

Joint Report on the Boating Safety and Fisheries Management Agreement

April 1, 2014

SUBMITTED BY:

NORTH CAROLINA DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES AND
THE NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION



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JOINT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Appropriations Act of 2013 directed the Division of Marine Fisheries and the Wildlife Resources Commission to develop and implement an agreement specifying collaboration on boating safety through five specific provisions ranging from authorizing the Division of Marine Fisheries to perform boating safety inspections to avoiding duplication of enforcement activities¹.

The memorandum of agreement between the Division of Marine Fisheries and the Wildlife Resources Commission regarding collaboration on boating safety was completed and signed in February of 2014².

The Appropriations Act of 2013 further called for “a joint report including any findings and recommendations, including any legislative proposals” on the issue.

Two specific findings are to be detailed, along with “any other issue the Division of Marine Fisheries or the Wildlife Resources Commission deems pertinent to include in the report”.

Requirement #1:

Whether the agreement developed pursuant to subsection (a) of this section has been successful from the perspective of the Division of Marine Fisheries, the Wildlife Resources Commission and the public in clarifying enforcement activities and reducing the duplication of enforcement activities by the Division of Marine Fisheries marine patrol and the Wildlife Resources Commission law enforcement officers.

Finding #1:

The active season for recreational boating is April through October with peak volumes from Memorial Day through Labor Day. With the boating safety and fisheries management agreement not in effect during the previous peak period, there has not been an ability to gauge the successfulness of the agreement. The coordination of patrol efforts, utilization of a uniform method of identifying vessels that have been inspected on a given day and increased collaborative training should reduce the perceived duplication of enforcement activities, while increasing the efficiency of each officer through the force multiplier effect. These conclusions can best be reached through analyzing data and public comment from a full boating season.

¹ Sections 14.11.(a) & (b) of Session Law 2013-360 “Appropriations Act of 2013” – Appendix A.

² “Memorandum of Agreement Between The North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources Division of Marine Fisheries and The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission Regarding Boating Safety” – Appendix B.

Requirement #2:

As an alternative to the agreement developed under the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, whether it would be preferable to confer law enforcement powers upon the Division of Marine Fisheries marine patrol to authorize the Division of Marine Fisheries marine patrol to engage in enforcement activity related to only fisheries under the jurisdiction of the Division of Marine Fisheries or subject to the management of the Division of Marine Fisheries.

Finding #2:

Granting additional law enforcement authority to the Division of Marine Fisheries marine patrol will allow Marine Fisheries Inspectors the ability to thoroughly respond to criminal violations while engaged in their primary subject matter jurisdiction duties without having to rely on other law enforcement agencies thus improving overall enforcement efficiency. The public's confusion regarding multiple agencies responding will be reduced.

Requirement 3:

Any other issue the Division of Marine Fisheries or the Wildlife Resources Commission deems pertinent to include in the report.

Finding #3:

The Executive Director of the Wildlife Resources Commission and the Director of the Division of Marine Fisheries have included their issues in the adjoining sections.

JOINT LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Grant additional law enforcement authority to Marine Inspectors in [G.S. 113-136\(d1\)](#).
Division of Marine Fisheries Recommends
2. Amend [G.S. 113-171](#) to include any conviction of the holder of a commercial fishing license, using commercial fishing gear in inland waters, in the commercial fishing suspension and revocation process or amend [G.S. 113-171](#) to provide the Marine Fisheries Commission clear authority to adopt rules to include any conviction of the holder of a commercial fishing license, using commercial fishing gear in inland waters, in the commercial fishing suspension and revocation process.
Division of Marine Fisheries Recommends
3. The Wildlife Resources Commission is specifically granted jurisdiction over all aspects of fishing, exclusive of fishing under the jurisdiction of the Marine Fisheries Commission, [G.S. 113-136\(c\)\(3\)](#). In an effort to gain compliance and reduce confusion among user groups, Wildlife Protectors should be granted the authority to respond to all fishery violations in coastal and joint waters incidental to their primary subject matter jurisdiction duties without having to rely on other law enforcement agencies thus improving overall enforcement efficiency. The requested statutory change would codify Section 2 of the Boating Safety and Fisheries Management Agreement.
Wildlife Resources Commission Recommends

WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

As described in Finding #1, coordinated patrols, implementation of uniform methods to identify vessels that have been inspected, and increased collaborative training should reduce perceived duplication of effort while increasing law enforcement operational efficiency and effectiveness. Further recommendations described in the Joint Legislative Recommendations section suggest that statutory modification of jurisdictional authorities including those outlined in the boating safety and fishery management agreement would increase workforce effectiveness.

Given the conclusions herein that positive benefits would accrue from coordination of law enforcement activities and conferring jurisdictional authorities that would enable law enforcement personnel to enforce regulations promulgated by either agency, it is a logical next step to examine the costs and benefits of combining these work units. Accordingly, Dr. Louis B. Daniel, III, Director of the Division of Marine Fisheries and I recommend that should this examination be undertaken, a neutral third-party should be identified to conduct that analysis.

BOATING SAFETY IN NORTH CAROLINA

The National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) estimates that recreational boating has a \$4.15 billion impact to the economy of North Carolina. The NMMA shows there are 1,072 boating related businesses in North Carolina that generate 32,827 direct and indirect jobs. This economic engine is directly supported by and reliant upon a safe boating environment. That safe boating environment, and the opportunities which it affords, is assured in part through effective boating safety law enforcement.

History and Statutory Authority

With the passage of the Federal Boating Act of 1958, states became essential partners in boating safety. In 1959, the North Carolina General Assembly adopted Chapter 75A, the “Boating and Water Safety Act”. G.S. 75A-1 reads “It is the policy of this State to promote safety for persons and property in and connected with the use, operation, and equipment of vessels, and to promote uniformity of laws relating thereto.” The Wildlife Resources Commission is responsible for enforcing and administering the provisions of this Chapter³.

While both [G.S. 113-136\(c\)\(1\)](#) and [G.S. 75A-3\(a\)](#) specifically grant jurisdiction and administration of boating safety to the Wildlife Resources Commission, [G.S. 75A-17](#) grants enforcement of the chapter to “every wildlife protector and every other law-enforcement officer of this State and its subdivisions”. This statutory language has allowed for productive partnerships throughout the state with state and local law enforcement agencies in a concerted effort to provide safe opportunities on the water.

Jurisdictional Areas

The jurisdictions of both Wildlife Protectors and Marine Inspectors are clearly defined for purposes of fisheries regulations and enforcement. Under [G.S. 113-132](#) the Wildlife Resources Commission and the Marine Fisheries Commission have agreed on jurisdictional boundaries and on the delineation of waters as joint fishing waters. Those boundaries have been jointly adopted as rules in [15A NCAC 03Q](#). A map delineating the general boundaries is included in Figure 1.

Local law enforcement agencies are constrained to the political boundaries of their town or county. Federal agencies such as the United States Coast Guard have jurisdiction within all state and federal waters, which extend 200 miles off the coast.

³ N.C.G.S. 75A-3(a)

NORTH CAROLINA COASTAL, JOINT AND INLAND FISHING WATERS

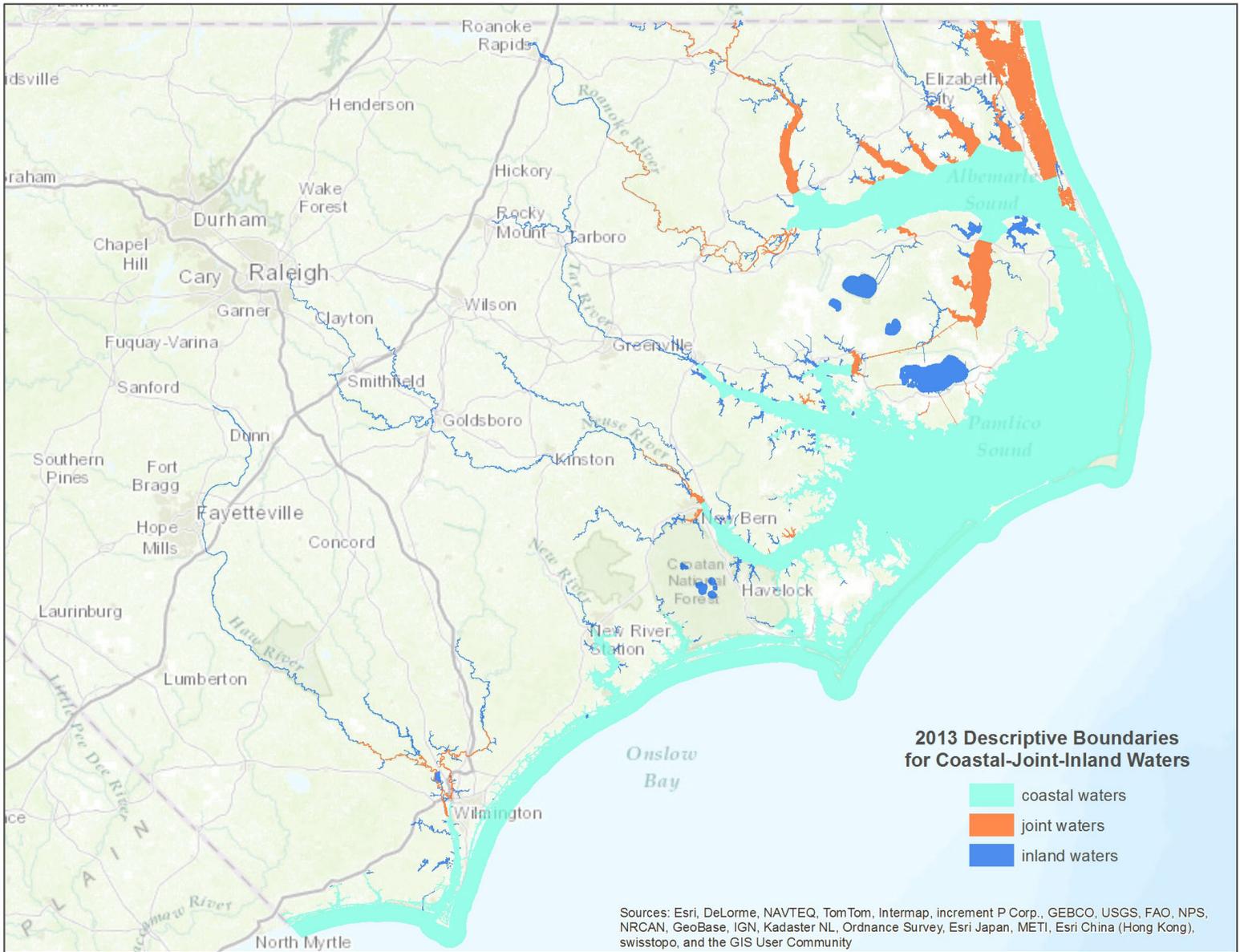


Figure 1: Map of coastal, joint and inland fishing waters on the coast of North Carolina.

SCOPE OF ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

Division of Marine Fisheries of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources:

Department of Environment and Natural Resources Mission

The N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources is the lead stewardship agency for the preservation and protection of North Carolina's outstanding natural resources. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources' primary mission is to protect North Carolina's environment and natural resources under the three broad principles of fundamental philosophy, fundamental economics, and fundamental science. Implementation of this mission results in a collaborative stewardship among the citizens, government regulators and the business community to maintain and enhance North Carolina's environment and natural resources for the benefit and enjoyment of everyone living in or visiting our great state.

Division of Marine Fisheries

North Carolina is unique among Atlantic coast states in its mission, legal mandate, operations, customer service, organization, and approach to fisheries management. Its unique geography supports one of the most productive coastal fisheries in the United States. North Carolina has the largest estuarine system of any one state on the east coast, with over 2.5 million acres of coastal rivers, creeks, large sounds, and inlets surrounded by approximately 4,000 miles of coastal shoreline. In North Carolina, coastal fish are a public trust resource and belong to the citizens of the state as a whole. The Division of Marine Fisheries is charged with stewardship of these resources. The Fisheries Reform Act of 1997 "*recognizes the need to protect our coastal fishery resources and to balance the commercial and recreational interests through better management of these resources*" and requires the Marine Fisheries Commission "*to provide fair regulation of commercial and recreational fishing groups in the interest of the public.*"



The Division of Marine Fisheries mission statement:

“To ensure sustainable marine and estuarine fisheries and habitats for the benefit and health of the people of North Carolina.”

As a model fisheries management agency, the Division of Marine Fisheries’ vision:

- Ensures healthy, sustainable marine and estuarine fisheries and habitats through management decisions based on sound data and objective analyses.
- Monitors and evaluates coastal waters for the safe harvest of molluscan shellfish and recreational uses to safeguard the public health of shellfish consumers and recreational bathers.
- Provides excellent public service by motivated employees in an open and healthy working environment.
- Views public participation as essential for successful management of North Carolina’s fisheries resources.
- Enforces marine fisheries statutes and rules fairly and consistently.

Division of Marine Fisheries’ Marine Patrol

The Division of Marine Fisheries is authorized by [G.S. 113-181](#) to administer and enforce the provisions of Subchapter IV of Chapter 113 of the General Statutes, Conservation of Marine and Estuarine and Wildlife Resources. Pursuant to [G.S. 143B-289.52\(f\)](#), the department, through the Division of Marine Fisheries, enforces all rules adopted by the Marine Fisheries Commission. Specifically, enforcement is provided through the Marine Patrol. Marine Patrol’s jurisdiction encompasses all coastal waters and extends to three miles offshore for recreational and commercial fishing.

Marine Patrol is composed of 56 sworn full-time law enforcement officers (Inspectors) with jurisdictional authority for state marine fishing violations. Marine Inspectors patrol over 4,000 miles of coastline and covering over 2.5 million acres of water related to marine fisheries rules and regulations. Its jurisdiction includes all coastal and joint waters, extends to three miles offshore and ranges to 200 miles offshore for some federally regulated species.

The North Carolina General Statutes, Marine Fisheries Commission rules relating to coastal fishing and the proclamation authority of Division of Marine Fisheries’ director provide the authority for Marine Patrol. The Marine Patrol ensures compliance with conservation regulations and protects the state’s marine and estuarine fisheries and habitat resources by inspecting fishermen who harvest fish (commercial and recreational fishermen) and fish houses that buy North Carolina seafood, including retail seafood markets and seafood restaurants. Marine Inspectors enforce regulations on a commercial seafood industry and on a marine recreational industry that pumps millions of dollars into the state’s economy as shown in the tables on the following page.

Table 1. Economic Impacts of the North Carolina Commercial Fishing Harvesting Sector from 2008 to 2012.

Year	Participants Reporting Landings ¹	Pounds ¹	Ex-Vessel Value ¹	Economic Impacts		
				Jobs ^{2,3}	Income Impacts (thousands of dollars) ³	Total Economic Impacts (thousands of dollars) ³
2012	3,167	56,693,669	\$72,911,625	3,548	\$50,482	\$121,943
2011	3,243	67,500,748	\$71,182,533	3,616	\$48,333	\$118,292
2010	3,598	72,001,800	\$79,865,176	4,018	\$53,126	\$131,826
2009	3,756	68,963,523	\$77,196,361	4,163	\$50,331	\$126,706
2008	3,664	71,200,227	\$86,809,853	4,123	\$55,928	\$141,633

¹As reported by the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) trip ticket program.

²Includes all commercial fishing participants reporting landings as well as jobs (full time and part time) in supporting industries.

³Economic impacts calculated using the DMF commercial fishing economic impact model and IMPLAN economic impact modeling software. All economic impact estimates are for the state economy of North Carolina.

Table 2. Economic Impacts of North Carolina Saltwater Recreational Fishing Trip Expenditures from 2008 to 2012.

Year	Total Trips ¹	Estimated Expenditures (thousands of dollars) ²	Economic Impacts		
			Jobs ^{3,4}	Income Impacts (thousands of dollars) ⁴	Total Economic Impacts (thousands of dollars) ⁴
2012	5,303,480	\$369,555	5,956	\$201,578	\$585,240
2011	4,739,744	\$317,072	5,177	\$172,027	\$500,032
2010	5,677,574	\$355,755	5,625	\$182,545	\$538,136
2009	5,308,692	\$329,985	5,528	\$173,750	\$515,327
2008	6,898,425	\$425,510	7,346	\$227,252	\$672,182

¹Trip estimates as reported by the National Marine Fisheries Service Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP).

² Expenditures estimated using the DMF recreational fishing economic impact model.

³Includes full time and part time jobs.

⁴Economic impacts calculated using the DMF recreational fishing economic impact model and IMPLAN economic impact modeling software. All economic impact estimates are for the state economy of North Carolina.

Table 3. Division of Marine Fisheries Marine Patrol Performance Metrics, 2009-2013.

Metric	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of vessels and fishermen inspected	106,703	73,636	80,755	136,053	141,975
Number of seafood dealer inspections	6,891	6,380	6,605	6,744	6,308
Number of polluted shellfish area patrol hours	9,893	9,251	8,418	8,325	8,718
Vessel patrol hours	19,029	18,791	18,504	18,405	16,930
Vehicle patrol hours	47,497	45,942	43,994	45,217	45,955
Aircraft patrol hours	869	1,370	1,199	968	1,092
Number of civil penalties processed	31	47	69	26	11
Number of educational exhibits	31	35	29	39	21
Number of educational programs	41	35	78	120	48
Number of public attending exhibits & programs	249,621	223,614	339,209	153,325	171,540

Wildlife Resources Commission:

Wildlife Resources Commission Mission

In 2009, the Wildlife Resources Commission revised its strategic plan and mission statement in direct alignment with enabling legislation and statutory authorities. The mission statement, *“To conserve North Carolina’s wildlife resources and their habitats and provide programs and opportunities that allow hunters, anglers, boaters and other outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy wildlife-associated recreation”*, directs the agency’s daily work. Goal 1, *“All North Carolina citizens have the opportunity for safe and readily available participation in hunting, fishing, boating and other wildlife-related activities”* charges Commission staff specifically with providing opportunities for participation in a safe boating environment. This charge extends directly to the Division of Law Enforcement.

Wildlife Resources Commission Division of Law Enforcement

Wildlife Protectors are sworn law enforcement officers as defined in [G.S. 113-128\(9\)](#). Wildlife Protectors enforce the hunting, trapping and inland fishing laws on all lands and waters of the state to protect the resources of the state and the safety of its citizens. Under G.S. 75A, Wildlife Protectors are the sole officers charged with enforcing the boating laws and regulations on all waters of the state, up to three miles offshore in the Atlantic Ocean. Wildlife Protectors annually conduct 300 free pre-launch boating safety checks, 100 free boating safety courses, 1100 free Hunter Education Courses and over 236,000 safety and compliance checks. The 3,570 sq. miles of water and 52,712 sq. miles of land patrolled by Wildlife Protectors include 2 million acres of public game lands, 211 public boating access areas, 58 public fishing areas and 73 waterfowl impoundments.

Wildlife Resources Commission Division of Law Enforcement Mission

The Division of Law Enforcement's mission statement details three critical goals toward which Wildlife Protectors must focus their work efforts, and describes two ways to achieve these goals:

“The Mission of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission’s Division of Law Enforcement is to conserve wildlife resources; promote safe, responsible boating; and provide public safety, through both proactive law enforcement and the instruction of quality education.”

Two critical elements are tied directly to boating:

- The promotion of safe, responsible boating and;
- The provision of public safety.

The ways to accomplish these tasks are also outlined in this statement:

- Through proactive law enforcement and;
- The instruction of quality education.

Wildlife Resources Commission Division of Law Enforcement Vision

The Division's vision statement also contains three broadly-stated goals that direct staffs' daily activities:

“It is the vision of the Division of Law Enforcement to strive for an atmosphere of continuous improvement and development of its employees, a persistent focus on gaining compliance of both statutes and rules through a variety of law enforcement methods, and a selfless sense of public service.”

This vision helps Division administrators and Wildlife Protectors form the parameters for the actions taken as they strive to achieve the stated mission.

Multifaceted Approach to Boating Law Enforcement

As indicated in the Division of Law Enforcement Vision and Mission Statements, Wildlife Protectors seek to ensure the safety of the boating public through “proactive law enforcement and the instruction of quality education,” and through a “variety of law enforcement methods.” The following are examples of the multifaceted approach taken by Wildlife Protectors to achieve this mission.

Boating Education

Effective May 1, 2010 any person under the age of 26 must successfully complete a National Association of Safe Boating Law Administration (NASBLA) approved boating education course before operating any vessel propelled by a motor of 10 horsepower or greater in the public waters of North Carolina. Note: Effective December 1, 2013 this statute was changed to require any person born on or after January 1, 1988 to complete a boating education course.⁴

Boating education courses are designed for 6.0 hours of instruction. These courses are delivered online and via classroom settings. Approved classes are taught by Wildlife Protectors, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, the U.S. Power Squadron, and various internet-based course providers.

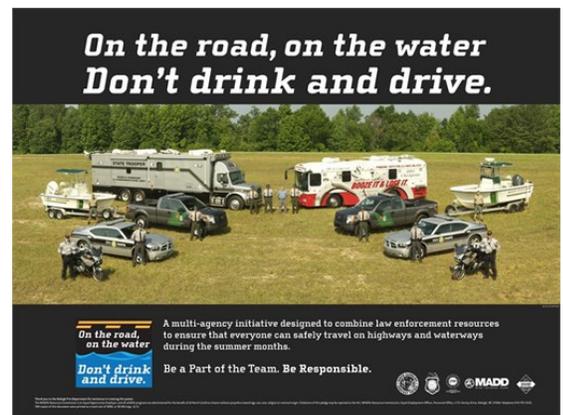
Below are ten year totals for North Carolina boating education students. The sharp increase in students beginning in 2009 is reflective of the statute change requiring boaters born on or after January 1, 1988 to complete a boating education course before operating a vessel.

Year	Boating Education Students	Year	Boating Education Students
2003	3,667	2008	4,363
2004	3,889	2009	17,328
2005	3,711	2010	31,253
2006	3,706	2011	41,379
2007	5,008	2012	35,532

Media and Public Awareness

Media promotions are a key component to achieving the goal of providing a safe environment for people using the state’s waterways. In 2012, our safety message was carried in 220 newspaper articles across the state. In addition, Wildlife Protectors conducted television interviews and provided opportunities for reporter ride-alongs in all major media markets. Time Warner Cable Channel 14 placed these interviews in high rotation with the spots appearing as often as 10-15 times per day on holiday weekends.

The Division of Law Enforcement produced two awareness posters in 2011 and 2012 that coincided with the “On the Road, On the Water” campaign.



⁴N.C.G.S. 75A-16.2

Pre-launch Boating Safety Checks

The Division has conducted courtesy pre-launch boat safety checks as part of boating safety events for many years. During the summer of 2012, the Division issued the following guidelines for expanding these inspections:

- The checks are to be called “Pre-launch Boating Safety Checks.”
- Pre-launch checks can be held any time but the emphasis is on holidays and weekends.
- Each Wildlife Protector will conduct at least two checks per month from May to August. At least one of these is required to be held on Saturday or Sunday.
- The checks are to be conducted between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm for a minimum two hour period to take advantage of times when most people launch their boats.
- It is preferred that the checks be held on Wildlife Resources Commission boating access areas.
- Wildlife Protectors are encouraged to cover all of the access areas in their districts at least once, alternating locations as much as possible.

The goal of these checks is to address potential safety issues before people launch their boats, thereby gaining compliance with rules and reducing safety risks without issuing costly citations. Wildlife Protectors in the Lake Norman area have tracked these checks over the past two years with the following results:

- Wildlife Protectors checked 539 vessels prior to launching during the two year period.
- Identified 163 violations, at a violation rate of 30% of the boats checked.
- Of these violations:
 - 58% were for numbering/registration/decal violations
 - 24% were for Personal Flotation Device (PFD) violations (insufficient number/type/condition)
 - 18% were fire extinguisher related (discharged or missing).
- As a result of these checks, 71 boaters were brought into compliance with boating safety requirements before they launched their boats and without receiving citations.

These pre-launch checks bring boaters into compliance, promote safety on the waterways, provide educational opportunities and positive interactions with the public, and save the boating public money by preventing citations for these offenses.



Geoff Cantrell

High Visibility Patrol

Conspicuous patrolling is an additional element of accomplishing boating safety goals. The majority of Wildlife Protectors patrol in pickup trucks that are marked as Wildlife Law Enforcement vehicles. On Wildlife Resources Commission boating access areas, a parking space is reserved for agency staff near the launching ramp. This ensures that Wildlife Protectors have a parking space on the more heavily used access areas. Parking a marked vehicle in this manner also serves as a visual reminder to the boating public that a Wildlife Protector is patrolling the waterway. Our desire is for this to prompt the boaters to do a quick equipment check before launching their boat.



Geoff Cantrell

The majority of Wildlife Resources Commission boats used for boating patrol are also marked as law enforcement vessels, furthering the high visibility presence that serves as a deterrent to violations.

Partnerships

The Wildlife Resources Commission participates in three statewide partnerships that promote awareness of the dangers of impaired operation of a vessel on the state's waterways.

- "Operation Dry Water" is a program with a nationwide emphasis on impaired operation that is held the weekend prior to the Fourth of July holiday. We have been a partner in this effort since 2009. In 2013, more than 500 agencies from across the country participated in this three-day event.
- In 2011, staff from the Wildlife Resources Commission, the North Carolina State Highway Patrol, and North Carolina Alcohol Law Enforcement (ALE) teamed up to increase safety on and around our waterways. The program was named "On the Road, On the Water, Don't Drink and Drive." In 2013, this program was expanded to include the US Army Corp of Engineers, NC State Parks, US Coast Guard, Marine Patrol, and many local police and sheriff's departments.
- Another partner for "Operation Dry Water" and "On the Road on the Water - Don't Drink and Drive", (and other special boating operations) is the North Carolina Division of Public Health's Forensic Tests for Alcohol Branch. Its mobile Breath Alcohol Testing (BAT) unit plays a role in providing mobile testing of impaired drivers and motorboat operators. These "BAT Mobiles" are marked with an anti-impaired operation message and are placed on boating access areas up to two hours prior to operations to serve as a reminder and deterrent to operators who may operate while impaired.

Special Operations

The Division has three fixed wing aircraft used for law enforcement operations. For boating enforcement, these planes focus on careless and negligent operation of vessels. Personal Watercrafts (PWCs) generate numerous complaints from the public for operating too close to other vessels or in close proximity to fixed structures such as docks. By utilizing aircraft, Wildlife Protectors can detect these violations and direct officers on the water to the violators. Aircraft are also useful in locating vessels operating without navigational lights at night and for locating lost or overdue boaters.



Geoff Cantrell

Wildlife Protectors often use no wake zones as areas to conduct inspections. These zones are typically high traffic areas where officers can maximize contacts with the boating public in a cost effective manner. Because of the reduced speed of the vessels in these areas, it is also a much safer environment in which to conduct inspections.

On inland lakes and barrier islands along the coast, sandbars or beach areas are popular locations for boaters to congregate. These areas generate complaints ranging from impaired operation to underage drinking. Wildlife Protectors work these locations because of the volume of boat traffic, boating congestion and the complaints from the public.

Search and Rescue

Because of their specialized skills, training and equipment, Wildlife Protectors are involved in search and rescue operations in the marine environment. For recovery operations, Wildlife Protectors are often requested to provide perimeter security.

Boating Law Enforcement Evaluation

Results Related to Violations and Incident Rates

In 2004, the percentage of vessels found to be in violation was 18%. There has been a steady decrease in the rate of violations over the past 10 years to a 13% violation rate in 2013. Likewise, the incident rate per 1000 registered vessels has decreased 50% over the past 40 years. This is especially significant given the number of registered vessels almost tripled over that 40-year period and can be directly linked to vigilant and effective boating education and public safety focus and procedures.

Wildlife Protectors report an increased observance and positive reaction to the use of designated operators (designated drivers) on vessels during their inspections. Many operators and passengers relate to Wildlife Protectors that they have seen or heard news reports of the campaigns designed to reduce the instances of impaired operation.

Refinement and Adaptation of Techniques

In keeping with the Vision of continuous improvement and providing public service, the Division of Law Enforcement has reviewed all elements of the boating law enforcement program. The areas below have been identified as those needing refinement or adaptation to continue providing the best possible public safety and quality customer service.

Issue 1: The Need for Increased Collaboration

A recent statewide survey of each wildlife district revealed a multitude of federal, state, and local agencies that are involved in law enforcement on the waters of North Carolina. More than 75 distinct law enforcement entities have an active presence on the state's waterways. The missions of these agencies, and the amount and type of patrols conducted by them are varied. In an effort to understand the scope and diversity of marine law enforcement and to ensure uniform application of the law, the Wildlife Resources Commission hosted a series of six regional meetings with these departments across the state. These meetings provided the opportunity for administrators to determine training needs and to identify ways to increase communication and collaboration among these agencies. The following lists the agencies in attendance at each location and those agency's stated missions for marine law enforcement presence on waterways within their respective jurisdictions.

Wildlife Resources Commission Headquarters, Raleigh - October, 23, 2013

US Army Corps of Engineers – Their primary mission is water safety with a focus on education and public awareness. They perform limited boat patrols.

Wake County Sheriff's Department – Conducts daytime weekend patrols on Falls and Shearon Harris Lakes (no weekday or nighttime patrol). Their primary mission is power plant protection and emergency evacuation in the event of a power plant emergency (their boating unit is funded by Duke Progress Energy). Their secondary mission is boating safety. They check numerous boaters on these lakes.

Durham County Sheriff's Department – Their primary mission is search and rescue (they have a dive team). They are discouraged from actively checking boats.

Vance County Sheriff's Department – They do not have an operational boat at this time, but hope to have it running by next year. Their primary mission is to protect waterfront property and deter theft from boats and docks.

Rocky Mount Police Department – Their primary mission is to enforce town ordinances on Wilson Reservoir.

Wilson Police Department – Their primary mission is to enforce town ordinances on Buckhorn Reservoir and Lake Wilson.

Wrightsville Beach Police Department – October 29, 2013

DMF Marine Patrol – Their primary mission is enforcing commercial and recreational fishing regulations.

US Coast Guard – Their primary mission is water safety to include boating checks, and search and rescue. They also enforce fishing regulations 3 miles offshore and beyond.

Topsail Beach Police Department – They stopped using their boat this summer, but will begin using it again during the duck season to enforce town ordinances against hunting within the town limits.

Wrightsville Beach Police Department – Their primary mission is boating safety.

Brunswick County Sheriff's Department – Their primary mission is boating safety, and search and rescue.

Pender County Sheriff's Department – They do not have a boat at this time, but want to get one to assist with emergency response.

Wilmington Police Department – They work the waterfront area of Wilmington for public safety.

Jacksonville Police Department – Their boat is not operational at this time. Their primary mission is enforcing town ordinances such as hunting within the city limits.

Morehead City Police Department - October 30, 2013

DMF Marine Patrol – Their primary mission is enforcing commercial and recreational fishing regulations.

US Coast Guard – Their primary mission is water safety to include boating checks, and search and rescue. They also enforce fishing regulations 3 miles offshore and beyond.

US Park Service – Their primary mission is resource protection and public safety.

Elizabeth City - October 31, 2013

DMF Marine Patrol – Their primary mission is enforcing commercial and recreational fishing regulations.

US Coast Guard – Their primary mission is water safety to include boating checks, and search and rescue. They also enforce fishing regulations 3 miles offshore and beyond.

USFWS – Their primary mission is resource protection and assisting other agencies.

Chowan County Sheriff's Department – Their primary mission is search and rescue, assisting stranded boaters, and property protection. They do not conduct boat checks.

Edenton Police Department – Their primary mission is search and rescue, and property protection. They do not conduct boat checks.

Currituck County Sheriff's Department – Their primary mission is search and rescue, assisting stranded boaters and property protection. They do not conduct boat checks.

Charlotte/Mecklenburg Training Center – November 5, 2013

Lake Lure Police Department – Their primary mission is law enforcement on the lake (the lake is managed by the city).

Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department – The primary mission is boating and water safety. They have boats on Lake Norman and Lake Wylie.

Davidson Police Department – They do not currently have a presence on the water but plan to in the future.

High Point Police Department – They have no lake presence.

Statesville Agriculture Center – November 7, 2013

Cornelius Police Department – They respond to community issues such as property crimes. They also promote safe boating.

Iredell County Sheriff’s Department – They focus on property issues and emergency responses.

Hickory Police Department – They have a part-time presence on the water, primarily on holidays. Their primary mission is boater assistance.

Davidson County Sheriff’s Department – They work on the water from 5/15-9/15. They are funded by Alcoa. They work access areas and promote water safety on the water.

Catawba County Sheriff’s Department – They have a full-time presence on the lake. They respond to 911 calls on the lake and look for other violations (including boating violations).

US Army Corp of Engineers Kerr Scott – Their primary mission is water safety.

Issue 2: Decrease the Likelihood of Multiple Checks

The number of agencies on the waterways creates the possibility of individuals being stopped by multiple agencies during an outing on the water. The Division attempts to reduce the possibility of multiple boat checks during the course of a day by issuing “Boat Check” cards⁵. These cards list the time and date of the inspection, the number of passengers onboard and whether alcohol was on board. If the boater is stopped again that day, s/he can show the Wildlife Protector the card and if nothing has changed such as an increase in the number of passengers, the boaters are allowed to go on their way without further inspection. However, the Division of Law Enforcement is the only agency using these cards and their use may not be honored by other agencies.

Issue 3: The Need to Modify the Inspection Practice

In an effort to balance public safety with the rights granted to individuals under the 4th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution (prohibits unreasonable searches), the Division recently directed Wildlife Protectors to begin using a probable cause or reasonable suspicion standard for initiating boat stops. Wildlife Protectors were also directed to inspect vessel equipment when fishing or hunting activity is the reason for the stop. This practice began on August 18, 2013. Since that date, Wildlife Protectors report the following as the most

⁵Wildlife Resources Commission Boat Safety Check card - Appendix C

common source of probable cause or reasonable suspicions for boat stops:

- Boat numbering violations
- Decal/Registration violations
- No Wake Zone violations
- Child under 13 years of age not wearing a PFD
- Lighting violations
- Vessel operation

In addition, Division staff will begin working a “check point” policy similar to those used on the highways. The criteria for conducting checkpoints on the waterways include:

- Identifying the time and location for the checkpoint
- How the checkpoint will be identified
- The pattern for the stops
- The number of officers involved

Issue 4: Possible Inconsistencies in Performance Metrics

Wildlife Protectors track patrol activity such as inspections, citations and arrests, warnings and presentations in the Wildlife Resource Commission’s Federal Assistance Management Reporting System (FAMRS). There is a need to clarify and develop guidelines to ensure that each Protector is using the same criteria when logging their patrol activity.

Issue 5: The Need to Expand Equipment Loaner Programs

At many U.S. Army Corp of Engineer lakes and at some state parks that border waterways, personal flotation device loaner programs are in place. At these locations, boaters can borrow personal flotation devices if needed and can return the personal flotation devices when their trip is complete. This program provides a means for boaters to continue their outings while meeting safety and legal requirements and possibly avoiding a citation.

Equipment loaner programs can be expanded to Wildlife Resources Commission boating access areas. There have been preliminary discussions with private industry representatives regarding furnishing personal flotation devices and fire extinguishers free of charge or at reduced rates to the Wildlife Resources Commission in support of these types of programs.

COOPERATIVE ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS BETWEEN DMF AND WRC

The Division of Marine Fisheries and the Wildlife Resources Commission have longstanding and dynamic partnerships on a multitude of research projects, species management, and law enforcement activities. Boating safety is an area in which we partner with all enforcement agencies on the water, including Marine Inspectors. Historically this was a casual partnership, but with the passage of Session Law 2013-360, “the Appropriations Act of 2013,” this relationship has become formalized through a Memorandum of Agreement.

Boating Safety and Fisheries Management Agreement

The Agreement was established with the goal of enhancing coordination and collaboration in marine law enforcement between the Wildlife Resources Commission and the Division of Marine Fisheries. The Agreement contains seven key provisions directed toward achieving this goal.

1. Authorize DMF Inspectors to conduct boating safety inspections incidental to inspections of commercial and recreational anglers in coastal and joint waters;
2. WRC Protectors will conduct recreational angler inspections incidental to boating safety inspections in coastal and joint waters;
3. a) Coordinate patrol efforts optimizing distribution of patrol vessels in geographic areas;
b) Develop and implement a uniform method identifying a vessel has been inspected for the day;
4. Qualified DMF Inspectors will be authorized to investigate boating accidents in coastal and joint water when WRC Protectors are unavailable;
5. WRC will provide training on boating safety and accident investigation to DMF Inspectors;
6. DMF will not receive any federal boating safety funds except in the instance of boat accident investigations; and
7. Specifically outlines provisions for mutual aid authorizing DMF Inspectors to enter into inland waters to respond to or investigate reports of illegal netting activities.

This formalized agreement should result in increased efficiency in marine law enforcement through the coordination of patrol efforts, utilization of a uniform method of identifying vessels that have been inspected on a given day, and increased collaborative training. Moreover, formally coordinating the distribution of patrols will reduce duplication and redundancy, and relieve public perceptions of ineffectiveness.

Joint Operations

Wildlife Protectors and Marine Inspectors routinely conduct joint operations throughout eastern North Carolina. These exercises allow both agencies to focus on their missions of protecting public safety on the water and conserving marine resources. A joint operation in Craven, Pamlico and Beaufort counties in

August 2013 focused on vessel inspections, recreational creel checks, and gill net, shrimp trawl, and crab pot investigations⁶. Operations involving multiple agencies are examples of inter-agency cooperation and can benefit the public efficiency, enhanced effectiveness, and reduced costs.

Boating Safety Check Cards and Inspection Tag Pilot

As previously detailed, boating safety check cards list the time and date of the inspection, the number of passengers onboard and whether alcohol was being consumed. If the boater is stopped again that day, they show the Wildlife Protector the card and if nothing has changed such as an increase in the number of passengers, the boaters are allowed to go on their way without further inspection. These cards have been shared with all law enforcement agencies with a marine presence, including the Division of Marine Fisheries. Both agencies are investigating additional tools to identify vessels previously inspected for boating safety. A colored-coded tag representing a day, week, or month can be affixed to inspected vessels informing other officers the vessel has been inspected thus reducing the need for an additional inspection by either agency. A pilot of this system can be implemented this upcoming boating season, and if successful, can be expanded year round.



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Training

All Marine Inspectors and Wildlife Protectors are sworn law enforcement officers having graduated from North Carolina accredited Basic Law Enforcement Training. Inspectors and Protectors continue to attend general law enforcement and specific jurisdictional in-service training on an annual and as needed basis. The Division of Marine Fisheries and the Wildlife Resources Commission provide cross-agency training in their respective areas of expertise.

Since the adoption of Chapter 75A, Boating and Water Safety, Boating Safety Act in 1959, the Wildlife Resources Commission has been responsible for the enforcement and administration of the Chapter. Through the years the Wildlife Resources Commission has developed the only Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) lesson plans approved by the North Carolina Criminal Justice Standards Division for boating law enforcement. The lesson plans include instruction in the subjects of Motor Boat Laws, Motor Boat Accident Investigation, Standardized Field Sobriety Training (standard and seated battery), Boating

⁶New Bern Sun Journal "Joint Operation Patrols Local Waters," Bill Hand, August 10, 2013 - Appendix D

Procedures & Small Boat Handling, Water Safety and Swimming, and Knotsmanship. These lesson plans have been used to train all Wildlife Protectors and many local law enforcement agencies that have requested training.

Similar to the State Highway Patrol and Alcohol Law Enforcement, the Wildlife Resources Commission is accredited to teach Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET). All Wildlife Protectors are required to complete 21 weeks of BLET and 6 months of in-service training before be assigned a duty station. This assures the best possible training to begin their careers. The Wildlife Resources Commission is the only conservation agency currently in the state that has earned this accreditation through the NC Criminal Justice Standards Division. Most Wildlife Protectors are certified chemical analysts through NC Forensic Test for Alcohol branch. The Wildlife Resources Commission has five Standardized Field Sobriety Testing (SFST) instructors that are certified by both the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) to instruct in the detection of impaired driving on the road or on the water.



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In 2008 Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) presented the Wildlife Resources Commission’s Division of Law Enforcement with the “Law Enforcement Award of Excellence - Statewide DWI Agency Hero” award for training conducted for both the Wildlife Resources Commission and partner agency officers in the detection of boating under the influence.

Training in the ability to recognize recreational boating violations and how to take proper action is being provided to Division of Marine Fisheries Inspectors currently. Boat accident investigation training will also be provided to meet the requirements of the USCG Boating Accident Report Database (BARD).

Standardized Field Sobriety Training

March 17-20	Manteo
March 31-April 3	Wilmington
April 14-17	Morehead City
May 5	Statesville (One day transition course)
May 13	Charlotte (One day transition course)
June 9-11	Raleigh

Boat Law and Boat Accident Investigation Training

April 22-25	Manteo
April 28-May 1	Wilmington
May 5-8	Morehead City
May 19-20	Charlotte
June 2-3	Raleigh
June 9-10	Statesville

Other departments will be invited to attend the Standardized Field Sobriety Testing and Boat Law training sessions. The information gathered from the Marine Law Enforcement Summits indicated that agencies were seeking training to provide a unified approach to boating law enforcement.

Training for 'In-Water Survival' has been developed and offered by Division of Marine Fisheries Marine Patrol Instructors to Wildlife Protectors and is tentatively scheduled during May 2014 at a time and place yet to be determined. Marine Patrol Instructors will provide training in proper fish identification, particularly with regard to the snapper-grouper complex and sharks, proper interpretation of Division of Marine Fisheries proclamations, rules and regulations and Standard Operating Procedures for marine fisheries law enforcement. Blocks of training are to be scheduled during 2014 at a time and place yet to be determined. A plan for keeping Wildlife Protectors current on marine fisheries regulations and enforcement standards will be developed. Marine Patrol will be offering training on these changes at Division of Marine Fisheries field offices or facilities.



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Appendix A - Sections 14.11(a) &(b) of Session Law 2013-360**BOATING SAFETY ENFORCEMENT AGREEMENT**

SECTION 14.11.(a) The Director of the Division of Marine Fisheries of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Director of the Wildlife Resources Commission shall develop and implement an agreement that includes at least all of the following provisions:

- (1) Provisions to authorize the Division of Marine Fisheries marine patrol to perform any needed boating safety inspection.
- (2) To avoid the duplication of enforcement activities by the Division of Marine Fisheries marine patrol and the Wildlife Resources Commission law enforcement officers, a schedule for high volume areas that is developed to take into account that the Division of Marine Fisheries marine patrol must confine their enforcement activities to the coastal waters.
- (3) To further encourage more efficient management of the State's resources, a protocol that sets forth appropriate circumstances when the Division of Marine Fisheries marine patrol is authorized or required to investigate boating accidents in coastal waters and within the joint jurisdiction of the Division of Marine Fisheries and the Wildlife Resources Commission.
- (4) A provision to prohibit, except in the instances of investigations of boating accidents, the Division of Marine Fisheries from receiving any federal boating safety funds.
- (5) A provision to provide mutual aid that authorizes the Division of Marine Fisheries marine patrol to enter into inland waters in winter to conduct a normal investigation of suspected illegal netting activity.

SECTION 14.11.(b) No later than April 1, 2014, the Division of Marine Fisheries of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Wildlife Resources Commission shall submit a joint report to the Senate Appropriations Committee on Natural and Economic Resources, the House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee on Natural and Economic Resources, and the Fiscal Research Division. The report shall include any findings and recommendations, including any legislative proposals. The report shall include findings regarding at least the following issues:

- (1) Whether the agreement developed pursuant to subsection (a) of this section has been successful from the perspective of the Division of Marine Fisheries, the Wildlife Resources Commission and the public in clarifying enforcement activities and reducing the duplication of enforcement activities by the Division of Marine Fisheries marine patrol and the Wildlife Resources Commission law enforcement officers.
- (2) As an alternative to the agreement developed under the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, whether it would be preferable to confer law enforcement powers upon the Division of Marine Fisheries marine patrol to authorize the Division of Marine Fisheries marine patrol to engage in enforcement activity related to only fisheries under the jurisdiction of the Division of Marine Fisheries or subject to the management of the Division of Marine Fisheries.
- (3) Any other issue the Division of Marine Fisheries or the Wildlife Resources Commission deems pertinent to include in the report.

Appendix B – Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Boating Safety and Fisheries Management:

**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES
AND
THE NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE
RESOURCES COMMISSION
REGARDING BOATING SAFETY**



INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

WHEREAS, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) protectors and North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) inspectors share concurrent jurisdiction in the Coastal Fishing Waters and Joint Fishing Waters of eastern North Carolina, as defined by N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 113-129 (4) and (9a);

WHEREAS, N.C. Gen. Stat. § 113-132 (d) grants concurrent jurisdiction to the Marine Fisheries Commission and the Wildlife Resources Commission where their jurisdictions overlap;

WHEREAS, N.C. Gen. Stat. § 75A-17 grants to every wildlife protector and every other law enforcement officer of the State the authority to enforce the Boating Safety Act; and

WHEREAS, Each agency has a specific mission when working these waters. However, the law enforcement officers from each agency are similarly equipped, trained, and geographically their patrols sometime overlap.

WHEREAS, Numerous fish species, including, but not limited to, speckled trout, flounder, shad, and striped bass, provide opportunities for commercial and recreational fishing in eastern North Carolina and are found in Inland Fishing Waters, Joint Fishing Waters, and Coastal Fishing Waters.

AGREEMENT

Pursuant to 2013 N.C. Sess. L. 360 § 14.11(a), the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Division of Marine Fisheries enter into this Memorandum of Agreement so as to specify how the WRC and DMF will coordinate and collaborate to provide effective, efficient and uniform boating law enforcement, and effectively manage commercial and recreational fishing in the Coastal, Inland, and Joint Fishing Waters of Eastern North Carolina. WRC and DMF do mutually agree:

1. DMF inspectors will conduct boating safety inspections incidental to inspections of commercial and recreational anglers in Coastal and Joint Waters.

2. WRC protectors will conduct recreational angler inspections incidental to boating safety inspections in Coastal and Joint Waters.
3. To improve customer service and reduce the likelihood of duplicative inspections, the WRC and DMF will:
 - a. Coordinate patrol efforts to optimize distribution of patrol vessels in a geographical area, and
 - b. Utilize a uniform method of issuing boater inspection forms or cards that identify a boat as having been checked on a given day.
4. Qualified DMF inspectors are authorized and agree to investigate boating accidents in Coastal and Joint Waters when WRC protectors are not available to complete the investigations. In addition to the statutory requirements for boating accident investigations, DMF will:
 - a. Complete boating accident investigations using forms MB 4.1 or MB 4.2, and
 - b. Submit those forms to the WRC headquarters within ten (10) days of the accident for entry into the U.S. Coast Guard Boat Accident Report Data (BARD) base.
5. WRC will provide training on boating safety and accident investigation to DMF inspectors.
6. DMF will not receive any federal boating safety funds except in instances of boat accident investigations.
7. DMF inspectors are authorized to enter into Inland Waters to respond to reports of illegal netting activity. Per DMF directives issued on 11/01/13, DMF inspectors will adhere to the following protocol for illegal netting in inland waters:
 - a. If there is advanced notice of a violation, the WRC will be notified and DMF may assist as needed.
 - b. If a violation is observed, the DMF inspector(s) will conduct an investigation, including, but not limited to, documenting elements of the violation and contacting the WRC. DMF inspectors will assist as needed.

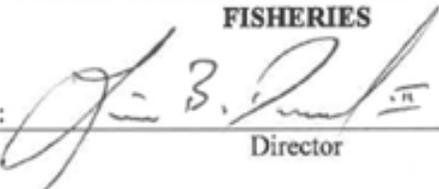
EXECUTION, MODIFICATION AND DURATION OF AGREEMENT

This agreement will become effective upon the date subscribed by the last signatory and shall continue in force until December 31, 2014. Amendments to this Memorandum of Agreement may be proposed by either party and shall become effective upon approval by both parties.

**NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE RESOURCES
COMMISSION**

Date: 2/7/2014 BY: 
Executive Director

**NORTH CAROLINA DIVISION OF MARINE
FISHERIES**

Date: 2/10/14 BY: 
Director

Appendix C - Boating Safety Check Cards



N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission
Boat Safety Check

If your vessel is stopped again today by a wildlife officer, present this card to help expedite inspection.

Officers may check vessels more than once per day due to conditions that can change while on the water, such as number of passengers onboard, number of fish caught and alcohol consumption.

Date _____ Time _____ Boat Number _____ Passengers _____
 Alcohol Onboard Y N Fishing Y N Call number _____

Report Violations 1-800-662-7137

Boating Safety Education Law Effective May 1, 2010

Anyone younger than 26 years old operating a vessel powered by 10 HP or greater motor on public waterways is required to complete an approved boating safety education course or otherwise be in compliance. All boaters must be able to show compliance upon request of a law enforcement officer. More information at www.ncwildlife.org or (919) 707-0030.

Get **N.C. Wildlife Update**—news including season dates, bag limits, legislative updates and more—delivered to your Inbox from the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission. Go to www.ncwildlife.org/eneews.



30,000 copies of this public document were printed at a cost of \$375.00 or \$0.125 per copy. 07/10

Appendix D – New Bern Sun Journal “Joint Operation Patrols Local Waters”

Joint operation patrols local waters

By Bill Hand, Sun Journal Staff

Published: Saturday, August 10, 2013 at 20:19 PM.

When boaters see them coming they get a definite “Why me?” look and, as often as not, they scramble to locate their life jackets, extinguishers and registration.

Nimble little boats with a flashing blue light, a 250-horse Evinrude motor, and “Wildlife Officer” stenciled down the sides, these are the police cruisers of North Carolina’s waterways.

On Friday the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and the Marine Patrol of the Division of Marine Fisheries held a joint patrol along Blounts Creek and the Pamlico River. This was not unusual, but an invitation to members of the press to ride along was.

We met at 3:30 at the newly-built Blount Creek boat ramp on Crisp Landing Road, 10 miles west of Chocowinity where waivers were signed and life jackets handed out. The boat ramp was so new, that the \$384,000 facility had just been opened to the public.

The Sun Journal wound up sharing a boat with Patrol Officer Allen Williford of Marine Fisheries, Master Wildlife Officer Billy Cain of the Wildlife Resources Commission and Frederick Bonner, a fisheries biologist and columnist with the Washington Daily News.

Despite dire predictions of rain for the day it was perfect weather as at least four patrol boats sped up the creek and across the broad and choppy Pamlico to perform random checks on boaters

“You’re out in real force today,” one boater complained with a smile.

Cain and Williford were professional, friendly and polite with the four or five boats that we pulled up to. Some boats were still in the water with fisherman plying their hobby; those that were in motion, such as pleasure boaters, were ordered to put their craft into neutral as we pulled alongside.

The first check was fairly typical: Adam Philipps and his father Douglas were out fishing as we pulled alongside. Cain and Williford exchanged pleasantries with the Philipps as they examined their life jackets, warned them not to drink too much, too much is a blood alcohol level of .08 or greater, checked to be sure their fire extinguisher was up to code and went over their registration and licenses.

Our second stop had a boater struggling to find a life jacket to display — he opened enough cabinet doors to do Mother Hubbard proud and finally came up with a child’s life jacket. The officers let him go with a warning.

A pleasure boat with two women failed a check as well — registration and life jackets were fine, but her ex-

tinguisher was too low. She said she had just gotten it, and Williford told her, “You’d better take it back and get it exchanged.”

Another boat that had some catches had the officers sampling a cooler of captive crabs, measuring it to be sure it was of legal size. They were of size, no doubt to the chagrin of the crabs.

Our one problem came when a man cruising with his family in a motorboat, was found to be missing the registration numbers on his bow. He was ticketed and, while he made no complaint to the officers — “You’re just doing your job” — he was less pleased with the press.

“I’m just doing my job,” Williford said of the ticket. He noted that, had some accident happened to the boat, without registration numbers it would have been hard to identify whose it was. Registration numbers are required to be written on both sides of the boat while a validation registration sticker must be presented on the starboard side.

Kayaks, canoes and rowboats escape registration requirements, so long as it has no motor, including a trolling motor. Sailboats that are longer than 14 feet at the waterline also require registration, and fire extinguishers are required for all boats that use any kind of fuel.

We passed plenty of vacation homes that looked as though they might bankrupt the middle class, while osprey and cormorants plied the waves. Williford noted that the river had its share of pelicans as well, while Bonner stated the Pamlico has been host to manatees, sharks and dolphins.

We boated past under the Mouth of the Creek bridge, one of the few remaining wooden-plank bridges in the state.

At the end of a couple of hours we were delivered back to the boat ramp, where we were met by the irate boater from earlier who apologized for his anger with the press.

“You have every right,” he admitted, joking, “If it was Monday, I wouldn’t have been so mad.”

It was obvious that Williford and Cain enjoy their jobs.

“The thing with us, it’s constantly changing,” Cain said.

As seasons shift — from fishing to various hunting seasons — his job changes as well, putting him on state game lands or patrolling on his boat at different times of the year. Although Williford’s job is more directly related to the waterways, he stated that changes in seasons keeps his job pleasantly in flux as well.

The joint exercises for the day included vessel checks, creel and harvest checks, gill net, shrimp trawl and crab pot checks through the day.

The fisheries and wildlife departments have a large job: North Carolina has more than 4,000 miles of shoreline, according to Public Information Officer Patricia Smith, and 2.5 million acres of marine and estuarine waters.

There are 3,169 active commercial fishermen and 1.5 recreational fishermen in coastal and joint brackish waters.

The Division of Marine Fisheries' jurisdiction covers all coastal waters and extends three miles offshore while the Wildlife Resources Commission is primarily responsible for inland, or fresh, waters. Both patrol joint waters.

Spokesman Geoffrey Cantrell said both organizations emphasize boater safety.

“There have been 12 boating fatalities this year,” he said. “North Carolina ranks seventh in the nation in boating accidents, so we do have a real emphasis on the safety aspect.”