



GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Opportunities for Public Input on Proposed Reef Fish Amendment 30 - Gag, Red Grouper, Greater Amberjack, and Gray Triggerfish

[Note: After completion of the Amendment 30 scoping document, the Southeast Data, Assessment and Review (SEDAR) Steering Committee recommended additional scientific review of the 2006 gag assessment. Consequently, it is possible that the gag and red grouper portions of proposed Amendment 30 may be separated out and a revised version presented at a later time following the review.]

Tampa, Florida – March 9, 2007 - The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) has scheduled a series of scoping meetings to solicit public comment on a proposed Amendment 30 to the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan. A list of meeting dates and locations is provided on the reverse of this notice.

For stakeholders and other interested parties who are unable to participate in the scoping meetings, comments and suggestions can be submitted to the Council via e-mail: gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org, US mail: 2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607, or fax: (813) 348-1711. Other opportunities to provide input on this amendment will include a series of public hearings that will be scheduled later this summer, a final public hearing which will be held during a future Council meeting, and open public comment sessions held at each Council meeting.

Interested parties are encouraged to participate in this process. While written comments on the scoping document should be received on or before March 23, 2007, comments on the Amendment will be accepted throughout the process. Copies of the [scoping document](#) can be obtained by calling the Council at 813-348-1630, or by e-mailing the Council at gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org.

Amendment 30 deals with possible changes to the management of gag, red grouper, greater amberjack, and gray triggerfish. Recent stock assessments completed under the Southeast Data, Assessment and Review (SEDAR) program, indicate that management changes may be needed.

For Gag, the stock biomass has been declining since 2003 and is projected to continue to decline unless fishing mortality is reduced by 10 to 34 percent. In addition, management targets and thresholds consistent with the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996 (SFA) must be reviewed and adopted.

The red grouper rebuilding plan implemented in 2004, combined with a strong recruitment year class in 2000, has resulted in a stock that is currently above its maximum sustainable yield (MSY) biomass threshold and slightly above to its optimum yield (OY) target level. As a result, a 15% increase in red grouper TAC, and management measures to achieve that increase, may be implemented while still maintaining OY.

A recent stock assessment for greater amberjack (SEDAR 9) found that the stock continues to undergo overfishing and is not meeting the rebuilding targets established in its 2003 rebuilding plan. Consequently, the rebuilding plan needs to be revised.

Gray triggerfish were found to be undergoing overfishing based on a 2006 stock assessment (SEDAR 9). A 35 percent reduction in landings is necessary to end overfishing. In addition, management targets and thresholds consistent with SFA need to be reviewed and adopted.

All scoping meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. and will conclude when public testimony is completed.

Meeting dates and locations are as follows:

March 19, 2007

City of Orange
Beach
Parks & Recreation
27235 Canal Rd
Orange Beach, AL
251-981-6028

IP Hotel
850 Bayview Ave
Biloxi, MS
228-432-3216

March 20, 2007

Edgewater Beach
Resort
11212 Front Beach
Panama City, FL
800-331-6338

Four Points
Sheraton
6401 Veterans
Memorial Blvd
New Orleans, LA
504-885-5700

March 21, 2007

Best Western
6400 Dudley Drive
Naples, FL
239-643-6655

Hilton
5400 Seawall Blvd
Galveston, TX
409-744-1500

March 22, 2007

City of Madeira
Municipal Building
300 Municipal Drive
Madeira Beach, FL
727-391-9951

Meetings are open to the public and are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to the Council office within five business days of the meeting date.

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 Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council prepares fishery management plans designed to manage fishery resources in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico.

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