



Gulf Fishery News

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

October - December, 2010

Inside this issue:

From the Deck of the Shipp	2
NOAA Closes 4,213 Square Miles to Royal Red Shrimping	3
Council Seeks Applicants for Ad Hoc IFQ Review Panel	4
Temporary Rule for Gag Effective January 1	5
Fishery Closures	5
Council Agenda	6
IFQ Program Reminders	8
Crew Size Limit Under Consideration	9
NMFS Establishes 2011 Commercial Quotas and Opening Dates for Shark Fisheries	10

Louisiana Shrimp Season to Remain Open in Certain Waters East of the Mississippi

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has extended the fall inshore shrimp season in a portion of state waters east of the Mississippi River that was originally scheduled to close December 21, 2010. Typically, the inshore shrimp season closes in late December when only smaller, less valuable shrimp are being caught by recreational and commercial fishermen. However, extended closures in state

See Page 10



Volume 32, Issue 4

Greater Amberjack Update

Johann Meissenheimer and his family moved to Venice, Florida from Cape Town, South Africa in 2007. An avid outdoorsman, Meissenheimer fell in love with Florida's natural beauty.

Glen Ballinger is a Sarasota charter captain who met Meissenheimer on a recent charter trip. "This was his first offshore fishing trip," said Ballinger.

Meissenheimer managed to land a 72 pound greater amberjack on that trip.

"The experience was unbelievable; I never realized a fish can drain you like that," said Meissenheimer.

He and other Gulf anglers got a reprieve this year when the projected amberjack landings came in below the annual quota. What does that mean? No recreational closure for greater amberjack in 2010.

In 2009, the greater amberjack recreational landings exceeded the annual quota, and the season closed October 24, 2009. Accountability measures kicked in, and the quota for the 2010 season was reduced to 1,243,184 pounds.

"We believe that the fishing closures mandated by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill limited effort enough to prevent the 2010 quota from being exceeded," said Dr. Steve Bortone, Executive Director of the Gulf Council.

Nevertheless, the Gulf Council, at its October meeting, took final action on a regulatory framework action for greater amberjack that creates a recreational season closure of June 1 through July 31. The intent of this action is to avoid in-season closures during peak economic fishing months. However, a stock assessment update for greater amberjack is underway, and if that update assessment reveals the total allowable catch can be increased, the Council intends to reconsider the proposed June 1 through July 31 season closure.

The update assessment and recommendations from the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee will be reviewed during its February Council meeting in Gulfport, Mississippi.



Johann Meissenheimer and Rick Hall show off Meissenheimer's 72 pound Amberjack

Gulf Council Hires Social Scientist

The Council welcomes Ava Lasseter, who joins the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council as a Social Scientist.

A native Floridian, Ava grew up fishing and boating on both coasts. She recently earned a PhD in cultural anthropology from the University of Florida, with a research focus on human-marine environment interactions. She spent 13 months

conducting doctoral fieldwork among lobster divers on the Yucatan coast of the Gulf of Mexico. Her research examined the adaptive strategies of small-scale fishermen who are dealing with resource scarcity, and was funded by grants from the National Science Foundation and the American Philosophical Society.

Ava is a PADI Divemaster and an avid underwater photographer.



Ava and her prized kingfish



Dr. Bob Shipp, Council Chair

From the Deck of the Shipp

“Days at Sea” - Another Alternative?

You wouldn't think there's any relationship between Scottish fishery management

of the commercial cod fishery and our own red snapper recreational for-hire industry. But a closer look reveals a potential link known as “days at sea.” In the Scottish cod fishery, days-at-sea were allocated to fishers as a way to reduce the bycatch of cod. In the Gulf of Mexico red snapper fishery, the goal is to rebuild the stock while allowing the greatest number of fish to be harvested. Even though there is some controversy over cod management in the North Sea, I believe, like many of the skippers I've talked to, that a “days-at-sea” model could be a plan everyone would buy into, and one that should be seriously considered for the Gulf of Mexico.

Here's an example of how it could work. Instead of having a season with a set number of days (e.g. 54) during a set period of time, each charter captain in the for-hire sector would be allocated “days at sea” where they could fish a predetermined number of days whenever they choose. The number of days would have to be something less than the current 54, inasmuch as that number takes into account that both weather and lost charters will result in fewer than 54 fishing days. Polling the fleet to determine how many days were actually fished during the 54-day season would provide some insight.

Testing such a system could be done through a pilot program; using volunteer captains willing to take fewer fishing days in return for the option to fish on the days of their choosing. At the recent sector separation workshop the “days-at-sea” concept received plenty of hallway chatter, and it seemed to engender considerable interest.

But beyond the possible advantages to the charter fleet, such as the ability to better plan trips by avoiding bad weather - consider the related benefits. For tourism, the snapper season would essentially be open year round. The “snow birds” that converge on the coast during winter and early spring would have an additional motive to come down. They and others could pick and choose their charter date and be guaranteed a fair weather trip.

While there may be unintended consequences, as there always seem to be when such a plan is launched, a days-at-sea program could prove effective. It certainly merits some consideration.

And alas, the private recreational angler remains in the lurch, since there is currently no workable alternative for them. Someone brighter than me will have to deal with that “elephant in the room”, but at least folks are beginning to think about different and perhaps better ways to manage our stocks.

I just wish that when new ideas are offered, the ensuing discussions would remain civil.



NOAA Closes 4,213 Square Miles to Royal Red Shrimp Fishing

On December 3, 2010, NOAA Fisheries Service filed a rule to continue the royal red shrimp fishing area closure until 12:01 a.m., local time, February 2, 2011, unless otherwise extended. The intent of this action is to prohibit harvest of adulterated seafood while promoting public safety and consumer confidence in seafood products regarding areas affected by the BP/Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The area surrounding the wellhead remains closed to all fishing.

On November 24, 2010, NOAA Fisheries Service closed this area to royal red shrimp fishing as a precautionary measure in response to a known interaction of this component of the shrimp fishery with oil, tar, or oil byproducts. Because that rule was effective for only 10 days, NOAA Fisheries Service filed this second rule to continue the closure until February 2, 2011, unless otherwise extended.

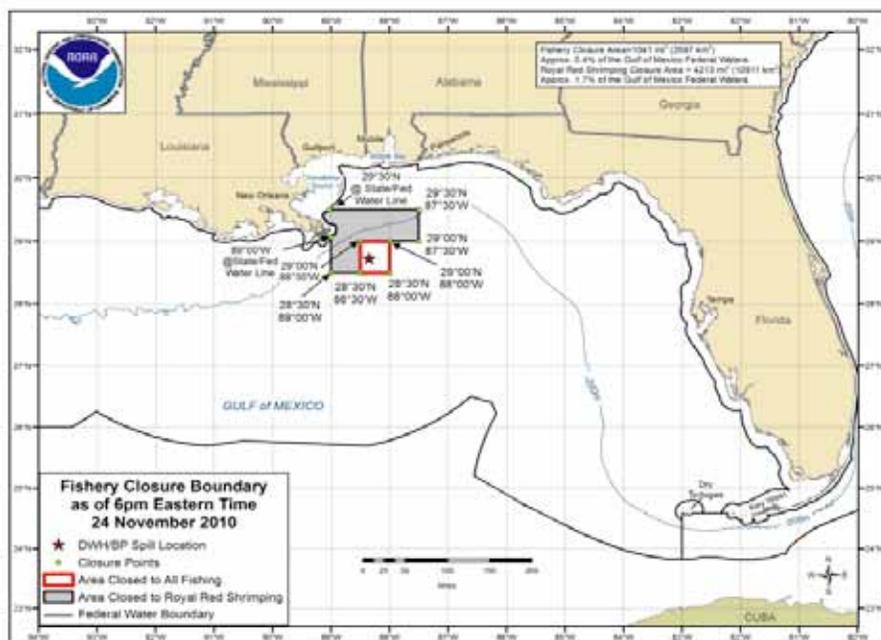
During the closed period, NOAA will sample the area to determine the presence, amount, and origin of oil, tar, or oil byproducts, and any affect those products may have on seafood.

The rule does not address other shrimp fisheries because they are prosecuted in shallower water farther from the Deepwater Horizon wellhead, and NOAA Fisheries Service has not received any reports of shallow water shrimp gear interacting with oil, tar, or oil byproducts in Gulf federal waters.

The rule also did not address other deep water fisheries in the area because bottom trawling is not used in those fisheries. Because trawls move across the bottom, collecting shrimp and other items, tarballs and other oil byproducts are likely to be collected and intermingled with the shrimp catch.

NOAA Fisheries Service is not aware of any reported interactions with oil, tar, or oil byproducts in any federal Gulf fishery other than the royal red shrimp component of the shrimp fishery.

NOTE: This notice published November 24, 2010. Please visit http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/deepwater_horizon_oil_spill.htm for the most up to date information on reopenings of the closed area.



The area closed to all fishing is bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following coordinates:

North latitude	West longitude
29° 00'	At the state/federal line
29° 00'	88° 30'
29° 30'	88° 00'
29° 30'	88° 00'

The area closed to royal red fishing is bounded by rhumb lines connecting, in order, the following coordinates:

North latitude	West longitude
29° 30'	At the state/federal line
29° 30'	87° 30'
29° 00'	87° 30'
29° 00'	88° 30'
28° 30'	88° 30'
28° 30'	89° 00'
At the state/federal line	89° 00'
Follow the state/federal water line easterly to beginning point	

Reminders

Modeling and mapping the actual and projected spill area is not an exact science. NOAA Fisheries Service strongly advises fishermen not to fish in areas where oil or oil sheens (very thin layers of floating oil) are present, even if those areas are not currently closed to fishing.

If state waters are closed to fishing due to the oil spill, all vessels must comply with that closure. If state waters are not closed to fishing due to the oil spill, federally permitted vessels may fish in those waters while abiding by all other applicable regulations.

Permit holders are reminded to maintain their federal vessel permits by submitting timely reporting requirements and renewal applications, even if the vessel is not currently engaged in fishing activities.

February Council Meeting Reminder

The Council will be meeting the week of February 7-10, 2011, at the Courtyard Marriott in Gulfport, Mississippi. Please make your reservation under the GMFMC room block to receive the special discounted room rate.

Submission of written comments and materials to be included as part of the briefing book materials for this meeting **MUST BE RECEIVED** by 5:00 p.m. EDT February 1, 2011.

If you miss the deadline and bring your own copies to the meeting, please bring at least 30 copies for the Council. If you wish your materials to be made available to the public, please bring additional copies.

A draft agenda can be found on page 6 of this newsletter as well as on our web site at www.gulfcouncil.org



Gulf Council Seeks Applicants for Ad Hoc Red Snapper Individual Fishing Quota Review Panel

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is currently recruiting members to serve on an Ad Hoc Red Snapper Individual Fishing Quota Review Advisory Panel.

The Gulf of Mexico commercial red snapper Individual Fishing Quota Program was implemented January 1, 2007 through Amendment 26 to the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan. The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Management Act requires the Council to include provisions for the regular monitoring and review of the operations of the program, including determining progress in meeting the goals of the program and the Magnuson Act, and any necessary modification of the program to meet those goals, with a formal detailed review five years after program implementation. Consistent with the Magnuson Act, the Council requires in Reef Fish Amendment 26 a five-year review of the program. This panel will aid the Council in conducting its five-year review.

Advisory Panel members are not compensated; however, travel expenses are reimbursed. Anyone interested in serving on the Ad Hoc Red Snapper Individual Fishing Quota Review Advisory Panel should submit a letter and resume to:

Phyllis Miranda
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
2203 N. Lois Avenue
Suite 1100
Tampa, FL 33607

Materials may also be faxed to: 813-348-1711; or e-mailed to phyllis.miranda@gulfcouncil.org. Resumes and letters should be received no later than close of business February 1, 2011.

Send us Your Fishing Photos

We want to see your favorite fishing and fishery-related photos! Whether they are from a spear fishing adventure, a charter trip, or a commercial effort, we'd like to see your photos and possibly use them on our web site or in our newsletter.

Send us your photos and help us build a photo library! To submit your photos, please send an e-mail with "Photo Library" in the subject line to gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org. Be sure to include your name, address, phone number, along with a description and proper photo credit, then simply attach the image and send. Photo descriptions may be edited for grammar, clarity, and/or length. Photos must be in jpeg format and should not exceed 1.5 MB (no more than 200 ppi).

NOTE: By submitting photos, you understand that if we decide to use your photo, it can be used on our web site, in our newsletter or other publications. We will display a brief description of the photo and your name, unless requested otherwise.



Photo submitted by Glen Balingier

Gag Interim Rule Effective Jan 1, 2011

Recreational bag limits for gag will be temporarily set at zero beginning January 1, 2011, and the commercial quota will be reduced to 100,000 pounds.

Gag is one of the four species under the management of the Gulf Council that is overfished, and the Council is developing an amendment to its Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan (Reef Fish Amendment 32) to end overfishing and rebuild the stock within the required ten years. However, because that amendment is not scheduled for implementation until later next year, an interim rule is necessary to minimize regulatory discards and reduce overfishing of gag.

Preliminary estimates indicate that the 2011 recreational allocation will last for only 30 to 83 fishing days, depending partially on the time of year the season is open. In order to maximize the season length, the Council decided to defer the opening of the season until the second half of the year.

At the Council's request, NOAA Fisheries Service will release 100,000 pounds of the commercial gag quota to allow fishermen targeting other species to retain some bycatch of gag. That way, the bycatch will be counted against the commercial quota. The recreational fishery was not given a similar bycatch allowance because the release mortality rate for the recreational fishery is much lower than the commercial fishery. In addition, any recreational bycatch allowance would have to be deducted from the amount of fish available for the open season, resulting in a shorter recreational season.

In a separate action, the Council approved a commercial quota reduction for red grouper from 5.75 million pounds to 4.32 million pounds. The final rule, which published December 1, 2010, also reduces the 2011 commercial shallow-water grouper quota from 7.75 million pounds to 4.83 million pounds.

Recreational regulations remain unchanged; however, because the recreational fishery is not taking its allocation, even under the reduced catch limits, the Council will consider options in Reef Fish Amendment 32 that will allow for an increase in the recreational bag limit for red grouper.



Gulf of Mexico Fishery Closures

Recreational Closures:

Red Snapper

The supplemental recreational red snapper season closed 12:01 a.m., November 22, 2010. The fishery will reopen June 1, 2011.

Gag

NOAA Fisheries Service announced a temporary rule to set the recreational harvest of gag to zero, beginning January 1, 2011. The temporary rule expires May 31, 2011.

Commercial Closures/Shifts:

Greater Amberjack

The commercial harvest of greater amberjack in the Gulf of Mexico is closed, effective October 28, 2010, through December 31, 2010. NOAA Fisheries Service has determined the 2010 commercial quota will be reached by this date. During the closure, no person aboard a vessel for which a commercial Gulf of Mexico reef fish permit has been issued may fish for or retain greater amberjack in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. In addition, this closure applies in state waters for persons aboard a vessel for which a federal reef fish permit has been issued.

King Mackerel

From November 1, 2010, through March 31, 2011, fish harvested southward of the Flagler/Volusia County line to the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line are considered Gulf group king mackerel. The trip limit for the fishery in this Florida east coast subzone during this time is 50 fish per day, until February 1, when trip limits may increase to 75 fish per day, if 75 percent of the quota has not been reached.

Fish harvested from Monroe County during this time are considered to be Gulf group king mackerel in the Florida west coast southern subzone. This subzone extends south and west from 25° 20.4' N. lat. to 26° 19.8' N. lat. The trip limit for the hook-and-line sector is 1,250 pounds until 75 percent of the quota is reached. After that, the trip limit is reduced to 500 pounds until the end of the fishing season or 100 percent of the quota is met.

Beginning October 26, 2010, the Gulf group king mackerel commercial trip limit is reduced to 400 pounds in the northern Florida west coast subzone. NOAA Fisheries Service has determined 75 percent of the 168,750-pound quota has been taken.

The northern Florida west coast subzone is located in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico north of 26°19.8' N lat. and east of 87°31.1' W long.

The 500-pound daily trip limit will remain in effect until the quota is reached or June 30, whichever occurs first.

DRAFT Committee Agenda
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management
Council

The Courtyard Marriott
 Gulfport, Mississippi
 February 7-9, 2011

Monday February 7, 2011

8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Sustainable Fisheries/Ecosystem Management Committee

- * Ecosystem Update
- * Sector Separation Workshop Report
- * Generic Annual Catch Limits/Accountability Measures Amendment
- * Scoping Document for Generic Earned Income Requirement/Crew Size Amendment

2:00 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.

Administrative Policy Committee

- * Review and Final Approval of Administrative Handbook
- * Discussion of Initiating a Strategic Plan for the Council
- * Scientific & Statistical Committee Attendance Issues

3:45 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.

Habitat Protection Committee

- * Summary of Habitat Advisory Panel Meetings

4:15 p.m. - 4:45 p.m.

Data Collection Committee

- * Summary of Vessel Monitoring System Advisory Panel Meeting

4:45 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

SEDAR Selection Committee - Full Council

- * Report of the SEDAR Steering Committee

4:45 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.

Advisory Panel Selection Committee - Full Council

- * Make-up of the Ad Hoc Individual Fishing Quota Review Advisory Panel

5:30 p.m. - 5:45 p.m.

Advisory Panel Selection Committee - Closed Session

- * Appointments to the Ad Hoc Individual Fishing Quota Review Advisory Panel

5:45 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Full Council - Closed Session

- * Litigation Briefing

- Recess

Tuesday February 8, 2011

8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

Budget/Personnel Committee

- * Fourth Quarter Budget Review

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Shrimp Management Committee

- * Review and Approval of the 2011 Texas Closure
- * Summary of the Shrimp Advisory Panel
- * Preliminary Report on Shrimp Effort in 2010
- * Report of the Sawfish Workshop

10:00 a.m. - Noon & 1:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Reef Fish Management Committee

- * Update/2010 Red Snapper Landings & Regulatory Amendment Status
- * Terms of Reference Review/Approval - Gray Triggerfish and Vermilion Snapper
- * Greater Amberjack Update Assessment
- * Re-run of Gag Update Assessment
- * Goliath Grouper Assessment
- * Impact of Observed Discard Estimates on Red Grouper Assessment
- * Options Paper for Red Snapper Regulatory Amendment
- * Limited Access Privilege Program Advisory Panel Meeting Report
- * Individual Fishing Quota Finance Program
- * Individual Fishing Quota Discussion Paper

- Recess

Immediately following committee recess will be an Informal Question and Answer Session on Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Issues

Wednesday February 9, 2011

8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Spiny Lobster/Stone Crab Management Committee

- * Report on SAFMC Actions on Joint Amendment 10 for Spiny Lobster
- * Approval of Joint Amendment 10 for Public Hearings

10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Mackerel Management Committee

- * Review of Draft Amendment 18 to the Coastal Migratory Pelagics Fishery Management Plan
- * Review of Latent King Mackerel Gill Net Permit Alternatives

2:00 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.

Outreach and Education Committee

- * Summary of the Outreach & Education Advisory Panel

2:45 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Coral Management Committee

- * Presentation - Ecology & Conservation of Deep-sea Coral Habitats & Communities in the Gulf of Mexico

- Recess



DRAFT Council Agenda
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
 The Courtyard Marriott
 Coastal Ballroom
 Gulfport, Mississippi
 February 9-10, 2011

Wednesday February 9, 2011

- I. Call to Order and Introductions - Shipp
- II. Adoption of Agenda¹ - Shipp
- III. Approval of Minutes - Shipp
(3:30 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.)
- IV. Fisheries 101 - Bortone
(3:45 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.)
- V. Public Testimony^{2,3,4,5} - Shipp
 - a. Exempted Fishing Permits (EFP) (if any)
 - b. Open Public Comment Period^{2,6}
(4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.)

Thursday February 10, 2011

- VII. Committee Reports
 - a. Sustainable Fisheries/Ecosystem - Riechers
 - b. Reef Fish Management - Minton
 - c. Administrative Policy - Riechers
 - d. Habitat Protection - Hendrix
 - e. SEDAR Selection - Shipp
 - f. AP Selection - Perret
 - g. Data Collection - Pearce
 - h. Budget/Personnel - McIlwain
 - i. Shrimp Management - Sapp
 - j. Outreach & Education - Gill
 - k. Coral Management - Teehan
 - l. Stone Crab/Spiny Lobster Management - Teehan
 - m. Mackerel Management - Sapp
(8:30 a.m. - 5:15 p.m.)
- VIII. Other Business - Shipp
 - a. Report of the South Atlantic Council Meeting - Gill
 - b. Report of the Communities & Catch Shares Workshop - Lassetter
 - c. Report of the Council Coordinating Committee Meeting - Shipp
(5:15 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.)

¹The established times for addressing items on the Council and committee agendas, except for those setting times for public testimony or open public comment, may be adjusted as necessary to accommodate the timely completion of discussion relevant to the agenda items. Such adjustments may result in the meeting being extended from, or completed prior to the date established by these agendas.

²Persons wishing to testify for either public testimony or open public comment must submit a registration card before the beginning of public testimony; otherwise persons wishing to testify may be denied. One card must be completed for each issue on which persons wish to testify.

³Persons wishing Council members to have copies of written testimony or information should provide 30 copies to staff for distribution. All written information shall include a statement of the source and date of such information. Any oral or written statement shall include a brief description of the background and interests of the person testifying.

⁴Oral or written communications provided to the Council, its members or its staff that relate to matters within the Council's purview are public in nature. These communications will be made available to the public in their entirety and maintained by the Council as part of its permanent record. Further, knowingly and willfully submitting false information to the Council is a violation of Federal law.

⁵Anyone wishing to use electronic visual aids during public testimony must provide staff with a copy of the material at least one hour before testimony begins to allow for a virus scan of said material.

⁶The Council has set aside this time for open public comment regarding any fishery issue or concern. People wishing to speak before the Council should complete a public comment card, making sure to check the box marked Open Public Comment. In the interest of giving everyone an opportunity to speak, speakers are asked to limit comments to three minutes. If your sentiments are reflected in comments made by others, please state so and allow the next speaker to address the Council. Individuals may be asked to reduce speaking time in order to accommodate all who wish to speak. Open public comment will end no later than the time scheduled on the agenda regardless of the number of persons wishing to comment.

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

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Executive Director

Richard Leard
Deputy Director

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Individual Fishing Quota Program Reminders

Quota Changes for 2011 Fishing Year

The quota for red grouper will be 4.32 million pounds gutted weight and the quota for gag will be 100,000 pounds gutted weight. The gag grouper quota may be increased later in the fishing year, pending the outcome of a gag stock assessment. These quota changes will result in shareholders receiving 25% less red grouper allocation (pounds of fish) and 93% less gag allocation than received at the start of the 2010 fishing season. The quotas for deep-water grouper, tilefish, and other shallow-water grouper remain unchanged. The quota for red snapper will be increased later, provided the total allowable catch for red snapper in fishing year 2010 is not exceeded.

Transfer 2011 Allocation to Your Vessel Account after January 1

On January 1, allocation will be reissued to your shareholder account, *not your vessel account*. Any unused allocation from the 2010 fishing year will not be carried over to the 2011 fishing year. To harvest your 2011 allocation, you must transfer sufficient allocation to your vessel account prior to your landing notification.

To transfer allocation to your vessel account:

1. Log-in to your IFQ shareholder account and select **Allocation** then **Transfer Allocation** from the menu bar.
2. On the *Transfer Allocation* page select **To My Vessel Account** from the drop-down menu.
3. Click on your vessel account in the table on the middle of the page and highlight it in blue. The numbers to the right of your vessel's name will indicate the allocation currently held in your vessel account by share category.
4. The table at the bottom of the *Transfer Allocation* page shows the allocation currently in your shareholder account. In the "Transfer Pounds (gutted weight)" column, type the number of pounds of allocation you wish to transfer to your vessel account for each share category.
5. To complete the allocation transfer, press **Submit** in the lower left corner of the screen. you will receive a pop-up window to confirm the transfer.

Update Your Account

If you have not already done so, please update your account information, including your e-mail address and secret questions. Your e-mail address is used to send receipts of share and allocation transfers, reminders of cost recovery fees, and other important information. If you forget your password, you can have it e-mailed to you by answering your secret questions.

To update your account or find a UserID and PIN:

1. Log-in to your IFQ shareholder account and select **Update Account** from the menu bar.
2. On the *Update Account* page, click on the shareholder or vessel account you would like to update or view, and highlight it in blue.
3. Once you have selected an account, you can view your PIN for that account. To update your PIN, delete the old PIN and type a new PIN. You will need to retype the new PIN to confirm the change. **Your vessel account PIN must be used for completing landing transactions with a dealer.**
4. Enter your e-mail address and check the email flag box to receive messages.
5. Select two secret questions and provide answers to each. Secret questions allow you to retrieve your PIN using the *Forgot PIN* feature on the IFQ homepage. When calling customer support with inquiries about your specific account, be prepared to answer these questions to confirm your identity.
6. Press **Submit** at the bottom of the page to update your account.

Reminders *continued*

Vessel Transfers

If you transfer a reef fish permitted vessel, the vessel account associated with that vessel must be transferred as well. Before initiating the vessel transfer, please remove any IFQ allocation from your vessel account so the vessel account can be transferred to the new owner. If you purchase a reef fish permitted vessel, please contact IFQ Support to facilitate the transfer of the vessel account into your IFQ Shareholder account. NOAA Fisheries Service will be unable to transfer the vessel account to the new permit holder until all IFQ allocation has been removed by the older permit holder.

Accept Share Transfers

Remember that a share transfer is not complete until the transferee accepts the share transfer. To accept a share transfer, log-in to your shareholder account, select **Receive Transferred Shares** and follow the instructions to accept or reject a share transfer. Share transfers initiated in 2010 must be complete prior to December 31, 2010, to take effect in 2011.

Cost Recovery Fees

Fishers are responsible for submitting 3% of the ex-vessel value of IFQ species to the dealer purchasing those fish. At the end of each calendar quarter the dealer is responsible for submitting the cost recovery fees to NOAA Fisheries Service via the online system. The dealer has 30 days to submit. Dealer accounts may be suspended after 30 days pending payment of applicable fees. The payment schedule is listed below as a reminder.

Quarter	Cost Recovery Fee Available	Cost Recovery Fee Due on or Before
1st	April 1	May 1
2nd	July 1	July 31
3rd	October 1	October 31
4th	January 1	January 31

For more information on how to use the IFQ online system, visit the **Troubleshooting Guide** on the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish IFQ homepage.

Crew Size Limit Changes for Dual-Permitted Vessels Under Consideration

Currently, the maximum crew size for dually permitted vessels when fishing commercially is three unless the vessel has a U.S. Coast Guard Certificate of Inspection (COI). Vessels with a COI may carry a larger crew size to the extent necessary to comply with the COI requirements, which is typically a crew of four or more. However, vessels that carry six or fewer passengers for hire are not required to obtain a COI, and are, therefore, subject to the three-person maximum when fishing commercially.

The rule was established in part to help prevent dual-permitted vessels from both taking paying passengers fishing under commercial seasons and bag limits, and selling fish caught on charter trips.

“The number of people onboard doesn’t determine if the vessel is operating for hire,” said Michael Miglini, a Gulf fisherman and member of the Councils Ad Hoc Data Collection Advisory Panel.

Miglini and others say the limit presents safety issues, particularly for divers who want to fish commercially, but are limited to the three-person crew size.

“The three-person rule creates a situation where it’s impossible to have two divers continuously in the water and not have an overstressed crew,” said Miglini.

And now that commercially permitted vessels are required to have a vessel monitoring system onboard, as well as declare whether a trip is commercial or for-hire before leaving the dock, law enforcement can better monitor activity.

These discussions have led the Council to direct staff to draft a generic amendment that considers increasing the crew size limit, or eliminating it altogether. The issue will be discussed further during the February Council meeting in Gulfport, Mississippi.



Photo by Michael Miglini

LDWF Announces Shrimp Season to Remain Open in Certain Waters East of the Mississippi River and Close in a Portion of State Offshore Waters

waters throughout the summer and into fall prevented the shrimp stock from being harvested at levels seen in previous years. The area to remain open to shrimping is that part of Shrimp Management Zone 1 in Lake Pontchartrain, Chef Menteur Pass, Rigolets Pass, the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet (MRGO), that part of Lake Borgne seaward of a line extending one-half mile from the shoreline, and a portion of Mississippi Sound.

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission had earlier ordered that the fall inshore shrimp season in the open waters of Breton and Chandeleur Sounds as described by the “double-rig” line close March 31, 2011.

At its December 2, 2010, meeting the Commission approved closing a portion of state offshore waters to shrimping effective at sunset December 21, but authorized LDWF Secretary Barham to keep these waters open if necessary to allow continued harvest of shrimp by commercial and recreational fishermen.

The offshore area typically closed to shrimping each year is unique as it serves as a refuge to a large number of small, over-wintering, white shrimp. Additionally, provisions in state statute temporarily exempt the minimum possession count of 100 (whole shrimp) count per pound

on white shrimp from October 15 through the 3rd Monday in December. Following December 20, it becomes illegal to possess white shrimp smaller than 100 count per pound. As temperatures drop, smaller sized white shrimp occupying coastal lakes or bays migrate into these waters. Closures during the winter help to protect smaller shrimp so they may grow to larger, more valuable sizes.

As water temperatures warm, large numbers of these over-wintering white shrimp re-enter coastal lakes and bays and quickly grow to very large sizes, as evidenced by reported statewide white shrimp landings of 11 million pounds in May 2009, worth approximately \$14 million.

The offshore closure became effective December 21, 2010, and includes the portion of state outside waters south of the Inside/Outside Shrimp Line as described in LA R.S. 56:495, from the western shore of Freshwater Bayou Canal at 92° 18.33' W. long., to the U.S. Coast Guard navigation light off the northwest shore of Caillou Boca at 29° 03.10' N. lat. and 90° 50.27' W. long.

All state outside waters east of the U.S. Coast Guard navigational light off the northwest shore of Caillou Boca, as well as state outside waters west of Freshwater Bayou Canal, will remain open to shrimping.



Commercial Quotas & Opening Dates for Atlantic Shark Fisheries for 2011

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announced a final rule that establishes quota levels and opening dates for the 2011 Atlantic commercial shark fisheries. Based in part on public comments and implementation of adaptive management measures, NMFS changed the opening date for the non-sandbar large coastal shark fishery in the Gulf of Mexico region from the proposed opening date. The final opening dates and quotas are listed on the next page.

In addition, NMFS implemented criteria to establish fishery opening dates and adjust the trip limits for the shark fisheries through in-season actions to provide fishermen more equitable access to the resource throughout the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic regions. At this time, the shark trip limit of 33 non-sandbar large coastal sharks remains in effect and will not change at the start of the fishing season.

See Sharks, next page

Sharks *continued*

All of the shark fisheries will remain open until December 31, 2011, unless NMFS calculates that the landings have reached, or are projected to reach, 80 percent of the available quota. In that case, NMFS will publish a closure notice in the Federal Register for that shark species group that will be effective no fewer than five days from the date of filing.

More details on this ruling are provided in the final rule and Final Environmental Assessment for this action. Copies of these documents are available upon request from the Highly Migratory Species Management Division in Silver Spring, Maryland. You may call 301-713-2347 or visit the Highly Migratory Species Management web site at www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/.

Species Group	Region	2011 Annual Quota	Season Opening Dates
Non-Sandbar Large Coastal Sharks	Gulf of Mexico	351.9 (775,740 lb dw)	March 1, 2011*
	Atlantic	190.4 (419,756 lb dw)	July 15, 2011
Non-Sandbar LCS Research Quota	No Regional Quotas	37.5 (82,673 lb dw)	January 1, 2011
Sandbar Research Quota		87.9 (193,784 lb dw)	January 1, 2011
Non-Blacknose Small Coastal Sharks		314.4 (693,257 lb dw)	January 1, 2011
Blacknose Sharks		19.9 (43,872 lb dw)	January 1, 2011
Blue Sharks		273 (601,856 lb dw)	January 1, 2011
Porbeagle Sharks		1.6 (3,479 lb dw)	January 1, 2011
Pelagic Sharks other than Porbeagle or Blue		488 (1,075,856 lb dw)	January 1, 2011



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The Gulf Council would like to hear from you! Please contact us regarding fishery questions, comments, or concerns you would like to see covered in the ***Gulf Fishery News***. Anyone interested in submitting information, such as articles, editorials, or photographs pertaining to fishing or fisheries management is encouraged to do so. Submissions may be mailed to Charlene Ponce, Public Information Officer, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607. Materials can also be sent via fax to 813-348-1711, or by e-mail to charlene.ponce@gulfcouncil.org.

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. The Council is responsible for the development and modification of fishery management plans (FMPs) that are designed to manage fishery resources in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the Gulf of Mexico from state boundaries to the 200-mile limit.

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