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

Judy Helmey.....SAFMC
Mara Levy.....NOAA GC
John Walter.....SEFSC

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The Sustainable Fisheries Committee of the Gulf Council convened at the Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino in Biloxi, Mississippi on Monday morning, August 24, 2026, and was called to order by Chairman Kesley Banks.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA
APPROVAL OF JANUARY 2026 MINUTES
ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS

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

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

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

DISCUSSION OF FIVE-YEAR STANDARDIZED BYCATCH REPORTING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAIRMAN BANKS: Thank you. Mr. Rindone.

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

MR. HELIES: Unlikely, but we'll talk offline. It's unlikely that we're going to have anything by definitely Friday, and so let me 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.
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5 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on August 24, 2026.)
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