



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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Reminders Regarding the Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program in the Gulf of Mexico

Quota Changes for 2012 Fishing Year

On January 1, 2012, the red grouper quota will increase from 5.23 to 5.37 million pounds gutted weight. Commercial quota increases for gag, deep-water grouper, other shallow-water grouper, and tilefish have been proposed by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council) and, if approved by NOAA Fisheries Service, will be implemented Spring 2012. The Gulf Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee will also review updated red snapper data at their January meeting, which may result in an increase to the quota later in the year.

IFQ Species Changes

The Gulf Council is proposing to remove five species from the reef fish fishery management plan that are currently regulated under the IFQ program. These species include: blackline tilefish, anchor tilefish, misty grouper, red hind, and rock hind. Dealers will no longer need to report landings of these species to the IFQ online system once they are removed from the fishery management plan. Landings of these species should still be reported on state trip tickets and federal logbooks.

End of Year Landing Transactions

On December 31, 2011, the IFQ online system will be shut down for maintenance at 6 p.m. eastern standard time (EST) to prepare for the 2012 fishing year. Dealers and IFQ fishermen are reminded that all electronic transactions must be completed before this time. Electronic IFQ functions will resume at 2 p.m. EST on January 1, 2012. You may still submit an advanced notice of landing during the 20-hour maintenance window by using your vessel's vessel monitoring system or by calling IFQ Customer Service (866) 425-7627 (Option 1).

IFQ Online Accounts

Beginning January 1, 2012, all U.S. citizens and permanent resident aliens are eligible to establish IFQ online accounts and purchase red snapper quota shares

and allocation (i.e., pounds). Prior to this date, only participants with a valid commercial reef fish permit could establish online accounts and purchase red snapper quota shares and allocation. **You may not harvest red snapper commercially without a valid Gulf of Mexico commercial reef fish permit and sufficient red snapper IFQ allocation. You also will not be eligible to purchase grouper-tilefish quota shares and allocation without a commercial reef fish permit.**

Persons not currently participating in the IFQ program can call IFQ Customer Support after January 1, 2012, to begin the process of applying for an online IFQ account. All persons that currently have an IFQ account (either active or inactive) must submit an application to maintain access to your IFQ account. Applications were mailed to all IFQ participants on record in early December. If you did not receive an application, or if you have questions about the application, please call IFQ Customer Support. A completed application must be returned to NOAA Fisheries Service on or before January 31, 2012, to maintain access to your account.

IFQ Online System Changes

Due to the new public participation requirements for red snapper, shareholders will see several IFQ online system changes beginning January 1, 2012. The primary change will be separate share and allocation transfer screens for red snapper versus other grouper-tilefish species. This change was necessary to address the new eligibility requirements for transferring red snapper shares and allocation.

Transfer 2012 Allocation to Your Vessel Account after January 1

On January 1, allocation will be issued to your shareholder account, *not your vessel account*. To harvest this allocation, you must transfer sufficient allocation to your vessel account prior to your landing notification.

To Transfer Allocation to your vessel, log in to your IFQ account:

1. On the menu bar select **Allocation** then select **Transfer Allocation** and follow the instructions. Note: Allocation transfers for red snapper must be completed separately from allocation transfers for grouper-tilefish.
2. Step 1: Select “From My Shareholder Account To My Vessel Account” is selected from the drop-down menu.
3. Step 2: Select your vessel account; you must click the vessel name to highlight it in blue. The numbers to the right of your vessel’s name indicate the allocation currently held in the **vessel account** by share category.
4. Step 3: In the “Transfer Pounds (gutted weight)” column type in the number of pounds of allocation you would like to transfer to your vessel account.
5. To complete an allocation transfer press Submit in the lower left corner of the screen. You will receive a pop-up asking you to confirm the transfer.

Accept Share Transfers

Remember that a share transfer is a two step process requiring shares to be transferred by the transferor, and then accepted by the receiving party. The transferee must log into their shareholder account, select the “Receive Transferred Shares” tab, and then accept the share transfer. Share transfers must be completed prior to December 31, 2011, to receive allocation associated with the shares in 2012.

To Receive Transferred Shares:

1. On the menu bar select **Shares** then select **Receive Transferred Shares** and follow the instructions.
2. Step 1: Select one transfer from the table of pending share transfers by clicking on the share transfer and highlighting it in blue. Included in the table are the percentage of shares transferred by share category and the transfer status.
3. Step 2: Review the details of the selected share transfer to ensure the percentage, price, and other information are correct.
4. Step 3: If the information is correct, select the ‘Accepted’ status. If you want to reject the transfer, select the ‘Rejected’ status.

5. Step 4: Select the ‘Confirm’ button to confirm your acceptance or rejection of the transferred shares from another shareholder. You will then receive a pop-up screen asking you to confirm the transaction for final submission.

Vessel Transfers

If you transfer a reef fish permitted vessel, the vessel account associated with that vessel must be transferred as well. Before initiating the vessel transfer please remove any IFQ allocation on the vessel account so that it can be transferred to the new owner. If you purchase a reef fish permitted vessel, please contact IFQ Support to facilitate the transfer of the vessel account into your IFQ Shareholder account. NOAA Fisheries Service will be unable to transfer the vessel account to the new permit holder until all IFQ allocation is removed.

Cost Recovery Fees

Fishers are responsible for submitting 3 percent of the ex-vessel value of IFQ species to the dealer purchasing those fish. At the end of each calendar quarter, the dealer is responsible for submitting the cost recovery fees to NOAA Fisheries Service via the online system. The dealer has 30 days to submit the cost recovery fees. Dealer accounts will be suspended after 30 days pending payment of applicable fees. The payment schedule is listed below so that dealers may mark their calendars as a reminder.

Quarter	CRF available	CRF due on or before
1 st	April 1	May 1
2 nd	July 1	July 31
3 rd	October 1	October 31
4 th	January 1	January 31

Please Send Your Feedback

As the online system continues to change, please provide your suggested changes and additions by e-mail SER-IFQ.Support@noaa.gov, or call IFQ Support at **1-866-425-7627 (Option 2)** Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., EST, excluding federal holidays. We will review the suggested changes and if possible, incorporate your suggestions into the program.

This bulletin provides only a summary of the information regarding the existing regulations. Any discrepancies between this bulletin and the regulations as published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.