

Modifications to Lane Snapper Minimum Size Limit and Recreational Bag Limit



Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
Sarah Gardiner

Council rationale for action



- Harvest of lane snapper increasing in recent years
 - ACL exceeded frequently 2016-present
 - 2019-2022 resulted in early season closure
- **Accountability Measure:** Prohibition of harvest for the remaining of fishing year if landings are met or projected to meet ACL; if ACL continues to be exceeded, the Council should consider additional management measures

June 2024 Motions Report

Motion: To request staff to start a document to evaluate minimum size and bag limits, and other measures to stay within the ACL for lane snapper.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Timeline



**June 2024
Council
motion**

**September
2024 IPT
meeting**

**November
2024 PPT**

**January 2025
Draft Action
Review**

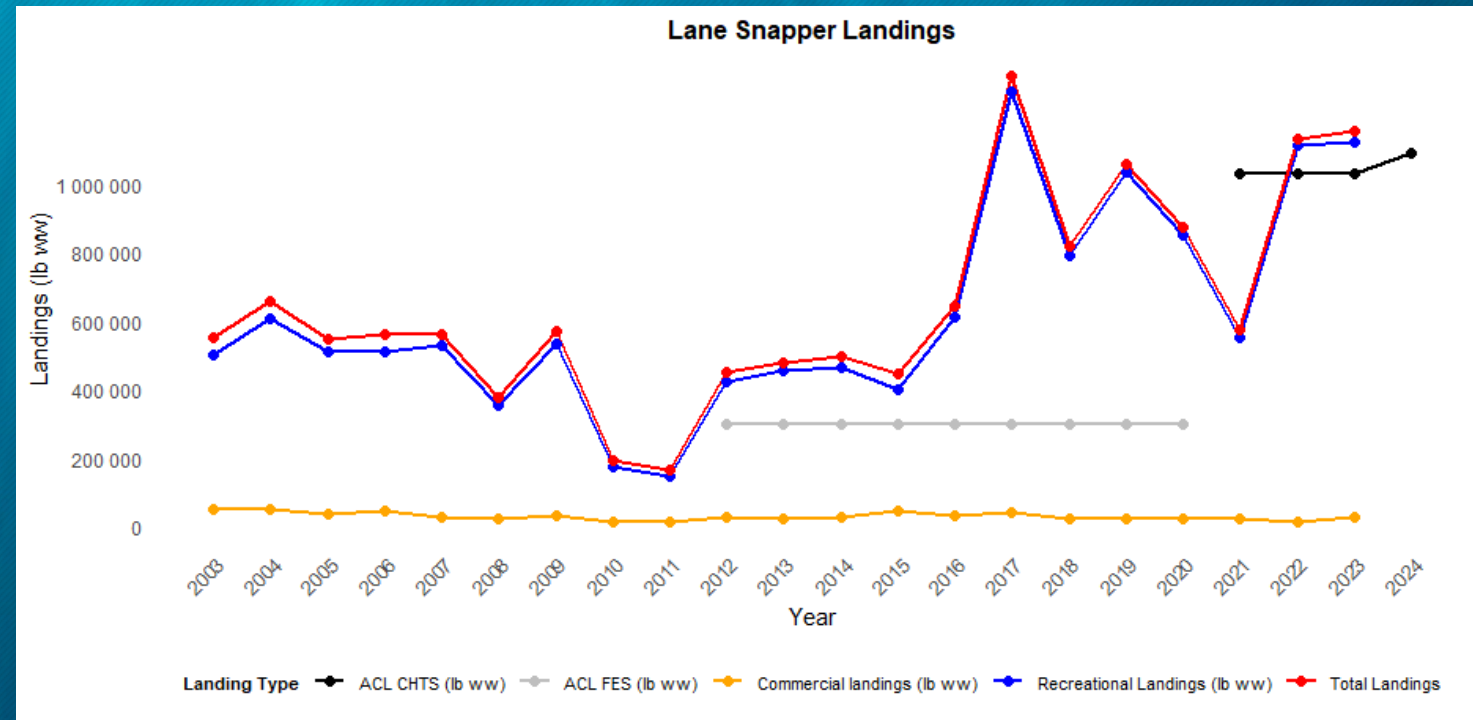
Gulf Lane Snapper



Season: January 1-December 31

Closures:

- December 13, 2019; October 18-December 21, 2021, and November 15, 2022
- 2021: amendment to increase ACL and revise Accountability measures
- 2024: amendment to increase ACL-total increase ~60,000 lb allowable harvest



Gulf Lane Snapper



Hypotheses for increase in Landings

- Increase in stock size
- Expansion in geographical distribution
- Angler behavior changing
 - Increased targeting of lane snapper compared to historical landings



Current Regulations



OFL: 1,116,331 lb ww, ABC: 1,088,873 lb ww, ACL: 1,088,873 lb ww

Size Limit:

Recreational and Commercial: 8 in TL

Accountability measures

2011-2021: Prohibit harvest in the subsequent year if landings met/exceeded the ACL

2021-present: Prohibition of harvest for the remaining of fishing year if landings are met or projected to meet ACL

Current Regulations



Bag Limit

- 50 CFR 622 (b)(5) Aggregate Reef Fish Bag limit 20 fishes
- Not included in the Snapper aggregate bag limit

Snapper	10	Gray Snapper	
		Mutton Snapper	5
		Yellowtail Snapper	
		Cubera Snapper	
		Queen Snapper	
		Blackfin Snapper	
		Wenchman Snapper	
		Silk Snapper	
Reef Fish	20	Vermilion Snapper	10
		Lane Snapper	
		Gray Triggerfish	1
		Almaco Jack	
		Golden Tilefish	
		Goldface Tilefish	
		Blueline Tilefish	

Draft Purpose and Need



The purpose is to modify current management measures to prevent overfishing. In recent years, the ACL has been exceeded, resulting in early recreational season closures. Stakeholders have expressed an interest in additional management measures that may reduce early season closures.

The need is to prevent overfishing given landings exceeding the ACL in recent years. Management measures such as bag and size limits aid in achieving optimum yield consistent with the requirements of the National Standard 1 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

Draft Action Alternatives



Action 1: Modify the size limit for commercial and recreational Gulf lane snapper

Alternative 1: Maintain the current recreational and commercial size limit of 8 in. TL for Gulf lane snapper.

Alternative 2: Modify the recreational and commercial size limit to 10 in. TL for Gulf lane snapper.

Alternative 3: Modify the recreational and commercial size limit to 12 in. TL for Gulf lane snapper.

Draft Action Alternatives



Lane Snapper Maturity	L50 (in)	L100 (in)	Source
Female	9.1	13.8	Freitas et al., 2014
Male	9.5	14.8	Freitas et al., 2014
Female	10.7	15.3	Fernandes et al., 2022
Male	11.1	15.7	Fernandes et al., 2022

Draft Action Alternatives



Action 2: Modify the bag limit for recreational Gulf lane snapper

Alternative 1: Maintain Gulf lane snapper within the Gulf reef fish aggregate bag limit of 20 reef fishes.

Alternative 2: Within the recreational Gulf reef fish aggregate bag limit of 20 fishes, modify the bag limit to allow for no more than 2 Gulf lane snapper.

Alternative 3: Within the recreational Gulf reef fish aggregate bag limit of 20 fishes, modify the bag limit to allow for no more than 5 Gulf lane snapper.

Draft Action Alternatives



Action 2 cont.: Modify the bag limit for recreational Gulf lane snapper

Alternative 4: Within the recreational Gulf reef fish aggregate bag limit of 20 fishes, modify the bag limit to allow for no more than 10 Gulf lane snapper.

Alternative 5: Within the recreational Gulf reef fish aggregate bag limit of 20 fishes, modify the bag limit to allow for no more than 15 Gulf lane snapper.

Draft Action Alternatives

Action 2: Bag limit modification

Reef Fish	20	Vermillion Snapper	10
		Lane Snapper	
		Gray Triggerfish	1
		Almaco jack	
		Golden Tilefish	
		Goldface Tilefish	
		Blueline Tilefish	



Next Steps



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Analysis Requested

- Bag and Size limit and proposed alternatives on season length and landings
- Landings comparison with ACL for all presented alternatives
- Size frequency distribution amongst landings

Council Input



- Are the proposed Action Alternatives likely to achieve the Council's intended goal?
- Analysis requested from SERO and will be presented in Jan 2025
 - Is there any additional analysis the Council wishes to see in January?

Questions?

