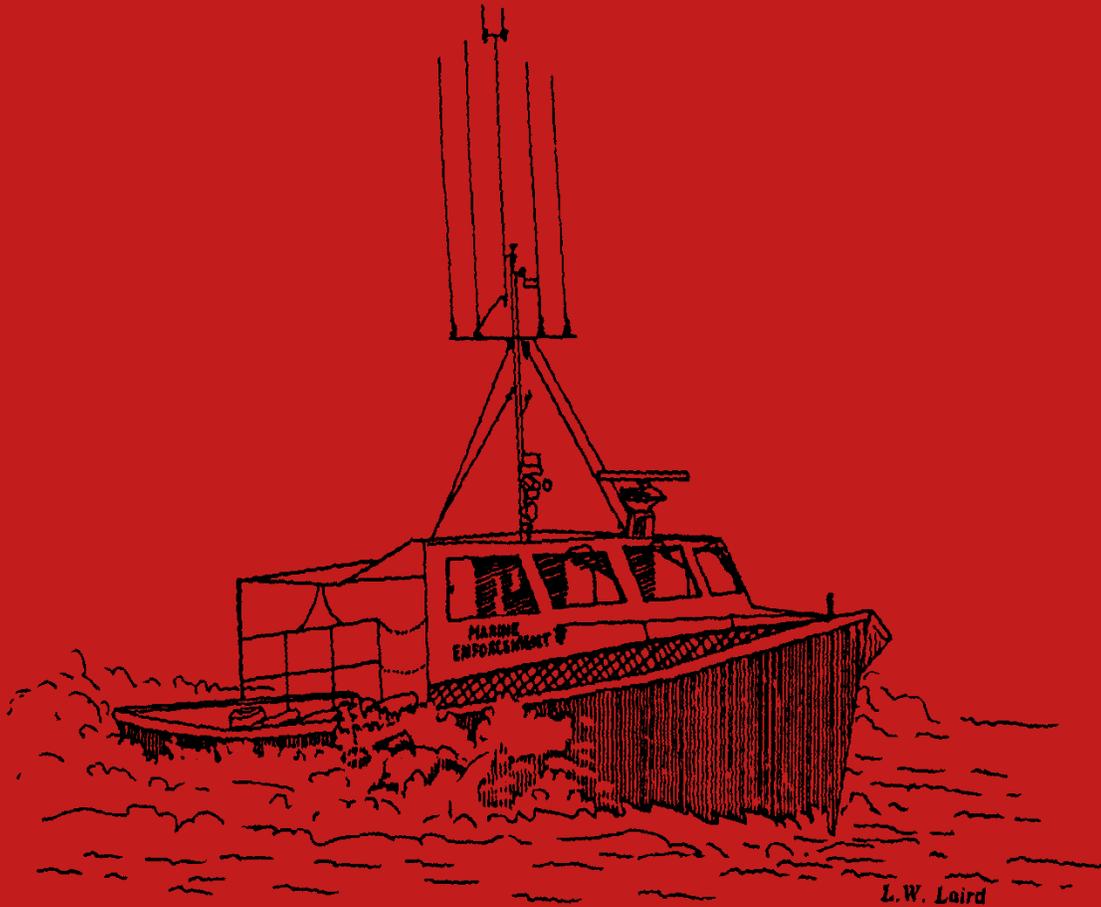


GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

# Law Summary 2015



A Summary of Marine Fishing Laws & Regulations for the Gulf States

September 2015

GSMFC No. 245

*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. Enforcement personnel of the Gulf states compiled it specifically for their use and convenience. The information is current as of September 16, 2015; however, changes may occur in each state at any time. For definitive enforcement regulations in your area, contact state or federal agencies directly.

**GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION  
Law Enforcement Committee**

Major Scott Bannon  
Chief Enforcement Officer  
Alabama Marine Resources Division

Lt. Colonel Rusty Pittman  
Interim Chief of Marine Patrol  
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Captain Rama Shuster  
Division of Law Enforcement  
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation  
Commission

Assistant Commander Brandi L. Reeder  
Fisheries Law Administrator  
Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

Captain Chad Hebert  
Division of Law Enforcement  
Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries

Nicholas Chavez  
Special Agent in Charge  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Southwest Region

Tracy A. Dunn  
Acting Deputy Director  
NOAA Office of Law Enforcement  
Southeast Enforcement Division

Cynthia Fenyk  
Enforcement Attorney  
NOAA General Counsel for Enforcement &  
Litigation, Southeast Region

Luis J. Santiago  
Special Agent in Charge  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Office of Law Enforcement, Southeast Region

LCDR Jason Brand  
U.S. Coast Guard  
District Eight (DRE)

Edited by  
Debora K. McIntyre  
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission  
2404 Government Street  
Ocean Springs, Mississippi 39564  
(228) 875-5912  
[www.gsmfc.org](http://www.gsmfc.org)



**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>ALABAMA</b>	<b>1</b>
Commercial Saltwater Regulations .....	13
Recreational Saltwater Regulations .....	14
<b>FLORIDA</b>	<b>16</b>
Commercial Saltwater Regulations .....	31
Recreational Saltwater Regulations .....	52
<b>LOUISIANA</b>	<b>68</b>
Commercial Saltwater Regulations .....	95
Recreational Saltwater Regulations .....	147
<b>MISSISSIPPI</b>	<b>176</b>
Recreational Saltwater Regulations .....	181
Commercial Saltwater Regulations .....	183
<b>TEXAS</b>	<b>216</b>
Commercial Saltwater Regulations .....	243
Recreational Saltwater Regulations .....	296
<b>GULF OF MEXICO FEDERAL WATERS</b>	<b>306</b>
Commercial Saltwater Regulations for Gulf of Mexico Federal Waters .....	310
Recreational Saltwater Regulations for Gulf of Mexico Federal Waters.....	344



## ALABAMA

The following is an unofficial compilation of marine laws and regulations for Alabama. The information is current as of September, 2015, but changes may occur at any time. For definitive enforcement regulations, please contact the Alabama Marine Resources Division (AMRD), P.O. Box 189, Dauphin Island, Alabama 36528 (251) 861-2882, or visit our web page at [www.outdooralabama.com](http://www.outdooralabama.com).

### **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 prior to making 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 prior to making application for a license. Wholesale and retail licenses shall be issued in the same manner and under the same provisions as provided under other licenses.

#### Proof of Residency

A current valid Alabama's driver's license or two of the following:

- Certificate of employment if containing proof of permanent residency.
- Copy of home property tax.
- Copy of previous year's tax return (mailing address only).
- Health insurance forms with address.
- The last three months of a utility bill with mailing address.
- Student identification plus copy of residence agreement or any other proof of residence listed.
- Military personnel with an out-of-state driver's license must have a copy of order of assignment to Alabama for a minimum of 30 days, or have Alabama as home of record.
- Health insurance card with address.
- Telephone calling card with address.
- Copy of school registration for non-driving students.
- Voter registration.
- 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.

#### Saltwater Jurisdiction

For the purpose of saltwater commercial and recreational fishing and seafood management activities the following areas would be under the authority of the Marine Resources Division as defined in 220-2-.42. Those areas, 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 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 the Interstate Highway 10 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 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 northwardly to the intersection of the Florida state line and the mouth of the Perdido River.

All commercial licenses have a \$1.00 issuance fee and all recreational licenses have \$1.10 issuance fee in addition to the cost of the license.

### **SHRIMP**

License expires September 30 of each year.

#### **Commercial License**

Commercial Shrimp Boats

- Under 30' \$60.00
- 30' - 45' \$90.00
- Over 45' \$120.00

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

Commercial Shrimp Boat Licenses are only available at a MRD office or by mail.

#### **Recreational License**

- Boat License \$18.00
- If using a cast net from a boat to catch shrimp a boat license and recreational fishing license are required.

(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**

There are 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 ten feet (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 sixteen feet (16') as measured along the main top line. There are no restrictions on mesh size.

There are no restrictions on cast nets.

#### **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 expires September 30 of each year.

### **License**

- Sell live shrimp for bait and operate one boat and one truck - \$105.00
- Sell live shrimp for bait and operate two boats and two trucks - \$210.00  
(Limit – two boats and two trucks per dealer)

### **Non-resident**

Non-residents transporting and/or selling live or dead saltwater bait shall pay a license fee equal to that charged to an Alabama resident to conduct the same activity in the state of residence of the applicant and in no event less than double that of a citizen of the state of Alabama.

**Live bait boats must have Alabama registration (no out of state catcher/facility boats)**

### **Place of Business**

#### **Shore Facility**

A permanently erected building from which fishing bait and fishing supplies and tackle are routinely sold to the public; or

#### **Vessel Place of Business Excluding Shrimp**

A vessel that sells live or dead saltwater bait (excluding shrimp) to the public. Such vessel shall meet the requirements for a boat facility, shall provide a physical address where vessel will be docked or stored, shall not possess or attempt to possess or attempt to use a trawl, and shall make vessel immediately available for inspection. Such vessel shall have the words “Live Bait – No Shrimp” in letters at least six (6) inches high on both sides of the vessel; or

#### **Vessel Place of Business Including Shrimp**

A vessel that sells live or dead saltwater bait (including shrimp) from a designated location to the public. Marine Resources Division shall be notified of the GPS position of the designated location ten (10) working days prior to utilizing or moving such location. The vessel shall meet all the requirements of a shore facility and a boat facility, shall provide a physical address where

vessel will be docked or stored, shall not possess or attempt to possess or attempt to use a trawl, shall make a vessel immediately available for inspection. Such vessel shall have the words “Live Bait – For Sale” in letters at least six (6) inches high on both sides of the vessel.

### **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 fifty feet (50’) as measured across main top line except when in an area temporarily closed to commercial shrimping or in a designated live bait area the trawl shall not exceed sixteen feet (16’). No mesh restrictions. Boats shall display the words “**LIVE BAIT**” in letters no smaller than six inches (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 water recirculation or commercial fish aerator and shall display the words “**LIVE BAIT**” no smaller than six inches (6”) high on each side of the truck. Boats and Trucks licensed under a Vessel Place of Business Excluding Shrimp shall not possess or transport live or dead shrimp. These boats and trucks shall meet the same requirements as listed above except the words in six (6) inch high letters on each side of the boat or truck shall be “Live Bait – No Shrimp”

Bull minnow traps in possession onboard a boat on the waters of the state of Alabama or in use by a licensed live bait dealer shall be marked with the Alabama boat registration number.

### **Legal Size**

No restrictions.

### **Pounds Allowed**

Possession of no more than two standard shrimp baskets of shrimp (live or dead) per boat or truck. Possession of no more than four 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 five pounds.

## **SHELLFISH – OYSTERS**

### **License Requirements**

License expires 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 \$30.00  
(Required by all persons, must be in possession, taking oysters for commercial purposes.)
- Oyster Dredge \$30.00  
(Required in addition to a Commercial Oyster Catcher's License before an oyster dredge can be used.)

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 location.

### **Seasons**

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) and the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) are authorized to open and close public areas for commercial and recreational harvest from October 1 through April 30 of each year. Private leases may be closed at any time by the ADPH for public health reasons. 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 and private reefs and water bottoms by hand, oyster tongs or oyster dredge. Dredges may only be used on private leases or in designated public reef areas and must be inspected and permitted by MRD.

Oyster dredges must:

- not exceed 125 pounds,
- have self-dumping baskets
- have no more than 16 teeth
- no more than 3 inches between teeth
- have a rope no shorter than 15 feet with a minimum 6 inch buoy attached with the permit holders number affixed

No more than one dredge may be possessed onboard at one time.

### **Size Limits**

Oysters taken for either commercial or personal consumption must be at least three inches (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; each corner shall be clearly marked and defined with the lessee's name clearly attached. Intermediate markers shall be placed no more than 600 feet apart and plat (including GPS coordinates of the corners) 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). The Director of MRD may require the leases to be resurveyed every 5 years.

### **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 \$0.35/each at MRD Oyster Management Stations. Oystermen must check out at an Oyster Management Station before oystering on Public Bottoms and check back in to the same Oyster Management Station. Commercially harvested oyster must be taken to a designated and certified dealer. No oysters shall be culled or sacked on board a boat in waters closed to the harvesting of oysters. No oysters taken from a public reef shall be culled upon a private reef. It shall be unlawful to possess oysters taken from a private lease and oysters taken from a public reef on board a boat at the same time. Recreational and commercially harvested oysters may not be possessed onboard a vessel in the same trip. It is illegal to possess empty oyster sacks with tags attached.

#### **SHELLFISH – CRABS**

License expires September 30 of each year.

#### **Licenses**

- Commercial - \$60.00
- Recreational – Saltwater Fishing License Required (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 location.

#### **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.

Soft-shell 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 fishermen.

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

Crabs in a workbox 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 workboxes. Crab boxes which are sealed or covered, other than by a grader, shall not be considered a workbox.

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 “catcher’s” 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 area 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 numbers 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 inches (6”) in diameter. At least one-half (½) of the buoy shall be white; each buoy shall be marked with the fisherman’s identification number (assigned by the Marine Resources Division and remains the same for subsequent years) that is visible above the water line. Buoys shall be attached to the traps by the use of weighted line to prevent the line from floating. Plastic bottles are prohibited for use as a commercial crab trap buoy. Owners trap identification number must be painted or affixed to each side of the vessel used to harvest crabs in block type a minimum

of 3 inches in height and contrasting with the background.

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 one inch (1”) in height, colored to be a definite contrast with the color of the float, of block character, and 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 feet (300’) of any navigational channel marked by a lawfully established system of waterway markers or any public boat launching ramp, Heron Bay Cutoff, or the mouth of the 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), Bill’s Bayou (in Heron Bay), Bayou Coden, Bayou La Batre, or their tributaries, in Mobile County, or Blakely River North of the charted position of Blakely River Marker 18 then northwesterly to the southern tip of Big Island (30-38.305’N, 087-55.503’W), 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].

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 by 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 inches (6") in diameter or width. The buoy shall have a legible letter "R" at least two inches (2") 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 ADCNR.

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.

## **FINFISH**

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

Annual license expires August 31 each year.

Required by any person who is 16 years of age or older, but has not yet reached the age of 65, who takes, catches, kills, possess or attempts to take catch, kill, or posses by the use of rod & reel, artificial bait, lure, fly, gig, cast net, bow, crab trap or spear.

#### **Resident Annual**

- Annual \$23.00
- 7-day trip \$9.70

#### **Nonresident – 7 Day**

- Florida \$30.10
- All other states \$27.30

#### **Nonresident – Annual**

- Louisiana \$90.10
- All other states \$49.20

### **Spear Fishing License**

License expires September 30 each year.

Required when completely submerged and using a spear or similar instrument that is held in the hand of the person using same and the use of a weapon, other than a firearm, which propels or forces a projectile, arrow or similar device therefrom to which a wire, rope, line, cord or other means of recovering the propelled projectile, arrow or similar device is attached and is secured to the weapon or to the person using the weapon. The possession of a spear, spear gun or spearing device in a boat, on the bank of a body of public water or on or in the public waters of this state shall be prima facie evidence to the court having jurisdiction that the person in possession of the same is engaged in spearfishing, unless said person is frog gigging only.

- Resident \$6.00
- Nonresident \$8.50

### **Pier License**

Piers located in inside waters of the state \$1,001.00

(Residents may fish without an additional license but must have Saltwater Angler Registry.)

Saltwater Pier License (license for individual)

- Resident \$6.15
  - Non-resident \$11.25
- (Valid only on public piers)

**Saltwater Angler Registration**

Any Alabama resident 16 years of age or older fishing in, attempting to fish in or possessing fish taken from those waters under the Marine Resources Jurisdiction shall be required to register.

It is included in an annual saltwater, 7 day trip and pier fishing license.

Required for residents over the age of 64, lifetime saltwater license holders and persons that utilize a pier that purchases the \$1001.00 pier license.

The registration is at NO COST.

**Commercial Party Boat – Certified**

License expires September 30 of each year.

Any person, firm or corporation that engages in the business of carrying one or more persons fishing in the salt and brackish waters of Alabama shall purchase a commercial party boat license. Also, required for federally permitted charter passengers to possess fish in Alabama State waters.

Persons onboard may fish without an additional license.

**Resident**

- Up to 6 people \$240.00
- 7-25 people \$360.00
- Over 25 people \$600.00

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 location.

**Commercial Fishing License**

License expire September 30 of each year.

Required to sell or attempt to sell finfish or take or attempt to take by hook and line, rod and reel, cast net, gig, trot line, spear gun, or bow and arrow, or other gear as defined by regulation or to possess or transport for

commercial purposes finfish from those waters under the jurisdiction of the Marine Resources Division.

Required to offload finfish to a resident or non-resident seafood dealer, regardless of where the fish were taken.

Does not apply to a legally licensed commercial gill net fisherman or for finfish taken by a licensed commercial shrimp boat.

- Resident \$120.00
- Nonresident \$240.00

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, striped bass (caught under the MRD jurisdiction) and tarpon caught in state waters. No allowance for undersize fish.

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 10 which lies north of State Highway 90 (Battleship Parkway) in which case the line follows the Parkway] shall be subject to those laws, rules, and regulations of the ADCNR/MRD.

No hook and line device may contain more than five (5) 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 game fish 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.

Commercial fishermen landing Gulf Reef Fish shall have, in their possession, an Alabama Commercial Fishing License and must adhere to

all provisions for landing, offloading, transporting and reporting of Gulf Reef Fish under 50 CFR Part 622

Any vessel or individual that is required to have a federal permit to harvest or retain a marine aquatic species must possess such permit to land that species in Alabama.

All species shall be maintained with heads and fins intact through landing. Sharks, swordfish and tunas may be landed in the form permitted by federal fisheries regulations.

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

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

**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 a shark species 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 a shark species, 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.

**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: Atlantic Angel Shark, Bigeye Thresher Shark, Dusky Shark, Longfin Mako Shark, Sand Tiger Shark, Basking Shark, Whale Shark, White Shark, Smalltail Shark, Bigeye Sand Tiger Shark, Bigeye Six Gill Shark, Bignose Shark, Caribbean Reef Shark, Caribbean Sharpnose Shark, Galapagos Shark, Narrow Tooth Shark, Night Shark, Seven Gill Shark, Six Gill Shark, Smalltooth Sawfish, Largetooth Sawfish, Silky Shark Sandbar (unless fisherman possess a NOAA Fisheries sandbar research permit), Atlantic Manta Ray, Spotted Eagle Ray, Goliath Grouper ( Jewfish ), Nassau Grouper

**By-catch Provisions on Sharks for Commercial Purposes**

Regardless of the open or closed status of Federal and Alabama waters 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 percent (10%) by weight of other fish taken.

**SALTWATER NETS**

License expires September 30 of each year.

**Purse Seine Licenses**

- Resident \$1,800.00
- Nonresident \$3,600.00

**Permits**

Permits expire September 30 of each year. Recreational nets shall not exceed 300' in length; commercial nets shall not exceed 2,400' in length (main top line).

**Resident**

- Recreational - \$60.00 + must have purchased a license prior to June 1, 2008 and must purchase the license each successive year.

- Commercial - \$360.00 + additional \$600.00 for roe mullet and Spanish mackerel permit. Fisherman must have purchased a license prior to June 1, 2008 and must purchase the license each successive year.
- If a commercial or recreational gill net license holder fails to purchase a license in a license year they are ineligible to continue to purchase that license.

#### Nonresident

- Recreational – pays the same fee as that charged an Alabama resident to conduct the same activity in applicant’s state of residence provided nonresidents pay no less than twice the cost for license that Alabama residents pay. Must have license from previous year to purchase current year license.
- Commercial. Not available after June 1, 2008.

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 twenty-five feet (25’) in length or four feet (4’) in depth. A license made out to an individual is not transferable; licensee must be present when net is in use. A seafood dealer’s license is also required if fish are sold to other than an Alabama seafood dealer. A saltwater fishing license is 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 Pines to Bayou La Batre Channel Marker 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 commercial gill nets, trammel nets, and other entangling nets may vary by area. The minimum mesh size in the inside waters is 1½” (knot to knot).

Except as otherwise noted, gill nets, trammel nets, and other entangling nets used to catch any fish in Gulf waters in Alabama’s territorial jurisdiction must have a minimum mesh size of 1½” bar (knot to knot). A minimum mesh size of 2” bar is required for such nets used to take mullet in the Gulf & during the period from October 24 thru 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 2” or larger bar mesh during the period October 24 through December 31 of each year must have 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. 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 the 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. It is illegal to use recreational gill nets in Gulf waters and Pelican Bay.

It shall be unlawful to use or possess a gill net, trammel net or other entangling net or seine in the Gulf of Mexico, including Pelican Bay, from March 15 through the day after Labor Day each year from 12:00 noon each Friday through 7:00 p.m. each Sunday.

Year round, gill nets, trammel nets, seines, haul seines, and other entangling nets are prohibited in Gulf waters within ¼ mile of shore, except (and subject to other provisions) waters east of longitude 87°47.826'(Old Little Lagoon Pass) which will be open from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. Monday through Thursday, 12:00 midnight. to 12:00 noon on Friday and from 7:00 pm. to from March 15 through May 12:00 midnight on Sunday 15. 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 ¼ mile of shore will be open to netting west of Old Little Lagoon Pass in Mobile and Baldwin Counties, , except from March 15 through 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. Monday through Thursday, 12:00 midnight to 12:00 noon on Friday and from 7:00 pm. to 12:00 midnight on Sunday. West of Old Little Lagoon Pass to the last house on Dauphin Island (located at Longitude 88° 11.500'W). From March 15 through Labor Day, waters west of longitude 88°11.500' are open from 7:00 pm. Sunday to 12:00 noon Friday. From May 15 to October 2, 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. 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 (3) miles of Gulf beaches, 500' of any shoreline, or into any river, stream, bayou, or creek.

It is illegal to use or possess a gill net, trammel, or other entangling net that do not have a two inch (2") cork every five feet (5') or a six inch (6") buoy every fifty feet (50') on the top line.

#### **SEAFOOD DEALER LICENSE**

License expires September 30 of each year.

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, 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 - \$240.00
- Nonresident seafood dealer - \$480.00 or the same fee that is charged an Alabama resident in their state if Alabama residents are charged more than \$480.00

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

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

- Resident and nonresident - \$101.00 per vehicle

#### **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 MRD Director, on blanks provided for that purpose.

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 MRD Director at

monthly intervals the fisherman's name; license or permit number; species purchased; 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 produce was sold fails to report as required, it will be the responsibility of the fisherman who sold the product to provide to the MRD Director 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, and be at least six inches (6") in height.

**Commercial Size and Possession Limits**

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>DAILY BAG</b>	<b>POSSESSION</b>	<b>MINIMUM LENGTH IN INCHES</b>	<b>MAXIMUM LENGTH IN INCHES</b>
Red Snapper <sup>1,4</sup>			13 TL	
Cobia		2	33 FL	
Gag Grouper <sup>1,4</sup>			22 TL	
Black Grouper <sup>1,4</sup>			22 TL	
Red grouper <sup>1,4</sup>			18 TL	
Yellowfin Grouper <sup>1,4</sup>			20 TL	
Scamp <sup>1,4</sup>			16 TL	
Florida Pompano		3	12 TL	
Vermilion Snapper <sup>4</sup>			10 TL	
Lane Snapper <sup>4</sup>			8 TL	
Gray Snapper <sup>4</sup>			12 TL	
Tripletail		3	18 TL	
King Mackerel <sup>4</sup>			24 TL	
Greater Amberjack <sup>4</sup>			36 FL	
Sheepshead			12 FL	
Mullet			None	
Flounder			12 TL	
Gray Triggerfish <sup>4</sup>		12/vessel	14 FL	
All Sharks <sup>2,3,4</sup>			None	
Lesser Amberjack <sup>4</sup>			14 FL	22 FL
Banded Rudderfish <sup>4</sup>			14 FL	22 FL
Yellowfin Tuna			27 CFL	
Bigeye Tuna			27 CFL	

<sup>1</sup>Commercial vessels which hold a valid Federal red snapper license and/or a Federal reef fish commercial vessel permit may land in Alabama up to their (IFQ) Individual Fishing Quota issued to them by NOAA. They are required to follow all pertinent Federal regulations.

<sup>2</sup>Recreational and commercial harvest of the following species are prohibited:

Shark - Atlantic Angel, Longfin Mako, Small Tail, Bigeye Thresher, Bignose, Sevengill, White, Dusky, Sixgill, Nurse, Sand Tiger, Whale, Bigeye Sand Tiger, Caribbean Reef, Caribbean Sharpnose, Galapagos, Narrowtooth, Night & Basking, Silky, Sandbar (unless fisherman holds a NOAA Fisheries Sandbar shark research permit), Sawfish - largetooth & smalltooth, Rays - Atlantic Manta & Spotted Eagle

Grouper - Goliath & Nassau

<sup>3</sup> Illegal to use chumming or bloodbaiting within 300 feet of the shoreline or any pier in the waters under the jurisdiction of Marine Resources Division.

<sup>4</sup> When adjoining federal waters are closed then state waters are closed to the taking of Gulf Reef Fish, King Mackerel & sharks.

**Recreational Size and Possession Limits**

SPECIES	DAILY BAG	POSSESSION	MINIMUM LENGTH IN INCHES	MAXIMUM LENGTH IN INCHES
Cobia	2	2	33 FL	
Spotted Seatrout	10	10	14 TL <sup>1</sup>	
Red Drum	3	3	16 TL <sup>1</sup>	26 TL <sup>1</sup>
Red Snapper	2 <sup>9</sup>	2 <sup>9</sup>	16 TL	
Gray Snapper	10 <sup>9</sup>	10 <sup>9</sup>	12 TL	
Vermilion Snapper	10 <sup>2,9</sup>	10 <sup>2,9</sup>	10 TL	
Lane Snapper	Note <sup>2,9</sup>	Note <sup>2,9</sup>	8 TL	
Spanish Mackerel	15	15	None	
King Mackerel	2 <sup>9</sup>	2 <sup>9</sup>	24 FL	
Greater Amberjack	1 <sup>9</sup>	1 <sup>9</sup>	34 FL	
Striped Bass	2 <sup>3</sup>	2 <sup>3</sup>	16 TL	
Gray Triggerfish	2 <sup>2,9</sup>	2 <sup>2,9</sup>	14 FL	
Gag Grouper	2/person in 4 grouper aggregate <sup>9</sup>	2/person in 4 grouper aggregate <sup>9</sup>	22 TL	
Black Grouper	4/person in 4 grouper aggregate <sup>9</sup>	4/person in 4 grouper aggregate <sup>9</sup>	22 TL	
Red Grouper	2/person in 4 grouper aggregate <sup>9</sup>	2/person in 4 grouper aggregate <sup>9</sup>	20 TL	
Yellowfin Grouper	4/person in 4 grouper aggregate <sup>9</sup>	4/person in 4 grouper aggregate <sup>9</sup>	20 TL	
Scamp	4/person in 4 grouper aggregate <sup>9</sup>	4/person in 4 grouper aggregate <sup>9</sup>	16 TL	
Tarpon	Tag required	Tag required	60 TL	
Florida Pompano	3	3	12 TL	
Mullet	Note <sup>4,5,6</sup>	Note <sup>4,5,6</sup>		
Atlantic Sharpnose & Bonnethead Sharks	1/person <sup>7</sup>	1/person <sup>7</sup>	None	
Great Hammerhead	1/person	1/person	78 FL	
Smooth hammerhead	1/person	1/person	78 FL	
Scalloped Hammerhead	1/person	1/person	78 FL	
Other sharks	1/person <sup>7,8</sup>	1/person <sup>7,8</sup>	54 FL	
Tripletail	3	3	18TL	
Flounder	10	10	12 TL	
Sheepshead	10	10 <sup>10</sup>	12 FL	
Lesser Amberjack	2 <sup>9</sup>	2 <sup>9</sup>	14 FL	22 FL
Banded Rudderfish	2 <sup>9</sup>	2, 9	14 FL	22 FL
Yellowfin Tuna	No limit	No limit	27 CFL	
Bigeye Tuna	No limit	No limit	27 CFL	

<sup>1</sup> redfish – no undersized fish allowed, one (1) may exceed the maximum size.

<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 through 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 through December 31 – Unlawful to take mullet by cast netting or snagging in Theodore Industrial Canal, Dog River, or the tributaries thereof.

<sup>7</sup>Illegal to use chumming or bloodbaiting within 300 feet of the shoreline or any pier in the waters under the jurisdiction of Marine Resources Division.

<sup>8</sup>Recreational and commercial harvest of the following species are prohibited:

Sharks - Atlantic Angel, Longfin Mako, Small Tail, Bigeye Thresher, Bignose, Sevengill, White, Dusky, Sixgill, Nurse, Sand Tiger, Basking, Bigeye Sixgill, Caribbean reef, Caribbean Sharpnose, Galapagos, Narrowtooth, Night and Whale, Sandbar, Silky

Sawfish - largetooth & smalltooth

Rays - Atlantic Manta & Spotted Eagle

Grouper - Goliath & Nassau

<sup>9</sup>When adjoining federal waters are closed then state waters are closed to the taking of Gulf Reef Fish.

# Commercial Saltwater Regulations

August 2013

**WET YOUR LINES...** Here is your complete guide to commercial fishing in Florida

**Saltwater  
Products  
License  
Information**

page **4**



Florida Fish and Wildlife  
Conservation Commission

MyFWC.com

MyFWC



@MyFWC



MyFWC  
videos



MyFWC



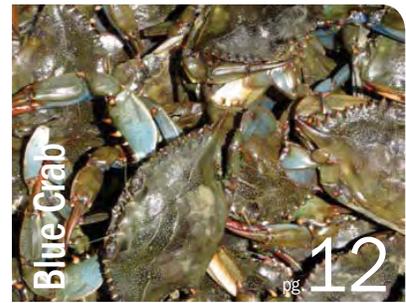
MyFWC



MyFWC  
media



# Table of Contents



SNAPPERS ..... 7 

GROUPERS ..... 8 

POMPANO ..... 9 

SEATROUT ..... 9 

MACKEREL ..... 10 

MULLET ..... 11 

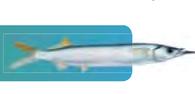
BLUE CRAB ..... 12 

STONE CRAB ..... 13 

LOBSTER ..... 13 

SHELLFISH ..... 14 

REGULATION CHART .... 16 

BAITFISH ..... 22 

The Division of Law Enforcement (DLE) ..... 3  
 License Fees ..... 4  
 Permit ..... 9  
 "Marine Life" Regulations (Tropical/Ornamentals)..... 15 & 23  
 Commercially Prohibited Species ..... 24  
 Industry Input is Key to Fishery Management..... 24  
 Planning a Move? ..... 24

## COMMISSION MEETINGS

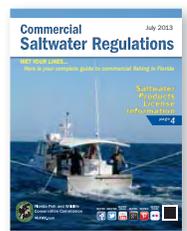
*(Dates and locations are subject to change.)*

The Florida Constitution authorizes the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to enact rules and regulations regarding the state's fish and wildlife resources.

To do this, the 7 Commissioners meet **5 times** each year to hear staff reports, consider rule proposals and conduct other Commission business. Because stakeholder involvement is a crucial part of the process, we conduct Commission meetings at different locations across the state and offer citizens the opportunity to address the Commission about issues under consideration.

- September 4-6, 2013  
Pensacola
- November 20-21, 2013  
Ft. Lauderdale - Miami

For more information about workgroup and advisory board meeting dates, times and locations, and agendas visit our website at MyFWC.com.



Cover Photo taken by Bryan Fluech on a commercial King Mackerel fishing trip.  
 Bryan Fluech, Collier County Extension Director/Florida Sea Grant Extension Agent  
 University of Florida/IFAS Extension

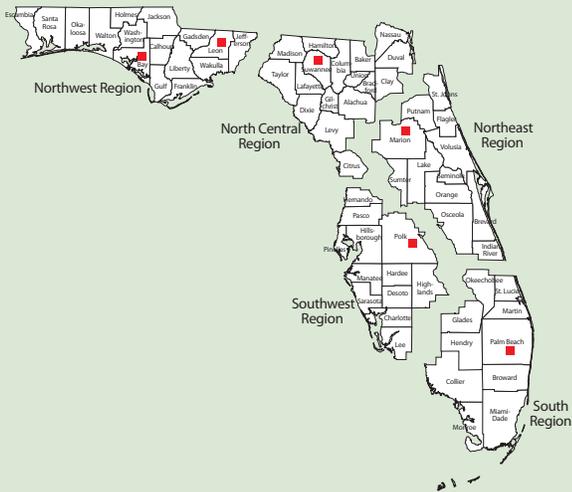
**Disclaimer:** This unofficial summary has no legal effect and is provided for informational purposes only. For the official regulatory language, please refer to Chapter 379, Florida Statutes, and Chapters 68B and 68E, Florida Administrative Code. **NOTE:** This summary is for informational purposes only and has no legal force or effect. **Fishery regulations are subject to change.** This summary does not include regulatory changes that may have occurred after publication. Visit MyFWC.com to view official rule language.

## The Division of Law Enforcement (DLE)

The Division of Law Enforcement patrols Florida's coastal waters to provide assistance to boaters and fishermen as well as to enforce Florida's saltwater fishing and boating laws. FWC officers assist boaters who are in distress, provide advice and direction to those who are traveling Florida's coastline and waterways, and may issue citations for violations of state and federal fishing, wildlife, and boating laws.

In emergencies or if state fisheries, wildlife, or boating laws are being violated, call 888-404-FWCC (3922) or for cell phone users throughout the state dial \*FWC>(\*392) depending on your location, hail on VHF channel 16 or report violations via text message. Most cell phones allow users to send that text message directly to an email address. You can text Tip@MyFWC.com: standard usage fees may apply.

### FWC Regional Offices



#### ■ Northwest Region

3911 Highway 2321  
Panama City, FL 32409-1658  
(850) 265-3676  
Lt. Col. Louie Roberson,  
Regional Director

#### ■ North Central Region

3377 East U.S. Highway 90  
Lake City, FL 32055-8795  
(386) 758-0525  
Roland Garcia,  
Regional Director

#### ■ Northeast Region

1239 Southwest 10th Street  
Ocala, FL 34471-0323  
(352) 732-1225  
Shannon Wright,  
Regional Director

#### ■ Southwest Region

3900 Drane Field Road  
Lakeland, FL 33811-1299  
(863) 648-3200  
Chris Wynn,  
Regional Director

#### ■ South Region

8535 Northlake Boulevard West  
Palm Beach, FL 33412-3303  
(561) 625-5122  
Charles E. Collins,  
Regional Director

#### ■ Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

620 South Meridian Street  
Farris Bryant Building  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600  
(850) 488-4676  
(800) 955-8771 TDD



With the FWC protecting and managing more than 1,000 species, keeping track of what's important to you can be a difficult task. But not anymore. This spring, the FWC implemented GovDelivery, a digital communications management system that allows you to receive information on topics of interest to you.

Interested in Commercial saltwater fishing in the Gulf of Mexico? We've got that. How about upcoming workshops or commission meetings. You can subscribe to that too. Not into saltwater fishing even though you are reading this in the Commercial Saltwater Fishing Regulations publication? No worries. You can subscribe to various other FWC-related topics from boating to wildlife viewing and more.

Most information is delivered via email but you can sign up for text alerts as well. Subscribe today by visiting MyFWC.com and select what news you'd like to hear about and how often you'd like to receive it. And if your interests change, all you have to do is visit your profile and change your preferences. Go get GovDelivery today! Don't miss out on the next big thing in FWC news and information.

### Resource information

#### Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100  
Tampa, FL 33607  
(Toll Free) 888-833-1844  
813-348-1630  
[www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org)  
Email: [info@gulfcouncil.org](mailto:info@gulfcouncil.org)

#### South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

4055 Faber Place Drive Suite 201  
North Charleston, SC 29405  
843-571-4366 or Toll Free 866/SAFMC-10  
Email: [safmc@safmc.net](mailto:safmc@safmc.net)  
[www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net)

### Resource Hotlines

To Report Fish Kills: 800-636-0511  
To Report Fish Tags: 800-367-4461  
[TagReturn@MyFWC.com](mailto:TagReturn@MyFWC.com)

### For federal contact information:

#### NOAA Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office

263 13th Ave South  
St. Petersburg, FL 33702  
727-824-5301  
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

#### Highly Migratory Species Management Division

301-713-2347  
HMS Automated toll free: 888-872-8862

#### NMFS-Permit Department

Toll Free: 887-376-4877  
[www.nmfspermits.com](http://www.nmfspermits.com)

#### U.S. Coast Guard, 7th District

305-415-6781  
(Florida east of St. Marks)

# SALTWATER PRODUCT LICENSE INFORMATION

VALID JULY 1 THROUGH JUNE 30

## Saltwater Products Licenses (SPL) & Endorsements

Saltwater Products License Individual Resident	\$50
Saltwater Products License Individual Nonresident	\$200
Saltwater Products License Individual Alien	\$300
Saltwater Products License Vessel Resident	\$100
Saltwater Products License Vessel Nonresident	\$400
Saltwater Products License Vessel Alien	\$600
Saltwater Products License Crew Resident	\$150
Saltwater Products License Crew Nonresident	\$600
Saltwater Products License Crew Alien	\$900
Credit toward SPL for Apalachicola Oyster Harvesters	
Credit toward SPL for St. Johns Com. Food/Live Shrimp Producers	

## The Following Endorsements Require the SPL:

Sponge Endorsement	Free
Purse Seine Endorsement	\$25
Restricted Species Endorsement (RS) (must qualify)	Free

## The Following Endorsements Require the SPL and RS:

Blue Crab Hard-shell Endorsement (Moratorium on new endorsements)	\$125
Blue Crab Soft-shell Endorsement (Moratorium on new endorsements)	\$125
Blue Crab Non-Transferable Endorsement (Moratorium on new endorsements)	\$125
Blue Crab Incidental Take Endorsement	\$25
Marine Life Endorsement (Moratorium on new endorsements)	\$75
Spiny Lobster Endorsement (Applicants with no trap certificates)	\$100
Spiny Lobster Endorsement (fee applies to applicants with one or more trap certificates)	\$125
Stone Crab Endorsement	\$125
Stone Crab Incidental Catch Endorsement	\$25
Pompano Endorsement (Law Enforcement review required; vessel required)	Free

## Replacement Licenses

Replacement Licenses and Reprints	\$10
Replacement Vessel Decals	\$10

## Other Miscellaneous Licenses

Closed Season Spiny Lobster Permit (Planes & Vessels o/t Common Carrier only)	\$50
Closed Season Spiny Lobster Permit (Wholesale Dealers only)	\$100

## Shrimp Licenses

St. Johns River Commercial Food Shrimp Production License (Credit on SPL)	\$250
St. Johns River Commercial Shrimp Live Production License (Credit on SPL) (Wholesale Dealer License required)	\$250
Dead Shrimp Production Permit Resident Tampa Bay	\$250
Dead Shrimp Production Permit Nonresident Tampa Bay	\$1,000

## Seafood Dealer Licenses

Wholesale Seafood Dealer County Resident	\$400
Wholesale Seafood Dealer County Nonresident	\$600
Wholesale Seafood Dealer County Alien	\$1,100
Wholesale Seafood Dealer State Resident	\$550
Wholesale Seafood Dealer State Nonresident	\$1,100
Wholesale Seafood Dealer State Alien	\$1,600
Retail Dealer License Central Location Resident	\$75
Retail Dealer License Central Location Nonresident	\$250
Retail Dealer License Central Location Alien	\$300
Retail Dealer License Other Location Resident	\$25
Retail Dealer License Other Location Nonresident	\$40
Retail Dealer License Other Location Alien	\$65

## Noncommercial Licenses

Stone/Blue Crab Depredation Permit (Issued to Aquaculture Producers only)	Free
---	------

## Special Activity Endorsement

Chemical Collecting Permit (Quinaldine) (Must hold Marine Life Endorsement)	\$25
Scientific Research, Educational, Exhibitional, Pompano, Snook, Shellfish Dredge (clams & mussels), Public Purpose, Quinaldine, Indigenous Marine Prohibited Species, Brood stock, Experimental or Innovative Gear. (Issued by Div. of Marine Fisheries Management)	\$25 certain licenses; others free

## Marine Trap Certificate Programs

To receive a quantity of trap tags, you must have an equal quantity of spiny lobster or stone crab trap certificates on account with the FWC or hold an active blue endorsement.

### Spiny Lobster Certificate Transactions

Spiny Lobster Trap Certificates/Tags	\$1
Spiny Lobster Trap Replacement Tags	\$1
Spiny Lobster Trap Tag Replacement Handling Fee	\$3 per trans
Spiny Lobster Trap Emergency Replacement Tags	Cost
Spiny Lobster Trap Certificate Transfer	\$2/Cert.
Spiny Lobster Trap Certificate Surcharge (applies only to 1st-time transfer outside family) <b>Fee:</b> \$5 per Certificate or 25% of the actual market value, whichever is greater.	

### Stone Crab Certificate Transactions

Stone Crab Trap Certificates/Tags	\$0.50
Stone Crab Trap Replacement Tags	\$0.50
Stone Crab Trap Tag Replacement Handling	\$8 per trans
Stone Crab Trap Emergency Replacement Tags	Cost
Stone Crab Trap Certificate Transfer Fee	\$1/Cert
Stone Crab Trap Cert. Transfer (to crew per tag)	\$0.50/Cert.
Stone Crab Trap Certificate Surcharge (applies only to 1st-time transfer outside family) <b>Fee:</b> \$1 per Certificate or 25% of the actual market value, whichever is greater.	

### Blue Crab Effort Management Program Transactions

Blue Crab Trap Tags	\$0.50
Blue Crab Trap Replacement Tags	\$0.50
Blue Crab Trap Replacement Handling Fee	\$8 per trans
Blue Crab Trap Emergency Replacement Tags	Cost
Blue Crab Endorsement Transfer Fee	No Charge



<http://myfwc.com/license/saltwater/commercial-fishing/>

## Planning a Move?

Don't forget to let the office of licensing and permitting know your new mailing address! 850-487-3122

## COMMERCIAL SALTWATER FISHING LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

### Commercial Saltwater Fishing Regulations

These rules apply in state waters extending nine nautical miles off the Gulf coast and three nautical miles off the Atlantic coast. Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission rules may also include federal waters. The FWC is charged with establishing marine fisheries rules in Chapters 68B and 68E, Florida Administrative Code. License fees and penalties for fisheries violations rules and regulations in Chapter 379, Florida Statutes, are enacted by the Legislature. The official FWC marine fisheries regulations can be found at: myfwc.com. The FWC Division of Law Enforcement enforces fisheries laws in both state and federal waters.

### Additional Regulations

A state may regulate vessels that are registered in that state and 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 of the state and the state rules are consistent with federal regulations. NOTE: Federally permitted for-hire reef fish vessels must comply with the more restrictive of federal or state reef fish regulations when fishing for reef fish in state waters. A Saltwater Products License (SPL) is required to commercially harvest or sell all saltwater products. An SPL may be issued in the name of an individual or a valid boat registration number issued in the name of the license applicant. Any vessel used to harvest commercial quantities of saltwater products must have a commercial vessel registration. Such license is not transferable if the vessel is sold.

A saltwater product is any marine fish, marine invertebrate or marine plant, except non-living shells and salted, cured, canned, or smoked seafood. Harvest over the recreational bag limit, use of certain gear as required by law, or possession of more than 100 lbs. per person per day of species with no established bag limit is considered commercial harvest. Possession of two or fewer fish with no established bag limit is not considered commercial harvest.

A Restricted Species Endorsement (RS) is required to commercially harvest and sell the following species: Spanish Mackerel, King Mackerel, Black Drum, Spotted Sea Trout, Grouper, Snapper, Red Porgy, Gray Triggerfish, Amberjack, Sea Bass, Tropical/Ornamental "Marine Life", Black Mullet, Silver Mullet, Bluefish, Hogfish, Blue Crab, Stone Crab, Crawfish/Spiny Lobster, African Pompano, Florida Pompano, Permit, Sheepshead, Tripletail, Clams (Brevard County only), Shrimp, Flounder, Cobia, Wahoo

and Dolphin. Additional species may be designated as restricted by the Commission at any time. Licensed commercial fishermen must show proof of income in the form of trip tickets or out-of-state landings reported under their license (along with a copy of the out of state license) to qualify for the RS. Sales reported under a retail dealer's license cannot be used to qualify for the RS. Additional qualification criteria or exemptions to the income requirements may apply for first-time applicants.

### Sale and Reporting Requirements for Saltwater Products

A wholesale dealer's license is required to purchase saltwater products from a producer and sell products to retail dealers or other wholesale dealers. A retail dealer's license is required to purchase saltwater products from a wholesale dealer and sell to the consumer unless licensed by the Division of Hotels and Restaurants. A wholesale dealer's license is not required for products entering the state through interstate or international commerce as long as the products are continuously bonded during transit through the state. Wholesale dealers are responsible for reporting all purchases from a producer to the commission.

It is unlawful for any unlicensed person to purchase or sell saltwater products. Penalties for unlicensed sale include criminal and civil fines of up to \$5,000, permanent revocation of license privileges, and imprisonment in addition to penalties levied by the court. Additional penalties for unlicensed sale by a person whose fishing privileges have been revoked or suspended include forfeiture of property involved in the offense.

Dealers are required to confirm that potential sellers hold all of the required licenses prior to purchasing any saltwater product. All dealers must report products when landed for the first time to the FWC Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI) Trip Ticket Reporting Office. Wholesale and retail dealers who harvest their own products under an SPL must also submit trip tickets.

Commercial fishermen can only sell their catch to a licensed wholesale dealer. Fishermen are strongly advised to always obtain and retain copies of their trip tickets and to compare them with their landings summaries produced by the FWRI on an annual basis. For reporting or landings information contact the FWC FWRI Trip Ticket Office at (727) 896-8626.

## DID YOU KNOW... ?

- A federal dealer permit is required for a dealer to receive Gulf reef fish harvested from federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. A Gulf IFQ dealer endorsement is also required. Call 1-866-425-7627 for more information
- Food fish may not be taken for the purpose of making oil, fertilizer or compost.
- Hook and line gear must be tended at all times. Possession of longline gear (a line or a series of connected lines with more than 10 hooks) is prohibited in state waters except for persons in continuous transit across state waters to or from federal waters.
- Use of firearms or explosives for harvest is prohibited. Harvest with or possession of fish harvested with a powerhead or bangstick is prohibited in state waters. Powerheads may be used for personal protection only. Use of a rebreather to harvest any marine species is prohibited. Use of a rebreather is allowed for nonconsumptive purposes only. Simultaneous possession of a rebreather and fish is prohibited, except for persons in continuous transit from federal waters.
- Vessel monitoring systems are required onboard all vessels with federal commercial permits for Gulf reef fish, including charter vessels/ headboats that also have a commercial reef fish permit.

## COMMERCIAL SALTWATER FISHING GEAR LIMITATIONS

### Net Limitations

Food fish caught in any net and not kept due to bag, size, or other reason must be immediately returned to the water alive.

The use of gill and entangling nets is prohibited in all state waters (nine nautical miles from the Gulf coast and three nautical miles from the Atlantic coast). Any net (other than a hand thrown cast net) with a stretched mesh size larger than two inches is considered an entangling net. Any net (other than a hand thrown cast net or handheld landing or dip net) constructed wholly or partially of monofilament or multistrand monofilament material is also considered an entangling net.

The use of a cast net with a stretched length (the distance from the horn to the lead line with the net pulled tight) of more than 14 feet and fishing with more than two cast nets per vessel are also prohibited in state waters.

Use of more than four seines is prohibited in state waters. This limitation applies to primary vessels and secondary vessels aboard or connected to the primary vessel. No more than two lawful nets may be fished per vessel in nearshore and inshore waters (all waters landward of a line three nautical miles from the Gulf coast and one nautical mile from the Atlantic coast). A person not on a vessel may fish no more than one such net.

The use of any net with a mesh area exceeding 500 square feet is prohibited in nearshore and inshore waters. Check rule number 68B-4.0081(3)(e) for how to measure a net. Tying, connecting, or fastening two or more nets together in any way so as to exceed 500 square feet of mesh area is prohibited.

No net may have more meshes attached per foot of corkline or leadline than 14 divided by the bar measurement of the mesh in the net. The use of trawls with a net or bag containing more than 500 square feet of mesh area is prohibited in nearshore and inshore waters.

Any vessel in state waters with gill or entangling nets aboard or more than four seines aboard and vessels in nearshore or inshore waters with any net with a mesh area larger than 500 square feet aboard (the trawl door or frame may not be deployed) must proceed as directly, continuously and expeditiously as possible from the place where the vessel is regularly moored to waters where use of such nets is lawful and back or to the licensed wholesale dealer where the catch is to be sold. This requirement does not apply to vessels containing or otherwise transporting dry nets that are rolled, folded, or otherwise properly stowed in "lock boxes" so as to make their immediate use impracticable.

In all waters of the state, the possession of gill or entangling nets or seines with a mesh area larger than 500 square feet is prohibited on any airboat, on any vessel with a forward-mounted

primary power source that is less than 25 feet in length, and on any vessel less than 22 feet in length.

Violations of these net gear regulations are considered major violations. Civil penalties and license suspensions may be assessed in addition to court assessed criminal penalties

Gill nets used in the federal gill net fishery must be marked at each end with the SPL number of the vessel operator or vessel from which it is deployed. Seines must be tended and marked with the SPL number at each end.

Beach or haul seines, with the exception of nets used in the specified area of the the Southwest region, may not be soaked for more than one hour from the time the mesh first enters the water until the mesh is first retrieved. In the Southwest region (Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte, Lee, and Collier counties, except inside waters) nets may be fished from one hour after sunset to one hour before sunrise. Such nets may not be soaked for more than 12 hours from the time the first mesh is set until the first mesh is retrieved. In this area a seine net with one unattached wing is allowed; however, one end of the main net must be anchored on the shore, and a vessel with a white light visible from 360° and at least one mile must be anchored at the seaward end of the nets.

Purse seines or similar devices may not be used to take food fish other than tuna and menhaden. Lawfully used seines may have a pocket bunt on the middle of the seine with a mesh size less than two inches.

### Trap Limitations/Marking Requirements

The use of any trap is prohibited in designated areas off of Citrus, Hernando, and Pasco counties during the following closed seasons.

**Zone II** - closed season Oct. 5 - May 20

**Zone IV** - closed season Oct. 5 - Dec. 1 & April 2 - May 20

**Zone V** - closed season Oct. 5 - Nov. 30 & Mar. 16 - May 20

The boundaries for these zones are defined by longitude and latitude in rule 68B-38(2), F.A.C.

Unless otherwise prohibited, finfish may be harvested in a lawful black sea bass or pinfish trap, or as bycatch in a lawful crab or crawfish trap (licensing requirements apply to bycatch). A lawful black sea bass trap may not exceed two feet in any dimension and must have a biodegradable panel and a throat not more than five inches high by two inches wide. Black sea bass traps are prohibited south of Latitude 27° N (a line extending east and west through the Sarasota area on the west coast and Martin County on the east coast). A lawful pinfish trap may not exceed two feet in any dimension and must have a throat or entrance not more than 3 inches high and ¾ inches wide. Possession

of fish traps not otherwise allowed by rule is prohibited in state.

Each black sea bass trap must have the trap owner's saltwater products license number permanently attached to the trap. Each buoy attached to such trap shall have the letter "B" and the owner's saltwater products license number affixed to it in legible figures at least 1.5 inches high.

Each trap and buoy used to harvest spiny lobster, blue crab and stone crab shall have the commercial harvester's current endorsement number permanently affixed in legible figures. Each trap shall also have firmly affixed a current trap tag issued annually by the Commission. Traps with tags that are not firmly affixed by nails, staples, or otherwise securely fastened as may be provided by the Commission, shall be considered untagged for enforcement purposes. On each buoy, the affixed endorsement number shall be at least 2 inches high. The buoy color and license or trap number shall also be permanently and conspicuously displayed on any vessel used by a commercial harvester for setting traps and buoys, so as to be readily identifiable from the air and water, in the following manner:

A buoy or time release buoy shall be attached to each trap or at each end of a weighted trap trotline. The buoy shall be constructed of styrofoam, cork, molded polyvinyl chloride, or molded polystyrene, be of sufficient strength and buoyancy to float, and be of such color, hue, and brilliancy as to be easily distinguished, seen, and located. Buoys shall be either spherical in shape with a diameter no smaller than 6 inches or some other shape so long as it is no shorter than 10 inches in the longest dimension and the width at some point exceeds 5 inches. No more than 5 feet of any buoy line attached to a buoy to mark a stone crab trap or attached to a trotline shall float on the surface of the water.

**From the Air** – The buoy design approved by the Commission shall be displayed and be permanently affixed to the uppermost structural portion of the vessel and displayed horizontally with the painted design up. The display shall exhibit the harvester's approved buoy design, unobstructed, on a circle 20 inches in diameter, outlined in a contrasting color, together with the endorsement number permanently affixed beneath the circle in numerals no smaller than 10 inches in height.

**From the Water** – The buoy design approved by the Commission shall be displayed and be permanently affixed vertically to both the starboard and port sides of the vessel near amidship. The display shall exhibit the harvester's approved buoy design, unobstructed, on a circle 8 inches in diameter, outlined in a contrasting color, together with the endorsement number permanently affixed beneath the circle in numerals no smaller than 4 inches in height.

## “REEF FISH” REGULATIONS

Species designated as “Reef Fish” are also designated as Restricted Species. An SPL with a Restricted Species (RS) endorsement is required to sell any species designated as “Reef Fish”. A Federal Permit is also required to harvest in commercial quantities and sell “Reef Fish” species other than bank, black, or rock sea bass and red porgy harvested in the Gulf. No “Reef Fish” may be sold by or purchased from persons who do not hold the required state and federal permits.

Allowable gear for the harvest of “Reef Fish” is limited to hook and line gear, black sea bass traps, and spearing. Possession of “Reef Fish” harvested as incidental bycatch while targeting other species or with gear not allowed for the harvest of “Reef Fish” is limited to the

recreational bag limit. Incidental bycatch of red porgy harvested in the Atlantic during the closed season is limited to one fish and may not be sold. **Possession of a recreational and a commercial bag limit of all reef fish species on the same trip is prohibited.**

If at any time adjacent federal waters are closed to commercial harvest of a “Reef Fish” species, corresponding state waters are also closed to the harvest of that species. During any such closure, the purchase and sale of that species harvested from the closed area is prohibited.

**Federally permitted for-hire reef fish vessels must comply with the more restrictive of federal or state reef fish regulations when fishing for reef fish in state waters.**

### Species designated as “Reef Fish”:

Groups		Jacks	Snappers		Other
Black Grouper	Snowy Grouper	Greater Amberjack	Black Snapper	Queen Snapper	Hogfish
Coney Grouper	Tiger Grouper	Banded Rudderfish	Blackfin Snapper	Red Snapper	Red Porgy
Gag	Yellowedge Grouper	Lesser Amberjack	Cubera Snapper	Schoolmaster	Gray Triggerfish
Graysby	Yellowfin Grouper	Almaco Jack	Dog Snapper	Silk Snapper	Golden Tilefish
Misty Grouper	Yellowmouth Grouper		Gray (Mangrove) Snapper	Vermilion Snapper	
Red Grouper	Bank Sea Bass *		Lane Snapper	Wenchman Snapper	
Red Hind	Black Sea Bass*		Mahogany Snapper	Yellowtail Snapper	
Rock Hind	Rock Sea Bass*		Mutton Snapper		
Scamp					

\*Harvest of bank, black, and rock sea bass is prohibited in John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park

**NOTE:** This summary is for informational purposes only and has no legal force or effect. **Fishery regulations are subject to change.**

## SNAPPERS



	State Waters Florida	Federal Waters Gulf of Mexico	Federal Waters South Atlantic
<b>Red</b>	2 per person per day Atlantic: 20" TL Gulf: 13" TL	13" TL The Commercial red snapper fishery is managed under an Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) system.	See: <a href="http://www.safmc.net">www.safmc.net</a>
<b>Vermilion</b>	Gulf: 10" TL Atlantic: 12" TL	10" TL	12" TL See: <a href="http://www.safmc.net">www.safmc.net</a>
<b>Lane</b>	8" TL	8" TL	8" TL
<b>Gray (Mangrove)</b>	12" FL	12" TL	12" TL
<b>Mutton</b>	16" TL May and June: 10 per person per day or 10 per trip (whichever is more restrictive)	16" TL	16" TL May and June: possession limited to 10 per person per day or per trip (whichever is more restrictive)
<b>Yellowtail / Dog / Mahogany</b>	12" TL	12" TL	12" TL
<b>Schoolmaster</b>	10" TL	12" TL	12" TL
<b>Blackfin / Silk / Queen</b>	12" TL		12" TL
<b>Black / Wenchman</b>			
<b>Cubera</b>	12" TL 2 per person (not to exceed 2 per boat) for fish 30" TL or larger	12" TL	12" TL 2 per person (not to exceed 2 per vessel) for fish 30" TL or larger off East coast of Florida
<b>Reef fish as Bait</b>	All fish must be landed in whole condition; legal-sized whole fish may be used as bait but counted against bag limit.	Only sand perch & dwarf sand perch may be used for bait.	All species in the snapper grouper complex must be maintained with heads and fins intact. (Cobia, king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, dolphin, and wahoo must also be landed with heads and fins intact.)

**Commercial vessels are prohibited from retaining reef fish caught under the recreational size and bag/possession limits when commercial quantities of Gulf reef fish are on board.**

## GROUPERS



	State Waters - Florida	Federal Waters - Gulf of Mexico <small>For updated information, visit <a href="http://www.gulfcouncil.org">www.gulfcouncil.org</a></small>	Federal Waters - South Atlantic <small>For updated information, visit <a href="http://www.safmc.net">www.safmc.net</a> or call toll free 866/SAFMC-10</small>
<b>Goliath/Nassau</b>	Harvest prohibited	Harvest prohibited	Closed to possession or harvest
<b>Black</b>	Gulf: 24" TL Atlantic & Monroe Co: Closed Jan-Apr	24" TL The Commercial grouper fishery is managed under an Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) system. Jan 1 - Apr 30 "Edges" closure	24" TL Closed Jan-Apr
<b>Gag</b>	Gulf: 24" TL Atlantic & Monroe Co: Closed Jan-Apr	22" TL Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) System Jan 1 - Apr 30 "Edges" closure	24" TL Closed Jan-Apr
<b>Red</b>	Atlantic & Monroe Co: 20" TL, Closed Jan-Apr Gulf: 18" TL	18" TL Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) System Jan 1 - Apr 30 "Edges" closure	20" TL Closed Jan-Apr
<b>Scamp</b>	Gulf: 16" TL Atlantic & Monroe Co: 20" TL, Closed Jan-Apr	16" TL Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) System Jan 1 - Apr 30 "Edges" closure	20" TL Closed Jan-Apr
<b>Yellowfin</b>	20" TL Atlantic & Monroe Co: Closed Jan-Apr	20" TL Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) System Jan 1 - Apr 30 "Edges" closure	20" TL Closed Jan-Apr
<b>Yellowmouth</b>	20" TL Atlantic & Monroe Co: Closed Jan-Apr	Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) System Jan 1 - Apr 30 "Edges" closure	20" TL Closed Jan-Apr
<b>Rock Hind/Red Hind</b>	Atlantic & Monroe Co: Closed Jan-Apr	Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) System Jan 1 - Apr 30 "Edges" closure	Closed Jan-Apr
<b>Yellowedge/Misty Deep Water Grouper</b>	N/A	No size limit - Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) System	N/A
<b>Warsaw/Speckled Hind Deep Water Grouper</b>	Commercial harvest and sale prohibited	No size limit - Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) System	Closed to harvest or possession in federal waters. May not be sold or traded: no transfer at sea.
<b>Snowy Deep Water Grouper</b>	N/A	No size limit - Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) System	No size limit. 100 lb trip limit
<b>Coney/Graysby/Tiger</b>	Atlantic & Monroe Co: Closed Jan-Apr	N/A	Closed Jan-Apr
<b>Golden Tilefish</b>	N/A	Tilefish is managed under an Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) system. Anyone commercial fishing for Tilefish must possess (IFQ) allocation and follow the established reporting protocol.	See: <a href="http://www.safmc.net">www.safmc.net</a>
<b>Tilefish (All: Goldface, Blue-line, Sand, Black-line, Anchor)</b>	N/A	Tilefish is managed under an Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) system.	N/A
<b>Black Sea Bass</b>	10" TL	10" TL (state rules apply)	11" TL Fishing year is June 1- May 31. Sea bass pot restrictions found at <a href="http://www.safmc.net">www.safmc.net</a>

## AMBERJACK



	State Waters - Florida	Federal Waters - Gulf of Mexico <small>For updated information, visit <a href="http://www.gulfcouncil.org">www.gulfcouncil.org</a></small>	Federal Waters - South Atlantic <small>For updated information, visit <a href="http://www.safmc.net">www.safmc.net</a> or call toll free 866/SAFMC-10</small>
<b>Banded rudderfish</b>	14" - 22" FL Closed March, April and May	14" - 22" FL	
<b>Greater amberjack</b>	36" FL Closed March, April, and May	36" FL Closed March, April and May	36" FL; no coring, 1,200 lbs (gw) See "allowable gear" at <a href="http://www.safmc.net">www.safmc.net</a>
<b>Lesser amberjack</b>	14" - 22" FL Closed March, April, and May	14" - 22" FL	

## POMPANO & PERMIT



### State and Federal Waters Daily Commercial Harvest Limits



#### Commercial Florida Pompano Fishing

##### Without Pompano endorsement:

Persons harvesting Florida pompano in state and federal waters who have a saltwater products license with a restricted species endorsement, but do not possess a pompano endorsement, shall be subject to a daily harvest and landing limit of 250 individual Florida pompano.

Simultaneous possession of Florida pompano and gill or entangling nets is prohibited in state waters unless pompano were harvested in federal waters as incidental bycatch. Vessels carrying pompano harvested in federal waters as incidental bycatch with gill and entangling nets must travel directly through state waters to land without stopping.

Incidental bycatch harvested with gill or entangling nets in federal waters may not exceed 100 Florida pompano.

##### With Pompano endorsement:

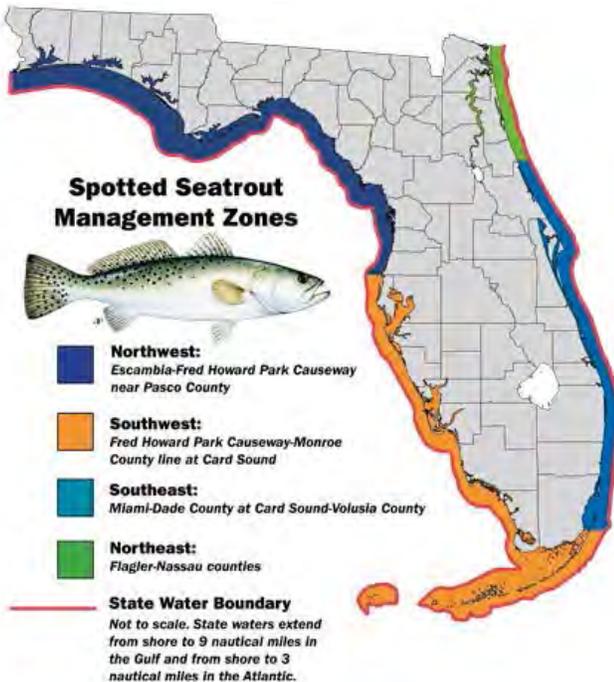
Persons harvesting Florida pompano in state and federal waters who have a saltwater products license with a restricted species endorsement and a pompano endorsement can harvest an unlimited number of pompano with gill and entangling nets in addition to allowable gear within the Pompano Endorsement Zone, south of Hurricane Pass and north of Cape Sable.

Florida pompano harvested in federal waters with gill or entangling nets must be landed in Florida within the boundaries of the Pompano Endorsement Zone. Vessels with gill nets and Florida pompano on board at the same time must travel through state waters without stopping.

Gill nets used to directly harvest Florida pompano in federal waters must be at least 400 yards long, at least 70 meshes deep at its shallowest point and have a stretched mesh size of at least 4 1/2 inches throughout.



## SEATROUT



### Commercial Seatrout Regulations

	Statewide	Seasons	
<b>Slot limit</b>	Slot Limit: 15-24 inches	Northeast Region	June 1- Nov. 30
<b>Daily harvest limit</b>	75 fish per person per day or per vessel, whichever is less A commercial vessel limit of 150 with two or more licensed fishermen are aboard	Southeast Region	May 1- Sept. 30
<b>Allowable gear</b>	Hook and line and cast net	Southwest and Northwest regions	June 1- Oct. 31

\*NOTE: Sale and possession of seatrout inventory is allowed for 30 days after the season closes. All spotted seatrout inventory must be reported to the FWC on the Closed Season Spotted Seatrout Declaration and be submitted to the FWC by the seventh day after a regional closure. A copy must be kept at the place of business through the 30 days following a closure. After 30 days following a regional closure, no spotted seatrout may be possessed in a closed region.



# KING MACKEREL (KINGFISH)



King mackerel are divided into two separate fisheries: the Atlantic fishery and the Gulf-Atlantic fishery. Bag limits vary by fishery, region, and season.

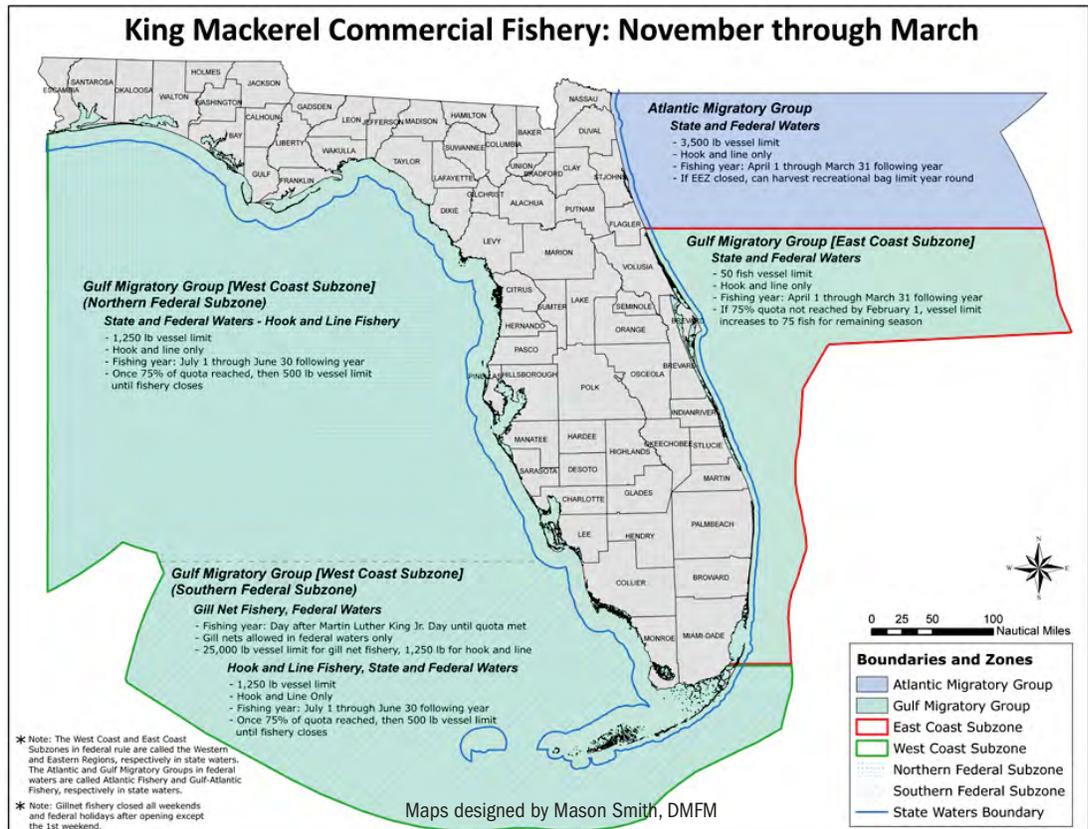
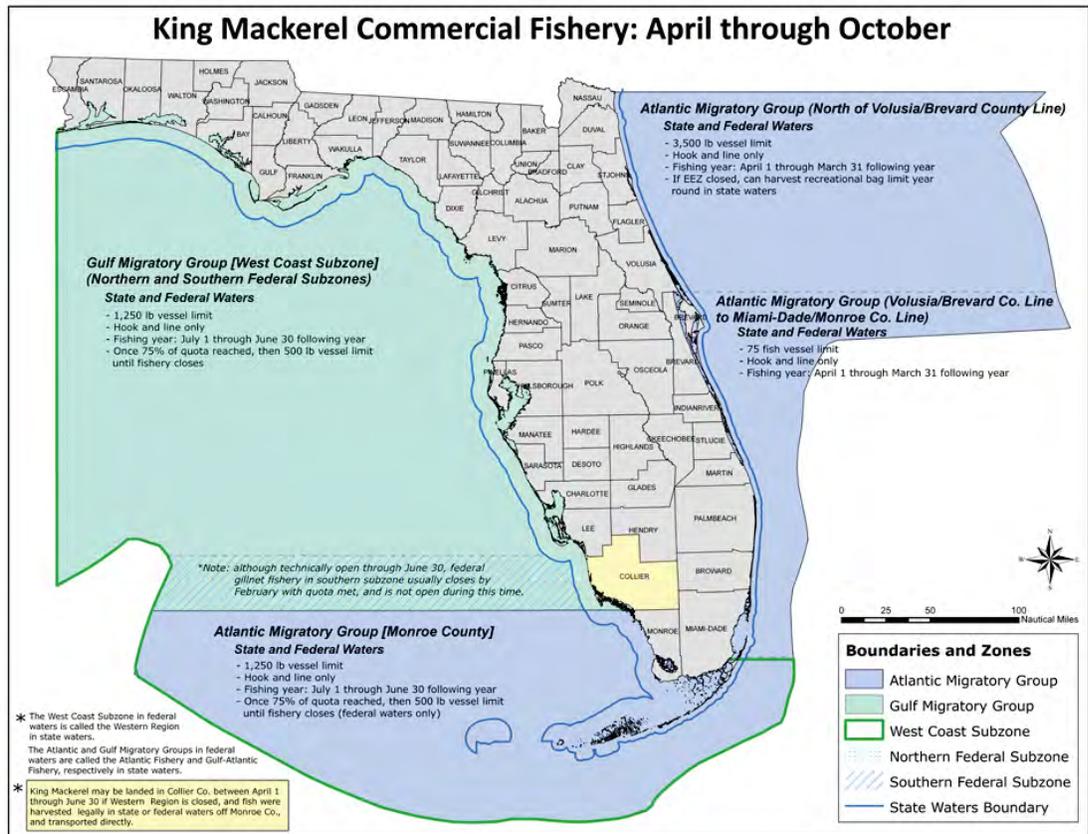
The boundaries between the Atlantic and Gulf-Atlantic fisheries shift between the summer and winter seasons. During the summer season (April 1 - Oct. 31), the Atlantic Fishery includes all Atlantic and Monroe County waters and the Gulf-Atlantic fishery includes all Gulf waters north of the Collier/Monroe County line.

During the winter season (Nov. 1 - March 31), the Atlantic fishery includes only Atlantic waters north of the Volusia/Flagler County line and the Gulf-Atlantic Fishery includes all Atlantic waters south of the Volusia/Flagler County line and all Gulf waters east of the Alabama/Florida border.

In both the Atlantic and Gulf-Atlantic fisheries, the trip limit for the commercial harvest of king mackerel in state waters is reduced or closed in response to federal trip limit reductions and closures.

King mackerel must be at least 24 inches in fork length to be harvested and a saltwater products license, a restricted species endorsement and a federal king mackerel permit must be held to harvest king mackerel commercially.

Colored areas in the vessel/trip limits chart correspond to colored area in the maps.



## SPANISH MACKEREL



The commercial Spanish mackerel fishery is divided into Eastern and Western regions. The boundary separating the regions is 25°20.4' N. Latitude, (a line directly east from the Miami/Dade/Monroe County border to the edge of the EEZ). All Atlantic waters north of the boundary line comprise the Eastern Region. All Atlantic waters south of the boundary line and all state waters and adjacent federal waters in the Gulf comprise the Western Region. Although the trip limit for the commercial harvest of Spanish mackerel is reduced in response to federal trip limit reductions and closures, there is no closed season for the commercial harvest of Spanish mackerel in state waters. Transfer of fish between vessels is prohibited in the Eastern Region.

### Spanish Mackerel Vessel/Trip Limits:

Eastern	
From April 1 to Nov. 30:	3,500 lbs. daily vessel limit
From Dec. 1 until the EEZ closes to unlimited harvest -	
Mon. - Fri.:	3,500 lbs. daily vessel limit
Sat. and Sun.:	1,500 lbs. daily vessel limit
From date closure to unlimited harvest until EEZ closes:	1,500 lbs. daily vessel limit
From the date of closure until March 31:	500 lbs.
Western	
From April 1 until the EEZ closes:	Unlimited harvest
From the date the EEZ closes until Mar. 31	500 lbs. daily vessel limit

## MULLET

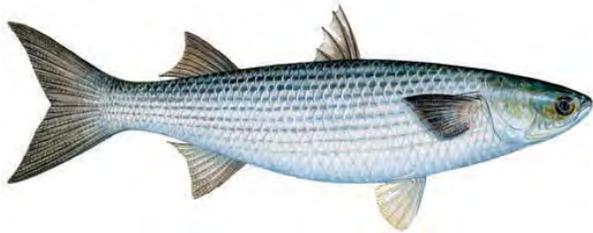


Striped (black) and silver (white, fantail, or redeye) mullet are designated as "Restricted Species".

The minimum size limit for striped mullet is 11 inches (fork length), with an allowance for a quantity of undersized mullet not to exceed 10

percent of the total weight of all striped mullet possessed. Fork length is measured from the tip of the snout to the fork of the tail.

The use of any gear other than cast nets (no more than 14 feet long, and no more than two per vessel), beach or haul seines (no larger than 500 square feet, and no more than two may be fished per vessel), hook and line gear; and by spearing is prohibited. Spearfishing is prohibited in fresh water. Simultaneous possession of any mullet species in excess of the recreational bag limit and any gill or entangling net is prohibited. This prohibition applies to mullet and gill nets in separate vessels or vehicles that are operated in coordination with one another, including towed vessels. Sale of mullet harvested with illegal gear is prohibited.



### Mullet Bag Limits & Closures

#### Striped

##### Area Regional Bag Limits and Closures

Statewide Harvest is prohibited seaward of the 3-mile line (Gulf and Atlantic) and seaward of the Everglades National Park line in Florida Bay.

#### Striped Mullet Only

##### Area\*

Pinellas County (Tampa Bay) - Riviera Bay and Bayou Grande (Papy's Bayou), Placido Bayou (Smack's Bayou), Snell Isle Harbour, and Coffee Pot Bayou, and certain connecting areas of Tampa Bay, and areas of Tampa Bay between the municipal pier head to just north of the southern tip of Weedon Island.

Manatee County - Manatee River upstream of a line from the eastern side of the mouth of Warner's Bayou northeasterly to the eastern side of the mouth of Tierra Ciega Cutoff.

Charlotte County - Peace River upstream of a line from Mangrove Point running northwesterly through the northeastern most point of Locust Point to the shoreline in the body of water known as Myakka Cutoff. Coral Creek upstream of its mouth on Gasparilla Sound.

Charlotte County - Punta Gorda area.

##### Regional Bag Limits and Closures

Oct 1 - Jan. 31 - 5 mullet per person or per vessel per day, whichever is more restrictive.

Nov. 1 - Jan. 31 - 50 mullet per person per day or per vessel, whichever is more restrictive.

Nov. 1 - Jan. 31 - 50 mullet per person or per vessel per day, whichever is more restrictive.

Nov. 1 thru the end of February, closed nightly 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Possession is prohibited during the nightly closure.

\* Refer to official area descriptions in the Mullet Rule.

#### Silver Mullet Only

##### Area\*

All Atlantic waters north of the Miami/Dade/Monroe County line.

Statewide

##### Regional Bag Limits and Closures

During February, commercial harvest prohibited.

Weekend Closure - July 1 - Jan. 31 commercial harvest prohibited 12:01 a.m. Sat. morning to 12:01 a.m. Mon. morning. Mullet harvested under the recreational bag limit during the weekend closure may not be sold or purchased.

\* Refer to official area descriptions in the Mullet Rule 68B-39, F.A.C.

## BLUE CRAB



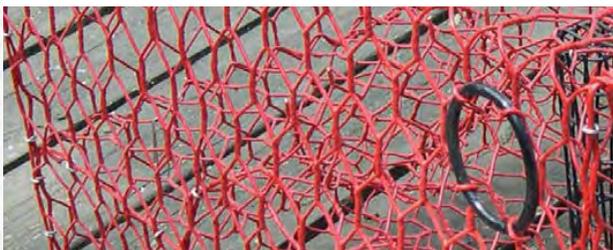
The blue crab effort management plan for the commercial blue crab fishery limits both the number of fishermen and traps in the blue crab fishery. A hard crab endorsement (VH, VN), soft crab (VS) and a blue crab incidental take (VI) endorsement can be associated with either an individual or vessel SPL. The cost of a blue crab endorsement fee is \$125 for a hard shell endorsement, \$125 for a soft shell endorsement and \$25 for the incidental take endorsement. Endorsements must be renewed by September 30. From these endorsement fees, \$25 is dedicated to the trap retrieval program with the retrieval fee waived for up to 5 traps retrieved during trap retrieval. Traps retrieved during closed season by FWC will be assessed a retrieval fee of \$10 per trap. Commission issued blue crab trap tags will be required on blue crab traps an annual fee of 50 cents per trap tag and can be ordered in increments of 50. Leasing or renting of endorsements, tags or traps is prohibited. Blue crab endorsements will be transferable from May 1, through the end of February, but the buyer must purchase the endorsement and trap tags. The buyer must also work no fewer than 14 days fishing blue crab on the buyer's/endorsement holder's vessel and document this activity at the time of transfer. Requalification: Beginning with license year 2010/2011, the holder of a blue crab effort management endorsement must requalify for the endorsement number by documenting landings in at least one of the three previous license years. Each endorsement number will then be valid for three years from the date of requalification, but must still be renewed annually.

A hard crab (VH) endorsement is required to harvest commercial quantities of hard shell blue. A VH endorsement entitles the owner to fish up to 600 inshore blue crab traps, and an additional 400 traps offshore in the Gulf of Mexico, per endorsed SPL. A total of 150 soft crabs per endorsed SPL may be landed daily as bycatch. Fishermen can maintain as many as three shedding tanks without possessing a soft shell crab endorsement.

A soft crab (VS) endorsement is required to harvest commercial quantities of soft shell crabs. A VS endorsement allows up to 400 peeler traps to be fished and allows the holder to operate a blue crab shedding facility with greater than 3 shedding tanks. Entities with more than one qualifying SPL are entitled to receive up to 250 additional traps per additional endorsed SPL.

A hard crab (VN) endorsement is a nontransferable blue crab endorsement that allows the endorsement holder to deploy 100 hard shell blue crab traps in any state waters where blue crab traps are allowed. A total of 150 soft crabs per endorsed SPL may be landed daily as bycatch. Fishermen can maintain as many as three shedding tanks without possessing a soft crab endorsement. The non-transferable blue crab endorsement cannot be sold or otherwise transferred. If the holder of a VN endorsement purchases a VH endorsement the non-transferable endorsement shall be forfeited.

A blue crab (VI) incidental take endorsement allows persons possessing a valid stone crab endorsement or persons who can demonstrate landings of blue crabs as bycatch using legal shrimping gear, to harvest and sell up to 200 pounds of blue crabs as bycatch, provided the amount does not exceed 200 pounds of blue crabs per vessel per trip.



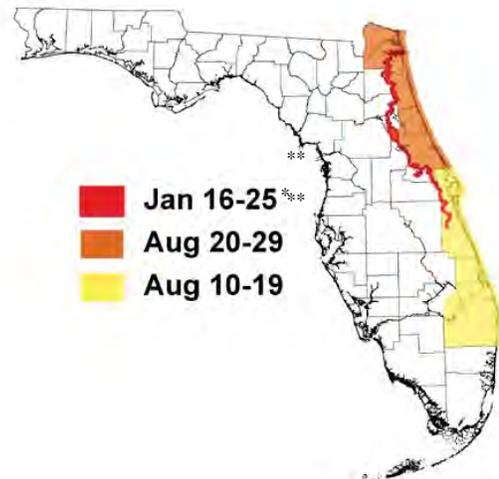
**There are six regional closed seasons to the harvest of blue crabs with traps to help clean up Florida's waters. Traps that remain in the water will be removed and disposed of by FWC.**

### The dates and locations of the closures are:

- All waters of the St. Johns River system from Jan. 16–25\*
- All other coastal waters from the Georgia/Florida state line south through Volusia County from Aug. 20–29\*\*
- All waters of Brevard through Palm Beach counties from Aug. 10–19\*\*

\* All waters of the St. Johns River, its associated lakes and tributaries from west of the St. Johns River's intersection with the Intracoastal Canal through and including Lake Hellen Blazes

\*\* Except all waters of the St. Johns River system



### Blue crab closures that occur in odd years:

- All waters of Broward through Pasco Counties from July 10–19
- All waters of Hernando through Wakulla Counties including all waters Ochlockonee River and Bay from July 20–29
- All waters of Franklin County to the Florida/Alabama state line from Jan. 5–14



**Trap theft or molestation is a felony crime; penalties include permanent loss of license and trap certificates in addition to court assessed penalties.**

## STONE CRAB



Size and bag limits, closed seasons and license requirements are found in the chart on pages 16-22. An SPL with a Restricted Species (RS) and Stone crab (X#) endorsement is required to commercially harvest and sell any stone crab. Only legal sized claws may be possessed, transported, or sold. Crabs must be kept alive and damp in containers that do not compress them until the claws can be removed. Transport of intact stone crabs or bodies is prohibited. Spears, grains, grabs, or hooks that can puncture or crush crabs are prohibited. Removal of claws from egg-bearing females is prohibited.

Trap certificates and tags are required for all stone crab traps. A valid tag must be securely attached to each trap. Stone crab trap specifications and trap, buoy, and vessel marking requirements apply. Traps, buoys, and vessels must display the X#. Traps must be constructed of wood, plastic, or wire and be no larger than two feet by two feet by two feet or a volume of 8 cubic feet with the entrance (throat) located on a horizontal side of wire traps and on the top of wood and plastic traps. Each plastic trap must have a degradable panel. Each wire trap must have at least three unobstructed escape rings (2 3/8" inside diameter) located on a vertical side of the trap as specified in rule. Refer to the official rules before building or buying traps. Traps may be worked during daylight hours only. Traps may be baited and placed in the water 10 days before the season begins.

Stone crab traps are prohibited in all navigation channels of Inland Coastal Waterways or channels marked by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, USCG, state, county or local governments. Pulling another person's trap without express consent of the owner and FWC Law Enforcement is prohibited. Traps must be removed from the water within 5 days after the end of the season.

**Trap theft or molestation is a felony crime; penalties include permanent loss of license and trap certificates in addition to court assessed penalties.**

## SPINY LOBSTER (CRAWFISH)



Size limits and closed seasons are found in the "Basic Commercial Saltwater Fishing Regulations" chart on pages 16-22.

An SPL with a Restricted Species (RS) and Crawfish (C#) or (CD#) endorsement is required to commercially harvest and sell any spiny lobster.

Additional requirements apply to harvest by diving and with traps.

Spiny lobster retained as an incidental bycatch in a net or trawl other than a hand-held net may not exceed five percent of the total whole weight of all species possessed (all license requirements apply). Spiny lobster may only be sold by or purchased from persons who hold the required licenses and endorsements. A federal permit is required to possess "wrung" tails in or on state waters. Tails must be at least 5 1/2 inches in length (not including muscle tissue). Possession of undersized lobster is prohibited, except as provided for in the Spiny Lobster Trap Fishery section below. Undersized lobster may not be sold. Possession of any egg-bearing lobster is prohibited. Use of any device that could puncture or crush the lobster is prohibited.

The vessel limit for harvest with a bullynet is 250 lobster per vessel per day statewide.

### Spiny Lobster Trap Fishery

Trap certificates and tags are required for all traps. A valid tag must be securely attached to each trap. Spiny lobster trap specifications and trap, buoy, and vessel marking requirements apply. Traps, buoys, and vessels must display the C#. Traps must be constructed of wood or plastic and be no larger than three feet by two feet by two feet or the volumetric equivalent (12 cubic feet) with the entrance (throat) located on top of the trap. Each plastic trap must have a degradable panel. Refer to the official rules before building or buying traps. Traps may be baited and placed in the water beginning Aug. 1. Traps may be worked during daylight hours only. Traps may not be placed within 100 feet of the intercoastal waterway or any bridge or seawall. Pulling another person's trap without the express written consent of the owner and FWC Law Enforcement is prohibited. Traps must be removed from the water by April 5 each year. Harvest is prohibited in designated areas of John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park.

A person aboard a vessel with a C# and trap certificates may harvest and possess while on the water 50 undersized spiny lobster (shorts) and one short per trap aboard the boat. Shorts must be released alive and unharmed upon leaving trap lines (livewell specifications apply). The allowance for shorts applies to the trap fishery only and sale is prohibited.

### Spiny Lobster Dive Fishery

All vessels used by persons commercially harvesting lobster by diving, scuba or snorkel must display the Commercial Dive Permit (CD#) on the vessel. A dive permit was issued to divers with trip ticket landings between July 1, 2000 and June 30, 2003. Trap certificates cannot be held by a person with a CD#. No dive permits will be issued, renewed or replaced except those that were active in 2004-05.

#### **Dive permits not renewed by September 30, of each year are forfeited to the FWC.**

A 250 lobster per day vessel limit applies in Broward, Dade, Monroe, Collier, and Lee counties and adjoining federal waters. Divers must permanently and conspicuously display a "divers down flag" placard on the vessel and affix the CD# to the diagonal stripe with 10" numbers visible from the air and 4" numbers visible from the water. Harvest from artificial habitat is prohibited. Divers must possess a carapace measuring device and measure lobster in the water. The use of bleach or chemical solutions or simultaneous possession of spiny lobster and any plastic container capable of ejecting liquid is prohibited. The recreational bag limit applies when diving at night.

**Trap theft or molestation is a felony crime; penalties include permanent loss of license and trap certificates in addition to court assessed penalties.**



## SHELLFISH (OYSTERS, CLAMS & MUSSELS)

Please check [www.MyFWC.com](http://www.MyFWC.com) for updates



Shellfish may only be harvested from waters certified by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) as open for harvest. The DACS is authorized to describe, open and temporarily close any shellfish harvesting area. Vessels used to harvest shellfish must have a portable or U.S. Coast Guard approved marine sanitation device with a holding tank and any through valve shut and fixed in a closed position. All vessels must have false bottoms and bulkheads fore and aft to prevent contact with bilge water. The presence of dogs or other animals on vessels is prohibited. Additional shellfish handling and area water quality requirements apply. Refer to Chapter 5-L, F.A.C.

Unauthorized harvest is prohibited within a distance of 25 feet from the lawfully marked lease boundaries or within the setback and access corridors within specifically designated high-density aquaculture lease areas and aquaculture lease areas and aquaculture use zones.

### Oyster Regulations

Unless otherwise stated below the basic statewide bag limit and closed seasons and gear restrictions are listed in the chart on page 18.

A bag equals two five-gallon buckets, one ten-gallon bucket, or 60 lbs. of culled oysters in the shell. Undersized oysters must be culled immediately upon harvest and returned to the reef from which they were harvested. Undersized oysters may number no more than five percent (by count) of unattached oysters per bag and no more than 15 percent (by count) attached (such that separation would destroy either oyster) per bag. Vessels connected together, such as towing, may only claim one bag limit all together. Commercial and recreational harvest by any person during the same day is prohibited. Bycatch from trawling or dragging any gear over a public oyster bar should be returned to the water as closely as possible to the beds where taken and transport and sale of bycatch or oysters

taken intentionally is prohibited. Wholesale and retail dealers may not sell oysters unless they are labeled and traceable to the point of harvest.

Upon leaving an area, harvesters must pass through a monitoring station when in operation. Harvest on leased parcels is subject to the established rules unless otherwise exempted by the approved lease provisions.

Harvest from public reefs is prohibited from July 1 – Sept. 30, except as provided below.

In Wakulla, Dixie, and Levy Counties, harvest is prohibited from June 1 – Aug. 31.

In Indian River County, harvest is prohibited within 75 feet of the shoreline of the Indian River, any canal bank, or any privately owned submerged lands, or dock without written permission of the owner. In Volusia County, oysters harvested from an approved public bar may not be stockpiled onto a lease.

### Oyster Harvesting In Apalachicola Bay\* the following seasonal bag limits and closures apply:

Season	Closed days/Areas/Bag limit
June 1 - Aug. 31	Harvest is prohibited on Fridays and Saturdays. Harvest is allowed only in areas referenced in paragraph 5L - 1.003(1) Table 2 of the DACS Comprehensive Shellfish Control Code.
July 1 - Sept. 30	20 Bags per person per day or vessel, which ever is less.
Sept. 1 - Nov. 15	Harvest is prohibited on Saturdays or Sundays.
Oct 1 - June 30	20 bags per person per day.
Nov. 16 - May 31	Harvest is allowed any day of the week, except upon notice of DACS, harvest will be prohibited on Saturdays and Sundays.

\*Apalachicola Bay includes St. George Sound, East Bay, Apalachicola Bay, and St. Vincent Sound and their canals, channels, rivers, and creeks; and Indian Lagoon and its canals, channels, rivers, and creeks.



### Hard Clam Regulations

Unless otherwise stated below, the basic statewide clam size and bag limits, closed season and gear restrictions are listed in the chart on page 16. Clams may only be harvested from waters certified by DACS as open for harvest.

There is a three percent (by count) per bag allowance for undersized clams. The possession of unsorted clams aboard vessels underway is prohibited. Harvest is prohibited between one-half hour after sunset and

one-half hour before sunrise (this restriction does not apply to properly permitted dredge operations).

Vessel engines must be turned off during manual use of gear. Use of rakes, dredges, or mechanical devices is prohibited in grass beds and pulling such gear under power is prohibited except under a Special Activity License. Vessels must be equipped with shades to shield clams from the sun and cull boards or racks with unobstructed clear space to allow undersized clams to fall through. Undersized

clams must be immediately returned alive to the place where taken.

In Apalachicola Bay, clams may only be harvested by hand, diving, swimming, or leaning from vessels, wading, and by tongs. The use of a dredge is prohibited. In Brevard County, divers must be certified. Harvest is prohibited within 75 feet of the Indian River or Banana River shoreline abutting property that is used for residential purposes or within 75 feet of any canal bank.

## “MARINE LIFE” REGULATIONS (TROPICAL/ORNAMENTALS) more information on page 23

Marine Life - Fish*		
Species	Remarks/Bag Limits ■	Size Limits (total length unless otherwise noted)
Angelfish▲	75 per person per day or 150 per vessel per day, whichever is less	Gray, French Angelfish: 1 1/2 -8" slot limit Blue, Queen Angelfish: 1 3/4 -8" slot limit Rock Beauty: 2-5" slot limit
Butterflyfish▲	50 per day/100 per vessel**	1-4" slot limit
Filefish▲/Triggerfish▲	Except unicorn filefish, gray and ocean triggerfish	
Gobies▲		Maximum size limit: 2"
Hamlets▲/Seabasses▲	Except reef fish† and Longtail Bass	
Jawfish▲		Maximum size limit: 4"
Parrotfish▲		Maximum size limit: 12"
Porkfish	75 per day/150 per vessel**	Minimum size limit: 1 1/2"
Pufferfish▲, Burrfish▲, Balloonfish▲, Porcupinefish▲	Includes Sharpnose Pufferfish, Striped Burrfish, Spotted Burrfish, Balloonfish, Porcupinefish	
Seahorses▲	400 dwarf seahorses per person or per vessel per day, whichever is less	
Tangs▲ and Surgeonfish▲		Maximum size limit (fork length): 9"
Wrasse▲/Hogfish▲/Razorfish	Except Hogfish snapper; Spanish, Cuban Hogfish: 50 of each per day/100 total combined per vessel**	Spanish Hogfish: 2-8" slot limit Cuban Hogfish: 3-8" slot limit

Marine Life - Invertebrates	
Species	Remarks/Bag Limits ■
Anemones	Zero bag limit on Giant Caribbean Anemone ( <i>Condylactis gigantea</i> )***; Corallimorphs: 100 per day/200 per vessel**; Zoanthids: 1 gallon per day/2 gallons per vessel**; Corallimorphs and Zoanthids: must be harvested with a flexible blade no wider than 2". Corallimorphs harvested as single polyps only.
Corals, Hard (Stony)	Harvest prohibited
Corals, Soft (Octocorals)	Harvest of attached substrate within 1" of octocoral base is permitted; harvest closes in response to federal octocoral closures
Crab, Emerald (Green Clinging)	400 per person or per vessel per day, whichever is less
Crab, Hermit	Except Land Hermit Crabs; Scarlet reef hermit ( <i>Paguristes cadenati</i> ): 1 quart per day/2 quarts per vessel**; Blue-legged/tricolor hermit crabs ( <i>Clibanarius tricolor</i> ): 1 quart per day/per vessel, whichever is less
Live Rock	Aquaculture only; live rock lease and/or state and/or federal permits required
Octopods	Except Common Octopus
Sea Fans	Harvest of Venus Sea Fan and Common (Purple) Sea Fan prohibited
Siphonophores/Hydroids	Harvest of Fire Coral prohibited
Sponges	Except Sheepswool, Yellow, Grass, Glove, Finger, Wire, Reef, and Velvet Sponges; harvest of substrate within 1" of base permitted north and west of the southernmost point of Egmont Key, no substrate allowed south of Egmont Key
Starfish	Harvest of Bahama Starfish (Cushion Sea Star) prohibited
Starsnails ( <i>Lithopoma americanum</i> , <i>Lithopoma tectum</i> , <i>Astraliu phoebium</i> )	One gallon per day/ 2 gallons per vessel**
Urchins	Except Sand Dollars & Sea Biscuits; harvest of Longspine Urchin prohibited

\*MLD or MLN required for use and possession of quinaldine used to harvest tropical fish (Special Activity License also required).

■ MLB endorsement holders using gears other than those listed in 68B-42.007 F.A.C.: 20 total marine life finfish per day.

▲ Collection prohibited in John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park. See Chapter 68B-5 F.A.C. for other prohibited species including Bigeyes, Bonnetmouths, Congers, Dragonets, Goatfishes, Muraenesocids, Pikeblennies, Sand Stargazers, Scorpionfish, Sea chubs, False Morays, Soles, Spaghetti Eels, Squirrelfishes, Stargazers, Threadfins, and Tonguefishes. Collection of most fish species less than 8 inches total length is prohibited within John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park unless a minimum size limit is otherwise established by rule or law.

\*\*Bag limit is per unique SPL number with a marine life endorsement; vessel possession limit is per vessel with two or more unique SPL numbers with marine life endorsements aboard.

†Such as groupers, snappers, sea bass, and amberjacks. Must abide by regulations for these species on page 8-9.

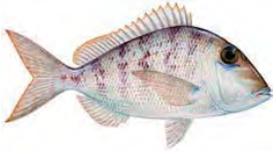
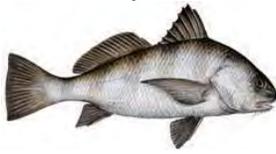
\*\*\*Bag limit is per unique SPL number with unique marine life endorsement; vessel possession limit is per vessel with two or more unique SPL numbers with unique marine life endorsements aboard.

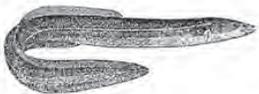
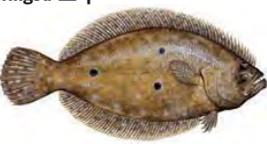
**Other Marine Life fish include** ■: Basslets▲, Batfish▲, Blackbar Soldierfish▲, Blennies▲, Brotulas (Black and Key), Cardinalfish▲, Clingfish▲, Cornetfish▲, Damsel fish▲, Eels (Moray and Snake) ▲, Frogfish▲, Hawkfish▲, High-hat▲/Jackknife-fish▲/Spotted Drum▲/Cubbyu▲, Pipefish▲, Reef Croakers▲, Sleepers, Yellow Stingray, Sweepers▲, Toadfish▲, Trumpetfish▲, and Trunkfish▲/Cowfish▲

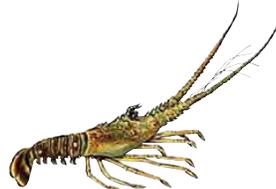
**Other Marine Life invertebrates include:** Brittlestars, Decorator (Furcate Spider) Crab, False Arrow Crab, Nimble Spray (Urchin) Crab, Red Mithrax Crab, Red Ridged Clinging Crab, Spotted Porcelain Crab, Yellowline Arrow Crab, Fileclams, Upside-down Jellyfish, Nudibranchs/Sea Slugs, Sea Cucumbers, Sea Lilies, Cleaner/Peppermint Shrimp, Coral Shrimp, Snapping Shrimp, Nassarius Snails, Featherduster Worms, and Calcareous Tube Worms.

**Marine Life plants include:** Coralline red algae, Caulerpa, Halimeda/Mermaid's Fan/Mermaid's Shaving Brush

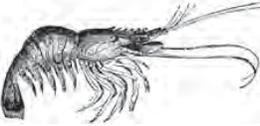
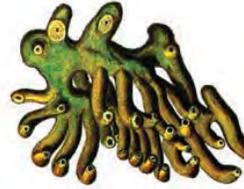
## BASIC COMMERCIAL FISHES REGULATION CHART

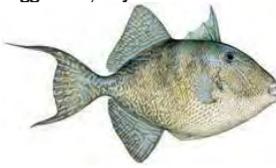
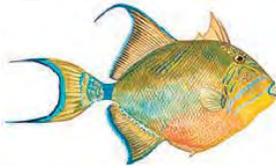
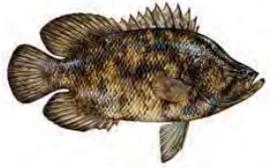
Species & Area	Size Limit	Trip Limit/ Bag Limit	Closed Season	Other Regulations
<b>Baitfish</b> 	None	None	None	Local baitfish restrictions apply.
<b>Ballyhoo</b> (halfbeaks, balao, and silver stripe halfbeaks) 	None	See page 23		*Lampara Net Endorsement (L) and/or Purse Seine (PS) endorsement may be required. Allowable gear: Cast net, hook and line, landing or dip net, lampara net. Use of a lampara net prohibited Aug. 1 - Aug. 31. Prohibition applies to state and federal waters. License requirements and bag limits are determined by the method of harvest and gear used. p. 23
<b>Black Drum</b> ▲ † 	14" - 24" TL	500 lbs. per person or per vessel per day, whichever is less.	None	*RS required. Prohibition on multiple or snatch hook applies to state and federal waters. Maximum size limit applies to sale. Bag limit applies regardless of the possession or use of additional vessels. Harvest prohibited in John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park.
<b>Blue Crab</b> 	5"		Regional p. 12	(VH,VS,VN) and*RS required. Gear and harvest specifications and size and bag limits differ for the various fishery segments (bycatch, peeler crabs, or live bait).
<b>Bluefish</b> ▲ 	12" FL	Atlantic north of Monroe County - 7,500 lbs. per vessel per day. Other state and federal waters - None.	None	*RS required. Limits and gear restrictions apply in state and federal waters of the Atlantic north of Monroe Co. Nets must be tended. May set no more than 1 net per vessel. No more than 2 nets may be on a vessel, unless nets differ by 1/4" mesh size and 25 meshes in depth. Nets may not be soaked more than 1 hr. Specific gear restrictions and net marking requirements apply to nets other than purse seines. In Atlantic waters, nets must be no more than 600 yards long (connected or unconnected) with stretched mesh size no less than 3 inches. Size limit applies to sale of fish.
<b>Blue Land Crab</b> 	None	20 crabs per person possession limit.	July 1 - Oct. 31	Allowable gear: by hand or landing or dip net Use of bleach or other chemical solutions prohibited. Harvest from road or right-of-way or state park prohibited. Prohibitions do not apply to imported crabs. Possession, stripping, purchase, and sale of eggbearing crabs prohibited.
<b>Clams, Hard</b> 	1" thickness across hinge	Sorted - None. Unsorted - 1 bushel per vessel.	None	

Species & Area	Size Limit	Trip Limit/ Bag Limit	Closed Season	Other Regulations
<b>Cobia (Ling) ▲</b> 	33" FL	2 fish per person per day, maximum of 6 per vessel.	None	*RS required. May not possess a recreational bag limit and a commercial bag limit at the same time. Size limit applies to sale.
<b>Dolphin ▲</b> 	20" FL	Directed harvest - None. Incidental bycatch - 10 fish per person.	None	*FP & RS required. FP for Atlantic. Allowable gear: hook and line, longline gear (federal waters only), and spearing. Size limit applies to purchase and sale of fish.
<b>Eels other than moray and snake eels</b> 	None	None	None	"Marine Life" regulations p. 15 apply to moray and snake eels. Harvest of spaghetti eels is prohibited in John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park.
<b>Flounder - Gulf, southern, summer, fringed ▲ †</b> 	12" TL	Incidental bycatch - 50 lbs. <b>shrimp trawls</b>	None	*RS required. Allowable gear: beach or haul seine, cast net, hook and line, and spearing. In Volusia County, spearing with barbed spear having more than 3 prongs prohibited. Size limit applies to sale of fish.
<b>Groupers ▲</b> 		See: "Reef Fish" Regulations. pgs. 8 & 9		See: "Reef Fish" Regulations. pgs. 8 & 9
<b>Herring (blueback and river herring)</b> 	None	None	None	Allowable gear: hook and line only. Spearing prohibited.
<b>Hogfish ▲</b> 	12" FL	None	None	Size limit applies to imported fish
<b>Horseshoe Crab</b> 	None	25 crab per person per day or 100 per person per day w/ ML#	None	Allowable gear: by hand or gig. Limits extend to docks, piers, bridges, beaches and adjacent fishing sites. A biomedical collection permit is required for collecting blood (crabs must be released alive in the area where collected).
<b>Jacks (Amberjacks) ▲</b> 		See: "Reef Fish" Regulations. p. 9		See: "Reef Fish" Regulations on p. 9

Species & Area	Size Limit	Trip Limit/ Bag Limit	Closed Season	Other Regulations
<b>Jellyfish</b> 	None	None	None	Harvest with gear other than a cast net with a radius of no more than 12.5'; a beach or haul seine, a paired trawl with a stretched mesh size no less than 3 1/2" in the wing and 1 1/2" in the bag, no more than 2 wing nets with a perimeter no greater than 40 feet and a mesh size no less than 3 1/2", or more than 2 dip nets is prohibited.
<b>Lobster, Slipper</b> 	None	None	None	Possession of eggbearing lobster prohibited. Possession prohibited in designated area of John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park.
<b>Lobster, Spiny</b> 	3" carapace (head) 5 1/2" tail	Trap fishery - None Bully Net - 250 lobster vessel limit. Dive Fishery - 250 lobster vessel limit.	April 1 - Aug. 5	*RS, C# required. CD# required for divers. Allowable gear: by diving, traps, hand-held net, hoop net (diameter no longer than 10'), or bully net (diameter no larger than 3'). Specific restrictions and requirements depend on the method of harvest. See: Spiny Lobster Regulations on page 13
<b>Mackerel, King ▲</b> 	24" FL	See: King Mackerel Regulations. p. 10	Regional	*RS, FP required for commercial harvest in federal waters and to exceed the recreational bag limit in state waters. Allowable Gear: Atlantic fishery - hook and line and spearing.
<b>Mackerel, Spanish ▲</b> 	12" FL	See: Spanish Mackerel Regulations. p. 11	Regional	*RS required. Allowable Gear: beach or haul seine, cast net, hook and line, or by spearing.
<b>Mullet, Silver</b> (white, fantail, or redeye) ▲ 	None	See: Mullet Regulations on page 11	Regional	*RS required.
<b>Mullet, Striped</b> (black) ▲ 	11" FL w/ a 10% allowance by weight for undersize fish	See: Mullet Regulations on page 11	Regional	*RS required.
<b>Oysters</b> 	3" in greatest dimension.	20 bags per person or vessel per day, whichever is less. Additional regional limits apply. See: Oyster Regulations. p. 14	Regional	*AP required in Apalachicola Bay.

Species & Area	Size Limit	Trip Limit/ Bag Limit	Closed Season	Other Regulations
<b>Permit ▲ †</b> 	Not less than 11" or more than 20" FL	100 Incidental bycatch, Only incidental bycatch allowed outside SPZ when fishing with nets targeting other species in federal waters.		SPZ- Special Permit Zone, which includes all state and federal waters south of a line running due east from Cape Florida and south of a line running due west from Cape Sable. Page 9
<b>Pompano ▲ †</b> 	11" - 20" FL	Florida pompano without endorsement - Direct harvest: 250 pompano trip limit  Florida pompano with pompano endorsement in PEZ - Unlimited		Must have Pompano endorsement to use gill and entangling nets in the PEZ (Federal waters between Hurricane pass and Cape Sable in the Gulf).  Must transit all harvested fish directly through state waters to land without stopping and must be landed within the PEZ. Page 9
<b>Pompano, African · †</b> 	24" FL	2 per person or per vessel whichever is less		State waters: hook and line only; Federal waters: Hook and line and spearing  No spearing in state waters Page 9
<b>Red Porgy ▲</b> 	14" TL	50 lbs. daily vessel limit (Atlantic)	Jan 1 - April 30	Atlantic Ocean, a person harvesting other species for commercial purposes during the closure may harvest and possess three red porgy. During this closed season, the purchase, sale, or exchange of any red porgy harvested from state waters of the Atlantic Ocean is prohibited.
<b>Scallops, Calico</b> 	None	250 individual meats per 1lb. sample.	None	Bycatch of other species prohibited. No person shall harvest calico scallops for commercial purposes within or without the waters of the state using any gear other than an otter trawl 68B-53.003
<b>Shad</b> (Alabama, American, hickory) 	None	Aggregate bag limit of 10 American shad, Alabama shad, and hickory shad per day, nor possess at anytime more than 10 such fish.	None	Allowable gear: hook and line only. Spearing prohibited.
<b>Sharks</b> 	None	1 shark per person per day or 2 sharks per vessel, whichever is less.	Federal closure applies in state waters.	*FP required. Spearing and filleting prohibited. Finning and removing heads prohibited in state waters. Purchase and sale of sharks landed after the closure date is prohibited. A federal permit is required for sale. Gear and license requirements apply when prohibited. Hook and line only in state waters. See: Prohibited Species on p. 24.
<b>Sheepshead ▲ †</b> 	12" TL	Incidental bycatch - 50 lbs. shrimp trawls	None	*RS required. Allowable gear: beach or haul seine, cast net, hook and line, and spearing.

Species & Area	Size Limit	Trip Limit/ Bag Limit	Closed Season	Other Regulations
<b>Seashells (Live Shellfish)</b> 	None	Manatee County - 2 shellfish of any single species per day. Lee County - Harvest Prohibited.	None	ML# required for the harvest of some species. See: "Marine Life" Regulations on pgs. 15 & 23. The term "Live Shellfish" includes mollusks and echinoderms such as clams, snails, starfish, brittle stars, urchins, sanddollars, etc. Manatee and Lee county prohibitions on harvest do not apply to shells that are empty when collected or to live oysters, hard clams, sunray venus clams, and coquinas.
<b>Shrimp (Brown, Pinkspotted, Pink, White, Roughneck, Roughback, Seabob)</b> 	None	Food Shrimp - Regional. Live Shrimp - 5 gallons dead shrimp, heads on, except in NE Region, 1 gallon. 68B-31 F.A.C	Regional	*RS required; other licenses required in Tampa Bay and St. Johns River (TB#, DS#, LS#). Regional harvest and gear restrictions, size and bag limits, closed seasons, license requirements, and fishing gear limitations apply. Shrimp may not be harvested as live bait and food shrimp on the same trip. Turtle Excluder Device (TED) required on all otter and skimmer trawls, except single try net or roller from trawl. Otter and skimmer trawls must have bycatch reduction device (BRD) installed.
<b>Shrimp, Other</b> 		See: "Marine Life" Regulations. pgs 15 and 23		See: "Marine Life" Regulations on pgs. 15 and 23.
<b>Snappers ▲</b> 		See: "Reef Fish" Regulations. pgs. 8 & 9		See: "Reef Fish" Regulations. pgs. 8 & 9.
<b>Sponges, Commercial</b> 	5", wet, across the top.	None	None	*Q# required. Commercial sponges = sheepswool, yellow, grass, finger, wire, reef, and velvet sponges. Size limit = measurement in greatest dimension across the top of the sponge and applies to possession and sale within the state. Hooks must be 5" wide. Diving prohibited, except in the Big Bend & Southwest Florida areas.
<b>Sponges, Others</b> 		See: "Marine Life" Regulations. pgs. 15 & 23		See: "Marine Life" Regulations on pgs 15 and 23.
<b>Spotted Seatrout ▲ †</b> 	15" - 24" TL	75 fish per person per day or a vessel limit of 150 with two or more licensed fishermen are aboard	Regional see p. 9	*RS required. Allowable gear: cast net or hook and line. Spearing prohibited. Simultaneous possession of gill nets and seatrout is prohibited. Towing extra vessel to exceed bag limit is prohibited. Sale of seatrout inventory will be allowed for 30 days after the season closes

Species & Area	Size Limit	Trip Limit/ Bag Limit	Closed Season	Other Regulations
<b>Stone Crab</b> 	2 3/4" claw	None Incidental bycatch - 5 gallons	May 16 - Oct. 14	*RS, X# or I# required. Landings limited to legal size claws measured by a straight line from the elbow to the tip of the lower immovable finger. Transport and sale of intact crabs prohibited. License, trap and harvest specifications apply. See: Stone Crab Regulations on page 13.
<b>Swordfish</b> 	47" lower jaw FL with head attached or 29" cleithrum to keel length if head removed, or 33 lbs. dressed	None	None	*FP required for harvest and sale. Spearing prohibited. Size limits apply to fish damaged by shark bites. "Lower jaw FL" = a straight-line measurement from the tip of the lower jaw to the fork of the caudal fin. "Cleithrum to keel length" = a curved measurement from the point of the cleithrum that provides the measurement along the body contour to the anterior portion of the caudal keel. The cleithrum is the semicircular bony structure at the posterior edge of the gill opening. A dressed fish may have its head, viscera, and fins removed, but its backbone and remaining carcass must remain intact and not be halved, quartered or otherwise further reduced.
<b>Triggerfish ,Gray ▲</b> 	14" FL	None	Check MyFWC.com for recent updates	Size limit applies to imported fish
<b>Triggerfish, Ocean</b> 	None	None	None	Harvest prohibited in John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park.
<b>Triggerfish, Other</b> 		See: "Marine Life" Regulations. pgs. 15 and 23		See: "Marine Life" Regulations on pgs. 15 and 23.
<b>Tripletail ▲ †</b> 	15" TL	10 per person per day or per vessel, whichever is less. Incidental bycatch - 2 per person per day or per vessel, whichever is less.	None	*RS required. Allowable gear: hook and line. Spearing prohibited. Size limit applies to sale of fish.

Species & Area	Size Limit	Trip Limit/ Bag Limit	Closed Season	Other Regulations
<b>Tropical Ornamentals</b> 		See: "Marine Life" Regulations, pgs. 15 and 23		See: "Marine Life" Regulations on pgs. 15 and 23..
<b>Wahoo ▲</b> 	None	500 lb. Commercial Daily Limit	None	*RS & FP required on the Atlantic coast.
<b>Weakfish</b> (gray seatrout or yellow-mouth trout) ▲ 	12" TL	None	None	Spearing is prohibited. Size limit applies to sale of fish.

### Chart Key

▲ Must remain in whole condition until landed ashore (head & tail intact)

† Harvest prohibited by or with the use of any multiple hook in conjunction with live or dead natural bait or any snatch hook.

**TL** = total length measure; Tip of snout to tip of tail.

**FL** = fork length measure; Tip of snout to fork of tail.

\* A Saltwater Products License (SPL) is required for commercial harvest and sale of all saltwater products. Additional Licenses, Permits, and Endorsements may also be required. See: Commercial Saltwater Fishing License Requirements

**AP** = Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services Apalachicola Bay Oyster harvesting license.

**C#** = crawfish endorsement required.

**CD#**= commercial dive permit required to harvest spiny lobster for commercial purposes by diving.

**DS#/LS#** = in St. Johns River, food shrimp or live shrimp production license required (moratorium in place for DS).

**FP** = federal permit.

**I#** = incidental catch endorsement required to sell up to 5 gallons of stone crab claws harvested in lawful commercial blue crab and spiny lobster traps by persons who hold a C# and/or V# and no X#.

**L#** = lampara net endorsement required to harvest more than 10 gallons of Ballyhoo per vessel per day.

**MLD#, MLB#, MLN#**= marine life endorsement required to species designated as "Marine Life" including "Live Shellfish" species such as urchins, starfish, starsnails, sanddollars.

**P#** = pompano endorsement applies to Cape Sable-Hurricane Pass area federal gill net fishery only.

**Q#** = sponge endorsement.

**RS** = restricted species endorsement.

**TB#**= in Tampa Bay, food shrimp production license required (moratorium in place).

**VH#, VS#, VN#, VI#** = blue crab endorsements required to sell or harvest blue crab, harvest in commercial quantities, or harvest with more than 5 traps.

**X#** = stone crab endorsement.



**Commercial Regulations  
Online Quick Chart**

# BALLYHOO

## Ballyhoo (halfbeaks, balao, and silver stripe halfbeaks) License Requirements and Bag Limits by Method of Harvest and Gear Used:

Harvest Method	Gear Used	License Requirements	Bag Limit
Directed harvest	Cast net, hook and line gear, landing or dip net.	Saltwater Products License (SPL)	5 gallons fish per person per day or per vessel.
Directed harvest	Lampara net.	SPL, with both Purse Seine (PS) and Lampara Net (L) endorsements.	10 boxes of fish per vessel (limit one trip per day). ‡
Incidental bycatch	Purse seine or lampara net.	SPL, PS	10 gallons per person per day or per vessel.
Incidental bycatch	All other gear.	SPL	5 gallons fish per person or per vessel per day.

‡ Boxes must have rectangular or square sides, a base and lid with a dimension no larger than 4.25 feet by 2 feet by 2 feet (the volume equivalent of 17 feet<sup>3</sup>).



### Baitfish Regulations

Basic size and bag limits, closed seasons, license requirements, and gear allowances are listed on pages 5 and 6. All license requirements and general commercial fishing limitations apply to species harvested as baitfish. Local limitations also apply to the use of nets to harvest baitfish, such as herring, menhaden, or sardines, in waters off the coasts of Citrus, Hernando, Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Manatee, Charlotte, Collier, Lee and Sarasota counties. Contact the regional FWC Law Enforcement Office before using nets to commercially harvest baitfish. See: FWC Law Enforcement Regional Offices on page 3.

A National Marine Sanctuary Permit is required to harvest ballyhoo or herring in the Newfound Harbor Key, Cheeca Rocks, Eastern Dry Rocks, Hens and Chickens, Rock Key and Sand Key sanctuary preservation areas (SPAs). All bycatch other than ballyhoo, balao, halfbeaks, or herring must be returned to the water alive. Lampara nets are prohibited in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) Newfound Harbor Key SPA, and cast nets used in Newfound Harbor Key SPA can be no greater than 500 square feet in area (12'7" radius). Cast nets and/or modified lampara nets that are no greater than 500 square feet in area may be used in the Sand Key, Rock Key, Eastern Dry Rocks, Hens and Chickens, and Cheeca Rocks SPAs. Contact with or disturbance of the seabed is prohibited in the SPAs. Harvest of baitfish by hook and line in the Newfound Harbor Key, Cheeca Rocks, Eastern Dry Rocks, Hens and Chickens, Rock Key and Sand Key SPAs is prohibited.

### “Marine Life” Regulations (Tropical/Ornamentals)

*Marine Life Chart on Page 15*

Florida’s commercial marine life fishery involves harvest of live saltwater finfish, invertebrates and plants, primarily for the aquarium trade. These organisms are landed and sold alive to wholesalers, retailers and aquarium owners. An SPL with a Restricted Species (RS) and Marine Life tiered endorsement is required for harvest of marine life species listed in rule 68B-42, F.A.C.

#### Marine Life Transferable Dive (MLD)

Required to harvest commercial quantities of listed marine life species using allowable gears, including harvest by diving. Initially issued to applicants with a reported income of at least \$5000 from landings of marine life species or live rock during one of the license years between July 1, 1999 and June 30, 2003. The MLD is transferable to another person with an SPL & RS. **Requalification for this endorsement begins in 2010/2011, based on prior years landings.**

#### Marine Life Bycatch Endorsement (MLB)

Required to harvest commercial quantities of marine life as bycatch which does not include harvest by diving. For persons who collected marine life primarily as bycatch in other fisheries, with gear other than diving gear, and with reported sales of less than \$5000 during one of the qualifying years. The bycatch endorsement is also transferable.

#### Marine Life Non-Transferable Dive (MLN)

Required to harvest commercial quantities of marine life by diving using dive gear for persons who had less than \$5000 in marine life landings or held a state live rock lease or federal live rock permit during one of the qualifying years and wish to harvest by diving. This endorsement is only transferable to immediate family members in the event of death or disability.

**The following species may not be commercially harvested and/or sold in Florida.**

Fish		Invertebrates
Bonefish	Snook	Coral - Black, Fire, Hard, Stony
Grouper - Goliath, Nassau, Warsaw, Speckled Hind	Spearfish	Crab - Mitten
Mariin - Blue, White	Sturgeon (Gulf or Atlantic)	Live Rock - unless from lease
Ray - Manta, Spotted Eagle	Tarpon	Queen Conch
Red Drum (Red fish)		Scallops - Bay
Sailfish		Seafans - Common, Venus
Sawfishes		Starfish - Bahama
Shark - Basking, Bigeye Sand Tiger, Sand Tiger, Spiny Dogfish, Whale, White, Atlantic Angel Shark, Bigeye Sixgill Shark, Bigeye Thresher Shark, Bignose Shark, Caribbean Reef Shark, Dusky Shark, Galapagos Shark, Hammerheads, Longfin Mako Shark, Narrowtooth Shark, Night Shark, Sevengill Shark, Sixgill Shark, Smalltail Shark, Lemon Shark, Silky Shark, Sandbar Shark and Caribbean Sharpnose Shark		Urchin - Longspine

**Commercially Prohibited Species**

The prohibition on the sale of warsaw grouper and speckled hind does not apply to legally imported fish or fish harvested from federal waters.

Possession, harvest, destruction, and sale of fresh, uncleaned, or uncured sea fan, hard or stony coral or fire coral is prohibited (does not apply to such species harvested outside state waters or adjacent federal waters and lawfully entering the state through interstate or international commerce and with acceptable proof of origin documenting the initial place of harvest and original sales transaction).

The prohibitions on the harvest and possession of live queen conch apply to Florida registered vessels in adjacent federal waters, but not to queen conch shells that are empty when collected. Licensed wholesale or retail

dealers may possess conch meat when documentation is present to show that such meat was legally imported from a foreign country. Possession of shells with an off-center hole larger than 1/16 inch in diameter through the spire is prohibited in or on the waters of Florida.

Simultaneous possession of bay scallops and any trawl, drag, dredge or net other than a landing dip net is prohibited. Documentation on scallops harvested out-of-state and entering the state in interstate commerce must be maintained and presented upon request.

**Industry Input is Key to Fishery Management**

Feedback offered by one fisherman or dealer can make a difference. Fishermen who cannot attend Commission meetings are encouraged to send comments to the Commission and to respond to questionnaires. The Division of Marine Fisheries Management Commercial Outreach Program can be reached by phone at 850-617-9629 or by e-mail at [daniel.ellinor@myfwc.com](mailto:daniel.ellinor@myfwc.com) or look for updates on the web at [MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com).

Dan Ellinor  
 Commercial Outreach Coordinator  
 FWC Division of Marine Fisheries  
 2590 Executive Center Circle, East,  
 Suite 203  
 Tallahassee, Florida 32301

For Additional Information Please Contact:  
 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
 Division of Marine Fisheries Management  
 2590 Executive Center Circle East Suite 203  
 Berkley Building  
 Tallahassee, Florida 32301  
[MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com)



PRFRT. STD  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
 TALLAHASSEE, FL  
 PERMIT 20

# FISHING REGULATIONS

## READY FOR LOBSTER SEASON?

page 18



- ▶ Improving Gulf Reef Fish Data [page 10](#)
- ▶ Saltwater Angler Photos [page 19](#)



**NEW!**  
FWC Licensing  
Phone App  
page 15

Applies to Florida State Waters of the Gulf and Atlantic | Issued: July 1, 2015

▶ Search MyFWC on Social Media



Florida Fish and Wildlife  
Conservation Commission



Please visit [MyFWC.com/Fishing/Saltwater/Recreational](http://MyFWC.com/Fishing/Saltwater/Recreational) for the most current regulations





# YOUR FISHING SEASON STARTS HERE

EVERY SEASON STARTS AT  
**DICK'S**  
 SPORTING GOODS  
 SHOP [DICKS.COM/FISHING](http://DICKS.COM/FISHING)

VALID 6/30/15 THROUGH 12/30/15

**TAKE \$10 OFF**

**YOUR NEXT FISHING, HUNTING AND CAMPING PURCHASE OF \$50 OR MORE**

Limit one coupon per customer. Minimum purchase of \$50 before sales tax. Total amount of coupon must be redeemed at one time. Cannot be combined with any other offers, coupons, team discounts or Guaranteed In-Stock markdowns, or used for licenses or previously purchased merchandise. **Coupon valid in-store only.** Not redeemable for cash, gift cards or store credit. No reproductions or rain checks accepted. Returns or exchanges where a ScoreCard Reward or other discount was applied may result in an adjusted refund amount. Excludes purchases of gift cards, firearms, ammunition, Shimano, St. Croix, G. Loomis, Eureka!, Leupold, Gregory, Hurler, O'Neill, Diamondback, Under Armour, The North Face, Patagonia, Burton, Marmot, Columbia, Volcom, Simms, Thule, Van Staal and Yakima, Megabass, GoPro, Garmin, Fuji, Mongoose, Rollerblade, Descente, Prana, Benchmade, Camelbak, Kelty, Merrell, Yeti, Liquid Force, Kwik Tek, Teeter, Yvolution, Wenonah, Weber, Thermos, RAVE Sports, Hurricane Kayaks, Sportube, Henderson Wetsuits, FLOW, Arena, Advanced Elements, Swarovski Optik, Zeiss, K2 Snowboards, Atlas Snowshoes, Tubbs Snowshoes, MSR, Therm-A-Rest, Seal Line, Platypus, Ecase, PackTowl and Humminbird. Excludes clearance items. Clearance items have .x3 or .x7 endings. Some additional exclusions may apply. See store or visit [Dicks.com](http://Dicks.com) for details. Valid 6/30/15 through 12/30/15.

EVERY SEASON STARTS AT  
**DICK'S**  
 SPORTING GOODS



# CONTENTS



Eszter Keresztes

2015 FWC Commission Meeting Dates and Locations..... 4

Saltwater Fishing Shows and Events ..... 4

2015 License Free Fishing Days..... 4

Message from Marine Fisheries Management Director Jessica McCawley ..... 6

FWC Offices ..... 6

Know Your Management Zones ..... 8

New Grand Slam Challenges..... 9

Improving Gulf Reef Fish Data ..... 10

**Basic Regulations:**

Reef Fish and Pelagics ..... 11-12

Coastal Species..... 13

Unregulated Species ..... 13

Crustaceans and Mollusks..... 14

Sharks and Prohibited Species..... 14

New FWC Licensing Phone App ..... 15

Recreational Gear and Sparring ..... 16-17

Ready for Lobster Season?..... 18

Marine Life Regulations ..... 20

Grand Slams and State Records ..... 21

Saltwater Fishing License and Exemptions ..... 22

FWC Division of Law Enforcement ..... 24



## Buy your license online!

When you buy your license online, it's fast, convenient and saves time and travel.

You can obtain a license 24 hours a day at [License.MyFWC.com](http://License.MyFWC.com) and begin fishing immediately!

Licenses are also available toll-free at 1-888-FISHFLORIDA (1-888-347-4356). Processing fees apply to telephone and Internet sales.

## Contact us

Go to [MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com) for up-to-date information on recreational saltwater fishing regulations, news and events as well as resources, publications and videos.

Visit the FWC's Fish and Wildlife Research Institute online at [MyFWC.com/Research](http://MyFWC.com/Research)

For federal fishing regulations, please contact:

- Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council  
888-833-1844  
[www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org)
- South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
866-SAFMC-10  
[www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net)
- National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries)  
727-824-5301  
[www.nmfs.noaa.gov](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov)

## For additional information please contact:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
[MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com)

Division of Marine Fisheries Management  
2590 Executive Center Circle East  
Berkeley Building  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301  
850-487-0554

## Wildlife alert reward program

Report fish and wildlife law violations by calling toll-free 1-888-404-FWCC (3922); on cell phones, dial \*FWC or #FWC depending on service carrier; or click [MyFWC.com/Contact](http://MyFWC.com/Contact). For more information, see page 24.

## On the cover

Noah Bingham with spiny lobster  
Photograph by Dave Bingham

Have a picture for the cover?  
Please send your photographs to:  
[Saltwater@MyFWC.com](mailto:Saltwater@MyFWC.com).



# West Marine®

For your life on the water®

## GREAT GEAR, RIGHT HERE!

West Marine is the one-stop source for all of the best brands in fishing!



SHIMANO®

GRUNDENS

PELAGIC



OLD HARBOR OUTFITTERS  
BLOCK ISLAND

Columbia



Over 50 stores to serve you in Florida!

For the location nearest you, or to shop 24/7, go to [westmarine.com](http://westmarine.com)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Introduction

This publication is provided as a guide to Florida fishing laws and regulations. The Florida Administrative Code is the final authority on fishing laws. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) strives to ensure information in this booklet is accurate, but assumes no liability for any errors that occur in this publication. Contact the FWC if you have any questions on issues not covered in this booklet. A continuously updated electronic version of this publication is available at [MyFWC.com/Fishing](http://MyFWC.com/Fishing) by clicking on "Saltwater" and "Recreational Regulations."

#### How your license fee helps

The money collected from saltwater fishing licenses is used to improve and restore fish habitat and for marine fisheries research, law enforcement and public education on marine resources. An additional \$.50 fee will be charged for any license or permit not purchased directly from the county tax collector. Obtain immediate license privileges, 24 hours a day, at [License.MyFWC.com](http://License.MyFWC.com) or by calling toll-free 888-FISH-FLORIDA (347-4356). Processing fees will apply to telephone and Internet sales.

#### 2015 Commission meeting dates and locations

Subject to change regarding availability of appropriate facilities to hold the meeting.

- September 2–3, 2015 — Weston, FL
- November 18–19, 2015 — Panama City, FL

For more information about Commission meeting dates, times, locations and agendas, visit our website at [MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com) and click on "About" and "Commission Meetings" on the top of the page.

### 2015 Shows and Events

Visit the FWC booth at these upcoming events to pick up your copy of the *Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations and Fishing Lines: Angler's Guide to Florida's Marine Resources*. For more information call 850-487-0554 or visit [MyFWC.com/Fishing](http://MyFWC.com/Fishing) and click on "Saltwater" and "Outreach and Education Programs."

#### Keys/SE Florida Summer Workshops

July 6, Key West  
July 7, Islamorada  
July 8, Miami/Coral Gables  
July 9, Jupiter

#### Southwest Coast Summer Workshops

July 6, Naples  
July 7, Punta Gorda  
July 8, St. Pete (at FWRI)  
July 9, Crystal River

#### Panhandle/Big Bend Summer Workshops

July 13, Pensacola  
July 14, Destin  
July 15, Panama City  
July 16, Steinhatchee

#### East Coast Summer Workshops

July 20, Stuart  
July 21, Fort Pierce  
July 22, Cocoa  
July 23, Daytona/  
Ormond Beach

#### Other Summer Workshops

July 27, Tallahassee  
Webinar  
July 28 or 29, Carabelle  
July 30, Jacksonville

#### Kids' Fishing Clinics

July 18, Palm Coast  
Sept. 19, Sarasota  
Oct. 10, Naples  
Nov. 7, Steinhatchee  
Dec. 5, Juno Beach

#### Women's Fishing Clinics

July 11, Panama City  
Aug. 22, Fernandina Beach  
Oct. 10, St. Petersburg

#### Florida Sportsman Expo

Sept. 12–13, Tampa

#### FWRI's Marine Quest

Oct. 17, St. Petersburg



### 2015 License-Free Saltwater Fishing Days!

- September 5
- November 28



### About this Guide

This high-quality regulation guide is offered to you by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Division of Marine Fisheries Management through its unique partnership with J.F. Griffin Publishing, LLC.

J.F. Griffin is an award winning publishing house that specializes in producing state fish & wildlife regulation books. J.F. Griffin supports the FWC staff in the design, layout and editing of the guides. They also manage the marketing and sales of advertising to appropriate businesses within the book.

The revenue generated through ad sales significantly lowers production costs and generates savings. These savings translate into additional funds for other important fisheries and habitat programs.

If you have any feedback or are interested in advertising, please contact us at 413.884.1001 or online at [www.JFGriffin.com](http://www.JFGriffin.com)

#### Graphic Design:

Jon Gulley, Dane Fay,  
Evelyn Haddad, Chris Sobolowski



430 Main St. Suite 5 | Williamstown, MA 01267



J.F. Griffin Publishing, LLC is proud to print the official Florida Saltwater Fishing Regulations on post-consumer recycled paper.

**NOW** available online  
in a new Digital Edition!

- » Fully searchable
- » Email pages
- » Live hyperlinks to expanded content
- » One-click printing



the only stop for all your  
**OUTDOOR NEEDS**



**A Academy**<sup>®</sup>  
SPORTS+OUTDOORS

**RIGHT STUFF. LOW PRICE. EVERYDAY!**

academy.com |     

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



### FWC Summer Workshops Scheduled

Do you have ideas about how Florida's marine fisheries should be managed? The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) wants to hear from you.

Whether you are a seafood aficionado who wants priority placed on getting fish to the dinner plate or a recreational fisher who prefers to catch and release, we want to know what marine fisheries issues you are concerned about. This is your chance to let us know what we are doing right, where you see opportunities for improvement, and what your top priorities for marine fisheries management are.

To gather this input and develop a better understanding of the public's views on marine fisheries, the FWC will host several workshops across the state throughout the month of July 2015.

All are invited and we hope you will be able to attend.

Groups that might be interested in participating include commercial and recreational fishers, wholesale dealers, those in the tourism industry, fishing guides, divers and concerned citizens.

At the meetings, staff will provide a brief presentation about statewide and regional fisheries management issues that are currently being worked on and other potential issues that have been brought to our attention. Then it will be your turn to fill in any gaps and let us know where you think the FWC should focus its efforts in the coming years.

To learn more about when and where these workshops will be hosted, please turn to page 4 of this booklet or visit [MyFWC.com/Fishing](http://MyFWC.com/Fishing) and click on "Saltwater," "Rulemaking" and "Upcoming Public Workshops."

Jessica McCawley | Director, Marine Fisheries Management,  
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission



## Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

620 South Meridian Street  
Farris Bryant Building  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600  
(850) 488-4676  
(800) 955-8771 TDD

### Commissioners

**Richard A. Corbett**  
Chairman, Tampa

**Brian S. Yablonski**  
Vice Chairman, Tallahassee

**Ronald M. Bergeron**  
Ft. Lauderdale

**Richard Hanas**  
Oviedo

**Aliese P. "Liesa" Priddy**  
Immokalee

**Adrien "Bo" Rivard**  
Panama City

**Charles W. Roberts III**  
Tallahassee

### Staff

**Nick Wiley**  
Executive Director

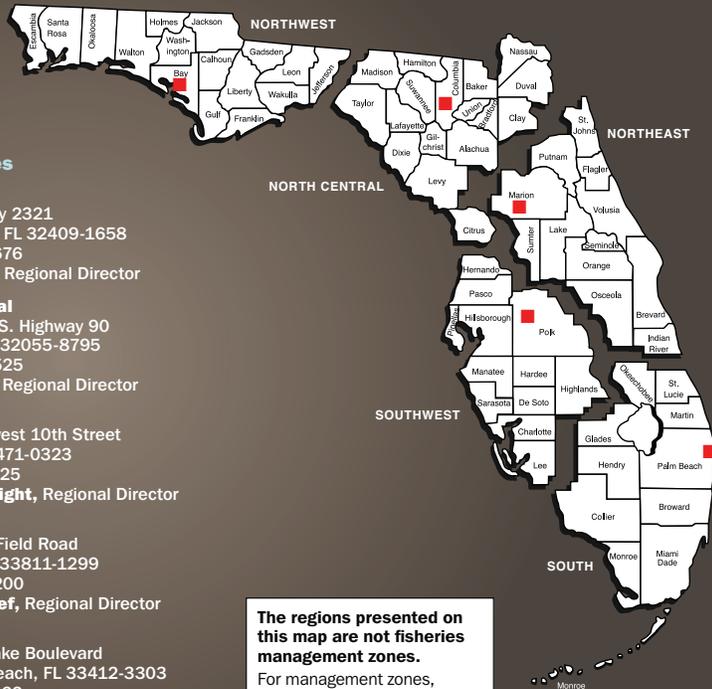
**Eric Sutton**  
Assistant Executive Director

**Jennifer Fitzwater**  
Chief of Staff

**Jessica McCawley**  
Director, Marine  
Fisheries Management

### FWC Offices

- **Northwest**  
3911 Highway 2321  
Panama City, FL 32409-1658  
(850) 265-3676  
**Steve Shea**, Regional Director
- **North Central**  
3377 East U.S. Highway 90  
Lake City, FL 32055-8795  
(386) 758-0525  
**Chris Wynn**, Regional Director
- **Northeast**  
1239 Southwest 10th Street  
Ocala, FL 34471-0323  
(352) 732-1225  
**Shannon Wright**, Regional Director
- **Southwest**  
3900 Drane Field Road  
Lakeland, FL 33811-1299  
(863) 648-3200  
**Thomas Graef**, Regional Director
- **South**  
8535 Northlake Boulevard  
West Palm Beach, FL 33412-3303  
(561) 625-5122  
**Ernie Marks**, Regional Director



The regions presented on this map are not fisheries management zones. For management zones, please see page 8.

## MAKO™ The Perfect Predator

Whether you're out to tackle saltwater bays or bluewater, MAKO boats are born and bred to outsmart the most elusive prey. And they are backed by MAKO ASSURANCE, the best warranty in the business. See them for yourself at Bass Pro Shops® Tracker Boat Center throughout Florida and beyond.



[MAKO-BOATS.COM](http://MAKO-BOATS.COM)

Call 888.434.7487



# Legendary Trips Start Here

When you're preparing for fishing, Bass Pro Shops® is the first and only place you'll need to stop. Our showrooms house a huge selection of gear and tackle from all the top brands, like Offshore Angler™. We also carry a variety of marine gear and boat accessories, in addition to being your Mercury® repower headquarters.



Shop online at  
[basspro.com](http://basspro.com)

For a FREE catalog  
1-800-BASS PRO  
1-800-227-7776

For an adventure in itself  
Visit Our Stores Nationwide



## MANAGEMENT ZONES

# Know Your Management Zones

For most species, Florida's recreational bag limits apply to all state waters off Florida, which extend out to 3 nautical miles on the Atlantic and out to 9 nautical miles on the Gulf. The maps below provide information regarding 3 species that have specific management zones where bag limits or rules vary by region.

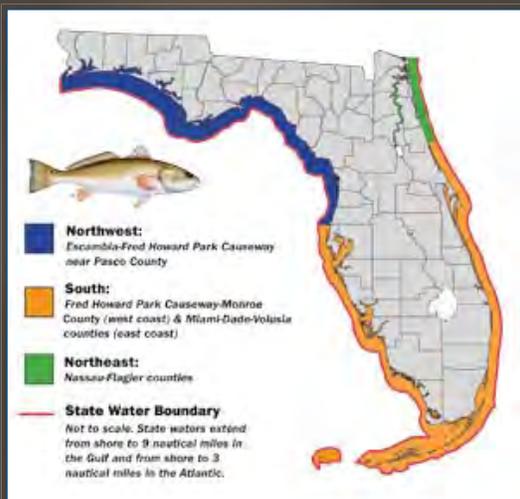
## Blue Crab Trap Closures

The blue crab trap closure map identifies the regions and time-frames where recreational traps must be removed from the water or tied to private property. Crabbing can continue during a trap closure period with other legal gear or with traps that are attached to private property. For more information on trap closures please visit: [MyFWC.com/Fishing/Saltwater/Recreational/Blue-Crab](http://MyFWC.com/Fishing/Saltwater/Recreational/Blue-Crab).



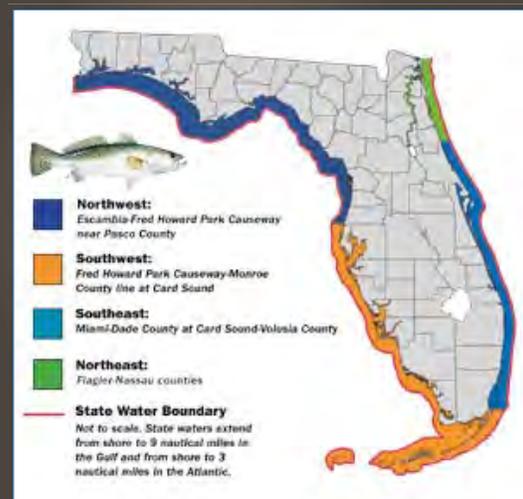
## Red Drum Management Zones

For red drum, there are three management zones and the daily recreational bag limit is two fish in northeast and northwest regions, and one fish in the south region.



## Spotted Seatrout Management Zones

Spotted seatrout has four management zones and the recreational bag limit is six fish in the northeast region, five fish in the northwest region, and four fish in the southeast and southwest zones.



# FWC unveils **NEW** Grand Slams!

Think you have what it takes to catch a new Saltwater Grand Slam? Grand Slams challenge anglers to catch three specific fish species in a 24-hour period and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has recently updated the program by creating nine new slams including a Small Fry Slam for children 15 and under.

Fishing in Florida is a favorite pastime for millions of anglers. What makes it so special and exciting is not only the beautiful places and weather, but the large variety of saltwater species an angler can catch. Programs like the new and improved grand slams make for a great day out on the water!

By encouraging anglers to target multiple species during fishing trips, the grand slam program entices anglers to learn more about Florida's vast recreational fishing opportunities. The new slams include:

**Inshore Grand Slam:**  
Red drum, spotted seatrout, flounder

**Family Slam:**  
Any three fish in the same family

**Blue Water Slam:**  
Dolphinfish, sailfish, wahoo

**Florida Grand Slam:**  
Permit, tarpon, bonefish

**Shoreline Slam:**  
Sheepshead, kingfish (whiting), Florida pompano

**Reefs and Rubble Slam:**  
Black sea bass, gag, triggerfish

**Nearshore Slam:**  
Cobia, tripletail, king mackerel

**Bay and Estuary Slam:**  
Mangrove snapper, snook, Spanish mackerel

**Small Fry Slam:**  
(15 and under):  
Pinfish, grunt, catfish

All catches, past and present, are eligible as long as they can be documented. Successful anglers will receive a certificate signed by both the Executive Director of the FWC and the President of the International Game Fish Association as well as a colorful shirt in recognition of their achievement. Recipients will also be listed on the MyFWC.com website and in the this Saltwater Fishing Regulations Booklet.

As always, FWC encourages responsible angling. Remember proper catch-and-release techniques when fishing. Anglers do not have to harvest their fish to be eligible, and are strongly encouraged to release their catches alive. For more information or to apply for a grand slam visit our website [MyFWC.com/Fishing](http://MyFWC.com/Fishing) and click on "Saltwater" and "Angler Recognition" or send an email to [AnglerRecognition@MyFWC.com](mailto:AnglerRecognition@MyFWC.com). Share your grand slam photographs and stories with us on Twitter or Instagram by using #FWCSlam.

**CCA FLORIDA**  
**STAR TOURNAMENT**  
PRESENTED BY **YAMAHA**

**CATCH A STAR TAGGED REDFISH AND WIN A BRAND NEW BOAT!**

**80 TAGGED REDFISH** & **\$500,000 IN PRIZES AND SCHOLARSHIPS**  
TAGGED REDFISH PRIZES INCLUDE BOAT, MOTOR AND TRAILER PACKAGES FROM...

**CONTENDER**      **HELL'S BAY BOATWORKS**      **PATHFINDER ANGLER DRIVEN**

**108 DAYS OF FISHING** & **\$30 ENTRY FEE**

Mark your calendars → **MAY 23 - SEPT 7, 2015**

Visit **WWW.CCAFLSTAR.COM** for more.



**BIG Kahuna**  
PORTABLE SHOWER

Available In Three Sizes:  
4.7 Gallons • 8 Gallons • 13.6 Gallons

Relied Upon By:

- "LOVED" BY NASCAR!
- UV Protected
- Dept Of Homeland Security
- Variable Pressure
- K-9 Trainers
- Controlled Shower Head
- Veterans Administration
- Easy to Operate – Vented, Integrated, Patented Water Tight Lid
- Fire Departments
- 12-Volt Worry-Free, Submersible Pump
- Construction Companies
- Marine-Grade construction
- Outdoorsmen
- Boaters

Currently being used on the *Bonneville Salt Flat Time Trials*

Want To Learn More? Visit Us Online:  
[www.bigkahunashowers.com](http://www.bigkahunashowers.com)




**DOCK PILING REPAIR & PROTECTION**

Before After

**DO YOU HAVE ROTTEN DOCK PILING?**  
Save thousands of dollars with our rotten or worm-damaged Restoration System. It can fix a piling that has been completely eaten through! After installation, your piling will be far stronger than replacing it with a new, high-priced piling. It also eliminates the headaches of pulling permits and waiting months for the dock company to show up. We've been installing this system for 26 years and have **NEVER had a callback or failure of any kind!** We are so sure you'll be satisfied, we give a 15 year warranty on labor and materials!

**NEW PILING PROTECTION**  
We also protect new pilings from the absolute certain worm damage it will have if left unprotected. Every dock that is in salt or brackish water needs to be protected!

[WWW.DOCKPILINGREPAIR.COM](http://WWW.DOCKPILINGREPAIR.COM)  
FREE ESTIMATE OR INFO: 727-808-4999

# Improving Gulf Reef Fish Data Starts With You

The Gulf Reef Fish Survey is a program designed to collect better recreational harvest data from anglers targeting several species of Gulf reef fish. Better data is something Gulf reef fish anglers have asked for and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has listened and taken action. But we still need your help.

## Who should sign up for the Gulf Reef Fish Survey?

Signing up is mandatory for anglers (including those 65 and older) fishing in the Gulf of Mexico (excluding Monroe County) from a private boat, who plan to harvest, possess or land any of the following reef fish: red and vermilion snapper; gag, black and red grouper; gray triggerfish; greater and lesser amberjack; banded rudderfish; and almaco jack. If you are a Gulf reef fish angler and haven't yet signed up, please do so today! The process is easy and no-cost and helps the FWC paint a clearer picture of how many people are targeting Gulf reef fish.

If you are fishing from a for-hire vessel, you do not need to sign up for the Gulf Reef Fish Survey. Anglers under 16 years of age and those fishing from a vessel that has a vessel recreational fishing license also do not need to sign up.

## How do I sign up?

To sign up, visit [License.MyFWC.com](http://License.MyFWC.com) and click "Purchase a License" and add "Gulf Reef Fish Angler" to your cart. You can also sign up at any retailer such as tackle shops, sporting goods stores and tax collector offices or by phone at 1-888-FISHFLORIDA (347-4356). Renewal will be on an annual basis, just like any one-year fishing license.

Are you a Florida resident 65 or older and exempt from needing a recreational saltwater fishing license? No worries! Though you are still required to click "Purchase a License," signing up as a "Gulf Reef Fish Angler" is no-cost. You are not required to purchase any other license, such as a recreational saltwater fishing license, or pay any other fees to sign up for the Gulf Reef Fish Survey.

## How does the Gulf Reef Fish Survey work?

Throughout the year, FWC researchers will contact a percentage of people who have signed up for the Gulf Reef Fish Survey via mail and ask them to fill out a brief questionnaire on their recent fishing trips targeting Gulf reef fish. Anglers are not required to fill out these questionnaires, but participation will help improve recreational data. The FWC asks that anglers return surveys even if you have no fishing trips to report.

## Need more information?

Visit [MyFWC.com/Fishing](http://MyFWC.com/Fishing) and click on "Saltwater," "Recreational Regulations" and "Gulf Reef Fish Survey." On this website, we have a video showing how you can sign up online, background information on the Gulf Reef Fish Survey program, and a link to a Frequently Asked Questions page. You can also call the Division of Marine Fisheries Management at 850-487-0554.





# Florida Recreational Saltwater Fishing Regulations

Issued: July 2015

New regulations are highlighted in red  
Regulations apply to state waters of the Gulf and Atlantic  
(please visit: MyFWC.com/Fishing/Saltwater/Recreational  
for the most current regulations)

All art: © Diane Rome Peebles, except snowy grouper (Duane Raver)

## Reef Fish

### Snappers (Gulf reef fish anglers — see page 10)

#### General Snappers Regulations:

- Within state waters of the Atlantic and Gulf, the snapper aggregate bag limit is 10 fish per harvester unless the species rule specifies that it is not included in the aggregate. This means that a harvester can retain a total of 10 snappers in any combination of species. Exceptions are noted below.
- If no season information is included, the species is open year-round.

#### All Other Snapper ▲◆●

##### Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 12"

##### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 10 per harvester

##### Remarks

- Includes: Blackfin, Dog, Mahogany, Queen, Silk and Yellowtail



#### Snapper, Cubera ▲◆●

##### Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 12" (see remarks)

##### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 10 per harvester

##### Remarks

- May possess no more than 2 over 30" per harvester or vessel per day, whichever is less. 30" or larger not included within the snapper aggregate bag limit.



#### Snapper, Red ▲◆●

##### Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic - 20"
- Gulf - 16"

##### Season:

- Atlantic - Open year-round
- **Gulf - May 23-July 12; Sept. 5, 6, 7; and every Saturday and Sunday in Sept. and Oct.; and Nov. 1**

##### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 2 per harvester

##### Remarks

- Gulf - Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain and crew on for-hire vessels.



#### Snapper, Vermilion ▲◆●

##### Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic - 12"
- Gulf - 10"

##### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic - 5 per harvester
- Gulf - 10 per harvester

##### Remarks

- **Not** included within the snapper aggregate bag limit.



#### Snapper, Lane ▲◆●

##### Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 8"

##### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic - 10 per harvester
- Gulf - 100 pounds (see remarks)

##### Remarks

- Gulf not included within the snapper aggregate bag limit.



#### Snapper, Gray (Mangrove) ▲◆●

##### Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 10"

##### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 5 per harvester



#### Snapper, Mutton ▲◆●

##### Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 16"

##### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 10 per harvester



#### Snapper, Schoolmaster ▲◆●

##### Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 10"

##### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 10 per harvester



#### Snapper, Black & Wenchman ▲◆●

##### Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - None

##### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 10 per harvester

## Grouper

#### Atlantic Grouper

##### General Regulations:

- Atlantic grouper regulations apply to all state waters of the Atlantic and all state waters off Monroe County (Gulf and Atlantic sides).
- Atlantic grouper aggregate bag limit is 3 fish, which means that no harvester shall retain more than 3 Atlantic groupers in any combination of species.

#### Gulf Grouper

##### General Regulations:

- Gulf grouper regulations apply to all state waters of the Gulf except off Monroe County (where Atlantic rules apply).
- Gulf grouper aggregate bag limit is 4 fish which means that no harvester can retain more than 4 Gulf grouper in any combination of species.
- Zero bag limit for captain and crew of for-hire vessels applies to gag, black, and red grouper only.

#### Season Information:

- If no season information is provided, the species is open year-round.



#### Grouper, Black ▲◆●

##### Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic - 24"
- Gulf - 22"

##### Season:

- Atlantic - Closed Jan. 1-April 30
- Gulf - Open year-round

##### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic - 1 per harvester. Only 1 fish can be gag or black
- Gulf - 4 per harvester



#### Grouper, Scamp ▲◆●

##### Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic - 20"
- Gulf - 16"

##### Season:

- Atlantic - Closed Jan. 1-April 30
- Gulf - Open year-round

##### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic - 3 per harvester
- Gulf - 4 per harvester



#### Grouper, Snowy ▲◆●

##### Minimum Size Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - None

##### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic - 1 per harvester
- Gulf - 4 per harvester



#### Gag ▲◆●

##### Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic - 24"
- Gulf - 22"

##### Seasons:

- Atlantic - Closed: Jan. 1-April 30
- Gulf - State waters off Franklin, Wakulla, Jefferson and Taylor counties: Open April 1-June 30
- Gulf - State waters off all other counties: Open July 1-Dec. 3

##### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic - 1 per harvester. Only 1 fish can be gag or black
- Gulf - 2 per harvester



#### Grouper, Red ▲◆●

##### Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 20"

##### Season:

- Atlantic - Closed Jan. 1-April 30
- Gulf - Open year-round

##### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic - 3 per harvester
- **Gulf - 2 per person**



#### Grouper, Warsaw & Speckled Hind ▲◆●

##### Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - None

##### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 1 per vessel per day of each species



#### Grouper, Yellowfin & Yellowmouth ▲◆●

##### Minimum Size Limits:

- Atlantic and Gulf - 20"

##### Season:

- Atlantic - Closed Jan. 1-April 30
- Gulf - Open year-round

##### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic - 3 per harvester
- Gulf - 4 per harvester



#### Other Grouper ▲◆●

##### Other Grouper includes:

- Tiger, Rock Hind, Red Hind, Coney and Graysby

##### Minimum Size Limit:

- Atlantic and Gulf - None

##### Season:

- Atlantic - Closed Jan. 1-April 30
- Gulf - Open year-round

##### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Atlantic - 3 per harvester
- Gulf - 4 per harvester

## Reef Fish

**Other Reef Fish** (If no season information is provided, the species is open year-round)



**Amberjack, Greater** ▲ ●

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
 • Atlantic - 28" fork length  
 • Gulf - 30" fork length (Size limit changing to 34" – see MyFWC.com for effective date)

**Season:**  
 • Atlantic - Open year-round  
 • Gulf - Closed June 1-July 31

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
 • Atlantic and Gulf - 1 per harvester



**Red Porgy** ▲ ◆ ●

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
 • Atlantic - 14"  
 • Gulf - None

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
 • Atlantic - 3 per harvester  
 • Gulf - 100 pounds



**Amberjack, Lesser & Banded Rudderfish** ▲ ●

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
 • Atlantic and Gulf - Cannot be less than 14" or greater than 22" fork length

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
 • Atlantic and Gulf - 5 per person aggregate of the two species



**Tilefish, Golden** ▲ ●

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
 • Atlantic - 1 per harvester  
 • Gulf - 4 per harvester

**Remarks**  
 • Golden tilefish included within Atlantic and Gulf Grouper aggregate bag limits



**Black Sea Bass** ▲ ◆ ●

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
 • Atlantic - 13"  
 • Gulf - 10"

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
 • Atlantic - 5 per harvester  
 • Gulf - 100 pounds per harvester



**Lionfish**

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
 • Atlantic and Gulf - None

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
 • Atlantic and Gulf - unlimited

**Remarks**  
 • No license required to harvest by dip net, pole spear, Hawaiian sling.  
 • Divers are encouraged to safely remove lionfish whenever they are found.



**Triggerfish (Gray)** ▲ ●

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
 • Atlantic and Gulf - 14" fork length  
 • Gulf - Closed until Jan. 1, 2016

**Season:**  
 • Atlantic - Open year-round  
 • Gulf - Closed until Jan. 1, 2016

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
 • Atlantic - 100 pounds  
 • Gulf - Closed until Jan. 1, 2016



**Hogfish** ▲ ●

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
 • Atlantic and Gulf - 12" fork length

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
 • Atlantic and Gulf - 5 per harvester

## Pelagics



**Billfish** ▲

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
 • Sailfish 63";  
 • Blue Marlin 99";  
 • White Marlin 66";  
 • Roundscale Spearfish 66"

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
 • 1 per harvester per day aggregate bag limit

**Remarks**  
 • Measured tip of lower jaw to fork. All landed fish must be reported to NOAA within 24 hours 800-894-5528 or hmspermits.noaa.gov.  
 • HMS permit required in federal waters.



**Wahoo** ▲

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
 • None

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
 • 2 per harvester per day



**Swordfish**

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
 • 47" lower jaw fork length with head attached or 25" cleithrum to keel length if head removed

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
 • 1 per harvester per day, not to exceed a maximum of 4 per recreational (not for-hire) vessel or 15 per for-hire vessel per day

**Remarks**  
 • All landed fish must be reported to NOAA within 24 hours 800-894-5528. HMS permit required in federal waters. Zero daily bag and possession limit for captain and crew of for-hire vessels.



**Cobia (Ling)** ▲

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
 • 33" fork length

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
 • 1 per harvester per day, not to exceed 6 per vessel per day



**Mackerel, King** ▲

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
 • 24" fork length

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
 • 2 per harvester per day

**Remarks**  
 • Bag limit reduced to 1 in some state waters if federal waters are closed to recreational harvest.



**Tripletail** ▲ ◆ †

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
 • 15"

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
 • 2 per harvester per day

**Remarks**  
 • Hook and line only. No snatch hooks.



**Mackerel, Spanish** ▲

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
 • 12" fork length

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
 • 15 per harvester per day



**Dolphinfish** ▲

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
 • Atlantic - 20" fork length  
 • Gulf - None

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
 • 10 per harvester per day, not to exceed 60 per vessel per day. Vessel limit does not apply to for-hire vessels.



Scan this code with your mobile device to view the regulations online.

Buy your license online at [License.MyFWC.com](http://License.MyFWC.com) or toll free at: 1-888-347-4356

Report fish and wildlife law violations toll free at: 1-888-404-3922

## Coastal Species



### Bluefish ▲ ■

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
• 12" fork length

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
• 10 per harvester per day



### Weakfish ▲ ◆

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
• Weakfish Management Area (WMA) in Nassau County - 12"  
• All other areas - no minimum

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
• WMA - 1 per harvester  
• All other areas - 100 pounds per day

#### Remarks

• Regulations apply in parts of Nassau County only.  
• See map at: [MyFWC.com/Fishing/Saltwater/Recreational/Weakfish](http://MyFWC.com/Fishing/Saltwater/Recreational/Weakfish)



### Black Drum ▲ ◆ ■

**Size Limits:**  
• Not less than 14" or more than 24"

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
• 5 per harvester per day

#### Remarks

• May possess one over 24". Snatching prohibited.



### Blue Runner ■

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
• No minimum

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
• 100 fish per harvester per day



### Snook (All species) ▲ ◆ ■

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
• Not less than 28" or more than 32" Atlantic excluding Monroe  
• Not less than 28" or more than 33" Gulf and Monroe County

#### Closed Season:

• Atlantic (excluding Monroe) closed Dec. 15-Jan. 31 and June 1-Aug. 31.  
• Gulf including Monroe County, Dec. 1-end of February, and May 1-Aug. 31.

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
• 1 per harvester per day

#### Remarks

• Snook permit required for harvest when saltwater license required. See [MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com) for snook permit details. Snatching and spearing prohibited.



### Flounder ▲ ◆ ■

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
• 12"

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
• 10 per harvester per day

#### Remarks

• May be harvested by spearing. Snatching prohibited.



### Bonefish ■

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
• 0 per harvester per day

#### Remarks

• Catch and release only  
• Hook and line only



### Spotted Seatrout ● ▲ ◆ ■

#### Size Limits:

• Not less than 15" or more than 20" (See remarks)

#### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

• 5 per harvester per day N.W. Zone  
• 4 per harvester per day S.W. Zone  
• 4 per harvester per day S.E. Zone  
• 6 per harvester per day N.E. Zone

#### Remarks

• May possess no more than 1 over 20"; included in the regional bag limit. See management zone map at [MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com).



### Mullet, Striped (Black) & Silver

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
• No minimum size

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
• 50 aggregate per harvester per day;

• **Aggregate vessel limits**  
Feb. 1-Aug. 31: 100 per vessel;  
Sept. 1-Jan. 31: 50 per vessel



### Pompano, African ● ▲ ■

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
• 24" fork length

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
• 2 per harvester per day, not to exceed 2 per vessel per day



### Permit ● ▲ ■

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
• 22" fork Special Permit Zone (SPZ); Not less than 11" or more than 22" fork length all other areas

**Closed Season:**  
• May 1-July 31 SPZ Only

#### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

• 1 per harvester per day, not to exceed 2 per vessel per day SPZ;  
• 2 per harvester per day all other state waters

#### Remarks

• May possess 1 over 22" fork length outside the SPZ, not to exceed 2 over 22" fork per vessel per day. For map of SPZ, please see: [MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com).



### Pompano, Florida ▲ ■

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
• 11" fork length

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
• 6 per harvester per day

#### Remarks

• Hook and line, cast net and beach or haul seine ONLY.



### Sheepshead ● ▲ ◆ ■

**Minimum Size Limits:**  
• 12"

**Daily Recreational Bag Limit:**  
• 15 per harvester per day

#### Remarks

• Snatching prohibited



### Tarpon ● ■

#### Recreational Bag Limit:

• 1 per harvester per year. \$50 harvest tag required. Vessel limit of one fish. Harvest tag can only be used when fish is retained for potential IGFA record.

#### Remarks

• Tarpon over 40 inches must remain in the water during release. Spearing and snatching prohibited. Bottom weighted jigs prohibited in Boca Grande Pass. See: [MyFWC.com/Fishing/Saltwater/Recreational/Tarpon](http://MyFWC.com/Fishing/Saltwater/Recreational/Tarpon) for additional information.



### Red Drum (Redfish) ▲ ◆ ■

#### Size Limits:

• Not less than 18" or more than 27"

#### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

• 2 per harvester per day in NE and NW zones, 1 per harvester per day in S zone. See map at [MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com).  
• Vessel limit of 8 fish, on-shore possession limit during transport 6 fish

#### Remarks

• Giggling, spearing, snatching prohibited. Harvest in Federal waters prohibited.

## Can't find your fish in the regulations?

Florida's coastal waters are home to thousands of marine species, and the majority of these species have no specific regulations with regard to bag limits, size limits, gear restrictions or closed seasons. These species are often referred to as "unregulated species," although the name can be a bit misleading. State law provides that for any marine species that does not have specific regulations, harvesting more than 100 pounds or two fish (whichever is the greater amount) constitutes a commercial quantity and requires a commercial license. This means the recreational harvest limit for any unregulated species is 100 pounds or two organisms if the combined weight of the two organisms exceeds 100 pounds.



#### Examples of "unregulated species" include:

Ladyfish, bonito, great barracuda, white grunt, southern stingray, gulf kingfish (whiting), pinfish, Atlantic croaker, jack crevalle, cero mackerel, hardhead catfish, gafftopsail catfish and blackfin tuna.

▲ Must remain in whole condition (removal of gills and guts allowed).

◆ Measured as total length. Total length is the straight line distance from the most forward part of the head with the mouth closed to the farthest tip of the tail with the tail compressed or squeezed together while the fish is lying on its side.

■ State regulations apply in federal waters.

● Additional gear rules apply, please see: [MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com)

† Harvest prohibited by or with the use of any multiple hook (any hook with two or more points and a common shaft) in conjunction with live or dead natural bait.

## Crustaceans and Mollusks

### Shrimp



#### Closed Season:

- April & May closed in Nassau, Duval, St. Johns, Putnam, Flagler & Clay counties

#### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 5 gallons heads on per harvester or vessel per day, whichever is less

#### Remarks

- Visit: [MyFWC.com/Fishing](http://MyFWC.com/Fishing) and select "Saltwater", "Regulations" and "Shrimp" for additional regulations specific to Dade, Nassau and Duval



### Bay Scallops

#### Season:

- Open June 27–Sept. 24, 2015

#### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 2 gallons whole or 1 pint meat per harvester per day; no more than 10 gallons whole, or ½ gallon meat per vessel anytime

#### Remarks

- Harvest allowed only in state waters of the Gulf of Mexico from the Pasco-Hernando county line, to the west bank of the Mexico Beach Canal in Bay County. It is illegal to harvest, possess and land bay scallops on waters outside open harvest area.

### Crab, Blue



#### Closed Season:

- Regional trap closures apply. See [MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com) for 2015 trap closure dates and locations.

#### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 10 gallons whole per harvester per day

#### Remarks

- 5 traps maximum. Trap requirements apply. Harvest of egg-bearing crabs prohibited.



### Spiny Lobster

#### Minimum Size Limit:

- Carapace must be greater than 3" measured in the water

#### Seasons:

- Sport Season Open July 29–30, 2015
- Regular Season Opens August 6, 2015

#### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- Sport Season: 6 per harvester per day in Monroe County and Biscayne National Park, 12 per day in all other harvest areas.
- Regular Season: 6 per harvester in all areas

#### Remarks

- Recreational trapping prohibited. Spiny lobster permit required when license required. Harvest of egg-bearing females prohibited.

### Crab, Stone



#### Minimum Size Limits:

- 2¾" claw

#### Closed Season:

- May 16–Oct. 14

#### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 1 gal. claws per harvester or 2 gal. per vessel, whichever is less

#### Remarks

- 5 traps maximum. Trap requirements apply. Illegal to possess whole crab. Harvest of egg-bearing crabs prohibited.



### Clams (Hard)

#### Minimum Size Limits:

- 1" thick across hinge

#### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- One 5 gal. bucket per harvester or 2 per vessel (whole in shell)

#### Remarks

- Illegal to harvest from closed areas.
- Go to [www.FloridaAquaculture.com](http://www.FloridaAquaculture.com) for allowable harvesting areas.
- May not harvest half hour after official sunset until half hour before official sunrise.

### Oysters



#### Minimum Size Limit:

- 3"

#### Closed Season:

- June, July, Aug. in Dixie, Wakulla, Levy counties.
- July, Aug., Sept. in all other areas except Apalachicola Bay which has open areas year-round.

#### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 2 bags per harvester or vessel except Apalachicola Bay

#### Remarks

- **Apalachicola Bay: special bag limits and other harvest restrictions apply. See [MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com) for detailed information.**
- Apalachicola Bay has summer & winter seasons/areas.
- Harvest from approved shellfish areas during daylight hours only.
- Go to [FloridaAquaculture.com](http://FloridaAquaculture.com) to determine the Open or Closed status of shellfish harvesting areas.
- May not harvest half hour after official sunset until half hour before official sunrise.
- 1 Bag = 60 lbs. or two 5 gal. buckets (whole in shell)
- Harvest prohibited in any harvest area that is in the Closed status as determined by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

## Sharks

#### Daily Recreational Bag Limit:

- 1 per harvester or 2 per vessel per day, whichever is less.

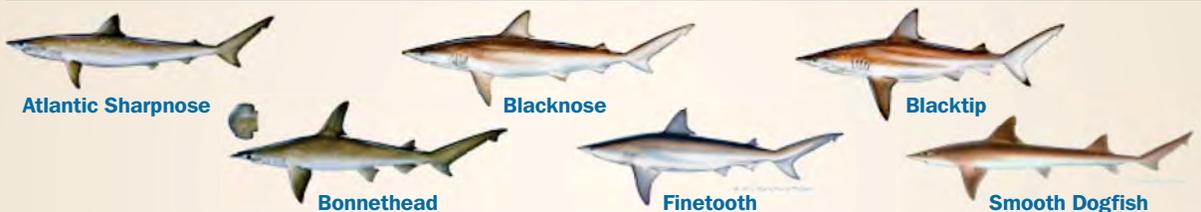
#### Remarks

- The retainable sharks are managed as a group for bag limit purposes. In other words, you can only harvest one shark per day and the shark that you harvest must be one of the retainable species.
- Hook-and-line gear only.
- See list of prohibited species below.

### Examples of Retainable Sharks with a 54" fork length minimum ▲ †



### Complete List of Retainable Sharks with no minimum size limit ▲ †



## Prohibited Species

#### It is unlawful to harvest, possess, land, purchase, sell or exchange the following species:

Goliath Grouper (Jewfish), Nassau Grouper, Sawfish, Atlantic Angel Shark, Basking Shark, Bigeye Sand Tiger Shark, Bigeye Sixgill Shark, Bigeye Thresher Shark, Bignose Shark, Caribbean Reef Shark, Caribbean Sharpnose Shark, Dusky Shark, Galapagos Shark, Lemon Shark, Longfin Mako Shark, Narrowtooth Shark, Night Shark, Silky Shark, Sand Tiger Shark, Sandbar Shark, Sevengill Shark, Sixgill Shark, Smalltail Shark, Spiny Dogfish, Whale Shark, White Shark, Tiger Shark, Great Hammerhead Shark, Scalloped and Smooth Hammerhead Shark, Manta Ray, Devil Ray, Spotted Eagle Ray, Longbill Spearfish, Mediterranean Spearfish, Sturgeon, Queen Conch, Calico Scallop, Stony, Hard and Fire Corals, Sea Fans, Bahama Starfish, and Longspine Urchin. Harvest of live rock in state waters is prohibited. Puffer fish harvest is prohibited in Volusia, Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie and Martin counties.

FWC – Division of Marine Fisheries Management, 2590 Executive Center Circle East, Tallahassee, FL 32301 Phone: 850-487-0554

This publication is provided as a guide to Florida fishing laws and regulations. The Florida Administrative Code is the final authority on fishing laws. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) strives to ensure information in this booklet is accurate, but assumes no liability for any errors that occur in this publication.

# Use New FWC App to Buy Your License and Ask for the Hard Card!



Buying a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) license has never been easier or more convenient with the new Fish-Hunt-FL application for Android, Apple and Windows smartphone devices.

This interactive app allows you to purchase any recreational fishing or hunting license offered by the FWC, and you can also store a copy of your license on your phone, check out recent FWC news, look at the current sunrise/sunset time for your area, check the coastal waters forecasts and look up hunting and fishing regulations. Download the free app today by searching FWC in the App Store or Google Play. Click on the "Purchase a License" option on the app or, to purchase a license online or learn more about FWC's license types, please visit: License.MyFWC.com.

While paper licenses have served the purpose for a long time, many anglers prefer a durable credit card style license (hard-card) that

easily fits in your wallet with all the other cards. The fact that it's waterproof makes it a great option for those who spend time on the water. Last year, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) began selling \$4 hard-card licenses to those purchasing one-year licenses; prior to this, only those who got 5-year or lifetime licenses were able to purchase a hard-card. And to top it off, the new licenses feature art donated by Guy Harvey. Printing for these new cards began in September 2014 and the newest design features dolphinfish. The original card, which has sold out, featured Florida's state saltwater fish, the sailfish. "We wanted to feature a species that is beautiful and easy to catch," said Brenda Brand, who

works in the FWC Office of Licensing and Permitting. "My son went crazy over it," Brand said. "He feels like he has something adult, a pre-driver's license," she said about her 15-year-old. "It also allows him to show his support for conservation!"

If you intend to fish for Gulf reef fish, don't forget to add the Gulf reef fish angler designation to your license. This is a relatively new requirement that became mandatory on April 1, 2015. To learn more about this designation and the Gulf Reef Fish Survey, see Page 10 or visit: MyFWC.com/Fishing and click on "Saltwater," "Recreational" and "Gulf Reef Fish Survey" under "Regulations."



**TACKLE DIRECT**  
World's Premier Fishing Outfitter.



**Request Our Current Catalog at [TackleDirect.com/Catalog](http://TackleDirect.com/Catalog)**

Shop Over 40,000 Items at: [www.TackleDirect.com](http://www.TackleDirect.com)

 <p><b>SHIMANO CT400D CALCUTTA REEL</b></p> <p>Priced at <b>\$379<sup>99</sup></b></p> <p><small>SHM-2367</small></p> <p>★★★★☆ Read Reviews + Product Q &amp; A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perfect saltwater reel for many species, including the biggest species</li> <li>• Comfortable to use with a round design</li> </ul>	 <p><b>SHIMANO STRADIC CI4 PLUS SPINNING REEL</b></p> <p>Priced at <b>\$239<sup>99</sup></b></p> <p><small>SHM-2660</small></p> <p>★★★★★ Read Reviews + Product Q &amp; A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CI4+ Construction</li> <li>• X-Ship gearing</li> <li>• High density EVA large handle grip</li> </ul>	 <p><b>SHIMANO BTR600FD BAITRUNNER REEL</b></p> <p>Priced at <b>\$169<sup>99</sup></b></p> <p><small>SHM-1551</small></p> <p>WATCH VIDEO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legendary performance and durability</li> <li>• Propulsion Line Management System</li> <li>• Can handle nearly any live-bait application</li> <li>• S A-RB bearings</li> </ul>
---	--	---

Shop Online: [TackleDirect.com](http://TackleDirect.com) Order Toll-Free: 888.354.7335 Retail Location: 6825 Tilton Road, Bldg C, Egg Harbor Twp, NJ 08234-4426

## RECREATIONAL GEAR

### Recreational gear

Additional regional gear restrictions may apply in your county. For further clarification, contact the local regional offices listed on page 6.

#### Reef fish gear rules

(applies to species marked with ● on pages 11–12)

- **Gulf of Mexico:** These regulations require the use of a dehooking device when recreationally fishing for reef fish in the Gulf of Mexico. All persons aboard a vessel harvesting reef fish must possess and use non-stainless steel circle hooks when using natural baits.
- **Atlantic Ocean:** Recreational and commercial fishers are required to use dehooking devices as needed while fishing for reef fish.

These rules apply to all members of the reef fish complex including groupers, snappers, amberjacks, red porgy, gray triggerfish, black sea bass, golden tilefish, banded rudderfish, speckled hind and others. For a complete species list, please visit MyFWC.com.

#### Hook-and-line gear

Hook-and-line anglers must tend their gear at all times to prevent people, marine life and

shore life from becoming entangled in the line or injured by the hook. Also, it is against the law to intentionally discard any monofilament netting or line into or onto state waters. Monofilament line can entangle birds, marine mammals, marine turtles and fish, often injuring or killing them. Trot lines with 10 or fewer hooks are considered hook-and-line gear and must be tended at all times while deployed. Species identified with "T" on pages 11 through 14 cannot be harvested with multi-hooks (single hook with two or more points) in conjunction with natural baits.

#### Nets

The following types of nets may be used for recreational purposes in Florida waters:

- Bully nets (for lobster only) no greater than 3 feet in diameter.
- Frame nets and push nets (for shrimp only) no greater than 16 feet in perimeter. Frame nets cannot be used in state waters off Dade County.
- Hand-held landing or dip nets no greater than 96 inches in perimeter.
- Cast nets measuring 14 feet or less stretched length (stretched length is defined as the distance from the horn at the center of the net with the net gathered and pulled taut, to the lead line). Cast nets may be used as harvesting

gear for the following species only: black drum, bluefish, cobia, flounder, mullet, Florida pompano, red drum, sheepshead, shrimp, Spanish mackerel, spotted seatrout, weakfish and unregulated species (see p. 13).

- Beach or haul seines measuring no larger than 500 square feet of mesh area, no larger than 2 inches stretched mesh size, not constructed of monofilament, and legibly marked at both ends with the harvester's name and address if a Florida resident. Non-residents using beach or haul seines for recreational purposes are required to have a commercial saltwater products license and legibly mark the seine at both ends with the harvester's saltwater products license number. Beach or haul seines may be used as harvesting gear for the following species only: black drum, bluefish, cobia, flounder, mullet, Florida pompano, red drum, sheepshead, shrimp, Spanish mackerel, weakfish and unregulated species.

#### Explosives, etc.

The use of powerheads, explosives, chemicals or the discharge of firearms to kill or harvest marine life is prohibited in state waters.

### FISHMASTER

Marine Towers and Accessories

## Universal Folding T-Tops

FREE SHIPPING



Only \$995

1.90" Tubing

Fits Virtually All Center Console Boats

Introducing the first PWC Fishing Arch



Turn your PWC into the Ultimate Fishing Machine

www.Fishmaster.com 877-777-8693

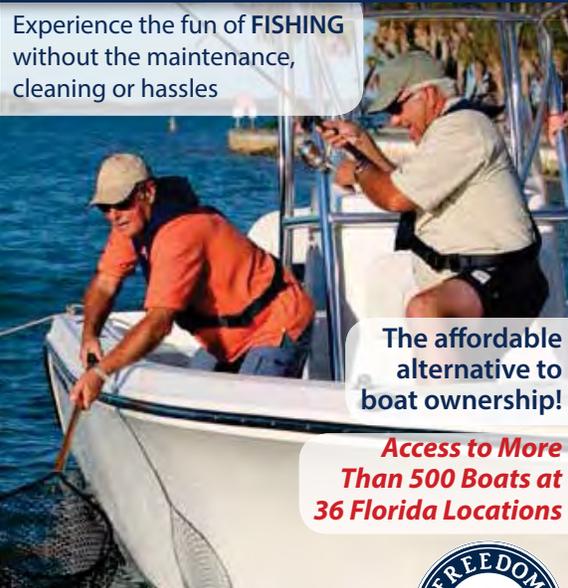
Accessories

- Rod Holders - E-Box
- Outriggers - Lights
- Antenna Brackets - and much, much more!

✓ BAIT
✓ FISHING ROD
✓ COOLER
✓ GAS

✓ JOIN FREEDOM BOAT CLUB

Experience the fun of FISHING without the maintenance, cleaning or hassles



The affordable alternative to boat ownership!

Access to More Than 500 Boats at 36 Florida Locations

CALL 888.766.7113

[www.FreedomBoatClub.com](http://www.FreedomBoatClub.com)



## Spearfishing

Spearfishing is a general term that includes bow fishing, gigging, spearfishing (underwater), or the use of any other device to capture a fish by piercing its body. Spearfishing does not include snagging or snatch hooking by hook and line. Marine species harvested by spearfishing are subject to the same recreational regulations (e.g., bag limits, size limits, and closed seasons) as those marine species that are harvested by any other type of recreationally-allowed gear. The following is a list of species or groups of species which are prohibited from harvest by all forms of spearfishing in state waters:

- All Prohibited Species (listed on p. 14)
- Billfish and Swordfish (all species)
- Bonefish
- Crab (blue, stone)
- Caribbean Spiny Lobster (*Panulirus argus*)
- Permit
- Pompano (Florida and African)
- Red drum
- Sharks (all species including dogfish)
- Snook
- Spotted seatrout
- Tarpon
- Tripletail
- Weakfish
- Marine Life Species (listed on p. 20)

\* Volusia County — You may not harvest by spearfishing in Volusia County inland waters with the exception of flounder and sheepshead, and only by the use of a barbed spear with three or fewer prongs.

\* Special Local Laws also prohibit harvest by spearfishing in specific areas (see: MyFWC.com and select: Fishing, Saltwater Regulations, Full Text Rule by Species, and Local Laws).

### Spearfishing

Spearfishing is a specific form of “spearfishing” defined as “the catching or taking of a fish through the instrumentality of a hand or mechanically propelled, single or multi-pronged spear or lance, barbed or barbless, operated by a person swimming at or below the surface of the water.” In addition to the harvest species limitations above, you may not spearfish:

- For any species that cannot be harvested by spearfishing (see Spearfishing above).
- For any species (freshwater or marine) in freshwater. Possession of spearfishing equipment in or on freshwater is also prohibited.
- Within the upper Keys no-spearfishing zone, which includes all state waters from the Miami-Dade County line down to and including Long Key.
- Within 100 yards of any designated public bathing beaches, commercial or public

fishing piers, or portions of bridges where fishing is allowed.

- Within 100 feet of the unsubmerged portion of any jetty, except that spearfishing is allowed along the last 500 yards of any jetty that extends more than 1,500 yards from the shoreline.
- In or on any body of water under the jurisdiction of the Division of Recreation and Parks of the Department of Environmental Protection. Within these areas, the possession of spearfishing equipment is also prohibited except when such equipment is unloaded and is properly stored upon watercraft passing nonstop through the area.
- Within the no-take areas of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (Visit: [www.floridakeys.noaa.gov](http://www.floridakeys.noaa.gov))
- Within any area where spearfishing is prohibited by a Special Local Law (Visit: [http://www.MyFWC.com/media/1527518/special\\_acts\\_of\\_local\\_applicationadobe.pdf](http://www.MyFWC.com/media/1527518/special_acts_of_local_applicationadobe.pdf))

### Powerheads, Bangsticks, Rebreathers

Harvest with the use of powerheads, bangsticks or rebreathers is prohibited in state waters, except that rebreathers are allowed for the harvest of lionfish. Within state waters, powerheads and bangsticks can be used for personal protection only, and cannot be used to harvest any species.

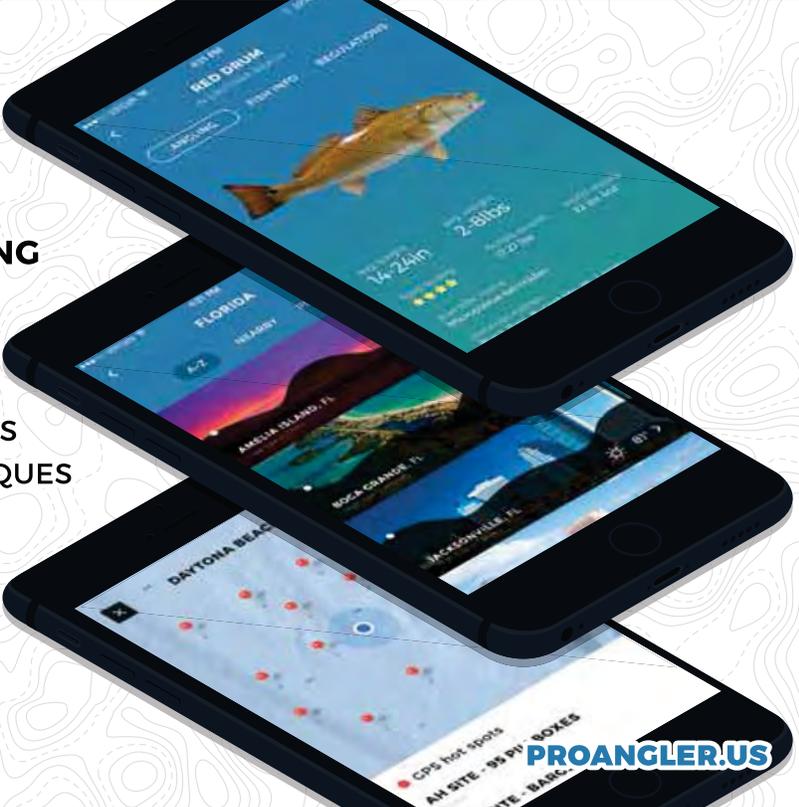


**NEED LOCAL FISHING  
ADVICE & TIPS?**

LOCAL PRO REPORTS  
GPS HOT SPOTS  
OVER 200 FISH SPECIES  
PRO ANGLING TECHNIQUES  
MARINE WEATHER  
REGULATIONS  
SOLUNAR TIMES  
TIDES & MOVING TIDES







PROANGLER.US

# Ready for Lobster Season?

The 2015 spiny lobster sport season (or mini-season) will occur on July 29–30, followed by the regular lobster season that begins on Aug. 6 and runs through the end of March 2016.

Many people find the rules and geographical boundaries in southern Florida to be complex and confusing. Whether you are new to the sport or a seasoned lobster veteran, a quick review of the basic information is never a bad idea!

## Do I need a recreational license or lobster permit?

Yes, unless you meet the established exemption requirements, you will need to purchase a Recreational Saltwater Fishing License and a \$5 Lobster Permit. To purchase a recreational license online, please visit: [License.MyFWC.com](http://License.MyFWC.com). You can also get a license by calling 1-888-347-4356, or download the new FWC Licensing Phone App (see page 15 for details). Licenses can also be purchased at any county tax collectors' office or at most marinas, bait and tackle stores, and fishing equipment retailers in Florida. To determine if you meet the established license exemption criteria, please visit [MyFWC.com](http://MyFWC.com) and select "Do I need one?" under Licenses and Permits. **If you are exempt from the recreational fishing license, you are also exempt from the requirement to purchase a lobster permit.**

## What gear can I use for recreational harvest?

Recreational gear for Caribbean spiny lobster (*Panulirus argus*) includes hand-held landing or dip nets, bully-nets that do not exceed 3 feet in diameter, hoop nets that do not exceed 10 feet in diameter, and other devices (grabs) that will not penetrate, puncture or crush the exoskeleton or flesh of the lobster. The use of chemicals or traps to harvest any species of lobster is prohibited. The use of spears and gigs to harvest Caribbean spiny lobster (*Panulirus argus*) is also prohibited. Standard equipment for most recreational harvesters includes a tickle stick and a dip net.

## Can I harvest at night?

During the two-day sport season, diving for lobster at night (one hour after sunset until one hour before sunrise) is prohibited in all state and federal waters off Monroe County. Harvest at night by hoop net or bully net is allowed statewide any time the recreational season is open.

## What is the recreational bag limit?

During the two-day sport season, the recreational bag limit is 6 per harvester per day in Monroe County and Biscayne National Park, and 12 per harvester per day in all other areas. During the sport season, there is also an on-shore possession limit of 6 lobster per person on the first day and 12 lobster per person on the second day that applies in Monroe County. Outside of Monroe County there is an on-shore possession limit of 12 lobster per person on the first day and 24 lobster per person on the second day of the sport season. During the regular harvest season beginning on August 6, the recreational daily bag limit is 6 lobster per person in all areas, and there is no on-shore possession limit.

## Is a spiny lobster with a 3 inch carapace legal?

No. FWC rules provide that the carapace length must EXCEED 3 inches in length, as measured from the front edge of the carapace (between the rostral horns) to the rear edge of the carapace. Inexpensive lobster measuring devices are very helpful in accurately measuring a lobster and are available from most marinas and tackle stores in south Florida and the Keys. Because lobster harvested while diving must be measured while in the water, FWC rules require every diver to possess a measuring device while diving for lobster.

## Do the bag limits and size limits apply to all species of lobster?

No. The bag limits and size limits provided above apply only to the Caribbean spiny lobster (*Panulirus argus*). Other species of lobster (spotted, smooth tail and slipper lobsters) are not specifically regulated which means that you can harvest up to 100 pounds of each species and there is no minimum size limit.

## Are there areas that are closed to lobster harvest?

Yes! If you are not a seasoned veteran who knows the area well, make sure you get a map to help you stay out of areas where lobster harvest is not allowed including. Lobster harvest is prohibited in:

- John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park is closed to lobster harvest during the sport season. During the regular season, lobster harvest is allowed in the park as long as you are not within any of the "Lobster Exclusion Zones" (marked with orange and white buoys) or on any coral formation within the park. Ask park officials for information if needed.
- Everglades National Park (Florida Bay)
- Dry Tortugas National Park

- Biscayne Bay-Card Sound Lobster Sanctuary
- No-take areas in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary which include 18 sanctuary preservation areas, four research only areas, and two ecological reserve areas. While the Dry Tortugas Ecological Reserve Areas are not marked, all of the other closed areas are marked with 30" diameter yellow buoys.
- Any artificial habitat.
- During sport season and the beginning of regular season, several local jurisdictions in Monroe County also prohibit diving and snorkeling in manmade canals and within 300 feet of marinas and other improved residential and commercial shorelines. For additional information on the local jurisdictions and closed areas, please visit: [MyFWC.com/Fishing](http://MyFWC.com/Fishing) and click on "Saltwater," "Recreational Regulations" and "Monroe County Lobster" or stop by the lobster information booth hosted by the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and FWC. The booth is located in Key Largo (between mile marker 105 and 106) and is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. from July 25 through July 28. Staff from the NOAA-Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and FWC Law Enforcement will be on hand to answer any questions that you may have about lobster season and regulations.

## Are there other regulations that I need to know about? Yes!

- The harvest or possession of any egg-bearing female lobster is prohibited, and this regulation applies to all species of lobster in the families *Panuliridae* (spiny lobsters) and *Scyllaridae* (slipper lobsters).
- The use of artificial habitats of any kind to attract and concentrate lobsters is strictly prohibited. If you see an artificial habitat of any kind, please report the location to the FWC-Division of Law Enforcement and do not harvest any lobster from the structure. **Seawalls, bridge piles, navigational markers and other structures constructed under a permit are not included within the definition of an artificial habitat.**
- A "divers-down" flag or buoy (red with a white diagonal stripe) is required while swimmers and divers are in the water. For more information on boating safety, please visit [MyFWC.com/Boating](http://MyFWC.com/Boating).
- While Caribbean spiny lobster (*Panulirus argus*) cannot be harvested by any gear that will puncture, penetrate or crush the lobster, other species of lobster can be harvested by spear where spearfishing is legal and lobster harvest is allowed.
- Caribbean spiny lobster (*Panulirus argus*) must be landed in whole condition.
- Traps of any kind are prohibited for recreational lobster harvest.
- Bag limits are "individual" bag limits that apply to the person actually harvesting the lobster. Bag limits cannot be pooled or shared among harvesters and licensed or exempt persons who may be on-board but are not actively participating in the harvest may not possess a bag limit.



SALTWATER ANGLER PHOTOS

Submit your fishing photo to [Saltwater@MyFWC.com](mailto:Saltwater@MyFWC.com)



Wesley Hamlett with a red drum.



Rosemary White with a gag grouper.



Dennis Palmer with flounder.



Zack Brawner with an amberjack.



Eszter Keresztes with a sheephead.



Melissa Wench with a lionfish.



Taylor Kinna with an amberjack.



Jim Higgins with a spotted seatrout.



Capt. James Weaver with a red drum.

## Marine life regulations

### Requirements for marine life (aquarium species) harvest:

- Recreational saltwater fishing license
- Organisms must be landed and kept alive
- A continuously circulating live well, aeration or oxygenation system of adequate size to maintain these organisms in a healthy condition
- **Allowable Gear:** hand-held net, drop net, rod, barrier net, slurp gun (use of quinaldine is prohibited)\*
- **Bag Limit:** 20 organisms per person per day; only 5 of any one species allowed within the 20-organism bag limit
- **Possession Limit:** 2-day possession limit, 40 total organisms, no more than 10 of any one species allowed
- **Allowable substrate:** see species specifications in table
- **Closed areas:** Some closed areas exist\*\*
- Sale of recreationally caught marine life organisms is prohibited
- Regulations apply in federal waters

\* Some organisms have additional gear limitations, see chart.

\*\* Various closed areas exist. See regulations for Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, Everglades National Park, Biscayne National Park and Florida's State Parks before collecting in these areas.

Additional rules apply to the collection of shells containing live organisms in Lee or Manatee counties.



Marine Life — Fish		
SPECIES	REMARKS <sup>1</sup>	SIZE LIMITS (total length unless otherwise noted)
Angelfish	No more than 5 per person per day in any combination	Gray, French Angelfish: 1½–8" slot limit Blue, Queen Angelfish: 1¾–8" slot limit Rock Beauty: 2–5" slot limit
Butterflyfish		1–4" slot limit
Filefish/Triggerfish	Except Unicorn Filefish, Gray Triggerfish and Ocean Triggerfish	
Gobies		Maximum size limit: 2"
Hamlets/Seabasses	Except reef fish <sup>2</sup> and Longtail Bass	
Jawfish		Maximum size limit: 4"
Parrotfish		Maximum size limit: 12"
Porkfish		Minimum size limit: 1½"
Pufferfish, Burrfish, Balloonfish, Porcupinefish	Includes Sharpnose Pufferfish, Striped Burrfish, Spotted Burrfish, Balloonfish, Porcupinefish	
Tangs and Surgeonfish		Maximum size limit (fork length): 9"
Wrasse/Hogfish/Razorfish	Except Hogfish Snapper	Spanish Hogfish: 2–8" slot limit Cuban Hogfish: 3–8" slot limit
Other Marine Life fish include <sup>1</sup> : Basslets, Batfish, Blackbar Soldierfish, Blennies, Brotulas (Black and Key), Cardinalfish, Clingfish, Cornetfish, Damsel fish, Eels (Moray and Snake), Frogfish, Hawkfish, High-hat/Jackknife-fish/Spotted Drum/Cubbyu, Pipefish, Reef Croakers, Seahorses, Sleepers, Yellow Stingray, Sweepers, Toadfish, Trumpetfish and Trunkfish/Cowfish.		

Marine Life — Invertebrates	
SPECIES	REMARKS <sup>1</sup>
Anemones	Corallimorphs and Zoanthids: No more than 5 polyps of each may be landed per person per day, must be harvested with a flexible blade no wider than 2". Corallimorphs must be harvested as single polyps only. Zero bag limit on Giant Anemone ( <i>Condylactis gigantea</i> ).
Conch, Queen	Harvest prohibited
Corals: Hard, stony & fire	Harvest prohibited
Octocorals	No more than 6 octocoral colonies per person per day in any combination; harvest of attached substrate within 1" of base is permitted; harvest closes when quota met.
Crab, Hermit	Except Land Hermit Crabs
Crab, Horseshoe	Harvest prohibited
Live Rock	Harvest prohibited
Octopods <sup>3</sup>	Except Common Octopus
Sea Fans	Harvest of Venus Sea Fan and Common (Purple) Sea Fan prohibited
Siphonophores/Hydroids	Harvest of Fire Coral prohibited
Sponges	Except Sheepswool, Yellow, Grass, Glove, Finger, Wire, Reef and Velvet Sponges; no more than 5 sponges per harvester per day in any combination; harvest of substrate within 1" of base permitted north and west of the southernmost point of Egmont Key, no substrate allowed south of Egmont Key
Starfish <sup>3</sup>	Harvest of Bahama Starfish (Cushion Sea Star) prohibited
Urchins <sup>3</sup>	Except Sand Dollars & Sea Biscuits; harvest of Longspine Urchin prohibited
Other Marine Life invertebrates include <sup>1</sup> : Brittlestars <sup>3</sup> , Decorator (Furcate Spider) Crab, False Arrow Crab, Green Clinging (Emerald) Crab, Nimble Spray (Urchin) Crab, Red Mithrax Crab, Red-Ridged Clinging Crab, Spotted Porcelain Crab, Yellowline Arrow Crab, Fileclams <sup>3</sup> , Upside-down Jellyfish, Nudibranchs/Sea Slugs <sup>3</sup> , Sea Cucumbers <sup>3</sup> , Sea Lilies, Cleaner/Peppermint Shrimp, Coral Shrimp, Snapping Shrimp, Nassarius Snails <sup>3</sup> , Starsnails <sup>3</sup> , Feather-duster Worms and Calcareous Tube Worms.	

Marine Life — Plants	
SPECIES	LIMITS
Algae, Coralline Red	
Caulerpa	One gallon of tropical ornamental marine plants per day in any combination; 2 gallon maximum possession limit
Halimeda/Mermaid's Fan/ Mermaid's Shaving Brush	

- 1—Unless otherwise noted, combined bag limit of 20 marine life fish and invertebrates per person per day, only 5 of any one species allowed. A 2-day possession limit also applies (40 total organisms, only 10 of any one species).
- 2—Such as groupers, snappers, seabass and amberjacks. Must abide by regulations for these species on pages 11–12.
- 3—Bag limit of 2 live shells of any single species per harvester per day in Manatee County. Harvest prohibited in Lee County.

**Grand Slams and State Records**

The Florida Saltwater Grand Slam program is managed by the FWC in partnership with the International Game Fish Association (IGFA). Grand Slams challenge anglers to catch three different fish species in a 24-hour period and were created to increase the variety of species targeted by anglers. There are eight Grand Slam challenges plus a Small Fry Slam for children 15 and under: Inshore, Family, Blue Water, Florida, Shoreline, Reefs & Rubble, Nearshore, Bay & Estuary and the Small Fry Slam. The grand slams are based on species, not where they are caught in Florida. Anglers can earn any of the grand slams regardless of what region/habitat they are fishing in. Successful applicants receive a certificate signed by both the FWC Executive Director and the President of the IGFA, as well as a colorful T-shirt to recognize their achievement.

Another challenge hosted by the FWC is the Florida State Records program. There are currently 76 species eligible for state records in both conventional tackle and fly fishing categories. Almaco jack and vermilion snapper are now eligible and several other species are being considered.

In addition to the programs mentioned, there are a couple of exciting new programs currently being developed by the FWC. The intention of the new programs is to encourage a saltwater fishing interest in new anglers as well as expand the activities of those already "hooked" on fishing.

For more information or to apply for a state record or grand slam, contact the FWC Division of Marine Fisheries Management by calling 850-487-0554, or visit [MyFWC.com/Fishing](http://MyFWC.com/Fishing) and click on "Saltwater" and "Angler Recognition." Entries are free!

**Grand Slams**

**Inshore Slam**  
red drum, spotted seatrout, flounder

**Family Slam**  
any three fish in the same family

**Blue Water Slam**  
dolphinfish, sailfish, wahoo

**Florida Slam**  
permit, tarpon, bonefish

**Shoreline Slam**  
sheepshead, kingfish (whiting), Florida pompano

**Reefs and Rubble Slam**  
black sea bass, gag, triggerfish

**Nearshore Slam**  
cobia, tripletail, king mackerel

**Bay and Estuary Slam**  
mangrove snapper, snook, Spanish mackerel

**Small Fry Slam (15 and under)**  
pinfish, grunt, catfish

**Recent Grand Slam Certificate Recipients**

**East Florida**  
Tim Quicksell, James Manus, Mark Lee

**West Florida**  
Jeff Turner, Ryan DeGroot, William Carter, Justin Grubich, Mark Lee, Steve Kost, David Kubert, Craig Del Valle, Ethan White, Tim Quicksell

**South Florida**  
Larry Langohr, Nathan Linville, Vitaliy Cervone, Emily Bracher, Stephen Trippe, Patrick Callahan, Lawson Stiff, Jr., Liza Hough

**North Florida**  
None



**OUR FLORIDA REEFS**  
YOUR VOICE, OUR FUTURE

HELP DECIDE THE FUTURE OF SOUTHEAST FLORIDA'S CORAL REEFS JOIN THE COMMUNITY




FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN HELP AT:  
**OURFLORIDAREEFS.ORG**

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!



Photo: Lee Marino

## LICENSES AND PERMITS

### Costs for licenses

In addition to the cost of licenses and permits specified in this section, license agents may charge an issuance fee for selling licenses or permits. **Note: All sales are final.**

Florida resident licenses	
<b>One-Year Saltwater Shoreline Only License</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
Covers saltwater fishing from shorelines and attached structures. Does not cover fishing from a watercraft, fishing from a shoreline reached by watercraft, or fishing while swimming or diving.	
<b>One-Year Saltwater License</b>	<b>\$17.00</b>
Covers both watercraft and shoreline fishing	
<b>Youth Saltwater Fishing License — valid until 17th birthday</b>	<b>\$17.00</b>
<b>Five-Year Saltwater License</b>	<b>\$79.00</b>
Combination licenses (Florida residents only)	
<b>Fishing-Saltwater/Freshwater</b>	<b>\$32.50</b>
<b>Fishing-Saltwater/Freshwater &amp; Hunting</b>	<b>\$48.00</b>
<b>One-Year Gold Sportsman's License</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>
<b>Five-Year Gold Sportsman's License</b>	<b>\$494.00</b>
<b>Youth Gold Sportsman's License — valid until 17th birthday</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>
<b>One-Year Military Gold Sportsman's License</b>	<b>\$20.00</b>

(Offers the same privileges as the Gold Sportsman's License. Available only to Florida residents who are active or retired members of the U.S. Armed Forces, the U.S. Armed Forces Reserve, the National Guard, the U.S. Coast Guard or the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve, upon submission of a current military identification card and proof of Florida residency. Purchase at county tax collector's offices only.)

Lifetime saltwater fishing license (Florida residents only; includes Snook and Lobster Permits)	
<b>Age: 0-4</b>	<b>\$126.50</b>
<b>Age: 5-12</b>	<b>\$226.50</b>
<b>Age: 13 or older</b>	<b>\$301.50</b>
Lifetime sportsman license (Florida residents only)	
<b>Age: 0-4</b>	<b>\$401.50</b>
<b>Age: 5-12</b>	<b>\$701.50</b>
<b>Age: 13 or older</b>	<b>\$1,001.50</b>
Non-resident licenses	
<b>Three-day License</b>	<b>\$17.00</b>
<b>Seven-day License</b>	<b>\$30.00</b>
<b>One-Year License</b>	<b>\$47.00</b>
Permits	
<b>Snook Permit</b>	<b>\$10.00</b>
<b>Five-Year Snook Permit (Florida residents only)</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>
<b>Spiny Lobster Permit</b>	<b>\$5.00</b>
<b>Five-Year Spiny Lobster Permit (Florida residents only)</b>	<b>\$25.00</b>
<b>Tarpon Tag (available only at tax collector offices)</b>	<b>\$51.50</b>

**If you are required to have a license, even the \$0.00 shoreline license, you are required to purchase permits to harvest Snook and Spiny Lobster.**

### Saltwater fishing in Florida... What you must know before you go

Saltwater fishing licenses are sold online at License.MyFWC.com, at county tax collector's offices and at many license agents. Licenses may also be obtained over the telephone by dialing toll-free, 1-888-FISH-FLORIDA (347-4356). An additional fee is charged for telephone and Internet services. For any recreational licensing information not contained in this publication, please go to MyFWC.com/License.

#### Florida residents

When applying for a saltwater recreational fishing license, you are considered to be a Florida resident if you are:

- Any person who has declared Florida as his or her only state of residence as evidenced by a valid Florida driver license or identification card with both a Florida address and a Florida residency verified by the Department of Highway Safety; or
- Any member of the United States Armed Forces who is stationed in Florida (includes spouse and dependent children residing in the household).

#### Gold sportsman's licenses

- Includes:
  - » Hunting, Saltwater Fishing and Freshwater Fishing licenses
  - » Management Area, Archery, Crossbow, Muzzleloading Gun, Turkey, Florida Waterfowl, Deer, Snook and Spiny Lobster permits
- Florida residents may buy a lifetime saltwater fishing license or a lifetime sportsman license. Holders of lifetime saltwater fishing licenses may fish in saltwater for life and will pay no additional fees. The lifetime license fee includes the taking of snook or spiny lobster, which would otherwise require a separate fee. A lifetime sportsman license allows holders to fish in freshwater

or saltwater and to hunt in Florida. Both of the licenses require holders to obey fishing or hunting laws in effect at any given time.

#### You do not need a license if you are:

- A resident who is saltwater fishing from land or a structure fixed to land who has been determined eligible for the food stamp, temporary cash assistance, or Medicaid Program by the Department of Children and Family Services. Proof of identification and a benefit issuance or program identification card issued by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities or the Agency for Health Care Administration must be on your person when fishing.
- A child under 16 years of age.
- Any resident fishing for recreational purposes only, within her or his county of residence with live or natural bait, using poles or lines not equipped with a fishing line retrieval mechanism.
- Fishing from a for-hire vessel—guide, charter, party boat—that has a valid charter boat license or charter captain license.
- A holder of a valid saltwater products license.
- A Florida resident 65 years of age or older and you possess proof of age and residency, such as a Florida driver's license or ID, or an optional no-cost Resident Senior Citizen Hunting and Fishing Certificate.
- A Florida resident who is a member of the U.S. Armed Forces, who is not stationed in this state, while on leave for 30 days or less, upon submission of orders. This does not include family members.
- Any person fishing who has been accepted as a client for developmental disabilities services by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, provided the agency furnishes proof thereof.
- Fishing for recreational purposes from a pier that has a valid pier saltwater fishing license.
- Fishing from a boat that has a valid recreational vessel fishing license.

- A Florida resident who is fishing for mullet in freshwater with a valid Florida *freshwater* fishing license.
- A Florida resident who possesses a no-cost Florida Resident Disabled Person Hunting and Fishing Certificate. In order to qualify for this, applicants must provide a certification of total and permanent disability from the United States Armed Forces, Railroad Retirement Board, Florida Worker's Compensation or the United States Veterans Administration. Alternatively, current documentation from the Social Security Administration for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Supplemental Security Disability Income (SSDI) benefits also will be accepted.

#### Other saltwater fishing fees

Licenses (Charter Boat or Charter Captain) are required for all vessels that charge a fee (for-hire vessels) to take passengers out to catch marine fish.

<b>Eleven or more customers .....</b>	<b>\$801.50</b>
<b>Five to ten customers .....</b>	<b>\$401.50</b>
<b>Four or fewer customers .....</b>	<b>\$201.50</b>

Optional fees include the annual Recreational Vessel fee (\$2,001.50) for not-for-hire pleasure craft and the annual Pier license (\$501.50). For charter licensing information, contact your local county tax collector's office or visit MyFWC.com.

**NEW Requirements  
for Gulf Reef  
Fish Anglers**

**See Page 10**



## KEEP FIREWOOD LOCAL

### Protect Fish and Wildlife Habitat from Invasive Pests and Diseases

Exotic tree-killing pests and diseases can be carried long distances in untreated wood. Please help protect our trees and forests. Buy local firewood near your destination, or gather it on site where permitted.



## LAW ENFORCEMENT



The FWC's Division of Law Enforcement patrols Florida's coastal waters to provide assistance to boaters and anglers as well as to enforce Florida's saltwater fishing and boating laws. FWC officers assist boaters who are in distress, provide advice and direction to those who are traveling Florida's coastline and waterways, and may issue citations for violations of state and federal fishing, wildlife and boating laws.

In emergencies or if state fisheries, wildlife or boating laws are being violated, call 888-404-FWCC (3922) or for cell phone users throughout the state, dial \*FWC (\*392) depending on your location, hail on VHF Channel 16 or report violations via text message. Most cell phones allow users to send text messages directly to an email address. You can text Tip@MyFWC.com; standard usage fees may apply.

## Resource Information

Join the nation's largest conservation law enforcement agency—become an FWC law enforcement officer. For more information contact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at 1-866-FWC-HIRE (392-4473) or visit MyFWC.com/Law

- **To purchase fishing licenses:**  
888-FISH-FLORIDA (347-4356)  
License.MyFWC.com
- **FWC Division of Law Enforcement**  
888-404-FWCC (3922)
- **For up-to-date information on the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill,**  
please visit MyFWC.com/OilSpill
- **To report fish and wildlife law violations, call the Wildlife Alert Hotline:**  
888-404-FWCC (3922)
- **FWC Fish and Wildlife Research Institute**  
727-896-8626  
MyFWC.com/Research
- **To report fish kills:**  
800-636-0511
- **To report fish tags:**  
800-367-4461  
TagReturn@MyFWC.com
- **To report Sawfish sightings:**  
941-255-7403  
sawfish@MyFWC.com
- **Bird Entanglement**  
888-404-3922  
727-391-6211 for Tampa area
- **To request Tarpon DNA Sampling Kits:**  
800-367-4461  
TarponGenetics@MyFWC.com
- **Red Tide Information Hotline**  
866-300-9399 toll free in Florida  
727-552-2488 nationwide
- **Aquatic Toxins Hotline:** 888-232-8635
- **Shellfish Harvesting Questions**  
FDACS, 850-488-5471  
www.floridaaquaculture.com
- **To report Lionfish sightings,**  
please visit MyFWC.com/Reportlionfish  
or call 1-877-786-7267

## At the FWC, it pays to love the outdoors!



Visit MyFWC.com to learn how to become an FWC officer.



## ANGLER SHOWPLACE

### BOATING PRODUCTS

**WANT TO MOTORIZE YOUR KAYAK?**

With "The Skimmer" just sit back, relax, and return home safely! 17 or 24lb. thrust. 2-5 mph.

**631.440.6114**  
**WWW.KAYAKTROLLINGMOTOR.COM**

### LAND FOR SALE

**Foreclosed Land Deeply Discounted**

Recreational and Residential land located in FL, NC, TX, AR, NY, PA, WA, AZ, NV

**888-758-5687 · www.dfcland.com**

### IN-STATE GUIDES, CHARTERS & PRESERVES

**WATERFRONT COTTAGES**  
St. Augustine, FL

**Devil's Elbow**  
FISHING RESORT

Dockage  
Boat Rentals  
Boat Ramp  
Full Service Bait & Tackle

904.471.0398 · DevilsElbowFishingResort.com

**Stamps South**  
RV Resort

**On the Little Manatee River**  
tampasouthrvresort.com

2900 S US Hwy 41  
Ruskin, FL 33570  
813-645-1202

**Share your exciting product or service**  
with the Florida sporting community!

For advertising inquiries, please call  
**(413) 884-1099**





UNDER ARMOUR

# ISO-CHILL

MADE FROM YARNS WITH INCREASED SURFACE AREA, THAT HELP DISSIPATE HEAT FROM THE BODY, CREATING A COOLING EFFECT.

# Take Us With You On the Water

**UNLIMITED  
TOWING**  
just  
**\$158**

## **THOUSANDS OF TOWS AND YEARS OF EXPERIENCE**

work in your favor—we've been there, done that, and seen it all! Our captains are licensed and trustworthy. With over 600 boats in 300 ports nationwide, we're only a quick call away to assist you on the water when you need it most. Get Unlimited Towing for \$158 and just show your BoatU.S. Membership card for payment on the water.

***Call or go online now to join!***



Download  
the NEW &  
IMPROVED  
BoatU.S. App!

**Tow BoatU.S.**® 1-800-888-4869 BoatUS.com/towing

Unlimited towing details and exclusions can be found online at BoatUS.com/towing or by calling.

LOUISIANA

# COMMERCIAL FISHING REGULATIONS

2015







**LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE & FISHERIES**

P.O. Box 98000  
2000 Quail Drive  
Baton Rouge, LA 70898  
225-765-2800

**Bobby Jindal, Governor**

**Robert J. Barham, Secretary**

Bryan McClinton, *Undersecretary*

Jimmy Anthony, *Assistant Secretary*

Randy Pausina, *Assistant Secretary*

Mark Schexnayder, *Dep. Assistant Secretary*

**DIVISION ADMINISTRATORS**

Kenneth Ribbeck, *Wildlife*

Robert Love, *Coastal & Nongame Resources*

Col. Joey Broussard, *Enforcement*

Scott Longman, *Fisheries*

**WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION**

Billy Broussard, *chairman*

Pat Manuel, *vice-chairman*

Ann L. Taylor

Dan Davis

Ronald Graham

Edward W. Swindell

Bart Yakupzack

**Cover Photo:**

**For updated information and the latest regulations, visit us online at [www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov).**

**REPORT FISHING VIOLATIONS**

**1-800-442-2511**

**24 hours a day - 7 days a week**

**4 Commercial Fishing Licenses**

Commercial License Fees.....4  
About Commercial Licenses.....6  
Saltwater Charter Fishing Guide Licenses.....8  
Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealers and Retail Seafood Dealer Licenses, Restaurants and Fresh Products License.....9

**12 Definitions**

**16 General Regulations and Information**

Restrictions & Methods of Taking Freshwater & Saltwater Fish...16  
Saltwater-Freshwater Line.....18  
How to Measure a Fish.....19

**21 Freshwater Commercial Fishing**

Size and Take Limits.....21  
Methods of Take.....22  
Gear Restrictions by Waterbody.....24

**26 Saltwater Commercial Fishing**

Size and Take Limits.....26  
Methods of Take.....31

**33 Other Commercial Activities**

Commercial Crabbing.....33  
Commercial Shrimping.....34  
Commercial Oystering.....37  
Reptiles and Amphibians.....39

**41 WMA and Refuge Regulations**

**43 Boating Information**

Voluntary Gulf of Mexico Communications Protocol.....43

**DISCLAIMER**

**This publication is not an official copy of the laws in effect and should not be utilized or relied upon as such.** It does represent an attempt by the publisher to present, as a public service, a partial summary of some of the laws in effect at the time of the printing of this publication. Substantive changes to the law may very well occur following the printing of this publication. For these reasons, the accuracy of the information contained within this publication cannot be guaranteed and the reader is cautioned that it is his responsibility to apprise himself of the laws in effect at any given time. These laws include those contained within the Louisiana Revised Statutes, particularly Title 56, the official regulations of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, federal laws, and any local or parish ordinances. State laws can be viewed on the legislative website: [www.legis.state.la.us/](http://www.legis.state.la.us/). **Fishing regulations on state Wildlife Management Areas and Refuges may differ from those contained in this pamphlet. Consult the Wildlife Management Area Regulations portion of this pamphlet or contact the nearest Department office for WMA regulations.**

This public document was published at a total cost of \$7,039.60. 13,000 copies of this public document were published in the first printing at a cost of \$7,039.60. This document was published by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA to inform Louisiana residents and non-residents as to the rules and regulations governing the fishing resources of the State of Louisiana. This material was printed in accordance with the standards for printing by state agencies established pursuant to R.S. 43:31. Printing of this material was purchased in accordance with the provisions of Title 43 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes.

*Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Department of Commerce strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental federally assisted programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or handicap. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of federal assistance should write to: Director, Office for Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington D.C. 20240.*

# MAJOR CHANGES FOR THE 2015 COMMERCIAL FISHING REGULATIONS

---

1. Closed season for the commercial harvest of gray triggerfish from June 1 through July 31. Commercial trip limit of 12 gray triggerfish.
2. 100 pound trip limit for commercially harvested tripletail. 18-inch minimum total length for commercially harvested tripletail.
3. 2,000 pound trip limit for commercially harvested greater amberjack.
4. No person shall be issued a commercial crab trap gear license unless that person qualifies under one or both of the following provisions:
  - The person possessed a valid commercial crab trap gear license during any two license years between 2011 and 2014
  - The person has enrolled in and completed the program to increase and elevate professionalism in the commercial crab industry
5. Crab Traps (These regulations become effective Nov. 15, 2017, and shall be applicable to license year 2017 and thereafter.)
  - A minimum of 3 escape rings shall be placed on the vertical outside walls flush with the trap floor or baffle, with at least 2 rings located in the upper chamber of the trap
  - Minimum ring size shall be 2 and 3/8 inches in inside diameter, not including the ring material
  - Traps placed in Lake Pontchartrain would no longer be exempt from escape ring requirements
6. Skimmer nets
  - Horizontal net frame may extend no more than 20 feet from the gunwale of the vessel
  - Skimmer nets (webbing) may be mounted to the frame at any distance from the side of the vessel
  - Net opening not to exceed a maximum of 72 feet in circumference
  - Maximum lead line length not to exceed 33 feet
7. The Inside/Outside Shrimp Line has been moved from its previous location in the Calcasieu Ship Channel known as the "Firing Line" northward 2.37 nautical miles to positions in the Calcasieu Ship Channel south of the Ferry Landing. The coordinates of the new locations are as follows:
  - Western shore of Calcasieu Ship Channel – 29 degrees 48 minutes 06 seconds north latitude and 93 degrees 20 minutes 54 seconds west longitude
  - Eastern shore of Calcasieu Ship Channel – 29 degrees 48 minutes 05 seconds north latitude and 93 degrees 20 minutes 41 seconds west longitude
8. Season dates for the commercial netting season on False River, Lake Bruin and Lake Providence were modified. The season now opens October 1 rather than November 1.
9. The net ban on Spanish Lake (St. Martin and Iberia parishes) was removed to provide commercial fishermen the opportunity to utilize abundant stocks of buffalo, catfish and carp.

# LDWF MISSION STATEMENT

---

To manage, conserve and promote wise utilization of Louisiana’s renewable fish and wildlife resources and their supporting habitats through replenishment, protection, enhancement, research, development, and education for the social and economic benefit of current and future generations; to provide opportunities for knowledge of and use and enjoyment of these resources; and to promote a safe and healthy environment for the users of the resources

## LDWF FISHERIES CONTACT INFORMATION

### FRESHWATER OFFICES

Minden	318-371-3050
Monroe	318-343-4044
Alexandria	318-487-5885
Lake Charles	337-491-2577
Opelousas	337-948-0255
Baton Rouge	225-765-2336
Lacombe	985-882-5228
New Iberia	337-373-0032
Many	337-286-5940

### SALTWATER OFFICES

Lacombe	985-882-0027
New Orleans	504.284.2030
Grand Isle	504-284-2030
Bourg	985-594-4139
New Iberia	337-373-0032
Lake Charles	337-491-2579

---

### LDWF ENFORCEMENT OFFICES

*Have a specific question that you don't see answered here?  
Call an Enforcement Office to speak with someone directly.*

Alexandria	318-487-5634	New Iberia	337-373-0032
Baton Rouge	225-765-2999	New Orleans	504-284-2023
Lake Charles	337-491-2580	Opelousas	337-948-0257
Minden	318-371-3049	Thibodaux	985-447-0821
Monroe	318-343-2417		

# COMMERCIAL FISHING LICENSES

## COMMERCIAL LICENSE FEES

*All commercial licenses expire on December 31 each year, unless otherwise noted.*

	Resident	Non-Resident
Commercial Fisherman's License	\$55	\$460
Apprentice	\$27.50	\$230
Vessel License (required south of saltwater line)	\$15	\$60
Mussel Harvester Permit (captain only)	\$100	\$1,000
Oyster Harvester Permit (captain only)	\$100	\$400
Oyster Tong (per tong)	\$30	\$240
Oyster Dredge (per dredge)	\$25	\$200
Public Oyster Seed Ground Vessel Permit	\$15	\$60
Calcasieu Lake Oyster Harvester Permit	No Fee	No Fee
Shrimp Trawl (per trawl)	\$25	\$100
Butterfly Net (per net)	\$25	\$100
Skimmer Net (per net)	\$25	\$100
Shrimp Gear Fee (one-time annually)	\$10	\$40
Senior Commercial License (residents 70 years and older - see page 6 for additional requirements)	\$20	N/A
Hoop Net (any legal number)	\$25	\$100
Freshwater Fish Seine (any legal number)	\$25	\$100
Freshwater Trammel Net (any legal number)	\$25	\$100
Freshwater Gill Net (any legal number)	\$25	\$100
Freshwater Shrimp Net License	\$25	N/A
Dip Net	\$25	\$100
Crab Trap (any legal number) <i>*NEW license eligibility requirements on page 7</i>	\$25	\$100
Crab Trap Gear Fee (one-time annually)	\$10	\$40
Crab Drop Net	\$25	\$100
Slat Trap (any legal number)	\$25	\$100
Minnow Trap (any legal number)	\$25	\$100
Eel Pot (any legal number)	\$25	\$100
Cans, Buckets, Pipes, Drums (any legal number)	\$25	\$100
Cast Net	\$25	\$100
Set Lines (trot, bush, etc. - any legal number)	\$25	\$100
Flounder Gig (per gig)	\$25	\$100
Spear Gun (per spear gun)	\$25	\$100
Mullet Permit (captain only)	\$100	\$400
Mullet Strike Net (per net)	\$250	\$1,000
Freshwater Shad Seine	\$25	\$100
Shad Gill Net	\$25	\$100
Pompano Permit (captain only)	No Fee	No Fee
Pompano Strike Net (per net)	\$250	\$1,000
Saltwater Rod and Reel (any legal number)	\$250	\$1,000

	<b>Resident</b>	<b>Non-Resident</b>		
Shark Permit	No Fee	No Fee		
Spotted Seatrout Permit	\$100	\$400		
Traversing Permit	No Fee	No Fee		
Purse/Menhaden Seine (per seine)	\$505	\$2,020		
Crawfish Traps (any legal number)	\$25	\$100		
Out-of-State Oyster Landing Permit	\$100	\$100		
Special Bait Dealer Permit	\$110	N/A		
Wire Net (any legal number)	\$25	\$100		
Bow and Arrow Gear	\$25	\$100		
Garfish Gig (per gig)	\$25	\$100		
<b>CHARTER LICENSE FEES</b>				
Offshore Landing Permit	No Fee	No Fee		
Charter Boat Fishing Guide (up to 6 passengers)	\$250	\$1,500		
Charter Boat Fishing Guide (more than 6 passengers)	\$500	\$2,500		
Mothership License (carrying up to 6 skiffs)	\$1,000	\$1,000		
Mothership License (carrying more than 6 skiffs)	\$2,000	\$2,000		
Charter Skiff License (per skiff - 2 persons per skiff limit)	\$50	\$50		
<b>DEALER LICENSE FEES</b>				
	<b>Resident</b>	<b>Non-Resident</b>	<b>4-year Resident</b>	<b>4-year Non-Resident</b>
Seafood Wholesale/Retail Dealer - Business	\$250	\$1,105	\$1,000	\$4,420
Seafood Wholesale/Retail Dealer - Vehicle	\$250	\$1,105	\$1,000	\$4,420
Seafood Retail Dealer - Business	\$105	\$405	\$420	\$1,620
Seafood Retail Dealer - Vehicle	\$105	\$405	\$420	\$1,620
Seafood Transport - Wholesale/Retail Dealer	\$30	\$30	\$120	\$120
Seafood Transport - Retail Dealer	\$30	\$30	\$120	\$120
	<b>Resident</b>		<b>Non-Resident</b>	
Wholesale Out-of-State Crab Shipping	\$100		\$100	
Retail Out-of-State Crab Shipping	\$100		\$100	
Seafood Transport - Commercial Fisherman	\$30		\$30	
Fresh Products (Commercial Fisherman License required)	\$20		\$120	
Fresh Products - Spouse	\$5		N/A	
Domesticated Aquatic Organism License (fish farming)	\$15		\$400	
Triploid Grass Carp Sales Permit	\$250		\$250	
Triploid Grass Carp Possession and Transport Permit	\$50		\$50	
Reptile and Amphibian Collector (under 16)	\$10		N/A	
Reptile and Amphibian Collector (16 years of age and older)	\$25		\$200	
Reptile and Amphibian Wholesale/Retailer Dealer	\$105		\$405	
Reptile and Amphibian Transport	\$30		\$120	
Non-Resident Reptile and Amphibian Wholesale/Retail Dealer (3-day)	N/A		\$75	
Alligator Parts Dealer (expires June 30)	\$50		\$50	
Alligator Parts Retailer (expires June 30)	\$5		\$5	
Mussel Buyer's Permit	\$150		\$600	
Oyster Cargo Vessel Permit	\$250		\$1,105	

**Persons taking fish, whether recreationally or commercially, persons involved in the fish industry, including wholesale/retail dealers and transporters, and vessels involved in the fish industry must be licensed.**

## **ABOUT COMMERCIAL LICENSES**

---

**A COMMERCIAL FISHERMAN'S LICENSE IS NON-TRANSFERABLE.  
STRIKE NET GEAR LICENSES ARE NON-TRANSFERABLE**

### **REQUIREMENTS TO ENGAGE IN COMMERCIAL FISHING**

---

- Persons and vessels engaged in commercial fishing activities for which a license is required shall show an original, valid license upon demand to duly authorized agents of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF).
- The person in charge of the operation of each vessel engaged in commercial fishing activities must have, in his possession, and in his name, a valid, original Commercial Fisherman's License.
- This person must also have in his possession a gear license indicating that the applicable gear fee has been paid, and if fishing south of the saltwater line (see page 18), a valid original vessel license.
- If harvesting oysters, mullet (with a strike net), mussels, spotted seatrout, shark or pompano, a commercial fisherman must also have in his possession and in his name the applicable license or permit.
- Vessels harvesting oysters on the public oyster seed grounds or reservations, except those in Calcasieu Lake or Sabine Lake, must have a valid Oyster Seed Ground Vessel Permit, issued in the name of the vessel owner. The person in charge of operation of each vessel engaged in the commercial taking of oysters from Calcasieu Lake (Cameron Parish) must hold a valid Calcasieu Lake Oyster Harvester Permit.

### **ABOUT THE COMMERCIAL FISHERMAN'S LICENSE**

---

- A commercial fisherman taking fish, including bait species, from state waters or possessing fish in the state must purchase and possess a commercial fisherman's license.
- All persons on board a vessel with commercial rod and reel in use must possess a valid commercial fisherman's license.
- A licensed commercial fisherman may only sell to a wholesale/retail dealer. Any commercial fisherman may transport his catch to licensed Louisiana wholesale/retail dealers located within the state. A commercial fisherman who also holds a valid Fresh Products License may sell his own catch to a consumer located within the state.
- 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, seizure of the vessel, and all catch 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 their name as long as there is a licensed commercial fisherman on board.

### **SENIOR COMMERCIAL FISHERMAN AND GEAR LICENSE**

---

- This license is for resident commercial fishermen who are 70 years of age or older.
- It includes gear licenses.
- This license is non-transferable.
- Permits are not included.
- The crab trap gear fee is required if the senior commercial fisherman will use crab traps. The shrimp gear fee is required if using shrimp trawls, skimmers or butterfly nets.

### **FRESH PRODUCTS LICENSE**

---

- A commercial fisherman with a valid license must also possess a Fresh Products License if selling fish to a consumer within the state.
- A commercial fisherman may purchase a Fresh Products-Spouse License that will allow the commercial fisherman to continue to fish while the spouse sells the catch.
- Persons with a Fresh Products License may only sell to the consumer, and are required to maintain "trip ticket" records and file monthly reports as required in the "*Reporting*" section on page 11.

## COMMERCIAL GEAR LICENSE

---

### GEAR LICENSES ARE NON-TRANSFERABLE WHEN QUALIFICATIONS EXIST.

- Only a licensed commercial fisherman can purchase a Commercial Gear License, except for a menhaden purse seine. A commercial fisherman must possess a valid and original Commercial Gear License whenever using or possessing such gear on the fishing grounds.
- A Gear License is required for each piece of gear or each type of gear in use or in possession, whichever is applicable.
- Gear licenses are temporarily transferable to a person holding a valid Commercial Fisherman's License and of the same residency status (gear licenses issued to a resident fisherman cannot be transferred to a non-resident). Violation of this rule subjects the commercial gear licensee to revocation of the commercial gear license and seizure of gear.
- No Commercial Gear License shall be issued to any non-resident whose domiciliary state prohibits the use of similar commercial fishing gear.

## COMMERCIAL VESSEL LICENSE

---

- 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 LDWF.

## ABOUT COMMERCIAL LICENSE/PERMIT APPLICATION PROCESS

---

- License/permit applicants must complete and sign an application form, available by contacting the LDWF Commercial License Section at 225-765-2898.
- Resident applicants must provide proof of residency as stated on page 12 (*Definition #5*).
- Non-residents must provide proof of residency from their domiciliary state, such as driver's license, voter's registration, vehicle registration and state income tax (*page 14, Definition #48*).
- You may renew your license by internet at [www.la.wildlifelicense.com](http://www.la.wildlifelicense.com). No changes are allowed via internet purchases.
- Applicants applying for a license in a business name must provide documentation showing proof of valid federal tax ID # assigned to business name and proof of authorized signature, or an occupational license will be required.
- To apply by mail:
  - Payment for license fees must be in the form of money order or cashier's check payable to the "Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries."
  - Applications applied for by mail may take up to two weeks for processing.
- To apply in person:
  - License/permits may be applied for in person at the following location:
    - LDWF Headquarters
    - 2000 Quail Drive
    - Baton Rouge, LA 70808
  - Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- **NOTE:** An original valid license/permit must be in possession in order to engage in the licensed/permitted activity. Under no circumstance is a copy of a license/permit or application and/or proof of payment thereof acceptable in lieu of the original license/permit.

## CRAB TRAP GEAR LICENSE

---

No person shall be issued a commercial crab trap gear license unless that person qualifies under one or both of the following provisions:

- The person possessed a valid commercial crab trap gear license during any two license years between 2011 and 2014
- The person has enrolled in and completed the program to increase and elevate professionalism in the commercial crab industry

# SALTWATER CHARTER FISHING GUIDE LICENSES

---

**New applicants must apply in person in the Baton Rouge Office only.**

- Resident and non-resident guides operating charter-fishing vessels in saltwater areas of the state must possess a Charter Boat Fishing Guide License.
- To qualify for purchase of a Charter Boat Fishing Guide License, the captain of a charter vessel must present the following items:
  - A valid captain's license issued by the U.S. Coast Guard.
  - A valid driver's license, and
  - A Louisiana Recreational Fishing License.
- The Guide License is valid for one year beginning Jan. 1 of each calendar year and expiring on Dec. 31 of the same calendar year.
- A saltwater guide may not possess a Spotted Seatrout Permit.
- Charter Boat Fishing Guides must have, in their name, proof of liability insurance that is currently in force and written by a company with at least an A- rating in the latest printing of A.M. Best's Key Rating Guide, is of a commercial nature and not associated with a primary residence, and the coverage shall not be less than \$300,000 per occurrence. Proof of liability insurance must be in possession, while on the water, and available for inspection by duly authorized agents of the department.

## MOTHERSHIP LICENSE

---

- A Mothership License shall be required for a charter fishing operation which does not have a charter boat fishing guide present and consists of a large vessel carrying small skiffs that will be used by no more than two people for fishing purposes.
- The main motorized vessel shall carry a Mothership License and the captain must have a valid Captain's License issued by the U.S. Coast Guard on his person.
- In addition, each skiff is required to have a Charter Skiff License, which identifies the charter vessel to which it is attached.
- A licensed skiff shall only be used for fishing purposes while the charter vessel with which it is identified is located in Louisiana territorial waters.
- The Mothership License and the Charter Skiff License are valid for one year, beginning on Jan. 1 of each calendar year and expiring on Dec. 31 of the same calendar year.
- As stipulated by Title 56, Section 302.1.C.(1) Licensing requirements for individuals fishing under the direction of a Mothership operation or a charter guide requires that all recreational anglers fishing south of the "saltwater line" for saltwater species have in their possession a Louisiana saltwater angler's license IN ADDITION TO a basic Louisiana fishing license EXCEPT those persons otherwise exempted. All regulations apply regardless of where the fish is taken.
- The main motorized vessel must carry proof of liability insurance that is currently in force and written by a company with at least an A- rating in the latest printing of A.M. Best's Key Rating Guide, is of a commercial nature and not associated with a primary residence, and the coverage shall not be less than \$300,000 per occurrence. Proof of liability insurance must be in possession, while on the water, and available for inspection by duly authorized agents of the department.

## OFFSHORE LANDING PERMIT

---

Charter captains are required to obtain this permit (free of charge) to possess tunas, billfish, swordfish, amberjacks, groupers, snappers, cobia, wahoo and dolphin. To obtain a permit, charter captains must register at [www.wlf.la.gov/rolp](http://www.wlf.la.gov/rolp). More details on this program are also available on this site.

# WHOLESALE/RETAIL SEAFOOD DEALERS AND RETAIL SEAFOOD DEALER LICENSES, RESTAURANTS AND FRESH PRODUCTS LICENSE

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

## LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

### WHOLESALE/RETAIL SEAFOOD DEALERS\*

#### Definition

- Any individual person, firm, association, corporation, partnership or any legal entity recognized by law that buys or 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.

#### Permitted Activities

- A wholesale/retail seafood dealer is the only licensee who can legally purchase "fish" from a commercial fisherman and resell such "fish."

#### Additional Information

- Wholesale/retail seafood dealers are required to abide by regulations of any activity in which they engage.
- Wholesale/retail seafood dealers are not required to obtain a Reptile and Amphibian Dealer's License. They are however, required to abide by regulations of those particular activities.
- If a Wholesale/Retail Dealer's License is in the name of an individual, the license is only valid for that individual.

#### Selling Outside Louisiana

- Any wholesale/retail seafood dealer who exports or attempts to export outside the state of Louisiana any crabs, softshell crabs, boiled crabs, containerized crabmeat, or containerized pasteurized crabmeat shall be required to purchase a Wholesale Out-of-State Crab Shipping License in addition to his Wholesale/Retail Dealer's License. The Wholesale Out-of-State Crab Shipping License shall be issued in the same manner as a Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer's License and shall be issued only to a person who is a licensed wholesale/retail seafood dealer.

### RETAIL SEAFOOD DEALERS\*

#### Definition

- 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.

#### Purchasing Seafood Product

- 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.

#### About Sale of Seafood by Dealers

- 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 Dealer's License if purchasing such "fish" from a licensed wholesale/retail seafood dealer.
- If a Retail Seafood Dealer's 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.

#### Selling Outside of Louisiana

- Any retail seafood dealer who exports or attempts to export outside of the state of Louisiana any crabs, softshell crabs, boiled crabs, containerized crabmeat, or containerized pasteurized crabmeat shall be required to purchase a Retail Out-of-State Crab Shipping License in addition to his Retail Dealer's License.
- The Retail Out-of-State Crab Shipping License shall be issued in the same manner as the Retail Seafood Dealer's License and shall be issued only to a person who is a licensed retail seafood dealer.

*\*Wholesale/retail seafood dealers and retail seafood dealers may purchase a license for a four-year period at four times the cost of the annual license fee.*

### RESTAURANTS AND RETAIL GROCERS

#### Details

- 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.

#### 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 Dealer's License and applicable transport license(s).
- Persons exempt from license requirements are required to maintain records as provided below in the section detailing record keeping requirements.

## PURCHASES/SALES

---

### WHOLESALE/RETAIL SEAFOOD DEALERS

- 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 fisherman 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).
- **Out-of-State Purchases/Sales**
  - 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 Dealer's 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.
- **Purchase of Federally Regulated Species**
  - Wholesale/retail seafood dealers may be required to obtain certain federal permits when purchasing federally regulated species from commercial fisherman.
  - For information regarding federal permits contact the NOAA Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office - Constituency Service Branch
    - 263 13th Avenue South, Saint Petersburg, FL 33701
    - 877-376-4877 or [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/operations\\_management\\_information\\_services/constituency\\_services\\_branch/permits/permit\\_apps/index.html](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/operations_management_information_services/constituency_services_branch/permits/permit_apps/index.html)

### COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN

- Commercial fishermen who sell their catch to anyone other than a Louisiana licensed wholesale/retail seafood dealer or transport their catch out-of-state are required to purchase and possess a Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer's License and are required to comply with all regulations governing wholesale/retail seafood dealers.
- A validly licensed commercial fisherman may sell his catch to a consumer within the state if he is also the holder of a valid Fresh Products 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, nor shall they be required to possess a license to transport their own crawfish or catfish from the private pond to first point of sale.
- 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 purchase catfish or crawfish to be resold.

### NON-LICENSED RESTAURANTS AND RETAIL GROCERS

About the sales/purchases as a non-licensed restaurant or retail grocer:

- 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 Dealer's License and applicable transport license.

### RECORD KEEPING REQUIREMENTS OF WHOLESALE/RETAIL SEAFOOD DEALERS, RETAIL SEAFOOD DEALERS, FRESH PRODUCTS LICENSEES, RESTAURANTS AND RETAIL GROCERS

- **Records must be kept and maintained in English and shall include the following:**
  - The quantity and species of "fish"/seafood (fresh, frozen, processed or unprocessed) acquired must be kept and maintained,
  - 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-state seller from whom the "fish"/seafood was acquired, and
  - 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, and shall state the "fish"/seafood was sold to the consumer.
- Records shall be maintained for three years, and shall be available and open to inspection by LDWF.
- 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 by head count of such species.
- Wholesale/retail seafood dealers purchasing from commercial fishermen and fresh products licensees are required to document such transactions on LDWF-issued trip tickets.

## REPORTING

---

### MONTHLY RETURNS TO LDWF

- Any wholesale/retail seafood dealer buying "fish" or seafood from anyone other than a licensed wholesale/retail seafood dealer or fresh products licensee must complete trip tickets documenting each transaction.
- On or before the 10th of each month, the dealer shall submit all the previous month's trip tickets and a submission sheet.
- Computerized trip tickets are available to wholesale/retail dealers.
- For more information on monthly dealer reports or computerized trip tickets contact LDWF at 225-765-2371.
- All "fish"/seafood purchased by a wholesale/retail seafood dealer from persons other than licensed wholesale/retail seafood dealers, which are not reported as required are deemed to have been illegally possessed or purchased by the purchasing wholesale/retail seafood dealer.

### OYSTER SEVERANCE TAX

- 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 10th day of the following month.
- Contact LDWF at 225-765-2655.

### SHRIMP EXCISE TAX

#### About the Tax

- La. R.S. 56:506 enacted in the 2002 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature requires an excise tax on all saltwater shrimp taken from state waters and on all shrimp imported into the state.

#### How the Tax is Assessed

- *Domestic Shrimp*
  - The tax is assessed at the rate of 15 cents 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 Shrimp*
  - 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.

#### Paying Shrimp Excise Tax

- Shrimp excise taxes shall be payable to LDWF on or before the 10th day of the month following the date of sale.
- Upon failure to pay excise taxes when due, a penalty of 10 percent per month, not exceeding 30 percent in the aggregate, calculated upon the excise tax due, shall be levied and collected by LDWF in addition to the tax due.
- If there is a delinquency in the filing of reports and in the payment of taxes due as required above, demand for payment shall be made by LDWF as soon thereafter as possible, coupled with the warning that the license of the delinquent shall be revoked unless report is submitted and taxes paid.
- After demand for payment and warning, LDWF may seize any shrimp or parts of products thereof in the possession of a person liable for taxes and penalties due and sell them for payment of the tax and penalties.
- Any surplus from the proceeds of sale, after deducting all costs and charges, taxes and penalties due, shall be paid to the owner of the shrimp or parts or products thereof seized.

- At any time after demand for payment and warning the licenses of any person who fails to make monthly reports and to pay excise taxes due shall be revoked by LDWF and shall remain until all reports are made and all taxes due are paid with accrued penalties.
- Any person who refuses or fails to pay the excise taxes due or to make monthly reports as aforesaid, and whose license has been revoked, is hereby prohibited from buying and selling or otherwise engaging in the disposition of shrimp or parts or products thereof and other seafood under the jurisdiction of LDWF.

### 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 or 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:

#### • Commercial Fisherman's License

- This is only applicable for a commercial fisherman transporting his own catch to a wholesale/retail seafood dealer.

#### • Transport License

- Seafood Transport Licenses can only be purchased by and in the name of a person holding a valid Louisiana Commercial Fisherman's License, Seafood Wholesale/Retail Dealer's License, or Seafood Retail Dealer's License.
- May be used if purchased in connection with a Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer's License authorizes to deliver "fish"/seafood to and for a wholesale dealer.
- May be used if purchased in connection with a Retail Seafood Dealer's 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.
- May be used 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 that take place under authority of a transport license issued in the name of that dealer.

#### • Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealers Vehicle License

- This is applicable for all activities of wholesale/retail seafood dealers.
- Vehicles commercially shipping seafood out of state must have a Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer's License or a Transport License purchased in connection with a Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer's License.

# DEFINITIONS

1. **Angle:** to fish with rod, fishing pole or hook and line, with or without a reel.
2. **Bait Seine:** a net measuring no more than 30 feet in length with a mesh size not exceeding 1/4-inch mesh bar, 1/2-inch mesh stretched, and operated solely by foot without any mechanical device, pulley or mechanical assistance whatsoever.
3. **Bait Species:** all species of fish and other aquatic life utilized for bait.
4. **Bandit Gear:** vertical hook-and-line gear with rods attached to a vessel and with line retrieved by manual, electric or hydraulic reels. Bandit gear is not allowed for the taking of fish in saltwater state waters.
5. **Bona Fide Resident:** any person who has resided in Louisiana continuously during the 12 months immediately prior to the date on which he applies for any license and who has manifested his intent to remain in this state by establishing Louisiana as his legal domicile, as demonstrated by compliance with all of the following, as applicable:
  - If registered to vote in Louisiana.
  - If licensed to drive a motor vehicle, he is in possession of a valid Louisiana driver's license.
  - If owning a motor vehicle located within Louisiana, he is in possession of a valid Louisiana registration for that vehicle.
  - If earning an income, he has filed a Louisiana state income tax return and has complied with state income tax laws and regulations.
  - As to 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 is domiciled in Louisiana and has a permanent physical location of business in Louisiana where records are held.
  - Any person, corporation or other legal entity that possesses a resident license from any other state or country shall not qualify for a resident license in Louisiana.
6. **Butterfly Net:** a fixed, frame-mounted net, used to fish near surface waters, which is suspended from the side or sides of a boat, pilings, floats, rafts or shore installation. Butterfly nets are only allowed to be used in state waters when and where the shrimp season is open.
7. **Can:** a metal container of not more than 55-gallon capacity which is set for the purpose of taking fish.
8. **Cast Net:** a light circular net of vegetable or synthetic materials and weighted around its perimeter that is thrown by hand over the water.
9. **Charter Boat Fishing Guide:** any person who operates a vessel for hire and derives income from the bringing of recreational fishermen upon waters in saltwater areas within the state for the purpose of taking fish.
10. **Circle Hook:** a fishing hook designed and manufactured so that the point is turned perpendicularly back to the shank to form a generally circular or oval shape.
11. **Commercial Fish:** all designated freshwater commercial fish and designated saltwater commercial fish found in the waters of the state.
12. **Commercial Fisherman:** any person who derives income from harvesting fish. "Income" as used herein shall not include a prize or award offered as a prize in a fishing tournament. (See also "Non-resident Commercial Fisherman")
13. **Common Carrier:** any agency or person transporting passengers or property of any description for hire.
14. **Common Float:** an all-white plastic, 1-gallon or larger bleach bottle.
15. **Crab Dropnet:** any device constructed with vegetable, synthetic or metal fibers and without flues or throat, attached to a wire frame that forms a net basket and is used for the purpose of taking crabs. This device shall be operated solely by hand and fished in a stationary, passive manner.
16. **Crab Trap:** a cube-shaped device, constructed of wire, no larger than 30 inches 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 inches 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 one and one-half times the vertical diameter of the opening.
17. **Crawfish Net:** any device constructed with vegetable or synthetic material without flues or throats attached to a wire frame that forms a net basket and is used for taking crawfish.
18. **Crawfish Trap:** any device constructed of coated wire with the opening of the throats or flues not exceeding 2 inches and which is used for the sole purpose of taking crawfish. Crawfish traps are typically of the pillow style or cone style with minimum mesh size no smaller than 3/4 inch by 11/16 inch.
19. **Crawfish Farmer:** a person who farms or cultivates crawfish commercially in private ponds.
20. **Crawfish Harvester:** a person who harvests wild crawfish commercially without participating in the growing of the crawfish.
21. **De-hooking Device:** a device intended to remove a hook embedded in a fish to release the fish with minimum damage. At least one device is required gear to fish or possess Gulf reef fish in the Gulf EEZ.
22. **Dip Net:** a net, usually a deep mesh bag of vegetable or synthetic materials, on a fixed frame not to exceed 3 feet in diameter attached to a handle and worked exclusively by hand without any mechanical assistance and by no more than one individual.

- 23. Eel Pot:** any device not to exceed 48 inches in length and with an outside mesh size not smaller than 1/2 inch, constructed with throats or flues not larger than 3 inches in diameter at their narrowest point and not larger than 5 inches in diameter at their widest point, and which is used solely for the purpose of taking eel. No lead or wing shall be connected to or used in conjunction with any eel pot. Any fish other than eel taken in this gear must be immediately returned unharmed to the water.
- 24. Federal Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):** zone which falls within a line conterminous with the seaward boundary of each of the coastal states and a line drawn in such a manner that each point on it is 200 nautical miles from the baseline from which the territorial sea is measured.
- 25. Finfish (noun):** any of numerous cold-blooded aquatic vertebrates that characteristically swim with fins, breathe with gills, and are covered with skin or scales.
- 26. Fish (noun):** all finfish, shellfish and crustaceans, and all other species of aquatic life.
- 27. Fish Dealer - Retail:** persons, excluding restaurants, purchasing fish or seafood whether whole, dressed or fresh frozen for sale within the state to the consumer only.
- 28. Fish Dealer - Wholesale:** persons purchasing fresh or frozen fish for resale to dealers or to ship out of state.
- 29. Fishing Gear:** any vessel and any equipment, whether or not attached to a vessel, which is used in the commercial handling or harvesting of living marine resources.
- 30. Fork Length:** distance from tip of snout to midline of caudal fin. Used to measure some fish with deeply forked tails, such as amberjack.
- 31. Freshwater Recreational Fish:** any species of freshwater fish taken for recreational purposes.
- 32. Freshwater Commercial Fish:** any species of freshwater fish taken by a commercial fisherman. Freshwater commercial fish do not include any species of game fish.
- 33. Fyke Net:** any cone-shaped net of vegetable or synthetic fibers having throats or flues that are stretched over a series of rings or hoops to support the webbing, with vertical panels of net wings set obliquely on one or both sides of the mouth of the cone-shaped net.
- 34. Game Fish:** all of the following species of freshwater and saltwater fish:
- **Freshwater game fish:**
    - Largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*)
    - Spotted bass (*Micropterus punctulatus*)
    - Shadow bass (*Ambloplites ariommus*)
    - Black or white crappie (*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*, *P. annularis*)
    - White bass (*Morone chrysops*)
    - Yellow bass (*Morone mississippiensis*)
    - Striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*)
    - Hybrid striped bass (striped bass-white bass cross or striped bass-yellow bass cross)
    - Any species of bream (*Lepomis spp.*)
  - **Saltwater game fish:**
    - Any sailfish (*Istiophorus platypterus*)
    - Blue marlin (*Makaira indica*)
    - Black marlin (*Makaira nigricans*)
    - Striped marlin (*Tetrapturus audax*)
    - Hatchet marlin (*Tetrapturus spp.*)
    - White marlin (*Tetrapturus albidus*)
    - Red drum (*Sciaenops ocellatus*)
- 35. Gill Net:** any net of one or more layers not customarily used for shrimp or menhaden fishing, with a mesh of such size and design as to be used primarily to catch or entangle fish by the gills or other bony projections. No gill net shall exceed 1200 feet.
- 36. Hook:** any curved or bent device attached to a line for the purpose of taking fish or alligator and consisting of not more than one eye and one shank with no more than three barbs.
- 37. Hoop Net:** a cone-shaped net of vegetable or synthetic materials having throats or flues and which are stretched over a series of rings or hoops to support the webbing.
- 38. Lead or Wing Net:** a panel of netting of any mesh size or length, with or without weights and floats, attached to one or both sides of the mouth of a cone-shaped net having flues or throats, and set so as to deflect or guide fish toward the mouth of the net.
- 39. Length (of seines, trawls or other netting):** the full measure of the extended net as in use or in possession on the fishing grounds, when measured along the cork line between the points where the webbing is attached to the rope at either end, and does not include the additional rope used for pulling the net or attaching it to the arm-poles or trawl boards.
- 40. Licensee:** any resident or non-resident lawful holder of an effective license duly issued under the authority of LDWF.
- 41. Longline Gear:** a line which is over 440 yards long to which gangions and hooks are attached that is deployed horizontally and which may be retrieved by an electric or hydraulic hauler. Longline gear shall not mean a trotline as defined in R.S. 56:8(140). Longline gear is not allowed for the taking of fish in saltwater state waters.

- 42. Lower Jaw Fork Length (LJFL):** longest distance from tip of lower jaw to midline of caudal fin. Used to measure billfish such as marlin and swordfish.
- 43. Menhaden Seine:** a purse seine used to take menhaden and herring-like species.
- 44. Mesh Size:** the full measure of the mesh as found in use when measured as follows:
- *Bar measure* is the length of the full bar stretched from the near side of one knot to the far side of the other after being tarred, treated or otherwise processed.
  - *Stretched measure* is the full-stretched distance from the near side of one knot to the far side of the opposite knot diagonally across the mesh. This measurement shall not be applicable to weaved or woven nets commonly used for menhaden fishing. In woven nets, stretched measure is the full-stretched distance of the opening of the mesh; bar measure is one-half of stretched measure.
- 45. Minnow Trap:** any device with throats or flues not to exceed 1 inch in width, which is used for the sole purpose of taking minnows for bait.
- 46. Monofilament:** a single untwisted synthetic filament.
- 47. Mullet Strike Net:** a gill net that is not more than 1,200-feet long and with a mesh size of 1 and 3/4 inches square to 3 and 1/2 inches stretched mesh (minimum) that is not anchored or secured to the water bottom or shore and which is actively worked while being used. A mullet strike net shall not be an unattended net as defined in R.S. 56:8 (141).
- 48. Non-resident Commercial Fisherman:** means any person who is not a bona fide resident as that term is defined by R.S. 56:8 (16) (a). (See "Bona Fide Resident")
- 49. Non-resident Commercial Fishing Boat:** any boat or vessel registered in any state other than Louisiana, or which has not continually been registered in this state for a period of more than 12 months, or which is not owned by any person who is a bona fide resident, and which is used for the purpose of taking or assisting in taking or catching fish from the waters of this state for pay or for the purpose of sale, barter or exchange.
- 50. Pompano Strike Net:** a gill net that is not more than 2,400-feet long and with a mesh size of 2 and 1/2 inches square not less than 5 inches stretched that is not anchored or secured to the water bottom or shore and which is actively worked while being used. A pompano strike net shall not be an unattended net as defined in R.S. 56.8(141).
- 51. Possess:** in its different tenses, the act of having in possession or control, keeping, detaining, restraining or holding as owner or as agent, bailee or custodian for another. When possession of fish or other wildlife is prohibited, reference is made equally to such fish or other wildlife coming from without the state as to those taken within the state.
- 52. Processing:** any method of preparing fish or fish products for market including drying to a point of dehydration, canning, salting, packing or packaging of alligators or parts, breading, freezing, and cooking for immediate consumption, but not simple packing of fresh fish in a sack, bag, package, crate, box, lug or vat.
- 53. Purse Seine:** any net or device commonly known as a purse seine and/or ring net that can be pursed or closed by means of a draw-string or other device that can be drawn to close the bottom of the net or the top of the net or both. Such nets are constructed of mesh of such size and design as not to be used primarily to entangle fish by the gills or other bony projection.
- 54. Recreational Purpose:** a purpose other than deriving or attempting to derive an income of any kind from the harvest of fish. "Income" as used herein shall not include a prize or award offered as a prize in a fishing tournament.
- 55. Reptiles and Amphibians:** native turtles, snakes, lizards, frogs, toads and salamanders.
- 56. Saltwater Commercial Fish:** any species of saltwater fish taken for commercial purposes. Saltwater commercial fish do not include any species of game fish.
- 57. Saltwater Recreational Fish:** any species of saltwater fish taken for recreational purposes.
- 58. Saltwater Fish:** all species of finfish that normally inhabit the saline waters of the marine and estuarine environment for most of their life cycle.
- 59. Seine:** any net used to enclose or entrap fish either in a bag or where its ends are pulled together on a vessel or a shore and constructed with a mesh of such size and design as not to be used primarily to entangle fish by the gills or other bony projections (see "Purse Seine"). No seine in use shall exceed 1200 feet. Seines are not allowed for the taking of fish in saltwater state waters.
- 60. Shad Gill Net:** a net having a mesh size no less than 2 inches stretch and no more than 4 inches stretched. May not exceed 1,200 feet in length and must have attached to each end a 1-gallon jug painted international orange and with the words "Shad Gill Net" in black lettering, and must have waterproof tags with the name and license number of the fisherman in accordance with R. S. 56:320(F). A shad gill net shall not be an unattended net as defined in R.S. 56.8 (141).
- 61. Shad Seine:** seine with a mesh size not less than 1-inch bar and 2 inches stretched and not more than 2-inch bar and 4 inches stretched. A shad seine may not be constructed of monofilament. The net may not exceed 1200 feet in length and must have attached to each end a 1-gallon jug painted international orange and with the words "Shad Seine" in black lettering and must have waterproof tags with the name and license number of the fisherman in accordance with R.S. 56:320(F). The shad seine shall not be left unattended. Shad seine is not allowed for the taking of fish in saltwater state waters.
- 62. Shellfish:** an aquatic, invertebrate species having a shell. These species include, but are not limited to, oysters, clams, crawfish, shrimp, crabs and other mollusks and crustaceans.

- 63. Skimmer Net:** a net attached on two sides to a triangular frame and suspended from or attached to the sides of a boat, with one corner attached to the side of the boat and one corner resting on the water bottom. A ski and one end of the lead line are attached to the corner of the frame that rests on the water bottom and the other end of the lead line is attached to a weight, which is suspended from the bow of the boat. Skimmer nets are only allowed to be used in state waters when and where the shrimp season is open.
- 64. Slat Trap:** any device, used solely for the capture of catfish, which is cylindrical, rectangular or square in cross section configuration, constructed of slats forming the length of the trap, with at least one pair of slats spaced at least 1 inch apart from each other on at least three sides of the trap and which is no more than 6 feet in length, 2 feet in diameter or width and which has one or more cone-shaped throats, flues or entrances.
- 65. Slot Limit:** protective size limits denoting that fish within the range, inclusive of stated measurements, must be returned to the water immediately.
- 66. Strike Net:** any gill net, trammel net or seine not anchored or secured to the water bottom or shore, and which is actively worked while being used.
- 67. Stupefying Substances or Devices:** the use of explosives or chemicals or comparable destructive fishing practices as a capture technique.
- 68. Take:** in its different tenses, the attempt or act of hooking, pursuing, netting, capturing, snaring, trapping, shooting, hunting, wounding or killing by any means or device.
- 69. Test Trawl:** a trawl that is not more than 16 feet along the corkline or 20 feet along the leadline.
- 70. Total Length:** the longest measurable distance from the outermost portion of the snout lengthwise to the outermost portion of the caudal fin.
- 71. Trammel Net:** any device composed of layers of netting material attached to one or more float lines or one or more weighted bottom lines, with the layers being constructed of fine mesh and of larger mesh so that a fish attempting to pass through the device pushes the smaller mesh through the larger mesh creating a pocket or compartment in which the fish is entrapped, entangled or restricted. All trammel nets must be tagged with a waterproof tag attached to the corkline at each end of the net, no more than 3 feet from the edge of the webbing. The tags must contain the fisherman's full name (no initials) and commercial fisherman's license number. The tags are to be supplied by the commercial fisherman. No trammel net in use shall exceed 1200 feet. Trammel net is not allowed for the taking of fish in saltwater state waters.
- 72. Transport:** in its different tenses, the act of shipping, attempting to ship, receiving, or delivering for shipment, transporting, conveying, carrying, or exporting by air, land or water, or by any means whatsoever.
- 73. Trawl:** 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 feet, and 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 under way. Trawls are only allowed to be used in state waters where and when the shrimp season is open.
- 74. Trigger (Yo-yo):** any tension-loaded rubber band or spring device that contains several feet of line and a hook or hooks, which is baited and set, and which automatically hooks and plays a fish.
- 75. Trotline:** a line which is 440 yards or less to which hoop drops are tied at various intervals or gangions and hooks are attached and which may be retrieved manually or by electric or hydraulic haulers. Hooks must be a minimum of 24 inches apart.
- 76. Turtle Trap:** Any device designed to attract and/or capture turtles in aquatic habitats; it must be open above water to allow respiration of air-breathing animals.
- 77. Unattended Net:** any net in the water to which the licensee thereof cannot be immediately located for identification within 200 feet thereof.
- 78. Venting Tool:** a device used to release excess gas from the abdominal cavity of fish.
- 79. Wing Net:** See "Lead Net."
- 80. Wire Net:** a cone-shaped net of vegetable or synthetic materials, with a mesh no less than 1 inch square or 2 inches stretched, having throats or flues and that is stretched over wire of 5-inch mesh or greater to support the webbing.

## NOTICE TO FISHERMEN AND BOATERS ABOUT AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES

With increasing frequency, introduced aquatic plants are creating serious aquatic habitat problems in many areas of the state. This harmful introduction can cause significant changes in freshwater and marine ecosystems. Help do your part by taking a few simple steps to stop the spread of undesirable aquatic plants:

- Dispose of unwanted live bait on land before leaving the waterbody.
- Inspect all fish caught using seines, dip nets or other types of netting; remove and discard unwanted bycatch.
- Check boats (live wells, ice chests, fishing tackle, etc.) and trailers for the presence of aquatic vegetation before leaving the launch site. If present, remove all plant material and dispose of it in a manner that will prevent introduction into other water bodies.
- Wash and dry your boat, tackle and other equipment to remove/kill harmful species that were not evident at the boat launch.

# GENERAL REGULATIONS & INFORMATION

## INTRODUCTION

---

The following digest includes a summary of certain relevant statutes contained in Title 56 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes and relevant rules and regulations adopted by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission and the Secretary of LDWF. The Secretary of LDWF is authorized to implement additional restrictions in emergencies in order to protect fish and wildlife resources.

## FISHING OFFSHORE

---

Ensuring you are fishing in the right places and for the right species in Louisiana's offshore waters is essential. Not sure where you may and may not fish or what you can fish for off the Louisiana coast in the Gulf of Mexico? Get the information directly from the federal agencies that regulate these offshore waters. Information on obtaining permits is available from the National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office.

### Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

- [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org)
- [info@gulfcouncil.org](mailto:info@gulfcouncil.org)
- 1-888-833-1844 or 813-348-1630
- Mobile app available for iPhone and Android

### National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Southeast Regional Office

- [sero.nmfs.noaa.gov](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov)
- Permits: 1-877-376-4877 or 727-824-5301

### NMFS, Highly Migratory Species Division

(for tunas, billfishes, swordfish and sharks)

- [nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/](http://nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/)
- [hmspermits.noaa.gov](http://hmspermits.noaa.gov)
- [Editor.HMS@noaa.gov](mailto:Editor.HMS@noaa.gov)
- 1-888-872-8862 or 727-824-5399

### NMFS Marine Commercial/Recreational Saltwater Registry Portal

- [countmyfish.noaa.gov/index.html](http://countmyfish.noaa.gov/index.html)
- 301-427-8528

## OFFSHORE LANDING PERMIT

See information on Offshore Landing Permit on page 8.

## SPECIALLY REGULATED AREAS

---

In addition to the general statewide fishing regulations, state wildlife refuges and wildlife management areas, national refuges, federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico, and certain local areas may have special regulations or restrictions on fishing. For more complete information, see your local wildlife enforcement agent or the current Hunting Regulations pamphlet.

## RESTRICTIONS AND METHODS OF TAKING FRESHWATER AND SALTWATER FISH

---

### LEGAL METHODS FOR TAKING COMMERCIAL FINFISH

---

- Any pole
  - Line
  - The device known as yo-yo
  - The device known as a trigger device
  - Handline
  - Any trotline wherein hooks are not less than 24 inches apart
  - Legal slat traps
  - Legal cans
  - Legal minnow traps
  - Legal seines
  - Legal nets
  - Bows and arrows
  - By any skin diver in saltwater or fresh water, when submerged in the water and using standard spearing equipment
  - Commercial saltwater rod and reel, in saltwater areas as defined in R.S. 56:322 (see License prerequisites for requirements)
  - Eel pots and other legal gear may be used for taking eel for commercial purposes only in areas of the state south of the saltwater line and in designated saltwater lakes, excluding Lake Maurepas.
    - LDWF may issue permits to fish eel pots in these otherwise prohibited areas under provisions in the underutilized species act. For more information, contact an LDWF Enforcement Agent.
- \* Certain species of finfish have specific regulations regarding gear and have permits required for harvest.*

## ILLEGAL METHODS FOR TAKING FISH

---

- Spears (except for taking flounder in saltwater areas and garfish)
- Poisons
- Stupefying substances or devices
- Explosives
- Guns
- Tree-topping devices
- Lead nets (except lead nets are permitted on hoop nets when set in overflowed regions when the water is out of the actual bed of the natural stream or lake and the hoop net is set 500 feet from the actual stream bed)
- Electricity or any instrument or device capable of producing an electrical current used in shocking said fish
- Snagging devices (not including bow and arrow)
  - Exceptions:
    - Catfish may be taken by means of snagging devices.
    - Garfish may be taken by means of spears and bows and arrows.

It shall be unlawful to possess any of the prohibited instruments, weapons, substances or devices set out herein above with the intent to take fish in violation of the provisions of this section.

## ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS AND MANDATES FOR USAGE OF CERTAIN GEAR

---

- No nets or beam trawls used for taking fish or shrimp from saltwater areas of the state shall be left unattended, except legal nets or trawls which are attached to a wharf at a bona fide inhabitable camp, which shall be tagged with an LDWF issued tag.
- Hoop nets, without leads, may be left unattended in the saltwater areas of the state for the sole purpose of taking legal commercial catfish species.
- No person shall possess or have on board any vessel a gill net, trammel net, strike net or seine in the saltwater areas of the state, except as provided in R.S. 56:333 for the commercial taking of mullet, R.S. 56:320.2 for traversing, or R.S. 56:406 for the commercial taking of pompano.
- No person shall use or deploy within the state territorial waters bandit gear or longline gear. A person may possess bandit gear or longline gear aboard a vessel within state territorial waters so long as such gear is not in use or deployed to take fish. No person shall possess fish taken within the state territorial waters using bandit gear or longline gear.
- No person shall take or attempt to take fish by means of an elevated trotline, except in exempt areas. For more information on exempt areas, contact an LDWF Enforcement Agent.

## MORE ABOUT PERMITTED FISHING PRACTICES

---

- All fishing operations shall be conducted in such a way that the nests of fish or the natural hiding places of young fish are not destroyed.
- Nets shall not be hauled out upon the shore in such a way that any fish which may happen to be taken therein cannot be returned to the waters without injury.

## KEEPING FREE PASSAGE WHILE FISHING

---

- No person shall obstruct the free passage of fish in any of the streams, lakes, bayous, or in any body of water including crevasses, coulees and canals in marsh and swamp areas of the state by any means whatsoever, provided that the provisions of this section shall not apply to water control structures or dams for the retention of water for conservation purposes.
- No obstructions including trawls, butterfly nets, fyke nets, wings or leads, seines, gill nets or trammel nets, which interfere with the free passageway of fish as defined herein, shall be set within 500 feet of the mouth of any inlet or pass, or within 500 feet of any water control structures, dams or weirs.
- Wings and leads are permitted on hoop nets in overflowed regions where the water is out of the actual bed of the natural stream or lake but not within the restricted 500-foot area. The possession of fish caught in leads or wings is prohibited. Wings and leads on hoop nets south of the saltwater line, as defined in R.S. 56:322(A), are permitted. However, the use of monofilament leads or wings shall be prohibited south of the saltwater line. No pair of wings or leads shall be within 100 feet of each other and no single lead shall exceed 25 feet in length. Free passageway for fish means a minimum passageway opening of 5 feet in width extending from the surface to the bottom of the water in the deepest portion of the water.

*The Louisiana Marine Resources Conservation Act of 1995, Act 1316 of the 1995 Regular Legislative Session, changed many aspects of commercially harvesting saltwater finfish. Persons involved in these activities should contact LDWF's Enforcement Division for accurate information.*

# SALTWATER - FRESHWATER LINE



For complete requirements regarding the taking of fish in federal waters obtain a *Commercial Fishing Regulations for Gulf of Mexico Federal Waters* pamphlet\* from the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council:  
2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100  
Tampa, FL 33607  
813-348-1630  
info@gulfcouncil.org  
www.gulfcouncil.org  
\*Available in PDF format at [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org)

The saltwater-freshwater line in Louisiana extends easterly from the Texas state line all the way to the Mississippi state line. The areas north of this saltwater-freshwater line are deemed freshwater. Those areas south of the described line, including a number of saltwater lakes and waterways, are legally considered saltwater. Although the actual levels of salt in the water may differ from day to day due to tides and shifts in wind and currents, in most cases, the flora and fauna found on either side of the line differ dramatically. A detailed description of the saltwater-freshwater line can be found below. As with any regulation issue, please contact your local LDWF Enforcement Agent with any questions you may have.

## LOUISIANA SALTWATER LINE DEFINITION

The Intracoastal Waterway from the Texas-Louisiana boundary to its junction with Louisiana Highway 27 at Gibbstown, then south to Louisiana Highway 82, east to its junction with the Intracoastal Waterway at Forked Island, the Intracoastal Waterway from Forked Island to Bayou Barataria to the Harvey Canal, the Harvey Canal to the Mississippi River, the Mississippi River to the Industrial Canal, the Industrial Canal to the Intracoastal Waterway, the Intracoastal Waterway to the Rigolets in Orleans Parish to the Louisville & Nashville Railroad bridge, the Louisville & Nashville Railroad right-of-way from the Orleans Parish line to the Mississippi state line.

Also, the areas south of the above described line, plus the saltwater lakes known as Lake Maurepas, Lake Pontchartrain, Lake St. Catherine, Chef Menteur Pass (except that 7/10 of a mile section from Bayou Sauvage south to the Intracoastal Waterway), the Rigolets, Unknown Pass, Pass Manchac, Intracoastal Waterway, and that portion of the Calcasieu Ship Channel from the Intracoastal Waterway south to the Gulf of Mexico, shall be designated as saltwater areas.

Persons fishing and/or possessing saltwater fish in these areas are required to have a saltwater fishing license in addition to the basic fishing license (Source Title 56, Section 302.1). Persons fishing for and/or possessing freshwater fish in saltwater areas are not required to hold a saltwater license.

## FEDERAL WATERS (EEZ - Exclusive Economic Zone)

Louisiana state waters extend out 9 nautical miles from the nearest land, but in some cases extend further. Federal Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) waters extend from that point out to 200 miles from the coast.

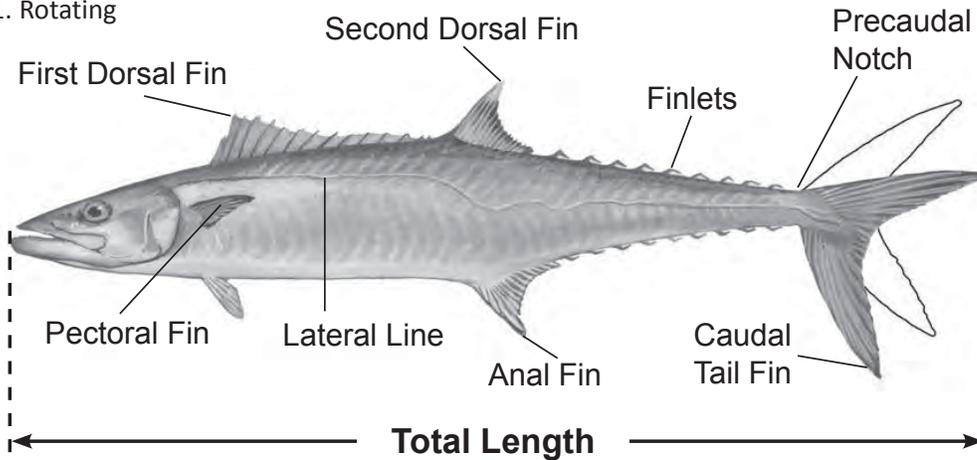
# HOW TO MEASURE A FISH

Use these guidelines to measure a fish correctly (refer to Illustrations):

1. Place the fish on its side on a flat board with the jaw closed.
2. **Total Length** - Measure in a straight line from the tip of the snout to the extreme tip of the tail fin. Adjust the tail by rotating (Example 1) or by squeezing (Example 2) to obtain the maximum length of the fish (Illustration 1).
3. **Fork Length** - Measure in a straight line from the tip of the snout to the fork of the tail (Illustration 2).
4. **Lower Jaw Fork Length** - Measure in a straight line the length from the tip of the lower jaw to the fork of the tail (Illustration 3).
5. **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 (Illustration 4).
6. **Carcass Length** - Measure the curve from posterior edge of gill opening to anterior portion of caudal keel (Illustration 4).

## Illustration 1

Example 1. Rotating



Example 2. Squeezing

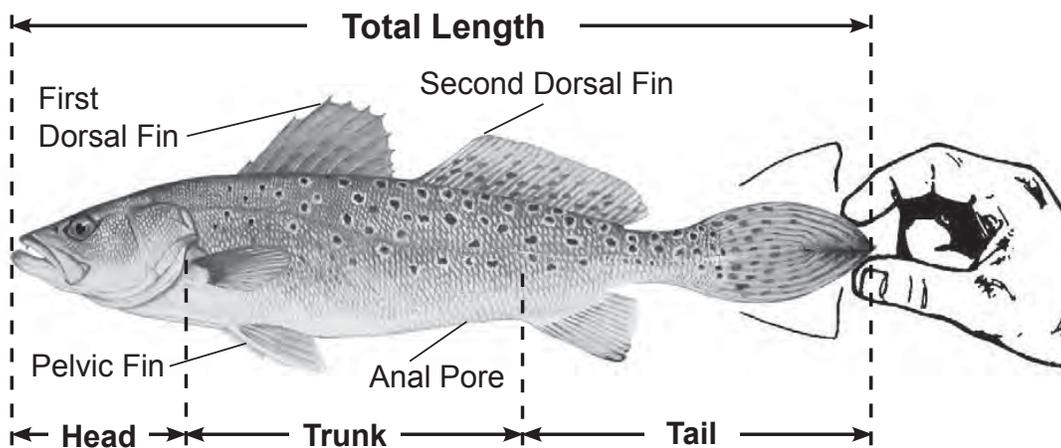


Illustration 2

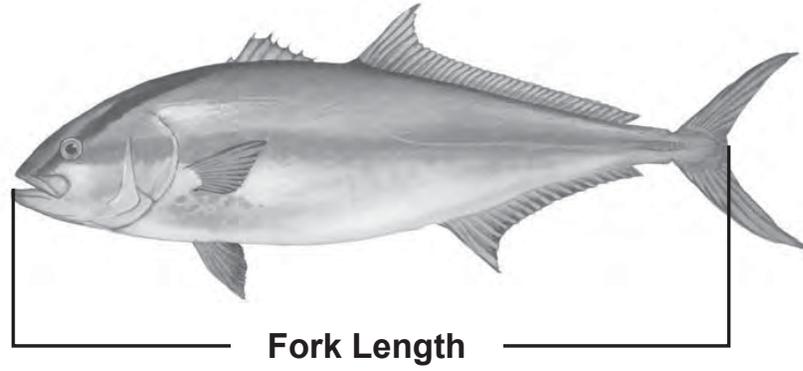


Illustration 3

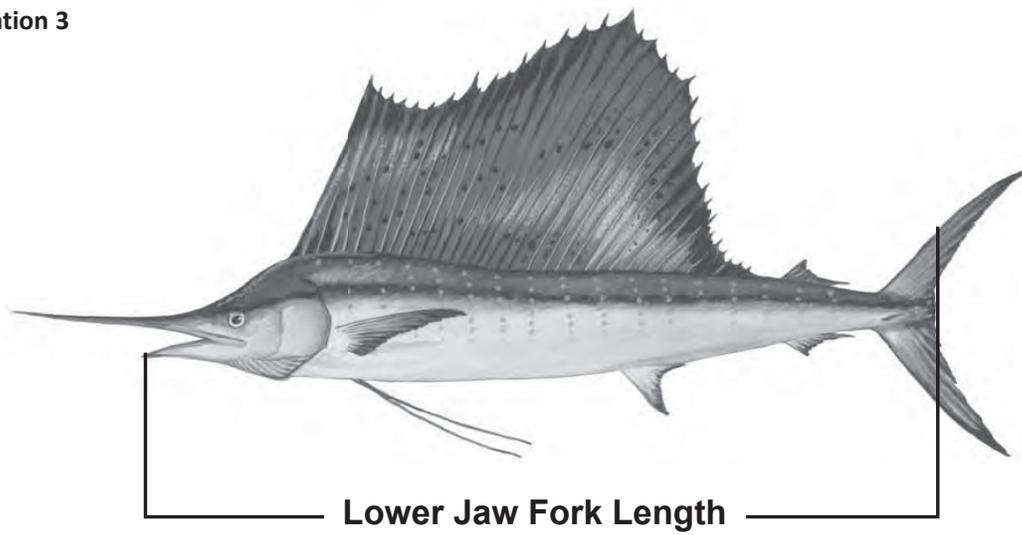
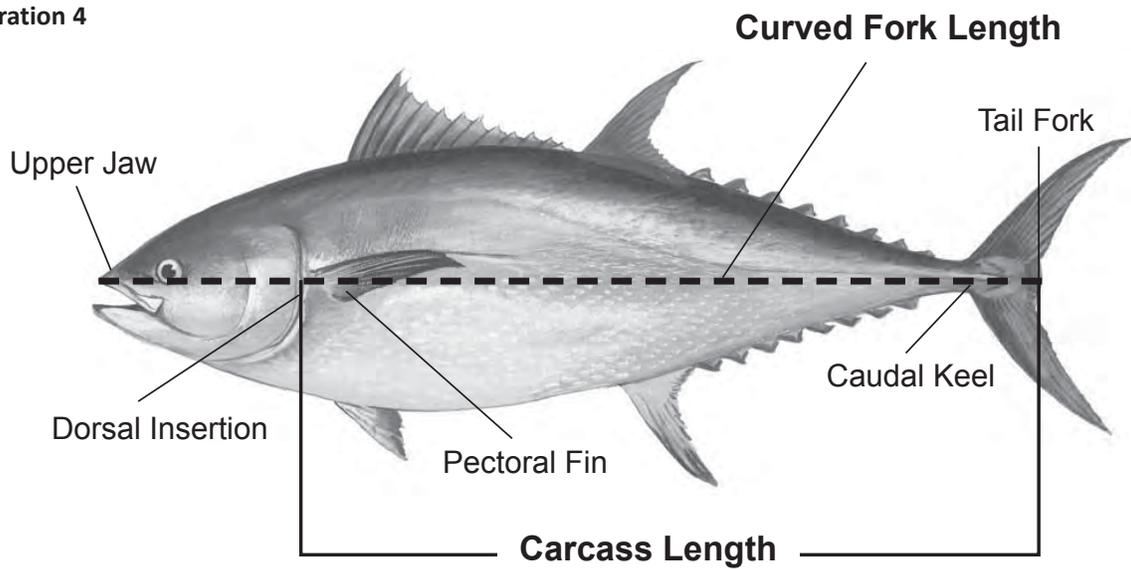


Illustration 4



# FRESHWATER COMMERCIAL FISHING

## FRESHWATER SIZE AND TAKE LIMITS

Commercial fishermen must return all undersized fish to waters without injury. Any commercial species for which there is no specified size limit may be taken in any size and quantity.

Freshwater commercial fish species refers to any species of fish found in freshwater that are not protected by the state or federal government, are not prohibited species, or are not considered gamefish. Gamefish include: largemouth bass, spotted bass, shadow bass, black or white crappie, white bass, yellow bass, striped bass, hybrid striped bass, and any species of bream.

Five percent of each species of commercial fish by number may be smaller than the legal limit, EXCEPT channel catfish of which 10 percent by number may be smaller than the legal limit.

Commercial fishermen, wholesale/retail seafood dealers, retail seafood dealers, restaurants or retail grocers shall not sell, purchase, barter, trade or exchange, or attempt to sell, purchase, barter, trade or exchange undersized fish.

### BLUE CATFISH

- 12" minimum total length
- 5% of species may be smaller than the legal limit.
- Open year-round

### BUFFALO

- 16" minimum total length
- 5% of species may be smaller than the legal limit.
- Open year-round

### CHANNEL CATFISH

- 11" minimum total length
- 10% of species may be smaller than the legal limit.
- Open year-round

### FLATHEAD CATFISH

- 14" minimum total length
- 5% of species may be smaller than the legal limit.
- Open year-round

### FRESHWATER DRUM

- 12" minimum total length
- 5% of species may be smaller than the legal limit.
- Open year-round

### BOWFIN

- 22" minimum total length
- 5% of species may be smaller than the legal limit.
- Open year-round except prohibited during the months of December, January, and February, EXCEPT in Assumption, Avoyelles, Iberville, Pointe Coupee, Terrebonne, Tangipahoa, and West Baton Rouge parishes, and in the areas know as Bayou Courtableau, Bayou Teche, Lake Dauterive, Lake Fausse Point, Vermilion River, Carencro Bayou, Queue de Tortue Bayou, Bayou Nez Pique, Mermentau River, Bayou Lacassine, Sabine River, and the Atchafalaya Basin Floodway that is bounded by the east and west levees of the Atchafalaya Basin and is south of U.S. Highway 190.

### MULLET

- Open year-round
- May be taken in any size and quantity.
- May be taken in hoop nets in the freshwater areas of the state.
- Mullet taken in freshwater may not be possessed in saltwater, at night, or taken with a hoop net with leads on it.

### PADDLEFISH

- **TAKE PROHIBITED**
- Commonly called spoonbill catfish.
- Taking or possession of whole or any body parts, including roe (eggs) is prohibited.

### PALLID, ATLANTIC AND SHOVELNOSE STURGEON

- **TAKE PROHIBITED**
- Taking or possession of whole sturgeon or any body parts, including roe (eggs) is prohibited.

# ILLEGAL TO POSSESS THE FOLLOWING FRESHWATER SPECIES

---

- All species of piranha
- All species of tilapia
- Rio Grand Cichlid
- Freshwater Electric Eel (*Electrophorus sp.*)
- Rudd (*Scardinius erythrophthalmus*)
- All members of the families *Synbranchidae* (Asian swamp eels)
- *Channidae* (snakeheads)
- *Clariidae* (walking catfishes)
- *Trichomycteridae* (pencil catfishes)

## METHODS OF TAKE

---

### PERMITTED GEAR FOR COMMERCIAL FRESHWATER FISHING

---

**Cast Net:** any cast net used for commercial purposes.

**Crawfish Trap:** any device constructed of coated wire with the opening of its throats or flues not exceeding 2 inches used for the sole purpose of taking crawfish. Crawfish traps are typically of the pillow style or cone style with minimum mesh size no smaller than 3/4 inch by 11/16 inch.

**Gill Net:** minimum mesh of not less than 3 inches square or 6 inches stretched after treating with tar or copper. No gill net in use shall exceed 1,200 feet in length.

**Hoop Net:** mesh of not less than 1-inch square or 2 inches stretched after treating with tar or copper.

**Seine:** minimum mesh of not less than 2 inches square or 4 inches stretched after treating with tar or copper. No seine in use shall exceed 1,200 feet in length.

**Shad Gill Net:** only shad and skipjack herring may be taken with special shad gill net licenses in Lake Palourde, Lake Verret, Lac Des Allemands, all of the waterways in Iberville Parish, and those portions of the parishes of Iberia, St. Martin and St. Mary located between the guide levees of the Atchafalaya Basin, but is specifically not authorized to do so in the streams, bayous, canals and other water bodies connected with the specified lakes. However, a commercial fisherman may keep other commercial fish species up to a maximum of 25 fish. All fish on board the vessel shall have the head and caudal fin intact. A single shad gill net having a mesh size no less than 1-inch bar or 2 inches stretched and no more than 2-inch bar or 4 inches stretched may be used per licensee per vessel. The net may not exceed 1,200 feet in length and must have attached to each end a 1-gallon jug painted international orange and with the words "Shad Gill Net" in black lettering, and must have waterproof tags with the name and license number of the fisherman in accordance with R. S. 56:320(F). The shad gill net shall be placed at least 50 feet from the tree line. The shad gill shall not be unattended as defined in R.S. 56.8(102). The season will be closed from July through October each year. Shad and skipjack may be taken after sunset and before sunrise during open season. However, there shall be no commercial taking of shad or skipjack on any Saturday or Sunday. During the open season, there shall be no daily take or possession limit for the commercial harvest of shad and skipjack by properly licensed shad gill net commercial fishermen. Only strike fishing is authorized. Once deployed, the shad gill net shall remain stationary until fish are being removed from the net or the net is retrieved from the water.

**Shad Seine:** shad, skipjack herring and any other legal-sized freshwater commercial fish may be taken with a shad seine. All fish on board the vessel shall have the head and caudal (tail) fin intact. A single shad seine having a mesh size no less than 1-inch bar and 2 inches stretched and not more than 2-inch bar and 4 inches stretched, not constructed of monofilament, may be used per licensee, per vessel and cannot be left unattended. The net may not exceed 1,200 feet in length and must have attached to each end a 1-gallon jug painted international orange and with the words "Shad Seine" in black lettering and must have waterproof tags with the name and license number of the fisherman in accordance with R.S. 56:320(F). A shad seine may only be fished in the freshwater areas of the state, but it shall not be used in the bodies of water where seine use is prohibited, nor the Pearl River or the Pearl River navigational canal. There shall be no daily take or possession limit for the commercial harvest of shad and skipjack taken by properly licensed shad seine commercial fishermen.

**Slat Trap:** any device, used solely for the capture of catfish, which is cylindrical, rectangular or square in cross section configuration, constructed of slats forming the length of the trap, with at least one pair of slats spaced at least 1-inch apart from each other on at least three sides of the trap and which is no more than 6 feet in length, 2 feet in diameter or width and which has one or more cone-shaped throats, flues or entrances.

**Trammel Net:** minimum mesh of not less than 3 inches square or 6 inches stretched after treating with tar or copper. All trammel nets must be tagged with a waterproof tag attached to the corkline at each end of the net, no more than 3 feet from the edge of the webbing. The tags must contain the fisherman's full name (no initials) and commercial fisherman's license number. The tags are to be supplied by the commercial fisherman. No trammel net in use shall exceed 1200 feet.

**Trotline:** hooks must be a minimum of 24 inches apart. Use of elevated trotlines is prohibited in certain areas.

**Wire Net:** mesh size must not be less than 1-inch square or 2 inches stretched.

**NOTE:** All gill nets and trammel nets must be tagged with a waterproof tag attached to the corkline at each end of the net, no more than 3 feet from the edge of the webbing. The tags must contain the fisherman's full name (no initials) and commercial fisherman's license number. The tags are to be supplied by the commercial fisherman.

## FRESHWATER BAIT SEINES, CAST NETS, DIP NETS AND MINNOW TRAPS

---

A person may have in possession or in use for the sole and only purpose of taking minnows, shrimp and other baits permitted by law, seines of 1/4 inch mesh or less and measuring 30 feet or less in length, cast nets with a radius of less than 8 and 1/2 feet, dip nets and minnow traps (See Recreational and Commercial Licensing Requirements).

## NOTICE CONCERNING FISHING IN LOUISIANA/MISSISSIPPI BORDER WATERS

---

When commercial fishing in Mississippi border waters, as defined in "Reciprocal License Agreement - Mississippi & Louisiana, November 2000," trot lines, snag lines, hoop nets, gill nets and trammel nets may be tagged with a waterproof tag containing the fisherman's full name (no initials) and commercial fisherman's license number, in lieu of tags required by Mississippi regulations. The tag shall be placed within 5 feet of one end on trot and snag lines, on the first hoop on hoop nets, and on the float line within 5 feet of one end on gill and trammel nets. Fishermen shall supply their own tags. Louisiana fishermen using slat traps or slat baskets in Mississippi border waters are required to obtain tags from the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks.

## FRESHWATER SPECIES WITH ADDITIONAL POSSESSION RESTRICTIONS

---

The following species may be taken in state waters, possessed and sold by properly permitted commercial fishermen provided the fish is dead:

- Asian carp (grass carp) (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*)
- Silver carp (*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix*)
- Bighead carp (*Hypophthalmichthys nobilis*)
- Black carp (*Mylopharyngodon piceus*)

## FRESHWATER MUSSEL HARVEST

---

### AREAS CLOSED TO FRESHWATER MUSSEL HARVEST

The following areas are closed to the harvest of freshwater mussels:

- Areas officially recognized as saltwater areas.
- Amite River from the junction with Bayou Manchac to the Mississippi State Line.
- All of Rapides and Grant parishes, except the main channel of the Red River.
- Bayou Bartholomew in Morehouse Parish from the Arkansas state line to its confluence with the Ouachita River.
- Additional areas may be closed at any time by notice from the Secretary of LDWF.

### LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

- A freshwater mussel harvester is required to purchase a Commercial Fishing License and a Mussel Harvester Permit to commercially harvest mussels.
- The Mussel Buyer's Permit can only be purchased by and in the name of a person holding a valid Louisiana Seafood Wholesale/Retail Dealer's License.

Some species of mussels are off-limits for commercial or recreational take. These federally listed threatened and endangered, or prohibited species are listed below. Some civil and criminal penalties may apply for taking the following aquatic mussel species:

- Louisiana pearlshell mussel
- Inflated heelsplitter mussel
- Fat pocketbook mussel
- Pink mucket mussel

## ADDITIONAL GEAR RESTRICTIONS BY WATER BODY

### TROTLINE AND YO-YO RESTRICTIIONS

Location	Gear Restrictions
<b>BLACK-CLEAR LAKE, CADDO LAKE, CHICOT LAKE, D'ARBONNE LAKE, LAKE LAFOURCHE &amp; LAKE ST. JOSEPH</b>	<p><b>Yo-Yos</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The placement of any artificial object to anchor a yo-yo or trigger device is prohibited.</li> <li>No more than 50 yo-yos or trigger devices allowed per person.</li> <li>Each yo-yo or trigger device must be clearly tagged with the name, address and telephone number of the owner/user.</li> <li>All fish or any other animals caught or hooked must be immediately removed from the device.</li> <li>Each yo-yo or trigger device must be re-baited at least once every 24 hours.</li> <li>No yo-yo or trigger device is allowed to be attached to any metallic object.</li> <li>Except for an object used strictly in the construction of a pier, boathouse, seawall, or dock, no object which is driven into the lake bottom, a stump, tree, or the shoreline shall be used to anchor a yo-yo or trigger device. "Object" means rebar or other metal material, cane, PVC tubing, construction material, or any other type of material.</li> </ul> <p><b>Trotlines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All trotlines must be marked, tagged, and dated with the owner/user's name, address, phone number and date of placement. The trotline must be marked on each end with a floating object that is readily visible.</li> <li>No person is allowed to set more than three trotlines with a maximum of 50 hooks per trotline.</li> <li>All trotlines must have an 8-foot cotton leader on each end of the trotline to insure that if the trotline is left unattended, the cotton leader will deteriorate and the line will sink.</li> <li>All trotlines must be attended daily while in service.</li> </ul>

### NETTING RESTRICTIIONS

Location	Gear Restrictions
ANACOCO BAYOU	Trammel nets, fish seines, gill nets and hoop nets are prohibited.
ANACOCO LAKE	Trammel nets, fish seines, gill nets and hoop nets are prohibited.
LAKE BARTHOLOMEW	The use of gill nets, trammel nets and fish seines is prohibited.
LAKE BISTINEAU	Trammel nets, fish seines, gill nets and hoop nets are prohibited.
BLACK BAYOU RESERVOIR	The use of gill nets, trammel nets and fish seines is prohibited. Hoop nets, slat traps and wire nets are prohibited from March 1 - Oct. 31 of each year
BOGUE CHITTO RIVER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The use of seines, all nets and webbing for the taking of fish in Bogue Chitto River from where it enters the state in the northern part of Washington Parish to where it enters into the Pearl River in St. Tammany Parish is prohibited.</li> <li>The taking of fish from logs, buckets, barrels, drums or natural or artificial nesting areas by hand grabbing is also prohibited in this area.</li> </ul>
BUNDICK LAKE	Trammel nets, fish seines, gill nets and hoop nets are prohibited.
CADDO LAKE	Gill nets, fish seines and trammel nets prohibited.
CANEY CREEK RESERVOIR	Trammel nets, fish seines, gill nets and hoop nets are prohibited.
LAKE CHARLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gill nets, strike nets, fish seines and trammel nets prohibited.</li> <li>Butterfly nets and shrimp trawls longer than 16 feet prohibited.</li> </ul>
LAKE CLAIBORNE	Gill nets, fish seines and trammel nets prohibited.
LAKE CONCORDIA	Gill nets, fish seines and trammel nets prohibited.

## NETTING RESTRICTIONS (*CONT.*)

Location	Season/Gear Restrictions
CROSS LAKE	Trammel nets, fish seines, gill nets and hoop nets are prohibited.
CYPRESS LAKE	The use of gill nets, trammel nets and fish seines is prohibited. Hoop nets, slat traps and wire nets are prohibited from March 1 - Oct. 31 of each year.
CHICOT LAKE	Trammel nets, fish seines, gill nets and hoop nets are prohibited.
D'ARBONNE LAKE	Gill nets, fish seines and trammel nets prohibited.
FALSE RIVER LAKE, LAKE BRUIN & LAKE PROVIDENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gill and Trammel nets open Oct. 1 and closes at sunset on the last day of February the following year.</li> <li>The use of fish nets is prohibited EXCEPT that a special recurring commercial fishing season allowing the use of gill and trammel nets greater than or having at least a minimum of 3 and 1/2 inches square (7 inches stretched) is permitted.</li> <li>Commercial fishing will be allowed only during daylight hours except that gear can remain set overnight but fish captured shall be removed during daylight hours only.</li> <li>Commercial fishing with trammel and gill nets will be allowed only during the open season and only by licensed commercial fishermen.</li> </ul>
FOOL RIVER	Fish seines prohibited.
JOHN K. KELLY – GRAND BAYOU RESERVOIR	Trammel nets, fish seines, wire nets, gill nets and hoop nets are prohibited.
LACASSINE BAYOU	<i>(That portion of the bayou that flows through the Lacassine National Refuge)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gill nets, trammel nets and hoop nets prohibited March 1 - Nov. 30</li> </ul>
MOSS LAKE	Fish seines, strike nets, trammel nets, gill nets, butterfly nets and shrimp trawls over 16 feet prohibited.
NANTACHIE LAKE	Netting prohibited.
POVERTY POINT LAKE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All freshwater commercial fish netting prohibited.</li> <li>In addition, no person shall possess set or use any yo-yos, trot lines or slat traps.</li> </ul>
PRIEN LAKE	Fish seines, strike nets, trammel nets, gill nets, butterfly nets and shrimp trawls longer than 16 feet prohibited.
TCHEFUNCTE RIVER	Seines, all nets, webbing or traps of any kind and all types, including slat traps, for the taking of fish in the Tchefuncte River, and its tributaries, from its origin in Washington Parish to where it empties into Lake Pontchartrain in St. Tammany Parish, are prohibited.
TOLEDO BEND RESERVOIR	Hoop nets are prohibited from March 1 through May 15 each year only in that portion of Toledo Bend Reservoir from a point north of Logansport where the lake enters Texas, and south to a point on the lake where the Texas Duck Refuge Canal intersects the Old Channel of the Sabine River.
LAKE VERNON	Trammel nets, fish seines, gill nets and hoop nets are prohibited.
<b>NOTE:</b> Sanctuaries exist within WMAs, refuges and other areas which may be closed to certain gear types or methods of fishing. Consult your local LDWF office or Enforcement Agent or the current hunting regulations pamphlet.	

## GENERAL PROHIBITION OF NETTING IN IMPOUNDMENTS DURING DRAWDOWN PERIODS

All fresh water impoundments shall be closed to use of all commercial fish netting during water drawdown periods, unless otherwise specified by LDWF based upon biological and technical data; the closure to begin on the date the drawdown control structure is opened and continued until the lake returns to full pool following closure of the structure.

# SALTWATER COMMERCIAL FISHING

## SIZE AND TAKE LIMITS

### COMMON COASTAL SPECIES

#### COBIA (Ling or Lemon Fish)

- 33" minimum fork length.
- Two fish per person.
- Licensed commercial fishermen may only possess and sell two fish per trip.

#### DRUM

##### Black

- 16" minimum total length.
- There is an annual harvest quota of 3.25 million pounds for black drum measuring 16-27 inches total length, and an annual harvest of 300,000 fish measuring longer than 27 inches total length.
- Fishing year begins Sept. 1.

##### Red

Commercial take of red drum is prohibited.

#### FLORIDA POMPANO

##### Pompano Permit

- A commercial fisherman is required to obtain a Pompano Permit to commercially harvest and sell pompano using a pompano strike net in Breton and Chandeleur Sounds during the pompano season.
- Applications are only accepted from Jan. 1 - April 31

##### Legal Gear - Pompano Strike Net

- In addition to other legal gears, Florida pompano can be harvested with pompano strike nets in seasons and areas described below.
- 2 and 1/2 inches square or 5 inches stretched mesh (minimum).
- No pompano strike net in use shall exceed 2,400 feet in length or be unattended by the licensee thereof.
- Pompano strike nets may only be used for the legal taking of pompano in the waters in excess of 7 feet in depth and beyond 2,500 feet from land within the Chandeleur and Breton Sound areas described in R.S. 56:406(A)(2).
- Pompano strike nets may be used from Aug. 1 - Oct. 31 of each year.

#### MACKEREL

##### King

- 24" minimum fork length.
- There is a 3,000-pound trip limit in effect.
- Fishing year begins July 1.
- Federal permit is required when fishing in federal waters.

##### Spanish

- 12" minimum fork length.
- Federal permit is required when fishing in federal waters.

#### MENHADEN

Anyone legally harvesting menhaden cannot possess more than 5 percent, by weight, of any species other than menhaden and herring-like species.

##### Legal Gear - Purse Seine

- Cannot be used to take finfish other than menhaden or herring like species.
- Use is otherwise prohibited in inside or outside waters as delineated in LA. R.S. 56:495.

##### Regular Menhaden Season

- The season for the taking of menhaden as well as processing of menhaden shall be from the third Monday in April through Nov. 1.
- The menhaden season applies to all waters seaward of the inside-outside line described in R.S. 56:495 including waters in the Federal Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and in Chandeleur and Breton sounds LAC 76:VII.307.D.
- All other inside waters and passes are permanently closed to menhaden fishing.

## COMMON COASTAL SPECIES *cont.*

### MENHADEN (*cont.*)

#### Menhaden Bait Season

- The season runs from after the close of the regular menhaden season until Dec. 1.
- If the quota has not been reached by Dec. 1, then, beginning on April 1 of the following year, bait gulf menhaden may be taken until LDWF determines that the quota (3,000 metric tons) has been met.
- Any menhaden taken pursuant to this special season shall be sold only for use as bait.
- The Secretary of LDWF shall grant special permits for the taking of menhaden during the special bait season.

### SHEEPSHEAD

10" minimum total length.

### SOUTHERN FLOUNDER

10 fish for each licensed fisherman for each consecutive day on the water EXCEPT any commercial shrimping vessels may retain and any commercial fisherman may sell all Southern flounder caught as by-catch on any shrimping trip.

### SPOTTED SEATROUT (Speckled Trout)

#### Spotted Seatrout Permit

- In addition to other commercial fishing licenses, a qualified commercial fisherman must have in his possession a valid Spotted Seatrout Permit to commercially harvest and sell spotted seatrout.
- Spotted seatrout may be taken only by properly licensed and permitted commercial rod-and-reel fishermen.
- All persons on board a vessel commercially fishing for spotted seatrout shall be validly licensed commercial fishermen.
- Only the Spotted Seatrout Permit holder may sell spotted seatrout. The commercial fisherman (captain) is required to qualify and purchase a Spotted Seatrout Permit to commercially harvest and sell spotted seatrout.
- A saltwater guide may not possess a Spotted Seatrout Permit.
- Qualifying criteria for Spotted Seatrout Permit are:
  - Applicant must have possessed a valid Saltwater Gill Net License during two of the years 1993, 1994 or 1995.
  - Applicant must provide positive proof, in the form of state and federal income tax returns, including Schedule C of the federal 1040 form, submitted in accordance with procedures established by the commission, that the applicant has derived more than 50 percent of his income earned from the capture and sale of seafood species in at least two of the three years, 1993, 1994 or 1995.

#### Legal Gear

- No commercial gear other than commercial rod-and-reel may be used or in possession to take spotted seatrout.
- It is illegal to possess spotted seatrout on a vessel where there is a gill net, strike net, hoop net, trammel net, seine, or other commercial gear. No person shall qualify for a Charter Boat Fishing Guide License and a Spotted Seatrout Permit during the same licensure period.

#### Size

- 14" minimum total length, with an annual harvest quota of 1 million pounds.

#### Seasons/Times

- The commercial taking or harvesting of spotted seatrout is prohibited within Louisiana waters west of the Mermentau River. Commercial fishing begins on the second day of January until the last day of December or until the quota is reached, whichever comes first.
- Spotted seatrout may not be taken commercially during the period from official sunset on Friday through official sunrise on Monday, and there shall be no possession of spotted seatrout in excess of the recreational limit during the period between 10:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m.
- However, a person holding a permit for the commercial taking or possession of spotted seatrout may take or possess an amount not to exceed the legal recreational limit of spotted seatrout between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. during the open season and at any time during the closed season if that person also possesses a Basic Recreational Fishing License and a Saltwater Fishing License.

### STRIPED MULLET

#### Mullet Permit

- The commercial fisherman (captain) is required to qualify and purchase a Mullet Permit to commercially harvest mullet.
- Mullet Permit required in addition to other licenses, qualifications exist.
- Qualifying criteria for Mullet Permit are:
  - Applicant must have possessed a valid Saltwater Gill Net License during two of the years 1993, 1994 or 1995.
  - Applicant must provide positive proof, in the form of state and federal income tax returns, including Schedule C of the federal 1040 form, submitted in accordance with procedures established by the commission, that the applicant has derived more than 50 percent of his income earned from the capture and sale of seafood species in at least two of the three years, 1993, 1994 or 1995.

## COMMON COASTAL SPECIES (*cont.*)

### STRIPED MULLET (*cont.*)

#### Legal Gear - Mullet Strike Net

- Mullet may be taken commercially with a mullet strike net.
- A gill net 1 and 3/4 inches square or 3 and 1/2 inches stretched mesh (minimum)
- No mullet strike net in use can exceed 1,200 feet in length.
- Must not be anchored or secured to the water bottom or shore and must be actively worked while being used.
- A mullet strike net shall not be an unattended net as defined in R.S. 56:8 (102).
- Mullet strike nets may only be used in state waters for the legal taking of striped mullet with a special mullet permit during the commercial season.

#### Legal Gear - Cast Net

- Mullet may be taken for live bait purposes with a commercial cast net of no more than 12 feet in radius, operated manually, during any season.
- Any person commercially taking mullet for live bait purposes with a cast net must have a valid cast net gear license issued by LDWF for each cast net within their possession while taking live mullet.

#### Commercial Season

- The season for the commercial taking of mullet with a mullet strike net shall be from the third Monday in October until the third Monday in the following January. No commercial harvest of mullet with a mullet strike net is allowed outside this season.
- Live mullet for bait purposes may be taken commercially with a cast net during any season.
- Mullet may only be taken commercially with a mullet strike net or a cast net Monday through Friday from sunrise to sunset.
- Only one mullet strike net may be in use from any vessel at any time.
- A commercial fisherman using a mullet strike net must have in possession a valid LDWF Mullet Permit in his or her name for legal harvest and sale. Mullet strike nets must be tagged with an LDWF-issued tag.
- No other fish may be possessed when mullet fishing with a mullet strike net or cast net.

### TRIPLETAIL

- 18" minimum total length
- 100-pound trip limit

## REEF FISH

**NOTE:** *There are proposed rules that could significantly modify rules for the harvest of reef fish. Harvesters and wholesale/retail dealers interested in harvesting reef fish should remain aware of the current regulations.*

To commercially harvest or sell certain reef fish species listed below, whether taken within or without the territorial waters of Louisiana, fishermen must possess a permit issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service for the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Resources.

- Species for which a permit is required include:
  - Triggerfishes
  - Snappers
  - Amberjacks
  - Groupers
  - Wrasses
  - Tilefishes
- To purchase a permit, contact the National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office:
  - [sero.nmfs.noaa.gov](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov)
  - 727-824-5305 or 1-877-376-4877

For a person on board a vessel to fish for or possess Gulf reef fish in the Gulf EEZ, the vessel must possess on board and such person must use the gear as specified below:

- **Non-stainless Steel Circle Hooks** - required when fishing with natural baits for reef fish.
- **De-hooking Device** - at least one device is required and must be used to remove hooks embedded in Gulf reef fish with minimum damage.
  - The hook removal device must be constructed to allow the hook to be secured and the barb shielded without re-engaging during the removal process.
  - The de-hooking end must be blunt and all edges rounded.
  - The device must be of a size appropriate to secure the range of hook sizes and styles used in the Gulf reef fish fishery.

### AMBERJACK

#### Greater

- 36" minimum fork length
- Closed season March 1 - May 31 each year
- 2,000-pound trip limit

#### Lesser

- 14" minimum fork length and 22" maximum fork length

## REEF FISH (*cont.*)

### BANDED RUDDERFISH

14" minimum fork length and 22" maximum fork length.

### BLACK SEABASS

8" minimum total length.

### GREY TRIGGERFISH

- 14" minimum fork length
- 12 fish trip limit
- Closed season from June 1 - July 31 each year

### GROUPEL\*

Commercial harvest of grouper species is limited to those persons possessing a federal commercial vessel permit issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service under the Federal Fishery Management Plan for the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Resources, and the applicable federal Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) vessel account.

#### Goliath (formerly called Jewfish)

- Take or possession of Goliath grouper within or without the waters of Louisiana is prohibited.

#### Nassau Grouper

- Take or possession of Nassau grouper within or without the waters of Louisiana is prohibited.

#### Shallow-Water Grouper

- **Black Grouper:** 24" minimum total length
- **Gag Grouper:** 22" minimum total length
- **Red Grouper:** 18" minimum total length
- **Scamp Grouper:** 16" minimum total length
- **Yellowfin Grouper:** 20" minimum total length

#### Deep-Water Grouper

- **Misty, Snowy, Yellowedge, Warsaw Groupers and Speckled Hind** have no minimum lengths.

### SNAPPER\*

Commercial harvest of red snapper and tilefish is limited to those persons possessing a federal commercial vessel permit issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service under the Federal Fishery Management Plan for the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Resources, and the applicable federal Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) vessel account.

- **Lane:** 8" minimum total length.
- **Vermilion (beeliner):** 10" minimum total length.
- **Yellowtail:** 12" minimum total length.
- **Schoolmaster:** 12" minimum total length.
- **Cubera:** 12" minimum total length.
- **Mahogany:** 12" minimum total length.
- **Dog:** 12" minimum total length.
- **Gray (mangrove):** 12" minimum total length.
- **Hogfish:** 12" minimum fork length.
- **Red\*:** 13" minimum total length.
- **Mutton:** 16" minimum total length
- **Queen Snapper, Blackfin Snapper, Silk Snapper, Wenchman, Almaco Jack, Goldface Tilefish, Tilefish, Blackline Tilefish, Anchor Tilefish, Blueline Tilefish, Dwarf Sandperch and Sandperch** have no minimum limits.

**\*NOTE:** Commercial regulations for harvest of reef fish include additional regulations required under the NMFS Reef Fish Permit System. Persons involved in the commercial harvest of these species should contact their local and federal enforcement agents for details on these regulations (*see pages 2 and 16 for contact information*).

Commercial red snapper, grouper and tilefish harvest regulations include several changes to reflect requirements for Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) regulations. In addition to a requirement for a federal commercial vessel permit for Gulf reef fish, in order to fish for, possess or land Gulf red snapper, any species of grouper or any tilefish species, the appropriate federal IFQ vessel account must have been issued to the vessel. Appropriate IFQ allocation must be assigned that is at least equal to the pounds of red snapper, grouper and tilefish landed/docked at a shore side location or off loaded. On the last fishing trip of the year a vessel may exceed by 10 percent the remaining IFQ allocation.

No person shall purchase, sell, exchange, barter, or attempt to purchase, sell, exchange or barter any red snapper, grouper or tilefish species in excess of any possession limit for which federal commercial license, permit and appropriate allocation were issued.

## REEF FISH (cont.)

In addition to the requirement for a federal dealer permit for Gulf reef fish, for a dealer to receive Gulf red snapper, any species of grouper or any tilefish species from a commercial fishing vessel he must have a federal Gulf IFQ dealer endorsement. For a person aboard a vessel with a federal Gulf red snapper IFQ vessel account to sell to anyone other than a permitted dealer, such person must also have a federal Gulf IFQ dealer endorsement. The owner or operator of a vessel landing red snapper, groupers or tilefish species is responsible for calling National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Office of Law Enforcement at least three hours, but no more than 12 hours, in advance of landing to report the time and location of landing and the name of the IFQ dealer where the red snapper, groupers or tilefish species are to be received, and the estimated gutted weight of red snapper, grouper and tilefish for each federal IFQ share category (red snapper, gag, red grouper, deep-water grouper, other shallow-water grouper and tilefish species). At-sea or dockside transfer of commercial red snapper, groupers or tilefish species from one vessel to another vessel is prohibited.

## HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES

**IMPORTANT: Tuna, swordfish and sharks possessed by a commercial fisherman shall not be skinned or scaled until set or put on shore or when sold.**

### SHARK

**NOTE:** There are proposed rules that could significantly modify rules for the harvest of sharks. Harvesters and wholesale/retail dealers interested in harvesting shark should remain aware of the current regulations.

#### Shark Permit

- Persons commercially fishing for shark are required to obtain a Shark Permit from LDWF. In addition to other commercial licenses and state shark permits, persons commercially fishing for sharks in federal waters are required to have a federal shark permit. Those persons possessing a federal commercial directed or incidental limited access shark permit or federal shark research permit issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service under the Federal Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Sharks are limited to daily take, trip and possession limits as specified in that federal permit. Persons possessing a commercial state shark permit but no federal shark permit shall not possess on any one day, or on any trip, or land from any trip, or sell, barter, trade, or exchange in excess of 36 sharks per vessel from the large coastal species group, taken from Louisiana state waters.
- NOTE:** There are possession, daily and trip limits, as described above, of 36 fish for large coastal sharks, which are the following species:
  - Blacktip Shark
  - Bull Shark
  - Great Hammerhead
  - Lemon Shark
  - Nurse Shark
  - Sandbar Shark
  - Scalloped Hammerhead
  - Silky Shark
  - Smooth Hammerhead
  - Spinner Shark
  - Tiger Shark
- Persons possessing a Commercial State Shark Permit shall not possess any sandbar sharks unless they also have in their name and in possession a valid Federal Shark Research permit under 50CFR635.32(1).
- The act of "finning" is prohibited. All sharks aboard a vessel shall have fins naturally attached to the original shark carcass by at least some portion of uncut skin.
- No person aboard any vessel shall transfer or cause the transfer of sharks between vessels on state or federal waters.
- All Louisiana state waters out to the seaward boundary of the Louisiana Territorial Sea shall be closed to the commercial harvest of all sharks between April 1 and June 30 of each year.
- The fishing year for shark shall begin on Jan. 1. The opening date for the commercial shark season may be set at some date other than Jan. 1, and the closure of the fishery may be done on short notice as quotas are achieved, so participants in this fishery must remain aware of seasons as well as the potential for other rule changes.

#### Prohibited Shark 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:

- Atlantic Angel Shark
- Basking Shark
- Bigeye Sand Tiger Shark
- Bigeye Sixgill Shark
- Bigeye Thresher Shark
- Bignose Shark
- Caribbean Reef Shark
- Caribbean Sharpnose Shark
- Dusky Shark
- Galapagos Shark
- Largetooth Sawfish
- Longfin Mako Shark
- Narrowtooth Shark
- Night Shark
- Sand Tiger Shark
- Sevengill Shark
- Sixgill Shark
- Smalltail Shark
- Smalltooth Sawfish
- Whale Shark
- White Shark

## HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES (*cont.*)

### SWORDFISH

- 29" carcass length or 33-pound dressed weight.
- To commercially harvest, possess or sell swordfish, whether within or outside Louisiana state territorial waters, fishers must possess a valid Federal Commercial Swordfish Permit aboard the vessel.
- No person aboard any vessel shall transfer or cause the transfer of swordfish between vessels on state or federal waters.

### TUNA

The following are permanent Louisiana regulations on tuna harvest, which may be superseded by seasonal changes within the federal regulatory system (see websites referenced below for current federal regulations):

- **Yellowfin:** 27" curved fork length
- **Bigeye:** 27" curved fork length
- **Bluefin:** 73" curved fork length
- Those species of tuna that have minimum size restrictions may have the head removed as long as the carcass length without the head exceeds the minimum size requirement.
- In addition to state-required commercial fishing licenses, to commercially harvest, possess or sell Atlantic bluefin tuna, yellowfin tuna, bigeye tuna, skipjack tuna and albacore, whether within or without Louisiana state territorial waters, fishers must possess a valid Federal Commercial Tuna Permit. See contact information below.
- Persons subject to the jurisdiction of the state, fishing for tunas within or without Louisiana state waters, are subject to both state and federal laws, rules and regulations. Federal regulations on harvest of tunas change often, especially for bluefin tuna.
- Prior to harvest of tuna, be aware of the most current federal regulations on harvest, including sizes, bag limits and closed seasons.
- The "Atlantic Tunas Regulations Brochure" is available at: [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/brochures/2013/2013\\_tunas\\_regs\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/brochures/2013/2013_tunas_regs_brochure.pdf)
- For in-season fishery notices (retention limit adjustments, closures, etc.), visit [hmspermits.noaa.gov](http://hmspermits.noaa.gov), or call the Atlantic Tunas Information Line at 888-872-8862 or 727-824-5399.
- NMFS maintains an automated permitting system for the issuance of Atlantic tunas and HMS vessel permits.
- To apply for or renew an Atlantic tunas or HMS vessel permit, visit [hmspermits.noaa.gov](http://hmspermits.noaa.gov) or dial 888-872-8862.
  - Customer Service for the Automated Permitting System can be reached by pressing "0" from the main menu.
- To apply for an Atlantic tunas dealer permit, call the NMFS Northeast Permit Office at 978-281-9370.

## METHODS OF TAKE

### GENERAL

- **Commercial fishermen** must be properly licensed to commercially harvest and sell fish. Specific state and federal permits are required for certain fisheries.
- **Commercial gear** must be properly licensed when used in state waters. Use or possession of certain commercial gear requires qualification. See "Commercial Gear License" section of this pamphlet for more information.
- **Commercial vessels** must be properly licensed whenever taking or possessing fish for sale in Louisiana saltwater areas.
- Any commercial species for which there is no specified size or take limit may be taken in any size or quantity.
- Commercial fishermen must return all undersized fish to waters without injury.
- Five percent of each species of commercial fish by number may be smaller than the legal limit, EXCEPT channel catfish, of which 10 percent by number may be smaller than the legal limit.
- Commercial fishermen, wholesale/retail seafood dealers, retail seafood dealers, restaurants or retail grocers shall not sell, purchase, barter, trade, or exchange or attempt to sell, purchase, barter, trade, or exchange any undersized fish.
- Possession of red drum or spotted seatrout on board any vessel on which there is a gill net, strike net, hoop net, trammel net or seine is prohibited.
- All finfish in or from saltwater areas, except tuna, swordfish and sharks, possessed by a commercial fisherman shall have the head and caudal fin intact until set or put on shore or when sold. Shark fins shall not be possessed aboard a fishing vessel unless naturally attached to the original shark carcass by at least some portion of uncut skin. All garfish possessed by a commercial fisherman in the saltwater areas of the state may have the head and caudal fin removed, but shall retain a strip of skin sufficient to clearly identify the fish until set or put on shore or when sold. All finfish shall be measured in accordance with applicable law.
- For the purpose of consumption at sea onboard the harvesting vessel, a person shall have no more than 2 pounds of finfish parts per person on board the vessel, provided that the vessel is equipped to cook such finfish.
- When on a commercial finfish fishing trip all finfish in possession are deemed to be used for commercial purposes. This means finfish possessed must comply with commercial sizes, limits, seasons and other commercial requirements.
- It shall be unlawful for any person 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 fishing for menhaden and herring-like fish.

**NOTE:** Sanctuaries exist within WMAs, refuges and other areas, which may be closed to certain gear types or methods of fishing. Consult your local LDWF Office or Enforcement Agent or the WMA section of this pamphlet.

## SALTWATER COMMERCIAL FISHING GEAR & RESTRICTIONS

---

Some commercial gears are restricted to specific fisheries, and are described under each of those fisheries.

### LEGAL GEARS IN STATE WATERS

- **Cast Net:** any cast net used for commercial purposes or cast nets exceeding 8 and 1/2 feet in radius.
- **Commercial Rod and Reel:** any rod and reel used for commercial purposes.
  - Qualifying criteria for Rod and Reel Gear Licenses are:
    - Applicant must provide positive proof that they held a valid Commercial Gear License for saltwater gill nets during any two years of the years 1993, 1994 and 1995.
    - Applicant must provide positive proof, in the form of state and federal income tax returns, including Schedule C of the federal 1040 form, submitted in accordance with procedures established by the commission, that the applicant has derived more than 50 percent of his income earned from the capture and sale of seafood species in at least two of the three years, 1993, 1994 or 1995.
- **Hoop Net:** 1-inch square or 2 inches stretched mesh (minimum) after treating with tar or copper. Hoop nets without leads may be left unattended in saltwater areas for the sole purpose of taking catfish.
- **Trawl:** any net generally funnel-shaped, pulled through the water or along the bottom with otter boards to spread the mouth open while being fished. This gear is only allowed to be used in waters where and when the shrimp season is open.
- **Trotline:** any set line which is 440 yards or less to which hoop drops are tied at various intervals or gangions and hooks are

attached and which may be retrieved manually or by electric or hydraulic haulers. Hooks must be a minimum of 24 inches apart.

### PROHIBITED IN SALTWATER STATE WATERS

- Saltwater gill nets
- Seines
- Trammel nets
- Bandit gears
- Longline gears

### GEARS LIMITED TO FEDERAL WATERS

- **Bandit Gear:** vertical hook-and-line gear with rods attached to a vessel, and with line retrieved by manual, electric or hydraulic reels (cannot be used in state waters).
- **Longline Gear:** a line which is over 440-yards long to which gangions and hooks are attached that is deployed horizontally and which may be retrieved by an electric or hydraulic hauler. Longline gear shall not mean a trotline as defined in R.S. 56:8(140) (cannot be used in state waters).
- **Saltwater Gill Net for EEZ:** a traversing permit is required from LDWF for transport of gill nets, trammel nets, seines and strike nets across state waters for use in federal waters. Permit holders must notify LDWF four hours before leaving port to traverse or fish under the conditions of the Traversing Permit and immediately upon returning from the permitted trip. LDWF must be notified by calling 1-800-442-2511 or 225-765-2441 (24 hours).

## OTHER SPECIES PROHIBITED COMMERCIALY

---

Some aquatic species are off-limits for fishing or commercial or recreational take. These federally listed threatened and endangered or prohibited species are listed below. Some civil and criminal penalties may apply for taking the following aquatic species:

- All Whales
- Dolphin (mammal)
- West Indian Manatee
- Sea Turtles (refer to "Reptiles and Amphibians" section)

In addition to species prohibited as part of the Federal Endangered Species Act, the following species of gamefish may not be commercially sold or purchased unless imported and tagged with metal self-locking tags placed in one operculum of each fish:

- Sailfish
- Blue marlin
- Black marlin
- Striped marlin
- Hatchet marlin
- White marlin
- Red drum

Tags must be issued by the official conservation agency of the state from which the fish were taken, and must show the originating water body and identity of the issuing agency, EXCEPT that red drum need only be accompanied by a bill of lading in accordance with L.R.S. 56:327 and 327.1, or unless certified by LDWF as having been raised and taken in accordance with a certified aquaculture program or a valid mariculture permit pursuant to L.R.S. 56:579.1.

LDWF must be notified at 1-800-442-2511 or 225-765-2441 prior to importation of these fish.

## OFFSHORE LANDING PERMIT

---

Charter captains are required to obtain this permit (free of charge) to possess tunas, billfish, swordfish, amberjacks, groupers, snappers, cobia, wahoo and dolphin. To obtain a permit charter captains must register at [www.wlf.la.gov/rolp](http://www.wlf.la.gov/rolp). More details on this program are also available on this site.

# OTHER COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

## COMMERCIAL CRABBING

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission passed a notice of intent at their meeting on July 3, 2014 to implement a professionalism program for new entrants into the Louisiana crab fishery. This program was designed in close cooperation with LDWF and the Louisiana Crab Task Force.

Beginning Nov. 15, 2014, any commercial fisherman applying for a crab trap gear license must have possessed a valid commercial crab trap gear license in any two of the following years: 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014. Otherwise, fishermen who wish to purchase a crab trap gear license must first enroll in and complete a crab industry professionalism program. This training will include:

- Education in the proper fishing techniques necessary for the health and sustainability of crabs; proper techniques for the best capture and presentation of the crabs for marketability
- Proper instructions regarding the placement, tending, and maintenance of crab traps to reduce potential conflicts with other user groups
- Authorizes the program to include a mandatory apprenticeship program

Details regarding how to participate in the program and program requirements had not been finalized at the time of this publication. The Notice of Intent containing a draft of the program rules can be viewed on page 1428 of the July 2014 edition of the Louisiana Register under the Louisiana Fisheries Forward Program.

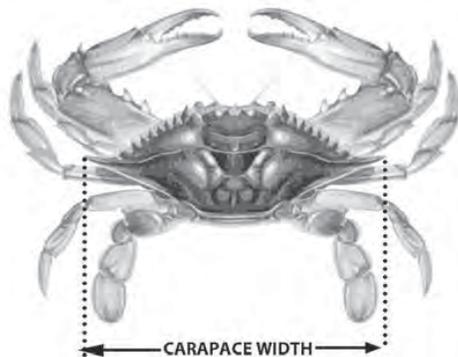
### GENERAL

- Commercial fishermen shall tag, mark or otherwise identify any crabs that are sold, in a manner which will ensure that such commercial fisherman can be identified as the person who harvested the crabs. The identification required herein shall include the commercial fisherman's name, license number and date on which the crabs were harvested.
- Any commercial fisherman identified as having sold undersized crabs to a wholesale/retail dealer shall be subject to penalties for the taking and possession of undersized crabs.

### SEASONS

The Wildlife and Fisheries Commission has the authority to prohibit the use of crab traps in state waters during a 16 consecutive-day period between Feb. 1 and March 31 of each year and during a 14 consecutive-day period, which includes the opening day of the spring inshore shrimp season. These closure areas are associated with the Derelict Crab Trap Removal Program.

### SIZE/POSSESSION LIMITS



#### HARD SHELL CRABS

- 5 inches in carapace width as measured from point to point of the upper shell, EXCEPT when held for processing as soft crabs or sold to a processor for the making of soft shell crabs.
- Crabs under the minimum size limit shall be returned immediately to the waters from which taken without avoidable injury.
- Maximum possession of whole stone crab is one stone crab per each crate of blue crabs or group of blue crabs equivalent to one crate.

#### PRE-MOLT CRABS

- Pre-molt crabs less than 5 inches in width held by a fisherman for processing as softshell crabs or sold by him to a processor for the making of softshell crabs must be identifiable as pre-molt crabs and must be held in a separate container marked "peelers" or "busters" while in the possession of the fisherman. Crabs in the pre-molt stage are no further from molting than having a white line on the back paddle fin.

- Minimum commercial size limits do not apply to crabs held in a work box. Each fisherman may have one work box if not using a grader, or two work boxes if using a grader.

#### STONE CRABS

- Stone crabs (*Menippe adina*) may be taken by the same method as blue crabs, however only the claws may be landed.
- Minimum claw length is 2-3/4-inch forearm (propodus) measured from the immovable anterior-most tip of the claw to the base of the joint.
- Whole stone crabs may be possessed on the vessel until the claws are removed after which time the crab shall be returned to the waters from which taken.

#### BYCATCH

- A licensed commercial fisherman may retain for personal consumption finfish caught as by-catch in crab traps up to an aggregate of 25 finfish per vessel per day. No freshwater game fish, no red drum and no spotted seatrout may be kept as a part of this aggregate.
- Any fish retained are subject to recreational size and possession limits.
- In addition, any licensed commercial fisherman holding a Gear License which allows him to take finfish for commercial purposes, may possess any finfish caught under that Gear License up to the commercial possession limit allowable for such finfish and such fish shall not be required to be separated from the by-catch allowed above.

## METHODS OF TAKING

---

- Crabs may be taken with any legal crab trap, crab drop net, trawl, skimmer net, butterfly net, trotline, handline, bush-line, dip net or cast net. Dredges shall not be used for the intentional taking of crabs.
- The taking of crabs by means of trawls in inside waters is permitted only during the open season for shrimp and only with a legal mesh size (see "Commercial Shrimping - Trawls").
- No person shall possess or sell adult female crabs in the berry stage (i.e., carrying the eggs or young attached to the abdomen).
- All crabs in the berry stage taken by any means shall be returned immediately to the waters. However, a legally licensed commercial crab fisherman may have in his work box an incidental take of crabs in the berry stage equal to not more than 2 percent of the total number of crabs in his possession.

### CRAB TRAPS

- The baiting, tending, checking or removing of crab traps, the contents of crab traps or their lines, buoys or markers is prohibited in public waters from one-half hour after legal sunset until one-half hour before legal sunrise.
- It is the responsibility of the crabber to place traps so vessels can safely navigate and to properly dispose of his unserviceable traps on shore. No crab traps shall be set in navigable channels or entrances to streams. A crabber who retrieves his trap with a commission approved common float shall return the common float to any shrimper for reuse.
- No person other than the licensee or his agent shall intentionally damage or destroy crab traps or the floats or lines attached thereto, or remove the contents thereof.
- Crab fishers may utilize a plastic bait box cover to mark trap ownership or a 2-inch stainless steel, self-locking tag attached to the center of the trap ceiling. Either must be legibly engraved or embossed with the commercial fisherman's license number. Crab traps may be attached to a trotline to which at least one end is attached to a non-floating line and a

visible float of at least 6 inches in diameter or half-gallon volume size. Crab traps located in areas designated as freshwater north of the northern bank of the Intracoastal/Waterway and west of LA Highway 70 and those areas located on the eastern side of the Mississippi River and inland from the saltwater line are not required to be marked with a float and float line unless the trap is placed in a lake. Each crab trap on a trotline shall be registered with LDWF and shall have attached thereto a tag bearing the crab fisherman's license number. All crab traps must be marked with a solid float, 6 inches in diameter or greater, attached with a non-floating line 1/4-inch minimum diameter or larger. Each crab trap must have a minimum of two escape rings 2 and 5/16 inches in inside diameter, excluding the ring material. Rings must be placed on the vertical outside walls flush with the trap floor or baffle with at least one ring located in each chamber of the trap. Except from April 1 - June 30 and from Sept. 1 - Oct. 31, escape rings shall not be obstructed with any material that hampers or prevents exit of crabs. However, any crab trap constructed of wire mesh 2 and 5/16 square inches or greater or any crab trap placed in Lake Pontchartrain is exempt from escape ring requirements. However, effective Nov. 15, 2017 and thereafter, a minimum of three escape rings shall be placed on the vertical outside walls flush with the trap floor or baffle, with at least two rings located in the upper chamber of the trap. Minimum ring size shall be 2 and 3/8 inches in inside diameter, not including the ring material. Traps placed in Lake Pontchartrain would no longer be exempt from escape ring requirements.

- Metal tackle or metal crab traps shall not be used in any of the public waters north of the Intracoastal Waterway 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 Cypremort Point 1 mile offshore to Blue Point.
- Crab traps are prohibited in the Tchefuncte River.

## SOFT SHELL CRAB SHEDDERS LICENSE

---

- The owner or operator of any soft shell crab shedding facility must purchase a Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer License.
- Wholesale/retail seafood dealers who shed soft shell crabs or operate soft shell crab shedding facilities shall on or before the tenth of each month submit to LDWF on forms specified by LDWF, information relative to the amount of soft shell crabs produced.

## COMMERCIAL SHRIMPING

---

To commercially harvest and sell shrimp using trawls, skimmer nets, butterfly nets or cast nets, an individual must possess a commercial fisherman's license, a commercial gear license for each gear used, and a vessel license in the vessel owner's name.

### AREAS

---

Shrimping areas in Louisiana are divided into inside waters, the outside territorial seas, and the federal Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The line (shrimp line) as described in LA R.S. 56:495(A) that separates inside waters from outside territorial waters generally follows the coastline, although there are some exceptions (visit <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/insideoutside-shrimp-line> for a complete description of the inside/outside shrimp line). For specific boundary locations check with your local Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Agent or visit the LDWF website at <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/shrimp-season> for a description of

the inside/outside shrimp line. Maps of the shrimp line are available at a charge of \$10 per map by writing the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Oyster Lease Survey Section, UNO Advanced Technology Center, 2021 Lakeshore Drive, New Orleans, La. 70122 or by calling 504 284-5272. Please specify which area of the coast you are interested in. The line that separates state territorial waters from the EEZ runs along the Louisiana coast 9 nautical miles seaward from shore. For specific boundary locations, particularly in the Grand Isle and Marsh Island area, contact your local Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Agent.

**NOTE:** Restricted areas exist within certain WMA, state and federal refuges and other areas. These areas may be closed to certain gear types or methods of fishing and different possession limits may apply. Consult your local Wildlife and Fisheries office or Enforcement Agent or the WMA section of this pamphlet.

## SEASONS

---

- Shrimp seasons are flexible and are fixed by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission based upon biological and technical data relative to shrimp populations in Louisiana waters.
- Generally, the spring inshore season will begin in early to mid-May and may extend into July. The fall inshore season usually begins in early to mid-August and extends into December.
- The shrimp season in Louisiana's territorial waters is generally open year-round EXCEPT for a closed season in portions of state outside waters which may be set during late fall to early winter, usually beginning in mid to late December and extending into April or May.
- The shrimp season in the federal waters of the Gulf seaward (south) of Louisiana's territorial waters is usually open all year; these waters are controlled by the federal government.
- A federal shrimp vessel moratorium permit is required for all vessels fishing for shrimp in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Information concerning federal shrimp vessel permits, Turtle Excluder Device (TED) and Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRD) requirements and exemptions can be obtained by contacting the NOAA Fisheries Service at 727-824-5312 for TEDs or 727-824-5305 for BRDs or at [www.nmfs.noaa.gov](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov).
- Detailed information on TEDs may be found at the following link to the NOAA Fisheries website <http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/labs/mississippi/ted/regulations.htm>.

## SIZE/POSSESSION LIMITS

---

- There is no size limit on any saltwater shrimp taken during the spring open season nor is there any size limit on brown shrimp or seabobs taken during any open season in Louisiana. There is, however, a possession count on saltwater white shrimp taken in either inside or outside (offshore) waters of Louisiana of 100 count (whole shrimp per pound).
- This size restriction applies to the taking or possession of such shrimp aboard a vessel, EXCEPT during the period from Oct. 15 through the third Monday in December when there shall be no possession count on saltwater white shrimp taken or possessed.
- When more than 50 percent by weight of the saltwater shrimp taken or possessed is seabobs or brown shrimp, then the maximum allowable amount of undersized white shrimp taken or possessed shall not exceed 10 percent by weight of the total saltwater shrimp taken or possessed.

## METHODS OF TAKING

---

- During open seasons, saltwater shrimp may be taken with trawls, butterfly nets, skimmer nets or cast nets, and by no other means.
- **Bait shrimp** may be taken at any time, even during the closed season, with cast nets less than 8 and 1/2 feet in radius, hand operated dip nets with a diameter not to exceed 3 feet, bait traps, and bait seines less than 30 feet with a maximum mesh size of 1/4-inch bar mesh that are manually operated on foot only.
- Qualified permit holders in possession of a "Special Bait Dealers Permit" may take live bait shrimp and live croaker during the closed season beginning May 1 of each year and between the spring and fall inshore shrimp seasons.
- Trawls, butterfly nets or skimmer nets cannot be used for any purpose in state waters during closed season. However, businesses that possess a "Special Bait Dealer's Permit" are allowed to harvest live shrimp and live croaker beginning May 1 of each year and during that period between the closing of the spring inshore shrimp season and beginning of the fall inshore shrimp season under certain restrictions.

**NOTE:** Federal law requires that all shrimp trawlers with a power retrieval system must have approved Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) installed in each trawl except test nets with headrope lengths of 12 feet or less. Test nets with headrope lengths of 12 feet or less are limited by tow-time restrictions. Also, in federal waters, federal law requires shrimp trawlers to install approved Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRDs) in each trawl.

### TRAWLS

- Trawls cannot have a mesh size less than 5/8-inch bar or 1 and 1/4 inches stretched mesh. Trawls cannot have a mesh size less than 3/4-inch bar or 1 and 1/2 inches stretched mesh during the fall inshore shrimp season from the western shore of Vermilion Bay and Southwest Pass at Marsh Island to the Atchafalaya River.
- In inshore waters, vessels may use one trawl measuring 50 feet or less in length along the corkline and 66 feet or less along the lead line; or two trawls which shall not exceed 25 feet each along the corkline, 33 feet or less along the lead line and have trawl doors no larger than 8 feet in length and 43 inches in height; or two trawls which shall not exceed 25 feet each along the corkline, 33 feet along the lead line and have no more than two outer trawl doors no larger than 8 feet in length and 43 inches in height and no more than two inner sled doors, EXCEPT that each vessel may, in addition, pull a test trawl. In state outside territorial waters (from the beach to 3 miles offshore in most areas), each shrimping vessel may only use nets that do not exceed a total maximum per vessel of 130 feet of cork line and 165 feet of lead line, in addition to one test trawl.
- In Breton and Chandeleur sounds as described by the "double rig" line in LA R.S. 56:495.1(A)(2), two trawls may be used, each measuring 65 feet or less in length along the corkline and 82 feet or less in length along the lead line, plus one test trawl.
- "Test trawl," as used in this section, means a trawl which is not more than 16 feet along the corkline or 20 feet along the lead line or head rope. The length of trawls is the full measure of

the extended net as in use or in possession on the fishing grounds, when measured along the cork line between the points where the webbing is attached to the rope at either end, and does not include the additional rope used for pulling the net or attaching it to the arm-poles or trawl boards.

- In federal offshore waters (EEZ), up to four trawls may be used of any size, plus one test trawl.
- Trawling, skimming and butterflying is prohibited in Lake Maurepas and that portion of Lake Pontchartrain from the shoreline to 1 and 1/4 miles out from the Jefferson/Orleans Parish line east to South Point, from South Point to North Shore along the railroad bridge west from North Shore to Goose Point.
- Trawling, skimming and butterflying are prohibited between the railroad bridge and Interstate 10 in Lake Pontchartrain.
- No person shall trawl, seine or use a skimmer net over any privately leased bedding grounds or oyster propagating place which is staked off, marked or posted as required by law or regulation.
- Trawling at night is prohibited in the Cameron Parish sections of Calcasieu Lake, the Black Bayou system, Grand Bayou and Little Burtons Ditch (all in the Calcasieu Lake area), and in Grand Lake and White Lake.
- Use of skimmer nets is prohibited at night in Calcasieu Lake; however, skimmer nets may be used during day and night in all areas of Cameron Parish west of the western shore of Calcasieu Lake.
- Trawling, skimming and butterflying at night are prohibited in Grand Lake and White Lake.
- All commercial fishing with butterfly nets and trawls longer than 16 feet is prohibited in Lake Charles, Moss Lake and Prien Lake.
- Night shrimping, between the hours of one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise, is prohibited in Vermilion Bay, East and West Cote Blanche bays, and Atchafalaya Bay to the western shore of the Atchafalaya River and the Atchafalaya River Ship Channel out to Eugene Island as described by the inside-outside line in R.S. 56:495; EXCEPT in the following area: In the waters of Southwest Pass at Marsh Island south of a line drawn from the following points: the most southeastward point of Southwest Pass at 29 degrees 36 minutes 47 seconds north latitude, 92 degrees 00 minutes 32 seconds west longitude east southeast to the Green Light Channel Marker Number 21 at 29 degrees 36 minutes 44 seconds north latitude, 92 degrees 00 minutes 21 seconds west longitude; thence northeast to a point located at 29 degrees 37 minutes 34 seconds north latitude, 91 degrees 59 minutes 36 seconds west longitude; thence southeast to the western shore of Big Charles Bayou at 29 degrees 36 minutes 43 seconds north latitude, 91 degrees 59 minutes 17 seconds west longitude.
- Trawls and butterfly nets are prohibited in the waters of Bayou Judge Perez (Bayou Hermitage) from its entrance into Lake Judge Perez (Lake Hermitage) to Devils Bayou, a distance of approximately 1 mile, located in Plaquemines Parish.
- Trawling, skimming or butterflying north of the LA Highway 631 bridge at Des Allemands and in Lake Des Allemands, its streams and tributaries, is prohibited.
- Taking shrimp with saltwater trawls from May 1 - Sept. 15 each year is prohibited in state waters on the south side of Grand Isle from Caminada Pass to Barataria Pass in Jefferson Parish, from the southeast side of the Caminada bridge to the northwest side of Barataria Pass at Fort Livingston, extending

from the beach side of Grand Isle to a distance of 500 feet beyond the shoreline into the Gulf of Mexico.

- Trawling is prohibited in the cove immediately adjacent to Cypremont Point State Park landward of a line from Blue Point to Cypremont Point to the shoreline.

## BUTTERFLY AND SKIMMER NETS

- ***Federal Turtle Excluder Device (TED) regulations require skimmer and butterfly net fishermen to limit tow times. Maximum tow times are 55 minutes from April 1 - Oct. 31 and increase to 75 minutes from Nov. 1 - March 31.***
- Butterfly and skimmer nets with a mesh size less than 5/8-inch bar or 1 and 1/4 inches stretched mesh are prohibited. Butterfly and skimmer nets cannot have a mesh size less than 3/4-inch bar or 1 and 1/2 inches stretched mesh during the fall inshore shrimp season from the western shore of Vermilion Bay and Southwest Pass at Marsh Island to the Atchafalaya River.
- A single stationary butterfly net measuring more than 22 feet vertically or horizontally, or double butterfly nets having individual nets measuring more than 12 feet vertically or horizontally are prohibited, unless double butterfly nets are used on a vessel, in which case each individual net can measure no more than 12 feet vertically by 16 feet horizontally. No person on a vessel shall use a double skimmer net with an opening measuring more than 72 feet in circumference for each net and a lead line greater than 33 feet. No person shall use a double skimmer net where the horizontal net frame extends more than 20 feet from the gunwale of the vessel. Operation of butterfly and skimmer nets shall in no way impede normal navigation. No person shall use sweeper devices, leads, extensions, wings or other attachments in conjunction with or attached to butterfly nets or skimmer nets.
- No net or beam trawl used for taking fish or shrimp from the saltwater areas of the state shall be left unattended as defined in R.S. 56:8(141) except such legal nets or trawls which are attached to a wharf at a camp and which are tagged with an LDWF tag issued in conjunction with the gear being used.
- Fishing with a butterfly net shall be prohibited in inside waters during the closed season.
- No butterfly net or bottom net may be suspended from a piling, float, barge, raft, bridge or shore installation in the Rigolets or Chef Menteur Pass or in those portions of Lake Pontchartrain or Lake Borgne which are within 2 miles of the Rigolets or the Chef Menteur Pass. However, in the Chef Menteur Pass a properly licensed single butterfly net measuring not more than 22 feet by 22 feet may be suspended from a wharf which has been approved by the U.S. Corps of Engineers and which is attached to privately owned or leased immovable property, or to a structure that is not attached to privately owned or leased property if the owner has possessed a permit for such structure from the U.S. Corps of Engineers prior to 1988, provided that the owner or leaseholder is present on the immovable property or permitted structure at all times that the net is in the water.
- Butterfly nets may be used for the taking of shrimp in Calcasieu Lake, Calcasieu River, Grand Bayou and Calcasieu Ship Channel, all within Cameron Parish only, in the daytime and in the nighttime, during open seasons.
- All butterfly nets located in East and West Passes of the Calcasieu River, in Grand Bayou and in Oyster Bayou, all within Cameron Parish only, shall be tagged with a tag listing the fisherman's name, address and butterfly net license

number. This tag shall be attached to the net, frame or any other structure or part directly attached to the net or frame in such a manner that it is above the water at all times. This tag shall be of readable size, easily visible and with letters at least 3 inches high and of appropriate width.

- No person may operate a stationary shrimp net within 1,000 feet upstream from another stationary shrimp net that is attached to or moored to a wharf or platform permitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. However, if two permitted wharves or platforms are located within 1,000 feet of each other, the owner of the upstream wharf or platform may attach a stationary shrimp net if any one of the following applies:
  - His permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was issued prior to Aug. 15, 2004.
  - His permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was issued prior to the permit for the downstream wharf or platform.
  - The owner of the downstream wharf or platform does not operate a stationary shrimp net.
- A stationary shrimp net is any net for taking shrimp including butterfly or skimmer net that is attached to the water bottom, bank or fixed structure.
- When a butterfly net located in West or East Pass of the Calcasieu River, in Oyster Bayou or in Grand Bayou, all within Cameron Parish, is not being fished, all of the following shall apply:
  - Any object to which the net is attached or mounted solely for purposes of fishing, including but not limited to any unmanned boat or vessel, floating platform, pontoon or

barge, shall be moved from the waterway and relocated adjacent to the shoreline in a manner which shall not present an obstruction or hazard to navigation.

- Any anchor or weight used to secure in the waterway the net or any object to which it is attached or mounted solely for purposes of fishing, including but not limited to any unmanned boat or vessel, floating platform, pontoon or barge, shall be removed from the water bottom.
- Any rope, line, chain or other device used to connect to the shoreline the net and any object to which it is attached or mounted solely for purposes of fishing, including but not limited to any unmanned boat or vessel, floating platform, pontoon or barge, shall be prohibited. However, the prohibition expressed herein shall not apply when such rope, line, chain or other device is being used to secure, when not in use, such net and any object to which it is attached or mounted adjacent to the shoreline in a manner which shall not present an obstruction or hazard to navigation.
- Any butterfly net, whether or not it is being fished, that is not marked for identification so that the person owning or responsible for such net can be identified shall be considered contraband. Any agent finding the contraband butterfly net shall immediately seize and take it into custody and may obtain from a judge of any court in the parish where the butterfly net was found an ex parte order forfeiting the contraband and ordering its destruction. An LDWF Enforcement Agent or an authorized employee who seizes items as provided in this paragraph is immune from liability and from suit for seizure and destruction of a butterfly net.

## SHRIMPER/CRAB TRAP INTERACTION

---

A shrimper who catches an unserviceable crab trap shall keep it on the vessel and properly dispose of it on shore. A shrimper that catches an otherwise serviceable trap without a float shall return it to the water with a common float. A common float is defined as an all-white plastic, 1-gallon or larger bleach bottle.

## COMMERCIAL OYSTERING

---

### SEASONS

---

- The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission (LWFC) determines which public oyster beds are open for fishing by opening or closing the season as biological and technical data indicate a need.
- The season generally runs from the first Wednesday following Labor Day in September through April 30 of the following year; however, there are often exceptions to this for certain seed grounds.
- No public ground or reservation shall be fished for market sacks until the second Monday in October. Consult [www.wlf.la.gov](http://www.wlf.la.gov) for the most recent information regarding oyster seasons.
- The owner of an oyster lease or his designee with written permission, may fish oysters at any time of year on their lease, unless the lease is under a Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (LDHH) closure order.
- The Commission shall fix the open season for commercial taking of oysters from Calcasieu Lake and Sabine Lake, which for Calcasieu Lake shall begin on any date between Oct. 15 and Nov. 1 and shall end on April 30 or on a date set by the Commission.

**NOTE:** Areas opened by the LWFC may, however, be closed by LDHH for health reasons. Information on closed areas is available from LDWF or from LDHH at 1-800-256-2775 or [new.dhh.louisiana.gov](http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov)

### SIZE/POSSESSION LIMITS

---

- All oysters taken from public grounds for market sales must be 3 inches or greater in length from hinge to mouth. A lessee of private oyster grounds may be permitted to take undersized oysters from public grounds for bedding purposes only, unless such area of the public grounds has been designated by the Commission as a "sacking-only" area. Consult [www.wlf.la.gov](http://www.wlf.la.gov) for the most recent information concerning "sacking-only" areas.
- Size restrictions do not apply to commercially harvested oysters taken from a private lease.
- Not more than 25 sacks per boat per day may be taken from Sabine Lake.

[www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov)

37

- Harvest limits in Calcasieu Lake shall be set by the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission not to exceed 25 sacks of oysters per person per day per licensed vessel.
- Harvest from private leases for commercial purposes is unlimited.
- Recreational oyster fishermen may harvest oysters:
  - In leased areas only with the written permission of the lease holder;
  - In personally leased areas; and
  - In areas open to the public for the harvesting of oysters, but shall be limited to two sacks per person (R.S. 56:424c) per day for personal consumption, except in Calcasieu Lake where the daily limit is one sack per person.

## METHODS OF TAKING

---

- Oysters may be taken from public grounds by dredges, scrapers and tongs. Dredges and scrapers shall be no longer than 6 feet in width measured along the tooth bar. The dredge teeth shall be no longer than 5 inches and there shall be no more than seven dredges in use on any one vessel. **Dredges shall not be used in such a manner as to remove excessive non-living reef material with seed oyster loads or as to cause physical destruction to the natural reefs.**
- The use of dredges in Calcasieu and Sabine lakes is limited to a single hand dredge or a single scraper with mechanical assist that has a tooth or flat bar of no more than 36 inches in length.
- Any oysters taken from the public natural reefs or the oyster seed grounds or reservations, except those in Calcasieu Lake or Sabine Lake, shall be placed only on a vessel which has an Oyster Seed Ground Vessel permit issued. Such permit shall be issued in the name of the vessel owner and shall identify the vessel permitted by including the state registration number or the U.S. Coast Guard documentation number. For more information, contact the LDWF Licensing Section at 225-765-2898.
- Oysters from Calcasieu Lake may only be taken by a person holding a valid Calcasieu Lake Oyster Harvester Permit.
- Each person in charge of an oyster cargo vessel shall purchase an Oyster Cargo Vessel Permit. The permit shall be issued at a cost of \$250 per year for residents and \$1105 per year for non-residents.

## LEASES

---

- 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 Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries a written application and cash deposit of such amount as determined by LDWF.
- Lessees, under the supervision of LDWF, shall stake off and mark the lease 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 that state the lease number and name or initials of the lessee.
- Oysters shall not be harvested from any unmarked lease.

## RESTRICTIONS

---

- Culling oysters, which is the act of discarding undersized oysters and/or non-living reef material (e.g., dead shell, cultch material, etc.), 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.
- The taking of oysters one-half hour after sunset until one-half hour before sunrise is prohibited.
- Oysters taken from the reefs of this state either for sale or consumption shall be landed in Louisiana, except persons in possession of an out-of-state oyster landings permit may land oysters taken from private leases only in any state.
- Sacks or any other types of containers used to hold oysters harvested in Louisiana and placed in commerce must be tagged with a tag issued by LDWF. Tags may be obtained by calling LDWF Licensing at 225-765-2898.

## OYSTER HARVESTER LICENSE

---

- Commercial fishermen harvesting or possessing oysters in state waters must purchase an oyster harvester license, in addition to any and all licenses otherwise required.
- Commercial fisherman harvesting oysters from the public oyster seed grounds or reservations, except those grounds of Calcasieu and Sabine Lakes, are required to possess a valid Public Oyster Seed Ground Vessel Permit. Commercial fishermen harvesting oysters from Calcasieu Lake are required to possess a valid Calcasieu Lake Oyster Harvester Permit.

# REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

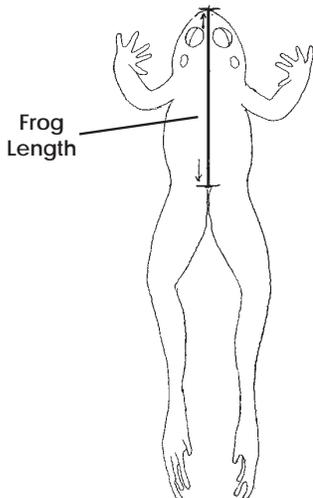
## GENERAL

- Reptile and amphibian regulations apply to lizards, snakes, turtles, frogs, salamanders and related species. **They do not include alligators.**
- Any person engaged in the sale, barter, or trade of native reptiles and amphibians collected in Louisiana must possess either:
  - Reptile and Amphibian Collector's License, or a
  - Reptile and Amphibian Wholesale/Retail Dealer's License.
- Any person engaged in acquiring or handling, by any means, native reptiles or amphibians for resale, or engaged in the shipping or transporting of such reptiles or amphibians into or out of Louisiana must possess a Reptile and Amphibian Wholesale/Retail Dealer's License. Act 376 of the 1997 Louisiana Legislature exempts wholesale/retail seafood dealers from this license.

## METHODS OF TAKING

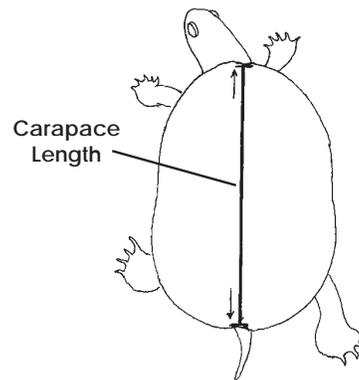
- Removal of nesting or nest tending animals is prohibited.
- Traps must be checked daily.
- Turtle traps must be placed in a manner that leaves enough area above the waterline to allow trapped turtles to breathe; must be marked as "turtle trap," and be constructed as a horizontal, single-throated device.
- A commercial gear license is required to operate a single-throated hoop net or turtle trap.
- Possession of finfish while turtle trapping is prohibited.
- Use of gasoline to flush animals from hiding places is prohibited.
- Natural cover such as stumps and logs may not be destroyed while searching for animals.
- Frogs may be taken using any visible light and mechanical devices known as frog catchers or with devices that puncture the skin such as gigs and spears.

## SIZE/POSSESSION LIMITS



### BULLFROGS (*Rana catesbeiana*) and PIG FROGS (*Rana grylio*)

- May be taken year round except during the months of April and May where the season is closed throughout the state.
- No person shall take or possess bullfrogs that are less than 5 inches in length, nor take or possess pig frogs or grunners that are less than 3 inches in length. Length is measured from the tip of the muzzle to the posterior end of the body between the hind legs.
- **Exception:** Frogs under the legal length may be taken from privately owned ponds or waters by the owner thereof or his authorized representative and may be sold for the purpose of stocking ponds or waters.



### ALLIGATOR SNAPPING TURTLES

(*Macrolemys temminckii*)

- **Commercial Take:** May not be sold nor caught for purposes of commerce.
- **Recreational Take:** Limit of one per day per boat or vehicle.

### DIAMONDBACK TERRAPINS (*Malaclemys terrapin*)

May not be taken by trap of any kind and may not be taken between April 15 - June 15. All terrapins taken must measure at least 6 inches in length on the plastron (bottom shell plate).

### BOX TURTLES (genus *Terrapene*)

May not be sold commercially; recreational take and possession shall not exceed four.

### GREEN ANOLES (*Anolis carolinensis*)

May not be sold or purchased if less than 1 and 3/4 inches snout-vent length or less than 5 inches overall length.

### TURTLE EGGS

May not be taken except for those of the red-eared slider (*Trachemys scripta*), wherever found.

## REPTILE & AMPHIBIAN COLLECTOR'S LICENSE

---

- Anyone gathering reptiles and amphibians for sale must possess a Commercial Reptile and Amphibian Collector's License.
- Alligators are excluded from this provision.
- All non-protected native reptile and amphibian species (frogs, turtles, lizards, salamanders, snakes, etc.), except alligators, can be legally taken by residents possessing a valid recreational fishing license. For more information see "Reptiles and Amphibians" section. Non-residents may purchase a "Three-day Reptile and Amphibian Wholesale/Retail Dealer's License" that is valid for three consecutive days.

## REPTILE & AMPHIBIAN WHOLESALE/RETAIL DEALER'S LICENSE

---

- Commercial dealers engaged in the buying, selling, acquiring or handling by any means any species of native reptile or amphibian in Louisiana for resale, or shipping or transporting any native reptile or amphibian into or out of Louisiana must possess a Reptile and Amphibian Wholesale/Retail Dealer's License, Reptile and Amphibian Transport License or Seafood Wholesale/Retail Dealer's License and Seafood Transport Wholesale/Retail Dealer's License if applicable.
- Wholesale/retail seafood dealers are exempt from this license.

## PROHIBITED REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

---

The following species may not be taken or collected from the wild in Louisiana:

- Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*)
- Southern Red Backed Salamander (*Plethodon serratus*)
- Webster's Salamander (*Plethodon websteri*)
- Mud Salamander (*Pseudotriton montanus*)
- Red Salamander (*Pseudotriton ruber*)
- Green Sea Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)
- Hawksbill Sea Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)
- Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*)
- Leatherback Sea Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*)
- Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*)
- Gopher Tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*)
- Ringed Sawback Turtle (*Graptemys oculifera*)
- Dusky Gopher Frog (*Rana sevosa*)

# WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS & REFUGES

## COMMERCIAL REGULATIONS FOR WMAs & REFUGES

### COMMERCIAL FISHING

- Permits are required of all commercial fishermen using Grassy Lake, Pomme de Terre and Spring Bayou WMAs. Drag seines (except minnow and bait seines) are prohibited EXCEPT experimental bait seines allowed on Dewey Wills WMA north of LA 28 in diversion canal. Commercial fishing is prohibited during regular waterfowl seasons on Grand Bay, Silver Lake and Lower Sunk Lake on Richard K. Yancey WMA.
- Commercial fishing is prohibited on Salvador/Timken, Ouachita and Pointe-aux-Chenes WMAs EXCEPT commercial fishing on Pointe-aux-Chenes is allowed in Cutoff Canal and Wonder Lake.
- No commercial fishing activity shall impede navigation and no unattended vessels or barges will be allowed. Non-compliance with permit regulations will result in revocation of commercial fishing privileges for the period the license is issued and one year thereafter.
- Commercial fishing is allowed on Pass-a-Loutre and Atchafalaya Delta WMAs. *\*See Pass-a-Loutre heading for additional commercial fishing regulations regarding mullet.*
- Commercial fishing is prohibited in the Limited Access Areas on Pass-a-Loutre and Atchafalaya Delta WMAs from September to January each year.

### COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

- Except for licensed activities otherwise allowed by law, commercial activities are prohibited without a permit issued by the Secretary of LDWF.
- Mudboats or air-cooled propulsion vessels powered by more than 36 total horsepower are prohibited on Atchafalaya Delta, Biloxi and Pass-a-Loutre WMAs.
- **Camping and houseboat mooring allowed only in designated areas.**

### ELMER'S ISLAND WILDLIFE REFUGE

- Commercial fishing, including guide service, is CLOSED.
- Access and use of Elmer's Island is only permitted 30 minutes before official sunrise to 30 minutes after official sunset seven days a week. However, the Secretary of LDWF may restrict any portion of Elmer's Island whenever circumstances exist such that restrictions are necessary to protect the Refuge or to protect the public from harm.
- Camping or overnight activities are not permitted.
- No glass containers are permitted on Elmer's Island Wildlife Refuge.
- The discharge or fire of any firearms, including muzzleloaders, bows and arrows or crossbows are not permitted.
- Maximum speed limit on the Island is 5 MPH.

### FORT POLK

Special regulations pertaining to fishing are posted at specific lakes.

### GRASSY LAKE

Commercial fishing permitted EXCEPT on Smith Bay, Red River Bay and Grassy Lake proper on Saturday and Sunday and during waterfowl season. Permits are available from the area supervisor of Spring Bayou Headquarters or Opelousas Field Office at 337-948-0255.

### ISLE DERNIERES BARRIER ISLAND REFUGE

- Isle Dernieres Barrier Islands Refuge (Wine, East, Trinity, Whiskey and Raccoon islands) is restricted to all public access except for a 3,000-linear feet by 500-linear feet recreational public use area on Trinity Island (borders western end of California Canal).
- **Only recreational fishing is permitted in the public use area.**
- Fishing from boats or wade fishing in the surf areas of the islands is allowed adjacent to restricted islands.

## OUACHITA

---

Commercial fishing CLOSED.

## PASS-A-LOUTRE

---

Commercial fishing same as outside. Commercial mullet fishing open only in:

- South Pass
- Pass-a-Loutre
- North Pass
- Southeast Pass
- Northeast Pass
- Dennis Pass
- Johnson Pass
- Loomis Pass
- Cadro Pass
- Wright Pass
- Viveats Pass
- Cognevich Pass
- Blind Bay
- Redfish Bay
- Garden Island Bay
- Northshore Bay
- East Bay (west of barrier islands) and oil and gas canals as described on LDWF Pass-a-Loutre WMA Map

## POINTE-AUX-CHENES

---

- Nighttime activities are prohibited.
- Commercial fishing is allowed in the Cut Off Canal and Wonder Lake.

## POMME DE TERRE

---

- Commercial fishing permitted Monday through Friday EXCEPT closed during duck season.
- Commercial Fishing Permits available from area supervisor, Opelousas Field Office or Spring Bayou Headquarters.

## ROCKEFELLER REFUGE, STATE WILDLIFE REFUGE & MARSH ISLAND REFUGE

---

- All commercial fishing and use of any commercial fishing gear on the refuge is prohibited.
- Commercial fishing gear or trawls shall not be permitted in possession while participating in sport fishing on the refuge.
- Commercial fishing gear may be in possession for non-stop access directly across the refuge or safe harbor only. Nighttime activities are prohibited.

## SALVADOR

---

Commercial fishing and nighttime activities are prohibited.

## SPRING BAYOU

---

- Commercial fishing permitted Monday through Friday EXCEPT slat traps and hoop nets permitted any day, and EXCEPT gill or trammel nets or the take or possession of grass carp prohibited.
- Permits available from area supervisor or Opelousas Field Office at 337-948-0255.
- Commercial fishing CLOSED until after 2 p.m. during waterfowl season.

## U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS - INDIAN BAYOU AREA

---

Commercial or recreational crawfishing is permitted from Feb. 1 - Aug. 31 with an additional permit required. The permit is available Jan. 1. Call USACE Port Barre Office for more details (337) 585-0853.

# BOATING INFORMATION

## VOLUNTARY GULF OF MEXICO MARINE COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL

The voluntary Gulf of Mexico (GOM) communications protocol is an agreed communications format that identifies methods of notification, recommended frequencies, and generally accepted two-way marine VHF radio protocols. It is for use in GOM Outer Continental Shelf areas and State Territorial Waters adjacent to Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.

The objective is to provide a common voluntary marine communications protocol for GOM resource users to use in alerting parties that will be interacting in the same general area. This protocol will provide a common communication format for notification and feedback between offshore platform and rig operators and others in responding to the safety needs of all GOM resource users.

Any vessel operator (commercial, for hire (charter/headboat), recreational fishermen, sport divers, and oil and gas contractors and operators) proposing to approach either fixed or floating drilling, production and support facilities or oil and gas transportation infrastructure should utilize the GOM communications protocol.

### PROTOCOL

Any vessel approaching either a fixed or floating offshore facility with the intent of tying to or remaining around (within 1,500 feet of) that facility for any purpose, should contact as far in advance as practical that specific facility using a marine VHF radio on Channel No. 16. All offshore facilities are identified by signage that identifies the area, block, platform and operator.

This protocol helps GOM offshore facility operators identify vessels approaching or mooring and gives shared resource users a common communication tool. If vessels fail to establish communications, a facility operator is faced with the task of evaluating the vessel's intent. Communications will help operators make a judgment on the activity and help assess if the vessel poses a threat to the people or facility.

### POTENTIAL HAZARDS TO FISHERMEN WHEN FISHING AROUND OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS PRODUCTION PLATFORMS

Most offshore fishermen target oil and gas production platforms as their fishing location of choice. Petroleum platforms, commonly referred to as "rigs," provide recreation for fishermen and scuba divers because they act as artificial reefs, attracting and establishing aquatic communities, including highly sought food and sport fishes. Also, offshore facilities serve as navigation points for small marine craft. Manned facilities can also provide a haven for small craft operators forced to abandon their vessels during storms or following accidents.

Generally this interaction between fishermen and offshore platform personnel takes place without incident. However, periodically, a fisherman or scuba diver may be asked by platform personnel to move to another location. This request is generally made when certain potentially dangerous activities are taking place onboard the platform and is made for the safety of both platform personnel and the fisherman.

Some of these potential hazards to fishermen occur when construction or maintenance activities are underway. These activities frequently require use of marine support vessels that

limit access to the facility and require frequent movement and the possibility for entanglement in anchor lines or mooring hardware exists. Platform cranes making lifts can expose vessels and personnel to dropped objects, and overhead work, such as blasting, welding and burning or painting, can also potentially expose people and equipment to falling debris and equipment. These activity types are easy to see and the request to move is easily understood.

Some activities taking place on offshore platforms that may also be dangerous are not as easily seen, and therefore, a request to move may be misunderstood. Activities such as well perforating, poisonous gas releases (red flashing light) or emergency shut downs that may require significant venting or flaring may not be visible from the sea surface. Perforating activities require elimination of radio transmissions to help prevent an inadvertent triggering of the explosive charges. Gas releases, some of which may be poisonous (red flashing light), have the potential to drift to the water surface and envelop a vessel, where an open flame or spark could set off the gas.

Therefore, if asked by platform personnel to move to another structure, please understand the request is made for your safety, the safety of the personnel on board the platform, and the safety of the facilities. Please observe common courtesy and move to another location.

### EXAMPLE

**Contact Request:** "Eugene Island 313 "A" Platform, this is M/V Duck, M/V Duck, on Channel 16"

**Response:** "Eugene Island 313 "A" back to M/V Duck. Switch to Channel No. \_\_\_\_\_."

**Follow Up on New Channel:** "M/V Duck back; we are 5 miles out and in route to your location for \_\_\_\_\_ (offloading, fishing, diving, bird watching, etc.) and request assistance in determining your current facility status."

**Recognition:** "Eugene Island 313 "A" back; we have no current marine traffic or hazardous operations but expect a supply boat later today." If the facility was planning operations that might preclude safe positioning of marine craft or if potentially hazardous lifting or well work is scheduled, the operator would so inform the vessel.

**Notification:** "M/V Duck back; we are a 25-foot sport fisherman out of Cocodrie with a total of five people on board and will approach your location at 0900 hours and estimate our stay at three hours."

The approaching vessel has established contact, identified its intent to approach or moor, its purpose, and estimated its time of arrival and time at location. The operator is now alerted to the fact that the vessel is approaching with the intent of being in the area and can validate actual activities by visually observing the vessel and its crew.



The Louisiana Wild Seafood Certification Program (LWSCP) was established by various state agencies to help consumers identify seafood that was caught by Louisiana licensed fishermen, landed, processed, and packaged in Louisiana. Seafood branded with the program logo helps eliminate consumer confusion and promote the heritage and culture of the Louisiana seafood industry by allowing purchasers to be confident that they are purchasing genuine, authentic, wild caught Louisiana seafood.

The primary mission with this origin based certification program is to build a unified brand that will attract not only consumers but also food service and seafood distribution retailers who want to be sure they are sourcing the best tasting seafood in the world – Louisiana seafood.

More information on training along with application forms may be found at [www.louisianacertifiedseafood.com](http://www.louisianacertifiedseafood.com).

### Certified Authentic Louisiana Wild Seafood Product Eligibility Requirements:

1. All seafood must be landed in Louisiana to be eligible for the certification label. Product must be available upon request for inspection and sampling to ensure certification standards are being followed.
2. Seafood must be harvested from wild stock from the Gulf of Mexico or Louisiana waters and cannot be comingled with seafood that was not harvested from wild stock from the Gulf of Mexico or other Gulf State waters.
3. Licensed commercial fishermen must harvest the seafood.
4. Seafood must be landed in Louisiana and either transferred to a Wholesale/ Retail Seafood Dealer, Louisiana licensed facility or retained by the commercial fishermen for sale as a Louisiana licensed Fresh Product licensee.
5. Seafood must be processed and packaged in Louisiana by a Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer licensed Louisiana packer/processor.
6. All products packaged for retail sale must be properly registered.

### Certified Authentic Louisiana Wild Seafood Participant Eligibility Requirements for Fishermen:

1. Must have a current Louisiana Commercial fishing license.
2. Must adhere to all current state and federal commercial regulations.

### Certified Authentic Louisiana Wild Seafood Participant Eligibility Requirements for Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealers:

1. Must apply for and receive authorization to participate in the Louisiana Wild Certification program and use the associated label.
2. Must be licensed as a Louisiana Resident Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer and have a facility in Louisiana.
3. Must comply with state and federal reporting requirements and be up to date on trip ticket reporting.
4. Must not use the Certified Authentic Louisiana Wild Seafood Certification label on seafood purchased from other states or countries.
5. Must comply with state and federal regulations
  - a. Must have the legally required permits and licenses
6. Must be trained in program rules, regulations and quality control techniques (certification course completion required; 45-60 minute video).
  - a. Program rules and guidelines
  - b. Best handling practices
  - c. Best business practices
  - d. State and federal regulations





# LOUISIANA FISHING REGULATIONS

2015



# Help Manage YOUR Fisheries

Update your contact information with LDWF



**FISHERIES**  
**LA CREEL TEAM**

[wlf.la.gov/lacreel](http://wlf.la.gov/lacreel)



LA Creel is an angler survey tailored to fit Louisiana's unique recreational fisheries. Through LA Creel we will not only improve the precision of recreational landings data statewide, but will also be able to obtain critical, basin-level information to customize management of the species that are abundant in the unique habitats of our state's basins. You can help us by updating your contact information and participating in our brief surveys.

[wlf.la.gov/lacreel](http://wlf.la.gov/lacreel) 

**INVEST IN THE FUTURE... GEUX FISH LOUISIANA!**



**LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE & FISHERIES**

2000 Quail Drive  
Mailing:  
P.O. Box 98000  
Baton Rouge, LA 70898  
225-765-2800

**Bobby Jindal, Governor**

**Robert J. Barham, Secretary**

Bryan McClinton, *Undersecretary*

Jimmy Anthony, *Assistant Secretary*

Randy Pausina, *Assistant Secretary*

Mark Schexnayder, *Deputy Assistant Secretary*

**DIVISION ADMINISTRATORS**

Kenneth Ribbeck, *Wildlife*

Robert Love, *Coastal & Nongame Resources*

Col. Joey Broussard, *Enforcement*

Scott Longman, *Fisheries*

**WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES**

**COMMISSION**

Billy Broussard, *chairman*

Pat Manuel, *vice-chairman*

Ann L. Taylor

Dan Davis

Ronald Graham

Edward W. Swindell

Bart Yakupzack

**For updated information and the latest regulations visit us online at [www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov).**

**INFORMATION HOTLINE**

1-800-256-2749

**4 Licenses**

**9 Definitions**

**12 General Fishing Information**

General Regulations.....12  
How to Measure a Fish.....14  
Saltwater/Freshwater Line.....16

**17 Freshwater Fishing**

General Information.....17  
Freshwater State Creel & Size Limits.....22

**25 Saltwater Fishing**

General Information.....25  
Saltwater State Creel & Size Limits.....30

**37 Other Recreational Activities**

Recreational Shrimping.....37  
Recreational Oystering.....40  
Recreational Crabbing.....41  
Recreational Crawfishing.....43  
Reptiles & Amphibians.....44

**46 WMA & Refuge Regulations**

**53 Fish Consumption Advisories**

**54 Boating Safety**

**LDWF MISSION STATEMENT**

To manage, conserve, and promote wise utilization of Louisiana’s renewable fish and wildlife resources and their supporting habitats through replenishment, protection, enhancement, research, development, and education for the social and economic benefit of current and future generations; to provide opportunities for knowledge of and use and enjoyment of these resources; and to promote a safe and healthy environment for the users of the resources

**HELP STOP POACHING**

**REPORT FISHING VIOLATIONS**

**Operation Game Thief**

**1-800-442-2511**

**24 hours a day - 7 days a week**

***New regulations appear in red text throughout the pamphlet.***

## **MAJOR CHANGES FOR 2015**

1. The saltwater license fee has increased from \$5.50 to \$13 effective Aug. 1, 2014 (*see page 4*).
2. The Louisiana residency requirement has changed from one year to six months (*see pages 5 and 9*).
3. The way recreational licenses are issued when purchased via mobile device has changed (*see page 6*).

### **FRESHWATER FINFISH**

1. Changes in black bass size and creel limit on Black Bayou Reservoir (Bossier Parish), Chicot Lake, Cross Lake, Lake Rodemacher, Vernon Lake and Spanish Lake: statewide regulations now apply.
2. Change in possession limit up to three times the daily take for black bass (*Micropterus spp.*) below (south) U.S. Highway 90.
3. Regulations for in Louisiana-Texas border waters (Toledo Bend Reservoir, Caddo Lake, and the Sabine River) are now limited to five channel catfish and blue catfish per day over 30, rather than 20 inches.

### **MARINE FINFISH**

***Please refer to these LDWF websites for current information:  
[www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/recreational/saltwater/seasons](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/recreational/saltwater/seasons) and  
[www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/recreational/saltwater/regulations](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/recreational/saltwater/regulations)***

1. The closed season for gag grouper is Jan. 1 - June 30 of each year (*see page 36*).
2. The closed season for the harvest of black grouper, red grouper, yellowfin grouper, yellowmouth grouper, and scamp is Feb. 1 - March 31 of each year seaward of the 20 fathom (120 feet) curve (*see page 36*).
3. The closed season for the harvest of gray triggerfish is from June 1 - June 30 (*see page 36*).
4. The vermilion snapper recreational bag limit is not more than 10 fish per person within the current 20 fish aggregate (*see page 32*).
5. The gray triggerfish recreational limit is not more than 2 per person within the current 20 fish aggregate (*see page 32*).
6. The recreational bag and size limit of tripletail is 5 fish per person per day at 18 inches minimum total length (*see page 33*).
7. Gray snapper, dolphinfish, wahoo and cobia have been added to the list of species requiring a Recreational Offshore Landing Permit. Permit must be obtained at [www.wlf.la.gov/rolp](http://www.wlf.la.gov/rolp) (*see pages 6 and 25*).
8. The requirement for anglers on a for hire trip to have the Recreational Offshore Landing Permit has been removed, instead only requiring the charter captain to have the permit in possession (*see page 6*).
9. The requirement for the possession of and the use of a venting tool when fishing for reef fish has been removed (*see page 29*).
10. **The size, bag and season limits for rock hind, red hind, misty grouper, black sea bass, dog snapper, mahogany snapper, schoolmaster, blackline tilefish and anchor tilefish have been removed.**
11. Crab Traps (These regulations shall become effective Nov. 15, 2017, and shall be applicable to license year 2017 and thereafter.)
  - A minimum of 3 escape rings shall be placed on the vertical outside walls flush with the trap floor or baffle, with at least 2 rings located in the upper chamber of the trap
  - Minimum ring size shall be 2 and 3/8 inches in inside diameter, not including the ring material
  - Traps placed in Lake Pontchartrain would no longer be exempt from escape ring requirements

## LDWF FISHERIES CONTACT INFORMATION

### FRESHWATER OFFICES

Minden	318.371.3050
Monroe	318.343.4044
Alexandria	318.487.5885
Lake Charles	337.491.2577
Opelousas	337.948.0255
Baton Rouge	225.765.2336
Lacombe	985.882.5228
New Iberia	337.373.0032
Many	337.286.5940

### SALTWATER OFFICES

Lacombe	985.882.0027
Grand Isle	504.284.2030
	985.787.2163
New Orleans	504.284.2030
Bourg	985.594.4139
New Iberia	337.373.0032
Lake Charles	337.491.2579

### LDWF ENFORCEMENT OFFICES

*Have a specific question that you don't see answered here?*

*Call an Enforcement Office to speak with someone directly.*

Alexandria	318-487-5634	New Iberia	337-373-0032
Baton Rouge	225-765-2999	New Orleans	504-284-2023
Lake Charles	337-491-2580	Opelousas	337-948-0257
Minden	318-371-3049	Thibodaux	985-447-0821
Monroe	318-343-2417		

#### **DISCLAIMER**

**This publication is not an official copy of the laws in effect and should not be utilized or relied upon as such.** It does represent an attempt by the publisher to present, as a public service, a partial summary of some of the laws in effect at the time of the printing of this publication. Substantive changes to the law may very well occur following the printing of this publication. For these reasons, the accuracy of the information contained within this publication cannot be guaranteed and the reader is cautioned that it is his responsibility to apprise himself of the laws in effect at any given time. These laws include those contained within the Louisiana Revised Statutes, particularly Title 56, the official regulations of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, federal laws, and any local or parish ordinances. State laws can be viewed on the legislative website: [www.legis.state.la.us/](http://www.legis.state.la.us/).

**Fishing regulations on state Wildlife Management Areas and Refuges may differ from those contained in this pamphlet. Consult the Wildlife Management Area and Refuge Regulations portion of this pamphlet or contact the nearest LDWF office for WMA & refuge regulations.**

*Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Department of Commerce strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental federally assisted programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or handicap. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of federal assistance should write to: Director, Office for Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington D.C. 20240.*

This public document was published at a total cost of \$8500.00. 250,000 copies of this public document were published in the first printing at a cost of \$8500.00. This document was published by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA to inform Louisiana residents and non-residents as to the rules and regulations governing the fishing resources of the State of Louisiana. This material was printed in accordance with the standards for printing by state agencies established pursuant to R.S. 43:31. Printing of this material was purchased in accordance with the provisions of Title 43 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes.

## LICENSING

RECREATIONAL FISHING FEES		
	Resident	Non-Resident
Basic Fishing Season	\$9.50	\$60.00
Saltwater License ( <i>Basic Fishing required</i> )	<b>\$13.00</b>	\$30.00
Basic Fish Trip - 1 day		\$5.00
Saltwater Trip - 1 day		\$17.50
Hook and Line ( <i>cane pole</i> )	\$2.50	
Charter Passenger License ( <i>3-day</i> ) <sup>1</sup>	\$10.00	\$10.00
Charter Skiff ( <i>3-day</i> ) <sup>2</sup>		\$30.00
LA Sportsman's Paradise License <sup>3</sup>	\$100.00	
Senior Fish/Hunt <sup>4</sup>	\$5.00	
Non-Resident Student Basic Fishing <sup>5</sup>		\$9.50
NR Student Saltwater Fishing ( <i>Basic Fishing required</i> ) <sup>5</sup>		\$5.50
Resident Disabled Basic Fishing <sup>6</sup>	\$2.50	
Resident Disabled Saltwater <sup>6</sup>	\$2.50	
Offshore Landing Permit <sup>7</sup>	Free	Free
MILITARY		
Active Military Basic Fishing	\$9.50	\$9.50
Active Military Saltwater	\$5.50	\$5.50
Resident LA National Guard Fish/Hunt	\$50.00	
<b>Resident/Native Retired Military Hunt/Fish</b>	<b>\$5.00</b>	
<b>Resident Surviving Spouse Killed in Action Fish</b>	<b>\$2.50</b>	
FISHING GEAR		
Crab Traps (limit 10)	\$15.00	\$60.00
Slat Traps (limit 5)	\$20.00	\$80.00
Trawls - up to 16 feet	\$25.00	\$100.00
Trawls - 16 feet to 25 feet	\$80.00	\$320.00
Oyster Tong (per tong)	\$5.00	\$20.00
Crawfish Traps (limit 35)	\$15.00	\$60.00
Pipes/Drums (limit 5)	\$10.00	\$40.00
Cans/Buckets (limit 5)	\$10.00	\$40.00
Wire Nets (limit 5) <sup>8</sup>	\$20.00	\$80.00
Hoop Nets (limit 5) <sup>8</sup>	\$20.00	\$80.00

4 ■ 2015 Louisiana Fishing Regulations

- <sup>1</sup> Valid to fish from a charter vessel in saltwater areas of the state, with a licensed guide on board at all times.
- <sup>2</sup> Valid to fish under the direction of a charter operation in a licensed charter skiff in saltwater areas of the state.
- <sup>3</sup> **Sportsman's Paradise License:** Includes Basic and Saltwater Fishing, Basic and Big Game Hunting, Bow, Primitive Firearms, Turkey, LA Duck and WMA Hunting Permit, and all recreational gear licenses (EXCEPT recreational trawls greater than 16 feet in length).
- <sup>4</sup> **Senior Fish/Hunt License:** Any resident who reached age 60 on June 1, 2000 or later must obtain a Senior Hunt/Fish License to hunt or fish. This license is in lieu of basic and saltwater fishing, basic hunting, big game, bow, primitive firearms, LA duck license, turkey stamp and WMA hunting permit. It does not include special gear such as trawls, crab traps, crawfish traps, hoop nets, etc.
- <sup>5</sup> **NR Student:** Applies to a nonresident who is enrolled as a full-time student at an accredited college, university or high school that has a physical campus in Louisiana. Verification of full-time status on the Department form available at <http://wlf.la.gov/licenses>. Any person fishing under a "student license" must carry valid student I.D. card indicating current full time status while hunting or fishing.
- <sup>6</sup> **LA Disabled Fishing and Saltwater:** See page 8.
- <sup>7</sup> **Offshore Landing Permit:** See page 6.
- <sup>8</sup> Recreational wire and hoop nets shall be used only in the geographical areas of the state designated as freshwater (see page 16).

## LIFETIME LICENSES

LIFETIME LICENSE FEES	
Lifetime Fishing (5-13 years old)	\$200
Lifetime Fishing (14 years and older)	\$300
Lifetime Hunt/Fish (0-4 years old)	\$200
Lifetime Hunt/Fish (5-13 years old)	\$300
Lifetime Hunt/Fish (14 years and older)	\$500
NR Lifetime Hunt/Fish	\$3,000
Lifetime Resident Senior Hunt/Fish (60 or older)	\$50
Lifetime Fishing Gear	10 times annual fee per gear type

Lifetime fishing licenses include both freshwater and saltwater fishing.

**Lifetime licenses are available from Baton Rouge office only.** Allow three weeks processing time. Applicants are required to have lived in Louisiana for the immediate **6 months** prior to making application to qualify for resident rates. Mandatory documents required with application are a valid LA driver's license issued a minimum of **6 months** and one of the following:

1. Louisiana voter's registration card
2. Louisiana vehicle registration or
3. Two previous year's state tax filing, stamped by Department of Revenue and Taxation.

(Applications available at [www.wlf.louisiana.gov/licenses/lifetime/](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/licenses/lifetime/) or by calling 225-765-2887)

## LICENSING

***Recreational fishing and hunting licenses may be purchased by phone toll-free at 1-888-765-2602 or online at [www.la.wildlifelicense.com](http://www.la.wildlifelicense.com). Methods of payment are Visa, MasterCard, Discover, American Express or E-check. An authorization number for immediate use will be provided. A handling fee is assessed.***

## RECREATIONAL LICENSES

### ABOUT THE LICENSE

- Recreational licenses are valid from the date of purchase, are available for purchase each June 1, and expire June 30 of the following year.
- To obtain licenses at resident rates, proof of residency is required. Valid forms of I.D. include:
  - Louisiana driver's license
  - Louisiana ID card (issued by the Department of Public Safety)
- Recreational Licenses that are purchased via mobile device (smart phone, laptop, tablet, etc.) will not receive a license in the mail. You will receive a text with a temporary authorization number, and an e-mail with the temporary authorization number and a PDF of your licenses which can be saved and printed.

### WHO NEEDS A LICENSE

Anglers 16 years of age or older who take or possess fish in Louisiana waters must possess a fishing license.

### WHO DOES NOT NEED A LICENSE

- Children under the age of 16 do not need a fishing license (15 and under).
- Residents born before June 1, 1940 who have lived in Louisiana for one year prior to fishing are exempt from basic and saltwater licenses but MUST have appropriate gear licenses when using trawls, crab traps, slat traps, oyster tongs, crawfish traps, wire nets, hoop nets or any other legal fishing gear.

### FISHING IN SALTWATER

Title 56, Section 302.1.C.(1) requires that all recreational anglers fishing south of the "saltwater line" (see page 16) for saltwater species have in their possession a Louisiana saltwater angler's license IN ADDITION TO a basic Louisiana fishing license EXCEPT those persons otherwise exempted. All regulations apply regardless of where the fish is taken.

### OFFSHORE LANDING PERMIT

Both non-charter recreational anglers and charter captains are required to obtain this permit (free of charge) to possess tunas, billfish, swordfish, amberjacks, groupers, snappers, **dolphinfish, wahoo and cobia**. Anglers wishing to obtain a permit must register at [www.wlf.la.gov/rolp](http://www.wlf.la.gov/rolp). More details on this program are also available on this site. **The requirement for anglers on a for-hire trip to have the permit has been removed, instead only requiring the charter captain to have the permit in possession.**

### ACTIVITIES THAT REQUIRE A LICENSE

A valid Basic Fishing License is required to possess fish in Louisiana waters OR to use the following gears in pursuit of fish:

- Bow and arrow
- A barbed or barbless spear
- Frog gig/catcher
- Scuba gear
- Hook and Line
- Cast net with a radius not to exceed 8 feet, 6 inches
- Crabbing on a refuge or wildlife management area (WMA)

### MILITARY RECREATIONAL LICENSES

- Active-duty members of the United States armed forces, including National Guard, are eligible to purchase annual licenses for the same fee that Louisiana residents pay for annual licenses.
- An active-duty military member's spouse and/or any dependents may also obtain a fishing license at the Louisiana resident rate.
- In order to obtain Louisiana resident rate licenses the active-duty member of the military, spouse or dependents must present a valid active duty military ID card at the time of the license purchase.
- A Louisiana resident who is a member of the Louisiana National Guard or any reserve component of the United States armed forces may purchase a combination license to hunt and fish for \$50. Information and applications are available at <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/licenses> or by calling 225-765-2887.
- A Louisiana resident or native born Retired member of the United States armed forces, including Louisiana National Guard, is eligible to purchase a combination license to hunt and fish for \$5. (Application for this license can be mailed to the Baton Rouge office or presented to the Baton Rouge office in person).
- A Louisiana resident who is a surviving spouse of a member of the United States armed forces, including Louisiana National Guard, who was killed in action while in a combat zone, is eligible to purchase a recreational fishing license for \$2.50. (Application for this license can be mailed to the Baton Rouge office or presented to the Baton Rouge office in person).

### TEXAS/LOUISIANA RECIPROCAL

- Louisiana and Texas residents who hold resident licenses from their resident state or who are exempted from holding resident licenses in their state may fish the border waters between Texas and Louisiana without additional licenses. Boundary waters include:
  - Caddo Lake
  - Toledo Bend Reservoir
  - Sabine River
  - Sabine Lake
  - Sabine Pass
- Louisiana residents who are 65 years old or older may fish in Texas public waters (both freshwater and saltwater) as long as they possess valid Louisiana resident licenses and comply with Texas law.
- Louisiana residents born before June 1, 1940 are not required to have a license to fish border waters, only.
- Louisiana residents who are 17 to 64 years of age must purchase Texas non-resident fishing license(s) when fishing in Texas, except when fishing in border waters.
- Texas residents who are 65 years old or older may fish in Louisiana public

[www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov) | 7

## LICENSING

waters (both freshwater and saltwater) as long as they possess valid Texas resident license(s) and comply with Louisiana law.

- Texas residents born before Sept. 1, 1930 must possess Texas resident fishing license(s) when fishing in Louisiana, except in the border waters.

## DISABILITY LICENSES

- Resident veterans who have a permanent service-connected disability classification of 50 percent or more, and residents who are blind, paraplegic or multiple amputee can be issued recreational basic and saltwater fishing license(s) for free.
- Residents who are totally and permanently disabled and receiving federal social security disability benefits or disability retirement income from a retirement system whose members are exempt from social security pursuant to the Railroad Retirement Insurance Act or employees of the state or a political subdivision of the state that has not voluntarily agreed to participate in federal social security may qualify for reduced rate basic and saltwater fishing licenses. (This exemption does not apply to Supplemental Security Income benefits).
- Residents required to use one or more artificial limbs or permanent braces for mobility or a single amputee can be issued recreational basic and saltwater fishing licenses for free.
- As defined in R.S. 47:463.4(E), Mobility impaired persons that are bona fide residents of Louisiana, in possession of valid identification, and over 60 years of age may use one legal slat trap and/or one hoop net not greater than 18 feet by 8 feet, without a license in any waters of the state, only for the purpose of catching catfish and only for home consumption.
- Applications for these licenses can be mailed to the Baton Rouge office or presented to the Baton Rouge office in person.
- Application forms for the Resident Disabled Sportsman License or Resident Disabled with Social Security Benefit License are available at [www.wlf.louisiana.gov/licenses](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/licenses). For more information contact Sports License at 225-765-2887



*Free Fishing Weekend*  
June 6 - 7

Enjoy a weekend of fishing in Louisiana without having to purchase a license.  
See [www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov) for special events and more information

## DEFINITIONS

1. **Angling:** to fish with rod, fishing pole or hook and line, with or without a reel.
2. **Bag Limit/Creel Limit:** the maximum number of a species permitted to be taken by one person in any one day.
3. **Bait Seine:** a net measuring no more than 30 feet in length with a mesh size not exceeding 1/4-inch mesh bar, 1/2-inch mesh stretched, and operated solely on foot and solely by hand, without any mechanical device, pulley or mechanical assistance whatsoever.
4. **Bait Species:** all species of fish and other aquatic life utilized for bait.
5. **Bandit Gear:** vertical hook-and-line gear with rods attached to a vessel and with line retrieved with rods and with line retrieved by manual, electric or hydraulic reels. (Use prohibited in state waters)
6. **Bona Fide Resident:**
  - A. any person who has resided in this state continuously during the **six months** immediately prior to the date on which he applies for any license and who has manifested his intent to remain in this state by establishing Louisiana as his legal domicile, as demonstrated by compliance with all of the following, as applicable.
    - If registered to vote, he is registered to vote in Louisiana.
    - If licensed to drive a motor vehicle, he is in possession of a valid Louisiana driver's license.
    - If owning a motor vehicle located within Louisiana, he is in possession of a valid Louisiana registration for that vehicle.
    - If earning an income, he has filed a Louisiana state income tax return and has complied with state income tax laws and regulations.
  - B. any person who possesses a resident license from any other state shall not qualify for a resident license in Louisiana.
7. **Can:** a metal container of not more than 55-gallon capacity which is set for the purpose of taking fish.
8. **Cast Net:** a light circular net of vegetable or synthetic materials that is weighted around its perimeter and is thrown by hand over the water.
9. **Crab Dropnet:** any device constructed with vegetable, synthetic, or metal fibers and without flues or throat, attached to a wire frame that forms a net basket and is used for the purpose of taking crabs. This device shall be operated solely by hand and fished in a stationary, passive manner.
10. **Crab Trap:** a cube-shaped, device constructed of wire, no larger than 30 inches 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 inches 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 one and one-half times the vertical diameter of the opening.
11. **Crawfish Net:** any device constructed with vegetable or synthetic material without flues or throats attached to a wire frame that forms a net basket and is used for the purpose of taking crawfish.
12. **Crawfish Trap:** any device constructed of coated wire with the opening of the throats or flues not exceeding 2 inches and which is used for the express purpose of taking crawfish.
13. **Dip Net:** a net, usually a deep mesh bag of vegetable or synthetic materials, on a fixed frame not to exceed 3 feet in diameter attached to a handle that is held and worked solely by hand by no more than one individual, and without any mechanical assistance.
14. **Finfish:** (*noun*) any of numerous cold-blooded aquatic vertebrates that characteristically swim with fins, breathe with gills and are covered with skin or scales.

## DEFINITIONS

15. **Fish:** (*noun*) all finfish, shellfish and crustaceans and all other species of aquatic life.
16. **Fork Length:** distance from tip of snout to midline of caudal fin. Used to measure some fish with deeply forked tails, such as amberjack.
17. **Freshwater Game Fish:** see “Game Fish” definition.
18. **Freshwater Recreational Fish:** any species of freshwater fish taken for recreational purposes.
19. **Fyke Net:** any cone-shaped net of vegetable or synthetic fibers having throats or flues which are stretched over a series of rings or hoops to support the webbing, with vertical panels of net wings set obliquely on one or both sides of the mouth of the cone-shaped net.
20. **Game Fish:** all of the following species of freshwater and saltwater fish.
  - A. **Freshwater Game Fish:** largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*), spotted bass (*Micropterus punctulatus*), shadow bass (*Ambloplites ariommus*), black and white crappie (*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*, *P. annularis*), white bass (*Morone chrysops*), yellow bass (*Morone mississippiensis*), striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*), hybrid striped bass (*striped bass-white bass cross* or *striped bass-yellow bass cross*), and any species of bream (*Lepomis sp.*).
  - B. **Saltwater Game Fish:** any sailfish (*Istiophorus platypterus*), blue marlin (*Makaira indica*), black marlin (*Makaira nigricans*), striped marlin (*Tetrapturus audax*), hatchet marlin (*Tetrapturus spp.*), white marlin (*Tetrapturus albidus*), and red drum (*Sciaenops ocellatus*).
21. **Hook:** any curved or bent device attached to a line for the purpose of taking fish or alligator and consisting of not more than one eye and one shank with no more than three barbs.
22. **Hoop Net:** a cone-shaped net of vegetable or synthetic materials having throats or flues and which are stretched over a series of rings or hoops to support the webbing.
23. **Landing Net:** means a net, usually a mesh bag of vegetable or synthetic material on a fixed frame attached to a handle held and operated by hand for the sole purpose of assisting in the landing of fish legally caught by other legal gear.
24. **Lead or Wing Net:** a panel of netting of any mesh size or length, with or without weights and floats, attached to one or both sides of the mouth of a cone-shaped net having flues or throats, and set so as to deflect or guide fish toward the mouth of the net.
25. **Licensee:** any resident or nonresident lawful holder of an effective license duly issued under the authority of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF).
26. **Lower Jaw Fork Length (LJFL):** longest distance from tip of lower jaw to midline of caudal fin. Used to measure billfish such as marlin, swordfish and paddlefish.
27. **Mesh Size:** the full measure of the mesh as found in use when measured as follows:
  - A. **Bar measure** is the length of the full bar stretched from the near side of one knot to the far side of the other after being tarred, treated or otherwise processed.
  - B. **Stretched measure** is the full stretched distance from the near side of one knot to the far side of the opposite knot diagonally across the mesh. This measurement shall not be applicable to weaved or woven nets commonly used for menhaden fishing. In woven nets, stretched measure is the full stretched distance of the opening of the mesh; bar measure is one-half of stretched measure.
28. **Monofilament:** a single untwisted synthetic filament.
29. **Nonresident:** any person who is not a bona fide resident as that term is defined by R.S. 56:8(69) (*See Bona Fide Resident on page 9*).
30. **Possess:** in its different tenses, the act of having in possession or control, keeping, detaining, restraining or holding as owner, or as agent, bailee or custodian for another. When possession of fish or other wildlife is prohibited, reference is made equally to such fish or other wildlife coming from without the state as to those taken within the state.

## DEFINITIONS

31. **Recreational Purposes:** a purpose other than deriving or attempting to derive an income of any kind from the harvest of fish. "Income" as used herein shall not include a prize or award offered as a prize in a fishing tournament.
32. **Reptiles and Amphibians:** native frogs, toads, turtles, snakes, lizards and salamanders.
33. **Saltwater Fish:** all species of finfish which normally inhabit the saline waters of the marine and estuarine environment for most of their life cycle.
34. **Saltwater Game Fish:** see "Game Fish" definition.
35. **Saltwater Recreational Fish:** any species of saltwater fish taken for recreational purposes.
36. **Shellfish:** an aquatic invertebrate species having a shell. These species include, but are not limited to oysters, clams, crawfish, shrimp, crabs and other mollusks and crustaceans.
37. **Slat Trap:** any device, used solely for the capture of catfish, which is cylindrical, rectangular, or square in cross section configuration, constructed of slats forming the length of the trap, with at least one pair of slats spaced at least 1 inch apart from each other on at least three sides of the trap and which is no more than 6 feet in length, 2 feet in diameter or width and which has one or more cone-shaped throats, flues or entrances.
38. **Slot Limit:** protective size limits denoting that fish within the range, inclusive of stated measurements, must be returned to the water immediately.
39. **Snagging:** a method of hooking fish without the fish taking the bait with their mouth. The angler jerks the fishing line out of the water as soon as any movement is felt on the line.
40. **Stupefying Substances or Devices:** explosives or chemicals or comparable destructive fishing practices as a capture technique.
41. **Take:** in its different tenses, the attempt or act of hooking, pursuing, netting, capturing, snaring, trapping, shooting, hunting, wounding or killing by any means or device.
42. **Test Trawl:** a trawl which is not more than 16 feet along the corkline or 20 feet along the headline or headrope.
43. **Total Length:** the longest measurable distance from the outermost portion of the snout lengthwise to the outermost portion of the caudal fin.
44. **Transport:** in its different tenses, the act of shipping, attempting to ship, receiving or delivering for shipment, transporting, conveying, carrying or exporting by air, land or water, or by any means whatsoever.
45. **Trawl:** 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 feet, and 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 under way. Trawls are only allowed to be used in state waters when and where the shrimp season is open.
46. **Trigger:** any tension-loaded device that contains several feet of line and a hook or hooks, which is baited and set, and which automatically hooks and plays a fish.
47. **Turtle Trap:** any device designed to attract and/or capture turtles in aquatic habitats. It must be open above water to allow respiration of air-breathing animals and clearly marked "turtle trap."
48. **Venting Tool:** a device intended to deflate the abdominal cavity of a fish to release the gases so the fish may be released with minimum damage.
49. **Wing Net:** see Lead Net on page 10.
50. **Wire Net:** a cone-shaped net of vegetable (cotton, flax, burlap) or synthetic materials (nylon, polypropylene, plastic), with a mesh no less than 1-inch square or 2 inches stretched, having throats or flues and which is stretched over wire of 5-inch mesh or greater to support the webbing.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### ***SALE OF RECREATIONAL FISH PROHIBITED***

***All aquatic species caught must be for personal use only and are not to be sold or used for commercial purposes. It is illegal to buy, sell or trade any game fish.***

## GENERAL INFORMATION FOR FRESHWATER & SALTWATER ANGLERS

Louisiana is known around the world as a premier sport fishing destination. The Office of Fisheries uses scientific management methods to protect and enhance fish environments, habitats and other populations of aquatic species. As an angler, the decisions you make and your catch help us sustain the fisheries for present and future generations.

### **KNOW BEFORE YOU GO!**

Want to check the weather and river stages before you leave on your next fishing trip? Call the National Weather Service's Dial A Forecast for regularly updated marine forecasts.

- Shreveport 318-635-7575
- Lake Charles 337-439-0000
- New Orleans 504-522-7330

Also stay tuned to the NOAA Weather Radio (NWR) for up to the minute broadcasts.

### **BEST PRACTICES FOR CATCH AND RELEASE FISHING**

Proper fish handling techniques are critical for the survival of your catch.

- Never play the fish to complete exhaustion.
- Handle the fish as little as possible and use wet hands, wet towel or wet glove.
- Avoid any contact with the gills.
- Keep the fish in the water as much as possible. Do not let the fish flop on a deck or beach.
- If you must remove the fish from the water, keep air exposure to a minimum.
- Use a landing net only when necessary. A soft knotless mesh or rubber net is less damaging to the fish's eyes, fins and mucus coating (slime).
- Circle hooks, barbless hooks or hooks with crimped barb make removal easier.
- If the hook is deeply buried, cut the line as close to the hook as possible.
- Return the fish to water as quickly as possible. If it is sluggish, gently hold it and move it forward and back to get water moving across the gills.

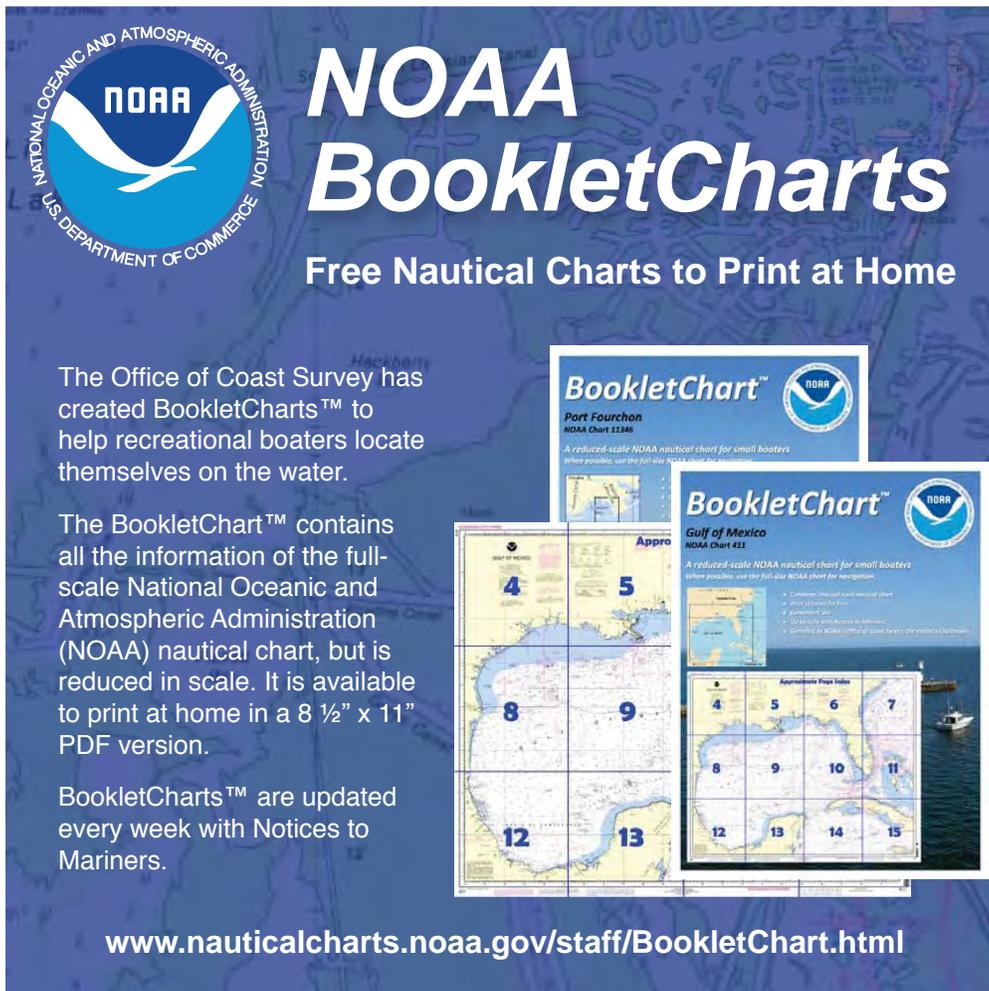
A fish that appears to be in poor condition probably has a low chance of survival. If legal, consider keeping that fish for consumption.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### CARING FOR YOUR CATCH

You can never be too careful when preserving your catch for later consumption. The fish must be iced down to remain fresh. A fish that feels mushy and has cloudy eyes may have spoiled and can make you sick.

- Be sure you have plenty of ice on hand. Place the fish on ice as soon as you remove the hook.
- Pour the ice out of the bag into your ice chest and place a layer of ice above and below the fish.
- Another technique in keeping fish fresh on hot days or for extended periods is to gut the fish and pack the body cavities with ice. This practice chills the fish faster.
- Anglers using baskets and live wells should be aware that overcrowded fish die quickly. If using a stringer, put the stringer through the jaw tissue and not the gills. Anglers using live wells on their vessel should also be aware of this danger.
- Cleaning your fish at the end of the fishing day is recommended. If you stored your fish on ice, use fresh ice for the newly cleaned fish.
- Keep the fish as cold as possible and refrigerate them as quickly as possible.



The advertisement features the NOAA logo on the left, which includes the text "NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION", "NOAA", and "U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE". The main title "NOAA BookletCharts" is prominently displayed in white on a dark blue background. Below the title, the text "Free Nautical Charts to Print at Home" is written in white. The central part of the ad shows two examples of BookletCharts: "Port Fourchon NOAA Chart 11346" and "Gulf of Mexico NOAA Chart 411". The Gulf of Mexico chart is shown as a grid of 15 numbered pages (4-15). The background of the entire ad is a faint nautical chart.

**NOAA**  
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

# NOAA BookletCharts

## Free Nautical Charts to Print at Home

The Office of Coast Survey has created BookletCharts™ to help recreational boaters locate themselves on the water.

The BookletChart™ contains all the information of the full-scale National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) nautical chart, but is reduced in scale. It is available to print at home in a 8 ½" x 11" PDF version.

BookletCharts™ are updated every week with Notices to Mariners.

[www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/staff/BookletChart.html](http://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/staff/BookletChart.html)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

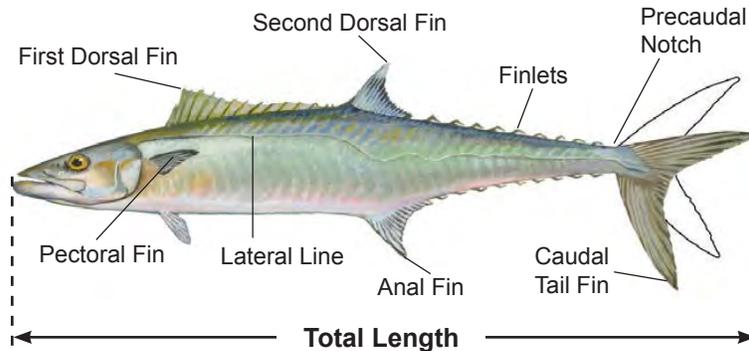
### HOW TO MEASURE YOUR FISH

Use these guidelines to measure a fish correctly (refer to Illustrations):

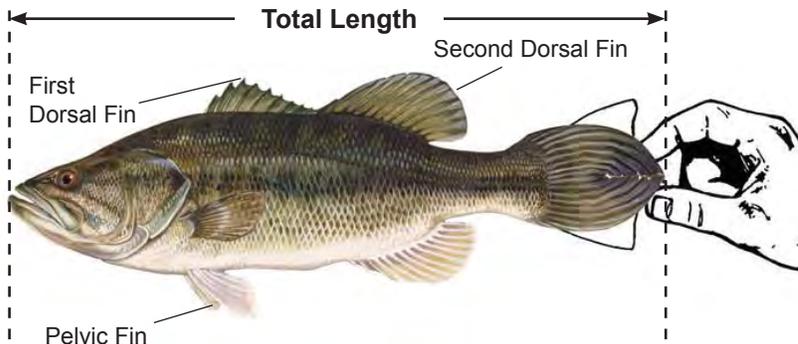
1. Place the fish on its side on a flat board with the jaw closed.
2. **Total Length** - Measure in a straight line from the tip of the snout to the extreme tip of the tail fin. Adjust the tail by rotating (*Example 1*) or by squeezing (*Example 2*) to obtain the maximum length of the fish (*Illustration 1*).
3. **Fork Length** - Measure in a straight line from the tip of the snout to the fork of the tail (*Illustration 2*).
4. **Lower Jaw Fork Length** - Measure in a straight line the length from the tip of the lower jaw to the fork of the tail (*Illustration 3*).
5. **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 (*Illustration 4*).
6. **Carcass Length** - Measure the curve from posterior edge of gill opening to anterior portion of caudal keel (*Illustration 4*).

#### Illustration 1

Example 1. Rotating



Example 2. Squeezing



GENERAL INFORMATION

Illustration 2

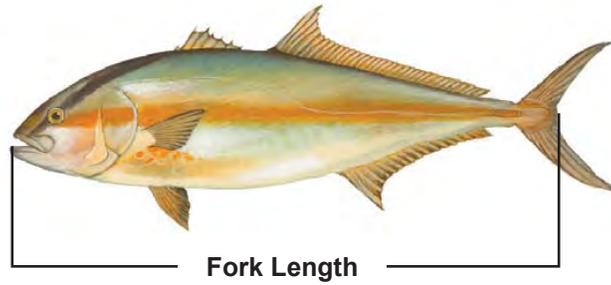


Illustration 3

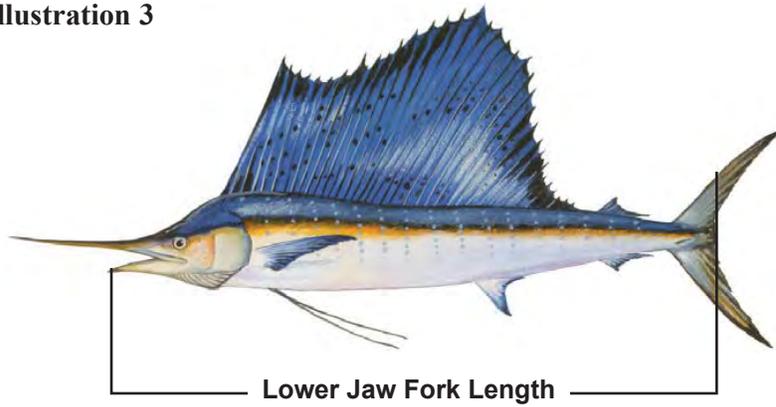
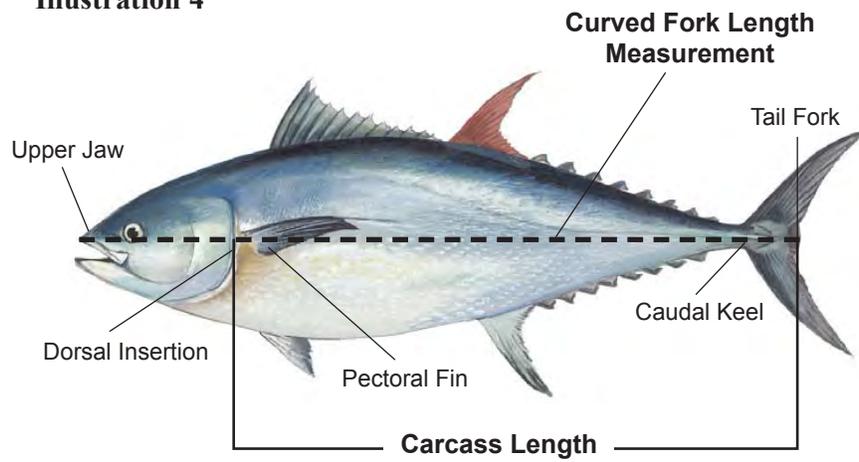


Illustration 4



Fish illustrations by Duane Raver

[www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov) 15

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### SALTWATER - FRESHWATER LINE



The saltwater-freshwater line in Louisiana extends easterly from the Texas state line all the way to the Mississippi state line. The areas north of this saltwater-freshwater line are deemed freshwater. The areas south of the described line, including a number of saltwater lakes and waterways, are legally considered saltwater. Although the actual levels of salt in the water may differ from day to day due to tides and shifts in wind and currents, in most cases, the flora and fauna found on either side of the line differ dramatically. A detailed description of the saltwater-freshwater line can be found below. As with any regulation issue, please contact your local LDWF Enforcement Office with any questions you may have (see page 3).

**NOTE:** Persons fishing and/or possessing saltwater fish in these areas are required to have a saltwater fishing license in addition to the basic fishing license. Persons fishing for and/or possessing freshwater fish in saltwater areas are not required to hold a saltwater license.

#### LOUISIANA SALTWATER LINE DEFINITION

The Intracoastal waterway from the Texas-Louisiana boundary to its junction with Louisiana Highway 27 at Gibbstown, south along Louisiana Highway 82, east to its junction with the Intracoastal Waterway at Forked Island, the Intracoastal Waterway from Forked Island to Bayou Baratavia to the Harvey Canal, the Harvey Canal to the Mississippi River, the Mississippi River to the Industrial Canal, the Industrial Canal to the Intracoastal Waterway, the Intracoastal Waterway to the Rigolets in Orleans Parish to the Louisville & Nashville Railroad bridge, the Louisville & Nashville Railroad right-of-

way from the Orleans Parish line to the Mississippi state line.

Also, the areas south of the above described line, plus the saltwater lakes known as Lake Maurepas, Lake Pontchartrain, Lake St. Catherine, Chef Menteur Pass (except that 7/10 of a mile section from Bayou Sauvage south to the Intracoastal Waterway), the Rigolets, Unknown Pass, Pass Manchac, Intracoastal, and that portion of the Calcasieu Ship Channel from the Intracoastal Waterway south to the Gulf of Mexico, shall be designated as saltwater areas.

## FRESHWATER FISHING

***No fish of any species from outside of the state of Louisiana shall be liberated within the state except upon written permission of the Secretary of LDWF.***

## FRESHWATER FISHING IN LOUISIANA

### LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

All anglers fishing in freshwater must possess a valid Basic Fishing License.

A **Basic Fishing License** is also required to use the following gear:

- Bow and arrow
- Barbed or barbless spear
- Frog gig/catcher
- Scuba gear
- Hook and Line
- Cast net (radius not to exceed 8 feet, 6 inches)

All applicable licenses must be in possession of the fisherman.

### FRESHWATER SPECIES YOU CANNOT HARVEST

The federally listed threatened and endangered, or prohibited species listed below are off limits for recreational take. Civil and criminal penalties may apply for taking the following aquatic species.

- Louisiana pearlshell mussel (*Margaritifera hembeli*)
- Inflated heelsplitter mussel (*Potamilus inflatus*)
- Fat pocketbook mussel (*Potamilus capax*)
- Pink mucket mussel (*Lampsilis orbiculata*)
- Gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*)
- Pallid sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*)
- Shovelnose sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus platyrhynchus*)

### PROHIBITED FRESHWATER FISH

It is unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to possess, sell, or transport any of the following species of fish into Louisiana without first obtaining the written permission of the secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

- All species of tilapia
- Carp (except koi, common carp and goldfish)
- Freshwater electric eel
- Rudd
- All members of the families of Asian swamp eels, snakeheads, walking catfishes, and pencil catfishes

Exotic species of Asian carp (silver, bighead, black and grass) taken from state waters must not be returned to the water and may not be possessed alive.

No person shall have in possession or sell in this state a piranha or Rio Grande cichlid. If an angler catches a Rio Grande cichlid using legal methods, the fish shall not be returned to the water or kept alive while in the possession of the angler.

[www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov) 17

## FRESHWATER FISHING

### DAILY BAG LIMIT

Recreational anglers must not exceed the daily bag limit for any species while on the water.

### POSSESSION LIMIT

No recreational anglers can have in their possession more than twice the daily bag limit of any species of freshwater recreational fish, **EXCEPT** that anglers may have up to three times the daily bag limit of black bass (*Micropterus spp.*) below U.S. Highway 90 in coastal Louisiana. Anglers may have up to 100 crappie in their possession at Toledo Bend Reservoir.

All freshwater game fish caught in any type of recreational or commercial net or trap must be returned immediately to the water from which it was taken without injury. See tips for safely releasing fish on page 12.

No person shall possess filleted fish while aboard a vessel in freshwater. However, for the purpose of consumption, a person shall have no more than 2 pounds of filleted finfish per person on board a vessel in freshwater.

## METHODS FOR FISHING OR TAKING FRESHWATER FISH

There are many ways to catch fish and other aquatic species in Louisiana's beautiful rivers, lakes, bayous, ponds and streams. The headings below define the legal methods and illegal methods of take, and certain exceptions that are allowable by species, methods and locations.

Always check with an LDWF Enforcement Office if you have questions. See page 3 for contact information.

### LEGAL METHODS OF TAKE

- Hook and Line
- Bow and Arrow
- Yo-yos or Trigger Devices
- Recreational Slat Traps
- Recreational Crawfish Traps (must be marked with a waterproof tag, provided by the fisherman, with the name and recreational gear license number of the fisherman legibly printed on the tag, and must have a minimum mesh size of a hexagon of 3/4 by 11/16 of 1 inch from wire to wire not including any coating on the wire)
- Standard Spearing Equipment (used by recreational skin divers submerged in water when sport fishing)
- Barbed Gig (allowed in saltwater for taking flounder ONLY)
- Recreational Hoop Nets\*
- Recreational Wire Nets\*

\* Allowed only in the geographical areas of the state designated as Freshwater (see map and definition on page 16).

### ILLEGAL METHODS FOR FISHING OR TAKING ALL FISH

It is unlawful to possess any of the prohibited instruments, weapons, substances or devices described below with the intent to take fish.

- Crossbows
- Poisons

## FRESHWATER FISHING

- Spears (see garfish, silver carp and bighead carp exception listed in “Gear Restrictions by Species” section)
- Stupefying Substances or Devices
- Explosives
- Guns
- Any instrument or device capable of producing electric current to shock fish
- Snagging Devices (see catfish, silver carp, and big head carp exceptions listed below)

### GEAR RESTRICTIONS BY SPECIES

Some alternative methods are allowed for catching/taking specific aquatic species.

#### FRESHWATER GAME FISH

Game fish are defined as largemouth bass, spotted bass, shadow bass, yellow bass, white bass, striped bass, hybrid striped bass, black crappie, white crappie, and bream

##### LEGAL

- Bream (*Lepomis spp.*) may not be taken as bait for sportfishing purposes in any form of trap **EXCEPT** at Toledo Bend Reservoir, where a minnow trap not exceeding 24 inches in length and having a throat no larger than 1 inch by 3 inches may be used to take bream for non-commercial bait purposes

##### NOT LEGAL

- Standard Spearing Equipment used by recreational skin divers is prohibited.
- Bow and Arrow
- Possession of game fish with nets or traps including recreational hoop nets, slat traps, pipes, buckets, drums, tires or cans including those licensed for recreational purposes.

#### CATFISH

**LEGAL** – snagging devices

**PADDLEFISH** (commonly called “spoonbill catfish,” but are not catfish)

**NOT LEGAL** – snagging devices

#### GARFISH

##### LEGAL

- Spears
- Bows and arrows

#### LEGAL BAIT SPECIES

Including minnows, crawfish and shrimp (does not include game fish)

##### LEGAL

- Cast nets
- Minnow traps
- Recreational Trawls
- Dip Nets (net must be on a fixed frame no larger than 3 feet in diameter worked exclusively by hand, by no more than one person, without any mechanical assistance)
- Bait Seines (with a maximum mesh size not exceeding 1/4 inch bar, 1/2 inch stretched and 30 feet in length; must be operated solely on foot and by hand, without any pulley, mechanical device or assistance whatsoever)

#### SILVER CARP & BIGHEAD CARP

##### LEGAL

- Boats
- Dip nets
- Spears
- Snagging

### RESTRICTIONS AND EXCEPTIONS BY METHOD

#### DIVERS

##### LEGAL

- Standard spearing equipment is the only legal method of take for non-game species that can be used by a skin diver submerged in water

##### NOT LEGAL

- The taking of gamefish with standard spearing equipment is prohibited.

## FRESHWATER FISHING

### MOBILITY IMPAIRED INDIVIDUALS

As defined in R.S. 47:463.4(E), mobility impaired persons who are bona fide residents of Louisiana, in possession of valid identification, and over 60 years of age may use one legal slat trap and/or one hoop net not greater than 18 feet by 8 feet, without a license in any waters of the state, only for the purpose of catching catfish and only for home consumption.

### RESTRICTIONS BY LOCATION

Some Louisiana waterbodies have specific gear restrictions and are listed below.

#### **BLACK LAKE, CLEAR LAKE, PRAIRIE LAKE** (Natchitoches Parish)

#### **CADDO LAKE** (Caddo Parish)

#### **CHICOT LAKE** (Evangeline Parish)

#### **LAKE D'ARBONNE** (Union Parish)

#### **LAKE LAFOURCHE** (Caldwell Parish) and

#### **LAKE SAINT JOSEPH** (Tensas Parish)

##### **Yo-Yo Restrictions**

- The placement of any artificial object to anchor a yo-yo or trigger device is prohibited.
- No more than 50 yo-yos or trigger devices allowed per person.
- Each yo-yo or trigger device must be clearly tagged with the name, address and telephone number of the owner/user.
- All fish or any other animals caught or hooked must be immediately removed from the device.
- Each yo-yo or trigger device must be re-baited at least once every 24 hours.
- No yo-yo or trigger device is allowed to be attached to any metallic object.
- Except for an object used strictly in the construction of a pier, boathouse, seawall, or dock, no object which is driven into the lake bottom, a stump, tree, or the shoreline shall be used to anchor a yo-yo or trigger device. "Object" means rebar or other metal material, cane, PVC tubing, construction material, or any other type of material.

##### **Trotline Restrictions**

- All trotlines must be marked, tagged, and dated with the owner/user's name, address, phone number and date of placement. The trotline must be marked on each end with a floating object that is readily visible.
- No person is allowed to set more than three trotlines with a maximum of 50 hooks per trotline.

- All trotlines must have an 8-foot cotton leader on each end of the trotline to insure that if the trotline is left unattended, the cotton leader will deteriorate and the line will sink.
- All trotlines must be attended daily while in service.

#### **BOGUE CHITTO RIVER**

##### **Seines, Nets and Webbing Restrictions**

- The use of seines, nets or webbing for the taking of fish in Bogue Chitto River from where it enters the state in the northern part of Washington Parish to where it enters into the Pearl River in St. Tammany Parish is prohibited.

##### **Taking by Hand**

- The taking of fish from logs, buckets, barrels, drums or natural or artificial nesting areas by hand grabbing is also prohibited in this area.

#### **CYPRESS LAKE AND BLACK BAYOU RESERVOIR** (Bossier Parish)

##### **Hoop Nets, Wire Nets and Slat Traps**

- These devices are prohibited from March 1 - Oct. 31 of each year.
- These devices must be removed from the lakes prior to March 1 of each year.

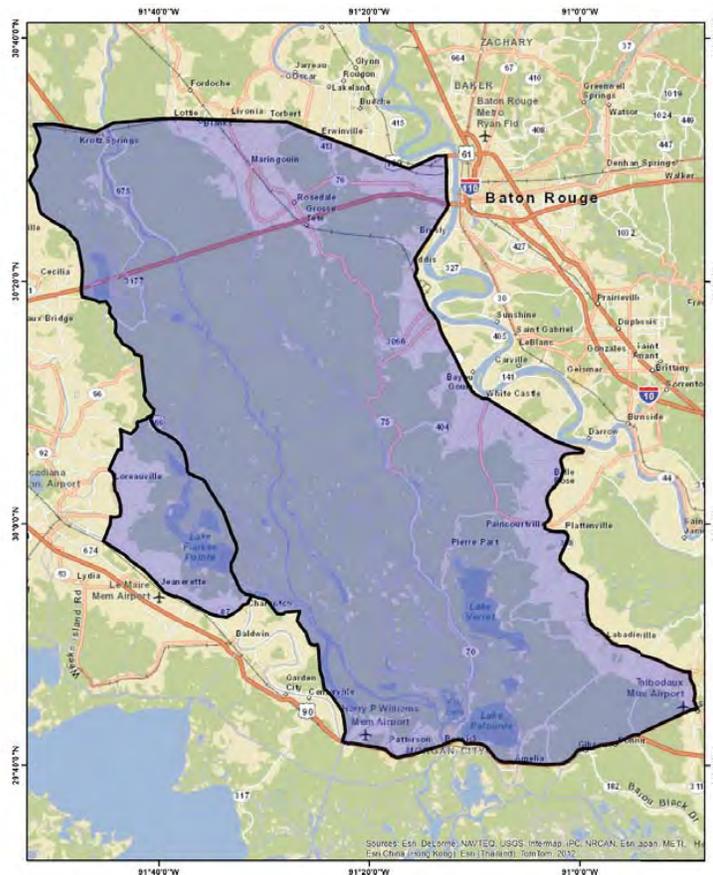
#### **POVERTY POINT**

No person is allowed to possess, set or use any recreational hoop nets, recreational wire nets, yo-yos, trotlines or slat traps at this location.

#### **TCHFUNCTE RIVER**

Seines, nets, webbing or traps of any kind and all types, including slat traps, for the taking of fish in the Tchfunct River, and its tributaries, from its origin in Washington Parish to where it empties into Lake Pontchartrain in St. Tammany Parish, are prohibited.

ATCHAFALAYA BASIN, LAKE VERRET-PALOURDE  
AREA & LAKE FAUSSE POINT-DAUTERIVE AREA



The area south of U.S. 190 from the West Atchafalaya Basin Protection Levee (WABPL) to the intersection of LA 1 and U.S. 190 due north of Port Allen, west of LA 1 from U.S. 190 to LA 20 in Thibodaux, north and west of LA 20 from LA 1 to U.S. 90, north of U.S. 90 from LA 20 to the WABPL, east of the WABPL from U.S. 90 to the Corps of Engineers (USACE) Locks on the WABPL at the Charenton Drainage and Navigation Canal (CDNC), north of and including the CDNC from the USACE Locks on the WABPL to Highway 87, north and east of Highway 87 from the CDNC to Highway 320, east of Highway 320 from Highway 87 to Highway 86, south and east of Highway 86 from Highway 320 to Highway 345, east of Highway 345 from Highway 86 to Highway 679, south and east of Highway 679 from Highway 345 to Highway 3083, south of Highway 3083 from Highway 679 to the WABPL and east of the WABPL from Highway 3083 to U.S. 190.

## FRESHWATER FISHING

### FRESHWATER STATE CREEL AND SIZE LIMITS

#### KEY

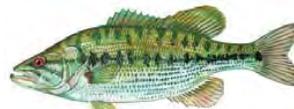
**MLL** - Minimum Length Limit    **SL** - Slot Limit

**Possession Limit is TWICE the daily creel limit unless otherwise stated.**

#### FRESHWATER GAME FISH



Largemouth Bass



Spotted Bass

#### BLACK BASS (Largemouth & Spotted)<sup>1</sup>

Location	Size Limit	Daily Creel Limit
All state waters EXCEPT as follows:	None	10 daily
Atchafalaya Basin, Lakes Verret/Palourde, Fausse Point/Dauterive Areas <sup>2</sup>	None	7 daily
Eagle Lake	16" MLL	10 daily
Poverty Point Reservoir	15-19" protected SL <sup>3</sup>	8 daily No more than one over 19" total length
Caney Creek Lake (Jackson Parish)	15-19" protected SL <sup>3</sup>	8 daily No more than two over 19" total length
False River (Pointe Coupee Parish)	14" MLL	5 daily
John K. Kelly-Grand Bayou Reservoir (Red River Parish)	14-17" protected SL <sup>3</sup>	8 daily No more than four over 17" total length
Caddo Lake	14-18" protected SL <sup>3</sup> for Largemouth Bass No length restriction for spotted bass	8 daily No more than 4 Largemouth Bass over 18" total length
Sabine River <sup>4</sup> and Toledo Bend Reservoir	14" MLL for Largemouth Bass No MLL for spotted bass	8 daily

<sup>1</sup> NOTE: For enforcement purposes, a spotted bass is defined as a black bass with a tooth patch on the tongue.

<sup>2</sup> See page 21 for area descriptions.

<sup>3</sup> Fish falling within a protected slot limit must be immediately released.

<sup>4</sup> River proper from the Toledo Bend Dam to the I-10 bridge. River proper upstream from Toledo Bend Reservoir to the point at which the entire river enters TX (state line is marked with a sign).

<sup>5</sup> Anglers may have up to three times the daily bag limit of black bass (*Micropterus* spp.) below U.S. Highway 90 in coastal Louisiana providing the fish are kept whole or whole gutted in separate bags for each daily take limit. The bags must be marked with the date fish were taken, the species and number of fish contained in the bag, and the name and recreational fishing license number of the person taking the fish.

## FRESHWATER FISHING

FRESHWATER GAME FISH			
Location	Size Limit	Daily Creel Limit	
<b>STRIPED OR HYBRID STRIPED BASS</b> (or any combination thereof)			 Striped Bass
All state waters	None	5 daily No more than two over 30" total length	
<b>WHITE BASS</b>			 White Bass
All state waters EXCEPT as follows:	None	50 daily	
Caddo Lake, Sabine River and Toledo Bend Reservoir	None	25 daily	
<b>CRAPPIE</b>			 Black Crappie   White Crappie
All state waters EXCEPT as follows:	None	50 daily 100 fish possession limit	
Poverty Point, Caddo Lake and Sabine River	None	25 daily 50 fish possession limit	
Toledo Bend Reservoir	None	25 daily 100 fish possession limit	
<b>YELLOW BASS</b>			 Yellow Bass
All state waters EXCEPT as follows:	None	50 daily	
Caddo Lake, Sabine River and Toledo Bend Reservoir	None	No limit	
FRESHWATER NONGAME FISH			
Location	Size Limit	Daily Creel Limit	
<b>BOWFIN (Choupique)</b>			 Bowfin
All state waters	16" MLL	No limit	
<b>BUFFALO FISH (or their hybrids)</b>			 Smallmouth Buffalo   Bigmouth Buffalo
All state waters	16" MLL	25 daily	

Yellow Bass: Iowa Department of Natural Resources; Gizzard Shad: NOAA; All other images by Duane Raver

## FRESHWATER FISHING

FRESHWATER NONGAME FISH			
Location	Size Limit	Daily Creel Limit	
<b>CATFISH</b>			
All state waters EXCEPT as follows:	<b>Blue Catfish:</b> 12" MLL	100 daily in the aggregate. A fisherman may possess up to 25 undersized catfish of the three species combined.	 Blue Catfish
	<b>Channel Catfish:</b> 11" MLL		 Channel Catfish
	<b>Flathead Catfish:</b> 14" MLL		 Flathead Catfish
Caddo Lake, Sabine River and Toledo Bend Reservoir	<b>Blue &amp; Channel Catfish:</b> None	50 daily in the aggregate No more than 5 over 30" total length	 Flathead Catfish
	<b>Flathead Catfish:</b> 18" MLL	10 daily	
<b>FRESHWATER DRUM (Gaspergou)</b>			
All state waters	12" MLL	25 daily	 Freshwater Drum
<b>PADDLEFISH</b>			
No open season in boundary waters with TX or below the saltwater line	30" max lower jaw fork length	2 daily (fish cannot be retained alive & cannot be harvested by snagging methods)	 Paddlefish
<b>SHAD</b>			
All state waters	None	50 pounds daily	 Gizzard Shad
<b>STURGEON</b>			
All state waters	N/A	<b>No legal harvest or possession</b>	 Sturgeon
<b>OTHER FRESHWATER FISH</b>			
All state waters	None	No limit	 Bluegill  Redear Sunfish  Spotted Gar  Yellow Bullhead
<b>CRAWFISH</b>			
All state waters	None	150 pounds daily	

## SALTWATER FISHING IN LOUISIANA

### STATE AND FEDERAL LICENSES AND PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

#### STATE LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Basic Fishing License**
2. **Saltwater Fishing License**
3. An **Offshore Landing Permit** is required of all anglers, **except those anglers on a paid-for-hire trip where the captain possesses an Offshore Landing Permit**, (free of charge) including those not normally required to have a fishing license to possess tunas, billfish, swordfish, amberjacks, groupers, snappers, **dolphinfish, wahoo and cobia**.
  - The Offshore Landing Permit can be found on the LDWF website at [www.wlf.la.gov/rolp](http://www.wlf.la.gov/rolp) or through Smartphone applications. The iPhone app can be downloaded free of charge from the App Store by searching for the Louisiana Recreational Offshore Landing Permits App. The Android app can also be downloaded free of charge from the Google Play Store by searching for LDWF Recreational Offshore Landing Permits App.

All applicable licenses must be in possession of the fisherman.

#### FEDERAL LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) manages the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Division in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea.

1. A **Federal Recreational Fishing Permit** is required for vessels fishing for tunas, billfishes, swordfish and sharks. You may apply for an initial or renewal permit in one of several ways. The permit fee is \$20.
  - To apply for an initial or renewal permit online visit the NMFS Permit Shop at [www.hmspermits.noaa.gov](http://www.hmspermits.noaa.gov).
  - An initial or renewal application package can be downloaded from the NMFS Permit Shop or mailed by calling the NMFS at 888-872-8862.
  - Renew permits by calling the automated voice response system at 888-872-8862. Permits will be valid from the date of issuance through Dec. 31, 2014
2. An **Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat Permit** is required for all charter or headboat fishing for and/or retaining regulated Atlantic HMS in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The permit fee is \$20. HMS Charter/Headboat Permit will be valid from the date of issuance through Dec. 31, 2014.
3. A **Federal Shrimp Vessel Permit** is required for all vessels fishing shrimp in the Gulf of Mexico EEZ.

Information about obtaining HMS permits and regulations are available at [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/information](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/information) or by calling 888-872-8862.

### KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

The National Marine Fisheries Service has a Memorandum of Agreement with the National Weather Service to broadcast unanticipated and time-critical fishery regulatory actions where there is minimal opportunity for advance public notice. These broadcasts are issued for four or five days, 24 hours a day, by selected NWR coastal stations. (VHF frequencies in MHz)

- 162.400
- 162.525
- 162.550
- 162.425
- 162.450
- 162.475

[www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov) | 25

## SALTWATER FISHING

### SALTWATER SPECIES YOU CANNOT HARVEST

#### THREATENED OR ENDANGERED AND PROHIBITED SPECIES

The federally listed threatened and endangered, or prohibited species listed below are off limits for fishing or recreational take. Civil and criminal penalties may apply for taking the following aquatic species. If any of these protected species are incidentally caught, they must be released immediately unharmed. See page 12 for tips on safely releasing fish.

- All Whales
- Dolphin (mammal)
- Goliath Grouper
- Gulf Sturgeon  
(*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*)
- Largetooth Sawfish
- Nassau Grouper
- Sea Turtles
- Smalltooth Sawfish
- West Indian Manatee

#### SHARKS

- Atlantic Angel Shark
- Basking Shark
- Bigeye Sand Tiger Shark
- Bigeye Sixgill Shark
- Bigeye Thresher Shark
- Bignose Shark
- Caribbean Reef Shark
- Caribbean Sharpnose Shark
- Dusky Shark
- Galapagos Shark
- Longfin Mako Shark
- Narrowtooth Shark
- Night Shark
- Sand tiger Shark
- Sevengill Shark
- Sixgill Shark
- Smalltail Shark
- Whale Shark
- White Shark

### RECREATIONAL SALTWATER TOURNAMENT OPERATORS

Federal regulations require any person conducting a fishing tournament in the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico involving the catch and/or landing of any HMS regulated species to register with the HMS Management Division of the National Marine Fisheries Service at least four weeks prior to start of the tournament. A Tournament Registration Form [PDF] is available on the NMFS website at [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/tournaments/index.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/tournaments/index.html).

To register a tournament, an Atlantic HMS Tournament Registration Form must be completed, signed, and sent to the Atlantic HMS Management Division by mail or fax.

Fax: 727-824-5398

Mailing Address:

HMS Tournament Registration  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
263 13th Avenue S.  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Once the registration form has been processed an Atlantic HMS Tournament Confirmation Number will be produced and provided to the tournament operator.

NOTE: Registration is not complete unless the tournament operator has received a confirmation number from the HMS Management Division of NMFS. For more information call 727-824-5399; [www.hmspermits.noaa.gov](http://www.hmspermits.noaa.gov).

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT FISHING IN GULF OF MEXICO FEDERAL WATERS

---

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council manages federal waters from where the Louisiana gulfward boundary ends and extends 200 miles seaward into the Gulf of Mexico. Louisiana recreational and commercial anglers fishing beyond the 9 nautical-mile (10.357 statute miles or 3 marine leagues) Louisiana gulfward boundary are in federal waters.

**\*NOTE:** In June 2012, the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission took action to extend Louisiana state waters from 3 miles offshore to 3 marine leagues or approximately 9 nautical miles, but the U.S. Congress has yet to confirm this action. LDWF officials encourage fishermen to use caution and their own personal judgement when fishing beyond the 3 mile boundary

as it is fully expected that federal agents will continue to enforce federal law.

These waters are also known as the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Federal fishing regulations are not always the same as state fishing regulations. To make sure that you are in complete compliance with federal regulations call the Gulf Council at 888-833-1844, or e-mail [gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org](mailto:gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org). Visit [gulfcouncil.org](http://gulfcouncil.org) for information about federal fishing regulations, measurement guidelines, sanctuaries & closures and fish identification charts.

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries App for iPhone and Android available free of charge.

### METHODS FOR FISHING OR TAKING SALTWATER FISH

---

There are many ways to catch fish and other aquatic species in Louisiana's beautiful coastal waters. The headings below define the legal methods and illegal methods of take, plus certain exceptions that are allowed by species, methods and locations.

Always check with an LDWF Enforcement Office if you have questions.

#### LEGAL METHODS

---

Some species of gamefish may not be taken with the gear listed below.

- Hook and Line
- Trolling Line
- Handline
- Bait Casting
- Fly Casting Apparatus
- Recreational Crawfish Traps (must be marked with a waterproof tag, provided by the fisherman, with the name and recreational gear license number of the fisherman legibly printed on the tag, and must have a minimum mesh size of a hexagon of 3/4 by 11/16 of 1 inch from wire to wire not including any coating on the wire)
- Yo-yos or Trigger Devices
- Bow and Arrow
- Standard Spearing Equipment (used by a skin diver sport fishing in saltwater or freshwater when submerged in the water)
- Barbless Spear or Multi-pronged Barbed Gig (may be used in saltwater for taking flounder ONLY)
- Dip Nets

[www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov) | 27

## SALTWATER FISHING

### EXCEPTIONS TO METHODS OF TAKE BY SPECIES

---

An alternative method is allowed for taking the aquatic species listed below. Harvest of any other saltwater species by this method is prohibited.

#### RED DRUM

##### LEGAL

- Bow and Arrows
- Standard Spearing Equipment used by a skin divers submerged in water when sport fishing

### SALTWATER RESTRICTIONS AND EXCEPTIONS BY METHOD

---

#### SKIN DIVERS

With the exception of game fish, the only legal method for a skin diver to take fish is when submerged in water using standard spearing equipment. See page 30 for a complete listing of game fish.

#### MOBILITY IMPAIRED INDIVIDUALS

As defined in R.S. 47:463.4(E), mobility impaired persons who are bona fide residents of Louisiana, in possession of valid identification, and over 60 years of age may use one legal slat trap and/or one hoop net not greater than 18 feet by 8 feet, without a license in any waters of the state, only for the purpose of catching catfish and only for home consumption.

### ILLEGAL METHODS FOR FISHING OR TAKING ALL FISH

---

It is unlawful to possess any of the prohibited instruments, weapons, substances or devices described below with the intent to take fish.

- Crossbows
- Gill Nets (freshwater and saltwater)
- Spears
- Poisons
- Stupefying Substances or Devices
- Explosives
- Guns
- Tree-topping Devices
- Any instrument or device capable of producing electric current to shock fish
- Snagging Devices

### LEGAL BAIT SPECIES

---

#### INCLUDING MINNOWS, CRAWFISH AND SHRIMP (not including game fish)

##### LEGAL

- Cast nets
- Minnow traps
- Dip Nets (net must be on a fixed frame no larger than 3 feet in diameter worked exclusively by hand, by no more than one person, without any mechanical assistance)
- Bait Seines (a maximum mesh size not exceeding 1/4-inch bar, 1/2 inch stretched and 30 feet in length; must be operated solely on foot and by hand, without any pulley, mechanical device or assistance whatsoever)
- Recreational Trawls, only allowed in state waters when and where shrimp season is open.

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT BRINGING YOUR SALTWATER CATCH TO SHORE

All saltwater finfish caught in possession of a recreational angler must have the head and caudal fin intact until set on shore. Garfish may have the head and caudal fin removed prior to the fish being on shore as long as a sufficient patch of skin that clearly identifies the fish remains on the fish.

**EXCEPTION:** Tuna, swordfish and shark possessed by a recreational angler must not be skinned or scaled until set or put on shore. Tuna that meet minimum size requirements may have the head removed if the carcass length is in excess of the minimum total length. **See Lengths on page 14.**

Fillets may not be possessed on the water, except for the purpose of consumption at

sea aboard the harvesting vessel. An individual must not have more than 2 pounds of finfish parts per person in state waters, or more than 1.5 pounds of finfish parts per person in federal waters, on board the vessel, provided that the vessel is equipped to cook finfish and that the finfish does not exceed applicable bag limits. These provisions do not apply to bait species.

Saltwater finfish caught or transported by a recreational fisherman are presumed to have been caught in Louisiana waters, for license requirements.

All regulations regarding these species apply whether caught in freshwater or saltwater areas.

### REQUIRED ONBOARD GEAR FOR FISHING IN GULF OF MEXICO FEDERAL WATERS

Louisiana state waters extend 9 nautical miles (10.357 statute miles or 3 marine leagues) seaward from the nearest land, but in some cases extend further. The EEZ is described as waters that extend seaward from that point out to 200 miles from the coast.

Recreational anglers onboard a vessel to fish for or possess Gulf reef fish in the Gulf of Mexico EEZ must possess onboard and use the required gear as specified below. These devices are required because they reduce mortality on released fish. See page 12 for tips on safely releasing fish.

#### NON-STAINLESS STEEL CIRCLE HOOKS

Non-stainless steel circle hooks are required when fishing with natural baits for reef fish.

#### DEHOOKING DEVICE

At least one dehooking device is required on board and must be used to remove hooks embedded in Gulf reef fish with minimum damage. The device must be constructed to allow the hook to be secured and the barb shielded without

reengaging during the removal process. The dehooking end must be blunt and all edges rounded. The device must be of a size appropriate to secure the range of hook sizes and styles used in the Gulf reef fishery.

#### VENTING TOOL

The requirement for the possession of and the use of a venting tool when fishing for reef fish has been removed.

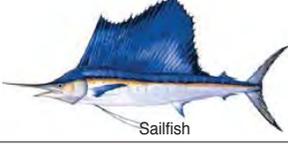
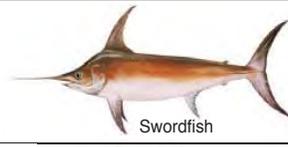
## SALTWATER FISHING

### SALTWATER STATE CREEL AND SIZE LIMITS

*Unless otherwise established, there are no size limits on species not listed and unless otherwise noted, possession limits for saltwater fish are the same as the daily bag limit.*

COMMON COASTAL SPECIES		
Size Limit	Bag & Possession Limit	
<b>COBIA (Ling or Lemonfish)</b>		
33" min fork length	2 daily per person	 Cobia
<b>DRUM</b>		
16" min total length 27" max total length	<b>BLACK DRUM:</b> 5 daily per person - bag and possession No more than one over 27" max total length	 Black Drum
	<b>RED DRUM (Redfish):</b> 5 daily per person - bag <sup>2</sup> No more than one over 27" max total length	 Red Drum
<b>SOUTHERN FLOUNDER</b>		
No Size Limit	10 daily per person	 Southern Flounder
<b>MACKEREL</b>		
<b>KING MACKEREL</b> <sup>3</sup> : 24" min fork length	2 daily per person	 King Mackerel
<b>SPANISH MACKEREL</b> <sup>3</sup> : 12" min fork length	15 daily per person	 Spanish Mackerel
<b>STRIPED MULLET</b>		
No Size Limit	100 lbs. daily	 Striped Mullet
<b>Spotted Seatrout (Speckled Trout)</b> <sup>4</sup>		
12" min total length	25 daily per person - bag <sup>2</sup> ; 15 daily per person with no more than two over 25" (in specified areas)	 Spotted Seatrout

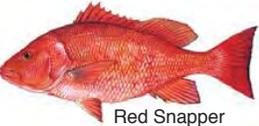
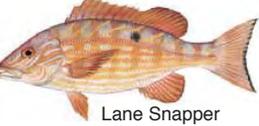
## SALTWATER FISHING

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES <sup>5</sup>		
Size Limit	Bag & Possession Limit	
<b>MARLIN<sup>6</sup></b>		
<b>BLUE MARLIN:</b> 99" min lower jaw fork length	No Bag or Possession Limit	 Blue Marlin
<b>WHITE MARLIN:</b> 66" min lower jaw fork length		 White Marlin
<b>SAILFISH<sup>6</sup></b>		
63" min lower jaw fork length	No Bag or Possession Limit	 Sailfish
<b>SHARK<sup>7</sup></b>		
<b>ATLANTIC SHARPNOSE &amp; BONNETHEAD SHARK<sup>7</sup>:</b> None	1 daily per person - possession. All shark harvest prohibited from April 1 - June 30	 Atlantic Sharpnose Shark
<b>OTHER SHARKS (EXCEPT Prohibited silky and sandbar):</b> 54" min fork length	1 in aggregate per vessel per trip - possession. No silky or sandbar sharks. No prohibited species. All shark harvest prohibited from April 1 - June 30. <i>(See complete list of Prohibited Sharks on page 26)</i>	
<b>SWORDFISH<sup>8</sup></b>		
29" min carcass length or 33 lbs. min dressed weight	Not more than 5 per vessel per trip	 Swordfish
<b>TUNA<sup>8</sup></b>		
<b>BLUEFIN TUNA<sup>9</sup>:</b> 73" min curved fork length	1 per vessel per year with appropriate federal permit as incidental catch during the open season	 Bluefin Tuna
<b>BIGEYE TUNA<sup>9</sup>:</b> 27" min curved fork length	No Bag or Possession Limit	 Bigeye Tuna
<b>YELLOWFIN TUNA<sup>9</sup>:</b> 27" min curved fork length	3 daily per person	 Yellowfin Tuna

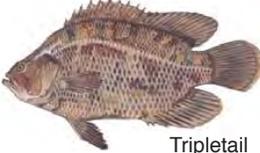
## SALTWATER FISHING

**\*NOTE:**

- Species within the 20 fish aggregate bag limit are Vermilion Snapper, Lane Snapper, Almaco Jack, Gray Triggerfish, Tilefish, Goldface Tilefish, and Blueline Tilefish.
- Species within the 10 fish aggregate bag limit are all snappers (Gray, Mutton, Yellowtail, Cubera, Queen, Blackfin, Silk and Wenchman) except Red, Vermilion and Lane.

REEF FISH <sup>3</sup>		
Size Limit	Bag & Possession Limit	
<b>GROUPE<sup>10,11</sup></b>		
<b>BLACK &amp; GAG<sup>10</sup>:</b> 22" min total length	4 daily in aggregate No more than 1 speckled hind and 1 Warsaw grouper per vessel, not more than 4 red grouper per person, and not more than 2 gag per person included in the bag limit	 Gag Grouper
<b>RED &amp; YELLOWFIN<sup>10</sup>:</b> 20" min total length		
<b>SCAMP<sup>10</sup>:</b> 16" min total length		
<b>GOLIATH &amp; NASSAU:</b> Take Prohibited	Take/Possession Prohibited	
<b>SNAPPER<sup>12</sup></b>		
<b>RED<sup>11,13</sup>:</b> 16" min total length	10 daily per person in aggregate <sup>3*</sup>	 Red Snapper
<b>MUTTON:</b> 16" min total length		
<b>QUEEN, BLACKFIN, SILK &amp; WENCHMAN:</b> None		
<b>CUBERA, GRAY (mangrove) &amp; YELLOWTAIL:</b> 12" min total length <b>VERMILION:</b> 10" min total length		
<b>LANE:</b> 8" min total length	20 daily per person in aggregate <sup>3*</sup>	 Lane Snapper
<b>ALMACO JACK</b>		
No Size Limit	20 daily per person in aggregate*	 Almaco Jack
<b>GRAY TRIGGERFISH<sup>14</sup></b>		
14" min fork length	2 daily per person in aggregate <sup>3*</sup>	 Gray Triggerfish

## SALTWATER FISHING

REEF FISH AND OTHER <sup>3</sup>		
Size Limit	Bag & Possession Limit	
<b>TILEFISH (Goldface &amp; Blueline)</b>		
No Size Limit	20 daily per person in aggregate*	
<b>AMBERJACK</b>		
<b>GREATER<sup>11,15</sup>:</b> 30" min fork length	1 daily per person <sup>3</sup>	 <p>Greater Amberjack</p>
<b>LESSER &amp; BANDED RUDDERFISH<sup>15</sup>:</b> 14-22" fork length slot limit	5 daily per person in aggregate	
<b>HOGFISH</b>		
12" min fork length	5 daily per person	
<b>TRIPLETAIL</b>		
18" min total length	5 daily per person	 <p>Tripletail</p>

Images by Duane Raver

## EXPLANATION OF SALTWATER CREEL & SIZE LIMITS

### <sup>1</sup>RED DRUM (REDFISH) AND SPOTTED SEATROUT (SPECKLED TROUT)

Recreational saltwater anglers may possess a two days' bag limit on land; however, no person shall be in possession of fish over the daily bag limit in any one day or while fishing or while on the water, unless that recreational saltwater angler is aboard a trawler engaged in commercial fishing for a consecutive period of longer than 25 hours. Take or possession of red drum in federal waters is prohibited.

### <sup>2</sup>OFF-WATER BAG LIMIT

Two days' bag limit allowed in possession off of the water, not while fishing or in a boat.

### <sup>3</sup>CHARTER VESSELS & HEADBOATS

Two-day limit allowed in possession only on charter vessels and headboats on multi day trips, if the vessels have two licensed operators, as required by the U.S. Coast Guard for trips more than 12 hours, and if each angler has in possession a receipt issued on behalf of the vessel verifying the length of the trip.

## SALTWATER FISHING

### <sup>4</sup>SPOTTED SEATROUT (SPECKLED TROUT)

12" minimum total length, 25 fish per person daily bag limit. EXCEPT: 15 fish daily bag and possession limit, with no more than two spotted seatrout exceeding 25" total length, regardless of where taken in a defined area of Cameron and Calcasieu parishes located in southwestern Louisiana. The defined area, including coastal territorial waters, is as follows: south of Interstate 10 from its junction at the Texas-Louisiana boundary eastward to its junction with Louisiana Highway 171, south to Highway 14, south to Holmwood, and then south on Highway 27 through Gibbstown, south to Louisiana Highway 82 at Creole and

south on Highway 82 to Oak Grove, then due south to the western shore of the Mermentau River, following this shoreline south to the junction with the Gulf of Mexico, and then due south to the limit of the state territorial sea. Under the authority of the provisions of R. S. 56:325.1(A), the daily bag and possession limit shall be 15 fish, regardless of where taken, with no more than two spotted seatrout exceeding 25 inches total length. Those spotted seatrout exceeding 25" in length shall be considered as part of the daily recreational bag and possession limit.

### <sup>5</sup>HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES

A **HMS Permit** is required for all owners/operator of vessels in the Gulf of Mexico fishing for and/or retaining the HMS regulated species of tunas, billfishes, swordfish and sharks. The Atlantic HMS Permits will be valid from the date of issuance through Dec. 31, 2014. The permit fee is \$20.

An **Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat Permit** is required for all charter or headboat fishing for and/or retaining regulated Atlantic HMS in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The HMS Charter/Headboat Permit will be valid from

the date of issuance through Dec. 31, 2014. The permit fee is \$20.

For information about contact the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Permitting Office at 1-888-872-8862 or 727-824-5399 or visit the NMFS Permit Shop at [www.hmspermits.noaa.gov](http://www.hmspermits.noaa.gov). For complete HMS regulations, contact the HMS Management Division at 301-713-2347 or visit the website at [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/information](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/information). See page 25 for a complete listing of Highly Migratory Species contact information

### <sup>6</sup>MARLIN AND SAILFISH

All recreational anglers, including those not normally required to have a fishing license, and charter captains must obtain an Offshore Landing Permit to possess billfish (*see page 25 for more details*).

### <sup>7</sup>SHARKS

#### CLOSED SEASON

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

#### SMALL COASTAL SHARKS

Atlantic sharpnose shark; bonnethead shark; blacknose shark; finetooth shark

#### LARGE COASTAL SHARKS

Blacktip shark; nurse shark; smooth hammerhead; bull shark; sandbar shark\*; spinner shark; great hammerhead; scalloped hammerhead; tiger shark; lemon shark; silky shark\*

**\*NOTE:** Recreational harvest of sandbar and silky sharks (ridgeback sharks) is not allowed.

#### PELAGIC SHARKS

Blue shark; porbeagle shark; thresher shark; oceanic whitetip shark; shortfin mako

## SALTWATER FISHING

**NOTE:** 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 listed under Highly Migratory Species on illustrated chart (page 31). 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 (see tips on safely releasing fish on page 12).

### PROHIBITED SHARKS

The following is a list of shark species that are prohibited: Atlantic angel shark, sand tiger shark, dusky shark, bigeye sand tiger shark, sixgill shark, largetooth sawfish, bigeye thresher shark, smalltooth sawfish, narrowtooth shark, Caribbean reef shark, white shark, Caribbean sharpnose shark, basking shark, sevengill shark, Galapagos shark, bigeye sixgill shark, smalltail shark, longfin mako, bignose shark, whale shark and night shark. No sandbar or silky sharks may be retained under a recreational bag limit.

### <sup>8</sup>SWORDFISH

All recreational anglers, including those not normally required to have a fishing license, and charter captains must obtain an Offshore Landing Permit to possess swordfish (see page 25 for details).

Recreational fishing vessels shall not possess more than five swordfish per vessel per trip. Swordfish taken under a recreational bag limit shall not be sold, purchased, exchanged, bartered, or attempted to be sold, purchased, exchanged or bartered. No person aboard any vessel shall transfer or cause the transfer of swordfish between vessels on state or federal waters.

### <sup>9</sup>TUNA

All recreational anglers, including those not normally required to have a fishing license, and charter captains must obtain an Offshore Landing Permit to possess tuna (see page 25 for details).

Anglers fishing for tunas within or outside Louisiana state waters are subject to both state and federal laws, rules and regulations. Federal regulations regarding the recreational harvest of tunas change often, especially for bluefin tuna. Prior to angling for or harvest of tuna, be aware of the most current federal regulations for fishing or harvest, including sizes, bag limits and closed seasons. For updates on tuna quota monitoring and tuna retention limit adjustments, anglers may call the Atlantic Tunas Information Line at 888-872-8862. The “Atlantic Tunas Regulations Brochure” is available at <http://hmspermits.noaa.gov/library.asp> and announcements of changes may be accessed via the web at <http://hmspermits.noaa.gov/news.asp>.

Permanent Louisiana regulations on tuna harvest may be superseded by seasonal changes within the federal regulatory system. See websites referenced above for current federal regulations. State requirements regarding tuna regulations may also be subject to change, please refer to the LDWF website for current information:

[www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/recreational/saltwater/seasons](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/recreational/saltwater/seasons) and  
[www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/recreational/saltwater/regulations](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/recreational/saltwater/regulations).

### BLUEFIN TUNA

All bluefin tuna must be reported within 24 hours of landing to NMFS by calling 888-872-8862 or visiting [www.hmspermits.noaa.gov](http://www.hmspermits.noaa.gov). For further information about angling category permits call the NMFS HMS Division at 888-872-8862 or 301-713-2347.

## SALTWATER FISHING

### <sup>10</sup>GROUPE

All recreational anglers, including those not normally required to have a fishing license, and charter captains must obtain an Offshore Landing Permit to possess grouper (see page 25 for details).

There is a closed season for the recreational harvest of gag from Jan. 1 through June 30 of each year. A closed season for the recreational harvest of black, red, yellowfin and yellowmouth groupers as well as scamp has also been established from Feb. 1 - March 31 of each year seaward of the 20 fathom (120 feet) curve.

Other seasons and rules are currently in place in Federal waters off of Louisiana. Please check those rules at [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org) under "Fishing Regulations."

### <sup>11</sup>CHARTER CAPTAIN & CREW

No harvest of red snapper, greater amberjack or grouper of any species is allowed for the captain and crew of vessel under charter (their creel limit/bag limit is zero).

All recreational anglers, including those not normally required to have a fishing license, must obtain an Offshore Landing Permit to possess tunas, billfish, swordfish, amberjacks, groupers and snappers (see page 25 for details).

### <sup>12</sup>SNAPPER

Non-charter recreational anglers and charter captains must obtain an Offshore Landing Permit to possess snapper (see page 25 for more details).

### <sup>13</sup>RED SNAPPER

As of publication of this regulations pamphlet, modified regulations were being considered for the recreational harvest of red snapper in Louisiana state waters. For current red snapper season, bag limit and possession-information check the LDWF website at: [www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/recreational/saltwater/seasons](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/recreational/saltwater/seasons) and [www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/recreational/saltwater/regulations](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/recreational/saltwater/regulations).

- As our department continues to fight the battle for regional management of our fisheries, regulations may have the potential to change throughout the season. We urge anglers to visit our webpage or our online fishing regulations pamphlet prior to your trip to ensure you are compliant.
- Currently open in state waters and closed in federal waters.
- State waters only season is weekends only (weekends are defined as Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) where the Monday of Memorial Day (May 25, 2015) and Labor Day (Sept. 7, 2015) are included as weekend days.

### <sup>14</sup>GRAY TRIGGERFISH

There is a closed season for the harvest of gray triggerfish from June 1 through June 30.

### <sup>15</sup>AMBERJACK

All recreational anglers, including those not normally required to have a fishing license, and charter captains must obtain an Offshore Landing Permit to possess amberjack (see page 25 for details).

A closed season for the recreational harvest of greater amberjack has been established from June 1 - July 31 of each year. For amberjack season information, check the LDWF website at [www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/recreational/saltwater/seasons](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/recreational/saltwater/seasons) and [www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/recreational/saltwater/regulations](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/recreational/saltwater/regulations).

### RECREATIONAL SHRIMPING

#### LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

##### CAST NET LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Basic Fishing License

##### TRAWL LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Basic Fishing License
2. Trawl License
3. Federal Shrimp Vessel Permit required for vessels fishing shrimp in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico (EEZ)

\* No license required for use of bait seines and dip nets.

#### AREAS

Shrimping in Louisiana is divided into three distinct areas, the inshore waters, the off-shore territorial sea and the federal EEZ.

The line (shrimp line) that separates inside waters from outside territorial waters generally follows the coastline, however there are some exceptions. For a description of the specific boundary locations check with your local LDWF Enforcement Office or visit [www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/insideoutside-shrimp-line](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/insideoutside-shrimp-line).

Maps of the shrimp line are available at a charge of \$10 per map by writing the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
2021 Lakeshore Drive, Suite 220  
New Orleans, La., 70122  
504-284-5272.

Please specify which area of the coast in which you are interested. Louisiana state waters extend 9 nautical miles (10.357 statute miles or 3 marine leagues) seaward from the nearest land, but in some cases extend further, particularly in the Grand Isle, Marsh Island and East Cote Blanche Bay area. The EEZ is described as waters that extend seaward from the Louisiana gulfward boundary out to 200 miles from the coast. For specific boundary locations, contact your local LDWF Enforcement Office.

#### SIZE AND POSSESSION LIMITS

No size limit on any saltwater shrimp taken during the spring open season in Louisiana. No size limit on brown shrimp or seabobs taken during any open season.

There is a minimum possession of 100 count (whole shrimp per pound) on white shrimp taken in either inside or outside (offshore) waters of Louisiana. This size restriction applies to the taking or possession of such shrimp aboard a vessel.

**EXCEPTION:** There is no possession count on white shrimp taken or possessed from Oct. 15 through the third Monday in December. When more than 50 percent by weight of the shrimp taken or possessed is seabobs or brown shrimp, the maximum allowable amount of undersized white shrimp taken or possessed shall not exceed 10 percent by weight of the total shrimp taken or possessed.

## OTHER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### SEASONS

Trawls cannot be used for any purpose in state waters during the closed shrimp season. Shrimp seasons are flexible and are determined by the LWFC based upon biological and technical data relative to shrimp populations. The spring inshore season usually begins in early to mid May, and may extend into July. The fall inshore season usually begins near mid-August and typically extends into December. The shrimp season in Louisiana's outside territorial waters is generally open year round EXCEPT for a closed season in portions of state

outside waters, which may be set during the late winter to early spring months, usually beginning in December or January and extending into March or April. The shrimp season in the EEZ is usually open year-round.

**NOTE:** Restricted areas exist within WMAs, refuges and other areas and may be closed to certain gear types or methods of fishing. Check with your local LDWF Office or refer to the WMA and Refuge section of this pamphlet.

### CAST NETS, DIP NETS AND BAIT SEINES

A recreational fisherman is allowed to use dip nets, bait seines, and cast nets not to exceed 8 and 1/2 feet in radius. Recreational fishermen shall not take at anytime more than 50 pounds of shrimp during closed shrimp season and 100 pounds of shrimp per day during the open season, in the aggregate, per boat or vehicle, regardless

of the number of persons thereon. Shrimp taken are to be used for bait or for the fisherman's own consumption and are not sold, traded or otherwise permitted to enter into commerce. Certain WMAs and state or federal refuges may have different rules. Always check with an LDWF Enforcement Office if you have questions.

### RESTRICTIONS ON NIGHT SHRIMPING

Night shrimping is prohibited between the hours of one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise in the following areas: Vermilion Bay, East and West Cote Blanche bays, and in Atchafalaya Bay, from the western shore of Vermilion Bay to the western shore of the Atchafalaya River and the Atchafalaya River Ship Channel out to Eugene Island as described by the inside-outside line

### TRAWLS

Trawls cannot have a mesh size less than 5/8-inch bar or 1 and 1/4 inches stretched. In that portion of state inside waters 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-inch bar or 1 and 1/2 inches stretched during the fall inshore shrimp season.

#### TRAWLING DURING OPEN SEASON AND POSSESSION LIMITS

During the open shrimping seasons trawls 25 feet and less are allowed for recreational purposes.

Recreational shrimpers using trawls 16 feet in length or less are limited to 100 pounds (heads on) of shrimp per boat per day.

Recreational shrimpers using trawls between 16 and 25 feet in length are limited to no more than 250 pounds of (heads-on) shrimp per day per boat per day, if the shrimp taken are used for bait or the fisherman's own consumption and are not sold, traded or otherwise permitted to enter commerce.

Information concerning federal shrimp vessel permits, Turtle Excluder Device (TED) and Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRD)

## OTHER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

requirements and exemptions can be obtained by contacting the NOAA Fisheries Service at 727-824-5312 for TEDs or 727-824-5305 for BRDs or at [www.nmfs.noaa.gov](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov). Detailed information on TEDs may be found at the following link to the NOAA Fisheries website <http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/labs/mississippi/ted/regulations.htm>.

### TRAWLING RESTRICTIONS

- No net or beam trawl used for taking fish or shrimp from the saltwater areas of the state is allowed to be left unattended.
- Taking shrimp with saltwater trawls from May 1 - Sept. 15 each year is prohibited in state waters on the south side of Grand Isle from Caminada Pass to Barataria Pass in Jefferson Parish; from the southeast side of the Caminada bridge to the northwest side of Barataria Pass at Fort Livingston, extending from the beach side of Grand Isle to a distance of 500 feet beyond the shoreline into the Gulf of Mexico.
- Trawls cannot be used for any purpose in state waters during the closed shrimp season.
- No person is allowed to trawl over any privately leased bedding grounds or oyster propagating place that is staked off, marked or posted as required by law or regulation.
- Trawling is prohibited in Lake Maurepas and that portion of Lake Pontchartrain from the shoreline to 1.25 miles out from the Jefferson/Orleans Parish line east to the eastern shore of South Point, from South Point to North Shore along the railroad bridge west from North Shore to Goose Point.
- Trawling is prohibited between the railroad bridge and Interstate 10 in Lake Pontchartrain.
- Trawling at night is prohibited in Cameron Parish sections of Calcasieu Lake, the Black Lake Bayou System, Grand Bayou, Little Burton's Ditch, Grand Lake, and White Lake.
- Trawls are prohibited in the waters of Bayou Judge Perez (Bayou Hermitage) from its entrance into Lake Judge Perez (Bayou Hermitage) to Devils Bayou, a distance of approximately 1 mile, located in Plaquemines Parish.
- Trawling is prohibited north of the LA Highway 631 Bridge at Des Allemands, Louisiana, and in Lac Des Allemands, its streams and tributaries.
- Trawling is also prohibited in the cove immediately adjacent to Cypremort Point State Park landward of a line from Blue Point to Cypremort Point to the shoreline.

## CLEAN WATER - DO YOUR PART

### Be part of the solution

- Use shore-side toilet facilities before going out on the water.
- Dispose of waste from portable toilets or on-board sewage holding tanks properly.
- Don't throw anything overboard.
- Bring cut fishing line ashore.
- Avoid discharging bilge waste into the water.
- Be careful when fueling; try to prevent spills.
- For more information on boat sewage disposal facilities or the Clean Vessel Act (CVA) Grant Program, please contact the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries at (225) 765-2864, or visit the Louisiana CVA web page at [www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov) (click on "Boating," click on "Programs" then click on "Clean Vessel Program").



## OTHER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### RECREATIONAL OYSTERING

#### LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Basic Fishing License
2. Saltwater Fishing License
3. A Recreational TONGING License is required for each tong in use.
4. A Senior Fishing License is required of residents who turned 60 years of age on or after June 1, 2000, to take oysters.

#### METHODS OF TAKE

Recreational oyster harvest for home consumption is limited to tonging or gathering by hand.

##### RESTRICTIONS ON METHODS OF TAKE

- Culling oysters, the act of discarding undersized oysters or dead shell, is allowed only on the open designated public areas 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 oyster harvest.
- The harvest or take of oysters during the period of one-half hour after sunset until one-half hour before sunrise is prohibited.
- Oysters taken from the reefs of Louisiana either for sale or consumption must be landed in Louisiana, except with a valid out-of-state oyster-landing permit and with the fisherman being in compliance with all other rules and regulations.

#### SEASONS

The LWFC determines the public oyster areas to be opened for oyster fishing by opening and closing the seasons as biological and technical data indicates. The owner of an oyster lease or his designee, with written permission, may fish oysters at any time of year on their lease.

**EXCEPTION:** Areas opened by the LWFC may, however, be closed by the LDHH for public health reasons. Information on LDHH closed areas is available at [www.dhh.la.gov](http://www.dhh.la.gov).

#### SIZE AND POSSESSION LIMITS

- All oysters taken from public oyster areas must be 3 inches or greater in length from hinge to mouth. A lessee of private oyster areas may be permitted to take undersized oysters from public areas for bedding purposes only.
- Size restrictions do not apply to oysters taken from a private lease.
- Recreational oyster fishermen may harvest oysters from a lease only with the written permission of the leaseholder or in public oyster areas open for the harvesting of oysters. Recreational oyster harvesters are limited to two sacks per person per day for personal consumption, except in the Calcasieu Lake Public Oyster area where the limit is set at one sack per person, per day.

## OTHER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### LEASES

For information on Oyster Leases visit [oysterlease.wlf.la/oyster](http://oysterlease.wlf.la/oyster) or call (504) 284-5279.  
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
2021 Lakeshore Drive, Suite 220  
New Orleans, LA 70122

## RECREATIONAL CRABBING

### REQUIRED LICENSES

1. No license is required for any person using crab nets or crab lines for the purpose of taking crabs.
2. Persons harvesting crabs on LDWF WMAs or refuges must possess a basic recreational fishing license or a Wild Louisiana Stamp.
3. A Recreational Crab Trap Gear License is required to use crab traps. There is a limit of 10 traps per licensed fisherman. Use of crab traps is prohibited on LDWF WMAs and refuges.

### METHODS OF TAKE

- Blue crabs or stone crabs can be taken with any legal crab trap, crab drop net, trawl, hoop net, trotline, handline, bushline, dip net or cast net.
- The taking of crabs by means of trawls in inside waters is permitted only during the open season for shrimp and with legal mesh sizes. For legal mesh sizes refer to the section about trawls listed under Recreational Shrimping.
- Gear restrictions may exist within certain wildlife management areas (WMAs), refuges or other areas.
- the eggs or young attached to the abdomen). All crabs taken in the berry stage by any means must be returned immediately to the waters.
- No crab traps shall be set in navigable channels or entrances to streams. Traps must be placed so vessels can safely navigate.
- Metal tackle or metal crab traps shall not be used in any of the public waters north of the Intracoastal Waterway 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 Cypremort Point 1 mile offshore to Blue Point.

### RESTRICTIONS ON METHODS OF TAKE

- Dredges are not allowed for the intentional taking of crabs.
- No person may possess adult female crabs in the berry stage (i.e., carrying
- Crab traps are prohibited in the Tchefuncte River.

### ABOUT CRAB TRAPS

- A crab trap is a cube-shaped device, constructed of wire, no larger than 30 inches 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 inches 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 one and one-half times the vertical diameter of the opening.
- Certain traps advertised by retail outlets as crab/fish/crawfish traps may not be

[www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov) 41

## OTHER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

legal. If unsure that the trap you purchased or plan to use is legal, please consult your local Enforcement Agent.

- The baiting, tending, checking or removing of serviceable crab traps in use, the contents of such crab traps or their lines, buoys or markers is prohibited in public waters from one-half hour after legal sunset until one-half hour before legal sunrise.
- Crab traps that are no longer serviceable or no longer in use must be removed by the owner and properly disposed of or stored.
- No person other than the licensee or his agent shall intentionally damage or destroy serviceable crab traps or the floats or lines to which they are attached, nor shall they remove the contents thereof.
- Each crab trap shall be marked with a 2-inch stainless steel self-locking tag attached to the center of the trap ceiling. Tags shall be supplied by the fishermen and shall have the recreational crab trap gear license number printed thereon. Crabbers are allowed to use a durable plastic bait box marker as an alternate means of tagging crab traps. Crab traps may be attached to a trotline to which at least one end is attached to a non-floating line and a visible float of at least 6 inches in diameter or 2-gallon volume size. Crab traps located in areas designated as freshwater north of the northern bank of the Intracoastal Waterway and west of Louisiana Highway 70 and those areas located on the eastern side of the Mississippi River and inland from the saltwater line are not required to be marked with a float and float line, unless the trap is placed in a lake. Each crab trap on a trotline shall be registered with LDWF and shall have attached to it a tag bearing the crab fisherman's license number. This is the LDWF number located at the top of your license.
- All crab traps are required to be marked with a solid float at least 6 inches in diameter. The float must be attached to the trap with a non-floating line at least 1/4 inch in diameter. West of Louisiana Highway 70, there is no mark required.
- Each crab trap shall have a minimum of two escape rings. All escape rings shall be placed on the vertical outside walls flush with the trap floor or baffle with at least one ring located in each chamber of the trap. The minimum sizes of the rings shall be 2 and 5/16 inches in inside diameter, not including the ring material. Rings shall be rigid and attached to the trap with material of a smaller diameter than the wire strands of the trap. Escape ring openings may be obstructed with material that prevents or hampers exit of crabs from April 1 - June 30 and from Sept. 1 - Oct. 31. **Effective Nov. 15, 2017 and thereafter, a minimum of three escape rings shall be placed on the vertical, outside walls flush with the trap floor or baffle with at least two rings located in the upper chamber of each trap. The minimum sizes of rings shall be 2 and 3/8 inches.** Any crab trap constructed of wire mesh 2 and 5/16 square or greater is exempt from escape ring requirements.

### SIZE AND POSSESSION LIMITS

- There is no minimum recreational size limit for blue crabs. The limit is 12 dozen per person, daily and in possession.
- Certain WMAs and state and federal refuges may have different possession limits. Consult a local LDWF or Enforcement Office for specifics (*see WMA and Refuge Regulations on page 46*).
- There is no minimum recreational size limit for stone crabs or stone crab claws.

## RECREATIONAL CRAWFISHING

### LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Basic Fishing License
2. A Recreational Crawfish Trap Gear License is required to use crawfish traps in public waters.

### EXCEPTIONS

- A Basic Recreational Fishing License or a Wild Louisiana Stamp is required to use crawfish nets, dip nets, hand lines, or bait seines on LDWF WMAs or refuges.
- A Basic Recreational Fishing License or a gear license is not required to use crawfish nets, dip nets, hand lines, or bait seines for taking crawfish recreationally.

### METHODS OF TAKE

Crawfish may be taken with any legal crawfish trap, crawfish net, hoop net, wire net, handline, bushline, bait seine or dip net. A cast net must not exceed 8.5 feet in radius.

#### CRAWFISH TRAP

A crawfish trap is defined as any device constructed of coated wire with the opening of the throats or flues not exceeding 2 inches, and which is used for the express use of taking crawfish. Crawfish traps are typically of the pillow style or cone style with minimum mesh size no smaller than 3/4 inches by 11/16 inches. Traps must have a minimum mesh size of a hexagon of

3/4 by 11/16 of 1 inch from wire to wire not including any coating on the wire.

Crawfish traps must be marked with a waterproof tag, provided by the fisherman, with the name and recreational gear license number of the fisherman legibly printed on the tag.

#### CRAWFISH NET

A crawfish net is defined as any device constructed with vegetable or synthetic material without flues or throats attached to a wire frame that forms a net basket and is used for the purpose of taking crawfish.

### SEASONS

There is no closed season for wild crawfish harvest EXCEPT for some wildlife management areas and state and federal refuges (*see WMAs and Refuges on page 46*).

### SIZE AND POSSESSION LIMITS

- There is no minimum size for crawfish.
- The bag and possession limit for crawfish is 150 pounds daily per person in state waters.
- No more than 35 traps may be used per person while fishing recreationally for crawfish.

## OTHER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

#### LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Basic Resident or Non-Resident Fishing License.

#### METHODS FOR COLLECTING OR CATCHING THESE SPECIES

The regulations listed below apply to all frogs, salamanders, lizards, snakes, turtles and related species. All reptiles and amphibians caught are for personal (non-commercial) use only. These regulations do not include alligators. For alligator regulations visit [www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov). Always check with an LDWF Enforcement Office if you have questions.

#### ILLEGAL METHODS OF TAKE FOR ALL REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

- Removal of nesting or nest-tending animals is prohibited.
- Use of gasoline to flush animals from hiding places is prohibited.
- Natural cover such as stumps and logs may not be destroyed while searching for animals.
- **Additional illegal methods of take are species specific and are grouped accordingly.**

#### SPECIES YOU CANNOT HARVEST

- Tiger salamander
- Southern red backed salamander
- Webster's salamander (*Plethodon websteri*)
- Mud salamander (*Pseudotriton montanus*)
- Red salamander

#### THREATENED OR ENDANGERED SPECIES

The following federally listed threatened and endangered, or prohibited species are off limits for recreational take. Civil and criminal penalties may apply for taking the following aquatic species. If any of these protected species are incidentally caught, they must be released unharmed immediately:

- Green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)
- Hawksbill sea turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)
- Kemp's ridley sea turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*)
- Leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*)
- Loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*)
- Gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*)
- Ringed map turtle (*Graptemys oculifera*)
- Dusky gopher frog (*Rana sevosa*)

#### WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS AND STATE AND FEDERAL REFUGES

WMAs, state refuges and federal refuges may have specific regulations regarding open seasons, harvest and gear restrictions. For state-regulated areas refer to the WMA and Refuge Regulation section on page 46.

## OTHER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

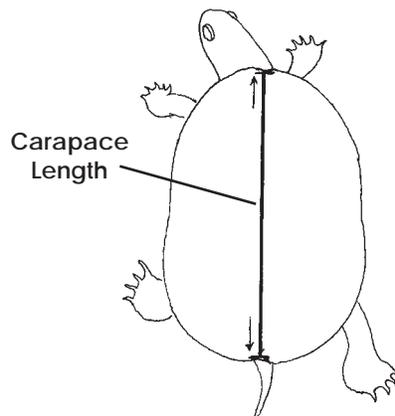
### TURTLES

#### ALLIGATOR SNAPPING TURTLES

- No size limit.
- Take is limited to no more than one snapping turtle per day, per person, per vehicle/vessel.

#### DIAMONDBACK TERRAPINS

- Must measure 6 inches or more carapace length.
- Legal during all months except between the dates of April 15 - June 15.
- ***It is illegal to take this species by a trap of any kind.***



#### BOX TURTLES

- Take is limited to two box turtles per day.
- Possession is limited to four box turtles of the genus *Terrapene* at any time.

#### TURTLE EGGS

No turtle eggs may be taken except for those of the red eared slider.

#### TURTLE TRAPS

- Traps must be checked daily.
- Must be marked as "turtle trap."
- Must be open above water to allow breathing.
- Must be constructed as a horizontal, single-throated device.
- ***It is illegal to possess finfish while turtle trapping.***

### FROGS

#### LEGAL METHOD OF TAKE

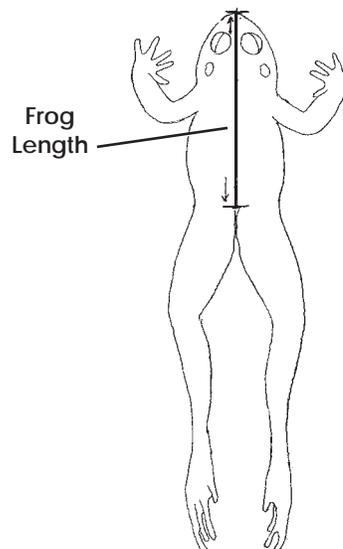
Frogs may be taken using any visible light and mechanical devices known as frog catchers or with devices that puncture the skin, such as gigs or spears.

#### ILLEGAL METHOD OF TAKE

Possession of firearms while taking or hunting frogs at night is prohibited.

#### BULLFROGS AND PIG FROGS

- Length requirements (measured from tip of the muzzle to the posterior end of the body between the hind legs)
- Bullfrogs harvested must be 5 inches or larger.
- Pig frogs harvested must be 3 inches or larger.
- Frogs harvested on private lands, ponds or waters where the individual is an authorized representative are not limited by length requirements.
- Harvest is legal during all months of the year except April and May.



## WMAs, REFUGES & FEDERAL LANDS

### FISHING REGULATIONS ON WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS, REFUGES & FEDERAL LANDS

Wildlife management areas (WMAs), refuges and certain federal lands may have special fishing seasons and bag and possession limits, size limits or closures that differ from general regulations.

#### REQUIRED LICENSES

A Wild Louisiana Stamp, hunting license or fishing license, depending on activities in which an individual is engaged, is required for use of department-administered lands, including wildlife refuges, WMAs and habitat conservation areas. Persons under 16 years of age and over 60 years of age or older are exempt from this requirement. Persons attending official functions of private, non-profit and charitable organizations recognized as tax-exempt under the provisions of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code shall also be exempted from this requirement.

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

The operation of boats with internal combustion engines within designated limited access areas (LAAs), on some coastal WMAs is restricted during waterfowl hunting season from Sept. 1 - Jan. 31. Limited access areas exist within the Atchafalaya Delta, Joyce (year-round), Manchac, Pass-a-Loutre, Pointe-aux-Chenes and Salvador WMAs.

LAAs are posted with signage at access points around the perimeter. Any vessel with a movable outdrive system may enter an LAA as long as the boat's internal combustion engine is trimmed up out of the water in an inoperable position. Vessels with fixed props must adhere to the "no operation" rule. Trolling motors may be used to access and navigate within an LAA while hunting or fishing.

Additional restrictions may apply at some WMAs. Below are specific restrictions by WMA. For additional information, contact your local LDWF Office.

For National Wildlife Refuges, please contact the area offices as follows:

- North Louisiana Complex - 318-726-4222
- Central Louisiana Complex - 318-253-4238
- Southeast Louisiana Complex - 985-882-2000
- Southwest Louisiana Complex - 337-598-2216

For fishing information on the Indian Bayou Recreational Area within the Atchafalaya Basin or the Bonne Carre Spillway contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at 337-585-0853.

For fishing information within the Catahoula and Red Dirt National Wildlife Management Preserves, contact Kisatchie National forest 318-473-7160.

## WMAs, REFUGES & FEDERAL LANDS

### ATCHAFALAYA DELTA

---

- Camping and houseboat mooring is allowed only in designated areas.
- **Vessels/Vehicles:** Mudboats or air-cooled propulsion vessels powered by more than 36 total horsepower are prohibited on the WMA.
- **Limited Access Area:** No internal combustion engines allowed from September through January. See WMA map for specific locations.

### BILOXI

---

**Vessels/Vehicles:** Mudboats or air-cooled propulsion vessels powered by more than 36 total horsepower are prohibited on the WMA.

### CAMP BEAUREGARD

---

Special regulations to be posted at Twin Lakes.

### DEWEY W. WILLS

---

Crawfishing is limited to 100 pounds per person per day.

### ELMER'S ISLAND WILDLIFE REFUGE

---

- Commercial fishing, including guide service, is CLOSED.
- Access and use of Elmer's Island is only permitted 30 minutes before official sunrise to 30 minutes after official sunset seven days a week. However, the secretary of LDWF may restrict any portion of Elmer's Island whenever circumstances exist such that restrictions are necessary to protect the Refuge or to protect the public from harm.
- Camping or overnight activities are prohibited.
- No glass containers are allowed.
- The discharge of firearms, including muzzleloaders, bows and arrows, or crossbows is prohibited.
- Maximum speed limit on the island is 5 MPH.
- Check for emergency closures and other information on Elmer's Island at <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/refuge/elmers-island>

### FORT POLK-VERNON

---

Special regulations pertaining to fishing are posted at specific lakes.

### GRASSY LAKE

---

- Recreational fishing is permitted only after 2 p.m., during the waterfowl season in Smith and Red River bays, and in Grassy Lake proper.
- Recreational crawfishing is permitted from March 15 - July 31 and is limited to 100 pounds per person per day. **No traps or nets are to be left overnight.**

### ISLE DERNIERES BARRIER ISLANDS REFUGE

---

#### WINE ISLAND, EAST ISLAND, WHISKEY ISLAND AND RACCOON ISLAND

- Public access by any means to the exposed land areas, wetlands, and interior waterways of these islands is prohibited without a permit.
- Disturbing, injuring, or collecting flora, fauna, or other property is prohibited without a permit.
- Boat traffic is allowed adjacent to the islands in open water (Gulf and bays).

[www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov) 47

## WMAs, REFUGES & FEDERAL LANDS

- Boat traffic is prohibited in waterways extending into the interior of the islands or within any land-locked open waters or wetlands of the islands.
- Fishing from boats along the shore and wade fishing in the surf areas of the islands is allowed.
- Littering is prohibited.

### TRINITY ISLAND

- Public access is allowed in a designated public use area.
- The area is approximately 3,000 linear feet by 500 linear feet and it borders the western end of the man-made canal commonly known as California Canal. It is accessible via California Canal or the Gulf of Mexico. The boundaries are marked and maintained by LDWF.
- Public recreation such as bird-watching, picnicking, fishing, and overnight camping is allowed in this area.
- Travel on or across this area shall be limited to foot or bicycle traffic only. No use of ATVs or other vehicles powered by internal combustion engines or electric motors shall be allowed.
- Carrying, possessing, or discharging firearms, fireworks, or explosives in the designated public use area is prohibited.
- Littering is prohibited.
- Disturbing, injuring, or collecting flora, fauna, or other property is prohibited without a permit.
- Any member of the public utilizing the public use area must have a portable waste disposal container to collect all human waste and to remove it upon leaving the island.
- Public access outside of the public use area is prohibited without a permit.
- Boat traffic is allowed adjacent to the island in open water (Gulf and bays) and within the man-made canal commonly known as California Canal.
- No boat traffic is allowed in other man-made or natural waterways extending into the interior of the island or in any land-locked open waters or wetlands of the island.

### JOYCE

- **Limited Access Area:** Internal combustion engines prohibited year-round. See WMA map for specific location.
- Crawfishing is limited to 100 pounds per person per day.

### LAKE BOEUF

All nighttime activities prohibited, including frogging.

### MANCHAC

- **Limited Access Area:** No internal combustion engines allowed from September through January. See WMA map for specific location.
- Crab traps are prohibited. Attended lift nets are allowed.

### MAUREPAS SWAMP

Crawfishing is limited to 100 pounds per person per day.

### OUACHITA

- Recreational crawfishing is limited to 100 pounds per person per day. No traps or nets may be left overnight.
- The waterfowl refuge north of LA Hwy. 15 is closed to all fishing during duck season, including early teal season, **EXCEPT** allowed during the "Falconry for Ducks" portion of the waterfowl season.

## WMAs, REFUGES & FEDERAL LANDS

### PASS-A-LOUTRE

- Oyster harvesting is prohibited.
- Camping is allowed only in designated areas.
- **Vessels/Vehicles:** Mudboats or air-cooled propulsion vessels powered by more than 36 total horsepower are prohibited on the WMA.
- **Limited Access Area:** No internal combustion engines allowed from September through January. See WMA map for specific locations.

### PEARL RIVER

Crawfishing is limited to 100 pounds per person per day.

### POINTE-AUX-CHENES

- All nighttime activities prohibited.
- The harvest of all fish, shrimp, crabs and crawfish is for recreational purposes only and any commercial use is prohibited.
- All castnet contents shall be contained and bycatch returned to the water immediately.
- Fishing gear used to catch crawfish must not remain set overnight.

#### VESSELS & VEHICLES

- All boats powered by internal combustion engines having horsepower ratings above 25 hp., are not allowed in the Grand Bayou, Montegut and Pointe-aux-Chenes water management units. The public is permitted to travel anytime through the WMA for access purposes only, in the waterways known as Bayou Pointe-aux-Chenes, Grand Bayou, Humble Canal, Little Bayou Blue, St. Louis Canal, and Grand Bayou Blue. All other motorized vehicles, as well as horses and mules, are prohibited unless authorized by LDWF.
- Type A personal watercraft, model year 2003 and beyond, which are 8 or more feet in length may be operated on Pointe-aux-Chenes WMA from April 1 until the Monday after Labor Day Weekend, from sunrise to sunset only. No person shall operate such watercraft at a speed greater than "slow/no wake" within 100 feet of any anchored or moored vessel, shoreline, dock, pier, persons engaged in angling or any other manually powered vessel.

#### SHRIMPING

- Shrimp may be taken by the use of cast nets only.
- During the inside open shrimp season, 25 pounds per boat per day (heads on) maximum allowed. Size count must conform to open season requirements.
- During the inside closed season, 10 pounds per boat per day (heads on) may be taken for bait.

#### OYSTERS

- Oyster harvesting is prohibited.

#### FINFISH

- Fish may be taken only by rod and reel or by hand lines for recreational purposes only.

#### CRABBING

- Crabs may be taken only through the use of hand lines or nets; however, none are to remain set overnight.
- Twelve dozen crabs maximum are allowed per boat or vehicle per day.

#### CRAWFISHING

- Crawfish may be harvested in unrestricted portions of the WMA and shall be limited to 100 pounds per person per day.

#### LIMITED ACCESS AREA

- No internal combustion engines allowed from September through January. See WMA map for specific locations.

[www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov) 49

## WMAs, REFUGES & FEDERAL LANDS

### POMME DE TERRE

---

- Recreational fishing regulations are the same as outside. **NOTE:** Allowed only after 2 p.m., during waterfowl season.
- Recreational crawfishing is allowed from March 15 - July 31 and is limited to 100 pounds per person per day. **No traps or nets are to be left overnight.**

### RICHARD K. YANCEY

---

#### YAKY FARMS ONLY

- Recreational crawfishing is permitted from March 15 - July 31 and is limited to 100 pounds per person per day. A maximum of five wire traps per person is permitted. No traps or nets are to be left overnight.
- No motorized watercraft are allowed on farms.

### RUSSELL SAGE

---

Crawfishing is limited to 100 pounds per person per day limit.

### SALVADOR/TIMKEN

---

- All nighttime activities prohibited, **EXCEPT** during the Experimental Nighttime Activity Season.
- Self-Clearing Permit required for all activities permitted during the Experimental Nighttime Activity Season.
- The harvest of all fish, shrimp, crabs and crawfish are for recreational purposes only and any commercial use is prohibited.

#### SHRIMPING

- Shrimp may be taken by the use of cast nets only.
- During the inside open shrimp season, 25 pounds per boat per day (heads on) maximum shall be permitted.
- Size count shall conform with any open season requirements.
- During the inside closed season, 10 pounds per boat per day (heads on) maximum may be taken for bait.
- All castnet contents shall be contained and bycatch returned to the water immediately.

#### FINFISH

- Fish may be taken only by rod and reel, or by hand lines for recreational purposes.

#### CRABBING

- Crabs may be taken only through the use of hand lines or nets; however, none are to remain set overnight.
- Twelve dozen crabs maximum are allowed per boat or vehicle per day.

#### CRAWFISHING

- Crawfish may be harvested in unrestricted portions of the WMA and shall be limited to 100 pounds per person per day. Fishing gear used to catch crawfish shall not remain set overnight.

#### VESSELS & VEHICLES

- Use of mudboats powered by internal combustion engines with more than four cylinders is prohibited.
- Pulling boats over levees, dams or water control structures or any other activities that may cause detriment to the integrity of levees, dams and water control structures is prohibited.

#### LIMITED ACCESS AREA

- No internal combustion engines allowed from September through January. See WMA map for specific location.

## WMAs, REFUGES & FEDERAL LANDS

### EXPERIMENTAL NIGHTTIME ACTIVITY SEASON

- Self-clearing Permit required
- 12 a.m., June 1, 2014 through official sunset Aug. 15, 2014. Nighttime activities LIMITED to the take of frogs and fishing with a rod and reel. All other nighttime activities prohibited. Daily limit of 50 frogs per vessel in aggregate (bull frogs/pig frogs). If engaged in frogging on or while traversing the WMA, all frogs in possession will be deemed to have been taken from the WMA. At no time may anyone possess more than on daily limit of frogs while on the water.
- **Size Limit:** (Measured from the tip of the muzzle to the posterior end of the body between the hind legs). Bull frogs harvested must be 5 inches or larger. Pig frogs harvested must be 3 inches or larger.
- Check out portion of self-clearing permit must include boat registration number under the comments section. Possession of firearms while participation in any experimental nighttime activity is prohibited.

### SHERBURNE

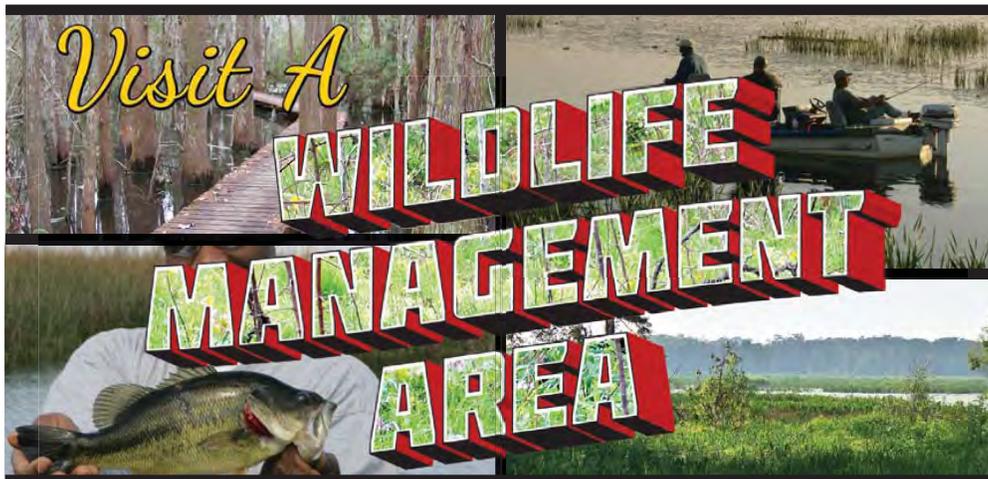
- Recreational crawfishing is permitted from March 15 - July 31 with a limit of 100 pounds per person per day. No traps or nets are to be left overnight.
- No motorized watercrafts are allowed on the farm complex.

### SODA LAKE

Recreational fishing is permitted from April 1 - Aug. 31.

### SPRING BAYOU

- Recreational fishing is permitted, **EXCEPT** only after 2 p.m. during waterfowl season.
- Recreational crawfishing is permitted from March 15 - July 31 and is limited to 100 pounds per person per day. **No traps or nets are to be left overnight.**



LDWF's WMAs offer over 1.5 million acres of public recreation  
Fishing - Hunting - Camping - Hiking - Bird Watching - Photography  
For more information, call your local LDWF Office or go to [www.wlf.la.gov](http://www.wlf.la.gov)

## WMAs, REFUGES & FEDERAL LANDS

### ROCKEFELLER WILDLIFE REFUGE, STATE WILDLIFE REFUGE (Vermilion) & MARSH ISLAND WILDLIFE REFUGE

- Trawling is prohibited.
- Trotlines, jug lines, trammel and gill nets, and traps are prohibited.
- Use of the refuges is permitted from official sunrise to official sunset. This includes access routes through the refuge. Overnight camping is prohibited.
- Firearms are prohibited. Littering is prohibited. Damage to or removal of trees, shrubs, and wild plants without prior approval is prohibited.

#### SHRIMPING

- 25 pounds of shrimp (heads on) per boat or vehicle per day is allowed during the inside open shrimp season as established by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission.
- 10 pounds of shrimp (heads on) for bait purposes may be caught during the closed season.
- Shrimp may be harvested only by cast net on the refuge and only for sport fishing or home consumption use. When harvesting shrimp with a cast net, contents shall be dumped in a container and not on the ground.

#### CRAWFISHING

- Recreational crawfishing is permitted in the open portion of the refuge with a limit of 100 pounds per boat or vehicle per day.
- Set nets may be used but must be attended and removed from the refuge daily. No commercial harvest is allowed.

#### CRABBING

- Crabs may be harvested from the open portion of the refuge with a limit of 12 dozen crabs per boat or vehicle per day.
- **NOTE:** No commercial harvest is allowed on Marsh Island, State Wildlife and Rockefeller refuges.

#### OYSTERS

- Oysters may be harvested by tonging (properly licensed) or by hand collection from the natural reefs, but only in waters approved (open) for harvest by the Department of Health and Hospitals.
- One gallon per boat or vehicle per day is allowed and oysters must be opened at the reef and the shells returned to the reef.
- Taking of oysters from the natural reefs may be closed at any time by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

#### VESSELS & VEHICLES

- Speedboat racing and water skiing are prohibited.
- All boat traffic shall honor no wake zones and shall keep wave wash to a minimum.
- Pulling boats over or around levees, dams or water control structures or any other activities that may cause detriment to the integrity of levees, dams and water control structures is prohibited.
- Jet skis and airboats are prohibited.

### KISATCHIE NATIONAL FOREST- NATIONAL CATAHOULA AND NATIONAL RED DIRT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PRESERVES

Preserves will be closed to fishing during deer gun hunts. Consult hunting regulations for dates.

### U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS - INDIAN BAYOU AREA

Commercial or recreational crawfishing is permitted from Feb. 1 - Aug. 31 with an additional permit required. The permit is available Jan. 1. Call USACE Port Barre Office for more details (337) 585-0853.

## FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORIES

### FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORIES

Fish are a lean and nutritious source of protein. However, some fish may contain chemicals that could pose health risks. Louisiana fish consumption advisories are based on the estimate that the average Louisiana resident eats four fish meals per month (a meal is considered to be 6 ounces of fish for adults and children). If you or your family

members eat more than four meals of fish a month from local water bodies, you might increase your health risks. For current advisories call the Department of Environmental Health at 888-293-7020, 504-568-8156 or visit [www.dhh.state.la.us](http://www.dhh.state.la.us) for more information about eating fish that may contain chemicals.

### CONSUMPTION ADVICE FOR WOMEN WHO ARE PREGNANT, NURSING OR MIGHT BECOME PREGNANT & FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

By following these three recommendations for selecting and eating fish or shellfish, women and young children will receive the benefits of eating fish and shellfish and be confident that they have reduced their exposure to the harmful effects of mercury. Follow these same recommendations when feeding fish or shellfish to a young child, but serve smaller portions.

- Do not eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel or tilefish, as these contain high levels of mercury.
- Eat up to 12 ounces a week of a variety of fish and shellfish that are lower in mercury. The five most commonly eaten species that are low in mercury are shrimp, canned light tuna, salmon, pollock and catfish.
- Up to 6 ounces a week of albacore ("white") tuna may be consumed since this variety may contain more mercury than light tuna.



[www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov) | 53

## BOATING SAFETY

*All boaters are encouraged to ensure their vessels are in good working condition and all required safety equipment is on board.*

### LOUISIANA REQUIRED BOATING EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

	PERSONAL WATERCRAFT	BOATS LESS THAN 16 FEET	BOATS 16 FEET TO LESS THAN 26 FEET
Registration on Board	✓	✓	✓
Validation Decals Displayed	✓	✓	✓
PFDs: Type I, II or III	✓ 1	✓ 2,3,4	✓ 2,4
PFDs: Type IV			✓
Engine Cut Off Device	✓	5	5
Type B Fire Extinguishers	✓	✓	✓
Navigation Lights	6	✓	✓
Horn, Whistle or Bell			✓
Daytime Visual Distress Signals			✓ 7
Nighttime Visual Distress Signals	6	7	7
Backfire Flame Arrestor	✓	8	8
Ventilation System	✓	✓	✓
Muffler/Underwater Exhaust	✓	✓	✓

- Those on personal watercraft (PWC) must wear a USCG approved Type I, II, III or V personal flotation device (PFD) at all times.
- Children 16 years of age and younger must wear a USCG approved Type I, II or III PFD while underway on a vessel less than 26 feet long. A wearable USCG approved Type I, II or III PFD must be readily available for each of the other passengers onboard.
- All persons onboard a motorboat less than 16 feet which is being propelled by a hand tiller outboard motor are required to wear a USCG approved Type I, II, III or V PFD while the motorboat is underway.
- Persons engaged in water sports, which includes but is not limited to water skiing, being towed on a tube, wake boarding, wake surfing, etc. must wear a USCG approved Type I, II, III or V PFD. An inflatable PFD does not meet the requirements.
- A motorboat less than 26 feet with a hand tiller outboard motor in excess of 10 horsepower designed to have or having an engine cut-off switch must have the engine cut-off switch link attached to the operator, the operator's clothing, or the operator's PFD, if worn, while the motor is running and the vessel is underway.
- Certain items are not applicable to PWCs because PWCs are not allowed to operate between sunset and sunrise.
- Required on federally controlled waters (offshore, tidal coastal areas).
- Required for inboards and stern drivers only.

### LIFE JACKETS SAVE LIVES

*Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) save lives. Get one and wear it when you're on the water.*

Remember that children 16 years old or younger must wear a properly sized and fitted, personal flotation device approved by the U.S. Coast Guard at all times when a vessel is underway. Get your child fitted for a proper life vest and lead by example by wearing one too. For more information on how to find the right life vest or for more boating safety tips, visit <http://www.uscgboating.org> or [www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov).



**CONSUMER ALERT:** Choosing the correct Personal Flotation Device (PFD) can be the difference between life and death when on the water. Make sure the PFD is U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) approved. A USCG approved PFD will have an approval number on the label usually on the inside part of the PFD. A PFD that is not USCG approved is illegal and unsafe. More and more non-approved PFDs are showing up in the marketplace and are being sold at larger retailers where most customers assume it is an approved version

### BOATER EDUCATION

All persons born after Jan. 1, 1984 are required to complete a NASBLA approved boating education course to operate a motorboat over 10 horsepower and must carry proof of such when operating the motorboat. A motorboat may be operated if any person on board or participating in any boating activity from the motorboat is over the age of 18, and if required to have completed a boating course, has completed the required boating safety course.

LDWF offers Boating Classes in every region of the state, free of charge to the public.

For those who cannot attend a classroom setting an online boating class is available, however, it is not administered by LDWF and a fee is assessed. Visit [www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov) for more information about Boater Education.



**TO REPORT MISSING/OVERDUE BOATERS, REPORT A BOAT CRASH INCIDENT OR REPORT VIOLATIONS, PLEASE CALL 1-800-442-2511.**

**LADWF TIPS APP now available from the Apple Store and Google Play**

**LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE & FISHERIES  
LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION**

# LOUISIANA SPORT FISH RESTORATION PROGRAM

The Sport Fish Restoration Program is a “user pays, user benefits” system of resource management. The federal and state governments, the sport fishing industry, anglers, and boaters formed the cooperative effort to increase boating and sport fishing opportunities.



The cycle of funding (illustrated above) shows how Louisiana anglers and outdoor enthusiasts support the Sport Fish Restoration Program, and the benefits they receive in return.

**Invest in the Future... Geaux Fish Louisiana!**





Aquatic plants and marine species are creating serious aquatic habitat problems in many areas of the state. This harmful introduction can create significant changes in freshwater and marine ecosystems.

**Help do your part by taking a few simple steps to stop the spread of unwanted aquatic plants:**

- Dispose of unwanted live bait on land before leaving the waterbody.
- Inspect all fish caught using seines, dip nets, or other types of netting; remove and discard undesirable bycatch.
- Inspect your boat, trailer, and other equipment and remove any visible plants, animals or mud before leaving a water body.
- Wash and dry your boat, tackle, and other equipment to remove/kill harmful species that were not evident at the boat launch.



Giant Salvinia: Troy Evans, Great Smoky Mountains National Park; Hydrilla: Chris Evans, Illinois Wildlife Action Plan (all courtesy of [forestryimages.org](http://forestryimages.org)). Water Hyacinth, Coontail and Boat photos: LDWF.

# COMING SUMMER 2015!



LOUISIANA | WILDLIFE & FISHERIES | FOUNDATION  
PRESENTS

## WIN A BOAT!

# Louisiana

2015-2016  
LICENSE TO WIN!



# SWEEPSTAKES

PURCHASING A 2015-2016  
SALTWATER RECREATIONAL LICENSE  
QUALIFIES YOU FOR THE  
GRAND PRIZE, QUARTERLY  
& MONTHLY DRAWINGS!

WIN  
MONTHLY  
&  
QUARTERLY  
GIVEAWAYS!

- Purchase a **FISHING LICENSE**
- Provide valid method of contact during purchase

GRAND  
PRIZE!  
BOAT,  
MOTOR &  
TRAILER

[www.wlf.la.gov/fishing/license-win-sweepstakes](http://www.wlf.la.gov/fishing/license-win-sweepstakes)



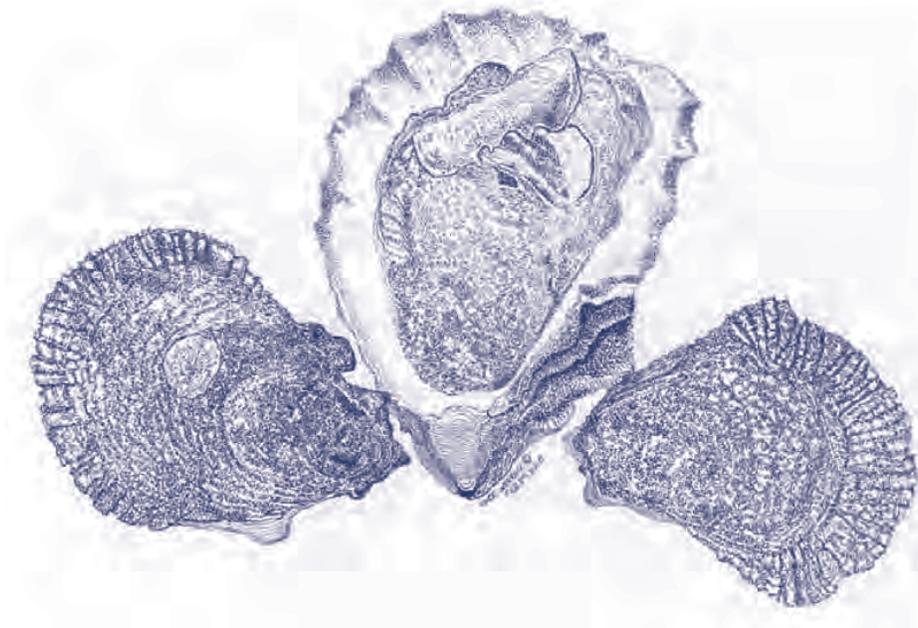
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



# **Guide to Mississippi Saltwater Fishing**

---

## **Rules and Regulations**



ENHANCE \* PROTECT \* CONSERVE

## **2015-2016**

### **Mississippi Department of Marine Resources**



# Mississippi Department of Marine Resources



## State of Mississippi

The Honorable Phil Bryant, Governor

## Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources

Richard Gollott – Chairman  
Harrison County

Commercial Seafood Processor

Shelby Drummond – Vice Chairman  
Jackson County

Recreational Fisherman

Steve Bosarge  
Jackson County

Commercial Fisherman

Ernie Zimmerman  
Hancock County

Nonprofit Environmental  
Organization

Ron Harmon  
Harrison County

Charter Boat Operator

## Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Jamie M. Miller, Executive Director

Printed July 2015

For more information, contact the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, 1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi, MS 39530, 228-374-5000.

Visit our website: [dmr.ms.gov](http://dmr.ms.gov).

The information provided in this guide is an overview of regulations in effect as of July 1, 2015, concerning saltwater fishing in Mississippi's marine waters prepared in accordance with Mississippi Code Annotated §49-15-18. However, this guide is not, nor is it intended to be, a definitive publication of all regulations pertaining to saltwater fishing in Mississippi. Complete texts of all regulations and statutes are available at the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources' office and website. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this guide, readers are reminded that in the event of a conflict between state statute and CMR regulations, state statute will take precedence. If you are fishing in another state or in federal waters, please consult fishing regulations that would be applicable. Readers are further reminded that all regulations are subject to change.

**Federal regulations may differ from state regulations. For federal regulations, contact the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council at 888-833-1844 or [gulfcouncil.org](http://gulfcouncil.org).**

**The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council offers a free fishing regulations App for the Android and the iPhone.** The Apps provide immediate access to the most up-to-date commercial and recreational federal fishing regulations for species managed by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. Visit the App Store or Android Market to download the App or simply scan the appropriate QR code below with your iPhone or Droid.

iPhone



Droid



## Table of Contents

<b>FISHING AND BOAT LICENSES</b> .....	2
<b>LICENSE FEES</b> .....	3
<b>RECREATIONAL FISHING LIMITS</b> .....	4
<b>COMMERCIAL FISHING LIMITS</b> .....	6
<b>CATCH AND RELEASE</b> .....	7
<b>SHARKS</b> .....	8
Recreational & Commercial Shark Limits	
Common Sharks in Mississippi Waters	
<b>SALTWATER FINFISH</b> .....	12
Methods of Taking	
Special Provisions	
Venting Regulations	
Catch Restrictions	
Common Finfish in Mississippi Waters	
<b>RECREATIONAL FISHING</b> .....	18
Special Provisions	
Charter and Head Boats	
<b>MISSISSIPPI SPORTFISHING RECORDS</b> .....	20
<b>SHRIMP</b> .....	21
Commercial & Recreational Methods of Taking	
Restricted Areas	
Season	
Legal Size	
Special Provisions	
Live-Bait Shrimping	
<b>OYSTERS</b> .....	24
Methods of Taking	
Definitions to Know	
Oyster Reefs	
Special Provisions	
Seasons	
Legal Size & Catch Limits	
<b>CRABS</b> .....	28
Methods of Taking	
Special Provisions	
Commercial & Recreational	
Diamondback Terrapins	
<b>MENHADEN</b> .....	30
<b>DATA REPORTING REQUIREMENTS</b> .....	30
<b>PROTECTED SPECIES</b> .....	31
<b>MARINE LITTER</b> .....	33
Marine Litter Regulation & Exceptions	
Penalties	
Mississippi Coastal Cleanup	
Mississippi Monofilament Recycling Program	
<b>INVASIVE SPECIES</b> .....	35
<b>GENERAL PENALTIES/LICENSE SALES</b> .....	36

---

## Fishing and Boat Licenses

### FISHING LICENSES

A Mississippi saltwater fishing license is required for anyone to harvest fish in coastal and marine waters (Miss Code Ann. Section 49-15-313) of this state except:

- Any person under the age of 16.
- Residents who have been declared by the Veterans Administration as having a total service-connected disability or have been declared totally disabled by the Social Security Administration. **Proof is required.**

**Residents 65 years of age or older are required to purchase a lifetime recreational saltwater fishing license for a one-time fee.**

A saltwater fishing license is required to fish south of Highway 90. Above Highway 90 and below Interstate 10, either a saltwater or freshwater license will suffice, and above I-10, a freshwater license is required.

### OTHER RECREATIONAL LICENSES

The above exemptions apply for recreational crab, shrimp and oyster licenses, but only to vessels registered in the exempt resident's name.

**Anyone exempt from these license requirements must have a valid driver's license and proof of service-connected or Social Security disability, if applicable, in his possession while fishing.**

Temporary residents stationed at a Mississippi military base can use a military I.D. to purchase a resident fishing license.

**Free fishing days** – Anyone may fish without a recreational saltwater fishing license in state marine waters, which are waters south of I-10, on **the first weekend of National Fishing and Boating Week in June and on July 4.**

**Saltwater sportfishing, recreational shrimping and recreational crabbing licenses expire one (1) year after date of sale.**

All commercial boats, whether resident or nonresident, fishing for shrimp, oysters, crabs or finfish (with gill net, trammel net or similar approved nets) within the territorial waters of the State of Mississippi are required to be licensed as described herein.

**All commercial seafood licenses expire April 30 of each year.**

### BOAT LICENSES

Proof of residence must be shown, along with valid boat registration/documentation before any license can be purchased. Proof can be a valid driver's license, homestead exemption, voter's registration card or a Mississippi state tax return.

## License Fees

TYPE OF LICENSE	RESIDENT LICENSE FEES
<b>SHRIMP</b>	
Recreational	\$15
Shrimp/Captain Under 30' Boat	\$60
Shrimp/Captain 30' to 45' Boat	\$85
Shrimp/Captain Over 45' Boat	\$110
Mississippi Captain's License	\$10
<b>CRAB</b>	
Commercial Crab Trawl	\$75
Commercial Crab Trap	\$75
Recreational Crab Trap	\$5
<b>FISH</b>	
Recreational Saltwater Fishing License*	\$12.29**
Fishing Boat License/Gill & Trammel Net	\$100
Charter Boat	\$200
Commercial Hook and Line/Gig per Vessel	\$100
Commercial Hook and Line/Gig per Fisherman	\$100
Menhaden Boat/Net	\$150
Lifetime License (for 65 and older)***	\$7.29
<b>OYSTER</b>	
Recreational	\$10
Commercial TONGING****	\$60
Commercial Dredging****	\$110
<b>LIVE BAIT</b>	
Live-bait Shrimp Dealer	\$50
Live-bait Shrimp Boat	\$100
Saltwater Minnow*****	\$50
<b>BUSINESS LICENSE</b>	
Interstate Commerce	\$20
Seafood Dealer/Processor*****	\$100
Menhaden Processor	\$500
Seafood Transport License	\$100
Fresh Product Permit	No Charge

\*Valid for recreational methods of taking finfish south of U.S. Interstate 10.

\*\*License fee of \$10 plus \$2.29 processing and agent fees.

\*\*\*Residents 65 years of age or older are required to purchase a lifetime recreational saltwater fishing license for a small one-time fee of \$5 plus \$2.29 processing and agent fees.

\*\*\*\*A valid MS Shellfish Education Course certificate must be presented by the business representative at time of license purchase.

\*\*\*\*\*In order to catch or transport saltwater minnows for sale, fishermen must obtain a saltwater minnow license (see p. 13).

\*\*\*\*\*A valid MS Oyster Harvester Education certificate must be presented by the boat owner at time of license purchase.

**Each seafood dealer/processor is required to complete Mississippi trip tickets provided by the MDMR. Commercial fishermen who land and sell their catch to anyone except a licensed Mississippi dealer/processor are required to complete trip tickets and be in possession of a fresh product permit.**

License fees for nonresidents may vary. Call the MDMR at 228-374-5000 for current license fees if you are a nonresident.

## Recreational Fishing Limits\*

<i>*Bag/Possession are per person unless stated otherwise.</i>	Minimum Length in Inches	Number of Fish Bag/Possession
COBIA	33 FL	2
FLOUNDER	12 TL	15
RED DRUM ♦	18 TL to 30 TL**	3
SPOTTED SEATROUT	13 TL	15
KING MACKEREL ♦♦♦	24 FL	2
SPANISH MACKEREL ♦♦♦	No Limit	15
TRIPLETAIL	18 TL	3
VERMILLION SNAPPER ♦♦♦	10 TL	20 (in aggregate)
LANE SNAPPER ♦♦♦	8 TL	
GRAY TRIGGERFISH ♦♦♦	14 FL	
ALMACO JACK ♦♦♦	No Limit	
GOLDFACE TILEFISH ♦♦♦	No Limit	
ANCHOR TILEFISH ♦♦♦	No Limit	
TILEFISH ♦♦♦	No Limit	
BLACKLINE TILEFISH ♦♦♦	No Limit	
BLUELINE TILEFISH ♦♦♦	No Limit	
GOLIATH GROUPER ♦♦♦	No Take	
NASSAU GROUPER ♦♦♦	No Take	No Take
WARSAW GROUPER ♦♦♦	No Limit	1 per vessel***
RED & YELLOWFIN GROUPERS ♦♦♦	20 TL	4 (in aggregate)
BLACK GROUPER ♦♦♦	24 TL	
GAG ♦♦♦	22 TL****	
SCAMP ♦♦♦	16 TL	
SPECKLED HIND ♦♦♦	No Limit	1 per vessel***
RED SNAPPER ♦♦♦	16 TL	2
GRAY, SCHOOLMASTER, CUBERA, DOG, MAHOGANY & YELLOWTAIL SNAPPERS ♦♦♦	12 TL	10 (in aggregate)
MUTTON SNAPPER ♦♦♦	16 TL	
QUEEN, BLACKFIN, SILK & WENCHMAN SNAPPERS ♦♦♦	No Limit	

**\*It is illegal to sell any seafood taken with a recreational license.**

\*\*Range represents minimum and maximum lengths.

\*\*\*Recreational fishermen may possess one (1) per vessel within four-fish aggregate.

\*\*\*\*Recreational fishermen may possess two (2) within four-fish aggregate.

♦Recreational fishermen may retain only one red drum over 30 inches.

♦♦♦For openings and closings of federally regulated fish go to [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org).

TL = TOTAL LENGTH - Straight line distance from tip of snout to tip of tail.

FL = FORK LENGTH - Straight line distance from tip of snout to fork of tail.

CFL = CURVED FORK LENGTH - Tip of the upper jaw to the fork of tail measured along the contour of the middle of the body.

**Note: Fishing seasons for some species may be closed by order of the Commission on Marine Resources. Advance notice of such closures shall be given. Species caught out of their natural habitat may have size, creel and seasonal limits.**

## Recreational Fishing Limits\*

<i>*Bag/Possession are per person unless stated otherwise.</i>	Minimum Length in Inches	Number of Fish Bag/Possession
YELLOWMOUTH, YELLOWEDGE, MISTY & SNOWY GROUPERS	No Limit	4 (in aggregate)**
ROCK & RED HIND GROUPERS	No Limit	4 (in aggregate)**
GREATER AMBERJACK◆◆◆	30 FL	1
LESSER AMBERJACK & BANDED RUDDERFISH◆◆◆	14 FL to 22 FL**	5 (in aggregate)
HOGFISH◆◆◆	12 FL	5
BIGEYE TUNA◆◆◆	27 CFL	No Limit
YELLOWFIN TUNA◆◆◆	27 CFL	3
BLUE MARLIN◆◆◆	99 lower jaw FL	No Limit
WHITE MARLIN◆◆◆	66 lower jaw FL	No Limit
SAILFISH◆◆◆	63 lower jaw FL	No Limit
Longbill Spearfish◆◆◆	No Take	No Take
SHARKS (LARGE COASTALS & PELAGICS)◆◆/◆◆◆	37 TL	1 per person/ up to 3 per vessel
SHARKS (SMALL COASTALS)◆◆/◆◆◆	25 TL	4
CRABS - HARD SHELLS	5***	No Limit
CRABS - SOFT SHELL	No Limit	No Limit

**\*It is illegal to sell any seafood taken with a recreational license.**

\*\*Range represents minimum and maximum lengths.

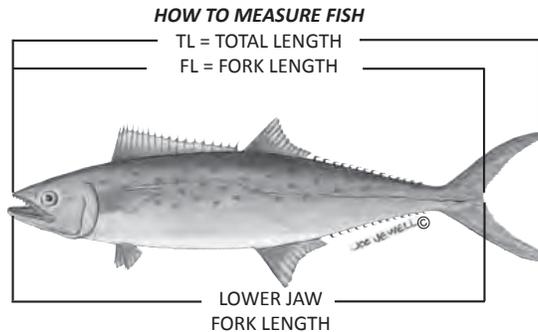
\*\*\*As measured from the tip of one lateral spine across the back of the shell to the tip of the opposite lateral spine.

\*\*\*\*Recreational fishermen may possess two (2) within four-fish aggregate.

◆◆ Possession of certain coastal sharks is prohibited. See p. 8 and federal regulations for more information.

◆◆◆ For openings and closings of federally regulated fish go to [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org).

**Bluefin tuna limits** are variable throughout the season and depend on the size category. Refer to [www.nmfspermits.com](http://www.nmfspermits.com) or call 888-872-8862 for updated information. All bluefin catches must be reported to the MDMR Office of Marine Fisheries, 1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi, MS 39530, or call 228-374-5000.



Federal regulations may differ from state regulations. For federal regulations, contact the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council at 888-833-1844 or [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org).

## Commercial Fishing Limits

	Minimum Length in Inches	Number of Fish Bag/Possession
COBIA♦	33 FL	2
MULLET	10 TL	No Limit
FLOUNDER	12 TL	Quota***
RED DRUM♦♦	18 TL to 30 TL*	Quota***
SPOTTED SEATROUT	14 TL	Quota***
KING MACKEREL	24 FL	3,000 lbs
SPANISH MACKEREL	14 FL	No Limit
GOLIATH GROUPE	No Take	No Take
NASSAU GROUPE	No Take	No Take
RED GROUPE	18 TL	
YELLOWFIN GROUPE	20 TL	No Limit
GAG GROUPE	22 TL	
BLACK GROUPE	24 TL	No Limit
SCAMP	16 TL	No Limit
TRIPLETAIL	18 TL	3
RED SNAPPER	13 TL**	IFQ**
VERMILLION SNAPPER	10 TL	No Limit
LANE SNAPPER	8 TL	No Limit
GRAY TRIGGERFISH	14 FL	No Limit
GRAY, SCHOOLMASTER, CUBERA, DOG, MAHOGANY & YELLOWTAIL SNAPPERS	12 TL	No Limit
MUTTON SNAPPER	16 TL	No Limit
GREATER AMBERJACK	36 FL	No Limit
LESSER AMBERJACK & BANDED RUDDERFISH	14 FL to 22 FL*	No Limit
HOGFISH	12 FL	No Limit
BIGEYE TUNA	27 CFL	No Limit
BLUEFIN TUNA	No Take	No Take
YELLOWFIN TUNA	27 CFL	No Limit
BLUE MARLIN	No Take	No Take
WHITE MARLIN	No Take	No Take
SAILFISH	No Take	No Take
Longbill Spearfish	No Take	No Take
CRABS - HARD SHELLS	5****	No Limit
CRABS - SOFT SHELL	No Limit	No Limit

♦It is illegal to sell cobia caught in Mississippi territorial waters or cobia landed in Mississippi.

♦♦Commercial fishermen may retain only one red drum over 30 inches.

\*Range represents minimum and maximum lengths.

\*\*It is illegal to sell, barter or trade any species of reef fish without possessing the proper federal permits and/or licenses required by the NOAA Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan and complying with any other conditions set forth by federal or state regulations for the management of the identified reef fish. IFQ = Individual Fishing Quota.

\*\*\*The season for flounder and red drum will run from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31 each year. The season for spotted sea-trout will run from Feb. 1 through Sept. 30 each year. Total allowable catch (TAC) limits are 74,000 pounds for flounder, 50,000 pounds for red drum and 50,000 pounds for spotted seatrout. The commercial TAC for spotted seatrout is 50,000 pounds, which is divided into two fishing periods. For more information on the commercial spotted seatrout season, see page 15. When landing reports, as required by law, show the TAC has been reached for a given species, MDMR will, with adequate notice, issue a news release and public notice closing state waters to commercial fishing for that species for the remainder of that fishing year.

**Federal regulations may differ from state regulations. For federal regulations, contact the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council at 888-833-1844 or [gulfcouncil.org](http://gulfcouncil.org).**

\*\*\*\*As measured from tip of one lateral spine across the back of the shell to tip of opposite lateral spine.

---

## Catch and Release

### WHY RELEASE FISH?

1. A fish is too valuable a resource to be caught only once.
2. A personal commitment to conservation adds fun to fishing.
3. Size, season and bag regulations make release of some fish mandatory.

### HOW TO BEGIN

1. Use barbless or circle hooks that are made from metals that rust quickly.
2. Set your hook immediately. Try to prevent a fish from swallowing the bait.
3. Work a fish out of deep water slowly, so it can adjust to the pressure change.
4. Otherwise, land your quarry quickly; don't play it to exhaustion.

### HANDLING YOUR CATCH

1. Leave the fish in the water (if possible) and don't handle it.
2. Net your catch only if you cannot control it any other way.
3. When you must handle a fish: Use a wet glove or rag to hold it; turn a fish on its back or cover its eyes with a wet towel to calm it; don't put your fingers in the eyes or gills of your catch. Larger fish may be kept in the water by holding the leader with a glove or by slipping a release gaff through the lower jaw. Avoid removing mucus or scales.

### REMOVING THE HOOK

1. If possible, back the hook out the opposite way it went in.
2. Cut the leader close to the mouth if a fish has been hooked deeply or if the hook can't be removed quickly.
3. Use needle-nose pliers, a hemostat or a hookout to remove the hook and protect your hands.
4. For a larger fish in the water, slip a gaff around the leader and slide it down to the hook. Lift the gaff upward while pulling downward on the leader.
5. Do not jerk or pop a leader to break it. This could kill the fish.

### THE RELEASE

1. Gently place the fish in the water, supporting its midsection and tail.
2. Resuscitate an exhausted fish by moving it back and forth or tow it alongside the boat to force water through its gills.
3. For fish pulled up from deep water, air bladder deflation is achieved by inserting an approved venting tool through the side of the fish immediately behind the upper part of the pectoral fin base (see diagram p. 14). The deflation position varies among species. However, penetration at a point below the 4th or 5th dorsal fin spine is generally appropriate.
4. Watch the fish to make sure it swims away.
5. If it doesn't, recover the fish and try again.

*Note: Fishing seasons for some species may be closed by order of the Commission on Marine Resources. Advance notice of such closures shall be given.*

---

## Sharks

The numerous shark species are divided into three management groups:

### I. LARGE COASTAL SHARKS

sandbar**	<i>Carcharhinus plumbeus</i>
blacktip	<i>Carcharhinus limbatus</i>
dusky*	<i>Carcharhinus obscurus</i>
spinner	<i>Carcharhinus brevipinna</i>
silky*	<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>
bull	<i>Carcharhinus leucas</i>
bignose*	<i>Carcharhinus altimus</i>
narrowtooth*	<i>Carcharhinus brachyurus</i>
Galapagos*	<i>Carcharhinus galapagensis</i>
night*	<i>Carcharhinus signatus</i>
Caribbean reef*	<i>Carcharhinus perezii</i>
tiger	<i>Galeocerdo cuvier</i>
lemon	<i>Negaprion brevirostris</i>
sand tiger*	<i>Odontaspis taurus</i>
bigeye sand tiger*	<i>Odontaspis noronhai</i>
nurse	<i>Ginglymostoma cirratum</i>
scalloped hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>
great hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna mokarran</i>
smooth hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna zygaena</i>
whale*	<i>Rhincodon typus</i>
basking*	<i>Cetorhinus maximus</i>
white*	<i>Carcharodon carcharias</i>

### II. SMALL COASTAL SHARKS

Atlantic sharpnose	<i>Rhizoprionodon terraenovae</i>
Caribbean sharpnose*	<i>Rhizoprionodon porosus</i>
finetooth	<i>Carcharhinus isodon</i>
blacknose	<i>Carcharhinus acronotus</i>
smalltail*	<i>Carcharhinus porosus</i>
bonnethead	<i>Sphyrna tiburo</i>
Atlantic angel*	<i>Squatina dumeril</i>

\*Possession of these species is prohibited by state regulation and federal law.

\*\*Sandbar sharks may only be possessed by fishermen possessing a research fishery permit issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

---

### III. PELAGIC SHARKS

shortfin mako	<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>
longfin mako*	<i>Isurus paucus</i>
porbeagle	<i>Lamna nasus</i>
thresher	<i>Alopias vulpinus</i>
bigeye thresher*	<i>Alopias superciliosus</i>
blue	<i>Prionace glauca</i>
oceanic whitetip	<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>
sevengill*	<i>Heptanchias perlo</i>
sixgill*	<i>Hexanchus griseus</i>
bigeye sixgill*	<i>Hexanchus vitulus</i>

\*Possession of these species is prohibited.

### RECREATIONAL SHARK LIMITS

Recreational fishermen may possess no more than one of the large coastal and pelagic shark species per person and no more than three of the large coastal and pelagic shark species per vessel in state waters.

The minimum size limit for large coastal sharks is 37 inches total length in state waters.

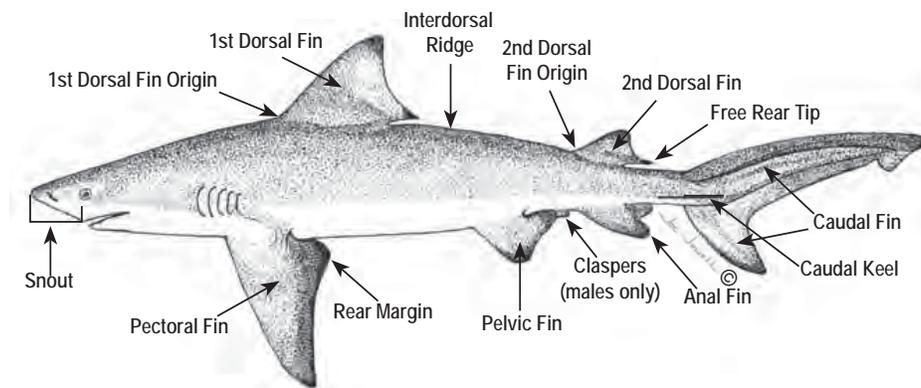
Of the small coastal shark species group, recreational fishermen may possess four sharks per person per day in state waters.

The minimum size limit for small coastal sharks is 25 inches total length in state waters.

### COMMERCIAL SHARK LIMITS

All shark species are under federal quotas.

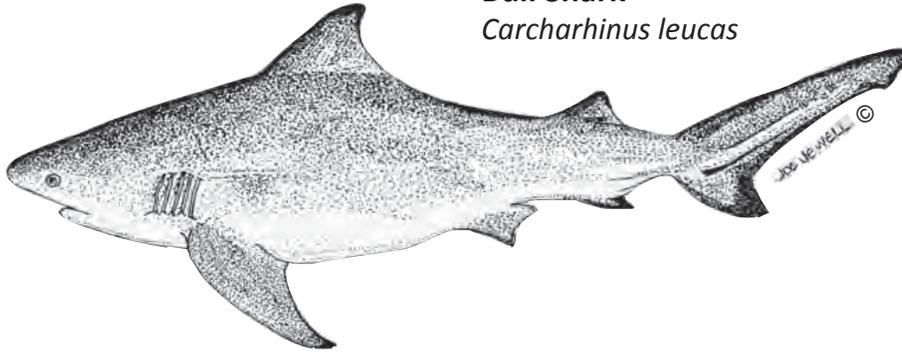
**The practice of finning, which is removing only the fins and returning the remainder of the shark to the sea, is illegal.**



---

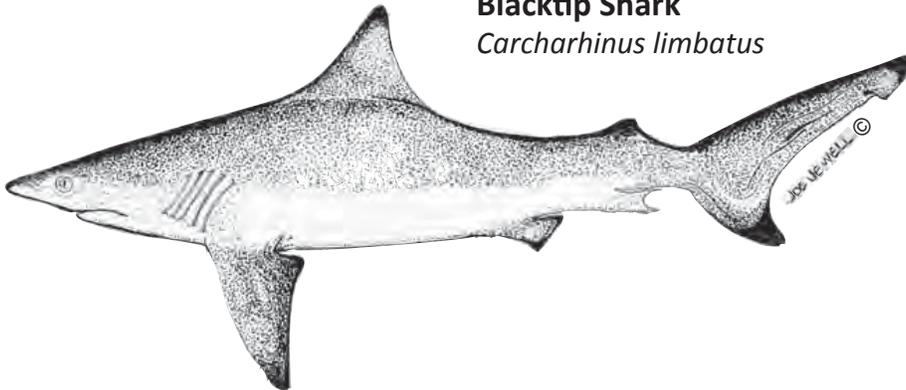
## Common Sharks in Mississippi Waters

**Bull Shark**  
*Carcharhinus leucas*



One of the largest sharks commonly found in inshore waters, it can reach lengths of greater than 10 feet. One of the few sharks that regularly move into fresh water. The most distinguishing characteristic of this shark is its large robust body. This shark is also characterized by a short snout that is blunt and rounded.

**Blacktip Shark**  
*Carcharhinus limbatus*



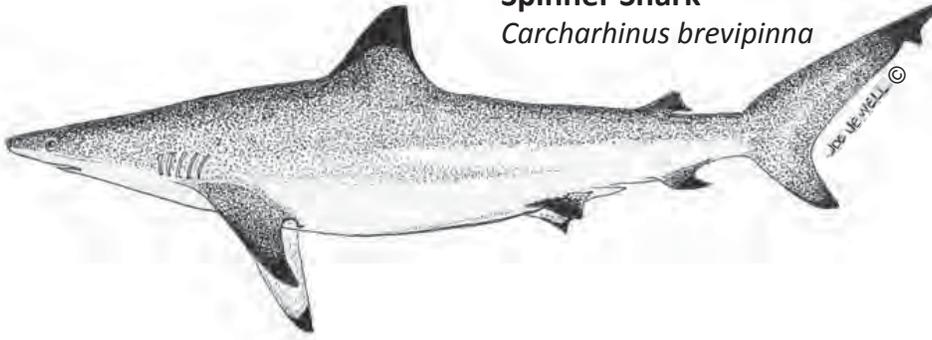
As the name indicates, this shark's fins are tipped in black **except** for the anal fin. It is a medium-size shark, but can reach lengths of 9 feet. This shark is very active when hooked and will jump out of the water.

---

## Common Sharks in Mississippi Waters

### Spinner Shark

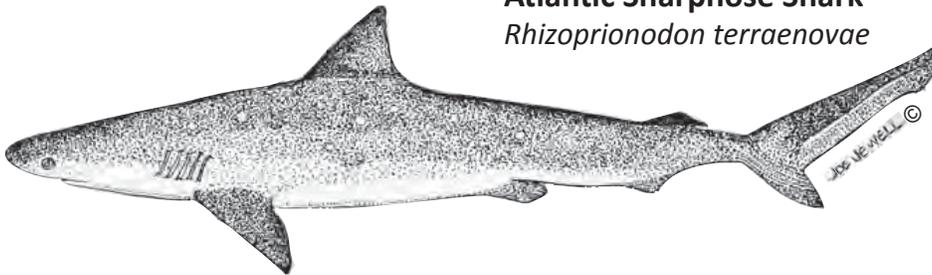
*Carcharhinus brevipinna*



The spinner shark gets its name from a behavior where it leaps out of the water and spins in midair. It is very similar to the blacktip shark, but all its fins are black-tipped, including the anal fin. It can reach lengths up to 9 feet and is extremely active when hooked.

### Atlantic Sharpnose Shark

*Rhizoprionodon terraenovae*



The most common shark in Mississippi coastal waters, this shark rarely exceeds 4 feet in length. It is characterized by a slender build and white blotches on the body. The origin of the second dorsal fin is about mid-base of the anal fin. These sharks are also called “wormies” by coastal fishermen.

---

## Saltwater Finfish

### METHODS OF TAKING

A Recreational Fishing license is required for all methods of finfish harvest.

Saltwater finfish may be taken from Mississippi waters by any of the following methods:

- Hook and line: Cane pole, handline or rod and reel.
- Trotline: Anyone trotline fishing south of Interstate 10 must be registered with MDMR and be issued a unique number that is to be attached, along with fisherman's name, to both ends of trotline on metal tags, written in indelible ink so that it is readable by MDMR personnel.
- Spear or gig.
- Cast nets and brill (brail) nets: Not to exceed 12 feet in radius, may be used in marine waters only. No freshwater species may be in a fisherman's possession while he is using a cast net or brill net.
- Small-mesh beach seines under 100 feet in length and with a maximum 1/4-inch-square mesh size.
- Trammel or gill nets, seines or any similar contrivance must be under 1,200 feet in total length. Gill and trammel nets must have a minimum 1-1/2-inch-square mesh size. From Oct. 15 through Dec. 15 of each year, gill and trammel nets must have a minimum square-inch mesh size of 1-3/4 inches. Gill and trammel nets must be made of MDMR-approved degradable materials.
- Permitted eel traps must have a minimum of 1/2- by 1-inch-square mesh size.

### SPECIAL PROVISIONS

Commercial fishing is prohibited north of the CSX Railroad bridge in the three coastal counties of Mississippi.

In addition, the National Park Service prohibits commercial fishing within the Gulf Islands National Seashore boundary, which is a one-mile perimeter around Ship, Horn and Petit Bois islands.

Any person or company selling or transporting for sale any species of fish that does not meet Mississippi state size limits or for which the season is closed must possess valid documentation from the state or country of origin evidencing that the fish were legally harvested.

**Commercial eel permit:** A special permit and regulations for commercial eel fishing must be obtained from the MDMR.

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.

It shall be unlawful for commercial or recreational fishermen to possess fish with heads, tails or flesh removed until delivered to final destination; however, fish may be scaled or have gills removed. (see pg. 19 for charter boats)

---

**Saltwater minnow license:** In order to catch or transport saltwater minnows for sale, fishermen must obtain a saltwater minnow license (see license fees pg. 3).

All minnow traps placed in or on the marine waters of Mississippi must have a corrosion-resistant metal or plastic tag permanently attached to the trap and stamped with the licensed owner's full name. The minimum height of the letters shall be at least 3/16 of an inch.

**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 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 navigation channel; OR
- (c) Traveling within a U.S. Coast Guard marked and maintained navigation channel.

The use of gill or trammel nets is prohibited within 1/2 mile of the shoreline. All nets, regardless of type, must be clearly marked with the owner's name or license number. Floats or buoys must be placed at intervals of 100 feet or less.

**Nets, seines or any like contrivance are not permitted in the following areas:**

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 Chaude Bay.
- Heron Bay.
- South Rigolets.
- Biloxi Bay, south of a line between Marsh Point, Ocean Springs and Grand Bayou, Deer Island.
- 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 beacon "Occ R 4 sec 100 feet" on the eastern side of Northrop Grumman Ship Systems; thence southeasterly following the shoreline of the southeasternmost point

---

of Northrop Grumman Ship Systems; thence easterly along the most direct line to the southernmost point of land adjoining the entrance of Yazoo Lake and South Rigolets and Biloxi Bay south of a line drawn between Marsh Point and Grand Bayou.

Nets, seines or fish traps used for catching fish are not permitted within 1,200 feet of any pier or harbor. Nets, seines or fish traps are not permitted within 100 feet of the mouth of any bay, bayou, creek, canal, stream, lake, inlet, channel or tributary or within any area that would block the mouth of any such body of water. **(Please note: gill and trammel nets are prohibited within 1/2 mile of the shoreline.)**

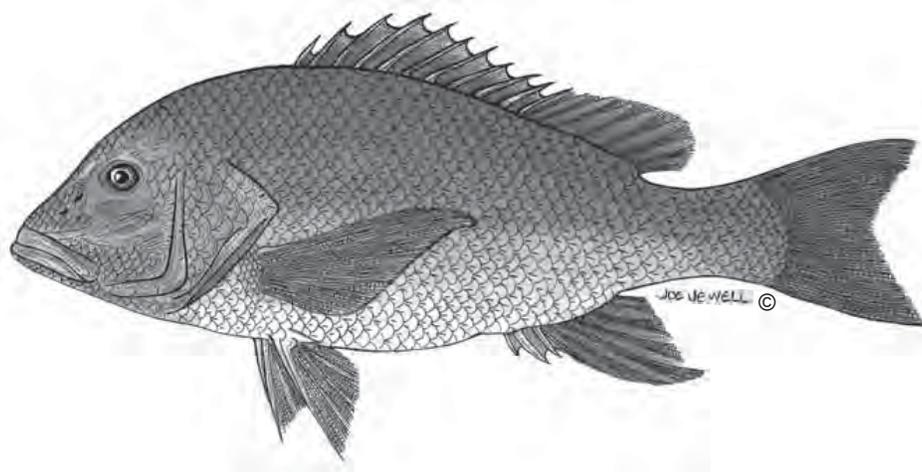
Purse seines may not exceed 1,500 feet in length, except those used expressly to catch menhaden. Menhaden purse seines must have a mesh size no smaller than 1/2-inch square (1-inch stretch).

### **REEF FISH REGULATIONS**

All fishermen fishing for reef-associated species (snappers, groupers, triggerfish and amberjack) must possess and utilize the tools described below:

**Dehooking tool:** The hook removal device is required to be constructed to allow the hook to be secured and the barb shielded without re-engaging during the removal process. This requires the dehooking end to be blunt, and all edges rounded. The device must be of a size appropriate to secure the range of hook sizes and styles used in the reef-fish fishery.

**Hooks:** NON-stainless steel circle hooks are required when using natural baits while fishing for all reef species including red snapper.



---

## CATCH RESTRICTIONS

King mackerel fishing is defined as a fishing activity in which the sole purpose is to catch king mackerel. Catching in excess of 10 percent by weight of species other than king mackerel while net fishing for king mackerel is prohibited.

Mullet fishing is defined as any net-fishing activity in which 90 percent or more of the total catch by weight consists of mullet. Mullet fishing using traps, seines or nets other than cast or Brill nets is not permitted within 1,200 feet of any public or hotel pier nor within 300 feet of any private pier, provided that such piers are in usable condition and extend 75 feet or more from the shoreline. Nets must not exceed 1,200 feet in length.

The commercial season will run from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 each year. Total allowable catch (TAC) limits for the 2015 season and each following will be 74,000 pounds for flounder, 50,000 pounds for red drum and 50,000 for spotted seatrout. When landing reports, as required by law, show the TAC has been reached for a given species, MDMR will, with adequate notice, issue a news release and public notice closing state waters to commercial fishing for that species for the remainder of that fishing year.

If the first half of the commercial TAC is not met in the first time period (Feb. 1 - May 31) the extra poundage shall be added to the second time period (June 1 - Sept. 30). If however the 25,000-pound TAC is exceeded, the overage shall be subtracted from the second time period (June 1 - Sept. 30).

Purse seines may not be used to catch in excess of 5 percent by weight in any single set of the net, any of the following fishes:

- Bluefish
- Cobia (ling or lemonfish)
- Dolphin
- Jack crevalle
- King mackerel
- Pompano
- Spanish mackerel
- Spotted seatrout (speckled trout)

It also is illegal for any vessel carrying a purse seine to have on board in excess of 10 percent by weight of the total catch any of the aforementioned species.

It is further illegal for any vessel carrying a purse seine to have on board any quantity of red drum (redfish).

Commercial fishermen may retain two cobia per person for personal consumption.

It is illegal to sell cobia caught in Mississippi territorial waters or landed in Mississippi.

---

## Common Finfish in Mississippi Waters

### Red Snapper

*Lutjanus campechanus*



Abounding around the offshore artificial reefs and other bottom obstructions, the red snapper is a coveted foodfish along the Gulf Coast. These brilliantly colored fish are distinguished by their red coloration and reef-dwelling habits. Snapper are typically caught on heavy tackle, using cut fish for bait. Please be aware, juveniles will have a dark spot below the dorsal fin.

### Mullet

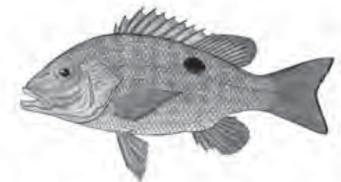
*Mugil cephalus*



Both striped and white mullet are called “Biloxi Bacon” along the Mississippi Gulf Coast as this species is a staple for subsistence fishermen and a principal prey species for larger fish. Mullet are most commonly taken using cast nets. Hook-and-line fishermen can catch these fish with very small hooks and doughball baits.

### Lane Snapper

*Lutjanus synagris*



The color pattern of this snapper makes it easy to distinguish from the other snappers that occur along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. They are a red color with 8 to 10 yellow/gold horizontal stripes along the sides and a black spot beneath the dorsal fin. This species is less abundant than either the red or vermilion snappers.

### Red Drum

*Sciaenops ocellatus*



Redfish are another favorite species of local anglers. These bruisers can get upwards of 30 pounds. Feeding habits are intermediate between their cousins, the bottom-feeding black drum and the more surface-feeding spotted seatrout. Blue crabs and gold spoons are among the best bait to use for catching redfish.

### Gray Snapper (Mangrove)

*Lutjanus griseus*



This small snapper is commonly found inshore congregating around seagrass beds, rocky areas and piers. This species is often found in mixed schools with pinfish and pigfish. As they grow larger they move offshore over hard bottoms and can be caught around artificial reefs.

### Vermillion Snapper (Beeliner)

*Rhomboplites aurorubens*



This snapper is bright red in color and its body shape is narrower than that of the red snapper. Vermillion snapper are small snapper which are found in the same habitat as red snapper and caught on the same type of baits.

---

## Common Finfish in Mississippi Waters

**King Mackerel**  
*Scomberomorus cavalla*



Kings are constantly on the move and migrate along the entire northern Gulf of Mexico, where they may congregate around oil rigs, offshore wrecks and shoalwater. King mackerel in excess of 60 pounds are taken each year by fishermen who troll and cast for them as far south as the mouth of the Mississippi River.

**Gag**  
*Mycteroperca microlepis*



During the summer months when the water temperatures increase along the coast, juvenile gag are often caught by fishermen around rock piles and pilings. The larger adults occur offshore in deeper water, usually over hard bottoms and around some kind of structure.

**Spanish Mackerel**  
*Scomberomorus maculatus*



Spanish mackerel are abundant in the Mississippi Sound from early summer through midfall. Caught best on fast-moving, silvery lures, they form the summer staple of the charter fishery. Care should be taken when removing these toothsome critters from the hook.

**Spotted Seatrout**  
*Cynoscion nebulosus*



Locally called speckled trout or simply "speck," this fish is widely sought in coastal waters Gulfwide. Specks upwards of 5 pounds are not uncommon, but the average school trout will be around a pound or so. Trout can be caught year-round, but spring and fall are peak fishing times.

**Cobia**  
*Rachycentron canadum*



Called lemonfish locally, the cobia is truly a big-game species. Lemonfish up to 100 pounds are caught annually during the spring run. Lemonfish have a decided preference for congregating around buoys, anchored vessels, etc. Live catfish or white trout are preferred bait, though a jig or feather might also entice a big lemon into striking.

**Greater Amberjack**  
*Seriola dumerili*



This fish is generally found around deep water oil rigs or artificial reefs. Greater amberjack can reach weights in excess of 100 pounds and can put up an excellent fight when hooked. The greater amberjack is the largest of the four amberjack species that occur in the Gulf of Mexico.

---

## Recreational Fishing

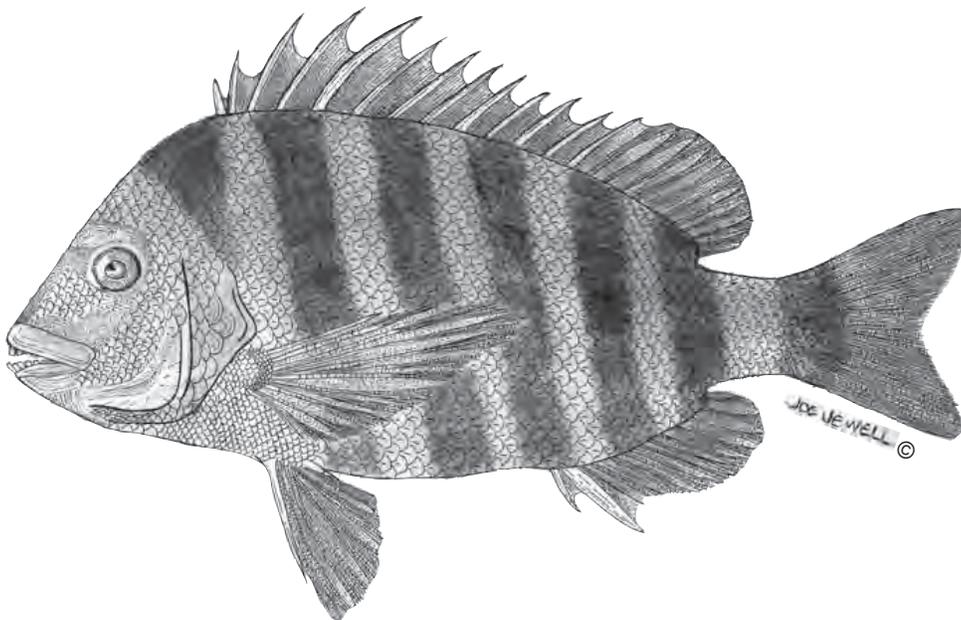
### SPECIAL PROVISIONS

Please see the "Fishing Licenses" section (pp. 2-3) in the front of this booklet for more information on Mississippi recreational saltwater sportfishing licenses and Mississippi's free saltwater sportfishing days. A recreational saltwater fishing license is required for all methods of recreational finfish harvest.

It shall be unlawful for recreational fishermen to sell or offer for sale any seafood caught in or landed in the State of Mississippi, and only licensed commercial fishermen may catch and sell seafood. Furthermore, it shall be unlawful for any person, firm or corporation to purchase, buy, barter for or trade for any seafood caught in or landed in the State of Mississippi that was caught or landed by a recreational fisherman or that was transported into the State of Mississippi by a recreational fisherman.

It is lawful for any restaurant to possess, prepare and serve lawfully recreationally caught marine finfish to the persons who caught the finfish (Senate Bill 2068).

Recreational fishermen not fishing in Mississippi waters may transport and land fish that meet the minimum size and creel limits of the waters in which they were legally caught. Said recreational fishermen must possess a valid salt-water sportfishing license as may be required in the waters where the fish were caught. In the absence of minimum size or creel limits in another jurisdiction, Mississippi law will prevail.



---

## CHARTER AND HEAD BOATS

Persons on a licensed charter boat or head boat may possess a two-day bag limit only when complying with the following conditions and only for the species listed in subsection H as listed below:

- A. Charter boats must be less than 100 gross tons and meet U.S. Coast Guard requirements to carry six or fewer passengers.
- B. Head boats must hold a valid certificate of inspection issued by the Coast Guard.
- C. The charter boat or head boat must possess a federal reef fish permit if fishing for reef fish or in possession of reef fish in federal waters.
- D. The charter boat or head boat must have two Coast Guard-certified captains aboard (as required by Coast Guard regulations for trips over 12 hours).
- E. Each person aboard the charter boat or head boat must possess a certificate issued in the name of the chartering company, stating the time and date the charter left the dock, and the trip must be in excess of 24 hours.
- F. Charter vessel captain and crew are prohibited from keeping a recreational bag limit of red snapper.
- G. For-hire vessel captains and crew are prohibited from retaining a recreational bag limit of greater amberjack.
- H. King and Spanish mackerel, snappers (red, vermillion, lane, gray, mutton, yellowtail, schoolmaster, cubera, dog, mahogany, queen, blackfin, silk and wenchman), groupers (misty, snowy, yellowedge, warsaw, speckled hind, red, yellowfin, black, gag, scamp, yellowmouth, rock hind and red hind), hogfish, gray triggerfish, lesser amberjack, banded rudderfish, almaco jack, goldface tilefish, anchor tilefish, blackline tilefish, blueline tilefish and greater amberjack.

Charter and recreational fishermen fishing in the Gulf of Mexico over 24 continuous hours may possess filleted fish in Mississippi waters, if they have filed a float plan with the MDMR in advance and have a signed copy aboard their boats. Float plans are available at the MDMR during regular working hours, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Float plans must be filed and received during these times, before the boat's departure on the fishing trip. A float plan does not allow anglers to possess a two-day catch.

---

## Mississippi Sportfishing Records

To qualify for saltwater sportfishing record consideration, anglers must complete an official application obtained from the MDMR and must abide by the following rules:

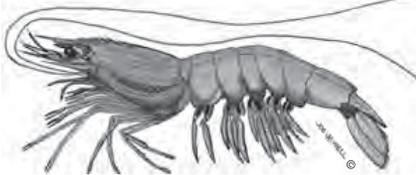
1. Fish must be hooked, fought and brought to net or gaff by the applicant with no help from any person, except that another person may operate the net or gaff. Catches on handlines or other nonsporting equipment will not be considered.
2. a. Conventional Records: Fish must be legally caught in a sporting manner on rod, reel and line or pole and line, and hooked with any legal hook or lure.  
b. Fly-Fishing Records: Fish must be legally caught using conventional fly-fishing tackle. The lure used must be a recognized type of artificial fly. Treble hooks are prohibited. The use of any other type of lure or natural bait, either singularly or attached to the fly is prohibited. The fly used must be submitted with the application.
3. Two color photographs should be submitted with each application:
  - a. One of angler and fish.
  - b. One showing a clear, close-up side view of the fish.Photos become the property of the MDMR.
4. Fish MUST be weighed on certified scales or scales legal for trade, i.e., grocery store scales, etc. The weighing must take place in the presence of two witnesses other than the applicant who MUST sign the application form or a separate statement attesting that they witnessed the OFFICIAL weight. NO provision for weight loss will be allowed. The actual weight of the fish AT THE TIME OF WEIGHING will be the OFFICIAL WEIGHT. It is also desirable to include signature(s) on the application form of the witness(es), if any, to the actual catching of the fish. Witnesses to the weight and catch CANNOT be the same persons. Rodeo entries are considered valid and acceptable weights.
5. Length of the fish must be measured in a straight line from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail AND from the tip of the snout to the fork of the tail (see diagram on p. 5).
6. Girth of the fish will be measured around the thickest portion of the body.
7. Applications for saltwater species SHALL be positively identified AND verified by a professional fisheries biologist and/or a rodeo weighmaster.
8. Only fish caught in Mississippi waters or fish caught in adjacent waters and landed in a Mississippi port will be considered.
9. The MDMR reserves the right to further check fish identification or verification of witnesses and to refuse any application that is questionable. It will be considered “just cause” for disqualification of current application and any previous records established by anyone who knowingly falsifies a Record Application. All rules will be strictly adhered to. The decision of the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources will be final.

---

## Shrimp

### COMMERCIAL METHODS OF TAKING

During open seasons and in open areas, saltwater shrimp may only be taken with shrimp trawls, trawls, butterfly nets, skimmer nets, push trawls, beach seines and cast nets. North of the barrier islands (COLREGS demarcation



line), within the Mississippi Sound, shrimp may only be taken with a single net, no larger than 50 feet along headrope and 60 feet along footrope, or not more than two nets, each no larger than 25 feet on headrope and 32 feet on footrope. A test (or try) trawl no longer than 12 feet along headrope and

15 feet along footrope and used with boards not more than 30 inches in length is permitted. Trawl doors shall not exceed 8 feet by 43 inches.

Licensed shrimp trawlers may keep up to 25 pounds in total of white trout, croaker, black drum, ground mullet, gafftopsail catfish and flounder and three dozen blue crabs for personal consumption. Non-resident licensed shrimp trawlers may only keep this allowance if their respective state has a reciprocal agreement with Mississippi.

It shall be unlawful to use skimmer trawls or wing nets with a maximum size greater than 25 feet on the headrope and 32 feet on the footrope.

All recreational and commercial shrimp vessels with a mechanical assisted retrieval system must have a Turtle Excluder Device (TED). Skimmer trawl vessels may use 55-minute tow times instead of TEDs April 1 to October 31 and 75-minute tow time from November 1 to March 31. Contact NOAA 228-762-4591 for more information on these federal requirements.

### RECREATIONAL METHODS OF TAKING

**A recreational shrimp license is required for shrimp harvest by trawl.**

**Recreational shrimp harvest by cast net does not require a recreational fishing license, unless retaining finfish.**

Recreationally harvested shrimp cannot be sold.

All crabs and finfish harvested by recreational fishermen may be kept for personal consumption, but **MUST** meet minimum size and creel limits.

Cast nets or brill (brail) nets not exceeding 12-foot maximum radius may be used to catch up to 50 pounds of shrimp (heads on) per person, per day for personal consumption only in the bays located within and surrounding the cities of Bay St. Louis, Biloxi, Ocean Springs, Gautier and Pascagoula.

Persons catching shrimp with cast nets or brill nets shall not remove the heads of the shrimp on site.

Small mesh beach seines under 100 feet in length and with a maximum 1/4-inch-square mesh size are permitted.

Holders of a recreational shrimp trawling license are limited to the use of a single net measuring no larger than 16 feet along the headrope.

---

## **RESTRICTED AREAS**

Trawling is not generally permitted in any area within 1/2 mile of the mainland, except by duly licensed live-bait dealers. Please contact the MDMR for more details on closed areas.

Trawling is prohibited north of the Intracoastal Waterway (tugboat channel) starting at midnight Dec. 31 of each year. The area south of the Intracoastal Waterway (tugboat channel) will be closed to trawling after April 30 of each year and prior to the opening of shrimp season (special extensions may be made by the Commission on Marine Resources pending sampling findings).

It shall be unlawful to recreationally or commercially trawl within the boundaries of the Gulf Islands National Seashore, which is a one-mile perimeter around Ship, Horn and Petit Bois islands.

## **SEASON**

Shrimp season is officially opened by public notice at such time that the MDMR's Office of Marine Fisheries has determined that the shrimp have reached legal size. As defined in Miss Code Ann. 49-15-64.1

## **LEGAL SIZE**

Shrimp smaller in size than 68 count to the pound are not to be taken in Mississippi waters, except by licensed live-bait boats. According to (title 22) part chapter 5 (106)

## **SPECIAL PROVISIONS**

It is illegal for anyone to drag or pull a trawl or tray net under the water with the bag tied or untied within any waters that are closed to shrimping. It also is illegal for anyone to clean nets by pulling them within any waters that are closed to the use of that size, type or number of trawls. Title 22, part 2, ch. 5 (106)

It is illegal to use a saltbox in Mississippi waters in which the salt solution exceeds 100 parts per thousand salinity.

Commercial shrimpers are permitted to sell their legally caught shrimp live with "Fresh Product" permit.

**For the latest updates on the Mississippi shrimp fishery, call the toll-free 24-hour Shrimp Information Hotline 1-866-We Trawl (866-938-7295).**

## **LIVE-BAIT SHRIMPING**

Live-bait catcher boats are prohibited from trawling north of the CSX Railroad bridge in the three coastal counties of Mississippi.

The live-bait fishery is viewed as a service to recreational fishermen and to the tourist industry of Mississippi. The special privileges granted and the regulations imposed are intended to ensure that this service may be performed with minimal impact on shrimp and fish populations.

---

Written application for live-bait licenses must be made to the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources.

Shrimp of 100 count to the pound are the minimum legal size for licensed live-bait dealers. Live-bait dealers must mark their boats and transport vehicles with the designation "LIVE BAIT" in letters at least 6 inches high on both the port and starboard sides of the vessel and at least 4 inches high on the transport vehicle. The name of the bait camp must be similarly displayed on the boat and transport vehicle.

Live-bait boats must be equipped to adequately maintain live shrimp on board. Such boats also are restricted to tows of 25 minutes or less and are not permitted to have on board in excess of 30 pounds of dead shrimp at any time.

Live-bait trawling is permitted only during the hours beginning 30 minutes before sunrise and ending at sunset, then only using a trawl no larger than 16 feet on the headrope and 22 feet on the footrope, except areas west of Bayou Caddy, where trawls may be 25 feet on the headrope and 32 feet on the footrope. Special areas may be opened to live-bait trawling and additional restrictions imposed.

Fish caught coincidental to a live-bait operation may be retained and sold for chum. Fish retained must be of legal commercial size. However, if crabs are to be kept, the dealer is required to hold a valid Mississippi commercial crab license.

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 the heads attached and in containers holding no more than 16 ounces. No more than five 16-ounce 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, at least eight hours per 24-hour period.
- Location of the camp must be accessible to the general public by public road or waters located within the three coastal counties.

Purchasing dead shrimp in bulk quantities from a live-bait dealer is illegal and punishable by a \$5,000 fine for the first offense. Additional information and regulations governing live bait are available from the MDMR.

---

## Oysters

### METHODS OF TAKING

A recreational oyster license is required for all methods of oyster harvest. During open season, oysters may be taken only by hands, tongs and dredges.

Dredges for oystering may not exceed 115 pounds in weight nor may they have an excess of 16 teeth. Teeth on the dredge must be 5 inches or less in length.

Restrictions on the maximum number of dredges carried or the maximum number of sacks that may be harvested daily will be established seasonally by the Commission on Marine Resources.

### DEFINITIONS TO KNOW\*

#### APPROVED AREA

A classification used to identify a growing area where harvest for direct marketing is allowed.

#### CONDITIONALLY APPROVED AREA

A classification used to identify a growing area which meets the criteria for the approved classification except under certain conditions described in a management plan.

#### RESTRICTED AREA

A classification used to identify a growing area where harvesting shall be by special license and the shellstock, following harvest, is subjected to a suitable and effective treatment process through relaying or depuration.

#### PROHIBITED AREA

A classification used to identify a growing area where the harvest of shellstock for any purpose, except depletion or gathering of seed aquaculture, is not permitted.

*\*Definitions from the National Shellfish Sanitation Program's "Guide for Control of Molluscan Shellfish," 2015 Revision.*

---

## OYSTER REEFS

Oysters may be taken only from those waters approved for shellfish harvest by the Commission on Marine Resources. These area waters are subject to reclassification.

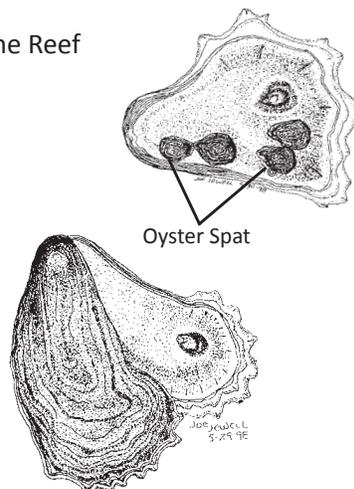
The harvesting, shucking, processing and sale of oysters must conform to all regulations specified by state statute and in the regulation adopted by the Commission on Marine Resources.

Several natural reefs are located in approved waters. They include:

- Southern Portions of the Pass Marianne Reef
- Telegraph Reef
- Buoy Reef
- Umbrella Reef
- Pelican Key Reef
- Fletcher's Key Reef

The major natural oyster reefs known to be located within conditionally approved waters include:

- Northern Portions of the Pass Marianne Reef
- St. Joe Reef (St. Joseph's Point Reef)
- Waveland Reef
- St. Stanislaus Reef
- Square Handkerchief Reef
- Henderson Point Reef
- Bay St. Louis Reef
- Kittiwake Reef (Long Beach Reef)
- White House Reef
- North and South Rigolets
- Middle Bay



Following a rainfall, riverstage or other pollution event, conditionally approved reefs and affected privately leased areas may be temporarily closed to oystering when poor water-quality conditions exist. Such closures are released to local newspapers, television and radio media. Pertinent information about the opening and closing of reefs is available by calling the **MDMR toll-free 24-hour Oyster Information Hotline at 228-374-5167 or 800-385-5902**. The information may be updated daily during oyster season. Information on the current status of any shellfish growing waters in this state may be obtained from the MDMR.

---

## **SPECIAL PROVISIONS**

Both recreational and commercial oyster harvesters must purchase a license from the MDMR.

Oysters taken from Mississippi 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 oyster harvesters must check in at the designated check station before going to reefs and must check out at the same station.

Tags are issued at the time of inspection. Each tag must be completed with the harvester's name, license/identification number, harvest date, harvest area and the shell-stock dealer's name and identification number if the oysters are to be sold. Tags must be affixed to the sacks with the fasteners provided by the MDMR. All harvesters are required to pay a shell retention fee to the MDMR on the day of harvest. Shell retention fees will be used to further oyster production in the state.

Oysters taken from private leases must be so designated by tags indicating the official lease numbers issued by the MDMR.

Oysters taken for personal consumption also must be inspected and a tag will be issued for each sack. Such tags will identify that the contents are not to be sold.

Each boat or vessel used to harvest or transport shellfish is required to have on board a functional, approved marine sanitation device (MSD), portable toilet or other approved sewage disposal receptacle designed to contain human sewage.

Oysters destined for interstate commerce must originate from a certified Mississippi dealer with a fixed cooler facility.

Any oysters taken from other than Mississippi waters must be accompanied by a bill of lading indicating the point of origin.

Oysters harvested outside of Mississippi waters and transported by water into the state must apply for a permit issued by the Department of Marine Resources and comply with the provisions of the permit.

Between May 1 and Sept. 30, harvest vessels must have an awning or similar covering above shellstock to provide protection from the sun.

---

## SEASONS

The commercial oyster season is regulated by the Commission on Marine Resources and notice thereof will be duly released to local newspapers, radio and television media.

During open season, oysters may be taken only from legal sunrise until 4:00pm. These times are subject to change as necessary.

## LEGAL SIZE LIMITS

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

## LEGAL CATCH LIMITS

Recreational catch limits, set by Statute 49-15-46 (4), and commercial catch limits, set by Statute 49-15-38, are set annually.



American oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*)

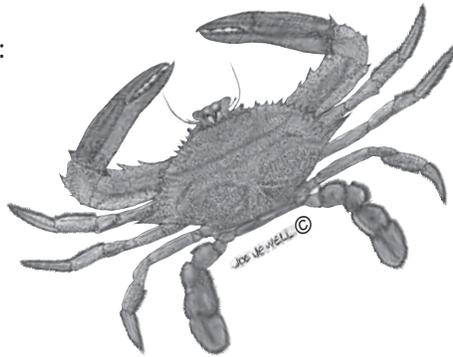
---

## Crabs

### METHODS OF TAKING

Traditional methods of taking crabs:

- Traps (pots)
- Handline
- Drop net
- Dip net
- Trawls



### SPECIAL PROVISIONS

A recreational crab license is required for crab traps only.

It shall be unlawful to have any sponge crabs (egg-bearing crabs) at any time of year. All sponge crabs shall immediately be returned to the water alive.

It is illegal to remove crabs from traps or pots for which one is not specifically licensed. It is illegal to remove crab traps from the water between the hours of 1/2 hour after sunset to 1/2 hour before sunrise.

All crabs, except for peeler crabs (those that are about to shed) and soft-shell crabs (those that have recently shed), must be 5 inches or larger as measured from the tip of one lateral spine across the back of the shell to the tip of the opposite lateral spine. Peeler crabs, if under 5 inches, must be in a separate container during commercial harvest activities.

All crab trap floats must be visibly marked with corresponding commercial or recreational crab license number. In addition, all crab traps fished from only recreational boats must also be marked with the vessel's registration number. A crab trap float line must be of non-floating or weighted material and easily cut with a knife. All floats must measure 6 inches in diameter. It is illegal to place any crab trap so that the trap, the trap line or float is in any navigable waterway and interferes with normal boat traffic.

**All crab traps must be permanently marked for ownership by a corrosion-resistant metal or plastic tag attached to the trap.** The tag must be supplied by the fisherman and must be legibly stamped with license holder's full name.

To protect overwintering crabs, it is illegal to fish for crabs by any means between Jan. 1 and March 31 each year in the winter crab sanctuary west of Cat Island (see legal description in CMR Title 22 Part 4). Contact the MDMR at 228-374-5000 for more information or see map at [www.dmr.ms.gov/marine-fisheries/shrimp-a-crab](http://www.dmr.ms.gov/marine-fisheries/shrimp-a-crab).

---

## COMMERCIAL

Commercial crabbing is prohibited north of the CSX railroad bridge in the 3 coastal counties of Mississippi. Crabs may be taken by trawl, but the trawl must not exceed the maximum allowable dimension specified under “Methods of Taking” for shrimp (see p. 21) and must comply with all other regulations governing the use of a trawl. Crabs incidentally caught in trawls must be immediately returned to the water unless the boat operator holds a valid Mississippi commercial crab license. Licensed shrimp trawlers and licensed oyster fishermen may keep up to three dozen blue crabs for personal consumption. Licensed commercial crab fishermen may register a buoy color code with Marine Patrol.

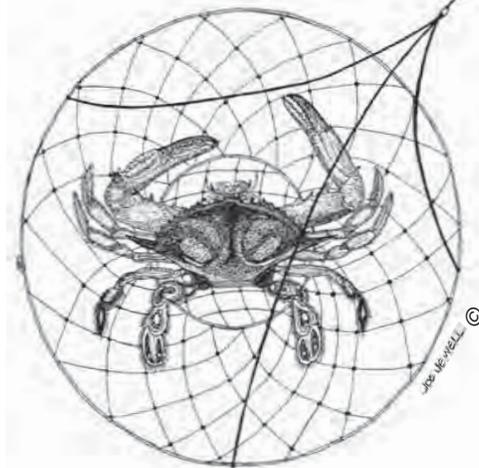
## RECREATIONAL

A recreational crab license (\$5) is required to catch crabs in traps for personal use (not for sale). The taking of crabs with drop nets is permitted without a license.

It shall be unlawful for any person recreationally fishing for crabs for personal use or consumption, by means of crab traps or crab pots, to use in excess of six such traps or pots per household. Traps or pots must be marked with the owner’s name, and if traps or pots are being fished from a vessel, the traps or pots must be marked with the vessel’s registration number. Recreational crab traps are not allowed north of Interstate 10.

## DIAMONDBACK TERRAPINS

Diamondback terrapins, a type of aquatic turtle, occasionally become trapped in crab traps. If you catch one, please call the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve at 228-475-7047. Your help is greatly appreciated in the study and protection of this species of concern. Free Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs) for crab traps are available from the MDMR Shrimp and Crab Bureau. Call 228-374-5000 for more information.



---

## Menhaden

### METHOD OF TAKING

Menhaden are traditionally taken using purse seines. Boats and nets for taking menhaden are commercially licensed separately.

### SEASONS

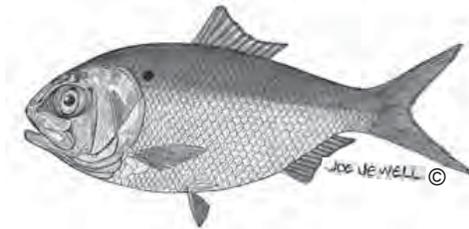
Menhaden season opens on the 3rd Monday of April and closes on Nov. 1 each year.

### SPECIAL PROVISIONS

Purse seines for taking menhaden may not be used in any bay, river or bayou, nor within one mile of the shorelines of Hancock or Harrison counties.

Purse seines may not be used to catch in excess of 5 percent by weight, in any single set of the net, any of the following species:

- Bluefish
- Cobia (ling or lemonfish)
- Dolphin
- Jack crevalle
- King mackerel
- Spotted seatrout (speckled trout)



It also is illegal for any vessel carrying a purse seine to have on board in excess of 10 percent by weight of the total catch any of the aforementioned species.

It is further illegal for any vessel carrying a purse seine to have on board any quantity of red drum.

## Data Reporting Requirements

Statistical agents of the MDMR's Office of Marine Fisheries are authorized and empowered to obtain information on all fish and shellfish landed in Mississippi. This information may be collected from the fishermen in the form of interviews and/or questionnaires and may also be obtained from the purchase slips or landing records of each seafood dealer, processor or landing firm. All such statistical information obtained by the MDMR will remain confidential and will not be released except in aggregate form.

Cooperation with statistical agents is appreciated. For more information on the statistical program and associated data reporting requirements, contact the MDMR's Office of Marine Fisheries.

---

## Protected Species

Certain marine species are protected by federal law. Should any of these species be inadvertently taken in nets, on fishing hooks or otherwise, they must be taken to a rehabilitation facility or immediately released unharmed. Protected species include but are not restricted to the following:

- All marine mammals
- West Indian manatee
- Kemp's Ridley, hawksbill, leatherback, loggerhead and green sea turtles (see pg. 32)
- Atlantic and Gulf sturgeon
- Marine birds
- Smalltooth and largetooth sawfish

If an injured or dead sea turtle or marine mammal is found, immediately call the following office:

- **Institute for Marine Mammal Studies, 1-888-SOS-DOLPHIN (1-888-767-3657)**

Information on manatee sightings is greatly needed. To report a sighting, or if an injured or dead manatee is found, immediately call:

- **Manatee Sighting Network, 1-866-493-5803**

To report a captured Gulf sturgeon call:

- **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 850-769-0552**

For all other injured or dead protected species immediately notify:

- **Department of Marine Resources, 228-374-5000**

Please note that criminal violations (intentionally shooting, killing or harming endangered or threatened animals) of the Endangered Species Act carry a maximum fine of \$20,000 and a jail sentence of up to one year. Should this action be observed, call NOAA Fisheries Service or MDMR Marine Patrol.

Attention Fishermen: It is against the law to possess fish with heads, tails or flesh removed until the final destination. Fish may be eviscerated and scaled. To protect sea turtles, please discard fish parts in trash receptacles on land.

---

## While Fishing, Help Save Sea Turtles

Sea turtles inadvertently caught in trawls may appear to be dead, but the Endangered Species Act of 1973 requires that fishermen attempt resuscitation of such sea turtles.

- Place the sea turtle on its breastplate (lower shell) and elevate its hindquarters several inches.
- Keep the turtle moist and in the shade. Do not put turtle in a container with water.
- Once recovered, release the turtle over the stern of the vessel (with engines in neutral).

### How to Avoid Hooking and Entangling a Sea Turtle

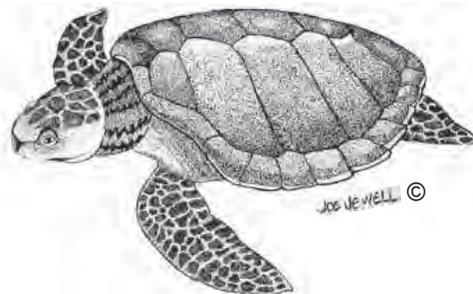
- Reuse bait and properly dispose of cleaned fish remains. Dumping bait attracts sea turtles to piers.
- Recycle fishing line and stash your trash.
- Never feed sea turtles – it is harmful and illegal.
- Use corrodible (non-stainless steel) hooks to reduce injuries to wildlife.
- Reel in your line or change location if a sea turtle is near or shows interest in your bait or catch.
- Never cast in the direction of a sea turtle.

### What to Do if You Hook a Sea Turtle

**If you catch a sea turtle while fishing, immediately call the response team at 1-888-SOS-DOLPHIN (1-888-767-3657), even if the turtle got away!**

*While you wait for the response team:*

- Do NOT lift by the hook or pulling on the line.
- Use a net or lift by the sides of the shell to bring the turtle on the pier or land. If no net is available or the turtle is too large, try to walk it to the beach.
- Leave the hook in place as removing it could cause harm.
- Keep the turtle out of direct sunlight, and cover the shell with a damp towel. Do not cover the head.



---

## Marine Litter

The Marine Litter Act of 1989 prohibits the dumping of wastes, garbage and other debris from vessels and empowers the marine enforcement officers to uphold and enforce the provisions as set forth in the act. U.S. Coast Guard officers are further authorized to make arrests under federal law.

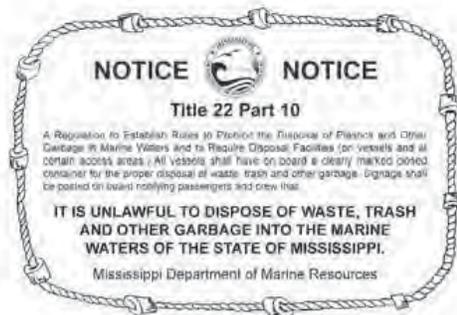
### MARINE LITTER REGULATION

- “Vessel” means any boat, barge or other vehicle operating in the marine environment from the largest supertanker to the smallest recreational craft.
- “Person” means any human individual discharging garbage from land, vessel, plane or fixed or floating platforms.
- “Garbage” means all food wastes, but does not include fresh fish or their parts.

It shall be unlawful for any person or vessel to discharge any type of plastics, including synthetic ropes, fishing nets, garbage bags and other garbage, including paper products, glass, metal, dunnage, lining and packing materials, into the marine waters of this state.

All marinas and access areas used by vessels shall be required to have proper disposal facilities on site.

All vessels shall have on board a clearly marked **closed container** for the proper disposal of waste, trash and other garbage. Signage shall be posted on board notifying passengers and crew that it is unlawful to dispose of waste, trash and other garbage into the marine waters of the State of Mississippi.



*This Marine Litter Sticker may be obtained free of charge at the MDMR. This sticker is required to be visibly displayed in all vessels (including personal watercraft) within the marine waters of the State of Mississippi.*

“Closed Container” means any sealed and properly labeled receptacle. The size and volume of the container shall be determined by the length and purpose of the cruise/voyage, the number of passengers and crew on board and the amount of trash or garbage to be generated. Closed containers shall include, but not be limited to, buckets or cans with lids, or watertight garbage bags with appropriate ties. Closed containers shall be clearly and permanently marked **TRASH** with weather-resistant materials.

---

## EXCEPTIONS

The regulations contained herein shall not apply during the following emergencies:

- Discharges of garbage from a ship for the purpose of securing the safety of a ship and those on board or saving life at sea.
- The escape of garbage resulting from damage to a ship or its equipment, if all reasonable precautions have been taken before and after the occurrence of the damage to prevent or minimize the escape.
- The accidental loss of synthetic fishing nets or the loss of synthetic material during repair of nets, provided all reasonable precautions have been taken to prevent such losses.
- Refuse or other flotsam found in nets during trawling activities may legally be returned to the sea without violating these regulations. Regulations prohibit the intentional discharge of fishing nets at sea.

***Note that it is illegal to throw trash or allow it to enter into the marine waters of this state from piers, docks, bridges or land.***

## PENALTIES

Any person or vessel convicted of violating any provision of these regulations shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$500. Each day of a continuing violation constitutes a separate violation. Violations of more than one (1) section or subsection of these regulations or parts thereof shall be considered separate offenses and punished as such.

Any person or vessel convicted of a 2nd or subsequent violation of any provisions of these regulations shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$10,000.

Any person violating federal marine litter laws may receive fines up to \$50,000. A provision of the federal law may award a portion of criminal penalties or civil fines assessed against a violation to the person who gives information that leads to a conviction or assessment of a penalty.

## MISSISSIPPI COASTAL CLEANUP

The Mississippi Coastal Cleanup is held the 3rd Saturday of October as part of the International Coastal Cleanup, during which coastal states and countries around the world dedicate the day to ridding the coastline of marine debris. Mississippi has one of the most successful cleanups in the world. Along with the event, the MDMR promotes marine debris awareness and education on prevention throughout the year. Visit [www.mscoastalcleanup.org](http://www.mscoastalcleanup.org) to find out how you can participate in the next Coastal Cleanup, the largest event to help stop marine debris.

---

## MISSISSIPPI MONOFILAMENT RECYCLING PROGRAM

The MDMR and partners launched the state's Monofilament Recycling Program in 2008 in an effort to reduce the amount of fishing line in the environment.



Monofilament is a strand of strong, flexible plastic used for fishing. The majority is non-degradable in water and lasts about 600 years in the environment.

Fishing line recycling tubes and bins can be found at about 30 piers and harbors across the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Carefully disposing of monofilament in these tubes and bins can help prevent fish and wildlife entanglements and death, and the destruction of boat propellers and intake valves.

For more information on the Mississippi Monofilament Recycling Program or for a list of tube and bin locations, go to [www.dmr.ms.gov](http://www.dmr.ms.gov) and click on Marine Fisheries.

## Invasive Species

Non-native invasive species can harm Mississippi's natural environments by outcompeting native animals and plants for food and space. Aquatic plants can degrade water quality, reducing oxygen available to native aquatic species.

The impact to fishing and hunting can be substantial. Fish populations can be reduced by competition from non-native species and reduced water quality. Invasive aquatic plants can cover the water surface, making fishing impossible. Reduced water quality may degrade habitat for other animals as well. Non-native aquatic plants can clog motor intakes, degrade swimming areas and can even reduce property values in areas where non-native aquatic plants have taken over.

YOU CAN HELP prevent the spread of non-native invasive plants and animals by:

- Removing any aquatic plants from boat propellers, intakes, trailers and gear before leaving a launch area.
- Never releasing plants, fish or animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water.
- Eliminating water from equipment before transporting.
- Blowing out jet-ski intakes and washing boats and equipment land side before traveling into a new waterway.

For more information on invasive aquatic species visit:

[www.ProtectYourWaters.net](http://www.ProtectYourWaters.net)

To report invasive species call the MDMR at 228-374-5000.

---

## General Penalties

It is a misdemeanor to violate the Seafood Laws and the rules and regulations of the Commission on Marine Resources.

Any person, firm or corporation convicted of violating any regulation adopted by the Commission on Marine Resources shall be fined no less than \$100 and no more than \$500 for the 1st offense, unless the 1st offense is committed during a closed season, in which case the fine shall be no less than \$500 and no more than \$1,000.

For a 2nd offense within a period of three (3) years, the fine will be no less than \$500 and no more than \$1,000.

For any 3rd or subsequent offense within a period of three (3) years, penalties shall include no less than \$2,000 and no more than \$4,000, or imprisonment in the county jail for a period not exceeding 30 days. Upon conviction of a 3rd or subsequent offense, the court will revoke the right of the person or boat in violation from taking any seafood from state waters for one (1) year.

In addition to any other penalties, the Commission on Marine Resources may suspend the license of any person convicted of a violation and any vessel used in the violation for a period not to exceed five (5) days for the 1st offense, and a period not to exceed 30 days for the 2nd offense.

**Upon conviction of five seafood violations within a period of five years, the Commission on Marine Resources may revoke the license of the convicted party and the vessel used in the offenses, and may prohibit indefinitely the issuance of a license to that person or vessel.**

The Commission on Marine Resources is also authorized to impose administrative penalties of not more than \$10,000 for each violation of the rules and regulations of the Commission.

---

## License Sales

**24-Hour License Sales: Call 1-800-5GO-HUNT (1-800-546-4868) or purchase online at [www.ms.gov/gf/hunting](http://www.ms.gov/gf/hunting).**

**All licenses may be purchased at the MDMR, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

**Recreational saltwater fishing licenses may be purchased at most Wal-Mart, Kmart, sporting goods stores, bait shops and fishing camps.**

**For more information contact the MDMR at 228-374-5000.**



or

**[www.dmr.ms.gov/licenses](http://www.dmr.ms.gov/licenses)**

**Saltwater Fishing License Purchase**

## Coastal Resources...



### **Yours to Treasure. Yours to Protect.**

Your purchase of a fishing license supports research and restoration that enhances fishing opportunities in coastal Mississippi.



ENHANCE ★ PROTECT ★ CONSERVE

Mississippi Department of Marine Resources  
1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi, MS 39530  
228-374-5000  
[www.dmr.ms.gov](http://www.dmr.ms.gov)



DELBERT HOSEMANN  
*Secretary of State*

ILLUSTRATIONS by Joe Jewell ©, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources.

Each year, the cover of "Guide to Mississippi Saltwater Fishing: Rules and Regulations"  
highlights a different Fisheries bureau within MDMR.  
The 2015-2016 cover represents the Artificial Reef Bureau.

This public document is *not for sale*, and all rights to the publication are reserved to the MDMR. Copies may be made for educational purposes only.



Printed on recycled paper



# Texas Commercial Fishing Guide

**EFFECTIVE SEPT. 1, 2015 THROUGH AUG. 31, 2016**

Information in this guide may change due to Legislative or Commission action.  
**IMPORTANT:** See Important Notices, Page 2

# Operation Game Thief

Texas' Wildlife Crime-Stoppers Program



**You can make a difference by reporting** poaching, pollution and dumping, arson in state parks, and intoxicated boaters! Up to \$1,000 may be paid for information leading to arrest and conviction of a person for a violation of our state's wildlife and fisheries laws, as well as for certain laws related to environmental crime, arson, and intoxicated boaters.

## **Reward Hotline (800) 792-GAME**

Operation Game Thief is privately funded. Please consider supporting efforts to protect our precious natural resources and keep our waterways safe by sending your tax deductible donation to Operation Game Thief, or by becoming an Operation Game Thief Member. Please visit [www.ogttx.com](http://www.ogttx.com) for membership information. Donations can be sent to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744, or you may also call (512) 389-8801 to make a donation by credit card.

# A GUIDE TO TEXAS COMMERCIAL FISHING INDUSTRY REGULATIONS

Commercial fishing is any activity involving taking or handling fresh or saltwater aquatic products for pay or for the purpose of barter, sale or exchange.

This publication is a summary of regulations for the commercial fishing industry in Texas and is designed as a guide only. Regulations concerning sport fishing are contained in the *Texas Parks and Wildlife Outdoor Annual* which is available free of charge from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) offices and from bait, tackle and sporting goods dealers where fishing licenses are sold.

**More detailed information concerning commercial fishing industry regulations can be obtained from TPWD game wardens or any law enforcement office of TPWD.**

IMPORTANT NOTICES.....	2
OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE REGULATIONS.....	3
GENERAL REGULATIONS.....	3
Rules Requiring Draining of Water.....	3
Civil Restitution.....	4
Possession of Prohibited Fishing Devices.....	4
Definitions.....	4
Freshwater and Saltwater Devices, Means and Methods.....	7
LICENSE REQUIREMENTS.....	11
Recreational License Requirements for Commercial Fishermen.....	11
Shrimp, Crab, Finfish and Oyster License Management.....	12
General Licenses.....	12
Bait Dealers' Licenses.....	14
Other Business Licenses.....	15
Boat Licenses.....	16
Harvester/Shell Recovery Tags.....	17
PURCHASE OF AQUATIC PRODUCTS FOR RESALE.....	17
SHIPPING REGULATIONS.....	18
Aquatic Product Transportation Invoices.....	18
Interstate Transportation.....	18
Containers.....	18
Licenses.....	18
RECORDS.....	19
Commercial Harvest Reports.....	19
MARKING OF VEHICLES.....	20
IMPORTATION REGULATIONS.....	20
Commercially Protected Fish.....	20
FRESHWATER/SALTWATER BOUNDARY.....	22
FISH.....	23
General Regulations.....	23
Prohibited Acts in all Public Waters.....	23
Sale of Fish – Fresh Water.....	23
Sale of Fish – Salt Water.....	24
Texas State Waters – Federal Waters.....	25
Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) for Red Snapper.....	25
Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for Gulf Menhaden.....	25
Padre Island National Seashore – Special Regulations.....	25
How to Measure Fish and Crabs.....	25
Commercial Bag, Possession and Length Limits.....	26
SHRIMP.....	27
General Regulations.....	27
Display Boat Numbers.....	28
Method of Net Measurement.....	28
Special Regulations (Bay and Bait Shrimping).....	28
Waters Defined.....	29
Map of Gulf Shrimp Fishery Management Zones.....	30
Outside Waters.....	31
Inside Waters.....	34
BRD and TED Illustrations.....	36-40
CRABS.....	41
OYSTERS.....	44
MUSSELS AND CLAMS.....	44
SEA TURTLES AND OTHER AQUATIC LIFE.....	45
CRIMINAL PENALTIES AND CIVIL VALUE RECOVERY.....	45

# IMPORTANT NOTICES

## NOTICES BY TPWD

1. A **Harvester/Shell Recovery Tag**
  - a. The tag must be affixed to the outside of each sack of oysters at the time of harvest, in the location of harvest, contain information required by the Department of State Health Services under the National Shellfish Sanitation Program, and remain affixed during transportation of the oysters to a dealer.
  - b. The appropriate Harvester/Shell Recovery Tag (green or white) must be affixed to the sack regardless of the season or whether the requirements of 25 TAC §241.57 (relating to Molluscan Shellfish Harvesting and Handling) apply.
2. **All commercial shipments of aquatic products** must be accompanied by an invoice and containers must be labeled. (See Page 18 – SHIPPING REGULATIONS.)
3. **The Shipper and Receiver** of commercial shipments of aquatic products must keep the shipping invoices on file as a record for one year from the date of shipment. (See page 19 – RECORDS.)
4. **Consumption of Clams, Mussels, and Other Molluscan Shellfish** taken from public **fresh waters** is prohibited by the Texas Department of State Health Services.
5. **Clams, Mussels, Oysters, and Other Molluscan Shellfish** taken from public **salt waters** may be taken only from waters approved by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Maps identifying approved areas may be obtained from the Texas Department of State Health Services, Seafood Safety Division (512) 834-6757. Additional information concerning **area closures** may be obtained 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling **(800) 685-0361**.

## CONSUMPTION ADVISORIES

Fish and shellfish can be a source of high-quality protein in your diet. Fish and shellfish, however, can accumulate contaminants from the waters in which they live. The Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) monitors fish in the state for the

presence of environmental contaminants and alerts the public through bans and advisories when a threat to human health may occur from the consumption of contaminated fish.

In waters with consumption bans, possession and consumption of fish and/or shellfish is prohibited. Catch-and-release fishing from these areas is allowed. A consumption advisory is a recommendation to limit consumption to specified quantities, species, and sizes of fish. For additional information, a listing of all consumption bans and advisories, or a listing of areas tested where no bans or advisories were issued, call the TDSHS at (800) 685-0361 (shellfish) or (512) 834-6757 (fish) or visit: [www.dshs.state.tx.us/seafood](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/seafood).

## RETENTION BANS ON FINFISH AND SHELLFISH

By order of the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) retention bans on finfish and shellfish are in effect in the following areas:

1. The area of **Lavaca Bay** inshore of a line beginning at the last point of land at the northeastern approach of the Lavaca Bay Causeway, then in a southwest direction to Aquatic Life Marker A to Aquatic Life Marker B to Channel Marker #12, then in a southeastern direction to Aquatic Life Marker C to Aquatic Life Marker D to Aquatic Life Marker E to Channel Marker #74, then in a northeastern direction to Aquatic Life Marker F to the southernmost point of land on the spoil island east of the ship channel, is **closed** to the **retention of finfish and crabs**. (Catch and release of finfish and crabs is lawful. This closure is due to mercury contamination.)
2. Echo Lake in Tarrant County is declared a prohibited area for the taking of all species of aquatic life. This closure is due to elevated levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) found in fish samples.
3. The Donna Irrigation System in Hidalgo County is declared a prohibited area for the taking of all species of aquatic life. This closure is due to elevated levels of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) found in fish samples.

## OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE REGULATIONS

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department adopted rules that prescribe the procedures and conditions for operating an offshore aquaculture facility in Texas waters, and implement the department's responsibilities under Agriculture Code, Chapter 134 by providing protection for marine resources in the wild, including endangered species. TPWD's responsibility is to protect the health and viability of native populations of fish, shellfish, and aquatic life in state waters, including endangered species. In general, the new rules prescribe the conditions under which marine species may be introduced into an offshore aquaculture facility without damaging surrounding water and marine resources.

The regulation of offshore aquaculture involves both state and federal jurisdictions. With respect to state agencies, the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) is the primary agency responsible for regulating aquaculture, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has primary responsibility for establishing and enforcing

water quality standards, the Texas General Land Office (GLO) is responsible for managing state-owned submerged lands, the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) is responsible for management of animal disease necessary to protect agriculture, and the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) is the primary agency for protecting human health and safety, including seafood safety. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (COE) and the United States Coast Guard (USCG) are responsible for establishing maritime navigation standards and the identification, marking, and mitigation of navigational hazards.

The intent of this rulemaking is that individuals applying to the various agencies for their necessary permissions be able to do so simultaneously so that the many needed reviews, inspections and other activities can be accomplished in the minimum amount of time. However, the rule also specifies that all of these other permissions be obtained before the permit is approved by TPWD. For more information, call Robert Adami at (361) 939-7784.

## GENERAL REGULATIONS

These rules also apply to fish, shrimp, crabs or other aquatic life caught in the Exclusive Economic Zone and landed in Texas.

**Texas residents** 17 years of age or older while fishing, hunting or trapping **MUST** have on their person a driver's license or personal identification certificate issued by the Department of Public Safety. **Non-residents** must have similar documents issued by the agency of the state or country of which the person is a resident that is authorized to issue driver's licenses or personal identification certificates.

**Waste of Fish** - It is unlawful to leave edible fish or bait fish taken from the public waters of the state to die without the intent to retain the fish for consumption or bait.

### **RULES REQUIRING DRAINING OF WATER FROM VESSELS AND HOLDING TANKS USED ON PUBLIC FRESH WATERS**

Persons leaving or approaching public fresh water are required to drain all water from their

vessels and on-board receptacles (includes live wells, bilges, motors and any other receptacles or water-intake systems coming into contact with public waters). This rule applies at all sites where boats can be launched and includes all types and sizes of boats whether powered or not, personal watercraft, sailboats, kayaks/canoes, or any other vessel used to travel on public waters.

- Live fish, including personally caught live bait, cannot be transported in or aboard a vessel in water that comes from the water body where the fish were caught. Personally caught live bait can be used in the water body where it was caught.
- Transport and use of commercially purchased live bait in water while fishing from a vessel is allowed, provided persons in possession of the bait have a receipt that identifies the source of the bait. Any live bait purchased from a location on or adjacent to a public water body that is transported in water from that water body can only be used as bait on that same water body.

- A vessel leaving a public freshwater body may be transported on a public roadway without water being drained, provided the vessel is transported via the most direct route to another access point located on the same water body during that same day.
- Marine sanitary systems are not covered by these regulations.

Following these procedures does not exempt persons from complying with prohibitions against transporting exotic aquatic species that are visible to the unaided eye, such as adult zebra mussels, which may be attached to boats or trailers.

### CIVIL RESTITUTION

When a Texas Game Warden encounters a violation of hunting and fishing regulations, there will be a criminal complaint filed in either a justice court or a county court. Fines for such violations are assessed by the presiding judge hearing the case, and commercial aquatic products harvested in violation of the law may be confiscated and sold. In addition to assessed fines that may be associated with a criminal complaint, violators are also liable to civil restitution for the loss of or damage to wildlife resources that have resulted from the violation. Civil restitution will be assessed following each violation and each violator will receive an invoice for this restitution from the department. Failure to pay the civil recovery value will result in the department's refusal to issue any license, tag or permit in the violator's name until restitution is made. An individual who hunts or fishes after such a refusal commits a Class A misdemeanor which is punishable by a fine not less than \$500 or more than \$4,000; punishment in jail not to exceed one year; or both fine and confinement. **For questions concerning civil restitution call (512) 389-4630.**

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** A person who seeks reinstatement of license privileges following license revocation or denial must apply for license privilege reinstatement and pay a \$100 application fee.

### POSSESSION OF PROHIBITED FISHING DEVICES

It is UNLAWFUL to possess a device designed to catch fish or other aquatic life in or on the public water of this state where the use of the device is prohibited or are not identified

in this document as legal devices.

In coastal waters, a prohibited device may be possessed on board a vessel if the vessel is in port or in a marked channel going directly to or from an area in this state where the use of the device is permitted.

Gill nets, trammel nets, strike nets and seines (other than minnow seines) may not be possessed within 500 yards of any public coastal waters.

### DEFINITIONS

**Aquaculture:** The business of producing and selling cultured species raised in private facilities.

**Aquatic Product:** Any live or dead uncooked, fresh or frozen aquatic animal life.

**Artificial Lure:** Any lure (including flies) with hook or hooks attached that is man-made and is used as a bait while fishing.

**Bait:** Something used to lure any wildlife resource. It is UNLAWFUL to use game fish or any part thereof as bait.

**Barrel of Oysters:** As defined in Parks and Wildlife Code, §76.001, a barrel of oysters is three boxes of oysters in the shell or two gallons of shucked oysters without shells. The dimensions of a box are ten inches by 20 inches by 13 1/2 inches. In filling a box for measurement the oysters may not be piled more than 2 1/2 inches above the height of the box at the center.

**Bycatch Reduction Device (BRD):** A device installed in the cod end (tail bag) of a shrimp trawl for the purpose of excluding finfish from the net. **NOTE: BRDs are required in certain trawls.**

**Cast Net:** A net which can be hand-thrown or cast to drop over an area.

**Charter Vessel:** A vessel less than 100 gross tons that meets the requirements of the U.S. Coast Guard to carry six or fewer passengers for hire and that carries a passenger for hire at any time during the calendar year. A charter vessel with a commercial permit is considered to be operating as a charter vessel when it carries a passenger who pays a fee or when there are more than three persons aboard, including operator and crew.

**Circle Hook:** A hook originally designed and manufactured so that the point of the hook is turned perpendicularly back toward the shank

of the hook to form a generally circular or oval shape.

**Community Fishing Lake:** All public impoundments 75 acres or smaller located totally within an incorporated city limits or a public park, and all impoundments of any size lying totally within the boundaries of a state park. For a list of community fishing lakes in your area, call (800) 792-1112 or visit [www.tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/fish/recreational/lakes/cfl.phtml](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/fish/recreational/lakes/cfl.phtml).

**Crab Line:** A baited line with no hook or pole attached.

**Crab Measurement:** Blue crabs are measured across the widest point of the body from tip of spine to tip of spine. Stone crab claws are measured by the propodus length which is that distance from the tip of the immovable claw finger to the first joint behind the claw. (See Page 25 for details.)

**Daily Bag Limit:** The quantity of a species that may be taken in one day.

**Day:** A 24-hour period of time that begins at midnight and ends the following midnight.

**Dip Net:** A mesh bag suspended from a frame attached to a handle.

**Fishing:** Taking or attempting to take fish, shrimp, crabs, oysters, clams, mussels or any other aquatic life by any means.

**Fishing Guide:** A person who, for compensation, accompanies, assists, or transports a person or persons engaged in fishing in the waters of this state.

**Fishing Guide Deck Hand:** A person in the employ of a fishing guide who assists in operating a boat for compensation to accompany or to transport a person or persons engaged in fishing in the water of this state

**Gaff:** Any hand-held pole with a hook attached directly to the pole.

**Game Fish** (includes hybrids or subspecies of fish on this list):

- Bass, Guadalupe
- Bass, largemouth
- Bass, smallmouth
- Bass, spotted
- Bass, striped
- Bass, white
- Bass, yellow
- Catfish, blue
- Catfish, channel
- Catfish, flathead
- Cobia
- Crappie, black
- Crappie, white
- Drum, red
- Mackerel, king
- Mackerel, Spanish
- Marlin, blue
- Marlin, white

- Pickerel
- Sailfish
- Sauger
- Seatrout, spotted
- Sharks
- Snook
- Spearfish, longbill
- Swordfish, broadbill
- Tarpon
- Tripletail
- Trout, brown
- Trout, rainbow
- Wahoo
- Walleye

**Gear Tag:** A tag constructed of material as durable as the device to which it is attached. The gear tag must be clearly legible and show the name and address of the person using the device and except for saltwater trotlines and crab traps, the date the device is set out. (See Page 7 for details.)

**Gig:** Any hand-held shaft with single or multiple points, barbed or barbless.

**Handfishing:** Fishing by the use of HANDS ONLY. The use of ANY other fishing device while handfishing (including but not limited to gaff, pole hook, trap, spear, or stick) is UNLAWFUL.

**Harvester/Shell Recovery Tag:** An identifying marker that must be affixed to the outside of each sack of oysters at the time and location of harvest containing information required by the Texas Department of State Health Services under the National Shellfish Sanitation Program. The tag must remain affixed during transportation of the oysters to a dealer.

**Headboat:** A vessel that holds a valid Certificate of Inspection issued by the U.S. Coast Guard to carry passengers for hire. A headboat with a commercial vessel permit is considered to be operating as a headboat when it carries a passenger who pays a fee or, in the case of persons aboard fishing for or possessing coastal migratory fish or Gulf reef fish, when there are more than three persons aboard, including operator and crew.

**Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ):** A form of limited access that assigns a fixed share of the total allowable catch to each user of the resource.

**Jug Line:** For use in FRESH WATER only. A fishing line with five or less hooks tied to an orange buoy.

**Lawful Archery Equipment:** Includes longbow, recurved bow, compound bow, and crossbow.

**Mussels and Clams:** Includes all freshwater and marine bivalve mollusks except oysters.

- Freshwater mussels - bivalve mollusks of the family Unionidae.

**Natural Bait:** A whole or cut-up portion of a fish or shellfish or a whole or cut-up portion of plant material in its natural state, provided that none of these may be altered beyond cutting into portions.

**Nongame Fish:** All species not listed as game fish except endangered or threatened fish which are defined and regulated under separate rules.

**Non-resident:** A person who does not meet the resident requirements.

**Offshore Aquaculture Facility:** All enclosures and associated infrastructure used to produce, hold, propagate, transport or sell stock under authority of an offshore aquaculture permit.

**Paddle Craft:** Any non-motorized vessel.

**Paddle-craft Fishing Guide:** A person who, for compensation, accompanies, assists, or transports a person or persons by means of a non-motorized vessel engaged in fishing in the coastal waters of this state.

**Permanent Structure:** A building designed, planned and constructed so as to remain at one location.

**Place of Business:** means a permanent structure on land or a motor vehicle where aquatic products or orders for aquatic products are received or where aquatic products are sold or purchased, but does not include a boat or any type of floating device, a public cold-storage vault, the portion of a structure that is used as a residence, or a vehicle from which no orders are taken or no shipments or deliveries are made other than to the place of business of a licensee in this state.

**Pole and Line (which includes rod and reel):** A line with hook, attached to a pole.

**Possession Limit:** The maximum number of a species of game, fish or other animals that may be possessed at one time.

**Purse Seine:** A net with flotation on the corkline adequate to support the net in open water without touching bottom with a rope or wire cable strung through rings attached along the bottom edge to close the bottom of the net.

**Residence:** A permanent structure where a person regularly sleeps and keeps personal belongings such as furniture and clothes, but does not include a temporary abode or dwelling such as a hunting or fishing club, or any club house, cabin, tent, or trailer house or mobile home used as a hunting or fishing camp, or any hotel, motel or rooming house used on a temporary basis.

**Resident:** A person who has lived in Texas continuously for more than 6 months immediately before applying for a license. (This includes residents and their spouses or unmarried children living at home who enter the United States Armed Forces and continue to list Texas as their state of residency with the armed forces.)

**Sack of Oysters:** A volume of oysters equivalent to a box (see definition of Barrel of Oysters) that weighs no more than 110 pounds of oysters including dead shell and the weight of the sack.

**Seine (includes a push net):** A section of non-metallic mesh webbing, with the top edge buoyed upwards by a floatline and the bottom edge weighted.

**Shark Fin:** The fresh and uncooked, or cooked, frozen, dried, or otherwise processed, detached fin or tail of a shark.

**Spear:** Any shaft with single or multiple points, barbed or barbless, which may be propelled by any means, but does not include arrows.

**Spear Gun:** Any hand operated device designed and used for propelling a spear, but does not include the crossbow.

**Stock:** Native species of fish, shellfish, or aquatic plants intended for use in, being transported to, or contained within an offshore aquaculture facility under the terms of an offshore aquaculture permit.

**Throwline:** For use in FRESH WATER only. A fishing line with five or less hooks and with one end attached to a permanent fixture. Components of a throwline may also include swivels, snaps, rubber, and rigid support structures.

**Trap:** A rigid device of various designs and dimensions used to entrap aquatic organisms.

**Trawl:** A beam trawl or otter trawl with a bag-shaped net which is used to catch shrimp.

- **Beam Trawl** - A trawl, without wings, the mouth of which is held open by a rigid beam of wood or metal.
- **Otter Trawl** - A funnel-shaped trawl, with wings, the mouth of which is held open by floats and weights and spread by trawl doors fastened to the wings.

**Trotline:** A non-metallic main fishing line with more than five hooks attached and with each end attached to a fixture.

**Turtle Excluder Device (TED):** A device installed in a shrimp trawl forward of the cod end (tail bag) for the purpose of excluding sea turtles from the net. **NOTE: TEDs are required in certain trawls.** (See Page 40 – APPROVED TED DESIGNS or federal regulation CFR Part 223 §223.207 for TED specifications).

**Umbrella Net:** A non-metallic mesh net that is suspended horizontally in the water by multiple lines attached to a rigid frame.

**Wildlife Resources:** Any wild animal, wild bird, or aquatic life.

#### **POTENTIALLY HARMFUL EXOTIC FISH, SHELLFISH AND AQUATIC PLANTS**

The importation, sale, transportation and release of exotic fish, shellfish, or aquatic plants designated harmful or potentially harmful by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission are prohibited except by special permit from the department. The list of potentially harmful species may be obtained by calling (800) 792-1112 or visit: [www.tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/species/exotic/prohibited\\_aquatic.phtml](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/species/exotic/prohibited_aquatic.phtml).

### **FRESH WATER AND SALT WATER DEVICES, MEANS AND METHODS**

ONLY DEVICES AND RESTRICTIONS LISTED MAY BE USED TO TAKE OR ATTEMPT TO TAKE AQUATIC LIFE

A person may fish with multiple poles or other devices, except as provided in this guide. In Fresh Water it is UNLAWFUL to fish with more than 100 hooks on all devices combined.

**Bycatch Reduction Device (BRD):** BRDs are required in certain trawls (See Page 37 – SHRIMP for trawl design restrictions).

**Cast Net:**

- May be used to take NONGAME fish and shrimp only (See Page 27 – SHRIMP).
- May not be greater than 14 feet in diameter.
- In SALT WATER, NONGAME fish may be taken for bait purposes only.

**Circle Hook:** It is UNLAWFUL to fish for red snapper using any kind of hook other than a circle hook when using natural bait.

**Crab Trap:** See Pages 41-43 – CRAB for crab trap design restrictions.

**Dip Net:**

- May be used to take NONGAME fish only.
- May be used to aid in the landing of fish caught by other legal devices.
- In SALT WATER, NONGAME fish may be taken for bait purposes only.

**Gaff:**

- May only be used to aid in the landing of fish caught by other legal devices, means, or methods.
- Fish landed with a gaff may not be below the minimum, above the maximum, or within a protected length limit.

**Gear Tag:** The GEAR TAG must be legible, contain the name and address of the person using the device and the date the device was set out (See Page 5 – DEFINITIONS).

**Gig:** May be used to take NONGAME fish only.

**Handfishing:**

- The use of ANY other fishing device while handfishing (including but not limited to gaff, pole hook, trap, spear or stick) is UNLAWFUL.
- No person may intentionally place a trap (including such devices as boxes, barrels or pipes) in public fresh water for the purpose of taking catfish by handfishing.
- May be used to take channel catfish and blue catfish in FRESH WATER only.
- For hand fishing under a commercial license, flathead catfish may not be retained or possessed.

**Harvester/Shell Recovery Tag:**

- Must be affixed to the outside of each sack of oysters at the time of harvest.
- Must be filled out completely with all information as indicated on the tag. Must remain affixed during transportation of the oysters to a dealer.

**Jugline:** For use in FRESH WATER only.

- May be used to take NONGAME fish, channel catfish and blue catfish only.
- For juglines fished under a commercial license, flathead catfish may not be retained or possessed.
- Placement and Location Restrictions:  
Juglines may not be used in:
  - Community Fishing Lakes (See Page 5 for definition)
  - Reservoirs or sections of rivers lying totally within the boundaries of a state park
  - Bellwood Lake in Smith County
  - Boerne Lake in Kendall County
  - Canyon Lake Project #6 in Lubbock County
  - Dixieland Reservoir in Cameron County
  - Gibbons Creek Reservoir in Grimes County
  - Lake Bastrop in Bastrop County
  - Lake Bryan in Brazos County
  - Lakes Coffee Mill and Davy Crockett in Fannin County
  - Lake Naconiche in Nacogdoches County
  - Lake Pflugerville in Travis County
  - North Concho River from O.C. Fisher dam to the Bell Street dam
  - South Concho River from Lone Wolf dam to Bell Street dam
  - Tankersley Reservoir in Titus County
  - Wheeler Branch Reservoir in Somervell County
- Tagging and Marking Requirements:
  - Must be used with a valid GEAR TAG (See Page 5) attached within 6 inches of the free-floating device; gear tag is valid for 10 days after the date set out and must include the number of the permit to sell nongame fish taken from fresh water, if applicable.
  - Properly-marked buoys or floats qualify as valid gear tags.
  - For juglines, properly-marked buoys or floats qualify as valid GEAR TAGS.
  - For non-commercial purposes, a jugline

must be marked with a white, free-floating device.

- For commercial purposes, a jugline must be marked with an orange, free-floating device.

**Lawful Archery Equipment:**

- May be used to take NONGAME fish only.
- Any fish that is edible or can be used for bait (includes all gar species, common carp, and buffalo) may not be released back into the water after being taken with lawful archery equipment. See also "Waste of Fish" on Page 3.
- State regulations permit bow fishing in most public waters. EXCEPT it is UNLAWFUL to possess, shoot or hunt with a bow and arrow or crossbow on all water in the Aransas and Poesta rivers in Bee County; on all public water in the state-owned riverbeds of La Salle or McMullen counties; and on all public water in the state-owned riverbeds of the Nueces, Frio and Atascosa rivers in Live Oak County.
- Additionally, bow fishers are advised to check with local authorities that may have ordinances restricting use of archery equipment.
- A person fishing with lawful archery equipment on a navigable stream in Dimmit, Edwards, Frio, Kenedy, Llano, Maverick, Real, Uvalde, or Zavala counties may not possess an arrow equipped with fletching of any kind, an unbarbed arrow, or a bow that is not equipped with a reel and line.

**Minnow Trap:**

- May be used to take NONGAME fish
- NONGAME fish may be taken for bait purposes only.
- Trap may not exceed 24 inches in length. The throat may not exceed 1 inch by 3 inches.
- The trap must have a GEAR TAG attached (See Page 5) which is valid only for 10 days.

**Oyster Dredge:** For use in SALT WATER only

- May be used to take OYSTERS only.
- Oysters may be taken by the use of a legal oyster dredge in places, at times, and in manners as authorized by TPWD (see section on Oysters for details).
- May not exceed 48 inches in width and a 2-barrel capacity.

**Perch Traps:** For use in SALT WATER only.

- May be used to take NONGAME
- NONGAME fish may be taken for bait purposes only
- May not exceed 18 cubic feet.
- Must be marked with a floating visible orange buoy not less than 6 inches in height and 6 inches in width .The buoy must have a GEAR TAG (See Page 5) valid only for 10 days attached.
- Must be equipped with a degradable panel as described for crab traps (See Page 43 for design details).
- Buoys or floats may not be made of plastic bottle(s) of any color or size.
- It is UNLAWFUL to place any type of trap within the area in Cedar Bayou between a department sign erected where Mesquite Bay flows into Cedar Bayou and the department sign erected near the point where the pass empties into the Gulf of Mexico.

**Pole and Line (fished under a commercial fishing license):**

- May be used to take NONGAME fish only.
- For pole and line fished under a commercial license, GAME FISH (EXCEPT blue catfish and channel catfish) may not be retained or possessed.
- It is UNLAWFUL to take or attempt to take fish with one or more hooks attached to a line or artificial lure used in a manner to foul-hook a fish (snagging or jerking). A fish is foul-hooked when caught by a hook in an area other than the fish's mouth.
- For community fishing lakes, pole and line is the only lawful method for taking GAME FISH (EXCEPT blue catfish and channel catfish may be retained or possessed) and NONGAME fish from Community Fishing Lakes (See Page 5 – DEFINITIONS); includes impoundments lying totally within the boundaries of a state park), sections of rivers lying totally within boundaries of a state park, the North Concho River from O.C. Fisher dam to the Bell Street dam, the South Concho River from Lone Wolf dam to Bell Street dam, Wheeler Branch Reservoir, Lake Pflugerville, and Canyon Lake Project #6.

**Purse Seine:** For use in SALT WATER only.

- Purse seines with not less than 1-1/2 inch stretched mesh, not including the bag, may be used only for taking menhaden

from the third Monday in April through the first day in November.

- Purse seines for taking menhaden may not be used in any bay, river, pass or tributary, nor within one mile of any barrier, jetty, island or pass, nor within 1/2 mile offshore in the Gulf of Mexico.
- When using a purse seine to take menhaden, edible aquatic products may not exceed five percent by volume of the menhaden in possession.

**Seine (Includes a push net):**

- May be used to take NONGAME fish and shrimp only.
- May not be longer than 20 feet.
- May not have mesh exceeding 1/2-inch square.
- Must be manually operated.
- In SALT WATER, NONGAME fish may be taken by seine for BAIT PURPOSES only.

**Shad Trawl:** For use in FRESH WATER only.

- May be used to take NONGAME fish only.
- May not be longer than 6 feet or with a mouth larger than 36 inches in diameter.
- May be equipped with a funnel or throat and must be towed by boat or hand.

**Shrimp Trawl:** For use in SALT WATER only.

- "Legal shrimping operations" means the use of a legal trawl in places, at times, and in manners as authorized by TPWD (See Page 27 – SHRIMP).
- Seasons, area restrictions and trawl design restrictions (See Page 27 – SHRIMP).
- NONGAME fish (EXCEPT those species regulated by bag or size limits) taken by certain legal shrimping operations may be retained (See Page 27 – SHRIMP for details).
- May be used to take NONGAME fish only.

**Spear Gun:**

- May be used to take NONGAME fish only.
- Not a legal means to take fish in a community fishing lake.

**Throwline:** For use in FRESH WATER only.

- May be used to take NONGAME fish, channel catfish and blue catfish.
- For throwlines used under a commercial license, flathead catfish may not be retained or possessed.
- Must be used with a valid gear tag attached. Gear tag is valid for 10 days after the date set out.

- Placement and Location Restrictions:  
Throwlines may not be used in:
  - Community Fishing Lakes (See Page 5 – DEFINITIONS)
  - Reservoirs or sections of rivers lying totally within the boundaries of a state park
  - Bellwood Lake in Smith County
  - Boerne Lake in Kendall County
  - Canyon Lake Project #6 in Lubbock County
  - Dixieland Reservoir in Cameron County
  - Gibbons Creek Reservoir in Grimes County
  - Lake Bastrop in Bastrop County
  - Lake Bryan in Brazos County
  - Lakes Coffee Mill and Davy Crockett in Fannin County
  - Lake Naconiche in Nacogdoches County
  - Lake Pflugerville in Travis County
  - North Concho River from O.C. Fisher dam to the Bell Street dam
  - South Concho River from Lone Wolf dam to Bell Street dam
  - Tankersley Reservoir in Titus County
  - Wheeler Branch Reservoir in Somervell County

**Trotline:**

- NONGAME fish, channel catfish and blue catfish may be taken by trotline.
- For trotlines fished under a commercial license, flathead catfish may not be retained or possessed.
- Red drum, spotted seatrout, and sharks caught on a trotline may not be retained or possessed.
- General Construction and Design Restrictions: Trotlines may not be used with:
  - A mainline length exceeding 600 feet;
  - Hooks spaced less than 3 horizontal feet apart;
  - Metallic stakes; or
  - The main fishing line and attached hooks and stagings placed above the water's surface.

**Trotlines in Fresh Water:**

- Tag Requirements: Must be used with a valid GEAR TAG (See Page 5 – DEFINITIONS).
- Properly-marked buoys or floats qualify as valid GEAR TAGS.
- GEAR TAGS must be attached within 3 feet of the first hook at each end of the trotline and are valid for 10 days after the date set out.

- Construction and Design Restrictions:  
May not have more than 50 hooks on any one trotline.
- Placement and Location Restrictions:  
Trotlines may not be used in:
  - Community Fishing Lakes (See Page 5 – DEFINITIONS)
  - Reservoirs or sections of rivers lying totally within the boundaries of a state park
  - Bellwood Lake in Smith County
  - Boerne Lake in Kendall County
  - Canyon Lake Project #6 in Lubbock County
  - Dixieland Reservoir in Cameron County
  - Gibbons Creek Reservoir in Grimes County
  - Lake Bastrop in Bastrop County
  - Lake Bryan in Brazos County
  - Lakes Coffee Mill and Davy Crockett in Fannin County
  - Lake Naconiche in Nacogdoches County
  - Lake Pflugerville in Travis County
  - North Concho River from O.C. Fisher dam to the Bell Street dam
  - South Concho River from Lone Wolf dam to Bell Street dam
  - Tankersley Reservoir in Titus County
  - Wheeler Branch Reservoir in Somervell County

**Trotlines in Salt Water:**

- Maximum Number of Trotlines Allowed: It is UNLAWFUL to fish for commercial purposes with more than 20 trotlines at one time.
- Tag Requirements:
  - Must be used with valid GEAR TAGS (See Page 5 – DEFINITIONS) which must be attached within 3 feet of the first hook at each end of the trotline.
  - For trotlines in SALT WATER fished under a commercial license, date is not required on a valid GEAR TAG.
- Construction and Design Restrictions:
  - The mainline length may not exceed 600 feet.
  - May not use metallic stakes.
  - May not place the main fishing line and attached hooks and stagings above the water's surface.
  - Must be marked with yellow flagging attached to stakes or with a yellow floating buoy not less than 6 inches in height and 6 inches in width, attached to end fixtures.
  - Floats must be yellow.

- Buoys or floats may not be made of plastic bottle(s) of any color or size.
- May not be baited with other than natural bait.
- Natural bait is whole or cut-up portion of a fish or shellfish or a whole or cut-up portion of plant material in its natural state, provided that none of these may be altered beyond cutting into portions.
- Hooks must be 3 feet apart.
- May not be used with hooks other than circle-type hook (comparable to Mustad 11/0 circle hook Model #39960ST) with point curved in and having a gap (distance from point to shank) of no more than 1/2 inch, and with the diameter of the circle not less than 5/8 inch.
- Placement and Location Restrictions:
  - May not be used in or on the waters of the Gulf of Mexico within the jurisdiction of this state;
  - May not be placed closer than 50 feet from any other trotline, or set within 200 feet of the edge of the Intracoastal Waterway or its tributary channels.
  - May not be used in Aransas County in Little Bay and the water area of Aransas Bay within one-half mile of a line from Hail Point on the Lamar Peninsula, then direct to the eastern end of Goose Island, then along the southern shore of Goose Island, then along the causeway between Lamar Peninsula and Live Oak Peninsula, then along the eastern shoreline of the Live Oak Peninsula past the town of Fulton, past Nine-Mile Point, past the town of Rockport to a point at the east end of Talley Island, including that part of Copano Bay within 1,000 feet of the causeway between Lamar Peninsula and Live Oak Peninsula.
  - No trotline or trotline components including lines and hooks, but excluding poles,

may be left in or on coastal waters between the hours of 1 p.m. on Friday through 1 p.m. on Sunday of each week, except that attended sail lines are excluded from the restrictions imposed by this clause. Under the authority of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Code, §66.206(b), in the event small craft advisories or higher marine weather advisories issued by the National Weather Service are in place at 8 a.m. on Friday, trotlines may remain in the water until 6 p.m. on Friday. If small craft advisories are in place at 1 p.m. on Friday, trotlines may remain in the water until Saturday. When small craft advisories are lifted by 8 a.m. on Saturday, trotlines must be removed by 1 p.m. on Saturday. When small craft advisories or higher marine weather advisories are still in place at 1 p.m. on Saturday, trotlines may remain in the water through 1 p.m. on Sunday. It is a violation to tend, bait or harvest fish or any other aquatic life from trotlines during the period that trotline removal requirements are suspended under this provision for adverse weather conditions. For purposes of enforcement, the geographic area customarily covered by marine weather advisories will be delineated by department policy.

**Turtle Excluder Device (TED):** TEDs are required in certain trawls (See Page 40 – SHRIMP REGULATIONS for trawl design restrictions).

**Umbrella Net:**

- May be used to take CRABS and NON-GAME fish
- NONGAME fish may be taken for bait purposes only.
- May not have within the frame an area that exceeds 16 square feet.

## LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

*License requirements and fees are subject to change. (License fees are not refundable.)*

### RECREATIONAL LICENSE REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN

A commercial fisherman must purchase a recreational fishing license, either resident or non-resident, and appropriate fresh or salt-

water endorsement to fish for recreational purposes. NOTE: commercial plates must be removed from any commercial vessel while being used for recreational purposes.

When fishing under a recreational sport license recreational size, bag and possession

limits apply, and no aquatic species taken under a recreational license may be sold.

### SHRIMP, CRAB, FINFISH AND OYSTER LICENSE MANAGEMENT

A moratorium on the sale of licenses or a license management program (limited entry) has been in effect for the Texas bay and bait shrimp fishery since 1996, the crab fishery since 1998, the saltwater finfish fishery since 2000 and both the gulf shrimp and oyster fisheries since 2005. To retain eligibility in each of these fisheries, purchase of the previous year's license is required. A license buyback provision is in place for bay and bait shrimp boat, crab and finfish commercial licenses, but not for gulf shrimp boat or oyster boat licenses.

For further information regarding any limited entry requirements, license buybacks or other provisions of the program contact: Jeremy Leitz, Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept., Coastal Fisheries Division, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin TX 78744, (512) 389-4333, email: jeremy.leitz@tpwd.texas.gov.

### GENERAL LICENSES

<b>General Commercial Fisherman's</b>	
Resident (Type 372) .....	\$26
Non-resident (Type 340).....	\$189

Required for any person who:

- catches aquatic products from the waters of this state for pay or for the purpose of sale, barter or exchange or any other commercial purpose; or
- unloads in this state aquatic products that were taken from water outside this state and have not been previously unloaded in another state or a foreign country, for pay or for the purpose of sale, barter or exchange or any other commercial purpose.
- a non-resident who is residing in a state that denies the privilege of commercial fishing in that state to a Texas resident because of residency status is not eligible for a non-resident general commercial fisherman's license.

**Exceptions:**

- a person who holds a commercial shrimp boat captain's license, commercial oyster boat captain's license, a bait dealer's license and catching bait only, commercial crab fisherman's license, commercial fin-

fish fisherman's license, Class A and Class B menhaden boat license, or the crew of a licensed commercial shrimp boat or oyster boat is not required to obtain a general commercial fisherman's license.

**Commercial Finfish Fisherman's**

Resident (Type 371) .....	\$360
Non-resident (Type 361).....	\$1,440

This is a limited entry license. (See Page 12 – SHRIMP, CRAB, FINFISH AND OYSTER LICENSE MANAGEMENT.)

Required for any person who takes finfish for commercial purposes from the coastal waters of this state.

- Finfish Fisherman: defined as a person who catches finfish from the coastal waters of this state for the purpose of sale, barter, exchange or any other commercial purpose.
- Finfish: defined as those living resources having either cartilaginous or bony skeletons (Chondrichthyes and Osteichthyes).

**Exceptions:**

- A person who is licensed as a bait dealer and who takes finfish for bait only is not required to obtain a commercial finfish fisherman's license.
- A person who is in a vessel licensed as a menhaden boat and who takes menhaden is not required to obtain a commercial finfish fisherman's license.
- A person who holds a commercial shrimp boat captain's license or the crew of a licensed commercial shrimp boat is not required to obtain a commercial finfish fisherman's license when catching finfish incidental to legal shrimp trawling operations.
- A person may operate a boat bearing a commercial finfish fisherman's license plate ONLY if that person possesses on board the following documentation:
  - a commercial finfish fisherman's license OR
  - a general commercial fisherman's license, the original finfish fisherman's license AND a copy of an affidavit permitting the boat operator to fish the commercial finfish fishing devices owned by the person to whom the commercial finfish fisherman's license was issued. The affidavit must contain the date, original signature of the licensee, and commercial finfish

license number which matches the commercial finfish license plate number on the boat.

- A person operating a boat for the purpose of commercial finfish fishing is not required to possess a commercial fishing boat license.

**Note:**

- A person purchasing this license will receive two (2) license plates bearing a number unique to that person.
- A boat operated for the purposes of commercial finfish fishing is required to have commercial finfish fisherman's license plates prominently displayed as to be clearly visible from both sides of the boat.
- **No more than one set of commercial finfish license plates and license may be on board a commercial finfish fishing boat at any one time.**

**Commercial Shrimp Boat Captain's**

<b>Resident</b> (Type 333).....	<b>\$50</b>
<b>Non-resident</b> (Type 433).....	<b>\$126</b>

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.

**Commercial Oyster Boat Captain's**

<b>Resident</b> (Type 309).....	<b>\$32</b>
<b>Non-resident</b> (Type 409).....	<b>\$126</b>

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

**Commercial Oyster Fisherman's**

<b>Resident</b> (Type 370).....	<b>\$126</b>
<b>Non-resident</b> (Type 470).....	<b>\$315</b>

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. (Not required of the captain and crew onboard a licensed commercial oyster boat.)

**Commercial Crab Fisherman's**

<b>Resident</b> (Type 338).....	<b>\$630</b>
<b>Non-resident</b> (Type 438).....	<b>\$2,520</b>

This is a limited entry license. (See Page 12 – SHRIMP, CRAB, FINFISH AND OYSTER LICENSE MANAGEMENT.)

Required for any person who takes crabs for commercial purposes from the coastal waters of the state.

**NOTE:** No person may hold more than three commercial crab fisherman's licenses.

**Exceptions:**

- A person may operate a boat bearing a commercial crab fisherman's license plate ONLY if that person possesses on board the following documentation:
  - a commercial crab fisherman's license OR
  - a general commercial fisherman's license, AND a copy of an affidavit permitting the boat operator to fish the commercial crab fishing devices owned by the person to whom the commercial crab fisherman's license was issued. The affidavit must contain the date, original signature of the licensee, and commercial crab license number which matches the commercial crab license plate number on the boat.

- A person operating a boat for the purpose of commercial crab fishing is not required to possess a commercial fishing boat license.

**Note:**

- A person purchasing this license will receive two (2) license plates bearing a number unique to that person.
- A boat operated for the purposes of commercial crab fishing is required to have a commercial crab fisherman's license plate prominently displayed as to be clearly visible from both sides of the boat.
- No more than one set of commercial crab fisherman's license plates and license may be on board a commercial crab fishing boat at any one time.

**Commercial Mussel and Clam Fisherman's**

<b>Resident</b> (Type 320).....	<b>\$38</b>
<b>Non-resident</b> (Type 420).....	<b>\$1,008</b>

Required of any person taking mussels, clams or their shells from the public waters of this state for commercial purposes. (See Page 44 – MUSSELS AND CLAMS.)

**Fishing Guide Licenses:**

Required for any person who for compensation, accompanies, assists, or transports any person engaged in fishing in the public waters of the state.

**Fresh Water**

**Resident and Non-resident**  
(Type 600).....\$132

**All-Water**

**Resident** (Type 610)..... \$210  
**Non-resident** (Type 710).....\$1,050

Required of any person operating as a fishing guide in all public waters (salt water only or both fresh and salt water).

**NOTE:** No person operating a motorized vessel or boat as a fishing guide on or in the salt waters of this state may be issued a fishing guide license unless the person presents original documentation to the license agent that the applicant possesses a valid and appropriate U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Operator’s License. It is the operator’s responsibility to assure compliance with USCG regulations. For additional information, contact the USCG Regional Examination Center in Houston, Texas at (713) 948-3350.

**All-Water Paddle Craft**

**Resident** (Type 650)..... \$210  
**Non-resident** (Type 750).....\$1,050

Required of any person operating as a fishing guide and utilizing paddle craft (canoes, kayaks, etc.) in all coastal waters.

**NOTE:** Persons operating as a fishing guide and utilizing paddle craft (canoes, kayaks, etc.) while guiding can qualify for a fishing guide license upon presentation to a license agent of certification or proof of completion of a TPWD boater safety course, CPR/First Aid training, and completion of the American Canoe Association Coastal Kayak Day Trip Leading Assessment or the British Canoe Union Four Star Leader Sea Kayak Certification. This license is applicable only to paddle craft and cannot be used when a person is operating a motorized vessel.

Any person who possesses an All-Water fishing guide license and a valid USCG vessel operator’s license is qualified as an All-Water paddle craft fishing guide.

**All-Water fishing guide and All-Water paddle craft licenses available only at TPWD Law Enforcement offices. Freshwater fishing guide licenses available at any location where licenses are sold.**

**BAIT DEALERS’ LICENSES**

All bait dealers who purchase aquatic product(s) from anyone except other dealers, and all bait dealers who harvest aquatic product(s) themselves are required to report these landings under the Trip Ticket Program. (See Page 19 – COMMERCIAL HARVEST REPORTS.)

**Bait Dealer – Individual**

(Type 312).....\$38

Required for any person who catches, transports or sells his own catch of minnows, fish or other aquatic products (except shrimp) for bait.

**Note:** In addition to this license, a permit to sell nongame fish taken from public fresh water is required. The fee for this license is \$60 and can be obtained by calling (512) 389-4444. (See Page 15 – OTHER BUSINESS LICENSES AND PERMITS and Page 7 – GENERAL COMMERCIAL FISHERMAN’S LICENSE.)

**Bait Dealer – Place of Business/Building**

(Type 515).....\$38

Required for any person who buys for the purpose of sale, minnows, fish, shrimp in non-coastal counties or other aquatic products for bait.

**Bait Dealer – Place of Business/Motor Vehicle**

(Type 516).....\$38

Required for any person operating a place of business and buying, for the purpose of sale from a motor vehicle, minnows, fish, shrimp in non-coastal counties or other aquatic products for bait.

**Bait-Shrimp Dealer (coastal counties)**

(Type 335)..... \$215

Required for any person who operates an established place of business engaged in selling shrimp for fish bait. Minnows, nongame fish or other aquatic products may also be sold for fish bait under this license. Only the place of business/building bait dealer’s license is required for grocery stores which do not unload or purchase shrimp directly from commercial bait-shrimp boats.

## OTHER BUSINESS LICENSES AND PERMITS

“Place of business” means a permanent structure on land or a motor vehicle where aquatic products or orders for aquatic products are received or where aquatic products are sold or purchased, but does not include a boat or any type of floating device, a public cold-storage vault, the portion of a structure that is used as a residence, or a vehicle from which no orders are taken or no shipments or deliveries are made other than to the place of business of a licensee in this state.

Aquatic products lawfully taken from the waters of another state may be sold within this state by licensed dealers without regard to size limitations imposed on such products taken within this state. A record of the source and disposition of such undersized or oversized products shall be maintained by the dealer for as long as the undersized or oversized products are retained and for at least 30 days thereafter.

All fish dealers who purchase aquatic product(s) from anyone except other dealers, and all fish dealers who harvest aquatic product(s) themselves are required to report these landings under the Trip Ticket Program. (See Page 19 – COMMERCIAL HARVEST REPORTS.)

**\*Wholesale Fish Dealer**  
(each place of business except trucks)  
(Type 314) ..... \$825

**\*Wholesale Fish Truck Dealer**  
(for each truck used as a place of business)  
(Type 315) ..... \$590

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

**\*Note:** HB 2470 of the 78th Legislature mandated a 10% surcharge on fees for these licenses. The funds generated by these increases will be dedicated to a shrimp marketing and promotion program administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture.

**\*Retail Fish Dealer**  
(each place of business except trucks)  
(Type 302) ..... \$92.40

**\*Retail Fish Truck Dealer**  
(each truck used as a place of business)  
(Type 316) ..... \$171.60

Required for any person who operates a place of business and sells aquatic products to consumers.

**\*Note:** HB 2470 of the 78th Legislature mandated a 10% surcharge on fees for these licenses. The funds generated by these increases will be dedicated to a shrimp marketing and promotion program administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture.

**Menhaden Fish Plant (Type 326) ..... \$180**

Required for any person who operates, at a fixed location on land, any installation where fish and fish by-products are processed by pressure, heat or chemical means into fish oil, fish solubles, fish scraps or other products.

**Texas Finfish Import License**  
(Type 380) ..... \$95

Required of any person in this state receiving bass of the genus *Micropterus*, blue marlin, crappie, flathead catfish, goliath grouper (formerly called jewfish), longbill spearfish, muskellunge, northern pike, red drum, sailfish, sauger, snook, spotted seatrout, striped bass, tarpon, walleye, white bass, white marlin, yellow bass or hybrids of any of these fish directly from another state or country; or importing, transporting, or selling these fishes in this state. (This license is not required for fishes raised under a Texas Department of Agriculture Aquaculture License, or persons transporting these fish by common carrier from outside this state to a point of delivery outside this state providing the fish are not unloaded in Texas and are accompanied by a bill of lading.)

**Shell Buyer**  
**Resident (Type 324) ..... \$126**  
**Non-resident (Type 424) ..... \$1,890**

Required to purchase for commercial use mussel and clam shells that have been taken from the public waters. (See Page 44 – MUSSELS AND CLAMS.)

**Permit to Sell Nongame Fish from Public Fresh Water ..... \$60**

Required of any person who sells nongame fish taken from the public fresh waters of this state. Additional licenses such as a General Commercial Fisherman’s License, Individual

Bait Dealer's License, and/or a Commercial Fishing Boat License (if using a boat to catch nongame fish) may be required. (See Page 23 – SALE OF FISH – FRESH WATER.) This permit can be obtained by calling (512) 389-4444.

## BOAT LICENSES

Current boat registration or documentation papers must be presented when purchasing a boat license.

A **non-resident boat** is defined as a boat that does not have a Texas Certificate of Number or a boat that does not have a United States Coast Guard Certificate of Documentation that lists the owner's address in Texas.

### Commercial Fishing Boat

(Type 304)..... **\$27**

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, sale, exchange or any commercial purpose.

### Class A Menhaden Boat

(Type 325)..... **\$4,200**

Required for each boat used in the coastal waters of this state for the purpose of catching, storing and transporting menhaden for pay, barter, sale or exchange. Persons aboard a menhaden boat for the purpose of taking menhaden are not required to possess a general commercial fisherman's license or commercial finfish fisherman's license.

### Class B Menhaden Boat

(Type 329)..... **\$50**

Required for each boat used for the purpose of assisting a Class A Menhaden boat in catching menhaden. Persons aboard a Class B Menhaden boat for the purpose of catching menhaden are not required to possess a general commercial fisherman's license or commercial finfish fisherman's license.

### Bait-Shrimp Boat

**Resident** (Type 337)..... **\$366**

**Non-resident** (Type 437)..... **\$758**

This is a limited entry license. (See Page 12 – SHRIMP, CRAB, FINFISH AND OYSTER LICENSE MANAGEMENT.)

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. A boat licensed as a commercial bait shrimp boat may also be used to take edible aquatic products, other than shrimp, for pay, barter, sale or exchange from inside waters.

### Bay-Shrimp Boat

**Resident** (Type 336)..... **\$382.80**

**Non-resident** (Type 436)..... **\$825**

This is a limited entry license. (See Page 12 – SHRIMP, CRAB, FINFISH AND OYSTER LICENSE MANAGEMENT.)

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. A boat licensed as a commercial bay shrimp boat may also be used to take other edible aquatic products for pay, barter, sale or exchange from inside waters.

### Gulf-Shrimp Boat

**Resident** (Type 330)..... **\$495**

**Non-resident** (Type 430)..... **\$1,485**

This is a limited entry license. (See Page 12 – SHRIMP, CRAB, FINFISH AND OYSTER LICENSE MANAGEMENT.)

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 edible aquatic products for pay, barter, sale or exchange or for boats unloading within the state such products taken outside the state's waters.

### Commercial Oyster Boat License

**Resident** (Type 306)..... **\$441**

**Non-resident** (Type 406)..... **\$1,764**

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.

## HARVESTER/SHELL RECOVERY TAGS

Green Tag (Type 301) .....	\$0.20
White Tag (Type 303) .....	\$0.20

Harvester/Shell Recovery tag must be affixed to the outside of each sack of oysters at the time of harvest, in the location of harvest, contain information required by the

Department of State Health Services under the National Shellfish Sanitation Program, and remain affixed during transportation of the oysters to a dealer.

The appropriate Harvester/Shell Recovery Tag (green or white) must be affixed to the sack regardless of the season or whether the requirements of 25 TAC §241.57 (relating to Molluscan Shellfish Harvesting and Handling) apply.

## PURCHASE OF AQUATIC PRODUCTS FOR RESALE

### EXOTIC SPECIES

**Wholesale fish dealers and Retail fish dealers** may display live tilapia, lawfully purchased from the holder of an exotic species permit, but must gut or behead the tilapia before selling or delivering to another person. It is unlawful to transfer live tilapia between fish dealers that do not possess exotic species permits. Exotic species regulations may be found at 31 TAC 57.111 - 57.137.

**Wholesale fish dealers** may purchase for resale, or receive for sale, barter, exchange, or any other commercial purpose aquatic products **only** from persons or entities in this state who hold a valid:

- general commercial fisherman's license;
- commercial oyster fisherman's license;
- commercial oyster boat license;
- wholesale fish dealer's license;
- fish farmer's license;
- commercial oyster boat captain's license;
- commercial shrimp boat license;
- commercial shrimp boat captain's license;
- commercial crab fisherman's license; or
- commercial finfish fisherman's license.

All wholesale fish dealers who purchase aquatic product(s) from anyone except other dealers, and all wholesale fish dealers who harvest aquatic product(s) themselves are required to report these landings under the Trip Ticket Program. (See Page 19 – COMMERCIAL HARVEST REPORTS.)

**Retail fish dealers** may purchase for resale, or receive for sale, barter, exchange, or any other commercial purpose aquatic products **only** from persons or entities in this state who

hold a valid:

- wholesale fish dealer's license;
- fish farmer's license;
- general commercial fisherman's license;
- commercial shrimp boat captain's license;
- commercial shrimp boat license when the retail fish dealer has given written notification to the department of the dealer's intent to purchase aquatic products from the holder of a general commercial fisherman's license or a commercial shrimp boat license;
- commercial crab fisherman's license; or
- commercial finfish fisherman's license.

All retail fish dealers who purchase aquatic product(s) from anyone except other dealers, and all retail fish dealers who harvest aquatic product(s) themselves are required to report these landings under the Trip Ticket Program. (See Page 19 – COMMERCIAL HARVEST REPORTS.)

**Restaurant owners, operators or employees** may purchase aquatic products (**only** for consumption by the restaurant's patrons on the restaurant premises) **only** from persons or entities in this state who hold a valid:

- general commercial fisherman's license;
- wholesale fish dealer's license;
- fish farmer's license;
- commercial shrimp boat license;
- commercial shrimp boat captain's license;
- commercial crab fisherman's license; or
- commercial finfish fisherman's license.

# SHIPPING REGULATIONS

## AQUATIC PRODUCT TRANSPORTATION INVOICES

All aquatic products (uncooked, fresh or frozen fish, shrimp, oysters, crabs, etc.) shipped for commercial purposes must be accompanied by an invoice prepared by the shipper containing the following information:

- Invoice Number
- Date of Shipment
- Name and Physical Address of Shipper (Fish Dealer)
- Name and Physical Address of Receiver
- Dealer Number of Shipper
- Quantity of Aquatic Products contained in the shipment; finfish by species, number or weight; oysters by volume; and all other aquatic products by weight.

Shippers shall sequentially number invoices during each license year. No number may be used twice during any one license period.

Shipper and receiver shall maintain a copy of invoice for a period of one year from date of shipment.

## INTERSTATE TRANSPORTATION

No person may bring into this state and deliver aquatic products for commercial purposes unless the person has obtained a wholesale fish dealer's license, a retail fish dealer's license, a bait dealer's license, or an exotic species interstate transport permit, as applicable, issued by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Aquatic products lawfully taken from the waters of another state may be sold within this state by licensed dealers without regard to size limitations imposed on such products taken within this state. A record of the source and disposition of such undersize or oversize products shall be maintained by the dealer for as long as the undersize or oversize products are retained and for at least 30 days thereafter.

No person may transport aquatic products out of this state for commercial purposes unless the transporter first obtains a wholesale fish dealer's license or a retail fish dealer's license. A person who delivers aquatic products for a licensed wholesale fish dealer or retail fish dealer must possess a copy of the dealer's license while making deliveries.

## CONTAINERS

All containers of aquatic products shipped for commercial purposes must have a label attached to the outside listing the following information:

- Aquatic Products Transportation Invoice number of the shipment of which the container is a part
- Kind of aquatic product contained
- Weight of aquatic product in the container

Finfish may not be shipped in individual packages that contain more than one species.

A commercial fisherman licensed to take aquatic products from Texas waters transporting **their own catch** within this state is not required to invoice the shipment or label containers.

## LICENSES

Any person transporting aquatic products for commercial purposes must have in his possession the license authorizing the shipment.

- Commercial finfish fisherman's license OR
- General commercial fisherman's license and an affidavit from the holder of the commercial finfish fisherman's license authorizing the person to operate their fishing devices for shipments of the fisherman's own catch.
- Commercial shrimp boat license (or copy of commercial shrimp boat license) and commercial shrimp boat captain's license for shipments of shrimp and/or other aquatic products taken on a commercial shrimp boat.
- Commercial oyster boat captain's license and commercial oyster boat license (or copy of commercial oyster boat license), for shipments of oysters taken on a commercial oyster boat.
- Commercial oyster fisherman's license for shipments of the fisherman's own catch of oysters.
- Wholesale or retail fish dealer's truck licenses (original license) or a **copy** of the wholesale or retail fish dealer's business license for shipments going to or from the place of business of fish dealer.

No person may transport aquatic products out of this state for commercial purposes unless the shipper first obtains a wholesale

fish dealer's license, retail fish dealer's license or a bait dealer's license, whichever is applicable.

No person may bring into this state and **deliver** aquatic products for any commercial purpose unless he has obtained a wholesale fish dealer's license or a retail fish dealer's license, whichever is applicable.

A motor carrier providing contract carriage of aquatic products for a fish dealer is not responsible for invoicing or labeling the shipment or obtaining a wholesale or retail fish dealer's license. The shipper (seller of the aquatic product) is responsible for invoicing and labeling the shipment and obtaining the proper dealer's license.

## RECORDS

### COMMERCIAL HARVEST REPORTS

#### Trip Tickets

**NOTE:** All aquatic product transactions are required to be recorded by individual trip regardless of the species involved in the transaction, and each trip's landings will be linked to information about the fisherman and his equipment. These transactions may be recorded electronically [using software provided by TPWD at the address below] or on paper using forms provided by TPWD [at the same address].

All dealers who purchase or receive aquatic product(s) from anyone other than another dealer **MUST** file a monthly report with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department on or before the 10th day of each month following the month in which the reportable activity occurred. The report must be filed every month, whether or not reportable activity occurs. The filing of an incorrect or false report is unlawful. This report must include the forms for all transactions conducted during the period covered by the report.

**All commercial fishermen who sell their catch to individuals other than wholesale fish dealer, retail fish dealer, wholesale truck dealer, retail truck dealer, bait dealer, bait-shrimp dealer, MUST report these sales by filing a monthly report with the TPWD on or before the 10th day of each month following the month in which reportable activity occurred. Processed aquatic products not sold to the processing dealer must be reported by the commercial fishermen at the landing weight prior to processing.**

#### A trip ticket must include:

- the name of the seller;
- the **commercial license** number of the seller;
- commercial license type of seller;
- Texas driver's license;
- the date of sale;
- the number of pounds sold by species;
- unit and condition codes
- count and/or market size
- the water body or bay system from which the aquatic products were taken;
- price paid per pound per species;
- gear used to harvest the aquatic product;
- trip time;
- fishing time;
- commercial fishing vessel name;
- commercial fishing vessel registration number;
- dealer name; and
- the **commercial license** number of the dealer.

Trip tickets are required for all **aquatic** products and must be completed at the time the products are delivered from the fisherman to the dealer.

#### Source of Forms

Dealer report forms for aquatic products are available by writing: Commercial Harvest Program, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Dickinson Marine Laboratory, 1502 FM 517 E, Dickinson, TX 77539 or calling (281) 534-0117.

## MARKING OF VEHICLES

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 letters of good proportion in contrasting color to the background and be at least six inches in height, or be marked in the lower left portion, on the rear of the vehicle with a decal (see illustration) as prescribed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission. For information call (512) 389-4853. **Each individual dealer or company is responsible for generating their own decal according to provided guidelines.**



(Reduced version of truck decal. Must be at least six inches by six inches in size and in contrasting color to the truck.)

## IMPORTATION REGULATIONS

No person may import into this state or possess a wildlife resource taken outside this state, unless the person possessing the wildlife resource produces on demand by a game warden a valid hunting, fishing or other applicable license, stamp, tag, permit or document for the state or country in which the wildlife resource was legally taken.

A person importing or possessing a wildlife resource from another state or country must produce upon demand by a game warden a valid driver's license or personal identification certificate.

Fish imported into Texas and landed by boat, must comply with Texas bag and size limits. This does not apply to fish caught under the authority of an approved Federal Fishery Management Plan.

### COMMERCIALLY PROTECTED FISH

All shipments of commercially protected finfish must be accompanied by a "Commercially Protected Finfish Shipping Invoice." A copy of the invoice must accompany all commercially protected finfish shipments through their place of final sale to the consumer.

#### Commercially Protected Finfish

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Bass of the genus <i>Micropterus</i> * | • Grouper, goliath (formerly called jewfish) |
| • Bass, striped*                         | • Marlin, blue                               |
| • Bass, white*                           | • Marlin, white                              |
| • Bass, yellow                           | • Muskellunge                                |
| • Catfish, flathead*                     | • Pike, northern                             |
| • Crappie, black*                        | • Sailfish                                   |
| • Crappie, white*                        | • Sauger                                     |
| • Drum, red*                             |  |

- Seatrout, spotted
- Snook
- Spearfish, longbill
- Tarpon
- Walleye
- Hybrids of any of these fish\*

**\*NOTICE:** 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 any 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.

#### Commercially Protected Finfish Invoice

1. Shall accompany all shipments of commercially protected finfish imported, exported or shipped within the state.
2. Shall contain all of the following information, correctly stated and legibly written:
  - (a) Commercially Protected Finfish Shipping Invoice number;
  - (b) Date of shipment;
  - (c) Name and physical address of shipper;
  - (d) Name and physical address of receiver;
  - (e) Shipper's and receiver's Texas Finfish Import Dealer number when required;
  - (f) Number and weight of whole fish or fillets by species contained in the shipment; and
  - (g) State (or country, if outside the United States) of origin.
3. Shall be on the form prescribed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission and 8-1/2 x 11 inches in size.
4. Be sequentially numbered during the license period.

5. **NEW.** The **shipper** and **receiver** is responsible for reporting each shipment made within 24 hours of shipment through the **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department approved internet application found at <https://txfinfish.com>**, except a retail dealer or restaurant selling only to the consumer is not required to report through the department approved internet application.

6. One copy of each invoice must be **retained** by the shipper and receiver, including retail dealers and restaurants, for a period of at least one year from the date of shipment. For questions contact (512) 389-4853.

#### **Package Requirements**

Commercial shipments of commercially protected finfish must be shipped in containers whose volume is no greater than six cubic feet or in containers that do not contain more than three individual fish each.

#### **Package Labels**

Each package of commercially protected finfish shall be labeled as to its contents. Labels shall be placed on the outside of each package and contain the following information:

1. The commercially protected finfish invoice number of the shipment of which the package is a part.
2. The number and weight of whole fish or fillets by species contained in the package.

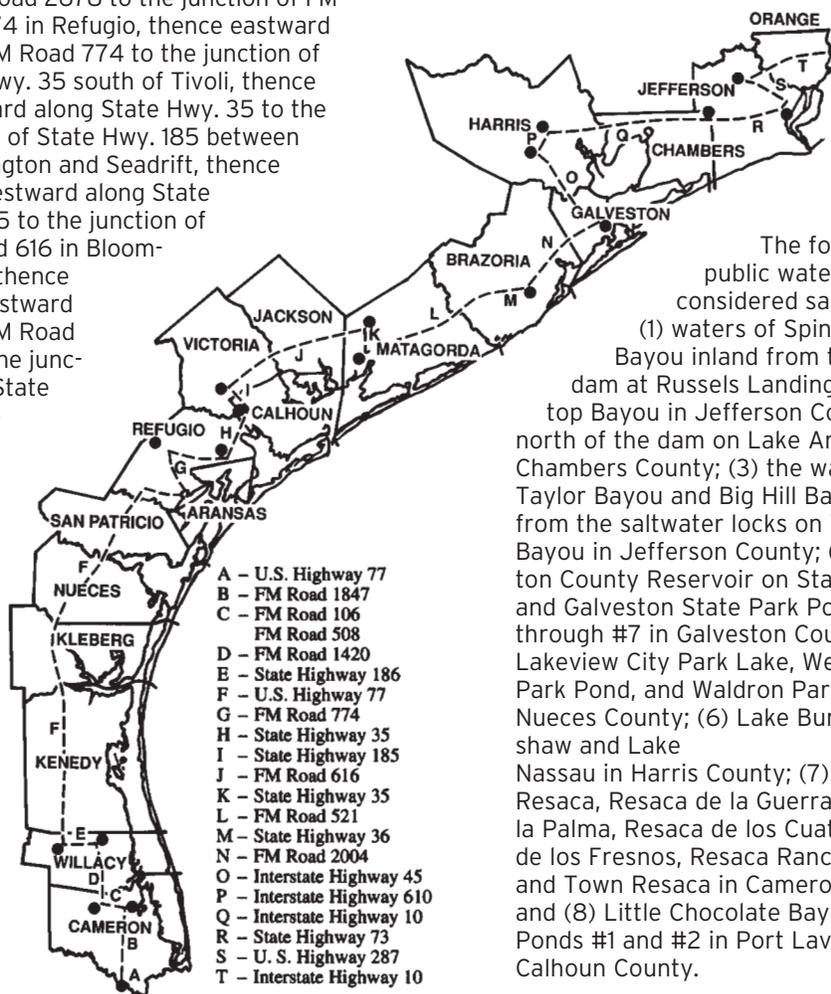
#### **Importation of Commercially Protected Finfish from the EEZ by Commercial Fishermen**

A commercially protected finfish lawfully taken or raised for commercial purposes in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) under the authority of a Federal Fishery Management Plan or Federal Permit may be transported into this state by the harvesting vessel. These commercially protected finfish may only be unloaded to the holder of a Texas Finfish Import License.

# FRESHWATER/SALTWATER BOUNDARY

All public waters east and south of the following boundary are considered salt waters: beginning at the International Toll Bridge in Brownsville, northward along U.S. Hwy. 77 to the junction of Paredes Lines Road (FM Road 1847) in Brownsville, thence northward along FM Road 1847 to the junction of FM Road 106 east of Rio Hondo, thence westward along FM Road 106 to the junction of FM Road 508 in Rio Hondo, thence northward along FM Road 508 to the junction of FM Road 1420, thence northward along FM Road 1420 to the junction of State Hwy. 186 east of Raymondville, thence westward along State Hwy. 186 to the junction of U.S. Hwy. 77 near Raymondville, thence northward along U.S. Hwy. 77 to the junction of the Aransas River south of Woodsboro, thence eastward along the south shore of the Aransas River to the junction of the Aransas River Road at the Bonnie View boat ramp; thence northward along the Aransas River Road to the junction of FM Road 136 to FM Road 2678 to the junction of FM Road 774 in Refugio, thence eastward along FM Road 774 to the junction of State Hwy. 35 south of Tivoli, thence northward along State Hwy. 35 to the junction of State Hwy. 185 between Bloomington and Seadrift, thence northwestward along State Hwy. 185 to the junction of FM Road 616 in Bloomington, thence northeastward along FM Road 616 to the junction of State Hwy. 35

east of Blessing, thence southward along State Hwy. 35 to the junction of FM Road 521 north of Palacios, thence northeastward along FM Road 521 to the junction of State Hwy. 36 south of Brazoria, thence southward along State Hwy. 36 to the junction of FM Road 2004, thence northward along FM Road 2004 to the junction of Interstate Hwy. 45 between Dickinson and La Marque, thence northwestward along Interstate Hwy. 45 to the junction of Interstate Hwy. 610 in Houston, thence east and northward along Interstate Hwy. 610 to the junction of Interstate Hwy. 10 in Houston, thence eastward along Interstate Hwy. 10 to the junction of State Hwy. 73 in Winnie, thence eastward along State Hwy. 73 to the junction of U.S. Hwy. 287 in Port Arthur, thence northwestward along U.S. Hwy. 287 to the junction of Interstate Hwy. 10 in Beaumont, thence eastward along Interstate Hwy. 10 to the Louisiana State Line.



The following public waters are not considered salt water:  
 (1) waters of Spindletop Bayou inland from the concrete dam at Russels Landing on Spindletop Bayou in Jefferson County; (2) north of the dam on Lake Anahuac in Chambers County; (3) the waters of Taylor Bayou and Big Hill Bayou inland from the saltwater locks on Taylor Bayou in Jefferson County; (4) Galveston County Reservoir on State Hwy. 146 and Galveston State Park Ponds #1 through #7 in Galveston County; (5) Lakeview City Park Lake, West Guth Park Pond, and Waldron Park Pond in Nueces County; (6) Lake Burke-Crenshaw and Lake Nassau in Harris County; (7) Fort Brown Resaca, Resaca de la Guerra, Resaca de la Palma, Resaca de los Cuates, Resaca de los Fresnos, Resaca Rancho Viejo, and Town Resaca in Cameron County; and (8) Little Chocolate Bayou Park Ponds #1 and #2 in Port Lavaca in Calhoun County.

# FISH

## GENERAL REGULATIONS

It is **UNLAWFUL** to take, attempt to take, possess, sell or purchase fish within a protected length limit, in greater numbers, by other means, or at any time or place other than as provided in this guide.

It is **UNLAWFUL** to transport by boat or person any fish within a protected length limit, or in excess of the daily bag limit or possession limit established for those fish.

**No person** on board a licensed commercial fishing boat (a commercial fishing boat, commercial shrimp boat, menhaden boat, commercial oyster boat) may possess any fish species whose sale is prohibited.

- On board a commercial shrimp boat fish legally taken incidental to a legal shrimp operation may only be possessed by a person with a shrimp boat captain's license or a person who is the owner of a licensed commercial shrimp boat.
- To legally fish recreationally from a licensed commercial fishing boat, the commercial plates must be removed from the boat. While no commercial plates are on board, all recreational fishing regulations apply including size, bag and possession limits.
- While the commercial plates are on board, all commercial regulations apply, including size, bag and possession limits.

**No person** may possess a finfish of any species, except broadbill swordfish or king mackerel, taken from public water with the head and tail removed until such person finally lands the catch on the mainland, a peninsula or barrier island, not including jetties or piers. Sharks may have their head removed prior to landing the catch on the mainland, a peninsula or barrier island, not including jetties or piers. However the tail must remain attached to the carcass until finally processed or until delivered to the dealer.

**Leaving fish to die.** It is **UNLAWFUL** to leave **edible fish** or **bait fish** taken from the public waters of this state to die without the intent to retain the fish for consumption or bait.

## PROHIBITED ACTS IN ALL PUBLIC WATERS

It is **UNLAWFUL** to fail to immediately remove the intestines from **grass carp, tilapia, or any other harmful exotic species** when caught or possessed. (For a complete listing contact TPWD at (800) 792-1112.)

It is **UNLAWFUL** for any person to use a gaff except to aid in the landing of fish caught by other legal devices, means, or methods. Fish landed with a gaff may not be below the minimum, above the maximum, or within a protected length limit.

It is **UNLAWFUL** for any person to release into the public waters of this state a fish with a device or substance implanted or attached that is designed, constructed or adapted to produce an audible, visual or electronic signal used to monitor, track, follow or in any manner aid in the location of the released fish.

It is **UNLAWFUL** to catch, possess, use, transport, purchase or sell any game fish or any part thereof as bait.

Billfish, except swordfish, may not be landed or possessed by the captain or crew of a commercial fishing vessel.

## SALE OF FISH – FRESH WATER

It is **UNLAWFUL** to sell any fish taken from the public fresh water of Texas except for the following:

(1) **Channel and blue catfish** over 14 inches in length taken in the following:

- Angelina County
- Bowie County
- Camp County
- Cass County
- Chambers County
- Franklin County
- Freestone County
- Gregg County
- Hardin County
- Harris County
- Harrison County
- Jasper County
- Jefferson County
- Lamar County
- Leon County
- Liberty County
- Madison County

- Marion County
- Montgomery County
- Morris County
- Nacogdoches County
- Navarro County
- Newton County
- Orange County
- Panola County
- Polk County
- Red River County
- Sabine County
- San Augustine County
- San Jacinto County
- Shelby County
- Titus County
- Trinity County
- Tyler County
- Upshur County
- Walker County
- the Neches and Trinity rivers in Houston County
- the Colorado River in Bastrop, Colorado, Fayette, Matagorda or Wharton counties

**(2) A PERMIT TO SELL NONGAME FISH**

is required to sell alligator gar, shortnose gar, spotted gar, longnose gar, bowfin, gizzard shad, threadfin shad, common carp, goldfish, grass carp, bighead carp, bigmouth buffalo, black buffalo, smallmouth buffalo, river carpsucker, black bullhead, yellow bullhead, freshwater drum (gaspergou), tilapia and their hybrids, Rio Grande cichlids (perch), silversides, mullet, listed shiners and minnows, and hybrids of these species taken from the public fresh waters of this state (See Page 15 - OTHER BUSINESS LICENSES AND PERMITS). Other nongame fish may not be sold. For permit information call (512) 389-8292.

**SALE OF FISH – SALT WATER**

All fish listed below taken from the public salt water of Texas may **NOT** be sold for any purpose. All other fish taken from public salt water may be sold provided all commercial fishing regulations including licensing, and size, possession and bag limits are met.

- Bass of the genus *Micropterus*
- Bass, striped
- Bass, white
- Bass, yellow
- Catfish, flathead
- Crappie, black
- Crappie, white
- Drum, red
- Grouper, goliath (formerly called jewfish)
- Marlin, blue
- Marlin, white
- Muskellunge
- Pike, northern
- Sailfish
- Sauger
- Seatrout, spotted
- Snook
- Spearfish, longbill
- Tarpon
- Walleye
- Hybrids of any of these fish

**Commercial Fishing Seasons**

The commercial fishing seasons for red snapper, sharks and king mackerel caught in Texas waters shall run concurrently with commercial seasons established for these species in federal waters of the Exclusive Economic Zone (more than 9 nm off shore).

## TEXAS STATE WATERS – FEDERAL WATERS

Texas recreational and commercial fishermen fishing more than 9 nautical miles off the coast of Texas are in federal waters and are subject to rules and regulations that may differ from those in state waters. **It is a violation of state law** to possess aquatic animal life in Texas that was unlawfully taken in violation of federal law in the Exclusive Economic Zone. To insure you are in compliance with federal regulations, you should contact the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council at (888) 833-1844 (toll-free) or visit [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org) and click on REGULATIONS.

### INDIVIDUAL FISHING QUOTA (IFQ) FOR RED SNAPPER

No person aboard any vessel shall sell, barter, trade, or exchange red snapper; land or attempt to land red snapper for the purpose of sale, barter, trade, or exchange; or possess red snapper for the purpose of sale, barter, trade, or exchange unless the person possesses a valid federal permit for the harvest of Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish, a valid federal red snapper Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) vessel endorsement and a sufficient allocation for red snapper.

### TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH (TAC) FOR GULF MENHADEN

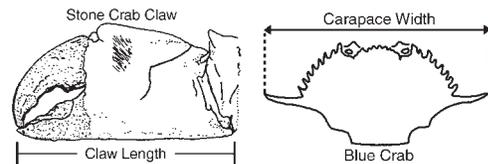
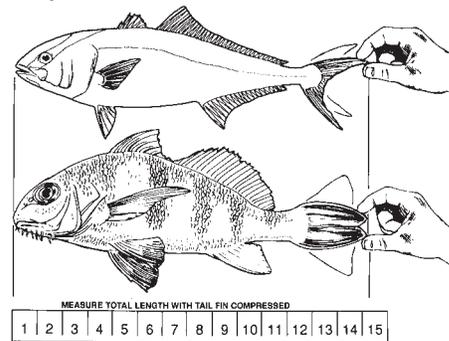
The commercial season for menhaden (*Brevoortia patronus*) is open beginning on the third Monday in April and will continue until whichever of the following first occurs: the first day in November; or the total catch for the season has reached 31,500,000 pounds.

## PADRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE – SPECIAL REGULATIONS

Starting March 7, 2009 anyone, excluding vendors and concessionaires, who makes money from a public resource at the Padre Island National Seashore or within its aquatic perimeter is required to possess a National Park Service issued "Commercial Use Authorization" permit while operating their service. Direct questions at (361) 949-9239, ext. 33. Also check the website for a full explanation of the rule: [www.nps.gov/pais](http://www.nps.gov/pais)

### HOW TO MEASURE FISH AND CRABS

The length to be measured is that straight line distance from the tip of the snout to the extreme tip of the tail or caudal fin. All measurements are to be made as that straight line distance (not over the curve of the body) with the fish lying on its side and with the jaw closed in a normal position, not extended in any way. The tail should be squeezed or rotated to produce the maximum overall length.



## COMMERCIAL BAG, POSSESSION AND LENGTH LIMITS

Species	Bag Limit	Possession Limit	Minimum Length (Inches)	Maximum Length (Inches)
Amberjack, greater	1	2	34	No limit
Drum, black <sup>a</sup>	No limit	No limit	14	30
Catfish: blue and channel	25 <sup>b</sup> (In any combination)	50 (In any combination)	14	No limit
Catfish, gafftopsail	No limit	No limit	14	No limit
Cobia	2	4	37	No limit
Flounder <sup>c</sup>	30/2 <sup>c</sup>	30/2 <sup>c</sup>	14	No limit
Gar, alligator <sup>d</sup>	1 <sup>e</sup>	2 <sup>e</sup>	No limit	No limit
Grouper, gag	2	4	22	No limit
Mackerel, king	2	4	27	No limit
Mackerel, Spanish	15	30	14	No limit
Mullet: all species their hybrids and subspecies <sup>f</sup>	No limit	No limit	No limit	12 during Oct., Nov., Dec. & Jan.
Shark:	1 See Special Regulation <sup>g</sup> below	2		
Atlantic sharpnose, blacktip, bonnethead			24	No limit
Allowable shark species			64	No limit
Prohibited shark species <sup>h</sup>	0	0	Catch and release only	Catch and release only
Sheepshead <sup>a</sup>	No limit	No limit	15	No limit
Snapper, lane	No limit	No limit	8	No limit
Snapper, red <sup>i</sup>	4	8	15	No limit
Snapper, vermillion	No limit	No limit	10	No limit
Triggerfish, gray	20	40	16	No limit
Tripletail	3	6	17	No limit

<sup>a</sup> Only the holder of a commercial finfish fisherman's license is exempt from recreational bag and possession limits while commercial fishing for black drum or sheepshead.

<sup>b</sup> Exceptions to catfish daily bag limit:

- 1) in Lake Livingston (Polk, San Jacinto, Trinity and Walker counties) the daily bag limit for channel and blue catfish is 50 in any combination;
- 2) in lakes lying totally within a state park and community fishing lakes (see the Texas Parks and Wildlife Outdoor Annual), the daily bag limit for channel and blue catfish is 5 in any combination and fish may be taken by pole and line only.

<sup>c</sup> **Flounder Special Regulation:** Daily bag is 30 fish except from Nov. 1-30, when the daily bag limit is 2 fish (flounder may be taken only by pole-and-line); and from December 1-14, when the daily bag limit is 2 fish (flounder may be taken by any legal means). Possession limit is equal to the daily bag.

On board a licensed commercial shrimp boat the limit is equal to the recreational limit per each person with a current shrimp boat captain's license and is subject to the 50% bycatch rule (See Page 27 – SHRIMP)

<sup>d</sup> **Fishing Restrictions for Spawning Alligator Gar:** When conditions such as water temperature and flooding events would be conducive for spawning of alligator gar, the TPWD Executive Director may temporarily prohibit taking or attempting to take alligator gar in a specified area for a period not to exceed 30 days. Conditions that would be used to invoke this action include water temperatures between 68 to 82°F and occurrence of moderate flood levels as defined and reported by U.S. Geological Survey gauges (see [www.srh.noaa.gov/wgrfc](http://www.srh.noaa.gov/wgrfc)). Notice of this action will be posted on the TPWD website, distributed to print and broadcast media, and shared through social media. The notice will specify the area to be closed and when lawful fishing for alligator gar may resume. For current closure notices, visit [tpwd.texas.gov/gar-closure](http://tpwd.texas.gov/gar-closure)

- <sup>e</sup> In Falcon International Reservoir (Starr and Zapata counties), daily bag limit is 5, and possession limit is 10.
- <sup>f</sup> May not take from public waters or possess on board a boat mullet over 12 inches during October, November, December and January. No limits apply during other months.
- <sup>g</sup> **Special Regulation:** The daily bag limit is one (1) fish for all allowable shark species **INCLUDING** Atlantic sharpnose, blacktip and bonnethead.
- <sup>h</sup> **Prohibited shark species:** Atlantic angel, Basking, Bigeye sand tiger, Bigeye sixgill, Bigeye thresher, Bignose, Caribbean reef, Caribbean sharpnose, Dusky, Galapagos, Longfin mako, Narrowtooth, Night, Sandbar, Sand tiger, Sevengill, Silky, Sixgill, Smalltail, Whale, White.
- <sup>i</sup> **Special Regulation:** Red snapper may be taken using pole and line, but it is **UNLAWFUL** to use any kind of hook other than a circle hook when using natural bait.

The possession limit does not apply to fish in the possession of:

(1) **a person who has an invoice or sales ticket** showing the name and address of the seller, number of fish by species, date of the sale, and other information required on a sales ticket or an invoice.

(2) for all wildlife resources (including fish) taken for personal consumption and

for which there is a possession limit, the possession limit shall not apply after the wildlife resource has reached its final destination and/or point of sale with required invoices.

It is **UNLAWFUL** for any person while fishing on or in public waters to have in possession fish in excess of the daily bag limit or fish within a protected length limit as established for those waters.

## SHRIMP

### GENERAL REGULATIONS

#### LICENSE REQUIRED

- Commercial Shrimp Boat Captain's License
- Commercial Shrimp Boat License (Bay, Bait or Gulf)

(See Pages 6 and 13 for licensing details)

To legally sport fish from a licensed commercial shrimp boat and to legally catch and retain fish species prohibited from sale, the commercial plates must be removed from the boat. While no commercial plates are on board, all sport fishing regulations apply including licenses, size, bag and possession limits. All commercial regulations apply when the commercial plates are on board.

It is **UNLAWFUL** to:

- take or attempt to take shrimp within the boundaries of any natural or man-made pass leading from the inside waters to the outside waters (Gulf of Mexico) of the state.
- use a trawl or fail to have the spreading devices on deck and the trawl bag untied at a time when shrimping is prohibited.
- possess a trawl that is too wide or has small mesh in an area where the trawl is prohibited. Such trawls may be possessed on vessels in port or in a marked

channel going directly to or from an area in this state where the use of the trawl is permitted.

- head shrimp aboard a boat in inside waters.
- possess a device designed to catch fish or other aquatic life, including a shrimp trawl, in or on the public waters of the state where the use of the device is prohibited.
- catch and retain fish species prohibited from sale on a licensed commercial shrimp boat while the commercial plates are on board.
- retain a red drum, spotted seatrout or lightning whelk on board a licensed commercial shrimp boat if there is a trawl on board the boat.

It is **UNLAWFUL** for any person:

- aboard a vessel licensed as a commercial bay shrimp boat to off-load, transfer, sell, or barter any amount of live or dead shrimp to a person aboard another vessel;
- aboard a vessel to off-load, transfer, purchase, or barter from a person aboard a vessel licensed as a commercial **bay** shrimp boat any amount of live or dead shrimp;
- aboard a vessel licensed as a commercial **bait** shrimp boat to off-load, transfer, sell, or barter any amount of live or dead shrimp, except an amount of live or dead

- shrimp not to exceed two quarts per sport fisherman or one gallon (by volume) for two or more sport fishermen may be off-loaded, transferred, sold, or bartered to a person aboard a sport fishing vessel; or
- aboard a vessel to off-load, transfer, purchase, or barter from a person aboard a vessel licensed as a commercial **bait** shrimp boat any amount of live or dead shrimp, except a person aboard a recreational fishing vessel may off-load, transfer, purchase, or barter an amount of shrimp not to exceed two quarts per sport fisherman or one gallon (by volume) for two or more recreational fishermen.

Commercial shrimp boat license plates must be prominently displayed as to be clearly visible from both sides of the boat.

Fresh shrimp may be held in possession only through open seasons and five days thereafter, **except** that bait dealers and sport fishermen may possess bait shrimp throughout the year.

**The captain of a licensed commercial shrimp boat is required to hold a Commercial Shrimp Boat Captain's license.**

Nongame fish and other aquatic products taken incidental to legal shrimp trawling operations may be retained provided each person that retains a lawful limit of fish has a current shrimp boat captain's license, or is the licensed owner of the shrimp boat, and:

- the total weight of aquatic products retained, in any combination, do not exceed 50% by weight of shrimp on a shrimping vessel; or
- from May 1 to Sept. 30 up to 1,500 live nongame fish not regulated by bag or size limit and/or 300 dozen ribbonfish may be retained daily **for bait purposes only** on board a vessel licensed for commercial bait shrimp fishing.

The taking of aquatic products of **illegal size** on board a licensed commercial shrimp boat engaged in the lawful taking of shrimp is not a violation if the aquatic products of UNLAWFUL size are returned to the waters from which taken in a manner to ensure their **best chance of survival**.

## DISPLAY BOAT NUMBERS

All commercial shrimp boats are required to exhibit the vessel's documentation or registration number on the **port** and **starboard** sides of the deckhouse or hull and on an **appropriate weather deck**. The number in block Arabic numerals in contrasting color to the background must be at least 18 inches in height on vessels over 65 feet and 10 inches in height for all other vessels and be permanently attached.

## METHOD OF NET MEASUREMENT

All total widths specified for commercial otter trawls, including try nets, are measured along the uninterrupted corkline from leading tip of door to leading tip of door, including any and all add-on devices or attachments to the corkline. All beam trawl widths are measured along the beam in its fully extended position. (See Page 36 for details.)

Mesh sizes specified for commercial trawls apply to the trawl, bag and trawl liner and are measured in inches of length between the two most widely separated knots in any consecutive series of five stretched meshes after the trawl has been placed in use.

## SPECIAL REGULATIONS (Bay and Bait Shrimping)

A boat having on board or displaying a bait shrimp boat license must operate **only** under commercial bait shrimp regulations, including: 1) 200 pound daily limit; 2) maintaining 50% of the shrimp alive; 3) places authorized for bait shrimping; and 4) sale or unload to a bait shrimp dealer or sportsman. (See Page 27 – SHRIMP.)

A shrimp boat licensed both as a bay shrimp boat and a bait shrimp boat may not shrimp in both a major bay and any other water on the same calendar day during the period May 15 through July 15 (Spring Open Season).

A shrimp boat licensed both as a bay shrimp boat and a bait shrimp boat may not take more than 800 pounds of heads-on shrimp per calendar day during the period May 15 through July 15 (Spring Open Season).

See tables on pages 34-35 for open seasons, limits and requirements for the Commercial Bay-Shrimp and Bait-Shrimp Boats.

## WATERS DEFINED

**Outside Waters**—That part of the Gulf of Mexico extending from the shoreline seaward to nine nautical miles.

**Inside Waters**—All bays, passes, rivers or other bodies of water landward from the Gulf of Mexico. In these waters, the tide rises and falls and saltwater shrimp are found or migrate.

**Major Bays** (arranged geographically north to south)

- Sabine Lake (north of Cameron Causeway to the south of a line marked by the GIWW [Sabine Neches Canal/Sabine River] between the eastern most tip of Goat Island to the western most tip of Stewts Island)
- Trinity Bay (southward from a line extending from the mouth of Double Bayou in Chambers County to Double Bayou Channel Marker 14, to Separator C-2, to Point Barrow in Chambers County)
- Galveston Bay
- East Bay (westward from a line extending from Frozen Point to the GIWW Marker 12)
- Matagorda Bay (westward of a line extending from a location on the mainland where a line running immediately northwest [bearing 330 degrees] from Shellfish Marker A intersects the mainland; thence southeasterly to Shellfish Marker A located near the mainland, thence to Shellfish Marker B located near the end of Shell Island Reef, thence to the tide gauge located near the Matagorda Peninsula, and thence southeasterly [bearing 153 degrees] to the Matagorda Peninsula)
- East Matagorda Bay
- Tres Palacios Bay (south of a line from Grasse Point to the mouth of Pilkington Bayou)
- Espiritu Santo Bay
- Lavaca Bay (seaward of State Hwy. 35)
- San Antonio Bay (seaward of a line from McDowell Point to Mosquito Point)
- Aransas Bay
- Corpus Christi Bay (exclusive of the area bounded by a line extending from the GIWW at the southwest point of Dagger Island chain, along Dagger Island to the

southeast tip of Ransom Island, then southeast to the westernmost point of land north of Marker 14 in the Corpus Christi Ship Channel)

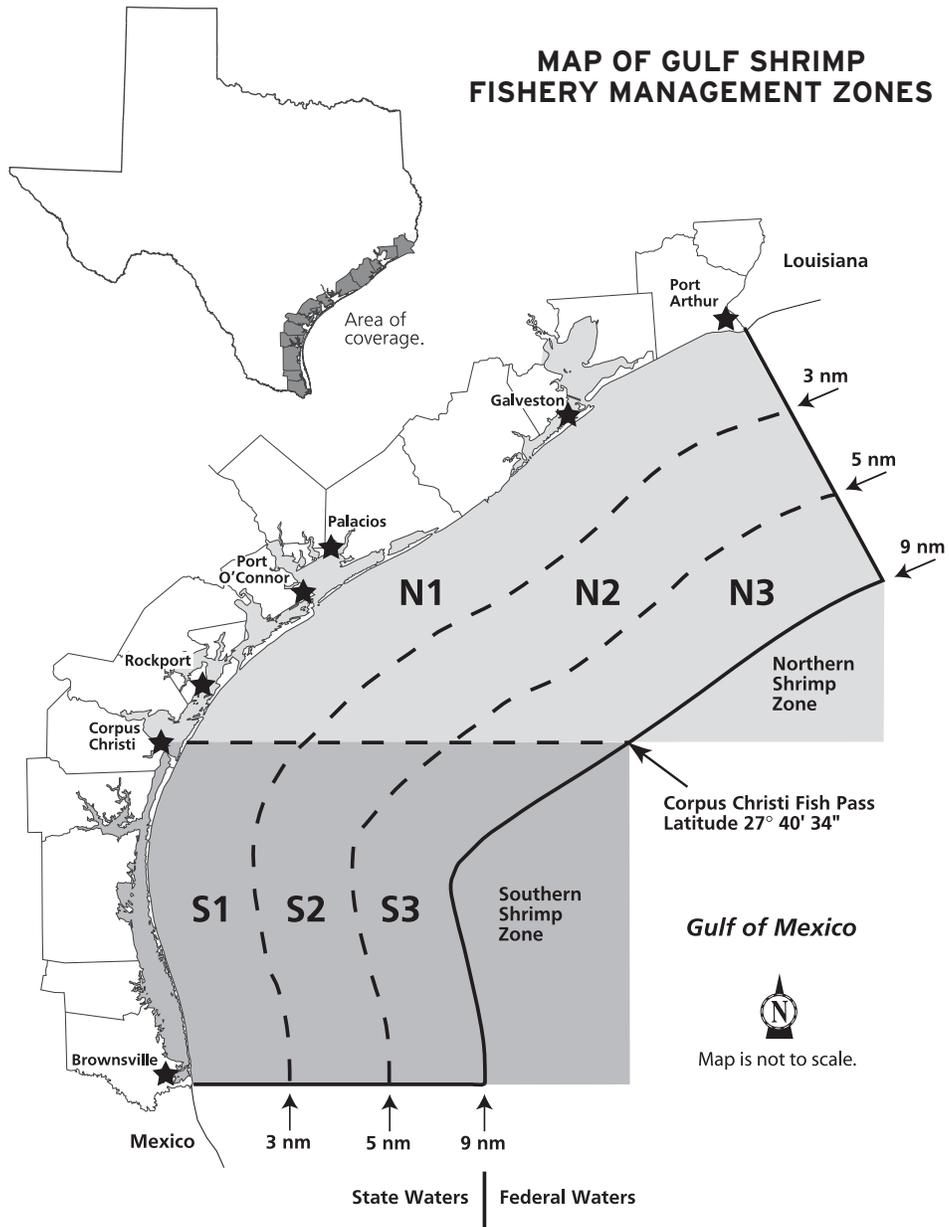
- All exclusive of tributary bays, bayous and inlets, lakes and rivers.

**Bait Bays include major bays** and the following (arranged geographically north to south)

- Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) exclusive of all tributaries
- Chocolate Bay
- West Bay (south and west of Interstate Hwy. 45 Causeway Bridge and the GIWW inclusive of the area south of a line extending westward from the Interstate Hwy. 45 Causeway Bridge at Virginia Point, along the southern edge of Tiki Island to the northeastern tip of North Deer Island at Channel Marker 48)
- Trinity Bay (northward from a line extending from the mouth of Double Bayou in Chambers County to Double Bayou Channel Marker 14, to Separator C-2, to Point Barrow in Chambers County)
- The Old Brazos River (lying north of the GIWW in Brazoria County)
- Baroom Bay
- Upper Laguna Madre
- Alazan Bay
- Baffin Bay, and
- Lower Laguna Madre including the Brownsville Ship Channel

**Nursery Areas** (Those coastal waters not specifically named above as Major Bays or Bait Bays are considered Nursery Areas)—Includes tributary bays, bayous, inlets, lakes and rivers that provide growth and development environments for postlarval and juvenile shrimp. Does not include outside waters, major bays or bait bays.

## MAP OF GULF SHRIMP FISHERY MANAGEMENT ZONES



## OUTSIDE WATERS

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

#### Closed Seasons:

- **Federal Waters** (from 9 nautical miles to 200 nautical miles from the Texas Coast), shrimping is closed:
  - from May 15\*\* - July 15\*\*
 

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** The rules regarding the Summer Closed Season for Federal Waters off Texas may have changed prior to publication of this guide. For current rules, please call the National Marine Fisheries Service at (727) 824-5305 or contact your nearest TPWD Law Enforcement office.
- **Within 5 nautical miles of the Texas coast** (Zones N1, N2, S1, S2), shrimping is closed:
  - at night (30 minutes after sunset to 30 minutes before sunrise)
  - from Dec. 1 - Feb. 15
- **Within 5 nautical miles of the Texas coast in the South Zone** (Zones S1, S2), shrimping is closed:
  - from Feb. 16 - May 15\*\*
- **Within 9 nautical miles of the Texas coast** (Zones N1, N2, N3, S1, S2, S3), shrimping is closed:
  - from 30 minutes after sunset May 15\*\* to 30 minutes after sunset July 15\*\*

\*\***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.

#### Net Limitations:

- **Net Type I:**
  - **Trawl Size:** Otter trawls must have doors at least 3 feet 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.

Door Length (ft.)	Total Width (ft.)
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'

- **Net Type II:**
  - **Trawl Size:** Otter trawls must have doors at least 3 feet 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.

#### • **Net Dimensions:**

Door Length (ft.)	Total Width (ft.)
3' or more but less than 4'	40'
4' or more but less than 5'	42'
5' or more but less than 6'	44'
6' or more but less than 7'	46'
7' or more but less than 8'	48'
8' or more but less than 9'	50'
9' or more but less than 10'	52'
10' or more	54'

#### • **Seabob Net:**

- **Trawl Size:** Otter trawls must have doors at least 3 feet 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.

#### • **Net Dimensions:**

Door Length (ft.)	Total Width (ft.)
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	62'

- **Try Nets** (Gulf and Inshore - Bay Shrimping):
  - **Otter Trawls:**
    - Total width: 21 feet
    - Doors: 450 square inches
  - **Beam Trawls:** May not exceed 10 feet in width
- **Try Nets** (Inshore - Bait Shrimping):
  - **Otter Trawls:**
    - Total width: 12 feet
    - Doors: 450 square inches
  - **Beam Trawls:** May not exceed 5 feet in width

See tables on pages 32-33 for open seasons, limits and requirements for the Southern and Northern Zones for Commercial Gulf-Shrimp Boats.

**OUTSIDE WATERS**

**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 Shrimp Zone are OPEN TO SHRIMPING as follows:					
Map Segments (see pg. 29)	Location	Season (Dates)	Hours	Limits	Trawl Requirements
S3	5-9 nautical miles	July 16** - Nov. 30 Dec. 1 - May. 15**	Day and Night	Bag: No Limit Size: No Limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of trawls: No Limit</li> <li>• Mesh Size: Not less than 8-3/4 inches over 5 stretched meshes</li> <li>• Trawl Size: No Limit</li> <li>• Approved BRDs<sup>†</sup> are required</li> <li>• Approved TEDs<sup>#</sup> are required (FEDERAL REGULATION)</li> </ul>
S2	3-5 nautical miles	July 16** - Nov. 30	30 min. before sunrise to 30 min. after sunset		
S1	Inside 3 nautical miles	July 16** - Nov. 30	30 min. before sunrise to 30 min. after sunset	Bag: No Limit Size: No Limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of trawls: No more than 2</li> <li>• Mesh Size: Not less than 8-3/4 inches over 5 stretched meshes</li> <li>• Trawl Size: Net Type I (see pg. 30)</li> <li>• Approved BRDs<sup>†</sup> are required</li> <li>• Approved TEDs<sup>#</sup> are required (FEDERAL REGULATION)</li> </ul>

**\*\*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.  
<sup>†</sup> BRD means Bycatch Reduction Device      <sup>#</sup> TED means Turtle Excluder Device

**OUTSIDE WATERS**

**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>OPEN TO SHRIMPING</b> as follows:					
Map Segments (see pg. 29)	Location	Season (Dates)	Hours	Limits	Trawl Requirements
N3	5-9 nautical miles	July 16** - Nov. 30 Dec. 1 - May 15**	Day and Night	Bag: No Limit Size: No Limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of trawls: No Limit</li> <li>• Mesh Size: Not less than 8-3/4 inches over 5 stretched meshes</li> <li>• Trawl Size: No Limit</li> <li>• Approved BRDs† are required</li> <li>• Approved TEDs‡ are required (FEDERAL REGULATION)</li> </ul>
N2	3-5 nautical miles	Feb. 16 - May 15** July 16** - Nov. 30	30 min. before sunrise to 30 min. after sunset		
N1	Inside 3 nautical miles	Feb. 16 - May 15** July 16** - Nov. 30	30 min. before sunrise to 30 min. after sunset	Bag: No Limit Size: No Limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of trawls: No more than 2</li> <li>• Mesh Size: Not less than 8-3/4 inches over 5 stretched meshes</li> <li>• Trawl Size: Net Type I (see pg. 30)</li> <li>• Approved BRDs† are required</li> <li>• Approved TEDs‡ are required (FEDERAL REGULATION)</li> </ul>
N1, N2 & N3	Seabobs	Dec. 1 - May 15** July 16** - Nov. 30	30 min. before sunrise to 30 min. 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of trawls: No more than 1</li> <li>• Mesh Size: 6-1/2 inches over 5 stretched meshes</li> <li>• Trawl Size: Seabob Net (see pg. 30)</li> <li>• Approved BRDs† are required</li> <li>• Approved TEDs‡ are required (FEDERAL REGULATION)</li> </ul>

\*\*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 means Bycatch Reduction Device  
 ‡ TED means Turtle Excluder Device

**INSIDE WATERS**

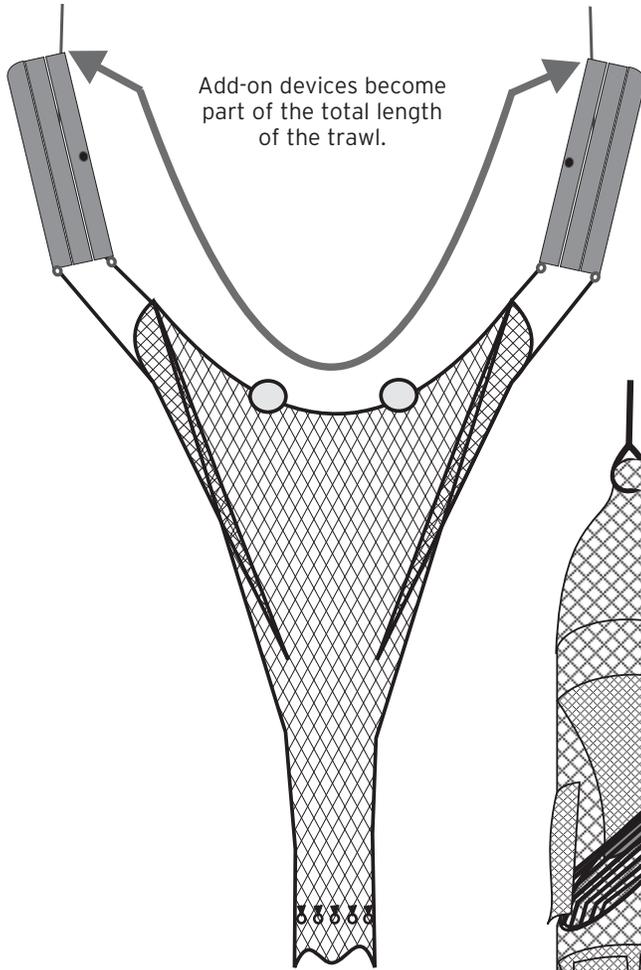
**Commercial Bay-Shrimp Boats – Seasons, Limits and Gear Restrictions (Major Bays Only)**

Location	Season (Dates)	Hours	Limits	Trawl Requirements
Major Bays	Spring Open Season May 15 - July 15	30 min. before sunrise to 30 min. after sunset	Bag: 800 pounds Size: No Limit	<p><b>Main Net:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 1 net may be used at any one time as a main net.</li> <li><b>Mesh Size:</b> 6-1/2 inches over 5 stretched meshes</li> <li><b>Trawl Size:</b> Net Type II (see pg. 30) (Beam trawls used as the main trawl cannot exceed 25 feet in width.)</li> <li>Approved BRDs<sup>†</sup> are required.</li> <li>Approved TEDs* are required (<b>FEDERAL REGULATION</b>).</li> </ul>
Major Bays	Fall Open Season Aug. 15 - Nov. 30	30 min. before sunrise to 30 min. after sunset	Bag: No Limit Size: No Limit	<p><b>Main Net:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 1 net may be used at any one time as a main net.</li> <li>Aug. 15 - Oct. 31: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Mesh Size:</b> Not less than 8-3/4 inches over 5 stretched meshes</li> </ul> </li> <li>Nov. 1 - Nov. 30: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Mesh Size:</b> 6-1/2 inches over 5 stretched meshes</li> </ul> </li> <li>Approved BRDs<sup>†</sup> are required</li> <li>Approved TEDs* are required (<b>FEDERAL REGULATION</b>).</li> <li>Trawl may not exceed 95 ft. in total width.</li> </ul>
Major Bays – Only south of the Colorado River	Winter Open Season Feb. 1 - April 15	30 min. after sunset to 30 min. before sunrise	Bag: No Limit Size: No Limit	<p><b>Main Net:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No more than 1 net may be used at any one time as a main net.</li> <li><b>Mesh Size:</b> 6-1/2 inches over 5 stretched meshes</li> <li><b>Trawl Size:</b> Net Type II (see pg. 30) (Beam trawls used as the main trawl cannot exceed 25 feet in width.)</li> <li>Approved BRDs<sup>†</sup> are required.</li> <li>Approved TEDs* are required (<b>FEDERAL REGULATION</b>).</li> </ul>
<p>† BRD means Bycatch Reduction Device      * TED means Turtle Excluder Device      * h-o means heads on</p>				

**INSIDE WATERS**

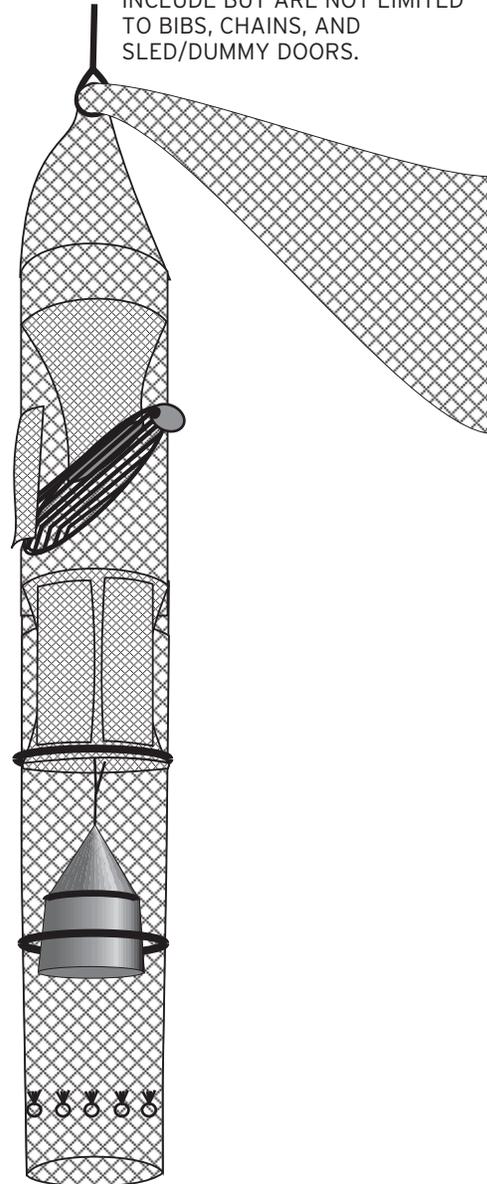
**Commercial Bait-Shrimp Boats - Seasons, Limits and Gear Restrictions (Major Bays and Bait-Bays)**

Location	Season (Dates)	Hours	Limits	Trawl Requirements
Major Bays and Bait Bays	Year-round	Aug. 15 - Mar. 31: 30 min. before sunrise to 30 min. after sunset Apr. 1 - Aug. 14: 30 min. before sunrise to 30 min. after sunset	Bag: 200 pounds Size: No Limit  <b>Special Requirements:</b> Nov. 15 - Aug. 15; at least 50% of the onboard catch must be kept in a live condition. Aug. 16 - Nov. 14; all shrimp must have heads attached.	<b>Main Net:</b> • No more than 1 net may be used at any one time as a main net. • <b>Mesh Size:</b> 6-1/2 inches over 5 stretched meshes • <b>Trawl Size:</b> Net Type II (see pg. 30) (Beam trawls used as the main trawl cannot exceed 25 feet in width.) • Approved <b>TEDs*</b> are required ( <b>FEDERAL REGULATION</b> ).
<p><b>Nueces County Laguna Madre Special Commercial Bait-Shrimping Regulations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All year in the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway between markers 17 and 57 in the Laguna Madre in Nueces County, commercial bait-shrimp boats may take bait-shrimp from 1 a.m. to 30 minutes before sunrise each day with a legal beam trawl only.</li> <li>• It is UNLAWFUL for any person to take or attempt to take shrimp with a trawl at any other time or in any other place in the Laguna Madre in Nueces County north of a line starting on the mainland at the most northeasterly point on the north side of the entrance of Whiteley Channel then proceeding in a straight line to the north end of Pita Island; then continuing on a line to the southermost point on the westerly most spoil island bordering the north side of the New Humble Channel (commonly referred to as Hap's Channel); then continuing on a line along the north edge of the New Humble Channel (commonly referred to as Hap's Channel) to its junction with the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway; then continuing on a straight line to the Nueces/Kieberg County line marker on Padre Island.</li> </ul>				
<p>† BRD means Bycatch Reduction Device      * TED means Turtle Excluder Device</p>				



**OTTER TRAWL MEASUREMENTS**

Shrimp trawls in Texas are measured from leading tip of one door along the uninterrupted cork line to the leading tip of the other door. (Any devices added to the cork line, except the corks, will not be considered interrupting the cork line and will be included in the total measurement of the trawl.) THESE ATTACHMENTS/ADDITIONS INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO BIBS, CHAINS, AND SLED/DUMMY DOORS.



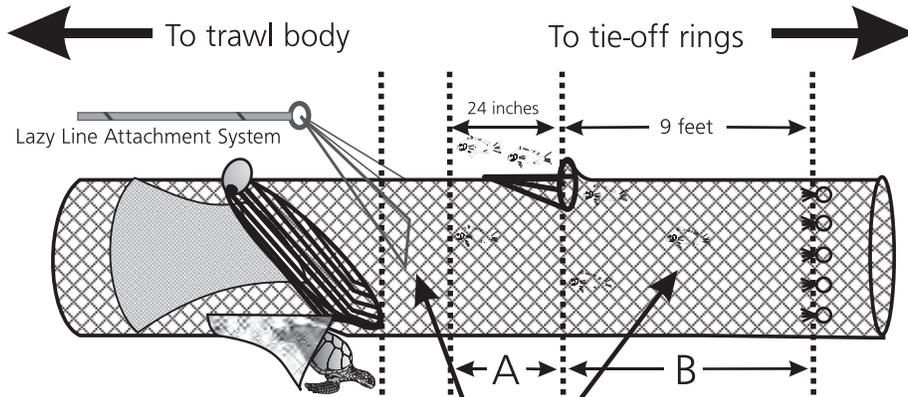
**BRD MEASUREMENTS**

All measurements must be taken with gear in a hanging position.

For additional information on specifications for trawls, BRDs and TEDs, call the nearest Coastal Law Enforcement office (see page 46).

Diagrams are derived from images provided by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

## FISHEYE AND SEA EAGLE BRDs

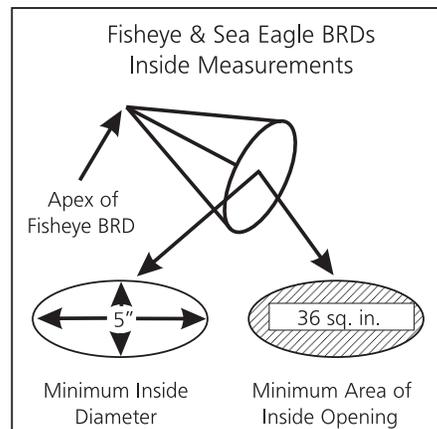
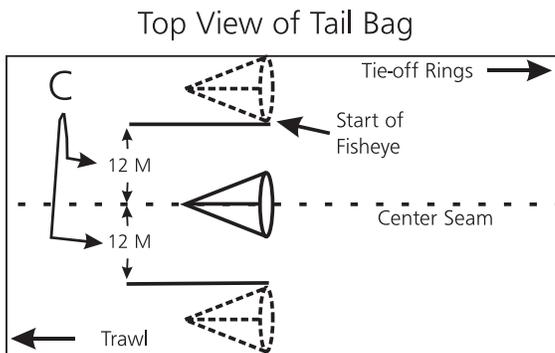


### Key Measurements

- A. Fisheye opening may not be placed less than 24 inches behind lazy line attachment system.
- B. Fisheye opening must be less than 9 ft. from the cod end tie-off rings.
- C. Fisheye may not be placed more than 12 meshes either side of the center seam of the tail bag.

### Lazy Line Placement

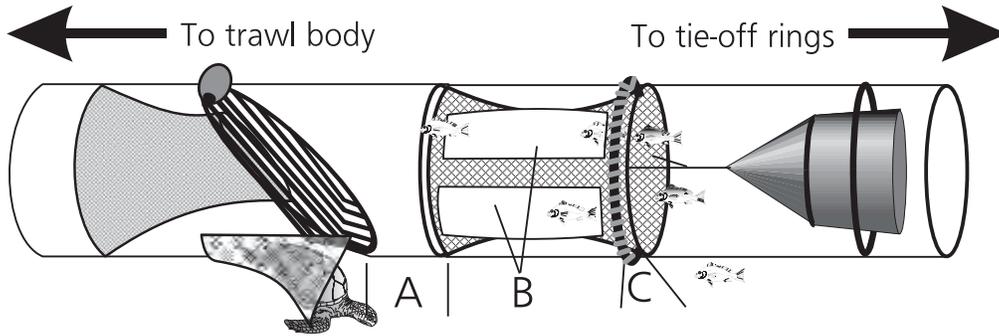
- Lazy lines, choker straps, elephant ears, rings and other lines may be placed in these areas.
- Fisheye opening may not be obstructed by any ropes, rings, elephant ears or straps.



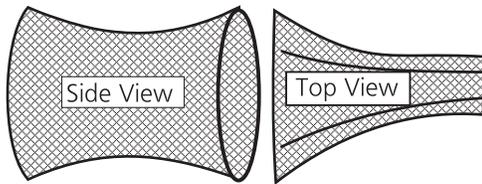
For additional information on specifications for trawls, BRDs and TEDs, call the nearest Coastal Law Enforcement office (see page 46).

Diagrams are derived from images provided by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

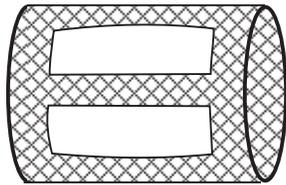
## JONES-DAVIS BRD



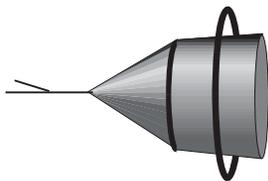
### Components



Funnel Section



Escape Openings  
(Openings are cutouts in the body of the trawl tail bag)



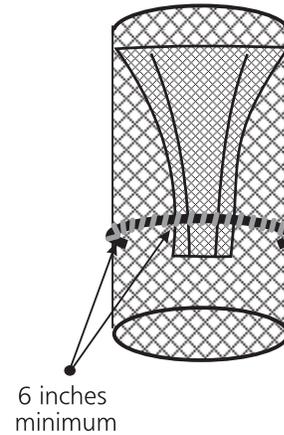
Jones-Davis Cone Stimulator



Semi-rigid Hoop

### Key Measurements

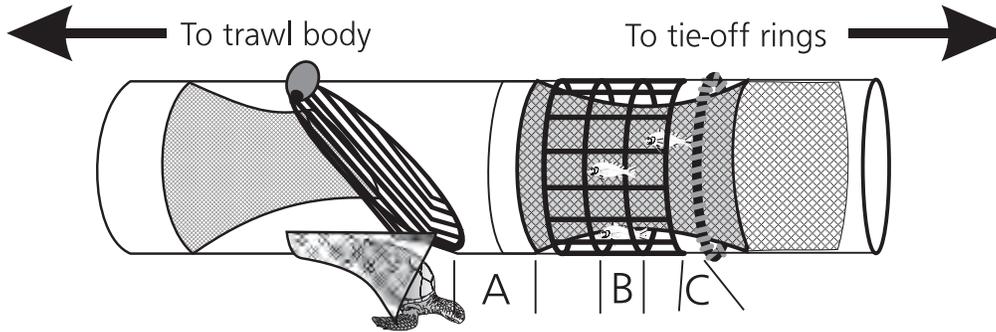
- A. Leading edge of the Escape Opening must be within 18 inches of the posterior edge of the TED grid.
- B. BRD escape opening should total a minimum of 864 sq. in.
- C. Clearance between the 28-inch hoop and the side of the funnel, when hanging, should be at least 6 inches.



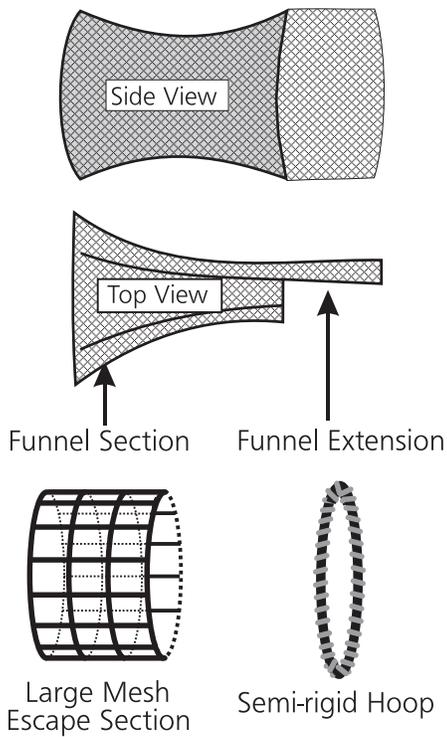
For additional information on specifications for trawls, BRDs and TEDs, call the nearest Coastal Law Enforcement office (see page 46).

Diagrams are derived from images provided by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

## LARGE MESH EXTENDED FUNNEL BRD

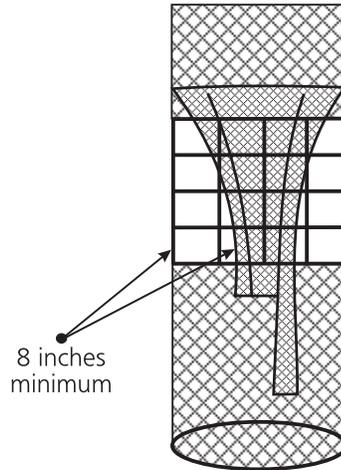


### Components



### Key Measurements

- A. BRD funnel should not be more than 14 inches from the posterior edge of the TED grid.
- B. Mesh size of the Large Mesh Escape Section should be between 4 and 5 inches on a side.
- C. Clearance between the posterior edge of the large mesh escape section and the funnel, when hanging, should be at least 8 inches.



For additional information on specifications for trawls, BRDs and TEDs, call the nearest Coastal Law Enforcement office (see page 46).

Diagrams are derived from images provided by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

## APPROVED TED DESIGNS



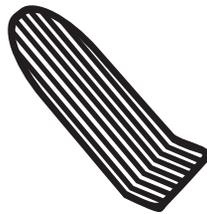
Standard Grid



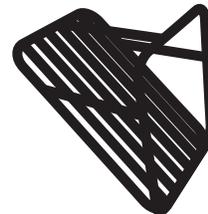
Bent Rod



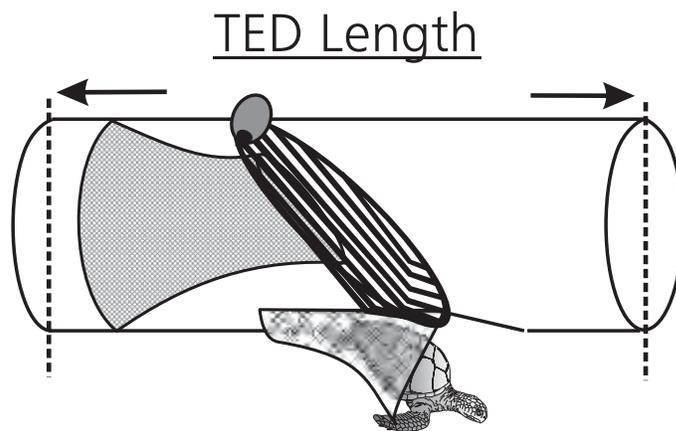
Anthony



Bent Pipe



Fixed Angle



If webbing immediately around TED has a mesh size smaller than allowed for the trawl, such webbing may not be greater than 60 total stretched meshes in length.

For additional information on specifications for trawls, BRDs and TEDs, call the nearest Coastal Law Enforcement office (see page 46).

Diagrams are derived from images provided by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

# CRABS

**NOTE:** It is UNLAWFUL to place, fish or leave a crab trap component in the coastal waters of this state from Feb. 19-29, 2016.

- There are no public salt waters, seasons or times closed to the taking and retaining of crabs and ghost shrimp, EXCEPT as provided in this guide.
- It is lawful to take, attempt to take or possess crabs and ghost shrimp by means, in numbers, and of sizes ONLY as described below.

## BAG, POSSESSION AND LENGTH LIMITS

### Blue crab

- Daily Bag: No limit
- Possession: No limit
  - Except that not more than 5% by number, of undersized blue crabs may be possessed for **bait purposes only** and must be placed in a separate container.
  - May not possess egg-bearing (sponge) crabs.
  - May not possess a female crab that has its abdominal apron detached.
- Minimum Length: five inches
  - Measured across the widest point of the body from tip of spine to tip of spine (see page 25).

### Stone crab (right claw only)

- Daily Bag: No limit
- Possession: No limit
  - Only the right claw may be retained or possessed.
  - The body of the stone crab must be returned immediately to the water from which it was taken.
- Minimum Length: 2-1/2 inches claw measurement
  - Measured from the tip of the immovable claw to the first joint behind the claw (see page 25).

## DEVICES AND RESTRICTIONS

**Crab Line:** A baited line with no hook attached.

- Must be marked with a white floating buoy not less than 6 inches in height, 6 inches in length and 6 inches in width.
- Buoys must be marked with a commercial crab fisherman's license plate number in letters of a contrasting color at least 2 inches high attached to the trap.

- Buoys or floats may not be made of plastic bottle(s) of any color or size.

### Crab Traps:

- May only remove crab traps from the water or remove crabs from crab traps during the period **from 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset**.
- Maximum Number of Traps Allowed:
  - Only 200 crab traps at a time may be used while fishing under the authority of a commercial crab fisherman's license.
  - Only 20 crab traps at a time may be used while fishing under the authority of a commercial finfish fisherman's license.
- Tag Requirements: Must be used with a valid GEAR TAG (See Page 5) attached within 6 inches of the buoy.
- Construction and Design Restrictions (See Page 43):
  - Crab traps may not exceed 18 cubic feet.
  - Crab traps must be equipped with at least two escape vents in each crab-retaining chamber and located on the outside trap walls.
    - Escape vents must be at least 2-3/8 inch in diameter.
  - Crab traps must be marked with an attached white floating buoy not less than 6 inches in height, 6 inches in length and 6 inches width.
  - Crab traps fished under the authority of a **commercial crab fisherman's license** must have buoys marked with a commercial crab fisherman's license plate number in letters of a contrasting color at least 2 inches high.
  - Crab traps fished under the authority of a **commercial finfish fisherman's license** must have buoys marked with a commercial finfish fisherman's license plate number preceded with the letter "F" in letters of a contrasting color at least 2 inches high attached to the trap.
  - Buoys or floats may not be made of plastic bottle(s) of any color or size.
  - Crab traps must be equipped with a degradable panel. A trap is considered to have a degradable panel if one of the following methods is used in construction of the trap:
    - the trap lid tie-down strap is secured to the trap at one end by a simple

loop of untreated jute twine (comparable to Lehigh brand #530), sisal twine (comparable to Lehigh brand #390) or untreated steel wire with a diameter of 20 gauge or smaller. The trap lid must be secured so that when the twine or wire degrades, the lid will no longer be securely closed; or

- the trap contains at least one sidewall, not including the bottom panel, with a rectangular opening no smaller in either dimension than 3 inches by 6 inches. 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 twine (comparable to Lehigh brand #530), sisal twine (comparable to Lehigh brand #390) or untreated steel wire with a diameter of 20 gauge or smaller knotted only at each end and not tied or looped more than once around a single mesh bar. When the twine or wire degrades, the opening in the sidewall of the trap will no longer be obstructed; or
- the obstruction may be loosely hinged at the bottom of the opening by no more than two untreated steel hog rings and secured at the top of the obstruction in no more than one place by a single length of untreated jute twine (comparable to Lehigh brand #530), sisal twine (comparable to Lehigh brand #390) or untreated steel wire with a diameter of 20 gauge or smaller. When the twine or wire degrades, the obstruction will hinge downward and the opening in the sidewall of the trap will no longer be obstructed.
- Placement and Location Restrictions:
  - May not place a crab trap or portion thereof closer than 100 feet from any other crab trap, EXCEPT when traps are secured to a pier or dock.
  - May not fish a crab trap in public fresh waters.
  - May not fish a crab trap within 200 feet of a marked navigable channel in Aransas County; and in the water area of Aransas Bay within one-half mile of a line from Hail Point on the Lamar Peninsula, then direct to the eastern

end of Goose Island, then along the southern shore of Goose Island, then along the eastern shoreline of the Live Oak Peninsula past the town of Fulton, past Nine Mile Point, past the town of Rockport to a point at the east end of Talley Island including that part of Copano Bay within 1,000 feet of the causeway between Lamar Peninsula and Live Oak Peninsula.

- May not possess, use or place more than three crab traps in waters north and west of Highway 146 where it crosses the Houston Ship Channel in Harris County.
- May not use or place more than three crab traps in public waters of the San Bernard River north of a line marked by the boat access channel at Bernard Acres.
- Baiting Crab Traps: It is UNLAWFUL to use any part of a game fish for bait, except for processed catfish heads used as crab-trap bait by a licensed crab fisherman, provided the catfish is obtained from an aquaculture facility permitted to operate in the United States. A person who uses catfish as bait under this subparagraph shall, upon the request of a department employee acting within the scope of official duties, furnish appropriate authenticating documentation, such as a bill of sale or receipt, to prove that the catfish was obtained from a legal source.

#### **Other Devices:**

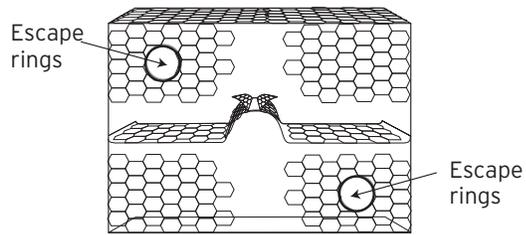
- Devices legally used for taking of fresh or saltwater fish or shrimp may be used to take crab if operated in places and at times authorized by a proclamation of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission or the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Code.
- See applicable pages in this guide to determine authorized uses, places and times for other legal devices.

#### **ARANSAS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE – SPECIAL REGULATIONS**

Beginning March 1, 2009 the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge began enforcing a no commercial crabbing regulation within refuge marshes. For more information contact the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge at (361) 286-3559.

**ESCAPE RINGS**

A crab trap must be equipped with at least two escape vents in each crab-retaining chamber and located on the outside trap walls (saltwater perch traps are not required to be equipped with escape rings). Escape vents must be at least 2-3/8 inches in diameter.



**DEGRADABLE PANELS**

A crab trap and a saltwater perch trap must be equipped with a degradable panel. A trap is considered to have a degradable panel if one of the following methods is used in construction of the trap:

<p><b>Option 1</b></p>	<p>The lid tie-down strap is hooked into a <b>LOOP</b> of approved material.</p>	
<p><b>Option 2</b></p>	<p>The lid tie-down strap is hooked into a <b>BRIDLE</b> of approved material.</p>	
<p><b>Option 3</b></p>	<p>A hole (minimum of 3 in. x 6 in.) may be cut in the trap sidewall <b>AND EITHER</b></p>	
	<p>a. The hole is laced over with a single strand of approved material; <b>OR</b></p>	
	<p>b. Wire mesh is laced into the hole with a single strand of approved material; <b>OR</b></p>	
	<p>c. The hole is covered by a hinged door tied once at the top with a single strand of approved material.</p>	

# OYSTERS

## NOTICES -

1. As authorized by Section 3 of SB 932, the executive director of the department may close an oyster area upon finding that the area is being overworked or damaged, or if the area needs to be reseeded or restocked. Information on closures will be available at all TPWD offices.
2. A Harvester/Shell Recovery Tag must be affixed to the outside of each sack of oysters at the time of harvest, in the location of harvest, contain information required by the Department of State Health Services under the National Shellfish Sanitation Program, and remain affixed during transportation of the oysters to a dealer.
3. The appropriate Harvester/Shell Recovery Tag (green or white) must be affixed to the sack regardless of the season or whether the requirements of 25 TAC §241.57 (relating to Molluscan Shellfish Harvesting and Handling) apply.

**Commercial Oystering Seasons**—Nov. 1 through Apr. 30 except in 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 3:30 p.m.

**Commercial Oyster Limits**—No oyster boat may take more than 50 sacks of oysters per boat per day, and may possess no more than six sacks (equivalent of two barrels) of unculled oysters which must be unsacked and separate from the rest of the cargo. A sack is defined as 110 pounds of oysters (including dead oyster shell and the sack).

**Legal Size Limits**—Three (3) inches (greatest length of shell) or larger. Oysters 3/4 inch to 3 inches and dead oyster shell greater than 3/4 inch (measured along any axis) are to be culled and returned to the reef from which taken; provided, however, that each cargo may contain not more than 15 percent of oysters and/or dead shell of these sizes. Not more than the equivalent six sacks of unculled oysters are permitted on board while on a reef and must remain unsacked and separate from the culled cargo.

**Legal Means and Methods**—It is UNLAWFUL while taking or attempting to take oysters for pay or the purpose of sale, barter or

exchange or any other commercial purpose to use more than one dredge, use a dredge which exceeds 48 inches in width and a two-barrel capacity, have more than one dredge connected in any manner to a winch, chain or other lifting device during the open public season; or have any additional dredge(s) on board unless secured below deck, to the wheelhouse or to the deck in such a manner as to be lashed, tied, shackled or chained as to prevent its immediate use. Commercial oyster boats are limited to not more than 50 sacks of legal size oysters.

**Special Provisions**—Oysters may be taken only from waters approved by the State Commissioner of the Department of State Health Services.

**New Laws: The penalty for a commercial oyster boat taking oysters in a closed area has increased to a Parks and Wildlife Class "A" Misdemeanor (See Page 45 – CRIMINAL PENALTIES AND CIVIL VALUE RECOVERY) and everyone on the vessel will be in violation.**

The harvesting, shucking, processing and sale of oysters must conform to all regulations specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

# MUSSELS AND CLAMS

A moratorium on the sale of new licenses is in effect for the Texas commercial freshwater mussel fishery.

## SEA TURTLES AND OTHER AQUATIC LIFE

It is **UNLAWFUL** for any person to knowingly take, kill or disturb any **sea turtle** or **sea turtle eggs** in the State of Texas. To report stranded sea turtles or nests, please call 1-866-TURTLES.

There is no open season in any county for ALL MARINE MAMMALS INCLUDING PORPOISES, DOLPHINS AND WHALES.

Any other aquatic life (except threatened and endangered species) not addressed in this guide may be taken only by hand or with the devices defined as lawful for taking fish, shrimp, oysters or crabs in places and at times as provided in this guide.

## CRIMINAL PENALTIES AND CIVIL VALUE RECOVERY

If you violate fish and wildlife laws, in addition to civil restitution you may:

- be fined (Class C - \$25-\$500; Class B - \$200-\$2,000; Class A - \$500-\$4,000; State Jail Felony, \$1,500-\$10,000);
- be jailed (Class B and higher offenses);
- face automatic suspension or revocation of licenses for up to five years;
- forfeit hunting gear, including firearms, used to commit a violation.

**CIVIL RESTITUTION:** In addition to the criminal penalty for hunting and fishing violations, the department will seek the civil recovery value for the loss or damage to wildlife resources. The civil restitution cost is payable to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and is in addition to the fine assessed by the court. Failure to pay the civil recovery value will result in the department's refusal to issue a license, tag, or permit. An individual who hunts or fishes after the refusal commits a Class A misdemeanor which is punishable by a fine not less than \$500 or more than \$4,000; punishment in jail not to exceed one year; or both fine and confinement.

**LICENSE REINSTATEMENT:** A person who seeks reinstatement of license privileges following license revocation or denial must apply for license privilege reinstatement and pay a \$100 application fee. For questions concerning civil restitution call (512) 389-4630.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Texas is now a member of the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact (IWVC). The IWVC is a multi-state compact that allows member states to share information about wildlife violators and to deny licensure to persons who have failed to comply with conservation law in member states. For example, if a person has had their hunting, fishing or trapping privileges suspended in one member state, the suspension may be recognized by any member state. For more information call (512) 389-4383.

## WHERE TO GET INFORMATION AND LICENSES

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department **Regional** and Field Law Enforcement Offices

ABILENE, 281 North Willis (79603) (325) 673-3333	LAREDO, 5119 Bob Bullock Loop (78041) (956) 718-1087
AMARILLO, 203 West 8th, Suite #200, LB14006 (79101) (806) 379-8900	LUBBOCK, 1702 Landmark Lane, Suite 1 (79415) (806) 761-4930
BEAUMONT, 5655 Eastex Freeway, Suite A (77706) (409) 892-8666	LUFKIN, 4100 S. Medford Drive, Suite 204B (75901) (936) 632-1311
BROWNSVILLE, 5460 Paredes Line Road, Suite 201 (78526) (956) 546-1952	MIDLAND, 4500 West Illinois, Suite 307 (79703) (432) 520-4649
BROWNWOOD, 301 Main, Suite D (76801) (325) 646-0440	MT. PLEASANT, 212 South Johnson (75455) (903) 572-7966
COLLEGE STATION, 12845 FM 2154 (Wellborn Road), Suite 160 (77845) (979) 696-4148	ROCKPORT, 715 South Highway 35 (78382) (361) 790-0312
CORPUS CHRISTI, 5541 Bear Lane, Suite 232 (78405) (361) 289-5566	RUSK, 580 West 6th Street (75785) (903) 683-2511
EL PASO, 401 East Franklin, Suite 520 (79901) (915) 834-7050	SAN ANGELO, 3407 South Chadbourne (76903) (325) 651-4844
FORT WORTH, 5400 Airport Freeway, Suite E (76117) (817) 831-3128	SAN ANTONIO, 2391 N.E. Loop 410, Suite 409 (78217) (210) 348-7375
GARLAND, 346 Oaks Trail, Suite 100 (75043) (972) 226-9966	TEMPLE, 3615 So. General Bruce Drive (76504) (254) 778-8913
HOUSTON (NORTH), 350 North Sam Houston Pkwy E., Suite 100 (77060) (281) 931-6471	TYLER, 3330 South Southwest Loop 323 (75701) (903) 534-0388
HOUSTON (SOUTH), 10101 Southwest Frwy, #206 (77074) (713) 779-8977	VICTORIA, 2805 N. Navarro, Suite 600A (77901) (361) 575-6306
KERRVILLE, 309 Sidney Baker South (78028) (830) 257-7611	WACO, 1601 East Crest Drive (76705) (254) 867-7951
LAMARQUE, 14037 Delany Road (77568) (409) 933-1947	WICHITA FALLS, 4822 Kemp Blvd., Suite 1300 (76308) (940) 723-7327

## **COMMERCIAL FISHING LICENSE LIMITED ENTRY AND BUYBACK PROGRAMS**

For further information regarding any commercial license management program or license buyback program contact:

Jeremy Leitz, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Coastal Fisheries Division,  
4200 Smith School Road, Austin TX 78744, (512) 389-4333  
email: jeremy.leitz@tpwd.texas.gov

## **OPERATION GAME THIEF**

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department  
4200 Smith School Road • Austin, Texas 78744

### **STOP POACHING!**

FOR 24-HOUR REPORTING OF VIOLATIONS, you may call:

**(800) 792-GAME**

**AUSTIN – (512) 389-4848**

**HOUSTON – (281) 842-8100**

## **TOLL FREE INFORMATION**

**(Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)**

For information concerning fishing regulations or other subjects related to TPWD.

**(800) 792-1112 (general information) OR (512) 389- + extension #**

#4820	Hunting & Fishing Licenses
#4626	Law Enforcement - Hunting
#4853	Law Enforcement - Fishing
#4828	Boat Registration
#4726	Pollution
#2011	Coastal Fisheries
#4647	Scientific Permit
#4444	Inland Fisheries
#4628	Commercial Licenses





This digest will be revised as new regulations become effective. Note the date on the front cover and make sure you have the latest issue. For further information, please contact your local game warden or Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

[www.tpwd.texas.gov](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov)



**Life's better outside.®**

4200 Smith School Road  
Austin, Texas 78744

© 2015 by TPWD. PWD BK V3400-074 (7/15)

Dispersal of this publication conforms with Texas State Documents Depository Law, and it is available at Texas State Publications Clearinghouse and/or Texas Depository Libraries.

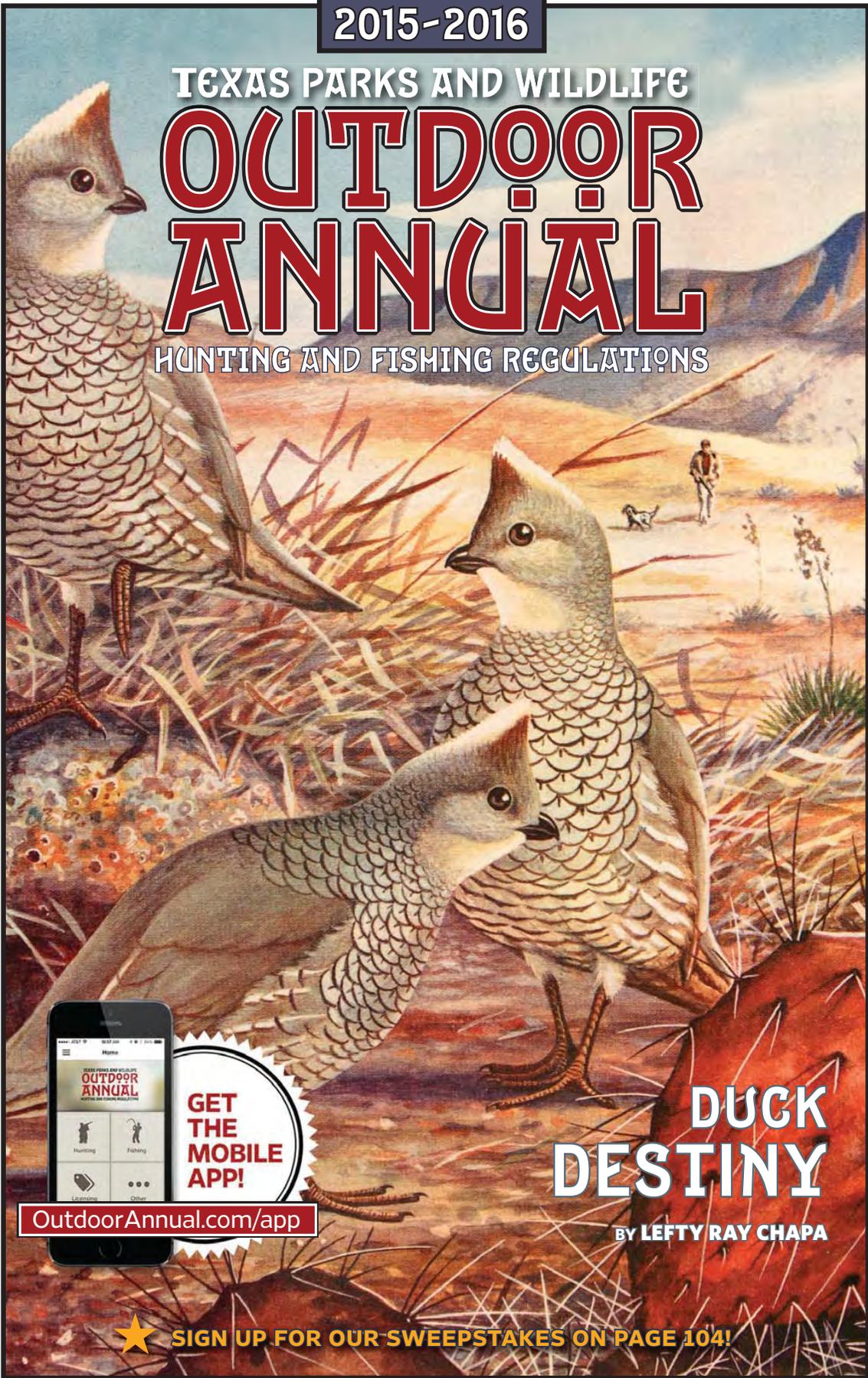
TPWD receives funds from the USFWS. TPWD prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, age, and gender, pursuant to state and federal law. To request an accommodation or obtain information in an alternative format, please contact TPWD on a Text Telephone (TDD) at (512) 389-8915 or by Relay Texas at 7-1-1 or (800) 735-2989. If you believe you have been discriminated against by TPWD, please contact TPWD or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office for Diversity and Workforce Management, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041.

2015-2016

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE

# OUTDOOR ANNUAL

HUNTING AND FISHING REGULATIONS



[OutdoorAnnual.com/app](http://OutdoorAnnual.com/app)

## DUCK DESTINY

BY LEFTY RAY CHAPA

★ SIGN UP FOR OUR SWEEPSTAKES ON PAGE 104!

# 2015-2016 SUMMARY OF FISHING AND HUNTING REGULATIONS

Valid September 1, 2015 through August 31, 2016

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** The information in this guide is a **SUMMARY** of regulations and statutes governing hunting and fishing. For more detailed information on game and regulations, please contact a TPWD Law Enforcement office (see pg. 18) or call (800) 792-1112 (8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday through Friday). Please note that information contained in this summary is subject to change by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission, the Texas Legislature, and/or the federal government. The official regulations, current to the day, can be accessed at [www.sos.state.tx.us/tac](http://www.sos.state.tx.us/tac) under Title 31 of the Texas Administrative Code. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Code can be accessed at: [www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us](http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us)

## CONTENTS

Where to Get Information and Licenses .....	18
<b>GENERAL HUNTING AND FISHING REQUIREMENTS/RESTRICTIONS</b>	
Criminal Penalties and Civil Value Recovery   General Law .....	19
General Information About Licenses, Endorsements and Tags .....	20
Hunting and Fishing Combination License Packages .....	21
Lifetime Licenses   Fishing Licenses and Packages .....	22
Fishing Endorsements and Tags   License Requirements for Border Waters .....	24
Hunting Licenses and Permits.....	25
Hunting Endorsements .....	26
Hunter Education.....	26
Transfer of Wildlife Resources   Importation of Wildlife Resources .....	27
<b>SUMMARY OF 2015-2016 RECREATIONAL FISHING REGULATIONS</b>	
General Fishing Rules for Fresh and Salt Waters.....	28
Reservoir Boundaries.....	30
Freshwater/Saltwater Boundary.....	31
Definitions .....	32
Legal Freshwater and Saltwater Devices and Restrictions for Fish .....	33
Freshwater Fishing Harvest Regulations.....	36
Statewide Bag and Length Limits   Exceptions to Statewide Freshwater Harvest Regulations .....	37
How to Attach Red Drum Fish Tag   How to Measure Fish and Crabs   Tips for Releasing Fish.....	41
Identification of Yellow, White, Striped, and Hybrid Striped Bass .....	42
Identification of Smallmouth, Guadalupe & Spotted, and Largemouth Bass.....	43
Saltwater Fishing - General Information   Bag and Length Limits for Saltwater Fish .....	44
Saltwater Freeze Events   Shrimp Regulations .....	46
Crab and Ghost Shrimp Regulations .....	49
Oyster Regulations.....	51
Other Aquatic Life (Fresh and Salt Waters).....	51
Fish Consumption Bans and Advisories.....	52
Boater Education .....	52
Boating Regulations and Safe Boating Tips   Invasive Species   Operation Game Thief .....	53
<b>SUMMARY OF 2015-2016 HUNTING REGULATIONS</b>	
Definitions.....	54
Means and Methods .....	55
Tagging Deer or Turkey .....	59
Proof of Sex .....	61
After Killing a Deer   Processing Deer, Turkey, or Antelope in Camp   Cold Storage or Processing Facilities.....	62
Taxidermist.....	63
Game Animals: .....	64
Pronghorn Antelope; Desert Bighorn Sheep; Deer; White-tailed Deer Youth-Only; Javelina; Squirrel Youth-Only, Alligator	
Game Birds:.....	67
Migratory Game Birds; Pheasant; Quail; Turkey; Turkey Youth-Only	
Migratory Game Birds (Early Season).....	68
Nongame and Other Species [including frogs and turtles].....	72
Fur-bearing Animals .....	73
Restricted Areas in Counties .....	74
<b>COUNTY LISTINGS</b> .....	76
Alligator Hide Tag Report Form .....	100
Wildlife Resource Document .....	100

Hunting and fishing regulations, as well as state-mandated hunter education and safety information, are also available online in Spanish. Visit [www.tpwd.texas.gov/espanol](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/espanol), or with specific questions call (800) 792-1112. En español, el sumario del reglamento para cacería y pesca, así como la información sobre el requisito de certificación de educación y seguridad en la caza, se encuentran disponibles en línea visitando: [www.tpwd.texas.gov/espanol](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/espanol) o con preguntas específicas llamando a (800) 792-1112.

## WHERE TO GET INFORMATION AND LICENSES

Recreational hunting and fishing licenses and endorsements are available at approximately 1,800 locations throughout the state in addition to the offices listed below. These locations include sporting goods stores, gun shops, department stores, discount stores, bait and tackle shops, grocery stores, and many other types of stores. Some commercial hunting and fishing licenses are available ONLY at the Austin headquarters and offices listed below. For added convenience, select recreational licenses may be purchased by phone or through the Internet with approved Visa, Discover, or MasterCard. A \$5.00 administrative fee will be charged for those sales. Call (800) TX LIC 4 U (1-800-895-4248) between 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday through Friday (closed Saturday, Sunday and most holidays), or log on to [www.tpwd.texas.gov/licenses/online\\_sales](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/licenses/online_sales). Many licenses may be purchased for immediate use except where tagging is required, i.e., deer and turkey.

**TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS:** 4200 Smith School Road, Austin 78744

**TOLL-FREE INFORMATION:** (Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-5 p.m.) (800) 792-1112 or (512) 389-4800

**TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT WEBSITE:** [www.tpwd.texas.gov](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov)

### TPWD REGIONAL AND FIELD LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICES:

**Abilene**, 281 North Willis (79603) (325) 673-3333

**Amarillo**, 203 SW 8th Ave., Suite 200 (79101)  
(806) 379-8900

**Beaumont**, 5655 Eastex Frwy., Suite A (77706)  
(409) 892-8666

**Brownsville**, 5460 Paredes Line Road, Suite 201 (78526)  
(956) 546-1952

**Brownwood**, 301 Main, Suite D (76801)  
(325) 646-0440

**College Station**, 12815 FM 2154 (Wellborn Road),  
Suite 160 (77845) (979) 696-4148

**Corpus Christi**, 5541 Bear Lane, Suite 232 (78405)  
(361) 289-5566

**El Paso**, 401 East Franklin, Suite 520 (79901)  
(915) 834-7050

**Fort Worth**, 5400 Airport Frwy, Suite E (76117)  
(817) 831-3128

**Garland**, 346 Oaks Trail, Suite 100 (75043)  
(972) 226-9966

**Houston (north)**, 350 North Sam Houston Pkwy E.,  
Suite 100 (77060) (281) 931-6471

**Houston (south)**, 10101 Southwest Frwy, #206 (77074)  
(713) 779-8977

**Kerrville**, 309 Sidney Baker South (78028)  
(830) 257-7611

**LaMarque**, 14037 Delany Road (77568)  
(409) 933-1947

**Laredo**, 5119 Bob Bullock Loop (78041)  
(956) 718-1087

**Lubbock**, 1702 Landmark Lane, Suite 1 (79415)  
(806) 761-4930

**Lufkin**, Old Texas Plaza, 4100 S. Medford Drive,  
Suite 204B (75901) (936) 632-1311

**Midland**, 4500 West Illinois, Suite 307 (79703)  
(432) 520-4649

**Mt. Pleasant**, 212 South Johnson (75455)  
(903) 572-7966

**Rockport**, 715 South Hwy. 35 (78382) (361) 790-0312

**Rusk**, 580 West Sixth Street (75785) (903) 683-2511

**San Angelo**, 3407 South Chadbourne (76903)  
(325) 651-4844

**San Antonio**, 2391 N.E. Loop 410, Suite 409 (78217)  
(210) 348-7375

**Temple**, 3615 South General Bruce Drive (76504)  
(254) 778-8913

**Tyler**, 3330 South Southwest Loop 323 (75701)  
(903) 534-0388

**Victoria**, 2805 N. Navarro, Suite 600A (77901)  
(361) 575-6306

**Waco**, 1601 East Crest Drive (76705) (254) 867-7951

**Wichita Falls**, 4822 Kemp Blvd., Suite 1300 (76308)  
(940) 723-7327

### WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TEXAS GAME WARDENS?

Web: [www.tpwd.texas.gov/warden](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/warden) Twitter: [www.twitter.com/TexasGameWarden](https://twitter.com/TexasGameWarden)

Friend us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/pages/Texas-Game-Wardens/362214707170256](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Texas-Game-Wardens/362214707170256)

### STOP POACHING! FOR 24-HOUR REPORTING OF VIOLATIONS, CALL

(800) 792-GAME, Austin (512) 389-4848, Houston (281) 842-8100 (see pg. 53)

TPWD receives funds from the USFWS. TPWD prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, age, and gender, pursuant to state and federal law. To request an accommodation or obtain information in an alternative format, please contact TPWD on a Text Telephone (TDD) at (512) 389-8915 or by Relay Texas at 7-1-1 or (800) 735-2989. If you believe you have been discriminated against by TPWD, please contact TPWD or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office for Diversity and Workforce Management, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041.

## GENERAL HUNTING AND FISHING REQUIREMENTS/RESTRICTIONS

### CRIMINAL PENALTIES AND CIVIL VALUE RECOVERY

#### IF YOU VIOLATE FISH AND WILDLIFE LAWS, IN ADDITION TO CIVIL RESTITUTION YOU MAY:

- **be fined (Class C – \$25-\$500; Class B – \$200-\$2,000; Class A – \$500-\$4,000; State Jail Felony, \$1,500-\$10,000);**
- **be jailed (Class B and higher offenses);**
- **face automatic suspension or revocation of licenses for up to five years;**
- **forfeit hunting gear, including firearms, used to commit a violation.**

**CIVIL RESTITUTION:** In addition to the criminal penalty for hunting and fishing violations, the department will seek the civil recovery value for the loss or damage to wildlife resources. **The civil restitution cost is payable to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and is in addition to the fine assessed by the court.** Failure to pay the civil recovery value will result in the department's refusal to issue a license, tag, or permit. An individual who hunts or fishes after the refusal commits a Class A misdemeanor which is punishable by a fine not less than \$500 or more than \$4,000; punishment in jail not to exceed one year; or both fine and confinement.

**LICENSE REINSTATEMENT:** A person who seeks reinstatement of license privileges following license revocation, denial or suspension must apply for license privilege reinstatement and pay a \$100 application fee. For questions concerning civil restitution call (512) 389-4630.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Texas is now a member of the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact (IWVC). The IWVC is a multi-state compact that allows member states to share information about wildlife violators and to deny licensure to persons who have failed to comply with conservation law in member states. For example, if a person has had their hunting, fishing or trapping privileges suspended in one member state, the suspension may be recognized by any member state. For more information call (512) 389-4381.

### GENERAL LAW

The following information addresses some of the more commonly asked questions about hunting and fishing requirements and restrictions. For additional information not included in this guide, contact your local game warden or phone the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) toll free at (800) 792-1112.

- **INSPECTION AUTHORITY:** A game warden who observes a person engaged in an activity governed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code or reasonably believes that a person is or has been engaged in such an activity may inspect:
  - (1) any license, permit, tag, or other document issued by the department and required by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code of a person hunting or catching wildlife resources;
  - (2) any device that may be used to hunt or catch a wildlife resource;
  - (3) any wildlife resource in the person's possession; and
  - (4) the contents of any container or receptacle that is commonly used to store or conceal a wildlife resource.
- **PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION:** while hunting, fishing or trapping, persons 17 years of age or older must carry on their person a driver's license or personal identification certificate issued by the Texas Department of Public Safety. Non-residents must carry similar documents issued by the agency in their state or country of residence that is authorized to issue driver's licenses or personal identification certificates.
- **WASTE OF GAME:** It is an offense (Class C misdemeanor) if a person while hunting kills or wounds a game bird or game animal and intentionally or knowingly fails to make a reasonable effort to retrieve the animal or bird and include it in the person's daily or seasonal bag limit. It is an offense if a person intentionally takes or **possesses** a game bird, game animal, or a fish and intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly, or with criminal negligence, fails to keep the edible portions of the bird, animal, or fish in an edible condition. It is a Class A misdemeanor to fail to retrieve or to keep in an edible condition a whitetail or mule deer, pronghorn antelope, or desert bighorn sheep hunted without landowner consent; from a vehicle, boat, or aircraft; on a public road; at night; or with the aid of a light.
- **RETRIEVAL OF GAME:** No person may pursue a wounded wildlife resource across a property line without the consent of landowner of the property where the wildlife resource has fled. Under the trespass provisions of the Penal Code, a person on a property without the permission of the landowner is subject to arrest.
- **HARASSMENT OF HUNTERS, TRAPPERS, OR ANGLERS** (Sportsmen's Rights Act – TPWD Code, §62.0125) is punishable by a fine of \$200 to \$2,000 and/or 180 days in jail.

- **IT IS UNLAWFUL TO:**
  - take, attempt to take, or possess wildlife resources within a protected length limit, in greater numbers, by other means, or at any time or place, other than as indicated within this guide.
  - store, transport, or abandon an unsecured loaded firearm in a place where children can obtain unsupervised access to the firearm. A person under age 17 who has lawful access to a firearm may hunt with the firearm if the youth has successfully completed the hunter education course, or is accompanied by a licensed hunter age 17 or older who has complied with the hunter education requirement, if applicable.
  - drive a motor vehicle in the bed of a navigable freshwater stream, unless approved by a local river access plan established by a city, county, or river authority. This law does not apply to the Canadian River and Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River. There are other exemptions as well. The full text of this law may be found in Texas Parks and Wildlife Code, Chapter 90.
  - fish on privately owned waters, fish in public water from private land, or hunt on privately owned lands without the permission of the owner or the owner's agent. Under the Texas Penal Code (§30.05) it is an offense for any person to enter property that is **fenced, posted with a sign(s), or marked (purple paint)** without the **express permission** of the owner. Posts or trees bearing **purple paint** marking of not less than eight inches in length and not less than one inch in width at not less than three or more than five feet from the ground constitute notice that the property is **posted**. A person who hunts without owner consent and kills a desert bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, white-tailed deer, or mule deer commits an offense that is a Parks and Wildlife Code state jail felony. Upon conviction, your hunting and fishing license is automatically revoked. You are not required to have a fishing license to fish in private waters in Texas, but if you are on private property while fishing in public water, a fishing license is required.
  - discharge a firearm on or across a public road.
- **Sale of Inedible Wildlife Parts: The following inedible wildlife parts may be purchased or sold provided the part was lawfully taken or possessed:**
  - Hair, hide, antlers, bones, horns, skull, hooves, or sinew from the following game animals: mule deer, white-tailed deer, pronghorn antelope, desert bighorn sheep, gray or cat squirrels, fox squirrels or red squirrels, and collared peccary or javelina.
  - Feathers from ducks, geese, and brant may be used, purchased, or sold for making fishing flies, pillows, mattresses, and similar commercial uses.
  - Feathers from migratory birds may not be purchased or sold for hats or ornamental purposes nor may a person purchase or sell mounted migratory game bird specimens taken by hunting.
  - Feathers, bones, or feet of game birds other than migratory game birds (turkey, grouse, pheasant, partridge, quail, and chachalaca).
- **Hunter Orange:** No hunter orange is required while hunting on private property, but it is recommended.
- There is no open season for any wild animal, wild bird, or exotic animal on public roads or the right-of-way of public roads. **EXCEPTION: See Reptile and Amphibian, pg. 26.**
- **It is unlawful to possess a deer or any part of a deer that has been hit by a motor vehicle.**

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT LICENSES, ENDORSEMENTS AND TAGS

See sections on Fishing (pg. 22) and Hunting (pg. 25) for specific licensing information.  
License fees ARE NOT refundable.

All of the licenses, license packages, endorsements, and tags listed in this guide, unless otherwise noted, may be purchased at approximately 1,800 locations statewide where licenses are sold.

Many licenses may be purchased by phone or through the Internet with approved Visa, Discover, or MasterCard. Call (800) TX LIC 4 U (1-800-895-4248) between 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday through Friday (closed Saturday, Sunday and most holidays), or log on to: [www.tpwd.texas.gov/licenses/online\\_sales](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/licenses/online_sales)

**Generally, fishing and hunting licenses and endorsements** are valid from the date of sale through Aug. 31, 2016. Temporary hunting and fishing licenses and packages, Year-from-Purchase fishing licenses and Lake Texoma fishing licenses have different expiration dates.

A number of "endorsements," historically called "stamps" are available for purchase with fishing packages (pg. 22) and hunting licenses (pg. 25) at the time a license is purchased. All fishing and all combination packages include one or more endorsements. Additional endorsements are available for purchase anytime during the effective date of the license/package. Actual stamps with pictures on them are no longer issued with hunting and fishing licenses; however, a book of commemorative stamps (item Type 555), which are not valid for hunting or fishing use, is available for purchase for \$21.65. The book, which contains all six Texas picture stamps (three hunting, two fishing, one non-game), may be purchased online at [www.tpwd.texas.gov/licenses/online\\_sales](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/licenses/online_sales), by phone at 1-800-895-4248 (\$5 administrative fee charged for all online and phone sales), or Austin headquarters. Stamp books purchased online or by phone will be mailed to the purchaser. Individual stamps are not sold by TPWD.

**Lost/Destroyed License, Package or Endorsement:** Any type of license or endorsement that has been lost or destroyed may be replaced at any license sales location by signing an Application for Replacement License affidavit. Fees vary from \$3-\$10 for replacement of recreational licenses or endorsements.

A **RESIDENT** is a person who has lived continuously in Texas for more than six months immediately before applying for a license. Members of the U.S. Armed Forces (and their dependents) on active duty anywhere are entitled to purchase a resident license, but the Texas Resident Active Duty Military "Super Combo" package, Texas Resident Active Duty Military All-Water Fishing Package and Texas Resident Active Duty Military Hunting Package are available to Texas residents only. The term "active duty" means full-time duty in active military service, including the National Guard and Reserves of the United States. Such term includes full-time training duty and attendance while in the active military service at a school designated as a service school by law or by the Secretary of the military department concerned. Non-residents under 17 years of age are designated as residents for hunting license purposes (**not valid for Lifetime Licenses**).

Residency is proven by any three of the following (all documents must reflect the applicant's name and a physical address in Texas). Except for a valid driver's license or a state issued identification card, documentation is not required at time of purchases or while hunting or fishing:

- a current Texas homestead property tax statement
- the most recent six months of utility bills
- the most recent six months of paycheck receipts
- the person's most recent tax return from the Internal Revenue Service
- a statement from a parole board or probation officer stating that the person has continuously resided in Texas for the six months immediately preceding the application for a license or permit
- a valid Texas driver's license\*
- a current Texas voter registration certificate\*
- a current vehicle registration\*

\*must have been issued at least six months prior to license or permit application

A **NON-RESIDENT** is any person who does not meet the requirements listed for qualification as a Texas resident.

**It is unlawful to:**

- hunt or fish without a valid license, or a permit and endorsement on your person and available for inspection by a game warden, unless exempt by age, program or a reciprocal agreement with another state.
- use another person's license or tag to hunt or fish.
- let someone else hunt or fish with your license or tags.

**It is unlawful to purchase or obtain more than one of the following licenses:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • Resident Hunting                      | • Texas Resident Active Duty Military "Super Combo" Package |
| • Youth Hunting                         | • Resident Combination Hunting and Fishing Package          |
| • Senior Hunting                        | • Senior Resident Combination Hunting and Fishing Package   |
| • Disabled Veteran "Super Combo"        | • Texas Resident Active Duty Military Hunting Package       |
| • Resident "Super Combo" Package        | • General Non-Resident Hunting                              |
| • Senior Resident "Super Combo" Package | • Non-Resident Spring Turkey Hunting                        |

**Collection of Social Security Number (SSN):** The collection of the SSN is mandated by federal and state law (42 U.S.C.A. 666 and Texas Family Code, Section 231.302) for the purpose of child support collection enforcement; however, state law exempts persons 13 years of age and younger from having to provide a SSN to purchase a license. TPWD cannot force persons older than 13 years of age to provide the SSN, but we cannot sell you a license. If you are buying a license for another person, the law requires that the purchaser provide the SSN of the person who will be holding the license.

## HUNTING AND FISHING COMBINATION LICENSE PACKAGES

**For Texas residents only:**

The "**Super Combo**" includes a Resident Hunting License, a Resident Fishing License and five state endorsements (archery, freshwater fishing, saltwater fishing with a red drum tag, upland game bird, and migratory game bird) at a discount price. For residents who hunt and fish fresh water and/or salt water, the "Super Combo" package can save purchasers up to \$18. **Resident "Super Combo" License Package** (Type 111): **\$68**; **Senior Resident "Super Combo" License Package** (Type 117): **\$32** (for age 65 and over).

The "Combo" packages include a Resident Hunting License, a Resident Fishing License and either the saltwater endorsement (with a red drum tag), freshwater endorsement, or both, depending on the specific package purchased. **Resident Combination Hunting and Freshwater Fishing: \$50**; **Resident Combination Hunting and Saltwater Fishing: \$55**; **Resident Combination Hunting and All-Water Fishing: \$60**; **Senior Resident Combination Hunting and Freshwater Fishing: \$16** (for age 65 and over); **Senior Resident Combination Hunting and Saltwater Fishing: \$21**; **Senior Resident Combination Hunting and All-Water Fishing: \$26**.

Residents who purchase "Combo" packages specific to either salt or freshwater fishing may upgrade to the All-Water package through the purchase of the appropriate endorsement (i.e., the endorsement not included in the initial license package purchased).

**Texas Resident Active Duty Military “Super Combo” Hunting and All-Water Fishing Package** (Type 510): **FREE**  
Available to any **Texas resident** on active duty in the U.S. Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, Reserves, or National or State Guard. Includes all five state endorsements (archery, freshwater fishing, migratory game bird, saltwater fishing with a red drum tag, and upland game bird). The Federal Duck Stamp is not included. **Proof of residency for this license is: military service record(s) indicating that the person’s home of record is in Texas or that the person’s duty station for the six months immediately prior to the time of application is in Texas.**

**Texas Resident Active Military All-Water Fishing Package** (Type 511): **FREE**  
Available to any **Texas resident** on active duty in the U.S. Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, Reserves, or National or State Guard. This package includes a resident fishing license and the freshwater and saltwater endorsements with a red drum tag. **Proof of residency for this license is: military service record(s) indicating that the person’s home of record is in Texas or that the person’s duty station for the six months immediately prior to the time of application is in Texas.**

**Texas Resident Active Military Hunting Package** (Type 512): **FREE**  
Available to any **Texas resident** on active duty in the U.S. Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, Reserves, or National or State Guard. This package includes a resident hunting license and three state endorsements (archery, upland game bird and migratory game bird). NOTE: the Federal Duck Stamp is NOT included. **Proof of residency for this license is: military service record(s) indicating that the person’s home of record is in Texas or that the person’s duty station for the six months immediately prior to the time of application is in Texas.**

**Disabled Veteran “Super Combo” Hunting and All-Water Fishing Package** (Type 502): **FREE**  
Available to a resident or non-resident qualifying as a disabled veteran. Disabled veteran means a veteran with a service-connected disability, as defined by the Veterans Administration, consisting of the loss of the use of a foot or leg, or a disability rating of 50% or more, and who is receiving compensation from the U.S. for the disability. Official proof of disability (issued by the V.A.) must be shown when applying for this license and must state the rate of disability. Includes all five state endorsements (archery, freshwater fishing, migratory game bird, saltwater fishing with a red drum tag, and upland game bird). The Federal Duck Stamp is not included.

## LIFETIME LICENSES

**Lifetime Resident Combination Hunting and Fishing: \$1,800; Lifetime Resident Hunting: \$1,000; Lifetime Resident Fishing: \$1,000.** Note: A lifetime resident hunting or fishing license can be upgraded to a lifetime resident combination hunting and fishing license for \$800.

Residents may buy hunting and fishing licenses valid for the lifetime of the license holder. The lifetime license exempts the holder from the red drum license tag requirement and all state endorsement requirements other than the Reptile and Amphibian Endorsement. The lifetime license **does not** exempt the holder from the Federal Duck Stamp requirement. **Not valid for commercial fur trapping.** Lifetime tags may be obtained at retailers each year at no fee. Applications for lifetime licenses may be obtained from TPWD offices, online at [www.tpwd.texas.gov/](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/) or by calling (800) 792-1112, #4820. **Lifetime licenses are available for purchase from TPWD Austin headquarters and Law Enforcement offices.**

## FISHING LICENSES AND PACKAGES

**A valid fishing license with a freshwater or saltwater endorsement is required to take fish, mussels, clams, crayfish, or other aquatic life in the public waters of Texas. A hunting license is required to take turtles and frogs. The first Saturday in June of each year is the annual Free Fishing Day and no person is required to have a fishing license or endorsements while fishing on that day. In 2016, Free Fishing Day is June 4. A fishing license and endorsement are not required if fishing from the bank in a state park or in waters completely enclosed by a state park. All other fishing regulations, such as length and bag limits, remain in effect.**

Recreational anglers must have a Texas fishing license and saltwater endorsement to bring any fish taken in federal waters ashore in Texas or possess fish on a vessel in the tidal waters of Texas (see also Texas State Waters - Federal Water on pg. 44).

### Resident Fishing Licenses:

Required of any resident (see RESIDENT, pg. 21) who fishes in the **public waters** of Texas.

#### You do not need a license/package if you:

- are under 17 years of age.
- were born **BEFORE** Jan. 1, 1931.
- are a mentally disabled person who is engaging in recreational fishing as part of medically approved therapy, and who is fishing under the immediate supervision of personnel approved or employed by a hospital, residence, or school for mentally disabled persons. The mentally disabled person must carry an authorization identifying the entity supplying the service. This authorization may be in the form of an I.D. card that contains the name of the sponsoring entity.

- are a mentally disabled person and you are recreational fishing under the direct supervision of a licensed angler who is a family member or who is a licensed angler that has permission from the family to take the mentally disabled person fishing. While fishing, the mentally disabled person needs a note from a doctor stating the person has been diagnosed as mentally disabled.

A resident fishing license is included in all Super Combination and Combination packages, including Resident Lifetime Fishing License, and the various resident fishing packages offered by the department. Anyone who holds one of these licenses/packages is not required to purchase a separate fishing license.

**Non-Resident Fishing Licenses:**

Required of all non-residents who fish in the public waters of Texas. Licenses/Packages are not required if you are a:

- non-resident under 17 years of age;
- Louisiana resident 65 years of age or older who possesses a valid Louisiana Recreational Fishing License (includes Senior Fish/Hunt License); or
- Oklahoma resident 65 years of age or older.

A variety of **fishing packages** are offered from which the public may select based on the type of fishing (freshwater, saltwater, or both) and duration of license desired.

**License Year Fishing Packages** include a **resident, senior resident, special resident, or non-resident** fishing license valid from the date of sale to Aug. 31, 2016 and either a freshwater endorsement, a saltwater endorsement with a red drum tag, or both endorsements valid for the same time period.

**Senior Resident Fishing Packages** are available to any Texas resident who is at least 65 years of age and was born on or after Jan. 1, 1931. The packages include a senior resident fishing license, and either a freshwater endorsement, a saltwater endorsement with a red drum tag, or both depending on the package selected.

**Special Resident All-Water Fishing License** is available to any Texas resident who is legally blind. Endorsements are not required for this license. One red drum tag shall be available at no additional charge.

**One-Day All-Water Fishing License** includes a **resident or non-resident** fishing license valid for the selected day or days purchased. Endorsements are not required for this license. Consecutive days may be bought at the time of purchase. One red drum tag (Item 598) shall be available at no additional charge with the purchase of the first one-day license only.

**Year-from-Purchase All-Water Fishing Package (available only to Texas residents)** includes a resident fishing license, a freshwater endorsement and a saltwater endorsement with a red drum tag, all valid from the date of purchase through the end of the purchase month of the next license year.

**2015-2016 FISHING LICENSES AND FEES:**

**Resident:**

- Freshwater Package \$30
- Saltwater Package \$35
- All-Water Package \$40
- Senior Freshwater Package \$12
- Senior Saltwater Package \$17
- Senior All-Water Package \$22
- Special Resident All-Water License (for legally blind) \$7
- Year-from-Purchase All-Water Package \$47
- One-Day All-Water License \$11

**Non-Resident:**

- Freshwater Package \$58
- Saltwater Package \$63
- All-Water Package \$68
- One-Day All-Water License \$16

**Please note that if you own any valid freshwater fishing package, you will be able to purchase a saltwater endorsement, and conversely, if you own any valid saltwater fishing package, you will be able to purchase a freshwater endorsement.**

**Sport Oyster Boat License:**

Required when using a sport oyster dredge or tongs to take oysters. **Resident** (Type 328): **\$13** - For boats registered in Texas or having a U.S. Coast Guard document that shows the owner's address is in Texas. **Non-resident** (Type 428): **\$51**

**Fishing Guide License:**

Required for any person who for compensation, accompanies, assists, or transports any person engaged in fishing in the waters of the state. See Texas Commercial Fishing Guide, [www.tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/fish/commercial](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/fish/commercial)

## FISHING ENDORSEMENTS AND TAGS

### Freshwater Fishing Endorsement (Type 256): \$5

This endorsement is required in addition to a valid fishing license if you take or attempt to take fish in the public fresh waters of Texas. If you are not required to hold a fishing license, or if you hold a lifetime combination or lifetime fishing license, this endorsement is not required. A freshwater fishing endorsement is included in freshwater and all-water fishing packages.

### Saltwater Fishing Endorsement (Type 211): \$10

This endorsement is required in addition to a valid fishing license if you take or attempt to take fish in the public salt water of Texas. If you are not required to hold a fishing license, or if you hold a lifetime combination or lifetime fishing license, this endorsement is not required. **A red drum tag shall be issued at no additional charge with each saltwater fishing endorsement.** A saltwater fishing endorsement is included in saltwater and all-water fishing packages.

### Red Drum Tag:

This tag is required for an individual to take one red drum per license year over the maximum length limit of 28 inches, and is included free with the purchase of a saltwater fishing endorsement or any package that includes the saltwater fishing endorsement. See tagging information, pg. 45.

**Persons who want to obtain a red drum tag and are EXEMPT from fishing license requirements may purchase an Exempt Angler Red Drum Tag for \$3.**

### Bonus Red Drum Tag (Type 599): \$3

This tag is required for an individual to take an additional red drum per license year over the maximum length limit of 28 inches. Bonus tag can be purchased at any license sales location upon presenting a valid fishing license or other valid personal identification. Only one bonus tag allowed per person per year.

### Saltwater Trotline Tag (Type 307): \$5

Required for each 300 feet, or fraction thereof, on all non-commercial trotlines and sail lines placed in the coastal waters of Texas. Available at TPWD Coastal Law Enforcement offices.

### Individual Bait-shrimp Trawl Tag (Type 334): \$37

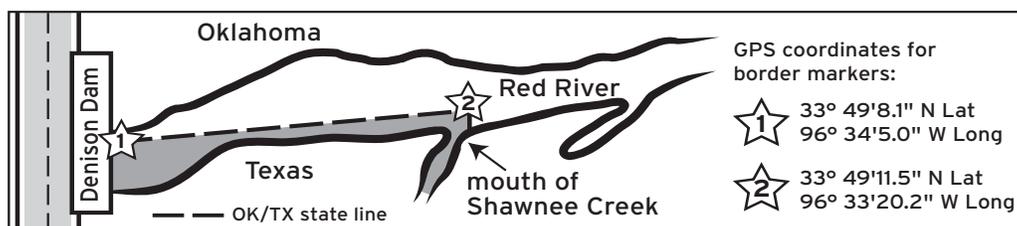
Required for trawls used to take shrimp for any purpose under a recreational license. Available at TPWD Coastal Law Enforcement offices.

## LICENSE REQUIREMENTS FOR BORDER WATERS

**ALL fish landed in Texas must comply with Texas bag and length limits. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

### Texas-Oklahoma and Texas-Arkansas:

- In Oklahoma or Arkansas waters of the Red River, the requirements of those states apply, including fishing regulations.
- A person must have a valid Texas fishing license to fish from the Texas bank from Denison Dam to Shawnee Creek (see illustration). An Oklahoma fishing license is required to wade-fish or fish from a boat in these waters.
- An Oklahoma resident 65 years of age or older is exempt from fishing license requirements in Texas, including on Lake Texoma.
- A person may fish in Texas or Oklahoma waters on Lake Texoma only with the appropriate license from the respective state, unless the person possesses a Lake Texoma fishing license, which is valid anywhere on Lake Texoma.
- **Lake Texoma License** (Type 208): \$12 - With this license, which is valid until December 31 following the date of issuance, a person may fish in both the Texas and Oklahoma waters of Lake Texoma without any additional Texas or Oklahoma fishing licenses. A Texas resident 65 years of age or older does not need this license to fish in the Oklahoma portion of Lake Texoma. A Lake Texoma license is valid ONLY on Lake Texoma.



**Texas-Louisiana:** Residents of either state, who are properly licensed in their state (or are exempt because of age), or persons who hold valid non-resident fishing licenses issued by either state may fish in any portion of the lakes and rivers forming a common boundary between Louisiana and Texas inland from a line across Sabine Pass between Texas Point and Louisiana Point. Fish landed in Texas must adhere to Texas bag and length limits; see pgs. 37-41 and 44-45.

**Texas-Mexico:** A fishing license issued by Mexico is required to fish in Mexican waters.

## HUNTING LICENSES AND PERMITS

**Note:** A Hunting Endorsement may be required (see pg. 26).

See pgs. 21-22 for specific information on Lifetime, Disabled Veteran, Texas resident ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY, and Combination licenses. For residents who hunt and fish fresh water and/or salt water, the "Super Combo" package can save purchasers up to \$18.

For information about public hunting programs, permits, and opportunities, visit [www.tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/hunt/public](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/hunt/public)

A hunting license is required of any person, regardless of age, who hunts any animal, bird, frog or turtle in this state (except furbearers, if the hunter possesses a trapper's license). No license is required for nuisance fur-bearing animals (see pg. 73), depredating hogs or coyotes (see below). Non-residents under 17 years of age may purchase and hunt with the Youth Hunting License (Type 169).

**Exceptions: a hunting license is not required to hunt the following:**

- Coyotes, if the coyotes are attacking, about to attack, or have recently attacked livestock, domestic animals, or fowl.
- Depredating feral hogs, if a landowner (resident or non-resident) or landowner's agent or lessee is taking feral hogs causing depredation on the landowner's land.
- Fur-bearing animals, if the hunter possesses a trapper's license or if the fur-bearing animals are causing depredation.

**Note:** All laws and regulations governing hunter education still apply.

**Resident Hunting** (Type 101): **\$25**

Valid to hunt any legal bird or animal (terrestrial vertebrates). **Endorsement requirements apply.** Required of any resident (see RESIDENT defined, pg. 21) unless the resident possesses a valid:

- Senior Resident Hunting License;
- Youth Hunting License;
- Super Combo or Resident Combination Hunting and Fishing License Package;
- Lifetime Resident Hunting License;
- Disabled Veteran Super Combo Hunting and Fishing License Package;
- Lifetime Resident Combination Hunting and Fishing License; or
- Texas Resident Active Duty Military Super Combo Hunting and Fishing License Package.
- Texas Resident Active Duty Military Hunting Package

**Senior Resident Hunting** (Type 102): **\$7**

Valid only for residents 65 years of age and older. Valid to hunt any legal bird or animal. Endorsement requirements apply to persons 65 and over.

**Youth Hunting License** (Type 169): **\$7**

Valid for any person, resident or non-resident, under 17 years of age at the date of license purchase. Exempt from state hunting endorsement requirements, except for Reptile and Amphibian Endorsement (pgs. 26 and 72). State endorsement exemptions remain valid for the entire license year.

**Non-resident General Hunting** (Type 105): **\$315**

Valid to hunt any legal bird or animal (including deer). **Endorsement requirements apply.**

**Non-resident Spring Turkey** (Type 118): **\$126.** Available after Feb. 1.

Valid to hunt turkey only during the open spring turkey season. Holders of this license are exempt from the upland game bird endorsement requirements. (Unlawful to possess both this license and a valid Non-Resident General Hunting License.)

**Non-resident Special Hunting** (Type 107): **\$132**

Valid to hunt: Exotic animals (see pg. 73), all legal game birds (**NOT VALID FOR TURKEY**), all nongame animals, squirrel, javelina and alligator (**not valid for other game animals, NOT VALID FOR DEER**). **Endorsement requirements apply.**

**Non-resident 5-Day Special Hunting** (Type 157): **\$48**

Legal for any period of five consecutive days (valid hunting dates will be printed on the license when issued). **Valid to hunt:** Exotic animals (see pg. 73), all legal game birds (except turkeys), all nongame animals, squirrel, javelina and alligator (**not valid for other game animals, NOT VALID FOR DEER**). **Endorsement requirements apply.**

**Non-resident Banded Bird Hunting** (Type 120): **\$27**

Valid only to hunt banded game birds (bobwhite quail, partridge, pheasant, mallard ducks) on private bird hunting areas. Upland and Migratory Game Bird endorsement requirements apply.

**Trapper's: Resident** (Type 106): **\$19; Non-resident of any age** (Type 115): **\$315**

Required for all persons to hunt, shoot, or take for sale those species classified as fur-bearing animals or their pelts. (See pg. 73 and Fur-bearing Animal Digest for more information.)

**Hunting Lease License** (Types 132, 133 and 134)

Required of a landowner or landowner's agent who leases hunting rights to another person on property they own or control for pay or other consideration. The license must be displayed on the property.

**License fee:** \$79 for 1 through 499 acres; \$147 for 500 through 999 acres; or \$252 for 1,000 acres or more. **NOTE: Hunting lease license record book no longer required.**

**Federal Sandhill Crane Hunting Permit** (Type 590): **FREE**

This permit is required to hunt sandhill cranes. The permit can be obtained in person ONLY at TPWD Law Enforcement offices (see pg. 18) and TPWD headquarters in Austin, but also is available by phone at (800) 792-1112, #4820 or (512) 389-4820, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday through Friday or online any time at [tpwd.texas.gov/licenses/online\\_sales](http://tpwd.texas.gov/licenses/online_sales). For phone and online orders, a transaction receipt will be issued in lieu of a permit. A \$5 administrative fee will be charged for online orders. Permittees should keep a record of hunting activities because 26% of crane hunters are chosen for a federal harvest survey.

**Harvest Information Program (HIP) Certification** (Type 137): **FREE**

This certification is required to hunt any migratory game bird.

**Experimental Pronghorn Antelope Permit: FREE**

This permit is required to hunt buck pronghorn antelope on certain properties. See pg. 64 for additional info.

## HUNTING ENDORSEMENTS

**SPECIAL NOTE: Except as noted below, no STATE endorsements are required for anyone under 17 years of age (resident or non-resident), holders of Lifetime Resident Combination, or Lifetime Resident Hunting licenses. The youth hunting license and state endorsement exemptions remain valid for the entire license year.**

**Archery Endorsement** (Type 135): **\$7**

Required to hunt deer or turkey during an Archery-Only open season. Required to hunt deer at any time in Collin, Dallas, Grayson, or Rockwall counties.

**Texas Migratory Game Bird Endorsement** (Type 168): **\$7**

Required to hunt any migratory game bird (waterfowl, coot, rail, gallinule, snipe, dove, sandhill crane, and woodcock). A valid Federal Duck Stamp and HIP Certification are also required of waterfowl hunters 16 years of age or older. A free Federal Sandhill Crane Hunting Permit is required to hunt sandhill cranes. The permit is available only at TPWD Law Enforcement offices, online ([www.tpwd.texas.gov/licenses/online\\_sales](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/licenses/online_sales)), or by phone: (800) 792-1112.

**Upland Game Bird Endorsement** (Type 167): **\$7**

Required to hunt turkey, pheasant, quail, or chachalaca. Non-residents who purchase the Non-resident Spring Turkey License are exempt from this endorsement requirement. **May not be used to hunt turkey with a Non-resident Special Hunting License (Type 107) or a Non-resident 5-Day Special Hunting License (Type 157).**

**Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp ("Duck Stamp"):** **\$25, plus fulfillment fee.**

Required for all waterfowl hunters 16 years of age or older; available at most U.S. Post offices, TPWD Law Enforcement offices, Austin headquarters, and all license retail sales locations. The stamp must be signed on its face by the person using it. A valid hunting license, HIP Certification, and a valid Texas Migratory Game Bird endorsement are also required.

**Reptile and Amphibian Endorsement** (Type 178): **\$10**

Required for any person to capture indigenous reptiles or amphibians on the shoulder of a public road or any unpaved area of a public right of way. **Holders of lifetime licenses and persons under 17 years of age are not exempt from this endorsement.**

## HUNTER EDUCATION

Every hunter (including out-of-state hunters) born on or after Sept. 2, 1971, must successfully complete a Hunter Education Training Course. Proof of certification or deferral is required to be on your person while hunting. Minimum age of certification is 9 years. Single-day in-person course cost is \$15. Persons 17 years of age and older have the option of taking the course in person or online. The cost of an approved online course varies by provider.

Call (800) 792-1112 or visit [www.tpwd.texas.gov/education/hunter-education](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/education/hunter-education) for information about various course options.

If you were born on or after Sept. 2, 1971, and you are:

- under **9** years of age, **you must be accompanied.\***
- age **9** through **16**, you **must successfully complete a hunter education course or be accompanied.\***
- age **17** and over, you **must successfully complete a hunter education course; or purchase a “Hunter Education Deferral” and be accompanied.\***

**Hunter Education Deferral (cost: \$10)** – Allows a person 17 years of age or older who has not completed a hunter education program to defer completion for up to one year. A deferral may only be obtained once and is only valid until the end of the current license year. A person who has been convicted or has received deferred adjudication for violation of the mandatory hunter education requirement is prohibited from applying for a deferral.

**\*“Accompanied” means:** By a person (resident or non-resident) who is at least 17, who is licensed to hunt in Texas, who has passed hunter education or is exempt (born before Sept. 2, 1971), and you must be within normal voice control.

**Note:** Certification is **not** required to purchase a hunting license.

**Bowhunter Education:** Certification is required on the Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge, Pottsboro.

**Note:** Bowhunter education does **not** substitute for Hunter Education certification.

For course information, please consult the TPWD Hunter Education section at: [www.tpwd.texas.gov/education/hunter-education](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/education/hunter-education) or call toll-free **(800) 792-1112** (menu 6) or call **(512) 389-4999**.

## TRANSFER OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

A person may give, leave, receive, or possess any species of legally taken wildlife resource, or part of the resource, that is required to have a tag or permit attached or that is protected by a bag or possession limit if the wildlife resource is accompanied by a **Wildlife Resource Document (WRD)** (see pg. 100) from the person who killed or caught the wildlife resource. Also at: [www.tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/hunting/general-regulations/transfer-of-wildlife](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/hunting/general-regulations/transfer-of-wildlife)

- For deer or antelope, a properly executed **WRD** shall accompany the wildlife resource or part of the resource until it reaches its **final destination** and is **quartered** (see Definitions, pg. 54, 55). For turkey, the **WRD** must remain attached until the turkey reaches its **final destination** and is finally processed (see pg. 54).
  - **NO WRD** is required to possess a wildlife resource that is required to be tagged if the wildlife resource is tagged.
- For all other wildlife resources except aquatic resources (for aquatic resources, see “Possession Limit,” pg. 32), a properly executed **WRD** shall accompany the wildlife resource until it reaches the possessor’s permanent residence or a cold storage/processing facility, except:
  - **NO WRD** is required if a person receiving the wildlife resource does not exceed the possession limit (exception: see Migratory Game Birds - Documentation, pg. 69).
  - A person may use the **WRD** provided in this guide (pg. 100) or a handwritten **WRD** document that includes the same required information may be used.

**NOTE:** No **WRD** is required when the entire carcass of a deer (including head, which may be skinned or unskinned) or antelope (including head, which must be unskinned) is given to, or transported by, another person if the tag from the hunter’s license and other required permits or the pronghorn permit remains attached until the carcass reaches its final destination and is quartered.

## IMPORTATION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

It is unlawful to import a wildlife resource into this state or possess a wildlife resource taken outside this state unless the person possessing the wildlife resource possesses a valid hunting, fishing, or other applicable license, endorsement, tag, permit, or document for the state or country in which the wildlife resource was legally taken. Such documentation must be produced upon request of a game warden.

**NOTE: It is unlawful to land by boat or person any fish taken from public water within a protected length limit, or in excess of the daily bag limit or possession limit established for those fish in Texas, regardless of the state or country in which they were caught.**

A person possessing a wildlife resource for importation must produce, upon request of a game warden, a valid driver’s license or personal identification certificate.

A person may possess an animal or bird killed outside of Texas that is listed in Texas as threatened or endangered, provided that the person possesses proof that the animal or bird possessed was lawfully killed. Proof consists of bill-of-sale, license tag, or notarized affidavit.

**NOTE: (IMPORTS FROM MEXICO)** The requirements listed above are waived if an official United States Customs Officer’s **Statement** is obtained from the United States Customs Office at the port of entry showing that the wildlife resource was brought in from Mexico. The Customs Officer’s statement must accompany the wildlife resource to a final destination.

## AN ETHICAL ANGLER...

- Takes only what they can use, and uses what they take.
- Always recycles or properly disposes of monofilament line to protect the environment and aquatic or wildlife resources.
- Leaves no litter and doesn't pollute our waters.
- Records their trophy with care, and returns it to the water.

## SUMMARY OF 2015-2016 RECREATIONAL FISHING REGULATIONS

### General Fishing Rules for Fresh and Salt Waters

For purposes of this guide, salt waters and coastal waters mean the same thing.

#### It is a violation to:

- Take, kill, or disturb sea turtles. If you land a sea turtle, immediately call the Marine Mammal Stranding Network at (866) 887-8535 for information on how to handle the turtle.
- Take, kill, or disturb any endangered or threatened species (paddlefish, shovel-nosed sturgeon, smalltooth sawfish, and others);
- Take or kill diamondback terrapin, sawfish of any species, porpoises, dolphins (mammals), or whales;
- Place any game fish into public waters, other than the body of water where the fish was caught, without a valid permit issued by TPWD. This includes fish caught by pole and line. For permit information, please call TPWD at (800) 792-1112 (menu 4) or (512) 389-4444.
- Use any vessel to harry, herd or drive fish including, but not limited to, operating any vessel in a repeated circular course, for the purpose of or resulting in the concentration of fish for the purpose of taking or attempting to take fish.
- Uproot or dig out any rooted seagrass plant from a bay bottom or other saltwater bottom in this state by means of a propeller. Additional information regarding seagrass regulations: [www.tpwd.texas.gov/seagrass](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/seagrass)

### Rules on Possession and Transport of Exotic Aquatic Species

#### It is a violation to:

- Possess or transport any exotic aquatic plant or animal listed as harmful or potentially harmful. This includes: plants such as hydrilla, water hyacinth, and giant salvinia; fishes such as tilapia and Asian carps (grass, silver, and bighead carp); and zebra mussels.
- Possess any tilapia, grass carp, or any other fish listed as harmful or potentially harmful without immediately removing the intestines, except on those waters where a valid Triploid Grass Carp Permit is in effect. In those waters, it is illegal to possess grass carp, and any grass carp caught must be immediately returned to the water unharmed. For a list of waters with a Triploid Grass Carp Permit, see [www.tpwd.texas.gov/gcpermits](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/gcpermits).
- Fail to immediately remove and lawfully dispose of any harmful or potentially harmful aquatic plant that is clinging or attached to a vessel, watercraft, trailer, motor vehicle, or other device used to transport or launch a vessel or watercraft can result in a fine of \$25-\$500.

### Rules Requiring Draining of Water from Vessels Used on Public Fresh Waters

Persons leaving or approaching public fresh water are required to drain all water from their vessels and on-board receptacles (includes live wells, bilges, motors and any other receptacles or water-intake systems coming into contact with public waters). This rule applies at all sites where boats can be launched and includes all types and sizes of boats whether powered or not, personal watercraft, sailboats, kayaks/canoes, or any other vessel used to travel on public waters.

- Live fish, including personally caught live bait, cannot be transported from the water body where the fish were caught in or aboard a vessel in water from the water body where the fish were caught. Personally caught live bait can be used in the water body where it was caught.
- Transport and use of commercially purchased live bait in water while fishing from a vessel is allowed, provided persons in possession of the bait have a receipt that identifies the source of the bait. Any live bait purchased from a location on or adjacent to a public water body that is transported in water from that water body can only be used as bait on that same water body.
- A vessel leaving a public freshwater body may be transported on a public roadway without water being drained, provided the vessel is transported via the most direct route to another access point located on the same water body during that same day.
- Persons participating in a fishing tournament confined to one water body are allowed to transport live fish in water from that single water body to an identified off-site weigh-in location, provided all water is drained and properly disposed of before leaving that location. Participants must possess documentation provided by tournament organizers that identify them as participants in a tournament.
- Marine sanitary systems are not covered by these regulations.

Following these procedures does not exempt persons from complying with prohibitions against transporting exotic aquatic species that are visible to the unaided eye, such as adult zebra mussels, which may be attached to boats or trailers.

**Fishing Restrictions for Spawning Alligator Gar**

When conditions such as water temperature and flooding events would be conducive for spawning of alligator gar, the TPWD Executive Director may temporarily prohibit taking or attempting to take alligator gar in a specified area for a period not to exceed 30 days. Conditions that would be used to invoke this action include water temperatures between 68 to 82°F and occurrence of moderate flood levels as defined and reported by U.S. Geological Survey gauges (see [www.srh.noaa.gov/wgrfc](http://www.srh.noaa.gov/wgrfc)). Notice of this action will be posted on the TPWD website, distributed to print and broadcast media, and shared through social media. The notice will specify the area to be closed and when lawful fishing for alligator gar may resume. For current closure notices, visit [tpwd.texas.gov/gar-closure](http://tpwd.texas.gov/gar-closure)

**Fishing in Texas State Parks**

A fishing license and endorsement are not required if fishing on State Park property or in waters completely enclosed by a State Park.

On man-made structures (docks, piers, jetties, etc.) within state parks, fishing is by pole-and-line only, with each person limited to two poles. All other fishing regulations, such as length and bag limits, remain in effect.

**Anchoring Boats and Vessels**

**It is a violation to:**

- Leave unattended for any period of time or anchor a barge, boat, or fishing platform in the Trinity River below Livingston Dam in an area 1,000 feet from the dam to a point 1,500 feet downstream from the dam:
  - for more than 10 hours in a 24-hour period without moving 100 feet or more during that time, or
  - for five or more consecutive days, whether or not it has been moved;
- Anchor or moor a vessel, barge, or structure for a period exceeding two consecutive days within the area in Cedar Bayou between a department sign erected where Mesquite Bay flows into Cedar Bayou and the department sign erected near the point where the pass empties into the Gulf of Mexico.

**Tagging Fish** - It is unlawful to release into the public waters of this state a fish with a device or substance implanted or attached that is designed, constructed, or adapted to produce an audible, visual, or electronic signal used to monitor, track, follow, or in any manner aid in the location of the released fish. It is **legal** to place an identification tag on the exterior of a fish and release this fish back into public waters. Caution is advised as use of these tags can damage fish.

**Waste of Fish** - It is unlawful to leave edible fish or bait fish taken from the public waters of the state to die without the intent to retain the fish for consumption or bait.

**Possession of Fish taken from Public Water**

- Any fish caught must be taken by legal means and methods. Fish caught and immediately released are not considered to be in your possession. Any fish not immediately released that are retained by using any type of holding device such as stringer, cooler, livewell, or bucket are considered in your possession and must adhere to established protected length and bag limits. While fishing, it is illegal to be in possession of more fish than the daily bag limit or fish that are within a protected length limit.
- In order to verify length and species, a fish caught may not have the head or tail removed and may not be filleted until an angler finally lands the catch on the mainland, a peninsula, or barrier island not including jetties or piers and does not transport the catch by boat. Broadbill swordfish, shark, and king mackerel may have the head or tail removed, but the carcass must remain intact and may not be filleted.
- Any fish taken from public water and landed by boat or person in Texas must adhere to the protected length limits and daily bag and possession limits established for those fish in Texas regardless of the state or country in which they were caught.
- The bag limit for a guided fishing party is equal to the total number of persons in the boat licensed to fish or otherwise exempt from holding a license minus each fishing guide and fishing guide deckhand multiplied by the bag limit for each species harvested.
- It is unlawful to transport live, nongame fishes taken from the Red River below Lake Texoma downstream to the Arkansas border, Big Cypress Bayou downstream of Ferrell’s Bridge Dam on Lake O’ the Pines (including the Texas waters of Caddo Lake), or the Sulphur River downstream of the Lake Wright Patman dam. Nongame fishes collected from the above waters may be used as live bait on these water bodies only.

**Special Area Designations and Restrictions**

- **It is a violation to** move, remove, deface, alter, or destroy any sign, depth marker, or other informational signage placed by the department within, or to delineate boundaries of the Redfish Bay State Scientific Area.
- **Rio Grande:** Portions of the Rio Grande adjacent to the Black Gap Wildlife Management Area are designated as a “Wild and Scenic River.” Special federal rules apply to fishing, boating, and other uses in these areas. For more information concerning these rules and boundaries, call the Big Bend National Park at (432) 477-2251 (menu 3, option 3).

## RESERVOIR BOUNDARIES (For bag, possession and length limits):

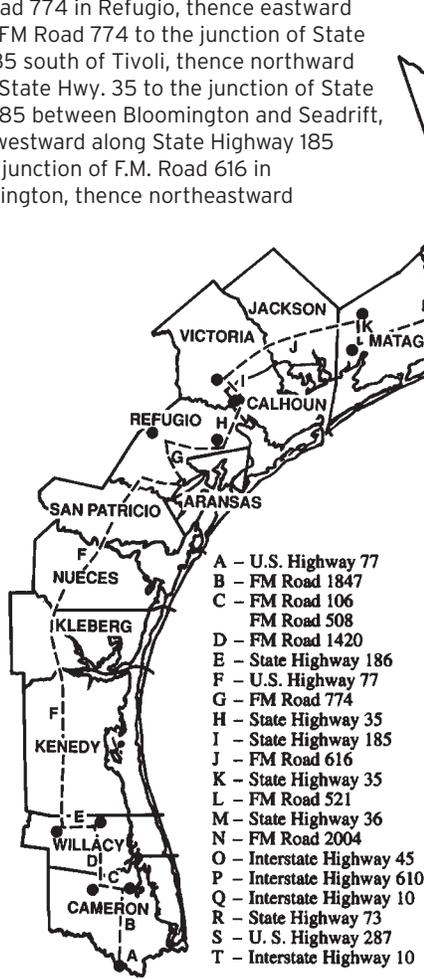
- Buchanan Reservoir in Burnet, Lampasas, Llano, and San Saba counties comprises all impounded waters of the Colorado River from Lake Buchanan dam upstream to the U.S. Hwy. 190 bridge.
- Caddo Lake in Marion and Harrison counties comprises all impounded waters of Big Cypress Bayou from the Texas-Louisiana border upstream to the State Hwy. 43 bridge.
- Canyon Reservoir in Comal County comprises all impounded waters of the Guadalupe River from the Canyon dam upstream to the U.S. Hwy. 281 bridge.
- Lake Conroe in Montgomery and Walker counties comprises all impounded waters of the West Fork of the San Jacinto River from the Lake Conroe Dam upstream to FM Road 1791 bridge.
- Cooper Lake (Jim L. Chapman Lake) in Delta and Hopkins counties comprises all waters within the Corps of Engineers lands on Cooper Lake upstream from State Hwy. 19/154 and downstream from FM Road 71.
- Falcon International Reservoir in Starr and Zapata counties comprises all impounded waters of the Rio Grande from the Falcon Dam upstream to the Zapata/Webb county line.
- Lake Georgetown in Williamson County comprises all impounded waters of the North Fork of the San Gabriel River from the Lake Georgetown Dam upstream to U.S. Hwy. 183 bridge.
- Gibbons Creek Reservoir in Grimes County comprises all waters within the Texas Municipal Power Agency property boundaries.
- Inks Lake in Burnet and Llano counties comprises all impounded waters of the Colorado River from the Roy Inks Dam (Inks Lake Dam) upstream to the Lake Buchanan Dam.
- Lake Limestone in Leon, Limestone, and Robertson counties comprises all impounded waters of the Navasota River from the Lake Limestone dam upstream to the Fort Parker State Park Lake Dam.
- Lake Livingston in Leon, Houston, Madison, Polk, San Jacinto, Trinity, and Walker counties comprises all impounded waters of the Trinity River from the Lake Livingston Dam upstream to the lock and dam near State Hwy. 7.
- Lake Lyndon B. Johnson in Burnet and Llano counties comprises all impounded waters of the Colorado River from the Alvin Wirtz Dam (Lake Lyndon B. Johnson Dam) upstream to the Roy Inks Dam (Inks Lake Dam) including the Llano River upstream to the State Hwy. 16 bridge and Sandy Creek upstream to the State Hwy. 71 bridge.
- Lake Marble Falls in Burnet County comprises all impounded waters of the Colorado River from the Max Starcke Dam (Lake Marble Falls Dam) upstream to the Alvin Wirtz Dam (Lake Lyndon B. Johnson Dam).
- Lake Murvaul in Panola County comprises all impounded waters of Murvaul Creek Bayou upstream from the Lake Murvaul Dam and Murvaul Creek Bayou downstream from the dam to FM Road 1970 bridge.
- Lake O' The Pines in Camp, Marion, Morris, and Upshur counties comprises all impounded waters of Big Cypress Creek from the Ferrell's Bridge Dam (Lake O' The Pines Dam) upstream to U.S. Hwy. 259 bridge.
- Lake Palestine in Anderson, Cherokee, Henderson, Smith, and Van Zandt counties comprises all impounded waters of the Neches River from the Blackburn Crossing Dam (Lake Palestine Dam) upstream to FM Road 279 bridge, including Kickapoo and Flat Creeks in Henderson County.
- Lake Pat Mayse in Lamar County comprises all impounded waters of Sanders Creek from Pat Mayse Lake Dam upstream to County Road 35610.
- Purtis Creek State Park Lake in Henderson and Van Zandt counties comprises all waters within the Purtis Creek State Park boundaries.
- Lake Somerville in Burleson, Lee, Milam, and Washington counties comprises all impounded waters of Yegua, East Yegua and Middle Yegua Creeks upstream from the Lake Somerville Dam.
- Toledo Bend Reservoir in Newton, Panola, Sabine, and Shelby counties comprises all impounded waters of the Sabine River from Toledo Bend Dam upstream to the Texas - Louisiana state line in Panola County.
- Lake Travis in Burnet and Travis counties comprises all impounded waters of the Colorado River from the Mansfield Dam (Lake Travis Dam) upstream to the Max Starcke Dam (Lake Mansfield Dam), including the Pedernales River upstream to the Hammetts Crossing-Hamilton Pool Road bridge.

## FRESHWATER/SALTWATER BOUNDARY

**All public waters east and south of the following boundary are considered salt water:**

beginning at the International Toll Bridge in Brownsville, northward along U.S. Hwy. 77 to the junction of Paredes Lines Road (FM Road 1847) in Brownsville, thence northward along FM Road 1847 to the junction of FM Road 106 east of Rio Hondo, thence westward along FM Road 106 to the junction of FM Road 508 in Rio Hondo, thence northward along FM Road 508 to the junction of FM Road 1420, thence northward along FM Road 1420 to the junction of State Hwy. 186 east of Raymondville, thence westward along State Hwy. 186 to the junction of U.S. Hwy. 77 near Raymondville, thence northward along U.S. Hwy. 77 to the junction of the Aransas River south of Woodsboro, thence eastward along the south shore of the Aransas River to the Junction of the Aransas River Road at the Bonnie View boat ramp; thence northward along the Aransas River Road to the junction of FM Road 136 to FM Road 2678 to the junction of FM Road 774 in Refugio, thence eastward along FM Road 774 to the junction of State Hwy. 35 south of Tivoli, thence northward along State Hwy. 35 to the junction of State Hwy. 185 between Bloomington and Seadrift, northwestward along State Highway 185 to the junction of F.M. Road 616 in Bloomington, thence northeastward

along F.M. Road 616 to the junction of State Highway 35 east of Blessing, thence southward along State Highway 35 to the junction of F.M. Road 521 north of Palacios, thence northeastward along F.M. Road 521 to the junction of State Highway 36 south of Brazoria, thence southward along State Highway 36 to the junction of F.M. Road 2004, thence northward along F.M. Road 2004 to the junction of Interstate Highway 45 between Dickinson and La Marque, thence northwestward along Interstate Highway 45 to the junction of Interstate Highway 610 in Houston, thence east and northward along Interstate Highway 610 to thence the junction of Interstate Hwy. 10 in Houston, thence eastward along Interstate Hwy. 10 to the junction of State Hwy. 73 in Winnie, thence eastward along State Hwy. 73 to the junction of U.S. Hwy. 287 in Port Arthur, thence northwestward along U.S. Hwy. 287 to the junction of Interstate Hwy. 10 in Beaumont, thence eastward along Interstate Hwy. 10 to the Louisiana State Line.



- A - U.S. Highway 77
- B - FM Road 1847
- C - FM Road 106
- FM Road 508
- D - FM Road 1420
- E - State Highway 186
- F - U.S. Highway 77
- G - FM Road 774
- H - State Highway 35
- I - State Highway 185
- J - FM Road 616
- K - State Highway 35
- L - FM Road 521
- M - State Highway 36
- N - FM Road 2004
- O - Interstate Highway 45
- P - Interstate Highway 610
- Q - Interstate Highway 10
- R - State Highway 73
- S - U. S. Highway 287
- T - Interstate Highway 10

**The following public waters are not considered salt water:**

- (1) waters of Spindletop Bayou inland from the concrete dam at Russels Landing on Spindletop Bayou in Jefferson County;
- (2) north of the dam on Lake Anahuac in Chambers County;
- (3) the waters of Taylor Bayou and Big Hill Bayou inland from the saltwater locks on Taylor Bayou in Jefferson County;
- (4) Galveston County Reservoir on State Hwy. 146 and Galveston State Park Ponds #1 through #7 in Galveston County;
- (5) Lakeview City Park Lake, West Guth Park Pond, and Waldron Park Pond in Nueces County;
- (6) Lake Burke-Crenshaw and Lake Nassau in Harris County;
- (7) Fort Brown Resaca, Resaca de la Guerra, Resaca de la Palma, Resaca de los Cuates, Resaca de los Fresnos, Resaca Rancho Viejo, and Town Resaca in Cameron County; and
- (8) Little Chocolate Bayou Park Ponds #1 and #2 in Port Lavaca in Calhoun County.

FISHING REGULATIONS

## DEFINITIONS

### Artificial Lure:

Any lure (including flies) with hook or hooks attached that is man-made and is used as a bait while fishing.

### Bait:

Something used to lure any wildlife resource. It is unlawful to use game fish or any part thereof as bait.

### Community Fishing Lake:

All public impoundments 75 acres or smaller located totally within an incorporated city limits or a public park, and all impoundments of any size lying totally within the boundaries of a state park. See pgs. 38-41 for a listing of specific fishing regulations for these waters. For a list of Community Fishing Lakes in your area, call (800) 792-1112 (menu 3) or check the TPWD website at: [www.tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/fish/recreational/lakes](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/fish/recreational/lakes)

### Daily Bag:

Quantity of a species of a wildlife resource, such as fish, that may be taken in one day.

### Day:

A 24-hour period of time that begins at midnight and ends at midnight.

### Fishing:

Taking or attempting to take aquatic animal life by any means.

### Fishing Guide:

A person who, for compensation, accompanies, assists, or transports a person or persons engaged in fishing in the water of this state.

### Fishing Guide Deck Hand:

A person in the employ of a fishing guide who assists in operating a boat for compensation to accompany or to transport a person or persons engaged in fishing in the water of this state.

### Game Fish (includes hybrids or subspecies of fish on this list):

- |  |                     |                         |
|--|---------------------|-------------------------|
| • Bass: Guadalupe, largemouth, smallmouth, spotted, striped, white, yellow | • Pickerel          | • Spearfish, longbill   |
| • Catfish: blue, channel, flathead   | • Red drum          | • Swordfish, broadbill  |
| • Cobia  | • Sailfish          | • Tarpon                |
| • Crappie: black, white  | • Sauger            | • Tripletail            |
| • Mackerel: king, Spanish  | • Seatrout, spotted | • Trout: brown, rainbow |
| • Marlin: blue, white  | • Sharks            | • Wahoo                 |
|  | • Snook             | • Walleye               |

### Gear Tag:

A tag constructed of material as durable as the device to which it is attached. The gear tag must be legible, contain the name and address of the person using the device and the date the device was set out. Date is not required for saltwater trotlines or crab traps fished under a commercial license. For juglines and freshwater trotlines, properly-marked buoys or floats qualify as valid gear tags.

### Nongame Fish:

All species not listed as game fish except endangered and threatened fish which are defined and regulated under separate rules.

### Possession Limit:

The maximum number of fish a person may possess before returning to their residence. Possession limit is twice the daily bag on game and nongame fish, except as provided in this guide, and does not apply to fish in the possession of or stored by a person at their residence.

### Residence:

A permanent structure where a person regularly sleeps and keeps personal belongings such as furniture and clothes, but does not include a temporary abode or dwelling such as a hunting or fishing club, or any club house, cabin, tent, or trailer house or mobile home used as a hunting or fishing camp, or any hotel, motel or rooming house used on a temporary basis.

### Wildlife Resources:

Any wild animal, wild bird, or aquatic life.

## Legal Freshwater and Saltwater Devices and Restrictions for Fish

**ONLY DEVICES AND RESTRICTIONS LISTED MAY BE USED TO TAKE OR ATTEMPT TO TAKE AQUATIC LIFE.**

**GAME FISH** may be taken only by pole and line (which includes rod and reel), except as otherwise provided in this guide.

A person may fish with **multiple poles** or other devices, except as provided in this guide. **In fresh water, it is unlawful** to fish with more than 100 hooks on all devices combined.

**In fresh water, it is unlawful to take fish with a hand operated device held underwater except that a spear or spear gun may be used to take NONGAME fish.**

**CAST NET:** A net that can be hand-thrown over an area.

- May be used to take **NONGAME** fish and shrimp only (see shrimp regulations, pg. 46).
- May not be greater than 14 feet in diameter.
- In **SALT WATER**, nongame fish may be taken for bait purposes only.

**DIP NET:** A mesh bag suspended from a frame attached to a handle.

- May be used to take **NONGAME** fish only.
- May be used to aid in the landing of fish caught by other legal devices.
- In **SALT WATER**, nongame fish may be taken for bait purposes only.

**GAFF:** Any hand-held pole with a hook attached directly to the pole.

- May only be used to aid in the landing of fish caught by other legal devices, means, or methods.
- Fish landed with a gaff **MAY NOT** be below the minimum, above the maximum, or within a protected length limit.

**GIG:** Any hand-held shaft with single or multiple points, barbed or barbless.

- May be used to take **NONGAME** fish only.

**HANDFISHING:** Fishing by the use of **HANDS ONLY**. The use of **ANY** other fishing device while handfishing (including but not limited to gaff, pole hook, trap, spear or stick) is **UNLAWFUL**.

- No person may intentionally place a trap (including such devices as boxes, barrels or pipes) in public fresh water for the purpose of taking catfish by handfishing.
- May be used to take channel, blue, and flathead catfish in fresh water only.

**JUGLINE:** For use in **FRESH WATER** only. A fishing line with five or less hooks tied to a free-floating device.

- May be used to take **NONGAME** fish, channel catfish, blue catfish, and flathead catfish only.
- **Placement and Location Restrictions:** Juglines may not be used in
  - Community Fishing Lakes (see pg. 32 for definition)
  - Reservoirs or sections of rivers lying totally within the boundaries of a state park
  - Bellwood Lake in Smith County
  - Boerne City Lake in Kendall County
  - Canyon Lake Project #6 in Lubbock County
  - Dixieland Reservoir in Cameron County
  - Gibbons Creek Reservoir in Grimes County
  - Lake Bastrop in Bastrop County
  - Lake Bryan in Brazos County
  - Lakes Coffee Mill and Davy Crockett in Fannin County
  - Lake Pflugerville in Travis County
  - Lake Naconiche in Nacogdoches County
  - North Concho River from O.C. Fisher dam to the Bell Street dam
  - South Concho River from Lone Wolf dam to Bell Street dam
  - Tankersley Reservoir in Titus County
  - Wheeler Branch Reservoir in Somervell County

• **Tagging and Marking Requirements:**

- Must be used with a valid GEAR TAG (see pg. 32) attached within 6 inches of the free-floating device; gear tag is valid for 10 days after the date set out and must include the number of the permit to sell nongame fish taken from fresh water, if applicable. Properly-marked buoys or floats qualify as valid gear tags.
- For non-commercial purposes, a jugline must be marked with a free-floating device of any color other than orange.
- For commercial purposes, a jugline must be marked with an orange, free-floating device.

**LAWFUL ARCHERY EQUIPMENT:** Includes longbow, recurved bow, compound bow, and crossbow.

- May be used to take **NONGAME** fish only.
- Any fish that is edible or can be used for bait (includes all gar species, common carp, and buffalo) may not be released back into the water after being taken with lawful archery equipment. See also "Waste of Fish" on pg. 29.
- State regulations permit bow fishing in most public waters (see Exceptions to Statewide Freshwater Harvest Regulations, pgs. 37-41, and Restricted Areas in Counties, pg. 74). Additionally, bow fishers are advised to check with local authorities that may have ordinances restricting use of archery equipment.
- A person bow fishing on a navigable stream in Dimmit, Edwards, Frio, Kenedy, Llano, Maverick, Real, Uvalde, or Zavala counties may not possess an arrow equipped with fletching of any kind, an unbarbed arrow, or a bow that is not equipped with a reel and line.

**MINNOW TRAP:**

- May be used to take **NONGAME** fish only.
- Trap may not exceed 24 inches in length. The throat may not exceed 1 inch by 3 inches.
- GEAR TAG (see pg. 32) valid for only 10 days must be visibly attached.

**PERCH TRAPS:** For use in **SALT WATER** only.

- May be used to take **NONGAME** fish only.
- May not exceed 18 cubic feet.
- Must be marked with a floating visible orange buoy not less than 6 inches in height and 6 inches in width. The buoy must have a GEAR TAG (see pg. 32) valid only for 10 days attached.
- Must be equipped with a degradable panel as described for crab traps (see pg. 50).
- Buoys or floats may not be made of plastic bottle(s) of any color or size.
- It is unlawful to place any type of trap within the area in Cedar Bayou between a department sign erected where Mesquite Bay flows into Cedar Bayou and the department sign erected near the point where the pass empties into the Gulf of Mexico.

**POLE AND LINE** (which includes rod and reel): A line with hook, attached to a pole.

- May be used to take **GAME AND NONGAME** fish.
- It is unlawful to take or attempt to take fish with one or more hooks attached to a line or artificial lure used in a manner to foul-hook a fish (snagging or jerking). A fish is foul-hooked when caught by a hook in an area other than the fish's mouth.
- Game and nongame fish may be taken by pole and line, except that in the Guadalupe River in Comal County starting 800 yards downstream from the Canyon Dam release and extending downstream to the second bridge crossing on River Road, rainbow and brown trout may not be retained when taken by any method except artificial lures. In this area only, artificial lures cannot contain or have attached either whole or portions, living or dead, of organisms such as fish, crayfish, insects (grubs, larvae or adults) or worms, any other animal or vegetable material, or synthetic scented materials. This does not prohibit the use of artificial lures that contain components of hair or feathers. It is an offense to possess rainbow and brown trout while fishing with any other device in that part of the Guadalupe River defined in this paragraph.
- Pole and line is the only lawful method for taking game fish and nongame fish from Community Fishing Lakes (see definition, pg. 32); includes impoundments lying totally within the boundaries of a state park), sections of rivers lying totally within boundaries of a state park, the North Concho River from O.C. Fisher dam to the Bell Street dam, the South Concho River from Lone Wolf dam to Bell Street dam, Wheeler Branch Reservoir, Lake Pflugerville, and Canyon Lake Project #6.

**SAIL LINE:** For use in **SALT WATER** only. A type of trotline with one end of the main line fixed on the shore, the other end of the main line attached to a wind-powered floating device or sail.

- Nongame fish, red drum, spotted seatrout, and sharks may be taken with a sail line.
- No more than one sail line may be used per fisherman.
- The sail line must be attended at all times the line is fishing.
- Sail lines may not be used by the holder of a commercial fishing license.
- Sail lines may be used seven days a week.
- **Tag Requirements:** Must have a valid SALTWATER TROTLINE TAG for each 300 feet of mainline or fraction thereof being fished.
- **Construction and Design Restrictions:**
  - Sail line may not exceed 1,800 feet from reel to sail.
  - Sail and the most shoreward float must be bright orange or red color. All other floats must be yellow. **No float** may be more than 200 feet from the sail.
  - A weight of 1 ounce or more must be attached to the line not less than 4 feet or more than 6 feet shoreward of the most shoreward float.
  - Reflectors of not less than 2 square inches shall be attached to the sail and floats. They must be easily seen from all directions. This applies for sail lines operated from 30 minutes after sunset to 30 minutes before sunrise.
  - May have no more than 30 hooks.
  - There is no hook spacing requirement.
  - No hook may be placed more than 200 feet from the sail.
  - May be baited with either natural or artificial bait.
- **Placement and Location Restrictions:** Must meet placement and location requirements for saltwater trotlines (see pg. 36).

**SEINE:** (Includes a push net.) A section of non-metallic mesh webbing, with the top edge buoyed upwards by a floatline and the bottom edge weighted.

- May be used to take **NONGAME** fish and shrimp only.
- May not be longer than 20 feet.
- May not have mesh exceeding 1/2-inch square.
- Must be manually operated.
- In **SALT WATER**, nongame fish may be taken by seine for bait purposes only.

**SHAD TRAWL:** For use in **FRESH WATER** only. A bag-shaped net which is dragged along the bottom or through the water to catch aquatic life.

- May be used to take **NONGAME** fish only.
- May not be longer than 6 feet or with a mouth larger than 36 inches in diameter.
- May be equipped with a funnel or throat and must be towed by boat or hand.

**SPEAR:** Any shaft with single or multiple points, barbed or barbless, which may be propelled by any means, but does not include arrows. May be used to take **NONGAME** fish only.

**SPEAR GUN:** Any hand operated device designed and used for propelling a spear, but does not include the crossbow. May be used to take **NONGAME** fish only, not a legal means to take fish in a community fishing lake.

**THROWLINE:** For use in **FRESH WATER** only. A fishing line with five or less hooks and with one end attached to a permanent fixture. Components of a throwline may also include swivels, snaps, rubber, and rigid support structures.

- May be used to take **NONGAME** fish, channel catfish, blue catfish, and flathead catfish only.
- Must be used with a valid gear tag attached. Gear tag is valid for 10 days after the date set out.

• **Placement and Location Restrictions:** Throwlines may not be used in:

- Community Fishing Lakes (see pg. 32 for definition)
- Reservoirs or sections of rivers lying totally within the boundaries of a state park
- Bellwood Lake in Smith County
- Boerne City Lake in Kendall County
- Canyon Lake Project #6 in Lubbock County
- Dixieland Reservoir in Cameron County
- Gibbons Creek Reservoir in Grimes County
- Lake Bastrop in Bastrop County
- Lake Bryan in Brazos County
- Lakes Coffee Mill and Davy Crockett in Fannin County
- Lake Naconiche in Nacogdoches County
- Lake Pflugerville in Travis County
- North Concho River from O.C. Fisher dam to the Bell Street dam
- South Concho River from Lone Wolf dam to Bell Street dam
- Tankersley Reservoir in Titus County
- Wheeler Branch Reservoir in Somervell County

**TRAWL (INDIVIDUAL BAIT-SHRIMP TRAWL):** For use in **SALT WATER** only. A bag-shaped net which is dragged along the bottom or through the water to catch aquatic life. Restricted to hand-operated trawls only; use of mechanical devices is **UNLAWFUL**.

- See pg. 46 under Shrimp Regulations for trawl design restrictions.
- Nongame fish (EXCEPT those species regulated by bag or size limits) taken incidental to legal shrimping operations may be retained.
- "Legal shrimping operations" means the use of a legal trawl in places, at times, and in manners as authorized by TPWD (**see section on Shrimp for details**).
- 200 nongame fish taken with an individual bait-shrimp trawl may be retained per person for **BAIT PURPOSES ONLY**.

**TROTLINE:** A non-metallic main fishing line with more than five hooks attached and with each end attached to a fixture.

- Nongame fish, channel catfish, blue catfish, and flathead catfish may be taken by trotline.
- Red drum, spotted seatrout, and sharks caught on a trotline may not be retained or possessed.
- **General Construction and Design Restrictions:** Trotlines may not be used with:
  - a mainline length exceeding 600 feet;
  - hooks spaced less than 3 horizontal feet apart;
  - metallic stakes;
  - or the main fishing line and attached hooks and stagings placed above the water's surface.

**TROTTLINES IN FRESH WATER**

- **Tag Requirements:** Must be used with a valid GEAR TAG (see pg. 32). Properly-marked buoys or floats qualify as valid gear tags. Gear tags must be attached within 3 feet of the first hook at each end of the trotline and are valid for 10 days after the date set out.
- **Construction and Design Restrictions:** May not have more than 50 hooks on any one trotline.
- **Placement and Location Restrictions:** Trotlines may not be used in:
  - Community Fishing Lakes (see pg. 32 for definition)
  - Reservoirs or sections of rivers lying totally within the boundaries of a state park
  - Bellwood Lake in Smith County
  - Boerne City Lake in Kendall County
  - Canyon Lake Project #6 in Lubbock County
  - Dixieland Reservoir in Cameron County

- Fayette County Reservoir in Fayette County
- Gibbons Creek Reservoir in Grimes County
- Lake Bastrop in Bastrop County
- Lake Bryan in Brazos County
- Lakes Coffee Mill and Davy Crockett in Fannin County
- Lake Naconiche in Nacogdoches County
- Lake Pflugerville in Travis County
- North Concho River from O.C. Fisher dam to the Bell Street dam
- Pinkston Reservoir in Shelby County
- South Concho River from Lone Wolf dam to Bell Street dam
- Tankersley Reservoir in Titus County
- Wheeler Branch Reservoir in Somervell County

**TROTTLINES IN SALT WATER** - No more than one trotline may be used per fisherman.

- **Tag Requirements:**

- Must have a valid SALTWATER TROTLINE TAG attached to each 300 feet of mainline or fraction thereof. (Must be purchased at TPWD Law Enforcement offices, see pg. 18.)
- Must be used with a valid GEAR TAG (see pg. 32) attached within 3 feet of the first hook at each end of the trotline. Tag does not need to be dated.

- **Construction and Design Restrictions:**

- Must be marked with a yellow floating buoy not less than 6 inches in height, 6 inches in length, and 6 inches in width, bearing a two-inch wide stripe of contrasting color, attached to end fixtures.
- Buoys or floats may not be made of plastic bottle(s) of any color or size.
- May not be baited with other than natural bait. Natural bait is a whole or cut-up portion of a fish or shellfish or a whole or cut-up portion of plant material in its natural state, provided that none of these may be altered beyond cutting into portions.
- May not be used with hooks other than circle-type hook with point curved in and having a gap (distance from point to shank) of no more than one-half inch, and with the diameter of the circle not less than five-eighths inch (comparable to Mustad 11/0 circle hook Model #39960ST).

- **Placement and Location Restrictions:**

- May not be used in or on the waters of the Gulf of Mexico within the jurisdiction of this state.
- May not be placed closer than 50 feet from any other trotline, or set within 200 feet of the edge of the Intracoastal Waterway or its tributary channels.
- May not be used in Aransas County in Little Bay and the water area of Aransas Bay within one-half mile of a line from Hail Point on the Lamar Peninsula, then direct to the eastern end of Goose Island, then along the southern shore of Goose Island, then along the causeway between Lamar Peninsula and Live Oak Peninsula, then along the eastern shoreline of the Live Oak Peninsula past the town of Fulton, past Nine-Mile Point, past the town of Rockport to a point at the east end of Talley Island, including that part of Copano Bay within 1,000 feet of the causeway between Lamar Peninsula and Live Oak Peninsula.
- No trotline or trotline components (EXCEPT Sail Lines), including lines and hooks, but excluding poles, may be left in or on coastal waters between the hours of 1 p.m. on Friday through 1 p.m. on Sunday of each week, except that attended sail lines are excluded from the restrictions imposed by this clause. In the event small craft advisories or higher marine weather advisories issued by the National Weather Service are in place at 8 a.m. on Friday, trotlines may remain in the water until 6 p.m. on Friday. If small craft advisories are in place at 1 p.m. on Friday, trotlines may remain in the water until Saturday. When small craft advisories are lifted by 8 a.m. on Saturday, trotlines must be removed by 6 p.m. on Saturday. When small craft advisories or higher marine weather advisories are still in place at 1 p.m. on Saturday, trotlines may remain in the water through 1 p.m. on Sunday. It is a violation to tend, bait, or harvest fish or any other aquatic life from trotlines during the period that trotline removal requirements are suspended under this provision for adverse weather conditions. For purposes of enforcement, the geographic area customarily covered by marine weather advisories will be delineated by department policy.

**UMBRELLA NET:** A non-metallic mesh net that is suspended horizontally in the water by multiple lines attached to a rigid frame.

- May be used to take crabs and **NONGAME** fish only.
- May not have within the frame an area that exceeds 16 square feet.

## Freshwater Fishing Harvest Regulations

- Statewide regulations apply for all public fresh waters except for those locations noted in the Exceptions to Statewide Freshwater Harvest Regulations on pgs. 37-41.
- A person taking or attempting to take game and nongame fish from fresh water for non-commercial purposes is required to have a valid fishing license and a freshwater fishing endorsement.
- The only exceptions to the statewide possession limits, which are twice the daily bag limits, are for striped bass from Lake Texoma and alligator gar from Falcon International Reservoir (see pg. 38-39). Please note that on Caddo Reservoir, Kirby Reservoir, Lake Livingston, Palestine Reservoir, the Sabine River below Toledo Bend Reservoir and Toledo Bend Reservoir where some daily bag limits are larger than the statewide daily bag, the possession limits remain twice the statewide daily bag limits listed on pg. 37.
- For saltwater finfish species caught in the public fresh waters of this state, statewide bag, possession, and length limits as listed on pgs. 44-45 apply.
- Some reservoirs have special regulations for red drum. See Exceptions to Statewide Freshwater Harvest Regulations.

## Statewide Bag and Length Limits (see below and pgs. 38-41 for exceptions)

Daily bag and possession limit defined on pg. 32.

Species	Daily Bag	Length in Inches (Minimum)
Bass:	5 (in any combination)	
largemouth and smallmouth		14
spotted and Guadalupe		No limit
Bass, striped and hybrid striped bass (also known as palmetto or sunshine bass)	5 (in any combination)	18
Bass, white	25	10
Bass, yellow	No limit	No limit
Catfish: channel and blue catfish, their hybrids and subspecies	25 (in any combination)	12
Catfish, flathead	5	18
Crappie: white and black crappie, their hybrids and subspecies	25 (in any combination)	10
Paddlefish	No harvest allowed	
Gar, alligator <sup>a,b</sup>	1	No limit
Saugeye	3	18
Sunfish: various species including bluegill, redear, green, warmouth and longear	No limit	No limit
Trout: rainbow and brown trout, their hybrids and subspecies	5 (in any combination)	No limit
Walleye	5 (only two can be less than 16 inches in length)	No limit

**FISHING REGULATIONS**

For fishes not listed above, there are **NO** statewide bag or length limits. There are special requirements associated with the harvest of harmful or potentially harmful exotic fishes (tilapia, grass carp); see pg. 28.

<sup>a</sup>See alligator gar fishing restrictions on pg. 29. <sup>b</sup>See notes on “Lawful Archery Equipment” on pg. 33.

## Exceptions to Statewide Freshwater Harvest Regulations

### Bait Fish Exceptions

In Brewster, Crane, Crockett, Culberson, Ector, El Paso, Jeff Davis, Hudspeth, Kinney, Loving, Pecos, Presidio, Reeves, Terrell, Upton, Val Verde, Ward, and Winkler counties, the only fishes that may be used or possessed for bait while fishing are common carp, fathead minnows, gizzard and threadfin shad, golden shiners, goldfish, Mexican tetra, Rio Grande cichlid, silversides (Atherinidae family) and sunfish (Lepomis).

**How to use the table (pgs. 38-41):** First, look for your location of interest (lake or river) under **Location**. The locations are listed in alphabetical order. If you find the location you are looking for, first check the counties listed to the right of the locations to make sure you have the correct location. If those match, continue reading to the right and note the codes for regulation exceptions. Exception codes are listed starting on pg. 40.

For instance, Lake Bastrop is located in Bastrop County. The codes for regulations that are exceptions to statewide regulations are **Bass9** and **Gear3**. Locate these codes listed on pgs. 40-41. Then read the description for each regulation exception. Please note MLL = Minimum Length Limit.

If you do not find the location you are looking for, that means **statewide regulations apply**. Please see above for Statewide Bag and Length Limits. If the lake is less than 75 acres and within a public park, it is most likely a **Community Fishing Lake**. See the Community Fishing Lakes listing for regulation exceptions and also see the definition on pg. 32.

**Exceptions to Statewide Freshwater Harvest Regulations** (see "How to use the table" on pg. 37.)

**FISHING REGULATIONS**

Location	County(ies)	Exceptions		
Alan Henry	Garza	Bass14		
Athens	Henderson	Bass9		
Bastrop	Bastrop	Bass9	Gear3	
Bellwood	Smith	Bass7	Ctfish1	Gear3
Boerne City Lake	Kendall	Gear3		
Braunig	Bexar	RDrm1		
Bridgeport	Jack / Wise	Bass8		
Bright	Williamson	Bass7	Ctfish2	Gear2
Brushy Creek Lake	Williamson	Bass7	Ctfish2	Gear2
Bryan	Brazos	Bass7	Gear3	
Buck	Kimble	Bass4	Ctfish2	Gear1
Buescher State Park Lake	Bastrop	Bass9	Ctfish2	Gear1
Burke-Crenshaw	Harris	Bass8	Ctfish2	Gear2
Caddo*	Harrison / Marion	Bass16 Ctfish9	Crpie1 S&W5	Ctfish10
Calaveras	Bexar	RDrm1		
Canyon Lake Project #6	Lubbock	Ctfish2	Gear2	
Casa Blanca	Webb	Bass7		
Cleburne State Park Lake	Johnson	Bass7	Ctfish2	Gear1
Coffee Mill	Fannin	Gear3		
Coledo Creek Reservoir	Goliad / Victoria	RDrm1		
Community Fishing Lakes (except Reservoirs totally within State Parks; see State Park Lakes, pg. 39)	Various - See pg. 32 for definition	Ctfish2	Gear2	
Concho River (North Concho River from O.C. Fisher dam to the Bell Street dam and South Concho River from Lone Wolf dam to Bell Street dam)	Tom Green	Ctfish2	Gear2	
Conroe*	Montgomery / Walker	Bass6		
Cooper (Jim L. Chapman)*	Delta / Hopkins	Bass7		
Davy Crockett	Fannin	Bass8	Gear3	
Devils River	Val Verde - State Hwy. 163 bridge downstream to Dolan Falls	Bass12		
Dixieland	Cameron	Ctfish1	Gear3	
Elm	Fort Bend	Ctfish2	Gear1	
Fairfield	Freestone	Bass7	RDrm1	
Falcon	Starr/Zapata	Gar2		
Fayette County	Fayette	Bass10	Gear4	
Fork	Hopkins / Rains / Wood	Bass11	Crpie2	
Fort Parker State Park Lake	Limestone	Ctfish2	Gear1	
Georgetown*	Williamson	Bass8		
Gibbons Creek Reservoir*	Grimes	Bass10	Gear3	
Gilmer	Upshur	Bass7		
Granbury	Hood	Bass6		
Grapevine	Denton / Tarrant	Bass8		
Guadalupe River#	Comal	Trout1	Trout2	
Houston County	Houston	Bass9		
Jacksonville	Cherokee	Bass15		
Joe Pool	Dallas / Ellis / Tarrant	Bass9		
Kirby	Taylor	Ctfish8		
Kurth	Lufkin	Bass1		
Kyle	Hays	C&R1	Gear2	

\*See Reservoir Boundaries on pg. 30. # See "Pole and Line" on pg. 34 for additional restrictions on use of artificial lures.

Location	County(ies)	Exceptions		
Lady Bird (Town)	Travis	Bass9	Carp1	
Lake O' The Pines*	Marion / Morris / Upshur	Crpie2		
Lewisville	Denton	Ctfsh7		
Livingston*	Houston / Leon / Madison / Polk / San Jacinto / Trinity / Walker	Ctfsh3		
Lost Maples State Natural Area	Bandera	Bass3	Ctfsh2	Gear1
Madisonville	Madison	Bass8		
Marine Creek	Tarrant	Bass7		
Meredith	Hutchinson / Moore / Potter	Bass13		
Meridian State Park Lake	Bosque	Bass7	Ctfsh2	Gear1
Mill Creek Lake	Van Zandt	Bass9		
Mineral Wells	Parker	Ctfsh2	Gear1	
Monticello	Titus	Bass10		
Murvaul*	Panola	Bass9		
Nacogdoche	Nacogdoches	Bass7	Gear3	
Nacogdoches	Nacogdoches	Bass1		
Nasworthy	Tom Green	Bass8		
Nelson Park Lake	Taylor	Bass4	Ctfsh2	Gear2
O.H. Ivie	Coleman / Concho / Runnels	Bass15		
Old Mt. Pleasant City	Titus	Bass7	Ctfsh2	Gear2
Palestine	Anderson / Cherokee / Henderson / Smith	Ctfsh8		
Pflugerville	Travis	Bass7	Gear1	
Pilant	Fort Bend	Ctfsh2	Gear1	
Pinkston	Shelby	Bass9	Gear4	
Possum Kingdom	Palo Pinto / Stephens / Young	Bass6		
Purtis Creek SP Lake*	Henderson / Van Zandt	Bass5	Ctfsh2	Gear1
Raven	Walker	Bass5	Ctfsh2	Gear1
Ratcliff	Houston	Bass6	Ctfsh2	Gear1
Red River below Lake Texoma	Grayson	S&W3	Ctfsh4	
Richland Chambers	Freestone / Navarro	Ctfsh7		
Sections of Rivers within State Parks	Various	Gear1		
Rusk State Park Lake	Cherokee	Bass7	Ctfsh2	Gear1
Sabine River (from Toledo Bend Dam to I-10 Bridge)	Newton / Orange	Bass2 Ctfsh10	Crpie1 S&W2	Ctfsh9 S&W5
San Augustine City	San Augustine	Bass8		
Sheldon	Harris	Ctfsh2	Gear1	
State Park Lakes (includes reservoirs totally within State Parks)	Various	Ctfsh2	Gear1	
Sweetwater	Nolan	Bass8		
Tankersley	Titus	Ctfsh1	Gear3	
Texoma	Cooke / Grayson	S&W1 Crpie3	S&W5 Wall1	Ctfsh5 Gar1
Timpson	Shelby	Bass9		
Toledo Bend*	Newton / Panola / Sabine / Shelby	Bass2 Ctfsh9	Crpie1 S&W2	Ctfsh10 S&W5
Trinity River	Polk / San Jacinto	S&W4	Ctfsh6	Shad1
Waco	McLennan	Ctfsh7		
Walter E. Long	Travis	Bass9		
Welsh	Titus	Bass7		
Wheeler Branch	Somervell	Bass9	Bass12	Gear1

\*See Reservoir Boundaries on pg. 30.

## REGULATION EXCEPTION CODES AND DESCRIPTIONS:

### BASS (LARGEMOUTH, SMALLMOUTH, SPOTTED AND GUADALUPE BASS):

**Bass1** - For largemouth bass, only bass 16 inches in length or less may be retained. Daily bag = 5 bass. Bass 24 inches or greater in length may be temporarily retained in a live well or other aerated holding device and immediately weighed using personal scales. Bass weighing 13 pounds or more may be donated to the ShareLunker Program; otherwise, the fish must be immediately released in the lake where caught. Anglers wishing to donate their bass must immediately cease fishing and contact TPWD at (903) 681-0550. Anglers may not remove the bass from the immediate vicinity of the reservoir unless instructed to do so by TPWD staff. Bass not accepted by TPWD must be immediately released.

**Bass2** - Daily bag for all four species of bass = 8 bass in any combination. Possession limit = 10. For largemouth bass, MLL = 14 inches.

**Bass3** - Catch and release only for largemouth, smallmouth, spotted, and Guadalupe bass.

**Bass4** - Catch and release only for largemouth bass.

**Bass5** - Catch and release only for largemouth bass, except that any bass 24 inches or greater in length may be temporarily retained in a live well or other aerated holding device and immediately weighed using personal scales. Bass weighing 13 pounds or more may be donated to the ShareLunker Program; otherwise, the fish must be immediately released in the lake where caught. Anglers wishing to donate their bass must immediately cease fishing and contact TPWD at (903) 681-0550. Anglers may not remove the bass from the immediate vicinity of the reservoir unless instructed to do so by TPWD staff. Bass not accepted by TPWD must be immediately released.

**Bass6** - For largemouth bass, MLL = 16 inches, and daily bag for all four species of bass = 5 bass in any combination.

**Bass7** - For largemouth bass; MLL = 18 inches, and daily bag for all four species of bass = 5 bass in any combination.

**Bass8** - For largemouth bass, length limit is a 14-18 slot. Bass 14 inches and less or 18 inches or greater in length may be retained, and daily bag for all four species of bass = 5 bass in any combination.

**Bass9** - For largemouth bass, length limit is a 14-21 slot. Bass 14 inches and less or 21 inches or greater in length may be retained. Only one bass 21 inches or greater may be retained each day.

**Bass10** - For largemouth bass, length limit is a 14-24 slot. Bass 14 inches and less or 24 inches or greater in length may be retained. Only one bass 24 inches or greater may be retained each day.

**Bass11** - For largemouth bass, length limit is a 16-24 slot. Bass 16 inches and less or 24 inches or greater in length may be retained. Only one bass 24 inches or greater may be retained each day.

**Bass12** - For smallmouth bass, MLL = 18 in. and daily bag = 3.

**Bass13** - For smallmouth bass, length limit is a 12-15 slot. Bass 12 inches and less or 15 inches or greater in length may be retained. Daily bag = 3.

**Bass14** - For largemouth and spotted bass there is no MLL. Daily bag = 5 bass in any combination. Up to 5 largemouth or spotted bass may be retained; however, only 2 may be less than 18 inches.

**Bass15** - For largemouth bass, no MLL, daily bag = 5. However, only two largemouth bass less than 18 inches may be retained each day.

**Bass16** - For largemouth bass, length limit is a 14-18 slot. Largemouth bass 14 inches and less or 18 inches or greater in length may be retained, and daily bag for all bass species = 8 bass in any combination of which no more than four may be largemouth bass 18 inches or greater. Possession limit = 10

### BASS (STRIPED, WHITE, AND HYBRID STRIPED BASS):

**S&W1** - For striped bass and hybrid striped bass, no MLL, daily bag = 10 and possession limit = 20, and only two striped or

hybrid striped bass, 20 inches or greater, may be retained each day. Culling of striped bass and hybrid striped bass is prohibited.

**S&W2** - For striped bass, no MLL, daily bag = 5, and only two striped bass, 30 inches or greater, may be retained each day.

**S&W3** - For striped bass and hybrid striped bass, no MLL and daily bag = 5. Culling of striped bass is prohibited.

**S&W4** - For the Trinity River from the Lake Livingston dam downstream to the FM Road 3278 bridge, striped bass MLL = 18 inches and daily bag = 2.

**S&W5** - For white bass, no MLL and daily bag = 25.

### COMMON CARP:

**Carp1** - For common carp, only one carp 33 inches or greater may be retained each day. There is no daily bag limit for carp less than 33 inches in length.

### CATCH & RELEASE:

**C&R1** - No harvest of largemouth bass, channel catfish, or any sunfish species is allowed.

### CATFISH (BLUE, CHANNEL, AND FLATHEAD CATFISH):

**Ctfsh1** - For channel and blue catfish, MLL = 12 and daily bag = 5 in any combination

**Ctfsh2** - For channel and blue catfish, no MLL and daily bag = 5 in any combination.

**Ctfsh3** - For channel and blue catfish, daily bag and possession limit = 50 in any combination. NOTE: Applies only to the portion of Lake Livingston in Polk, San Jacinto, Trinity, and Walker counties.

**Ctfsh4** - For flathead catfish, MLL = 20 in. and daily bag = 5.

**Ctfsh5** - For blue and channel catfish, MLL = 12 and daily bag = 15. Only one blue catfish 30 inches or greater may be retained each day. For flathead catfish, MLL = 20 in. and daily bag = 5.

**Ctfsh6** - For the Trinity River from the Lake Livingston dam downstream to the FM Road 3278 bridge, blue and channel catfish MLL = 12 and daily bag = 10, of which only 2 fish can be 24 inches or larger.

**Ctfsh7** - For blue catfish, length limit is a 30- to 45-inch slot. Blue catfish 30 inches and less or 45 inches or greater in length may be retained. Only one blue catfish 45 inches or greater may be retained each day. Daily bag = 25 blue and channel catfish in any combination.

**Ctfsh8** - For blue and channel catfish, no MLL and daily bag and possession limit = 50 in any combination of which no more than five blue or channel catfish 20 inches or greater may be retained.

**Ctfsh9** - For flathead catfish, daily bag = 10 and possession limit = 10.

**Ctfsh10** - For blue and channel catfish, no MLL, and daily bag and possession limit = 50 in any combination of which no more than five blue or channel catfish 30 inches or greater may be retained.

### CRAPPIE (BLACK AND WHITE):

**Crpie1** - For black and white crappie, there is no MLL and daily bag = 25 in any combination.

**Crpie2** - For black and white crappie caught from DEC. 1 through the last day of FEB., there is no MLL, daily bag = 25 in any combination, and all crappie caught must be retained.

**Crpie3** - For black and white crappie, MLL = 10 inches and daily bag = 37 in any combination. Possession limit = 50

### GAR (ALLIGATOR):

**Gar1** - During May, no person shall fish for, take, or seek to take alligator gar in that portion of Lake Texoma encompassed within the boundaries of the Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge or that portion of Lake Texoma from the U.S. 377 bridge (Willis Bridge) upstream to the I.H. 35 bridge.

**Gar2** - For alligator gar, daily bag = 5. Possession limit = 10

### GEAR AND METHODS: (see pg. 33 for Legal Freshwater and Saltwater Devices and Restrictions)

**Gear1** - Fishing is by pole and line only.

**Gear2** - Fishing is by pole and line only. Anglers may use no

more than two poles while fishing.

**Gear3** - Use of juglines, throwlines and trotlines is prohibited.

**Gear4** - Use of trotlines is prohibited.

**RED DRUM:**

**RDm1** - For red drum, MLL = 20 inches and daily bag = 3 and no maximum length limit.

**SHAD (GIZZARD AND THREADFIN SHAD):**

**Shad1** - For the Trinity River below Lake Livingston between Polk and San Jacinto counties, the daily bag for shad = 500 and the possession limit = 1,000 fish in any combination.

**TROUT (RAINBOW AND BROWN TROUT):**

**Trout1** - For rainbow and brown trout in the Guadalupe River 800 yards downstream from the Canyon Dam release and

extending downstream to the easternmost Highway 306 bridge crossing, length limit is a 12-18 inch slot. Trout 12 inches and less or 18 inches or greater in length may be retained. Daily bag = 5 trout and only one trout 18 inches or greater in length may be retained. Harvest of trout is by artificial lures only. See pg. 34 under "Pole and Line" for additional restrictions on use of artificial lures.

**Trout2** - For rainbow and brown trout in the Guadalupe River from the easternmost Highway 306 bridge crossing downstream to the second bridge crossing River Road, MLL is 18 inches and daily bag is one fish. Harvest of trout is by artificial lures only. See pg. 34 under "Pole and Line" for additional restrictions on use of artificial lures.

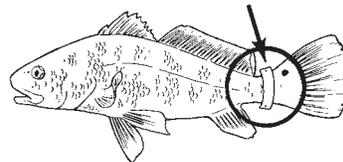
**WALLEYE:**

**Wall1** - For walleye, MLL = 18 inches and daily bag = 5.

**How to Attach Red Drum Tag**

Immediately upon retaining a fish:

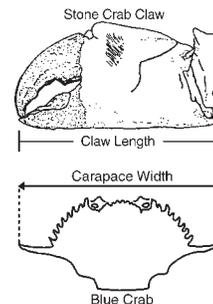
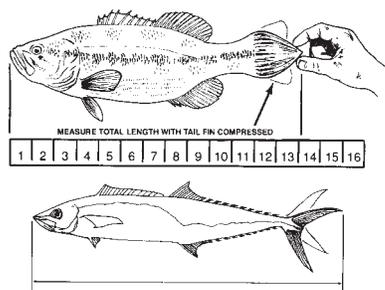
1. Remove tag from license and use entire tag.
2. Fill in ALL information spaces on front of tag.
3. Cut out day and month.
4. Attach tag with a string or wire to the narrowest part of the tail, just ahead of the tail fin (see diagram).



**How to Measure Fish and Crabs**

Use these guidelines to measure fish correctly:

1. Place the fish on its side with the jaw closed.
2. Squeeze the tail fin together or turn it in a way to obtain the maximum overall length.
3. Measure a straight line from the tip of the snout to the extreme tip of the tail fin.



**Tips for Releasing Fish**

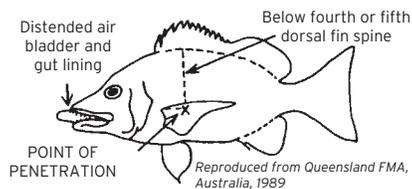
**Releasing fish today means better fishing for tomorrow. Give your fish the best chance at survival by following these tips:**

- Play and land fish as quickly as possible.
- Minimize the time fish is out of the water (no longer than you can hold your breath).
- Wet hands to avoid removing protective slime.
- Smaller fish (under 5 pounds) can be vertically held by the lower jaw. Never hold fish horizontally by jaw unless supporting with a second hand under the fish's body.
- Attempt to remove all hooks before release as most will not rust out.
- For details on hook removal, depressurizing overinflated air bladders, and more fish survival tips, see [www.tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/fishing/freshwater-fishing/catch-release-tips](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/fishing/freshwater-fishing/catch-release-tips)

**For saltwater fishes only**

When releasing a fish that cannot right itself or is showing a distended air bladder:

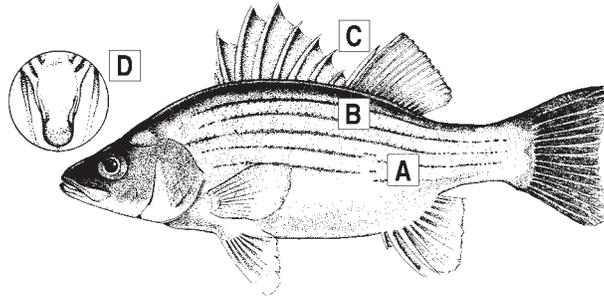
- Gently insert a thin point or an approved device through the side of the fish immediately behind the upper part of the pectoral fin base. This is usually directly below the fourth or fifth spine (see diagram right).
- Revive fish by holding upright in water and facing it into the current, gently forcing water through gills.



## Identification of Yellow, White, Striped and Hybrid Striped Bass

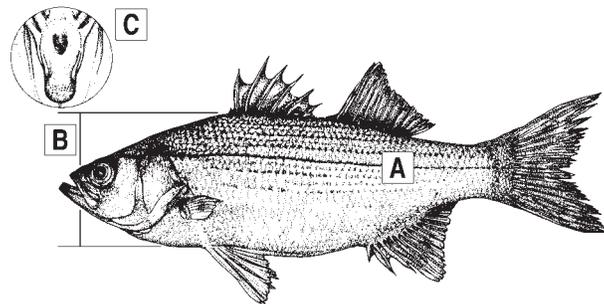
### yellow bass

- A** Stripes distinct, broken above anal fin.
- B** Color - silvery yellow.
- C** Dorsal fins joined.
- D** Does not have a tooth patch near the midline towards the back of the tongue.



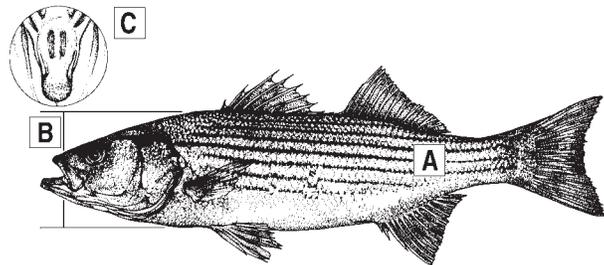
### white bass

- A** Stripes faint, only one extends to tail.
- B** Body deep, more than 1/3 length.
- C** Has one tooth patch near the midline towards the back of the tongue.



### striped bass

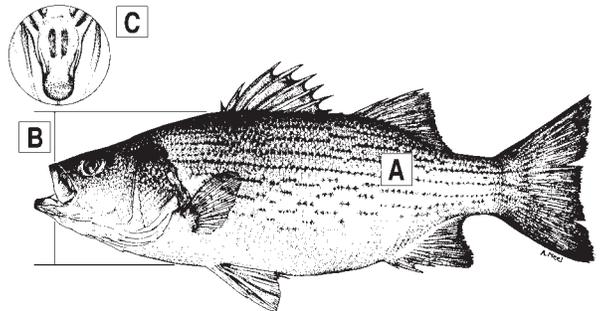
- A** Stripes distinct, several extend to tail.
- B** Body slender, less than 1/3 length.
- C** Has two, distinct tooth patches near the midline towards the back of the tongue.



### hybrid striped bass

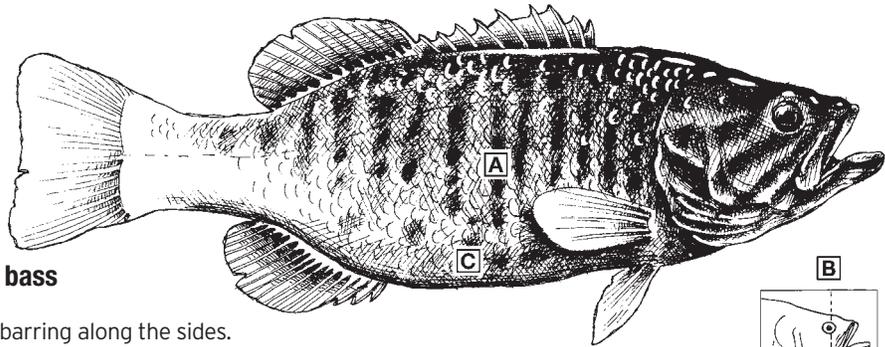
(also known as Palmetto or Sunshine bass)

- A** Stripes distinct, usually broken, several extend to tail.
- B** Body deep, more than 1/3 length.
- C** Has two tooth patches near the midline on the back of the tongue. Tooth patches may be distinct or close together.



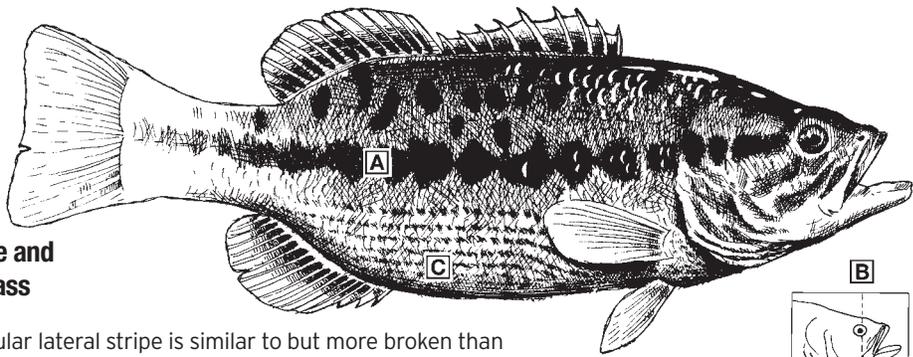
Note: For hybrid striped bass, all characteristics should be considered for identification as characteristics in individual fish may vary.

## Identification of Smallmouth, Guadalupe & Spotted and Largemouth Bass



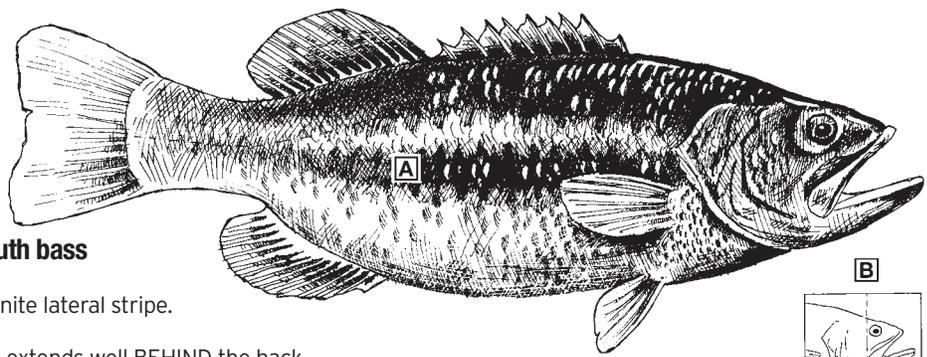
### smallmouth bass

- A** Vertical barring along the sides.
- B** Jaw does not extend BEYOND the back margin of the eye when mouth is closed.
- C** Brownish-green color; white belly area does not extend high on the sides.



### Guadalupe and spotted bass

- A** Irregular lateral stripe is similar to but more broken than largemouth bass.
- B** Jaw does not extend BEYOND the back margin of the eye when mouth is closed.
- C** Spots on scales form "rows" of stripes on whitish belly area.



### largemouth bass

- A** Definite lateral stripe.
- B** Jaw extends well BEHIND the back margin of the eye when mouth is closed.

## SALTWATER FISHING – GENERAL INFORMATION

- For freshwater finfish species caught in the public salt waters of this state, statewide bag, possession and length limits as listed on pg. 37 apply.
- A person taking or attempting to take game and nongame fish from salt water for non-commercial purposes is required to have a valid fishing license and a saltwater fishing endorsement.

### Texas State Waters – Federal Waters

Texas recreational and commercial fishermen fishing more than nine (9) nautical miles off the coast of Texas are in federal waters and are subject to rules and regulations that may differ from those in state waters. An example would be the federal requirement to use non-stainless circle hooks when fishing for reef fish. Recreational anglers must have a Texas fishing license and saltwater endorsement to bring any fish taken in federal waters ashore in Texas. To ensure that you are in compliance with federal regulations, you should contact the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council at (888) 833-1844 (toll free). Federal rules may be found online at [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org)

The limits and restrictions in this guide apply to aquatic life caught in the public waters of Texas out to nine (9) nautical miles in the Gulf of Mexico, and also apply to aquatic life caught between 9 and 200 nautical miles in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and possessed in state waters or landed in this state. (Federal law also regulates species between 9 and 200 nautical miles managed under a Federal Fishery Management Plan.) See pg. 27 for Importation of Wildlife Resources.

**IT IS UNLAWFUL TO POSSESS AQUATIC LIFE IN TEXAS WATERS THAT WAS ILLEGALLY TAKEN IN FEDERAL WATERS.**

### Bag and Length Limits for Saltwater Fish

- Daily bag and possession limit are defined on pg. 32.
- There are no bag, possession, or length limits on game or nongame fish, except as listed in this guide.

Species	Daily Bag	Length in Inches (Minimum — Maximum)
Amberjack, greater	1	34 – No limit
Bass: striped, its hybrids and subspecies	5 (in any combination)	18 – No limit
Catfish: channel and blue catfish, their hybrids and subspecies	25 (in any combination)	12 – No limit
Catfish, flathead	5	18 – No limit
Catfish, gafftopsail	No limit	14 – No limit
Cobia	2	37 – No limit
Drum, black <sup>a</sup>	5	14 – 30 <sup>a</sup>
Drum, red <sup>b</sup>	3	20 – 28 <sup>b</sup>
Flounder: all species, their hybrids and subspecies <sup>c</sup>	5/2 <sup>c</sup> (in any combination)	14 – No limit <sup>c</sup>
Gar, alligator	1	No limit – No limit
Grouper, gag	2	22 – No limit
Grouper, goliath (formerly called Jewfish)	0	Catch and release only
Mackerel, king	2	27 – No limit
Mackerel, Spanish	15	14 – No limit
Marlin, blue	No limit	131 – No limit
Marlin, white	No limit	86 – No limit

(Continued)

Species	Daily Bag	Length in Inches (Minimum — Maximum)
Mullet: all species, their hybrids and subspecies <sup>d</sup>	No limit	No limit – 12 <sup>d</sup> (during Oct., Nov., Dec. & Jan.)
Sailfish	No limit	84 – No limit
Seatrout, spotted All waters NORTH of F.M. 457 in Matagorda County All waters SOUTH of F.M. 457 in Matagorda County	10 5	15 – 25 <sup>e</sup>
Sharks:	1	
Atlantic sharpnose, blacktip, bonnethead	See Special Regulation <sup>f</sup> below.	24 – No limit
allowable shark species		64 – No limit
prohibited species <sup>g</sup>	0	Catch and release only
Sheepshead	5	15 – No limit
Snapper, lane	No limit	8 – No limit
Snapper, red <sup>h</sup>	4	15 – No limit
Snapper, vermillion	No limit	10 – No limit
Snook	1	24 – 28
Tarpon	1	85 – No limit
Triggerfish, gray	20	16 – No limit
Tripletail	3	17 – No limit

<sup>a</sup> No more than one black drum over 52 inches may be retained per person per day and counts as part of the daily bag and possession limit.

<sup>b</sup> Red drum special regulation: During a license year, one red drum over the stated maximum length limit may be retained when affixed with a properly completed Red Drum Tag and one red drum over the stated maximum length limit may be retained when affixed with a properly completed Bonus Red Drum Tag. Any fish retained under authority of a Red Drum Tag or a Bonus Red Drum Tag may be retained in addition to the daily bag and possession limit as stated in this section.

<sup>c</sup> Flounder special regulation: Daily bag is 5 fish except from Nov. 1-30, when the daily bag limit is 2 fish (flounder may be taken only by pole-and-line); and from December 1-14, when the daily bag limit is 2 fish (flounder may be taken by any legal means, including gigging). Possession limit is equal to the daily bag.

<sup>d</sup> May not take from public waters, or possess on board a boat, mullet over 12 inches during October, November, December, and January. No limits apply during other months.

<sup>e</sup> No more than one spotted seatrout over the stated maximum length may be retained per person per day and counts as part of the daily bag and possession limit.

<sup>f</sup> **Special Regulation:** The daily bag limit is 1 fish for all allowable shark species **INCLUDING** Atlantic sharpnose, blacktip and bonnethead.

<sup>g</sup> **Prohibited shark species:** Atlantic angel, Basking, Bigeye sand tiger, Bigeye sixgill, Bigeye thresher, Bignose, Caribbean reef, Caribbean sharpnose, Dusky, Galapagos, Longfin mako, Narrowtooth, Night, Sandbar, Sand tiger, Sevengill, Silky, Sixgill, Smalltail, Whale, White.

<sup>h</sup> **Special Regulation:** Red snapper may be taken using pole and line, but it is unlawful to use any kind of hook other than a circle hook when using natural bait. For additional regulations governing red snapper and other reef fish, see pg. 44.

## Saltwater Freeze Events

When temperatures on the coast are predicted to fall below 32°F for three or more days, the TPWD executive director may close one or more of the sites listed on the website below for saltwater fishing until the threat from the freeze event is over. This NOTICE OF CLOSURE will be made available to local media including newspapers. If you have any questions about your fishing area during a freeze event, please watch your local newspaper or call the nearest TPWD Law Enforcement office (see pg. 18).

**Coastal areas that may be closed to fishing during freeze conditions can be found at the following website: [tpwd.texas.gov/saltwater-freeze-events](http://tpwd.texas.gov/saltwater-freeze-events)**

## Shrimp Regulations

- Shrimp may be taken for personal use (bait or food). Shrimp taken for personal use may not be sold.
- A person taking or attempting to take shrimp from salt water for non-commercial purposes is required to have a valid fishing license and a saltwater fishing endorsement.

### Legal Sport Shrimping Devices:

- Cast Net (see pg. 33 for cast net restrictions)
- Seine (see pg. 34 for seine restrictions)
- Individual Bait-shrimp Trawl with Individual Bait Shrimp Trawl Tag (see pg. 24 and below)

### Individual Bait-shrimp Trawl:

- Only one trawl per boat is allowed.
- Must have an individual bait-shrimp trawl tag in one's possession while trawling (see pg. 24).
- Must not be greater than 20 feet in width between the doors.
- Mesh size must not be smaller than 8-3/4 inches over a consecutive series of five stretched meshes.
- Boards must not be larger than 450 square inches each.

**Coastal waters** (all the salt waters of the state) are divided into the following groups:

- 1. Outside Water:** That part of the Gulf of Mexico extending from the shoreline seaward to nine nautical miles. May not take shrimp from outside waters during closed seasons (see pg. 48)
- 2. Inside Water:** All bays, passes, rivers, or other bodies of water landward from the shoreline along the Gulf of Mexico. In these waters, the tide rises and falls and saltwater shrimp are found or migrate. Shrimping is not permitted within any natural or man-made pass leading from the inside waters to the outside waters of the state.
- 3. Major Bays:**
  - Sabine Lake north of Cameron Causeway to south of a line marked by the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (Sabine Neches Canal/Sabine River) between the easternmost tip of Goat Island to the westernmost tip of Stewts Island
  - Trinity Bay southward from a line extending from the mouth of Double Bayou in Chambers County to Double Bayou Channel Marker 14, to Separator C-2, to Point Barrow in Chambers County
  - Galveston Bay
  - East Bay westward from a line extending from Frozen Point to the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway Marker 12
  - Matagorda Bay westward of a line extending from a location on the mainland (where a line running immediately northwest [bearing 330 degrees] from Shellfish Marker A intersects the mainland), thence southeasterly to Shellfish Marker A located near the mainland, thence to Shellfish Marker B located near the end of Shell Island Reef, thence to the tide gauge located near the Matagorda Peninsula, and thence southeasterly [bearing 153 degrees] to the Matagorda Peninsula.
  - East Matagorda Bay

- Tres Palacios Bay south of a line from Grassey Point to the mouth of Pilkington Bayou
- Espiritu Santo Bay
- Lavaca Bay southward of State Highway 35
- San Antonio Bay southward of a line from McDowell Point to Mosquito Point
- Aransas Bay
- Corpus Christi Bay exclusive of the area bounded by a line extending from the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway at the southwest point of the Dagger Island chain, along Dagger Island to the southeast tip of Ransom Island, then southeast to the westernmost point of land north of Marker 14 in the Corpus Christi Ship Channel
- All exclusive of tributary bays, bayous, inlets, lakes and rivers

**4. Bait Bays** (includes major bays and those listed here):

- Chocolate Bay
- West Bay south and west of Interstate Hwy. 45 Causeway Bridge and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway inclusive of the area south of a line extending westward from Interstate Hwy. 45 Causeway Bridge at Virginia Point, along the southern edge of Tiki Island to the northeastern tip of North Deer Island at Channel Marker 48
- Trinity Bay northward from a line extending from the mouth of Double Bayou in Chambers County to Double Bayou Channel Marker 14, to Separator C-2, to Point Barrow in Chambers County
- The Old Brazos River lying north of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway in Brazoria County
- Upper Laguna Madre
- Baffin Bay
- Alazan Bay
- Barroom Bay
- Lower Laguna Madre, including the Brownsville Ship Channel
- The entire Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, exclusive of all tributaries

**5. Nursery Areas:** (No Shrimping Allowed) Those coastal waters not specifically named above as Major Bays or Bait Bays are considered Nursery Areas. Includes tributary bays, bayous, inlets, lakes, and rivers that serve as significant growth and development environments for postlarval and juvenile shrimp. Does not include outside waters, major bays, or bait bays.

**Bait Shrimping (Major Bays and Bait Bays)**

Season	Hours	Limits
Aug. 15 - Mar. 31	30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 quarts/person (with heads attached)</li> <li>• 4 quarts/boat (with heads attached) on boats taking shrimp with individual bait shrimp trawl</li> </ul>
Apr. 1 - Aug. 14	30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No count size restrictions</li> </ul>

**Shrimping for Purposes other than Bait (Major Bays only)**

Season	Hours	Limits
Spring Open Season May 15 - July 15	30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 pounds/person/day (heads attached)</li> <li>• No count size restrictions</li> </ul>
Fall Open Season Aug. 15 - Oct. 31	30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 pounds/person/day (heads attached)</li> <li>• No count size restrictions</li> </ul>
Fall Open Season Nov. 1 - Nov. 30	30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 pounds/person/day (heads attached)</li> <li>• No count size restrictions</li> </ul>

## Shrimping in Outside Waters — Southern Zone

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

Location	Season	Hours	Limits
Beyond 5 nautical miles	Dec. 1-May 15**	Day and Night	• 100 pounds onboard/day (heads attached)
	July 16**-Nov. 30		
Inside 5 nautical miles	July 16**-Nov. 30	30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset	• 100 pounds onboard/day (heads attached)
	<b>CLOSED TO NIGHT SHRIMPING</b>	30 minutes after sunset to 30 minutes before sunrise	<b>CLOSED TO NIGHT SHRIMPING</b>
	<b>WINTER CLOSED SEASON</b> Dec. 1-May 15**	Day and Night	<b>CLOSED SEASON</b>
Inside 9* nautical miles	<b>SUMMER CLOSED SEASON</b> May 15**-July 15**	Day and Night	<b>CLOSED SEASON</b>

## Shrimping in Outside Waters — Northern Zone

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

Location	Season	Hours	Limits
Beyond 5 nautical miles	Dec. 1-May 15**	Day and Night	• 100 pounds onboard/day (heads attached)
	July 16**-Nov. 30		
Inside 5 nautical miles	Feb. 16-May 15**	30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset	• 100 pounds onboard/day (heads attached)
	July 16**-Nov. 30		
	<b>CLOSED TO NIGHT SHRIMPING</b>	30 minutes after sunset to 30 minutes before sunrise	<b>CLOSED TO NIGHT SHRIMPING</b>
Inside 9* nautical miles	<b>WINTER CLOSED SEASON</b> Dec. 1-Feb. 15	Day and Night	<b>CLOSED SEASON</b>
	<b>SUMMER CLOSED SEASON</b> May 15**-July 15**		

**\*SPECIAL NOTICE:** The federal government may close the Exclusive Economic Zone off Texas (9-200 nautical miles) at the same time Texas waters are closed. For further information call the National Marine Fisheries Service at (727) 824-5305.

**\*\*SPECIAL NOTICE:** These dates may be changed by the department providing 72 hours public notice on new closing dates and 24 hours public notice on new opening dates.

## Special County Restrictions

**Nueces:** It is unlawful for any person to take or attempt to take shrimp with a trawl in the Laguna Madre north of a line starting on the mainland at the most northeasterly point on the north side of the entrance to Whiteley Channel then proceeding in a straight line to the north end of Pita Island; then continuing on a line to the southernmost point on the westerly most spoil island bordering the north side of the New Humble Channel (commonly referred to as Hap’s Channel); then continuing on a line along the north edge of the New Humble Channel (commonly referred to as Hap’s Channel) to its junction with the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway; then continuing on a straight line to the Nueces/Kleberg County line marker on Padre Island.

## Crab and Ghost Shrimp Regulations

**NOTE:** It is unlawful to place, fish, or leave a crab trap or crab trap component in the coastal waters of the state from Feb. 19-29, 2016.

- Crabs may be taken for personal use (bait or food). Crabs taken with recreational license for personal use **may not be sold**.
- There are no public salt waters, seasons, or times closed to the taking and retaining of crabs and ghost shrimp, **EXCEPT** as provided in this guide.
- It is lawful to take, attempt to take, or possess crabs and ghost shrimp by means, in numbers, and of sizes **ONLY** as described below.
- A person taking or attempting to take crabs or ghost shrimp from salt water for non-commercial purposes is required to have a valid fishing license and a saltwater fishing endorsement.

### Bag, Possession and Length Limits

Species	Daily Bag	Possession	Minimum Length
Blue crab <sup>a</sup>	No limit	No limit	5 inches (Measured across the widest point of the body from tip of spine to tip of spine.) See pg. 41.
Stone crab <sup>b</sup> (right claw only)	No limit	No limit	2-1/2 inches claw (Measured from the tip of claw to first joint behind the immovable claw.) See pg. 41.
Ghost shrimp	20	20 per person	None

<sup>a</sup> Except that not more than 5% by number, of undersized blue crabs may be possessed for bait purposes only and must be placed in a separate container.

- May not possess egg-bearing (sponge) crabs.
- May not possess a female crab that has its abdominal apron removed.

<sup>b</sup> Only the right claw may be retained or possessed. The body of the stone crab must be immediately returned to the water from which it was taken.

## Legal Devices and Restrictions

**Crab Line:** A baited line with no hook attached.

- No restrictions.

**Umbrella Net** (sometimes called crab net): A non-metallic mesh net that is suspended horizontally in the water by multiple lines attached to a rigid frame.

- May be used to take crabs and **NONGAME** fish only.
- May not have within the frame an area that exceeds 16 square feet.

### Folding Panel Traps:

- Only crabs may be taken.
- Overall surface area (including panels) may not exceed 16 square feet.

### Crab Traps:

- Only six crab traps at a time may be fished for non-commercial purposes.
- May only remove crab traps from the water or remove crabs from crab traps during the period from 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset.
- **Tag Requirements:** Must be used with a valid GEAR TAG, valid for 10 days (see pg. 32) and attached within six inches of the buoy or pier to which the trap is tied.
- **Construction and Design Restrictions:**
  - May not exceed 18 cubic feet.
  - Must be equipped with at least two escape vents in each crab-retaining chamber and located on the outside trap walls.
  - Escape vents must be at least 2-3/8 inches in diameter.
  - Must be marked with a white floating buoy not less than 6 inches in height, 6 inches in length, and 6 inches in width, bearing a 2-inch wide center stripe of contrasting color, attached to the crab trap.
  - Buoys or floats may not be made of plastic bottle(s) of any color or size.
  - Must be equipped with a degradable panel. A trap is considered to have a degradable panel if one of the following methods is used in construction of the trap:
    - the trap lid tie-down strap is secured to the trap at one end by a simple loop of untreated jute twine (comparable to Lehigh brand #530), sisal twine (comparable to Lehigh brand #390) or untreated steel wire with a diameter of 20 gauge or smaller. The trap lid must be secured so that when the twine or wire degrades, the lid will no longer be securely closed; or
    - the trap contains at least one sidewall, not including the bottom panel, with a rectangular opening no smaller in either dimension than 3 inches by 6 inches. 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 twine (comparable to Lehigh brand #530), sisal twine (comparable to Lehigh brand #390) or untreated steel wire with a diameter of 20 gauge or smaller knotted only at each end and not tied or looped more than once around a single mesh bar. When the twine or wire degrades, the opening in the sidewall of the trap will no longer be obstructed; or
    - the obstruction may be loosely hinged at the bottom of the opening by no more than two untreated steel hog rings and secured at the top of the obstruction in no more than one place by a single length of untreated jute twine (comparable to Lehigh brand #530), sisal twine (comparable to Lehigh brand #390) or untreated steel wire with a diameter of 20 gauge or smaller. When the twine or wire degrades, the obstruction will hinge downward and the opening in the sidewall of the trap will no longer be obstructed.
- **Placement and Location Restrictions:**
  - May not place a crab trap or portion thereof closer than 100 feet from any other crab trap, EXCEPT when traps are secured to a pier or dock.
  - May not fish a crab trap in public fresh waters.

- May not fish a crab trap within 200 feet of a marked navigable channel in Aransas County; and in the water area of Aransas Bay within one-half mile of a line from Hail Point on the Lamar Peninsula, then direct to the eastern end of Goose Island, then along the southern shore of Goose Island, then along the eastern shoreline of the Live Oak Peninsula past the town of Fulton, past Nine Mile Point, past the town of Rockport to a point at the east end of Talley Island, including that part of Copano Bay within 1,000 feet of the causeway between Lamar Peninsula and Live Oak Peninsula.
- May not possess, use, or place more than three crab traps in waters north and west of Hwy. 146 where it crosses the Houston Ship Channel in Harris County.
- May not use or place more than three crab traps in public waters of the San Bernard River north of a line marked by the boat access channel at Bernard Acres.
- It is unlawful to place any type of trap within the area in Cedar Bayou between a department sign erected where Mesquite Bay flows into Cedar Bayou and the department sign erected near the point where the pass empties into the Gulf of Mexico.

**Other Devices:**

- Devices legally used for taking of fresh or saltwater fish or shrimp may be used to take crab if operated in places and at times authorized by a proclamation of the Parks and Wildlife Commission or the Parks and Wildlife Code.
- See applicable pages in this guide to determine authorized uses, places, and times for other legal devices.

**Sand Pumps:** A self-contained, hand-held, hand-operated suction device used to remove and capture Callianassid ghost shrimp.

- May only be manually operated.
- May not be used for commercial purposes.

**Oyster Regulations**

- Oysters may be taken for personal use (food). Oysters taken with recreational license for personal use **may not be sold**.
- A person taking or attempting to take oysters is required to have a valid fishing license and a saltwater endorsement.
- Persons fishing with tongs or a dredge must hold a sport oyster boat license.
- Oysters may be taken only from waters approved by the **Texas Department of State Health Services Seafood and Aquatic Life Group. For more information call (800) 685-0361.**
- Oysters may not be taken from marked private leases, except by permission of the lessee.
- **Seasons:** November 1 through April 30, sunrise to 3:30 p.m., coastwide.
- **Length and Possession Limits:**
  - Oysters must be 3 inches or larger as measured by the greatest length of the shell.
  - Oysters 3/4 inch to 3 inches and dead oyster shell greater than 3/4-inch (measured along any axis) must be culled and returned to the reef from which taken.
  - Oysters 3/4 inch to 3 inches and dead oyster shell greater than 3/4-inch (measured along any axis) may not make up more than 15% by number of oysters in possession.
  - No more than two sacks of legal oysters may be possessed per person. A sack is defined as 110 pounds of oysters including dead oyster shell and the sack.
- **Devices:**
  - Oysters may be taken by hand, with tongs, or by oyster dredge.
  - Oyster dredges may not be more than 14 inches in width.

**Other Aquatic Life (Fresh and Salt Waters)**

- Aquatic life not addressed in this guide (except threatened and endangered species) may be taken only by hand or with the devices defined as lawful for taking fish, crabs, oysters, or shrimp in places and at times as provided in this guide.

- There is no open season, bag or possession limit for **marine mammals** (including porpoises, dolphins and whales).
- In public fresh waters, a fishing license and freshwater fishing endorsement is required to take mussels, clams, crayfish, and other aquatic life for personal use. In salt water, a saltwater fishing endorsement is required with the fishing license.
- **A hunting license is required to hunt non-protected turtles and frogs** (see pgs. 25 and 72).
- No more than 25 pounds of whole mussels and clams, or 12 pounds of mussel and clam shells may be taken per day for personal use only.
- **Clams, Mussels and Other Molluscan Shellfish** taken from public **salt waters** may be taken only from waters approved by the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS). Maps identifying approved areas may be obtained from the TDSHS, Seafood and Aquatic Life Group (512) 834-6757. Additional information concerning area closures may be obtained 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling (800) 685-0361.
- **Consumption of Clams and Mussels** taken from public **fresh waters** is prohibited by the TDSHS.
- Mussels and clams may only be taken by hand.
- Freshwater mussels of the following species may be taken only when they will not pass through a ring with an inside diameter (I.D.) specified for that species.

Species	Ring I.D. in inches
Washboard	4.00
Threeridges and roundlakes	2.75
Mapleleafs and pimplebacks	2.75
Tampico pearlymussel	2.75
Bleufer	2.75
All Other Species of Freshwater Mussels	2.50

- More information on harvesting freshwater mussels and clams, including areas closed to harvest, can be obtained by calling TPWD in Austin at (512) 389-4444.
- It is unlawful to take more than 15 live univalve snails during a day which include no more than two each of the following snails: lightning whelk, horse conch, Florida fighting conch, pear whelk, banded tulip, or Florida rocksnail.
- It is unlawful to take or kill shell-bearing mollusks, hermit crabs, starfish, or sea urchins from Nov. 1 through Apr. 30 within the following boundary: the bay and pass sides of South Padre Island from the east end of the north jetty at Brazos Santiago Pass to the west end of West Marisol Drive in the town of South Padre Island, out 1,000 yards from the mean high-tide line, and bounded to the south by the centerline of the Brazos Santiago Pass.

## Fish Consumption Bans and Advisories

Fish and shellfish can be a source of high-quality protein in your diet. Fish and shellfish, however, can accumulate contaminants from the waters in which they live. The **Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS)** monitors fish in the state for the presence of environmental contaminants and alerts the public through bans and advisories when a threat to human health may occur from the consumption of contaminated fish.

In waters with consumption bans, possession and consumption of fish and/or shellfish is prohibited. Catch-and-release fishing from these areas is allowed. A consumption advisory is a recommendation to limit consumption to specified quantities, species, and sizes of fish. For additional information, a listing of all consumption bans and advisories, or a listing of areas tested where no bans or advisories were issued, call the **TDSHS at (800) 685-0361 (shellfish) or (512) 834-6757 (fish)** or visit: [www.dshs.state.tx.us/seafood](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/seafood).

## Boater Education

**Anyone born on or after September 1, 1993 MUST complete an approved boater education course before operating in public water a vessel of more than 15 horsepower, a windblown vessel of more than 14 feet in length, or a personal watercraft, unless there is another person on board who is 18 years of age or older and who is legally qualified to operate the vessel or personal watercraft.**

For course information, please call TPWD toll-free at **(800) 792-1112** (menu 6) or call **(512) 389-4999** or consult the TPWD Boater Education section at: [www.tpwd.texas.gov/boating/education](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/boating/education)

## Boating Regulations and Safe Boating Tips

Each year, over 90 percent of all sportsmen who die in the water were not wearing a life jacket. **WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET! The life you save may be your own.**

If you use a boat:

- **STATE LAW REQUIRES** a wearable-type life jacket (Types I, II, or III) for each person on board. Life jackets must be U.S. Coast Guard approved.
- Children under 13 years of age **must wear** a wearable personal flotation device on a vessel under 26 ft. in length while underway. It is recommended that non-swimmers always wear a life jacket on the water. In addition, a Type IV throwable-type life jacket is required on boats 16 feet in length and longer.
- **STATE LAW PROHIBITS** intoxicated persons (.08% BAC) from operating a boat.
- **CHECK THE WEATHER** and give a "float plan" to a friend before departing.
- See the **Texas Water Safety Act Digest** available on the TPWD website for a detailed summary of boating regulations.

[www.tpwd.texas.gov/boatsafe](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/boatsafe)

## HELLO INVASIVE SPECIES. GOODBYE TEXAS LAKES.

Texas' waterways are under attack by invasive species that push aside native plants and animals, throwing aquatic ecosystems out of whack. Invasive plants like giant salvinia can double in size in a week and block recreational access. And species like zebra mussels can hinder water recreation, damage your boat and affect our water supply.

**Don't be a carrier. Prevent the spread of invasive species by following 3 steps EVERY time you leave the water:**

- 1. CLEAN.** Inspect your boat, trailer and gear and remove all plant material, mud and foreign objects.
- 2. DRAIN.** Remove all water from the boat, including the motor, bilge, livewells and bait buckets.
- 3. DRY.** Open all compartments and allow the boat and trailer to dry for a week or more before entering another body of water. If you can't dry the boat and trailer for at least a week, wash them with high-pressure, hot soapy water instead.

Possession or transportation of aquatic invasive species without a permit is illegal in Texas. Boaters are also required to drain all water from their boat and gear before approaching or leaving a public water fresh water body. The penalty for the first offense is a fine of up to \$500. The penalty for a repeat offense is a fine of up to \$2,000, up to 180 days in jail, or both.

**Learn more at [www.texasinvasives.org](http://www.texasinvasives.org). For a list of harmful and potentially harmful aquatic species, visit [www.tpwd.texas.gov/invasives](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/invasives)**

**GOOD FISHING DEPENDS ON CLEAN WATER.** Algae blooms affect fishing spots, creating "dead zones" where no aquatic life can survive. The cause is usually pollution from fertilizers, septic systems, animal waste, and sewage treatment plants. Everyone can do something to help. Supporting water quality protection supports great fishing! Learn more at: [www.epa.gov/nutrientpollution/](http://www.epa.gov/nutrientpollution/)

Check water conditions, fish habitat partnerships and fish advisories by accessing EPA's water data at [www.epa.gov/mywaterway](http://www.epa.gov/mywaterway)



*Operation Game Thief*  
Texas' Wildlife Crime-Stoppers Program

**Reward Hotline: (800) 792-4263**  
**[www.ogttx.com](http://www.ogttx.com)**

**NEW! Violations can now be reported via text messaging.** Text to **847411**, then type message beginning with **TPWD** (not case-sensitive).

**You can make a difference by reporting** poaching, pollution and dumping, arson in state parks and intoxicated boaters! Up to \$1,000 may be paid for information leading to arrest and conviction of a person for a violation of our state's wildlife and fisheries laws, as well as for certain laws related to environmental crime, arson and intoxicated boaters.

Operation Game Thief is privately funded. Please consider supporting efforts to protect our precious natural resources and keep our waterways safe by sending your tax deductible donation to Operation Game Thief, or by becoming an Operation Game Thief member.

**Please visit [www.ogttx.com](http://www.ogttx.com) for membership information. Donations can be sent to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, Texas 78744, or you may also call (512) 389-4381 to make a donation by credit card.**



# Commercial Fishing Regulations for Gulf of Mexico Federal Waters

For Species Managed by the Gulf of Mexico  
Fishery Management Council

January 1, 2015





This publication was prepared for general informational purposes and has no legal force or effect. Fishing regulations are subject to change. Check for updates by visiting [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org).

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council  
2203 North Lois Avenue  
Suite 1100  
Tampa, Florida 33607

A publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Award No. NA05NMF4410011.

For more information call 888-833-1844.



## Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

2203 N. Lois Avenue  
Suite 1100  
Tampa, Florida 33607

### Table of Contents



About Us	2
Commercial Regulations	
Coastal Migratory Pelagics	3
Reef Fish	4
Coral and Shellfish	7
Commercial Permit Requirements	8
Additional Rules	11
Measurement Guidelines	13
Species Identification	14
Marine Sanctuaries & Closures	16
Gulf of Mexico Federal Waters	22
Important Phone Numbers	23
Regulation Changes and Updates	25

About the

## Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

The **Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council** is one of eight regional Fishery Management Councils established by the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976. The Council prepares fishery management plans, which are designed to manage fishery resources within the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

The Council consists of 17 voting members: the Southeast Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Southeast Regional Office (or his designee), the directors of the five 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. There are also four non-voting 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 five times a year at various locations around the Gulf coast. When reviewing potential rule changes, the Council draws upon the services of knowledgeable people from other state and federal agencies, universities, and the public to balance competing interests and achieve the greatest overall benefit to the nation.

Scoping workshops and public hearings are also held throughout the Gulf coast, and virtual meetings are available online. Testimony, oral or written, is considered by the Council before it takes final action on proposed rule changes. Public testimony is also heard during each Council meeting. Proposed rule changes are then submitted to National Marine Fisheries Service for further review and approval before implementation by the Secretary of Commerce.

## Commercial Fishing Regulations

### Coastal Migratory Pelagics

Species	Minimum Size Limit	Trip Limit	Quota/Closed Seasons
Cobia (ling)	33" fork length	Daily bag and possession limit of 2 per person	NOTE: Drift gill nets prohibited
Spanish Mackerel	12" fork length	None	Quota: 5.187 mp Gulf group Season 4/1 through 3/31
King Mackerel	24" fork length  Maximum of 5% by weight may be undersized	<b>Eastern Zone:</b> <b>FL east coast subzone</b> 11/1 to 3/31 - 50 fish per trip until quota is filled. If 75% of quota is not harvested by 2/1, trip limit increases to 75 fish. 4/1 to 10/31 South Atlantic regulations apply. <b>FL West Coast subzone:</b> <b>Gillnet</b> 6:00 a.m. day after the Martin Luther King Jr. Federal holiday until gear quota reached - 25,000 lbs/trip whole weight. <b>FL West Coast subzone:</b> <b>Hook &amp; Line</b> 7/1 until 75% gear quota - 1,250 lbs/trip then 500 lbs/trip whole weight until gear quota filled. <b>Gillnet</b> - 25,000 lbs/trip whole weight. <b>Western Zone:</b> 7/1 - 3,000 lbs/trip until quota filled	<b>Eastern Zone</b> <b>FL East Coast subzone</b> 1,102,896 lbs whole weight  <b>FL West Coast subzone</b> Northern Hook & Line 178,848 lbs whole weight  Southern Gillnets 551,448 lbs whole weight  Southern Hook & Line 551,448 lbs whole weight  <b>Western Zone:</b> 1,071,360 lbs whole weight
<p><b>NOTE:</b> The use of gillnets is permitted only in the southern Florida west coast subzone. The gillnet fishery for Gulf group king mackerel in or from the Gulf EEZ is closed each year from July 1 until 6:00 a.m. on the day after the Martin Luther King Jr. federal holiday. The gillnet fishery also is closed during all subsequent weekends and observed federal holidays, except for the first weekend following the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, which will remain open to the gillnet fishery provided that a notification of closure has not been filed. Weekend closures are effective from 6:00 a.m. Saturday to 6:00 a.m. Monday. Holiday closures are effective from 6:00 a.m. on the observed federal holiday to 6:00 a.m. the following day.</p>			



## Reef Fish

### Snappers

Species	Minimum Size Limit	Trip Limit	Quotas/Closed Seasons
Red Snapper	13" total length	Red snapper is managed under an IFQ program. Anyone commercially fishing for red snapper must possess IFQ allocation and follow established protocols.	5.61 mp gutted weight
Vermilion	10" total length	None	NOTE: The Gulf Council has set a control date of December 31, 2008, for the commercial reef fish fishery.
Lane	8" total length	None	
Gray (Mangrove)	12" total length	None	
Mutton	16" total length	None	
Yellowtail	12" total length	None	
Cubera	12" total length	None	
Blackfin	None	None	
Queen	None	None	
Silk	None	None	
Wenchman	None	None	



## Reef Fish

### Groupers

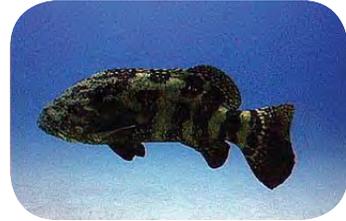
Species	Minimum Size Limit	Trip Limit	Quotas/Closed Seasons
<b>Shallow-Water Groupers</b> Gag Red Black Yellowfin Scamp* Yellowmouth	22" total length 18" total length 24" total length 20" total length 16" total length none	Grouper are managed under an IFQ program. Anyone commercially fishing for grouper or tilefish must possess IFQ allocation and follow established protocols	Gag: 0.567 mp gutted weight Red Grouper: 5.37 mp gutted weight Other shallow water grouper: 0.510 mp gutted weight *For the purposes of the IFQ, DWG allocation may be used to land and sell scamp once an IFQ account holder's other SWG allocation has been landed and sold or transferred.
<b>Deep-Water Groupers</b> Yellowedge Snowy	none none		DWG quota 1.127 mp gutted weight
Speckled Hind** Warsaw**	none none		**For purposes of the IFQ, these species are also included as SWG.

## Protected Groupers

**Goliath (Jewfish) harvest and possession is prohibited.**

## Other Species

It is illegal to harvest or possess **Red Drum** in federal waters.



## Other Reef Fish

Species	Minimum Size Limit	Trip Limit	Quota/Closed Seasons
Tilefish (Golden) Blue-line Tilefish Goldface Tilefish	None	Tilefish is managed under an IFQ program. Anyone commercially fishing for tilefish must possess IFQ allocation and follow established protocols.	Overall tilefish Quota: 582,000 lbs gutted weight
Hogfish	12" fork length	None	None
Gray Triggerfish	14" fork length	12 fish	60,900 lbs whole weight Closed June 1 through July 31
Greater Amberjack	36" fork length <i>Closed through December 31, 2015</i>	2,000 lbs	409,000 lbs round weight Closed March 1 through May 31
Lesser Amberjack Banded Rudderfish Almaco Jack	14" - 22" fork length 14" - 22" fork length None	None None None	None (NOTE: Combined ACL of 189,422 lbs round weight) None None



## Coral and Shellfish

### Corals and Coral Reefs

Species	Notes
Allowable Octocorals	Octocorals (soft corals) were removed from the Coral and Coral Reefs Fishery Management Plan and are now managed by Florida FWC in state and federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. See Florida Fish Wildlife & Conservation Commission regulations.
Live Rock	Harvest or possession of wild live rock is prohibited. Harvest and possession of aquacultured live rock requires a permit.
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 Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission for more information 850-488-4676.



### Shellfish

Species	Size Limit	Trip Limit	Quotas/Closed Seasons
Spiny Lobster	Carapace more than 3" or tail more than 5-1/2". Divers must measure in water.	none	Closed 4/1 through 8/5
Shrimp	None, but white shrimp taken in the EEZ and transported to Louisiana must comply with minimum size limit of that state.	none	Royal red shrimp is exempt. Royal red quota - 392,000 lbs tail weight. Royal red season opens 1/1 and closes when the quota is reached or projected to be reached.

## Commercial Permit Requirements

Applications for permits (except for tuna) may be obtained from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue S., St. Petersburg, Florida 33701, or by calling 877-376-4877. Tuna permits may be obtained by calling 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. May retain up to 50 spiny lobsters under the minimum size limit, and one per trap.
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. Fishermen with tailing permits must land spiny lobster all whole or all tailed.
Shrimp	Permit required for all vessels that intend to fish for shrimp in EEZ waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Permit moratorium in effect. Shrimp trawlers must have a bycatch reduction device (BRD) installed on each net rigged for fishing.



## Commercial Permit Requirements *continued*

Permit	Required for:
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 moratorium, but existing permits are transferable. There is no moratorium on 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. Permit moratorium, area restrictions, and restrictions on permit transfer are in effect.
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 goliath grouper and Nassau grouper (for which all harvest is prohibited). Issuance of new reef fish permits is under moratorium. Existing permits are transferable.



## Commercial Permit Requirements *continued*

Permit	Required for:
Aquacultured live rock permit	Possession or harvest of cultivated live rock. Florida state permits are also required to land live rock in Florida. Wild live rock possession/harvest prohibited.
Allowable octocoral permit	Octocorals (soft corals) were removed from the Coral and Coral Reefs Fishery Management Plan and are now managed by Florida FWC in state and federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. See Florida Fish Wildlife & Conservation Commission regulations.
Commercial tuna categories: General, Longline, Purse Seine, Harpoon, 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 Atlantic bluefin quota and gear restrictions apply to each category. For more information contact the Atlantic tunas information hotline at 888-872-8862 or the NMFS HMS Division at 978-281-9260.
Swordfish vessel permit	Commercial harvest and sale of swordfish under quota.
Shark vessel permit	Harvest and sale of sharks listed in the management unit of the Atlantic Sharks Fishery Management Plan under quota and in excess of bag limits.
Dealer permits	A dealer to receive Gulf reef fish harvested from federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. A Gulf IFQ dealer endorsement is also required. Call 1-866-425-7627 for more information.



## Additional Rules

Vessel Monitoring Systems are required onboard all vessels with federal commercial permits for Gulf reef fish, including charter vessels/headboats that also have a commercial reef fish permit.
Entangling nets may not be used for directed harvest of reef fish.
Reef Fish taken under recreational bag limit may not be sold.
Commercial vessels are prohibited from retaining reef fish caught under the recreational size and bag/possession limit when commercial quantities of Gulf reef fish are on board.
Reef fish as bait, except sand perch or dwarf sand perch, is prohibited.
Reef fish gear is limited to no more than 3 hooks in a special management zone off Alabama. Nonconforming gear is restricted to bag limits, or for reef fish without a bag limit, to 5% by weight of all fish onboard.
Vessels with shrimp trawls or entangling net gear onboard may not exceed the recreational reef fish bag limits.
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 roller trawls and power heads is prohibited.
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 bag limit may be consumed at sea.
Pelagic longlining for highly migratory pelagics is prohibited from the DeSoto Canyon area. Contact NMFS at 301-713-2347 for detailed coordinates.

**Additional Rules** *continued*

Reef fish bottom longline rules:
A state may regulate vessels that are registered in that state and that are fishing in federal waters for species for which there are no federal fishery management plans or applicable federal regulations.
The use of non-stainless steel circle hooks when using natural baits and possessing dehooking devices onboard are required by all vessels participating in the reef fish fishery.
Operators of vessels with Gulf of Mexico reef fish commercial or charter vessel/headboat permits must comply with guidelines for proper care and release of incidentally caught smalltooth sawfish and sea turtles and possess onboard specific gear to ensure proper release of such species.
A bottom longline endorsement is required to fish for reef fish east of Cape San Blas, Florida. The use of longlines and buoy gear for reef fish is prohibited inside of 50 fathoms west of Cape San Blas, Florida. East of Cape San Blas, the use of longlines and buoy gear for reef fish is prohibited inside of 20 fathoms year round, and 35 fathoms during June - August. Vessels fishing within this zone and possessing longlines or buoy gear may not exceed the recreational bag limits, and for reef fish without a bag limit, 5% by weight of all fish aboard.
The maximum number of hooks that may be possessed onboard each reef fish bottom longline vessel is 1,000 total, only 750 of which may be fished or rigged for fishing at any time.

## Measurement Guidelines

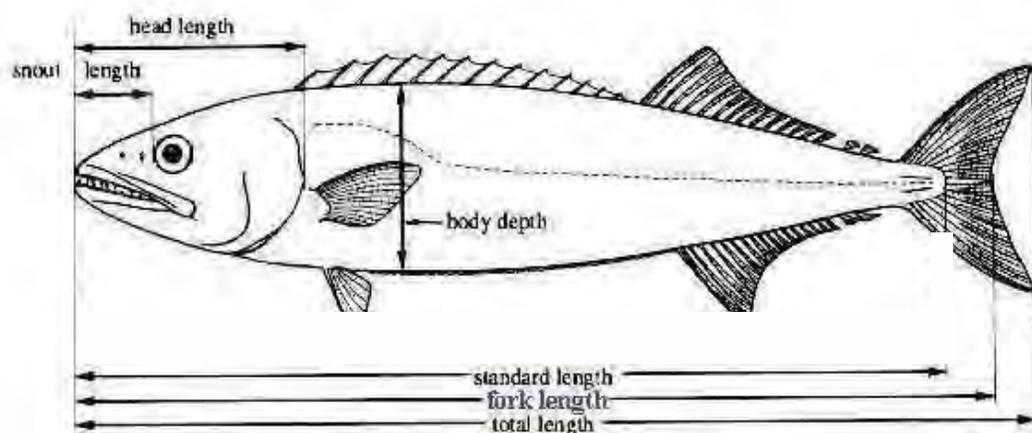
**Fork length:** the straight-line distance from the tip of the head (snout) to the rear center edge of the tail (caudal fin).

**Total length:** the straight-line distance from the top of the snout to the tip of the tail (caudal fin), excluding any caudal filament, while the fish is lying on its side. The mouth of the fish may be closed and/or the tail may be squeezed together to give the greatest overall measurement.

**Dressed weight:** fish has been gutted and the head and fins removed, but is otherwise in whole condition.

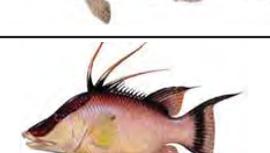
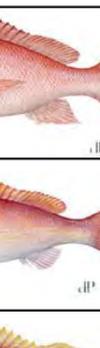
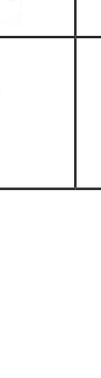
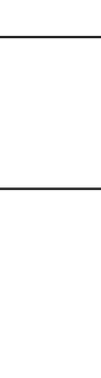
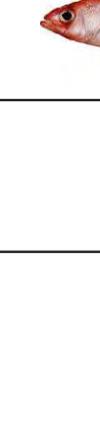
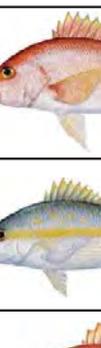
**Curved fork length:** the tip of the jaw to form of tail measured along the contour of the middle of the body.

**Carcass length:** the curved measure from posterior edge of gill opening to anterior portion of caudal keel.



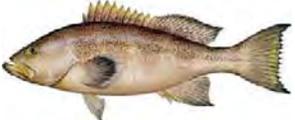
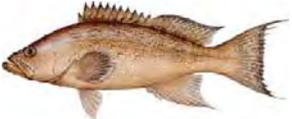
## Species Identification

Artwork © Diane Rome Peebles

Red Snapper		Silk Snapper	
Vermilion Snapper		Yellowtail Snapper	
Lane Snapper		Blackfin Snapper	
Gray-Mangrove Snapper		Mutton Snapper	
Cubera Snapper		Queen Snapper	
Hogfish			

Species Identification *continued*

Artwork © Diane Rome Peebles

<p>Black Grouper</p> 	<p>Greater Amberjack</p> 
<p>Gag Grouper</p> 	<p>Lesser Amberjack</p> 
<p>Red Grouper</p> 	<p>Banded Rudderfish</p> 
<p>Yellowmouth</p> 	<p>Cobia (ling)</p> 
<p>Yellowfin</p> 	<p>Spanish Mackerel</p> 
<p>Scamp</p> 	<p>King Mackerel</p> 

## Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures

### Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

Below is a summary of regulated activity within the FGBNMS. For the full text, contact the Sanctuary office at 409-621-5151 or visit [www.flowergarden.noaa.gov](http://www.flowergarden.noaa.gov).

#### Fishing and Related Activities

The following activities are generally prohibited:

- Injuring, catching, harvesting, collecting or feeding, or attempting to injure, catch, harvest, collect or feed, any fish within the sanctuary by use of any gear, device, equipment or means (e.g. spear guns, nets) except by use of conventional hook and line gear.
- Possessing (except while passing through the sanctuary without interruption) any fishing gear, device, equipment, or means except conventional hook and line gear.
- Possessing or using explosives or releasing electrical charges within the sanctuary.

*Conventional hook and line gear* means any fishing apparatus operated aboard a vessel and composed of a single line terminated by a combination of sinkers and hooks or lures and spooled upon a reel that may be hand or electrically operated, hand-held or mounted.

#### Anchoring and Mooring

The following activities are prohibited:

- Anchoring any vessel within the Sanctuary.
- Mooring a vessel over 100 feet in registered length on a Sanctuary mooring buoy.

#### Discharges

Discharging or depositing any material or other matter within the Sanctuary is prohibited, with the following exceptions:

- Fish, fish parts, chumming materials or bait used in or resulting from fishing with conventional hook and line gear in the sanctuary.
- Clean effluent from an operable Type I or Type II marine sanitation devise (MSD).
- Clean water generated by routine vessel operations (e.g. engine exhaust, cooling water, deck wash down, and gray water), excluding oily wastes from bilge pumping.

#### Injury to or Possession of Sanctuary Resources

The following activities are generally prohibited:

- Injuring or removing, or attempting to injure or remove, any coral or other bottom formation, coralline algae or other plant, marine invertebrate (e.g., *spiny lobster*, *queen conch*, *shell*, *sea urchin*) brine-seep biota or carbonate rock.
- Possessing within the Sanctuary (regardless of where collected), any coral or other bottom formation, coralline algae or other plant, or fish (except for fish caught by use of conventional hook and line gear).
- Drilling into, dredging, or otherwise altering the seabed of the sanctuary; or constructing, placing, or abandoning any structure, material, or other matter on the seabed of the Sanctuary.

Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures *continued*

**Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Boundary Coordinates (NAD)**

East Flower Garden Bank Boundary Coordinates:		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	27°59'14.4" N	93°38'58.2" W
B	27°59'14.4" N	93°34'03.5" W
C	27°52'36.5" N	93°34'03.5" W
D	27°52'36.5" N	93°38'58.2" W
A	27°59'14.4" N	93°38'58.2" W

West Flower Garden Bank Boundary Coordinates:		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	27°55'22.8" N	93°53'09.6" W
B	27°55'22.8" N	93°46'46.0" W
C	27°49'03.0" N	93°46'46.0" W
D	27°49'03.0" N	93°53'09.6" W
A	27°55'22.8" N	93°53'09.6" W

## Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures *continued*

### Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

The following locations are closed to all fishing. Anchoring of fishing vessels is also not allowed. The boundaries of the areas are as follows:

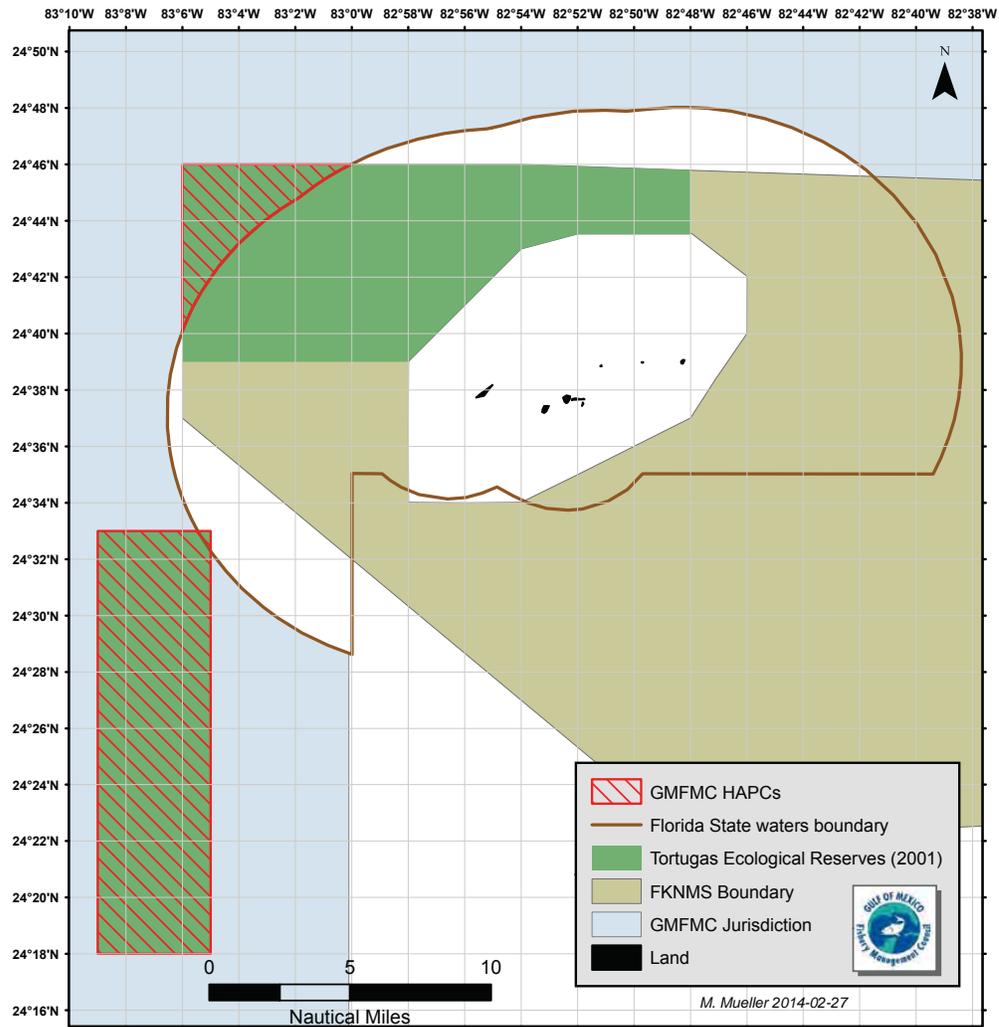
Tortugas North Ecological Reserve		
Point	Latitude	Longitude
A	24°46'00" N	83°06'00" W
B	24°46'00" N	82°54'00" W
C	24°45'80" N	82°48'00" W
D	24°43'53" N	82°48'00" W
E	24°43'53" N	82°52'00" W
F	24°43'00" N	82°54'00" W
G	24°39'00" N	82°58'00" W
H	24°39'00" N	83°06'00" W
A	24°46'00" N	83°06'00" W

Tortugas South Ecological Reserve		
Point	Latitude	Longitude
A	24°33'00" N	83°09'00" W
B	24°33'00" N	83°05'00" W
C	24°18'00" N	83°05'00" W
D	24°18'00" N	83°09'00" W
A	24°33'00" N	83°09'00" W

## Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures *continued*

### Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

Tortugas North and South Ecological Reserves



### Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures *continued*

The following locations off the west-central coast of Florida are closed to reef-fish fishing year round. Surface trolling for species other than reef fish is allowed May 1 through October 31.

Madison-Swanson Marine Reserve:		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	29°17' N	85°50' W
B	29°17' N	85°38' W
C	29°06' N	85°38' W
D	29°06' N	85°50' W
A	29°17' N	85°50' W

Steamboat Lumps Marine Reserve:		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	28°14' N	84°48' W
B	28°14' N	84°37' W
C	28°03' N	84°37' W
D	28°03' N	84°48' W
A	28°14' N	84°48' W

## Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures *continued*

**The Edges 40 fathom contour** is closed January 1 through April 30 to all fishing. The Edges is a 390 nautical square mile region northwest of Steamboat Lumps.

The Edges Coordinates:		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	28°51'00" N	85°16'00" W
B	28°51'00" N	85°04'00" W
C	28°14'00" N	84°42'00" W
D	28°14'00" N	84°54'00" W
A	28°51'00" N	85°16'00" W

Fishing with a bottom longline, bottom trawl, dredge, pot, or trap is prohibited year-round.

Middle Grounds		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	28°42.5' N	84°24.8' W
B	28°42.5' N	84°16.3' W
C	28°11.0' N	84°00.0' W
D	28°11.0' N	84°07.0' W
E	28°26.6' N	84°24.8' W
A	28°42.5' N	84°24.8' W

## Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures *continued*

Fishing with a bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear, pot, or trap and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels are prohibited year-round.

Pulley Ridge		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	24°58'18" N	83°38'33" W
B	24°58'18" N	83°37'00" W
C	24°41'11" N	83°37'00" W
D	24°40'00" N	83°41'22" W
E	24°43'55" N	83°47'15" W
A	24°58'18" N	83°38'33" W

McGrail Bank		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	27°59'06.0" N	92°37'19.2" W
B	27°59'06.0" N	92°32'17.4" W
C	27°55'55.5" N	92°32'17.4" W
D	27°55'55.5" N	92°37'19.2" W
A	27°59'06.0" N	92°37'19.2" W

Stetson Bank Boundary Coordinates:		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	28°10'38.3" N	94°18'36.5" W
B	28°10'38.3" N	94°17'06.3" W
C	28°09'18.6" N	94°17'06.3" W
D	28°09'18.6" N	94°18'36.5" W
A	28°10'38.3" N	94°18'36.5" W

## Gulf of Mexico Federal Waters

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council manages fisheries in the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico Exclusive Economic Zone. From Texas and Florida, federal waters begin nine nautical miles out, and from Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama, federal waters begin three nautical miles out. Federal waters extend to the 200-mile limit of the Gulf of Mexico.

### Title 50: Wildlife and Fisheries

#### Part 600 - Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions Subpart B - Regional Fishery Management Councils

##### § 600.105 Intercouncil boundaries.

(c) South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Councils. The Boundary coincides with the line of demarcation between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico, which begins at the intersection of the outer boundary of the EEZ, as specified in the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and 83°00'W long., proceeds northward along that meridian to 24° 35' N lat. (near the Dry Tortugas Islands), thence eastward along that parallel, through Rebecca Shoal and the Quicksand Shoal, to the Marquesas Keys, and then through the Florida Keys to the mainland at the eastern end of Florida Bay, the line so running that the narrow waters within the Dry Tortugas Islands, the Marquesas Keys and the Florida Keys, and between the Florida Keys and the mainland are within the Gulf of Mexico.

## State Authority in Federal Waters

A state may regulate vessels that are registered in that state and 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 of the state and the state rules are consistent with federal regulations.

NOTE: Federally permitted for-hire reef fish vessels must comply with the more restrictive of federal or state reef fish regulations when fishing for reef fish in state waters.

## Important Phone Numbers

NMFS Operations Branch	727-824-5305
NMFS Permits and Regulations Branch (see below for tuna permit applications)	877-376-4877
To apply for permits online visit <a href="http://www.nmfspermits.com">www.nmfspermits.com</a>	
NMFS nationwide federal fishing violations hotline	800-853-1964
NMFS 24-hour tuna information line (also for tuna permits)	888-872-8862
NMFS Highly Migratory Species Division	301-713-2347
NMFS Swordfish/Billfish Recreational Reporting	800-894-5528
Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary	409-621-5151
Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary	305-809-4700
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council	843-571-4366
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission	228-875-5912
U.S. Coast Guard, 7th District (Florida east of St. Marks)	305-415-6781
U.S. Coast Guard, 8th District (St. Marks, Florida to Texas)	504-671-2245
Regional NMFS Office for Law Enforcement	727-824-5344
NMFS Enforcement Field Offices:	
St. Petersburg, Florida	727-893-3616
Marathon, Florida	305-743-3110
Niceville, Florida	850-729-8628
Slidell, Louisiana	985-643-6232
Galveston, Texas	409-770-0812
Harlingen, Texas	956-423-3450

Important Phone Numbers *continued*

<b>State Agencies</b>	
Alabama Department of Conservation & Marine Resources	251-861-2882
Information or to report state fishing violations	251-986-7576
24-Hour voice mail to report state fishing violations	251-476-1256
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission Information	850-488-4676
To report state fishing violations	850-488-9924
Cellular phone	888-404-3922
	*FWC
Louisiana Department of Wildlife & 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 & Wildlife Department Information	800-792-1112
To report state fishing violations	800-792-game



### **Regulation Changes and Updates**

Supplemental “update sheets” will be published periodically to reflect changes in fishing regulations implemented since this pamphlet was published. For up-to-date regulations visit [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org) or download our free regulations app. Just visit the Android Market or iTunes and search for “Gulf Council”.

NOTE: The Official Electronic Code of Federal Regulations for 50 CFR 622 for Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic is available online. Please visit [www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html).

Photos courtesy of: Kathy Hoak, Florida SeaGrant, iStock, Louisiana Seafood, NOAA Photo Library.



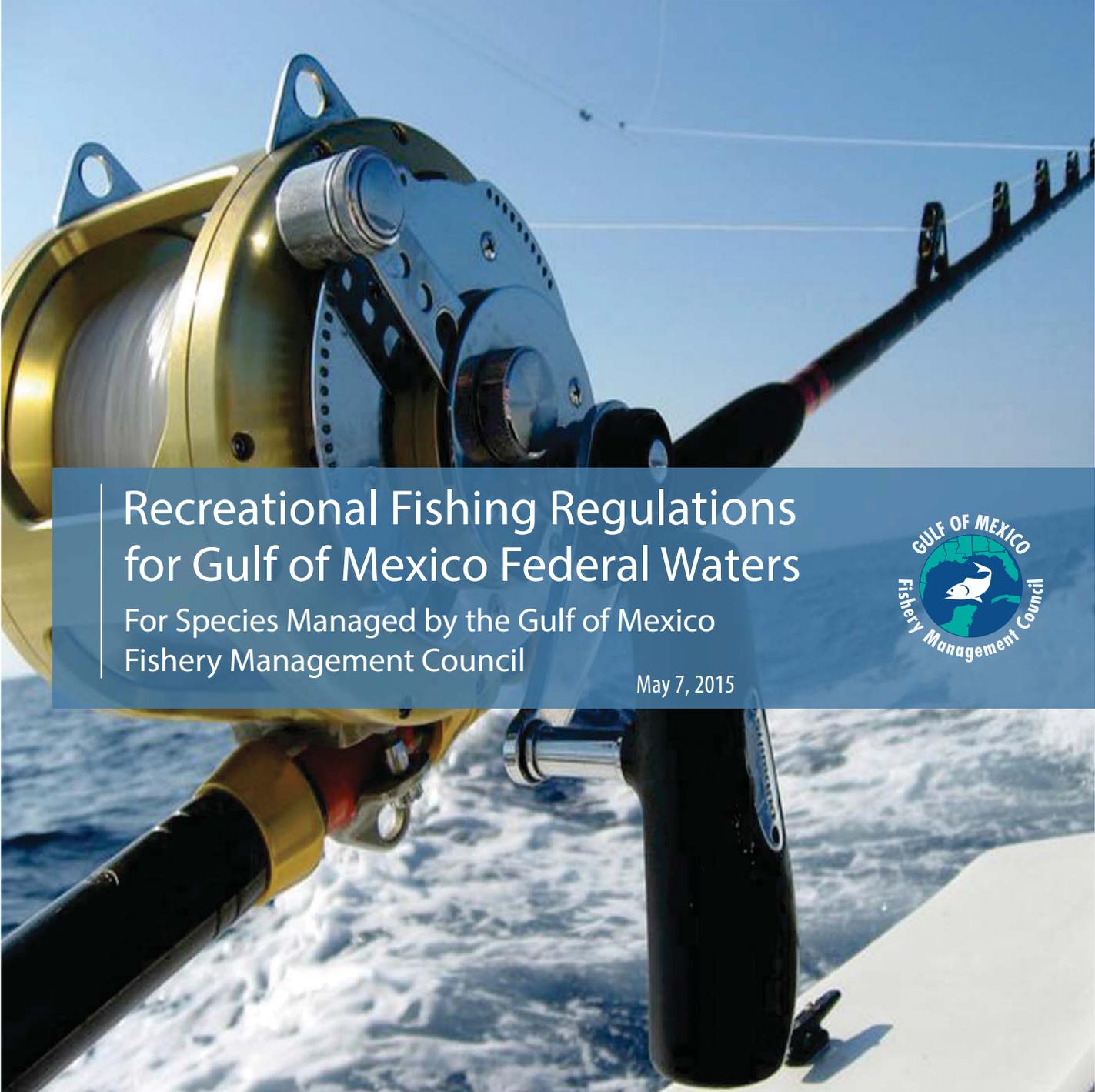








p | 813-348-1630 e | [gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org](mailto:gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org) w | [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org)



# Recreational Fishing Regulations for Gulf of Mexico Federal Waters

For Species Managed by the Gulf of Mexico  
Fishery Management Council

May 7, 2015





This publication was prepared for general informational purposes and has no legal force or effect. Fishing regulations are subject to change. Check for updates by visiting [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org).

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council  
2203 North Lois Avenue  
Suite 1100  
Tampa, Florida 33607

A publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Award No. NA05NMF4410011.

For more information call 888-833-1844.



## Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

2203 N. Lois Avenue  
Suite 1100  
Tampa, Florida 33607

### Table of Contents



About Us	2
Recreational Regulations	
Reef Fish	3
Coastal Migratory Pelagics	6
Shellfish, Coral, and Other Species	7
Recreational Permit Requirements	8
Additional Rules	9
Highly Migratory Species	10
Species Identification	12
Measurement Guidelines	14
Marine Sanctuaries & Closures	15
Gulf of Mexico Federal Waters	22
Important Phone Numbers	23
<b>Regulation Changes and Updates</b>	<b>25</b>

About the

## Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

The **Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council** is one of eight regional Fishery Management Councils established by the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976. The Council prepares fishery management plans, which are designed to manage fishery resources within the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

The Council consists of 17 voting members: the Southeast Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Southeast Regional Office (or his designee), the directors of the five 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. There are also four non-voting 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 five times a year at various locations around the Gulf coast. When reviewing potential rule changes, the Council draws upon the services of knowledgeable people from other state and federal agencies, universities, and the public to balance competing interests and achieve the greatest overall benefit to the nation.

Scoping workshops and public hearings are also held throughout the Gulf coast, and virtual meetings are available online. Testimony, oral or written, is considered by the Council before it takes final action on proposed rule changes. Public testimony is also heard during each Council meeting. Proposed rule changes are then submitted to National Marine Fisheries Service for further review and approval before implementation by the Secretary of Commerce.



## Recreational Fishing Regulations

### Reef Fish

#### Snappers

Species	Minimum Size Limit	Season	Daily Bag/Possession Limit
Red Snapper	16" total length	Opens June 1 Private Angler season closes 12:01 am local time June 11 Federal CFH season closes 12:01 am local time July 15	2 per person Captain & crew may not retain a bag limit
Vermilion	10" total length	Year round	10 per person within the 20-reef fish combined total
Lane	8" total length	Year round	20 per person within the 20-reef fish combined total
Gray (Mangrove)	12" total length	Year round	10 per person within the 10-snapper combined total  Includes all snappers except red, vermilion, and lane
Mutton	16" total length	Year round	
Yellowtail & Cubera	12" total length	Year round	
Queen	none	Year round	
Blackfin	none	Year round	
Silk	none	Year round	
Wenchman	none	Year round	

## Reef Fish

### Groupers

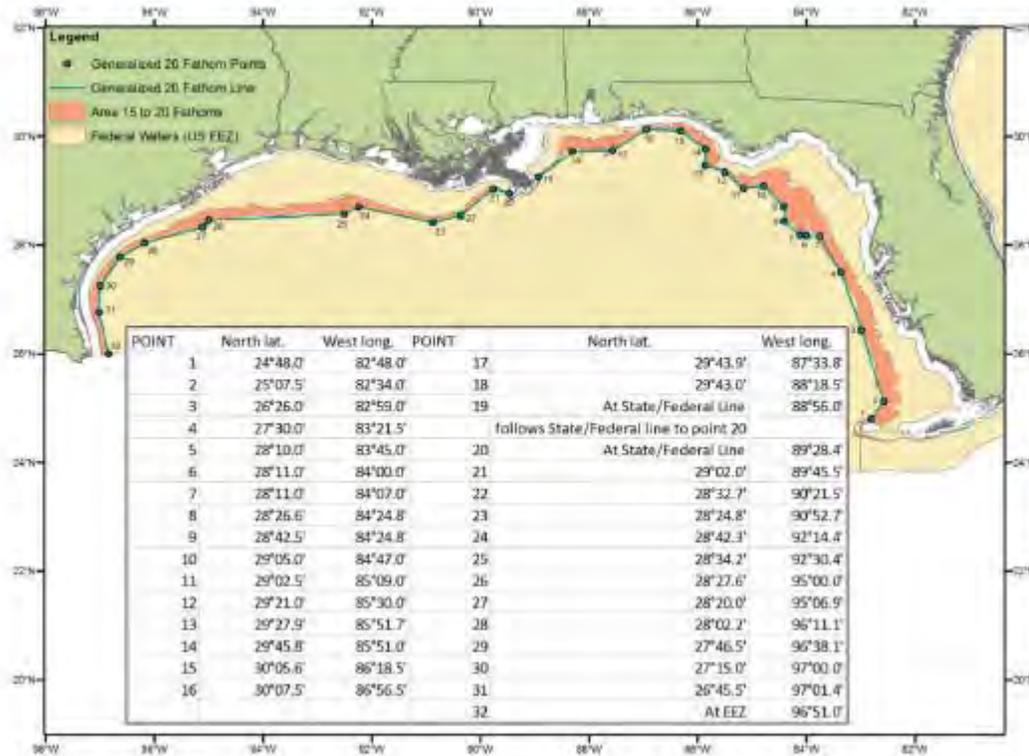
Species	Minimum Size Limit	Season	Daily Bag/Possession Limit
<b>Shallow-water Groupers</b>			
Black	22" total length	All Shallow-water grouper closed 2/1 - 3/31 when fishing beyond the 20-fathom break. <small>NOTE: When fishing in state waters off Monroe County South Atlantic regulations apply.</small>	4 per person combined 4-grouper total
Yellowfin	20" total length		
Scamp	16" total length		
Yellowmouth	none		
Red	20" total length		2 per person within the 4-fish combined grouper total
Gag	22" total length	July 1 - December 2 Subject to in-season closure	2 per person within the 4-fish combined grouper total
<b>Deep-water Groupers</b>			
Yellowedge	none	Year round	4 per person combined grouper total
Snowy	none	Year round	
Speckled Hind	none	Year round	1 per vessel, included in the 4-fish combined grouper total
Warsaw	none	Year round	

**Protected Groupers:** Goliath (Jewfish) harvest and possession is prohibited.

### Other Reef Fish

Species	Minimum Size Limit	Season	Daily Bag/Possession Limit
Hogfish	12" fork length	Year round	5 per person
Gray Triggerfish	14" fork length	Closed June 1 - July 31 <small>NOTE: In-season Closure effective Feb 7 - Dec 31.</small>	2 per person within the 20-reef fish combined total
Greater Amberjack	30" fork length <small>(34" size limit increase pending)</small>	Closed June 1 - July 31 Subject to in-season closure	1 per person Captain & crew may not retain a bag limit
Lesser Amberjack	14" - 22" fork length	Year round	5-fish combined total
Banded Rudderfish	14" - 22" fork length	Year round	

## Map of the 20-fathom break



## Species that are part of the 20-reef fish aggregate bag limit include:

Vermilion Snapper  
 Lane Snapper  
 Almaco Jack  
 Gray Triggerfish  
 Tilefish (Golden)  
 Goldface Tilefish  
 Blueline Tilefish

## NOTES:

For-hire captains and crew are prohibited from retaining bag limits of any grouper, greater amberjack, or red snapper while under charter.

Federally permitted for-hire reef fish vessels must comply with the more restrictive of federal or state reef fish regulations when fishing for reef fish in state waters.



### Coastal Migratory Pelagics

Species	Minimum Size Limit	Season	Daily Bag/Possession Limit
Cobia (ling)*	33" fork length	Year round	2 per person
King Mackerel	24" fork length	Year round	2 per person
Spanish Mackerel	12" fork length	Year round	15 per person

\*The 2-day bag limit allowance for qualified charter vessels and headboats on a trip in excess of 24 hours **does not** apply to cobia.

## Shellfish

Species	Minimum Size Limit	Season	Daily Bag/Possession Limit
Spiny Lobster*	More than 3" carapace. Divers must measure in water.	8/6 - 3/31 A special 2-day, non-trap recreational season opens the last consecutive Wednesday and Thursday in July	6 per person, no transfer at sea between boats. During the 2-day special season - 12 per person off Florida, except 6 per person for Monroe County, Florida Keys.

\*Removal of tail prohibited at sea. See commercial regulations for trap use. No spears, hooks, or piercing devices. No taking of egg-bearing spiny or slipper lobsters.



## Coral and Other Species

Species	Notes
Live Rock	Harvest and possession of live rock is prohibited, except for permitted aquaculture operations. Call 727-824-5763.
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 at 850-487-3122.
<b>Other Species</b>	
Red Drum	Illegal to harvest or possess in federal waters.

## Recreational Permit Requirements

Permit	Required for:
Charter vessel/headboat coastal pelagics permit	Charter vessel and headboats fishing for mackerels, cobia, little tunny, cero, dolphin, bluefish. NOTE: Issuance of new permits is under a moratorium effective 6/16/2003.
Charter vessel/headboat reef fish permit	Charter vessels and headboats fishing for snappers, groupers, amberjack, tilefish, hogfish, and gray triggerfish. NOTE: Issuance of new permits is under a moratorium effective 6/16/2003.
Highly migratory species (HMS) charter/headboat permit	All charter or headboats that fish for or possess highly migratory species.
HMS recreational angling permit	Owners of vessels used to fish recreationally for Atlantic HMS - Atlantic tunas (other than blackfin), billfish, sharks, and swordfish.

8



## Additional Rules

Two-Day Bag Limit	Persons on qualified charter vessels or headboats with two captains for trips in excess of 24 hours may possess a 2-day bag limit of reef fish, king mackerel, and Spanish mackerel. One-day bag limits apply to all other species and trips, regardless of length.
Head & Fins Attached	All fish, except for bait and oceanic migratory species, taken from federal waters must have heads and fins intact through landing. Up to 1.5 pounds of finfish per person is exempt from this rule for personal consumption, provided the vessel is equipped to cook such finfish.
For-Hire Captains and Crew	For-hire captains and crew are prohibited from retaining bag limits of any grouper, red snapper, or greater amberjack while under charter.
Federally Permitted For-Hire Reef Fish Vessels	Federally permitted for-hire reef fish vessels must comply with the more restrictive of federal or state reef fish regulations when fishing for reef fish in state waters.
Reef Fish as Bait	The use of federally managed reef fish as bait is prohibited.
Non-Stainless Steel Circle Hooks	Non-stainless steel circle hooks, along with dehooking devices, are required when angling for reef fish in federal waters.
Gear	Reef fish gear is limited to no more than 3 hooks in a special management zone off of Alabama. Nonconforming gear is restricted to bag limit. For reef fish without a bag limit, nonconforming gear is restricted to 5% by weight of all fish onboard.
Stressed Areas	Use of roller trawls and power heads is prohibited in designated stressed areas. 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.
Sale of Recreationally Caught Reef Fish	Reef fish taken under the recreational bag limit may not be sold.
Care and Release of Incidental Catch of Smalltooth Sawfish and Sea Turtles	Operators of vessels with Gulf of Mexico reef fish commercial or charter vessel/headboat permits must comply with guidelines for proper care and release of incidentally caught smalltooth sawfish and sea turtles and must possess onboard specific gear to ensure proper release of such species.

## Highly Migratory Species

All HMS species, except blackfin tuna, require an HMS Angling Category permit from NOAA Fisheries. Permits are available by calling 888-872-8862, or by visiting [www.nmfspermits.com](http://www.nmfspermits.com). No sale permitted for HMS species caught under an angling permit. Additional recreational reporting requirements apply for swordfish, billfish, and Atlantic bluefin tuna. For complete HMS regulations contact NOAA Fisheries HMS Management Division at 301-713-2347, or visit [www.nmfspermits.com](http://www.nmfspermits.com).

For updates on tuna quota monitoring and tuna retention limit adjustments, anglers may call the Atlantic Tunas Information Line at 888-872-8862 or visit [www.nmfspermits.com](http://www.nmfspermits.com). For more information on tunas, contact the HMS Management Division at 978-281-9260. Recreational swordfish and billfish landings should be reported to 800-984-5528.

Species	Minimum Size Limit	Season	Daily Bag/Possession Limit
<b>Tuna</b>			
Bluefin	27" curved fork length		Bag limits are subject to sub-quotas by size and permit categories, change seasonally, and are reduced to zero when subquotas are filled
Bigeye	27" curved fork length	Year round	None
Yellowfin	27" curved fork length	Year round	3 per person
Albacore	None	Year round	None
Skipjack	None	Year round	None
Blackfin	None	Year round	None
<b>Billfish</b> Minimum size lower jaw to fork			
Blue Marlin	99" lower jaw	Year round	None
White Marlin	66" fork length	Year round	None
Sailfish	63" fork length	Year round	None
Longbill Spearfish	HARVEST PROHIBITED		
Swordfish	Whole fish: 47" lower jaw to tail	Year round	1 per person; max 4 per vessel (6 per vessel for charter boats; 15 per vessel for headboats)

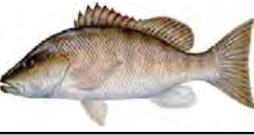
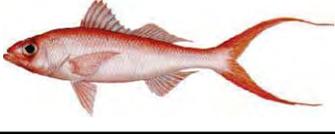
## Highly Migratory Species *continued*

Species	Minimum Size Limit	Season	Daily Bag/Possession Limit
<b>Sharks</b>			
All regulated sharks*	54" fork length	Year round	1 per vessel per trip (any authorized species)
*Exceptions: Hammerhead (smooth, great, & scalloped)	78" fork length	Year round	1 per vessel per trip (any authorized species)
Atlantic sharpnose	None	Year round	1 per person
Bonnethead	None	Year round	1 per person
<b>Prohibited Sharks-Recreational Harvest</b>			
Atlantic angel	Bignose	Longfin mako	Sevengill
Basking	Caribbean reef	Narrowtooth	Sixgill
Bigeye sand tiger	Caribbean sharpnose	Night	Smalltail
Bigeye sixgill	Dusky	Sandbar	Whale
Bigeye thresher	Galapagos	Sand tiger	White



## Species Identification

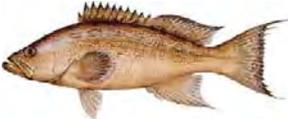
Artwork © Diane Rome Peebles

<p>Red Snapper</p> 	<p>Silk Snapper</p> 
<p>Vermilion Snapper</p> 	<p>Yellowtail Snapper</p> 
<p>Lane Snapper</p> 	<p>Blackfin Snapper</p> 
<p>Gray (Mangrove) Snapper</p> 	<p>Mutton Snapper</p> 
<p>Cubera Snapper</p> 	<p>Queen Snapper</p> 
<p>Hogfish</p> 	

12

Species Identification *continued*

Artwork © Diane Rome Peebles

<p>Black Grouper</p> 	<p>Greater Amberjack</p> 
<p>Gag Grouper</p> 	<p>Lesser Amberjack</p> 
<p>Red Grouper</p> 	<p>Banded Rudderfish</p> 
<p>Yellowmouth</p> 	<p>Cobia (ling)</p> 
<p>Yellowfin</p> 	<p>Spanish Mackerel</p> 
<p>Scamp</p> 	<p>King Mackerel</p> 

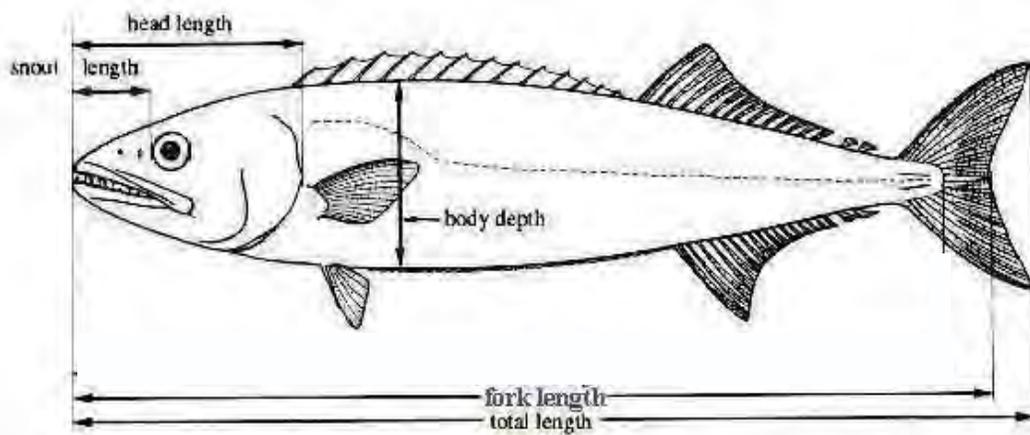
## Measurement Guidelines

**Fork length:** the straight-line distance from the tip of the head (snout) to the rear center edge of the tail (caudal fin).

**Total length:** the straight-line distance from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail (caudal fin), excluding any caudal filament, while the fish is lying on its side. The mouth of the fish may be closed and/or the tail may be squeezed together to give the greatest overall measurement.

**Curved fork length:** the tip of the jaw to form of tail measured along the contour of the middle of the body.

**Carcass length:** the curved measure from posterior edge of gill opening to anterior portion of caudal keel.



## Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures

### Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

Below is a summary of regulated activity within the FGBNMS. For the full text, contact the Sanctuary office at 409-621-5151 or visit [www.flowergarden.noaa.gov](http://www.flowergarden.noaa.gov).

#### Fishing and Related Activities

The following activities are generally prohibited:

- Injuring, catching, harvesting, collecting or feeding, or attempting to injure, catch, harvest, collect or feed, any fish within the sanctuary by use of any gear, device, equipment or means (e.g. spear guns, nets) except by use of conventional hook and line gear.
- Possessing (except while passing through the sanctuary without interruption) any fishing gear, device, equipment, or means except conventional hook and line gear.
- Possessing or using explosives or releasing electrical charges within the sanctuary.

**Conventional hook and line gear** means any fishing apparatus operated aboard a vessel and composed of a single line terminated by a combination of sinkers and hooks or lures and spooled upon a reel that may be hand or electrically operated, hand-held or mounted.

#### Anchoring and Mooring

The following activities are prohibited:

- Anchoring any vessel within the Sanctuary.
- Mooring a vessel over 100 feet in registered length on a Sanctuary mooring buoy.

#### Discharges

Discharging or depositing any material or other matter within the Sanctuary is prohibited, with the following exceptions:

- Fish, fish parts, chumming materials or bait used in or resulting from fishing with conventional hook and line gear in the sanctuary.
- Clean effluent from an operable Type I or Type II marine sanitation devise (MSD).
- Clean water generated by routine vessel operations (e.g. engine exhaust, cooling water, deck wash down, and gray water), excluding oily wastes from bilge pumping.

#### Injury to or Possession of Sanctuary Resources

The following activities are generally prohibited:

- Injuring or removing, or attempting to injure or remove, any coral or other bottom formation, coralline algae or other plant, marine invertebrate (e.g., *spiny lobster*, *queen conch*, *shell*, *sea urchin*) brine-seep biota or carbonate rock.
- Possessing within the Sanctuary (regardless of where collected), any coral or other bottom formation, coralline algae or other plant, or fish (except for fish caught by use of conventional hook and line gear).
- Drilling into, dredging, or otherwise altering the seabed of the sanctuary; or constructing, placing, or abandoning any structure, material, or other matter on the seabed of the Sanctuary.

Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures *continued*

**Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Boundary Coordinates (NAD)**

East Flower Garden Bank Boundary Coordinates:		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	27°59'14.4" N	93°38'58.2" W
B	27°59'14.4" N	93°34'03.5" W
C	27°52'36.5" N	93°34'03.5" W
D	27°52'36.5" N	93°38'58.2" W
A	27°59'14.4" N	93°38'58.2" W

West Flower Garden Bank Boundary Coordinates:		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	27°55'22.8" N	93°53'09.6" W
B	27°55'22.8" N	93°46'46.0" W
C	27°49'03.0" N	93°46'46.0" W
D	27°49'03.0" N	93°53'09.6" W
A	27°55'22.8" N	93°53'09.6" W

16

## Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures *continued*

### Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

The following locations are closed to all fishing. Anchoring of fishing vessels is also not allowed. The boundaries of the areas are as follows:

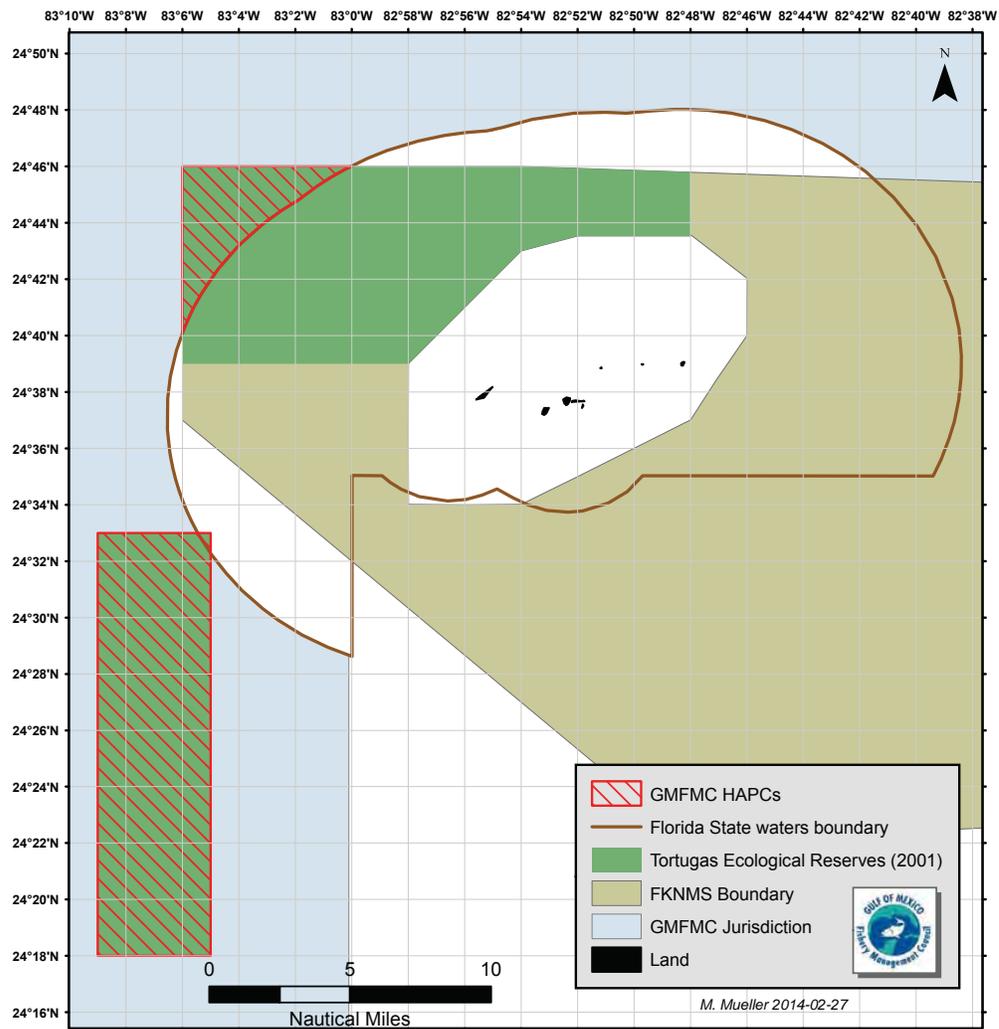
Tortugas North Ecological Reserve		
Point	Latitude	Longitude
A	24°46'00" N	83°06'00" W
B	24°46'00" N	82°54'00" W
C	24°45'80" N	82°48'00" W
D	24°43'53" N	82°48'00" W
E	24°43'53" N	82°52'00" W
F	24°43'00" N	82°54'00" W
G	24°39'00" N	82°58'00" W
H	24°39'00" N	83°06'00" W
A	24°46'00" N	83°06'00" W

Tortugas South Ecological Reserve		
Point	Latitude	Longitude
A	24°33'00" N	83°09'00" W
B	24°33'00" N	83°05'00" W
C	24°18'00" N	83°05'00" W
D	24°18'00" N	83°09'00" W
A	24°33'00" N	83°09'00" W

## Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures *continued*

### Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS)

Tortugas North and South Ecological Reserves



18

### Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures *continued*

The following locations off the west-central coast of Florida are closed to reef-fish fishing year round. Surface trolling for species other than reef fish is allowed May 1 through October 31.

Madison-Swanson Marine Reserve:		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	29°17' N	85°50' W
B	29°17' N	85°38' W
C	29°06' N	85°38' W
D	29°06' N	85°50' W
A	29°17' N	85°50' W

Steamboat Lumps Marine Reserve:		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	28°14' N	84°48' W
B	28°14' N	84°37' W
C	28°03' N	84°37' W
D	28°03' N	84°48' W
A	28°14' N	84°48' W

## Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures *continued*

**The Edges 40 fathom contour** is closed January 1 through April 30 to all fishing. The Edges is a 390 nautical square mile region northwest of Steamboat Lumps.

The Edges Coordinates:		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	28°51'00" N	85°16'00" W
B	28°51'00" N	85°04'00" W
C	28°14'00" N	84°42'00" W
D	28°14'00" N	84°54'00" W
A	28°51'00" N	85°16'00" W

20

Fishing with a bottom longline, bottom trawl, dredge, pot, or trap is prohibited year-round.

Middle Grounds		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	28°42.5' N	84°24.8' W
B	28°42.5' N	84°16.3' W
C	28°11.0' N	84°00.0' W
D	28°11.0' N	84°07.0' W
E	28°26.6' N	84°24.8' W
A	28°42.5' N	84°24.8' W

## Marine Sanctuaries and Area Closures *continued*

Fishing with a bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear, pot, or trap and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels are prohibited year-round.

Pulley Ridge		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	24°58'18" N	83°38'33" W
B	24°58'18" N	83°37'00" W
C	24°41'11" N	83°37'00" W
D	24°40'00" N	83°41'22" W
E	24°43'55" N	83°47'15" W
A	24°58'18" N	83°38'33" W

McGrail Bank		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	27°59'06.0" N	92°37'19.2" W
B	27°59'06.0" N	92°32'17.4" W
C	27°55'55.5" N	92°32'17.4" W
D	27°55'55.5" N	92°37'19.2" W
A	27°59'06.0" N	92°37'19.2" W

Stetson Bank Boundary Coordinates:		
Position	Latitude	Longitude
A	28°10'38.3" N	94°18'36.5" W
B	28°10'38.3" N	94°17'06.3" W
C	28°09'18.6" N	94°17'06.3" W
D	28°09'18.6" N	94°18'36.5" W
A	28°10'38.3" N	94°18'36.5" W

## Gulf of Mexico Federal Waters

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council manages fisheries in the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico Exclusive Economic Zone. From Texas and Florida, federal waters begin nine nautical miles out, and from Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama, federal waters begin three nautical miles out. Federal waters extend to the 200-mile limit of the Gulf of Mexico.

### Title 50: Wildlife and Fisheries

#### Part 600 - Magnuson-Stevens Act Provisions Subpart B - Regional Fishery Management Councils

##### § 600.105 Intercouncil boundaries.

(c) South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Councils. The Boundary coincides with the line of demarcation between the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico, which begins at the intersection of the outer boundary of the EEZ, as specified in the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and 83°00' W long., proceeds northward along that meridian to 24° 35' N lat., (near the Dry Tortugas Islands), thence eastward along that parallel, through Rebecca Shoal and the Quicksand Shoal, to the Marquesas Keys, and then through the Florida Keys to the mainland at the eastern end of Florida Bay, the line so running that the narrow waters within the Dry Tortugas Islands, the Marquesas Keys and the Florida Keys, and between the Florida Keys and the mainland are within the Gulf of Mexico.

## State Authority in Federal Waters

A state may regulate vessels that are registered in that state and 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 of the state and the state rules are consistent with federal regulations.

NOTE: Federally permitted for-hire reef fish vessels must comply with the more restrictive of federal or state reef fish regulations when fishing for reef fish in state waters.

## Important Phone Numbers

NMFS Operations Branch	727-824-5305
NMFS Permits and Regulations Branch (see below for tuna permit applications)	877-376-4877
To apply for permits online visit <a href="http://www.nmfspermits.com">www.nmfspermits.com</a>	
NMFS nationwide federal fishing violations hotline	800-853-1964
NMFS 24-hour tuna information line (also for tuna permits)	888-872-8862
NMFS Highly Migratory Species Division	301-713-2347
NMFS Swordfish/Billfish Recreational Reporting	800-894-5528
Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary	409-621-5151
Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary	305-809-4700
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council	843-571-4366
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission	228-875-5912
U.S. Coast Guard, 7th District (Florida east of St. Marks)	305-415-6781
U.S. Coast Guard, 8th District (St. Marks, Florida to Texas)	504-671-2245
Regional NMFS Office for Law Enforcement	727-824-5344
NMFS Enforcement Field Offices:	
St. Petersburg, Florida	727-824-5344
Marathon, Florida	305-743-3110
Niceville, Florida	850-729-8628
Slidell, Louisiana	985-643-6232
Galveston, Texas	409-770-0812
Harlingen, Texas	956-423-3450

Important Phone Numbers *continued*

<b>State Agencies</b>	
Alabama Department of Conservation & Marine Resources	251-861-2882
Information or to report state fishing violations	251-986-7576
24-Hour voice mail to report state fishing violations	251-476-1256
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission Information	850-488-4676
To report state fishing violations	850-488-9924
Cellular phone	888-404-3922
	*FWC
Louisiana Department of Wildlife & 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 & Wildlife Department Information	800-792-1112
To report state fishing violations	800-792-game

### **Regulation Changes and Updates**

Supplemental “update sheets” will be published periodically to reflect changes in fishing regulations implemented since this pamphlet was published. For up-to-date regulations visit [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org) or download our free regulations app. Just visit the Android Market or iTunes and search for “Gulf Council”.

NOTE: The Official Electronic Code of Federal Regulations for 50 CFR 622 for Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic is available online. Please visit [www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html).

Photos courtesy of: Jeff Berman, Mark Braxton, Ben Leininger, Mark Miller, Emily Muehlstein, Florida Sea Grant, NOAA Photo Library, iStock Photo











p | 813-348-1630 e | [gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org](mailto:gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org) w | [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org)



**Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission  
2404 Government Street  
Ocean Springs, Mississippi, 39564**