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Court Maintains Order In Red Snapper Fishery

Outcome effectively ensures illegal season extension won't be repeated

The Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance today issued the following statement in response to the court's determination to stay the lawsuit filed as a result of the Department of Commerce's decision to illegally extend the 2017 private recreational red snapper fishing season in the Gulf of Mexico:

NMFS's decision this year to reopen the red snapper fishing season for recreational anglers in the Gulf of Mexico violated the law and caused overfishing. When sued, NMFS did not even try to defend its action and swore to the court it would not do it again. Now the litigation has been stayed pending NMFS's action to set the recreational angler season in 2018.

Judicial oversight is appropriate because recreational anglers have exceeded their catch limits in *23 of the last 27 years*. Options exist under current law to improve how the recreational fishery is managed. The Shareholders' Alliance hopes these options will be finally be considered.

The commercial sector adopted reforms and now complies with its catch limits every year. Gulf of Mexico charter and headboat operators are developing their own reforms. American consumers depend on this resource and proper management of all sectors is critical.

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