



Photo by Jim Higgins



Spiny Lobster Trap Reduction Schedule

Final Public Hearing

Report Date: December 19, 2008

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

At the December 2008 Commission meeting, staff presented a draft rule that would end the moratorium on the reduction of lobster trap certificates and amend the lobster trap certificate reduction schedule. Upon transfer the number of certificates received by the purchaser would be reduced by 10 percent. Reductions would only occur upon the sale or transfer of lobster trap certificates outside the immediate family of the certificate holder. The Commission directed staff to develop this draft rule for final public hearing at the February Commission meeting.

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Lobster Trap Reduction History

- 1992: Lobster Trap Certificate Program implemented
- 1993-95, 1998: 10% Reduction of certificates from each owner
- 2001: Management goal of 400,000 traps set
- 2001-04: Reduction slowed to 4% “Passive/Active” reduction
- 2004: Reduction suspended during evaluation of fishery
- 2008: Industry Working Group convenes
- Sep 2008: Recommends 10% passive reduction of certificates
- Dec 2008: Draft Rule approved by Commission



The above slide briefly summarizes the lobster trap certificate reduction process that was established as part of the Lobster Trap Certificate Program, which has been used to manage the lobster trap fishery in Florida:

§ 1992: The Lobster Trap Certificate Program was established

§ 1993-1995,1998: Each certificate holder had the number of trap certificates they held reduced by 10% annually

§ 2001: A target number of 400,000 trap certificates was set as the goal of the program. The reduction rate was slowed to 4% per year, and the process was replaced by a “Passive/Active” reduction mechanism. The “passive” reduction occurred by reducing by 25% per transaction those certificates that are sold or transferred outside the immediate family of the certificate holder. If in any year such passive reductions did not amount to 4% of the total available certificates, additional certificates were reduced at an equal rate from each certificate holder at a rate sufficient to achieve the 4% overall target.

§ 2004: The reduction was suspended in 2004 while the agency conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the spiny lobster fishery management strategy.

§ 2008: Members of the lobster industry independently convened a group to discuss issues in the lobster fishery and in September 2008 provided recommendations to the FWC, including a recommendation for a passive trap reduction of 10% on trap certificates transferred outside the immediate family. The Commission approved this draft rule at its December 2008 meeting.

Proposed Rule

- 68B-24.009: Trap Reduction Schedule.
- Will end the moratorium on the lobster trap certificate reduction on July 1, 2009
- Will establish a new reduction mechanism
 - Upon sale or transfer of lobster trap certificates outside the immediate family of the certificate holder, the number of certificates received by the purchaser will be reduced by 10 percent.



This slide summarizes proposed rule amendments to the Commission's Spiny Lobster Rule, 68B-24, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.).

Rule 68B-24.009 F.A.C., (Trap Reduction Schedule) would be amended to end the moratorium on the reduction of lobster trap certificates and establish a new reduction mechanism. This mechanism will, upon sale or transfer of lobster trap certificates outside the immediate family of the certificate holder, reduce the number of certificates received by the purchaser by 10 percent.

Staff Recommendation

- Staff recommends approving this rule amendment as advertised with an effective date of July 1, 2009



Staff recommends that the Commission approve these rule amendments as advertised with an effective date of July 1, 2009. Staff has evaluated the rules under the standards of 68B-1.004, F.A.C. and found them to be in compliance.