

NOTICE OF INTENT

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

2023 Recreational Gag Grouper Season Modification

Louisiana's recreational gag grouper season was previously scheduled to open on June 1, 2023. The regional administrator of NOAA Fisheries has informed the secretary that the 2023 recreational season for the harvest of gag grouper in the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico will remain closed from June 1, 2023 through August 31, 2023 and will open from September 1, 2023 through November 9, 2023. Action by the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council requested these emergency measures in order to prevent overfishing of gag grouper while a rebuilding plan for the stock is established. 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 he is 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, previously scheduled to open on June 1, 2023, shall remain closed until 12:01 a.m. on September 1, 2023, at which time it will open and remain open until 11:59 p.m. on November 9, 2023 at which time it will close. The season for the recreational harvest of gag grouper will then remain closed until the regularly scheduled opening of the 2024 season, currently scheduled for June 1, 2024. Effective with this closure, no person shall recreationally harvest or possess gag grouper whether within or without Louisiana waters.

Robert E. Shadoin
Secretary

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