



JOSH STEIN
Governor

D. REID WILSON
Secretary

KATHY B. RAWLS
Director

M-7-2025

PROCLAMATION

RE: OBSERVER TRIP SCHEDULING SYSTEM

This proclamation establishes the observer trip scheduling system (OTSS) to fish non-exempted gill nets in Internal Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters. The system will be operational starting at 12:01 A.M. Monday February 17, 2025 to submit plans to fish the following week.

Kathy B. Rawls, Director, Division of Marine Fisheries, hereby announces that effective at **12:01 A.M, February 24, 2025, the following restrictions apply:**

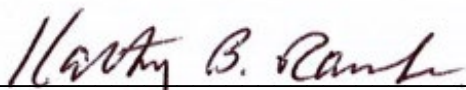
I. RESTRICTIONS

- A. It shall be unlawful to fish non-exempted gill nets in Internal Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters without having a confirmation number from the observer trip scheduling system or an agent of the division present while fishing.
- B. It shall be unlawful to fail to provide a confirmation number upon request by a Marine Patrol officer while fishing non-exempted gills nets in Internal Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters.

II. 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; 113-221.1; 143B-289.52; and N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rules 15A NCAC 03H .0103, 03J .0103, 03O .0501, and 03O .0506.
- B. It is unlawful to violate 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. To fish non-exempted gill nets, fishermen must hold a valid Estuarine Gill Net Permit (EGNP) and use the OTSS.
- D. The restrictions in this proclamation apply to non-exempted gill nets used by recreational commercial gear license holders as well as standard and retired commercial license holders.
- E. Exempted gill nets are defined in [M-2-2025](#).
- F. The observer trip scheduling system (OTSS) will open from 12:01 a.m. Monday until 11:59 P.M. Wednesday every week for fishermen to declare their intent to fish non-exempt gill nets the following week. Fishermen must report into OTSS by calling 833-ITP-TRIP (833-487-8747) or entering information online at <https://dmf.ncdenr.org/OTSSPublic/>.
- G. The availability of options to select a Management Unit and mesh size category while reporting into OTSS does not indicate whether or not the gear is allowed in the Management Unit at that time.

- H. All EGNP holders have been opted in to all communication types: phone, text, and email. Fisherman may choose to opt-out of up to two options but are required to have at least one opt-in to facilitate communication with the OTSS.
- I. If a fisherman is selected to be observed, the fisherman must contact their assigned observer by 4:00 P.M. on Friday before your scheduled trip.
- J. If a selected fisherman is unable to meet at the agreed upon time and place, the fishermen must contact their assigned observer within 30 minutes of the agreed upon time or risk trip cancellation for that day.
- K. If the assigned observer is not at the agreed time and place, contact the Observer Program at (252) 515-5625.
- L. 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 our website at www.ncmarinefisheries.net.
- M. 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.
- N. The Division of Marine Fisheries has received a Federal Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit (ITP) No. 27106 to authorize the incidental take for specified threatened and endangered sea turtles and sturgeon. This ITP allows the legal continuation of the small and large mesh gill net fisheries in internal coastal (inshore) waters of North Carolina, subject to permit conditions. The ITP conditions are designed to monitor, avoid & minimize, and mitigate interactions with these species in gill net fisheries permitted by the ITP (i.e., non-exempted gill net fisheries). Permit conditions require the division to provide 7-10 percent observer coverage in the permitted large-mesh non-exempt gill net fishery and 1-2 percent observer coverage in the permitted small-mesh non-exempt gill net fishery in Internal Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters. **If the required coverage is not maintained, large and small mesh gill nets permitted by the ITP could be prohibited in all Internal Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters.**
- O. **All other existing gill net rules and proclamations remain in effect.** See <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries/rules-proclamations-and-size-and-bag-limits/fisheries-management-proclamations#currentprocs> to refer to those M-type proclamations for gill net regulations that may be effective in the areas covered by this proclamation.
- P. **If there are any problems using the OTSS contact the observer program at (252) 515-5625.**
- Q. **This proclamation establishes the observer trip scheduling system (OTSS) to fish non-exempted gill nets in Internal Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters. The system will be operational starting at 12:01 A.M. Monday February 17, 2025 to submit plans to fish the following week.**

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

February 14, 2025
3:00 P.M.