

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE

Renaissance New Orleans Pere Marquette New Orleans, Louisiana

January 28, 2025

VOTING MEMBERS

- 10 Rick Burris (designee for Joe Spraggins).....Mississippi
- 11 Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama
- 12 Billy Broussard.....Louisiana
- 13 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
- 14 Troy Frady.....Alabama
- 15 Dakus Geeslin (designee for Robin Riechers).....Texas
- 16 Michael McDermott.....Mississippi
- 17 Lt. Jackson Morton.....USCG
- 18 Chris Schieble (designee for Ryan Montegut).....Louisiana
- 19 Troy Williamson.....Texas

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

- 22 Kesley Banks.....Texas
- 23 J.D. Dugas.....Louisiana
- 24 Tom Frazer.....Florida
- 25 Anthony Overton.....Alabama
- 26 John Sanchez.....Florida
- 27 Andy Strelcheck.....NMFS
- 28 C.J. Sweetman (designee for Jessica McCawley).....Florida
- 29 Ed Walker.....Florida

STAFF

- 32 Max Birdsong.....Social Scientist
- 33 Assane Diagne.....Economist
- 34 Matt Freeman.....Economist
- 35 John Froeschke.....Deputy Director
- 36 Beth Hager.....Administrative Officer
- 37 Lisa Hollensead.....Fishery Biologist
- 38 Sarah Gardiner.....Fishery Biologist
- 39 Mara Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
- 40 Jessica Matos.....Administrative Document Editor & IT Coordinator
- 41 Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer
- 42 Ryan Rindone.....Lead Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison
- 43 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
- 44 Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

- 47 Frank Helies.....NOAA
- 48 Tom Roller.....SAFMC
- 49 John Walter.....SEFSC

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1 The Law Enforcement Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
2 Management Council convened at The Renaissance New Orleans Pere
3 Marquette in New Orleans, Louisiana on Tuesday afternoon,
4 January 28, 2025, and was called to order by Chairman Rick
5 Burris.

6
7 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
8 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
9 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**

10
11 **CHAIRMAN RICK BURRIS:** The members of the Law Enforcement
12 Committee are as follows: myself, Mr. Broussard, Mr. Anson, Lt.
13 Morton, Mr. Donaldson, Captain Frady, Mr. McDermott, Mr.
14 Schieble, Mr. Osborne, Mr. Geeslin, and Mr. Williamson.

15
16 The first item on the agenda is the Adoption of the Agenda. Do
17 I have a second? I have a second. All right. Next up will be
18 the Approval of the January 2024 minutes, if everybody has had a
19 chance to look at those?

20
21 **MR. DAKUS GEESLIN:** Motion to approve.

22
23 **MR. DAVE DONALDSON:** Second.

24
25 **CHAIRMAN BURRIS:** Any opposition? The motion carries. All
26 right. Next up we have the Action Guide and Next Steps. Dr.
27 Birdsong.

28
29 **LAW ENFORCEMENT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (LETC) MEETING**

30
31 **DR. MAX BIRDSONG:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I'm going to
32 summarize our Law Enforcement Technical Committee meeting that
33 we held this month. The meeting was originally scheduled in
34 October and moved, due to Hurricane Milton.

35
36 At the meeting, we discussed two topics, and I think the
37 technical committee did a good job of distilling their feedback
38 down into two motions for us. The topics that we discussed were
39 the federal charter vessel ID markers and the twenty-fathom
40 recreational closure for grouper. Bernie, if you could go ahead
41 and pull up the report.

42
43 All right, and could you scroll down to the first motion?
44 That's perfect. Thank you. The technical committee was asked
45 by the Council if there were any -- The council would like to
46 know whether there were more convenient requirements that could
47 be considered for federal charter vessels. And, after some
48 discussion, the LETC Committee passed this motion here.

1
2 The LETC discussed various options regarding vessel ID number
3 display requirements. The LETC believes the current vessel ID
4 number sizes are appropriate. The LETC would not be opposed to
5 allowing vessel ID numbers to be displayed in a manner that is
6 not permanently affixed. All right, and, Bernie, if you could
7 scroll to the next motion then.

8
9 **MR. ANDY STRELCHECK:** I'm just curious. So, with the current
10 numbers for vessels, I think there's like a certain size for
11 smaller vessels, and then a larger size for any vessels above
12 that size. Did they have any conversation about kind of
13 incremental increases in size of the vessel numbers?

14
15 **DR. BIRDSONG:** Yes, there was some discussion. I believe the
16 cutoff is a twenty-five-foot vessel, and under twenty-five feet
17 is a three-inch number. Yes, there was some talk of incremental
18 increases, but I think the response was any number in between
19 makes it a bit harder to distinguish from a from a distance, and
20 they liked having a distinct difference between the three-inch
21 and the ten-inch, if I can recall that correctly.

22
23 Okay, so I'll continue with the next motion then. Dr. John
24 Froeschke gave a presentation on the twenty-fathom closure for
25 grouper, and this was the motion in response to that.

26
27 The LETC discussed the options the council is considering
28 regarding the possible modification of the current twenty-fathom
29 shallow-water grouper closure. As the council considers its
30 options, the LETC would advise the council that regulations that
31 are linked to a specific area closure are always more difficult
32 to enforce than simple bag, possession, and season closures,
33 particularly when the relevant area is significantly offshore.

34
35 Nevertheless, the LETC will continue to fully support and
36 enforce, to the best of its abilities and resource limitations,
37 whatever management tool the council decides is most appropriate
38 for the conservation of the species. That was an important
39 point, that they considered this a management action, and didn't
40 think that the enforcement should influence the decision.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN BURRIS:** Any discussion on that?

43
44 **DR. BIRDSONG:** Is there any discussion on this?

45
46 **CHAIRMAN BURRIS:** Captain Walker.

47
48 **MR. ED WALKER:** Not exactly this one. Sorry, and I just walked

1 in at the end of the last one, but, on the vessel letter size,
2 is that really up for us to decide, the vessel ID numbers? I
3 thought that was a Coast Guard mandate. I'll stand by on that
4 one. That affects me greatly. I have a center console boat,
5 and I'm required to have really oversized numbers, and so I'll
6 get together on that.

7

8 **CHAIRMAN BURRIS:** Dr. Simmons.

9

10 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So
11 another thing that was discussed, when we were going through the
12 vessel ID number display requirements, is that this is a
13 requirement in the Gulf and the South Atlantic, and for
14 commercial vessels as well, and so changing this could be more
15 cumbersome than we originally thought, but I would look down to
16 the Ms. Levy, to see if she had any other information regarding
17 the current regulations, but we did briefly talk about that
18 during that call.

19

20 **CHAIRMAN BURRIS:** There was talk about it being removable,
21 right, to make it a little bit easier on them? Captain Walker.

22

23 **MR. WALKER:** This says "vessel". Are we talking about
24 commercial vessels, charter vessels, recreational vessels?

25

26 **DR. BIRDSONG:** I believe this is referring to charter, federal
27 charter.

28

29 **MR. WALKER:** Okay.

30

31 **CHAIRMAN BURRIS:** Dr. Birdsong.

32

33 **DR. BIRDSONG:** That's all we have to bring forward.

34

35 **CHAIRMAN BURRIS:** All right. The next item on the agenda is
36 Other Business. Is there any other business to come before this
37 committee? All right. Seeing none, I'll return it back to you,
38 Mr. Chair.

39

40 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on January 28, 2025.)

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