



Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

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

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For Immediate Release

August 22 2011

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Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Moves Forward With Reef Fish Amendment 35 - Greater Amberjack

In March 2011, the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee reviewed the latest greater amberjack stock assessment and determined it necessary to adjust the acceptable biological catch (the sustainable harvest level used to set the upper limit on the range of potential annual total allowable catch). The Scientific and Statistical Committee recommended the acceptable biological catch be set at 1.78 million pounds whole weight. The current total allowable catch, which is effectively the stock annual catch limit, is 1.871 million pounds whole weight.

The current total allowable catch of 1.871 mp established in Amendment 30A exceeds the acceptable biological catch recommended by the Scientific and Statistical Committee so the Council is looking at options to adjust the current stock annual catch limit (total allowable catch). During its August meeting, the Council considered the following actions and selected a preferred alternative for one action:

1. Adjust Annual Catch Limits based on the Scientific and Statistical Committee recommendations. **The Council selected (Preferred Alternative 3 Option b.** Modify the rebuilding plan for greater amberjack and set the ACL = ABC = 1,780,000 pounds ww and set the ACT = 1,539,000 pounds ww).
2. Consider adding trip limits to the commercial sector and possibly modify the fixed closed season. **No Preferred Alternative has been selected.**
3. Consider changing the fixed recreational closed season (currently June and July); adjusting the minimum size limit, and exploring proportional bag limits. **No Preferred Alternative has been selected.**

Greater Amberjack has been under a rebuilding plan since 2003 after a stock assessment determined it was overfished. The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires overfished stocks be rebuilt within 10 years, and that deadline is quickly approaching.

Public hearings on this amendment will be held later this year. Details will be posted at www.gulfcouncil.org. To view the current draft document, visit www.gulfcouncil.org/news_resources/scoping_documents.php. If you wish to submit comments, please visit www.gulfcouncil.org/council_meetings/RF35GAJ.php.

