

SECTION .0300 - POTS, DREDGES, AND OTHER FISHING DEVICES

15A NCAC 03J .0301 POTS

(a) It shall be unlawful to use pots except during time periods and in areas specified herein:

- (1) in Internal Waters from December 1 through May 31, except that:
 - (A) in the Northern Region designated in 15A NCAC 03R .0118(1) all pots shall be removed from Internal Waters from January 1 through January 31. Fish pots upstream of the U.S. 17 Bridge across Chowan River and upstream of a line across the mouth of Roanoke, Cashie, Middle, and Eastmost Rivers to the Highway 258 Bridge are exempt from this removal requirement.
 - (B) in the Southern Region designated in 15A NCAC 03R .0118(2) all pots shall be removed from Internal Waters from March 1 through March 15.
- (2) in Internal Waters from June 1 through November 30 in the Northern Region designated in 15A NCAC 03R .0118(1):
 - (A) in areas described in 15A NCAC 03R .0107(a).
 - (B) to allow for the variable spatial distribution of crustacea and finfish, the Fisheries Director may, by proclamation, specify time periods for and designate the areas described in 15A NCAC 03R .0107(b) or any part thereof, for the use of pots.
- (3) in Internal Waters from May 1 through November 30 in the Southern Region designated in 15A NCAC 03R .0118(2), the Fisheries Director may, by proclamation, specify time periods and areas for the use of pots.
- (4) in the Atlantic Ocean from May 1 through November 30 the Fisheries Director may, by proclamation, specify time periods and areas for the use of pots.

(b) It shall be unlawful to use pots:

- (1) in any navigation channel marked by State or Federal agencies; or
- (2) in any turning basin maintained and marked by the North Carolina Ferry Division.

(c) It shall be unlawful to use pots in a commercial fishing operation unless each pot is marked by attaching a floating buoy of any color except any shade of yellow or any shade of hot pink, or any combination of colors that include any shade of yellow or any shade of hot pink. Buoys 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. The gear owner's last name and initials shall be engraved on the attached buoy or identified by attaching engraved metal or plastic tags to the buoy. 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) Pots attached to shore or a pier shall be exempt from Subparagraphs (a)(2) and (a)(3) of this Rule.

(e) It shall be unlawful to use shrimp pots with mesh lengths smaller than one and one-fourth inches stretch or five-eighths-inch bar.

(f) It shall be unlawful to use pots to take eels with mesh lengths smaller than one-half inch by one-half inch.

(g) Except for unbaited pots or pots baited with a male crab, it shall be unlawful to use crab pots in Coastal Fishing Waters unless each pot contains no less than three unobstructed escape rings that are at least two and five-sixteenth inches inside diameter and:

- (1) for pots with a divider:
 - (A) two escape rings shall be located on opposite panels of the upper chamber of the pot; and
 - (B) at least one escape ring shall be located within one full mesh of the corner and one full mesh of the bottom of the divider in the upper chamber of the pot.
- (2) for pots without a divider:
 - (A) two escape rings shall be located on opposite panels of the pot; and
 - (B) at least one escape ring shall be located within one full mesh of the corner and one full mesh of the bottom of the pot.

For the purpose of this Rule, a "divider" shall mean a panel that separates the crab pot into upper and lower sections.

(h) The Fisheries Director may, by proclamation, impose on a commercial fishing operation and for recreational purposes any of the following restrictions for pots:

- (1) specify time;
- (2) specify area;
- (3) specify means and methods;
- (4) specify record keeping and reporting requirements;

- (5) specify season, including a closed season for removal of all pots from Internal Waters;
 - (6) specify species; and
 - (7) specify quantity.
- (i) It shall be unlawful to use more than 150 crab pots per vessel in Newport River.
 - (j) It shall be unlawful to remove crab pots from the water or remove crabs from crab pots between one hour after sunset and one hour before sunrise.
 - (k) It shall be unlawful to use pots to take crabs unless the line connecting the pot to the buoy is non-floating.
 - (l) It shall be unlawful to use pots with leads or leaders to take shrimp. For the purpose of this Rule, "leads" or "leaders" shall mean any fixed or stationary net or device used to direct fish into any gear used to capture fish. Any device with leads or leaders used to capture fish shall not be a pot.

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