



Blue Crab Fishery Management Plan

Draft Amendment 3

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Marine Fisheries

N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission | Jason Rock | Aug. 16, 2018



Overview

- Timeline
- Goal and Objectives
- Issues



Timeline

TIMELINE FOR BLUE CRAB FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT 3 (May 1, 2018)



MILESTONES	PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE
1. Orient AC and Discuss Issues, Goal and Objectives	September 2017-June 2018
2. Draft/Revise and Review Informational Sections and Issue Papers in the FMP and Establish DMF/AC Positions	June 2018-June 2019
3. Present Timeline and Goal and Objectives to MFC; Solicit MFC Input on Issues	August 2018
4. Obtain MFC Approval for Review of FMP	August 2019
5. Public and Committee Review of FMP	September 2019
6. Present Revised FMP to MFC for Selection of Preferred Management Options	November 2019
7. Review of FMP by Department and Legislative Committee	January 2020
8. Procedural Approval of FMP and Approval of Notice of Text for Rulemaking by MFC	May 2020
9. Direct Rules through APA Process	August-October 2020
10. Final FMP and Rule Approval by MFC	November 2020
11. Selected Management Measures Effective Date	48 Hours if proclamation; April 1, 2021 if rule



Goal



Manage the blue crab fishery to achieve a self-sustaining population that provides sustainable harvest using science based decision making processes.

Objectives

1. Implement management strategies that maintain/restore the blue crab spawning stock with multiple cohorts and adequate abundance to prevent recruitment overfishing.
2. Restore, enhance, and protect habitat and environmental quality necessary to maintain or increase growth, survival, and reproduction of the blue crab population.
3. Use biological, environmental, habitat, fishery, social, and economic data needed to effectively monitor and manage the blue crab fishery and its ecosystem impacts.
4. Promote stewardship of the resource through increased public awareness regarding the status and management of the blue crab fishery, including practices that minimize bycatch and discard mortality.



Issues

- Issue 1: Restore the blue crab spawning stock
 - *2018 stock assessment: overfished and overfishing is occurring*
 - *Example measures that could be explored include:*
 - *Reduced cull tolerance*
 - *Increase escape ring size*
 - *Closed season*
 - *Prohibit sponge crab harvest*
- Issue 2: Minimizing ecosystem impacts
 - *Terrapin excluder devices (holdover from Amendment 2)*
 - *Eliminating crab harvest with dredges*
 - *Reducing crab trawl areas*
- Issue 3: Protect and enhance habitat conditions for blue crab
 - *Expand and/or designate new crab spawning sanctuaries*
 - *Effects of agricultural runoff on the blue crab population*



Next Steps

- Solicit input on issues
- Vote on approval of Goal and Objectives

