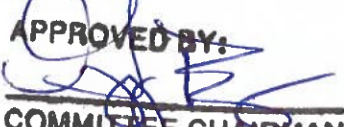


APPROVED BY:  
  
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN  
on behalf of  
Luiz Barbieri.

**STATE-FEDERAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
Thursday October 30, 2025**

Chairman **Luiz Barbieri** called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The following members and others were present:

**Members**

John Mareska, ALDCNR, Dauphin Island, AL  
Luiz Barbieri, FLFWC, Tallahassee, FL  
Joe Spraggins, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Jason Froeba, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Chris Mace, TPWD, Corpus Christi, TX  
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Andy Strelcheck (virtual), NOAA Fisheries, Saint Petersburg, FL

**Others**

Patrick Banks, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA  
Doug Boyd, Boerne, TX  
Chris Bradshaw, FLFWC, Charleston, SC  
Rick Burris, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Eric Gigli, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Lindsey Hoyer, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Paul Mclaughlin, LDWF, Lake Charles, LA  
Trevor Moncrief, MDMR, Biloxi, MS  
Ty Hibbs, Slidell, LA  
Nicole Beckham, ALDCNR, Gulf Shores, AL

**Staff**

Gregg Bray, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Steve VanderKooy, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Charlie Robertson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Jeff Rester, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Keith Wilson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Joe Ferrer, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Donna Bellais, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Deanna Valentine, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Dalton Powell, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Michael Brochard, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Angela Rabideau, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS  
Ali Wilhelm, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

### **Adoption of Agenda**

The agenda was approved with suggested amendments. Presenter updated for Item 8 and Item 10 removed for future meetings.

### **Discussion and Final Approval of GulfFIN Funding Activities for 2026**

**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 2026 that was developed by the FIN Committee. **Bray** stated we currently have no indication of proposed funding levels for 2026. **Bray** mentioned the preliminary proposed funding levels are utilizing 2025 amounts of \$7.5M. The current amount proposed for 2025 for all the jobs was approximately \$9.29M, which would result in a funding shortfall. **Bray** stated that the committee should likely make a motion based on the priorities they would like to fund and we would reconvene the committee virtually when funding levels are realized and if a shortfall was realized.

The committee members discussed in detail how to make funding decisions for GulfFIN with uncertainty in 2026 funding levels. After considerable discussion the committee made the following motion:

**Motion: The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee moved to approve the following GulfFIN activities for 2026 (Coordination and Administration of FIN Activities; Collecting, Managing, and Disseminating Marine Recreational Fisheries Data; Operation of FIN Data Management System; Trip Ticket Program Operations; Alabama Snapper Check Implementation; and Southeast Headboat Port Sampling (pending NOAA SEFSC funding availability)). The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee will reconvene when 2026 funding levels are obtained. We request the Commission provide authority to make final funding decisions to the State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee upon reconvening with realized funding levels. The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee forwards this onto the full Commission for their approval. The motion passed unanimously.**

### **Discussion of SEAMAP Funding Activities for 2026**

The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee reviewed the various SEAMAP surveys along with their associated costs. **J. Rester** discussed the expected FY2026 SEAMAP appropriation should be approximately \$6.725 million for fishery independent sampling for all three SEAMAP components. All three SEAMAP components based their FY2026 budget on level funding of \$6.725 million. The total proposed for the Gulf was approximately \$3.0 million. After discussion the committee made the following motion:

**Motion: The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee moved to accept the proposed funding activities for SEAMAP surveys for 2026. The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee will reconvene when 2026 funding levels are obtained. We request the Commission provide authority to make final funding decisions to the State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee upon reconvening**

**with realized funding levels. The Committee forwards this onto the full Commission for their approval. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Discussion and Final Approval of IJ State Research Funding for 2026**

The committee received an update from **S. VanderKooy** on the Interjurisdictional Fisheries State Research funding program. GSMFC is making available \$178,457-\$235,055 in new monies to each state based on need for work in 2026 and budgets have been received from each state. **VanderKooy** provided table of proposed projects submitted by each state. After discussion the committee made the following motion:

**Motion: The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee moved to accept the proposed funding for IJF activities for 2026 for a total budget of \$1.06M and to forward this onto the full Commission for their approval. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Discussion and Final Approval of Next IJ Species for Profile/FMP Development**

**S. VanderKooy** discussed the need for starting a new species profile as the work on the Black Drum profile is nearly complete. **VanderKooy** stated that the Technical Coordinating Committee recommended striped mullet and spotted seatrout be selected as the next species for profile development. After discussion the committee made the following motion:

**Motion: The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee moved that Striped Mullet and spotted seatrout be selected as the next species for profile development and to forward this onto the full Commission for their approval. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Menhaden Advisory Committee Report**

**S. VanderKooy** presented the overview of 2025 Gulf fishing season. The landings through September was 412,572 mt or 1,357 M standard fish. This is up 8% over 2024 for equivalent time (335,551 mt) but down 5% from the previous five-year average (435,014 mt). In May, NOAA forecasted a higher than average hurricane season with 13-19 named storms of which 6-10 could become hurricanes including 3-5 major hurricanes but thanks to Saharan Sand and a dry summer over the Atlantic, the number of fishing days were higher than normal leading to higher effort. 33 vessels fished with 6 run boats in 2025 and fishing effort for the whole season is estimated to be around 256,049 vtws and projected landings could come in around 420,701 mt.

**VanderKooy** did not provide any forecasting nor was there any update on fishing in the Atlantic. The MAC will need to discuss what the expectations are for the Commission to provide in the future.

**C. Gelpi** (TPWD) reported that a total of 14 sets were made in Texas waters in August and landings were about 7.3% of the available TAC at 2,556,050 lbs.

**S. Raborn** and **P. Mudrak** (LGL) presented the final results from the purse seine fishery bycatch study off the coast of Louisiana. This was the second time they had provided the presentation to the MAC.

**S. VanderKooy** provided a review of the port sampling for 2025. For the first time in at least the last 6 years, the samplers should be approaching the target numbers of 300 samples per plant. A total of 616 processed samples were completed through the end of August and there are a number of samples still left in freezers and the October samples will be recovered from the plants over the next few weeks. The Commission is completely covering the port sampling effort now, not just the contracts. Supplies and logistics are being handled by staff although the ageing of the samples is still being conducted by NOAA Beaufort for now.

**S. VanderKooy** updated the MAC on the electronic reporting for 2025. The new program is working well with the fleet providing their daily catch estimates on a monthly basis through the portal. **VanderKooy** reported that all the historic CDFR data is in the office and being blended into a central database which will include the Joe Smith year through 2014, the Ray Mroch years through 2023, and the new system for 2024 and 2025. We anticipate having the complete frame finished and populated by next year. A question was raised by the industry regarding some of the old, legacy fields such as weather and direction to shore which aren't valuable any longer.

Based on this discussion and the reports that the Commission will provide in the future, the MAC agreed that it may be time to review all the inputs on the old form and perhaps update it to meet the needs for managers today. **VanderKooy** will reach out to the MAC after the first of the year to go through how the CDFRs might be modified to be more beneficial for management. In addition, the group will discuss what other information they may want Commission staff to provide as part of the regular updates before the season and in October.

**P. Himchek** was unable to attend but conveyed that the industry expects to be fully recertified by MSC in the next few weeks. He will provide more information at the March meeting.

Finally, since the Omega reps were not able to attend, the Final Discussion and Adoption of Menhaden Advisory Committee SOPs was postponed until March when all the industry reps could be included in the discussion and final approval.

Under other business, **R. Leaf** (USM) presented the results of the diet work conducted by his student Calvin Chee which was presented last October. The study "A Multi-species Trophic Model Combining Biotracers and Stomach Contents for nGOM Fishes" was completed, in part, to help satisfy the ecosystem conditions raised in the audit for MSC certification. **Leaf** also presented work that is underway with his current student looking at the predator/prey relationship between relative abundance of Spotted Seatrout and Red Drum with Gulf Menhaden abundance. The study intends to assess the relative contribution of environmental, biological, and anthropogenic factors to observed trends in stock abundance with a focus on Spotted Seatrout. **Leaf** will update the MAC as the work moves forward.

### **Discussion of Young Fisherman's Program**

**A. Rosenberg** provided a presentation on the Young Fisherman's Program. The problem industry faces is an ageing commercial industry, a lack of young deckhands, a lack of a roadmap for getting started as a new commercial fisherman and large startup costs for potential new fishermen. The Gulf Commercial Fisherman Program works to provide training, mentorship opportunities, and financial planning training for interested new entrants into the commercial fishing industry. The training process includes shore based and on the water training. The program is designed to be as inclusive as possible and removes barriers like language and cost of participation. The program held pilot meetings in October 2024 and May 2025 to test and refine the training process. Each meeting had 5 participants and the feedback about the training was positive. Several of those participants have found new roles in the commercial fishing industry and have stated the Gulf Commercial Fisherman Program was critical in helping them build relationships with existing industry professionals. Rosenberg stated they are planning another training session in 2026. They have also launched the National Future Fishermen Coalition to help empower young fishermen and strengthen industry networks from local to national levels.

### **Discussion of State Port Agent Support for Fisheries Monitoring**

With the absence of federal partners this topic was tabled until a future meeting.

### **Update on Progress of State Data Warehouse Development**

**G. Bray** provided a brief update on the development of a data warehouse at GSMFC to receive and distribute state recreational survey data. This will provide data to interested partners (federal, academia, public) from one location in a standardized format. Should increase accessibility and transparency of state recreational surveys. We have contracted with a company that is building the processes to accomplish importing, validating, disseminating and summary reporting along with making program design documentation available. We have completed the import process for TPWD and LA Creel data. We are working on the import process for Florida SRFS. The import process for AL and MS Creel will closely match what has been created for LA Creel. We have weekly development meetings with the contractor and hope to have a production interface in early 2026.

### **Review of S/FFMC Standard Operating Procedures**

The committee reviewed the draft standard operating procedures provided by Commission staff. A few editorial changes were provided by committee members and Commission staff agreed to implement the revisions. The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee made the following motion:

**Motion:** The State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee moved to approve the State/Federal Fisheries Management Committee Standard Operating Procedures and to forward them onto the full Commission for their approval. The motion passed unanimously.

*There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.*