



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Notice of Final Rule for Amendment 13C to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (FMP)

CHANGES INTENDED TO REDUCE HARVESTS, END OVERFISHING AND ACHIEVE OPTIMUM YIELD

NOAA Fisheries Service has published a final rule in the *Federal Register* implementing the approved regulatory actions in Amendment 13C to the FMP. The final rule is effective October 23, 2006. The intent of the amendment is to reduce harvests, end overfishing, and achieve optimum yield (the amount of fish that will achieve the maximum sustainable yield, as reduced by any relevant economic, social, or ecological factor) through the following management measures:

Snowy grouper:

- Decrease the annual commercial quota over three years from 151,000 pounds gutted weight (lbs gw) in 2006 to 118,000 lbs gw in 2007, and 84,000 lbs gw in 2008;
- decrease the commercial trip limit over three years from 275 lbs gw in 2006 to 175 lbs gw in 2007, and 100 lbs gw in 2008; and
- limit possession to one per person per day within the 5-grouper per person per day aggregate recreational bag.

Golden tilefish:

- Reduce the annual commercial quota to 295,000 lbs gw;
- reduce the commercial trip limit to 4,000 lbs gw, which would decrease to 300 lbs gw if 75 percent of the quota were taken by September 1; and
- limit possession to one per person per day within the 5-grouper per person per day aggregate recreational bag limit.

Vermilion snapper:

- Establish an annual commercial quota of 1,100,000 lbs gw; and
- increase the recreational minimum size limit from 11-inch total length (TL) to 12-inch TL.

Black sea bass:

- Change commercial and recreational fishing years from the calendar year to June 1 through May 31;
- establish and decrease an annual commercial quota, over three years from 477,000 lbs gw in year 1 (June 1, 2006, to May 31, 2007) to 423,000 lbs gw in year 2 (June 1, 2007, to May 31, 2008), and 309,000 lbs gw in year 3 (June 1, 2008, to May 31, 2009);
- require the use of at least 2-inch mesh for the entire back panel of pots;
- remove pots from the water once the commercial quota is met;
- establish a recreational allocation that would decrease over three years from 633,000 lbs gw in year 1 to 560,000 lbs gw in year 2, and 409,000 lbs gw in year 3;
- increase the recreational size limit from 10-inch TL to 11-inch TL in year 1 and 12-inch TL in year 2; and
- reduce the recreational bag limit from 20 to 15 per person per day.

Red porgy:

- Increase the commercial trip limit to 120 fish during May through December;
- establish a commercial quota of 127,000 lbs gw; and
- increase the recreational bag limit from 1 to 3 red porgy per person per day.

Answers to frequently asked questions about Amendment 13C can be found at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/grouper/FAQs%20092106.pdf>.

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Weather Bureau and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

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