

Inside this issue:

Council Forming Ad Hoc Limited Access Privilege Program Advisory Panel	2
Update on Sea Turtle/Longline Amendment	3
Upcoming Meetings	3
Council Seeks Economist to Serve on Socioeconomic Panel	4
Fishery Closures	4
August Council Agenda	6
Gag Status Update	7

New Council Members Welcomed

The Secretary of Commerce announced in June the latest appointments to the eight regional fishery management Councils.

Damon Paul McKnight of Slidell, Louisiana and John R. Greene, Jr. of Daphne, Alabama are the two newest members of the Gulf Council and will take the oath of office during the August Council meeting in Orange Beach, Alabama.

Reappointed members include Thomas McIlwain of Mississippi, Robert Gill of Florida, and Harlon Pearce of Louisiana.

See story at right.

New Council members appointed

Please join us in welcoming the newest members of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. The Secretary of Commerce in June announced the latest appointments to the eight regional fishery management councils.

For the Gulf Council, that includes Damon Paul McKnight of Louisiana and John R. Greene, Jr., of Alabama.

Reappointed to the Council were Thomas McIlwain, Robert Gill, and Harlon Pearce. Terms are for three years, with a three-term limit.



Tom McIlwain

Thomas McIlwain was first appointed to the Gulf Council in 2006 and is ending his first term on the Council and second year as Council Chair. He has been involved with Gulf fish stocks for more than 40 years.

The former liaison for the Southeast Fisheries Science Center and the current Project Coordinator for the University of Southern Mississippi, McIlwain has directed and managed the development and implementation of multiple complex fishery science and fishery management programs.

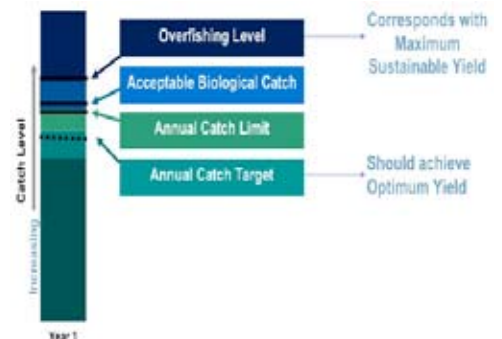
He also has received national and international recognition for developing complicated inter-disciplinary fishery science,

See New Members, page 2

Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures under development

New requirements in the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act of 2006 require regional councils to develop annual catch limits and accountability measures by 2011, to ensure that overfishing does not occur.

While the Council has already met the requirement to establish by 2010, annual catch limits and accountability measures for managed stocks classified as



See New Requirements, page 9

New Members *from page 1*

fishery management, and marine aquaculture programs.

McIlwain and his wife Janet live in Ocean Springs, Mississippi.

Robert Gill, also ending his first term on the Council, is an engineer by training. He began his career as an Engineering Officer in the U.S. Navy and spent nearly 20 years working as an engineer before going into business for himself.

Gill is co-owner of Shrimp Landing, a seafood dealership in Crystal River, Florida. He serves on the Board of Directors for both the Southeastern Fisheries Association, Inc. and Organized Fishermen of Florida. He is also a member of the Florida Boating Advisory Council and Chairman of the Board of the Nature Coast Bank.

He and his wife Cathy live in Crystal River, Florida.

Harlon Pearce has spent a lifetime working in the seafood industry and is beginning his second three-year term on the Council.

Pearce began his career in 1965 as General Manager of Don's Seafood, and for the past 16 years he has owned and managed Harlon's Louisiana Fish.



Bob Gill



Damon McKnight



John Greene



Harlon Pearce

Prior to his appointment to the Gulf Council, Pearce served a 20-year stint as the Chair of the Council's Red Drum Advisory Panel.

He and his wife Sharon live in Mandeville, Louisiana.

Damon McKnight, a strong believer in conservation and management of the fishery resources in the Gulf of Mexico, is the owner of Super Strike Charters in Venice, Louisiana. He also writes fishing articles for various publications.

"I'm honored to have the opportunity to serve on the Council and look forward to being part of the solution," said McKnight.

McKnight has been a member of the Louisiana Charter Boat Association since 2006, and is a past member of the Venice Marine Charter Boat Association.

He and his longtime girlfriend, Kim Martinez, live in Slidell, Louisiana.

John Greene has been involved in both commercial and recreational fisheries for the past 20 years. He began his involvement in fisheries with typical recreational activities, then spent some time in the commercial sector. For the last 15 years he has worked in the charter industry.

Greene is the Owner/Operator of Intimidator Sportfishing, Inc., in Orange Beach, Alabama. He is also a 20-year member of the Orange Beach Fishing Association.

"I am looking forward to serving on the Gulf Council and contributing to the future of the Gulf of Mexico fisheries," said Greene.

Greene, his wife Ana, and their three children live in Daphne, Alabama.

Limited Access Privilege Program Ad Hoc Advisory Panel Forming

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is forming a new Advisory Panel to assist in the development of an all-inclusive catch share program, or other limited access privilege program for the reef fish fishery.

The Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act of 2006 encourages regional Fishery Management Councils to develop limited access privilege programs, such as catch share programs, for fisheries when appropriate. Such programs allow fishermen more flexibility in terms of how and when they can fish during the year, increasing both efficiency and safety at sea.

In addition, limited access privilege programs help improve resource conservation because combined catches of all quota holders are generally at or below the total allowable catch.

The new Ad Hoc Advisory Panel will consist of both a recreational component and a commercial component, and will work on limited access privilege programs for those sectors. Expected time commitment is 2 - 3 two-day meetings per year. Members are not compensated; however, travel expenses are reimbursed.

See LAPP Advisory Panel, page 5

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Steve Bortone
Executive Director

Richard Leard
Deputy Director

Appointed Voting Members

Ed Sapp
Gainesville, FL
352-377-2715

Michael Ray
Austin, TX
512-389-4649

Robert Gill
Crystal River, FL
352-795-1916

Robert Shipp
Vice Chair
Mobile, AL
251-460-6351

Joseph Hendrix
Houston, TX
281-597-1620

*Damon McKnight
Slidell, Louisiana
985-960-1900

Thomas McIlwain
Chair
Ocean Springs, MS
228-818-8866

*John Greene, Jr.
Daphne, AL
251-747-2872

Julie Morris
Sarasota, FL
941-487-4527

Kay Williams
Vancleave, MS
228-826-2160

Harlon Pearce
Kenner, LA
504-467-3809

*New members
will be sworn in
August 13, 2009

State/Federal Voting Members

Robin Riechers
Austin, TX
512-389-4864

Corky Perret
Biloxi, MS
228-374-5000

Bill Teehan
Tallahassee, FL
850-487-0554

Myron Fischer
Cutt Off, LA
985-632-4525

Vernon Minton
Gulf Shores, AL
251-968-7576

Roy Crabtree
SERO
727-824-5301

Non-voting Members

Sam Hamilton
USF&WS
404-679-4000

Larry Simpson
GSMFC
228-875-5912

Radm Mary Landry
Eighth USCG District
504-589-6223

David Hogan
Foreign Affairs
202-647-2335

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

2203 N. Lois Avenue
Suite 1100
Tampa, FL 33607
Phone: 813-348-1630
Fax: 813-348-1711

Council Delays Final Action on Reef Fish Amendment 31 - Emergency Rule Remains in Effect

After being presented with newly released data regarding loggerhead sea turtle mortality, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council at its June meeting agreed to hold off on taking final action on its proposed Reef Fish Amendment 31, saying it needs more time to review the data before making a decision.

Reef Fish Amendment 31, which is intended to address sea turtle interactions with bottom longline fishing gear in the reef fish fishery of the Gulf of Mexico, is expected to get final approval in August.

In the meantime, the Council is asking its Scientific and Statistical Committee to review the newly released data and provide advice during the Council's August meeting.

[See Sea Turtles, page 5](#)

Greenwise Newsletter Delivery Option

If you currently receive a hard copy of the *Gulf Fishery News* and would like to opt for a greener way of keeping apprised of fishery issues currently under consideration, you can sign up to receive the newsletter by e-mail. Simply send a blank e-mail with "Subscribe" in the subject line to: pressreleases@gulfcouncil.org and you will automatically be added to the e-mail list. Besides receiving a link to the newsletter, you will also receive updates on fishery issues, as well as meeting notices and other pertinent information.

To discontinue receipt of the newsletter (hard copy), please send an e-mail to charlene.ponce@gulfcouncil.org with "newsletter unsubscribe" in the subject line.

Upcoming Scoping Meetings

- Generic Amendment -Annual Catch Limits/Accountability Measures
- Mackerel Amendment 18
- Spiny Lobster Amendment 9

September 21, 2009
Monroe County Harvey Govt Center
1200 Truman Avenue
Key West, FL 33040

September 23, 2009
City of Madeira Beach
300 Municipal Dr.
Madeira Beach, FL 33708

Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries
195 Ludwig Annex
Grand Isle, LA 70358

SpringHill Suites
7922 Moley Rd
Houston, TX 77061

September 22, 2009
Banana Bay
4590 Overseas Highway
Marathon, FL 33050

City of Orange Beach
27235 Canal Road
Orange Beach, AL 36561

Best Western
7921 Lamar Poole Road
Biloxi, MS 39532

September 24, 2009
NMFS Lab
3500 Dellwood Beach Dr.
Panama City, FL 32408

Holiday Inn - Emerald Beach
1102 S. Shoreline Blvd.
Corpus Christi, TX 78401

For more information on any of these meetings, please call the Gulf Council at 813-348-1630.

A Note on Scoping:

Scoping is the process of identifying issues, potential impacts, and reasonable alternatives associated with the issue at hand. It provides the first and best opportunity for the public to make suggestions or to raise issues and concerns before the Council begins developing an amendment.

Council Seeking Economist to Serve on Socioeconomic Panel

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is currently recruiting for an Economist to fill a vacancy on its Socioeconomic Panel.

The Panel consists of sociologists and economists who review amendments to fishery management plans and advise the Council on social and economic issues related to fisheries management.

Expected time commitment is 2 - 3, two-day meetings per year. Members are not compensated; however travel expenses are reimbursed.

Economists interested in serving on the Socioeconomic Panel should submit a letter and resume to:

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

Materials may also be faxed to: 813-348-1711; or e-mailed to phyllis.miranda@gulfcouncil.org.

Resumes and letters should be received no later than close of business August 6, 2009.

Send us Your Fishing Photos

We want to see your favorite fishing and fishery related photos! Whether they are from a spear diving 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 newsletter.

Send us your photos and help us build a photo library! To submit your photos, please send an e-mail with "Photo Library" in the subject line to gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org. Be sure to include your name, address, phone number, along with a description and proper photo credit, then simply attached the image and send. Photo descriptions may be edited for grammar, clarity, and/or length. Photos must be in jpeg format and should not exceed 1.5 MB (up to 150dpi).

NOTE: By submitting photos, you understand that if we decide to use your photo, it can be used anywhere on the web site, in our newsletter or other publications. We will display a brief description of the photo and your name, unless requested otherwise.

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Closures

Recreational Closures:

Red Snapper

Recreational red snapper season will close at 12:01 a.m. local time August 15, 2009. The season will reopen June 1, 2010, the beginning of the 2010 federal recreational red snapper fishing season.

Commercial Closures:

Deep-Water Grouper

The commercial fishery for deepwater grouper in the Gulf of Mexico closed, effective 12:01 a.m. local time June 27, 2009, and will reopen January 1, 2010.

During the closure, vessels with commercial quantities of reef fish on board are prohibited from retaining a recreational bag limit. Thus, a vessel may only have a commercial quantity of reef fish or a recreational bag limit of reef fish.

Tilefish

The commercial fishery for Gulf of Mexico tilefish closed effective May 15, 2009 and will reopen January 1, 2010. The commercial quota has been reached and the closure is necessary to protect the tilefish resource.

NOTE: The tilefish fishery was closed on May 15, 2009, with the closure of deepwater grouper, both quotas will have been filled and the use of bottom longline gear to harvest reef fish in water of all depths east of 85°30'W longitude is prohibited as of June 27, 2009.

King Mackerel

The commercial run-around gillnet fishery for Gulf group king mackerel in the southern Florida west coast subzone is closed effective 6 a.m. local time, January 30, 2009, through January 19, 2010.



June Council Meeting Reminder

The Council will be meeting the week of August 11 - 14, 2009 at the Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, Alabama. Please make your reservation under the GMFMC room block to receive the special discounted room rate.

When the Council travels, the deadline for comments is moved up a day in order to accommodate packing and shipping of materials to our meeting location.

Submission of written comments and materials to be included as part of the briefing book materials for this meeting **MUST BE RECEIVED** by 5:00 p.m. EDT August 5, 2009

If you miss the deadline and bring your own copies to the meeting, please bring at least 30 copies for the Council. If you wish for your materials to be made available to the public, please bring additional copies.

A draft agenda can be found on page 6.



LAPP Advisory Panel *continued from page 3*

Anyone interested in serving on the Advisory Panel should submit a letter and resume to:

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

Materials may also be faxed to: 813-348-1711; or e-mailed to Phyllis.miranda@gulfcouncil.org. Resumes and letters must be received no later than close of business August 6, 2009.

Sea Turtles *continued from page 3*

As it stands, management actions contained in the amendment include:

- Allowing or prohibiting the use of squid as bait in the bottom longline fishery
- Longline time/area closures
- Longline endorsements to fish east of Cape San Blas, FL
- Modifications to fishing practices & gear

According to a 2006-2008 NOAA Fisheries report, the number of threatened loggerhead sea turtles that have been caught in the bottom longline fishery has exceeded authorized levels.

The Council is required by the Endangered Species Act to take action to provide protection for threatened loggerhead sea turtles from interactions with fishing gear. Similarly, National Standard 9 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires the Council to reduce bycatch to the extent practicable, and where it cannot be reduced, to reduce bycatch mortality.

In January, the Council requested an emergency rule that would address the issue in the short-term. That rule temporarily closes the bottom longline fishery in waters less than 50 fathoms for the entire eastern Gulf of Mexico.



Additionally, during the 2009 fishing year while the emergency longline closure is in effect, once the 2009 deep-water grouper quota is caught, reef fish bottom longline gear will be prohibited in the eastern Gulf of Mexico (east of Cape San Blas, FL). The commercial deep-water grouper fishery closed June 27, 2009.

The emergency rule was implemented May 18 and can remain in effect for 180 days, but the Council has requested that NOAA Fisheries end the emergency action as soon as possible if the biological opinion currently under development indicates that actions outlined in Amendment 31 will sufficiently address the turtle bycatch issue in the longline fishery.

The updated biological opinion is expected to be completed by August, 2009.

Committee Agenda Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

The Perdido Beach Resort
Orange Beach, AL
August 11 - 12, 2009

Tuesday, August 11, 2009

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Orientation for new Council Members

12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

AP Selection Committee (Closed Session)

* Appointment of the Ad Hoc LAPP AP

2:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

SSC Selection Committee (Closed Session)

* Appointment of an Economist to the SEP

2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Reef Fish Management Committee

* Final Action on Reef Fish Amendment 31/DEIS to address longline/turtle interactions
+ Comments from the July SSC meeting

Wednesday, August 12, 2009

8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Reef Fish Management Committee

* Presentation by Russell Nelson - "Is there a better way to manage U.S. shared commercial and recreational fisheries?"
* Presentation by Donald Leal - "Evolving Approaches to Managing Marine Recreational Fisheries"
* Preliminary Analysis of Gag and Red Grouper Management Measures

2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Sustainable Fisheries/Ecosystem Committee

* Scoping Document for Generic ACL/AM Amendment
* Final SAFMC Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 1
* Report of Catch Shares Task Force

3:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Spiny Lobster Management Committee

* ACL Amendment Scoping Document for Spiny Lobster

3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Budget/Personnel Committee

* 5-year Budget Proposal

4:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Highly Migratory Species Committee

* Presentation on Amendment 3 to the Consolidated Highly Migratory Species FMP

5:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Data Collection Committee

* Presentation on Louisiana For-Hire Logbook Program

6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

* Informal Q&A Session on Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Issues

¹The established times for addressing items on the Council and committee agendas, except for those setting times for public testimony or open 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.

Next Meeting:
October 19 - 22, 2009
Holiday Inn - Emerald Beach
Corpus Christi, TX

Council Agenda Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

The Perdido Beach Resort
Orange Beach, AL
August 13, 2009

Thursday, August 13, 2009

- I. Call to Order and Introductions - McIlwain
- II. Swearing in of New Council Members
- III. Adoption of Agenda¹ - McIlwain
- IV. Approval of Minutes - McIlwain
(8:30 a.m. - 8:50 a.m.)
- V. Public Testimony^{2,3,4,5} - McIlwain
 - a. Exempted Fishing Permits (EFP) (if any)
 - b. Final Action on Reef Fish Amendment 31
 - b. Open Public Comment Period^{2,6}
(8:50 a.m. - 12:00 Noon)
- VI. Report on the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Activities - W. Walker
(1:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.)
- VII. Committee Reports
 - a. Reef Fish Management - Minton
 - b. AP Selection Committee - Pearce
 - c. SSC Selection Committee - Simpson
 - d. Budget/Personnel Committee - Shipp
 - e. Spiny Lobster Committee - Teehan
 - f. Sustainable Fisheries/Ecosystem Management - Gill
 - g. Highly Migratory Species - Sapp
 - h. Data Collection - Riechers
(2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.)
- VIII. Review and Revision of Proposed SEDAR Schedule
(5:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.)
- IX. Other Business - McIlwain
(6:00 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.)
- X. Election of Chair and Vice Chair - McIlwain
(6:15 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.)

²Persons wishing to testify for either public testimony or open public comment must submit a registration card before the beginning of public testimony; otherwise persons wishing to testify may be denied. One card must be completed for each issue on which persons wish to testify.

³Persons wishing Council members to have copies of written testimony or information should provide 30 copies to staff for distribution. 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 testimony begins to allow for a virus scan of said material.

⁶The Council has set aside this time for open public comment regarding any fishery issue or concern. People wishing to speak before the Council should complete a public comment card, making sure to check the box marked Open Public Comment. In the interest of giving everyone an opportunity to speak, speakers are asked to limit comments to three minutes. If your sentiments are reflected in comments made by others, please state so and allow the next speaker to address the Council. Individuals may be asked to reduce speaking time in order to accommodate all who wish to speak. The open public comment period will end no later than the time scheduled on the agenda regardless of the number of persons wishing to comment.

New Requirements *(continued from page 1)*

overfished or undergoing overfishing (greater amberjack, gray triggerfish, red snapper and gag), a generic amendment is under development to establish annual catch limits and accountability measures for the remainder of the managed stocks. For coastal migratory pelagics and spiny lobster, which are managed jointly by the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils, separate joint amendments will be developed.

During its June meeting, the Council approved a draft scoping document, and scoping meetings are planned around the Gulf coast later this summer. The Council strongly encourages the public to participate in the scoping process - it's the first and best opportunity for the public to make suggestions or to raise issues and concerns **before** the Council begins developing a draft amendment.

"It's important to have as much public input as possible before the Council sets these annual catch limits," said Dr. Steve Bortone, Executive Director, Gulf Council.

Annual catch limits are based on the scientifically determined annual biological catch, but may be set lower to allow for uncertainties associated with actions and activities related to management.

Uncertainties include things like variation in adherence to fishing regulations and the inability of surveys to always detect the actual catch and discard levels of fish in any given fishery.

"We want to set annual catch limits as close to the acceptable biological catch as possible but, because of the nature of fish and fishing, we need a little breathing room to assure that our management activities don't unintentionally go over that all important annual catch limit", said Bortone.

In the event that catch limits are exceeded, accountability measures will kick in. Accountability measures are predetermined actions to either prevent further catches in the current fishing year, or return catches to the specified levels in the following year.

See page 3 for scoping meeting information, or contact the Gulf Council by emailing gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org or by calling 888-833-1844.

Status Update on Gag Grouper

A recent stock assessment update for Gulf of Mexico gag shows a decline in abundance.

In other words, the stock is overfished and undergoing overfishing, and the Council must take immediate action to end overfishing and rebuild the stock. The Council, as a result, directed staff to initiate a plan amendment for the rebuilding of gag grouper.

It is expected that the Council will begin reviewing a draft document in October, and that scoping meetings will likely be held later this fall/winter.

Scoping meetings provide the first and best opportunity for the public to make suggestions or to raise issues and concerns before the Council begins developing management options. The Council strongly encourages the public to participate in this open process.



Gulf of Mexico Grouper	New Regulations (as of 5/18/2009)
<i>Recreational measures</i>	
Grouper Aggregate Bag Limit	4 per person/day
Gag Bag Limit	2 per person/day within 4-fish grouper aggregate
Red Grouper Bag Limit	2 per person/day within 4-fish grouper aggregate
Recreational Season	All shallow water grouper (gag, red, black, yellowfin, yellowmouth, rock hind, red hind, & scamp) closed 2/1 through 3/31
<i>Commercial measures</i>	
Red Grouper Minimum Size Limit	18" total length
Gag Quota	1.32 mp (GW)
Red Grouper Quota	5.75 mp (GW)
Shallow-Water Grouper Quota	7.48 mp (GW)
Commercial Season	No closed season

*GW – gutted weight; mp – million pounds

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 N. 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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