



# Fish Dealer Report



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

October 2013

## JANUARY TO JUNE 2013 PRELIMINARY COMMERCIAL LANDINGS REVIEW

During the first six months of 2013, fisherman landed 18.8 million pounds of seafood at North Carolina ports, according to the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries Trip Ticket Program. This represented an approximately 29 percent decrease in landings from the first half of 2012 and a 30 percent decrease from the previous five-year average. Both finfish (11 million pounds) and shellfish (7.5 million pounds) landings saw decreases during the reporting period compared with those from 2012.



The top five species accounted for 37 percent of the total catch and included hard blue crabs (6 million pounds), spiny dogfish (3 million pounds), Atlantic croaker (1.3 million pounds), swordfish (0.9 million pounds) and bluefish (0.7 million pounds). Blue crabs and Atlantic croaker were both down by almost 50 percent compared with landings from the first half of 2012; however, spiny dogfish, swordfish and bluefish landings all increased. Bluefish had a substantial increase of 121 percent, while spiny dogfish and swordfish increased by 11 percent and 26 percent, respectively.

North Carolina dealers also reported a 9 percent decrease in the number of trips taken. The largest decreases were seen in flynet and flounder trawl trips, which decreased by 83 percent and 81 percent, respectively. Despite the overall decline in the number of trips, increases were seen in the number of crab trawl and haul seine trips. Crab trawl trips were up by 350 percent and haul seine trips were up by 159 percent. Other increases were observed in fish pots, oyster dredge, and peeler trawls.

## NEW BLACK SEA BASS REGULATIONS FOR THE SOUTHEAST

Fishing Year <sup>1</sup>	Commercial annual catch limit <sup>2</sup>	Recreational annual catch limit <sup>2</sup>
2013-2014	780,020	1,033,980
2014-2015	780,020	1,033,980
2015-2016	780,020	1,033,980
2016-2017 <sup>3</sup>	755,274	1,001,177

<sup>1</sup>The fishing years are from June 1 through May 31.

<sup>2</sup>Values are in pounds whole weight.

<sup>3</sup>The annual catch limits for 2016-2017 will remain in place until modified.

Effective Sept. 23, the National Marine Fisheries Service increased catch limits for black sea bass in the South Atlantic and implemented an annual prohibition on the use of black sea bass pots from Nov. 1 through April 30 (effective Oct. 23). The actions were specified in the final rule for Regulatory Amendment 19 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region.

## NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR SHELLFISH SANITATION

Beginning April 1, 2014, the director of the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries will have proclamation authority to implement important public health protection requirements of the National Shellfish Sanitation Program. This program sets minimum requirements in its Model Ordinance that all states must meet in order to harvest, tag, store, process and sell oysters, clams and mussels. Proclamation authority will allow timely implementation of the national requirements to safeguard public health.

Recent amendments to the Model Ordinance include time-to-temperature requirements for harvesters, pre-chill requirements for dealer shipments, and educational information the states must develop for harvesters and dealers. These changes are intended to prevent shellfish consumption illnesses from naturally occurring *Vibrio* bacteria. Once harvested, these bacteria can multiply to potentially dangerous levels if shellfish are exposed to warm air temperatures. Proper handling, labeling and temperature control are important measures to ensure a safe and quality shellfish product. For more information about the upcoming

requirements, contact Patti Fowler or Steve Murphey at 1-800-682-2632. For additional information on *Vibrio* bacteria in shellfish please reference the following website: <http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/cd/diseases/vibrio.html>

result in either the suspension or revocation of the permit by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

## **NEW STRIPED BASS TAGGING REQUIREMENTS COMING FOR 2014 FISHING SEASON**

### **NEW LICENSE FEES TO TAKE EFFECT**

The 2013 session of the General Assembly increased fees for the division’s commercial fishing licenses and gave the Marine Fisheries Commission authority to set fees for most commercial permits. The increases, which amount to 25 percent, are the first since the current license system went in place in 1999. All of the fee increases are earmarked to fund the Observer Program, as required by a federal Sea Turtle Incidental Take Permit. Each of these fee increases will roll out at different times to allow the technical aspects to be worked out. The current and future commercial license fees can be seen in the table below.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission approved Addendum III to Amendment 6 to the Atlantic Striped Bass Interstate Fishery Management Plan in August 2012. The recently approved addendum will require changes to the striped bass tagging and reporting program. The first change will be a modification to the information printed on each tag to include year issued, state issued and the minimum size limit. The second change will require seafood dealers to record the beginning and ending unique sequence numbers of the tags they use each day through a dealer logbook. At the end of the fishing season, all unused tags and logbooks will be collected by Marine Patrol. The division is currently looking for suggestions on how best to implement the dealer logbook portion of these requirements. The purpose of these measures is to help eliminate practices that can lead to the illegal commercial harvest of striped bass. These measures won’t be implemented in North Carolina until the 2014 fishing season. For more information about these requirements or suggestions on how to implement the dealer logbook, contact Michelle.Duval at 800-682-2632, extension 8011 or Michelle.Duval@ncdenr.gov. Addendum III to Amendment 6 to Atlantic Striped Bass Interstate Fishery Management Plan can be found at <http://www.asmfc.org>.

<b>Licenses/Permits</b>	<b>Current</b>	<b>Future</b>
<b>Standard Commercial Fishing License</b>	\$200	\$250
<b>Retired SCFL</b>	\$100	\$125
<b>Fish Dealer License</b>	\$50/category	\$62.50/ category
<b>Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration</b>	\$1-\$6/ft.	\$1.25-7.50/ft.
<b>Shellfish License for NC Residents</b>	\$25	\$31.50
<b>Land or Sell License</b>	\$200 or equivalent	\$250 or equivalent
<b>Replacements/Transfers</b>	\$10	\$12.50
<b>Permits</b>	Free	Up to \$100
<b>Limited Entry Licenses</b>	Free	Up to \$500

### **LICENSE SALES**

Licenses sold for fiscal year 2013 (July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013) by license type; includes active licenses only. Totals do not include transfers, voids or replacements.

### **SEA TURTLE INCIDENTAL TAKE PERMIT INFORMATION**

The division received an incidental take permit from the National Marine Fisheries Service on Sept. 10 that allows for the incidental capture of threatened and endangered sea turtles in both small and large mesh anchored gill nets fished in estuarine waters. The permit carries the same restrictions on soak times, gear and requirement for observer coverage as was previously implemented through a lawsuit settlement agreement between the state and the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center. Also, the number of allowed takes for each area are for the entire period of Sept. 1 to Aug. 31 each year, so if an area must close, it closes for the remainder of the year. Recreational and commercial gill net fishermen are also required to report any incidental capture of a sea turtle to the division at 252-726-7021 or 1-800-682-2632. However, sea turtle interactions reported by fishermen do not count against the allowed interactions in the permit. Failure to meet the requirements of the permit will

<b>Standard Commercial Fishing License</b>	5,540
<b>Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License</b>	1,159
<b>Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration</b>	8,335
<b>License to Land Flounder from Atlantic Ocean</b>	160
<b>Land or Sell License</b>	88
<b>NC Resident Shellfish License Without SCFL</b>	1,712
<b>Fish Dealer License</b>	770
<b>Ocean Pier License</b>	20
<b>Recreational Fishing Tournament License</b>	16
<b>Recreational Commercial Gear License</b>	4,772
<b>Total Licenses For All License Types</b>	22,572

Licenses for fiscal year 2014 (July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014) are currently available. If you want to avoid the lines at the license office, please use the mail-in process.