



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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Commercial Harvest of Snowy Grouper Closing to Vessels Fishing in South Atlantic Waters on December 19, 2012

The commercial harvest of snowy grouper in the **South Atlantic from North Carolina through Key West, Florida, will be closed, effective 12:01 a.m. (local time), December 19, 2012**, through the remainder of the 2012 fishing year. NOAA Fisheries has determined the 2012 commercial annual catch limit of 82,900 pounds gutted weight will be reached by that date.

The operator of a vessel that has been issued a federal commercial permit for snapper-grouper and has snowy grouper for sale must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such snowy grouper prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, December 19, 2012.

During the closure, all harvest and possession of snowy grouper in or from closed waters is subject to the applicable bag and possession limits, and the sale or purchase of snowy grouper taken from closed waters is prohibited. In addition, those bag and possession limits, and the prohibition on sale or purchase, apply in state and federal waters of the Atlantic region for a vessel for which a valid federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper has been issued.

The prohibition on sale or purchase does not apply to sale or purchase of snowy grouper that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, December 19, 2012, and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.