

South Atlantic
Frequently Asked Questions
Red Snapper in the South Atlantic
May 2016

Will there be a red snapper commercial or recreational season in South Atlantic federal waters in 2016?

- No, there will not be a season for either sector.

Will there be a red snapper season in state waters?

- The public should contact each state's fishery management department to obtain the regulations in state waters. Red snapper may not be harvested in state waters on board a vessel for which a valid federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for snapper-grouper has been issued.

Why is there not a red snapper season in 2016 in federal waters?

- There will not be a season because estimates of red snapper total removals (landings plus dead discards) in 2015 (276,729 fish) exceeded the allowable level (114,000 fish).

What determines if there will be a season?

- In 2013, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council developed, and NOAA Fisheries implemented, a process to determine if a fishing season will occur each year, the allowable harvest, and the season lengths for the commercial and recreational sectors.
- The first step of the process dictates the following:

--A red snapper season may occur when estimates of red snapper total removals are less than the allowable level in the previous year.

--A red snapper season will not occur when estimates of red snapper total removals are greater than the allowable level in the previous year.

- More information on the process may be found here: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/2013/am28/index.html

What does total removals mean?

- Total removals are red snapper killed either by being kept or by not surviving after being released.

Who determined the estimates of 2015 red snapper total removals and allowable levels?

- The 2015 red snapper total removal estimates were determined through an evaluation of the landings and discard information compiled by fishery biologists from the four South Atlantic states (Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina) and NOAA Fisheries.
- The 2015 red snapper allowable level of total removals was determined by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, as informed by a red snapper stock assessment, rebuilding projections, and the scientific advice of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee.
- The report of the 2015 estimates of red snapper total removals may be found here: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/2016/red_snapper/index.html

What information was used to determine the 2015 estimates of red snapper total removals in South Atlantic waters?

- The 2015 estimates of red snapper total removals are based on commercial landings and discard data from dealer reports and fishermen logbooks and recreational landings and discard data from federal and state recreational surveys.

When was the most recent stock assessment for red snapper in the South Atlantic?

- The most recent South Atlantic red snapper stock assessment and peer review were completed in April and May 2016, respectively. The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee reviewed the assessment results and will present their report and recommendations, which are still in preparation, to the Council at the June meeting in Cocoa Beach, Florida.

Will there be a season in 2017?

- At this time, it is not possible to determine if there will be a red snapper season in South Atlantic federal waters in 2017.
- The annual process described above will be repeated in 2017, and NOAA Fisheries will announce the results of the process in 2017.

Who may I contact for more information?

- Contact NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Regional Office at (727) 824-5305.
- More information may be found on the following NOAA Fisheries Web site: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/s_atl/sg/2016/red_snapper/index.html