

**2017 South Atlantic Red Snapper Annual Catch Limits and
Recreational Season Length Projection
Southeast Regional Office
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Introduction

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council approved Amendment 28 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region in September 2012. Amendment 28 established (1) a process to determine if a red snapper fishing season will occur each year, which would include specification of the allowable harvest and season lengths for the commercial and recreational sectors; (2) an equation to determine the annual catch limit (ACL) amount for each sector; and (3) management measures if fishing is allowed. The purpose of this analysis is to determine the recreational and commercial ACLs for 2017.

2017 Annual Catch Limit

Amendment 28 specified the following formulas for calculating the ACL for red snapper each fishing year where ABC is the acceptable biological catch and estCSR is the estimated closed season removals:

$$\text{If total removals}_{yr-1} > ABC_{yr-1}, \text{ then } ACL_{yr} = 0 \quad (1)$$

$$\text{If total removals}_{yr-1} < ABC_{yr-1}, \text{ then} \quad (2)$$

$$ACL_{yr} = \left(\frac{ABC_{yr-2} - estCSR_{yr-2}}{ABC_{yr-2}} + \frac{ABC_{yr-1} - estCSR_{yr-1}}{ABC_{yr-1}} \right) / 2 \times ABC_{yr}$$

In the formulas for the 2017 season, yr-2 represents 2015 values and yr-1 represents 2016 values.

Total removals for 2016 were obtained from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC; 2017). Using Equation 1, the total removals for 2016 (total removals_{yr-1}) were compared to the 2016 ABC (ABC_{yr-1}) to determine the 2017 ACL (ACL_{yr}). The 2016 ABC equaled 121,000 fish. Total removals were based on landings and discards reported from logbooks and surveys. For charter boats and private recreational boats, the Marine Recreational Information Program landings estimates were converted to Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) equivalent estimates because the current South Atlantic red snapper ABC is based in part on the MRFSS landings. Total removals were determined to be 407,079 fish (Table 1). Since 2016 total removals exceeded the 2016 ABC, the 2017 ACL will be set to zero.

Table 1. ABC, plus estimated landings and dead discards by sector equaling total removals for South Atlantic red snapper in 2016.

| Variable | Number of Fish |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| | 2016 |
| ABC | 121,000 |
| Commercial Landings | 418 |
| Commercial Dead Discards | 27,365 |
| Recreational Headboat Landings | 331 |
| Recreational Headboat Dead Discards | 27,270 |
| Recreational Charter Landings | 81 |
| Recreational Charter Dead Discards | 48,197 |
| Recreational Private Landings | 0 |
| Recreational Private Dead Discards | 303,363 |
| Total Removals | 407,025 |

References

SEFSC 2017. Total removals of red snapper (*Lutjanus campechanus*) in 2016 from the U.S. South Atlantic. NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Beaufort, NC. 7 pp.