



## FWC Division of Marine Fisheries Management

### HOT SHEET – MAY 2011

(Valid through May 31, 2011)

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Visit Hot Sheet [online!](#)

#### Issues covered in this posting:

[Grouper](#), [Black Sea Bass](#), [Red Snapper](#), [South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper](#), [Greater Amberjack](#),  
[Public Workshops](#), [Season Updates](#), [Free License Weekend](#), [Commission Meeting](#)

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#### Issue: GROUPER

##### → Gulf of Mexico

##### Action: Interim closure for recreational harvest of gag grouper in federal waters

**Information:** NOAA Fisheries Service established a temporary rule to close the harvest of gag grouper in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico through May 31, 2011. Charter and headboats that hold federal reef fish permits are required to abide by federal rules, even in state waters. This interim rule is in effect through May 31 could be extended for another 186 days. However, it was the intent of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC), when requesting this temporary rule, that there should be a recreational harvest of gag in 2011. At its April meeting, the GMFMC requested an interim rule for gag grouper that will set the 2011 recreational gag season from Sept. 16 through Nov. 15, 2011. NOAA Fisheries Service is accepting [public comment](#) on this proposed interim rule through May 6, 2011. Please visit the links below for information on submitting public comment.

Links for more information:

[GMFMC April Meeting](#) [gulfcouncil.org]

[Southeast Fishery Bulletin](#) [sero.nmfs.noaa.gov]

##### Action: Potential season modifications for gag grouper in state waters

**Information:** At the April 2011 meeting, FWC Commissioners approved rules that would close state waters of the Gulf of Mexico, excluding Monroe County, to recreational harvest of gag grouper from June 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011, with the exception of a fall harvest season Sept. 16 through Nov. 15. These rules would be in effect for 2011 only and are dependent upon consistent regulations in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

Links for more information:

[FWC News Release](#) [MyFWC.com]

[Grouper Fishery Information](#) [MyFWC.com]

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#### Issue: Black Sea Bass

##### → South Atlantic

##### Action: Recreational harvest closure in federal waters of the South Atlantic

**Information:** NOAA Fisheries Service has determined that the 2010-2011 recreational annual catch limit (ACL) of 409,000 pounds for black sea bass has been reached. In accordance with the accountability measure established in Amendment 17B (see [below](#)), the recreational fishery for black sea bass in federal waters of the South Atlantic closed [Feb. 12, 2011](#) and will remain closed until [June 1, 2011](#). This action is intended to prevent overfishing of black sea bass.

Charter and headboats that hold federal snapper-grouper permits are required to abide by these federal rules, even in state waters. State waters of the South Atlantic remain open to recreational black sea bass harvest for anglers who are not fishing from federally permitted for-hire vessels. State waters extend three nautical miles from shore into the Atlantic.

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Links for more information:

[Southeast Fishery Bulletin](#) [sero.nmfs.noaa.gov]

[Black Sea Bass Fishery Information](#) [MyFWC.com]

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## Issue: RED SNAPPER

### → Gulf of Mexico

#### Action: **Federal** quotas and recreational red snapper season set for 2011

**Information:** NOAA Fisheries Service has published a final rule implementing increases in the commercial and recreational red snapper quotas in the Gulf of Mexico from 3.542 and 3.403 million pounds (MP) to **3.66 and 3.525 MP** in 2011, respectively. A recent red snapper assessment update indicated that the total allowable catch may be increased. The 2011 recreational red snapper harvest season for federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico will be from **June 1 through July 18**. These dates were chosen, in part, due to the increasing size of landed fish.

FWC will discuss federal consistency action at the June Commission meeting in St. Augustine.

Links for more information:

[Southeast Fishery Bulletin](#) [sero.nmfs.noaa.gov]

[GMFMC April Meeting Update](#) [gulfcouncil.org]

[June Commission Meeting Information](#) [MyFWC.com]

### → South Atlantic

#### Action: **Federal** regulations for red snapper and use of circle hooks

**Information:** Amendment 17A was approved by NOAA Fisheries Service to address overfishing of red snapper in federal waters of the South Atlantic. The final rule for Amendment 17A does the following:

- Prohibits all harvest and possession of red snapper in federal waters of the South Atlantic and in state waters for vessels holding federal snapper-grouper permits
- The use of non-stainless steel circle hooks is required on any vessel (commercial or recreational) using hook-and-line gear with natural baits to fish for snapper-grouper species north of 28 degrees N. latitude in federal waters of the South Atlantic.
- Creates a program to monitor red snapper.

Initially, Amendment 17A also created an area of federal waters off of southern Georgia and northern Florida where fishing for all snapper-grouper species would be prohibited. However, after review of the latest scientific information from the 2010 red snapper stock assessment, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) unanimously voted to approve Regulatory Amendment 10 to eliminate the proposed closed area. NOAA Fisheries Service approved this amendment and will **not** implement the proposed snapper-grouper area closure in South Atlantic federal waters.

The decision to eliminate the snapper-grouper area closure in Atlantic federal waters **will not affect** the prohibition on harvest and possession of red snapper in Atlantic federal waters.

State waters of the Atlantic remain open for recreational red snapper harvest to anglers who are not fishing from federally permitted for-hire vessels. State waters extend three nautical miles from shore into the Atlantic.

Links for more information:

[Southeast Fishery Bulletin](#) – Circle Hook [safmc.net]

[Southeast Fishery Bulletin](#) – Regulatory Amendment 10 [sero.nmfs.noaa.gov]

[Amendment 17A FAQs](#) [sero.nmfs.noaa.gov]

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[Southeast Fishery Bulletin](#) – Final Rule [safmc.net]

[Snapper Fishery Information](#) [MyFWC.com]

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## Issue: SOUTH ATLANTIC SNAPPER-GROUPER SPECIES

→ South Atlantic

**Action: Final rule implementing accountability measures and annual catch limits for snapper-grouper species**

**Information:** NOAA Fisheries Service approved [Amendment 17B](#) to address overfishing that is occurring in the Atlantic snapper-grouper fishery and implement requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act. This rule established annual catch limits (ACLs) and accountability measures (AMs) for South Atlantic golden tilefish, snowy grouper, speckled hind, warsaw grouper, gag, red grouper, black grouper, black sea bass, and vermilion snapper. ACLs are set to prevent overfishing and AMs are management controls such as in-season closures that ensure that ACLs are not exceeded or correct for ACL overages. Additionally as part of [Amendment 17B](#), the following regulations became effective in federal waters of the Atlantic January 31, 2011:

- Harvest and retention of speckled hind and warsaw grouper are prohibited
- The bag limit for snowy grouper is reduced from one fish per person per day to one fish per vessel per day

Charter and headboats that hold federal snapper-grouper permits are required to abide by the above federal rules, even in state waters.

- Harvest and retention of snowy grouper, blueline tilefish, yellowedge grouper, misty grouper, queen snapper, and silk snapper beyond 240 feet depth in federal waters of the South Atlantic are prohibited.

This area closure is applicable only in federal waters that are greater than 240 feet in depth. This area closure does **not** extend into state waters. Charter and headboats that hold federal snapper-grouper permits may fish for these species in state waters regardless of depth.

Links for more information:

[Southeast Fishery Bulletin](#) [sero.nmfs.noaa.gov]

[Amendment 17B FAQs](#) [sero.nmfs.noaa.gov]

## Action: Request for Public Comment

**Information:** NOAA Fisheries Service is requesting public comment through May 16 on a proposed rule that would prevent the progressive shortening of fishing seasons for black sea bass, gag, and vermilion snapper, and would increase the trip limit for greater amberjack in South Atlantic federal waters. Information on submitting public comment may be found in the Southeast Fishery Bulletin link below.

Links for more information:

[Southeast Fishery Bulletin](#) [sero.nmfs.noaa.gov]

[Grouper Fishery Information](#) [MyFWC.com]

[Snapper Fishery Information](#) [MyFWC.com]

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## Issue: GREATER AMBERJACK

→ Gulf of Mexico

**Action: Seasonal closure in state and federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico**

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**Information:** NOAA Fisheries Service has published a final rule establishing a seasonal closure of **June 1 through July 31** for the recreational harvest of greater amberjack in or from federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Additionally, NOAA Fisheries Service adjusted the recreational and commercial 2011 quotas to 1.3 million pounds and 0.3 million pounds, respectively. The intended effects of the proposed rule are to maintain greater amberjack fishery stock rebuilding, reduce the chances of exceeding recreational quota limits, minimize in-season quota closures and increase economic benefits to Gulf of Mexico fishers by maximizing the number of fishing days available to the recreational sector.

FWC ruled at the April Commission Meeting to adopt a consistent June 1 through July 31 seasonal closure for the recreational harvest of greater amberjack in state waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

Links for more information:

- [Southeast Fishery Bulletin](#) - Seasonal Closure [sero.nmfs.noaa.gov]
- [Southeast Fishery Bulletin](#) - Quota Adjustment [sero.nmfs.noaa.gov]
- [FWC News Release](#) [MyFWC.com]
- [Amberjack Fishery Information](#) [MyFWC.com]
- [April Commission Meeting Information](#) [MyFWC.com]

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## Issue: PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

### Action: Upcoming public workshops on octocorals

**Information:** FWC is holding public workshops to gather public comments on possible rule changes that would extend FWC octocoral regulations into federal waters. Workshops will be available at the times and locations listed below.

<b>May 2, 2011</b> 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. EDT FWC South Regional Office 8535 Northlake Blvd. West Palm Beach, FL 33412 <b>Please call the South Regional office at 561-625-5122 between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. for directions.</b>	<b>May 3, 2011</b> 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. EDT City of Key Colony Beach City Hall Building, City Hall Auditorium Mile Marker 53.5 600 W. Ocean Drive Key Colony Beach, FL 33051-0141
<b>May 5, 2011</b> 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. EDT (5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. CDT for people located in the central time zone) The public may access this workshop via voice-only phone line. <b>Please RSVP to the Division of Marine Fisheries Management at 850-487-0554 to obtain instructions to join the meeting via voice-only phone line.</b>	

Links for more information:

- [Upcoming Public Workshops](#) [MyFWC.com]

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## Issue: SEASON UPDATES

### Action: Upcoming and continuing season openings and closures

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

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- **Bay Scallop:** The 2011 recreational harvest season for bay scallops will be from June 25 through Sept. 25. Bay scallop harvest is only permitted from the Pasco-Hernando County line to the west bank of the Mexico Beach Canal in Bay County.
- **Grouper:** The recreational harvest season of shallow-water groupers opened April 1 in state waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Gag, black, red, yellowfin, scamp, yellowmouth, rock hind or red hind groupers may be harvested and possessed in state waters. Federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico also opened to the recreational harvest of shallow water groupers beginning April 1, **excluding gag grouper**. The gag fishery in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico will remain closed through May 31. (see [above](#))
- **Grouper:** State and federal waters of the Atlantic, including state waters of Monroe County, open May 1 to the recreational harvest of gag, black, red, scamp, rock hind, red hind, coney, graysby, yellowfin, yellowmouth and tiger grouper.
- **Stone Crab:** The recreational harvest season of stone crab closes May 15 in state and federal waters.
- **Snook:** The recreational harvest of snook is closed through August 31, 2011 in all state and federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic. Catch and release is still permitted.

Links for more information:

- [FWC News Release Bay Scallop](#) [MyFWC.com]
- [Bay Scallop Fishery Information](#) [MyFWC.com]
- [FWC News Release Gulf Grouper](#) [MyFWC.com]
- [FWC News Release Atlantic Grouper](#) [MyFWC.com]
- [FWC News Release Snook](#) [MyFWC.com]
- [Stone Crab Fishery Information](#) [MyFWC.com]

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### Issue: FREE FISHING WEEKEND

→ Statewide

**Action: FWC establishes license free fishing weekends**

**Information:** FWC has designated two weekends in June 2011 when a saltwater fishing license will not be required statewide. On June 4 and 5, as well as June 18 and 19, a saltwater fishing license is not required for the recreational harvest of marine species.

Links for more information:

- [FWC News Release Free License Weekends](#) [MyFWC.com]

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### Issue: COMMISSION MEETING

**Action: FWC June Commission Meeting in St. Augustine**

**Information:** The FWC June Commission meeting will be held June 8-9 in St. Augustine. Marine fishery topics such as permit, pompano, Gulf red snapper and others will be discussed on June 9. Please check online for agenda items.

Links for more information:

- [June Commission Meeting Information](#) [MyFWC.com]

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