



Red Drum (Redfish) Q&A on Current Stock Assessment & Future Regulation Changes

What is the current state of the Red Drum stock in LA?

The latest stock assessment indicates that the Red Drum stock in Louisiana is not overfished (depleted), but overfishing (depletion) is occurring. The current spawning stock of Red Drum is above the target limit; however, it is being depleted at a rate that requires management changes.

What is the cause?

Red Drum is unique in that the vast majority (97%) of harvest is comprised of juvenile fish between 16 and 27 inches in length and approximately 1.5 to 4 years old. This reduces the number of Red Drum that survive and move offshore to spawn, also referred to as the escapement rate. Currently, overfishing is contributing to a low escapement rate. In addition, current Red Drum recruitment rates (young of the year surviving to harvestable size) are the lowest LDWF has ever seen.

What needs to happen for the stock to recover?

A reduction in the overall harvest of Red Drum is needed to allow more fish to spawn. LDWF recommends a minimum 35% reduction in total harvested weight which corresponds to a recovered stock by 2050. More drastic reductions could lead to a faster recovery. The quickest option is a 65% reduction for a 2031 recovery.

Why such a long recovery period?

Since Red Drum are a long-lived species (39 years in Louisiana), full recovery will take time even if escapement rates rebound quickly. There is a lag between juvenile fish leaving the estuary between ages four and five and those fish living out their lifespan to 39 years old.

What are LDWF's plans to restore the population?

LDWF has provided numerous management options that will reduce Red Drum harvest by 35%. LDWF will request public input through email and online surveys regarding preferred management options. The results will be presented to the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission (LWFC) for consideration and potential action.

When was the last time the regulations were changed?

The current recreational regulation (16-inch - 27-inch slot/5 fish creel) was established in 1988 at the same time the commercial Red Drum fishery was closed.

I catch my limit every time I go fishing, why does there need to be a change?

While some anglers continue to catch their limit, there has been a statewide decline in the frequency of anglers (Private & Charter) catching their limit.

Are LDWF biologists observing the same decline as anglers?

Yes. LDWF uses trammel nets to collect juvenile Red Drum and have observed a decrease in abundance. Information collected with bottom longline surveys indicate a similar decline in the mature offshore spawning population.

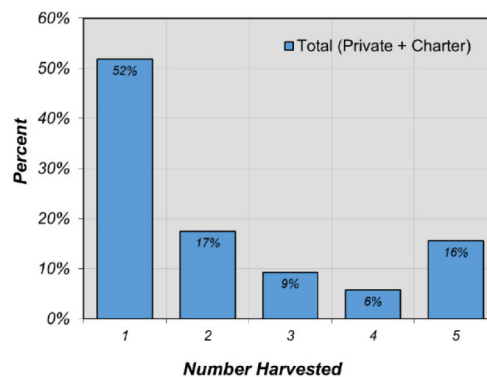
What is the effect of the charter guide limit on the harvest?

The charter guide limit accounts for approximately 2% of the overall harvest, but charter guides are more efficient at catching larger fish.

Will removing the ability to keep 1 over the slot limit have an effect on stock recovery?

Yes, if anglers are no longer allowed to keep 1 fish over the slot limit, the harvest of mature fish would be reduced. These tables include harvest reduction rates under various management scenarios.

Angler Trip Harvest Frequency (2019-2021)



One Fish Over Slot					
Slot/Bag	Total Juvenile Harvest Reduction by Slot & Bag				
	1	2	3	4	5
16-20	61.10%	44.41%	34.80%	26.63%	24.48%
16-21	57.36%	39.07%	28.54%	21.78%	17.23%
16-22	54.46%	34.92%	23.67%	16.45%	11.60%
16-23	52.19%	31.67%	19.87%	12.29%	7.19%
16-24	50.52%	29.29%	17.07%	9.23%	3.95%
16-25	49.38%	27.66%	15.16%	7.14%	1.74%
16-26	48.79%	26.82%	14.18%	6.06%	0.60%
16-27	48.49%	26.38%	13.66%	5.50%	0.00%
17-20	66.98%	52.81%	44.66%	39.43%	35.90%
17-21	63.25%	47.48%	38.40%	32.58%	28.66%
17-22	60.34%	43.33%	33.54%	27.25%	23.02%
17-23	58.07%	40.08%	29.73%	23.08%	18.31%
17-24	56.40%	37.70%	26.93%	20.02%	15.37%
17-25	55.26%	36.07%	25.02%	17.93%	13.16%
17-26	54.68%	35.23%	24.04%	16.86%	12.08%
17-27	54.37%	34.79%	23.52%	16.29%	11.42%
18-20	72.79%	61.11%	54.39%	50.08%	47.17%
18-21	69.05%	55.78%	48.13%	43.23%	39.93%
18-22	66.15%	51.63%	43.27%	37.90%	34.29%
18-23	63.88%	48.38%	39.46%	33.73%	29.88%
18-24	62.21%	46.00%	36.67%	30.67%	26.64%
18-25	61.07%	44.37%	34.76%	28.58%	24.43%
18-26	60.48%	43.53%	33.77%	27.51%	23.29%
18-27	60.18%	43.09%	33.25%	26.94%	22.69%
19-20	77.85%	68.35%	62.88%	59.37%	57.01%
19-21	74.12%	63.02%	56.63%	52.52%	49.76%
19-22	71.22%	58.87%	51.76%	47.19%	44.12%
19-23	68.94%	55.62%	47.95%	43.03%	39.71%
19-24	67.28%	53.24%	45.16%	39.97%	36.48%
19-25	66.14%	51.61%	43.25%	37.88%	34.27%
19-26	65.55%	50.77%	42.26%	36.80%	33.13%
19-27	65.24%	50.33%	41.75%	36.24%	32.53%

No Fish Over Slot					
Slot/Bag	Total Juvenile Harvest Reduction by Slot & Bag				
	1	2	3	4	5
16-20	76.20%	66.00%	60.10%	56.30%	53.80%
16-21	72.20%	60.30%	53.50%	49.10%	46.10%
16-22	68.50%	55.00%	47.20%	42.20%	38.90%
16-23	64.90%	49.90%	41.20%	35.70%	31.90%
16-24	61.50%	45.10%	35.60%	29.50%	25.40%
16-25	58.40%	40.50%	30.20%	23.60%	19.20%
16-26	55.90%	37.00%	26.20%	19.20%	14.50%
16-27	53.90%	34.20%	22.80%	15.50%	10.60%
17-20	82.10%	74.40%	70.00%	67.10%	65.20%
17-21	78.10%	68.70%	63.30%	59.80%	57.50%
17-22	74.40%	63.40%	57.10%	53.00%	50.30%
17-23	70.80%	58.30%	51.10%	46.50%	43.40%
17-24	67.40%	53.50%	45.40%	40.30%	36.80%
17-25	64.20%	48.90%	40.10%	34.40%	30.60%
17-26	61.80%	45.50%	36.00%	30.00%	25.90%
17-27	59.80%	42.60%	32.60%	26.30%	22.00%
18-20	87.90%	82.70%	79.70%	77.80%	76.50%
18-21	83.90%	77.00%	73.00%	70.50%	68.80%
18-22	80.20%	71.70%	66.80%	63.70%	61.60%
18-23	76.60%	66.60%	60.80%	57.10%	54.60%
18-24	73.20%	61.80%	55.10%	50.90%	48.10%
18-25	70.10%	57.20%	49.85%	45.10%	41.90%
18-26	67.60%	53.80%	45.80%	40.60%	37.20%
18-27	65.60%	50.90%	42.40%	36.90%	33.30%
19-20	93.00%	89.90%	88.20%	87.10%	86.30%
19-21	89.00%	84.30%	81.50%	79.80%	78.60%
19-22	85.30%	79.00%	75.30%	73.00%	71.40%
19-23	81.70%	73.80%	69.30%	66.40%	64.50%
19-24	78.30%	69.00%	63.60%	60.20%	57.90%
19-25	75.10%	64.40%	58.30%	54.40%	51.70%
19-26	72.70%	61.00%	54.30%	49.90%	47.00%
19-27	70.70%	58.10%	50.90%	46.20%	43.10%

*Highlighted areas show bag and size limit combinations that meet or exceed the recommended 35% harvest reduction.

What are the Red Drum regulations in the other Gulf States?

State	Daily Limit	Slot	Additional
TX	3	20"-28"	1 > 28" annual with tag
MS	3	18"-30"	1 > 30" in bag
AL	3	16"-26"	1 > 26" in bag
FL	1	18"-27"	Vessel limit 4 Panhandle to Tampa; Vessel limit 2 Tampa south

We encourage everyone to review this information and the information on our website
(Hot Topic: Red Drum | Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries)

to better understand the current status of the Red Drum fishery and the potential management options.

Once the survey is available, you will have the information necessary to make the
best recommendation based on your angling habits.