

Subject: Goliath Grouper

Date: Friday, January 3, 2014 7:00:19 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: sean@rhategan.com

To: Gulf Council

As a dive operator it would be a shame to see our local friendly grouper gone and on the dinner table. This would be like spearing your pet and eating it - just because you can.

Sean Rhategan
PADI IDCS 68143

Subject: Goliath Grouper

Date: Friday, January 3, 2014 8:30:40 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Alan

To: Gulf Council

CC: Jessica McCawley

Good evening,

I understand that there is a meeting coming up in reference to lifting the ban on hunting or fishing for the above... and further that dive industry groups such as DEMA oppose the lifting of the moratorium. As an avid boater, fisherman, diver and spear fisherman in Florida, I must respectfully disagree with DEMA on this issue. I have witnessed fellow divers nearly seriously injured or even killed as some of the larger fish attempted to take Black or Gag grouper from their spear gun, stringer or both. As with all interactive, predatory creatures which are completely protected, they have completely lost their fear of man (or woman).

Secondly I would point out that when we had that cold winter in Florida a few years back, the following spiny lobster season in the keys (off Marathon) where I dive was exceptional even though it had been in decline for over 5 years. One thing that my friends and I noticed was the absence of juvenile Goliath Grouper on the Gulf side where we snorkel for the bugs. Unscientific as it may be, the observation is accurate as is the fact that up until that cold year we saw juvenile GGs on almost every spot (small coral area, structure etc... of which we have hundreds). This observation causes me to think that the DEMA position may be a somewhat narrow view of the subject. From a purely economic standpoint, we should not fail to factor in things like the impact a large predatory species has on other equally viable or even more economically substantial resource(s).

In closing, I would like to point out that history shows that protecting large predatory species such as the Alligator cannot be sustained indefinitely. Regardless if this council decides to act or not someone eventually will. In my opinion, some limited management approach will eventually be enacted to cull both the adult and juvenile population of the Goliath Grouper to, the benefit of all. Why wait? Good luck in your deliberations.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Alan Buchanan

Private Investigator

Detective Online, Inc.

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ab@detectiveonline.com

Subject: Status of Goliath Grouper

Date: Saturday, January 4, 2014 10:55:04 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: Ann Pennywitt

To: Gulf Council

Consideration of revoking the current status of this marine inhabitant is going to cost Florida millions of dollars in tourism revenue. It is one of the major draws to the Florida Keys for divers. Are you guys really willing to have divers head back to the Bahamas to view these creatures?

Decimate this population AGAIN, and we will continue to see decline of the underwater ecosystem. I have lived in SE Asian countries where hardly anything is left underwater-dive tourism stops and fishermen are without a profession.

Ann P

Subject: (none)

Date: Saturday, January 4, 2014 12:05:27 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Carol Schurtz

To: Gulf Council

The fishing ban on Goliath Groupers has been successful
And to recend it will send their numbers plummeting again. Experience
Has proven without protection the fisherman will decimltate any unprotected species. The lionfish invasion is
threatening every species in this area please please please do not lift the ban on the Goliath grouper!
Carol Schurtz

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HAPPY BUBBLES, CAROL

Subject: Goliath Grouper - oppose ending the moratorium o the East Coast of Florida

Date: Saturday, January 4, 2014 2:32:07 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Force-E Scuba - Skip

To: Gulf Council, Jessica McCawley

East Coast Goliath Grouper aggregate around artificial reefs and large reef structures. These fish are easy to find and will be wiped out in less than one season.

It has taken decades to return these giant Florida natives to sustainable numbers. A live grouper has much more economic value to the State than a couple of hundred pounds of wormy fillets.

Gerald Commagere
6542 Contempo Lane
Boca Raton FL 33433

Subject: Lifting Ban on Goliath Grouper

Date: Monday, January 6, 2014 9:18:30 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: scott ames

To: Gulf Council

CC: Jessica McCawley

To Whom it may concern;

I am in favor of lifting the ban on Goliath Grouper. I do feel, despite what other parties may think, this population of fish are reducing the population of snapper and other game fish on our reefs.

Thank you.

Scott Ames naui # 55141