

**STATE-FEDERAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
Wednesday October 20, 2021
Webinar**

Chairman **Scott Bannon** called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. The following members and others were present:

Members

Scott Bannon, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Luiz Barbieri, FLFWC, Saint Petersburg, FL
Rick Burris, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Jason Froeba, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Chris Mace, TPWD, Corpus Christi, TX
Andy Strelcheck, NOAA Fisheries, Saint Petersburg, FL
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Others

Richard Cody, NOAA Fisheries, Silver Spring, MD
Clay Porch, NOAA Fisheries, Miami, FL
Trevor Moncrief, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Adam Pollack, NOAA Fisheries, Pascagoula, MS
Kevin Anson, ALDCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Shannon Calay, NOAA Fisheries, Miami, FL
Dan Ellinor, FLFWC, Tallahassee, FL
Amy Schueller, NOAA Fisheries, Beaufort, NC
Daniel Luers, NOAA Fisheries, Saint Petersburg, FL
Marie Head, ALDCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Megan Fleming, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
John Mareska, ALDCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Jason Saucier, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

Staff

Gregg Bray, FIN Program Manager
Jeff Rester, SEAMAP Program Manager
Steve VanderKooy, IFJ Program Manager
James Ballard, Sport Fish Restoration/Aquatic Invasives Coordinator
Charlie Robertson, Fisheries Restoration Coordinator
Debbie McIntyre, IJF Program Staff Assistant
Joe Ferrer, Systems Administrator, Ocean Springs, MS
Donna Bellais, ComFIN Programmer, Ocean Springs, MS
Cheryl Noble, Administrative Assistant, Ocean Springs, MS
Deanna Valentine, FIN Scanning Specialist, Ocean Springs, MS
Ali Wilhelm, Sport Fish Restoration/Aquatic Invasives Staff Assistant/Travel Processor

Angie Rabideau, Senior Accountant

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was approved as written.

Discussion and Final Approval of GulfFIN Funding Activities for 2022

G. Bray provided a brief overview of the documents that were distributed to the group. He also discussed the summary of the activities for potential funding in 2022 that was developed by the FIN Committee. The list is attached (Attachment A). **R. Cody** stated NOAA Fisheries Office of Science and Technology (OST) staff stated the likelihood of operating under a continuing resolution resulting in level funding is high. For that reason, the preliminary proposed funding levels are utilizing 2021 amounts. The preliminary numbers show the GulfFIN line item at \$4.294M and RecFIN line item at \$3.415M. The Gulf portion of the RecFIN line item totals about \$1.059M. In addition, historically, there is an additional \$880K provided by the NOAA OST to allow for large base sampling allocations for MRIP dockside surveys. Congress also allocated additional funds to support the FIN programs. The GulfFIN line item has an increase of \$405k and the RecFIN line item received an increase of \$93k. With administrative fees removed, the amount available for FIN funding in 2022 totals \$6.791M. The original amount proposed for 2022 for all the jobs was approximately \$6.626M, which meant there is a potential surplus of approximately \$165K. NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fishery Science Center (SEFSC) has provided funding assistance to support headboat port sampling and biological sampling programs that covers all of 2022. The breakdown of the proposed 2022 funding is as follows:

2022 Proposed Funding		
GulfFIN line item	4,219,946	
OMB administrative fee	(293,608)	
SER administrative fee	(2,396)	
Congressional increase - 2022	405,207	
GulfFIN - available		4,329,149
RecFIN line item	3,415,426	
OMB administrative fee	(238,292)	
RecFIN - available	3,177,134	
Gulf portion of RecFIN (1/3)	1,059,045	
MRIP base allocation funding	880,000	
2022 MRFMA Rec General Survey funds		
2021 MRFMA Rec General Survey funds	900,000	
Congressional increase - 2022	93,476	
SER administrative fee	0	
Economics survey	0	
SEFSC data collections	(228,308)	
LDWF payback	(242,000)	
RecFIN - available		2,462,213
Additional funds		

SEFSC funds		0
SER funds		0
HQ funds		0
Other		0
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING		6,791,362

The original amount proposed for 2022 for all the jobs proposed was approximately \$6.626M, which results in a potential surplus of \$165k.

After discussion, **L. Barbieri** moved to fund **Coordination and Administration of FIN Activities, Collecting, Managing, and Disseminating Marine Recreational Fisheries Data, Operation of FIN Data Management System, and Trip Ticket Program Implementation and Operation for a total budget of \$6.827M and was seconded by A. Strelcheck. The motion passed unanimously.**

This funding scenario would result in a potential surplus of \$166k. Until definitive funding amounts for 2022 are provided by NOAA Fisheries it is difficult to determine how to prioritize surplus spending. **G. Bray** stated biological sampling is currently operating under a funding shortfall through December 31, 2022. The GulfFIN committee expressed a desire in helping to offset that shortfall with GulfFIN surplus if available. **G. Bray** stated that when accurate funding levels are obtained, GulfFIN would provide some recommended spending priorities for the S/FFMC to review and make a final decision on.

G. Bray also discussed GulfFIN has received funding to support state survey work and the Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting Program (SEFHER). Both funding amounts are being tracked separately and can only be used for those specific tasks. Currently, funds are being used to fully support Alabama Snapper Check and GSMFC administrative costs. NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office has also provided funding to support a dockside validation survey to be implemented to support the new federal for-hire logbook reporting program under SEFHER. In 2020, GulfFIN received \$1.5M to support year 1 activities which are just now getting started. Alabama and Florida staff have been trained and the remaining states will be trained in the coming weeks. GSMFC also received an additional \$450k in 2021 to support validation survey implementation. Based on the late start in year 1 and proposed budgets for year 2, we project we have enough funding in hand to support through December 31, 2022 with likely a small amount of carryover after 2022.

Discussion of SEAMAP Funding Activities for 2022

J. Rester provided some background on the SEAMAP budget and surveys for the Gulf of Mexico. The FY2021 SEAMAP appropriation was \$5.125 million and he stated that SEAMAP received approximately \$4.73 million for fishery independent sampling for all three SEAMAP components. All three SEAMAP components based their FY2022 budget on level funding of \$5.125 million. The total proposed for the Gulf was \$2.02M.

The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee reviewed the various SEAMAP surveys along with their associated costs. For FY2022, SEAMAP will continue the current SEAMAP survey work and sampling effort and hope that level funding or additional funding will be appropriated.

After discussion, **L. Barbieri moved to accept the proposed funding for SEAMAP surveys for 2022 for a total budget of \$2.02M and was seconded by J. Froeba. The motion passed unanimously.**

Discussion and Final Approval of IJF State Research Funding for 2022

S. VanderKooy discussed the Interjurisdictional Fisheries State Research Funding program (SuRF). With increases in IJF funding the program is supporting a program to assist with important research priorities at the state level. A total of \$1.4M has been made available in 2021 and \$974,800 is being made available in 2022. **S. VanderKooy** showed 14 projects being completed by state partners in 2022. Four states are working on flounder research and other research is being done on blue crabs, oysters, acoustic monitoring research, and a fishery dependent survey of the Florida recreational scallop fishery.

After discussion **L. Barbieri moved to accept the proposed funding for IJF State Research Funding for 2022 for a total budget of \$974,800 and was seconded by J. Froeba. The motion passed unanimously.**

Menhaden Advisory Committee Report

T. Moncrief provided the Menhaden Advisory Committee report. The MAC met virtually on Tuesday, October 5, 2021.

Review of Operational Assessment for Gulf Menhaden (GDAR03)

Dr. Amy Schueller (NOAA Beaufort) presented the results of the Operational Assessment for Gulf Menhaden (GDAR03). The MAC had provided review prior to the meeting so no additional changes were made to the report. The bottom line is that the stock is neither overfished nor is overfishing occurring. The MAC moved to approve the Stock Assessment Report (GDAR03) and move it to the SFFMC for their review and consideration. The motion was approved unanimously. After some committee discussion **L. Barbieri moved to accept the Operational Assessment Report for Gulf Menhaden (GDAR03) and send it onto the Commission Business session for their approval. The motion was seconded by J. Froeba. The committee approved the motion unanimously.**

Review of 2021 Gulf Menhaden Season

R. Mroch (NOAA Beaufort) presented the 2021 landings through the end of August. In general, landings were relatively low for April, May, and June but went up in July and then fell again in August which put them well below the five-year average by about 23%. There were a number of tropical systems including Hurricanes Fred, Ida, and then TS Nicholas that came through late further impacting fishing days. Based on typical landings in the last two months of the season, we are likely on track for a projected total of around 388k mt. This is a 6.1% decrease from last year

and an 18% decrease from the 5-year average. It was reported that no menhaden were harvested from Texas waters in 2021. Mroch stated that this year's port sampling was complicated by COVID but he has contact with samplers and all is going well. It looks like next year is set for continuing with these samplers as well.

Ecosystem Modeling

Two presentations were made by the Ecosystem modeling community. **Dr. Igal Berenshtein** (NOAA Miami) reported on a RESTORE project to integrate information on ecosystems, stressors, and predator prey interactions into assessments and management of fisheries in the entire Gulf of Mexico. **Dr. Kim De Mutsert** (USM/GCRL) presented another Ecopath and Ecosim model for Louisiana which includes a spatial component and predicts the effects on menhaden. The model includes environmental stressors driven by the Mississippi River watershed and the hypoxic zone which vary spatially and temporally resulting in variable menhaden mortality.

Marine Stewardship Certification of Gulf Menhaden Updates

Peter Himchak (Omega Protein) stated that the auditors have started the surveillance for Gulf Menhaden MSC Certification. Industry will start its portion with an open meeting on October 18th and close on October 26th. A number of the MAC members will likely be contacted by the surveillance team over the next couple weeks.

NOAA Observer Steering Committee

Francois Kuttel (Daybrook) explained that NOAA has ordered observers to assess a proof of concept program by putting cameras on one of the fleet's steamers to record interactions with marine mammals and turtles in the wild. They will be deploying floating models of turtles and how they end up in the nets. Two observers and two drone pilots will spend next week testing out the protocols.

Election of Chair

The federal partner is next on the rotation for MAC chair but **R. Mroch** will be moving to a new position at NOAA and he recommended that **T. Moncrief** (MS) continue as chair for the coming year. The MAC agreed unanimously.

After discussion, **L. Barbieri** moved to accept the MAC report. **J. Froeba** seconded the motion. **The committee approved the motion unanimously.**

Update on State and Federal Red Snapper Survey Calibration Issues

A. Strelcheck stated the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council has made a recommendation to NOAA Fisheries to implement calibrations for state survey red snapper estimates starting in 2023. During the Council meeting there was a motion asking for additional coordination between NOAA Fisheries, state partners, and GSMFC to understand differences between state surveys and federal general survey. **A. Strelcheck** wanted to get an update on those efforts to work toward a January 2022 meeting to discuss this issue in detail. **R. Cody** discussed that a small working group of the Gulf Transition Team that includes NOAA OST, SERO, SEFSC, state partners and GSMFC has been created to develop the initial plan for a larger workshop in

January 2022. This workgroup is meeting November 9, 2021 to discuss the terms of reference and agenda for the January 2023 workshop. **S. Bannon** asked if there was a delay in the federal budget if it would impact the ability to have the workshop in January 2022. **R. Cody** stated because the meeting is coming up so quickly the likelihood of holding an in-person meeting might be diminishing but initial efforts will be to hold an in-person meeting.

Election of Officers

S. Bannon was nominated for chairman and **L. Barbieri** was nominated for vice-chairman. The nominations were closed and both were approved unanimously by the committee.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

ATTACHMENT A

GULFFIN ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION IN 2022

Ongoing

H - Coordination and Administration of FIN Activities

H - Collecting, Managing and Disseminating Marine Recreational Fisheries Data

H - Operation of FIN Data Management System

H - Trip Ticket Program Operations

Funded through other sources

H – Biological Sampling for Recreational Catches (funded through Dec. 31, 2022)

H – Headboat Port Sampling (funded through Dec. 31, 2023)