



Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Managing Fishery Resources in the U.S. Federal Waters of the Gulf of Mexico

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Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council June 2013 Update

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council met in Pensacola, Florida, June 17 - 21, 2013, to discuss a number of fishery issues, including several related to the management of red snapper. Here are some of the actions taken by the Council last week.

Regional Management of Red Snapper

The Council reviewed a public hearing draft of [Reef Fish Amendment 39](#) - Regional Management of Recreational Red Snapper, which examines dividing the federal recreational red snapper quota among states or regions. This division would potentially give states/regions more flexibility in choosing seasons and bag limits, but would not necessarily result in more fishing days. Under regional management, red snapper would remain a federally managed species subject to federal conservation goals, and the Council would continue to oversee management of the stock.

During its June meeting, the Council added a new preferred alternative under Action 4 that considers allowing individual regions to establish sub-allocations for the private and for-hire sectors, if they choose to do so. Default management measures were also added to the document in the event delegation is suspended or if a state chooses to not participate.

The revised document, including preferred alternatives, will be presented to the public in the coming weeks through a series of public hearings. Dates and locations will be announced soon. Comments will also be accepted online at <http://bit.ly/177mEcD>. The Council is expected to take final action on Amendment 39 as early as August, 2013.

Red Snapper Benchmark Assessment Review

The Council reviewed the SEDAR 31 Red Snapper Benchmark Assessment and the Scientific and Statistical Committee's (SSC) recommendations for Acceptable Biological Catch. After a lengthy discussion, the Council agreed to initiate a Framework Action to Establish 2013 Red Snapper Quotas and a Supplemental Recreational Red Snapper Season. A special Council meeting will be held July 17 in New Orleans, Louisiana to review and take final action on the Framework Action.

Public comment will be taken at the special Council meeting on the draft document from 9:30 am - Noon. For anyone who cannot attend the meeting, an electronic public

hearing will be published soon and written comments can be submitted by visiting <http://bit.ly/19kZFz9>.

Red Snapper IFQ Program

The Council discussed Reef Fish Amendment 36, which will address potential modifications to the red snapper Individual Fishing Quota program based on the recent 5-year review. The Council also agreed to create an Ad Hoc Red Snapper IFQ Advisory Panel to review and recommend management measures to improve the performance of the commercial red snapper IFQ program.

Data Collection

The Council approved a Framework Action for Headboat Electronic Reporting Requirements, which, if approved, will require weekly reporting by federally permitted headboat vessels in the Gulf to ensure effort, landings, and discard information of managed fish stocks are recorded accurately and in a timely manner. These revisions will help prevent overfishing and ensure ACLs are not exceeded.

The Council also reviewed a discussion document for improving private recreational data collection and decided to postpone discussions until the October 2013, Council meeting.

Amendment 28 - Red Snapper Allocation

The Council reviewed an options paper for red snapper allocation and directed staff to revise the document to incorporate the Council's preferred quota, which will be determined during the July 17, 2013, Council meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Shrimp

After discussing recommendations made by the Shrimp Advisory Panel, the Council took final action on the Abbreviated Framework Action to Establish Funding Responsibilities for the Electronic Logbook (ELB) Program in the Shrimp Fishery. The Council chose Option 3 - NMFS and industry will share the cost of the ELB program, as its preferred option. In light of the possibility that industry or the Council may secure funding from other sources, the Council agreed, should that be the case, the current ELB program contract with LGL and Associates could be continued for several years to allow for a smoother transition between the current program and the new program. The Council also requested that language be added to the document stipulating that if funding becomes available, the cost-share option would no longer be necessary and the shrimp industry will be reimbursed for their share of expenses.

The framework action will be submitted to the Secretary of Commerce for final approval and implementation.

Mackerel

The Council reviewed Amendments 19 and 20 to the Coastal Migratory Pelagic Fishery Management Plan. Amendment 19 addresses sale and permit provisions for Gulf of Mexico Spanish and king mackerel. Amendment 20 addresses season length, transit

provisions, allocation, and framework procedures for coastal migratory pelagics. A series of public hearings will be held on these two amendments before the Council's August meeting in San Antonio, Texas.

About Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional Fishery Management Councils established by the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976. The Council prepares fishery management plans, which are designed to manage fishery resources within the 200-mile limit of the Gulf of Mexico.