



Restricted Species Aquaculture: Rules and Regulations

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Food fish aquaculture is a growing industry in Florida and farmers have diversified production to many different species. “Restricted species” are animals identified in [Aquaculture Best Management Practices \(BMPs\)](#) and require authorization by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) or the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), Division of Aquaculture, to possess for commercial use. Commercial production of restricted species requires an [Aquaculture Certificate of Registration](#), as well as a Restricted Species Authorization letter issued by the Division for commercial aquaculture businesses. Restricted species are not authorized for personal use.

ADDITIONAL BMPS

Restricted species have additional [BMPs](#) that must be met, including containment, sales, record keeping and documentation. Restricted species cultured outdoors (when permissible) must be held in a water body that has the lowest point of the top edge of its levee, dike, bank or tank at least one foot above the 100-year flood elevation issued by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). There must be effective measures to prevent theft of restricted species, and all holding, transport and culture systems must consist of solid construction and be designed to prevent escapement of all life stages of restricted species as well as deter predator access.

Live sale or transfer of restricted species and their hybrids is limited to those authorized by FDACS or FWC. All records of live restricted species purchases, sales and transfers must be maintained and available for inspection for a period of at least two years.



Blue Tilapia

TILAPIA

A popular finfish for culture is tilapia. Blue tilapia, *Oreochromis aureus*, Nile tilapia, *O. niloticus*, and hybrids of the two species may be possessed, transported and cultured without a special permit in four [FWC designated regions](#): North Central, Northeast, South and Southwest. Mozambique, *O. mossambicus*, Wami tilapia, *O. urolepis*, and hybrids of the two species are as restricted species, requiring a valid [Aquaculture Certificate of Registration](#) and a Restricted Species Authorization letter.

BARRAMUNDI

Barramundi is a restricted species throughout Florida. Barramundi must be held in an indoor facility with a detailed facility plan, including hurricane rated buildings and a timeline must be submitted and approved by the Division before any animals may be obtained.

CRAYFISH

Three species of crayfish are listed as restricted in Florida: Australian red claw (*Cherax quadricarinatus*), red swamp crayfish (*Procambarus clarkii*) and white river crayfish (*Procambarus zonangulus*). Commercial culture is limited to tanks in an enclosed structure.

Australian red claw is the only species of the genus *Cherax* available for culture in Florida. All other species of the genus *Cherax* are prohibited species in Florida.



Red claw crayfish

BONY-TONGUE FISHES

Some bony-tongued fishes are restricted as well, including Arapaima (*Arapaima gigas*), and may only be possessed with appropriate certification or permitting. The silver arowana (*Osteoglossum bicirrhosum*) is not restricted and may be obtained and kept without any special permitting.

For a full list of restricted and prohibited species, see the [Aquaculture Best Management Practices](#).

