

For the reasons set out in the preamble, 50 CFR part 622 is proposed to be amended as follows:

PART 622--FISHERIES OF THE CARIBBEAN, GULF OF MEXICO, AND SOUTH ATLANTIC

1. The authority citation for part 622 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.

2. In § 622.187, paragraph (b) (2) is revised to read as follows:

§ 622.187 Bag and possession limits.

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(b) * * *

(2) Grouper and tilefish, combined--3. Within the 3-fish aggregate bag limit:

(i) No more than fish may be a gag;

(ii) No more than one fish may be a black grouper;

(iii) No more than one fish may be a golden tilefish;

(iv) No more than one fish per vessel may be a snowy grouper; and

(v) No goliath grouper or Nassau grouper may be retained.

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3. In § 622.190, paragraphs (a) (7) and (b) are revised to read as follows:

§ 622.190 Quotas.

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Comment [1]: Action 2. No pref alt has been selected. This paragraph could change if alt 2 or 3 is chosen as preferred for this action.

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(a) * * *

(7) Gag--(i) For the 2015 fishing year--312,442 lb (141,721 kg), gutted weight; 368,682 lb (167,231 kg), round weight.

(ii) For the 2016 fishing year--314,992 lb (142,878 kg), gutted weight; 371,691 (168,596 kg), round weight.

(iii) For the 2017 fishing year--336,412 lb (152,594 kg), gutted weight; 396,966 lb (180,061 kg), round weight.

(iv) For the 2018 fishing year--354,262 lb (160,691 kg), gutted weight; 418,029 lb (189,615 kg), round weight.

(v) For the 2019 and subsequent fishing years--367,012 lb (166,474 kg), gutted weight; 433,074 lb (196,439 kg), round weight.

(b) Wreckfish. The quotas for wreckfish apply to wreckfish shareholders, or their employees, contractors, or agents. The quotas are given round weight. See § 622.172 for information on the wreckfish shareholder under the ITQ system.

(1) For the 2015 fishing year--411,350 lb (186,585 kg).

(2) For the 2016 fishing year--402,515 (182,578 kg).

(3) For the 2017 fishing year--393,490 lb (178,484 kg).

(4) For the 2018 fishing year--385,985 lb (175,080 kg).

(5) For the 2019 fishing year--376,960 lb (170,986 kg).

(6) For the 2020 and subsequent fishing years--369,645 lb (167,668 kg).

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Comment [2]: Action 1, pref alt 2. Directed commercial quotas for gag for fishing years 2015-2019 and subsequent fishing years. Quotas are given in gutted and round weights.

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Comment [3]: Action 3, pref alt 2. Commercial quotas=commercial ACLs for wreckfish for fishing years 2015-2020 and subsequent fishing years. Quotas are given in round weight.

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4. In § 622.193, paragraphs (c) and (r) are revised to read as follows:

§ 622.193 Annual catch limits (ACLs), annual catch targets (ACTs), and accountability measures (AMs).

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(c) Gag--(1) Commercial sector. If commercial landings, as estimated by the SRD, reach or are projected to reach the applicable commercial quota, specified in § 622.190(a)(7), the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to close the commercial sector for gag for the remainder of the fishing year.

(2) Recreational sector. (i) If recreational landings, as estimated by the SRD, reach or are projected to reach the applicable recreational ACL, specified in paragraph (c)(2)(iv) of this section, and gag are overfished, based on the most recent Status of U.S. Fisheries Report to Congress, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to close the gag recreational sector for the remainder of the fishing year. On and after the effective date of such notification, the bag and possession limits for gag in or from the South Atlantic EEZ are zero. These bag and possession limits also apply in the South Atlantic on board a vessel for

which a valid Federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper has been issued, without regard to where such species were harvested, i.e., in state or Federal waters.

(ii) Without regard to overfished status, if gag recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register, at or near the beginning of the following fishing year, to reduce the recreational ACL for that fishing year by the amount of the overage.

(iii) Recreational landings will be evaluated relative to the ACL based on a moving multi-year average of landings, as described in the FMP.

(iv) The recreational ACL for gag is 326,340 lb (148,025 kg), gutted weight, 385,081 (174,670 kg), round weight, for 2015; 328,790 lb (149,137 kg), gutted weight, 387,972 lb (175,981 kg), round weight, for 2016; 349,370 lb (158,472 kg), gutted weight, 412,257 lb (186,997 kg), round weight, for 2017; 366,520 lb (166,251 kg), gutted weight, 432,494 lb (196,176 kg), round weight, for 2018; and 378,770 lb (171,807 kg), gutted weight, 446,949 lb (202,733 kg), round weight, for 2019 and subsequent fishing years.

(r) Wreckfish--(1) Commercial sector. The ITQ program for wreckfish in the South Atlantic serves as the accountability

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Comment [4]: Action 1, pref alt 2. Recreational ACLs for gag for fishing years 2015-2019 and subsequent fishing years. ACLs are given in gutted and round weights.

measures for commercial wreckfish. The commercial ACL for wreckfish is equal to the commercial quota specified in § 622.190(b).

(2) Recreational sector. (i) If recreational landings for wreckfish, as estimated by the SRD, exceed the recreational ACL specified in paragraph (r)(2)(ii) of this section, then during the following fishing year, recreational landings will be monitored for a persistence in increased landings and, if necessary, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register, to reduce the length of the following recreational fishing season by the amount necessary to ensure recreational landings do not exceed the recreational ACL in the following fishing year. However, the length of the recreational season will also not be reduced during the following fishing year if the RA determines, using the best scientific information available, that a reduction in the length of the following fishing season is unnecessary.

(ii) The recreational ACL for wreckfish is 21,650 (9,820 kg), round weight, for 2015; 21,185 lb (9,609 kg), round weight, for 2016; 20,710 lb (9,394 kg), round weight, for 2017; 20,315 lb (9,215 kg), round weight, for 2018; 19,840 lb (8,999 kg), round weight, for 2019; and 19,455 lb (8,825 kg), round weight, for 2020 and subsequent fishing years.

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Comment [5]: Action 3, pref alt 2. Recreational ACLs for wreckfish for fishing years 2015-2020 and subsequent fishing years. ACLs are given in round weight.