



# Gulf Fishery News

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

June - July, 2011

## Inside this issue:

From the Deck of the Ship	2
Reef Fish Amendment 32	4
Greater Amberjack	4
Ad Hoc Head Boat AP Recruitment Extended	5
New Council Members Named	5
CMP Amendment 18	7
Upcoming Public Hearings	7
Fishery Closures	7
Council Agenda	8
NOAA Seeks Comment on ACL/AM Measures	10
Gulf Shrimp Season to Open July 15	11

## 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](mailto: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 3

## Red Snapper Update

In April 2011, the Council requested a rerun of the red snapper projections that included the 2009 and 2010 actual landings data. The results of that rerun indicate that the overfishing limit could be increased. The Council's Science Committee reviewed the rerun results and determined that the 2011 Total Allowable Catch could be increased by 345,000 pounds.

As a result of that determination, the Council, during its June meeting, requested that NOAA Fisheries Service develop an emergency rule to suspend the September 30 recreational red snapper closure date and assign the entire 345,000 pounds of increased Total Allowable Catch to the recreational sector for the 2011 season.

The recreational red snapper season, which is technically June 1 - September 30, has consistently closed early since it was established. Suspending the September 30 recreational red snapper closure date will give the Regional Administrator more latitude to open a recreational fall season if/when the quota is not met during the regular season.

## Will there be a Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Fall Season in 2011?

That remains to be seen, but in June the Council was presented with an options paper for an amendment that would revise the structure of the fall recreational snapper season. Currently, the three actions contained in the Options Paper are:

- *Revise or eliminate the October through December fixed closed season. Currently, the recreational red snapper season must close by September 30. Pushing back or eliminating the closure date will provide the Council with more red snapper season management options.*
- *Provide for weekends only, or weekdays only fishing periods. This would provide the council with more options for in-season management, or during a supplemental season should the fishery be reopened after a premature closure.*
- *Increase the 2012 red snapper Total Allowable Catch based on the 2011 red snapper rerun analysis.*

Public hearings for this regulatory amendment will be held sometime after the August 2011 Council meeting.

In June the Council also requested that the SEDAR steering committee schedule a benchmark assessment of red snapper in 2012.





Dr. Bob Shipp,  
Council Chair

## From the Deck of the Shipp

### Seafood safety and fish with lesions

As always, this column reflects my opinion and not necessarily that of the Gulf Council. That fact is especially important with this issue. Both red and yellow flags have been raised lately regarding the health of Gulf seafood, especially for red snapper with lesions.

First, I don't think I or anyone else denies that some snapper have been taken with lesions on their body. Beyond the lesions, however, is a very important question - how frequently do the lesions occur? I can only comment on our lab and field results and not about what others have reported. I firmly believe that Gulf seafood is absolutely safe. I eat it, my kids and grandkids do as well. The FDA has surveyed our findings, and based on their tests, have concluded that there is no health concern.

Below are the findings of the Department of Marine Sciences, University of South Alabama and the Dauphin Island Sea Lab:



### Second Supplemental Report to Alabama Marine Resource Division

June 9, 2011



**Drs. Sean Powers and Robert L. Shipp**

### Department of Marine Sciences, University of South Alabama and the Dauphin Island Sea Lab

**Purpose:** To provide a brief synopsis of fishery independent data to assess whether diseased reef fish are present in the population.

**Summary:** Based on our fishery independent sampling from January to early June 2011, we found no significant evidence of diseased fish (noted by external sores or visible disfigurement of internal organs) in reef fish populations off Alabama or the western Florida Panhandle. We conclude that the prevalence of fish with external lesions in coastal Alabama is extremely low (<1%) at this time.

**Synopsis of methodology:** Extensive fishery independent sampling conducted by USA and DISL occurred from Jan 2010 - April 2011 and, most recently from late May to early June 2011. This report updates the previous supplemental report with data from the most recent cruises conducted in May and June 2011. Multiple gears are used during sampling events including underwater video recorded via a ROV, vertical or "bandit" longlines, bottom longlines, bottom trawls and traditional hook and line gear. Site selection for 96% of the samples was based on a completely random and unbiased design. The non-random sites were chosen based on reports from fishermen and one research that diseased fish were present at those sites. In addition, a limited number of fishery dependent (port sampling) data were collected. Approximately 3,100 economically important fish (primarily red snapper, gray trigger fish, gag grouper, scamp) have been collected in coastal Alabama and the western panhandle of Florida out of 300 foot depths since Jan 2010. Of this total, 80% have been sampled after the *Deepwater Horizon* Incident. Our most recent sampling (late May and early June) account for approximately 30% of the total fish. Two types of visual examinations were conducted on fish: external examination for sores, lesions or skin abnormalities and gross anatomical examination of internal organs (this analysis would detect organ disfigurement or enlargement). For the early June 2011 sampling, scientists from the FDA Lab on Dauphin Island accompanied USA/DISL scientists on cruise and collected samples from 1 fish with an external skin discoloration/lesion and 10 samples from red snapper without lesions or skin abnormalities for background samples. With the exception of the one fish sampled by FDA, which was collected from one of the non-random stations where diseased fish had been reported, no sores, lesions or disfigurement were noted in the external examination or gross anatomical examination, FDA has provided a summary report (attached) of their findings.

[See next page](#)

## Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

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### The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

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## From the Deck (continued)

Figure 1. Collection sites in coastal Alabama and western Florida from Jan 2010 until June 2011 for three gear types.

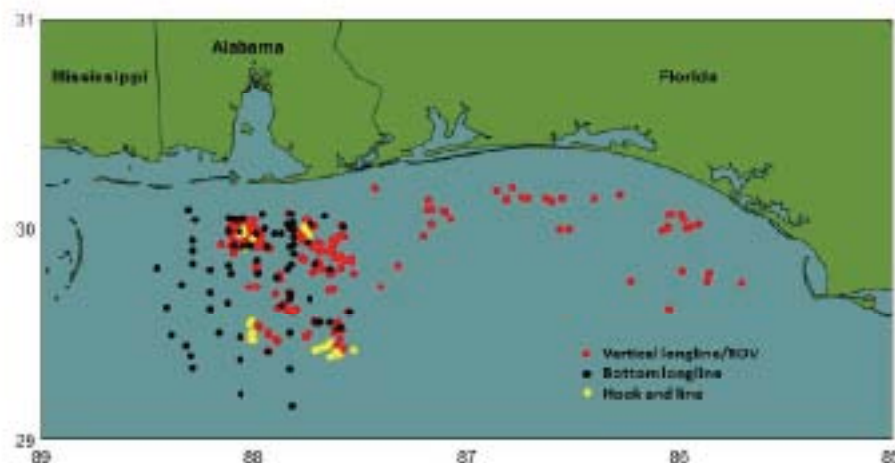


Table 1. Number of collections or sites by methodology from Jan 2010 until June 2011 for all gear types.

Survey Gear	Effort
<b>Fishery Independent</b>	
Vertical Longline	812 sets
Bottom Longline	124 set
Hook & Line	50 collections
Remotely Operated Video (ROV)	79 videos
Trawl	58 trawls
<b>Fishery Dependent</b>	
Port Samples	38 collections

Table 2. Results for external and internal examination of abundant and economically important finfish captured in coastal Alabama and northwest Florida.

Species	Number*	External sores or lesions	Internal organ abnormalities based on gross examination
Red snapper	2,778	1**	0
Gray triggerfish	90	0	0
Red drum	102	0	0
Vermilion snapper	93	0	0
Grouper/Scamp	24	0	0

\*Approximately 700 fish were sampled in late May and June of 2011.



## Reef Fish Amendment 32 - Gag and Red Grouper

The Council has postponed final action on Reef Fish Amendment 32 until its August 2011 meeting in Austin, Texas. The Council representative from the state of Florida requested the delay to allow the state Commission to review the Council's preferred alternatives before it takes final action.

The Council will also hold another round of public hearings in Florida to gather additional public input on the actions proposed in Amendment 32. Meeting dates and locations are listed on page 7. Public hearing documents will be available on the Council web site by July 15, 2011.

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

Amendment 32 was initiated to address the overfishing of gag and to develop a stock rebuilding plan in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Red grouper 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, including an increase in the recreational red grouper bag limit.

## Greater Amberjack

In April 2011, the Council received the results of the latest greater amberjack update stock assessment. The assessment concluded that the greater amberjack stock continues to be overfished.

National Standard One of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires that overfished stocks be managed under rebuilding plans that will rebuild stocks in ten years or less. For greater amberjack, the end of 2011 marks the end of the ten year rebuilding period, and it's highly unlikely that the greater amberjack stock will meet its rebuilding deadline. As a result, the Council's Science Committee has adjusted the Acceptable Biological Catch through 2013 to adhere to the National Standards.

Meanwhile, the Council reviewed an options paper for greater amberjack that includes actions to:

- Modify the greater amberjack rebuilding plan
- Adjust recreational management measures, including: vessel limits; minimum size limits; and closed seasons
- Adjust commercial management measures including trip limits and closed seasons

Staff is developing a public hearing draft for review by the Council during its August meeting. Public hearings will be scheduled sometime before the Council meets in October 2011.

Photo by Troy Frady



Photo by Troy Frady



## Generic Annual Catch Limits & Accountability Measures

The Council has postponed final action on the Generic Amendment for Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures until its August meeting in Austin, Texas.

Written testimony can be emailed to: [gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org](mailto:gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org), or sent via U.S. Mail to:

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

Documents are available for review at [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org).



## August Council Meeting Reminder

The next Council meeting is scheduled for the week of August 15 - 19, 2011, at the Crowne Plaza in Austin, Texas. 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 August 8, 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](http://www.gulfcouncil.org)



## Cook's Corner

*Here's a blast from the past. This recipe was taken from Florida Department of Natural Resources 1970 recipe book.*

### Spicy Snapper

#### Ingredients

2 pounds of snapper filets, or other fish filets, fresh or frozen\*  
 2/3 cup of tomato juice  
 3 tablespoons of vinegar  
 2 tablespoons of salad oil  
 1 envelope (3/4 ounce) old fashioned French dressing mix

Thaw frozen fillets. Skin fillets and cut into serving-size portions. Place fish in a single layer in a shallow baking dish. Combine remaining ingredients and mix thoroughly. Pour sauce over fish and let stand for 30 minutes, turning once. Remove fish, reserving sauce for basting. Place fish on a well-greased broiler pan. Broil 4 to 5 minutes. Turn carefully and brush with sauce. Broil 4 to 5 minutes longer or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Serves 6. Approximately 155 calories in each serving.

\* Council staff recommend using fresh Gulf red snapper, and maybe a different recipe...



## 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](mailto: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.



Photo by Scott Hickman, Texas

## Gulf Council Extends Recruitment Period for Ad Hoc Head Boat Advisory Panel

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council appointed the following individuals to a newly formed Ad Hoc Head Boat Advisory Panel:

Tom Becker	Randy Boggs
Cliff Cox	Chad Haggert
Mary Ann Heimann	Michael Miglini
Ed Schroeder	Steve Tomeny
John Williams	

The Council also will continue recruiting members to serve on the Ad Hoc Panel through August 8, 2011. The charge of the Panel is to explore management issues, including current regulations and business practices, options for reducing discards, data collection improvements, and any other management considerations or practices that may be addressed by the Council.

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 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](mailto:phyllis.miranda@gulfcouncil.org). Resumes and letters should be received no later than close of business August 8, 2011.



## New Council Members Named

The Commerce Department announced the appointment of 21 new and returning members to the eight regional fishery management councils – important partners with NOAA's Fisheries Service in determining how ocean fisheries are managed.

The councils, established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, prepare fishery management plans for marine fish stocks in their regions. The councils fulfill the act's charge to end and prevent overfishing and rebuild fish stocks to ensure sustainable fisheries. NOAA's Fisheries Service works closely with the councils during plan development and also reviews, approves, and implements the management plans developed by the councils.

"The individuals selected for the councils are uniquely qualified for these important positions. They are the experts—fishermen and scientists, leaders in their regions—who will help us achieve sustainable fisheries and maintain vibrant fishing communities," said Eric Schwaab, Assistant Administrator for NOAA's Fisheries Service.

Council members represent diverse constituents, including commercial and recreational fisheries, environmental interests, and academia. Each year, the

Secretary of Commerce selects approximately one-third of the total of 72 appointed members to the eight regional councils. Twenty-one are being named or reappointed for the next term, which begins on August 11, 2011.

NOAA's Fisheries Service annually solicits nominations from the governors of fishing states and oversees the annual appointment process. The Secretary must select council members from the list of nominees provided by the governors to fill obligatory and at-large seats that have become available due to an expiring term, a resignation, or other reasons. Obligatory seats are state-specific, while at-large seats can be filled by a person from any of the states in the region. Council members serve three-year terms and may be reappointed to serve up to three consecutive terms.

Gulf Council Appointments - the Gulf Council includes members from the states of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. The appointees for 2011 three at-large seats are:

Pamela J. Dana (Florida)  
Patrick F. Riley (Texas)  
Robert L. Shipp (Alabama - reappointment)

Council members will be sworn in during the August Council meeting in Austin, Texas.



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## Mackerel Amendment 18 - Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures

The Council has approved the public hearing draft for Amendment 18 to the Mackerel Fishery Management Plan. The Amendment contains actions to set Annual Catch Limits, Annual Catch Targets, and Accountability Measures for Gulf-group king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and cobia. It also contains measures to remove cero, little tunny, dolphin and bluefish from the fishery management plan; to revise the framework procedure; and to separate cobia into Atlantic and Gulf migratory groups.

Public hearings are scheduled around the Gulf coast from August 1 through August 4, 2011. See below for additional meeting information.



### Upcoming Public Hearings

Public hearings have been scheduled for Amendment 18 to the Coastal Migratory Pelagic Fishery Management Plan, which deals with annual catch limits and accountability measures, and for Amendment 32 to the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan, which deals with gag and red grouper.

**All hearings will begin at 6:00 p.m. local time, and will conclude no later than 9:00 p.m.**

#### Monday, August 1, 2011

(CMP Amendment 18)

Plantation Suites  
1909 Highway 361  
Port Aransas, Texas

(CMP Amendment 18)

Fisheries Research Lab  
195 Ludwig Annex  
Grand Isle, Louisiana

(CMP Amendment 18)

Courtyard Marriott  
1600 East Beach Blvd.  
Gulfport, Mississippi

#### Wednesday, August 3, 2011

(CMP Amendment 18)

Boardwalk - Royal American  
Beach Getaways  
9400 S. Thomas Drive  
Panama City Beach, Florida

(RF Amendment 32)

Hyatt Place  
2600 Champion Ring Road  
Fort Myers, Florida

Copies of the draft documents as well as public hearing guides can be downloaded from the Council web site. Please visit [www.gulfcouncil.org/news\\_resources/scoping\\_documents.php](http://www.gulfcouncil.org/news_resources/scoping_documents.php).

#### Tuesday August 2, 2011

(CMP Amendment 18 & RF Amendment 32)

Hilton Carillon Park  
950 Lake Carillon Drive  
St. Petersburg, FL

Written comments will be accepted through August 8, 2011. Comments can be e-mailed to [gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org](mailto:gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org), or mailed to 2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607.

(CMP Amendment 18)

Fairfield Inn & Suites  
3111 Loop Road  
Orange Beach, Alabama



## 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 opened June 1 and will 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.

#### Greater Amberjack

New seasonal closure in effect. Closed June 1 through July 31.

### 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

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.

#### Seasonal bottom longline closure

June 1, 2011, through August 31, 2011 bottom longline gear in the reef fish fishery east of Cape San Blas, Florida, shoreward of a line approximating the 35-fathom depth contour is prohibited.

**Committee Schedule**  
**Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council**  
Crowne Plaza Hotel  
Austin, Texas 78752  
August 15-17, 2011

**Monday August 15, 2011**

**9:00 am – 12:00 noon**

**New Council Member Orientation (Tab L)**

**1:30 pm – 2:00 pm**

**Outreach and Education Committee (Tab K)**

- Outreach and Education Advisory Panel Recommendations

**2:00 pm – 5:00 pm**

**Sustainable Fisheries/Ecosystem Committee - Continued (Tab G)**

- Ecosystem Scientific & Statistical Committee Report
- Presentation on Allocation by Buzz Thompson
- Final Action on the Generic Annual Catch Limits/Accountability Measures Amendment

**5:00 pm – 5:15 pm**

**FULL COUNCIL – CLOSED SESSION**

- Litigation Briefing

**Tuesday August 16, 2011**

**8:30 am – 12:00 noon & 1:30 pm – 5:00 pm**

**Reef Fish Management Committee (Tab B)**

- Final Action on Regulatory Amendment for Red Grouper Total Allowable Catch & Bag Limit
- Final Action on Amendment 32 - Gag Rebuilding & Gag Annual Catch Limit
- Draft Regulatory Amendment for Fall Red Snapper Season
- Presentation on Red Snapper Economics by Wade Griffin
- Draft of Amendment 35 - Greater Amberjack
- Ad Hoc Red Snapper Individual Fishing Quota 5-Year Review Panel Report
- Ad Hoc Commercial Reef Fish Individual Fishing Quota Advisory Panel Report

**Wednesday August 17, 2011**

**8:30 am – 9:00 am**

**Advisory Panel Selection Committee (Tab N) – CLOSED SESSION**

- Appointments to the Ad Hoc Headboat Advisory Panel
- Appointment of Retiring Council Members to Advisory Panels

**9:00 am – 9:30 am**

**Budget/Personnel Committee – FULL COUNCIL – CLOSED SESSION**

- Employment Matters

**9:30 am – 10:00 am**

**Budget/Personnel Committee (Tab E)**

- Quarterly Budget Review

**10:00 am – 11:00 am**

**Mackerel Management Committee (Tab C)**

- Final Action on Mackerel Amendment 18

**11:00 am – 11:30 am**

**Joint Mackerel/Reef Fish/Red Drum Management Committees (Tab I)**

- Proposed Rule Implementing Aquaculture Amendment

**1:00 pm – 2:00 pm**

**Artificial Reef Committee (Tab J)**

- Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) Presentation
- Discussion of Oil Rig Removals
- Status of Artificial Reefs in Fishery Management

**2:00 pm – 3:00 pm**

**Data Collection Committee (Tab F)**

- Presentation on the I-Snapper Program
- Discussion on Creating an Ad Hoc Advisory Panel to Collect Private Recreational Angler Data

**3:00 pm – 3:30 pm**

**Administrative Policy Committee (Tab O)**

- Council Strategic Plan
- SEDAR Guidelines
- Ad Hoc Advisory Panel Membership

**Immediately Following Committee Recess will be the Informal Question & Answer Session on Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Issues.**



**Council Agenda**  
**Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council**  
 Crowne Plaza Hotel  
 Salons A-D  
 6121 North IH-35  
 Austin, Texas 78752  
 August 18-19, 2011

**Thursday August 18, 2011**

- I. Call to Order and Introductions – Shipp  
9:00 am – 9:05 am
- II. Adoption of Agenda (**Tab A, No. 4**) – Shipp  
9:05 am – 9:10 am
- III. Investiture Ceremony for New Members – Crabtree  
9:10 am – 9: 25 am
- IV. Approval of Minutes – Shipp  
9:25 am – 9:30 am
- V. Fisheries 101 (**Tab M**) – Bortone/Steele  
9:30 am – 9:45 am
- VI. Committee Reports
  - a. Outreach and Education (**Tab K**)  
9:45 am – 10:00 am
  - b. Advisory Panel Selection (**Tab N**) – Shipp  
10:00 am – 10:15 am
  - c. Joint Mackerel/Reef Fish/Red Drum (**Tab I**) – Fischer/Gill/Pearce  
10:15 am – 10:30 am
  - d. Artificial Reef (**Tab J**) – Greene  
10:30 – 10:45 am
  - e. Data Collection (**Tab F**) – Pearce  
10:45 am – 11:00 am
  - f. Budget/Personnel (**Tab E**) – McIlwain  
11:00 am – 11:15 am
  - g. Administrative Policy (**Tab O**) – Riechers  
11:15 am – 11:30 am
- VII. Public Testimony - Shipp
  - a. Exempted Fishing Permits (EFP) – if any
  - b. Final Action on Reef Fish Amendment 32
  - c. Final Action on the Generic Annual Catch Limits/Accountability Measures Amendment
  - d. Final Action Joint Amendment 18 to the Coastal Migratory Pelagics Fishery Management Plan
  - e. Open Public Comment Period  
12:30 pm – 4:30 pm
- VI. Committee Reports – Continued
  - h. Mackerel (**Tab C**) – Fischer  
4:30 pm – 4:45 pm

**Friday August 19, 2011**

- VI. Committee Reports - Continued
    - i. Sustainable Fisheries/Ecosystem (**Tab G**) – Riechers  
8:30 am – 9:30 am
    - j. Reef Fish (**Tab B**) – Gill  
9:30 am – 12:00 noon
  - VIII. Other Business (**Tab P**) – Shipp  
12:00 noon – 12:15 pm
  - IX. Election of Chair and Vice Chair – Simpson  
12:15 pm – 12:30 pm
- Adjourn –

## NOAA Seeks Public Comment on Proposed Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Generic Annual Catch Limits/Accountability Measures Amendment for the Gulf of Mexico

NOAA Fisheries Service is seeking public comment on a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Generic Annual Catch Limits /Accountability Measures Amendment for the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish, Red Drum, Shrimp, and Coral and Coral Reef fishery management plans (FMPs). A DEIS is a draft analysis of potential significant impacts that proposed management actions can have on the natural and social environment.

The analysis compares a series of alternatives for each action to evaluate the effects on the environment. The Environmental Protection Agency announced the availability of the DEIS in the Federal Register on July 1, 2011 (76 FR 127). The public comment period ends on August 15, 2011.

The Generic Annual Catch Limits/Accountability Measures Amendment proposes the establishment of annual catch limits and accountability measures for species in the Reef Fish, Red Drum, Shrimp, and Coral and Coral Reef FMPs not subject to overfishing (rate of removal is too high).

Annual Catch Limits are set at levels that prevent overfishing from occurring by limiting the amount of fish that can be caught in pounds. Accountability Measures are management controls to prevent annual catch limits from being exceeded, and to correct overages of annual catch limits if they occur.

Actions contained in the DEIS include: Actions 1 and 2 determine which stocks are in need of annual catch limits and which may not need annual catch limits due to being removed from the fishery management plans or delegated to other management agencies.

Action 3 establishes species groupings, which allow a single annual catch limit to be set for all species within that group.

Actions 4, 5, and 6 establish the necessary procedures for determining and implementing annual catch limits and associated management measures by creating an acceptable biological catch control rule, an annual catch limit/annual catch target control rule, and a framework procedure for implementing management changes.

Action 7 establishes annual catch limits and optional annual catch targets for each species or species group. This section also apportions stocks that occur across jurisdictional boundaries between the Gulf of Mexico

and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils, and allocates black grouper between commercial and recreational sectors.

Action 8 establishes the accountability measures for each species or species group. In-season and post-season accountability measures will be established to keep catch levels within the designated annual catch limits or to restore catch levels to those limits if exceeded.

### Request for Comments

Comments on this DEIS must be received no later than August 15, 2011, in order to be considered by NOAA Fisheries Service. See the Addresses section for information on where and how to submit comments.

### Addresses

Electronic copies of the DEIS may be obtained from the Southeast Regional Office Web site at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/GulfACL.htm> and from the e-rule making portal <http://www.regulations.gov>.

You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- Electronic Submissions: Federal e-Rulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. After selecting "submit a comment," enter the following docket number into the "Search" box: NOAA-NMFS-2011-0143. All comments received are part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change.

All personal identifying information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NOAA Fisheries Service will accept anonymous comments.

Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

- Mail: Rich Malinowski, NOAA Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, Sustainable Fisheries Division, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505.

Comments received through means other than those specified may not be considered.



## Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Season Opens July 15, 2011

The Gulf of Mexico commercial shrimp season for both Texas state and federal waters will open 30 minutes after sunset Friday, July 15, 2011. The opening date is based on an evaluation of the biological, social, and economic information to maximize the benefits to the industry and the public.

In making its determination, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Coastal Fisheries Division used the best available scientific information, including samples collected by using trawls and bag seines during routine data collection by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

The purpose of the closed Gulf season is to protect brown shrimp during their major period of emigration from the bays to the Gulf of Mexico until they reach a larger, more valuable size before harvest, and to prevent waste caused by the discarding of smaller shrimp.

Federal waters (from 9 to 200 nautical miles offshore) will open at the same time that Texas state waters open. The National Marine Fisheries Service chose to adopt rules compatible with those adopted by Texas.

### Texas Shrimp Closure:

Closed from the coast line to 200 miles off Texas.

Closure for 2011, approximately May 15 - July 15, actual duration depends on sampling done by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Protects migrating juvenile shrimp which results in larger shrimp.

Larger shrimp result in increased revenues to the shrimp industry.



## Joint Spiny Lobster Amendment 10

During its June Council meeting, the Gulf and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils met jointly to review and discuss a joint amendment to the Spiny Lobster Fishery Management Plan. The amendment establishes annual catch limits and accountability measures now required by the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

Other actions contained within the amendment include:

- Removal of some lobster species from the fishery management plan
- Setting of biological and management reference points
- Using undersized lobster as lures
- Modifying tailing requirements

The Councils approved the joint amendment and voted to send it to the Secretary of Commerce for approval and implementation.

A copy of the document can be downloaded from the Council website at [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org).

In June, the Council also initiated a new regulatory amendment for spiny lobster to address trap line colors and closed areas. A draft of that amendment will be available online in the August Council briefing book.



# 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](mailto: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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