

Development of State-Managed Offshore Fishing License/Permit



Background

- Gulf Council passed following motion in April
 - **Request that NMFS, GSMFC, and Council staff provide collaborative support to the 5 Gulf state fishery agencies for the express purpose of developing a universal, state managed, recreational saltwater angler landing permit program, to provide more precise fishing effort for use in both management and assessments.**
 - Can we better define the universe of offshore anglers targeting federal species?

Who is currently licensed or permitted?

Louisiana:

- Recreational Offshore Landing Permit (ROLP)
 - Required to possess tunas, billfish, swordfish, amberjacks, groupers, snappers, hinds, cobia, wahoo, gray triggerfish and dolphinfish in LA waters (not required for minors under 18).
 - Charter captains also required to have ROLP if possessing priority species
 - Can be obtained online <https://ldwf.wlf.la.gov/rolp/login>
 - Enforcement will issue citations if in violation
 - LDWF uses as sample frame in effort telephone survey
- Fishing License Exemptions
 - Residents or nonresidents under age 18
 - Residents born before June 1, 1940 and lived in LA for 6 months
 - required to have a free senior hunt/fish license

Who is currently licensed or permitted?

Florida:

- State Reef Fish Angler Designation
 - Individual anglers/divers (16 years and older) fishing from private boat that attempt to harvest:
 - red snapper, vermilion snapper, mutton snapper, yellowtail snapper, gag, red grouper, black grouper, gray triggerfish, hogfish, greater amberjack, lesser amberjack, banded rudderfish, almaco jack
 - No charge to angler
 - Anglers can be issued citations for non-criminal infraction, carries \$50 fine
 - Can be obtained when fishing license is renewed or separately, valid for one year
 - FFWC uses under-coverage adjustment to account for effort from anglers that do not have State Reef Fish designation
- Fishing License Exemptions
 - Anglers 16 years of age or younger
 - State residents 65 years of age or older (must still have SRFS Designation)

Who is currently licensed or permitted?

Alabama:

- Gulf Reef Fish Endorsement

- Required to possess any Gulf Reef Fish Species Listed in Rule 220-3-.46
 - 31 species including Jacks, Triggerfishes, Snappers, Groupers, Tilefishes
- Required for all anglers 16 years of age and older
- Vessel endorsements available for commercial and charter vessels
- Fees associated with obtaining (\$10 per angler annually)
- Anglers can be fined under state law for being in violation

- Fishing License Exemptions

- Under 16 years of age or residents age 65 and older
 - Anglers over 65 are required to register annually for free
 - Lifetime license holders over 16 years also required to register annually for free

Who is currently licensed or permitted?

Mississippi:

- No existing permit or designation for offshore landings
- Fishing License Exemptions
 - Under 16 years of age
 - Medically disabled
 - Seniors are required to purchase and hold lifetime license

Who is currently licensed or permitted?

Texas:

- No existing permit or designation for offshore landings
- Fishing License Exemptions
- Residents
 - Any person under the age of 17
 - Anyone born before January 1, 1931
 - Anyone born with an intellectual fishing disability as part of medically approved therapy, under the immediate supervision of personnel employed by a hospital, residence, or school for persons with intellectual disability (must carry identifying documentation)
- Non-residents
 - Any person under the age of 17
 - LA resident 65 years of age or older who possess a valid LA Recreational Fishing License
 - OK resident 65 years of age or older

State Requirements Comparison Table

	Gulf States Licensing and Reporting Requirements				
<u>Criteria:</u>	AL	FL	MS	LA	TX
Saltwater license*	X	X	X	X	X
Type of reef fish license**	X	X		X	
<u>Reporting:</u>					
General***				X	X
Reef Fish Specific	X	X	X	X	X
By Vessel	X		X		X
By Angler		X		X	

*Each state has exceptions

**Florida has a Reef Fish Designation, Alabama has a Reef Fish Endorsement, Louisiana has a Recreational Offshore Landing Permit

***FL, AL, and MS use MRIP to estimate landings of several species

Next Steps: Small steps or tweaks to administrative processes

- Can databases of registered anglers/vessels be standardized and centralized?
- How timely are license and designation frames updated?
- Are there small steps that the Gulf states would be willing to consider to improve the current National Saltwater Registry (NSAR)?
 - Examples: Is it feasible for each Gulf state to submit a list of anglers at the time with the same level of detail to the NSAR?
 - Pro: Better starting point, current different scales and frequencies
 - Con: Too difficult to agree on these level and frequency of information that NSR needs?

Next Steps: Process questions

- Is it possible/practicable to request the states consider the agreed upon changes without going through the Council or legislative approval process?
 - Outline potential obstacles

Next Steps: What criteria are essential for improved effort information

- Would it be better to develop minimum criteria that are needed to benefit the recreational data collection to provide more precise fishing effort for use in both management and assessments?
 - Who needs it? (Angler or Vessel based?)
 - How do we standardize to make it regionally useful?
- What are the minimum criteria needed by the NSAR to improve effort estimation for recreational anglers?

Next Steps: Cost considerations and administrative burdens

- Are there cost considerations for implementation?
- Does the benefit of implementing justify the costs and disruptions?