

GULF COUNCIL  
SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES COMMITTEE

Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino & Virtual Biloxi, Mississippi  
August 24, 2026

**VOTING MEMBERS**

Kesley Banks.....Texas  
Mike Allen.....Florida  
Kevin Anson.....Alabama  
Billy Broussard.....Louisiana  
Troy Frady.....Alabama  
Johnny Marquez.....Mississippi  
John Sanchez.....Florida  
Chris Schieble (designee for Ryan Montegut).....Louisiana  
Joe Spraggins.....Mississippi  
Andy Strelcheck.....NMFS  
C.J. Sweetman (designee for Jessica McCawley).....Florida

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

Brenda Ballard.....Texas  
Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC  
J.D. Dugas.....Louisiana  
Dakus Geeslin (designee for Robin Riechers).....Texas  
Lt. Jackson Morton.....USCG  
Jason Osborne.....Mississippi  
Anthony Overton.....Alabama  
Ed Walker.....Florida

**STAFF**

Alyssa Clift.....Administrative Assistant  
Assane Diagne.....Economist  
Leonardo "Leo" Egula.....Fishery Outreach Specialist  
John Froeschke.....Deputy Director  
Beth Hager.....Administrative Officer  
Lisa Hollensead.....Fishery Biologist  
Jessica Matos.....Administrative Document Editor & IT Coordinator  
Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer  
Ryan Rindone.....Lead Fishery Biologist & SEDAR Liaison  
Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager  
Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director  
Anabelle Suitor.....Social Scientist  
Verena Wang.....Ecosystem Analyst

**OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

Frank Helies.....NOAA

1 Judy Helmey.....SAFMC  
2 Mara Levy.....NOAA GC  
3 John Walter.....SEFSC  
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1 The Sustainable Fisheries Committee of the Gulf Council convened  
2 at the Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino in Biloxi, Mississippi on  
3 Monday morning, August 24, 2026, and was called to order by  
4 Chairman Kesley Banks.

5  
6 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**  
7 **APPROVAL OF JANUARY 2026 MINUTES**  
8 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**  
9

10 **CHAIRMAN KESLEY BANKS:** The Sustainable Fisheries Committee  
11 comprises myself as chair, Mr. Anson as vice chair, Dr. Allen, Mr.  
12 Broussard, Captain Frady, Mr. Marquez, Dr. Sweetman, Mr. Schieble,  
13 Mr. Sanchez, General Spraggins, and Mr. Strelcheck.

14  
15 First up is the adoption of the agenda. Is there any additional  
16 topics that need to come before this committee in Other Business?  
17 Seeing none, can I get a motion to adopt the agenda? General  
18 Spraggins and Mr. Marquez. The motion -- Any opposition to that  
19 motion? Seeing none, the motion passes.

20  
21 The next thing is the approval of the January 2026 minutes. Is  
22 there any modifications to the minutes? Seeing none, can I get a  
23 motion to adopt the minutes? Dr. Sweetman and Dr. Allen. Is there  
24 any objection to that motion? Seeing none, motion passes with no  
25 opposition. Dr. Diagne, if you would like to go through the action  
26 guide with us?

27  
28 **DISCUSSION OF FIVE-YEAR STANDARDIZED BYCATCH REPORTING**  
29

30 **DR. ASSANE DIAGNE:** Yes, Madam Chair. Thank you, and so, for the  
31 action guide for the Sustainable Fisheries Committee, here we have  
32 one item, and that is going to be a discussion of the five-year  
33 standardized bycatch reporting.

34  
35 Mr. Helies, here from SERO, will give a presentation on  
36 standardized bycatch reporting methodology. The previous review  
37 was submitted in February of 2022. Because these have to be  
38 completed at a five-year interval, the next one is going to be due  
39 by February of 2027.

40  
41 In his presentation, Mr. Helies will talk about the elements that  
42 would be included in the review, discuss the progress and timing  
43 of this upcoming review, and so the committee should evaluate the  
44 information presented, ask questions, make recommendations, and,  
45 as warranted, suggest the next steps. Thank you.

1 **CHAIRMAN BANKS:** All right. Mr. Helies, you're up.

2  
3 **MR. FRANK HELIES:** Thank you, Madam Chair. My team member, Dan  
4 Luers going to be the lead on this action, but I'm going to give  
5 this very brief presentation, and so, as Assane mentioned earlier,  
6 we completed the original review back in February of 2022, and now  
7 five years is up, and so we have to revisit our standardized  
8 bycatch reporting methodology, and so this is going to be a very  
9 brief presentation, just kind of reorienting everybody to what we  
10 have done in the past.

11  
12 What are SBRMs? They're consistent procedures used to collect,  
13 record, and report bycatch data. It's important to note that we  
14 have SBRMs for all of our FMPs.

15  
16 For the last review, we found that the methods were in compliance  
17 with the regs, and we didn't need to take any management action.  
18 We're going to have to make some updates based on some changes in  
19 the fishery. For one, the SEFHIER program went away, and so that  
20 was one of the ones that was listed in the previous review, and so  
21 we'll have to make some changes to the review.

22  
23 The councils must review the SBRMs and implement any management  
24 actions deemed necessary by the deadline. We're supposed to review  
25 them every five years, and there's four main components of the  
26 review, and so we outline the characteristics of bycatch that's  
27 occurring in the fishery, and we have to consider the feasibility  
28 of the methods from cost, technical, and operational perspectives.

29  
30 We have to consider the uncertainty of the data resulting from the  
31 data collection and how that data is used to assess the amount and  
32 type of bycatch that's occurring in the fishery.

33  
34 Bycatch characteristics, and we'll do this for every FMP. We rely  
35 on the center to provide us some updated data and some amount and  
36 type bycatch. We consider the importance of the bycatch in  
37 estimating mortality, fishing mortality, and any of those effects  
38 on bycatch on ecosystems.

39  
40 Feasibility, and so SBRMs must be feasible, and so they have to be  
41 capable of being implemented. For instance, 100 percent observer  
42 coverage in the reef fish fishery, or the shrimp fishery, is not  
43 feasible, right, and so we have to consider the feasibility of the  
44 methods.

45  
46 Uncertainty around the data, and so all SBRMs must be designed

1 such that the uncertainty associated with the data can be  
2 described, qualitatively or quantitatively. Like most everything,  
3 the council should seek to minimize uncertainty where possible,  
4 and this could be different in every fishery, depending on what we  
5 need.

6  
7 Data use, and so a council must address how data resulting from  
8 the methods are used to assess bycatch in the fishery. There's a  
9 number of different things to consider, and this will be discussed  
10 more in detail in the review.

11  
12 Next steps, and we're standing up a very small IPT. It will be  
13 Dan from my team, and likely someone from our LAPP Branch, someone  
14 from the center, and John, I think, has volunteered to help with  
15 this, I think, and we're going to request some updated data, and  
16 then we'll present this to the SSC sometime in the fall, as long  
17 as this goes according to plan.

18  
19 I'm thinking that we can hopefully get something in front of the  
20 council in October, and then the council can bless the final  
21 product in January, prior to our February deadline. After that,  
22 we have to do some internal memos and send stuff up to  
23 Headquarters. I think, fingers crossed, we're not going to require  
24 any management action on the council's part, but we can determine  
25 that based on the results of the review. I think that's my last  
26 slide.

27  
28 The next one should just have a link to the previously completed  
29 review from 2022 and the regs that are on the books that require  
30 such review, and so I would be happy to take any questions.

31  
32 **CHAIRMAN BANKS:** Thank you. Mr. Rindone.

33  
34 **MR. RYAN RINDONE:** Thank you, Madam Chair, and so the next SSC  
35 meeting is September 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, and I have to submit the FRN  
36 for that with Ms. Pereira on Friday, and we don't have another SSC  
37 meeting planned beyond that one between then and the end of the  
38 year, and so do you guys think you're going to be able to present  
39 in September, or are we going to have to push this to later,  
40 because you mentioned trying to get this in front of the council  
41 in October.

42  
43 **MR. HELIES:** Unlikely, but we'll talk offline. It's unlikely that  
44 we're going to have anything by definitely Friday, and so let me  
45 think about it and talk it over. Thanks.

1 **CHAIRMAN BANKS:** Any other questions or comments? Not seeing any,  
2 there was no other business that came before this committee, and  
3 so I will yield back to you, Mr. Chair.

4  
5 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on August 24, 2026.)  
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