



JOSH STEIN
Governor

D. REID WILSON
Secretary

KATHY B. RAWLS
Director

FF-31-2026

PROCLAMATION

RE: SPOTTED SEATROUT – COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL – COASTAL AND JOINT FISHING WATERS INCLUDING THE ATLANTIC OCEAN - OPENING AND HARVEST RESTRICTIONS

This proclamation supersedes proclamations FF-12-2026, dated February 4, 2026, and FF-37-2025, dated September 29, 2025. This proclamation opens the commercial and recreational spotted seatrout (speckled trout) fishery in Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters including the Atlantic Ocean on July 1, 2026, in accordance with Amendment 1 to the N.C. Spotted Seatrout Fishery Management Plan.

Kathy B. Rawls, Director, Division of Marine Fisheries, hereby announces that effective **12:01 A.M., July 1, 2026**, the following restrictions will apply to spotted seatrout in **Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters including the Atlantic Ocean**:

I. RECREATIONAL SIZE AND HARVEST RESTRICTIONS

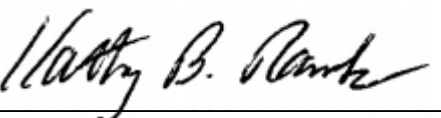
- A. It shall be unlawful to possess spotted seatrout taken for recreational purposes less than 14 inches total length or greater than 20 inches total length except that one (1) spotted seatrout over 26 inches maybe be retained
- B. It shall be unlawful to possess more than three (3) spotted seatrout per person per day taken by hook-and-line or for recreational purposes.

II. COMMERCIAL SIZE AND HARVEST RESTRICTIONS

- A. It shall be unlawful to possess spotted seatrout taken for commercial purposes less than 14 inches total length.
- B. It shall be unlawful for a commercial fishing operation to possess more than 75 spotted seatrout per day except the stop net beach seine fishery in the Atlantic Ocean off Bogue Banks, Carteret County.
- C. It shall be unlawful for a commercial fishing operation to possess more than three (3) spotted seatrout per person per day taken by hook and line.
- D. From January 1 through September 30, it shall be unlawful for a commercial fishing operation to take or land spotted seatrout for commercial purposes from 11:59 P.M. Friday to 12:01 A.M. Monday each week.
- E. From October 1 through December 31, it shall be unlawful to take or land spotted seatrout for commercial purposes from 11:59 P.M. Friday through 12:01 A.M. Tuesday each week.

III. 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 .0512 and 03M .0522.
- 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. In accordance with N.C. General Statute 113-130 to “Take” as used in this proclamation is defined as all operations during, immediately preparatory, and immediately subsequent to an attempt, whether successful or not, to capture, kill, pursue, hunt, or otherwise harm or reduce to possession any fisheries resources or wildlife resources.
- D. In accordance with N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03I .0101(5)(f)(ii) to “Land” as used in this proclamation is defined for trip tickets, when fish reach a licensed seafood dealer, or when the fisherman is the dealer, when the fish reach the shore or a structure connected to the shore.
- E. For additional restrictions on spotted seatrout harvest with stop nets refer to the most recent FF-type proclamation that establishes the reporting requirements and spotted seatrout harvest restrictions for stop nets in the Atlantic Ocean off Bogue Banks, Carteret County, in accordance with Amendment 1 to the N.C. Spotted Seatrout Fishery Management Plan.
- F. For additional stop net restrictions refer to the most recent M-type proclamation that establishes the areas, seasons, gear, and additional restrictions including the net operation call in requirements in the stop net beach seine fishery in the Atlantic Ocean off Bogue Banks, Carteret County, in accordance with Amendment 2 to the N.C. Striped Mullet Fishery Management Plan.
- G. The intent of this proclamation is to manage the spotted seatrout fishery in accordance with Amendment 1 to the N.C. Spotted Seatrout Fishery Management Plan.
- H. 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.
- I. Contact the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, P.O. Box 769, Morehead City, NC 28557, phone 252-515-5500 or 800-682-2632 for more information or visit the division website at www.ncmarinefisheries.net.
- J. **This proclamation opens the commercial and recreational spotted seatrout (speckled trout) fishery in Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters including the Atlantic Ocean on July 1, 2026, in accordance with Amendment 1 to the N.C. Spotted Seatrout Fishery Management Plan.**

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

June 25, 2026
2:30 P.M.