



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DPNR ANNOUNCES NEW SUSTAINABILITY MEASURES FOR YELLOWTAIL SNAPPER

In recognition of World Fisheries Day on November 21st, Commissioner Jean-Pierre L. Oriol of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) highlights the essential role fishers play in preserving marine resources. With guidance from the territorial Fishery Advisory Committees, DPNR is implementing new management measures for yellowtail snapper (*Ocyurus chrysurus*)—a species that is both culturally and economically significant in the U.S. Virgin Islands. To align territorial regulations with federal protections under 50 CFR 622.481 and 50 CFR 622.516, the following rule is now in effect:

- Minimum Size Requirement: All yellowtail snapper harvested in territorial waters around St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John must measure **at least 12 inches in total length**.

This size limit ensures fish have the opportunity to reproduce before harvest, supporting long-term sustainability of the species.

Compliance and Enforcement

- Fish under 12 inches must be released immediately with minimal harm.
- Vessel operators are responsible for ensuring compliance.
- Possessing, selling, or purchasing undersized yellowtail snapper is prohibited.

These measures, consistent with Title 12 of the Virgin Islands Code and Title 50 CFR Part 622, create a unified standard for territorial and federal waters, simplifying compliance for local fishers. Violations may result in enforcement actions. For additional details, visit dpnr.vi.gov or contact:

- Division of Fish and Wildlife:
 - St. Croix: (340) 773-1082
 - St. Thomas: (340) 775-6762
- Division of Environmental Enforcement:
 - St. Croix: (340) 773-5774
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