

15A NCAC 03J .0103 GILL NETS, SEINES, IDENTIFICATION, RESTRICTIONS

(a) It shall be unlawful to use gill nets:

- (1) with a mesh length less than two and one-half inches; and
- (2) in Internal Waters from April 15 through December 15, with a mesh length five inches or greater and less than five and one-half inches.

(b) The Fisheries Director may, by proclamation, limit or prohibit the use of gill nets or seines in Coastal Fishing Waters, or any portion thereof, or impose any of the following restrictions on gill net or seine fishing operations:

- (1) specify time;
- (2) specify area;
- (3) specify means and methods, including:
 - (A) gill net mesh length, but the maximum length specified shall not exceed six and one-half inches in Internal Waters; and
 - (B) net number and length, but for gill nets with a mesh length four inches or greater, the maximum length specified shall not exceed 2,000 yards per vessel in Internal Waters regardless of the number of individuals involved; and
- (4) specify season.

(c) It shall be unlawful to use fixed or stationary gill nets in the Atlantic Ocean, drift gill nets in the Atlantic Ocean for recreational purposes, or any gill nets in Internal Waters unless nets are marked by attaching to them at each end two separate yellow buoys that shall be of solid foam or other solid buoyant material no less than five inches in diameter and no less than five inches in length. Gill nets that are not connected together at the top line are considered as individual nets, requiring two buoys at each end of each individual net. Gill nets connected together at the top line are considered as a continuous net requiring two buoys at each end of the continuous net. Any other marking buoys on gill nets used for recreational purposes shall be yellow, except that one additional buoy, any shade of hot pink in color, constructed as specified in this Paragraph, shall be added at each end of each individual net. Any other marking buoys on gill nets used in commercial fishing operations shall be yellow, except that one additional identification buoy of any color or any combination of colors, except any shade of hot pink, may be used at either or both ends. The gear owner's last name and initials shall be identified on a buoy on each end by using engraved buoys or by attaching engraved metal or plastic tags to the buoys. If a vessel is used, the identification shall also include one of the following:

- (1) gear owner's current motor boat registration number; or
- (2) gear owner's U.S. vessel documentation name.

(d) It shall be unlawful to use gill nets:

- (1) within 200 yards of any flounder or other finfish pound net set with lead and either pound or heart in use, except from August 15 through December 31 in all Coastal Fishing Waters of the Albemarle Sound, including its tributaries to the boundaries between Coastal and Joint Fishing Waters, west of a line beginning at a point 36° 04.5184' N – 75° 47.9095' W on Powell Point; running southerly to a point 35° 57.2681' N – 75° 48.3999' W on Caroon Point, it shall be unlawful to use gill nets within 500 yards of any pound net set with lead and either pound or heart in use; and
- (2) from March 1 through October 31 in the Intracoastal Waterway within 150 yards of any railroad or highway bridge.

(e) It shall be unlawful to use gill nets within 100 feet either side of the center line of the Intracoastal Waterway Channel south of the entrance to the Alligator-Pungo River Canal near Beacon "54" in Alligator River to the South Carolina line, unless such net is used in accordance with the following conditions:

- (1) no more than two gill nets per vessel may be used at any one time;
- (2) any net used must be attended by the fisherman from a vessel who shall at no time be more than 100 yards from either net; and
- (3) any individual setting such nets shall remove them, when necessary, in sufficient time to permit unrestricted vessel navigation.

(f) It shall be unlawful to use runaround, drift, or other non-stationary gill nets, except as provided in Paragraph (e) of this Rule:

- (1) to block more than two-thirds of any natural or manmade waterway, sound, bay, creek, inlet, or any other body of water; or
- (2) in a location where it will interfere with navigation.

(g) It shall be unlawful to use unattended gill nets with a mesh length less than five inches in a commercial fishing operation in the gill net attended areas designated in 15A NCAC 03R .0112(a).

(h) It shall be unlawful to use unattended gill nets with a mesh length less than five inches in a commercial fishing operation from May 1 through November 30 in the Internal Waters and Joint Fishing Waters of the state designated in 15A NCAC 03R .0112(b).

(i) It shall be unlawful for any portion of a gill net with a mesh length five inches or greater to be within 10 feet of any point on the shoreline while set or deployed, unless the net is attended from June through October in Internal Waters.

(j) For the purpose of this Rule and 15A NCAC 03R .0112, "shoreline" shall mean the mean high water line or marsh line, whichever is more seaward.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-173; 113-182; 113-221.1; 143B-289.52;
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