Allocation shift from mobile gears per Amendment 3
 - TAL reduced from 186,168 to 79,718 pounds



Management Options

- **Status Quo**

- Maintain allocation shift from Amendment 3
- 60/40 in 2025 and 50/50 in 2026

- **Expedited Allocation Shift**

- Expedite transition to 50/50 in 2025 instead of 2026



Public Comment & Advisory Committee Review



Public Comment

- Online public comment open from April 1-30
- 30 responses
- Most in support of moving to 50/50 in 2025
- Some voiced concerns of commercial gears' effect on Southern Flounder



Southern Advisory Committee

- Discussed the issue
- Support for expedited allocation shift was mixed
- Did not pass a motion due to ties



Northern Advisory Committee

- Motion to recommend to the Marine Fisheries Commission to remain status quo regarding southern flounder allocation



Northern Advisory Committee

- Motion to recommend that the Marine Fisheries Commission ask the DEQ Secretary to allow Amendment 5 to the Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan to change the 72% reduction that was adopted in Amendment 3 to a 52% reduction and split the total allocation equally between the commercial and recreational sectors



Finfish Advisory Committee

- Motion to recommend to the Marine Fisheries Commission to remain status quo in regard to the allocation schedule in Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan Amendment 3
- Discussed lowering reductions similar to the Northern AC



Southern Flounder FMP Amendment 4

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Action Item

Select preferred management for
Amendment 4 to the Southern
Flounder Fishery Management Plan



Questions?

Jeffrey.Dobbs@deq.nc.gov

Morehead City

252-515-5655

Daniel.Zapf@deq.nc.gov

Morehead City

252-515-5412

Anne.Markwith@deq.nc.gov

Wilmington

910-796-7292

Holly.White@deq.nc.gov

Elizabeth City

252-381-6004

