

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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BOBBI WALKER ELECTED COUNCIL VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR 2002/2003

Ms. Bobbi Walker (Orange Beach, Alabama) was elected Vice-chairman of the Gulf Council for 2002/2003 at the November Council meeting in Key Largo, Florida. This election is normally conducted at the September meeting, but was deferred to the November meeting due to a tie vote in September. At the September 9-12, 2002 Council meeting, Jim Fensom (Panama City, Florida) was elected to serve as the chairman for 2002/2003. The election was conducted among the voting members of the Gulf Council. Mr. Fensom and Ms. Walker will serve as Chairman and Vice-chairman through September 2003 Council meeting, when new elections will be held.

NOAA FISHERIES ISSUES EMERGENCY RULE

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) has issued an emergency rule to extend

certain permit-related deadlines contained in the final rule implementation of the charter vessel/headboat permit moratorium for reef and coastal migratory pelagic fish in the Gulf of Mexico. The moratorium permit deadline was extended by the rule to include the December 16, 2002 deadline for having a moratorium permit aboard vessels operating in these fisheries; and the deadline for a decision regarding appeals related to eligibility.

This rule is in part due to a request by the Gulf Council at its November 12-15, 2002 meeting in Key Largo, Florida, that NOAA Fisheries clarify its intentions for "Eligibility" under the Charterboat/Headboat Permit Moratorium. The Council was concerned that its r e q u e s t m a y n o t

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

January 13-16, 2003
Holiday Inn Riverwalk
217 North St. Mary's
San Antonio, Texas 78205



have been accurately interpreted and that NOAA Fisheries was considering actions that would result in an "open access" permit period beginning in December 2002. After a lengthy discussion, the Council voted to make the following request to NOAA Fisheries to further clarify the Council's intent and the available record regarding initial eligibility, and to preclude an "open access" permit period:

Implement via emergency action the language of the motion adopted by the Council at its September 9-12, 2002 meeting amended as follows: It was the intent of the Council that under C-1 - to provide for fully transferable reef fish or coastal migratory pelagic charter/headboat permits to individuals/charter vessels who held valid permits on March 29, 2001, or held a valid permit during the preceding year or had applied for such permits received in the NOAA Fisheries office by March 29, 2001. The intent of the Council was to cap the effort and passenger capacity of vessels as of March 29, 2001.

The above motion differs from the request made by the Council in September in that: 1) It clarifies the Council's intent to use the "one year preceding March 29, 2001" criteria for determining eligible persons/vessel that held a valid permit rather than require that the permits be held on the specific date of March 29, 2001; and 2) it requests that the action be implemented by emergency action.

The above motion differs from the initial qualification criteria in the final rule published by NOAA Fisheries on June 28, 2002 in the following ways: 1) the permit application criteria applies to applications received in the NOAA Fisheries office by March 29, 2001, rather than during the period March 29, 2000 through March 29, 2001. However, this should be interpreted in light of the final sentence that clarifies the Council's intent to cap effort and passenger capacity of vessels as of March 29, 2001; and 2) There is no requirement that the person/vessel have a valid permit on the effective date of the final rule (July 29, 2002).

A copy of the final rule and emergency rule can be obtained from the Gulf Council office (see page 10 for contact information).

COUNCIL HEARS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SHRIMP AMENDMENT 13

The Gulf Council is currently working on Amendment 13 to the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The purpose of this plan amendment is to establish definitions of maximum sustainable yield (MSY), optimum yield (OY), the overfishing threshold, and the overfished condition for managed shrimp stocks in the Gulf. In 1999, the Council submitted proxy definitions for these parameters as part of its Generic Sustainable Fisheries Act Amendment (SFA); however, only the definitions of the overfished conditions were approved by NOAA Fisheries. Consequently, revised definitions need to be developed. Amendment 13 may also include alternatives to require vessel monitoring systems (VMS) on shrimp vessels fishing in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the Gulf. The Council has also established some relatively large permanently and seasonally closed areas to shrimp trawling, namely the Tortugas Shrimp Sanctuary and the cooperative Texas Closure that total about 5,000 square nautical miles. To enhance enforcement of these closures and to potentially collect better effort data from the shrimp fishery, the Council is considering requiring VMS on shrimp vessels in at least some portion of the EEZ.

Additionally, the Council is considering ways to improve bycatch reporting methodology by the shrimp fishery in this amendment. The Council has proposed such a methodology under Amendment 10 to the Shrimp FMP. However, alternatives discussed in Amendment 13 are designed to improve bycatch reporting and to further reduce bycatch in the shrimp fishery.

The Council asked its Shrimp Stock Assessment Panel (SSAP) to review definitions needed for MSY, OY, overfishing thresholds, and overfished thresholds. For penaeid shrimp, the SSAP concluded that these stocks were an annual crop, and harvest varied based on environmental conditions. The SSAP noted that MSY estimates have been reported, based on analytical models of catch and landings, with observed values near maximum catches. However, the SSAP noted that even if catches above MSY persist for 2 or 3 years, overfishing is not likely to occur due to

environmental fluctuations. The SSAP believes that parent stock numbers, as discussed in the following, are the best proxies for use in determining if overfishing is occurring or if a penaeid stock is overfished.

The SSAP recommended the following definitions for MSY:

Brown Shrimp - MSY is the annual harvest level, estimated at between 67 and 104 million pounds, that does not result in recruitment overfishing.

White Shrimp - MSY for white shrimp is the annual harvest level, estimated at between 35 and 71 million pounds, that does not result in recruitment overfishing.

Pink Shrimp - MSY for pink shrimp is the annual harvest level, estimated at between 6 and 19 million pounds, that does not result in recruitment overfishing.

Because these species are an annual crop, the SSAP believed that there were no biological reasons to set OY below MSY and recommended that OY be equal to MSY.

The SSAP reviewed various alternatives of the definition of overfishing and recommended that the overfishing threshold be defined as a fishing mortality rate (F) that results in the parent stock number for any of the penaeid species being reduced below the following minimum levels:

Brown Shrimp - 125 million individuals, age 7+ months during the November through February period.

White Shrimp - 330 million individuals, age 7+ months during the May through August period.

Pink Shrimp - 100 million individuals, age 5+ months during the July through June year.

The SSAP also recommended that the determination of overfishing should not occur unless the parent stock number was reduced below these aforementioned levels for 2 consecutive years.

NOAA Fisheries had approved the Council's previous recommendation from the Generic Sustainable Fisheries Act Amendment for the overfished threshold based on the National Standard 1 Guidelines that allow a value as low as 50% of the MSY level. Since the minimum parent stock numbers used as the definition of overfishing have been shown to provide sufficient recruits to produce MSY within the range recommended, the SSAP recommended status quo as follows:

Brown Shrimp - 63 million individuals, age 7+ months during the November through February period.

White Shrimp - 165 million individuals, age 7+ months during the May through August period.

Pink Shrimp - 50 million individuals, age 5+ months during the July through June year.

The SSAP believed that the parent stock numbers for all three species have remained well above the MSY parent stock minimum for about 30 years and has maintained adequate spawning potential. Overfishing does not appear imminent for any of the three penaeid species in the Gulf.

The SSAP also examined status criteria for royal red shrimp and rock shrimp. The SSAP felt that new biological and distribution data are needed before the quality of the current royal red shrimp MSY estimate can be improved. They also felt that OY should be equal to MSY and supported the previously recommended range for royal red shrimp MSY of between 392,000 and 650,000 pounds. The SSAP recommended that overfishing be defined as a fishing mortality rate (F) that results in catch exceeding MSY for 2 consecutive years and that the overfished condition be defined as a catch level that exceeds 200% of the catch at MSY for 2 consecutive years. The SSAP decided not to consider of definitions for MSY, OY, overfishing, and an overfished status until the Council decides whether to add this stock to the management unit. As with royal red shrimp, the SSAP felt that additional data on the rock shrimp fishery in the Gulf was needed; consequently the SSAP also recommended that the Council consider the array of alternatives that would require permits for vessels harvesting rock shrimp in the Gulf EEZ.

COUNCIL REVIEWS AMENDMENT 21 OPTIONS PAPER (STEAMBOAT LUMPS AND MADISON/SWANSON RESERVES)

At its November meeting, the Gulf Council reviewed the Options Paper for Amendment 21 to the Reef Fish FMP, which includes alternatives suggested during the scoping meetings. The primary focus of this amendment is determine if the Steamboat Lumps and Madison/Swanson marine reserves need to be continued in time. These reserves were established in June 2000 through an August 1999 regulatory amendment as part of a package of regulations that were proposed in response to a NOAA Fisheries determination that, based on a 1997 stock assessment, the gag stock was undergoing overfishing and approaching an overfished condition. In addition to the NOAA Fisheries status determination, there was also a concern that the proportion of male gag in the population has decreased through selectively removing males by fishing.

The regulation package implemented in 2000 included creating the Steamboat Lumps and Madison/Swanson marine reserves for a period of four years, with a prohibition on harvest of all species except for those managed by the NOAA Fisheries Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Division (billfish, swordfish, oceanic sharks, and tunas other than black tuna). The purpose of limiting the reserves to four years duration was to allow research into their impacts on gag and other species that occupy the habitat to be evaluated before deciding whether to continue them. The regulations also included a seasonal closure on commercial harvest of gag, black grouper and red grouper during part of the peak gag spawning season, February 15th to March 15th, a minimum size limit increase for gag from 20 to 24 inches total length for the commercial fishery, and a minimum size limit increase for gag from 20 to 22 inches total length for the recreational fishery¹.

¹ The regulatory amendment also proposed that the recreational minimum size limit be subsequently raised in annual 1-inch increments until it reached 24 inches total length. However, that proposal was disapproved by NOAA Fisheries due to concern that a 24-inch minimum

At the time that the marine reserves were created, the Council asked the NOAA Fisheries HMS Division to adopt compatible regulations to prohibit fishing for species under their jurisdiction within the reserves. However, a legal challenge was filed by the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) regarding the need to prohibit fishing for species higher up in the water column which are commonly fished by trolling. Subsequently, the NOAA Fisheries Highly Migratory Species Division and CCA reached an agreement whereby the Council's request would be held in abeyance while NOAA Fisheries conducted research to answer the following questions:

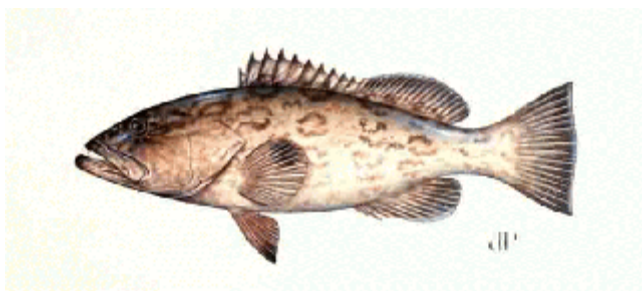
- ! Can recreational fishers trolling for coastal migratory pelagic species access the deep reef fishes at the shelf-edge (200-400 ft.) that Madison-Swanson and Steamboat Lumps reserves occur?
- ! If downriggers can access reef species, what is the depth or effective distance-off-bottom for catching snapper/grouper?
- ! Are there seasonal differences in susceptibility of deep species to trolling?
- ! Can enforcement officials surveying the areas detect depth of trolling by recreational vessels from surface observations?

NOAA Fisheries in-house research projects, in association with a MARFIN funded project being conducted by Florida State University, is examining these questions, with a project duration of May 2001 - May 2003. The results of these projects will be made available to the Gulf Council in May 2003 prior to taking final action on this amendment.

In Secretarial Reef Fish Amendment 1, submitted to NOAA Fisheries in September 2002 and currently

size limit on the recreational fishery would have a disproportionate impact compared to a 24-inch size limit on the commercial fishery, which fishes in deeper water on average and tends to catch larger gag.

under review by NOAA Fisheries, regulations to implement a ten-year rebuilding plan for the overfished red grouper stock include a proposal to repeal the seasonal closure on commercial harvest of gag, black grouper and red grouper during February 15th to March 15th. The repeal was proposed because the one-month closed season did not appear to be effective in reducing red grouper fishing mortality, resulted in increased fishing effort in the weeks before and after the closure, and contributed to economic disruptions in the grouper fishery. However, repeal of the closed season, if approved by NOAA Fisheries, will leave the reserves as the only management measures remaining in place that provide protection for



at least some of the gag spawning aggregations, and protection for a portion of the male gag population, which tends to remain offshore year-round.

In May 2002, NOAA Fisheries informed the Council that, based on a new 2001 gag stock assessment which found that the gag stock was in an improved condition, the stock will be reclassified to not undergoing overfishing and not overfished. This designation will appear in the 2003 Report to Congress on the Status of Fisheries.

The reserves expire four years after their implementation, on June 19, 2004, unless continued beyond that time by a plan amendment. The purpose of this amendment is to evaluate whether these reserves should continue, and to determine whether changes in the fishing restrictions within the reserves are warranted. The need for this amendment is that, if the reserves are allowed to expire, the possible protections afforded by the reserves to a portion of the gag spawning aggregations and male gag, and to other species within the Steamboat Lumps and Madison-Swanson habitats area, will cease.

Actions in this amendment include:

- ! Continuation of Marine Reserves - Benefits of the marine reserves include protection of spawning aggregations of gag and other species from intervention by fishing gear as well as protection of a portion of the male gag population year-round. Protection of both spawning aggregations and a portion of the male population is an integral part of rebuilding gag populations to OY levels. Alternatives considered range from allowing the reserves to expire in 2004 to maintaining them indefinitely.
- ! Fishing Restrictions Within the Reserves - The original fishing restrictions in the marine reserves prohibited fishing by any means and for all species except those managed by NOAA Fisheries HMS, and a request was made by the Council to NOAA Fisheries HMS to adopt compatible restrictions for the species that they manage. However, members of the fishing community questioned the need to include surface trolling in the restrictions, given that the primary reason for the reserves was to benefit gag and other bottom dwelling species. Alternatives considered in this section range from a prohibition of all types fishing to allowing for trolling for coastal migratory pelagics (e.g., mackerels and cobia) and HMS species (e.g., tunas and swordfish).
- ! Seasonal Regulations - The marine reserves were created as part of a regulatory amendment to provide protection primarily for gag spawning aggregations and male gag. Peak gag spawning occurs during the late winter and early spring months, therefore closing these months to fishing for gag should afford some protection to the spawning aggregations. Alternatives in this section range from keeping the reserves closed year round to just closing them in February and March.

COUNCIL TAKES FINAL ACTION ON SECRETARIAL AMENDMENT 2 TO REEF FISH FMP

At its November meeting, the Gulf Council approved sending Secretarial Amendment 2 to the Reef Fish FMP to the Secretary of Commerce (SOC) for implementation. The purpose of this amendment is to: 1) specify the maximum sustainable yield (MSY), optimum yield (OY), maximum fishing mortality threshold (MFMT), and minimum stock size threshold (MSST) levels for greater amberjack that are in compliance with current fishery management standards; and 2) establish a rebuilding plan for greater amberjack in the Gulf of Mexico. This amendment was developed in response to the determination by NOAA Fisheries that the Gulf of Mexico stock of greater amberjack was overfished, but was not currently experiencing overfishing. NOAA Fisheries had concluded that overfishing was not occurring due to the recent implementation of management measures that were not reflected in the recent stock assessment. These measures included: 1) a reduction in the greater amberjack recreational bag limit from 3 to 1 fish (implemented 1997); 2) a commercial closed season during March, April and May (implemented 1998); and 3) partial protection of misidentified juvenile greater amberjack by establishment of a slot limit on lesser amberjack/banded rudderfish prohibiting harvest between 14 and 22 inches fork length plus an aggregate 5-fish recreational bag limit. As a result of this finding, additional measures to end overfishing were not needed. However, a plan to rebuild the stock that complies with the Sustainable Fisheries Act and the NOAA Fisheries National Standard Guidelines needed to be specified.

The proposed alternatives within this Secretarial amendment for SFA status criteria are as follows:

! MSY for greater amberjack is the yield associated with $F_{30\% \text{ SPR}}$ (proxy for F_{MSY}) when the stock is at equilibrium. The most recent stock assessment estimated the yield at $F_{30\% \text{ SPR}}$ to be 9.5 million pounds (mp).

! OY for greater amberjack is the yield associated with an $F_{40\% \text{ SPR}}$ when the stock is at equilibrium. The most recent stock assessment estimated the yield at $F_{40\% \text{ SPR}}$ to be 8.5 mp.

! Set MFMT = $F_{30\% \text{ SPR}}$ ($F_{30\% \text{ SPR}}$ is currently estimated at 0.25); The greater amberjack stock would be considered undergoing overfishing if the probability that F_{current} is larger than $F_{30\% \text{ SPR}}$ is greater than 50 percent.

! Set MSST to $(1-M) \cdot B_{\text{MSY}}$ or 75 percent of B_{MSY} . Using the proxy of F_{MSY} being $F_{30\% \text{ SPR}}$, B_{MSY} is estimated to be 28.4 mp. Greater amberjack stocks in the Gulf of Mexico will be considered overfished if the probability that B_{current} is less than MSST is greater than 50 percent.

For the rebuilding plan, the proposed alternative is as follows:

Limit the harvest of greater amberjack for 3- year intervals with the expected harvest set at the yield associated with $F_{40\%}$ for the first year of each interval (Rebuild the stock in 7 years). Expected harvest would be 2.9 mp for 2003-2005, 5.2 mp for 2006-2008, 7.0 mp for 2009-2011, and for 7.9 mp for 2012.

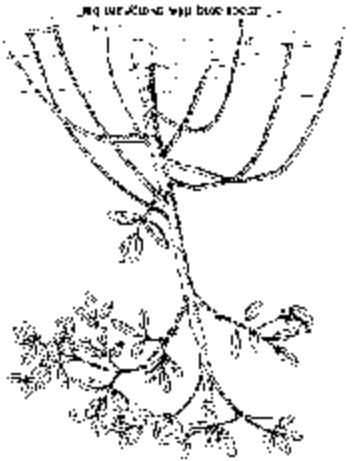
GULF - KING MACKEREL COMMERCIAL FISHERY CLOSED IN NORTHERN FLORIDA WEST COAST SUBZONE

The commercial fishery for Gulf group king mackerel in the northern Florida west coast subzone was closed, effective 12 noon, December 5, 2002, through June 30, 2003. NOAA Fisheries has determined that the commercial quota for the 2002/2003 fishing year has been reached. This action closes the king mackerel commercial fishery in the Gulf of Mexico from the Alabama/Florida state boundary to the Lee/Collier County, Florida boundary. Along with the previous closure of the western zone (October 25, 2002), the commercial fishery for Gulf group king mackerel is now closed from the U.S./Mexico border to the Lee/Collier County, Florida boundary until July 1, 2003.

COUNCIL ASKS FOR AND EXTENSION OF EFH SEIS

The Gulf Council has requested that NOAA Fisheries negotiate for a time extension to complete the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Generic Amendment for Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). The M-SFCMA mandated the identification of EFH for managed species as well as measures to conserve and enhance the habitat necessary to fish to carry out their life cycles. The Council has until the end of January 2003 to complete this document; however, the complexities in developing and analyzing the alternative management measures has taken more time than anticipated. To write the EIS portion of the generic amendment, the Gulf Council has contracted with MRAG Americas, Inc., a consulting firm that specializes in marine fishery resource science and management.

In 1998, the Gulf Council developed a single Generic EFH Amendment to apply to all seven Gulf FMPs. The Generic EFH Amendment contained an environmental assessment (EA) rather than an EIS, due to the conclusion that there was a finding of no significant impact (FONSI). The NOAA Fisheries partially approved the Generic Amendment, but found that it did not consider and assess all managed species or all fishing gears with potential to damage fish habitat. Additionally, a Federal Court Joint Stipulation and Order (American Oceans Campaign [AOC] et al. v. Daley et al., Civ. No. 99-982 [D.D.C.]) determined the amendment did not comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements, and established a schedule for new EISs to be developed. This Joint Stipulation and Order (or 'settlement agreement') stemmed from a lawsuit filed by seven environmental groups and two fishing associations which covered fishery management plan amendments developed by the New England, Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean, Pacific, and North Pacific Councils. The Court Order did allow the approved portions of the Gulf Generic Amendment to be enforced.



As part of the settlement agreement in (AOC) et al. v. Daley et al., the NOAA Fisheries and Regional Fishery Management Councils are preparing new environmental impact statements (EISs) for the EFH components of many fishery management plans. These new EISs must assess a range of potential alternatives to designate EFH; identify habitat areas of particular concern (HAPC); and prevent, mitigate or minimize the adverse effects of fishing on EFH to the extent practicable, using the best available scientific information.

In addition to addressing adverse fishing impacts, the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires Federal agencies that authorize, fund, or conduct activities that "may adversely affect" EFH to work with NOAA Fisheries to develop measures that prevent or minimize damage to EFH. Federal agencies proposing to dredge or fill habitats in or near EFH, for instance, must consult with NOAA Fisheries to develop EFH conservation measures if the action may adversely affect EFH. While NOAA Fisheries does not have veto authority over federal projects adversely affecting EFH, this mandate enables NOAA Fisheries to provide guidance to Federal action agencies on ways to tailor their projects to minimize harm to EFH. By requiring the consideration of impacts on EFH from both fishing and non-fishing activities, the Magnuson-Stevens Act ensures that NOAA Fisheries takes a more holistic approach to fish habitat protection.

Furthermore, by providing EFH conservation recommendations before an activity begins, NOAA Fisheries and the Councils may help to prevent adverse effects on habitat before they occur. This is more efficient and more precautionary than responding to habitat damage after it has occurred. EFH conservation should lead to more sustainable fisheries, and provide benefits to fishers and coastal communities.

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

COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

Monday, January 13, 2003

Shrimp Management Committee

- Texas Closure
 - Review of the Texas Industry
 - NMFS Biological Report
 - NMFS Economic Report
 - Shrimp AP Recommendations
 - Committee Recommendations
- Draft Amendment 13 Options Paper
 - Staff Revisions
 - Committee Recommendations

Mackerel Management Committee

- Draft Regulatory Amendment/EA
 - Staff Presentation
 - Committee Recommendations

Reef Fish Management Committee

- TAC for Red and Yellowedge Groupers
 - RFSAP Report
 - SEP Report
 - SSC Recommendations
 - AP Recommendations
 - Committee Recommendations
- Draft Reef Fish Amendment 18 Options Paper
- Draft Reef Fish Amendment 21
- Penalties for Violations of red snapper ITQ System
- Violation of Western Longline Prohibited Area

Tuesday, January 14, 2003

Reef Fish Management Committee (Continued)

Habitat Protection Committee

- Draft EIS for EFH Amendment
 - MRAG Presentation
 - Committee Recommendations

COUNCIL AGENDA

Wednesday, January 15, 2003

- I. Call to Order and Introductions
- II. Adoption of Agenda
- III. Approval of Minutes
- IV. Public Testimony²
 - a. Cooperative Texas Shrimp Closure
 - b. Yellowedge and Red Grouper TAC and Regulatory Recommendations
- V. Committee Reports
 - a. Habitat Protection
 - b. Reef Fish Management

Thursday, January 16, 2003

- V. Committee Reports (Continued)
 - c. Shrimp Management
 - d. Mackerel Management
- VI. Draft Red Snapper IFQ Profile
 - a. Discussion of ITQ/IFQ System
 - b. Completion of ITQ Profile
- VII. SAFMC Liaison Report
- VIII. Enforcement Reports
- IX. Regional Administrator's Report
- X. Directors' Reports
- XI. 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.

² **Persons testifying must turn in the registration card prior to the start of the testimony period.**



Gulf Council members and others in front of a static display of a USCG Falcon jet.

GULF COUNCIL TAKES COAST GUARD TRAINING FLIGHT

At its November meeting, Council members, Council staff, and NMFS staff were treated to a training flight on a United States Coast Guard (USCG) C-130 aircraft that was arranged by Lieutenant Commander David Cinalli. The event began at the District 7 (D7) USCG air station in Miami, Florida with a briefing by USCG personnel on various aspects of marine safety and enforcement. Speakers touched on topics such as asset availability, at sea rescues, and VMS. Next on the agenda was a static display of a USCG HH-65 Dolphin helicopter and a HU-25 Falcon jet. These allowed attendees to see first hand how these aircraft can carry out their safety and enforcement duties.

The main event was a USCG Fisheries training mission in a C-130 aircraft that flew out to the Tortugas shrimp grounds where plane intercepted the shrimp fleet. Council members were able to see first hand how the USCG is able to monitor fishing vessels. Even flying at 1,500 feet altitude and 2-3 miles away from the fleet, cameras on board the airplane could clearly discern details such as a vessel's name, the vessel's rigging, and people working on the deck. The C-130 also carried the forward-looking infra-red (FLIR) system that allowed the USCG personnel to see images quite clearly during low-light or night time conditions.

The day finished up with a dinner at Rear Admiral Jay Carmichael's Flag Quarters and provided the opportunity not only for the Council to meet the USCG D7 staff, but to further build the critical relationships and joint cooperation that the USCG has shared with the Gulf Council. The briefing, training flight, and hospitality provided by the USCG were much appreciated by the Council. The lessons learned will certainly be remembered as the Council continues to develop regulations to manage the Gulf fisheries.

GULF COUNCIL WELCOMES NEW STAFF MEMBER

The Gulf Council welcomes new staff economist Dr. Timothy Goode. Dr. Goode will be conducting socioeconomic analyses of proposed fishery management measures. These analyses will include cost/benefit and distributive impacts of regulations, and the evaluation of fishing regulations on small business entities.

Dr. Goode recently received his doctorate from Clemson University where he conducted economic analysis and risk analysis on the Partitioned Aquaculture System designed and built by Clemson. Prior to working on his degree at Clemson, Dr. Goode worked as a business and networking specialist with the United Nations Development Program/Small Business Development Corporation, a management and planning advisor in Fiji with the United States Peace Corps, and has served in the United States Naval Submarine Force.

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. GULF FISHERY NEWS or the Gulf Council office can be contacted at 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: gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org Website: <http://www.gulfcouncil.org>

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.

March Meeting:

March 10-13, 2003
Adam's Mark Hotel
64 South Water Street
Mobile, Al 36602

May Meeting:

May 12-15, 2003
Edgewater Beach Resort
11212 Front Beach Road
Panama City Beach, FL 32407
