



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 SCDNR



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
HAMP HARBOR, NEW YORK
TRAILING, SPORTS, AND
RECREATION CENTER

ONE WAY

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



[Signature]
Commissioner
April 3, 2020

