

# Speakers: Sales License OK If It Helps Fishing Industry

BY DORI COSGROVE GURGANUS

A majority of speakers at a public hearing Monday night told a state legislative study commission they would support licensing of all seafood harvesters who sell their catch if it would benefit the industry.

"This is your night," State Rep. David Redwine of Brunswick County told those gathered at Bolivia at the first of several public hearings scheduled over the next few months along the coast by the Joint House and Senate Seafood and Aquaculture Commission.

The hearings are intended to answer questions about the need for licenses to sell seafood by the people who harvest it, as well as the usefulness of the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission, Redwine said.

Along with State Sen. Marc Basnight of the Outer Banks, Redwine co-chairs the Joint Commission. The panel visited Brunswick County this week to hear from fishing community representatives and lobbyists. In addition to the hearing Monday night, the commission held a business meeting Tuesday morning at the Jones/Byrd Conference Center at Sea Trail.

About 40 people filled the Public Assembly meeting hall at the Brunswick County Government Center Monday night to have their say before the 12-person panel, which is made up of state congressional members as well as representatives of recreational and commercial fishing groups.

Approximately 15 of the group spoke during the hearing and also answered questions from panel members.

Opinions varied, but many speakers agreed that some form of regulatory license is needed for marine fishermen.

The major point of the public hearing Monday as well as a meeting of the joint commission Tuesday morning was "license to sell."

The issue of the Marine Fisheries Commission was dropped by the joint commission Tuesday morning due to lack of time for consideration.

The licensure proposal was introduced to the 1991 session of the N.C. General Assembly as House Bill 1105 last April, but was not approved, Redwine said.

The state Division of Marine Fisheries, part of the Department of Environment, Health and Natural



BRIAN SHEPARD, member of the Southeastern N.C. Waterman's Association, hands information sheets out to State Rep. David Redwine (hand outstretched) and other members of the Joint House and Senate Seafood and Aquaculture Commission during a public hearing Monday night. Seated at the table are (left to right) C.B. "Cash" Caroon, Tom Caroon, State Sen. Marc Basnight, Redwine, State Sen. Richard Conder, State Rep. Ronald Smith and State Rep. Pete Thompson.

Resources, has reported that it can't keep accurate records on the state of the fishing industry in North Carolina because many seafood dealers and harvesters don't keep records, or don't cooperate with Division representatives.

Requiring a license for every fisherman who then sells his catch to a dealer may help trace the origin of seafood back to the harvester and help state officials keep better records on stocks of certain species, several speakers agreed.

Dick Brame, executive director of

the N.C. Atlantic Coast Conservation Association, told the panel that licensing is "something we needed yesterday."

He agreed with other lobbyists who said that having such a license would enable the Division of Marine Fisheries to record data on what is caught, how much of each species is caught, and who is doing the catching.

"It will be enforced at the fish house," Brame said.

Fentress "Red" Munden, deputy director of the Division, said that

now dealers and harvesters voluntarily give data regarding amounts of fish caught.

"We can by no means get everything that's caught," he said.

Munden said a license would be a method of providing information to the Division.

Jerry Schill of New Bern, executive director of the N.C. Fisheries Association Inc., told the group that his organization "firmly endorses" the collection of data to help the Division better manage coastal waters.

A member of the Southeastern N.C. Waterman's Association, Earl House of Sneed's Ferry, spoke against licensing. "I've been licensed to death," he said, but added that he would accept the idea if "that license will provide data helpful to the industry."

"People who manage our resources know so little," House said.

A meeting at Sea Trail in Sunset Beach Tuesday morning allowed the commission to hear more comments from scheduled speakers Schill, Munden and Brame, who continued

to support the need for a license and data-gathering system.

"I think the fishermen will support it if it puts restrictions on part-timers," Munden said Tuesday. "And if it helps get some of the gear out of the water."

"It must be such that a dealer will lose his license if he buys on the black market," Brame told the panel.

According to Redwine, his panel has been "charged to monitor the seafood industry and report back to the short session of the General Assembly in May."

"We are to make some recommendation, if any, to the General Assembly," he said.

The next set of hearings and meetings of the joint commission is scheduled March 26 and 27 in Oriental, Morehead City and Sneed's Ferry.

## Power Squadron Installs Lambert

In a change of watch ceremony Feb. 7, Charles "Buzz" Lambert of Shallotte was installed as commander of the Shallotte River Power Squadron for 1992, announced the outgoing commander, Clete Waldmiller of Sunset Beach.

Other officers are executive officer, Lt. Commander Franklin Forrest of Holden Beach; squadron education officer, Past Commander Carr Parsons of Sunset Beach; administrative officer, Lt. Commander Gus Ulrich of Holden Beach; secretary, Lt. Commander Joseph Brust of Ocean Isle Beach; and treasurer, Lt. Commander Lucy Keefer of Calabash.

The local squadron is part of the national organization, which is dedicated to safe boating through education, said Waldmiller.



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## This Week's Tide Table

FEBRUARY		HIGH		LOW	
Day	Date	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
Thursday	20	9:25	9:56	3:11	3:33
Friday	21	10:12	10:47	4:01	4:18
Saturday	22	11:00	11:37	4:50	5:05
Sunday	23	11:50	—	5:42	5:52
Monday	24	12:29	12:41	6:36	6:46
Tuesday	25	1:24	1:36	7:32	7:43
Wednesday	26	2:24	2:34	8:32	8:43

ADJUSTMENTS  
 SHALLLOTTE INLET—add 17 min. high tide, add 32 min. low tide.  
 LOCKWOOD POLLY—subtract 22 min. high tide, subtract 8 min. low tide.  
 BALD HEAD ISLAND—subtract 10 min. high tide, subtract 7 min. low tide.  
 SOUTHPORT—add 7 min. high tide, add 15 min. low tide.  
 LITTLE RIVER—add 7 min. high tide, add 7 min. low tide.

## State Restricts Grouper Harvest

State rules limiting the harvest of gag and black grouper have been revised to comply with federal restrictions.

The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries issued a proclamation last week outlawing the possession of the two types of grouper if they are less than 20 inches long.

The rules, which took effect Monday, apply to waters within three miles of the beach.

The proclamation also continued existing limits on black sea bass and cobia. It's still illegal to possess black bass less than eight inches long taken by hook-and-line or pots south of Cape Hatteras.

The state also prohibits the harvest of more than two cobia per person per day or any cobia less than 33 inches fork length or 37 inches total length.

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