



News Release

Coastal Conservation Association

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Gulf Council clears way for extension of red snapper season

Emergency rule gives option for longer season quota not taken due to oil spill

GULFPORT, MS - In response to a request from Coastal Conservation Association, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council has approved an emergency rule that paves the way for the recreational red snapper season to remain open past July 24 if the quota is not taken due to the oil spill. Dr. Russell Nelson, CCA's Gulf Fisheries Director, made the request for the impact of the oil spill to be taken into account during the Council's meeting this week in Gulfport, Mississippi.

"We appreciate the Council taking a pragmatic approach to this unprecedented situation in the Gulf of Mexico," said Nelson. "If the quota is not taken, a longer season will hopefully allow more people who have been sidelined by the oil spill to take advantage of this recovering stock."

The recreational red snapper season is set to run from June 1 to July 24 and is the shortest season on record at 53 days. With as much as 35 percent of federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico closed to all fishing as a result of the Deepwater Horizon disaster, it is likely that the season will end before many anglers from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida are cleared to fish offshore. With passage of the emergency rule, on a motion made by Florida state member Bill Teehan, the Gulf Council has given NOAA Regional Administrator Roy Crabtree the authority to leave the season open if recreational quota remains available.

"This is an example of how the Council and the recreational community can work together to find common-sense solutions to complex problems," said Chester Brewer, chairman of CCA's National Government Relations Committee. "We are going to face many challenges in the Gulf of Mexico and it will be necessary for everyone to find a way through the tough times. It is good that the Council has acknowledged the impact the oil spill has had on recreational anglers and the coastal communities that depend on them."

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CCA is the largest marine resource conservation group of its kind in the nation. With almost 100,000 members in 17 state chapters, CCA has been active in state, national and international fisheries management issues since 1977. Visit www.JoinCCA.org for more information.