



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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

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FB16-042

NOAA Fisheries Seeks Public Comment on a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Hogfish in Federal Waters of the South Atlantic Region

Comment Period Ends on August 1, 2016

NOAA Fisheries is seeking public comment on a draft environmental impact statement for Amendment 37 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 37).

NOAA Fisheries is proposing to manage hogfish in the South Atlantic as two populations: Georgia through North Carolina and Florida Keys/East Florida. A population assessment determined that the Florida Keys/East Florida population is *undergoing overfishing and is overfished* and, therefore, in need of a rebuilding plan. The overfishing and overfished status of the Georgia/North Carolina population is unknown. The draft environmental impact statement for Amendment 37 analyzes a range of alternatives for actions, which include:

- Modifying the management unit for hogfish.
- Establishing a rebuilding plan for the Florida Keys/East Florida population to increase hogfish biomass to sustainable levels.
- Specifying commercial and recreational annual catch limits and accountability measures for the Georgia/North Carolina and Florida Keys/East Florida populations of hogfish.
- Modifying or establishing fishing regulations for both populations of hogfish, including minimum size limits, commercial trip limits, recreational bag limits, and a recreational fishing season.

For more information, please see the frequently asked questions section at:

http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/2015/am37/index.html

Request for Comments

The comment period on this draft environmental impact statement ends on August 1, 2016. You may obtain electronic copies of the draft amendment and environmental impact statement from the NOAA Fisheries Web site at http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/2015/am37/index.html or the e-Rulemaking Portal (see Addresses section).

Addresses

You may submit comments on this document, identified by NOAA-NMFS-2016-0068, by either of the following methods:

ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION: Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal.

1. Go to www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2016-0068.
2. Click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields.
3. Enter or attach your comments.

MAIL: Submit written comments to Nikhil Mehta, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.

INSTRUCTIONS: Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered by NOAA Fisheries.

All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address, etc.), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NOAA Fisheries will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous).