

Gulf of Mexico Commercial Red Snapper Fishery

Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program

Frequently Asked Questions

July 2009



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE IFQ PROGRAM

What is an IFQ program?

- An IFQ program is a type of limited access privilege program (LAPP), which provides individual fishermen or corporations the exclusive privilege to harvest a certain percentage of the total allowable catch (TAC) of a fishery.
- Most IFQ programs enable this exclusive harvest privilege to be bought and sold in the marketplace.
- Market-based fishery management programs have received increasing recognition over the last few decades as an effective way to better align the amount of fishing capacity in a fishery with the amount of fish that may be taken by the fishery, or the TAC.

What is fishing capacity and why is it important?

- Fishing capacity is the ability of a fishing vessel or fleet of vessels to catch fish, and is generally measured by the number of vessels in a fleet, the size of each vessel, the technical efficiency of each vessel, and the time each vessel spends fishing.
- Fisheries with excess capacity are overcapitalized, meaning more time and money is invested in fishing capacity than is necessary to harvest the TAC.
- Over-investing improves fishermen's ability to compete with each other for their share of the TAC, but also reduces the efficiency and profitability of fishery operations.

Why are IFQ programs better than conventional fishery management tools in managing fishing capacity?

- By ensuring each program participant the opportunity to harvest a specific amount of the TAC each year, IFQ programs eliminate the need to compete for the TAC under derby-style fishing conditions and, consequently, the incentive to over-invest in fishing capacity.
- Fishermen who spend less time and money pursuing and harvesting their share of the TAC profit more from the sale of their catch.
- IFQ programs allow fishermen to buy or sell IFQ shares to fit their business needs.
- Conventional fishery management programs, even those that limit access to a fishery, do not provide the same degree of compensation to those fishermen who choose to exit the

fishery because limited access permits are not as valuable as exclusive harvest privileges. As a result, fishermen often remain in fisheries managed under conventional management programs even when profits are low.

Have IFQ programs been tried and tested?

- IFQ programs have been used worldwide since the late 1970s.
- Canada, New Zealand, and Iceland are a few of the countries that have significant experience with IFQ programs.
- IFQ programs implemented in the United States include:
 - The Mid-Atlantic surf clam and ocean quahog IFQ (1990);
 - The South Atlantic wreckfish IFQ (1992);
 - The Alaskan halibut and North Pacific sablefish IFQ (1995); and
 - The Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands crab rationalization program (2005).
- A number of regional fishery management councils are currently developing IFQ program proposals for additional U.S. fisheries.
- Also, some U.S. fisheries are managed under similar, market-based, LAPPs. For example:
 - The Western Alaska Community Development Quota Program allocates a portion of the TAC of all federally-managed Bering Sea and Aleutian Island fisheries to eligible communities in Western Alaska to use for community and economic development;
 - The Pacific Whiting and Bering Sea Pollock Cooperatives allocate a portion of the Pacific whiting and Bering Sea pollock TACs, respectively, to defined gear groups or sectors; and
 - The Gulf of Alaska rockfish pilot program permits harvesters to form voluntary cooperatives and receive an exclusive harvest privilege to groundfish species in the Central Gulf of Alaska.

How has the Gulf of Mexico commercial red snapper fishery changed under an IFQ program?

- Overcapacity and derby-style fishing conditions shortened the commercial red snapper fishing season to just 88 days, on average, from 1992 through 2006.
- Past regulations were designed to prolong the fishing season by making fishermen inefficient; for example, by restricting the times during which red snapper can be targeted and the amount of red snapper that can be landed per trip.
- These regulations had limited success slowing the race to harvest the commercial quota and did not address the underlying problem of excessive fishing capacity.
- Upon implementation of the IFQ program restrictive seasons and trip limits were eliminated. The IFQ program also provides participants the flexibility to take their share of the commercial quota during times, in places, and using methods that are best suited to their individual business operations and strategies.

What are the benefits of the IFQ program?

- Allowing IFQ program participants to decide when, where, and how to take their share of the commercial red snapper quota has:
 - Increased fishery efficiency and profitability by enabling fishermen to reduce their operating costs to a level that maximizes their earnings;
 - Provided consumers the ability to purchase fresh, quality fish during longer periods of the year;
 - Increased safety at sea;
 - Improved compliance; and
 - Reduced bycatch and habitat-related impacts.

Did affected fishermen support the establishment of an IFQ program?

- NOAA Fisheries Service conducted two referendums on the red snapper IFQ program, both of which were required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).
- A majority of votes in the first referendum, conducted in February 2004 (69 FR 6921), favored the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council) developing an IFQ program proposal in Amendment 26 to the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan.
- A majority of votes in the second referendum, conducted in January 2006 (71 FR 913), favored the Gulf Council submitting the IFQ program proposal to the Secretary of Commerce for review, approval, and implementation.

What determined the amount of IFQ share and allocation each eligible program participant received?

- The **IFQ share** allocated to each program participant was determined by the amount of the red snapper landings reported under his or her qualifying license during a specific time period:
 - The IFQ share allocated each current owner of a Class 1 license was based on the ten consecutive years from 1990 through 2004 during which landings reported under the license were highest.
 - The IFQ share allocated each current owner of a Class 1 license issued on the basis of historical captain status was based on the seven years of landings data reported under the license from 1998 through 2004.
 - The IFQ share allocated each current owner of a Class 2 license was based on the five years from 1998 through 2004 during which landings reported under the license were highest.
- IFQ shares were allocated in direct proportion to the amount of landings reported under a red snapper license during the qualifying time period relative to that of other red snapper licenses. As a result, owners of red snapper licenses with larger than average landings during the qualifying time period received larger than average IFQ shares. Conversely, owners of red snapper licenses with smaller than average landings during the qualifying time period received smaller than average IFQ shares.
- The **IFQ allocation** assigned each IFQ shareholder at the start of each calendar year will be determined by the amount of his or her IFQ share and the amount of the annual commercial red snapper quota.

When did the IFQ program become effective?

- The IFQ program became effective on January 1, 2007.

How does the IFQ program prevent one or more commercial reef fish permit holders from purchasing all the available IFQ shares and monopolizing the fishery?

- The IFQ program specifies that no single person or corporation can individually or collectively obtain an amount of IFQ share that exceeds the maximum IFQ share issued to a person or corporation in the initial year of the program. [Click here for more information regarding the Share Cap.](#)
- The IFQ program does not limit the amount of IFQ allocation that may be purchased or held by a person or corporation during a given calendar year.

How is the IFQ program monitored and enforced?

- All IFQ share and allocation transactions are recorded, monitored, and approved by NOAA Fisheries Service using an electronic accounting system.
- Other requirements NOAA Fisheries Service uses to monitor red snapper landings and transactions include, but are not limited to, a landings notification requirement, a restriction on the time during which red snapper may be offloaded, and a restriction stating allocation must be in the name of the person landing the red snapper.

How are overages on the last fishing trip of the fishing year addressed?

- The electronic accounting system used to manage IFQ share and allocation transactions enables fishermen to purchase additional IFQ allocation at sea, if needed, in the event they accidentally harvest an amount of red snapper that exceeds their IFQ allocation.
- The IFQ program allows IFQ shareholders (or those persons landing the IFQ allocation of an IFQ shareholder) to exceed by up to ten percent the IFQ shareholder's allocation remaining on the last fishing trip of the fishing year. However, the amount of any such overage will be deducted from the amount of IFQ allocation distributed to the IFQ shareholder the subsequent year.
- This overage provision only applies to fisherman who own shares, because fishermen without shares will not receive IFQ allocation the subsequent year from which the overage can be deducted.

Who pays for the IFQ program?

- IFQ fishermen are charged an administrative fee to recover a portion of the costs required to manage and enforce the IFQ program.
- The cost recovery fee is currently equal to three percent of the ex-vessel value of the landed fish.
- IFQ dealers are responsible for collecting the cost recovery fee from the fisher (IFQ allocation holder) at the time of each sales transaction, and submitting cost recovery fees to NOAA Fisheries Service on a quarterly basis.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR POTENTIAL IFQ PARTICIPANTS

Who is eligible to participate in the IFQ program?

- Everyone who owned a current red snapper license on November 22, 2006, received IFQ shares and allocation if red snapper landings were reported under their qualifying license during the qualifying time period.
 - The qualifying time period for Class 1 licenses is 1990 through 2004.
 - The qualifying time period for Class 2 licenses, and for Class 1 licenses issued on the basis of historical captain status, is 1998 through 2004.
- Those who owned a current red snapper license on November 22, 2006, but did not have any landings reported in association with their qualifying license during the qualifying time period did not receive IFQ shares or allocation because they did not demonstrate an historical dependence on the fishery as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Act.
- However, everyone who owns a valid commercial Gulf of Mexico reef fish permit is eligible to purchase IFQ shares and allocation from current IFQ shareholders for the first five years of the IFQ program. After January 1, 2012, all U.S. citizens and permanent resident aliens will be eligible to purchase IFQ shares and allocation.
- Everyone who possesses a valid commercial Gulf of Mexico reef fish dealer permit is eligible to participate in the IFQ program as a dealer.

What is the difference between IFQ share and allocation?

- An **IFQ shareholder** is an individual who holds a percentage of the commercial red snapper quota. This percentage, or share, determines the actual pounds of Gulf red snapper (IFQ allocation) a shareholder will be allowed to harvest each year.
- An **IFQ share** is the percentage of the commercial quota assigned to each eligible IFQ shareholder at the start of the IFQ program. With limited exceptions, the amount of the IFQ share allocated to each IFQ shareholder will not change unless the IFQ shareholder sells all or a portion of his or her IFQ share, or purchases additional IFQ shares from another IFQ shareholder. IFQ shares can be sold, but cannot be used to possess, land, or sell red snapper unless the IFQ shareholder also possesses IFQ allocation.
- An **IFQ allocation holder** is a person who is authorized to land a specific poundage of red snapper during a given fishing year. The person must possess a valid commercial permit for Gulf reef fish and a Gulf red snapper IFQ vessel endorsement.
- **IFQ allocation** is the actual poundage of red snapper each IFQ shareholder or IFQ allocation holder is ensured the opportunity to possess, land, or sell, during a given calendar year. IFQ allocation will be distributed to each IFQ shareholder at the beginning of each calendar year, and will expire at the end of each calendar year. Annual IFQ allocation is determined by the amount of the shareholder's IFQ share and the amount of the annual commercial red snapper quota.
- **Remember:** *Shares are transferred permanently, whereas, allocation is transferred for the remainder of the fishing year.*

How do I become a shareholder or allocation holder in the IFQ program? What are the requirements?

- Before fishers can participate in the red snapper fishery, they must obtain a Gulf Reef Fish permit
 - Please note: GOM Reef Fish permits are under a moratorium so the fisher must find a current active permit holder who would be willing to sell the permit.
- Once the permit is transferred to the new fisher's name through the NMFS Southeast Regional Office's Permits Office, the fisher must call IFQ Support (1-866-425-7627; Option 2) and have a new, free IFQ online account set-up.
 - New participants will be mailed a new user packet *only* to the address listed in the IFQ system, which is linked to the address associated with the Gulf Reef Fish permit.
 - A personal identification number (PIN) will be mailed separately
- When the fisher gets the new user packet in the mail, they must activate the account by logging into the online account using the UserID and temporary 4-digit PIN
 - The first time the fisher logs in, they will be prompted to answer two of the three secret questions provided and change their PIN.
 - The secret questions are: What is the name of your pet? What is the name of your child? What city were you born in?
 - The answer is case-sensitive and any spaces or special characters will be recognized.
 - New PINs must be at least 12 characters long and contain three of the following four requirements:
 - Uppercase letters
 - Lowercase letters
 - Numbers
 - The following special characters ! @ \$ % ^ & * () + ?
 - No spaces or special characters not listed above.
- Once the IFQ online account is activated, the fisher must buy shares and/or allocation (unless they were initially distributed shares and had not yet activated their account) from an existing IFQ participant in order to land and sell red snapper.
 - NOAA Fisheries is unable to give names of people who do not use their allocation. There is a publicly accessible list of IFQ account holders on the IFQ website with their contact information. New participants are encouraged to contact local dealers in their area to find out if anyone is selling shares and/or allocation.
- An IFQ vessel endorsement is required to fish for, possess, or land Gulf red snapper. A vessel endorsement can be obtained by logging into the IFQ online account and downloading the vessel endorsement. The vessel endorsement remains valid as long as the vessel permit remains valid and the vessel owner is in compliance with all Gulf reef fish and Gulf red snapper IFQ reporting requirements.
- Prior to departing on a fishing trip, fishers must report a trip declaration by calling 1-888-219-9228. For more information, please see the [Vessel Monitoring System \(VMS\) Frequently Asked Questions](#).
- Fishers must report a landing notification of a pending landing. Additional information on a landing notification is described below.

What are the requirements to be a dealer in the IFQ program?

- For a dealer to receive Gulf red snapper under the IFQ program, the dealer must 1) possess a valid dealer permit for Gulf reef fish, 2) establish an IFQ online account and 3) obtain a non-transferable Gulf red snapper IFQ dealer endorsement.
- To establish an IFQ online account, the dealer must first contact IFQ Customer Support at 1-866-425-7627 to obtain a UserID and PIN. Individuals access their online account at the IFQ Web site, <https://ifq.sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/ifqrs/index.cfm>.
- Endorsements can be downloaded from the dealer's online account on the IFQ Web site at <https://ifq.sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/ifqrs/index.cfm>. There is no fee for obtaining this endorsement. The endorsement remains valid as long as the Gulf reef fish dealer permit remains valid and the dealer is in compliance with all Gulf reef fish and Gulf red snapper IFQ reporting requirements.

How can I learn more about commercial red snapper IFQ program requirements and the responsibilities of IFQ shareholders, allocation holders, and dealers?

- The final rule implementing the IFQ program describes the complete list of program requirements, and is available to download at: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/RedSnapper/RedSnapperDocs.htm>.
- The Gulf Council's Amendment 26 to the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan is available to download at: <http://www.gulfcouncil.org/Beta/GMFMCWeb/downloads/Amend26031606FINAL.pdf>.
- For additional information or specific questions about the IFQ program, please call the Southeast Regional Office's Sustainable Fisheries Division at 1-727-824-5305.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR ACTIVE IFQ PARTICIPANTS

Landing Notification

Why do I have to report a landing notification?

- The landing notification requirement is intended to provide law enforcement officers the opportunity to be present at the point of landing so they can monitor and enforce red snapper requirements dockside.

What information must the fisher provide to complete an IFQ landing notification?

- IFQ allocation holders (fishers) must report a vessel landing notification at least three hours, but no more than twelve hours, prior to any landing with red snapper on board.
- Landing notifications may be made with the VMS unit, by calling the Landing Notification Call Service 24/7 (1-866-425-7627 Option 1), or online through an IFQ account.
- The following information **MUST** be available to complete a landing notification. The system cannot issue a confirmation number if the fisher notifying does not provide all of this information. To assist you in providing this information, please see the Gulf of Mexico IFQ Red Snapper Landing Notification Script. [Please click here for the script.](#)
 - **Vessel identification** - The fisher must provide the name of the vessel, the vessel's U.S. Coast Guard documentation number, or the state registration number. This information is on the commercial reef fish permit issued to the vessel.
 - **Dealer's business name** – The fisher must provide the name of the business to which the fisher proposes to sell the red snapper.
 - **Physical location for the landing** – NOAA Fisheries Service has a list of registered landing locations, including the address, city, and state. If the landing location is on the registered list, please tell this to the operator or select the location from the list. System users will be able to locate the landing by city, state and location name. If the fisher provides a landing location not identified on this registered list, the fisher must provide as much detail as they can, including the name or identifying information, address, city, and state of the landing location. **This specific landing location information MUST be provided to receive a confirmation number.** If the fisher intends to land at more than one location, the fisher must make a separate landing notification for each landing location. The landing location information must be provided so that law enforcement officers have the opportunity to be present at the point of landing so they can monitor and enforce red snapper requirements dockside. **If using VMS to make a notification, fishers can only select locations which are registered and have been assigned a VMS code.**
 - **Time of Arrival** – The fisher must provide an estimated time of arrival at the landing location including the time zone of the landing location.

Do fishers have to make multiple landing notifications if they plan on landing at more than one location?

- Yes, if the fisher intends to land a boat containing red snapper at more than one location, the fisher must make a separate landing notification (notification) for each landing location. Once a second notification is given, the fisher must be sure three hours have passed before landing at the second location (see Examples below). If a fisher knows the time and location of a second landing, he can submit this in advance of landing at the first location, potentially reducing the wait time at the first location (see Example 2 below).
 - **Example 1:** The fisher plans on landing but not offloading at location A at 9 a.m. today. A notification must have been given for location A no later than 6 a.m. today and no earlier than 9 p.m. yesterday. If the fisher then plans on landing at location B to offload 10 a.m., the fisher has to give a separate notification for location B no later than 7 a.m. today and no earlier than 10 p.m. yesterday. The fisher must ensure at least three hours have passed from the time he makes the notification for location B before he lands at location B.
 - **Example 2:** If the fisher knows at 6 a.m. that he will land at location A at 9 a.m. and location B at 10 a.m., the fisher can make two separate notifications for both locations at 6 a.m. If the fisher waits until finished at location A before reporting his notification for location B, then he will have to wait three hours before landing at location B.
 - **Example 3:** The fisher plans on landing but not offloading at location A at 5 p.m. today. A notification must have been given for location A no later than 2 p.m. today and no earlier than 5 a.m. today. If the fisher then plans on landing at location B to offload at 9 a.m. tomorrow, the fisher has to give a separate notification for location B. This notification must be given no later than 6 a.m. tomorrow and no earlier than 9 p.m. today.

Do fishers have to make a separate landing notification if the dealer changes but not the landing location?

- Yes, a new landing notification must be submitted if the fisher changes dealers. However, the fisher does not have to wait an additional three hours because the landing location has not changed.

Why should I register my landing location with NOAA Fisheries Service?

- Registering your landing location will be beneficial to you because the operator should be able to record your landing notification more efficiently.
- Registered landing locations will be approved by law enforcement agents and added to drop-down menus in the online database as well as given VMS codes so that fishers can make their notification through their VMS unit rather than calling.
- If you would like to add your landing location to this list, please call customer service at 1-866-425-7627 or e-mail SER-IFQ.Support@noaa.gov. Once the landing location has been approved by NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement, the location will be added to the list of registered landing locations. [Click here for a list of registered landing locations.](#)

Landing versus Offloading

Is the fisher required to land between 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.? Is the fisher required to offload between 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.?

- A vessel can land red snapper anytime during the day and night, provided that a landing notification has been given between 3 to 12 hours prior to landing.
- Offloading is restricted to the hours of 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Fishers only need to notify law enforcement in advance of landing not offloading.
- **Please Note:** *For the purposes of these regulations, the term “landing” means to arrive at a dock, berth, beach, seawall, or ramp. “Offloading” means removing red snapper from a vessel.*

2009 Commercial Red Snapper Quota

What is the amount of the 2009 commercial red snapper quota?

- There was no change in the commercial quota from the 2008 to 2009; therefore the commercial quota for red snapper in 2009 is 2.55 mp.

Calculating Allocation at the Beginning of the Year

How do IFQ shareholders calculate the amount of red snapper pounds (IFQ allocation) they will receive at the beginning of the year?

- Convert the amount of shares you hold from a percentage to a number by dividing the percentage by 100.
 - **Example:**
 - Amount of Shares Expressed as a Percentage: 1%
 - Divide 1 by 100.
 - $1/100 = 0.01$
 - Amount of Shares Expressed as a Number: 0.01
- Multiply the commercial quota (gutted weight) by the amount of shares you hold. The commercial quota for 2009 is 2,297,297 pounds gutted weight (2,550,000 pounds whole weight).
 - **Example:**
 - Amount of Shares: 0.01
 - Commercial Quota: 2,297,297 pounds gutted weight
 - $2,297,297 \times 0.01 = 22,972$ pounds gutted weight
 - Therefore, the 2009 IFQ allocation for 1% shares is 22,972 pounds gutted weight.

Transferring, Selling, or Purchasing Shares and Allocation

How does a shareholder transfer shares?

- The individual who is selling or transferring the shares can transfer shares following these directions:
 1. Log into the IFQ system at ifq.sero.nmfs.noaa.gov.
 2. Select “Shares.”
 3. Select “Click Here to Transfer Shares.”
 4. Choose the individual who is purchasing the shares from the list of IFQ participants.
 5. Enter the amount of shares to be transferred.
 6. Enter the purchase price (you must enter a value, even if it is zero).
 7. Click on “Submit.”
 8. Print out the application for share transfer.
 9. Both the buyer and seller must sign the application and have it notarized.
 10. Send the application to the Permits Office.
NOAA Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office
Attn: Permits Office
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701
- The permits office will approve or disapprove the application.
- If the application is approved, the shares will be transferred into the online account.

How does a shareholder transfer allocation?

- The individual who is selling or transferring the allocation can transfer allocation by following these directions:
 1. Log into the IFQ system at ifq.sero.nmfs.noaa.gov.
 2. Select “Allocation.”
 3. Select “Transfer Allocation.”
 4. Choose the individual who is purchasing the allocation from the list of IFQ participants.
 5. Enter the amount of allocation to be transferred.
 6. Enter the purchase price (you must enter a value, even if it is zero).
 7. Click on “Submit.”
- This transaction will occur immediately in the online system.

If I purchase IFQ shares do I also have to purchase IFQ allocation?

- When you purchase IFQ shares the allocation associated with those shares does not automatically transfer until January 1st of the next year. If you want the allocation associated with those shares during the year you are purchasing the shares, the allocation must also be transferred. Otherwise, the allocation remains with the original shareholder until the end of the calendar year.

Prohibition of Share Transfers in December

Why does NOAA Fisheries Service prohibit share transfers during the month of December?

- IFQ shareholders are not able to transfer shares during the month of December because NOAA Fisheries Service needs this time to settle IFQ accounts and update shares and allocation for the upcoming fishing year.

IFQ Share Cap

What is the IFQ Share Cap?

- The IFQ Share Cap has been set at 6.0203%.
- The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires fishery managers to ensure IFQ shareholders do not acquire an excessive share of the total allowable catch of an IFQ fishery.
- The Gulf Council defined the IFQ Share Cap for the commercial red snapper fishery as the maximum IFQ share initially issued to a person, corporation, or other entity as of June 4, 2007, which is the date appeals were resolved and shares were adjusted accordingly.
- The intent of the IFQ Share Cap is to prevent one or more Gulf of Mexico commercial reef fish permit holders from purchasing an excessive amount of IFQ shares and monopolizing the fishery.
- The IFQ program does not limit the amount of IFQ allocation that may be purchased or held by a person or corporation during a given calendar year.

Why has NOAA Fisheries Service asked corporations to identify their corporate shareholders?

- NOAA Fisheries Service has asked corporations to provide this information to assist the agency in ensuring no person, including a corporation or entity, individually or collectively, holds IFQ shares in excess of the IFQ Share Cap.
- Corporations should update this information as changes occur.

Where can corporations enter or update their shareholder information?

- Corporations can enter or update their current information online by following these directions:
 1. Log into the IFQ system at ifq.sero.nmfs.noaa.gov.
 2. Select "Account information."
 3. Select "Update Corporate Shareholders."
 4. Select the corporate shareholder from the list of existing IFQ shareholders, or if the corporate shareholder is not an IFQ participant, enter the name in the box below the list.

Note: Please choose or enter an individual's name, not the name of the corporation. Enter a corporation's name instead of an individual's name, if the corporation exists as a corporate shareholder in another company.
 5. Enter the percentage of shares of the corporation held by each corporate shareholder (the total of all entries should be 100 %).

Forgotten IFQ UserID and Personal Identification Number (PIN)

What if I forgot my UserID?

- An individual's UserID can be found on the IFQ Web site, ifq.sero.nmfs.noaa.gov under the link "IFQ Participants".

What if I forgot my PIN?

- The individual should click on "Forgot PIN" on the IFQ Web site homepage.
- The individual will be prompted to click on their two secret questions and answer the questions.
- For assistance, the individual can call IFQ Customer Support at 1-866-425-7627. NOAA Fisheries Service personnel cannot give out an individual's PIN over the phone, but can help the caller identify their secret questions and answers.
- **Please Note:** *Please do not forget or misplace your PIN. This is confidential information similar to the PIN you would use for a bank's ATM.*

Miscellaneous Customer Support Questions

If I have general questions about the IFQ process, what is the phone number for IFQ Customer Support?

- If you have a customer service inquiry, please call **1-866-425-7627** and follow the prompts for IFQ customer support. Customer service calls will be answered from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Eastern time, Monday to Friday, excluding federal holidays. Any message left after hours, on weekends, or holidays will be addressed during normal working hours. *Please do not leave a landing notification on the voice mail.*

How does a dealer list a new facility in their online account?

- A dealer must first add the facilities to their Gulf of Mexico reef fish dealer permit. Please contact the Permits Office at 1-727-824-5326 for further information.

Can a fisher transport Gulf red snapper on land?

- The fisher must complete a landing transaction with a dealer and receive an approval code before the red snapper can be transported on land by the fisher or dealer.
- Additionally, a copy of the dealer's permit and IFQ dealer endorsement must accompany each vehicle used to transport red snapper on land.

Does the fisher need to notify NOAA Fisheries Service of planned fishing activity?

- As of May 6, 2007, all Gulf commercial reef fish permit holders are required to send pre-trip information through a call-in system accessible at 1-888-219-9228.
- For more information, please see the [Vessel Monitoring System FAQs](#).

Does the IFQ program have an allocation overage provision for IFQ shareholders?

- Yes, IFQ shareholders can land 10 % over their remaining allocation on the last fishing trip of the year. Any overage will be deducted from the shareholder's allocation for the next fishing year.
- For example, if 100 pounds of red snapper remain in an IFQ shareholder's account on his/her last fishing trip of the year, the shareholder may land 110 pounds of red snapper. However, 10 pounds will be deducted from the shareholder's allocation the following year.
- **Please Note:** *IFQ fishermen who are only IFQ allocation holders and not IFQ shareholders may not land red snapper in excess of their remaining allocation because these individuals do not receive allocation from NOAA Fisheries Service at the beginning of the next year. Therefore, there is no reliable method for compensating for the overage in the following fishing year.*