

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019

H.B. 483
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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH10253-MH-49

Short Title: Let Them Spawn. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Yarborough, Saine, Wray, and B. Turner (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

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

6 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

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

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

31 **SECTION 2.(b)** Temporary Management Measures. – Until Fishery Management
32 Plans are adopted that include the minimum size limits required by this act, the Director of the
33 Division of Marine Fisheries is directed to review the biological and life history information
34 currently available in the marine fisheries literature and marine fisheries reports. No later than
35 August 2019, the Director shall present the findings of this review and an authorization to the
36 Commission to impose temporary management measures establishing minimum size limits



1 required to allow seventy-five percent (75%) of juveniles of each species reaching the minimum
2 size limit to have reached the size of maturity and to have had the opportunity to spawn at least
3 once.

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