



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505
<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

F/SER24:SB

Mr. Kevin Anson, Chairman
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
2203 North Lois Avenue, Suite 1100
Tampa, Florida 33607

JAN 06 2015

Dear ~~Mr. Anson:~~ *Kevin*

With this letter, I am providing you the January 2015 Regional Administrator's Report. The report is intended to inform the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council) of the status of actions transmitted for review and implementation by the Secretary of Commerce.

Coastal Migratory Pelagics Framework 1: This action increased the annual catch limits (ACLs) for Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Spanish mackerel. A proposed rule published on July 31, 2014, with public comment accepted through September 2, 2014. A final rule published November 20, 2014, effective December 22, 2014.

Reef Fish Framework to Adjust ACLs for Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Grouper-Tilefish: This action identified the annual catch targets as the quotas for each complex and established ACLs for each complex. A proposed rule published October 1, 2014, with public comments accepted through October 16, 2014. A final rule published December 8, 2014, effective January 7, 2015.

Grouper-Tilefish IFQ Control Date: NOAA Fisheries announced a January 1, 2015, control date for the grouper-tilefish IFQ program on December 8, 2014, with public comments accepted through January 7, 2015. This control date informs the public that participation in the grouper-tilefish IFQ program after that date is not assured, should the Gulf Council decide to create additional restrictions limiting participation in the program.

Headboat Collaborative Exempted Fishing Permit: The Collaborative caught approximately 99 percent and 48 percent of its red snapper and gag allocations, respectively, during the 2014 fishing year. For 2015, the program has expanded from 17 to 19 vessels. NOAA Fisheries issued 215,027 pounds of the 5.39 million-pound (mp) red snapper recreational quota (3.9894%) and 41,669 pounds of the 1.708 mp gag recreational catch target (2.4396%) to the Collaborative. This represents 42,690 individual red snapper and 5,925 individual gag.

Coastal Migratory Pelagics Amendment 20B: This amendment would modify fishing years and trip limits, establish regional quotas for king and Spanish mackerel in the South Atlantic, adjust the framework, revise ACLs and establish allocations between the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic for cobia, and establish transit provisions. A notice of availability published on October 17, 2014, with the comment period ending December 16, 2014. A proposed rule published October 31, 2014, with a comment period ending December 1, 2014. NOAA Fisheries has until



January 15, 2015, to approve, disapprove, or partially approve the amendment. A final rule is under review.

Shrimp Amendment 16: This amendment would resolve current discrepancies in the regulations where the established ACL is less than the established quota, and two conflicting accountability measures exist. A notice of availability and a proposed rule are in review.

Red Grouper Bag Limit and Accountability Measure (AM) Framework: This action would reduce the red grouper recreational bag limit from 4 fish to 2 fish, and remove a post-season AM, where the bag limit is reduced if the recreational ACL is exceeded. A proposed rule is under review.

Reef Fish Amendment 40: This amendment would establish separate sub-quotas for red snapper between the for-hire and private anglers within the recreational sector. Sub-quotas would be based on historical catch histories between the two components of the recreational sector. The proposed program is scheduled to expire in three calendar years without further action by the Gulf Council. A notice of availability and a proposed rule are under review.

Permits: The following totals are the number of permits issued or renewed within the last 12 months, which can be used to fish in the appropriate fishery (expired but renewable limited access permits are in parentheses). These totals do not represent activity in the fishery. The number of permits as of January 5, 2015, are:

- 1,347 (125) moratorium Gulf shrimp permits and 284 royal red shrimp endorsements
- 1,143 (160) for-hire coastal pelagic moratorium permits; 31 (3) historical captain permits
- 1,305 (154) commercial king mackerel moratorium permits (includes South Atlantic); 17 (5) commercial king mackerel gillnet
- 1,713 commercial Spanish mackerel permits (includes South Atlantic)
- 1,131 (161) for-hire reef fish moratorium permits; 30 (3) historical captain permits
- 749 (112) commercial reef fish moratorium permits; 59 (3) longline endorsements
- 215 commercial spiny lobster permits and 230 tailing permits (includes South Atlantic)

Recreational and commercial landings, catch limits and quotas, fishing seasons, and closures can be tracked on the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) Web site at http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/acl_monitoring/index.html.

For IFQ species, up-to-date landings can be tracked on the SERO's Reef Fish IFQ Web page at <https://ifq.sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/ifq/>.

Sincerely,



Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.
Regional Administrator