



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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PROPOSED RULE TO IMPLEMENT AMENDMENT 13C TO THE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN (FMP) FOR THE SNAPPER GROUPER FISHERY OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION COMMENT PERIOD OPEN

CHANGES INTENDED TO REDUCE HARVESTS, END OVERFISHING AND ACHIEVE OPTIMUM YIELD

NOAA Fisheries Service announces the proposed rule to implement Amendment 13C to the FMP for the snapper grouper fishery of the South Atlantic region. The notice of availability of Amendment 13C is available for comment through July 17, 2006.

The proposed regulatory changes are intended to reduce harvests, end overfishing, and achieve optimum yield (the amount of fish which will achieve the maximum sustainable yield, as reduced by any relevant economic, social, or ecological factor) of the snapper grouper fishery of the South Atlantic.

Snowy grouper:

- Decrease the annual commercial quota over three years from 151,000 pounds gutted weight (lbs gw) to 84,000 lbs gw in year 3;
- Decrease the commercial trip limit over three years from 275 lbs gw to 100 lbs gw in year 3; and
- Limit possession to one per person per day within the 5-grouper per person per day aggregate recreational bag.

Golden tilefish:

- Reduce the annual commercial quota to 295,000 lbs gw;
- Reduce the commercial trip limit to 4,000 lbs gw, which would decrease to 300 lbs gw if 75

percent of the quota were taken by September 1; and

- Limit possession to one per person per day within the 5-grouper per person per day aggregate recreational bag limit.

Vermilion snapper:

- Establish an annual commercial quota of 1,100,000 lbs gw; and
- Increase the recreational minimum size limit from 11-inch total length (TL) to 12-inch TL.

Black sea bass:

- Establish and decrease an annual commercial quota, over three years from 477,000 lbs gw to 309,000 lbs gw in year 3;
- Require the use of at least 2-inch mesh for the entire back panel of pots;
- Remove pots from the water once the commercial quota is met;
- Change commercial and recreational fishing years from the calendar year to June 1 through May 31;
- Establish a recreational allocation which would decrease over three years from 633,000 lbs gw to 409,000 lbs gw in year 3;
- Increase the recreational size limit from 10-inch TL to 12-inch TL over two years; and
- Reduce the recreational bag limit from 20 to 15 per person per day.

Red porgy:

- Increase the commercial trip limit during May through December;
- Establish a commercial quota of 127,000 lbs gw; and
- Increase the recreational bag limit from 1 to 3 red porgy per person per day.

For a complete description of the proposed regulatory changes, please obtain a copy of the proposed rule (See Addresses and Dates section, below).

Electronic copies of the Proposed Rule as published in the *Federal Register* may be obtained at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/Index.html>. Print copies of the proposed rule are available from Jack McGovern at the Southeast Regional Office, NOAA Fisheries Service, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701; phone: (727) 824-5383, fax: (727) 824-5308.

Written comments on the proposed rule must be received no later than 5 p.m., eastern time, on July 24, 2006. Comments may be submitted via e-mail, written correspondence, or fax. You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

E-mail: 0648-AT75.Proposed@noaa.gov; include the following document in the subject line: 0648-AT75-Proposed.

Federal Rulemaking Portal: Follow the Instructions at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Fax: Comments may be faxed to: 727-824-5308.

All comments received by NOAA Fisheries Service on the amendment or the proposed rule during their respective comment periods will be considered by NOAA Fisheries Service in its decision to approve, disapprove, or partially approve the amendment and its implementing regulations. All comments will be addressed in the final rule.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation’s living marine resources and their habitats through scientific research, management, and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

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