

## **FISH STATUS REPORT**

**Volume 1 — Spring/Summer 2026**

***“Let the wild remain wild.”***

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### **A MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE OF GEORGIA**

The Genesis 1:26 Project was created for one purpose:

To educate, inform, and advocate for the long-term protection and restoration of our saltwater fisheries for future generations.

This is not a political movement.

This is a public-trust conservation initiative grounded in:

- stewardship,
- sustainability,
- transparency,
- accountability,
- and the future of our children’s inheritance.

Georgia’s fish and wildlife belong to the people under O.C.G.A. § 27-1-3.

That means these resources must be protected and managed for long-term sustainability — not only for today, but for future generations yet to come.

The Genesis 1:26 Project believes we cannot pass:

- deregulation,
- de minimis classifications,
- ecosystem decline,
- and diminishing public opportunity

on to our children as the future of fisheries management.

Now is the time for the public to become informed and engaged.

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## **WHY THIS MOMENT MATTERS**

In February 2026, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division (CRD) conducted the Red Drum Town Hall meetings in Brunswick and Richmond Hill, Georgia.

Those meetings revealed something many citizens had never fully heard discussed publicly before:

- ecosystem concerns,
- bycatch concerns,
- de minimis classifications,
- deregulation,
- and the absence of rebuilding pathways for several foundational saltwater fish species.

At the same time, Georgia's only saltwater game fish species — red drum — was being discussed under increasing management concern.

That moment matters.

Because a sustainable fishery cannot depend upon one protected species alone while the surrounding ecosystem continues weakening beneath it.

A sustainable fishery requires:

- healthy foundational fish populations,
- ecosystem balance,
- diversification,
- adult age-class rebuilding,
- and long-term stewardship.

Without those things, pressure increasingly concentrates onto the few remaining protected species while the broader ecosystem weakens beneath them.

That is not long-term sustainability.

That is a warning sign.

The purpose of this newsletter is not to tell citizens what to think.

The purpose is to provide information, research, public documents, and conservation history so the people of Georgia can examine the facts and draw their own conclusions.

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## **WHY THE GENESIS 1:26 PROJECT EXISTS**

The Genesis 1:26 Project was founded to educate the public about:

- Game Fish Status,
- public-trust conservation,
- fisheries-management history,
- ecosystem stewardship,
- and the long-term sustainability of America's saltwater fisheries.

For more than a century, America responded to wildlife decline by strengthening protections surrounding wild public resources through:

- game animal laws,
- game bird protections,
- freshwater game fish status,
- restoration programs,
- and public-trust conservation.

Those protections helped restore:

- deer,
- turkey,
- waterfowl,
- black bass,
- striped bass,
- trout,

- and countless additional wildlife populations across the United States.

The Genesis 1:26 Project believes Georgia's saltwater fisheries deserve the same long-term stewardship principles already applied to nearly every other wild public resource in America.

The question now facing Georgia is simple:

### **Why should saltwater fisheries be treated differently?**

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#### **WE ARE ALREADY ENGAGED**

The Genesis 1:26 Project is not standing on the sidelines.

Representative Rick Townsend became the Genesis 1:26 Project's initial legislative contact regarding ecosystem concerns, public-trust fisheries management, and Game Fish Status discussions in Georgia.

Educational and research materials prepared through the Genesis 1:26 Project — including fisheries-management analysis and ecosystem-review documents — were shared directly with legislators and fisheries officials.

Importantly, one ecosystem-review document submitted through the Genesis 1:26 Project was introduced onto the floor of the Georgia General Assembly during the 2026 legislative session through Representative Rick Townsend for consideration of ecosystem review and long-term public-trust sustainability concerns.

The Genesis 1:26 Project also submitted a formal 30-question fisheries-management review to CRD in order to better understand and explain fisheries terminology, management structures, de minimis classifications, deregulation history, and public-trust implications to both legislators and the public.

Additional conversations have also taken place with Representative Buddy DeLoach and other officials interested in learning more about the future of Georgia's coast and fisheries resources.

As this process continues, the Genesis 1:26 Project intends to help keep the public informed regarding:

- ecosystem-review discussions,
- fisheries-management developments,
- public-trust concerns,

- and legislative responses affecting Georgia's coastal future.

This matters because the people of Georgia deserve transparency regarding decisions affecting their public resources and the future of their fisheries.

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## **WHY PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT MATTERS**

Many citizens still do not fully understand terms such as:

- de minimis,
- deregulation,
- bycatch,
- ecosystem-based management,
- or public-trust fisheries protection.

That is exactly why this newsletter exists.

The Genesis 1:26 Project was created to help educate the public so citizens can:

- understand what is happening,
- review the public documents,
- examine the timelines,
- think critically,
- and respectfully engage with fisheries managers and elected officials.

If you care about:

- the future of fishing,
- your children,
- public access,
- conservation,
- ecosystem sustainability,
- and Georgia's coastal future,

then now is the time to become involved.

Silence cannot rebuild a fishery.

Public engagement can.

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## **THE RED DRUM TOWN HALL RESPONSE**

The Genesis 1:26 Project has already submitted a formal public response regarding the February 2026 Red Drum Town Hall meetings.

We encourage every citizen to:

- read the attached documents,
- review the concerns raised,
- and respectfully submit their own comments and concerns as well.

You do not need to be a scientist or a politician.

You simply need to care about the future of Georgia's fishery and speak honestly in your own words.

Tell decision-makers:

- why the fishery matters to you,
- why long-term sustainability matters,
- why public-trust conservation matters,
- and why future generations deserve healthy wild resources.

The people of Georgia deserve:

- healthy ecosystems,
- healthy fisheries,
- public opportunity,
- and management philosophies built around long-term sustainability rather than decline.

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## **A PUBLIC-TRUST QUESTION GEORGIA MUST CONSIDER**

One of the central questions now facing Georgia is whether long-term ecosystem sustainability inside state waters can coexist with unlimited industrial-scale extraction and uncounted discard mortality inside critical nursery habitat.

The Genesis 1:26 Project believes this is a legitimate public-trust question worthy of serious public discussion.

Georgia retains authority over its state waters from the shoreline to three nautical miles offshore.

The project believes it is reasonable for citizens and policymakers to examine whether portions of those state waters should function more strongly as protected public-trust nursery habitat capable of rebuilding:

- foundational fish populations,
- ecosystem diversity,
- public recreational opportunity,
- and long-term sustainability.

This is not opposition to sustainable shrimp harvest.

This is a call for serious public discussion regarding balance, stewardship, and the long-term future of Georgia's coastal ecosystem.

Healthy ecosystems do not happen by accident.

They are protected through stewardship, accountability, conservation, and public engagement.

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## **ATTACHED EDUCATIONAL DOCUMENTS**

The following educational and research materials accompany this newsletter and are available through GoFishUSA.com and the Genesis 1:26 Project:

### **Attached Documents**

1. *Public Comment Response — Red Drum Town Hall*
2. *Bycatch Scale, Diversification, and the Public Trust in Georgia's Coastal Fishery*
3. THE FISHERY WE WERE NEVER SHOWN

These materials were prepared for:

- public education,
- conservation awareness,
- fisheries-management transparency,
- and long-term sustainability discussion.

We encourage every citizen to review these materials carefully and draw their own conclusions.

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## **ABOUT THE BOOK**

Captain Mark Noble's book, *The Saltwater Fisherman's New Testament*, expands on many of the topics discussed in this newsletter, including:

- Game Fish Status,
- public-trust conservation,
- fisheries-management history,
- ecosystem sustainability,
- the Magnuson-Stevens Act,
- bycatch,
- and the future of America's saltwater fisheries, including the grouper-snapper complex.

The book is available in Kindle and paperback editions through Amazon.

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## **GENESIS 1:26**

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth...”

— Genesis 1:26 (KJV)

The Genesis 1:26 Project believes stewardship carries responsibility.

Not merely the right to use a resource —

but the duty to protect it for future generations.

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## **FINAL MESSAGE**

Georgia still has time.

But the public must become informed and engaged now.

The Genesis 1:26 Project was created because there is currently no major organization singularly focused on advancing Game Fish Status and long-term public-trust stewardship for saltwater fisheries.

That must change.

Our children deserve:

- healthy ecosystems,
- healthy fisheries,
- public opportunity,
- and a future built on stewardship rather than decline.

We invite you to:

- subscribe,
- stay informed,
- share these materials,
- engage respectfully,
- and stand with us for the future of our fisheries.

**Let the wild remain wild.**