



## South Atlantic Council Consistency

Dehooking Tools

Report Date: August 12, 2009



**Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**  
Division of Marine Fisheries Management

NOAA Fisheries Service has implemented federal regulations that reduce commercial and recreational fishing for several species of shallow-water grouper, including a requirement to use dehooking tools when releasing fish in federal waters. This provision went into effect July 29, 2009 and was designed to lower bycatch mortality of snapper-grouper species. Dehooking tools are widely used by commercial and recreational fishers and are a proven way of reducing handling and associated mortality of fish that are returned to the water. State rules currently specify use of dehooking tools for reef fish in state waters of the Gulf of Mexico. This proposed rule would extend the requirement to use dehooking tools in state waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

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## Staff Recommendation



- Approve draft rule requiring dehooking tools aboard commercial and recreational vessels in the Atlantic Ocean when fishing for reef fish
- Proceed to Final Public Hearing in December 2009



Staff recommends approving this draft rule requiring dehooking tools aboard commercial and recreational vessels in the Atlantic Ocean when fishing for reef fish and proceeding to Final Public Hearing in December 2009.