

# Gulf Fishery Management Council

*Managing Fishery Resources in the U.S. Federal Waters of the Gulf of Mexico*

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## **Gulf Gag Grouper Terms of Reference DRAFT: September 25, 2025**

1. Update the approved 2022 Alternative SEDAR 72 base model, using the State of Florida's State Reef Fish Survey for private angling and landings and discards, for Gulf gag grouper with data through 2024.
2. Document any changes or corrections made to model and input datasets and provide updated input data tables.
  - Evaluate use of the G-FISHER video index.
  - Describe any annual differences in the magnitude of landings from the previous assessment greater than 10%, with assistance from appropriate data providers.
  - Update life history data (e.g., growth, reproduction, natural mortality) if warranted. Evaluate any new data on discard mortality.
  - Evaluate available data on the severity (intensity and extent) of the 2021 red tide episodic mortality event and determine if the previous estimate used in the projections from the last assessment ("medium" severity) should be updated. Evaluate additional red tide episodic mortality (e.g., 2022 to 2024 red tide bloom, if/as applicable) as data availability and time permit.
3. Update model parameter estimates and their variances, model uncertainties, estimates of stock status and management benchmarks, and provide the probability of overfishing occurring at specified future harvest and exploitation levels. Provide commercial and recreational landings and discards in **pounds and numbers**.
  - Use the following status determination criteria (SDC):
    - MSY proxy = yield at  $F_{MSY}$  or proxy ( $F_{40\%SPR}$ )
    - If overfished, MSY proxy =  $F_{Rebuild}$
    - $MSST = 0.5 * B_{MSY}$
    - $MFMT = F_{MSY}$  and  $F_{Rebuild}$  (if overfished)
    - $OY = 75\%$  of the yield at MSY or proxy (Amendment 30B); 90% of MSY or proxy, or if rebuilding,  $OY = ACL$  (Amendment 56; in development)
    - If different SDC are recommended, provide outputs for both the current and recommended SDC.
  - Unless otherwise recommended, use the geometric mean of the previous three years' fishing mortality to determine  $F_{Current}$ . If an alternative approach is recommended, provide justification and outputs for the current and alternative approach.
  - Provide yield and spawning stock biomass streams for the overfishing limit and acceptable biological catch in pounds and document if it is gutted weight or whole weight:
    - Annually for five years
    - Under a "constant catch" scenario for both three and five years
    - For the equilibrium yield at  $F_{MSY}$ , when estimable

4. Develop a stock assessment report to address these TORS and fully document the input data and results of the stock assessment model.

**Topical Working Group**

A virtual topical working group **is** recommended for this assessment:

- Life History updates (i.e., natural mortality)
- Red tide mortality