

Gulf Fishery News

A publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council



December 2012
Volume 34 Issue 5

Special Reef Fish Management Committee Meeting Scheduled

The Gulf Council's Reef Fish Management Committee will meet in a special session January 7-8, 2013, at the Hilton Tampa Airport Westshore, 2225 North Lois Avenue in Tampa, Florida. The Committee will discuss a proposed framework action to address the 2013 commercial and recreational red snapper quotas and a possible bag limit reduction.

This framework action is under consideration because of an estimated 1.6 million pound overharvest of recreational red snapper in 2012.

The Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) met November 8, 2012, to review the recreational quota overage and, based on the results of the analysis, the SSC determined that the 2013 acceptable biological catch (ABC) can still be increased, but at a lower level than scheduled. Any change in the ABC requires a framework action to adjust the fishery management plan based on the new ABC.

This framework action will contain alternatives for commercial and recreational quotas and recreational bag limits. The Council also asked staff to also include an option that considers a one-fish recreational red snapper bag limit as a way to extend the season length.

The Committee will also discuss:

- Red snapper allocation
- Red snapper IFQ 5-year review
- Recreational red snapper regional management issues

Click [here](#) to see the meeting agenda. This meeting is open to the public. You can also watch it live by registering [here](#).

Recommendations made during this special meeting will be presented to the full Council during its February 5 - 8, 2013 meeting in Mobile, Alabama. See [page 10](#) for a **draft** agenda.



Photo by Mark Miller



Photo by Kathy Hoak

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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 workshops 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

Council to Meet in Mobile, Alabama February 5-8, 2013

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will meet in Mobile, Alabama, February 5 - 8, 2013. Agenda items for which the Council is tentatively scheduled to take final action include:

- Reef Fish Framework Action for Vermilion & Yellowtail Snapper Annual Catch Limits and the Venting Tool Requirement
- Framework Action to Adjust the 2013 Red Snapper Quotas

The Council is also scheduled to review public comments from scoping workshops held around the Gulf on Reef Fish Amendment 39 - Regional Management of Recreational Red Snapper. See [page 7](#) for dates and locations.

Also on the **draft** agenda is the review of scoping documents for the following amendments:

- Reef Fish Amendment 28 - Allocations
- Days-at-Sea Pilot Program for the For-Hire Sector for Red Snapper
- Scoping Document - Modifications to Federally-Permitted Headboat Reporting Requirements

Public comment is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, February 7, 2013, from 2:00 pm to 5:30 pm. If you can't make the meeting but would like to stay up to date, you can watch the meetings live. Visit - http://www.gulfcouncil.org/council_meetings/Webinars.php - to register.

You can also comment on specific items by visiting - http://www.gulfcouncil.org/fishery_management_plans/scoping-thru-implementation.php - and clicking on the "Submit Your Comments" hyperlink for the issue or issues in which you are interested.

As always, there will be an informal Question and Answer Session with Dr. Crabtree and Council members on Gulf of Mexico fishery management issues. The Q&A is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday after the the Council recesses.

Please see the **draft** agenda on [page 10](#) for more detailed information. The final agenda will soon be posted on the Council web site at www.gulfcouncil.org



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MANAGEMENT PLANS

Click on the thermometer to:

- review pending fishery management plans and amendments
- review available amendment guides
- review public comments
- submit public comments



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Photo: Emily Muehlstein



Photo: Captain Murphy



Stock Photo

Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) Q&A

Reprinted from the November MRIP Update



In the August issue of Newscast, we asked readers for their questions. We heard from Capt. Monty Hawkins, a charter boat operator, blogger, and recreational fishing advocate, who sent us two related queries. For the purposes of space, we've condensed them below. To read the full text with his accompanying commentary, along with his other posts, you can visit Capt. Monty's blog at <http://blog.morningstarfishing.com/>

Question:

How can you say MRIP is "better" than MRFSS when there are still so many estimates that appear to be obvious outliers? Specific examples include:

- Wave 2, 2010, New Jersey Shore Mode tautog catch. The estimate was 483,198 pounds. That number is greater than the TOTAL for-hire Wave 2, 2010, catch PLUS the total commercial landings for the WHOLE YEAR.
- Wave 3, Massachusetts Private Boat Mode black sea bass catch. The estimate was 246,973 black sea bass in Wave 3 alone. That number is greater than the catch of the entire East Coast for-hire fleet through Wave 3.

Where's the head-count? Where are the statistical stops to prevent wild flyers in the data? Isn't there some way to clearly flag the "bad" numbers and only report the ones that make sense?

Answer:

These are important issues with complex explanations that straddle the line between the science of producing estimates of recreational fishing activity, and the most appropriate use of those estimates to fairly and sustainably manage recreational fisheries.

On the science side, MRIP has implemented a number of significant, peer-reviewed improvements to our previous recreational fishing data collection program. The basis for these improvements is a 2006 review of MRFSS by the National Research Council (NRC), a leading group of independent scientists. One of the chief concerns raised by the NRC was that our catch estimation methods introduced the potential for bias in our results. In statistics, bias can occur when you make assumptions about your data that you haven't tested, such as assuming that catch rates are the same during different parts of the day.

The NRC recommended a number of specific changes to MRFSS to remove the potential for bias from our estimates, which the MRIP team - made up of NOAA representatives, state partners, outside consultants, fishermen and other stakeholders - has systematically worked to implement over the past several years. Complete details of all our projects can be found at our website, www.countmyfish.noaa.gov.

With these improvements in place, we can say with confidence that we have enhanced the quality of our estimates. In fact, the cases you cite are good examples for demonstrating exactly what we mean by that. To begin with, it is important to recognize that when we talk about an "estimate," we're actually talking about two numbers. The first is the "Point Estimate," which is the number you refer to in your question. The second is the "Precision." In polling, this is often referred to as the "margin of error." In our estimates, we use a measure called "percent standard error" (or PSE). Precision tells us how confident we can be in the point estimate.

For an estimate to have any real-world meaning, BOTH of these numbers have to be taken into account. That's because if there is a high PSE, then we are less certain that the point estimate reflects the true value, a fact that has to be accounted for when using the data.

However, less precision is not the same as less accuracy. Because we have removed the potential for bias from the way we estimate catch, MRIP's new numbers - the point estimates combined with the PSEs - are still a more accurate estimation of recreational fishing activity.

In the tautog example you ask about, the PSE was a very imprecise 86.4. One of the reasons the PSE is so high for this species in this mode is because we don't encounter many people catching them. Because of the way that sampling and estimation work, there is a good chance that the point estimate for any individual species and type of fishing (mode) during a single two-month sampling period (wave) may seem unrealistically high or low. Although it is typically the high "outliers" that tend to get the most attention, they must also be taken in context with the low outliers; considering both is an important part of evaluating the bigger picture.

Continued on next page

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MRIP Continued

As an example, the table below shows Wave 2/New Jersey/Shore Fishing/Tautog Catch Estimates from 2000 through 2012. In nine of those years, the estimate was zero tautog caught (PSEs cannot be calculated for zero catch). In years where there has been reported catch, the PSE is very high.

Table 1

Screen grab from data query publicly available at www.countymyfish.noaa.gov.

Estimate Status	Year	Wave	Common Name	Harvest (A+B1) Total Weight (lb)	PSE	Landings (no.) without Weight
FINAL	2000	MARCH/APRIL	TAUTOG	4,287	100.0	0
FINAL	2005	MARCH/APRIL	TAUTOG	0	.	0
FINAL	2009	MARCH/APRIL	TAUTOG	13,966	96.0	0
FINAL	2010	MARCH/APRIL	TAUTOG	483,198	86.4	0
PRELIMINARY	2012	MARCH/APRIL	TAUTOG	11,388	101.7	0

PSE, or proportional standard error, is automatically included in all outputs.

It expresses the standard error of an estimate as a percentage of the estimate and is a measure of precision.

■ A PSE value greater than 50 indicates a very imprecise estimate.

Data Sources by Geographic Area:

MRIP: ME-LA, PR, HI

Both statistically and anecdotally, it is unlikely that zero fish were caught during any given year. Therefore, what these numbers indicate more than anything is that our samplers encountered very few individuals catching tautog from the shore in New Jersey during Wave 2.

To improve precision we'd need to substantially increase the size of our intercept sample, which means talking to significantly greater numbers of anglers. That, in turn, would significantly increase the cost of the surveys. This must be weighed carefully against all the other competing needs for those resources.

With regard to black sea bass, the PSE for Wave 3 in 2012 was 30.9. This is far more precise, but there's still wide margin in terms of the potential number of fish caught. It's also worth pointing out these are preliminary estimates. Before they're finalized, all estimates go through an extensive quality control process, including a point-by-point data review that specifically looks for collection errors.

This process is part of what we do to "flag" outlier numbers. In addition to our own review, preliminary estimates are open to public scrutiny so that people such as you can point out numbers that should get closer scrutiny. We have also added new features to our query outputs that highlight especially high PSEs.

As you note in the rest of your post about black sea bass, even if these particular point estimates hold, as we begin to look at data over a longer and longer time series, or across broader geographic areas, the PSE declines and the point estimate becomes more precise.

This leads to the issue of how best to use the data our surveys produce. As managers face new mandates to ensure that overfishing is not occurring, we may find a greater need for more precise estimates delivered more frequently for some species during some parts of the year. Each of these needs has costs associated with it. The question of where the money will come from and how to spend it is part of the dialogue among fisheries managers, scientists, fishermen, coastal community representatives, and other stakeholders. But tools are being put in place to get the information when it's needed.

In addition, the work to make our surveys better and to anticipate the emerging needs and opportunities of the future continues. Numerous MRIP-funded studies are underway, looking at everything from how to improve survey response rates, to how we count for-hire catch, to ways to enable anglers to submit their own data. As each study is completed, the findings are incorporated into the overall program, making the process of improvement incremental and ongoing.



Grouper and Red Snapper Allocation

In October, the Gulf Council reopened discussions on the sector allocation document and decided to split the document back into two separate amendments; one addressing allocation issues and another addressing sector separation. The Council would like to address allocation issues before considering potential sector separation.

Reef Fish Amendment 28, which will deal with allocation, will be discussed during the February 2013 Council meeting in Mobile, Alabama. The Sector Separation issue is on hold until allocation issues are addressed.



Stock Photo



Photo by: Ron Schiaffo



Photo by: Scott Hickman

Changes to 2013 Recreational Gag Season

After reviewing public hearing comments and the actions and alternatives contained in a regulatory amendment to address the 2013 gag season and bag limits, the Council chose to keep the July 1 gag season opening, but allow the season to remain open until the annual catch target has been met. The 2-fish bag limit also remains in effect, giving an estimated season of 133-155 days, compared to the 123 days in 2012.

The Council also decided to eliminate the current February 1 through March 31 shallow-water grouper closed season shoreward of the 20 fathom break. Recreational harvest of shallow-water grouper (red grouper, black grouper, scamp, yellowfin grouper, and yellowmouth grouper) will be permitted all year unless you are fishing beyond 20 fathoms. Beyond 20 fathoms, the February 1 through March 31 recreational closed season remains in effect.

Before becoming law, the management changes must be approved and implemented by the Secretary of Commerce.

To receive email updates on new rules, pending issues, and other news, sign up [here](#).



Photo by Troy Frady

Regional Management of Red Snapper

The Council reviewed a scoping document for Reef Fish Amendment 39 – Regional Management for Recreational Red Snapper during its October Council meeting and a series of scoping meetings. The document examines:

- Defining regional boundaries
- Allocation among regions
- Program administration
- Accountability measures

Meetings will be held around the Gulf to get public input on the issues and concerns related to regional management. See [page 7](#) for meeting dates and locations.

February Council Meeting Reminder

The next Council meeting is scheduled for the week of February 5 - 8, 2013, at the Mobile Marriott in Mobile, Alabama. Please make your reservation under the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council room block to receive the special discounted room rate.

Note that all written comments will be posted on the Council's web site for viewing by Council members and the public.

To help ensure that Council members have sufficient time to consider your 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 written comments and will be posted to the web site.

Oral 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. Further, knowingly and willfully submitting false information to the Council is a violation of Federal Law.

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

Federal Fishery Closures

Recreational Closures:

Red Snapper

The 2012 recreational red snapper season closed effective July 16, 2012.

Gray Triggerfish

The recreational gray triggerfish season closed June 11, 2012, and will reopen January 1, 2013.

Commercial Closures:

Gray Triggerfish

The commercial harvest of gray triggerfish in the Gulf of Mexico closed July 1, 2012. NOAA Fisheries Service determined that the 2012, commercial quota of 60,900 pounds whole weight was harvested.

King Mackerel

The northern Florida west coast subzone closed October 5, 2012 to commercial fishing for king mackerel.

The Western Zone of the Gulf of Mexico king mackerel commercial fishery closed August 22, 2012.

The king mackerel commercial run-around gill net component of the coastal migratory pelagic fishery in the southern Florida west coast subzone closed January 21, 2012, and will reopen 6 a.m. January 21, 2013.



Photo by: Captain Murphy



Photo by: Mark Miller

Send us Your Fishing Photos

We want to see your favorite fishing and fishery-related photos! Whether 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 publications.

Send us your photos and help us build a photo library! To submit your photos, send an e-mail with "Photo Library" in the subject line to 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. 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).

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

Can't make a meeting?

Don't worry, you can watch the virtual presentation on Gulf Council TV. Simply visit http://www.gulfcouncil.org/resources/gulf_council_tv.php and scroll down to the presentation section.

Then submit your comments online at http://gulfcouncil.org/fishery_management_plans/scoping-thru-implementation.php

A [Scoping Guide](#) will be available soon!

Upcoming Scoping Workshops

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will hold a series of workshops around the Gulf to take comments on proposed Reef Fish Amendment 39 - Regional Management of Red Snapper.

The proposed amendment is in the beginning stages of development, and scoping is the process of identifying issues, potential impacts, and reasonable alternatives associated with the issue at hand. It provides the first and best opportunity for the public to make suggestions or to raise issues and concerns before the Council begins developing management options.



Photo: Captain Murphy



Photo: Mark Miller

The scoping workshop schedule is listed below. All workshops begin at 6 pm and will conclude after public input has ended, but no later than 9 pm.

January 14, 2013

Doubletree by Hilton
4964 Constitution Avenue
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

January 14, 2013

Holiday Inn Express
2440 Gulf Freeway
Texas City, TX 77591

January 15, 2013

Hilton Garden Inn
6717 S. Padre Island Drive
Corpus Christi, TX 78412

January 15, 2013

Four Points by Sheraton
940 Beach Boulevard
Biloxi, MS 39530

January 16, 2013

Hilton Garden Inn
23092 Perdido Beach Boulevard
Orange Beach, Alabama 36561

January 17, 2013

Destin Community Center
101 Stahlman Avenue
Destin, FL 32541

January 22, 2013

Hilton St. Petersburg Carillon Park
950 Lake Carillon Drive
St. Petersburg, FL 33716



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Gulf Currents will keep you in the loop and prepare you to participate effectively in the fishery management process by educating you about current events, possible management considerations, regulatory changes, the fisheries management process, and more.

Check it out at: <http://gulfcouncil.blogspot.com/>



Oil and Gas Platforms

To remove, or not to remove: "essentially" that is the question.

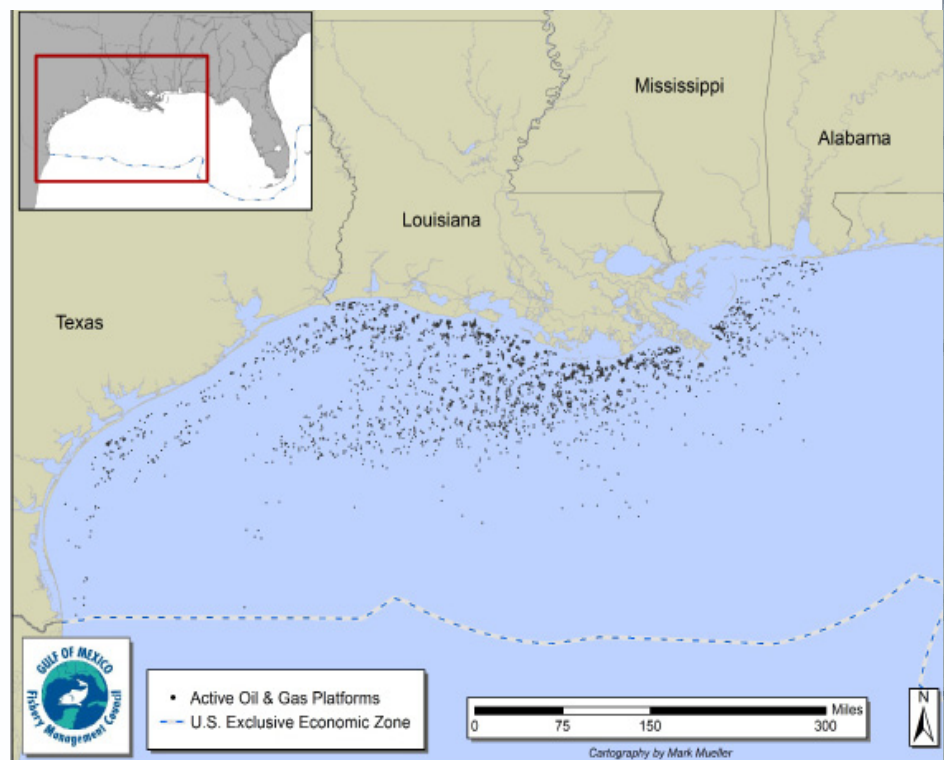
By Steve Bortone and John Froeschke

Over the years, fishermen have learned that oil and gas platforms are havens for red snapper, greater amberjack, and gray triggerfish, among other species. There are over 3,700 oil and gas platforms currently functioning in the Gulf of Mexico, with many other platforms no longer in use. These out-of-use platforms continue to function as artificial reefs, attracting fish species and serving as a substrate for the attachment of a variety of invertebrates (sponges, corals, crabs, shrimp, etc.). They may also provide a situation where some fish species increase in abundance and improve fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico.

Much to the chagrin of the fishing community, the law dictates that these derelict structures must be removed at the owners expense. Reasons for removal are several and include: danger to shipping, interference with other fishing activities, the recovery of the steel of which they are composed, and high maintenance expense, as well as persisting legal responsibility by the owners. On occasion, some platforms are "reefed," that is they are toppled over in place or partially dismantled and relocated, serving as long-term (nothing is permanent in the ocean!) artificial reefs.

For the purpose of interpreting this definition: "waters" includes aquatic areas and their associated physical, chemical, and biological properties that are used by fish, and may include areas historically used by fish where appropriate; "substrate" includes sediment, hard bottom, structures underlying the waters, and associated biological communities; "necessary" means the habitat required to support a sustainable fishery and a healthy ecosystem; and "spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity" covers a species' full life cycle.

-ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT
ASSESSMENT REPORT for the
Salmon Fisheries in the EEZ off the
Coast of Alaska, March 31, 1998



Between 100 and 150 of these structures are removed each year. Most fishermen perceive positive benefits result from leaving the oil and gas platforms in place, and naturally think that removing the platforms is detrimental to the fisheries associated with them. Through oral testimony at public meetings and in written comments provided to the Council, the public has asked the Council to look into stopping, or at least slowing down, the removal rate of oil and gas platforms until such time as it is known for sure that it does not harm the fisheries associated with the platforms. One idea is to ascribe the label "Essential Fish Habitat" to these structures. Essential Fish Habitat is defined as those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity.

If it can be determined that oil and gas platforms are indeed serving as "Essential Fish Habitat" then there is good reason to leave them in place. But before declaring these structures as Essential Fish Habitat, the Council will convene its Ad Hoc Artificial Substrate Advisory Panel, composed of about 20 members from around the Gulf of Mexico with expertise in recreational and commercial fisheries, artificial reef scientists, and oil and gas company representatives among others, to look into the ramifications of designating oil and gas platforms as Essential Fish Habitat. The panel is expected to meet in February and report back to the Council in April. Input from this panel of hands on, knowledgeable people will help the Council to make a more informed recommendation about Essential Fish Habitat status for oil and gas platforms.



Recipe Rewind

Here's another blast from the past. This recipe was taken from *Things Mother Used to Make (1914)*.

Baked Mackerel

Ingredients

1 mackerel
3 small slices of salt pork
salt to taste



Split open the mackerel, remove head and insides, wash clean, and lay in a baking-pan on a well buttered paper or cheese-cloth, the skin side down. Spread over this slices of salt pork and a little salt.

Bake in moderate oven for twenty minutes, or half an hour.

Even better:

Eliminate the salt pork and stuff the mackerel with a mixture of butter and herbs. Butter and herb recipe is as follows:

1/2 stick unsalted butter, softened
4 tablespoon chopped parsley
1 small onion, grated
1 tablespoon snipped chives
2 tablespoon lemon juice

½ teaspoon chopped chives
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 cloves garlic crushed to a paste with a little salt

NOTE: Makes enough for eight mackerel filets.

Take the retro recipe challenge! Send us your favorite retro recipe and have it published in the next edition of Gulf Fishery News.



Download the Free Federal Fishing Regulations App

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council offers a fishing regulations App for the Android and the iPhone - both are available for download.

The Apps are free and provide immediate access to the most up-to-date commercial and recreational federal fishing regulations for species managed by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. The Apps also provide information on fish identification, measurement guidelines, sanctuaries and closures, and important telephone numbers.

Visit the App Store or Android Market to download the App - or simply scan the appropriate QR code on the left with your iPhone or Droid to begin downloading the Gulf Council's free regulations App!



Droid



iPhone

Free QR Code Reader Apps are available in both the App Store and Android Market.

For more information on federal fishing regulations, visit www.gulfcouncil.org.



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Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Committee Schedule

Mobile Marriott
Mobile, Alabama
February 5 - 6, 2013

Tuesday, February 5, 2013

9:30 am – 5:00 pm **Full Council - Closed Session**
Executive Director Applicant Interviews

Wednesday, February 6, 2013

8:30 am – 11:30 am & 1:00 pm – 5:30 pm
Reef Fish Management Committee (Tab B) - Shipp
• Final Action - Vermilion and Yellowtail Snapper and Venting Tool Framework Action
• Scoping Document - Amendment 28 - Reef Fish Allocations
• Red Snapper IFQ 5-Year Review
• Scoping Document - Amendment 39 - Regional Management of Red Snapper
• Council Guidance for Framework Action on Charter Fishing Definition
• Summary of Socioeconomic Scientific & Statistical Committee Meeting
• Discussion on Exempted Fishing Permits related to reef fish (if any)

Issues discussed during the January 7 - 8, 2013 Reef Fish Committee Meeting:

- Draft 2013 Red Snapper Framework Action
- Discussion of Red Snapper Allocation
- Discussion of the Red Snapper IFQ 5-Year Review
- Discussion of Red Snapper Regional Management Issues
- Open Discussion on Red Snapper Management Issues

Immediately following committee recess will be the Informal Question & Answer Session on Gulf of Mexico fishery management issues.

Thursday, February 7, 2013

8:30 am – 9:00 am
Data Collection Committee (Tab E) - Pearce
• Scoping Document - Modifications to Federally-Permitted Headboat Reporting Requirements

9:00 am – 10:00 am
Joint Reef Fish/Mackerel/Red Drum Committees (Tab F) - Shipp/Fischer/Pearce
• Review and deem changes to the Proposed Rule for the Fishery Management Plan for Regulating Offshore Marine Aquaculture in the Gulf of Mexico

10:00 am – 10:30 am
Shrimp Committee (Tab D) - Riley
• Review of the 2011 Cooperative Texas Closure
• Shrimp Advisory Panel Recommendations
• Preliminary Effort Report for 2012

10:30 am – 11:30 am
Administrative Policy Committee (Tab G) - Riechers
• Review of Travel Guidelines

¹The established times for addressing items on the Council and committee agendas, except for those setting times for public comment, may be adjusted as necessary to accommodate the timely completion of discussion relevant to the agenda items. Such adjustments may result in the meeting being extended from, or completed prior to, the date established by these agendas.

²Persons wishing to give public testimony must turn in a registration card before the beginning of the public comment period. During public comment, the Council will first hear testimony related to final actions of the Council and pertinent agenda items, and then allow for open public testimony regarding any fishery issue or concern. During public comment, time constraints may limit individual speaking time as determined by the presiding officer. If your sentiments are reflected in comments made by others, please avoid duplication and allow the next speaker to address the Council.

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Meeting Agenda

Mobile Marriott
Mobile, Alabama
February 7 - 8, 2013

Thursday, February 7, 2013

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm
I. Call to Order and Introductions – Boyd

II. Adoption of Agenda ¹ (Tab A, No. 4) – Boyd

III. Approval of Minutes (Tab A, No. 5) – Boyd

IV. Council Member 101 - Bortone

V. Review of Action Schedule (Tab A, No. 6) – Boyd

VI. Review of Exempted Fishing Permits (if any) (Tab J) Crabtree/Boyd

2:00 pm - 5:30 pm
VII. Public Comment ^{2, 3, 4, 5} - Boyd

- a. Agenda Testimony
 1. Framework Action for Vermilion & Yellowtail Snapper ACL and Venting Tool Requirement
 2. Regulatory Amendment to Adjust 2013 Red Snapper Quotas
 3. Exempted Fishing Permits (if any)
- b. Open Testimony

8:30 am - 8:45 am
VIII. Vote on Exempted Fishing Permits (if any) (Tab K) - Crabtree/Boyd

8:45 am - 3:30 pm
IX. Committee Reports

- a. Data Collection (Tab E) - Pearce
- b. Joint Reef Fish/Mackerel/Red Drum (Tab F) - Shipp/Fischer/Pearce
- c. Shrimp (Tab D) - Perret
- d. Administrative Policy (Tab G) - Riechers
- e. Reef Fish (Tab B) - Shipp
- f. Reef Fish - continued (Tab B) - Shipp/Fischer/Pearce

Friday, February 8, 2012

8:30 am - 8:45 am
VIII. Vote on Exempted Fishing Permits (if any) (Tab K) - Crabtree/Boyd

8:45 am - 3:30 pm
IX. Committee Reports

- a. Data Collection (Tab E) - Pearce
- b. Joint Reef Fish/Mackerel/Red Drum (Tab F) - Shipp/Fischer/Pearce
- c. Shrimp (Tab D) - Perret
- d. Administrative Policy (Tab G) - Riechers
- e. Reef Fish (Tab B) - Shipp
- f. Reef Fish - continued (Tab B) - Shipp/Fischer/Pearce

3:30 pm - 4:00 pm
X. Other Business (Tab L) - Boyd

- Marine Resource Education Program Update - Ponce

-Adjourn-

³Persons wishing Council members to have copies of written testimony or information should provide 30 copies to staff before public comment begins for distribution to members. All written information shall include a statement of the source and date of such information. Any oral or written statement shall include a brief description of the background and interests of the person testifying.

⁴Oral 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 maintained by the Council as part of its permanent record. Further, knowingly and willfully submitting false information to the Council is a violation of federal law.

⁵Anyone wishing to use electronic visual aids during public testimony must provide staff with a copy of the material at least one hour before comment begins to allow for a virus scan of said material.

Vermilion Snapper

In October, the Council reviewed a draft framework action to set the vermillion snapper annual catch limit and, optionally, the annual catch target. This draft document looks at an increase in harvest limits and a change in the recreational bag limit.

The Council chose a preferred alternative that leaves the current annual catch limit and annual catch target in place.

Year	ABC	Stock ACL	Stock ACT
2013	4.41 mp	3.42 mp	2.94 mp
2014	4.34 mp	3.42 mp	2.94 mp
2015	4.33 mp	3.42 mp	2.94 mp
2016+	4.33 mp	3.42 mp	2.94 mp

The preferred alternative for bag limits sets the recreational bag limit to 10-fish per person within the 20-reef fish aggregate bag limit.

Regulations currently require Gulf reef fish fishermen to possess and use venting tools on all reef fish that are released. For fish that have a

distended or ruptured swim bladder, venting can help the fish return to depth and improve the likelihood of survival. However, for fish caught in shallow water and with no sign of barotrauma, the use of a venting tool can do more harm than good. In addition, alternative devices called fish descenders can be used to return a fish to depth in addition to, or instead of, venting. As a result, the Council added an action to the amendment to modify or eliminate the venting tool requirement, and chose as a preferred alternative to eliminate the requirement.

The Council will take final action on the framework action during its February 2013 meeting. Comments can be submitted online by visiting our website and clicking on the thermometer, or by clicking [here](#).



Gulf Council Appoints Members to New Ad Hoc Advisory Panel

The Council recently appointed members to its newly formed Ad Hoc Artificial Substrate Advisory Panel. Congratulations to the following individuals:

Allain	Bret	LA	R
Ballard	James	MS	GSMFC
Cuevas	Kerwin	MS	MDMR
Dale	David	FL	NMFS
Delaney	Glenn	Wash., D.C.	O
Dodrill	Jon	FL	FWC
Falgout	Ted	LA	OIL
Gala	William	CA	OIL
Hunger	Drew	TX	OIL
Huye	George	LA	R/CB/EN
Janowski	Lori Schmitz	FL	O
Kaller	Arie	LA	O (BOEM)
Lindberg	Bill	FL	UF
Newton	Craig	AL	ADCNR
Peter	Douglas	LA	LDWF
Phillips	Todd	TX	EN
Shively	Dale	TX	TPWD
Sinclair	James	LA	S/BSEE
Stunz	Greg	TX	TX A&M
Tackett	Bruce	Wash., D.C.	OIL
Williamson	Troy	TX	R

The new Ad Hoc Artificial Substrate Advisory Panel will assist the Council with potentially designating fixed petroleum platforms and artificial reefs as essential fish habitat.

The charge of the Ad Hoc Advisory Panel is to consider:

1. The myriad of similar artificial substrates in the aquatic environment that provide structure and habitat functions for fishery resources.
2. Emerging scientific research and economic activities related to artificial habitats and fisheries.
3. Ocean dumping and debris disposal that otherwise mimics the establishment of "artificial reefs".
4. Perspectives from industry representatives relative to the potential impacts of considering artificial substrates as Essential Fish Habitat in the Gulf of Mexico.

To comment on this or other active amendments, please visit [gulfcouncil.org/fishery_management_plans/scoping-](http://gulfcouncil.org/fishery_management_plans/scoping-thru-implementation.php)

[thru-implementation.php](http://gulfcouncil.org/fishery_management_plans/scoping-thru-implementation.php). Here you will find a copy of the amendment, any guides that are available, and a comment form. You can even read what others are saying.



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 North 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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