



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Qualitative Summary of Social and Economic Impacts from the COVID-19 Pandemic

Prepared for the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

June 2020



....To Conserve and Manage

Participants

- Online form to request information on impacts from pandemic
- Advisory Panels & their contacts (SG, CMP, DW, Spiny Lobster, etc.)
- 39 Responses
- Responses summarized here are from 3/20 to 6/1
- Confidential data so information is summarized



Questions

- How do you participate in fisheries in the South Atlantic?
- How has the current situation affected your ability to fish?
- How, if at all, has your fishing been affected?
- List any fish houses, marinas, fishing piers, or other fishing industry businesses in your area that have been impacted
- Do you know anyone else in your area that we should contact?





Impacts to Commercial Industry

Including commercial fishermen, seafood dealers (wholesale and retail)



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East Florida & Keys

- Major impacts are due to inability to sell product or uncertainty about demand
- Impacts to shrimping because state waters were closed to harvest
- Inability to obtain supplies (e.g., ice, bait) and groceries have curtailed fishing activity
- Issues with crew not wanting to engage in fishing and leave their family behind
- Demand and prices dropped, impacting trip profitability



East Florida & Keys (cont'd)

- Heavy reliance on the retail market
- Severe impacts to lobster fishery compounded by tariffs and lobster catch being “off.”
- Severe impacts to crab market (from 2k pounds per week to 50 lb per week)
- Fish houses limiting what they buy and are only buying from core fishermen
- Some fishermen elected not to fish during shut-down
- Fish market demand is up 50% from last year
- Catches consistent with historical average



Georgia & Carolinas

- Sale of product is difficult; prices fell at least 25%
- 50-75% of dock crew not working or laid off
- Limited demand so sluggish fishing activity
- Lack of market has resulted in dramatic losses in revenue





South Carolina
STATE OF EMERGENCY

CLOSED

Per Executive Order 2020-16 issued by South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster on March 30, 2020, and in response to the public health threat posed by coronavirus (COVID-19), public access to all beaches, waterways, boat ramps, boat landings, piers, docks and wharfs in Beaufort County is **PROHIBITED** for the duration of the State of Emergency.

This order does not apply to fishermen with a valid commercial license or permit.

Anyone who violates any order in connection with the State of Emergency "is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than one hundred dollar or imprisoned for not more than thirty days."

To report potential violations, call 843-524-2777.





Image courtesy of Andy Piland



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Photo courtesy of Andy Piland



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Hatteras, North Carolina
Photo courtesy of Andy Piland

Impacts to For-Hire Industry

Including charter vessels and headboats



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East Florida & Keys

- Charter businesses in the Florida Keys severely affected due to restricted access. Hotels and businesses in the Keys shut down on 3/22
- Cancellations for charter trips through May
- Fear that many charter businesses will not survive



Georgia & Carolinas

- Social distancing and fear of traveling caused for-hire businesses to grind to a halt
- Several businesses reported being completely shut down for several weeks
- Access restrictions to beaches, marinas, piers, etc. have contributed to loss of business for charter operations





Impacts to Private Recreational Sector



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South Atlantic

- Some fishermen have stopped fishing due to limited public access
- Reports of higher than usual fishing activity since people have more time to fish
- Initial reports of low numbers of boats going out. Since restrictions have been lifted, fishing activity has markedly increased



Area Temporarily Closed
Pursuant to County Order
Beginning 7:30 PM, April
3, 2020

TRAILS END
PARK

PARK FOR RECREATION PURPOSES
KAYAKING, FISHING, BOATING,
HANGING OUT, etc.

ONE WAY

NEW HAVEN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
DECLARATION OF STATE OF EMERGENCY - (SECOND AMENDMENT)
ADDITIONAL PROHIBITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS



[Signature]
Commissioner
April 3, 2020

Image courtesy of Scott Baker

