

Minutes
Coastal Committee
 2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, S. E.
 Suite 1252 East Tower
 Atlanta, GA 30334

September 24, 2019

Attendees:

<u>Committee Members</u>	<u>Staff Members</u>
Rob Leebern, Chair	Mark Williams, Commissioner
Bill Jones, Vice Chair	Terry West
Nancy Addison	Walter Rabon
Tim Lowe	Kyle Pearson
Aaron McWhorter	Wes Robinson
Paul Shailendra – Via Conference Call	Cathy Barnette
Miki Thomaston	Amber Carter
Dee Yancey	Artica Gaston
Bodine Sinyard, Board Chair, Ex-officio	Courtney Hall
	Thomas Barnard
<u>Board Members</u>	Jeff Cown
William Bagwell	Dave Crass
Dwight Davis	Steve Friedman
Dwight Evans	Doug Haymans
Joe Hatfield	Carolyn Belcher
Ray Lambert	Ted Will
Mark Mobley	
Billy New	Richard Dunn, Director
Mike Phelps	Lauren Curry
Brother Stewart – Via Conference Call	Chuck Mueller
	Laura Williams
<u>Guests</u>	Donald Kirkland
Bryan Tolar, GA Urban Agriculture Council	Dika Kuoh
Scott Tanner, Joe Tanner & Associates	
Brant Lane, Hodges, Harbin, Newberry & Tribble	
Jim Renner, Southern Ionics Minerals	
Mark Woodall, Sierra Club	
Jake Tench, Georgia Agribusiness Council	
Katie Gregory, McGuire Woods	
Ronny Just, GA Power	
Jason Wilhelm, Office of the Governor	
Leah Dixon, GA Conservancy	

The September 24, 2019 meeting of the Coastal Committee was called to order by Bodine Sinyard, Chairman of the Board of Natural Resources.

Chairman Sinyard called on Rob Leebern, Chairman of the Coastal Committee, who called on Dr. Carolyn Belcher, Chief of Marine Fisheries.

Dr. Belcher provided a presentation on two proposed changes to the rules of the Saltwater Fishing Regulations, Chapter 391-2-4, specifically the North Atlantic Shortfin Mako Shark and the Oceanic Whitetip Shark.

Dr. Belcher stated in May 2019, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) approved changes to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (ISFMP) for Atlantic Coastal Sharks. The proposed amendments will increase compliance and improve the effectiveness of state and federal conservation law enforcement.

Dr. Belcher stated the first proposed amendment will prohibit the harvest of Shortfin Mako Sharks less than 83 inches fork length, regardless of sex, because it is difficult for anglers to identify the sex of such large fish. She further stated the definition of Sharks will be amended to state the individually managed species such as the Shortfin Mako Shark are not included in the generic “Shark” grouping. The Shortfin Mako Shark will now be included with sharks requiring a federal dealer permit to buy or sell. She further stated the Shortfin Mako Shark will be included with shark species allowed to have heads removed but fins and tails naturally attached. She added the Shortfin Mako Shark will be harvestable only by rod and reel or handline.

Dr. Belcher stated in January 2018, NOAA issued a final ruling adding the Oceanic Whitetip Sharks to the threatened list under the federal Endangered Species Act. She further stated the second proposed amendment is a proactive approach and will prohibit the harvest of Oceanic Whitetip Shark and restrict shark fishermen from landing this species in Georgia.

Dr. Belcher stated the two species are not found in state waters and the impacts to DNR fisheries is relatively low. She further stated it would not impact recreational fishers, fishing-related businesses or the general public but will ensure the department is in conservation equivalency with other states who are managing it in state waters.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.