



Marine Fisheries
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Fish Dealer Report

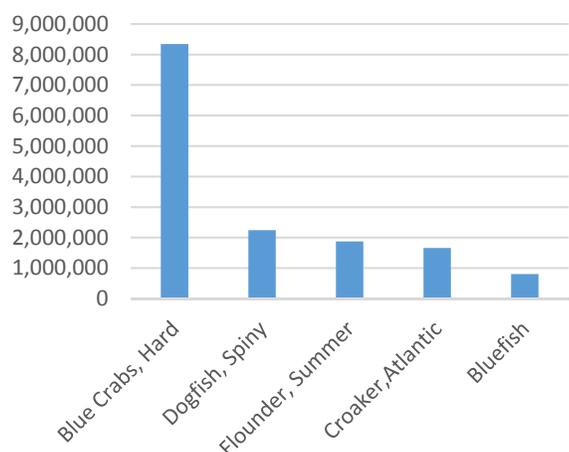
License & Statistics Section, PO Box 769, Morehead City, NC 28557

October, 2016

2016 COMMERCIAL LANDINGS REVIEW

According to the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries Trip Ticket Program, North Carolina fishermen landed 22.8 million pounds of seafood from January through June, 2016. These landings represent a 7.8 percent decline in total landings over the same timeframe in 2015, and a 13.7 percent decline over the previous five-year average for the same time period. The top five species landed were: hard blue crabs (8.3 million pounds), spiny dogfish (2.2 million pounds), summer flounder (1.9 million pounds), Atlantic croaker (1.7 million pounds) and bluefish (800,000 pounds). The total number of trips reported in the first half of 2016 was down 33.4 percent from the first half of 2015.

Top Five Species Landed
January through June 2016



UPCOMING RULE CHANGES

The North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission is accepting public comment on a number of proposed rule changes, including six to implement amendments to the Oyster and Hard Clam fishery management plans. Of particular interest to dealers may be amendments to reduce the culling tolerance for oysters from 10 percent to 5 percent.

Another rule change proposes to relocate the long-standing 2003 requirement for a permit for dealers transacting in spiny dogfish from proclamation into rule. Spiny dogfish are monitored under a quota and dealers are required to report daily landings during the open season. Placing the permit requirement in rule has no real impact on holders of the permit as the reporting requirements, application process, and cost of the permit will not change. Seasonal openings, as well as trip limits, will continue to be stipulated in proclamation due to the variable nature of the provisions for the fishery.

The Marine Fisheries Commission is scheduled to approve the proposed rules and the amendments to the Oyster and Hard Clam fishery management plan at its February 2017 meeting. The rules have an intended effective date of May 1, 2017. Written comments may be submitted until 5 p.m. Dec. 2 to Catherine Blum, Rulemaking Coordinator, N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, P.O. Box 769, Morehead City, N.C. 28557. Comments may also be emailed to Catherine.Blum@ncdenr.gov or faxed to 252-726-0254.

For more information on these and other proposed rules, go to <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/mfc-proposed-rules-links> or contact Catherine Blum at 252-808-8014 or Catherine.Blum@ncdenr.gov.

BLUE CRAB ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission is looking for commercial and recreational fishermen and scientists to serve on the Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan Advisory Committee. The committee will assist the Division of Marine Fisheries in amending the Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan. The commission uses fishery management plans as guides for implementing regulations and other management measures.

Those interested in serving as advisers should be willing to attend meetings at least once a month and participate in the committee process. Advisers will be reimbursed for travel and other expenses incurred in relation to their official duties.

For an advisory committee application, go to <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/mfc-advisory-committees>, stop by any Division of Marine Fisheries office, or call 252-808-8022 or 800-682-2632. Applications should be submitted by 5 p.m. Nov. 15 to C.J. Alley, N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, P.O. Box 769, Morehead City, N.C. 28557.

ESTUARINE GILL NET PERMIT

The North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries requires fishermen to obtain an Estuarine Gill Net Permit for any anchored small or large mesh gill net fishing operation in internal coastal waters. The permit is a requirement of federal incidental take permits for sea turtles and Atlantic sturgeon.

A condition of the incidental take permits is to maintain certain levels of observer coverage statewide. The Estuarine Gill Net Permit requires fishermen to provide an active phone number where they can be reached to schedule observer trips so that the division can maintain the observer coverage needed to stay in compliance with the incidental take permits. If the required coverage is not maintained, large and small mesh anchored gill nets could be prohibited in all internal coastal waters. There have been 2,387 permits issued for fiscal year 2017. Fishermen can obtain or renew their annual permit when they renew their license at division offices or via mail.

DMF TAGGING PROGRAM

The North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries Multi-Species Tagging Program marks over 15,000 fish per year, including red drum, striped bass, southern flounder, and spotted seatrout. Fish are marked with yellow or red streamer-style tags that are imprinted with the letters "NCDMF," the tagging program phone number "1-800-682-2632," and a tag number consisting of a letter followed by five numbers (such as A00001).

If a tagged fish is caught, the fisherman or dealer should record the following information: species, tag number, date, location captured, total length of fish, fate of fish (released or harvested), and the type of gear used to capture the fish. The information should then be reported by calling 1-800-682-2632 or filling out the online tag return form at <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/report-tag-online>. Be sure to check both sides of the fish for tags, as some fish may have two yellow tags—both tag numbers will need to be reported.

The Division of Marine Fisheries is dedicated to ensuring sustainable marine and estuarine fisheries and habitats for the benefit and health of the people of North Carolina.

In return for tag information, the individual will receive a reward, official program letter, and personalized certificate with information about the fish. Rewards for yellow tags include a hat, fish towel, or \$5. Rewards for red tags are \$100. In order to receive the \$100 reward, the red tag must be cut off and returned to the division's Morehead City Headquarters Office, either in person or by mail to: NC Division of Marine Fisheries, P.O. Box 769, Morehead City, NC 28557.

For more information about the Multi-Species Tagging Program, contact Ami Staples at 252-948-3913 or ami.staples@ncdenr.gov.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP

Thank you to all the dealers and fishermen who cooperated in correcting pound net landings data this spring. The Division of Marine Fisheries always strives for the most accurate data available. Without the help of dealers and fishermen, this would not have been possible. Also, thank you to the dealers who helped in preparing for Hurricane Matthew. Together, dealers and division staff were able to collect and protect a large number of paper tickets. Additionally, a large number of electronic reports were submitted and protected prior to any loss or damage. The division sincerely appreciates this assistance.

NEW TRIP TICKETS ADD SPACE TO RECORD CATCH DISPOSITION

The North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission has instructed the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries to add a place to record catch disposition on commercial trip tickets. The intent is to capture commercial harvest that is not being

sold to the dealer, therefore not being reported on a trip ticket. This could include situations where a fisherman has kept some of the landed species for personal consumption, or if part of the harvest was kept for bait. Although the current plans are to have new trip ticket templates created in early 2017, the North Carolina Trip Ticket Program and many paper based seafood dealers have a large amount of trip tickets in stock using the current template. The North Carolina Trip Ticket Program plans on exhausting the current stock of paper forms and will not require seafood dealers to discard older style tickets. This means that any data collected on disposition from paper forms will be minimal until the new tickets are fully circulated to seafood dealers who use paper trip tickets.

During this transition, the templates for the paper trip tickets will be further reviewed, evaluated and standardized across trip ticket types. The division will also evaluate the species, gears, and waterbodies listed by default on each ticket type to determine if further changes need to be made.

A report on the progress of this endeavor will be presented to the Marine Fisheries Commission at its February 2017 meeting.

If you have any suggestions for changes to the layout of the trip tickets, please let your port agent know or contact Scott Smith, division port agent supervisor, at Scott.Smith@ncdenr.gov or at 252-808-8095.

The Division of Marine Fisheries is dedicated to ensuring sustainable marine and estuarine fisheries and habitats for the benefit and health of the people of North Carolina.