

RESOLUTION

Greater Amberjack Exempted Fishing Permit

**Adopted by the
Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission
August 6, 2026**

- WHEREAS, the mission of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (Department) is to manage, conserve, and promote wise utilization of Louisiana's renewable fish and wildlife resources and their supporting habitats through replenishment, protection, enhancement, research, development, and education for the social and economic benefit of current and future generations; to provide opportunities for knowledge and use and enjoyment of these resources; and to promote a safe and healthy environment for the users of the resources; and
- WHEREAS, the Department is responsible for managing numerous major commercial and recreational fisheries and has proven itself an effective steward of these fisheries resources, including greater amberjack; and
- WHEREAS, the most recent stock assessment (SEDAR 70) determined that Gulf greater amberjack is overfished and undergoing overfishing, and the stock is currently managed under a federal rebuilding plan with a rebuilding target of 2027; and the Department supports rebuilding the stock and intends that any Exempted Fishing Permit operate within, and not exceed, the recreational annual catch limit established for greater amberjack; and
- WHEREAS, federal management of the Gulf greater amberjack fishery relies on imprecise, untimely estimates of recreational greater amberjack landings from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP), has resulted in imprecise estimates of fishing quotas and overly restrictive recreational fishing opportunities and reduced economic opportunities for fishing communities through lost revenues at businesses that support the recreational fishing industry; and
- WHEREAS, the Department is providing sound data through the state's own Recreational Creel Survey (LA Creel), an improved recreational landings data collection system, certified by NOAA Fisheries in 2018 as an approved alternative to the federal MRIP, that allows the Department to accurately count species such as greater amberjack as they are landed and estimate recreational landings within two weeks after data are collected, thereby providing precise, real-time, localized landings data managers need to flexibly and appropriately manage recreational fishing seasons; and
- WHEREAS, the Department has the tools and infrastructure needed to precisely monitor greater amberjack landings, collect much needed biological samples, and provide more frequent critical data needed to manage greater amberjack fisheries, and set flexible, tailored management measures that address local needs as well as Gulf-wide conservation goals; and
- WHEREAS, the primary purposes of the requested Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) are data collection, biological sampling, and conservation, including the reduction of dead discards, consistent with the exempted fishing purposes authorized under 50 C.F.R. § 600.745, and any resulting change in the timing of the recreational season is intended to improve monitoring and reduce waste rather than to increase the total allowable harvest; and
- WHEREAS, the President's Executive Order 14276 "Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness" directs the Secretary of Commerce to expand EFP programs to increase domestic fishing opportunities, test new state-led data management strategies, modernize data collection, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Saltwater Recreational Initiative recommends the Gulf

Fishery Management Council (Council) explore ways the Council can play a more active role in the Exempted Fishing Permit Process, and

WHEREAS, the Gulf Fishery Management Council and NOAA Fisheries have delegated management of the recreational red snapper fishery to the five Gulf states through Amendment 50 to the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan, an approach that grew out of state EFPs and has improved in-season monitoring while providing anglers more stable, tailored seasons; and

WHEREAS, recommendation 4.3 from the Gulf Council's prioritized work plan urges and requests the Council to explore differentiating management measures (i.e., size limit, bag limit, and season) for greater amberjack between the eastern Gulf (Florida and Alabama) and western Gulf (Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas) given regional differences in fishery characteristics, and

WHEREAS, saltwater fishing provides more than \$800 million in economic impact to the state of Louisiana, and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission that it fully supports and urges the United States Secretary of Commerce and NOAA Fisheries to authorize an Exempted Fishing Permit allowing state managed seasons for the recreational harvest of greater amberjack.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Exempted Fishing Permit could reduce dead discards by allowing a set pre-determined fishing season during months of high interaction with greater amberjack, thus reducing the number of fish caught out of season that would otherwise be discarded during months of the year with higher water temperatures.



Kenneth A. "Andy" Brister, Chairman
Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission