



FWC Division of Marine Fisheries Management

HOT SHEET – JANUARY 2009

(Valid through January 31, 2009)

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Issues covered in this posting:

[Grouper](#), [Snapper](#), [Amberjack & Triggerfish](#), [Blue Crab](#), [Marine Life](#), [Spotted Seatrout](#), [Snook](#), [Angler Registry](#)

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 season from February 1st through March 31st
- Reduced the bag limit to two within the five grouper aggregate bag limit

Red Grouper

- Increased the bag limit to two within the five grouper aggregate bag limit

The Gag Grouper regulations are consistent between state and federal waters.
The Red Grouper regulations only apply in state waters.

Timeline: New Gulf grouper regulations take effect January 1, 2009.

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

→ South Atlantic

Action: Pending Regulation Changes in the South Atlantic

Information: A proposed interim rule to close South Atlantic federal waters to the recreational harvest of groupers has been canceled. However, new permanent regulations for federal waters of the South Atlantic have been proposed for all shallow-water grouper species that would reduce harvest by all fishers. These regulations are expected to take effect sometime in 2009; however the exact date has not yet been set. These changes include:

- January through April closed to all harvest of these species
- The grouper aggregate bag limit reduced to 3 shallow-water grouper
- Reduced bag limit to one Gag or one Black Grouper (combined) within the three grouper aggregate bag limit

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In the South Atlantic, there are no changes in state or federal waters for grouper at this time.

Timeline: Changes to Atlantic grouper regulations are anticipated for sometime in 2009.

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: SNAPPER

→ **Gulf of Mexico**

Action: Proposed Season Change in the Gulf of Mexico

Information: At the December 4, 2008 Commission meeting, the FWC proposed changing the recreational season for Red Snapper in state waters of the Gulf of Mexico from April 15 – November 1 to June 1 – September 30. This proposed action would make the open season for Red Snapper in state waters consistent with that in federal waters. A final public hearing on this proposed action will take place during the FWC's February meeting in Destin.

Timeline: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Meeting January 26-29, 2009
FWC meeting February 4-5, 2009 in Destin

Links for more information:

[FWC News Release - Proposed 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 Vermillion Snapper in federal waters of the South Atlantic were discussed at the December 2008 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting. The South Atlantic Council approved new regulations for Vermillion 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 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 early 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: GREATER AMBERJACK and GRAY TRIGGERFISH

Action: New Regulations in State Waters of the Gulf of Mexico

Information: Regulation changes took effect on January 1, 2009 for Greater Amberjack and Gray Triggerfish in state waters in the Gulf of Mexico. The most recent stock assessments for these species indicate that there is excessive fishing pressure and that reductions in harvest are needed. The new regulations correspond with rules already in place in federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico, which extend beyond nine nautical miles offshore of Florida.

State and Federal Regulations

Greater Amberjack

- A recreational minimum size limit of 30 inches fork length
- Zero bag limit for captain and crew of for-hire vessels
- Annual Catch Limits (federal) – allows for in-season adjustments if the limits are exceeded
 - possible seasonal closure if ACL is exceeded
- Quotas set (federal): 0.503 million pounds for commercial, 1.386 mp for recreational

Gray Triggerfish

- A recreational and commercial minimum size of 14 inches fork length
- Annual Catch Limits (federal) – allows for in-season adjustments if the limits are exceeded
 - possible seasonal closure if ACL is exceeded
- Commercial federal quota set at 80,000 pounds in 2008, increasing in 2009 and 2010

Links for more information:

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[FWC News Release – New State Rules](http://www.myfwc.com) [www.myfwc.com]

[FWC Background Report – Amberjack and Triggerfish](http://www.myfwc.com) [www.myfwc.com]

[Southeast Fishery Bulletin – New Federal Regulations](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov) [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov]

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Issue: BLUE CRAB

Action: Proposed Staggered Closed Seasons to Remove Abandoned Traps

Information: Draft rules establishing regional closed seasons to the harvest of blue crabs with traps were proposed at the December 2008 FWC meeting. The proposed rules would establish closed periods of up to 10 days in six regions in the state to help efforts to identify and retrieve lost and abandoned blue crab traps from Florida waters. The proposed rule stems from deliberations of the Blue Crab Advisory Board, comments generated during public workshops held throughout the state during August, and from other comments received by staff. A hearing on final adoption of the rules will be held at the February 2009 FWC meeting in Destin. If the rule is adopted it will take effect in July 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: Proposed Rules

Information: At the December 2008 FWC meeting, a series of draft rule amendments were proposed for the marine life (aquarium species) fishery. Final action on these rules is scheduled for the February 2009 FWC meeting. The FWC is proposing to add several species to the marine life rule, which means that commercial harvesters of these species would need a marine life endorsement to collect them. These species also would be included in the marine life recreational bag limit. In addition, the FWC is proposing to adjust size and bag limits of several species already in rule. For specific details on the rule changes, review the top two links below.

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 in southern Florida re-opened on January 1, 2009. The re-opened area includes all waters south of the Flagler-Volusia county line in the Atlantic and south of a line running due west from the westernmost point of Fred Howard Park Causeway, which is about 1.17 miles south of the Pinellas/Pasco counties line in the Gulf.

The harvest of Spotted Seatrout will close on February 1, 2009 for these areas: all waters north of the Flagler-Volusia county line in the Atlantic and north of a line running due west from the westernmost point of Fred Howard Park Causeway in the Gulf.

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 will re-open on February 1 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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ISSUE: NATIONAL ANGLER REGISTRY PROGRAM

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Action: NOAA Adopts Final Rule

Information: NOAA's Fisheries Service released its final rule December 23, 2008 to create a national saltwater angler registry of all marine recreational anglers to help the nation better protect our shared marine resources. This rule is a result of a requirement passed by the U.S. Congress in 2007. Beginning January 2009, NOAA will exempt anglers from the federal registration rule if they are licensed in states that have a system to provide complete information on their saltwater anglers to the national registry. Saltwater recreational anglers and spearfishers who are not exempt from the requirement will need to be registered to fish in federal waters beginning January 1, 2010. Florida's current saltwater licensing system will not exempt anglers from the federal angler registry requirement. The FWC has requested that the Florida Legislature consider eliminating the shoreline saltwater license exemption for Florida residents, which would help the state qualify for an exemption to the federal angler registration requirements beginning in 2010.

Timeline: January 1, 2010: Anglers from non-exempted states are required to be registered.

In early 2011 a small fee (\$15 to \$25) may be charged to register.

Links for more information:

[NOAA Marine Recreational Information Program](http://www.countmyfish.noaa.gov) [http://www.countmyfish.noaa.gov]

[NOAA Press Release](http://www.countmyfish.noaa.gov) [http://www.countmyfish.noaa.gov]

[NOAA Fact Sheet](http://www.countmyfish.noaa.gov) [http://www.countmyfish.noaa.gov]

[FWC Angler Registry Information](http://www.myfwc.com) [http://www.myfwc.com]

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