



Caribbean Fishery Bulletin

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Final Rule Revises How Accountability Measures are Triggered for Reef Fish in Puerto Rico Federal Waters

KEY MESSAGE:

NOAA Fisheries announces a final rule, applicable only to reef fish populations in Puerto Rico federal waters, which revises the trigger for implementing an accountability measure (fishery closure) for species and species groups that are separately managed with commercial and recreational annual catch limits.

WHEN THE RULE WILL TAKE EFFECT:

- The rule will take effect on January 2, 2018.

WHAT THIS MEANS:

- The final rule will revise the trigger for implementing an accountability measure for the recreational sector or commercial sector from an overage of the sector's annual catch limit to an overage of the total (combined recreational and commercial) annual catch limit for a species or species group.
- If the total annual catch limit is exceeded, the fishing season closure will only apply to the sector that exceeded its annual catch limit, and will continue to be calculated and applied according to current practice.
- This action is expected to result in fewer fishery closures, minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse socio-economic effects while increasing the likelihood that the long-term optimum yield will be achieved on a continuing basis.
- This final rule is the result of Regulatory Amendment 6 to the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan (Accountability Measure Triggers Amendment) recommended to NOAA Fisheries by the Caribbean Fishery Management Council.

FORMAL FEDERAL REGISTER NUMBER: 82 FR 56917, published December 1, 2017.

Where can I find more information on the Accountability Measure Triggers Amendment?

The Accountability Measure Triggers Amendment may be found online at the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office web site at:

- http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/caribbean/generic/am_triggers/index.html

And the Caribbean Fishery Management Council web site at:

- http://www.caribbeanfmc.com/159_meeting.html

This bulletin serves as a Small Entity Compliance Guide, complying with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996.