



FWC Division of Marine Fisheries Management

HOT SHEET – FEBRUARY 2009

(Valid through February 28, 2009)

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Visit Hot Sheet at
<http://myfwc.com/marine>

Issues covered in this posting:

[Grouper](#), [Snapper](#), [Blue Crab](#), [Marine Life](#), [Spotted Seatrout](#), [Snook](#)

Issue: GROUPEL

→ Gulf of Mexico

Action: Regulation Changes in the Gulf of Mexico

Information: Regulation changes took effect on January 1, 2009 for grouper fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico in both state and federal waters.

Gag

- Established a closed recreational season from February 1st through March 31st in state and federal waters
- Reduced the bag limit to two within the five grouper aggregate bag limit in state and federal waters

Red Grouper

- Increased the bag limit to two within the five grouper aggregate bag limit in state waters
- Closed recreational season from February 15th to March 15th in federal Gulf of Mexico waters

Black Grouper

- Closed season from February 15th through March 15th in federal waters

The Gag Grouper regulations are consistent between state and federal waters.

Timeline: Other changes to Gulf grouper regulations are expected for later in 2009.

→ South Atlantic

Action: New Regulation Changes in the South Atlantic

Information: New permanent regulations for federal waters of the South Atlantic have been proposed for all shallow-water grouper species and will reduce harvest by all fishers. These regulations are expected to take effect sometime in 2009; pending final implementation. These changes include:

- January through April closed to all harvest of these species
- The grouper aggregate bag limit reduced to 3 shallow-water grouper

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- Reduced bag limit to one Gag or one Black Grouper (combined) within the three grouper aggregate bag limit

Timeline: Federal changes to Atlantic grouper regulations are anticipated for sometime in 2009. The FWC may address potential changes in state waters following any action taken by the federal agencies.

Links for more information:

- [Grouper Fishery Information](http://www.myfwc.com/marine) [www.myfwc.com/marine]
- [FWC News Release – Grouper Regulations](http://www.myfwc.com) [www.myfwc.com]
- [Gulf Council News Release](http://www.gulfcouncil.org) [www.gulfcouncil.org]
- [DMFM Background Report - Gulf Grouper FPH](http://www.myfwc.com/commission) [www.myfwc.com/commission]
- [South Atlantic Council News Release](http://www.safmc.net) [www.safmc.net]

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Issue: RED SNAPPER

→ **Gulf of Mexico**

Action: Season Change in the Gulf of Mexico

Information: At the February 5, 2009 Commission meeting, the FWC voted to change the recreational season for Red Snapper in state waters of the Gulf of Mexico from April 15 – November 1 to June 1 – September 30.

Links for more information:

- [FWC News Release - Red Snapper Season](http://www.myfwc.com) [http://www.myfwc.com]

→ **South Atlantic**

Action: Pending Regulation Changes in the South Atlantic

Information: Potential regulation changes for Red and Vermilion Snapper in federal waters of the South Atlantic were discussed at the December 2008 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting. The South Atlantic Council proposed new regulations for Vermilion Snapper that are expected to take effect sometime in 2009 pending final implementation. These changes would establish:

- A bag limit of five vermillion snapper
- A closed season from November through March

Action on Red Snapper was postponed at the December 2008 South Atlantic Council meeting and will be addressed during their meeting in March 2009. The FWC may address potential changes following any action taken by the federal agencies.

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Additional rule changes are expected to take effect sometime in 2009 that would affect federal snapper and grouper permit holders and all sales of snapper and grouper species. These rules were adopted by the South Atlantic Council in March 2008 but have not been implemented.

Timeline: Vermilion Snapper regulation changes effective in 2009
Red Snapper regulation changes on hold for now

Links for more information:

[South Atlantic Council December 2008 Meeting Summary](http://www.safmc.net) [www.safmc.net]

[Snapper Fishery Information](http://www.myfwc.com/marine) [www.myfwc.com/marine]

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Issue: BLUE CRAB

Action: Approved Staggered Closed Seasons to Remove Abandoned Traps

Information: New rules establishing regional closed seasons to the harvest of blue crabs with traps were approved at the February 2009 FWC meeting. These rules establish closed periods of up to 10 days in six regions in the state to identify and retrieve lost and abandoned blue crab traps from Florida waters. The rule will take effect July 1, 2009.

Link to map of proposed closed areas and dates:

[Blue Crab Trap Closure Map](http://www.myfwc.com) [http://www.myfwc.com]

Links for more information:

[FWC News Release – Blue Crab Trap Closed Seasons](http://www.myfwc.com) [http://www.myfwc.com]

[FWC Background Report - BC Trap Closed Seasons](http://www.myfwc.com/commission) [http://www.myfwc.com/commission]

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Issue: MARINE LIFE (Aquarium Trade)

Action: Approved Rules

Information: At the February 2009 FWC meeting, a series of draft rule amendments were approved for the marine life (aquarium species) fishery. The FWC is adding several species to the marine life rule, which means that commercial harvesters of these species will need a marine life endorsement to collect them. These species will also be included in the marine life recreational bag limit. In addition, the FWC has approved changes to the size and bag limits of several species already in rule. For specific details on the rule changes, review the top two links below. The rule will take effect July 1, 2009.

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Links for more information:

[FWC News Release - Marine Life](http://www.myfwc.com) [http://www.myfwc.com]

[FWC Background Report - Marine Life Draft Rules](http://www.myfwc.com/commission) [http://www.myfwc.com/commission]

[68B-42, F.A.C. – Marine Life Rule](https://www.flrules.org) [https://www.flrules.org]

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Issue: SPOTTED SEATROUT

Action: Seasonal Re-openings and Closures

Information: The harvest of Spotted Seatrout closed on February 1, 2009 for these areas: all waters north of the Flagler-Volusia county line to the Florida/Georgia border, in the Atlantic and north of a line running due west from the westernmost point of Fred Howard Park Causeway to the Florida/Alabama border, in the Gulf.

The harvest of Spotted Seatrout in all other Florida waters remains open.

Links for more information:

[FWC News Release - Snapper and Seatrout Closed](http://www.myfwc.com) [http://www.myfwc.com]

[68B-37, F.A.C. – Spotted Seatrout Rule](https://www.flrules.org) [https://www.flrules.org]

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Issue: SNOOK

Action: Seasonal Re-openings

Information: The harvest season for Snook reopened on February 1, 2009 in these areas: all Atlantic coastal and inland waters, including Lake Okeechobee and the Kissimmee River. The harvest season for Snook will remain closed until March 1 in these areas: all of Florida's Gulf of Mexico, Everglades National Park and Monroe County coastal and inland waters.

Links for more information:

[FWC News Release - Snook Seasons](http://www.myfwc.com) [http://www.myfwc.com]

[68B-21, F.A.C. – Snook Rule](https://www.flrules.org) [https://www.flrules.org]

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