

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

2024 Recreational Gag Grouper Season Modification

Louisiana's recreational gag grouper season was previously scheduled to open on July 1, 2024. The regional administrator of NOAA Fisheries has informed the secretary that the 2024 recreational season for the harvest of gag grouper in the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico has been modified and will open on September 1, 2024 until NOAA Fisheries projects the annual allocation has been met. The most recent gag grouper population assessment indicated the stock is overfished and undergoing overfishing. Compatible season regulations in state waters are preferable to provide effective rules and efficient enforcement for the fishery, and to prevent overfishing of the species in the long term.

In accordance with the emergency provisions of R.S. 49:962, which allows the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to use emergency rules to set finfish seasons, R.S. 56:326.3 which provides that the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission may set seasons for saltwater finfish, and the authority given to the secretary by the commission in LAC 76:VII.335.G.5 to modify opening and closing dates of any commercial or recreational reef fish seasons in Louisiana state waters when informed by the regional administrator of NOAA fisheries that the seasons have been modified in adjacent federal waters, the secretary hereby declares:

The season for the recreational harvest of gag grouper in Louisiana state waters shall open at 12:01 a.m. on September 1, 2024 and remain open until 11:59 p.m. on December 31, 2024, or until otherwise modified. The season for the recreational harvest of gag grouper will then remain closed until the regularly scheduled opening of the 2025 season, currently September 1, 2025. During the closure periods above, no person shall recreationally harvest or possess gag grouper whether within or without Louisiana waters.

Madison D. Sheahan
Secretary