

Gulf Fishery News

A publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council



December, 2013
Volume 35 Issue 5

Gulf Council to Host RAP Sessions around the Gulf Coast



Photo by Scott Hickman

The Gulf Council has scheduled a series of Recreational Angler Participation Sessions - RAP Sessions - around the Gulf coast. During these sessions we'd like to hear from you about the challenges you, as a recreational angler, have with current federal fisheries management, and we want to explore with you potential solutions to those issues.

Do you have concerns about recreational fisheries regulations that you would like to share?

Would you like to play a role in shaping the future of recreational fisheries management?

Then attend one of our RAP sessions!

Gulf Council RAP Sessions

Mississippi

January 8, 2014
6 pm – 9 pm
Gulf Coast Research Lab
703 E. Beach Drive
Ocean Springs, MS 39564

Texas

January 13, 2014
6 pm – 9 pm
University of Texas Marine
Science Institute
630 E. Cotter Street
Port Aransas, TX 78373

January 14, 2014
6 pm – 9 pm
Bass Pro Shop
1000 Bass Pro Drive
Houston, TX 77047

Louisiana

January 15, 2014
6 pm – 9 pm
Mockler Beverage Company
11811 Reiger Road
Baton Rouge, LA 70809

January 16, 2014
6 pm – 9 pm
Service Chevrolet
1212 Ambassador Caffery Pkwy
Lafayette, LA 70506

Alabama

January 9, 2014
6 pm – 9 pm
Five Rivers Delta Resource Center
30945 Five Rivers Boulevard
Spanish Fort, AL 36527

Florida

January 11, 2014
9 am - Noon
Destin Community Center
101 Stahlman Avenue
Destin, FL 32541

January 22, 2014
6 pm – 9 pm
Bill Jackson's
9501 US Highway 19 North
Pinellas Park, FL 33782

January 23, 2014
6 pm – 9 pm
Bass Pro Shops
10040 Gulf Center Drive
Fort Myers, FL 33913

Webinar

January 27, 2014
6 pm – 9 pm
This is an online meeting for those who cannot attend an in-person meeting.
To register visit:
www4.gotomeeting.com/register/390667327

Inside this issue:

A Message from Sam Rauch	2
Gulf Council Welcomes New Fishery Biologist	3
Joint meeting on South Florida Issues Scheduled	4
The Great Goliath	5
Recipe Rewind	6
MRIP Update	7

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

Call 813-348-1630 for more information.



Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Doug Gregory
Executive Director

Carrie Simmons
Deputy Director

Appointed Voting Members

Pam Dana
Destin, FL
850-650-3212

Robert Shipp
Mobile, AL
251-460-7136

John Sanchez
Homestead, FL
786-255-1880

Doug Boyd
Chair
San Antonio, TX
830-230-5032

Patrick Riley
Lake Jackson, TX
979-233-2624

Camp Matens
Baton Rouge, LA
225-769-9080

Corky Perret
Poplarville, MS
504-722-1366

John Greene
Daphne, AL
251-747-2872

Roy Williams
Tallahassee, FL
850-445-0778

Leann Bosarge
Pascagoula, MS
228-762-0888

Harlon Pearce
Kenner, LA
504-467-3809

State/Federal Voting Members

Robin Riechers
Austin, TX
512-389-4645

Dale Diaz
D'Iberville, MS
228-861-3190

Martha Bademan
Tallahassee, FL
850-487-0554

Myron Fischer
Cut Off, LA
985-632-4525

Kevin Anson
Vice Chair
Gulf Shores, AL
251-968-7576

Roy Crabtree
NMFS SERO
227-824-5301

Non-voting Members

Rowan Gould
USF&WS
404-679-4000

Dave Donaldson
GSMFC
228-875-5912

RADM Kevin Cook
USCG District
504-589-6223

David Hogan
OES/OMC
202-647-2335

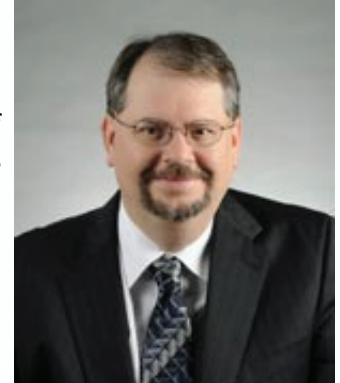
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

2203 N. Lois Avenue
Suite 1100
Tampa, Florida 33607
813-348-1630

A Message from Sam Rauch Head of NOAA Fisheries

Celebrating 40 Years of Recovering Threatened and Endangered Species

This December marks the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), which President Nixon signed into law on December 28, 1973. Species diversity and ecosystem health are part of the natural legacy we leave for future generations, and the Act helps protect this legacy by guiding conservation of threatened and endangered species and their environment.



In its 40 years, the Endangered Species Act has had success—less than one percent of the species listed under the Act have become extinct. While we have recovered and delisted a small percentage of listed species since 1973, like the recently delisted Eastern Steller sea lion population, we would likely have seen hundreds of species go extinct without the Endangered Species Act. The ocean is a very different place than it was 40 years ago, though. We now understand many of the threats faced by marine and anadromous species and we are working with many partners to bring those threats under control. Aided by our recovery efforts and time, the populations of many listed species are increasing. Still, the populations of many species continue to decline and many more species are being listed.

The Act was designed to protect both species and their habitats, and we strive to make this vision a reality by using ecosystem approaches to management. That means keeping the big picture in mind and planning for environmental variability. Already we are seeing profound changes in ocean conditions associated with rising temperatures. In the Gulf of Maine for instance, the distribution and abundance of zooplankton is shifting in ways that will impact species up the food chain, including endangered North Atlantic right whales. Similar changes are occurring throughout the ocean, and we must monitor and predict these changes so that we can adapt to them quickly. Scientists at NOAA Fisheries are developing the next generation of ocean observing systems so that we can see what's happening and adapt our management to respond to the challenges of a changing climate. We will continue developing new technologies and management approaches while working with national and international partners to ensure the Endangered Species Act remains effective in a rapidly-changing world.

All month long NOAA Fisheries will showcase the Endangered Species Act online. We will tell the recovery success stories, highlight what the Act has accomplished, and outline the challenges ahead. You can find these stories and more at www.fisheries.noaa.gov. You can also catch all this and more on Fisheries Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Samuel D. Rauch III

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, performing the functions and duties of the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries



Morgan Kilgour Joins Gulf Council Staff

Please join the Gulf Council in welcoming Morgan Kilgour, who will be working as its newest Fisheries Biologist. Dr. Kilgour, originally from Sacramento, California, earned both an M.S. in biology and a Ph.D. in coastal and marine system science at Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi. She earned a B.S. in marine biology from the University of California, Santa Cruz.



Morgan loves to go the beach, snorkel and scuba, hike, and garden. Her interests include

biodiversity, landscape ecology, marine ecology, deep-sea benthic ecology, and the reproductive biology of marine species.

Welcome Dr. Kilgour!



February Council Meeting Reminder

The next Council meeting is scheduled for the week of February 3-7, 2014, at the Westin Galleria in Houston, Texas. 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.

Comments can be submitted online by clicking the thermometer on the Council's homepage - www.gulfcouncil.org. Find your topic of interest and click on the "Submit Your Comments here" link.

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.

Happy Holidays!



from all of us at the Gulf Council

Quick Guide to Submitting Online Comments

The Gulf Council wants your input on the many issues under consideration. One way to give your input is by attending scoping workshops and public hearings held around the Gulf of Mexico. But it's impossible for the Council to hold a workshop or hearing in every coastal community, so for anyone who can't make a meeting because it's too far away or because of other commitments, we're producing online presentations and comment forms for each amendment.

Check it out! Go to www.gulfcouncil.org and click on the thermometer in the middle of the page. From there you can read up on all the pending actions, watch the video presentations, read comments, and submit your own. All comments submitted through the online form are automatically posted on our web site for Council review. Other comments are manually posted every couple of days.

There is also a thermometer for each issue that lets you know where the Council is in the process for that particular amendment, whether its the scoping phase, final action, or implementation.

Let us hear from you!

MANAGEMENT PLANS

Click on the thermometer to:

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

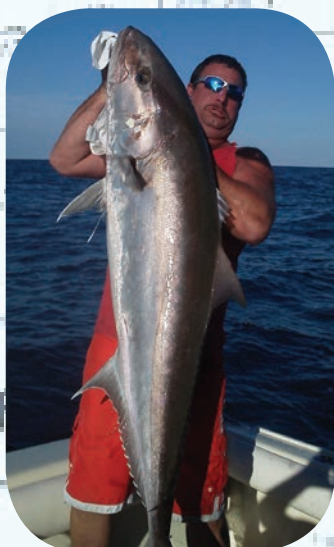


Photo: Paul Borowski

Send us Your Fishing Photos

We want to see your favorite fishing 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 in other publications. Photo credit will be given.

Joint Meeting on South Florida Management Issues and the Goliath Grouper Joint Council Steering Committee Scheduled

The Gulf and South Atlantic Councils will convene a joint steering committee at the Hilton Key Largo Resort January 7 - 9, 2014, to discuss South Florida Management Issues. The meeting will begin at 8:30 am Tuesday, January 7, 2014, and conclude no later than noon Thursday, January 9, 2014.

On the 7th, the Joint Council Committee on South Florida Management Issues will hear a presentation on the South Florida Issues workshops that were held in July and August of 2013, as well as an overview of status and trends for South Florida species. The Committee will discuss species specific management concerns and next steps for yellowtail snapper, mutton snapper, hogfish, mangrove snapper, shallow-water groupers, Nassau grouper, Warsaw, and speckled hind.

On the 8th, the Ad Hoc Goliath Grouper Joint Council Committee will meet to review the last stock assessment for Goliath grouper and hear a presentation on the recent Goliath Grouper Stakeholder Workshops and survey. Other items on the agenda include the review of recommendations from the Ad Hoc Goliath Grouper Joint Science workshop and a review of ongoing goliath grouper research.

For a complete agenda, visit <http://bit.ly/1cMg3rP>.



The Great Goliath

The goliath grouper population is showing signs of recovery in the Southeastern United States. This should be fantastic news, since goliath are considered critically endangered throughout most of the world, but many Gulf fishermen don't see it that way.

That's because goliath grouper have a bad habit of eating fish that are struggling at the end of fishing lines and spears. Understandably, this opportunistic behavior has led many fishermen to believe that goliath are a nuisance - directly competing with them and decimating game fish populations.

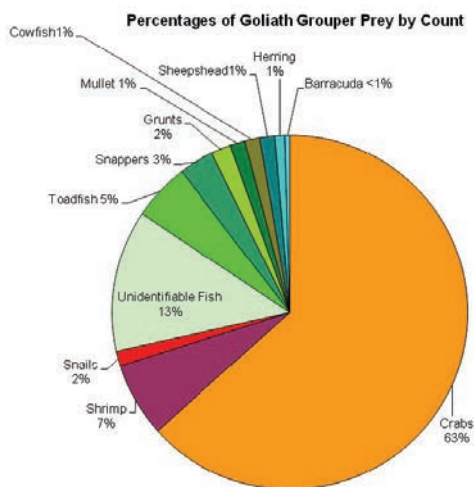
However, scientific studies have concluded that goliath grouper are not the reef fish gobbling, top predators they appear to be, and they don't seem to harm the snapper or grouper populations on reefs where they live and eat.

How do we know this?

A very straightforward way to figure out what something is eating is to check out what's in its stomach. When scientists capture goliath their stomachs are emptied and the contents are classified.



Using gut content analysis, scientists Chris Koenig and Felicia Coleman (2009) found that, rather than eating all the game fish in sight, 72% of a goliath groupers diet is invertebrates – 62% of which is crabs. The figure below shows how many of each prey type were present in the stomachs of the 226 adult and juvenile goliath grouper studied.



The only downside to gut content analysis is that it only shows a snapshot of what's been eaten recently. Since we are what we eat, stable isotope analysis can determine what a marine organism has eaten over a long period of time. Chemical signatures found in the muscles of fish can indicate what food source was used to build that tissue. The more nitrogen in the muscle, the higher up on the food chain an animal feeds. Koenig and Coleman (2009) found that goliath grouper holds a relatively low position on the food chain and actually about even with pin fish.

Finally, in reef fish surveys conducted in southwest Florida, Koenig and Coleman (2009) found that there was no significant relationship between the number of adult goliath and the number of other groupers on a site. Interestingly, the number of snapper actually increased along with the number of goliath grouper on a reef.

So what do we do when the science says something that seemingly contradicts what fishermen are experiencing?

Fishery managers do their best to balance the views and needs of fishermen with the requirements of the law and the science. In 2012 the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils joined up to consider how to move the goliath grouper fishery beyond moratorium. The Ad Hoc Goliath Grouper Steering Committee was formed as a direct result of public input suggesting we consider allowing for a limited fishery as the goliath population recovers.

At the initial meeting, the group recognized the importance of both scientific and public viewpoints for future management of goliath by initiating a science workshop to gather all the research that has been done on goliath since the last stock assessment, and asking for a stakeholder survey and workshop to be conducted.

In January, the Goliath Grouper Steering Committee will hear the results of the science workshop and stakeholder survey. They are expected to consider how to move forward with potential management actions for the future. More information about this meeting can be found on page 4.

Koenig, C.C., and F.C. Coleman. 2009. Population density, demographics, and predation effects of adult goliath grouper (*Epinephelus itajara*). Final Report to NOAA MARFIN for Project NA05NMF4540045



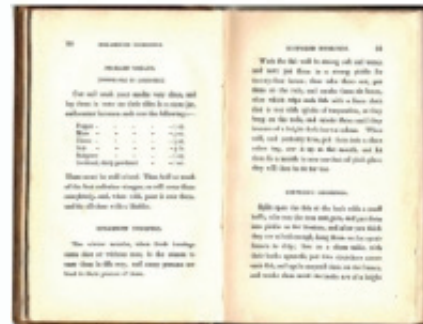
Recipe Rewind

Here's another blast from the past. This recipe was taken from *The Lady's Own Cookery Book (1844)*.

Scallops

Instructions

Pick the scallops, and wash them extremely clean; make them very dry. Flour them a very little. Fry them of a fine light brown. Make a nice, strong, light sauce of veal and a little ham; thicken a very little, and gently stew the scallops in it for half an hour.



Modern Day Scallop Recipe - Scallops & Arugula Salad

Ingredients

Cooking spray
8 large sea scallops
1/2 teaspoon salt, divided
1/4 teaspoon black pepper, divided
2 teaspoons butter
1/2 cup chopped red onion
8 oz. mushrooms
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
5 oz. arugula

Instructions

1. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Sprinkle scallops with 1/4 teaspoon salt and 1/8 teaspoon pepper. Add scallops to pan; cook 2-3 minutes on each side or until desired degree of doneness. Remove from pan; keep warm.

2. Melt butter in pan. Add remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt, remaining 1/8 teaspoon pepper, red onion, and mushrooms to pan; sauté 4 minutes or until mushrooms release their liquid. Combine juice and arugula in a large bowl. Add mushroom mixture to arugula mixture; toss gently to combine. Arrange salad mixture on 2 plates; top each serving with 4 scallops.

ENJOY!



Stay in the loop with *Gulf Currents*

Stay up to date on Gulf of Mexico Fishery issues - visit our blog - [Gulf Currents](#).

[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 management process, and more.



MRIP Update

2013-2014 Implementation Plan Update Outlines Shift to MRIP's Implementation Phase



Overview

Along with milestones from the previous year and priorities for 2014 and beyond, the 2013 MRIP Implementation Plan Update outlines steps we are taking to manage a significant transition in the program. As we finalize the evaluation of our existing data collection and estimation methods, and begin completing the comprehensive process of testing and certifying improved methods, a key focus of MRIP will now be on helping with the implementation and scaling up of these improvements for use in the field.

A key step in successfully initiating this transition has been a decision by the MRIP Executive Steering Committee (ESC) to expand the ESC's role beyond research and development priority-setting and review of pilot projects results. The ESC will now also be serving an overview role in the implementation of new methods, with responsibilities including:

- Seeking feedback from regions on progress in implementation and any problems being encountered;
- Determining if regional needs are being met and capturing information gaps; and
- Identifying ways that MRIP can provide assistance in filling in those gaps.

2013 Milestones

Among the key MRIP achievements for 2013 included in the Implementation Plan Update are:

- **New APAIS Protocols.** One of the most visible initiatives was the implementation of the new Access Point Angler Intercept Survey, beginning in Wave 2. These are the “dockside” catch surveys MRIP conducts at the end of fishing trips to measure recreational catch on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. The new protocols remove potential sources of bias from our sampling process, which was a chief concern raised by the National Research Council in its 2006 review of our survey methods.
- **Online Site Register.** Key to the process of activating our new survey protocols was developing an online, interactive Site Register of every recreational fishing access point from Maine to Louisiana. Working extensively with our state partners, the Site Register captures and catalogues the numerous interconnected details required to make efficient and statistically sound site assignments. The register is updated using information from samplers, our state partners and crowd-sourced information that comes in from public users.
- **Expanded regional efforts.** Recognizing that the management needs of different regions and fisheries can vary dramatically, MRIP was conceived as a series of regional surveys adhering to a set of rigorous national standards. In upholding that role over the past year, MRIP tested survey design improvements that had been developed based on previous studies on the Pacific Coast and in Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Ongoing Priorities

MRIP priorities for 2014 focus on continuing to catalog and test our fundamental survey designs, monitor and adjust new methodologies we have implemented in the field, and work to meet customer needs for timeliness, precision and geographic resolution. We are currently exploring:

- Shifting from telephone surveys to mail surveys for effort estimates.
- Greater use of licensing and registration information in conducting surveys.
- Options to increase reporting efficiency for the charter boat fleet.
- How to use new and emerging technologies to make catch and effort survey more efficient and user-friendly.

MRIP is grounded in the understanding that fisheries science and management is an evolving process, with new threats and opportunities constantly emerging, and that recreational data collection needs to evolve in step. As fishing and coastal communities change, surveys that are effective today will need to be revisited again in the future. MRIP is more than a static set of surveys; it's a process that enables us to keep our data collection methods as fluid and dynamic as the fisheries that they help to manage.



The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Protecting our marine resources

2203 North Lois Avenue
Suite 1100
Tampa, FL 33607
Phone: 813-348-1630
Fax: 813-348-1711



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.

Gulf Fishery News is a publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. Any material in this newsletter may be reprinted or reproduced; however, please credit the Council when reprinting articles from this newsletter.