



THE
PEW
ENVIRONMENT GROUP



**END OVERFISHING
IN THE SOUTHEAST**

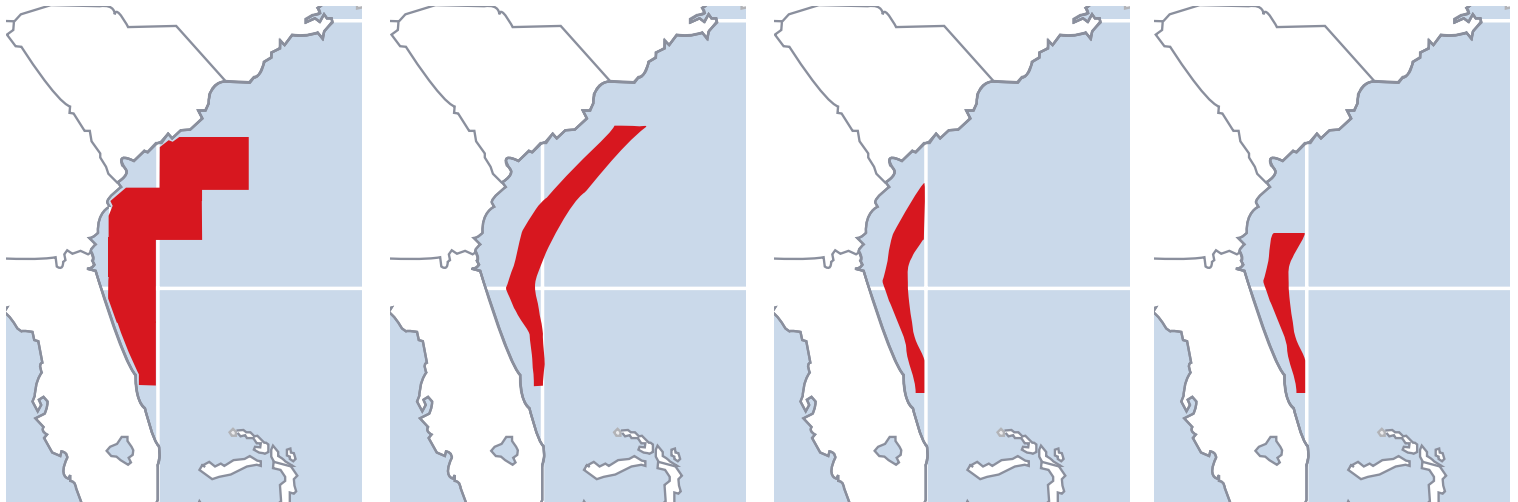
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THE COMPROMISE TO SAVE RED SNAPPER

Fishery managers have changed the long-term red snapper recovery plan to lessen economic impacts on fishermen, while maintaining critical conservation measures. They have reduced the size of proposed closed ocean areas and will consider a new study about the imperiled species. The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Amendment 17A would still halt red snapper fishing from North Carolina to Florida until the species begins to rebound. A temporary red snapper fishing moratorium expires Dec. 5.

SMALLER PROPOSED CLOSED AREA

A halt to fishing near the ocean bottom is needed in areas where red snapper are often caught accidentally when fishermen target other species, such as gag grouper. Even if thrown back, too few red snapper survive. Council members have repeatedly reduced the size of the closure and plan to consider options to modify it when a new red snapper stock assessment is completed in December.



Source: South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

**MINIMUM CLOSURE
RECOMMENDED BY FISHERY
COUNCIL SCIENCE ADVISORS**
26,600 square miles, all depths

**FIRST REDUCTION,
DECEMBER 2009**
9,597 square miles,
from 98 to 300 feet

**SECOND REDUCTION,
MARCH 2010**
6,161 square miles,
from 98 to 240 feet

**FINAL CLOSURE APPROVED,
JUNE 2010**
4,827 square miles,
from 98 to 240 feet

NEW ASSESSMENT WILL INFLUENCE FINAL CLOSURE SIZE

In response to fishermen who claim red snapper are more numerous than scientists believe, the fishery council launched a new, in-depth study of the health of the South Atlantic population to be completed by December. At that time, council members could adjust the proposed closed areas according to the findings. The study will include updated data, and researchers will review the computer models and assumptions that have been the subject of criticism. Some of the study data will be collected under a newly improved program by the National Marine Fisheries Service. Among other improvements, it will use sonar and ocean bottom mapping to target locations of snapper habitat and hotspots.

The last red snapper assessment was conducted in 2005. The council originally had planned a quick update to that assessment, but the new study is more in-depth and exhaustive than the standard update. The new study will be extensively peer-reviewed by independent scientists.

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