



JOSH STEIN
Governor

D. REID WILSON
Secretary

MICHAEL S. LOEFFLER
Interim Director

M-16-2026

PROCLAMATION

RE: RULE SUSPENSION – FLOUNDER POUND NETS – INTERNAL COASTAL AND JOINT FISHING WATERS - ESCAPE PANEL REQUIREMENTS

This proclamation supersedes proclamation M-9-2024, dated April 16, 2024. This proclamation maintains the minimum 5 ¾ inch stretched mesh length escape panel requirement for flounder pound nets in accordance with Amendment 4 to the N.C. Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan.

Michael S. Loeffler, Interim Director, Division of Marine Fisheries, hereby announces that effective at **12:01 A.M., September 15, 2026**, the following restrictions will apply to flounder pound net sets in Internal Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters:

I. SUSPENSION OF A PORTION OF N.C. MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION RULE 15A NCAC 03J .0501 (e)(2)

The following portion of N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03J .0501 is suspended:

Section (e)(2), which reads:

(e) Escape Panels:

- (2) It shall be unlawful to use flounder pound net sets without four unobstructed escape panels in each pound. The escape panels shall be fastened to the bottom and corner ropes on each wall on the side and back of the pound opposite the heart. The escape panels shall be a minimum mesh size of five and one-half inches, hung on the diamond, and shall be at least six meshes high and eight meshes long.

II. FLOUNDER POUND NET CONSTRUCTION AND REQUIREMENTS

It shall be unlawful to use flounder pound net sets as defined in N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03J .0501(a)(2):

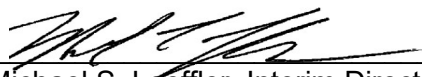
- A. Without four unobstructed escape panels in each pound; and
- B. The escape panels shall be fastened to the bottom and corner ropes on each wall on the side and back of the pound opposite the heart; and
- C. The escape panels shall be a minimum stretched mesh length of **5 ¾ inches**, hung on the diamond, and shall be at least six meshes high and eight meshes long.

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 .0501.

- B. It is unlawful to violate the provisions of any proclamation issued by the Fisheries Director under their delegated authority pursuant N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03H .0103.
- C. 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.
- D. In accordance with N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03J .0505 (a)(3) it is unlawful to fail to render a flounder pound net set inoperable during the closed flounder season.
- E. In accordance with N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03O .0503 (e)(4)(B), it shall be unlawful for a fish dealer to possess, purchase, sell, or offer for sale flounder taken from estuarine waters without first obtaining an Estuarine Flounder Dealer Permit required for specific management purposes for the applicable fisheries and harvest area. These permits are available at no cost from all Division of Marine Fisheries License Offices
- F. For additional restrictions on flounder please refer to the most recent FF-type proclamations issued for specific management areas.
- G. The intent of this proclamation is to maintain minimum mesh size requirements for the flounder pound net escape panels in accordance with Amendment 4 to the N.C. Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan.
- H. 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 <http://ncmarinefisheries.net/>.
- I. **This proclamation maintains the minimum 5 ¾ inch stretched mesh length escape panel requirement for flounder pound nets in accordance with Amendment 4 of the N.C. Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan.**

By:


Michael S. Loeffler, Interim Director
DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES

September 3, 2026
10:15 A.M.