

MEMORANDUM



To: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners
From: Jessica McCawley, Director, Marine Fisheries Management
Date: June 20, 2018
Subject: Draft Rule – Trap Fisheries Management

Purpose:

Provide a review of management needs and recent public feedback related to the stone crab, blue crab, and spiny lobster trap fisheries and obtain approval for proposed draft rule amendments that would modify the Commission's stone crab (68B-13, Florida Administrative Code [FAC]), blue crab (68B-45, FAC), and spiny lobster (68B-24, FAC) regulations in order to improve the management of these trap fisheries.

Summary:

As part of a long-term effort to review and improve the management of Florida's saltwater trap fisheries, staff has worked with stakeholders to identify management needs related to the stone crab, blue crab, and spiny lobster trap fisheries. Additionally, at the December 2017 Commission meeting, the Commission directed staff to research a request from the commercial fishery to extend the spiny lobster trap soak period and to return with a proposal in June 2018.

Staff is in the process of conducting a series of public workshops to gather feedback on potential management actions that could allow for a better understanding of recreational trap effort in the stone crab and blue crab fisheries, clarify regulations related to deploying traps at night, improve estimates of commercial stone crab trap effort, and gather feedback on the potential to modify the spiny lobster trap soak period to begin on the Friday after the two-day sport season each year.

As a part of the larger effort of improving management of these fisheries, any proposed draft rules will be provided prior to the June Commission meeting.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff will update this document to reflect the staff recommendations prior to the June Commission meeting.

Staff Contact and/or Presenter:

Melissa Recks, Division of Marine Fisheries Management