



# Fish Dealer Report



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

April 2010

## **Trip Ticket Program Staff & Contact Numbers**

### **Call for Trip Ticket Program Questions**

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## **Preliminary Results of the 2009 Commercial Catch**

According to harvest data collected by the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries Trip Ticket Program, commercial fishermen landed 68.6 million pounds of fish and shellfish in 2009 with a dockside value of \$77 million. These results indicate total landings were down 4-percent overall from 2008.

The top five species harvested in 2009 were: hard blue crabs (28.8 million pounds), Atlantic croaker (6.1 million pounds), shrimp (5.4 million pounds), summer flounder (2.9 million pounds) and southern flounder (2.4 million pounds).

Bluefish landings were not far behind southern flounder, with 2.3 million pounds harvested, a 22-percent increase from 2008. Southern flounder harvest fell 8 percent while summer flounder harvest increased by almost 19 percent over 2008. Atlantic croaker landings increased by 6 percent. Despite an increase in the number of crab pot and crab trawl trips, the harvest of hard crabs dropped 11 percent in 2009 from the previous year. Shrimp harvest dropped by 43 percent, with 248 fewer shrimp trawl trips made and slightly less effort made with channel net and skimmer trawl gears.

Other species showing increased landings in 2009 include Spanish mackerel, spiny dogfish, Atlantic menhaden, American eel, dolphin, sea bass, spot, yellow perch, peeler

crabs, sea scallops and oysters. The number of eel pot trips more than doubled in 2009, while more oyster dredge trips were taken than in any of the previous five years.

Species showing drops in harvest from 2008 include king mackerel, sea mullet, black drum, red grouper, vermilion snapper (beeliners), striped bass, clams and soft crabs. There were fewer king mackerel landed by gill nets and trolling gears in 2009, possibly due to weather factors in the fall and winter. Anchored gill net trips were down slightly while trolling trips were up. The vermilion snapper fishery was affected by a season closure. Due to the quota being reached for this fishery the season was closed on September 18, 2009.

Despite fewer trips being made with some gears, the number of fishing trips increased overall from the previous year. Effort with pound nets, longlines, flynets and fish pots increased, while the opportunity for a bay scallop season in 2009 resulted in fishermen making 701 scallop scoop trips out of the 1,094 trips made for bay scallops.

For more information on the preliminary landings results for 2009, view the 2009 Annual Fisheries Bulletin. The bulletin also contains landings and value by species for 2005-2008 as well as a summary of the number of trips by major gears.

## The Many Uses for NCDMF Trip Ticket Data

Trip ticket data are used frequently by various sources and can provide valuable information because of the many data elements collected on a trip ticket. Trip tickets collect information on the species caught, gears used, area fished, number of trips, and more. Fish dealers should accurately report all information asked for on trip tickets. Accurate reporting is essential to having good data to make sound management decisions.

The following are examples of how trip ticket data were used in 2009 and are being used now:

- *Keeping the blueline (gray) tilefish fishery open*

The DMF submitted a minority report to the South Atlantic Fishery Council requesting that North Carolina's blueline tile fishery be exempt from the upcoming deepwater snapper-grouper closure. Fishermen pointed out that the closure was intended to protect the deepwater grouper species (snowy groupers, warsaw groupers, and speckled hind). Blueline tilefish are harvested over mud bottoms, not on rocky substrates or structure areas. Trip ticket data was used to show there is a separation of effort for blueline tilefish and groupers and that they can be caught without affecting groupers. The fishery remains open until further notice.

- *Monitoring the red drum fishery*

Over the past two years, trip ticket data have been used to monitor red drum catches in relation to the caps set for the September to April and May to August seasons. Landings were run monthly and the results forwarded to fisheries management staff who determined when the fishery should be closed depending on whether the cap was close to being met or exceeded.

- *Developing fishery management plans*

Trip ticket data are used in the analysis of every Fisheries Management Plan (FMP). Currently, these data are being used to complete the first Spotted Seatrout FMP as well as updating the southern flounder, striped bass, and blue crab FMPs. Trip ticket data are also being reviewed for

an amendment to the Bay Scallop FMP. The data are used to describe the trends in each fishery, to determine the economic impact each fishery has to the state as well as the impacts different management options will have on each fishery.

- *Participating in SouthEast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) workshops*

Trip ticket data have been used in several SEDAR workshops over the years. In 2009 that included workshops on red drum and red grouper and in 2010, the red snapper fishery. Trip ticket landings data are used to describe the fishery and provide input on stock assessment models for each respective fishery.

SEDAR is a cooperative fishery management council process to improve the quality and reliability of fishery stock assessments in the South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and US Caribbean. SEDAR is managed by the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic regional fishery management councils in coordination with NOAA Fisheries and the Atlantic and Gulf States marine fisheries commissions. Staff plan to participate and present North Carolina's data for several update SEDARs in 2010, including black sea bass and snowy grouper.

- *Developing a Section 10 Permit application for gill nets*

The Trip Ticket Program provided data for developing a statewide Section 10 Permit application for gill nets. Trip ticket staff looked at data in several different ways to assist in explaining the type of gill net fisheries that occur in the state, where they occur, when they occur, and the amount of effort taking place using gill nets.

Trip ticket data were combined with data gathered from fish house sampling to determine the gill net mesh size distribution used by fishermen throughout the state. Data were also analyzed by a statistician to determine the number of potential sea turtle interactions that could occur in the state under different conditions. Using these data, division staff will be able to recommend specific areas and seasons that will not need to be closed to gill nets.

## Southern Shrimp Alliance Files TAA Petition

The Southern Shrimp Alliance (SSA) has been working with several shrimp fishermen, state shrimp association leaders and Sea Grant Programs throughout the southeast to determine the best strategy for submitting a successful petition for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) on behalf of the shrimp industry.

The SSA is a non-profit alliance of members of the U.S. shrimp industry in eight states that works to prevent deterioration of America's shrimp industry and to ensure the future viability of the industry. SSA serves as a national voice for the shrimp fishermen and processors in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture launched the TAA program petition period for 2010 just last month. The program will provide technical assistance and cash benefits to fishermen and U.S. producers of raw agricultural commodities who meet eligibility requirements and whose crops or catch have been adversely affected by imports of like or directly competitive commodities.

Before individual producers and fishermen can apply for benefits, a commodity organization or a group of producers must submit a petition to the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), a division of the USDA. If the petition is approved, the TAA for farmers program will provide free technical assistance and cash benefits to eligible producers of raw agricultural commodities and fishermen who have been hurt by import competition. Eligible agricultural or fishing industry groups must first file a petition with the FAS demonstrating that imports contributed to a greater than 15-percent decline in their national average price, quantity of production, value of production, or cash receipts for their raw products.

The SSA submitted their petition for marketing year 2008, the most recent year with 100-percent complete National Marine Fisheries Service data for the region. Shrimp producers would likely not be eligible for marketing year 2009 because nationally, the volume of shrimp imports coming into

the United States is less than in previous years, not meeting a basic TAA requirement. The highest level of shrimp imports occurred in 2008.

Shrimp fishermen will need to examine their previous tax records to see if they qualify for TAA assistance, training and possible eventual cash payments. The petition now goes to the regional level for approval.

For more information, contact M. Scott Baker, Jr. with the N.C. Sea Grant Extension Program at (910) 962-2492.

## New Trip Ticket Codes Added to Meet Dealer & Data Needs

The Trip Ticket Program recently added a new gear code and several new species codes.

A new gear code for **peeler trawl, gear code 206, was** added to the Type 3 Crab Trip Ticket. Dealers should use this new trawl code when applicable. Codes for blue, bonnethead, finetooth, and spinner sharks have been added to the electronic trip ticket software, but dealers using paper tickets can also write in these codes when needed. Codes for the carcass condition of these species are:

- Blue shark: 5880
- Finetooth shark: 5680
- Bonnethead shark: 5830
- Spinner shark: 5780

### Meeting the Reporting Deadline

- *If you purchased seafood last month, your trip tickets and a submittal form are due by the **10th** of this month.*
- *If you didn't purchase seafood last month & you haven't told us you are seasonally closed, a submittal form is due by the **10th** of this month.*

*Staff spend hours tracking down dealers who don't report by the 10th of the month. Help reduce the time and costs involved in this tracking by reporting on time. Failing to report on time could result in Marine Patrol interaction.*

## Taking Conversion Factors into Account

Trip Ticket Program staff have been working on a project to validate many of the conversion factors used to calculate the whole weights of seafood products from the landed weight. Whole weights are calculated using conversion factors that vary between fish species and products. The program's fisheries statistics are presented as whole weight but seafood is landed in gutted, headed, or dressed conditions or in different units such as bushels, bags, or by the piece. Since most fish quotas are based upon whole weight, conversion factors are a fundamental tool in the management process.

The project began in December 2008 and is now being analyzed. Samples of vermilion snapper (beeliners), gag, red and various other groupers, king mackerel, amberjacks, clams and oysters have been collected and analyzed to determine a processed to whole weight. In addition to validating the existing conversion factors the Trip Ticket Program uses, data from the project will be used to update any that have changed.

Staff determined some of the new conversion factors obtained are significantly different than some of those currently in place, especially for groupers. Because data collected over time will yield better results, proposals were submitted to continue funding to extend this project. A new proposal is in the works to request funding from the Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) to coordinate this effort and to expand it coastwide from Maine to Florida. The Division of Marine Fisheries appreciates the assistance the commercial fishing industry has provided to this project.

## More Trip Ticket Statistics ...

The trip ticket office received 154,927 trip tickets from licensed fish dealers in 2009. Fifty-nine dealers submitted 39,927 of these tickets (26 percent) electronically using the trip ticket software program. Electronic tickets represented 39,145 trips taken by fishermen and 49 percent of the total harvest for 2009. The remaining tickets were submitted by 625 dealers using paper trip tickets. These landings represented 117,762 trips and 50 percent of the total seafood harvested.

If you are interested in finding out more about electronic reporting, please contact the commercial port agent in your area or Grace Kemp at (800) 682-2632, ext. 8101.

## License Sales to Date

2009-2010 Licenses Sold to Date (as of 4/18/10):

Standard Commercial Fishing License	5,285
Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License (RSCFL)	996
Commercial Fishing Vessel Registration (CFVR)	8,725
NC Resident Shellfish License without SCFL	1,945
Menhaden License for Non-Resident without SCFL	10
License to Land Flounder from Atlantic Ocean	143
Land or Sell License	112
Fish Dealer License	815
Ocean Pier License	21
Spotter Plane License	9
Recreational Fishing Tournament License	14
Recreational Commercial Gear License (RCGL)	5,459
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,534</b>

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