North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
Division of Marine Fisheries
RECREATIONAL COMMERCIAL GEAR LICENSE (RCGL) APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS
(REV 2025-12)

This application is to be completed and signed by individuals applying for a Recreational Commercial Gear license. Individuals applying for a license for another under the authority of Power of Attorney must submit a **PHOTOCOPY** of the Power of Attorney and current picture identification.

Provide a **PHOTOCOPY** of one of the following current picture identifications:

- Driver's License; or
- State Identification (issued by DMV); or
- Military Identification; or
- Passport; or
- Resident Alien Card (green card)

A **Recreational Commercial Gear License** Application:

- If you have moved to the state of North Carolina and have resided within the state for 60 days to six months and consider North Carolina as your permanent residence, you are required to complete the Certification of Eligibility for North Carolina Residency/Domicile.
- Sign and date the RCGL application.
- If you set a non-exempt gill net (anchored gill nets) with this license you will also need to fill out the EGNP application and sign, date, and notarize (new applications only), the Permit Application Certification & General Permit Conditions Form and sign, date, and notarize (new applications only), and the Estuarine Gill Net Permit Specific Conditions Form. Mail all forms back with application(s) and current pictured identification.
- Check corresponding box on application for use of non-exempt gill nets (anchored gill nets).
    - An EGNP is required for gill-net fisheries that are covered by the ITP. Previously, the ITP, EGNP, and other related DMF documents used the term "anchored gill nets", while fisheries exempt from these requirements were termed run-around, strike, or drop gill nets and drift gill nets. With the new ITP, definitions of exempted gill-net fisheries were updated. The revised definitions offer greater consistency with the description of gear in the ITP application, and are as follows:
        - Run-around, strike, or drop gill nets: gill nets that are actively fished by either (1) using the boat to run a net around a school of fish, creating a closed circle, or (2) using the boat after the net is set to herd fish into the net without delay, whereby soak time does not exceed 30 minutes from the end of the set to the beginning of the haul.
        - Drift gill nets: gill nets that are used to capture fish while being moved along by water currents whereby the net stays attached to the vessel from deployment through retrieval.

    Non-exempt gill nets are those that do not meet these definitions, and the term "non-exempt" replaces the previously used description of "anchored". As such, they are regulated, in part, by the EGNP.

NC Wildlife Requirement:

Applications must include the last 4 digits of your social security number (SS#) to be processed.

Fees:

- $71.00 North Carolina Residents
- $501.00 Non-Residents
- Method of payment: Personal check, Money Order, Cashier check, Cash (In person only), or Credit Card (In person only). Make payable to North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries. There will be a $35.00 service charge for returned checks.

You are required to notify the Division of Marine Fisheries of any address or residency changes within 30 days. Incomplete applications submitted without required documentation will be deemed incomplete and returned to you unprocessed.

Mail to: **North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries**
License Office
PO Box 769
Morehead City, NC 28557

North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
Division of Marine Fisheries
RECREATIONAL COMMERCIAL GEAR LICENSE (RCGL) APPLICATION
(REV 2025-12)

NC Wildlife requires the last 4 digits of your SS# for processing

Last 4 digits of SS#	

Select One: ☐ New Application ☐ Renew ☐ Update

Will you be using a non-exempt gill net (anchored gill net): ☐ Yes ☐ No

Existing Recreational Commercial Gear License Number	

Select One:
☐ North Carolina Resident
☐ Non-Resident – less than 60 days
☐ Military stationed in North Carolina**
☐ Student in NC School**
** **Must provide documentation as proof of residency.**

Individual Participant Information

WRC I.D. # (If renewing)	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Suffix

Check One: Driver's License ☐	State I.D. ☐	Military I.D. ☐	Resident Alien I.D. ☐	Passport ☐

No.	Expire Date / /

Date of Birth	Primary Residence (State)	E-mail Address
_____ / _____ / _____		

Race	Gender:	Physical Address	Mailing Address ☐ Check if same as physical address
	M / F		
Height	Weight	Address 1:	Address 1:
		Address 2:	Address 2:
Eye Color	Hair Color	City: State: Zip:	City: State: Zip:
		County: Country:	County: Country:

Home Phone:	Business Phone:	Fax:	Cellular Phone:
( ) -	( ) -	( ) -	( ) -

Applicant signature **Must be signed to be valid** Date

For those individuals applying for a Recreational Commercial Gear license (RCGL):

An Estuarine Gill Net Permit (EGNP) is required for anyone who plans to fish any gill net in internal coastal waters other than run-around, strike, or drop gill nets and drift gill nets. Internal coastal waters include sounds and rivers, but not the ocean. Gill nets that require an EGNP are referred to as "non-exempt gill nets."

To be exempt from this permit requirement, run-around, strike, or drop gill nets must be "actively fished by either using the boat to run around a school of fish, creating a closed circle, OR using the boat after the net is set to herd fish into the net without delay, whereby soak time does not exceed 30 minutes from the end of the set to the beginning of the haul." Drift gill nets must be attached to the vessel from deployment through retrieval while being moved along by water currents and cannot be anchored.

To ensure compliance with the Federally issued Incidental Take Permit for sea turtles and sturgeon in the estuarine non-exempt gill net fishery, a condition of this permit is that the fisherman agrees to be observed by the DMF's Observer Program.

To facilitate scheduling of observed fishing trips, the DMF developed the Observer Trip Scheduling System (OTSS), which was implemented in February 2025. All Estuarine Gill Net Permit (EGNP) holders who intend to fish non-exempt gill nets are required to use this system to legally fish non-exempt gill nets.

If the fisherman ONLY uses drift, runaround, strike, and/or drop gill nets and NOT non-exempt gill nets, they do not need an EGNP or to report their plans using OTSS.

To report planned fishing activity, fishermen must submit their plans one week advance between 12:01 p.m. Monday and 11:59 p.m. Wednesday. Reports can be submitted by calling the automated hotline at 833-ITP-TRIP (833-487-8747) or through the web portal at https://dmf.ncdenr.org/OTSSPublic/. Fishermen must have a current unexpired Estuarine Gill Net Permit and their permit number available to report their plans. If technical issues occur while reporting, fishermen must contact the Observer Program helpline at 252-515-5625 before 11:59 p.m. Wednesday. If staff are unavailable, a voicemail must be left to document the issue.

Automated reminders to report plans for the following week are sent to all EGNP holders each Monday and Wednesday. Each Thursday, fishermen selected to be observed the following week will receive contact information for their assigned observer. Those not selected will be provided with one or more confirmation numbers. Selected fishermen must contact their assigned observer by 4:00 p.m. Friday to legally fish during the following week. Having a confirmation number does not guarantee that a fisherman will not be observed by DMF staff or Marine Patrol.

Reminders and notifications are sent via phone, text message, and/or email. Permit holders may adjust their notification preferences by contacting their local DMF license office or the Observer Program helpline at 252-515-5625. At least one notification preference must be selected to ensure fishermen receive their confirmation number(s) and/or contact information for their assigned observer.

For more information, visit https://www.deq.nc.gov/OTSS or contact the Observer Program helpline at 252-515-5625.

(rev 05/2026)

North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
Division of Marine Fisheries
ESTUARINE GILL NET PERMIT APPLICATION
(REV 2025-12)

An Estuarine Gill Net Permit is required for anyone setting non-exempt gill nets in estuarine Internal Joint and Coastal (estuarine) waters that are covered by the Division of Marine Fisheries Incidental Take Permit issued by National Marine Fisheries Service under Section 10 of the Endangered Species Act. This requirement applies to gill nets used beginning September 1, 2014, whether for commercial or recreational purposes except gill nets that are exempted from the Incidental Take Permit defined as follows.

- Run-around, strike, or drop gill nets: gill nets that are actively fished by either (1) using the boat to run a net around a school of fish, creating a closed circle, or (2) using the boat after the net is set to herd fish into the net without delay, whereby soak time does not exceed 30 minutes from the end of the set to the beginning of the haul.
- Drift gill nets: gill nets that are used to capture fish while being moved along by water currents whereby the net stays attached to the vessel from deployment through retrieval.

The permit is free of charge. The application is available at any division license office, on our website, or by calling a division office and requesting an application. Refer to proclamation number M-2-2025 and the attached list of Frequently Asked Questions for more information.

Select One: ☐ New* ☐ Renewal ☐ Replace ☐ Update
*If you have not previously held an Estuarine Gill Net Permit, then this is a new application. New applications require the signature to be notarized.

Individual or Business Agent Participant Information

Participant I.D.	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Suffix

Check One: Driver's License ☐	State I.D. ☐	Military I.D. ☐	Resident Alien I.D. ☐	Passport ☐

No. Expire Date / /

Date of Birth	Primary Residence (State)	E-mail Address
_____ / _____ / _____		

Home Phone:	Business Phone:	Fax:	Cellular Phone:
( ) -	( ) -	( ) -	( ) -

Primary contact phone number where you can be reached (check one-required): ☐ home; ☐ cell; ☐ business

Commercial Use of Gill Nets (check box) ☐ *must have a valid Standard Commercial Fishing License or Retired SCFL*

P-Number Vessel #1: _____ Length:
P-Number Vessel #2: _____ Length:
P-Number Vessel #3: _____ Length:

Recreational Use of Gill Nets (check box) ☐ *must have a valid Recreational Commercial Gear License*

Vessel Length: _____

Management Units Fished (A, B, C, D1, D2, E) *

Fished Most Frequently _____
Next Most Frequently _____
Next Most Frequently _____
Next Most Frequently _____
Next Most Frequently _____

Gill Net Mesh Size Fished *

☐ Less than 4 inches stretched (small mesh)
☐ Greater than or equal to 5 inches stretched (large mesh)
☐ Both

Refer to attached maps

**As defined by NCDMF's Sea Turtle Incidental Take Permit*

North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
Division of Marine Fisheries
ESTUARINE GILL NET PERMIT APPLICATION

Please sign and date the following permit certification:

1. All the information provided, and any supporting documentation provided is true, accurate, and complete. For renewals, any changes in information or supporting documents have been provided at the time of renewal.
2. I, and all listed designees, currently have no marine fisheries licenses, permits, endorsements, or registrations under suspension or revocation, and the privilege to hold such licenses, permits, endorsements, or registrations is not revoked or suspended.
3. I, and all listed designees, have not been convicted of four or more violations in any jurisdiction related to state or federal law or regulations involving or related to marine or estuarine resources.
4. I have been provided a copy of the NC Rules for Coastal Fishing Waters containing the rules and conditions that apply to this permit and/or a copy of the Permit Condition Form for permits whose conditions are stated in proclamation.
5. I understand that as a condition of accepting this permit from the Division of Marine Fisheries, I agree to abide by all conditions of this permit and agree, that if specific conditions of this permit as identified for this permit are violated, or if false information was provided in the application for initial issuance, renewal or transfer, this permit may be suspended or revoked by the Fisheries Director.

I understand that any false information or fraudulent disclosures may result in termination of this permit and possible criminal prosecution.

You are required to notify the Division of Marine Fisheries of any address changes within 30 days. Incomplete applications submitted without required documentation will be deemed incomplete and returned to you unprocessed.

Mail to: **North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries**
License Office
PO Box 769
Morehead City, NC 28557

Signature:_____ _____
Applicant signature Date
Must be signed to be valid

Date Signed: _____

Signature of Permittee: _____

NOTARY (for NEW permit applications only)

State: _____

County: _____

Sworn to and Subscribed before me this _____ day of _____

Notary Public: _____My Commission expires:_____

North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
Division of Marine Fisheries
PERMIT APPLICATION CERTIFICATION & GENERAL PERMIT CONDITIONS FORM
(REV 2025-12)

OFFICE USE ONLY	Year_____
PID #	
PERMIT #	
DMF Staff:	

Certification Statement *(This section must be completed by applicant)*

I, _____ certify that:

1. All the information provided on this application and any supporting documentation provided is true, accurate, and complete. And further, for renewals, any changes in information or supporting documents have been provided at the time of renewal. I understand that any false information or fraudulent disclosures may result in termination of appropriate licenses, permits and related documents, revocation or suspension of marine fisheries licensing and other privileges, and in possible criminal prosecution.

2. I am a resident of the State of: _____.
   If claiming resident status in North Carolina, I certify further that (check one):
   - ☐ I have been a legal resident for more than six months, or
   - ☐ If domiciled in North Carolina between 60 days and six months, I have completed and submitted with this application a notarized Certificate of Eligibility for North Carolina Residency.

3. For permits, I certify that:
   a) I currently have no marine fisheries licenses, permits, endorsements, or registrations under suspension or revocation and the privilege to hold such licenses, permits, endorsements, or registrations is not revoked or suspended.
   b) I have not been convicted of four or more violations in any jurisdiction related to state or federal law or regulations involving or related to marine or estuarine resources during the previous three years.
   c) I understand that as a condition of accepting a permit from the Division of Marine Fisheries, I agree to abide by all conditions of the permit and agree, that if conditions of the permit as identified for the permit are violated, or if false information was provided in the application for initial issuance, renewal or transfer, the permit may be suspended or revoked by the Fisheries Director.

4. NC General Statute §113-221 requires the NC Division of Marine Fisheries to provide a current copy of the rules governing activities authorized by the license you are purchasing. You have the right to request a current rulebook in hardbound. The document is available on the Division of Marine Fisheries website on the "Rules and Regulations" webpage at http://deq.nc.gov/dmf-rules.

5. I have been provided a copy of the permit rules and conditions that apply. I acknowledge failure to abide by all permit rules as well as conditions may result in suspension or revocation of the permit. For violation of general or specific permit conditions, permits may be suspended or revoked for 10 days, 30 days, or up to 6 months depending on the 3-year history of violations.

15A NCAC 03O .0502 Permit Conditions; General

(a) It shall be unlawful to violate any permit condition.
(b) The following conditions shall apply to all permits issued by the Fisheries Director:
- (1) it shall be unlawful to:
  - (A) operate under the permit except in areas, at times, and under conditions specified on the permit.
  - (B) operate under a permit without having the permit or copy thereof in possession of the permittee or the permittee's designees at all times of operation and the permit or copy thereof shall be ready at hand for inspection, except for a Pound Net Set Permit.
  - (C) operate under a permit without having a current picture identification in possession and ready at hand for inspection.
  - (D) refuse to allow inspection and sampling of a permitted activity by an agent of the Division of Marine Fisheries.
  - (E) fail to provide complete and accurate information requested by the Division in connection with the permitted activity.
  - (F) provide false information in the application for initial issuance, renewal, or transfer of a permit.
  - (G) hold a permit issued by the Fisheries Director if not eligible to hold any license required as a condition for that permit as stated in Rule .0501 of this Section.
  - (H) fail to provide reports within the timeframe required by the specific permit conditions.
  - (I) fail to keep such records and accounts as required by the rules in this Chapter for determination of conservation policy, equitable and efficient administration and enforcement, or promotion of commercial or recreational fisheries.
  - (J) assign or transfer permits issued by the Fisheries Director, except for a Pound Net Set Permit as authorized by 15A NCAC 03J .0504.
- (2) the Fisheries Director or the Fisheries Director's agent may, by conditions of the permit, impose on a commercial fishing operation and for recreational purposes any of the following restrictions for the permitted purposes:
  - (A) specify time;
  - (B) specify area;
  - (C) specify means and methods;
  - (D) specify record keeping and reporting requirements;
  - (E) specify season;
  - (F) specify species;
  - (G) specify size;
  - (H) specify quantity;
  - (I) specify disposition of resources;
  - (J) specify marking requirements; and
  - (K) specify harvest conditions.
- (3) unless specifically stated as a condition on the permit, all statutes, rules, and proclamations shall apply to the permittee and the permittee's designees.

I understand that any violation of permit conditions may result in suspension or revocation of the permit.

Signature of Applicant: _____Date: _____

NOTARY

State: _____ County: _____

Sworn to and Subscribed before me this _____ day and year of _____, _____

Notary Public:_____My Commission expires: _____

North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries
ESTUARINE GILL NET PERMIT SPECIFIC CONDITIONS FORM
(REV 2025-12)

OFFICE USE ONLY	**Year**_____
PID #	_____
PERMIT #	_____
	_____
DMF Staff:	_____

The Estuarine Gill Net Permit (EGNP) serves as a certificate of your inclusion in the Incidental Take Permit Conservation Plan.

The Division of Marine Fisheries has received a new Federal Endangered Species Action Section 10 Incidental Take Permit (ITP; Number 27106) from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) authorizing a limited number of incidental takes of threatened or endangered sea turtles, and endangered sturgeon in estuarine gill net fisheries with the exceptions of runaround/strike/drop and drift gill nets as described below:

1. Runaround, strike or drop gill nets – gill nets that are actively fished by either (1) using the boat to run a net around a school of fish, creating a closed circle, or (2) using the boat after the net is set to herd fish into the net without delay, whereby soak time does not exceed 30 minutes from the end of the set to the beginning of the haul.

2. Drift gill nets – gill nets that are used to capture fish while being moved along by water currents whereby the net stays attached to the vessel from deployment though retrieval.

The EGNP meets related permit requirements of the Incidental Take Permit (15A NCAC 03H .0103(a), 03O .0506). The ITP includes a Conservation Plan that outlines measures to monitor, avoid & minimize, and mitigate interactions with these species in gill-net fisheries covered by the ITP. As part of the Conservation Plan, fishermen must apply for and receive an EGNP in order to use commercial or recreational gill nets covered by the ITP.

The Fisheries Director may, by proclamation, require individuals taking marine and estuarine resources regulated by the Marine Fisheries Commission, to obtain a special permit.

For violation of specific permit conditions (as specified on this form), permits may be suspended or revoked in accordance with 15A NCAC 03O .0504.

Legal Authority:
Authority for Estuarine Gill Net Permit is specified in G.S. 113-169.1, G.S. 113-221.1, 15A NCAC 03O .0501, 03O .0502, and 03O .0506.

Specific Permit Conditions:
An EGNP is required for holders of a Standard Commercial Fishing License (SCFL), Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License (RSCFL), or Recreational Commercial Gear License (RCGL) who deploy gill nets in Internal Coastal Waters and Joint Waters, except as described above for runaround/strike/drop or drift gills nets. **15A NCAC 03O .0502(a)** (15A NCAC 03O .0506)

Permits are non-transferable (see General Permit conditions). An individual who is assigned a SCFL shall hold an EGNP in their own name. The master designated on the single vessel corporation SCFL is the individual eligible to receive the EGNP.
15A NCAC 03O .0502(a) (15A NCAC 03O .0506)

EGNP holders whose permit has been suspended or revoked shall contact the Division of Marine Fisheries Protected Resources staff at (252) 515-5625 or (252) 515-5627 within 5 calendar days of reinstatement of the EGNP to arrange an observer trip.
15A NCAC 03O .0502(a) (15A NCAC 03O .0506)

It is unlawful to violate the provisions of any rules or proclamations issued in regards to the conditions set out in the federally issued ESA Section 10 Incidental Take Permit to reduce incidental takes of sea turtles and sturgeon in large- or small-mesh gill-net fisheries covered by the ITP. **15A NCAC 03O .0502(a)** (15A NCAC 03O .0506)

It is unlawful for an EGNP holder to refuse or deny Division of Marine Fisheries observers a trip aboard their vessel to collect data or a trip using alternative platform to collect data. **15A NCAC 03O .0502(a)** (15A NCAC 03O .0506)

It is unlawful for an EGNP holder, as well as the master and crew members of the boat, to interfere with, or obstruct the observer in the course of collecting data or samples, which shall include refusal or failure to provide information on fishing gear parameters or to provide any captured finfish or sea turtle to Division of Marine Fisheries staff. **15A NCAC 03O .0502(a)** (15A NCAC 03O .0506)

It is unlawful for an EGNP holder, as well as the master and crew members of the boat, to harass the observer in the course of setting up trips, collecting data and samples, or during any other type of communication. Harassment shall be defined consistent with the federal regulations, 50 CFR §600.725(o), (t), and (u), and may be verbal or physical including, but not limited to, sexual connotations, intimidating, resisting, impeding, threatening, bribing, and coercion of observers. **15A NCAC 03O .0502(b)(1)** (15A NCAC 03O .0506)

It is unlawful for an EGNP holder to avoid or mislead observers including but not limited to failure to return phone calls (regardless of whether or not the EGNP holder is actively fishing or not), failure to notify the Division of Marine Fisheries of a phone number change within 14 calendar days of such change and providing incorrect information on fishing activity. **15A NCAC 03O .0502(a)** (15A NCAC 03O.0506)

It is unlawful to fail to provide a phone number that the EGNP holder can be reached. **15A NCAC 03O .0502(a)** (15A NCAC 03O .0506)

When the Division of Marine Fisheries determines an EGNP holder's boat does not meet the safety requirements to carry an observer, the EGNP holder will be notified and shall contact the Division of Marine Fisheries Protected Resources staff at (252) 515-5625 or (252) 515-5627 within 5 calendar days to make arrangements for an alternative platform observer trip. **15A NCAC 03O .0502(a)** (15A NCAC 03O .0506)

It is unlawful to fail to comply with all observer notification system or call-in requirements set out by permit conditions, proclamations, and/or rule. **15A NCAC 03O .0502(a)** (15A NCAC 03O .0506)

It is unlawful to fail to report within 24 hours of capture any sea turtle or sturgeon captured in gill-net fisheries covered by the federally issued ESA Section 10 Incidental Take Permit. Reports shall be made to the Division of Marine Fisheries at (252) 515-5500 or (800) 682-2632. Permit holders must follow instructions for safe handling, resuscitation, and disposition for any incidentally captured sea turtles or sturgeon provided to EGNP holders at the time they receive their permit. Self-reported takes of sea turtles and sturgeon by fishermen fishing without an observer do not count toward the allowable takes in the Incidental Take Permit. **15A NCAC 03O .0502(a)** (15A NCAC 03O .0506)

I understand that any violation of permit conditions may result in suspension or revocation of the permit.

Signature:_____ _____

Permittee signature (**must be signed to be valid**) Date

North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality

Division of Marine Fisheries
ESTUARINE GILL NET PERMIT INFORMATIONAL PACKET

December 2025

BACKGROUND:

Thank you for your interest in acquiring an Estuarine Gill Net Permit (EGNP). Please read all included documents in this packet related to your EGNP. These documents are intended to help you abide by the conditions of your permit and ensure the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) adheres to the conditions of the sea turtle and sturgeon Endangered Species Act Section 10 Incidental Take Permit (ITP) issued by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

On October 2, 2024, the DMF received a consolidated ITP permit for sea turtles and sturgeon. As such, there have been significant changes to the EGNP, including the addition of the Observer Trip Scheduling System. Therefore, please read all documents in the following packet thoroughly to ensure you are familiar with your responsibilities and the requirements of the EGNP.

An EGNP is required for gill-net fisheries that are covered by the ITP. Previously, the ITP, EGNP, and other related DMF documents used the term “anchored gill nets”, while fisheries exempt from these requirements were termed run-around, strike, or drop gill nets and drift gill nets. With the new ITP, definitions of exempted gill-net fisheries were updated. The revised definitions offer greater consistency with the descriptions of gear in the ITP application, and are as follows:

- Run-around, strike, or drop gill nets: gill nets that are actively fished by either (1) using the boat to run a net around a school of fish, creating a closed circle, or (2) using the boat after the net is set to herd fish into the net without delay, whereby soak time does not exceed 30 minutes from the end of the set to the beginning of the haul.

- Drift gill nets: gill nets that are used to capture fish while being moved along by water currents whereby the net stays attached to the vessel from deployment through retrieval

“Non-exempt gill nets” are those that do not meet these definitions, and the term “non-exempt” replaces the previously used description of “anchored”. As such, they are regulated, in part, by the EGNP.

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Estuarine Gill Net Permit (EGNP) Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Have the Specific Permit Conditions for the EGNP been modified?

A: Yes, while most of the Specific Permit Conditions remain unchanged it is important to read all the Specific Permit Conditions each time you receive your permit to make sure you are aware of all the requirements of the permit.

Q: Why was the EGNP developed?

A: The EGNP was developed to meet the National Marine Fisheries Service requirements in the DMF's Incidental Take Permit for sea turtles and sturgeon under Section 10 of the Endangered Species Act for the incidental take of these species in estuarine gill-net fisheries (except drift gill nets and runaround/strike/drop gill nets). The EGNP will improve the accuracy of the estimated number of fishery interactions with protected species and improve fisherman compliance with the Federal Incidental Take Permits.

Q: Do I need an EGNP for fishing gill nets in the ocean?

A: No, the EGNP is only for the non-exempt gill net fisheries set in Internal Coastal and Joint Waters (NCGS § 113-132, 15A NCAC 03Q).

Q: What types of gill nets DO require an EGNP?

A: An EGNP is required to set non-exempted gill nets in Internal Coastal and Joint Waters. A "non-exempted gill net" is defined as a gill net that does NOT meet the following definitions:

- Run-around, strike, or drop gill nets: gill nets that are actively fished by either (1) using the boat to run a net around a school of fish, creating a closed circle, or (2) using the boat after the net is set to herd fish into the net without delay, whereby soak time does not exceed 30 minutes from the end of the set to the beginning of the haul.
- Drift gill nets: gill nets that are used to capture fish while being moved along by water currents whereby the net stays attached to the vessel from deployment through retrieval

Q: How much does an EGNP cost?

A: There is no charge for an EGNP.

Q: How long is my 2026 EGNP valid?

A: The 2026 EGNP is valid from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026.

Q: Do Recreational Commercial Gear License (RCGL) holders who fish EGNP-permitted gill nets need an EGNP?

A: Yes. In addition to Standard Commercial Fishing License (SCFL) and Retired Standard Commercial Fishing License (RSCFL) holders, RCGL holders fishing non-exempted gill nets in Internal Coastal and Joint Waters need an EGNP.

Q: Do I need an EGNP if a Standard Commercial Fishing License was assigned to me?

A: Yes, you will need an EGNP in your name. This permit is non-transferable.

Q: What does the Specific Permit Condition concerning harassment refer to?

A: Harassment of an observer will not be tolerated and could result in the suspension or revocation of your EGNP.

Observer harassment is defined in a Specific Permit Condition stating, “It is unlawful for an EGNP holder, as well as the master and crew members of the boat, to harass the observer in the course of setting up trips, collecting data and samples, or during any other type of communication. Harassment shall be defined consistent with the federal regulations, 50 CFR §600.725(o), (t), and (u), and may be verbal or physical including, but not limited to, sexual connotations, intimidating, resisting, impeding, threatening, bribing, and coercion of observers.”

Q: What are examples of harassment?

A: Examples of harassment are outlined as follows:

- Intimidating, resisting, opposing, impeding, sexually harassing, bribing, or interfering with an observer.
- Interfering with or biasing the sampling procedure employed by an observer.
- Tampering with, destroying, or discarding an observer's collected samples, equipment, records, photos, papers, or personal effects.
- Prohibiting or barring by command, impediment, threat, coercion, or by refusal of reasonable assistance, an observer from performing duties.
- Harassing an observer by conduct that has sexual connotations, or otherwise creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.
- Requiring, pressuring, coercing, or threatening an observer to perform crew member duties.

Q: Why do I have to allow my gill-net trip to be observed?

A: The National Marine Fisheries Service requires specific amounts of gill-net trips be observed (i.e., coverage) as a condition of the ITP issued to the DMF. If the DMF fails to consistently observe the required percentage of gill-net trips to obtain the required coverage, the National Marine Fisheries Service could suspend or revoke the Incidental Take Permit.

Refusing to allow an observer to observe a gill-net trip, either onboard or alternative platform, will result in suspension or revocation of your EGNP.

Q: How many gill-net trips does the DMF have to observe?

A: The conditions of the Incidental Take Permit require the DMF to observe a minimum of 7% of all large-mesh EGNP-permitted gill-net trips and a minimum of 1% of all small-mesh EGNP-permitted gill-net trips for each Management Unit during each season. If the DMF does not meet the minimum percentages, the gill-net fishery may have to close per the conditions of the Incidental Take Permit.

Q: How are large mesh and small mesh defined?

A: Large-mesh gill nets are classified as nets with a stretched mesh size of 5 inches or greater, and small-mesh gill nets are classified as nets with a stretched mesh size less than 5 inches.

Q: Why do I need to provide a valid phone number?

A: A valid phone number is needed to schedule an observed trip. This helps the DMF meet the mandatory observation requirement defined by the National Marine Fisheries in the Incidental Take Permit and keep the non-exempt gill net fishery open in Internal Coastal and Joint Waters.

Q: Will my EGNP be suspended or revoked if I do not allow the observer to sample my catch due to safety reasons (e.g., bad weather, mechanical issues, etc.)?

A: No, safety concerns are a legitimate reason to suspend sampling efforts. In these cases, the observer can resume sampling once conditions are safe again.

Q: What if my boat is too small to accommodate an onboard observer?

A: You can call the DMF Protected Resources staff at 252-515-5625 or 252-515-5627 and if you meet the criteria, you can arrange for the observers to observe the trip from a division-owned boat (alternative platform trip).

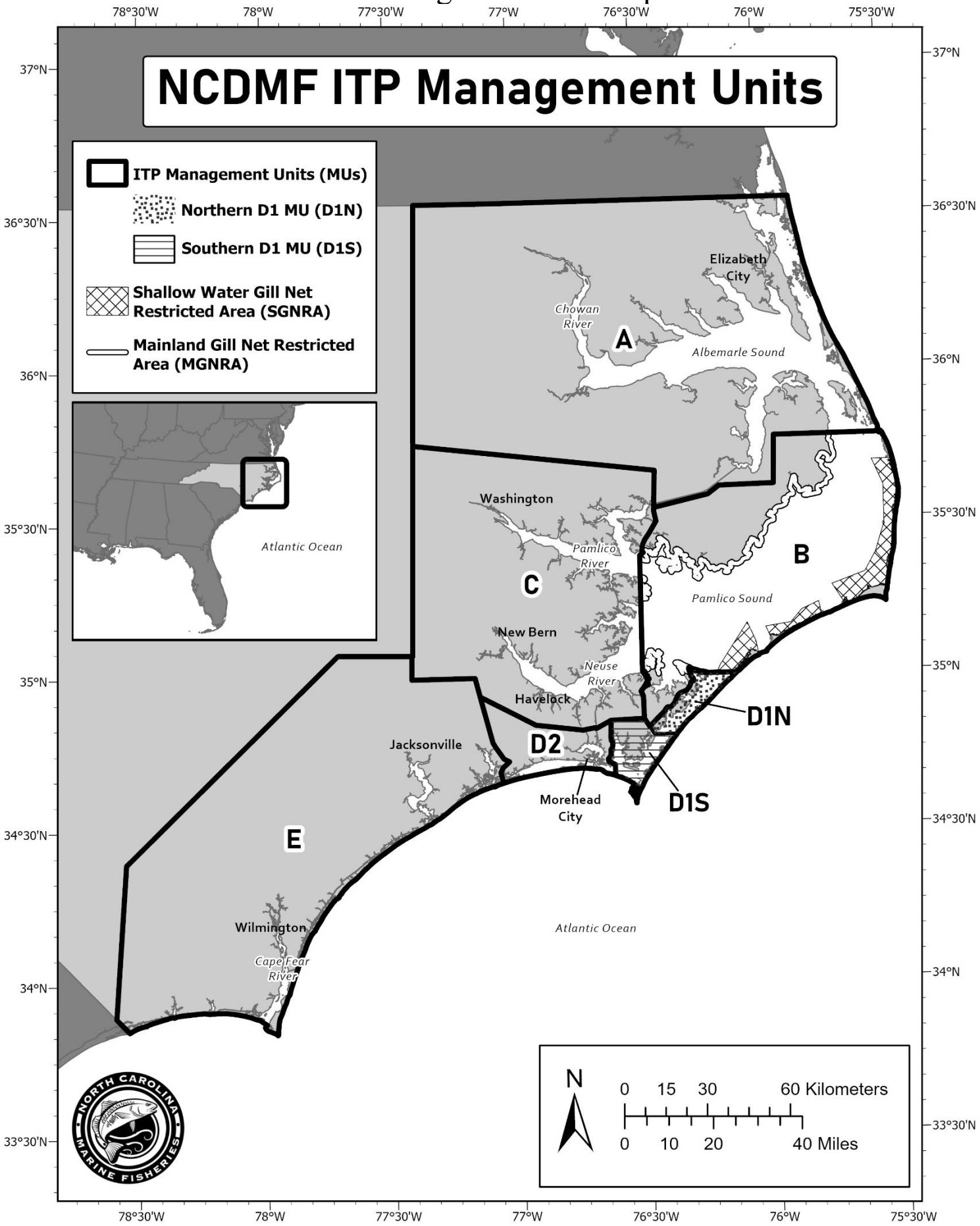
Q: If I self-report that I caught a sea turtle or sturgeon, could that close the fishery?

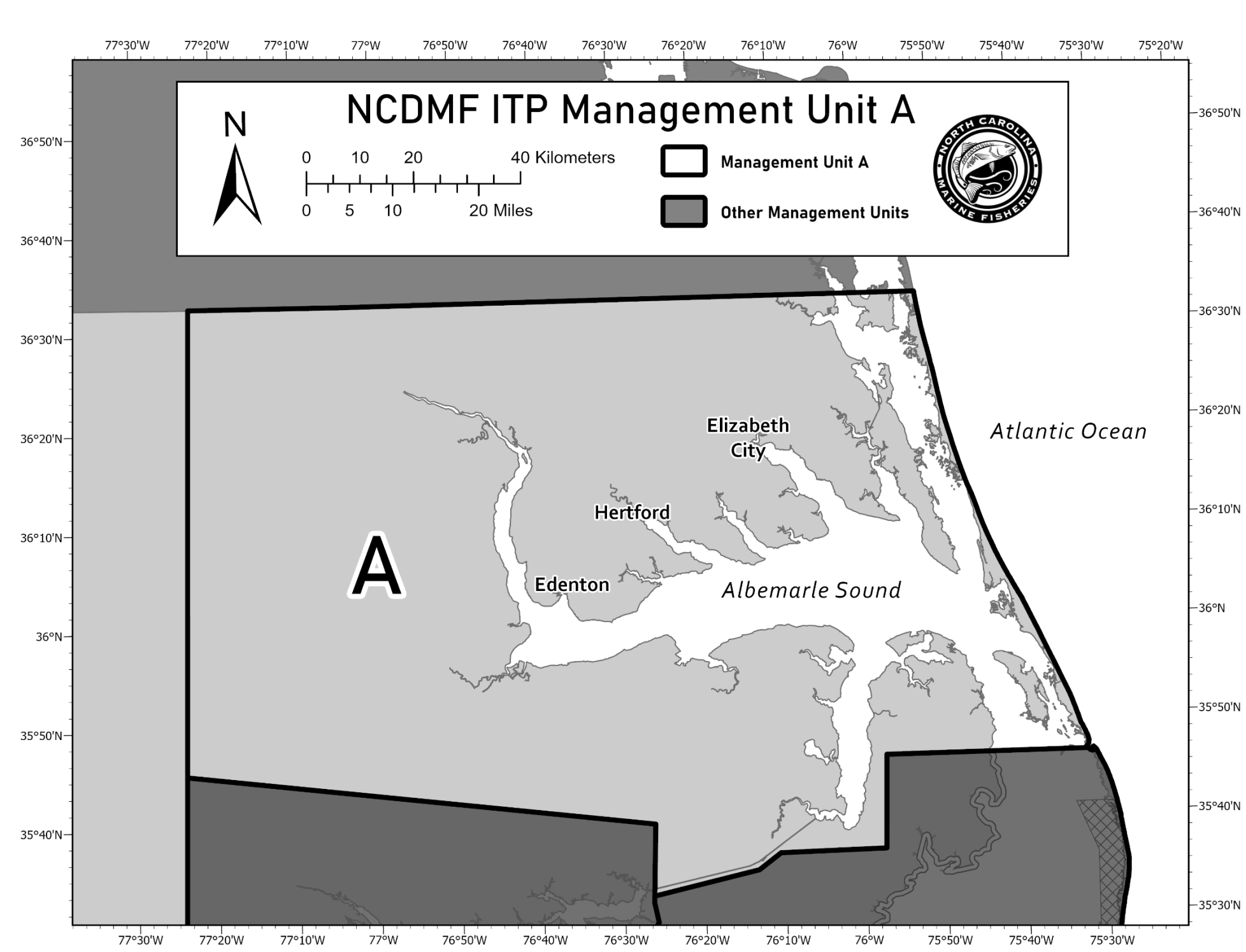
A: No. Only DMF-observed captures of sea turtles and sturgeon count towards the authorized number of incidental takes of sturgeon and sea turtles.

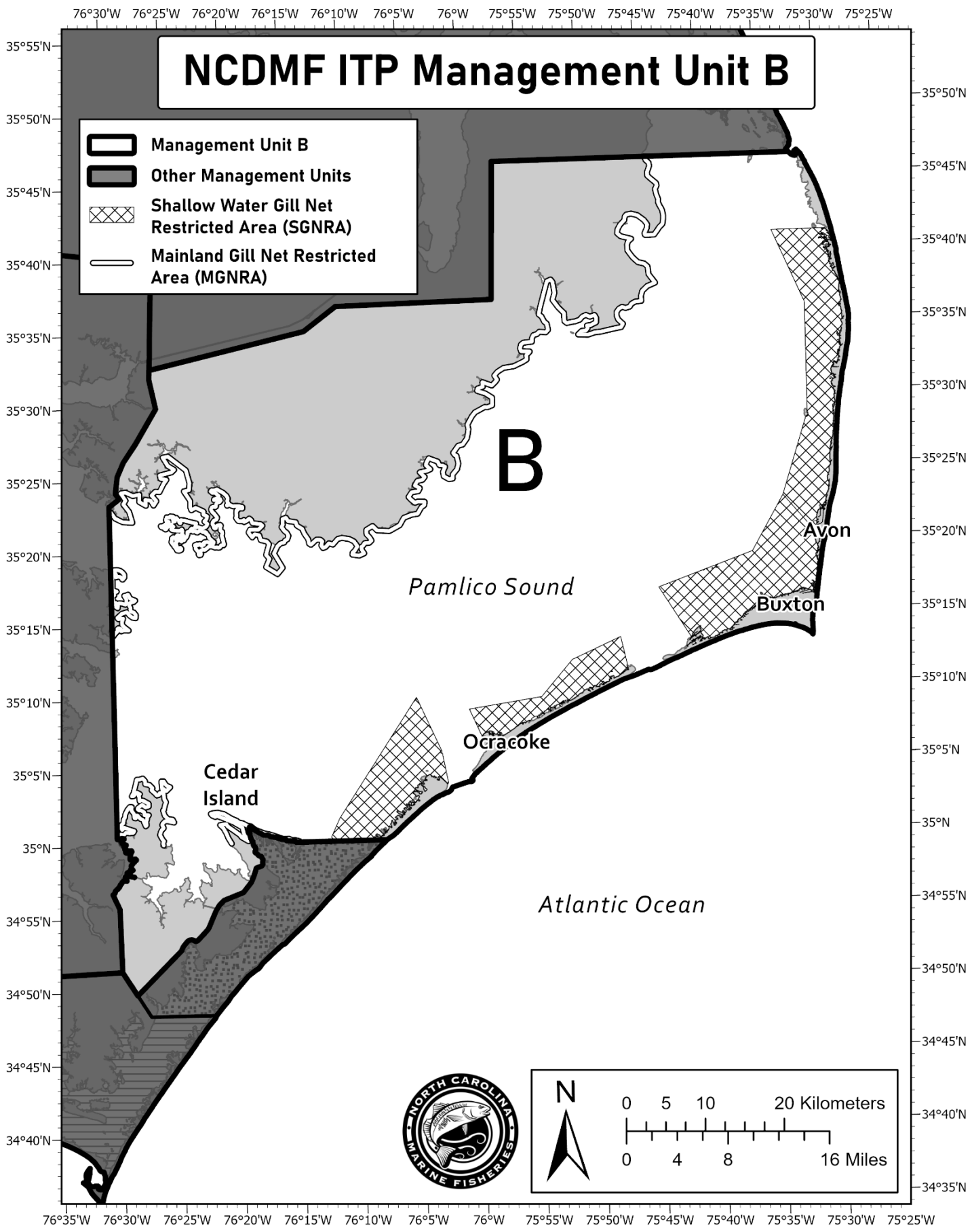
Q: Where can I get an EGNP?

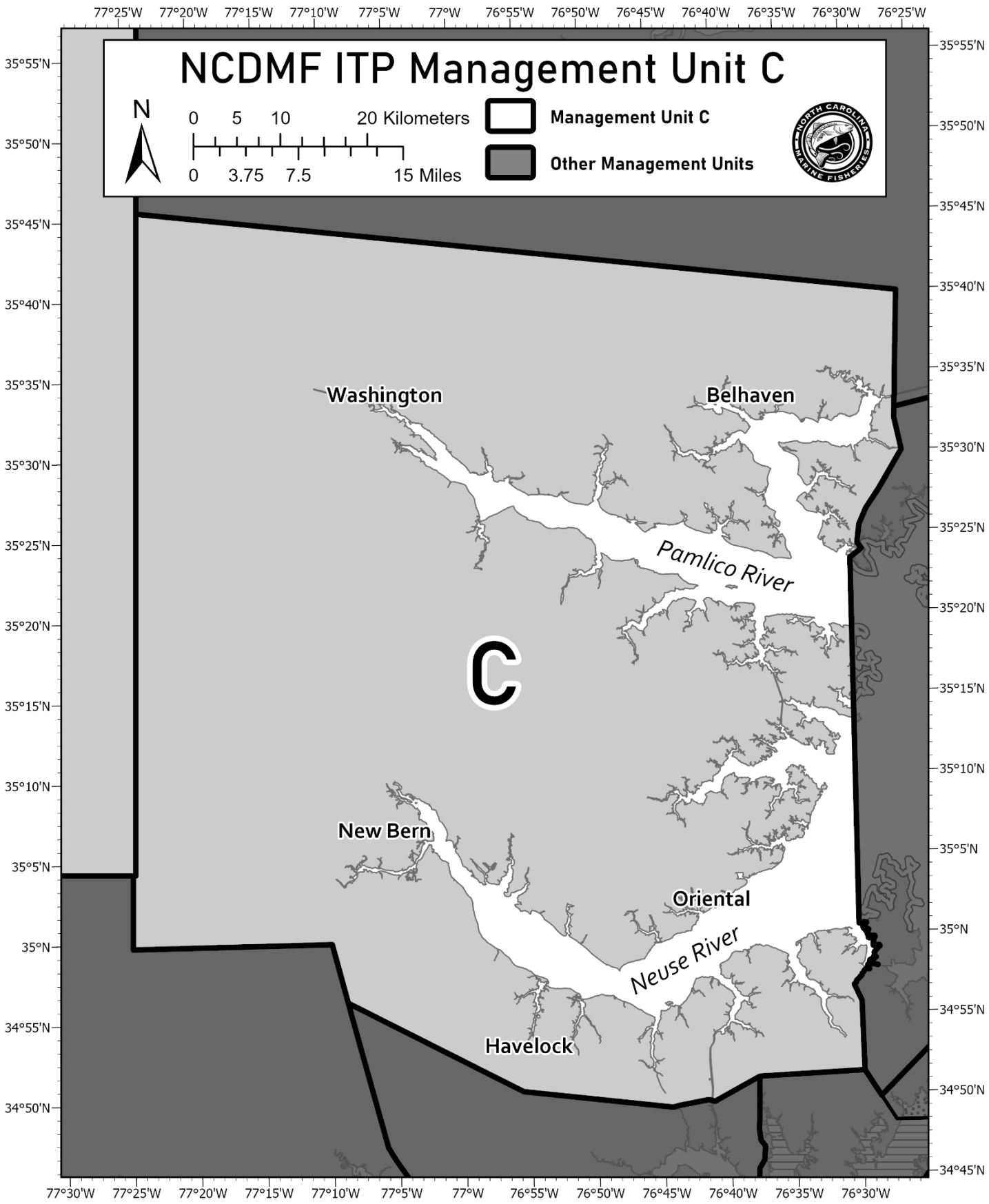
A: You can obtain an EGNP at any of the Division of Marine Fisheries offices in Manteo, Washington, Morehead City, and Wilmington.

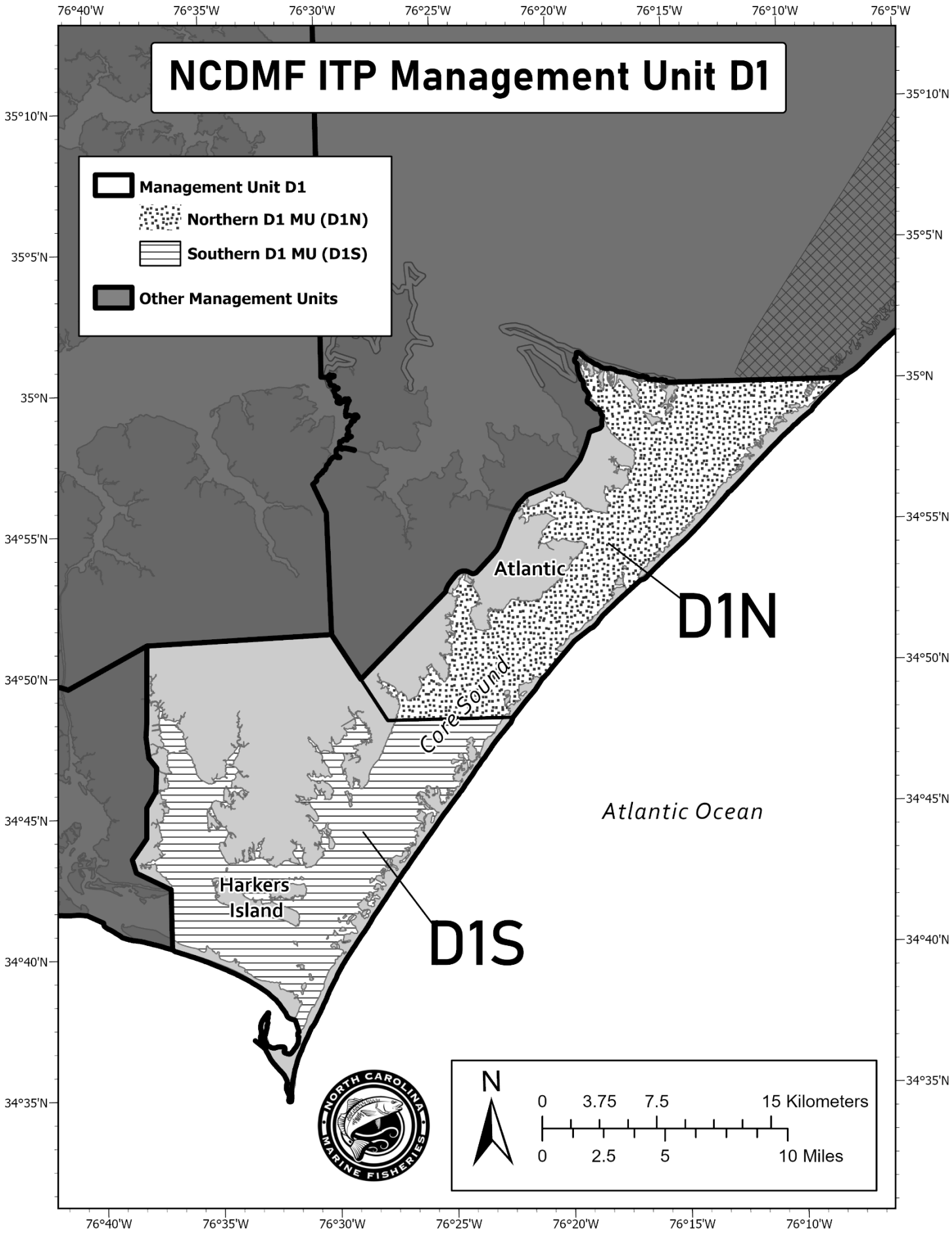
ITP Management Unit Maps

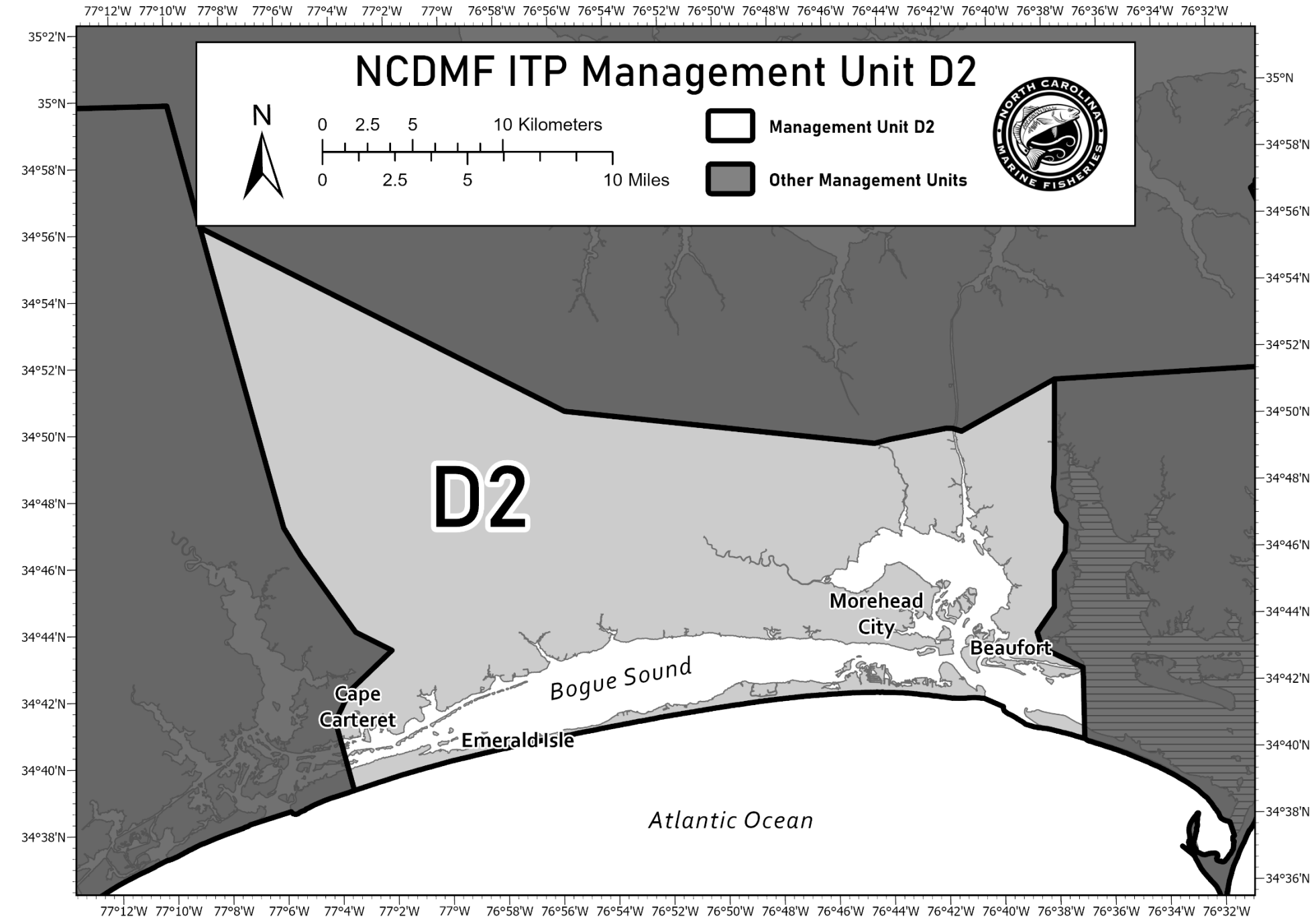


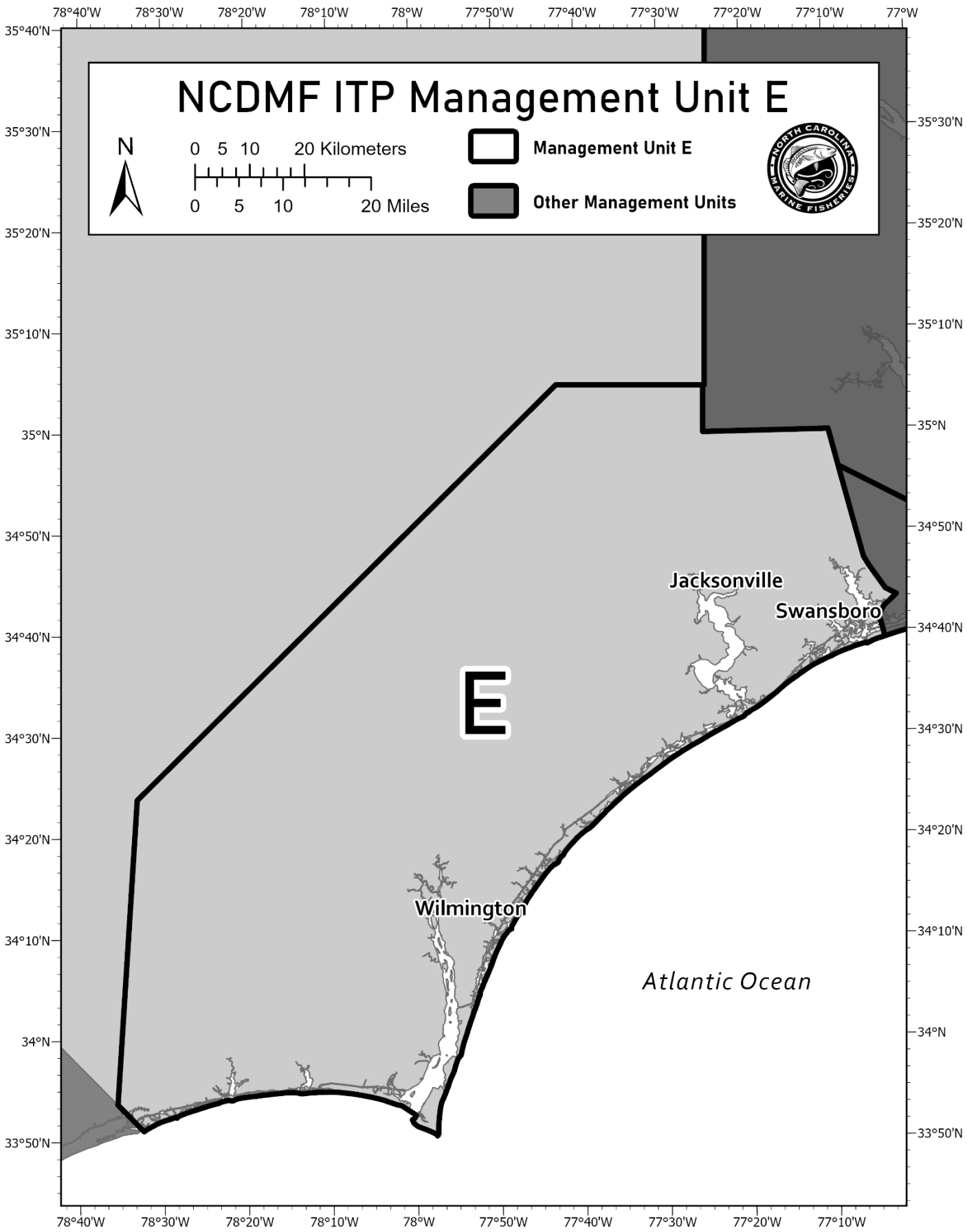

NCDMF ITP Management Unit A
N
0 10 20 40 Kilometers
0 5 10 20 Miles
Management Unit A
Other Management Units
NORTH CAROLINA MARINE FISHERIES
77°30'W
77°20'W
77°10'W
77°W
76°50'W
76°40'W
76°30'W
76°20'W
76°10'W
76°W
75°50'W
75°40'W
75°30'W
75°20'W
36°50'N
36°40'N
36°30'N
36°20'N
36°10'N
36°N
35°50'N
35°40'N
35°30'N
A
Elizabeth City
Hertford
Edenton
Albemarle Sound
Atlantic Ocean


NCDMF ITP Management Unit B
Management Unit B
Other Management Units
Shallow Water Gill Net Restricted Area (SGNRA)
Mainland Gill Net Restricted Area (MGNRA)
B
Pamlico Sound
Atlantic Ocean
Avon
Buxton
Ocracoke
Cedar Island
NORTH CAROLINA MARINE FISHERIES
N
0 5 10 20 Kilometers
0 4 8 16 Miles
76°30'W 76°25'W 76°20'W 76°15'W 76°10'W 76°5'W 76°W 75°55'W 75°50'W 75°45'W 75°40'W 75°35'W 75°30'W 75°25'W
35°55'N 35°50'N 35°45'N 35°40'N 35°35'N 35°30'N 35°25'N 35°20'N 35°15'N 35°10'N 35°5'N 35°N 34°55'N 34°50'N 34°45'N 34°40'N 34°35'N


NCDMF ITP Management Unit C
N
0 5 10 20 Kilometers
0 3.75 7.5 15 Miles
Management Unit C
Other Management Units
NORTH CAROLINA MARINE FISHERIES
77°25'W 77°20'W 77°15'W 77°10'W 77°5'W 77°W 76°55'W 76°50'W 76°45'W 76°40'W 76°35'W 76°30'W 76°25'W
35°55'N 35°50'N 35°45'N 35°40'N 35°35'N 35°30'N 35°25'N 35°20'N 35°15'N 35°10'N 35°5'N 35°N 34°55'N 34°50'N 34°45'N
Washington
Belhaven
Pamlico River
C
New Bern
Oriental
Neuse River
Havelock


NCDMF ITP Management Unit D1
Management Unit D1
Northern D1 MU (D1N)
Southern D1 MU (D1S)
Other Management Units
76°40'W
76°35'W
76°30'W
76°25'W
76°20'W
76°15'W
76°10'W
76°5'W
35°10'N
35°5'N
35°N
34°55'N
34°50'N
34°45'N
34°40'N
34°35'N
Atlantic
D1N
Core Sound
Atlantic Ocean
Harkers Island
D1S
NORTH CAROLINA MARINE FISHERIES
N
0 3.75 7.5 15 Kilometers
0 2.5 5 10 Miles


NCDMF ITP Management Unit D2
N
0 2.5 5 10 Kilometers
0 2.5 5 10 Miles
Management Unit D2
Other Management Units
NORTH CAROLINA MARINE FISHERIES
D2
Morehead City
Beaufort
Bogue Sound
Cape Carteret
Emerald Isle
Atlantic Ocean
77°12'W 77°10'W 77°8'W 77°6'W 77°4'W 77°2'W 77°W 76°58'W 76°56'W 76°54'W 76°52'W 76°50'W 76°48'W 76°46'W 76°44'W 76°42'W 76°40'W 76°38'W 76°36'W 76°34'W 76°32'W
35°2'N 35°N 34°58'N 34°56'N 34°54'N 34°52'N 34°50'N 34°48'N 34°46'N 34°44'N 34°42'N 34°40'N 34°38'N 34°36'N


NCDMF ITP Management Unit E
N
0 5 10 20 Kilometers
0 5 10 20 Miles
Management Unit E
Other Management Units
NORTH CAROLINA MARINE FISHERIES
78°40'W
78°30'W
78°20'W
78°10'W
78°W
77°50'W
77°40'W
77°30'W
77°20'W
77°10'W
77°W
35°40'N
35°30'N
35°20'N
35°10'N
35°N
34°50'N
34°40'N
34°30'N
34°20'N
34°10'N
34°N
33°50'N
Jacksonville
Swansboro
E
Wilmington
Atlantic Ocean

Sea Turtle Handling and Resuscitation Requirements

NOAA FISHERIES

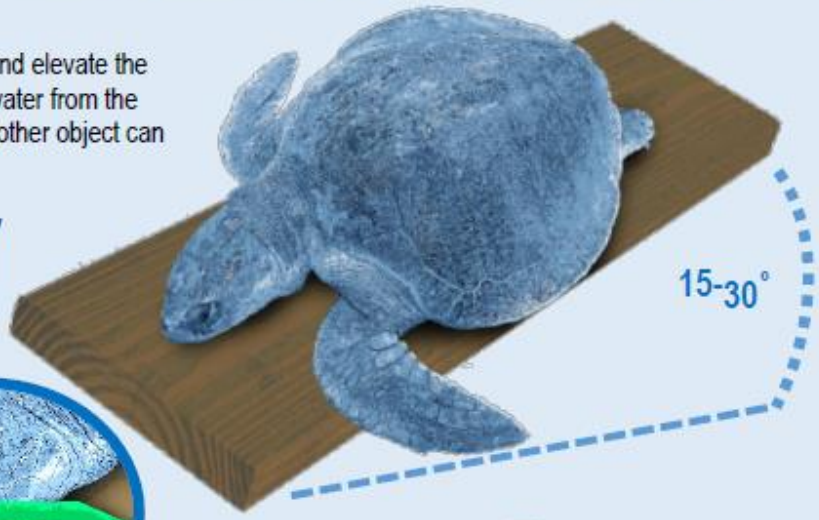
Per federal regulations at 50 CFR 223.206(d)(1):

Any sea turtle taken incidentally during fishing must be handled with care to prevent injury, evaluated to make sure it is active, and safely returned to the water.

Unresponsive turtles could still be alive and resuscitation must be attempted.

- Turtles that are unresponsive after capture may survive if allowed to recover.
- Sea turtles should only be considered dead if the muscles are stiff (rigor mortis), their body becomes bloated with gas, or the skin is detaching.

Resuscitation of unresponsive or inactive sea turtles must be attempted using the following procedures:



1. **Elevate Tail End:** Place the turtle right side up and elevate the hindquarters at least 6" (~15 - 30°) to help drain water from the lungs. A board, tire, boat cushion, coiled rope, or other object can be used for elevation.

2. **Rock Gently**: Occasionally rock the turtle gently side to side by holding the outer edge of the shell and lifting one side about 3", then alternate to the other side.

3. **Check Eye Reflex:** Periodically, gently touch the corner of the eye or eyelid to see if the eyelid moves. This reflex will return as the turtle recovers.



4. **Keep Cool and Moist:** In warm weather (over 75°F), keep the turtle shaded and moist. Place a water-soaked towel over the head, shell, and flippers or regularly wet the turtle with seawater to keep the turtle cool and moist. Never put the turtle into a container with water.

5. **Release Active Turtle Carefully:** Release active, resuscitated turtles as close to the water as possible. When doing so make sure fishing gear is not in use, the engine is in neutral, and avoid areas where the turtle may be recaptured or injured by other vessels.

6. **Give Them Time:** Attempt resuscitation for at least 4 hours. If there are no signs of life after 24 hours on deck, or if the muscles are stiff and/or the flesh has begun to rot, consider the turtle dead and return it to the water in the same manner (unless an observer retains the carcass).



Do not put the turtle on its back or pump the bottom shell (plastron) or try to force water out, as this is dangerous to the turtle.

Need assistance with a sea turtle in distress? ***Call NC Stranding Hotline: (252) 241-7367***

Sea turtle interactions must also be reported to NCDMF at (252) 515-5500 or (800) 682-2632 within 24 hours of the interaction.

NOAA FISHERIES

Atlantic Sturgeon are Protected By Federal Law Due to their Endangered Status under the Endangered Species Act

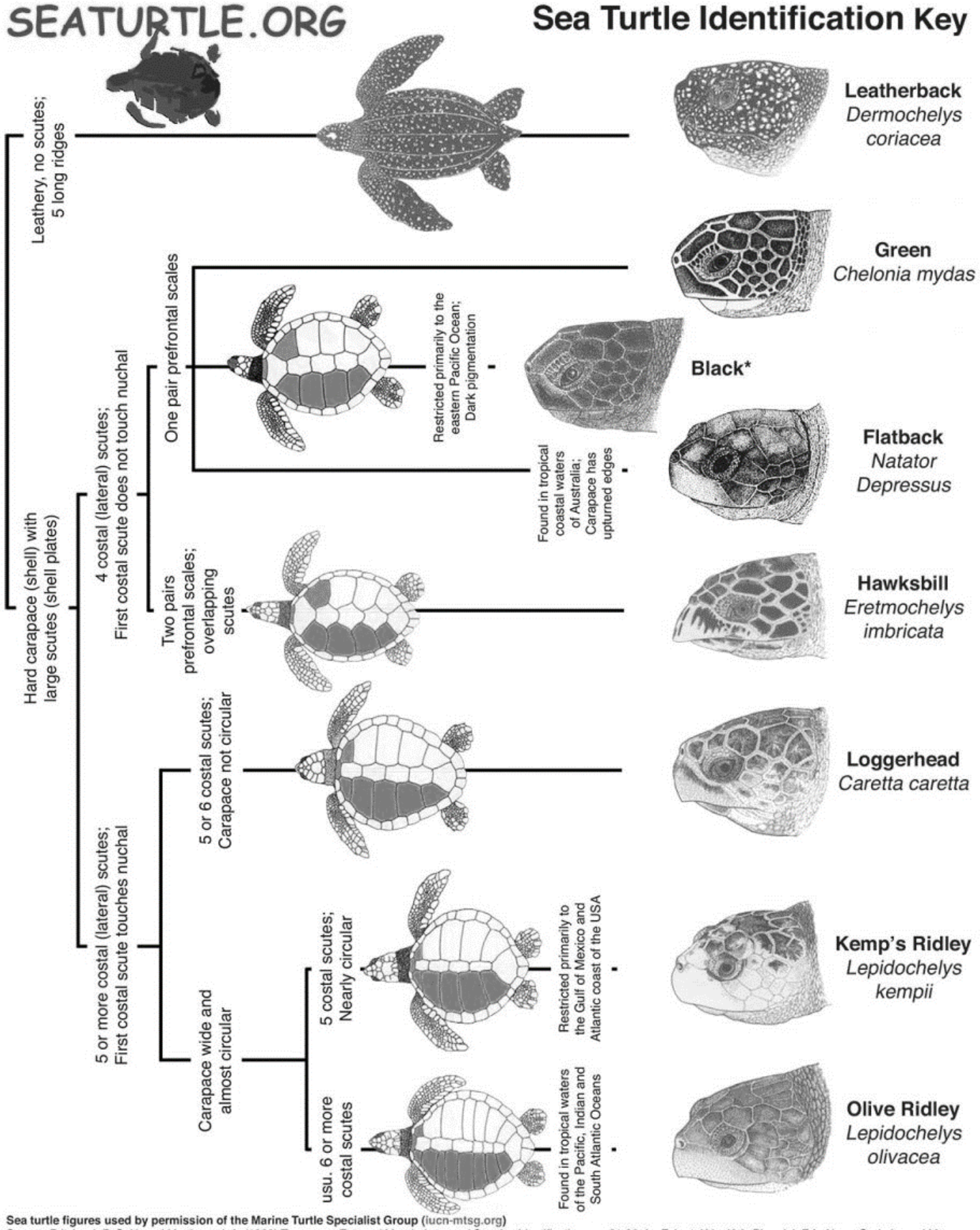
Atlantic Sturgeon Safe Handling and Release Guidelines for Fishers under Permit No. 27106

If you incidentally take an Atlantic Sturgeon, take the following actions to release it with care:

1. Rapidly handle the fish with care, and keep it underwater to the maximum extent possible during handling.
2. If the fish has air in its bladder, return the fish to neutral buoyancy prior to, and during, release. Gently apply pressure to the stomach of the animal by moving from the tail toward the head to release the air from the bladder.
3. Before releasing the fish, hold it underwater and gently move the tail fin back and forth to aid water passage over the gills.
4. Release the fish when it shows signs of increased activity and is able to swim away under its own power.
5. Watch the fish to ensure it stays underwater and does not float to the surface. If it does resurface, make one additional attempt to recapture the animal and repeat steps 1-4 above.
6. Injured sturgeon should be reported to NOAA Fisheries Southeast at (844) STURG-911 or (844) 788-7491 or email noaa.sturg911@noaa.gov.
7. Dead sturgeon should immediately be returned to the waters from which they were retrieved and reported to NOAA Fisheries Southeast at (844) STURG-911 or (844) 788-7491 or email noaa.sturg911@noaa.gov.
8. Interactions must also be reported to NCDMF at (252) 515-5500 or (800) 682-2632 within 24 hours of the interaction.

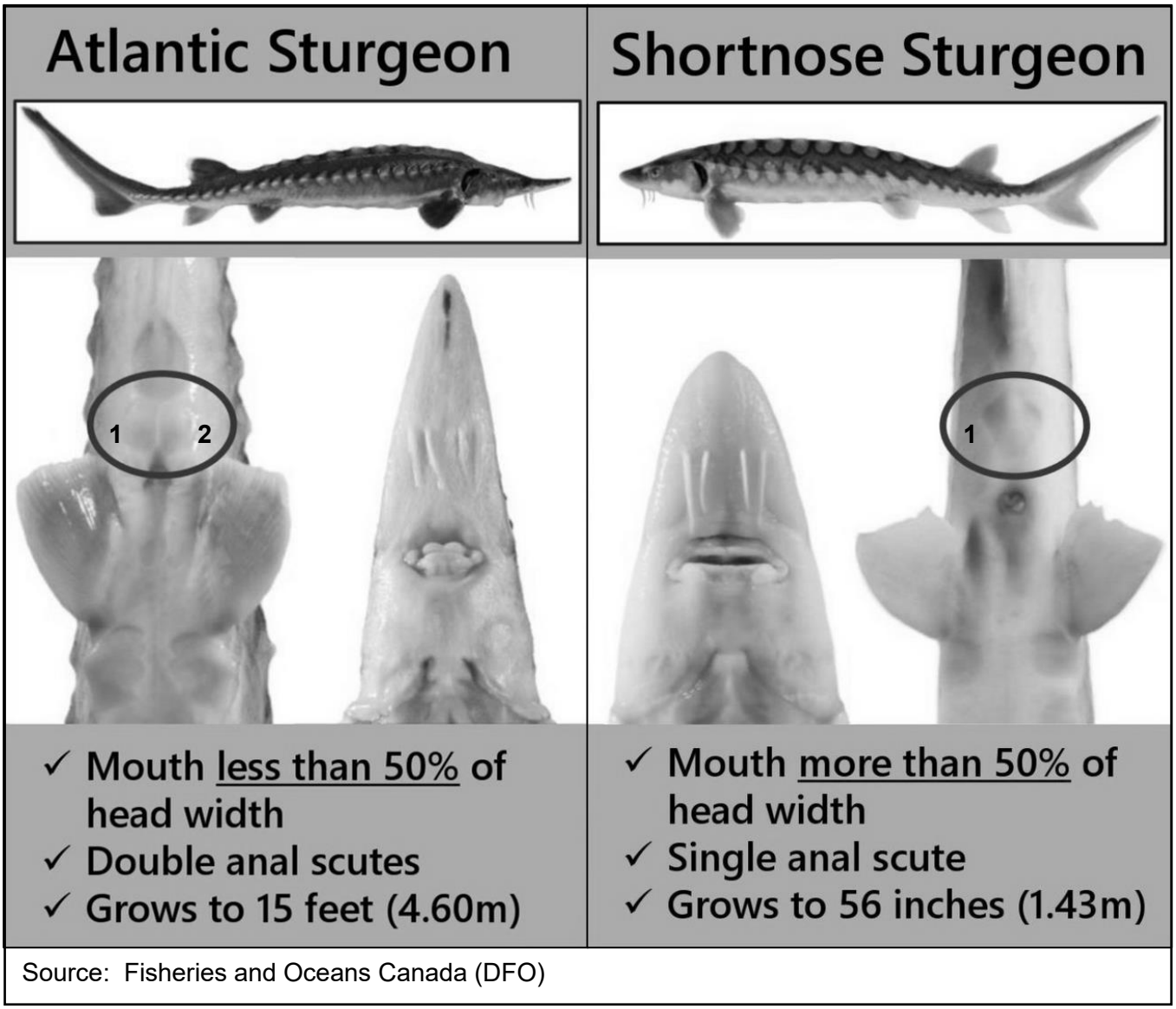


Duane Raver, USFWS



Sea turtle figures used by permission of the Marine Turtle Specialist Group (iucn-mtsg.org)
Source: Pritchard, P. C. H. and Mortimer, J. A. (1999) Taxonomy, External Morphology, and Species Identification. pp. 21-38. In: Eckert, K.L., K.A. Bjorndal, F.A. Abreu-Grobois, and M. Donnelly (Editors). 1999. Research and Management Techniques for the Conservation of Sea Turtles. IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group Publication No. 4. (for further details see http://www.iucn-mtsg.org/publications/) Illustrations by Tom McFarland

Sturgeon Identification



Source: Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)

Observer Trip Scheduling System (OTSS)

Step by Step Guide

Step 1: Plan your fishing schedule for next week.

- Although this depends on weather and other things, plan which days you would like to fish EGNP-permitted gear the following week.
- If you are selected to be observed, you can always cancel your trip with your assigned observer if your plans change.

Step 2: Report your fishing plans to OTSS.

- Between 12:00 am Monday and 11:59 pm Wednesday, report your fishing plans to OTSS.
- Weeks are divided into three groups:
    1. Monday, Tuesday (M-Tu)
    2. Wednesday, Thursday (W-Th)
    3. Friday, Saturday, Sunday (F-Su)
- You have two options to report your plans:
    - Automated Phone Call System: **833-ITP-TRIP (833-487-8747)**
    - Online: **https://dmf.ncdenr.org/OTSSPublic**

Step 3: Wait to hear if you've been selected to take an observer.

- Thursday after 12:00 pm, you will receive a phone call, text message, and/or email that will notify you if you were selected to take an observer or not.
- If you **are selected**: You will be given the name and phone number of an Observer for each week group you were selected to take an observer during (M-Tu, W-Th, F-Su). Contact the Observer(s) no later than 4:00 pm Friday.
- If you are **not selected**: You will be given a confirmation number for each week group(s) you were not selected for.
- NOTE: You may be selected for none, some, or all of the week groups (M-Tu, W-Th, F-Su)

(IF SELECTED) Step 4: Contact your Observer(s)

- By 4:00 pm Friday, you must contact your assigned Observer(s) to schedule your trip(s).
- If your plans change after 4:00 pm Friday, contact your Observer directly to let them know before the day and time of your fishing trip.

NOTE: It is unlawful for you to fish EGNP-permitted gill nets without either an Observer or a Confirmation Number.

Contact Information

Observer.Program@deq.nc.gov

Observer Coordinator, Christina Bland, 252-515-5625

Observer Trip Scheduling System Call Guide

EGNP Number	• "Please enter your Estuarine Gill Net Permit Number followed by the pound sign (#)." • Press 1 to Confirm • Press 2 to Reenter
Phone Number	• "Please enter a phone number where you can be reached." • Press 1 to Confirm • Press 2 to Reenter
Management Unit (MU)	• Press 1 for MU A • Press 2 for MU B • Press 3 for MU C • Press 4 for MU D1 • Press 5 for MU D2 • Press 6 for MU E
Gill Net Mesh Size	• Press 1 for Small Mesh (Under 5 inches) • Press 2 for Large Mesh (5+ inches) • Press 3 for BOTH Small and Large Mesh

Fishing Plans	• The week is divided into 3 groups:
	  • Monday - Tuesday
	  • Wednesday - Thursday
	  • Friday - Sunday
	• When asked if you're fishing for each group:
	  • Press 1 for Yes
	  • Press 2 for No
	• To Confirm
	  • Press 1 to Confirm
	  • Press 2 to Reenter

Please DO NOT hang up until OTSS says:

"Your call has been logged."