



# Recreational Closure of Gag Harvest in Federal Waters of the Gulf of Mexico

*September 29, 2023*

FB23-072: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Bulletin. For more information, contact: Dan Luers: (727) 824-5305; [Daniel.Luers@noaa.gov](mailto:Daniel.Luers@noaa.gov)

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## What/When/Where:

- Recreational harvest of gag in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) **will close at 12:01 a.m., local time, on October 19, 2023.**
- Gag recreational harvest will be closed until the 2024 fishing season opens.

## Why The Gag Closure Is Happening:

- Interim measures to reduce overfishing of gag stated that the recreational season would begin on September 1, 2023, and end on November 10, 2023, unless NOAA Fisheries projects that the gag recreational annual catch limit would be met before that date.
- Projections of recreational catch and effort data indicate the recreational Gulf gag annual catch limit of 403,759 pounds gutted weight will be reached on October 19, 2023.
- Preliminary reports indicate high catch rates of gag this year, in part because of changes in the season start from June 1 to September 1.
- In accordance with the regulations, NOAA Fisheries must close harvest when the recreational annual catch limit has been met or is projected to be met.
- Shortening the season may also mitigate the potential for a quota overage, which would result in a reduction in the annual catch limit, annual catch target, and season length for

the 2024 gag recreational season.

## During The Closure:

- During the recreational closure, the bag and possession limit is zero for gag in or from federal waters of the Gulf.
  - The prohibition on possession of Gulf gag also applies in Gulf state waters for a vessel issued a valid federal charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf reef fish.
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[Quick Glance Contact List](#) for the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office

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permits for permit transfers. Envelopes with information labels will be provided so that your documents can be attached to the correct application. The mailbox will be checked daily. For more information, contact the Permits Office at 877-376-4877.

**Other contacts:**

Media: Allison Garrett, 727-551-5750

Recreational Fishing Coordinator: Sean Meehan, 727-385-5202

*Last updated by [Southeast Regional Office](#) on October 02, 2023*