



Red Drum Public Hearing

Kathy Knowlton
September 21 & 22, 2022

Regulatory Process & Timeline

June 6 & 9 - Public Town Hall meetings conducted in Savannah and Brunswick *

August 23 – Briefing on proposed Red Drum regulation changes presented to the Board of Natural Resources *

August 24 – Public Notice issued announcing written comment period *

September 21 & 22 – Public hearings conducted in Savannah and Brunswick

October 6 – Public written comment period closes

October 25 – Final Action on proposed Red Drum regulation changes by the Board of Natural Resources

If approved - Effective January 1, 2023

CRD Red Drum Sampling Surveys and Programs



CRD Red Drum Sampling Surveys and Programs

- **Marine Sportfish Population Health Survey-** samples smaller Red Drum with gillnets and trammel nets in Georgia estuaries
- **Coastal Longline Survey-** encounters large adult Red Drum offshore in state waters
- **The Escapement Project-** targets older juveniles in Georgia estuaries and the implanted acoustic tags can be detected outside of the state as fish age and emigrate from coastal waters
- **Marine Sportfish Carcass Recovery Program-** samples legal-sized fish from the recreational fishery within the state
- **The Cooperative Angler Tagging Program-** samples Red Drum of various sizes caught by anglers and provides information from both within and outside the state
- **Marine Recreational Informational Program-** dockside intercept survey gathers information about angler Red Drum catch and mail survey to estimate fishing effort (MRIP, state-federal partnership)

CRD Red Drum Status Report

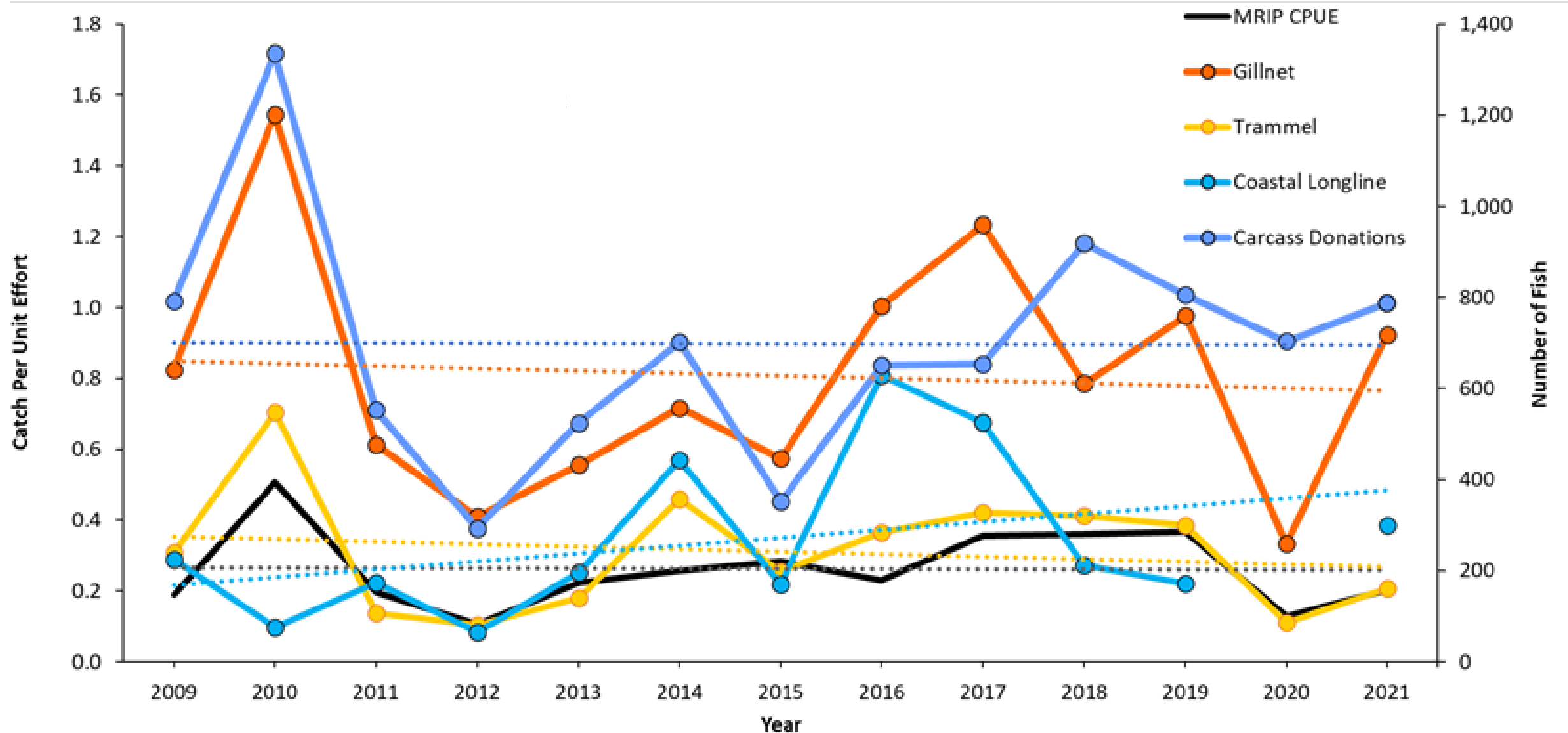
Data from these surveys and programs summarized Red Drum Status Reports (2021 & 2022).

Presented to CRD Finfish Advisory Panel & June Town Halls.

- Based on available biological data, no management action was necessary
- Tagging data estimated fishing mortality was low and suggested fish are escaping the fishery
- Red Drum indices were variable between years, but trends were relatively stable over time
- Indices tended to agree over time



Red Drum State Surveys & MRIP

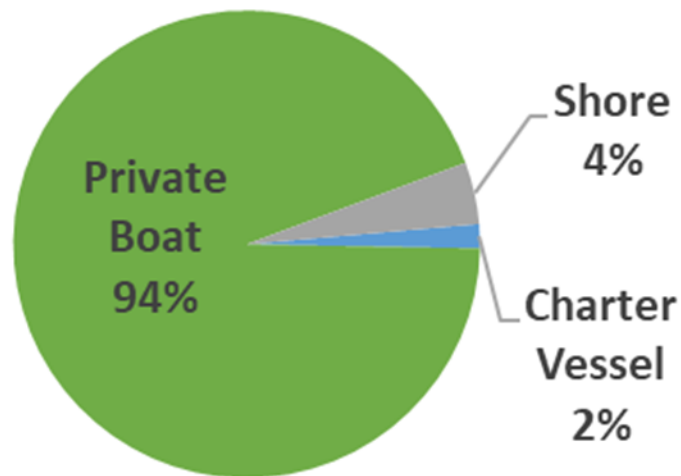


Red Drum Recreational Catch & Effort Data



Red Drum Recreational Catch & Effort Data

Red Drum Harvest
by Fishing Mode
2017-2021

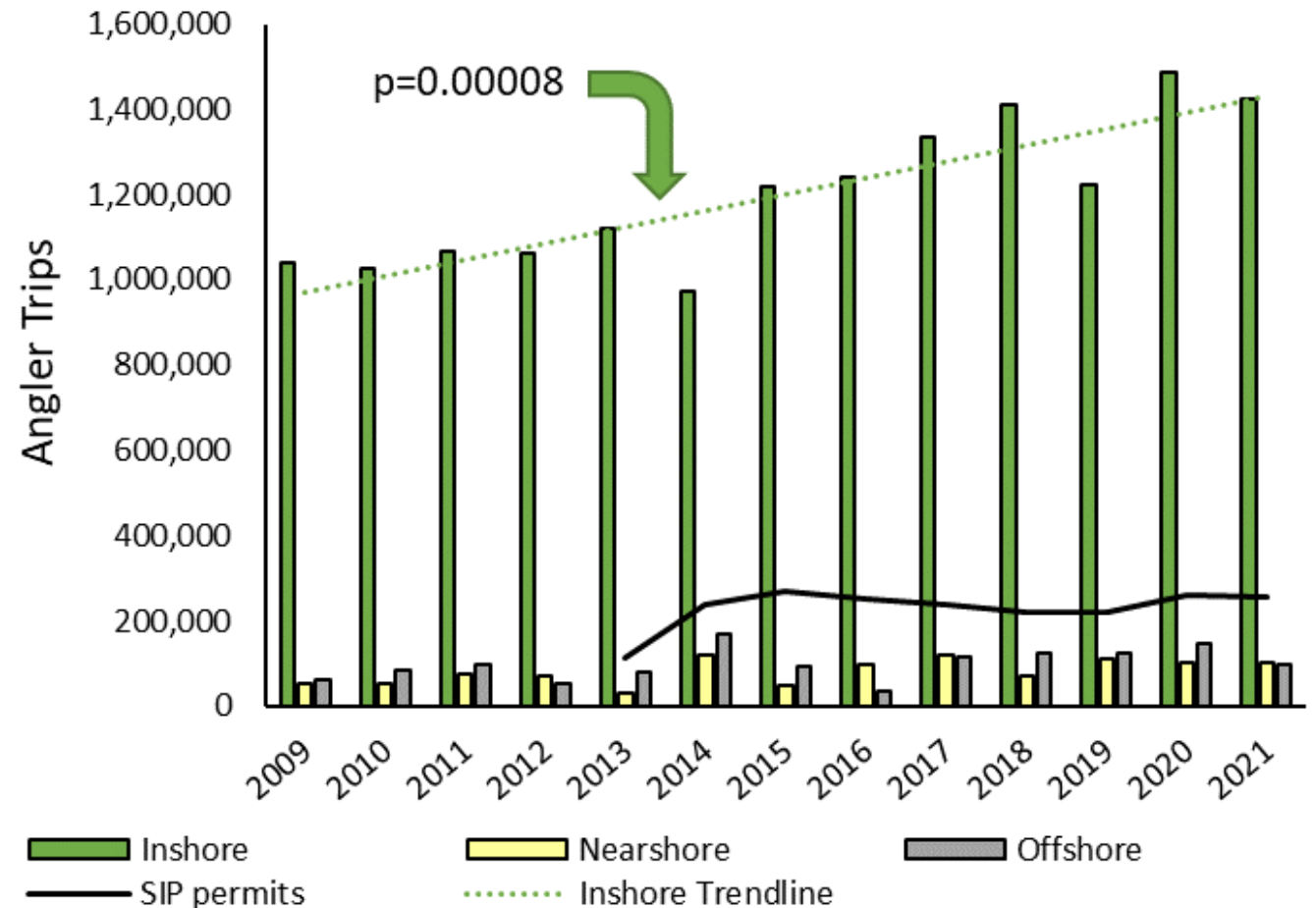


Average # INSHORE trips (2017-2021)

Anglers = 1,374,000

Guides = 20,800

Private Boat Angler Trips per Area Fished



Satisfaction Surveys

Georgia Saltwater Anglers' and Captains' Attitudes Toward Saltwater Fishing Issues



Study Conducted for
Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Coastal Resources Division

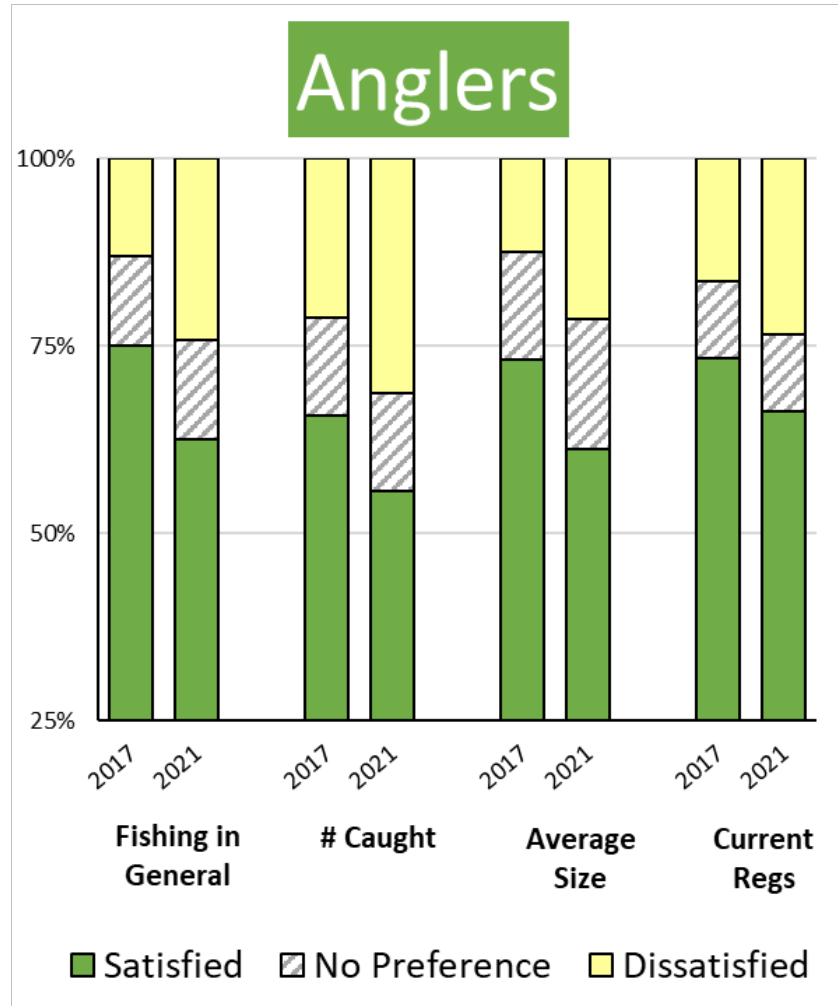
2022



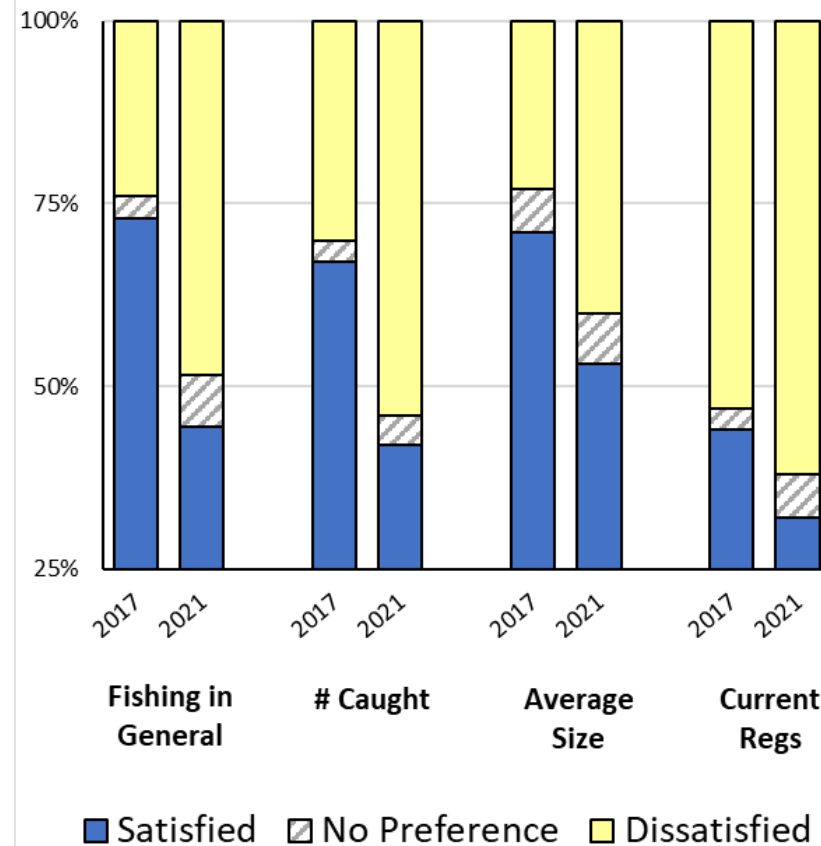
Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your Red Drum fishing?



10% less
satisfied



Guides



21% less
satisfied

Satisfaction = "Very" + "Somewhat"

Town Halls

Town Halls: June 6 & 9

Savannah (55)

Brunswick & online (97)

Presentations

CRD Red Drum Sampling Surveys & Programs

Angler & Guide Satisfaction Survey

Public invited to select options for five management actions under consideration:

Creel limit be decreased?

Vessel limit be established?

Charter captains/mates retain a creel limit?

Red Drum Season?

Slot size limit be changed?



Participants after 3 weeks

257 Recreational anglers

55 Guides

Decrease the Daily Creel Limit

Creel Limit	6-10 Fish	5 Fish (status quo)	4 fish	3 fish	2 fish	1 fish
2017/2021 Satisfaction Survey Results						
	2017 / 2021	2017 / 2021	2017 / 2021	2017 / 2021	2017 / 2021	2017 / 2021
Anglers	26% / 22%	56% / 46%	3% / 5%	7% / 12%	4% / 10%	1% / 3%
Guides	5% / 4%	28% / 28%	3% / 0%	26% / 21%	25% / 33%	14% / 14%
2022 Town Hall Results						
Anglers		14%	3%	14%	47%	22%
Guides		9%	2%	9%	51%	29%
Average Percent Reduction (2009-2021) calculated from the MRIP						
			-5%	-11%	-23%	-43%

Establish a Vessel Limit

	No Limit (status quo)	10 fish	9 fish	8 fish	7 fish	6 fish	5 fish
2021 Satisfaction Survey Results (Question not asked in 2017)							
2021 Anglers = 58% support a vessel limit							
2021 Guides = 77% support a vessel limit							
2022 Town Hall Results							
Anglers	16%	7%		12%		65%	
Guides	8%	4%		18%		71%	
Average Percent Reduction (2009-2021) calculated from the MRIP							
2009-2021		-2%	-4%	-6%	-8%	-11%	-15%
Average # of Anglers / Vessel: Private Vessel = 2.2 Guide Vessel = 2.8							

Guide creel limit; Season; Slot size limit

- **Prohibit guides/mates from retaining daily creel limit**

- This question was asked only at the Town Hall Meetings.
- 75% of anglers and 83% of guides agreed that guides and their mates should not retain a creel limit.

- **Fishing Season**

- Both anglers and guides opposed a fishing season for Red Drum. No change is being requested.

- **Slot Size Change**

- Although both groups supported changing the slot limit size, currently 14"-23", the Department does not have enough information at present to analyze the effects of a change.
- A regional stock assessment will be conducted in 2024, the results of which can better inform this question.

Rationale for Recommended Regulation Changes

Regulations most often changed based on results of regional stock assessment.

- Red Drum 2002
- Weakfish

Additional reasons for change include supporting other management options.

- Increased abundance: Spotted Seatrout

Social Components must be part of the equation.

- Tripletail, Billfish
- Red Drum
 - Anglers have been requesting action for several years
 - Survey participants support a regulatory change
 - 40% increase in inshore angler trips
 - “Georgia continues to grow at greater than 1% per year, which makes it one of the faster growing states (12th) in the country” (<https://worldpopulationreview.com/states/georgia-population>).

Proposed Amended Rule 391-2-4-.04 Saltwater Finfishing

391-2-4-.04 (3) Seasons, Daily Creel and Possession Limits, Minimum and Maximum Size Limits.

Species	Season	Daily Creel and Possession Limit	Minimum Size (inches)	Maximum Size (inches)
(m) Red Drum	All Year	<u>5-3 per person not to exceed 9 per boat</u>	14 TL	23 TL
<u>1. Guides and mates are prohibited from retaining a daily creel or possession limit.</u>				

- Help decrease large individual catches when immature Red Drum are vulnerable to fishing mortality
- Reduce the risk of localized overfishing

Written Comment Opportunities: Deadline October 6, 2022

- Electronically coastalgadnr.org/RedDrumPublicHearings
- Comment Sheet tonight

Both comment submission options ask whether you Support or Oppose:

Action 1: Decrease the Red Drum daily creel limit from five (5) to three (3) fish.

Action 2: Establish a vessel limit of nine (9) Red Drum.

Action 3: Prohibit guides and mates from retaining their creel limit.

Both submission options also provide a space for comments for each action as well as general comments.

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