



# GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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## Gulf Council to Convene its Regularly Scheduled Meeting in Point Clear, Alabama

**Tampa, Florida – December 29, 2006** - The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will meet January 22 – 26, 2007 at the Grand Hotel Marriott, One Grand Boulevard, Point Clear, Alabama.

During the weeklong meeting, the Joint Reef Fish/Shrimp Management Committees plan to resume deliberations on Joint Reef fish Amendment 27/Shrimp Amendment 14. The Council at its August meeting delayed discussions on that amendment until after the first of the year in order to collect more data. The amendment proposes to reduce directed and incidental fishing mortality on the red snapper stock and manage effort in the shrimp fishery to prevent excessive bycatch of juvenile red snapper. Under consideration are alternatives to reduce total allowable catch (TAC) for red snapper, along with other regulatory changes designed to keep the red snapper stock on track with its rebuilding plan.

The committees also will discuss an options paper for Shrimp Amendment 15. The options paper examines alternatives to further reduce bycatch and effort in the penaeid shrimp fishery, and to improve enforcement through the requirement of vessel monitoring systems.

Other items under consideration by the joint committee include presentations - *Red Snapper Juvenile Densities off Texas* and *Updated Rebuilding Projections for Red Snapper*, and reports from the Shrimp Effort Workgroup, the Ad Hoc Shrimp Effort Management Advisory Panel (AP), and the Shrimp AP.

The Reef Fish Management Committee will meet to take final action on a regulatory amendment for vermilion snapper. Since the latest stock assessment indicates vermilion snapper is not overfished or undergoing overfishing, the regulatory amendment will make appropriate adjustments to the reef fish fishery management plan to potentially remove some restrictions previously imposed.

Reef Fish Amendments 29 and 30 will also be discussed. The committee will consider recommendations by the Ad Hoc Grouper IFQ Advisory Panel on the development of Amendment 29/grouper IFQ, as well as review a scoping document for Amendment 30, which contains alternatives to stop overfishing and set SFA parameters for gag grouper, greater amberjack, gray triggerfish, and red grouper.

Other Committee items on the agenda include the review of an options paper for an Aquaculture Amendment by the Joint Reef Fish, Mackerel/Red Drum Committees, and discussions on a shark rebuilding plan and proposed regulatory changes to the swordfish regulations by the Migratory Species Management Committee.

Public testimony is scheduled for Thursday, January 25, 2007, from 8:45 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and will be accepted on Exempted Fishing Permits (if any) and the proposed vermilion snapper regulatory amendment. The Council will also hold an open public comment session for citizens to address the Council on fishery issues that may not be on the agenda. Those comments will be heard from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Thursday's agenda also includes Council deliberation and action on committee recommendations established earlier in the week. Deliberations are expected to continue through to Friday, ending by 10:30 a.m.

For a complete agenda or for copies of documents pertaining to any of these issues, please 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 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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