

SEA HARVEST NEWS

MASGP-06-002-03

March 6, 2006

RICHARD K. WALLACE Extension Marine Specialist Alabama Sea Grant Extension Program

Gulf Council to Meet in Mobile

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will meet March 20 – 23 at the Radisson Admiral Semmes Hotel on Government. Committee meetings are on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday morning. The full Council meets Wednesday afternoon and most of Thursday.

The joint Reef / Shrimp Management Committee will meet 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Monday and all day Tuesday to recommend options for Draft Amendment Reef Fish 27 / Shrimp 14 and Shrimp 15. These are the Amendments that were the focus of scoping hearings here in Mobile and elsewhere during January. For more information about the meeting, contact the Gulf Council at 813-348-1630, gulfcouncil@gulfcouncil.org or www.gulfcouncil.org.

Foundation Solicits Bycatch Reduction Designs

The Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Inc. (G&SAFF) is seeking gear designs that increase shrimp retention and reduce bycatch in response to ongoing concerns about the efficiency of currently certified TEDs and BRDs.

If you would like to submit a gear design, please send a description / diagram of your design to the Foundation (address below) no later than March 31, 2006. Ideas should be submitted on paper and include a drawing of the device (including general

measurements) and a full description of how shrimp will be retained while reducing bycatch.

The Foundation will convene a meeting of experts (Foundation's Regional Coordinators and selected Gear Technologists) in April 2006 to review all designs submitted in response to this solicitation. The five most innovative and practical designs will be selected, and the creator of the gear will be provided funds to: (1) build a prototype of the gear and (2) travel to Panama City, Florida to observe the gear during underwater tests (June 2006).

This program will not only allow fishermen to development new gears, but also observe how these gears work during trawling operations. This is an important step in the gear development process, and allows for necessary changes to be made prior to the use of the gear during commercial fishing operations.

The Foundation is interested in hearing from all of industry: captains, boat owners, deck hands, and net men! As such, **please feel free to distribute this solicitation to any and all industry members that you know.** If you would like further information regarding this program, please call the Foundation's office (813-286-8390) and ask to speak with either the Executive Director (Judy Jamison) or Program Director (Davie Medici). The mailing address is: Gulf & South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Inc., Lincoln Center, Suite 740 / 5401 West Kennedy Boulevard / Tampa, Florida 33609. Phone (813) 286-8390 / Fax (813) 286-8261.

Shrimp Import Continues to Rise

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
Shell-on headless	414,048	506,381	539,222	547,429
Peeled	424,408	485,797	562,213	516,963
Canned	3,552	3,521	3,082	3,217

Breaded	8,366	17,242	36,521	98,263
Total	850,374	1,012,941	1,141,138	1,165,872
(Thousands of pounds)				

Grouper Fishing

The federal fisheries regulations for grouper have become pretty complex. Here are some of the key elements of current regulations. Commercial fishermen must have a Reef Fish Vessel Permit. No new permits are being issued but existing permits are transferable. For deep water groupers (misty, snowy, yellowedge, Warsaw, and speckled hind) there is a 1.02 million pound gutted weight quota. For shallow water grouper, there is an 8.8 million pound gutted weight quota and length limits (black and gag, 24 inches; red and yellow- fin, 20 inches; scamp, 16 inches; yellowmouth, rock hind, and red hind, none). The shallow water grouper fishery is closed when either the shallow water grouper quota is reached or the red grouper quota (5.31 million pounds gutted weight) is reached. No harvest or sale of gag, black, and red grouper allowed from February 15 through March 15th. Harvest of goliath (jewfish) and Nassau grouper is prohibited for both commercial and recreational fishermen.

Recreational fishermen fish under a aggregate bag limit that allows five groupers per person per day but no more than one red grouper per person as part of the five grouper limit. Only one Warsaw and one speckled hind per vessel is allowed. Length limits are: black and gag, 22 inches; red and yellow fin, 20 inches; scamp, 16 inches; yellowmouth, rock hind and red hind, none.

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A February 15th – March 15th recreational closure for red, black and gag grouper is in the works but not currently approved. For more details

on grouper and other regulations, go to
www.gulfcouncil.org.