

Recreational Gig, Spear, and Archery Equipment Fishing **N. C. Division of Marine Fisheries**

Definitions

Gigs are harpoonlike devices used to catch fish. In this document, it also includes other pointed implements which are propelled by hand, whether or not the implement remains in the hand.

A spear is a shaft with a sharp point and barbs for spearing fish. In this document, it also includes Hawaiian slings or similar devices, which propel pointed implements by mechanical means, including elastic tubing or bands, pressurized gas or similar means, such as blow dart or archery equipment. Archery equipment includes compound bows, recurved bows, long bows, crossbows or similar devices.

License requirements

Individuals need a coastal recreational fishing license to gig, spear or crossbow fish in North Carolina. For information on the types of licenses available and the fees associated with them, visit <https://deq.nc.gov/recreational-fishing-licenses>.

Regulations

CRFL holders are allowed to gig or spear or blow dart any species except red drum, sharks, spiny lobster, stone crabs, tarpon and any species that is not in season.

- A person may take fish for recreational purposes by means of a gig without holding a Recreational Commercial Gear License. **(G.S. 113-173. Recreational Commercial Gear License.)**
- It is unlawful to use any device to take stone crabs that can puncture, crush, or injure the crab body, such as gigs, spears, grabs, hooks, or similar devices. **(15A NCAC 03L .0208 STONE CRABS (MENIPPE MERCENARIA))**
- It is unlawful to remove red drum from any type of net with the aid of any boat hook, gaff, spear, gig, or similar device. It is also unlawful to take or possess red drum taken by any boat hook, gaff, spear, gig, or similar device. **(15A NCAC 03M .0501 RED DRUM)**
- It is unlawful to possess American lobster which has an outer shell which has been speared. **(15A NCAC 03L .0301 AMERICAN LOBSTER (NORTHERN LOBSTER))**
- It is unlawful to take spiny lobsters with a gaff hook, spear or similar device. Possession of a speared, pierced, or punctured spiny lobster is prima facie evidence that prohibited gear was used. (<https://deq.nc.gov/proclamation-m-7-2022>)
- It is unlawful for recreational fishermen to catch sharks by any gear other than rod and reel or handlines. Handlines are defined as a mainline with no more than two gangions or hooks attached that are retrieved by hand only. (<https://deq.nc.gov/proclamation-ff-3-2022>)

Individuals must follow the latest size and bag limits of the North Carolina Recreational Coastal Waters Guide for Sports Fishermen. The most current guide can be found at <https://deq.nc.gov/recreational-size-bag-limits> or smart phones users can locate them by scanning the following QR code.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Is it legal to spear fish?

A: Yes, both above and below the surface.

Q: Is it legal to use a crossbow to fish?

A: Yes, both above and below the surface.

Q: Do you need a license to gig, spear and/or bow fish?

A: Yes. A Coastal Recreational Fishing License is required.

Q: Is there any species that I cannot spear?

A: Yes. Red drum, sharks, spiny lobster, stone crabs, tarpon and any species that is not in season.

Q: Can I gig, spear and/or bow fish at Cape Hatteras National Seashore or Cape Lookout National Seashore?

A: Yes.

Q: Are there different size and bag limits for gig, spear and bow fishing?

A: Individuals must follow the latest size and bag limits of the North Carolina Recreational Coastal Waters Guide for Sports Fishermen. The most current guide can be found at <https://deq.nc.gov/recreational-size-bag-limits>.

For more information on North Carolina's marine resources, check out the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries' website at <https://deq.nc.gov/marine-fisheries> or by telephone at 800-682-2632 or P.O. Box 769, Morehead City, NC 28557.

