

Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper
Proposed Amendment 27/14 Management Measures
Frequently Asked Questions

August 2007



Why is NOAA Fisheries Service proposing to implement new measures in the Gulf of Mexico red snapper and shrimp fisheries?

- The most recent red snapper [stock assessment](#) indicates continued overfishing is compromising the objectives of the current Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's (Gulf Council) red snapper rebuilding plan.
- The [Interim measures](#) NOAA Fisheries Service implemented in 2007 are temporary in nature and are not sufficient to end overfishing and rebuild the red snapper stock on schedule.

What are the proposed long-term measures to end red snapper overfishing and allow stock recovery?

- In summary, the proposed measures would:
 - Reduce the total allowable catch (TAC) of the commercial and recreational fisheries to 5.0 million pounds (mp) (commercial quota of 2.55 mp; recreational quota of 2.45 mp).
 - Reduce the recreational red snapper bag limit and fishing season.
 - Reduce the commercial size limit.
 - Require the use of various tools and the use of non-stainless steel circle hooks when using natural baits to reduce red snapper bycatch.
 - Establish an adjustable target red snapper bycatch reduction goal for the shrimp trawl fishery, which is managed with seasonal-area closures.

How do the proposed management measures differ from past measures?

- The table below summarizes 2006 management measures, interim measures for the current 2007 fishing year, and measures proposed by Amendment 27/14.

MANAGEMENT ACTION	2006 Management Measures	Interim Management Measures (2007)	Proposed Management Measures in Amendment 27/14
Reduce red snapper total allowable catch	9.12 mp (4.65 mp commercial; 4.47 mp recreational)	6.5 mp (3.315 mp commercial/ 3.185 mp recreational)	5.0 mp (2.55 mp commercial/ 2.45 mp recreational)
Reduce commercial red snapper minimum size limit	15" total length	13" total length	13" total length
Reduce recreational red snapper bag limit	4 fish/person/day (also applies to captain & crew of for-hire vessels)	2 fish/person/day (0 fish/person/day for captain & crew of for-hire vessels)	2 fish/person/day (0 fish/person/day for captain & crew of for-hire vessels)
Recreational minimum size limit	16" total length	16" total length	16" total length
Recreational fishing season	April 21 – October 31	April 21 – October 31	Shortened season (to be determined)
Reduce bycatch in the directed commercial and recreational reef fish fisheries			Require the use of venting tools, dehooking devices, and non-stainless steel circle hooks (when using live bait)
Establish red snapper bycatch mortality reduction goal for shrimp fishery		50% of the bycatch mortality that occurred during 2001-2003	74% of the bycatch mortality that occurred during 2001-2003; relax the target, as allowed, over time to a target reduction goal of 60%
Establish, as necessary, a seasonal closure for the shrimp fishery			Closure beginning on the same start date as the Texas closure in 10 to 30-fathom zone of selected areas in Gulf statistical zones 10-21

<p>Establish a framework procedure to adjust shrimp fishery area and season closures</p>			<p>After an annual assessment, determine the area and duration of closure if needed. Regional administrator implement closure</p>
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Why is the length of the recreational season to be determined?

- The Gulf Council has proposed a 154-day season in Amendment 27/14 based on its preferred bag limit alternatives and an assumption the recreational fishing effort and landings will be 10 percent below average of an indefinite time period.
- An assumption of a 10-percent reduction in post-hurricane fishing effort and landings is controversial because:
 - Although preliminary data suggest some declines in effort have occurred since the 2005 hurricane season, the magnitude of reductions vary by fishing sector, are often less than 10 percent, and in some cases effort and landings have increased.
 - It is unknown how long post-hurricane reductions in landings and fishing effort may continue as the fisheries recover.
- Consequently, NOAA Fisheries Service has also proposed a 122-day recreational fishing season based on the Gulf Council’s preferred bag limit and the possibility the data do not support the Gulf Council’s assumption about recreational fishing effort and landing levels.

When are the proposed measures expected to go into effect?

- NOAA Fisheries Service is currently reviewing the Gulf Council’s proposed actions for consistency with the NOA and other applicable law.
- If approved and implemented, the proposed measures could be in effect at the start of the 2008 fishing year.

Can I comment on the proposed measures?

- Yes. NOAA Fisheries Service is currently accepting comments on Amendment 27/14 and the proposed rule.
- All comments will be considered by NOAA Fisheries Service in its decision to approve, disapprove, or partially approve Amendment 27/14.
- Comments must be received by:
 - 5 p.m. eastern time, on September 24, 2007, on Amendment 27/14.
 - 5 p.m. eastern time, on September ??, 2007, on the proposed rule.

Who do I send comments to?

- E-mail:
 - For Amendment 27/14, comments can be sent to 0648-AT87.NOA27-14@noaa.gov. Please include in the subject line the following document identifier: 0648-AT87-NOA27-14.
 - For the proposed rule, comments can be sent to 0648-AT87. proposed27-14@noaa.gov. Please include in the subject line the following document identifier: 0648-AT87.
- Mail: Peter Hood, NOAA Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, Sustainable Fisheries Division, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701.

- Fax: 727-824-5308, Attention: Peter Hood
- Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Please follow the instructions for submitting comments.

Links to additional information on red snapper management and rulemaking

- Red snapper assessment process and reports
(http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/sedar/Sedar_Workshops.jsp?WorkshopNum=07)
- Interim measures for the red snapper and shrimp fisheries
(<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/RedSnapper/GOMRedSnapperInformation.htm>)
- Commercial red snapper IFQ program (<https://ifq.sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/ifqrs/index.cfm>)