



## **ABANDONED VESSELS** **Procedures for Taking Ownership**

**Definition:** "Abandoned vessel" means a vessel that has been relinquished, left, or given up by the lawful owner without the intention to later resume any right or interest in the vessel. The term does not include a vessel that is left by an owner or agent of the owner with any person or business for the purpose of storage, maintenance, or repair and that is not subsequently reclaimed.

A person finding an abandoned vessel can become the registered and titled owner of the vessel, provided that the previous owner(s) cannot be located and that they have not reported the vessel missing or stolen.

The finder of an abandoned vessel should submit a "Vessel Owner Information Request Form" to the Commission at 1709 Mail Service Center Raleigh, NC 27699. This form must be submitted prior to WRC releasing vessel owner information. Once the applicant has obtained the last registered owner information, that individual must perform the following steps:

- prove he/she has made all effort to contact the last registered owner(s) to indicate they have relinquished, left, or given up any right or interest they have in the vessel;
- send a Certified Letter, return receipt requested, to the last registered owner(s) to demonstrate to WRC that this letter was not deliverable or the last registered owner(s) would not respond;
- provide WRC with a written police report stating that the abandoned vessel has not been reported missing or stolen in the area where it was found;
- send a notarized statement to the WRC summarizing when and where the vessel was found; the attempts to locate the owner; the available evidence that the vessel is abandoned; and statements from any other persons knowledgeable about the history of the vessel;
- complete a VL-1 form to request registration and/or a title and mail it, along with the above listed documentation, and fee to the address shown on the form.

WRC will consider the evidence presented and will consult all available records. If WRC deems the vessel has been abandoned, WRC will register and/or title the vessel into the ownership of the applicant.

For more information regarding abandoned vessels, call 833-950-0575.