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# GULF FISHERY NEWS

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JANUARY - FEBRUARY/MARCH - APRIL 1998

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*GULF FISHERY NEWS is a publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council for persons interested in the Gulf's fishery resources. Editor: Steven Atran.*

Note: There was no issue of *Gulf Fishery News* published following the January Council meeting due to time constraints. This issue summarizes events from both the January and March Council meetings.

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## REEF FISH

BULLETIN - NMFS IMPLEMENTS SHRIMP TRAWL  
BRDS, AND REDUCES RED SNAPPER BAG LIMIT TO  
4 FISH

NMFS, April 9, 1998 - The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has agreed to adopt Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) recommendations regarding the use of Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRDs) in most Gulf of Mexico shrimp nets which should save millions of juvenile red snapper and other finfish from

being caught in shrimp trawls. NMFS officials also have agreed to retain the Council's total allowable catch

### NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

May 11-15, 1998  
Sandestin Beach Hilton  
4000 Sandestin Boulevard South  
Destin, Florida 32541  
(850) 267-9500



recommendation of 9.12 million pounds subject to scientific verification of a BRD efficiency of 60 percent. NMFS officials will conduct a vigorous, observer-based research program to measure the performance of BRDs, the distribution of red snapper, shrimping effort, and other issues, the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced today.

The BRD provides a small opening in the top of the shrimp trawl for red snapper and other finfish to escape while retaining nearly all of the shrimp catch. Most offshore Gulf of Mexico shrimpers will be required to install BRDs in their nets within 30 days, NMFS officials announced today. The rule announced today should be published in the Federal Register within the next day or so, officials said.

Since 1991, red snapper bycatch has been the focus of a major cooperative research program which led to the Council's 1997 decision to require BRDs on most trawls used by the offshore Gulf shrimp fleet. In addition, red snapper research has been the target of a number of recent independent scientific reviews including one required under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and two by the Council's scientific committees. Each review concluded that the Gulf's red snapper stock is severely overfished. Each review recommended that shrimp trawl bycatch be reduced and the TAC for the directed red snapper fisheries be reduced to no more than 6 million pounds.

The Shrimp fishery has achieved a 10 percent reduction in bycatch since 1994 from declines in fishing effort in the areas contributing most of the bycatch. However, additional bycatch reduction is needed for the red snapper fishery to recover. The Council noted that if an additional shrimp bycatch reduction of at least 45 percent could be achieved in 1998, and increased to 60 percent or more by 2001, a total allowable red snapper catch of 9.12 million pounds could be maintained. Consequently, at its January 1998 meeting the Council voted to maintain the current TAC of 9.12 million pounds.

"We recognize that shrimpers are concerned that the fisheye BRD, the only currently approved BRD design, may lose some of the shrimp catch," said Andrew Kemmerer, administrator of the Fisheries Service's Southeast Region. "Agency gear specialists have been working in close cooperation with the shrimp industry to develop soon to be approved alternative designs that will prevent the loss of any shrimp. In fact, the shrimp industry has had the lead in writing the cooperative bycatch research plan, overseeing the research, helping us deploy observers on cooperating shrimp trawlers, and conducting BRD research."

"In conjunction with the implementation of this rule, NMFS will conduct a four-month, intensive research effort utilizing 2,000 observer days at sea to test the effectiveness of BRDs at reducing the mortality of juvenile

red snapper. The research will conclusively determine the effectiveness of BRDS under actual operating conditions. The effort will begin on May 1 and focus on providing a statistically valid estimate of BRD bycatch reduction under operational conditions, said Kemmerer. According to Kemmerer, observers will be hired to obtain samples while deployed on randomly selected shrimp vessels; port agents will be added to expand the agency's ability to monitor red snapper and shrimp landings; and other research related to shrimping effort, red snapper life history, and bycatch will be conducted.

"If this critically important research effort is to succeed, we'll need extensive cooperation from shrimpers and recreational red snapper fishermen," said Kemmerer. "We again look forward to working closely with shrimpers, as we did throughout the BRD project. I'm confident that this study will put to rest most of the controversy regarding the assessments, peer reviews, and a host of other questions related to red snapper bycatch and the overall health of the Gulf's red snapper stock.

NMFS has issued an interim rule which divides the 1998 red snapper fishing year into two seasons: January through August, and September through December. While the 1998 TAC will remain at the current 9.12 million pounds, only 6.0 million pounds will be released for harvest during the January 1 through August 31 period. The remaining portion of the TAC, 3.12 million pounds, will be released for harvest on September 1, 1998 if NMFS is able to validate a reduction in the juvenile red snapper bycatch mortality in shrimp trawls of at least 60 percent. If the research demonstrates that the bycatch mortality reduction is more than 50 percent, but less than 60 percent, a portion of the remaining 3.12 million pounds will be released proportional to the efficiency of the BRDs, i.e., for each additional 1% of bycatch reduction above 50%, NMFS will release 10% of the remaining TAC.

The interim rule will also reduce the current recreational red snapper bag limit from 5 to 4 fish. This bag limit reduction is expected to become effective about May 14.

Under the current TAC of 9.12 million pounds, the commercial red snapper industry receives 51 percent of the quota. Their season is divided into two parts with the spring portion allocated 3.06 million pounds and the fall portion the remaining part of the total 4.65 million pound commercial quota. The spring portion begins February 1 while the fall portion begins September 1. If the remaining 3.12 million pounds of the 1998 TAC are not released for harvest, the fall commercial season would be canceled.

The recreational fishery bag limit for red snapper, based on 1997 catch levels, will be set at 4 fish per day to ensure that the season will continue into at least mid-September or early October if the TAC level is reduced to 6 million pounds. Under the higher quota, the recreational season would extend through December.

**COUNCIL PROPOSES RED SNAPPER STATUS QUO TAC FOR 1998**

At its January meeting in Point Clear, Alabama, the Gulf Council proposed retaining the red snapper total allowable catch (TAC) at its current level of 9.12 million pounds, with 51 percent (4.65 million pounds) allocated to the commercial quota and 49 percent (4.47 million pounds) allocated to the recreational quota. This proposal has been conditionally accepted by NMFS (see preceding article). The Council also proposed setting a zero bag limit for the captain and crew of for-hire recreational vessels under this TAC, in order to help extend the recreational quota season. The TAC has been at this level since 1996. The proposal for status quo exceeds the range of allowable biological catch (ABC) of 3 to 6 million pounds recommended by the Council's Reef Fish Stock Assessment Panel (RFSAP).

The RFSAP's ABC recommendation was closely tied to the level of shrimp trawl bycatch reduction that can be expected once regulations requiring the use of bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) are implemented. At the minimum legal requirement of 44 percent bycatch reduction from BRDs, the red snapper TAC would have to be reduced to 3 million pounds in order for the stock to reach 20 percent SPR by the target year of 2019. If a 60% bycatch reduction were achieved, the recovery could be accomplished with a 9 million pound TAC. The RFSAP assumed that a 60 percent bycatch reduction would not be achieved, and therefore set the upper limit of the ABC range at 6 million pounds.

The Council disagreed with the RFSAP's assumption. BRDs currently being tested are achieving bycatch reduction rates of 60 percent, and possibly even higher. NMFS BRD expert John Watson testified to the Council that once BRDs are required, an initial bycatch reduction of 50 percent was a reasonable estimate, and that over time, higher rates would be possible.

Analyses by NMFS stock assessment biologists indicates that, even if only a 45 percent bycatch reduction from BRDs is achieved in the first year, with a gradual increase in effectiveness to 60 percent reduction by 2001, the 20 percent SPR target in 2019 is achievable with a 9 million pound TAC.

Because scenarios that the Council considers realistic show that a red snapper recovery is possible without the need to reduce TAC, and because of concern about the certainty of severe social and economic disruption to both the recreational and commercial fisheries if the TAC were reduced, the Council voted to retain the existing TAC.

As can be seen, the decision on where to set TAC is heavily dependent on assumptions about the implementation and effectiveness of BRDs. The National Marine Fisheries Service has approved and is implementing regulations to require the use of BRDs, and

is implementing a monitoring program to evaluate the effectiveness of the BRDs.

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**PRELIMINARY PROJECTIONS FOR RED SNAPPER RECREATIONAL QUOTA HARVEST IN 1998**

At the January Council meeting, NMFS presented the Council with a preliminary projection of 1998 red snapper recreational harvest under various levels of TAC and bag limits. These projections assumed that fishing patterns will be similar to the average for 1995-1997, and that there will be an increase in the average weight of recreationally caught red snapper in the range of 0 to 10 percent over 1997. As data from recreational fishing surveys becomes available during 1998, these estimates will be revised.

Under the status quo 9.12 million pound TAC (4.47 million pound recreational quota):

- 5 fish bag limit - closure projected between mid-October and mid-December
- 4 fish bag limit - no closure projected

Under a 6 million pound TAC (2.94 million pound recreational quota):

- 5 fish bag limit - closure projected in mid to late August
- 4 fish bag limit - closure projected between mid-September and early October
- 3 fish bag limit - closure projected between end of October and end of November
- 2 fish bag limit - no closure projected

The proposed zero bag limit for captain and crew of for-hire vessels is projected to extend the recreational red snapper season by approximately two weeks. The Council has asked that this measure be approved only if the status quo 9.12 million pound TAC is approved, since this is the only level of TAC at which the zero bag limit proposal has a chance to avert a recreational quota closure under a 5 fish bag limit.

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**REEF FISH AMENDMENT 16 SPLIT, FINAL ACTION ON 16B SCHEDULED FOR MAY**

A power outage during the March Council meeting in Duck Key, Florida, combined with extended discussion on fish trap issues, resulted in the Council addressing only the fish trap section of proposed Reef Fish Amendment 16. As a result, Amendment 16 has been split in two. Amendment 16A contains the Council's proposed actions on fish trap issues, and is being forwarded to NMFS for their review, approval and implementation. See the following article for a summary of Council proposals regarding fish traps. Amendment 16B contains the remaining issues from Amendment 16. Final action on

these issues will be taken at the next Council meeting in Sandestin, Florida, May 11-15, 1998, with public testimony scheduled for Wednesday, May 13. Issues in Amendment 16B include:

**SECTION 7.0 - MINOR AMBERJACK MANAGEMENT MEASURES**

**Section 7.2.1 - Minor Amberjack Size Limits**

The following were all selected as Preferred Alternatives:

Set a slot limit for the recreational fishery of 14 inches to 20 inches fork length for banded rudderfish and lesser amberjack.

Set a slot limit for the commercial fishery of 14 inches to 20 inches fork length for banded rudderfish and lesser amberjack.

Prohibit the sale of lesser amberjack and banded rudderfish less than the commercial minimum size limit for greater amberjack.

**Section 7.2.2 - Banded Rudderfish and Lesser Amberjack Bag Limits**

Preferred Alternative: Set an aggregate bag limit of 5 fish for banded rudderfish and lesser amberjack.

**SECTION 8.0 - SPECIES LISTED AS NOT IN THE MANAGEMENT UNIT**

No Preferred Alternative. The alternatives in this section are: 1) Remove sand perch, dwarf sand perch, and queen triggerfish from the Reef Fish FMP, 2) Move hogfish into the list of species in the management unit, 3) Remove the distinction in the Reef Fish FMP between species in the management unit and those in the fishery but not in the management unit, or 4) Status quo - leave the list of species in the fishery but not in the management unit as is.

**SECTION 9.0 - FLORIDA COMPATIBLE SIZE LIMITS**

No Preferred Alternative, but delete gray snapper from the list of subject species. Proposed size limits are 20 inches for scamp and yellowmouth grouper, 16 inches for mutton snapper, and 12 inches for blackfin snapper, cubera snapper, dog snapper, mahogany snapper, schoolmaster, silk snapper, mutton snapper, queen snapper, gray triggerfish, and hogfish.

**SECTION 10.0 - FLORIDA COMPATIBLE BAG LIMITS**

Preferred Alternative - Adopt the following recreational bag limits for the entire Gulf EEZ: a) Include the red snapper bag limit as part of the snapper aggregate bag limit (currently 10), and b) hogfish - 5 fish.

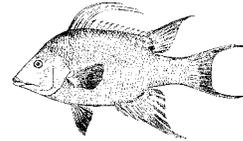
**SECTION 11 - SPECKLED HIND AND WARSAW GROUPE**

Preferred Alternative - Set a recreational bag limit of 1 speckled hind and 1 warsaw grouper per person, to be included within the grouper aggregate bag limit.

**SECTION 12 - REVISIONS TO THE FRAMEWORK PROCEDURE FOR SETTING TAC**

The Council voted to delete this section.

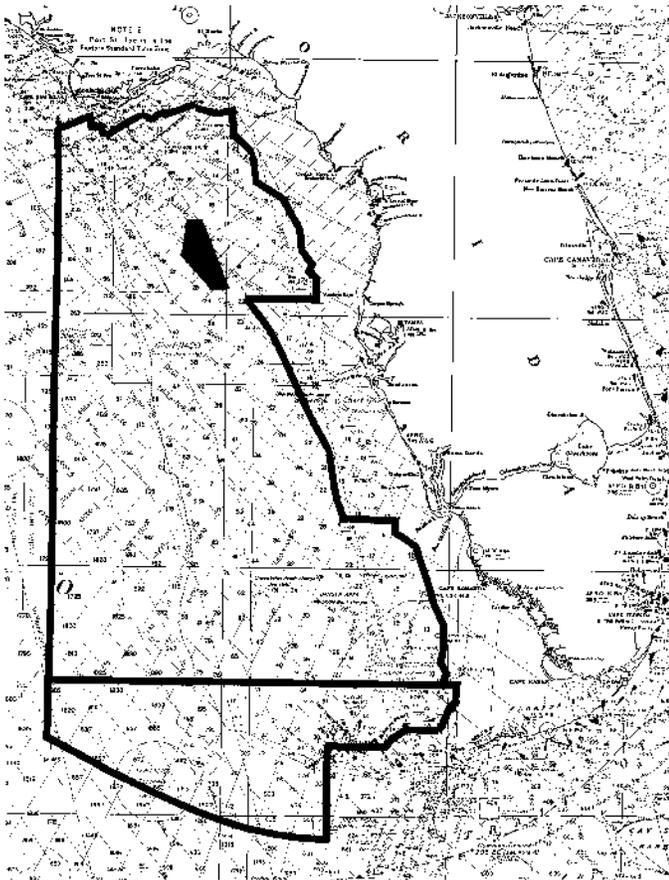
The Public Hearing Draft Reef Fish Amendment 16 is currently available from the Council office, and Amendment 16B, which is a subset of Amendment 16, will be available in May.



**SHORTER FISH TRAP PHASE-OUT PROPOSED FOR FLORIDA KEYS AND ADDITIONAL FISH TRAP REGULATIONS AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS PROPOSED UNDER REEF FISH AMENDMENT 16A**

Fish traps will be banned after February 7, 2001 from federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico south of 25.05 degrees north latitude, under a proposed revision to the fish trap phase-out. In the remaining areas where fish traps are allowed, the phase-out will continue until the existing February 7, 2007 termination date. The demarcation line for the shorter phase-out area corresponds approximately to Cape Sable, the southernmost point of the Florida peninsula. The Council chose this action for a shorter phase-out under Reef Fish Amendment 16 after hearing testimony from enforcement officers and fishermen that fish trap enforcement problems exist in the waters off of south Florida, particularly in the area of the Dry Tortugas. Similar enforcement problems have not been reported from the remaining fish trap areas.

Fish traps are currently allowed in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico east of Cape San Blas, Florida and seaward of the stressed area boundary, which is generally the 10-fathom contour from the Dry Tortugas northward to Sanibel Island, the 20-fathom contour from Sanibel Island to Tarpon Springs, and the 10-fathom contour from Tarpon Springs to Cape San Blas. Outside of this area the use of fish traps is prohibited. In addition, traps and other bottom type fishing gears (bottom longline, bottom trawl, and pots) are prohibited from an area known as the Florida Middle Grounds Habitat Area of Particular Concern.



*Allowed fish trap areas. Fishing with lawfully permitted fish traps is allowed in the Gulf of Mexico EEZ, from the outer boundary of the Stressed Area westward to 85°30' west longitude, until February 7, 2007. The lower area is where traps are proposed to be phased out after February 7, 2001. The black spot in the upper area is the Florida Middle Grounds Habitat Area of Particular Concern, where traps are currently prohibited.*

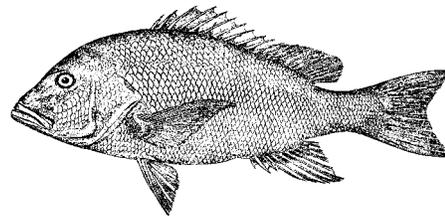
In an effort to improve enforceability of fish trap regulations, the Gulf Council has also proposed several additional new measures in addition to a shorter phase-out period for the south Florida region.

- Vessels fishing spiny lobster or stone crab traps that have reef fish permits can continue to retain commercial quantities of reef fish. However, the possession of reef fish exhibiting the condition of “trap rash” on board any such vessel is prima facie evidence of illegal trap use and is prohibited except for vessels possessing a valid fish trap endorsement. This proposal is intended to allow reef fish permitted vessels to hook and line for reef fish on the same trip on which spiny lobster or stone crab traps are being used, but prevent the use of such traps to target reef fish and circumvent current fish trap restrictions.

- Fish trap vessels will be required to submit trip initiation and trip termination reports, detailing the time and point of departure, number of traps deployed, latitude and longitude for the center of the area where the traps are deployed, duration of trip, fish dealership where catch is offloaded and sold, and notification of any lost traps or

traps left deployed for any reason. Prior to implementation of this reporting requirement, there will be a one month period during which each fish trap fisherman will be required to have an appointment with NMFS enforcement for the purpose of having his trap gear, permits and vessel available for inspection. This proposal is intended to increase the efficiency of enforcement contacts with fish trap fishers and to better insure that all fish traps that are deployed are properly constructed and deployed.

- NMFS will develop a system to require implementation of an electronic vessel monitoring system (VMS) for vessels engaged in the fish trap fishery, with the costs of the vessel equipment, installation, and maintenance to be paid or arranged by the owners. Prior to implementation, the system would have to be approved by the Council. The implementation of the VMS would be done through a proposed and final rule.



**COASTAL PELAGICS**

**FINAL ACTION ON MACKEREL AMENDMENT 9 POSTPONED, JOINT MEETING WITH SOUTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL AND FLORIDA SCHEDULED**

The Gulf Council had intended to take final action on proposed Coastal Pelagics (Mackerel) Amendment 9 at its March meeting in Duck Key, Florida. However, this FMP is administered jointly by the Gulf Council and the South Atlantic Council. The South Atlantic Council was expected to take its final action at its March meeting, held a week prior to the Gulf Council meeting. Instead, the South Atlantic Council deferred final action due to differences in preferred alternatives between the two Councils regarding the sale of recreationally caught fish, retention and sale of cut-off (damaged) fish, and minimum size limit of king mackerel. Because some of the alternatives affecting Gulf group mackerel would have implications to the South Atlantic Council’s area of jurisdiction and Florida’s state waters, the Gulf Council supported meeting with representatives of these groups to attempt to reach a consensus. This meeting is scheduled for Friday, May 15, 1998, which is prior to the June 1998 meeting of the South Atlantic Council where final action is expected to be taken on the amendment.

Although final action was not taken, the Gulf Council continued its review of the draft amendment at its January

1998 meeting, and again at its March meeting. Based on previous comments received from the South Atlantic Council, comments received at a series of public hearings held during February, and recommendations of the Council's advisory panels and Scientific and Statistical Committee, the Council removed alternatives dealing with Gulf Council action on Atlantic migratory group king and Spanish mackerel. The Council also approved adding an alternative that would base potential splits in the allocation of TAC for the west coast of Florida on historical landings for the period 1980 through 1992. This alternative was added to other alternatives that base the allocation of TAC on both earlier and later landings scenarios. On another matter, the Council approved a request by the South Atlantic Council to resubmit a portion of Amendment 8 that had been rejected by NMFS. This measure would allow the use of drift, or sink nets, north of Cape Lookout, North Carolina. The South Atlantic Council has subsequently decided not to resubmit this measure.

As a result of the January and March reviews, the Council approved the following preferred alternatives:

Section 2.1 Fishing Year - The Council maintained as the preferred alternative Section 2.1.4 - Status Quo - Recreational fishing year begins January 1, and commercial fishing year begins July 1 of each year.

Section 2.2 Sale of King and Spanish Mackerel - The Council maintained as the preferred alternative Section 2.2.2, Option a - Prohibit the sale of Gulf group king and Spanish mackerel by all persons fishing under the recreational allocation (bag limits), including charter and head boat operators. The Council also added a provision that any fish that is caught by a recreational fisherman be counted only against the recreational quota, regardless of its disposition.

Section 2.3 Reallocations of TAC for the Commercial and Recreational Sectors for Gulf Group King Mackerel - The Council approved as preferred alternatives Section 2.3.1 - Reallocate the percentage of the commercial allocation of TAC for the North and South/West Areas of the Eastern Zone (the east coast and west coast of Florida, respectively) to 45% North and 55% South/West; and Section 2.3.3 - Increase the recreational allocation from the current 68% of TAC to 70%; however, all catches/landings by the for-hire sector shall be counted against the recreational allocation only.

Section 2.4 Subdivision of the Commercial Hook-and-Line King Mackerel Allocation of TAC for the Gulf Group, Eastern Zone, South/West Area (Florida West Coast)

into Subzones by Area - The Council voted to maintain the preferred alternative - Subdivide the commercial hook-and-line king mackerel allocation for the Gulf group, Eastern Zone, South/West Area by establishing 2 subzones. However, the Council elected to change the preferred option for a dividing line between the 2 subzones to the Sarasota/Charlotte County line.

Section 2.5 Establish Regional Allocations of TAC for the Commercial Hook-and-Line King Mackerel Fishery in the South/West Area of the Eastern Zone (Florida West Coast) based on the Historical catches from the Subzones Identified in Section 2.4.1 - The Council approved a change in the preferred alternative to establish regional allocations of TAC for the west coast of Florida with up to 30% of the TAC being allowed from Subzone 2 as indicated in Section 2.4.1.

Section 2.6 Subdivision of the Commercial King Mackerel Allocation of TAC for the Gulf Group, Western Zone - The Council selected as the preferred alternative. Status Quo - do not subdivide TAC in the Western Zone.

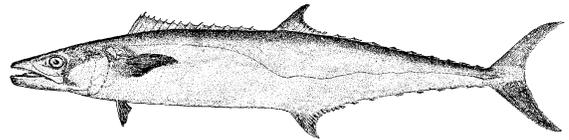
Section 2.7 Establish Trip Limits for Commercial Vessels Fishing for Gulf Group King Mackerel in the Western Zone (AL/TX) - The Council approved as the preferred alternative to establish a trip limit of 3,000 pounds per vessel per trip for the Western Zone.

Section 2.8 Restrictions on the Use of Net Gear to harvest King Mackerel in the South/West Area of the Eastern Zone (Florida West Coast) - The Council continued to support an alternative to establish a moratorium on the issuance of additional king mackerel gill net endorsements based on historical participation criteria and to limit transferability of gill net endorsements to immediate family members (son, daughter, father, mother, or spouse) only.

Section 2.9 Size Limits - The Council established as the preferred alternative to increase the minimum size limit for Gulf group king mackerel from 20 inches to 24 inches fork length (FL).

Section 2.10 Establish a Purse Seine Allocation for Gulf Group Spanish Mackerel - The Council approved as the preferred alternative, Status Quo - do not allow a purse seine allocation of TAC for Spanish mackerel.

Section 2.11 Retention and Sale of Cut-Off (Damaged) Fish - The Council voted to establish a preferred alternative to allow the retention and sale of cut-off (damaged) legal-sized king and Spanish mackerel within established trip limits.



The Council will also receive additional public testimony on Amendment 9 at its May 1998 meeting, and the Council could make additional changes to its preferred alternatives at that meeting. Final action by the Gulf Council could be taken in May or July 1998.

**SHRIMP AND CRABS**

**TEXAS AND LOUISIANA SHRIMP FISHERY REVIEWED**

NMFS biologist Dr. James Nance reviewed the 1997 shrimp fishery at the January Council meeting. Texas' offshore production for May through August was the lowest since the inception of the Texas seasonal closure in 1981. The dominant sizes of brown shrimp caught off Texas were 31-40 count and 51-67 count, whereas off Louisiana, most of the catch was smaller than 67 count. Dr. Nance concluded that: 1) Environmental factors in Texas predicted an above average harvest for the 1997-98 fishing year, 2) 15 percent of the catch was larger than 67 count and actual brown shrimp catches off Texas were below average, 3) the increase in yield (pounds) as a result of the Texas seasonal closure was between 10 and 31 percent, 4) distribution of shrimp landings during the Texas closure was similar to previous years, and 5) white shrimp catches were well below average in July but above average in August. Based on the estimated benefits of the Texas closure, the Council recommended maintaining the cooperative, 200-mile closure with the state of Texas for 1998.

The Council also recommended that NMFS and Texas jointly sponsor a workshop to improve the efficiency of the Texas seasonal closure, including cooperative closures of state and federal waters. The workshop will include representation from the shrimp industry as well as individuals with expertise in other areas of the Gulf.

**COUNCIL OPPOSES DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY IN PROPOSED DOLPHIN-WAHOO FMP TO SOUTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL**

As a precursor to establishing a joint fishery management plan for the management of wahoo and dolphin, a Federal Register notice was published by NMFS on March 9, 1998 (Volume 63, Number 45) regarding a request by the South Atlantic Council. The action being contemplated is the designation of the South Atlantic Council as the lead regional fishery management council to prepare an FMP and subsequent amendments for dolphin, *Corphaena hippurus*, and wahoo, *Acanthocybium solanderi*, throughout their range in the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea. Such a designation would include coordination with the other affected regional fishery management councils (Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, Mid-Atlantic, and New England Councils); however, only actions by the South Atlantic Council would be considered for review, approval, and implementation of management programs.

The Gulf Council previously reviewed this request of the South Atlantic Council and indicated support for the development of management measures for dolphin (currently included in the joint Coastal Migratory Pelagics FMP for which the Gulf Council is the lead) and the development of a FMP for wahoo. The Gulf Council's support for this coordinated effort was contingent on the Gulf Council maintaining authority to develop, approve, and recommend management alternatives for these species in the Gulf Council's area of jurisdiction. Consequently, the Gulf Council objected to the proposed management structure indicated in the referenced notice. The Gulf Council has supported a management structure that would allow the Gulf Council to develop and approve management programs for fisheries that occur in its area of jurisdiction.

The Gulf Council has requested an extension of the comment period on the Federal Register notice through June 1, 1998. This extension would allow the Council an opportunity to consider the request more fully at the upcoming May 11-15, 1998 Council meeting.

**NEWLY DEVELOPED SOFT TED AUTHORIZED FOR USE DURING 18-MONTH TRIAL PERIOD**

A new soft turtle excluder device (TED), designed to allow threatened and endangered sea turtles to safely escape shrimp fishermen's nets, while providing an additional option to shrimpers, has been approved for an 18-month trial period by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

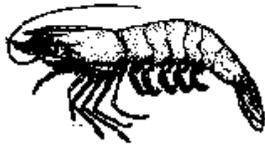
This interim rule allows shrimpers the option of immediately using a new soft TED design --- the Parker soft TED. Previously approved soft TEDs were disallowed in areas of high sea turtle abundance off the coasts of Texas, Louisiana, Georgia, and South Carolina on March 1, 1997, and were disallowed throughout the rest of the southeast region on December 19, 1997, because of an increased occurrence of sea turtle strandings believed to

be attributable in part to soft TED use in these areas. NMFS worked closely with industry representatives during 1997 to address identified problems with soft TEDs and to develop new soft TED designs for testing. The approval of the Parker soft TED resulted from these efforts.

To ensure that the Parker soft TED is effective under commercial fishing conditions, NMFS has developed an enforcement operations plan, an observer program, and a soft TED manufacturer's training program.

The Parker soft TED does not use the slack, large mesh webbing that is known to cause turtle entanglements in previously approved soft TEDs. Instead, the Parker soft TED consists of a single triangular panel, composed of webbing of two different mesh sizes, that form a barrier for turtles inside a trawl and that angles toward an escape opening in the top of the trawl. The Parker soft TED was tested in a variety of trawl sizes and styles. During testing, the Parker TED successfully excluded 100 percent of the turtles introduced into the trawl, and is especially adaptable under certain environmental conditions; shrimp loss was approximately 9 percent.

The Parker TED will be approved for permanent use only if the enforcement and observer data verify the effectiveness and correct use of this TED under commercial fishing conditions.



### **STONE CRAB VESSEL REGISTRATION MORATORIUM EXTENDED**

Stone Crab Amendment 6 was approved by the Council and forwarded to NMFS for implementation at the January Council meeting. This amendment extends the moratorium on registration of commercial stone crab vessels for up to 4 years duration. The original moratorium was implemented through Amendment 5 for the period April 15, 1995 - June 30, 1998, for compatibility with a Florida state moratorium on issuance of permits while the industry considered development of a limited access system. Under the Stone Crab FMP, vessels fishing for stone crab in federal waters must be registered by either the appropriate federal or state agency. The stone crab fishery is essentially a Florida fishery. However, legislative action by the state of Florida to establish a limited access system may be delayed beyond the current June 30, 1998 expiration date for the current moratorium. This extension will allow time for the state legislation to be implemented and for the Council to develop an amendment instituting the program in the EEZ.

### **COUNCIL TO DEVELOP A BIOLOGICAL PROFILE ON THE RED AND GOLDEN CRAB FISHERY**

In January, the Gulf Council reviewed a request from the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) to develop a fishery management plan for red and golden crabs. These deep water crabs (red crabs are found at depths of 370 to 570 fathoms, and golden crabs at depths of 170 to 270 fathoms) take 10 to 15 years to reach maturity and may live in excess of 30 years. These characteristics make the stock extremely vulnerable to overexploitation. At present, there are believed to be only two vessels engaged in the deep water crab fishery in the Gulf of Mexico. However, the South Atlantic Council has developed an FMP for golden crab in Atlantic waters that provides for limited access and a quota, and potential exists for expansion of the Gulf of Mexico fishery. The Council directed its staff to work with the GSMFC to develop a biological profile on the deep water crab complex and gather information as to the extent of effort in this fishery.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **COUNCIL TO FILL VACANCIES ON REEF FISH, CRUSTACEAN, AND MARINE RESERVE SCIENTIFIC PANELS**

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council at its May 11-15, 1998 meeting in Sandestin, Florida will fill one vacancy each for its Reef Fish Stock Assessment Panel and Crustacean Stock Assessment Panel. In addition, it will complete the selection of members for an Ad Hoc Marine Reserves Scientific and Statistical Committee. The stock assessment panels are comprised of biologists knowledgeable about population dynamics and stock assessments who meet periodically to review stock assessments or other biological information on species under management by the Council. The Ad Hoc Marine Reserves SSC will be comprised of biologists, economists, sociologists, and legal experts with a knowledge of the use and impacts of marine reserves from their areas of expertise. This SSC is expected to meet one time in 1998, to assist Council staff with development of criteria for establishing marine reserves in the Gulf of Mexico, and development of a scoping document for future presentation at public workshops. Positions on these committees are unpaid, but travel expenses are reimbursed by the Council.

Persons wishing to be considered for these vacancies should send a resume by May 1, 1998 describing their background to Trish Kennedy at the Gulf Council, 3018 U.S. Highway 301 North, Suite 1000, Tampa, Florida 33619-2266. Applications may also be faxed (813-225-7015) or e-mailed (trish.kennedy@gulfcouncil.org).

## **NEW MINIMUM SIZES FOR ATLANTIC BILLFISH ESTABLISHED**

The National Marine Fisheries Service has established new minimum sizes for Atlantic blue marlin and Atlantic white marlin--two species of billfish--as part of an international commitment to reduce marlin landings by at least 25 percent.

The 1997 recommendation by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the body that recommends international fishery management measures for member countries, also called for improvements in current billfish monitoring, data collection, and reporting procedures.

NMFS manages Atlantic billfish in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea. Species included in this group include: blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*), white marlin (*Tetrapturus albidus*), sailfish (*Istiophorus platypterus*), and longbill spearfish (*Tetrapterus pfluegeri*)

The billfish species are highly migratory and are subject to fishing pressure from many nations. NMFS works with other members of the ICCAT to implement international conservation and management measures for these species.

At its November 1997 meeting, ICCAT recommended that landings of blue marlin and white marlin be reduced by at least 25 percent (from 1996 levels) starting in 1998. This action by NMFS implements those recommendations for U.S. domestic fishermen.

Minimum sizes are based on the 1994-1996 size distribution of recreational landings. The minimum size limit for Atlantic blue marlin is 96 inches (measured lower jaw-fork length-LJFL), with the minimum size for Atlantic white marlin set at 66 inches (LJFL). Currently, only recreational landings are allowed for U.S. fishermen. All commercial bycatch must be released at sea. No Atlantic billfish may be purchased, bartered, traded, or sold in any state.

Atlantic blue marlin and white marlin were identified as overfished by the Fisheries Service in September 1997. Atlantic blue marlin and white marlin stocks are estimated to be at 24 percent and 23 percent, respectively, of the biomass levels needed for maximum sustainable yield.

This regulatory action also requires mandatory registration of all Atlantic highly migratory species tournaments. Those people conducting a tournament involving score keeping or awards for Atlantic highly migratory species (whether or not retained), must register their tournament with the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center: attn: "Tournament Registration", 75 Virginia Beach Drive, Miami, FL 33149. The registration must be in writing, at least four weeks prior to commencement of tournament fishing. A tournament registration form is available upon

request from the above address or can be requested from NMFS by FAX (305-361-4219).

Some tournament operators will be selected by NMFS to submit a record of catch and effort to the agency. If selected, tournament operators are required under the Magnuson-Stevens Act to report the information to the Fisheries Service. Completed forms must be submitted to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, attn: Eric Prince, postmarked not later than the seventh day after the conclusion of the tournament, and must be accompanied by a copy of the tournament rules.

For further information about the new requirements, contact Buck Sutter at the NMFS Southeast Regional Office, (813-570-5447).

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## **LIMITED ENTRY IN THE RECREATIONAL FOR-HIRE INDUSTRY BEING CONSIDERED**

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is considering whether there is a need to impose additional management measures limiting entry into the recreational for-hire fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico EEZ; and if there is a need, what management measures should be imposed. In both the red snapper and king mackerel fisheries, the recreational sector, including recreational for-hire vessels, has frequently exceeded the allocations set for that sector when TAC is set annually. To prevent the recreational sector from exceeding its allocation, the Council must either reduce the bag limits or take some other action to reduce the effort and/or landings, e.g. seasonal closures, increased size limits, etc. Reduction of the bag limits is the most effective way to control landings, but such reductions have adverse economic impacts on the recreational-for-hire vessels. When the bag limit is reduced to a lower level some of the clientele of these vessels cease to fish and pay for fishing trips. The Council is, therefore, considering limited entry or other effort limitation programs for recreational-for-hire vessels.

The Council has learned from public input that a portion of the charter/headboat industry supports limiting access. If development of a limited entry program is initiated, the Council will publish notice of a control date, which is intended to discourage new entry into the fisheries based on economic speculation during the Council's deliberations on the issues.

The recreational-for-hire fisheries, other than highly migratory species (sharks, billfish, swordfish, and tuna) in the Gulf of Mexico EEZ are managed by the Council under the Reef Fish FMP and the Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources FMP. The highly migratory species are managed by NMFS. The Council has asked NMFS whether it would be possible to include vessels fishing for highly migratory species in a control date notice. If NMFS provides a positive response, then the Council, should it

decide to proceed, will publish a control date notice that applies to all recreational-for-hire fisheries within the Council's area of jurisdiction, including the highly migratory species. If NMFS indicates that the control date notice cannot be applied to the highly migratory species, then the notice, if published, will apply only to Council managed fisheries.

and Wildlife Service letter. Thank you for the opportunity to express our concerns to you.

Sincerely,

Maumus F. Claverie, Jr.  
Chairman

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### **COUNCIL REITERATES OPPOSITION TO FENHOLLOWAY RIVER PIPELINE PROJECT**

The Council has previously sent two letters to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection expressing concern over the proposal to build a pipeline to divert industrial effluent from the Buckeye paper mill in Perry, Florida to a point in the Fenholloway River further downstream in order to improve water conditions in the upper portion of the river. After reviewing a letter from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection expressing concern about the impact of this proposal on the lower portion of the Fenholloway River and estuary, the Council approved sending the following letter to Mr. John Hankinson, Jr., Regional Administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IV:

Dear Mr. Hankinson:

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council would like to reiterate and endorse the concerns expressed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (enclosed letter dated December 18, 1997) on the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's intention to issue the Industrial Wastewater Facility Permit (State NPDES Draft Permit FL0000876) to Buckeye Florida, L.P. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council also has concerns on the issuance of this permit and has expressed these concerns in our enclosed letters to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection dated March 20, 1997 and August 27, 1997.

The Council does support the attempt to improve water conditions and to reclassify the Fenholloway River as a Class III water body, but we do not support the idea of moving the effluent discharge downstream in order to possibly improve the water conditions of the upper river. We believe that the proposed downstream discharge will have significant negative impacts on the surrounding seagrass habitat and associated biological communities. Those seagrass beds are essential habitat for many fish species managed by the Council, and any further degradation of this habitat will have predictably negative impacts on those fish populations. Therefore, we urge the EPA to join us in objection to this project.

Again, we continue to support the views expressed in our letters to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and also endorse the views expressed in the much more detailed U.S. Fish



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### **ERRATA AND UPDATE PAMPHLETS AVAILABLE FOR FISHING REGULATION PAMPHLETS**

An "Errata and Update" pamphlet is available which supplements Commercial Fishing Regulations pamphlet and Recreational Fishing Regulations pamphlet that were published in October, 1997. The Errata and Update pamphlet contains corrections and changes to the recreational and commercial fishing regulations for Gulf of Mexico federal waters since the regulation pamphlets were published.

The Errata and Update sheet will be periodically revised to reflect changes in the fishing regulations until the next full revision of the fishing regulation pamphlets. All three pamphlets are available from the Council office (toll free 888-833-1844). Persons or organizations who would like copies of the pamphlets in quantity are encouraged to contact the Council office with their requests.



<p>ERRATA AND UPDATES TO THE OCTOBER 1997 FISHING REGULATION PAMPHLETS FOR GULF OF MEXICO FEDERAL WATERS  April 1998</p> <p>Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council The Commons at Rivergate 3018 U.S. Hwy. 301 N., Suite 1000 Tampa, Florida 33619-2266</p> <p>813-228-2815 888-833-1844 (TOLL-FREE) 813-228-7015 (FAX)</p> <p>e-mail: gulf.council@noaa.gov web page: www.gulfcouncil.org</p>  <p><small>This booklet was prepared for general informational purposes in April 1998 and has no legal force or effect. Fishing regulations are subject to change. A separate summary of commercial fishing regulations is available from the Council.</small></p>	<p>COMMERCIAL FISHING REGULATIONS FOR GULF OF MEXICO FEDERAL WATERS  October 1997</p>  <p>Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council The Commons at Rivergate 3018 U.S. Hwy. 301 N., Suite 1000 Tampa, Florida 33619-2266</p> <p>813-228-2815 888-833-1844 (TOLL-FREE) 813-228-7015 (FAX)</p> <p>e-mail: gulf.council@noaa.gov web page: www.gulfcouncil.org</p>  <p><small>This booklet was prepared for general informational purposes in October 1997 and has no legal force or effect. Fishing regulations are subject to change. A separate summary of commercial fishing regulations is available from the Council.</small></p> <p>Report federal fishing violations: 24 hour toll-free hotline: 1-800-853-1964</p>	<p>RECREATIONAL FISHING REGULATIONS FOR GULF OF MEXICO FEDERAL WATERS  October 1997</p>  <p>Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council The Commons at Rivergate 3018 U.S. Hwy. 301 N., Suite 1000 Tampa, Florida 33619-2266</p> <p>813-228-2815 888-833-1844 (TOLL-FREE) 813-228-7015 (FAX)</p> <p>e-mail: gulf.council@noaa.gov web page: www.gulfcouncil.org</p>  <p><small>This booklet was prepared for general informational purposes in October 1997 and has no legal force or effect. Fishing regulations are subject to change. A separate summary of commercial fishing regulations is available from the Council.</small></p> <p>Report federal fishing violations: 24 hour toll-free hotline: 1-800-853-1964</p>
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Florida. In March, two vessels operating out of Texas were added to the evaluation. In addition to recording vessel position using GPS data, the VMS system is designed with sensors to monitor the vessel's hydraulic system, stack temperature, and rpm. When coupled with the GPS system, these sensors allow determination of when gear is deployed or hauled and other operations of the vessel.

The system can be set to call in and report to the ground stations at specific intervals, for example, at 30 minute intervals from leaving port. Additionally, the system can be programmed to respond to a variety of situations, e.g. when a vessel leaves an area, enters a zone, or uses gear. If a vessel is operation out of cellular range, the system will store the information until the vessel is back within range, and then transmit the accumulated data.

Initial cost for the system per vessel was originally between \$1,000 and \$1,500 for the equipment, with installation costs at about \$500 to \$800. However, equipment costs have recently been reduced to approximately \$800.

The Council has addressed the utility of using this technology in fishery management programs (see article about proposed fish trap regulations). Results are promising, but premature at this time. At the March 1998 meeting, the Council approved the following policy with regard to vessel monitoring:

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY  
MANAGEMENT COUNCIL VMS POLICY

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council recognizes that electronic remote vessel monitoring systems are a viable and desirable technology for use in fisheries management. The Council also recognizes that fishery management needs and available technologies may differ among fisheries and geographical areas. Thus, it is the policy of the Council to:

- Where appropriate and desired, implement satellite-based or other fishing vessel monitoring systems to assist fishery management programs in the Gulf region.
- Develop specific technical and operational guidelines for VMS programs for each FMP, as appropriate, and in consultation with the respective fishery's Advisory Panel (AP) and relevant government agencies.
- Focus VMS programs on enforcement, scientific data collection, and safety.
- When developing VMS programs, consider efficiency, enforceability, safety, and cost-effectiveness for the fishing industry and management agencies.

**ENFORCEMENT**

**NIGHT-TIME FISHERIES ENFORCEMENT ENHANCED WITH INFRARED EYES**

The Florida Marine Patrol (FMP), in a joint effort with NMFS, has been working to use high technology to improve its night-time enforcement and patrol capability. At the Council's March meeting, Major Bruce Buckson of the Florida Marine Patrol described the use of an airborne Forward Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) system to detect illegal night-time fishing activities. The FLIR system is currently in use on an FMP airplane operating out of Titusville. Not only can the FLIR system allow night-time observations from the air, but it can also record the latitude and longitude of observed activities. Once an illegal fishing activity has been located from the air using FLIR, the system can be used to guide a patrol vessel to intercept the violator. In addition to locating illegal fishing activities, the FLIR system can improve night-time rescue capability, and has allowed the FMP to make a night-time at-sea rescue that might not have otherwise been possible. NMFS Enforcement will report on the success of the FLIR system after its first full year of operation at the May Council meeting in Sandestin, Florida.

**VESEL MONITORING SYSTEM REVIEWED, COUNCIL POLICY ADOPTED**

At the January and March Council meetings, NMFS Enforcement reviewed a vessel monitoring system that it is evaluating for possible use in the Gulf of Mexico. Unlike the satellite tracking system that was reviewed in the September-October 1997 issue of *Gulf Fishery News*, this system uses less expensive cellular telephone technology to communicate between the vessel and a ground station.

In recent pilot trials, the equipment has been installed on one shrimp and one stone crab vessel in the Crystal River area of Florida and two fish trap vessels out of Naples,

- Allow for research and development of VMS technology.
- Couple any requirements for VMS to the issuance of federal fishing permits, except in special situations, such as when a permit is not required and a VMS is required.
- Pursue government funding for VMS programs in the Gulf. If comprehensive funding by implementing federal agencies is not possible, pursue alternative funding arrangements (e.g., taxes, special appropriations, industry funding, etc.).
- Request that NMFS develop minimum safeguards for the security of VMS data and conduct periodic inspections and other monitoring efforts to insure effectiveness.
- Pursue, as a long-term goal, compatibility among VMS programs in the Gulf.
- Request that NMFS and other implementing federal agencies provide the Council and the states with periodic reports on the status of each VMS, including but not limited to the number of vessels participating, the number and types of violations, and recommendations for the continued use or modifications to VMS programs.

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**TWO COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSELS CITED FOR ILLEGAL LONGLINE FISHING IN CLOSED AREAS**

The National Marine Fisheries Service announced that two Notices of Violation and Assessment (NOVAS) containing monetary penalties and proposed permit sanctions were issued to the owners and operators of two Florida west coast commercial fishing vessels. The owners and captains of the longline fishing vessels PROVIDER and LADY EM, both homeported in Madeira Beach, were charged with violating the prohibitions and restrictions applicable to area closures, including the taking and retention of reef fish and the taking of protected coral species.

These actions resulted from an investigation into unlawful fishing practices that was conducted jointly by investigators from NOAA's Southeast Enforcement Division and Coast Guard boarding officers from U.S. Coast Guard Group St. Petersburg. The investigation was initiated after several citizens complained of widespread unlawful practices conducted by commercial fishermen targeting grouper along Florida's west coast shelf.

The longline restricted area adjacent to the southwest Florida coastline is an extremely important management measure designed to protect the spawning components of the stocks of red grouper, and other reef fish, and has been closed to bottom longline fishing since February of 1990.

NOVAs were issued to Colin C. Petrey of St. Petersburg, the captain of the F/V PROVIDER, and Provider, Inc. of Seminole, the vessel's owner. Both were charged with fishing on October 10, 1997 in the area off of Florida's west coast that is closed to longline and buoy gear fishing. The fines against Mr. Petrey and Provider, Inc. totaled \$15,000 plus a proposed 30-day permit sanction.

NOVAs were also issued to Richard Fullen of St. Petersburg, captain of the F/V LADY EM, and the vessel's owners, Reynolds E. and Jane P. Bryan of Riverview. All individuals involved were charged with fishing on October 23, 1997 in the area off of Florida's west coast that is closed to longline and buoy gear fishing. They were also charged with harvesting and possessing protected species of coral, and filleting reef fish at sea. The fines for these charges totaled \$21,500 plus a proposed 30-day permit sanction.

All individuals cited in these cases have a right to request a hearing to contest the charges and the sanctions.

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**NMFS ENFORCEMENT REPORT: OCTOBER - DECEMBER 1997**

The Southeast Enforcement Division summary report on enforcement activities is produced on a quarterly basis. This report covers the first quarter of FY 98: October 1, 1997 through December 31, 1997, and includes NMFS enforcement activities in the Gulf of Mexico.

NMFS SEIZURES

On October 26, 1997, Special Agents and USCG Officers working in Port Isabel, Texas, seized 725 pounds of shrimp from the F/V HIGH CHAPARRAL for violation of the Turtle Excluder Device provisions of the Endangered Species Act. The vessel was trawling with four TEDs with the escape openings sewn shut. The shrimp was sold for \$3,166.25.

On November 2, 1997, Special Agents and USCG Officers working in Venice, Louisiana, seized 9,430 pounds of blacktip shark and 305 pounds of shark fins from the F/V ST. MARTIN IV for violating the large coastal shark closure. The seizure was sold for \$6,212.00.

On November 4, 1997, USCG Officers working in Galveston, Texas, seized 1,167 pounds of shrimp from the F/V DADDY RABBIT for trawling with no Turtle Excluder Device installed. The shrimp were sold for \$875.25.

On February 11, 1998, Special Agents and USCG officers in Dulac, Louisiana, seized 1,931 pounds of shrimp from the F/V SEA GULL II for trawling with a top shooting hard TED which was sewn shut with monofilament line. The seized shrimp were sold for \$3,822.05.

## NOVAs ISSUED BETWEEN NOVEMBER 6, 1997 AND JANUARY 15, 1998 - GULF OF MEXICO

CASE NUMBER	RESPONDENT NAME	AREA	LE UNIT	CASE DESCRIPTION	NOVA AMOUNT	NOPF* AMOUNT	PROPOSED NOPS** DURATION
SE960095ES	Hoa Van Huynh Hoang Van Nguyen	GOM	USCG	TED violation	\$2,000.00		
SE970023FM	Keith A. Schultz Darrell Knepp Trenton Knepp	GOM	USCG	Possess 34 shark fins without corresponding carcasses	\$1,600.00		
SE970153FM	Thiet Van Tran Tan V. Tran	GOM	LA	Retain shark during closure of specified species	\$12,000.00	\$4,432.55	30 days
SE970161FM	Quang T. Tran Thanh L. Tran	GOM	USCG	Possess reef fish over bag limit	\$3,000.00		
SE970266LA	Pedro Juarez Gonzales	GOM	USCG	Take shrimp without valid Mexican permit	\$3,000.00		
SE970290FM	Thanh Hein Vo Richard Hein Thanh Vo	GOM	USCG	Possess 1,282 pounds of red snapper during closure	\$12,000.00		30 days
SE970322FM	Reynolds E. Bryan Jane P. Bryan Richard G. Fullen	GOM	USCG	(1) Fishing in longline restricted area (2) Possess 40 grouper fillets	(1)\$20,000.00 (2) \$1,500.00		30 days
SE970331FM	Victor O. Chang	GOM	USCG	Possess snapper over the bag limit	\$2,000.00		
SE970370FM	Provider, Inc. Colin B. Petrey	GOM	USCG	Fishing in longline gear restricted area	\$15,000.00		30 days

\*NOTICE OF PROPOSED FORFEITURE

\*\*NOTICE OF PERMIT SANCTION

SETTLEMENTS BETWEEN NOVEMBER 6, 1997 AND JANUARY 15, 1998 - GULF OF MEXICO

CASE NUMBER	RESPONDENT NAME	AREA	LE UNIT	CASE DESCRIPTION	FINAL AMOUNT	FORFEITED AMOUNT	PERMIT SANCTION
SE900815ES	Danny J. Duplantis	GOM	USCG	TED violation	\$3,750.00		
SE940556FM	Nancy Thi Tran	GOM	USCG	Possess cobia over bag limit	\$230.00	\$358.50	
SE940556FM	Thien Van Tran	GOM	USCG	(1) Possess cobia over bag limit (2) Interfere with enforcement officers	(1) \$230.00 (2) \$1,540.00		
SE940638FM	Hal W. Yelvington	GOM	USCG	(1) Illegal dumping of fish upon approach of enforcement (2) Possess snapper/grouper fillets	(1) \$1,875.00 (2) \$187.50		
SE950314FM	Alva Johnson Allin, Inc.	GOM	USCG	Possession of red snapper during closure	\$12,500.00	\$7,671.00	
SE960095ES	Hoa Van Huynh Hoang Van Nguyen	GOM	USCG	TED violation	\$2,000.00	\$2,500.00	
SE960305ES	Martin Tran Hong Tran	GOM	NMFS/TX	TED violation	\$2,000.00		
SE970001FM	David M. Sigler Sig-Fish, Inc.	GOM	USCG	(1) Possess 2,921 pounds red snapper during closure (2) Possess 227 undersized red snapper	(1) \$11,250.00 (2) \$2,250.00	\$8,847.80	30 days
SE970127ES	Kenneth E. Simpson	GOM	USCG	TED violation	\$725.00		
SE970127ES	Carolyn S. Allen	GOM	USCG	TED violation	\$725.00		

## VOTING COUNCIL MEMBERS

1997/98 Council Chairman: Dr. Maumus Claverie, Jr.

Vice-Chairman: Hal Osburn

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman are elected at each September Council meeting and serve through the following September meeting.

### Appointed Voting Members

Name	Yr app	Int	Location	Phone	Fax	E-mail
Florida						
DR. FELICIA COLEMAN	96	O	Tallahassee	850-644-2019	805-644-9829	coleman@bio.fsu.edu
SCOTT GREEN	95	R	Winter Park	407-629-9277	407-629-5005 407-629-9272	
KARL J. LESSARD	94	C	Marathon	305-743-5996	305-289-1207	
Alabama						
ALBERT L. KING, SR.	91	C	Gulf Shores	334-968-7653	334-968-7654	
DR. ROBERT L. SHIPP	91	R	Mobile	334-460-7136 334-633-3178	334-460-7357	rshipp@jaguar1.usouthal.edu
Mississippi						
PHILIP D. HORN	89	C	Pascagoula	601-762-4511	601-769-5108	
KAY WILLIAMS	97	C	Pascagoula	601-762-0176	601-769-6153	
Louisiana						
DR. MAUMUS CLAVERIE, JR.	96	R	New Orleans	504-524-5418	504-524-1066	maumusjr@aol.com
MYRON JAMES FISCHER	97	R	Cut-Off	504-632-4525	504-632-4262	ddrum@cajunnet.com
Texas						
PETE APARICIO	96	C	Victoria	512-578-4989	512-578-0875	
IRBY W. BASCO	95	R	Port Neches	409-722-4434	409-722-6428	

Interest Sectors: C=commercial, R=recreational, O=other

### State and Federal Voting Representatives

Name	State	Phone	Fax	E-mail
ROY O. WILLIAMS (d) (designee for Russell Nelson) Marine Fisheries Comm.	Florida	850-487-0554	850-487-4847	williams_r@dep.state.fl.us
R. VERNON MINTON Dept. of Cons. and Natural Res.	Alabama	334-861-2882	334-861-8741	rvminton.amrdgs@gulftel.com
CORKY PERRET (d) (designee for Glade Woods) Dept. of Marine Resources	Mississippi	601-385-5860	601-385-5864	
KAREN FOOTE (d) (designee for Jimmy Jenkins) Department of Wildl. and Fish.	Louisiana	504-765-2383	504-765-2489	
HAL OSBURN (d) (designee for Gene McCarty) Parks and Wildlife Department	Texas	512-389-4648	512-389-4388	
DR. ANDREW J. KEMMERER	NMFS	813-570-5301	813-570-5300	andrew.kemmerer@noaa.gov

(d) - Designee who usually attends Council meetings on behalf of the state fisheries management director.

Nonvoting members include representatives of the U.S. Coast Guard (Seventh and Eight Districts), Department of State, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

*GULF FISHERY NEWS WANTS YOUR NEWS AND VIEWS . . . .*

*GULF FISHERY NEWS is a publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. Any material in this newsletter may be reprinted or reproduced. We would like to hear from you regarding fishery questions you would like to see covered in GULF FISHERY NEWS. Send your comments to GULF FISHERY NEWS, c/o Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 3018 U.S. Highway 301 North, Suite 1000, Tampa, Florida, 33619-2266. Telephone: 813-228-2815 (toll-free 888-833-1844). Fax: 813-225-7015. E-mail: [gulf.council@noaa.gov](mailto:gulf.council@noaa.gov)*

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils that were established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act in 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. This is a publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and financial assistance for this news release was provided by grant funds pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Award No. NA87FC0003.