

MEMORANDUM



To: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners
From: Jessica McCawley, Director, Marine Fisheries Management
Date: May 1, 2019
Subject: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) Report

Purpose:

To report on actions from the GMFMC's April 1-4 meeting in Biloxi, MS.

Summary:

The Council is scheduled to meet the first week of April, and briefing documents will be updated as soon as possible following the Council meeting. The Council is expected to take final action on several items including:

- State Management of Red Snapper: Transferring management of the recreational red snapper fishery in Gulf federal waters from the Council/NOAA Fisheries to each of the Gulf states.
- Red Grouper: Reducing the annual quota based on recent analysis and stakeholder concerns that indicate the fishery may be overfished and undergoing overfishing.
- Carryover of Unused Quota: Allowing the carryover of unused quota to be harvested the following year for certain species.

Other Council discussions may include modifying commercial trip limits for greater amberjack and the reallocation of red snapper quota among the commercial and recreational sectors. The Council is expected to continue work on these topics at future Council meetings.

NOAA Fisheries recently announced the red snapper fishing season for federally permitted for-hire vessels will be open June 1 – August 1 (62 days) in Gulf federal waters.

In late March, NOAA Fisheries announced that recreational harvest of greater amberjack in Gulf federal waters would not reopen as scheduled for the month of May due to the federal recreational annual catch target (ACT) being caught in the fall portion of the season (Aug. 1 – Oct. 31, 2018). NOAA Fisheries also announced that recreational harvest of gray triggerfish in Gulf federal waters will close on May 11 for the remainder of 2019 because the recreational ACT is expected to be reached. NOAA Fisheries requests the Commission close Gulf state waters to recreational harvest of greater amberjack and gray triggerfish to be consistent with these federal closures.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends the Commission close Gulf state waters recreational harvest of greater amberjack through the end of May 2019 and gray triggerfish through the end of 2019. Staff may request direction on other items following the Council meeting.

Staff Contact and/or Presenter:

Martha Guyas, Division of Marine Fisheries Management