



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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Commercial Harvest for Golden Tilefish Using Longline Gear in South Atlantic Waters Will Close on February 19, 2015

The commercial longline component of golden tilefish harvest in South Atlantic waters will close at 12:01 a.m. (local time) February 19, 2015. Commercial harvest will reopen at 12:01 a.m. (local time) on January 1, 2016. The 2015 longline component commercial catch limit is 405,971 pounds gutted weight. Reports indicate the longline catch limit will be met by February 19, 2015.

The operator of a vessel that has been issued a federal commercial permit for snapper-grouper and a golden tilefish longline endorsement that is landing golden tilefish for sale must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such golden tilefish prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, February 19, 2015. The prohibition on sale or purchase does not apply to the sale or purchase of longline-caught golden tilefish that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, February 19, 2015, and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

During the commercial longline closure:

- Golden tilefish may still be harvested commercially using hook-and-line gear.
- Vessels with a golden tilefish longline endorsement are not eligible to fish for or possess golden tilefish using hook-and-line gear.
- The bag/possession limits and the sale/purchase provisions of the commercial closure apply to a person on board a vessel with a golden tilefish longline endorsement, regardless of whether the golden tilefish are harvested in state or Federal waters.
- All harvest or possession of golden tilefish by a vessel with a golden tilefish longline endorsement, and the sale or purchase of longline-caught golden tilefish is prohibited.

This closure is necessary to protect the snapper-grouper resource.