Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

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July 19, 2013
FB13-061

August 2013 Opening of Commercial and Recreational Red Snapper Season in the South Atlantic Federal Waters and Final Rule to Consider Future Seasons

This Fishery Bulletin announces the August 2013 opening of red snapper in the South Atlantic and the publishing of the final rule for Amendment 28 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic.

August 2013 Red Snapper Opening

NOAA Fisheries announces the opening of the 2013 commercial and recreational red snapper fishing season in South Atlantic federal waters. The **commercial** red snapper season opens at 12:01 a.m., local time, on August 26, 2013. The commercial season will end when the annual catch limit is projected to be met; NOAA Fisheries will announce the closure in another Fishery Bulletin. During the open commercial season, the daily trip limit is 75 pounds gutted weight and there is no minimum size limit for red snapper.

The **recreational** fishing season will open for one weekend made up of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The recreational red snapper season opens at 12:01 a.m., local time, on August 23, 2013, and closes at 12:01 a.m., local time, on August 26, 2013. During the open recreational season, the bag limit is one fish per person per day and there is no minimum size limit for red snapper.

NOAA Fisheries may change the commercial and recreational season dates if severe weather conditions exist. If severe weather conditions exist, NOAA Fisheries will announce via NOAA Weather Radio and a Fishery Bulletin any change in the red snapper fishing seasons.

After the conclusion of the commercial fishing season, harvest and possession of red snapper are limited to the bag limit unless the recreational sector is closed. After the conclusion of the recreational fishing season, red snapper may not be harvested or possessed under the bag limit in federal waters of the South Atlantic.

Harvest and possession prohibitions also apply to state waters for vessels holding federal snapper-grouper permits.

The commercial and recreational annual catch limits for 2013 are 21,447 pounds gutted weight and 9,585 fish, respectively. The sector annual catch limits are based upon allocations previously decided by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

Amendment 28

Amendment 28 establishes the annual process to determine red snapper fishing seasons and harvest amounts. More specifically, Amendment 28 establishes (1) ***a process*** to determine if a fishing season will occur each year, which would include specification of the allowable harvest for both sectors and season length for the recreational sector; (2) ***an equation*** to determine the annual catch limit amount for each sector; and (3) ***management measures*** if fishing is allowed. The final rule for Amendment 28 will publish in the *Federal Register* on July 24, 2013.

The intent of the 2013 red snapper opening and the actions in Amendment 28 are to provide fishermen the opportunity to harvest the red snapper annual catch limit and enhance the social and economic benefits to the fishery.

More information, including Frequently Asked Questions for the 2013 red snapper fishing seasons can be found online at:
http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/2013/am28/index.html

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June 2, 2014
FB14-038

NOAA Fisheries Announces the Opening of the 2014 Commercial and Recreational Red Snapper Fishing Seasons in the South Atlantic Federal Waters

NOAA Fisheries announces the opening of the 2014 commercial and recreational red snapper fishing seasons in South Atlantic federal waters. NOAA Fisheries may change the commercial and recreational season dates if tropical storm or hurricane conditions exist, or are projected to exist, in the South Atlantic. If severe weather conditions exist, NOAA Fisheries will announce via NOAA Weather Radio and a Fishery Bulletin any change in the red snapper fishing seasons.

Commercial

The commercial 2014 catch limit is set at 50,994 pounds gutted weight. The commercial red snapper season opens at 12:01 a.m., local time, on July 14, 2014. During the open commercial season, the daily trip limit is 75 pounds gutted weight and there is no minimum size limit for red snapper. The commercial season will end when the annual catch limit is projected to be met. Commercial landings are updated on the Southeast Regional Office's Web site: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/acl_monitoring/commercial_sa/index.html. Another *Federal Register* notice and Fishery Bulletin will be published if and when the commercial annual catch limit for red snapper is projected to be met.

Recreational

The recreational 2014 catch limit is set at 22,576 fish. The recreational fishing season will open for two weekends made up of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday and one weekend of Friday and Saturday. The dates and times that the recreational red snapper season will be open are listed in the table below. During the open recreational season, the bag limit is one fish per person per day and there is no minimum size limit for red snapper.

	Recreational Opening Date/Time	Recreational Closure Date/Time
Weekend 1	Friday, July 11 (at 12:01 a.m.)	Monday, July 14 (at 12:01 a.m.)
Weekend 2	Friday, July 18 (at 12:01 a.m.)	Monday, July 21 (at 12:01 a.m.)
Weekend 3	Friday, July 25 (at 12:01 a.m.)	Sunday, July 27 (at 12:01 a.m.)

For additional information regarding the South Atlantic red snapper annual catch limits and recreational season length projection report, please visit: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/documents/pdfs/sa_rs_acl_season_projections.pdf. For more information, refer to the Frequently Asked Questions.

This bulletin provides only a summary of the existing regulations. Full regulations can be found in the *Federal Register*.

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July 24, 2014
FB14-053

REMINDER: 2014 Commercial and Recreational Red Snapper Fishing Seasons in the South Atlantic Federal Waters

This is a reminder about the commercial and recreational fishing seasons in South Atlantic federal waters for red snapper. Unlike the previous two weekends, the recreational fishing season for the upcoming weekend (beginning July 25, 2014) will be open on Friday and Saturday only and will not be open on Sunday. For the upcoming weekend, the recreational fishing season for red snapper in South Atlantic waters will open on Friday, July 25 (at 12:01 a.m.) and close on Sunday, July 27 (at 12:01 a.m.). During the open recreational season, the bag limit is one fish per person per day and there is no minimum size limit for red snapper.

The commercial red snapper season opened at 12:01 a.m. on July 14, 2014. The commercial season will end when the annual catch limit is projected to be met. Another *Federal Register* notice and Fishery Bulletin will be published if and when the commercial annual catch limit for red snapper is projected to be met. During the open commercial season, the daily trip limit is 75 pounds gutted weight and there is no minimum size limit for red snapper.

If severe weather conditions exist, NOAA Fisheries will announce via NOAA Weather Radio and a Fishery Bulletin any change in the red snapper fishing seasons.

For additional information regarding the South Atlantic red snapper annual catch limits and recreational season length projection report, please visit: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/documents/pdfs/sa_rs_acl_season_projections.pdf. For more information, refer to the Frequently Asked Questions.

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September 2, 2014
FB14-065

Commercial Harvest of Red Snapper in South Atlantic Waters Will Close on September 9, 2014

Commercial harvest of red snapper in South Atlantic waters will **close at 12:01 a.m. (local time) September 9, 2014.** The 2014 commercial catch limit is 50,994 pounds gutted weight. Reports indicate that commercial landings are rapidly approaching the 2014 catch limit and harvest should close.

The operator of a vessel that has been issued a federal commercial permit for snapper-grouper and that is landing red snapper for sale must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such red snapper prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, September 9, 2014. The prohibition on sale does not apply to sale or purchase of red snapper that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m. (local time) September 9, 2014, and held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

During the closure:

- Sale and purchase of red snapper are prohibited.
- The closure applies in both state and federal waters.

This closure is necessary to protect the snapper-grouper resource.

Amendment 28 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic established the annual process to determine red snapper fishing seasons and harvest amounts. If NOAA Fisheries determines that commercial and recreational red snapper seasons can occur in 2015, an announcement will be made in a Fishery Bulletin next year.

NOAA NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

South Atlantic Fishery Bulletin

Bringing Fishing News to You

FB17-071
FISHERY BULLETIN ISSUE DATE: November 24, 2017
CONTACT: Sustainable Fisheries (727) 824-5305

Recreational Reopening of Red Snapper in South Atlantic Federal Waters on December 8, 9, & 10, 2017

WHAT/WHEN:

- The recreational harvest of red snapper in South Atlantic federal waters will reopen for three days in December 2017. Recreational harvest will **reopen 12:01 a.m. (local time) on December 8, 2017, and close 12:01 a.m. (local time) on December 11, 2017**. During the three-day reopening, the recreational bag limit for red snapper is one fish per person per day with no minimum size limit.

WHY THIS REOPENING IS HAPPENING:

- Recreational harvest of red snapper was allowed for six days in November 2017. The 2017 recreational catch limit for red snapper is 29,656 fish. As of November 16, 2017, preliminary estimates of recreational harvest indicate that the catch limit has not been caught, likely due to inclement weather. Harvest projections show that an additional three-day opening for red snapper by the recreational sector would not result in harvest exceeding the 2017 recreational catch limit.

AFTER THE REOPENING:

- Recreational harvest of red snapper is closed for the remaining part of 2017 beginning at 12:01 a.m. (local time) on December 11, 2017.

This bulletin provides only a summary of the existing regulations. Full regulations can be found in the *Federal Register* or at https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=383bc195ccbeab4fd6bec1c24905df34&node=sp50.12.622.i&rgn=div6#_top.

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Other contacts:
Media: Kim Amendola, 727-551-5707
Allison Garrett, 727-551-5750

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South Atlantic Fishery Bulletin

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FB18-050
FISHERY BULLETIN ISSUE DATE: July 23, 2018
CONTACT: Frank Helies, Sustainable Fisheries, 727-824-5305, frank.helies@noaa.gov

NOAA Fisheries Announces Limited Opening of Recreational and Commercial Red Snapper Seasons in South Atlantic Federal Waters

KEY MESSAGE:

NOAA Fisheries announces a final rule for Amendment 43 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 43). This rule specifies recreational and commercial annual catch limits for red snapper beginning in 2018.

- Red snapper recreational and commercial seasons will open in South Atlantic federal waters for limited harvest beginning in 2018.
- The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council approved Amendment 43 after recent scientific information indicated an increase in the red snapper population since 2010.
- NOAA Fisheries determined limited harvest beginning in 2018 is neither expected to result in overfishing, nor prevent continued rebuilding of the population.

WHEN RULE WILL TAKE EFFECT:

- The rule will take effect on July 26, 2018.
- The **recreational sector** will open for harvest on weekends only (Friday, Saturday, Sunday) on the following days:
    - August 10, 11, and 12, 2018 – The recreational season opens at 12:01 a.m., local time, on August 10, 2018, and closes at 12:01 a.m., local time, on August 13, 2018.
    - August 17, 18, and 19, 2018 – The recreational season opens again at 12:01 a.m., local time, on August 17, 2018, and closes at 12:01 a.m., local time, on August 20, 2018.
- The **commercial sector** will open for harvest upon publication of the final rule at 12:01 a.m., local time, on July 26, 2018, and will close at 11:59 p.m., local time, on December 31, 2018, unless the commercial annual catch limit is met or projected to be met before this date.
    - NOAA Fisheries will announce if the commercial sector needs to close before December 31, 2018.

WHAT THIS MEANS:

- The total annual catch limit will be 42,510 fish.
- The **recreational** annual catch limit will be 29,656 fish.
    - The recreational bag limit will be one red snapper per person per day. This applies to private and charterboat/headboat vessels (the captain and crew on for-hire vessels may retain the recreational bag limit).
- The **commercial** annual catch limit will be 124,815 pounds whole weight (12,854 fish).
    - The commercial trip limit will be 75 pounds gutted weight.
- There will be no minimum or maximum size limit for the recreational or commercial sectors.
- NOAA Fisheries expects that beginning in 2019, commercial and recreational harvest will begin in July, as per Amendment 43 and the final rule.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

When will the 2018 South Atlantic recreational and commercial red snapper seasons open?

- The **recreational sector** will open for harvest on weekends only (Friday, Saturday, Sunday) on the following days:
    - August 10, 11, and 12, 2018 – The recreational season opens at 12:01 a.m., local time, on August 10, 2018, and closes at 12:01 a.m., local time, on August 13, 2018.
    - August 17, 18, and 19, 2018 – The recreational season opens again at 12:01 a.m., local time, on August 17, 2018, and closes at 12:01 a.m., local time, on August 20, 2018.
- The **commercial sector** will open for harvest upon implementation of the final rule at 12:01 a.m., local time, on July 26, 2018, and will close at 11:59 p.m., local time, on December 31, 2018, unless the commercial annual catch limit is met or projected to be met before this date.
    - NOAA Fisheries will announce if the commercial sector needs to close before December 31, 2018.

What will the regulations for red snapper be during the Atlantic recreational and commercial red snapper seasons?

- **Recreational** annual catch limit of 29,656 fish.
    - The recreational bag limit of one red snapper per person per day. This applies to private and charterboat/headboat vessels (the captain and crew on for-hire vessels may retain the recreational bag limit).
- **Commercial** annual catch limit of 124,815 pounds whole weight (12,854 fish).
    - The commercial trip limit of 75 pounds gutted weight.
- There will be no minimum or maximum size limit for either the recreational or commercial sector.

Why is limited harvest of South Atlantic red snapper allowed to begin in 2018?

- Recent studies show red snapper abundance has increased in the South Atlantic since 2014, and was highest in 2017.
    - These fisheries independent studies are available online at:
        - Southeast Reef Fish Survey program: http://safmc.net/download/Briefing%20Book%20Council%20Mtg%20June%202018/Late%20Materials/Tab%2008%20-%20Snapper%20Grouper%20Committee/TAB08_A05_SERFSTrendsReport_06_2018.pdf.
        - Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission: http://safmc.net/download/Briefing%20Book%20Sept%202017/Late%20Materials/TAB01/Tab01_A1_FWRI_SA_Red_Snapper_OverviewREVISEDSep17.pdf.

    - The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission study also shows a greater number of large red snapper and a broader range of ages in recent years suggesting the red snapper population is rebuilding despite the limited harvest allowed in 2012, 2013, and 2014.
- The total annual catch limit equals the landings of red snapper when harvest occurred in 2014, the highest observed landings during the limited openings in 2012-2014.
- The harvest prohibitions of red snapper since 2010 have resulted in adverse socio-economic effects to fishermen and fishing communities such as loss of additional revenue and recreational opportunities, as well as indirect benefits to businesses that provide supplies for fishing trips.
- Federal and state personnel will collect fishery dependent information on red snapper, including catch data and biological samples during the open seasons beginning in 2018, which could inform future population assessments.

How will the limited harvest beginning in 2018 affect the overfishing and overfished status of red snapper?

- NOAA Fisheries has determined that the limited harvest beginning in 2018 is not expected to result in overfishing and is not expected to prevent the continued rebuilding of the red snapper population.

What is the history of South Atlantic red snapper harvest and prohibitions since 2010?

- Harvest of red snapper from South Atlantic federal waters was prohibited in 2010 when the population was determined to be severely overfished and undergoing overfishing (See 2008 population assessment - Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review [SEDAR] 15).
- Amendment 28 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region established a process that allowed harvest if total removals (landings plus dead discards) were below the acceptable biological catch in the previous year.
- Limited harvest of red snapper was allowed in 2012, 2013, and 2014.
- The estimated total removals of red snapper exceeded the acceptable biological catch in 2014, 2015, and 2016, resulting in no allowable harvest since 2014.
- NOAA Fisheries temporarily allowed limited harvest of red snapper beginning November 2, 2017, by a temporary rule through emergency action. The temporary rule was effective through December 31, 2017.

What is the current status of the red snapper population in the South Atlantic Region?

- The latest population assessment (SEDAR 41) was completed in 2016 and revised in 2017. It indicated the South Atlantic red snapper population is overfished and undergoing overfishing; however, the population is rebuilding.
- The red snapper overfishing determination in the assessment came from 2012-2014 when only a small amount of harvest was allowed to occur. However, discards during this time period were high due to fishermen targeting other species that co-occur with red snapper, which likely contributed to the overfishing determination.

- Recent results from fishery-independent studies suggest that the relative abundance of red snapper has increased since 2014.

What are some Best Fishing Practices while fishing for red snapper?

- The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council identified the following best practices to reduce release mortality and further protect the population as it rebuilds:
    - Avoid areas likely to have red snapper if you already have met your recreational bag limit. If you are approaching your commercial vessel limit, move to a different area.
    - When red snapper are out of season, avoid areas where they are common.
    - Use single hook rigs since the recreational bag limit for red snapper during the proposed limited fishing seasons will be one per person per day. This will potentially reduce the number of red snapper that are caught on one drop.
    - Use non-offset circle hooks while fishing in areas where red snapper are common.
    - Use a dehooking device to remove the hook. Keep fish in the water if you plan to release them or return them to the water as quickly as possible.
    - Use descending devices when releasing fish with signs of barotrauma.

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South Atlantic Fishery Bulletin

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FB18-082
FISHERY BULLETIN ISSUE DATE: November 30, 2018
CONTACT: Sustainable Fisheries (727) 824-5305

Commercial Reopening for Red Snapper in South Atlantic Federal Waters on December 5, 2018

WHAT/WHEN:

- The commercial harvest of red snapper in South Atlantic federal waters will reopen for 10 days on December 5, 2018. Commercial harvest will **reopen at 12:01 a.m., local time, on December 5, 2018, and close at 12:01 a.m., local time, on December 15, 2018**. During the 10-day reopening, the commercial trip limit for red snapper is 75 pounds gutted weight.

WHY THIS REOPENING IS HAPPENING:

- The 2018 commercial catch limit for red snapper is 124,815 pounds whole weight. On November 7, 2018, the commercial catch limit for the 2018 season was projected to be met, and NOAA Fisheries closed commercial harvest. However, new information indicates that the red snapper commercial catch limit was not met.

AFTER THE REOPENING:

- The 2019 fishing season for the red snapper commercial sector opens at 12:01 a.m., local time, on July 8, 2019, unless otherwise specified.
- As a reminder, recreational harvest is closed. Therefore, the recreational bag and possession limit for red snapper in or from South Atlantic federal waters is zero. The 2019 recreational season, which consists of weekends only (Friday, Saturday, Sunday), begins on the 2nd Friday in July, unless otherwise specified.

This bulletin provides only a summary of the existing regulations. Full regulations can be found in the *Federal Register* or at https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=383bc195ccbeab4fd6bec1c24905df34&node=sp50.12.622.i&rgn=div6#_top.

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