

# Gulf Fishery News

*A publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council*



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Volume 39 Issue 3

## Meet the New Council Members!

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council welcomed two new members at the August Council meeting in San Antonio, Texas.

Dr. Bob Shipp is professor Emeritus in the Department of Marine Sciences at the University of South Alabama, which he chaired for 20 years. He served on the Gulf Council from 1992-2000 and 2005-2013, during which he was elected chair three times. His primary research areas are artificial reef habitats and the biology of red snapper, on which he has published numerous peer reviewed papers and has testified before Congress three times. He is currently a board member of the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative (GOMRI), the 500 million dollar research program created to study the impacts of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. He served on the Gulf Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee before he was reappointed to the Council. He is author of "Dr. Bob Shipp's Guide to Fishes of the Gulf of Mexico"

in its second edition and has served as judge for 35 years for the Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo, the largest and oldest fishing tournament in the world.



*Photo: Bob Shipp*



*Photo: Phil Dyskow*

Former President of Yamaha Marine Group, Phillip Dyskow is a life-long recreational angler from Florida, with experience in both fresh and salt water. Throughout his adult life he developed a passion for fishing the Gulf of Mexico, both inshore and offshore. Over the past decade he has focused his fishing efforts in the 10,000 Islands area of Southwest Florida, operating out of his waterfront home on Marco Island, Florida. Phil pilots his own 24 foot bay boat, and enjoys the solitude of a day on the water in a very remote part of Florida. Phil is active in Marine Conservation and is a Legacy Member and a Life Member of the Coastal Conservation Association.

Dr. Paul Mickle also joined the Council as a State Representative replacing Dr. Kelly Lucas. Paul has worked for the Mississippi Office of Marine Fisheries since 2014 and left his position as Deputy Director of the Finfish Bureau to serve as the Chief Scientific Officer for MDMR. Paul received his bachelor's degree in Biology from the University of Florida and continued on to earn his master's and doctoral degrees with emphasis in fisheries ecology from the University of Southern Mississippi.



*Photo: Paul Mickle*

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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 meetings and public hearings. The Council also takes open public comment during each Council meeting and accepts written and online comments throughout the process. Written comments can be emailed to: [gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org](mailto:gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org) or mailed to:

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

Questions?  
Call Emily Muehlstein at  
813-348-1630 ext. 238



## August 2017 Council Meeting Update

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council met in San Antonio, Texas, August 7-10, 2017, to discuss a number of fishery issues. The following is a summary of the Council's actions:

### Stock Assessment Schedule

The Council reviewed the [stock assessment schedule](#) and requested that Southeast Data Assessment and Review (SEDAR) move the cobia stock assessment from 2018 to 2019 to ensure that gray triggerfish is prioritized. In addition to the 2017 red snapper assessment that is being conducted currently, the Council requested that SEDAR conduct another red snapper assessment in 2019 and ensure that harvest data from 2017 and 2018 are incorporated.

### Greater Amberjack Annual Catch Limits and Management Measures

The Council took final action on a [Framework Action](#) that modifies the greater amberjack rebuilding plan. The previous stock assessment was completed in 2016. The Scientific and Statistical Committee reviewed the assessment and determined that the greater amberjack stock continues to be overfished and experiencing overfishing, and that the stock is not making adequate progress towards rebuilding. The Council must modify the rebuilding plan within two years of receiving notification that the stock is overfished so, the Council chose to use the ACL/ACT Control rule to establish a 13% buffer to the commercial sector and a 17% buffer to the recreational sector. The revised annual catch limits and targets are as follows:

Year	ABC	Recreational		Commercial	
		ACT	ACL	ACT	ACL
2018	1,182,000	862,860	716,173	319,140	277,651
2019	1,489,000	1,086,970	902,185	402,030	349,766
2020	1,794,000	1,309,620	1,086,985	484,380	421,411

The Council also chose to temporarily modify the recreational closed season to be January 1 - June 30. The Council also initiated two new framework amendments to evaluate modifying the recreational fishing season to allow for split spring and fall recreational season openings, and to consider recreational vessel limits and commercial trip limits.

### Federal Charter For-Hire and Headboat Management

The Council reviewed draft referendum eligibility requirements for [Amendment 41](#) which considers allocation based management for federally permitted charter vessels for reef fish species, and [Amendment 42](#) which considers allocation based management for federally permitted headboat survey vessels for reef fish species. For [Amendment 41](#), the Council decided to add an option that would allow the unique number of federal permit holders to vote and also to consider an option to weight the unique permit holders by the total permits held. For [Amendment 42](#), the Council selected a preferred alternative that would define eligible voters as for-hire federal permit holders whose vessels landed an annual average of at least 100 fish combined of red snapper, gray triggerfish, greater amberjack, red grouper, and gag. Annual average landings are based on harvests recorded by the Southeast Regional Headboat Survey between 2011 and 2015. Each eligible permit will have one vote. The Council will discuss further action on referendum requirements in October.

The Council also decided to convene a joint meeting of the Charter For-Hire and Headboat Advisory Panels before the end of the year.

### For-hire Permit Moratorium and Permit Transfers

In 2006, the Council established an indefinite limited access program capping the number of available permits for both Reef Fish and Coastal Migratory Pelagic federal for-hire fisheries. The Council discussed the results of the [for-hire permit moratorium review](#) that included a summary of permit transfers.

...continued on next page



## August Council Meeting continued...

### **Modifications to Federal For-Hire and Private Angler Red Snapper Annual Catch Targets**

The Council reviewed a [draft framework action](#) that considers changing the buffers between the red snapper annual catch limits and annual catch targets for federal for-hire and private angler components of the recreational sector. Since 2015, when component-specific annual catch targets were put in place, the private angler component has exceeded its annual catch target twice and its annual catch limit once. The for-hire component has not exceeded its annual catch target or annual catch limit. The Council has asked the Scientific and Statistical Committee review this document before the October meeting relative to the potential for reducing the harvest buffer for the for-hire component.

### **Ad-Hoc Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Advisory Panel**

The Council has decided to disband the Ad Hoc Red Snapper IFQ Advisory Panel and form a new Ad Hoc Red Snapper and Grouper-Tilefish IFQ Advisory Panel so participants in both red snapper and grouper-tilefish IFQ programs can work together in an advisory role to the Council. The Council is now soliciting members for the newly formed Advisory Panel before the October meeting. *Note: Information regarding the newly formed panel is found on page 8 of this newsletter.*

### **Grouper-Tilefish Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program 5-year Review**

The Council heard a [presentation](#) on the 5-year review of the grouper-tilefish IFQ program. The presentation included an overview of the program including share and allocation ownership and transfers, the influence of the IFQ program on ex-vessel prices, technical efficiency, and safety at sea. The review will be discussed by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee and the to-be formed Red Snapper and Grouper-Tilefish IFQ Advisory Panel before it is finalized.

### **Modifications to Commercial Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Programs**

The Council reviewed an [options paper for Amendment 36B](#), which analyzes program participation, distribution of shares from non-activated accounts, quota redistribution or set-asides, and allocation caps. The Council specified that the quota set-asides are intended to assist small participants and entry by the next generation of fishermen into the IFQ program as well as to reduce discards in the fishery. The Council also requested an option that would reclaim quota from IFQ accounts that become inactive in the future for redistribution through a quota bank, and removed allocation caps from further consideration.

### **Status Determination Criteria and Optimum Yield**

The Council heard a presentation on an [options paper](#) that considers setting or revising the maximum sustainable yield proxies, status determination criteria (minimum stock size threshold and maximum fishing mortality threshold), and optimum yield for reef fish. These reference points form the basis for determining the health of each stock and are required under the Magnuson-Stevens Act and National Standard 1 guidelines. Staff will further develop the options paper and will present an updated draft at the October meeting.

### **State Management of Recreational Red Snapper**

The Council reviewed a series of draft amendments that would enable the Gulf States to establish management programs for the recreational harvest of red snapper out to 200 nautical miles. The Council selected a preferred alternative that would allow each state to choose whether to manage its private angling component only, or to manage both private and federal-for hire components. The Council added alternatives that would consider allocation among states based on: the distribution of biomass and recreational trips; historical landings series ending in 2009; and each state's best ten years of landings throughout the entire historical landings series. The Council decided not to consider changing the recreational minimum size limit. Finally, the Council reviewed state specific documents for [Louisiana](#), [Mississippi](#), and [Alabama](#) and added additional state management amendments for Florida and Texas. The Council will review revised drafts at the October meeting.



## Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Doug Gregory Executive Director  
Carrie Simmons Deputy Director

### Appointed Voting Members

Leann Bosarge Chair  
Pascagoula, MS  
228-762-0888  
John Greene Vice Chair  
Daphne, AL  
251-747-2872

John Sanchez Homestead, FL  
786-255-1880  
Doug Boyd San Antonio, TX  
830-230-5032

Greg Stunz Corpus Christi, TX  
361-825-3254  
Bob Shipp Fairhope, AL  
334-300-6625

Dale Diaz Biloxi, MS  
228-523-4082  
Thomas Frazer Gainesville, FL  
352-392-9230

Ed Swindell Hammond, LA  
985-345-4614  
Camp Matens Baton Rouge, LA  
225-769-9080

Phil Dyskow  
Marco Island, FL  
239-821-7698

### State/Federal Voting Members

Robin Riechers  
Lance Robinson, Designee  
Austin, TX  
512-389-4645  
Jamie Miller  
Paul Mickle, Designee  
Biloxi, MS  
228-523-4104

Nick Wiley  
Martha Guyas, Designee  
Tallahassee, FL  
850-487-0554  
Patrick Banks  
Myron Fischer, Designee  
Baton Rouge, LA  
985-632-4525

Chris Blankenship  
Kevin Anson, Designee  
Dauphin Island, AL  
251-968-7576  
Roy Crabtree  
Jack McGovern, Designee  
NMFS SERO  
727-824-5301

### Non-voting Members

Glenn Constant Designee for Cynthia Dohner  
USF&WS  
225-578-4243  
LCDR Stacy McNeer  
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

## The Council Considers:

### Protocol for Authorizing Sea Turtle Release Gear

During the August Council Meeting, Mr. Charlie Bergmann (SEFSC-Pascagoula) gave a presentation describing the protocols and procedures in use to protect sea turtles from interactions with the reef fish fishery. He displayed two new devices that are being considered for approval for sea turtle releases: a collapsible hoop net that could be used in place of the current dip net, and a dehooking device.



Photo: Charles Bergmann, NOAA



Photo: Charles Bergmann, NOAA

Staff outlined a potential amendment that could be developed to authorize the new devices and modify the framework procedure to allow changes in release gear requirements to be implemented via the framework process. The Council decided to move forward with the document.

### Framework Action to require possession of descending devices or venting tools on board vessels possessing reef fish

At the June, 2017 Council meeting, Captain Betty Staugler (Florida Sea Grant) presented a review of two surveys on angler knowledge and attitudes toward venting and descending devices. These devices are used with fish experiencing barotrauma; to reduce physical trauma caused from the change in pressure associated with bringing fish up from deep water.

One survey was conducted by Florida Sea Grant in 2014 via e-mail. The other survey was a University of Florida Fisheries & Aquatic Sciences survey completed for the Council in 2015/16. Both surveys found that anglers are generally familiar with barotrauma signs, and more anglers were familiar with venting tools than descender devices. The greatest impact affecting the use of mitigation measures is whether or not such use is viewed as socially responsible behavior.

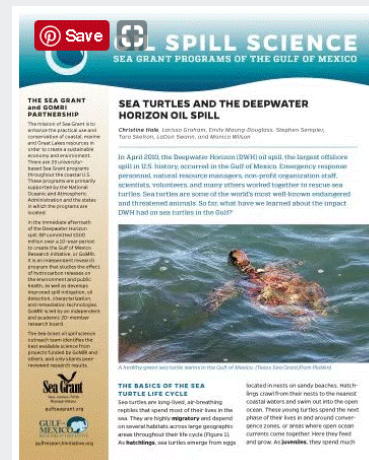
Staff then reviewed an [options paper](#) for possible actions to recommend or require venting tools or descending devices on vessels fishing for reef fish. Committee members strongly supported an outreach program regardless of whether devices were recommended or required. The Council continues to evaluate how best to proceed.



## In the News

### Sea Grant in the Gulf of Mexico Announces New Publication: *Sea Turtles and the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill*

Extension specialists with the Sea Grant oil spill science outreach program have produced new titles about oil spill science in the Gulf of Mexico. The May 2017 publication [Sea Turtles and the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill](#) addresses the risks, rescue, and impacts to sea turtles during and after the spill. Other topics covered include the sea turtle life cycle, threats and protections, and the rise and fall of the Kemp's Ridley.



### Sea Turtle Early Restoration Project

The year 2017 marked the first full year of implementation of the Sea Turtle Early Restoration Project. Developed to begin restoring turtle populations affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, this project is a collaboration between NOAA, the Department of Interior, and the State of Texas.

The 10-year project is aimed at reducing threats to all species of sea turtles on nesting beaches and in the marine environment of the Gulf of Mexico, with a primary focus on Kemp's ridley, green, and loggerhead sea turtles.

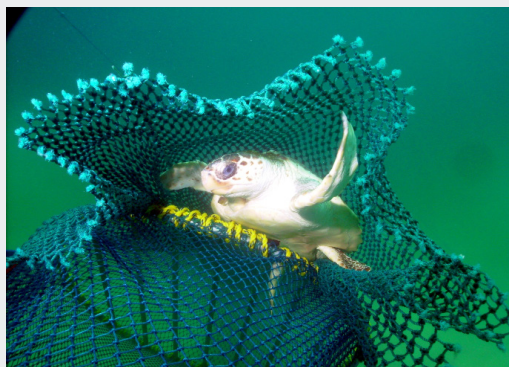


Photo: NOAA Fisheries

The project has four complementary components 1) Kemp's Ridley Nest Detection and Enhancement, 2) Enhancement of the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network and Development of an Emergency Response Program, 3) Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Trawl Bycatch Reduction, and 4) Texas Enhanced Fisheries Bycatch Enforcement. NOAA Fisheries is implementing the stranding network and bycatch reduction components, while DOI and Texas are implementing the Kemp's ridley nesting beach and Texas enforcement components. Read about the program's progress [here](#).



## Learn about Bycatch

National Standard 9 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) states that conservation and management measures shall, to the extent practicable, (A) minimize bycatch and (B) to the extent bycatch cannot be avoided, minimize the mortality of such bycatch.

Read more about Bycatch and associated issues at [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/fisheries\\_eco/bycatch/index.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/fisheries_eco/bycatch/index.html)



Photo: NOAA Fisheries

## Barotrauma in Deep Water Fish

Catch-and-release fishing is a common practice. Unfortunately, fish caught in deeper water (30 feet or more) present a unique challenge. These fish may experience barotrauma; a condition that occurs when deeper water fish are brought to the surface too quickly.

Barotrauma is caused by gasses escaping from the ruptured swim bladder into the fish's abdominal cavity. The gasses expand in the body and make it buoyant. The fish are then unable to swim or dive back down. For this reason, it is known that survival rates of caught and released deeper water fish are low.

A variety of tools are available to help increase survival of released reef fish, including venting tools, which release the gasses from the fish's abdominal cavity, and descender (recompression) devices, which lower the fish to a depth at which the effects of barotrauma are reduced and the fish can swim away. Read more about barotrauma at <http://catchandrelease.org/>

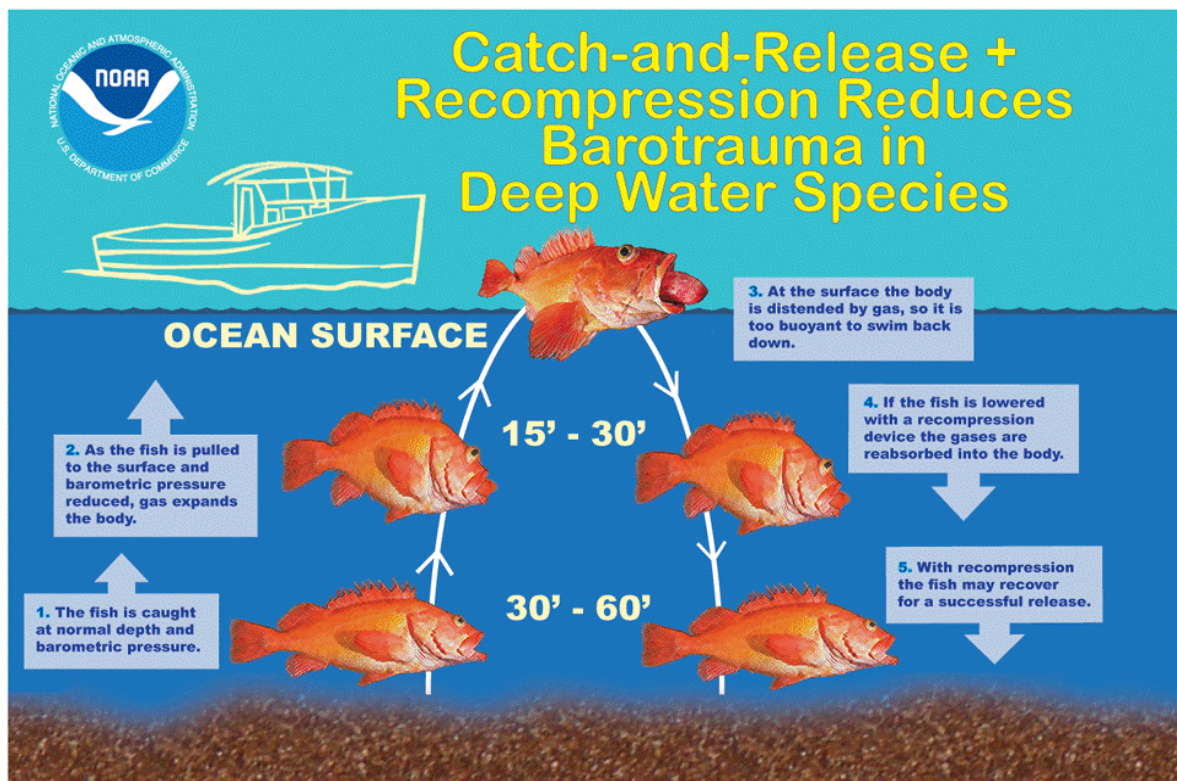


Image: <http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov>



## Upcoming Meetings

Standing SSC - September 12-14  
Tampa, Florida

Ad Hoc Red Snapper Charter-for-hire AP -  
September 19 - Tampa, Florida

Ad Hoc Reef Fish Headboat AP - September 20 -  
Tampa, Florida



## Actions Awaiting Implementation

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council has recently taken final action on a number of fishery management measures. Once final action is taken, the proposed management measure is forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for rule making. During rule making, a proposed rule is published and a final comment period is opened to the public. The Secretary of Commerce reviews the proposed rule and any feedback received through public comment before deciding to approve, disapprove, or partially approve a proposed fishery management measure. If a measure is approved, NOAA Fisheries will publish the final rule and implement the new regulation.

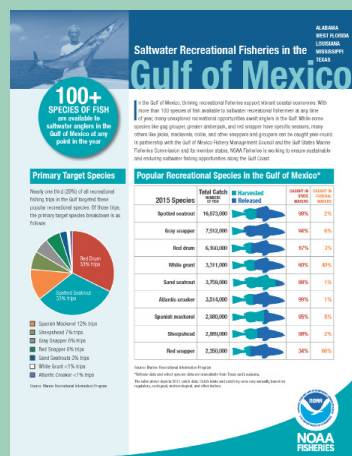
The following fishery management measures have been approved and transmitted to the Secretary of Commerce by the Council and are awaiting approval and implementation:

- [Reef Fish Amendment 46 – Modify Gray Triggerfish Rebuilding Plan](#)
- [Reef Fish Amendment 47 – Modify Vermilion Snapper ACLs and MSY Proxies](#)
- [Reef Fish Amendment 44 - Minimum Stock Size Threshold for Reef Fish Stocks](#)
- [Modifications to Charter Vessel and Headboat Reporting Requirements](#)
- [Framework Action to Modify Mutton Snapper and Gag Management Measures](#)
- [Shrimp Amendment 17B – Establishing Optimum Yield, Target Number of Permits, Permit Pool, and Addressing Transit Provisions Through Federal Waters](#)
- [Reef Fish Amendment 36A – Commercial IFQ Program Modifications](#)
- [Framework Action to Modify the Number of Unrigged Hooks Carried Onboard Bottom Longline Vessels](#)
- [Regulatory Amendment 4 - Spiny Lobster Annual Catch Limits and Targets and Recreational Trap Prohibition in the South Atlantic](#)



Photo: Jim Green

Once any of these suggested management measures are approved and implemented the Council will update the regulations, publish, and send out a press release announcing the changes.



## NOAA Fisheries Continues Commitment to Saltwater Recreational Fisheries

### Gulf Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Snapshot

Check out the new information [factsheet](#) highlighting the opportunities and economic impacts of recreational fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico region. With more than 100 species of fish available to saltwater recreational fishermen at any time of year, many unexplored recreational opportunities await anglers in the Gulf.

Source: NOAA Fisheries FishNews, July 12, 2017



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## Gulf Council Seeks Applicants for Ad Hoc Red Snapper and Grouper-Tilefish Individual Fishing Quota Program (IFQ) Advisory Panel

**Application Deadline is 5:00 pm EST, September 8, 2017**

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council has decided to disband its Ad Hoc Red Snapper IFQ Advisory Panel and replace it with an Advisory Panel that incorporates both red snapper and grouper-tilefish IFQ fishermen and fish dealers. The Council is currently accepting applications for membership on the Ad Hoc Red Snapper and Grouper-Tilefish IFQ Advisory Panel.

Advisory panels are charged with advising the Council on specific fishery issues and are comprised of individuals who are knowledgeable and interested in the conservation and management of the fishery resources, or who are engaged in the harvest of Gulf of Mexico managed species. Membership provides individuals with an opportunity to become more directly involved in the management decision-making process.

Advisory panel members generally meet no more than once or twice per year and are compensated for travel and per diem expenses.

To apply to this Ad Hoc Advisory Panel, visit:

<https://goo.gl/forms/PEYdfSQuOWLYlpxp1>

If you have any questions, please call the Council office at 813-348-1630.



## Submit Your Comments!

Use the online public comment forms available for each proposed Amendment as listed on the "[Amendments Under Development](#)" page of our website.

For general fishery comments, not related to a specific Amendment, use the "[Submit General Fishery Comments](#)" button at the bottom of the "Amendments Under Development" website page.



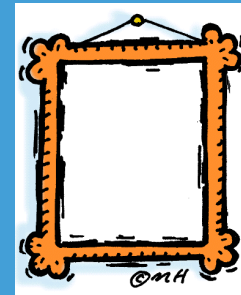
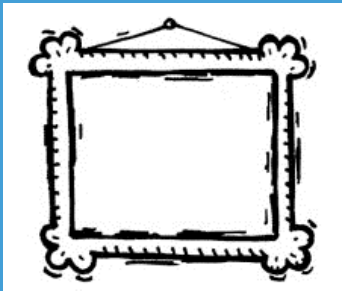
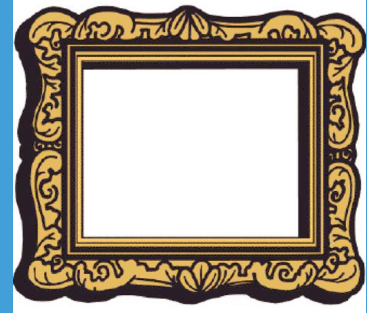
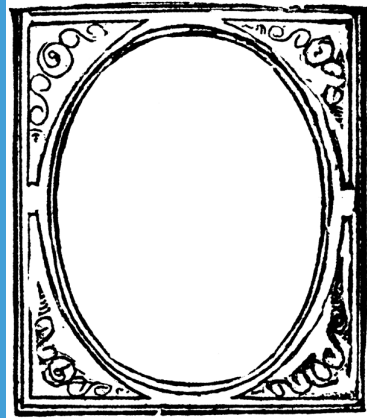
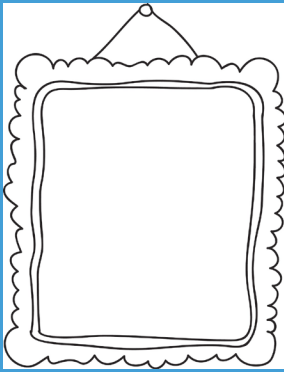
Online, oral, and/or written communications provided to the Council, its members, or its staff that relate to matters within the Council's purview are public in nature. These communications will be made available to the public in their entirety and will be maintained by the Council as part of the permanent record. **Note that all comments will be posted on the Council's website for viewing by Council members and the public.**

To help ensure that Council members have sufficient time to consider 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 comment forms and will be posted to the web site. Further, knowingly and willfully submitting false information to the Council is a violation of Federal Law.



## Our Gallery Needs an Update!



### ***We're seeking new fishing and fishery-related photos***

Whether from a recreational family outing, a spear fishing adventure, a charter trip, or a commercial effort, we'd like to see your photos and possibly use them on our website or in our publications.

Our photo library is in need of updating! To submit your photos, send an e-mail with "Photo Library" in the subject line to [gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org](mailto: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.

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



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# The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

*Protecting our marine resources*

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



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, 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 [emily.muehlstein@gulfcouncil.org](mailto: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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