

Alabama Department of
Conservation & Natural Resources
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CONTACT: Vern Minton



From left-right: Chief Marine Biologist Steve Heath, Tournament Director Tony Kennon, ADCNR Comm. M. Barnett Lawley, Tom Steber, Gov. Bob Riley, Captain Maurice Fitzsimmons, Marine Resources Division Dir. R. Vernon Minton

Marine Resources Division Receives \$50,000 For State's Offshore Artificial Reef Program

Captain Maurice Fitzsimmons, Tom Steber and Tony Kennon of the Red Snapper World Championship presented Marine Resources Division Director Vern Minton a check for \$50,000 on Nov. 26 at Craft Farms in Gulf Shores, Alabama. The money will be used as match for the Sportfish Restoration monies to continue building offshore artificial reefs.

"Since its inception in 2004, the Red Snapper World Championship has been a very successful tournament and has helped generate a lot of revenue for coastal Alabama," said Gov. Bob Riley. "Their continued commitment in supporting Alabama's Artificial Offshore Reef Program is very much appreciated."

In partnership with the Marine Resources Division of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR), the tournament has donated \$50,000 each year to be used as matching money for the federal SportFish Restoration program. The 3:1 match creates \$200,000 yearly.

"This is a great cooperative effort that has produced a tremendous amount of habitat to the benefit of the fishery resources and the fishermen," said Minton. "The program has been able to place 864 artificial reefs in the permit area, creating excellent habitat for reef fishes like red snapper and grouper." Approximately 1,200 square miles of offshore waters are included in the artificial reef general permit areas of Alabama, making this the largest artificial reef program in the United States.

ADCNR Commissioner M. Barnett Lawley said, "We look forward to continuing this successful working relationship in the future and appreciate the opportunity to share in this tremendous tournament." The Red Snapper World Championship is held each spring in Orange Beach, Alabama. Hundreds of anglers from all over the nation participate in the tournament for cash and prizes.

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources promotes wise stewardship, management and enjoyment of Alabama's natural resources through five divisions: Marine Police, Marine Resources, State Lands, State Parks, and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries. To learn more about ADCNR, visit www.outdooralabama.com.

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