



**St. Johns County Boating Restricted  
Areas**  
Draft Rule Amendment - 68D-24.155



**Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**  
Division of Law Enforcement

This is a presentation about the Commission's Rule 68D-24.155, St. Johns County Boating Restricted Areas. This rule delineates the boating restricted areas on the Florida Intracoastal Waterway in St. Johns County. The need for this rule revision process originated from an informal request from St. Johns County officials to analyze the need for additional protection around the Vilano Beach Bridge due to the addition of a public floating dock adjacent to the bridge.

## Proposed Rule Amendments

- Extend the zone at the Vilano Beach Bridge to ensure safety of those using a recently constructed public dock.
- Decrease the zone at the Devil's Elbow Boat Ramp.
- Change the restrictions at all five bridge zones from "Idle Speed No Wake" to "Slow Speed Minimum Wake."
- Update rule maps.



This proposal includes minor revisions to the "footprint" of two state boating safety zones in St Johns County and changing the speed restriction to Slow Speed Minimum Wake throughout the rule.

Rule text and all maps will be updated.





The Devil's Elbow Boat Ramp zone is regulated at Slow Speed Minimum Wake and is only proposed to change slightly in configuration. The reason for this change is to reduce regulation in an area that is less than suitable for boating traffic. Most of the boat traffic comes to and from the boat ramp on the east side of the waterway using the main channel. Shoaling on the west side of the zone limits boats from using that area. This proposed change would reduce the footprint of the zone to impose the least restriction needed to provide adequate public safety.

## Slow Speed Minimum Wake Zones

- Proposal increases the allowed speed in all five state boating restricted areas at bridges in St. Johns County to “Slow Speed Minimum Wake.”
  - Palm Valley, Vilano Beach, Bridge of Lions, State Road 12, Crescent Beach
- This change has received widespread support in other areas.



This proposed change would reduce the restriction for five state boating restricted areas in the Intracoastal Waterway within St. Johns County. It has been determined that requiring boats to operate at Slow Speed Minimum Wake, instead of the more restrictive Idle Speed No Wake, would provide adequate public safety at the five bridge crossings along the Intracoastal Waterway. Similar efforts to change to Slow Speed Minimum Wake in other counties has been widely accepted among the boating public and enforcement officers.

“Slow Speed Minimum Wake” is described in 68D-23.103, FAC, to require a vessel to operate fully off plane, completely settled in the water and making little or no wake.

“Idle Speed No Wake” is more restrictive and is described as a speed no greater than that which will maintain headway and steerageway.

Other than the Vilano Beach Bridge and Devil’s Elbow Boat Ramp boating restricted areas mentioned previously, the boundaries of the remaining state-adopted boating restricted areas would remain unchanged.

## Staff Recommendation

- Approve filing of Notice of Proposed Rule reflecting the proposed changes.
- Unless a public hearing is requested, approve filing the Final Rule for adoption.



Staff recommends the Commission approve publishing the Notice of Proposed Rule, as provided in the background materials, in the Florida Administrative Register. Unless a public hearing is requested within the time period provided in law, staff requests approval to file the Final Rule for adoption with the Department of State.