



# Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

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

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November 15, 2023

Dr. Michael Rubino  
Senior Advisor for Seafood Strategy  
NOAA Fisheries  
1315 East-West Highway  
14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Dr. Rubino:

At its October 23-26, 2023 meeting, the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) Fishery Management Council (Council) received a summary of its Shrimp Advisory Panel's (AP) October 19, 2023, meeting. During the discussion of the meeting summary, Council members noted the negative economic conditions facing the shrimp industry in the Gulf and recognized that these conditions had been reflected in letters to the Department of Commerce from Texas, Louisiana, and Alabama. The Council provided feedback to Ms. Sarah Shoffler and Ms. Laura Diederick (NOAA Fisheries staff leads) on the draft National Seafood Strategy in June 2022 as well as to you during your attendance of the Council's Shrimp AP meeting<sup>1</sup> in March 2023. Now that the National Seafood Strategy is finalized, the Council requests regular updates on the implementation plan to operationalize the final National Seafood Strategy. The Council also requests that specific consideration of a regional focus on the Gulf shrimp industry as part of the implementation plan. The Gulf shrimp industry represents historically the most economically valuable Gulf fishery with social and economic importance to U.S. domestic seafood.

The National Marine Fisheries Service's Fisheries Economics of the United States website captures the extent of the Gulf shrimp industry as an economic driver, with \$437 million of the \$920 million (or 47.5%) preliminary total seafood landings revenue in the Gulf for 2021 being attributed to shrimp. In 2020, the number of valid or renewable federal Gulf commercial shrimp permits was only 1,400 and has been declining since the permit moratorium in 2007. This number reflects the susceptibility that a vital economic driver for Gulf seafood has to price competition with imports along with other economic conditions. Therefore, with respect to the specific goals within the National Seafood Strategy, it is imperative to recognize that the current economic conditions faced by the Gulf shrimp industry such as fuel costs and ex-vessel prices prevent Goal 1 (Maintain or increase sustainable U.S. wild capture production) from being achieved. Likewise, implementation plan actions for Goal 3 (Foster access to domestic and global markets for the U.S. seafood industry) would ideally address fair trade of seafood from foreign markets into the U.S. that have contributed to depressed ex-vessel prices recognized by

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<sup>1</sup> [https://gulfcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/D-4a-Shrimp-AP-Summary\\_March-2023\\_final.pdf](https://gulfcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/D-4a-Shrimp-AP-Summary_March-2023_final.pdf)

the Gulf shrimp industry while also contributing to market development within the U.S. for shrimp processors as well as for direct sales from shrimp harvesters. Lastly, the objectives in Goal 4 (Strengthen the entire U.S. seafood sector) align with additional factors affecting the Gulf shrimp industry such as an aging workforce and the need for additional infrastructure, whether due to competing uses for waterfronts or to natural disaster damages such as hurricanes. Such infrastructure investments would also support fisheries beyond Gulf shrimp. The Council requests an update at a Council meeting and Shrimp AP meeting on the implementation plan, particularly as it corresponds with the Gulf shrimp industry.

Thank you for your consideration, and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Carrie Simmons. The Council looks forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kevin Anson".

Mr. Kevin Anson  
Council Chair

cc: Gulf Council  
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