

POTPOURRI

**Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Wildlife and Fisheries Commission**

Public Hearing—Substantive Change to Notice of Intent
Spotted Seatrout Management Measures
(LAC 76:VII.341)

The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission published a Notice of Intent to amend its rules in the November 20, 2022 edition of the Louisiana Register. The commission proposes to amend the original Notice of Intent to modify the proposed statewide minimum size and bag limits for spotted seatrout. The original Notice of Intent proposed a statewide 13.5 inch minimum size limit with a 15 fish bag and possession limit, but was rejected by the Legislative Oversight Committee on February 1, 2023. The commission proposes to amend the original Notice of Intent to establish the minimum size limit of 13 inches and a maximum size limit of 20 inches with an allowance for two fish over the maximum length limit, maintain the proposed 15 fish bag limit, and eliminate the ability for charter guides and/or their deckhands to keep a bag limit while conducting a for-hire trip. The amendments to the proposed Notice of Intent also include a requirement for a stock assessment to be provided to the commission no later than the April 2027 meeting and a sunset of the proposed changes at 12 a.m. on January 1, 2028 unless regulations are modified prior

to that date. These changes are being made based upon public comment provided during the comment period for the original Notice of Intent and during a Legislative Oversight hearing held on February 1, 2023.

Title 76

WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

Part VII. Fish and Other Aquatic Life

Chapter 3. Saltwater Sport and Commercial Fishery

§341. Spotted Seatrout Management Measures

A.-B. ...

C. Recreational Regulations.

1. The daily take and possession limit for spotted seatrout (*Cynoscion nebulosus*) caught recreationally within or without Louisiana waters shall be 15 fish per day and in possession.

2. The minimum legal size for the recreational taking of spotted seatrout (*Cynoscion nebulosus*) shall be 13 inches total length. The maximum legal size for the recreational taking of spotted seatrout shall be 20 inches total length, however, no person shall have in possession while fishing, or while on the water, more than two spotted seatrout which, when whole, is or was over the prescribed maximum size of 20 inches total length overall when measured with the mouth closed.

3. Captain and crew members shall not retain a bag limit of spotted seatrout while operating or representing themselves as a charter vessel or headboat. Captain and crew may engage in fishing activity to assist passengers to catch, retrieve, or land spotted seatrout, or to demonstrate to passengers how to catch spotted seatrout.

4. Not later than the regular monthly commission meeting of April 2027, the department shall present a stock assessment of spotted seatrout to the commission, provide data on whether the size and bag limits above are still needed in order to recover the stock, provide alternative management measures for potential size and bag limit increases if the stock has recovered to target, or provide further needed restrictions if the stock has not recovered to target.

5. On January 1, 2028, unless further action is taken by the commission prior to that date, the size and bag limit for spotted seatrout will revert to a minimum size limit of 12 inches total length and a bag limit of 25 fish per person, except as provided in Subparagraph 5.a.

a. Within those areas of the state, including coastal territorial waters, south of Interstate 10 from its junction at the Texas-Louisiana boundary eastward to its junction with Louisiana Highway 171, south to Highway 14, and then south to Holmwood, and then south on Highway 27 through

Gibbstown south to Louisiana Highway 82 at Creole and south on Highway 82 to Oak Grove, and then due south to the western shore of the Mermentau River, following this shoreline south to the junction with the Gulf of Mexico, and then due south to the limit of the state territorial sea, under the authority of the provisions of R.S. 56:325.1(A), the daily take and possession limit shall be 15 fish, regardless of where taken, with no more than 2 spotted seatrout exceeding 25 inches total length. Those spotted seatrout exceeding 25 inches in length shall be considered as part of the daily recreational take and possession limit.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with Act 157 of the 1991 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, R.S. 56:6(25)(a), R.S. 56:305.5, R.S. 56:305.7, R.S. 56:325.1 (A) and (B), R.S. 56:325.3, R.S. 56:326.3, Act 1316 of the 1995 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, and Act 1164 of the 2003 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, LR 18:199 (February 1992), amended LR 22:238 (March 1996), LR 24:360 (February 1998), LR 26:2333 (October 2000), LR 30:1509 (July 2004), LR 30:2498 (November 2004), repromulgated LR 32:125 (January 2006), amended LR 32:1071 (June 2006), LR 37:355 (January 2011), LR .

Public Hearing

In accordance with R.S. 49:966(H)(2), a public hearing on proposed substantive changes will be held by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries on September 21, 2023 at 10 a.m. in the Joe L. Herring Louisiana Room of the Wildlife and Fisheries Headquarters Building, 2000 Quail Drive, Baton Rouge, LA, 70808. Interested persons are invited to attend and submit oral comments on the proposed amendments.

Andrew J. Blanchard

Chairman