

Proposed Rules for Shrimping in Nassau and Duval Counties



**Presentation to the Jacksonville Waterways Commission
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**

April 2025



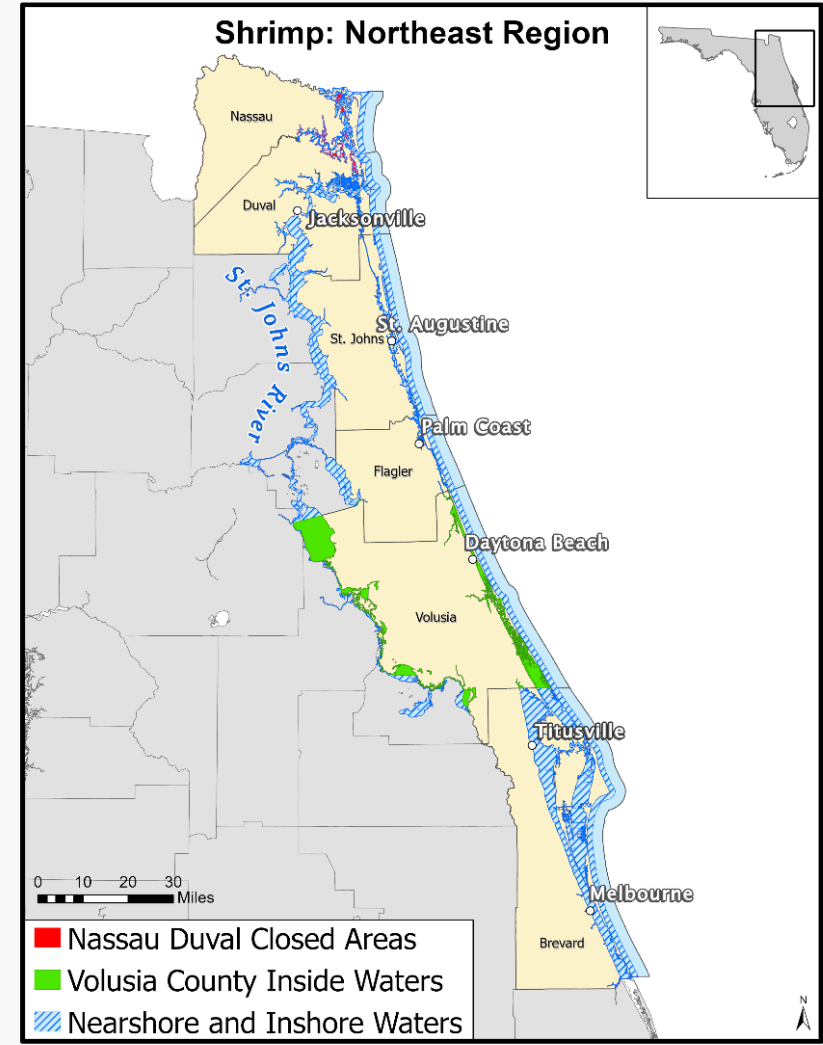
Shrimp Background

Biology

- Annual crop
- Adult white shrimp in estuaries unless spawning
 - Migrate offshore to spawn April – Oct.
- Newly hatched shrimp return to estuaries seeking nursery grounds

Fishery

- Florida's oldest and most valuable commercial fishery
- Regulations apply statewide or regionally
 - Nassau and Duval counties are part of the Northeast Region



Nassau & Duval Counties' Inshore Shrimp Fishery

Recreational Fishery

- Primarily cast net

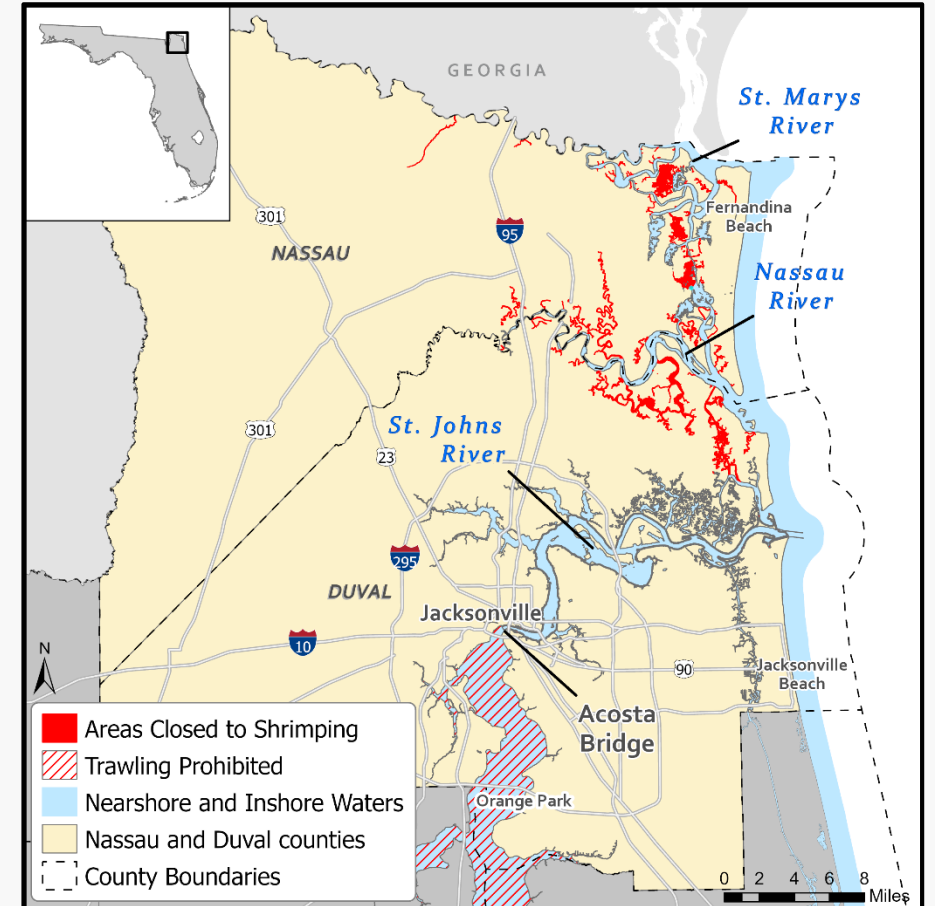
Commercial Fishery

- Vessels must be less than 35' (Duval) or 45' (Nassau)
 - Live bait: Skiffs or smaller cabin-style trawlers
 - Food shrimp: Smaller cabin-style trawlers
- Primary gear: Otter trawls
- Short tow times
- Primary locations: St. Johns River and Nassau River



Current Regulations

- Seasonal closure: April 1 – May 31
- Year-round closed areas to protect nursery areas
- Commercial food shrimp harvest prohibited on weekends and holidays
- No size requirement
- Recreational bag limit: 5 gallons
- Commercial bag limit: unlimited
 - Live bait shrimpers' dead shrimp allowance: 1 gallon (heads on)
- Commercial licenses:
 - Saltwater Products License
 - Restricted Species Endorsement
 - Live Shrimp Production
 - Food Shrimp Production



Timeline

- **April 2024** – Commercial shrimpers began requesting changes from FWC stakeholder-requested changes
- **May 2024 Commission Meeting** – Commission directed staff to find ways to reduce burdens on NE FL shrimp harvesters
- **Nov. 2024** – FWC public workshop to gather feedback on stakeholder-requested changes
- **Feb. 2025** – FWC public workshop to gather feedback on recommendations for proposed rules
- **February 2025 Commission Meeting** – Commission approved publication of proposed rules
- **April** – FWC public workshop on proposed rules



Proposal 1: Increase Dead Shrimp Allowance

Proposed change

- Increase dead shrimp allowance for commercial live bait shrimpers from 1 to 5 gallons

Considerations

- Make consistent with the rest of the region and state
- Unlikely to increase total take of shrimp
- Decrease waste of dead shrimp



Proposal 2: Seasonally Open Part of Pumpkin Hill Creek

Background

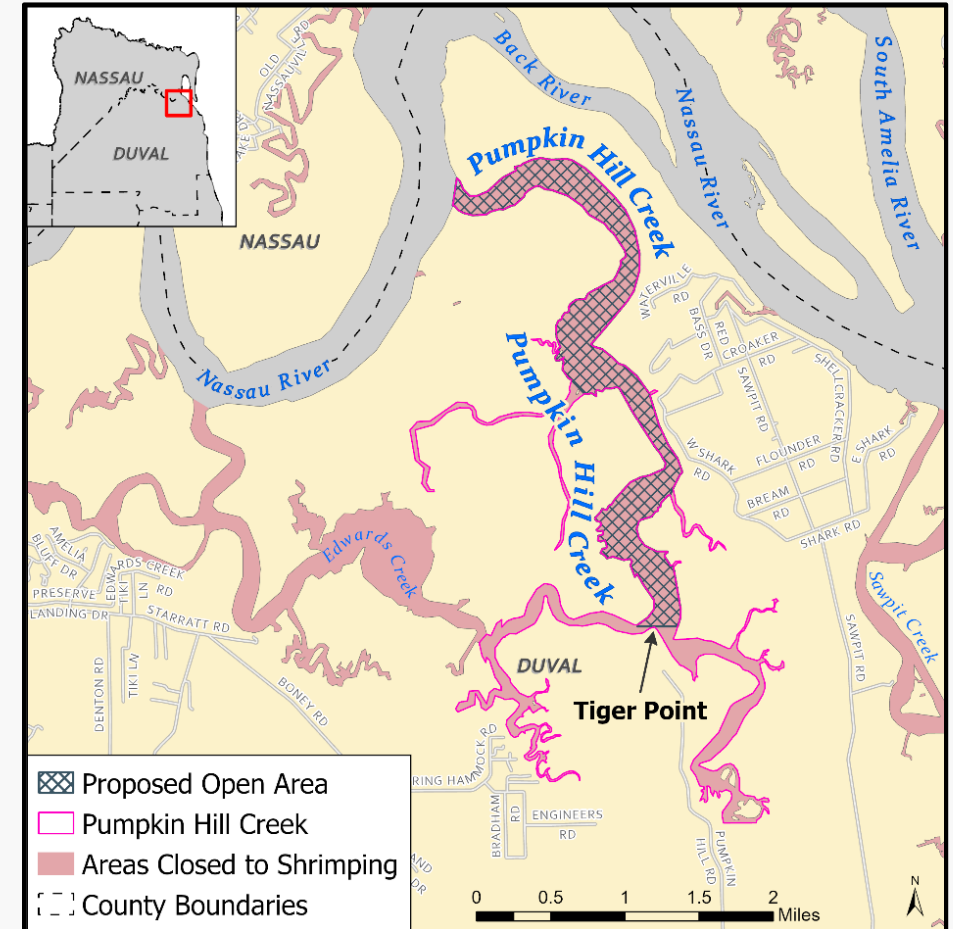
- Many tributaries in Nassau & Duval counties are closed to shrimp harvest
- Protects shrimp nurseries & reduces potential bycatch

Proposed change

- Open PHC to shrimping from the Nassau River to Tiger Point (30°30.0783' N) from Sept. through Dec.

Considerations

- Create more shrimp harvest opportunities
- Limiting season and area would continue to protect juvenile shrimp
 - Surveys show highest abundance of juvenile shrimp farther up the creek



Next Steps

- FWC staff will compile and consider public comment
- Staff will form a final rule recommendation
- FWC Commissioners will consider a final rule at a future Commission meeting

Ways to comment

- Online form: MyFWC.com/SaltwaterComments
- Email: Marine@MyFWC.com

