



Gulf of Mexico Fishery Bulletin

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RED SNAPPER | *Lutjanus campechanus*

Final Rule to Adjust Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Sector Annual Catch Limits, Annual Catch Targets, and Quotas

KEY MESSAGE:

Amendment 28 to the reef fish fishery management plan shifted 2.5 percent of the red snapper quota allocation from the commercial sector to the recreational sector. A court order vacated the amendment and requires NOAA Fisheries to reinstate the sector allocations and resulting annual catch limits, annual catch targets, and quotas that were in effect prior to Amendment 28. Therefore, NOAA Fisheries is implementing a new rule that adjusts the sector annual catch limits, annual catch targets, and quotas based on the sector allocations in place before Amendment 28 for red snapper.

WHEN RULE WILL TAKE EFFECT:

- The rule will be effective on **June 6, 2017**.

WHAT THIS MEANS:

- The allocation is now 51 percent to the commercial sector and 49 percent to the recreational sector.
- The combined allowable catch of red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico for the commercial and recreational sectors is 13.74 million pounds whole weight. The recreational sector quota is 6,733,000 pounds whole weight. The commercial sector quota is 7,007,000 pounds whole weight.
- The 2.5 percent commercial sector IFQ quota will be distributed as gutted weight, which equals 6,312,613 pounds.

- The 2.5 percent of the quota that shifts to the commercial sector will be released on or about the effective date of this rule.

FORMAL FEDERAL REGISTER NAME: Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Red Snapper Management Measures; Compliance with Court Order, publishing June 7, 2017.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Why are the annual catch limits, annual catch targets, and quotas changing?

- The allocation of 51.5 percent to the recreational sector and 48.5 percent to the commercial sector was established in 2016 through Amendment 28 to the reef fish fishery management plan.
- However, NOAA Fisheries was sued over the quota change and the judge vacated the final rule implementing Amendment 28 on March 3, 2017.
- The court order directs NOAA Fisheries to reinstate sector annual catch limits, annual catch targets, and quotas of red snapper based on the pre-Amendment 28 allocations of 51 percent commercial and 49 percent recreational.
- There are no alternatives to complying with the requirements of the court order.
- If the requirements are not implemented immediately, then red snapper harvest will not be managed in accordance with the court order.

What are the quotas and annual catch targets for 2017?

- The recreational quota is divided into private angling and for-hire component quotas.
- In 2016, the private angling quota was exceeded, resulting in an overage of the total recreational quota. The overage of the total recreational quota must be paid back in 2017 by the component that exceeded its quota (private angling).
- Both the total recreational quota and the private angling component quota are reduced by the overage of the 2016 total recreational quota.
- The recreational annual catch targets are 80% of the quotas. This 20% buffer helps maintain landings within the total quota.
- The IFQ program serves as the commercial accountability measure; therefore, they do not have an annual catch target set.

Sector or Component	2017 quota (pounds whole weight)	2017 Annual Catch Target (pounds whole weight)
All Recreational	6,603,094*	n/a
Federal for-hire	2,848,000	2,278,000
Private angling	3,755,094*	3,004,075**
Commercial	7,007,000	n/a

*Adjusted by 129,906 lbs whole weight to account for 2016 overage, **80% of the adjusted quota

Where can I find more information on the required rule?

- Contact NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Regional Office
By Mail: Kelli O'Donnell
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By FAX: (727) 824-5305
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- Regulatory Amendment 28 may be found online at the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office Web site
at: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/reef_fish/2013/am28/
- Additional information on this rule can be found
at: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/fishery_bulletins/documents/pdfs/2017/2017-11804.pdf

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- **South Atlantic Recreational Fisheries Related Alerts**
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 - Text CARIBFISH to 888777

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