



Gulf Fishery News

Volume 29, Issue 4

July–August, 2007

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SEDAR 16 King Mackerel Appointees

Data Workshop

Mike Holmes
Ed Presley
Donald Waters
Bob Zales
Will Patterson
Jason Adriance
Doug DeVries
Richard Fulford

Assessment Workshop

Donald Waters
Bob Zales
Russ Nelson
Harry Blanchet
Doug Gregory
Bob Muller
Mike Murphy

Review Workshop

Mike Nugent
Donald Waters
Bob Zales
Doug Gregory
Bob Muller

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council *Protecting our marine resources*

Reef Fish Amendment 30A Cleared for Public Hearings

An amendment that will address the overfishing and overfished status of both gray triggerfish and greater amberjack made its way through the Gulf Council's Reef Fish Committee, where committee members finished selecting preferred alternatives for the management actions outlined in the draft, before recommending to full Council that the amendment go to public hearings.

Public hearings are scheduled for mid September (see page 4 for dates and locations), and final action by the Council is expected in early November.

Amendment 30A aims to reduce the harvest of greater amberjack and gray triggerfish in order to end overfishing and rebuild both stocks.

Aside from setting management thresholds and targets for gray triggerfish, the amendment also proposes to adjust the allocation of both species.

Other management alternatives under consideration include reducing the bag limit for greater amberjack and increasing the recreational size limit for gray triggerfish, as well as establishing a commercial quota for both fisheries.

Greater amberjack have been under a rebuilding plan since 2003, but a new stock assessment concludes the stock remains overfished and is currently undergoing overfishing.

According to another recent stock assessment Gray triggerfish are also overfished and undergoing overfishing.

Council Bids Farewell to Departing Members

Passion was the word most used during the last Council meeting to describe Philip Horn, outgoing Council member from Mississippi.

"On behalf of the Council, I'd like to thank Philip for his many years of service to the Council.

"His passion in representing his views on fisheries

management issues are heartfelt, and his in-depth history and knowledge of fisheries in the Gulf will be missed." said Council Chairman, Robin Riechers.

Horn completed his latest three-year stint on the Council in August, after serving a total of 12 years.



Robin Riechers, Chair, presents outgoing member Philip Horn with a service plaque

See "Farewell" page 2

Harvesting & Selling Illegal Marine Life Nets Man 10 Months in Jail

Alexandre Alvarenga-Freire, 40, of Miami, Florida, was sentenced in Miami federal District Court in connection with the illegal harvesting and sale in interstate and foreign commerce of *Ricordia florida*, an invertebrate corallimorph, in violation of the federal Lacey Act.

Alvarenga-Freire was sentenced to a ten-month prison term and a year of supervised release. His 1969 34' fiberglass hulled Morgan sailing vessel, "Pippin", the one used to harvest the marine life, was forfeited to the United States as a result of the violations.

Ricordia florida are prized by aquarists for their varied coloration and their ability to impart a "natural" look to displays. Both federal and Florida law closely regulate the harvesting and sale of such marine life.

According to court records, in November 2006 two German nationals intercepted at Miami International

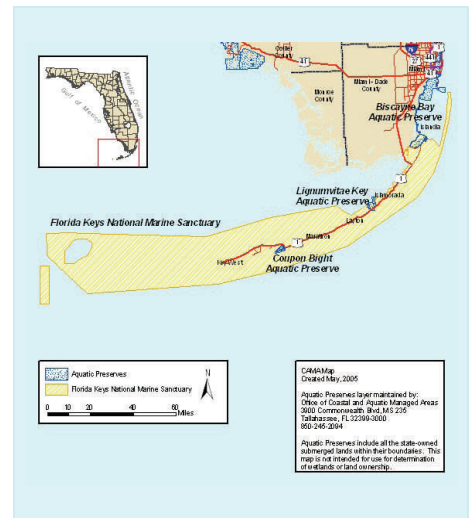
Airport exporting 500 specimens of *Ricordia florida* admitted to investigators that they were involved with Freire in harvesting the marine life while aboard the Pippin.

With a Global Position System, investigators monitored the Pippin through January 25, 2007, when Freire was arrested at Cudjoe Key Marina after returning from the Sanctuary with a load of 44 specimens of *Ricordia florida*.

Information from the GPS, as well as an overflight conducted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement confirmed the information provided by the German nationals.

The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) is a 2,800 square nautical mile area surrounding the entire archipelago of the Florida Keys. It includes the productive waters of Florida Bay, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Atlantic Ocean.

The FKNMS supports rich biological communities with extensive conservation, recreational, commercial, ecological, historical, research, educational, and aesthetic values of national significance.



Within the waters of the FKNMS are spectacular, unique, and nationally significant marine environments, including seagrass meadows, mangrove islands, and extensive coral reefs.

Farewell *continued from page 1*

A lifetime member of the fishing community and part owner of Clark Seafood, Horn's service runs deep. He served as Council Chair during the 1992-1993 Council year. He has also served as a Commissioner for the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources, and was previously a member of the Gulf Council's Reef Fish and Red Snapper Advisory Panels.

Horn also serves on the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission's Commercial/Recreational Fisheries Advisory Panel, and is a Trustee for the Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation.

The Council also says goodbye to Degraaf Adams of Texas.

"The council sends its thanks and gratitude for Degraaf's service. His ability to understand the complex issues of fisheries management helped us in seeking the

best management solutions for the long-run," said Riechers.

Appointed in 2004, Adams has been a strong advocate for the recreational fishing sector. Like Horn, he also has a long history of service.

Adams is a past President of the Coastal Conservation Association's (CCA) Houston Chapter, and served on CCA's Texas State Board of Directors, Texas State Executive Board, and National Board of Directors.

He's past Chair of the Galveston Bay National Estuary Program and currently serves on its Management Council. Mr. Adams also served on the Gulf States Advisory Panel.

"We'll miss them both, and we wish them well," said Riechers.

Tentative Committee Schedule
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
Beau Rivage
Biloxi, Mississippi
October 29—October 31, 2007

Monday, October 29, 2007**1:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.**

- Reef Fish Management Committee (**Tab B**)
- Scoping Document for Reef Fish Amendment 29 (Grouper IFQ)
 - Summaries of Scoping Hearings
 - British Columbia IFQ Programs (EDF)
 - Committee Recommendations
 - Report on Marine Reserves
 - SEFSC Report on Madison-Swanson
 - FSU Report on Red Grouper Spawning in Steamboat Lumps
 - Ecosystem Modeling Workshop Report
 - Draft Reef Fish Amendment 30B Options Paper
 - SEFSC Estimates of Male/Female Ratios
 - Staff Revisions
 - Selection of Public Hearing Locations
 - Committee Recommendations
 - Draft Red Snapper Allocation Discussion Document

Tuesday, October 30, 2007**8:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon**

- Reef Fish Management Committee Continued (**Tab B**)
- Reef Fish Amendment 30A—Gray Triggerfish and Greater Amberjack
 - Public Hearing Summaries
 - SSC Recommendations
 - AP Recommendations
 - Final Committee Action

1:00 p.m.—1:30 p.m.

- Joint Reef Fish/Mackerel/Red Drum Management Committee (**Tab J**)
- Generic Amendment for Regulation of Offshore Aquaculture
 - IPT Revisions
 - Final Committee Action

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

- Data Collection Committee (**Tab C**)
- Reports by SSC Select Committee on Revisions of MRFSS

2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

- Administrative Policy Committee (**Tab I**)
- Review of Proposed SOPPs Language for Leave Without Pay Status

3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

- Budget/Personnel Committee (**Tab F**)
- Status Review of 2007 Funding
 - Review of 2008 Council Operational Budget

4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

- Red Drum Management Committee (**Tab E**)
- Ad Hoc Review Panel for Red Drum Recommendations for Long-term Research Program

Wednesday, October 31, 2007**8:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.**

- Shrimp Management Committee (**Tab D**)
- Status Report on Shrimp Stocks
 - Review of 2007 Permits and Effort

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

- Habitat Protection AP Recommendations (**Tab G**)

1:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

- Spiny Lobster/Stone Crab Management Committee (**Tab H**)
- Size limit for Imported Spiny Lobster

Tentative Council Agenda
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
Beau Rivage
Biloxi, Mississippi
October 31—November 1, 2007

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

- I. Call to Order and Introductions
(2:00 p.m.—2:05 p.m.)
- II. Adoption of Agenda¹
(2:05 p.m. – 2:10 p.m.)
- III. Approval of Minutes (**Tab A**)
(2:10 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.)
- IV. Public Testimony ^{2,3}-
 - a. Exempted Fishing Permits (EFP) if any
 - b. Reef Fish Amendment 30A
 - c. Generic Amendment for Regulation of Offshore Aquaculture
(2:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.)
- V. Open Public Comment Period⁴
(4:15 p.m.—5:15 p.m.)

Thursday, November 1, 2007

- VI. Committee Reports
 - a. Reef Fish Management (**Tab B**)
 - b. Joint Reef Fish/Mackerel/Red Drum (**Tab J**)
 - c. Data Collection (**Tab C**)
 - d. Administrative Policy (**Tab I**)
 - e. Budget/Personnel (**Tab F**)
(8:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m.)

Recess

 - f. Red Drum Management (**Tab E**)
 - g. Shrimp Management (**Tab D**)
 - h. Habitat Protection (**Tab G**)
 - i. Spiny Lobster/Stone Crab Management (**Tab H**)
(1:00 p.m.—2:30 p.m.)
- VII. Other Business (**Tab K**)
(2:30 p.m.—3:30 p.m.)

VIII. Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

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 must turn in a registration card before the beginning of the public testimony period; otherwise persons wishing to testify may be denied.

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

⁴The 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*. A note about 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 even further in order to accommodate all those who wish to speak. **The open public comment period will end no later than the time scheduled on the agenda, regardless of the number of persons wishing to comment.**

A Letter From Dr. Hogarth

NOAA Fisheries Service recently released its annual report on the status of U.S. marine fisheries for 2006. The report tracks both population levels and harvest rates for species caught in federal waters. Of the 187 fish stocks and multi-species groupers reviewed, 47 were overfished, while 48 stocks of the 242 surveyed were subject to overfishing.

As you know, ending overfishing is the only way to begin the rebuilding of a fish stock. Last year the Bush Administration gained bipartisan support in Congress to rewrite and strengthen the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

Under the reauthorized act, fishery managers must revise fishery management plans to end overfishing by 2010.



We must end overfishing now. We have the right combination of legal tools to improve stewardship and we're moving forward to implement Congress' strengthened mandate to end overfishing so future generations of Americans can enjoy sustainable and healthy marine ecosystems.

It is time to end overfishing. NOAA Fisheries recently completed nine public meetings and a comment period to hear ideas from fishing communities about ways to end overfishing. We're now evaluating those comments and will soon release a range of proposals for further public review. Please plan to participate.

While our goal is to end overfishing and rebuild our fisheries to their most productive levels, I want to do so with as little impact on fishermen and their communities as possible. I need your help. Please plan to participate in the public review process. We will be listening.

Bill Hogarth

Director

National Marine Fisheries Service

Public Hearings for Reef Fish Amendments 29 and 30A

September 10, 2007

W Hotel
333 Poydras Street
New Orleans, Louisiana

Wingate Inn
12009 Indian River Road
Biloxi, Mississippi

September 11, 2007

Courtyard by Marriott
3750 Gulf Shores Pkwy
Gulf Shores, Alabama

Holiday Inn
5002 Seawall Blvd.
Galveston, Texas

September 12, 2007

Palacios Rec Center
2401 Perryman
Palacios, Texas

Edgewater Beach Resort
11212 Front Beach Road
Panama City, Florida

September 13, 2007

Holiday Inn Emerald Beach
1102 S. Shoreline Blvd.
Corpus Christi, Texas

September 17, 2007

Radisson Hotel
12600 Roosevelt Blvd.
St. Petersburg, FL

September 18, 2007

Sombrero Cay Club Resort
19 sombrero Blvd.
Marathon, Florida

September 19, 2007

Clarion Hotel
12635 S. Cleveland Ave.
Ft. Myers, Florida

All meetings begin at 6:00 p.m. local time and will end no later than 10:00 pm.

Proposed Aquaculture Amendment

After hearing concerns about a proposed Aquaculture Amendment from the public, its Scientific and Statistical Committee, as well as from its own members, the Gulf Council agreed at its August meeting to convene the Aquaculture Interdisciplinary Planning Team (IPT) to review and address those concerns and to have NOAA General council also provide review and comment.

At that same meeting, the Council tweaked its previously selected preferred alternatives, paving the way for final approval of the document as early as November, 2007.

The amendment represents an effort to develop a regional permitting process for regulating environmentally sound aquaculture in the Gulf EEZ. It also evaluates the effects of issuing permits for aquaculture operations.

A regional permitting process is intended to ensure any aquaculture operations undertaken in the Gulf are environmentally sound and sustainable, and provide maximum benefits to the Nation. The process also is designed to maximize the benefits of U.S. coastal resources for local, regional, and national economies and to assist NOAA Fisheries Service and the Council in better achieving required objectives.

See Aquaculture, next page

Grouper Effort Management/LAPPs

The Gulf Council has approved a draft scoping document for Reef Fish Amendment 29. Scoping meetings will be held around the Gulf in September (*see page 4 for dates and locations*) to solicit public input on proposed management alternatives. The Council will review the results of those meetings during its October/November meeting in Biloxi, Mississippi, before deciding how staff will proceed with its options paper.

Current regulatory measures used in the management of the commercial grouper fishery include a license limitation system, quotas, trip limits, minimum size limits, area gear restrictions, and season closures.

The incentive structure resulting from this regulatory framework has fostered overcapitalization, causing commercial grouper regulations to become increasingly restrictive over time, and intensifying derby conditions under which fishermen race to harvest as many fish as possible before the quota runs out.

Reef Fish Amendment 29 proposes to rationalize effort and reduce overcapacity in the commercial grouper

fishery in order to achieve and maintain optimum yield (OY). In doing so, some of the problems resulting from derby fishing will be eased, preventing the problem from worsening.

Reducing overcapitalization is also expected to improve profitability of commercial grouper fishermen. Collectively, working conditions including safety at sea should improve and bycatch in the grouper fishery should be reduced, and a flexible and effective integrated management approach for the grouper complex should follow.

Included in the draft amendment are five options for managing effort in the grouper fishery. Those options include eliminating latent permits, a buyback or buyout program, permit endorsements, an individual fishing quota (IFQ), and an individual transferable effort quota (ITEQ).

These options are preliminary, and public involvement in the scoping process is encouraged.

For more information, please call the Council office at 813-348-1630.

Gag Management Options Considered

Reef Fish Amendment 30B, intended to address the overfishing of gag grouper, is currently under development. Recent stock assessments for red grouper and gag have found that, while red grouper has fully recovered to its optimum yield, gag is still undergoing overfishing. Under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA), the Council is required to submit a plan to end overfishing within two years of being notified of such a determination.

As a result, the Council is seeking ways to allow red

grouper harvest to increase while at the same time reducing the fishing mortality rate on gag. Although a one-gag bag limit is under consideration, it is just one of a range of alternatives contained in the draft amendment. Other strategies up for Council deliberation include seasonal closures, size limit changes, or combinations of these management measures.

Prior to the approval of any plan, a series of public hearings will be held throughout the Gulf coast. Dates and locations will be announced in the near future.

Aquaculture *continued from page 4*

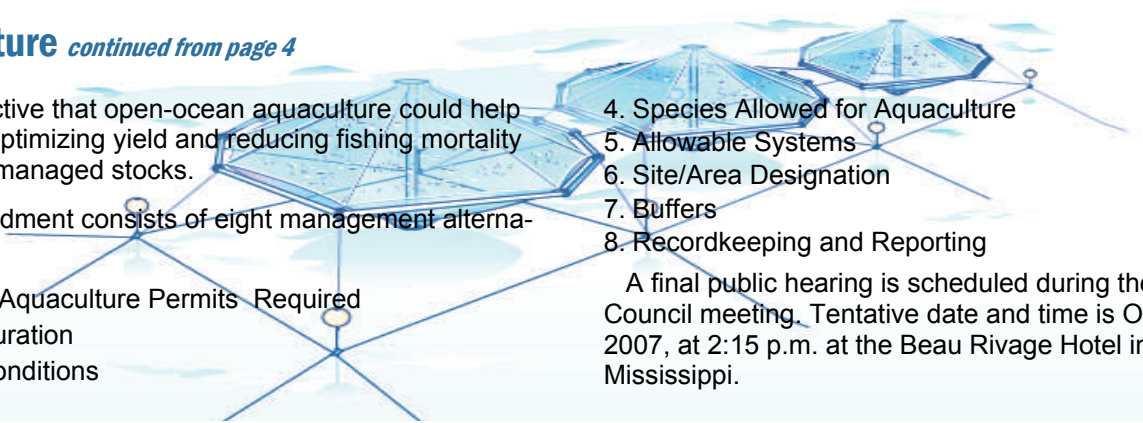
One objective that open-ocean aquaculture could help achieve is optimizing yield and reducing fishing mortality on Council managed stocks.

The amendment consists of eight management alternatives:

1. Types of Aquaculture Permits Required
2. Permit Duration
3. Permit Conditions

4. Species Allowed for Aquaculture
5. Allowable Systems
6. Site/Area Designation
7. Buffers
8. Recordkeeping and Reporting

A final public hearing is scheduled during the next Council meeting. Tentative date and time is October 31, 2007, at 2:15 p.m. at the Beau Rivage Hotel in Biloxi, Mississippi.



Survey seeks input on marine research needs

Anyone interested in Gulf of Mexico coastal and marine issues is invited to complete a survey that will help scientists and funding agencies prioritize regional research and informational needs.

Participants can help shape the future direction of Gulf of Mexico research, discovery and information dissemination by identifying the topics they believe are most important.

The survey, which takes approximately 10 minutes to complete, is available online at <http://masgc.org/gmrp>.

Resources that help scientists and managers understand the natural and human-caused impacts on the Gulf are limited, yet coastal and marine concerns continue to rise.

Current topics of concern include stewardship of natural and cultural resources, ecosystem and human health, marine operations, natural hazards and the ocean's role in climate.

This survey and other stakeholder input will be used to develop a regional priorities plan for the Gulf of Mexico research community. The plan will assist research-based organizations to collaboratively work to address the most-pressing needs.

The Gulf of Mexico Research Prioritization and Information Needs Project is coordinated regionally by the Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi-Alabama and Texas Sea Grant programs and engages federal, state, university, non-governmental and international organizations.

The project is funded through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. For more information, contact Steve Sempier, Sea Grant Gulf of Mexico research coordinator, at stephen.sempier@usm.edu or (662) 325-5509.



This regional research plan will focus on the needs in the Gulf and will link recently developed plans.

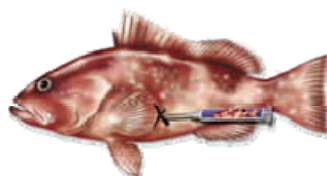
Venting Fish:

A Guide to Releasing Reef Fish with Ruptured Swimbladders

Proper release of marine fishes has become increasingly important to anglers. In order to maintain healthy fish populations, each angler is responsible for carefully handling fish that are hooked, and releasing fish so they can spawn or perhaps be caught again.

Reef fish may require special handling during release to decrease mortality. This information is based on the best available research regarding reef fish venting as interpreted by a Florida Sea Grant Advisory Panel assembled to review this research.

Although the authors realize the need for further study of the influence of venting on long-term reef fish survival, sufficient information exists to warrant providing guidelines to assist anglers in successful release practices.

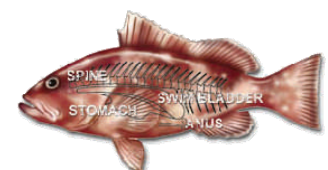


The Problem

Many marine reef fish have a gas-filled organ called a swimbladder, which controls buoyancy and allows the fish to maintain a certain depth in the water column.

The gas in the swimbladder can over-expand when fish are brought quickly to the surface by hook and line. This can result in serious injury to the fish, and if released in this buoyant condition, the fish may float away and die from exposure to the elements or become an easy target for predators. This defeats the purpose of fishery management laws such as minimum size restrictions and daily bag limits.

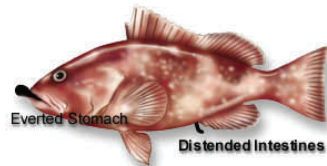
Watch the Video—[How to Vent A Fish](#) from the Mote Marine Laboratory.



Swimbladder Biology

Many reef fish have a closed swimbladder, an internal organ filled with gases, mostly oxygen, carbon dioxide, and nitrogen. This organ is located in the peritoneal cavity attached to the fish's backbone beneath the dorsal fin. Swimbladders can expand only so far before they burst.

When the swimbladder bursts, the swimbladder gases escape into the fish's body cavity, where they can continue to expand. The pressure exerted by these gases is sufficient to push the stomach out the mouth and the intestines out of the anus. Venting releases these gases from the body cavity, thus eliminating the pressure on the internal organs. If damage is not excessive, the organs will return in place on their own, once the gases are expelled. Venting also will allow the fish to overcome buoyancy problems and swim down to habitat depth, enhancing its immediate survival.



Determining Which Fish to Vent

Scientific studies have shown that species with large swimbladders such as red grouper, black sea bass, and gag derive immediate benefit from venting. Your ability to judge which fish should be vented will improve with practice and experience. After reeling in a fish, closely observe its condition. If the fish is bloated and floats (is unable to control its buoyancy) or if the fish's stomach is distended out of the mouth, the fish should be vented. If the fish appears normal, not bloated, and is able to swim down to habitat depth on its own, venting is not necessary.

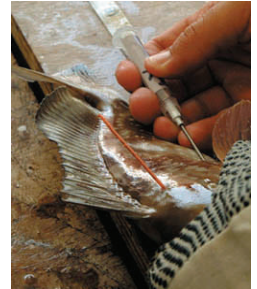
Venting Procedure

It is best to vent the fish as quickly as possible with a minimum of handling. If the fish's stomach is everted out of the fish's mouth, do not attempt to push it back into the fish's body. Expelling the swimbladder gases will allow the stomach to return to its normal position within a few hours. Hold the fish gently but firmly on its side and insert the venting tool at a 45-degree angle approximately one to two inches back from the base of the pectoral fin.



Insert the tool only deep enough to release the gases — do not skewer the fish. The sound of the escaping gas is audible and deflation is noticeable. If a fish is extremely bloated, use the hand holding the fish to exert gentle pressure on the fish's abdomen to aid deflation.

Keep a good grip on the venting tool during the entire process, so that an unexpected jerk from the fish does not dislodge the tool and cause injury to others.



The fish's everted stomach should not be punctured. This practice is not as efficient in releasing gas from the body cavity and results in additional injury.

Return the fish to the water as soon as possible. If necessary, revive it by holding the fish with the head pointed downward and moving the fish back and forth to pass water over the gills until the fish is able to swim unassisted.

Venting Tools

A venting tool can be any hollow, sharpened instrument that allows gases to escape. Ice picks and knives are not suitable because simply puncturing the fish is undesirable and can result in a mortal injury.

The Novak Venting Tool, designed and developed by Florida Sea Grant in cooperation with Mote Marine Laboratory researchers, can be purchased from [Aquatic Release Conservation, Inc.](http://www.dehooker4ARC.com) (www.dehooker4ARC.com), or by calling its toll free number, 1-877-411-4272. Florida Sea Grant is not aware of any other commercial suppliers of venting tools.

It is also possible to make your own venting tool. The modified hypodermic needle pictured is an excellent choice for a fish venting tool. A hollow, sharpened stainless steel cannula mounted on a hollow wooden dowel also works. Cannulas (16-gauge recommended) can often be purchased from farm supply and feed stores. The tool should be cleaned between uses and kept in a safe and accessible place. Chlorine bleach is a good disinfectant. Be sure to cap or place a cork on the tip of the tool after use to prevent personal injury.



Winners of the 2007 Annual Great American Cook-off Announced

The Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board presented the fourth annual Great American Seafood Cook-Off at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans on Aug. 4-5.

Select chefs from coast to coast showcased their art, the value of domestic seafood, and the simplicity of cooking seafood at home.

On Day 1 of the Cook-Off, the 19 chefs in the cook-off made all their own selections on ingredients and impressed the crowd with their mastery of the culinary arts using sustainable and domestic seafood.

At the beginning of Day 2, six finalists were announced and went on to compete for the title of King or Queen of American Seafood.

John Connelly, president of National Fisheries Institute and auditor for the event, called out the states: Alaska, California, Georgia, Hawaii, Louisiana, and Massachusetts as the six finalists. He explained that the challenge for Day 2 was to cook a home-style dish for today's busy home cook in just 45 minutes.

The Chefs had to use one or two ingredients, undisclosed until the contest began: corn flakes and/or a Michelob Light beer. Plus, besides seafood from their home states, they were instructed to choose their fresh and dry goods on site at the Whole Foods Market stand.

Georgia Chef James "Tim" Thomas said the tension for the chefs was in just not knowing who would make the top six and then what ingredients they would be working with. "I knew what I wanted to do, but so much was unknown."

Thomas selected a beer from a variety of Michelob Lights by Anheuser Busch with a fragrant profile that he believed would complement his wild Georgia shrimp ratatouille with boursin and cheese grits, and selected his fresh vegetables for stewing from Whole Foods Market.

Thomas must have been at the top of his game. The afternoon wound down and the judges, sitting at a home-like dining room table, completed their job. Bill Hogarth, assistant administrator of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and Justin Timineri, the



Tim Thomas—Winner of the 2007 Great American Cook-off

2006 King, crowned Thomas the 2007 King of American Seafood.

"It was a wonderful experience. This is a wonderful town," said Thomas.

Thomas said keeping it simple is critical to his cooking and he frequently cooks with the home chef in mind. After taking third place at the 2006 Great American Seafood Cook-Off, he said, "I am very grateful to have been invited back again. I can't express my appreciation."

Thomas' dish the first day was Shrimp and hoe cakes, Georgia peach and Vidalia onion chutney, chipotle sour cream and cucumber salad.

Chef Tenney Flynn of Louisiana was awarded second place for his sautéed American red snapper with melon and mango salad. Chef Michael Schlow of Massachusetts won third place for his Local Striped Bass, summer corn puree, chanterelles, pickled shallots and truffle emulsion.



Tenney Flynn—2nd place winner 2007 Great American Cook-off

The distinguished line up of judges included Bill Hogarth of NOAA; Julia Rutland, senior editor of *Coastal Living Magazine*; Donald Link, a James Beard winner and executive chef at Cochon Restaurant in Louisiana; and Justin Timineri, executive chef for the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Chef John Besh of Restaurant August in Louisiana served as emcee of the event.

When asked what opening up the Cook-Off to a second day for the consumer did for the event, LSPMB Executive Director Ewell Smith said, "Bringing the event to the consumer level is the best thing we've ever done. Day 2 fully demonstrated how easy it can be to cook seafood."

The remaining visiting executive chefs also cooked home-style meals, giving consumers at the event a chance to sample their many simple yet delicious dishes.



Council Member Harlon Pearce with second place winner Tenney Flynn

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Closures

Commercial Closures:

Tilefish

The commercial tilefish fishery in Gulf of Mexico federal waters closed at 12:01 a.m., local time, April 18, 2007, when the quota of 440,000 pounds, gutted weight, was projected to be reached. The fishery will remain closed until 12:01 a.m., local time, January 1, 2008.

King Mackerel

The Commercial run-around gillnet fishery for Gulf group king mackerel in the **southern Florida west coast subzone** was closed. The gillnet fishery will remain closed in the EEZ through 6:00 a.m., local time, January 22, 2008, unless changed by future notice in the *Federal Register*.

Deep-Water Grouper

NOAA Fisheries Service closed the commercial deep-water grouper fishery in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico at **12:01 a.m., local time, June 2, 2007**. The fishery will remain closed until 12:01 a.m., January 1, 2008. During the closure, if commercial quantities of reef fish are onboard, a bag limit of reef fish is not allowed.

Question of the Month

Are there any conditions under which I am allowed to fillet, at sea, the fish I catch in the Gulf of Mexico EEZ?

Federal regulations generally required that all finfish taken from the Gulf of Mexico EEZ be kept with heads and fins attached through landing and offloading. However, there is an exception for personal consumption, per 50CFR Section 622.38(d)(2), which states:

Legal-sized finfish possessed for consumption at sea on the harvesting vessel are exempt from the requirement to have head and fins intact, provided:

- (i) such finfish do not exceed any applicable bag limit;
- (ii) such finfish do not exceed 1.5 lb of finfish parts per person;
- (iii) the vessel is equipped to cook such finfish on board.

Additionally, shark, swordfish, and tuna species may have head and fins removed under certain conditions (see the [2006 Compliance Guide](#) for details). Bait is exempt from the head and fins attached rule; however, reef fish cannot be used as bait.

If you have a question you would like answered, please submit your question to charlene.ponce@gulfcouncil.org. Questions and answers will be published in Gulf Fishery News when space permits.

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Wayne Swingle
Executive Director

Richard Leard
Deputy Director

Appointed Voting Members

William Daughdrill
Panama City, FL
(850) 814-5468

Michael Ray
Austin, TX
(512)389-4649

Robert P. Gill
Crystal River, FL
(352) 795-1916

Robert Shipp
Mobile, AL
(251) 460-6351

Joseph Hendrix, Jr.
Houston, TX
(281) 597-1620

Susan Villere
Mandeville, LA
(985) 845-3557

Thomas McIlwain
Ocean Springs, MS
(228) 818-8866
Julie Morris
Sarasota, FL
(941) 487-4527

Bobbi Walker
Orange Beach, AL
(251) 981-6159

Kay Williams
Vanceleave, MS
(228) 826-2160

Harlon Pearce
Kenner, LA
(504) 467-3809

State/Federal Voting Members

Robin Riechers,
Chair
Austin, TX
(512) 389-4864
Designee for
Larry McKinney

Vernon Minton
Gulf Shores, AL
(251) 968-7576

Corky Perret,
Vice Chair
Biloxi, MS
(228) 374-5000
Designee for William Walker

Karen Foote
Baton Rouge, LA
(225) 765-2383
Designee for John Roussel

Bill Teehan
Tallahassee, FL
(850) 487-0554
Designee for Ken Haddad

Roy Crabtree
St. Petersburg, FL
(727) 824-5301

Non-voting Members

Sam Hamilton
USF&WS
(404) 679-4000

Larry Simpson
GSMFC
(228) 875-5912

Radm Robert Duncan
Eighth Coast Guard
District
(504) 589-6223

David Hogan
Foreign Affairs
Officer
(202) 647-2335




GMFMC wants your news and views

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 are encouraged to do so. Submissions may be mailed to Charlene Ponce, Public Information Officer, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, FL 33607. Materials can also be sent via fax to 813-348-1711, or e-mail; 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 of 1976. 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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The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council *Protecting our marine resources*

2203 Lois Avenue
Suite 1100
Tampa, FL 33607

Phone: 813-348-1630

Fax: 813-348-1711

E-mail: gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org

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