

Florida Commercial Freshwater Fisheries

2011-2012 Rules and Regulations Summary

Regulations effective July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012



Pound nets for nongame fish

The use of pound nets is limited to sites registered prior to 1983. See FWC rules for details.

Hoop nets for nongame fish

Maximum number – 100 per licensee

Specifications: Maximum diameter – 5 feet. Mesh size – Not less than 2 inches stretched throughout, nor more than 2½ inches stretched rearward of the attachment of the second funnel.

Depth – At least 3 feet of clearance between the highest point of the hoop net and the water surface.

Funnels – A cross or other restrictive device shall be attached to the inside of the first funnel opening in order to exclude manatees. This device shall be constructed to prevent cylindrical objects 7 inches or more in diameter from entering the front funnel opening.

Second funnel opening shall be designed to discourage or prevent the entrance of game fish by restricting said opening with twine or webbing.

Locations: Allowed in Trout River east of Interstate 95; Broward River, Dunn Creek and in that portion of the St. Johns River from the Seaboard Coastline Bridge in Duval County upstream to State Road 46 (Mims Bridge), including Crescent Lake, Dunns Creek and lakes Beresford, Woodruff, Dexter, Monroe and Harney, **except** Lake Jessup.

Hoop nets are prohibited within 100 feet of the mouths of the following St. Johns tributaries: Getout Creek, Blue Springs Run, Wekiva River, Deep Creek, Alexander Springs Creek, Spring Garden Creek, Shell Creek and DeLeon Springs Creek. Hoop nets are prohibited within 25 yards of vegetation in Crescent Lake except from June 1 through Aug. 31. Hoop nets are prohibited in the main channel of the St. Johns River from a point immediately south of Lake Monroe to State Road 46 (except in Lake Harney) from Jan. 1 to March 31.

Minnow lift nets for nongame fish

Maximum number – 10 per licensee

Specifications: Maximum dimensions – 12 feet square. Maximum mesh – 1 inch stretched.

Markings – Poles shall be marked with reflective material at least 6 inches in width, visible 360 degrees.

Permanent tag bearing the name and address of the owner shall be attached to the pull pole of the lift net.

Area specific regulations: No minnow lift nets shall be fished in the St. Johns River Water Management Areas of Lake County formerly known as Long Farm, S.N. Knight Lisbon Farm (both parcels north and south of the Yale-Griffin canal), S.N. Knight Leesburg Farm, Lowrie Brown Farm, Eustis Muck Farm and Walker Ranch.

Minnow seine for nongame fish (except catfish) – *Specifications:* Nets for use in public waters: maximum length 40 feet; no pocket permitted; maximum mesh, 1 inch stretched.

Eel traps and pots – Persons licensed in accordance with Section 372.65(1), F.S., may take eels only under permit from the Commission. Permits shall be subject to such terms, conditions and restrictions as prescribed therein and shall be issued, denied, renewed or revoked as provided in Rule 68A-5.004, F.A.C. Eel harvest permits shall be issued to applicants who have submitted a completed eel harvest permit application.

Specifications: Eel traps or pots – shall be of one inch by ½ inch wire mesh.

In waters other than those specified for wire traps or slat baskets, such eel traps and pots, in addition to having a 1 inch by ½ inch wire mesh, shall be of the following types and specifications:

Square “Carolina”-type pots
Maximum dimensions – 24 inches by 24 inches by 18 inches. Maximum diameter of any and all funnel openings – 2 inches.

Cylindrical “shotgun”-type pots
Maximum dimensions – 4 feet by 18 inches. Maximum diameter of any funnel openings – 2 inches.

Miscellaneous rules

Fishing gear such as hoop nets, wire traps, slat baskets, trotlines, bush hooks and setlines must be clearly and legibly marked with the fisherman’s name and address. This enables better enforcement and removal of abandoned gear or improperly positioned gear, such

as gear that is in too shallow water, which would create a navigation hazard.

A limited number of permits may be issued by the executive director to authorize operation of haul seines in Lake Okeechobee and in the Southwest Region. Contact the Commission for information on permits, application procedures, and gear specifications and use.

Blue crab traps and pots may be fished in fresh water. Trap and pot specifications and use shall be as specified in FWC rules.

Commercial harvest or sale of freshwater mussels is prohibited.

Commercial harvest and sale of wild freshwater turtles is prohibited after July 20, 2009 until further notice, as prescribed in FWC Rule 68A-25.002. Rules 68A-23.012, and 68A-27 deals with listed species of turtles.



Commercial fishing license fees

Resident:

RC – Resident Commercial Fishing (fish or frogs) \$25
RFD – Resident Freshwater Fish Dealer \$40

Nonresident:

NCF – Nonresident Commercial Fishing \$100 (fish or frogs)
NRF – Nonresident Retail Fish Dealer \$100
NW – Nonresident Wholesale Fish Dealer \$500
NWB – Nonresident Wholesale Fish Buyer \$50

Commercial fishing licenses are issued only by the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). For complete rules see the Florida Administrative Code: MyFWC.com/RulesAndRegs/codebook_index.htm.



Introduction

Any person who takes freshwater fish or frogs by any lawful method prescribed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) for purpose of sale is required to possess a Commercial Fishing License (resident or nonresident). Holders of this license may sell to anyone but may not buy fish for the purpose of sale. A valid Resident Commercial Fishing License also allows recreational fishing.

The Resident Freshwater Fish Dealer License permits a resident to import, export or sell freshwater fish or frogs, including live bait. An import permit also is required in addition to this license to import certain live freshwater fish.

The holder of a Nonresident Retail Fish Dealer License may buy freshwater fish from people properly licensed to sell freshwater fish and may sell freshwater fish, including live bait, directly to a consumer.

The holder of a Nonresident Wholesale Fish Dealer License may buy freshwater fish for resale from people properly licensed to sell freshwater fish and may sell fish within the state.

The Nonresident Wholesale Fish Buyer License permits a nonresident, who does not sell freshwater fish or frogs in Florida, to buy freshwater fish or frogs from resident freshwater fish dealers for resale outside the state.

A Commercial Fishing License is required even for use of trotlines of 25 hooks or less when fish are taken for purpose of sale.

Senior citizens are not exempt from purchase of commercial fishing licenses.

No Freshwater Commercial Fishing License or Fish Dealer License is required to take or sell live bait, other than freshwater fish or frogs.

It is unlawful for licensed freshwater fish dealers or buyers to purchase freshwater fish or frogs from any unlicensed person. All boats engaged in commercial fishing shall have at least one commercial licensee on board.

Lawful methods for using trotlines and bush hooks or set lines

A trotline limited to 25 hooks may be used for taking

nongame fish for personal use. Persons operating more than 25 bush hooks or set lines or a trotline using more than 25 hooks are considered to be fishing commercially and must have a commercial license. All game fish taken by trotlines, bush hooks or set lines shall be immediately returned to the water, and it is unlawful to possess any game fish while operating trotlines, bush hooks or set lines.

Trotlines, bush hooks or set lines are permitted statewide except in that portion of the Ochlockonee River between State Road 20 and the Lake Talquin Power Dam; that portion of the Apalachicola River between U.S. Highway 90 and the Jim Woodruff Dam; Bear Gully Lake in Seminole County; the Oklawaha River upstream from the Eureka Bridge; Lake Jackson in Walton County; Silver Lake on the Withlacoochee River; Lakes Jessamine and Holden in Orange County; Triplett lakes in Seminole County; Lake Helen in Volusia County; in Martin County east of the Sunshine State Parkway; in that portion of the St. Johns River and its tributaries south of State Road 46 and north of U.S. Highway 192, including lakes Poinsett, Winder and Washington.

Trotlines are permitted in the portion of the St. Johns River lying between U.S. Highway 17-92 and State Road 46 provided that from 9 a.m. on Saturday until sunset on Sunday all trotlines shall be sunk to the bottom or to a minimum depth of 14 feet during daylight hours. From Jan. 1 until March 31 trotlines shall be prohibited from 9 a.m. until sunset in the waters of the main channel of the St. Johns River from a point immediately south of Lake Monroe to State Road 46, excluding Lake Harney. Trotlines are prohibited from 9 a.m. until sunset in the Oklawaha River below the Rodman Dam.

In lakes Beauclaire, Carlton, Dora, Eustis, Griffin, Harris and Yale, no trotline shall be allowed from 9 a.m. Friday until one hour before sunset Sunday. Trotlines also shall be prohibited from 9 a.m. until one hour before sunset Monday through Thursday from May 1 through Oct. 31. No trotline shall be secured to or fished within 50 yards of a private pier or dock.

In East Lake Tohopekaliga, trotlines are permitted only from sunset Sunday until midnight Friday of each

week, and only during the period from sunset each day until 9 a.m. the following morning.

Trotlines are prohibited in Little Bay Lake in Orange County except under permit.

Trotlines are prohibited in Lake Talquin during daylight hours.

Trotlines are prohibited from 9 a.m. until sunset in the waters of the following lakes:

Lake County – Cherry, Cook, Crescent, Hiawatha, Johns, Louisa, Minnehaha, Minneola, Palatlahaha, Susan, Wilson and Winona.

Orange County – Butler, Chase, Conway, Down, Fish, Isleworth, Johns, Mable, Maitland, Misell, Osceola, Picket, Sheen, Starke, Tibet Butler and Virginia.

Polk County – All lakes except Arbuckle, Crooked, Hancock, Rosalie, Tiger and Walk-in-Water.

Commercial fishing devices – provisions for certain waters

Persons licensed under s. 372.65, F.S. may use certain commercial fishing devices only in the manner and in the areas specified in this section, except as specified in FWC Rule 68A-23.002(10). Any game fish taken by these devices shall be returned to the water immediately.

Wire traps and slat baskets for nongame fish

Specifications for wire traps: Maximum length – 7 feet. Maximum width – 32 inches. Mesh – Minimum 1 inch. Type – Two funnels in one end. Depth – At least 3 feet of clearance between the highest point on the trap and the water surface.

Specifications for slat baskets: Maximum length – 6 feet. Maximum diameter – 32 inches. Construction of slats with openings of at least 1 and 1/2 inch in the head or upstream end. Depth – At least 3 feet of clearance between the highest point on the basket and the water surface. Funnel opening – Maximum diameter of smallest funnel opening 2 inches, except under pressure.

Locations and number of traps and baskets: Eighty wire traps and slat baskets per licensee in Trout River east of Interstate 95, Broward River, Dunn Creek and in that portion of the St. Johns River from the Seaboard Coastline Bridge in Duval County upstream to State

Road 46 (Mims Bridge) including Doctors Lake, Crescent Lake, Dunns Creek and lakes Beresford, Woodruff, Dexter, Monroe and Harney, **except** Lake Jessup.

Wire traps and slat baskets are prohibited within 100 feet of the mouths of the St. Johns tributaries: Getout Creek, Blue Springs Run, Wekiva River, Deep Creek, Alexander Springs Creek, Spring Garden Creek, Shell Creek and DeLeon Springs Creek. Wire traps and slat baskets are prohibited in the main channel of the St. Johns River from a point immediately south of Lake Monroe to State Road 46 (except Lake Harney) from Jan. 1 to March 31. Wire traps and slat baskets are prohibited within 25 yards of vegetation in Crescent Lake except from June 1 through Aug. 31.

Eighty wire traps and slat baskets per licensee in the part of the main channel of the St. Marys River downstream from the railroad bridge paralleling U.S. Highway 17.

Regulations pertaining to wire traps fished in Lake Okeechobee are contained in FWC Rule 68A-23.012.

Forty wire traps and slat baskets in the aggregate per licensee in lakes Apopka, West Tohopekaliga, Cypress, Hatchineha and Kissimmee.

Twenty slat baskets per licensee in the Santa Fe, Suwannee (and its tributary, the Withlacoochee) and Apalachicola rivers (except in the section between U.S. Highway 90 and Jim Woodruff Dam); and the Apalachicola River tributaries (except that portion of the Chipola River upstream from Dead Lakes Dam); and in Lake Seminole in Jackson County. No wire traps permitted.

Forty wire traps per licensee in Lake Istokpoga and Red Beach Lake in Highlands County and in lakes Arbuckle, Crago, Banana, Buffum, Davenport, Henry, Gibson, Marion, Reedy, Surveyors, Vann, Effie, Hancock, Hunter, Parker, Rosalie and Tiger in Polk County.

Additionally, wire traps and slat baskets may be fished in other specific areas as designated by rule of the Commission.

Traps or baskets not being fished shall be removed from the water.