

**Public Comment Summary**  
**Reef Fish Amendment 49: Modifications to the Sea Turtle Release Gear and  
Framework Procedure for the Reef Fish Fishery**

**Webinar Public Hearing  
May 31, 2018**

**Council/Staff**

Leann Bosarge  
Dr. Carrie Simmons  
Emily Muehlstein

**8 members of the public attended. 1 member of the public submitted comment.**

**Ashford Rosenberg** – Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders’ Alliance  
She applauds the Council’s efforts to streamline gear requirements. She questions why the document doesn’t also consider changing recreational requirements since the Biological Opinion found that recreational fishing activities affect protected species, including sea turtles.

**Written Comment**

**6 written comments were received.**

- Flexibility needs to be added to the document to allow different brands of gear to be used. If you don’t have the exact brand or pliers or dehooker you shouldn’t be subject to fines.
- The brand of de-hooker added to the list of gear is not being produced any longer.
- Private recreational anglers should be required to have release gear as well.
  - It’s estimated that the recreational sector takes an estimated three times more sea turtles per year than the commercial vertical longline fishermen.
  - The recreational sector is rapidly expanding, reporting of interactions are inconsistent, and the sea turtle population is expanding.
- Time is of the essence when releasing marine life.
- Gear requirements are meaningless if release behaviors are not controlled properly.
- Support for Action 1, Preferred Alternative 2.
- Support for Action 2, Preferred Alternative 2, Options A and B.