



NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE



For more information on the
Gulf of Mexico
Red Snapper IFQ:

<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/RedSnapper/RedSnapperDocs.htm>

<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/pdfs/2008RedSnapperIFQAnnualReport1.pdf>

Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper IFQ

Vital Stats

First year: 2007

Type of Catch Share Program: IFQ

Management units: Gulf Red Snapper.

Vessels / Gear types: Bottom longlines, handlines, and bottom trawls

Available Trend Data

Season length:

Before Program: ~77 days

After Program: Year-round

Ex-vessel value:

Before Program (2004): ~\$10 million; ~\$3.15/lb

After Program (2008): \$8.3 million (decrease due to quota reduction); \$3.69/lb (worth \$3.24/lb in 2004 value)

Consolidation:

Beginning of Program (2007): 546 IFQ permits

After Program (2008): 466 IFQ permits (14.6% reduction)

Stock status:

Before Program (2004): Overfishing: YES; Overfished: YES

After Program (2008): Stock status has not been assessed since 2005. An assessment is currently being completed and will be available soon, but there has been no official status determination for 2008.

Nature of Harvest Privilege

Eligibility: Initial eligibility restricted to persons who owned a Class 1/Class 2 red snapper license.

Duration: There is no limit to the duration of the IFQ program. However, a program evaluation will occur every 5 years. The Gulf Council can take action to end the program through the normal Council process.

Transferability: IFQ shares/allocations can be transferred only to individuals/vessels with a valid commercial reef fish permit during the first 5 years of the IFQ program, and U.S. citizens and permanent resident aliens thereafter. Eligible individuals must be U.S. citizens or permanent resident aliens.

Accumulation: For any single fishing year, no person shall own IFQ shares that represent more than 6.0203 percent of the total, which is the maximum percentage issued to a recipient at the time of the initial apportionment of IFQ shares.

Initial Allocation: Initial shares were issued to program participants based on the amount of red snapper landings reported under each participant's qualifying license during a specific time period. For Class 1 license holders, IFQ shares were based on the best ten consecutive years from 1990-2004. For Class 1 historical captain license holders, IFQ shares were based on seven years of landings from 1998-2004. For Class 2 license holders, IFQ shares were based on the best five years of landings from 1998-2004.



For additional Catch Share
Spotlights in this series go to:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/catchshares>

Questions, comments or need
more information? Contact us
via email at:

catchshares@noaa.gov

Primary Management Information

Identified Costs: Administrative costs: \$183,524 (2008); Enforcement costs approximately: \$152,000 (Source: Office of Law Enforcement, Southeast Enforcement Division)

Cost recovery: 3% of the ex-vessel value of the red snapper landings.

Monitoring: New electronic reporting and monitoring system was developed for this fishery. The red snapper IFQ program is managed with an online accounting system that can be accessed at <https://ifq.sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/>. On the homepage of this Web site, IFQ fishermen and dealers can log-in to their online IFQ accounts.

Summary

The Gulf of Mexico red snapper stock, popular for recreational and commercial fishermen, has been depleted and fished at an unsustainable rate since the late 1980s. The commercial fishery has also been overcapitalized, resulting in derby-style fishing conditions as fishermen raced to catch a share of the quota in the midst of shortening fishing seasons, increasing management restrictions, and unsafe conditions.

Development of a red snapper Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) program began in early 2004 after a majority of eligible fishermen voted to support a commercial catch share program. The program began implementation by NMFS in 2007. Primary objectives of the program were to reduce overcapacity and mitigate derby fishing conditions.

The program has not been in effect long, but a number of benefits are apparent: red snapper ex-vessel prices continue to increase, additional consolidation has occurred, and bycatch is substantially lower than pre-13" minimum size limit levels. Additionally, numerous improvements over the historical derby-style fishing conditions experienced under pre-IFQ management have occurred. For example, during 17 years of quota management prior to the IFQ, the commercial quota was exceeded nine times. In the first two years of the IFQ program, reported landings have been below quotas.

However, the IFQ has not been easy for all fishermen as it is addressing the issue of overcapitalization – too many fishermen to maintain an environmentally and economically sustainable fishery. The IFQ program has reduced participant numbers; however for those who remain in the fishery, the program has already begun to increase the price of red snapper; those who have sold their shares have received compensation.