

# Red Drum Assessment Shows Numbers Down; Management Measures Needed

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) presented the state's stock assessment of red drum to the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission (LWFC). The stock assessment shows that while the spawning stock is still above limits, it is being depleted at a rate that requires management changes.

LDWF monitors two portions of the red drum stock, the juvenile stock (up to age 5 and generally under 27 inches in length) that resides in inshore waters and the adult spawning population (greater than age 5) in nearshore coastal waters. Red drum is unique in that the vast majority (97 percent) of harvest is on the juvenile stock when it is between 16 and 27 inches in length, or about 1.5 to 4 years old. Given this type of harvest strategy, the amount of red drum that moves through the fishery and into the offshore spawning population is critical to the future status of the stock.

The juvenile portion of the red drum stock is measured through an "escapement" rate. Escapement is the percentage of red drum that pass through the recreational fishery (there is no commercial fishery allowed for red drum in Louisiana) from inshore waters as juveniles and make it into the spawning stock offshore. The established escapement rate limit for management is 30 percent; Louisiana's escapement rate is currently 20 percent, indicating too few red drum are surviving to make it offshore and eventually to spawn.

The spawning stock of red drum is measured with a Spawning Potential Ratio (SPR), simply put, the number of red drum available to spawn relative to the population if they were not fished. While the current red drum SPR is above the limit of 20 percent, it has been declining since 2005 as fewer and fewer red drum "escape" to the offshore population. Since red drum are a long-lived species (39 years in Louisiana), recovery times will be long even if escapement rates rebound quickly as there is a lag between juvenile fish leaving the estuary between ages 4 and 5 and those fish living out their lifespan to 39 years old.

Escapement rates will need to be increased through management measures to rebuild the red drum population and prevent it from declining below the SPR limit in nearshore and offshore waters. While escapement rates can recover to management targets relatively quickly with action (3 to 5 years), recovery of the spawning stock to above management targets could take until the year 2050 given the life span of red drum.

Thirty-five years ago, in 1988, red drum were designated a game fish, ending the commercial harvest of red drum in Louisiana. Also in 1988, the current recreational red drum creel limit of 5 fish with only 1 over 27 inches was initiated.

In the near future, LDWF will collect public input through email and online surveys on potential management measures to provide those results to the LWFC for consideration of future regulatory changes.





A Joint Publication of Louisiana Sea Grant and LSU AgCenter



### **REQUEST** for Comments: Proposed Rule for a Framework Action to Modify Vermillion Snapper Catch Levels in the Gulf of Mexico

NOAA Fisheries requests comments on a proposed rule for a framework action under the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico to modify catch levels of vermilion snapper. These changes are based on the results of the most recent stock assessment and the recommendations of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee and Reef Fish Advisory Panel.

The stock assessment used data from the Marine Recreational Information Program Fishing Effort Survey, which replaced the Marine Recreational Information Program Coastal Household Telephone Survey. Had data from the Fishing Effort Survey been available when the prior stock assessment was completed, the overfishing limit would have been almost double the current overfishing limit of 3,490,000 pounds whole weight.

#### **Summary of Proposed Changes:**

The current and proposed overfishing limit (OFL), acceptable biological catch (ABC) and stock annual catch limit (ACL) are shown below in pounds whole weight.

Current Harvest Levels	OFL	ABC	ACL	
MRIP-CHTS 3,490,000 3,110,000 3,110,000				
Tables from https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/bulletin/	request-comments-proposed-ru	le-framework-action-modify-ver	milion-snapper-catch-levels	
Proposed Harvest Levels	OFL	ABC	ACL	
MRIP-FES	8,600,000	7,270,000	5,452,500	

At its January 2022 meeting, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council unanimously approved the framework action. The proposed rule would revise the regulations for the annual catch limit specified in the framework action.

#### How to Comment:

The comment period is open now through Jan. 5, 2023. You may submit comments by electronic submission or by postal mail. Comments sent by any other method (such as e-mail), to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered by NOAA Fisheries.

#### Formal Federal Register Name/Number: 87 FR 74588, published Dec. 6, 2022.

Electronic Submissions: Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal.

- 1. Go to www.regulations.gov/document/NOAA\_FRDOC\_0001-6428.
- 2. Click the "Comment" icon, complete the required fields.
- 3. Enter or attach your comments.

Mail: Submit written comments to Rich Malinowski, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.

### **NOAA Fisheries Publishes Final Rule to Implement Two Framework** Actions for Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper

NOAA Fisheries announced a final rule that will implement two framework actions under the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico; Modifications to Data Calibrations (Data Calibrations Framework) and Annual Catch Limits (Catch Limits Framework) for Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) Red Snapper.

The Catch Limits Framework and the final rule will increase the catch limits as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1. The current (2022) and new (effective Jan. 1, 2023) red snapper overfishing limit (OFL), acceptable biological catch (ABC), annual catch limits (ACL) and recreational annual catch targets (ACT).						
Catch Limit Type	Current (2022)	New (2023)	Calculation			
OFL	15,500,000	25,600,000	N/A			
ABC	15,100,000	15,400,000	60.1% of the OFL			
Total ACL	15,100,000	15,400,000	ACL = ABC			
Commercial ACL	7,701,000	7,854,000	51% of ABC			
Recreational ACL	7,399,000	7,546,000	49% of ABC			
Federal For-Hire ACL	3,130,000	3,191,958	42.3% of Recreational ACL			
Federal For-Hire ACT	2,848,000	2,904,682	9% below For-Hire ACL			
Private Angling ACL	4,269,000	4,354,042	57.7% of Recreational ACL			
Private Angling ACT*	3,415,200	3,483,234	20% Below Private Angling ACL			

\*Under federal regulations, the Private Angling ACT will increase with implementation of the new catch limits, but it is not currently used in management of red snapper.

The Data Calibrations Framework and the final rule will apply calibration ratios developed by NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology and the Gulf of Mexico States to state-specific ACLs to adjust those ACLs into the currency in which each state monitors landings (Table 2). Upon implementation of this rule, the private recreational red snapper ACL for each state will be as follows.

Table 2. State ACLs that will be implemented with this final rule. The "Federal Equivalent" is multiplied by the calibration ratio to get the "State Annual Catch Limit." Catch limits are in whole weight.						
State	Federal Equivalent	Calibration Ratio	State Annual Catch Limit			
Alabama	1,145,026	0.4875	558,200			
Florida	1,951,569	1.0602	2,069,053			
Louisiana	832,493	1.06	882,443			
Mississippi	154,568	0.3840	59,354			
Texas	270,386	1.00	270,386			

Data tables found at https://gulfcouncil.org/press/2022/noaa-fisheries-publishes-final-rule-to-implement-two-framework-actions-for-gulf-of-mexico-red-snapper/

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council chose an implementation date for the calibration ratios of Jan. 1, 2023. Thus, the effective date for the changes in this rule will be Jan. 1, 2023.

More information about the catch limit increase and the calibration ratios, please visit: *https://gulfcouncil.org/press/2022/noaa-fisheries-publishes-final-rule-to-implement-two-framework-actions-for-gulf-of-mexico-red-snapper/*.

### **Louisiana Shrimp Watch**

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The shrimp watch data is back, but there are some changes to the Monthly Gulf Coast Shrimp Statistics report passed by NOAA Fisheries. Changes were being made to make the report more consistent and reliable. All landing data will be based on trip ticket data provided by Gulf States and no estimations will be made.









### **Important Dates & Upcoming Events**

Jan. 11, 2023: Shrimp Task Force Meeting, New Orleans, LAJan. 17, 2023: Crab Task Force Meeting, Houma, LAMarch 1, 2023: Louisiana Fisheries Forward Summit, Kenner, LA

## THE GUMBO POT

### **BEER POACHED VERMILION BAY SWEET SHRIMP OVER MIXED GREENS\***

Recipe courtesy of Louisiana Kitchen & Culture.

For more recipes or to subscribe to their magazine or free newsletter, please visit http://louisiana.kitchenandculture.com/



#### **Ingredients:**

Shrimp

- 3 lbs Vermillion Bay Sweet Shrimp
- 1 bottle Abita Amber beer

#### Vinaigrette

- 12 oz. olive oil
- 3 oz. cane vinegar
- 2 tablespoons dried oregano
- 2 tablespoons dried thyme
- 2 tablespoons dried basil
- 1 tablespoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons Steen's syrup
- 1 tablespoon garlic, minced

#### Salad

- 1 lb. spring mix, leafy lettuce
- 6-8 small tomatoes, quartered
- 8 oz. carrots, shredded

#### Method:

For the vinaigrette combine all ingredients except the olive oil in a medium bowl. Using a whisk, stir the ingredients while drizzling in the olive oil to make an emulsion. Set aside.

In a small pot, pour in the Abita Amber and bring to a simmer. Once it reaches a simmer, toss in the peeled and deveined shrimp. Slowly poach the shrimp until they are fully cooked; it takes about 6-8 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, remove the shrimp and place in a bowl of ice water (this keeps the shrimp from overcooking.)

To put the salad together, mix the vinaigrette with the mixed greens and place on a small plate. Place a few shrimp on the salad and garnish with the carrot and tomatoes.

\*Serves 6 to 8

Be sure to visit the Lagniappe blog for additional news and timely events between issues. https://louisianalagniappe.wordpress.com/

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We would like to hear from you! Please contact us regarding fishery questions, comments or concerns you would like to see covered in the Lagniappe. Anyone interested in submitting information, such as articles, editorials or photographs pertaining to fishing or fisheries management is encouraged to do so.

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