



**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

Southeast Regional Office  
263 13th Ave S  
Saint Petersburg, FL 33701

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## A DAY IN THE LIFE: NOAA FISHERIES ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

Officer Randall Bibler, Southeast Division

### **What is the role of a NOAA fisheries enforcement officer and why is it important?**

The role of an NOAA Enforcement Officer is to monitor, patrol, and investigate violations of the nation's resource laws. It is important because we help ensure fish populations are sustainable, threatened marine species and the habitats that they live in are protected, and ensure these resources are around for future generations to enjoy.

### **What made you decide to become a NOAA fisheries enforcement officer?**

I began my law enforcement career with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) in the Florida Keys. I was federally deputized by NOAA to enforce federal regulations and had the opportunity to work hand in hand with NOAA officers and agents. I patrolled onboard the Sanctuary Offshore Patrol Vessel Peter Gladding in the Dry Tortugas. This helped inspire me to become an enforcement officer with NOAA OLE.

After a couple of years with FWC in the Keys, I

transferred to St. Petersburg, FL where I worked with several NOAA enforcement agents and officers. I was able to learn even more about the duties of a NOAA enforcement officer. After 6 years working with FWC, I left and began a new career with NOAA.

### **What are the requirements for becoming a NOAA enforcement officer?**

Generally speaking, you must be a US citizen, no older than 37 years of age, must pass the Uniformed Police Training Program or equivalent, must complete the Marine Law Enforcement Training Program, must be proficient with firearms, must obtain a security clearance, must pass a medical and psychological evaluation, and must pass a background investigation. Another key component is job history. To be seriously considered for a career with NOAA as an enforcement officer, an applicant should have a background in conservation law enforcement or military experience, preferably in the role of a law enforcement or fisheries boarding officer. NOAA also values traditional education and has an intern program.

### **What's your favorite part of the job?**

I'd have to say one of my favorite parts of my job is the freedom to patrol anywhere under US jurisdiction. One day I may be conducting vessel inspections at a seafood dealer and the next I may be on vessel patrol with other law enforcement agencies. Recently, I spent two weeks in Hawaii where I was able to patrol the shoreline looking for peo-

ple harassing spinner dolphins. There aren't that many law enforcement jobs that I'm aware of which afford an officer the opportunity to travel across the globe while on duty. There are even opportunities to work and train with other nations.

### **What's your least favorite part of the job?**

My least favorite part of my job is not being able to work closely with other officers in my district. NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement is a small agency when compared to the amount of territory we patrol.

### **What types of regulations do you enforce?**

The top five are the [Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#), [Marine Mammal Protection Act](#), [Endangered Species Act](#), [Lacey Act](#), and the [National Marine Sanctuaries Act](#). Each region in NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement has national and specific priorities. My priorities in the Southeast Region are conducting vessel stops at sea on commercial and recreational fishing vessels for compliance with fishing regulations, inspecting federally permitted seafood dealers, and investigating dolphin harassment.

### **What are the most common offenses you see?**

The most common violations include over bag limits, seasonal/area closure violations, and commercial IFQ and charter/headboat reporting violations.

### **Where can fishermen go to find more information about fisheries regulations and ask questions related to enforcement?**

The internet. Federal fishing regulations are readily available on state and federal websites such as



Officer Randall Bibler (second from the left) and colleagues in the field at a shoreside facility inspection.

[MyFWC.com](#), [GulfCouncil.org](#), [SAFMC.net](#), and [fisheries.noaa.gov](#). Cell phone applications such as [FishHuntFL](#) and [Explorer](#) (National Marine Sanctuary) are also good resources. Many of these apps have geo location and work outside cell phone coverage. NOAA program managers also issue [email bulletins](#) regarding changes that occur outside of normal seasonal closures. I would highly recommend [signing up](#) for these emails if you're not already. And lastly, just ask an officer. If you don't regularly see a NOAA enforcement officer or state officer, find a number on the [NOAA Office of Law Enforcement website](#) and you can speak with an officer in your area.



Patrol Vessel Peter Gladding



Below you will find **Preliminary 2022 Price Summary Data** for each species and share category in the Gulf Catch Shares programs.

| Share Category        | Species             | Share Price<br>(per 1lb equivalent) | Allocation Price<br>(per/lb) | Ex-Vessel<br>Price |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Red Snapper           | Red snapper         | \$42.75                             | \$4.25                       | \$5.50             |
| Deep Water Grouper    | Snowy grouper       | \$11.93                             | \$1.16                       | \$5.96             |
|                       | Speckled hind       |                                     |                              | \$5.89             |
|                       | Warsaw grouper      |                                     |                              | \$5.21             |
|                       | Yellowedge grouper  |                                     |                              | \$6.29             |
| Gag Grouper           | Gag grouper         | \$11.43                             | \$1.15                       | \$6.89             |
|                       |                     |                                     | multi-use: \$1.50            |                    |
| Shallow Water Grouper | Black grouper       | \$6.05                              | \$0.73                       | \$6.79             |
|                       | Scamp               |                                     |                              | \$6.70             |
|                       | Yellowfin grouper   |                                     |                              | -                  |
|                       | Yellowmouth grouper |                                     |                              | \$5.64             |
| Red Grouper           | Red grouper         | \$18.69                             | \$1.62                       | \$5.81             |
|                       |                     |                                     | multi-use: \$1.63            |                    |
| Tilefish              | Blueline tilefish   | \$8.03                              | \$0.76                       | \$2.66             |
|                       | Golden tilefish     |                                     |                              | \$3.55             |
|                       | Goldface tilefish   |                                     |                              | \$3.50             |

- Insufficient data for yellowfin grouper ex-vessel price calculation.

HOW TO SUBMIT VMS POWER DOWN EXEMPTIONS:

- In order to turn off (power down) your VMS unit, you must submit a VMS power down exemption request form at the below web address:  
[https://grunt.sefsc.noaa.gov/apex/fer/r/fer\\_forms/home](https://grunt.sefsc.noaa.gov/apex/fer/r/fer_forms/home)
- This web address will take you to the web page shown below, where you must click on the blue “Power Down Exemption” text:



- You will need to complete the online form which requires the following: date submitted, name of person submitting, official vessel number, permit number, turn off date & time, estimated turn on date & time, vessel location during power down, and reason for power down (e.g. maintenance).

POWER DOWN EXEMPTION REQUIREMENTS:

- Power down exemption requests must be a **minimum duration of 72 hours** from the reported “Turn Off Date & Time” and a **maximum duration of one year**.
- If you wish to extend your power down exemption, you can simply complete another power down exemption request form online starting after the “Turn On” date of the initial form.
- If you wish to end your power down exemption earlier than the date indicated on your request form, please contact the Southeast Region VMS Commercial Vessel line at (800) 707-1632.
- For other assistance, contact the Southeast Regional Office VMS Customer Support line at (800) 758-4833.

# The Reel Deal on Stock Statuses and Terminology

## Why does NOAA Fisheries report the status of a fishery?

NOAA Fisheries is required by the [Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act](#) (104-297 (e)(1)) to report on the status of fish stocks within each Council's geographic area and identify fish stocks that are overfished or approaching an overfished status. The status of stocks are based on the most current information available. The status of a fish stock indicates the sustainability of the stock over time and how well management measures are working under current environmental conditions. NOAA Fisheries produces an annual report of the [status of U.S. Fisheries](#) along with quarterly reports of stock status.

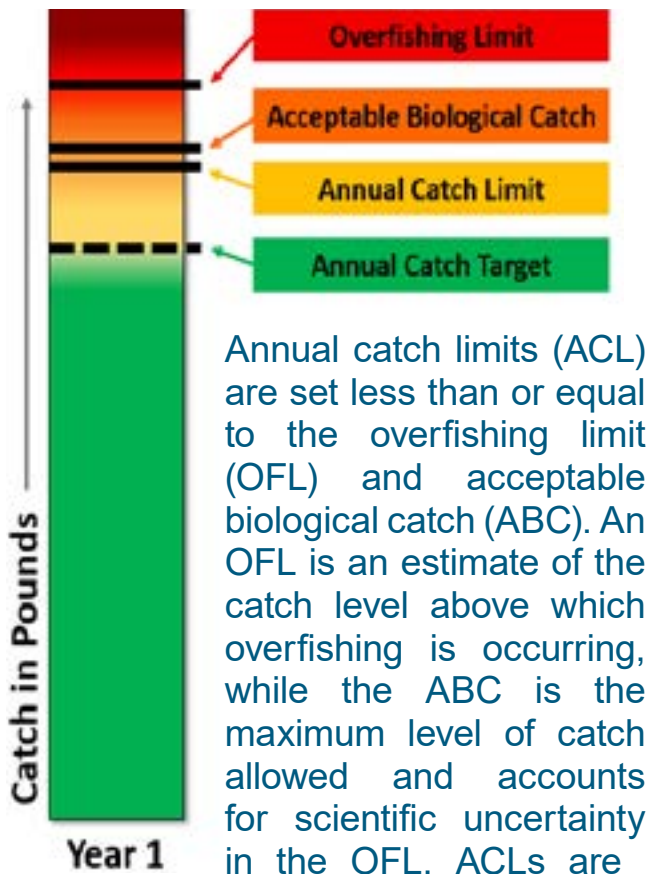
## How is the status of a fish stock determined?

NOAA Fisheries determines the status of fish stocks by comparing results from stock assessments or overfishing limits to an overfishing reference level. A stock assessment, or scientific analysis of the abundance and composition of a fish stock, is performed. Stock assessments use data such as landings, scientific surveys,

and biological studies, to serve as a reference point in determining whether a stock is subject to overfishing. Fishery management councils specify annual catch limits for a stock based on results from stock assessments and recommendations from their Scientific and Statistical Committee.

## What are the different fishery stock statuses and what do they mean?

- **Overfishing** – The fishing mortality (catch or harvest) rate is greater than the fishing mortality threshold level at maximum sustainable yield (MSY).
- **Overfished** – The population size of a stock is below the biomass level at the MSY. This stock size jeopardizes the stocks' ability to produce its MSY. A rebuilding plan is required for stocks that are identified as overfished.
- **Rebuilding** – The process of implementing management measures that increase a fish stock to its target size at which a stock could produce MSY.
- **Rebuilt** – A previously overfished stock that has increased in abundance to the target population size that supports its MSY.



Annual catch limits (ACL) are set less than or equal to the overfishing limit (OFL) and acceptable biological catch (ABC). An OFL is an estimate of the catch level above which overfishing is occurring, while the ABC is the maximum level of catch allowed and accounts for scientific uncertainty in the OFL. ACLs are set higher than the annual catch target (ACT). The ACT is a level of catch set to account for management uncertainty. This tiered system shown above is designed to prevent overfishing a stock. For more information, visit [Frequent Questions: Annual Catch Limit Monitoring](#).

## Common Fisheries Terms Explained:

Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) - the range of estimated allowable catch for a species set each year by a scientific group. The ABC estimates are used to set the annual total allowable catch.

Annual Catch Limit (ACL) - the level of catch intended to ensure overfishing does not occur. ACLs are set less than



or equal to the overfishing limit and acceptable biological catch.

Annual Catch Target (ACT) - the level of catch set to account for management uncertainty.

Catch - any activity that results in taking fish out of its environment dead or alive, and all fish killed by the act of fishing, not just those landed.

Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) - The largest long-term average catch that can continuously be taken from a stock under existing environmental conditions.

Overfishing Limit (OFL) - the point at which fishing seriously compromises a fishery's continued, sustained productivity. This limit may also incorporate economic and social considerations relevant to a particular fishery.

Total allowable catch (TAC) - The annual recommended catch for a species, set by the regional fishery management council from the range of allowable biological catch.

These definitions were adapted from the [NOAA Fisheries Glossary](#).



# DATES & RESOURCES

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[IFQ WEBSITE](#)

[IFQ SHAREHOLDERS](#)

[PERMITS](#)

[SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE](#)

[LAPPS BRANCH](#)

[SOUTHEAST REGION ACL](#)

[MONITORING](#)

[ELECTRONIC CODE OF  
FEDERAL REGULATIONS](#)

[GULF COUNCIL](#)

[GULF STATES COMMISSION](#)

**APR  
1-30**

Pay 1st Quarter Cost  
Recovery Fees

**APR  
3-6**

Gulf Council Meeting  
Gulfport, MS

**JUN  
5-8**

Gulf Council Meeting  
Mobile, AL

Like what you see?

Do you have suggested topics to feature?

Please send feedback to  
[NMFS.SER.CatchShare@noaa.gov](mailto:NMFS.SER.CatchShare@noaa.gov)  
or call 866-425-7627 (option 2).

