



GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Gulf Council to Convene its Regularly Scheduled Meeting in Destin, Florida

Tampa, Florida – March 5, 2007 - The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will meet March 26 - 30, 2007 at the Embassy Suites Hotel, 570 Scenic Gulf Drive, Destin, Florida.

During the weeklong meeting, the Joint Reef Fish/Shrimp Management Committee will review recommendations from the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) along with the public hearing draft for Joint Reef fish Amendment 27/Shrimp Amendment 14. 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, as well as 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 Reef Fish Amendment 31/Shrimp Amendment 15. The options paper examines alternatives to further reduce bycatch and effort in the penaeid shrimp fishery, and improve enforcement through the requirement of vessel monitoring systems.

Other items under consideration by the joint committee include reports from the Southeast Fishery Science Center on release mortality in relation to depth and dolphin predation, and a longline survey of adult red snapper.

The Reef Fish Management Committee will hear an update on Reef Fish Amendment 28 (grouper allocation) and consider recommendations by the Ad Hoc Grouper Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Advisory Panel on the development of Amendment 29/grouper IFQ.

Of particular interest is the committee review of scoping hearing comments and SSC recommendations for Reef Fish Amendment 30, which contains alternatives to stop overfishing and set SFA parameters for gag grouper, red grouper, greater amberjack, and gray triggerfish.

Finally, the Committee will select members for a newly created Ad Hoc Recreational Red Snapper AP and develop a charge for the group, which will develop new ideas to manage the recreational and for-hire red snapper fisheries.

A public hearing draft of a proposed Aquaculture Amendment will be discussed by the Joint Reef Fish/Mackerel/Red Drum Management Committee. The Committee will also consider recommendations from the SSC on completing a red drum SEDAR stock assessment.

The recently revived Data Collection Committee will review a discussion paper on a possible amendment to require trip tickets for the recreational-for-hire sector. And the Mackerel Management Committee will again review a report of the joint Mackerel Management committees from September 2006, which contains alternatives for potential changes to the mixing regulations for Gulf and Atlantic group King mackerel.

On Tuesday, beginning at 6:30 p.m., NOAA will hold a scoping meeting regarding the newly reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act requirement to set annual catch limits by 2010, which will end overfishing. With assistance from the public, NOAA will develop guidelines to help the eight regional fishery management councils and NOAA Fisheries Service modify fishery management plans to meet the new requirement.

Wednesday evening, from 6:00 – 8:00, a Red Snapper IFQ update and Q&A session will be held for IFQ shareholders and other interested parties.

Public testimony is scheduled for Thursday, March 29, 2007, from 8:45 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and will be

accepted on Exempted Fishing Permits (if any). 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 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

Thursday's agenda includes Council deliberation and action on committee recommendations made earlier in the week. Deliberations are expected to continue through to Friday, ending by noon.

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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