Process to Modify Red Drum Management Out to 9 nm

June 22, 2021

GULF OF MEXICO Fishery Management Council

Council Motion:

- **Motion:** To direct staff start a document to allow the States of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana to manage red drum out to 9 nautical miles.

- *Motion carried 15-1 with one abstention*

History of Management

- Original FMP: 1986
  - No directed commercial harvest from the EEZ for 1987
    - Incidental catch allowance for net and shrimp fishermen
  - Recreational bag limit of one fish per person per trip
  - Total harvest estimated at 625,000 lbs; 300,000 lbs commercial, and 325,000 lbs recreational
  - Stock assessment: high inshore (state waters) fishing mortality on juvenile and sub-adult red drum
    - Significant long-term risks to SSB
    - Reduced juvenile recruitment to the adult population
    - Continued exploitation of adults.

History of Management

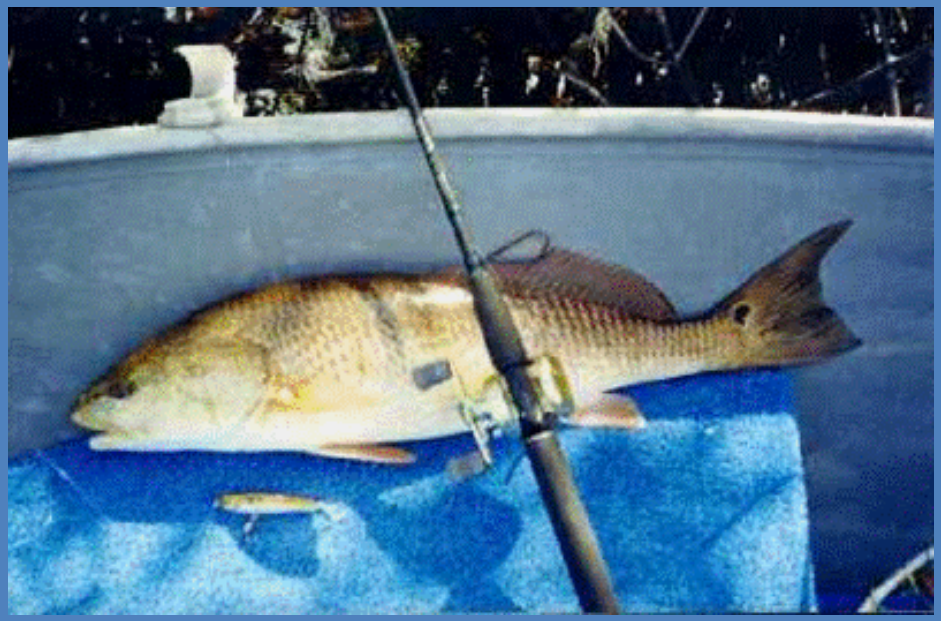
- Amendment 1: 1987
  - Continued commercial closure in the EEZ
  - Restricted recreational landings and commercial incidental catch to EEZ off LA, MS, and AL only
  - Requested that Gulf states implement rules to achieve a 20% escapement rate for inshore juveniles

History of Management

- Amendment 2: 1988
  - Prohibited all retention and possession in the EEZ
  - Set TAC = 0 lbs
  - Requested that Gulf states increase escapement rates to 30%

History of Management

- Amendment 3: 1992
  - Modified the framework procedure for specifying TAC by providing that NMFS would conduct stock assessments biennially rather than annually



History of Management

- Amendment 4: 2001
  - Also known as EFH Amendment 2: established the Tortugas Marine Reserves
- Amendment 5: 2021
  - Modified the status determination criteria for Gulf red drum

Current State Management

- Recreational red drum fishing allowed in all Gulf state waters
- MS allows annual commercial harvest in state waters of 60,000 lbs whole weight
  - Most caught via hook and line

Considerations

- No stock assessment completed on the Gulf-wide population since 2000
  - This means updating the ACL (currently 0) is not possible at present
- States manage by escapement rate
  - Every state measures this rate differently
  - Methods are not comparable
  - State assessments of escapement rate vary in frequency by state

Stock Assessment Findings

Stock Assessment Findings Summary				
Year	Agency	Overfished?	Overfishing?	ABC Recommendation
1987	SEFSC	Yes	Yes	300,000 lbs (comm); (325,000 lbs (Rec)
1989	SEFSC	Yes	No	0 pounds
1991	SEFSC	Yes	No	0 pounds
1993	SEFSC	Yes	No	0 pounds
1996	SEFSC	Yes	No	0 pounds
2000	SEFSC	Yes	No	0 pounds

Considerations

- Options:
  - Can't update the ACL, so delegation
    - Delegation requires an ACL
  - Conservation equivalency
    - States would need to ensure that management measures are consistent with MSA
      - Must be consistent with the Red Drum FMP:
        - » Prevent overfishing, monitor the fishery, conserve habitat, and minimizing conflicts between user groups
      - Requires the state to have a way to monitor and constrain harvest

More on Conservation Equivalencies

- CE would require annual plans reviewed by NMFS
  - May require states to assess red drum escapement annually
  - States would need to ensure 30% escapement rate, accounting for harvest in federal waters (between 3 – 9 nm; AL, MS, LA)
  - States would need to close harvest if juvenile escapement is projected to drop below 30%

Additional CE Details

- CE plans (CEP) reviewed by NMFS to insure conservation equivalency to federal regulations.
  - Submit directly to NMFS for review
  - Without an approved CEP, anglers would be subject to default federal regulations (i.e., no harvest between 3-9 nm off AL, MS, and LA)

- Each CEP would require the following:
  - State contact for the CEP and for implementing management measures
  - Proposed season structure and harvest management measures
  - Specification of the duration of the CEP
  - Analysis showing how the CEP constrains recreational harvest per the FMP (and commercial harvest for MS)
  - Annual fishery performance for each state
  - Explanation of how the CEP will be enforced
  - Additional analysis (as necessary) documenting compliance with NEPA, MSA, or other applicable laws
  - Any other supporting documentation for the CEP, such as scientific research.

Questions?