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**CCGF**

# Press Release

## **NOVEMBER 7, 2009: A HISTORIC DAY FOR FISHERIES AND FISHERMEN**

**Gulf of Mexico, November 8, 2009:** November 7, 2009 is a day that will live in many people's memories for a long time. From the Panhandle of Florida through the Louisiana coast recreational anglers, commercial fishermen, charter boat owners and coastal businesses gathered together for a peaceful on the water protest against devastating management measures put forth due to the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Over 250 vessels and a conservative estimate of over 10,000 affected families and supporters turned out for the event.

In January 2007, President Bush signed into law the reauthorization of the Magnuson Stevens Fishery and Conservation and Management Act. Among many new requirements the RMSA established new regulatory mandates based on a required timeline. Congress mandated that the National Marine Fisheries Service implement an improved Marine Recreational Fishing Statistical Survey by January 2009. They mandated that the NMFS stop overfishing of all fish species under going overfishing by 2010 and all other fisheries under going over fishing by 2011.

The NMFS has failed to comply with the mandate for an improved MRFSS data system by January 2009 and still does not have an improved recreational data system. The NMFS is working to comply with the mandate for stopping overfishing of all fish species by 2010, without an improved data system. The unintended impacts of the Congressional mandates has caused severe economic and social harm to small family fishing businesses, anglers, support businesses, local fishing communities, and the coastal states. In the Gulf of Mexico, the Total Allowable Catch of red snapper has been reduced from 9.12 million pounds to 5 million pounds, the recreational bag limit reduced from 4 fish to 2 fish, the recreational red snapper fishing season reduced from 6 months to 30 days or less for 2010. The greater amberjack recreational fishery was closed on October 23rd; the commercial fishery was closed on November 6th. The recreational gag grouper fishery now has a two month closure and the recreational bag limit reduced from 5 fish to 2 fish.

In the South Atlantic area from North Carolina through Florida, the red snapper fishery has been targeted to be shut down within the next few months, the grouper fishery is facing extended closures and the recreational bag limit reduced to 1 fish per person. The recreational vermilion snapper fishery now has a 5 month closure and the bag limit reduced to 5 fish per person. Massive area fishery closures are proposed in the South Atlantic area. The recreational sea bass fishery in the North East was shut down on October 5th. These are just some of the massive restrictions, closures and seasonal adjustments being created by the NMFS due to the RMSA.

Saturday November 7, 2009 Thousands of individuals came out to tell congress that people should matter and they need to fix the Act that has created chaos among so many Americans. There is no

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excuse for putting rigid deadlines on rebuilding plans for resources that create livelihoods for so many families and small businesses.

These people want congress to save the people while they are protecting resources. Many said, "We aren't going to take it anymore!" They want congress to stand up, take responsibility and relax laws so that people and resources can survive together.

House of Representatives Bill HR1584 and Senate Bill S1255 both address the issue of "overfished" in the RMSA. We need Congress to amend both bills to relax the overly restrictive "overfishing" requirements and pass both bills. Relaxing the "overfishing" requirements of the RMSA will allow the NMFS to ease up on the regulations and will keep the small family businesses, their families, and communities sustainable while allowing the fisheries to rebuild.

*CCGF is a 501(c) (6) non profit that represents recreational for-hire vessel owners and operators, supporting businesses, and recreational anglers from the Gulf of Mexico*