

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**

**BY THE COMMISSIONER**

- WHEREAS:** O.C.G.A. Section 27-4-133(a) authorizes the Commissioner of Natural Resources to open any waters outside, on the seaward side, of the sounds between May 15 and December 31, when he has determined that the shrimp in said waters are 45 or fewer with heads on to the pound and that opening said salt waters is consistent with current sound principles of wildlife research and management; and
- WHEREAS:** O.C.G.A. Section 27-4-132 authorizes the Commissioner to open any portion of the salt waters of the state to recreational and commercial food shrimp harvest by cast net or beach seine at any time between May 15 and the last day of February when he has determined that opening said salt waters is consistent with current sound principles of wildlife research and management; and
- WHEREAS:** sample trawls in the outside waters indicate shrimp are 45 or fewer with heads on to the pound; and
- WHEREAS:** the Commissioner has determined that opening certain outside waters to fishing with power-drawn nets for shrimp for human consumption would be consistent with current, sound principles of wildlife research and management; and
- WHEREAS:** the Commissioner has determined that opening the salt waters of the State to recreational and commercial cast netting and beach seining for shrimp for human consumption would be consistent with current sound principles of wildlife research and management; and
- WHEREAS:** through the Endangered Wildlife Act of 1973 (O.C.G.A. Sections 27-3-130 - 132) the Department is authorized to evaluate environmental concerns pertaining to protected species; and
- WHEREAS:** sea turtles are state and federally protected species which occur in coastal Georgia waters year-round and in greatest abundance when water temperatures are 16 degrees Centigrade or higher; and
- WHEREAS:** Rule 391-4-10-.06 (1)(b) prohibits the possession of any protected animal species unless otherwise authorized by a scientific collecting, wildlife exhibition, or other permit or license issued by the Department; and

**WHEREAS:** O.C.G.A. Section 27-1-37 authorizes the Department to issue an Administrative Order requiring corrective action when it has reason to believe a violation of any provision of the Game and Fish Code, or rule or regulation adopted pursuant thereto is occurring; and

**WHEREAS:** based on the foregoing, the State of Georgia desires to open the salt waters of the State to fishing with cast nets and beach seines for shrimp for human consumption; and

**WHEREAS:** based on the foregoing, the State of Georgia desires to open to fishing with power-drawn nets for shrimp for human consumption in its territorial waters of the Atlantic Ocean, seaward of the sounds, from the Georgia-Florida state line boundary northward to the Georgia-South Carolina state line boundary in the vicinity of the "Savannah River" navigational channel, while affording maximum protection to endangered and threatened sea turtles; and

**WHEREAS:** based on the foregoing, the State of Georgia desires to keep closed to trawling with power-drawn nets the area known as Estelle Beach.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BY VIRTUE OF THE POWER VESTED IN ME AS THE COMMISSIONER OF NATURAL RESOURCES, IT IS HEREBY**

**ORDERED:** Effective 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, June 20, 2023:

1.

All territorial Atlantic Ocean waters on the seaward side of the sounds except as provided below are hereby OPENED to fishing with power drawn nets for shrimp for human consumption from the Georgia-Florida line northward to the Georgia-South Carolina line in the vicinity of the "Savannah River" navigational channel to the three-mile territorial limit, as shown on the chart of the Savannah River and Wassaw Sounds, Soundings in feet, Chart No. 11512, published by the United States Department of Commerce, NOAA, National Ocean Service.

2.

The portion of the "Savannah River" navigational channel between the north and south jetties and eastward of the buoy, R"24", FL R 4 sec., at the landward end of the jetties, southeast of Oyster Bed Island is hereby OPENED to fishing with power-drawn nets for shrimp for human consumption.

3.

The area known as Estelle Beach, which is south of a line extending along the south jetty of the Savannah River Entrance to the lighted day beacon at the easternmost tip of the south jetty, and west of a line extending from said lighted day beacon south to the northernmost tip of Tybee Island, is CLOSED to food shrimp harvest with power-drawn nets.

4.

Each trawl with a head rope length greater than 16 feet is required to have installed a certified turtle excluder device (TED) and a certified bycatch reduction device (BRD).

5.

All salt waters of the state are hereby OPENED to commercial and recreational food shrimp harvest with cast nets and seines pursuant to O.C.G.A. Section 27-4-132.

6.

Those portions of sand beaches as provided for by Rule 391-2-4-.12 are hereby OPENED to commercial and recreational food shrimp harvest with beach seines.

This 12<sup>th</sup> day of June 2023.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Mark Williams", written in black ink. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

MARK WILLIAMS

COMMISSIONER OF NATURAL RESOURCES

