



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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Establishment of a June and July Closed Season for the Recreational Harvest of Greater Amberjack in the Gulf of Mexico SMALL ENTITY GUIDE

NOAA Fisheries Service has published a final rule to establish a **June 1 through July 31** seasonal closure for recreational harvest of greater amberjack in or from the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) federal waters. The intended effect of the rule is to maintain the rebuilding plan targets for the overfished greater amberjack resource, reduce the likelihood of exceeding the recreational quota for greater amberjack, minimize the length of in-season quota closures for greater amberjack during peak recreational fishing months, and increase social and economic benefits for Gulf recreational fishers by maximizing the number of fishing days available to the recreational sector.

Background: In 2009, the recreational sector exceeded its greater amberjack quota. The recreational sector was closed on October 24 after NOAA Fisheries Service projected the recreational quota was met. Final landings indicated the recreational quota was exceeded by 9 percent. In accordance with established accountability measures, the recreational quota for 2010 was reduced to account for this overage.

In response to this quota closure, the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council (Council) developed a regulatory amendment to establish a fixed closed season to the harvest of greater amberjack by the recreational sector. Based on public input, the Council selected to have a seasonal closure during June and July. These are peak recreational harvesting months of greater amberjack; closing federal waters during this time frame is expected to allow recreational fishing for greater amberjack to occur in all other months of

the year, without exceeding the quota before year's end.

This two month closure coincides with the open recreational seasons for other managed reef fish species, including red snapper, and provides recreational fishers the opportunity to fish for at least one of the targeted species year round (provided the recreational quota for greater amberjack is not exceeded). A closed season for Gulf greater amberjack that overlaps with an open season for Gulf red snapper is intended to minimize the social and economic impacts to recreational fishers in the Gulf.

This bulletin serves as a Small Entity Compliance Guide, complying with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996. This bulletin provides only a summary of the information about the rule. Discrepancies between this bulletin and the rule as published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.

Copies of the final rule are available by contacting NOAA Fisheries Service's Southeast Regional Office at 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701. The final rule can be obtained in electronic form from the *Federal Register* Web site: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html> (use advanced search for final rules using "BA48" as a keyword).

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Southeast Regional Office's Web page:

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