



October 11, 2011

**CCA FLORIDA**  
**RECOMMENDATIONS**  
**for**  
**FWC SPOTTED SEATROUT MANAGEMENT**

**Recommendations:**

Recreational Fishery:

- Remove closed months for the recreational sector in the Northern and Southern zones.
- Maintain current size and bag limit in these zones.
- Remove cast nets from acceptable gear.

Commercial Fishery

- Maintain the three month commercial season with no increase in daily take.
- Do not allow a incidental by-catch harvest of Seatrout
- Remove cast nets as a form of acceptable gear.

**Comments:**

Spotted Seatrout are meeting their management goal of 35% spawning potential ratio (SPR) set by FWC in all four regions of Florida. The lowest region in Florida is the northwest where Seatrout are at 36.6% SPR and FWC is recommending a two month extension on the three month commercial fishery along with opening a five month fishery in the northwest zone during the winter months. They have also been requested to consider a by-catch allowance for incidental catch, and are considering increasing the boat limit from 75 fish to 150 fish as long as there are two licensed commercial fishermen in the boat.

These proposed rules are being made in conjunction with the proposed removal of the closed recreational months, resulting in one or two additional months depending on the section of Florida. CCA is in favor of the removal of the closed months for the recreational anglers because of the potential in increased spending from fishermen and the help to our economy, but we are concerned with the increase in commercial pressure. FWC estimates that the commercial take of Seatrout is currently just over 2%, and do not feel that these changes will cause this percentage to increase. CCA is concerned that these changes will result in additional harvest due to more commercial fishermen targeting Seatrout, as well as the additional months.

Recreational Seatrout fishing is one of the most popular fisheries among Florida residents along with many tourists that travel to Florida to catch these fish. South Carolina, Alabama, and Texas have all given "Game Fish Status" to Spotted Seatrout. Georgia has the same daily bag limit for both recreational and commercial fisherman. These four states have already set a precedent for how valuable the Seatrout fishery is for the recreational fisherman and the long term goal of CCA Florida is to see Seatrout as a no sale status fishery in this state as well.



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Currently, Seatrout may be taken only by hook and line or by cast net. CCA Florida believes that this fishery should be a hook and line fishery only. During the colder months Seatrout congregate in the deep holes in rivers and creeks and become more susceptible to take especially from a cast net.

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