



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505

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FB16-055

NOAA Seeks Comments on an Application for an Exempted Fishing Permit for a Study to Test Trap Designs for Capturing Lionfish

NOAA Fisheries is accepting comments on an application for an exempted fishing permit from the Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association (FKCFA). The FKCFA proposes to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of several trap designs for capturing lionfish in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. This study, to be conducted in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, would also derive biological and life history information to improve lionfish control. In addition, the project would utilize an outreach and education program to inform the public about the status of lionfish as an invasive species, efforts to control the spread of the population, and lionfish as a consumer food source.

Dates:

Comments must be received no later than 5 p.m., Eastern Time, on September 15, 2016.

Addresses:

You may submit comments on the application, identified by RIN 0648-XE046, by any of the following methods:

E-mail: 0648.XE046.Association.Lionfish.EFP@noaa.gov. Include in the subject line of the e-mail the following document identifier: "Lionfish EFP".

Mail: Susan Gerhart, NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.

Program Concept

The one-year monthly sampling program would occur year-round aboard FKCFA commercial fishing vessels. The proposal has yet to be funded, thus the intensity of sampling cannot be estimated at this time. FKCFA would fish 25 units of four different trap designs on each set, not to exceed 100 days per year in each area, to determine which designs are most productive. Initial sampling would occur off South Carolina, both coasts of Florida, and in the Florida Keys.

NOAA Fisheries finds this application warrants further consideration, and is seeking public comment on the application. A final decision on issuance of the exempted fishing permit will depend on NOAA Fisheries' review of public comments received, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's recommendation, consultations with the affected states, and the U.S. Coast Guard, as well as a determination that it is consistent with all applicable laws.

For additional information, Contact Susan Gerhart, 727-824-5305; e-mail: Susan.Gerhart@noaa.gov.