

PHASED-IN MANDATORY COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL REPORTING OF CERTAIN FISH HARVESTS

SECTION 6.(a) G.S. 113-170.3 reads as rewritten:

"§ 113-170.3. Record-keeping requirements; mandatory reporting for certain fisheries.

...

(d) Any person who recreationally harvests a fish listed in this subsection from coastal fishing waters, joint fishing waters, and inland fishing waters adjacent to coastal or joint fishing waters shall report that harvest to the Division of Marine Fisheries within the Department of Environment Quality in a manner consistent with rules adopted by the Marine Fisheries Commission and the Wildlife Resources Commission. The harvest of the following finfish species shall be reported:

- (1) Red Drum.
- (2) Flounder.
- (3) Spotted Seatrout.
- (4) Striped Bass.
- (5) Weakfish.

(e) Any person holding a commercial fishing license engaged in a commercial fishing operation who harvests any fish in coastal or joint fishing waters, regardless of sale, shall report that harvest to the Division of Marine Fisheries within the Department of Environmental Quality in a manner consistent with rules adopted by the Marine Fisheries Commission.

(f) Violation of subsection (d) or (e) of this section shall only be punishable by a verbal warning."

SECTION 6.(b) G.S. 113-170.3(f), as enacted by subsection (a) of this section, reads as rewritten:

"(f) Violation of subsection (d) or (e) of this section shall only be punishable by issuance of a warning ticket pursuant to G.S. 113-140. Notwithstanding G.S. 113-140(c), an inspector or protector may issue additional warning tickets for repeat violations of subsection (d) or (e) of this section."

SECTION 6.(c) G.S. 113-170.3(f), as enacted by subsection (a) of this section and amended by subsection (b) of this act, reads as rewritten:

"(f) Violation of subsection (d) or (e) of this section shall only be an infraction as provided in G.S. 14-3.1, punishable by a fine of thirty-five dollars (\$35.00). A person responsible for an infraction under this subsection shall not be assessed court costs, but the Fisheries Director of the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries is authorized to suspend, revoke, or refuse to issue a commercial or recreational fishing license for any individual guilty of an infraction for violations of subsection (d) or (e) of this section pursuant to G.S. 113-171. The Executive Director of the Wildlife Resources Commission is authorized to revoke or refuse to issue a recreational fishing license issued by the Wildlife Resources Commission for any individual guilty of an infraction for violations of subsection (d) or (e) of this section for two consecutive years or upon failure to pay outstanding infraction fines when required to do so."

SECTION 6.(d) The Marine Fisheries Commission and the Wildlife Resources Commission shall adopt temporary rules to implement this section and shall adopt permanent rules to replace the temporary rules. Temporary rules adopted in accordance with this section shall remain in effect until permanent rules that replace the temporary rules become effective.

SECTION 6.(e) The Department of Environmental Quality and the Wildlife Resources Commission shall report on the implementation and response to the fishery reporting requirements imposed by subsection (a) of this section, including potential incentives to encourage reporting, to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources no later than May 1 of each year.

SECTION 6.(f) Subsection (a) of this section becomes effective December 1, 2024, and applies to violations committed on or after that date. Subsection (b) of this section becomes effective December 1, 2025, and applies to violations committed on or after that date. Subsection (c) of this section becomes effective December 1, 2026, and applies to violations committed on or after that date. The remainder of this section is effective when it becomes law.