



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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

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Reminder about 2011 Recreational Grouper Regulations in the Gulf of Mexico

Gag

NOAA Fisheries Service reminds fishermen a temporary rule will go into effect on **January 1, 2011**, that sets the recreational gag bag limit to zero. This rule was put in place to reduce overfishing of gag. Gag is currently considered overfished (population abundance is too low) and undergoing overfishing (rate of removal too high). The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires that overfished stocks be rebuilt and that overfishing be halted. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council requested NOAA Fisheries Service implement this temporary rule to address overfishing while they developed a long-term rebuilding plan through Amendment 32 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico.

Other shallow-water species

NOAA Fisheries Service also reminds fishermen:

- The recreational harvest of shallow-water grouper will be prohibited from **February 1 through March 31**.
- The aggregate grouper bag limit is four fish per person per day.

- The red grouper bag limit is two fish per person per day and is part of the four-fish aggregate bag limit.
- Minimum size limits are 22 inches total length (TL) for black grouper; 20 inches TL for red and yellowfin grouper; and 16 inches TL for scamp. If harvest is allowed, other species have no minimum size limit.
- Harvest of goliath and Nassau grouper is prohibited.

Charter vessels and headboats

Where federal and state regulations differ, operators of federally permitted charter vessels and headboats are reminded they must comply with the more restrictive of federal or state reef fish regulations when fishing for reef fish in state waters. Additionally, captain and crew are prohibited from retaining bag limits of any grouper while under charter.

Need more information on these topics?

Southeast Regional Office's Web page:
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

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