



FWC Division of Marine Fisheries Management

HOT SHEET – July 2009

(Valid through July 31, 2009)

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Issues covered in this posting:

[Grouper](#), [Emergency Rule](#), [Shoreline License](#), [Snapper](#), [Season Updates](#), [Blue Crab](#),
[Marine Life](#)

Issue: GROUPER

→ Gulf of Mexico

Action: STATE Regulation Changes in the Gulf of Mexico

Information: New regulations for the recreational harvest of grouper in the Gulf of Mexico are anticipated to take effect August 2009 and are consistent with current grouper regulations in Gulf federal waters. These changes were approved at the June 2009 Commission meeting and are as follows:

- Feb. 1 – March 31 closed spawning season for all recreational harvest of shallow-water groupers in state waters of the Gulf of Mexico, excluding Monroe County. Shallow-water groupers include gag, red, black, yellowfin, yellowmouth, rock hind, red hind and scamp groupers.
- Decrease the daily recreational bag limit from five grouper to four grouper per person in Gulf state waters, excluding Monroe County
- Maximum of 2 red grouper and 2 gag grouper within the 4 grouper daily aggregate

Information: New state commercial regulation changes for grouper in the Gulf of Mexico were approved at the June 2009 Commission meeting. These changes are expected to be implemented August 2009 and are as follows:

- Reduce the minimum size limit for Gulf red grouper from 20" to 18" total length

Links for more information:

[Grouper Fishery Information](http://www.myfwc.com) [www.myfwc.com]
[FWC News Release – Grouper Regulations](http://www.myfwc.com) [www.myfwc.com]
[DMFM Background Report - Gulf Grouper FPH](http://www.myfwc.com/commission) [www.myfwc.com/commission]

→ Gulf of Mexico

Action: FEDERAL Regulation Changes in the Gulf of Mexico

Information: New federal recreational regulations took effect May 18 in Gulf of Mexico waters for groupers. These new regulation changes are outlined below.

- Grouper aggregate bag limit reduced to 4 grouper per person per day
- Gag grouper bag limit reduced to 2 fish per day per person within the 4 grouper aggregate bag limit
- Red grouper bag limit increased to 2 fish per person per day within the 4 grouper aggregate bag limit
- The recreational harvest season is closed for all shallow-water grouper from Feb. 1 through March 31. Shallow-water groupers include gag, red, black, yellowfin, yellowmouth, rock hind, red hind and scamp groupers.

Information: New federal commercial regulations took effect May 18 in federal Gulf of Mexico waters. These new regulation changes are outlined below.

- Red grouper minimum size limit reduced to 18" total length

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- Red grouper quota increased to 5.75 million pounds (gutted weight)
- Eliminated the Feb. 15 through March 15 commercial harvest season closure for gag, red, and black groupers

Timeline: Other changes to Gulf grouper regulations for state and federal waters are expected later in 2009.

Links for more information:

[Southeast Fishery Bulletin](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/index.html) [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/index.html]

→ South Atlantic

Action: Federal Regulation Changes in the South Atlantic

Information: The South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council has approved new regulations for all shallow-water grouper species that will reduce harvest by all fishers in federal waters. These regulations go into effect July 29, 2009 and include:

- January through April closed to all commercial and recreational harvest of gag, black grouper, red grouper, scamp, rock hind, red hind, coney, graysby, yellowfin grouper, yellowmouth grouper and tiger grouper
- The grouper aggregate bag limit reduced to 3 groupers
- Reduced bag limit to one gag or one black grouper (combined) within the three grouper aggregate bag limit
- A dehooking tool is required when necessary

Timeline: New grouper regulations effective in federal waters of the Atlantic on July 29, 2009. Other federal changes to Atlantic grouper regulations are anticipated for sometime in 2009. The FWC may address potential changes in state waters after the federal rules are implemented.

Links for more information:

[Southeast Fishery Bulletin](http://www.safmc.net) [www.safmc.net]

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Issue: EMERGENCY RULE

Action: Bottom longline gear restriction in the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Fishery

Information: The National Marine Fisheries Service implemented an emergency rule, effective May 18 through Oct. 28, which prohibits bottom longlining for reef fish east of 85° 30'W longitude in the Exclusive Economic zone (EEZ) of the Gulf of Mexico east of the 50-fathom depth contour. In accordance with this rule, the use of bottom longline gear to harvest reef fish in water of all depths east of 85° 30'W longitude is prohibited as of June 27, 2009 because the commercial tilefish quota has been met and the commercial deepwater grouper fishery closed on June 27.

Links for more information:

[National Marine Fisheries Service-Final Rule](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/index.html) [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/index.html]

[Southeast Fishery Bulletin](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/index.html) [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/index.html]

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Issue: SHORELINE LICENSE

Action: A shoreline license is now required for Florida anglers

Information: Beginning August 1, 2009, Florida residents fishing for saltwater species from the shore or from a structure fixed to shore will need a state fishing license. The annual resident shoreline fishing license will cost \$9.00 and will be available for purchase beginning July 15, 2009. Resident anglers may consider purchasing a \$17.00 one-year saltwater license which covers both shoreline and watercraft recreational fishing. Exemptions are listed below:

- The same exemptions as a regular one year saltwater license
- Anglers drawing food stamps, temporary cash assistance or Medicaid
- Anglers fishing in their home counties who use cane poles or other gear that does not depend on mechanical retrieval

Links for more information:

[FWC News Release – Shoreline Exemption Repealed](http://www.myfwc.com) [www.myfwc.com]

[FWC License Exemptions](http://www.myfwc.com) [www.myfwc.com]

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Issue: RED SNAPPER and VERMILION SNAPPER

→ Gulf of Mexico

Action: Proposed Season Change in the Gulf of Mexico

Information: At the June 2009 meeting, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission voted to change the recreational harvest season for red snapper in Gulf of Mexico state waters to June 1 – Aug. 14. The red snapper season in state waters of the Gulf of Mexico is now consistent with the June 1 - Aug. 14 season in federal waters. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) shortened the 2009 federal season because the recreational fishery went over its allowable quota by 1.2 million pounds last year. This overage needs to be accounted for in the current season by a reduction in the length of the season.

Links for more information:

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

[National Marine Fisheries Service – News Release](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/) [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/]

[DMFM Background Report – Gulf Red Snapper Season FPH](http://www.myfwc.com) [www.myfwc.com]

→ South Atlantic

Action: Regulation Changes in the South Atlantic

Information: Regulation changes for red and vermilion snapper in federal waters of the South Atlantic were further discussed at the June 2009 South Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting. The South Atlantic Council approved new regulations for vermilion snapper in federal waters effective July 29, 2009. These changes establish:

- A bag limit of five vermilion snapper
- A closed season from November through March for recreational harvest
- Use of a dehooking tool is required when necessary

At their March 2009 meeting, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council also recommended an interim rule that would close all harvest of red snapper in south Atlantic federal waters (beyond 3 miles from shore). This interim rule is currently under review and the NMFS will hold a 30 day comment period regarding this rule beginning early July. If implemented, a closure would likely take place in fall 2009.

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Timeline: Vermilion snapper regulation changes are effective July 29, 2009. Federal Atlantic red snapper closure expected in fall 2009.

Links for more information:

- [South Atlantic Council June 2009 Meeting Information](#) [www.safmc.net]
- [South Atlantic Council News Release](#) [www.safmc.net]
- [Snapper Fishery Information](#) [www.myfwc.com]
- [Southeast Fishery Bulletin](#) [www.safmc.net]

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Issue: SEASON UPDATES

Action: Upcoming season openings and closures

Information: The following species have upcoming season openings/closures:

- **Scallops:** The recreational harvest season for bay scallops opens July 1 and will remain open until Sept. 10 for the areas of the west bank of Mexico Beach Canal in Bay County to the Pasco-Hernando county line near Aripeka.
- **Spiny Lobster Sport Season:** The recreational harvest spiny lobster sport season is July 29-30, 2009.

Links for more information:

- [FWC News Release – Bay Scallop Season](#) [www.myfwc.com]
- [Spiny Lobster Sport Season Information](#) [www.myfwc.com]

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Issue: BLUE CRAB

Action: Approved Staggered Closed Seasons to Remove Abandoned Traps

Information: New rules take effect on July 1, 2009 that will 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. Upcoming closed dates and areas are as follows:

- **July 10-19:** All waters of Broward through Pasco counties
- **July 20-29:** All waters of Hernando through Wakulla counties

Link to map of 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](#) [www.myfwc.com]

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Issue: MARINE LIFE (Aquarium Trade)

Action: Approved Rules

Information: New rules for the marine life (aquarium species) fishery take effect on **July 1, 2009**, including changes to the size and bag limits of several species. Several species have been added 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. For specific details on the rule changes, review the two links below.

Links for more information:

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

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

[Recreational Harvest of Marine Life \(Aquarium Species\)](http://www.myfwc.com) [www.myfwc.com]

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