



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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NOAA Fisheries Reminds Recreational Fishers That the February 1 Through March 31 Shallow-water Grouper Closure Is Still in Effect for All Gulf of Mexico Federal Waters

NOAA Fisheries reminds recreational fishers that the February 1 through March 31 shallow-water grouper closure is still in effect. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council has recommended that the closure be modified so that it only applies to federal waters seaward of a boundary approximating the 20-fathom depth contour. However, rulemaking to put this modification into effect is still ongoing and will not be complete before the end of this year's closed season. Therefore, the shallow-water grouper closure will be in effect for all Gulf of Mexico federal waters in 2013.

Note that recreational fishing for gag is already closed. Gag fishing will open in Gulf of Mexico federal waters on July 1, 2013. The rulemaking, if implemented, would also modify the 2013 recreational gag season by keeping the July 1 opening date, but revising the closure date from

October 31 to a date when the annual catch target is projected to be caught.

As part of the rulemaking, there will be a comment period on a proposed rule. NOAA Fisheries will provide instructions on how and when to submit comments in an accompanying Fishery Bulletin outlining the proposed rule.

Species in the Recreational Shallow-Water Grouper Complex

- Black Grouper
- Red Grouper
- Gag
- Yellowfin grouper
- Scamp
- Yellowmouth grouper