

**Law Enforcement Technical Committee (LETC) Report
Biloxi, Mississippi
October 29, 2025**

Chairman Casterline called the meeting to order with introductions, and the agenda was adopted as written. Minutes from the October 2023 LEC/LETC joint meeting in New Orleans had been previously approved during the January 2025 virtual meeting of the LETC. Committee members reviewed their contact information and provided corrections where necessary.

Additional Tier of ID Number Size for Federally permitted Vessels between 25 feet and 65 feet

Council staff indicated that the Council requested the LETC revisit ID number size for federally permitted vessels and determine whether an additional size tier for vessels between 25 feet and 65 feet could be considered. Staff presented the current federally permitted vessel ID requirements¹ and provided the motion approved by the Committee during its January 2025 meeting. The Committee motion indicated that current vessel ID requirements are appropriate. General Spraggins noted that the Committee should provide clear recommendations and that the Council would typically support LETC recommendations. Committee members discussed alternative sizes and rotating colors for displaying ID number sizes including decals like license plates. The Committee discussed the use of color-coded markings and noted that visibility from afar is important. The Committee noted that the current official number displays were useful in distinguishing federal for-hire vessels from state for-hire or guide boats. Committee members indicated that current markings are particularly helpful for vessel identification from an aircraft. Members also noted that some states are expecting to acquire new aircrafts for aerial surveillance. Members reiterated that decreasing the size of the number display would adversely impact the ability to identify the vessels from distance. The Committee recommended to keep sizes mentioned in regulations for visibility purposes from aircraft, and from patrol vessels from a greater distance for example when using binoculars. The Committee unanimously approved the following resolution:

The LETC discussed decal configurations and color schemes to allow for smaller number sizing. After discussion, the LETC recommends the current sizing for official number displays adequate to assist in enforcement. The intent of the LETC is that the identifying display be of sufficient size and contrast to allow identification from a standoff distance for law enforcement vessel and aircraft.

Update on 20-fathom Boundary Line Closure

Council staff provided an update on the 20-fathom boundary line. Staff indicated that in Reef Fish Amendment 62 (Red Grouper Allocation), the Council has selected the preferred alternative below to eliminate the 20-fathom boundary closure.

Preferred Alternative 2: Eliminate the February 1 through March 31 recreational closed season for shallow water grouper in federal waters seaward of the 20-fathom boundary.

¹ [eCFR :: 50 CFR 622.6 -- Vessel identification.](#) and [eCFR :: 50 CFR 635.6 -- Vessel and gear identification.](#)

The Committee concurred with the Council’s decision and did not recommend any additional action.
State and Federal Boundary Line for Reef Fish

Staff led a short discussion on the boundary between state and federal waters for reef fish management in the Gulf and ask Committee members whether the boundary resulted in enforcement challenges. Committee members discussed the map provided by staff and unanimously adopted the following resolution

The LETC discussed the Federal Boundary for the Management of Gulf Reef Fish. It was determined that currently, there are no enforcement issues.

Following the discussion at the LETC meeting, Council staff coordinated with NOAA staff regarding potential ambiguity in the state and federal boundary for reef fish management in the Gulf. NOAA staff indicated that they have developed an approved boundary line and provided it to Council staff for use and management and clarification with stakeholders.

Nomination Process for Officer/Team of the Year

Staff noted that the Committee typically meets via webinar in closed session every January to discuss nominations for the Officer/Team of the Year. LETC members then send electronically their nominees to the Gulf Council. During the January 2025 meeting, Committee members inquired about the need for the virtual meeting and suggested that the webinar may no longer necessary. Committee members indicated that because the electronic submissions of nominees following the usual procedure would suffice, the recommendation is to eliminate the virtual meeting. The Committee unanimously approved the following resolution:

The LETC decided to streamline the nomination process by removing the closed session webinar for discussing nominees.

LETC Members in Attendance:

Les Casterline, TPWD, Austin, TX (Chair)
Dean Aucoin, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA (Vice-Chair)
Patrick Carron, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
John Conlin, FWC, Tallahassee, FL (proxy)
Edward Willis, ADCNR, Dauphin Island, AL (proxy)
Jackson Morton, Coast Guard, New Orleans, LA

Joe Spraggins, Council Representative

Commission Staff, Council Staff, and Others:

Assane Diagne, Gulf Council, Tampa, FL
John Froeschke, Gulf Council (virtual)
Doug Boyd, GSMFC Commissioner, Boerne, TX
Steve VanderKooy, GSMFC Staff, Ocean Springs, MS
Keith Wilson, GSMFC Staff, Ocean Springs, MS