



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

## FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

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December 30, 2008  
FB08-070

## NOAA Seeking Public Comment on Amendment 16 to the South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery Management Plan

### Comment Period Ends February 23, 2009

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service) is seeking public comment on Amendment 16 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region. The notice of availability was published in the *Federal Register* on December 24, 2008, (73 FR 79037). The amendment, if approved, would establish recreational and commercial management measures to address overfishing of South Atlantic snapper and grouper as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

New measures would include:

- Management reference points and interim allocations for gag and vermilion snapper;
- A four month prohibition on recreational and commercial harvest of shallow-water grouper species including gag, black grouper, red grouper, scamp, rock hind, red hind, coney, graysby, yellowfin grouper, yellowmouth grouper, and tiger grouper;
- A five month prohibition on recreational harvest of vermilion snapper;
- Modifications to gag and vermilion snapper commercial quotas;
- Reductions in recreational bag limits for vermilion snapper, gag, black grouper, and the grouper aggregate; and
- A requirement for the commercial and recreational sectors to use venting and dehooking tools when necessary.

For a person on board a vessel for which a federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for the South Atlantic snapper-grouper fishery has been issued, the provisions of the closures for gag and vermilion snapper would apply regardless of whether the fish are harvested in state or Federal waters. Captain and crew on for-hire vessels would be prohibited from retaining vermilion snapper, grouper, or tilefish.

### Summary table of current and proposed regulations for the South Atlantic.

Measures	Current	Proposed in Amendment 16
<b>Recreational</b>		
Grouper aggregate bag limit	5 fish	3 fish
Gag/black grouper bag limit within aggregate	2 gag or black grouper (combined)	1 gag or black grouper (combined)
Vermilion snapper bag limit	10 fish	5 fish
Shallow-water grouper* closed season	None	January-April
Vermilion snapper closed season	None	November-March
<b>Commercial</b>		
Shallow water grouper* closed season	March-April (gag/black grouper)	January-April (all shallow-water groupers*)
Gag quota	None	352,940 lbs gutted weight
Vermilion Snapper Quota	1,100,000 lbs gutted weight	315,523 lbs gutted weight (January-June); 302,523 lbs gutted weight (July-December)
* Gag, black grouper, red grouper, scamp, red hind, rock hind, coney, yellowfin grouper, yellowmouth grouper, and tiger grouper		

### Request for Comments

Written comments on Amendment 16 must be received no later than 5:00 pm, EST, February 23, 2009, in order to be considered by NOAA Fisheries Service. See the **Addresses** section for information on where and how to submit comments.

## Addresses

Electronic copies of the DEIS may be obtained from the NOAA Fisheries Service Web site at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>, the e-Rulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Web site at <http://www/safmc.net>, or:

NOAA Fisheries Service  
Southeast Regional Office  
Sustainable Fisheries Division  
263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- Electronic Submissions: Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. All comments received are part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All personal identifying information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NOAA Fisheries Service will accept anonymous comments. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

- Mail: Jack McGovern  
NOAA Fisheries Service  
Southeast Regional Office  
Sustainable Fisheries Division  
263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701
- Fax: 727-824-5308, Attention: Jack McGovern

## How Can We Improve These Fishery Bulletins?

If you have any suggestions on how we may improve the contents of future fishery bulletins please contact: Kim Amendola, Communications Specialist, Phone: 727-551-5707, FAX: 727-824-5320, e-mail: [sero.communications.comments@noaa.gov](mailto:sero.communications.comments@noaa.gov).

If you would like to receive these fishery bulletins via e-mail as soon as they are published, please email us at address below. You will still receive a hard copy of these bulletins through the mail.

**E-mail:** [sero.communications.comments@noaa.gov](mailto:sero.communications.comments@noaa.gov) and include: "Request for Electronic Fishery Bulletins" in the subject line and your preferred e-mail address in the body of the e-mail.

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