



## **Fiscal Note for 2025-2026 Annual Cycle Rule Proposals Wildlife Resources Commission - Inland Fisheries**

**Rule Amendments:** 15A NCAC 10C .0205 PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS  
15A NCAC 10C .0306 CRAPPIE  
15A NCAC 10C .0422 STRIPED MULLET AND WHITE MULLET

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**Fiscal Impact:** State Government: Yes  
Local Government: No  
Private Impact: Yes  
Substantial Economic Impact: No

**Authority:** G.S. 113-134; 113-272; 113-292; 113-304; 113-305

### **BACKGROUND**

The wildlife resources of the State belong to the people of the State as a whole, including the enjoyment of these resources (G.S. 113-131(a)). The Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) is tasked with the conservation of wildlife resources of the State (G.S. 143-239). This responsibility includes managing as equitably as possible the various competing interests regarding these resources, including the use and take of such resources (G.S. 113-131.1(a)). The statutes governing wildlife resources are found in Chapter 113, Subchapter IV of the General Statutes, and WRC has been granted rulemaking authority to implement the provisions of these statutes (G.S. 113-134).

As part of its mission, the WRC conducts an annual review of its inland fish, wildlife, and game land regulations to determine whether the rules need to be adjusted in order to accomplish the objectives of managing wildlife resources or Commission property through a biologically sustainable harvest consistent with sound conservation objectives; managing WRC-owned land for the conservation of wildlife resources, and the enjoyment of the public; and implementing legislative directives.

A summary of the proposed rule amendments is shown below, with the full rule text included in Appendix A. Many of the proposed amendments change what anglers may harvest in specific waters and where anglers may harvest certain species. Some of the proposed amendments seek to increase restrictions to protect the resources, while others increase angling opportunity or provide clarity to anglers. All the proposed changes are intended to ensure future angling opportunity, and despite the changes, no impact to angling participation is expected.

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS BY RULE**

### **15A NCAC 10C .0205 PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT**

The WRC manages approximately 5,300 miles and 2,100 acres of the State's coldwater resources within its Public Mountain Trout Waters (PMTW) program, and in 2022 an estimated 369,968 anglers fished for trout in PMTW and contributed approximately \$1.38 billion to the State's economy.<sup>1</sup> As noted within the WRC's Trout Management Plan, the purpose of PMTW is to use science-based decision making and biologically sound management principles to enhance the quality and quantity of trout populations for continued and varied angling opportunities. By designating waters as PMTW, the WRC is able to enact biologically sound management that ensures the conservation and wise use of trout resources (including efforts focused on the State's only native salmonid: Brook Trout), increase awareness of angling opportunities, invest in infrastructure that provides angling access to all anglers regardless of physical ability, produce and stock approximately 1 million trout annually to provide fisheries, and partner with local (municipalities and counties), state (North Carolina State Parks and North Carolina Forest Service), and federal entities (United States Forest Service) to manage important ecological, cultural, and economic resources.

The proposed amendments will modify the list of waters designated as PMTW and further classified as Hatchery Supported Trout or Delayed Harvest Trout Waters. To reflect changes in partnerships with landowners and angler access, approximately 13.4 miles of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters will be removed; approximately 0.5 miles of Hatchery Supported Trout Waters will be added; and approximately 13.3 miles will be reclassified from Hatchery Supported Trout Waters to Wild Trout Waters. Changes to PMTW boundaries are necessary to clarify designations based upon partnerships with landowners, angler access, and overall trout management.

#### **Fiscal Impact**

##### *State Impact*

Proposed rule amendments that modify the classification of PMTWs will not change on-the-ground management activities. Conservation biologists will change signage as part of their regular duties. The change in signage will not require more than one day, at an estimated one-time cost to the agency of approximately \$304 (\$38/hr x 8 hrs = \$304). New signage will cost the agency approximately \$90 (\$0.90/sign x 100 signs). The total one-time cost to the agency is estimated to be approximately \$394 (\$304 + \$90 = \$394).

<sup>1</sup> Evaluation of North Carolina Trout Anglers' Opinions, Participation and Socioeconomic Impact, 2023.

### *Local Impact*

The proposed amendments have no anticipated local government impact.

### *Private Impact*

Changes to PMTW boundaries will result in a net loss of approximately 12.9 miles of PMTW from public access. While this will be a loss of angling opportunity to the public in specific areas, it represents only 0.24% of the total PMTW.

The WRC does not have a mechanism to determine the specific fiscal impact of the proposed changes to private individuals. These changes will affect anglers' ability to use natural bait. In general, fewer people use natural bait compared to artificial in these specific streams. Reclassifying the waters simplifies the different types of classifications and by not allowing natural bait, the catch and release mortality decreases, leaving more fish in the water to be caught. The loss of 12.9 miles of PMTW could reduce fishing activity within the specific waterbodies. Overall participation in recreational fishing, however, is not expected to decline as a result of the changes. It is expected that anglers will move to other PMTW opportunities that may be local.

## **15A NCAC 10C .0306 CRAPPIE**

The proposed amendment to the rule will establish an eight-inch minimum size limit and a 20 fish daily creel limit for Crappie for Shearon Harris Reservoir.

A Fall 2023 assessment of Crappie in Shearon Harris Reservoir indicated the fishery was supported by only two year-classes (ages 2 and 3), and no age 1 fish were collected. Anglers have expressed concern that Crappie are being overharvested in the reservoir and have indicated they would prefer a size and creel limit for Crappie. Reduced harvest will allow the population to recover, including more age classes to ensure a stable fishery.

### Fiscal Impact

#### *State Impact*

This rule amendment is anticipated to have no state impact as the change is part of routine fisheries management and will not require additional staff time or resources for implementation and enforcement.

#### *Local Impact*

This proposed amendment has no anticipated local government impact.

### *Private Impact*

Private impacts are anticipated to be minimal. Harvest of Crappie will likely be reduced in the Shearon Harris Reservoir in the near term, but anglers will still be able to fish for other species. As such, the change is not expected to impact overall participation in fishing in the reservoir. The creel limit and minimum size limit should increase the abundance of Crappie and help to establish a quality fishery which, in the longer term, could allow increased Crappie harvest opportunity. The WRC does not have a mechanism to determine the specific impacts of the proposed change.

### **15A NCAC 10C .0422 STRIPED MULLET AND WHITE MULLET**

The proposed amendment to the rule will reduce the daily creel limit for Mullet from 200 fish to 100 fish and establish a limit of no more than 400 fish total per boat.

According to the Striped Mullet Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) Amendment 2, Striped Mullet is overfished, and overfishing is occurring. A reduced harvest is expected to allow the Mullet population to recover to a more sustainable level. This change is consistent with the FMP's preferred management option as selected by the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission.

### Fiscal Impact

#### *State Impact*

This rule amendment is anticipated to have no state impact as the change is part of routine fisheries management and will not require additional staff time or resources for implementation and enforcement.

#### *Local Impact*

This proposed amendment has no anticipated local government impact.

#### *Private Impact*

Private impacts are anticipated to be minimal. Harvest opportunities for Striped Mullet and White Mullet in Inland and Joint Fishing Waters will be reduced, but anglers will still be able to fish for other species. As such, the change is not expected to impact overall participation in fishing. This change is expected to allow these fish populations to recover to a more sustainable level which, in the longer term, could allow increased Striped Mullet and White Mullet harvest opportunity. Although the WRC does not have a mechanism to determine the specific fiscal impact of the proposed change, some shift in what anglers may harvest is likely, particularly in areas known to be popular for fishing these species.

1 **15A NCAC 10C .0205 PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS**

2 (a) For purposes of this Rule, the following definitions apply:

- 3 (1) "Natural bait" means a living or dead plant or animal, or parts thereof, or prepared substances  
4 designed to attract fish by the sense of taste or smell.
- 5 (2) "Single hook" means a fish hook with only one point.
- 6 (3) "Artificial lure" means a fishing lure that neither contains nor has been treated by a substance that  
7 attracts fish by the sense of taste or smell.
- 8 (4) "Artificial fly" means one single hook dressed with feathers, hair, thread, tinsel, rubber, or a similar  
9 material to which no additional hook, spinner, spoon, or similar device is added.
- 10 (5) "Youth anglers" are individuals under 18 years of age.

11 (b) For purposes of this Rule, 15A NCAC 10C .0316, and 15A NCAC 10D .0104, the following classifications apply:

- 12 (1) "Public Mountain Trout Waters" are the waters included in this Rule and those designated in 15A  
13 NCAC 10D .0104.
- 14 (2) "Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters" are Public Mountain Trout Waters  
15 where only artificial flies and lures having one single hook may be used. No trout may be possessed  
16 or harvested while fishing these streams. Waters with this designation include tributaries unless  
17 otherwise noted.
- 18 (3) "Delayed Harvest Trout Waters" are Public Mountain Trout Waters where between October 1 and  
19 one-half hour after sunset on the Friday before the first Saturday of the following June, it is unlawful  
20 to possess natural bait, use more than one single hook on an artificial lure, or harvest or possess trout  
21 while fishing. From 6:00 a.m. until noon on the first Saturday in June, only youth anglers may fish  
22 and these waters have no bait or lure restrictions. From noon on the first Saturday in June until  
23 October 1, anglers may fish these waters with no bait or lure restrictions. Waters with this  
24 designation do not include tributaries unless otherwise noted.
- 25 (4) "Hatchery Supported Trout Waters" are Public Mountain Trout Waters that have no bait or lure  
26 restrictions. Waters with this designation do not include tributaries unless otherwise noted.
- 27 (5) "Special Regulation Trout Waters" are Public Mountain Trout Waters where watercourse-specific  
28 regulations apply. Waters with this designation do not include tributaries unless otherwise noted.
- 29 (6) "Wild Trout Waters" are Public Mountain Trout Waters identified in this Rule or 15A NCAC 10D  
30 .0104. Only artificial lures having only one single hook may be used. No person shall possess natural  
31 bait while fishing these waters. Waters with this designation do not include tributaries unless  
32 otherwise noted.
- 33 (7) "Undesignated Waters" are the other waters in the State. These waters have no bait or lure  
34 restrictions.

35 (c) Seasons, creel, and size limits. Seasons, creel, and size limits for trout are listed in Rule .0316 of this Subchapter.

36 (d) Classifications. This Paragraph designates waters in each county that have a specific classification. Waters on  
37 game lands are designated in 15A NCAC 10D .0104, unless otherwise indicated in this Paragraph. The other waters

1 are classified as Undesignated Waters.

2 (1) Alleghany

3 (A) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:

4 Big Pine Creek

5 Bledsoe Creek

6 Brush Creek from the N.C. 21 bridge to the confluence with the Little River, except where  
7 posted against trespassing

8 Cranberry Creek

9 Glade Creek

10 Little River from 400 yards upstream of the S.R. 1128 bridge, marked by a sign on each  
11 bank, to McCann Dam

12 Meadow Fork

13 Pine Swamp Creek

14 Piney Fork

15 Prathers Creek

16 (B) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:

17 The waters located on Stone Mountain State Park

18 (2) Ashe County

19 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:

20 Big Horse Creek from the Virginia state line to Mud Creek at S.R. 1363, excluding  
21 tributaries

22 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:

23 Big Horse Creek from the S.R. 1324 bridge to the North Fork New River

24 Helton Creek from 900 yards upstream of the S.R. 1372 bridge, marked by a sign on both  
25 banks to a point adjacent to intersection of N.C. 16 and S.R. 1536

26 South Fork New River from the upstream end of Todd Island to the S.R. 1351 bridge

27 Trout Lake

28 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:

29 Beaver Creek from N.C. 221 to the confluence of Beaver Creek and South Beaver Creek

30 Big Horse Creek from Mud Creek at S.R. 1363 to the S.R. 1324 bridge

31 Big Laurel Creek from the S.R. 1315 bridge to the confluence with the North Fork New  
32 River

33 Buffalo Creek from the S.R. 1133 bridge to the N.C. 194-88 bridge

34 Cranberry Creek from the Alleghany Co. line to the South Fork New River

35 Nathans Creek

36 North Fork New River from the Watauga Co. line to Sharp Dam

37 Old Fields Creek from N.C. 221 to the South Fork New River

- 1 Peak Creek from the upper boundary of the NCDA-NCSU Upper Mountain Research
- 2 Station to Trout Lake
- 3 Roan Creek
- 4 Three Top Creek
- 5 (3) Avery County
- 6 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:
- 7 Elk River, the portion on Lees-McRae College property, excluding the millpond
- 8 Lost Cove Creek, the game land portion, excluding Gragg Prong and Rockhouse Creek
- 9 Wilson Creek, the game land portion
- 10 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:
- 11 Boyde Coffey Lake
- 12 Elk River from the S.R. 1305 crossing immediately upstream of Big Falls to the Tennessee
- 13 state line
- 14 Linville River from S.R. 1504 to the Blue Ridge Parkway boundary line, except where
- 15 posted against trespassing
- 16 Milltimber Creek
- 17 North Toe River from Watauga St. to Roby Shoemaker Wetlands and Family Recreational
- 18 Park, except where posted against trespassing
- 19 North Toe River from S.R. 1164 to Mitchell Co. line, except where posted against
- 20 trespassing
- 21 Squirrel Creek
- 22 Wildcat Lake
- 23 (C) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:
- 24 Birchfield Creek
- 25 Cow Camp Creek
- 26 Cranberry Creek from the headwaters to the U.S. 19E, N.C. 194, bridge
- 27 Gragg Prong
- 28 Horse Creek
- 29 Kentucky Creek
- 30 North Harper Creek
- 31 Plumtree Creek
- 32 Roaring Creek
- 33 Rockhouse Creek
- 34 Shawneehaw Creek, the portion adjacent to Banner Elk Greenway
- 35 South Harper Creek
- 36 Webb Prong
- 37 (4) Buncombe County

- 1 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:  
2 Carter Creek, the game land portion
- 3 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:  
4 Bent Creek from the headwaters to the N.C. Arboretum boundary line  
5 Cane Creek from the headwaters to the S.R. 3138 bridge  
6 Corner Rock Creek from Little Andy Creek to the confluence with Walker Branch  
7 Dillingham Creek from Corner Rock Creek to Ivy Creek  
8 Ivy Creek from Dillingham Creek to the U.S. 19-23 bridge  
9 Lake Powhatan  
10 Reems Creek from Sugar Camp Fork to the U.S. 19-23 bridge, except where posted against  
11 trespassing  
12 Rich Branch from downstream of the confluence with Rocky Branch  
13 Stony Creek  
14 Swannanoa from the S.R. 2702 bridge near Ridgecrest to the Wood Avenue bridge, at the  
15 intersection of N.C. 81 and U.S. 74A in Asheville, except where posted against trespassing
- 16 (5) Burke County
- 17 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:  
18 Henry Fork, the portion on South Mountains State Park
- 19 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:  
20 Jacob Fork from Shiny Creek to the lower South Mountains State Park boundary
- 21 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:  
22 Carroll Creek, the game land portion above S.R. 1405  
23 ~~Henry Fork from the lower South Mountain State Park line to S.R. 1919 at Ivy Creek~~  
24 Linville River, ~~the portion within Linville Gorge Wilderness area and~~ the portion below  
25 Lake James powerhouse from the upstream bridge on S.R. 1223 to Muddy Creek
- 26 (D) Special Regulation Trout Waters are as follows:  
27 Catawba River from Muddy Creek to the City of Morganton water intake dam
- 28 (E) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:  
29 The waters located on South Mountains State Park, except those waters identified in Parts  
30 (A) and (B) of this Subparagraph
- 31 (6) Caldwell County
- 32 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:  
33 Wilson Creek, the game land portion below Lost Cove Creek to Philips Branch
- 34 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:  
35 Boone Fork Pond  
36 Buffalo Creek from the mouth of Joes Creek to McCloud Branch  
37 Joes Creek from the first falls upstream of S.R. 1574 to the confluence with Buffalo Creek



- 1 Wilson Creek from Phillips Branch to Brown Mountain Beach Dam, except where posted  
2 against trespassing  
3 Yadkin River from the Happy Valley Ruritan Community Park to S.R. 1515  
4 (C) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:  
5 Buffalo Creek from the Watauga Co. line to Long Ridge Branch including game land  
6 tributaries  
7 Joes Creek from the Watauga Co. line to the first falls upstream of the end of S.R. 1574  
8 Rockhouse Creek  
9 (7) Cherokee County  
10 (A) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:  
11 Davis Creek from the confluence of Bald Creek and Dockery Creek to Hanging Dog Creek  
12 Hyatt Creek from Big Dam Branch to the Valley River  
13 Junaluska Creek from Ashturn Creek to the Valley River  
14 Shuler Creek from the Joe Brown Hwy, S.R. 1325 bridge, to the Tennessee state line  
15 Valley River from S.R. 1359 to the U.S. 19 Business bridge in Murphy  
16 (B) Special Regulation Trout Waters are as follows:  
17 Apalachia Reservoir  
18 (8) Clay County  
19 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:  
20 Fires Creek from Rockhouse Creek to the foot bridge in the USFS Fires Creek Picnic Area  
21 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:  
22 Buck Creek, the game land portion downstream of the U.S. 64 bridge  
23 Fires Creek from the foot bridge in the USFS Fires Creek Picnic Area to S.R. 1300  
24 Tusquitee Creek from Compass Creek to the lower S.R. 1300 bridge  
25 (9) Graham County  
26 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:  
27 Snowbird Creek from the USFS footbridge at the old railroad junction to USFS Rd. 2579  
28 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:  
29 Calderwood Reservoir from Cheoah Dam to the Tennessee state line  
30 Cheoah Reservoir  
31 Panther Creek from the confluence of Stand Creek and Rock Creek to Lake Fontana  
32 Santeetlah Creek from Johns Branch to Lake Santeetlah  
33 Snowbird Creek from USFS Rd. 2579 to the S.R. 1127 bridge  
34 Stecoah Creek from the upper game land boundary to Lake Fontana  
35 Tulula Creek from S.R. 1201 to the lower bridge on S.R. 1275  
36 West Buffalo Creek  
37 Yellow Creek from Lake Santeetlah hydropower pipeline to the Cheoah River

- 1 (C) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:  
2 Little Buffalo Creek  
3 South Fork Squally Creek  
4 Squally Creek
- 5 (10) Haywood County
- 6 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:  
7 West Fork Pigeon River from Queen Creek to the first game land boundary upstream of  
8 Lake Logan
- 9 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:  
10 Cold Springs Creek from Fall Branch to the Pigeon River  
11 Jonathan Creek from upstream of the S.R. 1302 bridge to the Pigeon River, except where  
12 posted against trespassing  
13 Pigeon River from Stamey Cove Branch to the upstream U.S. 19-23 bridge  
14 Richland Creek from the Russ Avenue, U.S. 276, bridge to the U.S. 19 bridge  
15 West Fork Pigeon River from Tom Creek to Queen Creek
- 16 (11) Henderson County
- 17 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:  
18 North Fork Mills River, the game land portion below the Hendersonville watershed dam
- 19 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:  
20 Broad River from the end of S.R. 1611 to the Rutherford Co. line  
21 Cane Creek from the railroad bridge upstream of the S.R. 1551 bridge to the U.S. 25 bridge  
22 Clear Creek from Laurel Fork to S.R. 1582  
23 Green River from the Lake Summit powerhouse to the game land boundary  
24 Hungry River from ~~S.R. 1885~~ Little Hungry River to the Green River
- 25 (12) Jackson County
- 26 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:  
27 Flat Creek  
28 Tuckasegee River, the game land portion upstream of Tanasee Creek Lake, including the  
29 Duke Energy powerline corridor  
30 Tuckasegee River the portion upstream from the Clark property
- 31 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:  
32 Tuckasegee River from downstream of the N.C. 107 bridge to the falls located 275 yards  
33 upstream of the U.S. 23-441 bridge, marked by a sign on both banks
- 34 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:  
35 Balsam Lake  
36 Bear Creek Lake  
37 Cedar Cliff Lake

- 1 Cullowhee Creek from Tilley Creek to the Tuckasegee River  
2 Dark Ridge Creek from Jones Creek to Scott Creek  
3 Greens Creek from Greens Creek Baptist Church on S.R. 1370 to Savannah Creek  
4 Savannah Creek from Shell Branch to Cagle Branch  
5 Scott Creek from Dark Ridge Creek to the Tuckasegee River, except where posted against  
6 trespassing  
7 Tanasee Creek Lake  
8 Tuckasegee River from John Brown Branch to the downstream N.C. 107 bridge  
9 Tuckasegee River from the falls located 275 yards upstream of the U.S. 23-441 bridge,  
10 marked by a sign on both banks, to the S.R. 1534 bridge at Wilmont  
11 Wolf Creek Lake  
12 (D) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:  
13 Gage Creek  
14 North Fork Scott Creek  
15 Tanasee Creek  
16 Whitewater River from Silver Run Creek to the South Carolina state line  
17 Wolf Creek except Balsam Lake and Wolf Creek Lake  
18 (13) Macon County  
19 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:  
20 Nantahala River from Whiteoak Creek to the Nantahala hydropower discharge canal  
21 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:  
22 Burningtown Creek from Left Prong to the Little Tennessee River  
23 Cartoogechaye Creek from downstream of the U.S. 64 bridge to the Little Tennessee River  
24 Cliffside Lake  
25 Cullasaja River from Sequoyah Dam to the U.S. 64 bridge near the junction of S.R. 1672  
26 Nantahala River from Dicks Creek to Whiteoak Creek  
27 Nantahala River from the Nantahala hydropower discharge canal to the Swain Co. line  
28 Queens Creek Lake  
29 (14) Madison County  
30 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:  
31 Big Laurel Creek from the N.C. 208 bridge to the U.S. 25-70 bridge  
32 Shelton Laurel Creek from the N.C. 208 bridge at Belva to the confluence with Big Laurel  
33 Creek  
34 Spring Creek from the N.C. 209 bridge at the Hot Springs city limits to the iron bridge at  
35 end of Andrews Ave.  
36 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:  
37 Big Laurel Creek from Puncheon Fork to the S.R. 1318, Big Laurel Rd., bridge downstream

1 of Bearpen Branch  
 2 Big Pine Creek from the S.R. 1151 bridge to the French Broad River  
 3 Little Ivy Creek from the confluence of Middle Fork and Paint Fork at Beech Glen to the  
 4 confluence with Ivy Creek at Forks of Ivy  
 5 Max Patch Pond  
 6 Meadow Fork Creek from Meadow Fork Campground to Spring Creek  
 7 Puncheon Fork from Wolf Laurel Branch to Big Laurel Creek  
 8 Roaring Fork from Fall Branch to Meadow Fork  
 9 Shelton Laurel Creek from the confluence of Big Creek and Mill Creek to the N.C. 208  
 10 bridge at Belva  
 11 Shut-in Creek  
 12 Spillcorn Creek  
 13 Spring Creek from the junction of N.C. 209 and N.C. 63 to the confluence with Meadow  
 14 Fork  
 15 West Fork Shut-in Creek from the lower game land boundary to the confluence with East  
 16 Fork Shut-in Creek

17 (15) McDowell County

18 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:

19 Newberry Creek, the game land portion

20 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:

21 Catawba River, the portion adjacent to the Marion Greenway

22 Curtis Creek, the game land portion downstream of the USFS boundary at Deep Branch

23 Mill Creek from the U.S. 70 bridge to the I-40 bridge

24 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:

25 Armstrong Creek from the Cato Holler line downstream to the upper Greenlee line

26 Catawba River from the Catawba Falls Campground to the Old Fort Recreation Park

27 Little Buck Creek, the game land portion

28 North Fork Catawba River from the headwaters to North Cove School at the S.R. 1569  
 29 bridge

30 (16) Mitchell County

31 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:

32 Cane Creek from the N.C. 226 bridge to the S.R. 1189 bridge

33 North Toe River from the U.S. 19E bridge to the N.C. 226 bridge

34 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:

35 Big Rock Creek from the headwaters to ~~the N.C. 226 bridge at the S.R. 1307 intersection~~  
 36 the S.R. 1325 bridge

37 Cane Creek from S.R. 1219 to the N.C. 226 bridge

- 1 East Fork Grassy Creek  
 2 Grassy Creek from East Fork Grassy Creek to the mouth  
 3 ~~Little Rock Creek from the Green Creek bridge to Big Rock Creek, except where posted~~  
 4 ~~against trespassing~~  
 5 North Toe River from the Avery Co. line to the S.R. 1121 bridge  
 6 (C) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:  
 7 Green Creek from the headwaters to the Green Creek bridge, except where posted against  
 8 trespassing  
 9 Little Rock Creek the portion upstream of the Green Creek bridge, including the tributaries,  
 10 except where posted against trespassing  
 11 Wiles Creek from the game land boundary to the mouth  
 12 (17) Polk County  
 13 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:  
 14 Green River from the Fishtop Falls Access Area to the confluence with Cove Creek  
 15 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:  
 16 Green River from the mouth of Cove Creek to the natural gas pipeline crossing  
 17 North Pacolet River from Joels Creek to the N.C. 108 bridge  
 18 (18) Rutherford County  
 19 (A) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:  
 20 Broad River from the Henderson Co. line to the U.S. 64/74 bridge, except where posted  
 21 against trespassing  
 22 (19) Stokes County  
 23 (A) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:  
 24 Dan River from the Virginia state line downstream to a point 200 yards below the end of  
 25 S.R. 1421  
 26 (20) Surry County  
 27 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:  
 28 Ararat River, the portion adjacent to the Ararat River Greenway downstream of the N.C.  
 29 103 bridge  
 30 Mitchell River from 0.6 miles upstream of the end of S.R. 1333 to the lowermost bridge  
 31 on S.R. 1330  
 32 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:  
 33 ~~Ararat River from the S.R. 1727 bridge to~~ River, the portion adjacent to the Ararat River  
 34 Greenway upstream of the N.C. 103 bridge  
 35 Big Elkin Creek from the dam 440 yards upstream of the N.C. 268 bridge to a point 265  
 36 yards downstream of N.C. 268, marked by a sign on both banks  
 37 Fisher River from the Virginia state line to the I-77 bridge

- 1 Little Fisher River from the Virginia state line to the N.C. 89 bridge  
2 Lovills Creek from the U.S. 52 Business bridge to the Ararat River  
3 Pauls Creek from the Virginia state line to 0.3 miles below the S.R. 1625 bridge
- 4 (21) Swain County
- 5 (A) Delayed Harvest Waters Trout Waters are as follows:  
6 Tuckasegee River from the U.S. 19 bridge to the Slope Street bridge
- 7 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:  
8 Alarka Creek from the game land boundary to Fontana Reservoir  
9 Calderwood Reservoir from Cheoah Dam to the Tennessee state line  
10 Cheoah Reservoir  
11 Connelly Creek from Camp Branch to the Tuckasegee River  
12 Deep Creek from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park Boundary line to the  
13 Tuckasegee River  
14 Nantahala River from the Macon Co. line to the existing Fontana Lake water level
- 15 (22) Transylvania County
- 16 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:  
17 Davidson River from the headwaters to Avery Creek, excluding Avery Creek, Looking  
18 Glass Creek, Grogan Creek, Cedar Rock Creek and John Rock Branch
- 19 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:  
20 East Fork French Broad River from East Fork Baptist Church to ~~the~~ 350 yards downstream  
21 S.R. 107 bridge of Whitmire Falls, marked by a sign on both banks  
22 Little River from the confluence of Lake Dense to 100 yards downstream of Hooker Falls
- 23 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:  
24 Davidson River from Avery Creek to the lower USFS boundary  
25 French Broad River from the confluence of the North Fork French Broad River and west  
26 Fork  
27 French Broad River to the Island Ford Rd., S.R. 1110, Access Area  
28 Middle Fork French Broad River from upstream of the U.S. 178 bridge to the French Broad  
29 River  
30 West Fork French Broad River from S.R. 1312 to confluence with North Fork French  
31 Broad River
- 32 (D) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:  
33 The waters located on Gorges State Park  
34 Whitewater River from Silver Run Creek to the South Carolina state line
- 35 (23) Watauga County
- 36 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:  
37 Laurel Creek from the confluence of North Fork Laurel Creek and South Fork Laurel Creek

- 1 to Elk Creek, excluding tributaries  
2 Pond Creek from the headwaters to the Locust Ridge Rd. bridge, excluding the pond  
3 adjacent to Coffee Lake
- 4 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:  
5 Lake Coffey  
6 Watauga River from the S.R. 1114 bridge to the Valle Crucis Community Park lower  
7 boundary  
8 Watauga River from the S.R. 1103 bridge to the confluence with Laurel Creek
- 9 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:  
10 Beaverdam Creek from the confluence of Beaverdam Creek and Little Beaverdam Creek  
11 to an unnamed tributary adjacent to the intersection of S.R. 1201 and S.R. 1203  
12 Beech Creek  
13 Buckeye Creek from Buckeye Creek Reservoir dam to Grassy Gap Creek  
14 Buckeye Creek Reservoir  
15 Cove Creek from the S.R. 1233 bridge at Zionville to the S.R. 1214 bridge at Sherwood  
16 Dutch Creek from the second S.R. 1136 bridge to the mouth  
17 Elk Creek from the S.R. 1510 bridge at Triplett to the Wilkes Co. line, except where posted  
18 against trespassing  
19 Laurel Creek from the S.R. 1123 bridge at the S.R. 1157 intersection to the Watauga River  
20 Meat Camp Creek from the S.R. 1340 bridge at the S.R. 1384 intersection to N.C. 194  
21 Middle Fork New River from adjacent to the intersection of S.R. 1539 and U.S. 321 to the  
22 South Fork New River  
23 Norris Fork Creek  
24 South Fork New River from the canoe launch 70 yards upstream of U.S. 421 bridge to the  
25 lower boundary of Brookshire Park  
26 Stony Fork from the S.R. 1500 bridge at the S.R. 1505 intersection to the Wilkes Co. line
- 27 (D) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:  
28 Dutch Creek from the headwaters to the second S.R. 1136 bridge  
29 Howard Creek  
30 Maine Branch from the headwaters to the North Fork New River  
31 North Fork New River from the confluence with Maine Branch and Mine Branch to the  
32 Ashe Co. line  
33 Winkler Creek from the lower bridge on S.R. 1549 to the confluence with the South Fork  
34 New River
- 35 (24) Wilkes County  
36 (A) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:  
37 East Prong Roaring River from Bullhead Creek to the Stone Mountain State Park lower

- 1 boundary  
2 Elk Creek from the Watauga Co. line to the lower boundary of the Blue Ridge Mountain  
3 Club  
4 Elk Creek, the portion on Leatherwood Mountains development  
5 Reddies River from the Town of North Wilkesboro water intake dam to the confluence  
6 with the Yadkin River  
7 Stone Mountain Creek from the falls at the Alleghany Co. line to the confluence with the  
8 East Prong Roaring River and Bullhead Creek  
9 (B) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:  
10 Basin Creek from the S.R. 1730 bridge to the confluence with Lovelace Creek  
11 Bell Branch Pond  
12 Boundary Line Pond  
13 Cub Creek from 0.5 miles upstream of the S.R. 2460 bridge to the S.R. 1001 bridge  
14 Darnell Creek from the downstream ford on S.R. 1569 to the confluence with the North  
15 Fork Reddies River  
16 East Prong Roaring River from the Stone Mountain State Park lower boundary to the Low  
17 Meadows Lane bridge  
18 Fall Creek from the S.R. 1300 bridge to the confluence with South Prong Lewis Fork,  
19 except where posted against trespassing  
20 Middle Fork Reddies River from the headwaters to the bridge on S.R. 1580  
21 Middle Prong Roaring River from the headwaters to the second bridge on S.R. 1736  
22 North Fork Reddies River from the headwaters to the Union School bridge on S.R. 1559  
23 Pike Creek  
24 Pike Creek Pond  
25 South Fork Reddies River from the S.R. 1355 bridge to the confluence with the Middle  
26 Fork Reddies River  
27 South Prong Lewis Fork from Fall Creek to the U.S. 421 bridge adjacent to the S.R. 1155  
28 intersection  
29 (C) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:  
30 The waters located on Stone Mountain State Park, except East Prong Roaring River from  
31 Bullhead Creek to the Stone Mountain State Park lower boundary where Delayed Harvest  
32 Trout Waters regulations apply, and Stone Mountain Creek from the falls at the Alleghany  
33 Co. line to the confluence with the East Prong Roaring River and Bullhead Creek in Stone  
34 Mountain State Park where Delayed Harvest Trout Waters regulations apply  
35 (25) Yancey County  
36 (A) Catch and Release Artificial Flies and Lures Only Trout Waters are as follows:  
37 South Toe River from the headwaters to Upper Creek



1 Upper Creek

2 (B) Delayed Harvest Trout Waters are as follows:

3 Cane River from Blackberry Ridge Rd. to the downstream boundary of Cane River County  
4 Park

5 (C) Hatchery Supported Trout Waters are as follows:

6 Bald Mountain Creek, except where posted against trespassing

7 Cane River from Bee Branch, S.R. 1110, to Bowlens Creek

8 Price Creek from the junction of S.R. 1120 and S.R. 1121 to Indian Creek

9 South Toe River from Clear Creek to the lower boundary line of Yancey Co. Recreation  
10 Park, except where posted against trespassing

11 (D) Wild Trout Waters are as follows:

12 Cattail Creek from the bridge at Mountain Farm Community Rd. to the N.C. 197 bridge

13 Licksillet Creek

14 Middle Creek from the game land boundary to the mouth  
15

16 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-272; 113-292;*

17 *Eff. February 1, 1976;*

18 *Amended Eff. July 1, 1998; July 1, 1997; July 1, 1996; July 1, 1995; July 1, 1994; July 1, 1993;*

19 *October 1, 1992;*

20 *Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 1999;*

21 *Amended Eff. July 1, 2000;*

22 *Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 2001;*

23 *Temporary Amendment Eff. July 1, 2002;*

24 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2002 (approved by RRC on 6/21/01 and 04/18/02);*

25 *Temporary Amendment Eff. June 1, 2003;*

26 *Amended Eff. June 1, 2004 (this amendment replaces the amendment approved by RRC on July 17,*  
27 *2003);*

28 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2018; August 1, 2017; August 1, 2016; August 1, 2015; August 1, 2014;*

29 *August 1, 2013; August 1, 2012; August 1, 2011; August 1, 2010; May 1, 2009; May 1, 2008; May*  
30 *1, 2007; May 1, 2006; June 1, 2005;*

31 *Readopted Eff. August 1, 2019;*

32 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2024; August 1, 2023; August 1, 2022; August 1, 2021; August 1, 2020.*  
33  
34

1 **15A NCAC 10C .0306 CRAPPIE**

2 (a) There is no daily creel limit for Crappie, except in waters identified in Paragraphs (d) through (h) of this Rule.

3 (b) There is no minimum size limit except in waters identified in Paragraphs (f) through (h) of this Rule.

4 (c) There is no closed season.

5 (d) In Buckhorn Reservoir in Wilson and Nash counties, the daily creel limit is 20 fish.

6 (e) In Lake Chatuge in Clay County, the daily creel limit is 30 fish.

7 (f) In the following waters, the daily creel limit is 20 fish and the minimum size limit is 10 inches:

8 (1) Roanoke River and its tributaries downstream of Roanoke Rapids dam;

9 (2) Cashie River and its tributaries;

10 (3) Middle River and its tributaries;

11 (4) Eastmost River and its tributaries; and

12 (5) Lake Mattamuskeet in Hyde County.

13 (g) In the following waters, the daily creel limit is 20 fish and the minimum size limit is eight inches:

14 (1) Lake Norman;

15 (2) Lake Hycó;

16 (3) Cane Creek Lake in Union County;

17 (4) Lake Hampton in Yadkin County;

18 (5) B. Everett Jordan Reservoir;

19 (6) Shearon Harris Reservoir;

20 ~~(5)(7)~~ Tar River downstream of Tar River Reservoir Dam including tributaries;

21 ~~(6)(8)~~ Neuse River downstream of Falls Lake Dam including tributaries;

22 ~~(7)(9)~~ Haw River downstream of B. Everett Jordan Reservoir Dam including tributaries;

23 ~~(8)(10)~~ Deep River downstream of Lockville Dam including tributaries;

24 ~~(9)(11)~~ Cape Fear River including tributaries;

25 ~~(10)(12)~~ Waccamaw River downstream of Lake Waccamaw Dam including tributaries;

26 ~~(11)(13)~~ Lumber River including Drowning Creek including tributaries;

27 ~~(12)(14)~~ public fishing waters east of Interstate 95, except Tar River Reservoir in Nash County, Sutton Lake  
28 in New Hanover County, and waters listed in Paragraph (f) of this Rule; and

29 ~~(13)(15)~~ public waters west of Interstate 77, except Lake ~~Chatuge;~~ and Chatuga.

30 ~~(14) B. Everett Jordan Reservoir.~~

31 (h) In John H. Kerr Reservoir, the daily creel limit is 25 fish and the minimum size limit is nine inches.

32

33 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-292;*

34 *Eff. November 1, 2013;*

35 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2017; August 1, 2016; August 1, 2015;*

36 *Readopted Eff. August 1, 2019;*

37 *Amended Eff. August 1, 2024; August 1, 2023; March 15, 2023; August 1, 2020.*

1 **15A NCAC 10C .0422 STRIPED MULLET AND WHITE MULLET**

2 (a) The daily creel limit for striped mullet and white mullet is ~~200~~ 100 fish per person in ~~aggregate.~~ aggregate and no  
3 more than 400 fish per boat.

4 (b) There is no minimum size limit.

5 (c) There is no closed season.

6

7 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113-134; 113-292; 113-304; 113-305;*

8 *Temporary Adoption Eff. September 1, 2022;*

9 *Eff. March 15, 2023.*

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