



Gulf of Mexico Fishery Bulletin

Bringing Fishing News to You

FB18-003

FISHERY BULLETIN ISSUE DATE: January 17, 2018

CONTACT: Lauren Waters, (727) 824-5305, Lauren.Waters@noaa.gov

Request for Comments: Intent to Develop a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for State Management of Gulf of Mexico Recreational Red Snapper

KEY MESSAGE:

NOAA Fisheries, in collaboration with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council), intends to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for an amendment to consider a state management program for recreational red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf). The management alternatives are being proposed for the individual Gulf states of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. The Council is considering state management that would enable states and their associated communities to specify the management measures that best meet the needs of their state's constituents, thereby addressing regional socio-economic concerns.

BACKGROUND:

- The Gulf red snapper stock is currently under a rebuilding plan.
- The recreational sector is separated into federal for-hire (charter vessels and headboats) and private angling components, each managed under their respective recreational quotas.
- NMFS annually projects the recreational season lengths for each component based on the quota and the projected rate of harvest. As a result of uncertainty in estimating recreational catches, as well as state recreational fishing seasons being inconsistent with the federal fishing season, the private angling component season has become shorter and the component has exceeded its respective quota four of the last six years.
- Fishermen from the Gulf states have requested more flexibility in recreational red snapper management so that regulations provide greater socio-economic benefits to their particular area.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTIONS:

The Council is still in the process of developing an amendment that considers state management. The actions considered to date would establish:

- the apportionment of the total recreational red snapper quota for the Gulf among the individual Gulf states,
- the components of the recreational sector (federal for-hire and/or private angling) that would be included under a state's management program,
- the authority structure for state management, and
- post-season accountability measures for each state.

NOAA Fisheries and the Council are soliciting comments on the current actions or any other actions within the scope of the amendment that the public would like the Council and NOAA Fisheries to consider.

HOW TO COMMENT:

The comment period is open now through February 16, 2018. You may submit comments by electronic submission or by postal mail. Comments sent by any other method (such as e-mail), to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered by NOAA Fisheries.

FORMAL *FEDERAL REGISTER* NAME/NUMBER: NOAA- NMFS-2017-0122 published January 17, 2018.

Electronic Submissions: Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal.

1. Go to: www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2017-0122
2. Click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields.
3. Enter or attach your comments.

Mail: Submit written comments to Lauren Waters, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.

Where can I find more information on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for State Management of Gulf of Mexico Recreational Red Snapper?

- State Management Program for Recreational Red Snapper documents 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/2017/RS_State_Management/RS_State_Manage_index.html
- Contact NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Regional Office
 - By Mail:** Lauren Waters
NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Regional Office
Sustainable Fisheries Division
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505
 - By Phone:** (727) 824-5305

SIGN UP FOR TEXT MESSAGE ALERTS - FIND OUT ABOUT IMMEDIATE OPENINGS AND CLOSURES

NOAA's Text Message Alert Program allows you to receive important fishery related alerts via text message (SMS). Standard message & data rates may apply. You may opt-out at any time.

Text alerts you may receive include:

- Immediate fishery openings and closures.
- Any significant changes to fishing regulations that happen quickly.

Sign up for one or more of the following groups:

- **Gulf of Mexico Recreational Fisheries Related Alerts**
 - Text GULFRECFISH to 888777
- **Gulf of Mexico Commercial Fisheries Related Alerts**
 - Text GULFCOMMFISH to 888777
- **South Atlantic Recreational Fisheries Related Alerts**
 - Text SATLRECFISH to 888777
- **South Atlantic Commercial Fisheries Related Alerts**
 - Text SATLCOMMFISH to 888777
- **Caribbean Fisheries Related Alerts**
 - Text CARIBFISH to 888777

Other contacts: Media: Kim Amendola, 727-551-5707 or Allison Garrett, 727-551-5750