



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

NOAA Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office Permits Branch
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Shrimp Vessel Moratorium Permits Required Beginning March 26, 2007: A Reminder

All shrimp vessel owners are reminded a commercial shrimp vessel moratorium permit needs to be issued and aboard vessels fishing for or possessing shrimp in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico beginning on March 26, 2007.

In October 2006, a 10-year moratorium on the issuance of new federal shrimp vessel permits for the shrimp fishery of the Gulf of Mexico was established. **All currently active open access federal shrimp vessel permits will no longer be valid as of March 26, 2007.** As of that date, only vessels eligible for a federal shrimp vessel moratorium permit will be allowed to fish for or possess shrimp in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

To be eligible for a commercial shrimp vessel permit under the moratorium, vessels must have been issued a valid commercial shrimp vessel permit prior to and including December 6, 2003. Additionally, an owner who sold his qualified vessel, had his qualified vessel repossessed, or otherwise lost use of his qualified vessel (i.e., damage, sinking, unaffordable repairs), but who obtained a valid commercial shrimp vessel permit for the same vessel or another vessel equipped for offshore shrimp fishing, of at least 5 net tons, and was documented by the Coast Guard, prior to September 26, 2006, is eligible for a shrimp vessel permit under the moratorium.

NOAA Fisheries Service permit records are the sole basis for determining eligibility based on permit history. A person who believes he/she meets the permit eligibility criteria based on ownership of a vessel under a different name, as may have occurred when ownership has changed from individual to corporate or vice versa, must document his/her continuity of ownership.

Over the past few months, the Permits Branch of NOAA Fisheries Service's Southeast Regional Office has attempted to provide information to all active shrimp vessel owners letting them know of the new moratorium

permit requirements, application procedures, and the time frame of the moratorium.

Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of the vessel owner to ensure an application is obtained and submitted to NOAA Fisheries Service within the specified time frame. Owners of vessels who desire a commercial shrimp vessel permit for Gulf shrimp must submit an application to the Southeast Regional Office Permits Branch, postmarked or hand delivered not later than **October 26, 2007**. After that date, no applications for additional commercial vessel permits for Gulf shrimp will be accepted under the moratorium. Failure to apply in a timely manner will preclude permit issuance even when the applicant otherwise meets the permit eligibility criteria. Owners who have not received application materials should contact:

**NOAA Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office
Permits Branch
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701
Phone: 727-824-5326; FAX 727-551-5747**

A fee will be charged for each application for a permit or a written request for replacement of a permit. The applicable fee is specified on the appropriate form.

Applications for a moratorium vessel permit are available via NOAA Fisheries Service's Southeast Regional web site at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>. The application may be filled out online, printed and mailed to the Permits Branch at the address above, along with all other pertinent information and payments.

Incomplete applications. If an application that is postmarked or hand-delivered in a timely manner is incomplete, the Permits Branch will notify the applicant of the deficiency. If the applicant fails to correct the deficiency within 30 days of the date of such notification, the application is considered abandoned.

Notification of ineligibility. If the applicant does not meet the applicable eligibility requirements, the applicant will be notified in writing of such determination and the reasons for it.

Permit transferability. Commercial vessel moratorium permits for Gulf shrimp are fully transferable, with or without the sale of the vessel. The owner who is transferring the permit must sign on the reverse of the permit, and the signature must be notarized. The person who is to receive the transferred permit must ensure the transfer information on the reverse of the permit is

complete and return the permit and a completed application for transfer to the Permits Branch.

Renewal. Renewal of a commercial vessel moratorium permit for Gulf shrimp is contingent upon compliance with the recordkeeping and reporting requirements. A commercial vessel moratorium permit for Gulf shrimp that is not renewed will be terminated and will not be reissued during the moratorium. A permit is considered to be not renewed when an application for renewal, as required, is not received within 1 year of the expiration date of the permit.

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