



## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 622

[Docket No. 240715–0194; RTID 0648-XF794]

#### **Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of America, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of America; 2026-2027 Recreational Closure for Greater Amberjack**

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

**ACTION:** Temporary rule; closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS implements an accountability measure (AM) for the recreational harvest of greater amberjack in Federal waters of the Gulf of America (Gulf). The 2026-2027 fishing season for greater amberjack begins on September 1, 2026. NMFS has projected that recreational landings of greater amberjack will reach the annual catch target (ACT) by October 14, 2026. Therefore, the recreational fishing season will be open from September 1 through October 13 and will close on October 14, 2026. NMFS implements this recreational AM to protect the greater amberjack resource.

**DATES:** This temporary rule is effective from October 14, 2026, through July 31, 2027.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Kelli O'Donnell, NMFS Southeast Regional Office, telephone, 727-824-5305, email: [kelli.odonnell@noaa.gov](mailto:kelli.odonnell@noaa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NMFS manages the Gulf reef fish fishery and greater amberjack under the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf (FMP). The Gulf Fishery Management Council prepared the FMP, and NMFS implements the FMP under the authority of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) through regulations at 50 CFR part 622.

All greater amberjack weights discussed in this temporary rule are in round

weight. The metric conversion for the imperial measurement used in this document is 1 pound (lb) equals approximately 0.45 kilograms.

For Gulf greater amberjack, the recreational fishing year begins on August 1 and extends through July 31 of the following calendar year (50 CFR 622.7(h)). However, there are seasonal closures of the recreational sector during each January through August and November through December (50 CFR 622.34(c)). Therefore, the recreational fishing season for greater amberjack is open during September and October. The recreational annual catch limit (ACL) is 404,000 lb, and the ACT, or recreational quota, is 335,320 lb (50 CFR 622.41(a)(2)(iii) and 622.39(a)(2)(ii)). Under the recreational AM at 50 CFR 622.41(a)(2)(i), NMFS is required to close the recreational harvest of greater amberjack if NMFS projects that landings will reach the recreational ACT during a fishing year. Based on a review of recreational landings data, NMFS has projected that for the 2026-2027 fishing year, the recreational ACT of 335,320 lb (152,099 kg) will be reached by October 14, 2026. Accordingly, NMFS closes recreational harvest of greater amberjack in or from Gulf Federal waters on October 14, 2026.

During the recreational closure, the bag and possession limits for greater amberjack harvested in or from Gulf Federal waters are zero. The possession of greater amberjack is also prohibited in state waters of the Gulf for any vessel issued a valid Federal charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf reef fish (50 CFR 622.39(c)).

### **Classification**

NMFS issues this action pursuant to section 305(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. This action is required by 50 CFR 622.41(a)(2)(i), 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 regulation associated with the closure of the greater amberjack recreational sector at 50 CFR 622.41(a)(2)(i) has already been subject to notice and public comment, and all that remains is to notify the public of the closure. Prior notice and opportunity for public comment are contrary to the public interest because there is a need to immediately implement this action to protect the greater amberjack stock. In addition, prior notice and opportunity for public comment would require time and many of those affected by the length of the recreational fishing season, particularly charter vessel and headboat operators who book trips for clients in advance, need as much notice as possible to adjust their business plans to account for the recreational fishing season.

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

Dated: May 28, 2026.

**David R. Blankinship,**

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries,*

*National Marine Fisheries Service.*