

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 § 622.188, revise paragraphs (a)(2) and (a)(3) to read as follows:

§ 622.188 Required gear, authorized gear, and unauthorized gear.

(a) * * *

(2) *Non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hooks.*

(A) *Commercial sector.* Non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hooks are required to be used when commercially fishing for South Atlantic snapper-grouper with hook-and-line gear and natural baits north of 28° N lat.

(B) *Recreational sector.* A single non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hook is required to be used when recreationally fishing for South Atlantic snapper-grouper with hook-and-line gear and natural baits north of 28° N lat., and no more than one hook per fishing line is authorized.

(3) *Non-stainless steel circle hooks.*

(A) *Commercial sector.* Non-stainless steel hooks are required to be used when commercially fishing for South Atlantic snapper-grouper with hook-and-line gear and natural baits south of 28° N lat.

(B) *Recreational sector.* A single non-stainless steel hook is required to be used when recreationally fishing for South Atlantic snapper-grouper with hook-and-line gear and natural baits south of 28° N lat., and no more than one hook per fishing line is authorized.

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3. In § 622.193, revise paragraph (y) to read as follows:

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

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(y) *Red snapper* -

(1) *Commercial sector.* The commercial ACL is 77,016 lb (34,934 kg), round weight, for 2023; 85,268 lb (38,677 kg), round weight, for 2024; 90,769 lb (41,172 kg), round weight, for 2025; 96,270 lb (43,667 kg), round weight, for 2026; and 99,021 lb (44,915 kg), round weight, for 2027 and subsequent fishing years. See § 622.183(b)(5) for details on the commercial fishing season. NMFS will monitor commercial landings during the season, and if commercial

landings, as estimated by the SRD, reach or are projected to reach the commercial ACL, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to close the commercial sector for red snapper for the remainder of the year. On and after the effective date of the closure notification, all sale or purchase of red snapper is prohibited and harvest or possession of red snapper is limited to the recreational bag and possession limits and only during such time as harvest by the recreational sector is allowed as described in § 622.183(b) (5). This bag and possession limit and the prohibition on sale/purchase 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 or possessed, *i.e.*, in state or Federal waters.

(2) *Recreational sector.* The recreational ACL for red snapper is 19,119 fish for 2023; 21,167 fish for 2024; 22,533 fish for 2025; 23,899 fish for 2026; and 24,581 fish for 2027 and subsequent fishing years. The AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to announce the length of the recreational fishing season for the current fishing year. The length of the recreational

fishing season for red snapper serves as the in-season accountability measure. See § 622.183(b) (5) for details on the recreational fishing season. On and after the effective date of the recreational closure notification, the bag and possession limits for red snapper are zero.

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