



JOSH STEIN
Governor

D. REID WILSON
Secretary

KATHY B. RAWLS
Director

FF-12-2026

PROCLAMATION

RE: SPOTTED SEATROUT – COASTAL AND JOINT FISHING WATERS INCLUDING THE ATLANTIC OCEAN - COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FISHERY CLOSURE – COLD STUN EVENTS

This proclamation supersedes proclamation FF-22-2025, dated June 10, 2025. This proclamation closes the commercial and recreational spotted seatrout fishery in Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters due to cold stun events, in accordance with Amendment 1 to the N.C. Spotted Seatrout Fishery Management Plan.

Kathy B. Rawls, Director, Division of Marine Fisheries, hereby announces that effective **4:00 P.M., February 6, 2026**, the following restrictions will apply to spotted seatrout in **Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters including the Atlantic Ocean**:

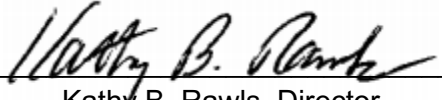
I. HARVEST RESTRICTIONS

It shall be **unlawful to possess, transport, buy, sell or offer for sale** spotted seatrout taken from Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters of North Carolina except dealers will have until 4:00 P.M., February 13, 2026, to dispose of unfrozen spotted seatrout in their possession taken prior to the closure.

II. 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 .0512 and 03M .0522.
- 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. This action was taken to control fishing effort following a severe cold stun event under the approved management strategy in Amendment 1 to the N.C. Spotted Seatrout Fishery Management Plan.
- D. It is the intent of the Fisheries Director to open the spotted seatrout season for commercial and recreational fishing by proclamation later in 2026 after surviving fish have the opportunity to spawn in accordance with Amendment 1 to the N.C. Spotted Seatrout Fishery Management Plan.
- E. 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.

- F. Contact the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, P.O. Box 769, Morehead City, NC 28557, phone 252-515-5500 or 800-682-2632 for more information or visit the division website at <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries>.
- G. **This proclamation closes the commercial and recreational spotted seatrout fishery in Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters due to cold stun events, in accordance with Amendment 1 to the N.C. Spotted Seatrout Fishery Management Plan.**

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

February 4, 2026
4:00 P.M.