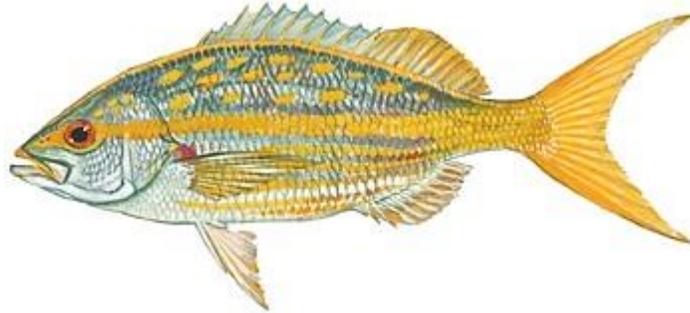


**Frequently Asked Questions for an Extension of the  
Temporary Rule to Increase the Commercial Annual Catch Limit for  
Yellowtail Snapper in the South Atlantic**

**April 2013**



**Why is NOAA Fisheries Service increasing the commercial annual catch limit for yellowtail snapper in the South Atlantic?**

- The state of Florida recently completed a new population assessment of the yellowtail snapper stock in the southeast region of the U.S.
- The new assessment indicates yellowtail snapper are not overfished or undergoing overfishing, and current catch limits may be increased without jeopardizing the health of the population.
- In order to prevent the commercial sector for yellowtail snapper from meeting the old annual catch limit and triggering an in-season commercial closure in 2012, a temporary rule (effective for 180-days) was implemented to increase the commercial annual catch limit for the 2012 fishing season. NOAA Fisheries has the option to extend the temporary rule for an additional 186 days.
- Extending the temporary rule, which expires May 6, 2013, will ensure that an unnecessary in-season commercial closure would not occur in 2013.
- NOAA Fisheries is reviewing Regulatory Amendment 15 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Regulatory Amendment 15), which would implement the increased annual catch limit permanently. NOAA Fisheries expects Regulatory Amendment 15 to be implemented within the 186-day temporary rule extension time period.

**What is the new commercial annual catch limit for yellowtail snapper in the South Atlantic?**

- The new commercial annual catch limit is 1,596,510 pounds whole weight.
- The new catch limit is an increase of 453,921 pounds whole weight over the previous commercial annual catch limit (1,142,589 pounds whole weight).

**What is a “Temporary Rule” and why is the annual catch limit increase only temporary?**

- A temporary rule implements some management measure, or in this case annual catch limit, for a limited period of time, 180 days, with the ability to extend the provisions for an additional 186 days.
- A temporary rule is often used in case of an emergency, or if temporary management measures are needed while permanent measures are being developed through another regulatory action, which is the case with yellowtail snapper.
- In the case of yellowtail snapper, this extension to the temporary rule is being implemented to avoid an unnecessary closure of the commercial sector for yellowtail snapper in the South Atlantic during the 2013 fishing year.

**What is the South Atlantic Council doing to increase the yellowtail snapper annual catch limit in subsequent years?**

- The South Atlantic Council and NOAA Fisheries have developed Regulatory Amendment 15, which would permanently implement the new commercial and recreational yellowtail snapper annual catch limits.
- If approved by the Secretary of Commerce, Regulatory Amendment 15 is expected to be implemented sometime in fall 2013.

**Why is the recreational annual catch limit not being increased through this temporary rule?**

- The recreational sector for yellowtail snapper in the South Atlantic is not in danger of harvesting the recreational annual catch limit during the 2013 fishing year.
- The recreational sector annual catch limit will be increased through Regulatory Amendment 15, if approved by the Secretary of Commerce.

**Where can I get more information on the yellowtail snapper temporary rule?**

- Contact Kate Michie of the Office of Sustainable Fisheries at [Kate.Michie@noaa.gov](mailto:Kate.Michie@noaa.gov) or at (727) 824-5305.