



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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

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NOAA Fisheries Service Announces the Publication of a Final Rule Intended to End Overfishing of Red Snapper in the South Atlantic

NOAA Fisheries Service published a final rule to implement Amendment 17A to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 17A), which addresses overfishing of red snapper in the South Atlantic.

In 2008, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council was notified red snapper in the South Atlantic are overfished (the population is too small), and undergoing overfishing (fish are being taken from the population too quickly). The law governing U.S. fisheries requires the Council to develop a plan to end overfishing. To address overfishing of red snapper in the South Atlantic, the Council developed Amendment 17A. The final rule for Amendment 17A does the following:

- Prohibits all harvest and possession of red snapper in federal waters of the South Atlantic and in state waters for vessels holding federal snapper-grouper permits;
- Creates a closed area off southern Georgia and northern Florida where fishing for all snapper-grouper species would be prohibited, except when using spearfishing gear or black sea bass pots to fish for species other than red snapper.

***NOTE: The effective date of the snapper-grouper closed area will be delayed until June 1, 2011,** in order to allow time for the Council to consider the results of a new red snapper stock assessment completed in late October 2010.

- Requires the use of circle hooks in the snapper-grouper fishery in federal waters north of 28 latitude; and
- Requires a program to monitor red snapper.

Effective Dates

- The prohibition on all harvest and possession of red snapper is effective immediately, December 3, 2010.
- The snapper-grouper area closure has been delayed until June 1, 2011.
- The requirement to use non-stainless steel circle hooks north of 28° N. latitude is effective March 3, 2011.

Addresses

Electronic copies of Amendment 17A may be obtained from the NOAA Fisheries Service Web site at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>, the e-Rulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> docket number NOAA-NMFS-2010-0035, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Web site at <http://www.safmc.net>, or for hard copies contact:

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- More information, including Frequently Asked Questions for Amendment 17A can be found online at: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>. Frequently Asked Questions for the new red snapper stock assessment can be found online at: <http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/sedar/>.

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