

## Live Food Shrimp



Final Public Hearing  
September 27, 2018



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Version 1

This presentation provides a summary of a proposed final rule to amend the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) shrimp rules [68B-31, Florida Administrative Code (FAC)] to clarify regulations specific to the live food shrimp fishery.

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Unless otherwise noted, images throughout the presentation are by FWC.

## Florida's Commercial Shrimp Fishery

### One of the state's oldest and most valuable fisheries

- Value near \$46 million annually
- 3 primary species: pink, white, and brown shrimp
- 2 components historically
  - Bait: sold alive
  - Food: not sold alive
- Shrimp fishery evolving
  - Expanding market for live food shrimp
- Clarification of statewide shrimp rules needed to provide for live transit of food shrimp
- **Today:** Final public hearing to clarify statewide shrimp rules to provide for live transit of food shrimp



*Reminder: First step in a long-term project*

Photo courtesy of Florida Sea Grant

Florida's shrimp fishery is one of the oldest and most valuable commercial fisheries in the state with an average estimated dockside value of \$45.9 million annually over the last 10 years. The fishery mainly targets three species of shrimp: pink, white, and brown. Pink shrimp dominates the landings, followed by white shrimp, and then brown shrimp. Pink and brown shrimp are harvested throughout most of the state, whereas white shrimp is primarily harvested in northeast Florida.

The commercial shrimp fishery harvests shrimp for sale as both bait and food. Current regulations reflect the fact that bait shrimp have historically been sold alive, while food shrimp were historically not sold alive and therefore had to be iced to maintain food safety.

FWC's shrimp regulations are a combination of rules with different origins, including local laws dating back to the 1920s. As a result, not all of the current shrimp regulations reflect the practices of the current fishery and market. One such situation is the expanding market for live food shrimp. In order to accommodate this expanding market, clarification of statewide shrimp rules is needed to provide for live transit of food shrimp.

Today, staff will present a final rule proposal to clarify that it is legal to land food shrimp alive and to provide for the live transit of food shrimp statewide.

This proposed final rule is part of a much bigger, long-term effort to modernize FWC's shrimp management regulations.

## Proposed Final Rule

- Clarify that live food shrimp are not subject to icing requirements
- Establish transit requirements for live food shrimp
  - Vessel and vehicle live well requirements
  - ~~Wholesale dealer packaging requirements~~
- All other commercial food shrimp regulations would apply to live and dead food shrimp
  - License and sale requirements
  - Allowable gear
  - Seasons/allowable harvest days
  - Open/closed areas



The proposed final rule would modify 68B-31.009, FAC, to clarify that food shrimp do not have to be iced during transport if they are maintained alive. The proposed final rule would also establish transit requirements, including live well requirements for vessels and vehicles. As an update to the proposed draft rule discussed at the June Commission meeting, the final rule would not include previously proposed extraneous rule language related to dealer storage requirements since state and federal food handling requirements already apply.

All other commercial food shrimp regulations, including but not limited to license and sale requirements, allowable gear, seasons/allowable harvest days, and open/closed areas, would apply to both live and dead food shrimp.

## Long-term Shrimp Management Project

### Staff is continuing to work to modernize and streamline shrimp regulations

- Evaluating seasons
- Reassessing allowable harvest days
- Revisiting spatial closures
- Addressing conflicts with other fisheries
- Cleanup of outdated regulations

### Next step: Review NE regional shrimp regulations

- Allowable harvest days
- Permit transferability



In order to address the changes in this fishery over time, staff has embarked on a long-term management project to modernize and streamline the agency's shrimp regulations. As part of this project, staff will consider a variety of statewide and regional updates to the regulations in addition to what is proposed today. One part of the fishery that staff will be evaluating is when shrimpers are allowed to harvest. This includes both open and closed seasons, as well as days on which commercial harvest is currently not allowed during open season, such as weekends or holidays.

In the past, area closures were implemented to conserve small shrimp and other juvenile marine fishery species that occur in nursery habitats or to spatially separate conflicting fisheries. Staff will be reassessing the locations of current area closures to determine whether they are still serving the intended purpose. Staff will also be working to address emerging conflicts between different fisheries, such as between shrimp and trap fisheries. Finally, staff will be working to cleanup other outdated shrimp rules and to reorganize shrimp regulations to make them more streamlined and understandable.

The next step in this long-term project is to review the northeast regional shrimp regulations. Allowable harvest days and the transferability of permits specific to the region are among the topics being reviewed at this time.

## Staff Recommendation

### Approve the proposed final rule that will eliminate barriers to shrimp fishery participation in the expanding live seafood market

- Clarify that icing requirements do not apply to food shrimp maintained alive prior to sale
-  Establish transit requirements specific to live food shrimp for vessels and vehicles

*If approved, make the rule effective as soon as possible; advertise change to proposed rule language via a Notice of Change*



*Continue working with fishery on long term management project*

Staff recommends eliminating barriers to participation in the expanding live seafood market by approving the proposed final rule to allow the transit of live food shrimp. Specifically, staff recommends excluding live food shrimp from current icing requirements and establishing transit requirements specific to this fishery. Staff also recommends updating the previously advertised draft rule language to remove extraneous language related to dealer storage requirements since state and federal food handling requirements will apply.

If approved, staff recommends making this rule effective as soon as possible. Staff would advertise the change to the originally proposed rule language via a Notice of Change.

Moving forward, staff will continue working with the shrimp fishery on upcoming topics as part of the long-term shrimp fishery management project.

Staff has evaluated the proposed final rule under the standards of 68-1.004, FAC, and found it to be in compliance.

**The following slides are considered backup material  
and are not anticipated to be part of the actual  
presentation**



## Changing Seafood Industry

- Increasing demand for live seafood products
  - Example: spiny lobster
- Shrimp fishery evolving
  - Expanding market for live food shrimp
  - No threat to sustainability
- Clarification of statewide shrimp rules needed to provide for live transit of food shrimp



Many types of marine species are harvested and sold alive to meet an increasing demand for these live seafood products. Similar to the demand for live spiny lobster that emerged in recent years, a demand for food shrimp to be sold alive is expanding. Shrimp life history make them highly resilient to changes in fishery practices and this new market is not anticipated to threaten the biological sustainability of shrimp or the shrimp fishery.

Based on the increased demand for live product, Florida's shrimp industry has requested regulatory changes that clarify that it is legal to land food shrimp alive and to provide for the transit of live food shrimp statewide.

## Shrimp Biology

- Generally short lived (18-24 months)
- All 3 species mature during their first year, but at different sizes
- Adult shrimp spawn offshore and larvae and juveniles use nearshore waters as nursery grounds
  - Pink shrimp spawn year-round but predominately in the spring, summer, and fall
  - White shrimp spawn April - October
  - Brown shrimp spawn year-round with a peak in February and March

