

FLORIDA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
FOR SEA GRANT COLLEGE OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA



MARINE ADVISORY PROGRAM

REPLY TO:

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MARINE NEWS OF THE SOUTHEAST

MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION PROPOSES RULES FOR
SPANISH MACKEREL, REDFISH, SNAPPER/GROUPER, & KINGFISH

The Marine Fisheries Commission voted to set a minimum mesh size of 3½ inches stretched mesh on gill nets on the east coast of Florida from November 15 through March 15. This would effectively impose a minimum size limit of approximately 17 inches fork length (about 19 inches total length) on gill net fishermen during the primary fishing season. However, there would be no change established in the existing size limit of 12 inches fork length for mackerel caught by hook and line. The rule would also prohibit power roller gill net rigs from being used to harvest Spanish mackerel off Dade and Palm Beach Counties. Broward County is already closed to net fishing.

Under the proposed rule for redfish, all gillnetting for redfish would be prohibited in the state until studies are completed to determine what size gill net mesh could be used without violating the proposed new minimum size limits. These studies will also be aimed at determining what the mortality of sublegal fish caught in these nets would be. Upon completion of these studies, the Commission will reconsider use of gill nets. To increase survival of released fish, the statewide redfish rule would allow only a single barbed hook to be used when fishing with natural bait, and would set a statewide closed season on all commercial harvest of redfish from March 1 through June 30, and ban the sale of redfish in Florida during this same period.

In addition, in the areas of Hillsborough, Pinellas, and all east coast counties (including Monroe County), a daily bag limit of two fish per person for all fishermen, both commercial and recreational, would be established, along with a possession limit of four fish per person. For all other coastal counties, the same limits would apply to all fishermen during March 1 through June 30 only. This would effectively make redfish a game fish on the east coast and in Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties at all times, and in the rest of the state March through June.

The panel's redfish proposals are an addition to a major increase in minimum size limits. West of a line drawn in Dixie County between Steinhatchee and Horseshoe at Bowlegs Point, the minimum size limit will be 16 inches. In the rest of the state, 18 inches will apply. Also, a possession limit of one redfish 32 inches

or larger per person will be applied statewide. A final public hearing on the size limits portion of the rule was held July 10 in Key West, and implementation of these size limits, if approved by the Governor and Cabinet, is expected around October 15. These limits are intended to protect young and very large redfish from overfishing this fall.

In other action, the Commission reconsidered regulation of grouper and snapper, and voted to prohibit the use of sink gill nets to take grouper and snapper on the Atlantic side of Monroe County, and to again propose bag limits on recreational fishermen and a prohibition on the use of long line gear in state waters. The Commission also voted in an initial decision to allow commercial hook and line fishermen a 12 fish per day bag limit on king mackerel in state waters between Jupiter and Fowey Light in southeast Florida, because these fishermen do not have access to king mackerel in federal waters in this area. While this action would not greatly increase the catch rate, the Commission is very concerned that it be limited to bonafide commercial hook and line fishermen.

SOURCE: Marine Fisheries Commission, 7/11/85

SWORDFISH SNAGS

The Swordfish Plan is still being reviewed by the Secretary of Commerce and a decision is expected by August 1. However, because the Mid-Atlantic Council refuses to accept the closure dates, even if the plan gains approval, there may be no closure this year. Additionally, the State Department has objected to any limits on foreign fishing and this too may alter the Plan.

TILEFISH

Research conducted off the east coast indicates that tilefish are being heavily fished and suggests new entrants to the fishery be cautioned as to the likelihood of their success.

The research also suggests that tilefish prefer bottom temperatures of 9-14°C. Additionally, the fish moved out of areas of upwellings when bottom temperatures dropped below 9°C. This suggests that fishermen might be able to increase their catch rates if bottom temperatures were taken before setting gear.

More information on this research will be available in the near future, please let me know if you would like to receive additional information on this subject.

STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS FROM "FISHERIES OF THE UNITED STATES, 1984"

Per Capita Consumption: U.S. consumption of fishery products was a record 13.6 pounds of edible meat per person in 1984, up 0.5 pound from 1983. The total figure is made up of 8.3 pounds of fresh and frozen (a record, and up from 8.0 in 1983), 5.0 pounds of canned (up from 4.8 in 1983), and .3 pounds of cured (same as 1983).

Consumption of fillets and steaks increased 9.5% to a record 3.13 pounds. Shrimp, all preparations, increased 11% to a record 1.90 pounds per person. Canned salmon remained at .5 pounds and canned tuna increased 1 pound to 3.2 pounds. Breaded sticks and portions remained stable but up at 1.52 pounds.

Exports: U.S. exports of edible fishery products of domestic origin were down from 1983 in pounds, 574.1 million pounds (down 27.8 million pounds) and dollars \$842.3 million (down 65.3 million). Individual items of export note were fresh and frozen salmon (226.2 million pounds, \$341.1 million) and herring (77.7 million pounds, \$49.8 million). Canned was also down from 1983 totals; 61.0 million pounds (down 13.6%) and \$106.1 million (down 11.2%). Salmon was the major canned item, 49.0 million pounds, \$86.8 million. Cured items were down also to 39.2 million pounds, \$97.2 million.

Imports: 1984 U.S. imports of edible fishery products were up to new record heights: \$3.7 billion, \$115.6 million above 1983; and 2.5 billion pounds, 67.5 million pounds above 1983.

All Fresh and Frozen Products:.....	\$ 3.3 billion,	2.1 billion pounds
All Canned:.....	\$372.9 million,	316.4 million pounds
All Cured:.....	\$ 70.9 million,	67.8 million pounds
All Other:.....	\$ 17.9 million,	13.0 million pounds

Shrimp: 342.5 million pounds (up 1.1 million pounds) valued at \$1.2 billion (down \$7.2 million). Shrimp value 32% of total value of 1984 edible imports value.

Canned Tuna/Brine: 162.0 million pounds (a record), up 39.9 million pounds over 1983.

Fresh and Frozen Fillets and Steaks: Record 473.6 million pounds up 33.9 million pounds from 1983.

Regular and Minced Blocks: 316.2 million pounds, down 68.3 million pounds from 1983.

Trade Balance, Edible Product:

Exports: \$842.3 million, 574.1 million pounds

Imports: \$ 3.7 billion, 2.5 billion pounds

Balance: Negative \$2.86 billion; Negative, 1.93 billion pounds

Copies of "Fisheries of the United States, 1984" are available free from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Statistics Program, 2001 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20235, (202-634-7366).

SOURCE: Going To Market, National Fisheries Institute

BOATING SAFETY HOTLINE EXPERIMENT

WHAT'S THE HOTLINE FOR?

The Coast Guard is conducting a trial toll-free Hotline for boaters. The purpose of the Hotline is to:

- * Provide information on boats and associated equipment involved in safety defect (recall) campaigns for the past 5 model years. If you own a new boat or are buying a used boat and don't know if it's been in a defect campaign, you can find out, and get instructions on how to get the defect corrected.
- * Take complaints about possible safety defects, or assist consumers having difficulty getting corrective action for a safety recall already announced.

The trial period, which started on June 3, 1985 and will run for approximately one year, will allow the Coast Guard to evaluate the need for a permanent Boating Safety Hotline.

WHO CAN USE THE HOTLINE?

Anyone with access to a telephone in the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii, by dialing the toll-free number: (800) 368-5647.

The number for calls from the Washington, D.C. area is 472-2385.

WHEN CAN I CALL?

A Hotline operator will be on duty Monday thru Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. eastern time. If the Hotline is busy when you call, please try again.

WILL THE OPERATOR ANSWER ALL MY QUESTIONS?

Yes, the operator will try to answer all questions. If the recall information is lengthy or complicated, the operator may take your name and address and send recall information in the mail.

If you want to report a possible safety defect, the operator will mail you a pre-addressed, postage-paid form to fill out. This will insure that the Coast Guard gets the most complete information on the nature of the possible defect. Copies of all report forms will be sent to the appropriate manufacturers, who frequently take action on their own to correct the problem.

WHAT CONSUMER QUESTIONS CANNOT BE ANSWERED BY THE HOTLINE?

Sorry, the Hotline can't help the consumer resolve disputes with boat dealers or manufacturers about service or problems that do not involve safety; and the Hotline operator cannot recommend or endorse specific boats or product lines.

SOURCE: CONSUMER ADVISORY, U.S. Coast Guard



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