



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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

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FB12-081

## NOAA Fisheries Seeks Public Comment on Amendment 18B for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region *Comment Period Ends: December 26, 2012*

NOAA Fisheries is seeking public comment on Amendment 18B to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 18B). The amendment proposes an endorsement program for the commercial longline sector of the golden tilefish component of the snapper-grouper fishery.

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council has submitted Amendment 18B to NOAA Fisheries for review, approval, and implementation. The Notice of Availability for public comment on this amendment published in the *Federal Register* on October 26, 2012. Comments will be accepted until December 26, 2012.

### Amendment 18B proposes:

- An endorsement program for the commercial longline sector of the golden tilefish component of the snapper-grouper fishery. Only golden tilefish fishermen who meet certain landings criteria and also have a valid Unlimited South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Permit would receive an endorsement and be allowed to use longline gear to harvest golden tilefish.
- Establishment of longline landings criteria to determine who will receive endorsements.
- An appeals process for the golden tilefish endorsement program.
- Establishment of a procedure to allow transferability of golden tilefish endorsements.
- To allocate the commercial annual catch limit; 75% to the longline sector and 25% to the hook and line sector.
- Changes to the golden tilefish trip limit to remove the 300 pound gutted weight trip limit when 75% of the annual catch limit is caught.
- Establishment of 500 pound gutted weight trip limit for those who do not qualify for a golden tilefish endorsement.

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 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*.

### Request for Comments

Written comments on this proposed rule must be received **no later than December 26, 2012**, to be considered by NOAA Fisheries. All comments received by NOAA Fisheries will be addressed in the final rule. Electronic copies of the proposed rule or the regulatory amendment may be obtained from the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>, and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Web site at [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net).

### How to Submit Comments

You may submit comments by either of the following methods. Comments received through other means may not be considered.

**Electronic Submissions:** Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>

- Enter the following docket number into the "Search" box: **NOAA-NMFS-2012-0177**.
- Select the appropriate title, and click "Submit a Comment." This will display the comment webform.
- Attachments to electronic comments (up to 10 MB) will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

**Mail:** Karla Gore, NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Regional Office, Sustainable Fisheries Division, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505.

All comments will be part of the public record, and generally posted for public viewing to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) without change. All personal identifying information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter, may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. Anonymous comments will be accepted.

#### **More Information**

For more information on Amendment 18B please visit the Southeast Regional Office Web page at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/index.html>, or view the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Web page at: [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net).

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