



JOSH STEIN  
*Governor*

D. REID WILSON  
*Secretary*

KATHY B. RAWLS  
*Director*

**FF-27-2026**

## **PROCLAMATION**

### **RE: FLOUNDER – RECREATIONAL - INTERNAL COASTAL AND JOINT FISHING WATERS AND ATLANTIC OCEAN WATERS**

**This proclamation supersedes Proclamation FF-17-2026, dated March 13, 2026. This proclamation sets the 2026 recreational flounder fishery season, creel, and size limit, and prohibits the harvest of flounder using recreational commercial gear in accordance with Amendment 4 to the N.C. Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan.**

Kathy B. Rawls, Director, Division of Marine Fisheries, hereby announces that effective **at 12:01 A.M., September 1, 2026**, the following restrictions will apply to the taking of flounder for **recreational purposes in Internal Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters and Atlantic Ocean Waters:**

I. **SEASON**

It shall be unlawful to possess flounder for recreational purposes except from 12:01 A.M. on September 1, 2026, until 11:59 P.M. on September 14, 2026.

II. **SIZE, POSSESSION, AND GEAR LIMITS**

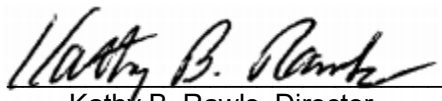
- A. It shall be unlawful to possess flounder less than 15 inches total length.
- B. It shall be unlawful to possess more than one (1) flounder per person per day.
- C. It shall be unlawful to possess more than one daily creel limit per person while engaged in fishing or aboard a vessel.
- D. It shall be unlawful to harvest flounder with a Recreational Commercial Gear License.

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 .0503 and 03M .0512.
- 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. The intent of this proclamation is to manage the recreational flounder fishery in accordance with Amendment 4 to the N.C. Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan.
- D. It is important for anglers to properly identify the flounder species they harvest. Please [SEE HERE](#) for resources to help anglers identify between North Carolina's three flounder species: southern flounder, summer flounder, and Gulf flounder.
- E. In accordance with N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03I .0120 it shall be unlawful to possess or transport through State Coastal Fishing Waters any species of fish that is subject to State season, size, or harvest restrictions, regardless whether the species was taken in State or federal waters, unless all fish taken are in

compliance with the restrictions for the waterbody or area being fished. If State season, size, or harvest restrictions differ from comparable restrictions pursuant to a fishery management plan adopted by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission or pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, or if there are no corresponding federal regulations, the State restrictions shall apply during such periods of possession or transportation.

- F. In accordance with N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Inland Fishing Regulations 15A NCAC 10C .0307, the season for taking and possessing flounder is September 1 through September 14 and the daily creel limit for flounder is one fish with a minimum size limit of 15 inches in Inland Fishing Waters.
- G. **N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 3I .0124 requires recreational fisherman who harvest flounder, red drum, spotted seatrout, striped bass, and weakfish from Coastal, Joint, and Inland Fishing Waters or Inland Fishing Waters adjacent to Internal Coastal or Joint Fishing Waters to report that harvest to the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries.**
- 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 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 <https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries>.
- J. **This proclamation sets the 2026 recreational flounder fishery season, creel, and size limit, and prohibits the harvest of flounder using recreational commercial gear in accordance with Amendment 4 to the N.C. Southern Flounder Fishery Management Plan.**

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

June 3, 2026  
11:30 A.M.