

## Fishermen Get \$7.2 Million For Hurricane Florence Relief

By Administrator

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The N.C. Department of Environmental Quality's Division of Marine Fisheries, under the Hurricane Florence Commercial Fishing Assistance Program, distributed 1,002 checks totaling \$7,231,500 are going to fishermen to help compensate for October and November harvest reductions due to Hurricane Florence. "When the storm hit, coastal communities suffered tremendous damage to homes, businesses, schools and their entire economy," Governor Cooper said. "Helping the commercial fishing industry recover is critical for the people and places who rely on it for their livelihood, and these funds are an important boost."

The program is designed to help make up for losses to the state's nearly billion-dollar commercial fishing industry due to the storm and is part of a package of Hurricane Florence relief efforts Governor Cooper signed into law on December 3, 2018.

The first round of checks to fisherman went out in February and included 678 checks totaling more than \$3.2 million to help compensate fishermen for reductions in the September harvest. See the total number of checks and amount by county for both rounds of payments [HERE](#).

Distribution of the money is based on reported commercial fishing landings in September, October, and November 2018 as compared to the same months in 2015, 2016, 2017. The state collects records of all marine fish and shellfish sold at North Carolina docks.

Hurricane Florence severely disrupted North Carolina's commercial fishing industry throughout the fall of 2018. The storm's historic rainfall and powerful winds destroyed boats, gear and buildings critical to fishing businesses.

As a result of the storm, Gov. Cooper sought and also won a federal disaster declaration for the state's marine fishing industry. That designation can assist with additional relief for commercial fishing families struggling to make a living while repairing their businesses.

According to the state Division of Marine Fisheries, the North Carolina commercial fishing industry generated more than \$96 million in revenue in 2017.