



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Maria Lopez; Maria.Lopez@noaa.gov
727/824-5305, FAX 727/824-5308

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NOAA Fisheries Service Announces New Regulations for Reef Fish and Queen Conch in the U.S. Caribbean

Small Entity Compliance Guide

On December 19, 2011, NOAA Fisheries Service approved the 2010 Caribbean Annual Catch Limit Amendment. This amendment to the Fishery Management Plans for reef fish and queen conch resources in the U.S. Caribbean is designed to bring those fisheries into compliance with the 2007 revisions to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. A final rule implementing these regulations published in the *Federal Register* on December 30, 2011 (76 FR 82404) with an effective date of January 30, 2012.

The final rule modifies regulations for snapper, grouper, parrotfish, and queen conch.

The final rule makes the following changes to the Fishery Management Plans for reef fish and queen conch resources:

- Amends the composition of the snapper and grouper species included in the rule.
- Establishes annual catch limits for species where the rate of removal is too high or the population abundance is too low, and puts accountability measures into place to protect the fish stocks in both the commercial and recreational sectors.
- Prohibits harvest of three species of parrotfish (midnight, blue, rainbow).
- Establishes an aggregate bag limit for recreational fishing of snapper, grouper, and parrotfish consisting of five fish per person per day with no more than two parrotfish per person per day within the aggregate, or fifteen fish per vessel per day with no more than six parrotfish per vessel per day within the aggregate.

- Establishes boundaries in federal waters for purposes of applying accountability measures.
- Establishes separate annual catch limits for each of the commercial and recreational sectors in the federal waters of Puerto Rico.
- Establishes framework provisions for the Reef Fish and Queen Conch Resources Fishery Management Plans.
- Provides guidelines for triggering accountability measures and for applying those measures.

This bulletin serves as a Small Entity Compliance Guide, complying with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996.

Electronic copies of the amendment and final rule may be obtained from the NOAA Fisheries Service Web site:
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/CaribbeanReefFish.htm>

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*.

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