NEWS RELEASE

MS Dept. of Marine Resources
1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi 39530

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

22-42-CWS
November 9, 2022

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MDMR extending gear reimbursement program for skimmer trawl turtle excluder device on commercial vessels

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) is extending the NOAA Skimmer Trawl Turtle Excluder Device (TED) gear reimbursement program through July 31, 2024, where fishermen may be reimbursed for NOAA-approved TEDs installed on their commercial vessels. The TED rule, which took effect Aug. 1, 2021, requires all shrimp skimmer trawl vessels 40 feet and greater in length to install and use TEDs designed to exclude small sea turtles in their nets.

The TED's arc is designed to reduce the number of sea turtles captured in shrimp trawls by allowing turtles an opening to escape the net. The space between the deflector bars of the new TEDs must not exceed 3 inches, escape openings must be oriented at the top of the net and there are potential webbing restrictions on the escape opening flap depending on the type of TED grid and escape opening configuration.

The TED gear reimbursement program is funded as part of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Protected Species Task 6, as written in the grant from the MDMR.

Program eligibility

To be eligible for this program, fishermen must meet the following criteria (a separate online application must be submitted for each qualified vessel):

- Must be a Mississippi resident.
- Must have had a 2018-2019 or 2019-2020 and a current 2020-2021 Mississippi resident commercial shrimp license for a skimmer trawl vessel 40 feet and over (license type 52 or 53).
- A maximum of two NOAA-approved TEDs and installation will be reimbursed per qualified licensed vessel not to exceed $700 ($350 per TED).
- Must apply online via MDMR website at https://arcg.is/1uamKq0.
- Must watch MDMR-NOAA Gear Monitoring Team video information on specifications for the skimmer TEDs.

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- Qualified shrimpers can register online and will be required to purchase the TEDs within 90 days of the date of submitting their online application in order to receive reimbursement from MDMR.
- This program will end July 31, 2024.

Apply for the program:

All applications submitted before the deadline will be considered. No late applications will be considered and there will be no appeals if the deadline is missed.

For assistance submitting a reimbursement application, contact Mike Brainard with the MDMR at 228-374-5000 or email SkimmerTED@dmr.ms.gov.

For information on the NOAA Skimmer Trawl Turtle Excluder Device (TED) rule, visit www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/bycatch/turtle-excluder-device-regulations.

For technical assistance, contact the NOAA Gear Monitoring Team at (228) 762-4591 or email TED.info@noaa.gov.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at dmr.ms.gov.

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