



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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

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FB13-031

NOAA Fisheries Seeks Comments - Proposed Rule Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Quota Increase

NOAA Fisheries is seeking comments on a proposed rule for **Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper**. The rule, if implemented, would set the 2013 quotas for commercial and recreational red snapper harvest. The quotas can be increased because recent population assessments show that overfishing has ended. The red snapper allowable catch would be increased from **8.080** million pounds whole weight in 2012 to the following:

	2012	2013
Overall Quota	8.080	8.460
Commercial Allocation (51%)	4.121	4.315
Recreational Allocation (49%)	3.959	4.145

Recreational Season

The federal recreational season for Gulf of Mexico red snapper begins June 1 each year with a 2-fish bag limit. The length of the season is determined by the amount of the quota, the average weight of fish landed, and the estimated catch rates over time. NOAA Fisheries is responsible for ensuring the entire recreational harvest, including harvest in state waters, does not exceed the recreational quota. Texas, Louisiana, and Florida have indicated they will implement inconsistent red snapper regulations for their state waters. Based on the expected inconsistent regulations, the preliminary season lengths would be as follows: Texas, 12 days; Louisiana, 9 days; Mississippi and Alabama, 28 days; and Florida, 21 days. The method for calculating these dates can be found in a report (SERO-LAPP-2013-02) at

http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/red_snapper/documents/pdfs/2013_red_snapper_emergency_regs.pdf.

NOAA Fisheries will officially announce the closure dates through a separate Southeast Fishery Bulletin.

NOAA Fisheries will announce a final decision on the recreational and commercial quota increases and the recreational fishing season after reviewing all public comments from this proposed rule. The agency will issue a Fishery Bulletin and will post the bulletin on the Southeast Regional Office's Web site:

<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/> in May.

Request for Comments

Written comments on the amendment must be received no later than April 19, 2013, to be considered by NOAA Fisheries. All comments received will be addressed in the final rule. Electronic copies of the documents are available.

- **Proposed Rule:** Federal eRulemaking Portal <http://www.regulations.gov>
- **Amendment:** Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council <http://www.gulfcouncil.org> and NOAA Fisheries <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/>

How to Submit Comments

You may submit comments on this document, identified by "NOAA-NMFS-2013-0055", by any of the following methods:

- **Electronic Submission:** Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2013-0055, click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments. NOAA Fisheries will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous). You can also attach additional files (up to 10MB) in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.
- **Mail written comments to**
Cynthia Meyer, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS,
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Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered by NOAA Fisheries. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on www.regulations.gov without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address, etc.), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible.

This summary is not a substitute for the actual regulations. We encourage you to read the full text of the regulations, available at www.sero.noaa.gov.