

Gulf Council Motions Report

August 24 – 27, 2026

Biloxi, Mississippi

ADMINISTRATIVE/BUDGET

Review of Final 2026 Funded Budget and Activities

Motion: To approve the final 2026 budget.

Motion carried with no opposition.

DATA COLLECTION

Generic Amendment: Modifications for Gulf For-hire Data Collection Program

Motion: To approve the changes recommended by Staff in Actions 1-3.

Action 1: Establish Frequency and Mechanism of Data Reporting for Charter Vessels

Preferred Alternative 2: Require the owner or operator of a charter vessel or headboat issued a valid Gulf for-hire permit for reef fish or CMP species submit trip, catch, and effort information for *each trip* conducted in marine or estuarine waters via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved software). If fish are harvested during the trip, electronic reporting is required prior to offloading fish. If fishing did not occur within a weekly period, a “Did Not Fish” report would be required to be submitted.

Alternative 3: Require the owner or operator of a charter vessel or headboat issued a valid Gulf for-hire permit for reef fish or CMP species submit trip, catch, and effort information for *each trip* conducted in marine or estuarine waters *daily* within 24 hours of trip end via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved software). If fishing did not occur within a weekly period, a “Did Not Fish” report would be required to be submitted.

Action 2: Language added to the beginning of the discussion section

This action pertains to headboats that are currently reporting to the SRHS and only considers modifying the timing for reporting. As a result, SRHS participants are still required to adhere to the other survey reporting requirement, including the completion of weekly DNF reports or logbooks to maintain permit compliance, and reporting of economic data after every for-hire fishing trip (see first paragraph of Action 4 discussion). Further discussion on reporting elements for the SRHS can be found in the document introduction and considerations for reporting can be found in the discussion of Action 1 (sections “Did Not Fish” reports, Reporting Requirements Due to Catastrophic Conditions, Conditions to maintain permit compliance).

Action 3: Trip Notification Reporting Requirements

Alternative 1: No Action. There are currently no trip notification requirements for federally permitted Gulf reef fish or CMP species charter/headboat vessels. A vessel issued a federal

commercial reef fish permit is required to submit a trip declaration and declare the intent of the trip and if harvesting reef fish are required to submit a pre-landing notification 3 hours prior to arrival at an approved landing location.

Alternative 2: Require that the owner or operator of a charter vessel or headboat issued a valid charter vessel/headboat federal permit for Gulf reef fish or CMP species submit a trip notification **prior to departing for a trip** that will be engaging in any type of for-hire fishing or for-hire activity being conducted in marine or estuarine waters. A trip notification cannot be submitted more than 24 hours in advance of the for-hire fishing or for-hire activity.

Option a: Charter vessels

Option b: SRHS Headboats

Preferred Alternative 3: Require that the owner or operator of a charter vessel or headboat issued a valid federal charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf reef fish or CMP species submit a trip notification **prior to departing for a trip** that will be engaging in any type of for-hire fishing activity being conducted in marine or estuarine waters. A trip notification cannot be submitted more than 24 hours in advance for the for-hire fishing trip.

Preferred Option a: Charter vessels

Preferred Option b: SRHS Headboats

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To approve Generic Amendment: Modifications to Gulf For-hire Data Collection Program and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation, and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial license to make the necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to the codified text as necessary and appropriate.

Names	Vote		
Capt. Walker	yes		
Capt. Frady	yes	abstain	2
Dr. Allen	yes	yes	15
Gen. Spraggins	yes	Grand Total	17
Mr. Anson	yes		
Mr. Schieble	abstain		
Ms. Ballard	yes		
Mr. Strelcheck	yes		
Dr. Overton	yes		
Mr. Broussard	yes		
Mr. Sanchez	yes		
Dr. Sweetman	yes		
Dr. Banks	yes		
Mr. Osborne	yes		
Mr. Geeslin	abstain		
Mr. Marquez	yes		
Mr. Dugas	yes		

Motion carried 15 to 0 with 2 abstentions.

ECOSYSTEM

Identification of Stakeholder-Driven Fishery Ecosystem Issues

Motion: Upon completion of identifying the list of fishery ecosystem issues, send the list to the Ecosystem Technical Committee to begin development of action item next steps for Council review and consideration.

Motion carried with no opposition.

GULF SEDAR

No motions.

REEF FISH

Discussion: Decision Points for Red Snapper Catch Limits and Allocations

Motion: To form a small working group made up of staff from the SEFSC, Council, each Gulf state, SERO, and the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission to understand data inputs and methodologies applied to landings data for the red snapper stock assessment (SEDAR 98).

Draft Charge: This working group is charged with understanding the data inputs, methodologies, and decision points that were used in the SEDAR 98 stock assessment to facilitate use of the results in management. This working group should identify and compile the time series of landings data necessary to allow the Council to review and evaluate red snapper allocations between sectors, recreational fleets, and among Gulf states (private angling component).

In addition, the working group should identify limitations for certain years when management changes and survey design changes were implemented that could impact harvest estimates by sector, recreational fleet (i.e., private, charter/headboat) and among Gulf states. Finally, the working group should recommend any analyses as appropriate, to inform Council management actions for utilizing these catch recommendations.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Draft Options – Reef Fish Amendment 64: Delegate Federal For-Hire Red Snapper Management to Gulf States

Motion: To move Action 2 to Considered but Rejected.

Action 2: Delegation Sunset Provisions

Alternative 1: No Action. No sunset provision

Alternative 2: The delegation of the federal for-hire management authority for red snapper to Gulf States will sunset after:

Option 2a: 2 years

Option 2b: 3 years

Option 2c: 4 years

Option 2d: 5 years

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To include options for regional management delegation.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To add an Alternative in Action 3 to use 50% of the average landings from 2016 – 2024 and 50% of the average landings from 2021 – 2024.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To add an Alternative in Action 3 to use 50% of the average landings from 2003 – 2024 excluding 2010 and 50% of the average landings from 2021 – 2024.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Draft Options – Modifications to Red Snapper Private Recreational Post-Season Accountability Measures

Motion: In Action 1, to make **Alternative 2, Option 2c** the preferred alternative.

Alternative 2: Unless the best scientific information available determines that a greater, lesser, or no overage adjustment is necessary, NMFS would reduce a state's private angling component ACL in the fishing year following an overage of the ACL by the amount of the overage if:

- The applicable state exceeds its ACL by more than the percentage specified in **Options 2a-2c**, or
- A state's red snapper private angling component landings exceed the applicable state's component ACL by any amount and private recreational landings from all states combined exceed the total private angling component ACL, or
- A state exceeds its ACL more than once in any three-year rolling period no matter the amount of the overage, and regardless of whether the total private recreational ACL is exceeded.

Option 2c: up to 10% of the state-specific private angling ACL

Motion carried with no opposition.

Draft Options – Reef Fish Amendment 59A: Permit Requirements in IFQ Programs

Motion: To request NOAA Fisheries establish August 26, 2026, as the control date the Gulf Council may use if it decides to recommend exemptions for non-profit organizations operating quota pools or other similar quota distribution programs from requirements to obtain or retain shares or allocation in the Gulf Red Snapper and Grouper-Tilefish Individual Fishing Quota programs. Non-profit organizations established after the control date or those that opened an IFQ account with NOAA Fisheries after the control date may not be eligible to apply for an exemption from reef fish permit requirements or other requirements recommended by the Council in the future.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To add proposed **Actions 5.1** and **5.2** to the amendment. Also, to include a requirement that entities that received exemptions must report yearly who applied, received, and were denied allocation. Also, to include a requirement that NMFS makes this report available to the Gulf Council.

Action 5.1: Exemptions from Permit Requirements

Alternative 1: No Action. Do not provide exemptions from permit requirements in Actions 1, 2, & 3.

Alternative 2: Provide exemptions from permit requirements in Actions 1, 2, and 3 to eligible non-profit organizations that submit a completed and signed exemption form to NMFS. To be eligible for an exemption, an organization must also submit to NMFS:

- An IRS-sanctioned proof of their non-profit status
- A copy of the organization's by-laws
- A list of its board directors, officers, and members
- Methods for managing shares and allocation for fishery participants it seeks to serve
- Procedures that will be used to solicit requests from members of the organization to use annual IFQ allocation held by the non-profit and that sets out the
- Criteria and procedures to select IFQ allocation recipients.

Action 5.2: Maintenance of Exemptions from Permit Requirements

Alternative 1: No Action. Do not create requirements to maintain an exemption from permit requirements.

Alternative 2: To maintain an exemption from the permit requirements in Actions 1, 2, and 3, an organization must provide a report which includes:

- Any change to the required submission material
- A list of participants to whom allocation was distributed, pounds received per recipient, and prices per pound of allocation received
- Methods used by the organization to determine allocation prices

The exemption status will be reviewed every:

Option a: year

Option b: two years

Motion carried with no opposition.

Public Hearing Draft – Reef Fish Amendment 55/Snapper Grouper Amendment 44: Mutton Snapper and Yellowtail Snapper Management Measures

Motion: To move **Alternative 2**, **Alternative 5**, and **Alternative 6** in Action 3 to Considered but Rejected.

Alternative 2. Allocate 17.02% of the revised total annual catch limit for mutton snapper to the commercial sector and 82.98% of the revised total annual catch limit for mutton snapper to the recreational sector.

Alternative 5. Allocate 9.29% of the revised total annual catch limit for mutton snapper to the commercial sector in year one, 9.69% in year two, and 9.98% in year three and thereafter. Allocate 90.71% of the revised total annual catch limit for mutton snapper to

the recreational sector in year one, 90.31% in year two, and 90.02% in year three and thereafter.

Alternative 6. Allocate 9.85% of the revised total annual catch limit for mutton snapper to the commercial sector in year one, 10.24% in year two, and 10.53% in year three and thereafter. Allocate 90.15% of the revised total annual catch limit for mutton snapper to the recreational sector in year one, 89.76% in year two, and 89.47% in year three and thereafter.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To make **Alternative 1** in Action 3 the preferred alternative.

Alternative 1: No Action. Retain the current commercial and recreational sector allocations as 17.02% and 82.98%, respectively, of the current South Atlantic total annual catch limit for mutton snapper.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To move **Alternative 2**, **Alternative 5**, and **Alternative 6** in Action 4 to Considered but Rejected.

Alternative 2. Allocate 52.56% of the revised total annual catch limit for yellowtail snapper to the commercial sector and 47.44% of the revised total annual catch limit for yellowtail snapper to the recreational sector.

Alternative 5. Allocate 55.28% of the revised total annual catch limit for yellowtail snapper to the commercial sector in year one, 55.30% in year two, and 55.29% in year three and thereafter. Allocate 44.72% of the revised total annual catch limit for yellowtail snapper to the recreational sector in year one, 44.70% in year two, and 44.71% in year three and thereafter.

Alternative 6. Allocate 55.44% of the revised total annual catch limit for yellowtail snapper to the commercial sector in year one, 55.45% in year two, and 55.45% in year three and thereafter. Allocate 44.56% of the revised total annual catch limit for yellowtail snapper to the recreational sector in year one, 44.55% in year two, and 44.55% in year three and thereafter.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To make **Alternative 1** in Action 4 the preferred alternative.

Alternative 1: No Action. Retain the current commercial and recreational sector allocations as 52.56% and 47.44%, respectively, of the current South Atlantic total annual catch limit for yellowtail snapper.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To take Reef Fish Amendment 55/Snapper Grouper Amendment 44: Mutton Snapper and Yellowtail Snapper Management Measures out to virtual public hearings.

Motion carried with no opposition.

SHRIMP

July 2026 SSC Meeting Summary and Presentation

Motion: That the methodology using observer data, which has been developed by the SEFSC and is being used to estimate red snapper bycatch in the Gulf, is acceptable for data input into the current red snapper assessment model.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To support expanding the bycatch methodology to include additional finfish species that are presently in the observer database. The SSC also recommends that the results of these additional efforts be presented to the Shrimp Bycatch Working Group and/or the appropriate SEDAR workshop or topical working group.

Substitute Motion: To support expanding the bycatch methodology to include additional finfish species that are presently in the observer database and recommend that the results of these additional efforts be presented to the Shrimp Bycatch Working Group and/or the appropriate SEDAR workshop or topical working group.

Substitute Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To write a letter to SEFSC supporting future investigations into improving the estimation of bycatch for finfish species not characterized since 2025 in the Observer Program.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Motion: To postpone work on updated analyses for the minimum threshold number of federal Gulf shrimp commercial permits and continue work on Shrimp Amendment 20 to update status determination criteria.

Motion carried with no opposition.

SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

No motions.

FULL COUNCIL

Other Business: Extension of State Cownose Ray Regulations into Federal waters

Motion: To direct staff to write a letter to FWC that there is no immediate intent to recommend managing cownose rays in federal waters.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Election of Council Chair

Motion: To nominate Kesley Banks to serve as Council Chair through the August 2027 Council

meeting.

Kesley Banks approved as Council Chair by acclamation.

Election of Council Vice Chair

Motion: To nominate Chris Schieble to serve as Council Vice Chair through the August 2027 Council meeting.

Motion: To nominate Mike Allen to serve as Council Vice Chair through the August 2027 Council meeting.

Chris Schieble approved as Council Vice Chair by vote.