



GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL WILL CONVENE A MEETING OF ITS SOCIOECONOMIC PANEL

Tampa, Florida – February 9, 2006 - The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will convene a meeting of its Socioeconomic Panel (SEP) to discuss total allowable catch (TAC) allocation issues for grouper.

Grouper allocation became an issue last year when the Council began developing a regulatory amendment to aid in the recovery of that fishery. During its January meeting, the Council took the first step toward establishing a grouper allocation among the recreational and commercial fishing sectors, and agreed to convene its SEP to recommend the socioeconomic models and other information the Council should use in setting those allocations. The panel's conclusions and recommendations will be reported to the Council during its regularly scheduled meeting March 20 – 23, 2006.

The SEP is made of up social scientists and economists familiar with models and data available on which to base a new allocation scheme. The panel will convene March 2 - 3, 2006 at the Quorum Hotel, 700 North Westshore Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33609. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. Thursday, March 2, 2006, and conclude no later than 12 p.m. on Friday, March 3, 2006. Copies of the agenda can be obtained by calling 813-348-1630.

Although other non-emergency issues not on the agenda may come before the SEP for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (M-SFCMA), those issues may not be the subject of formal action during these meetings. Actions of the SEP will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the agenda and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under Section 305(c) of the M-SFCMA, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take action to address the emergency.

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Dawn Aring at the Council at least five working days prior to the meeting.

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976. The Council prepares fishery management plans designed to manage fishery resources in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico.

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