



Gulf Fishery News

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

April - May, 2011

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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 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



Volume 33, Issue 2

Red Snapper Update

The 2011 federal recreational red snapper season will open June 1 and close at 12:01 a.m. July 19, 2011. While the Council increased both the 2011 commercial and recreational red snapper quotas to 3.66 and 3.525 million pounds, respectively, an increase in the average weight of red snapper landed in the Gulf also increased from 3.32 pounds to 5.34 pounds per fish. This increase in average size necessitates a shorter season, even though there was an increase in total allowable catch.

"We know that fishermen are seeing lots of red snapper, and that a shorter season seems counter intuitive, but this is what we expect to see when a rebuilding plan is successful," said Dr. Steve Bortone, Executive Director, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council.

"So what anglers are reporting is a good sign, we're just not quite there yet," he added.

Well why not?

A 2009 stock assessment update shows that the red snapper stock is no longer experiencing overfishing, but the stock has not yet rebuilt. Complete success of the rebuilding plan will occur when the total weight of the red snapper that are capable of reproducing reaches a level that will allow the largest amount of fish to be harvested continuously under existing environmental conditions. That magic number, the ideal spawning stock biomass, is roughly 10.16 million pounds. The 2009 update assessment estimated the red snapper spawning stock biomass to be at 1.78 million pounds in 2008.

Why is there such a difference?

While the overall size of the red snapper stock has increased, the amount of fish capable of reproducing is still below what is needed to declare the stock is rebuilt. This situation is attributed, in part, to a lack of older fish in the red snapper stock. Red snapper live for up to 50 years. Older fish are more fertile and they reproduce at a more successful rate. Most of the larger and older fish are missing from the red snapper stock, and because of their long lifespan, it takes longer to replace those missing fish. At this point stock recovery is partly dependent on the recovery of the biggest, oldest, most fertile, fish in a population.

Bottom line

The stock is recovering and is on target to meet the goals outlined in the rebuilding plan.



Remembering Wayne Swingle

Wayne Eugene Swingle Senior was born March 16, 1937, in Auburn Alabama, and passed away May 11, 2011, in Brandon, Florida.

Wayne was one of five children. He and his siblings lived in Auburn through High School. After high school, Wayne served in the Navy for two years and then attended Auburn University for bachelors and masters degrees.

Wayne was working in Fairhope, Alabama when he was introduced to Billie Joe Blackman, who would later become his wife. After they married, they lived in the Virgin Islands for a year, then moved to Connecticut so Wayne could attend the University of Connecticut while doing research and working on a PhD. While there they welcomed their first child, Wayne, Jr.. After six months, Wayne took a position on Dauphin Island, where they lived for the next 9 years, during which time his second son, Scott, was born.



Widely known in his industry, Wayne was well respected and referred to as one who did not speak unkindly of anyone. He was a mentor to many in his field.

Throughout his career Wayne worked in research and marine biology related to fisheries. In 1976 he became Executive Director of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. Wayne worked with the Council the remainder of his career, retiring in 2008.

“He took us everywhere with him, and we loved being with him,” said Wayne’s oldest son, Wayne, Jr.

“He was a special kind of guy. My father loved us unconditionally,” said Scott, Wayne’s youngest son.

One of Wayne’s lifelong friends, Walter Tatum, remembered Wayne as “a wonderful man who set a very good example.”

“Wayne was one of the good guys,” said Tatum.

He will be missed by many.

Wayne Swingle’s Seafood Gumbo

In a large pot start boiling:

6-8 cans stewed tomatoes

6-8 pints frozen okra

3 chopped onions

3 heaping tsp. minced garlic

2 chopped bell peppers (optional)

crab boil or other seasonings to taste

Boil together until okra disappears as individual pieces. Add water as needed.

While okra is boiling, make a roux by rendering ham fat trimmings in a large skilled. Add flour and cook slowly, stirring with a spatula until roux is dark brown.

After okra has finished boiling, add remaining ingredients in order. Allow mixture to return to a boil after adding each ingredient

2 quarts chicken stock (more if needed)

5 pounds peeled shrimp (cut in to small pieces if shrimp are large)

5 pounds crab meat (claw meat is tastier)

Add roux as soon as the entire mixture comes to a boil

Cook for a while and add:

3-4 quarts of oysters

“I use a 5 gallon pot to cook this in and the quantity varies, so my best recollection is this yields between 3-5 gallons, depending on the amount of water and other ingredients added.”

- Wayne Swingle



Dr. Bob Shipp,
Council Chair

From the Deck of the Shipp

Data...Again!

I asked staff for suggestions on a topic for this edition of "From the Deck of the Shipp."

Data, data, data!! Staff told me far and away stakeholders are pleading for more and better data.

First, we need to make sure we understand the difference between fishery dependent and fishery independent data. Fishery dependent data are those that come from fishermen, based on their catch and effort.

Fishery independent data are those that are gathered as randomly as possible, with as many different collection methods as possible. The intent is to make the samples as representative of the entire population. Fishery independent data are difficult and expensive to come by, but without these data, we will continue to be plagued with uncertainty of stock assessments.

A few columns ago, I extolled the virtue of fishery independent data and the flaws and biases inherent in fishery dependent data.

Why are fishery dependent data biased? These data are biased because they are not representative of the entire population. For example, commercial red snapper fishermen - and these guys are good - target two to four pound fish because they get a better price for that size range. Recreational fishermen, on the other hand, tend to target by area, fishing closer to shore, especially now with high fuel prices.

In both cases, the catches are targeted - in other words, they are not random. One key criterion for sampling is that it be random, giving each fish in the population an equal chance to be selected or counted. Nevertheless, fishery dependent data were, for years, the foundation of our stock assessments, largely because these were the only data we had to work with.

Compounding the problem was the notorious Marine Recreational Fishing Statistics Survey, or the MRFSS. While the survey was based on random phone calls, they were not random among the fishing community and relied on an angler's recollection. The MRFSS' new and improved replacement - the Marine Recreational Information Program, or MRIP - was supposed to be implemented in 2009, but remains under development. While this program may be an improvement, I don't believe its implementation will make a huge difference when it comes to stock assessments. It brings to mind the old saying, "be careful

what you wish for," which can certainly apply to the cry for more fishery dependent data. Of course we want more data, but more fishery dependent data simply exaggerates a biased sampling system.

So what has happened to make this column more relevant than my earlier data collection column? During the last Council meeting in Orange Beach, Alabama, we saw a truly hopeful sign of new, substantial independent data. The vice chair of our Scientific and Statistical Committee, Dr. Sean Powers, gave a presentation of a fishery independent survey of red snapper stocks in the north central Gulf. The collections were from sites located randomly by side-scan SONAR and used a variety of sampling methods, including bottom longline, vertical line, traditional hook-and-line, and ROV (remotely operated vehicle) video. The results underscored how markedly differently stocks can be assessed based on methodology.

We absolutely need more fishery independent data, and it needs to address other species and other geographic areas. In the meantime, I believe the seed for fishery independent data has not only been planted, but it is firmly rooted.

During a Council meeting a couple of years ago, I made a motion to use only fishery independent data in stock assessments. The motion received a second; however, after brief discussion, I withdrew my motion knowing full well that such a feat was impossible at the time. But with the promise of independent studies such as the one presented by Dr. Powers, it may not be long before we can scrap the fishery dependent numbers, and come up with something better.

And yes, the word data is plural.



Grouper Allocation

For some federally managed species, allocation is set by assigning each sector a percentage of the total allowable catch. Temporary allocations were set for gag and red grouper through Reef Fish Amendment 30B. The result was a commercial red grouper allocation of 76%, with 24% going to the recreational sector; gag is 39% commercial and 61% recreational. Allocation options for black grouper are included in the Generic Annual Catch Limit/ Accountability Measures Amendment.

The Council plans to discuss and review these interim allocations during a future meeting, and is also reviewing a discussion paper on grouper allocation (Reef Fish Amendment 28) that outlines a number of allocation methods for consideration.

Sign up to receive updates on this and other fishery issues. Just send a blank email with "subscribe" in the subject line to: pressreleases@gulfcouncil.org.

Gag Interim Rule

The Council has requested that the Secretary of Commerce publish an interim rule for gag that opens a recreational fishing season for gag from September 16 through November 15. The recreational sector is expected to harvest their 781,000 pound gag allocation by the close of that fall season. The rule also limits the release of the gag commercial quota to 430,000 pounds for the 2011 fishing year.

A 2009 stock assessment determined that gag is both overfished and undergoing overfishing. The Council is mandated by the Magnuson-Stevens Act to end overfishing and develop a plan that will rebuild the stock in ten years or less.

An interim rule was implemented that set the recreational bag limit for gag at zero, and limited the commercial harvest of gag to 100,000 pounds. These interim rules are designed to temporarily end overfishing while management options for the future harvest and rebuilding of gag are developed and implemented in Reef Fish Amendment 32.



Photo by Don DeMaria

Photo by Don DeMaria

Gulf Council Releases Regulations App for iPhone and iPad

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council announces the release of a fishing regulations iPhone/iPad app available for immediate download.

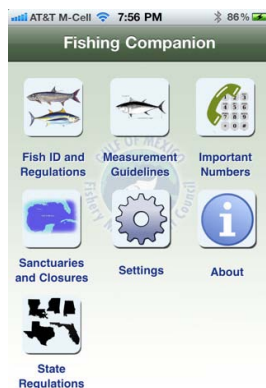
The app is free and allows users to access from their iPhone or iPad the most up-to-date commercial and recreational federal fishing regulations for species managed by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. The app also provides information on fish identification, measurement guidelines, sanctuaries and closures, and important telephone numbers.

"The use of this technology allows us to get the regulations

out to more people in a convenient format. It's particularly useful because no Internet connection is needed, so checking regulations or identifying fish while out on the water is easy," said Dr. Steve Bortone, Executive Director of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council.

The Council hopes to develop a similar app compatible with other smart phones.

Visit the app store from your iPhone or iPad, search for "Gulf Council," and click on the Council logo. To preview the app from your computer, visit <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/gulf-fisheries-management/id426286698?mt=8&ls=1>.



April Council Meeting Reminder

The Council will be meeting the week of June 6 - 10, 2011, at the Marriott Beachside in Key West, Florida. Please make your reservation under the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council room block to receive the special discounted room rate.

Submission of written comments and materials to be included as part of the briefing book materials for this meeting **MUST BE RECEIVED** by 5:00 p.m. EDT May 31, 2011.

If you miss the deadline and bring your own copies to the meeting, please bring at least 30 copies for the Council. If you wish your materials to be made available to the public, please bring additional copies.

A draft agenda will be posted on the Gulf Council web site at www.gulfcouncil.org



Gulf of Mexico Recreational Fishing Expenditure Study New study by NOAA/Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission



If you fish in the Gulf of Mexico, your response is important!

Who?

All saltwater recreational anglers across the Gulf of Mexico.

When?

The survey began in January 2011 and will continue through December 2011.

How?

A surveyor may ask you for trip costs in person during a fishing trip and then invite you to take a follow-up survey about your annual fishing experiences.

What?

We will collect information on your daily fishing costs and your annual fishing expenses.

Why?

We know fishing is important to you. You spend money every time you launch your boat, put a line in the water, or go on a charter trip. All of these fishing-related expenditures enter the state and regional economy and generate sales revenue and support jobs in the Gulf. This study is part of a national study of the economic contributions of marine recreational angling to the U.S. economy.

For more information contact:

Alex Miller at 228-875-5912 (amiller@gsmfc.org) or Sabrina Lovell at 301-713-2328 ext. 101 (2011NES@noaa.gov).



Send us Your Fishing Photos

We want to see your favorite fishing and fishery-related photos! Whether they are from a spear fishing 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 newsletter.

Send us your photos and help us build a photo library! To submit your photos, please send an e-mail with "Photo Library" in the subject line to gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org. Be sure to include your name, address, 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 should not exceed 1.5 MB (no more than 200 ppi).

NOTE: By submitting photos, you understand that if we decide to use your photo, it can be used on our web site, in our newsletter, or other publications. We will display a brief description of the photo and your name, unless requested otherwise.



Zachary Taylor and Dad (Richard Taylor) holding a Permit caught west of Tampa Florida
Photo by Eric Alenius

Greater Amberjack

A final rule establishing a June 1 - July 31 seasonal closure for the recreational harvest of greater amberjack has published in the Federal Register. The intent of the rule is to maintain the rebuilding plan targets for the overfished greater amberjack resource, reduce the likelihood of exceeding the recreational quota, and minimize the length of in-season quota closures during peak recreational fishing months. The rule will also help increase social and economic benefits for Gulf recreational fishers by maximizing the overall number of fishing days available to the recreational sector.

In 2009, the recreational sector went over the greater amberjack quota and the season closed October 24. Final landings showed anglers went over the quota by nine percent, which resulted in a reduction in the 2010 quota to account for the overage.

In order to avoid early quota closures, the Gulf Council developed a regulatory amendment to create a fixed closed season so that the recreational greater amberjack season can extend further into the year. Based on public input, the Council chose June 1 - July 31 for the closed season.

This two-month closure coincides with the open recreational seasons for other reef fish species, including red snapper. The fixed summer closure gives recreational anglers an opportunity to fish for at least one of the targeted species year round - provided the greater amberjack recreational quota is not exceeded.

In other greater amberjack news, the Council during its April meeting received the results of the 2010 greater amberjack stock assessment update and the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) report. The SSC concluded that the update assessment represents the best available scientific information, but it believes the projections are not reliable and contain too much uncertainty. Though the SSC did not provide specific recommendations on the status of the stock, but did determine that the acceptable biological catch needs to be reduced.

Further, the SSC recommended an overfishing limit of 2.38 million pounds and an acceptable biological catch of 1.78 million pounds. The Council requested that staff begin developing an amendment to adjust the total allowable catch for greater amberjack.

Finally, NOAA Fisheries announced that the greater amberjack commercial sector will close at 12:01 a.m. local time, June 18, 2011.



Gulf of Mexico Fishery Closures Recreational Closures:

Red Snapper

The supplemental recreational red snapper season closed 12:01 a.m., November 22, 2010. The 2011 recreational season will open June 1 and close at 12:01 a.m. July 19.

Gag

NOAA Fisheries Service announced a temporary rule to set the recreational harvest of gag to zero, beginning January 1, 2011. The temporary rule expires May 31, 2011. A subsequent temporary rule, if approved by the Secretary of Commerce, will set the 2011 recreational gag season to open September 15 and close at 12:01 a.m. November 16.

Commercial Closures:

Greater Amberjack

The Commercial greater amberjack fishery will close at 12:01 a.m. June 18, 2011, and reopen January 1, 2012.

King Mackerel

Beginning October 26, 2010, the Gulf group king mackerel commercial trip limit is reduced to 500 pounds in the northern Florida west coast subzone. The 500-pound daily trip limit will remain in effect until the quota is reached or June 30, 2011, whichever occurs first.

The western Gulf of Mexico zone is closed to commercial king mackerel from February 11, 2011, through June 30, 2011. With this action, commercial king mackerel fishing is prohibited in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico from the U.S./Mexico border to the Alabama/Florida boundary.

The king mackerel commercial run-around gillnet component of the coastal migratory pelagic fishery in the southern Florida west coast subzone is closed from February 2, 2011, through 6 a.m. January 17, 2012. With this action, king mackerel commercial gillnet fishing is prohibited in the Gulf of Mexico off Collier and Monroe Counties, from a line directly west of the Lee/Collier county line on the west coast of Florida south and east to a line directly east of the Monroe/Miami-Dade county line on the east coast of Florida.

The daily vessel trip limit is reduced to 500 pounds beginning 12:01 a.m., local time, March 8, 2011, for commercial hook-and-line vessels fishing for Gulf group king mackerel in the southern Florida west coast subzone.

Both the northern and southern Florida west coast subzones are closed for commercial hook-and-line vessels. The closure will remain in effect through the end of the fishing year, June 30, 2011.

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Steve Bortone
Executive Director

Richard Leard
Deputy Director

Appointed Voting Members

Ed Sapp Gainesville, FL 352-377-2715	Doug Boyd San Antonio, TX 830-230-5032
Robert Gill Vice Chair Crystal River, FL 352-795-1916	Robert Shipp Chair Mobile, AL 251-460-6351
Joseph Hendrix Houston, TX 281-597-1620	Damon McKnight Slidell, LA 985-960-1900
Thomas McIlwain Ocean Springs, MS 228-818-8866	John Greene Daphne, AL 251-747-2872
Larry Abele Tallahassee, FL 850-644-1765	Kay Williams Vancleave, MS 228-826-2160
Harlon Pearce Kenner, LA 504-467-3809	

State/Federal Voting Members

Robin Riechers Austin, TX 512-389-4864	Corky Perret Biloxi, MS 228-374-5000
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Rowan Gould (Acting) USF&WS 404-679-4000	Larry Simpson GSMFC 228-875-5912
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The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

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Proposed Amendments

The Gulf Council has just completed a series of public hearings held around the Gulf of Mexico. Public hearings are held near the end of the fishery management plan process to solicit stakeholder input on proposed fishery management plans or amendments. Hearings were conducted for:

- Generic annual catch limit and accountability measure amendment
- Reef fish 32- gag and red grouper
- Spiny lobster amendment 10 (Joint amendment with the South Atlantic Council)

Testimony given during the hearings was witnessed by at least one member of the Council, recorded, summarized, and will be reported to the entire Council during its June meeting in Key West, Florida. Written testimony can be submitted to: gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org, or to:

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

The Council will consider written testimony and input before taking final action on each of the following :

Reef Fish Amendment 32 - Gag and Red Grouper

Gag and red grouper are the two most abundant grouper species in the Gulf of Mexico, accounting for 93% of recreational grouper landings and 80% of all commercial grouper landings. The commercial fishery catches the majority of red grouper, while the recreational fishery catches most of the gag.

In 2009, an update stock assessment showed that the Gulf of Mexico gag stock was overfished and undergoing overfishing. This determination prompted the Gulf Council to begin developing Reef Fish Amendment 32 to address the overfishing of gag and develop a stock rebuilding plan in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The Act requires that overfishing be ended within two years and that overfished stocks be rebuilt to sustainable levels in ten years or less.

Currently, the Gulf red grouper stock is neither overfished nor undergoing overfishing. Amendment 32 proposes to increase the red grouper catch limits in response to the improved status of the stock, also increasing the recreational red grouper bag limit to allow a better opportunity for that sector to catch its allocation.

The proposed amendment contains seven actions:

- Rebuilding plan for gag
- Recreational bag limits, size limits, and closed seasons for gag and red grouper
- Commercial gag and shallow-water grouper quota adjustments to account for dead discards
- Adjustments to multi-use IFQ shares
- Commercial gag size limit
- Time and area closures
- Accountability measures

To download a summary guide to the proposed amendment - visit <http://www.gulfcouncil.org/Beta/GMFCWeb/downloads/Amendment%2032%20Public%20Hearing%20Guide%20Booklet.pdf>.

To download a copy of the proposed amendment - visit <http://www.gulfcouncil.org/Beta/GMFCWeb/downloads/RF%20Amend%2032%20Public%20Draft%204-27-11.pdf>.

Continued on next page

Annual Catch Limits & Accountability Measures

The Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act of 2006 requires Councils to end and prevent overfishing through the use of annual catch limits and accountability measures. Setting annual catch targets is optional.

An annual catch limit is the amount of fish from a stock or stock complex that is allowed to be caught within the fishing year. Accountability measures are measures taken to prevent fish harvest from going over annual catch limits, and, if that happens, can correct the overage.

According to National Standard 1 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, implementation of annual catch limits and accountability measures must begin by 2010 for fish stocks subject to overfishing, and in 2011 for all other federally managed stocks (with certain exceptions).

The Gulf Council has met the requirements for stocks subject to overfishing through Reef Fish Amendments 30A and 30B. Additionally, the Council established quotas and management measures for the red snapper fishery that are consistent with establishing annual catch limits and accountability measures.

Spiny Lobster Amendment 10

The Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils are developing regulations to bring the spiny lobster fishery management plan into compliance with new requirements of both the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and the Endangered Species Act.

The Spiny Lobster fishery management plan is jointly managed by the Councils. The proposed regulations are expected to be implemented in 2012.

Six categories of actions under consideration include:

Changes to Species Compositions - The Council is considering removing species from the Spiny Lobster Fishery Management Unit.

Control Rules for Acceptable Biological Catch - Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) is the range of estimated allowable catch for a species or species group. ABC Control Rule is a policy for establishing a limit or target fishing level that is based on the best available scientific information and is established by fishery managers in consultation with fisheries scientists. Control rules should be designed so that management actions become more conservative as biomass estimates, or other proxies, for a stock or stock complex decline and as science and management uncertainty increases.

Annual Catch Limits - Annual catch limit (ACL) is the level of catch that triggers accountability measures. It is expressed either in pounds or numbers of fish. The level

The Generic Amendment will address the remaining stocks, with the exception of Coastal Migratory Pelagic species and Spiny Lobster. These species will be addressed in separate joint amendments with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

The Generic Amendment contains eight actions:

1. Management of species by other state/federal agencies
2. Removal of stocks from the management plan
3. Species groupings
4. Acceptable biological catch control rule
5. Annual catch limit/annual catch target control rule
6. Generic framework procedure
7. Initial specification of annual catch limits
8. Accountability measures

To download a summary guide to the proposed amendment - visit <http://www.gulfcouncil.org/Beta/GMFMCWeb/downloads/Generic%20ACL-AM%20Amendment%20Public%20Hearing%20Guide%20Booklet.pdf>.

To download a copy of the proposed amendment - visit http://www.gulfcouncil.org/Beta/GMFMCWeb/downloads/PH_Draft_Generic_ACL_AM_Amendment-April_29_2011.pdf.

may not exceed the Acceptable Biological Catch.

Annual Catch Targets - Annual catch target (ACT) is an amount of annual catch of a stock or stock complex that is the management target of the fishery, and accounts for management uncertainty in controlling the actual catch at or below the ACL. Annual catch targets are recommended in the system of accountability measures so that ACL is not exceeded.

Sector Allocations Allocation is distribution of the opportunity to fish among user groups or individuals. The share a user group gets is sometimes based on historic harvest amounts.

Accountability Measures - An accountability measure is an action taken to keep catch below or avoid exceeding an identified catch level. Following are four types of accountability measures: specified an annual catch target, in-season regulations changes, post-season regulation changes, and specification of management measures (e.g., bag limits).

To download a summary guide to the proposed amendment - visit <http://www.gulfcouncil.org/Beta/GMFMCWeb/downloads/Jt%20Amend%2010%20Spiny%20Lobster%20Summary.pdf>.

To download a copy of the proposed amendment - visit <http://www.gulfcouncil.org/Beta/GMFMCWeb/downloads/Jt%20Amendment%2010%20Spiny%20Lobster.pdf>.



REMINDER: Gulf Council Seeking Applicants to Serve on Ad Hoc Head Boat Individual Fishing Quota Advisory Panel

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is seeking applicants for an Ad Hoc Head Boat Individual Fishing Quota Advisory Panel. The panel will investigate a developmental program for a red snapper and gag grouper voluntary Individual Fishing Quota pilot program.

Panel members are not paid, but are compensated for travel and per diem expenses for attendance at all meetings. Anyone interested in serving on the Ad Hoc Head Boat Individual Fishing Quota Advisory Panel should submit a letter and resume to:

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

Materials may also be faxed to: 813-348-1711; or e-mailed to phyllis.miranda@gulfcouncil.org. Resumes and letters should be received no later than close of business May 27, 2011.



Major Chris Blankenship Promoted to Director of Marine Resources

Major Chris Blankenship was recently promoted to Director of the Marine Resources Division of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The appointment was effective May 1.

Blankenship, a graduate of Alba High School and the University of South Alabama, has served as acting director of the department since July 2010. He has been in the division for 17 years and was named head of Marine Resources' Enforcement Section in 2008.

"It gives me great pleasure to promote Chris to the director's position," said N. Gunter Guy, Jr., Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. "He has been acting director for the past nine months and has fulfilled that role admirably. He has shown he's a good leader and well qualified for the promotion."



Major Chris Blankenship

Blankenship said he is looking forward to working with his staff and community to continue to improve Alabama's marine resources.

"Alabama is blessed with great inshore and offshore fishing, some of the best seafood on the Gulf of Mexico and a very productive estuary in Mobile Bay," Blankenship said. "The Alabama Gulf Coast is truly a natural treasure and my goal is to continue to provide quality outdoor recreation, as well as maintaining the resource that provides high quality seafood to Alabama and the nation."

As Director of the Marine Resources Division, Blankenship serves on the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. He has appointed Kevin Anson, who has served as proxy for Alabama's designated member on the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council for the past three years, as his designee.

Anson graduated from Auburn University with a Master of Science in Fisheries and Allied Aquacultures. He worked for a private aquaculture company in Belize, Central America, for five years prior to joining the staff of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources/Marine Resources Division where he has worked as a biologist for 12 years and was recently promoted to Chief of the Fisheries Section.

During his tenure with the Marine Resources Division, Anson has supervised various recreational data collection programs, administered federal grants and served as the Division's coordinator for boating access and artificial reef activities.





Marine Recreational Information Program Update - April 2011

NOAA hosts Recreational Data Timeliness Workshop

Scientists, managers, and anglers met in St. Petersburg, FL on March 15 and 16 for a workshop aimed at expanding efforts to produce timely recreational fishing data.

Concerns regarding the timeliness of the data, especially with respect to its impact on Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures, served as a discussion point among representatives from NOAA Fisheries, the Councils, Commissions, States, and the recreational community. Workshop participants looked at scientific and management strategies for improving the timeliness of catch data and meeting our Congressional mandates for setting Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures.

The Recreational Data Timeliness Workshop is part of MRIP's larger effort to improve the collection and reporting of recreational fishing data. A video blog from the conference is available at www.countmyfish.noaa.gov, where we'll also be posting a workshop summary and copies of presentations as they become available.

2011 estimates debut new methodology

On March 14, NOAA Fisheries accepted recommendations from the MRIP Operations Team and Executive Steering Committee to adopt a new method for estimating catch data from the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey.

This new methodology will be applied to historical MRFSS surveys dating back to 2003, results of which will be released later this spring, as well as to all future estimates beginning in early 2011.

Project addresses bias in intercept surveys

In partnership with the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries, NOAA Fisheries is analyzing findings from an improved sampling design for the intercept survey that was pilot tested in 2010.

The new survey design addresses a number of assumptions present in the current MRFSS intercept survey. For example, concern has existed that, under the MRFSS survey, samplers were more likely to sample people with fish than people without. Under the new sampling design, samplers work during specific, assigned parts of the day and night and sample all anglers that finished fishing during those periods.

NOAA Fisheries anticipates modifying sampling procedures based on the findings from the pilot project and is working with the Operations Team to investigate the feasibility of implementing the procedures in other states in late 2011 and into 2012.

This new methodology will be applied to historical MRFSS surveys dating back to 2003, results of which will be released later this spring, as well as to all future estimates beginning in early 2011.



Gulf Council gets a seat on the Gulf of Mexico Alliance

The Gulf Council is one of the newest members of the Gulf Mexico Alliance. The Alliance is a regional partnership of the five Gulf states, numerous federal agencies, academia, and non-governmental organizations. Its goal is to significantly increase regional collaboration to enhance the ecological and economic health of the Gulf of Mexico. The five U.S. Gulf States have identified six priority issues that are regionally significant and can be effectively addressed through increased collaboration at local, state, and federal levels. Those issues include water quality; habitat conservation and restoration; ecosystem integration and assessment; nutrients & nutrient impacts; coastal community resilience; and environmental education. The Council will actively participate at the management and priority issue team level.

"It is an honor to have the Gulf Council welcomed as a partner in the Gulf of Mexico Alliance," said Dr. Steve Bortone, Executive Director of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council.

"We share many of the same goals and objectives, and we look forward to working together on a host of issues, especially those that affect the sustainability of our fisheries."



Panel and Committee Appointments

During its April 2011 regular meeting, the Gulf Council selected members to its various panels and committees. The following individuals were appointed:

Coastal Migratory Pelagics (Mackerel)
Patrick Fitzmorris
Ben Harvard
Read Hendon
Wiley Horton
Chris Jenkins
Glenn Martin
Tom Marvel, Jr.
George Niles
Mike Nugent
Ed Presley
Gene Proulx
Richard Rice
James Robinson III
Gary Smith (FL)
Ed Swindell
Edward Walker
Donald Waters
Michael Whitfield
Jack Wilhite
Bob Zales, II

Coral
Mark Berrigan
Billy Causey
Henry Feddern
Ken Heck
Martin Moe, Jr.
John Talbot

Spiny Lobster
Robert Gaitanis
Bill Kelly
Jerry Sansom
Simon Stafford
Rick Superstein

Stone Crab
Tim Daniels
Gary Graves
Bill Kelly
Robert Robinson
Simon Stafford

Habitat Protection FL/AL
Carl Ferraro
Roy Lewis, III
Robert McMichael*
Gary Parsons
William Sierke, Jr
LaDon Swann*
David Yeager

Habitat Protection MS/LA
Richard Hartman*
Randy Lancot
Bethlyn McCloskey
David Richard
Cynthia Sarthou
Pete Umbdenstock
Heather Warner-Finley
Chuck Wilson*

Habitat Protection TX
Baker Bill
Blaha John
Nathan Kuhn*
Ronnie Luster
Russell Miger*
Robert Spain
Rusty Swafford*
Elbert Whorton

SEDAR NGO
Tristan Armer
Pam Baker
Dewey Blaylock
Marianne Cufone
Chris Dorsett
Claudia Freiss
Chad Hanson
Judy Jamison
Russell Nelson
Samantha Port-Minner
Aaron Viles



Outreach and Education
Richard Abrams*
Kim Amendola*
Dewey Blaylock
William Blome
Mike Colby
Heather Fox
William Mahan*
Art Morris*
David Rainer*
Tracy Redding
Lauren Thompson*
Danica Williams*
Red Drum
Tom Becker
Jeff Chambliss
Scott Floyd
Peter Gerica
Scott Green
Read Hendon
Edward Holder
Howard Mason, Jr.
Burt Moritz
Frank Rawlings
James Sibley
Ed Swindell
Ron Young
Red Snapper
Ben Fairey
Patrick Fitzmorris
Gary Graham
Richard Legnon
Herbert Malone
Mike Nugent
Gary Parsons
Dale Perkins
Devlin Roussel
Gary Smith (MS)
TJ Tate
Bobby Terrebonne
Mike Thierry
David Walker
Donald Waters
Monty Weeks

*Denotes Obligatory Seat

Appointments *continued*

Reef Fish
Ralph Allen
Patrick Bennett
Jim Clements
Jason DeLaCruz
Ben Fairey
Elizabeth Fetherston
Martin Fisher
Chris Jenkins
Brad Kenyon
Fred Lifton
Gus Loyal
Mike Rowell
Gary Smith (MS)
Robert Spaeth
TJ Tate
James Taylor
Bill Tucker
Tom Turke
David Walker
Mike Whitfield
Bob Zales, II

Ad Hoc Mackerel LAPP
Scott Hickman
Mike Jennings
David Krebs
Tom Marvel
Michael Miglini
George Niles
Kelty Readenour
Gary Smith (FL)
Donald Waters
Troy Williamson

Gulf Council Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee
Bob Gill
Doug Boyd
3 additional council members to be appointed by Council Chair
Charlene Ponce
John Froeschke
Harry Blanchet
Sean Powers
Troy Williamson
Bill Tucker
Ben Fairly
Elizabeth Fetherston

Shrimp
Wilma Anderson
Pete Barber
Vernon Bates
Steve Bosarge
Steve Charpentier
Kimberly Chauvin
Julius Collins
Glenn Delaney
Ivo Goga
Gary Graham
Dennis Henderson
Harris Lasseigne, Jr.
Trey Pearson
Riley Patrick
Thomas Schultz
Russell Stewart
John Williams
Walter Zimmerman

Ad Hoc Reef Fish LAPP
Bill Bird
Randy Boggs
Ben Fairey
Elizabeth Fetherston
Martin Fisher
Troy Frady
Scott Hickman
Gary Jarvis
David Krebs
Edwin Lamberth
Donald Leal
Julie Morris
Mike Nugent
TJ Tate
Bill Tucker
Richard Wallace
Troy Williamson

Ad Hoc Review Panel for Red Drum
Harry Blanchet
Mike Buchanan
Guy Davenport
Mark Fisher
Jessica McCawley
Mike Murphy
Ken Rose
Elbert Whorton

Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)
Glen Brooks
Jason DeLaCruz
Gary Jarvis
Brad Gorst
Michael Kelly
Brad Kenyon
Bart Niquet
Tracy Redding
John Schmidt
Robert Spaeth
Russell Stewart
Elbert Whorton

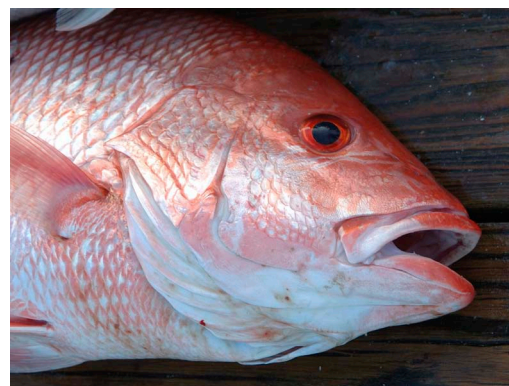
Ad Hoc Aquaculture
Jesse Chappell
Dennis Henderson
Robert Romaine
Ed Swindell
Richard Wallace
Paul Zajicek

Ad Hoc Data Collection
Patrick Bennett
Glen Brooks
Suzanne Delaune
Troy Frady
Brad Gorst
Chad Hanson
Matt Hill
Gary Jarvis
Camp Matens
Michael Miglini
Tracy Redding
Bobby Terrebonne
Elbert Whorton
Bob Zales, II

Ad Hoc Commercial Reef Fish IFQ
Seema Balwani
Gary Jarvis
David Krebs
TJ Tate
Bill Tucker
David Walker
Donald Waters

Appointments *continued*

Ad Hoc 5-year Red Snapper IFQ Review Panel	
Pam Baker	Glen Bryant
Phil Horn	Gary Jarvis
David Krebs	Michael Miglini
Ken Roberts	Bill Tucker
David Walker	Donald Waters
Mike Whitfield	Troy Williamson
Jim Zurbrick	



Scientific Panel Appointments

Standing Scientific and Statistical Committee
Luiz Barbieri
Harry Blanchet
Benjamin Blount
Shannon Cass-Calay
Richard Fulford
Douglas Gregory
Read Hendon
Walter Keithly
Kai Lorenzen
William Patterson
Joe Powers
Sean Powers
Greg Stunz
Steven Szedlmayer
John Ward

Special Coral
Thomas Cuba
Richard Dodge
Judith Lang
Richard Ruzicka
George Schmahl

Special Coastal Migratory Pelagics (Mackerel)
Jason Adriance
Ernst Peebles
Aaron Poday
G. Erick Porche

Special Red Drum
Jason Adriance
Mike Buchanan
Jessica McCawley
Jim Tolan

Special Shrimp
Martin Bourgeois
Traci Floyd
Wade Griffin
Leslie Harman
Karen Meador
James Nance
William Sharp

Special Spiny Lobster/Stone Crab
Theresa Bert
Rene Buesa
John Hunt
Tom Matthews
William Sharp

Socioeconomic Panel
Lee Anderson
Wade Griffin
Stephen Holiman
Stephen Holland
Steve Jacob
Mike Jepson
Sherry Larkin
Alexander Miller
Ebenezer Ogunyinka
Kurt Schnier
John Ward
David Yoskowitz

Special Reef Fish
Jason Adriance
Barbara Dorf
Bill Lindberg
John Mareska

Ecosystem
Cameron Ainsworth
Joan Browder
Columbus Brown
Bridgette Froeschke
Stephen Holiman
Behzad Mahmoudi
Steve Murawski
Ernst Peebles
Ken Rose
James Simons
Carl Walters
Priscilla Weeks
Wei Wu
David Yoskowitz

SEDAR Workshop Pool (Replaces the Finfish & Shrimp Stock Assessment Panels)
Walter Bubley
Mark Fisher
Karen Meador
Robert Muller
Debra Murie
Mike Murphy
Bill Richardson
Joseph West

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 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607. Materials can also be sent via fax to 813-348-1711, or by e-mail 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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