

Gulf Fishery News

A publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council



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Red Snapper: Higher Harvest Limits on the Horizon

Lately, much of the buzz about red snapper management has been less than positive. With sector separation, ever shortening seasons, and allocation on the roster, it's easy to overlook the good news.

Here it is: The red snapper stock is getting healthier every year; fishermen, scientists, and managers alike know it, and when that happens, harvest limits can be raised.

In January, the Council's scientific advisors (the Scientific and Statistical Committee) met to review a red snapper update stock assessment. Although the assessment was completed before 2014 landings data were available, results of the assessment suggest good news. The Council could increase allowable harvest by two million pounds for 2015 and beyond. An increase from 11,000,000 pounds to 13,000,000 pounds would bring the allowable harvest to its highest level in history.

But wait, there's more. Preliminary landings data from 2014 was reported to the Gulf Council during its most recent meeting in Alabama. The provisional landings estimates for 2014 indicate that the catches last year were lower than they were in 2013. This means that more fish were left in the water in 2014 to spawn and contribute to stock biomass levels. The stock assessment scientists reviewed the 2014 provisional landings and reported that the acceptable biological catch could potentially be increased by nearly a million more pounds. However, the Council cannot use these increased projections to set 2015 quotas until its scientific advisors review the projections and approve new acceptable biological catch levels.



Photo: Joseph Cawthon

In an effort to ensure the highest catch levels possible for this year, the Council has scheduled some special meetings to make the changes necessary to increase the 2015 red snapper annual catch limit.

On February 19, 2015, the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee met to review the provisional 2014 landings and formally suggest overfishing limits and annual catch limits for 2015 and beyond. On March 3, 2015, from 1-4 pm EST, the Council will meet via webinar to review the scientific advisors' recommendations and decide on an annual catch limit for this year and potentially future years.

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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

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Doug Gregory
Executive Director

Carrie Simmons
Deputy Director

Appointed Voting Members

Pam Dana
Destin, FL
850-650-3212

Harlon Pearce
Kenner, LA
504-467-3809

John Sanchez
Homestead, FL
786-255-1880

David Walker
Andalusia, AL
334-300-6625

Greg Stunz
Corpus Christi, TX
361-825-3254

Doug Boyd
San Antonio, TX
830-230-5032

Corky Perret
Poplarville, MS
504-722-1366

Camp Matens
Baton Rouge, LA
225-769-9080

Roy Williams
Vice-Chair
Tallahassee, FL
850-445-0778

John Greene
Daphne, AL
251-747-2872

Leann Bosarge
Pascagoula, MS
228-762-0888

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
Chair
Gulf Shores, AL
251-968-7576

Roy Crabtree
NMFS SERO
727-824-5301

Non-voting Members

Glenn Constant
USF&WS
225-578-4243

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

Interested in Gaining an In-Depth Understanding of Fisheries Management?

The Gulf of Maine Research Institute is now taking applications for this year's Marine Resource Education Program. Entering its third year, MREP Southeast is an education program created by fishermen for fishermen. It specifically runs through the fisheries science and management processes, demystifies the acronyms and vocabulary, and gives fishermen the tools to engage in the tough issues facing fishery managers.

The program is offered as a series of workshops that build upon each other: a three-day Fishery Science Workshop followed by a three-day Fishery Management Workshop. Presenters are drawn from National Marine Fisheries Service, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, the Fishery Management Councils, research institutions, and the fishing community.

Participants leave the workshops prepared to engage confidently in fishery management and to critically evaluate the science affecting their fishery.

To find out more about the program or to apply for a seat in the workshops, please visit <http://www.gmri.org/our-work/fisheries-convening/mrep-southeast>.



Upcoming MREP Workshops

Fisheries Science Workshop
April 14 - 16, 2015
Hilton Bayfront
St. Petersburg, FL

Fisheries Management Workshop
Sept 22 - 24, 2015
Grand Hyatt
Tampa, FL

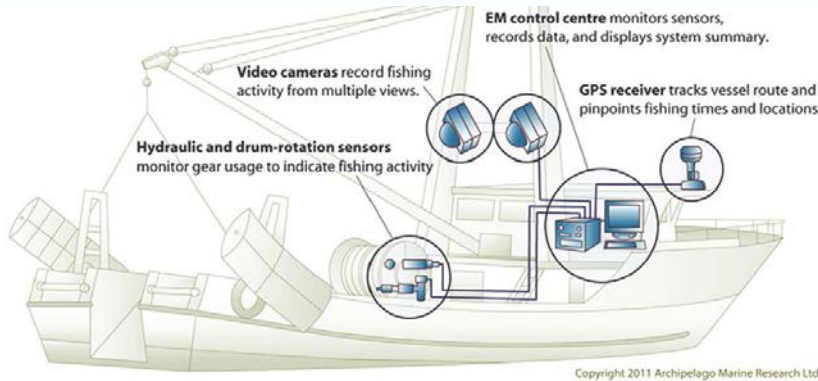


Electronic Monitoring and Reporting:

From the NOAA Fisheries Website

Using Technology to Improve our Knowledge of Fisheries

NOAA Fisheries produces world-class science to support our dual mission of maximizing sustainable fishing while achieving the greatest economic benefits to the nation. One way we accomplish this is by partnering with fishermen and other stakeholders to systematically integrate technology into our data collections and observations.



We're figuring out how technology such as on-board cameras, tablets, and electronic logbooks can be used to monitor fishing activity and report catch. One idea is to supplement human observers with digital video cameras and software capable of measuring and identifying different species of fish.

Moving from pilot to practice

NOAA Fisheries has supported over 30 pilot projects that experiment with new technologies. While we've successfully implemented a number of programs, it's time to focus on more widely integrating technology that is both cost-effective and appropriate for recording the information needed for monitoring federal fisheries.

Taking a smart approach to smart technology

We created regional plans to identify, evaluate, and prioritize implementation of promising electronic technologies that improve our knowledge of the fisheries and empower fishermen and other citizens to become more actively involved in the data collection process. [Click here to read the Southeast, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean regional plan.](#)

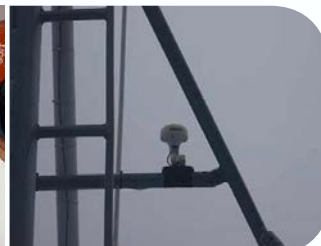
These plans are works-in-progress and part of an ongoing process to improve the timeliness and quality of our fisheries information. Aiding this process are a series of white papers, an internal policy directive, and a draft discussion paper of advice and best practices to inform the public conversation about emerging technologies in fisheries reporting and monitoring.



EM System Camera



EM System Control Box



EM System GPS

March/April Council Meeting

The next Council meeting is scheduled for the week of March 30 - April 2, 2015, at the Golden Nugget in Biloxi, Mississippi. 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.

Quick Guide to Submitting Online Comments

The Gulf Council wants your input on the many issues under consideration. You can give your input by attending scoping workshops and public hearings held around the Gulf of Mexico. But it's impossible for the Council to hold workshops or hearings in every coastal community, so if you can't make a meeting because it's too far away or because of other commitments, you can watch online presentations and submit comments electronically 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: David Payne

Send us Your Fishing Photos

We want to see your favorite fishing photos! Whether from a spearfishing 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.



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 fisheries management process, and more.

Check it out at:

<http://gulfcouncil.blogspot.com/>



Reef Fish Amendment 36 Modifications to the Red Snapper IFQ Program

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will hold a series of scoping workshops to discuss and take public comment on a proposed amendment to make modifications to the Red Snapper Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Program.

The Council is looking at a broad range of potential modifications to the Red Snapper IFQ program, including changes to the program's eligibility requirements; redistribution of shares held in inactive accounts to address regulatory discards; consideration of a full retention commercial fishery for red snapper; exploring share, allocation, and vessel caps on quota; requirements for the use of shares and/or allocation; withholding full distribution of shares in the event of an anticipated mid-year quota change; and increasing enforcement of all commercial reef fish landings. Although this action focuses on red snapper specifically, the implication of Red Snapper IFQ program changes on the Grouper-Tilefish IFQ program, and other potential issues within the Grouper-Tilefish IFQ program will also be discussed.



Photos: Kathy Hoak

See the workshop schedule below.



Photo: Mary Ochello Jackson

Can't make one of our meetings?

Don't worry, you can watch the virtual presentation on Gulf Council TV. Simply visit http://www.gulfcouncil.org/fishery_management_plans/scoping-thru-implementation.php and scroll down to Amendment 36.

Also on that page is a link to submit your comments online.

Amendment 36 - Commercial Red Snapper IFQ Modifications Scoping Workshop Schedule

Tuesday - March 10, 2015

Courtyard Marriott
142 Library Drive
Houma, LA 70360
(985) 223-8996

Thursday - March 12, 2015

Hilton Garden Inn
6703 Denny Avenue
Pascagoula, MS 39567
(228) 762-7182

Monday - March 16, 2015

Hilton Galveston Island Hotel
5400 Seawall Boulevard
Galveston Island, TX 77551
(409) 744-5000

Tuesday - March 17, 2015

Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham
501 East Goodnight Avenue
Aransas Pass, TX 78336
(361) 758-1774

Tuesday - March 17, 2015

Renaissance Mobile Riverview
Plaza Hotel
64 South Water Street
Mobile, AL 36602
(251) 438-4000

Wednesday - March 18, 2015

Hilton Garden Inn
1101 US Highway 231
Panama City, FL 32405
(850) 392-1093

Tuesday - March 24, 2015

Hilton St. Petersburg Carillon Park
950 Lake Carillon Drive
St. Petersburg, FL 33716
(727) 540-0050

All hearings begin at 6 pm local time and will conclude after public input has ended, but no later than 9 pm.

Gulf Council Seeks Applicants for Fishery Advisory Panels

Application Deadline is March 13, 2015

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is taking applications for seats on its advisory panels. Working at the grass roots level, advisory panel members provide expertise and guidance to the Council on the development and implementation of federal fishery management plans for the Gulf of Mexico.

The Gulf Council has ten advisory panels and four ad hoc advisory panels comprised of individuals who are knowledgeable about and interested in the conservation and management of the fishery resources, or who are engaged in the harvest of Gulf of Mexico managed species. Members include private anglers, charter-for-hire operators, headboat operators, commercial fishers, seafood dealers and processors, nongovernmental organizations, scientists, and concerned citizens. Membership provides individuals with an opportunity to become more directly involved in the management decision-making process. Advisory panel members are appointed by the Council and serve a two-year term. Advisory panel members generally meet no more than once or twice per year and are compensated for travel and per diem expenses. Ad Hoc panels operate in the same manner; however, these panels are temporary and are disbanded when the panel charge has been met.

Applications are now being accepted for the following panels:

- Coastal Migratory Pelagics
- Coral
- Data Collection
- Outreach & Education
- Red Drum
- Red Snapper
- Reef Fish
- SEDAR Workshop
- Shrimp
- Spiny Lobster
- Ad Hoc Artificial Substrate
- Ad Hoc Red Snapper IFQ
- Ad Hoc Red Snapper Charter For-Hire
- Ad Hoc Headboat Reef Fish

To apply, visit http://www.gulfcouncil.org/forms/Advisory_Form.php and complete the online application. Appointments are limited to a maximum of two advisory panels. Membership on Ad Hoc Panels is unlimited.

If you do not have internet access or need a paper copy of the application, please send an email to APApplicants@gulfcouncil.org, or call the Council office at 813-348.1630 to request an application. Applications must be received by March 13, 2015 for consideration by the Council during its March/April meeting in Biloxi, Mississippi.

NOTE: If you currently serve on an advisory panel you must reapply during this appointment process.



Recipe Rewind

This recipe is from the website irishfoodguide.ie, circa 1834.

"To Make a Good Chowder"

To make a good Chowder and have it quite nice
Dispense with sweet marjoram, parsley and spice:
Mace, pepper and salt are now wanted alone.

To make the stew eat well and stick to the bone,
Some pork is sliced thin and put into the pot;
Some say you must turn it, some say you must not;
And when it is brown, take it out of the fat,
And add it again when you add this and that.

A layer of potatoes, sliced quarter inch thick,
Should be placed in the bottom to make it eat slick;
A layer of onions now over this place,
Then season with pepper and salt and some mace.

Split open your crackers and give them a soak;
In eating you'll find this the cream of the joke.
On top of all this, now comply with my wish
And put in large chunks, all your pieces of fish;
Now put on the pieces of pork you have fried
I mean those from which all the fat has been tried.

In seasoning I pray you, don't spare the cayenne;
'Tis this makes it fit to be eaten by men.
After adding these things in their regular rotation
You'll have a dish fit for the best of the nation!



This old recipe's method, based on decoding the poem, goes something like this:

Ingredients

Mace, Salt, and Pepper to taste
Bacon
Red potatoes, sliced 1/4" thick
Yellow onion
Bread rolls
Cream or milk (enough to cover contents of pot)
Fish of your choice

Directions

1. Fry off some bacon till crispy. Remove and leave aside.
2. In the bacon fat, brown off some chunky-cut potatoes and sliced onions.
3. Season with pepper, salt & mace. (that bit was easy!)
4. Cut open some bread rolls into pieces and add to the pot. Cover with cream or milk.
5. Add your fish, cut in bite-size, and the crispy bacon strips.
6. Sprinkle in a generous amount of cayenne pepper and cook until the potato is soft.

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 email 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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