

**NOAA  
FISHERIES**

**SERO**

# Emergency Action to Reduce Overfishing of the Gulf of Mexico Greater Amberjack Stock

June 2022 GMFMC Meeting

*Action which can be implemented to reduce Greater  
Amberjack overfishing and prevent a recreational  
payback resulting in no 2023/2024 season*

# The purpose of this presentation is to:

- Detail the need for emergency action
- Present timeline for getting measures in place
- Detail potential options that could be enacted through an emergency rule to reduce overfishing in the 2022/2023 recreational fishing year.
- Present preliminary analysis

# Need for Action

- Current regulations only allow for an in-season closure based on the current ACT.
- If Reef Fish Amendment 54 is implemented before July 31, 2023, it will reduce the codified ACL for the 2022/2023 recreational fishing year, which starts on August 1, 2022, by approximately 78%.
- Under No Action, landings are projected to substantially exceed the 2023 Amendment 54 ACL, resulting in significant payback and potential ACL/ACT of 0 in 2023/2024.
- Current regulations for AMs state that a payback occurs only in the year after the overage.
- Because the projected recreational overage under No Action is more than double the 2022/2023 recreational ACL, a complete closure in 2023/2024 would not be enough to cover the overage, which could impact rebuilding and future ACLs/ACTs.

# Emergency Action Criteria

Under MSA section 305(c), the Secretary of Commerce may promulgate emergency regulations if the following criteria are met:

1. Results from recent, unforeseen events or recently discovered circumstances; and
2. Presents serious conservation or management problems in the fishery; and
3. Can be addressed through emergency regulations for which the immediate benefits outweigh the value of advance notice, public comment, and deliberative consideration of the impacts to the same extent as would be expected under the normal rulemaking process.

Emergency actions are:

- Limited to 180 days duration.
- May be extended one time for up to 186 more days (366 total days).

# Emergency Action to Reduce Overfishing

- Recreational landings during the 2022/23 season are projected to exceed the ACL in Amendment 54 by more than double
- Emergency Action would reduce or prevent overfishing and the negative biological impacts of a large quota overage.
- We recommend an Emergency Rule be developed and be effective August 1, 2022 thru July 31, 2023\*.

\*The Emergency Rule would be superseded by implementation of Reef Fish Amendment 54 if it occurs before this date.

# Proposed Timeline for the Emergency Action

- **May-June 2022:** NMFS develops the action, alternatives, and supporting analysis
- **June 2022:** Council reviews and decides whether to recommend emergency action to reduce greater amberjack overfishing
- **June-July 2022:** NMFS develops final emergency rule
- **July 2022:** Final emergency rule publishes
- **August 1, 2022:** Emergency rule and regulations to reduce overfishing of greater amberjack effective.

# Review: Current Management Measures

## Recreational

- Allocated 73% of ACL
- 17% ACT buffer
- Fishing Year = August through July
- Fixed Closed Season = November through April and June through July
- Accountability measures
  - inseason closure if ACT is met or projected to be met
  - postseason = if ACL is exceeded then in the following year, the ACL and ACT are reduced by the amount of the overage

# 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).

Modify the recreational fixed closed season to be:

**Alternative 2:** September 1 – July 31 (open August 1-31).

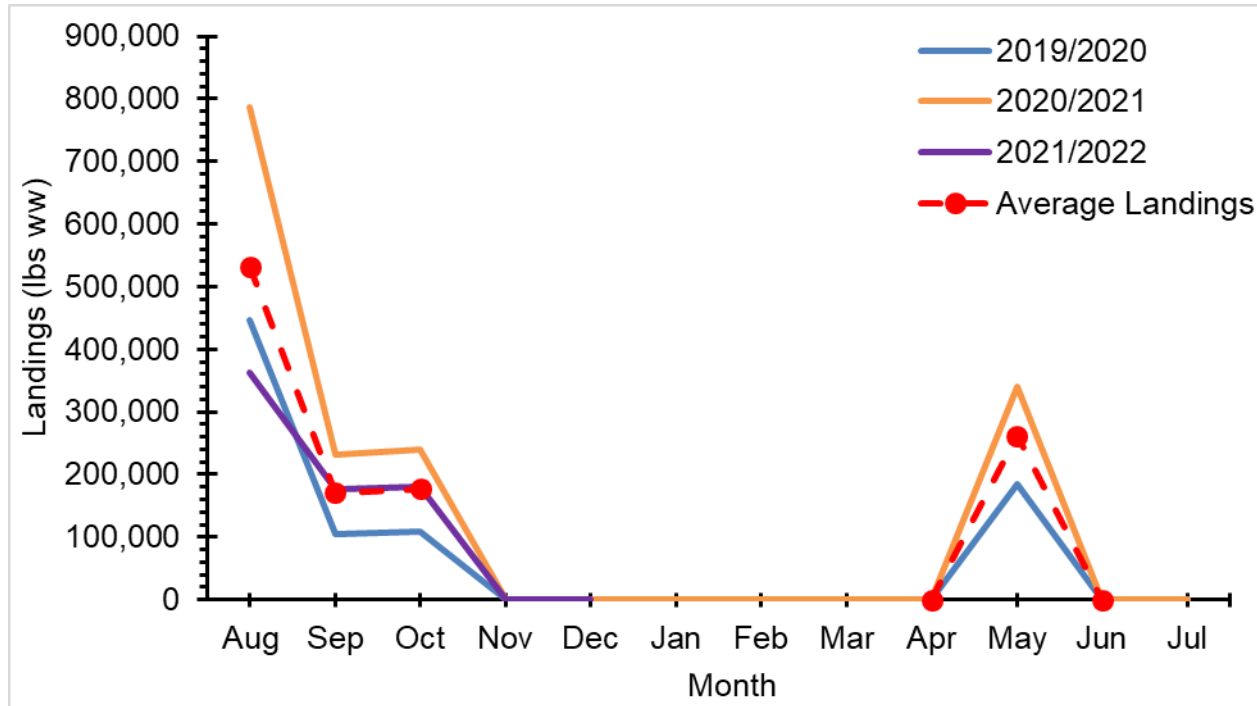
**Alternative 3:** August 1 – August 31 and October 1 - July 31 (open September 1-30).

**Alternative 4:** August 1 – September 30 and November 1 - July 31 (open Oct 1-31).

**Alternative 5:** August 1 – August 31 and November 1 - July 31 (open Sept 1 – Oct 31).



# Recreational Greater Amberjack Landings



**Note:** Recreational landings in MRIP-FES by month for available 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.

# Action 1: Summary of Recreational Alternatives

Open Months	Max Days Open	2022/2023 ACL under current sector allocation in RF Am 54	Projected Overage	2023/2024 ACL under current sector allocation in RF Am 54
August-October and May (Alt. 1)	123	473,770	948,708	562,100
August (Alt. 2)	31	473,770	58,462	562,100
September (Alt. 3)	30	473,770	None	562,100
October (Alt. 4)	31	473,770	None	562,100
September and October (Alt. 5)	61	473,770	None	562,100

\*MRIP-FES units

# Council and Stakeholder Feedback Needed

## Recreational

Retain August start date under Alts. 1 or 2?

**Pro – no need to reschedule August trips**

Con – payback projected.

Con – Alt. 1 payback so large likely would result in no season in 2023/2024.

Shift to a month of September opening under Alts. 3 or 5?

**Pro - no projected overage**

Pro - no longer split a wave.

Con – will need to reschedule August trips.

Con – if effort shifts, Alt. 5 may result in an overage as well.

Shift to a month of October opening under Alt. 4?

**Pro –no projected overage**

Con – will need to reschedule August trips.

\*Projections are only until the max time period of the emergency rule, July 31, 2023. Keep in mind projections are based on current allocation. Any change to that in Reef Fish Am. 54 or shift in landings would not end in the same results.

# Questions?

