

NOTE: REGULATION CHANGES MAY OCCUR IN 2005 FOR THE FOLLOWING SPECIES: **BLACK SEA BASS, VERMILION SNAPPER, SNOWY GROUPE**R AND **TILEFISH (GOLDEN)**. ALL REGULATIONS IN THIS BROCHURE ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. VISIT WWW.SAFMC.NET FOR UPDATES.



FISHING REGULATIONS FOR U.S. SOUTH ATLANTIC FEDERAL WATERS MAY 2005



FOR SPECIES MANAGED BY
THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY
MANAGEMENT COUNCIL



One Southpark Circle, Suite 306 • Charleston, SC 29407-4699
Phone: 843/571-4366 Toll Free: 866/SAFMC-10 Fax: 843/769-4520
Email: safmc@safmc.net • Web Site: www.safmc.net



ABOUT THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

To Conserve and Manage

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils in the United States. In 1976, Congress passed the Magnuson Act to address concerns of foreign fishing fleets fishing close to U.S. shores. The Magnuson Act extended the U.S. jurisdiction of fisheries offshore to 200 miles and created a new form of regional government through the establishment of the eight fishery management councils. **The role of the councils is to develop fishery management plans needed to manage fishery resources within the 200 nautical mile limit. This limit, sometimes referred to as the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) or “federal waters” extends offshore from state waters (three miles in the South Atlantic) to 200 nautical miles.**

In 1996, the Sustainable Fisheries Act (SFA) became law and amended the Magnuson Act (renamed the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act). Congress passed the SFA to protect marine fish stocks with requirements to prevent and stop overfishing, minimize bycatch and protect habitat. (For more information on the SFA, go to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa.)

Headquartered in Charleston, South Carolina, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is responsible for the conservation and management of fish stocks within the 200 nautical mile limit off the coasts of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and the East Coast of Florida south to Key West.

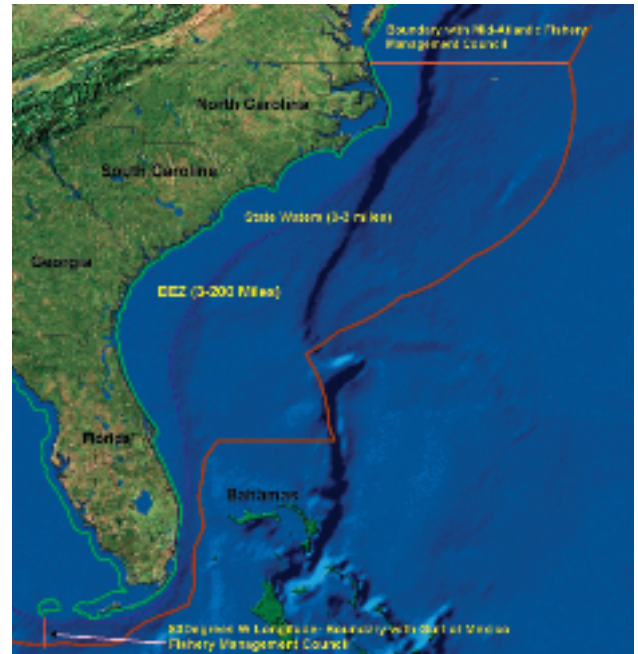
The Council’s primary function is to prepare fishery management plans and make recommendations for regulations for each fishery that requires conservation and management in the region under its jurisdiction.

Council Members

Council members are citizens from each of the four southeastern states who are knowledgeable of some aspect of the fisheries. They serve three-year terms and are appointed by the Secretary of Commerce from lists of nominees submitted by the governors of the states. These appointed members may serve a maximum of three consecutive terms. In addition, the directors (or designees) of each state’s marine resource management agency and the Southeast Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) serve on the Council as voting members. There are a total of 13 voting members. Non-voting members include representatives from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Department of State, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

Public Participation

The Council meets four times each year, once in each of the southeastern states. Before final action on any management action is taken, the Council involves the public through public hearings and input at Council meetings. Proposed management changes are then sent to NOAA Fisheries for further review, public comment and approval before being implemented.



The South Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone

In addition, the Council receives input and recommendations from knowledgeable people from other state and federal agencies, universities and members of the public who serve on various committees and panels. These include:

Advisory Panels - members may include recreational and commercial fishermen, headboat and charter operators, seafood buyers and sellers, conservationists, and consumers who are knowledgeable about a particular fishery. Members are appointed and serve three-year terms.

Scientific and Statistical Committee - members may include biologists, economists, sociologists and others who are knowledgeable in the technical aspects of fisheries in the South Atlantic.

SEDAR - A multi-step method for determining the status of fish stocks, the Southeastern Data, Assessment, and Review process involves scientists, biologists, and fishermen.

Persons interested in participating in any of the above panels should contact the Council office for more information on how to apply.

Council Advisory Panels

- Calico Scallop
- Coral
- Dolphin/Wahoo
- Golden Crab
- Habitat & Environmental Protection
- Information & Education
- King & Spanish Mackerel
- Law Enforcement
- Marine Protected Areas
- Protected Resources
- Rock Shrimp
- Shrimp
- Snapper/Grouper
- Spiny Lobster
- SEDAR Steering Comm.

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This is an unofficial summary of the federal regulations prepared for the information and convenience of interested persons. This summary has no legal force or effect. Since fishery regulations are subject to change, this summary does not include changes to these regulations that may have occurred after May 2005.

Updates to these regulations in a downloadable format can be found on the Council's web site at: www.safmc.net.

For the official regulations, please refer to 50 C.F.R. Part 622 (the Consolidated Federal Regulations can be found at www.archives.gov/federal_register/code_of_federal_regulations/code_of_federal_regulations.html)

Photo Credits: Photo Credits: Bill Mansfield – spiny lobster, cover; Roger Pugliese, SAFMC – map, p. 2; Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary - amberjack and reef fish, Robert Cardin – fisherman, p. 3 ; National Undersea Research Center – UNC-Wilmington (NURC) – Oculina coral, p. 10. All other photos: Kim Iverson, SAFMC.



SNAPPER/GROUPER RECREATIONAL REGULATIONS

Common Name	Local Names	Size Limit	Daily Bag Limits	Other Regulations
Black Grouper	Blackfin Grouper	24" TL	No more than 2 Black Grouper and/or Gag individually or in combination (included in 5 grouper per person)	
Black Sea Bass	Seabass, Blackfish	10" TL	20	See "Allowable Gear"
Blackfin Snapper		12" TL	Included in 10 snapper per person limit	See "Allowable Gear"
Cubera Snapper	Cuban Snapper	12" TL	2 per person (not to exceed 2 per boat) for fish 30" TL or larger off east Florida. See "retention limits."	
Dog Snapper		12" TL	Included in 10 snapper per person limit	See "Allowable Gear"
Gag	Charcoal Belly	24" TL	No more than 2 Black and/or Gag Grouper individually or in combination (included in 5 grouper per person)	
Gray Snapper	Mangrove Snapper	12" TL	Included in 10 snapper per person limit	See "Allowable Gear"
Gray Triggerfish	Triggerfish	12" TL off E. FL only	Included in 20 fish snapper grouper aggregate	See "Allowable Gear"
Greater Amberjack	Amberjack, A.J.	28" FL; no coring	1 per person/day. In April, limit to 1 per person/day or 1/vessel/trip whichever is more restrictive	See "Allowable Gear"
Hogfish	Hog Snapper	12" FL	5 off east Florida only	See "Allowable Gear"
Goliath Grouper	Jewfish, Giant Seabass	Closed to possession or harvest		
Lane Snapper	Redtail Snapper, Candy Snapper	8" TL	Included in 10 snapper per person limit	See "Allowable Gear"
Mahogany Snapper		12" TL	Included in 10 snapper per person limit	See "Allowable Gear"
Mutton Snapper	Muttonfish	16" TL	Included in 10 snapper per person limit	See "Allowable Gear"
Nassau Grouper		Closed to possession or harvest		
Queen Snapper		12" TL	Included in 10 snapper per person limit	See "Allowable Gear"
Red Grouper	Grouper	20" TL	Included in 5 grouper per person limit	See "Allowable Gear"
Red Porgy	Pink Porgy, Silver Snapper, Pink Snapper	14" TL	1	See "Allowable Gear"
Red Snapper	Mules, Sow Snapper, Spot Snapper, American Snapper	20" TL	2 red snapper (included in 10 snapper per person limit)	
Scamp	Broomtail	20" TL	Included in 5 grouper per person limit	See "Allowable Gear"
Schoolmaster		12" TL	Included in 10 snapper per person limit	See "Allowable Gear"
Silk Snapper	Yelloweye Snapper	12" TL	Included in 10 snapper per person limit	See "Allowable Gear"
Snowy Grouper	Snowflake	None	Included in 5 grouper per person limit	See "Allowable Gear"
Speckled Hind	Strawberry Grouper, Kitty Mitchell, Calico Grouper	None	1 speckled hind per vessel per trip (included in 5 grouper per person). May not be sold or traded; no transfer at sea.	
Golden, Blueline, Sand Tilefish	Golden - Rainbow Tilefish; Blueline - Gray Tilefish	None	Included in 5 grouper per person limit	See "Allowable Gear"
Vermilion Snapper	Beeliner, Night Snapper	11" TL	10 (in addition to the snapper bag limit)	See "Allowable Gear"
Warsaw Grouper	Jewfish (Miscalled), Grouper	None	1 warsaw per vessel per trip (included in 5 grouper per person). May not be sold or traded; no transfer at sea.	
Wreckfish	No recreational harvest allowed. Individual Transfer Quota (ITQ) Program in place. No one other than shareholders or their designees may possess wreckfish.			
Yellowfin Grouper		20" TL	Included in 5 grouper per person limit	See "Allowable Gear"
Yellowtail Snapper		12" TL	Included in 10 snapper per person limit	See "Allowable Gear"
Yellowmouth Grouper	Yellowtail	20" TL	Included in 5 grouper per person limit	See "Allowable Gear"

NOTE: This chart is for general informational purposes and has no legal force or effect. Fishery regulations are subject to change.

Check the Council's Web Site at www.safmc.net for updated information.

SNAPPER/GROUPER RECREATIONAL RETENTION LIMITS

Five (5) Groupers per person include:

*Black Grouper, *Gag, Misty Grouper, Red Grouper, Scamp, Snowy Grouper, **Speckled Hind, Tiger, **Warsaw Grouper, Yellowedge, Yellowfin Grouper, Yellowmouth Groupers; also includes Blueline, Golden, & Sand Tilefish, Coney, Graysby, Red & Rock Hind.

* No more than 2 may be gag or black grouper, individually or in combination.

** 1 per vessel per trip. May not be sold or traded; no transfer at sea.

Goliath Grouper - Closed to harvest or possession

Nassau Grouper - Closed to harvest or possession

Wreckfish - Only ITQ shareholders or their designees may harvest or possess wreckfish.

Ten (10) Snappers (excluding vermilion) per person with the following exceptions:

- Maximum of 2 red snapper
- Maximum of 2 cubera snapper per person for fish 30" TL or larger off east Florida. These 2 fish are not included in the 10 snapper bag limit. Cubera less than 30" TL are included in the 10 fish bag limit.

In addition, fishermen may retain:

- Greater Amberjack - 1 per person
- Black Sea Bass - 20 per person
- Hogfish - 5 per person off east Florida
- Red Porgy - 1 per person
- Vermilion Snapper - 10 per person

Other Snapper/Grouper Complex Species:

There is an aggregate bag limit of 20 fish per person inclusive of all fish in the snapper/grouper management unit currently not under a bag limit, excluding tomtates and bluerunners. This means you may catch your bag limits, and in addition retain up to 20 other fish for which there is no bag limit from the list below.



List of Species in the South Atlantic Snapper/Grouper Management Unit:

Snappers

Blackfin Snapper
Black Snapper
Cubera Snapper
Dog Snapper
Gray Snapper
Lane Snapper
Mahogany Snapper
Mutton Snapper
Queen Snapper
Red Snapper
Schoolmaster
Silk Snapper
Vermilion Snapper
Yellowtail Snapper

Groupers

Black Grouper
Coney
Gag
Goliath Grouper
Graysby
Misty Grouper
Nassau Grouper
Red Grouper
Red Hind
Rock Hind
Scamp
Snowy Grouper
Speckled Hind
Tiger Grouper

Warsaw Grouper
Wreckfish
Yellowedge Grouper
Yellowfin Grouper
Yellowmouth Grouper

Porgys

Grass Porgy
Jolthead Porgy
Knobbed Porgy
Longspine Porgy
Red Porgy
Saucereye Porgy
Scup
Sheepshead
Whitebone Porgy

Triggerfish

Gray Triggerfish
Ocean Triggerfish
Queen Triggerfish

Jacks

Almaco Jack
Banded Rudderfish
Bar Jack
Blue Runner
Crevalle Jack
Greater Amberjack
Lesser Amberjack
Yellow Jack

Tilefishes

Blueline Tilefish

Tilefish
Sand Tilefish

Grunts

Black Margate
Blue Striped Grunt
Cottonwick
French Grunt
Margate
Porkfish
Sailors Choice
Smallmouth Grunt
Spanish Grunt
Tomtate
White Grunt

Spadefishes

Atlantic Spadefish

Wrasses

Hogfish
Puddingwife

Sea Basses

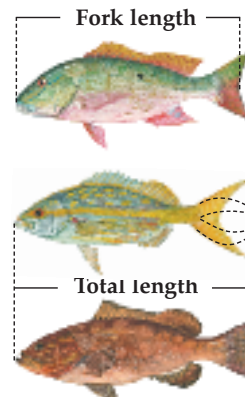
Bank Sea Bass
Black Sea Bass
Rock Sea Bass



All species in the Snapper/Grouper management unit must be maintained with heads and fins intact. (Cobia, king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, dolphin, and wahoo must also be landed with heads and fins intact.) Goliath and Nassau grouper must be released by cutting the line and not removing the fish from the water.

Allowable Gear:









- Vertical hook-and-line including hand-held hook-and-line, and bandit gear
- Spearfishing gear without rebreathers
- Powerheads, except where expressly prohibited in Special Management Zones (SMZs). In addition, the use of explosive charges, including powerheads, is prohibited in the EEZ off South Carolina.



FL = fork length measure; Tip of snout to fork of tail.
TL = total length measure; Tip of snout to tip of tail. (excluding filaments)

Check the Council's Web Site at www.safmc.net for updated information.

OTHER RECREATIONAL REGULATIONS

Species	Size Limit	Closed Season	Daily Bag/Possession Limit	Remarks
 Bluefish	None	None	15 per person	Recreational limits are reviewed and established annually. For more information, please contact the Mid-Atlantic Council (302) 674-2331.
 Cobia	33" FL	None	2 per person Note: Florida state regulations only allow 1 per person.	One day possession limit. Must be landed with heads and fins intact. Charter/headboats require a permit for Coastal Migratory Pelagics.
 King Mackerel	24" FL	None	3 per person off Georgia through New York and 2 per person off Florida. (Bag limit in federal waters off Florida same as state bag limit.) Cannot combine state and federal bag limits.	Must be landed with heads and fins intact. Charterboat/headboat operators must possess a charter/headboat vessel permit for Coastal Migratory Pelagics and must comply with bag limits. Persons on charterboats on trips of more than 24 hours may possess up to 2 bag limits (see additional information below).
 Spanish Mackerel	12" FL	None	15 per person off Florida through New York. Cannot combine state and federal bag limits.	
 Red Drum		Closed to possession or harvest in federal waters		
 Spiny Lobster	More than 3" carapace	For Florida: Season closed 4/1 - 8/5 off the east coast of Florida. Special non-trap season off Florida is last Wed. & successive Thurs. in July to conform to Florida state regulations.	6 per person off Florida. No transfer at sea between boats. Cannot combine EEZ and state bag limits. See "Special Nontrap Recreational Season for Spiny Lobster in EEZ off Florida".	Removal of tail prohibited at sea <i>without the possession of a tailing permit</i> . No spears, hooks or piercing devices. Poisons and explosives prohibited. No taking of berried spiny or berried slipper lobsters. Divers must measure spiny lobsters while in water. Undersized lobsters must be released unharmed immediately without removal from water. See commercial regulations brochure for trap use. See "Special Nontrap Recreational Season for Spiny Lobster in EEZ off Florida".
		Off NC, SC and GA harvesting allowed year-round.	2 per person off NC, SC & GA.	
 Dolphin	20" FL off Florida and GA, no min. size limit north of GA	None	10 per person/day, not to exceed 60 per boat/day. Headboats allowed 10/person per paying passenger/day.	Sale of recreational catch is prohibited (except for for-hire vessels with necessary state and federal commercial permits to sell recreational bag limit.)
 Wahoo	None	None	2 per person/day	

NOTE: This chart is for general informational purposes and has no legal force or effect. Fishery regulations are subject to change.

King & Spanish Mackerel Multi-day Possession Limit

A person who is on a trip that spans more than 24 hours may possess no more than two daily bag limits, provided:

- Such trip is aboard a vessel operating as a charter vessel or headboat;
- The vessel has two licensed operators aboard;
- Each passenger is issued and has in possession a receipt issued on behalf of the vessel that verifies the length of the trip.

Snapper/Grouper Multi-day Possession Limit

A person aboard a charter vessel or headboat on a trip that spans more than 24 hours may possess no more than two daily bag limits of species other than Red Porgy (limit 1).

A person aboard a headboat on a trip that spans more than 48 hours and who can

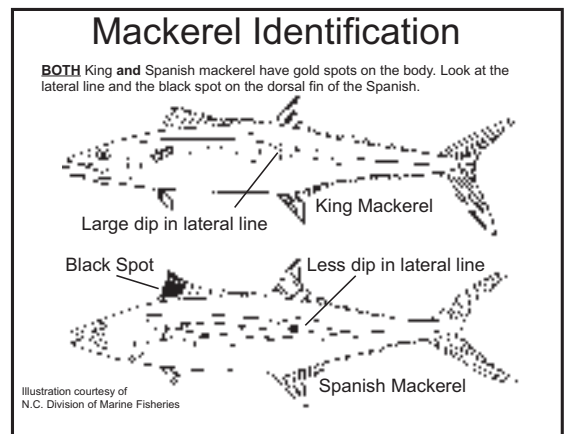
document that fishing was conducted on at least 3 days may possess no more than three daily bag limits of species other than Red Porgy (limit 1).

Special Nontrap Recreational Season for Spiny Lobster in EEZ off Florida

• The special two-day non-trap recreational season in the EEZ off Florida is the last Wednesday and Thursday in July to conform to Florida state regulations.

• The daily bag and possession limit is 12 spiny lobsters per person, except off Monroe County (Florida Keys) where the limit remains six.

- Harvest is limited to diving and the use of bully or hoop nets.
- Night diving for spiny lobster is prohibited off Monroe County (Florida Keys).



CORAL / LIVE ROCK / SARGASSUM REGULATIONS

It is illegal to take, damage or possess, in or from the EEZ off the South Atlantic states: (1) prohibited corals except under a federal permit issued for scientific, educational, or restoration purposes; (2) wild live rock; (3) aquacultured live rock without the required federal permit; (4) octocorals north of Cape Canaveral, FL; or (5) sea fans. Octocorals (gorgonians), other than prohibited sea fans, may be taken with a valid federal or state permit. Total harvest of allowable octocorals in South Atlantic (south of Cape Canaveral, 28°35.1'N. latitude) and Gulf of Mexico federal waters is limited to 50,000 colonies per fishing year. Prohibited coral, allowable octocoral, or live rock taken as incidental catch must be returned immediately to the sea. In fisheries in which the entire catch is landed unsorted, prohibited coral, allowable octocoral, or live rock may be landed; however, no person may sell, trade, or barter such prohibited coral, allowable octocoral, or live rock.

Live Rock Aquaculture

A live rock aquaculture permit and management system was established under Amendment 3 to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council coral plan. No aquaculture site may exceed one acre, material deposited on the site may not be placed on naturally occurring reef outcrops, limestone ledges, coral reefs, or vegetated areas. Aquacultured rock must be placed by hand or lowered under restraint from an anchored vessel, and must be geologically distinguishable from the naturally occurring substrate. In addition, aquacultured rock may be indelibly marked or tagged.

Gear Restrictions

A toxic chemical may not be used or possessed in a coral area in the EEZ. A power-assisted tool may not be used to take prohibited coral, allowable octocoral or live rock. Possession in the EEZ of coral resources harvested with a power assisted tool is prohibited.

Definitions

Allowable Octocoral - An erect, nonencrusting species of the subclass Ocotcorallia, except the seafans *Gorgonia flabellum* and *Gorgonia ventalina*, plus the attached substrate within one inch of the holdfast. Harvest allowed only south of Cape Canaveral, Florida (28°35.1'N. latitude).

Aquacultured Live Rock - Live rock which is harvested under an aquacultured live rock permit.

Live Rock - Living marine organisms, or an assemblage thereof, attached to a hard substrate, including dead coral or rock (excluding individual mollusk shells).

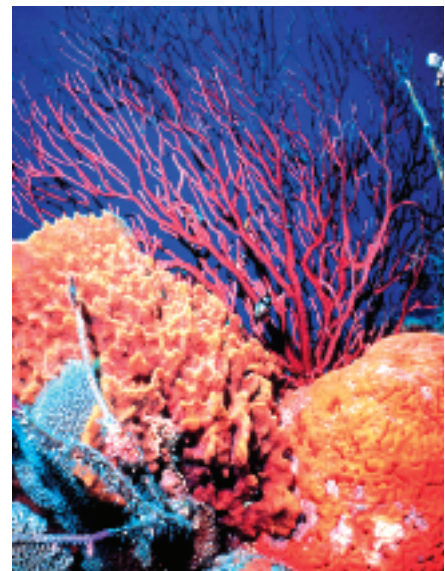
Prohibited Coral - Coral belonging to the Class Hydrozoa (fire corals and hydrocorals); coral belonging to the Class Anthozoa (stony corals and black corals); The seafans *Gorgonia flabellum* and *Gorgonia ventalina*; coral in a coral reef, except for allowable octocorals; or coral in a Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC), including allowable octocorals.

Permits

Applications for permits may be obtained from: NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Ave. S., St. Petersburg, FL 33701, phone (727) 824-5326.

Sargassum Regulations NEW!

Sargassum is a free-floating seaweed that provides habitat to a wide variety of marine organisms including invertebrates, fish, sea turtles, and marine birds. The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council developed a fishery management plan (FMP) for *Sargassum* to limit commercial harvest of *Sargassum*. Approved in 2003, the FMP establishes the following restrictions for *Sargassum* in the South Atlantic EEZ: 1) harvest and possession of *Sargassum* is prohibited south of the latitude line representing the North Carolina/South Carolina border (34° North latitude), 2) all harvest is prohibited within 100 miles of shore between the 34° North latitude line and the latitude line representing the North Carolina/Virginia border, 3) harvest is limited to the months of November through June, 4) official observers are required on any harvesting trip, 5) an annual quota of 5,000 pounds landed wet weight, and 6) nets used to harvest *Sargassum* must be constructed of 4" stretch mesh or larger fitted to a frame no larger than 4 x 6 feet.



SOUTH ATLANTIC SNAPPER



RED SNAPPER



MUTTON SNAPPER



BLACK SNAPPER



QUEEN SNAPPER



SCHOOLMASTER



BLACKFIN SNAPPER



GRAY SNAPPER



SILK SNAPPER



DOG SNAPPER



CUBERA SNAPPER



LANE SNAPPER



VERMILION SNAPPER



MAHOGANY SNAPPER



YELLOWTAIL SNAPPER



BLUELINE TILEFISH



GREATER AMBERJACK



LESSER AMBERJACK



ALMACO JACK



HOGFISH



BANDED RUDDERFISH



OCEAN TRIGGERFISH



TOMTATE



MARGATE



GRAY TRIGGERFISH



QUEEN TRIGGERFISH



FRENCH GRUNT



BLACK MARGATE



ATLANTIC SPADEFISH



BLUE STRIPED GRUNT



WHITE GRUNT



JOLTHEAD PORGY

PER/GROUPER COMPLEX



BLACK GROUPER



WARSAW GROUPER



CONEY



TIGER GROUPER



RED HIND



GRAYSBY



ROCK HIND



NASSAU GROUPER



RED GROUPER



YELLOWEDGE GROUPER



GAG GROUPER



SCAMP



SPECKLED HIND



GOLIATH GROUPER



BLACK SEA BASS



YELLOWFIN GROUPER



YELLOWMOUTH GROUPER



GOLDEN TILEFISH



SAUCEREYE PORGY



WRECKFISH



SNOWY GROUPER



SHEEPSHEAD



SCUP



BANK SEA BASS



ROCK SEA BASS



KNOBBED PORGY



WHITEBONE PORGY



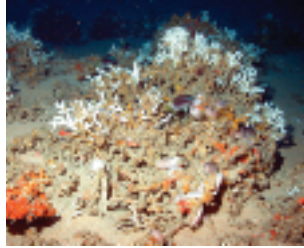
RED PORGY

OCULINA BANK/SPECIAL MANAGEMENT ZONES

The Oculina Bank

Oculina coral (*Oculina varicosa*), or ivory tree coral, is distributed along the South Atlantic shelf with concentrations occurring off the central east coast of Florida. The rare coral provides essential habitat to a complex of fish species including those managed under the Snapper/Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

The Oculina Bank, located approximately 15 nautical miles off the coast of Ft. Pierce, Florida has been designated a Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC) by the Council.



Restrictions are in place to protect fragile *Oculina* coral found in the area. Within the HAPC is an Experimental Closed Area with further restrictions to provide protection of snapper/grouper populations and associated *Oculina* coral.

• Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC):

Coordinates

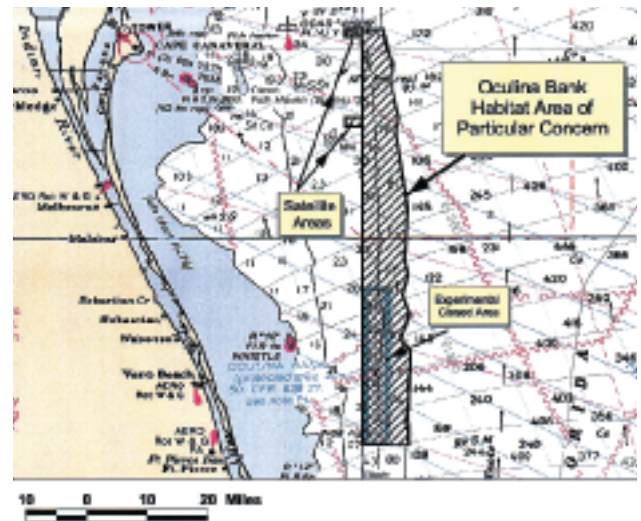
The Oculina Bank HAPC encompasses an area bounded on the north by 28°30' N. lat., on the south by 27°30' N. lat., on the east by the 100-fathom (183 meter) contour, as shown on the latest edition of NOAA chart 11460, and on the west by 80°00' W. long.

Two satellite areas are adjacent, the first bounded on the north by 28°30' N. lat., on the south by 28°29' N. lat., on the east by 80°00' W. long, and on the west by 80°03' W. long. The second satellite is bounded on the north by 28°17' N. lat., on the south by 28°16' N. lat., on the east by 80°00' W. long., and on the west by 80°03' W. long. These satellite areas have been created to protect concentrated areas of *Oculina* coral.

Restrictions

In the HAPC, no person may:

1. Use a bottom longline, bottom trawl, dredge, pot or trap.
2. If aboard a fishing vessel, anchor, use an anchor and chain, or use a grapple and chain.
3. Fish for rock shrimp or possess rock shrimp in or from the area on board a fishing vessel.
4. Possess *Oculina* coral.



The Oculina Bank is located off the coast of Ft. Pierce, Florida. Fishing restrictions are in place to protect the *Oculina* coral and snapper/grouper species found there.

• Experimental Closed Area Inside the HAPC:

Coordinates

Located *within* the Oculina Bank HAPC, the experimental closed area is bounded on the north by 27°53' N. lat., on the south by 27°30' N. lat., on the east by 79°56' W. long., and on the west by 80°00' W. long. This area provides researchers with an area in the South Atlantic region to describe the effects of prohibiting fishing for snapper/grouper species, and the characteristics of an unfished resource area that is protected from habitat damage.

Restrictions

All restrictions within the HAPC apply. In addition, no person may fish for snapper/grouper species in the area or retain snapper/grouper in or from the area. Any snapper/grouper taken incidentally by hook-and-line gear must be released immediately by cutting the line without removing the fish from water.

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT ZONES

In the Council's Special Management Zone (SMZ) program, a person or agency possessing a Corp of Engineers permit for any artificial reef or fish attraction device (or other modification of habitat for the purpose of fishing) may request that the Council designate the modified area and an appropriate surrounding area as an SMZ. This zone may prohibit or restrict the use of specific types of fishing gear that are not compatible with the intent of the permittee for the artificial reef or fish attraction device.

Currently, there are SMZs in the EEZ off of South Carolina, Georgia and Florida. Please contact the Council for a listing of the artificial reefs managed under SMZ status and applicable regulations.

Check the Council's Web Site at www.safmc.net for updated information.

SNAPPER/GROUPER COMMERCIAL REGULATIONS

Common Name	Local Names	Size Limit	Trip Limits	Other Regulations
Black Grouper	Blackfin Grouper	24" TL	In March & April possession limited to no more than 2 Black Grouper and/or Gag individually or in combination with no sale.	
Black Sea Bass	Seabass, Blackfish	10" TL	None	Pots allowed only N. of Cape Canaveral, Florida. See "bass pot regulations"
Blackfin Snapper		12" TL	None	See "Allowable Gear"
Cubera Snapper	Cuban Snapper	12" TL	2 per person (not to exceed 2 per boat) for fish 30" TL or larger off Florida.	
Dog Snapper		12" TL	None	See "Allowable Gear"
Gag	Charcoal Belly	24" TL	In March & April possession limited to no more than 2 Black Grouper and/or Gag individually or in combination with no sale.	
Gray Snapper	Mangrove Snapper	12" TL	None	See "Allowable Gear"
Gray Triggerfish	Triggerfish	12" TL off E. Florida only	None	See "Allowable Gear"
Greater Amberjack	Amberjack, A.J.	36" FL; no coring	During April, the commercial fishery is closed, no sale is allowed and possession is limited to 1/person/day or 1/person/trip, whichever is more restrictive. Quota= 1,169,931 pounds, no sale after quota is met and 1,000 lb. trip limit until quota is reached	
Hogfish	Hog Snapper	12" FL	None	See "Allowable Gear"
Goliath Grouper	Spotted Jewfish, Giant Seabass	Closed to possession or harvest		
Lane Snapper	Redtail Snapper, Candy Snapper	8" TL	None	See "Allowable Gear"
Mahogany Snapper		12" TL	None	See "Allowable Gear"
Mutton Snapper	Muttonfish	16" TL	During May and June, possession limited to 10 per person per day or per trip, whichever is more restrictive.	
Nassau Grouper		Closed to possession or harvest		
Queen Snapper		12" TL	None	See "Allowable Gear"
Red Grouper	Grouper	20" TL	None	See "Allowable Gear"
Red Porgy	Pink Porgy, Silver Snapper, Pink Snapper	14" TL	January through April sale or purchase prohibited and possession is limited to 1 per person/day or 1 per person/trip, whichever is more restrictive. Commercial bycatch of 50 lb. per trip rest of year.	
Red Snapper	Mules, Sow Snapper, Spot Snapper, American Snapper	20" TL	None	See "Allowable Gear"
Scamp	Broomtail	20" TL	None	See "Allowable Gear"
Schoolmaster		12" TL	None	See "Allowable Gear"
Silk Snapper	Yelloweye Snapper	12" TL	None	See "Allowable Gear"
Snowy Grouper	Snowflake	None	2,500 lbs. when season open; 300 lbs. when closed	Quota = 344,508 lbs.
Speckled Hind	Strawberry Grouper, Kitty Mitchell, Calico Grouper	None	1 per vessel per trip	May not be sold or traded; no transfer at sea.
Golden, Blueline, Sand Tilefish	Golden - Rainbow Tilefish; Blueline - Gray Tilefish	None	Golden: 5,000 lbs. when season open; 300 lbs. when closed	Golden: Quota = 1,001,663 lbs.
Vermilion Snapper	Beeliner, Night Snapper	12" TL	None	See "Allowable Gear"
Warsaw Grouper	Jewfish (Miscalled), Grouper	None	1 per vessel per trip	May not be sold or traded; no transfer at sea.
Wreckfish	Individual Transferable Quota Program in place. No one other than shareholders or their designees may possess wreckfish. Spawning season closure: January 15-April 15.			
Yellowfin Grouper		20" TL	None	See "Allowable Gear"
Yellowtail Snapper		12" TL	None	See "Allowable Gear"
Yellowmouth Grouper	Yellowtail	20" TL	None	See "Allowable Gear"

NOTE: This chart is for general informational purposes and has no legal force or effect. Fishery regulations are subject to change.

Check the Council's Web Site at www.safmc.net for updated information.

COMMERCIAL COMMERCIAL COMMERCIAL

SNAPPER/GROUPER COMMERCIAL INFORMATION

- A limited entry program went into effect for the South Atlantic snapper/grouper fishery on December 14, 1998.
- Those who did not meet the qualifying criteria must purchase two valid, transferable limited entry permits and exchange them for one new valid, transferable permit to gain entry into the fishery.
- Fishermen are encouraged to call NOAA Fisheries at 727-824-5326 to check the validity of permits before purchasing them.



Allowable Gear for the Commercial Snapper/Grouper Fishery

The following gear represent the only gear allowable for this fishery:

- Vertical hook-and-line including hand-held hook-and-line and bandit gear
- Spearfishing gear without rebreathers
- Powerheads, except where expressly prohibited in Special Management Zones and in the EEZ off South Carolina
- *Bottom longline, only in depths 50 fathoms or more, and only north of St. Lucie Inlet (27°10' N. lat.), Florida. (Bottom longline can not be used for wreckfish.)
- Black sea bass pots except in SMZs and only north of Cape Canaveral, Florida (Vehicle Assembly Building, 28°35.1' N. lat.).
- Sink net fishermen (NC only) can make multi-gear trips and all legal species harvested with black sea bass pots and/or vertical hook-and-line gear may be retained.

*Vessels with longline gear aboard may only possess snowy grouper, warsaw grouper, yellowedge grouper, misty grouper, golden, blueline and sand tilefish.

List of Species in the South Atlantic Snapper/Grouper Management Unit:

Snappers

Blackfin Snapper
Black Snapper
Cubera Snapper
Dog Snapper
Gray Snapper
Lane Snapper
Mahogany Snapper
Mutton Snapper
Queen Snapper
Red Snapper
Schoolmaster
Silk Snapper
Vermilion Snapper
Yellowtail Snapper

Groupers

Black Grouper
Coney
Gag
Goliath Grouper
Graysby
Misty Grouper
Nassau Grouper
Red Grouper
Red Hind
Rock Hind
Scamp
Snowy Grouper
Speckled Hind
Tiger Grouper

Warsaw Grouper
Wreckfish
Yellowedge Grouper
Yellowfin Grouper
Yellowmouth
Grouper

Porgys

Grass Porgy
Jolthead Porgy
Knobbed Porgy
Longspine Porgy
Red Porgy
Saucereye Porgy
Scup
Sheepshead
Whitebone Porgy

Triggerfish

Gray Triggerfish
Ocean Triggerfish
Queen Triggerfish

Jacks

Almaco Jack
Banded Rudderfish
Bar Jack
Blue Runner
Crevalle Jack
Greater Amberjack
Lesser Amberjack
Yellow Jack

Tilefishes

Blueline Tilefish

Golden Tilefish

Sand Tilefish

Grunts

Black Margate
Blue Stripe Grunt
Cottonwick
French Grunt
Margate
Porkfish
Sailors Choice
Smallmouth Grunt
Spanish Grunt
Tomtate
White Grunts

Spadefishes

Atlantic Spadefish

Wrasses

Hogfish
Puddingwife

Sea Basses

Bank Sea Bass
Black Sea Bass
Rock Sea Bass

Black Sea Bass Pot Requirements

A black sea bass pot or trap that is used or possessed in the South Atlantic must meet the following requirements:

- 1) It must be made of mesh sized as follows: hexagonal mesh (chicken wire) — at least 1.5 inches between wrapped sides; square mesh — at least 1.5 inches between sides; OR rectangular mesh — at least 1 inch between the longer sides and two inches between the shorter sides.
- 2) It must have an escape panel or door with an opening equal to or larger than the interior of the trap's throat (funnel) placed on at least one side, excluding the top and bottom. Its hinges or fasteners must be made of

one of the following degradable materials: ungalvanized or uncoated iron wire no larger than 19 gauge or 0.041 inches diameter OR galvanic, timed release mechanisms with a letter grade no higher than J.

- 3) It must have an unobstructed escape vent opening on at least two opposite vertical sides (excluding top and bottom) meeting the following requirements: The escape vent opening must measure at least 1 1/8 x 5 3/4" for rectangular vents, 1.75 x 1.75" for square vents (inside measure), or 2" diameter for circular vents.



For additional information contact the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council at 843/571-4366 or toll free 866/SAFMC-10

Check the Council's Web Site at www.safmc.net for updated information.

KING & SPANISH MACKEREL COMMERCIAL REGULATIONS

King & Spanish Mackerel

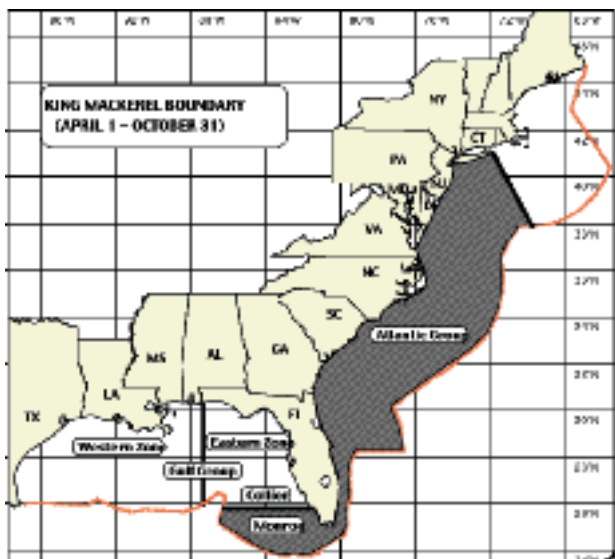
- An annual permit is required to fish under the commercial quota for king or Spanish mackerel. Currently, there is a permit moratorium on the issuance of king mackerel permits to prevent speculative entry into the fishery and provide stability.
- Charterboat/headboat operators must possess a charter/headboat vessel permit for Coastal Migratory Pelagics (cero, cobia, king mackerel, little tunny, and Spanish mackerel). For additional information contact NOAA Fisheries at 727-824-5326.

Retention and Sale of Cut-Off (damaged) King and Spanish Mackerel

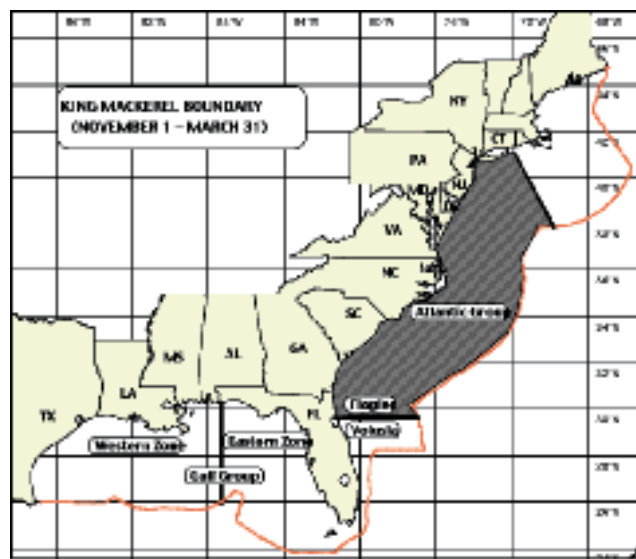
To reduce waste in the fishery, possession of cut-off king and Spanish mackerel that comply with the minimum size limits and the trip limits will be allowed in the Atlantic EEZ. Sale of such cut-off fish will be allowed. This is an addition to the existing allowance for possession and retention of a maximum of 5 cut-off king mackerel that are not subject to the size or trip limits, but that cannot be sold or purchased, nor counted against the trip limit.

Species	Permit Required	Size Limit	Gear Restrictions	Remarks	Fishing Year	Trip Limits
King Mackerel	Yes - A permit moratorium is in place.	24" FL Fishermen may possess undersized king mackerel less than or equal to 5% by weight of the king mackerel onboard.	Authorized gear: For Atlantic king mackerel north of the Cape Lookout, NC Light (34° 37.3' N. lat.) all gear is authorized except for drift gillnets and long gillnets. South of the Cape Lookout Light the following gear is authorized: automatic reel, bandit gear, handline, rod & reel. A minimum size of 4.75" stretch mesh is required for run-around gillnets. No more than 400,000 pounds may be harvested by purse seines.	Season opens 4/1 and closes 3/31 or when quota is filled. Fish must be landed with heads and fins intact. Quota = 3.71 million pounds.	The fishing year for Atlantic migratory group king mackerel is April 1 – March 31. For the area in Florida between the Volusia/Brevard and Miami-Dade/Monroe County boundaries, king mackerel are considered to be part of the Atlantic group from April 1 – October 31.	From NY to Flagler/Volusia County (FL) from April 1 – March 31, the trip limit is 3,500 pounds. From Flagler/Volusia to Volusia/Brevard county lines from April 1 – October 31, the trip limit is 3,500 pounds. From the Volusia/Brevard to Miami-Dade/Monroe County lines from April 1 – October 31, the trip limit is 75 fish. In Monroe County (Florida Keys) from April 1 – October 31, the trip limit is 1,250 pounds. (For information on Gulf king mackerel allocations affecting the east coast of Florida, contact NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Regional Office at 727-824-5301).

NOTE: This chart is for general informational purposes and has no legal force or effect. Fishery regulations are subject to change.




Roger Pugliese, SAFMC



Roger Pugliese, SAFMC

COMMERCIAL MACKEREL INFORMATION CONTINUED

Species	Permit Required	Size Limit	Gear Restrictions	Remarks	Fishing Year	Trip Limits
Spanish Mackerel 	Yes	12" FL	Authorized gear: automatic reel, bandit gear, handline, rod & reel, cast net, run around gillnet and stab net. Minimum size of 3.5" stretch mesh required for all run around gillnets.	Season opens 4/1 and closes 3/31 or when quota is filled. Must be landed with heads and fins intact. Quota = 3.87 million pounds. Atlantic Spanish mackerel catches divided into northern (GA through NY) and Southern (FL east coast to Dade-Monroe county line) zone. Northern zone restricted to 3,500 pounds per vessel per day. Southern zone possession limits vary by month and percentage allocation harvested (compatible with FL waters).	The fishing year for Atlantic migratory Spanish mackerel is April 1-March 31.	For Northern area (GA-NY), the trip limit is 3,500 pounds. The Florida trip limit regime has been modified into stages. For the first part of the fishing year, April 1-November 31 (stage I) the daily trip limit is 3,500 pounds. Beginning December 1 (Stage II) unlimited daily harvest is allowed on Monday through Friday, with a 1,500-pound trip limit on Saturday and Sunday. When 75% of the adjusted quota is taken (Stage III) all trip limits equal 1,500 pounds. Once the adjusted quota is met (Stage IV), trip limits are further reduced to 500 pounds for the remainder of the fishing year.

OTHER COMMERCIAL REGULATIONS

Shrimp

The Shrimp Fishery Management Plan allows North and South Carolina, Georgia and east Florida to request a closure in federal waters adjacent to closed state waters for brown, pink or white shrimp following severe cold weather that results in an 80% or greater reduction in the population of white shrimp (whiting, royal red and rock shrimp fisheries are exempt from a federal closure for white shrimp).

During a federal closure, a buffer zone is established extending seaward from shore to 25 nautical miles, inside of which no trawling is allowed with a net having less than 4" stretch mesh. Vessels trawling inside this buffer zone cannot have a shrimp net aboard (i.e., a net with less than 4" stretch mesh) in the closed portion of the federal zone. Transit of the closed federal zone with less than 4" stretch mesh aboard while in possession of a *Penaeus* (white, brown and pink) species will be allowed provided that the nets are in an unfishable condition, which is defined as stowed below deck.

The Council has established a **control date** of December 10, 2003, for the penaeid shrimp fishery in the South Atlantic EEZ. The Council is concerned about the potential for excess harvesting capacity in the fishery. A control date means that, in the future, the Council may consider management measures that limit the participation or effort in the fishery and may use this control date as part of a management strategy.

- **Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRDs)**

On a penaeid shrimp trawler in the South Atlantic EEZ, each trawl net that is rigged for fishing and has a mesh size less than 2.5", as measured between the centers of opposite knots when pulled taut, and each try net that is rigged for fishing and has a headrope length longer than 16.0 ft. must have a certified BRD installed. The following BRDs are certified for use by penaeid shrimp trawlers in the South Atlantic EEZ: extended funnel, expanded mesh and fisheye. Specifications of these devices and additional information on testing and certification of BRDs can be obtained through the SAFMC office.

- **Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs)**

TEDs are required for both the penaeid and rock shrimp fisheries. These devices are regulated by NOAA Fisheries. Contact the Southeast Regional Office, Protected Resource Division at 727-824-5312 for information.

Rock Shrimp


A commercial vessel permit and operator permit is required to fish for or possess rock shrimp in or from the South Atlantic EEZ. For a person aboard a vessel to fish for or possess rock shrimp in the South Atlantic EEZ off Georgia and Florida, a limited access endorsement for South Atlantic rock shrimp must be issued to the vessel and must be onboard. An owner or operator of a vessel that has been issued a limited access endorsement for South Atlantic rock shrimp must ensure that the vessel has a NMFS-approved type, operating Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) on board when on a trip in the South Atlantic. (For additional information regarding permits and VMS requirements, contact NOAA Fisheries at 727-824-5326.)

NEW!

A dealer permit is required to receive rock shrimp from permitted vessels. No persons may fish for rock shrimp in the Oculina Bank Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC) located off the east coast of Florida. See page 10 in this brochure for specific coordinates. No person may possess rock shrimp in or from this area on board a fishing vessel.









The minimum mesh size for the cod end of a rock shrimp trawl net in the South Atlantic EEZ off Georgia and Florida is 1 and 7/8 inches (4.8 cm) stretched mesh. This minimum mesh size is required in at least the last 40 meshes forward of the cod end drawstring (tie off strings), and smaller mesh bag liners are not allowed. A vessel that has a trawl net on board that does not meet these requirements may not possess a rock shrimp in or from the South Atlantic EEZ off Georgia and Florida.



Red Drum
Closed to possession or harvest in or from the EEZ.

OTHER COMMERCIAL REGULATIONS

Species	Permit Required	Size Limit	Gear Restrictions	Remarks	Trap Specifications
 <p>Spiny Lobster</p>	Yes	More than 3" carapace. Removal of tail allowed with tailing permit. If removed, tail must be at least 5.5".	Allowable gear: trap, pot, dip net, bully net or snare. There is a 5% by-catch limit by weight (of all fish lawfully aboard) for incidental harvest of Spiny Lobster by trawls in the EEZ. No poisons nor explosives are allowed. No spear, hooks nor piercing devices are allowed. A degradable panel is required on non-wooden traps. Traps may not be tended at night. Buoy and trap identification is required.	A trap certificate program has been adopted in the EEZ off Florida. Contact Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for information at 850/487-0554. Season closes April 1- August 5. No taking of berried spiny or berried slipper lobsters is allowed. Vessel ID is required. A maximum of 50 shorts or 1 per trap on board whichever is greater as attractants in a live well containing 3/4 gallon aerated, circulating sea water per lobster is allowed. These must be released alive and prior to one hour after sunset. Night divers are limited to a six-lobster bag limit. All divers must measure Spiny Lobsters while in the water and release shorts unharmed immediately without removal from the water. In federal waters off NC, SC and GA harvesting is allowed year-round with a daily bag or possession limit of 2 per person.	In the EEZ a Spiny Lobster trap may be no larger in dimension than 3 ft. by 2 ft. by 2 ft. or the volume equivalent. A trap constructed of material other than wood must have a panel constructed of wood, cotton or other material that will degrade at the same rate as a wooden trap. Such panel must be located in the upper half of the sides or on the top of the trap, so that, when removed, there will be an opening in the trap no smaller than the diameter found at the throat or entrance of the trap.

Species	Permit Required	Size Limit	Gear Restrictions	Remarks
 <p>Bluefish</p>	Yes	None	Contact the NMFS Northeast Regional Office at 978/281-9370.	Permits are required for commercial vessels, dealers and party/charterboats. Permits are required for bluefish vessel operators. Commercial quotas are established on state-by-state allocations. For more details, contact the NMFS Northeast Regional Office at 978/281-9370.
 <p>Cobia</p>	Yes - permit for Coastal Migratory Pelagics is required.	33" FL	Authorized gear: automatic reel, bandit gear, hand-line, rod & reel and pelagic long-line.	No person may possess more than two cobia per day regardless of the number of trips or duration of a trip. Must be landed with head and fins intact.
 <p>Golden Crab</p>	Yes - Permit limitation program in place. Contact the Council office for details.	None	Traps are the only allowable gear. Rope is the only allowable material for mainlines and buoy line. Max. trap size = 64 cubic feet in volume in the Northern zone and 48 cubic feet in volume in the Mid and Southern zones. Traps must have at least 2 escape gaps or rings and an escape panel. Traps must be identified with a permit number.	Golden Crab must be landed whole. Escape gaps or rings must be located on each of 2 opposite vertical sides of the trap, with an inside measurement no smaller than 2 3/4" by 3 3/4" for escape gaps or 4.5 inside diameter for escape rings. Traps made of webbing must have an opening at least 1 foot long that may be closed only with untreated cotton string less than or equal to 3/16" diameter. Traps constructed of other material must have an escape panel of at least 11 7/8" X 11 7/8" located on at least one side, excluding top and bottom. The hinges or fasteners must be made of specified degradable material. The retention of females is limited to 0.5% of the catch by number of all golden crab on board and the sale of females is prohibited. For information on zones, please contact the Council office.
 <p>Dolphin</p>	Yes - For details regarding permit requirements, contact NMFS Southeast Regional Office at 727/824-5326.	20" off FL and Georgia	Allowable gear in Atlantic EEZ: Pelagic longline*, hook-and-line gear including manual, electric, or hydraulic rod and reels, bandit gear, hand-line and spearfishing gear (including powerheads). *Surface and pelagic longline gear for dolphin and wahoo is prohibited within any "time area closure" in the Atlantic EEZ which is closed to the use of pelagic gear for highly migratory pelagic species (HMS).	Vessel permits and operator permits are required for both the commercial and for-hire fisheries. A cap of 1.5 million pounds or 13% of total landings, whichever is greater, has been established for the commercial fishery. Fishing year is January 1 to December 31. For a commercially permitted vessel fishing north 39° N. latitude, that does not have a federal commercial vessel permit for dolphin or wahoo, there is a trip limit of 200 pounds of dolphin and wahoo, combined.
 <p>Wahoo</p>	Yes	None		Commercial trip limit of 500 pounds (landed head and tail intact) with no transfer at sea. Vessel permits and operator permits are required for both the commercial and for-hire fisheries. Fishing year is January 1 to December 31.

NOTE: These charts are for general informational purposes and have no legal force or effect. Fishery regulations are subject to change.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS & INFORMATION SOURCES

*For More Information Regarding the Contents
of this Publication Contact:*

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
One Southpark Circle, Suite 306
Charleston, SC 29407-4699
Phone: 843/571-4366 Toll Free: 866/SAFMC-10
Fax: 843/769-4520
Email: safmc@safmc.net
www.safmc.net

For Other Information Contact:

National Marine Fisheries Service Offices
Highly Migratory Species (Sharks, Swordfish, Billfish & Tunas):
HMS Automated toll free: 1-800/894-5528 or 301/713-2347

- Current recreational and commercial regulations
- New alerts
- How to apply for permits

Permits and Landings Reporting System
www.nmfspermits.com
Toll Free: 1-888/872-TUNA (8862)

- Renew Atlantic tuna vessel permits
- Check permit status
- Report recreationally landed bluefin/tuna
- Regulations
- HMS tournament organizer registration information

NMFS Cooperative Tagging Program
1-800/437-3936

Fishery Management Councils
Caribbean Fisheries Management Council
www.caribbeanfmc.com
787/766-5926

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
www.gulfcouncil.org
1-888/833-1844 (toll free) or 813/228/2815

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council
www.mafmc.org
1-877/446-2362 (toll free) or 302/674-2331

New England Fishery Management Council
www.nefmc.org
978/465-0492

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
Southeast Regional Office
St. Petersburg, FL
http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov
Permits: 727/824-5326
Plans & Regulations: 727/824-5301

Law Enforcement:

NOAA Fisheries Enforcement
1-800/853-1964

NC Division of Marine Fisheries
www.ncfisheries.net
Information: 252/726-7021
Report state fishing violations: 1-800/682-2632 (NC Only)

SC DNR- Marine Resources Division
www.dnr.state.sc.us/marine
Information: 843/953-9300
Report state fishing violations: 1-800/922-5431

GA DNR-Wildlife Resources Division
www.dnr.state.ga.us
Information: 912/264-7218
Report state fishing violations: 1-800/241-4113

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
www.myfwc.com
Information: 850/487-0554
Wildlife Alert Reward Program: 1-888/404-FWCC (3922) or online
Cell Phone: *FWC or #FWC

Report Fishing Violations:
NOAA Fisheries Enforcement Hotline
1-800-853-1964
24 hours a day, 7 days a week
ANYWHERE IN THE U.S.A.

State Agencies:
NC DMF - 1-800/682-2632 (NC Only)
SC DNR - 1-800/922-5431
GA DNR - 1-800/241-4113
FWCC - 1-888/404-FWCC or Cell - *FWC or #FWC



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