

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019

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HOUSE BILL 483

Short Title: Let Them Spawn. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Yarborough, Saine, Wray, and B. Turner (Primary Sponsors).
For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Wildlife Resources, if favorable, Environment, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and
Operations of the House

March 28, 2019

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO REQUIRE A MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT ON ALL COMMERCIALY AND
RECREATIONALLY IMPORTANT SPECIES OF MARINE FISH TO ENSURE THAT
SEVENTY-FIVE PERCENT OF JUVENILE FISH OF EACH SPECIES HAVE AN
OPPORTUNITY TO REACH MATURITY AND SPAWN AT LEAST ONCE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 113-182.1(b) is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(8) Include a minimum size limit for every species of marine fish listed in the Division of Marine Fisheries Stock Status Report to ensure that seventy-five percent (75%) of the juvenile fish at the minimum size limit established for the species have reached the size of maturity and have had an opportunity to spawn at least once. The requirement for a minimum size limit shall not apply when the Fisheries Director determines that the species under consideration has a unique life cycle and maturity characteristic that would render the management measure inappropriate to generally accepted fishery management protocol. In the event the Marine Fisheries Commission accepts the determination of the Fisheries Director that an exception to the minimum size requirement is appropriate for a particular species, the Fisheries Director shall instead propose slot limits to protect the adult spawning stock."

SECTION 2.(a) Rule Making. – The Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) shall adopt rules to implement G.S. 113-182.1(b)(8), as enacted by Section 1 of this act, as set forth in this section. The Commission shall establish a minimum size limit for every species of marine fish listed in the Division of Marine Fisheries Stock Status Report based upon the best available biological and life history data to ensure that at least seventy-five percent (75%) of the juvenile fish of each species reaching the minimum size limit are mature and have had the opportunity to spawn at least once. In the event data for a particular species are unavailable for North Carolina, the Commission will utilize data from other Atlantic coast states until North Carolina specific studies can be completed. The minimum size limits set by the Commission shall be included in the management measures of the Fishery Management Plan for each species currently listed on the Division of Marine Fisheries annual Stock Status Report.

SECTION 2.(b) Temporary Management Measures. – Until Fishery Management Plans are adopted that include the minimum size limits required by this act, the Director of the Division of Marine Fisheries is directed to review the biological and life history information currently available in the marine fisheries literature and marine fisheries reports. No later than



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1 August 2019, the Director shall present the findings of this review and an authorization to the
2 Commission to impose temporary management measures establishing minimum size limits
3 required to allow seventy-five percent (75%) of juveniles of each species reaching the minimum
4 size limit to have reached the size of maturity and to have had the opportunity to spawn at least
5 once.

6 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law.