Recreational Anglers Asked to Help with Red Snapper Reporting

New pilot electronic reporting program designed to help with data collection during mini-season

Recreational fishermen gearing up to take advantage of the red snapper mini-season this year will also have the opportunity to voluntarily report their catches and releases of red snapper via a new pilot reporting website at MyFishCount.com. The recreational season will open in federal waters of the South Atlantic for two consecutive 3-day weekends, November 3rd through 5th and November 10th through 12th.

After hearing the requests of anglers across the region, the Council and the Snook and Gamefish Foundation in partnership with Elemental Methods, have teamed up to make recreational electronic reporting a possibility for the 2017 red snapper mini-season through MyFishCount.com. The type of catch information anglers can record on MyFishCount.com include fish length, photos, depth fished, release method, and more.

To log catches on MyFishCount.com, anglers need to first register for an account on the website. Once registered, the easy-to-use website will allow each user the opportunity to create a trip log, enter catch information, and view past trips from one convenient location. The website is accessible from any internet-enabled device while in cellular range. To collect information while fishing offshore out of cellular range, anglers can download and print a log sheet to record catch information to later be entered into MyFishCount.com. The downloadable form will be available for the mini-season and available on the MyFishCount.com website and the Council’s website under the Red Snapper Reporting page.

Using MyFishCount.com during the mini-season is an opportunity to collect information about the current red snapper fishery and can provide information to inform the development of future recreational reporting platforms. “We saw a unique opportunity to involve anglers in testing this pilot program with this year’s red snapper mini-season,” explained Chester Brewer, recreational fisherman and member of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council from West Palm Beach, Florida. “Fishermen have been telling managers about the increasing numbers of red snapper as the stock continues to rebuild. This pilot project gives them the opportunity to help document what they are seeing.” Brewer noted that this type of data collection effort may be useful in the future management of red snapper.

“It is also imperative that anglers use best fishing practices as they take advantage of this opportunity to catch red snapper,” said Brewer. “The use of descending devices and other best fishing practices will be highly beneficial in reducing fishing mortality as this stock continues to rebuild.”

Additional information on the pilot program, best fishing practices, and other items of interest for the upcoming red snapper season is available from the Council’s website at: http://safmc.net/electronic-reporting-projects/red-snapper-reporting.

To learn more about MyFishCount and to register for an account, visit MyFishCount.com or contact Kelsey Dick at the Council office at 843-725-7580 or kelsey.dick@safmc.net.