



## NOTICE OF TEXT [Authority G.S. 150B-21.2(c)]

### OAH USE ONLY

VOLUME:

ISSUE:

### CHECK APPROPRIATE BOX:

- Notice with a scheduled hearing  
 Notice without a scheduled hearing  
 Republication of text. Complete the following cite for the volume and issue of previous publication, as well as blocks 1 - 4 and 7 - 14. If a hearing is scheduled, complete block 5.  
Previous publication of text was published in Volume:                      Issue:

<b>1. Rule-Making Agency:</b> N.C. MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
<b>2. Link to agency website pursuant to G.S. 150B-19.1(c):</b> <a href="https://deq.nc.gov/mfc-proposed-rules">https://deq.nc.gov/mfc-proposed-rules</a>
<b>3. Proposed Action -- Check the appropriate box(es) and list <u>rule citation(s)</u> beside proposed action:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>ADOPTION:</b> 15A NCAC 03M .0524  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>AMENDMENT:</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>REPEAL:</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>READOPTION <u>with</u> substantive changes:</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>READOPTION <u>without</u> substantive changes:</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>REPEAL through READOPTION:</b>
<b>4. Proposed effective date:</b> Pending legislative review
<b>5. Is a public hearing planned?</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  If yes: <b>Public Hearing date:</b> Wednesday, August 26, 2026 <b>Public Hearing time:</b> 6 p.m. <b>Public Hearing location:</b> WebEx <b>Register link:</b> <a href="https://ncgov.webex.com/weblink/register/rd413a5ff71720d465fd9b2fe0fe71df9">https://ncgov.webex.com/weblink/register/rd413a5ff71720d465fd9b2fe0fe71df9</a> <b>WebEx Events meeting link:</b> <a href="https://ncgov.webex.com/ncgov/j.php?MTID=md3d30700b6f0c3c5fe2ba5308cd59903">https://ncgov.webex.com/ncgov/j.php?MTID=md3d30700b6f0c3c5fe2ba5308cd59903</a> <b>Webinar number:</b> 2439 876 2166 <b>Webinar password:</b> 1234 <b>Webinar phone number:</b> 1-415-655-0003 <b>Access code:</b> 2439 876 2166 <b>Listening station:</b> Division of Marine Fisheries Central District Office, 5285 Highway 70 West, Morehead City, NC 28557

6. If no public hearing is scheduled, provide instructions on how to demand a public hearing: N/A

**7. Explain Reason For Proposed Rule(s):**

The proposed rule adoption would implement a five-fish bag limit and otherwise delegate proclamation authority to the Fisheries Director to manage the Atlantic bonito (*Sarda sarda*) fishery, with prior consent of the Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) before a proclamation is issued. Landings of Atlantic bonito from the recreational sector have increased in state waters over the last 10 years, and North Carolina accounts for 22% of the overall coastwide landings. Trends in the number of recreationally harvested fish have increased while trends in the number of released fish have remained stable over this time. Atlantic bonito is incidentally caught by commercial fishers pursuing other species; there is not a targeted fishery at this time. Atlantic bonito has a limited shelf life as a fresh product and is not desirable in frozen form. Little information exists on the status of Atlantic bonito in North Carolina, so their stock status is considered unknown, and the species is not managed at either the state or federal level, except Massachusetts. The MFC is seeking to adopt a rule to have the ability to manage this fishery as more data continues to be collected and the apparent popularity of the recreational fishery increases.

**8. Procedure for Subjecting a Proposed Rule to Legislative Review:** If an objection is not resolved prior to the adoption of the rule, a person may also submit written objections to the Rules Review Commission. If the Rules Review Commission receives written and signed objections in accordance with G.S. 150B-21.3(b2) from 10 or more persons clearly requesting review by the legislature and the Rules Review Commission approves the rule, the rule will become effective as provided in G.S. 150B-21.3(b1). The Commission will receive written objections until 5:00 p.m. on the day following the day the Commission approves the rule. The Commission will receive those objections by mail, delivery service, hand delivery, or email. If you have any further questions concerning the submission of objections to the Commission, please call a Commission staff attorney at 984-236-1850.

**Rule(s) is automatically subject to legislative review. Cite statutory reference:** S.L. 2019-198

**9. The person to whom written comments may be submitted on the proposed rule(s):**

**Name:** CATHERINE BLUM

**Address:** P.O. BOX 769

MOREHEAD CITY, NC 28557

Written comments may also be submitted via an online form available at <https://deq.nc.gov/mfc-proposed-rules>.

**Phone (optional):** N/A

**Fax (optional):** N/A

**E-Mail (optional):** N/A

**10. Comment Period Ends:** October 2, 2026

**11. Fiscal impact. Does any rule or combination of rules in this notice create an economic impact? Check all that apply.**

- State funds affected
- Local funds affected
- Substantial economic impact ( $\geq$ \$1,000,000)
- Approved by OSBM
- No fiscal note required

**12. Rule-making Coordinator:** JENNIFER EVERETT

**Phone:** 919-707-8595

**E-Mail:** JENNIFER.EVERETT@DEQ.NC.GOV

**Additional agency contact, if any:** CATHERINE BLUM

**Phone:** 252-515-5500

**E-mail:** CATHERINE.BLUM@DEQ.NC.GOV

**13. The Agency formally proposed the text of this rule(s) on**  
**Date:** May 14, 2026

**14. Signature of Agency Head\* or Rule-making Coordinator:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Typed Name:** JENNIFER EVERETT  
**Title:** RULEMAKING COORDINATOR

*\*If this function has been delegated (reassigned) pursuant to G.S. 143B-10(a), submit a copy of the delegation with this form.*