

**Gulf Council Motions Report**  
**January 27 – 30, 2025**  
**New Orleans, Louisiana**

**ADMINISTRATIVE/BUDGET**

**Review Advisory Panel Appointments for Coral, Data Collection, and Spiny Lobster**

**Motion:** To readvertise and repopulate the Spiny Lobster Advisory Panel.

Motion carried with no opposition.

**Motion:** To maintain the current membership of the Coral and Data Collection Advisory Panels.

Motion carried with no opposition.

**HABITAT PROTECTION AND RESTORATION**

**Proposed Aquaculture Opportunity Areas (AOAs) Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS)**

**Motion:** To approve the draft Council comment letter with the revised language.

Motion carried with no opposition.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**Law Enforcement Technical Committee (LETC) Meeting Summary January 2025**

**Motion:** To ask the LETC to examine the feasibility of adding an additional tier of identification number sizes for commercial and federally permitted for-hire vessels based on vessel lengths greater than 25' and less than 65'.

[622.20 GOM Reef](#)

50 cfr 622.20(b)(iii)

(iii) Requirement to ***display a vessel decal***. Upon renewal or transfer of a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf reef fish, the RA will issue the owner of the permitted vessel a vessel decal for Gulf reef fish. The vessel decal must be displayed on the port side of the deckhouse or hull and must be maintained so that it is clearly visible.

[622.373 Pelagic fish](#)

50 cfr 622.373(d)

(d) Requirement to ***display a vessel decal***. Upon renewal or transfer of a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fish, the RA will issue the owner of the permitted vessel a vessel decal for that fishery. The vessel decal must be displayed on the port side of the deckhouse or hull and must be maintained so that it is clearly visible.

*(a) Applicability -*

*(1) Official number. A vessel for which a permit has been issued under subparts B through V of this part...must display its [official number](#) -*

*(i) On the port and starboard sides of the deckhouse or hull and, for vessels over 25 ft (7.6 m) long, on an appropriate weather deck, so as to be clearly visible from an enforcement vessel or aircraft.*

*(ii) In block arabic numerals permanently affixed to or painted on the vessel in contrasting color to the background.*

*(iii) At least 18 inches in height for vessels over **65 ft** long; at least 10 inches in height for vessels over **25 ft** long; and at least **3 inches in height for vessels 25 ft long or less.***

Motion carried with no opposition.

## **MACKEREL**

### **Spanish Mackerel Framework Action and Next Steps**

**Motion:** To move **Action 3** to Considered but Rejected.

#### **Action 3:** Modify Gulf Spanish Mackerel Bag Limits

**Alternative 1:** No Action. Retain the current bag limit of 15 fish per person per day for the recreational sector.

**Alternative 2:** Reduce the bag limit to 10 fish per person per day for the recreational sector.

**Alternative 3:** Reduce the bag limit to 7 fish per person per day for the recreational sector.

**Alternative 4:** Reduce the bag limit to 5 fish per person per day for the recreational sector.

**Alternative 5:** Reduce the bag limit to 3 fish per person per day for the recreational sector.

Motion carried with no opposition.

### **King Mackerel Management Measures and Next Steps**

**Motion:** To consider using two start dates, 1929 and 1986, for the King Mackerel Stock Assessment.

**Substitute Motion:** To explore temporal variations in stock productivity using the full complement of available data, including sensitivity analyses to explore model start dates.

Substitute Motion carried with no opposition.

**Motion:** To discontinue work on King Mackerel Framework Action 15 until completion of the king mackerel assessment (SEDAR 99) and SSC review and recommendations.

Motion carried with 1 in opposition.

## OUTREACH & EDUCATION

### Public Comment Improvements: Improving Viability of Written Comments and Consideration of Anonymous Voicemail Box

**Motion:** To move forward with implementing an anonymous voicemail comment box for a six-month pilot period.

Motion carried with no opposition.

## REEF FISH

### Draft: Reef Fish Amendment 58B: Modifications to Deep-water Grouper Management Measures

**Motion:** In Action 2, to move **Alternatives 5** and **6** to the Considered but Rejected Appendix.

**Alternative 5:** The complex ACL is set equal to the complex ABC. Establish a recreational ACL and sector allocation based on the average landings from the recreational and commercial sectors from 2001 – 2004 (see Table 1.1.2). This results in a recreational ACL of 31,026 lb gw, or 5.59% of the complex ACL. The commercial sector is allocated 94.41% of the complex ACL, or 524,000 lb gw. The commercial quota is reduced from the commercial ACL by 4% and is set at 503,040 lb gw. The recreational and commercial ACLs sum to equal the DWG complex ACL. These values are shown in the table below in lb gw.

Complex	Year	OFL	ABC (Complex ACL)	Comm ACL	Comm Quota	Rec ACL
DWG	2025-2029+	731,035	555,026	524,000	503,040	31,026

**Alternative 6:** The complex ACL is set equal to the complex ABC. Establish a recreational ACL and sector allocation based on the average landings from the recreational and commercial sectors from 2000 – 2023 (see Table 1.1.2). This results in a recreational ACL of 32,747 lb gw, or approximately 5.90% of the complex ACL. The commercial sector is allocated approximately 94.10% of the complex ACL, or 522,279 lb gw. The commercial quota is reduced from the commercial ACL by 4% and is set at 501,388 lb gw. The recreational and commercial ACLs sum to equal the DWG complex ACL. These values are shown in the table below in lb gw.

Complex	Year	OFL	ABC (Complex ACL)	Comm ACL	Comm Quota	Rec ACL
DWG	2025-2029+	731,035	555,026	522,279	501,388	32,747

Motion carried with no opposition.

**Motion:** To add a new **Alternative** to Action 3:

**Alternative:** For the recreational sector, if the average deep-water grouper landings exceed the average ACL over a three-year moving period, the Regional Administrator would reduce the length of the recreational season by the amount necessary to ensure that the recreational ACL is not exceeded during the following fishing year unless BSIA suggests no adjustment to the fishing season is necessary.

Motion carried with no opposition.

**Motion:** To move **Alternative 3** to the Considered but Rejected Appendix.

**Alternative 3:** Establish in-season recreational AMs for the DWG complex. For the recreational sector, if the recreational ACL is projected to be met in a fishing year, then the Regional Administrator would close the recreational sector for the DWG complex for the remainder of that fishing year.

Motion carried with no opposition.

**Draft Framework: Other Shallow-water Grouper Catch Limits**

**Motion:** In Action 1, to make **Alternative 2** the preferred.

**Alternative 2:** Reduce the Other SWG complex ABC, that is set equal to the Stock ACL by 54.7%. The Stock ACL is equal to 322,000 lb gw, the Commercial ACL is equal to 255,636 lb gw, and the Commercial ACT (quota) equal to 245,410 lb gw. These catch limits, in MRFSS units, are consistent with the percent reduction in the complex ABC that the SSC recommended for scamp and yellowmouth grouper based on the SEDAR 68 operational assessment that are being developed in Reef Fish Amendment 58A.

Motion carried with no opposition.

**Motion:** In Action 2, to add a new **Alternative**.

**Alternative:** Establish a recreational fixed closed season for the Other SWG complex. The recreational season would open July 1 and close when the recreational portion of the total ACL is expected to be met under the Preferred Alternative in Action 1.

Motion carried with no opposition.

**Motion:** In Action 2, to move **Alternative 2** to the Considered but Rejected Appendix.

**Alternative 2:** Establish a recreational fixed closed season for the Other SWG complex. The recreational season would open January 1 and close when the recreational portion of the total ACL is expected to be met under the Preferred Alternative in Action 1.

Action 1, Alternative 2: Closed July 17 – Dec 31 (Open January 1 – July 16)

Action 1, Alternative 3: Closed May 26 – Dec 31 (Open January 1 – May 25)

Action 1, Alternative 4: Closed May 31 – Dec 31 (Open January 1 – May 30)

Motion carried with no opposition.

**Motion:** To add an **Alternative** to look at an opening of April 1 to May 31 and reopen September 1 to October 31.

Motion carried with no opposition.

**Presentation: Modifications to Lane Snapper Minimum Size and Recreational Bag Limits**

**Motion:** In Action 1, to make **Alternative 2** the preferred.

**Alternative 2:** Modify the recreational and commercial size limit to 10 inch TL for Gulf lane snapper.

Motion carried with no opposition.

**Motion:** To move **Action 2** to the Considered but Rejected Appendix.

**Action 2** – Modify the bag limit for recreational Gulf lane snapper

Motion carried with no opposition.

**Draft: Reef Fish Amendment 59: Requirements for Participation in Individual Fishing Quota Programs**

**Motion:** To separate Amendment 59 into two documents.

1. Reef Fish Amendment 59 A: Actions 1, 3, 4, and 5
2. Reef Fish Amendment 59 B: Action 2

Motion carried 8 to 7 with 1 absent and 1 abstention.

**Motion:** In Action 1 to make **Alternative 3** the preferred.

**Alternative 3.** In addition to the US citizenship or permanent residency requirement, all applicants are required to possess a valid or renewable commercial reef fish permit to obtain and maintain an IFQ shareholder account.

Motion carried with no opposition.

**Motion:** In Action 5 to make **Alternative 2 Option 2a** and **Alternative 3 Option 3a**, the preferred.

**Alternative 2.** NMFS will reclaim shares from shareholder accounts that are not compliant with requirements set in Actions 1, 3, or 4:

**Option 2a:** 1 year following the effective date of the final rule implementing these requirements.

**Alternative 3:** After implementation of this amendment, if a shareholder account is no longer in compliance with the requirements set in Actions 1, 3, or 4, the owner(s) of the shareholder account must divest of their shares, or the shares will be reclaimed by NMFS:

**Option 3a:** 1 year following the non-compliant status.

Motion carried with no opposition.

### **Summary of Reef Fish Advisory Panel Discussions and Recommendations**

**Motion:** To request that the SEFSC conduct an interim analysis for lane snapper. The SEFSC is requested to develop the G-FISHER composite video index, updated to as current a terminal year as possible, and present this analysis to the SSC as soon as practical.

The SEFSC is also requested to provide the headboat catch-per-unit-effort index updated through as current a terminal year as possible for evaluation by the SSC.

Two indices should be evaluated relative to which index better represents the stock and the most appropriate index used for the interim analysis.

This interim analysis should be capable of being used by the SSC to modify the lane snapper OFL and ABC, if appropriate.

Motion carried with no opposition.

### **Other Business**

**Motion:** To request a presentation from the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council on Percent Change Approach Recreational Harvest Control Rule and its feasibility for use in the Gulf.

Motion carried with no opposition.

**Motion:** The Council write a letter to the SEFSC requesting a summary of the costs associated with the headboat port agents in Alabama through Texas and the impacts to stock assessments for species that utilize headboat dockside data.

Motion carried with no opposition.

## **SHRIMP**

### **Draft Shrimp Framework Action: Modification of the Vessel Position Data Collection Program for the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery**

**Motion:** To adopt the Shrimp Advisory Panel's recommended language for **Alternative 3**. **Alternative 3** would be revised as follows:

**Alternative 3:** Implement a cellular ~~VMS (eVMS)~~ **ELB (cELB)** requirement for the Gulf shrimp fishery that provides archived position data **to the SEFSC that is** compatible with the SEFSC's shrimp effort algorithm. If selected by the SRD, the owner or operator of a vessel with a SPGM would be required to install a ~~NMFS~~**SEFSC**-approved ~~eVMS~~ **cELB** that archives vessel position when on a **shrimp** fishing trip in the Gulf and automatically transmits those data via cellular service to a non-OLE NMFS server. ~~NMFS~~**SEFSC**- approved ~~eVMS~~ **cELBs** would be type-approved **for the Gulf shrimp fishery** through a process external to 50 C.F.R. § 600.1501.

**Substitute Motion:** To revise the following language recommended by the Shrimp Advisory Panel for **Alternative 3.** **Alternative 3** would be revised as follows:

**Alternative 3:** Implement a cellular ~~VMS (eVMS)~~ **ELB (cELB)** requirement for the Gulf shrimp fishery that provides archived position data **to the NMFS that is** compatible with the SEFSC's shrimp effort algorithm. If selected by the SRD, the owner or operator of a vessel with a SPGM would be required to install a ~~NMFS~~**NMFS-**approved ~~eVMS~~ **cELB** that archives vessel position when on a **shrimp** fishing trip in the Gulf and automatically transmits those data via cellular service to a non-OLE NMFS server. ~~NMFS~~**NMFS-** approved ~~eVMS~~ **cELBs** would be type-approved **for the Gulf shrimp fishery** through a process external to 50 C.F.R. § 600.1501.

Substitute Motion carried with no opposition.

**Motion:** To modify **Alternative 2** as follows:

**Alternative 2:** Implement a vessel monitoring system (VMS) requirement for the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) shrimp fishery that provides, at a minimum, archived position data **when on a fishing trip in the Gulf that is** compatible with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center's (SEFSC) shrimp effort algorithm to a NMFS server. If selected by the Science and Research Director (SRD), the owner or operator of a vessel with a Gulf shrimp moratorium (SPGM) permit would be required to install a type-approved VMS unit (50 C.F.R. § 600.1501).

**Substitute Motion:** To modify **Alternative 2** as follows:

**Alternative 2:** Implement a vessel monitoring system (VMS) requirement for the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) shrimp fishery that provides, at a minimum, archived position data compatible with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center's (SEFSC) shrimp effort algorithm to a NMFS server. If selected by the Science and Research Director (SRD), the owner or operator of a vessel with a Gulf shrimp moratorium (SPGM) permit would be required to install a type-approved VMS unit (50 C.F.R. § 600.1501) **that archives or transmits vessel position data to a NMFS server when on a fishing trip in the Gulf.**

Substitute Motion carried with no opposition.

**Motion:** To make **Alternative 3** the preferred.

**Alternative 3:** Implement a cellular ~~VMS (eVMS)~~ **ELB (cELB)** requirement for the Gulf shrimp fishery that provides archived position data **to the NMFS that is** compatible with the SEFSC's shrimp effort algorithm. If selected by the SRD, the owner or operator of a vessel with a SPGM would be required to install a ~~NMFS~~**NMFS-**approved ~~eVMS~~ **cELB** that archives vessel position when on a **shrimp** fishing trip in the Gulf and automatically transmits those data via cellular service to a non-OLE NMFS server. ~~NMFS~~**NMFS-** approved ~~eVMS~~ **cELBs** would be type-approved **for the Gulf shrimp fishery** through a process external to 50 C.F.R. § 600.1501.

Motion carried 9 to 2 with 5 abstentions and 1 absent.

**Motion:** To request a detailed accounting of all administrative costs to OLE and the SEFSC associated with **Alternatives 2** and **3.**

Motion carried with no opposition.