

Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Quota Increase and Recreational Season

Frequently Asked Questions

May 2013



What does the final rule do?

- Set the 2013 quota for commercial and recreational harvest.
 - The red snapper quota will increase from the 2012 **8.08** million pounds whole weight to **8.46** million pounds whole weight in 2013.

	2012	2013
Overall Quota	8.080	8.460
Commercial Allocation (51%)	4.121	4.315
Recreational Allocation (49%)	3.959	4.145

How does the final rule affect the recreational red snapper season in 2013?

- For all federal waters, the season begins **June 1, 2013**.
- States with consistent regulations
 - **Mississippi and Alabama:** In federal and state waters off Mississippi and Alabama, the season will be 34 days and close on July 5, 2013, at 12:01 a.m., local time.
- States with inconsistent regulations
 - **Texas:** In federal waters off Texas, the season will be 17 days, and close on June 18, 2013, at 12:01 a.m., local time.
 - Texas state waters are open all year for recreational red snapper fishing with a four-fish bag limit.
 - **Louisiana:** In federal waters off Louisiana, the season will be 24 days, and close on June 25, 2013, at 12:01 a.m., local time.
 - Louisiana state waters are open weekends only (Friday, Saturday, Sunday), March 23 – September 30, 2013, with a three-fish bag limit.
 - **Florida:** In federal waters off Florida, the season will be 26 days and close on June 27, 2013, at 12:01 a.m., local time.
 - Florida state waters are open June 1 – July 14, 2013, with a two-fish bag limit

Why is the recreational season length in the final rule different than in the proposed rule?

- During development of the final rule, NOAA Fisheries re-calculated the preliminary 2013 red snapper recreational season lengths off each Gulf state using updated recreational landings data as well as new information from Louisiana and Texas.

How will the final rule affect the commercial red snapper sector?

- Because the commercial sector is managed under an individual fishing quota (IFQ) program, and has maintained landings within their quota in recent years, the increase in quota will be reflected in the allocation of pounds of red snapper for the fishing year. The allocation will be distributed when the final rule is implemented.

How is the red snapper fishery currently managed?

- Recreational red snapper harvest in federal waters:
 - 49 % of the quota.
 - Minimum size limit of 16 inches total length.
 - Daily bag limit of two fish with a zero bag limit for the captain and crew of for-hire vessels.
 - Seasonal closure: Opens June 1, and closure date is announced each year.
- Commercial red snapper harvest:
 - 51 % of the quota.
 - Minimum size limit of 13 inches total length.
 - IFQ program, which allocates the commercial quota among individual fishers and corporations (see link at end of this document).

Links to additional information on red snapper management and rulemaking

- Red snapper assessment process and reports (http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/sedar/Sedar_Workshops.jsp?WorkshopNum=07)
- Regulations implemented in 2008 through Amendment 27/14 for Gulf of Mexico red snapper and shrimp fisheries (http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/RedSnapper/Amendment_27_14.htm)
- Commercial red snapper IFQ program (<https://ifq.sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/ifqrs/index.cfm>)
- Recreational Red Snapper Management http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/red_snapper/index.html