In the South Atlantic Region, thriving recreational fisheries support vibrant coastal economies. With 100 species of fish available to saltwater recreational fishermen at any time of year, many unexplored recreational opportunities await anglers in the Southeast United States. While some species like blueline tilefish, greater amberjack, and shallow water groupers have specific seasons, many others like mackerels, dolphinfish (mahimahi), wahoo, and black sea bass can be caught year-round along the Atlantic coast. NOAA Fisheries partners and collaborates with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and state agencies to manage fisheries in the South Atlantic.

### Popular Recreational Species in the South Atlantic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015 Species</th>
<th>Total Catch</th>
<th>Harvested</th>
<th>Released</th>
<th>CAUGHT IN STATE WATERS</th>
<th>CAUGHT IN FEDERAL WATERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kingfish (Whiting)</td>
<td>6,845,079</td>
<td>&gt;99%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spot</td>
<td>6,486,574</td>
<td>&gt;99%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Croaker</td>
<td>5,353,793</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spotted Seatrout</td>
<td>5,085,264</td>
<td>&gt;99%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluefish</td>
<td>4,903,716</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Sea Bass*</td>
<td>3,512,511</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Drum</td>
<td>2,587,007</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellowtail Snapper*</td>
<td>1,609,160</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahimahi</td>
<td>1,218,973</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Mackerel</td>
<td>1,006,175</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Marine Recreational Information Program and the *Southeast Fisheries Science Center
Mahimahi

Mahimahi remains one of the most prized game fish available to recreational anglers in the South Atlantic. From their acrobatic fights, to delicious table fare, this pelagic fish is an angler favorite. Mahimahi are prolific spawners, grow quickly, and have short life spans, which has helped sustain the population throughout its range. Since populations have remained relatively constant over the past decades, Annual Catch Limits have remained high, with a 2017 quota of 13.8 million pounds for the South Atlantic. This has offered anglers continued opportunities to fish without closed seasons and allowed generous bag limits of 10 fish per person. Recent recreational landings, along with anecdotal information from fishermen, indicate a noticeable decrease in the number of mahimahi being caught in the South Atlantic. NOAA Fisheries will work with state partners and fishermen to monitor this change in order to determine the cause and ways to address this trend.

LEARN MORE

In the South Atlantic Region, NOAA Fisheries works closely with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and their member states. For more information visit NOAA Fisheries Southeast Region website.

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**Sources:** Fisheries Economics of the United States 2015, Marine Recreational Information Program

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**2015 Economic Impacts in the South Atlantic**

**In 2015**

- **2.2 million** anglers took
- **16.5 million** fishing trips in the South Atlantic spending
- **$5.3 billion** on trips and durable goods

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**North Carolina**

- **Fishing Trip and Durable Goods Expenditures:** $1.39B
- **Total Sales Impacts:** $1.45B
- **Total Jobs:** 14,163
  - Sales Impacts from Fishing Trips: $473.48M
  - Jobs from Fishing Trips: 4,965

**South Carolina**

- **Fishing Trip and Durable Goods Expenditures:** $629.49M
- **Total Sales Impacts:** $675.56M
- **Total Jobs:** 6,900
  - Sales Impacts from Fishing Trips: $267.02M
  - Jobs from Fishing Trips: 2,870

**Georgia**

- **Fishing Trip and Durable Goods Expenditures:** $131.84
- **Total Sales Impacts:** $142.29M
- **Total Jobs:** 1,433
  - Sales Impacts from Fishing Trips: $37.33M
  - Jobs from Fishing Trips: 345

**East Florida**

- **Fishing Trip and Durable Goods Expenditures:** $3.13B
- **Total Sales Impacts:** $4.02B
- **Total Jobs:** 35,523
  - Sales Impacts from Fishing Trips: $449.70M
  - Jobs from Fishing Trips: 3,968

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**Pie Chart Key**

- **State Waters Contributions**
- **Federal Waters Contributions**

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**Sources:** Fisheries Economics of the United States 2015, Marine Recreational Information Program

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