

NEWS RELEASE

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



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Contact: Melissa Scallan
Phone: 228-523-4124**

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MDMR to open state recreational Red Snapper season May 26

BILOXI, Miss. – Mississippi’s recreational anglers will be allowed to harvest Red Snapper in state waters from May 26 through Sept. 4, officials with the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources announced Tuesday.

Mississippi territorial waters will be open from 12:01 a.m. Friday, May 26, through 11:59 p.m. Monday, Sept. 4. The bag limit will be two Red Snapper per person with a minimum size of 16 inches.

Also on Tuesday, NOAA announced that the federal season for private recreational anglers is three days – from 12:01 a.m. June 1 through 12:01 a.m. June 4.

The season for federally permitted for-hire charter vessels is 49 days – from 12:01 a.m. June 1 through 12:01 a.m. July 20.

Jamie Miller, executive director of MDMR, testified Tuesday in Washington D.C. before the House of Representatives’ Subcommittee on the Interior, Energy and Environment. He told the subcommittee that the largest management issue with Red Snapper is within the recreational sector.

“Over the past decade, the recreational private sector has seen annual seasons reduced from 194 days in 2007 to just 11 days in 2016,” Miller said. “These conditions created by the current management system have led to derby seasons, which have frustrated the private anglers and forced them to fish offshore in less favorable and sometimes dangerous conditions.

“These derby seasons also have decreased the ability of NOAA’s data collection tool, the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) to accurately determine harvest levels,” he said. “There are also serious questions about the timing and accuracy of stock assessment updates.

“As a result, our agency, as well as the public, has lost confidence in the data being used to determine season lengths.”

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Joe Jewell, director of MDMR's Office of Marine Fisheries, said the state season will give recreational fishermen more opportunities to fish for Red Snapper.

"The federal season will once again be one of the shortest on record," he said. "We look forward to providing our recreational fishermen an extended opportunity to catch Red Snapper this year."

In 2012, the state Legislature approved extending state waters to nine miles for fisheries management, and the law went into effect July 1, 2013. The federal government in December 2015 also approved the extension of state waters to nine nautical miles; however, that extension expires May 4. If it is not renewed, anyone possessing Red Snapper farther than three miles south of the barrier islands could receive citations from federal law enforcement officers or federally deputized law enforcement. Fishing between three and nine miles in Mississippi is at the angler's own risk.

Anglers also are required to participate in MDMR's reporting program for Red Snapper, "Tails n' Scales." This program is available through a smartphone App, a website and a call center. The App is available in iTunes and Google Play. The website is tailsnscales.org. Fishermen also can call 1-844-MSSNAPP (677-6277) to speak to a representative.

Fishermen must create a profile and start a trip and then report their catch. They must close out one trip before creating a new one.

"The purpose of this electronic reporting system is to provide fishery managers the best available data to ensure Mississippi anglers the most opportunities and greatest flexibility for Red Snapper harvest," said Matt Hill, director of MDMR's Finfish Bureau. "This reporting system provides fishery managers with accurate and timely data that will be used for better resource management."

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.