



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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Commercial Harvest of the Parrotfish Species Group in Federal Waters off Puerto Rico will Close on December 19, 2016

Commercial Fishing Closure

NOAA Fisheries reminds fishers and the general public that the 2016 fishing season for the commercial harvest of the parrotfish species group, including queen (*Scarus vetula*), princess (*Scarus taeniopterus*), striped (*Scarus iseri*), redband (*Sparisoma aurofrenatum*), redfin (*Sparisoma rubripinne*), redband (*Sparisoma chrysopterus*), and stoplight (*Sparisoma viride*), will close at **12:01 a.m. (local time) on December 19, 2016**. The fishing season will reopen at 12:01 a.m. (local time) on January 1, 2017. During the closure, parrotfish caught in federal waters off Puerto Rico may not be purchased or sold.

NOAA Fisheries determined that the annual catch limit for the parrotfish species group in federal waters around Puerto Rico was exceeded based on average landings during the 2012-2014 fishing years. Therefore, NOAA Fisheries is applying accountability measures to reduce the length of the 2016 fishing season for this species group by the amount necessary to ensure landings do not exceed the annual catch limit again.

NOAA Fisheries also reminds the public that the harvest of midnight (*Scarus coelestinus*), blue (*Scarus coeruleus*), and rainbow (*Scarus guacamaia*) parrotfish has been prohibited in federal waters of the U.S. Caribbean since 2012.

U.S. Caribbean federal waters around Puerto Rico extend from the nine nautical mile seaward boundary of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico out to 200 nautical miles offshore.