Summary of Written Public Comment
June 10, 2020
Framework Action: Modification of Fishing Access in Eastern Gulf of Mexico Marine Protected Areas

121 views of the public hearing video.
4 comments were received.

Action 1: Modification of Surface Trolling Provisions

- Support for Alternative 2 which would prohibit fishing in Madison-Swanson and Steamboat Lumps year-round.
    - Fishermen are good at finding loopholes in the law so, all fishing should be prohibited.
    - Eliminating trolling will aid law enforcement and protect spawning.
    - Fishing for HMS should also be eliminated.

Action 2: Modification of Prohibitions on Possession

- Support for Alternative 2 which would prohibit possession of all fish, year-round with no exception for vessels in transit.
    - Disallowing possession of fish in the areas will aid law enforcement and protect spawning fish.
- Fishermen should be able to transit as long as fishing gear is stowed.
- Only boats with VMS should be allowed to transit the area with fish.

General comment:

- Recreational reef fish poaching is common in both Madison-Swanson and Steamboat Lumps.
- Recreational plotting software advertises the areas and does not mention fishing prohibitions.
- Access to the areas should be prohibited completely to protect spawning and improve enforcement.