

**Regulatory Amendment 22 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper
Fishery of the South Atlantic Region
(Regulatory Amendment 22)**

*Frequently Asked Questions
August 11, 2015*

What is the purpose of Regulatory Amendment 22?

Regulatory Amendment 22 will adjust the annual catch limits for gag and wreckfish based on the outcome of population assessments.

Gag

The commercial and recreational annual catch limits for gag will initially decrease from 2014 levels, but will gradually increase and exceed 2014 levels by 2018. The commercial and recreational allocations were previously established as 51% and 49%, respectively. The commercial annual catch limit is reduced to the directed commercial quota by 27,218 pounds gutted weight to account for discard mortality of gag that would result from targeting other shallow water groupers after harvest of gag is closed. The new values in pounds gutted weight are:

Fishing Year*	Total Gag Annual Catch Limit	Commercial Annual Catch Limit (51%)	Directed Commercial Quota	Recreational Annual Catch Limit (49%)
Current (2014)	694,000	353,940	326,722	340,060
2015	632,700	322,677	295,459	310,023
2016	637,450	325,100	297,882	312,351
2017	677,350	345,449	318,231	331,902
2018	710,600	362,406	335,188	348,194
2019	734,350	374,519	347,301	359,832

*The fishing year for the commercial and recreational sectors begins on January 1.

Wreckfish

The commercial and recreational annual catch limits for wreckfish will initially increase from 2014 levels and will gradually decrease, but will still be above 2014 levels. The new values are:

Fishing Year*	Total Wreckfish Annual Catch Limit	Commercial Annual Catch Limit (95%)	Recreational Annual Catch Limit (5%)
Current (2014)	235,000	223,250	11,750
2015	433,000	411,350	21,650
2016	423,700	402,515	21,185
2017	414,200	393,490	20,710
2018	406,300	385,985	20,315
2019	396,800	376,960	19,840
2020	389,100	369,645	19,455

*The fishing year for the commercial sector begins on April 16, and the fishing year for the recreational sector begins on January 1.

Who will be affected by Regulatory Amendment 22?

- Commercial and recreational fishers who fish for gag and wreckfish in federal waters (3-200 miles offshore), off North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

When might Regulatory Amendment 22 be effective?

- The final rule published in the *Federal Register* on August 12, 2015. The commercial annual catch limit for wreckfish is effective on August 12, 2015. Remaining regulations are effective on September 11, 2015.

Where can I get more information on Regulatory Amendment 22 and its Final Rule?

- Contact NOAA Fisheries
By Mail: Southeast Regional Office, c/o Mary Janine Vara
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505
By FAX: (727) 824-5308
By Phone: (727) 824-5305
- Regulatory Amendment 22 and its Final Rule may be found online at the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office Web site at: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/2015/reg_am22/index.html or the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Web site at <http://www.safmc.net>.