

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2017

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HOUSE BILL 853

Short Title: Protect Striped Bass/Central Southern Area. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives W. Richardson, Adams, and Wray (Primary Sponsors).  
*For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*

Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 13, 2017

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO PROTECT STRIPED BASS IN THE CENTRAL SOUTHERN  
3 MANAGEMENT AREA.

4 Whereas, the General Assembly recognizes the need to protect our coastal fishery  
5 resources through proper management based upon the best available science; and

6 Whereas, the General Assembly also recognizes the importance of providing  
7 plentiful fishery resources to maintain and enhance the quality of life for North Carolina  
8 citizens and to foster economic benefits to the State and local communities from commercial  
9 and recreational fishing; and

10 Whereas, research conducted and data gathered by the Wildlife Resources  
11 Commission (WRC) and the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) show that over 85% of  
12 striped bass in the Central Southern Management Area (CSMA) are hatchery produced fish that  
13 are stocked annually; and

14 Whereas, WRC's objective in stocking striped bass has been and continues to be the  
15 rebuilding of spawning runs to the extent that further stocking becomes unnecessary; and

16 Whereas, reestablishing a strong spawning population has been unsuccessful due in  
17 large part to excessive harvest and cryptic mortality, hook and net mortality, and illegal harvest  
18 of stocked fish; and

19 Whereas, the commercial striped bass harvest in the CSMA, which is capped at  
20 25,000 pounds annually, is only 15% of the total yearly striped bass harvest taken from all  
21 internal coastal waters in North Carolina, with the remaining 85% coming from the Albemarle  
22 Sound Management Area; and

23 Whereas, records of the DMF show the annual value of the commercial striped bass  
24 harvest from the CSMA to the 168 commercial fishermen participating in the harvest averages  
25 about \$68,600 or about \$408 per fisherman while the cost of stocking striped bass that make up  
26 the harvest is around \$600,000 per year; and

27 Whereas, the General Assembly recognizes the importance of reestablishing a  
28 naturally spawning, sustainable striped bass population in the CSMA; Now, therefore,  
29 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

30 **SECTION 1.** G.S. 113-183 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

31 "(c) Striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*) taken in the striped bass Central Southern  
32 Management Area as delineated by the Wildlife Resources Commission and the Division of  
33 Marine Fisheries (CSMA) shall not be possessed unless taken with hook and line, and no  
34 striped bass taken in the CSMA shall be (i) bought, sold, bartered, or exchanged or (ii)



1 possessed or transported for the purpose of purchase, sale, barter, exchange, or shipment in  
2 commerce within the State or for export from the State, except for the following:

3       (1) Striped bass taken lawfully by legal commercial methods in areas of open  
4 commercial season for striped bass outside the CSMA may be purchased and  
5 sold, possessed, and transported for commerce within the State and for  
6 export by licensed fish dealers within the CSMA.

7       (2) Restaurants within the CSMA may purchase, possess, and sell striped bass  
8 prepared for their customers that are taken legally outside the CSMA during  
9 established commercial striped bass seasons or grown in licensed  
10 aquaculture facilities.

11       (3) Striped bass raised in fish hatcheries in licensed aquaculture facilities within  
12 the CSMA may be bought and sold, possessed, transferred, and transported  
13 for commerce within the State and for export."

14       **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2017, and shall expire upon  
15 completion and implementation of the revision to the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan  
16 scheduled to begin in 2018. The Division of Marine Fisheries shall notify the Codifier of  
17 Statutes of the effective date of the Plan upon its adoption.