



Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Managing Fishery Resources in the U.S. Federal Waters of the Gulf of Mexico

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April 26, 2018

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Dr. Clay Porch, Director
 Southeast Fisheries Science Center
 National Marine Fisheries Service
 75 Virginia Beach Dr.
 Miami, FL 33149

Dear Dr. Porch:

At the April 2017 Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) meeting, the Council reviewed the effort reduction threshold of the shrimp fishery in the statistical area 10 through 21 in the northern and western Gulf of Mexico that is monitored for juvenile red snapper bycatch. In Amendment 14 to the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan, measures to address the overfishing of red snapper included a reduction of juvenile red snapper bycatch in the shrimp fishery by reducing effort of the shrimp fishery based on the benchmark years 2001-2003 in the 10-30 fathom zone of selected areas in statistical subzones 10-21 in the Gulf of Mexico. Should shrimp effort not be reduced by the outlined percentage in the areas, closures could ensue.

The initial effort reduction was 74% from the baseline, but this percentage was changed to a 67% reduction from the baseline in 2011 and remains in effect. Also in the amendment, a target reduction goal of 60% from the baseline by 2032 was outlined. The shrimp fishery has been consistently above the target reduction goal of 67%, thus, closures in the fishery have not been necessary to date. However, the Council feels that due to the red snapper stock no longer being overfished, it is time to evaluate if this shrimp effort reduction threshold can once again be lowered from the baseline. The Council requests that the Southeast Fisheries Science Center incorporate, at a minimum, target reduction thresholds in the next red snapper assessment of percentage reductions in one percent increments from 67% to 60% so that the Council may evaluate if another modification to the target reduction is warranted for the shrimp fishery.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Council office.

Sincerely,

Leann Bosarge

Leann Bosarge
 Council Chair

cc: Gulf Council
 Susan Gerhart
 Rick Hart
 Shrimp AP

Shrimp SSC
 Theo Brainerd
 Peter Thompson
 Sunny Snider

Larry Massey