



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

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FB10-087

NOAA Seeks Public Comments on a Proposed Rule to Establish Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures for Nine South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Species

Comment Period Ends November 26, 2010

NOAA Fisheries Service is seeking public comment on a proposed rule that would implement Amendment 17B to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 17B). This proposed rule, would establish annual catch limits (ACLs) and accountability measures (AMs) for nine snapper-grouper species. The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires NOAA Fisheries Service and fishery management councils to establish ACLs and AMs for each species undergoing overfishing (rate of removal is too high) by 2010. ACLs are set at levels that prevent overfishing. AMs are management controls established to ensure that ACLs are not exceeded, or they may correct for overages if ACLs are exceeded during a fishing season.

In the South Atlantic snapper-grouper fishery there are nine species undergoing overfishing including speckled hind, warsaw grouper, snowy grouper, golden tilefish, black sea bass, red grouper, gag, vermilion snapper, and red snapper. Amendment 17B includes actions to establish ACLs and AMs for eight of these species as well as black grouper. Red snapper is being addressed in a separate amendment (Amendment 17A to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region).

The proposed rule for Amendment 17B, if made final, would also specify management measures intended to address overfishing, including a prohibition on harvest and retention of snowy grouper, blueline tilefish, yellowedge grouper, misty grouper, queen snapper, and silk snapper, beyond 240 feet (73 m) in federal waters of the South Atlantic. This species prohibition is intended

to reduce incidental catch of speckled hind and warsaw grouper.

Request for Comments

Written comments on this proposed rule must be received no later than November 26, 2010, in order to be considered by NOAA Fisheries Service. See the **Addresses** section for information on where and how to submit comments. Please note, a notice of availability and request for comments on Amendment 17B was published in the *Federal Register* on September 22, 2010, with a 60-day comment period ending on November 22, 2010.

Addresses

Electronic copies of proposed rule may be obtained from the e-Rulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Web site at <http://www.safmc.net>, or:

NOAA Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office
Sustainable Fisheries Division
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- Electronic Submissions: Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>, by entering "NOAA-NMFS-2010-0091" in the keyword search, then check the box labeled "Select to find documents accepting comments or submissions", then select "Send a Comment or Submission." All comments received are part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All

personal identifying information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NOAA Fisheries Service will accept anonymous comments. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only. Comments received through means not specified in this bulletin or the proposed rule may not be considered.

Mail: Kate Michie
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- Fax: 727-824-5308, Attention: Kate Michie
- More information, including Frequently Asked Questions, on Amendment 17B and ACLs can be found online at: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

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