

From: Ken Neill [<mailto:jackcrevelle@msn.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, February 24, 2016 9:44 AM

To: O'Reilly, Rob (MRC)

Subject: FW: cobia-from Capt. Jorj Head

> 1. I question the data that says VA went from a hundred and something thousand pounds in 2014 to eight-hundred and something pounds in 2015. I'm out there all summer and talk to a lot of the serious cobia fishermen, and I did not see a noticeable difference in the two years.

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> 2. I question the DNA study that concluded there are two separate stocks of cobia. Apparently there were two studies that were somewhat conflicting. (Wes and I both agree that there could almost be three stocks. We both feel from tagging data and information from experienced captains that many of our fish winter offshore of North Carolina).

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> 3. If there are two stocks, I question the data that concludes that the Florida stock is substantially more than the Northern stock. If that is the case it doesn't make much sense that Florida didn't come close to their quota and the Northern states went 2.5 times over theirs.

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> 4. Virginia does not have representation at SAFMC. They therefore are not taking Virginia's interest in to consideration.

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> 5. If a closure is recommended anytime after June, Virginia will be affected more than any of the other states involved.

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> 6. Virginia (VMRC) did not follow the federal recommendation of 2 fish per commercial fishermen and is going to continue to allow commercial fishing for cobia when the recreational sector is closed.

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> 7. VMRC should stand up for its recreational anglers and realize that closing the season is putting an unfair burden on Virginia and not follow the SAFMC recommendation.

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> 8. If SAFMC would reduce boat limits to 1 or 2 fish per boat for all states involved each state would share the same restrictions and that should reduce the harvest and eliminate or reduce a closure.

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> 9. Virginia's fishermen don't seem to have much of a voice. It seems this case would be something that would almost require legal representation to get our points heard but don't know who could organize or fund it.

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> 10. In my opinion cobia is the number one fishery the state currently has to offer. I'm sure there are millions of dollars spent yearly by recreational anglers pursuing cobia. There are many tackle shops, charter captains and mates, bait suppliers, marinas, restaurants, fuel docks, and so forth that rely heavily on this fishery to get through the summer. I would think Virginia would want to do everything possible to avoid a closure to this valuable fishery.