

MARINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
Friday, September 27, 2019
MRRRI Auditorium, Ft. Johnson
Charleston, SC

MAC Members Present: D. Swygert, B. Bailey, B. Rose, F. Rourk, J. Massey, E. Holder, C. Day

MAC Members Absent: R. Dukes, P. Brown

DNR Staff Present: P. Maier, M. Bell, M. Denson, B. Keppler, T. Darden, E. Weeks, J. Ballenger, M. Pate, M. Perkinson, A. Brown, J. Schwenter, A. Tweel, S. Johnson, C. McDonough, M. Kendrick, B. Dyer, S. Bobertz, Robert Boyles, M. Ingle

Guests: Scott Whitaker, CCA

1. **Call Meeting to Order – Chairman Swygert:**
Chairman Swygert called the meeting to order at 10:02 am.
2. **Invocation:**
Chaplain Dave Tafaoa led the invocation.
3. **Pledge of Allegiance – Vice-Chairman Bailey:**
Vice-Chairman Bailey led the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. **Approval of Minutes- Chairman Swygert:**
Chairman Swygert asked for a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes (September 2019). B. Rose made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. J. Massey 2nd, motion passed unanimously.
5. **Introduction of Guests- E. Weeks:**
Erin introduced Scott Whitaker with Coastal Conservation Association.
6. **Southern Flounder: Stock Status & Current Fishery Issues – Mel Bell & Dr. Joey Ballenger:**
This two-pronged presentation provided an in-depth data assessment, and possible paths forward of the regional Southern Flounder fishery.

Dr. Ballenger presented data from the recent stock assessment (Jan 2019) that showed stock is overfished regionally. He provided additional SCDNR data results that there is a serious depletion of Southern Flounder in South Carolina waters as well as the regional problem.

OFM Director Bell offered information on landings of Southern Flounder - noting that North Carolina has the greatest piece of the fishery, regionally. South Carolina's landings are almost exclusive to the recreational fishermen.

He showed the measures North Carolina has adopted in an attempt to reduce fishing mortality 72% over 10 years. He reviewed considerations targeting the South Carolina recreational fishery to reduce mortality which included: Lower bag limit, Increase Size, Establish a Recreational Season, Time/Area-based harvest restrictions, and Gear-based restrictions. Going forward SCDNR will pursue outreach to constituents and seek input;

continue to analyze data and explore possible options. Additionally, we will continue to work with other State Fisheries partners to address the issues at hand.

After a question and answer period, the MAC reached a consensus that Staff move forward with gathering data and investigating the problems, and coming up with possible solutions to the Southern Flounder stock problem and report back at the December meeting.

7. Review of SCDNR's Sea Turtle Program- Michelle Pate:

SCDNR Sea Turtle Program Manager Michelle Pate gave an in-depth review of the program at MRD. Her presentation focused on the history and successes of the program, threats to the species, and concluded with the work volunteers contribute to both the nesting and stranding networks along the South Carolina coast. The program will continue its role as a leader in sea turtle conservation ensuring a healthy loggerhead population for years to come.

8. Deputy Director's Comments-Acting Deputy Director Phil Maier:

Acting Deputy Director Maier welcomed Chairman Swygert and new member Jeff Massey to the MAC and thanked them for their willingness to serve on the Committee.

He briefed the Committee on the recent artificial reef deployment on the Betsy Ross reef in which CCA funded the entire deployment. He stressed the importance of CCA's support of Marine Division projects.

He noted the recent and on-going structural projects at Ft. Johnson (boat slip renovation and roof repairs on the MRRI Bldg.)

9. Date, Place & Time of Next Meeting-Chairman Swygert:

The next scheduled meeting of the Marine Advisory Committee is Thursday, December 5th at 10:00 in the MRRI Auditorium at Ft. Johnson.

10. Meeting Adjourn-Chairman Swygert:

Meeting adjourned at 11:45.