



Gulf Council Issues

Review and Discussion

April 20, 2017

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

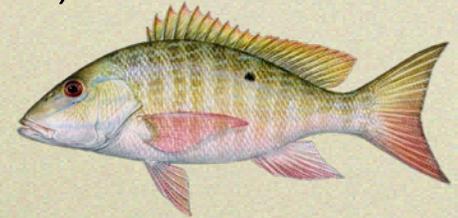
Division of Marine Fisheries Management

Final Council Actions – April 2016



Mutton Snapper

- Decrease bag limit from 10 to 5 per person (within the snapper aggregate)
- Increase minimum size limit from 16 to 18 inches TL
- Consistent with FWC regulations and pending regulations for Atlantic waters



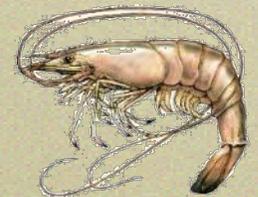
Gag Grouper

- Increase the commercial minimum size limit from 22 to 24 inches
- Consistent with current recreational size limit and Atlantic regulations



Shrimp

- Clarify transit provisions for shrimpers in federal waters and set a minimum threshold number for Gulf federal permits



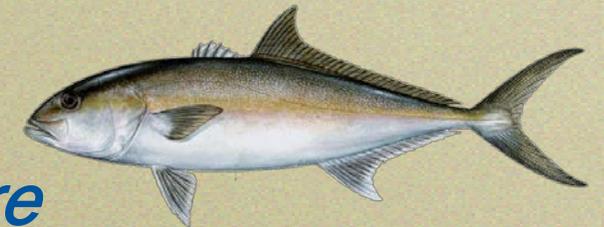
2017 Greater Amberjack Federal Recreational Season Closure



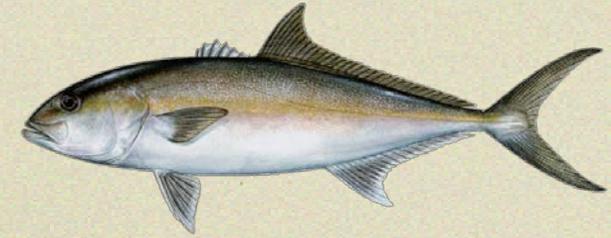
- In March, NOAA Fisheries determined ACT was exceeded on March 24 and announced federal season will remain closed through Dec. 31
 - Season scheduled to reopen Jan. 1, 2018
 - In 2016, federal harvest closed for the year on June 1, state harvest closed Sept. 10, and ACL was exceeded by 756,631 lbs.
- NOAA Fisheries requesting FWC close state waters for the remainder of the year
- New 2017 stock assessment update indicates stock still overfished and undergoing overfishing



Direction requested on recreational season closure



Greater Amberjack Recreational State Season Considerations



Benefit of keeping state waters open

- Maintaining state waters fishing opportunities

Benefits of closing state waters

- Help prevent additional quota overage and shortened season in 2018
 - Quota overages must be “paid back” the following year
- Contribute to stock rebuilding and ending overfishing

Additional Considerations

- Federally-permitted for-hire vessels must follow federal rules when fishing in state waters
- Approximately 13% of greater amberjack harvest occurs in state waters



Staff Recommendation

- Staff recommends closing Gulf greater amberjack to recreational harvest for the remainder of 2017 via Executive Order
- Input on other Council items is welcome
- Next Gulf Council meeting is June 5 - 9 in Naples, FL

