

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

Frequently Asked Questions
June 2016

What are the proposed actions in Regulatory Amendment 25?

- For black sea bass, increase the recreational bag limit from five to seven fish per person per day.
- For blueline tilefish, increase the annual catch limits for blueline tilefish to 87,521 pounds (commercial sector) and 87,277 pounds (recreational sector).
- For blueline tilefish, increase the commercial trip limit from 100 to 300 pounds gutted weight.
- For blueline tilefish, increase the recreational bag limit from one to three fish per person per day for the months of May through August. There would continue to be no recreational retention of blueline tilefish during the months of January through April and September through December, each year.
- For yellowtail snapper, change the fishing year start date for both the commercial and recreational sectors from January 1 to August 1, each year.

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

- Raising the recreational bag limit would increase the probability that the recreational annual catch limit would be landed and help ensure that optimum yield is being achieved. 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 stock 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 the increase in annual catch limits, commercial trip limit, and recreational bag limit for blueline tilefish being considered?

- The changes in the annual catch limits are based on a new acceptable biological catch recommendation and an increase in the buffer to account for management uncertainty.
- 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 a change in the fishing year for yellowtail snapper being considered?

- Changing the start of the fishing year to August 1 would 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
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- 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

How can I submit a comment on the proposed rule for Regulatory Amendment 25?

- You may submit comments by either of the following methods. Comments received through other means may not be considered.
 - **Electronic Submissions:** Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal.
 - Go to: <https://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2016-0042>
 - Click on “Comment Now!”. Complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.
 - Attachments to electronic comments (up to 10 MB) will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.
 - **Mail:** Mary Vara
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