



ROY COOPER  
*Governor*

ELIZABETH S. BISER  
*Secretary*

KATHY B. RAWLS  
*Director*

**FF-7-2023**

## **PROCLAMATION**

### **RE: STRIPED BASS RECREATIONAL – ATLANTIC OCEAN WATERS – SLOT LIMIT, CIRCLE HOOK AND NO GAFFING REQUIREMENTS**

**This proclamation supersedes FF-1-2021 dated December 3, 2020. For striped bass harvested for recreational purposes from Coastal Fishing Waters in the Atlantic Ocean of North Carolina, it maintains the one fish daily creel limit, year-round open season, harvest slot limit of 28 inches to less than 35 inches total length, circle hook requirements when using natural bait, and makes it unlawful to gaff or attempt to gaff any striped bass at any time when fishing recreationally.**

Kathy B. Rawls, Director, Division of Marine Fisheries, hereby announces that effective at **12:01 A.M., Sunday, January 1, 2023**, the following provisions shall apply to the harvest of striped bass **TAKEN BY HOOK-AND-LINE OR FOR RECREATIONAL PURPOSES IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN:**

I. **AREA DESCRIPTION**

Coastal fishing waters in the Atlantic Ocean of North Carolina out to three miles offshore.

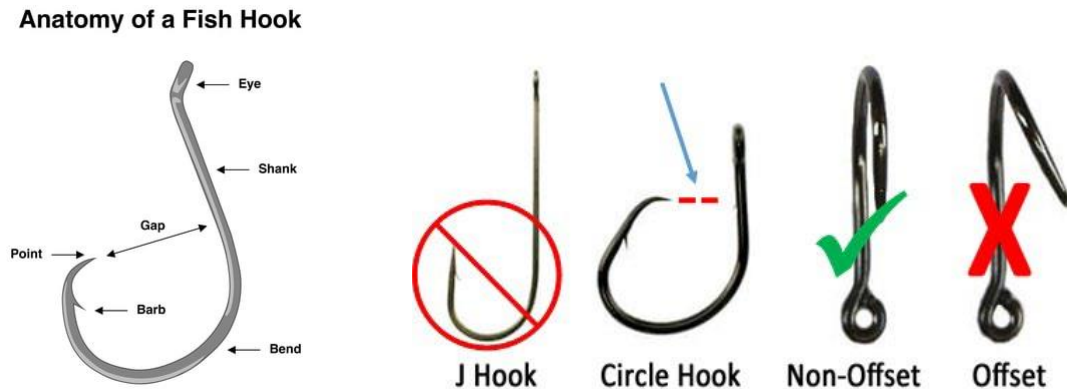
II. **SIZE AND CREEL LIMITS**

- A. It is unlawful to possess striped bass less than 28 inches total length or greater than or equal to 35 inches total length.
- B. It is unlawful to possess more than one (1) striped bass per person per day.

III. **SEASON, MEANS, AND METHODS**

- A. Striped bass may be taken seven days a week. The season is open year-round.
- B. It is unlawful to fish for or possess striped bass from the Atlantic Ocean for recreational purposes using hook and line gear with natural bait unless using a non-stainless steel, non-offset (inline) circle hook, regardless of tackle or lure configuration. Natural bait is defined as any marine or aquatic organism, live or dead, whole or parts thereof. Non-offset circle hook is defined as a hook with the point pointed perpendicularly back towards the shank and the point and barb are in the same plane as the shank (See Diagrams on next page).
- C. It is unlawful to take or possess striped bass taken by any boat hook, gaff, spear, gig, or similar device.
- D. It is unlawful to sell, offer for sale, or purchase striped bass taken by hook-and-line or with recreational commercial gear for recreational purposes.

## VI. DIAGRAMS

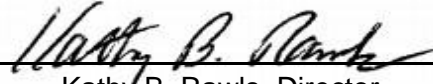


## V. GENERAL INFORMATION

- 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 .0202, and 03O .0500 et seq.
- 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. 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.
- D. The intent of this proclamation is to allow the recreational harvest of striped bass in the Atlantic Ocean to be in compliance with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) Amendment 7 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass. The circle hook requirement and no gaffing are designed to reduce release mortality in the recreational striped bass fishery.
- E. Amendment 7 to the Atlantic Striped Bass Interstate Fishery Management Plan continues to use daily possession and size limits to manage recreational striped bass fisheries, and quotas and minimum size limits to regulate the striped bass commercial fisheries. Striped bass taken in the Atlantic Ocean waters of North Carolina for commercial purposes will maintain the 28-inch minimum size limit and maintain harvest within the new 295,495 pound commercial quota for North Carolina.
- F. N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03M .0201 defines striped bass as striped bass and its hybrids.
- G. N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03M .0202 states that all striped bass that do not meet the size limit specified by proclamation shall immediately be returned to the waters from which taken regardless of condition.
- H. Existing Federal regulations prohibit recreational and commercial fishing for Atlantic striped bass in the Exclusive Economic Zone (3-200 miles from shore).
- I. Contact the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, P.O. Box 769, Morehead City, NC 28557 252-726-7021 or 800-682-2632 for more information or visit the division website at <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries>.

- J. **This proclamation supersedes FF-1-2021 dated December 3, 2020. For striped bass harvested for recreational purposes from Coastal Fishing Waters in the Atlantic Ocean of North Carolina, it maintains the one fish daily creel limit, year-round open season, harvest slot limit of 28 inches to less than 35 inches total length, circle hook requirements when using natural bait, and makes it unlawful to gaff or attempt to gaff any striped bass at any time when fishing recreationally.**

By: \_\_\_\_\_



Kathy B. Rawls, Director

DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES

December 16, 2022  
4:25 P.M.