



Culturing Marine Life: Rules and Regulations

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The harvest of wild marine life species is regulated by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), pursuant to [Rule 68B-42, Florida Administrative Code \(F.A.C.\)](#). In the state of Florida there are specific rules governing the commercial, nonlethal harvest of ornamental marine life species (including corals and octocorals). Pursuant to [Rule 68B-42, F.A.C.](#), the wild harvest of hard, stony, fire or black corals, the octocorals *Gorgonia flabellum* and *G. ventalina* (common sea-fans), the giant Caribbean anemone (*Condylactis gigantea*), and non-aquacultured live rock (including any formations created by tube worms of the family *Sabellariidae*) is prohibited. The wild harvest of other octocoral species and anemones is also restricted, and you should review [Rule 68B-42, F.A.C.](#) for any additional species restrictions that may occur.



The possession and sale of prohibited corals or sea fans legally harvested from sources outside the state is allowed as long as the source is documented by establishing the chain of possession from the initial transaction after harvest by receipt(s), bill(s) of sale, or bill(s) of lading, and any customs receipts ([Rule 68B-42.009, F.A.C.](#)).

Floridians interested in commercially culturing any marine life species must apply for an Aquaculture Certificate of Registration and will be regulated by the Division of Aquaculture under [Aquaculture Best Management Practices](#), in accordance with [Chapter 597, Florida Statutes](#). For information about certification and Best Management Practices or to apply for an Aquaculture Certificate of Registration, visit: www.FDACS.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Aquaculture/Aquaculture-Certificate-of-Registration

Marine life species voluntarily colonize the material that live rock aquaculturists plant on their state or federal lease sites. Cultured live rock can be harvested and sold with attached, naturally colonized, prohibited marine life species. The FWC must be notified at least 24 hours in advance of transporting live rock colonized by prohibited marine life species through, in or on the waters of the State.

Elkhorn (*Acropora palmata*), staghorn (*A. cervicornis*), rough cactus (*Mycetophyllia ferox*), pillar (*Dendrogyra cylindrus*), lobed star (*Orbicella annularis*), mountainous star (*O. faveolata*), and boulder star (*O. franksi*) corals are federally listed under the authority of the Endangered Species Act and may not be harvested from cultured live rock on submerged land leases.

Marine life aquaculturists must include their Aquaculture Certificate of Registration number (AQ#) on all sale or transfer of ownership paper work (receipts, bills of lading, invoices, etc). Farmers should include their AQ# on product packaging as well.



Federal regulations apply beyond state waters off Florida's coasts (federal waters begin 3 nautical miles from the Atlantic coast and 9 nautical miles from the Gulf coast). For more information about federal permitting and rules, visit the [NOAA Fisheries' Southeast Region Marine Aquaculture Page](#) or contact NMFS.SER.Aquaculture@NOAA.gov.

For regulations related to wild marine life species, visit the FWC website at MyFWC.com/Fishing/Saltwater/Commercial/.

For technical information concerning marine life culture (handling, culture systems, water quality, etc.), contact the University of Florida's Tropical Aquaculture Laboratory at (813) 671-5230 extension 109 or visit: TAL.ifas.ufl.edu/.

