

**Summary of Comments**  
**Executive Order Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis**  
**at Home and Abroad**  
June 8, 2021

16 Comments Received.

**Are there any changes to current management and conservation measures that could make our fisheries more resilient to climate change?**

**Under the Council's Jurisdiction:**

- Stop banning certain species from harvest because they overrun other species (e.g. goliath grouper).
- Use more state management and allow each state to manage their own waters.
- Lower the ABC on every species to build stocks and allow them to withstand changes in the environment.
- Stop overfishing by the private recreational sector.
- Minimize bycatch and discard mortality to maintain robust and resilient populations.
- Implement an Ecosystem-based Management Plan with a vision of a changing environment and use buffers to develop sustainable harvest strategies.
- Reconvene the Ecosystem Technical Committee and develop the Ecosystem Plan with a public hearing draft in Fall 2022.
- Develop a Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) to use as the primary instrument to identify and prioritize actions needed to address climate change impacts to populations, fisheries, and habitat.
- Develop strategies within the FEP to minimize impacts on species, such as gag and red grouper, caused by environmentally driven episodic mass mortality events (e.g., red tides) or other changes.
- Establish as standard process to review new information on ecosystems, science, and the fishery in the context of existing Marine Protected Areas.
- Reduce reliance on static, permanent, no-take areas closures in the Gulf in favor of sustainable, commercial fishing that is well-regulated and accountable.
- Proactively protect essential habitat, such as deep-sea corals, before fisheries that utilize bottom-contact gear move into colder and deeper waters as sea temperatures increase and the range of various fish populations shift in response. Protecting corals and other important habitat can also foster climate resilience by minimizing potential stressors.
- Increase opportunities for output-based management strategies.
- Increase assessment of the upstream impacts of land-based activities on marine ecosystems (e.g. red tide, blue-green algae, dead zone).
- Ensure management strategies are in place to address shifting species distribution and changing population dynamics, such as the timing or location of spawning.

- Increase outreach opportunities with the commercial fishing industry to assess what climate change looks like in the Gulf.
- Change the starting dates of fishing seasons rather than shortening or eliminating them.
- Evaluate federal management needs and coordinate with other agencies to ensure policies foster a healthy forage base to maintain ecosystem resilience in the face of climate change.
- Ensure allocations are fair.
- Mismanagement of red snapper has allowed them to overpopulate and decimate other species.
- Allowing big money from commercial fishing to drive red snapper regulations is corrupt.

#### **Outside the Council Purview:**

- Stop building along waterways and stop pollution of water and air (e.g. Crystal River, FL).
- Stop destroying mangroves and wetlands.
- Get the water from Lake Okeechobee, FL to flow south as it originally did.
- Buy land from big sugar and require landowners to treat any water they release.
- Stop using time released fertilizer on any river basin close to areas impacted by red tide.
- Don't allow developers and agriculture to pass on their pollution for the government to clean up.
- Narrow dredged inlets to major seaports.
- Restore sandbars near offshore.
- Facilitate mangrove expansion along all coastlines.
- Ensure that the Council and its stakeholders have the opportunity to participate in all discussions surrounding ocean use (e.g. oil and gas exploration, wind, aquaculture).
- Improve fisheries disaster relief process.
- Defund NMFS and the Gulf Council because they manipulate climate change numbers.
- Put Donald Trump back in the White House.

#### **Are there any improvements in science, monitoring, and cooperative research which could lead to more resilient fisheries?**

- Keep politics out of the science.
- Ask recreational fisherman what's going on, commercial fishermen lobby for profit.
- Stringent monitoring of the industry and municipal discharges, along with strict enforcement of the Clean Water Act.
- Use an independent audit of the science.

- Quit using models and do actual sampling to make management decisions.
- Involve divers, cameras, and other technology to monitor the real biomass.
- Require each state to monitor recreational harvest with technology such as Snapper Check and employ people to check each boat ramp.
- Improve data collection on fishing effort
- Study time released fertilizer usage in areas impacted by red tide.
- Science, monitoring, and cooperative research should be part of a climate-ready fisheries community of practice between the Council and the industry/communities.
- Perform annual stock assessments/updates for all regulated species and expedited way to incorporate results into management.
- Develop a pathway to implement electronic monitoring and reporting in commercial fisheries.
- Use real-time IFQ Market price data to inform CPUE.
- Increase dockside enforcement of commercial, charter, and private angler landings and offloads.
- Improve accuracy, precision, and timeliness of private angler catch.
- Develop a protocol for alternative fishery surveys/analyses to avoid survey gaps like the ones experienced due to COVID-19
- Increase opportunities for commercial fishermen to collect oceanographic and other ecosystem data
- Develop a recommendation to NOAA for ways to close the timeliness gap between scientific data collection and management implementation.
- Improve coordination between management objectives/priorities and NOAA cooperative research funding opportunities.

Full text comments available [here](#).