

What's left to catch? A bounty of fish remains

Proposed rules to save the imperiled U.S. South Atlantic red snapper would halt red snapper fishing and close an area to fishing near the ocean bottom where red snapper are caught accidentally when fishermen target other species.¹ But the rules would not stop all grouper and snapper fishing or fishing for dozens of other species. Recreational fishermen still would have plenty to target on family and weekend fishing trips. Those who fish from shore—the majority of southeast fishermen²—would see no rule changes for commonly caught species, such as dolphin, wahoo, bluefish and mackerel. And more than 90 percent of species that commercial fishermen rely on would not be affected. Sport fishermen who run charter and party boats will be most affected because they rely more heavily on snapper and grouper species.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Big name, small numbers

Red snapper are just **4%** of recreational catch*

Red snapper are just **1%** of commercial catch*

* In state and federal waters from North Carolina to Florida in 2008. Red snapper is a higher percentage of catch from Cape Canaveral, Fla., to south Georgia and near Charleston, S.C.

Still on the hook

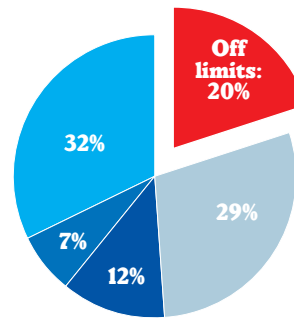
What recreational fishermen could still catch in proposed closed areas and what's off limits:

■ Red snapper, other grouper/ snapper species off limits

80 percent of catch not affected:

- Dolphin (mahi-mahi)
- King mackerel
- Other tunas/mackerels
- Miscellaneous species including wahoo, swordfish and flounders

Estimated future catch percentages are based on actual 2008 catch data from the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey



10% Amount of commercial catch represented by red snapper and other snapper and grouper species off limits in closed areas.

MORE TO CATCH

Species available in state and/or federal waters:

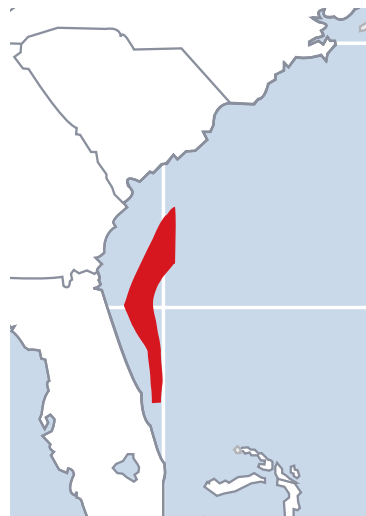
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|------------------|-------------------|
| Blue crab | Filefish |
| Oysters | Spotted seatrout |
| Shrimp | Bluefish |
| Croaker | Mullet |
| Spanish mackerel | Southern flounder |
| Wahoo | Summer flounder |
| Swordfish | Striped bass |
| Yellowfin tuna | Florida pompano |
| Bigeye tuna | Spot |
| Barracuda | Tautog |

Few pay the price

Those who would be most affected by the rule changes represent the smallest percentage of fishermen in the region.

23.8 million fishing trips, southeast region, 2006:

	Spending	Impact
53% Fishing from shore	\$784 million	Not affected by area closures
45% Private/rented boats	\$407 million	Most able to target dozens of other fish species
2% Party or charter boat	\$131 million	Most affected by new red snapper rules



PROPOSED CLOSED AREAS

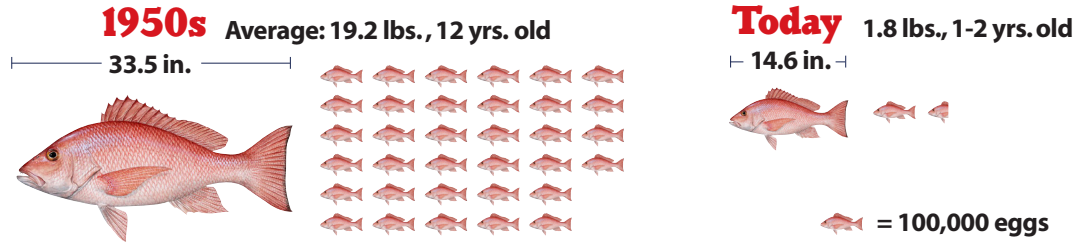
This area off Georgia and Florida would be off limits to snapper and grouper fishing at depths of roughly 98 to 240 feet. Fishing at more shallow depths and for other species would be allowed. Fishing for 85 federally managed species, including 70 in the snapper-grouper category, still would be permitted outside closed areas.

Red snapper's plight

TIME TO SPAWN

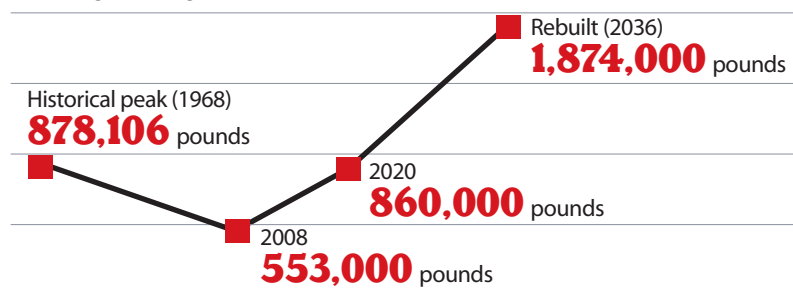
Although red snapper can live up to 54 years, few today are older than 10. Many older fish—the most prolific spawners—are taken before they can help replenish the population.

The iconic southeast species is at 3% of a healthy population level



BENEFITS OF REBUILDING

Catch (in gutted weight):



Although total recovery for the severely overfished red snapper might take 35 years, closed ocean areas could reopen and controlled red snapper fishing could be allowed much sooner as the species begins to recover. Under the recovery plan, the red snapper population could boom in less than 10 years, providing more robust fishing than today.

MAKING THE CASE

The long-term red snapper recovery plan is based on research conducted during the last several years by some of the country's leading fishery scientists. Through a collaborative scientific process, they amassed data from fishermen and other sources, collected samples of the fish and ran computer models to assess the overall condition of the red snapper population. In writing the stock assessment, a panel of experts considered testimony from independent researchers, fishermen and university scholars. The public was invited to comment on several occasions. The final report, known as the Southeast Data, Assessment and Review (SEDAR) 15, passed rigorous peer review.

¹ Amendment 17A Public Hearing Draft document to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan, 2009

² Fisheries Economics of the United States 2006: Economics and Sociocultural Status and Trends Series. Department of Commerce, p. 94.

ABOUT THIS FACT SHEET

This fact sheet focuses on Amendment 17A's effect on the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan, which is designed to end decades of severe red snapper overfishing. Council members are expected to vote on the measure this summer.

Other fishing restrictions also have been enacted or are under consideration. These measures have been factored into all conclusions in this fact sheet, including species that are still available to fishermen.

Amendment 17B, which seeks to protect nine imperiled species, is awaiting final federal approval. This rule would tighten limits on fishing for the critically endangered Warsaw grouper and speckled hind; snowy grouper, which is vulnerable to extinction; vermilion snapper; black sea bass; golden tilefish; red grouper; black grouper; and gag grouper. It also proposes closing deep-ocean areas to fishing for eight species.

Amendment 16, which went into effect in the South Atlantic in January 2010, prohibits catch of gag, black or red grouper during spawning season, January to April. The new and proposed rules cover federal waters, which extend from 3 to 200 miles offshore.

The information in this fact sheet is based on the largest ocean closures under discussion and the possibility that state officials could adopt final federal rules in state waters. In the end, final regulations could restrict fishing less than this fact sheet represents.

PEW ENVIRONMENT GROUP'S CAMPAIGN TO END OVERFISHING IN THE SOUTHEAST

Pew is leading efforts to work with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service to establish science-based annual catch limits by 2010 for species undergoing overfishing and by 2011 for all other species.

The campaign works to bring scientific expertise to bear on fishery management plans and seeks common ground with fishermen to find solutions that balance human and environmental needs and raise awareness about overfishing and potential remedies.

The Pew Environment Group is the conservation arm of The Pew Charitable Trusts.

For more information, visit www.sustainable-south-east-fisheries.org or contact Holly Binns at the Campaign to End Overfishing in the Southeast at fishinfo@pewtrusts.org or call 850-727-8241.