



FWC Division of Marine Fisheries Management

HOT SHEET – MARCH 2009

(Valid through March 31, 2009)

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Issues covered in this posting:

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

Issue: GROUPER

→ Atlantic and Monroe County

Action: Clarification of Gag and Black Grouper Bag Limit for State Waters

Information: In state waters of the Atlantic and Monroe County, no more than two Gag or Black Grouper, either individually or in combination, may be harvested within the five grouper aggregate bag limit. The three allowable Gag/Black grouper combinations are:

- 1 Gag and 1 Black, or
- 2 Gag and 0 Black, or
- 0 Gag and 2 Black

→ South Atlantic

Action: Proposed Federal Regulation Changes in the South Atlantic

Information: The South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council has proposed new regulations for all shallow-water grouper species which would reduce harvest by all fishers. These regulations are expected to take effect sometime in 2009; pending final implementation by NOAA Fisheries Service. These proposed changes include:

- January through April closed to all harvest of these species
- The grouper aggregate bag limit reduced to 3 shallow-water groupers
- 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 after the federal rules are implemented.

→ 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.

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Gag

- Established a closed recreational season from February 1st through March 31st in state and federal waters
- Reduced the recreational 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 through March 14th in federal Gulf of Mexico waters

Black Grouper

- Closed season from February 15th through March 14th in federal waters

Timeline: Other changes to Gulf grouper regulations are expected for later 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: RED SNAPPER

→ Gulf of Mexico

Action: Season Change in the Gulf of Mexico

Information: The recreational season for Red Snapper in state waters of the Gulf of Mexico has been changed from April 15 through October 31 to June 1 through September 30. The federal season is also currently 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:

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- 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 federal action taken.

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 by NOAA Fisheries.

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

Links for more information:

[South Atlantic Council March 2009 Meeting Information](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 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.

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](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: 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 top two links below.

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Links for more information:

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

[FWC Report - Marine Life Final 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 recreational harvest of Spotted Seatrout reopened in north Florida on March 1, 2009. The harvest of Spotted Seatrout is now open in all state waters.

Links for more information:

[FWC News Release - Snapper and Seatrout Opened](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 recreational season for Snook in all Gulf, Everglades National Park and Monroe County waters reopened March 1. The recreational harvest of Snook is now open in all state 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: KING MACKEREL

→ Gulf Group

Action: Commercial Season Closure

Information: The commercial season closed February 28 in state and federal Gulf waters for the west coast subzone off of Collier and Monroe Counties. This closure will remain in effect through the end of the fishing year, June 30, 2009.

Links for more information:

[NOAA Fishery Bulletin News Release](#)