



Tab E, No. 7(c)

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

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

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Laurie Rounds, Chair
Open Ocean Trustee Implementation Group
NOAA Restoration Center
Gulf Breeze Lab
1 Sabine Drive
Gulf Breeze, Florida 32561

Dear Ms. Rounds,

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) recently reviewed studies regarding angler attitudes and use of descending devices and venting tools to increase survival of released fish. The Council is in the process of developing a policy statement encouraging the use of such tools when appropriate for reef fish species. Descending devices have been shown to be effective in releasing reef fish at depth. However, some anglers may be unfamiliar with them as they are not currently in widespread use in the Gulf of Mexico. Therefore, the Council supports outreach programs that encourage a more widespread and proper use of such devices. This includes programs that distribute descending devices to anglers followed up by research on the utility of the devices and resulting survival of fish after the proper use of these devices. The Council fully supports the funding of such programs under the NOAA Fisheries Natural Resource Damage Assessment program. We hope that you, and the regional staff that we work with, can continue to keep us informed of your efforts regarding supporting funding of these types of projects in the Gulf of Mexico.

Sincerely,

Leann Bosarge
Chair

C: Council
Council staff
James Reinhardt
Amy Piko