



BRIAN KEMP
GOVERNOR

WALTER RABON
COMMISSIONER

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 to power-drawn nets during January and February, when he has determined that the shrimp in said waters are 50 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: sample trawls in the outside waters indicate that the shrimp in the outside waters are 50 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: O.C.G.A. Section 27-4-130 authorizes the Commissioner to close all or any portion of the salt waters of the state to commercial and non-commercial fishing by species for a period not to exceed six months within a calendar year; and

WHEREAS: O.C.G.A. Section 27-4-132 authorizes the Commissioner to close any portion of the salt waters of the state to non-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 closing said salt waters is consistent with current sound principles of wildlife research and management; and

WHEREAS: the Commissioner has determined that closing the salt waters of the State to non-commercial and commercial cast netting and beach seining for shrimp for human consumption would be consistent with current sound principles of wildlife research; and

WHEREAS: based on the foregoing, the State of Georgia desires to open to fishing with power-drawn nets for shrimp for human consumption its territorial waters of the Atlantic Ocean on the seaward side 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 close 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 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:

1.

Effective January 1, 2024 through 6:20 PM January 18, 2024: 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 effective January 1, 2024 through 6:20 PM January 18, 2024.

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.

Effective 6:20 PM January 18, 2024: All salt waters of the state are hereby closed to non-commercial and commercial food shrimp harvest with cast nets and seines pursuant to O.C.G.A. Sections 27-4-130 and O.C.G.A. 27-4-132, until July 15, 2024, unless reopened earlier through Administrative Order.

This 20th day of December 2023.


WALTER RABON
COMMISSIONER OF NATURAL RESOURCES



COASTAL RESOURCES DIVISION

ONE CONSERVATION WAY · BRUNSWICK, GA 31520 · 912-264-7218

WALTER RABON
COMMISSIONER

DOUG HAYMANS
DIRECTOR

OFFICIAL NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT GEORGIA'S TERRITORIAL SEA (EXTENDING FROM THE SOUND-BEACH BOUNDARY OUT TO THE 3-MILE LIMIT) FROM THE GEORGIA-SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOUNDARY LINE IN THE VICINITY OF THE SAVANNAH RIVER NAVIGATIONAL CHANNEL SOUTH TO THE GEORGIA-FLORIDA BOUNDARY WILL REMAIN OPEN TO COMMERCIAL SHRIMP TRAWLING FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION FROM JANUARY 1, 2024 UNTIL 6:20 P.M. ON JANUARY 18, 2024. WATERS MAY BE CLOSED PRIOR TO THEN SHOULD BIOLOGICAL OR ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS WARRANT SUCH A CLOSURE.

AS REQUIRED BY LAW, TRAWLING VESSELS MUST EMPLOY A NMFS-APPROVED TURTLE EXCLUDER DEVICE (TED) WITH THE ESCAPE OPENING MODIFIED TO EXCLUDE LEATHERBACK SEA TURTLES IN POWER-DRAWN NETS. NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN THAT FOOD SHRIMPERS UTILIZING TRAWL GEAR SHOULD CHECK WITH BOTH STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES TO VERIFY CURRENT REQUIREMENTS FOR BYCATCH REDUCTION DEVICES (BRD).

A PORTION OF THE SAVANNAH RIVER NAVIGATIONAL CHANNEL BETWEEN THE NORTH AND SOUTH JETTIES AND EASTWARD OF THE BUOY AT THE INNER END OF THE JETTIES, SOUTHEAST OF OYSTER BED ISLAND, R "24", FL 4 SEC, WILL ALSO REMAIN OPEN TO FISHING WITH POWER-DRAWN NETS FOR SHRIMP FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2024 UNTIL 6:20 P.M. ON JANUARY 18, 2024. WATERS MAY BE CLOSED PRIOR TO JANUARY 18 SHOULD BIOLOGICAL OR ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS WARRANT SUCH A CLOSURE. THAT AREA IN CHATHAM COUNTY KNOWN AS ESTELLE BEACH WILL REMAIN CLOSED TO COMMERCIAL SHRIMPING.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN THAT THE SEASON FOR COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL CAST NETTING AND BEACH SEINING FOR SHRIMP FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION WILL BE CLOSED EFFECTIVE JANUARY 18, 2024 AT 6:20 P.M. UNTIL JULY 15, 2024, UNLESS REOPENED EARLIER THROUGH ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER.

THIS ACTION IS TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH O.C.G.A. SECTIONS 27-4-130 AND 27-4-132, AND 27-4-133 AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER OF THE COMMISSIONER OF NATURAL RESOURCES DATED DECEMBER 20, 2023.

WALTER RABON, COMMISSIONER
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DOUG HAYMANS, DIRECTOR
COASTAL RESOURCES DIVISION

BY: Carolyn N. Belcher, PhD
CAROLYN BELCHER, PhD
CHIEF OF MARINE FISHERIES