

Law Enforcement Technical Committee (LETC) Meeting



Miramar Beach, FL
October 2026

Hook Limitations on Commercial Longline Vessels

Amendment 31, effective 2010:

- Hardshell sea turtle takes were observed in the eastern Gulf bottom longline component of the Reef fish fishery, estimated to be higher than amounts authorized in the 2005 Biological Opinion
- Amendment 31 was developed to reduce loggerhead and other hardshell sea turtle take, taking various measures including:
 - **Limiting the number of hooks in the Eastern Gulf for vessels with a longline endorsement to 1,000 hooks of which no more than 750 hooks are rigged for fishing.**

Framework Action, effective 2018:

- Following observations of hook loss due to shark depredation, industry representatives requested an increase in the number of unriggered hooks allowable.
- This framework action:
 - **Modified the total number of hooks to be unlimited of which no more than 750 hooks are fished or rigged for fishing.**

Crew Size Restrictions for Dually Permitted Vessels

Amendment 1, effective 1990:

- Required charter/commercial dually permitted vessels to fish under the bag limit when there are more than 3 persons aboard, including captain and crew.

Amendment 18A, effective 2006:

- Resolved a discrepancy in the regulations for dually permitted vessels
- Eliminated the 3-crew maximum on a dually permitted vessel with a USCG Certificate of Inspection (COI) when that vessel is fishing commercially and replaces it with minimum and maximum crew sizes based on the minimum manning requirements stated in the vessel's USCG COI.

Amendment 34, effective 2012

- Developed as existing limitations on crew size no longer relevant, and following safety concerns by commercial spearfishermen
- **Increased the maximum crew size to four for dually permitted vessels.**

QUESTIONS



Amendment 1, effective 1990:

- Overall management objective to stabilize long term population levels of all reef fish species, the Council proposed this longline restriction to protect the spawning component of the reef fish resources.
- Prohibits the use of longline and buoy gear for taking reef fish inside of 50 fathoms to the west and inside of 20 fathoms to the east of Cape San Blas, Florida