



# Gulf Fishery News

Volume 29, Issue 2

April-May, 2006

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## Ad Hoc Shrimp Effort Working Group

Congratulations to the following individuals:

Charles Caillouet, Jr.  
John Cole  
Wilson Gaidry, III  
Benny Gallaway  
Wade Griffin  
Rick Hart  
Walter Keithly, Vice Chair  
Sherry Larkin  
James Nance, Chair  
Michael Travis

The Ad Hoc Shrimp Effort Working Group will provide the Council with alternatives for determining the appropriate level of effort in the shrimp fishery in the EEZ.

The Council is specifically looking for the minimum level of effort necessary to achieve optimum yield in the shrimp fishery and what level of effort would derive the maximum benefits to the shrimp fishery.

The group will convene April 27-28, 2006 and May 23-24, 2006 at the NMFS Galveston laboratory, Galveston, Texas. For more information, or for copies of meeting agenda, please call 813-348-1630.

## The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council *Protecting our marine resources*

### IFQ referendum overwhelmingly approved

After spending nearly six years in development, Reef Fish Amendment 26, which establishes an IFQ system for commercial red snapper received resounding approval from eligible voters. While the Department of Commerce will have the final say in whether or not the measure is approved, 87% (weighted) of those who returned a ballot voted in favor of the IFQ amendment.

“We’re tired of wasting fish,” said David Krebs of Destin, Florida, adding that “VMS and a quota system is the only way we’re going to save the fishery”

At its March meeting, the Gulf Council voted to forward Reef Fish Amendment 26 to the Secretary of Commerce for review and consideration.

Under the IFQ system, individual quotas will be assigned based on historical landings. It

is hoped that working under an IFQ system will increase product quality by improving fishing and handling methods, as well as reduce by-catch by allowing fishermen greater flexibility in operations.

“We [commercial fishermen] stepped up, identified problems, and went forward with ways to address those problems,” said Donald Waters, a commercial fisherman from Pensacola, Florida.

IFQs often create an incentive for fishermen to conserve the resource by giving them a long-term interest in the health and productivity of the fishery.

“We won’t be racing out there for ten days trying to wipe out everything that’s out there,” said Krebs.

If approved by the Secretary of Commerce, the IFQ program will become effective in 2007.

### Ad Hoc Grouper IFQ Advisory Panel sets preliminary goals

The Ad Hoc Grouper IFQ Advisory Panel (AHGIFQAP) held its first meeting in February to begin assembling a broad list of recommendations regarding the scope and general configuration of a Dedicated Access Privilege (DAP) system for the commercial grouper fishery.

Staff presented to the Council at its March meeting the results of the panels discussion, which includes an initial set of goals for a grouper IFQ program.

The Council took no formal action on the goals, instead agreed the panel should continue with its work and approved an additional four work sessions for the AHGIFQAP. The group will meet between Council meetings and provide regular updates to the Council.

An IFQ program for grouper is under consideration because current regulations to control effort are forcing inefficiency in the grouper fishery.

*(See page 10 for the list of goals)*

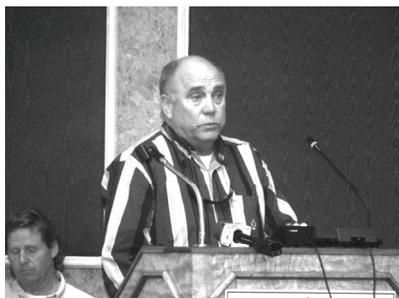
## Joint reef fish amendment 27/shrimp amendment 14 moves forward

After hearing more than two hours of public comment, followed by a lengthy debate, the Council refined a draft options paper on proposed Reef Fish Amendment 27/Shrimp Amendment 14.

The majority of those who spoke during open public comment spoke in reference to the amendment and commented on everything from size limits, to boundary lines, to bycatch reduction devices.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita weighed on everyone's mind as the Council deliberated a list of potential alternatives to address the overfishing of red snapper.

"There are just as many boats on land as there are in the water," said Corky Perret, Vice Chair of the Gulf Council, referring to the decline in participation in the shrimp fishery since the 2005 Hurricane season.



Captain Mike Thierry of Dauphin Island, Alabama addresses the Council during its March open public comment session

The joint amendment proposes to reduce directed and incidental fishing mortality on the red snapper stock and to manage effort in the shrimp fishery to prevent excessive bycatch of juvenile red snapper.

As part of that amendment, a list of actions and possible alternatives were presented to the Council. Included in the document are actions to set the directed red snapper harvest; reduce bycatch in the directed red snapper fishery; modify the bycatch reduction criterion for bycatch reduction devices; control/reduce effort in the penaeid shrimp fishery to reduce bycatch of red snapper; and restrict shrimp fishing if a cap on effort in the number of days fished in the EEZ is reached.

The Council requested additional analyses on yield per recruit and effort in order to develop more appropriate sub options on effort caps.

A public hearing draft will be presented to the Council at its June meeting, where the Council will select a slate of preferred alternatives before the document goes out for public hearing.

A round of public hearings is tentatively scheduled along the gulf coast between July 20—July 27, 2006. Please see the meeting schedule on page 9 for more details.

## Testing shows gulf fish safe to eat

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced recently that analyses of the second and third round of toxicology survey results from Gulf water, marine species, and sediment samples show no elevated toxins of bacteria from last year's hurricanes.

Samples were tested for toxins, such as PCBs, pesticides, and fire retardants that might have been released into the marine ecosystem after hurricane flooding. All samples showed the levels of those compounds to be well below federal guidelines for safe seafood consumption.

Samples were also tested for *E. coli* and other bacteria. None of the samples harbored the bacteria, though other *Vibrio* bacteria that normally inhabit the marine environment were found.

Survey results are consistent with similar findings recently announced by the FDA, EPA, and the States of Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama, which concluded Gulf seafood is safe to eat. NOAA will continue to

sample Gulf waters to detect trends or changes that might occur.

Another NOAA survey shows that Hurricanes Katrina and Rita did not cause a reduction in fish or shrimp populations in offshore areas of the Gulf of Mexico.

"Marine life in the Gulf of Mexico is resilient and well-adapted to the natural environment," said Bill Hogarth, Director of NOAA Fisheries Service.

"We had some concerns about the possible impacts of the Gulf hurricanes on fish and shrimp populations in the region, particularly in wetlands and nursery areas, but we've found that the fish stocks withstood the country's most devastating natural disaster," he added.

Hogarth also noted that there have not been any reported fish die-offs in the Gulf due to the hurricanes, and that the reduction in fishing activities since the hurricanes could be a contributing factor to the population increase for some of the shorter-lived species.

## Grouper allocation issues discussed

The Council's Socioeconomic Panel met in March to review the issue of grouper allocation between the recreational and commercial sectors and to recommend socioeconomic models and other information the Council should use in evaluating those allocations.

The Gulf Council, during its March 20—23, 2006 Council meeting, heard a presentation by staff outlining the SEPs recommendations. Chief among them was that a cost-benefit approach be used to analyze potential allocation decisions.

In evaluating allocation changes between competing sectors, a cost-benefit analysis provides a comparison of net benefits between user groups. Net benefits derived from a resource are equal to the difference between the economic value of the resource and its costs. The economic value of a resource corresponds to the maximum amount that users are willing to pay for the resource.

“The sector with the highest net benefits is the one that gets the most out of its spending,” said Assane Diagne, an economist for the Gulf Council.

From an economic standpoint, an optimal resource allocation maximizes total net benefits derived from the

resource use. Social effects and distributional impacts of allocation changes are among the additional criteria considered by fisheries managers.

The panel also recommended that the Council request the Southeast Fishery Science Center provide the information to update the LEM model for application to immediate and future allocation and bio-economic needs. The LEM model is a bio-economic simulation model capable of evaluating the effects of a variety of regulatory measures including recreational bag limits, commercial gear restrictions, TAC allocation changes, recreational and commercial season length and size limits.

The model was developed by Dr. Lee Anderson of the University of Delaware under the sponsorship of NMFS' Office of Science and Technology.

Finally, the SEP requested authorization to form a work group to examine the possible social impacts of any change in allocation. The Council honored that request and a work group will soon be formed.

Grouper allocation between sectors became an issue last year when the Council began developing a regulatory amendment to aid in the recovery of that fishery.

## Frequently used acronyms

<b>ABC</b>	Acceptable Biological Catch	<b>MSY</b>	Maximum Sustainable Yield
<b>AP</b>	Advisory Panel	<b>MRFSS</b>	Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey
<b>BRD</b>	Bycatch Reduction Device	<b>NMFS</b>	National Marine Fisheries Service
<b>CPUE</b>	Catch Per Unit Effort	<b>OY</b>	Optimum Yield
<b>EEZ</b>	Exclusive Economic Zone	<b>SEDAR</b>	Southeast Data, Assessment and Review
<b>EFH</b>	Essential Fish Habitat	<b>SSC</b>	Scientific and Statistical Committee
<b>FMP</b>	Fishery Management Plan	<b>SFA</b>	Sustainable Fisheries Act
<b>GSMFC</b>	Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission	<b>TAC</b>	Total Allowable Catch
<b>HAPC</b>	Habitat Area of Particular Concern	<b>TED</b>	Turtle Excluder Device
<b>HMS</b>	Highly Migratory Species	<b>VMS</b>	Vessel Monitoring System
<b>IFQ</b>	Individual Fishing Quota		

## NOAA removes goliath grouper from species of concern list

Beginning in the late 1970s up until the early 1980s, the goliath grouper population showed a decline in abundance and range, leading to the 1990 prohibition of harvest and possession by both the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's, as well as by the state of Florida.

NOAA Fisheries Service in 1991, identified goliath grouper as a candidate species under the Endangered Species Act. Goliath was later transferred, along with 24 other candidate species, to NOAA's



courtesy NOAA

species of concern list where it has remained since the list was created in April 2004.

In March, NOAA Fisheries Service announced the removal of goliath grouper from its species of concern list.

The action is based on a recent status report showing that protective management measures have resulted in an increased abundance of goliath grouper throughout its range - Bermuda and the Carolinas down through the coast of Brazil, including the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea.

"This is becoming a success story," said Dr. Roy Crabtree, Regional Administrator for NOAA Fisheries Service's Southeast Regional Office.

"Federal and state conservation and regulatory measures have

prevented elevation of the species to the endangered or threatened status," he added.

The largest of the western Atlantic Ocean groupers, goliath can reach a maximum length of eight feet, weigh up to 880 pounds, and live for more than 35 years. Mangrove habitat is thought to be the primary habitat for juveniles, while adults are found on artificial reefs, bridges, overhangs, piers, and shipwrecks.

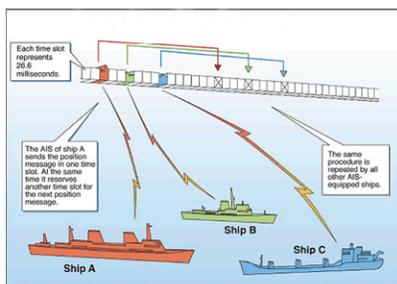
While the goliath stock remains overfished under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, a 2004 SEDAR assessment reports that the stock in south Florida waters, at least, is recovering. The assessment, however, does not predict a full recovery until 2020 or beyond. Meanwhile, recreational and commercial harvest of goliath grouper is still prohibited.

## U.S. Coast Guard expands Automatic Identification System requirements

The U.S. Coast Guard has announced plans to expand requirements of its Automatic Identification System to include commercial fishing vessels 65 feet or greater.

While commercial fishing vessels operating in a vessel traffic service area already are required to carry the system, the rule change will expand that requirement to include commercial fishing vessels 65 feet or greater.

Not to be confused with VMS, or vessel monitoring systems used as a fisheries management and enforcement tool, AIS is a shipboard broadcast system used as a



USCG graphic

collision avoidance and Vessel Traffic Service tool.

The proposed rule is an expansion of the Coast Guard's maritime domain awareness, or MDA, and will aid in reducing threats and vulnerability of the U.S. Maritime Transportation System (MTS).

A notice in the Federal Register dated October 31, 2005 states that "...it is clear that a terrorist incident against our MTS would have a disastrous impact on global shipping, international trade, and the world economy."

Cost of the units is estimated to be between \$2,500 and \$7,000 and will be the responsibility of vessel owners.

For more information on AIS, visit the U.S. Coast Guard's web site at <http://www.navcen.uscg.gov> and click on *Navigation Rules*.

## Gulf of Mexico fishery closures

### Recreational Closures:

#### Red Grouper

Per Interim Rule effective August 9, 2005, and the subsequent extension of that rule, Red grouper bag limit reduced from 2 to 1, and count as part of the 5-grouper aggregate.

Interim rule bag limit provisions were extended on January 19, and are effective through July 22, 2006 or until replaced by permanent rule, whichever comes first.

#### Red Snapper

The recreational fishery for red snapper closed at 12:01 a.m., EST, on November 1, 2005 and will remain closed until 12:01 a.m., EDT, April 21, 2006.

### Commercial Closures:

#### King Mackerel

The commercial hook-and-line fishery for king mackerel in the EEZ in southern Florida west coast subzone is closed effective 12:01 am, March 12, 2006, until 12:01 am, July 1, 2006. The NMFS has determined that the commercial quota of 520,312 pounds for Gulf group king mackerel for vessels using hook-and-line gear in the southern Florida west coast subzone has been met. The closure is necessary to protect the Gulf king mackerel resource.

The commercial fishery for Gulf group king mackerel in the western zone is closed, effective 12:00 noon, EST, November 17, 2005, through June 30, 2006. The western zone extends from the U.S./Mexico border to the Alabama/Florida boundary.

During the closure, no king mackerel caught in the closed zone/subzone may be purchased, bartered, traded, or sold. This includes recreational and tournament caught fish.

A person aboard a vessel that has a valid charter/headboat permit for coastal migratory pelagic fish may continue to retain king mackerel in or from the closed zone/subzone under the 2-fish daily bag limit, provided the vessel is operating as a charter vessel or headboat. Charter vessels or headboats that hold a commercial king mackerel permit are considered to be operating as a charter vessel or headboat when carrying a paying passenger or when more than three persons are aboard, including operator and crew.

#### Vermilion Snapper

The commercial fishery for vermilion snapper in Gulf of Mexico federal waters will close at 12:01 a.m., local time, on April 22, 2006 and remain closed until midnight, local time, on May 31, 2006. Closure of the vermilion snapper fishery complies with regulations implemented under Amendment 23 of the Reef Fish FMP and is necessary to protect the vermilion snapper resource.

## Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Wayne Swingle      Richard Leard  
Executive Director      Deputy Director

### Appointed Voting Members

DeGraaf Adams, III Richmond, TX (832) 476-5608	Julie Morris Sarasota, FL (941) 359-4527
Karen Bell Cortez, FL (941) 794-1249	Robert Shipp Mobile, AL (251) 460-6351
William Daughdrill Panama City, FL (850) 814-5468	Walter Thomassie Golden Meadow, LA (985) 396-2636
Myron Fischer Cut-Off, LA (985) 632-4525	Bobbi Walker Orange Beach, AL (251) 981-6159
Joseph Hendrix, Jr. Houston, TX (281) 597-1620	Kay Williams Vanceleave, MS (228) 826-2160
Philip Horn Pascagoula, MS (228) 762-4511	

### State/Federal Voting Members

Robin Riechers, Chair Austin, TX (512) 389-4645 Designee for Larry McKinney	Vernon Minton Gulf Shores, AL (251) 968-7576
Corky Perret, Vice Chair Biloxi, MS (228) 374-5000 Designee for William Walker	Karen Foote Baton Rouge, LA (225) 765-2383 Designee for John Roussel
Roy Williams Tallahassee, FL (850) 487-0554 Designee for Ken Haddad	Roy Crabtree St. Petersburg, FL (727) 570-5301

### Non-voting Members

Sam Hamilton USF&WS (404) 679-4000	Larry Simpson GSMFC (228) 875-5912
Radm Robert Duncan Eighth Coast Guard District (504) 589-6223	David Hogan Foreign Affairs Officer (202) 647-2335

## Vice-Chair Corky Perret receives Gulf Guardian Award

BILOXI, Miss. – The Gulf of Mexico Program recognized Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR) Office of Marine Fisheries Director William S. “Corky” Perret with a Gulf Guardian Award for 2005 in the Individual Category on March 28 at the Harte Research Institute in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Perret, who is also the Vice-Chair of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council has strived throughout his career to lead as an example through his unwavering efforts in fisheries management and that has spanned almost four



DMR Office of Marine Fisheries Director William S. “Corky” Perret is recognized with a Gulf Guardian for 2005 in the Individual Category .

decades between Mississippi and Louisiana. His recognized accomplishments and vast knowledge on a state, regional and national level make him a pioneer in the field of marine resource management within the Gulf of Mexico.

As a testament to his efforts he is recognized throughout the Gulf as a leader in the areas of shrimp, finfish, and oyster management. Perret uses a diverse approach to fisheries management that includes resource enhancement, habitat restoration and stabilization, and conservation of coastal wetlands.

“Corky’s knowledge and understanding of fisheries issues and opportunities is vast,” said DMR Executive Director William Walker. “He is a ‘can do’ individual who has accomplished great things for Mississippi and for the nation. Corky is a true asset to the Department of Marine Resources and is most deserving of this prestigious award.”

The Gulf of Mexico Program initiated the Gulf Guardian awards in 2000 as a way to recognize and honor the businesses, community

groups, individuals, and agencies that are taking positive steps to keep the Gulf healthy, beautiful and productive.

The Gulf of Mexico Program began in 1988 to protect, restore, and maintain the health and productivity of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem in economically sustainable ways. Award entries were received from Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. First, second, and third place awards are given each year in six categories – individual, business, youth and education, nonprofit organizations, government, and partnership efforts.

“This year’s Gulf Guardian Award winners encapsulate the essence of the Gulf of Mexico Program and our efforts to attain environmental solutions in concert with economic growth,” Gulf of Mexico Program Office Director Bryon O. Griffith said.

“Environmental successes are exponential when you bring the resources of many to the table, as the 2005 winners have so successfully demonstrated,” Griffith added.

## Updated fishing regulations now available



The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council now has available copies of the latest recreational and commercial fishing regulations.

Copies can be obtained by contacting the Gulf Council at 813-348-1630, or by sending an e-mail request to [charlene.ponce@gulfcouncil.org](mailto:charlene.ponce@gulfcouncil.org). Copies may also be downloaded from our web site by visiting [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org) and clicking on *Fishing Rules*.

## The Gulf Council bids farewell to three members

The Gulf Council bids farewell to three members—Kay Williams, Myron Fischer, and Karen Bell.

**K**ay Williams, who is finishing up her third three-year term on the council, began participating in the Council process back in 1992 as spokeswoman for a commercial fishing lobbying group, Save America's Seafood Industry. She was also president of a commercial fishing industry group. She



served on three Advisory Panels to the Council before being appointed in 1997. During her tenure on the Council, she has served as its Chair and Vice-Chair.

“Kay has been a hugely effective Council member. The time she committed to reviewing documents,

consulting with fisherman and scientists, and attending meetings contributed to her influence.

“She also provided leadership on Council administrative improvements,” said Julie Morris, Gulf Council Member.

**M**yron Fischer is also winding up his third three-year term. Fischer, a graduate of Marine Biology, has been licensed by the USCG since 1976 and has spent his life on the water honing his talents.



In addition to his service on the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, Fischer has fished all the states on the Gulf Coast, and has also journeyed up the East Coast to Ocean City, fished numerous ports in the

Bahamas, the North Drop off of St. Thomas, and Mexican Waters from Isla Mujeres to Tulum.

“Myron Fischer has brought an extraordinary background to the Council - years of on the water offshore charterboat experience combined with being a trained marine biologist make his input broad in scope and expertise,” said Karen Foote, Council member.

“He doesn't shy away from the hard issues and has developed compromises that are in the best interest of the fisheries of the Gulf of Mexico,” she added.

Fischer is a Charter boat business owner and has represented the recreational fishing sector.

**K**aren Bell began her term on the Council in August, 2000, and will be completing her second three-year term. She has elected not to seek reappointment.

Bell, a seafood dealer and restaurateur from Cortez, Florida, comes from a tradition of commercial fishing that her family has been a part of since the late 1800s. Today the family continues to operate a commercial fish house which was established in Cortez around 1940.



“As a Council member, Karen combined a thorough working knowledge of commercial fishing with a strong commitment to protecting the social and cultural values of historic fishing communities. In many difficult reef fish discussions, Karen's comments reflected honesty and open-mindedness,” said Morris.

Williams, Fischer, and Bell will attend their final meeting in June.

## NOAA Fisheries Service to hold coral conservation workshops

Based on the proposed rule to list Elkhorn and staghorn corals as threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, NOAA Fisheries Service seeks input from resource users and resource managers to identify programs and activities that may affect the species.

Additionally, information pertinent to identifying physical and biological features essential for conserving the species and identifying possible areas to designate as critical habitat will also be collected.

Information gathered during these workshops will be considered in the development of any future conservation measures.

For more information, contact Sara Heberling or Jennifer Moore at 727-824-5312.

### Workshop Schedule

May 8, 2006	International Game & Fish Assoc. 300 Gulf Stream Way Dania Beach, FL	May 9, 2006	Holiday Inn—Ramada—Marina Del Mar 99701 Overseas Highway Key Largo, FL
		May 10, 2006	Marathon Government Center 2798 Overseas Highway Marathon, FL
		May 11, 2006	Harvey Government Center 1200 Truman Avenue Key West, FL
		May 23, 2006	St. Croix Curriculum Center 2133 Hospital Street Christiansted, St. Croix
		May 24, 2006	Holiday Inn Windward Passage Veterans Drive Charlotte Amelie, St. Thomas
		May 25, 2006	Jardin Botanico—Barrio Venezuela Intersection of Rt. 1 and Rt. 847 Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico

## Commerce approves amendments—NMFS requests comments

The Department of Commerce has given approval of several fishery management plan (FMP) amendments affecting the Gulf of Mexico.

### Reef Fish Regulatory Amendment

This regulatory amendment establishes more permanent management measures for the recreational grouper fishery, which are needed to prevent or minimize increases in fishing mortality on gag and black grouper.

This rule establishes a red grouper recreational bag limit of one fish per person per day, prohibits captain and crew of a charter boat from retaining any Gulf grouper, and establishes February 15—March 15 seasonal closure for gag, red, and black grouper.

Comments will be accepted until May 1, 2006. Contact [0648-AU04.Proposed@noaa.gov](mailto:0648-AU04.Proposed@noaa.gov) with 0648-AU04 in the subject line.

### Shrimp Amendment 13

Amendment 13 was developed to address several issues, including the need to collect information of areas fished, effort, catch per unit effort, etc., in the royal red shrimp fishery, giving managers and scientists additional data to better manage the fishery.

This amendment establishes an endorsement to the existing federal shrimp vessel permit for vessels harvesting royal red shrimp; bycatch reporting methodologies and improve collection of shrimping effort data in the EEZ; and a moratorium on the issuance of commercial shrimp vessel permits.

The amendment also defines maximum sustainable yield (MSY), optimum yield (OY), the overfishing threshold, and the overfished condition for royal red and penaeid shrimp stocks in the Gulf for stocks that currently lack such definitions.

Completion of a Gulf Shrimp Vessel and Gear Characterization Form, as well as reporting and certification of landings during a moratorium are also required.

Comments will be accepted until May 22, 2006. Contact [0648-AS15.proposed@noaa.gov](mailto:0648-AS15.proposed@noaa.gov) with 06480AS15-proposed in the subject line.

### CMP Amendment 17/Reef Fish Amendment 25

This amendment establishes a limited access system in the for-hire reef fish and coastal migratory pelagic fisheries in the EEZ that continues to cap participation at the current level, and was necessary to prevent the industry from reverting to an open access system, causing an increase in fishing mortality.

Comments will be accepted until April 24, and April 27 respectively. Contact [0648-AS70.NOA@noaa.gov](mailto:0648-AS70.NOA@noaa.gov) with 0648-AS70.NOA in the subject line.

## Why use circle hooks?

Circle hooks—what are they and why should we use them?

A circle hook is a special hook designed to slide towards the point of resistance and embed itself in the jaw or in the corner of the fish's mouth after it's swallowed. The curved shape of the hook keeps it from catching in the gut cavity or throat.



The unique shape of the circle hook helps prevent gut-hooking

There are many benefits to using circle hooks, which have been used by commercial fishermen for decades. First, the hook sets itself when the line is reeled in. Because of its design, the result is fewer gut-hooked fish. This means a predicted higher survival rate.

Circle hooks also result in a better fighting fish. Fish hooked in the corner of the mouth tend to fight better than fish that are gut-hooked. Also, with the hook in the corner of the mouth, the line is generally out of the way of the fishes teeth, therefore, the use of a lighter leaders is possible.

Circle hooks can be used on any species of fish caught on hook and line. Here are some guidelines on how to use a circle hook:

- ◆ For bottom fishing, once a fish eats the bait, allow time for the fish to completely swallow the hook before steadily reeling in the line. DO NOT attempt to set the hook by sharply jerking the rod as this will pull the hook out of the fish's mouth.
- ◆ For trolling, it is best to attach the hook to the bait with a runner bank or waxed string. This allows the hook to hang freely above the bait.
- ◆ For live bait, simply hook the bait through a fleshy part of the fish. This allows the bait to tear loose when the fish strikes.

For more information on circle hooks, read *Circle Hooks: A Catch & Release Phenomenon* at [www.catchandreleasefound.org/fishstory6.html](http://www.catchandreleasefound.org/fishstory6.html).

**TENTATIVE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE  
GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
The Quorum Hotel  
Royal Palm Ball Room  
Tampa, FL  
June 5–7, 2006**

**Monday, June 5, 2006**

**1:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.**

Administrative Policy Committee (**Tab F**)

- SSC recommendations on SSC Operations section of SOPPs
- Proposed NMFS Operating Agreement for Regulatory Streamlining (IPTs)
- Staff Communications Plan
- Congressional Bills on Reauthorization of M-SFCMA

**Tuesday, June 6, 2006**

**8:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon**

Joint Reef Fish/Shrimp Management Committees and Standing SSC (**Tab C**)

- Report on Decline in Effort for Selected Fisheries (Donaldson/NMFS)
  - Report of the Ad Hoc Shrimp Effort Task Group (Nance)
  - Public Hearing Draft Amendment (Reef Fish 27/Shrimp 14)
- recess -

**1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

Shrimp Management Committee (**Tab D**)

- Listing of Near-Shore Areas Where Juvenile Red Snapper are Congregated
- Update of Shrimp Amendment 15 Preliminary Options Paper

**4:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.**

Joint Reef Fish/Mackerel/Red Drum Committees (**Tab E**)

- GSMFC Presentation on Siting of Aquaculture Facilities
  - Update on actions for Drafting the Aquaculture Amendment
- recess -

**Wednesday, June 7, 2006**

**8:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon**

Reef Fish Management Committee (**Tab B**)

- Report of the Ad Hoc Grouper IFQ AP
- Report of SEP Work Group on Grouper Allocation Amendment
- Monitoring Report on Madison/Swanson and Steamboat Lumps (Gledhill)  
Red Snapper IFQ Stakeholders Meetings (McKinney)

**Conference Call Meeting Prior to Council Meeting SEDAR Committee (Tab H)**

- Nomination of SEDAR 12 (red grouper) Panel Members

**TENTATIVE COUNCIL AGENDA  
GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
The Quorum Hotel  
Royal Palm Ball Room  
Tampa, FL  
June 5–7, 2006**

**Wednesday, June 7, 2006**

- I. Call to Order and Introductions – Riechers (1:30 p.m. – 1:35 p.m.)
- II. Adoption of Agenda – Riechers (1:35 p.m. – 1:40 p.m.)
- III. Approval of Minutes (**Tab A**) – Riechers (1:40 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.)
- IV. Implications of NRC Review of Recreational Data Collection (Tab G) - Crabtree (1:45 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.)
- V. Public Testimony <sup>1 2</sup> - Riechers
  - a. Exempted Fishing Permits (EFP) (if any) (2:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.)
- VI. Open Public Comment Period<sup>2 3</sup> - Riechers (2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.)
- VII. Committee Reports
  - a. Administrative Policy (**Tab F**) - Morris (3:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m.)
  - b. SEDAR Committee (**CLOSED SESSION**) (**Tab H**) - Riechers (4:30 p.m.–5:30 p.m.)

**Thursday, June 8, 2006**

- VII. Committee Reports—**Continued**
  - b. SEDAR Committee (**Tab H**) - Riechers (8:30 a.m.–8:45 a.m.)
  - c. Joint Reef Fish/Shrimp Management (**Tab C**) – Minton/Perret (8:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.)
  - d. Joint Reef Fish/Mackerel/Red Drum Committees (**Tab E**) - Minton/Fischer/Perret (11:15 a.m.–11:30 a.m.)

- recess -

  - e. Shrimp Management Committee (**Tab D**) - Perret (1:00 p.m.–1:30 p.m.)
  - f. Reef Fish Committee (**Tab B**) - Minton (1:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m.)
- VIII. Other Business (**Tab K**) - Riechers (2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.)
  - a. See Tabs O, P, Q, and R for Written Reports

<sup>1</sup>Persons wishing to testify must turn in a registration card before the beginning of the public testimony period.

<sup>2</sup>Persons wishing Council members to have copies of written testimony or information should provide 30 copies to staff for distribution to members. All written information shall include a statement of the source and date of such information. Oral or written statements shall include a brief description of the background and interests of the person testifying.

<sup>3</sup>The Council has set aside this time for open public comment regarding any fishery issue or concern. People wishing to speak before the Council should complete a public comment card, making sure to check the box marked *Open Public Comment*.

## AHGIFQAP goals for a grouper IFQ program

At its first meeting the Ad Hoc Grouper IFQ Advisory Panel adopted the following goals for a grouper IFQ program:

1. Multi species IFQ for the entire grouper fishery.
2. Protect participation of small-scale fishermen, and maintain geographical distribution of participation.
3. Eliminate bycatch.
4. Develop flexibility and dynamic regulations, and eliminate regulations that reduce flexibility.
5. Ensure a year-round fishing season.
6. Maintain infrastructure to maintain the integrity of the industry.
7. Base IFQ on catch per unit of effort (CPUE).
8. Prevent monopolies.
9. Improve abundance of grouper stocks so TACs can be increased.
10. Create opportunities for young fishermen to enter the industry.
11. Improve safety at sea.
12. Foster improved relations between sectors, including environmentalists, commercial fishermen, and recreational fishermen.
13. Improve ability to make business decisions; improve financial gains; prevent in-season adjustments that could affect business plans.

The AP is comprised of representatives of vertical line, longline and multi-species/multi-gear fishermen, and dealers. Members are assisted by non-voting members with expertise in economics, fishery science, and law enforcement.

## AHGIFQAP Membership

Pam Baker  
 Glen Brooks  
 James Clements  
 Ken Daniels  
 William Deadrick  
 Martin Fischer  
 Doug Gregory  
 Donald Leal  
 Ed Maccini  
 Tom Marvel  
 Dave McKinney  
 Dr. Ken Roberts  
 Eric Schmidt  
 Ed Small  
 Bob Spaeth  
 Susan Steingress  
 Bill Tucker  
 Donald Waters

## Rebuilding overfished stocks

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council has in place eight rebuilding programs for overfished stocks in the Gulf of Mexico. Following is a list of those plans with a brief status of each.

### Gulf-Group King Mackerel

This rebuilding program was initiated in 1984 by emergency rule and regulatory amendments. The stock was successfully restored by 2004.

### Gulf Red Drum

Amendment 2 implemented in June, 1988, prohibited harvest or possession of Red Drum from the EEZ. Individual states are restoring the stock by allowing up to 30% of each year class to escape to the EEZ spawning stock.

### Red Snapper

Amendment 1, the initial rebuilding plan, was implemented in January,

1990. Amendment 22 revised the rebuilding plan and was implemented in July, 2005. A new stock assessment was also completed in July 2005, and indicates the stock remains overfished. Amendment 27, which will adjust TAC, is currently under development and expected to be completed in 2006.

### Goliath Grouper

Amendment 2 prohibiting harvest or possession of Goliath Grouper within the Gulf EEZ was implemented June 21, 1990. Amendment 18B, which will provide new stock assessment and rebuilding plan, is currently under development and expected to be completed in 2006/2007. See related article on Goliath Grouper, page 4 of this newsletter.

### Nassau Grouper

Amendment 14 prohibiting harvest

or possession of Nassau Grouper within the Gulf EEZ was implemented March 25, 1997.

### Greater Amberjack

Secretarial Amendment 2, rebuilding plan for greater amberjack, was approved June 17, 2003. A new stock assessment will be completed in 2006.

### Red Grouper

Secretarial Amendment 1 rebuilding plan for red grouper was implemented July 15, 2004. A new stock assessment is due out in 2006. Regulatory amendment for revising rebuilding plan for recreational and commercial fisheries submitted to NMFS in 2005.

### Vermilion Snapper

Amendment 23 was implemented July 8, 2005. A new stock assessment will be completed in 2006.

## Tentative Public Hearing Schedule

### Joint Reef Fish Amendment 27/Shrimp Amendment 14

Ft. Myers, FL	July 20, 2006
Abbeville, LA	July 24, 2006
Mobile AL	July 24, 2006
Brownsville, TX	July 24, 2006
Chauvin, LA	July 25, 2006
Pascagoula, MS	July 25, 2006
Corpus Christi, TX	July 25, 2006
Belle Chase, LA	July 26, 2006
Orange Beach, AL	July 26, 2006
Palacios, TX	July 26, 2006
Tampa, FL	July 27, 2006
Panama City, FL	July 27, 2006
Galveston, TX	July 27, 2006

Public input is a necessary and valued part of the amendment process. It offers the public an opportunity to have ideas heard and possibly included as alternatives presented to the Council for consideration. Therefore, the Council strongly encourages public participation. Please contact the Gulf Council at 813-348-1630 for more information on how you can become part of the process.

*See related story, page 1*

## WWF Smartgear Contest Update

The World Wildlife Fund's second International Smart Gear Competition has received 83 entries from 26 countries covering all continents, up roughly 60 percent from last year.

The contest seeks innovative fishing gear that reduces marine bycatch—the accidental catch and related deaths of marine mammals, birds, sea turtles and non-target fish species in fishing gear such as nets and longlines.

Judges will convene in Washington DC April 20-21 and are looking for most practical, cost-effective methods for reducing bycatch of any species.

Winners will be announced at the European seafood Show in Brussels on Thursday, May 11, 2006. The grand prize winner will receive \$25,000. Two runners-up will receive a \$5,000 prize.

## NRC recreational fisheries survey methods report available

The National Research Council recently made public its review of recreational fisheries survey methods. The report is in response to a request from the National Marine Fisheries Service for a review of the methods currently used to collect and analyze recreational marine fisheries data for application to fisheries management.

Survey methods, particularly the Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey (MRFSS), have been criticized by anglers for years. The NRC review found that those criticisms are justified.

“Both the telephone and access components of the current approach have serious flaws in design or

implementation and use inadequate analysis methods that need to be addressed immediately,” the NRC report reads.

MRFSS is a large-scale regional survey used to evaluate the sustainability of recreational fisheries, as well as the effectiveness of regulations. While it has been a valuable data collection tool for more than 25 years, the NRC report includes a recommendation that it be completely redesigned.

Some of the general recommendations made by the NRC include:

- ◆ Redesigning the MRFSS to improve the effectiveness and appropriateness of sampling and estimation procedures.

- ◆ Achieve a greater degree of standardization among state surveys and between state surveys and the central MRFSS.
- ◆ For-hire sector marine recreational fisheries should be considered a commercial sector and should be reflected in the survey methods and reporting requirements.

Other recommendations dealt with sampling issues, program management and support, education and outreach, as well as others.

To read more about the NRC Review of Recreational Fisheries Survey Methods, please visit <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/11616.html>.

## GMFMC wants your news and views

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 are encouraged to do so. Submissions may be mailed to Charlene Ponce, Public Information Officer, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607. Materials can also be sent via fax to 813-348-1711, or e-mail; [charlene.ponce@gulfcouncil.org](mailto: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 of 1976. 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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*Protecting our marine resources*

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