



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW FEES FOR FEDERAL FISHERIES PERMITS BEGIN OCTOBER 2006 WITH INITIATION OF NEW PROGRAM TO RENEW PERMITS ANNUALLY

NOAA Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office (SERO) advises vessel owners and dealers that a new fee schedule becomes effective October 1, 2006, for permits issued for fisheries federally managed in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Renewal of these permits is now an annual process and corresponding fees must be remitted yearly. The new fees are half those previously required every 2 years, thus, applicants will incur no new additional costs. These changes and the discontinuance of the biennial, or every-other-year, automatic renewal of vessel and dealer permits resulted from the recent amending of federal fishing regulations. The changes were implemented in the final rule for Amendment 18A to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico that recently was published in the *Federal Register* (71 FR 45428, August 9, 2006); the effective date for these permit regulation changes has been corrected to read October 1, 2006 (71 FR 48483, August 21, 2006). See Southeast Fishery Bulletin FB06-036.

New Fee Schedule

For vessel owners, the new fee for the first vessel permit will be \$25; additional permits selected in a single application package for other EEZ fisheries will be \$10 each. For dealers, excluding the HMS International Trade Permit, the new annual fee is \$50 for the first permit; additional dealer permits selected in the same application package for other EEZ fisheries will be \$12.50 each (See table below).

<u>FISHERY PERMITS</u>	<u>FEES</u>
1	\$25.00
2	\$35.00
3	\$45.00
4	\$55.00
5	\$65.00
6	\$75.00
7	\$85.00
8	\$95.00
9	\$105.00
10	\$115.00
11	\$125.00
12	\$135.00
13	\$145.00

<u>DEALER PERMITS</u>	<u>FEES</u>
1	\$50.00
2	\$62.50
3	\$75.00
4	\$87.50
5	\$100.00
6	\$112.50
7	\$125.00
8	\$137.50
9	\$150.00

New Annual Renewal Requirements and Process

The new annual renewal requirements apply to all vessel permits, licenses, endorsements, and dealer permits required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and issued by NOAA Fisheries Service, including applicable highly migratory species (HMS) permits. The majority of vessel and dealer permits issued under federal regulations (50 CFR Parts 622 and 635) previously had been subject to biennial (every 2 years) automatic renewal.

NOAA Fisheries Service will continue to send renewal applications to permit holders approximately 2 months prior to permit expiration. Requiring owners to provide the necessary information requested on renewal applications should enhance applicant accountability, and the accuracy and verification of the information they provide. Annual remittance of permit fees will simplify permit financial accounting procedures. Also, the changes are necessary to help NOAA Fisheries Service revise and restructure permit programs and processes to make them compatible for the introduction of a new software application that soon will be used to manage information, and process permits, licenses, endorsements, and renewals. Complete phase out of the automatic renewal process is expected the first week of October 2006.

Important Requirements of the New Annual Renewal Process Are Listed Below.

1. Within 45 days prior to the expiration date of their permit(s), permit holders must contact the SERO Permits Office to request a renewal application, if they have not yet received one by mail.
2. At least 30 days prior to the permit's expiration date or the date the applicant wants the permit to be renewed and active, the completed application(s) and all required supporting documents must be submitted to NOAA Fisheries Service.
3. Applicants receiving letters of notification specifying deficiencies in their application(s), including the absence of payments or submission of incorrect fees, must provide necessary corrections to NOAA Fisheries Service within 30 days of the date of the letter. If a response is not received during that 30-day period, the application will be considered abandoned. A permit, license, or endorsement that is **not renewed within the applicable deadline will not be reissued.**
4. Beginning December 7, 2006, an application for renewal or transfer of a commercial vessel permit for Gulf of Mexico (GOM) Reef Fish will not be considered complete until proof of purchase, installation, activation, and operational status of an approved vessel monitoring system (VMS) for the vessel receiving the permits has been verified by NOAA Fisheries Service VMS personnel. Further information about this verification process will be forthcoming.

Reporting and Observer Requirements

Issuance or renewal of permits may be delayed or denied, if applicants are not compliant with the reporting or observer requirements stipulated by NOAA Fisheries Service or the Science and Research Director (SRD) of NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Miami, Florida. Permit holders are responsible for all

data requirements specified by the SRD. Accordingly, pertinent reporting requirements must be satisfied and delinquent logbook records must be submitted to the SRD before a permit can be renewed or reissued.

Certification for Meeting Income Requirements

An **Income Qualification Affidavit** must now be submitted with each application for a vessel permit with income qualifications. This new affidavit must accompany each application for renewal of vessel permits for king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, GOM reef fish, and spiny lobster. Hence, copies of income tax documents or fish sale receipts no longer are required nor acceptable for verifying that an applicant meets the income requirements specified for these permits in the regulations. The **Income Qualification Affidavit** is available from the SERO Permits Office or can be downloaded from the Web site page listed below:

http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/forms/Income_Qualification_Affidavit.pdf

Important Reminders about Maintaining and Renewing Federal Permits

Important requirements are provided below to help vessel owners and dealers keep their federal permits valid and active:

1. Within 30 days, permit holders must report a change of address or other information previously provided on permit applications or renewal forms to the SERO Permits Office. Failure to report such changes within 30 days may void the permit (50 CFR 622.4(c) and 635.4(i).
2. Commercial vessel permits for certain limited-access fisheries must be renewed within the time specified in the regulations or they will not be renewed or reissued by NOAA Fisheries Service. An application for renewal of a commercial vessel permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper must be received by the SERO Permits Office within 60 days of the permit's expiration date; South Atlantic golden crab applications must be received within 6 months of the permit's expiration date. Within one year of the permit's expiration date, renewal applications must be received for commercial vessel permits for shark, swordfish, limited-access endorsement for South Atlantic rock shrimp, king mackerel, king mackerel gillnet permit, GOM reef fish, and charter vessel/headboat permits for GOM coastal migratory pelagic or reef fish, including those with a historical captain endorsement.
3. After February 7, 2007, no endorsement for fish traps in the GOM will be valid, renewed, or transferred.

Permit Purchase, Transfer, and Landings Data

Persons interested in the purchase or transfer of a federal vessel permit are encouraged to contact NOAA Fisheries Service SERO Permits Office to ascertain if the permit is valid, active, and transferable.

Landings data for many commercial fishing vessels in the southeast that have logbook data submitted to the SRD may be available and requested from NOAA Fisheries Service. A form requesting catch history data is available and can be downloaded from the Web site page listed below:

<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/permits.htm>.

Landings data are considered confidential under the Magnuson-Stevens Act and, therefore, are made available only to the owner of the permit at the time of the catch. Such a permit holder, corporate officer specified in the articles of incorporation, or a court-appointed legal representative/guardian can request catch history data and, if desired, specify that the landings be released and sent to another entity. Please submit these landings requests on the form described above to the SERO Permits Office in St. Petersburg, FL.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitats through scientific research, management, and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

In 2007, NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, celebrates 200 years of science and service to the nation. Starting with the establishment of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA. The agency is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems, NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission, to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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