



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 622

[Docket No. 231101-0256]

RTID 0648-XF558

Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic; 2026 Recreational Season

Announcement and Closure Date for Golden Tilefish in the South Atlantic

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Temporary rule; closure.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces the closure date of the 2026 recreational fishing season for golden tilefish in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the South Atlantic. The 2026 recreational fishing season for golden tilefish in the South Atlantic EEZ is closed starting on March 27, 2026. This closure is necessary to prevent recreational landings of golden tilefish in the South Atlantic EEZ from exceeding the recreational annual catch limit (ACL) and to protect the golden tilefish resource from overfishing.

DATES: This closure is effective from March 27 through December 31, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Karla Gore, NMFS Southeast Regional Office, telephone: 727-824-5305, email: karla.gore@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The snapper-grouper fishery of the South Atlantic includes golden tilefish and is managed under the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (FMP). The FMP was prepared by NMFS and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and is implemented by NMFS under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) by regulations at 50 CFR

part 622.

Regulations at 50 CFR 622.193(a)(2) specify the 2026 recreational ACL for golden tilefish at 2,741 fish and the recreational AMs. The recreational AMs state, in part, that NMFS will project the length of the recreational fishing season for golden tilefish based on catch rates from the previous fishing year and annually announce the end date of the recreational season [50 CFR 622.193(a)(2)]. The fishing year and season for recreational harvest of golden tilefish started on January 1, 2026. Data from the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center informed NMFS' projection that recreational landings will reach the recreational ACL for 2026 by March 27. Therefore, NMFS announces that the last day of the recreational season for golden tilefish is March 26, 2026. The 2026 recreational fishing season for golden tilefish in the South Atlantic EEZ is closed starting on March 27, 2026, and continues to be closed through the end of the calendar year. During the recreational closure, the bag and possession limits for golden tilefish in or from the South Atlantic EEZ are zero. The next recreational fishing season for golden tilefish begins on January 1, 2027.

Classification

NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This action is required by 50 CFR 622.193(a)(2), which was issued pursuant to section 304(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and is exempt from review under Executive Order 12866.

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), there is good cause to waive prior notice and an opportunity for public comment on this action, as notice and comment are unnecessary and contrary to the public interest. Such procedures are unnecessary because the rule that established the recreational ACL and AMs for golden tilefish has already been subject to notice and comment, and all that remains is to notify the public of the end date of the recreational season. Such procedures are contrary to the public interest because of the

need to immediately implement this action to prevent overfishing of the golden tilefish stock. The recreational ACL will soon be reached and prior notice and opportunity for public comment would require additional time, potentially resulting in a harvest well in excess of the established ACL.

For the reasons just stated, there is also good cause to waive the 30-day delay in the effectiveness of this action under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3).

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: March 23, 2026.

David R. Blankinship,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,

National Marine Fisheries Service.