

GULF FISHERY NEWS

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GULF FISHERY NEWS is a publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council for persons interested in the Gulf's fishery resources. Editor: Peter Hood.

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CHARTER/HEADBOAT MORATORIUM APPROVED

The Gulf Council on Thursday, March 29, 2001 approved the provisions of a proposed 3-year moratorium on issuance of new charter and headboat vessel permits in the recreational for-hire fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) for reef fish, coastal migratory pelagics (mackerels, cobia, dolphin, little tunny, bluefish, and cero), and dwahoo [if the proposed Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plan

(FMP) is implemented]. The public will have an opportunity to comment to NMFS on the proposed regulations once they are published, and before any final regulations are approved and implemented. That comment period is 60 days. It is anticipated that the amendment will be implemented during the first quarter of 2002.

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

May 14-17, 2001
Edgewater Beach Resort
11212 Front Beach Road
Panama City Beach, FL 36602



Several major stocks targeted by the recreational sector are considered overfished (e.g., red snapper, red grouper, greater amberjack, and king mackerel) or approaching an overfished state (e.g., vermilion snapper and gag). Considering the continuing expansion of the recreational for-hire sector, the Gulf Council considered it prudent to develop and support the implementation of this amendment. The amendment will principally limit any future expansion in this sector of the fishery while the Gulf Council considers the need for a more comprehensive limited access system and evaluates the effect of the moratorium. In addition, this amendment addresses the current NMFS permit system that does not provide for transfer of permits between vessels or between persons. This has been viewed as a problem by the industry and this amendment will provide for such transfers.

The provisions of the moratorium approved by the Gulf Council are as follows:

A. Duration of Moratorium

Establish a 3-year Moratorium on the issuance of charter/headboat (for-hire) vessel permits, unless sooner replaced by a comprehensive limited access system. The moratorium is effective the date that this Amendment is implemented.

B. Permit and Endorsements

Create a new charter/headboat (for-hire) vessel permit for the Gulf EEZ with endorsements for reef fish, coastal migratory pelagic and dolphin/wahoo (if implemented). A vessel decal for the permitted vessel will be required. All permits and/or endorsements will be permanently numbered (this is so the permits/endorsements can be tracked through history).

C. Eligibility

Provide a fully transferable permit and endorsements to the following:

1. Vessels who obtained or have applied for reef fish and/or coastal pelagic permits prior to 03/29/01.
2. Any person who can demonstrate to NMFS they had a charter/headboat(for-hire) vessel under construction prior to 03/29/01 with copy of contract and/or receipts for expenditures of at least \$5,000.00.

3. Provide for Historical Captain Permits as follows: Any U.S. Coast Guard licensed captain, who can demonstrate to NMFS they were licensed by the USCG and operated as a Captain a for-hire fishery permitted vessel prior to 03/29/01, but did not have a fishery permit issued in their name, and who must qualify for the permit within 90 days of implementation of the final rule for this amendment and who must demonstrate at least 25 percent of their earned income came from recreational for-hire fishing in 1 of the last 4 years ending with 3/29/01. They will be issued a letter of eligibility to be replaced by permit/endorsements to be used only on a vessel that they operate as a captain.

D. Permit transfers

All permits/endorsements will be fully transferable with or without the vessel but without any increase in the passenger capacity.

E. Re-issuance of Permits

Permits/endorsements not renewed or permanently revoked will not be re-issued by NMFS.

F. Appeals Process

Individuals or corporations can appeal to the Regional Administrator to resolve issues related to the NMFS permit office records that pertain to initial eligibility.

G. Permit and Endorsement Renewal Conditions

1. Renewal will be every two years provided vessel complies with G2.
2. All vessels holding permits and/or endorsements will be included in an active sampling frame and participate in one of the approved fishing data surveys. Surveys include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Charterboat Telephone Survey
 - b. Beaufort Headboat Survey
 - c. Texas Parks & Wildlife Survey
 - d. Subsequently approved appropriate data collection system.



COMMERCIAL KING MACKEREL FISHERY CLOSED UNTIL JULY 1, 2001 IN THE SOUTHERN FLORIDA WEST COAST SUBZONE FOR VESSELS USING HOOK-AND-LINE GEAR

The commercial hook-and-line fishery for Gulf group king mackerel in the southern Florida west coast subzone closed 12:01 a.m., local time, March 2, 2001. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announced the closing of this fishery after projecting that landings would reach the quota (541,125 pounds) on March 1, 2001. The fishery will remain closed until July 1, 2001.

With this closure, the commercial fishery for Gulf group king mackerel is closed until July 1, 2001, in waters of the Gulf of Mexico western zone (Texas through Alabama) and eastern zone (Florida) from the U.S./Mexico boundary through the northern and southern Florida west coast subzones. The southern subzone is that part of the Florida west coast subzone which from November 1 through March 31 extends south and west from a line directly east from the Miami-Dade/Monroe County boundary (25° 20.4' N. lat) to a line directly west from the Lee/Collier County boundary (26° 19.8' N. lat), i.e., the Gulf and Atlantic waters off Collier and Monroe counties. From April 1 through October 31, the southern subzone is that part of the Florida west coast subzone which lies between the Lee/Collier County boundary and a line directly west from the Monroe/Collier County boundary (25° 48' N. lat.), i.e., Gulf waters off Collier County.

During the closure no king mackerel caught in the closed zones or subzones may be purchased, bartered, traded, or sold. This prohibition of sale does not apply to trade in king mackerel that were harvested and landed ashore, and bartered, traded, or sold before closure, and held in cold storage by a dealer or processor.

This closure complies with the Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic (FMP) and is necessary to protect and rebuild the overfished Gulf group king mackerel resource. Regulations implemented under the FMP require closure of any segment of the commercial fishery when its quota is reached or is projected to be reached.

CATCH LIMIT CHANGES FOR GULF GROUP KING MACKEREL

The NMFS has published a final rule implementing changes in the catch specifications for Gulf group king mackerel, as proposed by the Gulf Council and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC). The rule is intended to enhance the economic and social benefits from the Gulf group king mackerel fisheries while rebuilding the stock.

The changes, effective April 30, 2001, include:

Revision of the commercial trip limit for Gulf group king mackerel in the Atlantic subzone of the Eastern Zone (Miami-Dade through Volusia Counties, Florida). The trip limit would increase from 50 to 75 fish on February 1, if 75 percent of the annual quota has not been taken. The commercial fishery in this subzone has not met its quota for Gulf group king mackerel in eight of the last ten years. The SAFMC believes that a more flexible trip limit schedule will allow fishers a greater opportunity to meet their quota, while maintaining economic stability in the fishery for the majority of the season.

Establishment of a total allowable catch (TAC) for Gulf group king mackerel at 10.2 million pounds (MP). The TAC is a slight reduction from the existing 10.6 MP TAC. This reduction is necessary to restrain fishing mortality below the threshold level. The Gulf Council believes this TAC will allow continued rebuilding of the Gulf group king mackerel stock while minimizing the social and economic impacts from a TAC reduction.

Establishment of a 2-fish per person per day bag limit on Gulf group king mackerel for the captains and crews of for-hire vessels. Given that the stock of Gulf group king mackerel continues to improve, and because the recreational sector apparently is now maintaining harvest within its allocation, the Gulf Council believes that it is unnecessary to continue constraining the recreational harvest through the use of a zero-fish bag limit of Gulf group king mackerel for captains and crews of for-hire vessels.

COUNCIL SELECTS INITIAL PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES FOR GROUPE AMENDMENT

Red grouper have the highest landings of all grouper species caught by the commercial fishery and rank second in the recreational fishery. Gag have the highest landings in the recreational fishery and are second in the commercial fishery. Unfortunately, both these species appear to be over exploited. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has declared that red grouper are overfished and that gag are approaching an overfished state. To address concerns about these and other grouper species, the Gulf Council has initiated the development of Amendment 18 to the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan (FMP). This amendment examines possible gear restrictions, the use of vessel monitoring systems on commercial reef fish vessels, elimination of dormant reef fish permits, developing a red grouper rebuilding plan, and adding tilefish and marbled grouper to the management unit. At its March meeting, the Gulf Council began selecting preferred alternatives within the amendment.

Aspects of the amendment are as follows:

Gear restrictions: Longline vessels account for about 80 percent of the commercial red grouper catch, and average about 3 times as much annual landings of reef fish per vessel as handline and bandit rig vessels. Possible restrictions to longline gear include limited entry, changing the longline/buoy gear boundary line (currently outside of 20 fathoms east of Cape San Blas (85°30' W. Longitude) and outside 50 fathoms west of Cape San Blas), and a longline/buoy gear phase-out. **The Council did not specify any preferred alternatives for longline gear restrictions.**

Spearfishing with powerheads make it easier to catch large reef fish. This increase in fishing pressure on the larger, more fecund individuals in a population can hinder the rebuilding programs for overfished stocks (e.g., greater amberjack and red grouper). Permitting the use of powerheads would allow managers and assessment biologists to get a better idea of their level of use in the fishery. **As its preferred alternative, the Council selected that a permit be required for the use of powerheads to harvest reef fish (both commercially and recreationally).**

The use of power reels by recreational fishermen makes it easier to land reef fish. However, some Council members expressed concern that fish can be brought up from deeper depths too fast. Because of increased embolism from the rapid ascent, these fish may not survive as well as fish landed with manual reels. Therefore the Council asked to consider alternatives prohibiting the use or possession of power-driven reels in the recreational Gulf reef fish fishery, except by persons who are issued a written exemption by NMFS for handicapped use. **The Council did not specify any preferred alternatives for recreational power reel restrictions.**

Use of reef fish for bait: Presently it is illegal to cut up reef fish at sea for use as bait. However, it is not illegal to use cut up reef fish that were purchased on shore, nor is it illegal to use a whole reef fish provided it complies with applicable size and bag limits. This creates an enforcement problem because it is difficult for agents to differentiate between purchased carcasses and fish being cut up at sea. **The Council selected as its preferred alternative that all species and parts thereof in the reef fish management unit except sand perch and dwarf sand perch be prohibited in the use with any gear.**

Vessel monitoring system: Fish trap vessels, reef fish longline vessels, and reef fish vessels fishing near no-take zones are subject to area restrictions. However, at-sea enforcement of offshore area restrictions is difficult. A VMS system would improve enforcement of area restrictions. **The Council indicated their preferred alternative was to require VMS on bottom (reef fish) longline commercial vessels.**

Dormant reef fish permits: Vessel permits that are not used or rarely used represent a potential for unforeseen increases in reef fish effort and could nullify conservation/rebuilding measures. During 1997-1999, there were between 531 and 591 vessels each year that were assigned a reef fish vessel permit for at least part of the year, but did not have any reef fish catches. Many of these permits are apparently held by owners of charter vessels. Management measures to prevent a sudden or uncontrolled increase in reef fish effort from increased reef fish fishing by these vessels, or transfer of the permit to a vessel that will be more active, will prevent disruption

to existing conservation and rebuilding plans. **The Council did not select a preferred alternative for this section.**

Red grouper rebuilding plan: Red grouper were declared overfished by NMFS in October 2000, and a rebuilding plan must be submitted to NMFS within one year. Because red grouper is part of a multi-species fishery, actions to reduce red grouper harvest will affect other reef fish fisheries as well. The Council felt that the plan should be developed in a full plan amendment rather than a regulatory amendment because of the widespread affects that a red grouper rebuilding plan could have. The rebuilding plan will require an initial harvest reduction of 13 to 50 percent, depending on the strategy adopted. **As its preferred alternatives, the Council selected** that minimum stock size threshold (MSST) be set at 80



percent of the spawning stock at maximum sustainable yield (SS_{MSY}), maximum fishing mortality threshold (MFMT) be set at a fishing mortality rate that produces MSY (F_{MSY}) consistent with recovery to the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) level in no more than 10 years, optimum yield (OY) be set at 90% of MSY (6.0-6.3 millionpounds), adopt a 10-year rebuilding plan based on a constant catch strategy which could switch to a constant fishing mortality (F) strategy at an appropriate future time. **The Council selected no preferred alternative regarding commercial closed seasons, recreational closed seasons, commercial trip limits, recreational bag limits, and closed areas.**

Tilefish: Action to reduce red grouper harvest or to move the longline boundary could shift effort to deep-water groupers and tilefish. Deep-water groupers (speckled hind, misty, yellowedge, snowy, and warsaw groupers) have a precautionary quota of 1.6 million pounds, but no quota exists for tilefish. A precautionary

tilefish quota will assure that the tilefish stocks do not become overfished. The Gulf Council has not chosen a preferred alternative for this measure.

Changes to the reef fish management unit: The Reef Fish FMP fails to include some reef fish species for which landings from the Gulf of Mexico have been reported, specifically marbled grouper and sand tilefish. The inclusion of all groupers landed in from the Gulf of Mexico is necessary to maintain consistency with the NMFS regulations implementing the shallow-water grouper quota. NMFS defines shallow-water grouper as all groupers other than deep-water groupers, jewfish, and Nassau grouper. The inclusion of all tilefish landed in from the Gulf of Mexico will assure consistency with the NMFS regulations if a tilefish quota or other tilefish management measures are adopted.

Public hearings are tentatively scheduled from 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM on the following dates and cities:

June 14, 2001 Port Aransas, TX	June 20, 2001 Orange Beach, AL	June 26, 2001 Ft. Myers, FL
June 18, 2001 Larose, LA	June 21, 2001 Panama City, FL	June 27, 2001 Madeira Beach, FL
June 19, 2001 Biloxi, MS	June 25, 2001 Key West, FL	June 28, 2001 Crystal River, FL

For specific information on where the hearings will be held, contact the Gulf Council office (see page 16 for details).

RED SNAPPER RECREATIONAL FISHERY IN GULF OF MEXICO FEDERAL WATERS WILL OPEN APRIL 21, 2001 THROUGH OCTOBER 31, 2001

The NMFS announces that the recreational fishery for red snapper in Gulf of Mexico Federal waters will open at 12:01 a.m., on April 21, 2001, with a 16-inch minimum size limit and a four-fish bag limit that includes captain and crew of for-hire vessels. The fishery will close at midnight on October 31, 2001, when the recreational quota of 4.47 million pounds is projected to be caught.

COUNCIL PROCEEDS WITH DEVELOPMENT OF SHRIMP AMENDMENT 10

Amendment 10 to the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan (FMP) addresses the need for reducing bycatch from the shrimp trawl fishery in the EEZ off the west coast of Florida, specifically in the Gulf EEZ south and east of Cape San Blas (85°30' W. Longitude). Amendment 9 to the Shrimp FMP addressed bycatch reduction of red snapper in the Gulf EEZ west of Cape San Blas, Florida; and the method that was approved was the requirement of bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) that would reduce the mortality from shrimp trawls on age 0 and age 1 red snapper by at least 44% from the average level of mortality during the period 1984-89. Because Amendment 9 did not address bycatch reduction on the west coast of Florida (east of Cape San Blas), this amendment considers the need and practicability of various alternatives for reducing bycatch from shrimp trawling in this area, including the requirement of BRDs. It also reviews the effectiveness and potential affects of these alternatives.

The rationale behind this amendment is that the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA) requires that all FMPs, amendments, and regulations be consistent with the 10 National Standards. National Standard 9 states that “conservation and management measures shall to the extent practicable, (A) minimize bycatch and (B) to the extent bycatch cannot be avoided, minimize the mortality of such bycatch.”

Bycatch reduction is addressed through three methods in this amendment. These are area closures, seasonal closures, and using BRDs. The following are the alternatives considered in this amendment:

6.1 Area Closures

6.1.1 Increase the size of presently closed areas in the Gulf of Mexico EEZ east and south of Cape San Blas, Florida (85°30' W. Longitude) by 20% or (30%, 40%, or 50%).

6.1.2 Permanently close the present boundaries of the Southwest Florida Seasonal Trawl Closure and the Tortugas Shrimp Sanctuary in the EEZ .

6.1.3 Enact additional area closures in areas of high bycatch, particularly Statistical Zones 6-8

where there is a higher incidence of finfish bycatch.

6.1.4 Status Quo - do not increase the size or seasonal extent of presently closed areas in the Gulf of Mexico EEZ east and south of Cape San Blas, Florida (85°30' W. Longitude).

6.2 Seasonal Closures (Alternatives)

6.2.1 Extend the Southwest Florida Seasonal Trawl Closure by one month before and one month after the present closed period (currently January 1 to May 20).

6.2.2 Extend the present seasonal closures of the three small areas of the Tortugas Shrimp Sanctuary by one month before and one month after the present closed periods (current closures vary by area between April 11 and September 30).

6.2.3 Status Quo - do not extend the present closed seasons.

6.3 Bycatch Reduction Devices

6.3.1 Require the installation of BRDs in each net used aboard vessels trawling for shrimp in the Gulf of Mexico EEZ east and south of Cape San Blas, Florida (85°30' W. Longitude) that meet the criteria specified in Rule 46-31.0045, Florida Administrative Code under authority of Section 370.027(2), Florida Statutes (or as amended). Exempted are vessels trawling for royal red shrimp beyond the 100-fathom contour and vessels trawling for groundfish or butterfish. A single try net with a headrope length of 16 feet or less per vessel and no more than two rigid-frame roller trawls limited to 16 feet or less, such as those used in the Big Bend area of Florida are also exempted.

6.3.2 Require the installation of NMFS-certified BRDs that meet or exceed the bycatch reduction criteria established by the Council in each net used aboard vessels trawling for shrimp in the Gulf of Mexico EEZ east and south of Cape San Blas, Florida (85°30' W. Longitude). Exempted are vessels trawling for royal red shrimp beyond the 100-fathom contour and vessels trawling for groundfish or butterfish. A single try net with a

headrope length of 16 feet or less per vessel and no more than two rigid-frame roller trawls limited to 16 feet or less, such as those used in the Big Bend area of Florida are also exempted. Bycatch reduction criteria shall be as follows:

Option a. BRDs must reduce the bycatch of finfish (by number or weight) by 20% or (30%, 40%, or 50%).

Option b. BRDs must reduce the bycatch of all species (by number or weight) by 20% or (30%, 40%, or 50%).

Option c. No bycatch reduction criteria are specified.

6.3.3 Status Quo - do not require BRDs in shrimp trawls used aboard vessels trawling for shrimp in the Gulf of Mexico EEZ east and south of Cape San Blas, Florida (85°30' W. Longitude).

6.4 Status Quo - do not implement further bycatch reduction requirements on the west coast of Florida.

At its May 2001 meeting, the Gulf Council will consider these and other possible alternatives prior to proceeding with public hearings. Public hearings have been scheduled from 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM on the following dates and cities:

June 18, 2001 Key West, FL	June 19, 2001 Ft. Myers, FL
June 26, 2001 Apalachicola, FL	June 28, 2001 Tampa, FL.

For specific information on where the hearings will be held, contact the Gulf Council office (see page 16 for details).

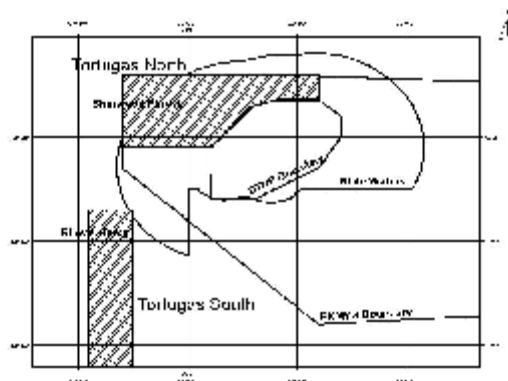
GENERIC AMENDMENT ADDRESSING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TORTUGAS MARINE RESERVES AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published a Notice of Availability for the Generic Amendment Addressing the Establishment of the Tortugas Marine Reserves in the Fishery Management Plans of the Gulf of Mexico (Tortugas Amendment) in the *Federal Register* on March 7, 2001. Written comments

must be received on or before May 7, 2001, and must be mailed to the Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, Florida 33702. A copy of the amendment can be obtained by contacting the Gulf Council office (see page 16 for details).

The Tortugas Amendment, developed by the Gulf Council, contains a proposed rule to establish two marine reserves in the vicinity of the Dry Tortugas, an area approximately 70 miles west of Key West, Florida. A collaborative process initiated by the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) developed the boundaries for two inter-jurisdictional marine reserves known as Tortugas North and Tortugas South. The proposed rule would implement the Tortugas Amendment and establish the portion of Tortugas North that resides within the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and Tortugas South, which resides entirely within the EEZ, in collaboration with efforts by the FKNMS, the state of Florida, and the Dry Tortugas National Park. Tortugas North encompasses an area of 120 square nautical miles (nm²). The portion proposed to be established by the Council is 13 nm². Tortugas South encompasses 60 nm², which includes the Riley's Hump mutton snapper spawning aggregation site established by the Gulf Council in 1994.

The Gulf Council proposes that fishing for any species, including highly migratory species, be prohibited within the marine reserves. Additionally, anchoring by fishing vessels would be prohibited within the marine reserves. The prohibition on fishing and anchoring of fishing vessels will help minimize human disturbance in order to restore and maintain ecological integrity including a full assemblage of fishes, coral, and other benthic invertebrates and to create a reference area for studying human impacts on the ecosystem.



COMMERCE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES \$8 MILLION FOR HABITAT PROJECTS, CALLS FOR NEW NATIONAL AND REGIONAL RESTORATION PARTNERS

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is seeking new partnerships under its Community-Based Restoration Program to utilize \$8 million for habitat restoration in 2001. Every year since 1996, NMFS has been working to maximize the impact of its Community-Based Restoration Program by seeking new partnerships with communities throughout the United States. This recent call for community participation seeks national and regional organizations interested in partnering with the NMFS Restoration Center to restore marine, estuarine and anadromous fish habitat. Officials estimate that up to \$35 million in support for restoration activities will be realized from the \$8 million in federal funds, thanks to in-kind services and other cooperative funding that communities bring to the table with their projects.

"I have participated in several grass roots community-based restoration projects around the nation and I can personally attest that they work," said National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere Scott Gudes. "This year, with the strong support of Congress, we have an additional \$6 million in federal funds to add to the \$2 million we had planned for restoration activities."

NOAA wants to develop national and regional partnerships that will accomplish on-the-ground, community-based restoration of marine, coastal and freshwater habitats to benefit living marine resources, including fish stocks managed by NOAA and the trophic systems that support them.

"Public-private partnerships are essential to our mission, and the organizations and communities that get behind them are some of our most important allies in restoring and preserving marine habitats," said Acting NMFS Director Bill Hogarth. "They will help us achieve meaningful habitat restoration, increase public awareness of the value of habitat to the environment and economy, foster a sense of community stewardship and pride for marine resources, and significantly leverage federal funds."

Coastal and marine resources that benefit from the

program include commercial and recreational fishery species, anadromous fish such as salmon and striped bass that spawn in freshwater and then migrate to the sea, endangered and threatened species, marine mammals and turtles, and habitats such as marshes, mangroves, seagrass beds, coral reefs, and other coastal habitats that support these organisms.

The NOAA Community-Based Restoration Program provides financial assistance and technical expertise to address important fishery habitat damage or loss across coastal America by means of a grass-roots, bottom up approach. Projects are successful because they have significant local support, including citizens' hands-on involvement in the implementation of restoration activities. Staff from the NOAA Restoration Center, NMFS Science Centers and regional staff work closely with communities to aid in project development and implementation. Projects are monitored and maintained by communities, promoting stewardship and a heightened appreciation for the environment and its long-term health.

Organizations interested in partnering with NMFS as part of the Community-Based Restoration Program should contact the NOAA Restoration Center at (301) 713-0174. Complete information, including a partnership application, is available online at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/habitat/restoration/community/feb9>.



GULF COUNCIL TO HOST ANNUAL COUNCIL CHAIRMEN'S MEETING

From May 21 to May 25, 2001, the Gulf Council will host the annual Council Chairmen's Meeting in Key West, Florida. This meeting is designed for the Chairmen and executive directors of the eight regional councils. Subjects that will be discussed at the meeting include law enforcement, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA) reauthorization, budgets, marine protected areas, and essential fish habitat.

Each council takes a turn hosting this meeting. For a copy of the agenda, contact the Gulf Council Office (see page 16 for details on how to contact the Council).

FORMER GULF COUNCIL CHAIRMAN AND OTHERS SELECTED AS FINAL NOMINEES FOR MARINE PROTECTED AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Twenty-six nominees were invited by the Secretary of Commerce to serve on the Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Advisory Committee in January, 2001 (pending successful completion of required clearances and final review and acceptance by the Secretary). The 26 finalists include representatives from different geographic regions, including the Great Lakes and U.S. territories. They represent a wide variety of different sectors including resource management (state, territory and tribal), science (economics, anthropology, and marine sciences), policy (environmental, social), and industry (commercial and recreational fishing, oil and gas production, shipping/ports, recreation and tourism).

Dr. Bob Shipp, former Council member from Alabama and Council Chairman was one of the persons nominated to the committee. Others nominated from the Gulf region include Tony Iarocci, Commercial Fisherman, Florida; Jim Ray, Manager, Environmental Sciences, Westhollow Technology, Texas; and Robert Zales, Charter Boat Operator & President, National Association of Charterboat Operators, Florida.



COMMERCIAL SHARK FISHERIES FIRST SEMI-ANNUAL FISHING SEASON - LARGE COASTAL SHARK CLOSURE

The first semiannual fishing season of the 2001 fishing year for the commercial fishery for large coastal sharks (LCS) in the western north Atlantic Ocean, including the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea closed March 24, 2001, 11:30 p.m. local time. This action is necessary to ensure that the semiannual quota for LCS of 642.5 metric tons (mt) dressed weight (dw) for the period January 1 through June 30, 2001, is not exceeded. For information about season openings, listed species, and quota limits, contact the National Marine Fisheries Service at 301-713-2347.

NMFS RELEASES A NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION TO PROTECT SEABIRDS

The NMFS released a national voluntary plan of action that outlines specific steps for reducing the incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries throughout the United States. The objectives of the national plan are to reduce seabird bycatch in U.S. longline fisheries, to provide national-level policy guidance on reducing seabird bycatch in U.S. longline fisheries, and to call for an assessment of all U.S. longline fisheries to determine whether a seabird bycatch problem exists. NMFS developed the national plan in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the U.S. Department of State.

The national plan is a component of the international plan of action for reducing the incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries that was developed at the November 1999 meeting of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Committee on Fisheries. The international plan is a voluntary measure that calls on FAO member nations that conduct longline fisheries to: (1) assess the degree of seabird bycatch in their longline fisheries; (2) develop individual national plans of action to reduce seabird bycatch in longline fisheries that have a seabird bycatch problem; and (3) develop a course of future research and action to reduce seabird bycatch. The international plan calls for FAO members to develop and implement national plans by 2001.

The national plan serves as an overarching framework within which NMFS and the USFWS will work through the regional fishery management council process to reduce the incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries. The national plan supports the FAO's International Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. The Code of Conduct is the only international agreement that addresses practically all aspects of fisheries, including marine and freshwater capture fisheries, aquaculture, harvesting, and shoreside operations.

The final version of the plan is available on the NMFS Web site at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov> or can be obtained from the Domestic Fisheries Division (F/SF3), National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (ph:301-713-2341).

COUNCIL SELECTS AP AND SSC MEMBERSHIP

At its March 2001 meeting, the Gulf Council selected members to its Advisory Panels (AP), Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), special SSCs, stock assessment panels (SAP), and Socioeconomic Panel (SEP).

APs are comprised of recreational and commercial fishermen, charterboat operators, buyers, sellers, consumers, and others who are knowledgeable about a particular fishery. SSCs are comprised of economists, biologists, sociologists, and natural resource attorneys who are knowledgeable about the technical aspects of

fisheries in the Gulf. SAPs are comprised of biologists who are trained in the specialized field of population dynamics, and who assess the available biological data and advise the Council on the status of stocks and level of acceptable biological catch. The SEP is comprised of economists and sociologists who are trained to evaluate the economic and social costs associated with various management measures and advise the Council of the economic and social costs associated with these measures.

The following persons were selected for each panel/committee:

BILLFISH AP

Pamela Basco
Walter W. Fondren, III
Darlene Fischer
Richard Gremillion
J. Manning McPhillips
Ellen Peel
Brian Phillips
Thomas Putnam
William A. Wagner, Jr.

BUTTERFISH AP

Steve Bosarge
Charles E. Bergman, II
Geir Monsen
James V. Reahard, II

COASTAL MIGRATORY

PELAGICS AP

Bob Zales, II
Mike Nugent
Robert Bell
Randy Boggs
Greg DiDomenico
William T. Gibson, Jr.
Don Harper
Ben Harvard
Mike Holmes
Glenn Martin
Peace Marvel
Tom Marvel, Jr.
Bobby G. O'Barr
Tim Torrence
Jim Twiggs
Charlie Walker
William Wickers, Jr.

CORAL AP

Billy D. Causey
Henry A. Feddern
Mark Berrigan
Ken Heck
Martin A. Moe, Jr.
Kim Swatland
William Ward

NEW DEEP-WATER CRAB AP

Gary Graves
Charles Renier

DOLPHIN/WAHOO AP

Pamela Basco
Clair Pease
Kenneth Guindon (NA)
Wiley Horton
Chris Jenkins
Richard Landry
Leo Ledet, Jr.
Richard Rice
Don Walker
William Wickers, Jr.

HABITAT PROTECTION AP

(Florida/Alabama)

Robert P. Jones
Bill Lindall
David S. Anthony
Barry A. Costa-Pierce
Roy R. Lewis, III
Andreas Mager (NR)
Robert McMichael
Bryan Pridgeon (NR)
William H. Sierke, Jr.
Alexander Stone
David Yeager

(Mississippi/Louisiana)

Cynthia M. Sarthou
Andreas Mager (NR)
David W. Frug  e
Randy P. Lanctot
Bethlyn McCloskey
David Richard
R. Glenn Thomas
Jack R. Van Lopik
Michael Walker

(Texas)

Bill Baker
Robert W. Spain
Frank M. Fisher
John M. Green
Dana W. Larson
Andreas Mager
Russell Miget
Burt E. Moritz
L. Don Perkins
Robert R. Stickney
Fred Werner

HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES AP

Gary Graham
Jerald Horst
Brett Falterman
Darlene Fischer
Steve Loga
Mike Nugent
Mark Twinam
William A. Wagner, Jr.
Donald Waters

RED DRUM AP

Harlon Pearce
Scott Green
Jeff Chambliss
Peter Gerica
Randolph P. Gros
Edward M. Holder
Bill Lindall
Howard I. Mason, Jr.
Burt E. Moritz
E. Frank Rawlings
Frank J. Schiraldi
James Sibley
Jim Twiggs
Robert Watters
James H. Williams
Ron Young

RED SNAPPER AP

John A. Williams
Gary L. Graham
Charles Carter
Henry Denton
Chris Dorsett
Philip Horn
Richard Legnon
Herbert Malone
Kim Nix
Bobby G. O'Barr
Clair Pease
Robert L. Shipp
Mike Thierry
Ed Thompson
Donald Waters
Wayne Werner
Mike Whitfield

REEF FISH AP

Bob Zales
 Marty Harris
 Ralph Allen
 Gary Bonanno
 Henry Denton
 Michael Dolfi
 Philip Horn
 Chris Jenkins
 Gus Loyal
 Gilmer Nix
 Mike Rowell
 Eric Schmidt
 Robert L. Shipp
 Robert Spaeth
 Frank Stephenson
 Ed Thompson
 Edwin Toomer
 Tom Turke
 William Ward
 Wayne Werner

SHRIMP AP

James C. Farrelly
 Julius Collins
 Wilma Anderson
 David Aparicio
 Al Armitt
 Pete Barber
 Steve Bosarge
 Steven Charpentier
 William Chauvin
 Anthony J. Cuccia, Jr.
 Edward Garcia, Jr.
 Dennis Henderson
 Robert P. Jones
 C.J. Kiffe
 Harris Lasseigne, Jr.
 Chris Nelson
 Jimmy B. Russell
 Joseph A. Villers
 Walter Zimmerman

SPINY LOBSTER AP

Jerry Sansom
 Simon R. B. Stafford
 Robert L. Gaitanis
 Karl J. Lessard
 C.H. Skip Long
 B. Allen Patrick
 Rick Superstein

STONE CRAB AP

Tim Daniels
 Gary Graves
 Robert Gill
 Jimmy Kofmehl
 Karl J. Lessard
 Kenneth Rhodes
 Robert D. Robinson
 Sue Smyrnios
 Simon R. B. Stafford

STANDING SSC

Stephen Thomas, Chrm.
 Walter Keithly, V. Chrm.
 Charles Adams
 Robert Colura
 James Cowan, Jr.
 Sandra Diamond
 Billy Fuls
 James Geaghan
 Douglas Gregory
 Albert Jones
 Frank Kennedy, Jr.
 John Roussel
 Mike Wascom
 James Wilkins
 Charles Wilson

SPECIAL BUTTERFISH SSC

Christopher Gledhill
 Michael Murphy
 David Nieland
 Richard Waller

SPECIAL CORAL SSC

Eugene Dodge
 Walter Jaap
 Judith Lang
 Pamela Muller

SPECIAL DOLPHIN/WAHOO SSC

Paul Choucair
 James Franks, Jr.
 Richard McBride

SPECIAL MACKEREL SSC

Karen Burns
 Doug DeVries
 Randall Pausina
 Kenneth Roberts
 Lance Robinson

SPECIAL OCEANIC MIGRATORY SPECIES

Randy Blankinship
 James Franks
 Linda Lucas
 Bruce Thompson

SPECIAL RED DRUM SSC

Paul Cook
 Larry McEachron
 Scott Nichols
 Glenn Thomas

SPECIAL REEF FISH SSC

Page Campbell
 Felicia Coleman
 Gary Fitzhugh
 Gene Huntsman
 Rick Kasprzak
 Bill Lindberg
 Kenneth Roberts

SPECIAL SHARK SSC

Steve Branstetter
 George Burgess
 John Carlson
 Jose Castro
 Robert Hueter
 Rocky Ward
 Mark Lawson

SPECIAL SHRIMP SSC

Marty Bourgeois
 Terry Cody
 Wade Griffin
 James Nance

SPECIAL SPINY LOBSTER SSC

Rene Buesa
 Mark Butler
 John Hunt

SPECIAL STONE CRAB SSC

Theresa Bert
 Tom Matthews
 Harriet Perry

MACKEREL SAP

William Patterson, Chrm.
 Joseph Shepard
 John Carmichael
 Nelson Ehrhardt
 Douglas Gregory
 Robert Muller

RED DRUM SAP

Mike Murphy, Chair
 Richard Condrey
 Mark Fisher
 Joseph Shepard
 Mark VanHoose
 James "Tut" Warren

REEF FISH SAP

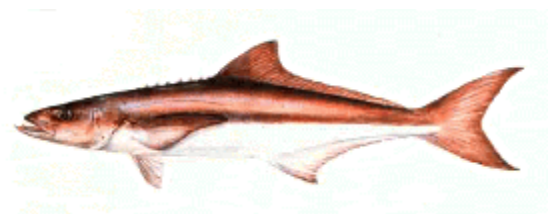
James Cowan, Chrm.
 Harry Blanchet
 Roy Crabtree
 Sandra Diamond
 Debra Murie
 Mike Murphy
 William Patterson
 Kenneth Rose

SHRIMP SAP

Leslie Hartman, Chrm.
 Mark Fisher
 Wade Griffin
 James Nance
 Scott Nichols

SEP

Lee Anderson
 Brian Bohnsack
 Duane Gill
 Stephen Holland
 Michael Jepson
 Wade Griffin
 Diane Keithly
 Walter Keithly
 David Lavergne
 Walter Milon
 Robert Palmer
 John Vondruska
 John Ward



ENFORCEMENT REPORTS

Red Snapper Poacher Ordered to Pay \$18,000

In Mobile, Alabama, Albert C. Adams, owner and operator of the fishing vessel LILLIE LOUISE, was ordered to pay a fine for unlawfully harvesting red snapper during the closure of this recreational and commercial fishery. Administrative Law Judge P. Thomas McElligott assessed an \$18,000 civil monetary penalty as well as a 120-day permit suspension against Adams for numerous charges including unlawfully harvesting 474 pounds of red snapper, possessing 29 undersized red snapper, making false statements to an authorized officer regarding his fishing activities, and impeding the conduction of the investigation.

"Judge McElligott's decision should alert the fishing community that those who break the rules designed to rebuild the overfished red snapper fishery will be brought to justice," said NOAA Enforcement Attorney Cynthia S. Fenyk. "It simply does not pay to violate the law and is

even more foolish to compound any violation with lies and efforts at concealment."

"A concerned citizen called us with information about Adams' poaching activity and NOAA enforcement agents conducted the investigation that led to the charges," said Gene Proulx, Special Agent in Charge of NOAA's Office for Law Enforcement's Southeast Office. "This case illustrates how one well founded call can help curtail poaching. Our enforcement staff will work with everyone to ensure that our nation's precious marine resources are harvested at a sustainable rate."

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) urges citizens to report fishery violations during weekly business hours of 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. EDT, to its Southeast Region Law Enforcement Division at (727) 570-5344, or after hours and weekends at its National Enforcement Hotline at (800) 853-1964.

SETTLEMENTS BETWEEN JANUARY 1, 2001 AND MARCH 31, 2001

Case Number	Respondent Name	Area	LE Unit	Case Description	Final Am't	Forfeited Amount	Permit Sanct.
SE001221FM	Xiomara Cabrera	FKNMS	FWCC	Fishing in FKNMS	\$150		
SE001272MS	Robert C. Marta	FKNMS	FWCC	Operate a vessel so as to strike or damage seagrass	\$1,250		
SE001276MS	Jose A. Robaina	FKNMS	FWCC	Fishing in sanctuary preservation area	\$1,250		
SE001318MS	Juan Ruiz	FKNMS	FWCC	Fishing in sanctuary preservation area	\$ 75		
SE990328FM	Matthew Brennan Bregold Fishery	GOM	USCG	1) Fail to maintain fish intact (red grouper) 2) Possess undersize fish (red grouper) 3) Interfere, obstruct or delay investigation	\$4,290		
SE990013FM	Donald Carl Jones Jill B, Inc.	GOM	USCG	Fish during closure (commercial red snapper)	\$12,000	\$2,266	15 days
SE00027FM	Thomas Berry	GOM	USCG	1) Fish during closure (rock shrimp) 2) BRD violation	\$7,500	\$30,433	
SE00204FM	Sea Hawk, Inc. Michael T. Davis	GOM	USCG	1) Fail to maintain fish intact through offloading (red snapper) 2) Fail to maintain fish intact through offloading (shark)	\$1,980		30 days
SE00205FM	Patrick McKeever Stacey Sheppard	GOM	USCG	1) Fail to maintain fish intact through offloading (red grouper) 2) Fail to release undersize fish (red gruper)	\$3,500		5 days
SE00348MS	Iason Hellenic Shipping Liberty M. Delgado	FKNMS	FWCC	Operate vessel so as to strike or damage seagrass	\$1,000		

SE00364ES	Juan Carlos Salinas LaBell Shrimp Co., Inc.	GOM	NMFS	TED violation	\$5,750		
SE00468FM	Randy R. Hisler	GOM	USCG	BRD violation	\$1,500		
SE00925FM	Jeffrey Sheldon Hunter	GOM	FWCC	Sell reef fish while operating charter (mutton snapper & greater amberjack)	\$990		
SE001047MS	Jose Guzman Castro	FKNMS	FWCC	Operate vessel at speed over 4 knots within 100 ft. of diver down flag	\$75		
SE001273MS	Claire Kern Capt. Claire Kern, Inc.	FKNMS	FWCC	Operate a vessel so as to strike or damage seagrass	\$5,000		
SE001274MS	Felix Bravo	FKNMS	FWCC	Operate a vessel so as to strike or damage seagrass	\$1,500		
SE001303FM	John F. Mauldwin	GOM	USCG	Fish during closure (red snapper)	\$4,500	\$1,699	15 days
SE990675FM	Nung Pham Phillip Pham	GOM	USCG	Fish during closure (red snapper)	\$2,250		
SE990729ES	Tuan Ngoc Nguyen Ly Le	GOM	USCG	1) TED violation 2) BRD violation	\$4,000		
SE00701FM	Anthony P. Chiodo, Jr.	GOM	FWCC	Fish during closure (red snapper) & failure to maintain fish intact through offloading (red snapper)	\$550		
SE001365ES	Ha Vt Van Jennifer Ho	GOM	USCG	TED violation	\$6,000		
SE001366FM	Jason Bradley Carpenter	GOM	USCG	Fish during closure (red snapper)	\$1,500		
SE000355FM	James E. Hoffman	GOM	FWCC	1) Fish during closure (red snapper) 2) Fail to maintain fish intact (assorted reef fish) 3) False statement 4) Obstruct investigation	\$5,250		

NOVAs ISSUED BETWEEN JANUARY 1, 2001 AND MARCH 31, 2001

CASE NUMBER	RESPONDENT NAME	AREA	LE UNIT	CASE DESCRIPTION	NOVA AMOUNT	NOFP* AMOUNT	PROPOSED NOPS** DURATION
SE960358FM	Capt'n Snapper, Inc. David E. Simms	GOM	NMFS	1) Fail to comply with restrictions after a closure of a fishery (red snapper) 2) Fail to maintain submit or provide information or fail to comply with inspection requirements; 3) Make a false statement to an authorized officer	\$ 32,500		120 days
SE990033FM	Dirk I. Frickey Keith Plaisance	GOM	USCG	BRD violation	\$ 6,000		
SE000205FM	Patrick A. McKeever Stacey Sheppard	GOM	NMFS & USCG	1) Fail to maintain fish intact (red grouper); 2) Possess or fail to release undersized fish (red grouper)	\$ 2,000 \$ 1,500		30 days

SE000366M M	William Perry Wilkerson, III	GOM	USFWS	Unlawfully import whale bone	\$ 1,000		
SE000770ES	Richard A. Pena J.B. Zipprian	GOM	NMFS	TED violation	\$ 2,000		
SE001221MS	Xiomara E. Cabrera	FKMS	NMFS	Fish in a sanctuary preservation area	\$ 500		
SE001273MS	Kohler Construction Claire Kern Capt. Claire Kern, Inc.	FKMS	FWCC	Operate a vessel in such a manner as to strike or otherwise injure coral, seagrass or any other immobile organism	\$ 5,000		
SE001363ES	Soi Van Nguyen	GOM	USCG	TED violation	\$ 3,000		
SE001365ES	Jennifer Ho Ha Vt Van	GOM	USCG	TED violation	\$ 8,000		
SE001366FM	Jason Bradley Carpenter	GOM	USCG	Fish in violation of the restrictions applicable to seasonal and/or area closures (red snapper)	\$ 1,500	40 red snapper	
SE001369FM	Hayward Anthony McKinney	GOM	NMFS	1)Engage in an activity for which a valid federal permit or endorsement (Gulf reef fish trap) is required; 2) Fish in violation of the gear restrictions applicable to area closures (Gulf reef fish stressed area)	\$ 6,500	75 fish traps	
SE01009`1F M	Cuong Vo	GOM	LA DW&F	Fail to comply with restrictions that apply during red snapper closure		\$946.00	5 years

*NOTICE OF PROPOSED FORFEITURE **NOTICE OF PERMIT SANCTION

STATE OF FLORIDA LOBSTER AND CRAB FISHERMEN RECEIVE DISASTER FUNDS

Secretary of Commerce Donald L. Evans recently awarded \$4.8 million in Fishery Disaster Relief program funds to the State of Florida to compensate Florida spiny lobster and stone crab fishermen for significant losses caused by Hurricane Georges and Tropical Storm Mitch. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) worked closely with the State of Florida to develop a spending plan which will benefit qualified trap fishermen who had lobster or stone crab traps that were lost, damaged, or destroyed as a result of the storms. The parties agreed that \$4.57 million will be allocated for the benefit of the fishermen and about \$230,000 will be used to fund research on the effects of trap reduction on the fishermen. The funds, awarded by Congress under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA), have been made available to the State of Florida for distribution.

HOGARTH TO MEET WITH FISHERMEN

Beginning in April, NMFS Acting Director Dr. Bill Hogarth will host the first in what is anticipated to be a series of regional meetings to be held around the country. At the meetings, Hogarth will listen to industry concerns, discuss the progress that has been made in managing marine resources and outline the challenges facing the agency. The dates and locations for the regional public meetings for the Gulf of Mexico are:

April 26 at 7:00 p.m. in the J.L. Scott Marine Education Center and Aquarium, 115 Beach Boulevard (US Hwy 90), Biloxi, Mississippi.

May 2 at 7:00 p.m. in the Hilton Tampa Airport Westshore, 2225 North Lois Avenue, Tampa, Florida.

For additional information on the meetings, contact Kate Naughten, NMFS, 1315 East-West Hwy, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3282 (ph: (301)713-2259 x184, fax: (301)713-2258, or email: kate.naughten@noaa.gov.)

TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR THE MAY GULF COUNCIL MEETING

COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

Monday, May 14, 2001

Reef Fish Management Committee

- Approval of Draft Amendment 18 and DSEIS for Public Hearings
- Consider a Reef Fish Quota Management Working Group to Develop IFQ Profile

Tuesday, May 15, 2001

Red Drum Management Committee

- RDSAP Recommendation on Stock Assessment Methodology

Law Enforcement Committee

- LEAP Operations Plan
- Federal Support of Regional Law Enforcement

Data Collection Committee

- GSMFC FIN Program

Administrative Policy Committee

- Senate Bill 637
- Policy on Cell Phone Use in Council Session
- Development of Logo
- Use of Robert's Rules by Council
- Council Policy on SSC Appointments
- Drafting of Regulations by Council
- Filing of Travel Vouchers

Shrimp Management Committee

- Approval of Draft Amendment 10/EA for Public Hearings
- Consider an Amendment to Include Rock Shrimp in FMP

Mackerel Management Committee

- Overfishing and Overfished Definitions
- OY Targets and Thresholds
- Pelagic Longline Closure for Dolphin and Wahoo

COUNCIL SCHEDULE

Wednesday, May 16, 2001

- I. Call to Order and Introductions - K. Williams
- II. Adoption of Agenda - K. Williams
- III. Approval of Minutes - K. Williams
- IV. Preliminary Results of Study of Closed Gag Aggregation Sites - Koenig

V. Committee Reports

- a. Reef Fish Management - Minton
- b. Mackerel Management - R. Williams
- c. Shrimp Management Committee - Aparicio
- d. Administrative Policy Committee - Fensom
- e. Red Drum Management Committee - Foote
- f. Data Collection Committee - Fischer

Thursday, May 17, 2001

V. Committee Reports (**Continued**)

- g. Law Enforcement Committee - Minton

VI. ICCAT Advisory Committee Meeting - Claverie

VII. NMFS HMS and Billfish AP Meetings - Claverie

VIII. MPA Stakeholders Meeting - K. Williams

IX. NOAA Constituency Workshop - Swingle

X. Enforcement Reports - Fiedler/Cinalli/Proulx

XI. Regional Administrator's Report - Powers

XII. Director Reports - R. Williams/Minton/Perret/ Foote/Osburn/Simpson/Frugé

XIII. Other Business - K. Williams

The above agenda is tentative and is not final until it becomes noticed. Updates to the agenda will be posted on the Gulf Council web site as they become available. Although non-emergency issues not contained in the agenda may come before the Gulf Council for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA), those issues may not be the subject of formal Gulf Council action during the meeting. The Gulf Council's actions will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the noticed agenda and any issues arising after publication of that notice that require emergency action under section 305 (c) of the MSFCMA, provided the public has been notified of the Gulf Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Following Meeting:

July 9-13, 2001

Hawks Cay Resort

Duck Key, FL

GULF FISHERY NEWS WANTS YOUR NEWS AND VIEWS

GULF FISHERY NEWS is a publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. Any material in this newsletter may be reprinted or reproduced. We would like to hear from you regarding fishery questions you would like to see covered in GULF FISHERY NEWS. GULF FISHERY NEWS or the Gulf Council office can be contacted at c/o Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 3018 U.S. Highway 301 North, Suite 1000, Tampa, Florida, 33619-2266. Telephone: 813-228-2815 (toll-free 888-833-1844). Fax: 813-225-7015. E-mail: gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org Website: <http://www.gulfcouncil.org>

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional fishery management councils that were established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act in 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. This is a publication of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and financial assistance for this newsletter was provided by grant funds pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Award No. NA07FC0015 and NA17FC1052.

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

3018 U.S. Highway 301 N.

Suite 1000

Tampa, Florida 33619-2266

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

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