



# Greater Amberjack Recreational and Commercial Management Measures



# Background

- Greater Amberjack Emergency Rule modified the 2022/2023 recreational fishing season
  - Implemented on July 25, 2022 and effective through January 23, 2023 (180 days)
  - Rule can be extended for 186 additional days (366 total)
- Amendment 54 being developed to reduce harvest levels and consider modifications to sector allocations
  - Necessary to end overfishing and rebuild the stock by 2027
  - The Council is required to have this rule in effect in 2023

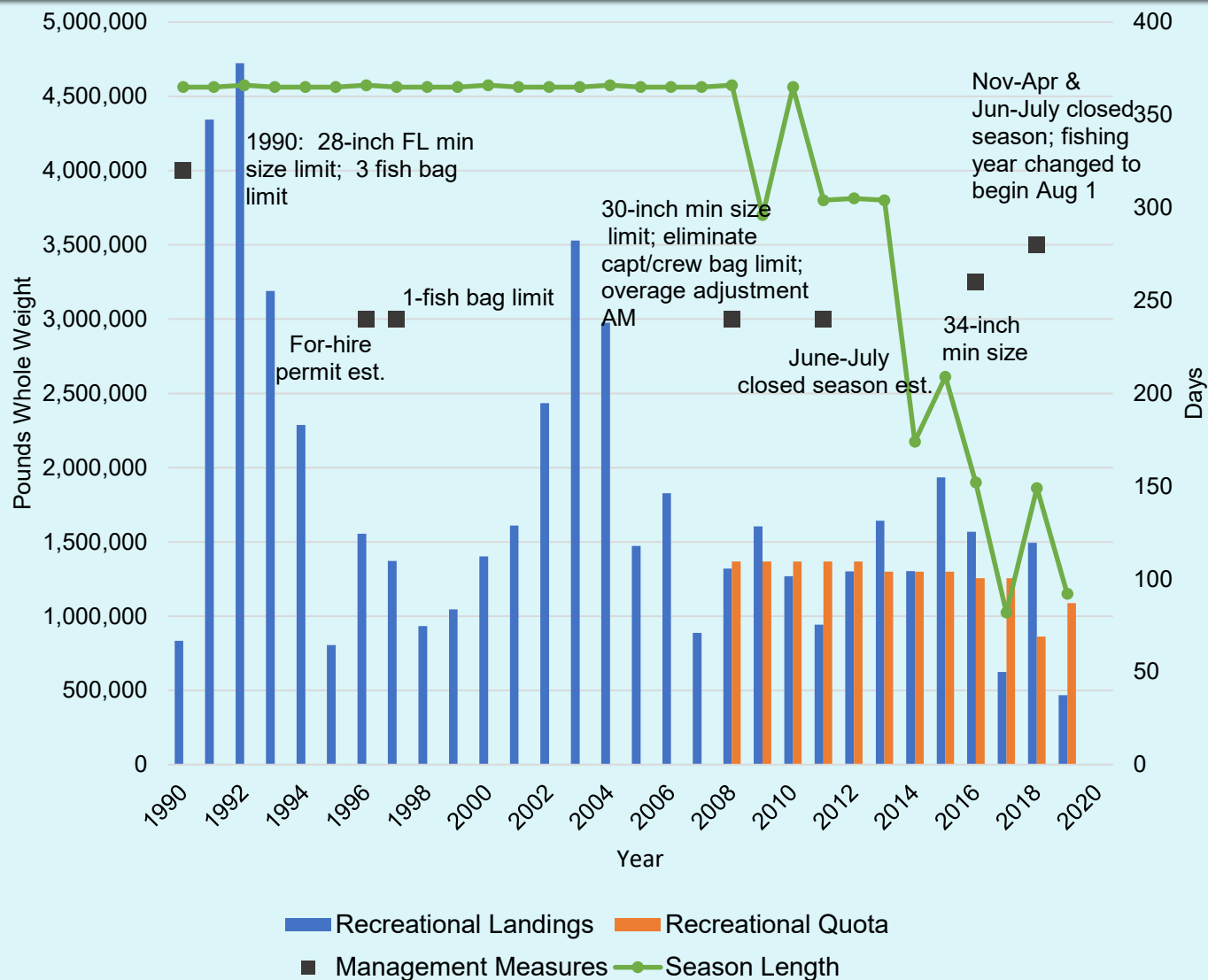


# Background

- August 2022: Council initiated work on a framework action to consider modifications to greater amberjack commercial and recreational management measures
  - Will aim to reduce harvest rates while best meeting stakeholder needs



# Background: Management Measures



# Background: Accountability Measures

- Current regulations: in-season closure based on respective sector ACT
- Amendment 54: if landings exceed the respective sector ACL (not ACT), paybacks are required pound for pound
  - Large overage could result in complete loss of fishing season
- Draft management actions aim to harvest sectors ACTs, avoid overages, and maximize stakeholder benefit, Gulf-wide



# Action 1: Modify the Recreational Fixed Closed Season for Greater Amberjack

**Alternative 1:** No Action – Do not modify the current regulatory recreational fixed closed season. The current fixed closed season is November 1 – April 30 and June 1 - July 31 (open August 1 – October 31 and May 1 – May 31).



# Action 1: Modify the Recreational Fixed Closed Season for Greater Amberjack

Modify the recreational season to be open:

**Alternative 2:** August 1-27

**\*Alternative 3:** September 1 – October 31

**\*\*Alternative 4:** Split season: Open September 1 – October 23 and May 1 – May 19

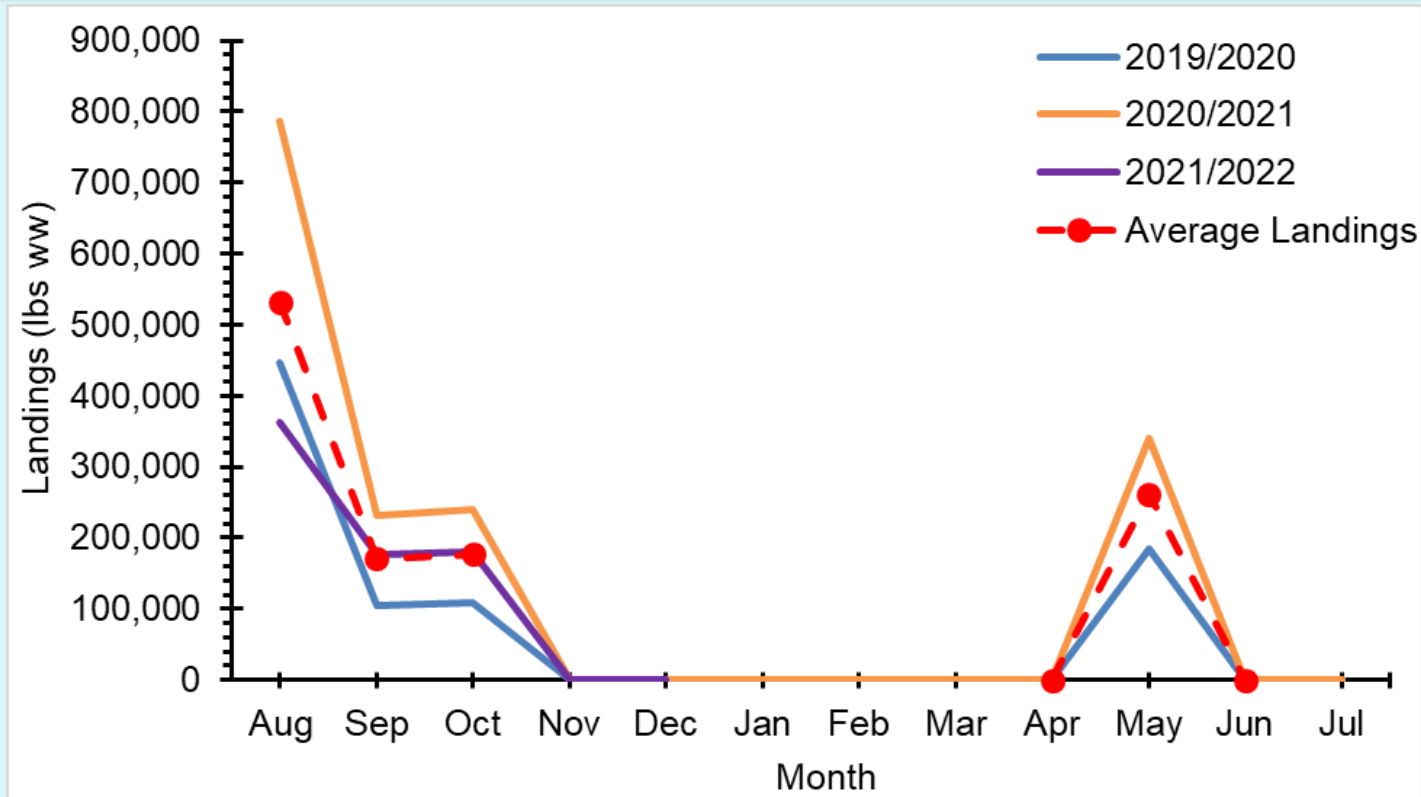
**Alternative 5:** Split season: Open September 1 – October 5 and May 1 – May 31

\* 2022-2023 recreational season is open from September 1 – October 31, based on the Emergency Rule effective July 25, 2022.

\*\* Approximately 65% of landings projected during the September-October season, 35% landings during the May season.



# Recreational Greater Amberjack Landings



**Note:** Recreational landings in MRIP-FES by month for 2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022 fishing years, and also an average of these landings. May only has landings from 2020 and 2021 because the recreational sector was closed in 2019 and May 2022 landings are not available at this time. Source: SERO



# Action 1: Summary of Recreational Alternatives

Recreational Season	Max Open Days	2023/2024 ACT under current sector allocation and 17% buffer	Projected landings	Landings – 2023/2024 ACT (466,543 lbs ww)
Aug 1-Oct 31; May 1-31	123	466,543	1,141,082	+674,539
August 1-27	27	466,543	461,616	-4,926
September 1 – October 31	61	466,543	347,344	-119,199
September 1 – October 23; May 1 - 19	72	466,543	462,068	-4,475
September 1 – Oct 5; May 1 – May 31	66	466,543	460,802	-5,741

# Action 2: Modify the Recreational Minimum Size Limit Greater Amberjack

**Alternative 1:** No Action – Do not modify the current recreational minimum size limit of 34 inches fork length (FL).

**Alternative 2:** Modify the minimum size limit for greater amberjack to 36 inches FL.



# Action 2: Modify the Recreational Minimum Size Limit Greater Amberjack

**Alternative 3:** Establish a slot limit with minimum and maximum sizes for retention:

Option a: Establish a slot limit between 34 and 42 inches

Option b: Establish a slot limit between 36 and 40 inches

Option c: Establish a slot limit between xx and yy inches

Slot limits were evaluated by Murie et al. (2020) and suggested a potential increase in larger individuals with slot limits that may increase the reproductive capacity of the stock.

*SEDAR 70-RD-02: Is the BOFFF (Big Old Fat Fecund Females) hypothesis applicable to Gulf of Mexico greater amberjack?*

<https://sedarweb.org/documents/sedar-70-rd-02-is-the-bofff-big-old-fat-fecund-females-hypothesis-applicable-to-gulf-of-mexico-greater-amberjack/>



# Size and Maturity

Proportion of mature females			
Fork Length (inches)	Proportion mature	LCL	UCL
30	0.11	0.00	0.23
32	0.45	0.23	0.66
34	0.85	0.69	1.00
36	0.97	0.92	1.00

Proportion of mature females at selected lengths for greater amberjack in the Gulf. At each selected length, the proportion of mature females is estimated using logistic regression. The 95% lower (LCL) and upper (UCL) confidence limits are also provided. Source: D. Murie, pers. comm. and SERO 2014.

# Action 3: Modify the Commercial Greater Amberjack Trip Limits

**Alternative 1:** No Action – Do not modify the current commercial trip limit for greater amberjack of 1,000 lbs gutted weight (gw). When 75% of the ACT is projected to be met, reduce the commercial trip limit to 250 lbs gw.

**Alternative 2:** Establish a commercial trip limit of 500 lbs gw. When 75% of the ACT is projected to be met, reduce the commercial trip limit to 250 lbs gw.

**Alternative 3:** Establish a commercial trip limit of 250 lbs gw.

## AP Question:

Should the Council consider modifying the commercial fixed closed season?



# Recommendations and Next Steps

- The Council is required to reduce harvest limits in Amendment 54 to end overfishing and rebuild the stock
- The actions presented aim to reduce the likelihood of ACL overages and paybacks that could further reduce harvest in subsequent years
- Does the AP have recommendations regarding these Actions and alternatives? Specifically:
  - Should actions be removed from consideration?
  - Should other actions be considered?
  - Is the range of alternatives within actions reasonable?

