

From: "Alan M." <amarcafina@aol.com>
Date: Friday, March 24, 2017 at 4:11 PM
To: John Milner <gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org>
Subject: insane



Snapper season just got shorter

Snapper season just got shorter (AGAIN) due to actions by Buddy Guindon and Co.

<https://docs.justia.com/cases/federa...2256/176077/30>

The judge reversed the reallocation back to the commercial IFQ shareholders so now we are back at the 51% commercial and 49% recreational.

Apparently greed has no bounds. The small pittance of fish that the Gulf Council reallocated to the recreational side is too much for the Sea Lords? This will come back to bite them on their backside I believe.

Consider that commercial IFQ shareholders enjoy harvesting 130% of pre-IFQ levels (6.0 mp now vs 4.65 mp in 2006) and commercial IFQ shareholders enjoy 300% of pre-IFQ access (365 days now vs 120 days 2006).

Also consider that recreational fishermen enjoy just 3% of pre-IFQ levels in 2016 (11 days / 2 fish bag limits in 2016 vs 194 days / 4 fish bag limits in 2006). This will probably drop to the 1% to 2% range this year with the payback provision for supposed overages as well as the reduction in our allocation due to the reallocation being taken away. This ridiculous situation is nearing its tipping point.

Obviously the system has been hijacked by the introduction of Catch Shares in 2007 to benefit commercial corporations at the direct expense of all recreational fishermen and the nation itself.

This requires immediate drastic action to correct this severe imbalance in our fisheries "management".

Alan M.

From: Dale Perkins <daleperk@aol.com>

Date: Wednesday, March 22, 2017 at 10:35 PM

To: John Milner <gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org>

Subject: All white racial bias in government give away program?

Please see the letter below that was sent to Congressman Garrett Graves.

3-22-17

Dear Congressman Garrett Graves,

My name is Dale Perkins and I live in Pensacola Florida. I am recreational fisherman. For years I have been dismayed over federal mismanagement and special interest privatization of the Gulf of Mexico by the Gulf Council, Roy Crabtree and the National Marine Fisheries Service. I served briefly on the Gulf Council Red Snapper Advisory Committee and was so dismayed by what I saw that I made a motion for a congressional investigation into the gulf council. After that motion received no second, I resigned from the committee, released a press statement, got some attention briefly, but no change ever resulted from it. The mismanagement is not only red snapper but also many other species. Currently trigger fish have become a real nuisance and are damaging recreational fishing opportunities for other species due to federal incompetence.

To me what is most appalling is the gifting of a formerly public resource to a few well connected good ole boys. Many of the people who have red snapper IFQ's or special charter permits were in fact on gulf council committees and took part in the recommendations that resulted in their enrichment. Now these individuals do not even have to fish to earn a living they just sell the right to fish (given to them by the government) to others who do the work.

I have heard that your House Resolution 3094 proposes returning fisheries management of red snapper to the states. I would encourage that we do this not only for red snapper but for all gulf species. Some of the commercial fisherman over here in the Florida Panhandle are saying that Florida gets treated unfairly by your bill and will use that to wedge our delegation away from it. Please adjust the bill if possible.

To me one of the most blatant (and heretofore unaddressed) problems with the **Gulf Council is the inherent racial bias in all of their decisions.** Their IFQ giveaway of billions of US dollars in a no-bid deal with no royalties for the public resource appears to have gone almost exclusively to white people. I know of no African American IFQ holder or Charter Boat permittee and certainly no special exemption permittee. I come from a large multi-racial family and was forced out of the charter boat business by excessive governmental regulation by the gulf council. I would love to get back into it but am excluded because my permit was not renewed in a timely manner and I was told it could not be renewed. My minority family members were able to enjoy this public resource before it was privatized by the Gulf Council. I ask you and your fellow

members of congress to consider the inherent racial bias as just one element of mismanagement by the Gulf Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service, but as a very problematic one that need to be addressed and could be better addressed by the states rather than the federal government.

Sincerely,

Captain Dale Perkins
3722 Dunwoody Drive
Pensacola, FL 32503

850-207-5826



Kevin Anson, Chairman
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
2203 North Lois Ave, Suite 1100
Tampa, FL 33607

August 14, 2016

Dear Chairman Anson,

On behalf of the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance (Shareholders' Alliance), please accept the following comments on the following issues to be discussed at the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council) meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana this week.

Amendment 36a (Commercial IFQ Modifications).

- **Action 1 - We support the expansion of hail requirements.** Measures like this will improve enforcement and close loopholes that undermine the individual fishing quota (IFQ) program. We'll continue to work with the Gulf Council and other industry groups to determine how extensive this should be.
- **Action 2.1 - We support the closing of red snapper/grouper-tilefish IFQ accounts that have never been activated (Alternative 4).** Allowing commercial access to this allocation will help achieve optimum yield and will provide economic benefit to the commercial sector and seafood-consuming public.
- **Action 2.2 – We support redistribution of shares from accounts that have never been activated.** To that end, we support maximizing the value/impact of these shares by using them to address a clearly-defined fishery problem. Red snapper discards and fishery transition to the next generation have been identified as concerns with the current IFQ systems. If the Gulf Council agrees, we hope this body will explore viable, efficient, and effective means for applying these shares to address this problem. Industry-run quota banks have demonstrated success throughout the country in addressing fishery problems through the creative and cooperative use of allocation/shares. The Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Quota Bank is an example that exists in this region that can publicly demonstrate a track record of reducing red snapper discards and assisting the next generation of red snapper fishermen. Please see Tab B, #6 in the Gulf Council briefing book for more information about this program. **We strongly encourage the Gulf Council to include an alternative in this Action to distribute the annual allocation associated with the shares in question to participants through an industry-run quota bank** and we look forward to working with the Gulf Council to develop a plan that details how this program would achieve its stated goals and meet the needs of the Gulf Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

- We believe that habitat protection and selective commercial fishing activities are not mutually exclusive activities. To that end, **we continue to support the inclusion of a regulatory alternative in the DEIS document that would detail a comprehensive commercial endorsement and certification program**

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that would allow qualifying commercial fishermen to continue to operate within proposed boundaries. Please see Appendix 1 for more details on this proposed program.

- The DEIS falls short in a number of other areas, including:
 - The document states that “NOAA considered but eliminated from further evaluation regulatory alternatives including fishery closures or permit requirements...” (p. 3-2) yet provides no detail for why these ideas were rejected. These details should be provided.
 - NOAA is required to look at a reasonable range of alternatives for a management action. The DEIS states that NOAA has “developed a reasonable range of *spatial* alternatives...” (p. 3-1, emphasis added) which is not equivalent. Limiting the range of alternatives to only spatial ones excludes any other reasonable alternatives from being considered, which may violate the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and would certainly overly restrict the analysis.
 - The DEIS states that its purpose is to “expand, as appropriate, the network of protected areas...” (p. 2-1) which indicates that expansion is a foregone conclusion. This is reiterated on page 5-37 where the document states “Alternative 1, the ‘No Action’ alternative, would not fulfil the purpose described in Section 2.1 or the need described in Section 2.2.” In our opinion, a legitimate Purpose would set the stage for a determination of whether an expansion is necessary, not prematurely dictate this determination.
 - There are 153 pages in the document (excluding the Appendices), yet there is only one page of commercial fishing analysis in the “Affected Environment” section and two pages of analysis in the “Analysis of Environmental Consequences.” This hardly seems sufficient.
 - None of the maps of the proposed areas include coordinates or depth contours (p. 3-3 through p. 3-14). How can commercial fishermen give input on the impacts of these closures if they don’t know exactly where the boundaries are?
 - Page 5-19 of the DEIS states that the negative impact on commercial fishing is “less than significant... due to its low level of intensity in the context of the total commercial fishing industry activity in the north central Gulf of Mexico, and considering the mitigating factors identified below (i.e. potential for gear substitution, mooring buoy installations).” The paragraph goes on to say “Effort by boats fishing with bandit reel or hand gear would be affected to a lesser degree than effort by bottom longliners or shrimp trawlers...” and “As described in Chapter 4, many boats carry multiple permit types.” It sounds like NOAA has determined that some of the harm imposed on commercial fishermen will be alleviated if they just switched gear types. However, there is no analysis whatsoever of the economic, social, regulatory, and biological cost/benefits for fishermen to switch gear types.
- Given that the Advisory Council has not had a formal opportunity to comment on the most recent boundary changes and the new information that led to these changes, **we strongly recommend that the Advisory Council be convened as soon as possible to review this information** and that a subsequent round of public hearings be conducted throughout the Gulf of Mexico that inform another DEIS prior to the Final EIS being developed.

Ad Hoc Private Angler Advisory Panel (AP).

- **We support the Gulf Council continuing to move forward with this AP.** We are glad to see the cycle of delay finally broken and we look forward to seeing these anglers finally given a seat at the table and a direct voice in management by the January 2017 deadline. We encourage the Gulf Council to choose candidates that not only recreationally fish, but who are committed to collaboratively and creatively solving problems and working with the Gulf Council and staff to ensure that this happens.

Charter/For-Hire Management (Amendments 41 and 42)

- **We support the Gulf Council continuing to move forward with Amendment 41 and 42 to develop charter/for-hire and headboat red snapper and reef fish management plans.** Doing so will afford these groups the opportunity to develop accountable management plans that work for their businesses and promote sustainable harvesting.

Amendment 33 (Reef Fish LAPP).

- **We continue to support the Gulf Council directing staff to proceed with the Amendment 33 document.** While not specifically on the agenda for this meeting, we hope that the Gulf Council will consider convening the Reef Fish AP to address management improvements for reef fish species not presently included in the IFQ systems. For example, greater amberjack continues to fail to meet its rebuilding requirements, remains overfished, has experienced commercial quota overages in seven of the last eight years, and has undergone commercial fishery closures prior to September every year since 2009 (the season closed on March 1 in 2012). There must be a better way to manage the commercial amberjack fishery. At this point, it's unclear whether or not an IFQ program would best solve some/all of these problems; but we do believe that the Reef Fish AP deserves the chance to review an updated document to decide whether or not to recommend moving forward and to start discussing IFQ issues for this and other applicable species. Please see Appendix 2 for more details on this proposal.

H.R. 3094

- We strongly encourage the Gulf Council to demonstrate its commitment to improving recreational red snapper management by defending itself against harmful federal legislation that strips it of its Congressionally-created authority. **We ask the Gulf Council to send a letter to Congressman Garret Graves' (R-LA) to inform him that you have initiated a private angler AP and a recreational red snapper management strategy in order to address shortened seasons and reduced angler access.** Not only is H.R. 3094 an unfunded mandate that's being imposed on commercial fishermen against their will or consent, it has now become a pointless waste of taxpayer time and money. We continue to believe that the Gulf Council – comprised of committed recreational, charter, and commercial fishing representatives as well as scientific and state agents - should be managing the nation's federal fishery resources, not solely 3 state bureaucrats. We hope you will defend yourselves from this bold and reckless attack on your credibility by letting Congressman Graves know that H.R. 3094 is unnecessary.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Eric Brazer, Deputy Director
Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance

APPENDIX 1

Flower Garden Banks Commercial Fishing Endorsement Program Proposal

Problem Statement	Existing proposals for the expansion of the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary incorporate heavy restrictions on commercial fishing activities that impose economic hardship on commercial fishing businesses and could disrupt the seafood supply chain.
Solution	We are seeking the development of a comprehensive commercial fishing endorsement program that would allow continued responsible commercial access to the proposed closures while at the same time protecting important habitat structures.
Goal & Objectives	<p>The goal of this program is to demonstrate that habitat protection and commercial fishing operations are not mutually exclusive. The objectives of this program are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain continued commercial fishing access to proposed closure areas.• Identify and codify commercial fishing operations protocols that minimize harmful habitat impacts.• Develop a comprehensive training course for fishermen to attend.• Educate commercial fishermen on the ecological importance of complex benthic habitat.
Eligibility Criteria	<p>Program standards will be developed through a series of public workshops and other opportunities for public input. These may include but would not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completion of a comprehensive training course that details sustainable harvesting and vessel operational practices that minimize habitat impact.• Receipt and maintenance of a program certification that would permit approved commercial fishing operations to occur within the areas in question.• Use of a working VMS.
Best Practices	<p>An Operations Plan and Agreement will be developed through a series of public workshops and other opportunities for public input. This document must be signed by anyone who wishes to participate in the program, and may include but would not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agreement to operate with higher levels of accountability including mandatory observer coverage and/or operation of a working electronic video monitoring system.• Agreement to minimize habitat impacts through adjustments in fishing behavior or gear configuration.• Agreement to increased data collection and reporting.• Agreement that fishing opportunities in these areas could be revoked at any time if program standards are not achieved.
Administration	This regulatory program would be administered by the NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries as coordinated with other federal agencies (e.g. NOAA Office of Law Enforcement, U.S. Coast Guard) and appropriate state agencies (e.g. Texas Parks and Wildlife, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries).

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APPENDIX 2

Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish IFQ Development

Executive Summary

The use of commercial trip limits and seasons as primary management tools often leads to quota overages or foregone economic profitability. This is especially true in the Gulf of Mexico with the management of greater amberjack and gray triggerfish. Fishermen and decision-makers should initiate an Advisory Panel conversation about whether a commercial individual fishing quota (IFQ) could address some of the biological, economic, and social problems in the fishery, and evaluate the tradeoffs of such a management shift. Fishing industry participation in these discussions and ultimate support is paramount.

Problem Statement

The Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish fishery is managed under two fundamentally different regulatory programs – one that utilizes outputs (e.g. quotas) and one that utilizes inputs (e.g. trip limits and seasons) to control fishing mortality. Red snapper, red grouper, other grouper species, and tilefish are managed under an IFQ while trip limits on landings and season lengths are in place for greater amberjack, vermillion snapper, red porgy, gray triggerfish, and others. IFQ and non-IFQ species are often caught on the same trip, which also presents conflicts and confusion for commercial fishermen.

The use of trip limits and seasons as primary fishing mortality tools is relatively inefficient and often results in quota overages (conservation risk) or quota underages (foregone economic yield). Managers must devote time and resources to regularly respond to these problems (capacity limitations) by adjusting these measures which alters impacts on fishermen and fishing communities (social disruption).

Amendment 33 to the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan proposes to consider IFQ management for a number of reef fish species that are currently managed under trip limits and fishing seasons. A number of these species consistently fail to achieve optimum yield or stable year-round fishing seasons, including:

- *Greater Amberjack*
 - Stock status: overfished.
 - Commercial quota overages in seven of the last eight years.
 - Commercial fishery closure prior to September every year since 2009.
- *Gray Triggerfish*
 - Stock status: overfished.
 - Commercial quota overages in two of the last five years including by 40% in 2012.
 - Foregone yield at a level of -25% to 35% in the last two years.

Solution

If developed properly and with considerable industry input, we believe an IFQ could address these biological, economic, social and logistical concerns through a stable, profitable, and accountable management system. IFQs can help rebuild fish stocks, maintain year-round fishing access, and substantially increased the value of the fishery and fishermen's businesses. This is evident in the two successful IFQ programs currently operating in the Gulf of Mexico – the Red Snapper IFQ and the Grouper/Tilefish IFQ.

The Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance (Shareholders' Alliance) proposes that the Gulf Council consider restarting discussions on Amendment 33 for the purpose of evaluating whether or not an IFQ system could address some of the pressing biological, economic, social, and management concerns with a number of reef fish species today.

As the Council acknowledged in its Scoping Document for Amendment 33, “the establishment of an incentive-based management program such as an IFQ is anticipated to reduce overcapitalization of the fleet, extend the fishing season and lower operating costs by affording IFQ participants more flexibility in their input choices and trip planning. An IFQ program is also expected to improve market conditions through a steadier supply of fresh fish, increased ex-vessel prices, and, improved safety at sea.”

Recommendations

1. **Acknowledge biological, economic, and social benefits and limitations of existing management measures (e.g. define problem).**
 - a. A proper evaluation of the success/shortcomings of existing input-controlled commercial fisheries is essential to the development of a strong Purpose and Need statement.
 - b. Such evaluation will provide necessary context for the subsequent Advisory Panel (AP) discussion.
2. **Convene the Reef Fish AP to discuss alternative reef fish management measures (e.g. initiate a vehicle for solution).**
 - a. With input from the Gulf Council, the AP should conduct a thorough analysis of management solutions.
 - b. Components of an IFQ system that should be discussed include:
 - i. Goals, Objectives, Purpose and Need (E.g. *What problem are we trying to solve? What do we want this fishery to look like in the future? How do we want the fishery to operate in the future?*)
 - ii. Species
 - iii. Program Participation (eligibility, involvement)
 - iv. Define and Assign the Privilege (form, length, units, transferability, dispersal, allocation formula)
 - v. Administrative System (allocation management, monitoring, reporting, operations)
3. **Engage in immediate and regular outreach with reef fish fishermen (e.g. ensure transparency).**
 - a. Given the controversial nature of IFQ development, a premium should be placed on maintaining open and transparent communication with industry.
4. **Advance Amendments 36a and 36b with an eye towards IFQ expansion.**
 - a. Legitimate concerns and justifiable shortcomings of the existing IFQ programs should be addressed in a way that applies this knowledge to the development of future IFQ programs.
 - b. Given that the development timeline for Amendment 33 could be lengthy, it would not be unreasonable to initiate the Amendment 33 discussion now and allow it to run on a parallel track with (and be informed by) Amendments 36a and 36b.

It is time to be part of the Grass Root Movement to Save Louisiana

THE SAVE LOUISIANA COALITION

***** PETITION STATEMENT*****

We, the undersigned likely voters, adamantly, object to ALL new Mississippi River diversions currently proposed in the Louisiana 2012 Coastal Master Plan and support that ALL existing river diversion structures be regulated by salinity control voted on by the existing River Diversion Councils in such a way as to be beneficial to the fisheriesâ€™™, coastal communities and landowner interests. We SUPPORT large scale, cost efficient, sediment dredging and pipeline delivery, marsh creation and barrier island restoration projects, elevation funding for coastal residents outside of hurricane protection levy systems, historic ridge creation, levy systems for Coastal Communities, shoreline protection, restoration of historical oyster reefs, and other projects in the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan fully supported by the residents of our Coastal Communities and STRONGLY SUPPORT that they be constructed in the most cost efficient manner. We ask that the LA Legislature and the Governor act on making these necessary changes to the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan.

"These diversions will destroy our seafood and sport fishing industries, and in doing so, destroy our coastal communities and culture. THEY MUST BE STOPPED."

PLEASE TELL ALL OF YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY! SPREAD THE WORD!

This signed petition will be faxed to Governor Bobby Jindal, Senator Mary Landrieu, Senator David Vitter, Senator John A. Alario, Jr. and Representative Charles 'Chuck' E. Kleckley, and Emailed to over 100 Louisiana Representatives and other Government Officials.

This letter was signed and submitted by:

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From: jim rapp <jimrapp@rocketmail.com>
Reply-To: jim rapp <jimrapp@rocketmail.com>
Date: Friday, July 29, 2016 at 4:52 PM
To: John Milner <gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org>
Subject: Complaint

The gulf council does not have nearly enough representation by private non-charter sport fishermen (Zero). We should have a say in the bag limit discussions, seasons, quotas, allocations, etc. You have rendered owning a waterfront home and a fishing boat to be of diminished value. You have by your actions raised the concern that your primary goal is to protect the value of your quotas rather than to serve the public welfare.

I have fished and dived offshore from Clearwater and St Pete for 40 years. The local stocks of gags, red grouper, red snapper, amberjack, are higher than I have seen them for the past four decades..... Perhaps you see shortages of these fish populations in the panhandle or somewhere beside here? I cannot understand why you do not regionalize your bag limits and closed seasons.

Over-Protecting Goliath Grouper is a travesty... They are responsible for more decimation of reef fish populations than any fishing activity.

James Rapp
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January 23, 2015

Kevin Anson, Chair
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
2203 N. Lois Avenue
Suite 1100
Tampa, Florida 33607

RE: Ocean Conservancy's Written Comments for the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's January Meeting in Point Clear, Alabama

Dear Chairman Anson:

Ocean Conservancy¹ is pleased to offer the recommendations and comments below as the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council prepares for its January meeting in Point Clear, Alabama.

1. **Council Must Develop a Rebuilding Plan for Greater Amberjack:** In accordance with federal law, the Council must establish a new rebuilding plan for greater amberjack immediately. A new rebuilding plan is needed to achieve compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation Management Act (MSA) and to provide the greatest likelihood for recovery of the stock.
2. **Council Should Use a Precautionary Approach in Setting Gag ACLs:** While the Scientific and Statistical Committee has set an Allowable Biological Catch that nearly doubles the existing Annual Catch Limit, Council should take a conservative, precautionary approach in setting Annual Catch Limits for 2015 seasons and onward.
3. **Council Should Reconvene the Ad-Hoc For-hire Red Snapper AP:** This advisory panel shows considerable promise and should be reconvened to continue to build on the motions and recommendations it made in December 2014.
4. **Council Should Develop Component-Specific Management Measures For the Two Recreational Red Snapper Sectors:** Creating paybacks and buffers for the recreational red snapper sectors will ensure that sector separation works as it was intended and conservation benefits can be reaped that will achieve stability in the stock.

Each of these individual recommendations is discussed treated in more detail in the following sections.

¹ Ocean Conservancy, a non-profit organization with over 120,000 members, educates and empowers citizens to take action on behalf of the ocean. From the Arctic to the Gulf of Mexico to the halls of Congress, Ocean Conservancy brings people together to find solutions for our water planet. Informed by science, our work guides policy and engages people in protecting the ocean and its wildlife for future generations.

1. Council Should Develop a New Amberjack Rebuilding Plan

At its January 2015 meeting, Council will continue to consider proposed modifications to Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) and Annual Catch Targets for greater amberjack. While there may be conservation benefits within the range of actions and options proposed in the Draft Framework Action, there is currently no action before Council to develop and implement a new MSA-mandated rebuilding plan for the stock, nor is there an attempt to understand why the previous rebuilding plan failed. **Accordingly, it is imperative that the Council embarks upon a thorough analysis of why the rebuilding plan failed, and moreover it is paramount that Council acts straightaway to end overfishing and to develop a new rebuilding plan for greater amberjack.**

Amberjack was declared overfished in 2000 and was placed under a rebuilding plan starting in 2003, with a rebuilding target of 2012. The rebuilding plan failed, and as of the 2014 SEDAR 33 assessment the stock remains overfished and is still undergoing overfishing,² a clear indication that the management strategies that have been applied to this stock over the past 14 years have been ineffective at alleviating overfishing or at rebuilding.³ The MSA requires stocks with an overfished designation to be subject to a rebuilding plan.⁴ Pursuant to federal law, managers must “end overfishing immediately” and “rebuild [the] affected [stock] of fish”.⁵ In order to overcome previous unsuccessful attempts to end overfishing, as well as to comply with the requirements of the MSA, Council needs to act immediately to implement aggressive management tactics for the stock.

In addition, the MSA requires that for overfished stocks, rebuilding must occur within 10 years or sooner.⁶ When a rebuilding plan runs its course and the stock is still determined to be overfished, as was the case with greater amberjack, the fishing mortality rate may not be increased and a remedial fishing rate must be selected.⁷ This remedial rate must be the *lesser of either* 75% of Maximum Fishing Mortality Threshold (MFMT), which in the case of amberjack would amount to 75% of F_{MSY} (F_{PROXY} standing in for F_{MSY} at $F_{30\%SPR}$), **OR** $F_{REBUILD}$.⁸ $F_{REBUILD}$ can only be determined when Council provides a rebuilding timeframe for the stock, and as yet the Council has not acted to develop a rebuilding timeframe for greater amberjack.⁹ The Council should develop a rebuilding plan that establishes $F_{REBUILD}$,

² SEFSC, *SEDAR 33*, http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/sedar/download/SEDAR%2033%20SAR-%20Gag%20Stock%20Assessment%20Report%20FINAL_sizereduced.pdf?id=DOCUMENT (accessed January 20, 2015).

³ NOAA Fisheries, *Status of the Stocks 2014 Third Quarter Report Overfished Stocks*, http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/fisheries_eco/status_of_fisheries/archive/2014/third/mapoverfishedstockscy_q3_2014.pdf (accessed January 20, 2015); NOAA Fisheries, *Status of the Stocks 2014 Third Quarter Report Stocks Subject to Overfishing*, http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/fisheries_eco/status_of_fisheries/archive/2014/third/mapoverfishingstockscy_q3_2014.pdf (accessed January 20, 2015).

⁴ 16 U.S.C. §1854(e)(2).

⁵ 16 U.S.C. §1854(e)(3)(A).

⁶ 16 U.S.C. §1854(e)(4)(A)(ii); 50 C.F.R. §600.310(j)(3)(i).

⁷ 50 C.F.R. §600.310(j)(3)(ii).

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, *Options Paper: Modifications to Greater Amberjack Allowable Harvest and Management Measures*, <https://public.gulfcouncil.org:5001/webman/index.cgi> (accessed January 20,

and can implement the desired conservation benefits already suggested in the recommended options within the framework adjustment. The Council should have implemented additional or revised rebuilding measures when it became clear back in 2011 (or sooner) that greater amberjack was still overfished and not making adequate progress toward the 2012 rebuilding date. By failing to carry out the MSA-mandated rebuilding obligations, NMFS and the Council have already violated the law. Steps must be taken immediately to achieve compliance to ensure conservation of the stock and a sustainable fishing future.

Presently, Council is considering its Scientific and Statistical Committee's (SSC's) recommendations for greater amberjack that are based on the default remedial rate of 75% of MFMT, with some options that are in fact more conservative than this rate. The SSC predicts that these measures will have the effect of rebuilding the stock by 2020, which from a conservation perspective is certainly desirable; however, past rebuilding efforts cast doubt on these predictions. In order to comply with the law, the Council (or NMFS) must first take the basic step of specifying a revised rebuilding date for this stock in order to establish $F_{REBUILD}$. Once that has been accomplished, a legally-compliant rebuilding plan can be put into place. (See the flow chart in the appendix to this letter.)

In addition to immediately developing a rebuilding plan for greater amberjack, the Council should assess and take into account the reasons why the previous rebuilding plan failed. Such a rebuilding failure analysis should be used to justify the selected target fishing mortality rates and should become protocol for any future failed rebuilding plans under Council management. Council should act in conformity with the findings, purpose, and policy of the MSA that mandate sustainability in and conservation of U.S. fisheries by developing a new rebuilding plan that assures meaningful rebuilding progress for greater amberjack and for other overfished stocks in the Gulf.¹⁰

2. Council Should Use a Precautionary Approach in Setting Gag Grouper ACLs

Ocean Conservancy recommends that the Council act conservatively when setting ACLs for gag grouper, despite the fact that the SSC's recommendation for 2015-17 ABCs would allow the Council to possibly double the existing ACL. It is commendable that the Council has already taken a measured and cautious approach thus far in compelling the SSC to consider the possible impacts of the recent red tide event on the gag grouper stock, and now even though the SSC has determined that there was no measurable impact from the 2014 red tide event, the Council should continue the careful and tactful approach heretofore taken. Seeking out possible ecosystem effects and analyzing their impacts on managed stocks leads to strong management decisions, and Ocean Conservancy applauds the Council on taking this approach.

One of the most reasonable courses of action would be to keep the 2015 recreational ACL at the previously established 1.708 million pounds gutted weight.¹¹ This conservative approach would reduce concerns among the fishing public about the accuracy of the gag stock assessment and would allow for more time to ensure that the stock is actually rebuilt while still allowing for an increase in the ACL.

2015). Available by logging into the Council's FTP Server; Attached (Appendix 1) is a flowchart that demonstrates that issue of selecting between the lesser of 75% of MFMT or $F_{REBUILD}$.

¹⁰ 16 U.S.C. §1801(a)-(c).

¹¹ 50 C.F.R. §622.41(d)(2)(4).

Ocean Conservancy recommends that the Council lends strong credence to the status quo alternative as it makes its management decisions on this issue.

It is also worth noting that in the past four seasons' recreational landings have fallen short of the Annual Catch Target, sometimes by nearly 40%. The 2014 season, which ended on December 3, 2014, also seems poised to have landed significantly less than the ACT of 1.519 million pounds gutted weight.¹² Council should take these figures into consideration when setting ACLs for gag for 2015 and onward, as an increase in ACL may not be warranted if the existing lesser ACLs and associated ACTs cannot be met. Furthermore, analysis of why anglers have not been landing their share of the quota should be undertaken in order to make informed management decisions going into the future.

3. Council Should Reconvene Ad-Hoc For-hire Red Snapper AP

At its inaugural meeting in December 2014, the Ad-Hoc For-hire Red Snapper Advisory Panel prepared a number of motions and recommendations pertaining to the charter-for-hire sector of the red snapper fishery that will be very useful to the Council in the management of the recreational fishery.

Of note was the AP's recommendation that the Council consider a variety of management tools for the charter-for-hire sector. The suggested management concepts show great promise for the long-term health and resiliency of the red snapper stock and will reduce the probability of perennial recreational overruns that jeopardize rebuilding and endanger optimum yield.

In addition, the AP's motion that the Council accelerate the development of electronic monitoring tools and tactics for charter-for-hire fishermen is excellent advice and indicates that the sector is seeking accountability.

Ocean Conservancy recommends that Council heed the AP's advice in considering these proactive strategies for managing this part of the recreational red snapper fishery, and furthermore that it honor the AP's request to reconvene the panel in late February.

4. Council Should Develop Component Specific Management Measures For the Two Recreational Red Snapper Sectors

Sector Separation stands as a milestone achievement for the Council, and it is certain that this management strategy has the ability to impart significant conservation benefits to the health and resiliency of the recreational red snapper fishery. However, the advantages of sector separation will not be fully realizable unless component specific management measures are created for the individual private recreational and charter-for-hire divisions. Accordingly, Council should act as soon as possible to implement, by way of a framework adjustment, these component specific management measures which could take the form of payback and/or buffer type accountability measures.

The Amendment 40 document notes that under the proposed sector separation format it is possible that one of the overall recreational red snapper season could be shut down due to an overage cause by

¹² NOAA Fisheries, *Gulf of Mexico Recreational Landings*, http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/acl_monitoring/recreational_gulf/index.html (accessed January 21, 2015).

one of the sectors, despite the fact that the other sector still had fish to catch under its share of the allocation.¹³ The language in the amendment is clear that the way to ameliorate this possible situation would be to implement accountability measures for the individual sectors. If, for example, the charter-for-hire sector exceeded its share of the allocation, its subsequent charter-for-hire season would be reduced by a corresponding amount and the private recreational sector would not be unfairly penalized. As sector separation currently stands, it is properly in compliance with MSA Section 407(d) which mandates that separate quotas are to be maintained for the Gulf of Mexico recreational and commercial red snapper fisheries.¹⁴ Adding accountability to the two sub-components of the recreational red snapper fishery does nothing to jeopardize compliance with MSA Section 407(d), and as such there are no legal obstacles to implementing paybacks or buffers for the individual sectors.

Currently before the Council is a framework action that may establish the possibility for creating a split season for the charter-for-hire recreational red snapper fishery.¹⁵ Ocean Conservancy urges the Council to consider including in this framework action, or alternatively in a standalone framework action, the implementation of accountability measures for the individual sectors that have been created under Amendment 40 that will eliminate any inequity between the two components that might arise from one exceeding its share of the allocation. Doing so will ensure that sector separation can precipitate the desired conservation results that were contemplated as the amendment was developed.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,

/s Jon Paul S. Brooker, JD

Policy Analyst, Ocean Conservancy

jbrooker@oceanconservancy.org

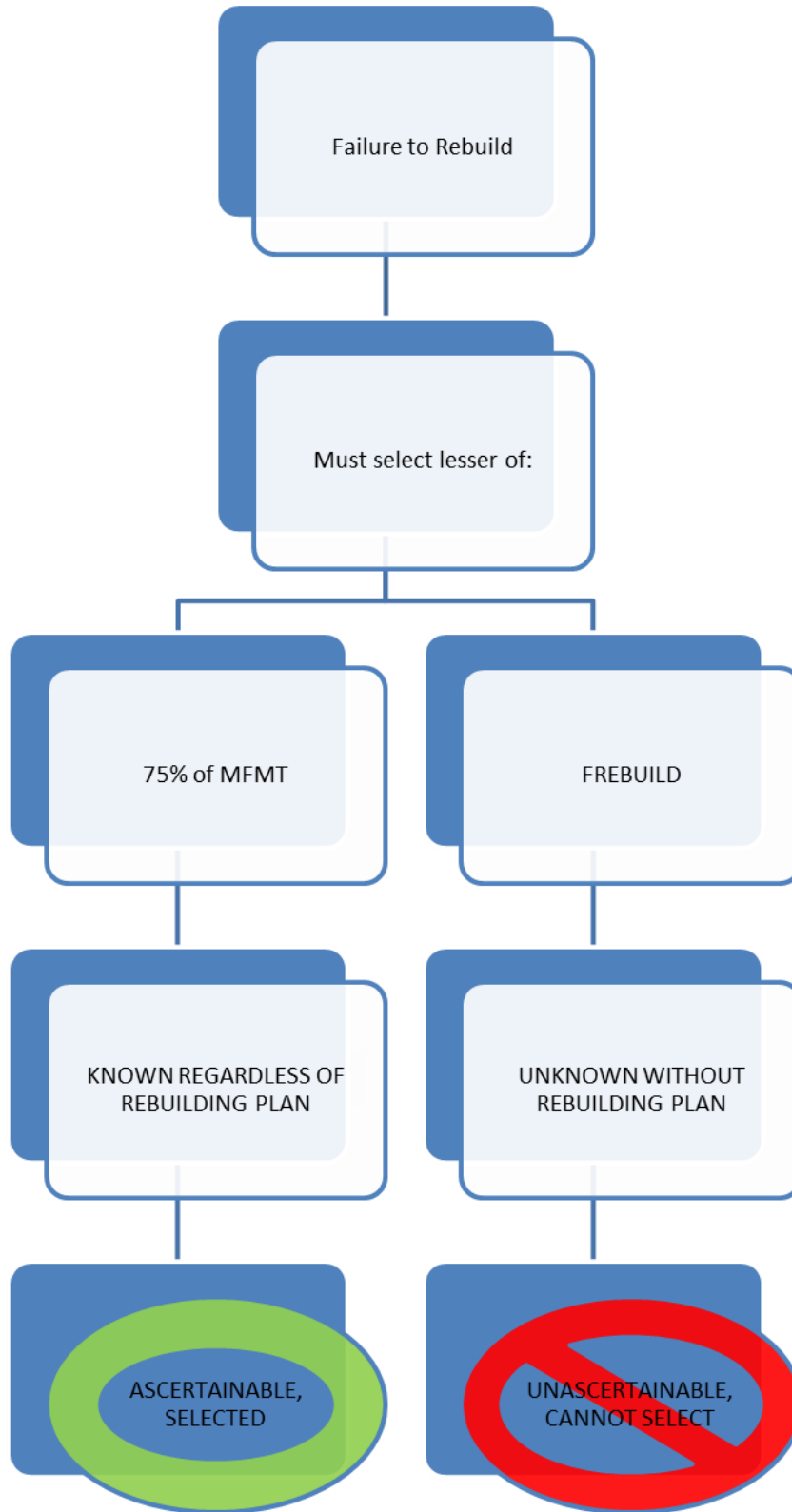
727.369.6613

¹³ Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, *Amendment 40*, at 22
<http://www.gulfcouncil.org/docs/amendments/RF%2040%20-%20Final%2012-17-2014.pdf> (accessed January 21, 2015).

¹⁴ 16 U.S.C. §1883(d).

¹⁵ Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, *Options to Establish a Red Snapper Split Season*,
[http://www.gulfcouncil.org/council_meetings/Briefing%20Materials/BB-01-2015/B%20-%2012b%20Framework%20Action%20Supplemental%20Action%20for%20CFH%20Red%20Snapper%20Split%20Season\[1\].pdf](http://www.gulfcouncil.org/council_meetings/Briefing%20Materials/BB-01-2015/B%20-%2012b%20Framework%20Action%20Supplemental%20Action%20for%20CFH%20Red%20Snapper%20Split%20Season[1].pdf) (accessed January 21, 2015).

Appendix 1: Selection Between Lesser of 75% of MFMT or FREBUILD



Subject: Recent Change in Reporting of Economic Statistics by NMFS/NOAA

Date: Monday, May 12, 2014 at 1:22:44 PM Eastern Daylight Time

From: Edwin Lamberth

To: Kevin Anson, Chris Blankenship, rshipp@jaguar1.usouthal.edu, Roy Crabtree, Douglass Boyd

CC: Gulf Council

Can someone explain to me why the federal government has decided to stop reporting the economic numbers as they have every year for the past umpteen (or at least as long as I can remember) years? As it sits right now, one can no longer distinguish the economic impacts between imported commercial seafood and domestic commercial seafood? In the past, the numbers have always been reported in a manner so that the two could be distinguished.

Further, in the past, one could use online queries to make truthful comparisons about economic information. Now, the federal government has decided to remove the ability to obtain that information.

By any honest assessment of this new method of reporting economic data, the data, as reported in this fashion, are misleading.

Of course, it may be that someone at NOAA/NMFS has an explanation for this action. If so, I would like to hear it. Taxpayers deserve to know why they are not being provided the same information they have received year after year. I look forward to receiving your response. Feel free to call me. Thanks.

Regards,

Edwin Lamberth
Mobile, Alabama
251-422-9275

Gulf Of Mexico Fisheries Management Council

Tampa, FL

02/23/2014

Dear Sirs,

My name is Frank May and I live in Port St. Joe, Florida, in the panhandle. I was born in Port St. Joe and have been an avid offshore fisherman my entire adult life. I have fished both recreationally and commercially, and have close friends in both sectors. I have practiced Dentistry here for 26 years, and have attempted to stay abreast of the management practices for reef fish here in the Northern Gulf.

I have fished when there was NO thirteen inch snapper to be caught, and guys were running all the way to Campeche to catch snapper, so I know management works. The reason I am writing today is to bring information to you that you need to know in your efforts to manage our reef fish stocks.

It appears that the premium on small fish is such that fishermen with snapper quotas are releasing (Killing in deep water) large snapper in order to fill their quotas with the much more valuable plate sized snapper. This practice of reverse upgrading is not something the fishermen like, but the fish houses are demanding this product and these guys (fish houses and restaurants) economically set policy (and own many of the permits outright).

I don't claim to have a solution, but you need to know about this and what the potential damage to the breeding population of snapper is, especially in light of the upcoming Slot limit for recreational anglers. This slot limit will be meaningless if the killing of these large breeding fish in deep water is continued.

The other issue which, again the fishermen don't like but are doing because "everyone else is" is catching Gag grouper during the peak spawn, when virtually every Gag grouper caught is full of roe. These Guys are "snapper" fishing in the deeper areas that the Gags use for spawning and there is no law against it. As long as you have gag quota and snapper quota you can "snapper" fish in the middle of the gag spawn areas and catch your gag quota with no repercussions.

Here the solution is simple. No hooks outside of 20 fathoms during peak Gag spawn (45 Days). This would also allow for snapper fishing with a much higher percentage of small fish being caught inside of 20 fathoms, and a much better mortality rate for released larger fish. Also, much fewer roe laden Gags caught.

I know you guys have a difficult job, and I laud your efforts. Please ask others about these issues and I think you will find them to be factual and relevant.

Good Luck and I am always at your service,


Frank D. May, DMD, PA

November 11, 2013

Sirs:

I am a seventy two year old man and a lifelong resident of Florida except for the 20 years I spent in the military away from home. Ten years ago I fished the Steinhatchee area frequently. At that time large black sea bass and pink mouth grunts were plentiful in the near shore waters with some gag grouper as well.

Last year I returned to Steinhatchee area after an absence of some 8 years. I fished the areas where fish used to be plentiful and all I caught was a few small sea bass and some undersize grunts. There were so many crab trap bouys in the area that it was almost impossible to navigate through them. They were as far as the eye could see and had at least 3 different markings. Some traps had no more than 20 feet between them.

As I had lived there before I knew several of the locals, I spoke to some of them. One of them worked at a local fish house where fish are sold to, packed and shipped out of the area. When I was complaining to him about the decline of the black sea bass and pink mouth grunts, he informed me that the crabbers can sell the fish as "by catch". He went on to tell me that they bend the rules by opening the funnels on their crab traps and using a different type of bait to attract the black sea bass and grunts. He said that as the price of sea bass and grunts has escalated in recent years the "by catch" for most crabbers has risen at an alarming rate.

Also I was at a local bar recently and I overheard a conversation between two men. They were talking concerning their catch for the day and the amount of money they would make. One man said he had been in the area three days that he had 350 pounds of mixed fish that he intended to take to the fish market in Valdosta, GA. When he left, he got into a truck with a GA tag. When I talked to some of the locals, they said "hell, man don't you know, over half of the boat trailers you see here have Georgia tags. Steinhatchee fish is hauled all over the state of Georgia. He also said with grouper limit decline now the blackfish and grunts are a main commercial target."

If this continues, my grandchildren will never feel the tug on the line of a large black fish.

Thank you for reading this letter. Hopefully, there will be more oversight into what boaters come to shore with. The marine patrol used to do boat inspections for fish. I haven't seen a marine patrol officer in ages at any of the marinas or ramps inspecting catches since at least 12 years back at the Cedar Key boat launching ramp.

George L Robinson
5419 SE 60th Avenue
Trenton, Florida 32693



Lionfish Population Control Proposal Outline

By: Candy Hansard ~ candy@valp.net

Today, our fishery is in grave danger due to the population explosion of the invasive species Lionfish. All Gulf Coast and Atlantic Coastal States need to immediately begin a Lionfish Population Control program to save our fishery. Cooperation and support of NOAA and the Gulf and Atlantic Council will be of tremendous value to the effort.

Plan Objective: Designed to control the population of lionfish and provide ample lionfish for research purposes.

- Lionfish will be removed by volunteers
- Significant reduction in lionfish populations should be evident after the second full year of the program
- Create an abundant supply of lionfish available for research purposes at a very minimal cost
- The NMFS/GC/ States will provide a LOW cost motivation Program.
- Keeping the process simple is critical to program success and keeping costs minimal

Volunteer Motivation

It is important to remember that the volunteers will be bearing the greatest financial expense of this program. This program would reward impressive removal by volunteers

100 lionfish turned in = Exemption Card

Exemption card allows:

- 1 Red Snapper and 1 Grouper per trip, out of season *and*
- 1 extra Red Snapper / Grouper during the open season
- Recognition on Lionfish Website pages on State and NOAA website
- Hunters can keep their lionfish fillets (their groceries)
- Volunteers must be given appreciation and recognition.

Exemption Cards would have the diver's name, DOB and, fishing or drivers license number to prevent fraudulent use of the exemption card.

Removal possibilities

We know a single adult female reproduces every 4 days releasing up to 2 Million eggs per year.

Assumption: 1/2 the lionfish removed are Female

- A single participant in the program would potentially remove 100 Million lionfish eggs from our waters per year (Remember: lionfish eggs and fry are venomous and that discourages predation by our native fish resulting in uncontrolled population explosions)
- 10 Participants would potentially remove 1 Billion lionfish eggs per year
- If we can recruit 1000 volunteers in the Gulf of Mexico that qualify for the exemption, we would be removing 1 Trillion lionfish eggs from the waters per year.
- Many spear fishers that remove lionfish will fail reach the exemption qualification number but the lionfish they kill will still help to control the lionfish population and provide lionfish for research
- Providing multi-year exemptions for each 100 turned in during the first few years of the program will encourage the most accomplished spear fishers to focus on removal, therefore speeding the reduction of the lionfish populations

When you look at the numbers, it's obvious that we can begin to quickly control the lionfish population by motivating volunteers to aggressively target lionfish. The number of Red Snappers and Groupers taken by those with an exemption will be miniscule compared to the number of our native fish saved from lionfish that eat those same species as well as their prey fish at unsustainable rates.

Research Benefits

- Lionfish turned in would be available to our State, NOAA, Universities as well as out-of-State/Country Researchers
- Research Institutions would pay the shipping & handling costs to get the lionfish but, the fish would be FREE
 - This will help further lionfish research because the cost of collecting lionfish specimens can be extremely high
- By providing lionfish to any research institution world wide, we increase our chance of finding a scientific solution to the problem that currently does not exist. I would recommend having part of the agreement of the lionfish share program is that all information gathered from the lionfish collected off our coasts must be freely shared.

Success Depends on Simplicity

This program is designed to remove lionfish from Florida's waters, not turn volunteers into scientists.

Keeping the program simple will:

- **Increase participation by volunteers**
- **Keep collection & book keeping costs low**
- **Keep the cost of the program low**

Administration

Exempted Fishing Permits will be issued by the GC/NOAA/States to allocate fish to support this program. Exempted Allocations would small in comparison to the benefit to saving our fishery. (Cost = EFP's Benefit = saving our fishery)

The first two years, participants would be asked to provide take exemption information so that a reasonable allocation could be estimated for future years efforts.

Collection sites will be set up in all Counties that have boating access to the GOM or Atlantic

Plan A:

**State Marine Law Enforcement will act as turn-in locations in the above mentioned Counties
Turn-in appointments or designated turn-in dates and times can be posted on the State Lionfish
Population Control Webpage**

Plan B:

Dive Shops/Marinas/Non-Profits

Same as Plan A except: some compensation will be provided to offset the cost of manpower and power to run the freezers .

Collection Site Requirements

- Freezers
- Shipping Containers
- Internet Access and Computer
- Puncture resistant Gloves
- Tongs
- Empty Cooler for fish counting
- Receipt Book
- Plastic Bags & Markers to log # of fish in bag and stapler to attach copy of collection receipt
- Willingness to buy ice or Ice machine for shipping lionfish

Lionfish Population Control Webpage

- Participation Disclaimer – Kill and handle Lionfish at your OWN Risk participation is voluntary
- Instructions on how to store lionfish for turn-in
- This will help keep the lionfish in research-ready condition
- A list of available lionfish Turn-in locations
- Click on a location for turn-in Schedules & Contact information
- Lionfish handling and safety information
- Lionfish Workshop locations and dates – FWC sponsored and include links to businesses or non-profits that offer FREE lionfish workshops and information.
- Lionfish Tournaments and Derby's - Provide links to Businesses and non-profits that host tournaments & contests
- Researcher Request Form - this would include a pay-pal function so they could pay shipping and handling charges prior to shipment of the lionfish.
- Researcher requests for additional information w/links to research contact info

Lionfish education workshops

These workshops could be conducted by the State and Federal Government, Non-profits and Dive shops. The workshops should provide information on:

It is critical that the presenters of these workshops have excellent people skills and credible lionfish hunting experience because they will be the first stage in building a good partnership relationship with the people who can help us save our fishery.

- Lionfish problem and why it is important to aggressively remove lionfish from our waters
- An overview of the Population control Motivation Program
- Safe kill and handling techniques
- Sting treatment
- Filleting
- Website address and turn-in location information

Subject: RE: Information Request
Date: Monday, December 17, 2012 3:58 PM
From: tom adams <4tomadams@gmail.com>
To: Charlene Ponce <charlene.ponce@gulfcouncil.org>
Cc: Cathy Readinger <cathy.readinger@gulfcouncil.org>
Conversation: Information Request

I do not understand why you would have the same person on 2 panels and some ad hoc committees, when there are other people with different viewpoints asking to be in the group. I thought you were looking for a good cross section of fishermen so you could try and manage the fisheries for optimum rebuilding and optimum satisfaction for charter, commercial and recreational fishermen alike. If you have the same few people that are all in a little group that all have the same opinion –you are not getting any diversity or a cross section of the people here along the Gulf. If you want a guaranteed answer of how the fisheries should be managed –by all means get all the same people on every committee. It seem like the council keeps forming new panels to get help from(supposedly a diverse segment) of the public, but in the end you only want the same very few peoples opinion that have the answers for the outcome that you want. As a stakeholder and rec fisherman it is very disheartening to me and the other 99.9% of the people that you choose not to include in the process. Please forward this to whomever it should be sent to , to possibly help the council start getting more diverse panels and committees for the good of all fishermen. Thanks again –and again Happy Holidays to all

Thanks,
**Capt. Tom Adams- Mexico Beach Charters
Recreational Fishing Alliance- Chairman- Forgotten Coast Chapter
311 Nutmeg St, Port St Joe, Fl 32456
850 -381-1313 www.mexicobeachcharters.com <http://
www.mexicobeachcharters.com/> or .net**

From: Charlene Ponce [mailto:Charlene.Ponce@gulfcouncil.org]
Sent: Monday, December 17, 2012 12:01 PM
To: tom adams
Cc: Cathy Readinger
Subject: Re: Information Request

Hi Tom:

Appointments to panels and committees are made every two years – so the next round of appointments will take place during the April 2013 meeting. I'll be sending out a notice in February asking interested parties to submit resumes and letters of interest. All of the contact information will be listed in the notice, but applicants should send their information to Phyllis Miranda at phyllis.miranda@gulfcouncil.org.

Occasionally the Council will create a new panel, which I believe is the case you are describing. The Council recently formed an Ad Hoc Artificial Substrate Advisory Panel and made the appointments during the October/November Council meeting. We did receive your request to sit on this advisory panel; however, the Council makes the final decision.

While there are no term limits for Advisory Panels, the Council does review and appoint applicants every two years, and individuals can serve on no more than two Advisory Panels (Ad Hoc Panels are not included) at a time.

Below is the section of our Statement of Organization Practices and Procedures pertaining to Advisory Panels:

2.6 Advisory Panels (APs)

The Council has established APs, which often serve as fishing industry advisory committees, and will form such panels as it deems necessary or appropriate to assist in carrying out assigned functions under the law. An AP shall normally be established for each fishery management unit identified by the Council.

2.6.1 Objectives and Duties

For each FMP or amendment under consideration, the APs provide advice concerning the recommended optimum yield (OY), the management measures and allocations under consideration, the supporting documentation to any regulatory action, management objectives, and any other advice the APs deem appropriate or as required by the Council.

2.6.2 Members and Chair

The APs shall generally be composed of members who are residents of the five state geographical area. Each AP shall be selected so as to provide for geographical,

commercial, recreational, marketing, or other interests in accordance with functions and purposes of the panel with such membership established in a manner that provides fair representation to commercial and recreational fishing interests. Membership on an AP is determined by the Council during a closed session of its Council meetings and is based on the application provided by the applicant as well as the Council members' knowledge of the applicant. Consideration for appointment may include the appropriate interest, experience, and past performance as well as other factors such as a record of fishery violations (among other factors). AP members serve at the pleasure of the Council and may be removed at any time without cause. No person may serve on more than two APs at any one time, however, service on any Ad Hoc or Special AP, as designated by the Council, will not be counted in the limitation to serving on more than two APs at the same time. Each AP shall be limited to a membership of 20 persons unless otherwise specified by the Council. Only federal, state, and Sea Grant members of the Law Enforcement AP and the Habitat Protection APs, as designated by the Council, may have designees represent them at meetings.

A Chair and Vice Chair for each AP shall be elected by members of the AP or may be designated by the Council at its discretion. The Chair or Vice Chair shall preside at each AP meeting. The Council may designate one or more members to meet with each AP. Members and officers of the APs shall be appointed by the Council for a period of two years and may be removed or reappointed at the pleasure of the Council. Reappointments shall be made at the Council meeting falling on a date nearest to April 1st. Appointment of new members may be made at any Council session, the terms of such appointments to end on April 1st on odd years.

A list of who is currently serving on the Advisory Panels is posted on our web site, so that information is readily available.

Let me know if you have any other questions – and Happy Holidays to you, too!

Charlene

On 12/17/12 11:49 AM, "tom adams" <4tomadams@gmail.com> wrote:

I have sent in requests for the last 3 years asking to be on some of the advisory committees. I have never had any response. When are the people chosen to be on these advisory panels and who exactly do you send in your resumes to? This last Oct. I sent in a letter with a resume asking how to apply and then sent in a letter of recommendation to add to my file. I have not heard back. I did just call Tampa and the operator there said I needed to talk to Cathey R. She also stated that panel members were chosen in November-is this correct? Does

anyone have receipt of any of my requests to sit on an advisory panel from the last couple of years or have my letters been going to the wrong place? I also received notification on my FOIA request for about 700.00. It doesn't seem that it would be necessary for this expenditure, just to see WHO you are picking for these panels to represent me. Also I would think there would be term limits for these panels—so you can get fresh ideas and definitely no person should serve on more than one committee; for the same reason we don't need Gary Jarvis, Scott Hickman, Mike Jennings, Mike Miglini, Richard Wallace, Troy Williamson, Donald Waters, Glenn Brooks , David Walker, David Krebs, Bill Tucker, TJ Tate and others serving on multiple committees, for what seems like-- forever. Please let me know how to apply properly for these positions and I will pass it around. Hopefully you will get the same people off of multiple panels and committees very soon. Happy Holidays

Thanks,

*Capt. Tom Adams- Mexico Beach Charters
Recreational Fishing Alliance- Chairman- Forgotten Coast Chapter
311 Nutmeg St, Port St Joe, Fl 32456
850 -381-1313 www.mexicobeachcharters.com <[http://](http://www.mexicobeachcharters.com/)
www.mexicobeachcharters.com/> or .net*

In a landmark move last year, East Coast fishery managers--responding to a plea for action by more than 90,000 people like you--committed to advancing new protections for Atlantic menhaden. Now we need your help to make sure these plans become real improvements on the water.

Menhaden populations have plummeted 90 percent over the past 25 years and remain at an all-time low--just 10 percent of historic levels. Because these small fish are prey for larger animals, this decline threatens to disrupt coastal and marine food webs and affect the thousands of fishing, whale-watching, and bird-watching businesses that menhaden help support.

We need to leave more menhaden in the ocean to promote their recovery. There is no limit on the total amount of these fish that can be caught at sea. Every year, hundreds of millions of them are ground up to make fertilizer; fish meal for farm animals, pets, and aquaculture; and oil for dietary supplements.

On Dec. 14, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission will make decisions that are critical to the recovery of Atlantic menhaden and the ocean wildlife that depends on them for food. Let the commission know that it's time to bring the menhaden fishery into the 21st century.

Tom Becker
228-385-2910

Above the Law

The National Marine Fisheries Service; (NOAA) The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration thru the guidance and directives of The United States Department of Commerce is guilty of:

1. Discrimination
2. Oppression
3. Passing Prejudice and Biased Laws
4. Blackmail
5. Invasion of privacy
6. Destruction of public property in excess of billions of dollars!
7. Creating and nurturing a multi-million dollar thievery ring!
8. Denying commercial fishermen freedom of speech.
9. Favoritism

The list goes on and on.....

I have been commercial fishing for over 25 years, and the NMFS is responsible For criminal activity that has seriously reduced our fish stocks.

These are serious allegations and I would like to see an investigation into these matters! A Senate investigation committee without Sport-fishermen controlling it!

It seems like the U.S. Dept. of Commerce is above the law and answers to no one!

The NMFS has commercial- fishermen shut-down (no fishing) during the spawning season (March and April) while allowing Sport-fishermen to fish during this time. Sport-fishermen catch/kill about 70 percent of all grouper landings. They fish For fun... We fish to pay our bills.

That Commercial Fishermen are put out of work for these months while allowing all others fish is Oppression! I believe this is CRIMINAL activity!

I was Blackmailed along with many others by the NMFS. I had to put a Vessel Monitoring device on my boat or the NMFS would not renew my Gulf Reef Fish permit.

This Vessel Monitoring device constantly reveals boats location 24-7. All fishermen hate to reveal their fishing spots. It is comparable to sharing your ATM card (account) with anyone and everyone who would like to have all your money!

IT'S JUST WRONG!!!!!!!

We were guaranteed our location would never-ever be revealed . Boats locations were posted on the Internet Friday March 14 2008.

For 20 years I've been treated worse than a non-citizen with a green-card. Am I less than a secondary citizen?

When the NMFS pass laws. First they bow-down to the Charter-Boat Associations and the other Sport-fishermen . Next the North Carolina Fishermen get what-ever they want (even DRIFT-NETS). The Florida Commercial Fishermen are to be oppressed at every opportunity.

Last consideration is for the fish. Most fish stocks reflect this!

DISBAND THE NMFS!!!!

THIS LETTER WAS WRITTEN AROUND 2008



4-25-17

I believe that the South Atlantic Ocean is re-seeding itself

At the round-table discussion at Hutchison Island, in early January 2010 (or earlier). I tried to inform Roy Crabtree about the change in our ocean currents caused by the 2004 hurricane season. He didn't want to hear about this, I guess it was a waste of his time. He does not understand our ocean. I was blown-off. My response was to write a letter about the excessive thermal clines (January 2010) caused by the 2004 hurricane season.

Our Ocean currents directly affect the fish off our coast. Roy Crabtree and company just can't comprehend this fact. Everyone on the South Atlantic Council and all Marine Biologist employed by the NMFS should be schooled on the Gulf Stream it's counter currents and thermal clines. These currents determine whether we can catch fish or not!

Off Central Florida we are still getting excessive thermal-clines as a result of the 2004 hurricane season.

Here are some of the results of these strange cold currents.

Red Snapper stocks off Central and North Florida are at levels that exceed what I remember we had in the mid 1970's.

Black Sea Bass stocks in Central and North Florida are at unbelievable levels. For twenty years you could not find any Sea Bass at home. You could not catch enough Sea Bass to pay for a sandwich. These last couple years there's Sea Bass on every rock.

Ribbon Fish: This year I've trolled up 50 or 60 Ribbon Fish, I can't remember ever catching a Ribbon fish trolling. In thirty years of commercial fishing I might have caught one or two Ribbon fish. I've fished more spots than any-one I know, and I've fished in ten or more fisheries. This year I marked over a hundred different schools of Ribbon Fish. One day for over two miles I went thru one school after another and these Ribbon Fish were biting like crazy. After two miles I quit fishing because there was nothing but Ribbon Fish. Where did all these Ribbon Fish come from?

The King Mackerel: Last year (2011) I went to the Florida Keys to King fish in February and March. I caught King fish in No Man's Land and the Banana Bar, these spots are a few miles from the Tail End Buoy or 35 miles west of Key West. I used to catch King Fish at these spots in the mid 1980's. In the 1990's and later, no King Mackerel were caught at these spots. That the King fish have returned to No Man's Land is great news.

It's not all good in the King Mackerel Fishery. The late great Capt. Doug King (he taught me how to fish) told me thirty years ago that when the conditions get right the King Fish will pull into our Feeding Grounds. The Feeding Grounds are anv and all rocks and ledges inside of 125 feet of water.

The last two years during the summer our Feeding Grounds have been covered up with cold water, this is a result of excessive thermal clines. This resulted in very low catches of king Mackerel during the summer off the Florida East Coast. The rumor is that these King Mackerel spent the summer up in Delaware.

Because of this horrible King Fishing last year I expect another 15 to 20 boats to follow us to Louisiana (or more).

Three years ago the Atlantic quota was almost filled. I fish Louisiana in the summer, what I heard was that there was nothing but cold water North of Ft. Pierce. But that south of Jupiter Fl. The King Fish were thick. What I do remember is that three years ago the price of King Fish was low all summer long because there was so many fish caught in South Florida.

I suspect that the Atlantic stock of King Mackerel are stronger today because of these new currents, due to the fact that the last two summers these fish were out of reach of their main predator "the King-fisherman".

This letter is to inform all members of the South Atlantic Council that any data on fisheries in the South Atlantic prior to the 2004 hurricane season is obsolete. The Ocean currents have changed.

Dan Kane 4-8-2012

The Ocean Currents have changed

The 2004 Hurricane season changed our Ocean Currents in South East Florida. Before 2004 we would get one or two thermal clines a year from the Gulf Stream. This would happen when the Ocean surface gets to hot. This extra hot water causes the cold water under the Gulf Stream to move quickly also.

Either the 90 degree turn at Miami causes this cold water to flip up to the surface, but probably a couple of large Sea Mounds south of Jupiter flips this cold water to the surface.

This used to happen early July and again around fall if Hurricane season is slow. Mother Nature's Thermostat. This water is so cold that it can kill fish that don't leave.

This ice cold water is full of Plankton and grows like crazy as the water warms up being in shallow water. This is the bottom of the Food-chain, so as the water warms up the minnows return to feed on the Plankton bloom. The Fish return to feed on the bait.

Not only is the Thermal Cline important in keeping our Coastal waters from overheating. This Plankton rich water produces oxygen and food, It's Life sustaining fertilizer/food for our Coast.

Since 2004 we have had about 30 extra Thermal Clines. Is this good or bad? I'm not sure!?

I believe these strange currents pushed a wall of Golden Tile Fish into our coastal waters. So many Tile Fish all the holes are slap full of fish!

East Coast Golden Tile Fish are under-fished!

I tried to explain this to Roy Crabtree, but Roy is one slow-Joe in the Intelligence department. Who put him in charge?

Live-bait well ban is the only solution

I have submitted letters requesting a ban on live-bait wells on more than two occasions. If this ban would have been implemented back in 2008, today the spawning stock of Gray Grouper would be more than three times what it is today. I figure that in four years a live bait well ban will increase the spawning stock by 3 to 4 times. In ten years the Gray Grouper spawning stock would increase by 10 to 15 times the present levels (these levels will increase on a geometric level). In twelve to fifteen years the spawning stock could be 30 to 50 times what it is today.

Take this formula and apply it to Amberjack; King Mackerel; cobia and many other fish. If you want to rebuild our fish stocks this is the most intelligent solution available.

Daniel C. Kane

4-25-2012

Subject: FW: fishing closures

From: <Turtleskaters@aol.com>

Date: Sat, 9 Jun 2012 12:50:57 -0400

To: Info <Info@gulfcouncil.org>

Subject: fishing closures

Hello,

Just a couple general comments from a citizen of the United States. This is probably not going to be accepted, since I may not have followed proper procedures. I have tried, but it is like keeping up with fishing regs, it is too difficult and they change too often.

First off, I know limits work. Second, I know fish stocks can be overfished.

However, some of the rules you guys set up are quite ludicrous. I will just offer some info, as I conversed with a NMFS employee and he suggested I offer comments/info to you guys.

I'll start with Triggers. First off, you guys just upped them from 12-14 inches FL a couple years ago. So, I would think you would give that time to settle out before you say they are overfished. Common sense dictates that if the limit is 14, up from 12, less will be taken. And I know all about the folks that measure wrong. Well, guess what. How about have one way to measure all fish. If a 14 inch FL trigger has a TL, on average, of 17, then make the limit 17. Same with all the other fish that have FL. Forget the pinching too, just lay it flat on the deck and measure.

Second, I was told by NMFS employee that commercial guys catch more and bigger triggers. Why then have they not reached their quote before the rec sector. This is inherently wrong. Your data says they should reach their quote first. So that means you guys adjust data as you see fit.

Next - red snapper. You guys have no idea how many there are out there. Do any of you even fish? Up here in the Pensacola area they are everywhere. And I mean everywhere.

Next - why would commercial guys get to keep a 14 inch red snapper while taxpayer me has to be 16 inches. And using by catch as a reason is lame. Rec sector has by catch as well. Limits are based on reproduction size, correct? Then how does a commercial caught fish reach sexual maturity before my rec caught fish. You cannot explain this one away. It is inherently wrong.

Next - too many folks fishing, that is what you say. Well, how about anyone that has a fishing infraction, say over their limit, cannot fish, ever. That should ease some of the pressure. Why should I, a citizen who obeys and studies the laws, have the right to fish taken away because the system is afraid or unwilling to weed out the problems.

Amberjack - I have read reports about how now one, that's one, researcher, is indicating they may not do much repro before size 30 inches. That's silly. We see them roed up all the time at that size. 28 inch was just fine. But, I would rather you guys make them 32 than close them all together.

Gag - why open them for 2 months? Same with red snapper. I don't agree at all with your data, or lack of data, because I know you guys are pulling numbers out of the thin air the majority of the time. But why open them at all? Keep them closed until your data changes.

If you guys want all these fish released, you better do a better job of ensuring fish that are released are given the best chance to survive. That means when you renew your license, you get a free venter. You do realize that bottle nose dolphin probably eat 25-30% of the red snapper released up here. If not, you need to look into it. They must think we are the most stupid species on the planet. Release perfectly good fish to them to eat.

Lastly, close the commercial sector first. Those fish belong to the public. Not a commercial fishermen.

So, from me, taxpayer Nicholas, stop these unnecessary closures. If you want to change something, change the size first

by an inch or two and see if that works.

I have been assured these comments will be highly considered. I highly doubt it. I can tell you I am baffled by the NMFS....completely. Same with just about everyone I know that does fish. You guys have lost the confidence of the public. Either win it back, or resign.

Right now your method is broke. You need to fix it.

Mark Nicholas
850 934-6024
1689 Village Parkway
Gulf Breeze, FL 32563

----- End of Forwarded Message