



Louisiana's 2018 Red Snapper Harvest Management Summary Report

LDWF Marine Fisheries

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This document fulfills Louisiana's annual reporting requirements for Exempted Fishing Permit Number 18-SERO-04.

"Management of the Harvest of Red Snapper by the Private Recreational Component in the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Louisiana's Gulf Coast for 2018 and 2019"

PURPOSE

"The purpose of this exempted fishing permit (EFP) is to allow the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) to conduct a pilot study during 2018 and 2019 to test data collection and quota monitoring methodologies for management of harvest of red snapper off Louisiana's Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) coast by the private recreational component. The federally permitted for-hire component is not included in this EFP. Note that persons aboard state-licensed charter vessels are prohibited from fishing for or possessing red snapper in or from federal waters when under charter unless those vessels have been issued a federal reef fish charter vessel/headboat permit."

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND DATA DISSIMINATION

"LDWF must report red snapper landings in numbers and pounds, the estimated number of trips and anglers landing red snapper, and any other relevant information at least bimonthly. At the end of each fishing year, a report summarizing the results of the EFP by LDWF shall be provided to NMFS for review and comment as soon as possible but no later than April 15 of the next calendar year."

REPORT SUMMARY

Management

The Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Commission has the responsibility of managing the fishery resources of the state. On May 3, 2018 the Commission established the 2018 recreational red snapper season opening date and directed the Department to monitor and report their landing. The season was opened on Friday May 25, 2018 as a 7 day a week season. Monthly reports were provided to the Commission including current landings and projections based on previous catches. The Commission then modified the 2018 recreational red snapper season to close on July 8, 2018 and re-open as a weekends only (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) season beginning July 13, 2018. The season was closed on August 12, 2018 when Louisiana's state allocation was projected to be reached. Resulting landings were estimated to be 6,066 pounds below Louisiana's

state allocation at the end of the season. The recreational red snapper season in Louisiana was open for 60 total days.

Following the regular recreational red snapper season, the LDWF provided an additional permitted season for disabled and wounded military veterans. A permit was issued to the Wounded War Heroes (WWH) organization to provide recreational red snapper trips to disabled or wounded military veterans. All trips were required to be volunteered by the vessel provider. The special permitted season was announced on November 13, 2018 and ran through December 31, 2018. Conditions of the permit required WWH to designate one responsible angler for each trip conducted and that designated angler was required to use the ROLP reporting system to declare and report trips taken under the permit. Forms signed by each participating veteran were required to be provided to LDWF prior to any trips taken. A total of 58 red snapper at 470 pounds were harvested under the program. At the end of 2018, recreational landings of red snapper were estimated to be 5,596 below Louisiana's state allocation proving our ability to monitor and control recreational landings.

LA Creel Survey

Louisiana's recreational landings survey (LA Creel) was used to provide weekly landing estimates in numbers of fish from the private and state charter sectors of the fishery. Louisiana's biological data collection program was used to provide mean monthly red snapper weights used to estimate total weight landed for state allocation monitoring (**Figure 1**). For biological data records where weight of the fish was not collected, a length weight regression was used to estimate weight from length.

$$\text{Weight (g)} = 9\text{E-}6 * \text{Length (mm FL)}^{3.089} \quad (\text{N}=4,133)$$

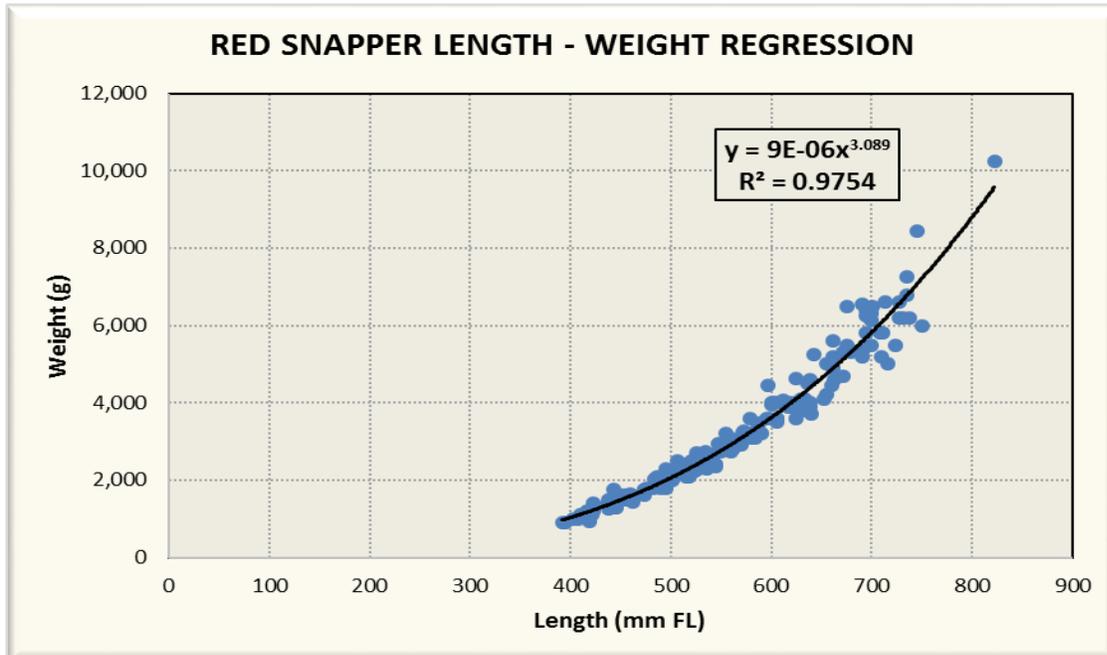


Figure 1. Length Weight Regression used to Estimate Weight from Lengths of Red Snapper Landed in Louisiana.

Mean monthly weight in pounds was used to calculate weekly landing weight. Red snapper landings were monitored on a weekly basis (**Table 1**) and the resulting estimates were as follows:

Table 1 - Louisiana's 2018 Red Snapper Allocation (Private Angler + State Waters Charter) = 734,000 pounds

Week	Begin Date	End Date	Landings (lbs)					
			State Charter	Private Angler	Total	Weeks % of Allocation	Running Total	Running % of Allocation
*21	5/21/2018	5/27/2018	2,128	86,784	88,912	12%	88,912	12%
22	5/28/2018	6/3/2018	3,062	66,315	69,377	9%	158,289	21%
23	6/4/2018	6/10/2018	5,888	105,971	111,859	15%	270,148	36%
24	6/11/2018	6/17/2018	2,074	17,387	19,461	3%	289,609	39%
25	6/18/2018	6/24/2018	722	7,907	8,629	1%	298,238	40%
26	6/25/2018	7/1/2018	551	45,350	45,901	6%	344,139	46%
27	7/2/2018	7/8/2018	1,015	64,899	65,914	9%	410,053	55%
28	7/9/2018	7/15/2018	679	94,201	94,880	13%	504,933	68%
29	7/16/2018	7/22/2018	2,376	21,510	23,886	3%	528,819	71%
30	7/23/2018	7/29/2018	2,621	119,771	122,392	16%	651,211	88%
31	7/30/2018	8/5/2018	3,883	63,525	67,408	9%	718,619	97%
32	8/6/2018	8/12/2018	1,299	17,016	18,315	2%	736,934	99%
Average Weekly Landing			2,192	59,220	61,411	8%		

Electronic Reporting

Under this EFP, LDWF had the ability to test electronic reporting of recreational red snapper catch via the ROLP website (mobile or desktop) and/or smartphone application. Prior to the start of the recreational red snapper season in Louisiana, LDWF modified its ROLP website and smartphone applications to allow voluntary reporting of recreationally landed red snapper. Participants were asked to “opt” into a voluntary reporting and trip declaration system when accessing their ROLP accounts. LDWF asked anglers to designate one responsible angler to report for the entire trip from a vessel to avoid duplicate reporting by individual anglers on the same trip. Once anglers had agreed to participate, a recreational trip for red snapper could be declared ahead of time or anytime up to the time of departure. Trips were allowed to be declared up to a maximum of 5 days in length to account for long weekends or stays at on the water facilities. When declaring a trip, anglers provided dates of the trip, a vessel’s state or Coast Guard identification numbers, whether they would be fishing for red snapper, and the departure location; a trip identification number was provided upon completion of a trip declaration. Anglers could report on a daily basis for extended trips or after the completion of any trip, no matter the length of that trip. Upon completion of a trip, anglers were asked to report departure location, number of anglers on the trip, vessel’s identification

number, whether they fished for red snapper on the trip (if no, no further reporting), number of red snapper kept, number of red snapper discarded due to size limits, number of red snapper discarded due to other reasons, what type of bottom most fishing occurred over (natural, artificial, or standing platform), which Offshore Lease Area most fishing occurred in, and approximate water depth fished.

Results:

By the end of 2018, a total of 15,107 private recreational anglers and 147 charter guides held Recreational Offshore Landing Permits. During the course of the recreational red snapper season, 226 trips voluntarily reported on red snapper landings. Those 226 trips comprised 1,015 anglers that harvested 1,546 red snapper. The majority of the 226 trips landed their red snapper in the Barataria, Mississippi, and Terrebonne Basins with the majority of fishing effort occurring in the West Delta, South Timbalier, Grand Isle, and South Pass Offshore Lease Areas. LDWF biologist intercepted nine of the 226 reported trips. Of those nine trips, five were validated with matching trip report numbers (**Table 2**) and one was validated with a matching vessel number (**Table 3**). The remaining three trips that were encountered were unable to be validated.

The proportion of declared and reported EFP red snapper trips were compared to total interviews of offshore trips and landings during the season as a possible leading indicator of effort and landings between estimates (**Figure 2**). Early in the season (weeks 22-25) this relationship appeared to be useful, but the relationship became less reliable as the season continued. Further exploration into the usefulness of electronically declared or reported trips as a leading indicator of effort and landings may be warranted.

Table 2 – Validated electronically reported trips interviewed during standardized LA Creel dockside sampling that had matching trip report codes. Trips are those where red snapper were reported to have been caught.

Trip Date	Landed		Released		Fishing Depth	
	LA Creel Intercept	Electronic Report	LA Creel Intercept	Electronic Report	LA Creel Intercept	Electronic Report
26-May-18	20	16	0	0	330	465
8-Jun-18	14	10	0	0	255	245
30-Jun-18	6	6	2	1	295	300
6-Jul-18	8	6	2	2	140	140
7-Jul-18	4	4	4	4	150	150

Trip Date	Area Fished		Location Type	
	LA Creel Intercept	Electronic Report	LA Creel Intercept	Electronic Report
26-May-18	21- Mississippi Canyon	21- Mississippi Canyon	3- Next to a standing platform	3- Next to a standing platform
8-Jun-18	21- Mississippi Canyon	17- Main Pass	3- Next to a standing platform	3- Next to a standing platform
30-Jun-18	16- South Pass	16- South Pass	3- Next to a standing platform	3- Next to a standing platform
6-Jul-18	15- West Delta	15- West Delta	1- Over an artificial reef	1- Over an artificial reef
7-Jul-18	15- West Delta	15- West Delta	3- Next to a standing platform	3- Next to a standing platform

Table 3 - Electronically reported trips interviewed during standardized LA Creel dockside sampling that didn't have a matching trip report code but had a matching vessel number. Trips are those where red snapper were reported to have been caught.

Trip Date	Landed		Released		Fishing Depth	
	LA Creel Intercept	Electronic Report	LA Creel Intercept	Electronic Report	LA Creel Intercept	Electronic Report
28-Jul-18	8	8	20	23	80	80

Trip Date	Area Fished		Location Type	
	LA Creel Intercept	Electronic Report	LA Creel Intercept	Electronic Report
28-Jul-18	12- South Timbailer	12- South Timbailer	3- Next to a standing platform	3- Next to a standing platform

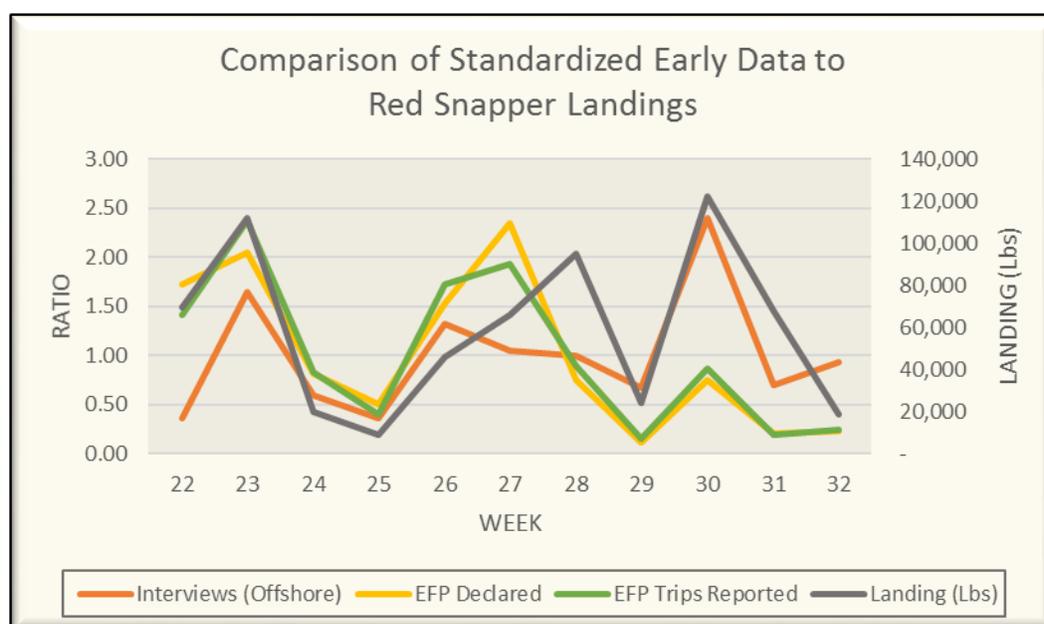


Figure 2. Comparison of Standardized Early Electronic Reporting and Interview Data to Red Snapper Landings.