

NEWS RELEASE

MS Dept. of Marine Resources
1141 Bayview Ave., Biloxi 39530



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

18-34-CWS
June 27, 2018

Contact: Charmaine Schmermund
Phone: 228-523-4156

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MDMR's Tails n' Scales survey design receives NOAA Fisheries certification

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources was notified today that its survey design for Tails n' Scales, Mississippi's Red Snapper reporting program, has been certified by NOAA Fisheries for gathering data on the recreational harvest of Red Snapper in the state.

Tails n' Scales is Mississippi's program that compiles data through surveys of private recreational and charter for-hire boats fishing for Red Snapper. By certifying the designs of the agency's Tails n' Scales survey, data collected will now be accepted by NOAA Fisheries for use with federal Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) monitoring of Red Snapper and help contribute data associated with annual catch limits. Tails n' Scales will be included in the suite of implemented MRIP surveys for the Gulf of Mexico.

"The State of Mississippi has the most accurate state monitoring program for Red Snapper," said Joe Jewell, director of the MDMR Marine Fisheries Office. "We are the only state that can currently provide real-time harvest and fishery data. The unique feature of our program, which sets Mississippi apart from other Red Snapper monitoring programs, is that recreational fishermen are required to participate in this program and acquire an authorization code prior to starting a fishing trip."

MDMR, along with the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, NOAA Fisheries and outside expert consultants have been working together to develop, test, review and refine the Tails n' Scales survey designs since 2015. These survey designs, used with both recreational and charter fishermen, include an electronic reporting system and a dockside access point intercept survey.

"Dockside Tails n' Scales surveys are used to validate the trip information that anglers are reporting," said Carly Somerset, program coordinator at MDMR.

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“Besides collecting trip information, such as number of fish and the authorization code, biologists also collect biological data, such as weight, length and sex of the fish. This information is vital to the success of the program and we appreciate the willingness of Red Snapper anglers who cooperate with our surveys.”

Along with the certification, the Tails n’ Scales program is now eligible for federal funding to support ongoing improvements and implementation. Estimates from these surveys can be used for federal scientific stock assessments and fishery management once a transition plan is developed.

“Tails n’ Scales is a great example of collaboration that will advance the collection of high-quality recreational fishing data, which is a top priority for our agency,” said Dave Van Voorhees, Fisheries Statistics Division Chief with NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology. “Working with our partners to develop and certify new survey methods demonstrates NOAA’s commitment to meeting the unique data needs of the Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper fishery.”

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at dmr.ms.gov.

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