



A Brief Overview of Alabama's Reef Fish Reporting Program

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Background

Alabama's Gulf of Mexico coastline stretches for 53 miles provides various access points for anglers to recreationally fish.

Alabama and local anglers have invested in a ~1,000 mi² artificial reef complex since the mid-1980's where over 10,000 artificial reefs are estimated to exist today.

Red Snapper is the most popular reef fish species for anglers to target off Alabama's Gulf Coast.

NOAA Fisheries manages the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in Federal Waters (9 miles – 200 miles) where the majority of red snapper are found.

States establish size and bag limits within state waters (3 miles, up to 9 miles for Red Snapper).



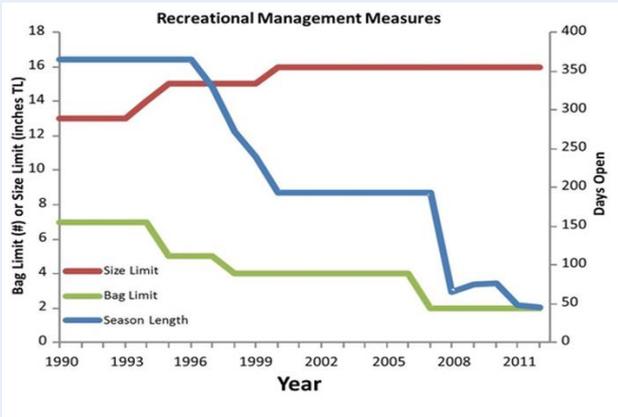
Background

NOAA Fisheries stock assessments provide reference points on the status of the population which are used to establish maximum harvest levels.

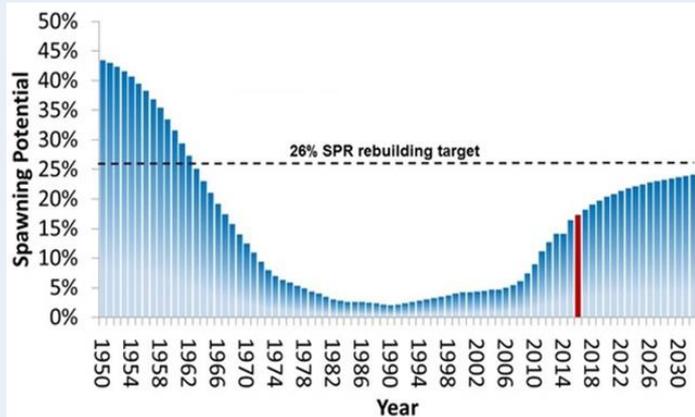
Fisheries managers and scientists use catch information gathered from federal recreational fisheries surveys (MRIP and MRFSS) to aid in state management of inshore species.

Federal estimates of Alabama recreational Red Snapper landings throughout the 1990's and 2000's ranged between 30-35% of Gulf recreational landings.

In 2006, reauthorization of the Magnuson-Steven Fishery Management and Conservation Act resulted in significant changes which increased harvest restrictions.



Source: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/history-management-gulf-mexico-red-snapper>



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Background

In 2013, the federal Red Snapper season was reduced to 28 days.

The Commissioner of ADCNR promulgated a regulation in 2014, prior to the recreational season, which required reporting of red snapper landed in Alabama by recreational vessels.

Recreational vessel owners/operators (federal for-hire, headboat, state for-hire and private vessels) are responsible for submitting landing reports prior to landing their Red Snapper harvest in Alabama.

Ways to report landings: online , smartphone app (android or apple), carbonless paper ticket, (Toll-free number used through 2016).

Landing report information reported includes:

- Date and time (for paper report only)
- Vessel registration or Conservation ID
- # of anglers
- # of fish harvested
- # of released dead
- county of landing
- trip type (private or charter)
- access type for private vessels and trip length for charter vessels.



Data Collection



Snapper Check utilizes the capture-recapture survey method for estimating rates of non-reporting.

Dockside surveys (capture) and landing reports (recapture) gather the same information so that comparisons (match trips) can be made to help estimate the number of non-reporting vessels.

Dockside sampling sites are selected using random, stratified probability proportional to size sampling methodology, using MRIP APAIS site frame.

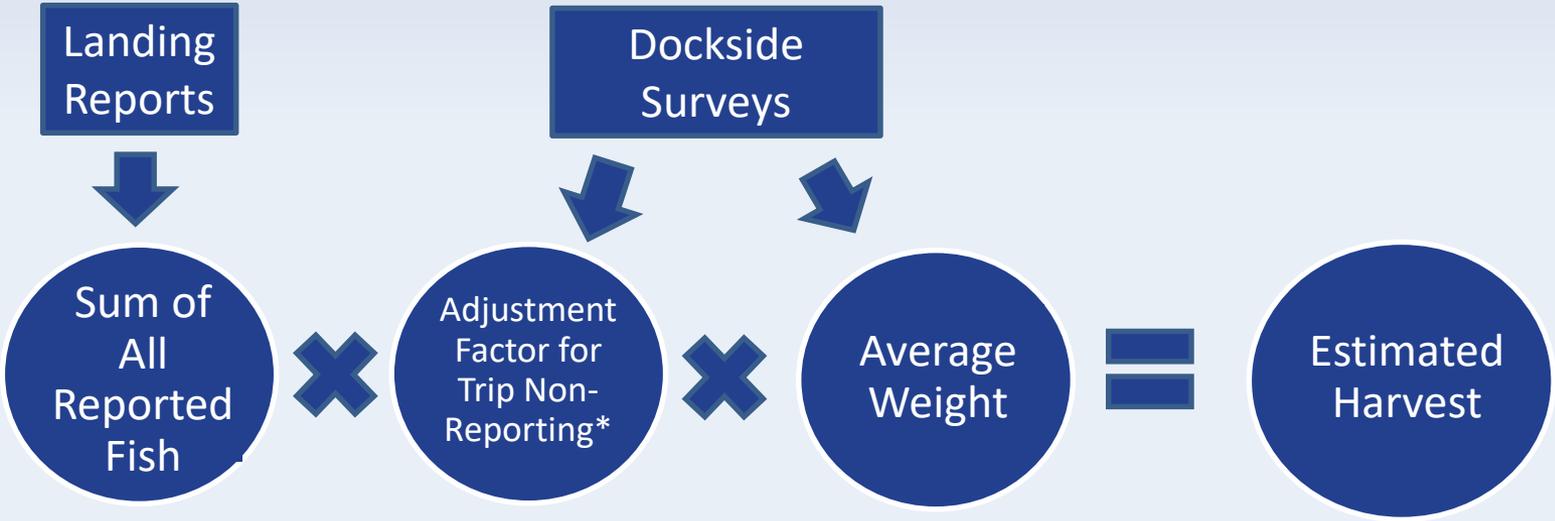
Dockside data is QA/QC'd after entry. Vessel registrations from both data sets are compared to a master list of charter vessels to validate that trip type is recorded correctly.



Estimate Calculations

Snapper Check is currently certified by NOAA Fisheries as a scientifically valid survey method, but data has not been used in federal stock assessments.

Landings estimation:



Non-reporting adjustment factor:

- Attempt is made to calculate proportion of vessels that do not report trip information.
- Landing records and docksides survey records are compared to one another.
- A “match” is made if the date, vessel reg. number, number of fish and anglers, and time of interview (w/in 3.5 hours of survey time) match.

*Adjust. Factor =
$$\frac{1}{\left(\frac{\text{No. Fish from Matched Docksides Surveys \& Landing Reports}}{\text{No. Fish from All Docksides Surveys}} \right)}$$

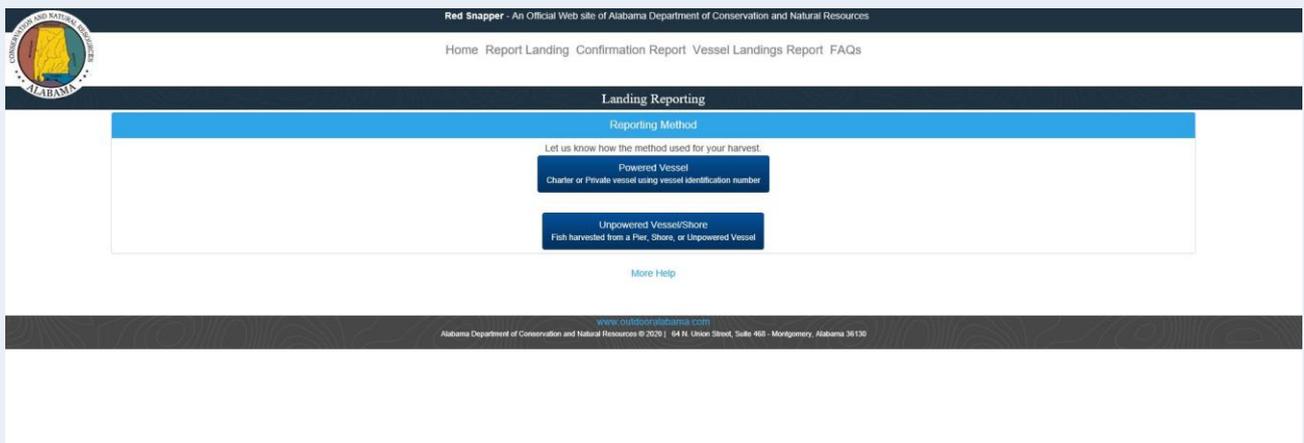
Recent Developments within Snapper Check

Alabama anglers will have recreational mandatory reporting of two additional reef fish species; Gray Triggerfish and Greater Amberjack beginning in 2021.

Kayak and shore anglers will now have an option to report their catch by selecting the “unpowered vessel/shore” option, available on the app and online.

Improved the connectivity when reporting through the app.

Streamlined reporting options down to online reporting or via smartphone app.





Thank You