



# Spotted Seatrout Cold Stun Event Update

*Department of Environmental Quality*

*Marine Fisheries*

*NC Marine Fisheries Commission | L. Pensinger & M. Lambert | May 22, 2025*



## *Cold Stun Protocol*

- Take into consideration:
  - Size and scope of kill
  - Severity and scope of temperature exposure





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## *Cold Stun Protocol*

- Take into consideration:
  - Size and scope of kill
  - Severity and scope of temperature exposure
  - Rate of water temperature change
  - Prolonged below average air temperatures
  - Evaluation of water temperature triggers



## *Event Timeline*

- **January 13, 2025:**  
Division received first cold stun reports

Little Alligator River





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Additional cold stun reports/investigation





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Proclamation FF-11-2025
- **January 22–29, 2025:**  
>5” of snow, additional cold stun reports/investigation



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- **March 13, 2025:**  
MFC adopts Amendment 1

March 2025

### **North Carolina Spotted Seatrout Fishery Management Plan Amendment 1**

North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries



North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality  
North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries  
3441 Arendell Street  
P. O. Box 769  
Morehead City, NC 28557



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- **April 8, 2025:**  
Proclamation FF-15-2025



JOSH STEIN  
*Governor*

D. REID WILSON  
*Secretary*

KATHY B. RAWLS  
*Director*

FF-15-2025

## PROCLAMATION

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

This proclamation supersedes proclamations FF-11-2025, dated January 22, 2025. This proclamation extends the closure of 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. The spotted seatrout fishery will open July 1, 2025 by proclamation. The proclamation opening the fishery will also specify size and bag limits and other restrictions consistent with Amendment 1.

Kathy B. Rawls, Director, Division of Marine Fisheries, hereby announces that effective 12:01 A.M., April 10, 2025, following restrictions will apply to spotted seatrout in Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters including the Atlantic Ocean:

## *Amendment 1: Cold Stun Management*

- Initial management
  - Extend fishery closure through June 30 following a severe cold stun

Little Alligator River





# *Amendment 1: Cold Stun Management*

- Initial management
  - Extend fishery closure through June 30 following a severe cold stun
- Cold stun adaptive management
  - Size limits, bag/trip limits, gill net yardage, seasons

Trent River



# *Moving Forward*

- Cold stun adaptive management
  - Will continue to analyze data

Topsail Island





# *Moving Forward*

- Cold stun adaptive management
  - Will continue to analyze data
- Final Cold Stun Report
  - February 2026 MFC Meeting



# Questions?

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