

The Gulf Council ignores the public, doesn't listen to public input and in fact discourages it by having meetings in the middle of the day during the middle of the week in order to get the least amount of public participation from the average recreational fisherman. Instead the meetings are always filled with profit driven participants who are all fighting for all pieces of the pie. If you wonder why public participation is so low, it's because people just don't care anymore what the Gulf Council does. But people love what LDWF did when they ignored the Gulf Council and opened up red snapper season. The LDWF is the voice of reason.

Sector separation, there has been a congressional mandate for the Gulf Council to stop wasting tax payer money exploring sector separation, yet the council ignores congress to satisfy Environmental defense. You fish either commercially or recreationally. Boat owners ARE NOT entitled to any share of ownership of a public resource.

Did you forget the sector separation workshop? Over 90 % opposed to this disguised theft of our fishery. Why the heck is it still moving forward? Instead, the Gulf Council listens to the money and the paid investor advocates, while ignoring the overwhelming input from the fishing public.

The annual catch limits are set too low and mortality discards too high. Louisiana's hard numbers proved that in 2012 alone the council over estimated fishing effort by 70%.

Economic impact is ignored by the gulf council as well as fishing rights.

Dr. Shipp says the red snapper fishery can withstand a 6 month season of 3 red snapper bag, TODAY. Why no action?

#### **Non-compliant Exempted Fishing Permit for RECREATIONAL CATCH SHARE PROGRAM-**

17 privately owned boats control WHO fishes and HOW MUCH they pay?

17 boats can take red snapper out of season?

Allows possession and SALE of recreational fish outside of legal season – VIOLATION

These people are selling fish collected specifically under an Exempted Fishing Permit

Each sample (fish) is not weighed and measured.

How do we know that duplicate 'tags' are not being issued to cover possession of illegally caught fish?

Not weighing and measuring every fish

No observer

No final check-in

Establishing a recreational ifq

No biological information

Discards are not recorded

Denies us our opportunity to fish

Denies our community economic activity

Denies our right to fish

Basically you have just given permission to 17 boats to operate above the law, because you don't care what the public thinks. Who wants to participate in the Gulf Council process after actions like that?

**And most important of all, the Gulf Council's Failure to protect the resource (reef demolition)**

Allows protected coral to be destroyed

Allows the needless slaughter of red snapper, red drum, sea turtles and other fishes and marine mammals when rigs are blown up

We have word that Main Pass 144 which consists of 2 platforms, one which is a single and the other a double are slated for destruction. These rigs are 210' to the bottom, and I've observed numerous red snappers and groupers, but more importantly these rigs have always held schools of 50+lb. redfish. The real mature spawning giants that we are trying to protect. Once these rigs are blown up, those redfish will be killed. You better believe, the destruction of the rigs will have severe impacts on our inshore fisheries as well as our offshore fisheries in the future.

Heck, in Lake Pontchartrain they have removed inshore platforms just to the west of the Causeway Bridge. Those rigs used to have a spawning aggregation of Alligator Gar around them, I've witnessed this underwater. The rigs are now gone and as far as I can see, the gar are gone also, not too mention the catfish that used to live on these structures.

# Some GOM Red Snapper Issues

- Continued concern regarding Red Snapper Data and Recreational Season
- Commercial: 5.61M lbs for 203 permit holders, an Avg of 27,635lb each
  - Assuming 40% of \$15/lb retail price each holder grosses about \$166k
  - **Fish year round until reaching IFQ – unfair advantage to Recreational sector (pick low hanging fruit)**
  - Permit moratorium – TAC increases provides additional revenue/earnings as well as \$/lb increases due to increased demand/inflation. Government appointed Oligopoly of a public resource?
- Recreational: 5.3M lbs for 1,356 CFH/Headboat permits plus all private recreational fisherman
  - Season starts June 1 and ends based on NMFS estimates of when TAC is met. May extend or supplement season if data supports
    - TX Rec anglers disadvantaged due to Jun 1 start and western GOM weather conditions
    - Using NDBC and 2.5ft seas as Go/No Go recreational fishing benchmark during 2011 season: Mobile < 2.5ft – 82%; Galveston < 2.5 – 56.8%; Freeport\* < 2.5ft -21.7%; Corpus Christi < 2.5ft – 26.8%
    - No limit on Rec licenses so our numbers can increase likely resulting in less fish per capita
  - TPWD has 570,926 registered pleasure craft (1287 commercial fishing)
- Amendment 39 proposes Regional (state) management but under current Federal guidelines and allocates % to states
  - Texas is greatly disadvantaged based on NMFS data (some significantly contrary to average of other states, some missing altogether)
- “Commercial” Fishing Discussion
- Headboat Pilot Red Snapper Allocation
- Data Collection Accuracy

# Past Recreational Red Snapper Seasons

<b>Year</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Quota</b>	<b>Landings</b>
1996	365	4.47	4.346
1997	330	4.47	6.008
1998	272	4.47	4.258
1999	240	4.47	3.999
2000	194	4.47	3.932
2001	194	4.47	4.468
2002	194	4.47	5.383
2003	194	4.47	4.847
2004	194	4.47	4.996
2005	194	4.47	4.084
2006	194	4.47	4.021
2007	194	3.185	4.44
2008	65	2.45	3.712
2009	75	2.45	4.625
2010	77	3.403	2.239
2011	48	3.866	4.603
2012	46	3.959	5.146

# Proposed Amendment 39

## Regional Management Allocation Inequities

	Alabama	Florida	Louisiana	Mississippi	Texas	Totals
<b>% Proposed</b>	<b>22.5 - 30.5</b>	<b>32.6 - 51.2</b>	<b>11.8 - 15.4</b>	<b>1.3 - 4.3</b>	<b>11.4 - 18.5</b>	<b>NMF</b>
<b>Population (M)</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>58.4</b>
<b>Coastline (mi)</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>1625.0</b>
<b>%Median+2</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>43.9</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>99.8</b>
<b>Population (%)</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>33.4</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>45.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Coastline (%)</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Weighted %</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>41.6</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>28.2</b>	<b>99.9</b>

“Proposed %” values based on “landings”

# Other Allocation Considerations

- NMFS study (Hanisko et al, 2007) indicates TX-LA shelf has 2x the RS larval of AL-MS shelf and MS-AL has 4x the RS larval of the W-FL shelf
- Amd 39, Action 3, Alt 4 is not given serious consideration...
  - “Alternative 4 considers apportioning the quota based on the projected yields for the ABC for the eastern and western Gulf, as derived from the updated projections from the 2009 assessment (Linton 2012a). The resulting apportionments of the ABC from that assessment would be 48.5% for the eastern and 51.5% for the western Gulf (Linton 2012a)”.

<b>"Landings" vs "Acceptable Biological Catch" Comparison</b>				
<b>Region</b>	<b>Landings</b>	<b>ABC</b>		
<b>FL-MS-AL</b>	<b>56.4 - 86%</b>	<b>48.5</b>		
<b>LA-TX</b>	<b>23.2 - 33.9</b>	<b>51.5</b>		

# 2012 NMFS Landings Data

Table 3.1.1 2012 Rec RS Landing in State (lbs ww)					
State	Charter	Headboat	Private	All	%
FLw	641,437	205,114	1,289,253	2,135,804	41.50%
AL	359,469	72,199	1,013,460	1,445,128	28.10%
MS	997	5,894	182,767	189,658	3.70%
LA	236,302	21,999	501,704	760,005	14.80%
<b>TX</b>	<b>39,128</b>	<b>419,671</b>	<b>157,726</b>	<b>616,525</b>	<b>12.00%</b>
<b>Total</b>	1,277,333	724,077	3,144,911	5,147,120	
<b>% by Mode</b>	24.80%	14.10%	61.10%	100%	

# 2012 NMFS Landings Data Concerns

- Concerned this incomplete/inaccurate/guesstimated data or similar is being positioned as a guide for sector separation between CFH, Headboat, and Private Recreational!!!
- What could make out fishery so significantly and statistically different than other Gulf states:
- Consider comparing sector data without TX data for comparison/reality check:

<u>Comparison</u>	<u>Others</u>	<u>Tx</u>
Private as % of all	65.9%	25.6%
Headboat as % of all	6.7%	68.1%
CFH as % of all	27.3%	6.3%
Private as % of Hdboat	978.7%	37.6%



# Commercial Fishing Discussion

(CFH, Headboat, and “Commercial”)

- Government entry is annual permit of nominal value (\$18 - \$120)
- Permit moratorium creates “blue sky \$” for existing permits and IFQs
  - \$6-8k for CFH reef fish permit and Commercial IFQ of \$?
- Not aware of any funds Feds spend on habitat, replenishment, etc.
- Why not annual increase to fees (based on take) to be used specifically for artificial reef habitat?
  - There should be some Commercial contribution given profiting from public resource
  - Should we consider a Recreational \$5 RS stamp IF funds dedicated only to new habitat construction?
- Limit “Commercial” fishing to >150ft water depth only

# “Pilot” Gulf Headboat Collaborative

- 17 Headboats (13 owners) “awarded” 286k lbs or 55.5k RS
  - Equates to 5.3% of 5.3M lb quota (and 3266 fish per Headboat)
  - Also “awarded” 6017 gag grouper as a group
  - Includes 2014 and 2015 seasons
- Allowed to fish RS all year until their quota is reached
- Rational: “They catch these fish anyway” during the season
- TX Headboats: **Captain John, La Pesca, and Scat Cat**
- **Issues:**
  - Precursor to sector separation forced on Private Rec fisherman?
  - Why should they be “guaranteed” these fish?
  - Will “pick the low hanging fruit” (deplete inshore stocks)
  - Anti-competitive – they no longer have to compete for the fish
- **Possible Remedies:**
  - Can state of TX prohibit landings? Special fee?
  - No “Collaborative” fishing inside of 25 fathoms (150ft)

# Inaccurate Data Collection?

- SPECIFICALLY, what are the data collection methodologies?
- SPECIFICALLY, how is TX data collected and by whom, where, when, and how often?
  - Why is TX data missing in NMFS charts, significantly different than other states?
- How are CFH, Headboat, and Private Recreational Data collected?
- What is actually sampled (#s) as a percent of total?
- What is statistical level of significance/confidence?