

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

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HOUSE BILL DRH10312-MH-84A

Short Title: 2025 Wildlife Resources Changes.-AB

(Public)

Sponsors: Representative Adams.

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO MAKE VARIOUS CHANGES TO THE WILDLIFE LAWS, AS REQUESTED
BY THE WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION.
The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

CONFIDENTIALITY OF WILDLIFE RESOURCE INFORMATION

SECTION 1. G.S. 143-254.5 reads as rewritten:

"§ 143-254.5. Disclosure of personal identifying and sensitive wildlife resource information.

(a) Social security numbers and identifying information obtained by the Commission shall be treated as provided in G.S. 132-1.10. For purposes of this section, "identifying information" also includes a person's mailing address, residence address, e-mail address, Commission-issued customer identification number, date of birth, information subject to G.S. 106-24.1 transferred to the Commission from the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and telephone number.

(b) Records that contain site-specific information regarding the occurrence of rare species of plants or animals specified in the current North Carolina Wildlife Action Plan, or the location of sensitive habitats, are confidential and exempt from disclosure under Chapter 132 of the General Statutes when the Executive Director finds that disclosure will create a risk of harm, theft, or destruction to the species or habitats or the area where the species or habitats are located. This subsection does not apply to a request for release of records requested by the owner of record of land where such species, habitats, or areas are located."

AUTHORIZE THE DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES TO ISSUE LIFETIME CONSERVATIONIST AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES REGISTRATION PLATES

SECTION 2.(a) G.S. 20-63(b1) is amended by adding a new subdivision to read:

"(j) Wildlife Resources."

SECTION 2.(b) G.S. 20-79.4(b) reads as rewritten:

"(b) Types. – The Division shall issue the following types of special registration plates:

...

(j) Lifetime Conservationist. – Issuable to the registered owner of a motor vehicle in accordance with G.S. 20-81.12. The plate shall bear the "North Carolina Lifetime Conservationist" logo of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.

...

(267) Wildlife Resources. – Issuable to the registered owner of a motor vehicle in accordance with G.S. 20-81.12. The plate shall bear the phrase "Wildlife



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Resources Commission" with a picture in the background representing a native wildlife species occurring in North Carolina.

...."

SECTION 2.(c) G.S. 20-81.12 reads as rewritten:

"§ 20-81.12. Collegiate insignia plates and certain other special plates.

...

(j) Lifetime Conservationist. – The Division must transfer quarterly the money in the Collegiate and Cultural Attraction Account derived from the sale of Lifetime Conservationist plates to the Wildlife Resources Fund established in G.S. 143-250.

...

(b163) ~~Wildlife Resources Plates. Resources. – The Division must receive 300 or more applications for a wildlife resources plate with a picture representing a particular native wildlife species occurring in North Carolina before the plate may be developed. The Division must transfer quarterly the money in the Collegiate and Cultural Attraction Plate Account derived from the sale of wildlife resources plates to the Wildlife Conservation Account established by G.S. 143-247.2.~~

...."

RECREATIONAL BOATING SAFETY CONFORMING PROGRAM CHANGES

SECTION 3.(a) G.S. 75A-5 reads as rewritten:

"§ 75A-5. Application for certificate of number; fees; reciprocity; change of ownership; conformity with federal regulations; records; award of certificates; renewal of certificates; transfer of partial interest; destroyed or junked vessels; abandonment; change of address; duplicate certificates; display.

...

(b) Reciprocity. – The owner of any vessel already covered by a number in full force and effect pursuant to federal law or a federally approved numbering system of another state shall record the identification number prior to operating the vessel on the waters of this State in excess of the ~~90-day~~ 60-day reciprocity period provided for in G.S. 75A-7(a)(1). The recordation shall be made pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, except that no additional or substitute identification number shall be issued.

...."

SECTION 3.(b) G.S. 75A-7(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) A vessel shall not be required to be numbered under this Chapter if it is:

(1) A vessel that is required to be awarded an identification number pursuant to federal law or a federally approved numbering system of another state, and for which an identification number has been so awarded: Provided, that any such vessel shall not have been within this State for a period in excess of ~~90~~ 60 consecutive days.

...."

SECTION 3.(c) G.S. 75A-6.1(a) reads as rewritten:

"(a) Every vessel operated on the waters of this State ~~that is required to obtain an identification number pursuant to this Chapter, has a valid marine document issued by the federal Bureau of Customs or any federal agency successor to it, or issued pursuant to a federally approved numbering system of another state~~ shall comply with the navigation rules, including requirements for navigational lights, sound-signaling devices, and other equipment, contained in the Inland Navigational Rules Act of 1980, codified as amended at 33 U.S.C. §§ 2001-2038, 2071-2073 (1993) and rules adopted pursuant thereto, see 33 C.F.R. Part 84 (1992)."

SECTION 3.(d) G.S. 75A-13.3 reads as rewritten:

"§ 75A-13.3. Personal watercraft.

...

(d) No person shall operate a personal watercraft on the waters of this State, nor shall the owner of a personal watercraft knowingly allow another person to operate that personal watercraft on the waters of this State, unless:

(1) Each person riding on or being towed behind the vessel is wearing a personal flotation device approved by the United States Coast Guard. Inflatable personal flotation devices do not satisfy this requirement; and

(2) In the case of a personal watercraft equipped by the manufacturer with a lanyard-type an engine cut-off switch, ~~the lanyard is securely attached to the person, clothing, or flotation device of the operator at all times while the personal watercraft is being operated in such a manner to turn off the engine if the operator dismounts while the watercraft is in operation.~~ the engine cut-off switch is being used while the vessel is operating on plane or above displacement speed.

...

(e) A personal watercraft must at all times be operated in a reasonable and prudent manner. Maneuvers that endanger life, limb, or property shall constitute reckless operation of a vessel as provided in G.S. 75A-10, and include any of the following:

(1) Unreasonably or unnecessarily weaving through congested vessel traffic.

(2) Jumping the wake of another vessel within 100 feet of the other vessel or when visibility around the other vessel is obstructed.

(3) Intentionally approaching another vessel in order to swerve at the last possible moment to avoid collision.

(4) Repealed by Session Laws 2000-52, s. 2.

(5) Operating contrary to the ~~"rules of the road"~~ navigation rules or following too closely to another vessel, including another personal watercraft. For purposes of this subdivision, "following too closely" means proceeding in the same direction and operating at a speed in excess of 10 miles per hour when approaching within 100 feet to the rear or 50 feet to the side of another vessel that is underway unless that vessel is operating in a narrow channel, in which case a personal watercraft may operate at the speed and flow of other vessel traffic.

...."

SECTION 3.(e) This section becomes effective October 1, 2025. Prosecutions for offenses committed before the effective date of this act are not abated or affected by this act, and the statutes that would be applicable but for this act remain applicable to those prosecutions.

EFFECTIVE DATE

SECTION 4. Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes law.