



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mr. Robert Jones, FL

President

Southeastern Fisheries Association, Inc.

Mr. Jerry Sansom, FL

Vice President

Organized Fishermen of Florida

Mr. Rutledge Leland, SC

Secretary/Treasurer

South Carolina-At-Large

Mr. Joey Daniels, VA

Virginia -At-Large

Mr. Byron Despaux, LA

Louisiana Shrimp Association

Mr. Craig Dopson, SC

South Carolina Shrimp Association

Ms. Andrea Hance, TX

Texas Shrimp Association

Mr. Philip Horn, MS

Mississippi-At-Large

Mr. Chris Nelson, AL

Alabama-At-Large

Mr. Harlon Pearce, LA

Louisiana-At-Large

Mr. Patrick Riley, TX

Texas-At-Large

Captain James Ruhle, NC

North Carolina-At-Large

Captain John Woods, GA

Georgia Shrimp Association, Inc.

Gulf & South Atlantic News

is published by the Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Inc., the research and conservation partner of the southeastern U.S. commercial fishing industry.

Judy Jamison, Exec. Director

Ph: (813) 286-8390

judy.jamison@att.net

gulfsouthfdn@att.net

www.gulfsouthfoundation.org

Turtle Excluder Device Compliance / Enforcement Workshop

The Foundation hosted a workshop at the Golden Nugget Hotel in Biloxi, MS on March 24-25, 2015 to gather industry, federal, and state official perspectives on turtle exclusion device (TED) compliance and enforcement in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic states. At this two-day meeting, participants received briefings on current regulatory activity/regulations and outreach, discussed issues and concerns currently faced in the fishery, and brainstormed next steps. The workshop was funded by NOAA under Award Number #NA14NMF4720318. Specific workshop objectives included: 1) Update participants on outreach currently being conducted by state and federal agencies; 2) Update participants on the achievements of current regulations; 3) Explore options for improving compliance; and 4) Develop action items to improve collaboration between industry and regulators.

The workshop included a full range of industry and state and federal agency participants as well as NGOs. Invited speakers included Foundation Regional Coordinators Gary Graham and Lindsey Parker; John Mitchell, NOAA Fisheries Gear Monitoring Team (GMT); Dale Stevens, NOAA Fisheries GMT; Robert Hoffman, NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office (SERO); John Williams, Southern Shrimp Alliance; Manny Antonaras, NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement; Jason Brand, US Coast Guard; Brandi Reeder, TX Parks and Wildlife; Chad Hebert, LA Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries; Scott Bannon, AL Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources; Rick Burris, MS Dept. of Marine Resources; and Rama Shuster, FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The workshop was facilitated by CONCUR, Inc.

After the series of presentations, the workshop was organized to provide for open discussion. The bulk of the workshop focused on dialog intended to (1) update the group on the different types and frequencies of TED outreach in the southeast; (2) voice industry concerns and articulate ideas for improvement going forward; and (3) identify potential action items and work groups. Recurring themes included: overall TED compliance rates show improvement in the industry; GMT trainings were seen as a positive aspect of TED management, and a key component in increasing compliance rates; state enforcement partners seek a more robust process for pooling and processing enforcement data; interest in pursuing shared culpability among boat owners, captains, and crew; and experiences with inconsistent guidance from enforcement officers. Feedback from participants has been positive and the Foundation is actively pursuing funding for a follow-up workshop in the future.

Funding Update

The Foundation has not received funds through the **NOAA/NMFS Cooperative Research** program since 2011 or the **MARFIN** program since 2012. Unfortunately, the Foundation went 0-6 this year as well. We submitted seven proposals in response to the Saltonstall-Kennedy program solicitation and anticipate hearing funding decisions within the next two months.

Gulf & South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Inc.

Program Update

“Continued Development and Assessment of Bycatch Reduction Devices within the Southeastern Shrimp Trawl Fishery”

(NA10NMF4540108, GSAFFI #115)

This project continued work completed under a previous award from NOAA through field testing of new or promising bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) for certification following the NOAA Fisheries BRD Certification Testing Protocol for the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic. BRD designs were solicited from shrimp fishermen, industry gear innovators, and NOAA Fisheries Harvesting Branch Personnel. Four devices were tested during this project: Ricky BRD, Modified Nested Cylinder, 2 inch Flat-bar TED, and T-TED (Trash Excluder Device). Four BRD assessment trips were undertaken and consisted of 135 sea days and 245 sampled tows. Paired nets were towed, one, the control net with a closed BRD and the other a similar net with a functioning experimental BRD. Total catch weight and total shrimp weight were determined for each net for each tow. Unfortunately none of the BRDs tested had the minimum required 30 tows. Both the Ricky and Modified Nested Cylinder BRDs would have passed the provisional certification threshold if sufficient tows were available; however both BRDs showed high shrimp loss during this study. Additional work on these BRDs is necessary for achievement of future certification. The Final Report is available from the Foundation.

“Continuation of an Expanded Outreach Program and Technology Transfer of Updated Turtle Excluder and Bycatch Reduction Devices to the Southeastern U.S. Shrimp Industry”

(NA12NMF4330088, GSAFFI #122)

This project involved the networking of gear specialists and performance of gear outreach throughout the Southeast. The Foundation utilized Regional Coordinators, Mr. Gary Graham from Texas and Captain Lindsey Parker from Georgia, to organize and orchestrate the numerous efforts in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. Gear experts from the NMFS Harvesting Branch - Pascagoula, Mississippi provided assistance with dissemination of gear information in this project. Efforts were directed

toward major fishing ports from North Carolina to Texas. These efforts included dissemination of educational materials, TED/BRD checks aboard docked vessels, and instruction on ways to check and maintain TED/BRD compliance. The project provided the shrimping industry with clear and definitive information regarding TED regulations and compliance parameters. Importantly, feedback received from many fishermen regarding their experiences with educational efforts was indicative of the success of this project. The Final Report is available from the Foundation.

“Prediction and Verification of Snapper-Grouper Spawning Aggregation Sites on the Offshore Banks of the Northwestern Gulf of Mexico”

(NA14NMF4270039, GSAFFI #129)

This project aims to predict and verify multi-species spawning aggregations in the northwestern Gulf of Mexico. In turn, this will allow consolidation of existing methods and further development of robust



Potential sheephead spawning aggregation

Photo: Kyle McCain

fishery dependent and independent data collection methods, designed to evaluate the status of all of the stocks that use multi-species spawning aggregation sites. This will be the first attempt to predict and verify spawning aggregations on the banks of the northwestern Gulf of Mexico. Though they are very likely to exist, no spawning aggregations

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

in this area have been documented. At a minimum, the project will compile and analyze fishery dependent and fishery independent data, expert fisher knowledge, and geomorphological predictions of likely spawning aggregation sites that can be used within this and other subsequent studies. Verified locations of aggregation sites will facilitate the collection of valuable data for stock assessments and management reef fish species. Several sampling cruises have been made to date and spawning aggregations have been located.

“Examination of Catch and Discards within the Commercial Snapper-Grouper Vertical Hook-and-Line Sector in the South Atlantic United States”

(NA14NMF4270040, GSAFFI #130)

Many species within the snapper-grouper fishery management unit are data poor. As a result, many of the species specific stock assessments have a high level of uncertainty associated with the models, including catch characterization, effort, and quantity of discards. This project reinitiates a fishery observer program within the vertical hook-and-line (bandit rig) sector of the snapper-grouper fishery of the South Atlantic United States to enhance the universe of data that are available to stock assessment scientists. Through cooperation of Foundation Coordinators and Industry Cooperators, we will solicit the participation of the commercial fishing industry to voluntarily assist in the performance of this project. A GSAFF contracted observer will be placed onboard cooperating vessels to collect a variety of data quantifying the participation, gear, effort, catch, and discards within the fishery. The intent of this project is not to form a standalone dataset, but to augment currently available datasets. With the information derived from this project, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and NOAA Fisheries can better assess the impact of current effort and discards on the data-poor snapper-grouper fishery. Data collection efforts have begun. If you are a participant in the South Atlantic snapper-grouper fishery and would like to participate in our program, please reach out to the Foundation (white paper located on page 5).

“Increasing Compliance and Effective Enforcement of Turtle Excluder Devices in the Southeast Shrimp Fishery—A Collaborative NOAA Fisheries/Industry Workshop”

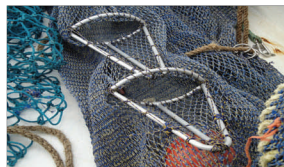
(NA14NMF4270318, GSAFFI #131)

Over the years, several issues have surfaced which have hampered effective and efficient enforcement of TED regulations. This project brought together personnel from NOAA Fisheries, Industry, and fisheries enforcement agencies to discuss problems associated with TED enforcement. The Foundation organized and convened a 2-day workshop in March 2015. The second deliverable will be a final workshop report, which will include an overview of the workshop discussions, presentations to include enforcement issues, and potential solutions and handouts. As a result of this effort, it is expected that all participants have a clearer understanding of the dilemmas currently being experienced by both Industry and various agencies involved with enforcement of TED regulations. Additional information on the workshop is included in the cover story (page 1).

“Shrimp Fishery Turtle Excluder Device/Bycatch Reduction Device Compliance Outreach Workshops for the National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office”

(WC-133F-14-SE-3800, GSAFFI #132)

This program, funded through a contract with NMFS, will assist with gear compliance and provide new turtle excluder device (TED) and bycatch reduction device (BRD) information to members of the shrimp fishing industry throughout the Southeast region (North Carolina to Texas). The Foundation will be responsible for relaying management outcomes and providing educational outreach services to the industry affected by TED/BRD regulations. The Foundation, through its staff and Regional Coordinators (Gary Graham and Captain Lindsey Parker), will serve as a liaison between the NMFS Southeast Regional Office, Protected Resources Division, and the commercial shrimp fishing industry. This program should provide industry with clear and definitive information regarding TED and BRD regulations. It is expected that through these educational efforts, the shrimp industry will continue to transition to the new regulations in a more effective and efficient manner. These activities will build upon the work conducted in our previous and current gear outreach projects (#122, #131).



Gulf Seafood Marketing Coalition Update

The Coalition continues to work with the Gulf States and our partners to promote Gulf Coast Seafood through an award from the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC). The award expires in August 2015, please contact the Foundation or Marketing Director Joanne Zaritsky with any funding opportunities.

MARKETING INITIATIVE UPDATES —

- Retail partnerships conducted with assistance of The Food Group over the course of Year III of this project resulted in an average of 152.8% sales increase in stores in 25 states.
- Joanne Zaritsky and Judy Jamison attended the Louisiana Fisheries Forward Summit on March 10-12, 2015. The Foundation had a table for distributed literature about Gulf Seafood Trace, the Coalition, and the Foundation (*picture right*).
- Joanne Zaritsky and Chef Brian Landry, with assistance from Edelman, met with nine media outlets, including *Cosmopolitan*, *Food & Wine*, *Good Housekeeping* and *Food Republic*, during the NYC media tour on February 23-26, 2015 to discuss the benefits of Gulf Seafood, sustainability, and the upcoming shrimp season. Chef Landry prepared shrimp etouffee for editors of *Every Day* with Rachel Ray and Meredith Publications.



Joanne Zaritsky and Judy Jamison at the Louisiana Fisheries Forward Summit



Chef Brian Landry's Shrimp Etouffee

- BIG Communications was contracted to conduct follow-up consumer research on Gulf seafood. The research results were presented at the Coalition meeting in October 2014 in Gulfport, MS. Key findings from the national survey of 1,800 consumers included: Cost and availability are two primary hurdles and “freshness” is the most important trait when choosing seafood.
- A Coalition meeting was held on April 22 in New Orleans, LA. The three agencies that have been working with the Coalition, The Food Group, Zehnder Communications and Edelman, provided recaps of marketing initiatives that were conducted over the last three years. The Coalition had an extensive discussion about future funding and sources are being actively sought.

WEBSITE / SOCIAL MEDIA—

Visit the enhanced Gulf Seafood website! Over 100 recipes can be found on the site with corresponding full-color images. In addition, the ever growing state database of suppliers is presented in the “Find It” tool, which allows users to locate Gulf Seafood near them based on geography, species, and seller-type. Also check out Gulf Coast Seafood on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest.

www.EatGulfSeafood.com

www.gulfsouthfoundation.org

facebook.com/gulfcoastseafood

twitter.com/EatGulfSeafood

pinterest.com/eatgulfseafood

instagram.com/eatgulfseafood

Snapper-Grouper Fishery Dependent Data, by the Fishery, for the Fishery

4th Year of a study conducted by the Gulf & South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Inc. with cooperation from the Bandit Reel Sector of the South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery

A high degree of variance is associated with the stock assessments for many species within the South Atlantic snapper-grouper complex. This variance is a result of a lack of data available to stock assessment scientists during analyses. However, the stock assessments are considered a component of the best available science and are used by fishery managers to regulate the harvest levels of snappers and groupers.

Many commercial fishermen within the South Atlantic snapper-grouper fishery are aware that more data are needed to allow scientists to accurately gauge the health of fish stocks. The purpose of this project will be to better define the catch, characterization, and discards associated with the bandit reel sector of South Atlantic commercial snapper-grouper fishery in hopes of reducing the variance associated with future stock assessments. This is the fourth year for this research which has been highly successful with data already being used in recent stock assessments.

The support of commercial fishermen within the South Atlantic is necessary for this project to be a success. Cooperating fishing vessels will be compensated a daily rate to allow space for a fishery observer to collect data during a commercial fishing trip. Vessel liability insurance will also be provided by the Foundation to protect the vessel in the event of a catastrophic incident resulting in injury to the observer.

The Foundation's Observer/Vessel and Industry Coordinators are actively soliciting the cooperation of fishing vessels and captains willing to voluntarily participate in this study. **Only vessels with valid snapper-grouper permits, exclusively fishing bandit rigs, will be allowed to participate in this program.**

Due to the requirements associated with the scientific collection permits needed to conduct this research, **a copy of the vessel's Coast Guard documentation, South Atlantic snapper-grouper permit, and your date of birth will need to be faxed to 813-286-8261.** This information will be kept in strict confidence and will only be shared with those agencies issuing scientific collection permits.

For more information or to participate, please contact:

Daniel Parshley – Observer/Vessel Coordinator
Cell: 912-506-8869
E-Mail: danparshley@comcast.net

or

Frank Helies - Program Director
Phone: 813-286-8390 Fax: 813-286-8261

Please fax your documentation and contact information to 813-286-8261.

This project is funded to the GSAFF through NOAA Award #NA14NMF4270040.

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Update



The Council met in Biloxi, MS in March/April 2015 to discuss the following fishery issues:

Red Snapper Allocation - Amendment 28

The Council reviewed a draft of Amendment 28 which considers reallocating the red snapper quota between the sectors. The Council chose Action 1 - Alternative 8 as its preferred alternative - The increase in allowable harvest from the update assessment will be allocated to the recreational sector. The percentage increase for the recreational sector should be that amount attributable to recalibration of MRIP catch estimates. This will result in 51.5% of the quota going to the recreational sector and 48.5% to the commercial sector. The Council is expected to take final action on Amendment 28 in August, 2015.

Since the allocation amendment will be implemented in early 2016, after the commercial IFQ allocation is released, the Council requested that staff begin developing a framework action that would allow the NMFS to hold back a portion of the commercial quota in anticipation of the implementation of Amendment 28.

Gag

Last year, a stock assessment concluded that the gag stock was no longer overfished or experiencing overfishing. However, members of the Council's Reef Fish Advisory Panel and fishermen testifying before the Council have expressed concern that gag do not appear to be as abundant as the assessment suggests. The Council reviewed options to adjust the gag annual catch limit (ACL) and season. Action 1 contains alternatives to increase the recreational ACL and annual catch target (ACT) through 2017 and to adjust the commercial ACL and eliminate the commercial ACT. Action 2 contains alternatives to eliminate the fixed December 3-31 recreational gag closed season, adjust the starting date of the recreational gag season, or consider adopting a split season. The Council will review the document and take final action during its June Council meeting in Key West, Florida.

Greater Amberjack

Last year, a stock assessment concluded that greater amberjack remains overfished, continues to experience overfishing, and did not meet the 10-year rebuilding plan that ended in 2012. The Council reviewed and took final action on a framework action for greater amberjack that adjusts the ACL and commercial/recreational management measures to ensure that the stock is rebuilt. The Council set the 2015 Annual Catch Targets at 1,092,372 for the recreational sector and 394,740 for the commercial sector. The minimum size limit will be increased to 34 inches fork length, and the commercial trip limit will be 1,500 pounds gutted weight (1,560 pounds whole weight). The framework action will be transmitted to the Secretary of Commerce for approval and implementation.

Shrimp

The Council approved the annual Texas shrimp closure for 2015. The closure is part of a cooperative seasonal closure with the State of Texas and runs concurrent with its mid-season closure. The shrimp fishery is closed annually off Texas to allow brown shrimp to reach a larger and more valuable size prior to harvest, and to prevent waste of brown shrimp that might otherwise be discarded due to their small size.

The Council also reviewed Shrimp Amendment 15, which looks at Status Determination Criteria for Penaeid Shrimp and Adjustments to the Shrimp Framework Procedure. The Council added a new action (Action 1.1) that addresses the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) and added an MSY based overfishing threshold in Action 1.2. The Council will be presented with a final document at the June Council meeting.

Finally, the Council reviewed a scoping document for Shrimp Amendment 17, which addresses the expiration of the shrimp permit moratorium. An options paper will be presented to the Council in June.

(Gulf Council Update—April 2015)

For more information about Gulf Council activities, please visit www.gulfcouncil.org

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Update



The Council met in St. Simon's Island, GA in March 2015. Several issues were tackled by the Council: regulations for blueline tilefish, protection of spawning areas for snapper grouper species, stock assessments for red snapper and gray triggerfish, management measures for king mackerel, issues affecting management in South Florida, and continued improvements for data collection.

Blueline Tilefish Regulations

A stock assessment conducted in 2013 determined the blueline tilefish stock was undergoing overfishing. The Council requested temporary emergency action from NOAA Fisheries to reduce harvest and began development of Amendment 32 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan to end overfishing. Approved by the South Atlantic Council in December 2014, the amendment would further reduce the annual catch limit (ACL) for blueline tilefish to 35,632 pounds for 2015, implement a commercial trip limit of 100 pounds (gutted weight), and a recreational bag limit of one blueline tilefish per vessel per day from May through August. Recreational harvest would be prohibited the rest of the year. The new regulations are expected to be in place by Mid-April from the NC/VA border southward to the east coast of FL.

Although the blueline tilefish stock is currently treated as one unit along the entire East Coast, the new regulations would only apply to vessels in the South Atlantic Council's area of jurisdiction. Concerns about rapidly increasing commercial and party/charter landings of blueline tilefish north of the NC/VA boundary, particularly in New Jersey, prompted the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council in February to request emergency action to implement a commercial trip limit of 300 pounds (whole weight) and a recreational bag limit of 7 fish per person within its jurisdiction. Commercial landings from Virginia and farther north increased on average from 11,000 pounds to 217,000 pounds in 2014 and party/charter vessel landings increased on average from 2,400 fish per year to over 10,000. Representatives from the Mid-Atlantic Council attended last week's meeting and discussed concerns about applying the 2013 blueline tilefish stock assessment results throughout the species' range.

Snapper Grouper Amendment 36—Spawning Special Management Zones

The Council continued to review alternatives to identify and protect important spawning habitat for snapper grouper species through the designation of Spawning Special Management Zones (SMZs), approving Snapper Grouper Amendment 36 for public hearings. The amendment includes alternatives for eight new Spawning SMZ sites, reconfiguration of an existing Deepwater Marine Protected Area off the coast of GA, and allows for the boundary of the existing Charleston Deep Artificial Reef MPA off the coast of SC to be moved to accommodate recently deployed artificial reef material. Fishing for or possession of snapper grouper species would be prohibited within the Spawning SMZs but fishermen would be allowed to troll for pelagic species. The amendment also includes alternatives for transit and anchoring provisions.

Other Items

The Council continued developing management alternatives in Mackerel Amendment 26 to revise ACLs and the stock management boundary for king mackerel and allow the sale of king mackerel bycatch in the shark gillnet fishery.

NOAA Fisheries advised the Council during the meeting that the numbers for the 2015 South Atlantic red snapper ACL will be available in late May. The ACL is calculated using landings and discard estimates from 2014. If the 2015 catch limit is large enough to allow for a 2015 fishing season, the recreational season would begin the second Friday in July for consecutive weekends, with the number of fishing days determined by the ACL. If allowed, the commercial season would begin the second Monday in July. NOAA Fisheries will make the announcement as soon as the numbers become available.

(SAFMC News Release, March 12, 2015)

For more information about South Atlantic Council activities, please visit www.safmc.org

Blue Crab Panini



Ingredients:

- ½ cup Light mayonnaise
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp Lemon juice
- 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- ¼ cup Green onion chopped
- ½ cup Celery diced
- 1 pound Blue crab meat
- ¼ cup Slivered almonds
- French bread
- Olive oil

Directions:

1. Combine mayonnaise, mustard, lemon juice, Worcestershire, onion and celery in a medium bowl. Gently add crab and almonds and add salt and pepper to taste. Brush cut sides of French bread with olive oil and top one slice with crab mixture.
2. Top with additional French bread slice. Heat a stove top grill or Panini press over high heat. Grill each sandwich for 2 minutes per side, pressing down with a metal spatula to flatten. Cook until browned and warm through. Cut into halves or quarters to serve.

<http://eatgulfseafood.com/recipes/Blue-Crab-Panini>

2015

May

27-28 **Southeastern Fisheries Association 63rd Annual Meeting**, Orlando, FL.

June

8-12 **South Atlantic Fishery Management Council**, Doubletree Grand Key Resort, Key West, FL.

8-12 **Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council**, Marriott Beachside, Key West, FL.

9-11 **Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council**, Hilton Virginia Beach Oceanfront, Virginia Beach, VA.

10-13 **International Conference on Shellfish Restoration**, Charleston DoubleTree, 181 Church Street, Charleston, SC 29401.

July

August

4-6 **Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission**, The Westin Alexandria, Alexandria, VA.

10-14 **Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council**, Hilton Riverside, New Orleans, LA.

11-13 **Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council**, Holiday Inn Midtown, New York, NY.

16-20 **American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting**, Hilton Portland and Executive Tower, Portland, OR.