

# MEMORANDUM



**To:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners  
**From:** Jessica McCawley, Director, Marine Fisheries Management  
**Date:** July 17, 2019  
**Subject:** Northeast Florida Shrimp – Draft Rule

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**Purpose:**

Obtain approval for draft rule amendments to 68B-31, Florida Administrative Code (FAC), that will modify regulations for the Northeast region commercial food shrimp fishery.

**Summary:**

Florida's shrimp fishery is one of the oldest and most valuable commercial fisheries in the state. The Commission's current shrimp regulations are a historical conglomeration of rules with different origins. These regulations are complex, partly because of the unique regionality of the shrimp fishery. This rulemaking is the second phase in a long-term project to streamline and modernize these regulations and addresses industry requests for updates to shrimp rules effecting commercial food shrimp harvest from inland waters of Northeast Florida.

The commercial shrimp fishery harvests shrimp for both bait and food. Florida Statutes require a Food Shrimp Production license for commercial harvest of food shrimp from inland waters of Nassau, Duval, St. Johns, Putnam, Flagler, or Clay Counties in addition to other required licenses and endorsements. When the Food Shrimp Production license was created by the Florida Legislature in 1976, there were approximately 800 participants in the fishery. The original intent of the Legislature was to phase the fishery out entirely. In 1988, the legislature authorized transfer of the license to immediate family members, allowing for the continued operation of the fishery in the area. There are 41 remaining licenses available for use.

Commercial food shrimping in inland waters of the Northeast region is allowed during daylight hours on Tuesday through Friday, except for legal state holidays. Based on the reduced participation in this fishery, staff believes that allowing a limited number of additional harvest days in this fishery is sustainable. Allowing harvest on Mondays not only allows additional access but also provides flexibility for the harvesters if conditions are not favorable to fish other days of the week. Additionally, when the Statute that prohibits this fishery from operating on legal state holidays was implemented, the Friday after Thanksgiving was not a state holiday. When the Friday after Thanksgiving became a state holiday in the 1990s, the fishery lost a day of allowable harvest.

Staff will present a series of proposed draft rule amendments to make the Food Shrimp Production license fully transferable (including outside the license-holders family) and allow shrimping on Mondays that are not legal state holidays and the Friday after Thanksgiving. If approved and directed, staff will return for a final public hearing at the October 2019 Commission meeting.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Approval of the proposed draft rules.

**Staff Contact and/or Presenter:**

Melissa Recks, Division of Marine Fisheries Management