

Gulf Fishery News

A publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council



Summer 2019
Volume 41, Number 3

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Fishery Management
Council**

*Protecting our marine
resources*

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Commerce Department Announces 2019 Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Appointments

In accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the United States Secretary of Commerce appoints the voting state-specific, or obligatory, members and at-large members to the regional fishery management councils.

A Council appointee is knowledgeable in fishery conservation and management, or the commercial or recreational harvest of fishery resources through occupational experience, scientific expertise, or related training.

On behalf of the Secretary of Commerce, the NOAA Fisheries Assistant Administrator for Fisheries solicits nominations from governors and facilitates the annual appointments process in mid-January each year.

In late June, the Secretary announces the appointee selections, and new Council members take their seats on August 11 for a three year term. Terms expire each year on August 10 for many obligatory and at-large members.

The Secretary of Commerce recently announced the appointment of one new and two returning members to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. The Council looks forward to welcoming the following appointees on August 11, 2019.

Mr. Troy B. Williamson will join the Council for his first term. He is an attorney from Corpus Christi, Texas and no stranger to fisheries management. He has served three terms on the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission and currently serves on the Gulf Council's Red Drum, Reef Fish, and Ad Hoc Red Snapper Individual Fishing Quota Advisory Panels. Williamson is also a member of the Executive Committee of Harte Research Institute, Center for Sportfish Science & Conservation at Texas A&M, and is an active member of Coastal Conservation Association.

Ms. Leann Bosarge of Mississippi is re-appointed for her third term on the Council. She served as Council Chair from 2016-2018 and currently serves as Chair of the Council's Personnel and Shrimp Committees. Ms. Bosarge descends from a long line of shrimpers and fishermen. She is a member of the Southern Shrimp Alliance and currently helps manage her family's fleet of shrimp vessels.

Dr. Thomas Frazer of Florida is re-appointed for his second term on the Council. He currently serves as the Council Chairman and also works as the Chief Science Officer for the State of Florida. Additionally, Dr. Frazer continues to serve as the Director of the University of Florida's School of Natural Resources and Environment. Dr. Frazer has spent his career conducting research in both freshwater and marine ecosystems around the globe. He has focused on water quality, nutrient dynamics, fish populations, food web interactions, and ecological restoration.



Summer Fishing in the Gulf!



Photos: Dylan Hubbard and Emily Muehlstein

Farewell to Council Member, Mr. Doug Boyd

Council Member, Mr. Doug Boyd completed his third term of Council service during the June 2019 Council Meeting in Miramar Beach, Florida. Mr. Boyd began serving on the Council in 2010. He served as Council Vice-Chair during 2010-2011, and served as Council Chair 2012-2014.

During the past nine years, he has served as a member of many of the Council's administrative and management committees, including Habitat Protection and Restoration, Coral, Migratory Species, Red Drum, Reef Fish, Spiny Lobster, Sustainable Fisheries, Data Collection, Outreach and Education, Marine Reserves, Sustainable Fisheries/Ecosystem, Artificial Reef, and Ad Hoc Allocation Committees.



He also served as Chair of the Administrative/Budget and Personnel Committees, and as a Retirement Plan Trustee. He served as Chair of the Law Enforcement Committee from 2015-2019.

Mr. Boyd is a member of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council, the Coastal Conservation Association, and the National Fish Habitat Board of Directors. As an avid angler, he has been an active Council participant for the recreational sector. We wish him all the best in his future endeavors!



Doug Boyd and Executive Director Carrie Simmons



June 2019 Council Meeting Update

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council met June 3-6 in Destin, Florida. The following is a brief overview of what was accomplished:

Carryover of Unharvested Quot

The Council heard a summary of comments on a draft amendment that considers carrying over uncaught quota from one year to the next when harvest has not reached the annual catch limit. In April 2019, the Council requested that the Science Center complete both carryover and payback provisions for greater amberjack, red snapper, and king mackerel. Paybacks would be applied to the smallest managed component of a fishery which exceeded its portion of the stock annual catch limit. However, the Council did not want to apply paybacks for otherwise healthy stocks if they were not necessary. Further, NOAA Fisheries is working on an interim analysis process that would provide timely evaluation of stock health to generate updated catch advice. This could allow for regular adjustments to ACLs while simultaneously monitoring the wellbeing of the stock. Based on these discussions, the Council decided to postpone work on the Carryover Amendment until the interim analysis procedures are developed.

Two-Day Possession Limit on Federal For-Hire Trips

Anglers on federal for-hire trips may retain two daily bag limits of reef fish and king and Spanish mackerel if the trip lasts longer than 24 hours, has two licensed captains onboard, and all anglers are in possession of a receipt showing the duration of the trip. Currently, anglers on such trips may not retain their second daily bag limit until 24 hours have passed. The Council initiated a document that would consider allowing the two-day bag limit to be harvested at any time during a multi-day federal for-hire trip.



Photo: FGBNMS NOAA

Modifications to Commercial Individual Fishing Quota Programs

The Council reviewed a draft of Amendment 36B, which considers modifying the commercial individual fishing quota programs with the intent to assist small participants and new entrants to the IFQ programs, reduce discards, and increase access to shares to actively fishing, eligible commercial fishermen.

The first action considers whether to require a commercial fishing permit to hold IFQ shares. The Council removed an alternative that would allow a shareholder to hold a very small amount of shares without a permit and decided instead to consider the commercial permit requirement for all shareholders.

Action 2 would distribute the shares that were reclaimed from IFQ accounts that were never activated. The alternatives would either distribute those shares among shareholders or use those shares to establish a quota bank. The Council added an alternative that would distribute the shares to small shareholders whose shares represent 500 lbs allocation or less of each share category.

Commercial fishermen are required to estimate the weight of fish they have onboard prior to landing through an advance landing notification. Then, the dealer reports the actual weight of fish when fish are offloaded and sold, thereby providing accountability in the IFQ program by ensuring allocation is accounted for after each fishing trip. Action 4 considers requiring greater accuracy in the estimated weights provided in advance landing notifications. The intent is to assist law enforcement efforts in ensuring that all landings of IFQ stocks are accounted for. The Council indicated that it would like to avoid punishing honest operators and focus on egregious cases of misestimating. Thus, the Council modified the action so that accuracy on estimated weights would apply only to underestimates provided in advance landing notifications.

The Council also changed the alternatives to reflect a more generous range of options by requiring estimated weights to be within 25%, 50%, 75%, or 100% of the actual landed weight per share category, and broadened options for the landing threshold at which this requirement would be applicable to be 100, 500, or 750 lbs.

Greater Amberjack Commercial Trip Limit

The Council took final action on a Framework amendment that considers reducing the commercial trip limit for greater amberjack. The Council decided to reduce the trip limit to 1,000 pounds gutted weight (gw) and when 75% of the annual catch target it met, the trip limit will step down to 250 pounds gw for the remainder of the fishing year.



June 2019 Council Meeting Update cont.

Public comment indicated that some fishermen want to maintain a higher trip limit to allow for directed greater amberjack trips while some fishermen supported lower trip limits because they consider greater amberjack a bycatch species and prefer that the season remain open as long as possible. The Council will submit this proposed regulation change to the Secretary of Commerce for approval and implementation.



Photo: Dylan Hubbard

Recreational Greater Amberjack

Recent recreational greater amberjack management changes modified the fishing year so that the quota renews on August 1 instead of January 1. The fishing season opens in the fall from August – October with the new quota, and then any remaining quota is used to open a May season in the following year. These changes went into effect in 2018, and the entire quota was harvested in the 2018 August – October season, resulting in no May 2019 season. The Council directed staff to develop a document that would prioritize both May and fall harvest seasons. The document should include options that consider changing the fishing year, fractional bag limits, and modifications to the current season structure.

Recreational For-Hire Red Snapper Annual Catch Target Buffer

The Council discussed a Framework Action that considers reducing the buffer between the federal for-hire component annual catch limit and annual catch target. A previous framework action modified the buffer by reducing it from 20% to 9% for 2019 only. Reducing the buffer on a more permanent basis is expected to allow a greater harvest while continuing to constrain landings to the federal for-hire component annual catch limit. The Council selected a preferred alternative that would set the buffer between the annual catch limit and annual catch target at 9%. The Council will solicit comments on this Framework Action before deciding to take final action at its August meeting.

Gray (Mangrove) Snapper

The Council continued work on an amendment that considers the criteria used to determine the overfishing and overfished status of gray snapper, and the annual catch limits for the stock. The Council selected preferred alternatives that will set the Maximum Sustainable Yield proxy at the yield when fishing at 26% of the spawning potential ratio. For future assessments, the Maximum Sustainable Yield proxy will be recommended by the Council’s Scientific and Statistical Committee, and subject to approval by the Council. The Council also selected a preferred alternative that would set the maximum fishing mortality threshold consistent with the Maximum Sustainable Yield proxy. Based on the preferred alternatives the Council selected gray snapper would not be overfished or undergoing overfishing. Additionally, the Council chose a preferred alternative that would establish harvest levels for 2019 and beyond:

Year	OFL (mp ww)	ABC (mp ww)	ACL (mp ww)
2019	2.59	2.52	2.24
2020	2.58	2.51	2.24
2021+	2.57	2.51	2.23



Photo: Emily Muehlstein

The Council will solicit public comments and host a public hearing via webinar before deciding to take final action on this document at its August meeting

Almaco Jack

After hearing public testimony and comments from the South Atlantic Council Liaison, the Council asked its Scientific and Statistical Committee to consider the science and biology of the stock in an effort to evaluate the utility of a minimum size limit for almaco jack.

Shrimp Bycatch Exempted Fishing Permit

The Council recommended that NOAA Fisheries approve an Exempted Fishing Permit Application that would allow for a new bycatch reduction device to be tested in the shrimp fishery.

In The News

Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity for Projects Addressing the Needs of Fishing Communities

The goal of the Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant program is to fund projects that address the needs of fishing communities, optimize economic benefits by building and maintaining sustainable fisheries, and increase other opportunities to keep working waterfronts viable. The FY20 solicitation seeks applications that fall into one of two priorities:

(1) Promotion, Development, and Marketing

Projects sought should:

- Promote better business practices to increase market demand for, and value-added of, U.S. commercial and recreational fish species.
- Develop collaborative and improved regional, national, and global public relations and marketing opportunities that can position the U.S. seafood industry to increase domestic production and better compete in global markets.
- Include marketing strategies which involve participation of the seafood industry locally, regionally, or nationally.

(2) Science or Technology that Promotes Sustainable U.S. Seafood Production and Harvesting

Projects sought should:

- Directly impact fisheries (to include commercial, recreational, wild capture, and aquaculture) through the development of science and technology based pilot projects that lead to the strengthening of existing, or the creation of new markets and opportunities in U.S fishing communities.
- Demonstrate a direct need or benefit to the fishing community that connects all segments of the fisheries supply chain from growing/harvesting to processing and marketing.
- Include, within the scope of the project, participation of the seafood industry and/or fishing community.

Two-page pre-proposals must be submitted by July 30. Only those applicants who submit accepted pre-proposals and meet all requirements are eligible to submit full proposals by Nov. 12. Information regarding the grant submission processes can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y5q7k43o>.

Source: NOAA Fish News, June 5, 2019



Photo: Kathy Hoak

In The News:

Recreational Fishing Survey Transition Policy – Open for Public Comment



NOAA Fisheries' Office of Science and Technology seeks comments on a re-issued policy directive that formally documents the Marine Recreational Information Program's survey certification process as a key step in transitioning to a new or improved data collection design.

Please submit your comments by July 22. Additional information and comment submission is available at <https://tinyurl.com/y2v9cavq>

Source: MRIP Newscast, June 6, 2019

Photo: Seagrant

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Carrie Simmons Executive Director
John Froeschke Deputy Director

Appointed Voting Members

Thomas Frazer Chair Gainesville, FL 352-392-9230	Dale Diaz Vice Chair Biloxi, MS 228-523-4082
John Sanchez Homestead, FL 786-255-1880	Doug Boyd San Antonio, TX 830-230-5032
Greg Stunz Corpus Christi, TX 361-825-3254	Phil Dyskow Marco Island, FL 239-821-7698
Susan Boggs Orange Beach, AL 251-747-4169	Leann Bosarge Pascagoula, MS 228-762-0888
Bob Shipp Fairhope, AL 251-454-7481	Jonathan "JD" Dugas Grand Isle, LA 337-254-0508
Ed Swindell Hammond, LA 985-345-4614	

State/Federal Voting Members

Robin Riechers Lance Robinson, Designee Austin, TX 512-389-4645	Joe Spraggins Paul Mickle, Designee Biloxi, MS 228-523-4104
Jessica McCawley Martha Guyas, Designee Tallahassee, FL 850-487-0554	Patrick Banks Chris Schieble, Designee Baton Rouge, LA 504-284-2035
Scott Bannon Kevin Anson, Designee Dauphin Island, AL 251-968-7576	Roy Crabtree Sue Gerhart, Designee NMFS SERO 727-824-5305

Non-voting Members

Glenn Constant Designee for Cynthia Dohner USF&WS 225-578-4243	LT Mark Zanowicz Designee for RADM David Callahan USCG District 8 504-671-2101
Deidre Warner-Kramer Designee for David Hogan OES/OMC 202-647-2335	Dave Donaldson GSMFC 228-875-5912

Gulf of Mexico's Bryde's Whale Listed as Endangered

At the next Gulf Council meeting, August 12-15, 2019, in New Orleans, Louisiana, a presentation on the 2019 Endangered Species Act listing of the Gulf Bryde's whale is scheduled during the Sustainable Fisheries Committee meeting. NOAA's Protected Resources Division will deliver information regarding the Bryde's whale biologically important area and overlap with fishing operations in that area.



Photo: NOAA

Gulf of Mexico Bryde's (pronounced "broodus") whales are members of the baleen whale family and are one of the most endangered whales in the world. They are the only resident baleen whale in the Gulf of Mexico and there are less than 100 individuals remaining.

The most significant threats facing Gulf of Mexico Bryde's whales are energy exploration and development, oil spills and responses, vessel strikes, ocean noise, and entanglement in fishing gear. They are particularly vulnerable due to the small population size and the small distribution area they inhabit in the northeastern Gulf.

In late May 2019, NOAA scientists and researchers began a third research cruise to study the species. The primary goal of the project is to develop a more thorough understanding of Gulf Bryde's whales, including the physical, oceanographic and biological features defining their habitat. You can follow the progress of this cruise on NOAA Fisheries Science Blog at https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/science-blog/summer-survey-study-trophic-ecology-gulf-mexico-brydes-whales-post-2?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery



Photo: NOAA

Learn more about the Gulf Bryde's whale at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/gulf-mexico-brydes-whale>

Corals in Crisis - Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease

Florida's fragile coral reefs are in crisis. A new ailment known as "Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease" is the latest attack on coral health. Experts of varying backgrounds are working diligently to figure out what is causing the disease, while simultaneously developing techniques to treat outbreaks and restore the sunshine state's coral reefs to their former glory.

WPBT2 South Florida PBS recently posted a documentary video regarding the issue. The video was produced in partnership between Halmos College of Natural Sciences and Oceanography at NSU, Keys Marine Laboratory, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, NOAA Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Coral Restoration Foundation, Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium, Mote Marine Lab Center for Tropical Research, FWC Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, Kristin Paterakis, Alexa Elliott, and David Daniel Diez. You can watch the full episode [here](#).



Photo: NOAA OER

More information about the Florida Reef Tract Coral Disease Outbreak is available at <https://floridakeys.noaa.gov/coral-disease/>

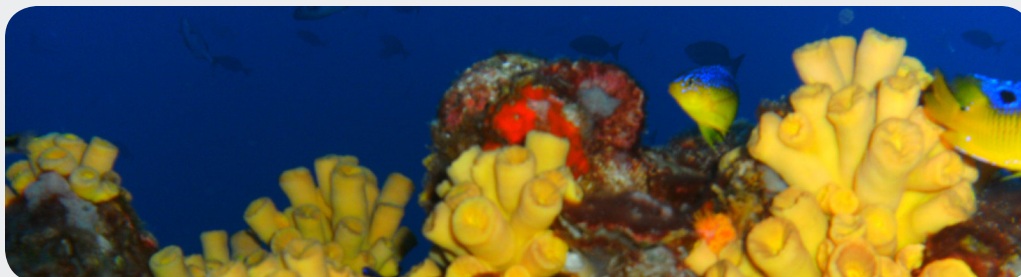
Divers Can Help Prevent the Spread of Coral Disease

With the widespread occurrence of stony coral tissue loss disease (SCTLD) across the Florida reef tract, and possibly to several Caribbean locations, another coral reef sanctuary in the Gulf of Mexico has raised concerns for caution. The disease appears to be caused by bacteria, and may be transmitted to other corals through direct contact and water circulation, meaning that divers and their gear may potentially spread this disease between sites.



Photos and source: FGBNMS

The Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary recently published appropriate decontamination guidelines for divers, in order to help prevent the spread of SCTLD to their currently healthy reefs. The decontamination guidelines have been developed by Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, with collaborating partners and dive professionals. Learn about the guidelines by visiting <https://flowergarden.noaa.gov/protection/pre-ventcoraldisease.html>



Upcoming Meetings

Public Hearing Webinar - Reef Fish Amendment 51: Gray Snapper Status Determination Criteria, Reference Points, and Annual Catch Limits

When:

Wednesday, July 17, 2019:
6:00-9:00 pm EST

[Register for Webinar](#)

[Standing, Special Reef Fish, Mackerel, & Socioeconomic SSC](#)

When:

Tuesday & Wednesday, July 30-31, 2019

Where:

Council Office Conference Room
4107 W. Spruce Street, Suite 200
Tampa, FL 33607

Council Meeting

When:

August 15-19, 2019

Where:

Hyatt Centric French Quarter
800 Iberville Street
New Orleans, LA 70112
[Register for the Webinar](#)



Photo: Dylan Hubbard



Goliath Grouper Learning Module

The Council's website includes a Coral Portal, sponsored by NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program, that provides interactive maps of habitats and fishery management areas; resources highlighting issues under consideration; and educational materials to support your understanding of corals, habitats, and the species linked to them.

"Get a glimpse into what we know about goliath grouper" is a learning module that provides a snapshot of information about this species in the Gulf. The information about goliath grouper In the module includes:

- ***How big they get***
- ***How they are managed***
- ***What they eat***
- ***What habitat they use***
- ***Goliath grouper interactive map***
- ***Additional facts***



Photo: Angela Collins, FWRI

Visit the portal to access the learning module at <https://portal.gulfcouncil.org/GoliathGrouper.html>

Florida Sea Grant conducted the Great Goliath Grouper Count in June 2019. See a video and learn more about the stock data provided to fishery managers at <https://tinyurl.com/y44uos8n>



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 Emily Muehlstein, Public Information Officer, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 4107 W. Spruce Street, Suite 200, Tampa, FL 33607. Materials can also be sent via fax to 813-348-1711, or by e-mail to emily.muehlstein@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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