



JOSH STEIN
Governor

D. REID WILSON
Secretary

KATHY B. RAWLS
Director

FF-17-2026

PROCLAMATION

RE: FLOUNDER – RECREATIONAL - ATLANTIC OCEAN STATE WATERS FROM PORTSMOUTH ISLAND SOUTH TO NC/SC STATE LINE

This proclamation supersedes Proclamation FF-13-2026, dated February 16, 2026. This proclamation provides additional clarity for flounder regulations and maintains the recreational Gulf flounder fishery season, creel, and size limits in Atlantic Ocean State Waters from Portsmouth Island South to the NC/SC State line in accordance with Amendment 4 to the N.C. Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan.

Kathy B. Rawls, Director, Division of Marine Fisheries, hereby announces that effective **at 12:01 A.M., March 16, 2026**, the following restrictions will apply to the taking of flounder for **recreational purposes**:

I. **AREA DESCRIPTION**

Atlantic Ocean – South of a line beginning on Portsmouth Island beginning at 35° 03.050' N, 76° 03.083' W extending offshore 3 miles and north of a line at the NC-SC border beginning on shore at point 33° 51.06' N, 78° 32.46' W extending offshore 3 miles ([see Map](#)).

II. **SEASON**

It shall be unlawful to possess flounder in Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters, including the Atlantic Ocean, except for Gulf flounder for recreational purposes from 12:01 A.M. on March 9, 2026, until 11:59 P.M. on March 22, 2026, in the area described in Section I.

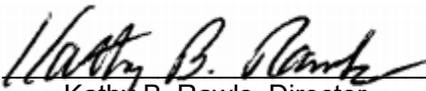
III. **SIZE, POSSESSION, AND GEAR LIMITS**

- A. It shall be unlawful to possess Gulf flounder less than 15 inches total length.
- B. It shall be unlawful to possess more than one (1) Gulf flounder per person per day.
- C. It shall be unlawful to possess Gulf flounder unless taken by hook and line.

IV. **GENERAL INFORMATION**

- A. This proclamation is issued under the authority of N.C.G.S. 113-134; 113-134.1; 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, 03M .0503 and 03M .0512.
- 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 manage the recreational flounder fishery in accordance with Amendment 4 to the N.C. Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan.
- D. **It is important for anglers to properly identify the flounder species they harvest. Please [SEE HERE](#) for resources to help anglers identify between North Carolina's three flounder species: southern flounder, summer flounder, and Gulf flounder.**
- E. In accordance with N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03I .0120 it shall be unlawful to possess or transport through State Coastal Fishing Waters any species of fish that is subject to State season, size, or harvest restrictions, regardless whether the species was taken in State or federal waters, unless all fish taken are in compliance with the restrictions for the waterbody or area being fished. If State season, size, or harvest restrictions differ from comparable restrictions pursuant to a fishery management plan adopted by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission or pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, or if there are no corresponding federal regulations, the State restrictions shall apply during such periods of possession or transportation.
- F. In accordance with N.C. General Statute 113-221.1(c), all persons who may be affected by proclamations issued by the Fisheries Director are under a duty to keep themselves informed of current proclamations.
- G. Contact N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, P.O. Box 769, Morehead City, NC 28557 252-515-5500 or 800-682-2632 for more information or visit the division website at www.ncmarinefisheries.net.
- H. **This proclamation provides additional clarity for flounder regulations and maintains the recreational Gulf flounder fishery season, creel, and size limits in Atlantic Ocean State Waters from Portsmouth Island South to the NC-SC State line in accordance with Amendment 4 to the N.C. Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan.**

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

March 13, 2026
3:15 P.M.