

Press Release

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Alabama Announces 2019 Private Angler Red Snapper Fishing Season

For the second year, Alabama is operating under an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) from NOAA Fisheries to allow state fisheries management agencies more flexibility to set private angler red snapper fishing seasons. In accordance with the EFP requirements, the Marine Resources Division of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources announces the following red snapper season information:

- The 2019 red snapper fishing season for anglers fishing from a private vessel or state-licensed guide boat will be three-day weekends (Friday-Sunday) from June 1 through July 28, 2019, including Thursday, July 4. Except for the opening weekend, which begins on a Saturday, weekends are defined as 12:01 a.m. Friday through 11:59 p.m. Sunday. This season only applies to private anglers and state-licensed Alabama commercial party boats that do not hold federal for-hire fishing permits.
- The 2019 red snapper fishing season for anglers fishing from a federally permitted charter boat or headboat will be announced by NOAA Fisheries in the coming weeks. Federally-permitted for-hire vessels must adhere to the federal season.
- One representative from any recreational vessel landing red snapper in Alabama, including private vessels, state-licensed guide boats and federally permitted charter vessels, is required to report red snapper landings before fish are landed in Alabama.
- 2019 is the second year of a two-year NOAA Fisheries study to examine the viability of limited state management for Gulf of Mexico red snapper in federal waters.

The 2019 private angling season is based on the fishing effort and average size of fish collected during 2018. Under the EFP, Alabama is provided a percentage of the Gulf-wide recreational quota for red snapper. Alabama's 2019 private vessel quota is 1,079,573 pounds. Under the terms of the EFP, Alabama will use Snapper Check to monitor the landings during the season and may adjust the season length to provide maximum access for fishermen while adhering to the quota.

“In 2018, the first year of the EFP, Alabama’s quota was 984,291 pounds and we estimated a 47-day season,” said Marine Resources Division Director Scott Bannon. “What we did not anticipate were the ideal weather conditions and the tremendous effort by Alabama anglers, which caused us to close the season after 28 days. We were required to adhere to the quota and, for the most part, we did, as we exceeded the quota by only 0.2 percent. Although the season was shortened, a tremendous number of people took advantage of the amazing red snapper fishery off Alabama’s coast, and we have shown that Alabama can manage the season effectively and make adjustments necessary to maintain this valuable fishery.”

Anglers are reminded to report their red snapper through the mandatory Snapper Check reporting program. Reports can be submitted via the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources’ Outdoor Alabama app, available for both iOS and Android users, or paper reports available at select public boat ramps. Only one report is required for each vessel landing red snapper in Alabama. The fish must be reported prior to the fish being landed, which is defined as when fish are removed from the boat or the boat containing the fish is removed from the water.

“I am looking forward to another great summer of fishing for red snapper with my family and friends,” said Conservation Commissioner Chris Blankenship. “I also want to thank Gov. Kay Ivey, Rep. Bradley Byrne and Sen. Richard Shelby for their continued support toward state management of this important species for Alabama’s coastal economy.”

Other Gulf states will be announcing their 2019 seasons in the coming weeks, and Alabama anglers may fish in those waters as long as they meet the requirements of that state and land red snapper in a state that is open to landing of red snapper. When Alabama’s recreational season is closed, anglers are not permitted to be in possession of red snapper on Alabama’s waters or land red snapper in Alabama, no matter where they were caught.

More information is available at OutdoorAlabama.com or by contacting Marine Resources Division offices at Dauphin Island, 251-861-2882; or Gulf Shores, 251-968-7576.

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources promotes wise stewardship, management and enjoyment of Alabama’s natural resources through four divisions: Marine Resources, State Lands, State Parks, and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries. To learn more about ADCNR, visit <http://www.outdooralabama.com>.