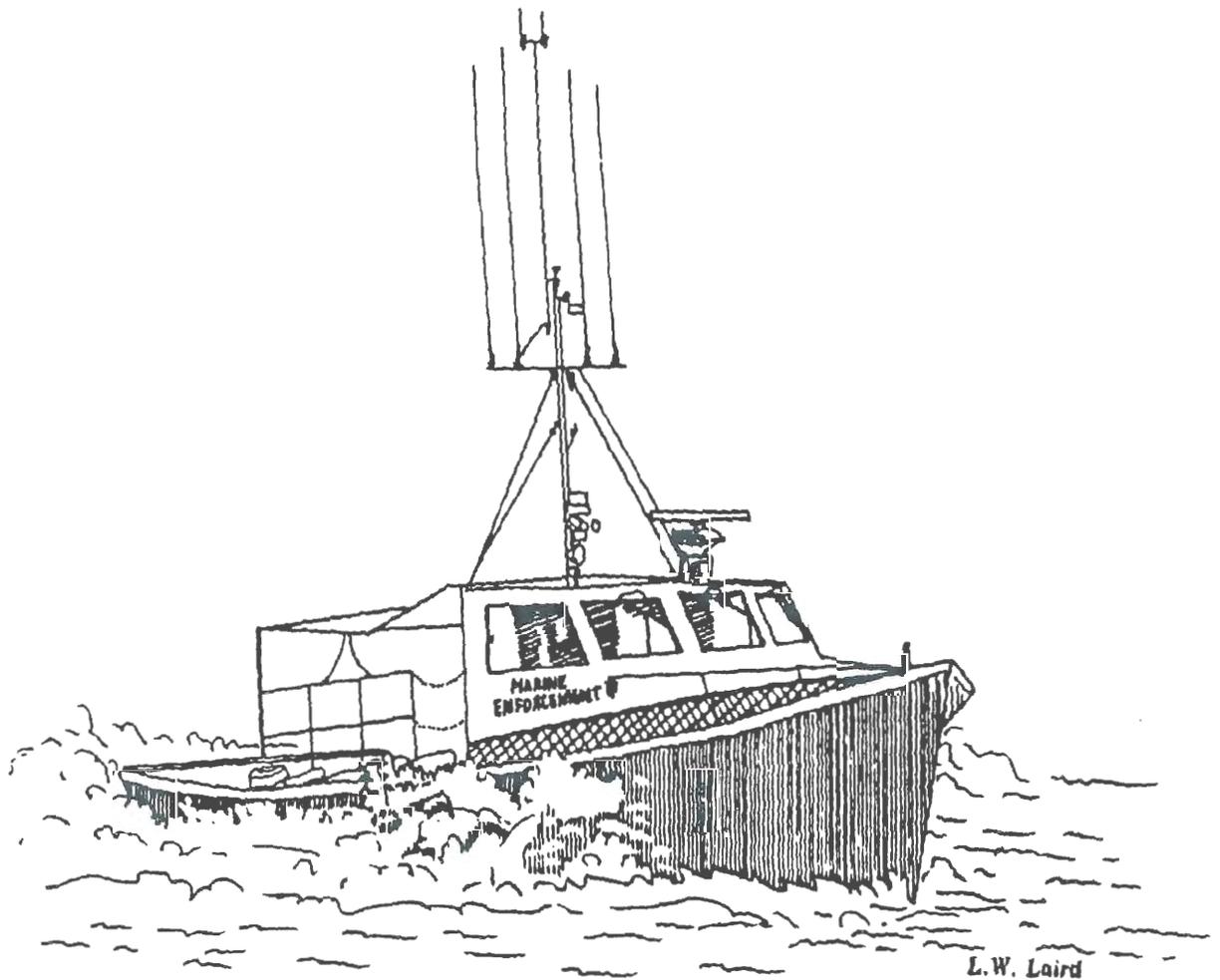


GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

# Law Summary 2003



## A Summary of Marine Fishing Laws and Regulations for the Gulf States

September 2003

GSMFC No. 116

*This publication is an unofficial compilation of marine fishing laws and regulations developed for the use and convenience of enforcement personnel. For definitive regulations, contact your local agency.*

The following is an unofficial compilation of marine laws and regulations for the Gulf States. It was compiled by enforcement personnel of the Gulf States specifically for their use and convenience. The information is current as of September 30, 2003; however, changes may occur in each state at any time. For definitive enforcement regulations in your area, contact state or federal agencies directly.

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Office of Law Enforcement

edited by

Cynthia B. Yocom  
GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION  
P.O. Box 726  
Ocean Springs, Mississippi 39566-0726



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# MARINE FISHERY LAWS AND REGULATIONS FOR THE GULF STATES

## ALABAMA

The following is an unofficial compilation of marine laws and regulations for Alabama. The information is current as of September 30, 2003, but changes may occur at any time. For definitive enforcement regulations contact the Alabama Marine Resources Division (MRD), P.O. Box 189, Dauphin Island, AL 36528 (251/861-2882).

### Residency Requirements

Annual Resident Freshwater or Saltwater Fishing License. Any person who has been a bona fide resident of this state for a period of not less than 90 days next preceding [the application] and who is between the ages of 16 and 65.

Use of Commercial Fishing Gear. A resident of the state of Alabama, as applicable to this article, shall be a person who has resided continuously in this state for 12 months next preceding the application for said license. Wholesale and retail licenses as prescribed in this section shall be issued in the same manner and under the same provisions as provided other licenses.

Proof of Residency. A current valid Alabama driver's license or two of the following: 1) certificate of employment if containing proof of permanent residency, 2) copy of home property tax, 3) copy of previous year's tax return (mailing address only), 4) health insurance forms with address, 5) the last three months of a utility bill with mailing address, 6) student identification plus copy of residence agreement or any other proof of residence listed, 7) military personnel with an out-of-state driver's license must have a copy of orders of assignment to Alabama for a minimum of 30 days or have Alabama as home of record, 8) health insurance card with address, 9) telephone calling cards with address, 10) copy of school registration for non-driving students, 11) voter registration, 12) other legal documents that may establish residency after approval by the conservation department. A non-driver identification card issued by the department of public safety is not acceptable proof of residency.

### **SHRIMP**

#### **Commercial License**

Commercial Shrimp Boats

Under 30' - \$51.00

30'-45' - \$76.00

Over 45' - \$101.00

(Nonresidents pay the same fee as that charged Alabama residents in the applicant's state of residence, except for the reciprocal state of Mississippi. Nonresident licenses are sold only by MRD offices.)

#### **Recreational License**

\$16.00 boat license

(Nonresidents pay the same fee as that charged Alabama residents in the applicant's state of residence, except for the reciprocal state of Mississippi.)

#### **Commercial Season**

Set by regulation/prohibited in permanently closed areas and designated exclusive bait areas.

#### **Recreational Season**

Prohibited in areas closed to commercial shrimping and permanently closed areas. Shrimping is allowed throughout the year in designated exclusive bait areas from 4:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m.

#### **Commercial Gear Limitation**

No restrictions on mesh size. In inside waters (bay, sounds, etc.) a trawl or trawls used together cannot exceed 50' as measured along the main top line. No more than two trawls may be used at the same time (not including a try trawl, which cannot exceed 10' on the main top line). No restrictions on trawl size offshore (Gulf of Mexico) - (other commercial specifications apply). Trawl wings shall be cut and tied to the wing line only on points, and it shall be illegal to use a trawl or trawls on which the length of the top leg line exceeds the length of the bottom leg line (the length of the leg line being defined as the distance from the rear of the trawl door to the beginning of the wing). Webbing or netting shall not be hung, tied, or otherwise connected between the rear of the trawl board or door and the adjacent wing line or between the top leg line and bottom leg line of any trawl so as to extend the width of any trawl or trawls over the legal width (50').

#### **Recreational Gear Limitations**

One trawl, size not to exceed 16' as measured along the main top line. There are no restrictions on mesh size.

#### **Commercial Legal Size**

Shrimp smaller in size than 68 count (68 shrimp or less per pound) are not to be taken in Alabama waters.

#### **Recreational Legal Size**

No restrictions in areas open to commercial shrimping and designated exclusive bait areas.

#### **Commercial Pounds Allowed**

No limit.

#### **Recreational Pounds Allowed**

In areas open to commercial shrimping, five (5) gallons per person per day. In designated exclusive bait areas, one (1) gallon per boat per day.

#### **LIVE BAIT**

##### **License**

Sell live shrimp for bait and operate one boat and one truck - \$51.00

Sell live shrimp for bait and operate two boats and two trucks - \$101.00 (limit two boats or trucks per dealer)

##### **Shore Facility**

Permanently erected building from which fishing bait and fishing supplies and tackle are routinely sold to the public.

##### **Season**

No closed season but areas may be closed by regulation. Prohibited in permanently closed areas. Designated exclusive bait areas are open to live bait dealers year around from 4:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m.

##### **Gear**

One trawl per boat. Trawl shall not exceed 16' as measured across main top line. No mesh restrictions. Boats shall display the words "LIVE BAIT" in letters no smaller than 6" high on each side of the boat and shall have a tank with a spray system operated by a pump or commercial fish aerator or a live well with forced water exchange. Trucks must have a wooden or fabricated transport tank with recirculating water or commercial fish aerator and shall display the words "LIVE BAIT" in letters no smaller than 6" high on each side of the truck.

##### **Legal Size**

No restrictions.

##### **Pounds Allowed**

Possession of no more than one standard shrimp basket of shrimp live or dead per boat or truck. Possession of no more than three standard shrimp baskets of shrimp live or dead per place of business.

##### **Restrictions**

Drags shall not exceed 20 consecutive minutes before retrieving trawl and sorting boat shrimp into the live tank. Shrimp can be sold alive or dead. Dead shrimp must have heads attached and be packaged and sold in lots no greater than one pound.

### **SHELLFISH - OYSTERS**

#### **License Requirements**

All licenses expire September 30 of each year.

Persons are allowed to take up to 100 oysters for personal consumption without a Catcher's License.

Commercial Oyster Catcher - \$26.00 - Required by all persons (must

be in possession) taking oysters for commercial purposes.  
Oyster Dredge - \$26.00 – Required before an oyster dredge can be used along with evidence that a \$1,000.00 bond has been secured.

#### Seasons

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) and the Alabama Department of Public Health are authorized to open and close areas during all or parts of the year. Taking oysters from a closed area for any reason is a misdemeanor. Taking oysters from open areas before or after time as set by regulation is prohibited. Transporting oysters at night through closed areas is prohibited.

#### Gear

Oysters may be taken from public reefs and water bottoms by hand or oyster tongs. Oyster dredges may be used by owners or lessees of private oyster reefs only after purchasing an oyster dredge license, posting a \$1,000.00 bond, and receiving written authorization from the ADCNR.

#### Size Limits

Oysters taken for either commercial or personal consumption must be at least 3" in length (5% undersize tolerance). Oysters must be culled on the reef where they are taken.

#### Possession Limits

Unlawful to take or have in possession more than the number of sacks of oysters per boat per day as set by regulation.

#### Leases

Persons, firms, or corporations desiring to lease oyster bottoms shall make application in writing to the Commissioner of Conservation and Natural Resources accompanied by such fee as may be prescribed. It is the duty of each lessee to have established an accurate survey by a registered surveyor of the bottoms, beds, or reefs under his control, and each corner shall be clearly marked and defined with the lessee's name clearly attached. Intermediate markers shall be placed and plat of the area filed with the MRD together with a list of any persons using said lease area (list must be updated every 30 days).

#### Restrictions

It is unlawful to drag any seines over the public reefs or private oyster grounds. Oysters taken commercially must be sacked (not more than ¼ Alabama barrel per sack) and each sack tagged before landing. Tags may be purchased for \$0.25/each at MRD offices or authorized agents.

### SHELLFISH - CRABS

#### Licenses

Commercial - \$51.00  
Recreational - No license (five traps maximum)  
Nonresidents pay the same fee as that charged Alabama residents to conduct the same activity in the applicant's state of residence, or not less than twice the amount of resident license.

#### Restrictions

No person, firm, or corporation shall take, catch, sell, transport, or possess blue crabs that measure less than five inches (5") carapace width as measured from the tip of one lateral spine to the tip of the opposite lateral spine. Provided, however, this limitation does not apply to soft-shelled crabs or to pre-molt crabs if the pre-molt crabs are taken solely for the purposes of shedding and held in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Exempted pre-molt crabs shall exhibit, at a minimum, a pink or red line on the back paddle fin, which is recognized by the crab industry as a preliminary pre-molt stage.

Softshell or pre-molt crabs must be held in a separate container, marked "peelers" or "busters," from those crabs of legal size while in the possession of the fishermen.

Pre-molt crabs in the possession of, or held by, a dealer for sale or processing as softshell crabs, are exempted from the minimum prescribed size limit, if identified as pre-molt crabs, and held in separate containers marked "peelers" or "busters."

Crabs in a work box shall not be subject to the minimum prescribed size limit while aboard the vessel. Commercial crab fishermen shall be allowed to have in possession aboard the vessel two work boxes. Crab boxes which are sealed or covered, other than by a grader, shall not be considered a work box.

Commercial crab fishermen shall tag or mark any containers of Alabama crabs in possession, or that are sold, in a manner which will ensure that such commercial crab fisherman can be identified as the

person who harvested the crabs. Such identification required shall be the full name of the crab fisherman and the number issued to the commercial crab fisherman by the MRD and the date on which the crabs were harvested. All containers of Alabama crabs in the possession of a dealer shall be tagged, marked, or otherwise identified in this manner. The identification number shall be assigned by the MRD when the fisherman purchases his or her commercial crab "catchers" license. For subsequent years, the same identification number shall be assigned to the same commercial crab fisherman.

Crabs taken by a licensed live bait dealer for sale as bait shall not be subject to the minimum prescribed size limit.

Crabs taken for bait by licensed recreational shrimp boats shall not be subject to the minimum prescribed size limit, but such boats are limited to no more than the number of crabs held by a one (1) gallon container per boat per day.

Crabs taken by licensed commercial or recreational shrimp boats in waters open to commercial shrimping are limited to no more than one five-gallon container of legal size crabs in possession per boat unless the operator possesses a valid commercial "crab catcher's" license.

Persons, firms, or corporations may import crabs for commercial purposes from a licensed dealer or fisherman residing outside the state of Alabama, provided, such crabs were taken and shipped pursuant to the state's laws and regulations. Containers of crabs shall be marked, tagged, or otherwise identified as required by the laws and regulations in that state.

A bill of sale or other proof of purchase showing the nonresident dealer's or fisherman's name and address, pounds or number of containers purchased, and date of purchase shall be maintained at the place of business for a period of one year, and shall be available for inspection and presented without delay upon request by a conservation enforcement officer or other authorized agent.

Persons who have caught crabs from the waters of another state may import those crabs into the state of Alabama for commercial purposes, provided, said crabs were legally taken, licensed, and transported pursuant to that state's laws and regulations. Containers of crabs shall be marked or tagged with the fisherman's name, commercial crab fisherman's license number issued by the state, and the date of harvest.

Traps used to take crabs or other seafood shall not exceed twenty-seven (27) cubic feet in volume.

Each commercial crab trap shall be marked with at least one (1) buoy no smaller than six (6) inches in diameter. At least one-half (½) of the buoy shall be white. Buoys shall be attached to the traps by use of a weighted line to prevent the line from floating. Plastic bottles are prohibited for use as a commercial crab trap buoy.

It shall be unlawful to set or place in the waters of this state any commercial crab trap which does not have attached a float marked with the identification number of the owner of the trap. Such number shall be at least 1" in height and colored to be a definite contrast with the color of the float, of block character, and spaced so as to be readable from left to right.

It shall be unlawful to remove crab traps from the water or remove crabs from crab traps during the hours from sunset to one (1) hour before sunrise the following day.

It shall be unlawful to set or place any commercial or recreational trap used for the taking of crabs or other seafood in the access canals of Heron Bay (west of and adjacent to State Highway 193 or within three hundred (300) feet of any navigation channel marked by a lawfully established system of waterway markers or any public boat launching ramp, Heron Bay Cutoff, or the mouth of West Fowl River, Weeks Bay, Fish River, Magnolia River, any man-made canal, or in any manner so as to prevent ingress or egress to or from any pier, wharf, dock, marina, or boat launching ramp.

It shall be unlawful to set or place any commercial trap used for the taking of crabs or other seafood in Mobile River, Dog River, Theodore Industrial Canal, Fowl River, the northwest arm of Heron Bay, Heron Bayou (off northwest arm of Heron Bay), Bayou Coden, Bayou La Batre, or their tributaries, in Mobile County, or Blakely River North of the charted position of Blakely River Channel Marker #20, Fly Creek, Fish River, Magnolia River, Bon Secour River north of channel markers 7 and 8, Wolf Creek, Sandy Creek, Mifflin Creek, Hammock Creek,

Roberts Bayou, Soldier Creek, Palmetto Creek, Old River (between Ono Island and Perdido Key), or their tributaries, in Baldwin County, or in any man-made canal [including but not limited to the following on Dauphin Island: Quivera Bay, Polaris Lagoon, Port Royal Lagoon, Lafitte Bay, Indian Bay, Indian Canal, Buchanan Bay, Columbia Bay, Colony Cove, Spanish Bay, Barcelona Bay, Confederate Bay, Salt Creek (Heron Bayou), Government Cut, and Billy Goat Hole].

\$31.00 Tennessee  
\$31.00 all other states

It shall be unlawful to set or place any recreational trap used for the taking of crabs or other seafood in any area named in the above paragraph of this regulation, unless such trap shall be physically attached to a line to a pier, dock, piling, bulkhead, boathouse, or other structure, on or attached to the shore. Such line shall allow the crab trap to be placed no farther than a distance of ten feet (10') from the pier, dock, boathouse, or shoreline. No more than five (5) traps shall be allowed per property.

Recreational crab traps shall be marked with an orange floating, visible buoy not less than six (6) inches, in diameter or width. The buoy shall have a legible letter "R," at least two (2) inches high, permanently affixed to it.

Crab traps which are no longer serviceable or in use shall be removed from the water by the owner thereof. No person shall intentionally damage or destroy crab traps or the floats or lines attached thereto.

Any unidentified, improperly marked, or illegally placed crab trap shall be considered a nuisance and may be confiscated by a conservation enforcement officer or other authorized agent of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Any person, firm, or corporation taking, catching, selling, transporting, or possessing crabs shall have in their possession a valid license, if applicable, for such activity.

Such license shall be immediately available for inspection, upon request, by a conservation enforcement officer or other authorized agent.

#### **Pier License**

\$1,001.00 - Piers located in inside waters of the state may purchase license (allows residents to fish without additional license).

#### **Commercial Party Boat**

Persons onboard may fish without additional license.

Certified:

\$201.00 - up to six people  
\$301.00 - 7-25 people  
\$501.00 - over 25 people

#### **Commercial Hook and Line License**

Resident - \$101.00 + annual saltwater rod and reel license  
Nonresident - \$201.00 + annual saltwater rod and reel license.

It is unlawful to possess in Alabama any species of saltwater fish or seafood product taken in federal waters or the waters of another state unlawfully in violation of any applicable federal or other state creel, possession, or size limit.

It is unlawful to sell speckled trout, red drum, and tarpon caught in state waters. Season closes for red snapper, king mackerel, and shark upon closure of federal waters. No allowance for undersize fish.

Saltwater fishing license requirements shall be applicable to such activities as provided within Sections 9-11-53.1, 53.5, and 55.2 Code of Alabama 1975 which occur south of the following line: beginning at the Mississippi state line, a meandering line following U.S. Highway 90 eastwardly to its junction with State Highway 188, State Highway 188 eastwardly to its junction with State Highway 193; State Highway 193 northwardly to its junction with State Highway 163; State Highway 163 northwardly to its intersection with Interstate Highway 10 (except all of the Theodore Industrial Canal); Interstate Highway 10 eastbound lane (except that portion of Interstate Highway 10 which lies north of State Highway 90, Battleship Parkway, in which case the line follows the Parkway) to Interstate Highway 10's intersection with U.S. Highway 98; U.S. Highway 98 southwardly and eastwardly to its intersection with State Highway 59; State Highway 59 southwardly to its intersection with Baldwin County Highway 20; Baldwin County Highway 20 eastwardly to its intersection with Baldwin County Highway 95; Baldwin County Highway 95 northwardly to its intersection with U.S. Highway 98; U.S. Highway 98 eastwardly to its intersection with the western shore of Perdido Bay; then the western shore of Perdido Bay northwardly to the intersection of the Florida state line and the mouth of the Perdido River.

All commercial fishing operations, as well as recreational netting operations, and all gear used in any of such operations, in state jurisdictional waters south of Interstate 10 eastbound lane (except that portion of Interstate Highway 10 which lies north of State Highway 90, Battleship Parkway, in which case the lines follows the Parkway) shall be subject to those laws, rules, and regulations of the ADCNR/MRD.

## **FINFISH**

### **Saltwater Rod and Reel License**

Annual licenses expire one year from the date of issue.

Resident - \$16.00 annual  
\$6.00 7-day trip  
\$6.00 annual pier (residents only to fish from public piers)  
Nonresident - 7-day  
\$16.50 Florida  
\$55.00 Louisiana  
\$11.00 Georgia  
\$11.00 Mississippi  
\$11.00 Tennessee  
\$11.00 all other states  
Nonresident - annual  
\$31.50 Florida  
\$110.00 Louisiana  
\$31.00 Georgia  
\$31.00 Mississippi

Recreational Size and Possession Limits for Alabama:

Species	Daily Bag	Possession	Minimum Length in Inches	Maximum Length in Inches
Cobia	2	2	33 FL	
Spotted seatrout	10	10	14 TL	
Red drum	3	3	16 TL <sup>1</sup>	26 TL
Red snapper	4	4	16 TL	
Snapper:				
Gray	10	10	12 TL	
Vermilion	Note <sup>2</sup>	Note <sup>2</sup>	10 TL	
Lane	Note <sup>2</sup>	Note <sup>2</sup>	8 TL	
Spanish mackerel	15	15		
King mackerel	2	2	24 FL	
Greater amberjack	1	1	28 FL	
Striped Bass	2 Note <sup>3</sup>	2 Note <sup>3</sup>	16 TL	
Gray triggerfish	Note <sup>2,3</sup>	Note <sup>2,3</sup>	12 TL	
Gag grouper	All groupers 5/person in aggregate	All groupers 5/person in aggregate	22 TL	
Black grouper	All groupers 5/person in aggregate	All groupers 5/person in aggregate	22 TL	
Red grouper	All groupers 5/person in aggregate	All groupers 5/person in aggregate	20 TL	
Yellowfin grouper	All groupers 5/person in aggregate	All groupers 5/person in aggregate	20 TL	
Scamp	All groupers 5/person in aggregate	All groupers 5/person in aggregate	16 TL	
Tarpon	Tag required	Tag required	60 TL	
Florida pompano	3	3	12 TL	
Mullet	Notes <sup>4,5,6</sup>	Notes <sup>4,5,6</sup>		
Atlantic sharpnose shark	2/person	2/person	None	
Other sharks	1/person	1/person	54 FL	
Triple tail	3	3	16 TL	
Flounder	No limit	No limit	12 TL	

<sup>1</sup>No allowance for undersized fish, except: redfish-no undersized fish allowed, 1 may exceed the maximum size. After January 1, 2001, there will be no undersize tolerance for speckled trout.

<sup>2</sup>There is a 20-fish aggregate bag limit for reef fish species for which there is no other bag limit (including banded rudderfish and lesser amberjack).

<sup>3</sup>When caught in areas designated as salt water.

<sup>4</sup>October 24-December 31 – Possession limit on mullet caught by cast net or snagging is 25 fish per boat per day or 25 fish per person per day from shore.

<sup>5</sup>Unlawful to possess onboard a boat more than 25 mullet while cast netting or snagging in waters close to the use of gill nets.

<sup>6</sup>October 24- December 1 – Unlawful to take mullet by cast netting or snagging in Theodore Industrial Canal, Dog River, or tributaries thereof.

Recreational and commercial harvest of the following sharks is prohibited: Atlantic angel, longfin mako, small tail, bigeye thresher, bignose, sevengill, white dusky, sitgill, nurse, sand tiger, and whale.

**Commercial Size and Possession Limits for Alabama:**

Species	Daily Bag	Possession	Minimum Length in Inches	Maximum Length in Inches
Red snapper <sup>1</sup>			15 TL	
Cobia		2	33 FL	
Gag grouper			24 TL	
Black grouper			22 TL	
Red grouper			20 TL	
Yellowfin grouper			20 TL	
Scamp			16 TL	
Florida pompano			12 TL	
Vermilion snapper			10 TL	
Lane snapper			8 TL	
Gray snapper			12 TL	
Triple tail		3	16 TL	
King mackerel			24 TL	
Greater amberjack			36 FL	
Mullet <sup>2</sup>		25 per person or vessel	36 FL	
Flounder			12 TL	

<sup>1</sup>Commercial vessels which hold a valid federal red snapper Class 1 license and the federal reef-fish commercial vessel permit may land in Alabama, up to, but not to exceed, 2,000 pounds per vessel per trip of red snapper taken from Alabama waters; all other validly licensed Alabama commercial fishermen holding the red snapper Class 2 license and federal reef-fish commercial vessel permit are restricted to landing in Alabama no more than 200 pounds per vessel per trip of red snapper taken from Alabama waters.

<sup>2</sup>October 24-December 31 taken by cast net or snagging.

**Closed Season and Creel/Possession Limit on King Mackerel for Commercial Purposes**

During such period of time that the federal waters (adjoining Alabama waters) are closed to the commercial harvest of king mackerel, it shall be unlawful to take, harvest, or possess, for commercial purposes, king mackerel, from the waters of the state of Alabama.

Sand tiger - *Odontaspis taurus*  
 White shark - *Rhincodon typus*  
 Dusky shark - *Carcharhinus obscurus*  
 Smalltooth sawfish - *Pristis pectinata*  
 Largetooth sawfish - *Pristis pristis*  
 Nassau Grouper  
 Goliath Grouper (Jewfish)

**Season on Sharks for Commercial Purposes**

During such period of time that the federal waters adjacent to Alabama waters are open to commercial harvest of small coastal sharks (SCS) or large coastal sharks (LCS) as defined by federal law or regulation, the Alabama waters of Mobile Bay, Bon Secour Bay, Mississippi Sound, and the Gulf of Mexico south of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway and west of Little Lagoon Pass (87°44'24"W longitude) shall be open to the harvest of such sharks for commercial purposes from 12:01 a.m. each Monday through 11:59 p.m. each Friday (no weekends), except for commercial harvesting of sharks shall be prohibited from 12:01 a.m. through 11:59 p.m. on each of the following holidays: Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day. When federal waters adjacent to Alabama are closed to the commercial harvest of either shark management unit (SCS or LCS), it shall be unlawful to take, harvest, or possess, or attempt to take, harvest, or possess, for commercial purposes, sharks of such closed management unit from the waters of the state of Alabama.

**Bycatch Provisions on Sharks for Commercial Purposes**

Regardless of the open or closed status of federal and Alabamawaters regarding the directed harvest of sharks, gill net fishermen targeting other fish shall be allowed to keep, for commercial purposes, an incidental bycatch of dressed weight of sharks (carcasses and fins) (except those species listed above) totaling no more than ten (10%) percent by weight of other fish taken.

**SALTWATER NETS**

**Purse Seine Licenses**  
 Resident - \$1,501.00  
 Nonresident - \$3,001.00

**Permits**

Permits expire September 30 of each year.  
 Recreational nets shall not exceed 300' in length; commercial nets shall not exceed 2400' in length (main top line).  
 Resident Recreational - \$51.00  
 Resident Commercial - \$301.00 plus additional \$501.00 for roe mullet and Spanish mackerel permit.  
 Nonresident Commercial - \$1,501.00 plus additional \$2,501.00 for roe mullet and Spanish mackerel permit.  
 Nonresident Recreational - pays the same fee as that charged Alabama resident to conduct same activity in applicant's state of residence provided nonresidents pay no less than twice the cost for license that

**Closed Season and Zero Possession Limit on Certain Species for Commercial Purposes**

No person shall take, possess, or attempt to take or possess, from the waters of the state of Alabama, for commercial purposes, any of the following species:

Basking shark - *Cetorhinus maximus*  
 White shark - *Carcharodon carcharias*  
 Bigeye sand tiger - *Odontaspis noronhai*

Alabama residents pay.

Permits for commercial net and seine permits shall only be issued to persons who purchased such licenses in two of five years from 1989 through 1993 and who have proof of 50% of their gross income from fishing or persons who purchased such a license in all five years and have filed annual income tax returns in all years.

All nets and seines must be licensed except seines used for taking bait. Bait seines shall not exceed 25' in length or 4' in depth. A license made out to an individual is not transferable; licensee must be present when net is in use. A seafood dealers license is also required if fish are sold to other than an Alabama seafood dealer. A license is not required for cast nets when used recreationally by Alabama residents.

#### Restrictions

It shall be unlawful to use purse seines for the taking or attempting to take fishes of other than those of the families Clupeidae (menhaden and herrings) and Engraulidae (anchovies). The starting date for the commercial menhaden season in the territorial waters of Alabama shall be the third Monday in April and the closing date shall be November 1 of each year (both dates inclusive). The taking of menhaden by purse seine shall be permitted only in those waters of Mississippi Sound and the Gulf of Mexico as described: "Mississippi Sound and the Gulf of Mexico west of a line extending from the southernmost tip of Point aux Pins to Bayou La Batre channel marker number 17, then to the southernmost point of the Isle aux Herbes (Coffee Island), thence eastward to the easternmost point of Marsh Island, then southward to Gulf Intracoastal Waterway Range Beacon "C," thence southward into the Gulf of Mexico for a distance of three (3) miles, except those waters lying within a radius of one (1) mile from the western point of Dauphin Island."

Gill nets must be marked every 100' with a color contrasting float and every 300' with the fisherman's permit number. Recreational nets must be marked with the licensee's name and license number. The allowable depth of commercial gill nets, trammel nets, and other entangling nets may vary by area.

Except as otherwise provided, gill nets, trammel nets, and other entangling nets used to catch any fish in gulf water in Alabama's territorial jurisdiction must have a minimum mesh size of 1 3/4" bar (knot to knot). A minimum mesh size of 1 7/8" bar is required for such nets used to take mullet during the period from the day after Labor Day through December 31 of each year for all Alabama coastal waters under the jurisdiction of the MRD, and only strike nets may be used in certain waters of Bon Secour Bay during this period. Any person using a 1 7/8" or larger bar mesh net during the period October 24 through December 31 of each year shall be considered a roe mullet fisherman and must possess a roe mullet permit. The minimum mesh for nets used in these excepted areas shall be generally the same as previously described by season for other coastal waters.

The use of purse seines to catch mullet is prohibited. Commercial and recreational gill net fishermen may use only one net at any time; however, commercial fishermen may possess more than one such net. No hook and line device may contain more than five hooks when used in Alabama waters under the jurisdiction of the MRD except from January 1 through April 30, when trotlines may be used to take legal species other than saltwater gamefish east of Mobile Ship Channel and north of the line from MS#78 to Blakely R. Ch. #2 and due east to the shoreline. These trotlines cannot exceed 300' and 50 hooks.

Gill nets, trammel nets, seines, purse seines, and other entangling nets are prohibited in any marked navigational channel, Theodore Industrial Canal, Little Lagoon Pass, or any man-made canal; within 300' of any man-made canal or the mouth of any river, stream, bayou, or creek; and within 300' of any pier, marina, dock, boat launching ramp, or certain "relic" piers. Recreational gill nets may not be used beyond 300' of any shoreline. It is unlawful to use any seine or net in any manner so as to block ingress or egress from any of the aforementioned structures.

Year round, gill nets, trammel nets, seines, haul seines, and other entangling nets are prohibited in Gulf waters within 0.25 miles of shore, except (and subject to other provisions) waters east of longitude 87° 47' 826" which will be open from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. each day from March 15 through May 7. From October 2 through December 31, the waters east of Old Little Lagoon Pass to the Florida line are open 24 hours a day. From the day after Labor Day through March 14, Gulf waters within 0.25 miles of shore will be open to netting west of Old Little Lagoon Pass in Mobile and Baldwin counties, and the minimum mesh size for nets shall be 1 9/16" bar, except from March 15 through

the Friday before Labor Day in waters west of Old Little Lagoon Pass. In Mobile and Baldwin counties, waters shall be open from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. each day. From March 15 through the Friday before Labor Day, waters west of longitude 88° 11' 500" are open 24 hours a day. From May 8 through Labor Day, all waters in the Gulf of Mexico east of Old Little Lagoon Pass to the Florida line are closed to gill nets, trammel nets, seines, haul seines, and other entangling nets. All waters of the Gulf of Mexico are closed during the Memorial Day, July 4<sup>th</sup>, and Labor Day holidays.

From January 1 through the day after Labor Day of each year, entangling nets are prohibited in certain waters in and around Dauphin Island.

It is illegal to remove the roe or otherwise process roe mullet aboard any boat or vessel in Alabama. All nets must be constantly attended by the licensee, and no dead fish or other dead seafood may be discarded within three miles of gulf beaches, 500' of any shoreline, or into any river, stream, bayou, or creek.

#### Finfish Taken as Bait by Bait Purse Seine

Bait Fishery Defined; Fishery Restrictions: An experimental offshore bait purse seine fishery in Alabama's territorial waters of the Gulf of Mexico for schooling, pelagic fish species (listed below) to be marketed exclusively as bait is herein authorized. It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to use a bait purse seine in Alabama's territorial waters of the Gulf of Mexico except as follows:

Gear Specifications: Purse seines utilized in taking or attempting to take bait fish species in the offshore territorial waters of the state of Alabama must be constructed entirely of one-half inch (1/2") knot to knot mesh webbing. This gear will be referred to in this rule as a "bait purse seine." The use of any purse seine in this bait fishery constructed of webbing sized other than as provided herein illegal, and the possession onboard a boat in the waters of Alabama of a bait purse seine in which the webbing is sized other than as specified in this rule is prohibited.

Waters Open to the Fishery: The taking of finfish species as bait by bait purse seine shall be permitted in all of Alabama's territorial waters of the Gulf of Mexico south of a line one-fourth (1/4) mile from the shoreline, including Pelican/Sand Island, seaward to a distance of three (3) miles from shore. These waters shall be open Monday through Friday except on state or national holidays. It shall be unlawful to take or attempt to take bait species using a bait purse seine in any inside waters of the state of Alabama as defined by Rule 220-3-.04(1) or in Pelican Bay (described as those waters encompassed by a line running south from Mobile Point Light at Fort Morgan to Sand Island Tower (Lighthouse), then northwesterly along the contour of Sand/Pelican Island, and then from the west end of Pelican Island to the Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board pier, then east along the shoreline of Dauphin Island to the most southeastern tip of Dauphin Island and from this point southeastwardly across the mouth of Mobile Bay to Mobile Point Light at Fort Morgan.

Species Restrictions: A bait purse seine may lawfully be used for taking or attempting to take only the following fishes to be marketed expressly as bait: round scad, *Decapterus punctatus*; rough scad, *Trachurus lathami*; bigeye scad, *Selar crumenophthalmus*; chub mackerel, *Scomber japonicus*; ladyfish, *Elops saurus*; and blue runner, *Caranx crysos*.

License Requirement: The operator of any vessel upon which a bait purse is possessed must hold a valid Alabama purse seine license.

Observer Requirement: Any vessel upon which a bait purse seine is possessed must have a bona fide fishery observer on board or comply with reporting requirements as determined by criteria established by the Director, ADCNR/MRD when such vessel is away from port and on the fishing grounds.

Landing Requirement: All fish taken as bait by bait purse seine in Alabama waters by a duly licensed bait purse seine vessel must be landed in the state of Alabama.

Reporting Protocol: Each bait purse seine vessel operator must submit reports in standardized form detailing catch, fishing conditions, and fishing equipment by individual fishing trip to the ADCNR/MRD at weekly intervals. Reports will be submitted each Tuesday, detailing fishing activities for the previous Monday through Friday fishing week.

The bait purse seining activities conducted pursuant to this rule shall not be construed as purse seining for the purposes of Section 9-12-

115.1, Code of Alabama 1975.

**Bycatch Restrictions:** It shall be unlawful in the territorial waters of Alabama to retain or possess any duly designated "game fish" on board any vessel upon which a bait purse seine is concurrently possessed. Bycatch allowances for species other than gamefish expressed as a percentage of targeted catch will be deferred until such time as representative biological and catch data can be compiled. Data regarding allowable bycatch (non gamefish) will be compiled on a per trip basis.

**Closure Provisions:** Due to the novelty of this fishery and a subsequent lack of data regarding its prosecution in the territorial waters of Alabama, this bait fishery shall be subject to immediate closure and/or reopening upon order of the Director, ADCNR/MRD. Entry into the fishery may be limited, or annual, species-specific quotas may be developed as fishery data become available.

Any person, firm, or corporation violating any of the provisions of this regulation shall be punished as provided by law.

#### **SEAFOOD DEALER LICENSE**

Required of any person, firm, or corporation selling, brokering, trading, bartering, or processing any fresh or frozen seafood. To obtain a seafood dealer license, tax identification number, proof of business license, and appropriate health permit are required (if applicable). License required for each place of business ("place of business" means a permanent structure on land or a vehicle from which seafood is sold or purchased if owner/operator does not have a licensed permanent structure).

Resident Seafood Dealer - \$201.00

Nonresident Seafood Dealer - \$401.00 or the same fee that is charged an Alabama resident in their state if Alabama residents are charged more than \$401.00

#### **SEAFOOD DEALER VEHICLE LICENSE**

Resident and nonresident - \$101.00 per vehicle

Only holders of a valid Alabama seafood dealer license may purchase a seafood dealer vehicle license.

#### **SEAFOOD REPORTING AND LANDING REGULATION**

Alabama code requires that each and every person, firm, or corporation holding a seafood dealer's license issued by the Commissioner of Conservation and Natural Resources or his or her authorized agent shall under oath make a monthly report to the Director of the MRD, on blanks provided for that purpose by the Director.

All saltwater finfish commercially harvested in the state of Alabama, except those lawfully taken by purse seine, shall be landed in this state and reported through a properly licensed Alabama seafood dealer. Persons who are transporting commercially harvested saltwater finfish out of the state of Alabama must have in their possession proof that said finfish were first landed and reported to a licensed Alabama seafood dealer.

Commercially harvested living marine products other than saltwater finfish taken from Alabama waters including, but not limited to, oysters, crabs, shrimp, other marine invertebrates and live rock, may be landed outside the state of Alabama provided the dealer to which products are sold provides to the Director of MRD at monthly intervals the fisherman's name and license or permit number, the species purchased, the volume and price paid for the product, date and area of harvest, trip and fishing time, proper vessel identification, type, quality and size of gear used, applicable mesh size of gear used, and date of purchase; provided that if the dealer outside the state of Alabama to which product was sold fails to report as required, it will be the responsibility of the fisherman who sold the product to provide to the Director of the MRD at monthly intervals the above required information.

All motor vehicles, trailers, or semi-trailers transporting aquatic products for commercial purposes are required to exhibit the inscription "FISH" on the rear of the vehicle. The inscription shall read from left to right, be attached or painted on the vehicle in block Arabic letters of good proportion in contrasting color to the background and be at least 6" in height.

## FLORIDA

The following is an unofficial compilation of marine laws and regulations for Florida. The information is current as of September 30, 2003, but changes may occur at any time. For definitive enforcement regulations contact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Division of Law Enforcement, 620 South Meridian Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399 (850/488-9924).

### Residency Requirements

"Resident" or "resident of Florida" includes citizens of the United States who have continuously resided in this state, next preceding the making of their application for saltwater fishing license, for the following period of time, to wit: For 1 year in the state and 6 months in the country when applied to all marine species laws not related to freshwater fish and game.

"Resident alien" shall mean those persons who have continuously resided in this state for at least 1 year and 6 months in the country and can provide documentation from the Immigration and Naturalization Service evidencing permanent residency status in the United States. For the purposes of this chapter, a "resident alien" shall be considered a "resident."

### **Commercial Saltwater Products License**

Saltwater products license (SPL) is required to engage in commercial finfishing, trapping stone crabs, blue crabs, the harvest of crawfish, clamming, oystering, commercial trawling for shrimp, sponge fishing, and for the taking of any species over the established recreational bag limit. A SPL is issued in the name of an individual or a valid boat registration number. A SPL is required to sell saltwater products (your harvest), and they can only be sold to a licensed wholesale dealer.

Resident individual - \$50.00

Nonresident - \$200.00

Alien individual - \$300.00

Resident vessel - \$100.00

Nonresident vessel - \$400.00

Alien vessel - \$600.00

Note: Vessel SPL covers captain and crew onboard vessel.

### **Recreational Saltwater Fishing License**

Resident 1-year - \$13.50

Resident 5-year - \$61.50

Nonresident 3-day - \$6.50

Nonresident 7-day - \$16.50

Nonresident 1-year - \$31.50

(Above licenses available through subagents for an additional \$.50 each.)

### **Annual Commercial Vessel Saltwater Fishing License**

11 or more customers - \$801.50

5-10 customers - \$401.50

4 or less customers - \$201.50

**Optional Pier Saltwater Fishing License - \$501.50**

**Optional Recreational Vessel License - \$2,001.50**

### **SHRIMP**

#### **Turtle Excluder Device**

A turtle excluder device (TED) is required in all trawls in state waters. The possession aboard any vessel in or on state waters of any trawl rigged for fishing that does not have a qualified TED installed therein is prohibited except for the following types of gear: 1) a single try net; 2) a roller frame trawl; 3) an experimental trawl authorized by the NMFS.

#### **Otter Trawl Gear Specifications: Bycatch Reduction Devices**

Where required on a regional basis by rule, no person shall operate or fish any otter trawl, or possess any otter trawl that is rigged for fishing aboard any vessel which does not have a bycatch reduction device (BRD) installed therein meeting the requirements.

No person shall rig or alter the BRD installed in any trawl in any manner so as to render the BRD nonfunctioning or ineffective in excluding species other than shrimp from the trawl.

A BRD shall be deemed to meet the requirements if it is one of two types:

1. Florida Finfish Excluder - This device shall consist of at least one rigid exit opening frame made of no smaller than ¼" steel or aluminum rod sewn into each trawl. Each exit opening frame shall be at least 12" in length and have an apex of three bars pointing forward to orient the exit opening in the direction of the mouth of the trawl. The opening thus created shall be in the shape of a parallelogram or oval and no smaller than 36 square inches in area and 5" across the opening in the shortest dimension. The opening formed by each frame shall be no further forward in the cod end than 70% of the distance between the draw string (tie-off rings) and the beginning of the tail bag (excluding any extension). The frame shall be installed on the top side of the cod end, no more than 15 meshes to the side of the centerline.
2. Extended Funnel BRD - This device consists of a funnel of small mesh netting within a cylinder of large mesh netting, held open by at least one semi-rigid hoop, which trawl section is located behind the TED. One side of the funnel is extended vertically to provide a passage for shrimp to the cod end and create an area of reduced waterflow to allow for fish escapement through the larger mesh outer netting. This BRD should meet the following specifications: 1) the small mesh funnel and large mesh section shall be positioned within an extension section constructed of no smaller than 1½" stretched mesh nylon netting, no less than 120 meshes in circumference. The portion of the extension in front of the large mesh section shall be no less than 6½ meshes long, and the section behind the large mesh section shall be no shorter than 23 meshes in length; 2) the small mesh funnel shall be constructed of no less than 1¾" stretched mesh netting. This component shall have a circumference of no less than 120 meshes at the leading edge and no less than 104 meshes at the trailing edge. The short side of the funnel shall be at least 36" long, while approximately one half of the opposite side of the funnel shall extend at least 22" further toward the trailing edge of the funnel and shall be attached no less than three meshes forward of the large mesh leading edge. At least seven meshes of the short side of the funnel shall be attached to the back section of extension webbing on the top and bottom at least eight meshes back from the trailing edge of the large mesh section; 3) the larger mesh outer section shall consist of no smaller than 8" stretched mesh netting cut on the bar. The section shall have a circumference no smaller than 19 meshes and a length of at least three meshes; and 4) the leading edge of the large mesh section shall be attached to one semi-rigid hoop with a minimum diameter of 24" constructed of plastic-coated trawl cable. It shall be installed at least five meshes behind the trailing edge of the large mesh section. If a soft TED is used, a second hoop of identical construction shall be installed at the leading edge of the funnel.

#### **Commercial Season**

Contact your nearest FWC office concerning any local laws of Florida

(Special Acts) which may apply.

Escambia, Santa Rosa, and Okaloosa Counties: In Escambia Bay and above a line running east from Robinson Point in Blackwater Bay and east of a line running north across Alexon Point in East Bay, season is closed from January 1 through September 15. All waters in Santa Rosa Sound, from Brooks Bridge at Fort Walton Beach west to the Bob Sikes Bridge, and those waters in Okaloosa County of Five Mile Bayou, west of the bridge of State Road 85 crossing Garnier's Bayou are closed to shrimping. No person shall harvest shrimp as a food shrimp producer, as defined in Rule 68B-31.006, in the following waters of Okaloosa County: all waters of Five Mile Bayou west of S.R. 85 bridge crossing said bayou and all waters of Chula Vista, Don's, Little, and Garnier bayous north of S.R. 85 bridge crossing Garnier Bayou.

Franklin and Wakulla Counties: All areas north of the Gorrie Memorial Bridge are permanently closed. From July 15 thru September 14, the Apalachicola Bay and St. Vincent Sound are closed from sunrise to sunset. Shrimping is closed all year in the Carrabelle River; in that portion of the Ochlockonee Bay west of State Road 30; and in Wakulla County beginning at the St. Marks lighthouse, southerly out to St. Marks Channel Marker 1; westerly to Shell Point Channel Marker 1; thence southwesterly to 30 degrees 01.67' North Latitude, 84 degrees 20.24' West Longitude; thence southwesterly to 29 degrees 59.90' North Latitude, 84degrees 21.80 West Longitude; thence southeasterly to 29 degrees 58.60' North Latitude, 84 degrees 20.23' West Longitude, at the Colregs Demarcation Line; thence southerly along the Colregs Demarcation Line to the shoreline at Ochlockonee Point. For additional closed areas, see 68B-31.018.

Citrus, Pasco, and Hernando Counties: Shrimping in designated areas during designated dates is prohibited. See 68B-38.001.

Pasco, Hernando, Citrus, Levy, Dixie, Taylor, Jefferson, and Wakulla counties have inshore closure year round. Call the local FWC office for area boundaries.

Taylor County: No person shall operate any trawl within the following described area: beginning at a point on the shoreline of the Gulf on the north side of the channel at Steinhatchee; thence westerly along the line of navigational buoys marking the north side of said channel to flashing light number "1" marking the outer extent of said channel; thence westerly to navigational flashing light number "18"; thence northwesterly to 29 degrees 53.253' North, 83 degrees 53.01' West; thence north-northwesterly to a privately maintained flashing light at Gamble Point near the mouth of the Aucilla River; thence southeasterly along the shoreline along the gulf to the point of beginning. A person possessing a live bait shrimping license issued by the commission pursuant to Section 370.15, Florida Statutes, may operate a trawl or trawls within the area described in subsection 3 if each of the following conditions is met: the person is harvesting live bait shrimp using no more than two roller frame trawls and neither the upper or lower horizontal beam on a roller frame trawl so used is greater than 15' in length.

As used in this rule: "roller frame trawl" means a trawl with all of the following: 1) a rectangular rigid frame to keep the mouth of the trawl open while being towed; 2) the lower horizontal beam of the frame has rollers to allow the trawl to roll over the bottom and any obstructions while being towed; 3) the trawl opening is shielded by a grid of vertical bars spaced no more than 3" apart; 4) the trawl is towed by attaching a line or towing cable to a tongue located above or at the center of the upper horizontal beam of the frame; and 5) the trawl has no doors attached to keep the mouth of the trawl open. "Trawl" means a net in the form of an elongated bag with the mouth kept open by various means and fished by being towed or dragged on the bottom. See 68B-31.003.

Lee County: Shrimping prohibited within a designated area.

See 68B-38.002.

Tortugas Shrimp Bed: Shrimping prohibited except for live bait shrimping under permit. See 68B-31.016.

Florida East Coast Shrimp Bed: No food shrimp production during April and May. See 68B-31.0156.

#### Recreational Season

All rules and regulations of commercial shrimp season apply, except in Wakulla County.

#### Commercial Gear Limitations

See net limitation information following this section.

Statewide Food Shrimp Production: Brine box is prohibited. In or on nearshore and inshore waters - a single try net with a headrope length not greater than 10' and a perimeter around the leading edge of the net not greater than 30' is allowed. Other than nearshore and inshore waters - a single try net with a headrope length not greater than 20' and a perimeter around the leading edge of the net not greater than 60' is allowed. Legal try net must be pulled immediately in front of another trawl and not connected to another trawl in any way. Such try net shall have a mesh size no smaller than that allowed for trawls in the region where used. Prohibits the harvest of shrimp for food shrimp, live bait, or recreation on the same trip.

The state is divided into five regions for the purpose of regulating lawfully allowed gear in each region for the harvest of food shrimp. The regions and the legal harvest gear are as follows:

Northwest Region Food Shrimp Production (all state waters of Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay, Gulf and Franklin Counties, and in Wakulla County west of a line from the St. Marks lighthouse south to Marker 24 except the nearshore and inshore closed area): No person shall harvest shrimp in the inshore waters of the region as a food shrimp producer with any type of gear other than: a roller frame trawl meeting the following specifications: 1) neither the upper or lower horizontal beam is greater than 16' in length; 2) the vertical bars shielding the trawl opening are spaced no further than 3" apart; 3) no more than two such trawls, unconnected, shall be towed by a single vessel at any time; or an otter trawl meeting either of the following specifications: No more than two unconnected otter trawls, each with a perimeter around the leading edge of the net not greater than 66 feet and a net no larger in mesh area than 500 square feet with mesh size not less than 3/4" bar measurement in the body of the net and 5/8" bar measurement in the cod end of the net; no more than two unconnected skimmer trawls meeting the following specifications: 1) The perimeter around the leading edge of any skimmer trawl shall not exceed 56 feet; 2) No more than two skimmer trawls, unconnected other than being attached to the same vessel, shall be deployed from a single vessel at any time; 3) The netting of a skimmer trawl shall be no larger than 500 square feet with a mesh size not less than 3/4" bar measurement in the body of the net and 5/8" bar measurement in the cod net of the net; 4) Skimmer trawls are allowed in the Northwest Region from Apalachicola Bay west to the Alabama/Florida border. No trawl shall be used for food shrimp production in the inshore waters of the Northwest Region that has a mesh size less than 3/4" bar measurement in the body of the net and 5/8" bar measurement in the cod end. In any trawl with a rigid TED, the section of netting surrounding the device shall have a mesh size no smaller than 1/2" bar measurement and shall be no more than 50 meshes in total length. No otter trawl shall be used for food shrimp production in the Northwest Region that is not in compliance with Rule 68B-31.004. In the Northwest Region, no person harvesting shrimp as a food shrimp producer shall operate or fish any otter trawl, or possess any otter trawl that is rigged for fishing aboard any vessel, which trawl does not have a BRD installed therein meeting the requirement of Rule 68B-31.0045.

Big Bend Region Food Shrimp Production (state waters of Wakulla, Jefferson, Taylor, Dixie, Levy, Citrus, Hernando, and Pasco Counties): No person shall harvest shrimp in the region as a food shrimp producer with any type of gear other than a roller frame trawl meeting the following specifications: 1) neither the upper or lower horizontal beam on a roller frame trawl so used is greater than 16' in length; 2) the vertical bars shielding the trawl opening are spaced no further than 3" apart; 3) no such trawl shall have a mesh size less than 3/4" bar measurement in the body of the net and 5/8" bar measurement in the cod end; and 4) in the nearshore and inshore Florida waters of the region, no more than two such trawls unconnected shall be towed by a single vessel at any time. In all other waters of the region, no more than four such trawls shall be towed by a single vessel at any time. Each person harvesting shrimp in the region as a food shrimp producer shall comply with Rule 68B-38.003.

Southwest Region Food Shrimp Production (state waters of Pinellas, Hillsborough, Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte, Lee, and Collier Counties): 1) No person shall harvest shrimp in the inshore waters of the region as a food shrimp producer with any type of gear other than — a roller frame trawl meeting the following specifications: Except in Tampa Bay, in all waters of the region landward of the territorial sea base line, a single otter trawl with a perimeter around the leading edge of the net not greater than 66 feet and a mesh area no larger than 500 square feet with a mesh size not less than 7/8" bar measurement in the body of the net and 3/4" bar measurement in the cod end of the net; 2) In all waters of the region between the territorial sea base line and a line three miles seaward of a parallel to said line, no more than two unconnected otter trawls, each with a perimeter around the leading edge of the net not greater than 66 feet and a mesh area no larger than 500 square feet with a mesh size not less than 7/8" bar measurement in the body of the net and 3/4" bar measurement in the cod end of the net. The two otter trawls allowed in Tampa Bay shall include any try net being towed. No trawl shall be used for food shrimp production in the inshore waters of the Southwest Region that has a mesh size less than 7/8" bar measurement in the body of the net and 3/4" bar measurement in the cod end. In any trawl with a rigid TED, the section of netting surrounding the device shall have a mesh size no smaller than 5/8" bar measurement and shall be no more than 50 meshes in total length. No otter trawl shall be used for food shrimp production in the Southwest Region that is not in compliance with Rule 68B-31.004. In the Southwest Region, no person harvesting shrimp as a food shrimp producer shall operate or fish any otter trawl, or possess any otter trawl that is rigged for fishing aboard any vessel, which trawl does not have a BRD installed therein meeting the requirements of Rule 68B-31.0045.

Southeast Region Food Shrimp Production (state waters of Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin, Palm Beach, Broward, Dade and Monroe Counties): No person shall harvest shrimp in the nearshore and inshore Florida waters of the Southeast Region as a food shrimp producer with any type of gear other than — a wing net meeting the following specifications: 1) no wing net shall have an opening larger than 28' around the perimeter; 2) no more than two unconnected wing nets shall be attached to or fished from a single vessel; 3) no wing net shall be fished by towing or dragging it over the bottom; 4) each wing net shall be no larger in mesh area than specified by Rule 68B-31.0035(2). In all waters of the Southeast Region outside nearshore and inshore Florida waters, no person harvesting shrimp as a food producer shall operate or fish any otter trawl, or possess any otter trawl that is rigged for fishing aboard any vessel, which trawl does not have a BRD installed therein meeting the requirements of Rule 68B-31.0045.

For closed areas and seasons, see 68B-31.017 (Big Bend) and 68B-31.018 (Northwest).

Each person harvesting shrimp in or on state waters as a food shrimp producer shall possess shrimp that are of legal size; average count not exceeding 47 shrimp per pound with heads-on or 70 shrimp per pound with heads-off, except in designated regions where count law has been

removed. These size provisions do not apply in 1) the Big Bend Region, 2) the Northeast Region, 3) any of the waters of the Northwest Region east of the line formed by 85°13.50' West longitude, 4) any waters of the SE Region in Dade County.

#### **Recreational Gear Limitations**

Allowable recreational harvest gear: landing or dip net with an opening no larger than 96" around the perimeter; cast net with a stretched length no greater than 14'; push net; one frame net with an opening no larger than 16' around the perimeter; shrimp trap; beach or haul seine with a mesh area no larger than 500 square feet.

#### **Commercial Legal Size**

47 count heads-on or 70 count heads-off, except in designated regions where count law has been removed.

#### **Recreational Legal Size**

No size limit.

#### **Commercial Pounds Allowed**

No Limit.

#### **Recreational Pounds Allowed**

Five gallons heads-on per person or vessel, whichever is less.

#### **LIVE BAIT SHRIMP**

##### **Season**

All year.

##### **Gear**

All live bait shrimp boats must be equipped with live wells. Allowable gear for live bait shrimp production is a roller frame trawl meeting the following specifications: 1) neither the upper or lower horizontal beam on a roller frame trawl so used is greater than 16' in length; 2) the vertical bars shielding the trawl opening are spaced no more than 3" apart; 3) no more than two such trawls, unconnected, shall be towed by a single vessel at any time; 4) the netting of the trawl shall be no longer than 500 square feet.

##### **Legal Size**

No restrictions.

##### **Pounds Allowed**

In all counties no more than five gallons of dead shrimp are allowed on board.

##### **Restrictions**

Harvest gear is limited to roller frame trawls only throughout the state.

#### **SHELLFISH - OYSTERS AND CLAMS**

##### **License Requirements**

Oysters and clams can only be harvested from approved shellfish harvesting areas.

Oyster Harvesting License - Required for Apalachicola Bay only.

Resident - \$100.00

Nonresident and Alien - \$500.00

Oyster Relaying Permit - No Charge.

Oyster Leases - \$15.00/acre

##### **Seasons**

Closed season for oysters statewide is July 1 through September 30, except for the following:

• Closed season for Wakulla, Dixie, and Levy counties is from June 1 through August 31.

• Winter season for Apalachicola Bay is October 1 through June 30.

• Summer season for Apalachicola Bay is July 1 through September 30. The bay is divided into harvest areas open only

during the specified periods. Call 850-653-9440 for current closure information.

#### **Gear**

Dredges may be used for harvesting oysters or clams on private leases after posting a \$3,000 bond and securing a special activity license.

#### **Size Limits**

Minimum size for oysters is 3". Minimum size for clams is 1" thick.

#### **Commercial Limits**

Bag limit is 20 bags per day for oysters. There is a variable bag limit in Apalachicola Bay. See Rule 68B-27.014 for more details.

#### **Leases**

Information available from the Bureau of Marine Fisheries.

#### **Restrictions**

Oysters and clams can only be harvested from an approved shellfish harvesting area.

#### **Recreational**

Oyster harvest limited to two (2) bags per person or boat, whichever is less per day. Clam harvest limited to one 5 gallon bucket per person per day; two 5 gallon buckets per vessel with 2 or more persons per day.

#### **CRABS**

##### **Licenses**

A SPL with a restricted species endorsement is required to fish with more than five (5) blue crab traps, required by the fisherman to sell any saltwater product, and allows sale only to a licensed wholesale dealer.

Fee - None.

##### **Restrictions**

There are trap size, buoy, and escape ring specifications for blue crab traps. See Rule 68B-45 for details. No blue crab traps will be allowed north and west of the Suwannee River beyond three miles two weeks prior to the opening of stone crab season. (Stone crab season opens on October 15 each year.)

##### **Legal Size**

Hardshell blue crabs must be 5" in width if sold.

##### **Recreational**

Allowed five (5) blue crab traps or less without an SPL. Bag limit is 10 gallons of whole crabs.

#### **STONE CRABS**

##### **License**

A SPL with a restricted species endorsement is required to fish with more than five (5) stone crab traps, required by the harvester to sell any saltwater products, and allows sale only to a licensed wholesale dealer.

Fee - \$125.00

##### **Restrictions**

Stone crab season is closed from May 16 through October 14. There are trap size, buoy, and escape ring specifications for stone crab traps. See Rule 68B-14 for details.

Trap tags are required on all traps. The number of tags issued is based on previous years landings. Tags are issued by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. For more information, contact the Commercial Saltwater License section at (850) 487-3122.

##### **Legal Size**

Stone crab claws must have a 2¾" forearm length.

#### **Recreational**

Allowed five (5) stone crab traps or less without a SPL.

#### **SPINY LOBSTER (CRAWFISH)**

##### **License**

A SPL with a restricted species endorsement is required to fish crawfish traps, required by the harvester to sell any saltwater products, and allows sale only to a licensed wholesale dealer.

Fee - \$100.00

##### **Season**

August 6-March 31 for spiny lobster. Trap may be placed in the water five days prior to season. Traps must be removed from the water by April 5. There is a special two-day non-trap recreational spiny lobster season the last Wednesday and successive Thursday in July.

##### **Gear**

Wood slat traps and plastic traps with a degradable panel located on the top horizontal section of the trap. Trap can be no larger than 3'x2'x2' or equivalent.

##### **Vessel and Gear Identification**

Each trap must have a trap tag and a buoy or be attached to a trap trotline; all traps and buoys must have the trap number permanently affixed. Buoy numbers shall be at least 2" high. The buoy color and trap number must be displayed on boats working traps so as to be readily identifiable from both the air and water. Trap tags are issued by the department at a cost of \$1.00 per tag.

##### **Size Restrictions**

Spiny lobster's minimum size must be greater than 3" carapace or 5½" tail measurement if separated from head. Separating the head from tail ("wringing") of lobster is prohibited in or on state waters.

##### **Harvest Limitations**

Egg bearing lobsters must be returned to the water unharmed. The stripping of eggs or removal of the pleopods from the lobster is prohibited. The bag limit during the two-day recreational season is six spiny lobster per person per day in Monroe County only. A bag limit of 12 spiny lobster per person per day is allowed in all other areas during the two-day recreational season.

Recreational bag limit during regular season is six lobsters per licensed person.

Traps worked during daylight hours only. The working of another's traps without written permission is prohibited.

Any harvest, commercial or recreational, from any artificial habitat (Casitas) is prohibited.

#### **FINFISH**

Recreational size and possession limits are shown at the end of this section and online at:  
[http://marinefisheries.org/Regulations/july2002\\_saltwater\\_regs.pdf](http://marinefisheries.org/Regulations/july2002_saltwater_regs.pdf)

#### **SALTWATER NETS**

No gill or entanglement nets allowed in state waters. No net can measure greater than 500 square feet in state waters.

##### **Licenses**

All commercial nets are required to be licensed with a SPL. SPL numbers must be attached to net.

##### **Restrictions**

Illegal Possession of Seines and Nets: Prohibits possession of any fishing seine or net in any county whose use is prohibited by law.

Use of Purse Seines, Gill Nets, and Pound Nets, etc.: It is illegal to take food fish from the waters of the state with a purse seine, purse gill nets, or other net using rings or other devices on the lead line thereof, through which a purse line is drawn, or pound nets, or to have any food fish so taken in possession for sale or shipment.

Seines and Pocket Bunts: In any county where seines are not prohibited on the open Gulf of Mexico or Atlantic Ocean, such seines may have a pocket bunt on the middle of the seine of a mesh size less than that provided by law. No net may be pulled up on shore where seining is prohibited. Such nets may be gathered, taken in, or taken up by power in the Gulf and Atlantic Ocean, except in Dade and Palm Beach counties. A special activity license must be obtained for the use of gear and equipment for exploration of offshore fishery resources.

Each net fished with, set, or placed in the water shall be tended. Each net fished with, set, or placed in the water shall be permanently and legibly marked at each end with a SPL number which matches either: 1) the SPL number issued for the vessel on which the net is possessed or from which the net is deployed, or 2) the SPL number of the operator of the vessel on which the net is possessed or from which the net is deployed.

The term "tend" means that the person fishing with, setting, or placing the net in the water is physically present at the seine. This rule shall not be construed to allow net fishing in closed areas or the use of any fishing gear otherwise prohibited by law or rule.

Use of Seine Nets in St. Johns County: Only cast nets or recreational nets can be used in the saltwaters of St. Johns County and within ¼ mile seaward of the beaches and coast, between May 1 and September 15 of each year and only cast nets and recreational nets can be used on Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays during the remainder of the year.

Only cast nets can be used in the following areas of St. Johns County and adjacent salt waters: 1) one mile radius of the center of Mantanzas Inlet Bridge; 2) in the waters of Salt Run, St. Augustine Inlet, Mantanzas River, North River or the ICW, or water adjacent to any of the aforementioned waters, lying north of Mickler-O'Connell Bridge, South of Vilano Beach Bridge across the ICW and inland of a line drawn from headland to headland across the mouth of St. Augustine Inlet; 3) on the Atlantic Ocean beaches and beach areas, within one mile north and south of the center of St. Augustine Inlet, and within one mile seaward of such beaches, and a line drawn from headland to headland across the mouth of the St. Augustine Inlet; and 4) on the Atlantic Ocean beaches and beach areas, within two miles north and two miles south of the center of St. Augustine Beach Pier, and within

one mile seaward of such beaches and beach areas.

The use of seines is prohibited in the salt waters of St. Johns County, within one mile seaward of the beaches and coast. Only recreational nets can be used in the salt waters of St. Johns County or within one mile seaward of the Atlantic Ocean beaches and coast without a \$250 permit. Such permit entitles the holder to use no more than one seine or net at any time. Said permit required to be in the holder's possession when the net is in use.

Recreational Nets: In St. Johns County a seine or similar net not exceeding 100' in length, set and hauled solely by hand and without use of any motor-driven boat or vehicle. No recreational net may be set or hauled within 100' of any other recreational or commercial net. Prohibits the use of a recreational net after sunset or before sunrise between May 1 and September 15. Only one bushel container of fish per net in use can be retained by the holder of a permit. All fish in excess and all unwanted species shall be returned alive to the water when caught.

#### SEAFOOD BUSINESS LICENSES

Resident Retail Seafood Dealer  
Primary Location - \$25.00  
Secondary Location - \$10.00  
Nonresident Retail Seafood Dealer  
Primary Location - \$200.00  
Secondary Location - \$25.00  
Alien Retail Seafood Dealer  
Primary Location - \$250.00  
Secondary Location - \$50.00  
Resident County Wholesale Seafood Dealer - \$300.00  
Nonresident County Wholesale Seafood Dealer - \$500.00  
Alien County Wholesale Seafood Dealer - \$1,000.00  
Resident State Wholesale Dealer - \$450.00  
Nonresident State Wholesale Dealer - \$1,000.00  
Alien State Wholesale Dealer - \$1,500.00

*Note: Since local regulations governing the taking of saltwater products may exist, you should contact the Division of Law Enforcement staff in the FWC, Regional Office nearest the location where you will be engaging in these activities for additional information. The laws mentioned here are listed only in part. Contact your local FWC office to see a complete copy of the law in which you are interested.*

# Basic Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations

This is a brief summary of regulations governing the taking of saltwater species in Florida for personal use. It is not intended or designed to provide specific information on commercial harvesting of these species. The failure to include complete laws, rules, and regulations in this summary does not relieve persons from abiding by those laws, rules, or regulations. State waters extend to 3 nautical miles on the Atlantic and 9 nautical miles on the Gulf. Federal rules apply beyond state waters. For species that do not have an established bag limit, more than 100 pounds or 2 fish per person per day (whichever is greater), is considered commercial quantities. A saltwater products license and commercial vessel registration is required to harvest commercial quantities of unregulated species. **Issue Twenty Two, January 2003**

Species	Minimum Size Limits	Closed Season	Daily Rec. Bag Limit	Remarks
Greater Amberjack ▲	28" fork		1 per person per day	
Lesser Amberjack	Not less than 14" or more than 22" fork		5 Aggregate of lesser amberjack and banded rudderfish	
Banded Rudderfish ▲				Species includes Marlin and Sailfish
Bilfish ▲	Sailfish 63" Blue Marlin 99" White Marlin 66"		1 per person per day Aggregate bag limit	Measured tip of lower jaw to fork. Federal regulations apply in state waters.
Black Drum ▲ + †	Not less than 14" or more than 24"		5 per person per day	May possess one over 24"
Bluefish ▲	12" fork		10 per person per day	
Bonefish ▲	18"		1 per person per day	
Clams-Hard	1" thick across hinge	May not harvest half hour after official sunset until half hour before official sunrise	one 5 gal. bucket per person or 2 per vessel, whichever is less per day	Illegal to harvest from closed areas. Go to <a href="http://www.floridaaquaculture.com">www.floridaaquaculture.com</a> for allowable harvesting areas
Cobia (Ling) ▲	33" fork		1 per person or 6 per vessel per day whichever is less	A saltwater products license and a restricted species endorsement are needed to sell cobia or exceed the one-fish daily bag limit
Crab-Blue			10 gallons whole per day	5 traps maximum. Use of commercial style traps prohibited in Volusia County. Trap requirements apply. Harvest of egg-bearing crabs prohibited
Crab-Stone	2 3/4" claw	May 16 - Oct. 14	1 gal. Stone Crab claws per person or 2 gal. per vessel, whichever is less	Illegal to possess whole crab. Harvest of egg-bearing crabs prohibited
Crawfish (Spiny Lobster) ▲	Larger than 3" carapace measured in the water	April 1 - Aug. 5 Exception: Sport Season - last consecutive Wed. & Thurs. of July each year	24 per person or 6 per person per day whichever is greater	Recreational trapping prohibited. Crawfish permit required. Special bag limit for 2-day Sport season. Call DLE for current information on Sport season
Dolphin ▲ + †	12"		10 per person per day	May be harvested by spearing
Flounder ▲ + †	12"		10 per person per day	
Grouper-Black & Gag ▲ + †	24" Atlantic & Monroe County 22" Gulf (excluding Monroe County)		2 per person per day Atlantic & Monroe County 5 per person per day Gulf (excluding Monroe Co.)	Included in the daily Grouper aggregate bag limit
Grouper-Red, Yellowfin, Yellowmouth ▲ + †	20"		Included within 5 per person per day Grouper aggregate bag limit	
Grouper-Scamp ▲ + †	20" Atlantic & Monroe County 16" Gulf (excluding Monroe County)		Included within 5 per person per day Grouper aggregate bag limit	
Grouper-Warshaw Speckled Hind ▲			1 per vessel per day of each species	Included within 5 per person per day Grouper aggregate bag limit
Grouper-all others ▲			Included within 5 per person per day Grouper aggregate bag limit	Includes: Coney, Graysby, Misty, Red Hind, Rock Hind, Snowy, Tiger, Yellowedge
Hogfish ▲	12" fork		5 per person per day	
Maifirel-King ▲	24" fork		2 per person per day	Bag limit in Gulf-Atlantic fishery reduced to 1 when federal waters are closed to all harvest. Call DLE for details
Mackerel-Spanish ▲	12" fork		15 per person per day	Transfer of Spanish Mackerel to other vessels at sea is prohibited
Mullet Striped or Black			Feb. 1 - Aug. 31, 50 per person per day, maximum 100 per vessel	Sept. 1 - Jan. 31, 50 per person or per vessel, whichever is less. Contact DLE for additional restrictions in Pinellas & Charlotte counties.
Oysters	3"	June, July, Aug. in Dixie, Wakulla, Levy counties. July, Aug., Sept. in all other areas	2 bags per person or vessel, whichever is less per day 1 Bag = 60 lbs. or two 3 gal. buckets (whole in shell).	Apalachicola Bay has summer & winter seasons/areas. Harvest from approved shellfish areas only. Go to <a href="http://www.floridaaquaculture.com">www.floridaaquaculture.com</a> for allowable harvesting areas
Permit & Pompano ▲ †	Not less than 10" or more than 20" fork		10 per person per day aggregate of Permit and Pompano.	May possess one over 20" of either Permit or Pompano. Giggling, spearing, snatching prohibited
Pompano-African ▲ †	Not less than 24" fork		2 fish per person or per vessel per day whichever is less.	Hook & line gear only
Red Drum (Redfish) ▲ + †	Not less than 18" or more than 27"		1 per person per day	Giggling, spearing, snatching prohibited
Red Porgy ▲ + †	14" Atlantic		1 per person per day Atlantic	
Scallops-Bay		September 11 - June 30	2 gallons whole or 1 pint meat per person per day, no more than 10 gallons whole, or 1/2 gallon meat per vessel anytime	Harvest allowed only in state waters of the Gulf of Mexico from the Pasco-Hernando county line (near Arpela-Altitude 28 degrees, 26.016 minutes North) to the west bank of the Mexico Beach Canal in Bay County (longitude 85 degrees, 25.84 minutes West). Any bay scallops harvested and possessed must be landed within the allowable harvesting area
Sea Bass-Black ▲ + †	10"		20 per person per day - Atlantic	
Shad			10 Aggregate per person per day	American, Alabama, and Hickory are part of aggregate limit. Hook and line gear only
Shark			1 per person or 2 per vessel per day, whichever is less	Practice of finning and filleting at sea prohibited. See list below for protected species
Sheepshead ▲ †	12"		15 per person per day	Measured from the most forward point of the head to the rear center edge of the tail
Shrimp		April & May closed to Nassau, Duval, St. Johns, Putnam, Flagler, & Clay counties	5 gallons heads on per person or vessel per day, whichever is less	Must be landed in a whole condition. Contact DLE for closed areas
Snapper-Black & Wenichman ▲			Included within 10 per person per day Snapper aggregate bag limit	
Snapper-Cubero ▲ + †	Not less than 12" or more than 30"		Included within 10 per person per day snapper aggregate bag limit if under 30"	Allowed 2 Cubero Snapper over 30" per person or vessel per day which ever is less. 30" or larger not included within the Snapper aggregate bag limit
Snapper-Gray (Mangrove) ▲ + †	10"		5 per person per day	Included within 10 per person per day Snapper aggregate bag limit
Snapper-Lane ▲ + †	8"		Included within 10 per person per day Snapper aggregate bag limit if harvested from Atlantic	Lane Snapper harvested from the Gulf of Mexico not included within the Snapper aggregate bag limit
Snapper-Mutton ▲ + †	16"		Included within 10 per person per day Snapper aggregate bag limit	
Snapper-Red ▲ + †	20" Atlantic, 16" Gulf	Nov. 1 - April 14 Gulf Only	2 per person/day Atlantic, 4 per person/day Gulf	Included within 10 per person per day Snapper aggregate bag limit
Snapper-Schoolmaster ▲ + †	10"		Included within 10 per person per day Snapper aggregate bag limit	
Snapper-Vermilion ▲ + †	10"		10 per person per day-Atlantic	Vermilion Snapper not included within the Snapper aggregate bag limit
Snapper-all other ▲ + †	12"		Included within 10 per person per day Snapper aggregate bag limit	Includes Blackfin, Dog, Mahogany, Queen, Silk and Yellowtail
Snook (All species) ▲ + †	Not less than 26" or more than 34"	Dec. 15-Jan. 31 statewide; June, July, Aug. - Atlantic; May, June, July, Aug. - Gulf, Monroe County, Everglades Nat. Park	2 per person per day-Atlantic; 1 per person per day-Gulf, Monroe County, Everglades Nat. Park	Snook permit required when saltwater license required. State regulations apply in federal waters. Illegal to buy or sell snook.
Sponge- Commercial	Greater than 5" in greatest dimension measured across the top of the sponge		10 per person per day	Includes sheepshead, yellow, grass, glove, finger, wire, reef & velvet sponge
Spotted Seatrout ▲ + †	Not less than 15" or more than 20" (statewide) except One fish over 20" per person	N.E. and N.W. regions - February S. Region - November and December - See region definitions below	N.E. and N.W. regions - 5 per person per day S. Region - 4 per person per day	- See region definitions below
Swordfish	37" lower jaw fork length			Lower jaw fork length is the straight-line measurement from the tip of the lower jaw to the fork of the tail.
Tarpon			2 fish possession limit	Requires \$50 tarpon tag to possess or harvest
Triggerfish (Gray) ▲ + †	12"			All species of Triggerfish except Gray and Ocean have live landing & live well requirements
Tripletail ▲ + †	15"		2 per person per day	Hook and line gear only (No snatch hooks)
Weakfish ▲ + †	12"		4 per person per day	

▲ Must remain in whole condition until landed ashore (heads & tails intact) † Measured as total length. † Harvest prohibited by or with the use of any multiple hook in conjunction with live or dead natural bait.

## ORNAMENTAL TROPICAL FISH AND PLANTS

Minimum Size Limit (Total length)	Spanish Hogfish 2"	Spotfin Hogfish 3"	Porkfish 11/2"
MAXIMUM SIZE LIMIT (Total length)	Angelfish (except Rock Beauty) 8"	Butterflyfish, Jawfish 4"	Rock Beauty 5" Gobies 2" Spanish Hogfish 8" Spotfin Hogfish 8"
BAG LIMIT Fishes / Invertebrates: 20 per person per day. No more than 5 Angelfish and no more than 6 Octocoral colonies. Plants: 1 gallon per person per day			
Live landing and live well requirements. Harvest in Biscayne National Park & John Pennekamp State Park prohibited.			

## PROTECTED SPECIES

It is unlawful to harvest, possess, land, purchase, sell, or exchange the following species:  
Nassau Grouper, Goliath Grouper (Jewfish), Sawfish, Basking Shark, Whale Shark, Spotted Eagle Ray, Sturgeon, White Shark, Sand Tiger Shark, Bigeye Sand Tiger Shark, Manta Ray, Longspine Urchin, Stony, Hard and Fire Corals, Sea Fans, Florida Queen Conch and Bahama Starfish. Harvest of live rock in state waters is prohibited.

## SEATROUT REGIONS

\*Northeast Region\* means all state waters lying north of the Flagler-Volusia County Line to the Florida-Georgia border, and adjacent federal Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) waters.  
\*Northwest Region\* means all state waters north and west of a line running due west from the westernmost point of Fred Howard Park Causeway (28°59.35'N 82°48.39'W), which is approximately 1.17 nautical miles south of the Pasco-Pinellas County Line to the Florida-Alabama border, and adjacent federal EEZ waters.  
\*South Region\* means state waters lying between the Flagler-Volusia County Line on the Atlantic Ocean and the southern boundary of the Northwest Region on the Gulf of Mexico in Pinellas County and adjacent federal EEZ waters.

## LOUISIANA

The following is an unofficial compilation of marine fishery laws and regulations for Louisiana. The information is current as of September 30, 2003, but changes may occur at any time. For definitive enforcement regulations contact the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), P.O. Box 98000, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70898-9000 (225/765-2980).

### Residency Requirements

A "bona fide resident" means any person who has resided in this state continuously during the twelve months immediately prior to the date on which he applies for any license and who has manifested his intent to remain in the state by establishing Louisiana as his legal domicile, as demonstrated by compliance with all of the following, as applicable:

- 1) If registered to vote, he is registered to vote in Louisiana.
- 2) If licensed to drive a motor vehicle, he is in possession of a Louisiana driver's license, or, if over the age of fifteen years and not licensed to drive, he is in possession of a special identification card issued by the Department of Public Safety and Corrections under the provisions of R.S. 40:1321.
- 3) If owning a motor vehicle located within Louisiana, he is in possession of a Louisiana registration for that vehicle.
- 4) If earning an income, he has filed a Louisiana state income tax return and has complied with state income tax laws and regulations.
- 5) As a corporation or other legal entity, a resident shall be any which is incorporated or otherwise organized under and subject to the laws of Louisiana, and which is domiciled in Louisiana and has a permanent physical location of business in Louisiana where records are held in compliance with R.S. 56:306.5.
- 6) Any person, corporation, or other legal entity which possesses a resident license from any other state or country shall not qualify for a resident license in Louisiana.

### **SHRIMP**

#### **Commercial Licenses**

Commercial licenses are valid for one year beginning January 1 of each calendar year and expire on December 31 of the same calendar year.

All Commercial Shrimp Fishermen must possess the following licenses:

Commercial Fisherman  
Resident - \$55.00  
Nonresident - \$460.00

Vessel  
Resident - \$15.00  
Nonresident - \$60.00

Gear  
Resident Shrimp Trawl - \$25.00 per trawl  
Nonresident Shrimp Trawl - \$100.00 per trawl  
Resident Butterfly - \$25.00 per net  
Nonresident Butterfly - \$100.00 per net  
Resident Skimmer Net - \$25.00 per net  
Nonresident Skimmer Net - \$100.00 per net  
Resident Shrimp Gear Fee (Annual) - \$10.00  
Nonresident Shrimp Gear Fee (Annual) - \$40.00

Recreational licenses are valid for one year (Jul 1-Jun 30 of the following year). No fee is required for use of a test trawl when used with another trawl for which the gear fee has been paid, maximum test trawl length is 16' cork line - 20' lead line.

#### **Recreational License**

Shrimp trawls 25' in length or less may be licensed recreationally. Recreational shrimpers using trawls measuring 16' in length or less are limited to no more than 100 pounds (heads-on) of shrimp per boat per day. Recreational shrimpers using trawls measuring no greater than 25' in length are limited to 250 pounds (heads-on) of shrimp per boat per day. Shrimp trawls in excess of 25' must be licensed commercially. Recreational shrimpers may not sell their catch.

Gear types and fees are as follows:

Shrimp Trawls (resident) - \$80.00 per trawl not exceeding 25' in length.

Shrimp Trawls (nonresident) - \$400.00 per trawl not exceeding 16' in length.

Recreational fishermen must possess a basic and saltwater sports fishing license to use a recreational gear license unless exempt by age. Recreational fishermen with a basic sports fishing license may use a cast net up to 8½' in radius and take up to 50 pounds of shrimp per day per boat or vehicle for bait or home consumption purposes only. Depending on season, daily limits of 10 pounds (closed season) and 25 pounds (open season) apply to LDWF Wildlife Management Areas and Refuges.

Inside/Outside Waters: Shrimping waters of the state are divided into two classes, inside and outside waters. The lines of demarcation between these two classes extending from the coastal boundary between Texas and Louisiana and terminating at the coastal boundary between Mississippi and Louisiana are described in R.S. 56:495.

#### **Commercial Season**

In state inside waters, the Commission shall fix no less than two open seasons each year based upon biological and technical data. The spring inshore shrimp season shall begin on or before the third Monday in May and no season shall begin on a Sunday. In state offshore territorial waters, seasons will be set by the Commission based upon biological and technical data.

#### **Recreational Season**

Same as commercial season.

#### **Commercial Gear Limitations**

By definition, a trawl means any net (generally funnel-shaped) pulled through the water or along the bottom with otter boards to spread the mouth open while being fished. The term "trawl" also means and includes plumb staff beam trawls that do not exceed 16' that do not use otter boards but are held open laterally by a horizontal beam and vertically by two vertical beams (plumb staffs), and that are used while the vessel is underway. No vessel may pull more than the following trawl rigging in inside waters: One trawl which shall not exceed 50' in length along the cork line and 66' along the lead line and in addition, one test trawl.

Two trawls each of which shall not exceed 25' along the cork line, 33' feet along the lead line, and have trawl doors no larger than 6' in length and 34" in height and in addition, one test trawl.

Two trawls which shall not exceed 25' along the cork line, 33' along

the lead line and have no more than two outer trawl doors no larger than 8' in length and 40" in height and no more than two inner sled doors, and in addition, one test trawl. It shall be legal for a vessel in Breton and Chandeleur sounds to pull no more than one or two trawls, either or both of which cannot exceed 65' along the cork line and 82' along the lead line in length, plus one test trawl. Saltwater shrimp may be taken by means of trawls, butterfly nets, skimmer nets, or cast nets and by no other means except as provided in R.S. 56:499. No person shall take saltwater shrimp with any trawl, skimmer net or butterfly net with a mesh size less than 5/8" square or 1/4" stretched. In Shrimp Management Zone 2 from the western shore of the Atchafalaya River to the western shore of Vermilion Bay and Southwest Pass at Marsh Island, mesh size must not be less than 3/4" bar or 1/2" stretched mesh during the fall inshore shrimp season. No trawl, skimmer net, or butterfly net may be used in closed waters. No person shall use a double butterfly net having an individual net frame more than 12' measured horizontally or vertically, whichever distance is greater, each or a single stationary butterfly net having an individual net frame greater than 22' measured horizontally or vertically, whichever distance is greater, except that persons on a vessel may use a double butterfly net having individual net frames of not more than 16' measured horizontally or 12' measured vertically, each. No person on a vessel shall use a double skimmer net having an individual net frame more than 16' measured horizontally or 12' measured vertically or 20' diagonally, or with a lead line measuring more than 28' for each net. No person shall tie individual skimmer nets together to exceed the herein stated specifications. Operation of butterfly and skimmer nets shall in no way impede or restrict normal navigation. No person shall use sweeper devices, leads, extensions, wings, or other attachments in conjunction with or attached to butterfly nets. Skimmer nets and butterfly nets may be mounted no more than 24" from side of vessel. In state offshore territorial waters, each trawling vessel may only use nets that do not exceed a total maximum per vessel of 130' of cork line and 165' of lead line.

#### **Recreational and Commercial Gear Limitations**

Recreational trawls must be 25' or less in length measured along the cork line. Trawls, skimmer nets and wing nets cannot have a mesh size less than 5/8" bar or 1/4" stretched, except for that portion of Shrimp Management Zone 2 from the Atchafalaya River west to the western shore of Vermilion Bay and Southwest Pass at Marsh Island where mesh size shall be a minimum of 3/4" bar by 1/2" stretch.

#### **Commercial Legal Size**

Fishermen may not catch or possess aboard a vessel saltwater white shrimp that average smaller in size than 100 per pound, unless having legal documentation that they were taken in another state or country. During the time period from October 15 through the third Monday in December, there shall be no count on saltwater white shrimp taken or possessed. There are no count restrictions on any shrimp during the spring open season. There are no count restrictions on sea bobs taken in state outside waters during any season. There are no count restrictions on bait shrimp.

#### **Recreational Legal Size**

All commercial shrimp rules and regulations apply.

Crab Trap Capture - Recreational and commercial shrimp fishermen are required to return unserviceable crab traps captured incidentally to shore for proper disposal. Shrimp fishermen who catch serviceable crab traps without a float shall return the trap to the water with a common float attached. A common float is defined as an all-white, plastic, one-gallon or larger bleach bottle. The owner of the crab trap shall return the common float to any shrimper for reuse. Serviceable crab traps are defined as any crab trap of legal construction and condition maintained in such a manner with the potential to harvest crabs. Maintained condition shall include being legally tagged, legally marked with a float and float line attached, and two escape rings affixed whether obstructed or not.

#### **Commercial Pounds Allowed**

No limit.

#### **Recreational Pounds Allowed**

100 pounds per day per vessel or vehicle with use of a shrimp trawl not exceeding 16'.

50 pounds per day per vessel or vehicle with use of cast net not exceeding 8 1/2' radius.

Louisiana Wildlife Management Areas and Refuges have special restrictions on the taking of shrimp; refer to local enforcement for regulations.

#### **LIVE BAIT**

##### **Rules Regulating**

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission has adopted rules and regulations for a "special bait dealers permit" to allow the taking of live bait shrimp by qualified permit holders during the closed season between the spring and fall inshore shrimp seasons. Persons allowed to take live shrimp for sale during closed season between the spring and fall seasons as bait must possess a special Bait Dealers Permit and post \$1,000 bond with the LDWF. Applications for the special bait dealer's permit will be accepted from January 1 through April 30 of each year. All applications should be mailed to the department via certified mail.

Persons desiring to catch their own bait may catch shrimp with cast nets (up to 8 1/2' in radius), bait traps, dip nets (up to 3' diameter and hand operated), or seines (less than 30' and footoperated). A basic and saltwater sports fishing license is required to take bait with a cast net.

#### **Season**

During the closed seasons, bait shrimp may be taken in state inside waters, but only with cast nets up to 8 1/2' in radius, bait traps, dip nets (diameter of no more than 3' and hand operated) or seines less than 30' in length with no mechanical devices and a mesh size of 1/4" square bar and 1/2" stretched mesh.

#### **SHELLFISH - CRABS**

##### **Recreational Licenses**

Resident Recreational Crab Trap - \$10.00 - Required for use of no more than ten traps

Nonresident Recreational Crab Trap - \$40.00 - Required for use of no more than ten traps

Resident Recreational Crab Trap - Attached to a trotline (up to ten traps) - \$1.00/trap

Nonresident Recreational Crab Trap - Attached to a trotline (up to ten traps) - \$4.00/trap

You must possess a basic and saltwater sports fishing license to use a recreational gear license unless exempt for age. Recreational harvest of crabs using a dipnet and/or baited lines (without hooks or traps) does not require a license.

##### **Commercial Licenses**

Resident Commercial Crab Trap - Attached to a trotline (up to 25 traps) - \$1.00/trap

Nonresident Commercial Crab Trap - Attached to a trotline (up to 25 traps) - \$4.00/trap

Resident Commercial Crab Trap - \$25.00

Nonresident Commercial Crab Trap Gear License - \$100.00

Resident Commercial Fisherman License - \$55.00

Nonresident Commercial Fisherman License - \$460.00

Resident Vessel License - \$15.00

Nonresident Vessel License - \$60.00

Resident Soft-Shell Crab Shedder License - \$100.00

Nonresident Soft-Shell Crab Shedder License - \$400.00

An operator of a soft shell crab shedding facility is required to obtain a soft-shell crab shedder's license unless they possess a wholesale/retail dealer license. A wholesale/retail dealer license is required if the soft crab shedder purchases premolt or buster crabs from commercial fishermen.

#### **Gear Restrictions**

Crabs may be taken with any legal crab trap, trawl, trotline, handline, bushline, dip net, or cast net. Dredges cannot be used for the intentional taking of crabs.

A crab trap is defined as cube-shaped, constructed of wire, no larger than 30" on any side and with either a bait box or materials providing cover or shelter for peeler crabs. The entrance funnels must extend no further than 7" into the inside of the trap with the openings to the entrance funnels on the vertical wall of the trap such that the horizontal diameter of each opening is at least 1 ½ times the vertical diameter of the opening.

A legal crab trap must have a solid float (six inches minimum diameter), a non-floating buoy line ¼" minimum diameter), be marked, and have escape rings.

A crab trap shall be marked with a 1.5 inch stainless steel self-locking tag attached to the center of the trap ceiling or a plastic bait box cover, containing the commercial fisherman's license number or the recreational fisherman's trap license number legibly engraved or embossed.

Each trap shall have a minimum of two 2<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" diameter escape rings, with one in each chamber. Escape rings shall be rigid and attached to the vertical, outside walls flush with the floor or baffle. Rings may be blocked from March 1-June 30 and from September 1-October 31. Fishermen in Lake Pontchartrain with a soft crab shedders license shall be exempt from escape ring mandates.

Crabbers must return their unserviceable traps to shore for proper disposal. A serviceable crab trap means any crab trap of legal construction and condition maintained in such a manner with the potential to harvest crabs. Maintained condition shall include being legally tagged, legally marked with float and float line attached and two escapement rings affixed whether obstructed or not.

A fisherman with a crab trap license may raise and check any trap with a common float (an all-white, plastic, one-gallon or larger bleach bottle) to determine ownership. Shrimp fishermen who catch an otherwise serviceable crab trap without a float may return the trap to the water with a common float.

#### **Size/Possession Restrictions**

Blue crabs of legal size may be taken in unlimited quantities by commercial fishermen. Recreational crabbers have a 144 crab possession limit. The minimum commercial size limit is five inches in carapace width. There is no minimum size for recreational crabbers.

Any sublegal blue crab caught by commercial fishermen must be returned immediately to the water without avoidable injury. A 10% tolerance of undersized crabs is allowed. Premolt, "buster," or peeler crabs less than five inches are exempt from commercial size limits.

Crabs in a work box are not subject to the minimum commercial size limits while held aboard the vessel. Each fisherman may have one work box, if not using a grader, or two work boxes under the grader, if using a grader.

#### **Time Restrictions**

The baiting, tending, checking, or removing of crab traps, the contents of serviceable crab traps or their lines, buoys, or markers is

prohibited in public waters from one-half hour after sunset until one-half hour before sunrise.

Crab traps which are no longer serviceable or in use must be removed from the water and properly disposed of or stored.

#### **Area Restrictions**

Crab traps cannot be set in navigable channels or entrances to streams. The fishermen must place his crab traps so that vessels can safely navigate.

Metal tackle or metal crab traps shall not be used in any of the public waters north of the Intracoastal Canal in the Calcasieu River or in any body of water comprising the Calcasieu River System north of the Intracoastal Canal, or in the waters of Vermilion Bay from Cypremont Point one mile offshore to BluePoint. The use of traps is prohibited in the Tchoufouct River.

Commercial gear (trawl, trotline, traps) or commercial fishing is not allowed from the Grand Isle shoreline out to the one fathom curve.

#### **Other Restrictions**

All crabs in the egg or berry stage taken by any means must be returned immediately to the water. However, a legally licensed commercial crab fisherman may have in his workbox an incidental take of crabs in the berry stage in an amount equal to not more than two percent of the total number of crabs in his possession.

No person may intentionally damage or destroy serviceable crab traps, floats or lines, or remove the contents thereof, other than the licensee or his agent.

Commercial fishermen must tag or mark any crabs sold with their commercial fisherman's license number, name, and date harvested.

#### **Stone Crabs**

Whole stone crabs shall not be landed. Live stone crabs may be held on board a vessel while on the water until such time as the claws are removed after which time the crabs shall be returned to the waters in which they were taken. The minimum claw size is 2.75 inches (propodus length). There is no minimum recreational size limit on stone crabs.

#### **SHELLFISH - OYSTERS**

##### **Licenses**

Resident Recreational Oyster Tong (per tong) - \$5.00  
Nonresident Recreational Oyster Tong (per tong) - \$20.00  
Resident Commercial Oyster Tong (per tong) - \$30.00  
Nonresident Commercial Oyster Tong (per tong) - \$240.00  
Resident Commercial Oyster Dredge (per dredge) - \$25.00  
Nonresident Commercial Oyster Dredge (per dredge) - \$200.00  
Resident Commercial Oyster Harvester - \$100.00  
Nonresident Commercial Oyster Harvester - \$400.00  
Resident Commercial Fisherman - \$55.00  
Nonresident Commercial Fisherman - \$400.00  
Resident Vessel License - \$15.00  
Nonresident Vessel License - \$60.00  
Out-of-state Oyster Landing Permit - \$100.00

You must possess a basic and saltwater sport fishing license to use a recreational gear license, unless exempt for age.

The licensed commercial fisherman harvesting or possessing oysters in state waters must purchase an oyster harvester license, in addition to any and all licenses otherwise required.

##### **Seasons**

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission designates when natural reefs are open for fishing; generally, natural reefs may be

fished from the first Wednesday after Labor Day through April 1 of the next year; however, the Commission has been given authority to extend the season on the natural reefs to May 15. The owner of an oyster lease, or his designee, with written permission, may fish oysters at any time of year on their lease. A reef opened by the Commission may, however, be closed by the Department of Health and Hospitals for health reasons. It is illegal to take oysters at night.

#### Size/Possession Limits

All oysters taken from natural reefs must be 3" or greater in length from hinge to mouth. A lessee of private oyster grounds may be permitted to take undersized oysters for bedding purposes only (under special regulations).

Not more than ten 1½-bushel sacks per boat per day may be taken from Calcasieu and Sabine lakes (in the event of a closure of the open season for more than seven days, 15 1½-bushel sacks per boat per day may be taken for three consecutive calendar days following reopening). Unlimited elsewhere for commercial purposes. Recreational fishermen may take two sacks per person from the natural reefs during open season if oysters are taken for personal consumption.

Oysters may be taken from public oyster beds by dredges, scrapers, and tongs. Dredges and scrapers used shall be no larger than 6' in width measured along the tooth bar. The dredge teeth shall be no longer than 5" in length and there shall be no more than seven dredges in use on any one vessel.

Any person who qualifies and who desires to lease a part of the bottom of any state waters shall present to the Secretary of the LDWF a written application and cash deposit of such amount as determined by the department. Lessees, under the supervision of the department, shall stake off and mark the leased water bottoms in order to locate accurately and fix the limits of the water bottoms embraced by each lease. Areas shall also be prominently marked with signs which state the lease number and name or initials of the lessee.

#### Restrictions

No person shall trawl or seine over any privately leased bedding grounds or oyster propagating place which is staked off, marked, or posted as required by law or regulation.

Culling oysters, which is the act of discarding undersized oysters or dead shell, shall be performed only on the open designated public grounds or on private leases on which the fisherman is authorized to take oysters. At no time will the act of culling oysters be permitted in areas closed to harvesting oysters.

Oysters may only be landed out of state by lease holders from privately leased areas with a permit to do so.

#### SHARK

##### Seasonal Closures

All Louisiana state waters out to the seaward boundary of the Louisiana Territorial Sea shall be closed to the recreational and commercial harvest of all sharks between April 1 and June 30 of each year.

##### Atlantic Sharpnose

The aggregate daily take and possession limit for Atlantic sharpnose caught recreationally within or without Louisiana waters shall be one fish per person per day and in possession.

##### Other Sharks

The aggregate daily take and possession limit for all "Small Coastal," "Large Coastal," and "Pelagic" sharks combined, caught recreationally within or without Louisiana waters, shall be one fish per vessel per trip and in possession.

All sharks taken under a recreational bag limit within or without Louisiana waters must be at least 54" fork length, except that the minimum size limit does not apply for Atlantic sharpnose sharks.

Small Coastal Sharks - bonnethead shark, Atlantic sharpnose shark, blacknose shark, finetooth shark.

Large Coastal Sharks - great hammerhead, scalloped hammerhead, smooth hammerhead, nurse shark, blacktip shark, bull shark, lemon shark, sandbar shark, silky shark, spinner shark, tiger shark.

Pelagic Sharks - porbeagle shark, shortfin mako, blue shark, oceanic whitetip shark, thresher shark.

#### Prohibited Species

No person shall take, possess, purchase, sell, barter, exchange or attempt to possess, purchase, sell, barter, or exchange any of the following species or parts thereof: basking shark, white shark, bigeye sand tiger, sand tiger, whale shark, smalltooth sawfish, largetooth sawfish, bignose shark, Caribbean reef shark, dusky shark, galapagos shark, narrowtooth shark, night shark, Atlantic angel shark, Caribbean sharpnose shark, smalltail shark, bigeye sixgill shark, bigeye thresher shark, longfin mako, sevengill shark, sixgill shark.

Sharks taken under recreational bag limit shall not be sold, purchased, exchanged, bartered, or attempted to be sold, purchased, exchanged, or bartered. A person subject to a bag limit shall not possess at any time, regardless of the number of trips or the duration of a trip, any shark in excess of the bag limits mentioned above.

The practice of "finning," that is, removing only the fins and returning the remainder of the shark to the sea is prohibited within and without Louisiana waters.

Notwithstanding other provisions of this part, a person may fish for, but not retain, white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*) with rod and reel only under a catch and release program, provided the person releases and returns such fish to the sea immediately with a minimum of injury. Fishermen must possess a commercial Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Permit to commercially harvest/sell reef fish.

Sailfish, blue marlin, black marlin, striped marlin, hatchet marlin, white marlin, and red drum are game fish in Louisiana and may not be commercially harvested, sold, bartered, traded, or exchanged. Contact the LDWF Enforcement Division for specific requirements governing commercialization of these species.

Recreational and commercial fishers must keep tuna, which have size requirements, heads and tail intact unless carcass length is in excess of the minimum total length. Recreational fishers are required to maintain sharks fully intact.

Bowfin eggs (roe) that are not naturally connected to a whole fish cannot be possessed by fishermen while on the water.

#### Recreational Licenses

Residents and nonresidents under 16 years of age and residents 60 years of age and older prior to June 1, 2000, who have resided within the state for two years prior to application, shall not be required to obtain licenses, permits, or pay fees to fish recreationally. A resident Senior Hunt/Fish License is required for persons who turn 60 years of age after June 1, 2000. Proof of age must be carried on person.

A recreational gear license is required of all persons using recreational gear except persons under the age of 16.

Military - In order to recreationally hunt or fish in the state of Louisiana, any United States citizen who is not a Louisiana resident

but who is issued a military identification card from the armed forces of the United States that signifies that he is currently on active duty shall be eligible to purchase annual nonresident military hunting and fishing licenses. The fee for nonresident active military licenses shall be equal to that of the annual resident license fees.

Any Louisiana resident who is issued a military identification card from the armed forces of the United States that signifies that he is currently on active duty shall be issued a resident active military hunt/fish license for a fee of \$5.00. This license shall be in lieu of basic and saltwater fishing license, basic hunting, big game, bow, muzzleloader, state duck license, turkey stamp, and WMA hunting permit. The resident shall have his military identification card, his resident active military license, and his Louisiana driver's license on his person at all times when he is engaged in hunting and fishing activities.

Military licenses are valid only during the time when the licensee is on ACTIVE DUTY in the armed forces of the United States

Veterans having a permanent service connected disability classification of 50% or more and who are Louisiana residents or resident persons who are blind, paraplegic, or multiple amputees shall, upon identification and proof of disability satisfactory to the department, be issued sports licenses without the payment of any fees thereof. Any resident who is a single amputee shall, upon identification and proof of disability satisfactory to the department, be issued a basic and saltwater fishing license without the payment of any fees thereof.

All other resident recreational fishermen shall purchase an annual Basic and Saltwater Fishing License for \$9.50. Licenses are available on June 1 and expire on June 30 of the following year. All other nonresidents must purchase a Basic Fishing License for \$60.00 for the period from June 1 through June 30, a basic 4-day license for \$15.00, or a basic 1-day license for \$5.00.

#### **Additional Licenses**

Resident Hook and Line License - \$2.50  
Resident Saltwater License - \$5.50  
Nonresident Saltwater License - \$30.00  
Nonresident Saltwater Trip - 4 Day - \$45.00  
Nonresident Saltwater Trip - 1 Day - \$15.00

#### **Recreational gear licenses required in addition to the basic fishing license:**

Resident Slat Traps (up to 5) - \$20.00  
Nonresident Slat Traps (up to 5) - \$80.00

#### **Lifetime Licenses (proof of residency required)**

Resident Basic and Saltwater - \$300.00  
Resident Basic and Saltwater (from five years to under 14 years of age) - \$200.00  
  
Resident Combination Fishing and Hunting - \$500.00  
Resident Combination Fishing and Hunting (from five years to under 14 years of age) - \$300.00  
Nonresident Combination Hunting and Fishing - \$3,000.00  
Resident Combination Fishing and Hunting (from birth through age four) - \$200.00

#### **OTHER COMMERCIAL FISHING**

##### **Wildlife Management Areas**

Commercial operations are not allowed on Wildlife Management Areas unless specified. Check with local enforcement for specific areas.

##### **Commercial Fishermen**

A commercial fisherman with a fresh products license may sell their

own catch to a consumer in state but is required to keep trip ticket records and comply with record submissions.

Commercial fishermen who sell their catch to anyone other than a Louisiana licensed Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer are required to purchase and possess a wholesale/retail seafood dealers license and are required to comply with all regulations governing wholesale/retail seafood dealers.

#### **Licenses**

A commercial fisherman taking fish, including bait species, from state waters or possessing fish in the state must purchase a commercial fisherman's license. It is unlawful for the owner of a licensed, commercial fishing vessel to permit any person not holding a valid, original commercial fisherman's license to operate such licensed vessel while the vessel is engaged in commercial fishing or while in possession of fish for sale in the waters of the state. Violation subjects the vessel owner to revocation of license and seizure of the vessel and all fish and equipment aboard. Helpers or persons assisting, or engaged in, operations while aboard commercial fishing vessels need not have a commercial fisherman's license in his name as long as the captain or owner of the vessel while aboard the vessel has in his name a valid and original commercial fisherman's license. A commercial fisherman may only sell to a Louisiana wholesale/retail dealer. Only one commercial fisherman's license is required for each menhaden seine being used to take menhaden or other herring-like fish.

A commercial fisherman must possess a valid and original commercial gear license whenever using or possessing such gear on the fishing grounds. In the event more than one gear type is in possession on the fishing grounds, a gear license for each gear type must be in possession. A gear license is required for each piece of gear or each type of gear in use or in possession, whichever is applicable. It is unlawful for a commercial gear licensee to permit a person not holding a valid, original commercial fisherman's license to use gear under privilege of the commercial gear license. Violation subjects the commercial gear licensee to revocation of the commercial gear license and seizure of gear.

A vessel must be licensed whenever engaged in commercial fishing or whenever possessing fish for sale in the saltwater areas of the state. Vessel licenses are issued in the name of the owner (person having legal ownership of the vessel; includes association, corporation, partnership, or other legal entity) of the vessel and shall list the owner's name and address, the vessel name and registration or documentation number, and any other information required by the department.

#### **Restrictions**

It is illegal to possess any gill net-trammel net seine on the saltwater areas of the state except during mullet fishing season, special pompano strike nets, or traversing to the EEZ.

There are special requirements in place for persons traversing to the EEZ with illegal gear.

Requirements exist to enter the commercial net fisheries for mullet and spotted seatrout. There are gear restrictions, special permits, seasons, times, and methods of taking commercial mullet. For information about the commercial finfish fishery, contact the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Division.

No commercial gear license shall be issued to any nonresident whose domiciliary state prohibits the use of those nets in commercial fishing. It is illegal to use or employ any aircraft including fixed wing aircraft, dirigibles, balloons, helicopters, or any other form of aerial surveillance in the airspace of this state to assist in the taking

of finfish except in the fisheries of menhaden and herring-like fish.

Mesh size of hoop or wire nets must be at least 1" square or 2" stretched after treating with tar or copper. The use of monofilament for any type net is prohibited in saltwater areas of the state. The use of purse seines is prohibited in inside waters. The use of purse seines is prohibited except for taking of menhaden and herring-like species. It is illegal to enter state waters with purse seine and speckled trout or red drum on same vessel.

#### SEAFOOD BUSINESS LICENSES

Resident Reptile & Amphibian Wholesale/Retail Dealer - \$105.00  
Resident Reptile & Amphibian Transport License - \$30.00  
Nonresident Reptile & Amphibian Transport License - \$120.00  
Nonresident Reptile & Amphibian Wholesale/Retail Dealer - \$405.00  
Resident Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer Vehicle or Business - \$250.00  
Nonresident Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer Vehicle or Business - \$1,105.00  
Alien Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer Vehicle or Business - \$2,210.00  
Resident Seafood Retail Dealer - \$105.00  
Nonresident Seafood Retail Dealer - \$405.00  
Alien Seafood Retail Dealer - \$810.00  
Transport License - \$30.00  
Alien Transport License - \$60.00  
Resident Charter Boat Fishing Guide (up to 6 passengers) - \$250.00  
Nonresident Charter Boat Fishing Guide (up to 6 passengers) - \$1,000.00  
Resident Charter Boat Fishing Guide (over 6 passengers) - \$500.00  
Nonresident Charter Boat Fishing Guide (over 6 passengers) - \$2,000.00

Note: The reptile and amphibian transport license can only be purchased by and in the name of a person holding a valid Louisiana reptile and amphibian collector's license or a reptile and amphibian wholesale/retail dealer's license. Transport licenses can only be purchased by and in the name of a person holding a valid Louisiana commercial fisherman's license, wholesale/retail dealer's seafood license, or retail seafood license. Persons operating under a transport license are prohibited from buying and selling, by any means whatsoever, any species of fish, except when a person transporting fish under the privilege of a Louisiana transport license purchased in connection with a Louisiana wholesale/retail dealer's license buys fish for or on behalf of the wholesale/retail dealer to whom such transport license was issued and only transports such fish to that wholesale/retail dealer. Transport licenses are freely transferable between vehicles.

#### WHOLESALE/RETAIL SEAFOOD DEALERS AND RETAIL SEAFOOD DEALER LICENSES

"Fish" (in quotation marks) in this section means all finfish, shellfish, and crustaceans.

##### License Requirements

**Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealers** are any individual person, firm, association, corporation, partnership or any legal entity recognized by law that buys, handles by any means whatsoever any species of "fish"/seafood whether fresh, frozen, processed, or unprocessed in Louisiana for sale or resale, including bait species, whether on a commission basis or otherwise. Wholesale/retail seafood dealers include but are not limited to any person who makes sales of seafood on a wholesale basis, including any dock, distributor, broker, fish factory, platform, processing plant or anyone shipping fish out of or into the state for resale.

A wholesale/retail seafood dealer is the only licensee who can legally purchase "fish" from a commercial fisherman and resell such fish. Wholesale/retail seafood dealers are not required to obtain a soft shell

crab shedders license or a reptile and amphibian dealers license. They are required, however, to abide by regulations of those particular activities. If a wholesale/retail dealers license is in the name of an individual, the license is only valid for that individual.

**Retail Seafood Dealers** are any individual person, firm, association, corporation, partnership or any legal entity recognized by law that only buys, acquires or handles by any means whatsoever any species of "fish"/seafood whether fresh, frozen, processed, or unprocessed in Louisiana for sale. Retail seafood dealers may only purchase fish from a licensed wholesale/retail seafood dealer. Retail seafood dealers may only sell "fish"/seafood directly to the consumer for personal or household use. Retail seafood dealers are not authorized to make wholesale transactions (sales intended to be resold). Restaurants or grocers that sell raw "fish" such as oysters or sushi are required to obtain a retail seafood dealers license if purchasing such fish from a licensed wholesale/retail seafood dealer. If a retail seafood dealers license is in the name of an individual, the license is only valid for that individual. Retail seafood dealers are not authorized to purchase fish from a commercial fisherman.

**Restaurants and Retail Grocers** who only purchase "fish"/seafood whether fresh, frozen, processed, or unprocessed from a licensed Louisiana wholesale/retail seafood dealer and only sell such "fish" fully prepared by cooking for immediate consumption by the consumer are exempt from these license requirements.

Restaurants and retail grocers who pick up "fish"/seafood directly from wholesale/retail seafood dealers themselves and transport such "fish"/seafood are required to purchase a retail seafood dealers license and applicable transport license(s). Persons exempt from license requirements are required to maintain records as provided below.

##### Purchases/Sales

**Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealers** shall only purchase from a validly licensed commercial fisherman or another licensed wholesale/retail seafood dealer. When purchasing species of "fish"/seafood from commercial fisherman for which a permit is required, they may only purchase "fish"/seafood from those commercial fishermen who possess the required permit. Permits include but are not limited to: mullet, reef fish, shark, spotted seatrout, tuna, etc. (permits include both state and federal). When purchasing "fish"/seafood from out-of-state sellers and bringing the "fish"/seafood into Louisiana, "fish"/seafood shall only be purchased from those persons legally licensed to sell "fish"/seafood in that state. When out-of-state sellers bring "fish"/seafood into Louisiana they must be legally licensed in Louisiana. Persons out-of-state purchasing "fish"/seafood in Louisiana for resale regardless of the type of transportation used must possess a Louisiana wholesale/retail seafood dealers license. Out-of-state buyers purchasing "fish"/seafood for resale from a Louisiana licensed wholesale/retail seafood dealer are not required to be licensed when receiving the shipment by that licensed wholesale/retail seafood dealer.

**Retail Seafood Dealers** shall only purchase "fish"/seafood from a licensed Louisiana wholesale/retail seafood dealer. When purchasing "fish"/seafood from out-of-state sellers and bringing the fish into Louisiana, "fish"/seafood shall only be purchased from those persons legally licensed to sell fish in that state. When out-of-state sellers bring fish into Louisiana they must be legally licensed in Louisiana. Retail seafood dealers may only sell "fish"/seafood directly to consumers.

**Non-Licensed Restaurants and Retail Grocers** shall only purchase "fish"/seafood from licensed Louisiana wholesale/retail seafood dealers (see exemptions). If a restaurant or retail grocer purchases "fish"/seafood from out of state they shall possess a wholesale/retail seafood dealer's license or a retail seafood dealer's license.

Restaurants or retail grocers who pick up "fish"/seafood directly from wholesale/retail seafood dealers themselves and transport such "fish"/seafood are required to purchase a retail seafood dealers license and applicable transport license.

**Records**

Wholesale/retail seafood dealers, retail seafood dealers, restaurants and retail grocers shall keep and maintain in the English language:

- a. Records of the quantity and species of "fish"/seafood (fresh, frozen, processed, or unprocessed) acquired; records of fish/seafood acquired from commercial fishermen are required to be documented on department-issued trip tickets.
- b. The date the "fish"/seafood was acquired and the full name and license number of the commercial fisherman, wholesale/retail dealer, or the out-of-statesellers from whom the "fish"/seafood was acquired;
- c. Records of the quantity and species of "fish"/seafood sold and the name and license number of the person to whom the "fish"/seafood was sold.

When sold to the consumer, the records shall indicate the quantity, species, and date the "fish"/seafood was sold to the consumer. Records shall be maintained for three years and shall be available and open to inspection by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Purchases made from fishermen for which a permit is required shall document the commercial fisherman's permit number on the records. When creel limits apply to commercial species, records shall also indicate the number or head count of such species.

**Reporting**

**Monthly Returns to the Department.** Any wholesale/retail seafood dealer buying "fish" or seafood from anyone other than a licensed wholesale/retail seafood dealer shall complete trip tickets documenting each transaction. On or before the tenth of each month, the dealer shall submit all the previous month's trip tickets and a submission sheet. For more information on monthly dealer reports call 225-765-2973.

**Severance Tax (oyster).** Wholesale/retail seafood dealers purchasing oysters from persons harvesting oysters in Louisiana are responsible for and shall pay an oyster severance tax on or before the tenth day of the month.

**Shrimp Excise Tax.** LA R.S. 56:506 enacted in the 2002 Regular Session of the Legislature requires an excise tax on all saltwater shrimp taken from state waters and on all shrimp imported into the state. The tax is assessed at the rate of 15¢ per barrel of 210 pounds or 210 pounds equivalence. If the heads have been removed the shrimp will be computed at 125 pounds per barrel or its equivalence. Imported peeled shrimp will be computed at 75 pounds per barrel. Payment of the excise tax is by the first wholesale/retail dealer to

whom the shrimp is first delivered. On imported shrimp brought to cold storage, the tax is to be paid by the dealer storing, brokering, or distributing the shrimp. The taxes and reports required are to be filed no later than the tenth day of the succeeding month.

*For more information on oyster or shrimp severance taxes call 225-765-5193.*

**Shipping Requirements**

All vehicles used for the commercial transportation of "fish"/seafood must be marked with the name and address of the company. Shipments containing fish shall be plainly marked; records, tags, or certificates to show the names of the consignor and the consignee, with an itemized statement of the number of pounds of fish or seafood and the names of each kind of species contained therein, must accompany all shipments of "fish"/seafood. All operators and drivers of any form of commercial transport who are in the act of loading, unloading, or transporting "fish"/seafood shall have in their possession one of the following licenses:

- a. Commercial Fisherman's License - only valid for a commercial fisherman transporting his own catch to a wholesale/retail seafood dealer.
- b. Transport License - if purchased in connection with a wholesale/retail seafood dealer license authorizes to deliver "fish"/seafood to another wholesale dealer.
  - if purchased in connection with a retail seafood dealers license only valid to pick up "fish"/seafood from a licensed wholesale/retail seafood dealer and transport product to the place of business of the retail seafood dealer.
  - if purchased in connection with a commercial fisherman's license, only valid to transport that commercial fisherman's catch to a wholesale/retail seafood dealer to be sold for that commercial fisherman.
  - dealers are responsible for all activities which take place under the authority of a transport license issued in the name of that dealer.
- c. Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealers License - good for all activities of wholesale/retail seafood dealers. Vehicles commercially shipping seafood out of state must have a wholesale/retail seafood dealers license or a transport license purchased in connection with a wholesale/retail seafood dealers license.

**Exemptions**

Persons who produce and harvest catfish or crawfish in private ponds shall not be required to possess any license in order to sell their crawfish or catfish. Any person may purchase crawfish or catfish from persons who harvest crawfish or catfish in private ponds. A seafood wholesale/retail dealer's license is required to resell.

Persons who harvest crawfish or catfish in private ponds shall not be required to possess any license to transport their own crawfish or catfish from the private pond to the first point of sale.

**FINFISH**

**Louisiana - Recreational Size and Possession Limits**

Species	Size Limit	Bag & Possession Limit
BILLFISH: All persons conducting a tournament involving score keeping for awards for Atlantic billfish must register with the National Marine Fisheries Service's Southeast Fisheries Science Center. FAX (305-361-4219). Website: <a href="http://www.nmfspermits.com/tournamentInstructions.asp">www.nmfspermits.com/tournamentInstructions.asp</a>		
Marlin, Blue	99" min LJFL	
Marlin, White	66" min LJFL	
Sailfish	63" min LJFL	

Species	Size Limit	Bag & Possession Limit
Swordfish	29" carcass length or 33 lbs dressed weight	5/vessel/trip
Cobia (Ling or Lemonfish)	33" min FL	2/person/day
Drum, Black	16" min TL	5/person bag and possession with only 1 over 27"
Drum, Red* (Redfish)	16" min TL	5/person bag with only 1 over 27"
Flounder, Southern		10/person/day for each consecutive day on the water
Mackerel, King**	24" min FL	2/person/day
Mackerel, Spanish**	12" min FL	15/person/day
Mullet, Striped		100 pounds/person/day
Seabass, Black	8" min TL	
Seatrou, Spotted* (Speckled Trout)	12" min TL	25/person bag
<b>REEF FISH**</b>		
Amberjack, Greater	28" min FL	1/person/day
Amberjack, Lesser Rudderfish, Banded	14" min FL and 22" max FL	5/person/day in aggregate
Hogfish	12" min FL	5/person/day
Gag, Black Groupers	22" min TL	5/person/day in aggregate (all groupers, excluding Jewfish and Nassau, with not more than one Speckled Hind and one Warsaw Grouper per vessel)
Red, Yellowfin Groupers	20" min TL	
Scamp	16" min TL	
Red Hind, Rock Hind, Speckled Hind, Misty Grouper, Snowy Grouper, Yellowedge Grouper, Yellowmouth Grouper, Warsaw Grouper		
Jewfish, Nassau Grouper	Take Prohibited	Take Prohibited
Red Snapper	16" min TL	4/person/day Season Apr 21-Oct 31
Schoolmaster, Cubera, Mahogany, Dog, Yellowtail, Gray Snappers	12" min TL	10/person/day in aggregate (all snapper except Red, Vermilion, and Lane)
Mutton Snapper	16" min TL	included in 10 fish aggregate
Queen Snapper, Blackfin Snapper, Silk Snapper, Wenchman		included in 10 fish aggregate
Vermilion Snapper	10" min TL	20/person/day in aggregate
Lane Snapper	8" min TL	included in 20 fish aggregate
Gray Triggerfish	12" min TL	included in 20 fish aggregate
Almaco Jack, Goldface Tilefish, Tilefish, Blackline Tilefish, Anchor Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish		included in 20 fish aggregate
<b>SHARK<sup>1</sup></b>		
Atlantic Sharpnose		1/person/day possession
Others: All except prohibited	54 min FL	aggregate 1/vessel/trip and in possession

Species	Size Limit	Bag & Possession Limit
<b>TUNAS<sup>2</sup></b>		
Tuna, Yellowfin	27" CFL	3/person
Tuna, Bigeye	27" CFL	
Tuna, Bluefin	27" CFL	
Atlantic Bluefin, Yellowfin, Bigeye, Skipjack, Albacore		

LJFL = Straight line length from the tip of the lower jaw to the fork of the tail.

TL = Total length measure in a straight line from the tip of the snout to the extreme tip of the tail fin.

FL = Fork length measure in a straight line from the tip of the snout to the fork of the tail.

Carcass length-curved measure from back edge of gill opening to anterior portion of caudal keel.

CFL = Curved fork length measure from the tip of the upper jaw to fork of tail measured along the contour of the middle of the body.

Dressed weight is weight of the carcass after it has been gutted, headed, and finned.

Harvest of Jewfish, Nassau Grouper, Basking Shark, White Shark, Bigeye Sand Tiger Shark, Sand Tiger Shark, Whale Shark, Smalltooth and Largetooth Sawfish is prohibited.

\*Two day bag limits allowed in possession off of the water not while fishing or in a boat.

\*\*Two day possession limit on multi-day trips on charter or head boats.

<sup>1</sup> All Louisiana state waters shall be closed to the recreational and commercial harvest of all sharks between April 1 and June 30 of each year.

<sup>2</sup> Requires a federal permit to harvest or transport in state waters.

Louisiana - Commercial Size and Possession Limits

Species	Size Limit	Possession Limits/ Quota	Season
Swordfish <sup>1</sup>	29" carcass length or 33 lbs dressed weight		
Cobia (Ling or Lemonfish)	33" min FL	2/person	
Drum, Black	16" min TL	Quota: 16"-27" 3,250,000 lbs and >27" 300,000 fish	Sep-Aug 31 or when respective quota is filled
Flounder, Southern*	none	10/licensed fisher/day	
Mackerel, King	24" min FL	3,000 lbs/trip federal quota	Opens Jul 1 until federal quota filled
Mackerel, Spanish	12" min FL	Federal quota	Open until federal quota filled
Mullet, Striped <sup>2</sup>			3 <sup>rd</sup> Mon in Oct until 3 <sup>rd</sup> Mon in Jan
Pompano <sup>1</sup>			Aug 1-Oct 31
Seabass, Black	8" min TL		
Seatroun, Spotted <sup>2</sup> (Speckled Trout)	14" min TL	Quota: 1 mil lbs	3 <sup>rd</sup> Mon in Nov until Apr 31 or when quota is filled.
Sheepshead	10" min TL		
<b>REEF FISH<sup>1</sup></b>			
Amberjack, Greater	36" min FL		Closed Mar 1 - May 31
Amberjack Lesser, Banded Rudderfish	14" min FL and 22" max FL		
Hogfish	12" min FL		
Triggerfish, Grey	12" min TL		
Queen Snapper, Blackfin Snapper, Silk Snapper, Wenchman, Almaco Jack, Goldface Tilefish, Tilefish, Blackline Tilefish, Anchor Tilefish, Blueline Tilefish, Dwarf Sandperch, Sandperch			
<b>Shallow-Water Groupers</b>			
Gag, Black	24" min TL	Federal quota	Black, Gag and Red Closed Feb 15- Mar 15 Jan 1 until federal quota is filled.
Red, Yellowfin	20" min TL		
Scamp	16" min TL		
Yellowmouth, Rock Hind, Red Hind	None		
<b>Deep Water Groupers</b>			
Misty, Snowy, Yellowedge, Warsaw, Speckled Hind	None	Federal quota	Jan 1 until federal quota filled

Species	Size Limit	Possession Limits/ Quota	Season
Red Snapper	15" min TL		First ten days of each month starting with Feb until 2/3 of the quota is filled. First ten days of each month starting in Oct until the remainder of the quota is filled.
Schoolmaster, Cubera, Mahogany, Dog, Yellowtail, Gray Snappers	12" min TL		
Mutton Snapper	16" min TL		
Vermilion Snapper	10" min TL		
Lane Snapper	8" min TL		
<b>TUNAS<sup>1</sup></b>			
Yellowfin, Bigeye, Bluefin	27" CFL		
Atlantic, Skipjack, Albacore			
<b>SHARKS<sup>1</sup></b>			
Large Coastal		4,000 lbs/trip dressed weight, federal quota	All shark harvest is prohibited from Apr 1 to Jun 30
Small Coastal, Pelagic		Federal quota	

LJFL = Straight line length from the tip of the lower jaw to the fork of the tail.

TL = Total length measure in a straight line from the tip of the snout to the extreme tip of the tail fin.

FL = Fork length measure in a straight line from the tip of the snout to the fork of the tail.

Carcass length-curve measure from back edge of gill opening to anterior portion of the caudal keel.

CFL = Curved fork length measure from the tip of the upper jaw to fork of tail measured along the contour of the middle of the body.

Dressed weight = weight of the carcass after it has been gutted, headed, and finned.

Sailfish, blue marlin, black marlin, striped marlin, hatchet marlin, white marlin, and red drum are game fish in Louisiana and may not be commercially harvested.

Harvest of Jewfish and Nassau Grouper is prohibited.

\*All southern flounder caught as bycatch on a shrimping vessel may be retained and sold.

<sup>1</sup>Requires a federal permit to harvest or transport in state waters.

<sup>2</sup>Requires a state permit.

#### Louisiana - Other Commercial License Fees

Other Commercial Licenses	Resident	Nonresident
All commercial licenses expire on December 31 each year, unless otherwise noted.		
Commercial Fisherman's License	\$55.00	\$460.00
Apprentice	27.00	230.00
Vessel License (required south of saltwater line)	15.00	60.00
Mullet Permit (captain only)*†	100.00	400.00
Mullet Harvester Permit (captain only)*	100.00	1,000.00
Oyster Harvester (captain only)*	100.00	400.00
Oyster Tong (per tong)	30.00	240.00
Oyster Dredge	25.00	200.00
Shrimp Trawl (per trawl)	25.00	100.00
Butterfly Net (per net)	25.00	100.00

Other Commercial Licenses	Resident	Nonresident
Skimmer Net (per net)	25.00	100.00
Shrimp Gear Fee (one-time annually)	10.00	40.00
Hoop Net (any legal number)	25.00	100.00
Freshwater Fish Seine (any legal number)	25.00	100.00
Freshwater Trammel Net (any legal number)	25.00	100.00
Freshwater Gill Net (any legal number)	25.00	100.00
Purse/Menhaden Seine (per seine)	505.00	2,020.00
Dip/Cast Nets (per net type)	25.00	100.00
Crab Trap (any legal number) (Act 19 of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Extraordinary Session requires any person who obtains a commercial crab trap license to pay a one-time fee of \$45.00 beginning license year 2001.)	25.00	100.00
Crab Trap Trot Line (per trap-maximum of 25)	1.00	4.00
Slat Trap (any legal number)	25.00	100.00
Minnow Trap (any legal number)	25.00	100.00
Eel Pot (any legal number)	25.00	100.00
Cans, Buckets, Pipes, Drums (any legal number)	25.00	100.00
Set Lines (Trot, Bush, etc.; any legal number)	25.00	100.00
Flounder Gig (per gig)	25.00	100.00
Spear Gun (per spear gun)	25.00	100.00
Mullet Strike Net (per net)	250.00	1,000.00
Pompano Strike Net (per net)	250.00	1,000.00
Saltwater Rod & Reel (any legal number)† ◇	250.00	1,000.00
Spotted Seatrout Permit†	100.00	400.00
Traversing Permit	No fee	No fee
Crawfish Traps (any legal number)	25.00	100.00
Out-of-state Oyster Landing Permit	100.00	N/A
Pompano Permit (captain only)* ‡	No fee	No fee
Wire Net (any legal number)	25.00	100.00
Shark Permit	No fee	No fee
*Commercial Fisherman's License required. †Must meet qualifying criteria. For more information call 225/765-2898. ◇Each person on board must have a commercial fisherman's license. ‡Must meet qualifying criteria. For more information call 504/568-5688.		

Dealer Licenses	Resident	Nonresident
Seafood Wholesale/Retail Dealer-Business	250.00	1,105.00
Seafood Wholesale/Retail Dealer-Vehicle	250.00	1,105.00

<b>Dealer Licenses</b>	<b>Resident</b>	<b>Nonresident</b>
Seafood Retail Dealer-Business	105.00	405.00
Seafood Retail Dealer-Vehicle	105.00	405.00
Seafood Transport-Wholesale/Retail Dealer	30.00	30.00
Seafood Transport-Retail Dealer	30.00	30.00
Four Year Wholesale	1,000.00	4,420.00
Four Year Retail	420.00	1,620.00
Four Year Transport	120.00	120.00
Seafood Transport-Commercial Fisherman	30.00	30.00
Soft Shell Crab Shedder	100.00	400.00
Fresh Products (Commercial Fisherman's License required)	20.00	120.00
Fish Farmer	15.00	N/A
Reptile & Amphibian Collector (under 16)	10.00	N/A
Reptile & Amphibian Collector	25.00	200.00
Reptile & Amphibian Wholesale/Retail Dealer	105.00	405.00
Reptile & Amphibian Transport	30.00	120.00
Alligator Parts Dealer (expires June 30)	50.00	N/A
Mussel Buyer's Permit**	150.00	600.00
Charter Boat Fishing Guide (up to 6 passengers)	250.00	1,000.00
Charter Boat Fishing Guide (more than 6 passengers)	500.00	2,000.00
**Seafood wholesale/retail dealer license required.		

<b>Additional Licenses</b>	<b>Resident</b>	<b>Nonresident</b>
Bow & Arrow Gear	25.00	100.00
Garfish Gig (per gig)	25.00	100.00
Non Game Quadruped - Exhibitor	10.00	N/A
Non Game Quadruped - Breeder	25.00	N/A
Game Breeder (\$50 inspection fee to raise deer and birds of prey)	25.00	N/A
Fur Buyer	25.00	100.00
Fur Dealer (\$500 deposit is required of residents and \$1000 for nonresidents)	150.00	300.00
Hunting Preserve	200.00	N/A

# MISSISSIPPI

The following is an unofficial compilation of marine laws and regulations for Mississippi. The information is current as of June 10, 2003, but changes may occur at any time. For definitive enforcement regulations contact the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, Marine Law Enforcement, 1141 Bayview Avenue, Fifth Floor Suite A, Biloxi, Mississippi 39530 (228/432-7708).

## Residency Requirements

A "resident" means a person, firm, or corporation that is domiciled in this state. A "domicile" means a person's principal or primary place of abode in which a person's habitation is fixed and to which the person, whenever absent, has the present intention of returning after a departure of absence therefrom, regardless of the duration of the absence. The burden of proving domicile in the state shall be on the person claiming the status. A person holding a current driver's license shall be deemed to be domiciled within the state issuing the license. If a person does not hold a current driver's license the following evidence may be considered for establishing, but is not necessarily determinative of domicile: residence for income or other tax purposes, homestead exemption receipt or other means prescribed by the commission. In the case of minors, domicile of the parents shall be used as evidence of the minor's domicile.

## SHRIMP

Each freight boat, ice boat, and catching boat used in catching or transporting saltwater shrimp taken from the waters of the state of Mississippi for sale in their fresh state, or for canning, packing, freezing or drying, shall first obtain from the commission an annual privilege license and pay a license fee at the following rates:

### Commercial License

- Shrimp Boat under 30'
  - resident - \$50.00
  - nonresident - \$100.00
- Shrimp Boat 30'-45'
  - resident - \$75.00
  - nonresident - \$100.00
- Shrimp Boat over 45'
  - resident - \$100.00
  - nonresident - \$200.00

The captain shall purchase a license entitled "captain license." This license shall be purchased at the same time the vessel license is purchased. The fee for a captain's license shall be a minimum of ten dollars (\$10.00). The individual registered as the captain of the vessel may be substituted after notification and the approval of the deputy director or the deputy director's designated representative.

### Recreational License

Each recreational vessel engaging in shrimping with a net having a cork line length of sixteen (16) feet or less shall pay an annual resident license fee or fifteen dollars (\$15.00) or an annual nonresident license fee of thirty dollars (\$30.00).

### Commercial Season

Trawling is prohibited north of the Intercoastal Waterway (tugboat channel) after sunset of December 31, except by licensed live bait dealers. Shrimp season is officially opened by public notice at such a time that the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) has determined that the shrimp have reached legal size (statistically probable in the second week of June).

Additionally, the area south of the Intercoastal Waterway will be closed after April 30 of each year and prior to the opening of the season for shrimp.

### Recreational Season

All rules and regulations of commercial shrimp apply.

### Commercial Gear Limitations

Shrimp may be taken in any manner south of a line formed by the barrier islands of Cat, Ship, Horn, and Petit Bois. North of this line (within Mississippi Sound), shrimp may only be taken with a single net measuring no larger than 50' along the head rope and 60' along the foot rope or not more than two nets, each measuring no more than 25' on the head rope and 32' on the foot rope. Trawl boards on

double rig commercial shrimpers are limited to a maximum door size of 6'x34". Single rig nets are not affected. A test (or try) trawl no larger than 12' along the head rope and 15' along the foot rope used with boards not more than 30' in length is permitted.

In addition the wings of push-nets (chopsticks) may not be attached to the rigid supports or poles for a distance greater than 24' on each side.

No saltboxes may be used for either recreational or commercial shrimpers. "Saltbox" shall mean any container or similar device in which the salinity is greater than one hundred (100) parts per thousand and is used to aid in separating the shrimp from the bycatch.

No nonresident shall be issued a commercial fishing license for the taking of saltwater shrimp using any type of net if that nonresident's state of domicile prohibits the issuing of commercial fishing licenses to residents of this state to engage in like activity.

During open seasons and in open areas, saltwater shrimp may be taken only with shrimp trawls, trawls, butterfly nets, skimmer nets, push trawls, beach seines, and cast nets.

### Recreational Gear Limitations

Holders of a recreational shrimping license are limited to the use of a single net measuring no larger than 16' on the cork line. Persons catching shrimp with cast or brail nets shall not remove the heads of the shrimp on site. Cast or brail nets cannot exceed 12' maximum radius or length.

### Commercial Legal Size

Shrimp smaller than 68-count are not to be taken.

### Recreational Legal Size

All rules and regulations of commercial shrimp apply.

### Commercial Pounds Allowed

No limit.

### Recreational Pounds Allowed

No limit. Limit of 50 pounds (with heads on) per person, per day when caught by cast or brail nets.

### Fish Retained for Consumption

Licensed vessels may keep in whole, for personal consumption only, the following types of fish which are caught in the shrimp nets or trawls of the vessel: white trout, croaker, black drum, and ground mullet; sheepshead; gaftopsail catfish; and flounder. The cumulative total of fish shall not exceed twenty-five pounds. In addition, a vessel may keep three-dozen blue crabs. This exemption for personal consumption does not apply to fish or crabs that are otherwise illegal to possess or catch.

## LIVE BAIT

### Licenses

- Live Bait Dealer - \$50.00
- Live Bait Boat - \$100.00
- Captain's License - \$10.00 (required for a live bait license holder)

Written application for live bait licenses must be made to the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources between January 1 and April 30 preceding the license year.

### Season

Live bait trawling is permitted only during the hours between 30 minutes before sunrise and ending at sunset; areas are not opened to live bait shrimp until shrimp average at least 100 count.

### Gear

Trawls cannot be larger than 16' on the head rope and 22' on the foot rope, except areas west of Bayou Caddy where trawls may be 25' on the head rope and 32' on the foot rope.

### Legal Size

Shrimp of 100-count to the pound are the minimum legal size for licensed live bait dealers.

### Pounds Allowed

No more than 30 pounds of dead shrimp allowed onboard at any time.

### Restrictions

Live bait dealers must mark their boats with the words "LIVE BAIT" in letters no smaller than 6" high on both the port and starboard sides of the boat. The name of the bait camp must be similarly displayed on the boat and transport vehicle. Fish caught coincidental to a live bait operation may be retained and sold for chum; however, if crabs are to be kept, the dealer is also required to hold a valid Mississippi crab license. Fish retained must be of legal size. Live bait camps must meet the following special requirements: each camp must have adequate holding and aerating systems which must be cleaned of dead shrimp at least every 12 hours; no bulk sales of dead shrimp are permitted; dead shrimp may be sold only with heads on and in 16 oz containers. No more than five 16 oz containers may be sold to an individual in one day. Someone must be readily available to serve customers during appropriate hours, and each live bait-dealer application must include these hours which must be at least eight per 24 hour period.

## SHELLFISH - OYSTERS AND CLAMS

### License Requirements

Each vessel used to catch, take, carry or transport oysters from the reefs of the state of Mississippi, or engaged in transporting any oysters in any of the waters within the territorial jurisdiction of the state of Mississippi, for commercial use, shall annually, before beginning operations, be licensed by the commission and pay the following license fees:

- Tonging
  - resident - \$50.00
  - nonresident - \$100.00
- Dredging
  - resident - \$100.00
  - nonresident - \$200.00

Each person catching or taking oysters from the waters of the state of Mississippi for personal use shall obtain a permit from the commission and pay an annual recreational oyster permit fee of ten dollars (\$10.00). Oysters caught under a recreational permit shall not be offered for sale. The limits on the allowable catch of oysters for recreational purposes shall be three (3) sacks per week. The department shall issue tags of a distinguishing color to designate

recreationally harvested oysters, which shall be tagged on the same day of harvest in the manner prescribed below.

### Season

Season is regulated by legal notice from the Commission on Marine Resources, and notice thereof will be duly published in local newspapers and released to both the radio and television media. During open season, oysters may be taken only during daylight hours.

### Gear

Oysters may be taken by any of the traditional methods of oystering in the state of Mississippi, that is, by hands (cooning), with tongs, or by using a dredge. Dredges for oystering may not exceed 140 pounds in weight nor may they have in excess of 16 teeth. Teeth on the dredge must be 5" or less. Restrictions on the maximum number of dredges carried will be established seasonally by the Commission on Marine Resources.

It is unlawful for any person to catch or take oysters by means of dredging in any of the waters designated as tonging reefs by the commission.

The commission shall designate certain areas as tonging reefs. The commission shall mark the boundaries of the areas designated by appropriate poles, stakes or buoys of material that will not injure water craft. The commission may authorize the taking of oysters on reefs designated as tonging reefs by dredge, drag or scoop if the commission finds that the dredging, dragging or scooping is necessary to manage the resource properly. Any dredging, dragging or scooping authorized under this section shall be for a specific time period as provided by the commission.

Unless otherwise authorized under this section, any boat or vessel which catches or takes oysters by means of dredges, drags or scoops, other than hand tongs, from any of the areas described in this section, or with a dredge or dredges in the water, shall have all oysters onboard the boat or vessel declared to be contraband. The oysters shall be taken and confiscated by the department or any marine law enforcement officer without court procedure. The captain and crew of the boat or vessel, promptly upon being ordered to do so, shall transport the oysters to a point on the public reefs of the state where the boat or vessel is found and there scatter the oysters according to the instructions of the enforcement officers. Any person who violates this section shall be punished as provided in Section 49-15-63.

### Size Limits

Oysters taken in state waters must be at least 3" long from hinge to bill. At times, however, the MDMR may adjust this limit upon public notice to that effect.

### Limits

Recreational and commercial catch limits are set annually (set by state statute 97-15-29).

### Leases

The Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources conducts a program of oyster leasing. Any resident of the state may lease state water bottoms for the purpose of oyster culture. Oysters taken from private lease areas must be sold designated by tags indicating the official leased number issued by the MDMR.

### Shell Retention Fee

The commission shall assess and collect a shell retention fee for the shells taken from waters within the territorial jurisdiction of the state of Mississippi as follows:

Commercial and recreational harvesters - fifteen cents (15¢) per sack paid to the department on the day of harvest; and

Initial oyster processor, dealer or factory first purchasing the oysters - fifteen cents (15¢) per sack paid to the department no later than the tenth day of the month following the purchase, on forms submitted by the department.

Commercial harvesters transporting their catch out of the state - fifty cents (50¢) per sack paid to the department on the day of harvest.

Funds received from the shell retention fee shall be paid into a special fund in the state treasury to be appointed by the legislature for use by the commission to further oyster production in this state, which includes "planting" oysters and/or cultch materials.

#### **Restrictions**

Both recreational and commercial harvesters must purchase a license from the MDMR. Oysters may be taken only from those waters approved for shellfish harvest by the MDMR. The harvesting, shucking, processing, and sale of oysters must also conform to all regulations specified by the MDMR. Following heavy rains, natural reefs and leased areas may be temporarily closed. Such closures are published in local newspapers and released to local television and radio media. Oysters taken from state waters must be tagged. These tags are issued by the MDMR at officially designated check-in/check-out stations. These stations will be identified in the opening order for oyster season. Both commercial and recreational oystermen must check in at the designated check station before going to reefs and must check out at the same station. Station hours are from 7:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. during harvest. Tags are issued at the time of inspection. Each tag must be completed with the catcher's name, date caught, area caught, and the shell-stock dealer's name and identification number if the oysters are to be sold. The department shall number all tags issued and shall maintain a record of those tags. The commission, at its discretion, may adopt any regulations regarding the tagging of oysters and other shellfish. Oysters taken from other than state waters must be accompanied by a bill of lading indicating the point of origin. Oysters taken for personal consumption must also be inspected, and a tag will be issued for each sack. Such tags will identify that the contents are not to be sold.

#### **SHELLFISH - CRABS**

##### **Licenses**

Commercial Crabbing - \$75.00

Recreational Crabbing (six pots or traps only) - \$5.00

##### **Restrictions**

Crabs may also be taken by trawl; however, the trawl must not exceed the maximum allowable dimensions specified for shrimp and must comply with all other regulations governing the use of a trawl. All crabs incidentally caught in trawls must be immediately returned to the water unless the boat operator holds a valid state crab fishing license. Commercial shrimp vessels are allowed to have in their possession three (3) dozen crabs for personal consumption.

Crab pots or traps must be visibly marked with the license number (MI#) of the owner or registered color code on the buoy. A crab trap float line must be of material easily cut with a knife. It shall be unlawful to have any sponge (egg-bearing) crabs, at any time in the state of Mississippi regardless of where they were harvested. All sponge crabs shall immediately be returned to the water alive. It is illegal to remove crabs from traps for which one is not specifically licensed. A valid crabbing license must be obtained when using in excess of six crab traps or whenever crabs caught are to be offered for sale. All areas north of the CSX Railroad bridges in the three coastal counties are closed to commercial crabbing.

Beginning January 1, 2004, all crab traps placed in or on the marine waters of the state of Mississippi shall utilize the following materials to permanently mark the crab trap for ownership: a stainless steel, aluminum, or plastic tag must be attached to the trap. The tag used

to mark the traps must be legibly and permanently stamped with raised letters containing the applicable licensed crab fisherman's full name. The minimum height of the letters must be at least 3/16 of an inch. The tags shall be supplied by the crab fisherman.

All crab traps or pots placed in the marine waters of the state of Mississippi must be marked with a float of at least six (6) inches in height, six (6) inches in length, and six (6) inches in width. The float must have a highly-visible color. Buoys shall be attached to crab traps by use of a weighted or non-floating line.

Beginning May 1, 2001, all resident and nonresident recreational crab fishermen utilizing traps or pots must possess a valid recreational crab trap license for a fee of five dollars. This requirement applies to individuals between the age of 16 and 65 years of age. Any resident citizen who is blind, paraplegic or a multiple amputee, or who has been adjudged by the Veterans Administration as having a total service-connected disability, or has been adjudged totally disabled by the Social Security Administration shall not be required to purchase or have in his possession a recreational crab license while engaged in such activities. Any resident exempt under this section shall have on his person while fishing proof of residency and age or disability.

##### **Legal Size**

All crabs (except for peeler crabs and soft-shell crabs) must be larger than 5" measured from the tip of one lateral spine across the back of the shell to the tip of the opposite lateral spine.

##### **Season**

The commission may establish a closed season or seasons for the use of crab traps in the public waters of this state. The commission may designate the closed season as not less than ten (10) days nor more than thirty (30) days per year. Any crab trap remaining in the public waters after the expiration to the seventh day of a closed season shall be considered abandoned and can be removed for proper disposal. The first seven days of the closed season shall be a period of time for crab fishermen to remove traps from the water; however, during this time harvest of crabs caught in traps is prohibited. The commission shall publish the season closure dates and areas in a closing order to the general public.

#### **FINFISH**

##### **Licenses**

Any resident between the ages of sixteen (16) and sixty-five (65) years, fishing in the marine waters of the state, shall obtain a saltwater sports fishing license for a fee of four dollars (\$4.00). This license shall be valid in any waters south of Interstate 10. Any resident citizen who is blind, paraplegic or a multiple amputee, or who has been adjudged by the Veterans Administration as having a total service-connected disability, or has been adjudged totally disabled by the Social Security Administration shall not be required to purchase or have in his possession a saltwater sports fishing license while engaged in such activities. Any resident exempt under this section shall have on his person while fishing proof of residency and age or disability.

The commission shall prescribe the forms, types and fees for nonresident saltwater sports fishing licenses except that the fee for a nonresident saltwater sports fishing license shall not be less than twenty dollars (\$20.00). The commission shall require a nonresident to purchase a nonresident freshwater fishing license and a nonresident saltwater sports fishing license if the nonresident's state requires both licenses for a nonresident to fish in its marine waters.

All resident vessels engaged in charter boat fishing, party boat fishing, head boat and guide boat fishing shall be issued a separate annual license by the commission at a fee of two hundred dollars (\$200.00). All nonresident vessels engaged in charter boat fishing,

party boat fishing, headboat and guide boat fishing shall be issued a separate annual license by the commission. The commission shall set the fees for nonresident vessel licenses. Crew members and customers of the licensed vessels shall not be required to purchase an individual resident or nonresident saltwater fishing license while sponsored by the licensed vessels. An operator of a licensed vessel shall be required to report the number of customers to the department as required by the commission and the information shall be kept confidential and shall not be released, except to other fisheries management agencies or as statistical data. All nonresident vessels engaged in saltwater sport fishing tournaments, not to exceed an aggregate of twenty (20) days per calendar year, shall not be required to purchase an annual license as provided under this subsection.

The saltwater sports fishing license is required for all recreational methods of finfish harvest.

Any resident who purchases a lifetime sportsman's license shall be

entitled to fish in the marine salt waters of the state and shall be exempt from the purchase of a sport saltwater fishing license.

Any person authorized to issue a license may collect and retain, for each saltwater fishing license issued, the additional authorized fee.

The fees collected from the sale of resident and nonresident saltwater sports fishing licenses shall be deposited into the Seafood Fund and shall be used solely for the management of marine resources.

Participants in the Very Special Fishing Olympics are exempt from this section.

July 4 of each year is designated as "Free Saltwater Sports Fishing Day." Any person may saltwater sports fish without a license on the "Free Saltwater Sports Fishing Day."

**Commercial Size and Possession Limits for Mississippi**

Species	Daily Bag	Possession	Minimum length in inches	Maximum length in inches
Red drum	Quota*	Quota*	18 TL	1 over 30 TL
Spotted seatrout	Quota**	Quota**	14 TL	
Mullet	No Limit	No Limit	10 TL	
Cobia***	2	2	37 TL	
Spanish mackerel	No Limit	No Limit	14 FL	
Red snapper	Quota	Quota	16 TL	
Flounder	Quota****	Quota****	12 TL	

\*There is a 35,000 lb annual commercial quota.

\*\*There is a 40,000 lb limit.

\*\*\*No commercial sale of cobia is allowed.

\*\*\*\*74,000 lb annual commercial quota.

An annual Total Allowable Catch for commercial landing of flounders will be set at 74,000 lbs beginning March 1, 2002, and ending September 30, 2002. Thereafter, the commercial fishing season will begin October 1, 2002, ending September 30 of each following year.

It shall be unlawful for any person, firm or corporation to sell, offer for sale, barter, trade or purchase any red drum smaller than the

minimum legal length established in Mississippi for red drum or red drum taken from the waters of the state of Mississippi during a closed commercial season for red drum.

Saltwater fishermen cannot use multiple-point hooks (i.e., treble hooks) when fishing with live, dead, or cut bait.

**Recreational Size and Possession Limits for Mississippi**

Species	Daily Bag	Possession	Minimum Length (inches)	Maximum Length (inches)
Red drum*	3	3	18 TL	1 over 30 TL
Spotted seatrout	15	15	14 TL	No Limit

Cobia **	2	2	37 TL	No Limit
King mackerel	2	2	24 FL	No Limit
Red snapper	4	4	16 TL	
Flounder	15	15	12 TL	No Limit

\*The sale, offering for sale, purchase, barter or trade of red drum caught by saltwater sports fishermen is prohibited.

\*\*The sale of cobia is prohibited.

It shall be unlawful for recreational fishermen to possess more than four (4) of the following shark species in aggregate per person per day:

Small coastal sharks

- Atlantic sharpnose (*Rhizoprionodon terraenovae*)
- Finetooth (*Carcharhinus isodon*)
- Blacknose (*Carcharhinus acronotus*)
- Bonnethead (*Sphyrna tiburo*)

It shall be unlawful for recreational fishermen to possess more than one (1) of the following shark species per person per day and no more than three (3) of the following shark species in aggregate per vessel per day:

Large coastal sharks

- Sandbar (*Carcharhinus plumbeus*)
- Blacktip (*Carcharhinus limbatus*)
- Spinner (*Carcharhinus brevipinna*)
- Silky (*Carcharhinus falciformis*)
- Bull (*Carcharhinus leucas*)
- Tiger (*Galeocerdo cuvieri*)
- Lemon (*Negaprion brevirostris*)
- Nurse (*Ginglymostoma cirratum*)
- Scalloped hammerhead (*Sphyrna lewini*)
- Great hammerhead (*Sphyrna mokarran*)
- Smooth hammerhead (*Sphyrna zygaena*)

Pelagic sharks

- Shortfin mako (*Isurus oxyrinchus*)
- Porbeagle (*Lamna nasus*)
- Thresher (*Alopias vulpinus*)
- Blue (*Prionace glauca*)
- Oceanic whitetip (*Carcharhinus longimanus*)

It shall be unlawful for recreational fishermen to possess any of the following species of sharks:

- Sand tiger (*Odontaspis taurus*)
- Bigeye sand tiger (*Odontaspis noronhai*)
- Whale (*Rhincodon typus*)
- Basking (*Cetorhinus maximus*)
- White (*Carcharodon carcharias*)
- Dusky (*Carcharhinus obscurus*)
- Bignose (*Carcharhinus altimus*)
- Galapagos (*Carcharhinus galapagensis*)
- Night (*Carcharhinus signatus*)
- Caribbean reef (*Carcharhinus perezi*)
- Narrowtooth (*Carcharhinus brachyurus*)
- Caribbean sharpnose (*Rhizorionodon porosus*)
- Smalltail (*Carcharhinus porosus*)
- Atlantic angel (*Squatina dumerili*)
- Longfin mako (*Isurus paucus*)
- Bigeye thresher (*Alopias superciliosus*)
- Sevengill (*Hepranchias perlo*)

- Sixgill (*Hexanchus griseus*)
- Bigeye sixgill (*Hexanchus vitulus*)

It shall be unlawful for recreational fishermen to possess any of the following named species of fish under the lengths prescribed:

- Spotted seatrout - 14" TL
- Red drum - 18" TL
- Cobia - 37" TL
- Greater amberjack - 28" FL
- Red snapper - 16" TL
- Vermilion snapper - 10" TL
- Lane snapper - 8" TL
- Gray, mutton, and yellowtail snapper - 12" TL
- Nassau and yellowfin - 20" TL
- Gag, red and black grouper - 22" TL
- Scamp - 16" TL
- Gray triggerfish - 12" TL
- King mackerel - 24" TL
- Small coastal sharks - 25" TL
- Large coastal sharks - 37" TL
- Flounders - 12" TL

The sale, offering for sale, purchase, barter or trade of any saltwater species caught by saltwater sports fishermen is prohibited.

Saltwater sports fishermen not fishing in the waters of the state of Mississippi may transport and land spotted seatrout and red drum with size and creel limits less than those above, provided such fish were legally taken in the waters under the jurisdiction of a state adjoining Mississippi and meet that state's minimum size and creel requirements. Said saltwater sports fishermen must possess a valid saltwater sports fishing license as may be required in the state where the fish were caught. In the absence of minimum size requirements in an adjoining jurisdiction, Mississippi law will prevail.

**SALTWATER NETS**

**Licenses**

- Resident Recreational (Hook and Line) - \$4.00\*
- Resident Gill & Trammel Net - \$100.00
- Resident Charter, Party - \$200.00

Commercial Hook and Line - \$100.00 + \$100.00 for each person on board. Beginning July 1, 1999, the hook and line license fisherman is now required to purchase an additional license which costs an additional \$100.00. This license is a Commercial Fisherman's license. It is also required that each person on board the vessel actively engaged in fishing must also purchase a Commercial Fisherman's license.

Resident Menhaden Boat/Net - \$150.00

\*Valid for recreational hook and line fishing south of U.S. Interstate Highway 10. Saltwater sport fishermen are not permitted to sell, barter, trade, or offer for sale any saltwater fish caught or landed in

Mississippi.

### Restrictions

Saltwater finfish may be taken from Mississippi waters by any of the following methods: hook and line, trotline, throw line, spear, gig, bow and arrow, cast net, and brail nets (less than 12' maximum radius; no freshwater species may be in possession while using cast or brail net), small-mesh beach seine (under 100' in length and with a maximum ¼" bar), Brill net, shrimp trawl, trammel net, gill net, wing net, beach and purse seines (all must be under 1,200' in total length and with a minimum 1½" square stretched mesh size and 1¼" square mesh October 15-December 15), fish traps (smaller than 1"x½" mesh size). Only single point hooks may be used while fishing with live, dead, or cut bait (artificial lures/baits excluded).

Nets, seines, or traps used for catching fish other than mullet are not permitted within 1,200' of any pier or harbor. Mullet fishing is defined as any net fishing activity in which 90% or more of the total catch by weight consists of mullet. Mullet fishing using fish traps, seines, or nets other than cast or brail nets is not permitted within 1,200' of any public or hotel/motel pier nor within 300' of any private pier, provided that such piers are in usable condition and extend 75' or more from the shoreline. Nets must not exceed 1,200' in length. King mackerel fishing is defined as fishing activity in which the sole purpose is to catch king mackerel; and the catching in excess of 10% by weight of species other than king mackerel while net fishing for king mackerel is prohibited. All nets except purse seines and trawls used for mullet fishing must be of mesh sizes 1½" square (3" stretched) or larger. Between October 15 through December 15 of each year, gill and trammel nets must be of a mesh size of one and three-fourths inch (1¾") square, three and one-half inch (3½") stretch or larger, and it shall be unlawful for any boat to use more than one (1) such net. On and after January 1, 1997, all gill and trammel nets must be constructed of an approved degradable material. An approved degradable material list will be on file with the Executive Director of the MDMR or his designee.

Purse seines may not exceed 1,500' in length, except those used expressly to catch menhaden and must have a mesh size no smaller than ½" square (1" stretched). Nets or seines must be attended at all times from a distance no greater than the length of the boat in use. All nets, regardless of type, must be clearly marked with the owner's name or license number on floats or buoys placed at intervals of 100' or less. All fish traps or pots and eel traps or pots must be clearly marked with the owner's full name, permit, or license number. All fish traps or pots and eel traps or pots must be checked and emptied at least once every 48 hours.

Nets, seines, or fish traps are not permitted in any of the following areas: 1) within any river, bayou, creek, canal, stream, tributary, lake, bay, inlet, or other water source entering into salt waters except: Point aux Chenes Bay, Middle Bay, Jose Bay, L'Isle Chaud Bay, Heron Bay, South Rigolets, Biloxi Bay, south of a line between Marsh Point and Grand Bayou, parts of Pascagoula Bay; 2) within 1,200' of the shoreline of Deer Island; 3) within one mile of the shorelines of Cat or Round islands or from the shoals of Telegraph Keys or Telegraph Reef during the period from May 15 through September 15 of each year and within one mile of Horn, Ship, and Petit Bois islands year round; 4) within 1,500' from the shoreline between the U.S. Highway 90 bridge and the north shore of Bayou Caddy in Hancock County.

Nets, seines, or fish traps are not permitted within 100' of the mouth of any bay, bayou, creek, canal, stream, lake, inlet, channel, or tributary or within any areas that would block the mouth of any such water body. Boats are permitted to use only one approved net as specified.

When landing reports, as required by law, indicate that the 35,000

pound catch limit for red drum and the total allowable catch (TAC) for commercial spotted seatrout landings (beginning October 1 through September 30 each year) have been reached, the DMR will, with adequate notice, issue a news release and public notice closing state waters to the commercial net fishing for red drum and spotted seatrout for the remainder of that year. Purse seines may not be used to catch in excess of 5% by weight in any set of the net any of the following: spotted seatrout, bluefish, Spanish mackerel, king mackerel, dolphin, pompano, cobia, or jack crevalle. It is illegal for any vessel carrying a purse seine to have onboard in excess of 10% by weight of the total catch, any of the aforementioned species. It is illegal for any vessel carrying a purse seine to have onboard any quantity of red drum. Commercial fishermen are not permitted to have in their possession any Atlantic bluefin tuna.

It is unlawful for a person to use a gill net, trammel net, entanglement net, or like contrivances for the taking of fish in marine waters within one half (½) mile of the shoreline of the state of Mississippi between the boundaries of Louisiana to the west and Alabama to the East.

It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to possess fish in, or in contact with, any gill or trammel net in a boat in the marine waters of Mississippi in the St. Louis Bay north of the CSX Railroad Bridge; in Biloxi Bay north of a line drawn between Marsh Point and Grand Bayou; in Pascagoula Bay north of the CSX Railroad Bridge.

It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to set or otherwise use a gill or trammel net in the marine waters of Mississippi or to possess fish in, or in contact with, a gill or trammel net in a boat in the marine waters of Mississippi between 6:00 a.m. on Saturday mornings and 6:00 p.m. on Sunday evenings.

It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to set or otherwise use a gill or trammel net in the marine waters of Mississippi or to possess fish in, or in contact with, a gill or trammel net in a boat in the marine waters of Mississippi between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on legal holidays established by the Mississippi legislature and as set forth in Mississippi Code Annotated §3-3-7.

No gill or trammel nets shall be set within ¼ nautical mile of another gill or trammel net.

Gill and trammel nets must be attended at all times from a distance of no greater than the length of the boat in use.

### Gill Net Ordinance

**Section 1. Definitions** - *Mullet fishing* shall be defined as a fishing activity where the sole purpose is to catch mullet (*Mugil* sp.). It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation, while engaged in any mullet fishing activity or "set" to catch in excess of ten percent by weight of species other than mullet. *King mackerel fishing* shall be defined as a fishing activity where the sole purpose is to catch king mackerel (*Scomberomorus cavalla*). It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation, while engaged in any net fishing activity or "set" to catch in excess of ten percent by weight of species other than king mackerel while king mackerel fishing. *Commercial eel fishing* shall be defined as a fishing activity using traps or pots where the sole purpose is to catch American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*). It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to retain any fish or shellfish other than adult eels while engaged in commercial eel fishing. An adult eel shall be defined as an eel at least 6" in length. *Approved degradable material* shall be defined as a material after which one year of immersion in water loses at least 50% of its tensile strength and for which a field test must be available to analyze the material for authenticity or the net must have a placard issued by the Department of Marine Resources which will be permanently attached to the net certifying that the net is made of an approved degradable material. Any material approved by the CMR under

Ordinance 5.012 shall be deemed an "approved degradable material" for the purposes of this ordinance, regardless of whether the material meets the 50% loss in tensile strength after one year of immersion in water.

The possession of a gill net, trammel net or like contrivance, or any other equipment prohibited for use in the taking or harvesting of seafood under this chapter on a vessel on the marine waters of this state where the use of the net, contrivance or equipment is prohibited, shall constitute *prima facie* evidence that an offense has been committed to take or harvest seafood with nets, contrivances or equipment prohibited by this chapter, unless the vessel is a) anchored or moored at a permanent facility intended for the mooring of vessels; b) traveling directly between a marina, harbor or public boat launching facility and a U.S. Coast Guard marked and maintained navigational channel; or c) traveling within a U.S. Coast Guard marked and maintained navigational channel.

Section 2. It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to catch, take, or carry away any saltwater fish by or with any gill nets, trammel nets, purse seines, seines, fish traps, except permitted eel traps, or any other like contrivances, in the territorial waters of the state of Mississippi within 1,200' of any public pier owned and operated by hotels or motels for the use of their patrons and guests for swimming and fishing or any harbor or within 1,200' of the shoreline of Deer Island.

Section 3. It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to catch, take or carry away any saltwater fish by or with any gill nets, trammel nets, purse seines, seines, fish traps, and other like contrivances except permitted eel traps in the following areas of the state of Mississippi:

A) within any river, bayou, creek, canal, stream, tributary, lake, bay, or inlet, or other water source entering into areas defined as salt waters under the jurisdiction of the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources, except Point aux Chenes Bay, Middle Bay, Jose Bay, L'Isle Chaude, Heron Bay, Pascagoula Bay, south of a line beginning at a point on the shoreline at the southern terminus of range lines R7W and R6W near Camp Lamotte; thence southeasterly along the most direct line to the southernmost point of Twin Islands; thence easterly along the most direct line to the southern point of Rabbit Island; thence easterly along the most direct line to the beacon "Occ R 4 sec 100 ft" on the eastern side of Litton Shipbuilding; thence southeasterly following the shoreline to the southeastern most point of land adjoining the entrance to Yazoo Lake and South Rigolets and Biloxi Bay south of a line drawn between Marsh Point and Grand Bayou. These restrictions in Subsection A shall not apply to mullet fishing in Pascagoula Bay south of the CSX Railroad Bridge.

B) within fifteen hundred (1,500) feet from the shoreline between U.S. Highway 90 bridge and the north shore of Bayou Caddy in Hancock County.

C) within an area that would block the mouth of any river, bayou, creek, canal, stream, tributary, lake, bay inlet, channel, or other water source entering into areas defined as salt waters under the jurisdiction of the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources. Areas defined as salt waters under the jurisdiction of the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources are specified by Mississippi Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks Public Notice Number 2276 in accordance with Section 49-15-23 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated.

D) within an area formed by a line running one mile from the shoreline of Cat, Ship, Horn, Petit Bois, and Round Island, or from the shoals of Telegraph Keys and Telegraph Reef (Merrill Coquille), during the period from May 15 to September 15 of each year.

E) within twelve hundred (1,200) feet of any private piers which extend a distance of 75' or more from the shoreline, except when mullet fishing.

F) within 300' of any private piers which extend a distance of 75' or more from the shoreline when mullet fishing.

G) All of the aforementioned piers must be in usable condition with boards spaced in such a way that persons can walk the entire distance of the pier.

Section 4. Notwithstanding the provisions of Sections 2 and 3 above, it shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to set, use or possess a gill or trammel net in the marine waters of the state of Mississippi contrary to the following restrictions:

A) from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. no gill and trammel nets shall be set or otherwise used for the taking of aquatic life within ½ nautical mile of the shoreline or any manmade structure attached to the shoreline from Bayou Caddy in Hancock County to Marsh Point in Ocean Springs, Jackson County.

B) from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. no gill and trammel nets shall be set or otherwise used for the taking of aquatic life within one-quarter nautical mile of the shoreline or any manmade structure attached to the shoreline from Bayou Caddy in Hancock County to Marsh Point in Ocean Springs, Jackson County.

C) It shall be unlawful for any person, firm or corporation to possess fish in, or in contact with, any gill or trammel net in a boat in the marine waters of Mississippi in the St. Louis Bay north of the CSX Railroad Bridge; in Biloxi Bay north of a line drawn between Marsh Point and Grand Bayou; in Pascagoula Bay north of the CSX Railroad bridge.

D) It shall be unlawful for any person, firm or corporation to set or otherwise use a gill or trammel net in the marine waters of Mississippi or to possess fish in, or contact with, a gill or trammel net in a boat in the marine waters of Mississippi between 6:00 a.m. on Saturday mornings and 6:00 p.m. on Sunday evenings.

E) It shall be unlawful for any person, firm or corporation to set or otherwise use a gill or trammel net in the marine waters of Mississippi or to possess fish in, or in contact with, a gill or trammel net in the marine waters of Mississippi or to possess fish in, or in contact with, a gill or trammel net in a boat in the marine waters of Mississippi between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on legal holidays established by the Mississippi legislature and as set forth in Mississippi Code Annotated §3-3-7.

F) No gill or trammel net shall be set within one-quarter mile of another gill or trammel net.

G) Gill and trammel nets must be attended at all times from a distance of no greater than the length of the boat in use.

H) On and after January 1, 1997, all gill and trammel nets must be constructed of an approved degradable material. An approved degradable materials list will be on file with the Executive Director of the Department of Marine Resources or his designee. Any material that has not been approved by the Commission on Marine Resources by the October 15, 1996 CMR meeting must meet the requirements of the approved degradable materials definition.

Section 5. It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to engage in commercial eel fishing activities by trap or pot in all areas defined as salt waters under the jurisdiction of the Mississippi Commission of Marine Resources by Public Notice No. 2276 in accordance with Section 49-15-23 of the Mississippi Code of 1972,

Annotated, without first obtaining a commercial eel permit from the Department of Marine Resources.

Section 6. It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to use at any time trammel nets, gill nets, seines, or any other like contrivances in excess of twelve hundred (1,200) feet in length. Except when fishing gill and trammel nets between October 15 through December 15 of each year, nets must be of a mesh size of 1½" square, 3" stretch or larger, and it shall be unlawful for any boat to use more than one such net. Between October 15 through December 15 of each year, gill and trammel nets must be a mesh size of 1¾" square, 3½" stretch or larger, and it shall be unlawful for any boat to use more than one such net.

Section 7. It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation other than licensed menhaden vessels engaged in menhaden fishing, to use or have in possession purse seine(s) in excess of fifteen hundred (1,500) feet in length. Said nets must be of a mesh size of ½" square, 1" stretch mesh or larger.

Section 8. It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to engage in commercial eel fishing as defined herein using:

- A) Traps with a diameter in excess of 2' or a length in excess of 4' or a muzzle or throat with an opening in excess of 2" maximum measurement.
- B) Traps with a mesh size smaller than ½" x 1".
- C) Pots larger than 24"x24"x15" or having a throat in excess of 2", maximum measurement.

Section 9. It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to leave a gill net, trammel net, purse seine, seine or any other net like contrivance governed by the restrictions set forth in this Ordinance unattended in the waters of this state, and at least one person shall be required to stand by, within one boat length of the boat using said net, at all times the net is in the water. It shall further be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to use or have in their possession a gill net, trammel net, seine or like contrivance on the waters of this state without a visible buoy attached every one hundred feet clearly marked with the license number or owner's full name thereon.

Section 10. It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to use or have in their possession in or on the waters of this state any fish traps, fish pots, eel traps, eel pots, or like contrivances that are not clearly marked with the owner's full name, permit, or license number. It shall further be unlawful for said person, firm, or corporation to fail to check and empty each trap, pot, or like contrivance at least once every 48 hours.

Section 11. The Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources, in accordance with the provisions of a duly adopted Commission management plan, published and filed with the Secretary of State; or in accordance with a management plan developed by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and approved by the United States Secretary of Commerce; may establish annual total allowable catch (TAC) rates for commercial and recreational fishermen. Said catch rates may apply to red drum, spotted seatrout, mullet, brown shrimp, white shrimp, blue crabs, or any other species of fish or shellfish which the Commission deems necessary to advisable. Furthermore, the Commission may close a fishery or disallow the

taking of any particular species of fish or shellfish by commercial fishermen, recreational fishermen or both commercial and recreational fishermen in response to catches meeting or exceeding a TAC established by order of the Commission. It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to violate any of the provisions of such management plans as approved by the Commission or to exceed the TAC levels which may be established annually for any species of fish or shellfish.

Section 12. An annual TAC for commercial landings of red drum (*Sciaenops ocellatus*) has been set at thirty-five thousand (35,000) pounds beginning October 1, 1990 and ending September 30 of each following year.

Section 13. An annual TAC for commercial landings of spotted seatrout (*Cynoscion nebulosus*) has been set at forty thousand (40,000) pounds beginning October 1, 1995 and ending September 30 of each following year.

Section 14. It shall further be unlawful for any person, firm or corporation to sell, offer for sale, barter, trade or purchase cobia landed in Mississippi. Cobia and any species of finfish that have an established annual quota and are landed legally elsewhere and/or transported into or within Mississippi for sale, must be accompanied by an affidavit or certificate from the regulating agency of the point of origin stating that the fish were legally landed or accompanied by a bill of lading if imported from a foreign country. Cobia and any species of finfish that have an established annual quota and are raised on permitted aquaculture facilities must be accompanied by a bill of lading with the permit number attached and may be sold below the prescribed minimum lengths.

Section 15. The restrictions, with the exception of Section 11, outlined in this ordinance do not apply to Brill nets, cast nets, drop nets for crabs, small mesh beach seines not exceeding 100' in length, and having a mesh size not to exceed ½" bar-½" stretch, trawls for the catching of shrimp, purse seines for the catching of menhaden, or nets, traps, or pots for experimental purposes approved and duly permitted by the Commission on Marine Resources.

Section 16. Any person, firm, or corporation convicted by violating any of the provisions of this ordinance shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and penalized in accordance with Section 49-15-63 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated. Violations of more than one section or subsection of this ordinance, or part thereof, shall be considered separate offenses and punished as such.

Section 17. Each section and subsection of this ordinance shall be declared separable, and if any section or subsection or part thereof shall be held invalid or unconstitutional, the balance of said ordinance shall remain in full force and effect.

#### **SEAFOOD BUSINESS LICENSES**

- Interstate Commerce - \$20.00
- Resident Seafood Dealer - \$100.00
- Resident Seafood Processor - \$200.00
- Resident Menhaden Processor - \$500.00
- Transport Permit - \$100.00

A nonresident will pay the same fee for a license that a Mississippi resident is charged as a non-resident if the fee is more than that listed. For a detailed listing of license fees contact the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources at (228) 374-5000.

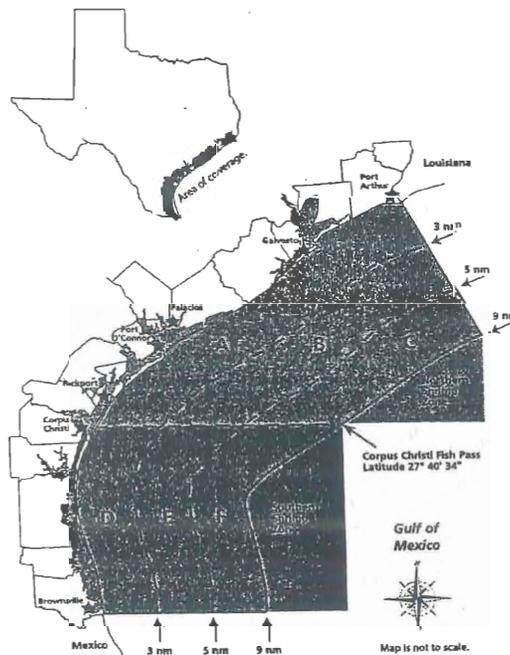
## TEXAS

Information in this section is current as of September 1, 2003 and may change due to Texas Legislative or Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission action(s). This section is only a brief and incomplete summary of Texas fishing regulations. More detailed information can be obtained by contacting the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744 (1-800-792-1112) or (512) 389-4628.

### Residency Requirements

A resident is defined as a person who has lived continuously in Texas for more than six months or any member of the Armed Services (and their dependents) on active duty.

### SHRIMP



### Shrimp License Management

A limited entry plan for the Texas bay and bait shrimp fishery became effective June 1995. The department may renew a bay or bait license only if the person seeking renewal owns the commercial bay and/or bait shrimp boat for which the license renewal is sought and held the bay and/or bait license during the preceding year.

### Commercial Shrimp Licenses

Gulf Shrimp Boat License  
Resident \$495.00  
Nonresident \$1,485.00

Required for each boat that must be registered under federal or

state laws and is used in the Gulf of Mexico or "outside" waters of the state for taking shrimp and other aquatic products for pay, barter, sale, or exchange or for boats unloading within the state such products taken outside the state's waters.

Bay Shrimp Boat License  
Resident \$382.80  
Nonresident \$825.00

Required for each boat that must be registered under federal or state laws and is used in the inside major bay waters of the state for taking shrimp for pay, barter, sale, or exchange.

Bait Shrimp Boat License

Resident \$348.00  
 Nonresident \$750.00

Required for each boat that must be registered under federal or state laws and is used in the inside waters of the state for taking bait shrimp for pay, barter, sale, or exchange.

Commercial Shrimp Boat Captain's License  
 Resident \$30.00  
 Nonresident \$120.00

Required of any person who operates a commercial shrimp boat catching or attempting to catch shrimp and other aquatic products from the public waters of this state or unloading or

attempting to unload in this state shrimp and other aquatic products taken from waters outside this state.

**Recreational Shrimping Licenses**

Resident Sportfishing License - \$23.00  
 Temporary (3-day) Resident Sportfishing License - \$12.00  
 Temporary (10-day) Resident Sportfishing License - \$15.00  
 Nonresident Sportfishing License - \$50.00  
 Temporary (5-day) Nonresident Sportfishing License - \$30.00  
 Saltwater Sportfishing Stamp - \$10.00  
 Individual Bait Shrimp Trawl Tag - \$35.00

**OUTSIDE WATERS**

**Commercial Gulf-Shrimp Boats – Seasons, Limits, and Gear Restrictions**

Southern Shrimp Zone

(South of a line from the Corpus Christi Fish Pass [Latitude 27°40'34"] to the Mexican Border)

The state outside waters of the Southern Shrimping Zone are <b>CLOSED TO SHRIMPING</b> as follows:					
Map Segments	Location	Season (Dates)	Hours	Limits	Trawl Requirements
D & E	Inside 5 nautical miles	<b>Night Shrimping</b> All year	30 minutes after sunset to 30 minutes before sunrise	CLOSED TO SHRIMPING	
D & E	Inside 5 nautical miles	<b>Winter Closed Season</b> Dec 1 - May 15**	Day & Night	CLOSED TO SHRIMPING	
D, E, & F	Inside 9 nautical miles	<b>Summer Closed Season</b> May 15** - Jul 15**	Day & Night	CLOSED TO SHRIMPING	
	9-200 nautical miles ( <i>federal waters</i> )	<b>Summer Closed Season</b> May 15** - Jul 15**	IMPORTANT NOTICE: For current rules, please call the National Marine Fisheries Service at (727) 570-5305.		
The state outside waters of the Southern Shrimp Zone are <b>OPEN TO SHRIMPING</b> as follows:					
F	5-9 nautical miles	Jul 16** - Nov 30	Day & Night	Bag: No Limit Size: No Limit	<b>Number of Trawls:</b> No Limit <b>Trawl Size:</b> No Limit Approved BRDs are required Approved TEDs are required <b>Mesh Size:</b> Not less than 8½" over 5 stretched meshes
		Dec 1 - May 15**	30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset	Bag: No Limit Size: No Limit	
E	3-5 nautical miles	Jul 16** - Nov 30	30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset	Bag: No Limit Size: No Limit	

Map Segments	Location	Season (Dates)	Hours	Limits	Trawl Requirements																						
D	Inside 3 nautical miles	Jul 16** - Nov 30	30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset	Bag: No Limit Size: No Limit	<p><b>Number of Trawls:</b> No more than 2 Approved BRDs are required Approved TEDs are required <b>Mesh Size:</b> Not more than 8¾" over 5 stretched meshes <b>Trawl Size:</b> Otter trawls must have doors at least 3' long as measured along the door centerline from leading tip of door to trailing edge of door; and each net cannot exceed any of the following dimensions as measured along an uninterrupted corkline from leading tip of door to leading tip of door including any and all add-on devices or attachments to the corkline.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Door Length</th> <th>Total Width</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>3' or more but less than 4'</td><td>71'</td></tr> <tr><td>4' or more but less than 5'</td><td>73'</td></tr> <tr><td>5' or more but less than 6'</td><td>75'</td></tr> <tr><td>6' or more but less than 7'</td><td>77'</td></tr> <tr><td>7' or more but less than 8'</td><td>79'</td></tr> <tr><td>8' or more but less than 9'</td><td>81'</td></tr> <tr><td>9' or more but less than 10'</td><td>83'</td></tr> <tr><td>10' or more but less than 11'</td><td>85'</td></tr> <tr><td>11' or more but less than 12'</td><td>87'</td></tr> <tr><td>12' or more</td><td>89'</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Try Nets:</b> Otter Trawls - total width 21'; doors 450 sq in Beam Trawls - may not exceed 10' in width</p>	Door Length	Total Width	3' or more but less than 4'	71'	4' or more but less than 5'	73'	5' or more but less than 6'	75'	6' or more but less than 7'	77'	7' or more but less than 8'	79'	8' or more but less than 9'	81'	9' or more but less than 10'	83'	10' or more but less than 11'	85'	11' or more but less than 12'	87'	12' or more	89'
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\*\*Special Notice: These dates may be changed by the department providing 72 hours public notice on new closing dates and 24 hours notice on new opening dates.

BRD - bycatch reduction device

TED - turtle excluder device

Northern Shrimp Zone

(North of a line from the Corpus Christi Fish Pass [Latitude 27°40'34"] to the Louisiana Border)

The state outside waters of the Northern Shrimp Zone are <b>CLOSED TO SHRIMPING</b> as follows:					
Map Segments	Location	Season (Dates)	Hours	Limits	Trawl Requirements
A & B	Inside 5 nautical miles	<b>Night Shrimping</b> All year	30 minutes after sunset to 30 minutes before sunrise	CLOSED TO SHRIMPING	
A & B	Inside 5 nautical miles	<b>Winter Closed Season</b> Dec 1 - Feb 15	Day & Night	CLOSED TO SHRIMPING	
A, B & C	Inside 9 nautical miles	<b>Summer Closed Season</b> May 15** - Jul 15**	Day & Night	CLOSED TO SHRIMPING	

Map Segments	Location	Season (Dates)	Hours	Limits	Trawl Requirements																						
	9-200 nautical miles ( <i>federal waters</i> )	<b>Summer Closed Season</b> May 15** - Jul 15**	IMPORTANT NOTICE: For current rules, please call the National Marine Fisheries Service at (727) 570-5305.																								
The state outside waters of the Northern Shrimp Zone are <b>OPEN TO SHRIMPING</b> as follows:																											
C	5-9 nautical miles	Jul 16** - Nov 30 Dec 1 - May 15	Day & Night	Bag: No Limit Size: No Limit	<b>Number of Trawls:</b> No limit <b>Trawl Size:</b> No limit Approved BRDs are required Approved TEDs are required <b>Mesh Size:</b> Not less than 8¼" over 5 stretched meshes																						
B	3-5 nautical miles	Feb 16 - May 15** Jul 16** - Nov 30	30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset	Bag: No Limit Size: No Limit																							
A	Inside 3 nautical miles	Feb 16 - May 15** Jul 16** - Nov 30	30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset	Bag: No Limit Size: No Limit	<b>Number of Trawls:</b> No more than 2 Approved BRDs are required Approved TEDs are required <b>Mesh Size:</b> Not less than 8¼" over 5 stretched meshes <b>Trawl Size:</b> Otter trawls must have doors at least 3' long as measured along the door centerline from leading tip of door to trailing edge of door; and each net cannot exceed any of the following dimensions as measured along an uninterrupted corkline from leading tip of door to leading tip of door including any and all add-on devices or attachments to the corkline.																						
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					<b>Try Nets:</b> Otter Trawls - Total width 21'; doors 450 sq in Beam Trawls - May not exceed 10' in width																						

Map Segments	Location	Season (Dates)	Hours	Limits	Trawl Requirements	
A, B & C	<u>Seabobs</u>	Dec 1 - May 15** Jul 16** - Nov 30	30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset	No person catching seabobs may catch or have on board a boat any other species of shrimp which exceed 10% in weight or number of the entire catch.	<b>Number of Trawls:</b> No more than 1 Approved BRDs are required Approved TEDs are required <b>Mesh Size:</b> 6½" over 5 stretched meshes <b>Trawl Size:</b> Otter trawls must have doors at least 3' long as measured along the door centerline from leading tip of door to trailing edge of door; and cannot exceed any of the following dimensions as measured along an uninterrupted corkline from leading tip of door to leading tip of door including any and all add-on devices or attachments to the corkline.	
					<b>Door Length</b>	<b>Total Width</b>
					3' or more but less than 4'	48'
					4' or more but less than 5'	50'
					5' or more but less than 6'	52'
					6' or more but less than 7'	54'
					7' or more but less than 8'	56'
					8' or more but less than 9'	58'
					9' or more but less than 10'	60'
					10' or more but less than 11'	62'
					11' or more but less than 12'	87'
					12' or more	89'
					<b>Try Nets:</b> Otter trawls - Total width 12'; doors 450 sq in	
<b>**Special Notice:</b> These dates may be changed by the department providing 72 hours public notice on new closing dates and 24 hours notice on new opening dates. BRD - bycatch reduction device TED - turtle excluder device						

**SHELLFISH - OYSTERS**

**Commercial Oyster Licenses**

Commercial Oyster Boat License  
 Resident \$420.00  
 Nonresident \$1,680.00

Required for each boat used to transport or for taking oysters for pay or for the purpose of sale, barter, or exchange or any other commercial purpose from the public waters of this state by utilizing a dredge, tongs, or other mechanical means.

Commercial Oyster Boat Captain's License  
 Resident \$30.00  
 Nonresident \$120.00

Required of any person who operates a commercial oyster boat while taking oysters from the public waters of this state.

Commercial Oyster Fisherman's License  
 Resident \$120.00  
 Nonresident \$300.00

Required of any person who takes oysters from the public waters of this state for pay or for the purpose of sale, barter, or exchange or any other commercial purpose.

**Recreational Oyster Licenses**

Sport Oyster Boat License  
 Required when using a sport oyster dredge or tongs to take oysters.

Resident \$12.00

Nonresident \$48.00

Resident Sportfishing License - \$23.00

Temporary (3-day) Resident Sportfishing License - \$12.00

Temporary (14-day) Resident Sportfishing License - \$15.00

Nonresident Sportfishing License - \$50.00

Temporary (5-day) Nonresident Sportfishing License - \$30.00

Saltwater Sportfishing Stamp - \$10.00

**Commercial Oyster Season**

Season is open from November 1 through April 30 except on all private leases with permits from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department where there is no closed season. During open season, oysters may be taken only from sunrise to sunset.

**Recreational Oyster Season**

Same as commercial oyster season. Oysters may be taken only from waters approved by the State Commissioner of Health.

**Commercial Gear Restrictions**

Oyster Dredge - Not more than 48" in width across the mouth. No more than two barrel capacity. May not use more than one dredge. May not have more than one dredge connected in any manner to a winch, chain, or other lifting device during the open public season. May not have on board any dredge(s), other than the one connected to a winch, chain, or other lifting device, unless secured below deck, to or on the wheelhouse, or to the deck in such a manner as to not be readily

accessible for use.

### Recreational Gear Restrictions

Oyster Dredge - Not more than 14" in width across the mouth. May not have more than one dredge connected in any manner to a winch, chain, or other lifting device during the open public season. May not have on board any dredge(s), other than the one connected to a winch, chain, or other lifting device, unless secured below deck, to or on the wheelhouse, or to the deck in such a manner as to not be readily accessible for use.

### Size Limits

Commercial and Recreational - It is unlawful for any person to take or possess a cargo of oysters more than 15% of which are between ¾" and 3" measured from beak to bill or along an imaginary line through the long axis of the shell.

### Oyster Bag Limits

Commercial - Commercial boats are limited to not more than 50 barrels of legal oysters. Not more than two barrels of unculled oysters are permitted onboard while fishing on a reef.

Recreational - It is unlawful to take or possess more than two bushels of legal sized oysters per person.

### Leases

Leases are granted to individuals upon approval of Coastal Fisheries Division.

## SHELLFISH - CRABS

On June 20, 1997, legislation was passed authorizing the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission to establish a license limitation system for the Texas commercial crab fishery.

### Commercial Crab Licenses

Commercial Crab Fisherman's License  
Resident \$600.00  
Nonresident \$2,400.00

Required for any person who takes crabs from the waters of this state for pay for the purpose of sale, barter, or exchange or any other commercial purpose.

General Commercial Fisherman's License  
Resident \$24.00  
Nonresident \$180.00

Required for any person operating a boat bearing a commercial crab fisherman's license or crab fishing under the license of a commercial crab fisherman.

### Recreational Crab Licenses

Resident Sportfishing License - \$23.00  
Temporary (3-day) Resident Sportfishing License - \$12.00  
Temporary (14-day) Resident Sportfishing License - \$15.00  
Nonresident Sportfishing License - \$50.00  
Temporary (5-day) Nonresident Sportfishing License - \$30.00  
Saltwater Sportfishing Stamp - \$10.00

### Commercial Crab Season

No closed season for the taking of crabs other than the closure established by the Texas Parks & Wildlife Commission. No person may remove crab traps from the water or remove crabs from crab traps during the period from 30 minutes after sunset to 30 minutes before sunrise.

### Recreational Crab Season

No closed season for the taking of crabs other than the closure established by the Texas Parks & Wildlife Commission. No person may remove crab traps from the water or remove crabs from crab traps during the period from 30 minutes after sunset to 30 minutes before

sunrise.

### Crab Restrictions

Possession and Sale - It is unlawful to possess egg bearing (sponge) crabs of any species, to purchase or sell a female crab that has its abdominal apron detached, to fail to return immediately a stone crab to the waters where caught, or to remove or possess onboard a vessel on public waters the left claw from a stone crab.

Size Limits - May not possess blue crabs less than 5" in width, measured across the widest point of the body from tip of spine to tip of spine. Not more than 5%, by number, of undersized crabs may be possessed if placed in a separate container at the time of taking. Each right stone crab claw retained must be at least 2½" long as measured from the tip of the immovable claw to the first joint behind the claw.

### Gear Restrictions

Degradable Panel - the trap lid tie-down strap secured to the trap at one end by a simple loop of untreated jute or sisal twine (comparable to Lehigh brand #390, #530) or untreated steel wire with a diameter of 20 gauge or smaller or containing at least one sidewall, not including the bottom panel with a rectangular opening no smaller in either dimension than 3"x6". Any obstruction placed in this opening may not be secured in any manner except it may be laced, sewn, or otherwise obstructed by a single length of untreated jute or sisal twine knotted only at each end and not tied or looped more than once around a single mesh bar.

Commercial - It is unlawful to fish for commercial purposes with more than 200 crab traps at one time; to fish a crab trap in the fresh waters of the state; to fish a crab trap that exceeds 18 cubic feet in volume and is not equipped with at least two escape vents (minimum 2¾" inside diameter) in each crab retaining chamber and located on the lower edge of the outside trap walls; to fish a crab trap that is not equipped with a degradable panel; to fish a crab trap for commercial purposes that is not marked with a floating white buoy not less than 6" in height, 6" in length, and 6" in width and marked with the crab fisherman's license plate number at least 2" high in contrasting color attached to the crab trap; to fish a crab trap in public waters that is marked with a buoy made of a plastic bottle of any color or size; to fish a crab trap in public salt waters without a valid gear tag that has a date that is more than 30 days old attached to the buoy.

Recreational - It is unlawful to fish for non-commercial purposes with more than six crab traps at one time; to fish a crab trap in the fresh waters of the state; to fish a crab trap that exceeds 18 cubic feet in volume and is not equipped with at least two escape vents (minimum 2¾" inside diameter) in each crab retaining chamber and located on the lower edge of the outside trap walls; to fish a crab trap that is not equipped with a degradable panel; to fish a crab trap for non-commercial purposes that is not marked with a floating white buoy not less than 6" in height, 6" in length, and 6" in width, bearing a 2" wide center stripe of contrasting color, attached to the crab trap.

## SHELLFISH - MUSSELS

### Commercial Licenses

General Commercial Fisherman's License  
Resident \$24.00  
Nonresident \$180.00

Required for any person who catches aquatic products from the waters of this state for pay for the purpose of sale, barter, or exchange or any other commercial purpose.

### Commercial Fishing Boat License

Resident \$18.00  
Nonresident \$72.00

Required of each boat that must be registered under federal or state laws and is used in taking aquatic products except menhaden, oysters, and shrimp from the public waters of the state or for boats unloading within the state such products taken outside the state's waters for pay,

barter, exchange, sale, or any commercial purpose.

Commercial Mussel and Clam Fisherman's License  
Resident \$36.00  
Nonresident \$960.00

Required of any person who takes mussels, clams, or their shells from the public waters of this state for commercial purposes.

Shell Buyer License  
Resident \$120.00  
Nonresident \$1,800.00

Required to purchase for commercial use mussel and clam shells that have been taken from public waters.

**Recreational Licenses**

Resident Sportfishing License - \$23.00  
Temporary (3-day) Resident Sportfishing License - \$12.00  
Temporary (14-day) Resident Sportfishing License - \$15.00  
Nonresident Sportfishing License - \$50.00  
Temporary (5-day) Nonresident Sportfishing License - \$30.00  
Saltwater Sportfishing Stamp - \$10.00

**Open Season**

Season is open year round. May be taken only from 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset. May be taken for consumption only from waters approved by the State Commission of Health. Not all public fresh waters are open to the taking of mussels and clams. Check with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for information on closed areas.

**Gear Restriction**

May be taken by hand only.

**Bag and Possession Limits**

No person may take or possess more than 75 pounds of whole mussels and clams from the public waters of this state per day.

**Size Limits**

No person may take or possess mussels and clams, including their shells, of the following species that will pass through a ring with an inside diameter (I.D.) specified for that species:

Species	Ring I.D. in Inches
Washboard, <i>Megaloniaias nervosa</i>	4.00
Threeridges and roundlakes, <i>Amblema</i> sp.	2.75
Mapleleafs and pimplebacks, <i>Quadrula</i> sp.	2.75
Tampico pearly mussel, <i>Cyrtoniaias tampicoensis</i>	2.75
Bleufer, <i>Potamilus purpuratus</i>	2.75
All other species of freshwater mussels	2.50

**FINFISH LICENSE MANAGEMENT**

A limited entry plan for the Texas finfish fishery became effective September 1, 2000. The department may renew a finfish license only if the person seeking renewal meets the eligibility requirements including historical participation in the fishery from September 1, 1997 through April 20, 1999.

Commercial Finfish Fisherman's License  
Resident \$360.00  
Nonresident \$1,440.00

Required for any person who takes finfish for commercial purposes from the coastal waters of this state. Exemptions for holders of an individual bait dealer license, a shrimp boat captain's license, and crew members on a licensed shrimp boat or licensed menhaden boat.

Commercial Fishing Boat License  
Resident \$18.00  
Nonresident \$72.00

Required of each boat that must be registered under federal or state laws and is used in taking aquatic products except menhaden, finfish, oysters, and shrimp from the public waters of the state or for boats unloading within the state such products taken outside the state's waters for pay, barter, exchange, sale, or any commercial purpose.

**Recreational Licenses**

Resident Sportfishing License - \$23.00  
Temporary (3-day) Resident Sportfishing License - \$12.00  
Temporary (14-day) Resident Sportfishing License - \$15.00  
Nonresident Sportfishing License - \$50.00  
Temporary (5-day) Nonresident Sportfishing License - \$30.00  
Saltwater Sportfishing Stamp - \$10.00

**Commercially Protected Finfish**

The following finfish taken from Texas state waters may not be purchased, transported, or possessed for the purpose of sale, or offered for sale: bass of the genus *Micropterus*, striped bass, white bass, yellow bass, flathead catfish, crappie, red drum, jewfish, blue marlin, white marlin, muskellunge, Northern pike, sailfish, sauger, spotted seatrout, snook, longbill spearfish, tarpon, walleye, or hybrids of any of these fish. With a Texas finfish import license, any person in this state may receive directly from another state or country or import, transport, or sell for resale commercially protected finfish. To be lawfully imported, sold, or purchased in Texas, bass of the genus *Micropterus*, crappie, flathead catfish, red drum, striped bass, white bass, or a hybrid of these fish must be farm raised and fed a prepared feed containing 20% or more of plant protein or grain by-products as a primary food source.

**COMMERCIAL SEAFOOD BUSINESS LICENSE**

Wholesale Fish Dealers License

\$825.00 for each place of business

Wholesale Fish Truck Dealers License

\$561.00 for each truck used as a place of business

Required for any person who operates a place of business and buys for the purpose of selling, canning, preserving, processing, or handling for shipments or sale aquatic products to retail or wholesale fish dealers, hotels, restaurants, cafes, or consumers.

Retail Fish Dealers License

\$92.40 for each place of business except trucks

Retail Fish Truck License

\$171.60 for each truck used as a place of business

Required for any person who operates a place of business and buys aquatic products for the purpose of sale to consumers only.

Texas Finfish Import License - \$90.00

Required of any person in this state receiving any commercially protected finfish directly from another state or country, or importing, transporting, or selling for resale these fish in this state.

**NET RESTRICTIONS**

All public waters in Texas are closed to the use of any type of nets, except minnow seines and cast nets, to take finfish.

**Size and Possession Limits for Texas Saltwater Finfish**

All sizes are total length measurements as measured in a straight line from the tip of the snout to the extreme tip of a squeezed tail or turned tail if a fork-tailed fish to obtain the maximum overall length.

Species	Daily Bag	Possession	Minimum Length (in inches)	Maximum Length (in inches)
<b>COMMERCIAL</b>				
Amberjack, greater	1	2	32	No Limit
Drum, black	No Limit	No Limit	14	30
Catfish, gafftopsail	No Limit	No Limit	14	No Limit
Flounder	60	60	14	None
Cobia	2	4	37	No Limit
Spanish mackerel	15	30	14	No Limit
King mackerel	2	4	27	No Limit
Mullet	No Limit	No Limit	No minimum	12 during Oct/Nov/Dec/Jan
Pompano, Florida	No Limit	No Limit	9	No Limit
Snapper, lane	No Limit	No Limit	8	No Limit
Snapper, red	4	8	15	No Limit
Snapper, vermilion	No Limit	No Limit	10	No Limit
Sharks	1	2	24	No Limit
Sheepshead	No Limit	No Limit	12	None
Fishermen holding a finfish fisherman license are exempt from bag limits on black drum and sheepshead.				
<b>RECREATIONAL</b>				
Notice - There may be exceptions on certain lakes; check with Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.				
Amberjack, greater	1	2	32	No Limit
Bass, striped	5	10	18	None
Catfish, gafftopsail	No Limit	No Limit	14	No Limit
Cobia	2	4	37	No Limit
Drum, black	5	10	14	30
Drum, red	3	6	20	28
Flounder	10	20	14	None
Jewfish	0	0	Catch & Release Only	Catch & Release Only
Mackerel, king	2	4	27	No Limit
Mackerel, Spanish	15	30	14	No Limit
Marlin, blue	No Limit		131	No Limit
Marlin, white	No Limit	No Limit	86	No Limit

Species	Daily Bag	Possession	Minimum Length (in inches)	Maximum Length (in inches)
Mullet	No Limit	No Limit	No minimum	12 during Oct/Nov/Dec/Jan
Sailfish	No Limit	No Limit	84	No Limit
Seatrout, spotted	10	20	15	25*
Sharks	1	2	24	No Limit
Sheepshead	5	10	12	No Limit
Snapper, lane	No Limit	No Limit	8	No Limit
Snapper, red	4	8	15	No Limit
Snapper, vermilion	No Limit	No Limit	10	No Limit
Snook	1	2	24	28
Tarpon (tarpon over 80" may be retained with special trophy tag)	0	0	Catch & Release Only	Catch & Release Only
Black bass, large mouth small mouth	5	10	14	0
Catfish, flathead	5	10	18	None
Catfish, channel and blue	25	50	12	None
Crappie, white and black	25	50	10	No Limit
Walleye	5	10	16	No Limit

Special Regulation: Bag and possession limits for black drum and sheepshead do not apply to the holder of a valid Commercial Finfish Fisherman's License.

Special Regulation: The daily bag and possession limit for the holder of a valid Commercial Finfish Fisherman's License is 60 flounder, except on board a licensed commercial shrimp boat.

Special Regulation: During the period October through January, no mullet more than 12" in length may be taken from public waters or possessed on board a vessel.

An individual may take an additional red drum per license year over the maximum length limit of 28 inches provided a red drum tag is attached to the fish.

\*One spotted seatrout over 25" may be retained per day.

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

NMFS Operations Branch	272-570-5305
NMFS Permits and Regulations Branch (see below for tuna permit applications)	272-570-5326
NMFS Southeast Region toll free public service line	866-570- 5301
NMFS nationwide federal fishing violations hotline	800-853-1964
NMFS 24-hour tuna information line (also for tuna permit applications)	888-872-8862 978-281-9260
NMFS Highly Migratory Species Division	301-713-2347
South Atlantic Fishery Mgmt. Council	843-571-4366
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Comm.	228-875-5912
CCA fishing violation hotline	866-WE ENFORCE (933-6367)
U.S. Coast Guard, 7th District (Florida east of St. Marks)	305-415-6778
U.S. Coast Guard, 8th District (St. Marks, Florida to Texas)	504-589-6237
Regional Office for Law Enforcement NMFS Enforcement Field Offices	272-570-5344
Marathon, FL	305-743-3110
Niceville, FL	850-729-8628
Stennis Space Center, MS	228-688-2920
Baton Rouge, LA	225-769-5477
Austin, TX	512-916-5401
Galveston, TX	409-770-0812
Harlingen, TX	956-423-3450

### State Agencies:

Alabama Dept. of Conservation and Marine Resources	
information or to report state fishing violations	251-861-2882 251-968-7576
24 hr voice mail to report state fishing violations	251-476-1256

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	
information	850-487-0554
to report state fishing violations	850-488-9924
	888-404-FWCC (3922)
cellular phone	*FWC

Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries	
information	225-765-2800
to report state fishing violations	800-442-2511

Mississippi Department of Marine Resources	
information and to report state fishing violations	228-374-5000

Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept.	
information	800-792-1112
to report state fishing violations	512-389-4848 or 281-842-8100 or 800-792-GAME

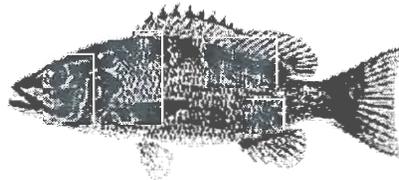
### ERRATA AND UPDATE SHEET

A supplemental "errata and update sheet" will be periodically published to indicate changes in fishing regulations since this pamphlet was published. Contact the Gulf Council to obtain the most recent supplement.

# COMMERCIAL FISHING REGULATIONS

## FOR GULF OF MEXICO FEDERAL WATERS

January 2003



Gray Snapper (*Lutjanus griseus*)

Gulf of Mexico  
Fishery Management Council  
The Commons at Rivergate  
3018 N. U.S. Hwy. 301, Suite 1000  
Tampa, Florida 33619-2272

813-228-2815  
888-833-1844 (TOLL-FREE)  
813-225-7015 (FAX)

e-mail: [gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org](mailto:gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org)  
web page: [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org)



This leaflet was prepared for general informational purposes in January 2001 and has no legal force or effect. Fishing regulations are subject to change. A separate summary of recreational fishing regulations is available from the Council.

Report federal fishing violations:  
24 hour toll-free hotline: 1-800-853-1964

This is a publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council pursuant to National  
Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Award No. NA17FC2203.

### OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- o Reef fish taken under the recreational bag limit may not be sold.
- o The use of longlines and buoy gear for reef fish is prohibited inside of lines approximating 50 fathoms west and 20 fathoms east of Cape San Blas, Florida. Vessels fishing within this zone and possessing longlines or buoy gear may not exceed the recreational bag limits and for reef fish without bag limits, 5 percent by weight of all fish aboard.
- o Stressed areas for reef fish begin at the shoreward boundary of federal waters and generally follow the 10 fathom contour from the Dry Tortugas to Sanibel Island; the 20 fathom contour to Tarpon Springs; the 10 fathom contour to Cape San Blas; the 25 fathom contour to south of Mobile Bay; the 13 fathom contour to Ship Island, Mississippi; the 10 fathom contour off Louisiana; and the 30 fathom contour off Texas. In designated "stressed areas" use of fish traps, roller trawls, and power heads is prohibited.
- o Reef fish gear is limited to no more than 3 hooks in a special management zone off Alabama. Nonconforming gear is restricted to bag limit or for reef fish without a bag limit to 5 percent by weight of all fish aboard.
- o Entangling nets may not be used for directed harvest of reef fish.
- o Vessels with shrimp trawls or entangling net gear aboard may not exceed the recreational reef fish bag limits.
- o Vessels fishing traps other than fish traps, stone crab traps, or spiny lobster traps may not exceed the recreational reef fish bag limits.
- o A reef fish trap endorsement is required for using traps, and vessels are limited to 100 traps. Traps must be returned to shore at the end of each trip and must have degradable panels, mesh no smaller than 1" x 2", 1.5" hexagon, or 1.5" by 1.5". Inside 300' contour, traps may not exceed 33 cu.ft. Two 2" x 2" escape windows required on two sides excluding the bottom (4 openings). Hinges and fasteners of degradable panel or access door must be constructed of either untreated jute string of no more than 3/16" diameter or magnesium alloy. Buoy and trap identification required. Traps (or the ends of a string of traps) must be buoyed and may not be tended at night. Pop up buoys are prohibited. Fish traps will be phased out after 2007.
- o A state may regulate vessels that are registered in that state and are fishing in federal waters for species for which there are no federal fishery management plans or applicable federal regulations.
- o All fish except for bait and oceanic migratory species taken from federal waters must have heads and fins intact through landing. Legal size fish within a bag limit may be consumed at sea.
- o Closed areas: EEZ portion of Tortugas North - fishing and anchoring of fishing vessels prohibited. Coordinates are 24°40' N. lat., 83°06' W. long./ 24°46' N. lat., 83°06' W. long./24°46' N. lat., 83°00' W. long./thence along the seaward limit of Florida's waters to 24°40' N. lat., 83°06' W. long.  
Tortugas South - fishing and anchoring of fishing vessels prohibited. Coordinates are 24°33' N. lat., 83°09' W. long./ 24°33' N. lat., 83°05' W. long./24°18' N. lat., 83°05' W. long./ 24°18' N. lat., 83°09' W. long.  
The Madison and Swanson site and Steamboat Lumps site off the west central coast of Florida are closed to all fishing except for highly migratory species. Coordinates are 29°17' N. lat., 85°50' W. long./ 29°17' N. lat., 85°38' W. long./29°06' N. lat., 85°50' W. long./29°06' N. lat., 85°38' W. long. for the Madison and Swanson Site and 28°14' N. lat., 84°48' W. long./28°14' N. lat., 84°37' W. long./28°03' N. lat., 84°48' W. long./28°03' N. lat., 84°37' W. long. for the Steamboat Lumps site.  
Longlining for highly migratory pelagic is prohibited from the DeSoto Canyon area. Contact the National Marine Fisheries Service at 301-713-2347 for detailed coordinates.

COMMERCIAL REGULATIONS - as of January 2003

Species	Minimum Size Limit (unless noted differently)	Trip Limit	Quotas/Closed Seasons
<b>COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGICS</b>			
Cobia (ling)	33" fork length	Daily bag and possession limit of 2/person	
King Mackerel	Minimum 24" fork length  Maximum of 5% by weight may be undersized.  Fork length: Tip of snout to fork of tail	<b>EASTERN ZONE:</b> <u>FL east coast subzone</u> 11/1-3/31 50 fish per trip until quota filled. 4/1 to 10/31 - South Atlantic regulations apply, refer to South Atlantic Council regulation pamphlet for Atlantic-group. <u>FL west coast subzone: Gillnets</u> 6:00 A.M. 1/16/2001 until gear quota - 25,000 lbs./trip. <u>FL west coast subzone: Hook-and-line</u> 7/1 until 75% gear quota - 1,250 lbs./trip. Then 500 lbs./trip until gear quota filled.  <b>WESTERN ZONE:</b> 3,000 lbs./trip until quota filled	Quota (subdivided as shown): 3,264,000 lbs. Gulf group  <b>EASTERN ZONE:</b> 2,252,160 lbs FL-east subzone 1,041,624 lbs.  FL-west subzone 1,210,536 lbs. Northern Hook-and-line 168,912 lbs. Southern Gillnets 520,812 lbs. Southern Hook-and-line 520,812 lbs  <b>WESTERN ZONE:</b> 1,011,840 lbs.
Spanish Mackerel	12" fork length	none	quota: 5.187 million lbs. Gulf group. Season opens 4/1 and closes when quota is filled.
<b>REEF FISH</b>			
<u>Snappers</u> Red Snapper	15" total length	2,000 lbs./trip with Class 1 red snapper license 200 lbs./trip with Class 2 red snapper license Commercial harvest prohibited without a Class 1 or 2 red snapper license in addition to a reef fish vessel permit.	quota = 4.65 million lbs. - 3.06 million lbs. on a Feb. 1 opening (open first 10 days of each month until sub-quota filled), remainder on a Oct. 1 opening (open first 10 days of each month until sub-quota is reached).
Vermilion Lane Gray (Mangrove) Mutton Yellowtail Mahogany Schoolmaster Dog Cubera Blackfin Queen Silk Wenchman	10" total length 8" total length 12" total length 16" total length 12" total length 12" total length 12" total length 12" total length 12" total length 12" total length none none none none	none none none none none none none none none none none none none none	
		Total length: Tip of snout to tip of tail	
Deep-Water Groupers Misty Snowy Yellowedge Warsaw Speckled Hind	none none none none none	none none none none none	quota: 1.6 million lbs.  Includes scamp after shallow-water grouper quota is filled.
<u>Shallow-Water Groupers</u> Black Gag Red Yellowfin Scamp Yellowmouth Rock Hind Red Hind	24" total length 24" total length 20" total length 20" total length 16" total length none none none	none none none none none none none none	quota: 9.8 million lbs.  Includes all groupers other than those classified as deep-water groupers.  Seasonal closure on commercial harvest and a prohibition on sale of gag, black, and red grouper from February 15 <sup>th</sup> to March 15 <sup>th</sup> .
<u>Protected Groupers</u> Jewfish Nassau grouper	Harvest prohibited Harvest prohibited		
Gray Triggerfish	12" total length	none	none
Hogfish	12" fork length	none	Fork length: Tip of snout to fork of tail none
Greater amberjack	(commercial) 36" fork length	none	Commercial closed season during March, April, and May
Lesser Amberjack Banded Rudderfish	14" to 22" fork length slot limit	none none	none none



ADDITIONAL REMARKS:																															
Stone Crab	Stone crab traps must have a biodegradable panel, and must be permanently marked with their Florida stone crab permit number and color or their federal number and color. Traps must meet Florida construction guidelines.																														
Spiny Lobster	Only diving, bully nets, hoop nets, and traps not to exceed 2'x2'x3' allowed. Bycatch of 5% allowed with trawls. Removal of spiny lobster tail allowed only when fishing exclusively in the EEZ on a trip of 48 hours or more, and requires a tailing permit.																														
Shrimp	Bycatch reduction devices required west of 85°30' W. Long; Prohibited areas to shrimping include the Tortugas Shrimp Sanctuary, Texas Flower Gardens, and the Florida Middle Ground (see next page for other protected areas); Traps are prohibited for the harvest of royal red shrimp.																														
Cobia (ling)	Drift gill nets are prohibited.																														
Allowable Octocorals	Allowable octocoral means an erect, nonencrusting species of the subclass Octocorallia, except the seafans Gorgonia flabellum and G. ventalina, plus the attached substrate within 1 inch of an allowable octocoral. Note: An octocoral with attached substrate exceeding 1 inch is considered to be live rock and not allowable octocoral.																														
Tuna - Bluefin	Allowable gear: rod and reel (including downriggers), handline, harpoon, bandit gear, and purse seine nets. Incidental catch allowed with purse seine nets, fixed gear, traps, and longline.																														
Tuna - others	Allowable gear: rod and reel (including downriggers), handline, harpoon, bandit gear, purse seine nets, and longline.																														
Billfish	Retention prohibited on longline vessels; must be released in water alive.																														
Swordfish	Allowable gear: Longline, handline, harpoon, rod-and-reel, and bandit.																														
Reef Fish	Sea basses, grunts, and porgies have been removed from federal management, and may be subject to state regulations even if caught in federal waters.																														
Sharks:	<p>Large Coastals:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Ridgeback Species:</td> <td>Sandbar</td> <td>Silky</td> <td>Tiger</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Non-Ridgeback Species:</td> <td>Blacktip</td> <td>Spinner</td> <td>Lemon</td> <td>Bull</td> <td>Great hammerhead</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Nurse</td> <td>Smooth hammerhead</td> <td>Scalloped hammerhead</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Small Coastals:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td>Atlantic sharpnose</td> <td>Blacknose</td> <td>Bonnethead</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Pelagics:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td>Shortfin mako</td> <td>Thresher</td> <td>Oceanic whitetip</td> <td>Blue</td> <td>Porbeagle</td> </tr> </table>	Ridgeback Species:	Sandbar	Silky	Tiger			Non-Ridgeback Species:	Blacktip	Spinner	Lemon	Bull	Great hammerhead		Nurse	Smooth hammerhead	Scalloped hammerhead				Atlantic sharpnose	Blacknose	Bonnethead				Shortfin mako	Thresher	Oceanic whitetip	Blue	Porbeagle
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<b>COMMERCIAL PERMIT REQUIREMENTS:</b> (Earned income qualification criteria apply to mackerel, reef fish, and shark permits.) Applications for permits may be obtained from National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, Koger Building, 9721 Executive Center Drive, St. Petersburg, Florida 33702 (telephone 727-570-5326), except for tuna permits, which may be obtained by telephoning 888-872-8862 or 978-281-9260.																															
Permit	Required For:																														
Spiny lobster federal vessel permit or Florida commercial harvester license and certificates	Florida commercial harvester license and certificates required for harvest or possession in excess of the bag limits in the EEZ off Florida or to land or sell in Florida. Federal vessel permit required for harvest or possession in excess of the bag limits in the EEZ other than off Florida or sale other than Florida.																														
Stone crab federal vessel permit or Florida commercial harvester license and certificates	Florida commercial harvester license and certificates required for harvest or possession in excess of the bag limits in the EEZ off Florida or to land or sell in Florida. Federal vessel permit required for harvest or possession in excess of the bag limits in the EEZ other than off Florida or sale other than Florida.																														
Spiny lobster tail-separation permit	Possession of a separated spiny lobster tail in or from the EEZ aboard a vessel. Also requires a spiny lobster federal vessel permit or Florida state license and certificates.																														
Shrimp	Permit required for all vessels that intend to fish for shrimp in EEZ waters of the Gulf of Mexico.																														
Mackerel vessel permit	Harvest of king or Spanish mackerel under quota and in excess of the bag limits. Issuance of new king mackerel permits is under a moratorium until October 15, 2005 but existing permits are transferable. There is no moratorium on issuance of Spanish mackerel permits, but these permits are not transferable.																														
King mackerel gillnet endorsement	Harvest of king mackerel in the Florida west coast subzone using a gillnet. Also requires a mackerel vessel permit.																														
Reef fish vessel permit	Harvest and sale of all reef fish listed in the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan under quota (where applicable) and in excess of the bag limits (where applicable), except jewfish and Nassau grouper (for which all harvest is prohibited). Issuance of new reef fish permits is under a moratorium until December 31, 2005. Existing permits are transferable.																														
Red snapper Class 1 or 2 license	A Class 1 red snapper license is required in addition to a reef fish permit to harvest red snapper at the 2,000 pound trip limit. A Class 2 red snapper license is required in addition to a reef fish permit to harvest red snapper at the 200 pound trip limit. Other reef fish permitted vessels are prohibited from commercial harvest. No new red snapper licenses are being issued, but existing red snapper licenses are transferable.																														
Fish trap endorsement	Required in addition to a reef fish permit to harvest reef fish using fish traps. No new fish trap endorsements are being issued. Endorsements are non-transferable except to another vessel owned by the endorsement holder, immediate family members or in case of death or disability of the endorsement holder. After February 7, 2007, all fish trap endorsements become invalid and the use of fish traps to harvest reef fish will be prohibited.																														
Aquacultured live rock permit	Possession or harvest of cultivated live rock. Appropriate Florida state permits are also required to land live rock in Florida. Wild live rock possession or harvest is prohibited.																														
Allowable octocoral permit	Harvest or possession of allowable octocoral, other than allowable octocoral that is landed in Florida. Appropriate Florida state permits are required to land allowable octocoral in Florida.																														
Commercial tuna categories: General, Incidental catch, Charter/headboat, Purse seine boat, Harpoon boat, Charter/headboat	Vessels must have one of these permits to sell Atlantic bluefin tuna, albacore, Atlantic bonito, bigeye tuna, skipjack tuna or yellowfin tuna. Separate quota and gear restrictions apply to each category. For further information on required permits for tuna and other highly migratory species, contact the NMFS HMS Management Division at 978-281-9260.																														
Swordfish vessel permit	Vessels must have a directed or incidental limited access permit for commercial harvest and sale of swordfish under quota.																														
Shark vessel permit	Vessels must have a directed or incidental limited access permit for harvest and sale of sharks listed in the management unit of the Atlantic Sharks Fishery Management Plan under quota and in excess of the bag limits.																														
<b>FISH LENGTHS</b>																															
Fork length: Tip of snout to fork of tail	Curved fork length: Tip of the upper jaw to fork of tail measured along the contour of the middle of the body																														
Total length: Tip of snout to tip of tail	Carcass length: Curved measure from posterior edge of gill opening to anterior portion of caudal keel																														
Dressed weight: Fish has been gutted and the head and fins removed, but is otherwise in whole condition																															

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

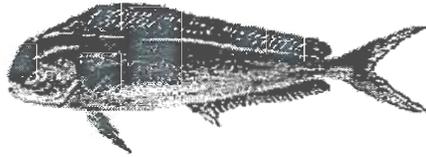
NMFS Operations Branch	727-570-5305
NMFS Permits and Regulations Branch (see below for tuna permit applications)	727-570-5326
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## ERRATA AND UPDATE SHEET

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# RECREATIONAL FISHING REGULATIONS FOR GULF OF MEXICO FEDERAL WATERS

January 2003



Dolphin (*Coryphaena hippurus*)

Gulf of Mexico  
Fishery Management Council  
The Commons at Rivergate  
3018 N. U.S. Hwy. 301, Suite 1000  
Tampa, Florida 33619-2272

813-228-2815  
888-833-1844 (TOLL-FREE)  
813-225-7015 (FAX)

e-mail: [gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org](mailto:gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org)  
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## WHAT IS THE GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL?

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) is one of eight regional Fishery Management Councils that were established by the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976. The Council prepares fishery plans which are designed to manage fishery resources within the 200-mile limit of the Gulf of Mexico.

The Council consists of 17 voting members who are: the Southeast Regional Administrator of NMFS (or his designee), the directors of the 5 Gulf state marine resource management agencies (or their designees), and 11 members who are nominated by the state governors and appointed by the Secretary of Commerce for three year terms (and can serve for a maximum of three consecutive terms). In addition, there are 4 nonvoting members representing the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of State, and the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

The Council meets every two months at various locations around the Gulf coast. Before final action on any proposed rule change is taken, public hearings are held throughout the Gulf as well as at the Council meeting where final action is scheduled. Proposed rule changes are then submitted to NMFS for further review and approval before being implemented.

When reviewing potential rule changes, the Council draws upon the services of knowledgeable people from other state and federal agencies, universities and the public who serve on panels and committees (see below).

Advisory Panels: recreational and commercial fishermen, charterboat operators, buyers, sellers, and consumers who are knowledgeable about a particular fishery.

Scientific and Statistical Committees: economists, biologists, sociologists, and natural resource attorneys who are knowledgeable about the technical aspects of fisheries in the Gulf.

Stock Assessment Panels: biologists who are trained in the specialized field of population dynamics, and who assess the available biological data and advise the Council on the status of stocks and level of allowable biological catch.

Persons interested in joining any of the above panels should contact the Council for information on how to apply.

RECREATIONAL REGULATIONS - as of January, 2003

Species	Minimum Size Limit (Unless otherwise indicated)	Closed Season	Recreational Daily Bag and Possession Limit
SHELLFISH			
Stone Crab	Minimum 2 3/4" claw	5/16 - 10/14	See additional rules on next page
Spiny Lobster	More than 3" carapace. Divers must measure in water.	4/1 - 8/5 There is a special 2 day non-trap recreational season, to be the last consecutive Wednesday and Thursday in July.	6/person, and no transfer at sea between boats (During the 2-day special recreational season, 12/person off Florida except 6/person for Monroe County - Florida Keys).
COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGICS			
Cobia (ling)	33" fork length	none	2/person
King Mackerel	24" fork length	none Fork length: Tip of snout to fork of tail	2/person including captain and crew of for-hire vessels.
Spanish Mackerel	12" fork length	none	15/person.
REEF FISH			
<u>Snappers</u> Red Snapper	16" total length	Season to open at 12:01 AM April 21, 2003 and close at 12:00 midnight October 31, 2003.	4/person
Vermilion Lane	10" total length 8" total length	none none	Included in 20 reef fish aggregate limit. Included in 20 reef fish aggregate limit.
Gray Mutton Yellowtail Schoolmaster Cubera Dog Mahogany Queen Blackfin Silk Wenchman	12" total length 16" total length 12" total length 12" total length 12" total length 12" total length none none none none	none none none none none none none none none none none none	10/person in aggregate bag limit. Includes all snappers except red, vermilion, and lane. Total length: Tip of snout to tip of tail
<u>Groupers</u> Black Gag Red Yellowfin Scamp Yellowmouth Rock Hind Red Hind Yellowedge Misty Snowy Speckled Hind Warsaw	22" total length 22" total length 20" total length 20" total length 16" total length none none none none none none none none none	none none none none none none none none none none none none none none	5/person in aggregate of all groupers except Jewfish and Nassau grouper.  1 per vessel 1 per vessel
<u>Protected Groupers</u> Jewfish Nassau Grouper	Harvest prohibited Harvest prohibited		
Hogfish Gray Triggerfish	12" fork length 12" total length	none none Fork length: Tip of snout to fork of tail	5/person Included in 20 reef fish aggregate limit.
Greater Amberjack Lesser Amberjack Banded Rudderfish	28" fork length (recreational) 14" to 22" fork length slot limit 14" to 22" fork length slot limit	none none none	1/person 5-fish aggregate limit for lesser amberjack and banded rudderfish, excluded from 20 reef fish aggregate limit
<u>Aggregate Reef Fish Bag Limit Species</u> Vermilion Snapper Goldface Tilefish Tilefish Lane Snapper Almaco Jack Blackline Tilefish Gray Triggerfish Anchor Tilefish Blueline Tilefish			20/person of all listed species in aggregate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Reef fish taken under the recreational bag limit may not be sold.</li> <li>o Stressed areas for reef fish begin at the shoreward boundary of federal waters and generally follow the 10 fathom contour from the Dry Tortugas to Sanibel Island; the 20 fathom contour to Tarpon Springs; the 10 fathom contour to Cape San Blas; the 25 fathom contour to south of Mobile Bay; the 13 fathom contour to Ship Island, Mississippi; the 10 fathom contour off Louisiana; and the 30 fathom contour off Texas. Use of fish traps, roller trawls, and power heads is prohibited in designated "stressed areas".</li> <li>o Reef fish gear is limited to no more than 3 hooks in a special management zone off Alabama. Nonconforming gear is restricted to bag limit or for reef fish without a bag limit to 5 percent by weight of all fish aboard.</li> <li>o Circle hooks are encouraged when angling for reef fish because they reduce mortality on released fish.</li> </ul>			

Species	Minimum Size Limit (unless otherwise indicated)	Closed Season	Recreational Daily Bag and Possession Limit
<b>OTHER SPECIES</b>			
Red Drum	Illegal to harvest or possess in federal waters.		
<b>HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES</b>			
<b>Tuna</b> Bluefin	<u>Size Categories</u> school - 27" to < 47" CFL large school - 47" to < 59" CFL small medium - 59" to < 73" CFL large medium - 73" to < 81" CFL giant - 81"+ CFL	Bag limits are subject to sub-quotas by size and permit categories, change seasonally, and are reduced to zero when sub-quotas are filled. Telephone the NMFS Highly Migratory Species Management Division's toll-free 24 hour information line for updates on bag limits and quotas: 888-872-8862 or call 978-281-9260.  CFL - Curved fork length: Tip of the upper jaw to fork of tail measured along the contour of the middle of the body.	
Bigeye Yellowfin Albacore Skipjack Blackfin Atlantic Bonito	27" CFL 27" CFL none none none none	none none none none none none	none 3/person none none none none
<b>Billfish</b> Blue Marlin White Marlin Sailfish Longbill spearfish	Minimum size lower jaw to tail fork 99" 66" 63" harvest prohibited	none none none none	none none none none
Swordfish	29" carcass length or 33 lbs. dressed weight*. Carcass length is a curved measure from posterior edge of gill opening to anterior portion of caudal keel.	none*	none*  *Changes to swordfish regulations are underway. Call 301-713-2347 for updates.
<b>SHARKS</b> Atlantic sharpnose other sharks	none** 54" fork length**	none** none**	1/person** 1/vessel in aggregate**
<b>Prohibited Sharks-Recreational Harvest</b> Atlantic angel Basking Bigeye sand tiger Caribbean reef Caribbean sharpnose Bigeye sixgill Bigeye thresher Bignose Dusky Galapagos Longfin mako Narrowtooth Night Sand tiger Sevengill Sixgill Smalltail Whale White			Harvest prohibited for these species. **Changes to shark regulations are underway. Call 301-713-2347 for updates.
<b>CORAL AND CORAL REEFS</b>			
Allowable Octocorals	Attached substrate within 1 inch of octocoral is allowed.	Fishery season regulated by state of Florida rules	6 colonies per day
Live Rock	Harvest and possession of live rock is prohibited (except for permitted aquaculture operations).		
Other Marine Life Organisms	Marine life organisms from the EEZ harvested or possessed by Florida residents or landed in Florida are subject to Florida's Marine Life Rule. Contact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission for more information (850-487-3122).		

<b>ADDITIONAL RULES</b>	
Charter vessels/Headboat 2-day bag limit allowance	Persons on qualified charter vessels or headboats with two captains for trips in excess of 24 hours may possess 2 days' bag limits of reef fish species, king mackerel and Spanish mackerel. 1-day bag limits apply on all other species and trips regardless of length.
Stone Crab	Claws may not be removed from egg-bearing females. Illegal to land whole crab. Florida daily limit of claws is 1 gallon/person, 2 gallons/vessel.
Spiny Lobster	Removal of tail prohibited at sea. See commercial regulations for trap use. No spears, hooks, or piercing devices. No taking of spiny or slipper lobsters that are berried (egg-bearing).
Cobia (ling)	The 2 day bag limit allowance for charter vessels and headboats <u>does not</u> apply to cobia.
Red snapper	Exact dates of the red snapper season opening and closing dependant on the NMFS projections. Contact the NMFS Fishery Operations Branch at 727-570-5305 for further details.
Allowable Octocorals	Allowable octocoral means an erect, nonencrusting species of the subclass Octocorallia, except the seafans Gorgonia flabellum and G. ventalina, plus the attached substrate within 1 inch of an allowable octocoral. Note: An octocoral with attached substrate exceeding 1 inch is considered to be live rock and not allowable octocoral.
Tuna	Tuna permit holders are required to report by telephone all recreationally caught bluefin tuna. Call 888-872-8862 and select the catch reporting option. For information about fishing under the NMFS tag and release program when bag limits are closed, call 1-800-437-3936. All tunas must be landed in round or eviscerated form with one pectoral fin intact. Head removal allowed. Caudal fin must be intact on bluefin. For further information, call 978-281-9260.
Billfish	No retention unless taken by rod and reel. Sale prohibited. Head, fins, and bill must be intact through landing. Those people conducting a tournament involving score keeping or awards for Atlantic highly migratory species (whether or not retained), must register their tournament with the Fisheries Service's Southeast Fisheries Science Center: attn: "Tournament Registration", 75 Virginia Beach Drive, Miami, FL 33149. The registration must be in writing, at least four weeks prior to commencement of tournament fishing. A tournament registration form is available upon request from the above address or can be requested by FAX (305-361-4219).
Swordfish	Swordfish may be gutted and head removed, but the remaining carcass cannot be cut into pieces while on board the vessel.
Sharks	Sharks must be landed with head, fins, and tail attached. Gutting and bleeding is allowed if caudal fin remains attached to the carcass.

RECREATIONAL PERMIT REQUIREMENTS:	
Permit	Required For:
Charter vessel/headboat coastal pelagics permit	Charter vessels and headboats fishing for mackerels, cobia, little tunny, cero, dolphin, bluefish. Note: Issuance of new permits is under a moratorium effective June 16, 2003
Charter vessel/headboat reef fish permit	Charter vessels and headboats fishing for snappers, groupers, amberjack, tilefish, hogfish, and gray triggerfish.
Allowable octocoral permit	Harvest or possession of allowable octocoral, other than allowable octocoral that is landed in Florida. Appropriate Florida state permits are required to land allowable octocoral in Florida.
Highly migratory species (HMS) Charter/headboat permit	HMS Charter/headboat permit is required for all charter or headboats that fish for or possess an HMS. Call 888-872-8862 for this permit. Atlantic tunas angling category permit is required for private vessel owners who fish for bluefin tunas in school, large school, small medium size classes, and other tunas such as bigeye, albacore, yellowfin, and skipjack tuna. No permit is needed for bonito or Atlantic blackfin tuna. Call 888-872-8872 for this permit. Rule making for the HMS-angling permit is underway that would require all anglers who fish for or possess HMS to obtain an angling permit. Call 978-281-9260 for updates

Applications for permits may be obtained from National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, Koger Building, 9721 Executive Center Drive, St. Petersburg, Florida 33702 (telephone 727-570-5326), except for tuna permits, which may be obtained by telephoning 888-872-8862 or 978-281-9260.

## OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- o A state may regulate vessels that are registered in that state and are fishing in federal waters for species for which there are no federal fishery management plans or applicable federal regulations, or for which the appropriate fishery management plan has delegated management to the state and the state rules are consistent with federal regulations.
- o All fish except for bait and oceanic migratory species taken from federal waters must have heads and fins intact through landing. Up to 1½ pounds of finfish per person is exempt from the head and fins intact rule for personal consumption provided the vessel is equipped to cook such finfish.
- o Area closures: The following locations off the west-central and south coast of Florida are closed to all fishing. Anchoring of fishing vessels is also not allowed in the Tortugas sites. The boundaries of the areas are as follows:

### Madison and Swanson Sites

NW corner 29°17' N. lat., 85°50' W. long.  
 NE corner 29°17' N. lat., 85°38' W. long.  
 SW corner 29°06' N. lat., 85°50' W. long.  
 SE corner 29°06' N. lat., 85°38' W. long.

### Steamboat Lumps

NW corner 28°14' N. lat., 84°48' W. long.  
 NE corner 28°14' N. lat., 84°37' W. long.  
 SW corner 28°03' N. lat., 84°48' W. long.  
 SE corner 28°03' N. lat., 84°37' W. long.

### EEZ portion of Tortugas North

NW corner 24°40' N. lat., 83°06' W. long.  
 NE corner 24°46' N. lat. 83°06' W. long.  
 SW corner 24°46' N. lat., 83°00' W. long.

thence along the seaward limit of Florida's waters to  
 24°40' N. lat., 83°06' W. long.

### Tortugas South

NW corner 24°33' N. lat., 83°09' W. long.  
 NE corner 24°33' N. lat., 83°05' W. long.  
 SW corner 24°18' N. lat., 83°05' W. long.  
 SE corner 24°18' N. lat., 83°09' W. long.

## HOW ARE RECREATIONAL STATISTICS COMPILED?

It is impossible to count every fish caught by each recreational fisherman in the Gulf of Mexico. Recreational catch statistics are derived from surveys that are designed to sample a statistically representative cross section of the recreational sector. Monitoring of the recreational fishery is accomplished primarily through a combination of three surveys:

**Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey (MRFSS):** This survey covers all Gulf states except Texas, and consists of an intercept survey (where catches are examined by surveyors at the docks and fishing piers to characterize species, size and catch-per-unit-effort), and a telephone survey (to estimate total angler effort and proportion of the public that fishes). Multiplying the observed catch data from the intercept survey by the total effort data from the telephone survey provides estimates of total recreational catch. Estimates are further divided into private/rental boats, charter vessels/headboats, and shore mode.

**NMFS Headboat Survey:** Intercept surveys conducted dockside and occasionally at sea provide estimates of species, sizes of fish caught, and other biological materials. Logbooks kept by vessel crews provide catch by species, number of anglers, fishing location, etc. This survey provides estimates of landings by party boats.

**Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Coastal Sport Fishing Survey:** Texas does not participate in the MRFSS, but it conducts its own survey which provides similar data.

Other surveys which may be used include the Atlantic bluefin tuna recreational survey, the southeast charterboat survey, and recreational billfish tournament and non-tournament sampling programs.

Because of the time needed to compile the recreational data and generate landings estimates, recreational catch estimates do not become available for several weeks or even months. Consequently, the Council generally does not know until the following year whether its recreational management measures have been effective.

## ERRATA AND UPDATE SHEET

A supplemental "errata and update sheet" will be periodically published to indicate changes in fishing regulations since this pamphlet was published. Contact the Gulf Council to obtain the most recent supplement.