

Amendment 64: Delegation of the Federal For-Hire Management Authority for Red Snapper to Gulf States

Draft Amendment 64 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico

**Including Environmental Assessment,
Fishery Impact Statement, Regulatory Impact Review,
and Regulatory Flexibility Act Analysis**

April 2026



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Atmospheric Administration Award No. NA25NMF4410007C.*

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

With Reef Fish Amendment 40 “Recreational Red Snapper Sector Separation” (GMFMC 2014), which was implemented in 2015¹, the Gulf Council (Council) instituted sector separation for the management of recreational red snapper, i.e., establishing separate federal for-hire and private angling components. The red snapper federal for-hire component includes all for-hire operators with a valid or renewable federal reef fish for-hire permit. The private angling component includes all other for-hire operators and private recreational anglers. The purpose of Reef Fish Amendment 40 was to define distinct private angling and federal for-hire components of the recreational red snapper fishery and allocate the red snapper recreational quota between the two components. The separate components would provide a basis for flexible management approaches better suited to meet the needs of each component and, as a result, reduce the likelihood for recreational red snapper quota overruns which would jeopardize the rebuilding of the red snapper stock. Management actions included in Reef Fish Amendment 40, created the separate private angling and federal for-hire components, allocated the recreational red snapper quota between the components, defined separate red snapper closure provisions for each component, and established a provision to sunset sector separation three years after its implementation. Through Reef Fish Amendment 45 “Revision of the Red Snapper Recreational Sector Separation Sunset Provision” (GMFMC, 2016), which was implemented in 2016², the Council extended the 3-year sunset provision for the red snapper recreational sector separation measure and the associated red snapper quotas for an additional 5 years.

Based on Gulf states expressed intent to assume responsibility for the management of red snapper for the private angling component, the Council developed Reef Fish Amendments 50 A-F (GMFMC 2019 a-f) “State Management Program for Recreational Red Snapper.” Implemented in 2020³, the umbrella amendment (Amendment 50A) delegated to Gulf states the authority to manage recreational fishing of red snapper in federal waters in the Gulf of America adjacent to their state waters. Auxiliary amendments (Amendments 50 B to F; GMFMC 2019 b-f) include state-specific management measures relative to the authority structure and quota adjustments for each state accepting delegation. Council’s letters to each Gulf state and responses from the states indicating their support for the delegation of authority for recreational red snapper management and their willingness to assume associated responsibilities are provided in Appendix A.

The development of this amendment is based on Council’s discussions and an approved motion. During its April 2025 meeting, the Council approved a motion to “direct staff to begin work on a

¹ [Federal Register :: Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Amendment 40](#)

² [Federal Register :: Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Red Snapper Management Measures](#)

³ [Federal Register :: Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Reef Fish Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico; Amendments 50A-F](#)

presentation to the Council to modify recreational management of red snapper by delegating management authority for the federal for-hire component of the recreational sector to the respective five Gulf states. Proposed management measures should include an option for individual states to opt-out of delegation of federal for-hire management authority. The federal for-hire component in those states that opt-out would continue to be managed under the federal status quo.”

The participation by Gulf States in the federal for-hire red snapper fishery can be illustrated by changes in red snapper landings and in numbers of permitted vessels by state. Numbers of vessels with a federal for-hire reef fish permit by state are provided in Table 1.1.1. Red snapper landings by federal for-hire vessels are provided by state in Table 1.1.2.

Table 1.1.1. Number of for-hire vessels (charter and headboat) with a Gulf For-hire permits for reef fish by vessel homeport state.

Year	Alabama	Florida	Louisiana	Mississippi	Texas	Non- Gulf	Total
2015	143	778	121	38	232	18	1,330
2016	134	776	119	35	232	19	1,315
2017	141	790	117	33	214	16	1,311
2018	137	803	121	32	205	10	1,308
2019	144	814	117	31	193	9	1,308
2020	147	808	113	28	195	8	1,299
2021	155	806	110	24	187	11	1,293
2022	156	815	99	22	177	11	1,280
2023	158	815	86	24	172	12	1,267
2024	154	817	82	25	174	11	1,263
2025	150	809	78	26	183	12	1,258

Table 1.1.2 Federal for-hire landings (charter and headboats) in pounds whole weight

Year	Alabama	Florida	Louisiana	Mississippi	Texas	Total
1986	305,676	1,563,287	204,951	150	352,077	2,426,141
1987	203,247	546,756	188,273	276	393,745	1,332,297
1988	472,213	516,313	69,494	9,338	536,389	1,603,747
1989	467,871	166,524	116,941	5,171	943,384	1,699,891
1990	314,978	141,351	150,880	14,610	317,265	939,084
1991	424,798	254,290	887,428	10,716	379,452	1,956,684
1992	522,851	163,578	580,807	11,545	758,663	2,037,444
1993	1,072,169	1,049,355	607,972	81,786	1,175,852	3,987,134
1994	788,319	698,531	453,796	116,984	1,300,998	3,358,628
1995	801,132	458,845	569,845	4,700	1,166,308	3,000,830
1996	1,036,788	830,709	263,990	42,687	1,203,382	3,377,556
1997	1,357,626	853,201	367,142	83,657	1,060,943	3,722,569
1998	865,790	1,187,762	105,994	12,666	880,264	3,052,476
1999	495,656	826,200	89,695	11,763	418,061	1,841,375
2000	641,793	1,007,798	141,299	16,023	561,227	2,368,140
2001	819,187	918,942	33,767	20,820	390,820	2,183,536
2002	991,564	1,323,858	243,008	65,126	610,854	3,234,410
2003	925,924	1,093,395	260,386	46,104	553,179	2,878,988
2004	709,025	1,466,114	298,964	6,589	535,993	3,016,685
2005	620,624	938,485	281,586	0	395,905	2,236,600
2006	580,745	927,727	366,076	3,384	477,006	2,354,938
2007	553,242	1,375,741	205,641	0	338,496	2,473,120
2008	216,929	774,394	205,124	1,279	193,173	1,390,899
2009	298,909	894,044	209,444	0	489,926	1,892,323
2010	49,915	285,990	0	6,517	296,674	639,096
2011	408,981	735,517	38,909	3,402	310,158	1,496,967
2012	450,816	804,282	240,522	1,405	445,437	1,942,462
2013	565,681	562,569	110,772	897	240,063	1,479,982
2014	85,276	105,415	17,164	0	193,705	401,560
2015	611,840	775,505	0	7,181	365,077	1,759,603
2016	694,802	753,147	130,655	13,936	358,399	1,950,939
2017	734,971	796,791	179,243	24,655	365,114	2,100,774
2018	730,549	1,127,076	157,492	8,254	418,092	2,441,463
2019	752,340	1,180,779	113,251	41,323	470,970	2,558,663
2020	614,511	1,159,827	86,880	22,169	426,235	2,309,622
2021	470,238	1,393,714	116,840	10,830	660,261	2,651,883
2022	635,288	1,659,116	75,076	7,506	471,931	2,848,916
2023	754,707	1,581,728	169,564	25,457	458,463	2,989,919
2024	491,213	1,179,859	170,391	5,610	481,922	2,328,995

1.2 Purpose and Need

The purpose of this action is to establish a program structure through which a Gulf state may establish a management program that would provide flexibility in the management of the federally permitted vessels' harvest of red snapper for their anglers.

The need is to consider the management of the federal for-hire harvest of red snapper within the context of the states of the Gulf to prevent overfishing, while achieving, on a continued basis, the optimum yield from the harvest of red snapper by the federal for-hire sector; take into account and allow for variations among and contingencies in the fisheries; fisheries resources and catches; and provide fair and equitable access for the sustained participation of fishing communities of the Gulf and, to the extent practicable, minimize adverse economic impacts on such communities.

CHAPTER 2. MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Action 1 – Delegation of the Federal Red Snapper For-hire Component Management Authority to Gulf of America (Gulf) States

Alternative 1. No Action. Do not delegate the federal management authority for the red snapper federal for-hire component to the respective Gulf states.

Alternative 2. Delegate the federal management authority for the red snapper federal for-hire component to:

Option 2a: the state of Alabama

Option 2b: the state of Florida

Option 2c: the state of Louisiana

Option 2d: the state of Mississippi

Option 2e: the state of Texas

Discussion:

Alternative 1 (No Action) would not delegate the federal management authority for the red snapper federal for-hire red snapper component. The for-hire component would continue to be managed by federal authorities, which would set a Gulf-wide red snapper fishing season in federal waters.

Options 2a to 2e in **Alternative 2** would delegate the federal management authority for the red snapper federal for-hire component to states willing to accept delegation authority. **Alternative 2** would allow these states the flexibility to manage recreational fishing of red snapper in federal waters in the Gulf adjacent to their state waters. **Alternative 2** would allow each state with delegated authority to develop a state-specific for-hire management program for red snapper. Each state with delegated authority would be required to constrain harvest at or below a state-specific for-hire red snapper quota, which would be determined by allocating the federal for-hire red snapper quota among the states (Action 2). The fishing season for federal for-hire operators from states without delegated authority would be determined based on the remainder of the federal for-hire red snapper quota (once the portions allocated to states accepting delegation have been deducted). The Council would determine the extent of the authority to be delegated to the states accepting delegation under **Alternative 2**. For example, the authority delegated could include the determination of minimum and maximum size limits within a predefined range, setting bag limits, and requesting the closure of federal waters adjacent to a particular state.

2.2 Action 2 – Allocation of the Federal For-hire Component Red Snapper Quota among Gulf States and Establishment of State-Specific For-Hire Annual Catch Limits (ACL)

Alternative 1. No Action. Maintain the current federal for-hire red snapper quota as a single component ACL. Do not allocate the federal for-hire red snapper quota between the Gulf states.

Alternative 2. Allocate the federal for-hire red snapper quota between the Gulf states based on each state’s average red snapper landings between 2016 and 2024. Resulting percentages of the federal for-hire red snapper quota allocated are:

Alabama	Florida	Louisiana	Mississippi	Texas
26.5%	48.8%	5.4%	0.7%	18.5%

Alternative 3. Allocate the federal for-hire red snapper quota between the Gulf states based on each state’s average red snapper landings between 2021 and 2024. Resulting percentages of the federal for-hire red snapper quota allocated are:

Alabama	Florida	Louisiana	Mississippi	Texas
22.6%	53.1%	4.7%	0.5%	19.0%

Discussion:

Alternative 1 (No Action) would maintain the federal for-hire red snapper quota as a single component ACL and would not allocate the federal for-hire red snapper quota among the Gulf states.

Alternatives 2 and 3 would allocate the federal for-hire red snapper quota among the states based on historical landings. Historical federal for-hire red snapper landings by state are provided in Table 2.2.1. **Alternative 2** would allocate the federal for-hire red snapper quota based on landings between 2016 and 2024. **Alternative 3** would use a different historical time series, i.e., 2021 to 2024, to allocate the quota among states. Although allocations based on landings histories are easily computed, e.g., **Alternatives 2 and 3**, determining the time series suitable to all interested parties may be challenging.

Table 2.2.1. For-hire red snapper landings by state (pounds and percent); 2016-2024.

Year	Alabama		Florida		Louisiana		Mississippi		Texas	
	Pounds	Percent	Pounds	Percent	Pounds	Percent	Pounds	Percent	Pounds	Percent
2016	694,802	35.6%	753,147	38.6%	130,655	6.7%	13,936	0.7%	358,399	18.4%
2017	734,971	35.0%	796,791	37.9%	179,243	8.5%	24,655	1.2%	365,114	17.4%
2018	730,549	29.9%	1,127,076	46.2%	157,492	6.5%	8,254	0.3%	418,092	17.1%
2019	752,340	29.4%	1,180,779	46.1%	113,251	4.4%	41,323	1.6%	470,970	18.4%
2020	614,511	26.6%	1,159,827	50.2%	86,880	3.8%	22,169	1.0%	426,235	18.5%
2021	470,238	17.7%	1,393,714	52.6%	116,840	4.4%	10,830	0.4%	660,261	24.9%
2022	635,288	22.3%	1,659,116	58.2%	75,076	2.6%	7,506	0.3%	471,931	16.6%
2023	754,707	25.2%	1,581,728	52.9%	169,564	5.7%	25,457	0.9%	458,463	15.3%
2024	491,213	21.1%	1,179,859	50.7%	170,391	7.3%	5,610	0.2%	481,922	20.7%
Avg 2016-2024	653,180	26.5%	1,203,560	48.8%	133,266	5.4%	17,749	0.7%	456,821	18.5%
Avg 2020-2024	593,191	22.6%	1,394,849	53.1%	123,750	4.7%	14,314	0.5%	499,762	19.0%

2.3 Action 3 – For-hire Red Snapper Season Provisions

Alternative 1. No Action. Maintain the current federal for-hire red snapper season opening and closure provisions. The federal for-hire red snapper quota would be used to determine the for-hire red snapper season length.

Alternative 2. For each state with delegated authority to manage the red snapper for-hire season within federal waters contiguous to their state waters, establish separate red snapper season closure provisions as determined by the state.

Alternative 3. For each state with delegated authority to manage the red snapper for-hire season within federal waters contiguous to their state waters, establish separate red snapper season opening and closure provisions as determined by the state.

Discussion:

Alternative 1 (No Action) would maintain a Gulf-wide red snapper fishing season for the federal for-hire component and would not allow the ability to set state-specific fishing seasons for their respective portions of the federal for-hire red snapper quota. Gulf states would likely not be interested in pursuing delegation without the opportunity to set state-specific fishing seasons.

Alternative 2 would allow each Gulf state with delegated authority to manage the red snapper for-hire season within federal waters contiguous to their state waters to establish separate red snapper season closure provisions as determined by the state. Boundary lines between states extending into federal waters are illustrated in Figure 2.3.1.

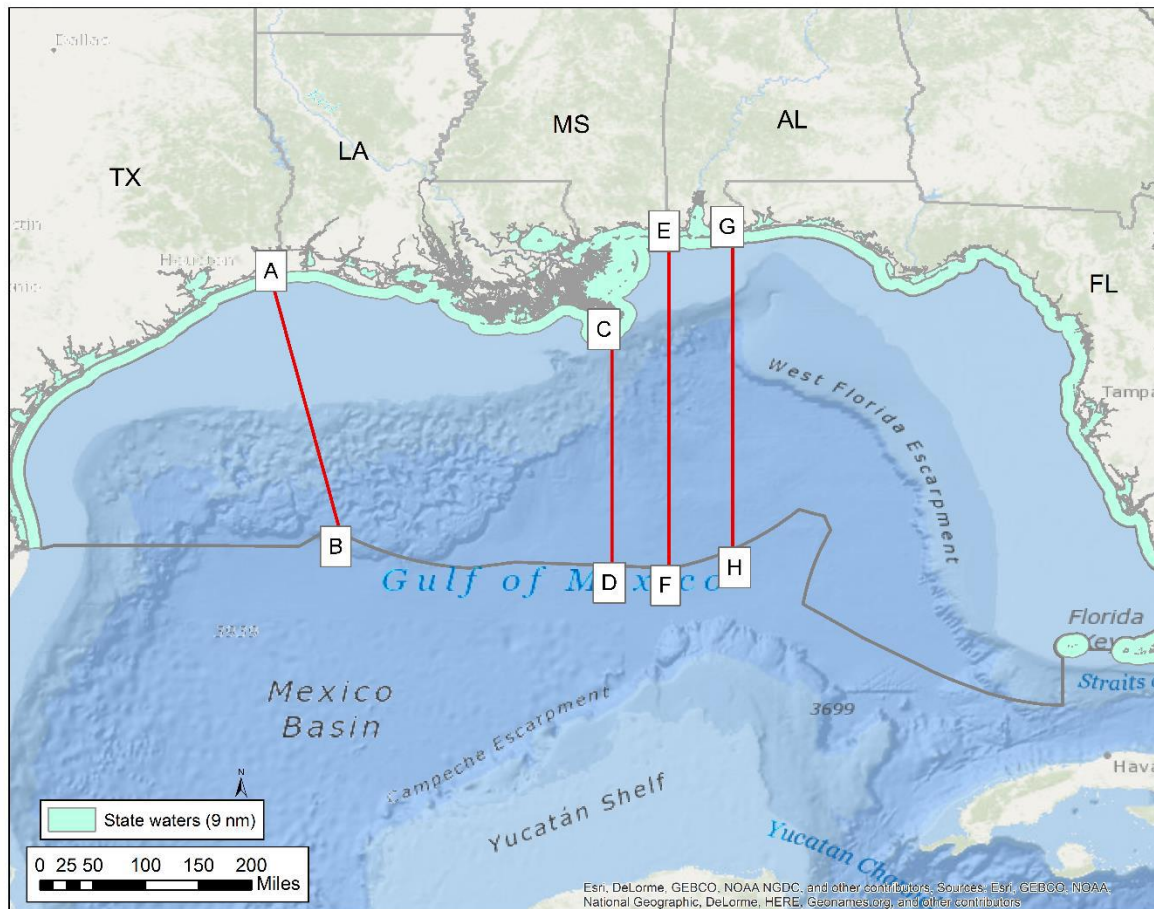


Figure 2.3.1. Map with green shading to identify reef fish management in state waters from federal waters and established and proposed boundaries between states extending into federal waters. The gray line passing through points B, D, F, and H indicates the outer boundary for federal.

Under **Alternative 2**, the Council would continue to set a Gulf-wide opening day for red snapper fishing by federal for-hire vessels. A single opening day across the Gulf may alleviate confusion for for-hire operators and anglers fishing from those vessels, especially those who travel across state lines to fish. **Alternative 3** would provide more flexibility to states with delegated authority. **Alternative 3** would allow each state to set specific red snapper season opening and closure provisions within federal waters contiguous to their state waters. While setting separate closure dates, state representatives would be expected to account for Section 407(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which mandates the end of the recreational harvest of red snapper when the recreational quota is reached or projected to be reached.

CHAPTER 3. REFERENCES

GMFMC. 2014b. Final amendment 40 to the reef fish fishery management plan for the reef fish resources of the Gulf of Mexico – recreational red snapper sector separation. Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, Tampa, Florida. 274 pp.

<http://www.gulfcouncil.org/docs/amendments/RF%2040%20-%20Final%2012-17-2014.pdf>

GMFMC. 2016. Amendment 45 to the fishery management plan for the reef fish resources of the Gulf of Mexico: Revision of the red snapper recreational sector separation sunset provision, including environmental assessment, fishery impact statement, regulatory impact review, and regulatory flexibility act analysis. Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, Tampa, Florida. 161 p. <http://gulfcouncil.org/docs/amendments/RF%2045%20Final.pdf>

GMFMC. 2019a. Final amendment 50A to the fishery management plan for the reef fish resources of the Gulf of Mexico: state management program for recreational red snapper. Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, Tampa, Florida. 278 pp. <http://gulfcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/State-Management-Program-for-Red-Snapper-Final-5-23-2019.pdf>

GMFMC. 2019b. Louisiana management for recreational red snapper. Final amendment 50B to the fishery management plan for the reef fish resources of the Gulf of Mexico, including environmental assessment, regulatory impact review, and regulatory flexibility act analysis. Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, Tampa, Florida. 75 pp. https://gulfcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/Louisiana-State-Management-5-23-2019_FINAL.pdf

GMFMC. 2019c. Mississippi management for recreational red snapper. Final amendment 50C to the fishery management plan for the reef fish resources of the Gulf of Mexico, including environmental assessment, regulatory impact review, and regulatory flexibility act analysis. Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, Tampa, Florida. 75 pp. https://gulfcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/Mississippi-State-Management-5-23-2019_FINAL.pdf

GMFMC. 2019d. Alabama management for recreational red snapper. Final amendment 50D to the fishery management plan for the reef fish resources of the Gulf of Mexico, including environmental assessment, regulatory impact review, and regulatory flexibility act analysis. Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, Tampa, Florida. 75 pp. https://gulfcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/Alabama-State-Management-5-23-2019_FINAL.pdf

GMFMC. 2019e. Florida management for recreational red snapper. Final amendment 50E to the fishery management plan for the reef fish resources of the Gulf of Mexico, including environmental assessment, regulatory impact review, and regulatory flexibility act analysis. Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, Tampa, Florida. 75 pp. https://gulfcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/Florida-State-Management-5-23-2019_FINAL.pdf

GMFMC. 2019f. Texas management for recreational red snapper. Final amendment 50F to the fishery management plan for the reef fish resources of the Gulf of Mexico, including environmental assessment, regulatory impact review, and regulatory flexibility act analysis. Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, Tampa, Florida. 74 pp.
https://gulfcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/Texas-State-Management-5-23-2019_FINAL.pdf

APPENDIX A. COUNCIL AND STATE DELEGATION LETTERS



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

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May 2, 2013

006241 MAY 20 13

Mr. Robin Riechers
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
4200 Smith School Road
Austin, Texas 78744

Dear Mr. Riechers:

At its April 15-18, 2013 meeting, the Gulf Council selected *delegation* as its preferred alternative to move forward with Reef Fish Amendment 39, regional management for recreational red snapper. Under this alternative, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) would delegate authority for certain components of recreational red snapper management to the Gulf states. The current preferred alternatives include delegating the dates and structure of the fishing season, bag limit, minimum size limit, and closed areas. Red snapper would remain a federally managed species and would still be subject to 16 U.S.C. §1883(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which requires the NMFS to close recreational harvest of red snapper in the EEZ when the quota is determined to have been caught.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act provides the parameters by which management authority may be delegated to the states, allowing a state to regulate fishing vessels outside its state waters. Provision 16 U.S.C. §1856(a)(3) states:

The fishery management plan for the fishery in which the fishing vessel is operating delegates management of the fishery to a State and the State's laws and regulations are consistent with such fishery management plan. If at any time the Secretary determines that a State law or regulation applicable to a fishing vessel under this circumstance is not consistent with the fishery management plan, the Secretary shall promptly notify the State and the appropriate Council of such determination and provide an opportunity for the State to correct any inconsistencies identified in the notification.

If, after notice and opportunity for corrective action, the State does not correct the inconsistencies identified by the Secretary, the authority granted to the State under this subparagraph shall not apply until the Secretary and the appropriate Council find that the State has corrected the inconsistencies. For a fishery for which there was a fishery management plan in place on August 1, 1996 that did not delegate management of the fishery to a State as of that date, the authority provided by this subparagraph applies

only if the Council approves the delegation of management of the fishery to the State by a three-quarters majority vote of the voting members of the Council.

The Council wishes to inform you of its intent to pursue delegation of certain aspects of recreational red snapper management and requests a written response as to your willingness to accept delegation and the responsibilities that accompany the delegation provision. Specifically, the State of Texas must agree to prohibit recreational red snapper landings in state and federal waters when Texas projects or determines that its apportioned quota has been harvested. In addition, a description of how your state would calculate its projected season length and/or monitor landings to close recreational red snapper harvest when Texas meets its apportionment of the entire recreational quota is met, is also requested.

The Council will review a public hearing draft of Amendment 39 at its June 17-21, 2013 meeting, and endeavors to have regional management in place by the beginning of 2014. To accommodate this timeline, we respectfully request your written response to this letter by June 10, 2013. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Ava Lasseter at the Gulf Council office.

Sincerely,



Douglass Boyd, Chairman
Gulf Council

AL/CMS/kh

c: Gulf Council / Gulf Council Technical Staff / Cynthia Meyer / Dr. Steve Branstetter



Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

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

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May 2, 2013

006242 MAY 20 13

Mr. Jamie Miller
Department of Marine Resources
1141 Bayview Avenue, Suite 101
Biloxi, Mississippi 39530

Dear Mr. Miller:

At its April 15-18, 2013 meeting, the Gulf Council selected *delegation* as its preferred alternative to move forward with Reef Fish Amendment 39, regional management for recreational red snapper. Under this alternative, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) would delegate authority for certain components of recreational red snapper management to the Gulf states. The current preferred alternatives include delegating the dates and structure of the fishing season, bag limit, minimum size limit, and closed areas. Red snapper would remain a federally managed species and would still be subject to 16 U.S.C. §1883(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which requires the NMFS to close recreational harvest of red snapper in the EEZ when the quota is determined to have been caught.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act provides the parameters by which management authority may be delegated to the states, allowing a state to regulate fishing vessels outside its state waters. Provision 16 U.S.C. §1856(a)(3) states:

The fishery management plan for the fishery in which the fishing vessel is operating delegates management of the fishery to a State and the State's laws and regulations are consistent with such fishery management plan. If at any time the Secretary determines that a State law or regulation applicable to a fishing vessel under this circumstance is not consistent with the fishery management plan, the Secretary shall promptly notify the State and the appropriate Council of such determination and provide an opportunity for the State to correct any inconsistencies identified in the notification.

If, after notice and opportunity for corrective action, the State does not correct the inconsistencies identified by the Secretary, the authority granted to the State under this subparagraph shall not apply until the Secretary and the appropriate Council find that the State has corrected the inconsistencies. For a fishery for which there was a fishery management plan in place on August 1, 1996 that did not delegate management of the fishery to a State as of that date, the authority provided by this subparagraph applies

only if the Council approves the delegation of management of the fishery to the State by a three-quarters majority vote of the voting members of the Council.

The Council wishes to inform you of its intent to pursue delegation of certain aspects of recreational red snapper management and requests a written response as to your willingness to accept delegation and the responsibilities that accompany the delegation provision. Specifically, the State of Mississippi must agree to prohibit recreational red snapper landings in state and federal waters when Mississippi projects or determines that its apportioned quota has been harvested. In addition, a description of how your state would calculate its projected season length and/or monitor landings to close recreational red snapper harvest when Mississippi meets its apportionment of the entire recreational quota is met, is also requested.

The Council will review a public hearing draft of Amendment 39 at its June 17-21, 2013 meeting, and endeavors to have regional management in place by the beginning of 2014. To accommodate this timeline, we respectfully request your written response to this letter by June 10, 2013. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Ava Lasseter at the Gulf Council office.

Sincerely,



Douglass Boyd, Chairman
Gulf Council

AL/CMS/kh

c: Gulf Council / Gulf Council Technical Staff / Cynthia Meyer / Dr. Steve Branstetter



Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

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

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May 2, 2013

006245 MAY 20.13

Mr. Chris Blankenship, Acting Director
Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Marine Resources Division
P.O. Box 189
Dauphin Island, Alabama 36528

Dear Mr. Blankenship:

At its April 15-18, 2013 meeting, the Gulf Council selected *delegation* as its preferred alternative to move forward with Reef Fish Amendment 39, regional management for recreational red snapper. Under this alternative, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) would delegate authority for certain components of recreational red snapper management to the Gulf states. The current preferred alternatives include delegating the dates and structure of the fishing season, bag limit, minimum size limit, and closed areas. Red snapper would remain a federally managed species and would still be subject to 16 U.S.C. §1883(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which requires the NMFS to close recreational harvest of red snapper in the EEZ when the quota is determined to have been caught.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act provides the parameters by which management authority may be delegated to the states, allowing a state to regulate fishing vessels outside its state waters. Provision 16 U.S.C. §1856(a)(3) states:

The fishery management plan for the fishery in which the fishing vessel is operating delegates management of the fishery to a State and the State's laws and regulations are consistent with such fishery management plan. If at any time the Secretary determines that a State law or regulation applicable to a fishing vessel under this circumstance is not consistent with the fishery management plan, the Secretary shall promptly notify the State and the appropriate Council of such determination and provide an opportunity for the State to correct any inconsistencies identified in the notification.

If, after notice and opportunity for corrective action, the State does not correct the inconsistencies identified by the Secretary, the authority granted to the State under this subparagraph shall not apply until the Secretary and the appropriate Council find that the State has corrected the inconsistencies. For a fishery for which there was a fishery management plan in place on August 1, 1996 that did not delegate management of the

fishery to a State as of that date, the authority provided by this subparagraph applies only if the Council approves the delegation of management of the fishery to the State by a three-quarters majority vote of the voting members of the Council.

The Council wishes to inform you of its intent to pursue delegation of certain aspects of recreational red snapper management and requests a written response as to your willingness to accept delegation and the responsibilities that accompany the delegation provision. Specifically, the State of Alabama must agree to prohibit recreational red snapper landings in state and federal waters when Alabama projects or determines that its apportioned quota has been harvested. In addition, a description of how your state would calculate its projected season length and/or monitor landings to close recreational red snapper harvest when Alabama meets its apportionment of the entire recreational quota is met, is also requested.

The Council will review a public hearing draft of Amendment 39 at its June 17-21, 2013 meeting, and endeavors to have regional management in place by the beginning of 2014. To accommodate this timeline, we respectfully request your written response to this letter by June 10, 2013. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Ava Lasseter at the Gulf Council office.

Sincerely,



Douglass Boyd, Chairman
Gulf Council

AL/CMS/kh

c: Gulf Council / Gulf Council Technical Staff / Cynthia Meyer / Dr. Steve Branstetter



Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

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

2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100

Tampa, Florida 33607 USA

Phone: 813.348.1630 • Toll free: 888.833.1844 • Fax: 813.348.1711

www.gulfcouncil.org

May 2, 2013

006244 MAY 20.13

Mr. Nick Wiley
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Division of Marine Fisheries Management
Farris Bryant Building
620 South Meridian Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Mr. Wiley:

At its April 15-18, 2013 meeting, the Gulf Council selected *delegation* as its preferred alternative to move forward with Reef Fish Amendment 39, regional management for recreational red snapper. Under this alternative, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) would delegate authority for certain components of recreational red snapper management to the Gulf states. The current preferred alternatives include delegating the dates and structure of the fishing season, bag limit, minimum size limit, and closed areas. Red snapper would remain a federally managed species and would still be subject to 16 U.S.C. §1883(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which requires the NMFS to close recreational harvest of red snapper in the EEZ when the quota is determined to have been caught.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act provides the parameters by which management authority may be delegated to the states, allowing a state to regulate fishing vessels outside its state waters. Provision 16 U.S.C. §1856(a)(3) states:

The fishery management plan for the fishery in which the fishing vessel is operating delegates management of the fishery to a State and the State's laws and regulations are consistent with such fishery management plan. If at any time the Secretary determines that a State law or regulation applicable to a fishing vessel under this circumstance is not consistent with the fishery management plan, the Secretary shall promptly notify the State and the appropriate Council of such determination and provide an opportunity for the State to correct any inconsistencies identified in the notification.

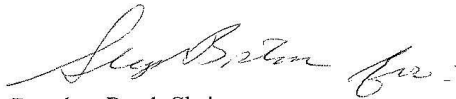
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fishery to a State as of that date, the authority provided by this subparagraph applies only if the Council approves the delegation of management of the fishery to the State by a three-quarters majority vote of the voting members of the Council.

The Council wishes to inform you of its intent to pursue delegation of certain aspects of recreational red snapper management and requests a written response as to your willingness to accept delegation and the responsibilities that accompany the delegation provision. Specifically, the State of Florida must agree to prohibit recreational red snapper landings in state and federal waters when Florida projects or determines that its apportioned quota has been harvested. In addition, a description of how your state would calculate its projected season length and/or monitor landings to close recreational red snapper harvest when Florida meets its apportionment of the entire recreational quota is met, is also requested.

The Council will review a public hearing draft of Amendment 39 at its June 17-21, 2013 meeting, and endeavors to have regional management in place by the beginning of 2014. To accommodate this timeline, we respectfully request your written response to this letter by June 10, 2013. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Ava Lasseter at the Gulf Council office.

Sincerely,



Douglass Boyd, Chairman
Gulf Council

AL/CMS/kh

c: Gulf Council / Gulf Council Technical Staff / Cynthia Meyer / Dr. Steve Branstetter



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www.gulfcouncil.org

May 2, 2013

Mr. Randy Pausina
Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries
147 West 107th Street
Cut-Off, LA 70345

006243 MAY 20 13

Dear Mr. Pausina:

At its April 15-18, 2013 meeting, the Gulf Council selected *delegation* as its preferred alternative to move forward with Reef Fish Amendment 39, regional management for recreational red snapper. Under this alternative, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) would delegate authority for certain components of recreational red snapper management to the Gulf states. The current preferred alternatives include delegating the dates and structure of the fishing season, bag limit, minimum size limit, and closed areas. Red snapper would remain a federally managed species and would still be subject to 16 U.S.C. §1883(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which requires the NMFS to close recreational harvest of red snapper in the EEZ when the quota is determined to have been caught.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act provides the parameters by which management authority may be delegated to the states, allowing a state to regulate fishing vessels outside its state waters. Provision 16 U.S.C. §1856(a)(3) states:

The fishery management plan for the fishery in which the fishing vessel is operating delegates management of the fishery to a State and the State's laws and regulations are consistent with such fishery management plan. If at any time the Secretary determines that a State law or regulation applicable to a fishing vessel under this circumstance is not consistent with the fishery management plan, the Secretary shall promptly notify the State and the appropriate Council of such determination and provide an opportunity for the State to correct any inconsistencies identified in the notification.

If, after notice and opportunity for corrective action, the State does not correct the inconsistencies identified by the Secretary, the authority granted to the State under this subparagraph shall not apply until the Secretary and the appropriate Council find that the State has corrected the inconsistencies. For a fishery for which there was a fishery management plan in place on August 1, 1996 that did not delegate management of the fishery to a State as of that date, the authority provided by this subparagraph applies

only if the Council approves the delegation of management of the fishery to the State by a three-quarters majority vote of the voting members of the Council.

The Council wishes to inform you of its intent to pursue delegation of certain aspects of recreational red snapper management and requests a written response as to your willingness to accept delegation and the responsibilities that accompany the delegation provision. Specifically, the State of Louisiana must agree to prohibit recreational red snapper landings in state and federal waters when Louisiana projects or determines that its apportioned quota has been harvested. In addition, a description of how your state would calculate its projected season length and/or monitor landings to close recreational red snapper harvest when Louisiana meets its apportionment of the entire recreational quota is met, is also requested.

The Council will review a public hearing draft of Amendment 39 at its June 17-21, 2013 meeting, and endeavors to have regional management in place by the beginning of 2014. To accommodate this timeline, we respectfully request your written response to this letter by June 10, 2013. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Ava Lasseter at the Gulf Council office.

Sincerely,



Douglass Boyd, Chairman
Gulf Council

AL/CMS/kh

c: Gulf Council / Gulf Council Technical Staff / Cynthia Meyer / Dr. Steve Branstetter



BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana
DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES
OFFICE OF FISHERIES

ROBERT J. BARHAM
SECRETARY

RANDY PAUSINA
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

June 6, 2013

006279 JUN 20 13

Douglass Boyd, Chairman
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100
Tampa, FL 33607

Mr. Boyd:

The State of Louisiana supports the concept of delegation of certain aspects of the recreational red snapper fishery. Louisiana is eager to accept all aspects of delegation discussed in your letter of May 2, 2013. Specifically, the State of Louisiana will prohibit recreational red snapper landings in state and federal waters when Louisiana projects or determines that its apportioned recreational quota has been harvested.

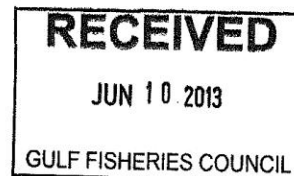
Louisiana is currently monitoring and intends to continue monitoring recreational red snapper landings in Louisiana. LDWF's Office of Fisheries quota monitoring survey methodology relies on the establishment of a free Recreational Offshore Landing Permit (See attachments for Offshore Landing Permit Rule, Survey Methodology and Sampling Protocols). A permit is free to all private anglers and for-hire charter captains and is required to possess or land red snapper in Louisiana. The permit allows us to estimate private angler fishing effort through a phone survey of the universe of anglers having the potential of pursuing red snapper. Coupled with a dockside access point angler survey, we are able to estimate the total landing of red snapper by private anglers in Louisiana. Permitted for-hire captains are surveyed weekly in a census of their red snapper landing. Our survey period is weekly and landing estimates for each period are available within nine to ten days of collection. This near real time analysis allows the Office of Fisheries to closely monitor the recreational landing of red snapper in Louisiana.

The Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Commission has been granted the authority by the Louisiana Legislature to regulate recreational possession and landing, and to set seasons, times, places, bag, possession and size limits. The Secretary of the Department of Wildlife & Fisheries has been granted the authority by the Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Commission to modify the red snapper fishing season and make adjustments necessary to implement a regional management program in Louisiana.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Randy Pausina
Assistant Secretary
Office of Fisheries
P. O. Box 98000
Baton Rouge, LA 70898



Title 76
WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES
Part VII. Fish and Other Aquatic Life

Chapter 3. Saltwater Sport and Commercial Fishery

§377. Recreational Offshore Landing Permit

A. Any person possessing any one of the following fish species or species groups on board a vessel taken from within or without Louisiana territorial waters shall be required to have obtained and have in their immediate possession a recreational offshore landing permit. The recreational offshore landing permit shall be available for inspection by a duly authorized agent of the department:

1. highly migratory species:
 - a. tunas bluefin, albacore, yellowfin, skipjack, bigeye, blackfin;
 - b. billfish blue marlin, white marlin, sailfish and longbill spearfish;
 - c. swordfish;
2. reef fish species:
 - a. any species of snapper other than gray snapper;
 - b. any species of amberjack;
 - c. any species of grouper or hind.

B. Permits may be obtained at no cost, from the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, or authorized method, by persons who hold any valid license authorizing the taking and possessing of saltwater species of fish. Permits shall be valid for the same duration as the license authorizing saltwater fishing privileges. For those licenses that do not have to be renewed every year, the permit shall be valid for one year from the date it was obtained.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 56:6(34).

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, LR 38:3249 (December 2012).

**LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF
WILDLIFE & FISHERIES**



OFFICE OF FISHERIES
RECREATIONAL STATISTICS PROGRAM
SAMPLING PROTOCOL
JANUARY 1, 2013

SAMPLING PROTOCOL

QUOTA MONITORING

OFFSHORE REEF FISH SPECIES

Private Angler Access-Point Survey - (FORM 1)

The access-point survey draws will be run for a two week period and provided to the CSA managers at least one week before the first assignments for that time period must be conducted. The draw will include the date and site an access-point survey is scheduled in each CSA. Port agents will be on site and conduct surveys from 2:00 pm through sunset for each scheduled assignment. If for any reason the assigned site is not accessible, discontinue sampling that assignment and notify the CSA manager as to the cause for not completing that assignment. If the site will not be accessible for multiple future assignments, the Fisheries Management Data Management Program Manager should be notified and informed to remove the site from the site register until further notice. Alternate sites are not acceptable in the event the selected site is not accessible. If it is determined by the port agent that there is no chance of intercepting an offshore angler prior to or during an assignment, the port agent should end that assignment immediately.

Port agents will interview ALL private angler offshore fishing trips for every assignment. One angler should be chosen to interview that can report information for the entire party. If the anglers on the trip are unaware of the need for an offshore landing permit, the port agent will give the angler an information card detailing the state's offshore landing permit requirements. If needed the port agents should explain the confidential nature of the information provided by the angler and that this information is provided anonymously, and will not contain names or license numbers. The creel interview form to be used is attached.

Upon arrival at a site, the port agent will fill out the interviewer's name and their unique numeric identification number. Next, they will write down the date of the survey and the site name (e.g., Bridge Side Marina 3) and/or the site's LDWF identification number (e.g., 141 for Bridge Side Marina 3). As each boat returns to the launch, the port agent will approach one person in the fishing party and ask them:

The screening question - ***"Were you fishing offshore, which is beyond the beach or rocks?"***

If the angler says no, then the port agent will thank them and move on to the next arriving fishing party. If they say yes, the port agent will ask a person in the fishing party if they would be willing to participate in a short survey. If the angler says yes, proceed with interview. If the angler refuses, inform them that it is a short survey and the information provided is confidential and no personal information is obtained. Inform them that the survey is being conducted by LDWF and designed to improve (quota species) management. If they refuse again, thank them and discontinue the survey.

QUESTION 2 – IS THIS A FOR-HIRE TRIP?

Determine if the fishing party is part of a for-hire charter trip. If yes, move to question 6B. If no, move to question 3.

QUESTION 3 – WERE YOU FISHING “*QUOTA SPECIES*” FOR A TOURNAMENT?

Document the answer (Y/N) in the box provided.

QUESTION 4 – HOW MANY TOTAL “*QUOTA SPECIES*” DID YOUR PARTY KEEP ON THIS TRIP?

The number MUST NOT INCLUDE fish that are caught and released. The only fish that are counted as landed are those that are in the party’s possession at the launch.

QUESTIONS 5 – HOW MANY ANGLERS, INCLUDING MINORS, WERE ON THIS FISHING TRIP?

This includes all anglers on the boat that had the potential to contribute to the landing of “*Quota Species*”.

QUESTION 6A – HOW MANY ANGLERS, INCLUDING MINORS, HAVE AN OFFSHORE LANDING PERMIT?

If anglers are unaware of the requirement to possess an offshore landing permit, provide them with information explaining the requirement.

QUESTION 6B – “ASK THE FOR-HIRE CAPTAIN” - DO YOU HAVE AN OFFSHORE LANDING PERMIT?

Record their response, thank the captain for participating in the survey and end the survey and collect length data if time permits.

LENGTH AND WEIGHT MEASUREMENTS

If there is sufficient time, that is, if no other boats are approaching or are unloading at the launch, then the port agent may ask to see the fish and take total length measurements and weights. However, it is more essential to get length measurements than weights. All lengths are in millimeter fork length and weights will be recorded in kilograms on page 2 of the field form. The type of scale used to collect weight will be approved by the Marine Fisheries Program Manager prior to use. They must be calibrated prior to the start of the creel day. It is vital that fish selected for measurement be randomly selected and not selected based on size.

Private Angler Phone Survey – (FORM 2)

Angler effort will be estimated using a combination of web-based surveys and phone interviews of all licensed saltwater anglers in Louisiana who hold an offshore landings permit.

To obtain an adequate number of interviews and minimize error, 10% of the anglers in the offshore landings permit database will be contacted at random for an interview each week. Prior to the start of the red snapper season, an e-mail will be sent to all permit holders explaining the intent of the web-based survey and phone call. On Friday of each weekend, 10% of the permit holders will be selected by simple random sampling. These people will be contacted on Friday by e-mail to tell them that they have been randomly selected to participate in an interview of their fishing activities for that weekend. The angler will have the option to answer the interview questions on a web-based survey form attached to the e-mail, which should be completed and submitted to LDWF by Monday or Tuesday following the fishing week. If they do not complete the web-based survey by 12:00 pm on Tuesday, then they will be contacted by phone to conduct the survey. The questionnaire for the web-based survey/phone interview is as follows:

The screening question - *“Did you fish offshore, which is beyond the beach or rocks between “FIRST DAY OF SAMPLING PERIOD” AND “LAST DAY OF SAMPLING PERIOD”?”*

QUESTION 2 – HOW MANY DAYS DID YOU FISH OFFSHORE BETWEEN “FIRST DAY OF SAMPLING PERIOD” AND “LAST DAY OF SAMPLING PERIOD”?

The number of days fishing offshore includes all offshore trips even for-hire trips.

QUESTION 3 – HOW MANY OF THOSE DAYS WERE FROM FOR-HIRE/CHARTER TRIPS?

Record the number of days the angler fished on for-hire trips.

QUESTION 4 – DID YOU LAND YOUR FISH AT A SITE THAT IS OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC?

The intent of this question is to determine if the landing site is in the site register and available to our dockside samplers or from a private site that is unavailable to our samplers.

QUESTION 5 – DID YOU LAND YOUR FISH BETWEEN 2:00 PM AND SUNSET?

The intent of this question is to estimate the proportion of anglers that we are missing as a result of the time period sampled.

Landings and Offshore Landing Permit Validation – (FORM 3)

Each port agent will be responsible for validating self-reported data provided by anglers by direct observation. For every 10th interview conducted, the port agent will request to see the fish landed and verify the number reported is correct and the species reported by the anglers is indeed the “Quota Species”. Port agents will also validate that the information provided by the angler on the number of anglers having an offshore landing permit is correct.

For-Hire Census – (FORM 4)

Port agents will make initial contact with permitted charter captains to determine the best method (phone, email, etc.) of receiving harvest information. Harvest data will be collected weekly beginning on Monday after the week in question. It is imperative that each captain be contacted and report the harvest information requested.

Data Entry

Data from creel surveys and angler phone interviews will be entered as soon as possible after collection. Access-point data for the previous week’s surveys must be entered by COB Wednesday. Data from the phone interviews must be entered by COB Thursday.

Site Survey – (FORM 5)

Sites will be evaluated weekly if possible to determine angler pressure at those sites. Port agents should attempt to determine the number of offshore trips using a site on a weekend day. The number of offshore anglers/day using a site will be documented and the information sent to Fisheries Management Data Management Program Manager.

FORM 1: PRIVATE ANGLER ACCESS POINT SURVEY FORM



Louisiana Red Snapper Quota Monitoring Private Angler Access Point Survey

Interviewer Name: _____ Interviewer ID #: _____ Date/Period: _____ / _____

Site Name/Number: _____ / _____

REMINDER
If Question 2 is "Yes" then proceed directly to Question 6b. If Question 2 is "No", continue with survey up to Question 6a and do not ask Question 6b.

SCREENING QUESTION: "Were you fishing offshore, which is beyond the beach or rocks?"

*Including minors

Trips #	1) For-hire charter trip? (Check if YES)	2) For-hire trip Captain's Permit	3) Fishing Red Snapper in Tournament? (Check if YES)	4) Total # of Red Snapper kept by Anglers* on the boat	5) # of Anglers* on the boat	6a) # of Anglers* with an offshore landing permit	6b) Does Captain have an offshore landing permit? (Check if YES)
1							
2							
3							
4							
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(Please Turn Over for Weights and Lengths of Private Angler Red Snapper Catch)

FORM 5 - SITE WEIGHTING FORM



Louisiana Red Snapper Quota Monitoring Site Weighting

For private angler sector - Enter the estimated number of anglers/day on average expected to encounter landing fish from an offshore fishing trip by month at each site.

For the For-Hire sector - Enter the estimated number of for-hire trips on average expected to encounter landing fish from an offshore fishing trip by month at each site.

SITE NUMBER/NAME	SECTOR:	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
	PRIVATE ANGLERS												
	FOR-HIRE TRIPS												
	PRIVATE ANGLERS												
	FOR-HIRE TRIPS												
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	FOR-HIRE TRIPS												

**LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF
WILDLIFE & FISHERIES**



OFFICE OF FISHERIES

RECREATIONAL STATISTICS PROGRAM

QUOTA MONITORING

JANUARY 1, 2013

QUOTA MONITORING

PURPOSE:

To provide landings estimates for fish species managed under a quota in Louisiana and to provide a forecast of when a quota is expected to be reached

OFFSHORE REEF FISH SPECIES

METHODOLOGY:

Recreational landing estimates will be calculated separately for the private recreational sector and for-hire sector. A dockside access- point survey to collect harvest rate in conjunction with a phone survey to determine total effort will be used in developing the private recreational sector landing estimate. The for-hire fishery will be contacted and a census used to determine landings.

Angler Sample Frame

Louisiana requires anglers and for-hire charter captains to obtain a permit (Offshore Landing Permit) to possess or land offshore reef fish species. This permit file is considered to be the universe of private anglers and for-hire captains contributing to Louisiana's offshore recreational landings.

Private anglers with an offshore landing permit will be randomly selected from the angler sample frame weekly for the phone survey. The proportion of anglers selected to participate in the phone survey will be based on the number of interviews required to obtain a mean number of angler trips with a coefficient of variation (CV) of 20%.

The sampling periods may vary based on the days during a given week that the season for the "Quota Species" is open. Where the season is continuous during the week, the sample period will be Monday – Sunday. Where the season is not continuous, the sample period will include those consecutive days without a break.

All for-hire captains in the angler sample frame will be surveyed weekly with a census of landings.

Site Sample Frame

Dockside access points are public access sites (i.e., marinas, piers, ramps) in Louisiana that receives offshore angling activity. Sites with the likelihood of encountering at least one offshore angler per day will be surveyed to provide weights for the random draw of sites, and to update weights during the season based on estimated angler use. Thus, the weights and access points in the sampling frame could fluctuate during the season based on angler use.

A preliminary survey produced 108 sites that had at least some offshore landing pressure during a given year. Those sites were weighted based on monthly offshore angler use (anglers/day)

resulting in 33 sites with a weight of at least one offshore angler per day for the month. It was determined that sites with probabilities of encountering less than 1 angler/day would be considered as very low use sites. Consequently, the sites were dropped from the site sampling frame for that month.

For the initial weekly dockside sample draw, we chose to limit the number of sites sampled daily to 30% of the sites in the sampling frame. For example, if a month had 20 of the 33 sites with a weight greater than or equal to 1 angler/day, then 6 sites would be selected for each sample day during that month. Subsequently, a weighted draw of sites would occur for each sample day for that month, with all 20 sites being available to be drawn for each new sample day.

A minimum of 3 sites will be sampled each weekend/holiday (Friday-Saturday) period. This will generally give a minimum number of potential survey site-days of 9 (12 for periods with a holiday day). During the federal season in which weekdays will be sampled, a minimum of two sites will be sampled during Monday-Thursday (but only those days that are not holidays). In addition one of the weekdays will be chosen at random, and will receive a third sample site. This will provide a total of 9 site-days during the weekday sample period (2 sites x 4 days + 1 site = 9).

Dockside Access Point Protocol (For Details See Sampling Protocol – Quota Monitoring – Offshore Reef Fish Species)

Port agents will conduct private angler surveys on predetermined dates at predetermined sites from a weekly draw. The port agent will be on site conducting surveys from 2:00 pm through sunset each of the assigned days. It is the sampler's priority to complete surveys of all offshore private angler trips during that time period. As time permits, fish lengths and weights will be collected.

Data to be documented from each interview of offshore private anglers are:

- Survey Date
- Number of Angler's in Party
- Total Number of "**Quota Species**" Landed
- Number of Angler's with an Offshore Landing Permit

Other information as time permits:

- "**Quota Species**" Length (millimeters fork length)
- "**Quota Species**" Weight (kilograms)

Estimating Private Angler Landings

Harvest rates will be determined using a ratio-of-means estimator for each day sampled, then averaged to derive a weekly harvest rate (Jones et al. 1995; Lockwood 1997; Pollack et al. 1997; Fuller 2009).

An unbiased estimate of weekly “quota species” harvest rate (H) can be derived. The ratio of means estimator (R) uses the day (D) as the trip length for each angler (A), and averages the sum of daily harvest and angler trips over the entire weekend/holiday period, where “ i ” is the number of creel interviews for the weekend, using the following equation:

$$R = \Sigma H_i / \Sigma A_i,$$

Harvest and angler trips will be modified to account for weighted probabilities assigned to each access site during a sample period. Consequently, inclusion probabilities for each site will be incorporated into the overall “ R ” estimates for each sample period based on the angler use weights provided by the CSA managers. The equation that will be used to estimate the total (T) ratio of mean harvest for the sample period will be the equation for a single stage cluster sample with weighted inclusion probability for a site-day will be as follows (from Fuller 2009):

$$T_j = \Sigma \pi_j^{-1} * y_j,$$

Where π_j is the weighted inclusion probability for an access site-day. After adjusting for the inclusion probabilities, R is then calculated for the entire sample period.

Variance is calculated as

$$\text{Var}(T) = \Sigma \Sigma \pi_{ij}^{-1} (\pi_i - \pi_i \pi_j) * w_i y_i w_j y_j$$

For-Hire Landings

For-hire landing is simply a calculation of the sum of reported harvest for each week during the season.

Estimating Private Angler Effort (For Details See Sampling Protocol – Quota Monitoring – Offshore Reef Fish Species)

Angler effort will be defined as angler-days. A combination of web-based surveys (e.g., Survey Monkey) and phone surveys will be used to question private anglers about their avidity (i.e., trip frequency) during the previous sampling period. Angler selection will be a random draw from the sampling frame. At the beginning of each survey period (i.e., prior to the weekend) 10% of anglers will be selected from the angler sample frame. As data becomes available the number of anglers selected each draw will be that number estimated to provide angler effort estimates with a CV of 20%. Prior to the start of the season, all anglers in the angler sample frame will be e-mailed explaining to them that they may be randomly selected throughout the season to

assess their offshore angling effort for the sampling period prior to the phone call. This initial e-mail will also provide them with the questions, so that they will understand them in advance. Randomly selected anglers will have the option to submit their previous weekend's effort information using a department established web-based survey until 12:00 AM Tuesday morning of the following week. If the web-based survey is not completed, LDWF staff will attempt to contact the angler by phone after 12:00 PM on Tuesday. Attempts to contact each angler will continue throughout the week in an attempt to reach all anglers selected.

$$E = A_i * D_i$$

where E is the estimate of angler effort for the sampling period, " A_i " is the number of anglers per day and " D_i " is average number of day trips per angler during the sample period. A finite population correction factor (fpc) will be used to adjust the variance of the mean number of anglers per day (A_i) because >5% of the angler population will be sampled (Fuller 2009). The following equation will be used:

$$fpc = \sqrt{(N-n) / (N-1)}$$

where " N " is the population of offshore anglers and " n " is the sample size of anglers interviewed by phone.

The population size of the offshore anglers will be adjusted to account for non-compliance with the offshore landings permit. Thus, population size (N) for the fpc equation will be modified with by dividing the number of anglers with permits by the proportion of non-compliant anglers (p_A). For example, if $N_i = 1,000$ anglers in the permit database, and the proportion of non-compliant anglers is estimated as 50%, the adjusted population size (N_a) used in the population correction factor will be $N_a = N_i / p_A = 1,000 / 0.50 = 2,000$.

Variance of angler effort (E) for the strata will be calculated as

$$\text{Var}(E) = [N_{(s)}]^2 * \text{Var}(D) + [N_{(D)}]^2 * \text{Var}(A) - \text{Var}(A) * \text{Var}(D)$$

where " $N_{(s)}$ " is the population of angler sites from which anglers could be interviewed during the period, " $N_{(D)}$ " is the number of fishing days during the weekend/holiday period, $\text{Var}(A)$ and $\text{Var}(D)$ are the sample variances of the means of number of anglers (A) and angler day trips (D).

Thus, "*quota species*" harvest estimate for a sample period will be computed as

$$H = R * E$$

Variance of harvest for the strata will be calculated as

$$\text{Var}(H) = [N_{(R)}]^2 * \text{Var}(E) + [N_{(E)}]^2 * \text{Var}(H) - \text{Var}(H) * \text{Var}(E)$$

where " N_R " is the number of harvest rate estimates (for each site-day), " N_e " is the effort estimates during the sample period, $\text{Var}(H)$ and $\text{Var}(E)$ are the variances of H and E as calculated above.

Survey Bias

- Public/Private Access Sites – There is a potential for harvest rate bias if there is a real difference in mean harvest rate between public and private sites. It is anticipated that given the low possession limit for red snapper the harvest rates will be similar between public and private sites and any potential bias will be minimal. The existing survey only encounters anglers landing at public sites.

Offshore Landing Permittees will be contacted through the phone survey to determine the magnitude of fishing effort conducted from sites without public access to determine the need for a more intensive survey.

- Access-Point Survey sampling period (morning/afternoon/evening) – The potential exist for harvest rate bias if there is a real difference in mean harvest rate between sampling periods. The existing survey seeks to maximize the number of anglers encountered by selecting a sampling period of 2:00 pm – sunset. Given the nature of the fishery, the vast majority of anglers fishing in offshore waters will return to the dock between 2:00 pm – sunset. It is anticipated that anglers returning prior to or after that time period will not change the mean harvest rate.

Offshore Landing Permittees will be contacted through the phone survey to determine the proportion of anglers landing outside of the sample period to determine the need for a more intensive survey.

- Access-Point Survey sampling (private boat and for-hire mode only sampling) – The potential exist for harvest rate bias if beach/bank/shore mode provides the opportunity for harvesting red snapper and harvest rate is different from those modes sampled. Louisiana's fishery for red snapper is, for the most part, exclusively a private boat and for-hire fishery. Minor harvest was noted in 1983 and 1986, but no harvest was noted after 1986 (NMFS MRIP). No attempts will be made to survey this mode.

- Access-Point Survey Self-Reported Data (landings, offshore landing permit) – The potential exist for harvest rates bias and angler effort adjustments bias to occur if data is reported incorrectly to port agents.

Landings reported by anglers will be validated through direct observation on every tenth port agent interview. Offshore landing permits will be validated by port agents through direct observation on every tenth port agent interview.

- Sampling frame doesn't include all anglers – There is the potential to under-estimate total harvest if anglers fishing in offshore waters fail to obtain an offshore landing permit and are not in the sampling frame. Dockside sampling will collect information on the number of anglers that don't have an offshore landing permit. Total harvest will be adjusted accordingly using a finite population correction factor.
- For-Hire Census and Self Reported Data – There is the potential for under estimated total harvest if for-hire captains under report their landings. Validation of for-hire harvest will be obtained through dockside interviews of charter vessels during MRIP sampling. Comparisons will be made between MRIP surveyed charter landings and landings reported in the quota monitoring survey.

DEFINITIONS

- Angler – A person that participates in the act of fishing that has the potential to contribute to the catch of that fishing trip.
- Private angler – An angler that harvests offshore reef fish for personal use and pleasure and does not take out anglers for hire.
- Reef Fish Trips – Fishing trips targeting reef fish species such as red snapper.
- Sector – There are 2 sectors of the recreational fishery recognized in this program (Private Angler and Charter).
- Site Register – A list of department accessible interview sites where private anglers and/or charter captains taking reef fish trips land and offload their harvest.

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Robert Bentley
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Our mission is to manage the State's marine fishery resources through research, enforcement, and education for the maximum benefit of the resources and the citizens of Alabama.



Christopher M. Blankenship
Director
MARINE RESOURCES DIVISION

7 June 2013

Douglass Boyd, Chairman
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100
Tampa, FL 33607

006281 JUN 20 13

Mr. Boyd,

The State of Alabama received your letter dated 2 May 2013 regarding delegation of certain elements of the recreational red snapper fishery to the Gulf States. The State of Alabama supports the concept of delegation and is eager to accept aspects of delegation as outlined in your letter. Specifically, the State of Alabama will prohibit recreational red snapper landings in the State or possession of recreationally caught red snapper on the waters of Alabama when Alabama projects or determines that its apportioned recreational quota has been harvested.

Alabama will calculate its red snapper fishing season based on methods currently being used by the NMFS when calculating the Gulf of Mexico federal season. The State allocation (pounds) will be divided by the cumulative average daily catch rate (pounds) for Alabama for all fishing modes (private, for-hire and headboat) from the previous fishing season. As the red snapper population continues to rebuild, recent trends indicate the average weight for harvested red snapper have increased each year. Therefore, an adjustment to the average daily catch rate will be made due to anticipated changes in average weight for the coming year. Alabama will investigate an alternative data collection system(s) to collect catch data in near real time and keep you and your staff apprised of any developments.

The Commissioner of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has been granted the authority by the Alabama Legislature to regulate recreational possession and landings of marine finfish, including establishing seasons, bag, possession and size limits.

Sincerely,

Christopher M. Blankenship, Director

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, gender, national origin, or disability in its hiring practices nor in admission to, access to, or operations of its programs, services, or activities.
www.outdooralabama.gov

006282 JUN 20 13



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Phil Bryant
Governor

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES

Jamie M. Miller, Executive Director

June 10, 2013

Douglass Boyd, Chairman
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
2203 N. Louis Avenue, Suite 1100
Tampa, FL 33607

Mr. Boyd:

This letter is in response to your letter of 2 May 2013 regarding delegation of certain elements of the recreational red snapper fishery to the Gulf States. The State of Mississippi, through the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources (CMR), supports the concept of regional management for recreational red snapper. Mississippi is willing to accept the delegation of authority of certain aspects of recreational red snapper management to the individual Gulf States. These may include but are not limited to: setting the dates and structure of the fishing season, setting bag limits and maximum size limits, and defining closure areas. Specifically, the State of Mississippi is prepared to prohibit recreational red snapper landings in the State and possession of recreationally caught red snapper within the state territorial waters of Mississippi when Mississippi projects or determines that its apportioned recreational quota has been harvested.

Mississippi will calculate its projected recreational red snapper fishing season length based on methods currently being used by National Marine Fisheries Service when calculating the Gulf of Mexico federal season. Mississippi's allocation will be divided by the cumulative average daily catch rate for Mississippi for all fishing modes from the previous fishing season. This will provide managers with projected landings during a specified timeframe and a season length in days can be set by using this method. Additionally, we may explore alternative data collection systems to provide real time data. We will keep you advised of those efforts.

The CMR has been granted the authority by the Mississippi Legislature to regulate recreational possession and size limits and to set seasons for recreational fisheries. The Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources has been granted the authority by the Mississippi CMR to amend the red snapper fishing season and make adjustments necessary to implement a regional management program in Mississippi.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie M. Miller".

Jamie Miller
Executive Director
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Cc: Mr. Dale Diaz, Director Marine Fisheries



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June 14, 2013

006284 JUN 20 13

Mr. Douglass Boyd, Chairman
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
2203 N. Lois Avenue, Suite 1100
Tampa, Florida 33607

Dear Mr. Boyd:

This letter is in response to your letter dated 2 May 2013 regarding delegation of certain elements of the recreational red snapper fishery to the Gulf States. The State of Texas and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) is in support of the concept of delegation of management and will continue to work with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in developing a regional management system.

While we fully support the concept of regional management, our complete endorsement and acceptance will depend on the stipulations set forth by the GMFMC and NMFS. In addition to awaiting final approval and implementation from GMFMC and NMFS, it must be noted that as a condition to receiving the delegation of authority we would expect not to be held to any higher standard and quota (landings) adjustment procedure than the one currently being used by the Council and NMFS.

At this time Texas would use the data collected from the landings systems currently in place for Texas. The Texas Marine Sport-Harvest Monitoring Program would be the primary data collection effort for both private recreational anglers and charter vessels. For any partyboat/headboat landings in Texas we would expect that data from the NMFS headboat data collection system would be shared cooperatively with Texas. These landings estimates provide a framework for projected landings during a specified timeframe. Under a regional management scenario the state would be provided an allowable catch in pounds. That allowable catch would be converted to numbers of fish and the estimated season days would be determined through a catch per day approach. In addition, we are willing to explore possibilities for improvement in these data collection systems or new data collection systems that would improve the timeliness of reporting.

TPWD supports more flexibility for the recreational red snapper fishery through regional management. We do believe this flexibility will allow greater optimization of the economic benefits from the recreational fishery.

Sincerely,

Robin Riechers
Director of Coastal Fisheries

RR:dh

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To manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.



June 14, 2013

006285 JUN 20 13

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Mr. Doug Boyd
Chairman, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
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RE: Delegation of certain aspects of the recreational red snapper fishery

Dear Mr. Boyd:

This letter is in response to your May 2, 2013, letter to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (Commission) regarding National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) delegation of authority for certain components of the recreational red snapper fishery to the Gulf states. The Commission discussed red snapper regional management and this delegation at their June 12, 2013, meeting in Lakeland, FL. The Commission is supportive of the concept of delegation of authority and is willing to assume the responsibilities that accompany the delegation provision for the State of Florida, including setting fishing seasons, bag limits, size limits, and closed areas. The Commission is also willing to prohibit recreational red snapper landings in state and federal waters when Florida projects or determines that its apportioned quota has been harvested. Please note that our willingness to accept this delegation is contingent upon an allocation of the percentage of the Gulf wide quota for red snapper that is satisfactory to the State of Florida.

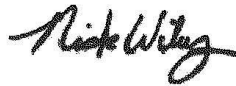
If aspects of recreational red snapper management are delegated to Florida, the Commission would use landings estimates generated by the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) and Headboat Survey to project Florida's red snapper season length, similar to the procedures currently used by NMFS. Season length will be projected by dividing Florida's allocation by Florida's cumulative average daily catch rate from the previous year. The Commission is also exploring other data collection approaches that would define the universe of red snapper anglers in Florida and provide more timely harvest data for quota monitoring. As these approaches are further developed, we would intend to incorporate these data into our procedures for projecting red snapper season length and defining other management tools as necessary.

Mr. Doug Boyd
Page 2
June 14, 2013

The Commission would also like to see the allocation percentage of the Gulf-wide quota for each state revisited as often as possible; at least every three years. It is important to revisit these state percentages frequently since the stock is rebuilding and red snapper are expanding their range. We want the percentages to reflect the changes in the stock and any changes in fishing behavior.

The Commission remains committed to working with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council on regional management of the red snapper fishery. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this issue further please contact Martha Bademan in the Division of Marine Fisheries Management at 850-487-0554.

Sincerely,



Nick Wiley
Executive Director

nw/jm/mb

cc: Martha Bademan
Roy Crabtree
Doug Gregory
Jessica McCawley