Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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Commercial Harvest of Golden Tilefish Closed to Vessels Fishing in the South Atlantic Federal Waters

The commercial harvest of golden tilefish in the South Atlantic federal waters is **closed, effective 12:01 a.m. (local time) February 17, 2012,** until 12:01 a.m. (local time) January 1, 2013. NOAA Fisheries Service has determined the 2012 commercial quota of 282,819 pounds gutted weight of golden tilefish will have been reached by this date.

During the closure, all harvest or possession of golden tilefish in or from South Atlantic federal waters is restricted to the bag and possession limits and the sale or purchase of such fish is prohibited. In addition, a person on board a vessel for which a federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for the South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery has been issued, is restricted to the bag and possession limits, and sale or purchase of such fish is prohibited during the closure for golden tilefish and would apply regardless of whether the fish are harvested in state or federal waters.

Closure of the commercial sector for golden tilefish in the South Atlantic complies with regulations implementing the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region and is necessary to protect the snapper-grouper resource.

The operator of a vessel with golden tilefish in excess of the bag or possession limit aboard must have landed such golden tilefish prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, February 17, 2012, and all sale or purchase of golden tilefish must occur prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, February 17, 2012. The prohibition on sale or purchase does not apply to sale or purchase of golden tilefish that were harvested, landed ashore, and sold prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, February 17, 2012, and were held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

This bulletin provides only a summary of the information regarding the existing regulations. Any discrepancies between this bulletin and the regulations as published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.