



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.

This term does not apply to vessels located on private property unless the applicant is the owner of the property or the property owner has given permission to enter the property and provided a written statement confirming the vessel is abandoned. Nothing in this rule permits anyone to enter private property without authorization to inspect a vessel under these procedures.

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 contact a N.C Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) law enforcement officer in the county in which the claimed abandoned vessel is located to request an inspection. A complete list of officers by county may be found at <https://www.ncpaws.org/employeesearch/search.aspx>. On the staff search page select "Enforcement" in the Division drop box and click search. **The applicant must obtain a completed inspection form from a NCWRC law enforcement officer before moving forward with any additional requirements of this procedure.**

Upon receiving the above-mentioned inspection form, the applicant will need to do the following.

- Call (833-950-0575) or email info@gooutdoorsnorthcarolina.com to request a "Vessel Owner Information Request Form." This form must be submitted prior to NCWRC releasing vessel owner information. Once the applicant has obtained the last registered owner information, that individual must perform the following steps:
- Send a Certified Letter, return receipt requested, to the last registered owner(s) to demonstrate to NCWRC that this letter was not deliverable, or the last registered owner(s) would not respond. A copy of the signed return receipt or the unopened returned certified letter must be provided with your application.

- Provide all relevant documentation proving all efforts have been made 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.
- Provide a notarized statement to the NCWRC detailing 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.
- Apply online at <https://vessel.gooutdoorsnorthcarolina.com> or complete a VL-1 application and mail it, along with the above listed documentation, and fee to NCWRC, 1709 Mail Service Center Raleigh, NC 27699. Abandoned vessel transactions cannot be completed at a Wildlife Service Agent location.

NCWRC will consider the evidence presented and verify all available records. If NCWRC deems the vessel is abandoned, it will register ownership and/or title the vessel to the applicant. **Applications submitted without the above-mentioned law enforcement inspection form will be denied.**

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