

overfishing and rebuild the stock within 10 years. It estimates that 40 to 50 percent catch reductions are necessary to end overfishing and to rebuild vermilion snapper. Ongoing efforts have already identified options to achieve these reductions.

We are now required to develop a formal rebuilding plan. I anticipate that a single amendment to the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan can serve as a rebuilding plan and also enact measures to end

overfishing. This administrative strategy could potentially delay efforts to end overfishing of vermilion snapper. Consequently, I am willing to issue an interim rule sooner, if necessary, to end overfishing once suitable regulations have been identified.

I look forward to working with the Council in developing a plan for rebuilding the vermilion snapper stock.

Sincerely yours,

Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.  
Regional Administrator

Dated: October 30, 2003.

**Bruce C. Morehead,**

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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