

| Timestamp | Enter your full name | email address | Comments | City, State, Zip Code | Check all that apply |
|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 10/17/2011 9:06:31 | Rick Cooke | rcooke4473@aol.com | <p data-bbox="994 129 1173 153">October 17, 2011</p> <p data-bbox="994 181 1536 256">Thank you for taking the time to accept my comment regarding the 2012 red snapper recreational season as well as the future seasons.</p> <p data-bbox="994 288 1536 448">I have been a recreational fisherman in the upper GOM since the mid 1960's. I have lived in Florida, Mississippi, and Alabama most of my life. In the past 45 years, I have enjoyed many different types of fishing as well as the abundance that many states have to offer.</p> <p data-bbox="994 480 1536 663">Since the 1980's, I have been primarily an offshore fisherman of the Mississippi and Alabama Gulf coast with an occasional run to the Louisiana waters. I can honestly say that there are more red snapper in my local area than ever before. I realize this information comes to no surprise to anyone and is well documented and discussed.</p> <p data-bbox="994 695 1547 1094">My purpose of this correspondence to request the council to continue its efforts to use good judgment based upon good data. I think the council is coming to terms with this imitative. Those of us who fish the GOM know that as fish age, they do become larger. If the fish are larger, they will weigh more. Basing the recreational TAC 100% on weight is a formula doomed for failure. I also would request the council to consider a season that allows the recreational fisherman the opportunity to have as many days on the water not limited to a certain set of months. For many of us, we do not have the luxury of fishing the times that the weather is perfect. Also, as we are well aware, tropical storms and hurricanes can eliminate a month or more of a summer snapper season.</p> <p data-bbox="994 1126 1536 1254">I would request the council use the best data available allowing the longest season possible (4 day weekends the entire year?) so that we may continue to enjoy the resources we have while passing this along to our future generations.</p> | Mobile, AL, 36605 | Recreational angler |

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| 10/18/2011 11:18:19 | Patrick Golden | Patrickgolden@goldenroc.org | <p>I would like to express my preference for a longer season, even if it requires a weekend or weekday only season. 5 months of weekday fishing is better than 2 months of weekend and weekday fishing.</p> <p>I would also like to see a more accurate reporting of red snapper. I feel that the quota is not being reached. In 2004 boats were hauling limits of snapper to the dock every day. Even during the season less boats are coming into the harbors with snapper due to increased fuel prices and a 2 per person limit. I think there is misinformation about how many snapper recreational fishermen are catching. There is no way more fish (in weight or quantity) are being harvested now in Mississippi than in 2004. The snapper populations can not get much thicker in our area without occupying inshore waters. Snapper are being caught all the way inside the barrier islands in Mississippi and some have been caught within yards of Pascagoula's shore.</p> <p>Zoning the Gulf of Mexico for red snapper quotas is the only way to help snapper populations in the few struggling areas of the Gulf of Mexico</p> | Biloxi, MS 39531 | Recreational angler |
| 10/18/2011 11:21:24 | Patrick Golden | Patrickzgoldn@aol.com | I would like to see the Council release a report of snapper catch by state. I would like to know how much each state accounts for meeting the quota each year. | Biloxi, MS 39531 | Recreational angler |
| 10/20/2011 6:19:52 | Patrick Golden | PatrickGolden@goldenroc.org | The Gulf Council's basis for the health of the red snapper stock is in part based on how many bigger and older snapper are in the Gulf. The problem is the older snapper are being wiped out. There is a two per person maximum for red snapper. This makes every spear fisherman go out and target the biggest snapper on the rigs. They are wiping out all the snapper that are 40 years old due to the restriction in how many snapper can be kept. | Biloxi, MS 39531 | Recreational angler |

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| 1/22/2012 18:52:13 | Jimmy Durst | jdurst71@embarqmail.com | <p>I am concerned about how this is being handled. Again I am for conservation but I have been fishing the Gulf Of Mexico for a long time and notice that the Red Snapper have reproduced to numbers I have not seen since I have been fishing these waters. The limit on landings is flawed. I constantly throw back Red Snapper every trip usually know less than 20-30 fish and this is while you are targeting other species. When you set the limit to two fish and I continue to catch two 12-16lb fish because they are so large, the overall limit is met early. This causes the population to grow rapidly and they are so aggressive that the Red Snapper eat so much that the rest of the reef fish cannot survive on the same reef. This is what I believe is more problematic for the Gag Grouper than actually being over fished. I believe that you owe it to the fisherman as well as the species to have an accurate study done or at least go fishing with some one that knows how to fish. You could go to areas in the Gulf of Mexico and catch Red Snapper until you are tired of fishing. I also know that you are aware of the economic impact this has on our coastal communities PLEASE look at this with careful eyes and If YOU have not spent any time on the water please take a boat ride a fishing pole and catch some fish for yourself DO NOT send some one in your place that can not fish or that does not truly care about fishing and what it means to be able to spend quality time with our children.</p> <p>Thanks again a concerned FISHERMAN and AMERICAN, Jimmy Durst</p> | Keaton Beach, FL and Carrabelle, FL | Recreational angler |

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| 1/24/2012 5:08:32 | Bo Gorham | bo.gorham@serve.com | <p>To whom it may concern - I am an offshore recreational fisherman based out of St Petersburg Florida. Fishing offshore for snapper from Tampa / St Pete means runs of over 50 miles to get to the grounds. With the short season, since I work weekdays, that means I have only 8 to 10 chances to get offshore for the entire Red Snapper season. Adding in weather days (winds blowing > 15mph) we were only able to make it out to the Red Snapper grounds 3 times for the entire season. This limited access to the fishery makes it difficult to justify the costs of the boat, maintenance, insurance, marina fees, tackle, bait, ice etc etc that i devote to offshore fishing.</p> <p>Something needs to be done to increase the available time on the water for the recreational fisherman. Weekend opens, extended seasons, chartered/declared days at sea, something. Please give us back our oppertunity to maintain our sport.</p> <p>Thanks</p> | st petersburg, fl 33705 | Recreational angler |
| 1/24/2012 7:47:47 | Michael Butler | venicemarina@gmail.com | <p>Committee members, There has to be a way you can give the charter fleet their own quota allowing them to fish when their business deems necessary. Consider taking the increased auota and begin the charter quota. Do this for a number of years and you have taken another step of quantifiability which is what everyone wants. Owning a marina in Venice Louisiana it makes since for a weekends red snapper fishery since recreational fishing is predominatly a weekend business. With that said i believe that you have to give the charter boats the ability to have flexible fishing days. If this is unattainable then I would suggest that you leave things as is and add fishing days.</p> | venice,la,70037 | Recreational angler, Charter/Headboat For-Hire, Other |

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| 1/25/2012 8:09:36 | Michelle Cooke | mlcooke1@gmail.com | <p>Thankful to have this opportunity to be able to address the council. As a girl who has grown up in a family of generations of commercial & recreational fisherman I find it frustrating that the council is not listening to the facts. At any moment we could take you out off of Keaton Beach & while trying to fish for grouper or other fish you would be reeling up Snapper like crazy. Keep in mind though you have to have some one that knows how to fish & to put you dead on a good marking. It is frustrating to see that flawed data is not only contributing to the abundant snapper increase (which is not good for conserving other fish) but in an economic crisis like we are in now for businesses. My husband & I are not only avid fishermen but we run a boat repair & sales business. Since all the laws on the Red Snapper & Gag grouper we have seen lots of our customers sell their offshore boats. It's not worth it to spend several hundred dollars in gas & bait to only throw back Red Snapper after Red Snapper. So not only is your flawed data you are getting keeping us from being able to bring Red Snapper home to our dinner table it is contributing to hurting our business & others that depend on recreational fishermen to keep theirs going. So please reconsider & reevaluate the facts. I'd like to challenge each one of you to get from behind your desk & take a trip out w/ a commercial fishermen or a good recreational fisherman to see what is being caught. Thanks again for your time & reconsideration.</p> | Madison Florida 32340 | Recreational angler, Other |

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| 1/25/2012 8:09:36 | Michelle Cooke | mlcooke1@gmail.com | | Madison Florida 32340 | Recreational angler, Other |

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| 1/25/2012 8:09:36 | Michelle Cooke | mlcooke1@gmail.com | Concerned for our fishing rights- Michelle Cooke | Madison Florida 32340 | Recreational angler, Other |

Dear Gulf Council Members

I would propose the Gulf Council and NMFS look at managing recreational anglers in the Red Snapper fishery on numbers of fish caught. That number should be based on a legal size fish of a ten year average weight.

Example (A)

Annual Gulf of Mexico recreational red snapper landings in numbers and pounds whole weight, 1998-2009.

| | Year | Landings (lbs ww) | Number Caught | Avg. Weight (lbs ww) |
|--|-------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| | 1998 | 4,260,891 | 1,225,279 | 3.48 |
| | 1999 | 4,001,898 | 993,398 | 4.03 |
| | 2000 | 3,935,348 | 988,875 | 3.98 |
| | 2001 | 4,471,359 | 1,064,275 | 4.20 |
| | 2002 | 5,386,618 | 1,372,296 | 3.93 |
| | 2003 | 4,849,296 | 1,259,960 | 3.85 |
| | 2004 | 4,998,990 | 1,292,022 | 3.87 |
| | 2005 | 4,086,941 | 1,031,350 | 3.96 |
| | 2006 | 4,025,435 | 1,201,348 | 3.35 |
| | 2007 | 4,443,206 | 1,338,082 | 3.32 |
| | 2008 | 3,713,406 | 864,815 | 4.29 |
| | 2009 | 3,581,005* | 713,093* | 5.02 |

In this data provided above you will see from 1998 to 2007 (4.5 million lb. TAC) recreational anglers caught an average of 1,177,000 fish per year with an average weight of 3.3 lbs.

Recreational anglers had an average 195 day red snapper season.

In 2008 the TAC was lower to 2.5 million lbs and a season was set from June 1st to Aug. 5th based on an increase of a 4.5 lb. average fish. A 29% increase in weight.

In 2009 the TAC remained at 2.5 million lbs and a season was set from June 1st to Aug. 15th based on a 5 lb. average fish. An 18% increase in weight. A loss of 150 days out of the 195 day season!!

In 2010 the TAC was raised to 3.4 million lbs. and a season was set from June 1st to July 24th based on an increased average weight to 7.5 lbs per fish. A 54 day season!!

Although the TAC was increased by almost a million lbs the average weight of each fish has more than double and the abundance of fish has increased exponentially, yet there was another loss of days in the season due to the increase in average weight of each fish.

In 2011 there was 123,000 lbs. added to the TAC to give us 3.5 million lbs with a 48 day season with an increase of average weight fish of 9.5 -10.5 lbs. A 48 day season!!

From 2007 to 2011 there has been a 75% increase in average weight of each fish caught but from 2008 to 2011 there has only been a 33% increase of 1.075 million lbs in the TAC!

Example (B)

| YEAR | TAC | AVERAGE WEIGHT | NUMBER OF FISH CAUGHT | SEASON LENGTH |
|------|-----|----------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| 2006 | 100 | 2 | 50 | 180 DAYS |
| 2007 | 100 | 3 | 33 | 110 DAYS |
| 2008 | 100 | 4 | 25 | 90 DAYS |
| 2009 | 100 | 5 | 20 | 60 DAYS |
| 2010 | 100 | 6 | 16 | 45 DAYS |

IN EVERY YEAR SCIENCE ALLOWED 100 LB TAC. MARINE FISHERIES MANAGERS APPLIED THE INCREASED AVERAGE WEIGHT. THE RESULTS, LESS FISH ALLOWED TO CATCH, THUS REDUCED SEASONS

This is just an example, but one can surely see that current management practices make no allowance for an increase in TAC to offset for the increased weight of the fish.

You could carry this example from 2012 and beyond, with a projected average weight increase of 75% every three years and an increase in TAC of only 33% or less every four years, we will never have an increase in seasons again.

(1998-2007) average 1.2 million fish harvested

(2008) 864,000 fish harvested

(2009) 713,000 fish harvested

(2010) 253,000 fish harvested

(2011) estimated 371, 000 fish harvested

Thirty days next year, twenty days the next and so on with less days to fish every season. Sector separation, days at sea, catch shares none of these plans will fix this scenario. Nope the only way out of this downward spiral in our season is to change the way fisheries managers count or should I say weight our fish.

Here in America we have very successful wildlife and freshwater fishery management plans ; they are managed by the number of game you allowed to take **NOT BY POUNDS!** In freshwater, again managed by number of fish allowed to harvest **NOT BY POUNDS!**

They have wildlife and fish surveys and check stations to monitor the age and growth of wildlife and this should continue in saltwater as well but they don't shorten seasons based on the fact the weight of the deer or ducks killed one season were bigger or the fish caught were bigger. No in fact they would admit there management was successful and would lengthen the season not punish them for their success.

We should continue to survey our saltwater fish for weight and size for science purpose, but manage TAC under an average weight of a legal size fish, if a 16 inch fish weights 3.5 lbs. then the fishery should be managed according to that weight.

Thank You

Scott Robson

DCBA Co President