



JOSH STEIN
Governor

D. REID WILSON
Secretary

KATHY B. RAWLS
Director

M-15-2025

PROCLAMATION

RE: GILL NETS – TIE DOWN AND DISTANCE FROM SHORE RESTRICTIONS - CENTRAL SOUTHERN MANAGEMENT AREA (CSMA) – REOPENS A PORTION OF WESTERN PAMLICO SOUND AND RIVERS

This proclamation supersedes proclamation M-6-2019, dated March 15, 2019. This proclamation reopens areas closed to gill nets and implements tie-down (vertical net height restrictions) and distance from shore restrictions for ITP non-exempt (i.e., fixed, stationary, or anchored) gill nets with a stretched mesh length five inches or greater in the western Pamlico Sound and rivers in accordance with Amendment 2 to the N.C. Estuarine Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan.

Kathy B. Rawls, Director, N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, hereby announces that **effective at 12:01 A.M., Tuesday, September 2, 2025, the following restrictions will apply to gill nets with a stretched mesh length five inches or greater:**

I. AREA DESCRIPTION (See Map)

- A. All Internal Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters west (upstream) of the 76° 28.0000' W longitude line which passes near Roos Point at the mouth of Pamlico River south to Point of Marsh at the mouth of the Neuse River.
- B. All Internal Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters in the following river areas:
 - 1. Neuse River - Upstream of a line beginning at a point at Cooper Point 35° 02.1433' N - 76° 55.9965' W; running southwesterly to a point at Fisher Landing Point 35° 00.1550' N - 76° 58.5738' W.
 - 2. Pamlico River - Upstream of a line beginning at a point at Gum Point 35° 25.1669' N - 76° 45.5251' W; running southwesterly to a point at Fork Point at 35° 23.4453' N - 76° 46.4346' W.
 - 3. Pungo River - Upstream of a line beginning at a point at Sandy Point 35° 26.8680' N - 76° 33.9520' W; running southwesterly to a point on the west shore at 35° 26.2810' N - 76° 35.5530' W.

II. GEAR RESTRICTIONS

- A. In the area described in I. A.:
 - 1. It shall be unlawful to fail to equip non-exempt (i.e., fixed, stationary, or anchored) gill nets with tie downs spaced no farther apart than 10 yards to restrict the vertical distance between the top and bottom lines to 36 inches or less. If the vertical height of the net (distance between the top and bottom line) is 36 inches or less, no tie-downs are required. Nets must be set so as to fish on the bottom and not exceed a vertical height of 36 inches.
- B. In the areas described in I. B.:
 - 1. It shall be unlawful to fail to equip non-exempt gill nets with tie downs spaced no farther apart than 10 yards to restrict the vertical distance between the top and

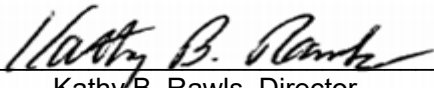
bottom lines to 36 inches or less. If the vertical height of the net (distance between the top and bottom line) is 36 inches or less, no tie-downs are required. Nets must be set so as to fish on the bottom and not exceed a vertical height of 36 inches.

2. It shall be unlawful for any portion of non-exempt gill nets with a stretched mesh length 5 inches and greater to be within 50 yards of any point on shore when set or deployed.

III. GENERAL INFORMATION

- A. This proclamation is issued under the authority of N.C.G.S. 113-134; 113-170.4; 113-170.5; 113-182; 113-182.1; 113-221.1; 143B-289.52 and N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rules 15A NCAC 03H .0103 and 03J .0103.
- B. It is unlawful to violate the provisions of any proclamation issued by the Fisheries Director under their delegated authority pursuant to N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03H .0103.
- C. The intent of this proclamation is to implement gill net regulations to reduce bycatch of striped bass in gill net fisheries in the specified areas of the CSMA in accordance with Amendment 2 to the N.C. Estuarine striped Bass Fishery Management Plan. A gill net is defined in accordance with N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03I. 0101(3)(h).
- D. N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03J .0103 (a) (2) states it shall be unlawful to use gill nets in Internal Waters from April 15 through December 15, with a mesh length 5 inches or greater and less than 5 ½ inches.
- E. N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03J .0103 (i)(2) states for gill nets with a stretched mesh length five inches or greater it is unlawful from June through October, for any portion of the net to be within 10 feet of any point on the shoreline while set or deployed unless the net is attended. N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03J .0103 (j) defines the shoreline as the mean high-water line or marsh line, whichever is more seaward.
- F. A gill net is defined in accordance with N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03I. 0101(3)(h).
- G. Proclamation [M-2-2025](#) dated December 16, 2024, requires holders of a Standard Commercial Fishing License (SCFL), Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License (RSCFL), or Recreational Commercial Gear License (RCGL) who deploy gill nets in Internal Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters with an exception for run-around, strike, drop or drift gill nets, to possess a valid Estuarine Gill Net Permit issued by the Division of Marine Fisheries.
- H. N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03I .0113 specifies that it shall be unlawful for any licensee under Chapter 113, Subchapter IV of the General Statutes to refuse to allow the Fisheries Director or their agents to obtain biological data, harvest information, or other statistical data necessary or useful to the conservation and management of marine and estuarine resources from fish in the licensee's possession. The Division of Marine Fisheries has implemented an Estuarine Gill Net Permit and an observer program as an inspection procedure to obtain such data.
- I. The Division of Marine Fisheries has received the Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permits (ITP) for threatened or endangered sea turtles, and endangered sturgeon. This ITP allows the legal continuation of the inshore gill net fisheries in North Carolina, subject to permit conditions. The ITP conditions are designed to monitor, avoid and minimize, and mitigate interactions with these species in gill net fisheries permitted by the ITP (i.e., non-exempted gill net fisheries). Permit conditions require the division to provide 7-10 percent observer coverage in the permitted large mesh gill net fishery and 1-2 percent observer coverage in the permitted small mesh gill net fishery in Internal Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters. **If the required coverage is not maintained, large and small mesh gill nets could be prohibited in all Internal Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters.**

- J. Proclamation [M-12-2025](#) dated June 3, 2025, prohibits the setting of gill nets in the Joint Fishing Waters of the state from midnight on Friday to midnight on Sunday each week. Portions of Albemarle and Currituck sounds are exempt from that provision.
- K. In accordance with N.C. General Statute 113-221(f) and 113-221.1(c) all persons who may be affected by rules and proclamations issued by the Fisheries Director are under a duty to keep themselves informed of current rules and proclamations. Multiple rules and proclamations regulating a fishery, species, gear, etc. may be in effect concurrently.
- L. **All other existing gill net rules and proclamations remain in effect.** See <https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries/rules-proclamations-and-size-and-bag-limits/fisheries-management-proclamations#currentprocs> to refer to those M-type proclamations for gill net regulations that may be effective in the areas covered by this proclamation.
- M. Contact N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, P.O. Box 769, Morehead City, NC 28557 252-726-7021 or 800-682-2632 for more information or visit the division website at <https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries>
- N. **This proclamation supersedes proclamation M-6-2019, dated March 15, 2019. This proclamation reopens areas closed to gill nets and implements tie-down (vertical net height restrictions) and distance from shore restrictions for ITP non-exempt (i.e., fixed, stationary, or anchored) gill nets with a stretched mesh length five inches or greater in the western Pamlico Sound and rivers in accordance with Amendment 2 to the N.C. Estuarine Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan.**

By: 
Kathy B. Rawls, Director
DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES

August 29, 2025
1:55 P.M.