



Marine Fisheries  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

# Fish Dealer Report

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

JUNE 2016

## 2015 COMMERCIAL LANDINGS REVIEW

Based on data collected through the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries' Trip Ticket Program, 66 million pounds of finfish and shellfish were landed in 2015 with an estimated dockside value of \$95 million. This is a 6 percent increase in landings when compared with 2014 and a 1 percent increase in value. It is also higher than the five-year average annual landings of 60.5 million pounds and value of \$82.3 million.

Dare County had the highest 2015 landings, with 27.6 percent of the total, followed by Carteret with 13.1 percent, Hyde 10.2 percent, Tyrrell 9.7 percent and Camden 8.3 percent. The remaining counties each had less than 7 percent of the total landings.

The top five species by pounds landed were hard blue crabs (31 million pounds), followed by, shrimp (9.1 million pounds), spiny dogfish (4.2 million pounds), summer flounder (2.9 million pounds) and Atlantic croaker (1.8 million pounds). With the exception of hard blue crabs and shrimp, landings of the top five species were lower this year than in 2014.

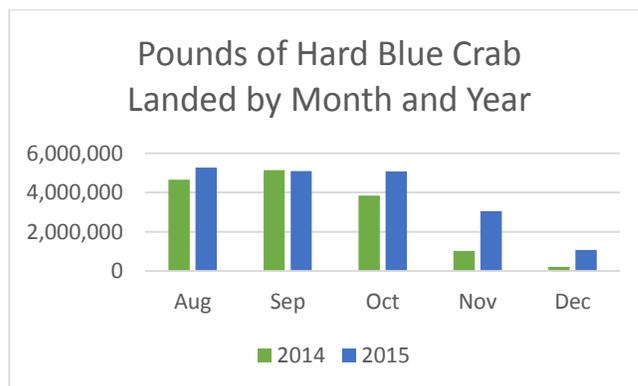
Hard crab landings increased 23 percent from 2014, while peelers and soft blue crabs increased 14 percent and 4 percent, respectively.

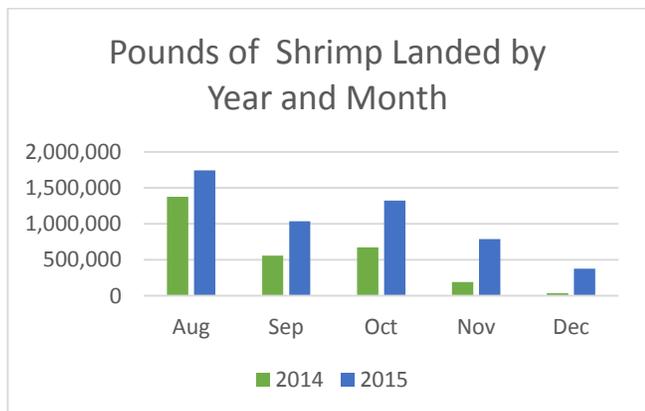


© Scott Smith

Ex-vessel value for hard blue crabs fell by 1 percent but rose by 9 percent for peeler crabs, and 5 percent for soft crabs. The top three gears used to harvest crabs (peeler, soft, and hard crab combined) were crab pots (31,054,478 pounds), peeler pots (835,009 pounds) and crab trawl (185,527 pounds).

A warm fall and winter contributed greatly to the increase in hard crab landings, with fishermen taking 150 percent more trips in December 2015 than they did in December 2014, and landing 386.5 percent more crab.





Shrimp landings also benefited from the warm fall and winter. The number of trips in the month of December increased from 91 in 2014 to 675 in 2015– a 641.8 percent increase. Total landings of shrimp for 2015 increased by 93.9 percent from 2014. In 2015, shrimp had an estimated ex-vessel value of \$16,835,205, which was a 19 percent increase over 2014.

2015 shrimp landings were driven by large spikes in white and brown shrimp, which were up 119.4 and 91.3 percent, respectively. Pink shrimp landings continued to fall in 2015, and were down 74 percent from last year.

For a full listing of pounds and ex-vessel value by species and further information on 2015 landings data see the *2015 Annual Fisheries Bulletin*. The bulletin also contains landings for 2011 to 2014 as well as a summary of the number of trips by major gears used in North Carolina.

### **ESTUARINE GILL NET PERMIT REQUIRED**

On Sept. 1, 2014, the Division of Marine Fisheries began requiring an Estuarine Gill Net Permit for any anchored small or large mesh 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. To date, there have been 2,894 permits issued. Fishermen can obtain or renew their annual permit when they renew their license at division offices or via mail.

### **NEW FLOUNDER POUND NET PERMIT**

The North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission recently passed a motion to institute a quota to manage flounder caught in pound nets. In response to this motion, the Division of Marine Fisheries will create a new permit, the Flounder Pound Net Dealer Permit.

The permit will be a requirement for dealers purchasing flounder caught by pound net during the pound net season starting Sept. 1. The permit will be offered in July, and will be free of charge. The division will announce the date of availability of this permit via news release or dealers may call the division for more information. The division’s quota monitoring logs will be updated to reflect these changes, and the dealer will be required to report the flounder pound net landings by license number. As always, dealers are asked to double check the license numbers for accuracy and validity. The quota monitoring dealer packet will be sent out in August this year, rather than October. It will contain more information about the new flounder pound net dealer permit. It will include copies of the quota monitoring log with the updated information.

*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.*

Dealers who file electronically will have an update to their electronic trip ticket reporting software reflecting the changes in the quota monitoring log, and it will tally the landings automatically as it does with other quota monitored species.

Logs for Monday through Thursday purchases will be due by noon on the following day, and Friday through Sunday logs will be due by noon on Monday. Daily reporting is mandatory, even for dealers who have closed themselves out with the Trip Ticket Program.

If you have any questions, please contact the Quota Monitoring Biologist, Grace Kemp, at 252-808-8101.

### **DIRECTOR, TRIP TICKET STAFF CHANGES**

The North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries has undergone some staffing changes this year, and to help with the seamless transition, we want to bring these to your attention:

**Braxton Davis**, director of the state Division of Coastal Management, was named to lead the state's Division of Marine Fisheries in April. For the immediate future, the divisions will remain separate entities housed under the state's environmental agency, and Davis will lead both divisions as director. The Department of Environmental Quality intends to examine ways in which the two divisions can achieve efficiencies in operations.

**Jack Holland**, the commercial port agent for the Southern District, has retired. Jack worked for the division for more than 30 years and is known to many dealers in the Wilmington area.

### **NC MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2016**

**August 17-19: Hilton Brownstone, Raleigh**

**November 16-18: Hilton Garden Inn, Kitty Hawk**

**\*Listen to MFC Meetings live via online streaming. See division website for details:  
<http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/mf/mfc-meetings>**

**Tyler McGuire** is the new port agent for the Southern District. Tyler will be in contact with many of you in the coming weeks. In the meantime, any questions you may have can be directed to:

[Tyler.Mcquire@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Tyler.Mcquire@ncdenr.gov) or 910-796-7216.

**Joey Roberts**, commercial port agent for the northern district, has accepted a federal job after 11 years with the state. He has not yet been replaced, so any questions can be directed to:

[Scott.Smith@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Scott.Smith@ncdenr.gov) or 252-808-8095.

**Don Hesselman**, License and Statistics Section chief, has retired after 16 years at the division.

**Stephanie McInerny** has accepted a promotion to License and Statistics Section chief. Stephanie's old position of trip ticket analyst has not yet been filled.

### **NEW SPECIES CODES AVAILABLE**

In 2015, new species codes were created for dealers to better classify their landings. This included codes for ribbed mussels, American eel elvers, almaco jack (added market grades), and menhaden bait by pounds and by numbers. These

*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.*

codes were created in response to dealers landing new species, or old species with new size grades. These code changes can be found in the latest version of the electronic reporting software Version 6.0.23. Please double check your version and update to ensure error-free submissions.

## **DIVISION CONDUCTING SURVEY WITH COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN**

Commercial fishermen who fish in the Atlantic Ocean off of North Carolina may receive a questionnaire in the mail or by phone call in the coming weeks and months for a North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries survey.

The division plans to contact approximately 300 fishermen between now and August and ask them information about their fishing activity, perceptions, fishing expenses and demographics. The information gathered in the survey will be used to improve the state's estimates of the economic impacts of commercial fishing and the effects of fishing regulations. It will also assist managers in making informed decisions on fisheries topics.

Fishermen will be asked questions about the species they commonly target, the gears they use, their business structure, their average trip and annual fishing expenses, demographic information, such as education, age, and household income, as well as their opinions on fishery conflicts and regulations and their reliance on commercial fishing. Individual answers to questions will be kept strictly confidential; however, the cumulative results from all survey participants will be included in a written report that will be made available to the public. A fisherman who receives such a call can verify that the person calling is working with the division on this survey

by asking the caller to verify his or her participant identification number (PID). This number is located on the bottom left corner of all North Carolina commercial fishing licenses.

It is very important that fishermen participate in the survey and answer as many questions as possible for the survey results to truly represent those who fish commercially in the Atlantic Ocean off of North Carolina. The results of the survey are taken very seriously and often guide fisheries managers in making rules that affect fishing activities within the survey area.

## **LICENSE SALES UPDATE**

Below are sales as of May 12 by license type for the 2016 (July 1,2015-June 30,2016) license year. The values below include active licenses only. Totals do not include transfers, replacements or voids.

Standard Commercial Fishing License	5,404
Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License	1,231
Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration	8,103
Land or Sell License	114
NC Resident Shellfish License Without SCFL	1,319
Fish Dealer License	737
Ocean Pier License	20
Recreational Fishing Tournament License	17
Recreational Commercial Gear License	*
Total Licenses for All License Types	16,945

\*Data not finalized in time for printing

*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.*