

On 3/10/17, 7:11 AM, "John Laubenthal" <jlmdinc@gmail.com> wrote:

As a regular Reef Fishermen in the N. GoM (off Panama City Beach) I would like to inform you that Triggerfish are literally taking over all the wrecks & reefs here & are such a nuisance we can't even fish for other species...

Please address this growing problem ASAP...

The current Closure is the most ridiculous thing you have done to date...

John Laubenthal MD

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850-233-8832

From: clark mceachern <cfishthis@yahoo.com>
Reply-To: "cfishthis@yahoo.com" <cfishthis@yahoo.com>
Date: Friday, March 3, 2017 at 6:16 PM
To: John Milner <gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org>
Subject: Gulf trigger fish

I think there needs to be a season on triggerfish you should be at least the loud to per person come on this is crazy. You're talking about closing the season totally I don't see what gives you guys the right that is not what it is about Triggerfish used to be considered a trash fish now you put a season on them? I can see the day coming when you going to go out there in the recreational fishermen is not going to be able to keep anything.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)



January 25, 2017

Mr. Leanne Bosarge, Chairwoman
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
2203 North Lois Ave
Tampa, FL 33607

Dear Chairwoman Bosarge,

The Charter Fisherman's Association is the largest federally permitted charter for-hire organization in the region. Our organization is focused on working respectfully within the fishery management process toward realistic solutions to problems facing the recreational fishery and charter for hire industry. We appreciate the opportunity to provide input and comments on a variety of fishery issues before the Gulf Council:

Modifications to Generic Charter Vessel and Headboat Reporting Requirements

First, it is finally time for the council to finalize and implement the modifications to charter vessel and headboat reporting requirements. Electronic logbook reporting has been a priority within the charter boat industry for many years and the opportunity to improve data timeliness and the quality of data while also building stakeholder buy-in is much appreciated. The electronic reporting program should include hail-out/hail-in provisions for both charter and headboats, prior to returning to the dock via a NMFS approved reporting device with minimum archival GPS permanently affixed to the vessel. ***This would be accomplished through the current preferred alternatives: Action1-alternative 4, Action2-alternative 4, Action 3-alternatives 2 and 3, Action 4- alternative 2.***

Amendment 41 and Amendment 41 - Charter and Headboat Management

Following the October Gulf Council meeting, there were some differences identified between the charter and headboat management amendments that needed to be addressed before moving forward. The primary differences were in species composition and development/implementation timelines. These were discussed at great length in the joint CFH/Headboat Advisory Panel meeting by members of a broad panel; but through these discussions, the group was able to develop and arrive at a few very good consensus statements. The Charter Fisherman's Association

supports moving forward with 2 multi-species, allocation based management amendments to be passed and implemented at the same time. Council staff needs direction from the council to move forward with development of both amendments according to the AP consensus statements for further discussion at the April council meeting. ***Next steps for Amendment 41 should include conversion of the program to include not only red snapper, but gray triggerfish, greater amberjack, gag grouper and red grouper, consistent with Amendment 42.*** The Council and NMFS staff also presented, at the joint AP meeting, ideas for “cyclic redistribution” of shares that are not used initially being allocated, to make sure fish ultimately go to those who are actively fishing as charter for-hire operators. The panel seemed very interested in this strategy, ***and we recommend “cyclic redistribution” as outlined by staff should be included in the Amendment 41 document for further analysis and consideration. We encourage the Council staff to work with NMFS to develop a suite of alternatives that address the details of how this redistribution could be operationalized.***

Carryover Provision for Unharvested Recreational Red Snapper ACL

Over the past few meetings, there has been discussion on a carryover provision of unharvested red snapper ACL to the following year to provide relief and access to the recreational fishery. While this is an excellent idea in principle, the council should proceed with caution throughout the development process to ensure accomplishment of the desired outcome. The current structure of the recreational fishery allows for two subsectors operating under combined accountability measures; in other words, accountability measures triggered by one subsector have consequences for both subsectors. In order to achieve an appropriate carryover provision, ***CFA recommends the council develop and pursue implementation of subsector-specific accountability measures for each segment of the recreational fishery.*** According to the latest landings data, and data since Amendment 40, the charter for-hire component has been held consistently and significantly within its portion of the ACL while the private angler component has significantly exceeded its portion of the ACL, despite being held to the same accountability measures. Implementation of any carryover provision, without the use of subsector-specific accountability, would allow for de facto reallocation to the private angler component causing undue economic harm to federal permitted charter for-hire businesses.

Amendment 46 - Gray Triggerfish Rebuilding Plan

Despite the current 2017 season closure for gray triggerfish, we look forward to working with the council to getting this critical species back on track for rebuilding; enabling us to offer these fish to charter for-hire customers to harvest again in the near future. ***The current preferred alternatives and management measures, albeit delayed in implementation, are encouraging and should provide increased***

opportunity for harvest with reasonable confidence to ensure rebuilding the stock as required under the Magnuson Stevens Act (MSA).

Amendment 47 - Modify Vermillion Snapper ACLs and MSY Proxy

In the process of ACL adjustments and establishment of proxies for rebuilding for vermillion snapper in Amendment 47, ***CFA would like to express support in moving forward with a constant catch yield stream in Action 2.*** Additionally, CFA would like further discussion and explanation of the expected impacts to season lengths within the recreational fishery for vermillion snapper as this amendment progresses. It is critically important to charter for-hire businesses that reasonable regulatory certainty and business planning opportunities be made available our businesses.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shane Cantrell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Shane" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Cantrell".

Shane Cantrell
Executive director, Charter Fisherman's Association

PANAMA CITY BOATMEN ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 4151
Panama City, Florida 32401

August 9, 2016

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
2203 N Lois Avenue
Suite 1100
Tampa, Florida 33607

By email: gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org

Re: Our comments on the triggerfish and greater amberjack closures

To All Council Members:

On behalf of the members of PCBA I would like to make the following comments on the recent actions by the NMFS on triggerfish and greater amberjack in the Gulf of Mexico. Apparently the staff and biologists at the NMFS and Council and the Members of the Council are out of touch with the reality of fishing in the GOM. According to a statement by Dr. Crabtree in *The News Herald* in a front page story in the Sunday August 7, 2016 paper about the triggerfish and amberjack closures, "triggerfish have not responded as well as we would like to regulations", it is clear he does not know where the fishery is.

We don't know where the NMFS wants the triggerfish biomass to be but if you fish from the Panhandle of Florida through Louisiana you find triggerfish almost everywhere. Not only are there plenty of juvenile triggerfish but sizes of 14" and greater are abundant. While fishing you can hardly get bait past the triggerfish. Some areas have more than others but you can find triggerfish everywhere.

The current size requirement for greater amberjack caused the quota to be met early and caused the NMFS to shut the fishery down for the rest of 2016. We argued for an incremental increase in the size limit to prevent this and allow the fishery to grow along with incremental increases in quota. The NMFS and Council told us and provided presentations that a 34" size would provide a 10 month season, we got 5 and it appears we caught more than the allowed quota meaning we will have less for 2017. Legal size amberjack are being caught on 3 hook gears with small pieces of squid intended for vermilion snapper and red porgies. This is while triggerfish are continually released.

The seasons for both species were set to reopen on August 1. Both early seasons closed as required on May 31 and it took the NMFS 6 weeks to notify the public that triggerfish would not reopen and 7 weeks to project that amberjack would not reopen after those closures. After all the years of hearing from charter vessel owners and operators that customers make plans in advance it is apparent that the NMFS and Council still do not understand this business. People make plans to fish based on the information they are provided by the NMFS. These plans are not just for the anglers but also for their families. These people do not want to change their plans to fish in January or February as they come here for the summer and fall season for the good weather and to be where there are other activities to enjoy as well as the fishing. While triggerfish has yet to achieve the level of popularity of amberjack and red snapper, triggerfish are rapidly gaining such popularity, the loss of amberjack trips at the time of year when we are finally able to put money back for the winter does financial harm to small family businesses. This financial loss is never recovered.

We strongly recommend that the SSC look at the data and hear, not just listen to, the testimony of the abundance of these species and readjust the quota to match the reality of fishing. The triggerfish and

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amberjack have achieved dramatic increases in biomass otherwise we would not be catching these fish in the numbers we do. We purposely try to stay away from these species but because of the abundance cannot. The NMFS needs to do a much better job with their computer modeling and provide timely and better projections of open and closed seasons. In this day of technological advances there is really no valid reason for such irresponsible notifications. Our industry has suffered enough with red snapper management; we don't need more economic and social damage with the mismanagement of these species.

We are constantly amazed at how the NMFS can list stocks such as gag and red grouper as not over fished and quotas are never met while listing the species of red snapper, amberjack, and triggerfish as overfished yet quotas are constantly met, open seasons are severely restricted, and continually shortened. It is clear that this picture has serious problems and frankly we would like to have a rational reason as to why this is. To date no reason has made any sense to us or the public we take fishing. Anglers who constantly catch species that they are told are in trouble yet can hardly find a species that is supposedly healthy do not understand how management works and frankly neither do we.

Changes must be made. Management must be improved. We cannot continue to operate in this fiasco where all you catch are species alleged to be in trouble and can't find a fish that is supposed to be healthy.

Thank you,

Capt. Bob Zales, II
President