

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

*Marine Resources Commission
Building 96
380 Fenwick Road
Fort Monroe, VA 23651*

Travis A. Voyles
Secretary of Natural and
Historic Resources

Justin L. Green
Commissioner

June 21, 2024

TO: COMMERCIAL FISHING REGISTRATION LICENSEES

FROM: VMRC FISHERIES MANAGEMENT DIVISION

SUBJECT: 2024 EASTERN SHORE COMMERCIAL SHRIMP TRAWL PERMIT

On July 27, 2021, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission approved Chapter 4 VAC 20-1390-10 et. seq., "Pertaining to Shrimping". This regulation established a commercial shrimp trawl license, lottery, associated gear, season, and area requirements, along with commercial and recreational shrimp possession limits **in the Virginia Beach area only** while retaining an experimental permit for shrimp trawling in the Eastern Shore.

In 2024, the Eastern Shore area will continue to operate as an experimental fishery due to insufficient data for informed management decisions. The fishing season will run from September 15, 2024, to December 31, 2024. Additionally, the permitted shrimp trawl area on the Eastern Shore will be extended 9 miles southward to Cape Charles Light (see attached map). These measures aim to increase fishing activity and enhance data collection for future management decisions. The Virginia Beach Shrimp Trawl Harvest Area will remain governed by Chapter 4 VAC 20-1390-10 "Pertaining to Shrimp," with the total number of licenses capped at 12 for 2024.

Please review the attached map for details regarding the shrimp trawl areas.

To participate in shrimp trawling on the Eastern Shore in 2024, all interested individuals must complete and submit the 2024 Commercial Shrimp Trawl Experimental Permit Application Form to VMRC via email or mail. Due to potentially high demand, VMRC reserves the right to limit the number of permits issued. In such cases, permittees will be selected through a lottery process.

Applications must be received by the Commission no later than 5pm, Monday, July 22, 2024.
Send applications to:

Email - Preferred method
fisheries@mrc.virginia.gov
Subject Header: ES SHRIMP PERMIT

Mail
ES SHRIMP PERMIT
VMRC Fisheries Management Division
Building 96, 380 Fenwick Rd
Fort Monroe, VA, 23651

Applications can also be submitted to the agency drop box located at the main office address listed above. If you have any questions regarding the process for this experimental fishery, please contact Pat Geer at 757-247-2236 or Joshua McGilly at 757-247-2299.

Information concerning the Eastern Shore Commercial Shrimp Trawl Permit

- 1) All applicants will be reviewed, and a lottery process used if interest exceeds the maximum expected permits.
- 2) **Lottery Process** - Those individuals entering the lottery must possess at minimum a valid Commercial Fisherman Registration License (CFRL).
- 3) The lottery is weighted, meaning applicants meeting the most criteria have a better chance of being selected. The table below shows the lottery criteria:

2023 Eastern Shore Experimental Shrimp Trawl Permit Criteria

#	Criteria	Pts
1	Virginia Resident Y=10 N=0	10
2	Previous Eastern Shore permit holder of a Virginia-issued Special/Experimental Fishing Permit for shrimp trawl gear (2019 to 2023) Y=10, N=0	10
3	Previous Eastern Shore shrimp trawl permit holder with at least 200 lbs of reported shrimp harvest in any given year between 2019 and 2023 Y=10, N=0, NA=0	15
4	Any Commercial fishing violations in past 3 years (2021-2023) Severe-0, Moderate-2, Occasional-5, Minimal-8, None-10	10
5	Compliance Issues with Mandatory Reporting (2021-2023) Frequent-0, Sometimes-6, Never-10	10
6	Resides near fishing area (Eastern Shore) Y=5, N=0	5
7	1000 lbs of reported harvest (all species) over three years (2021-2023) as of 6/1/24. No-0, as helper-5, w/ CFRL-10	10
8	Cooperative and professional with VMRC staff over past 5 years (0 to 10)	10
9	Previously licensed crab dredger with reported landings (2004-2008) 1 pt for each year	5
10	Application (legible, no blanks, on time, with detail on gear and marketing) (0 to 10)	10
11	Vessel port and lands at least 50% of harvest on Eastern Shore Y=5, N=0	5
	Max Points	100

- 4) Selected applicants will be notified by email and phone no later than **Friday, August 2nd**, and have 7 days to accept the permit. Those that fail to notify staff by the deadline forfeit the permit and another eligible individual will be chosen through the same process.
- 5) **Transfers:** Transfers of any Experimental Shrimp Trawl Permit is prohibited.
- 6) **Agents:** Agents are prohibited. Permittee must be on the boat.
- 7) **Season:** September 15 to December 31, but may be extended into January if necessary.
- 8) **Fishing Area:** Coastal waters of the Virginia Atlantic shoreline due east of Cape Charles Light, VA, out to the 3 nautical mile line, north to the Maryland/Virginia state line, excluding all seaside bays, sounds, and inlets. **Permittees are prohibited from fishing in the Virginia Beach Shrimp Trawl Area** (see attached map) unless properly licensed in accordance with Chapter 4 VAC20-1390-10 et seq., "Pertaining to Shrimp".
- 9) **Time of Day Restriction:** 30 minutes prior to sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset
- 10) **Gear:**
 - a. Vessel should be of appropriate size to fish the required gear.
 - b. A fixed frame net must have an opening no larger than 16 ft. in width and 4 ft. in height (i.e., beam or frame trawl).

- c. Net mesh must be from 1.5 inches to 2.0 inches stretched mesh.
 - d. Net must be equipped with a properly installed National Marine Fisheries Service or North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries approved by-catch reduction device (BRD).
 - e. Tow duration cannot exceed 30 minutes.
 - f. The Commission shall approve all shrimp trawl gear prior to the final issuance of an Experimental Shrimp Trawl Permit. Contact staff for an inspection.
- 11) Harvest of any Virginia quota-managed species is prohibited (Black Drum, Black Sea Bass, Bluefish, Atlantic Horseshoe Crab, Atlantic Menhaden, Scup, Speckled Trout, Spiny Dogfish, Striped Bass, and Summer Flounder).
 - 12) Permittees shall allow VMRC observer staff onboard fishing trips to collect data on shrimp and bycatch.
 - 13) Permittees are required to contact the MRC staff after each trip to report estimates of shrimp harvest, total bycatch, and any interactions with protected resources. Contact information will be provided.
 - 14) Harvest of all species must be reported to the MRC's Mandatory Harvest Reporting Program by the 5th of each month.

