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## SALTWATER RECREATIONAL FINFISHING

8/16/2000

[Click here to check recent News Releases for Season Dates and Rule Changes.](#)

Those interested in fishing in federal waters should contact the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, toll free 1-888-833-1844, 3018 U.S. Highway 301 North, Suite 1000, Tampa, FL 33619, e-mail: [gulf.council@noaa.gov](mailto:gulf.council@noaa.gov), webpage: [www.gulfcouncil.org/](http://www.gulfcouncil.org/) for Federal regulations.

### COMMON COASTAL SPECIES

**Drum, Black:** 16 inches minimum total length. 5 fish per person daily bag and possession limit with not more than one exceeding 27 inches.

**Drum, Red (Redfish):** 16 inches minimum total length. 5 fish per person daily bag limit with not more than one exceeding 27 inches. See note [\*] below. Take or possession of red drum in federal waters is prohibited.

**Flounder, Southern:** 10 fish per person for each consecutive day on the water, multi-pronged barbed gigs are allowed.

**Mullet, Striped:** 100 lbs. per person daily take and possession limit.

**Seatrout, Spotted (Speckled Trout):** 12 inches minimum total length. 25 fish per person daily bag limit. See note [\*] below.  
SPECIAL TROUT REG: Within those areas of the state, including coastal territorial waters, south of Interstate 10 from its junction at the Texas-Louisiana boundary eastward to its junction with Louisiana Highway 171, south to Highway 14, and then south to Holmwood, and then south on Highway 27 through Gibbstown south to Louisiana Highway 82 at Creole and south on Highway 82 to Oak Grove, and then due south to the western shore of the Mermentau River, following this shoreline south to the junction with the Gulf of Mexico, and then due south to the limit of the state territorial sea, no person shall possess, regardless of where taken, more than two (2) spotted seatrout exceeding twenty-five inches (25") total length. The spotted seatrout exceeding twenty-five inches (25") in length shall be considered as part of the daily recreational bag limit and possession limit.

**Cobia (ling or lemon fish):** 2 fish per person daily bag and possession limit. 33 inches minimum fork length.

**Mackerel, King:** 2 fish per person, See note [\*\*] below. 24 inches minimum fork length.

**Mackerel, Spanish:** 15 fish per person, See note [\*\*] below. 12 inches minimum fork length.

\*For Red Drum (Redfish), and Spotted Seatrout (Speckled Trout):  
Recreational saltwater anglers may possess a two days bag limit on land; however, no person shall be in possession of over the daily bag limit in any one day or while fishing or while on the water, unless that recreational saltwater angler is aboard a trawler engaged in commercial fishing for a consecutive period of longer than 25 hours.

### **HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES**

**Billfish:** Recreational tournament operators conducting a tournament involving scorekeeping or awards for Atlantic billfish (whether or not retained), must register with the National Marine Fisheries Service's Southeast Fisheries Science Center: attn: "Tournament Registration", 75 Virginia Beach Drive, Miami, FL 33149. A tournament registration form is available upon request from the above address or can be requested by FAX (305-361-4219) or can be down loaded at <http://www.nmfspermits.com/TournamentInstructions.asp>.

For purposes of this section, the following words and phrases have the meaning ascribed to them, unless the context clearly shows a different meaning:

**Dressed weight:** weight of the carcass after it has been gutted, headed and finned.

**Carcass Length:** curved measure from posterior edge of gill opening to anterior portion of caudal keel.

**Lower Jaw Fork Length (LJFL):** straight-line length from the tip of the lower jaw to the fork of the tail.

**Curved Fork Length (CFL):** tip of upper jaw to fork of tail measured along the contour of the middle of the body.

**Trip:** a fishing trip, regardless of the number of days duration, that begins with departure from a dock, berth, beach, seawall or ramp and that terminates with return to a dock, berth, beach, seawall or ramp.

**Marlin, Blue:** 99 inches minimum LJFL.

**Marlin, White:** 66 inches minimum LJFL.

**Sailfish:** 63 inches minimum LJFL.

**Swordfish:** 29 inches carcass minimum length or 33 pounds minimum dressed weight. 5 swordfish per vessel per trip bag and possession limit.

**Tuna:** A federal permit is necessary for the taking of Atlantic bluefin tuna, yellowfin tuna, bigeye tuna, skipjack tuna, and albacore; for information contact the National Marine Fisheries Service Permitting Office at 888-USA-TUNA or visit [NMFS Permit Shop](#).

**Tuna, Yellowfin:** 27 inches minimum CFL. 3 fish per person daily bag and possession limit.

**Tuna, Bluefin:** 27 inches minimum CFL.

**Tuna, Bigeye:** 27 inches minimum CFL.

**Shark: *Closed Season-*** All Louisiana State waters shall be closed to the recreational and commercial harvest of all sharks between April 1 and June 30.

**Atlantic Sharpnose:** 1 fish per person per day and in possession.

**Other Sharks:** The combined daily take and possession limit for all "Small Coastal", "Large Coastal" and "Pelagic" sharks shall be 1 fish per vessel per trip and in possession with a 54 inch minimum fork length.

**Small Coastal Sharks** - bonnethead shark, Atlantic sharpnose

shark, blacknose shark, finetooth shark.

**Large Coastal Sharks** - great hammerhead, scalloped hammerhead, smooth hammerhead, nurse shark, blacktip shark, bull shark, lemon shark, sandbar shark, silky shark, spinner shark, tiger shark.

**Pelagic Sharks** - porbeagle shark, shortfin mako, blue shark, oceanic whitetip shark, thresher shark.

**Prohibited Species** - No person shall take, possess or attempt to possess any of the following species or parts thereof: basking shark, white shark, bigeye sand tiger shark, sand tiger shark, whale shark, smalltooth sawfish, largetooth sawfish, bignose shark, Caribbean reef shark, dusky shark, galapagos shark, narrowtooth shark, night shark, Atlantic angel shark, Caribbean sharpnose shark, smalltail shark, bigeye sixgill shark, bigeye thresher shark, longfin mako, sevengill shark, sixgill shark. Sharks taken under a recreational bag limit shall not be sold, purchased, exchanged, bartered, or attempted to be sold, purchased, exchanged or bartered. A person subject to a bag limit shall not possess at any time, regardless of the number of trips or the duration of a trip, any shark in excess of the bag limits mentioned above. The practice of "finning", that is, removing only the fins and returning the remainder of the shark to the sea, is prohibited within and without Louisiana waters. Notwithstanding other provisions of this part, a person may fish for, but not retain, white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*) with rod and reel only under a catch and release program, provided the person releases and returns such fish to the sea immediately with a minimum of injury.

**REEF FISH**, See note [\*\*] below

**Groupers:** Combined, excluding Goliath Grouper (Jewfish) and Nassau grouper, 5 fish per person per day, for all groupers listed in this section, with not more than one **Speckled Hind** and one **Warsaw Grouper** per vessel per day. Size limits also apply to the following species:

**Black:** 22 inches minimum total length.

**Gag:** 22 inches minimum total length.

**Red:** 20 inches minimum total length.

**Yellowfin:** 20 inches minimum total length.

**Scamp:** 16 inches minimum total length.

**Red Hind, Rock Hind, Speckled Hind, Misty Grouper, Snowy Grouper, Yellowedge Grouper, Yellowmouth Grouper, and Warsaw Grouper:** no size limits.

**Goliath Grouper (Jewfish):** Taking or possessing Goliath Grouper is prohibited within or outside the waters of Louisiana.

[Notice to Anglers: Learn How You Can Participate in Goliath Grouper Research, click here for more info.](#)

**Nassau:** Taking or possessing Nassau grouper is prohibited within or outside the waters of Louisiana.

**Snappers:**

**Snapper, Red:** 4 fish per person. 16 inch minimum total length. A federal and state recreational quota for red snapper is in effect. **The recreational red snapper season is open from 12:01 am on April 21 until midnight October 31.**

**10/person/day combined for the following 11 snappers:**

**Schoolmaster, Cubera, Gray (mangrove), Yellowtail, Dog, & Mahogany:** 12 inch minimum total length.  
**Mutton:** 16 inch minimum total length.  
**Queen, Blackfin, Silk, & Wenchman**

**20/person/day combined for the following 9 species:**

**Snapper, Lane:** 8 inches minimum total length.  
**Snapper, Vermilion:** 10 inches minimum total length.  
**Triggerfish, Grey:** 12 inches minimum total length.  
**Almaco Jack, Goldface Tilefish, Tilefish, Blackline Tilefish, Anchor Tilefish, & Blueline Tilefish**

**Misc Reef Fish**

**Amberjack, Greater:** 1 fish per person. 28 inches minimum fork length.

**Amberjack, Lesser & Banded Rudderfish:** 14 inches minimum length and 22 inches maximum fork length. 5 fish per person per day combined.

**Hogfish:** 12 inches minimum fork length. 5 fish per person daily bag limit.

**Seabass, Black:** 8 inches minimum total length.

\*\*Two day limit allowed for all reef fish in possession only on charter vessels and headboats on multi-day trips, if the vessels have two licensed operators as required by the U.S. Coast Guard for trips more than 12 hours, and if each angler has in possession a receipt issued on behalf of the vessel verifying the length of the trip.

**General Notes:**

All saltwater finfish except tuna, garfish, and swordfish, and sharks possessed by a recreational fisherman shall have the head and caudal fin intact until set or put on shore. Tuna, garfish, swordfish, Swordfish and sharks possessed by a recreational fisherman shall not be skinned or scaled until set or put on shore. Tuna shall retain the caudal fin intact until set or put on shore and those species of tuna which have minimum size restrictions may have the head removed as long as the carcass length without the head exceeds the minimum size requirement.

For the purpose of consumption at sea aboard the harvesting vessel, a person shall have no more than two pounds of finfish parts per person on board the vessel, provided that the vessel is equipped to cook such finfish and such finfish does not exceed applicable bag limits. These provisions shall not apply to bait species.

Saltwater finfish caught or transported by a license holder, while license is in effect, are presumed to have been taken in Louisiana waters.

All regulations regarding these species apply whether caught in fresh or salt water areas.