

Snapper Grouper Sea Turtle and Smalltooth Sawfish Release Gear Requirements



Why do I have to carry sea turtle and smalltooth sawfish release gear?

The snapper grouper fishery in the South Atlantic Region is known to interact with endangered and threatened sea turtles and smalltooth sawfish. In order for the snapper grouper fishery to be exempt from the take prohibitions established in the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the National Marine Fisheries Service has to comply with terms and conditions, which include sea turtle and smalltooth sawfish handling protocols and/or guidelines for the commercial and for-hire sectors.

What does the ESA-listed sea turtles and smalltooth sawfish release protocol require onboard for commercial and for-hire snapper grouper vessels?

“Careful Release Protocols for Sea Turtle Release with Minimal Injury”	Must be available for reference on board electronically or have a paper copy on board inside the wheelhouse, or within a waterproof case.	Available HERE
Sea turtle handling and release guidelines placards.	Must be posted inside the wheelhouse or an easily viewable area.	Available HERE
Proper sea turtle release gear.	Required gear varies by freeboard height.	List of required gears available HERE .

Do you have additional questions?

Click [HERE](#) for a list of frequently asked questions, or feel free to contact us:

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council: 843-571-4366

NMFS Southeast Regional Office: 727-824-5305

