



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

September 26, 2023

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
Governor of Florida
The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Governor DeSantis:

Thank you for your letter requesting a federal fishery resource disaster determination pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) due to the effects of Hurricane Idalia on Florida's Big Bend region. I am responding on behalf of the Secretary of Commerce to acknowledge receipt of your request and to inform you that the Fishery Resource Disasters Improvement Act, which was passed in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, has amended the MSA. In accordance with the statute, the Secretary is required to respond with her determination within 120 days after receipt of a complete request containing all the necessary data to conduct the analysis.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) conducts the evaluation needed for the Secretary's fishery resource disaster determinations. NMFS will work with the State of Florida and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to assess whether a fishery resource disaster has occurred under the MSA.

Based on our initial review of your request, we will need the following information to assess whether a fishery resource disaster has occurred under the MSA. The State of Florida has up to 1 year from the date of this acknowledgment letter to submit all necessary information. To ensure we have a complete request, please provide all of the following information to our Southeast Region Point of Contact, Mike Travis, at mike.travis@noaa.gov:

- A clear definition of the fishery(ies) and sector(s) (e.g., commercial, dealer/processors) or components thereof (e.g., the for-hire component of the recreational sector), including identification of all presumed affected fish stocks, the appropriate fishery management entity or entities (federal or non-federal), and the geographical boundaries of the relevant fishery or fisheries.¹
- Twelve months of finalized revenue data for the affected fishery(ies) and sector(s) or components thereof of the requested fishery resource disaster.
- Annual revenues of the affected fishery by sector for the most recent 5 years when there were no positive fishery resource disaster determinations.

¹ The fishery as a whole is typically considered; for a federal fishery, NMFS will use the fishery as described in the relevant federal fishery management plan, though the requester(s) may provide a rationale for sub-units of a fishery or sub-regions, based on how the fishery is managed (i.e., for a state fishery the sub-units or sub-regions should have been treated as a unit for management purposes prior to the disaster).



If available/applicable, please provide additional information:

- Fishery characteristics (size and value; number of participants; whether jobs are full- or part-time; status of recovery from previous fishery resource disasters; and landings data).
- Length of time the fishery (or access to it) has been or will be restricted.
- Any additional information you are able to provide about the cause of the fishery resource disaster (e.g., published research, stock assessments, state reports, status of recovery from previous fishery resource disasters).
- If applicable, any negative impacts to ceremonial or subsistence fishing activities.
- If applicable, information on lost resource tax revenues for the 12 months of the disaster year and the previous 5-year average.

We look forward to working with you on this request. If you have any questions, please contact Makeda Okolo, Director of NOAA's Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, at makeda.okolo@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Janet Coit". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a stylized "C".

Janet Coit
Assistant Administrator
for Fisheries