

**Gulf Council Motions Report
April 16-20, 2018
Gulfport, MS**

CORAL

Review Public Hearing Draft of Coral Amendment 9

Motion: In Action 2, to add the SSC’s recommended Alternative 5.

Alternative 5: Establish a new HAPC named West Florida Wall bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
West Florida Wall Depth Range: 1308-1974 ft (218-329 fathoms) Area: 36.3 nm²	A	84°47.955’	26°28.835’
	B	84°46.754’	26°28.816’
	C	84°42.076’	26°10.471’
	D	84°44.577’	26°10.528’
	E	84°47.986’	26°25.028’
	F	84°47.980’	26°25.100’
	G	84°47.955’	26°25.835’

Option a. Do not establish fishing regulations in the West Florida Wall HAPC

Option b. Prohibit bottom-tending gear in the West Florida Wall HAPC. Bottom-tending gear is defined as: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: In Action 2, to replace the current preferred alternatives with Alternative 5, Option b.

Alternative 5: Establish a new HAPC named West Florida Wall bound by the following coordinates, connecting in order:

Area	Point	Longitude (West)	Latitude (North)
West Florida Wall Depth Range: 1308-1974 ft (218-329 fathoms) Area: 36.3 nm²	A	84°47.955’	26°28.835’
	B	84°46.754’	26°28.816’
	C	84°42.076’	26°10.471’
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	E	84°47.986’	26°25.028’
	F	84°47.980’	26°25.100’
	G	84°47.955’	26°25.835’

Option b. Prohibit bottom-tending gear in the West Florida Wall HAPC. Bottom-tending gear is defined as: bottom longline, bottom trawl, buoy gear*, dredge, pot or trap, and bottom anchoring by fishing vessels.

Motion carried with no opposition.

SHRIMP

Biological Review of the Texas Closure

Motion: To recommend to NMFS that federal waters be closed out to 200 miles to run concurrent with the date that the State of Texas recommends for the 2018 Texas shrimp closure in the Texas Territorial Sea.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Summary of the Shrimp Advisory Panel Meeting

Motion: To recommend that at such time that Coral Amendment 10 is under development there be a joint meeting of the Shrimp AP, Coral AP, Shrimp SSC, and Coral SSC.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To resend the letter to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) requesting an economic analysis and that appropriations be made for this analysis.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To send a letter to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) requesting an analysis of the effort reduction threshold for juvenile red snapper bycatch in the shrimp fishery.

Motion carried with no opposition.

MACKEREL

CMP Amendment 31

Motion: To make Alternative 2 the preferred alternative.

Alternative 2: Remove the Atlantic migratory group of cobia from the Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Region.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To direct staff to begin work on a Framework Action for Gulf cobia to include two action items; (1) potential reduction in possession limit and (2) potential increase in size limit.

Motion carried with no opposition.

ADMINISTRATIVE/BUDGET

Review of Grant Expenditures and Anticipated Budget Activities and Funding

Motion: To accept the 2018 activities and budget as written.

Motion carried with no opposition.

REEF FISH

Public Hearing Draft – Reef Fish Amendment 48/Red Drum 5 – Status Determination Criteria and Optimum Yield

Motion: To recommend that Action 1.1 be moved to Considered but Rejected.

Motion carried with no opposition.

State Management Program for Recreational Red Snapper

Motion: In Action 2, to move Alternative 2, Option 2e to Considered but Rejected.

Alternative 2: Establish an allocation of the recreational sector ACL that may be used for state management programs by apportioning the private angling ACL and federal for-hire ACL among the states based on the average of historical landings for the years (excluding 2010):

Option 2e: 2006-2009

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: In Action 2, to move Alternative 5, Option 5c to Considered but Rejected.

Alternative 5: Establish an allocation of the recreational sector ACL that may be used for state management programs by apportioning the private angling ACL and federal for-hire ACL among the states based on spatial abundance of red snapper biomass and recreational trips (Options 5a-5f), excluding 2010, and using one of the weightings from Options 5g-5i:

Option 5c: 2006-2009.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: In Action 2, in all five individual state amendments, to modify the language in (Preferred) Alternative 2 to read:

Preferred Alternative 2: If the combined Mississippi recreational landings exceed the Mississippi recreational ACL, then in the following year reduce the total recreational quota and Mississippi's ACL by the amount of the ACL overage in the prior fishing year, unless the best scientific information available determines that a greater, lesser, or no overage adjustment is necessary. If appropriate, the Mississippi recreational ACT (or component ACTs) will be adjusted to reflect the previously established percent buffer.

Substitute Motion: In Action 2, in all five individual state amendments, to modify the language in (Preferred) Alternative 2 to read:

Preferred Alternative 2: If the combined Mississippi recreational landings exceed or are less than the Mississippi recreational ACL, then in the following year reduce or increase the total recreational quota and Mississippi's ACL by the amount of the ACL overage or underage in the prior fishing year, unless the best scientific information available determines that a greater, lesser, or no ~~overage~~ adjustment is necessary. If appropriate, the Mississippi recreational ACT (or component ACTs) will be adjusted to reflect the previously established percent buffer.

Substitute Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: In the Alabama document, Action 1, make Alternative 2, Options 2a-2d the preferred.

Alternative 2: Establish a management program that delegates management authority in federal waters to Alabama. If Alabama's red snapper harvest plan is determined to be inconsistent with the requirements of delegation, the recreational harvest of red snapper in the federal waters adjacent to Alabama would be subject to the default federal regulations for red snapper. Alabama must establish the red snapper season structure for the harvest of its assigned portion of the recreational sector annual catch limit (ACL). In addition, delegated authority for managing the recreational harvest of red snapper may include establishing or modifying the:

Option 2a: bag limit

Option 2b: prohibition on for-hire vessel captains and crew from retaining a bag limit.

Option 2c: minimum size limit within the range of 14 to 18 inches total length (TL)

Option 2d: maximum size limit

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: In the Louisiana document, Action 1, add Options 2a-2d as the preferred.

Preferred Alternative 2: Establish a management program that delegates management authority in federal waters to Louisiana. If Louisiana's red snapper harvest plan is determined to be inconsistent with the requirements of delegation, the recreational harvest of red snapper in the federal waters adjacent to Louisiana would be subject to the

default federal regulations for red snapper. Louisiana must establish the red snapper season structure for the harvest of its assigned portion of the recreational sector annual catch limit (ACL). In addition, delegated authority for managing the recreational harvest of red snapper may include establishing or modifying the:

Option 2a: bag limit

Option 2b: prohibition on for-hire vessel captains and crew from retaining a bag limit.

Option 2c: minimum size limit within the range of 14 to 18 inches total length (TL)

Option 2d: maximum size limit

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: In the Mississippi document, Action 1, add Options 2a-2d as the preferred.

Preferred Alternative 2: Establish a management program that delegates management authority in federal waters to Mississippi. If Mississippi's red snapper harvest plan is determined to be inconsistent with the requirements of delegation, the recreational harvest of red snapper in the federal waters adjacent to Mississippi would be subject to the default federal regulations for red snapper. Mississippi must establish the red snapper season structure for the harvest of its assigned portion of the recreational sector annual catch limit (ACL). In addition, delegated authority for managing the recreational harvest of red snapper may include establishing or modifying the:

Option 2a: bag limit

Option 2b: prohibition on for-hire vessel captains and crew from retaining a bag limit.

Option 2c: minimum size limit within the range of 14 to 18 inches total length (TL)

Option 2d: maximum size limit

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: In Action 2 of the general state management document, to make Alternative 2, Option 2h the preferred.

Alternative 2: Establish an allocation of the recreational sector ACL that may be used for state management programs by apportioning the private angling ACL and federal for-hire ACL among the states based on the average of historical landings for the years (excluding 2010):

Option 2h: 50% of average historical landings for the years 1986-2015 and 50% of average historical landings for the years 2006-2015.

Motion failed 7 to 9.

Motion: In Action 2 of the general state management document, to remove the options that truncate at 2009, 2a, 2c, 2g, 5a, 5e.

Option 2a: 1986-2009.

Option 2c: 1996-2009.

Option 2g: 50% of average historical landings for the years 1986-2009 and 50% of average historical landings for the years 2006-2009.

Option 5a: 1986-2009 (trips)

Option 5e: 50% of the average number of recreational trips for the years 1986-2009 (5a) and 50% of the average number of recreational trips for the years 2006-2009 (5c). (trips)

Motion carried with one in opposition.

Motion: In Action 2 of the general state management document, to add a new alternative that would establish allocations for state management of private anglers based on the allocations set in the five EFPs.

Motion carried 16 to 0 with one abstention.

Grouper/Tilefish IFQ program 5-year review

Motion: To accept the Grouper-Tilefish IFQ 5-year program review report.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Revised Options Paper – Amendment 36B – Modifications to Commercial IFQ Programs

Motion: To accept the Ad Hoc Red Snapper and Grouper/Tilefish IFQ AP's recommendation for program participation, to not require a reef fish permit to be a shareholder thereby retaining the current regulations.

Motion failed 8 to 8.

Motion: To create a quota set-aside from non-activated accounts to run a NOAA quota bank for addressing commercial discards. The Council shall create an industry steering committee to provide advice in the administration of the program.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To move Section 2.3.1, the lease-to-own provision, to Considered but Rejected.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To add an action to Amendment 36B regarding the LEC/LETC's concerns with the accuracy of landing estimates provided in advance landing notifications in the commercial IFQ programs due to law enforcement observations of under-reporting.

Motion carried 9 to 7.

Motion: To have staff bring back the Framework Action to Modify Recreational Red Snapper ACT Buffers for the Private and For-Hire Components at the June 2018 Council meeting with an added option including percentages for consideration.

Motion carried with no opposition.

SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

Revised Policy Statement on the Use of Descending Tools and Venting Devices

Motion: To accept the suggested revisions to the Gulf Council Policy Statement and the Gulf Council Purpose Statement.

Suggested Revisions to the Gulf Council Policy Statement:

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council **strongly** encourages the use of descending devices **and/or** venting tools as appropriate when releasing **deep-water** fish, **such as snappers, groupers and other reef fish, whenever necessary. Proper and widespread use can significantly increase the** likelihood of survival of released fish **and in turn contribute to the overall stock productivity and sustainability. As such, decreased levels of fishing mortality through higher survivorship of released fish should lead to increased fish population abundance.**

Suggested Revisions to the Gulf Council Purpose Statement:

Add as last sentence:

Implementation of the Council’s policy on the use of descending devices and venting tools is intended to reduce bycatch and discard mortality, which may lead to increases in abundance and eventually higher allowable catch limits.

Substitute Motion: To accept the suggested revisions to the Gulf Council Policy Statement and the Gulf Council Purpose Statement with the following modification to the last sentence of the first paragraph.

“As such, decreased levels of fishing mortality through higher survivorship of released fish could lead to increased fish population abundance and more fishing opportunities.”

Substitute Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To incorporate the text below into the Gulf Council Policy on the Use of Venting Tools and Descending Devices

Outreach and Monitoring Plan:

To measurably and effectively reduce mortality associated with discarded reef fish, incorporate any new mortality rates into stock assessments, and potentially increase abundance of fish populations, it is important to quantify the use and effectiveness of descending devices and venting tools. The primary objectives for this council policy coupled with an outreach and monitoring plan are as follows:

- 1) Significantly increase use and effectiveness of safe discarding practices of fish caught at depths offshore.
- 2) Substantially decrease discard mortality of released fish.

- 3) Develop best practices and guidelines for most effective methods for releasing fish from depths.
- 4) Incorporate measured effectiveness and quantified use of safe discarding methods and practices into stock assessments and management measures.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To have staff provide a summary table that includes discard mortality estimates used in the current assessment and average (~ 5 years) discards by sector (private recreational, for-hire, headboat, and commercial) for red snapper and other key reef species (as available).

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To have staff provide a preliminary estimate of the reduction in mortality (numbers of fish) for red snapper and other key reef species (as available) by sector that may occur if these devices were actively used in the fishery.

Motion carried with no opposition.

2017 LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER OF THE YEAR

The Council chose the Conservation Enforcement Officer Kyle “Bull” Rabren from Alabama to be the 2017 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year.

VOTE ON EXEMPTED FISHING PERMIT (EFP) APPLICATIONS

Motion: To recommend that NMFS approve the Golden Crab EFP application noting the Council’s recommendations and comments relative to coral and the depth of the royal red shrimp fishery.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To recommend that NMFS approve the Aquaculture EFP application noting the Council’s recommendations and comments relative to hurricanes, lighting, baseline benthic substrate assessment, fin clippings of brood stock and progeny for genetic analysis, and biofouling.

Motion carried with no opposition.