

GULF FISHERY NEWS

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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: Peter Hood.

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COUNCIL MODIFIES PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES FOR RED GROUPER REBUILDING PLAN AND DEEP-WATER GROUPER/TILEFISH QUOTA

At its May 2002 meeting in Destin, Florida, the Gulf Council modified its preferred alternatives to implement a 10-year rebuilding plan for red grouper under the *Secretarial Amendment 1 to the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan to Set a 10-Year Rebuilding Plan for Red Grouper, With Associated Impacts on Gag and Other Groupers and Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement*. The red grouper stock was declared overfished by NMFS in October 2000. The major changes in the recreational and commercial scenarios from the alternatives initially selected in March are presented

in the table on the next page.

In addition to selecting the above alternative as being preferred, the Council asked for analyses on the impact of raising the recreational red grouper minimum size limit from 20 to 22 inches. A recreational size limit increase could be considered at the July Council meeting.

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

July 8-11, 2002

Hyatt Sarasota

1000 Boulevard of the Arts

Sarasota, Florida 34236



Recreational Scenarios to Achieve 45% Harvest Reduction

Old Preferred Alternative	New Preferred Alternative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 of 5 grouper bag limit can be red grouper (5% adjusted reduction) • Closed season August-November (40% reduction) • Closed season applies east of 87°31.1' (FL/AL state boundary) • Closed season applies to all shallow-water grouper <p>Total recreational red grouper reduction: 45%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 of 5 grouper bag limit can be red grouper (21%-28% reduction depending on length of closed season). • Select closed season months that add to the additional needed reduction (24% needed). • One of the closed months is to be July (17% reduction. An additional 7% reduction needed.) • Closed season applies throughout the range of red grouper in the Gulf EEZ. • Closed season applies to red grouper only. <p>Total recreational red grouper reduction: 17% from closed season + 23% adjusted from bag limit = 40%</p>

Commercial Scenarios to Achieve 45% Harvest Reduction

Old Preferred Alternative	New Preferred Alternative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move longline/buoy gear boundary to 50 fathom, assume 60%-80% shift to bandit gear (35%-40% adjusted reduction). • Closed season February 15-March 15 (8% reduction). • Closed season applies east of 87°31.1' (FL/AL state boundary) • Closed season applies to all shallow-water grouper • Reduce shallow-water grouper quota by an amount consistent with a 45% reduction in red grouper harvest. <p>Total commercial red grouper reduction: 43%-48%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move longline/buoy gear boundary to 50 fathom, assume 60%-80% shift to bandit gear (35%-40% adjusted reduction). • Closed season February 15-March 15 (8% reduction). • Closed season applies Gulf-wide. • Closed season applies to red/gag/black grouper. • Reduce shallow-water grouper quota from 9.35 mp gutted weight (9.8 mp whole weight) to 7.08 mp gutted weight. <p>Total commercial red grouper reduction: 43%-48%</p>

The Council also voted to retain the preferred alternative for deep-water grouper (misty, snowy, yellowedge, Warsaw, speckled hind, and once the shallow-water grouper quota is filled, scamp) and tilefish, which is as follows:

Change the existing quotas for deep-water grouper (1.6 million pounds whole weight, equal to 1.53 million pounds gutted weight) and tilefish (currently there is no tilefish

quota) to a single combined deep-water grouper/tilefish quota of 1.39 million pounds landed weight. This is the average annual harvest of deep-water grouper and tilefish combined from 1996-2000.

The Council will take additional public testimony at its July 8-12 meeting in Sarasota, Florida before making its final proposals. Testimony is scheduled to begin at 8:45 AM on Wednesday, July 10. **Persons**

testifying should turn in a registration card before the start of the testimony period. After the Council makes its final proposals, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will then take up the process for approval and implementation of the amendment.

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR SECRETARIAL AMENDMENT 1 TO THE REEF FISH FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR RED GROUPER IS AVAILABLE

The Gulf Council announces that in accordance with provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Secretarial Amendment 1 to the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan for Red Grouper with Associated Impacts on Gag and Other Groupers is available for review.

Amendment 1 would establish a rebuilding plan for the Gulf of Mexico stock of red grouper. Amendment 1 contains alternatives for determining the sustainable fishing parameters on which a rebuilding plan is based. These include maximum sustainable yield (MSY), the fishing mortality rate that produces MSY (F_{MSY}), the biomass or biomass proxy that supports MSY (B_{MSY}), the minimum stock size threshold (MSST) below which a stock is considered to be overfished, the maximum fishing mortality threshold (MSMT) above which a stock is considered to be undergoing overfishing, and optimum yield (OY). The Draft Red Grouper Amendment also contains alternatives for selecting a rebuilding strategy and rebuilding scenarios (combinations of management measures) to achieve rebuilding. In addition to the pre-constructed scenarios, the Draft Red Grouper Amendment contains individual alternatives to adjust the shallow-water grouper quota, implement or adjust closed seasons, implement commercial trip limits, adjust recreational bag limits, establish closed areas, move the longline/buoy gear boundary, and phase out the use of longlines and buoy gear for reef fish fishing.

Any written comments or questions you have should be submitted to Joseph E. Powers, Acting Regional Administrator, NMFS Southeast Regional Office,

9721 Executive Center Drive North, St. Petersburg, Florida 33702 by July 1, 2002. Also, one copy of your comments should be sent to Mr. Scott Guides, Deputy Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, Room 6121, SP, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C. 20230.

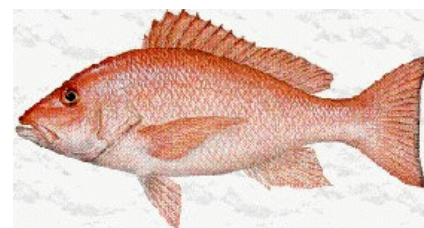
The DEIS for Secretarial Amendment 1 to the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan for Red Grouper with Associated Impacts on Gag and Other Groupers is available from the Gulf Council office (see page 10 for contact information).

AD HOC RED SNAPPER ADVISORY PANEL TO MEET TO DISCUSS ISSUES RELATED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL FISHING QUOTA PROFILE FOR THE RED SNAPPER FISHERY

The Gulf Council will convene its Ad Hoc Red Snapper Advisory Panel (AP) to discuss the issues related to and continue the development of an individual fishing quota (IFQ) profile for the commercial red snapper fishery. The profile will examine the benefits and consequences of using IFQs to manage the commercial red snapper fishery. When the profile is completed by the AP and Council, it will be submitted to the current participants in the fishery for a referendum to determine if the majority of the participants favor management by IFQs.

The AP will be convened at 8:30 a.m. on Monday, June 17, 2002 and will conclude by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 18, 2002. The meeting will be held at the Tampa Airport Hilton Hotel, 2225 Lois Avenue, Tampa, Florida.

The AP members consist of commercial fishermen holding Class 1 or Class 2 commercial red snapper licenses, and licensed commercial reef fish dealers. They are assisted by 4 non-voting members with expertise in fishery economics, fishery biology, environmental science, and law enforcement. The completion of the profile will require several subsequent meetings of this AP.



RED SNAPPER COMMERCIAL FISHERY IN GULF OF MEXICO FEDERAL WATERS WILL OPEN AT NOON, JUNE 1, 2002

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announces that the commercial fishery for red snapper in Gulf of Mexico Federal waters will open at noon, local time, on June 1, 2002, and close at noon, local time, on June 10, 2002. The 2002 Gulf of Mexico commercial red snapper quota is 4.65-million pounds. The commercial fishing season is divided into spring and fall seasons. The spring season began at noon, local time, on February 1, with 3.10 million pounds available, and the fall season begins at noon, local time, on October 1, with the remainder of the annual quota available. During the spring and fall seasons fishing will be allowed during the first 10 days of each month until the quota is caught. Preliminary landings for February 1-10, 2002, (649,494 pounds), March 1-10, 2002, (528,516 pounds), April 1-10, 2002, (540,728 pounds) and May 1-10, 2002, (525,358 pounds) totaled 2,244,096 pounds of red snapper landed. Therefore, a total of 855,904 pounds remain in the spring quota.

The operator of a vessel with a valid reef fish permit and a Class 1 or Class 2 red snapper license having red snapper aboard must have landed and sold such red snapper before noon, local time, on June 10, 2002. The minimum size limit for the commercial fishery is 15 inches total length.

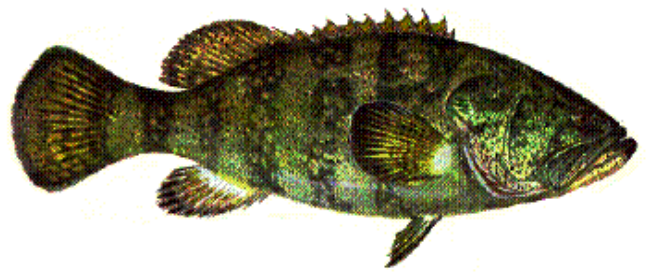
COUNCIL RECEIVES UPDATE ON GOLIATH GROUPEL POPULATIONS

The Gulf Council received two presentations on goliath grouper at its May 13-16, 2002 meeting in Destin. The first presentation was a series of underwater videos shot by Captain Eddie Toomer, a member of the Council's Reef Fish Advisory Panel. The video showed goliath grouper concentrations on various artificial reefs off southwest Florida between Charlotte Harbor and Florida Bay. These videos were shot over the past 3 to 4 years between May and September in depths of 40 to 150 feet. Captain Toomer estimated that most of the goliath grouper were between 300 and 500 pounds. He stated that every wreck had goliath grouper, but they were more abundant on wrecks that were further offshore and

more difficult to reach.

The second presentation was an update on the status of goliath grouper by Dr. Anne-Marie Eklund, who is the head of the NMFS goliath grouper research group. Although goliath grouper are in greater abundance than in the mid-1980s, they are still well below the abundance levels seen prior to 1983. Some fishermen have expressed concern that snapper and grouper disappear from areas that are populated by goliath grouper due to predation by the goliath grouper. However, underwater fish counts show that other groupers were more abundant in areas where goliath grouper were found than in areas where goliath grouper are absent. Stomach content analyses indicates that the primary food for goliath grouper is invertebrates and slow moving fish. One interesting observation is that goliath grouper seem to be more abundant on artificial reefs than on natural reefs. Data collected by volunteer divers for Project R.E.E.F. (Reef Environmental Education Foundation) found, off Charlotte and Lee counties, goliath grouper were present on 50%-60% of artificial reefs but only 10%-20% of natural reef sites, and less than 5% of dives made off the Florida Keys. Dr. Eklund felt that it was premature to say that goliath grouper had recovered. She also expressed concern about high methyl-mercury levels found in goliath grouper. Methyl-mercury concentrations measured from large goliath grouper caught from 1989-1991 have been found to exceed the USDA's action level of 1 ppm. (Since 1990 it has been illegal to harvest goliath grouper, and the goliath grouper research group has used only non-lethal methods to study the fish.)

Following the presentations, the Council declined to take any action concerning goliath grouper. Therefore, status quo, i.e., harvest prohibited will be continued.



SCOPING MEETINGS SCHEDULED ON CONTINUATION OF MADISON/SWANSON AND STEAMBOAT LUMPS MARINE RESERVES

The Gulf Council will hold two scoping meetings on the issue of whether the Council should begin developing an amendment to the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to extend the time period for the Madison/Swanson and Steamboat Lumps marine reserves. A scoping meeting is part of the initial process of determining whether development of a management action should proceed.

The Madison/Swanson and Steamboat Lumps marine reserves were implemented on June 19, 2000 with a 4-year sunset provision, and will expire on June 16, 2004. The Madison/Swanson site is approximately 115 square nautical miles in size and is located about 40 nautical miles southwest of Apalachicola, Florida. Steamboat Lumps is approximately 104 square nautical miles in size and is located about 95 nautical miles west of Tarpon Springs, Florida. Within each area, fishing is prohibited for all species except for highly migratory species, i.e., tunas, marlin, oceanic sharks, sailfishes, and swordfish.

These marine reserves were created primarily to protect a portion of the gag spawning aggregations and to protect a portion of the offshore population of male gag. However, the areas are also suitable habitat and may provide protection for many other species, such as scamp, red grouper, warsaw grouper, speckled hind, red snapper, red porgy and others. A 4-year period was established to give the Council time to evaluate the utility of marine reserves. If the Council chooses to continue the Madison/Swanson and Steamboat Lumps marine reserves beyond June 2004, it must do so through a reef fish plan amendment. Non-action will result in the two reserves expiring on June 16, 2004, and the areas re-opening to all fishing.

During the scoping meetings, Dr. Chris Koenig, Florida State University, who is one of the researchers studying the marine reserves, will give a presentation on his research to date. Public input will then be solicited as to whether management action should be initiated to continue the reserves beyond June 2004, and if so, what the scope of issues should be for consideration.

The scoping meetings will be held from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Monday, June 17, 2002 and Tuesday, June 18, 2002 in Panama City, Florida and Tampa, Florida, respectively. For details of where the meetings will occur, contact the Gulf Council office (see page 10 for contact information).

REEF FISH AP AND SSC TO REVIEW BIOECONOMIC MODELING RESULTS OF PROPOSED RED GROUPER REBUILDING PLAN

The Gulf Council will convene its Reef Fish Advisory Panel (AP) and the Standing and Special Reef Fish Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) to review a report of the Council's Socioeconomic Panel (SEP). The major content of the SEP report is a bioeconomic model evaluation of the economic implications of various measures proposed to rebuild the Gulf of Mexico red grouper stock under the draft *Secretarial Amendment 1 to the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan to Set a 10-Year Rebuilding Plan for Red Grouper, With Associated Impacts on Gag and Other Groupers and Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement*. The AP and SSC will also provide recommendations to the Council on red grouper regulations.

The AP will be convened at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, June 24, 2002 and will conclude by 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, June 25, 2002. The SSC will subsequently convene at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, June 26, 2002 and will conclude by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 27, 2002. Both meetings will be held at the Hilton Tampa Airport Westshore Hotel, 2225 Lois Avenue, Tampa, Florida.

Copies of the agendas of these meetings, the draft Secretarial Amendment 1, an addendum to Secretarial Amendment 1 (reflecting changes to the Council's preferred alternatives made at the May Council meeting), and the Socioeconomic Panel report can be obtained by contacting the Gulf Council office (see page 10 for details).

GULF COUNCIL TO CONVENE SOCIOECONOMIC PANEL

The Gulf Council will convene its Socioeconomic Panel (SEP) to review available social and economic information on Gulf king and Spanish mackerel and to determine the social and economic implications of the levels of acceptable biological catch (ABC) recommended by the Council's Mackerel Stock Assessment Panel (MSAP). The SEP may recommend to the Council total allowable catch (TAC) levels for the 2003 fishing year and certain management measures associated with achieving the TACs. In addition, the SEP will review the results of a bioeconomic modeling evaluation of the measures proposed in the Secretarial Amendment 1 for rebuilding the red grouper stock.

The SEP meeting will begin at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, June 12, 2002 and conclude at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, June 14, 2002. The meeting will be held at the Wyndham Riverfront Hotel, 701 Convention Center Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana. A report will be prepared by the SEP containing their conclusions and recommendations. The red grouper part of the report will be presented for review to the Council's Reef Fish Advisory Panel and Standing and Special Reef Fish Scientific and Statistical Committee at meetings to be held on the week of June 24th, 2002 in Tampa, Florida and to the Council at its meeting on the week of July 8th, 2002 in Sarasota, Florida. The mackerel portion of the report will be presented for review to the Council's Mackerel Advisory Panel and Standing and Special Mackerel Scientific and Statistical Committee at meetings to be held on the week of July 29th, 2002 in New Orleans, Louisiana and to the Council at its meeting on the week of September 9th, 2002 in Metairie, Louisiana.

SHRIMP STOCK ASSESSMENT PANEL TO CONSIDER DEFINITIONS OF MSY, OY, OVERFISHING, AND OVERFISHED FOR GULF SHRIMP STOCKS

The Gulf Council will convene its Shrimp Stock Assessment Panel (SSAP) to review Options for Amendment 13 to the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan (FMP) that contains alternatives for defining maximum sustainable yield (MSY), optimum yield

(OY), overfishing and the overfished condition for shrimp stocks in the Gulf of Mexico. The SSAP may also consider these parameters for rock shrimp that are currently not part of the management unit of the Shrimp FMP; however, the Gulf Council will be considering adding this stock to the Shrimp FMP.

The meeting will be held at the New Orleans Airport Hilton 901 Airline Highway in Kenner, Louisiana. The meeting is to begin at 1:30 p.m. on Monday, June 17, 2002 and conclude by 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 19, 2002.

FEDERAL WATERS OFF TEXAS CLOSED TO SHRIMPING ON MAY 15, 2002

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announced that Federal waters from 9 to 200 nautical miles off Texas would close to shrimp trawling at 30 minutes after the official sunset on May 15, 2002, corresponding to the period that Texas closes its waters to shrimp trawling. The Texas closure ranges from 45 to 90 days. The closing and/or opening date of the Texas closure is based on the results of biological sampling by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). NMFS will reopen Federal waters off Texas when the state of Texas opens its territorial waters. Historically, the opening has been on or about July 15. If there is a need to adjust the July 15 date for the termination of the closure, NMFS will announce the revised opening date.

NMFS considered a request by the Gulf Council to suspend the Texas closure for the 2002 fishing year. The Council made this request to NMFS after receiving public testimony from shrimp fishermen and processors indicating that the fishery was experiencing economic hardships because of unusually low shrimp prices. These industry participants commented that a suspension of the Texas closure would alleviate some economic problems in the shrimp fishery by providing continuous income to shrimp fishery participants.

In accordance with the provisions of the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico, U.S. waters (FMP), the Southeast Regional Administrator (RA), may, after determining that benefits may be increased or adverse impacts be decreased, either: (1) modify the geographical scope

of the extent of the Texas closure, or (2) eliminate the Texas closure for one season.

To make a determination regarding the potential for increased benefits with a suspension of the Texas closure, NMFS conducted a Regulatory Impact Review (RIR). The RIR projected that, if the closure were suspended, the average producer surplus (total revenues minus variable costs) for smaller vessels would increase, but producer surplus for larger vessels (which are more likely to fish in Federal waters) would decrease. The RIR also concluded that, for the fishery as a whole, total harvest (in pounds produced) and revenues over the entire fishing year would decline if the closure was suspended. Thus, NMFS concluded that rather than alleviating adverse economic conditions in the fishery, suspending the closure was more likely to perpetuate and probably exacerbate current problems. Therefore, NMFS decided not to suspend the Texas closure for the 2002 fishing year.

At its May 2002 meeting, the Gulf Council disagreed with NMFS's assessment of the Texas closure and moved to inform NMFS headquarters of their disappointment with NMFS's decision. Additionally, the Gulf Council moved to ask NMFS to create a process that will ensure timely and adequate analysis, review, and public input of the Texas Closure beginning in 2003.

COUNCIL TO SEND AMENDMENT 10 TO THE SHRIMP FMP TO THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR APPROVAL

The Gulf Council selected its proposed alternative for Amendment 10 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Shrimp Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico. This amendment contains alternatives for requiring additional measures to reduce bycatch in the shrimp fishery off the west coast of Florida, east of Cape San Blas (85°30' West Longitude). The Council moved that the proposed alternative be to require the installation of NMFS-certified bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) that meet or exceed the bycatch reduction criteria established by the Council in each net used aboard vessels trawling for shrimp in the Gulf of Mexico EEZ east of 85°30' West Longitude. Exempted are vessels trawling for royal red shrimp

beyond the 100-fathom contour and vessels trawling for groundfish or butterfish. A single try net with a headrope length of 16 feet or less per vessel and no more than two rigid-frame roller trawls limited to 16 feet or less, such as those used in the Big Bend area of Florida are also exempted. Bycatch reduction criteria shall be that BRDs must reduce bycatch of finfish by (at least) 30% by weight. To determine bycatch, the annual Summer Shrimp/Groundfish and Fall Shrimp/Groundfish Trawl Surveys will be used to determine finfish and invertebrate bycatch as opposed to commercial shrimp catches. Other measures that were considered in the amendment but were not selected as preferred alternatives included area and/or seasonal closures.

NMFS ANNOUNCES AVAILABILITY OF LARGE COASTAL SHARK MODELING PAPER AND 2002 LARGE COASTAL SHARK EVALUATION WORKSHOP

In accordance with a settlement agreement between NMFS and the Southern Offshore Fishing Association and other plaintiffs, NMFS completed an independent peer review of the 1998 Large Coastal Shark (LCS) stock assessment in October of 2001. The modeling paper evaluates the range of sensitivity trials and alternative model structures recommended by the 1998 assessment. NMFS requests public comment on the paper and whether the recommendations of the peer reviews have been adequately addressed. Send comments to Margo Schulze-Haugen or Karyl Brewster-Geiz, 1315 East West Highway, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, SSMC3, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Comments must be received no later than 5 p.m., EST June 5, 2002. To view the paper, visit: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hmspg.html>

Also, NOAA Fisheries will hold the 2002 LCS stock evaluation workshop (SWE) on June 24-28, 2002 at its Panama City Laboratory in Panama City, Florida. For more information contact Enric Cortes (850) 234-6541.

TRAP LIMITATION PROGRAM PROPOSED FOR THE STONE CRAB FISHERY IN FEDERAL WATERS OFF WEST FLORIDA

Proposals that would establish a Federal trap limitation program for the commercial stone crab fishery in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) off Florida's west coast, including Monroe County, recently have been announced in the Federal Register (67 FR 19155, April 18, 2002) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). This proposed Federal program would complement the stone crab trap limitation program recently implemented by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC). The proposals would enhance the effectiveness of the FFWCC program and, thereby, help to reduce overcapitalization in the stone crab fishery.

The proposed program was developed by the Gulf Council in Amendment 7 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Stone Crab Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico. Copies of Amendment 7 may be requested from the Gulf Council office (see page 10 for contact information).

In compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), the Gulf Council has submitted Amendment 7 to NMFS for review and consideration for approval. Concurrently, public review and comments are also being solicited. Please send written comments to Mark Godcharles, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702. Comments also maybe sent via fax to 727-570-5583. No comments submitted via e-mail or Internet will be accepted, nor will written comments received after June 17, 2002. If approved, implementation of the proposed Federal program would coincide with the expected implementation of the FFWCC program, i.e., October 1, 2002.

In Amendment 7, the Gulf Council has proposed the following nine changes to the FMP to align Federal management of the stone crab fishery with the FFWCC trap reduction program.

(1) Recognize, but not require, Florida's stone crab licenses and trap tags for vessels operating in the Federal management area.

(2) Establish a Federal program to issue nontransferable (to other persons) vessel permits, trap certificates, and trap tags for EEZ use only.

(3) Provide opportunity to apply for the proposed Federal vessel permit to those who could meet the qualifying criteria but could not or chose not to obtain the stone crab vessel license or tags issued by the FFWCC.

(4) Allow applicants up to 90 days following the effective date of the final rule implementing Amendment 7 to apply for Federal permits and tags.

(5) Determine the number of Federal trap tags to be issued to qualifying persons by dividing his/her highest seasonal landings of stone crab claws during one of three fishing seasons (1995/96, 1996/97, or 1997/98) by 5 pounds.

(6) Charge a fee for the issuance of Federal trap tags and vessel permits and their annual renewals.

(7) Establish a Federal appeals process for those denied a Federal permit.

(8) Revise the protocol (i.e., FMP Protocol and Procedure for all Enhanced Cooperative Management System) to reflect revisions to Florida's Constitution.

(9) Replace FMP management objective 3 with a new objective: Take regulatory action to increase catch per unit effort (CPUE) and reduce overcapitalization in terms of gear deployed in the fishery.

UPDATED COUNCIL HANDBOOK AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

The Gulf Council announces that it's updated Administrative Handbook of Policies and Procedures. The update includes rules affecting Council operations and personnel issues. To review the new handbook, a copy can be requested by contacting the Gulf Council office (see page 10 for details).



**TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR THE JULY
GULF COUNCIL MEETING**

COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

Monday, July 8, 2002

Habitat Protection Committee

- Preliminary Draft of PEIS for EFH Amendment
 - Presentation by MRAG
 - Technical Review Panel Comments
 - User Review Panel Comments
 - Committee Recommendations

Shrimp Management Committee

- Preliminary Options Paper for Shrimp Amendment 13
- Status and Health of Shrimp Stocks
- Evaluation of Tortugas Shrimp Fishery
- Report on Shrimp SAP Meeting

Tuesday, July 9, 2002

Reef Fish Management Committee

- Report on Ad Hoc Red Snapper AP
- Approval of Draft Secretarial Reef Fish Amendment 2 for Greater Amberjack
- Summaries of Scoping Meetings on Amendment 21 Options Paper
- Secretarial Reef Fish Amendment 1 for Red Grouper
 - Staff Review of Addendum to and Revision of Amendment
 - SEP Report on Analysis by Anderson Model
 - AP and SSC Reviews of SEP Report
 - Public Comments on the SEIS and Amendment 1
 - Committee Recommendations

Spiny Lobster Management Committee

- Proposed FFWCC Rule and Administrative Record
 - SSC Comments
 - AP Comments
 - Committee Recommendations

COUNCIL AGENDA

Wednesday, July 10, 2002

- I. Call to Order and Introductions - R. Williams
- II. Adoption of Agenda - R. Williams
- III. Approval of Minutes

- IV. Public Testimony¹
 - a. Secretarial Reef Fish Amendment 1/DSEIS for Red Grouper

Thursday, July 11, 2002

- IV. Public Testimony (Continued)
- V. Committee Reports
 - a. Spiny Lobster Management
 - b. Habitat Protection
 - c. Shrimp Management
 - d. Reef Fish Management

Friday, July 12, 2002

- V. Committee Reports (Continued)
 - d. Reef Fish Management
- VI. Council Chairmen's Meeting Report
- VII. SAFMC Liaison Report
- VIII. Report on SAW Meeting
- IX. ICCAT Advisory Committee
- X. Enforcement Reports
- XI. Regional Administrator's Report
- XII. Directors' Reports
- XIII. Other Business

Please note: The above agenda is tentative and is not final until it becomes noticed. Updates to the agenda will be posted on the Gulf Council web site as they become available. Although non-emergency issues not contained in the agenda may come before the Gulf Council for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA), those issues may not be the subject of formal Gulf Council action during the meeting. The Gulf Council's actions will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the noticed agenda and any issues arising after publication of that notice that require emergency action under section 305 (c) of the MSFCMA, provided the public has been notified of the Gulf Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

¹ **Persons testifying must turn in the registration card prior to the start of the testimony period. Persons are encouraged to testify on Wednesday as the Thursday public testimony session will end at 11:30 a.m., or before if no one is present to testify.**

GULF FISHERY NEWS WANTS YOUR NEWS AND VIEWS

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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 newsletter was provided by grant funds pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Award No. NA17FC2203.

September Meeting:

September 9-12, 2002
DoubleTree Hotel Lakeside
3838 N. Causeway Boulevard
Matairie, Louisiana 70002

November Meeting:

November 12-15, 2002
Westin Beach Resort
97000 South Overseas Hwy
Key Largo, Florida 33037
