



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/southeast>

F/SER25:MV

Trish Murphey, Chair
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
Charleston, South Carolina 29405

Dear Ms. Murphey:

NOAA Fisheries received three exempted fishing permit (EFP) applications from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR), and South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR). For your review, the EFP applications are available at www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/recreational-fishing-data/south-atlantic-red-snapper-state-data-collection-and-management. The applications contain additional information regarding the anticipated environmental effects of the proposed activities.

The applicants propose to pilot test state data collection and management strategies for the recreational harvest of red snapper in 2026. If issued, the EFPs would exempt the state agency applicants and recreational fishermen landing red snapper in the participating states from the federal regulations as specified in 50 C.F.R. §§ 622.181(c)(2), 622.183(b)(5)(i), and 622.193(y)(2). The states propose to use existing state-based surveys or develop and test new electronic methods for collecting red snapper landings data during their respective recreational red snapper fishing season. The EFPs would allow recreational harvest of red snapper in state and Federal waters daily during October. All red snapper harvest would be closed in November. Additional recreational harvest would be allowed in December if the states determine that the harvest in October was below the allowable harvest levels. The states will monitor the harvest during the season and close the season if the harvest limit is projected to be met.

FWC, GADNR, and SCDNR have requested harvest limits of 185,379, 10,759, and 19,253 red snapper, respectively. These proposed extended recreational seasons and exempted regulations would replace the July 2026 Federal recreational season annually announced by NMFS under current regulations. The North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries did not submit an EFP application and has instead requested a separate recreational red snapper season. None of the applicants' proposed projects would apply to the commercial harvest of red snapper in South Atlantic Federal waters. Unless specifically exempted, all other applicable Federal regulations, including authorized gears, the bag limit, the size limit, and the catch limit would continue to apply.

NOAA Fisheries published a notice of receipt of the EFP applications in the Federal Register on August 10, 2026, which requested public comment on the applications through August 25, 2026. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact me at (727) 551-5702.

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Strelcheck
Regional Administrator



cc: John Carmichael, Myra Brower, Heather Blough, Rick DeVactor