

20-Fathom Shallow Water Grouper Closure Outreach



Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Details of the SWG Closure

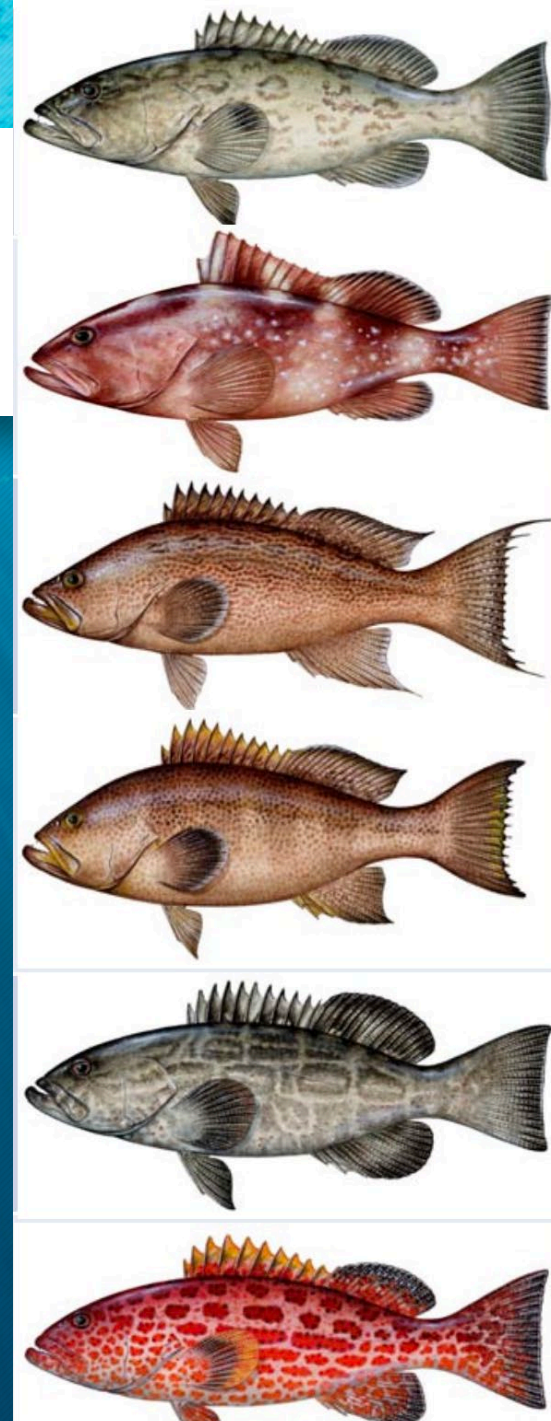
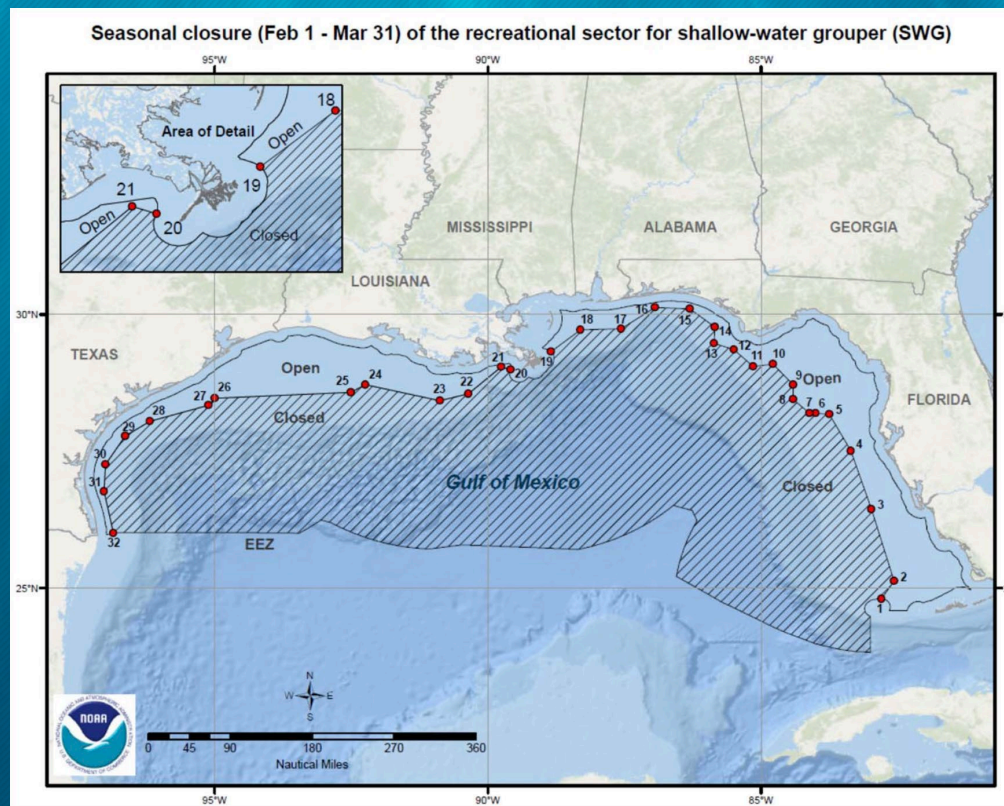
Who:

Gag, Red Grouper, Scamp, Yellowmouth Grouper, Black Grouper, Yellowfin Grouper

What:

Shallow-water grouper is closed for the recreational sector each year from February 1 - Through March 31 in the portion of the Gulf EEZ seaward of 20-fathoms.

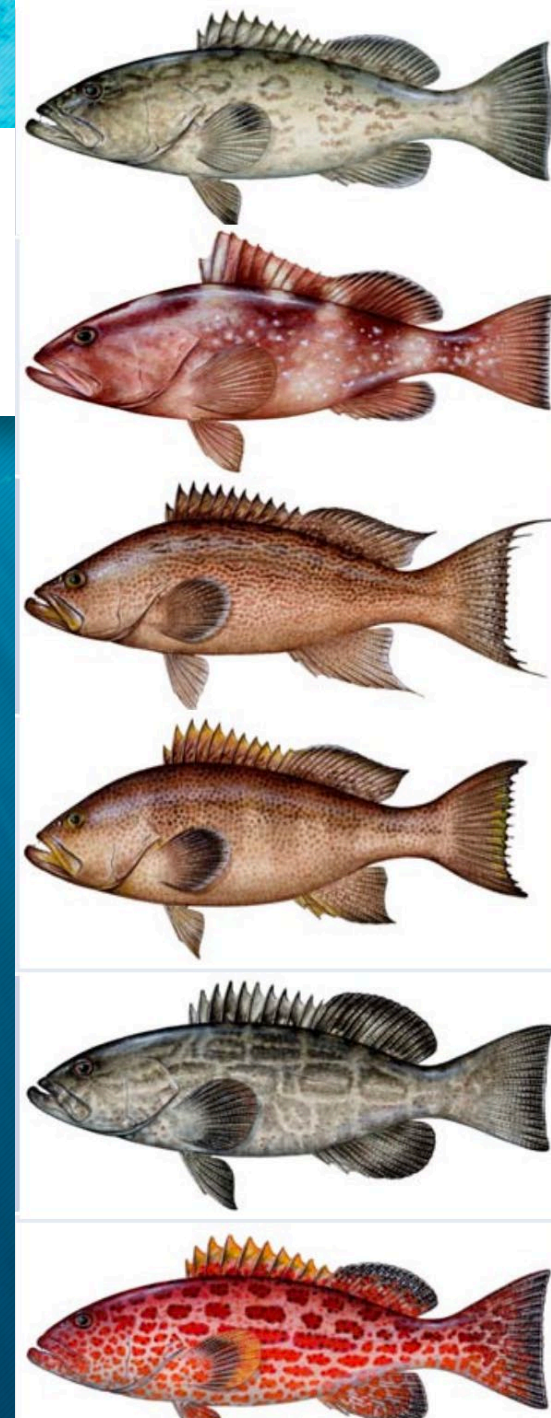
Where:



Details of the SWG Closure

FMP category	Common name	Family	Scientific name	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Coastal Migratory Pelagics	King Mackerel	Scombridae	<i>Scomberomorus caeruleus</i>												
Coastal Migratory Pelagics	Spanish Mackerel	Scombridae	<i>Scomberomorus maculatus</i>												
Red Drum	Red Drum	Sciaenidae	<i>Sciaenops ocellatus</i>												
Reef Fish	Gray Triggerfish	Balistidae	<i>Balistes capricornus</i>												
Reef Fish	Greater Amberjack														
Reef Fish	Almaco Jack														
Reef Fish	Speckled Hind	Epinephelidae	<i>Epinephelus drummondhayi</i>												
Reef Fish	Goliath Grouper	Epinephelidae	<i>Epinephelus itaiara</i>												
Reef Fish	Red Grouper	Epinephelidae	<i>Epinephelus morio</i>												
Reef Fish	Nassau Grouper	Epinephelidae	<i>Epinephelus striatus</i>												
Reef Fish	Yellowedge Grouper	Epinephelidae	<i>Hyporhamphus flavolimbatus</i>												
Reef Fish	Warsaw Grouper	Epinephelidae	<i>Hyporhamphus nigritus</i>												
Reef Fish	Snowy Grouper	Epinephelidae	<i>Hyporhamphus niveatus</i>												
Reef Fish	Black Grouper	Epinephelidae	<i>Mycteroperca bonaci</i>												
Reef Fish	Yellowmouth Grouper	Epinephelidae	<i>Mycteroperca interstitialis</i>												
Reef Fish	Gag Grouper	Epinephelidae	<i>Mycteroperca microlepis</i>												
Reef Fish	Scamp	Epinephelidae	<i>Mycteroperca phenax</i>												
Reef Fish	Yellowfin Grouper	Epinephelidae	<i>Mycteroperca venenosa</i>												
Reef Fish	Hogfish	Labridae	<i>Lachnolaimus maximus</i>												
Reef Fish	Mutton Snapper	Lutjanidae	<i>Lutjanus analis</i>												
Reef Fish	Red Snapper	Lutjanidae	<i>Lutjanus campechanus</i>												
Reef Fish	Cubera Snapper	Lutjanidae	<i>Lutjanus cyanopterus</i>												
Reef Fish	Vermilion Snapper	Lutjanidae	<i>Rhomboplites aurorubens</i>												
Reef Fish	Tilefish	Malacanthidae	<i>Lopholatilus chamaeleonticeps</i>												
Not Federally Managed	Southern Flounder	Paralichthyidae	<i>Paralichthys lethostigma</i>												
Not Federally Managed	Spotted Seatrout	Sciaenidae	<i>Cynoscion nebulosus</i>												
Not Federally Managed	Black Drum	Sciaenidae	<i>Pogonias cromis</i>												
Not Federally Managed	Sheepshead	Sparidae	<i>Archosargus probatocephalus</i>												
Number species (all)				11	13	13	19	19	20	16	18	15	9	7	5
Number species (peak)				3	5	10	9	8	8	8	7	4	2	1	3
				Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4		

Stallings et al. 2023

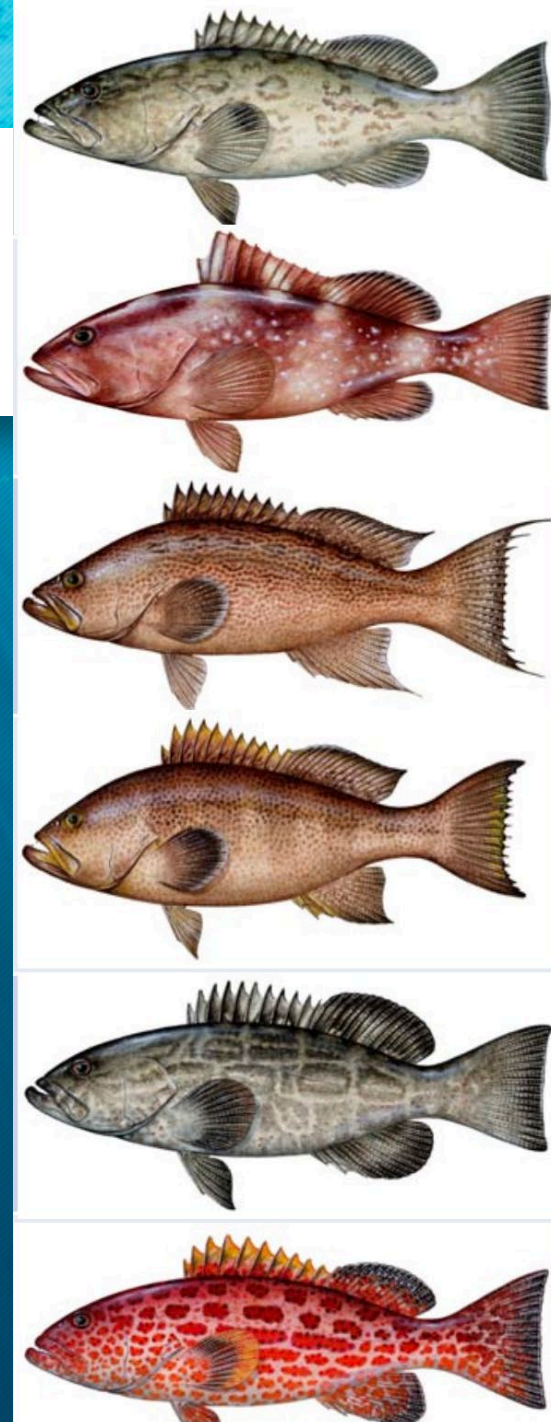


Why Are We Here?

April 2024 Council Motion: Explore the removal of the 20-fathom closure for shallow water grouper recreational fishery in the months of February and March.

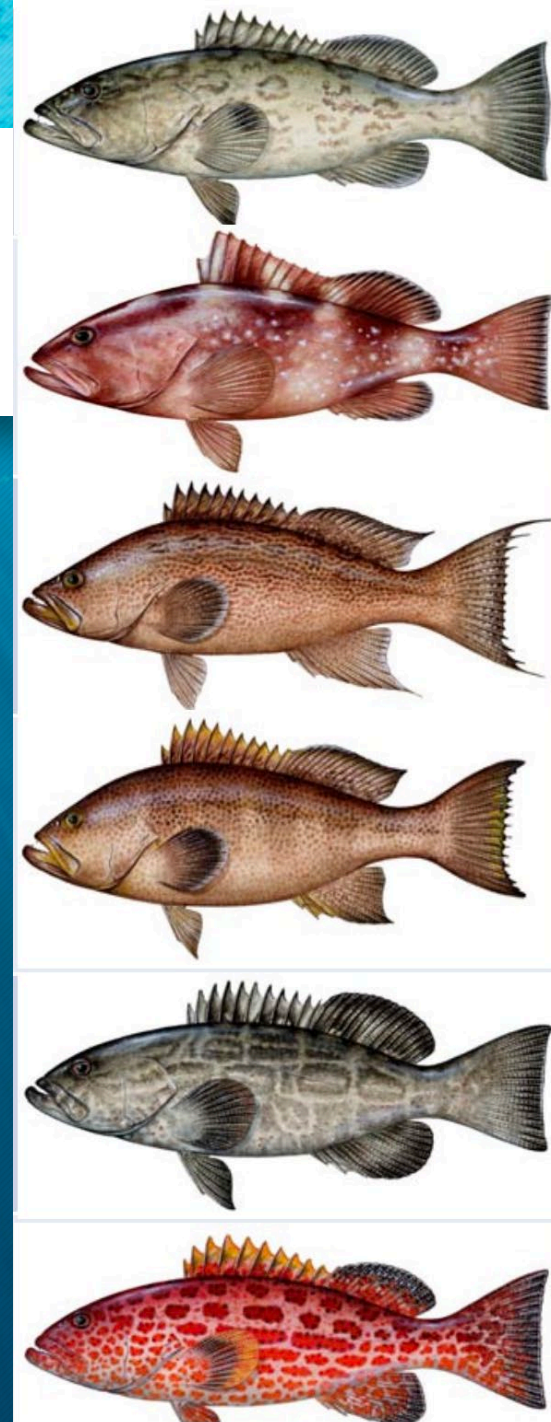
- Concern over low awareness and compliance

June 2024 Council Meeting: Council reviewed the SWG Closure and considered potential modifications.



Additional Considerations

- Removal of the SWG Closure may:
 - Affect catch rate
 - Affect size composition of catch
 - Require modifications to season length
 - Could increase vulnerability of groupers during spawning
- Effectiveness of the current closure is unknown
- Concern that lack of effective law enforcement limits effectiveness
- Conservation goals of closure may still be necessary
- There may be other ways to improve compliance/effectiveness
 - Education / Outreach



How can the Council improve compliance through education and outreach?

- Specific angles?
- Specific tactics?

Looking ahead...

