

# Recreational Initiative



## Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

Outreach and Education Technical Committee

November 13, 2024

Tampa, FL

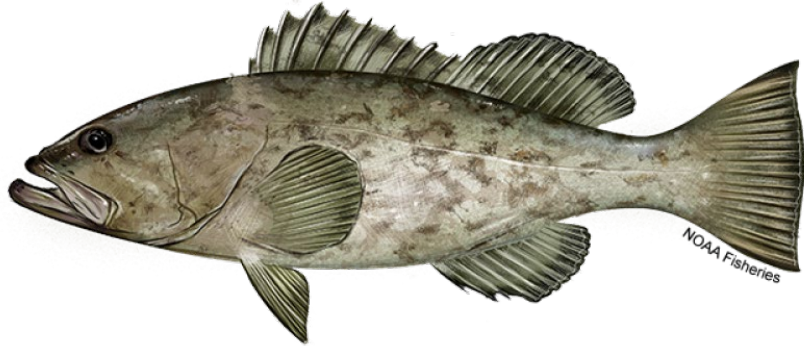
# ***What is the Gulf Council's Recreational Initiative?***

- An effort to engage the recreational community to:
  1. Review and evaluate past and current management strategies
  2. Explore potential innovative management strategies that could be applied in the future
- Use focal species of key interest to the recreational community to examine past/ongoing challenges and evaluate new approaches

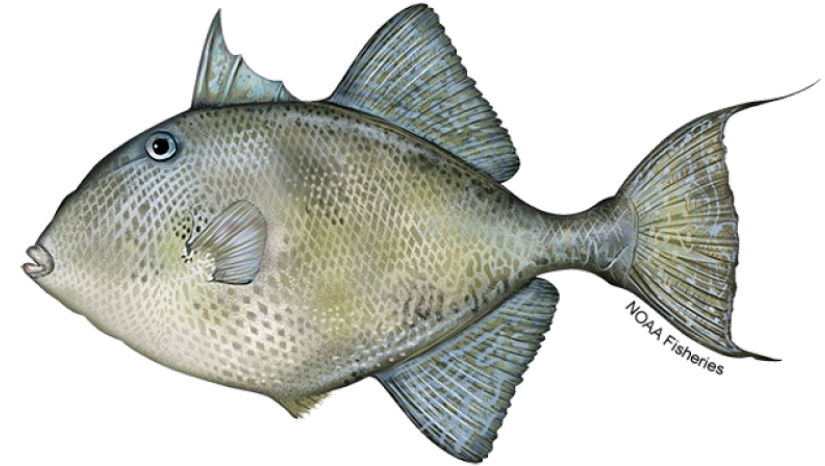
# Recreational Initiative Items

<p>1. Development, review, and revision of <b>goals and objectives</b> for recreational fisheries management.</p>	<p>5. Evaluation and consideration of <b>harvest control rules</b> (i.e., pre-agreed guidelines) for setting bag, size, and season limits.</p>
<p>2. A <b>review of the status</b> of Federally managed species in the Gulf of Mexico that are highly sought after by recreational anglers, including recreational sources of directed and bycatch mortality.</p>	<p>6. Scientific recommendations to the Council for <b>addressing variability and uncertainty in recreational catch estimates</b>, including use of multiple years of data, identification of catch estimates that are the result of low sample sizes or outliers, and statistical recommendations and guidance for how such approaches could be implemented.</p>
<p>3. A <b>review of recreational management measures</b>, including how management measures have changed over time.</p>	<p>7. Exploration of innovative <b>new management strategies</b>.</p>
<p>4. Assessment of the performance and efficacy of <b>recreational accountability measures</b> and recommended improvements.</p>	

# Recreational Initiative: Focal Species



**Gag Grouper**



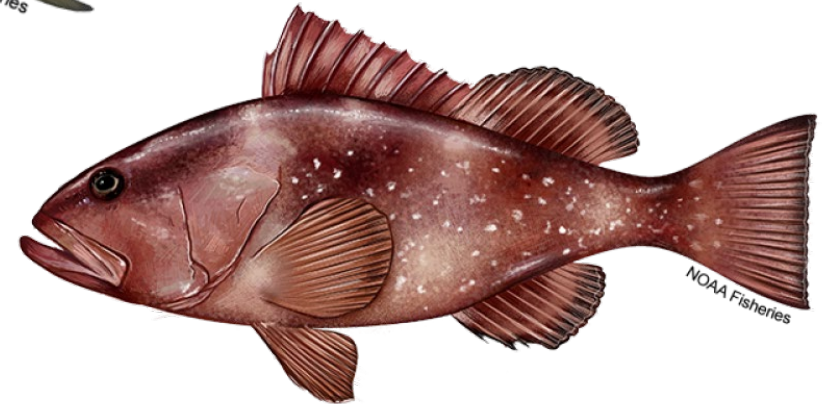
**Gray Triggerfish**



**Greater Amberjack**



**Red Snapper**



**Red Grouper**

# Who's Involved

## Steering Committee

- Provides guidance on overall effort (meets monthly)

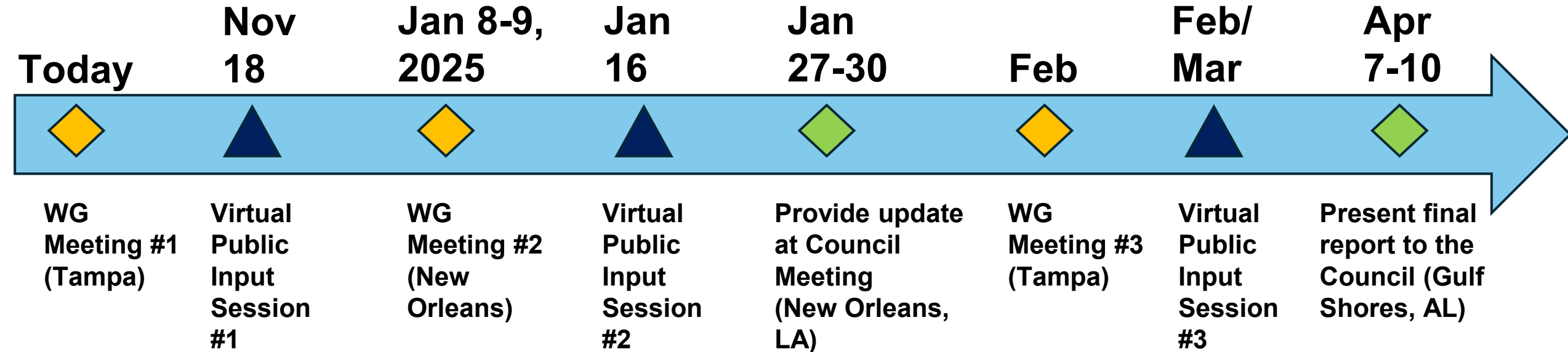
## Technical Group

- Provide background information to Working Group members

## Working Group

- Review management successes and failures and advise the Council on potential novel management measures.
- Focus on the exploration of ideas rather than reacting to proposed regulatory decisions from the Council.
- 12 members, consensus-based

# Summary of Recreational Initiative Timeline



# ***Stakeholder Engagement Strategy: Objectives***

- **Acknowledge the recreational sector's dissatisfaction with management**
  - Demonstrate that the Council is listening to stakeholder concerns and is working in the best interests of the recreational community within the confines of what's permitted (i.e., MSA)
- **Promote transparency and broad participation in the Recreational Initiative process**
  - Invite feedback from the broader recreational community and build a sense of shared ownership/investment
- **Lay the foundation for durability/success of the Recreational Initiative**
  - By securing buy-in from the recreational community, the Initiative has a better chance of gaining momentum within both community and the Council and achieving intended outcomes, as opposed to “fizzling out”

# ***Stakeholder Engagement Strategy: Approach***

Engagement should focus on two major elements:

- I. Provide Updates and Gather Public Feedback:** Over the course of the Initiative, inform the community of the Initiative's activities and provide opportunities for public comment and engagement.
- II. Disseminate Results:** Toward the end of the Initiative, effectively communicate the key findings and next steps.

Other Considerations:

- Strategy will be a **living document** to be adjusted as the Initiative evolves and to reflect any issues that arise in the broader context of Gulf recreational fisheries management
- **Target audience: Avid anglers/community leaders** who are “influencers” and who have a platform/audience (social media, etc.). This is in recognition of the Council's capacity limitations when it comes to reaching a broad/casual angler audience.

# ***I. Provide Updates and Gather Public Feedback***

- Emphasis on **communicating progress on the Recreational Initiative in real-time** → provide transparency and promote engagement.
- Couple updates with a **parallel public feedback process** to solicit broader public views on challenges and potential management approaches
- Platforms for coupled communication-feedback (more on next slide):
  - Council Meetings
  - Recreational Initiative Landing Page on Council Website
  - Virtual Public Feedback Meetings
- Effort will leverage existing Council communications infrastructure (social media, listserv, etc.)

# I. Provide Updates and Gather Public Feedback (2)

Platform	Progress Update	Public Feedback*	Notes
<b>Council Meetings (Jan and Apr 2024)</b>	Presentation with updates throughout Initiative	Public Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At WG Meeting 1, WG will select a representative to attend Jan Council meeting to help present results/field questions; will do so for Apr at subsequent WG meeting.</li> <li>Apr Council meeting: Dedicated Rec Initiative public comment session</li> </ul>
<b>Recreational Initiative Landing Page</b>	Copies of presentations, public engagement session summaries, background and Working Group meeting materials, etc.	Public comment/input web portal (Comments submitted via portal are publicly accessible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Posted materials to be shared by Steering Committee, Working Group members, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Virtual Public Engagement Session</b> after each Working Group meeting	Brief presentation summarizing recent Working Group Meeting	Three-hour virtual evening meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each session to be held 2-3 weeks after Working Group meetings</li> <li>WG members invited to attend but not actively participate</li> <li>Council rep(s) on Steering Committee to help present/field questions.</li> <li>Summaries will be prepared by Council staff.</li> </ul>

*\*Given these opportunities, there will not be a public comment period during Working Group meetings.*

# ***I. Provide Updates and Gather Public Feedback: Targeting the For-Hire Sector***

Given the lack of for-hire representation on the Working Group, it will be important to directly engage this sector:

- Send emails to Working Group applicants who weren't selected (personalized/for-hire specific email to for-hire applicants?) inviting them to engage via virtual Public Input Sessions, the online comment portal, Council meetings, etc.
- Over the course of the Initiative, send personal/semi-personal emails to federally permitted for-hire captains (Council has about 1/3 of emails; could gather the rest from SERO, etc. if desired).
- Reach for-hire folks through press releases and social media.
- Council Reef Fish and CMP APs will have opportunity to review Recreational Initiative report and provide feedback for Council consideration once the effort is complete

## II. Disseminate Results

- As the Initiative concludes, focus on communicating outcomes:
  - **Goals and objectives** for recreational Gulf reef fish fisheries management
  - **Major sources of dissatisfaction** for the Gulf recreational reef fishing community
  - **Existing constraints** (e.g., MSA) within which the Gulf Council must operate
  - **Potential viable and “game-changing” approaches** that the Council could consider
  - (If a solution is of interest but is not currently viable, **what changes must be made** [e.g., legislation, funding])

### Proposed Methods:

- Development of stakeholder-facing (brief!) **Recreational Initiative report** outlining next steps, and opportunities for stakeholder involvement
- **Recreational Initiative updates at Council meetings**
- Posts on **Recreational Initiative Landing Page (and other Council communications infrastructure)** to be amplified as appropriate

# Questions and Discussion

- Are there opportunities for recreational engagement over the next ~5 months that are not captured in this strategy?
- Are there other approaches for engaging the for-hire sector that you would recommend? What about for private anglers?
- How can the O&E Technical Committee best amplify these opportunities for soliciting public input?

