



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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NOAA Fisheries and State Partners Request Help from Fishermen to Collect Information on South Atlantic Red Snapper During the 2014 Season

NOAA Fisheries and state partners from North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida are preparing for the 2014 South Atlantic red snapper commercial and recreational seasons. These agencies are looking to fishermen for help with red snapper data collection during the openings. Data collected will provide information needed for future red snapper population assessments. Data collection is scheduled to happen in a number of ways, and at a number of locations throughout each state. A summary of data collection efforts is provided below, and more details on the data collection efforts, and how the data will be used are available on the following NOAA Fisheries Web page:

http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/atl/sg/2014/red_snapper/index.html

How to Contribute to the Data Collection Process

Dockside Sampling

Each state will conduct recreational and commercial sampling dockside to collect catch information and biological data (i.e., length of fish caught, fish ear bones for determining the age of the fish, etc.). Fishermen are encouraged to participate in dockside surveys and allow state and federal fishery biologists to collect biological data from their catch.

Specialized Catch and Effort Surveys in Florida

The state of Florida will conduct specialized surveys designed to provide precise estimates of recreational red snapper landings during the Atlantic season. State biologists will be conducting vessel counts at major inlets and in-person interviews at boat ramps and marinas on the Atlantic coast to collect vital statistics on the numbers of vessels targeting red snapper and numbers of red snapper harvested and released

during recreational trips. These estimates have been used in previous years to more precisely estimate recreational landings.

Carcass Drop Off Locations

The states of Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina will have freezers on docks, at marinas, and at bait shops where recreational anglers can drop off fish carcasses. To access the sites, use the website link in the first paragraph of this bulletin or check your state fisheries websites. Florida will also accept carcasses from the public at sites to be determined and advertised on the Fish and Wildlife Commission's Website. Some drop-off locations will also have catch cards for fishermen to complete when providing carcasses. The catch cards are intended to provide data and information about a fisherman's trip, such as date and length of trip. State biologists will collect the carcasses, measure the length of the carcass, and remove the ear bones to determine the fish's age.

Online Surveys

Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina are providing private anglers an opportunity to contribute catch and fishing effort information during the seasons through online surveys. The online surveys will be used to obtain information about an angler's fishing trip, including date, length, and location of a trip, as well as the number and size of fish landed and/or released. To access the surveys, use the website link in the first paragraph of this bulletin or check your state fisheries websites.

Charter and Headboat Logbooks

Charter for-hire vessel captains in South Carolina, and headboat captains from North Carolina through Florida are required to submit logbooks summarizing catch and effort information from each fishing trip. Headboats are required to report logbooks electronically on a weekly basis.

Charter Telephone Surveys

Each week, charter vessel operators in Georgia and the Atlantic coast of Florida will be contacted by phone during the recreational red snapper fishing season to collect information on red snapper catch and fishing trips taken during the prior weekend. Charter vessel operators will receive a letter in advance of the opening to notify them that they are selected for weekly phone calls. They will also be provided with a log sheet that they may use to record information that will be collected during phone interviews. This information will be used to estimate charter for-hire landings for the 2014 season.

Commercial Quota Monitoring

NOAA Fisheries will monitor the commercial red snapper quota through electronically submitted dealer reports. Currently, federally permitted dealers must report red snapper purchases every two weeks. Beginning on August 7, 2014, federally permitted dealers must report online, at least once per week. More details on the changes to the dealer reporting may be found here: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/fishery_bulletins/documents/pdfs/2014/fb14-024_dealer_reporting_fr.pdf

It is very important that red snapper purchases be reported by dealers in a timely manner as NOAA Fisheries will be monitoring the commercial landings in-season and will end the season when the annual catch limit is met or is projected to be met. Also, as a reminder, all dealers must include federal dealer permit numbers on all submitted reports.

Commercial Logbooks

All fishermen whose vessel has a commercial, federal Snapper-Grouper vessel permit must complete trip reports using the Southeast Coastal Fisheries Trip Report logbooks. Logbooks collect catch and effort information from commercial trips throughout the U.S. South Atlantic. In addition, selected fishermen must also report discarded fish through a supplementary logbook.

How This Information Will Be Used

Survey information collected will be used to estimate landings and fishing effort during the season. Biological samples will be used to determine the age, size, and growth of red snapper in the population. All information collected will be made available for future red snapper population assessments. Population assessment participants, which include fishermen, state and federal fishery biologists, academics, and other entities, will determine the applicability of the information for assessing the status of the population.

Details of the Season

The **commercial** red snapper season opens at 12:01 a.m., local time, on July 14, 2014. 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 eight days. The days are two weekends made up of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, and one weekend made up of Friday and Saturday. The dates and times for the recreational red snapper season are listed in the table below. 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.

	Recreational Opening Date/Time	Recreational Closure Date/Time
Weekend 1	Friday, July 11 (at 12:01 a.m.)	Monday, July 14 (at 12:01 a.m.)
Weekend 2	Friday, July 18 (at 12:01 a.m.)	Monday, July 21 (at 12:01 a.m.)
Weekend 3	Friday, July 25 (at 12:01 a.m.)	Sunday, July 27 (at 12:01 a.m.)

How You Can Help Reduce Discard Mortality

Many saltwater fish, such as red snapper, suffer from “barotrauma” following release. Barotrauma is a build-up of gases in the swim bladder that makes it difficult or impossible for fish to go back down into the water. The key to improving the survival of these released fishes is to return them to the depth from which they are caught as quickly as possible. A variety of recompression tools are on the market, including descending devices, release weights, release baskets, and others. For other tips and tactics, check out:

<http://catchandrelease.org/redsnapper.shtml>.

Through a program called FishSmart, anglers and NOAA Fisheries are looking for ways to make sure more of those released fish survive. Learn more at:

[http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2012/04/04_11_12fishmart_workshops.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2012/04/04_11_12fishsmart_workshops.html). Through careful fishing and use of proper release techniques, millions of fish released today can survive to improve the health of fisheries tomorrow.