

**Fishery Conservation and Management**

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opening where the throat meets the vertical wall of the trap and the opening of the throat at its farthest point from the vertical wall, inside the trap, must be greater than the height of any such opening. No such throat may extend farther than 6 inches (15.2 cm) into the inside of any trap, measured from where the throat opening meets the vertical wall of the trap to the throat opening at its farthest point from the vertical wall, inside the trap.

(5) A wire trap must have at least three unobstructed escape rings installed, each with a minimum inside diameter of 2¾ inches (6.0 cm). One such escape ring must be located on a vertical outer surface adjacent to each crab retaining chamber.

(6) A plastic or wire trap must have a degradable panel.

(i) A plastic trap will be considered to have degradable panel if it contains at least one sidewall with a rectangular opening no smaller in either dimension than that of the throat. This opening may be obstructed only with a cypress or untreated pine slat or slats no thicker than ¾ inch (1.9 cm) such that when the slat degrades, the opening in the sidewall of the trap will no longer be obstructed.

(ii) A wire trap will be considered to have a degradable panel if one of the following methods is used in construction of the trap:

(A) The trap lid tie-down strap is secured to the trap at one end by a single loop of untreated jute twine, a corrodible loop composed of non-coated steel wire measuring 24 gauge or thinner, or an untreated pine dowel no larger than 2 inches (5.1 cm) in length by ⅜ inch (0.95 cm) in diameter. The trap lid must be secured so that when the jute, corrodible loop, or pine dowel degrades, the lid will no longer be securely closed.

(B) The trap contains at least one sidewall with a vertical rectangular opening no smaller in either dimension than 6 inches (15.2 cm) in height by 3 inches (7.6 cm) in width. This opening may be laced, sewn, or otherwise obstructed by—

(J) A single length of untreated jute twine knotted only at each end and not tied or looped more than once around a single mesh bar;

(2) Untreated pine slat(s) no thicker than ⅜ inch (0.95 cm);

(3) Non-coated steel wire measuring 24 gauge or thinner;

(4) A panel of ferrous single-dipped galvanized wire mesh made of 24 gauge or thinner wire; or

(5) A rectangular panel made of any material, fastened to the trap at each of the four corners of the rectangle by rings made of non-coated 24 gauge or thinner wire or single strands of untreated jute twine. When the jute, untreated pine slat(s), non-coated steel wire, wire mesh panel, or corner fasteners degrade, the opening in the sidewall of the trap must no longer be obstructed.

(b) *Daylight hours.* A stone crab trap in the management area may be pulled or tended during daylight hours only—that is, from 1 hour before sunrise to 1 hour after sunset.

(c) *Gear belonging to others.* No fisherman may willfully tend, open, pull, or otherwise molest another fisherman's trap, buoy, or line in the management area without the prior written consent of that fisherman.

[60 FR 13919, Mar. 15, 1995, as amended at 65 FR 31835, May 19, 2000]

**§ 654.23 Southwest Florida seasonal trawl closure.**

From January 1 to 1 hour after sunset (local time) May 20, each year, the area described in this section is closed to trawling, including trawling for live bait. The area is that part of the management area shoreward of a line connecting the following points (see Appendix A, Figure 2, of this part):

Point	North Latitude	West Longitude
B <sup>1</sup> .....	26°16'	81°58.5'
C .....	26°00'	82°04'
D .....	25°09'	81°47.6'
E .....	24°54.5'	81°50.5'
M <sup>1</sup> .....	24°49.3'	81°46.4'

<sup>1</sup> On the seaward limit of Florida's waters.

**§ 654.24 Shrimp/stone crab separation zones.**

Five zones are established in the management area and Florida's waters off Citrus and Hernando Counties for the separation of shrimp trawling and stone crab trapping. The zones are as shown in Appendix A, Figure 3, of this

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part. Although Zone II is entirely within Florida's waters, it is included in this section and Appendix A, Figure 3, of this part for the convenience of fishermen. Restrictions that apply to Zone II and those parts of the other zones that are in Florida's waters are contained in Rule 46-38.001, Florida Ad-

ministrative Code. Geographical coordinates of the points referred to in this paragraph and shown in Appendix A, Figure 3, of this part are as follows (loran readings are unofficial and are included only for the convenience of fishermen):

Point	North latitude	West longitude	Loran Chain 7980			
			W	X	Y	Z
A .....	28°59'30"	82°45'36"	14416.5	31409.4	45259.1	62895.3
B .....	28°59'30"	83°00'10"	14396.0	31386.3	45376.8	63000.0
C .....	28°26'01"	82°59'47"	14301.5	31205.9	45103.2	63000.0
D .....	28°26'01"	82°56'54"	14307.0	31212.2	45080.0	62981.3
E .....	28°41'39"	82°55'25"	14353.7	31300.2	45193.9	62970.0
F .....	28°41'39"	82°56'09"	14352.4	31298.6	45199.4	62975.0
G .....	28°48'56"	82°56'19"	14372.6	31337.2	45260.0	62975.0
H .....	28°53'51"	82°51'19"	14393.9	31371.8	45260.0	62938.7
I .....	28°54'43"	82°44'52"	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
J .....	28°51'09"	82°44'00"	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)
K .....	28°50'59"	82°54'16"	14381.6	31351.8	45260.0	62960.0
L .....	28°41'39"	82°53'56"	14356.2	31303.0	45181.7	62960.0
M .....	28°41'39"	82°38'46"	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)
N .....	28°41'39"	82°53'12"	14357.4	31304.4	45176.0	62955.0
O .....	28°30'51"	82°55'11"	14323.7	31242.4	45104.9	62970.0
P .....	28°40'00"	82°53'08"	14352.9	31295.7	45161.8	62955.0
Q .....	28°40'00"	82°47'58"	14361.3	31305.4	45120.0	62920.0
R .....	28°35'14"	82°47'47"	14348.6	31280.6	45080.0	62920.0
S .....	28°30'51"	82°52'55"	14327.7	31247.0	45086.6	62955.0
T .....	28°27'46"	82°55'09"	14315.2	31225.8	45080.0	62970.0
U .....	28°30'51"	82°52'09"	14329.1	31248.6	45080.0	62949.9

<sup>1</sup> Crystal River Entrance Light 1A.  
<sup>2</sup> Long Pt. (southwest tip).  
<sup>3</sup> Shoreline.

(a) *Zone I* is enclosed by rhumb lines connecting, in order, points A, B, C, D, T, E, F, G, H, I, and J, plus the shoreline between points A and J. It is unlawful to trawl in that part of Zone I that is in the EEZ during the period October 5 through May 20, each year.

(b) *Zone II* is enclosed by rhumb lines connecting, in order, points J, I, H, K, L, and M, plus the shoreline between points J and M.

(c) *Zone III* is enclosed by rhumb lines connecting, in order, points P, Q, R, U, S, and P. It is unlawful to trawl in that part of Zone III that is in the EEZ during the period October 5 through May 20, each year.

(d) *Zone IV* is enclosed by rhumb lines connecting, in order, points E, N, S, O, and E.

(1) It is unlawful to place a stone crab trap in that part of Zone IV that is in the EEZ during the periods October 5 through December 1, and April 2 through May 20, each year.

(2) It is unlawful to trawl in that part of Zone IV that is in the EEZ during the period December 2 through April 1, each year.

(e) *Zone V* is enclosed by rhumb lines connecting, in order, points F, G, K, L, and F.

(1) It is unlawful to place a stone crab trap in that part of Zone V that is in the EEZ during the periods October 5 through November 30, and March 16 through May 20, each year.

(2) It is unlawful to trawl in that part of Zone V that it is in the EEZ during the period December 1 through March 15, each year.

(f) A stone crab trap, float, or rope in the management area during a period not authorized by this section will be considered unclaimed or abandoned property and may be disposed of in any manner considered appropriate by the Assistant Administrator or an authorized officer. An owner of such trap, float, or rope remains subject to appropriate civil penalties. A stone crab trap

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will be presumed to be the property of the most recently documented owner.

**§ 654.25 Prevention of gear conflicts.**

(a) No person may knowingly place in the management area any article, including fishing gear, that interferes with fishing or obstructs or damages fishing gear or the fishing vessel of another; or knowingly use fishing gear in such a fashion that it obstructs or damages the fishing gear or fishing vessel of another.

(b) In accordance with the procedures and limitations of the Fishery Management Plan for the Stone Crab Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico, the Regional Director may modify or establish separation zones for shrimp trawling and the use of fixed gear as may be necessary and appropriate to prevent gear conflicts. Necessary prohibitions or restrictions will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

**§ 654.26 Adjustment of management measures.**

In accordance with the procedures and limitations of the fishery management plan for the Stone Crab Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico, the Regional Director may establish or modify the following management measures: Limitations on the number of traps that may be fished by each vessel; construction characteristics of traps; gear and vessel identification requirements; gear that may be used or prohibited in a directed fishery; bycatch levels in non-directed fisheries; seasons; soak/removal periods and requirements for traps; use, possession and handling of stone crabs aboard vessels; and minimum legal sizes.

**§ 654.27 Specifically authorized activities.**

The Regional Director may authorize, for the acquisition of information and data, activities otherwise prohibited by the regulations in this part.

**§ 654.28 Tortugas marine reserves.**

The following activities are prohibited within the Tortugas marine reserves: Fishing for any species and anchoring by fishing vessels.

(a) *EEZ portion of Tortugas North.* The area is bounded by rhumb lines connecting the following points: From point A at 24°40'00' N. lat., 83°06'00' W. long. to point B at 24°46'00' N. lat., 83°06'00' W. long. to point C at 24°46'00' N. lat., 83°00'00' W. long.; thence along the line denoting the seaward limit of Florida's waters, as shown on the current edition of NOAA chart 11438, to point A at 24°40'00' N. lat., 83°06'00' W. long.

(b) *Tortugas South.* The area is bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following points:

Point	North lat.	West long.
A	24°33'00'	83°09'00'
B	24°33'00'	83°05'00'
C	24°18'00'	83°05'00'
D	24°18'00'	83°09'00'
A	24°33'00'	83°09'00'

[67 FR 47469, July 19, 2002]

APPENDIX A TO PART 654—FIGURES

- Figure 1—Stone Crab Claw
- Figure 2—Southwest Florida Seasonal Trawl Closure
- Figure 3—Shrimp/Stone Crab Separation Zones