



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mary Janine Vara, or Mary.Vara@noaa.gov
727/824-5305, FAX 727/824-5308
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

August 11, 2015
FB15-058

NOAA Fisheries Announces Catch Limit Changes for Commercial and Recreational South Atlantic Gag and Wreckfish

NOAA Fisheries announces annual catch limit changes for commercial and recreational sectors of South Atlantic gag and wreckfish. The final rule for Regulatory Amendment 22 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region will publish on August 12, 2015.

The final rule adjusts the annual catch limits for gag and wreckfish based on the outcome of population assessments.

Wreckfish

Regulations implementing the wreckfish commercial annual catch limit will be effective on August 12, 2015. Regulations implementing the wreckfish recreational annual catch limit will be effective on September 11, 2015.

The commercial and recreational annual catch limits for wreckfish will be higher than 2014 levels. The total current annual catch limit for wreckfish is allocated between the commercial (95%) and recreational (5%) sectors. The new values in pounds whole weight are:

Fishing Year*	Total Wreckfish ACL**	Commercial ACL (95% of Total ACL**)	Recreational ACL (5% of Total ACL**)
Current (2014)	235,000	223,250	11,750
2015	433,000	411,350	21,650
2016	423,700	402,515	21,185
2017	414,200	393,490	20,710
2018	406,300	385,985	20,315
2019	396,800	376,960	19,840
2020	389,100	369,645	19,455

*The fishing year for the commercial sector begins on April 16, and the fishing year for the recreational sector begins on January 1.

**ACL – Annual Catch Limit

Gag

Regulations implementing gag commercial and recreational annual catch limits will be effective on September 11, 2015.

The commercial and recreational annual catch limits for gag will initially decrease from 2014 levels, but will gradually increase and exceed 2014 levels by 2018. The total current annual catch limit for gag is allocated between the commercial (51%) and recreation (49%) sectors. The commercial annual catch limit is reduced to the directed commercial quota by 27,218 pounds gutted weight to account for discard mortality of gag that will result from targeting other shallow water groupers after commercial harvest of gag is closed. The new values in pounds gutted weight are:

Fishing Year*	Total Gag ACL**	Commercial ACL (51% of Total ACL**)	Directed Commercial Quota	Recreational ACL (49% of Total ACL**)
Current (2014)	694,000	353,940	326,722	340,060
2015	632,700	322,677	295,459	310,023
2016	637,450	325,100	297,882	312,351
2017	677,350	345,449	318,231	331,902
2018	710,600	362,406	335,188	348,194
2019	734,350	374,519	347,301	359,832

*The fishing year for the commercial and recreational sectors begins on January 1.

**ACL – Annual Catch Limit

More Information

For more information on Regulatory Amendment 22 and its Final Rule, please follow this link to the Frequently Asked Questions found at:

- The NOAA Fisheries Web site: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/satl/sg/2015/reg_am22/index.html.
- The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Web site at <http://www.safmc.net>.