



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 4 is Free Saltwater Sportfishing Day in MS

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources wants to remind anglers that July 4 is designated as "Free Saltwater Sportfishing Day" on the Coast. Any person may saltwater sport fish in the marine waters of the state (waters south of Interstate 10) without a license on Friday, July 4, 2014.

However, all size and possession limits remain in effect.

"This is a great opportunity for residents and visitors to enjoy our marine resources by going fishing," said Jamie Miller, executive director of the MDMR. "I encourage everyone to take advantage of this free fishing day in our beautiful waters."

Keith Davis, chief of Marine Patrol for MDMR, said everyone should remember to bring safety equipment with them, whether they are fishing or riding on a boat.

"Boaters and anglers need to remember that safety comes first when they are out on the water," he said. "Some of the equipment required on boats includes personal flotation devices, navigation lights and a fire extinguisher."

Anglers also are reminded that they are allowed to harvest red snapper in Mississippi territorial waters every weekend in July. The Commission on Marine Resources held a special meeting last week to authorize Miller to open the season.

The nine nautical miles of Mississippi waters approved by the Legislature will be open for red snapper fishing on July 4-6, 11-13, 18-20 and 25-27. The season will open each Friday at 12:01 a.m. and will close each Sunday at 11:59 p.m., local time. The bag limit will be two red snapper per person with a minimum size of 16 inches.

In 2013 the Mississippi Legislature approved extending state waters for fisheries management, and the law went into effect July 1, 2013. However, fishermen are reminded that the federal government does not recognize this distance, and anyone possessing red snapper farther than three miles south of the barrier islands could receive citations from federal law enforcement officers. Fishing between three and nine miles in Mississippi waters is at the angler's own risk.

Officials with MDMR are asking fishermen to participate in the agency's volunteer red snapper reporting program during the July season. They can report their catch on the agency's website, dmr.ms.gov, or fill out an information card available at local bait shops. Those with iPhones can download an MDMR red snapper app on iTunes.

The response to the program during the June red snapper season was excellent, said Joe Jewell, director of the Office of Fisheries for MDMR, and he wants to see that same level of participation in July.

"The continued participation of our anglers in the voluntary red snapper reporting program will provide essential data to the DMR," Jewell said. "This will allow us to make informed and responsible decisions in a timely manner to ensure the sustainability of Mississippi's red snapper resource."

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 www.dmr.ms.gov.

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