

TAB B, No. 9(b)

Reef Fish Amendment 39: Regional Management of Recreational Red Snapper Public Hearings were held in the following locations:

Mon, October 19, 2015

Courtyard Marriott Gulfport Beachfront
1600 East Beach Blvd.
Gulfport, MS 39501

and

Hilton Garden Inn
6717 South Padre Island Dr.
Corpus Christi, TX 78412

Tues, October 20, 2015

Renaissance Mobile
Riverview Plaza Hotel
64 South Water Street
Mobile AL 36602

and

Embassy Suites San Antonio
10110 US Highway 281 N
San Antonio, TX 78216

Wed, October 21, 2015

Hampton Inn & Suites
2320 Gulf Freeway South
League City, TX 77573

Thurs, October 22, 2015

Embassy Suites
570 Scenic Gulf Drive
Destin, FL 332550

Tues, October 27, 2015

Hilton St. Petersburg
Carillon Park
950 Lake Carillon Dr.
St. Petersburg, FL 33716

Wed, October 28, 2015

Webinar

Mon, November 2, 2015

Doubletree
4964 Constitution Avenue
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

Summaries of Public Hearings

Gulfport, Mississippi October 19, 2015

Council/Staff

Joe Jewel
Ed Swindell
Leann Bosarge
Ava Lasseter
Bernie Roy

41 members of the public attended.

Jim Brumfield – CCA member

His organization has the objective of protecting the rights of recreational fishermen. He supports local control of fisheries. Mississippi DMR would give more accessibility and more flexibility in managing their assets. Mississippi does a great job in the state fisheries and they trust the DMR to work with the Council effectively.

Clarence Seymour – Charter operator

He represents 32 of 41 reef fish permit holders in Mississippi. He spoke with Mississippi's DMR twice. He is concerned about sector separation. He wants the charter fleet to remain as its own entity. He supports Action 2, Alternative 2. As a business model, being under the federal umbrella helps charter operators provide access to the rest of recreational anglers who do not own a boat. Regional management would be perfect for the private sector; it's a good model for them. He provided a petition signed by federally permitted Mississippi charter operators as part of his testimony.¹ They need representation as a charter industry as a whole. Recreational anglers got a good season, even though sector separation was passed. With the 30B provision, he cannot go in state waters. He bought into the federal system in 1997 when he got his permit.

Chance Seymour – Charter operator

He went snapper fishing 9 times out of 44 days. He asks the Council to vote for Action 2, Alternative 2 in Amendment 39.

Pat Grannan –

Supports Amendment 39.

Jay Trochesset – Charter operator

His family has been in the charter fishing business for 50 years. He supports Action 2, Alternative 2 in Amendment 39.

David Wells –

Supports Amendment 39.

Mike Foto – Charter operator

He has had his permit since 1997. He supports Action 2, Alternative 2, and wants to keep the sector separate. The 45 days this year gave them a good season, better than 9 days. He supports letting the states manage the private recreational anglers.

Tom Becker – President of Charter Boat Association

He says the charter industry needs to be controlled by Alternative 2 (Action 2) in Amendment 39. It's taken a long time to go through all the rules, and this is one of biggest issues they've ever had.

Charles Guilford – Charter operator, Panama City Boatman's Association (PCBA)

He is from Mexico Beach, Florida, but cannot attend the Florida meeting. PCBA is opposed to Amendment 39 for several reasons. He has been in the charter industry for 39 years and was a

¹ Available at:

http://gulfcouncil.org/fishery_management_plans/Public%20Comment/RF39_Regional_Management/RF39.pdf

commercial fisherman, too. The fishing restrictions for commercial and charter operators from the Council on red snapper has gotten the fish out of their natural order, so they are causing other species to be out of natural order. He says they need better information in Florida. They are supposed to get the largest amount of quota, but that is not fair to other regions or the recreational fishers in the entire Gulf, and areas like Panama City. They (PCBA) are opposed to sector separation.

Steve Tomeny – Charter operator

He has many Mississippi customers on his boats. He has been in the charter business for over 39 years, and every fishing day they get is important. He has fought hard for sector separation and wants no part of regional management for his charter vessels. He prefers Action 2, Alternative 2. He has no problem with regional management for private anglers. Concerning the other alternatives, such as reuniting the sectors, they did that and it did not work well for them [charters]. They have had their divorce and he wants to stay divorced. He has nothing against private anglers, but the charter vessels are an easier group to regulate, as they are limited in number. They are also proposing to have more stringent accountability measures, which they are bringing on themselves. He says Amendment 39 is terribly complicated. Effort shifting could occur, as anglers trailer their boats to whichever region is open. He is not against regional management as long as he does not have to participate in it.

Kenny Barhanovich – Charter operator

He has been in the charter industry since 1960. He supports sector separation, Alternative 2. Separating charters from private anglers has been great for his business.

Brian Prendergast – Recreational angler

Regarding the charter operators who are here, he understands their perspective. But, if they are kept separate, with separate regulations, he wants to ensure private anglers get their fair share. This year, they got 10 days with only one weekend in it. He supports Amendment 39.

Ralph Humphrey – Recreational angler

He supports: Action 1, Alternative 2; let the states do it.

Action 2, Alternative 4.

Action 3, Alternative 5; he trusts his State's scientists.

Action 5, Preferred Alternative 2.

He thinks Action 6 is very complicated and he can't understand the alternatives.

Action 7, Preferred Alternative 2; the states have a good plan in place by making them file trip reports. He doesn't trust the Gulf Council or federal management.

Tom Steber – Charter operator; President of Alabama Charter Fishermen's Association

100% of the association's charter boats are in favor of sector separation. They are all going to have VMS and electronic logbooks by the end of the month. They want to be accountable and appreciate the opportunity to work towards that goal.

Brandon Morano – Charter operator

He has been in business since 1995. He remembers when there was no limit on snapper. Since then, the regulations have become more restrictive, but he has not seen a reduction in fish out there. He supports Action 2, Alternative 2.

Frank Becker – Charter operator

He supports Action 2 Alternative 2.

Dustin Trochesset – Charter operator

He is a third generation charter captain. They have been fighting with and against the Council for a long time. They started the Gulf CCA, but they don't put their stickers on their trucks anymore. The federal government regulating the charter industry is the best plan for them. The state could do a good job, but due to the politics, Action 2, Alternative 2 is the best option for them. It's also the most likely option to pass. He says the state will take good care of its private recreational anglers.

**Corpus Christi, Texas
October 19, 2015**

Council/Staff

Robin Riechers

Emily Muehlstein

Charlotte Schiaffo

46 members of the public attended.

Shane Cantrell – Charter operator, Galveston, Texas.

Supports Action 2, Alternative 2. Leave the charter component outside of regional management. Up until now, the charter industry has not seen any reason to believe that they would gain from being managed by the state. There is more value for the anglers on charter boats and charter businesses if they are federally managed by Amendments 41 and 42.

Troy Williamson – Recreational angler, Corpus Christi, Texas.

Supports Action 2, Alternative 4. If sector separation is ended and regional management is applied to everyone it will be a greater benefit to the anglers to allow the professional state managers to make decisions. This would allow fishermen to avoid the influence of special interest groups at the federal level.

Rick Hemper – Recreational angler, fishes on charter boats

Supports Action 2, Alternative 2. Charter boats should remain separate from regional management. He would like charter boats to be federally managed. Law enforcement is great but they are very limited by their resources. There is lots of poaching in federal waters from private anglers, and he always sees professional captains obeying the law.

Abby Webster – Recreational angler, Freeport, Texas.

Let sector separation remain so the captains can run their businesses. Let the private recreational fishermen be managed regionally if that is what they want.

Scott Hickman – Charter operator, Galveston, Texas.

The charter boat sector wants to do their own thing. He can run his business better than the government. This document is very confusing and contains too much information to grasp in one presentation. He wants to avoid being lumped into regional management as a charter operator. Supports Action 2, Alternative 2 – leave the charter boats out of regional management. Texas Parks and Wildlife can do a great job of managing their private anglers.

Quentin Rush – Recreational angler, fishes on charter boats, Angelton, Texas

Outside of state waters there is no one checking to keep anglers honest. The resources are limited on law enforcement. Private anglers are fishing in federal waters when they're not supposed to. Supports Action 2, Alternative 2, which would allow captains, who do this for a living, to make their own business decisions.

Mike Jennings – Charter operator, Freeport, Texas

Supports Action 2, Alternative 2. He takes recreational anglers out every day to enjoy the resource and simultaneously makes a living off of it. He has a different mindset from a private angler because he runs a business. He is demonized for making a profit. He is providing recreational anglers access to the resource. He has no business telling the private angler how they should be managed; if the private angler feels the state of Texas should manage them then so be it. The same applies in reverse - the private anglers should not tell him how his charter business should be managed.

Jeff Lamar – Recreational angler, fishes on charter boats, Houston, Texas

The captains aren't going to do anything to hurt the resource from which they make a living. He thinks charter boats should be allowed to manage themselves and supports Action 2, Alternative 2.

Daniel Land – Charter operator, Port Aransas, Texas

Supports Action 2, Alternative 2. The charter boats should be separated from regional management. Lots of his customers can't afford boats and can barely hire a charter. He has the joy of watching those fishermen go offshore for one day of the year. He would like to remain federally managed so he can make a living for himself and make his own business plan so that he can potentially lower rates to provide more anglers with the opportunity to fish.

Mike Nugent – Charter operator, Aransas Pass, Texas

It's not accurate to say all charter boats want to remain federally managed. No one really knows what all the charter boats want. That was true for Amendment 40 as well. The state of Texas can manage red snapper way better than the federal agencies can. He fears that the NMFS will water down the control they give the states as a ploy to get them to fail and become scapegoats. He doubts regional management would work, because Dr. Crabtree continues to water down what the states would be given. In its purest form the Aransas Boatman Association would support regional management. If the states would really get control he would support it. Take a

look at enforcement; if Amendment 39 went into effect the state would do a much better job controlling enforcement and poaching. The state of Texas has done a great job managing their fisheries. He doesn't know if it was the Chairman of the Council or Council Staff who messed up and chose to host the hearings for Amendments 41 & 42 in Galveston. He is concerned that the other Gulf States got hearings for all three amendments and Texas only had one scheduled for Amendments 41 and 42.

Mike Miglini – Charter/commercial, Corpus Christi, Texas

Private recreational anglers want regional management, and he supports that. However, the federally permitted charters have worked hard to get what they have and want it to stay that way. He would rather sit in a room with all the federal boats and 43% of the allocation to decide how to manage the fishery. He would rather give this a few years and let the charter boats work out a management plan. He supports Action 2, Alternative 2.

Ron Moser – Recreational angler

Supports Action 1, Alternative 3, and Action 2, Alternative 4. He is a private angler and is very dissatisfied with the Gulf Council and their apportioning of the allocation of fish. This past year as a recreational angler he got 10 days to fish. The for-hire sector had 44 days. As a private angler he believes that it would take 64 fishing days in state waters for him to catch the same amount of fish as the charter boats. The states would do a better job managing the fishery in its entirety. When he is on the water next to charter boats and headboats, he sees lots of discards of red snapper – dead fish floating off. He doesn't have discards as a private angler. The fishing methods are different and the undersized fish harvested on for-hire boats don't survive when thrown back. Additionally, when for-hire boats are fishing for other fish they catch red snapper when targeting other species. He also supports Action 4, Alternative 3, and Action 7, Alternative 2, Option b.

Billy Holmes – Gulf Coast Marine Boat Dealer

He owns a boat dealership and sells to both charter boats and private anglers. Both sides have felt that they have not had good opportunity to enjoy the resource. Ten days is hard for anglers from central Texas. It's hard to coordinate a vacation that way. The season has been way too short. Private anglers have gotten the short end of the stick for quite some time.

Dave Sullivan – Port Aransas Boatman Association

Supports Action 2, Alternative 4. If you think you're in good hands with the federal government – you're wrong. Action 2, Alternative 4 won't keep charter anglers from being able to fish. If charter boats side with the federal agencies they'll get it in the end.

**Mobile, Alabama
October 20, 2015**

Council/Staff

Kevin Anson

Chris Blankenship

Ava Lasseter

Bernie Roy

11 members of the public attended.

Bill Staff – Charter operator

He is proud to be part of an accountable fishery this year. [Given the for-hire season under sector separation] he received a smaller part than by his historical counting, but they had a stable season. He would prefer to stay with federal management. They have had short seasons in recent years due to state non-compliance. He fears what could happen for charter boats in other states under their state's management. He does not want private recreational anglers to suffer and hopes that regional management works for them, but asks that the charter boats be left out.

Dale Woodruff – Charter operator; Orange Beach Fishing Association

He overwhelmingly supports Action 2, Alternative 2 in Amendment 39. The states have been noncompliant for years. If the states want to be a part of the recreational industry, have everyone go compliant for two years first and see what the government could give the States. We could possibly have 60-70 days if all states were compliant. The states can't get along right now as it is. Texas says their state guide boats are equal to federally permitted ones, but that's not true. At the last meeting, several people said that state guide boats are ok with regional management, and they would be if they can get outside those state boundaries longer. But, federally permitted charter boats are bound by the 30B provision, so they can't fish in state waters. You can't put federally permitted charter boats together with state permitted guide boats. It's by choice, and it's the law. He doesn't think regional management will ever work, because the states can't get along. He knows his State will take care of the charter operators, but he chooses to stick together with other federally permitted charter boats. He also supports Amendments 41 and 42.

Gary Bryant – Charter operator

He supports Action 2, Alternative 2 and wants to be left out of Amendment 39. This is not a reflection on his State, he trusts the current state managers in Alabama. But, there is no certainty on who will be the future managers in the State. So, as a charter boat operator, he would like to be left out of Amendment 39 and continue on with Amendments 41 and 42.

Clarence Seymour – Charter operator

He is here to represent reef fish permit holders in Mississippi. Of the federal permit holders in Mississippi, 32 of 41 are in support of Action 2, Alternative 2. He said Mississippi would do really well managing the recreational sector, but in the recent years of Mississippi's management jumbles, charters boats would be best staying with federal management. They bought into the federal program before the permit moratorium and they support the season they had this year under separate management. He would like to know why MRIP's catch data estimated that Mississippi charter landings totaled 300 lbs, versus the estimate for private anglers, which was 0 lbs. He doesn't see how private anglers in Mississippi could complain since they are estimated to catch nothing, but got a longer season. [Provided handout to accompany his testimony, attached to the end of the summaries.]

Randy Boggs – Charter operator

He speaks in opposition to Amendment 39. He only supports Action 2, Alternative 2 and wants charter boats to stay under federal management.

Josh South – Private recreational angler

He accesses the fishery through both private boats and charter boats. In the last six years, he has worked to preserve future access for anglers. He opposes the inclusion of charter boats in Amendment 39, but supports the amendment for private anglers. In the past, there has not been consensus among the Council's state directors, and he's concerned there could be a shift in quota to the western Gulf. He is concerned about the states' resources for managing red snapper in a mixed species fishery. There's been overwhelming opposition by charter operators to be included in Amendment 39, but some state directors have been hostile toward commercial and charter for-hire fishermen in the past, and he does not foresee this changing in the future. He wants to let the charter operators continue work on Amendments 41 and 42. Regional management represents a large power shift in the fishery and we won't know what will happen until after it passes.

Blakeley Ellis – Alabama CCA

He supports Amendment 39, and if it moves forward, he supports Action 2, Alternative 4, to remove the precedent set of dividing charter boats from private anglers. He says you are either catching fish for fun and sharing expenses, paying a captain to take you out to catch that fish for fun, or you are catching the fish commercially for a profit. He is confident that states, especially Alabama, would do a fair and efficient job at managing red snapper. They have proven it with other fisheries. If the Council moves forward with Amendment 39, he supports Action 2, Alternative 4. Data collection that the Council uses through MRIP as best available for stock assessments is overestimating by 900,000 lbs what Alabama's Snappercheck estimated the catch was. Anything to allow the Council and federal government to retain management is the wrong path and we shouldn't head in that direction.

Dennis McKay – Private recreational angler

He feels Amendment 39 is acceptable as long as the federal charter fleet remains under federal control. Private anglers, including those who are boat owners, use the charter fleet to gain access to the water. Amendment 39 is a decent management tool for the states, but not for the charter fleet, and Amendment 40 said that. He supports giving Amendment 40 a chance to work, which Amendments 41 and 42 will do for the charter fleet. He said a shift to State management could undermine those amendments. There are good management tools under Amendments 41 and 42. It would be good to convene an Advisory Panel for recreational anglers, which could help define a good solution for all of us. He suggests working on both Amendment 39 and creating an Advisory Panel. He said it's all about accountability.

April DePaola – Alabama CCA

Amendment 39 began as way for the states to manage a greater portion of their fishery. But, since red snapper would still remain under federal management, Amendment 39 doesn't address the holistic change that anglers need to address the problems with red snapper. With the commercial and charter sectors only supporting regional management for the private recreational anglers, she sees catch shares in the future for these groups, and that is the worst case scenario for anglers. To make Amendment 39 effective, the states must be allowed to manage the entire recreational fishery, including charter and headboat operators. To do that, all anglers should demand that the Council adopt Action 2, Alternative 4, which would eliminate sector separation and allow the states to manage the recreational sector as a single unit.

San Antonio, Texas
October 20, 2015

Council/Staff

Lance Robinson
Emily Muehlstein
Charlotte Schiaffo

8 members of the public attended.

Bob Brumby – Recreational angler

Is confounded that Texas would relinquish control to the federal agencies in any instance. He fishes predominately inshore but occasionally fishes offshore on charter boats and friends' boats. He doesn't think that when he does those two things he should be managed by different entities. He is against sector separation and supports Action 2, Alternative 4.

Roger Ross – Recreational angler

Fishes offshore quite a bit and finds it surprising that the apparent strength of our red snapper population is so strictly regulated by the federal agencies. It is pretty much impossible to fish for anything else because the red snapper are so prevalent. He's confused by the documents so he can't say a whole lot about them. He does know that there are tons of red snapper out there. The bag limits on fish are not as important as the number of days they get to harvest them. He doesn't want to feel forced to go out in weather he shouldn't be going out in because he only has a small window to fish. He would rather have more days.

Steve Hayman – Recreational angler

He's noticed the limits have dropped for inshore fish (red drum, trout, etc.). The Council should follow suit with red snapper and drop the bag limit. Red snapper are very prevalent and he would rather have more days to fish.

League City, Texas
October 21, 2015

Council/Staff

Lance Robinson
Emily Muehlstein
Charlotte Schiaffo

28 members of the public attended.

William Corcoran – Recreational angler
In south Texas there are more red snapper in state waters.

Shane Cantrell – Charter operator, Galveston, Texas
Supports Action 2, Alternative 2. Keep the charter boats out of regional management; they want to be under a Gulf-wide federal management plan. The charter boats enjoyed the 44-day season with the same fish they've been catching historically. The private anglers have been consistently asking for regional management, but the charter boats have not. Amendment 40 is a step in the right direction and he would like to see it made permanent. The states are strongly influenced by private anglers and have a history of making decisions that adversely affect charter boats.

Serena Etie – Charter operator, Freeport, Texas
Supports Action 2, Alternative 2. She would like the charters to stay out of regional management. Use regional management for the private anglers. Charter boats can run their businesses better without the states. They want a VMS and their own quota, so they can take charter trips when they want to. They don't like the way the state manages their data collection and she does not believe they would be capable of managing the fishery as a whole.

Warren Clark – Recreational angler
He has never seen a federal agency run a successful program. This is very convoluted and there are more problems than ever before. For Amendment 39 to be effective the states should manage the entire fishery. He has been both a charter operator and a private angler. Red snapper is a public resource and all citizens should be able to participate in red snapper fishing equally. It shouldn't make any difference if he is charter or private. This system unequally divides the public resource and discriminates between who can afford charters and who can't. The Council should adopt Action 2, Alternative 4.

Bubba Cochran – Commercial and charter
Very few charter boats have asked for regional management. It's mostly private anglers that want to be managed by the states. The Council is already heading in the right direction with Amendments 41 and 42. He is against regional management for the charter industry and supports Action 2, Alternative 2.

Johnny Walker – Charter operator
In the last six or seven years things have been good for the charter industry, especially with last year's season. Amendment 40 allows him to run his business how he wants, and keeps the state

out of his business. The state has had plenty of time to get recreational fishing in order and he doesn't want them to do anything with the charter industry. He supports Action 2, Alternative 2.

Paul Bitner – Charter operator

He agrees that sector separation should be extended. The states can't manage well. There is a difference between the recreational guy from the coast that wants more days and the recreational guys inland that take charter boats to fish and want to choose when to fish. Supports Action 2, Alternative 2. Keep the charter and recreational fishermen separate to allow the private anglers that fish from charters to be able to select when they want to fish.

Tom Hilton – Recreational angler

The fish are a public trust owned by all Americans. Amendment 40 sets the stage for privatization to give the fish to corporations. He doesn't think charter businesses have any right to own the resource. Amendment 40 illustrates the need for regional management; Florida and Alabama comprise 40% of the landings but the Florida private anglers would only get a few days to fish while the Texas anglers would get a significantly larger amount. Texas can manage its own resources. There are more fish and less fishing pressure, which equates to more days for all anglers, including private and charter boats. Texas Parks and Wildlife has proven that they know how to manage wildlife. The federal agencies have proven to be failures by reducing seasons and adding restrictions. With a seven million pound annual catch limit and 1,000 charter boats you would get 29 days to fish. VMS and electronic monitoring would just be big brother over your shoulder. Charter fishing days will go down and charter boats are better off being managed by the State with private anglers using seasons and bag limits.

David Conrad – Charter and commercial

Charter operators fought long and hard for sector separation. He supports Action 2, Alternative 2.

Mike Jennings – Charter operator and Charter Fishing Association

His association sees Amendment 39 and its resurgence as a vessel to kill Amendment 40 rather than actually change the way red snapper is managed. He submits that red snapper is already managed by the states, as each Council member is either directly employed by the State or appointed by the governor. If private anglers want management to be handed over to five individual members on the Council rather than the entire Council, that is fine. He supports Action 2, Alternative 2 for the charter industry.

Greg Ball – Charter operator

The charters should stay out of regional management. If the private anglers want regional management, that's their business. He wants the charter boats to be managed under Amendments 41 and 42. Amendment 40 was great. He plans to put VMS on his boat. It's cheaper to hire a charter than it is to own a boat. The charter boats take out private anglers that don't own their own boats. Supports Action 2, Alternative 2.

Taylor Borel – Charter operator

Wants to push on with Amendments 41 and 42 for the for-hire industry. Charter vessels should not be included in regional management. Supports Action 2, Alternative 2.

Johnny Williams – Headboat operator

The states have not done a good job of managing charter and party boats. The short recreational seasons are due to the states opening their state waters, which does not allow the for-hire boats to fish. The states have not shown that they support the for-hire industry. He doesn't want to tell the private anglers how to manage their industry and charter boats don't want to be a part of regional management. A majority of people don't want to be a part of regional management and he fears what the State of Texas will do if the for-hire boats are included.

Charles Everats – Recreational angler

Charter boats are out to make a living and they need to find a way to do it without taking away from private anglers. When he first came to a meeting he thought it was great that the Council takes input from the people. But, he's since found out that it's a dog-and-pony show. He thinks fishery decisions should be made in the open. The Magnuson-Stevens Act promotes efficiency so that no such measure should have economic efficiency as their sole purpose. It also requires fair representation to commercial and recreational interests. There are charter for-hire members on this Council making decisions that don't represent the recreational anglers. There are tons of charter and commercial fishermen at the meetings, while the recreational anglers are home with their family. Hopefully things going on in this government will change the whole Council.

Tony Bess – Recreational angler

He doesn't know how the creel survey works and has only seen it done once. A majority of the attendees are charter fishermen. He understands they're making money, but there has to be a way for a poor guy like him to take his buddies out fishing when he wants to.

Sam Miller – Charter deckhand

Amendments 40, 41, and 42 will give a more accurate estimate of the fish population based on the data that the for-hire industry can give back. More accurate data would give everyone a better bargaining chip for better management.

Joey Lehderman – Recreational angler

He supports state management and thanks Texas Parks and Wildlife for putting forth the effort. He understands the charter guys want to make money, but there are better ways to make money.

Robert Reynolds – Charter operator

For years he has had a sticker on his boat, and before sector separation came about he was already separated. He can't keep a state water fish. He would like to be held accountable for what is caught and harvested. He doesn't think that accountability will be provided by the states under regional management.

Michael Corcoran – Recreational angler

Would like to lower the federal size limit for red snapper to 15 inches and would like to see anything done to extend the season.

Tommy Nolan – Recreational angler

He wouldn't be nearly as upset as he is if he had 44 days to fish like the charter industry did. He is a boat dealer and had no opportunity to fish this year because the season occurred during the

boat show in Houston. He would have had the opportunity to go fishing this year if he left his boat in his garage and hired a charter instead and that would be insane.

**Destin, Florida
October 22, 2015**

Council/Staff

Martha Bademan
Pamela Dana
Ava Lasseter
Ryan Rindone
Karen Hoak
Bernie Roy

35 members of the public attended.

Jason Mikel – Charter operator

He wants all federal charter operators to be excluded from Amendment 39. He supports Action 2, Alternative 2. He also supports continuing with Amendments 41 and 42.

Pam Anderson – Headboat operator, Anderson's Marina

She is reminded of why we are doing regional management: red snapper is important to our heritage and economy, for Florida and the Gulf. She notes that these are important decisions that shouldn't be made just because someone says it's good, but because it's the right thing to do. Red snapper is what motivates the public to enjoy recreational fishing. She doesn't want the recreational sector squabbling over quota among themselves. FWC knows how to balance the needs of conservation with the economic needs of communities. FWC's job is not to kill jobs and businesses, but NMFS' job is to reduce the number of people fishing in the Gulf. Headboats and charter boats need to stay with the states under regional management. The states are collecting their own data now, in recognition of the flawed data. She prefers Action 6 Alternative 8, and supports the other preferred alternatives.

Chris Schofield – Charter operator

He doesn't like Amendment 39. He wants to move forward with Amendments 41 and 42.

Mike Eller – Charter operator

He said this issue is important to their lives, and the idea of regional management is a recipe for disaster. He said Florida has the most anglers and access, but has less biomass. If we go to regional management, Florida is going to get the least amount of fish because there are so many of us. Texas and Louisiana will be the winners in regional management. He is surprised that FWC is moving forward with regional management, because they will lose. He is opposed to Amendment 39. He says they have the opportunity to move forward with their own system, and they're willing to pay for it. They want their season to be based on that. He hears that private recreational anglers also want to count their fish and be accountable, and asked who is stopping them from doing this? LA Creel is going well, and Florida should play catch up.

Jeff Shoults – Private recreational angler; state-licensed guide boat operator

He runs a private recreational boat to take his customers fishing. He is against Amendment 39 because he doesn't think the State taking over is going to help. Anglers are not going to get more days with regional management. Rather, it is going to let the State put more regulations on him, which he does not support. The only advantage is the dockside enforcement. But, if the states can close federal waters when another State is open, dockside enforcement is out of the picture. He would like to do electronic logbooks and report his red snapper. He would like to see a tag program. He has had the \$2,000 Florida state license for 15 years, and while it would be a pain in the neck, he would deal with tags, because he wants to be part of the solution - it's all about accountability. He doesn't like IFQs because they were given to people as ownership. He knows someone who doesn't own a boat and owns 85,000 lbs of fish and leases all of them. He is completely against IFQs for charter boats and headboats. Having a common season when everyone can go at the same time is fair.

George Eller – Charter operator

He says Amendment 39 would be a disaster for the for-hire industry. He doesn't believe private anglers would throw away 70 days of red snapper fishing [in state waters] in favor of 18 days. He doesn't want the charter fleet to be put back in with unaccountability. He says that in any management plan, you have to have accountability to make it work. The charter industry has been advocating for accountability for a long time. If you don't know how many fish are being caught, you're guessing. With fish tags, you would know how many fish would be caught from the start. He is on the fence about IFQs. He says this whole exercise [Amendment 39] is going to be ineffective, because the feds are never going to sign off on this. The feds never give up anything that they've got. The king mackerel bag limit was reduced to 2 fish and he says they are never going to go back to 3 fish. He is against Amendment 39 100%, as it kills their ability to be accountable. The charter boats are a small universe and an easy target. He wants to stay away from Amendment 39 and asks that the charter boats be able to govern their industry with sector separation. He urges the private sector to get their leaders together and find out what's good for their industry.

Stan Phillips – Charter operator

He said that as a charter operator, he doesn't see a lot of good in Amendment 39 for Florida. If it goes through, he wants Action 2, Alternative 2; leave the charter boats out of it. Private recreational anglers and charter for-hire are way different. The pure recreational anglers have exploded in recent years, even using paddle boards to participate in fishing tournaments, and anyone can find fish with GPS. There are so many things they can't keep because of regulations. Separating out the charter for-hire sector is the single good thing that's happened in a long time. He says they are set up for it and are willing to do what it takes. He says there are recreational anglers who would love to do this, too; they want to be accountable and shoot for a smaller buffer. But, for him to be thrown back into the big recreational pile is suicide. He wants Amendments 41 and 42 to go through.

Aaron Smith – Charter operator

He wants to end Amendment 39 and go forward with the rest of it.

Casey Weldon – Charter operator

He is against Amendment 39. If it does go through, he supports Action 2, Alternative 2, and he wants Amendments 41 and 42 to go forward. He wants his sector to be accountable and he says ‘no’ to Amendment 39.

Kathy Eller – Charter operator

She is against Amendment 39, and supports Amendments 41 and 42. She wants to have accountability, everyone counting their fish. She would even pay for VMS or logbooks.

Candy Hansard – Private recreational angler

She says they used to have a 365-day season with a 4-fish bag limit. Under federal management, private recreational anglers had 10 days in federal waters. Depending on the year and how they pick those days, anglers have jobs they have to go to Monday through Friday, so it’s a 2 or 4-day season. That is perfect example of why their governor and other governors said that federal management was irretrievably broken. When she looks at what’s happened to access in the fishery, rights to accessing the fishery have been taken away. She says they used to have millions of recreational anglers out fishing together as one unit. Now, there are private fishermen and charter operators trying to make a living, but due to broken management, it’s “us-against-them”. She heard about an economic impact study showing this was a \$16 billion business. By 2013, that business in Florida is down to \$10 billion. She says we are losing over \$6 billion due to restricted access to the fisheries. She is not anti-charter or anti-commercial, we should all be friends. Instead, the community is being split apart by regulations that are unnecessary and not working. FWC is perfectly capable of managing our fishery. She is glad that the 30B provision would never be effective under Amendment 39, because that took private recreational fishers and charter operators and split them apart. If Florida controls management, they can make a system that works for everyone. The State knows what’s in the best interest of economic prosperity for Florida. Recreational opportunities build stronger communities and make people more productive. She asks that the State be given the opportunity to show what they can do. She supports giving FWC a chance and if they mess it up, the feds can snatch it right back.

Eric Thrasher – Charter operator

He wants the Council to do away with Amendment 39. If it does go forward, he asks the Council to pick Action 2, Alternative 2, and go forward with Amendments 41 and 42. He can’t take gambles much longer and doesn’t want to take a chance to see what state management can do.

Chris Couvillion – Charter operator

He is against Amendment 39 and supports Amendments 41 and 42. He is a first year boat owner and Captain. He worked as a deckhand for a decade and has now moved up. It is not the same to manage charter boats with the private recreational fishermen. It affects charter operators more to be grouped with them.

Mark Odom – Private recreational angler

His boat is under 30 feet. Each time he goes out, it’s an expensive hobby and you don’t have revenue to offset the hobby expense. Federal regulations are making it problematic to justify this

hobby. He says you need a reason to go out on the Gulf, and when you look at all the species with catches that have been grossly reduced, the reasons to go out become fewer. This is a Florida issue, because if he doesn't go out he doesn't spend money. He spends thousands for dry dock and fuel, and overregulation of the fishery is a self-made problem. He asks if the Council and federal goal is to eliminate fishing on the Gulf, because the way to do that is to divide the recreational anglers against the commercial industry. He says that once you get IFQs, you then start using that data against the commercial guys. Is the goal liberty and freedom to teach children to fish? When kids are on the water, they are not getting into the wrong activities. The impacts are on marinas and hotels, etc.; the economy is being destroyed. Anglers need a Captain Anderson's Marina when they come down to fish. The commercial guys are right, they shouldn't be a part of their catch quotas compared to private recreational anglers, because they are two separate universes. Pitting them against each other is an impure goal. Accountability would be a great thing if the numbers aren't used against us. He says the amount of red snapper has been grossly underestimated.

Sean A. Kelley – Charter operator

Charter fishermen are trying to be part of the solution, not the problem. In the 1980s, you were lucky if you caught a good red snapper. He is not in favor of Amendment 39, as he does not see a benefit. There would not be enough days to fish and they need something that benefits everyone. Amendment 40 put them on the right track, but they have only had one year. So, they haven't been able to apply the benefit, yet. He asks that they be given at least until the sunset, 2 more years, and then see how accurate they are. The lack of correct information is the killer for both private anglers and charters. He goes on his friends' boats, too. There are a lot of non-federally permitted, inshore boats that rally around the state water seasons. When they do that, it takes away from the federal season for everyone else. Once they get correct data, and get the accountability right, everyone will have more time in federal waters. The 44-day season last year let them get by, but it should have been more. He asks that they be able to keep going with sector separation.

Charlie Saleeby – Recreational angler

He has a 20-foot boat. Regarding the commercial catch, there used to be quota for tobacco, and if people didn't use it, they leased it out. Now, if you want to fish commercially you can go buy 1,000 lbs of quota for \$40, then go lease it out for \$3.50 per pound. The guy who catches it only makes \$1 per pound. If you don't fish, you shouldn't have quota. If you have timber land, you pay for that. The same with oil, too. Fifty one percent of the fish are owned by people who do nothing for it. So, he is against quotas and anything we do in the future shouldn't be under a quota system.

St. Petersburg, Florida
October 27, 2015

Council/Staff

Martha Bademan

Ava Lasseter

Karen Hoak

25 members of the public attended.

Tom Wheatley – PEW

PEW is generally supportive of regional management, as it could provide flexibility to anglers who are asking for it. They prefer Action 2, Alternative 2, and support the plans under development for the for-hire fleet. Amendments 39, 41, and 42 together have the ability to provide flexibility for all anglers in the Gulf to catch red snapper. We all want a healthy stock and to be able to go out to fish.

Mike Colby – Charter operator

He says regional management is a mental train wreck. He wants the regulations to be understandable and simple, and to get them out fast. But, none of that is in here. This may give some flexibility for private anglers, but it does nothing for his charter business. If FWC wants to give this a shot, that's fine. But, he doesn't want to be included. He says they want to have opportunities for their charter customers to fish, just like private anglers want their opportunities through regional management. He doesn't see how any of this will be implemented or prosecuted.

Bob Howell – Recreational angler, Boca Grande, FL

He supports regional management, but is not sure how this would be enforced by the Coast Guard. Protecting the species is a good thing, and he really supports the sub-regional idea [e.g., Panhandle and West Florida as sub-regions], because here, he has to go 50 miles offshore to catch red snapper. Bad weather during such a short season can keep them completely off the water. He felt that the idea of crossing over federal waters and state waters was very complicated.

Kumar Chinnaswamy – Recreational angler

He says the 10-day season they had here in west Florida was too short. He supports regional management if they can get a longer season. He really supports FWC managing, because they do a great job of managing their species.

Brad Gorst – Charter operator

He has three boats, representing a lot of passenger capacity. He also has a private recreational boat. He has concerns with regional management for what he does for a living, but for private recreational anglers, it may be a solution. To him, the drawback is with the sub-sectors and where lines may be drawn. The issue has been state water inconsistent seasons, which has kept those in the south of Florida from fishing, while those in the north can fish in state waters. He says it may be possible for a private angler to trailer their boat up there, but charter boats can't. Also, regional management will be an enforcement nightmare. At the recent congressional hearing, it was stated that Florida should get 50-60% of the red snapper quota, which he does not see happening. He does not want regional management as a for-hire operator.

Eric Mahoney – Charter operator

He doesn't believe the 5 States can agree on anything, and says the charter industry does not want anything to do with regional management. He wants to stick with being managed by the feds. Until recently, he thought this was ok for private anglers, but after hearing this tonight, he

doesn't know how private anglers would benefit, as they wouldn't get much of a season. When Florida's [FWC] representative was asked how much red snapper allocation he wants for Florida, he said 50-60%, and that's not going to happen. He hopes Florida finally votes no on this, and hopes that the time spent on regional management would be spent on a private recreational panel, to start coming up with real solutions.

Dave Griffin – Recreational angler, Sarasota/Bradenton

He is frustrated with the expenses they have [to fish], then there is bad weather when they can't get out. He has spent all this money on this, and then doesn't understand the data and how the data is obtained for red snapper fishing. He says if the data is inaccurate, then all the data in the amendment is wrong. He says the data could be skewed one way or the other, so data collection is his biggest concern.

Jason de la Cruz – Commercial

He says the charter operators who come to his dock have made it clear they don't want anything to do with regional management, and that this is the most complicated document that has ever come out of the Council. There are so many moving parts, it seems unenforceable, and he just doesn't see how it's going to work. He added that the Graves bill has no oversight, and that is troublesome, too. He says what is needed is a private recreational panel to come together and find a solution as a group for how they want to manage this fishery.

Kevin Carlon – Recreational angler; marine sales

He doesn't see a good plan in any of this. No one here has confidence in the data. What he sees is two different groups with different sets of needs, and what we need is better data. He believes there was a conflict of interest among the Council members who voted for sector separation. Tourism is a huge boon to the state's economy, and he directly drops millions in revenue into the local economy, and lots indirectly into the economy, too. He says we are all recreational fishers. It's a symbiotic relationship [charter and private vessels] that's a huge injection in the economy. But, there is a huge wedge being driven between the two by the Council.

Webinar
Wed, October 28, 2015

Council/Staff

Martha Bademan
Emily Muehlstein
Charlene Ponce

17 members of the public attended.

Eric Brazier – Deputy Director of Reef Fish Share Holders Alliance

For Action 2, Alternative 2 is the only way to move forward. The charter fleet does not want to be a part of regional management. It's clear that the states have not earned the trust of the charter fleet and do not have the track record to prove they can manage the federally permitted charter

boats. Pay attention to the charter fishermen that come to the meetings over and over again and ask to remain federally managed.

Kellie Ralston –Florida Policy Director for American Sport Fishing Association

Supports the establishment of regional management which will give each state flexibility to manage red snapper in ways that better accommodate the needs of their fishermen. Since the quota applies to the entire recreational sector, regional management should apply to both for-hire and private angling components of the fishery. The allocation should be equitable among the Gulf States, and ASA is opposed any sunset provisions for Amendment 39.

Sam Young – Recreational angler

He is in favor of regional management. He also supports segmenting the regions into smaller sub-regions. For example, the state of Florida has many different demographics and regional management should allow for different regulations to be made in areas smaller than the state regions.

**Baton Rouge, Louisiana
November 2, 2015**

Council/Staff

Camp Matens

Katie Semon

Emily Muehlstein

Karen Hoak

30 members of the public attended.

Katie Semon from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife gave a brief summary of responses gathered from a survey on regional management that was conducted on Louisiana anglers with offshore landings permits.

Lance Walker – Charter operator

Sector separation has been a huge issue between him and recreational anglers. It allows average fishermen who can't afford a yacht to go out fishing for the day. Many people have bias against the charter captains for getting more days. He wants to clarify that it was fishermen that don't have their own boats that have gotten more days. He as a boat captain isn't allowed to bring a single fish home and he can't fish the state waters because his permit won't allow it. When people say the charter guys get more days - that isn't true. He want's sector separation to continue. He thinks it's a problem that captain and crew can't keep their limit of fish. He supports regional management and the inclusion of the 15-inch minimum size limit. He would also support a keep your first fish rule.

Robert Walker – Private angler

He has to give his son fish to eat because his son is a charter operator and he can't keep his own fish as a captain. He can only catch fish on his private boat which is separate from his son's

charter, and it is hard to understand. Sometimes he can take out a charter and catch fish when he can't fish on his own boat and he doesn't think that that is fair.

Ben Graham – Recreational angler

Supports regional management and Action 2, Alternative 4. Transfer all control to the states because they do a great job. He is confident that the other states will catch up with their data collection programs. The whole problem is that we're not addressing the data collection issues and we're using archaic methods to collect information. Regional management may allow for better data that is reported real time.

Gunner Waldeman – Recreational angler

He has fished the Gulf his entire life. He supports regional management in whatever capacity is best for the recreational fishermen. He urges the Gulf Council to lead the charge for the Gulf of Mexico and the people of the Gulf States. NMFS could also be a leader if they make a stand to slow down or stop the removal of oil rigs. He sees the waste of all species as they're blown up.

Steve Tomeny – Charter/ headboat operator

He has been working on the Gulf since the early 1970's. He has multi-passenger boats that have been in the headboat survey reporting data in for years. In the beginning there were no rules. He's seen the stock rebuild to the fabulous fishery we have now. He thinks Amendment 39 is super complicated. It hinges on 5 states cooperating, and we already have a lot of non-cooperation, especially regarding allocation. There is still a lot of hashing out to do. He does not support regional management for the charter industry. He supports Action 2, Alternative 2, which would continue sector separation and let the charter boats have their own management while the private anglers can be regionally managed. We've had our divorce and we want to stay divorced. We have some good plans for the charter fleets and he wants them to be managed under the new amendments because they're finally making some headway. He thinks the charter boats have protection under The Magnuson-Stevens Act and federal management. Federal management doesn't change as quickly as state management, and he doesn't want that volatility in the charter fleet.

Stacey Schlieve – Spoke on behalf of Congressmen Graves

Provide Gulf States with greater authority over red snapper management. Preserving status quo prevents superior management of the resource by the states. Regional management is a step in the right direction, but the Graves bill HR.3094 is even better.

Joe Macaluso – The Advocate

One of the things we're ignoring, the 800-lb gorilla in the room, is that EDF has divided the sectors so now everyone wants their own slice. Sector separation goes against The Magnuson-Stevens Act, which doesn't allow the sectors to be separated. He doesn't understand why charter boats wouldn't want regional management. Louisiana doesn't fish like Florida or like Alabama so why should they be lumped together when it comes to red snapper or any reef fish. Amendment 39 gives the state the demonstrated ability to manage red snapper. They're the only state that has proven they can optimize the recreational sector and even to allow the charter boats more days. The Council policy that should be repealed is 30B; do away with federal permits for charter operators. If anyone knows about red snapper they don't act like any other fish in the

Gulf; they do not migrate east and west, just north and south. This species should have been managed by the states from the start. Federal red snapper management keeps the Gulf Council in business. Give federal funds to the states. The Gulf Council sides with the commercial operations and has demonstrated a total lack of regard for the private anglers. The Council has driven a wedge in the recreational sector and states are better able to manage fish.

George Horton –

He thinks the sectors shouldn't be separate and supports Action 2, Alternative 4. Dividing and conquering sectors is an easy way for the federal government to get what they want. He is in favor of giving the state authority of managing red snapper. He is a biologist and he hates to pull up a 12-inch snapper and watch it die. He would like the Council to consider a first fish limit. He would also like to suggest that the Council let the state manage the resource entirely. Amendment 39 is extremely complicated and could be simplified.

Andrew Roberts – Recreational angler

In favor of Amendment 39 because the state has proven that they are capable of managing fisheries to the point where everyone can enjoy them. Management on a local level will exceed management from Washington. Commercial, recreational, and charter fishermen would all thrive under a regional system.

Scott Simineaux – Recreational angler

Supports amendment 39. This is a quality of life issue. He can go down and buy red snapper if its about eating it, which would be much cheaper than running his own boat. As a recreational fishermen he also takes charter trips and supports charter boats. He wants the charter industry to make it too. Management should be transferred to the state level so Louisiana can fix its own problem. He sees the Louisiana creel surveyors all the time. In Louisiana, every time you cast you expect to catch a fish.

Michael Barrett – Recreational angler

He supports 39. We're all here trying to make a living and enjoy life. He thinks there should be one recreational sector and limit and supports Action 2, Alternative 4. The federal agencies don't read letters and if you want to stop them from doing anything you have to sue them. Like the explosion of rigs - the Department of Interior needs to be sued to get their attention.

George Huye – Recreational angler, CCA

The federal government will never be as close to the people as the state managers so it's vital that we get control of red snapper to the states. He supports the charter boats but sector separation is in violation of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. He is a plaintiff in the suit against Amendment 40 and hopes they prevail, which would bring them back to square one. He is in favor of regional management, but they need to manage the entire sector together. For the charter component, if the Council could rescind 30B he would be in favor of it and support it. There is no reason to keep the charter clients out of state waters. No matter how you fish we need to end the discard problem, which would solve a huge problem with allocation.

Kim Fouquier – Recreational angler

Has been on Louisiana water his entire life. It is impossible for the federal government to manage species without reading the regulations. States have managed many species including deer. Charter boats should be able to fish in state waters. There is no reason to separate them and he supports Action 2, Alternative 4. A certain number of fish can be caught and it doesn't matter where they come from.

David Cresson – Recreational angler, CCA

There is no recreational angler anywhere that wants anything bad to befall the charter boat industry. They want to do what's right for all parties. CCA supported rescinding 30B, which would allow for-hire boats to fish in state waters. Somehow the Gulf Council decided to rescind it but then took it back; he suspects that could be due to environmental groups. Hopefully the idea of rescinding 30B will come back soon and then regional management for charter boats would be a no-brainer. When you look at the numbers it's hard to believe them. When you go through the history of what we've been dealing with, the 9-day season was based on 800,000 lbs of harvest for Louisiana. After 200+ days open in Louisiana they still haven't hit their limit, and the state even plans to open their federal season again. The numbers being used by the federal managers are not to be trusted. He supports Amendment 39, and in reality the real solution is Congressman Graves' bill. If the powers that be are concerned with the best science, best flexibility, enforceability, and data, they will give authority of the entire recreational sector to the states. All of the management train wrecks are federal, and the states manage successfully. Louisiana knows exactly how its anglers are fishing for their fish. The response rate to state management programs is great, and the state program is superior.

Joshua Ellender – Charter operator

We're here to save red snapper, and now we're focused on who can have what. If you're going to give the management away to the regions, then why not give them everything; commercial, recreational, and charter. How can you divide sectors and manage them differently even though they're catching the same fish? We don't have enough information on how fishing is impacting the stock itself. He doesn't understand how the management structure is the way it is. He supports Amendment 39. He thinks regional management should be more complex and the commercial sector should also be included.

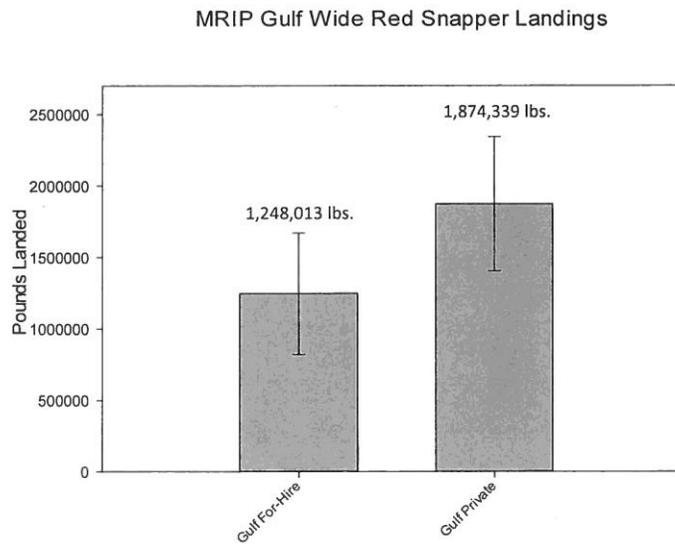
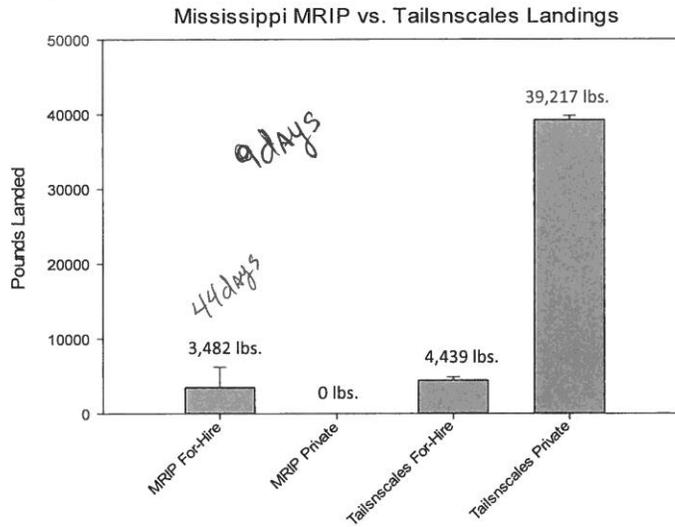
Daryl Carpenter – Charter operator

He has attended Council meetings out of his own pocket and has seen Council members dismiss public comments. Maybe an in-person comment at a scoping meeting might carry more weight than an online comment, but not as much as an in-person comment at the full Council meeting. Look where federal management has gotten us. We're fighting the same fight we've been fighting for years and it's not getting us anywhere new. He is in favor of regional management and reworking some of the different options. Locally, Louisiana recognizes that charter businesses can be different from private recreational anglers and he would like the state to take control over separate management plans. He would like Action 2, Alternative 4 to be reviewed to allow the states to manage the two components separately. Amendment 30B should be removed. He's on an Advisory Panel for the Council and heard Andy Strelcheck say the short federal season was because of non-compliant states, but with all that non-compliance this year only 60% of the annual catch limit was harvested. Federal management isn't working. This is a trust issue

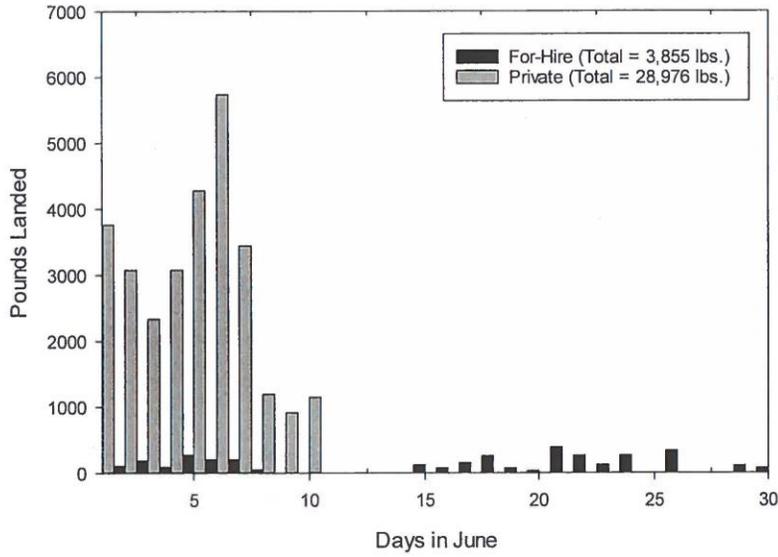
and he trusts the accessibility of his state folks and their responsiveness and responsibility. The politics that control the Council should not control what he does. He doesn't want to be a part of a catch share system or an IFQ. Let the state tell him when to fish.

Supplemental material provided by Clarence Seymour, Mobile, Alabama, 10/20/2015:

Provided by Clarence Seymour @ Mobile AM 39 PM.
Mr. Seymour is from MS.



Mississippi Tailnscales Reported Landings



Mississippi Tailnscales Reported Landings

