



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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Commercial Harvest of Snowy Grouper in South Atlantic Federal Waters Will Close on June 14, 2016

Commercial harvest of snowy grouper in South Atlantic federal waters will **close at 12:01 a.m. (local time) on June 14, 2016**. Commercial harvest will reopen at 12:01 a.m. (local time) on January 1, 2017. The 2016 commercial catch limit is 125,760 pounds gutted weight. Updated landings data indicate that commercial harvest of snowy grouper will reach the annual catch limit by that date. As a result, commercial harvest will be closed in federal waters of the South Atlantic.

The operator of a vessel with a federal commercial permit for snapper-grouper that is landing snowy grouper for sale must have landed and bartered, traded, or sold such snowy grouper prior to 12:01 a.m. (local time), June 14, 2016. The prohibition on sale does not apply to sale or purchase of snowy grouper that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m. (local time), June 14, 2016, and held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

During the closure:

- Sale and purchase of snowy grouper in or from federal waters in the South Atlantic is prohibited.
- Harvest or possession of snowy grouper in or from federal waters in the South Atlantic is limited to the recreational bag and possession limits when the recreational sector is open.
- These bag and possession limits apply in the South Atlantic on board a vessel for which a valid federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic snapper grouper has been issued without regard to where such species were harvested, i.e., in state or federal waters.

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