


UF/IFAS Thomas Wright



## South Atlantic Council Consistency

Final Public Hearing for Dehooking Tools  
Report Date: November 10, 2009

**Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**  
Division of Marine Fisheries Management

At the September 2009 Commission meeting, staff was directed to proceed to a final public hearing with proposed rules that would align state regulations for reef fish gear rules in the Atlantic with recent rule changes in South Atlantic federal waters. Federal rules were implemented that reduce commercial and recreational fishing for several species of shallow-water grouper, including a requirement to use dehooking tools as needed when releasing fish in federal waters. This provision went into effect July 29, 2009 and was designed to lower bycatch mortality of snapper-grouper species. Dehooking tools are widely used by commercial and recreational fishers and are a proven way of reducing handling and associated mortality of fish that are returned to the water. State rules currently specify use of dehooking tools for reef fish in state waters of the Gulf of Mexico. This proposed rule would extend the requirement to use dehooking tools as needed in state waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

Author: Mark Robson

## Proposed State Recreational Rules

### 68B-14.005 Regulation and Prohibition of Certain Harvesting Gear: Allowable Gear, Incidental Bycatch, Violation

- Require a dehooking tool to be aboard commercial and recreational vessels and to be used as needed to remove hooks from fish in the Atlantic Ocean when fishing for reef fish



Rule 68B-14.005, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), would be amended to require a dehooking tool to be aboard commercial and recreational vessels and to be used to remove hooks as needed from fish in the Atlantic Ocean when fishing for reef fish to be consistent with federal regulations.

## Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approving this rule amendment for Atlantic reef fish gear requirements to be consistent with federal reef fish gear requirements



Staff recommends approving this rule amendment for Atlantic reef fish gear requirements in order to be consistent with federal reef fish gear requirements. Staff has evaluated the rules under the standards of 68-1.004, F.A.C. and found them to be in compliance.