

# 2019 Alabama Exempted Fishing Permit Status Report

**Report Number: 6 (FINAL)**

**Period covered: June 1 – Oct. 6, 2019**

## Background

In 2018 and 2019, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) was issued an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) from NOAA Fisheries to manage the private vessel and state-licensed charter vessel components of Alabama's recreational Red Snapper fishery (excludes federally-permitted charter vessels). During both years of the EFP, ADCNR will attempt to manage landings within a quota. The 2019 quota is 1,079,513 pounds which was reduced by the harvest overage from 2018 which was estimated to be 2,007 pounds. ADCNR will monitor Red Snapper landings via Snapper Check, the program established to collect mandatory reports from recreational anglers landing Red Snapper in Alabama. Any landings amount above the quota in 2019 will be deducted from the 2020 quota prior to the start of the 2020 season. In order to obtain landings estimates, the number of reported harvested fish are multiplied by the average weight of fish measured and weighed by ADCNR staff from randomly selected vessels. Although a vessel representative from each recreational vessel with Red Snapper is required to submit a landing report prior to landing fish 100% compliance is not anticipated. Therefore, an estimate of the number vessels for which a landing report is not submitted is needed. Unreported Red Snapper are estimated by determining the ratio of the number of fish from reported and unreported trips to the number of fish from reported trips. Unreported trips are determined by comparing information collected by ADCNR staff at public boat ramps and marinas to vessel reports submitted by anglers through Snapper Check.

## 2019 Season Summary

The 2019 Alabama EFP red snapper season was open for 36 days. ADCNR/MRD announced one additional weekend (Oct. 4-6) after Report No. 5 was submitted to allow remaining quota to be fished. Total EFP Red Snapper landings for private and state-licensed charter vessels were 1,062,281 pounds or 17,232 pounds less than the 2019 EFP quota. Cumulative daily landings for both fishing modes are provided in Figure 1.

ADCNR staff surveyed 501 private vessels and 25 state-licensed vessels with Red Snapper during the 2019 season. As per survey protocols, an attempt was made to match data from surveyed vessels to data from landing reports to determine the proportion of vessels with red snapper that were not completing landings reports. The estimated reporting rate for private vessels and state licensed charter boats during the season was 51.4% and 29.3%, respectively.

Daily vessel trips for private and state-licensed vessels and mean daily wave heights during the 2019 season are provided in Figure 2. Every day the mean daily wave height was 2.0' or less during the season at least 500 vessel trips were completed. Mean wave heights of 1.0' or less often resulted in at least 1,000 or more vessel trips being completed. For comparison, daily estimated private and state-licensed charter vessel trips and mean daily wave heights during the 2018 season are provided in Figure 3. Mean daily wave heights during the 2018 EFP season was approximately 1.0' less than wave heights during the 2019 EFP season. The lower wave heights during the 2018 season may have contributed to the higher frequency of days with 1,200 or more vessels trips being completed; three days in 2018 and one day in 2019.

Length-frequency distributions of Red Snapper sampled during the 2019 and 2018 seasons from private and charter vessels are provided in Figures 4 and 5, respectively.

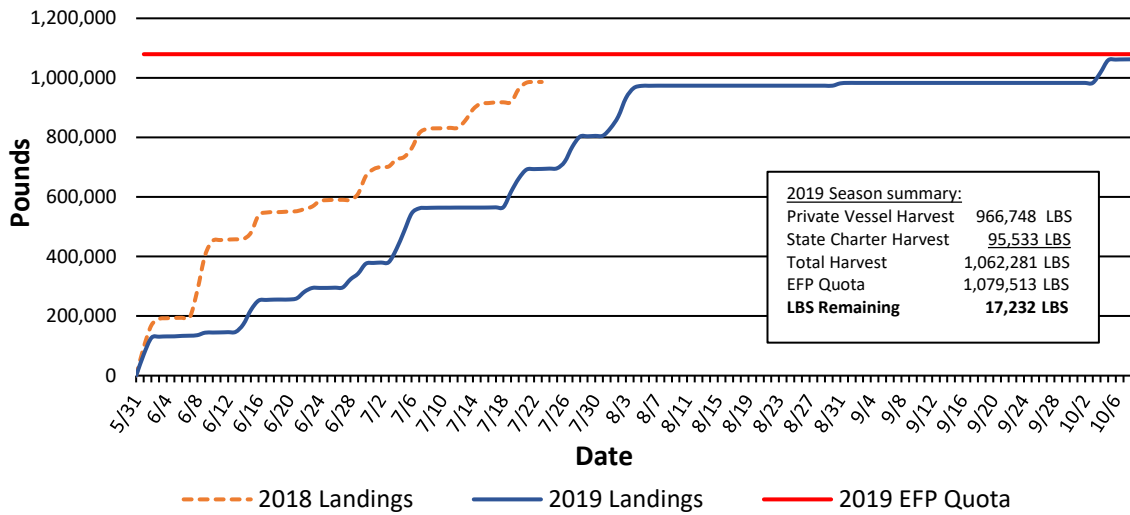


Figure 1. Cumulative Alabama recreational Red Snapper landings for the entire 2018 EFP and 2019 EFP seasons.

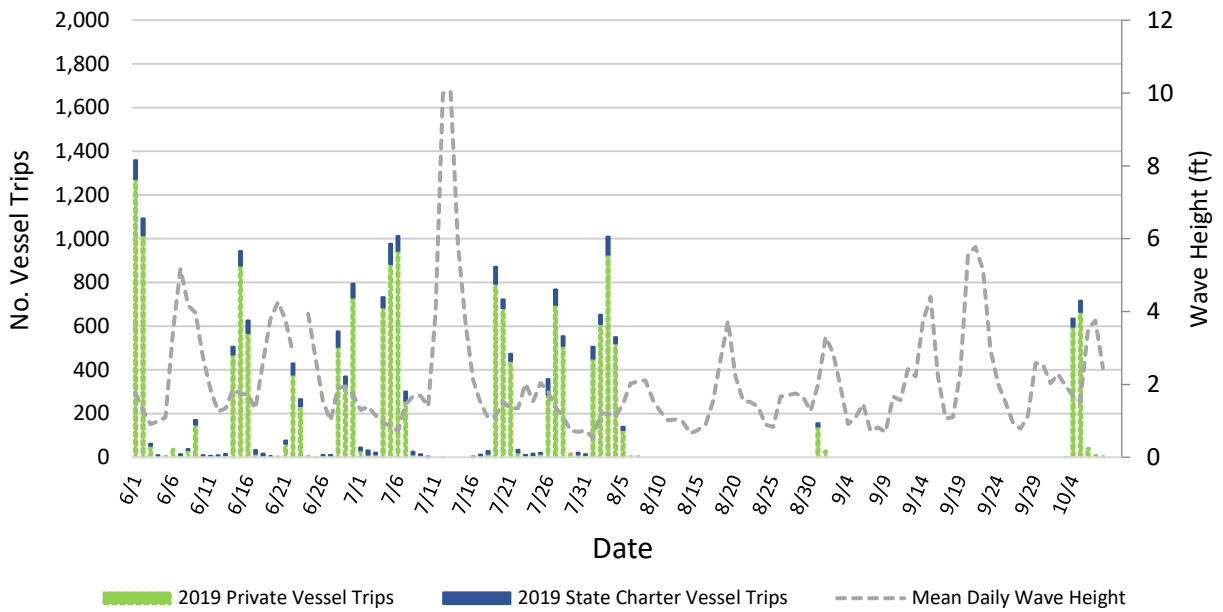


Figure 2. Daily private vessel and state charter vessel trips landing Red Snapper and mean daily wave height during the 2019 Alabama Red Snapper season. Wave height data from NOAA Data Buoy Center, Station #42012 (Orange Beach, AL). The gap in the wave height trendline indicates data was not recorded.

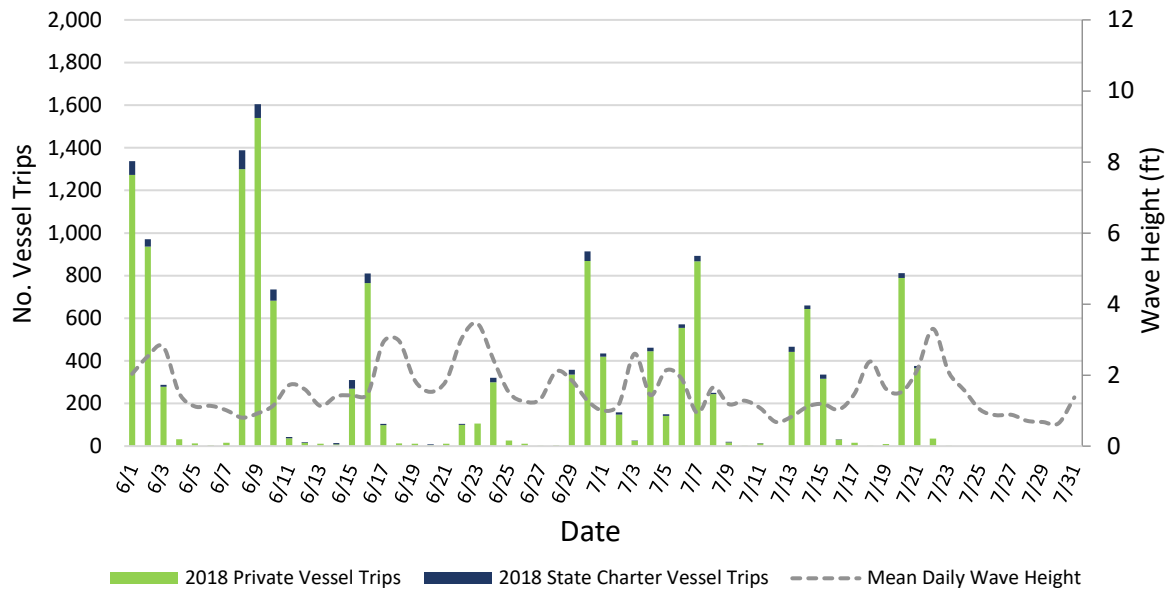


Figure 3. Daily private vessel and state charter vessel trips landing Red Snapper and mean daily wave height during the 2018 Alabama Red Snapper season (June 1 – July 23). Wave height data from NOAA Data Buoy Center, Station #42012 (Orange Beach, AL).

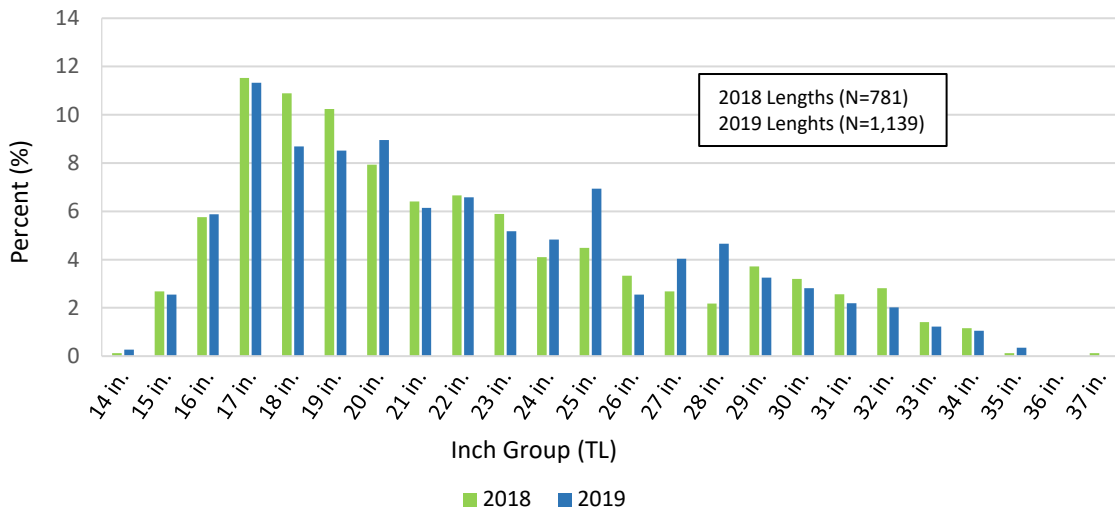


Figure 4. Private vessel Red Snapper length-frequencies (total length) for fish sampled during the 2018 and 2019 seasons.

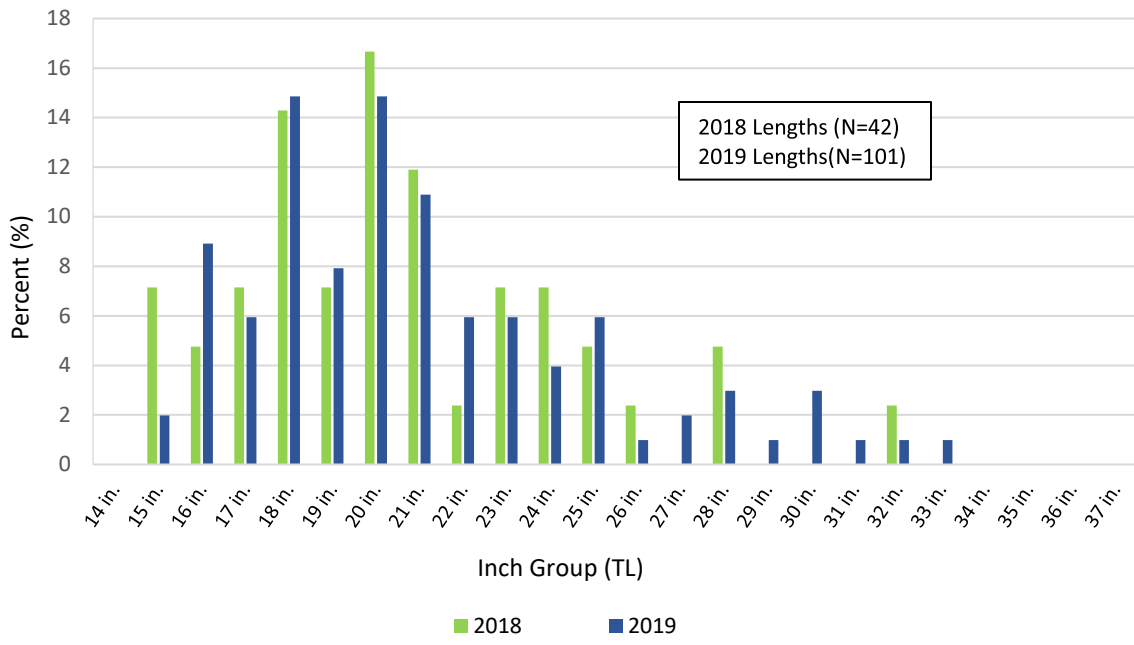


Figure 5. State charter vessel Red Snapper length-frequencies (total length) for fish sampled during the 2018 and 2019 seasons.