

# 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 (AM):** Prohibition of harvest for remainder of fishing year if landings are met or projected to meet ACL; if ACL continues to be exceeded, 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 Council  
PPT**

**December  
2024 Reef  
Fish AP PPT**

**January 2025  
Draft Action  
Review**

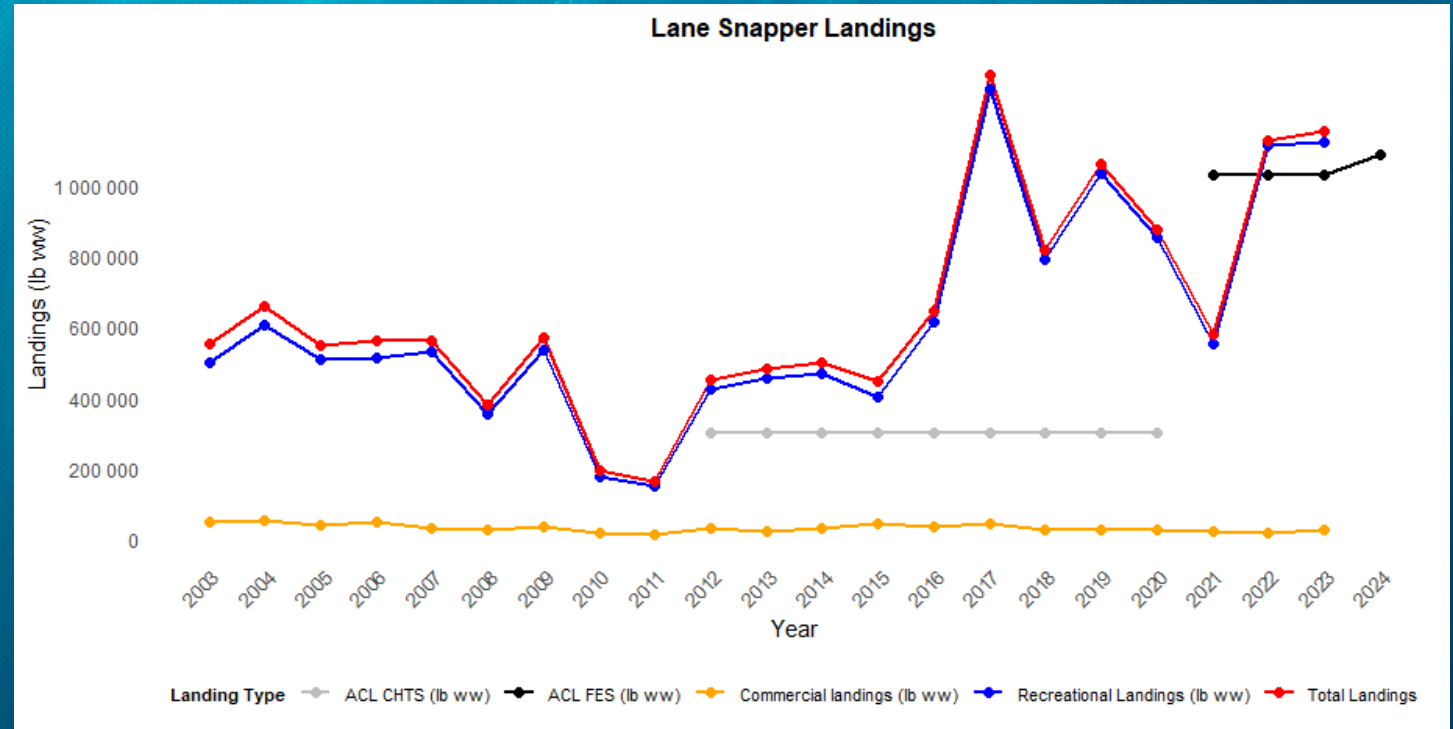
# Gulf Lane Snapper



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 AMs
- 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 inches TL

## AMs:

**2011-2021:** Prohibit harvest in the subsequent fishing year if landings predicted to meet/exceeded the ACL

**2021-present:** Prohibition of harvest for the remainder of current fishing year if landings meet or are projected to meet ACL

# Current Regulations



## Bag Limit

- 50 CFR 622 (b)(5) Aggregate Reef Fish Bag limit: 20 fish
- Not included in the 10-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 of this action is to modify the Gulf lane snapper minimum size and recreational bag limits to better constrain harvest to the stock ACL.**

**The need is to decrease the likelihood of overfishing the Gulf lane snapper stock consistent with National Standard 1 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.**



# Draft Action Alternatives

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

**Alternative 1:** Maintain the current recreational and commercial minimum size limit of 8 inches TL.

**Alternative 2:** Modify the recreational and commercial minimum size limit to 10 inches TL.

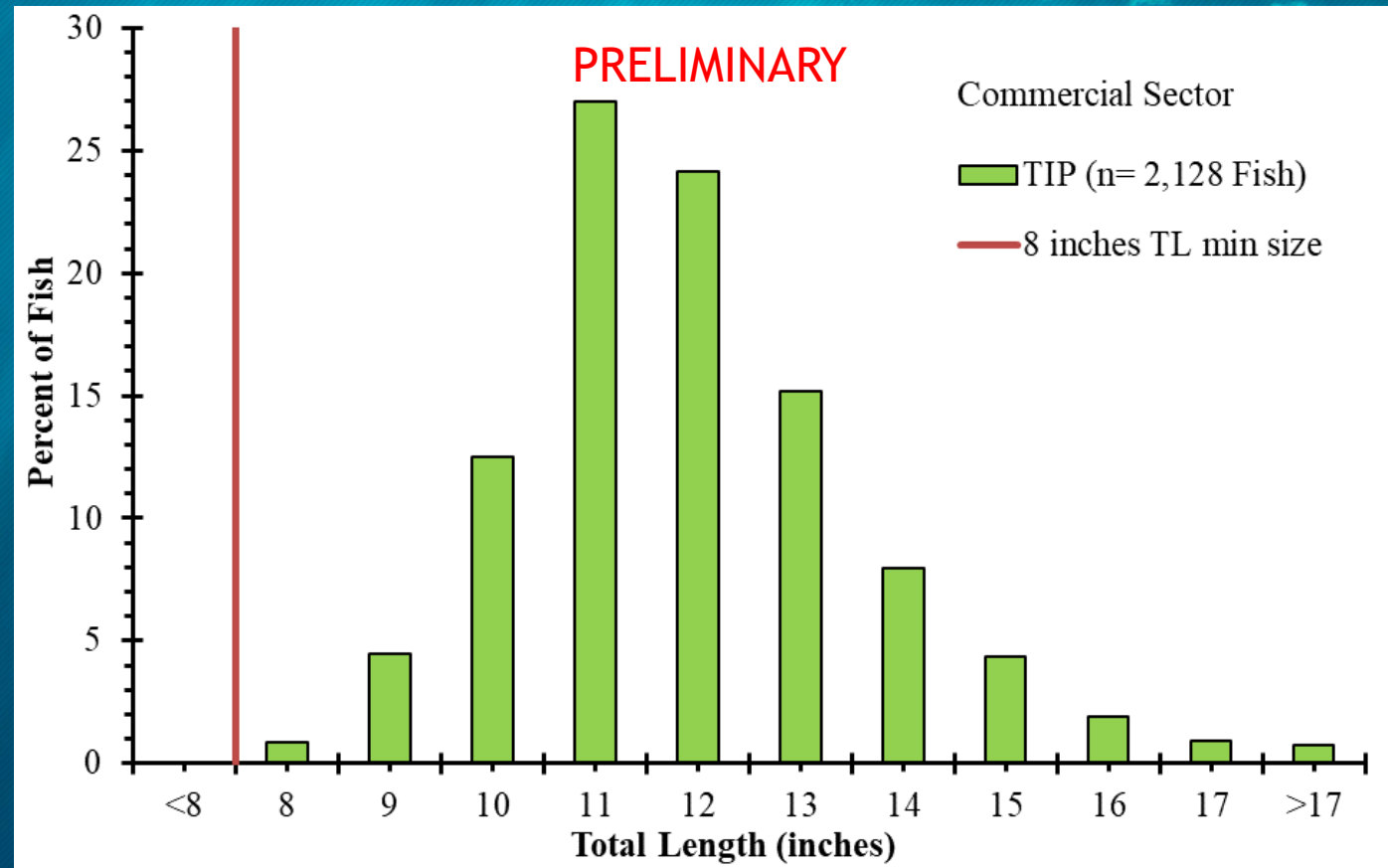
**Alternative 3:** Modify the recreational and commercial minimum size limit to 12 inches TL.

# Draft Action Alternatives



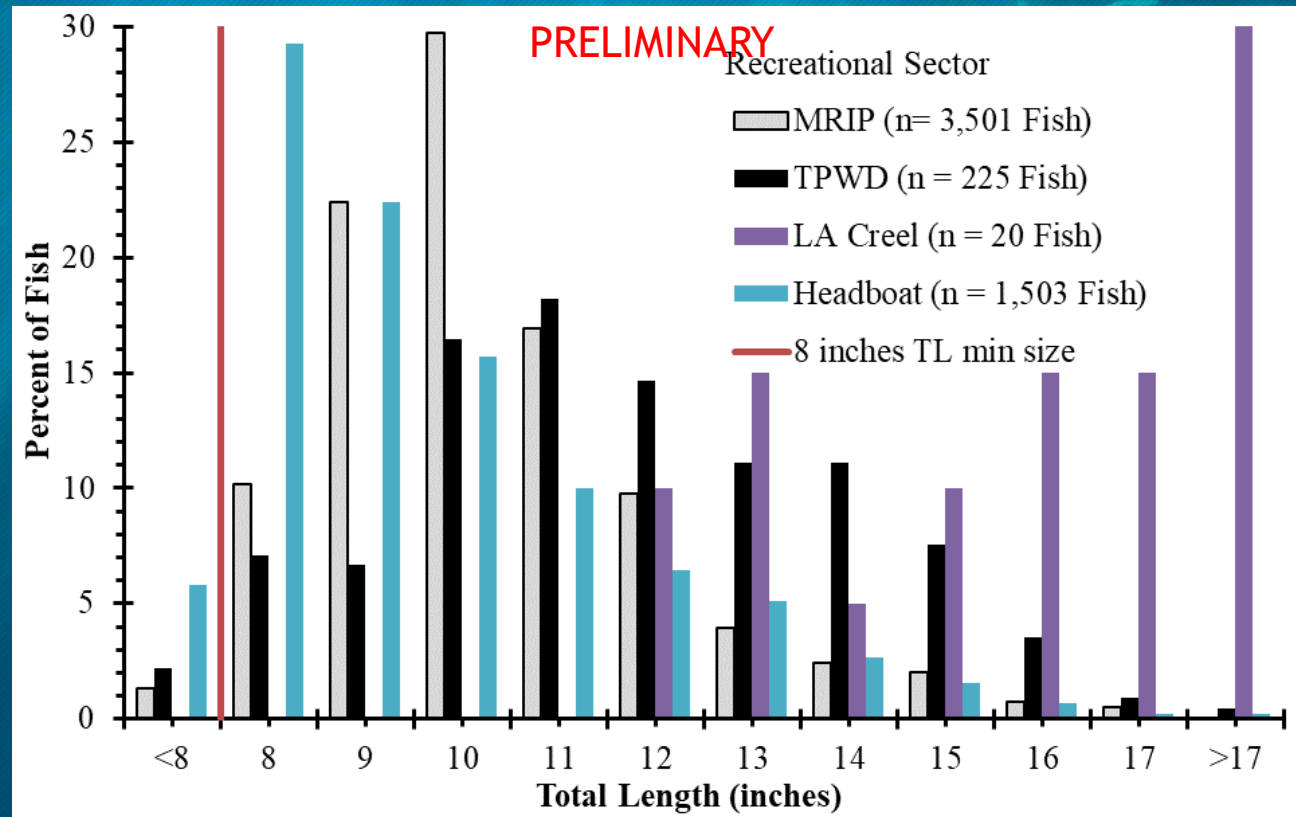
Lane Snapper Maturity	$L_{50}$ (in)	$L_{100}$ (in)	Source
Female	9.1	13.8	Freitas et al., 2014
Male	9.5	14.8	Freitas et al., 2014
Female	10.7	15.3	Fernandes et al., 2022
Male	11.1	15.7	Fernandes et al., 2022

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



**Figure 1.** Distribution of the Gulf of Mexico commercial lane snapper harvested by size bin. Data comes from the TIP program from 2021 through 2023. The red line is the current minimum size limit of 8 inches total length.

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



**Figure 2.** Distribution of the Gulf of Mexico recreational lane snapper harvested by size bin. Data comes from the recreational intercept data from TXPW, LA Creel, MRIP, and Headboat from 2021 through 2023. The red line is the current minimum size limit of 8 inches total length.

# Draft Action Alternatives



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

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

**Alternative 2:** Establish a 2-fish recreational daily bag limit for Gulf lane snapper within the Gulf reef fish aggregate bag limit of 20 fish.

**Alternative 3:** Establish a 5-fish recreational daily bag limit for Gulf lane snapper within the Gulf reef fish aggregate bag limit of 20 fish.

# Draft Action Alternatives



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

**Alternative 4:** Establish a 10-fish recreational daily bag limit for Gulf lane snapper within the Gulf reef fish aggregate bag limit of 20 fish.

**Alternative 5:** Establish a 15-fish recreational daily bag limit for Gulf lane snapper within the Gulf reef fish aggregate bag limit of 20 fish.

# 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 minimum size limit and proposed alternatives on season duration and landings
- Landings comparison with ACL for all presented alternatives
- Size frequency distribution amongst landings

# AP Input



- Are the proposed action alternatives likely to achieve the Council's intended goal?
- January 2025: Council will review draft document

Questions?

