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Saltwater Finfish



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NOTICE TO OFFSHORE FISHERMEN

Louisiana recreational and commercial anglers fishing offshore beyond the Louisiana boundary are in federal waters and are subject to rules and regulations that may differ from those in state waters. To ensure that you are in compliance with federal regulations, you should contact the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council at (813) 348-1630, toll free 1-888-833-1844 (write 2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607 for informational pamphlet, e-mail: gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org; website: www.gulfcouncil.org). All persons possessing fish in Louisiana waters must be in possession of applicable basic or saltwater license.

Contact your local Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Agent for specific information: Baton Rouge (225) 765-2999, Minden (318) 371-3049, Monroe (318) 362-2417, Alexandria (318) 487-5634, Ferriday (318) 757-3072, Lake Charles (337) 491-2580, Opelousas (337) 948-0257, Slidell/New Orleans (504) 284-2023, New Iberia (337) 373-0032, or Thibodaux (985) 447-0821.

COMMON COASTAL SPECIES

Drum, Black: 16 inches minimum total length. Five fish per person daily bag limit and possession limit with not more than one exceeding 27 inches.

Drum, Red (Redfish): 16 inches minimum total length. Five fish per person daily bag limit with not more than one exceeding 27 inches. See note* at the end of this section. Take or possession of red drum in federal waters is prohibited.

Flounder, Southern: 10 fish per person for each consecutive day on the water.

Mullet, Striped: Daily take and possession limit of 100 lbs. per person per day.

Seatrout, Spotted (Speckled Trout): 12 inches minimum total length. 25 fish per person daily bag limit.

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Within the area described here, of the daily take and possession limit of 15 spotted seatrout, no person shall possess, regardless of where taken, more than two spotted seatrout exceeding 25 inches total length, which are considered part of the daily bag and possession limit. These regulations apply to the area of the state, including coastal territorial waters, south of Interstate 10 from its junction at the Texas-Louisiana boundary eastward to its junction with Louisiana Highway 171, south to Highway 14, and then south to Holmwood, and then south on Highway 27 through Gibbstown south to Louisiana Highway 82 at Creole and south on Highway 82 to Oak Grove and then due south to the western shore of the Mermentau River, following this shoreline south to the junction with the Gulf of Mexico, and then due south to the limit of the state territorial sea.

Cobia (ling or lemon fish): Two fish per person. 33 inches minimum fork length.

Mackerel, King: Two fish per person. 24 inches minimum fork length. See note** at the end of this section.

Mackerel, Spanish: 15 fish per person. 12 inches minimum fork length. See note** at the end of this section.

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES***

Billfish: For purposes of this section, the following words and phrases have the meaning ascribed to them in this subsection, unless the context clearly shows a different meaning:

Saltwater Recreational Fishing State Creel and Size Limits

Dressed weight: weight of the carcass after it has been gutted, headed and finned.

Carcass Length: curved measure from posterior edge of gill opening to anterior portion of caudal keel.

Lower Jaw Fork Length (LJFL): straight-line length from the tip of the lower jaw to the fork of the tail.

Curved Fork Length (CFL): tip of upper jaw to fork of tail measured along the contour of the middle of the body.

Trip: a fishing trip, regardless of the number of days duration, that begins with departure from a dock, berth, beach, seawall or ramp and that terminates with return to a dock, berth, beach, seawall or ramp.

Marlin, Blue: 99 inches minimum LJFL.

Marlin, White: 66 inches minimum LJFL.

Sailfish: 63 inches minimum LJFL.

Swordfish: 29 inches carcass minimum length or 33 pounds minimum dressed weight. Recreational fishing vessels shall not possess more than five swordfish per vessel per trip. Swordfish taken under a recreational bag limit shall not be sold, purchased, exchanged, bartered, or attempted to be sold, purchased, exchanged or bartered. No person aboard any vessel shall transfer or cause the transfer of swordfish between vessels on state or federal waters.

Tuna: Person subject to the jurisdiction of the state, fishing for tunas within or without Louisiana statewaters, are subject to both state and federal laws, rules and regulations. Federal regulations on recreational harvest of

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 accessed via the web at <http://www.hmspermits.com/new.asp>.
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All bluefin tuna must be reported within 24 hours of landing to NMFS by calling (888) 872-8862 or accessing the www.hmspermits.govwebsite. For further information regarding angling category permits please call the Northeast Regional Office HMS Division at (978) 281-9260. Following are permanent Louisiana regulations on tuna harvest, which may be superseded by seasonal changes within the federal regulatory system. See websites referenced above for current federal regulations.

Tuna, Yellowfin - 27 inches minimum CFL. Three fish per person daily bag and possession limit.

Tuna, Bigeye - 27 inches minimum CFL.

Tuna, Bluefin - 27 inches minimum CFL.

Shark: Closed Season- All Louisiana State waters out to the seaward boundary of the Louisiana Territorial Sea shall be closed to the recreational and commercial harvest and possession of all sharks between April 1 and June 30 of each year.

Atlantic Sharpnose and Bonnethead: The aggregate daily take and possession limit for recreationally caught Atlantic Sharpnose and Bonnethead sharks within or without Louisiana waters shall be one fish per person per trip and in possession.

Other Sharks: The aggregate daily take and possession limit for all "Small Coastal," "Large Coastal" and "Pelagic" sharks combined, caught recreationally within or without Louisiana waters, shall be one fish per vessel per trip and in possession with a 54 inch minimum fork length, except that there is no minimum length limit on bonnethead shark and Atlantic sharpnose. Recreational harvesters may not take sandbar or silky shark from the "Large Coastal" species group.

Small Coastal Sharks: Atlantic sharpnose shark, bonnethead shark, blacknose shark, finetooth shark

Large Coastal Sharks: blacktip shark, nurse shark, smooth hammerhead, bull shark, sandbar shark, spinner shark, great hammerhead, scalloped hammerhead, tiger shark, lemon shark, silky shark

Pelagic Sharks : blue shark, porbeagle shark, thresher shark, oceanic whitetip shark, shortfin mako

Prohibited Species: No person shall take, possess, purchase, sell, barter, exchange or attempt to possess, purchase, sell, barter, or exchange any of the following species or parts thereof: Atlantic angel shark, Caribbean sharpnose shark, sand tiger shark, basking shark, dusky shark, sevengill shark, bigeye sand tiger shark, Galapagos shark, sixgill shark, bigeye sixgill shark, largetooth sawfish smalltail shark, bigeye thresher shark, longfin mako smalltooth sawfish bignose shark, narrowtooth shark, whale shark, Caribbean reef shark, night shark, white shark.

Sharks taken under a recreational bag limit shall not be sold, purchased, exchanged, bartered, or attempted to be sold, purchased, exchanged or bartered. A person subject to a bag limit shall not possess at any time, regardless of the number of trips or the duration of a trip, any shark in excess of the bag limits mentioned above. The practice of "finning," that is, removing only the fins and returning the remainder of the shark to the sea, is prohibited within and outside Louisiana waters. Notwithstanding other provisions of this part, a person may fish for, but not retain, white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*) with rod and reel only under a catch and release program, provided the person releases and returns such fish to the sea immediately with a minimum of injury.

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on board and such person must use the gear as specified below.

- a. Non-Stainless Steel Circle Hooks. Non-stainless steel circle hooks are required when fishing with natural baits for reef fish.
- b. Dehooking Device. At least one dehooking device is required and must be used to remove hooks embedded in Gulf reef fish with minimum damage. The hook removal device must be constructed to allow the hook to be secured and the barb shielded without re-engaging during the removal process. The dehooking end must be blunt, and all edges rounded. The device must be of a size appropriate to secure the range of hook sizes and styles used in the Gulf reef fish fishery.
- c. Venting Tool. At least one venting tool is required and must be used to deflate the swim bladders of Gulf reef fish to release the fish with minimum damage. This tool must be a sharpened, hollow instrument, such as a hypodermic syringe with the plunger removed, or a 16-gauge needle fixed to a hollow wooden dowel. A tool such as a knife or an ice-pick may not be used. The venting tool must be inserted into the fish at a 45-degree angle approximately 1 to 2 inches (2.54 to 5.08 cm) from the base of the pectoral fin. The tool must be inserted just deep enough to release the gases, so that the fish may be released with minimum damage.

Information on use of these tools can be obtained from information provided by Florida Sea Grant and Mote Marine Lab at: <http://catchandrelease.org>

Groupers:

Five fish per person per day bag limit in aggregate, all groupers, excluding Jewfish and Nassau grouper, with not more than one red grouper per person and two gag per person included in the bag limit and with not more than one speckled hind and one warsaw grouper per vessel. Two day limit allowed in possession only on charter vessels and headboats as described below under "Red Snapper." Size limits also apply to the following species:

Black: 22 inches minimum total length.

Gag: 22 inches minimum total length.

Red: 20 inches minimum total length.

Yellowfin: 20 inches minimum total length.

Scamp: 16 inches minimum total length.

Goliath (formerly called jewfish): Taking or possessing jewfish is prohibited within or outside the waters of Louisiana.

Nassau: Taking or possessing Nassau grouper is prohibited within or outside the waters of Louisiana.

Snappers:

Snapper, Red**: Two fish per person. 16 inches minimum total length. The captain and crew of vessels under charter have a creel limit of zero. A federal recreational quota for red snapper is in effect.

For the following 11 snappers the combined possession is 10/person/day.

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Snapper, Lane: Eight inches minimum total length.

Snapper, Vermilion: 10 inches minimum total length.

Gray Triggerfish: 14 inches minimum fork length.

Almaco Jack, Goldface Tilefish, Tilefish, Blackline Tilefish, Anchor Tilefish, & Blueline Tilefish

Miscellaneous Reef Fish:

Amberjack, Greater: One fish per person. 30 inches minimum fork length.

Amberjack, Lesser & Banded Rudderfish: 14 inches minimum length and 22 inches maximum fork length.

Five fish per person per day in aggregate.

Hogfish: 12 inches minimum fork length. Five fish per person daily bag limit.

Seabass, Black: Eight inches minimum total length.

GENERAL NOTES

All saltwater finfish except tuna, garfish and swordfish possessed by a recreational angler shall have the head and caudal fin intact until set or put on shore. Tuna, garfish, swordfish and shark possessed by a recreational angler shall not be skinned or scaled until set or put on shore. Tuna which have minimum size requirements may have head removed if carcass length is in excess of minimum total length. Fillets may not be possessed on the water, except for the purpose of consumption at sea aboard the harvesting vessel, a person shall have no more than two pounds of finfish parts per person on board the vessel, provided that the vessel is equipped to cook such finfish and such finfish does not exceed applicable bag limits. These provisions shall not apply to bait species. Saltwater finfish caught or transported by a recreational fisherman, while license is in effect, are presumed to have been taken in Louisiana waters, for license requirements.

All regulations regarding these species apply whether caught in fresh or salt water areas.

*For Red Drum (Redfish), and Spotted Seatrout (Speckled Trout): Recreational saltwater anglers may possess a two day's bag limit on land; however, no person shall be in possession of over the daily bag limit in any one day or while fishing or while on the water, unless that recreational saltwater angler is aboard a trawler engaged in commercial fishing for a consecutive period of longer than 25 hours.

**Two day limit allowed in possession only on charter vessels and headboats on multi day trips, if the vessels have two licensed operators as required by the U.S. Coast Guard for trips more than 12 hours, and if each angler has in possession a receipt issued on behalf of the vessel verifying the length of the trip.

***All owners/operators of vessels fishing recreationally for and/or retaining regulated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (Atlantic tunas, sharks, swordfish and billfish) in the Atlantic Ocean, including the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea, must obtain an Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) permit. Similar to Atlantic tunas permits, 2009 Atlantic HMS permits cost \$16.00 and will be valid from the date of issuance through December 31, 2009.

Those regulations also require an Atlantic HMS Charter/Headboat permit for all charter or headboat fishing for and/or retaining regulated Atlantic HMS in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. For information contact the National Marine Fisheries Service Permitting Office at 1-888-USA-TUNA (1-888-872-8862) or visit

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swordfish or billfish (whether or not retained), must submit a registration to

HMS Tournament Registration, National Marine Fisheries Service

263 13th Avenue S., St.

Peterburg, FL, 33701

or Fax to (727) 824-5398.

The registration must be in writing, at least four weeks prior to commencement of tournament fishing. A tournament registration form is available upon request from the above address or can be requested by FAX or from the HMS Permit Shop (<https://hmspermits.noaa.gov/library.asp>).

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LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES
PO BOX 98000
2000 QUAIL DRIVE
BATON ROUGE, LA 70898
800.256.2749
225.765.2800

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