



# SOUTHEASTERN FISHERIES ASSOCIATION

## H O T L I N E S

### SEPTEMBER 2006

#### **FINAL RULE FOR REEF FISH 18A PUBLISHED ON AUGUST 9, 2006**

Some charter boats and head boats along with all vessels holding a commercial reef fish permit for the Gulf of Mexico must have an approved Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) on board and working by December 7, 2006. (Pearl Harbor Day) Fishing without a working and verified VMS can cost the owner his permit to fish as well as heavy fines. The permit renewal opens September 1, 2006 and the renewal process has been changed from every two years to annually. However, instead of providing all the tax forms, the permit holder can submit an Affidavit showing how much was received from all fishing during the preceding year. On September 1, 2006, all other portions of the rule will take effect which include, prohibited gear and methods, seasonal harvest limitations, size limits etc. The law pertaining to no sale of fish taken under a bag limit remains in effect so restaurants that buy reef fish from an unlicensed person may be subject to heavy federal fines. The NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) will be sending packets out to all reef fish permit holders

This newsletter is published by Southeastern Fisheries Association. Please pass it along and encourage others to be added to our mailing list.

If you want to be removed from the list, please contact us.

SFA is a non-profit association founded in 1952, charged with maintaining a viable seafood industry in the Southeast.

Robert P. Jones, Editor

with a great deal of information. There might be full or partial reimbursement for the cost of the VMS as some funds have been earmarked for this purpose. For more information go to: [www.gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org](mailto:www.gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org) or to the NOAA Fisheries web site.

#### **BASA IS HERE TO STAY---SELL IT AS SUCH**

In 15 years (1990 – 2005) Basa and other catfish-like imports has risen from about 5 million pounds to over 30 million pound and that figure is probably understated because a lot of these kinds of fish have been sent to the US under other names, including grouper. Basa is still well below the 600 million pounds of domestic catfish production but many feel the domestic industry has peaked and could fall in production as more and more real channel catfish arrives from China. The Chinese pond-raised fish is the same species as southern catfish so banning their entry into the United States will be more difficult than placing a tariff and prohibiting the use of the catfish name for basa and other catfish-like species.

#### **SEAFOOD SUBSTITUTION ISSUE GAINING TRACTION**

Renee Montayne interviewed SFA's Bob Jones on *National Public Radio* during her *Morning Edition* program. Her audience is in the millions and calls from as far away as Salem, Oregon and Wichita, Kansas have been received looking for more information and congratulating the

association for its comments. If anyone cares to hear the short interview you can do so by going to [www.npr.com](http://www.npr.com) and under the search option, type in **grouper**. After the NPR interview, an investigator from Attorney General Charlie Crist's office called to talk and to announce that an investigation was underway and that under the statutes to be used by the AG, civil fines up to \$10,000 per offense could be levied and if the person who was sold fake fish is older than 60, (senior citizen) the civil fines could be as high as \$15,000 per offense. SFA policy is all seafood must be sold for what it is and not what it might be called. SFA supports importation of seafood because the domestic industry could never satisfy consumer demand and legitimate competition is welcome.

#### **RED SNAPPER IFQ SYSTEM TRAINING WORKSHOPS TO BE HELD**

NOAA law enforcement will conduct 4 Training Workshops to discuss the Red snapper Individual Fishing Quota system (IFQ). The IFQ system voted on by the participants is under review by the Secretary of Commerce and should be approved after the first of the year. In the meantime, NOAA wants to fully explain the system to those who will participate in order to avoid any unintentional violations. There will be 3 series of Training Workshops and all those who will possess the IFQ's should attend each series to avoid running afoul of the law at a later date. NOAA is to be commended

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for conducting these training workshops. Meetings begin at 7:00 PM. The first series are as follows:

<b>Sept 11</b>	<b>Sept 12</b>
Marriott Bay Point	Holiday Inn
4200 Marriott Dr.	5465 US 90
Panama City, FL	Mobile, Al.
<b>Sept 13</b>	<b>Sept 14</b>
Best Western	Holiday Inn
1021 Airline Dr.	5002 Seawall Blvd.
Kenner, La	Galveston, Tx

### **CHARTERBOAT CAPTAIN PLEADS GUILTY TO SHOOTING AT PORPOISES**

According to a US Department of Justice news release Captain Kevin Weaver of the charter fishing vessel LEO TOO pleaded guilty to one count of violating the Marine Mammal Protection Act. He faces a maximum one-year in prison and/or a \$100,000 fine for knowingly and unlawfully shooting at one or more dolphins in U.S. waters. According to the DOJ news release Captain Weaver shot his .357 caliber handgun at more than one fishing site. The LEO

TOO is owned by Bob Zales and several industry people were curious as to why a boat owner is charged when their captain takes their vessel inside the Tortugas Nursery line but the owner of a charter boat is not charged when the captain shoots at dolphins. Speculation is that the Mammal Protection fines are less than a FCMA violation. Dolphins routinely eat red snapper released because of size limitation and they do pick them off hooks often as well.

### **NMFS DRAFTING SECRETARIAL PLAN FOR RED SNAPPER**

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is considering a red snapper/shrimp regulation for implementation before the end of the year in the Gulf of Mexico. The new regulation could be in effect for two periods of 180 days each. The Gulf Council was not convinced the

time was right to drastically reduce the total allowable catch for red snapper in the Gulf nor implement draconian shrimp closures in the 10-30 fathom area from Cape San Blas, Florida to the Mexican/Texas border. The Council voted 10 to 5 to delay the decision until the end of the year, which inflamed several environmental groups. NMFS officials were also concerned with the action. A new rule can be crafted, published in the federal register and take effect immediately. A comment period after the implementation of the rule is allowable. A large reduction in TAC will cripple many commercial and recreational fishermen. Dr. Robert Shipp and Dr. Vernon Minton, Gulf Council members, have stated there are many more red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico than the stock assessment shows and contribute this uncounted abundance to artificial reefs and the plethora of oil platforms in the Gulf, which serve as habitats for many species of fish.

### **Welcome new SFA Member**

**The Fish Lady Seafood Co., Inc., Susan S. Bulifant, Fort Myers, Florida**

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