RECREATIONAL COMMERCIAL GEAR LICENSE (RCGL)
GENERAL GUIDELINES AND RULES SUMMARY
April 15, 2010

These RCGL guidelines are intended to summarize applicable rules and statutes to assist Recreational Commercial Gear License holders with using their gear. They are not the full text of all applicable rules. Furthermore, the Director has proclamation authority to restrict the setting of gear and adjust possession limits. It is recommended to check recent proclamations for any changes before you fish. For a complete copy of the rules or for other inquires, contact DMF at PO Box 769, Morehead City, NC 28557, by phone at (252) 726-7021 or (800) 682-2632 or online at www.ncdmf.net.

General Guidelines

- The RCGL is an annual license allowing limited amounts of commercial gear to be used to harvest fish for personal consumption only.
- The license cost is $35 for NC residents and $250 for non-residents. RCGL's can be obtained from any DMF license office or a license agent of the Wildlife Resources Commission ($1.00 surcharge).
- All harvest with RCGL gear must meet the recreational size and harvest limits. Seafood harvested cannot be sold.
- There is one possession limit of fish per RCGL except for crabs (see table).
- There is one gear limit per vessel except for gill nets (see table).
- The RCGL must be in possession while fishing.
- Unlicensed individuals may assist in fishing but at least one person must have a RCGL.
- A person under 16 years of age may use RCGL gear and take one possession limit if they are accompanied by a parent, grandparent or guardian holding a RCGL or have the parents, grandparents or guardians RCGL in their possession.
- Most RCGL gear, with the exception of electro-fishing, must be identified with a pink buoy at least 5" in diameter and 5" long. The RCGL holder's last name and initials must be engraved in the buoy, or engraved on a metal or plastic tag attached to the buoy. Additionally, if a vessel is used, either the vessel registration number or documentation name of the vessel belonging to the owner of the gear must also be engraved in the buoy or on the tag.
- RCGL holders must comply with Division of Marine Fisheries sampling and surveying programs.
- A RCGL is not required when harvesting shellfish recreationally or using the following recreational gears: hook and line, hand operated rakes and tongs, collapsible crab traps, seines less than 30 feet, dip nets, landing nets, cast nets, gigs, spears and minnow traps.
- As of January 1, 2007, a Coastal Recreational Fishing License is required to use hook and line gear, cast nets, dip nets, gigs, spears and 2 or less minnow traps for the taking of finfish recreationally in joint or coastal fishing waters.
- The use of more than 2 minnow traps, or the harvesting of any fish or shellfish for the purpose of selling requires a commercial fishing license.

Authorized Gear	Gear Requirements and Limits	Marking and Line Requirements	Attendance required?	Closed Period?	Comments
Gill Nets	Maximum length 100 yds, two or more RCGL holders can possess and set up to 200 yds[1], min 2.5" stretched mesh[2]	Each end of net must be marked with two yellow and one hot pink buoy	Attendance required for all gill nets south of the Emerald Isle bridge. North of the Emerald Isle bridge attendance required for gill nets less than 5 ½" and during the day for gill nets greater than or equal to 5 ½" mesh	No	From June through October all unattended large mesh nets must be set at least 10 feet from shore.
Fish Pots[3]	Max of 5 pots regardless of type, ask DMF about prohibited pot areas[4]	Hot pink buoy	No, but must be fished at least every 5 days	Yes, all pots must be removed from Jan 15 - Feb 7	RCGL requirements do not apply to minnow traps.
Eel Pots	Max of 5 pots regardless of type, only 2 can be eel if used for bait, min mesh size of 1 ½" unless pot has escape panel, ask DMF about prohibited pot areas and other specifics	Hot pink buoy	No, but must be fished at least every 5 days	Yes, all pots must be removed from Jan 15 - Feb 7	
Shrimp Pots	Max of 5 pots regardless of type, mesh size cannot be smaller than 1 ¼" stretched mesh or 5/8" bar, ask DMF about prohibited pot areas	Hot pink buoy	No, but must be fished at least every 5 days	Yes, all pots must be removed from Jan 15 - Feb 7	

Authorized Gear	Gear Requirements and Limits	Marking and Line Requirements	Attendance required (y/n)	Closed Period?	Comments
Crab Pots	Max of 5 pots of any type, ask DMF about prohibited pot areas	Non-floating line, hot pink buoy	No, but must be fished at least every 5 days, cannot be fished at night	Yes, all pots must be removed from Jan 15 - Feb 7	One pot set from private pier exempted from RCGL requirements. Max 50 crabs per person/day or 100 crabs per vessel/day. Peeler pots not allowed.
Shrimp and skimmer trawls	26 ft max headrope, 1 ½" min mesh, and a bycatch reduction device is required. Ask DMF about prohibited trawl areas	Hot pink buoy on tailbag	Yes	Yes, 9pm Fridays to 5pm Sundays except for in the Atlantic Ocean	Hand retrieval only without a Turtle Excluder Device
Shrimp Pound	One pound per license holder, dimensions of pound must be 36"X36" or smaller constructed of 1 ¼" mesh or greater, max 10 ft lead total w/1½" min mesh	Hot pink buoy attached to offshore lead	Yes, remove pound when not being fished	No	Min 100 yds between RCGL shrimp pounds and 300 yds from permitted commercial shrimp pounds
Trotlines	Max 100 ft	Hot pink buoy on both ends	No	No	
Seines	30-100 ft, must be set from shore, min 2 ½" mesh, for shrimp 1 ¼" min mesh	Hot pink buoy on corkline	Yes	No	Cannot seine for shrimp in closed trawling areas
Electro Fishing See pg 65 of Rulebook	Hand operated				Taking of catfish in Cape Fear River as described in 03J .0304.

[1] RCGL holders accompanied by a family member under 16 years of age can set up to 200 yards of gill net.
[2] Some areas may require a larger mesh size or a maximum mesh size. Please call DMF for details.
[3] RCGL holders are limited to setting a total of five eel, fish, shrimp or crab pots; of the five, only two can be eel pots.
[4] There are areas where pots cannot be set from May 1 – Nov 30 each year. Pots cannot be set in navigation channels marked by state or federal agencies or in a turning basin marked by the NC Ferry Division. Contact DMF for details.