

MEMORANDUM



To: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners
From: Jessica McCawley, Director, Marine Fisheries Management
Date: December 7, 2017
Subject: Gulf Greater Amberjack – Adoption of Federal Standards

Purpose:

Staff will present a federal consistency action to amend state rules to be consistent with pending changes for Gulf greater amberjack in adjacent federal waters.

Summary:

The Gulf Council recently took final action to amend the Gulf greater amberjack rebuilding plan at its October meeting. Greater amberjack is overfished and undergoing overfishing. The Council considered ways to balance rebuilding the stock while optimizing recreational fishing opportunities. The final action amends the greater amberjack recreational season to be open May 1–31 and Aug. 1 – Oct. 31. Federal rule changes are expected to take effect in 2018.

This measure allows for fishing opportunities in both the spring and fall while minimizing the chance of a quota closure.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends modifying Gulf greater amberjack regulations to be consistent with pending federal rules:

- Set the recreational harvest season in state waters as May 1–31 and Aug. 1– Oct. 31.

If the Commission approves the proposed season, staff recommends closing Gulf greater amberjack to recreational harvest via Executive Order from Jan. 1 – April 30, 2018. This is a stop-gap measure while federal and state regulations for 2018 are being implemented.

Staff Contact and/or Presenter:

Martha Guyas, Division of Marine Fisheries Management