

**SEA GRANT**  
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Fishermen and others concerned with 2007 red snapper regulations will have their chance to comment on proposed regulations for 2008 and beyond.

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will hold public hearings on a draft joint amendment to reef fish and shrimp fishery management plans later this month.

There are many proposed options and complexities but the preferred options in the plan include:

1. Reduce the total allowable catch of red snapper to five million pounds by reducing the commercial quota to 2.55 million pounds and the recreational quota to 2.45 million pounds. The recreational quota would be met with a two-fish bag limit and a June 1 – September 15 open season. There are many other options for the open season including open weekends.
2. Prohibit the captain and crew of for-hire vessels from retaining the recreational bag limit.
3. Reduce the commercial minimum size limit from 15 inches to 13 inches total length in order to reduce bycatch mortality.
4. Require the use of non-stainless steel circle hooks when using natural baits and require the use of venting tools and de-hooking devices.

5. Establish a target reduction of red snapper shrimp trawl bycatch mortality on red snapper at 74% less than the benchmark years of 2001, 2003.
6. Establish, if necessary, a shrimp seasonal closure beginning at the same start date as the closure of the EEZ in the 10 to 30-fathom zone of selected areas within the statistical zones 10-21 in the Gulf of Mexico.
7. Establish a framework procedure to adjust the effort target and closed season for the shrimp fishery in the Gulf of Mexico.

These proposed regulations are said to be needed in order to end overfishing between 2009 and 2010 and rebuild the stock to a level that would provide the optimal yield by 2032 as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Sustainable Fisheries Act.

Public hearings will be held at 6:00 p.m., May 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Foley Community Center, 407 East Laurel Avenue, Foley, Alabama. And at 6:00 pm., May 23, Riverview Plaza Hotel, 64 South Water Street, Mobile, Alabama. For more complete information on the proposals or the public hearings, contact the Gulf Council at 813-348-1630 or by emailing the Council at [gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org](mailto:gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org).