

**Report to the North Carolina General Assembly's Joint Legislative  
Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic  
Resources**

***Phased-In Mandatory Commercial and Recreational Reporting of  
Certain Fish Harvests Annual Report***

**May 1, 2026**

**NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
QUALITY / DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES**

**and**

**NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION**

**Pursuant to S.L. 2023-137, Section 6, and S.L. 2024-45, Section 8**

Each year, the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality/Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) are required to report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources on mandatory reporting of the harvest of certain fisheries. The following report covers activities from May 1, 2025, through April 30, 2026.

During this reporting period, NCDMF and NCWRC continued implementation of phased-in mandatory commercial and recreational harvest reporting requirements, with a focus on improving reporting tools, stakeholder outreach, compliance education, and long-term program development.

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## **Reporting Tools and Technology Development**

On December 1, 2025, DMF launched an ESRI Survey123 online reporting form ([www.deq.nc.gov/report-my-fish](http://www.deq.nc.gov/report-my-fish)) enabling recreational anglers to submit harvest reports using a smartphone, tablet, or computer. A simple iPhone app was also launched that allows users to log in, submit reports, and access their submission history at a later date to verify compliance if requested by Marine Patrol. Because the ESRI online reporting form did not have these capabilities and Android phone users did not have an app yet, DMF launched a custom ESRI web portal in March 2026 to allow users to log in, submit reports, and access their reporting history. An Android application is also under development. For anglers without access to a smartphone or online computer access, a paper report card option was developed and distributed (<https://www.deq.nc.gov/marine-fisheries/paper-report-card/open>). These tools represent the initial phase of development toward a more streamlined, web-based reporting system. Smartphone applications with offline reporting capabilities are currently in development to allow anglers to record and store harvest information on the phone until internet access is available to formally submit.

Development efforts continue towards a long-term recreational reporting system that will enhance angler experience and incentivize angler use. The agencies continue to work on developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a comprehensive recreational reporting platform. Work also progressed on the development of a commercial reporting application to allow commercial fishermen to report their own personal consumption landings without going through a seafood dealer. This is intended to improve efficiency, data accuracy, and stakeholder compliance and reduce the reporting burden on the dealer.

Additionally, a survey was developed for distribution to commercial latent license holders to assess their awareness of mandatory harvest reporting requirements and to inform future outreach and compliance strategies.

The Mandatory Harvest Reporting Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) website was also reviewed and updated to ensure current, accurate, and user-friendly information for stakeholders.

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## **Commercial Reporting and Stakeholder Communication**

The N.C. Trip Ticket Program continues to serve as the primary mechanism for receiving commercial harvest data from licensed seafood dealers. To reinforce compliance with legislative requirements:

- FAQ webinars were conducted for Division staff to ensure consistent messaging and internal understanding of reporting requirements.
- Information and FAQ meetings were held with Trip Ticket Program staff and Port Agents to support field-level compliance and education efforts.

- Reminders were published in the annual and semi-annual dealer reports distributed to commercial stakeholders about requirements.
  - A letter regarding mandatory harvest reporting requirements was sent to all commercial license holders.
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## **Outreach and Public Engagement**

Outreach remains a high priority for both agencies. During this reporting period:

- Staff attended **10** recreational fishing club events to provide education, demonstrations, and reporting guidance.
- Staff participated in **12** local festivals and community events to increase public awareness of mandatory harvest reporting.
- Staff issued **three** new releases to public distribution lists totaling **338,984** recipients.
- **Five** social media posts were published across agency platforms to promote reporting requirements, deadlines, tools, and frequently asked questions.

These outreach efforts included live demonstrations of reporting tools, distribution of informational materials to tackle shops and visitor centers, and direct engagement with anglers and commercial stakeholders to answer questions and address concerns.

The agencies are also evaluating the feasibility of utilizing billboard advertising in key coastal and inland travel corridors to further promote awareness of mandatory harvest reporting requirements and increase stakeholder outreach.

In addition, a letter regarding mandatory harvest reporting requirements was sent to all for-hire and pier license holders.

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## **Marine Fisheries Commission Updates**

Quarterly updates were provided to the Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) to ensure transparency and to inform Commissioners of implementation progress, outreach efforts, compliance trends, and technology development milestones.

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## **Funding and Ongoing Implementation**

The agencies continue to track expenditures associated with implementation of mandatory harvest reporting and to align program development with legislative requirements and available funding. Efforts remain focused on regulatory compliance, stakeholder education, reporting tool refinement, and long-term system sustainability. The agencies will incorporate the information gathered into future permanent rules as enforcement is phased in pursuant to S.L. 2023-137, Section 6, and S.L. 2024-45, Section 8.

NCDMF and NCWRC remain committed to improving harvest data collection, supporting fisheries management decisions, and ensuring that reporting requirements are clear, accessible, and efficient for all affected stakeholders.

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### **Recreational Reports to Date**

As of April 7, 2026 (9:00 AM), 1,280 recreational records have been submitted since the system went live on December 1, 2025. Following the removal of 12 clearly fictitious entries and 20 test records, the total is 1,248 reports. The Mandatory Harvest Reporting Program relies on self-reported data, which cannot be independently verified; therefore, the extent of inaccurate or invalid reports is unknown. However, the prevalence of clearly erroneous submissions has declined as the program has moved passed its initial implementation. To date, 12 clearly invalid submissions have been identified.