

**Report to the North Carolina General Assembly's Joint Legislative  
Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic  
Resources**

***Phased-In Mandatory Commercial and Recreational Reporting  
of Certain Fish Harvests Annual Report***

**May 1, 2025**

**NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
QUALITY/DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES**

**and**

**NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION**

**Pursuant to S.L. 2023-137, Section 6, and S.L. 2024-45, Section 8**

Each year, the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality/Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF) and North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) are required to report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources on mandatory reporting of the harvest of certain fisheries, per Session Law 2023-137, Section 6. The following is a report covering the activities from May 1, 2024, through April 30, 2025.

Staff from the NCDMF and the NCWRC have focused their efforts on several components to implement this legislation, including ongoing development and planning regarding regulations and compliance, reporting tools, outreach and incentives, and funding. Both agencies developed temporary rules for mandatory harvest reporting that set the data elements that must be reported and the frequency of reporting for all affected stakeholders, and these rules became effective July 2024. With temporary rules in place, NCDMF and NCWRC have turned their efforts towards developing permanent rules and associated fiscal analyses, consistent with the Administrative Procedure Act.

In order to meet the legislation requirements by December 1, 2025 (Session Law 2024-45), a web-based reporting form was created in the short-term to allow recreational anglers to submit their harvest reports via smartphone, tablet, or computer. This form is available to the public at [www.deq.nc.gov/report-my-fish](http://www.deq.nc.gov/report-my-fish) for voluntary submissions until the requirement begins. If anglers do not have internet access at the time their fishing trip is complete, a paper version of the form can be used as an alternative to ensure compliance until the angler has access to the internet. The paper form will be available for pick up at NCDMF offices or for printing from the NCDMF website prior to the fishing trip. If using the paper form, anglers will still be required to submit the data electronically. Both agencies are researching a more robust, long-term solution, such as a smartphone application and a call-in phone system, for recreational anglers to meet the requirements of the law and to incentivize stakeholders to submit their harvest information.

The established N.C. Trip Ticket Program is already set up to receive all commercial harvest data from a commercially licensed seafood dealer. To meet the requirements of the legislation, commercial fishermen that harvest fish for sale or not for sale must go to a seafood dealer who will fill out the Trip Ticket with the landings and submit to the NCDMF.

Outreach to stakeholders is a high priority, and NCDMF and NCWRC staff have collaborated on ways to distribute reporting information to the public. In addition to a joint NCDMF / NCWRC [webpage](#) to act as a one-stop shop for information and future harvest reporting, multiple posts and videos about mandatory harvest reporting have been displayed on social media platforms, such as [YouTube](#) (and [here](#)), [Facebook](#), Instagram, and Twitter. Incentive items, such as tape measures and fish stickers containing the QR code for recreational reporting, were developed and handed out to the public at festivals, boating and fishing shows, fishing clubs, NC Marine Fisheries Commission meetings, and local events throughout the year. Demonstrations using iPads to highlight the simplicity of the recreational reporting tool in real-time have been a valuable component of many of these outreach events. Signage has been created and posted at many boat ramps and public water access points across coastal North Carolina. Additionally, informational materials, including reminder postcards, have been developed for distribution to stakeholders.

A budget was created for the funding that was initially provided when the bill was passed. All relevant spending is being tracked. The NCDMF is in the process of hiring a Project Manager to coordinate, track, and document all project components. This Project Manager will also oversee the development of the Request for Proposals (RFP), if needed, to build the smartphone application.