

**Subject:** Reef fish amendment 43 & 45

**Date:** Monday, June 20, 2016 at 2:36:05 PM Eastern Daylight Time

**From:** Helen White

**To:** Gulf Council

Either eliminate amendment 45 for the red snapper or give more tint for fisherman to fish for snapper. Commercial fishermen have 44 days really! Fishermen have 10 days! Weather has not been conducive for fishing fishermen being hurricane season starting early this year. most fishermen work during the week limit their time to fish during a weekend only that 10 period is to short. How can you justify commercial fishermen 44 days to fish if your trying to conserve the species. By our not!

Hogfish are almost impossible to catch my rod you have to dive for them. When male in the pack dies the next largest female changes to make to preserve the species. These fish don't get big like grouper or red snapper. Most divers don't waste a speargun hit on a small hogfish!

Let's be real do something for these fishermen and divers give them a break instead of commercial fishermen and these fishing tournaments that are really wiping out the species not the recreational diver and fishermen who bring a lot of money to this state by having boats.

Sent from my iPhone

My name is Jim Zurbrick, a director for Fish for America USA, a commercial fisher and federal fisheries dealer from Steinhatchee Fl. For the record I'm more than qualified to speak to this issue as during the years 1995 till 2010 my business harvested at least 10% of the hogfish quota for those years. If I was limited to harvesting 16 inch fish I would have deprived the American consumer of approximately 50% of my catch and at the same time would have increased the discard mortality due to the difficulty in judging the larger fish size. One has to be a diver to understand the difficulty in judging size as the smaller fish is very hard not to identify and thus lives to feed a consumer another day.

At the FWC meeting in April a presentation was given on the logic for the increase, a logic that was based primarily on being consistent with the South Atlantic proposed regulation of 16 inch. What a terrible excuse to use when the American consumer will be the one to suffer along with hard working commercial fisher.

The other part of the logic for the increase was the SPR ( Spawning Potential Ratio) would increase and help preserve sustainable biomass, this excuse as good as it sounds is not necessary to maintain and hopefully increase the stock. The Hogfish stock is not overfished nor undergoing over fishing and that leads us to a compromise from 16 inches to 14 inches, This more than satisfies what is necessary to maintain the health of the fishery without damaging recreation and commercial interests.