

Comments by CCA NC Chairman Bud Abbott to the NCMFC Feb. 15, 2017

Good day. I'm Bud Abbott from Harkers Island North Carolina. I am a recreational fisherman and Chairman of Coastal Conservation Association. I thank you for the opportunity to speak here today regarding our fisheries.

I'm not a scientist, I'm not extremely well educated about fisheries, but I come to you as the voice of reality. My reality is that I learned to catch flounder, croakers, grey trout and even crab using a chicken neck and a piece of string from my grandmother behind Topsail Island in the late 50's. I also came to Harkers Island for the first time in the late 1960s. I fished with my father inside Cape Lookout and had the time of my life as a 16 to 18-year-old boy. We caught a lot of large flounder, grey trout, speckled trout, croakers, and spots our few trips there each year.

The reality of today is that I take my grandchildren and children fishing around Harkers Island and we catch virtually nothing, not just on one trip, but on several trips at different times of the year.

I made over 40 fishing trips inside this year and only caught one legal flounder. The reality is it is time to do something about our public trust resources and protecting our nursery areas.

The reality is that our fish stocks are in terrible shape. Only five of 22 state managed fisheries are listed as viable, the rest are in the toilet. You, the Commissioners of North Carolina's Marine Fisheries are responsible for protecting our public trust resources for all the citizens of North Carolina. The reality is, no one else has this authority, only you.

It is time to do what is right by our public trust resources. The shrimp petition, with some new rules, in some form, will be a great first step. Will it be easy, NO. Will it be right, YES. Our future fish stocks and our reality lies with only you!

Thank you for your service.