

Gulf Council Motions Report
April 7 – 10, 2025
Gulf Shores, Alabama

CORAL

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary: Restoration Blueprint Final Management Plan and Draft Memorandum of Agreement between the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, NMFS, FWC and Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

Motion: To move forward with finalizing the Memorandum of Agreement between the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, NMFS, Florida FWC, and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS).

Motion carried with no opposition.

DATA COLLECTION

Loss of Southeast Region Headboat Survey

Motion: To request the SEFSC and Council Staff provide an analysis and summary about the impacts of losing the Southeast Regional Headboat Survey to the fisheries management process. This analysis should explore if the loss of the program would impact catch estimates due to different effort estimates or size of fish landed, what species information would be most impacted and what those differences could mean for stock status estimates and quotas. Contingent upon the review, the Council requests that NOAA Fisheries consider and seek all available means for continued funding of the Southeast Regional Headboat Survey as an important time series for data collection.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Discussion on For-hire Data Collection Amendment

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

Alternative 2: Require that the owner or operator of a charter vessel or headboat issued a valid Gulf for-hire permit for reef fish or Gulf CMP species to submit trip, catch, and effort information for *each trip* via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved software). If fish are harvested during the trip, electronic reporting is required prior to offloading fish. If fishing did not occur within a weekly period, a “Did Not Fish” report would be required to be submitted.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: In Action 3, to include for-hire in **Alternatives 2** and **3**.

Alternative 2: Require that the owner or operator of a charter vessel or headboat issued a valid charter vessel/headboat federal permit for reef fish or Gulf CMP species submit a trip declaration for trips that will be engaging in any type of **For-hire** fishing *or for-hire* activity.

Option a: Charter vessels

Option b: SRHS Headboats

Alternative 3: Require that the owner or operator of a charter vessel or headboat issued a valid federal charter vessel/headboat permit for reef fish or Gulf CMP species submit a trip declaration for trips that will be engaging in any type of **For-hire** fishing activity.

Option a: Charter vessels

Option b: SRHS Headboats

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: In Action 3, to make the modified **Alternative 3**, to include **Options a** and **b**, the preferred.

Alternative 3: Require that the owner or operator of a charter vessel or headboat issued a valid federal charter vessel/headboat permit for reef fish or Gulf CMP species submit a trip declaration for trips that will be engaging in any type of **For-hire** fishing activity.

Option a: Charter vessels

Option b: SRHS Headboats

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: In Action 4, to make **Alternative 3** the preferred.

Alternative 3: Require that the owner or operator of a charter vessel or headboat issued a valid federal charter vessel/headboat permit for reef fish or Gulf CMP species submit economic data as part of the logbook when the vessel is engaging in any type of chartered fishing or chartered activity, if selected. Annually, a stratified random sampling design of permitted vessels will be used for selecting vessels that are required to report economic data. The Southeast Fisheries Science Center will determine the strata (based on previous years' data and minimum sample sizes by strata) sufficient for providing scientific and management advice.

Motion carried with no opposition.

GULF SEDAR

No motions.

SHRIMP

Review of the Texas Closure

Motion: To request NMFS continue with the Texas Federal Closure in the coming year in conjunction with the state of Texas Closure in 2025.

Motion carried with no opposition.

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

Motion: To recommend the Council approve **Framework Action: Modification of the Vessel Position Data Collection Program for the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery** and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation, and deem the codified text as necessary and

appropriate, giving staff editorial license to make the necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to the codified text as necessary and appropriate.

Names	Vote	Row Labels	Count of Vote
Mr. Anson	Y		
Mr. Sanchez	Y	ABSTAIN	1
Mr. McDermott	Y	Y	16
Dr. Banks	Y	Grand Total	17
Mr. Geeslin	Y		
Mr. Williamson	Y		
Mr. Broussard	Y		
Dr. Sweetman	Y		
Dr. Overton	Y		
Capt. Walker	Y		
Dr. Frazer	Y		
Gen. Spraggins	Y		
Mr. Strelcheck	ABSTAIN		
Mr. Schieble	Y		
Capt. Frady	Y		
Mr. Osborne	Y		
Mr. Dugas	Y		

Motion carried 16 to 0 with 1 abstention.

Discussion of Potential Expiration of Moratorium for Federal Gulf Shrimp Permits

Motion: To direct staff to begin development of a shrimp amendment to extend the moratorium on federal Gulf shrimp permits.

Motion carried with no opposition.

CLOSED SESSION

Selection of Spiny Lobster Advisory Panel members

The Council made the following appointments to the Spiny Lobster Advisory Panel.

01	Butler, Casey
02	Nicklaus, Joshua
03	Niles, George
04	Padron, Daniel
05	Young, Jerome

Selection of 2024 Law Enforcement Officer/Team of the Year

The Council selected FWC’s offshore patrol vessel (OPV) Trident Team for the 2024 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year.

REEF FISH

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

Motion: To select **Alternative 2** in Action 1 as the preferred Alternative.

Alternative 2: Revise the MSY proxy and catch limits for the DWG complex based on the Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) Fishery Management Council's (Council) Scientific and Statistical Committee's (SSC) recommendations. The OFL and ABC for yellowedge grouper would be set based on an MSY proxy of the yield when fishing at F40%SPR, and the yield when fishing at 75% of the FMSY proxy, respectively. The OFL and ABC for the three remaining species would be based on Tier 3b of the Council's ABC Control Rule. The DWG MSY proxy would be the yield when fishing at F40%SPR. The OFL and ABC for yellowedge grouper and the three remaining species would be combined, and all four species would be managed as a single complex with a complex OFL of 731,035 pounds (lb) gw, and an ABC of 555,026 lb gw. The complex ACL would be set equal to the ABC.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: In Action 3, to move **Alternative 4** to Considered but Rejected.

Alternative 4: Revise the post-season recreational AMs for the DWG complex. For the recreational sector, if recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL in two consecutive years out of the previous three fishing years, then in the following fishing year the Regional Administrator would close the recreational sector for the DWG complex for the remainder of that fishing year when the recreational ACL is projected to be met.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: In Action 3, to make **Alternative 5** the preferred.

Alternative 5: 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 duration of the recreational season by the amount necessary to ensure that the recreational ACL is not exceeded during the following fishing year unless the best scientific information available suggests no adjustment to the recreational fishing season is necessary.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: In Action 3, to modify the language in **Alternative 5** to read as follows:

Alternative 5: For the recreational sector, if the average deep-water grouper landings exceed the average recreational ACL and total ACL over a three-year moving period, the Regional Administrator would reduce the duration of the recreational season by the amount necessary to ensure that the recreational ACL is not exceeded during the following fishing year unless the best scientific information available suggests no adjustment to the recreational fishing season is necessary.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Summary: February 2025 Gulf and South Atlantic Scientific Statistical Committees (SSC) Webinar

Motion: To form a working group comprised of members of the Gulf and South Atlantic SSCs to collectively address the best practices for estimating steepness (and thus estimate MSY) for management advice, as well as a discussion of SPR proxy values given a range of life history values among fish species.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To direct staff to develop a document that updates catch advice and jurisdictional apportionments for mutton snapper and yellowtail snapper in the Gulf and South Atlantic in cooperation with the South Atlantic Council.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To direct staff to develop a document that provides management advice for red grouper.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To request NMFS develop an emergency rule for 2025 for red grouper based on the results of the SEDAR 88 stock assessment and pending SSC approval of updated catch projections in May 2025. Additionally, to set the ACL at 90% of the ABC.

Names	Vote		
Dr. Overton	y		
Mr. Anson	y	n	1
Dr. Frazer	y	y	16
Gen. Spraggins	y	Grand Total	17
Dr. Banks	y		
Mr. Geeslin	y		
Mr. Sanchez	y		
Dr. Sweetman	y		
Mr. McDermott	y		
Mr. Broussard	y		
Capt. Frady	y		
Mr. Strelcheck	n		
Mr. Osborne	y		
Capt. Walker	y		
Mr. Schieble	y		
Mr. Williamson	y		
Mr. Dugas	y		

Motion carried 16 to 1.

Draft Framework: Other Shallow-water Grouper Catch Limits

Motion: In Action 2, to make **Alternative 3** the preferred.

Alternative 3: 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.

Action 1, Alternative 2: Closed January 1 – June 30; (Open July 1 – December 31)

Action 1, Alternative 3: Closed January 1 – June 30; Closed August 18 – Dec 31 (Open July 1 – August 17)

Action 1, Alternative 4: Closed January 1 – June 30; August 25 – Dec 31 (Open June 1 – August 24)

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: In Action 2, to move **Alternative 4** to Considered but Rejected.

Alternative 4: Establish a recreational fixed closed season for the Other SWG complex. The recreational season would open September 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 January 1 – August 31 (Open September 1 – December 31)

Action 1, Alternative 3: Closed January 1 – August 31; Closed October 28 – Dec 31 (Open September 1 – October 27)

Action 1, Alternative 4: Closed January 1 – August 31; Closed December 21 – Dec 31 (Open September 1 – December 20)

Motion carried with no opposition.

FINAL ACTION: Modifications to Lane Snapper Minimum Size Limit

Motion: To approve **Framework Action: Modifications to Lane Snapper Minimum Size Limits** and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation, and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial license to make the necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to the codified text as necessary and appropriate.

Names	Vote	Row Labels	Count of Vote
Mr. Williamson	y		
Mr. Sanchez	y	y	17
Mr. Strelcheck	y	Grand Total	17
Mr. Schieble	y		
Capt. Walker	y		
Capt. Frady	y		
Dr. Banks	y		
Dr. Frazer	y		
Dr. Overton	y		
Dr. Sweetman	y		
Mr. Anson	y		
Gen. Spraggins	y		
Mr. Geeslin	y		
Mr. McDermott	y		
Mr. Osborne	y		
Mr. Broussard	y		
Mr. Dugas	y		

Motion carried 17 to 0.

Review of Return ‘Em Right Science

Motion: To direct staff develop a document that replaces and enhances the Descend Act.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To draft a letter to the Open Ocean Trustees, Fish and Water Column Invertebrates Restoration Coordinator, and Return ‘Em Right project management team emphasizing the importance of focusing the fourth phase of the Draft Restoration Plan on restoring the Gulf’s living marine resources and their services that were injured by the spill, particularly HMS and deep-water species.

Motion carried with 2 abstentions.

FULL COUNCIL OTHER BUSINESS

LA State Charter and Federal For-Hire Red Snapper 2024 Trips and Landings

Motion: To direct staff to begin work on a presentation to the Council to modify recreational management of red snapper by delegating management authority for the federal for-hire component of the recreational sector to the respective five Gulf states. Proposed management measures should include an option for individual states to opt-out of delegation of federal for-hire management authority. The federal for-hire component in those states that opt-out would continue to be managed under the federal status quo.

Motion carried 14 to 3.

Gag Grouper Recreational Management Measures for 2025

Motion: The Council requests NMFS implement an emergency rule establishing a 1 fish recreational bag limit for gag grouper for the 2025 season only.

Names	Vote		
Mr. McDermott	y	Row Labels	Count of Vote
Mr. Geeslin	y	n	1
Mr. Sanchez	y	y	16
Mr. Williamson	y	Grand Total	17
Mr. Schieble	y		
Capt. Frady	y		
Dr. Sweetman	y		
Dr. Overton	y		
Mr. Anson	y		
Mr. Broussard	y		
Dr. Banks	y		
Capt. Walker	y		
Mr. Burris	y		
Mr. Strelcheck	n		
Dr. Frazer	y		
Mr. Osborne	y		
Mr. Dugas	y		

Motion carried 16 to 1.