

Gulf Fishery News

A publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council



March - April 2013
Volume 35 Issue 1

Why does the recreational red snapper season keep getting shorter?

We know you're seeing more red snapper than ever before, and this is a great indicator that the rebuilding plan is working, but it doesn't mean that the stock is rebuilt.

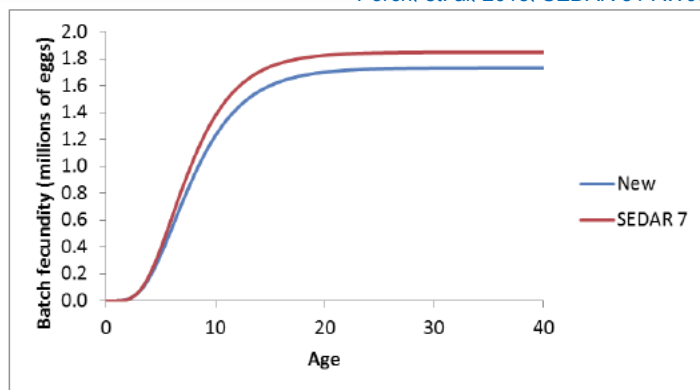
Why not?

The distribution and abundance of the red snapper stock is based on many factors and is not limited to the number of fish or biomass (weight). On the surface it may seem to be the practical way to make that judgment, but it's really not the best indication of a fish stock's sustainability, or its ability to reproduce for years to come.

The red snapper stock is measured in terms of egg production, known as spawning potential. Larger, older fish produce many more eggs than smaller, younger fish, so counting egg production to predict the health and sustainability of a stock is more accurate than counting numbers of fish.

This graph shows how the number of eggs produced by each fish during a spawn changes as the fish get older. As you can see, the number of eggs produced by a red snapper really takes off at about 10 years (about 30 inches).

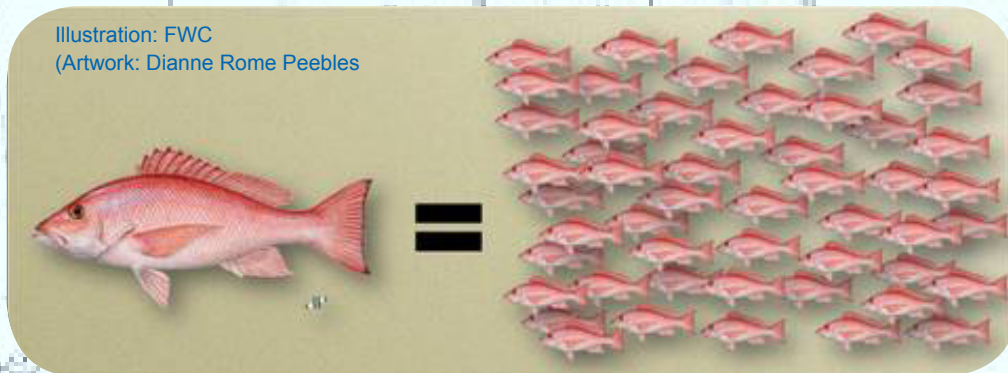
Porch, et. al. 2013. SEDAR 31-AW03



To put spawning ability into perspective, one 24-inch female red snapper produces as many eggs as 212 17-inch females.

Continued on next page.

Illustration: FWC
(Artwork: Dianne Rome Peebles)



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Did you know?

The Gulf Council encourages and accepts public testimony at every stage of the fishery management plan process. Comment opportunities go beyond scoping workshops and public hearings. The Council also takes open public comment during each Council meeting and accepts written comments throughout the process. Written comments can be emailed to: gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org, or mailed to:

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
2203 N. Lois Avenue
Suite 1100
Tampa, Florida 33607

Questions?

Call Charlene or Emily at
813-348-1630

Red Snapper *continued*

So, What Does This Mean?

Age and spawning success is a big part of why you're seeing more and more fish. Unfortunately, the science isn't giving the green light to dramatically increase the harvest. The National Marine Fisheries Service predicts the average size of a red snapper harvested this year will weigh approximately 7.70 pounds, which is about a 7-year-old fish. It's great that fish are getting bigger, and we need that trend to continue because the stock won't be reproductively successful (considered healthy/sustainable) until we have more older, bigger fish around to spawn.

When will we see an increase in the amount of red snapper we can harvest?

We already have. Beginning in 2009 the science has indicated that the red snapper population is indeed rebuilding. Each year, the Gulf Council has recommended an annual increase in the red snapper quota (the number of pounds of red snapper that can be harvested).

If the quota is going up every year, why does the season keep getting shorter?

There are a couple of reasons for the shrinking red snapper season. As the stock begins to rebuild we're seeing more fish than we have in recent memory, and these fish are getting bigger as time passes. Additionally, as the red snapper stock rebuilds, their geographical range increases and fishermen catch them in places they have not typically been found. The more fish there are, the easier it is to catch them, and the quota is harvested faster. Even though the number of annual red snapper fishing trips has gone down, those trips are more successful, with more anglers bringing home their bag limit of big red snapper.

This year the National Marine Fisheries Service is predicting that an average of 18,922 red snapper will be landed each day during the open season, which is more than three times the daily landings in 2007.

As the stock grows, the average size of red snapper is also increasing and there are more large fish to catch.

Anglers are catching more pounds of fish per trip, even though they're keeping the same number of fish. Since fish quotas are set in pounds, the quota is filled faster with fewer individual fish. Remember, the average size of red snapper harvested this year will weigh close to eight pounds, which is about twice the weight of the typical red snapper caught in 2007.



Photo by Mark Miller

Where do we go from here?

A benchmark stock assessment is underway and expected to be completed in June of this year. Once the results of the assessment are available, the Council's scientific advisors (the Scientific and Statistical Committee) will recommend harvest levels based on the new science, and Council will recommend fishery management measures to achieve those harvest goals.



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Watch educational videos on **Gulf Council Educational TV!**

MANAGEMENT PLANS

Click on the thermometer to:

- review pending fishery management plans and amendments
- review available amendment guides
- review public comments
- submit public comments



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Gulf Council Names New Executive Director

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council announces the selection of Doug Gregory as its new Executive Director. Gregory will take the helm May 20, 2013. He replaces Dr. Stephen Bortone, who is retiring.

"The Gulf Council has many important issues on its agenda, and I look forward to working with Doug as our new Executive Director," said Doug Boyd, Chairman of the Gulf Council.

"Doug brings extensive experience to the Council, both in practical application and in the fisheries management process. His educational work with the fishing public will be a great asset, and his background and experience will go a long way to enhance the Council process," Boyd added.

Gregory has earned a B.A. in Zoology, M.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Ecology, and B.S. in Statistics. He has been involved in fisheries for over 35 years, and during his career worked as a fishery biologist for National Marine Fisheries Service Northwest and Alaska Fishery Center in Seattle.

Gregory also spent 7 years as a staff biologist for the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and has been a long-time member and past Chair of the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee.

Gregory is leaving his post at the Florida Sea Grant Monroe County Extension Office in Key West, where he manages the office and supervises educational programs. His focus has been on developing collaborative efforts with fishing organizations and regulatory agencies to enhance co-management practices. Gregory has been instrumental in improving communications between regulators and the public at a grass roots level.

"I'm eager to apply the skills and knowledge I've gained throughout my career to help lead the Gulf Council in providing the best fisheries management possible for the benefit of both the resource and the stakeholders," Gregory said.

Gregory grew up in a shrimp fishing family and is an avid diver, spear fisher, and recreational angler. He looks forward to returning to the Tampa Bay area and taking on new challenges.



Doug Gregory



Proposed Charter-for-Hire Days-at-Sea Pilot Program for Red Snapper

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council recently held a series of workshops around the Gulf to take comments on proposed Charter-for-Hire Days-at-Sea Program.

If you missed the meetings, don't worry, you can watch the virtual presentation on Gulf Council TV. Simply visit http://www.gulfcouncil.org/resources/gulf_council_tv.php and scroll down to the presentation section.

When you're ready, you can submit your comments online at http://gulfcouncil.org/fishery_management_plans/scoping-thru-implementation.php

A [Scoping Guide](#) is also available for download!

Marine Recreational Information Program Update

New Public Access Fishing Site Register is Launched



On January 24, 2013, NOAA Fisheries launched a new comprehensive, online database of public recreational fishing sites on the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. The Site Register is available at <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/recreational-fisheries/access-data/public-access-fishing-site-register>.

Maintained by NOAA Fisheries, in cooperation with state and regional partners, the Site Register provides detailed information about every publicly accessible fishing site, whether marinas, boat ramps, piers, beaches, or jetties.

NOAA Fisheries created the register as part of its program for gathering catch data. All the characteristics collected provide important information about each site - how often people fish during different times of year, what types of fishing occur, and what amenities might attract anglers to visit - to ensure an accurate picture of all the fishing activity that is taking place. That, in turn, enables proper sampling of the activity and, subsequently, representative estimates.

The Site Register is also accessible to the public as a tool for anglers and others. The goal of making the Site Register public is two-fold. It will provide information that individuals or third-party developers may find useful in finding or accessing fishing sites. Equally important, since each fish site is dynamic, members of the public can contact NOAA Fisheries directly to provide updated information. Anyone who is interested in learning more about using this information, sees information that doesn't look right, or is aware of a fishing site that isn't listed can email SRAdmin@noaa.gov.

Completing the new Public Access Fishing Site Register is an important step to an improved angler catch survey, which began in March of this year.



MRIP Rolls Out Improved Angler Catch Survey

This year, MRIP is changing the way catch information is collected on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts with an improved angler catch survey. The new survey is different from the old catch survey in three ways:

- Samplers will interview anglers during all times of day, including night
- Samplers will stay at a specified location for a specified amount of time, regardless of the amount of fishing activity
- Each sampling assignment will include:
 - a specific site "cluster," or group of sites with similar characteristics,
 - a specified order in which to visit sites in that cluster,
 - specified times to stay at each site in that cluster, and
 - a single fishing mode to sample for the entire assignment.

The new procedures are based on recommendations made in an independent review of NOAA Fisheries' data collection methods and have been tested in a pilot study. The survey removes potential sources of bias from the survey design and helps improve the precision of estimates. The survey also ensures that the data collected complements the way it is used to produce estimates of catch.

There may be instances when samplers are at a fishing site where there isn't much activity. Similarly, you may see samplers interviewing anglers who obviously haven't caught any fish. This is a vital part of the job. All types of fishing activity must be sampled in order to see the overall picture of fishing activity.

For more information visit www.countmyfish.noaa.gov.



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Gulf Council Meeting in Gulfport, Mississippi

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will hold its regular meeting at the Marriott Courtyard, 1600 E. Beach Blvd. in Gulfport, Mississippi, April 15 - 18, 2013. Here's a quick look at some of what will be discussed:

Reef Fish Committee

Regional Management of Recreational Red Snapper

The Committee will review an Options Paper that examines dividing the federal red snapper quota among states or regions potentially giving them more flexibility in choosing season and bag limits, but this would not necessarily result in more fishing days.

Under a regional management system, red snapper would remain a federally managed species subject to federal conservation goals, and the Council would continue to allocate the recreational quota and set the size limit.

Red Snapper 5-Year IFQ Review and IFQ Inter-Sector Trading Issues

Discussions will continue on the 5-year review of the Red Snapper IFQ Program, and staff will present a document that looks at issues related to inter-sector trading of red snapper IFQ shares.

Inter-sector trading could allow both sectors to acquire and fish red snapper shares and allocation. It may also:

- Help supplement the recreational red snapper season
- Improve stability in the for-hire sector
- Result in a more efficient allocation of red snapper between sectors

For-Hire Days-at-Sea Program for Red Snapper

Scoping workshops regarding the proposed program were held around the Gulf in March and April. The Reef Fish Committee will review comments received during those workshops, along with any written comments received.

The program would give a portion of for-hire vessels a specific number of days to fish for red snapper. This would allow participating vessel owners to choose what days to fish, allowing them to make better business decisions.

Continued on next page.



Jeff and Jackson Carter



Photo by Mike Jennings



Photo by Jason Whitaker

April Council Meeting *continued*

SEDAR 31 Red Snapper Benchmark Assessment status report

The Committee will receive an update on the red snapper assessment that is currently underway. Assessment workshop webinars are being conducted to complete statistical analyses and sensitivities related to the preferred model runs. The assessment is expected to be completed and available to the Council in early June.

Data Collection Committee

For-Hire Electronic Logbook Pilot Study in the Gulf of Mexico

The Data Collection Committee will receive a final report on the pilot study conducted by the Marine Recreational Information Program that examines potential advantages in reliability, accuracy, compliance, and timeliness of electronic logbook reporting.

Headboat Electronic Reporting for Reef Fish Resources & Coastal Migratory Pelagics

The Data Collection Committee will review a draft framework action that deals with headboat electronic reporting for reef fish and coastal migratory pelagics. The purpose of this amendment is to modify the data reporting requirements for federally permitted headboat vessels in the Gulf of Mexico to ensure effort, landings, and discard information of managed fish stocks are recorded accurately and in a timely manner. The need for this amendment is to prevent overfishing and ensure ACLs are not exceeded.

The Committee will also receive an update on modifications to the **Federally-Permitted Seafood Dealer Reporting requirements**, and a summary report of the Ad Hoc Private Recreational Data Collection Advisory Panel Meeting held in February, 2013.

The Shrimp Management Committee will review a Framework Action to Fund an Electronic Logbook Program for the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery, and the **Joint Artificial Reef/Habitat Protection Committee** will receive a summary of the Ad Hoc Artificial Substrate Advisory Panel meeting also held in February, 2013.

A **public comment session** will begin Wednesday at 1:45 pm. The Council will take comments on:

- Framework Action to Fund Electronic Logbook Program for the Shrimp Fishery;
- Permit Transfer and Renewal Requirements for Gulf of Mexico Charter/Headboat Permits;
- Exempted fishing permits (if any).

The Council will then hear open public comment to give members of the public an opportunity to address the Council on fishery issues that may not be on the agenda. Open public comment will be taken immediately following public testimony until 5:30 pm. Anyone wishing to speak must sign up prior to the comment period.

To view the complete agenda and briefing book materials, visit <http://ftp.gulfcouncil.org/?user=anonymous> and click on the *Briefing Book* folder.

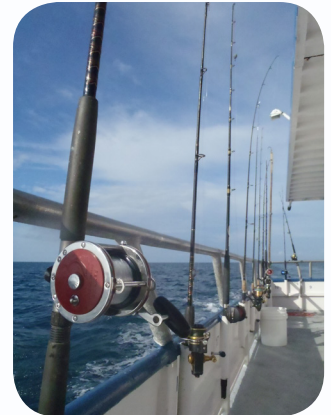


Photo by Emily Muehlstein



Photo by Mark Miller



Photo by Charlene Ponce



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Stay up to date on Gulf of Mexico Fishery issues - visit our blog - *Gulf Currents*.

Gulf Currents will keep you in the loop and prepare you to participate effectively in the fishery management process by educating you about current events, possible management considerations, regulatory changes, the fisheries management process, and more.



April Council Meeting Reminder

The next Council meeting is scheduled for the week of April 15 - 18, 2013, at the Marriott Courtyard, 1600 E. Beach Blvd. Gulfport, Mississippi. Please make your reservation under the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council room block to receive the special discounted room rate.

Note that all written comments will be posted on the Council's web site for viewing by Council members and the public.

To help ensure that Council members have sufficient time to consider your written testimony for a specific Council meeting, please submit your comments at least seven business days prior to the start of the Council meeting.

Materials submitted to Council members or staff for distribution prior to or during a Council meeting will be treated as all other written comments and will be posted to the web site.

Oral or written communications provided to the Council, its members, or its staff that relate to matters within the Council's purview are public in nature. These communications will be made available to the public in their entirety and will be maintained by the Council as part of the permanent record. Further, knowingly and willfully submitting false information to the Council is a violation of Federal Law.

A draft agenda will be posted on the Gulf Council web site at www.gulfcouncil.org.

Council Maintains Texas Shrimp Closure

By a unanimous vote, the Gulf Council approved a motion during its February meeting to continue the Texas shrimp closure for 2013. The closure is part of a cooperative seasonal closure with the State of Texas and runs concurrent with its mid-season closure.

The management objectives of the Texas closure are to increase the yield of brown shrimp and eliminate the waste of the resource caused by discarding undersized shrimp caught during a period in their life cycle when they are growing rapidly.

The closure results in larger shrimp in the fishery and, subsequently, a higher market value. This enables fishermen to harvest premium marketable-sized shrimp, thereby increasing revenues to the shrimp industry.

Since 1981, when the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan was implemented, there has been some form of closure off the coast of Texas. In 1989 the 200-mile closure went into effect and has remained in effect since.



Send us Your Fishing Photos

We want to see your favorite fishing photos! Whether from a spear fishing adventure, a charter trip, or a commercial effort, we'd like to see your photos and possibly use them on our web site or in our publications.

Send us your photos and help us build a photo library! To submit your photos, send an e-mail with "Photo Library" in the subject line to gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org. Be sure to include your name, address, and phone number, along with a description and proper photo credit, then simply attach the image and send.



Photo by: Chris Phillips

Photo descriptions may be edited for grammar, clarity, and/or length. Photos must be in jpeg format and cannot exceed 1.5 MB (200 ppi).

NOTE: By submitting photos, you understand that your photo may be used on our web site, in our newsletter, or other publications. Photo credit will be given.

Recipe Rewind

Here's another blast from the past. This recipe was taken from *Florida Fish Recipes*, Published by the United States Department of the Interior in cooperation with the Florida Board of Conservation and the Southeastern Fisheries Association, Inc.

Grouper Parmesan

Ingredients

2 pounds grouper fillets or other fish, fresh or frozen
 1 cup sour cream
 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
 1 tablespoon lemon juice
 1 tablespoon grated onion
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 Dash liquid hot pepper sauce
 Paprika
 Chopped Parsley



Thaw frozen fillets. Skin fillets and cut into serving-size portions. Place in a single layer in a well-greased baking dish, 12 x 8 x 2 inches. Combine remaining ingredients except paprika. Spread sour cream mixture over fish. Sprinkle with paprika. Bake in a moderate oven, 350 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes, or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Garnish with parsley. Serves 6.

Even better:

Save the Parmesan for chicken. Take 2 pounds of fresh grouper, rub with your favorite herbs or spices and grill.



Download the Free Federal Fishing Regulations App

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council offers a fishing regulations App for the Android and the iPhone - both are available for download.

The Apps are free and provide immediate access to the most up-to-date commercial and recreational federal fishing regulations for species managed by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. The Apps also provide information on fish identification, measurement guidelines, sanctuaries and closures, and important telephone numbers.

Visit the App Store or Android Market to download the App - or simply scan the appropriate QR code on the left with your iPhone or Droid to begin downloading the Gulf Council's free regulations App!



Droid



iPhone

Free QR Code Reader Apps are available in both the App Store and Android Market.

For more information on federal fishing regulations, visit www.gulfcouncil.org.



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Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Committee Agenda

Courtyard Marriott
Gulfport, Mississippi
April 15 - 17, 2013

Monday, April 15, 2013

8:30 am – 11:30 am **Full Council - Closed Session**

Advisory Panel Selection Committee (Tab F) - Perret
• Appointments to advisory Panels

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm **Full Council - Closed Session**

SSC Selection Committee (Tab G) - Simpson
• Appointments to Scientific and Statistical Committees

2:30 pm – 3:30 pm

Budget/Personnel Committee (Tab H) - Riechers
• Review of 2013 Budget

3:30 pm – 4:00 pm

Shrimp Management Committee (Tab D) - Riley
• Framework Action to Fund Electronic Logbook Program for the Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico

4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Red Drum Management Committee (Tab I) - Pearce
• History of Red Drum Management in the Gulf of Mexico
• Review of Past Meeting Discussions and Escapement Rates
• Overview of Current Research
• Options for Opening the EEZ to Harvest of Red Drum
• NMFS Explanation of Steps Necessary to Open Harvest

Tuesday, April 16, 2013

8:30 am – 9:15 am

Sustainable Fisheries/Ecosystem Committee (Tab J) - Riechers
• Review of Integrated Ecosystem Assessments
• Proposed Revisions to ABC Control Rule

9:15 am - Noon & 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Reef Fish Management Committee (Tab B) - Shipp
• Status of SEDAR 31 Red Snapper Benchmark Assessment
• Options Paper - Regional Management/ Recreational Red Snapper
• Discussion of Red Snapper 5-Year IFQ Review
• Discussion of IFQ Inter-Sector Trading Issues
• Scoping and Written Comments on For-Hire Days-at-Sea Pilot Program for Red Snapper
• Final Action - Permit Transfer and Renewal Requirements for Gulf of Mexico Charter/Headboat Permits (passenger capacity)
• White Paper on Live Animal Collection for Public Displays
• Status - Action Defining For-Hire Fishing Under Contractual Services
• Discussion on Exempted Fishing Permits (if any)

3:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Mackerel Management Committee (Tab C) - Fischer
• Status of Spanish Mackerel/Cobia Benchmark Assessments
• Review - Draft Joint Amendment 20 - Modifications to CMP Zones
• SAFMC Motions & Recommendations for Amendment 20

Immediately following committee recess will be the Informal Question & Answer Session on Gulf of Mexico fishery management issues.

Wednesday, April 17, 2013

8:30 am – 11:00 am

Data Collection Committee (Tab E) - Pearce
• For-hire Electronic Logbook Pilot Study - Final Report
• Draft Framework Action on Modifications to Headboat Electronic Reporting for Reef Fish and Coastal Migratory Pelagics
• Status Update on Modifications to Federally Permitted Seafood Dealer Reporting Requirements
• Summary of the Ad Hoc Private Recreational Data Collection Advisory Panel Meeting

11:00 am – 11:45 am

Joint Artificial Reef/Habitat Protection Committees (Tab K) - Anson/Greene
• Summary of Ad Hoc Artificial Substrate Advisory Panel Meeting
• Summary of Artificial Reef Meeting

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Meeting Agenda

Courtyard Marriott
Gulfport, Mississippi
April 17 - 18, 2013

Wednesday, April 17, 2013

1:30 pm - 1:45 pm

- I. Call to Order and Introductions – Boyd
- II. Adoption of Agenda¹ (Tab A, No. 4) – Boyd
- III. Approval of Minutes (Tab A, No. 5) – Boyd

1:45 pm - 5:30 pm

- IV. Public Comment^{2,3,4,5} - Boyd
 - a. Agenda Testimony
 1. Framework Action to Fund Electronic Logbook Program for the Shrimp Fishery
 2. Permit Transfer and Renewal Requirements for Charter/Headboat Permits (passenger capacity)
 - b. Open Testimony

Thursday, April 18, 2012

8:30 am - 8:45 am

- V. Exempted Fishing Permits (if any) (Tab L) - Crabtree/Boyd
- 8:45 am - 11:30 am

VI. Committee Reports

- a. Advisory Panel Selection (Tab F) - Perret
- b. SSC Selection (Tab G) - Simpson
- c. Budget/Personnel (Tab H) - Riechers
- d. Joint Artificial Reef/Habitat Protection (Tab K) - Anson/Greene
- e. Shrimp (Tab D) - Riley
- f. Red Drum (Tab I) - Pearce
- g. Sustainable Fisheries/Ecosystem (Tab J) - Riechers
- h. Joint GMFMC/SAFMC Mackerel Committee Report (Tab M) - March 2013 Meeting - Fischer

VII. Committee Reports (continued)

- i. Mackerel (Tab C) - Fischer
- j. Data Collection (Tab E) - Pearce
- k. Reef Fish (Tab B) - Shipp

4:00 pm - 4:30 pm

- VIII. Other Business (Tab N) - Boyd
 - SEDAR Schedule

IX. Review of Action Schedule (Tab A, No. 6) - Boyd

¹The established times for addressing items on the Council and committee agendas, except for those setting times for public comment, may be adjusted as necessary to accommodate the timely completion of discussion relevant to the agenda items. Such adjustments may result in the meeting being extended from, or completed prior to, the date established by these agendas.

²Persons wishing to give public testimony must register before the beginning of the public comment period. During public comment, the Council will first hear testimony related to final actions of the Council and pertinent agenda items. Open public testimony regarding any fishery issue or concern will follow. Time constraints may limit individual speaking time as determined by the presiding officer. If your sentiments are reflected in comments made by others, please avoid duplication and allow the next speaker to address the Council.

³Persons wishing Council members to have copies of written testimony or information should provide an electronic copy to staff prior to the meeting for posting on the web site. All written information shall include a statement of the source and date of such information. Any oral or written statement shall include a brief description of the background and interests of the person testifying.

⁴Oral or written communications provided to the Council, its members, or its staff that relate to matters within the Council's purview are public in nature. These communications will be made available to the public in their entirety and maintained by the Council as part of its permanent record. Further, knowingly and willfully submitting false information to the Council is a violation of federal law.

⁵Anyone wishing to use electronic visual aids during public testimony must provide staff with a copy of the material at least one hour before comment begins to allow for a virus scan of said material.

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Protecting our marine resources

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The Gulf Council would like to hear from you! Please contact us regarding fishery questions, comments, or concerns you would like to see covered in the Gulf Fishery News. Anyone interested in submitting information, such as articles, editorials, or photographs pertaining to fishing or fisheries management, is encouraged to do so. Submissions may be mailed to Charlene Ponce, Public Information Officer, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 North Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607. Materials can also be sent via fax to 813-348-1711, or by e-mail to charlene.ponce@gulfcouncil.org.

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional Fishery Management Councils established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The Council is responsible for the development and modification of fishery management plans (FMPs) that are designed to manage fishery resources in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the Gulf of Mexico from state boundaries to the 200-mile limit.

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