



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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August 2013 Opening of Commercial and Recreational Red Snapper Season in the South Atlantic Federal Waters and Final Rule to Consider Future Seasons

This Fishery Bulletin announces the August 2013 opening of red snapper in the South Atlantic and the publishing of the final rule for Amendment 28 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic.

August 2013 Red Snapper Opening

NOAA Fisheries announces the opening of the 2013 commercial and recreational red snapper fishing season in South Atlantic federal waters. The **commercial** red snapper season opens at 12:01 a.m., local time, on August 26, 2013. The commercial season will end when the annual catch limit is projected to be met; NOAA Fisheries will announce the closure in another Fishery Bulletin. During the open commercial season, the daily trip limit is 75 pounds gutted weight and there is no minimum size limit for red snapper.

The **recreational** fishing season will open for one weekend made up of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The recreational red snapper season opens at 12:01 a.m., local time, on August 23, 2013, and closes at 12:01 a.m., local time, on August 26, 2013. During the open recreational season, the bag limit is one fish per person per day and there is no minimum size limit for red snapper.

NOAA Fisheries may change the commercial and recreational season dates if severe weather conditions exist. If severe weather conditions exist, NOAA Fisheries will announce via NOAA Weather Radio and a Fishery Bulletin any change in the red snapper fishing seasons.

After the conclusion of the commercial fishing season, harvest and possession of red snapper are limited to the bag limit unless the recreational sector is closed. After the conclusion of the

recreational fishing season, red snapper may not be harvested or possessed under the bag limit in federal waters of the South Atlantic.

Harvest and possession prohibitions also apply to state waters for vessels holding federal snapper-grouper permits.

The commercial and recreational annual catch limits for 2013 are 21,447 pounds gutted weight and 9,585 fish, respectively. The sector annual catch limits are based upon allocations previously decided by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

Amendment 28

Amendment 28 establishes the annual process to determine red snapper fishing seasons and harvest amounts. More specifically, Amendment 28 establishes (1) *a process* to determine if a fishing season will occur each year, which would include specification of the allowable harvest for both sectors and season length for the recreational sector; (2) *an equation* to determine the annual catch limit amount for each sector; and (3) *management measures* if fishing is allowed. The final rule for Amendment 28 will publish in the *Federal Register* on July 24, 2013.

The intent of the 2013 red snapper opening and the actions in Amendment 28 are to provide fishermen the opportunity to harvest the red snapper annual catch limit and enhance the social and economic benefits to the fishery.

More information, including Frequently Asked Questions for the 2013 red snapper fishing seasons can be found online at:

http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/2013/am28/index.html