

**Regulatory Amendment 25 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper
Fishery of the South Atlantic Region
(Regulatory Amendment 25)**

Frequently Asked Questions
July 2016

What are the actions in Regulatory Amendment 25?

Blueline tilefish:

- Increase the annual catch limits for blueline tilefish from 26,766 to 87,521 pounds whole weight (commercial sector) and 26,691 to 87,277 pounds whole weight (recreational sector).
- Increase the commercial trip limit from 100 to 300 pounds gutted weight.
- Increase the recreational bag limit from one fish per vessel per day to three fish per person per day for the months of May through August within the aggregate bag limit. There will continue to be no recreational retention of blueline tilefish during the months of January through April and September through December, each year.

Black sea bass:

- Increase the recreational bag limit from five to seven fish per person per day.

Yellowtail snapper:

- Change the fishing year start date for both the commercial and recreational sectors from January 1 to August 1, each year. Therefore, the fishing year for yellowtail snapper will be from August 1 to July 31.

When will the regulations in Regulatory Amendment 25 be effective?

- The regulations for blueline tilefish will be effective on July 13, 2016, and the regulations for black sea bass and yellowtail snapper will be effective on August 12, 2016.

Why are increases in annual catch limits, commercial trip limits, and recreational bag limits for blueline tilefish being implemented?

- The changes in the annual catch limits are based on a new acceptable biological catch recommendation.
- The changes in the commercial trip limit and recreational bag limit are in response to the proposed increase in the annual catch limit.

Why is an increase in the recreational bag limit for black sea bass being implemented?

- Raising the recreational bag limit will increase the probability that the recreational annual catch limit would be landed. In 2011, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council reduced the bag limit for black sea bass from 15 fish to 5 fish. Since then, a population assessment indicated that black sea bass in the South Atlantic are neither overfished nor

undergoing overfishing and the recreational annual catch limit for black sea bass has been increased substantially (from 482,620 to 1,033,980 pounds whole weight).

Why is a change in the fishing year for yellowtail snapper being implemented?

- Changing the start of the fishing year to August 1 will benefit both commercial and recreational sectors because it would ensure that harvest is open during the winter months when yellowtail snapper obtain a higher price per pound commercially and during peak tourist season in south Florida where the majority of yellowtail harvest takes place.

Where can I find more information on Regulatory Amendment 25?

- Contact NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Regional Office
By Mail: Mary Vara
NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Regional Office
Sustainable Fisheries Division
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505
By FAX: (727) 824-5308
By Phone: (727) 824-5305
- Regulatory Amendment 25 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_am25/index.html