



ROY COOPER
Governor

MICHAEL S. REGAN
Secretary

STEPHEN W. MURPHEY
Director

FF-15-2020

PROCLAMATION

RE: COBIA - COASTAL FISHING WATERS – RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL

This proclamation supersedes proclamation FF-52-2019 dated December 19, 2019. This proclamation opens the recreational cobia fishery and maintains the season for the commercial cobia fishery. The recreational season will remain open through December 31, 2020.

Stephen W. Murphey, Director, Division of Marine Fisheries, hereby announces that effective **at 12:01 A.M., Friday, May 1, 2020**, the following restrictions will apply to the cobia fishery in Coastal Fishing Waters:

- I. **SUSPENSION OF N.C. MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION RULE 15A NCAC 03M .0516**
N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03M. 0516 that reads as follows **is suspended in its entirety**:
 - A. It is unlawful to possess cobia less than 33 inches fork length.
 - B. It is unlawful to possess more than two (2) cobia per person per day.

- II. **RECREATIONAL SEASON, HARVEST, VESSEL, AND SIZE LIMIT**
 - A. **RECREATIONAL SIZE LIMIT, POSSESSION LIMIT, AND SEASON**
 1. It is unlawful to possess for a recreational purpose cobia less than **36 inches fork length**.
 2. It is unlawful to possess for a recreational purpose more than **one (1) cobia per person per day** (See section II. B and II. C for season and vessel limits).
 3. The season for the recreational harvest of cobia will be **May 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020**.

 - B. **PRIVATE VESSEL LIMITS for Recreational Purpose (All vessels not engaged in a For-Hire Vessel operation)**
 1. From **May 1 – May 31**, it is unlawful to possess more than **two (2) cobia per vessel per day** or one (1) cobia per person per day, if there is only one person on board.
 2. From **June 1 – December 31**, it is unlawful to possess more than **one (1) cobia per vessel per day**.


 - C. **FOR-HIRE VESSEL (While engaged in a For-Hire Vessel operation as defined by G.S 113-174)**
 1. From **May 1 – December 31**, it is unlawful to possess more than **four (4) cobia per vessel per day** or one (1) cobia per person per day, if fewer than four (4) people are on board.

III. **COMMERCIAL SIZE AND HARVEST LIMIT**

- A. It is unlawful to possess cobia less than 36 inches fork length in a commercial operation.
- B. It is unlawful to possess more than two (2) cobia per person per day or six (6) per vessel per day, whichever is more restrictive in a commercial operation.
- C. It is unlawful to possess a commercial and recreational limit of cobia on the same vessel.
- D. The commercial fishery will be closed via proclamation if the quota is met or projected to be met or will close at 12.01 AM January 1, 2021.

IV. **GENERAL INFORMATION**

- A. This proclamation is issued under the authority of N.C. G.S. 113-170.4; 113-170.5; 113-182; 113-221.1; 143B-289.52 and N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rules 15A NCAC 03H .0103, and 03M .0512.
- B. It is unlawful to violate the provisions of any proclamation issued by the Fisheries Director under his delegated authority pursuant to N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission Rule 15A NCAC 03H .0103.
- C. Fishermen are encouraged to return all cobia not meeting harvest requirements to the water in a manner that ensures that highest likelihood of survival.
- D. The intent of this proclamation is to manage the commercial and recreational fishery for cobia in Coastal Fishing Waters consistent with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Interstate Cobia Fishery Management Plan.
- E. 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 www.ncmarinefisheries.net.
- F. In accordance with N.C.G.S. 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.
- G. **This proclamation supersedes proclamation FF-52-2019 dated December 19, 2019. This proclamation opens the recreational fishery and maintains the season for the commercial fishery. The recreational season will remain open through December 31, 2020.**

By: 
Stephen W. Murphey, Director
DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES

March 23, 2020
11:16 A.M.