

REEF FISHES

(06/00 ARCHIVE - NCDMF)

Stock status--Concern. Of the 73 species (including black sea bass) in the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council (SAFMC) management unit, 17 species are considered by SAFMC to be overfished, 5 are not overfished, and the status of the other 51 is unknown. The 17 overfished species include vermilion snapper, red snapper, red porgy, gag, scamp, snowy grouper, golden tilefish, and gray triggerfish.

Average Commercial Landings and Value 1987-1999--2,396,604 lb, \$3,523,002
(Excluding black sea bass)

1999 Commercial Landings and Value--2,278,520 lb,\$3,577,276

Average Recreational Landings 1987-1999-- 624,260 lb. **1999 --** 547,180 lb

Average Number of Award Citations 1987-1999/ 1999 only--Amberjack (190/241), Grouper (22/21), Jack Crevalle (53/49), Porgy (17/9), Sheepshead (25/33), Red snapper (17/11), and Triggerfish (29/1).

Status of Fisheries Management Plan--Managed under Amendments 1-11 by the SAFMC. Amendment 9, which became effective Feb 1999, increased size and bag limits, set spawning closures, trip limits and quotas, and further restricted longline catches. Harvest of red porgy was prohibited through emergency action, effective Sept 1999. Amendment 12, if approved, will allow a 50 lb commercial trip limit for red porgy.

Data and Research Needs--Develop juvenile indices, assess survival rates, conduct population assessment, expand age and growth studies, determine migration patterns.

Current Minimum Size Limits--State and Federal: greater amberjack-28 inches FL (recreational) and 36 inches FL (commercial); black and gag groupers-24 inches TL; red, scamp, yellowfin, and yellowmouth groupers-20 inches TL; red porgy-14 inches TL; silk and blackfin snappers-12 inches TL; red snapper-20 inches TL; and vermilion snapper-11 inches TL (recreational) and 12 inches TL (commercial). Federal only: hogfish (not pigfish)-12 inches FL; dog, gray, cubera, mahogany, queen, schoolmaster, and yellowtail snappers-12 inches TL; and mutton snapper-16 inches TL.

Harvest Season--Currently open year round except for the following species. Wreckfish has a spawning closure from Jan 15-Apr 15. Gag, black grouper, and red porgy have a March and April closure (no sale, bag limit only). Greater amberjack has an April closure (no sale) with a season and quota beginning May 1.

Size and Age at Maturity--Variable

Historical and Current Maximum Age--Variable

Juvenile Abundance Indices Average 1987-1999 and 1999--None available.

Habits/Habitats--Occur on hard or "live" bottom on the outer continental shelf.

For more information, see [DMF Species Leads page](#)