

# The Great Red Snapper Count Tagging Study



A scientist uses a dart tag applicator (above) to tag a red snapper. Photo by David Hay Jones

This fact sheet describes the tagging component of the Great Red Snapper Count, which is a 2-year research project to estimate the abundance of red snapper in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico. This study will include recreational and commercial fishers as a critical component of the scientific process.

## Who will tag the fish?

To ensure consistency, all red snapper will be tagged by scientists who are working on the Great Red Snapper Count, in collaboration with recreational and commercial fishers.

## How many red snapper will be tagged?

Approximately 4,000 legal-sized red snapper will be tagged.

## When and where will tagging occur?

Tagging will happen in spring 2019, prior to the federal Gulf of Mexico red snapper recreational fishing season. Red snapper will be tagged and released across the U.S. Gulf of Mexico.

## What do the tags look like, and where will they be located on the fish?

The tags are yellow and have text beginning with “RS” followed by a unique five-digit ID number, along with a phone number to call for reporting the recaptures. Tags will be placed beneath the dorsal fin. Some fish will have two tags so that tag shedding rates can be estimated.

Tags used in this tagging study (below) will be bright yellow with a unique five-digit ID number.

Photo by Judd Curtis, Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi



Questions or comments? Contact the project team at [snappercount@harterresearchinstitute.org](mailto:snappercount@harterresearchinstitute.org).

For more information, visit [snappercount.org](http://snappercount.org).

## What types of information should fishers document before reporting a recapture?

- The fishing port from which they departed
- The date the fish was caught
- The fish's tag ID ("RSXXXXX")
- The fish's length and weight
- The latitude and longitude where the fish was caught

## How can recreational and commercial fishers become involved in the study?

Fishers can become involved by recapturing tagged fish and then reporting those recaptures by calling the phone number printed on the tags.

## What is the reward for reporting a tagged fish?

Tags from recaptured fish will be worth \$250 per fish. Some double-tagged fish may be worth up to \$500. The physical tag must be mailed in to claim the reward, so fishers should always clip off and save the tag, even if they plan to release the fish. Fishers who report their recapture information and return the physical tag to the research team will receive a reward. If a fish has two tags, both tags should be reported and returned. Rewards will be issued through December 31, 2019.



A tagged red snapper ready to be released into Gulf waters.  
Photo by the Center for Sportfish Science and Conservation

## How will this tagging study contribute to the overall abundance estimate?

Tag returns will be combined with estimates of catch and effort from participating fishers to estimate red snapper abundance.

This independent study is being conducted by a leading team of red snapper scientists from across the Gulf of Mexico and beyond:



This publication was supported by the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration under NOAA Award NA16OAR4170181, the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, and the Mississippi State University Extension Service. The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of any of these organizations.

Publication 3354 (POD-05-21)  
MASGP-18-019-05

By **Amanda E. Jefferson**, Extension Associate, and **J. Marcus Drymon**, PhD, Assistant Extension Professor, Coastal Research and Extension Center.

Copyright 2022 by Mississippi State University. All rights reserved. This publication may be copied and distributed without alteration for nonprofit educational purposes provided that credit is given to the Mississippi State University Extension Service.

Produced by Agricultural Communications.

Mississippi State University is an equal opportunity institution. Discrimination in university employment, programs, or activities based on race, color, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, status as a U.S. veteran, or any other status protected by applicable law is prohibited.

Extension Service of Mississippi State University, cooperating with U.S. Department of Agriculture. Published in furtherance of Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914. GARY B. JACKSON, Director