

Gulf Fishery News

A publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council



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Council Expected to Take Final Action on Regional Management Amendment

The Gulf Council recently held a series of public hearings around the Gulf of Mexico to collect public comments on proposed Reef Fish Amendment 39 - Regional Management for Recreational Red Snapper. If you were unable to attend a meeting, there's still time to [send in your comments](#). The Council isn't expected to take final action until January, 2016.

The purpose of Regional Management is to take into account variation in the fishery, and to provide regional flexibility in management of the recreational harvest. This would enable areas of the Gulf (states) to modify some management measures to better suit the needs of each region. For example, a region could propose bag limits and season structure for the harvest of its portion of the recreational annual catch limit (ACL).



Reef Fish Amendment 39:
Regional Management of
Recreational Red Snapper



Once regions are defined, management measures adopted by a region must constrain harvest to within the region's portion of the recreational ACL (quota). Red snapper would remain a federally managed species, and the Council and the National Marine Fisheries Service would continue to oversee management and ensure that the annual recreational quota is not exceeded.

The amendment also considers other alternatives such as whether the Council will delegate some management authority to the regions, or have regions submit conservation equivalency plans; whether the management of

separate recreational components would continue; how to define the regions; modifying the federal minimum size limit; whether to allow regions to establish closed areas in federal waters adjacent to their regions; apportioning the recreational ACL among regions; and modifying post-season accountability measures.

For more information, or to submit your comments, please visit http://gulfcouncil.org/fishery_management_plans/scoping-thru-implementation.php

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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



Gulf Council Publishes Known Coral Locations in Gulf

Coral reefs are a crucial foundation for many of the marine species living in the Gulf of Mexico. They provide food, shelter, and nursery grounds to a seemingly endless list of fish, shellfish, marine mammals, and other inhabitants. Many of the fish we target as commercial or recreational fishermen spend some part of their life on a reef feeding, growing, or seeking shelter – that's why these habitats are so important.

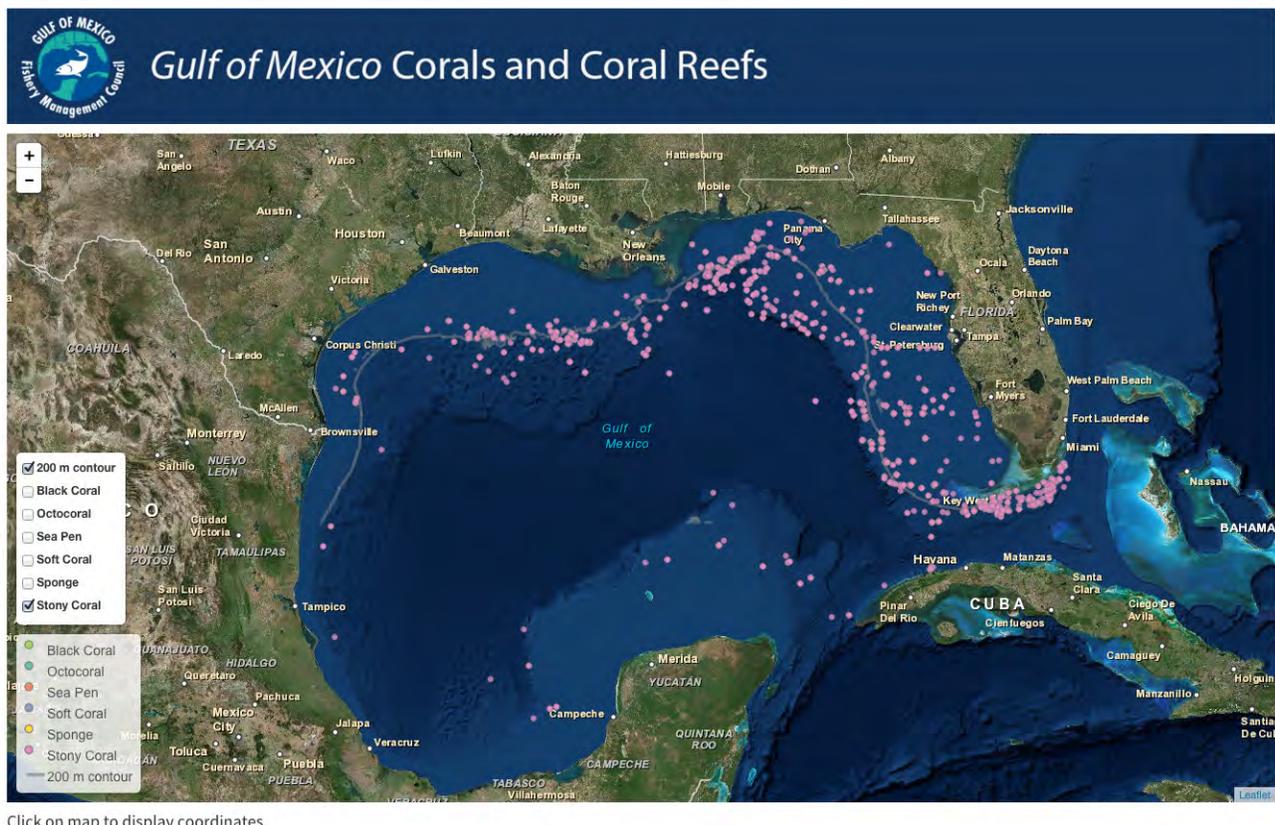
Unfortunately, coral reefs, their health, and abundance, are threatened by many things including; oil spills, ocean acidification, climate change, and rising ocean temperatures. Advances in technology such as satellite imagery and remote sensors that monitor the ever-changing ocean environment have allowed scientists to better understand the factors threatening coral reefs. Identifying coral communities allows for better management against the many threats posed on corals.

The coral web mapper created by the Gulf Council allows scientists, managers, and the public to explore the different corals in the Gulf of Mexico.

The five categories of corals/organisms that are depicted on the map tool are:

- Black Coral
- Octocoral
- Sea Pen
- Soft Coral
- Sponge
- Stony Coral

Check out the map tool to explore this comprehensive inventory of known coral locations in the Gulf of Mexico. Visit <http://portal.gulfcouncil.org/coral.html>.



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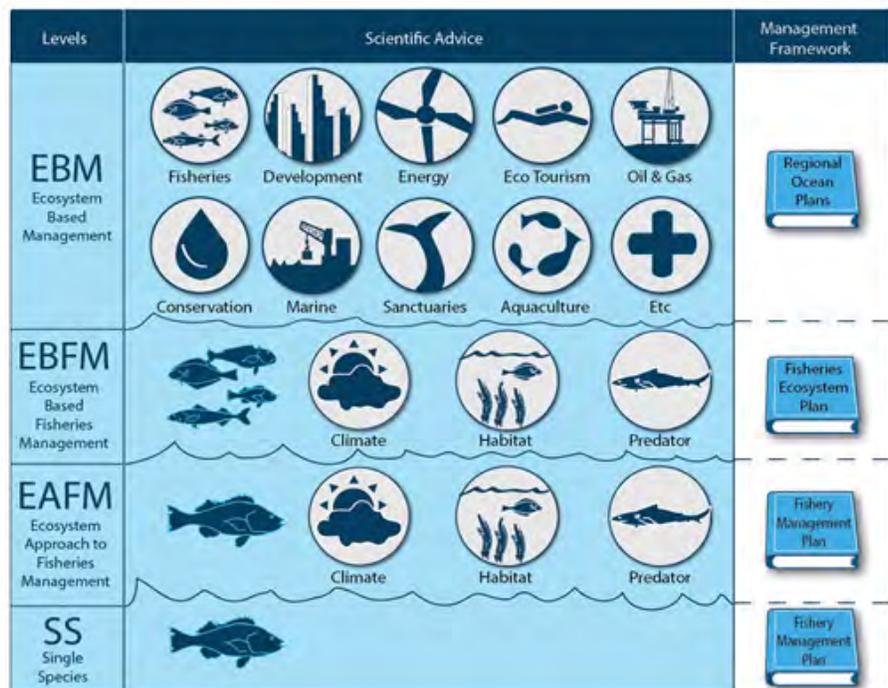
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Creating an Ecosystem-based Fishery Management Policy

from the NOAA website

Ecosystem-based fisheries management (EBFM) was introduced as a holistic approach to fisheries management in the 1990s. EBFM exists along a continuum, and takes into account the complex suite of biological, physical, economic, and social factors associated with managing living marine resources.

EBFM evolved over the last two decades to become a cornerstone of NOAA Fisheries efforts to sustainably manage the nation's marine resources.



NOAA Fisheries is developing an Agency-wide Ecosystem-based Fishery Management policy, which outlines a set of principles to guide our actions and decisions over the long-term. NOAA would like your thoughts on what should be included in the new policy.

Provide Your Input

The draft policy goals and framework are informed by NOAA Fisheries' own practices and partner experiences. These ideas are intended to limit neither discussion nor consideration of other potential policy goals. Read the policy [here](#).

Please share your thoughts by December 16, 2015. All comments should be emailed to [Jason Link](#), Senior Science Advisor for Ecosystems, or [Heather Sagar](#), Senior Policy Advisor.

For more information on Ecosystem-based Fishery Management, visit <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/ecosystems/ebfm/index>.



Help us Improve our Communications - Take a Short Survey

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, committed to improving stakeholder communications, invites you to participate in an online survey designed to evaluate the effectiveness of our communication efforts.

To participate, simply click the link below and complete the brief survey. It should take less than 10 minutes of your time and will provide us with important information on how best to communicate with you.

This survey is voluntary and no personally identifiable information will be collected. A link to the survey can also be found under "Hot Topics" on the front page of the Gulf Council web site at www.gulfcouncil.org.

Take the survey here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/gmfmccomm>.



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Stay up to date on the latest fishery management news and topics of interest - Sign up for our *News and Updates* mailing list and get the latest news and information delivered right to your inbox.

Visit www.gulfcouncil.org and click the **Subscribe** button in the left navigation column.



Or, just scan the QR code on the left with your phone, enter your email address, and you'll automatically be added to our email list.



January Council Meeting

The next Council meeting is scheduled for the week of January 25 - 29, 2016, at the Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, Alabama. Please make your reservation under the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council room block by January 5, 2016 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.

Comments can be submitted online by clicking the thermometer on the Council's homepage - www.gulfcouncil.org. Find your topic of interest and click on the "Submit Your Comments here" link.

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 Seeks Input on Proposed Reef Fish Amendments

The Gulf Council recently held a series of scoping workshops to discuss and take public comment on Reef Fish Amendments 41 and 42. If you were unable to attend a meeting, there's still plenty of time to [send in your comments](#).

Reef Fish Amendment 41 - Red Snapper Management for Federally Permitted Charter Vessels - examines red snapper management measures for federally permitted charter vessels that provide flexibility, reduce management uncertainty, improve economic conditions, and increase fishing opportunities for federal charter vessels and their angler passengers.

Reef Fish Amendment 42 - Federal Headboat Reef Fish Management - explores ways to provide flexibility, reduce management uncertainty, and improve economic conditions for reef fish headboat operators/owners, and increase fishing opportunities for their angler passengers by establishing a management program for federally-permitted headboat vessels participating in the Southeast Region headboat Survey.

Potential management measures for both Amendments 41 and 42 include traditional approaches and allocation-based management approaches.

Traditional management measures under consideration include modifications to the size limits, bag limits, and to the fishing seasons. Adjustments to the fishing seasons may consider split seasons and regional seasons.

Allocation-based management measures considered would divide the annual catch limit among smaller groups of operators or individual operators. Fishing cooperatives and regional fishing organizations are examples of allocation-based measures granting fishing privileges to groups. Management measures that would distribute portions of the ACL to individual operators include programs such as individual fishing quota, permit fishing quota, and fish tags.



Specific questions the Council would like input on include:

1. Charter vessels and headboats are currently managed using a traditional approach. In what ways does the current approach work or not work?
2. If the Council selects to continue using a traditional approach to management, what measures (size limit, bag limit, fishing season) should be adjusted and how?
3. In what ways might an allocation-based management approach benefit/hinder charter and headboat operators and their passenger anglers?
4. If the Council selects an allocation-based management approach which one is most appropriate and why?

Visit http://gulfcouncil.org/fishery_management_plans/scoping-thru-implementation.php to read the amendment guide, watch the video presentation, or submit your comments online.

Quick Guide to Submitting Online Comments

The Gulf Council wants your input on the many issues under consideration. You can give your input by attending scoping workshops and public hearings held around the Gulf of Mexico. It's impossible for the Council to hold workshops or hearings in every coastal community, so if you can't make a meeting because it's too far away or because of other commitments, you can watch online presentations and submit comments electronically for each amendment.

Check it out! Go to www.gulfcouncil.org and click on the thermometer in the middle of the page. From there you can read up on all the pending actions, watch the video presentations, read comments, and submit your own. All comments submitted through the online form are automatically posted on our web site for Council review. Other comments are manually posted every couple of days.

There is also a thermometer for each issue that lets you know where the Council is in the process for that particular amendment, whether its the scoping phase, final action, or implementation.

Let us hear from you!

MANAGEMENT PLANS

Click on the thermometer to:

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

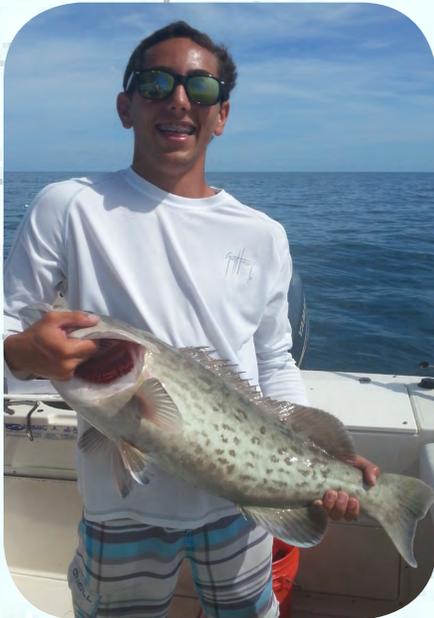


Photo: Emily Muehlstein

Send us Your Fishing Photos

We want to see your favorite fishing photos! Whether from a spearfishing 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 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 in other publications. Photo credit will be given.



Stay in the loop with *Gulf Currents*

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.

Check it out at:

<http://gulfcouncil.blogspot.com/>



Recipe Rewind

Recipe from the "Fresh from Florida" web site.

Herb Crusted Baked Grouper

Ingredients

- 4 (6-ounce) grouper filets
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- salt & fresh ground black pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 1 tablespoon dried basil
- 1 tablespoon dried thyme
- 1 tablespoon dried rosemary
- 4 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 small yellow onion, sliced



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Coat grouper liberally with olive oil.
3. In a flat dish, crumble the herbs and mix well.
4. Roll each filet in herb mixture, lightly coating each side.
5. Season the filets with salt and fresh ground pepper.
6. Place filets in a baking dish with onions; drizzle the melted butter evenly over the herbed filets.
7. Place in oven and cook for 20 minutes until opaque in the center.
8. Remove and serve filets topped with onions.

Serve with wild rice pilaf and baked tomatoes. Serves 4.

Baked Tomatoes

Ingredients

- 4 tomatoes, halved horizontally
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh oregano
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 4 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil



1. Preheat oven to 450° F.
2. Place tomatoes cut-side up on a baking sheet. Top with Parmesan, oregano, salt and pepper. Drizzle with oil and bake until tomatoes are tender, about 15 minutes.

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 email 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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