

49. If NMFS allows the use of ropeless fishing gear, should the option to use it be phased in (e.g., by specific geographic regions, by fishery, or through pilot programs)?

50. How can NMFS design ropeless fishing regulations to be flexible enough to accommodate future technological advancements?

51. What are the potential environmental benefits or consequences of fishing with ropeless gear? What are the potential benefits or consequences of ropeless fishing on fisheries operations?

52. Ropeless fishing gear is currently being used in fisheries outside of the Greater Atlantic Region. Do you have examples of its use or management outside the Greater Atlantic Region that should be emulated or avoided within the Greater Atlantic Region?

III. Definitions

Grappling: Method of retrieving fishing gear from the ocean floor by dragging a weighted hook along the bottom to snag rope (such as a groundline or bridle) that is connected to traps, pots, or nets.

Interoperability: Capability of different technologies, systems, devices, models, or brands to communicate, share information, and function with each other.

Retrieval mechanism: Apparatus designed to surface a retrieval line to allow for the hauling of fixed gear. For example, a buoyant spool, inflatable lift bag, and pop-up buoy.

On-demand device: Equipment that uses acoustic release technology to trigger a retrieval mechanism.

On-demand fishing gear: Fixed gear equipped with at least one on-demand device.

On-demand system: Combination of technologies and devices, including an on-demand device, that allow for the deployment, retrieval, and marking of fixed gear positions without persistent buoy lines. This definition excludes the technology needed to share and display digital gear marks. An on-demand system is a type of ropeless system.

One-end ropeless: String or trawl of fixed gear that uses a traditional, persistent buoy line on only one end. The end without the persistent buoy line may or may not be rigged with an on-demand or timed-retrieval device and retrieval mechanism.

Ropeless fishing gear: Fixed fishing gear that operates without persistent buoy lines. This definition includes fixed gear rigged with an on-demand device or timed-retrieval device that triggers a retrieval mechanism, as well

as fixed gear that can only be retrieved by grappling.

Ropeless system: Combination of technologies and devices that allow for the deployment, retrieval, and marking of fixed gear positions without persistent buoy lines. This definition excludes the technology needed to share and display digital gear marks. This definition includes, but is not limited to, on-demand systems and timed-retrieval systems.

Timed-retrieval device: Equipment that uses a pre-set timer or a degradable galvanic link to trigger a retrieval mechanism.

Timed-retrieval fishing gear: Fixed gear equipped with at least one timed-retrieval device.

Timed-retrieval system: Combination of technologies and devices, including a timed-retrieval device, that allow for the deployment, retrieval, and marking of fixed gear positions without persistent buoy lines. This definition excludes the technology needed to share and display digital gear marks. A timed-retrieval system is a type of ropeless system.

Persistent buoy line: Traditional fixed gear endline or vertical line that extends from the fishing gear on the seafloor to the physical surface marker for the entirety of the soak time.

IV. Other

Please note that this is an RFI only. In accordance with the implementing regulations of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), specifically 5 CFR 1320.3(h)(4), this general solicitation is exempt from the PRA. Facts or opinions submitted in response to general solicitations of comments from the public, published in the **Federal Register** or other publications, regardless of the form or format thereof, provided that no person is required to supply specific information pertaining to the commenter, other than that necessary for self-identification, as a condition of the agency's full consideration, are not generally considered information collections and therefore not subject to the PRA.

This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes; it does not constitute a request for proposals, applications, proposal abstracts, or quotations. This RFI does not commit the U.S. Government to contract for any supplies or services or make a grant award. Further, NMFS is not seeking proposals through this RFI and will not accept unsolicited proposals. Choosing not to respond to this RFI does not preclude participation in any future procurement, if conducted.

(Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*; 16 U.S.C. 5101 *et seq.*; Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, Division JJ, Title I, Section 101 *et seq.*)

Dated: July 13, 2026.

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

[FR Doc. 2026-14363 Filed 7-15-26; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XF865]

Gulf Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of a public meeting.

SUMMARY: The Gulf Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council) will hold a 2 day in-person meeting of its Standing and Shrimp Scientific and Statistical Committees (SSC).

DATES: The meeting will be held in-person on Tuesday, July 21 and Wednesday, July 22, 2026, from 9 a.m.–5 p.m., EDT daily.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will take place at the Gulf Council's office located at 4107 W. Spruce Street, Suite 200, Tampa, FL 33607. Hybrid connection information will be available on the Council's website at <https://www.gulfcouncil.org> and clicking on the "meeting tab".

Council address: Gulf Fishery Management Council, 4107 W. Spruce Street, Suite 200, Tampa, FL 33607; telephone: (813) 348-1630.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Ryan Rindone, Lead Fishery Biologist, Gulf Fishery Management Council; ryan.rindone@gulfcouncil.org, telephone: (813) 348-1630.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Tuesday, July 21, 2026; 9 a.m.–5 p.m. EDT

The meeting will begin with introductions and adoption of agenda, review and approval of Meeting Minutes and Summary from the May 2026 SSC webinar meeting, and Scope of Work.

The SSCs will review and discuss Estimation of Shrimp Trawl Bycatch Methodology and Gray Triggerfish Bycatch Estimation, including presentations, background materials and SSC Discussion.

The SSC will also receive recommendations from the Working Group on Shrimp Trawl Bycatch for Finfish.

The SSCs will then review the Minimum Threshold Number of Federal Gulf Shrimp Permits, including presentations, background materials and SSC Discussion.

Public comments, if any, will be heard at the end of the day.

Wednesday, July 22, 2026; 9 a.m.–5 p.m. EDT

The SSC will review and discuss Fisheries Integrated Modeling System Peer-review, Gulf King Mackerel Landings and Length Composition Data from Mexico, Gulf Tilefish Data Triage and Stock Evaluation Options, and the Greater Amberjack Count and the planned SEDAR Assessment for Gulf Greater Amberjack; including presentations, background materials and SSC Discussion and Recommendations.

Public comments, if any, will be heard at the end of the day followed by the review of any Other Business items.

— Meeting Adjourns

The meeting will also be broadcast via webinar. You may register to listen in only by visiting <https://www.gulfcouncil.org> and clicking on the SSC meeting on the calendar.

The Agenda is subject to change, and the latest version along with other meeting materials will be posted on <https://www.gulfcouncil.org> as they become available.

Although other non-emergency issues not on the agenda may come before the Scientific and Statistical Committees for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Actions of the Scientific and Statistical Committee will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in the agenda and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under Section 305(c) of the MSA, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take-action to address the emergency.

(Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*)

Dated: July 14, 2026.

Rey Israel Marquez,

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

[FR Doc. 2026–14360 Filed 7–15–26; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XF880]

Fisheries of the Gulf of America; Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review; Public Meeting

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

ACTION: Notice of webinar.

SUMMARY: The Southeast Data Assessment and Review (SEDAR) 105 assessment process of Gulf gag grouper will consist of a series of assessment webinars. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

DATES: The SEDAR 105 Topical Working Group Red Tide Mortality I webinar will be held August 5, 2026, from 1–4 p.m. Eastern Time.

ADDRESSES:

SEDAR address: 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, North Charleston, SC 29405.

Meeting address: The meeting will be held via webinar. The webinar is open to members of the public. Those interested in participating should contact Julie A. Neer at SEDAR (See **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**) to request an invitation providing webinar access information. Please request webinar invitations at least 24 hours in advance of each webinar.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Julie A. Neer, SEDAR Coordinator; (843) 571–4366. Email: Julie.neer@safmc.net.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Gulf, South Atlantic, and Caribbean Fishery Management Councils, in conjunction with the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Atlantic and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commissions have implemented the SEDAR process. SEDAR is a participatory process for developing, evaluating and reviewing information used for fisheries management advice. This multi-step process for determining the status of fish stocks in the Southeast Region may include (1) a Data stage, and (2) an Assessment stage, and (3) a Review stage. Each stage produces a report summarizing decisions made during that stage. A final stock assessment report is produced at the end of a SEDAR process documenting data sets used, model configurations and the opinions from the independent peer review. Participants for SEDAR projects are appointed by the Gulf, South Atlantic, and Caribbean Fishery

Management Councils and National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office, Highly Migratory Species Management Division, and Southeast Fisheries Science Center. Participants may include data collectors and database managers; stock assessment scientists, biologists, and researchers; constituency representatives including fishermen, environmentalists, and non-governmental organizations; International experts; and staff of Councils, Commissions, and state and Federal agencies.

The items of discussion during the SEDAR 105 Topical Working Groups Data Recommendations webinar are as follows:

Participants will review the data analyses and make recommendations.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this group for discussion, those issues may not be the subject of formal action during this meeting. Action will be restricted to those issues specifically identified in this notice and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to the Council office (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 business days prior to each workshop.

Note: Note: The times and sequence specified in this agenda are subject to change.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: July 14, 2026.

Rey Israel Marquez,

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

[FR Doc. 2026–14380 Filed 7–15–26; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XF876]

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

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