



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Rick DeVitor or Rick.DeVitor@noaa.gov
727-824-5305, FAX 727-824-5308

March 27, 2015
FB15-022

NOAA Fisheries Is Implementing Management Measures to End Overfishing of Blueline Tilefish in the South Atlantic

New Regulations, Including the Closure of the Recreational Sector, are Effective on March 30, 2015

NOAA Fisheries is implementing management measures in Amendment 32 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 32). The final rule publishes in the *Federal Register*, and is effective, on March 30, 2015.

Amendment 32 contains management measures that end overfishing (rate of fish removal too high) of blueline tilefish in the South Atlantic. A population assessment completed in 2013 determined that blueline tilefish is undergoing overfishing. The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and NOAA Fisheries are required by law to prepare and implement a plan amendment and regulations to end overfishing by December 6, 2015.

Note that recreational harvest of blueline tilefish is scheduled to begin on May 1, 2015. However, the recreational sector will not open in 2015 if recreational landings have reached, or are projected to reach, the recreational annual catch limit. In addition, the commercial sector will close in 2015 when commercial landings reach, or are projected to reach, the commercial annual catch limit.

Amendment 32 contains the following management measures:

Blueline Tilefish

- For 2015, annual catch limits of 17,841 and 17,791 pounds whole weight for the commercial and recreational sectors, respectively. The annual catch limits would increase each year as the stock rebuilds; the

2018 values would be held constant until changed through future rulemaking.

- A commercial trip limit of 100 pounds gutted weight.
- A recreational vessel limit of one per vessel per day for the months of May through August each year. Recreational harvest would be prohibited September through April each year.
- Accountability measures for the commercial and recreational sectors. Accountability measures are management controls to prevent annual catch limits from being exceeded and to correct overages of the catch limits if they do occur.
- A recreational annual catch target.

Deep-water Complex

- Removal of blueline tilefish from the deep-water complex. The deep-water complex currently includes blueline tilefish, yellowedge grouper, silk snapper, misty grouper, queen snapper, sand tilefish, black snapper, and blackfin snapper.
- Recalculation of the commercial and recreational annual catch limits.
- Revisions to the accountability measures for the commercial and recreational sectors.

More information, including Amendment 32 and the Frequently Asked Questions can be found online at:

http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/2014/am32/index.html.

This bulletin serves as a Small Entity Compliance Guide, complying with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996.