



Florida Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Commission
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For immediate release: July 21, 2010
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Get ready for lobster seasons

Recreational and commercial harvest seasons for spiny lobster in Florida reopen soon.

The special two-day spiny lobster sport season comes first, July 28-29 this year, followed by the regular commercial and recreational lobster season, Aug. 6 - March 31.

The special two-day sport season occurs on the last consecutive Wednesday and Thursday in July each year to let recreational fishermen collect spiny lobsters before commercial lobster traps are placed in the water. Commercial fishermen may begin putting traps in the water Aug. 1, and recreational and commercial fishermen may harvest spiny lobsters starting Aug. 6.

Spiny lobsters must have a carapace length greater than 3 inches to be legal take during open seasons, and divers must possess a measuring device and measure all lobsters in the water.

During the two-day spiny lobster sport season, recreational divers and snorkelers can take up to six lobsters per person daily in Monroe County and Biscayne National Park waters and 12 lobsters per person daily in other Florida waters. They may possess no more than the daily bag limit of lobsters while on the water.

When off the water, they may possess the daily bag limit on the first day and double the daily bag limit on the second day. Possession limits are enforced on and off the water during the two-day sport season.

Night diving for spiny lobsters during the two-day sport season is illegal in Monroe County, and all harvest of lobsters is prohibited in John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park during the two-day season.

Lobster harvest also is prohibited at all times in Everglades National Park, Dry Tortugas National Park, Biscayne Bay/Card Sound Spiny Lobster Sanctuary, certain areas in Pennekamp Park, and no-take areas in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

During the Aug. 6 - March 31 regular season, the daily recreational bag and on-the-water possession limit is six spiny lobsters per person.

Lobster harvesters must have a saltwater fishing license and a spiny lobster permit to recreationally harvest spiny lobsters unless they are exempt from recreational license requirements. Information about these licenses and permits is available online at MyFWC.com/License.

Divers and snorkelers must display a “divers-down” flag (red with a white diagonal stripe) while in the water. Divers-down flags displayed on vessels must be at least 20 inches by 24 inches, and a stiffener is required to keep the flag unfurled. Dive flags carried on floats must be at least 12 inches by 12 inches. More information on divers-down flag requirements is available online at MyFWC.com/RULESANDREGS.

Additional information on recreational spiny lobster fishing, including how to measure spiny lobster, is available online at MyFWC.com/RULESANDREGS. A Monroe County lobster fishing brochure is available for download at that Web page, as is more information about commercial lobster fishing.