



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
Rich.Malinowski@noaa.gov
727-824-5305, FAX 727-824-5308

December 18, 2012
FB12-091

NOAA Fisheries Announces New Regulations for Gulf of Mexico Greater Amberjack *Small Entity Compliance Guide*

On October 4, 2012, NOAA Fisheries approved Amendment 35 to the Fishery Management Plan for Reef Fish Resources in the Gulf of Mexico. This rule adjusts the annual catch limits and annual catch targets for the greater amberjack population in the Gulf of Mexico and establishes a 2,000-pound commercial trip limit. A final rule implementing these regulations published in the *Federal Register* on November 13, 2012 (77 FR 219), with an effective date of December 13, 2012.

Commercial Fishing Trip Limit & Season

The rule establishes a commercial trip limit of 2,000 pounds throughout the fishing year. The trip limit will allow for a longer fishing season for the commercial sector. The commercial fishing season re-opens on January 1, 2013. The 2013 commercial closed season will be March 1 through May 31, and will re-open on June 1st, as long as the annual catch target has not been exceeded or is projected to be exceeded.

Recreational Fishing Season

No changes were implemented for the 2013 fishing season that opens on January 1, 2013, and will remain open through May 31, 2013. The annual recreational fishing season closure will occur as scheduled from June 1, 2013, through July 31, 2013, and the fishing season will re-open on August 1st, as long as the annual catch target has not been exceeded.

Annual Catch Limits

In response to a 2010 update stock assessment, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) recommended a new annual catch limit equal to the acceptable biological catch at 1,780,000 pounds, which is less than the current annual catch limit of 1,830,000 pounds whole weight (pounds).

Annual Catch Targets

The Council established annual catch targets, which act as quotas for the commercial and recreational sectors. The catch target provides a buffer for management uncertainty, intended to keep landings less than the annual catch limits. The commercial allocation is 27 percent and the recreational allocation is 73 percent of the allowable catch. Until a future stock assessment is completed, or the annual catch limit is exceeded, the commercial quota will be 409,000 pounds, and the recreational quota will be 1,130,000 pounds. The 2013 commercial quota will be reduced by the 2012 landing overage after those numbers have been finalized.

This bulletin serves as a Small Entity Compliance Guide, complying with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996.

Electronic copies of the amendment and final rule may be obtained from the NOAA Fisheries Web site <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/GrouperSnapperandReefFish.htm>. For more information on Amendment 35 and the greater amberjack rebuilding plan, please refer to the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on the NOAA Fisheries Web site.

This summary is not a substitute for the actual regulations. We encourage you to read the full text of the regulations, available at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/>.

To receive fishery bulletins via email, please sign up through Constant Contact at <http://bit.ly/HQDUEU>. You may also sign up for Constant Contact by visiting our web site <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov> (sign-up option is located on the left side of the page). The electronic copy of the bulletin will be delivered to you faster than the paper copy, is in color, features informational links, and reduces paper use.

