



GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Gulf Council to Convene its Regularly Scheduled Meeting in Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Tampa, Florida – July 19, 2006 - The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will meet August 14 – 17, 2006 at the Baton Rouge Marriott, 5500 Hilton Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA 70808.

The Council will continue with its deliberations on Joint Reef Fish Amendment 27/Shrimp Amendment 14. The purpose of the amendment is to rebuild the red snapper fishery by the year 2032. The draft public hearing document being presented to the Council contains alternatives such as a possible reduction in total allowable catch (TAC), along with other regulatory changes designed to keep the stock on track with its rebuilding plan. Public hearings for the proposed amendment will be held throughout the gulf coast and are scheduled for September 25 – 28, 2006, with another round scheduled for October 16 – 19, 2006.

In addition, the Council will take final action on a regulatory amendment that will modify the criterion for bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) used in the penaeid shrimp fishery. The goal is to improve BRD performance. Revising the BRD certification criterion to address shrimp trawl bycatch more comprehensively and realistically is expected to increase flexibility, promote innovation, and allow for the certification of BRDs that achieve greater reductions in red snapper bycatch than those currently realized.

Also up for discussion is the much-anticipated stock assessment for gag grouper. The Council will review the SEDAR 10 workshop reports and potential recommendations made by the SSC and Reef Fish AP. In addition, the Council will review SSC and Reef Fish AP recommendations regarding the SEDAR 9 assessment for greater amberjack, gray triggerfish, and vermilion snapper.

The Council will also hear a report from staff on the status of Reef Fish Amendment 29, which deals with the possible establishment of an individual fishing quota (IFQ) system for grouper and/or the entire reef fish fishery.

Public testimony is scheduled for Wednesday, August 16, 2006, from 12:15 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. and will be accepted on the following issues:

Regulatory Amendment on BRD Certification
Exempted Fishing Permits (if any)

The Council will hold an open public comment session for citizens to address the Council on fishery issues that may not be on the agenda. Comments will be heard from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Also on Wednesday, NOAA Fisheries Service will hold a public workshop to provide a general demonstration of the on-line capabilities to implement the Red Snapper Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) System. This presentation, which begins at 6:30 p.m., is solely for the purpose of soliciting input from the Council and potential users of the system in an effort to make the tool user friendly, concise and responsive to Reef Fish Amendment 26.

Thursday's agenda includes Council deliberation and action on committee recommendations established earlier in the week.

For a complete agenda or for copies of documents pertaining to any of these issues call or E-mail the Council office. Anyone wishing to testify before the Council should register prior to the start of the scheduled public comment period.

Although other non-emergency issues not on the agenda may come before the Council and Committees 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 Council and Committees will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the agendas 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.

The established times for addressing items on the agenda may be adjusted as necessary to accommodate the timely completion of discussion relevant to the agenda items. In order to further allow for such adjustments and completion of all items on the agenda, the meeting may be extended from, or completed prior to the date established in this notice. Meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Tina Trezza at the Council five 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 Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the U.S. Gulf of Mexico.

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