

**From:** [Fletcher Hallett](#)  
**To:** [Mike Schmidtke](#)  
**Subject:** Red Snapper in Northeast Florida  
**Date:** Monday, February 7, 2022 9:40:43 AM

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Good morning, Mike

I hope you are well. I am not sure if you are the right one to reach out about this, but I would like to speak with someone about the red snapper regulations and population in and around North East Florida.

I grew up in the area. It was not long ago when the red snapper population was not doing well. on all accounts, the snapper population has made huge strides. It is a common occurrence for me to have to move spots to “get away” from the ARS. In North East Florida, we used to have one heck of a seabass fishery in winter months. reefs that we used to target for seabass are now all snapper. We also used to catch grouper inside 80ft of water in October/November. In the last two years, I have caught one and it was not even a keeper.

My concern here is the Red Snapper is out competing other fish on these reefs. Does the SAFMC have any studies to this effect? Anything that studies how aggressive of eater they are?

Additionally, last year during the three day recreational season, there were several boating accidents along our coast. One of which ended tragically. Are there talks of changing the season to allow something like a thirty day – one fish per vessel per day limit? Something different that does not cram all these boats on the water at the same time during, possibly, dangerous ocean conditions?

Thank you,

*Fletcher Hallett*

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**From:** [Fletcher Hallett](#)  
**To:** [Mike Schmidtke](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Red Snapper in Northeast Florida  
**Date:** Thursday, February 10, 2022 3:05:16 PM

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Hey Mike,

One thing I can tell you is last year for about a month after snapper season, the snapper did seem to be more hook shy than normal. I do a fair amount of offshore bottom fishing and had some excellent days once the season was over – I was finally able to fish and catch things other than red snapper.

I think allowing a small amount of harvest through out the warmer months would actually help the release mortality. Animals are smart and keeping pressure on them makes them more hook shy. I think a one fish per vessel limit would help a lot. once the boat catches one, they would move on to something else. This would also alleviate the snapper weekend craziness. Bottom line is snapper season is down right dangerous and irresponsible.

Thank you,