

2016
2017

IMPORTANT CHANGES TO OYSTER REGS

All Oyster Harvesters:

Oyster Harvester License Training Requirements (Act 276)

Beginning in license year 2017, ALL oyster harvesters must complete the oyster harvester education program BEFORE applying for the 2017 license.

- On the Internet, go to www.wlf.louisiana.gov/fishing/commercial-oyster and click on the box titled 'Training Video'; it will be available beginning October 15, 2016.
- Enter your first name, last name, email (optional), last 4 digits of your social security number and commercial fishing license number.
- Watch the video and answer 80% of the questions correctly to 'pass' (takes about 1 hour).
- A certificate of completion will be sent to your email, and logged with the LDWF office. It takes 24 to 48 hours for the system to update, so be sure to finish the video at least 3 days before you try to apply for a license.
- If you don't have a computer with Internet connection at home, try your local public library.



In order to apply for your 2017 oyster harvester's license, beginning November 15, 2016, you will be required to complete the training video with a score of 80%.

Harvesters will be required to take this training every three years.



Harvesting Oysters on Public Oyster Seed Grounds (POSG):

Changes to the POSG Permit (Act 291)

Several changes are in effect for the POSG permit; most notably a substantial fee increase, which will fund the Public Oyster Seed Ground Development Account.

- The permit cost for a single scraper vessel will be \$250 for a resident, and \$1,000 for a nonresident; a double scraper vessel will be \$500 for a resident and \$2,000 for a nonresident.
- New POSG vessel permit applications will be accepted once a professionalism program is developed; this should be complete by 2018.

New Gear Restrictions (Act 133)

This law changed the name of certain gear—‘dredges’ should now be called ‘scrapers’. It also limited the size and use of scrapers on POSG.



- Scrapers must not be more than 54 inches in width measured along the tooth bar.
- A scraper cannot weigh more than 175 pounds, and diving boards, hydrofoils, or any other equipment intended to create downward pressure is now illegal.
- Scraper teeth cannot be longer than 5 inches, with a minimum of 2 1/4 inch spacing between teeth. A tooth shall not exceed 11/16 of an inch in diameter.
- No more than two scrapers can be in use on any one vessel. An oyster scraper bag must be single mesh with a minimum mesh size of 3 inches stretched.

Leasing Practices / Oyster Lease Moratorium:

Leasing Practices for Oyster Harvest (Act 570)

Water bottoms that are under ‘dual claim’ ownership may now be leased for oyster harvest when LDWF and the private claimant agree to do so. This agreement does not indicate or determine ownership, and the lease is only in effect until a court rules on the ownership claim.



Lifting the Oyster Lease Moratorium (Act 595)

The Legislature has created a process for lifting the moratorium on oyster leases in phases.

- **Phase 1:** Leaseholders that did not renew leases due to predicted coastal restoration activities get first priority in these areas.
- **Phase 2:** Lease expansion for coastal restoration and take up space between leases (CPRA can require shoreline buffer).
- **Phase 3:** Leaseholders in private waters that are now in a dual-claim situation with the state get first priority in these areas.
- **Phase 4:** Open lottery (approximately 3 years from now).
- **Phase 5:** Possibly another lottery.
- **After Phase 5**, new standard application procedures (under development).

