

FIO Policy on disposition of edible fishes landed aboard Research Vessels

This document is intended to clarify the Florida Institute of Oceanography's (FIO) policy regarding the collection and disposition of samples of fishes collected aboard its Oceanographic Research Vessels (ORV) during Scientific Research Activity and to ensure that all samples are properly collected and disposed of in accordance with applicable international, federal, state and non-US law and the University of South Florida IACUC Protocols.

The catching, taking or harvesting of fish, or the attempted catching, taking, or harvesting of fish during a scientific cruise aboard a FIO ORV is permissible as long as the ORV is engaged in Scientific Research Activity conducted in accordance with an approved scientific research plan. The scientific research plan must meet the minimum requirements of a plan as set forth in 50 C.F.R. § 600.10, including the disposition of unused portions of fishes that are surplus to the sampling requirements. Under no circumstances should fish sampled or collected aboard a FIO ORV pursuant to a State of Florida Special Activities License be consumed unless specifically allowed by the applicable permit.

It shall be the responsibility of the principal investigator (PI) to obtain an approved Scientific Research Plan and all required scientific permits. This may include a Letter of Acknowledgement (LOA) or Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) from National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), for collections of Highly Migratory Species (HMS) or protected species in federal waters, and/or a Special Activities License (SAL) from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), for collections in Florida waters. For non-US territorial waters (e.g., Mexico, Bahamas, Cuba), it is the responsibility of the PI to obtain required permits for scientific harvesting from all applicable foreign sovereign nations and any respective political subdivisions therein, as required).

The PI must carry the permits/licenses aboard and produce the documents at the request of the vessel captain. It shall be the responsibility of the PI to follow the requirements of the Scientific Research Plan and applicable permits and adhere to any special requirements or specifications for the disposition of fishes, or portions thereof, not needed for scientific purposes.