



The following *Southeast Fishery Bulletin* from NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office is provided as a courtesy to our subscribers.

SOUTHEAST FISHERY BULLETIN

(Gulf of Mexico)

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NOAA Fisheries Announces Commercial and Recreational Quota Increases for Red Snapper and the Recreational Seasons in the Gulf of Mexico

Small Entity Compliance Guide

On May 1, 2015, NOAA Fisheries will publish a rule implementing an increase to the commercial and recreational quotas for red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico through 2017.

For 2015, the red snapper allowable catch is increasing from 11.0 million pounds (mp) whole weight to 14.3 mp. The commercial and recreational sector quotas will be based on the current 51 percent commercial and 49 percent recreational allocation. The commercial quota will increase to 7.29 mp; the recreational quota will increase to 7.01 mp.

The red snapper commercial sector is managed under an individual fishing quota program. The increase to the commercial quota will be distributed to shareholders on or shortly after the effective date of the final rule.

However, to better ensure the recreational sector does not exceed its quota, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council recently established a recreational catch target that is less than the recreational quota, and asked NOAA Fisheries to base the length of the recreational fishing season on this catch target instead of the quota.

Recently, NOAA Fisheries also established a federally permitted charter vessel/headboat (for-hire) component and a private angling component within the recreational sector, allocated the red snapper recreational quota and annual catch target between the components, and established separate seasonal closure provisions for the two components. The resulting annual catch targets for each component are 2.371 mp for the federally permitted for-hire component, and 3.234 mp for the private angling component (which also includes non-federally permitted for-hire vessels) of the recreational sector.

For 2015, the red snapper recreational season in federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico will be different for the two components of the recreational sector. Both the for-hire and private angling components will open on June 1, 2015, at 12:01 a.m., local time. Closing dates are:

- Private Anglers: June 11, 2015, at 12:01 a.m., local time.
- Federal For-Hire Vessels: July 15, 2015, at 12:01 a.m., local time.

The federal-water red snapper bag limit is 2 fish with a 16-inch minimum total length size limit.

Electronic copies of the framework and final rule may be obtained from the NOAA Fisheries Web site: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/>.

This bulletin provides only a summary of the information regarding the existing regulations. Any discrepancies between this bulletin and the regulations as published in the Federal Register will be resolved in favor of the Federal Register. This bulletin serves as a Small Entity Compliance Guide, complying with Section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996.

About Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional Fishery Management Councils established by the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976. The Council prepares fishery management plans, which are designed to manage fishery resources within the 200-mile limit of the Gulf of Mexico.



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