

"Save Our Fisheries" Campaign Raises Public Awareness of Coastal Resource Decline in North Carolina

Call for Reform Targets Decades of Mismanagement, Chronic Overharvesting and Waste

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA, UNITED STATES, September 29, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For more than 30 years, political influence from private interests has dominated marine fisheries management policy in North Carolina and allowed the state's coastal fisheries resources to be overexploited for profit, driving those resources into chronic decline.

The state is currently attempting to defend itself in court. Now, it will also have to answer to millions of North Carolinians for whom the state is required to hold public resources in trust.



[Coastal Conservation Association of North Carolina](#) (CCA NC), has launched "Save Our Fisheries," a public campaign to raise awareness about the long-running demise of North Carolina's once-abundant coastal fisheries. The campaign will leverage creative content, media outreach and storytelling across print, broadcast and digital channels to publicly share the urgency of the crisis and consolidate broad-based, grassroots demand for policy reforms.

"The State of North Carolina is solely responsible for the misguided policies that led to this moment," said CCA NC Executive Director David Sneed. "This campaign gives a needed voice to all citizens of North Carolina to ensure that outdated and inequitable marine fisheries management practices are reformed, critical fish stocks are rebuilt, and our coastal fisheries are restored to health and abundance."

[SaveOurFisheries.org](https://www.saveourfisheries.org) urges citizens to help “turn the tide before it’s too late.” In-depth information about the crisis is provided, along with a public petition and a link to the lawsuit CCA NC filed against the state in 2020 ([No. COA21-654](#)). The lawsuit focuses on the constitutional right of all North Carolina citizens to fish for personal use in public waters, and how that right is being infringed upon by the ongoing depletion of our coastal fisheries.

Overfished stocks have led to declines in the commercial harvest of striped bass (77%), Southern flounder (81%), spot (84%), croaker (91%) and weakfish (98%). Public fishing has suffered similarly. To stave off collapse of the Southern flounder stock, a North Carolina staple, the state cut the public fishing season for flounder back to just 30 days in September, with anglers limited to one fish per day.

Despite these conditions, the state continues to allow large-scale bottom trawling in critical nursery areas and gillnetting statewide, further impacting resource sustainability. Invisible and lethal to aquatic life such as fish, turtles, birds and marine mammals, gillnets are a mass harvesting gear that has been banned or severely restricted in every southern seafood-producing state except North Carolina. North Carolina is also the only state in the U.S. that holds a federal permit to injure or kill endangered sea turtles with gillnets.

“The state can continue to pursue fisheries management policies that prioritize maximum resource extraction, or it can take action and protect our coastal resources from profit-driven overharvesting and waste,” explained CCA NC Chairman and Beaufort resident Bert Owens. “Choosing the status quo will adversely affect every citizen.”

The “Save Our Fisheries” logo features a Southern flounder and the tagline, “Reform. Rebuild. Restore.” The campaign reinforces that all citizens—including conservation groups, public anglers, consumers, commercial fishermen, seafood dealers, and the recreational fishing industry—will benefit from prioritizing the long-term health and viability of North Carolina’s coastal fisheries.

About CCA NC

CCA NC is a community of conservationists and recreational anglers working to promote sound management of public trust marine and estuarine resources and protect them for the enjoyment of current and future generations. CCA NC is affiliated with the Coastal Conservation Association, a national non-profit organization comprised of 17 coastal state chapters spanning the Gulf of Mexico, Pacific and Atlantic seabords. CCA’s strength is drawn from the tens of thousands of recreational saltwater anglers who make up its membership and whose grassroots influence is felt through state capitals, U.S. Congress and, most importantly, in the conservation and restoration of our coastal marine resources. For more information, please visit www.ccanc.org.

Charles Upchurch

French/West/Vaughan
+1 919-395-1588
cupchurch@fwv-us.com

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