

MEMORANDUM



To: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners
From: Jessica McCawley, Director, Marine Fisheries Management
Date: February 20, 2019
Subject: Mullet – Draft Rule, Consent Agenda

Purpose:

To obtain approval for draft rule amendments that would modify statewide mullet regulations in 68B-39, Florida Administrative Code (FAC).

Summary:

Marine Fisheries Rule Cleanup is a long-term, ongoing effort to clarify, streamline, and standardize marine fisheries rules. In 2013, gear definitions in the Commission’s gear rule chapter (68B-4, FAC) were updated to include a definition for “snagging” or “snatch hooking” that applies to all species rules in Title 68B, FAC. Snagging or snatch hooking mullet is a commonly-used method of harvest for mullet and defining snagging or snatch hooking as a gear type had the unintended consequence of appearing to prohibit this method of harvest for mullet.

As part of the rule cleanup process, staff has also identified a few areas of the mullet rule that require clarifying changes that are needed to convey the original intent of the existing regulations. These changes include clarifying that limitations on harvest of mullet also apply to possession and landing of that catch and modifying the boundary where a seasonal commercial limit applies in the Peace River to be easier to reference on the water. Additional proposed changes are either organizational or an adoption of previously approved standardized language that improves consistency across marine fisheries rules. These changes are not expected to affect the current operation of the fishery but will provide additional clarification.

In summary, the proposed draft rule amendments would clarify that the harvest of mullet by snagging or snatch hooking is allowed and would make additional clarifications and non-substantive rule updates to implement the standardized rule formatting consistent with the rule cleanup process.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approving the proposed draft rules as presented. Staff also recommends the proposed changes be advertised and filed for adoption without further hearing, unless requested by a member of the public.

Staff Contact and/or Presenter:

Melissa Recks, Division of Marine Fisheries Management