

auxiliary aids should be directed to Anne Alford at the Council (see ADDRESSES) by December 29, 1998.

Dated: December 16, 1998.

Bruce C. Morehead,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 98-33725 Filed 12-18-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 121598G]

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will convene a public meeting of the Shrimp Advisory Panel (AP).

DATES: The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, January 7, 1999 and conclude by 3:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Doubletree Hotel - New Orleans, 300 Canal Street, New Orleans, LA; telephone: 504-581-1300.

Council address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 3018 U.S. Highway 301 North, Suite 1000, Tampa, FL 33619.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Richard Leard, Senior Fishery Biologist, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; telephone: 813-228-2815.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Shrimp AP will convene to review scientific information on the effects of the cooperative shrimp seasonal closure with the state of Texas. The Shrimp AP will also receive a presentation regarding the status of the shrimp stocks in the Gulf of Mexico and an overfishing report. A representative of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) will provide a perspective of the TPWD with regard to the cooperative seasonal closure. The AP may develop recommendations to the Council regarding the extent of Federal waters off Texas that will be closed in 1999 concurrently with the closure of Texas waters. Finally, the Shrimp AP will review a draft of an Options Paper for Amendment 10 to the Shrimp Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Among other alternatives, this options paper contains

provisions for permitting, mandatory reporting, and vessel monitoring.

Although other issues not on the agenda may come before the AP for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during the meeting. AP actions will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the agenda listed as available by this notice.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Anne Alford at the Council (see ADDRESSES) by December 31, 1998.

Dated: December 16, 1998.

Bruce C. Morehead,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 121598F]

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will convene public meetings of the Ad Hoc Sustainable Fisheries Amendment Act (SFA) Advisory Panel (AP) and the Standing Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC).

DATES: The meeting of the SFA AP will begin at 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 5, 1999 and conclude by 4:00 p.m. The meeting of the Standing SSC will begin at 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 6, 1999 and conclude by 4:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Doubletree Hotel - New Orleans, 300 Canal Street, New Orleans, LA; telephone 504-581-1300.

Council address: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 3018 U.S. Highway 301 North, Suite 1000, Tampa, FL 33619.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Wayne Swingle, Executive Director, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; telephone: 813-228-2815.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The AP, consisting of recreational and commercial fishery representatives, and SSC will review the Sustainable Fisheries Act (SFA) Amendment.

In 1996, Congress passed the SFA. The SFA implemented new requirements for marine fisheries managed by the Gulf Council and other Regional Councils. The Council has responded to this by developing the SFA Amendment which includes alternative management measures for reporting of bycatch by Gulf fishermen, for minimizing bycatch or bycatch mortality, for specifying higher standards for overfishing criteria that will restore fishery stocks to maximum sustainable yield (MSY), for rebuilding periods for overfished stocks (e.g., red snapper, king mackerel, and red drum) and a section identifying communities economically dependent on fishing.

Under the section on reporting of bycatch, five alternatives related to submission of data by fishermen and vessel observers are considered. The Council proposes that NMFS have authority to collect bycatch information by the most appropriate methods, but to use mandatory observers only when the Council agrees.

Under the section on measures to minimize bycatch or bycatch mortality, the Council proposes that stone crab traps used in Federal waters be constructed according to Florida law.

Under the section on overfishing criteria and rebuilding period for stocks, the Council has proposed that MSY, optimum yield (OY), and the overfishing thresholds be set at higher standards as follows: at 26 percent spawning potential ratio (SPR) for red snapper (with OY set at 36 percent SPR); at 30 percent SPR for red drum, all the coastal migratory species (including the mackerels) and for all reef fish species except red snapper, gag, Nassau grouper, and jewfish; at 50 percent SPR for Nassau grouper and jewfish; the Council has not selected a proposal for gag.

The rebuilding periods proposed for overfished stocks are as follows: red snapper by year 2033; king mackerel by 2009; no rebuilding periods are proposed for red drum, Nassau grouper, or jewfish because there was insufficient information to compute the periods.

Similarly, the amendment does not contain proposed overfished thresholds for any of the finfish stocks because there was insufficient information to compute these parameters in terms of biomass (weight). Alternatives for overfished thresholds in terms of SPR are included.