

FKNMS baitfish permits information

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Prepared for Mimi Stafford, FKNMS Advisory Council

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FKNMS issues two types of permits that allow catching of baitfish from the Sanctuary Preservation Areas (SPAs), which are otherwise no-take, no fishing zones.

1. Cast net baitfish permits allow the use of cast net or lampara net (commercial purse seine) and allow removal of four baitfish species from all 18 SPAs within the sanctuary. There are restrictions on net size based on whether the SPAs are in state or federal waters (to comply with the net ban). The permits are issued to one fisherman (not a boat) and always run on a calendar year basis, expiring Dec. 31. Permit holders are required to submit a catch log at the end of the permit year in order to be eligible for a renewal permit. The log asks for information on catch both inside and outside of the SPAs.
2. Hair hook baitfish permits allow the use of hair hooks to remove baitfish from only three of the SPAs (Conch, Davis and Alligator SPAs). This permit has more restrictions/conditions placed on it with regard to time of year (it is a shorter permit duration -- Oct. 15 to April 15), time of day fishing is allowed (5 - 10 am), gear type, and it requires an identification flag to be flown. The primary permit holder may name a second fisherman if they wish, but the permit is valid for those individuals, not a boat. These permit holders are also required to turn in a similar catch log to be eligible for a renewal, and the log similarly asks for information on catch both inside and outside of the SPAs.

Additional documents provided:

1. **2019 FKNMS baitfish permit template:** This is a blank cast net permit, which shows what is allowed, where, when, and what conditions are placed on the activity.
2. **2019 baitfish log:** Catch log to accompany cast net permit.
3. **Hairhook permit templ18-19:** This is a blank hair hook permit, which shows what is allowed, when, where, and what conditions are placed on the activity.
4. **Hair-hook log 2018-19:** Catch log to accompany hair hook permit.
5. **201910-fknms-socioeconomic-supporting-doc-restoration-blueprint:** This is the detailed socioeconomic analysis that supports the FKNMS DEIS. Data about the impacts of the proposal to eliminate baitfish permits is on pages 61-69.
6. **Net Benefits of Alternatives FKNMS 3 (1):** This is a socioeconomic fact sheet about the FKNMS DEIS preferred alternative. It is compiled off data from the full socioeconomic analysis.
7. **Summary of FKNMS hair hook permits 2004-19:** The first page contains a summary of all permit years (number of permits issued, number of log form returns, fishing location, etc.). The second page contain the specific numbers for the 2018-19 season, which then feeds the master table on page one. This is compiled from what fishermen report to FKNMS on their catch logs.

The socioeconomic analysis noted in attachment #4 above is based on information from log forms that fishermen reported through 2014. I compiled the following more recent stats from our cast net baitfish permits database about cast net permits that have been issued since 2015:

Year	# permits issued	# log form returns	# saying they didn't use permit	% returns	(% of that who didn't use permit)
2015	102	62	34	61%	55%
2016	89	56	32	63%	57%
2017	93	64	33	69%	52%
2018	91	67	38	74%	57%
2019	81	n/a – not due yet	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total	456 (AVG 91.2 permits/year)			AVG 66.75%	AVG 55.25%

Data Summary:

- In this five-year time period, the 456 total permits issued were granted to 205 total applicants.
- 84 of those applicants are non-repeat applicants (i.e., they held one permit only during the last 5 years).
- This means 41% of all permit holders in the last five years are unique individuals.
- This meshes with what we have been seeing as a trend (anecdotally): More new fishermen are requesting the permit each year, and fewer “regulars” are renewing their permits. Also, as you can see based on the log form returns, there is a high amount of attrition annually simply through lack of submitting the required catch log.
- Both the hair hook and cast net permits have about half of all log form respondents indicating they did not use the permit (~55% for cast net baitfish permit holders, ~50% for hair hook baitfish permit holders).
- So, based on ~25-40% of permit holders not returning their catch log and 50% of those that do saying they are not using the permit to fish (i.e., fishing outside the SPAs, getting bait elsewhere such as buying it), combined with the high percentage of unique individuals, the overall level of use of this permit is minimal.