



Gulf Council Issues

Review and Discussion

February 8, 2017

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Division of Marine Fisheries Management

For-Hire Electronic Reporting – Final Action



- All Gulf federally-permitted for-hire vessels will be required to electronically report trip information
 - Reports due at end of each trip **before unloading fish**
 - Reports to be made using devices that record location (i.e., smartphones, tablets, or VMS), **with GPS-portion of the device permanently affixed to the vessel**
- Implementation pending approval by U.S. Secretary of Commerce and program funding

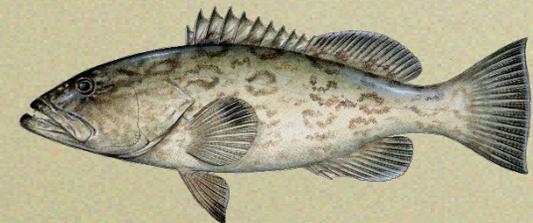


Gag Grouper – Stock Assessment and Management Update



- Assessment update indicates gag grouper not overfished or undergoing overfishing but results highly uncertain
- Council considering increasing commercial minimum size limit from 22 to 24 inches
 - Would match recreational 24-inch size limit
- State waters recreational season
 - Stakeholder requests for longer season in Franklin, Wakulla, Jefferson, and Taylor counties (currently open Apr. 1 – Jun. 30)
 - Other Gulf waters open June 1 – Dec. 31

Commission direction requested on state season



Bottom Longline Exempted Fishing Permit Application



- Proposal would allow 8 commercial longline vessels to fish in an area off west Florida that is seasonally closed to bottom longlining
- Seasonal closure implemented in 2010 to reduce take of sea turtles by the bottom longline fishery
 - Area open to other fishing gears
- Proposal goal: determine if electronic monitoring (i.e., video cameras) can be used to monitor, assess, and reduce sea turtle interactions
- Council to vote in April on whether to recommend approval of EFP application

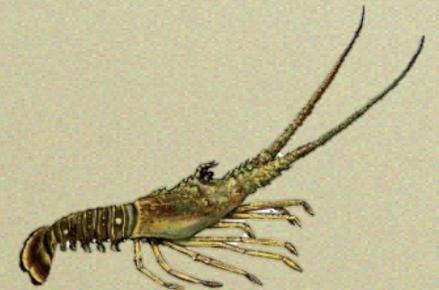
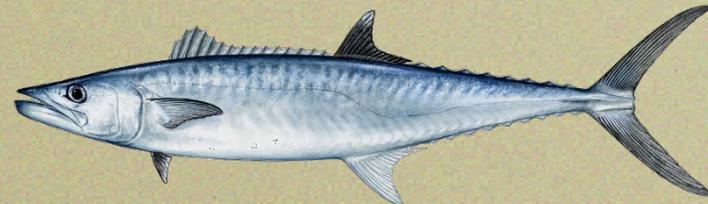


Commission direction requested



Other Council Updates

- Potential deep-water coral protection areas – scoping meetings in spring 2017
 - Could limit fishing in some offshore areas off Florida
- Commercial shrimp permits – public hearings in spring 2017
- Spiny lobster – joint amendment underway with South Atlantic Council to increase annual catch limit
- King mackerel allocation sharing – final action deferred



Direction Requested

- Gag grouper recreational season – Franklin, Wakulla, Jefferson, Taylor counties
- Bottom longline EFP request
- Input on other Council items is welcome
- Next Gulf Council meeting is Apr. 3-7 in Birmingham, AL

