



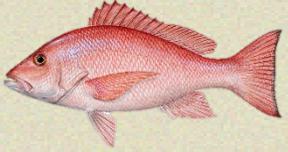
Federal Congressional Update

Review and Discussion

July 10, 2017

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Division of Marine Fisheries Management

2017 Red Snapper Recreational Season Update



39 Days Added to Federal Season for Private Anglers

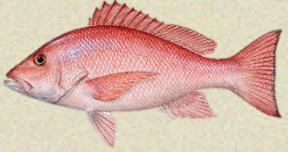
- U.S. Department of Commerce re-opened federal waters to private anglers for summer weekends
 - Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from June 16 through Sept. 3
 - Plus Monday and Tuesday of 4th of July weekend and Labor Day
- All Gulf states agreed to align their state seasons with this federal season for the summer

FWC Gulf State Waters Season Updated

- Executive order issue updated the state season to match new federal season based on input from the Commission and stakeholders
- Traded summer weekdays and fall weekends for increased summer weekend opportunities
- Resulted in 65 total days for state season



What's Next for Gulf Red Snapper?



- New stock assessment begins late 2017
- Gulf Council exploring management options for private anglers
 - Convened Ad Hoc Red Snapper Private Angler Advisory Panel
 - Approved motions to consider regional management through the Council process for AL, MS, and LA



Federal Congressional Activity



Recent Congressional Activity

- New presidential administration and 115th Congress began in January
- 2017 Appropriations Act passed
- A number of bills on other topics have been introduced
 - Gulf red snapper
 - Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
 - Shark fin sale
 - Lionfish
 - Other items – Biscayne National Park, State Wildlife Grants, Pittman-Robertson, Sportsmen Legislation, Commercial fishermen recruitment
- Today: Review bills recently introduced



2017 Appropriations

- Appropriations bill approved to fund government through September 2017
- Several provisions affect fish and wildlife management in Florida

Biscayne National Park

- Park expected to defer enforcement action relative to Marine Reserve Zone (MRZ) until the final rule is formalized
- Park expected to prepare an economic analysis and conduct baseline scientific monitoring before a MRZ could be designated

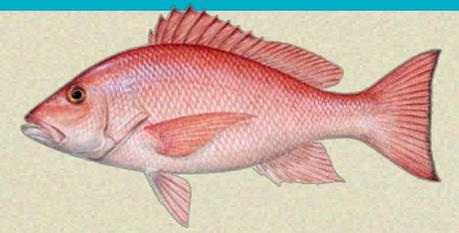
State Wildlife Grants

- Provides \$63,571,000 for 2017

Gulf red snapper



Appropriations – Gulf Red Snapper



- Permanently extends the boundary for MS, AL, and LA to 9 miles for red snapper management
- Provides \$10 million for independent, non-NOAA stock assessment
- Provides no funding for full transition of MRIP until NOAA fixes the stock assessment process
- Urges NOAA to provide increased quota allocation for private anglers
- Creates red snapper state management pilot program
 - Directs NOAA to develop pilot program that places Gulf states in the lead for fisheries management over designated reef zones
 - Provides an opportunity for Gulf states to demonstrate their ability to responsibly manage fisheries resources



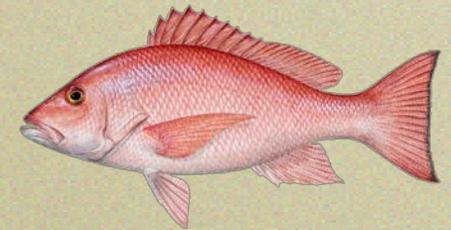
Congressional Bills Relating to Gulf Red Snapper

- **H.R. 1382** – Give Our Fishermen Immediate Snapper Help Act or GOFISH Act (Weber, TX)
 - Set private recreational season for 62 days beginning July 1
 - Set charter and commercial seasons and allocations the same as 2016
 - Catch and size limits for all sectors would be the same as 2016
 - Requires Secretary of Commerce to set the 2017 and 2018 seasons



Gulf Red Snapper Depth Management Concept

- Senate and House drafting legislation
- General concepts included in draft legislation
 - Extends state management authority beyond 9 miles for private anglers
 - Considering 25 fathoms or 25 miles, whichever is greater
 - Establishes maximum number of state days for 7 years



Direction requested on whether to support concept



Magnuson Act Bills

- H.R. 200 – (Young, AK) would make several changes to Magnuson
 - Provides flexibility in stock rebuilding and ceasing rebuilding plans
 - Gives regional Councils ability to use ecosystem changes and economic needs of fishing communities when setting ACLs
 - Exempts certain stocks from ACL requirements; spiny lobster
 - Provides flexibility in managing recreational fisheries
 - Increases public involvement and transparency when scientific data are collected
 - Prioritizes improvements to data collection and stock assessments in the Southeast U.S.
 - Adds a definition of a depleted fishery
 - Forms a state-federal partnership to improve recreational data collection
 - Requires a referendum for South Atlantic LAPP programs



Staff have supported this bill

Magnuson Act Bill – Recreational Management

- **H.R. 2023** – Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Act (Graves, LA and Webster, FL)
Brings flexibility, security, and reliability to the recreational fishing industry
 - Encourages use of data from recreational anglers
 - Encourages periodic reviews of allocations
 - Includes greater incorporation of various types of fisheries data in assessments
 - Gives Councils authority to use alternative fishery management measures for recreational fisheries
 - Bases rebuilding timeframes on biology, stock status, and the needs of fishing communities
 - Gives Councils flexibility to consider ecosystem changes and economic needs of communities when setting ACLs and removes some ACL requirements
 - Includes states in review of EFPs to ensure proposed activity consistent with management objectives
 - Prevents any future IFQs in Gulf and South Atlantic (staff has suggested 5-yr end date)



Staff have supported most items in this bill

Congressional Bill Relating to Sharks

Ban on possession, sale, and trade of shark fins

- S. 793 and H.R. 1456 – Shark Fin Trade Elimination Act 2017 (Sen. Booker, NJ and Rep. Royce, CA)
 - Not supported by FWC staff
 - Shark finning is already illegal nationwide
 - Will not improve sustainability of U.S. shark fisheries
 - Negative impacts to Florida and U.S. commercial fishermen
 - Not likely to reduce finning in less sustainable international fisheries



Congressional Bills on Lionfish

- H.R. 2560 – Reef Assassin Act (Gaetz, FL)
 - Encourages fishermen to remove lionfish in exchange for a tag to catch red snapper, gag grouper, triggerfish, or amberjack
 - States administer the tag program
 - 100 lionfish would qualify for 1 tag
 - No limit on the number of tags an angler can receive
 - Tags would be valid for 5 years after issue
 - Tags could be transferred
 - Exempts harvest under a tag from fishing seasons but not size limits
 - Exempts tag harvested fish from counting towards federal quota

Staff have supported this bill



Lionfish Funding

- H.R. 943 – Finding Innovative Lionfish Elimination Technologies Act of 2017 (Curbelo, FL and Hastings, FL)
 - Would allow Universities and research organizations to compete for grants to combat lionfish in Gulf and South Atlantic
 - \$7.5 million total over 5 years (max \$1.5 million per year)
 - Grant recipients must use money for:
 - 1) Lionfish research and their impacts on ecosystems
 - 2) Develop technologies including autonomous cameras and active acoustic systems to detect lionfish and determine priority areas for removal
 - 3) Develop lionfish mitigation technologies, including traps and countermeasures



Commercial Fishermen Recruitment

- H.R. 2079 – Young Fishermen’s Development Act (Young, AK)
 - Makes it easier to recruit and train commercial fishermen

Sportsmen’s Act of 2017

- S. 733 (Murkowski, AK)
 - Require federal officials to facilitate fishing, hunting, and recreational shooting on certain public lands

Hunting Heritage and Environmental Legacy Preservation for Wildlife Act

- S. 1514 (Barrasso, NY and Cardin, MD)
 - Provides funding for watershed restoration efforts and improving access for anglers and hunters, including recreational shooters on public lands

Staff have supported these bills



Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow's Needs Act of 2017

- H.R. 2591 (Scott, GA)
 - Modernizes Pittman-Robertson
 - Gives states more flexibility in how they administer funds
 - Allows more funding for programs to recruit, retain, and reactivate hunters and target shooters



Staff have supported this bill

Staff Recommendation and Next Steps

Staff is seeking direction on Gulf red snapper depth management concept

- Next steps
 - Staff will continue to advocate for what is best for Florida
 - Meet with Florida Delegation and Congressional staff
 - Staff visits to DC to discuss issues important to Florida
 - Coordinate with stakeholders and other states
 - Comment on bills
 - Testify as requested

