

# MEMORANDUM



**To:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners

**From:** Dr. Thomas Eason, Director, Division of Habitat and Species Conservation

**Date:** April 13, 2016

**Subject:** Marine Turtle Permit Rule, 68E-1, Draft Rule

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**Purpose:**

Staff requests approval to publish draft rule amendments to Florida Administrative Code (FAC) Rule 68E-1, Marine Turtle Permits.

**Summary:**

FWC is proposing to amend Chapter 68E-1 (FAC), Marine Turtle Permits, to improve, simplify, and clarify the permitting process and to address specific issues raised by staff and stakeholders. FWC issues authorizations to conduct conservation, research, or educational activities involving marine turtles, hatchlings, their nests, or parts under the Marine Turtle Protection Act, 379.2431 (1) (d), Florida Statutes.

During 2015, FWC issued over 200 Marine Turtle Permits to individual permit holders, who listed several thousand authorized personnel combined on their permits – all working for the conservation of Florida’s marine turtles. This work is conducted under the Marine Turtle Permit Rule, which specifies the application procedures, issuance criteria, expiration and duration for these authorizations. We propose to add language to clarify permit processing and the application and review process for research projects. This amendment includes language that will allow individuals, firms and corporations to obtain marine turtle permits to hold marine turtles in captivity for education and rehabilitation and to conduct educational and conservation work such as nesting beach surveys and responding to strandings. Under the existing rule, permits are only issued to individuals. The amendments would also allow for longer permit duration – up to two years, depending on the activity being authorized. Some portions of the rule with outdated information would be repealed under this request.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Approve the request to publish draft rule amendments for sections 68E-1.002, 68E-1.004, and 68E-1.0041 and to repeal 68E-1.0061, as this rule is outdated and duplicative of other rule sections.

**Staff Contact and/or Presenter:**

Carol Knox, Section Leader, Imperiled Species Management (Presenter)  
Dr. Robbin Trindell, Biological Administrator III, Imperiled Species Management