



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

<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

JUN 11 2013

Mr. David Cupka, Chair
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
North Charleston, SC 29405

Dear Mr. Cupka:

By this letter, I am approving Amendment 28 to the Fishery Management Plan for Snapper-Grouper of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 28). As you know, Amendment 28 would implement a process with formulas where the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) would (1) determine if there would be a fishing season for a particular year and (2) calculate the magnitude of red snapper harvest that might be allowed for that year. If harvest is allowed (when the previous year's mortality level is less than the previous year's acceptable biological catch (ABC)), NMFS would announce in the *Federal Register* the annual catch limit (ACL) as computed by the equation developed in Amendment 28. In years when harvest is allowed, the start dates for the commercial and recreational seasons are the second Monday and second Friday in July, respectively. If the fishing seasons do not open exactly on these dates, they would open as close to these dates as possible as stated in the proposed rule. NMFS would project when the recreational ACL would be reached and announce the fishing season beginning and end date in the *Federal Register*. NMFS would also announce the beginning date for the commercial sector, but commercial harvest would be monitored and the season would close when the ACL is projected to be met. Amendment 28 would also implement the following measures during a limited fishing season: (1) a commercial trip limit of 75 pounds gutted weight, (2) a recreational bag limit of one per person per day, and (3) removal of the minimum size limit.

A notice of availability for Amendment 28 was published in the *Federal Register* on March 12, 2013 (78 FR 15672), and the comment period ended May 13, 2013. The proposed rule published in the *Federal Register* on April 29, 2013 (78 FR 25047), and the comment period ended May 29, 2013.

Sincerely,

Roy Crabtree
Regional Administrator

