

APPROVED BY:

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
NOAA/NMFS Fisheries Penalty Schedules Meeting
MINUTES
Thursday, January 23, 1997
Biloxi, Mississippi

L. Simpson, Executive Director of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. The following were in attendance:

Larry Simpson, Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs, MS
David McKinney, NOAA/NMFS Enforcement, Silver Spring, MD
Karen Raine, NOAA General Counsel, St. Petersburg, FL
Jay Johnson, NOAA General Counsel, Washington, DC
Andy Kemmerer, NOAA/NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Bob Mahood, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Charleston, SC
Ben Hartig, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Charleston, SC
Steve Atran, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, Tampa, FL
Mark Johnson, US Coast Guard, New Orleans, LA
John Webb, US Department of Justice, Washington, DC
Suzanne Horn, NOAA/NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Robin Riechers, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Austin TX
Russell Nelson, Florida Marine Fisheries Commission, Tallahassee, FL
Ed Conklin, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Tallahassee, FL
John Roussel, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Baton Rouge, LA
Corky Perret, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, Biloxi, MS
Vernon Minton, Alabama Marine Resources Division, Gulf Shores, AL
Jerry Waller, Alabama Marine Resources Division, Dauphin Island, AL
Michael Zack, US Coast Guard, New Orleans, LA
Jeff Mayne, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Baton Rouge, LA
John Jenkins, Alabama Marine Resources Division, Dauphin Island, AL
David Dean, Alabama Department of Conservation, Montgomery, AL
Chris Lagarde, Congressman Gene Taylor's Office, Pascagoula, MS
Kay Williams, Save America's Seafood Industry, Pascagoula, MS
John Henry, Mississippi Attorney General's Office, Biloxi, MS
Judi Oram, Mississippi Attorney General's Office, Biloxi, MS
M. B. Adelson IV, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Tallahassee, FL
Perry Joyner, Florida Marine Patrol, Tallahassee, FL
David Rose, Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, Biloxi, MS
Terry Bakker, Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, Biloxi, MS
Mike Landrum, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Baton Rouge, LA
Frank Wakefield, US Coast Guard, Mobile, AL
Cindy Yocom, Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs, MS
Jim Duffy, Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Ocean Springs, MS

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Simpson provided opening comments, including a general welcome and overview of the meeting mission. He indicated his hopes for consensus building and possible changes for improved state-federal communication in the future. He discussed the manner in which the GSMFC had become aware of the NOAA General Counsel "Fix-it" Policy and penalty schedules, indicated that the commission had gathered and distributed information, and had arranged this meeting to address the issue.

A. Kemmerer introduced himself and stated that much confusion and misinformation surrounded this issue and that it was a very good idea to bring together the parties in attendance for discussion. Kemmerer introduced Jay Johnson, Acting General Counsel for NOAA/NMFS; Karen Raine, Chief Prosecuting Attorney for NMFS Southeast Region; Dave McKinney, Chief of Enforcement for NOAA/NMFS; and Suzanne Horn, Special Agent-in-Charge for NMFS Southeast Region. Self-introduction followed, including everyone in attendance.

L. Simpson called attention to the meeting folder and identified each inclusion.

J. Johnson indicated that the meeting agenda was arranged backwards and that internal federal resources govern how and when penalty schedules are generated. The agenda was abandoned, and open roundtable discussion ensued.

J. Johnson stated that the penalty schedules which attendees had seen previously were incorrect and not currently in effect. C. Perret briefed Johnson as to how and when he and others had obtained the earlier penalty schedules and inquired as to whether those schedules were currently in effect. Johnson reiterated that the schedules Perret and others had were not currently in effect and would be replaced by ones which he intended to hand out at the end of the meeting.

J. Johnson indicated the process of penalty schedule revision had started approximately four years ago, when NOAA officials realized they were handling too many "minor" cases, distracting energy from "more important" cases. Johnson passed out descriptions of NOAA enforcement and General Counsel resources and prosecutorial time lines in the southeast region and discussed personnel shortfalls within his agency. He pointed out differences between state and federal law enforcement mechanisms. Violations of state fisheries laws are treated as crimes, like breaking and entering. Violations of federal fisheries laws, except in rare cases, are not crimes, but are civil violations, like breaking a contract. Law enforcement officers can take cases 1) to state authority for criminal penalties, where they will get faster disposition by a local judge, or 2) to federal authority, with civil penalties, and protracted disposition.

C. Perret asked J. Johnson whether fisheries violations are treated differently than wildlife violations. Johnson responded yes, that Congress was very deliberate when passing the Magnuson-Stevens Acts. Most offenses under these acts are civil, not criminal, in an effort to de-criminalize

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fisheries so boat captains would not go to jail, so offending fishermen around the world could go home rather than to a foreign jail.

J. Johnson compared further the state and federal systems of enforcement and prosecution. According to Johnson, in state violations, fish become state property, whereas if the violation is federal, the fisherman retains ownership. Reports are filed with NOAA General Counsel, and if the violator settles, the process ends. If the violator wishes to challenge, then an administrative hearing (less formal than court) is held. Johnson indicated that less than 10% of the fisheries cases brought before federal administrators are accepted for prosecution in federal court. Johnson said if a violator is assessed a civil penalty but fails to pay, counsel must file papers to collect the debt. Success in collection often depends on the magnitude of penalty. If the violator cannot be made to pay, counsel can write the debt off and send it through channels to the Internal Revenue Service for possible collection.

R. Nelson stated his impression that because the probability of catching federal fisheries law violators is relatively low, compliance was encouraged by the threat of relatively large penalties. Nelson lauded the introduction of summary settlements for fishery violations, saying they send the appropriate message, they affect but do not financially cripple people, and summary settlements do not encourage challenge. Nelson stated that the problem, though, with the current system, is a perceived lack of penalty altogether, particularly for "minor" recreational violations.

J. Waller and E. Conklin pointed out that the prosecutorial time line handed out by J. Johnson misleads readers to the conclusion that federal prosecution is more laborious and time-consuming than its state counterpart. Examples were offered by both illustrating striking administrative similarities between the two systems.

B. Mahood asked J. Johnson if NOAA General Counsel shared the goal of conserving natural resources with the regional fishery management councils and states. J. Johnson replied in the affirmative. Mahood discussed some of the goals of the councils, related how intricate and detailed fishery allocation and regulation had become, and stated the impression he had from K. Raine's presentation to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council in November was that recreational fishery violations do not hurt the resource.

V. Minton suggested that compliance is fostered by the perception that violations will be vigorously and consistently prosecuted. J. Johnson replied that it may be inappropriate to set a penalty so high that it "sends a message." He felt that penalties should be set so as to be "appropriate to the violation." He further stated that he had no objection to states handling cases and seeking large penalties, but that federal resources were inadequate for the task.

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C. Perret stated that Mississippi's enforcement and legal resources are quite limited also, and that many of the problems alluded to by Johnson were shared by the states. M. Adelson concurred, but stated that current NOAA penalty schedules in effect amend regulations that are critically important to fishery management efforts.

L. Simpson stated that the goal is compliance. He stated that we must educate our constituents in conservation issues, seek to deter violations, and try to communicate more effectively.

S. Atran stated that state enforcement officers can issue violators a citation on scene, and that contrastingly, federal officers could not. He asked J. Johnson if it was possible to change this for the expediency it might provide in prosecution. Johnson responded that this could be done but may not be appropriate. Johnson further offered that the federal summary settlement system is an effort to make the federal disposition system "look" more like state systems, but if a violator refuses to pay, federal officials must be prepared to seek collection.

R. Riechers commented that the group had spent some time on process and could continue on this discussion, but he thought the reason the group had convened was to discuss the NOAA fishery penalty schedules. Riechers requested an opportunity to view NOAA's current penalty schedules at this time. J. Johnson assented, and K. Raine handed out the recreational and commercial schedules to the group. It was noted that the new schedules carried an effective date of January 17, 1997.

R. Nelson asked if the NOAA General Counsel had seen a reduction in fishery violation case load since the institution of the summary settlement system. Nelson added that, if given the opportunity, knowledgeable violators would choose to be prosecuted federally rather than under state law. Johnson declined to answer the case load question, but responded that as long as state regulations complement federal regulations and vessels are registered by states, federal prosecutors will help prosecute state laws (state directors felt uneasy about this statement), and state jurisdiction under those circumstances extends into the EEZ. Johnson again mentioned personnel shortages within his agency. C. Perret warned Johnson against assuming an abundance of state enforcement and legal resources. L. Simpson concurred with Perret, and reminded Johnson of the need for his agency's help during vessel registration language deliberations leading up to the recent re-authorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

J. King asked if the recent penalty schedule modifications which resulted in this meeting had been an effort to reallocate NOAA legal resources. His feeling was that if so, it would reduce legal effort in the prosecution of minor violations. B. Mahood reminded Johnson that cooperative enforcement agreements were for states to help federal enforcement, not the reverse. Mahood stated that state fishery managers and enforcement officials were outraged with the penalty schedule

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development process because they were not consulted. He stated that no matter what state regulations were, state courts would be reticent to hear cases regarding fishery violations committed in the EEZ.

J. Johnson referred to the new penalty schedule packet and indicated that penalty ranges have been added, and penalties actually assessed are very "fact dependent." He made the point that state enforcement officials would likely be more satisfied with final case disposition under state prosecution than under federal prosecution.

R. Nelson asked if the penalty schedules which had been known to him since October 1996 had ever been in effect. K. Raine responded that the schedules had never been made public, and that the on-scene guidance contained therein had been withdrawn. R. Nelson asked again if the schedules had ever been in effect. NOAA General Counsel failed to respond.

J. Waller stated that the penalty schedules had been in effect for a good portion of 1996. J. Johnson replied that the NOAA penalty schedules are to be used by NOAA attorneys when determining the severity and potential prosecution of cases. With respect to the field guidance contained therein, Johnson stated that what the group had seen earlier was to have been internal and has since been withdrawn.

C. Perret asked whether any state or management council personnel were consulted during the development of the schedules or of the on-scene guidance. Johnson responded that no consultations outside of the federal agencies was sought. Perret stated that state fishery managers and management council personnel might have provided valuable input into the schedule development process. C. Lagarde inquired as to possible changes in prosecution of TED violations. K. Raine responded there would be no changes.

B. Mahood asked as to the current status of fishery management councils and state law enforcement agencies in NOAA General Counsel's eyes. J. Johnson responded that he saw the regional fishery management councils as the proper authorities for FMP development but not for enforcement, that NOAA General Counsel tries to keep the councils and states apprized, and desires close cooperation with states. B. Mahood advocated that NOAA consult councils and states prior to implementation of enforcement protocols, for guidance as to priorities.

A general discussion among state managers, state enforcement personnel, and NOAA General Counsel as to possible disposition of examples of "minor" violations of federal fishery regulations followed. Examples and questions led NOAA General Counsel to summarize several points:

- 1) NOAA's goal is compliance with regulations, not criminal punishment of violators.

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- 2) NOAA would rather gear violations be fixed (FIX-IT) on scene, reduces case load.
- 3) Summary settlements are currently applicable to commercial fisheries only.
- 4) Commercial compliance with gear restrictions is probably quite high; possible permit revocation is an excellent deterrent to violations.
- 5) Charter/Head boats are treated as commercial operations, but individual clients are treated as recreational. Captains are usually cited for violations.
- 6) NOAA General Counsel does not intend to publicize future modifications to operational protocol nor penalty schedules. Management council and state input will not institutionally be sought prior to implementation.

L. Simpson asked state enforcement officers if they had sought federal assistance with enforcement issues in the past. All in attendance answered yes. Simpson indicated that this street should be two-way, that "two heads are always better than one."

R. Nelson suggested that there is a clear connection between state and federal fishery regulations and NOAA penalty schedules. Nelson further suggested that some consideration of relative biological impact must be applied to schedule development. He stated that fishery managers, if given the opportunity, might consider biologically acceptable tolerances for suggestion to NOAA General Counsel. Nelson noted that an annual enforcement report is available from the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council describing distribution of compliance across fisheries by location. Nelson asked if NOAA General Counsel had considered these data when developing the current penalty schedules. J. Johnson replied as to his reliance on A. Kemmerer for guidance. A. Kemmerer indicated that NOAA counsel consulted with himself, with NMFS enforcement, and with the US Coast Guard in developing schedules and guidance.

R. Nelson asked whether a formalized policy existed regarding follow-up for FIX-IT notices. S. Horn replied no. The NMFS relies on re-encountering the violator for confirmation of compliance.

Johnson stated that before the development of the current schedule, he and his agency were dealing with a 300-case backlog. Johnson's regional director simply re-guided his office's efforts toward the larger, more important cases. C. Perret asked if NOAA had used or could use United States Department of Justice legal assistance to deal with the backlog. Johnson replied that the difference between the civil nature of NOAA's violations and the criminal nature of Justice's violations prevented this. B. Hartig inquired as to the possibility of utilizing U.S. Coast Guard attorneys to help with the federal prosecution of fisheries violations. Johnson replied that it was worth exploring.

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After a brief break, L. Simpson called the meeting back to order at 10:35 AM. Simpson asked to see documentation of federal case loads. K. Raine handed out these documents to the group.

J. Johnson indicated that a federal enforcement scoping meeting held in Anchorage, Alaska, had been a success and thought it possible to conduct similar meetings at the state level, regionally. He suggested that various marine enforcement agencies could meet with legal counsels to discuss these issues. He added his belief that penalty schedules and their development are exercises in law, not biology.

E. Conklin asked if summary settlements can be proposed for recreational violations. J. Johnson replied that summary settlement systems were used only for commercial violations. Conklin asked if summary settlements were ever in effect for recreational violations. Johnson replied no, then reversed to yes. Johnson indicated that summary settlements did not appear to work well in recreational situations. Conklin asked about start and end dates for recreational summary settlement system (no answer from NOAA). K. Raine said officers in the field become suspicious of commercial activity if fishermen have a large quantity of fish, obviously more than they can use personally, and look in that case to the summary settlement system for disposition. Raine said that people obviously engaged in recreational fishing are handled somewhat differently than those suspected of commercial activity.

J. Johnson said that the penalty schedule and internal field guidance the group had originally seen was never intended for seasoned officers and was the result of a request from U.S. Coast Guard for their newly-recruited field officers. It was an effort to train for discretion.

E. Conklin asked as a matter of consistency, if the federal penalty schedule is far more lenient than state or Coast Guard penalties. J. Johnson and all enforcement personnel present indicated in the affirmative. R. Nelson agreed with Johnson that fishery managers need not be consulted regarding amounts of fines, but they should be consulted regarding ranges in violation. Nelson discussed a Florida "court assessment" done each year to find what works and what doesn't. He indicated that perhaps NOAA could benefit by a similar exercise. Nelson inquired as to why more NOAA legal resources are not assigned to the southeast, considering the case loads involved. Johnson replies that his staff is decreasing with further decreases planned for the future (129 to 101 going to 95 total personnel in NOAA General Counsel).

J. Waller disagreed with NOAA General Counsel, and the penalty schedules and guidance were presented to himself and others as solid, active documents. All indications had been given that the penalty schedules which the group had seen back in October were current and in effect.

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J. Jenkins indicated that he and his field officers use quite a bit of discretion, that he understood manpower constraints, but explained the frustration field officers have when they believe that NOAA General Counsel will refuse to prosecute minor cases. M. Johnson replied that the Coast Guard is multi-disciplinary and by nature experiences high personnel turnover. The field guidance in question had been developed for new Coast Guard field personnel with little experience. V. Minton stated that the guidance in question allows for more discretion than new officers need. Minton feared that similar violations would not be treated similarly, resulting in a reduction in compliance. M. Johnson disagreed with Minton, and said the Coast Guard boarding officer mind-set is to pursue maximum enforcement action.

T. Bakker noted that Mississippi's enforcement agency is not going to waste money detecting and citing federal fishery violations if NOAA General Counsel is not going to prosecute each case to the fullest. He indicated that to make officers want to enforce federal laws, that NOAA must make laws and back them up. J. Johnson replied that, regrettably, the dollar amount of the potential settlement often drives the discretion of NOAA General Counsel.

R. Nelson used mackerel as an example of the danger in the use of discretionary ranges as a determination index for prosecution. He indicated that from management standpoint, 10% of 500 pounds of mackerel was quite different than 10% of 50 unusually large mackerel.

M. Adelson admonished NOAA General Counsel for attempting to reduce case load by filtering cases in the field. He indicated the strong potential for a problem in public perception. J. Johnson replied that he and the agency don't want that appearance and added that he had hoped that the group could come to agreement about how to improve marine resource management.

C. Perret reminded NOAA that, similar to the Coast Guard, state management agencies are multi-disciplinary as well. Perret stated that the impression given by NOAA that General Counsel may not prosecute certain types of violations gives the public the impression that they can break fisheries laws with impunity. Perret indicated that it looks to him like NMFS wants to manage fisheries without enforcement. Perret said the states would never come out with mandated discretion, which would send a devastating message to public.

Enforcement officers discussed that in many cases, the upper bound of penalty for a particular federal violation is too low to provide a quality deterrent. J. Johnson replied that seizure of the catch should deter violations. J. Mayne indicated that for real deterrent, penalties must be set high enough so that fishermen don't consider them just another cost of doing business. Johnson responded that fishery managers should consider unlawful overages in setting realistic quotas and limits (state attendees voiced disagreement with this comment). J. Jenkins asked if NOAA General Counsel is going to listen to state managers and enforcement and modify their approach accordingly. Johnson was non-committal. L. Simpson indicated that open communication prior to

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implementation of the current schedules would have helped in this case. Johnson replied that he had a whole country full of problems to contend with, that the southeast was not his only responsibility.

J. Webb expressed confusion and said that this sort of case filtering is conducted in every U.S. attorney's office but is not written down. He used an example of drugs entering the country from Mexico. Webb indicated that these actions are not taken because the violations are not crimes rather because legal counsel simply cannot prosecute all of the violations encountered.

J. Johnson said that states have extra-territorial jurisdiction if state laws are not in conflict with federal laws. Johnson further indicated that cases where state laws are not at least as stringent as federal laws are very rare. Johnson suggested that if states can get prompt and sufficient judgement using state judicial systems, then they should do so. If, in some cases, evidence is not up to state criminal muster (shellfish was the example), then states may need Lacey Act help. His bottom-line guidance was, if states can prosecute satisfactorily, then do so.

B. Hartig stated he sees a danger in state prosecution, that state judges and prosecutors see a variety of types of cases, and may not realize the importance of fisheries violations. Federal judges and prosecutors may be more focused and have more expertise in prosecuting fisheries cases.

The group recessed for a 45 minute lunch break. L. Simpson reconvened the meeting at 1:15 p.m. and recognized A. Kemmerer. Kemmerer commended J. Johnson for taking all this heat that he (Kemmerer) normally endures at council meetings. The group responded jovially to this humor. Kemmerer summarized that no one in attendance thinks that people breaking the law should get off penalty free. Kemmerer thought the idea of an annual regulatory and prosecutorial assessment was a good one and encouraged states and NOAA to conduct these assessments. Kemmerer pointed out that Johnson has a personnel problem, and the NMFS is compensating by filling some shoes. Reductions in manpower are reality. He advocated bringing state and federal attorneys together to share ideas to optimize the use of state and federal resources. Kemmerer lauded the GSMFC for starting this important process and asked if the GSMFC could set up meetings with enforcement and legal specialists and federal counterparts to work out details of how best to achieve compliance with fishery laws. L. Simpson responded yes. Many attendees expressed their agreement with the action, and thanked GSMFC and NOAA/NMFS for helping defray costs.

J. Webb stressed that civil enforcement may be less valuable in achieving compliance than criminal enforcement. He indicated that there currently is a great opportunity for enhancing compliance through criminally punitive prosecution. Webb said U.S. Department of Justice can and does frequently put people in jail. Compared to civil fines and forfeiture of contraband, jail is real leverage. The Lacey Act provides that leverage. Webb believed that a few well-placed criminal cases would go a long way toward deterrence. States can exploit the power of the Lacey Act if the violation involves interstate commerce. Seafood industries need to get the message. Webb urged

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states to consider using available legal resources to develop criminal cases. In wildlife law enforcement, many species face extinction, and Webb thought this was probably true with fish as well. Webb stated he feels we must put out the fire. He urged states to work toward more criminal fisheries law enforcement. Webb said that because Magnuson-Stevens provides little criminal leverage for fisheries violations, that state law and legal systems will become more important than ever in gaining compliance.

J. Johnson indicated that because we are dealing with the health of the sea and most of the animals therein are dependent on habitat found in state waters, states and federal agencies must work together. He further stated that agencies must use all laws, state and federal, to improve ecosystems. We must develop management systems that work. L. Simpson agreed, and stressed all aspects, biology, enforcement, and law.

C. Perret recalled several years ago S. Horn's asking for state assistance with federal law enforcement and recalled himself asking A. Kemmerer for help with various issues on occasion. He asked if J. Johnson could imagine the shock when the NOAA penalty schedules and field guidance were made known to the management councils and states. Perret requested better, more timely communication between the states and the federal government in the future.

In closing discussions, attendees made tentative plans for collaborative meetings between the states and federal enforcement personnel, legal counsels, and fishery managers. J. Waller and S. Horn would work with GSMFC staff to develop settings, timing, and agendas. It was agreed that the March meeting of the GSMFC in Biloxi, Mississippi, would be the logical first venue.

R. Riechers asked J. Johnson if, as a result of this meeting, he had changed his thinking with regard to consulting with fishery managers prior to implementing General Counsel actions affecting fishery enforcement. Johnson replied that he welcomes any comments, and he and his agency will deal with problems as they arise. Johnson expressed a desire to meet with state legal specialists to revise state law for improved fit with federal regulations.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL
Washington, D.C. 20230

January 24, 1997

Mr. Larry B. Simpson
Executive Director
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
P.O. Box 726
Ocean Springs, MS 39566-0726

Dear Mr. Simpson:

Thank you for asking me to participate in yesterday's meeting concerning the enforcement priorities of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). I believe that we had some very constructive dialogue, although we have not reached common ground and much work still lies before us. To that end, I think it is necessary that I reiterate some of the points that I tried to make during the discussions, so that our further discussions will be most productive.

1. In light of the concerns raised by the Commission and the state fisheries agencies, NOAA has withdrawn the internal enforcement guidance that had been distributed to the Coast Guard and state cooperating enforcement agencies at a recent training session.

2. Unlike most state fish and wildlife laws, and unlike the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, most violations arising under the Magnuson-Stevens Act are not crimes; they are civil violations and, as a result, the procedures for imposing and collecting sanctions are quite different from the criminal procedures most state conservation officers are familiar with.

3. The authority of the Secretary of Commerce to impose civil monetary penalties and/or permit sanctions for violation of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and many other marine resource conservation laws, has been delegated to the NOAA General Counsel in the first instance. The penalty schedules are intended to set out a range of penalties as an initial starting point for issuing a notice of violation and assessment in an individual case -- there will be many factors that influence whether the penalty should be higher or lower within the range.

4. With respect to our process for issuing and revising penalty schedules, we do not intend to open that process up to public comment. The actual penalties imposed in particular cases are subject to review by an Administrative Law Judge, the NOAA Administrator and the Federal courts. We are interested, however, in learning what types of fishery violations are most important from the states' and Commission's conservation



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Attachment A

perspectives and we are certainly willing to adjust our penalty schedules from time to time as priorities change or compliance problems are brought to our attention and verified.

5. The NOAA Office of General Counsel has been reduced in size in recent years as part of the general downsizing of the federal government. The downsizing will continue for the next eight months at least. While I do not expect the number of lawyers now assigned to fisheries enforcement in the Southeast Region to decline, it is unrealistic to expect that there will be any additions to that staff in the foreseeable future.

6. Whatever number of enforcement lawyers we may have now or in the future, it will always be necessary to set internal priorities for sanctioning violations, to avoid overloading our system. As John Webb pointed out, this is a fact of life for every prosecutor in every federal jurisdiction. In this regard, NOAA has focussed our limited legal resources on those violations which pose the greatest threat to the conservation of marine resources. We set, and revise, our internal priorities by having quarterly meetings with the Regional Administrator and the Regional Special Agent-in-Charge in each region. - Rew

7. Our decision not to seek monetary sanctions for certain violations does not mean that those violations are unimportant or trivial -- just that they are less important than the other violations that have occurred and will continue to occur. If these lesser violations are to be sanctioned, we will need additional help from the states to impose the appropriate penalties under state law, just as the National Marine Fisheries Service has needed additional help from cooperating state agencies to monitor the fisheries and to detect the violations in the first instance.

8. For many years, NOAA General Counsel has been actively involved in encouraging the coastal states to exercise the full range of their constitutional authority to regulate state-registered fishing vessels even when they are operating within the exclusive economic zone. We have intervened or filed amicus curiae briefs in several cases where state extra-territorial authority had been questioned. And, several members of my staff were extensively involved, albeit behind the scenes, in the recent Congressional deliberations leading up to passage of the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996, which clarified those instances in which state laws remain applicable to fishing in the exclusive economic zone.

9. With respect to next steps, NOAA would like to arrange a series of regional meetings between state and federal law enforcement agents and lawyers to try to establish a common understanding on which level of government is best equipped to handle particular types of violations. As I mentioned, these meetings would broadly address marine resource conservation needs in both state and federal waters -- without regard to boundaries.

Moreover, these meetings would not focus exclusively on the Magnuson-Stevens Act, since there are some marine resource conservation violations that can only be sanctioned under federal law, some that can only be sanctioned under state law, and many that can be sanctioned under both state and federal law.

In conclusion, thank you again for this first effort at reaching common ground. I would appreciate your distributing this letter to all those that attended the meeting.

Very truly yours,



Jay S. Johnson
Acting General Counsel

cc: Rolland Schmitten
Andrew Kemmerer
David McKinney
Suzanne Horn
Michele Kuruc
Karen Raine



Larry B. Simpson
Executive Director

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

P.O. Box 726, Ocean Springs, MS 39566-0726
(601) 875-5912 (FAX) 875-6604

January 31, 1997

Mr. Jay S. Johnson
Acting General Counsel
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Office of the General Counsel
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Jay:

In response to your January 24th communication regarding last week's meeting, I too enjoyed the discussions. We have a long way to go, Jay, but we have at least started. I would like to respond to a few of the points you mentioned and reiterate some of the points we made during the discussions.

You noted that you do not intend to open up the process of revising penalty schedules to public comment. I take that to mean that your definition of the "public" includes state management partners, state law enforcement personnel under cooperative enforcement agreements, and the regional fishery management councils. While I agree the lay public would hinder the process and add inappropriate elements to your decision equations, the previously mentioned groups would help improve the product. In any event, a fatal flaw in the process was the lack of communication of the federal perspective to historical and legitimate federal partners in the states. You will have to do what you feel is appropriate about both issues.

You noted that NOAA focused limited legal resources on those violations which pose the greatest threat to the conservation of marine resources. Reasonable people can disagree, and in this regard there was disagreement. Recreational users of marine resources must be subject to the same standards of law enforcement and prosecution as are commercial users. History tells us that recreational users can and do pose serious challenges to the conservation of marine resources. It is important to maintain the perception of swift and sure enforcement action to ensure public compliance. Species such as red snapper, red drum, and amberjack are certainly examples of the magnitude of recreational take, and its impact on the health of fishery stocks.

Let me close with a point upon which we are in complete agreement. Together, we must explore and prepare for the appropriate and full exercise of state legal authority to regulate fishing activities that impact both state-managed and federally-managed marine resources. The presence or absence of federal fishery management plans, and compatibility of state and federal regulations are areas which

Attachment B

-Alabama-

-Florida-

-Louisiana-

-Mississippi-

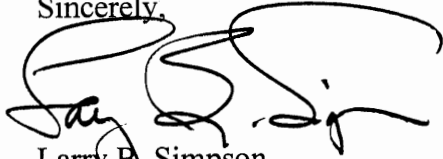
-Texas-

Mr. Jay S. Johnson
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demand our full attention. We at the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission are in the process of amending our Interjurisdictional Fisheries Management Program cooperative agreement to meet these challenges and develop initiatives.

Our next meeting concerning these enforcement and legal issues, and others as necessary, will be held in Biloxi, Mississippi at the Isle of Capri Crowne Plaza Hotel on March 19, 1997. I certainly hope you and your personnel can attend, so that we may reach a reasonable consensus on this important state/federal interaction. Rollie Schmittens plans to attend this meeting of the Commission, so he may join us in the discussions. My office will keep all past participants informed of meeting details as they are finalized.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Larry B. Simpson', written over a horizontal line.

Larry B. Simpson
Executive Director

LBS/mt



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

Office of General Counsel for
Enforcement and Litigation,
Southeast Region
9721 Executive Center Dr. N.
Suite 137
St. Petersburg, FL 33702

January 21, 1997

Larry B. Simpson
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
P.O. Box 726
Ocean Springs, MS 39566-0726

Dear Mr. Simpson:

In response to your letter to Jay S. Johnson dated November 15, 1996, enclosed please find the following:

1. A copy of my presentation to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council on November 14, 1996.
2. Copies of the following published penalty schedules:
 - a. The Southeast Region Magnuson-Stevens Act Commercial Penalty Schedule revised 1-17-97;
 - b. The Southeast Region Magnuson-Stevens Act Recreational Penalty Schedule revised 1-17-97;
 - c. The Southeast Region Magnuson-Stevens Act Commercial Summary Settlement Penalty Schedule revised 1-17-97;
 - d. The Southeast Region Fix-It Notice Violations dated 12-15-96.
3. A computer-generated list of Magnuson-Stevens Act cases opened in the Southeast Region from September 1, 1996, through December 31, 1996. The list contains the fishery plan, the location of the alleged violation, a description of the violation, and the current status of the case. Because the data base does not distinguish between cases

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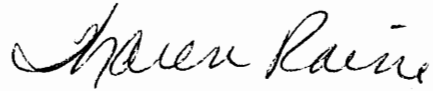
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K. Raine 1/23/97

treated under the recreational schedule, which was approved during the Winter of 1996, and the commercial schedule, which was approved in August of 1996, the list begins with cases opened as of September 1, 1996, in order to more accurately reflect those cases handled under these penalty schedules.

Sincerely,



Karen Antrim Raine
Senior Enforcement Attorney

Enclosures

cc: Jay S. Johnson
Michele Kuruc

COMMENTS ON MAGNUSON ACT PENALTY SCHEDULES
FOR THE GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 14, 1996

Karen Antrim Raine - GCEL/SE

I. INTRODUCTION

Thank you for inviting me to speak to you today. As you know, I am the senior enforcement attorney in the Southeast Region, and I work for the NOAA Office of General Counsel for Enforcement and Litigation, which is headed by the Assistant General Counsel for Enforcement and Litigation, Michele Kuruc. The last time I addressed the Gulf Council was a couple of years ago to explain the restructuring of the enforcement arm of NOAA General Counsel. As I have said since that time, I am always available to come to Council meetings to address any concerns you may have, to talk about our enforcement efforts, and so forth.

I have been invited to speak today about the penalty schedules in effect in the southeast region. I understand that you are particularly interested in my comments about the penalty schedules for Magnuson Act violations. First, however, I am going to briefly review the enforcement goals of NOAA GC that I relayed to you a couple of years ago and the progress made toward reaching those goals, part of which includes revisions to the penalty schedules.

II. GOALS

In advising you a couple of years ago about NOAA GC's enforcement objectives and goals, I discussed the fact that while a great number of fishery violations are documented each year, the resources to deal with all of those violations are limited. I noted that the challenge is how to best focus or channel or use the available, limited resources to accomplish the objectives of the fisheries management regime in a timely and effective manner. To that end, planning is requisite. I advised you of a program wherein the Regional Administrator, Special Agent-in-Charge and myself would meet quarterly to discuss which areas of fishery management are critically endangered, the regulatory structure that supports those areas (including whether the structure is adequate or is lacking), anticipated problems (including legal problems), as well as available resources from both Law Enforcement and General Counsel.

I also advised as to sanctions available for violators and how we would be looking to expand the summary settlement system.

III. QUARTERLY MEETINGS

The quarterly meetings have been held regularly since February 1994. We hold these meetings in order that the views and concerns unique to each participant, that is, to fishery management, to law enforcement, and to general counsel, are aired, discussed, and taken into account in determining strategies for enforcing fishery laws. Through this process, views and concerns held by those other than the primary group are also discussed and taken into account. Due to the very nature of fisheries, this process is dynamic. Enforcement priorities and strategies must be flexible in order to respond to current needs as well as limitations. These regular meetings provide not only an opportunity to review progress during the previous quarter, but alert all of us to upcoming events, regulations, and other matters of mutual concern and that will potentially affect the enforcement of fishery regulations.

A part of these discussions has been how to prioritize enforcement cases. As a result of these meetings, we have been able to prioritize enforcement cases in a general way, such as recognizing that prosecution of more recent cases takes precedent over older cases and that violations that are deemed egregious take precedent over relatively minor violations.

IV. SANCTIONS/PENALTIES

A. Review

In regard to the sanctions for violators, we indeed undertook an overdue revision of our penalty schedules in the Southeast Region, and did not limit ourselves to reviewing just the summary settlement system. The fact that we were reviewing the schedules was not secret. For example, in a letter published in the National Fisherman in January 1996, I noted that the schedules were in the process of being revised.

Let me just note here that reviewing and revising penalty schedules is not something new - frequently penalty schedules are modified. After the development and implementation of a penalty schedule, various factors may come into play over a period of time that necessitate revision of that schedule. For example, changes in regulations, policies, and the status of a particular fishery stock may factor into a revision. Also, we may discover that certain penalties are too high or too low based on the economics of a particular fishery, which may have changed over time. Presidential and Congressional guidance, whether through directives, legislation or what-

have-you, may also necessitate a change in a penalty schedule.

B. Sanction Options

Although both civil and criminal sanctions are available under certain circumstances, the majority of cases documented under the Magnuson Act are handled through the civil administrative process. Let me briefly review the various options that are available as civil sanctions. These options include verbal warnings, written warnings, a voluntary compliance program, a summary settlement system, a monetary penalty assessed through a notice of violation and assessment (NOVA), permit sanctions, and/or abandonment of catch or proceeds from the sale of the catch. You may be more familiar with 3 of the sanctions mentioned - verbal warnings, generally issued by the officer onscene, written warnings, which may be issued by law enforcement personnel or by NOAA GC, and NOVAs, which are issued only by NOAA GC. The Magnuson Act as well as our governing rules of civil procedures, specifically provide authority to issue written warnings and NOVAs. Verbal warnings are often thought of as being within the discretion of the law enforcement personnel onscene.

A relatively new sanction is found in the voluntary compliance program and is called a fix-it notice. This system was implemented in response to presidential and congressional directives that agencies shall allow for the reduction or waiver of penalties in certain circumstances and allow the violator to correct the violation. These directives will be more fully explored in a moment. Under this fix-it notice system, regional representatives from law enforcement, fisheries management, and general counsel, recommend to the headquarters offices of general counsel for enforcement and litigation and law enforcement specific violations in which a violator will be given the opportunity to fix or correct the violation within a certain time frame. That time frame, in the southeast region, is generally 30 days. If during a subsequent boarding or investigation, the violation is determined to have not been fixed or corrected, the violator is subject to further action, ranging from a written warning to imposition of a monetary penalty (through the summary settlement system). In this region, the Regional Administrator, the Special Agent-in-Charge, and I reviewed the various regulations under the Magnuson Act and agreed to recommend a number of violations for the fix-it notice program. Those recommendations were then forwarded to the headquarters' offices I just mentioned. Not only this region, but all regions forward their recommendations for fix-it notice violations to the headquarters' offices in order that consistency is maintained in the fix-it notice

program. Examples of violations considered appropriate for this program in the southeast region include improper gear or vessel identification, various gear violations, including trap construction, some net size violations, failure to submit some permit information such as a change in information, and failure to display an already-issued permit.

In this region we have utilized a summary settlement system for a number of years. The basic idea of this system is that law enforcement personnel may issue a ticket to a violator, either onscene or at a later date, without going through an attorney, that specifies a monetary fine that the violator may pay. This fine is less than a NOVA amount that would be assessed for the violation. If a violator pays the summary settlement amount, the case is over. In certain circumstances, particularly those circumstances involving the lapse of a permit, the summary settlement amount will be suspended if corrective action, such as obtaining the permit within a specified time frame, is taken. If the summary settlement amount is not paid, the case is forwarded to NOAA GC for a NOVA assessment. In order that the summary settlement ticket amounts do not vary among the various officers or agents who may be issuing the tickets, the types of violations for which a ticket may be issued and specific fines for those violations are spelled out in a penalty schedule issued by NOAA GC. Of course, in any given situation, an officer or agent may believe that the circumstances do not warrant issuance of a summary settlement and in the exercise of his or her discretion, forward the case to NOAA GC for review and determination of whether a NOVA will be issued.

The Magnuson Act and our governing regulations under that Act authorize permits to be sanctioned under two circumstances: (1) a permit may be suspended for non-payment of a civil or criminal penalty - in this circumstance, the opportunity for a hearing is not provided because that opportunity was already provided when the NOVA or criminal indictment was issued; and (2) a permit may be revoked,, suspended, or modified if a permit holder or permitted vessel violates a statute administered by NOAA or any regulation promulgated or permit condition prescribed thereunder. Under this second circumstance, the opportunity for a hearing is provided and, in addition, a monetary penalty may also be issued. As you might imagine, issuance of a permit sanction generally gets the attention of a violator and is an effective enforcement tool, both in terms of obtaining payment of unpaid penalties and sanctioning bad acts.

Under both the Magnuson Act and the civil procedure rules,

property may be seized and forfeited. The property may consist of the catch, gear, or even the vessel. In this region the property we mainly deal with is the catch from a fishing vessel. Often that catch is seized and subsequently sold. Either way, whether sold or not, the agency generally seeks to have the catch become the property of the government. This can be accomplished in one of two ways. First, a claimant to the property, such as the owner or operator of the vessel, may voluntarily abandon his or her interest in the property. Or, the agency may take affirmative steps to have the catch forfeited to the government. Briefly, if the forfeiture is opposed, an action is filed, through the Department of Justice, generally via a local United States Attorney's office, in federal district court, wherein the matter is heard and determined. As I am sure you can understand, it can be problematic to file forfeiture actions in federal district court when a relatively small number of fish is involved, due to the relatively higher importance placed on many other cases within our already overburdened legal system. While abandonment or forfeiture may be utilized in conjunction with monetary penalties, sometimes abandonment or forfeiture alone is a sufficient penalty.

C. Factors Considered

As you can see, there is a wide variety of enforcement action that may be taken in any given case. Although the Magnuson Act provides for imposition of penalties in excess of \$100,000 for a violation, a host of other factors must be taken into account in determining an appropriate penalty. Pursuant to the Magnuson Act and procedural regulations, specific factors taken into account may include the nature, circumstances, extent, and gravity of the alleged violation, the respondent's degree of culpability, any history of prior offenses, and other matters as justice may require. Not only is this list of factors important in determining a penalty in a specific case, these factors are considered in establishing a penalty schedule.

Within the past 19 months, as you know, guidance by way of the President and Congress has been issued. Specifically, on April 21, 1995, President Clinton issued a directive on regulatory reform - waiver of penalties and reduction of reports. Pursuant to this directive, to the extent permitted by law, agencies are to use their enforcement discretion to modify the penalties for small businesses to waive the imposition of all or a portion of a penalty when the violation is corrected within a time period appropriate to the violation in question. For those violations that may take longer to correct than the period

set by the agency, the agency shall use its enforcement discretion to waive up to 100 percent of the financial penalties if the amounts waived are used to bring the entity into compliance. This provision applies only where there has been a good faith effort to comply with the applicable regulations and the violation does not involve criminal wrongdoing or significant threat to health, safety, or the environment. This agency, along with all others, was required to submit a plan describing the actions it would take to implement these policies. As indicated before, the fix-it notice plan was a direct result of this presidential directive.

And, recent legislation in the form of the Small Business Regulatory Fairness Act of 1996, intends to ease the regulatory enforcement burden on "small business entities" by requiring regulatory agencies (NOAA included) to assist them with compliance and by easing the enforcement burden on them should they violate the regulations. As relates to my discussion today, one provision of the Act, section 223, regarding rights of small entities, basically says that the agency shall implement a policy allowing for the reduction or waiver of penalties under certain situations. The fix-it notice program seems to comport with this provision.

While both the presidential directive and the legislation speak in terms of small-business entities, which comprise the fishing businesses in this region, the spirit of these documents extends to recreational fishermen as well.

As I am sure at least some of you know, enforcement comments, from both the office of general counsel for enforcement and litigation and the office of law enforcement, are provided on the various management measures that are considered by the Council. We take the time to review these measures in order to catch problems in enforcing and prosecuting subsequently implemented regulations. Unfortunately, many of our comments go unheeded. When regulations are not easily enforced due to problems in the management measures themselves, aggressive enforcement cannot be reasonably expected. An example that comes to mind is our plea to define fish trap in order that those regulations may be enforced especially vis-a-vis crustacean traps. Enforceability problems such as this are considered in drafting penalty schedules.

Also taken into account were management measures that were inconsistent, either with each other or in practice or even with state regulations. For example, although the federal bag limit for red drum is zero, various coastal states allow varying bag limits of red drum to be taken.

Some of the other factors that weighed into our decisions included various court decisions, both at the administrative law judge level and at the federal court level that impact in general our way of doing business, the relative importance of various issues as weighed against each other, the needs of the Coast Guard for particular guidance in certain issues, and so forth.

We also needed to consider the available resources to prosecute violations. Due to the high number of regulatory plans in the southeast region, the year-round fishing, the high number of enforcement personnel, both federal and state, to document violations, and other factors, the numbers of violations documented in the southeast region have in the recent past been much higher than in other regions. In fact, the number of cases handled by the southeast office of general counsel has in the recent past comprised over 50% of the total cases nationwide. Of 14 NOAA enforcement attorneys, 3 are in the southeast region. In reviewing cases in our region, it was seen that hundreds of cases involving relatively small numbers of fish were logjamming the system so that we simply could not timely prosecute the cases, whether large or small. Timely prosecution is important for all law enforcement efforts in that an immediate sanction carries an impact, particularly to the individual violator as well as to the regulated industry as a whole, that diminishes with the passage of time. The immediacy of prosecution emphasizes the importance of complying with the regulations. Due to budgetary concerns and mandated reductions in FTEs, we have not been able to, nor will we be able to, hire more attorneys or even support staff to enable us to prosecute every single case that is made, no matter how small. At one extreme, the attorneys were being asked and tasked with prosecuting cases involving one or two minimally undersized fish, or wherein the documentation numbers for a vessel were faded or absent. We have reviewed and even tried various options with cases involving relatively few numbers of fish. For example, we tried a summary settlement system wherein relatively low fines were offered. This system simply did not work - the number of violators who did not pay and thus whose cases were forwarded to the southeast general counsel for enforcement and litigation office, were more than the attorneys could handle. Please remember that there are many many state officers, coast guardsmen, and federal agents documenting cases that end up in an office staffed by 3 attorneys. When NOVAs are issued, particularly in cases wherein a summary settlement ticket was not paid, the respondents often take the opportunity for a hearing before an administrative law judge. We simply could not keep up with timely prosecuting newly received cases while continuing to handle all of the cases in which NOVAs had

already been issued. In a nutshell, we simply could not afford to continue with this system. Therefore, we reached a point prior to the revision of the penalty schedules wherein we liberally used our prosecutorial discretion in handling cases and encouraged the office of law enforcement to use its discretion in order to reduce the numbers of cases we were seeing.

Please understand that, historically, most of the law enforcement action that have resulted in violations referred to the southeast regional enforcement attorneys has been opportunistic - that is, a fishing vessel is observed at random or located after a search and rescue mission, boarded, and a violation is discovered and documented. As we have seen, a concentration on this type of enforcement activity tends to concentrate on the smaller violators rather than the worst offenders, and logjams the total enforcement effort. Therefore, the offices of general counsel for enforcement and litigation and law enforcement have combined forces to redirect effort in order to get the biggest bang for the buck. I will not talk about any of these efforts in detail. However, the penalty schedules do reflect this strategy.

D. The Process

As you can see, there is obviously a challenge to meet in drafting a penalty schedule that considers all of the factors I've mentioned. The authority to establish penalties, including penalties in a penalty schedule as well as in specific cases, has been delegated from the Secretary of Commerce to the NOAA Office of General Counsel and specifically redelegated to the NOAA Office of General Counsel for Enforcement and Litigation. Although the penalties are within the province of the Office of General Counsel for Enforcement and Litigation, a more inclusive process was followed for the recent revisions to the Magnuson Act penalty schedules for the Southeast Region, as follows: the Southeast regional office of the general counsel for enforcement and litigation drafted penalty schedules. Those drafts were then circulated to the Regional Administrator, the Special Agent-in-Charge, and the Coast Guard for comment. Seeking internal comment from these federal partners was appropriate inasmuch as the Regional Administrator brought a view that encompassed fishery management issues, the Special Agent-in-Charge brought a practical law enforcement perspective to the table, as did the Coast Guard. After much discussion and revision based upon comments from these three quarters, a regional consensus or compromise was reached, and the schedules were forwarded to headquarters offices for the general counsel for enforcement and litigation and law

enforcement for review and approval. And, in fact, the schedules were approved by those two offices. The recreational penalty schedule was approved in February 1996 and the commercial penalty schedule was subsequently approved, during the summer of 1996. The official penalty schedules that are available to the public are issued from the headquarter's office of general counsel for enforcement and litigation, not from the regional office.

The schedules were effective upon approval. Full implementation of the schedules at the enforcement field level, however, has taken some time due to the time required to train field level law enforcement personnel, which did not occur until after approval of the commercial penalty schedule this summer. In a practical sense, the result was that field action taken that was inconsistent with the new schedules was reviewed and modified in accordance with the new schedules either by the regional office of law enforcement or the regional office of general counsel for enforcement and litigation.

Now that the schedules are implemented at the field level, we will revisit the schedules in a year to determine what action has been taken during the course of the year for various violations and what, if any, adjustments or modifications to the schedules need to be made.

E. The Penalty Schedules

At this point, I think it would be a good idea to discuss exactly what is a penalty schedule. Penalty schedules are simply general guidelines to apply to specific fact situations. Although enforcement actions in individual cases may differ due to various factors, including aggravating or mitigating circumstances, penalty schedules are established in recognition that we should be and are striving for fairness and consistency in penalizing violators of our nation's fishery laws who are similarly situated. Traditional use of law enforcement discretion is not thwarted by the penalty schedules, nor is prosecutorial discretion eliminated by the schedules. Again, the schedules are guidelines, or tools, in determining appropriate action under all of the circumstances.

Perhaps the key issue is what is appropriate under all of the circumstances. These are hard issues, as I'm sure you realize. The office of general counsel for enforcement and litigation would like to aggressively prosecute those individuals who are in some intentional and egregious fashion violating important fishery laws. But we also agree that when any violation of the Magnuson Act occurs, it is indeed a violation and should be dealt with in some fashion,

whether the enforcement action is a verbal warning or a high monetary penalty and permit sanction and even vessel forfeiture.

The penalty schedules now in effect do potentially cover the range of available sanctions, as they have in the past. It is unfortunate that you have been provided, through your briefing book, a copy of something apparently purporting to be a copy of the official penalty schedule that is published. This document is not an officially published penalty schedule and was not provided by my office to the Council. In addition to being an obviously incomplete copy of a document, I am afraid that it has been a source of confusion and misunderstanding, due at least in part to the fact that it is incomplete.

In order to clear the air, I will pass out an information sheet that contain questions and answers regarding the penalty schedules for violations of the Magnuson Act. As you can see, and as I have indicated, we have, as in the past, distinguished recreational fishermen from commercial fishermen in determining monetary penalties. First, let's put the recreational fishery violations into context of the big picture. Recreational violations under the Magnuson Act fall into basically 3 categories: (1) unlawful quantity of fish (e.g., exceeding the bag limit); (2) unlawful size of fish (e.g., undersized fish); and (3) unlawful condition of fish (e.g., fish without heads and fins intact, berried lobsters). Please note that for purposes of the recreational penalty schedule, recreational violators do not include anyone with any indicia of commerciality or headboats or charter boats. That is, anyone is a part-time commercial fisherman, anyone who has a state saltwaters products license or any other commercial-like permit, or who sells their catch, will be treated as a commercial fisherman.

Although documented recreational violations constitute a small percentage of violations in the southeast region, even though the recreational sector often gets a very high percentage of the TAC, again, because of resource limitations, particularly in General Counsel, an attorney cannot be assigned to prosecute each recreational violation. This is, again, because of the affect of the aggregate number of cases that would fall into the hands of 3 attorneys to prosecute. This does not mean, however, that monetary penalties are never appropriate, even for first-time recreational violators.

In general, the recreational penalty schedule provides a monetary NOVA range of \$100 - \$5,000 for all violations, whether for an unlawful quantity of fish, undersized fish,

or condition of fish. The illegal fish is also subject to abandonment or forfeiture. Jewfish and billfish, due particularly to their size and status, have NOVA penalty ranges of \$1,000 - \$5,000, and again, the illegal fish is subject to abandonment or forfeiture. Summary settlement options are also provided for some violations.

Internal guidance, which is not a part of the officially published penalty schedule, has been provided to assist law enforcement in exercising discretion in regard to any case. Such guidance does not eliminate either enforcement officer or agent or prosecutorial discretion.

Possible monetary penalties for commercial violators are, in general, higher than those for recreational violators, because commercial fishermen are conducting business in a highly regulated industry. For example, in general, NOVA ranges for violations regarding size, condition, or quantity of fish in a commercial context range from \$1,500 - 10,000 for a first-time violator and the illegal fish is, as with recreational fishermen, subject to abandonment or forfeiture. Because there are obviously more violations that are potentially commercial in nature rather than recreational, the commercial penalty schedule is a bigger document and covers more ground than the recreational penalty schedule. As with recreational fishermen, internal guidance which is not a part of the officially published penalty schedule, has been provided to assist law enforcement in exercising discretion in regard to any case. Again, such guidance does not eliminate either enforcement officer or agent or prosecutorial discretion.

E. Particular Issues Raised

We understand that in addition to misunderstandings regarding the actual penalty schedules, questions as to why the states were not asked to participate in the penalty schedule process as well as concerns regarding the effect of the federal penalty schedules on state regimes have been raised.

The authority to establish penalties is clearly delegated to the office of general counsel for enforcement and litigation. There is no requirement for, nor is there a process for, setting penalty schedules through a process of public comment and debate. This is because penalty schedules are not regulations, nor should they be treated as such. Again, penalty schedules are guidelines or tools that are within the province of the office of general counsel for enforcement and litigation because such are to be used in the exercise of prosecutorial discretion. And, the exercise of prosecutorial discretion is delegated through the NOAA

office of general counsel to the assistant general counsel for enforcement and litigation and ultimately to each enforcement attorney, who exercises it when considering and taking action in a particular case, taking into account all of the circumstances surrounding that case.

Further, a process of penalty schedule review that includes some selective group of persons outside of the federal government is problematic. Picking and choosing select persons without including all affected or potentially affected parties at the very least gives an appearance that public debate is appropriate and that we have failed to include the opportunity for all to comment.

When one considers that even within the southeast region state regulations and/or penalties may vary, it is not surprising that federal penalties would differ from one or all state regimes. We have found that, unlike our civil penalty process, states often turn to criminal penalties to sanction fishery violators. To try to resolve differences in criminal and civil regimes is mixing apples and oranges - the two systems are simply different and are based on different premises - the criminal generally being punitive in nature and the civil generally being remedial in nature. Additionally, behind some state sanctions may be issues of raising revenues for the state, which do not enter into determinations of appropriate federal sanctions. Further, it is likely that state methods for handling fishery violations differ from the federal means in part because the states have more human resources with which to handle prosecutions.

V. WRAP UP

As we all can see, enforcing fishery laws is a complex issue that must take into account many factors. The goal of NOAA GC is to handle in a manner appropriate under all circumstances, violations of fishery regulations. Depending on a variety of considerations, any one or a combination of the available penalty sanctions or options may be used in enforcing the fishery laws.

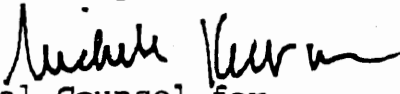
I appreciate your invitation to speak to you today. Thank you.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL
Washington, D.C. 20230
JAN 17 1997

CIVIL ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY SCHEDULE - TRANSMITTAL NOTICE NO. 17

MEMORANDUM FOR: All Holders of the NOAA Civil
Administrative Penalty Schedule

FROM: Michele Kuruc 
Assistant General Counsel for
Enforcement and Litigation

SUBJECT: Amendment to the NOAA Civil
Administrative Penalty Schedule

The NOAA Civil Administrative Penalty Schedule is hereby amended
as noted in the attached Filing Instructions.

The following amendments are attached to the Filing Instructions:

- Southeast Region Magnuson Act Commercial Penalty Schedule;
- Southeast Region Magnuson Recreational Penalty Schedule;
- Southeast Region Lacey Act Recreational Penalty Schedule;
- Southcast Region Magnuson Act Commercial Summary Settlement
Schedule; and
- Revised Index.

The violations listed in the attachment schedules may be revised
as part of an upcoming complete revision of the NOAA Civil
Administrative Penalty Schedule. The fully revised NOAA Civil
Administrative Penalty Schedule will reflect recent regulatory
consolidations and adjustments for inflation. In the interim,
the penalties described in the attachments are applicable.

This Transmittal Notice amends the NOAA Civil Administrative
Penalty Schedule originally issued on March 30, 1994, as revised
by previous Transmittal Notices.

NOTE: Transmittal Notices and any obsolete pages should be
retained for reference.

Attachments



Printed on Recycled Paper



CIVIL ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY SCHEDULE - TRANSMITTAL NOTICE NO. 17
FILING INSTRUCTIONS

The NOAA Civil Administrative Penalty Schedule is amended:

Remove Pages

i - iv Index
 (Revised 01/30/96,
 12/16/96, 01/06/97)

12-17 Southeast Region
 Magnuson Act Penalty
 Schedule (Effective
 5/8/92)

B-1 - B-6 Summary Settlement
 Schedule--Southeast
 Region (Revised
 9/29/94)

B-7 On-Scene Action for
 Turtle Excluder
 Device Violations

Insert Pages

i - iv Index
 (Revised 01/17/97)

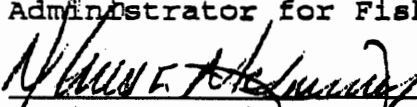
12-17g Southeast Region
 Magnuson Act
 Commercial Penalty
 Schedule (Revised
 01/17/97)

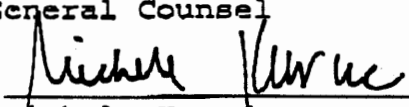
17h-17i Southeast Region
 Magnuson Act
 Recreational Penalty
 Schedule (Revised
 01/17/97)

17j-17k Southeast Region Lacey
 Act Recreational
 Penalty Schedule
 (Revised 01/17/97)

B-1 - B-9 Southeast Region
 Magnuson Act
 Commercial Summary
 Settlement Schedule
 (Revised 01/17/97)

Renumber as B-10

APPROVED: For the Assistant
 Administrator for Fisheries

 David A. McKinney
 Chief of Enforcement
 National Marine Fisheries Service
 Litigation

APPROVED: For the NOAA
 General Counsel

 Michele Kuruc
 Assistant General Counsel
 for Enforcement and

Date: 1-17-97

Date: 1-17-97

Attachments

SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENS ACT COMMERCIAL PENALTY SCHEDULE
(Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)

VIOLATION	VIOLATION HISTORY -- PENALTY AMOUNT		
	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
VIOLATIONS REGARDING SIZE/CONDITION/QUANTITY OF FISH	\$1,500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke
UNLAWFUL QUANTITY RESULTING FROM NON-ISSUED (OR OTHERWISE INVALID) PERMIT/LIMITED ENTRY SHARE/ENDORSEMENT			
Act without a permit/limited entry share/endorsement	See entries under Act without a Permit/Limited Entry Share/Endorsement (beginning page 5)		
Exceed trip limits (except ITQ)	\$1,500 - \$25,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$50,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke

*The \$100,000 statutory maximum civil monetary penalty under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson Act), 16 U.S.C. § 1858(a), has been adjusted for inflation pursuant to the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990 (Pub. L. No. 101-410), as amended by the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 (Pub. L. No. 104-134), which requires each agency to issue regulations to adjust all civil monetary penalties established by law and assessed or enforced by the agency. Adjusted maximum civil monetary penalties are applicable to all violations that occur after October 23, 1996, and further adjustments for inflation are required at least once every four years after that date. The adjusted maximum civil monetary penalty for the Magnuson Act is \$110,000. 61 Fed. Reg. 55092 (October 24, 1996) (adding 15 C.F.R. § 6.4(f)(10)).

SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENSON ACT COMMERCIAL PENALTY SCHEDULE
 (Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)

VIOLATION	VIOLATION HISTORY – PENALTY AMOUNT		
	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
VIOLATIONS REGARDING FISHING/POSSESSING/DEALING AT THE WRONG TIME/PLACE			
Area/Season/Quota Closures; Zero bag limit; Limited entry fishery; HAPCs (including SMZ, Oculina Banks)	\$500 - \$15,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$2,500 - \$25,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke
VIOLATIONS REGARDING THE METHOD OF FISHING/GEAR			
Method of Fishing			
Illegal gear, e.g., powerhead, trap, trawl, (e.g., gear separation zones - stone crab/shrimp zones), longline, speargun, other	\$500 - \$5,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$2,500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 -90 days/ revoke

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SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENS ACT COMMERCIAL PENALTY SCHEDULE
(Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)

VIOLATION	VIOLATION HISTORY -- PENALTY AMOUNT		
	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Illegal method, e.g., poisons, explosives	\$3,000 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$5,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$10,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke
Gear Construction/Exceed Maximum Quantity Allowed/Etc.			
Trap construction	\$500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$15,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$4,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke
Exceed maximum quantity of traps allowed/Fail to return traps	\$2,000 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$15,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$4,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke

SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENSON ACT COMMERCIAL PENALTY SCHEDULE
 (Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)

VIOLATION	VIOLATION HISTORY -- PENALTY AMOUNT		
	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Net construction - mesh size	\$2,000 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$15,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$4,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke
Net construction - net size	\$2,000 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$15,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$4,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke
Improper gear/vessel identification	\$250 - \$2,000	\$1,000 - \$5,000	\$2,000 - \$110,000
VIOLATIONS REGARDING PERMITS, REPORTING, DOCUMENTATION			

SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENS ACT COMMERCIAL PENALTY SCHEDULE
 (Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)

VIOLATION	VIOLATION HISTORY -- PENALTY AMOUNT		
	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Falsify information			
Income or landing information	\$1,500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 -90 days/ revoke
Other information	\$500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$1,000 - \$15,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$2,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke
Act without a permit/limited entry share/endorsement (dealers & fishermen & vessels)			
Wreckfish/Reef fish - No ITQ/permit displayed or reef fish permit expired more than one year	\$1,500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke

SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENSON ACT COMMERCIAL PENALTY SCHEDULE
(Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)

VIOLATION	VIOLATION HISTORY -- PENALTY AMOUNT		
	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Wreckfish/Reef fish - Reef fish permit expired within one year	\$1,500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke
Snapper-Grouper/Shark/Coastal Migratory Pelagics/Spiny Lobster/ Swordfish/Vessels of the U.S. Fishing in Columbian Treaty Waters - Either no current permit or an expired permit is displayed	\$1,500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 -90 days/ revoke
Coral and Coral Reef - No permit to collect allowable octocoral	\$1,500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke
Coral and Coral Reef - No permit to collect prohibited coral - for commercial coral/aquaculture businesses	\$1,500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke

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SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENS ACT COMMERCIAL PENALTY SCHEDULE
 (Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)

VIOLATION	VIOLATION HISTORY -- PENALTY AMOUNT		
	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
VIOLATIONS REGARDING OBSERVERS			
Failing to embark/provide information	\$1,500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke
Falsify information	\$1,500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke
Violations against the observer (e.g., assault, prohibiting an observer from his/her duties, failing to provide the required necessities, etc.)	\$10,000 - \$25,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$20,000 - \$50,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$40,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke

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SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENSON ACT COMMERCIAL PENALTY SCHEDULE
(Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)

VIOLATION	VIOLATION HISTORY -- PENALTY AMOUNT		
	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
VIOLATIONS REGARDING FAILING TO COMPLY WITH MORE RESTRICTIVE LAW	\$1,500 - \$2,500 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$2,500 - \$3,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$3,500 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke
VIOLATIONS REGARDING INTERFERENCE	See PENALTY SCHEDULE for 620 Regulations		
VIOLATIONS REGARDING FALSE STATEMENTS TO AN AUTHORIZED OFFICER	\$1,500 - \$10,000	\$3,000 - \$20,000	\$5,000 - \$110,000
VIOLATIONS REGARDING OPERATING A VESSEL THAT HAS A VIOLATION	\$1,500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke
VIOLATIONS REGARDING ANOTHER'S GEAR, ETC.			
Tending, etc., another's gear without prior written consent	\$1,500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days

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SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENSON ACT COMMERCIAL PENALTY SCHEDULE
(Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)

VIOLATION	VIOLATION HISTORY -- PENALTY AMOUNT		
	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Coral and Coral Reef - No permit to collect live rock	\$1,500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke
Letters of authorization/extension	\$1,500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke
Fail to comply with permit condition/restriction (i.e., the named operator is not onboard the vessel)	\$1,500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke
Misuse or mishandling of limited entry documents or quota coupons	\$1,500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke

SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENSON ACT COMMERCIAL PENALTY SCHEDULE
(Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)

VIOLATION	VIOLATION HISTORY – PENALTY AMOUNT		
	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
VIOLATIONS REGARDING FAILING TO MAKE FISH OR RECORDS AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION			
Records	\$500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$1,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$2,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke
Fish	\$1,500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke
VIOLATIONS REGARDING TRANSFER, PURCHASE, TRADE, SALE (AND ATTEMPTS)	\$1,500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 - 90 days/ revoke

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SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENSON ACT COMMERCIAL PENALTY SCHEDULE
 (Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)

VIOLATION	VIOLATION HISTORY – PENALTY AMOUNT		
	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Place articles in EEZ with intent to interfere, etc.	\$1,500 - \$10,000 Permit Sanctions 0 - 30 days	\$3,000 - \$20,000 Permit Sanctions 45 - 60 days	\$5,000 - \$110,000 Permit Sanctions 60 -90 days/ revoke

SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENSON ACT COMMERCIAL PENALTY SCHEDULE
(Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)

Factors that may be considered in determining the proper penalty level within the penalty range or, where appropriate, above or below the range include, but are not limited to the following:

- (1) Gravity of the violation;
- (2) Harm to the resource;
- (3) Condition and/or value of resource;
- (4) Whether fish were seized;
- (5) Commercial violation: market value of catch, degree that violator stood to profit from the violation;
- (6) All factors relevant to the violator's conduct such as: (a) state of mind: knowledge, intent, willfulness, negligence, gross negligence or inadvertence; (b) whether offense was committed in such a way as to avoid detection, e.g., whether there was concealment or flight, threats (to the extent such conduct not charged as a separate offense); (c) degree of dependence on illegal behavior for livelihood (if such information is available at time of charging); (d) whether offense was part of a pattern, course of conduct, common scheme or conspiracy, and violator's role in the activity;
- (7) Whether there are multiple violations (charged or not charged, including, if appropriate, whether the case involves multiple counts that would justify a downward adjustment of the overall assessment in order to reflect appropriately the severity of the illegal conduct);
- (8) Degree of cooperation;
- (9) Whether violator obstructed administration of justice during investigation or thereafter (to extent not charged as a separate offense) by destroying evidence, intimidating, threatening, materially lying, etc.
- (10) Acceptance of responsibility;
- (11) Danger of violence or injuries (or substantial likelihood) to the extent conduct not separately charged;
- (12) Ability to pay;
- (13) History of past offenses.

Seizure of entire catch or value, and seizure of vessel and/or gear, may apply even on first violations. The quantity and value of each catch should be included in the documentation of each case because such value may be added to NOVA penalty amounts.

SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENSON ACT RECREATIONAL PENALTY SCHEDULE

VIOLATION	PENALTY AMOUNT
Quantity of Fish (including coral)	
All fish except jewfish	\$100 - \$5,000
Jewfish	\$1,000 - \$5,000
Size of Fish	
All fish except billfish	\$100 - \$5,000
Billfish	\$1,000 - \$5,000
Condition of Fish	\$100 - \$5,000

SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENSON ACT RECREATIONAL PENALTY SCHEDULE

Factors that may be considered in determining the proper penalty level within the penalty range or, where appropriate, above or below the range include, but are not limited to the following:

- (1) Gravity of the violation;
- (2) Harm to the resource;
- (3) Condition and/or value of resource;
- (4) Whether fish were seized;
- (5) Commercial violation: market value of catch, degree that violator stood to profit from the violation;
- (6) All factors relevant to the violator's conduct such as: (a) state of mind: knowledge, intent, willfulness, negligence, gross negligence or inadvertence; (b) whether offense was committed in such a way as to avoid detection, e.g., whether there was concealment or flight, threats (to the extent such conduct not charged as a separate offense); (c) degree of dependence on illegal behavior for livelihood (if such information is available at time of charging); (d) whether offense was part of a pattern, course of conduct, common scheme or conspiracy, and violator's role in the activity;
- (7) Whether there are multiple violations (charged or not charged, including, if appropriate, whether the case involves multiple counts that would justify a downward adjustment of the overall assessment in order to reflect appropriately the severity of the illegal conduct);
- (8) Degree of cooperation;
- (9) Whether violator obstructed administration of justice during investigation or thereafter (to extent not charged as a separate offense) by destroying evidence, intimidating, threatening, materially lying, etc.
- (10) Acceptance of responsibility;
- (11) Danger of violence or injuries (or substantial likelihood) to the extent conduct not separately charged;
- (12) Ability to pay;
- (13) History of past offenses.

Seizure of entire catch or value, and seizure of vessel and/or gear, may apply even on first violations. The quantity and value of each catch should be included in the documentation of each case because such value may be added to NOVA penalty amounts.

**SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENSON ACT COMMERCIAL
SUMMARY SETTLEMENT SCHEDULE (SSS)
(Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)**

VIOLATION	SSS AMOUNT
VIOLATIONS REGARDING SIZE/CONDITION/QUANTITY OF FISH	
Except for swordfish, billfish and shark:	
1 - 5 illegal fish	Refer to state OR determine penalty on a case-by-case basis
6 - 20 illegal fish	Refer to state OR determine penalty on a case-by-case basis
21 - 50 illegal fish	\$600
51 - 100 illegal fish	\$1,500
Swordfish:	
1 - 25 fish	\$200/fish
Billfish:	
up to 10" short	\$500/fish
10+" short	\$1,000/fish
Shark Finning:	
1 - 50 fish	\$100/fish

**SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENSON ACT COMMERCIAL
SUMMARY SETTLEMENT SCHEDULE (SSS)
(Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)**

VIOLATION	SSS AMOUNT
UNLAWFUL QUANTITY RESULTING FROM NON-ISSUED (OR OTHERWISE INVALID) PERMIT/LIMITED ENTRY SHARE/ENDORSEMENT	
Exceed Trip Limits (except ITQ)	
up to 5% over	Determine penalty on a case-by-case basis
6 - 10% over	Determine penalty on a case-by-case basis
11 - 25% over involving trip limits through 1,000 pounds	\$750
11-25% over involving trip limits over 1,000 pounds	\$1,500
26 - 50% over involving trip limits through 1,000 pounds	\$1,500
26 - 50% over involving trip limits over 1,000 pounds	\$3,000
VIOLATIONS REGARDING FISHING/POSSESSING/DEALING AT THE WRONG TIME/PLACE	
Area/Season/Quota Closures	
Shark:	
1 - 25 shark	\$200/shark

**SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENSON ACT COMMERCIAL
SUMMARY SETTLEMENT SCHEDULE (SSS)
(Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)**

VIOLATION	SSS AMOUNT
Traps:	
1 - 50 traps	\$100/trap
Trawling:	
Texas closure	\$2,000
Tortugas Sanctuary	\$2,000
HAPCs (e.g., Oculina Banks, Florida Middle Grounds, Flower Garden Banks):	
bottom longline HAPC	\$2,000
snapper/grouper in Oculina Banks (1 - 50 fish)	\$750
Amberjack and Mutton Snapper in excess of that allowed:	\$100/fish
Zero Bag Limit	
Billfish	\$500/fish
Jewfish	\$1,500/fish
Nassau grouper	\$500/fish

**SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENS ACT COMMERCIAL
SUMMARY SETTLEMENT SCHEDULE (SSS)
(Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)**

VIOLATION	SSS AMOUNT
Red Drum: 1 - 5	Refer to state OR determine penalty on a case-by-case basis
Red Drum: 6+	\$50/fish
VIOLATIONS REGARDING THE METHOD OF FISHING/GEAR	
Gear Construction/Exceed Maximum Quantity Allowed/Etc.	
Trap Construction: Subsequent violations: 1 - 50 traps (Note: FIN program for first violation)	\$100/trap
Exceed maximum quantity of traps allowed/Fail to return traps	
up through 10%	Determine penalty on a case-by-case basis
11 - 25%	\$1,000
26 - 50%	\$2,000
Net construction - mesh size: First violation	Determine penalty on a case-by-case basis
Net construction - mesh size: Subsequent violations	\$1,000
Net construction - net size	

**SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENSON ACT COMMERCIAL
SUMMARY SETTLEMENT SCHEDULE (SSS)
(Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)**

VIOLATION	SSS AMOUNT
exceed allowed length up to 10%	Note: FIN program
exceed allowed length 11% - 25%	\$1,000 (first time only)
exceed allowed length 26% - 50%	\$2,000 (first time only)
VIOLATIONS REGARDING PERMITS, REPORTING, DOCUMENTATION	
Act without a permit/limited entry share/endorsement (dealers & fishermen & vessels)	
Wreckfish	\$5,000 (first time only)
Reeffish	\$2,000 (first time only)
Wreckfish/Reef fish - Reef fish permit expired within one year (First Violation Only)	\$1,500 and allow 30 days to provide proof that a permit has been obtained; if proof is provided, SSS will be suspended.
Snapper-Grouper/Shark - Either no current permit or an expired permit is displayed (First Violation Only)	\$1,500 and allow 30 days to provide proof that a permit has been obtained; if proof provided, SSS will be suspended.

**SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVEN'S ACT COMMERCIAL
SUMMARY SETTLEMENT SCHEDULE (SSS)
(Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)**

VIOLATION	SSS AMOUNT
Coastal Migratory Pelagics/Spiny Lobster/Swordfish/Vessels of the U.S. Fishing in Columbian Treaty Waters - Either no current permit or an expired permit is displayed (First Violation Only)	\$750 and allow 30 days to provide proof that a permit has been obtained; if proof provided, SSS will be suspended
Coral and Coral Reef - No permit to collect allowable octocoral (First Violation Only)	\$750 and allow 30 days to provide proof that a permit has been obtained; if proof provided, SSS will be suspended.
Coral and Coral Reef - No permit to collect prohibited coral - for commercial coral/aquaculture businesses (First violation only)	\$1,500 and allow 30 days to provide proof that a permit has been obtained; if proof provided, SSS will be suspended and proceeds/seized product returned.
Coral and Coral Reef - No permit to collect live rock (First violation only)	\$1,500 and allow 30 days to provide proof that a permit has been obtained; if proof provided, SSS will be suspended and proceeds/seized product returned.

**SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENS ACT COMMERCIAL
SUMMARY SETTLEMENT SCHEDULE (SSS)
(Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)**

VIOLATION	SSS AMOUNT
Letters of authorization/extension - No letter (First violation only)	\$1,500 and allow 30 days to provide proof that a permit has been obtained; if proof provided that letter was issued before violation, SSS will be suspended and catch returned; if proof provided that letter was issued after violation, SSS will be downgraded to WW and catch returned.
VIOLATIONS REGARDING FAILING TO MAKE FISH OR RECORDS AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION	
Records (Billfish)	\$175 and allow 30 days to provide the documentation; if documentation provided, suspend SSS.
VIOLATIONS REGARDING OBSERVERS	
VIOLATIONS REGARDING ANOTHER'S GEAR, ETC.	

**SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENS ACT COMMERCIAL
SUMMARY SETTLEMENT SCHEDULE (SSS)
(Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)**

VIOLATION	SSS AMOUNT
Tending, etc., another's gear without prior written consent	\$1,000 and allow 30 days to show proof that owner did give or now gives permission, if proof provided; SSS will be suspended and proceeds/catch returned.

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**SOUTHEAST REGION MAGNUSON-STEVENSON ACT COMMERCIAL
SUMMARY SETTLEMENT SCHEDULE (SSS)
(Includes Charter Boats and Head Boats)**

Factors that may be considered in determining the proper penalty level within the penalty range or, where appropriate, above or below the range include, but are not limited to the following:

- (1) Gravity of the violation;
- (2) Harm to the resource;
- (3) Condition and/or value of resource;
- (4) Whether fish were seized;
- (5) Commercial violation: market value of catch, degree that violator stood to profit from the violation;
- (6) All factors relevant to the violator's conduct such as: (a) state of mind: knowledge, intent, willfulness, negligence, gross negligence or inadvertence; (b) whether offense was committed in such a way as to avoid detection, e.g., whether there was concealment or flight, threats (to the extent such conduct not charged as a separate offense); (c) degree of dependence on illegal behavior for livelihood (if such information is available at time of charging); (d) whether offense was part of a pattern, course of conduct, common scheme or conspiracy, and violator's role in the activity;
- (7) Whether there are multiple violations (charged or not charged, including, if appropriate, whether the case involves multiple counts that would justify a downward adjustment of the overall assessment in order to reflect appropriately the severity of the illegal conduct);
- (8) Degree of cooperation;
- (9) Whether violator obstructed administration of justice during investigation or thereafter (to extent not charged as a separate offense) by destroying evidence, intimidating, threatening, materially lying, etc.
- (10) Acceptance of responsibility;
- (11) Danger of violence or injuries (or substantial likelihood) to the extent conduct not separately charged;
- (12) Ability to pay;
- (13) History of past offenses.

Seizure of entire catch or value, and seizure of vessel and/or gear, may apply even on first violations. The quantity and value of each catch should be included in the documentation of each case because such value may be added to NOVA penalty amounts.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL
Washington, D.C. 20230

DEC 17 1996

CIVIL ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY SCHEDULE - TRANSMITTAL NOTICE NO. 15

MEMORANDUM FOR: All Holders of the NOAA Civil
Administrative Penalty Schedule

FROM: Michele Kuruc *Michele Kuruc*
Assistant General Counsel for
Enforcement and Litigation

SUBJECT: Amendment to the NOAA Civil
Administrative Penalty Schedule

The NOAA Civil Administrative Penalty Schedule is hereby amended as noted in the attached Filing Instructions.

The amendments attached to the Filing Instructions provide:

- Revised Fix-It Notice Violation Schedules for all five regions;
- New Summary Settlement Schedules for the Alaska Region;
- Revised Index pages.

The violations listed in the attachment schedules will be revised as part of an upcoming complete revision of the NOAA Civil Administrative Penalty Schedule. The fully revised NOAA Civil Administrative Penalty Schedule will reflect recent regulatory consolidations and adjustments for inflation. In the interim, the penalties described in the attachments are applicable.

This Transmittal Notice amends the NOAA Civil Administrative Penalty Schedule originally issued on March 30, 1994, as revised by previous Transmittal Notices.

NOTE: Transmittal Notices and any obsolete pages should be retained for reference.

Attachments



Printed on Recycled Paper



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CIVIL ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY SCHEDULE - TRANSMITTAL NOTICE NO. 15

FILING INSTRUCTIONS

The NOAA Civil Administrative Penalty Schedule is amended as follows:

RemoveInsert

Pg. iv Index -- Regional
Summary Settlement
Schedules
(05/18/95)

Pg. iv Index -- Regional
Summary Settlement
Schedules
(12/15/96)

Pg. iv-b
& iv-c Index -- Regional
Fix-It Notice
Violations
(09/09/96)

Pg. iv-b
& iv-c Index -- Regional
Fix-It Notice
Violations
(12/15/96)

Tab E Alaska Region
Summary Settlement
Schedules (no
dates)

Tab E Alaska Region
Summary Settlement
Schedules
(12/15/96)

Tab F Northeast Region
Fix-It Notice
Violations
(09/09/96)

Tab F Northeast Region
Fix-It Notice
Violations
(12/15/96)

Tab G Southeast Region
Fix-It Notice
Violations
(09/09/96)

Tab G Southeast Region
Fix-It Notice
Violations
(12/15/96)

Tab H Southwest Region
Fix-It Notice
Violations
(09/09/96)

Tab H Southwest Region
Fix-It Notice
Violations
(12/15/96)

Tab I Northwest Region
 Fix-It Notice
 Violations
 (09/09/96)

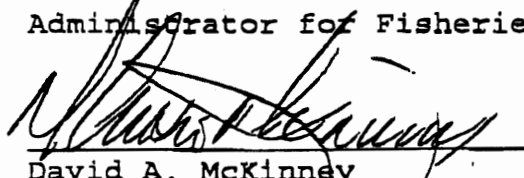
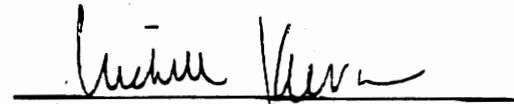
Tab I Northwest Region
 Fix-It Notice
 Violations
 (12/15/96)

Tab J Alaska Region Fix-
 It Notice
 Violations
 (09/09/96)

Tab J Alaska Region Fix-
 It Notice
 Violations
 (12/15/96)

APPROVED: For the Assistant
 Administrator for Fisheries

APPROVED: For the NOAA
 General Counsel

David A. McKinney
 Chief of Enforcement
 National Marine Fisheries Service
 Litigation

Michele Kuruc
 Assistant General Counsel
 for Enforcement and

Date: 12-13-96

Date: 12-17-96

Attachments

SOUTHEAST REGION FIX-IT NOTICE VIOLATIONS

VIOLATION	REMEDY	TIME PERIOD
Spiny Lobster - Gulf and South Atlantic		
Permit or letter of authorization is issued but is not on board -- 50 C.F.R. § 640.7(c)	Place the already-issued permit or letter of authorization on board	30 days
Improper vessel identification -- 50 C.F.R. § 640.7(d)	Paint on new numbers, etc.	30 days
Improper gear identification -- 50 C.F.R. § 640.7(d)	Paint on new numbers, etc.	30 days
Illegal trap construction -- 50 C.F.R. § 640.7(m)	Correct the illegal gear	30 days
Reef Fish - Gulf of Mexico		
Permit or letter of authorization is issued but is not on board -- 50 C.F.R. § 641.7(b)	Place the already-issued permit or letter of authorization on board	30 days
Fail to submit information (e.g., permit applications, logbooks, etc.) -- 50 C.F.R. § 641.7(c)	Send in the information	30 days
Improper vessel identification -- 50 C.F.R. § 641.7(e)	Paint on new numbers, etc.	30 days
Improper gear identification -- 50 C.F.R. § 641.7(g)	Paint on new numbers, etc.	30 days
Illegal trap construction -- 50 C.F.R. § 641.7(i)	Correct the illegal gear	30 days
Coastal Migratory Pelagics		
Permit or letter of authorization is issued but is not on board -- 50 C.F.R. § 642.7(c)	Place the already-issued permit or letter of authorization on board	30 days

SOUTHEAST REGION FIX-IT NOTICE VIOLATIONS

VIOLATION	REMEDY	TIME PERIOD
Fail to submit information (e.g., permit applications, logbooks, etc.) -- 50 C.F.R. § 642.7(d)	Send in the information	30 days
Improper vessel identification -- 50 C.F.R. § 642.7(f)	Paint on new numbers, etc.	30 days
Spiny Lobster - Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands		
Improper vessel identification -- 50 C.F.R. § 645.7(a)	Paint on new numbers, etc.	30 days
Improper gear identification -- 50 C.F.R. § 645.7(a)	Paint on new numbers, etc.	30 days
Illegal trap construction -- 50 C.F.R. § 645.7(g)	Correct the illegal gear	30 days
Snapper-Grouper		
Permit or letter of authorization is issued but is not on board -- 50 C.F.R. § 646.7(f)	Place the already-issued permit or letter of authorization on board	30 days
Fail to submit information (e.g., permit applications, logbooks, etc.) -- 50 C.F.R. § 646.7(g)	Send in the information	30 days
Improper vessel identification -- 50 C.F.R. § 646.7(j)	Paint on new numbers, etc.	30 days
Improper gear identification -- 50 C.F.R. § 646.7(j)	Paint on new numbers, etc.	30 days
Snapper Grouper Sea Bass Pot -- Illegal trap construction -- 50 C.F.R. § 646.7(ee) and (ff)	Correct the illegal gear	30 days

SOUTHEAST REGION FIX-IT NOTICE VIOLATIONS

VIOLATION	REMEDY	TIME PERIOD
Marine Mammal Protection Act		
Failure to display MMPA annual decal -- 50 C.F.R. § 229.4(f)(1)	Attach MMPA annual decal	30 days
Failure to have MMPA incidental take Authorization Certificate (or copy) on board vessel operating in Category I or II fishery -- 50 C.F.R. § 229.4(f)(2)	Carry MMPA Authorization Certificate (or copy) on board	30 days
Lacey Act Amendments of 1981		
Inadequate or improper markings on containers -- 50 C.F.R. § 246.1 (16 U.S.C. § 3372(b))	Properly mark containers and packages	30 days
Southeast MFCMA Penalty Schedule		
-- Improper vessel identification	Paint on new numbers, etc.	30 days
-- Illegal gear identification	Paint on new numbers, etc.	30 days
-- Illegal trap construction	Correct the illegal gear	30 days
-- Illegal net size -- up to 10% over length allowed	Cut off the excess net	On Scene
-- Fail to submit information (e.g., permit applications, logbooks, etc.)	Send in the information	30 days
-- Permit or letter of authorization is issued but is not on board	Place the already-issued permit or letter of authorization on board the vessel	30 days

SOUTHEAST REGION FIX-IT NOTICE VIOLATIONS

VIOLATION	REMEDY	TIME PERIOD
-- Fail to embark observer/Fail to provide information	Place the observer on board/Provide the information	30 days
High Seas Fishing Compliance Act of 1995		
Failure to apply for a vessel permit -- 50 C.F.R. § 300.6	Apply for a vessel permit	30 days
Swordfish		
Fail to submit information (e.g., permit applications, logbooks, etc.) -- 50 C.F.R. § 630.7(g)	Send in the information	30 days
Improper vessel identification -- 50 C.F.R. § 630.7(h)	Paint on new numbers, etc.	30 days
Fail to embark observer/Fail to provide information -- 50 C.F.R. § 630.7(i) and (j)	Place the observer on board/ Provide the information	30 days
Illegal net size - up to 10% over length allowed -- 50 C.F.R. § 630.7(p)	Cut off the excess net	On Scene
Coral		
Permit or letter of authorization is issued but is not on board -- 50 C.F.R. § 638.7(c)	Place the already-issued permit or letter of authorization on board	30 days
Fail to submit information (e.g., permit applications, logbooks, etc.) -- 50 C.F.R. § 638.7(d) and (f)	Send in the information	30 days
Improper vessel identification -- 50 C.F.R. § 638.7(f)	Paint on new numbers, etc.	30 days

SOUTHEAST REGION FIX-IT NOTICE VIOLATIONS

VIOLATION	REMEDY	TIME PERIOD
Red Drum - Gulf of Mexico		
Fail to submit information (e.g., permit applications, logbooks, etc.) -- 50 C.F.R. § 653.7(b)	Send in the information	30 days
Stone Crab		
Improper vessel identification -- 50 C.F.R. § 654.6(a)	Paint on new numbers, etc.	30 days
Improper gear identification -- 50 C.F.R. § 654.7(a)	Paint on new numbers, etc.	30 days
Illegal trap construction -- 50 C.F.R. § 654.7(g)	Correct the illegal gear	30 days
Shrimp - Gulf of Mexico		
Fail to submit information (e.g., permit applications, logbooks, etc.) -- 50 C.F.R. § 658.7(a)	Send in the information	30 days
Improper vessel identification -- 50 C.F.R. § 658.7(b)	Paint on new numbers, etc.	30 days
Reef Fish - Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands		
Improper vessel identification -- 50 C.F.R. § 669.7(b)	Paint on new numbers, etc.	30 days
Improper gear identification -- 50 C.F.R. § 669.7(b)	Paint on new numbers, etc.	30 days
Illegal trap construction -- 50 C.F.R. § 669.7(i)	Correct the illegal gear	30 days

SOUTHEAST REGION FIX-IT NOTICE VIOLATIONS

VIOLATION	REMEDY	TIME PERIOD
Coral - Caribbean		
Improper vessel identification -- 50 C.F.R. § 670.7(b)	Paint on new numbers, etc.	30 days
Shark		
Permit or letter of authorization is issued but is not on board -- 50 C.F.R. § 678.7(b)	Place the already-issued permit or letter of authorization on board	30 days
Fail to submit information (e.g., permit applications, logbooks, etc.) -- 50 C.F.R. § 678.7(c)	Send in the information	30 days
Improper vessel identification -- 50 C.F.R. § 678.7(e)	Paint on new numbers, etc.	30 days
Fail to embark observer/Fail to provide information -- 50 C.F.R. § 678.7(f) and (g)	Place the observer on board/ Provide the information	30 days

CASES OPENED FROM SEPTEMBER 1, 1996 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 1996

ACT	FISH	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	LOCATION	VIOLATION DESCRIPTION	CUR. STAT.
FM	ABS	N/A	N/A	15TH STREET BOAT RAMP, FT. LAUDERDALE, F	POSSESS ONE UNDERSIZED BLUE MARLIN	CASE OPENED
FM	ABS	N/A	N/A	NEW PIONEER COOP, IOWA CITY, IA	SELLING MARLIN WITHOUT PERMIT	FIXIT ISSUED BY ENF.
FM	ATS	2823N	9506W	N/A	POSSESS 4 SHARK FINS WITHOUT CARCASS	CASE OPENED
FM	GDF	2927.8N	9220.21W	N/A	POSSESS 1 RED DRUM IN EEZ	WRITTEN WARNING ISSUED BY ENF.
FM	GDF	2549N	8128W	N/A	POSSESS 1 RED DRUM IN EEZ	DISMISSED BY ENF.
FM	GDF	2549N	8128W	N/A	POSSESS 1 RED DRUM IN EEZ	DISMISSED BY ENF.
FM	GSL	N/A	N/A	PORT ISABEL, TX	FAIL TO DISPLAY SPINY LOBSTER PERMIT	CASE OPENED
FM	GSL	2746.2N	8300.5W	15 NM WEST OF JOHNS PASS	POSSESS 3 SPEARED SPINY LOBSTERS OF WHICH 1 WAS EGG-BEARING	PROPERTY FORFEITED
FM	PLM	N/A	N/A	CAPE LOOKOUT, NC	DISPOSAL OF FISH DURING A BOARDING	CASE OPENED
FM	PLM	N/A	N/A	OFFSHORE PONCE INLET, FL	DISPOSAL OF EVIDENCE WITHOUT APPROVAL	FINAL CASE REPORT RECEIVED
FM	PLM	2433N	8149W	N/A	POSSESS KING MACKERAL OVER COMMERCIAL TRIP LIMIT	SUMMARY SETTLEMENT PAID
FM	PLM	N/A	N/A	GEORGETOWN, SC	FAIL TO SUBMIT INFORMATION REQUIRED	FIXIT ISSUED BY ENF.
FM	RFG	N/A	N/A	GULF EEZ OFF MARCO ISLAND, FL	FAIL TO RETRIEVE FISH TRAPS	CASE OPENED
FM	RFG	2605.3N	8212.25W	N/A	POSSESS 2 UNDERSIZED RED GROUPER	CASE OPENED
FM	RFG	2627.6N	9645W	N/A	POSSESS 38 RED SNAPPER WITH A PERMIT	CASE OPENED
FM	RFG	2817N	8408.5W	N/A	TRAWLING INSIDE FLORIDA MIDDLE GROUNDS	FINAL CASE REPORT RECEIVED
FM	RFG	2932N	8732W	N/A	FISHING WITH EXPIRED REEF FISH PERMIT	FINAL CASE REPORT RECEIVED
FM	RFG	N/A	N/A	FORT JEFFERSON, DRY TORTUGAS	TRANSFER/TRADE FOUR YELLOWFIN GROUPER	WRITTEN WARNING ISSUED BY ENF.
FM	RFG	N/A	N/A	GALVESTON, TX	PURCHASE REEF FISH WITHOUT DEALER PERMIT	FIXIT ISSUED BY ENF.
FM	RFG	N/A	N/A	GALVESTON, TX	SELL REEF FISH TO UNPERMITTED DEALER	FIXIT ISSUED BY ENF.
FM	RFG	3008N	8819W	N/A	VESSEL DOCUMENTATION NUMBER NOT DISPLAYED	FIXIT ISSUED BY ENF.
FM	RFG	N/A	N/A	HOUSTON, TX	POSSESS AND SELL 158 UNDERSIZED GREATER AMBERJACK	SENT TO GC
FM	RFG	3017N	8806W	N/A	POSSESS REEF FISH WITHOUT HEADS AND FINS INTACT	PROPERTY FORFEITED
FM	RFG	N/A	N/A	ALAN WILLIAMS SEAFOOD, PENSACOLA, FL	POSSESS 2 UNDERSIZED GREATER AMBERJACK	PROPERTY FORFEITED
FM	RFG	3015N	8805W	N/A	POSSESS RED SNAPPER WITHOUT A PERMIT	PROPERTY FORFEITED
FM	RFG	2835.5N	9449.7W	N/A	POSSESS 17 RED SNAPPER OVER BAG LIMIT	PROPERTY FORFEITED
FM	RFG	N/A	N/A	CHOCTAHATCHEE BAY #1 FWB BUOYLINE	POSSESS 2 UNDERSIZED REEF FISH	PROPERTY FORFEITED
FM	RFG	N/A	N/A	HOUSTON, TX	PURCHASE 158 UNDERSIZED GREATER AMBERJACK	SENT TO GC
FM	SMM	3226.7N	7857.0W	N/A	EXPIRED PERMIT LESS THAN ONE YEAR	CASE OPENED
FM	SMM	2831.3N	8423.5W	N/A	ILLEGALLY FISHING IN FLORIDA MIDDLE GROUNDS WITH BOTTOM TRAW	FINAL CASE REPORT RECEIVED
FM	SNG	3133N	7933W	N/A	FAIL TO DISPLAY PERMIT	CASE OPENED
FM	SNG	2818N	8405W	N/A	TRAWLING IN HAPC	CASE OPENED
FM	SNG	2444N	8350W	N/A	POSSESS 22 UNDERSIZED RED GROUPER	CASE OPENED
FM	SNG	2605N	8006W	N/A	POSSESS 88 SNAPPER/GROUPER OVER BAG LIMIT	FINAL CASE REPORT RECEIVED
FM	SNG	N/A	N/A	N/A	POSSESS 1 NASSAU GROUPER	SUMMARY SETTLEMENT PAID
FM	SNG	3127N	7946W	N/A	POSSESS 56 UNDERSIZED SNAPPER/GROUPER	SUMMARY SETTLEMENT PAID
FM	SNG	2436N	8110.6W	N/A	POSSESS 29 YELLOWTAIL SNAPPER OVER BAG LIMIT	SUMMARY SETTLEMENT PAID
FM	SNG	2638.9N	8222.6W	N/A	POSSESS SHARK FINS	WRITTEN WARNING ISSUED BY ENF.
FM	SNG	N/A	N/A	SAFE HARBOR	FAIL TO DISPLAY VALID PERMIT	FIXIT ISSUED BY ENF.
FM	SNG	2728N	8241W	N/A	NO SNAPPER/GROUPER PERMIT	FIXIT ISSUED BY ENF.
FM	SNG	2542N	8007W	N/A	POSSESS 19 UNDERSIZED YELLOWTAIL SNAPPER	PROPERTY FORFEITED
FM	SNG	N/A	N/A	KINGS SEAFOOD, PORT ORANGE, FL	FAIL TO COMPLY WITH ITQ COUPONS FOR WRECKFISH REQUIREMENTS	SENT TO GC
FM	SRB	2616.9N	8215.6W	N/A	POSSESS 4 UNDERSIZED STONE CRAB CLAWS	CASE OPENED
FM	SRB	2538.8N	8159.2W	N/A	FAIL TO DISPLAY AND MAINTAIN VESSEL ID FOR STONE CRAB	WRITTEN WARNING ISSUED BY ENF.
FM	SWD	N/A	N/A	POMPANO BEACH, FL	POSSESS 6 UNDERSIZED SWORDFISH	CASE OPENED
FM	N/A	N/A	N/A	ST. PETERSBURG, FL	FALSIFICATION OF PERMIT APPLICATION	CASE OPENED
FM	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	ALLEGED VIOLATED OF NMFS OBSERVER CONTRACT	CASE OPENED
FM	N/A	2835.7N	8411.93W	N/A	POSSESS 3 UNDERSIZED RED GROUPER	WRITTEN WARNING ISSUED BY ENF.
FM	N/A	N/A	N/A	PONCE INLET, FL	FAIL TO POSSESS VALID MACKERAL PERMIT	FIXIT ISSUED BY ENF.

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TIMELINES

State System	Federal System
Detection of Violation Seize Illegal Catch	Detection of Violation Seize Illegal Catch
Issuance of Ticket	Sell or Preserve Catch
Post Bond or Pay Fine	Issuance of Enforcement Action Report
Hold Trial, Illegal Catch Declared State Property	Issuance of Notice of Violation and Assessment and/or Notice of Permit Sanction
Appeal or Pay Fine	Hold Hearing before Administrative Law Judge
	Appeal to NOAA Administrator
	Appeal to District Court
	Judicial Forfeiture of Illegal Catch
	Judicial Action to Collect Unpaid Penalty
	Refer to Internal Revenue Service for Offset

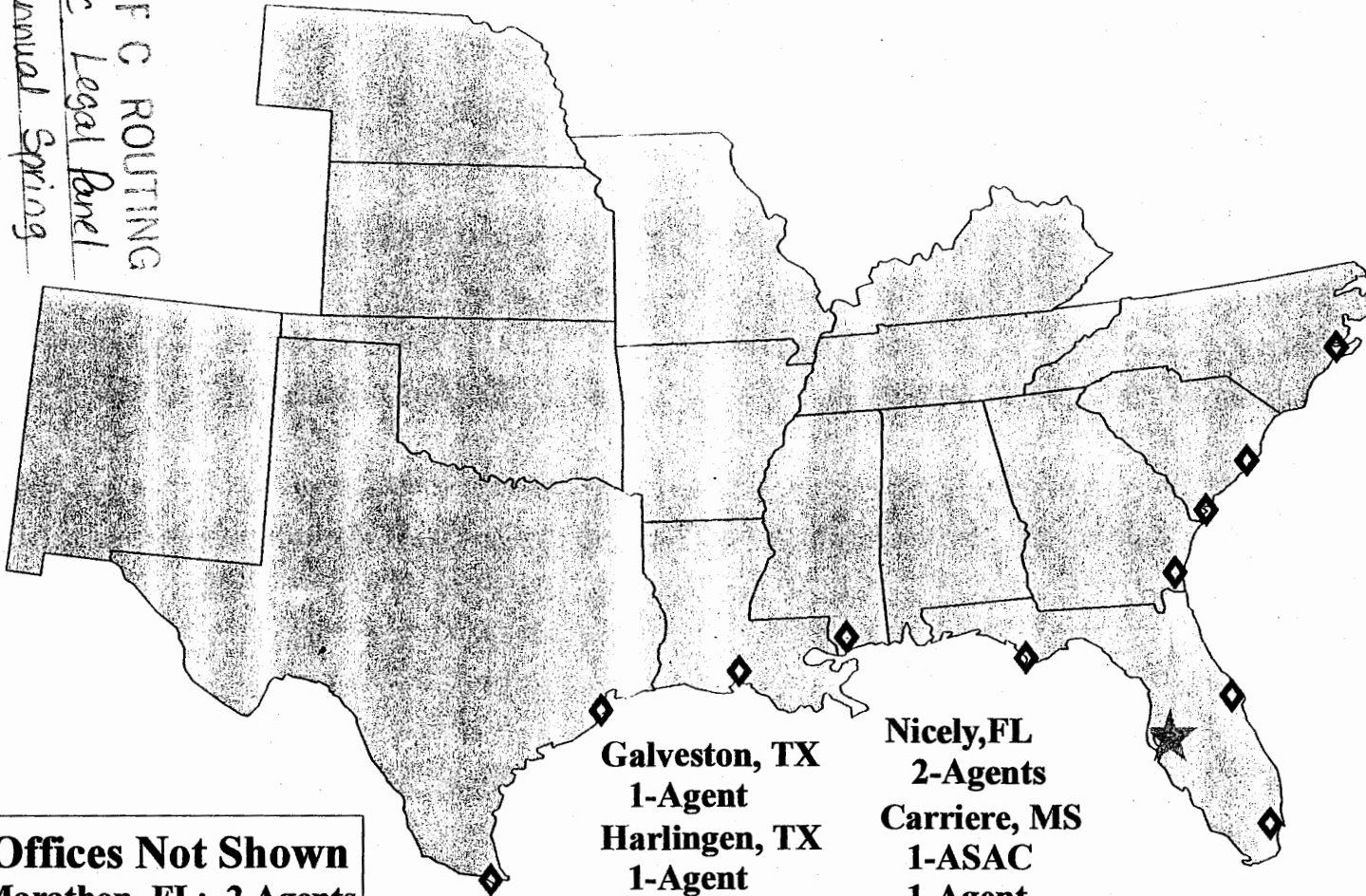
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NOAA Fisheries Office For Law Enforcement Southeast Enforcement Division

G S M F C ROUTING
Add Hoc Legal Panel
4747 Annual Spring



Offices Not Shown
Marathon, FL: 2 Agents
Virgin Islands: 1-Agent
Puerto Rico: 1-Agent

Galveston, TX
1-Agent
Harlingen, TX
1-Agent

Nicely, FL
2-Agents
Carriere, MS
1-ASAC
1-Agent
Lafayette, LA
1-Agent

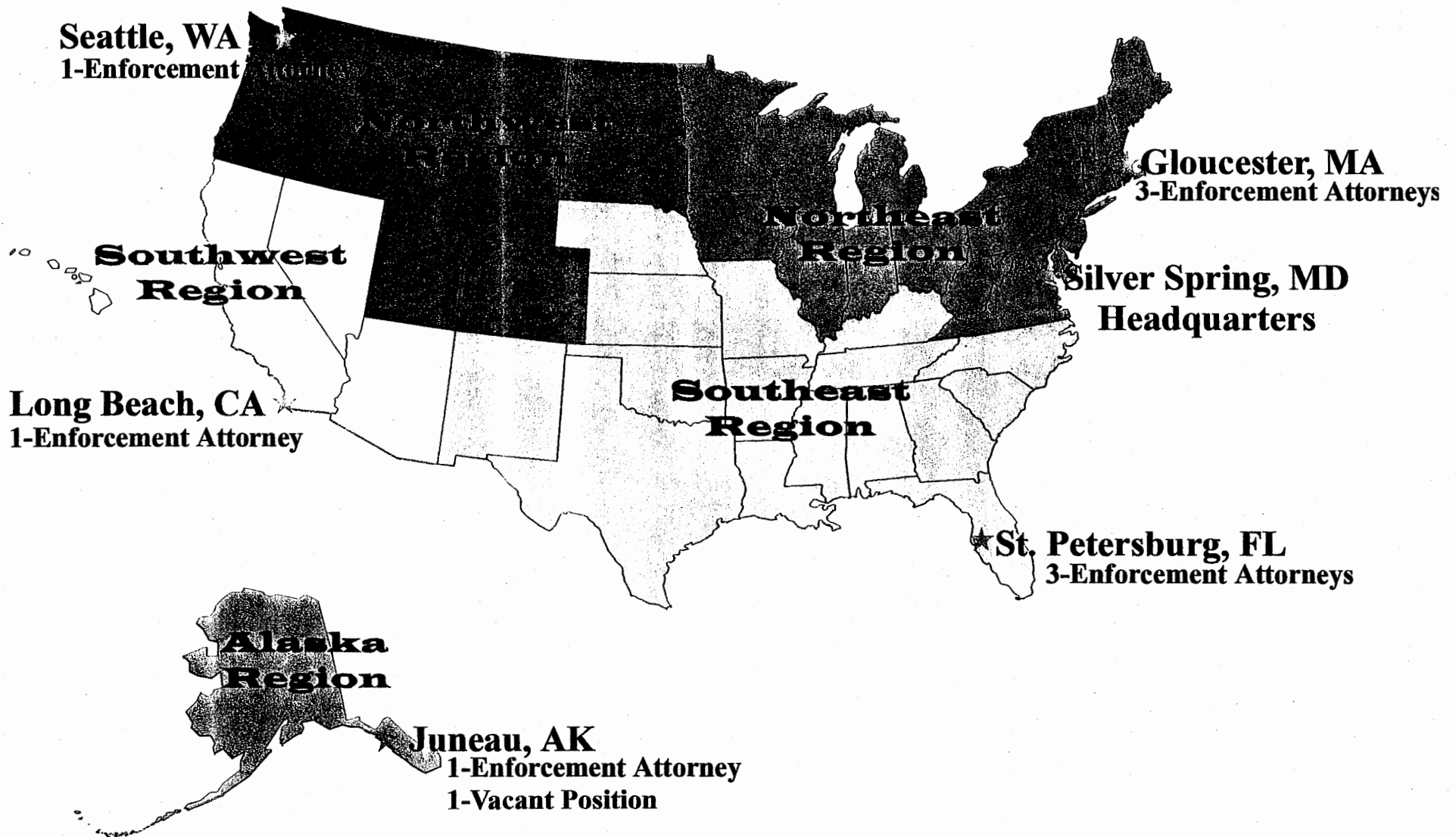
Atlantic City, NC
1-Agent
Charleston, SC
1-Agent
Greenwood, SC
1-Agent
Brunswick, GA
1-Agent
Titusville, FL
2-Agents
St. Petersburg
1-SAC
1-DSAC
3-ASAC
2-Agents
1-Officer
Miami, FL
1-Agent

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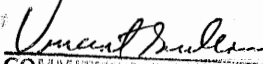
NOAA Fisheries Office For Law Enforcement Headquarters and Regional Offices



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COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

CRAB TTF MEETING
MINUTES
January 25, 1996

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. The following were in attendance:

Members

Vince Guillory, LDWF, Bourg, LA
Harriet Perry, GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS
Phil Steele, FDEP/FMRI, St. Petersburg, FL
Tom Wagner, TPWD, Rockport, TX

Others

Paul Hammerschmidt, TPWD, Austin, TX

Staff

Rick Leard, Program Coordinator, GSMFC
Cindy Yocom, Staff Assistant, GSMFC

By unanimous consent, Vince Guillory was elected task force chairman. The task force discussed membership gaps including commercial and recreational representation. Each task force member agreed to identify and submit the names of fishermen and/or processors to include in the review process.

R. Leard noted that the TCC Habitat Subcommittee could assist the TTF in development of the habitat section by providing data and reviewing structure and content. The Habitat Subcommittee has recommended that a habitat specialist representative (knowledgeable and experienced in marine habitat management) be appointed to each TTF. The habitat representative on the TTF would report to the Habitat Subcommittee, and the subcommittee would assist in the development and review of habitat sections of IJF FMPs and provide comments to the TTFs. The Habitat Subcommittee will submit names of persons to be appointed to the Blue Crab TTF.

The task force agreed to try to remain consistent in submission of draft sections using WordPerfect for Windows (either versions 5 or 6), selecting Times New Roman 12 pt, and utilizing E-mail when practical. Task Force members will provide E-mail addresses for the membership list.

Compilation of Data

Each state member will submit to GSMFC a list of available data including harvest/landings and value (commercial and recreational/hard and soft crab), fishery independent data by gear and area with any associated hydrological data, and available sociological and economic data. Rick will then compile a Gulf wide data list to assist in determining what analyses can be performed. P. Steele recommended using the entire data set for Florida. By consensus, the TTF agreed to use data from the entire Florida fishery rather than dividing by east/west coast.

FMP Section Assignments

The following assignments were made:

Cover - Paul Hammerschmidt volunteered to contact the TPWD Graphic Arts Division for assistance with art work.

Front Matter, Sections 1.0 (Summary) & 2.0 (Introduction) - Staff

Section 3.0 (Description of the Stock) - Harriet Perry will lead effort with assistance from Phil Steele and Vince Guillory.

Section 4.0 (Description of Essential Habitat) - Phil Steele will lead effort with assistance from the Habitat Subcommittee member and Steve Heath. State representatives send habitat data sources to Phil.

Section 5.0 (Fishery Management Laws) - Tom Wagner. Staff will provide Tom with the boilerplate of this section via E-mail or disk.

Section 6.0 (Description of the Fishery) - Vince Guillory will lead effort with assistance from each state representative. State representatives send 1985-1995 landings to Vince.

Sections 7.0 (Description of Processing) & 8.0 (Description of Economic Characters) - Walter Keithly

Section 9.0 (Social and Cultural Framework) - Steve Thomas will lead effort with assistance from Cecelia Formichella.

Section 10.0 (Management Considerations) - Each state representative will be responsible for summarizing fishery independent data to be used in the stock assessment. The following summaries are needed for each available or appropriate gear type: annual catch/sample for four size groups (0-9 mm CW, 10-39 mm CW, 40-124 mm CW, and ≥ 125 mm CW).

Section 11.0 (Potential Management Measures) - All

Section 12.0 (Management Recommendations) - All

Section 13.0 (Regional Research Priorities and Data Requirements) - All

Section 14.0 (Review and Monitoring of the Plan) - Staff

Section 15.0 (References) - All to provide input; use the format that is in the Mullet FMP (AFS style, no abbreviations, etc.)

Section 16.0 (Appendix) - Historical landings data from 1990 FMP.

Timetable

Each state representative should send Tom Wagner an update of current management regulations by mid February.

Data lists should be sent to Rick Leard by March 8, 1996.

Send any habitat data to Phil Steele by March 8, 1996.

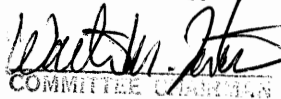
Progress will be reviewed at the March meeting. A subsequent meeting is tentatively planned for late spring/early summer.

Blue Crab Symposium - Baltimore, Maryland

The Crab TTF discussed the approach of the Gulf paper that will be presented by Vince Guillory. A list of major issues and problems for each state such as habitat, excessive fishing effort, user group conflicts, incomplete reporting of landings, ghost traps, trap and crab theft, increased processor regulation, peeler crab availability, bait, and others are needed for the Gulf report. A summary of the implications of recent research and the application of stock assessment methodology to the Gulf of Mexico will be provided by Harriet Perry and Phil Steele. Input from each representative is needed with the section "A Vision of the Future." Vince stressed that input on incomplete sections and comments from the original draft are needed back as soon as possible. State fishery reports for the symposium are due at the March GSMFC meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

APPROVED BY:


COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

SEAMAP SUBCOMMITTEE CONFERENCE CALL
MINUTES

Wednesday, February 14, 1996

Chairman Walter Tatum called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. The following personnel were present:

Terry Cody, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Jim Hanifen, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Mark Leiby, FMRI, St. Petersburg, FL
Richard Waller, GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS
Joanne Shultz, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
Walter Tatum, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Scott Nichols, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
Larry Simpson, GSMFC, Executive Director
David Donaldson, GSMFC, SEAMAP Coordinator

D. Donaldson stated that in a memorandum to the Regional Fishery Management Councils, it stated that the current continuing resolution (CR) provides funding at the FY1996 Conference level and that the participants will not be required to submit a new statement of work and budget for this period. The NOAA Grants Office will accept the original applications and will allow NMFS to release funding to the participants as it becomes available. The CR represents 13.4% of the year and that is the amount of funds that will be available during this period. The original start date of participants should be granted. However, the NOAA still needs to release the authority to spend so these actions can occur. Hopefully, this will happen in the near future. D. Donaldson stated that hopefully these provisions will also apply to the SEAMAP but it is not definite that will occur. There was some discussion concerning what the level of funding for 1996 would be (House or Conference mark) and apparently, no new applications will have to be submitted. In light of this information, T. Cody asked if he could begin charging time and funds to SEAMAP. W. Tatum suggested that he wait until a signed document has been received by TPWD before charging anything to SEAMAP. S. Nichols asked if any state was in trouble, financially, and could not wait until the March meeting before receiving funds. All the states reported that activities in their agencies would be okay until that time. W. Tatum stated that this was fairly good news and if S. Nichols or D. Donaldson hear anything concerning NOAA releasing the authority to spend, that they contact the SEAMAP Subcommittee as soon as possible.

D. Donaldson stated that since the Subcommittee will be meeting in conjunction with the Annual Spring Meeting, the group needs to discuss the agenda for the meeting. He stated that he had developed some items such as administrative report, status of FY1996, and Data Coordinating Work Group report and asked the Subcommittee if there were other items to be added. J. Hanifen stated that he would present an update of Louisiana's work concerning chlorophyll sampling. W. Tatum asked if S. Nichols could update the group regarding the status of NOAA Fleet and the implications for SEAMAP. And R. Waller suggested that the Subcommittee discuss various scenarios based on the final level of funding for this year.

There being no further business, the call was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

APPROVED BY:
Joe Moran
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

**SOUTHEAST COOPERATIVE STATISTICS
COMMITTEE MINUTES
Tuesday, February 27, 1996
New Orleans, Louisiana**

Chairman Joe Shepard called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. The following people were present:

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL
Theo Brainerd, SAFMC, Charleston, SC
Julie Califf, GDNR, Brunswick, GA
Mary Anne Camp, NMFS, Miami, FL
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Joe Desfosse, ASMFC, Washington, D.C.
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
David Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Walter Gibson, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, D.C.
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC
Skip Lazauski, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dee Lupton, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR
John Merriner, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL
Joseph Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Dawn Whitehead, USFWS, Vero Beach, FL

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was approved as written.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the Cooperative Statistics Program (CSP) meeting held on September 27-28, 1995 in Miami, Florida were approved as written.

Follow-up on the Trip Interview Program Workshop

J. Shepard stated that the Trip Interview Program (TIP) workshop was very productive. A variety of recommendations were developed as a result of the workshop. A detailed proceedings from the workshop will be developed and distributed to the Committee for their comment and review. It was suggested that J. Poffenberger, J. Shepard and R. Lukens develop a draft procedures document that outlines the procedure for collection of TIP data. The Committee agreed that the development of such a document was a good idea and asked the group to proceed. J. Shepard provided some highlights of the workshop such as focusing sampling effort on the species level, collection of commercial data only, identification of problems and groups them as either data management, data collection, or administrative, and others.

Review of List of Personnel with Access to Confidential Data

M. Camp distributed the list of personnel, by agency, who have access to confidential data. All participants reviewed the list and notified M. Camp if there were additions, deletions, or changes. In addition, D. Donaldson stated that he would send the list to Joe O'Hop, who was not present at the meeting, and have him send his changes to M. Camp.

Discussion of Comparison of Data Elements Matrix

D. Donaldson stated that this matrix was developed by the Data Collection Work Group and is one of the tasks identified in the Operations Plan. The purpose of the matrix is to identify gaps in commercial data collection. J. Shepard asked each participant to review the matrix and ensure that the information is complete and accurate. The group decided that the data collection activity (TIP, general canvass, state program, etc.) should be associated with each data element identified in the matrix. After some deliberations, each member provided D. Donaldson with any additions/deletions to the matrix. D. Donaldson stated that he would compile this information and distribute it to the Committee. The revised matrix is attached.

Final Approval of 1996 Operations Plan

* D. Donaldson stated that a draft copy of the 1996 Operations Plan was distributed to the Committee. The Committee completed a thorough review of each task. After some discussion,

J. Moran moved to accept the 1996 Operations Plan as amended. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The revised 1996 Operations Plan represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting.

Possible Development of 1995 Annual Report

* D. Donaldson asked if the Committee was interested in developing an annual report which would summarize the goals and objectives and the activities of the program for the previous year. The RecFIN(SE) produces a similar document and it is a useful tool in providing a quick overview of the year's activities. The Committee agreed that such a report would be beneficial. D. Donaldson stated that a draft 1995 Annual Report has been distributed. The Committee reviewed the document and make several editorial changes. After some discussion, **J. Moran moved to accept the 1995 Annual Report as amended. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The document will be revised by staff and distributed to the Committee and other interested personnel.

Other Business

S. Lazauski asked for an update on the status of the CSP funding. J. Poffenberger stated that NMFS has been given 50% funding for the CSP under the current continuing resolution. That translates to receiving 100% funding for 6 months (April - August). Hopefully before August, the budget situation will have been resolved and the rest of the funding will be available for the remainder of the year. In addition, there will be no need to resubmit the cooperative agreements.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

SOUTHEAST COOPERATIVE STATISTICS
COMMITTEE MINUTES
Tuesday, February 28, 1995
Jacksonville, Florida

Chairman Joe O'Hop was called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The following people were present:

Charlie Anderson, MDMF, Boston, MA
Mary Anne Camp, NMFS, Miami, FL
David Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Albert Jones, NMFS, Miami, FL
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, D.C.
Steve Koplun, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD
Skip Lazauski, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dee Lupton, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC
Joe O'Hop, FMRI, St. Petersburg, FL
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL
Lance Robinson, TPWD, Seabrook, TX
Gina Rogers, GDNR, Brunswick, GA
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL
Joseph Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was approved with the following changes:

- * Adding Status of IT-95 and Update of Dealer Codes under Unresolved Administrative Issues;
- * Adding Update of Processed Products Report and Red Snapper Collection Methods under Other Business.

Follow-up Discussion concerning Data Confidentiality Workshop

- * J. O'Hop stated that the group needed to discuss where the similarities and differences between agencies exists concerning confidentiality. R. Lukens stated that the staff will develop a proceedings which will be very detailed minutes of the workshop. J. Poffenberger asked that assuming all agencies in the Southeast Region agree to

share data, should there be a description section which alerts an user that, based on some criteria, they could be accessing confidential data. Historically, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has denoted data as confidential when there were fewer than three dealers in a particular area (rule of three). It was suggested that the Committee establish a criteria for determining if data are confidential. Without a definitive definition of confidentiality, the rule of three is probably a good criteria to use. It was suggested that it may be best to let the NMFS decide what criteria to use. S. Lazauski pointed out that even if the rule of three is used, it is still possible to determine particular fishermen. J. Poffenberger stated that the group can add additional criteria along with the rule of three such as market share, etc. The criteria developed by the group would essentially be a warning to users that they need to explore the confidentiality status of the data. The Committee discussed several scenarios of the number of dealers and percentages of market shares. It was suggested the rule of three and 65% of the market share would be used to tag confidential data. J. Shepard stated that these numbers and percentages are not really based on anything and that they appear to be arbitrary. R. Lukens moved that the Southeast Cooperative Statistics Committee use the rule of three and 75% of the market share as a criteria for determining confidential data. S. Lazauski amended the motion that if a confidentiality flag appears, the user contact the state(s) of origin and discuss the use of the data. After a lengthy discussion, the motion was withdrawn and the group decided not to take any action concerning criteria for confidential data.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the CSP meeting held on September 26-27, 1994 in St. Petersburg, Florida were approved with minor editorial changes.

Unresolved Administrative Issues

a. Update of Dealer Codes

J. Poffenberger stated that under the new system, the data will not be loaded unless the dealer id number has been validated. Therefore, that is the reason for the need for more timely updates from the states of the dealer codes. The intent of this

activity is to be able to assign a name with a dealer code. S. Lazauski noted that a dealer may have a finfish dealer code as well as a shrimp dealer code which can cause some problems. J. Poffenberger stated that NMFS currently used the state dealer codes for finfish dealers and are in the process of initiating a similar policy for shrimp dealers which should prevent any problems.

b. Coast Guard Vessel Registration Number

M. Camp reported that the Coast Guard vessel identification number has changed from a 6-digit to a 7-digit number, which could cause some data entry problems. She stated that the numbers will be strictly numerical and right justified. The state identification numbers will be kept in a separate database since they have alpha characters. The Coast Guard file will be used at the Silver Spring computer center.

c. NOAA Administrative order 216-100 and Status of IT-95

M. Camp distributed a complete copy of NOAA Administrative order 216-100 which refers to disclosure of confidential data. She stated that there is a new non-disclosure form which all states need to read, sign and send back to her in order to get access to the new NMFS computer system. Once the signed non-disclosure forms are received, M. Camp will assign access numbers to appropriate personnel. This is different from how it worked in the past. Now, each individual will have their own access number. In an effort to address turn-over of personnel, NMFS is considering a policy that would suspend the access number for people who have not accessed the computer for six months and remove their files from the system and store them on tape. If the tape has not been accessed for a year, NMFS will contact the state supervisor and ask what should be done with the files.

M. Camp stated that the A-10 has been disconnected. There is an A-7 working which is used for old archived tapes. The NMFS will be contacting the states concerning the old data and asking if the states want the data on the tapes. If an agency has Internet access, they can currently access the new system. If an agency does not have

Internet access, they need either PPP or SLIP software to access the machine and can do file transfer.

d. Update on Port Agent Meetings

R. Lukens stated that at the last meeting, the Committee discussed the prospect of continuing to hold port agent meetings and from that, a letter to Brad Brown was sent which stated that port agent meetings would be useful, and interaction between the different port agents and the Committee would be beneficial to the program. B. Brown responded to the letter by stating that he would encourage the lab directors to continue to conduct meetings of port agents and that state agency personnel would be notified of meetings in their area.

Development of Shrimp Vessel Registration Process

R. Lukens stated that under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), Section 7 consultation on sea turtles, it is now required that a permit be issued to shrimp vessels in the Southeast Region. Preliminary discussions between NMFS and state personnel leaned towards using existing state systems for issuing these permits. Since then, NMFS personnel has visited all the states in the Region to discuss this issue and have developed a set of questions to collect as much information as possible without overly burdening the vessel owners and fishermen. Although the purpose of the permit is to satisfy the ESA, it may be possible to collect pertinent data on vessels to adequately identify the universe in the shrimp fishery.

Presentation of Licensing Information in the Southeast Region

* D. Donaldson stated that he compiled licensing information received from various people and presented the document to the Committee. However, the shrimp permitting activity discussed above and this activity are very similar. It was suggested that this issue be suspended until the outcome from the NMFS activity is complete. The Committee agreed to delay action concerning collection of licensing information until the NMFS activities with regards to shrimp vessels are complete. D. Donaldson stated that

his only concern is that the Committee be involved in the NMFS activities and that these activities collect at least the data that would have been collected by the Committee's activities. **G. Rogers moved that the Committee stop any progress on the collection of licensing information until such time that the NMFS completes their activities related to this issue.** The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Work Group Reports

a. Data Collection

J. Poffenberger stated that the Work Group was charged with establishing a minimum set data elements necessary for fisheries management. He then updated the Committee on progress accomplished by the Work Group. At the next meeting, the Work Group will provide a formal presentation to the Committee for their consideration. The Work Group developed several lists of data elements needed for a variety of activities such as general fisheries management, stock assessment (primary data, derived data), economics (harvesting, processing, and retail), and social/cultural aspects. Some of these categories were grouped into various portions or sectors which are shown in the parentheses. This information will be distributed to the Committee for their comments. Once comments have been incorporated, the Work Group will present the final list to the Committee and have a discussion concerning these data elements at a subsequent meeting.

Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN)

a. Status

R. Lukens stated that at the last meeting, the Committee was scheduled to consider the MOU and Framework Plan for ComFIN, however, that did not occur. Thus at this meeting, the Committee needs to consider these documents and vote on their approval.

b. Framework Plan

* D. Donaldson stated that the plan has been distributed to the Committee and comments have been incorporated into the document. The plan has been reviewed and discussed at previous meetings and should be very close to being complete. **R. Lukens moved to accept the Framework Plan for ComFIN as written.** If there are any editorial comments concerning the document they should be given to the staff before they leave the meeting. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

T. Schmidt stated that the National Park Service (NPS) is interested in being involved in ComFIN. It is important for the NPS to be involved since they do monitor the commercial resources in Biscayne National Park and some U.S. Virgin Islands parks. Species such as stone crab, spiny lobster, and several bait fisheries are prosecuted in NPS jurisdictions. Since the NPS does have regulatory authority in these areas, it would be useful to have some consistency in data collection methods to ease the burden on the fishermen. Thus, it seems logical for the ComFIN to include the NPS. R. Lukens stated that it would be appropriate to also include the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in ComFIN. He has talked with FWS personnel about this issue and they were interested in becoming partners. R. Lukens stated that he would pursue this issue. The Committee agreed that the NPS and FWS should be included in the ComFIN.

c. Memorandum of Understanding

R. Lukens stated that there was a question concerning the status of the RecFIN MOU since the program is in its third year of a three-year pilot time frame. It was determined that it would probably be necessary to develop and sign a new RecFIN MOU. R. Lukens suggested that since the ComFIN and RecFIN MOUs need to be signed, the two MOUs should be combined into one document which incorporates both programs. The combined MOU would be very specific about the two separate components (ComFIN and RecFIN) and not diminish either program, as it would be very clear that there are two separate components. This issue will be discussed with commissioners and state directors at upcoming Commission meetings so they realize it is not a new program but just a blending of two existing programs. J. Moran

suggested that this issue be tabled until the FIN meeting when all the partners are in attendance.

Other Business

a. Update of Processed Products Report

S. Koplín stated that the processed products manual has been revised and everyone should have received copies. The NMFS has completed the conversion from the previous NMFS, state, and county codes to the FIPs system. The employment data block has been expanded to include all employees at a particular site. During the revision of the manual, information was added to further explain some areas of confusion. S. Lazauski stated that it would be easier if a dealer had one code for finfish, shrimp, processed products, etc. There is a possibility of using the state codes. S. Koplín likes the idea of using state codes; however, there is the problem of those codes being recycled after a dealer goes out of business which can be confusing.

J. O'Hop asked if the processed products survey could be used to determine the value of commercial fishing to a state and assess the impact on the commercial seafood industry due to net ban or similar actions. S. Koplín stated that you would have to go through a lot of imputations. To get any useful assessment, there needs to be some modifications to the current survey and region-wide cooperation among the participants.

b. Red Snapper Collection Methods

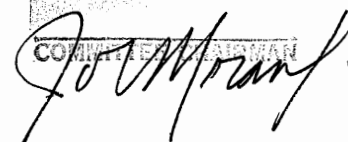
J. Poffenberger stated that the NMFS Miami Lab initiated an activity to get better sampling distribution for size frequency and bioprofile data for conducting stock assessment for red snapper. As a result, NMFS determined the number of fish that need to be sampled at particular dealer sites and asked the states to help in the collection of these samples. It has yet to be determined who will be responsible for aging all of the fish that are being collected. In the future, sampling will be expanded to include other species with specific sampling targets which will allow scientists to conduct stock assessments. J. Shepard stated that he was not sure that collection of otoliths was part of the CSP, but if participants are going to engage in this type of

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collection activity, there needs to be some type of sampling protocol developed by the Committee on how to collect the information. There needs to be more coordination for this activity. R. Lukens stated that this is the type of activity that needs to be coordinated under the auspices of ComFIN. This issue will be discussed at the next meeting to begin developing some type of protocol.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

APPROVED BY:


COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK
MINUTES

Wednesday, February 28, 1996
New Orleans, Louisiana

Chairman Steve Meyers called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. The following people were present:

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL
Theo Brainerd, SAFMC, Charleston, SC
Julie Califf, GDNR, Brunswick, GA
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Joe Desfosse, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
David Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Walter Gibson, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC
Lee Green, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Albert Jones, NMFS, Miami, FL
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC
Skip Lazauski, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dee Lupton, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR
John Merriner, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
Steve Meyers, VIDFW, St. Thomas, USVI
Joe Moran, SCWMRD, Charleston, SC
Nick Nicholson, GDNR, Brunswick, GA
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Washington, D.C.
Nancie Parrack, NMFS, Miami, FL
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL
Joseph Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
James Timber, PRDNER, Puerta Tierra, PR
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Dawn Whitehead, USFWS, Vero Beach, FL

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was approved with the addition of Discussion of NMFS Home Page and Query System under Other Business.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) meeting held on September 27, 1995 in Miami, Florida were approved with minor editorial changes.

Status of Memorandum of Understanding for RecFIN/ComFIN

D. Donaldson stated that the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed by almost all the participants. The MOU was recently sent to the NMFS personnel for their signature and the National Park Service and U.S. Virgin Islands are in the process of signing it. The South Atlantic Board requested that language concerning the cooperation between the RecFIN(SE)/ComFIN and the Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) be added, but this language does not change the intent of the MOU.

Discussion of Framework Plan for RecFIN/ComFIN

* D. Donaldson stated that at the last RecFIN(SE) meeting, the Committee decided that a joint RecFIN/ComFIN Framework Plan should be developed. The staff has developed a draft Framework Plan which essentially combined the two existing framework plans for the programs. The Administrative Subcommittee has reviewed the document and the FIN Committee needs to take action on the plan. It was noted that there are certain sections in the document that have been bolded which signify there was some discussion by the Administrative Subcommittee and need to be addressed by the FIN Committee. One of these issues related to the goals and objectives for ComFIN and RecFIN(SE). The objectives were modified to reflect the long-term nature of these programs to avoid having to revise them every year. The other issue referred to the establishment of a quorum. M. Osborn stated that the Administrative Subcommittee discussed the issue of using a simple majority versus a 2/3 majority for determining the preferred action. The rationale for a 2/3 majority is that if an important issue is being voted on, there may need to be more than a simple majority to decide the issue. This issue was thoroughly addressed by the Committee and after a lengthy discussion, **R. Lukens moved if consensus cannot be reached, the will of the Committees will be expressed by majority vote of a quorum (2/3 of all the members) to determine the preferred action. The motion was seconded and passed with NMFS abstaining and GMFMC against. S. Atran made a substitute motion that stated if consensus cannot be reached, the will**

of the Committees will be expressed by simple majority of those present with the “ayes” and “nays” recorded. The motion was seconded but was not passed.. It was noted that the voting procedures for subcommittees and work groups will be established by those groups. In addition to these issues, there were various editorial changes made to the document. The staff will make the revisions and distribute the revised plan to the Committee for their comment. The revised Framework Plan represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting.

The issue of publishing the Framework Plan was discussed. The Committee agreed that two documents should be produced. The first will be the formal Framework Plan which outlines the goals, objectives, procedures, etc. for the program. The other report will be an executive summary which provides a brief overview of the program and will be distributed to Congress and other personnel.

Update and Status of Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP)

L. Kline stated that the MOU for the program was presented in November 1995 for agency signatures. All states have signed or are in the process of signing. There are 23 signatory agencies. The MOU establishes a Fisheries Statistics Coordinating Council with each agency having one voting member. In addition, the NMFS will also have three non-voting members which will allow for the regional directors to be involved in the process. The Council is scheduled to meet in March and there are a lot of organizational issues that need to be addressed. Under the MOU, there is an Operations Committee which will be appointed by the Council. This group will deal with the daily activities of the program, similar to the ComFIN and RecFIN(SE) Committees. The ASMFC is compiling an inventory of the fisheries activities that the Atlantic states are conducting as well as an options paper which outlines many of the technical issues regarding marine fisheries topics. Two ad hoc groups have been established to address specific issues. The Marketing Strategy Work Group is charged with marketing the program to industry, the public, and eventually to Congress. The group developed an industry workshop where the program was presented to industry members (both commercial and recreational) and allowed them to provide feedback regarding the program. The other group is the Computer Technical Group which is charged with developing a strategy for designing the data management system.

Time Schedule for Next Meeting

The week of September 23, 1996 was selected as the next meeting time. The locations of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Charleston, South Carolina were suggested as possible meeting sites. The Committee directed the staff to determine the best location for the meeting and contact the members with the selection.

Other Business

M. Osborn stated that the NMFS-Fisheries Statistics Division has developed a home page. There is a link on this page to recreational fisheries data where users can access MRFSS data. The user can specify the type of data (length, catch, effort, etc.) for various regions and species. She asked everyone to access the page and send comments about the page to NMFS. The address of the page is: <http://remora.ssp.nmfs.gov>. To access the MRFSS data, you need the user id and password. They are as follows: user id: DESK; password: CHAIR. There were various questions regarding the development and use of this page and the group was excited about the home page. M. Osborn stated that work is continuing on providing access to more data sets. She said that developing and modifying HTML files is extremely easy and very portable. The portability will allow other NMFS offices and other agencies to utilize the scripts developed for this page for their own web pages.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

APPROVED BY:
Stephen Meyers

COMMITTEE

RECFIN(SE) COMMITTEE MINUTES

February 28 - 29, 1996

New Orleans, Louisiana

Chairman Stephen Meyers called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m. The following people were present:

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL
Theo Brainerd, SAFMC, Charleston, SC
Joe Desfosse, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
David Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Lee Green, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Albert Jones, NMFS, Miami, FL
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, D.C.
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC
Skip Lazauski, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dee Lupton, NCDMR, Morehead City, NC
John Merriner, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
Stephen Meyers, USVIDFW, St. Thomas, VI
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC
Nick Nicholson, GDNR, Brunswick, GA
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Washington, DC
Nancie Parrack, NMFS, Miami, FL
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
James Timber, PRDNER, Puerta Tierra, PR
Tom Van Devender, BMR, Biloxi, MS
Dawn Whitehead, USFWS, Vero Beach, FL

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved with the removal of Review of Goals and Objectives since this item was discussed at the FIN meeting earlier in the day.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the meeting held on September 26, 1995 in Miami, Florida were approved as written with GMFMC abstaining because no representative from the Council was present at the September 1995 meeting.

Final Approval of 1996 Operations Plan

a. Discussion of Recommendations Developed at Facilitated Session

S. Meyers noted a document was developed from the facilitated session report that outlines the recommendations from that session. The Committee began reviewing the document to ensure that the recommendations accurately capture the ideas discussed at the session. It was noted that since the facilitators were not intimately involved in the fisheries arena, some of the recommendations do not capture the meaning of the discussions. M. Osborn stated that the document should be examined and revised by a smaller group and their findings presented to the Committee at the next meeting. The ad hoc Recommendations Work Group, consisting of M. Osborn, R. Lukens, L. Kline, and S. Meyers, was charged with revising the recommendations document to accurately reflect the discussions. The Committee discussed the issue of publication of the recommendation document. After some discussion, the consensus of the Committee was that the document should be published and distributed to interested personnel.

b. Finalization of 1996 Operations Plan

A draft copy of the 1996 Operations Plan was distributed to the Committee. The Committee completed a thorough review of each task. During the discussion, it was noted that since much of the work regarding the development of the data management system was being conducted by the MRFSS staff, the Data Base Work Group has not been very active recently. Therefore, **M. Osborn moved to temporarily disband the Data Base Work Group until such a time when their input is needed.** The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. After the review was complete, **J. Moran moved to accept the 1996 Operations Plan as amended. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The revised 1996 Operations Plan represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting.

Status of Social/Economic Work Group

R. Lukens stated that there are two approaches to address this issue. The first is to have a works group consisting of members of Committee and charged them with making sure the identified tasks are accomplished. The other approach is to have actual economists and sociologists on the work group and have them periodically meet to address the identified tasks. It was suggested that

there could be a combination of both approaches, having both RecFIN(SE) Committee members and economists and sociologists. When an issue required more expertise, the work group ask various social scientists to participate. The Committee agreed that a combination of both approaches was the best method to use. The Committee decided that the Social/Economic Work Group will consist of Theo Brainerd, Steven Atran/Tony Lamberte, Lisa Kline, Steve Meyers, and Ron Schmied. It was noted that Steve Holiman would be a good addition to the Committee. The staff will contact S. Holiman to see if he would be willing to participate. The Committee also agreed that there needs to be a meeting of newly formed work group to discuss the identified tasks and develop an approach for addressing these issues.

The meeting recessed at 4:45 p.m.

February 29, 1996

The meeting reconvened at 8:40 a.m.

Development of 5-year Time Table for the RecFIN(SE)

R. Lukens stated that the Committee needs to develop a new time table for the program. The original time table covered three years due to the pilot phase of the RecFIN(SE). It was suggested that the new time table should cover five years. The time table allows the program to see where activities have occurred and where they will be occurring in the future. J Shepard suggested that the recommendations identified at the facilitated session could be prioritized into a time table. M. Osborn noted that each recommendation was given a "grade" by the group during the session and the group can utilize these "grades" for prioritizing the recommendations. From these "grades", a time table can be developed.

Administrative Subcommittee Report

R. Lukens stated that the Administrative Subcommittee met via a conference call on February 1, 1996. The first issue discussed by the group was an examination of the program review report. Although the report had been discussed by the Committee, it was suggested that the Subcommittee review the text of the report and determine if there were additional actions that needed to be

addressed. The Subcommittee reviewed the report and there were no additional actions that need to be addressed. The Subcommittee believed that the RecFIN(SE) is addressing all the issues identified by the program review report. One of the recommendations in the program review report was to utilize other potential funding sources, such as MARFIN and S/K to accomplish some work for the RecFIN(SE). Regarding that issue, the Subcommittee discussed the work that Buck Sutter has been doing regarding computerizing all the MARFIN projects which enables users to search and find information concerning past projects. The Subcommittee discussed the potential of this resources and the possibility of doing the same activity with the S/K projects. In addition, it was noted that the FWS has a similar program where users can access information regarding FWS projects. The Subcommittee then discussed the current vacancy of the Vice Chairmanship due to the replacement of Wayne Waltz. Therefore, the Committee needs to elect a new Vice Chairman for the RecFIN(SE). The floor was opened for nominations. L. Kline nominated Nick Nicholson. The nominations were closed and N. Nicholson was elected Vice Chairman of the RecFIN(SE) Committee by acclamation.

Review of Policy Statement regarding Survey Methodologies Changes

D. Donaldson stated that one of the tasks in the 1996 Operations Plan was to develop a policy statement regarding survey methodologies changes. This issue was developed during the facilitated session. Staff has developed a draft policy statement which has been distributed to the Committee. The Committee reviewed the statement and after some discussion, the following policy statement was adopted:

Realizing that it is not always possible, the RecFIN(SE) Committee has agreed that there is a need for policy concerning MRF survey methodology changes. The policy is that new methods should be benchmarked before changing methods of surveys to ensure that the methodologies will remain consistent over the years of the survey. The time period and spatial coverage will be determined on a case by case basis.

Discussion of MRFSS/Gulf States Proposal

R. Lukens stated that Gulf States, through the GSMFC, have submitted a proposal to conduct the intercept portion of the NMFS Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey in the Gulf of Mexico region. The proposal was submitted in late 1995 and activities are proposed to begin in January 1997. The proposal is currently at NMFS-Headquarters and staff should begin addressing

the proposal in March 1996. M. Osborn stated that NMFS cannot commit to doing the intercept survey through the Gulf States without budget numbers for those states. Although the NMFS cannot commit, they are willing to work with the Gulf States on this proposal. She mention there is an alternative proposal which would involve the Gulf States in implementing the testing of charterboat methodologies in the Gulf of Mexico. If the Gulf States started with that part, it would allow all involved to gain some experience in collecting MRFSS data. R. Lukens stated that it was an interesting proposal and will be added to the agenda of the upcoming Data Management Subcommittee meeting.

Reporting of Inkind Support

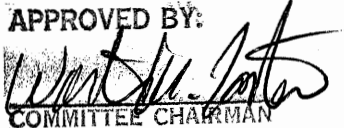
D. Donaldson stated that at the last meeting, the Committee decided to continue the collection of inkind support and that each member would provide that information to staff during this meeting. For those member who did not provided their inkind information, a deadline of March 18, 1996 was established for getting the information to staff.

Review of 1995 Annual Report

D. Donaldson stated that a draft copy of the Annual Report was distributed to the Committee for their comment and review. The Committee reviewed the document and made several minor changes. **J. Moran moved that the 1995 Annual Report for the RecFIN(SE) be approved as amended. The motion was seconded and passed with GMFMC abstaining.**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

SEAMAP Subcommittee Meeting
MINUTES
Brownsville, Texas
March 18, 1996

APPROVED BY:

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Chairman Walter Tatum called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. He noted that Mark Leiby, the Florida representative will not be attending the meeting. The following members and others were present.

Members:

Walter Tatum, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Jim Hanifen, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Terry Cody, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Richard Waller, GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS
Joanne Shultz, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS

Others:

Scott Nichols, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
Buck Sutter, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Ken Savastano, NMFS, SSC, MS
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Corky Perret, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA

Staff:

Larry Simpson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Cheryl Noble, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Adoption of Agenda

Under Other Business, J. Shultz will present preliminary results on the Red Drum Aerial Survey and information on reef fish and larval king mackerel data. With these changes the agenda was adopted.

Approval of Minutes

J. Shultz asked to change the October 23 minutes under the Environmental Data report, first paragraph, third sentence to read "NMFS would like to start using a data temperature recorder. . . ." and under the last line of the same paragraph change to read "six months they would like to send them to. . ." With these changes, the October 23, 1995 minutes were approved. The February 14, 1996 conference call minutes were approved as submitted.

Administrative Report

D. Donaldson reported that several surveys are scheduled to begin. The first is the Spring Plankton Survey which covers Gulf waters from Florida Bay to Brownsville, Texas. Vessels from Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and NMFS will participate. The survey is scheduled to begin in April 1996 and the purpose of the survey is to assess abundance and distribution of bluefin tuna eggs and larvae.

The Summer Shrimp/Groundfish Survey is scheduled for June through July 1996. The purpose of this survey is to determine abundance and distribution of demersal



organisms in the Gulf of Mexico. Vessels from NMFS, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Texas will participate in this survey.

NMFS is in the second year of the Longline Shark survey and they are studying the feasibility of conducting a shark survey in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic regions. It is envisioned that SEAMAP will become involved in this activity. Mark Grace from NMFS may give a presentation of the results of the first year at the joint or fall SEAMAP meeting. One of the goals of the survey is to identify the nursery grounds in the Gulf of Mexico. He asked that during routine SEAMAP surveys, if any sharks are found with umbilical cords to please preserve the animal and supply it to him. D. Donaldson distributed the NMFS 1996 Southeast Shark Assessment and Cruise Results on Coastal Shark Assessment (Attachment I).

T. Cody said that after discussions with M. Grace, they are interested in the neonate sharks and their nursery areas. They apparently think there are areas inshore or nearshore that have a large number of these sharks. T. Cody said he volunteered to take M. Grace and his team with them in the field to collect samples. T. Cody has also been corresponding with Charles Manire from Mote Marine Laboratory (MML) who wants TPWD to use MML tags to tag sharks during TPWD surveys.

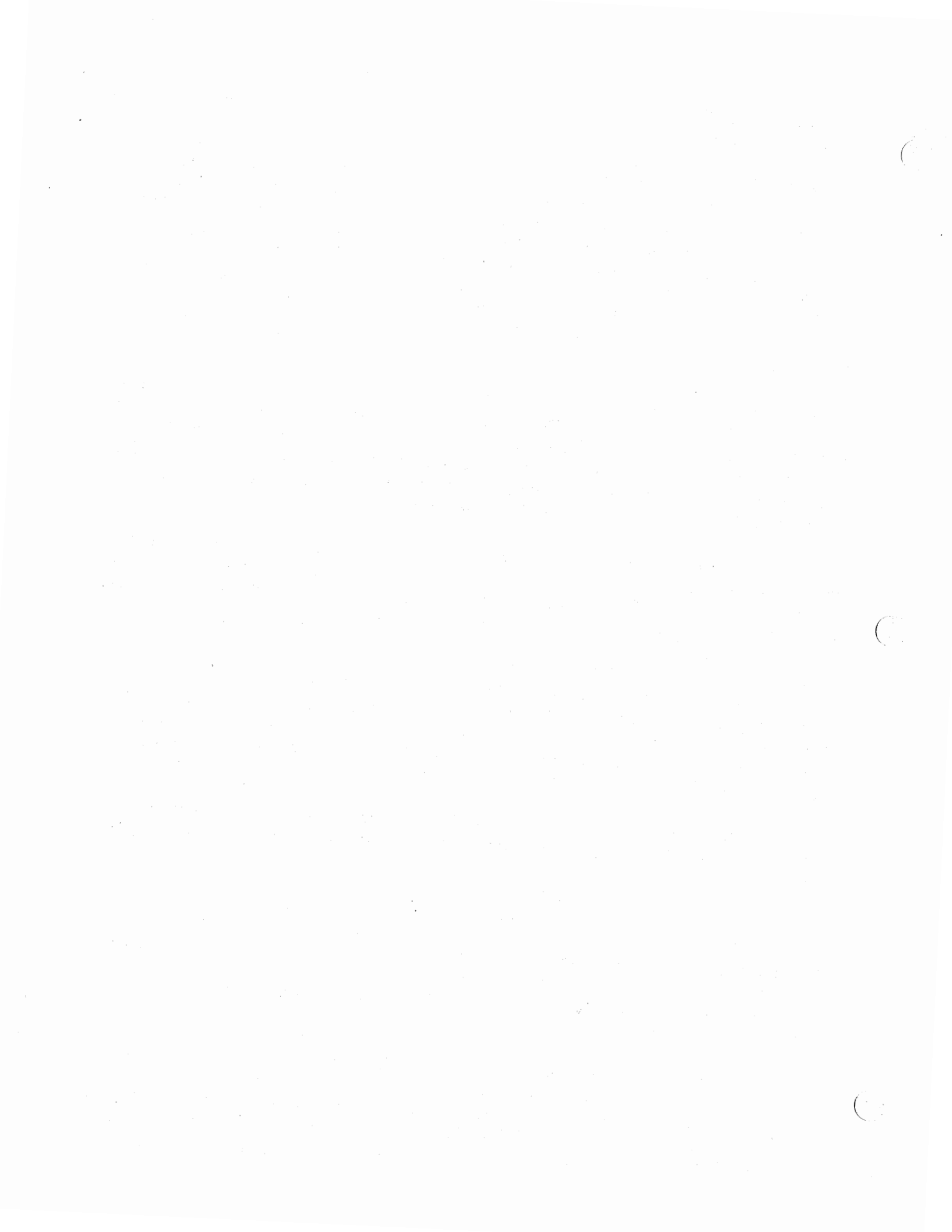
S. Nichols has received a request to submit an initiative for FY98 and he put something together based on the 5 Year Plan. He also submitted for \$20,000 for sharks but does not know what they will receive. D. Donaldson stressed that the survey work is contingent upon receipt of funds.

The 1996 Marine Directory has been completed and was distributed to the Subcommittee. It will also be distributed to the Commissioners and Proxies, the TCC and participating agencies. The FY95 Joint Annual Report has been received from the printers and it will be distributed with the 1993 Atlas which is at the printer's now. D. Donaldson has received all presentations from the General Session except one and it should be published and distributed by mid year.

D. Donaldson reported they have received their grant which was 50% of the FY96 conference mark. No new paperwork was necessary and GSMFC received their January 1 start date.

D. Donaldson is in the process of designing the GSMFC homepage and it should be operational by mid-1996. He then explained what will be on the homepage and asked for any suggestions and comments. He said that under the data management portion, he described what the system is and then in the last paragraph he stated that if you're interested in obtaining this data to please contact K. Savastano and he put in his telephone number and e-mail address.

W. Tatum said that he was at the ASMFC office and spoke with R. Pueser about the 5 Year Plan and Executive Summary. Because of the funding situation, she has not worked on either but now that the funding has come through she should be able to proceed. D. Donaldson said the 5 Year Plan is final it just has to be published but the Executive Summary is still in rough draft and the final should be coming out shortly.



Status of FY1996 Funds

B. Sutter reported that he had hoped by this time NMFS would have some kind of resolution but, unfortunately the situation is still unclear. Congress passed the 50% funding and that went through without having to file additional paper work. He said that basically everything with a January, February, March and April start date was funded and if it was under \$50,000 it got 50% funding and anything over \$50,000 got 100% funding. He said if Congress does pass a continuing resolution for the rest of the year, then they will be able to process the remaining 50% of the grant.

D. Donaldson reminded everyone that at the last meeting they decided to submit for a 15% cut in funding so they got 50% of that. He said the conference mark was closer to a 12 or 13% cut and asked if the contracts should be amended to get the additional money. B. Sutter suggested to just wait and see what is approved. Questions were asked about what happens if the Continuing Resolution continues, taxes, new rules, etc. and B. Sutter suggested to contact John Oliver to keep up to date. S. Nichols said that if a continuing resolution is passed for the duration of this fiscal year we'll be authorized to spend at whatever level is authorized. B. Sutter and L. Simpson said that it is their understanding that the next continuing resolution should be for a longer duration and it was suggested by many people to fund at the conference mark. L. Simpson also commented that NOAA and fisheries is in very good shape as far as money is concerned.

B. Sutter then noted all of the time and effort and the great job Judy Sherbino did to get all the paper work out quickly when the CR passed. W. Tatum said they appreciate all the work they did and would be sure to give Ms. Sherbino some thanks or at least some type of acknowledgment for her effort. He then asked B. Sutter to inform D. Donaldson of any new information he may receive on this subject.

The Subcommittee discussed what should be done if they don't get the additional 50% funding. They all agreed the long term trawling data base should be protected. After a lengthy discussion, the Subcommittee decided to operate normally as if they were getting full funding. B. Sutter said telephone calls and letters from the states to the regional office or headquarters may help in letting them know what an important effort this is.

Update on Louisiana's Work Regarding Chlorophyll Sampling

* J. Hanifen distributed two handouts (Attachment 2) on the Comparison of Spectrophotometry and Benchtop Fluorometry for Measuring Concentrations of Chlorophyll α and discussed the results, conclusions and recommendations in the handouts. He stated he still has concerns about the integrity of the long term data sets if they change methods at this point without thoroughly understanding the relationship between the two different methods. He said he understands the problems NMFS and the states are having with funding and personnel and said Louisiana has the personnel and lab facilities to do the chlorophyl samples but they would need support. After a lengthy discussion, R. Waller moved that NMFS should run both chlorophyl sampling methods if financially possible and encourage LDWF to continue their comparisons on the methods. J. Shultz seconded and after discussion the motion passed unanimously. T. Cody informed the committee that if need be, Texas will not participate in collecting the sample for a year because they are already a year behind because most of their samples from last year were lost or destroyed.

Status of NOAA Fleet and Implications to the SEAMAP

S. Nichols said the NOAA Corp, which operates the fleet, has been told by memo from their head admiral to expect to start disbanding starting October 1. Apparently, certain interests believe contracting the work will save money. He said there could be a problem in fisheries because they are not aware of anybody who can handle this type of sampling. He said he expects the NOAA Corp to be out of uniform sometime next year but in the short term we should be working with the same people and vessels. He said it's possible that we could end up working the same vessels just managed by someone else. He is convinced we will be able to function as long as the fishing community believes there is a need to do this work.

Data Coordinating Work Group

K. Savastano distributed the SEAMAP Data Management Report and asked that everyone check the data for 1982-1994 to see if it is comparable with their agency and inform him of any discrepancies. He said that Attachment 11 shows where they were in October and Attachment 12 shows where they are now. He said the only real change they've had since October is in the 1995 data--they picked up about 100 thousand records which is about a half a year's data. There is a lot of work that's not showing up because it hasn't been completed due to cut backs in personnel. They have just about terminated going backwards (because of limited resources and cuts in personnel). He said they are trying to focus on the data that is currently coming in but if they go to contracting they may be able to go back and do Louisiana, Texas and Florida. He said that with the resources they currently have they are trying to focus on getting the system converted to ORACLE. He said that in the meantime they will take the other processing resources that they have and focus on the 1994 atlas and the real time data. They only have one production person on staff who eventually will be going to contracting. Entry and edit will have to be shifted around to whoever is left.

K. Savastano then reviewed the rest of his report. W. Tatum commended him on the thorough job he has done in presenting this information considering his lack of personnel and resources.

Other Business

Red Drum Aerial Survey - J. Shultz reported that a rough draft report of the red drum aerial survey is completed. The survey took place September 18 - December 2, 1995. She showed transparencies of the preliminary results but did not distribute because it is not in its final form. She said that because of the weather the actual flight days were cut by 2/3. The final report should be available within 2 weeks and will be distributed.

Larval Fish Data - J. Shultz showed one transparency with the 1993 data from three of the eight cruises from the Summer Shrimp/Groundfish and the Fall Plankton Survey. It showed the mean abundance of king mackerel larvae. She said they sent an initial cut to Joe Powers in Miami and he seemed interested in using this in their stock assessments.

Reef Fish - J. Shultz said they lost time on the CHAPMAN and other earlier surveys so they have 14 days scheduled in May to do a very intensive video survey of the Flower



Gardens and associated areas. She said they are going to choose their sights in a randomly depth stratified regime to look at the effect on depth on reef fish.

T. Cody asked what was the proper procedure for returning his old SEAMAP machine. K. Savastano said to return it and sign the loan agreement to close it out. K. Savastano then stressed the importance of standardizing all the SEAMAP component's hardware--they should all be compatible and he gave an example of problems they had when the ASMFC bought new PC's.

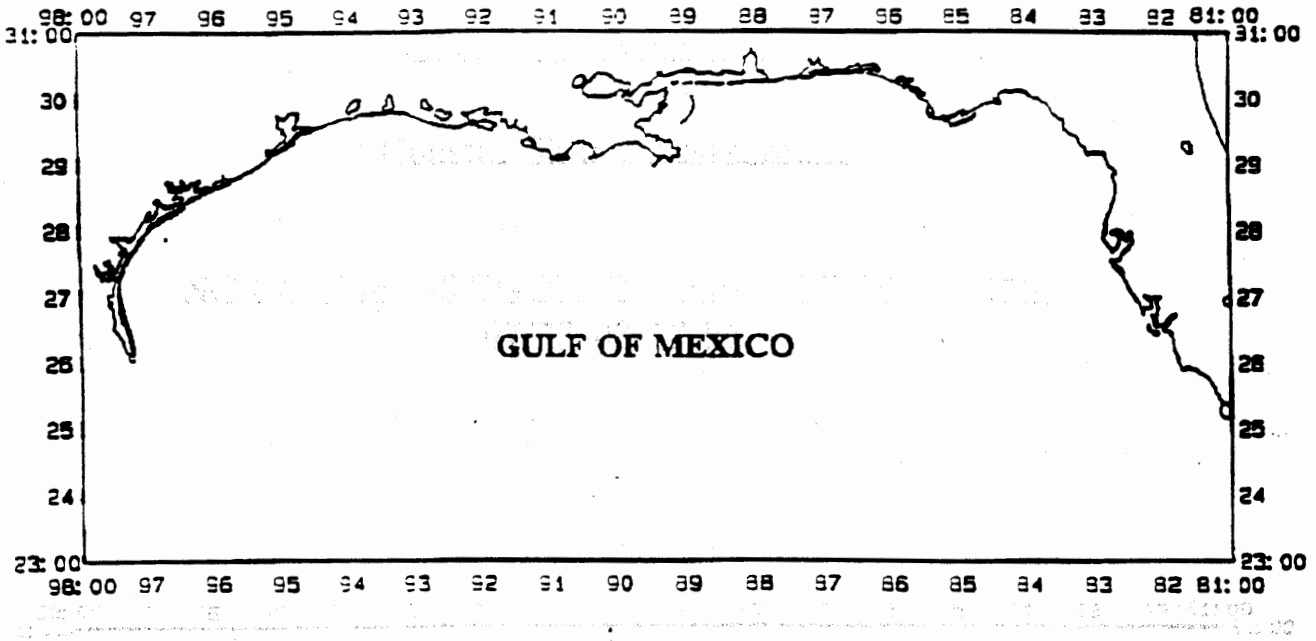
There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

ATTACHMENT I

CRUISE RESULTS

Coastal Shark Assessment

NOAA Ship OREGON II Cruise OT-95-04 (218)
07/23-08/17/95



U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Fisheries Science Center
Mississippi Laboratories
Pascagoula Facility
P.O. Drawer 1207
Pascagoula, MS 39568-1207

Cruise Report

OREGON II 95-07(218)
Coastal Shark Assessment
Bottom Longlining

1. SURVEY PERIOD: 7/23/95 - 8/17/95

2. AREA OF OPERATION:

Survey operations were conducted along the continental shelf of the Gulf of Mexico, from Brownsville, TX to the Dry Tortugas of southern Florida (Figure 1). The depth range for sampling was from 7 - 40 fathoms.

3. OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Conduct a pilot study to assess the feasibility of using bottom longline gear to determine the distribution and abundance of coastal sharks.
- 2) Collect biological data and samples of coastal sharks.
- 3) Tag and release coastal shark species.
- 4) Collect environmental data at survey sites.

4. MATERIALS AND METHODS:

The NOAA Ship OREGON II (173 ft length, 12 ft draft), was outfitted with commercial-type bottom longline gear. At the forward starboard quarter of the ship in proximity to the freeboard cutaway, a hydraulic longline reel was mounted to the deck. Monofilament mainline (940 lb test) was directed to the stern through a series of blocks. Setting gear at the stern was facilitated with an overhead boom suspending a block directly amidship, 5 ft off deck and 5 ft forward of the stern.

Radar reflector buoys (start set and end set; with strobes during night), bullet floats (start set, mid set, end set), chain link weights (7 lb each; 2 at start set, mid set, 2 at end set) and gangions with hooks (12 ft of 730 lb test monofilament, 3/0 shark hook) were clipped to the mainline (1.5 miles) as it was deployed

from the stern. During the set vessel speed averaged 4.5 knots with a set time of 20 minutes. Hand held radios were used for communication between the stern, bridge and longline reel operator.

Soak time was one hour and determined from the time the last radar reflector buoy was deployed during the set and the first radar reflector buoy was retrieved at haulback. During most sets, hooks (100) were baited with atlantic mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*, approximately 1 lb each) that had been cut in half. Periodically during the survey, other bait (eel, shark pieces, bonita and jack crevalle) was used as a comparison between bait types and because the supply of atlantic mackerel eventually was depleted. Hooks baited with shark pieces were identified with waterproof tags attached to the gangion clips.

Gear retrieval was conducted at the forward starboard freeboard cutaway. The cutaway measures 6 ft wide and is about 7 ft from the waterline. A retrieval roller was attached to the top of the caprail for facilitating retrieval of the mainline onto the longline spool. As the mainline was retrieved the longline components were unclipped. Catch was brought aboard through the freeboard cutaway or held at the surface for tagging. Haulback speed was approximately 4 knots and time to haul ranged upwards from 25 minutes (haulbacks without catch).

Environmental data were collected with a CTD deployed during the soak. The CTD provides a surface to bottom profile of temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, and chlorophyll.

5. SURVEY DESIGN:

Survey sites were selected at random and stratified by depth ranges of 10 - 20 fathoms, 20 - 30 fathoms, 30 - 40 fathoms. Primary sites were selected separate from alternate sites. All survey sites were occupied in the most time efficient manner possible and were not designated day or night sites prior to the survey. Operations were 24 hours.

The survey area for Leg II Phase II was selected to develop a comparison with an inshore bottom longline survey conducted concurrent by NMFS, Panama City, FL. Another criteria for selection of the survey area for Leg II Phase II was to develop a data base from shelf waters east of the Mississippi River delta to Cape San Blas, Florida which could serve as an accessible study area for future short-term surveys by NMFS, Mississippi Laboratories.

6. RESULTS:

During the survey 82 sites (47 day, 35 night) were sampled which represents approximately 800 hook hours of effort (Table 1). Sets completed between 630 am and 1930 m are designated day sets for the purpose of this report. Leg I was conducted from offshore of Brownsville, TX to south of Mississippi (30 stations); Leg II from south of Mississippi to the Dry Tortugas, FL (30 stations); Leg II Phase II from east of the Mississippi River Delta to Cape San Blas, FL (22 stations), (Figure 1). Primary sites were occupied during Legs I and II; alternate sites were occupied during Leg II Phase II and were included in the survey due to extra survey time.

7. SUMMARY:

Sharks constituted 80% of the total catch (268 of 334 captures). The mean shark catch rate was 3.3/hr; 6.0/hr (Leg I, 30 stations), 1.23/hr (Leg II, 30 stations), and 2.36/hr (Leg II Phase II, 22 stations). During Leg II Phase II, 4 stations (74, 75, 77 and 78) were conducted at depths less than 10 fathoms and produced 17 shark captures at a rate of 4.3/hr (4 hr).

Of the 13 shark species captured, 9 were large coastal species and 4 were small coastal species (Table 2). The dominant large coastal shark was the blacktip (*Carcharhinus limbatus*) and the dominant small coastal shark was the atlantic sharpnose (*Rhizoprionodon terraenovae*), (Table 3). Mortality for sharks was 34% dead of the total captures. The percentage of total sharks captured during day was 53%; during night 47% (Table 3). Bull sharks (*Carcharhinus leucas*), smooth dogfish (*Mustelus canis*) and finetooth sharks (*Carcharhinus isodon*) were captured only during Leg I; nurse sharks (*Ginglymostoma cirratum*) were captured only during Leg II and Leg II Phase II. All other sharks were encountered both west and east of the Mississippi River delta.

Of the total sharks captured, 48% (128) were tagged and released. Most of the tagged and released sharks were injected with tetracycline to facilitate age - growth studies for recaptures. Samples collected from shark captures were 110 for DNA analysis (white muscle, blood and liver), 34 sections of spinal columns for aging studies and 40 complete dissections of reproductive organs with some tissues retained. In addition, 130 shark specimens were examined for presence of external parasites with approximately 60 tissue samples retained. Examinations of spiral valves and stomachs were conducted for presence of internal parasites from 50 specimens.

The bait comparison was opportunistic and resulted in shark catch rates with atlantic mackerel at 3.3 captures/100 hooks (7393 hooks, 247 captures); shark pieces at .7 captures/100 hooks (669

hooks, 5 captures); atlantic mackerel mixed with other finfish bait at 12.0 captures/100 hooks (138 hooks, 16 captures from one set #78). Survey stations 73, 74, 75, 80, 81, 82 were baited entirely with shark pieces since the supply of atlantic mackerel was dwindling or depleted. These sites produced a shark catch rate of .5 captures/100 hooks (600 hooks, 3 captures). Differences in catches as related to bait type are not conclusive since variables such as location, depth and time of day were not systematically addressed.

8. Concurrent Assessments:

In addition to the NMFS Mississippi Laboratories assessment, an opportunity developed to conduct concurrent longlining effort with a survey by NMFS Panama City, Florida. Gear, bait and effort criteria by NMFS Mississippi Laboratories did not vary from the survey standard during the concurrent projects. For both assessments survey sites were randomly selected and stratified by depth. Survey sites for the NMFS Panama City study were both inshore (1) and offshore (4), (Table 4).

There were differences for the gear configuration and effort utilized by NMFS Panama City. Variations for NMFS Panama City include; whole menhaden (2 - 4 oz) for bait; shorter gangions (6 ft); .5 miles of monofilament mainline with 20 hooks (10 on bottom, 10 suspended midwater, 1 float over each hook); gear deployed both on bottom and suspended midwater (5 ft from surface); bottom and midwater sections of the mainline separated by 50 ft of polyline; effort continuous from 4 - 8 hours at each site during afternoon and night only; catch landed and bait replaced after each 1 hour soak.

For the sites in proximity to the NMFS Panama City assessment (Cape San Blas area, stations 38 - 44 and 61 - 67), catch rates at NMFS Mississippi sites were .02 shark captures/hook hour (30 captures, 100 hooks/hr, 14 hr, 1400 hook hours). NMFS Panama City catch rates were .06 shark captures/hook hour (27 captures, 20 hooks/hr, 27 hr, 540 hook hours), (Table 4). ³⁰

9. PARTICIPANTS:

Leg I 7/23/95 - 8/3/95

Mark Grace
Wes Pratt
Pat Turner
Cheryl Brown
Rebeka Rand
John Tyminski
Matt Andarde
Basil Arend

NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
NMFS, Narragansett, RI
NMFS, Narragansett, RI
NMFS, Miami, FL
Univ. of Rhode Island
Mote Marine, Sarasota, FL
Univ. of Massachusetts
SOFAI, Maderia Beach, FL

Bill Karel
Ed Heist
George Benz
Bobby Miller

TX Parks and Wildlife
TX A&M Univ.
Chattanooga Aquarium
Louisiana Wildlife & Fish

Leg II 8/6/95 - 8/17/95

Mark Grace
Wes Pratt
Steve Holiman
Rebeka Rand
Jill Dvuryachko
Ash Bullard
Kristy Smedley
Nienne Horton
Brent Winner
Carter Watterson
Peter Olsen

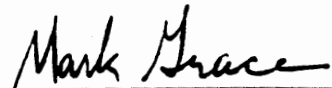
NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
NMFS, Narragansett, RI
SERO, St. Petersburg, FL
Univ. of Rhode Island
Louisiana Wildlife & Fish
Chattanooga Aquarium
Univ. of So. Mississippi
Mississippi Valley College
Florida Dept. Envir. Protection
Univ. of So. Alabama
Univ. of Connecticut

Concurrent Assessment 8/6 - 8/12/95, Panama City Laboratory

Lee Trent
John Carlson
Mel Miller
Sarah Prescott
Nancy Lewis
Brad Blackwell

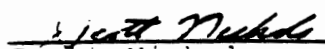
NMFS, Panama City, FL
Univ. of Mississippi
NMFS, Panama City, FL
NMFS, Panama City, FL
NMFS, Panama City, FL
NMFS, Panama City, FL

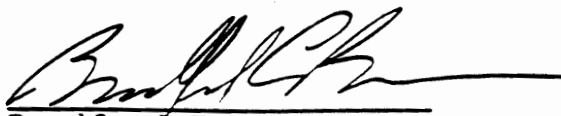
10. SUBMITTED BY:



Mark Grace
Chief Scientist
Date: 9/21/95

APPROVED BY:


Scott Nichols
Laboratory Director
Mississippi Laboratories
DATE: 10/2/95


Bradford E. Brown
SEFSC Director
DATE 10/2/95

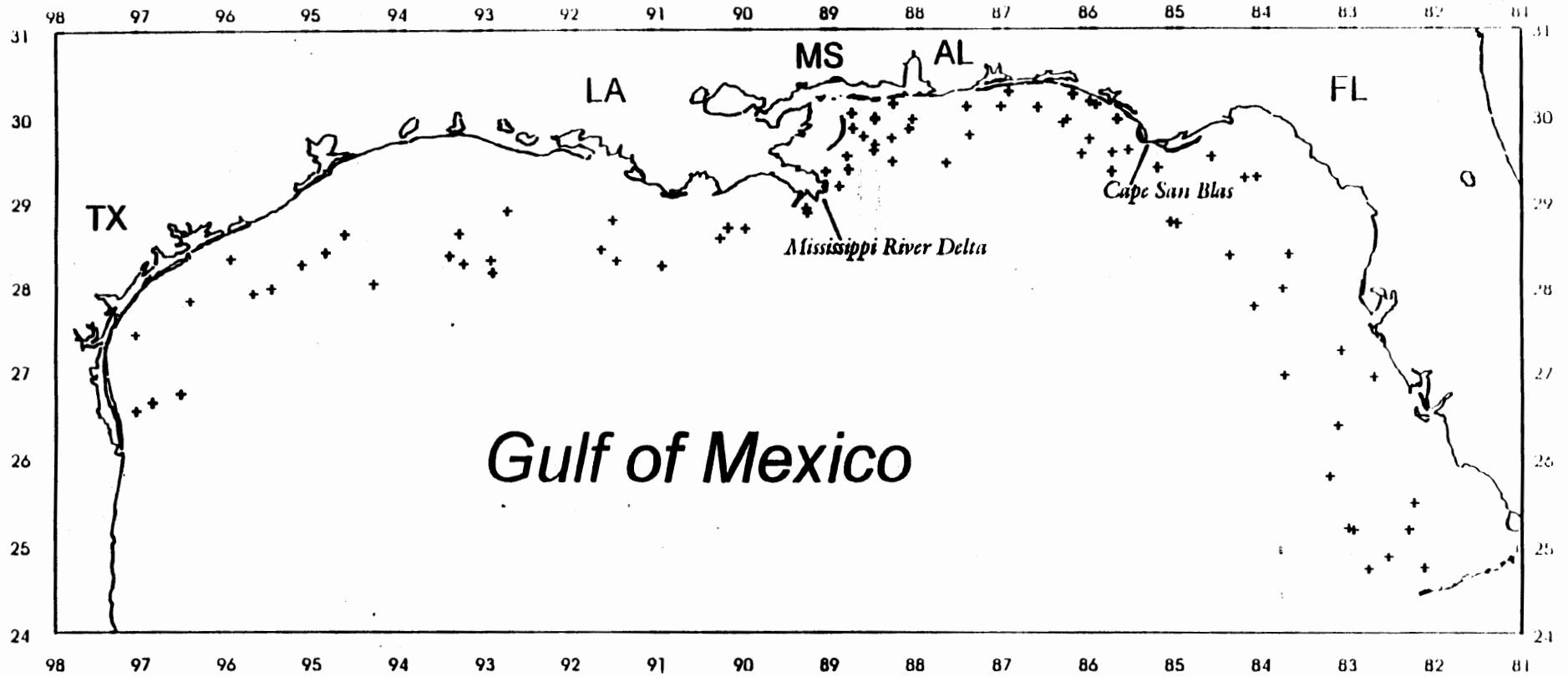


Figure 1. Survey area and station locations, 1995 Gulf of Mexico Shark Assessment.

TABLE 1. Survey sites 1995 Gulf of Mexico Shark Assessment.

Station	Latitude/ Longitude	Bottom Depth	TIME (CDT)	Shark Captures
1	3000/8828	12 fm	1328	Tiger (2); Blacktip (1)
2	2948/8828	29 fm	1750	Atlantic Sharpnose (9); Blacktip (1); Blacknose (1); Tiger (2)
3	2617/9632	32 fm	2014	Silky (1)
4	2633/9704	17 fm	0133	Atlantic Sharpnose (4)
5	2641/9653	26 fm	0911	Silky, (2); Atlantic Sharpnose (1); Sandbar (1)
6	2727/9704	14 fm	1529	Atlantic Sharpnose (1)
7	2752/9626	23 fm	2146	Atlantic Sharpnose (1)
8	2822/9556	13 fm	0338	Sandbar (1)
9	2757/9541	30 fm	0837	Atlantic Sharpnose (1)
10	2801/9528	30 fm	1142	
11	2819/9506	22 fm	1607	Sandbar (1); Atlantic Sharpnose (3); Silky (1)
12	2826/9452	21 fm	2011	Greater Hammerhead (1); Blacknose (1); Atlantic Sharpnose (1)
13	2839/9436	16 fm	0006	Tiger, (1); Bull (1); Blacktip (1); Atlantic Sharpnose (1); Blacknose (1)
14	2804/9416	34 fm	0606	
15	2822/9324	30 fm	1727	Scalloped Hammerhead (1); Atlantic Sharpnose (5)
16	2816/9314	31 fm	2030	Atlantic Sharpnose (5); Sandbar (1)
17	2811/9253	39 fm	0030	Smooth Dogfish (1)
18	2819/9257	30 fm	0529	Scalloped Hammerhead (1); Atlantic Sharpnose (3); Tiger (1)
19	2837/9318	20 fm	1009	Atlantic Sharpnose (8); Bull (3)
20	2854/9246	15 fm	1735	Bull (1); Blacknose (2); G. Hammerhead (1); Blacktip (2); Atlantic Sharpnose (4)
21	2848/9132	12 fm	1211	Blacktip (5); Atlantic Sharpnose (2);
22	2827/9140	29 fm	1737	Atlantic Sharpnose (8)

End longline set.

TABLE 1. (continued)

Station	Latitude/ Longitude	Bottom Depth	TIME (CDT)	Shark Captures
23	2821/9129	05 fm	2112	Smooth Dogfish (5); Scalloped Hammerhead(1)
24	2817/9058	05 fm	0838	Atlantic Sharpnose (6); Blacktip (1); Smooth Dogfish(2); Sc. Hammerhead (2)
25	2836/9018	22 fm	1450	Sandbar (1)
26	2843/9012	19 fm	1806	Spinner (2); Atlantic Sharpnose (1); Blacknose (1)
27	2842/9000	27 fm	2122	Atlantic Sharpnose (23); Bull (1); Spinner (1)
28	2857/8918	16 fm	0405	Finetooth (4); Atlantic Sharpnose (10); Sandbar (1)
29	2854/8917	33 fm	0639	Atlantic Sharpnose (13); Blacktip (2)
30	2912/8855	23 fm	1158	Atlantic Sharpnose (9); Blacktip (1)

Begin Leg II

31	2930/8817	26 fm	1442	Atlantic Sharpnose (2)
32	2930/8739	33 fm	1946	Blacknose (1); Atlantic Sharpnose (1); Scalloped Hammerhead (1)
33	2949/8723	27 fm	0006	Sandbar (1); Tiger (1); Atlantic Sharpnose (1)
34	3009/8701	15 fm	0448	
35	3008/8636	19 fm	0847	
36	2957/8619	32 fm	1238	Tiger (1)
37	2958/8618	29 fm	1509	
38	2937/8543	16 fm	0029	
39	2923/8542	24 fm	0339	Tiger (1); Atlantic Sharpnose (2)
40	2845/8503	37 fm	1003	
41	2845/8459	30 fm	1233	
42	2932/8433	13 fm	1927	Scalloped Hammerhead (1); Sandbar (1)
43	2918/8409	14 fm	0003	
44	2918/8404	13 fm	0248	Blacknose (1)

TABLE 1. (continued)

Station	Latitude/ Longitude	Bottom Depth	TIME (CDT)	Shark Captures
45	2823/8422	26 fm	1053	
46	2824/8341	16 fm	1612	
47	2759/8343	21 fm	2033	Blacknose (1)
48	2747/8404	32 fm	0041	Blacknose (1)
49	2700/8344	35 fm	0701	
50	2715/8306	17 fm	1229	Blacknose (1)
51	2658/8243	12 fm	1642	
52	2624/8306	24 fm	2228	
53	2549/8314	31 fm	0337	Blacktip (1); Atlantic Sharpnose (1)
54	2515/8300	30 fm	0850	Atlantic Sharpnose (1); Nurse (1)
55	2514/8256	28 fm	1110	
56	2447/8246	19 fm	1640	Atlantic Sharpnose (1)
57	2454/8230	17 fm	2011	
58	2447/8205	12 fm	0015	Blacknose (5); Greater Hammerhead (1); Blacktip (3)
59	2512/8218	16 fm	0437	Spinner (1)
60	2529/8213	14 fm	0809	Silky (2); Atlantic Sharpnose (1); Blacknose (1)
Begin Leg II Phase II				
61	2924/8510	13 fm	1000	
62	2936/8531	13 fm	1445	
63	2935/8603	31 fm	1906	Blacknose (1)
64	2946/8558	23 fm	2213	Sandbar (5); Greater Hammerhead (1)
65	2857/8529	12 fm	0232	
66	3008/8554	14 fm	0608	Atlantic Sharpnose (3); Tiger (2)
67	3011/8557	13 fm	0835	Tiger (3)
68	3016/8609	14 fm	1147	Tiger (1)
69	3019/8654	12 fm	1839	Greater Hammerhead (1)

TABLE 1. (continued)

Station	Latitude/ Longitude	Bottom Depth	TIME (CDT)	Shark Captures
70	3008/8723	14 fm	0030	Tiger (2); Sandbar (1); Nurse (1)
71	2959/8801	15 fm	0538	
72	3009/8814	10 fm	0904	
73	2958/8829	16 fm	1241	
74	3003/8846	7 fm	1607	Blacktip (1)
75	2954/8844	9 fm	1902	
76	2948/8835	14 fm	2202	
77	2934/8846	9 fm	0153	
78	2921/8902	7 fm	0601	Atlantic Sharpnose (11); Blacktip (5)
79	2922/8846	24 fm	0942	Spinner (2); Atlantic Sharpnose (8); Blacknose (1); Blacktip (1)
80	2935/8830	24 fm	1404	Blacktip (1); Sandbar (1)
81	2945/8815	20 fm	1733	
82	2954/8805	18 fm	2052	

TABLE 2. Large and Small Coastal Sharks

Large Coastal Sharks

Spinner - *Carcharhinus brevipinna*
 Silky - *Carcharhinus falciformis*
 Bull - *Carcharhinus leucas*
 Blacktip - *Carcharhinus limbatus*
 Sandbar - *Carcharhinus plumbeus*
 Tiger - *Galeocerdo cuvieri*
 Nurse - *Ginglymostoma cirratum*
 Scalloped Hammerhead - *Sphyrna lewini*
 Greater Hammerhead - *Sphyrna mokarran*

Small Coastal Sharks

Blacknose - *Carcharhinus acronotus*
 Finetooth - *Carcharhinus isodon*
 Smooth Dogfish - *Mustelus canis*
 Atlantic Sharpnose -
Rhizoprionodon terraenovae

TABLE 3. Catch Summary 1995 Gulf of Mexico Shark Assessment

	Day	Night	Alive	Dead	Tagged	% Freq. Sharks
Blacktip	16	10	24	2	18	9.7
<i>C. limbatus</i>						
Tiger	9	8	17	0	16	6.3
<i>G. cuvieri</i>						
Spinner	4	2	4	2	3	2.2
<i>C. brevipinna</i>						
Sandbar	5	10	15	0	7	5.5
<i>C. plumbeus</i>						
Blacknose	8	11	18	1	16	7.0
<i>C. acronotus</i>						
Sharpnose	81	66	66	81	48	54.8
<i>R. terranovae</i>						
Bull	4	2	6	0	4	2.2
<i>C. leucas</i>						
Silky	5	1	4	2	2	2.2
<i>C. falciformis</i>						
Nurse	1	1	2	0	0	.7
<i>G. cirratum</i>						
G. Hammerhead	2	3	5	0	2	1.8
<i>S. mokarran</i>						
Sc. Hammerhead	4	3	6	1	5	2.6
<i>S. lewini</i>						
Finetooth	0	4	1	3	1	1.4
<i>C. isodon</i>						
Smooth dogfish	2	6	8	0	6	2.9
<i>M. canis</i>						
Total	141	127	176	92	128	
						% Freq. Other
Eel	19	4	22	1		34.8
<i>O. rex</i>						
Barracuda	10	1	11	0		16.7
<i>S. barracuda</i>						
Red Snapper	3	3	4	2		9.0
<i>L. campechanus</i>						
Red Grouper	8	2	8	2		15.0
<i>E. morio</i>						
Devil Ray	2	0	2	0		3.0
<i>M. hypostoma</i>						
Cobia	2	0	2	0		3.0
<i>R. canadum</i>						
Cownose Ray	7	0	7	0		10.6
<i>R. bonasus</i>						
Bonita	1	0	0	1		1.5
<i>S. sarda</i>						
Cuskeel	1	1	2	0		3.0
Ophidiidae						
Unidentified	2	0	2	0		3.0
Total	55	11	60	6		
Sets Without Catch	11	11				

TABLE 4. Concurrent assessment results for NMFS Panama City, FL.

NMFS Panama City Laboratory

Station	Latitude/ Longitude	Bottom Depth	Effort Hours	Shark Captures	Midwater	Bottom
1	2939/8514 (inshore)	4 f	8	Blacktip Spinner G. Hammerhead Finetooth	3 2	7 1 1 1
2	2935/8534	5 f	5			
3	2936/8514	5 f	4	Blacktip A. Sharpnose Tiger	3 2 1	1
4	2944/8419	7-10 f	5	A. Sharpnose Blacknose Nurse	1 1	1 1
5	3004/8543	8 f	5	Spinner A. Sharpnose Blacknose	1 1	1 1

TABLE 4.

NMFS Pa

Statj

1



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southeast Fisheries Science Center
Mississippi Laboratories
P.O. Drawer 1207
Pascagoula, MS 39568-1207

March 4, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR: OA - Mike Bailey
FROM: F/SEC53 - Terry Henwood
SUBJECT: NMFS 1996 Southeast Shark Assessment

The purpose of this memo is to follow-up on our discussion regarding the 1996 shark surveys in the southeast Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. We seem to be in agreement regarding the surveys, and I am hopeful that you can assist in the funding of the project. Please review the pre-proposal describing our approach including a breakdown of the costs to accomplish the work.

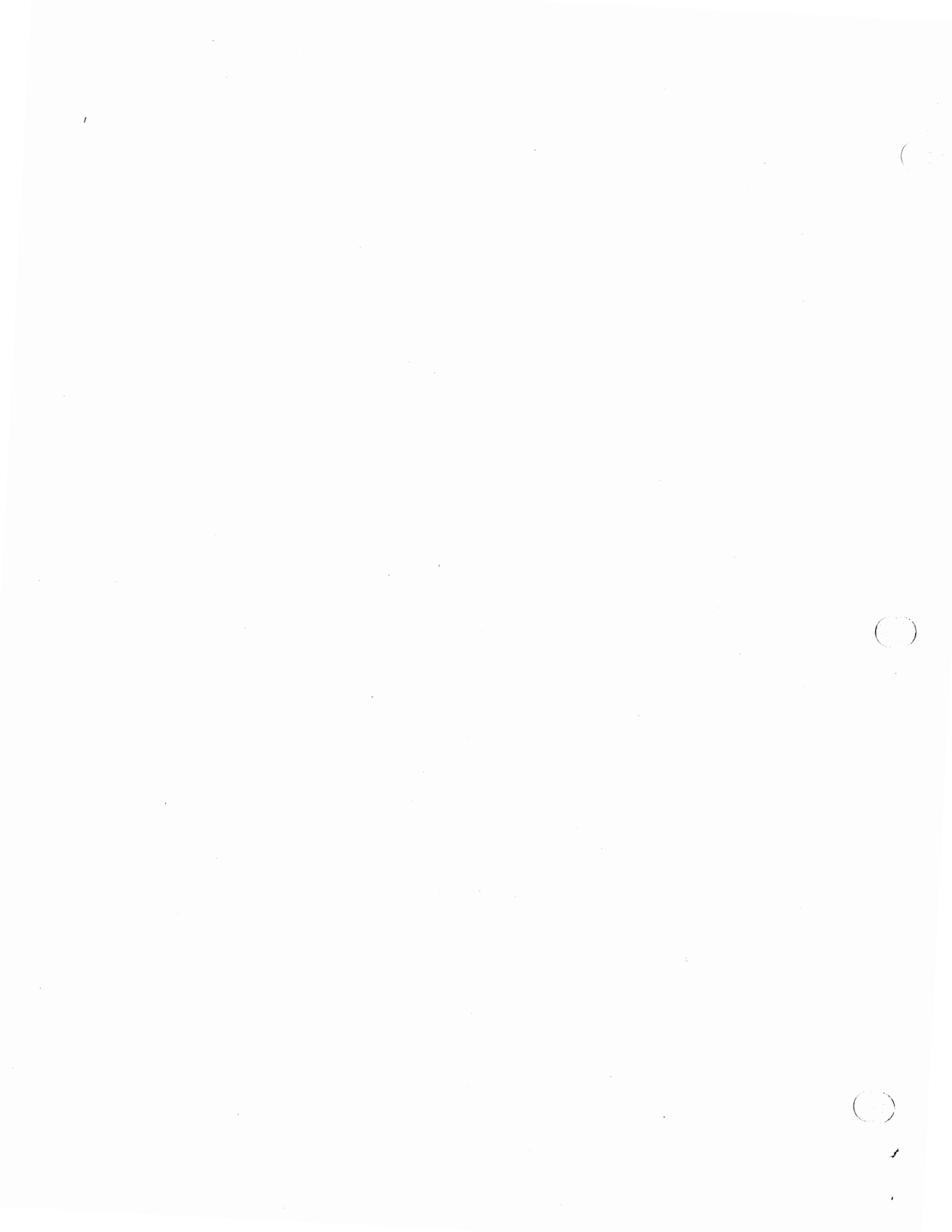
I think this project is a particularly good candidate for funding, because our needs are short-term. During last year's 1995 assessment, we demonstrated that sharks could be caught in sufficient quantities with commercial type gear for stock assessment.

The Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP), which is a state/federal/university program for collection, management and dissemination of fishery-independent data and information, is an obvious vehicle for support of continued shark surveys. Several of our SEAMAP partners (Gulf of Mexico state representatives) provided biologists during last year's survey and have expressed interest in continuing this project. In addition, the Texas Parks and Wildlife (SEAMAP) has offered to assist with locating shark nursery areas along the Texas coast during the 1996 project.

Please look over this pre-proposal and let me know if you need any additional information at this time. If you have any questions, please call.

cc: Scott Nichols
Gerry Scott
Jose Castro
Mark Grace
Dave Donaldson





**SOUTHEAST ATLANTIC AND GULF OF MEXICO
1996 SHARK ASSESSMENT PROPOSAL**

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
MISSISSIPPI LABORATORIES
SOUTHEAST FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER
PASCAGOULA, MISSISSIPPI

INTRODUCTION

Commercial landings of coastal and oceanic sharks in the U.S. Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico increased from 135 metric tons (mts) in 1979 to 7,122 mts in 1989 (NOAA 1993). This increase was due to a combination of factors which include increased effort, favorable market situations for shark products, and improved fishing techniques. Recreational landings during this same 10 year period decreased from 11,512 mts in 1979 to 1,666 mts in 1989 (NOAA 1993). These landing statistics for commercial and recreation shark fisheries were indicative of overfishing from unregulated shark fisheries of the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico.

Most shark species exhibit low fecundity levels and unrestricted exploitation can have devastating effects on populations. Over the past two decades, many shark populations in U.S. waters have declined precipitously. As these declines have been documented, the need for a comprehensive Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) was clearly established. During 1989, NMFS prepared the Secretarial FMP for Sharks of the Atlantic Ocean, and after several iterations, a final FMP was enacted in 1993.

The 1993 FMP for Sharks of the Atlantic Ocean (NOAA 1993) stressed the need for monitoring and assessment of shark populations to determine the efficacy of FMP measures. Unfortunately, prior to the 1995 longline survey conducted by Mississippi Laboratories, little effort was expended in the Gulf of Mexico to monitor and assess shark populations. The NMFS Panama City Laboratory and Mote Marine Institute in Sarasota, Florida, conduct limited tagging programs that target small sharks on pupping grounds. These studies employ small mesh gill nets, and larger sharks are seldom encountered. To our knowledge, no other fishery independent shark studies are being conducted in the Gulf of Mexico despite the fact that commercial shark fisheries continue to operate.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) Utilize longline gear for assessing shark populations in the U.S. southeast Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico (Figure 1).
- 2) Utilize gill net sampling to determine locations of shark nursery areas at selected sites in the Gulf of Mexico.
- 3) Develop a sampling strategy that provides information necessary for stock assessment of shark populations.
- 4) Provide summary reports of survey activities.

METHODS

The longline survey technique utilizes monofilament longline fishing gear of 2.4 kilometers (km) length, equipped with 100 hooks and with start set, midset and end set buoys and floats. Soak time is 1 hour using atlantic mackerel (*Scomber scomber*) as bait.

Survey sites are selected at random within three depth strata 10 f - 20 f, 20 f - 30 f, 30 f - 40 f, and equally distributed within 60 nautical mile grids. This survey design is in part supported by analysis presented in Belcher (1994). Belcher (1994) analyzed the three survey methods, (simple random, stratified random by individual species and stratified random by total number of coastal sharks caught), used during NMFS Atlantic surveys (NMFS 1986, 1989, 1991). Simple random sampling does not account for distributions (depth and regional) of management species, therefore it is possible to under sample or over sample certain species. Stratified random (by broad regions) by individual species or by total number of coastal sharks caught, is normally dependent on utilizing past fisheries independent data for individual species. Even though Belcher (1994) supports survey site stratification (by broad regions) dependent on species distribution patterns for individual species, data needed to establish species distribution patterns are largely not available for the Gulf of Mexico and data from NMFS Atlantic surveys (1986, 1989, 1991) is biased due to replicate sampling and targeting of large coastal and pelagic species for tagging studies.

Simple random sampling stratified by depth is conducted to ensure adequate sampling for all management species occurring within the survey depth range of 10 f - 40 f. With respect to using simple random sampling, Belcher (1994) states, "The main support for using SRS [simple random sampling] in the case of

highly variable data is to establish a baseline for an estimate as well as to see if there is in fact an improvement if another scheme were to be used. In some cases, even a strategic form of sampling scheme will not drastically improve upon an estimate or its variance." Distributing the survey sites by 60 minutes of latitude or longitude is necessary for uniform data collection throughout the entire survey area.

The proposed dates for the longline sampling activity are from 7/31 - 9/14/96 with one vessel (NOAA Ship OREGON II) for the entire survey. Tagging of adults will be in accordance with tagging protocol established by the NMFS Narragansett Laboratory. Tagging of pups captured in the Gulf of Mexico will be in accordance with tagging protocol established by the Mote Marine Institute; pup tagging in the Atlantic will be in accordance with NMFS Narragansett Laboratory protocol.

Survey data are recorded on NMFS Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP) data sheets created to characterize gear and catch. This information includes gear specifics, and environmental and biological data pertaining to sharks and bycatch species.

According to the 1993 FMP, sharks are divided into three management units; large coastal, small coastal and pelagic (Table 1). This ongoing study is expected to provide an index of abundance for the shark species encountered. Even though survey activities may not produce catches for all management unit species, data analysis addresses total catch, management unit and bycatch species. Data processing, editing and analysis are conducted at NMFS, Pascagoula. Gill net survey techniques follow programs developed at NMFS, Panama City Laboratory, Mote Marine Institute, Sarasota, Florida, or techniques used by Gulf of Mexico SEAMAP constituents. Mesh sizes and lengths of gill nets can be adjusted depending on the size of neonates, juveniles or adults targeted. Gill nets can be deployed in known nursery areas or in habitats similar to known nursery areas.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Service (SEAMAP constituent) has invited NMFS biologists to participate in their annual spring and early summer gill net surveys (8 contiguous coastal sampling zones in state waters, 10 week survey for each zone). These surveys may prove vital to the shark program since, other than Bigelow and Schroeder (1948), no published information describing nursery areas for any coastal sharks west of the Mississippi River delta exists. At present, our involvement will be either in the form of direct participation by NMFS biologists or by providing guidelines describing our data needs. We are optimistic that this opportunity for cooperative research will greatly enhance our knowledge of neonate and juvenile coastal sharks in the Western Gulf of Mexico and will help to identify vital nursery areas.

In addition to the offer by Texas Parks and Wildlife, other Gulf of Mexico SEAMAP constituents have expressed an interest in augmenting inshore assessment efforts. During the 1996 project, NMFS scientists will advise SEAMAP participants of data requirements pertaining to neonate and juvenile captures.

Gear efficiency and selectivity is a persistent question for any fishery related survey. Longline gear is assumed to be relatively efficient and selective for sharks dependent on bait, hook size and gear location and orientation. However, there are a number of factors that must be considered in interpretation of longline catch data. For instance, the relationship between longline catch and fish density is complicated by saturation of hooks due to catch of non-target species or by target species in areas of high densities (Sommerton and Kikkawa 1995). Another factor that may affect longline catches is the presence bottom features that may provide habitat for aggregations of shark prey.

Development of a separate and independent estimate of fish densities (other than longline data) is fundamental for determining longline gear efficiency and selectivity. To address this problem it is possible to incorporate a fishery acoustic system (FAS) for assessment purposes. NMFS Mississippi Laboratories currently has a dual frequency (38 kHz and 120 kHz) split-beam FAS that is able to detect acoustic targets oriented more than 1/2 meter off bottom (near bottom resolution may decrease with irregular bottom profiles). This system is capable of recording fish densities by interpreting acoustic return signals. The process requires systematically transecting the survey site prior to setting longline gear or collection of acoustic data during or after the longline set. The result is fish density for a survey site. During spring 1996, the OREGON II will be outfitted with hull-mounted transducers compatible with the NMFS Mississippi Laboratories FAS.

Acoustic data can be compared to the actual longline catch data to examine; 1) number of acoustic targets detected by the FAS compared to number of captures from the longline set, 2) target strength values of acoustic targets compared to physical sizes of species captured. Another comparison that might be possible is to determine the zone of influence for the longline gear. For example, if during acoustic transecting of a survey site prior to gear deployment few or no targets are detected but there was considerable catch from the longline set, then it may be valid to assume the longline gear attracted catch from outside the acoustically surveyed area. Past research has alluded to the attraction of catch to longline gear (i.e. Belcher 1994) but there is little data supporting attraction. This new application for acoustic technology should strengthen our understanding of longline gear efficiency and limitations.

SURVEY AREA

The survey area extends from the Texas - Mexico border in the Gulf of Mexico, around the southern tip of Florida, into the Atlantic and north to Cape Hatteras, (Figure 1). It is anticipated that gill netting will be opportunistic and will depend on the level of participation by the Gulf of Mexico SEAMAP constituents. At present, cooperative gill net effort is expected in selected areas of the Gulf of Mexico along the Texas, Mississippi and Florida coasts.

1995 RESULTS

Gill Netting

Despite the late start for the 1995 project, progress was made pertaining to gill netting for neonate and juvenile sharks. NMFS Mississippi Laboratories participated in late spring gill net surveys by Mote Marine Institute and NMFS Panama City. Areas of interests included tagging methods, data collection, gear handling and survey design. Neonate and juvenile captures included blacktip, spinner, atlantic sharpnose, blacknose and bonnethead sharks. Methods for gill net operations and biological sampling regimes were documented to benefit future gill net effort.

Bottom Longlining

Two longline surveys were completed by NMFS Mississippi Laboratories during the 1995 Southeast Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Shark Pilot Study; one conducted in the Gulf of Mexico (26 survey days, OREGON II) and the other in the Atlantic (19 survey days, RELENTLESS) (attached cruise reports NOAA Ships RELENTLESS 97-02, OREGON II 95-07). The surveys successfully utilized commercial-type longline gear to capture coastal sharks. Both projects incorporated diverse groups of scientists representing several laboratories, agencies and universities.

The results of the 1995 NMFS Southeast Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico project can be briefly reviewed by comparison of CPUE values (shark captures/100 hooks) for shark captures (Table 1) with the few surveys completed during previous years.

Despite the number of differences between the 4 Atlantic projects (NMFS 1986, 1989, 1991, 1995), a CPUE of 4.2 shark captures/100 hooks was reported from the 1995 RELENTLESS survey (NMFS 1995). Survey differences included gear, (Yankee gear 1986, 1989, 1991 vs. monofilament commercial type gear 1995), survey design, depths sampled, soak time and number of hooks.

In the western Gulf of Mexico, the comparison is made with 7 survey sites from Cody and Avent (1980) and 7 sites from the 1995 OREGON II survey (NMFS 1995) that were in proximity. Again, there were a number of gear and survey differences but the CPUE values for shark captures were .5 shark captures/100 hooks for Cody and Avent (1980) and 1.9 shark captures/100 hooks for 1995 OREGON II.

When comparing north central Gulf of Mexico survey sites from the 1995 OREGON II survey (NMFS 1995) with Branstetter (1981), the CPUE values were 2.7 shark captures/100 hooks for 1995 OREGON II and 3.5 shark captures/100 hooks for Branstetter (1981). Gear was not fished on bottom during the Branstetter (1981) survey since the survey was directed at large coastals, in particular spinner sharks (*Carcharhinus brevipinna*).

The concurrent assessment conducted by NMFS Panama City (1995) resulted in 5.6 shark captures/100 hooks as compared with 2.1 shark captures/100 hooks for the 1995 OREGON II sites (NMFS 1995) that were in proximity to the NMFS Panama City project. The NMFS Panama City gear was fished continuously and checked every hour with bait replaced; total time for gear deployments was up to 8 hours per site during afternoon and night only; details found in 1995 OREGON II cruise report.

A question concerning both the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico projects was the time frame for the surveys. The 1993 Shark FMP (NOAA 1993, page 122, Table 9.1), reports total U.S. eastern seaboard and Gulf of Mexico landings (1984 - 1988) are lower during August (ranked 6th) than the peak months of March through July, but closer scrutiny reveals additional information. In the New England area, August landings are the highest of all months; in the mid-Atlantic they are ranked third after July and September; in the Gulf of Mexico the landings during August are ranked fourth. Therefore, though August is not the best month for landings on a regional basis (U.S. eastern seaboard and Gulf of Mexico), the regional landings are reportedly better during August than 6 other months and August may actually be a favorable survey time for specific areas. Table 9.1 from the 1993 Shark FMP does not report effort which is an important factor affecting landings. With accumulation of time series data from fisheries independent surveys, it is possible to determine accurate seasonal trends.

PROJECT COSTS

Gear purchases will be minimal for 1996 survey operations (Table 3) since some gear from the 1995 survey can be reused. Other project costs will be for NMFS participants' overtime pay and travel for NMFS employees and cooperators, and for funds to support field work conducted by SEAMAP constituents (Table 5).

With the proposed funding level (Table 5), 47 days of longline effort can be expected. Gill net effort will depend on the levels of participation by SEAMAP constituents, but data from at least 50 gill net sets (10 per SEAMAP constituent) are anticipated from the Gulf of Mexico.

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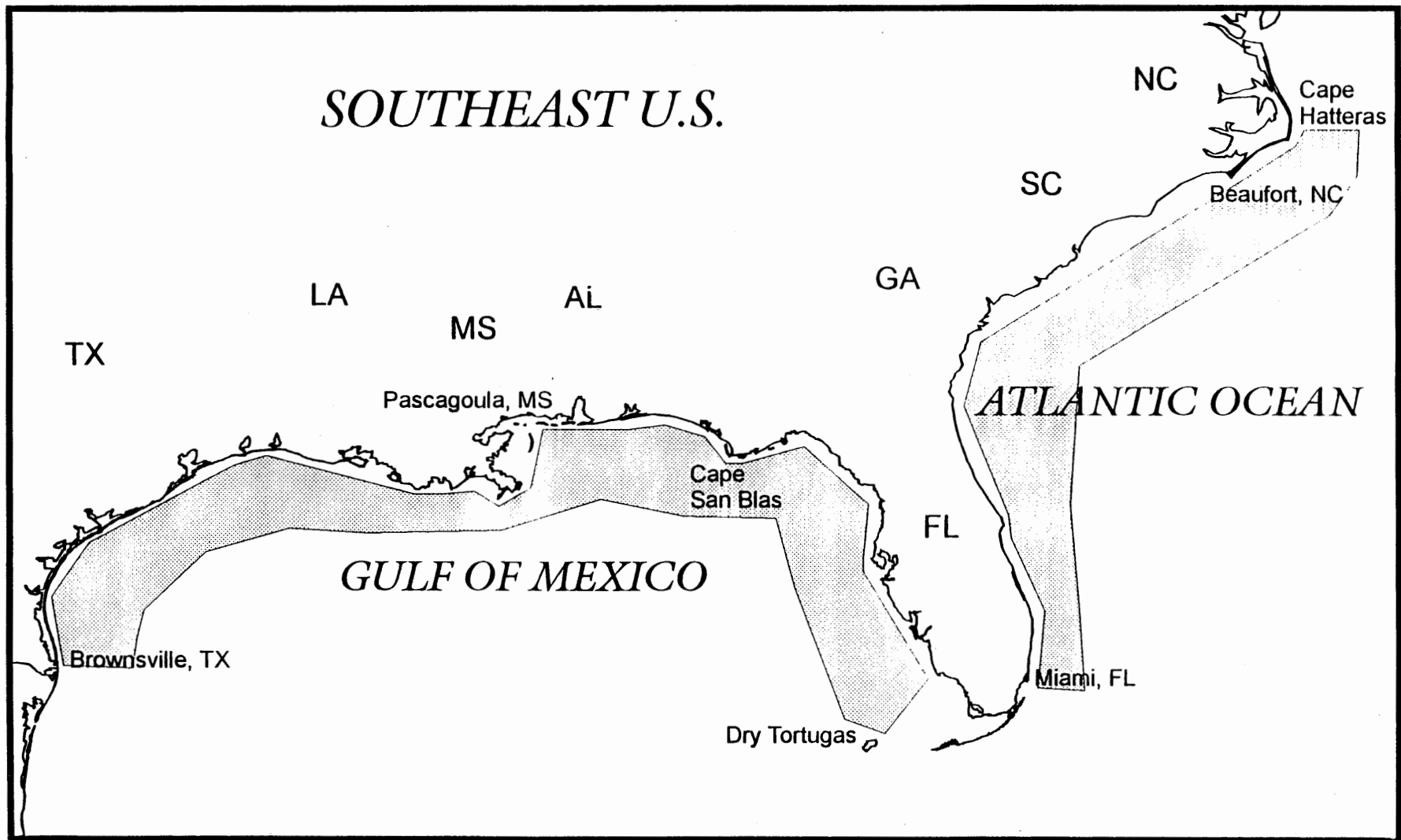


Figure 1. Survey area for 1996 U.S. Southeast Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Shark Assessment Project.

Table 1. Management units for sharks of the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico (NOAA 1993).

Large Coastal Sharks

Sandbar	<i>Carcharhinus plumbeus</i>
Blacktip	<i>Carcharhinus limbatus</i>
Dusky	<i>Carcharhinus obscurus</i>
Spinner	<i>Carcharhinus brevipinna</i>
Silky	<i>Carcharhinus falciformis</i>
Bull	<i>Carcharhinus leucas</i>
Bignose	<i>Carcharhinus altimus</i>
Narrowtooth	<i>Carcharhinus brachyurus</i>
Galapagos	<i>Carcharhinus galapagensis</i>
Night	<i>Carcharhinus signatus</i>
Caribbean reef	<i>Carcharhinus perezii</i>
Tiger	<i>Galeocerdo cuvieri</i>
Lemon	<i>Negaprion brevirostris</i>
Sand tiger	<i>Odontaspis taurus</i>
Bigeye sand tiger	<i>Odontaspis noronhai</i>
Nurse	<i>Ginglymostoma cirratum</i>
Scalloped hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna lewini</i>
Great hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna mokarran</i>
Smooth hammerhead	<i>Sphyrna zygaena</i>
Whale	<i>Rhincodon typus</i>
Basking	<i>Cetorhinus maximus</i>
White	<i>Carcharodon carcharias</i>

Small Coastal Sharks

Atlantic sharpnose	<i>Rhizoprionodon terraenovae</i>
Caribbean sharpnose	<i>Rhizoprionodon porosus</i>
Finetooth	<i>Carcharhinus isodon</i>
Blacknose	<i>Carcharhinus acronotus</i>
Smalltail	<i>Carcharhinus porosus</i>
Bonnethead	<i>Sphyrna tiburo</i>
Atlantic angel	<i>Squatina dumerili</i>

Pelagic Sharks

Shortfin mako	<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>
Longfin mako	<i>Isurus paucus</i>
Porbeagle	<i>Lamna nasus</i>
Thresher	<i>Alopias vulpinus</i>
Bigeye thresher	<i>Alopias superciliosus</i>
Blue	<i>Prionace glauca</i>
Whitetip	<i>Carcharhinus longimanus</i>
Sevengill	<i>Heptranchias perlo</i>
Sixgill	<i>Hexanchus griseus</i>
Bigeye sixgill	<i>Hexanchus vitulus</i>

Table 2. CPUE values for shark captures/100 hooks.

ATLANTIC	1986 ¹ WEICZNO July - Sept. 4.3 / 100 hooks	1989 ² DELAWARE II April - Sept. 4.4 / 100 hooks	1991 ³ DELAWARE II April - Sept. 3.0 / 100 hooks	1995 ⁴ RELENTLESS August 4.2 / 100 hooks
WESTERN GULF OF MEXICO	1979 ⁵ Cody et al. August .5 / 100 hooks	1995 ⁶ OREGON II July 1.9 / 100 hooks		
CENTRAL GULF OF MEXICO	1981 ⁷ Branstetter August 3.5 / 100 hooks	1995 OREGON II July - August 2.7 / 100 hooks		
NORTHEAST GULF OF MEXICO Concurrent with NMFS Panama City, FL	1995 ⁶ NMFS, Panama City August 5.6 / 100 hooks	1995 OREGON II August 2.1 / 100 hooks		
GULF OF MEXICO	1995 OREGON II July - August 3.3 / 100 hooks			

¹ NMFS, 1986 WEICZNO Cruise Results 86-01, Longline survey of apex predators, NMFS Narragansett, RI

² NMFS, 1989 DELAWARE II Cruise Results 89-03, Survey of apex predators - sharks, NMFS Narragansett, RI

³ NMFS, 1991 DELAWARE II Cruise Results 91-06, Survey of apex predators - sharks, NMFS Narragansett, RI

⁴ NMFS, 1995 RELENTLESS Cruise Results 95-03, Coastal shark longline assessment survey, NMFS Pascagoula, MS

⁵ Cody and Avent, 1980, Assessment of bottom longline fishing off the central Texas coast, Management Data Series 16, Texas Parks and Wildlife

⁶ NMFS, 1995 OREGON II Cruise Results 95-04, Coastal shark assessment, NMFS Pascagoula, MS

⁷ Branstetter, S., 1981, Shark fishery potential for the northern Gulf of Mexico, Dauphin Island Sea Lab Technical Report 81-001

Table 3. Longline gear and bait.

Item	Unit Cost	Qty.	Total (\$)
High flyer buoy	230	4	920
Strobe lights	49	4	196
Blocks	150	6	900
Monofilament line	278	5	1,390
Swivels	1.10	50	55
Aluminum sleeves (1000)	100	2	200
Crimping tool	224	1	224
Snap-on connectors (100)	90	6	540
Buoys (100)	564	1	564
Hooks (100)	14	3	42
Gaff	25	2	50
Electronic Scale	2,500	1	2,500
Bait	.50	6,500	3,200
Total			10,831

Table 4. Sampling supplies.

Item	Unit Cost	Qty.	Total (\$)
OTC	200	1	200
M Tags	1	1,000	1,000
S Tags	1	1,000	1,000
Tagging poles	20	3	60
Gloves	20	1	20
Film and developing	10	40	400
Video tapes	5	10	50
Scalpels (100)	50	1	50
Whirlpacs (200)	100	1	100
Shipping	500	1	500
Total			3,380

Figure 5. Other costs and project total.

SEAMAP/TRAVEL/OVERTIME	Unit Cost	Qty.	Total (\$)
GOM Seamap Support	8,000	5	40,000
Travel	600	25	15,000
Overtime (NMFS only)	1,000	12	12,000
Total			39,500
Project Total			81,211

①

ATTACHMENT II

Comparison of Spectrophotometry and Benchtop Fluorometry for Measuring Concentrations of Chlorophyll α

NMFS has proposed to replace the existing spectrophotometric method for determining chlorophyll concentration in environmental samples collected for the SEAMAP program. The replacement method proposed is *in-situ* determination of chlorophyll α by fluorometry. The capability of the State participants in SEAMAP to institute this method change is limited. LDWF compared the currently approved spectrophotometric method with a benchtop fluorometric method from duplicate samples collected during SEAMAP cruises in June and September 1995, and January 1996. Mean chlorophyll concentration from triplicate surface, and duplicate midwater and bottom samples were compared by cruise and depth (Figures and Tables attached).

Results

- The two methods were highly correlated (r^2 generally >90%).
- Analysis of Variance consistently found significant differences between chlorophyll α concentrations measured by the two methods.
- Fluorometry consistently measured less chlorophyll α in the samples.
- The differences between methods generally were consistent among depth strata within cruises. Differences varied substantially among seasons.
- Fluorometric measurements most closely approximated spectrophotometric values from the January 1996 cruise.
- Fluorometry underestimated chlorophyll α from June 1995 samples by approximately 50%, as compared to spectrophotometry.
- September 1995 results were intermediate between June and January.

Other research has found that the presence of chlorophylls *b*, *c*, and other phaeopigments mask measurement of α by fluorometric methods. Changes in relative abundance of diatoms, cyanobacteria and dinoflagellates, as occurs in summer hypoxia, could account for seasonal differences.

Conclusions

SEAMAP's goal is collecting long-term standardized data sets from across the Gulf of Mexico.

NMFS' proposal to replace the spectrophotometric method with *in-situ* fluorometry constitutes a substantial change in data acquisition, compromising the long-term data sets. The States are limited in their ability to institute the *in-situ* technique because of lack of necessary equipment. Some States, e.g., Louisiana, have the capability to use benchtop fluorometry as a substitute for the *in-situ* technique. Thus there are possibly three methods under consideration: spectrophotometry, and benchtop and *in-situ* fluorometry. Potentially there can be three different non-comparable values in the data sets.

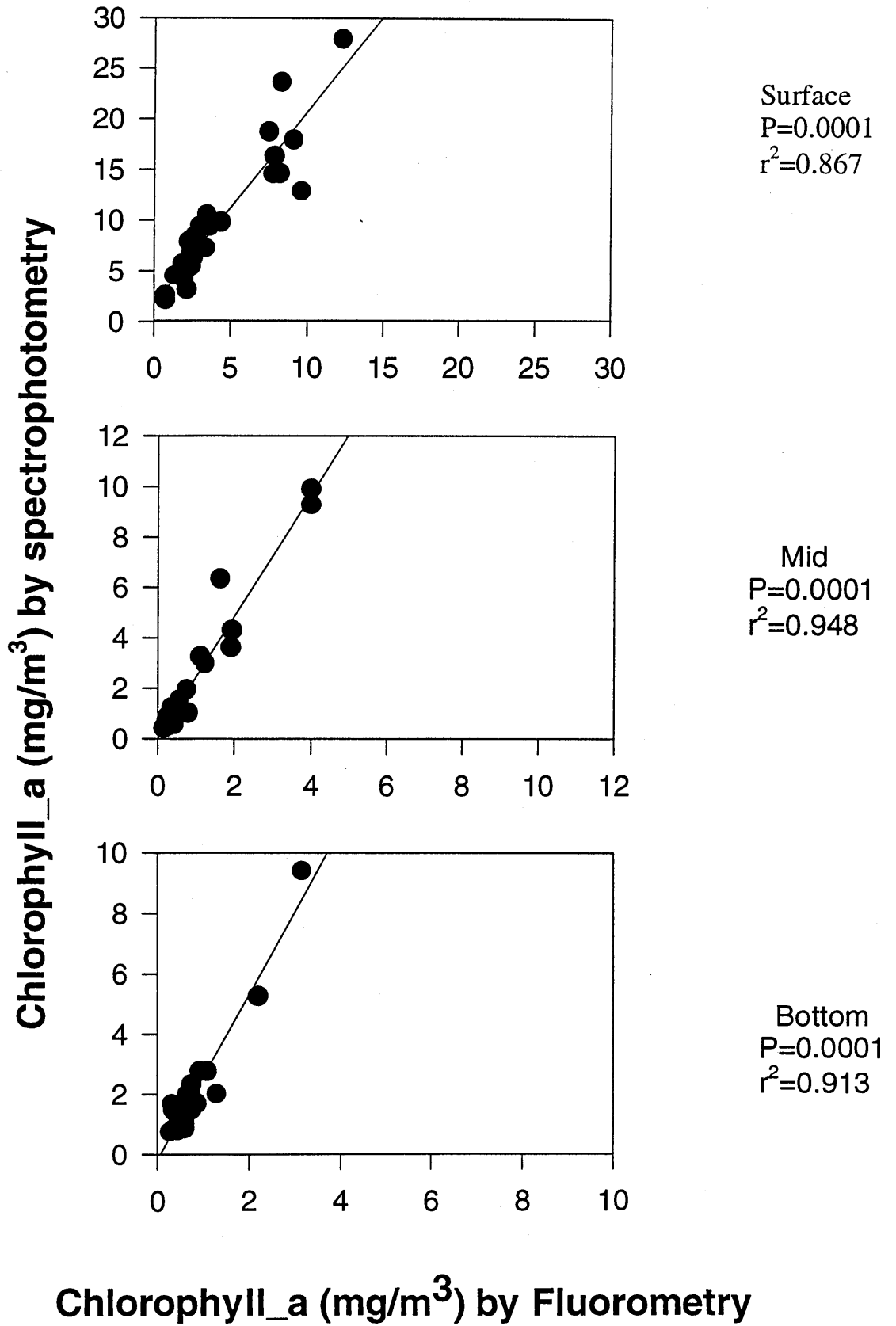
This analysis found differences between the Spectrophotometric and benchtop fluorometric methods. The data indicate that seasonal variation in phytoplankton community composition may complicate developing a calibration factor among the different methods. There have been limited comparisons made between the spectrophotometric and *in-situ* fluorometric methods by NMFS. No comparisons have been made between benchtop and *in-situ* fluorometry.

Recommendations

- All methods should be inter-calibrated before instituting a change in field methods.
- Any change in methods should be adopted as the SEAMAP method, and instituted Gulf-wide.
- Louisiana has the personnel and laboratory resources to continue analyzing chlorophyll by the spectrophotometric method, and to calibrate that method with the benchtop fluorometer. We also have initiated procedures to procure *in-situ* fluorometric capability.
- Louisiana can make those capabilities available to NMFS and the other Gulf States.



Chlorophyll_a Values Seamap Cruise June 1995



Analysis of variance (ANOVA) table for surface chlorophyll_a values between fluorometric and spectrophotometric determinations for the Seamap Cruise of June 1995 (significant differences are indicated by the Pr>F probability $\alpha \leq 0.05$).

Analysis of Variance Procedure

Dependent Variable: Chl_a_JH chlorophyll_a by Jeffries and Humphreys (spectrophotometer)

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	Pr>F	R-Square	C.V.
Model	1	950.002	950.002	168.84	0.0001	0.867	24.088
Error	26	146.288	5.626				
Corrected Total	27	1096.290		Root MSE			Mean Chl_a_JH
				2.372			9.848

Source	DF	Type I SS	Mean Square	F Value	Pr >F
Chl_a_Fl	1	950.002	950.002	168.84	0.0001

Source	DF	Type III SS	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
Chl_a_Fl	1	950.002	950.002	168.84	0.0001

Parameter	Estimate	T for HO: Parameter=0	Pr > T	Std Error of Estimate
Intercept	1.791	2.34	0.027	0.765
Chl_a_Fl	1.895	12.99	0.0001	0.146

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) table for mid chlorophyll_a values between fluorometric and spectrophotometric determinations for the Seamap Curise of June 1995 (significant differences are indicated by the Pr>F probability $\alpha \leq 0.05$).

Analysis of Variance Procedure

Dependent Variable: Chl_a_JH chlorophyll_a by Jeffries and Humphreys (spectrophotometer)

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	Pr>F	R-Square	C.V.
Model	1	164.141	164.141	476.62	0.0001	0.948	28.161
Error	26	8.954	0.344				
Corrected Total	27	173.095		Root MSE			Mean Chl_a_JH
				0.587			2.084

Source	DF	Type I SS	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
Chl_a_Fl	1	164.141	164.141	476.62	0.0001

Source	DF	Type III SS	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
Chl_a_Fl	1	164.141	164.141	476.62	0.0001

Parameter	Estimate	T for HO: Parameter=0	Pr > T	Std Error of Estimate
Intercept	0.022	0.15	0.880	0.146
Chl_a_Fl	2.413	21.83	0.0001	0.111

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) table for bottom chlorophyll_a values between fluorometric and spectrophotometric determinations for the Seemap Cruise of June 1995 (significant differences are indicated by the Pr>F probability $\alpha \leq 0.05$).

Analysis of Variance Procedure

Dependent Variable: Chl_a_JH chlorophyll_a by Jeffries and Humphreys (spectrophotometer)

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	Pr>F	R-Square	C.V.
Model	1	72.991	72.991	262.20	0.0001	0.913	27.165
Error	25	6.950	0.278				
Corrected Total	26	79.950		Root MSE			Mean Chl_a_JH
				0.528			1.942

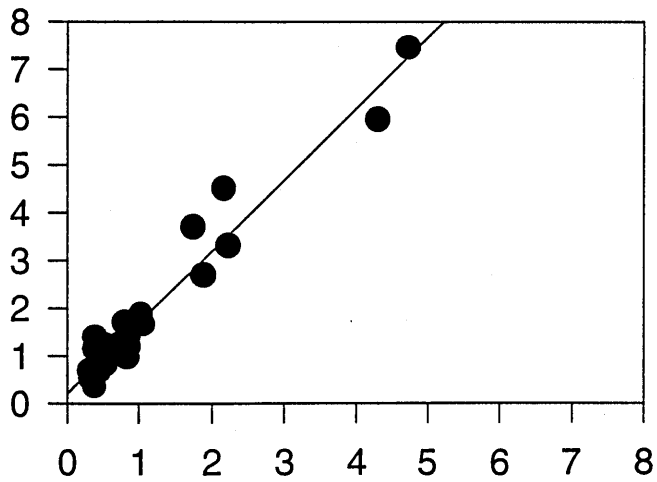
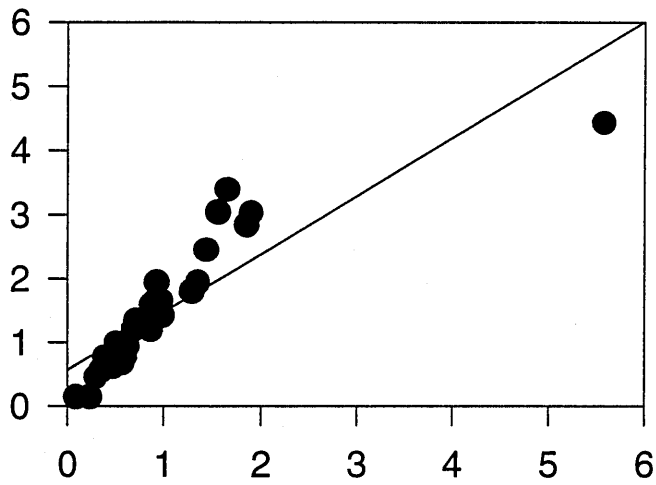
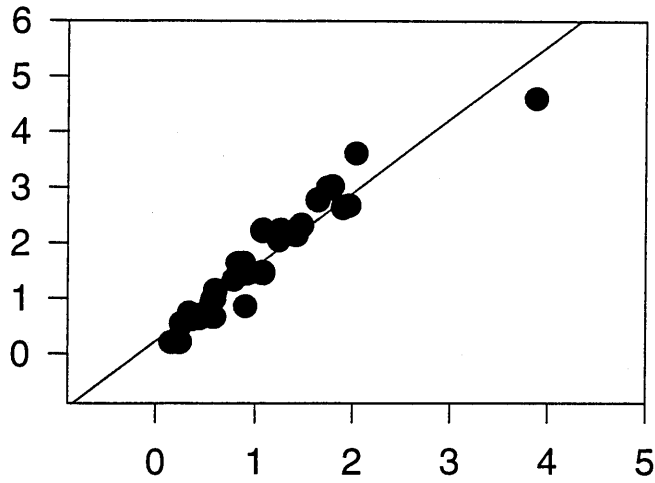
Source	DF	Type I SS	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
Chl_a_Fl	1	72.991	72.991	262.20	0.0001

Source	DF	Type III SS	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
Chl_a_Fl	1	72.991	72.991	262.20	0.0001

Parameter	Estimate	T for HO: Parameter=0	Pr > T	Std Error of Estimate
Intercept	-0.189	-1.14	0.266	0.166
Chl_a_Fl	2.754	16.19	0.0001	0.170

Chlorophyll_a Values Seamap Cruise September 1995

Chlorophyll_a (mg/m³) by Spectrophotometry



Chlorophyll_a (mg/m³) by Fluorometry

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) table for surface chlorophyll_a values between fluorometric and spectrophotometric determinations for the Seamap Cruise of September 1995 (significant differences are indicated by the Pr>F probability $\alpha \leq 0.05$).

Analysis of Variance Procedure

Dependent Variable: Chl_a_JH chlorophyll_a by Jeffries and Humphreys (spectrophotometer)

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	Pr>F	R-Square	C.V.
Model	1	31.078	31.078	303.67	0.0001	0.913	19.611
Error	29	2.968	0.102				
Corrected Total	30	34.046		Root MSE			Mean Chl_a_JH
				0.320			1.631

Source	DF	Type I SS	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
Chl_a_Fl	1	31.078	31.078	303.67	0.0001

Source	DF	Type III SS	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
Chl_a_Fl	1	31.078	31.078	303.67	0.0001

Parameter	Estimate	T for HO: Parameter=0	Pr > T	Std Error of Estimate
Intercept	0.228	2.30	0.029	0.099
Chl_a_Fl	1.332	17.43	0.0001	0.076

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) table for mid chlorophyll_a values between fluorometric and spectrophotometric determinations for the Seemap Cruise of September 1995 (significant differences are indicated by the Pr>F probability $\alpha \leq 0.05$).

Analysis of Variance Procedure

Dependent Variable: Chl_a_JH chlorophyll_a by Jeffries and Humphreys (spectrophotometer)

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	Pr>F	R-Square	C.V.
Model	1	23.222	23.222	81.14	0.0001	0.737	36.879
Error	29	8.300	0.286				
Corrected Total	30	31.522					
				Root MSE			Mean Chl_a_JH
				0.535			1.451

Source	DF	Type I SS	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
Chl_a_Fl	1	23.222	23.222	81.14	0.0001

Source	DF	Type III SS	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
Chl_a_Fl	1	23.222	23.222	81.14	0.0001

Parameter	Estimate	T for HO: Parameter=0	Pr > T	Std Error of Estimate
Intercept	0.603	4.49	0.0001	0.134
Chl_a_Fl	0.860	9.01	0.0001	0.096

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) table for bottom chlorophyll_a values between fluorometric and spectrophotometric determinations for the Seamap Cruise of September 1995 (significant differences are indicated by the Pr>F probability $\alpha \leq 0.05$).

Analysis of Variance Procedure

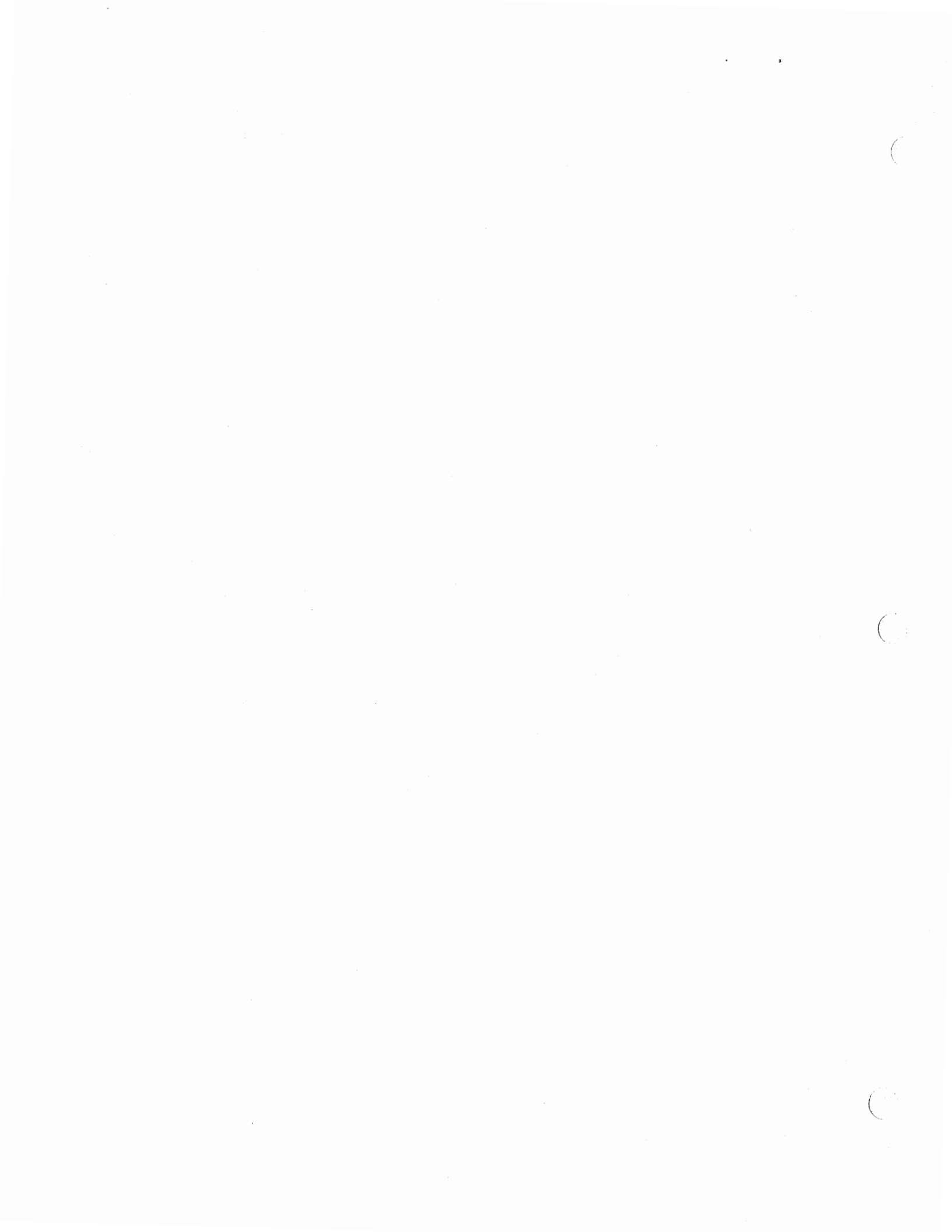
Dependent Variable: Chl_a_JH chlorophyll_a by Jeffries and Humphreys (spectrophotometer)

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	Pr>F	R-Square	C.V.
Model	1	75.375	75.375	552.07	0.0001	0.950	20.676
Error	29	3.959	0.137				
Corrected Total	30	79.335		Root MSE			Mean Chl_a_JH
				0.370			1.787

Source	DF	Type I SS	Mean Square	F Value	Pr >F
Chl_a_FI	1	75.375	75.375	552.07	0.0001

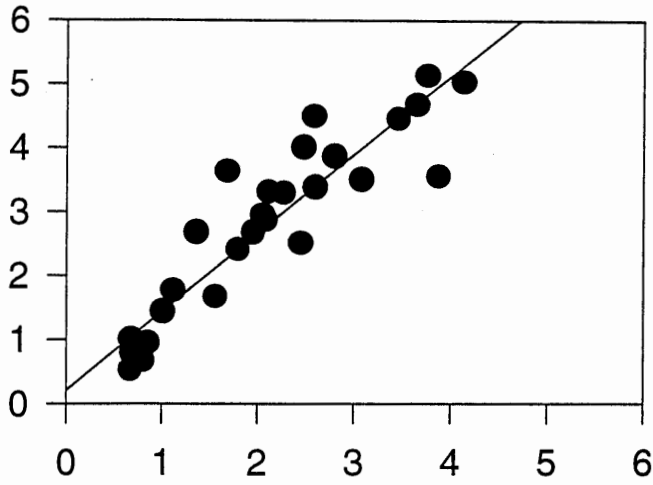
Source	DF	Type III SS	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
Chl_a_FI	1	75.375	75.375	552.07	0.0001

Parameter	Estimate	T for HO: Parameter=0	Pr > T	Std Error of Estimate
Intercept	0.219	2.33	0.027	0.094
Chl_a_FI	1.492	23.50	0.0001	0.063

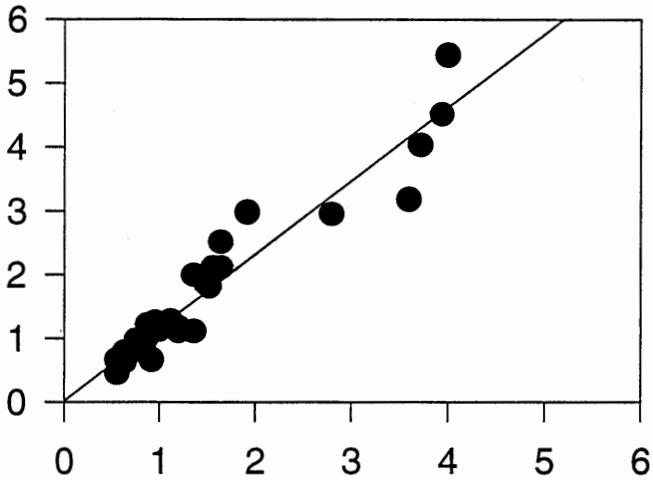


Chlorophyll_a Values Seamap Cruise January 1996

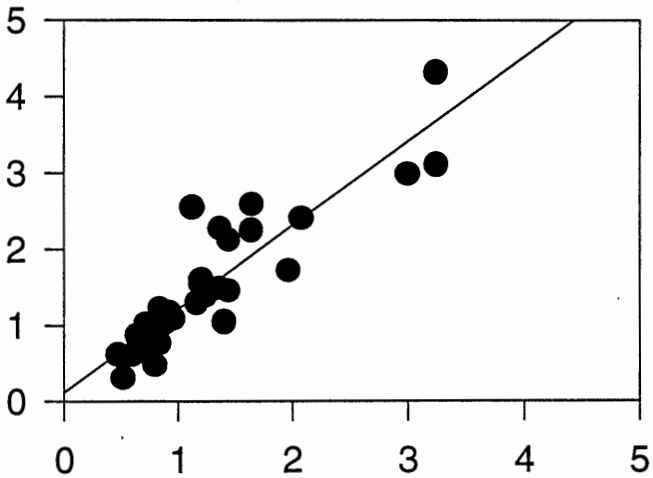
Chlorophyll_a (mg/m³) by Spectrophotometry



Surface
P=0.0001
 $r^2=0.854$



Mid
P=0.0001
 $r^2=0.918$



Bottom
P=0.0001
 $r^2=0.804$

Chlorophyll_a (mg/m³) by Fluorometry

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) table for surface chlorophyll_a values between fluorometric and spectrophotometric determinations for the Seamap Cruise of January 1996 (significant differences are indicated by the Pr>F probability $\alpha \leq 0.05$).

Analysis of Variance Procedure

Dependent Variable: Chl_a_JH chlorophyll_a by Jeffries and Humphreys (spectrophotometer)

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	Pr>F	R-Square	C.V.
Model	1	51.264	51.264	169.02	0.0001	0.854	20.691
Error	29	8.796	0.303				
Corrected Total	30	60.060		Root MSE			Mean Chl_a_JH
				0.551			2.662

Source	DF	Type I SS	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
Chl_a_Fl	1	51.264	51.264	169.02	0.0001

Source	DF	Type III SS	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
Chl_a_Fl	1	51.264	51.264	169.02	0.0001

Parameter	Estimate	T for HO: Parameter=0	Pr > T	Std Error of Estimate
Intercept	0.212	1.00	0.328	0.213
Chl_a_Fl	1.228	13.00	0.0001	0.094



Analysis of variance (ANOVA) table for mid chlorophyll_a values between fluorometric and spectrophotometric determinations for the Seemap Cruise of January 1996 (significant differences are indicated by the Pr>F probability $\alpha \leq 0.05$).

Analysis of Variance Procedure

Dependent Variable: Chl_a_JH chlorophyll_a by Jeffries and Humphreys (spectrophotometer)

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	Pr>F	R-Square	C.V.
Model	1	41.850	41.850	313.24	0.0001	0.918	21.035
Error	28	3.741	0.134				
Corrected Total	29	45.590		Root MSE			Mean Chl_a_JH
				0.366			1.738

Source	DF	Type I SS	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
Chl_a_Fl	1	41.850	41.850	313.24	0.0001

Source	DF	Type III SS	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
Chl_a_Fl	1	41.850	41.850	313.24	0.0001

Parameter	Estimate	T for HO: Parameter=0	Pr > T	Std Error of Estimate
Intercept	0.020	0.17	0.866	0.118
Chl_a_Fl	1.151	17.70	0.0001	0.065

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) table for bottom chlorophyll_a values between fluorometric and spectrophotometric determinations for the Seamap Cruise of January 1996 (significant differences are indicated by the Pr>F probability $\alpha \leq 0.05$).

Analysis of Variance Procedure

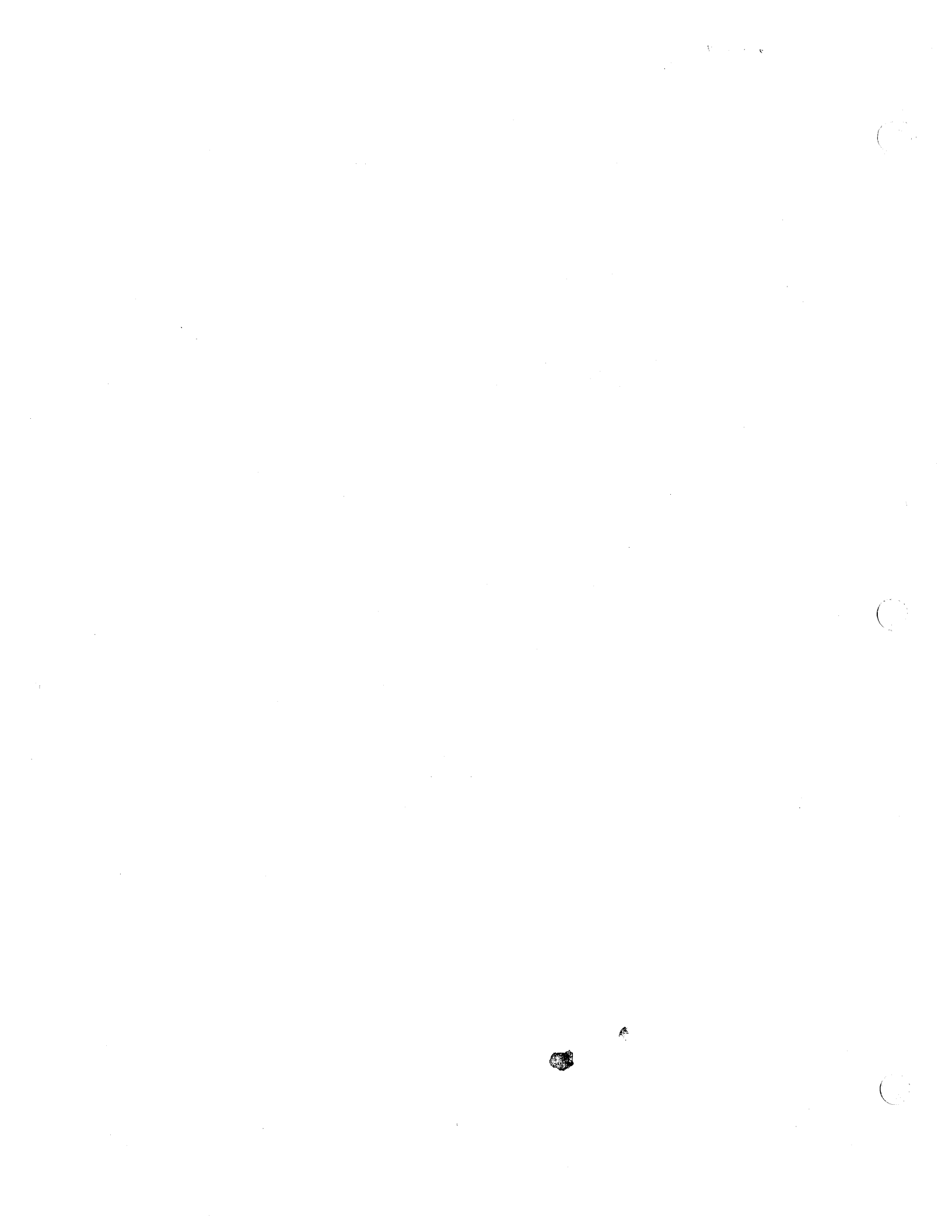
Dependent Variable: Chl_a_JH chlorophyll_a by Jeffries and Humphreys (spectrophotometer)

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F Value	Pr>F	R-Square	C.V.
Model	1	20.337	20.337	118.68	0.0001	0.804	26.936
Error	29	4.969	0.171				
Corrected Total	30	25.306		Root MSE			Mean Chl_a_JH
				0.414			1.537

Source	DF	Type I SS	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
Chl_a_Fl	1	20.337	20.337	118.68	0.0001

Source	DF	Type III SS	Mean Square	F Value	Pr > F
Chl_a_Fl	1	20.337	20.337	118.68	0.0001

Parameter	Estimate	T for HO: Parameter=0	Pr > T	Std Error of Estimate
Intercept	0.117	0.78	0.442	0.150
Chl_a_Fl	1.103	10.89	0.0001	0.101



TCC ANADROMOUS FISH SUBCOMMITTEE
Monday, March 18, 1996
Brownsville, Texas

APPROVED BY:

10/14/96

Vice-Chairman Charlie Mesing called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. The following were in attendance:

Members

Norman Boyd, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Jim Duffy, ADCNR/MRD, Gulf Shores, AL
Alan Huff, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL
Charles Mesing, FGFFC, Midway, FL
Buck Sutter, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Gary Tilyou, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

Staff

Ronald R. Lukens, Assistant Director
Nancy K. Marcellus, Administrative Assistant

Others

Wally Walquist, USFWS, Atlanta, GA
Ike Wirgin, New York University Medical Center

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as presented.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the October 23, 1995 meeting were approved with some minor editorial corrections from Doug Frugé.

State/Federal Reports

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) - B. Sutter informed the Subcommittee that of the nearly \$2.5 million anadromous money only about \$112,500 comes to the Southeast Region, and only \$45 thousand of that comes the Gulf. It is to support Larry Nicholson's project at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory. The overwhelming majority goes to the Pacific northwest for salmon work. Lukens asked Sutter if the allocation of those funds is set, or could they be reallocated based upon expressed need. Sutter indicated that Lukens should talk to Paul Perra in the NMFS Headquarters Office, since he is in charge of that program. Lukens indicated that he would do that, and J. Duffy and C. Mesing agreed to assist if necessary.

Alabama - J. Duffy stated that the ADCNR/MRD had stocked 3 genotypes of striped bass in the Perdido River system, none of which were C1 Atlantics. He indicated that as of the fall of 1996 the fish will be 2 years old. A total of 37,000 were stocked, originating from the Carbon Hill hatchery. C. Mesing asked what size the fish were when stocked, and Duffy replied that they were Phase 2 fish, ranging from 20 to 80 grams. Duffy could not remember the specific genotypes used, but he was sure that they were all of Apalachicola River origin. The original purpose of the stocking was to conduct a performance study of Atlantic genotypes versus gulf genotypes. Since Atlantic fish were not available, the comparison study cannot be conducted as planned.

Duffy briefly touched on Gulf sturgeon and Alabama shad issues, but indicated that nothing has been done recently in Alabama regarding those two species.

Louisiana - G. Tilyou indicated that Louisiana is continuing its normal production of striped bass at the Toledo Bend hatchery using Atlantic fish. The State continues to stock five coastal streams and Toledo Bend Reservoir.

Tilyou indicated that they now have four years of stocking gulf genotypes only into Indian Creek Reservoir. The hope is to establish a broodstock source there. The Reservoir was drawn down in the fall of 1995, and has not returned to its normal level as of the time of the meeting. If rainfall is not sufficient in the summer of 1996 to refill the reservoir, there could be problems with those striped bass. Tilyou briefly mentioned that the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is conducting some Gulf sturgeon work on the Pearl River.

Texas - N. Boyd reported that their coastal striped bass work has come to a halt, with no striped bass being stocked in coastal waters. He said they continue to stock a number of lakes, including Lake Waco and Twin Buttes which received gulf genotypes. Like Louisiana, they are attempting to establish broodstock in those two lakes.

Mississippi - T. Van Devender, representing L. Nicholson, did not have any specifics to report, except that the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources continues to support Nicholson's work using Wallop-Breaux funds.

Florida - C. Mesing reminded the Subcommittee that the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission has a new director. Currently, it has been decided to withdraw all Wallop-Breaux funds from supporting striped bass work. He is unsure what impact that will have on Florida's striped bass efforts, except that they will be significantly reduced.

Mesing indicated that the agency will continue to collect broodstock in 1996, and will continue to run surveys in the lower Apalachicola River to evaluate Phase 2 stocking. Mesing gave the Subcommittee an overview of Florida's stocking priorities for 1996.

Mesing closed with a comment that Forest Ware will be retiring soon. He also indicated that if Anadromous Fish Act funding or some other sources of funding were made available, Florida would likely renew its past level of interest in the Gulf-wide striped bass restoration program. B. Sutter added that it may be appropriate to apply for striped bass restoration funding to the S-K Grant Fund. Lukens indicated that he will investigate that possibility.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) - R. Lukens provided the report for D. Frugé. He indicated that the Carbon Hill Hatchery was transferred to Alabama in February 1996. The FWS is working on an agreement with Alabama to produce striped bass, but that agreement is pending. The FWS is also working on an agreement for growing out striped bass at the Claude Petit Mariculture Center in Gulf Shores, Alabama. To date, Carbon Hill Hatchery is the only hatchery closure that may affect striped bass. There are no additional hatchery closures or transfers on the immediate horizon.

A Ph.D. student from North Carolina State University has returned to the FWS Panama City Field Office to continue a Gulf sturgeon project in the Choctawhatchee River. The study objectives are to document habitat preference and identify potential spawning locations. To date, eleven Gulf sturgeon, ranging from 60 to 150 pounds, have been collected from Choctawhatchee Bay and fitted with radio transmitters.

The Sabine River telemetry study report has not been finalized. The report has been approved by the Regional Office and Frugé expects to complete it by the end of the summer.

Update of "Anadromous Fish Restoration Programs in the Gulf of Mexico"

R. Lukens advised the Subcommittee that copies of the subject document was completed in 1990. He stressed that the primary purpose of the document was to establish the amount and type of work toward striped bass restoration that had taken place in the Gulf of Mexico since the implementation of the Anadromous Fish Conservation Act. That paper also documented the low level of funding received by the Gulf States from that program, and was used as support to seek funding from Congress.

Frugé had suggested that the paper be updated as a way to again seek additional funding for striped bass work. The approach would be to have each state redraft their own section of the paper, and to have the GSMFC staff draft a section on the coordinated efforts since the mid 1980s, through the GSMFC. After much discussion regarding funding and potential source of support and funding, the Subcommittee agreed to redraft the subject document. Lukens indicated that he will contact each member for their information.

1996 GSMFC Sport Fish Restoration Administrative Program

Pascagoula River Contaminants Survey - Lukens pointed out that, at his request, the Subcommittee had approved a project, to be funded from the GSMFC Sport Fish Restoration Administrative Program, to document sources of contaminants that affect the Pascagoula, Leaf, and Chickasawhay Rivers. Due to funding concerns for striped bass, as expressed above, Lukens indicated that he would like to withdraw the project, since it would do no good unless additional work was done after its completion. Since funding uncertainties may preclude additional work, Lukens felt that it would be ill advised to spend money on the contaminants work. After some discussion, the Subcommittee agreed.

Striped Bass Nuclear DNA Project - Lukens reminded the Subcommittee of the agreement to continue to work with Dr. Ike Wirgin to conduct a three year study to determine the degree of introgression of Atlantic genetic material into the striped bass population in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River system. He pointed out that, while the latest study supports minimal introgression, it focused on mitochondrial DNA, which provides information from the maternal side only. The current study will focus on nuclear DNA, which will resolve the issue for both maternal and paternal parents.

* It was suggested that the genetics survey project, which was completed in 1995, should be continued. That project was designed to provide for the analysis of up to 300 striped bass samples for nuclear and mitochondrial DNA analysis (60 per state), in order to document genotypic distribution, and to assess the success of stocking gulf genotypes. After some discussion, G. Tilyou made a motion to continue the genetics survey as soon as funds are available. The motion was seconded and passed without objection.

Genetics Presentation

At the request of the Subcommittee, Dr. Ike Wirgin provided a presentation regarding his genetics work on striped bass and Gulf sturgeon. The details of those presentations can be found in publications that are or will be available from Dr. Wirgin.

Status of Gulf Sturgeon Recovery Plan

Lukens informed the Subcommittee that Frugé had been made aware that there may be some Gulf sturgeon being caught as a bycatch in mullet gillnets near the Pascagoula River mouth. To date there is no hard evidence, and no sale of the fish has been detected. Frugé indicated that he will keep informed on this issue and report appropriately.

Lukens indicated that Frank Parauka, FWS Field Office in Panama City, had sent a memo to the Gulf Sturgeon Recovery Team regarding a number of issues related to genetics and stocking. Parauka asked for a response from Recovery Team members, and since several members are also on the Subcommittee, Lukens asked to address the issues together. First, the Subcommittee agreed with Parauka that the management units identified by Wirgin's genetics work should be adopted. It was added, however, that this is for genetics and hatchery purposes only and should not affect other recovery actions that may need to take place on a river-by-river basis. The Subcommittee also agreed that the Suwannee River should be considered separate from Wirgin's work, since its population is in such healthy condition.

Next the Subcommittee agreed with Parauka's statement that hatchery introductions or transfers between genetically different watersheds should be prohibited. In opposition to Parauka's statements, the Subcommittee does not support stocking fish into the Mobile River System, Tampa Bay, Charlotte Harbor, or Florida Bay. The Subcommittee also recommended that additional effort be expended to collect Gulf sturgeon from the Mobile River

System, Tampa Bay, and Charlotte Harbor. Samples should be sent to Dr. Wirgin for analysis, since he has done all the analysis to date. Lukens indicated that the response to Parauka will have to be approved by the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and Commissioners before a letter can be sent. Lukens agreed to draft the letter.

Lake Talquin Update

Mesing reported that with the 1992 year class there was a significant decline in the survival of gulf fish at age 3. This was the first evidence showing a difference in survival rate between gulf and Atlantic fish. Mesing said this could be attributed to a drought in June and July which could have caused the creeks providing refuges to be condensed causing more stress to the gulf fish. Mesing believes that the gulf fish need cold water to survive, having evolved in the Apalachicola with 68 degree water temperatures in the springs. Mesing has asked for support for one more year to continue this study.

Striped Bass Production and Allocation - State and Federal

The Subcommittee received a copy of a memo from D. Frugé regarding gulf race striped bass production for 1996. The memo provides general guidance and planning targets for gulf race striped bass fry and fingerling production for 1996 based on priorities discussed at the *Morone* workshop in Chattahoochee, Florida on February 8-9, 1996.

Frugé also provided the Subcommittee with a table "Gulf of Mexico Striped Bass Stocking Summary - 1995." The table included information on stocking location, planned stocking/fry request, actual stocking, date stocked, hatchery, genetics information, and broodstock source/identification.

The Subcommittee also wished to acknowledge Doug's hard work in preparing this information.

Pascagoula River Cooperative Striped Bass Project

The Subcommittee received a copy of the proposal to use federal aid administrative funds entitled, "Assessment of population and habitat and development of a restoration plan for anadromous striped bass in the Pascagoula River, Mississippi." Last year the Subcommittee sought funding for this project to restore striped bass in the Pascagoula River. The project was not funded so the Subcommittee agreed to seek funding again but for a more-focused temperature study in the Pascagoula River system.

Other Business

The Subcommittee again discussed the possibility of holding the fall meeting of the Subcommittee at the Tara Wildlife Management Area located just outside Vicksburg, Mississippi. Since the Subcommittee was favorable to this, Lukens advised that he would pursue arrangements for that meeting.

Frugé sent the Subcommittee an update on the West Pearl River Navigation Project and the Pearl River "low flow" project. On the navigation project, the record of decision (ROD) is still withdrawn, and the court injunction against the project still stands. The injunction will likely be reconsidered when a new ROD is issued. The Corps is reinitiating Section 7 consultation due to the presence of the inflated heelsplitter mussel. However, the consultation will also consider updated information on all species of concern, including the Gulf sturgeon. The process is just getting underway. The earliest the Corps could possibly initiate any dredging under the project would be next spring (1997).

On the "low flow" issue, the Corps is still studying the problem for potential solutions. The study is on "fast track" due to pushing by the Mississippi congressional delegation. The study is due for completion in September, and is about on schedule. A number of water control structures will probably be proposed. A public review draft of the environmental impact statement will probably be out in June.

Lukens provided Subcommittee members with a copy of "Save the Pearl" newsletter. The newsletter asks all interested parties to write a personal letter to Mr. H. Martin Lancaster, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, expressing their opposition to the Pearl River Navigation Project.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 4:25 pm.

**S-FFMC MENHADEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
March 19, 1996
Brownsville, TX**

APPROVED BY:

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
15 Oct 96

Jerry Mambretti, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. The following were in attendance.

Members

Pryor Bailey, Zapata Protein (USA), Inc., Moss Point, MS
Borden Wallace, Daybrook Fisheries, Inc., Empire, LA
Jerry Mambretti, TPWD, Port Arthur, TX
Joseph Smith, NMFS, Beaufort, NC (*proxy for John Merriner*)
Vince Guillory, LDWF, Bourg, LA
Walter Tatum, ADCNR, MRD, Gulf Shores, AL (*proxy for Vernon Minton*)

Staff

Larry B. Simpson, Executive Director, Ocean Springs, MS
Rick Leard, Program Coordinator, Ocean Springs, MS
Cindy Yocom, Staff Assistant, Ocean Springs, MS

Others

Charles Anderson, Zapata Protein (USA), Inc., Cameron, LA
Corky Perret, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA

Adoption of Agenda

B. Wallace moved and V. Guillory seconded that the agenda be approved as presented. The motion carried without an objection.

Approval of Minutes

V. Guillory moved and J. Smith seconded that the minutes of the October 24, 1995 meeting held in Mobile, Alabama, be approved as written. The motion carried unanimously.

Review of 1996 Fishing Season Forecast

J. Smith reported that only five reduction plants are scheduled for operation in the 1996 season (Zapata Protein in Dulac, LA closed); however, 52 vessels (same as 1995) will probably operate. Based on prior vessel participation, nominal fishing effort is projected to be about 432,000 vessel ton weeks. Consequently, regression analyses indicate that landings will be about 515,000 mt with a four out of five chance that they will be between 386,000 and 643,000 mt. Based on environmental conditions and juvenile indices, V. Guillory stated that Louisiana predicts that age 1 landings will be average to slightly below average and age 2 catches will be below average. He predicted that harvest off Louisiana will be between 450,000 to 500,000 mt in 1996.

The committee discussed the potential impact of the extended season (through November 1 of each year) which commenced in 1993. It was noted that in previous years the extension amounted to 2 weeks (26 to 28 weeks); however, in 1996 the extension will be 3 weeks (29 week season). In discussion, it was noted that previous scenarios indicated that the extension would have no biological effects. *By consensus, the committee approved sending a letter to NMFS Beaufort Laboratory Director, Dr. Ford Cross, requesting that Dr. Douglas Vaughan review the appropriateness of developing a stock assessment for the years 1993 through 1996 to address the additional fishing weeks and report his findings to the MAC at their October 1996 meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana.

J. Smith stated that the contractual arrangement with the GSMFC to pay port samplers in 1995 was very successful. He noted that NMFS planned to continue this arrangement in 1996, and he believed that the funding (\$30,000) would be available.

Status of Industry Reclassification under Marine Mammal Protection Act

J. Smith reported that previous proposals to reclassify the Atlantic menhaden industry from a Category III (lowest classification based on Potential Biological Removal [PBR]) to a Category II had been dropped. It was noted that previous data being considered was erroneous, and both the Gulf and Atlantic fisheries were currently at Category III. The MAC also voiced concern regarding language in the Federal Register (Volume 60, Number 249, 67083) pertaining to the Gulf of Mexico Menhaden Purse Seine Fishery. *By consensus, the MAC requested that L. Simpson write a letter to the NMFS requesting the current status of and future plans for review of this fishery under the MMPA. The letter should also address the types of data and analyses used, and the criteria for establishing and changing classifications based on these data and analyses.

Discussion of Louisiana's Hypoxic Zone and Impacts on Fishing

J. Smith presented a handout showing that fishing effort and catches were down more significantly in the central portion of the fishing area off Louisiana, and this decrease was possibly due to the influence of the hypoxic zone. He also stated that catches are higher near reduction plants due to minimum travel distance desires and "topping off" from trips. It was also noted that Zapata Protein at Cameron, Louisiana will outfit 14 vessels with GPS positioning systems to track vessel movements throughout the 1996 season. Some of this information may be useful in the future to determine the effects of various factors on fishing locations.

Discussion of Legislation Potentially Affecting the Industry

It was noted that none of the states are currently considering legislation or regulations that would directly effectuate a change in the reduction fisheries in the Gulf. Recent and proposed changes to laws and regulations affecting gill net fisheries in some states may affect future recruitment of some personnel that participate in these fisheries in the off season due to loss of income.

Use of Fishery-Independent Data to Predict Changes in Catch

V. Guillory stated that Louisiana had been using their juvenile indices and other independent data as part of their seasonal forecast for several years. He noted that all states should computerize their data in order to analyze trends. J. Smith reported that D. Vaughan was interested in using these data to tune VPAs as a portion of stock assessments, and he also noted the potential for enhancing forecasts of seasonal harvest. J. Mambretti compared catches from Texas' bag seine and gill net sampling with industry catches and discussed various factors that could affect correlations. *By consensus, the MAC agreed to have V. Guillory and J. Mambretti determine what data and analyses are needed to potentially predict future abundance from fishery-independent sampling programs. This information will be sent to the GSMFC staff and transmitted to Alabama and Mississippi to determine if available data are comparable with Louisiana and Texas. The MAC agreed to discuss this issue further at the October 1996 meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Review of Bycatch Study

It was noted that Dr. Richard Condrey was not able to attend the meeting; however, a final report of the study was being drafted. *The MAC elected to defer discussion of the report to the October 1996 meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Other Business

J. Mambretti stated that Gulf Protein, Inc. was preparing to ~~open a reduction facility~~ ^{fish} in Texas, and approximately six vessels would be operating ~~for the plant~~. He noted that in conversation with company representatives, TPWD had emphasized the positive working relationship previously developed with other companies (most recently with Zapata Protein) and their desire for a similar relationship with Gulf Protein.

J. Smith reported that the ASMFC had produced an informational brochure on Atlantic menhaden and the fishery. *After discussion, the MAC decided to pursue the development of a similar brochure for gulf menhaden, and J. Smith volunteered to put together a draft for discussion at the October 1996 meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

APPROVED BY:
Vince Guillory
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

**TCC CRAB SUBCOMMITTEE
MINUTES
March 19, 1996
Brownsville, Texas**

Vince Guillory, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. The following were in attendance:

Members

Vince Guillory, LDWF, Bourg, LA
Paul Hammerschmidt, TPWD, Austin, TX
Walter Tatum, ADCNR/MRD (*proxy for Steve Heath*)
Harriet Perry, GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS
Phil Steele, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL

Others

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL
Julius Collins, GMFMC, Brownsville, TX
Henry Hildebrand, Corpus Christi, TX
J. Alan Huff, FMRI, St. Petersburg, FL
Skip Lazauski, ADCNR/MRD, Gulf Shores, AL
Corky Perret, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Tony Reisinger, Texas A&M Marine Advisory, San Benito, TX
Richard E. Tillman, Texas Marine Advisory, Aransas Pass, TX
Tom Wagner, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Jerry Waller, ADCNR/MRD, Dauphin Island, AL

Staff

Richard L. Leard, Program Coordinator, Ocean Springs, MS
Cynthia B. Yocom, Staff Assistant, Ocean Springs, MS

Adoption of Agenda

Walter Tatum moved that an additional item be placed on the agenda regarding the possibility of a workshop/symposium at the next GSMFC meeting that would address problems in crab trap identification. Harriet Perry seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Adoption of Minutes

Paul Hammerschmidt moved that the minutes from the meeting held October 23, 1995, in Mobile, Alabama, along with the minutes from the task force meeting held January 25, 1996, in Angleton, Texas, be approved as written. The motion was seconded by Phil Steele and approved by consensus.

State Reports

Florida - Phil Steele reported that the state of Florida has been mandated by the FMFC to update its trip ticket system. Landings in 1995 were 13.5 million pounds which indicates an average year. Value, however, has increased substantially with prices ranging from \$.79 to \$1.00 per pound. Catch per trips both on the east and west coast are significantly down over the 10 year period; Florida has doubled effort in both the Atlantic and Gulf Coast fisheries. The use of escape rings was originally mandated in the state management plan. A loop-hole was found when peeler trap fishermen were using hard crab traps and calling them peeler traps, and peeler traps were exempt from the use of escape rings. Regulations have now been corrected to state that any trap 1 1/2 inch mesh (regardless of reported use) shall have escape rings. The number of crab traps in Florida is a problem, but fishermen now have to report the average number of traps used per trip. The average is 200 traps per trip, and there are approximately 600-700 fishermen on the west coast and half as many on the east coast. This results in 200,000 - 250,000 traps in the fishery. Fishermen lose traps which results in the problem of ghost fishing. Another associated problem is the complaints being received from the

recreational boating sector regarding blocked navigation from crab traps. Crab trap identification and number of traps in the fishery are major problems for the crab fishery. Blue crab is now a restricted species in Florida. A fisherman applying for a license must prove \$5,000 or 25% of his income from the previous year came from commercial fishing. There is, however, a provision in the law for crew shares. A captain of a vessel can allow a member of his crew to report a portion of the vessel's catch in order for that crew member to qualify for a license in the next year. This is tracked through the saltwater product's license. Florida's genetic research found that very little genetic variation in blue crab from the Gulf of Mexico was found. Enough variation was found on the East Coast to define subpopulations, though.

Alabama - Walter Tatum reported Alabama's blue crab fishery reflects those of the other Gulf States in that something must be done concerning user conflicts in the blue crab fishery. Alabama has even experienced conflicts between duck hunters and crab fishermen. This particular problem was resolved by closing the most controversial fishing area during the duck hunting season. For the past eight months, Alabama has been meeting with the Alabama Seafood Association's Blue Crab Subcommittee. The subcommittee has crab fishermen and processors from Alabama's two coastal counties. The state is facilitating their efforts of self-governing and acknowledges their endeavors to recognize problems in the fishery and their subsequent focus to develop solutions. From these meetings, it is clear that some sort of license limitation will have to be put in place. From 1991-1995, crab license sales range from a low of 117 to a high of 153 sold. To obtain a license in the future, income requirements may have to be met (proposed at 50% of income derived from a commercial fishery) and proof of payment of state income tax. Other ideas include trap reductions per licensee, raising license fees, and a better method to identify crab traps. Alabama continues to struggle with user conflicts and trap identification, but on a positive note, the crab processing industry in Alabama is well and thriving.

Mississippi - Harriet Perry expressed a need to pool fishery-independent data for the north-central Gulf, east of the river. Settlement collection will begin in April or May this year and will be located in several locations to determine whether the area that has been sampled since 1991 is representative of settlement in the Mississippi Sound. A low calcium shedding system has been installed at a commercial crab shedding facility in Mississippi and will be monitored over the next year; however, the system will actually be run by the crab shedder. One question that should be answered during the year is how long does it take the water to go acidic. The original filter for the system was too complicated at first and was later modified to include a simple trickle filter with pea gravel. After a year of operation in the commercial shedding facility, the system should be ready to go to the Marine Advisory Service for introduction to the crab industry. A popular article will be coming out in the Sea Grant publication "Force Five" that highlights the system. Of legislative note, there is a current proposal to ban all pot crab fishing north of the Intercoastal Waterway in Mississippi which will in effect shut down the crab fishery in Mississippi.

Louisiana - Vince Guillory reported that their license moratorium went into effect during the summer of 1995. For a crab fisherman to purchase a license in 1996, 1997, or 1998, he had to have had a license in 1993, 1994, or 1995. This was thought to be a good way to limit entry into the fishery. Unfortunately, as soon as the bill was passed in summer 1995, speculative fishermen began buying licenses to qualify in case they wanted to crab during the next three years. In 1994, there were 2,503 licenses sold, and 3,482 licenses were sold in 1995. The licensing department ran a check and of the fishermen who didn't have a license in 1993 or 1994, and there were 1,300 new fishermen who purchased a license in 1995. There will be some speculative buying when a state tries to implement a limited entry program. At the last Louisiana Crab Task Force Meeting, Ken Roberts noted that not just the number of fishermen must be limited, but also the number of traps per fisherman must be limited. Ongoing research includes a megalopal study in Barataria Bay by Jim Powell at LSU and a drop net sampler study in Lake Pontchartrain by Don Baltz, also at LSU. The study by Don Baltz includes a chapter on blue crab, and both papers should be available by the October meeting. Of interest is a research bulletin from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game on capture and handling mortalities of decapods. Many of these papers showed delayed mortality from confinement in traps, reduced growth rates, etc. Just what is the impact of crabs being caught in traps and then being returned to the water?

Texas - Paul Hammerschmidt reported fishery-independent data and harvest data are showing trends similar to those of the other states. The data shows declines in certain size classes, and commercial landings are down to about 5

million pounds in 1994. Landings for 1995 are still preliminary. Preliminary results of a three-year special study on bycatch shows the number of crabs caught in shrimp trawls at 85 million crabs per year. Crabs range in size from under one inch to legal and above. This raises the similar question of the impacts of catch and release of crabs. Routine monitoring programs are ongoing in Texas.

Blue Crab Symposium

A symposium on the blue crab fisheries of North America addressing research, conservation, and management will be held April 18-19, 1996, in association with the 88th Annual Meeting of the National Shellfisheries Association in Baltimore, Maryland. Vince Guillory noted that the Crab Subcommittee spent several hours on Monday in an informal work session refining Gulf presentations. A revised copy will be sent out for review and further comment.

Blue Crab FMP Progress

Vince Guillory reported that sections were assigned at the task force meeting in January. Most task force members have been working on symposium presentations which will mesh into the FMP. It was suggested that the next task force meeting be held in June. Tom Wagner distributed copies of section 5 and asked state representatives to review and add state laws specific to the crab fishery. A brief overview of trends in the Texas blue crab fishery was given and will be available for incorporation into the FMP. Recent research in Texas was reviewed, and draft publications were distributed. Phil Steele is coordinating the habitat section and noted the publication on history and management of the blue crab fishery in Louisiana will be an excellent source document for this section.

Crab Trap Identification Symposium

Walter Tatum noted the ongoing struggle to identify crab traps. State representatives could present the successes and failures in their attempts to identify traps. Vince Guillory noted that he had just received a call from David Whittaker of South Carolina regarding this same problem. South Carolina is about to implement trap limits and trap identification system. Information on trap identification in other decapod fisheries should be included. Input from law enforcement must be included. Time should be allotted at the next meeting (perhaps as a general session) for this topic.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

APPROVED BY:
[Signature]
COMMITTEE CHAIR

**TCC DATA MANAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
MINUTES
Tuesday, March 19, 1996
Brownsville, Texas**

Chairman, Skip Lazauski, called the meeting to order at 8:30 am. The following members and others were present:

Members

Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, Texas
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, Mississippi
Skip Lazauski, ADCNR/MRD, Gulf Shores, Alabama
John Poffenberger, NMFS/SEFSC, Miami, Florida
Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, Florida

Staff

David Donaldson, Program Coordinator
Ron Lukens, Assistant Director
Larry Simpson, Director

Others

John Merriner, NMFS/SEFSC, Beaufort, North Carolina
Joe Smith, NMFS/SEFSC, Beaufort, North Carolina
Buck Sutter, NMFS/SERO, St. Petersburg, Florida

Adoption of Agenda

Chairman Lazauski suggested adding a discussion of dealer code number under Other Business. J. Poffenberger suggested adding a short discussion regarding confidentiality. The agenda was adopted without objection as amended.

Approval of Minutes

With several changes to statements in the state and federal reports, the minutes were approved without objection.

State/Federal Reports

Louisiana - J. Shepard indicated that LDWF is under new administration since the election of Governor Foster. Mr. Jimmy Jenkins is the new Secretary for the LDWF. New legislation in Louisiana that affected the use of gill nets also required the management of certain species at 30% SPR, including black drum, southern flounder, mullet, and sheepshead. Stock assessments for those species have been completed and transmitted to the legislature. The only one of the four species that was below the 30% SPR was southern flounder; consequently, the LDWF is planning to close the southern flounder fishery in the near future. It is not yet known what sectors of the fishery will be affected. Shepard indicated that they have been working on a spotted seatrout stock assessment, in conjunction with the region-wide effort under the GSMFC Interjurisdictional Fisheries Management Program. The department is also in the process of production aging of the four species listed above, including spotted seatrout.

Mississippi - T. Van Devender indicated that gill net issues have arisen again in the 1996 legislative session. He stated that there were two bills introduced that would force the MDMR to reconsider its current measures regulating the gill net fishery in favor of stricter measures. One of the bills stated that the legislation that authorizes the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources, and thus the Department, would be repealed if such action were not taken. The other bill indicated that the make-up of the Commission would be changed to appoint some additional seats. The bill to change the commission make-up failed, but the other bill did not fail. The

Mississippi Commission subsequently published a notice of intent to make the state's gill net regulations more strict, stating a number of specific provisions. Van Devender indicated that he does not know how the vote of the Commissioners will be cast, but he feels that stricter regulations will not pass.

Van Devender then discussed the Tidelands Trust fund that is derived from leasing bottomlands from the state. That fund is now near \$4 million, thanks to casino development. He indicated that much of the funds are being earmarked for local development projects, such as boat ramps, piers, marina construction, etc. The balance of those funds are to be used for environmental education, research, data collection, purchase of land, etc. He then discussed several projects that have been funded under the Tidelands Trust Fund.

Van Devender indicated that southern flounder is becoming an issue in Mississippi, as in Louisiana; however, specific actions have yet to be discussed. The recreational creel survey is still ongoing, as is work under the State-Federal Cooperative Statistics Program. Van Devender added that Mississippi experienced a hard freeze during the first weekend in February, and there was a fish kill that consisted of white mullet (*Mugil curema*) only. He indicated that this has happened for the last three years, and went on to describe some of the behavior of the fish prior to dying.

Texas - P. Campbell indicated that the TPWD is preparing for public hearings regarding southern flounder proposals to regulate the fishery. Specific measures include a reduction in recreational bag limit from 20 fish per person per day to 10 and a commercial limit of 60 fish per person per day, down from unlimited take. The size limit would be increased from 12 to 14 inches. She stated that the Sea Center has finally opened, with 7,500 people visiting the Center on the first day, and 15,000 visitors the first weekend. The Sea Center is an environmental educational facility. The TPWD is currently planning a series of workshops to work with the inshore shrimping industry regarding the use of bycatch reduction devices.

Alabama - S. Lazauski indicated that Alabama had also reported a fish kill during February. Many of the fish were netted and sold. There ensued a short discussion regarding any available literature about temperature tolerances for white mullet. Lazauski stated that the ADCNR/MRD is currently conducting an age and growth study on spotted seatrout as a part of a stock assessment in conjunction with regional management of the species through the GSMFC interstate fishery management plan. Lazauski discussed the Alabama gill net law that limits the gill net fishery, and a number of the provisions in the law, including a limited entry provision. A new reporting law passed the legislature which requires dealers to report monthly on forms provided by the MRD. The primary data collected will be species, pounds, and value of all landed product. The program is designed to enhance the existing reporting system. Lazauski then discussed a variety of provisions of the program, including how out-of-state fishing, landing, and purchasing are handled. Several members discussed a number of improvements that could be made to the form that Lazauski showed.

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Fisheries Science Center - J. Poffenberger indicated that the Center is moving ahead to integrate all the data into a single data base management system called SEFIN (Southeast Fisheries Information Network). Currently, the initial work has begun to integrate the log book data, which should be completed by the end of the summer. The other data bases are already on the SEF Host but they are not in the relational data base format that they will eventually be in. The data are accessible and documentation is better. He indicated that the Center is working with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission on the development of some of the components of their coast-wide cooperative statistics program. Recently, the Center completed a comprehensive science review, related to the need for the agency to downsize throughout NOAA. The exercise was designed to defend the programs of the Center. Each science center in the country had to undergo such a review. Some discussion continued regarding the possibilities of lab closings and transfer of activities directly related to NOAA's mission.

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council - S. Atran indicated that there have been some personnel changes at the office with Terry Leary retiring. Initially, Bill Lindall replaced Leary; however, for a variety of reasons, Lindall decided to decline the position after a short time in office. Currently the job has been offered to another individual, and should be filled soon. Atran then discussed the history of amendments related to the reef

fish complex, culminating in the current amendment proposals. Issues included fish trap endorsements; size limits for red grouper; size limits, bag limits, and quotas for red snapper; charter boat/ head boat issues; regulatory measures for amberjack species; etc. He briefly discussed a proposal for an aggregate bag limit of 20 reef fish for those species not otherwise subject to management. That measure would include such species as lane and vermilion snapper, porgies, and other species listed in the Reef Fish FMP for which regulatory measures do not currently exist. That means that an angler could catch the limit on red snapper, the groupers, and others currently under management, and could also catch up to 20 of these other species. A lengthy discussion regarding many of the Gulf Council reef fish provisions ensued. Also discussed were the provisions of the proposed ITQ system for red snapper. Atran indicated that the current amendments to the Magnuson Act place a moratorium on the implementation of any new ITQ systems. The fate of the red snapper ITQ is not known. Mackerel amendments and issues were then discussed. One of the contentious issues with the South Atlantic Council is the definition of overfishing for king mackerel. Amendments to the Shrimp FMP will primarily deal with bycatch reduction devices. Public hearings will take place in the near future. Atran then discussed several miscellaneous issues related to Gulf Council actions.

RecFIN/ComFIN Discussion

MRFSS/RecFIN Budget - Lukens informed the Subcommittee that he had been working on a cooperative agreement document to submit to the NMFS regarding the earlier proposed strategy to conduct the MRFSS through the states and coordinated by the GSMFC. As a part of the cooperative agreement, Lukens indicated that he used earlier budget figures provided by the Subcommittee to formulate standard budgets for each state. He indicated that the present discussion should provide enough guidance to Lukens to complete the budgets and submit the cooperative agreement to the NMFS soon after the meeting. Following a lengthy discussion regarding the specifics of each state's budget figures, it was determined that sufficient additional work needed to be done, such that Lukens would need to discuss the budgets individually over the phone.

State License Systems - Lukens reminded the Subcommittee that during the RecFIN meeting it was recommended that a comprehensive review of all state licensing systems should be conducted. The ultimate goal of this activity is to assess the feasibility of using state licenses as a sample frame for the telephone survey under the MRFSS or other appropriate survey. The activity should list the data elements that are required by each license, and compare that list with the minimum requirements for use as a sampling frame. It was pointed out that each state in the Gulf of Mexico now has a recreational fishing license; however, there are different exemptions and other items that may affect the utility of a license program as a sampling frame, for instance Florida's program does not require a license when fishing in the shore mode.

A report developed by Tom McIlwain of the NMFS was discussed. That report reputedly documented all the licensing systems in each state in the Southeast Region, and was thought to be supportive of the current activity. Upon closer examination of that document, it was noted that it does not include recreational licensing.

Lazauski suggested a different approach to get the information required. He recommended that the Subcommittee identify a minimum set of data elements and capabilities that would allow the use of the license as a sampling frame. Then a questionnaire could be sent to each state for them to provide the identified data and information. The following list of items was identified:

- list of licenses, including all categories
- list of exemptions
- duration of license and license cycle
- degree of automation (yes or no, partially or fully)
- timeliness of data
- all information required on license application

The questionnaire should also include any licensing for recreational shellfish harvesting.

Demonstration Charter Boat Survey - Lukens pointed out that M. Osborn, NMFS/MRFSS staff, discussed the possibility of the GSFMC through the states conducting the charter boat option in the 1996 MRFSS solicitation. Most Subcommittee members felt it was not the way they wanted to address the charter boat issue. Lukens pointed out that it would be a way of taking a small step to becoming involved with the MRFSS and could serve as a preliminary activity in preparation for conducting the MRFSS. After much discussion, the Subcommittee elected to address the charter boat issue through RecFIN, by conducting a workshop or series of workshops to investigate several alternatives to monitoring the charter boat/head boat fisheries. J. Shepard indicated that it may be useful to conduct the MRFSS charter boat option with one or two states, simply as a pilot. There was no clear resolution to this issue; however, it was clear that the Subcommittee was not interested in pursuing a Gulf-wide effort under the MRFSS charter boat option.

MRF Participation Survey

Lazauski opened the discussion with background regarding the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program (Wallop-Breaux) administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The primary issue was the split between the freshwater and saltwater agencies. He indicated that, as a default method of assessing the split, the FWS uses the five year survey of hunting, fishing, and outdoor related recreation as the basis. While this survey is widely used for a number of agency purposes, there are a number of states that believe that the five year survey does not accurately assess the proportion of freshwater and saltwater recreational anglers. The FWS has a policy that if a state implements their own survey that is a least comparable to the five year survey, and is approved by the FWS, the results of that state survey can be used to determine the split within that state. Lazauski reported that recently the State of Georgia developed and conducted a survey to determine saltwater fishing participation. The results of that survey significantly increased the amount of funding provided to the marine division of the agency through the Wallop-Breaux Program. Lazauski indicated that the ADCNR/MRD worked with individuals in Georgia to plan a similar survey for the State of Alabama, which was actually conducted by Dr. Steve Thomas, University of South Alabama. Lazauski reported that the results of the survey indicated that the MRD should be receiving significantly more funding from the Wallop-Breaux Program than they currently are receiving. Some discussion took place regarding the particulars of the survey, and Lazauski indicated that he would be glad to assist any state that is interested in conducting such a survey. Lazauski indicated that the next step is to reach some agreement between the State of Alabama and the FWS regarding the split. Perhaps the most important aspect of that agreement is for the ADCNR to agree with the MRD that the revised split is appropriate. Then the FWS would be able to reallocate those apportioned funds.

Electronic Communications - Capabilities and Needs

Lukens reminded the Subcommittee that there has been an ongoing interest in conducting a session regarding the various options for electronic communications. Upon looking further into situation, it became evident that most agencies and individuals were moving toward using the Internet for e-mail, file and data transfers, and as a source of general information. That being the case, it seemed more productive to assess the minimum requirements for communications using the Internet. Lukens also pointed out that the RecFIN(SE) Committee had asked the GSFMC to develop a Homepage; consequently, that issue will be a part of the discussion. Dave Donaldson developed the handout sheet regarding several discussion points. Those issues and Donaldson's suggestions, are as follows:

- What is the minimum hardware (computer, modem, etc.) necessary? Suggestion: 486DX, 8 mb RAM, 28.8 modem
- What type of software is needed to communicate with all participants? Suggestion: Software should support MIME and SMTP enclosures and have uuencode and uudecode capabilities
- What is the current status of on-line capabilities for each participant?
- What type of information should be included in the GSFMC Homepage?
- How do you envision the GSFMC utilizing electronic communications? Suggestions: E-mail, World Wide Web, FTP, other

Lazauski pointed out that it is important to look ahead and try to project where the agencies want to be in several years regarding electronic communications capabilities. Donaldson gave a brief overview of the handout

sheet and began the discussion regarding each item. It was determined that each of the agencies has the minimum hardware capability, but that software may be a problem. He pointed out that the GSMFC office could send messages to LDWF, but cannot send documents because the LDWF capability does not support the necessary kind enclosures. He indicated that the newer software does have the necessary capability. S. Atran pointed out that since private industry is now getting so heavily involved in Internet services, the capability to send files without having to code or decode them may soon be available. Atran also pointed out that the Gulf Council Office does not have either the hardware or software capabilities listed as minimum capabilities. He clarified that the hardware problem is that there is a shared modem. He can use e-mail through the Council system.

The question was asked how the GSFMC plans to use the Homepage. Lukens indicated that he sees it as twofold. First, it is a kind of advertisement, saying what the GSFMC does, what the program capabilities are, what the current activities are. Second, it will serve as a communications tool between the GSFMC office and its constituents, which are primarily the state and federal agencies. That communications function will manifest itself in e-mail, posting of meeting information, posting of minutes of meetings, posting of newsletters and current information, among other things. Lazauski pointed out the AFS Computer User Section now has a Homepage and is using it much as Lukens described. Donaldson also handed out a schematic of the GSMFC Homepage, after which a lengthy discussion took place.

Donaldson pointed out that for documents like draft minutes that have not been finalized, documents that are being edited, or information that should not be available to the general public should be sent via e-mail rather than making them available for downloading from the Home page. That way the general public will not have access to information that is not in its final adopted form.

Van Devender indicated that he hopes the MDMR will have Internet access within about a month. While he has the hardware capabilities discussed above, they are currently not on line at all. The same situation is true for the ADCNR/MRD; although, it may take longer to get on-line capability. Shepard indicated that the LDWF will soon be upgrading the Internet software, and they will be able to support the necessary type of enclosures to send and receive files through e-mail. Texas and Florida both have the capability to communicate with the GSMFC. The Subcommittee agreed that there is a great deal of potential for making communications among the state and federal partners using Internet technology, and that the possibility of conducting the MRFSS will provide the impetus for enhanced data management and data transfer capabilities.

Stock Assessment Training Workshop

J. Shepard had agreed to take the lead in organizing the next stock assessment training workshop. He indicated the he had talked with Joe Powers, NMFS/SEFSE/Miami, to determine if he could provide some input into determining what information the next workshop should cover, and to see if he could play a role in conducting the workshop. Powers indicted that his active participation in the next workshop would be limited, and recommended that Shepard contact Victor Restrepo. Shepard suggested that he meet with Restrepo, Powers, and Bob Muller, FDEP/MRI, during the upcoming mackerel stock assessment meeting (April 15 - 18). Following that meeting, Shepard felt that he would have a better idea of what information would constitute the next workshop. He indicated that Powers may be willing to teach part of the workshop if someone else, like Muller for instance, is willing to compile the course information.

Shepard indicated that Powers had suggested tuning of VPAs as the next workshop subject. The Subcommittee agreed with that topic. Lukens indicated that there will again be funding available to support travel for state participants. Typically, two people per state are provided for in the funding; however, additional people can attend, depending on available space and if they support their own travel. Lukens pointed out that funding has not traditionally been available to pay a fee for anyone to develop the course information or to instruct; however, he agreed that if travel were needed for an instructor, non-federal, that would likely be available. Lukens agreed to continue to work with Shepard to organize the workshop.

Protocols and Guidelines for Aging Using Otoliths

Shepard updated the Subcommittee on the idea of conducting a training session in aging fish using otoliths. He indicated that it should be a two tiered approach. The first tier is to convene several individuals who have noted expertise in aging fish using otoliths. These individuals will develop a manual or guidelines for collecting, preparing, and reading otoliths for aging. The second tier will be to invite state scientists to a hands-on workshop to use the guidelines and actually prepare and read otoliths. The idea behind this activity is to train a corps of state scientists to age fish using the same protocols so that variability and error among different individuals can be minimized. Shepard indicated that Mike Murphy and Joe O'Hop should be involved in selecting the individuals that would convene to develop the guidelines document. Lukens indicated that he will coordinate with Murphy and O'Hop. He indicated that it will likely be the end of the year before the guidelines workshop can be scheduled. The training session would then be put off until early 1997.


Other Business

Lazauski opened a discussion regarding dealer codes. The issue is that there is the potential for the same dealer to have several dealer codes. He suggested that there should be a standard coding system for dealers. All programs will use the same code for that dealer. If the dealer dies, goes out of business, or transfers that business, the dealer code is retired, never to be use again, and a new code is issued for the new business, even if the business retains the same name after transfer. Data documentation should allow tracking of transfers of ownership associated with the issuance of new dealer codes. Everyone agreed that something should be done about standardizing dealer codes, and agreed that it should come up through the ComFIN Committee, who would appoint a workgroup to address the issue.

Poffenberger initiated a discussion regarding data confidentiality. The issue arose, because the NMFS is not receiving confidential data from North Carolina, and they have asked for more detailed discussion than is provided in 216-100. They would like to convince their Attorney General's Office that transfer of confidential data to the NMFS would be alright. They are concerned about enforcement access to the confidential data. Poffenberger indicated that the NMFS cannot prevent federal law enforcement officers from having access to data collected under the authority of the Magnuson Act. That does not apply to data that are collected under state authority. He indicated that he will inform North Carolina that the NMFS will not allow law enforcement to have access to any of the data that originates from North Carolina. The Subcommittee agreed that Poffenberger's approach to responding to North Carolina is valid. Poffenberger asked about how to handle requests for data from University researchers, for instance, that may have a MARFIN grant with the NMFS. Should those individuals be given confidential data, as provided by 216-100, upon signing a non-disclosure agreement, or should they be referred to the state of origin? It was pointed out that the NMFS should identify confidential data so that a researcher would not inadvertently publish confidential data. A lengthy discussion ensued, without specific resolution to Poffenberger's second issue; however, the Subcommittee felt that sufficient protection is being applied to confidential data.

As a result of the February ComFIN meeting, it was determined that the states and GMFMC should compile a list of species for which data will be needed during the next year for stock assessment purposes. This is the first step in assessing what kind and how much data should be collected. This should ultimately result in a data collection operations plan for a given year. The GSMFC staff will poll the states regarding this issue.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.



 COORDINATING CHAIRMAN

**TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
MINUTES
Wednesday, March 20, 1996
Brownsville, Texas**

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

Members

Columbus Brown, (proxy for Noreen Clough), USFWS, Atlanta, GA
 Terry Cody (proxy for H. Osburn), TPWD, Rockport, TX
 Paul Hammerschmidt (proxy for G. McCarty), TPWD, Austin, TX
 Alan Huff, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL
 Skip Lazauski (proxy for V. Minton), ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
 Tom Mellwain (proxy for B. Brown), NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
 Corky Perret, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
 John Roussel, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
 Walter Tatum, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
 Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
 Richard Waller, GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS

Staff

Larry Simpson, Executive Director
 Ron Lukens, Assistant Director
 David Donaldson, SEAMAP Coordinator
 Rick Leard, IJF Coordinator
 Madeleine Travis, Staff Assistant

Others

Conrad Fjetland, USFWS, Albuquerque, NM
 Doug Frugé, USFWS, Ocean Springs, MS
 Vince Guillory, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
 Ken Johnson, Texas A&M, College Station, TX
 Leroy Kiffé, GSMFC Commissioner, Lockport, LA
 Joseph Smith, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
 Ike Wirgin, NYU Medical Center, Tuxedo, NY

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was approved as written.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the meeting held on October 25, 1995 in Mobile, Alabama were approved as written.

State/Federal Reports

a. Florida

A. Huff stated that last July, the State of Florida voted to ban most nets in Florida waters. The law states that it's illegal to catch marine species with a net, however, it is legal to have a net in your vessel. Therefore, law enforcement has to catch a fisherman in the act of fishing to have to case against him. The marine patrol has made approximately 150 cases against fishermen which has led to a second problem. Prosecutors have been willing to make deals and have not judicated many cases. This does not provide much incentive to make cases if they are just going to be plea bargained in court. Personnel are working on changing the law so that it is illegal to possess nets. Another issue is

that there is an aquaculture bill in the legislature that promotes aquaculture. It was conceived as an alternative source of employment for those displaced by the net ban. The Florida Marine Fisheries Commission passed a number of rule changes which modified the size limits and other regulations for various species in Florida.

b. Alabama

W. Tatum stated that Alabama, in response to the Florida net ban, has passed a regulation that limits gill net activities to those who rely on the fishery for their livelihood. Due to this regulation, the number of gill net licenses was reduced from the previous year. Alabama has conducted a stock assessment for mullet and the SPR falls within the conservation limit established by the Department. Alabama began working on the blue crab fishery in an effort to reduce the number of traps used by the fishery. The analysis of the blue crab fishery shows that the number of traps being fished has doubled over the past ten years but the catch has remained the same. Alabama is working with the fishermen, by convening meetings, to develop some method for reducing the number of crab traps in the state. Issues that have been discussed include having a license the previous year, earned income from the seafood industry, paid your taxes, and others. There will be an appeals board for those displaced from the industry. The goal of implementation is sometime in 1997. Alabama conducted their own saltwater participation survey for the determination of the split of Wallop-Breaux monies. The Bureau of Census figures showed that 12% of the population participate in saltwater fishing and the survey conducted by the Department that showed that the figure was actually 23%. This figure has been forwarded to the Fish and Wildlife Service. Alabama is currently conducting a stock assessment on spotted seatrout and then will conduct an assessment of southern flounder. There has been a request to make pompano a game fish in Alabama so the Department is compiling information concerning pompano. So far, there has not been very much data concerning this species. Alabama is still conducting mariculture work on white shrimp, and spawning work with red snapper.

c. Mississippi

T. Van Devender stated that one of the Department's charges deals with boat and water safety which has been extremely controversial. The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources Commission proposed some regulations that would have severely limit the use boats and jet skis in Mississippi waters. These proposed regulations created some much public outcry that the Commission had to totally revised the regulations and are continuing to work on this issue. A bill passed by the legislature stated that if the Commission does not enact more restrictive measures concerning gill nets, the legislature will abolish the Commission. The legislature has recently agreed to a more equitable split of the tidelands monies which provides more money for management and research projects. Some that have been proposed include mapping of the grassbeds and studying the effects of trawling in these beds. Mississippi has passed rules which identify and regulate skimmer nets. The Department is, in conjunction with Stennis Space Center, mapping the oyster reefs in western Mississippi using side-scan sonar. Some other proposed projects include studying the assemblage of juvenile fishes associated with tide rips. The Gulf Coast Research Laboratory cobia tagging and spotted seatrout aging work.

d. Louisiana

C. Perret stated that the State of Louisiana has recently elected a new governor and one of his first action was to appoint a new directory of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Due to the new administration, there has been some shifting of personnel in the Department. John Roussel is now the new Assistant Secretary of Fisheries for the Department. J. Roussel stated that the shrimp production for this year was at the highest level it has been in the past five years. This was due to a combination of good production in the spring and record high white shrimp production east of the River. There was some fish kills due to the freeze early this year. The kills were very isolated and small in size. The Department administered a compensation program for oyster fishermen who were impacted by some health closures. The Department is developing mitigation procedures for oyster leases that may be impacted by coastal restoration projects. In response to the Florida net ban, there was some legislation passed which affects the commercial net fisheries. Personnel is still in the process of determining all the ramifications of the legislation. The legislation is being challenged in both state and federal court. The Department has been involved in monitoring the loop offshore oil port since the mid 1970s. Recently, the oil companies involved with the port have drastically reduced the amount of sampling in regards to the port. The Department is currently awaiting comments from the state attorney general since monitoring was curtailed without the proper procedures being followed.

e. Texas

P. Hammerschmidt stated that Texas recently opened their marine hatchery Sea Center. The visitor center is opened and the hatchery ponds should be operational by this summer. There has been approximately 30,000 visitors since its opening. Texas is continuing to work on sunsetting all of their fish and game regulations. The goal of this activity is to reduce regulations by 25% and streamline and clarify remaining regulations. The Department is working on stricter limits for both recreational and commercial fishermen on flounder since data indicated an downward trend in the stocks. Texas is continuing to conduct a by-catch study. Some of the data has been analyzed and it shows a large amount organisms being caught in shrimp trawls. Texas will begin a new licensing scheme in September where some seniors will no longer be exempt from purchasing a fishing or hunting license.

f. National Marine Fisheries Service

T. McIlwain stated that NMFS currently has a budget but it expires at midnight on March 22. The latest information concerning the budget is that there will be a budget for the rest of the year, but it's still uncertain. The reorganization of NMFS is continuing. Recently, there was a meeting of high-level NMFS personnel but the results of that meeting are not known at this time. The goal of the reorganization is to essentially do more with less. There is a lot of uncertainty concerning the types of cuts that will occur. NMFS is also in the process of reviewing all the rules and regulations in an effort to streamline and avoid duplication. B. Sutter stated that NMFS has released partial funding to the states for projects that have start dates in January, February, March, and April. It was a very coordinated effort between NOAA Grants, NMFS-Regional office, and the states.

g. Fish & Wildlife Service

C. Brown stated that FWS is also operating under a continuing resolution and expects to operate under one until the end of the year. The funding levels for the Service do not look good. The monies funds available will be used to fund various fisheries and habitat restoration and enhancement projects. The Southeast Region of the FWS have transferred two hatcheries in the area. The FWS is implementing the ecosystems approach in the Southeast Region. Implementing guidelines have been established and there are three phases to the activity. The Assistant Regional Directors (ARD) will be responsible for managing specific geographic clusters in the Region. Through this activity, administrative responsibilities will be delegated to the ARDs. The Service has been developing a habitat conservation plan regarding the incidental catch of sea turtles. Panama City office has been working with area organizations regarding sea turtle nesting sites. The Service is working closely with the state of Florida concerning a major die off of manatees in the Gulf area. C. Fjetland stated that the Service is continuing work regarding the brown mussel. The study has shown that the mussels are common throughout coastal Texas including in most of the major bay systems. Recently, the studies have indicated that some of the early colonies are getting smaller and actually dying off.

Status of Freshwater Introduction Projects

D. Donaldson stated that he talked with David Etzold and D. Etzold stated that the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources is now in charge of the Bonne Carre project. Currently, the Corps of Engineers is conducting a mathematical model simulation of the project and will present the results in April 1996. The results from this test will determine the next steps in the process. C. Perret stated that the Davis Pond project is in the real estate acquisition phase. The COE will be advertising for bids for the construction contracts. Regarding the Carnarvaen project, the Department is completing its fifth year of post-construction monitoring.

Discussion of the Development of a Clearinghouse for Toxic Blooms

* T. Van Devender stated that Karen Steidinger is currently developing a manual on how to deal with marine toxic blooms. T. Van Devender provided some information concerning the different types of toxic blooms that occur in the Gulf of Mexico. It was suggested that when a toxic bloom occurs in a state's jurisdiction, state personnel should contact the GSMFC who would disseminate the information to interested personnel. The staff will develop a standardize form that each state would fill out when a bloom occurred. It was noted that the GSMFC is currently developing a home page for the Internet and it was suggested that this information could be placed on this home page. After some discussion, **S. Lazauski moved that the TCC endorse the concept of the GSMFC being a clearinghouse for marine toxic blooms in the Gulf of Mexico. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Presentation of Fisheries Genetics Work

a. Gulf Sturgeon

I. Wirgin stated that 25 species of sturgeon that have been identified world-wide. All of these species are at some level of decline. There is also a subspecies of sturgeon, namely the gulf sturgeon. Historically, their distribution extended from Charolotte Harbor to the Mississippi River. The first question researchers asked was "does genetics support the subspecies designation for gulf sturgeon?". If one examines the criterion, there is some support but it is not really strong. I. Wirgin stated that he began studying gulf sturgeon to determine if there were genetics differences between the gulf and Atlantic sturgeons. They sampled small numbers of sturgeons in the Atlantic and Gulf coasts and genetically analyzed the samples. The results showed that there were three sites on the mitrocondrial DNA (m-DNA) that were different among the two species. This finding supports that these species are actually different. In addition, the Gulf Sturgeon Recovery Plan was being developed. As part of this plan, a gulf-wide assessment to determine if there individual stock structures within the Gulf sturgeon species and there were different stocks, was there significant gene flow among these stocks. Again, genetic samples were taken from various river systems in the eastern Gulf of Mexico. The samples were divided into four separate regions. The analysis showed that there were differences among the different samples, thus there were separate stocks among the gulf sturgeon populations in the Gulf of Mexico. In addition, the gene flow among the different regions appeared to be very low. In conclusion, management of gulf sturgeon should be managed on a regional basis and if stocking is conducted, genetics difference should be considered before stocking is used to augment the population.

b. Striped Bass

I Wirgin stated that historically, striped bass were found as far west as the Mississippi River. By the 1960s, the only known naturally reproduction population of striped bass in the Gulf of Mexico was in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint Rivers system (ACF). In an effort to augment the native striped bass, Atlantic striped bass were introduced. Prior to the introduction of Atlantic fish, the gulf and Atlantic striped bass could easily be identified by the number of lateral line scales. After this introduction, the lateral line scale counts eroded and some suggested that there may no longer be a pure gulf striped bass population. Therefore, I. Wirgin began studying these populations to determine if there are still genetic difference among Atlantic and extant ACF gulf striped bass; how genetically similar is the extant ACF and the "pure" gulf striped bass populations; and are there other systems where unique populations of striped bass exist. Samples have been collected from the ACF system since 1983 and analyzed using various methods of both m-DNA and nuclear DNA (n-DNA) technologies. All of the methods showed that the most of the striped bass in the ACF system were unique and genetically different from the Atlantic species. The analysis comparing the existing ACF and historical populations of striped bass suggests that both populations are very similar.

Presentation of Shrimp Mariculture Disease Problems and Monitoring Activities

K. Johnson stated that mortality of shrimp is caused for the large part from predation, starvation, environmental degradation, and disease. The same mix of causes occurs in aquaculture but expression of each influence differs by degree. The intention of aquaculture design and process attempts to provide systems that artificially exclude predators, provide suitable food and environment and control influence of disease agents. The control of infective disease agents becomes particularly challenging in many aquaculture because of adaptive incompetence of animals in such settings.

Various groups of biological disease agents contribute to disease of shrimps. Protozoan and metazoan parasites usually require intermediate hosts and control is often had by targeting intermediate hosts for elimination. Several microbial groups directly infect immunocompromised individuals and control is approached by sanitation, environmental adjustments and occasionally medication or stock destruction. The virus group can be especially a problem because viruses infect internal parts of cells and tend to persist latently and transmit through production lines and process. While they are typically selective in their preferred hosts, they may also survive in other, even little-related, animals.

Survivals in shrimp culture vary according to the phase. Bacteria and environmental causes are mostly to blame. Three viruses have emerged as problems in *Penaeus vannamei*: Baculovirus penaei which is most acute in hatchery tanks; IHNV virus which has been seen to affect animals in nursery and pond growout stages by influencing

survival and stock performance; and Taura virus which has been seen in many pond systems to have a quick and important influence on survival.

Important disease occurrences in Texas shrimp aquaculture became apparent as commercial and research/demonstration efforts began in the early 1970's. Subsequently there have been regular recurrences in aquaculture units. Baculovirus penaei was the first virus to be studied. It was identified first in Gulf of Mexico shrimp but now its geographical and species distribution is recognized as much larger. Fungal infections in tank systems and bacteria in ponds and tanks were also noted early. Rickettsiae, again a kind of small bacterium that infects cells, caused important problems in Texas ponds as early as 1985. IHHN virus, now with a recognizable global distribution, was seen in Texas as early as 1988 but did not continue as a problem as it has in other aquaculture areas because of control efforts. Infective luminescent bacteria gained notoriety in other areas during the late 1980's as a hatchery disease and were reported from Texas in 1990. Taura virus was devastating to pond stocks of *Penaeus vannamei* in much of Texas in the early part of the 1995 season.

It may help perspective to compare times of discovery-description of important disease agents with occurrences in Texas. This is for perspective only as scientific inferences from reading of events are not defensible. During the 1970's several baculoviruses were discovered globally. I mentioned Baculovirus penaei already; BMN and MBV viruses are Asian. IHHN virus, a parvo virus was recognized in the early 1980's. Another virus similar to IHHN virus was discovered in Asian species in 1985 and given the name HPV. A rickettsial organism infecting Texas shrimp was described in 1989 but the disease agent had caused problems for several years earlier. Around 1993, three important virus diseases were recognized. Taura virus was shown in South America and then Central America to cause important industry-wide disease loss. In Asia white spot virus(es) and yellow head virus were responsible for important industry-wide loss.

Development of monitoring efforts for regulatory compliance relates to improvement. In scientific and technical knowledge as well as certain key events in the progress of aquaculture. During the 1970's initial pond research evaluated several Gulf of Mexico and American Pacific species. Producers and TPWD officials agreed to an inspection process that included declaration of source and examination certificate. The TAMU Extension Fish Disease Laboratory cooperated with producers and TPWD by providing routine microscopical examination of subsamples of all imports during the early years. One aspect of that program which was to have great influence later was an effort to provide seed and brood stocks that were considered free of certain disease agents. About 1990, the USDA supported program for specific pathogen free shrimp was established in Hawaii. Most requirements of TPWD for health certification were subsequently met by reliable examination of source stocks in Hawaii. In addition, a now well-established and well-funded research program was targeting disease problems and cooperating with Texas farms.

How then do shrimp viruses move about? Within stocks viruses transmit vertically from parents within sex products or contamination of eggs from parent at time release from female. Some possible routes of virus introduction include macro- and micro-scale, aquaculture commercial traffic - brooders or seed, non-commercial movements of stock (within system), frozen or live market product, natural migration of animal vectors - terrestrial or aquatic, unnatural movement of contaminated animals or medium, escapes from research, aquaculture, aquatic hobbies, people, equipment and general fomite airborne - aerosols, aquaculture inputs: food and water supply, fish bait, fishing activities, and sabotage.

Subcommittee Reports

a. Crab

* V. Guillory stated that the Subcommittee discussed and planned for the Blue Crab symposium, being held in Maryland. Each state will provide an overview of the status of the blue crab fishery as well as the Subcommittee presenting a paper regarding blue crab. The Subcommittee also discussed and decided to revise the Blue Crab FMP. V. Guillory noted that the Crab Subcommittee want to sponsor a trap identification symposium. The symposium will include presentations regarding the different types of identification systems and development of a trap identification system in the Gulf of Mexico at the next GSMFC meeting. The TCC agreed and directed staff to work with the

Subcommittee regarding planning of this session. **W. Tatum moved to accept the report. The motion was seconded and passed.**

b. Artificial Reef

W. Tatum stated that the Subcommittee has not been able to meet due to adverse weather conditions. will be working with the South Atlantic artificial reef committee to develop a protocol for updating the National Artificial Reef Plan. It was developed by NMFS in 1985 with very little state input. Once an protocol has been developed, a workshop will be convened to modify the document.

c. Data Management

S. Lazauski stated that the ComFIN/RecFIN meetings occurred at the end of February as well as two workshops regarding the Trip Interview Program (TIP) and southeast charterboat issues, respectively. Activities are going well with the ComFIN/RecFIN(SE). The Subcommittee met early this week and discussed various issues. Each state provided an overview of activities of their state's data management activities. There is a draft cooperative agreement for the states to conduct the intercept portion of the MRFSS. There was a discussion regarding electronic communications-capabilities. D. Donaldson gave an overview of the GSMFC home page. Other topics discussed included planning for the next stock assessment workshop and discussion of protocol and guidelines for aging.

d. Anadromous Fish

D. Fruge stated that the Subcommittee discussed the loss of funding for striped bass restoration activities. The Subcommittee has developed a document "Anadromous Fish Restoration Program in the Gulf of Mexico" which was used to support increased funding for striped bass restoration. The subcommittee decided to update this document to help procure funds for this activity. The Subcommittee decided to fund a nuclear DNA genetics study for striped bass to determine the genetic identity of Gulf striped bass. The Gulf Sturgeon Recovery/Management Plan has been completed. There are several issues regarding this document. The Subcommittee agreed to use the results of Dr. Wirgin's study to define management units for Gulf sturgeon with respects to genetics and hatchery activities. The Subcommittee agreed that hatchery introductions or transfers of Gulf sturgeon between genetically distinct populations should be prohibited. In response to the FWS request that there should be reintroduction of Gulf sturgeon in Tampa Bay, Charlotte Harbor, Florida Bay, and Mobile Bay, the Subcommittee believed this activity should not occur unless it has be determined that it is required to prevent the extirpation of a given population. Last year, the Subcommittee sought funding for a project to restore striped bass in the Pascagoula River. This project was not funded. The Subcommittee decided to seek funding for a more-focused temperature study in the Pascagoula River system.

e. Habitat

R. Leard reported for chairman David Ruple that the Subcommittee met in December 1995. At this meeting, the group discussed a variety of workshops and symposiums which have developed documents regarding habitat. The Subcommittee is in the process of collecting these documents for use by the GSMFC habitat program. Also, the Subcommittee revised and developed the goals and objectives of the habitat program for the GSMFC. One of the major activities the Subcommittee wants to be involved with includes setting up a workshop or series of workshops with regulatory and permitting personnel to discuss these issues. The Subcommittee is also interested in developing a Gulf-wide habitat protection and enhancement plan but are going to delay further action on this item until a later time. The Subcommittee requested that a habitat specialist be added to the technical task forces that develop the FMPs. W. Tatum made a motion to place a habitat specialist be added to the technical task forces that develop the FMPs. P. Hammerschmidt noted that there could be a potential problem with having different personnel on the various task forces. There needs to be consistent ways of accessing habitat and with different people on the various task forces, this could cause some problem. It was suggested that the Habitat Subcommittee, as a whole, review the habitat sections of the FMPs to insure consistent handling of this issue. Considering these comments, W. Tatum withdrew the motion.

L. Simpson stated that Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) has a Habitat Protection Advisory Committee. Via this Committee, discussions and recommendations are made regarding states activities concerning habitat. As the group discussed these issue more, the Committee realized that this particular issue was a state issue. Therefore, the Committee moved to establish a joint GMFMC/GSMFC committee to review the GMFMC

aquaculture policy and develop recommendations regarding this policy. This panel would develop a direction and plan on how to deal with some of these habitat issues. After a lengthy discussion, the TCC asked staff to contact GMFMC and get a clearer idea of what the Council wanted.

f. SEAMAP

* W. Tatum stated that the 1996 Marine Directory is published and will be distributed to interested personnel. The GSMFC is in the process of developing a Home Page. SEAMAP will have information on this page and will be linked with other web pages from the various Gulf States. SEAMAP will receive 50% of FY96 allocations. It is anticipated that the remainder of the funds will be released at some later date but this situation is not very clear. So far, the GSMFC has received their funding and received their January 1 start date. W. Tatum stated that Judy Sherbino of NMFS was instrumental in getting this accomplished and commended her for her diligence. In regards to chlorophyll sampling, NMFS has replaced one sampling technique for another (spectrophometry vs. fluorometry). Louisiana has been comparing the two methods and results indicate that there are some significant differences between methods. **W. Tatum, on behalf of the Subcommittee, moved that NMFS conduct both chlorophyll sampling methods, if financially possible and encourage LDWF to continue their comparison activities. Also, NMFS and LDWF personnel need to discuss the results with each other and keep the Subcommittee updated.** The motion was passed. The status of NOAA fleet is very similar to the funding status. However, whatever happens, the NMFS will be able to continue its survey operations. The Red drum aerial survey was conducted from Sept 18 - Dec 2. Due to weather, there was a limited number of sampling days. The biomass estimates (1995) are lower than 1987 estimates, however, this may be due to the reduced number of days. The NMFS is in process of procuring a contract to conduct the mark/recapture phase of this project.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

APPROVED BY:
JKW
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

**LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE (LEC)
MINUTES
March 20, 1996
Brownsville, Texas**

Jerry Waller, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The following were in attendance:

Members

Terry Bakker, MDWFP, Biloxi, MS
Perry Joyner, FMP, Tallahassee, FL
Dick Livingston, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL (*proxy for S. Horn*)
Larry Matherne, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA (*proxy for Louisiana*)
Bill Robinson, TPWD, Austin, TX
Jerry Waller, ADCNR/MRD, Dauphin Island, AL

Others

Charles F. Anderson, Zapata Protein (USA), Inc., Cameron, LA
Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL
Pryor Bailey, Zapata Protein (USA), Inc., Moss Point, MS
Dan Furlong, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Roy Gonzalez, TPWD, Brownsville, TX
Jack King, TPWD, Austin, TX
Skip Lazauski, ADCNR/MRD, Gulf Shores, AL
David McKinney, NOAA/NMFS Enforcement, Silver Spring, MD
Corky Perret, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
David Rose, MDWFP, Biloxi, MS
Tom Shuler, NMFS, Carriere, MS

Staff

Larry B. Simpson, Executive Director, Ocean Springs, MS
Ronald R. Lukens, Assistant Director, Ocean Springs, MS
Richard L. Leard, Program Coordinator, Ocean Springs
Cynthia B. Yocom, Staff Assistant, Ocean Springs, MS

Opening Remarks

Jerry Waller, Chairman, asked members to remain focused in their purpose, to take advantage of the forum given, and provide more input in future agenda items. The floor was then given to Dick Livingston who presented a plaque of appreciation to retiring officer Bill Robinson. The entire committee thanked Robinson for his work with the LEC and wished him well on his retirement.

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as presented.

Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held October 25, 1995, in Mobile, Alabama, were adopted as presented.

State Reports

Alabama - Jerry Waller reported that Alabama's new net issue law is in place and includes limited entry provisions. The crab fishery in Alabama continues to be plagued with conflicts among user groups. The ADCNR is aggressively pursuing a solution to crab trap identification problems. Limited entry and reduction in the number of traps are two other aspects of the fishery that must be addressed. Landings in this fishery remain constant; however, catch per

unit of effort is down. In conclusion, Waller noted continuing monetary obstacles that lead to shortages of personnel and equipment.

Florida - Perry Joyner noted that Florida's buy-back program is complete, and the state is implementing a retraining program for displaced fishermen. No gill nets are allowed in Florida; only seines and cast nets are allowed. Approximately 150-200 direct arrests have been made in association with the gill net ban. Joyner noted Florida's special products license that is required for any catch above recreational limits. In a shrimp net ruling, fishermen cannot use a net over a 60' open mesh. Nets can be connected with a sled, but they must have a T.E.D. Joyner noted that Florida, too, is experiencing financial binds within the law enforcement division.

Mississippi - Terry Bakker reported on Mississippi's proposed legislation on gill nets. The legislation proposes time and area limits. At night, gill net fishermen must be 1/4 mile offshore, and during the day, they must be 1/2 mile offshore. The legislation also proposes time limits including 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on certain days of the week and 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. on the other days. Bakker stated portions of the proposed legislation would be difficult to enforce. In the crab fishery, Bakker noted that no crab traps are allowed north of the CSX railroad bridge, and recreational crab fishermen are limited to six traps per household. He further noted a proposal to ban all pot crab fishing north of the Intercoastal Waterway in Mississippi. In an MOU with the Gulf Islands National Seashore, Mississippi will enforce regulations banning commercial fishing within 1 mile of the barrier islands. It is not clear at this point whether violations will be federal or state.

Louisiana - Larry Matherne reported on legislation that would ban the use of gill nets in saltwater. Use would be limited and then phased out over a two year period. Income and resident requirements' criteria will have to be met before licenses are issued. The legislation is being challenged in federal and state court. Louisiana is proposing limited entry into the crab fishery along with attends to limit crab traps. The LDWF in conjunction with the state health department is working on the time/temperature matrix for the oyster fishery. A balance between health issues and commercial fishery interests is being sought.

Texas - Bill Robinson introduced Assistant Commander Jack King who may be replacing him as Texas' representative on the committee. Robinson also introduced Captain Roy Gonzalez who is an officer at the Brownsville port of entry. Robinson noted the huge amount of fish coming over the border from Mexico, and invited the committee to visit the TPWD check point. Texas is seven months into their limited entry program for bay and bait shrimpers which now seems to be working smoothly. Over the last month or so, Robinson's office has been in the process of simplifying and clarifying regulations. Austin has asked for a 25% reduction in laws to remove redundancy. The remaining, improved regulations will be up for adoption in May. Emphasis in Texas has been on regulation of aquatic products, license sales, and wholesale and origination checks. A new licensing effort is underway that utilizes the use of the magnetic strip already in place on the Texas driver's license. Machines are being installed statewide and will be completely online in May that will allow the issuance of a fishing license by swiping driver's licenses to obtain appropriate information. Due to the recent retirement incentive given in the department, enforcement personnel are down by approximately 86 game warden officers which means years of experience are also being lost.

NMFS Report

Dave McKinney, NMFS Chief of Enforcement (Washington, D.C.), was introduced by Dick Livingston. Livingston reported that a priority for the NMFS is implementing the ITQ system for red snappers. This effort has been delayed due to budget complications and furloughs. The partial red snapper season is expected to close at the end of the month. The NMFS has requested additional personnel for the Gulf including additional agents in Brownsville and Corpus Christi, Texas; Carriere, Mississippi; and Louisiana.

Vessel Documentation Procedures

Bill Robinson reported a bonded company in Houston has received a contract from the Coast Guard to process vessel documentation applications. When the Coast Guard receives an application for vessel documentation, the applicant package is sent to the contracting center for processing along with a Coast Guard stamped postcard stating receipt of the application. This postcard along with a letter from the processing center stating receipt of necessary

documents is now being used as proof of application for state applications toward commercial fishing licenses. State agencies have been guaranteed by the Coast Guard that they will be notified if any subsequent changes are made on an application.

ISSC Activity

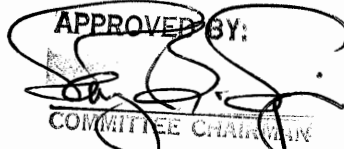
At the 1995 ISSC annual meeting, the time/temperature matrix was adopted, and the Gulf States have progress in formulating plans to address the matrix. David Rose gave a presentation on Mississippi's efforts to implement these regulations. The MDWFP endorses the regulations proposed by NSSP Manual as a much needed step toward uniform consumer protection. The MDWFP supports refrigeration requirements of interstate shipment of oysters; level three (water temperature = 75° to 84°F) time to refrigeration at 12 hours; time to refrigeration is to apply to processors, shippers, and dealers as well as harvesters; and time to refrigeration from time of first harvest allowed (sunrise).

Jerry Waller reported that the Tagging Committee is working on standardization and will include appropriate tags for oysters that are designated for raw consumption. The next meeting of the ISSC will be held in August in Colorado Springs. Waller encouraged participation by the Gulf States and noted the need for enforcement representation on the Executive Board and Tagging Committee.

Consistency of Regulations

Rick Leard reported that the LEC's recommendation for the Commission to support adoption of federal regulations on bag and size limits by all Gulf States in the commercial and recreational red snapper fishery was approved at the October Commission Business Session. As this is an ongoing action for the LEC, Jerry Waller asked the committee to review other areas where consistency among states may be appropriate.

There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

APPROVED BY:

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

**STATE-FEDERAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
Thursday, March 21, 1996
Brownsville, Texas**

Chairman Larry Simpson called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. The following members and others were present:

Members

Walter Tatum, ADCNR, MRD, Gulf Shores, AL
Ed Conklin, FDEP, Tallahassee, FL
Corky Perret, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Tom VanDevender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Gene McCarty, TPWD, Austin, TX
Columbus Brown, USFWS, Atlanta, GA
Dan Furlong, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Larry Simpson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Staff

Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Rick Leard, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Madeleine Travis, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Others

Pryor Bailey, Zapata Protein (USA) Inc., Moss Point, MS
Jerry Mambretti, TPWD, Port Arthur, TX
John Roussel, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL
Paul Hammerschmidt, TPWD, Austin, TX
Doug Fruge, USFWS, Ocean Springs, MS
Tom McIlwain, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
Buck Sutter, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Leroy Kiffe, Lockport, LA
Conrad Fjetland, USFWS, Albuquerque, NM
Tony Reisinger, TAMU-MAS, San Benito, TX
Wally Wahlquist, USFWS, Atlanta, GA
Skip Lazauski, ADCNR, MRD, Gulf Shores, AL
Jerry Waller, ADCNR, LED, Dauphin Island, AL
Deyaun Boudreaux, TSA

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as presented.

Approval of Minutes

Walter Tatum moved and Gene McCarty seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on October 26, 1995 in Mobile, Alabama be approved as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Menhaden Advisory Committee Report

J. Mambretti reported that the preliminary forecast by the Beaufort Lab for the 1996 Gulf menhaden season would be 515,000 metric tons. The predictions by Louisiana also fall in that range.

The Menhaden Advisory Committee (MAC) approved sending a letter to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Beaufort Lab to see if it would be feasible to develop a stock assessment for the years 1993

through 1996. This assessment would examine the effects an expanded season has on the overall stock. Results would be reported to the MAC at the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) Annual meeting in New Orleans in October.

The MAC requested that L. Simpson write to NMFS concerning the current status and future plans for the menhaden fishery under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). The menhaden industry is now at a category three and there is speculation this could be changed to a category two. The letter should review the different classifications for the fishery and assure the fishery is not affected by any changes in the categories.

The impact of the hypoxic zone on fishing was discussed. J. Smith of NMFS Beaufort Lab has looked into the distribution of the menhaden fleet during last season in an attempt to see how the hypoxic zone off the Louisiana coast may be affecting the fishery. C. Anderson of Zapata discussed the usefulness of the Global Information System (GIS) being used by their boats in Louisiana and the possibility of the information being useful for the research.

There was a call for further review of state data to determine what information is available to be shared and incorporated as trend indicators and in stock assessments. This item will be discussed at the meeting in October in New Orleans.

J. Smith of NMFS Beaufort Lab discussed a pamphlet which has been developed on the Atlantic coast to educate the public on the menhaden fishery, the impact of fishing on stocks, the limited bycatch, and fishery management terms. He encouraged the Gulf states to develop a similar pamphlet and have it be distributed by the states. This matter will be discussed further in New Orleans in October.

There was general discussion on the extended season. It was noted that many fleets are not fishing the additional weeks.

Status of LJF FMPs

R. Leard reported that the Striped Mullet FMP is complete and copies are available from GSMFC.

R. Leard reported that the Spotted Seatrout FMP biological section is complete, as is the section dealing with state and federal laws, policies and regulations. Each state is completing a separate stock assessment and this information will be integrated to produce a regional stock assessment. A TTF and SAT meeting has been set for April 10 - 12.

R. Leard reported that the Blue Crab TTF met in Angleton, Texas and has begun revision of the Blue Crab FMP. In addition to revising the FMP, the TCC Crab Subcommittee is working on a paper to be presented at the Blue Crab Symposium in Baltimore, MD in April.

An organizational meeting of the Flounder TTF will be held toward the end of April.

Status of Age and Growth Workshop

R. Leard reported that Mike Murphy will be responsible for developing the Age and Growth Workshop. There will be two workshops; one will focus on those who have been actively involved in age and growth work. This group will use existing literature and their knowledge of the techniques now in use to create a training manual. M. Murphy suggested several names for the first workshop and these include Doug Devries from Panama City NMFS lab, Chuck Wilson and Bruce Thompson from LSU, Bob Colura from Texas, Tut Warren from Gulf Coast Research Lab in Mississippi, Jim Cowan from the University of South Alabama and Steve Stuttlemeyer from Auburn University and others. The first workshop will probably be held in St. Petersburg in late June 1996 with completion of the manual hopefully by mid fall, 1996. The second workshop will bring together individuals from the states, other labs, universities, etc. for hands-on training of technicians and biologists in the best techniques for aging specific fish. This second workshop hopefully will be held before the end of 1996.

Report on 1996 Stock Assessment Training Workshop

R. Lukens reported that the next Stock Assessment Training Workshop will be the fourth in the series. This workshop will cover fine tuning Virtual Population Assessment (VPA). In conjunction with the mackerel Stock Assessment meeting being held in Miami, J. Shepherd will meet with J. Powers, V. Restrepo, and M. Murphy to work out details on structure of next Stock Assessment Training Workshop, who will instruct, etc. These workshops have been considered a great success by those participating and it has been suggested that a new group be trained next year. R. Lukens stated that in the future, a curriculum would be developed. T. McIlwain of NMFS encouraged all states to participate in the training program since stock assessments have become very complex.

RecFIN/ ComFIN Update

R. Lukens reported on the RecFIN/ComFIN meeting which was held the last week of February in New Orleans. The Trip Interview Program (TIP) workshop resulted in the recommendation that the program focus on commercial sampling trips, the types of data needed, and also a method to track this information through the years.

The ComFIN meeting dealt with the problem of collection of commercial data and recommended a process similar to the SEAMAP concept.

A workshop was held at the end of the RecFIN Business meeting at the request of the NMFS to explore the apparent increase in harvest of red snapper in the charterboat fishery during the 1993-94 season in comparison to the 1992 season. The Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistical Survey (MRFSS) staff was asked to review their statistics for those years and other data was compiled. It was concluded that nothing presented at the workshop refutes the data provided by MRFSS that indicates a large increase in effort and harvest of red snapper in the charterboat fleet from 1992 to the 1993-94 season.

R. Lukens reported that a proposal has been presented to NMFS that the states of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and the west coast of Florida conduct the intercepts for MRFSS under the RecFIN program, and that GSMFC serve as the program administrator and coordinator. NMFS responded with a request for budget figures. These figures will be forwarded to GSMFC by each state and compiled. The proposed target date for beginning this program is January 1997, with 1996 being the transition year. Hopefully funding will be available from NMFS for transition meetings and training to facilitate a smooth conversion to GSMFC prior to January 1997. Congress has appropriated \$2.9 million to be divided equally between GSMFC, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), and Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC). GSMFC will use a portion of this funding to implement the survey.

Discussion of Section 306, Magnuson Act Amendments

L. Simpson stated that there appeared to be a need for clarification of the jurisdiction and authority of the states with regard to actions in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) when there is no federal FMP. GSMFC, ASMFC, and PSMFC have worked together and jointly recommended, in the absence of federal management, state law should prevail in the EEZ. In certain instances where there is a federal FMP, and as long as state management measures were not inconsistent, as reviewed by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC), those regulations would be adhered to in the EEZ. In the last session of Congress, this language was included in the amendment to the Magnuson Act for the state of Alaska only.

On a recent trip to Washington, D.C., L. Simpson was asked by a senate staffer to circulate a new draft for section 306 of the Magnuson Act for comment. Many of the concerns of the three commissions, the council, etc. are addressed in this new draft. This information was distributed by L. Simpson to as many commercial and recreational associations as possible, however, there is no way of knowing their response. He was, however, optimistic that some of the issues the commission feels need to be addressed will be included in any subsequently passed Magnuson Act Amendments.

There was lengthy discussion on the needs and requirements for FMPs in the EEZ. It appears there is some question among certain members of Congress on the need for addressing this problem in the Gulf of Mexico. Their reluctance seems to be the appearance that more authority is given to the states. It was concluded that the Commission staff has explored all avenues to bring the issue to their attention, but the decision has been made and there would be no advantage to pursuing the topic further at this time. The individual states may wish to attempt procuring more favorable language.

Other Business

W. Tatum reported that there has been an effort to include pompano in the gamefish listing of fishes in Alabama.

D. Boudreaux of the Texas Shrimp Association submitted a TSA bulletin for inclusion in the minutes of the meeting.

C. Brown reported that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has initiated the National Hunting and Fishing Survey for 1996.

L. Kiffe requested information on the cost of turtle enforcement.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:03 a.m.

Texas Shrimp Association

P.O. Box 1020 • 126 West Cleveland • Aransas Pass, Texas 78336 • (512) 758-5024

Notice of Board of Directors Meeting

FIRST QUARTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MARRIOTT BAYFRONT HOTEL - NUECES ROOM
900 N. SHORELINE BOULEVARD
CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS
MARCH 7, 1996 - 10:00 AM - 4:30 PM

*Board Meetings are open to the membership

Notice to TSA Membership Industry Meeting

Membership Legal/Research Discussion/Position
on
Sea Turtle Conservation Measures
Marriott Bayfront Hotel - Nueces Room
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Anyone who has recommendations please try and get them to me prior to the meeting. I have received verbal recommendations, which we are now preparing outlines on for review and discussion.

Remember we are dealing with the Endangered Species Act and must deal with science as the supporting rationale. Mr. Walsh will respond to questions of legality and Dr. Gallaway will respond to questions requiring supporting scientific data.

1996 TSA Officers/Directors

Officers

President	Julius Collins
Vice President	Craig Wallis
Secretary/Treasurer	Chris Gala
Past President	Jimmy Russell

Directors

Harris Lasseigne, Julius Collins, Charles Burnell, Jimmy Russell, Jack Carinhas Jr., Jack Collins, Jorge Gonzalez, Jr., Margie Smith, Pepe Cuevas, Red Sagnes, Walter Zimmerman, Harley Londrie, Jeff Zimmerman, Neil Yeamans, Joe Buckmaster, Sydney Herndon, Joe Villers, David Johnson, Craig Wallis, Pete Aparicio, Vernon Bates, Jr., Isabel Gore, Chris Gala, Dennis Henderson, Kenny Vandergriff, Sonny Bosworth, Robert Sanchez, Louis Lapeyre, Bill Zimmerman, Danny Duzich and Ronald Herndon

Agenda

FIRST QUARTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MARCH 7, 1996
10:00 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.

- I. 10:00 A.M. Call to Order
- II. 10:00 A.M. - 10:15 A.M.
Dr. Robert Stickney, New Director of Texas A&M Sea Grant College Program
- III. Qualification of Directors
- IV. Approval of Agenda
- V. Approval of Minutes January 23, 1996 Meeting
- VI. Administrative
 - A. Association Financial Report - February 29, 1996
 - B. Review of Financial Status Legal/Research Escrow
 - C. Convention Review
- VII. Environmental Issues
- VIII. Other Business
- Recess --- Lunch (on your own)
1:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.
"TSA" Membership Legal/Research Discussion/Position
 - A. Legal Review: Bud Walsh, Davis Wright Tremaine
 - B. Research Review: Dr. Benny Gallaway, LGL Ecological Research
- 1) Review of the Proposed Shrimp Industry Sea Turtle Conservation Plan
- 2) Review of the NMFS Proposed Shrimp Fishery--Sea Turtle Conservation Areas - NMFS February 16th
- 3) Industry Comments Item 1 and 2
- 4) Industry -- Recommendations/Options/Position
- IX. Board Directive/Motion -- Sea Turtle Conservation Measures
- X. Adjourn

Galveston Court

12/95 - Final arguments were submitted in the two domestic shrimp-turtle lawsuits filed by CMC and NFI/TSA.

2/96 - Judge Kent has ruled on the merits against all claims made by CMC, and denied the procedural claim by TSA/NFI.

The hearing on Earth Island's motions is scheduled for March 8th.

US Court of International Trade

Since 1989, Section 609 of PL 101-162 has required shrimp imports to be embargoed unless the Secretary of State certifies on May 1 of each year that the exporting nation has TED requirements for shrimp trawlers "comparable" to those in the US. When section 609 was passed, the State Department interpreted it to apply to 14 nations in the Caribbean area extending from Mexico to Brazil. Earth Island Institute and other groups filed a lawsuit challenging this interpretation.

12/29/95 - US Court of International Trade has issued an interim order declaring that US officials have improperly limited the geographical scope of the US shrimp embargo program to protect sea turtles. The court said the embargo program should apply to all nations exporting shrimp to the United States, not just to the 14 nations in the wider Caribbean area, and directed them to-- "...prohibit not later than May 1, 1996 the importation of shrimp or products of shrimp where harvested in the wild with commercial technology which may affect adversely those species ... [loggerhead, Kemp's ridley, leatherback, green and hawksbill...].

Several claims by Earth Island were rejected by the Court.

Status: The Justice Department postponed a decision on appealing the court order imposing a shrimp embargo until February 26th.

State Department officials may adopt new paperwork requirements for all shrimp imports to avoid illegal transshipment after May 1st. US TED experts will visit within the next two weeks India, Indonesia, Thailand, Guyana, Venezuela and Trinidad to discuss TED compliance.

Comparison Sea Turtle Conservation Industry -vs- NMFS

Industry

LGL/TSA Proposed Sea Turtle Conservation Zone "STCZ" for the Gulf of Mexico

The following is the Shrimp Industry Proposal for sea turtle conservation measures that was submitted in 1995 for Proposed Rulemaking Comments in the Federal Register:

- 1) Establish Sea Turtle Conservation Zone including most bays and parts of bays, seaward to 10 km (6 statute miles) offshore
- 2) Establish the following restrictions for the offshore portion of the STCZ
 - a) Primary trawl gear limited to 100' of headrope, outside hanging to outside hanging
 - b) TED's required in primary fishing gear at all times and places within STCZ
 - c) 15' trynet (no TED required) allowed with door measurements not to exceed 18" x 36"
 - d) Night fishing prohibition to 7 fm or 10 km (whichever is greater) continued for Texas waters
- 3) Require conservation management plan to be filed by other users of the STCZ
- 4) Index "closure threshold" of strandings to abundance, if a weekly point value is compared to the mean for the prior three years, transform data as necessary and take sample variation into account (e.g., does the weekly value exceed the 3-yr mean +2 standard deviations).
- 5) Rescind the TED requirement outside the STCZ

Wilma Anderson brought before the TSA Board a proposal relating to a 60 ft vessel size restriction within the 6 statute miles. The Board rejected the vessel size restriction.

There has been no additions, deletions or revisions to the shrimp industry proposal.

NMFS

Preliminary Proposed Rulemaking -
TEDs - "Shrimp Fishery--Sea Turtle
Conservation Areas (SFSTCA)"
Corpus Christi February 16th

Areas where threat to sea turtles from
shrimping is greatest

- a) Important turtle habitat
- b) High turtle strandings
- c) High shrimping effort

Gulf SFSTCA -- Nearshore waters (beach
out to 10 nm) from Mississippi South
Pass to Rio Grande

- a) Same as in ERP (NMFS
Emergency Response Plan)
- b) Adds southernmost Texas
where adult Kemp's ridley
occur

Atlantic SFSTCA -- Nearshore waters
(beach out to 10 nm) off of Georgia and
South Carolina

- a) Adds South Carolina where
strandings were high and
temporary restrictions were
needed
- b) Removes northern Florida
where strandings were low
and where the State is
restricting shrimping
through Net Ban

Measures to Enhance TED Effectiveness -
Eliminate soft TEDs as approved TED
designs

- a) Effective immediately in the
SFSTCA's
- b) Delayed effective date to
December 31, 1996 elsewhere

Measures to Enhance TED Effectiveness --
Reduce the size of try nets which are
exempt from TED requirement

- a) Try nets with 12 ft or less
headrope length and 15 ft or
less footrope length would
remain exempt from TED
requirement
- b) Larger try nets would
require TEDs to be installed
- c) Effective immediately in the
SFSTCAs
- d) Delayed effective date to
December 31, 1996 elsewhere

Measures to Enhance TED Effectiveness --
Restrict the use of bottom-opening hard
TEDs

- a) Bottom-opening hard TEDs
would not be allowed when

fishing in the SFSTCAs,
rather top-opening hard TEDs
would be required

- b) Bottom-opening hard TEDs
would be allowed when
fishing outside of the
SFSTCAs
- c) Effective immediately in the
SFSTCAs

Texas ** Reduce Heavy Shrimp Trawling
Effort in Nearshore Waters ******

- a) Area in effect: Texas-
Louisiana border to U.S. -
Mexico border, from shore
out to 10 nm
- b) Time in effect: April 21-
July 31 each; approx. 3
weeks before and 3 weeks
after the Texas Closure
- c) Net limits: Fishing only
allowed for vessels with 100
ft or less combined headrope
length on all trawls rigged
- d) Vessel limits: Fishing only
allowed for vessels 60 ft or
less in length
- e) Larger vessels or vessels
with larger nets would be
required to fish further
offshore

Texas ** Reduce Heavy Shrimp Trawling
Effort in Nearshore Waters ******

Effects on effort

- a) No effect on effort
outside of April 21 -
July 31
- b) Effort reduction of
approximately 60% in
Texas nearshore waters,
during 6 affected weeks

Marine Mammal Registration Forms

Compliance with Marine Mammal Protection
Act, as Amended in 1994; Shrimp Trawling
in the Gulf of Mexico.

On December 28, 1995, NMFS published the
final list of fishery categories for
purposes of complying with the 1994
Amendments to the Marine Mammal
Protection Act. 60 Fed. Reg. 67063-90.
In that listing, the Gulf of Mexico
Shrimp Trawl Fishery is a Category III
fishery. Only participants in Category I
and II fisheries need to register and
obtain a valid Authorization Certificate
by February 29, 1996. In the event, a
mortality of injury occurs participants
in Category III must report any
incidental mortality and injury during
fishing to NMFS.

Bycatch

Motion: Brownsville, Texas January 24, 1996, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, passed the following Motion:

Before further restrictions to regulate shrimp trawling in order to reduce bycatch are adopted, Council will review all relevant information, including reduction in bycatch from previous regulations and other sources, results from ecological modeling research and outside reviews of the red snapper stock assessment.

Analysis of this information will be included in the draft bycatch amendment/SEIS for Council consideration. The intent of the Council was that this include analysis of all issues in the advisory panel motion. It is anticipated that the draft will be completed in May 1996.

Ecological Model Research (Predator - Prey): It is anticipated that the Final Research Report for the offshore fishery will be completed March 1996. A request has been made by the Gulf Council for MARFIN funding to develop an Ecological Model for the inshore fishery to assess the effects of bycatch reduction.

Review of the offshore model results indicate that reducing finfish in shrimp trawls will increase finfish biomass, but will decrease shrimp biomass: a) a 1% reduction of finfish in shrimp trawls will have a 1% negative impact on shrimp biomass, b) a 25% reduction will have a 6% negative impact on shrimp biomass and c) a 50% reduction will have a 11% negative impact on shrimp biomass.

Because of bycatch reduction in shrimp trawls, finfish populations will spiral upward. As the shrimp species diminish from fishing/natural mortalities and conclude their yearly life span, food source availability to the ever increasing finfish population will diminish. Large fish will then switch to juvenile finfish as the alternative food source.

Scenario: The shrimp fishery review of the preliminary research for the offshore fishery --- There is a major concern that impacts on the shrimp

biomass relating to reduction in finfish bycatch and the shrimp loss from bycatch devices will result in a severe economic impact on the shrimp fishery. Achievement of increased finfish biomass will not be maintained as the juveniles become part of the food chain for the larger fish.

Review/Relevant Information, Other Sources, Stock Assessment: Enclosed is a briefing by Dr. Gallaway, Research Consultant addressing - Finfish Bycatch in the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery -- Problem or Non-Problem.

**Texas Closure to Remain
at
200 Miles**

The 1996 cooperative seasonal closure to shrimping off Texas will continue to be a full closure of the EEZ

**Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management
Council Meeting**

March 11-14, 1996 - Hawk's Cay Resort, Mile Marker 61, Duck Key, Florida

TSA Annual Convention

April 18-20, 1996 - Raddison Resort, 500 Padre Boulevard, South Padre, Texas

Registration and information on the convention will be mailed shortly.

SEC. 304. ACTION BY THE SECRETARY

* * *

(f) FISHERIES EXTENDING BEYOND THE AUTHORITY OF A COUNCIL.--

(1)(A) Except as provided in paragraph (3), if any fishery extends beyond the geographical area of authority of a Council, the Secretary may--

(i) designate which Council shall prepare the fishery management plan for such fishery and any amendment to such plan;

(ii) require that the plan and amendment be prepared jointly by the Councils concerned, in which case the plan or amendment may not be submitted to the Secretary unless it is approved by a majority of the voting members, present and voting, of each Council concerned;

(iii) identify the fishery as one that should be managed by States in coordination with the appropriate Marine Fisheries Commission; or

(iv) identify the fishery as one that should be managed by the appropriate State or States.

(B) The Secretary shall promulgate regulations setting out standards and procedures for identifying fisheries under subparagraph (1)(A)(iii) and (iv). Factors to be considered in identifying such fisheries shall include the proportion of the stocks of fish located within State boundaries, within the EEZ, and seaward of the EEZ; the proportion of fishing effort in those locations; the migratory patterns of the stocks of fish; the State registry of vessels participating in the fishery; the capacity and willingness of an entity to manage the fishery; the adequacy of a Commission plan or State regulatory program(s) to manage the fishery; and the goal of eliminating duplicated effort in managing the fishery. After these regulations have been promulgated, the Secretary shall not approve fishery management plans for fisheries so identified, and shall withdraw approval from any existing plans for such fisheries.

(2) The Secretary shall establish the boundaries between the geographical areas of authority of adjacent Councils.

(3)(A) The Secretary shall have authority over any highly migratory species fishery....

* * *

SEC. 306. STATE JURISDICTION

(a) IN GENERAL.--

(1) Except as provided in subsection (b), nothing in this Act shall be construed as extending or diminishing the jurisdiction or authority of any State within its boundaries.

(2) * * *

(3) A State may regulate a fishing vessel outside the boundaries of the State, and may regulate the landing within the State of fish taken from the EEZ, in the following circumstances:

(A) where the fishing vessel is registered under the law of that State, and (i) there is no fishery management plan in place for the fishery; or (ii) the State's laws and regulations are consistent with the relevant fishery management plan implemented under this Act;

(B) where the relevant fishery management plan implemented under this Act defers management of the fishery to a single State; or

(C) where the Secretary has identified a fishery under section 304(f)(3)(A)(iv) as appropriate for management by a single State.

For purposes of this paragraph, "registered under the law of that State" means that the owner, captain, or vessel holds a fishing license, or other document that is a prerequisite to participating in a fishery, issued by the State; the vessel is numbered by the State in accordance with chapter 123 of title 46, United States Code; or the documentation of the vessel under chapter 121 of title 46, United States Code, identifies the vessel's homeport as located in the State.

(b) EXCEPTION.--

(1) If the Secretary finds, after notice and an opportunity for a hearing in accordance with section 554 of title 5, United States Code, that--

(A) a fishery, which is covered by a fishery management plan implemented under this Act, should not be identified under section 304(f)(1)(A)(iii) or (iv); and

(B) any State has taken any action, or omitted to take any action, the results of which will substantially and adversely affect the carrying out of such fishery management plan;

the Secretary shall promptly notify such State and the appropriate Council of such finding and of his intention to regulate the applicable fishery within the boundaries of such State (other than its internal waters), pursuant to such fishery management plan and the regulations promulgated to implement such plan.

(2) If the Secretary, pursuant to this subsection, assumes responsibility for the regulation of any fishery, the State involved may at any time thereafter apply to the Secretary for reinstatement of its authority over such fishery. If the Secretary finds that the reasons for which he assumed such regulation no longer prevail, he shall promptly terminate such regulation.

(c) EXCEPTION REGARDING FOREIGN FISH PROCESSING IN INTERNAL WATERS.--

(1) A foreign fishing vessel may engage in fish processing within the internal waters of a State if, and only if--

(A) the vessel is qualified for purposes of this paragraph pursuant to paragraph (4)(C);

(B) the owner or operator of the vessel applies to the Governor of the State for, and (subject to paragraph (2)) is granted, permission for the vessel to engage in such processing and the application specifies the species to be processed; and

(C) the owner or operator of the vessel submits to the appropriate Council and the Secretary, in a manner prescribed by the Secretary, periodic reports on the tonnage of fish received from vessels of the United States and the locations from which such fish were harvested.

(2) The Governor of a State may not grant permission for a foreign fishing vessel to engage in fish processing under paragraph (1)--

(A) for a fishery which occurs in the waters of more than one State or in the exclusive economic zone, except after--

(i) consulting with the appropriate Council and Marine Fisheries Commission, and

(ii) considering any comments received from the Governor of any other State where the fishery occurs; and

(B) if the Governor determines that fish processors within the State have adequate capacity, and will utilize such capacity, to process all of the United States harvested fish from the fishery concerned that are landed in the State.

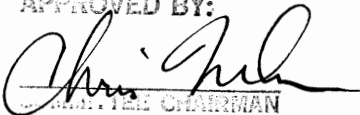
(3) Nothing in this subsection may be construed as relieving a foreign fishing vessel from the duty to comply with all applicable Federal and State laws while operating within the internal waters of a State incident to permission obtained under paragraph (1)(B).

(4) For purposes of this subsection--

(A) The term "fish processing" includes, in addition to processing, the performance of any other activity relating to fishing, including, but not limited to, preparation, supply, storage, refrigeration, or transportation.

(B) The phrase "internal waters of a State" means all waters within the boundaries of a State except those seaward of the baseline from which the territorial sea is measured.

(C) A foreign fishing vessel shall be treated as qualified for purposes of paragraph (1) if the foreign nation under which it is flagged will be a party to (i) a governing international fishery agreement or (ii) a treaty described in section 201(b) of this Act (16 U.S.C. 1821(b)) during the time the vessel will engage in the fish processing for which permission is sought under paragraph (1)(B).



 COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

**COMMISSION BUSINESS MEETING
MINUTES
March 21, 1996
Brownsville, Texas**

Chairman Corky Perret called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. He noted that a quorum was present. He reviewed pertinent rules and regulations regarding the appropriate meeting procedures.

The following Commissioners and/or proxies were present:

Commissioners

Ed Conklin, FDEP, Tallahassee, FL
 Walter Tatum, ADCNR/MRD, Gulf Shores, AL (proxy for James Martin)
 Gene McCarty, TPWD, Austin, TX (proxy for Andrew Sansom)
 Corky Perret, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
 Leroy Kiffe, GSMFC, Lockport, LA
 Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS (proxy for E. Glade Woods)

Staff

Larry Simpson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
 Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
 Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
 Richard Leard, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
 Nancy Marcellus, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
 Ginny Herring, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Others

Dan Furlong, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
 Columbus Brown, USFWS, Atlanta, GA
 Buck Sutter, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
 Doug Fruge, USFWS, Ocean Springs, MS
 John Roussel, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
 Tom McIlwain, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
 Paul Hammerschmidt, TPWD, Austin, TX
 Jerry Waller, ADCNR/MRD, Dauphin Island, AL
 Tony Reisinger, TX A&M/MAS, San Benito, TX
 Deyann Boudreaux, TX Shrimp ASSN, Port Isabel, TX

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted with the following changes: Delete report from Commercial Fisheries Advisory Committee; add discussion of position announcement for Interjurisdictional Fisheries Program Coordinator; add a video presentation on TEDs and bycatch; and, add information regarding Commission's new Home Page.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the October 19, 1995 meeting were approved as presented.

NMFS/Southeast Regional Office (SERO) Report

D. Furlong reported on behalf of the NMFS/SERO. He reported on the status of NMFS budget which has been impacted by four (4) Continuing Resolutions (CRs). He distributed information giving the dates of each CR, the various legislative authorities that provided funds, and the amount provided NMFS's SERO and SEC. He reported that they were currently operating under a 5th CR that went into effect March 16 - March 22. He stated that the first three CRs were based on the FY 95 budget, as of CR#4 dated January 27 - March 15, 1996, they have reached the budget mark that

they will receive if the President and the Congress can agree. Prior to CR#4, they were anticipating receiving \$13 million less. The lack of a budget along with legislation requiring a reduction of Federal positions by 280,000 government wide, hampered NMFS reorganization. They now feel that they will not have program or personnel cuts in the SERO or SEC. NMFS leadership is still uneasy and will not proceed with reorganization until they have a full year budget in place. At that time five (5) new headquarter offices will be established to address NMFS goals. There will be an office of habitat; protected species; sustainable fisheries; operations and management information; and, science director's office.

D. Furlong provided written information regarding NMFS proposed budgets for FY 96 and FY 97. He pointed out that if approved, the FY 96 budget would provide an additional \$11.3 million for NMFS and FY 97 would provide an additional \$24 million. NMFS finds itself with additional funds but has not been able to increase personnel as desired. In the SER several programs have been reduced in FY 96. Those receiving cuts are MARFIN; SEAMAP; Informational Technology; and, Interjurisdictional Fisheries Program. Programs that will receive increases are the Fishery Management Council; Marine Mammal Implementation Act; and, The Endangered Species Act Recovery Plans.

D. Furlong reported on the status of the Marine Recreational Survey Contract Award. Due to delays caused by the federal government furlough and protest received by contractors who did not receive the contract award, the office of GAO has delayed awarding the contract until an investigation is done regarding the protest. Work is continuing into 1996 with the 1995 contractor.

In regards to regulatory reform, D. Furlong stated that the National Performance Review mandates a reduction of federal personnel and requires a reduction of regulatory burden on U. S. citizens. This has required NMFS to look at their regulations and to consolidate, delete or redefine in an effort to reduce regulatory burden. A decision has been made to withdraw support of the Stone Crab and Spiny Lobster FMP. They are essentially turning these managements over to the States, in this case the State of Florida. Other efforts include consolidating 15 to 16 FMPs into a single document. D. Furlong is not sure how these efforts will affect the Fishery Management Councils. L. Simpson and T. McIlwain indicated that the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council was concerned, particularly about the Stone Crab FMP. They stated that the fishery did involve fishing in federal waters. The SERO felt that since the majority of the fishery was only off the State of Florida, it was appropriate to apply regulatory reduction in this area.

D. Furlong reported that the Fishery Information Network M.O.U. was currently in the Office of the General Counsel. M.O.U.'s are reviewed within the agency to address legal concerns regarding whether or not the agency has the authority to commit resources and whether or not they have the authority to do that which the M.O.U. calls for. The attorney who is reviewing the FIN M.O.U. is concerned about certain citations that refer to the Magnuson Act and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act. NMFS/SERO is currently reviewing the language and the specific citations and tying this information into the M.O.U. for the General Counsel. He anticipates that this should be completed and the M.O.U. signed in about a week.

D. Furlong reported that certain proposals are being made regarding TEDs. It is proposed that soft TEDs be eliminated; that certain try-nets be required to use a TED; that a critical area be identified (specifically from the Mississippi River south to the Rio Grande and the coast of Georgia and South Carolina); and, that a hard down shooter be used in the critical areas. L. Kiffe asked why the try-net proposal would impact nets with a 12 foot head rope? D. Furlong unsure as to the size, but stated that these try-nets are considered to be a problem and jeopardize turtles. C. Perret stated that it did not make sense to put a TED in a try-net with a 12 foot head rope. Because a TED would not fit and it would make more sense to put them in larger try-nets. He feels that this will create problems for fishermen if not reconsidered. W. Tatum stated that Commissioner Chris Nelson had discussed the critical area with Dr. Kemmerer and asked that the area be reconsidered, specifically the area just west of the Mississippi River, since there was not a problem there. D. Furlong stated that Dr. Kemmerer had discussed Mr. Nelson's concern with the Galveston Laboratory, he did not know what the outcome would be.

D. Furlong reported that the Gulf Council is currently addressing issues dealing with amendment 9 to the MFMCA. This amendment is trying to develop a bycatch reduction effort that reduces the take of red snapper in the

shrimp fishery. The specific criteria of amendment 9 is a 50% reduction in bycatch; 3% shrimp loss; and, 10% increase in current gear cost. He provided a 12 minute video that showed much of the current research being done to accomplish bycatch reduction. The video showed three (3) potential designs for bycatch reduction devices. Following this presentation, L. Kiffe questioned the accuracy of the amount of red snapper taken by shrimp trawls. He asked Dan to find out where this information came from and to let him know.

Law Enforcement Committee (LEC)

J. Waller reported that the LEC met on Wednesday, March 20, 1996. He reported that Captain Bill Robinson of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will be retiring. He pointed out that in addition to Captain Robinson's retirement, they have lost personnel in Florida and Louisiana within the past several years. These retirements represent over 90 years of experience in law enforcement and they will be missed in the law enforcement community. C. Perret directed L. Simpson to write a letter of congratulations and appreciation to Captain Robinson.

The LEC received reports from the various States. Texas reported that by May 1996 they would reduce current regulations by 25 percent in an effort to revise and clarify them. Mississippi and Louisiana reported a move toward limiting or banning gill nets. Alabama now has legislation in place which limits entry into the gill net fishery. Florida reported that the net buy back program is complete and they are moving forward with training programs for displaced fishermen.

The LEC discussed the upcoming ISSC meeting to be held in Colorado Springs in August 1996. LEC members will attend and are preparing to provide input into tagging standardization of oysters. They will also address concerns dealing with overboard discharge into shellfish harvesting areas; problems with interpretations by various states of the ISSC Manual; and, the implementation of the time/temperature matrix approved by the ISSC.

USFWS Region 4 Office Report

C. Brown reported on behalf of USFWS Region 4. In regards to the current budget status, he reported that FWS is currently operating under a continuing resolution that expires the end of the week. He anticipates another continuing resolution that will remain throughout FY96. FY96 funding levels are similar to FY95 budgets. He stated that the FY97 budget looked promising. The President's proposed budget provides a \$4.4 million increase for fishery programs nationwide. Of that amount, \$1 million will be for fishery health programs and \$3.4 million will be for recreational fishery programs. Of the funds for recreational fisheries, \$1.3 million will be spent in the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico fisheries in support of the Fishery Councils. The type of support FWS will provide will be to expand stocking and evaluation programs; monitor depleted populations; execute cooperative habitat restoration; and, coordinate and manage tagging data base. The target species will be striped bass, Atlantic salmon and sturgeon.

The FY97 budget includes provisions to continue support of hatcheries that have been previously identified for FY96 support. He reported that in the Southeast Region two (2) hatcheries have been transferred to States. Five (5) hatcheries remain on the transfer/closure list. Attempts have been made to maintain production but budget restraints have required transitional reductions. He explained that Wallop-Breaux funds are still available for hatcheries previously identified for transfer/closure.

C. Brown reported that Noreen Clough, Regional Director has expedited the implementation of the ecosystem approach in the Southeast Region. Like NMFS the FWS is addressing numerous changes that include regulatory reform, reinvention of government as well as the ecosystem approach. Guidelines for implementation were issued on February 29, 1996 and will become effective March 31. Under the ecosystem approach management will be accomplished in geographic clusters with full supervision for all field stations within a single geographic cluster being under an assistant regional director. He identified the Assistant Regional Directors that will be responsible in the various Gulf States and surrounding areas. There will be no changes in supervision of law enforcement officers. Certain allowances will be made in regards to important ongoing programs. In fisheries, all field stations and fishery research offices will continue to report to C. Brown. These provisions are being made because of the region-wide and nation-wide responsibilities and activities of these offices. This will provide continuity in FWS interface with the Gulf and Atlantic fishery organizations.

Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) Report

C. Perret reported that the TCC met on March 20, 1996. He stated that the TCC recommended that the TCC should act as a clearing house for toxic blooms in the Gulf of Mexico. When a bloom occurs in a state's jurisdiction, they should contact the GSMFC who would disseminate the information to interested persons. It was suggested that the information could be placed on the GSMFC home page. G. McCarty motioned to approve the recommendation. T. Van Devender seconded. The motion passed.

TCC Subcommittee provided reports of their activities. Reports were received from the following subcommittees: Crab; Artificial Reef; Anadromous Fish; Habitat; Data Management; and, SEAMAP. The Crab Subcommittee requested approval to sponsor a trap identification symposium. The symposium will include presentations regarding the different types of identification systems and development of a trap identification system for the Gulf of Mexico. W. Tatum motioned to approve the symposium. G. McCarty seconded. The motion passed.

C. Perret reported that the Habitat Subcommittee had developed objectives for a GSMFC habitat program. L. Simpson reported on the GMFMC's Habitat Protection Committee. He advised that the Council's committee had met last week. Members represented were from the various Gulf States, TNRCC, EPA, COE, NMFS and USFWS. They formulated two recommendations. The first identified problems as they have developed and exist within the aquaculture/mariculture industry in Texas. The second recommendation were proposed solutions to the problems. It became clear to the Council's participants that these issues were not within the Council's jurisdiction but within the States jurisdiction. Because of this, the committee tabled further action. Instead they recommended that the Council establish an aquaculture/mariculture policy review panel composed of members of the Gulf States, USFWS and NMFS. They further charged that the Executive Director of the Commission be chairman. L. Simpson requested input from the Commissioners regarding the make-up of this new committee. He asked if it would be appropriate to have the Commission's Habitat Committee members serve on the Council's committee. C. Perret clarified that the Council's committee is being established to review and advise on the current Council policy. W. Tatum stated that the Council did not feel qualified to address aquaculture issues therefore is establishing this committee to seek expert advice from individuals within the Gulf States, etc. He suggested that each State appoint an expert on aquaculture. D. Boudreaux stated that experts were available on the Gulf of Mexico Program's Aquaculture Committee. She stated that the Council hoped to make aquaculture more compatible with fisheries. There was some confusion as to what the Council wanted the States and Commission to do. T. McIlwain gave some background of the Council action. He stated that the Council viewed the Commission as a vehicle upon which to draw information. D. Boudreaux was concerned about the introduction of disease, etc. into shrimp stocks of the Gulf of Mexico. She hoped that when policy was formulated that input from existing resources would be utilized. E. Conklin motioned to participate in helping the Council establish a aquaculture/mariculture committee and to help modify policy in the EEZ after determining exactly what was required. In addition he requested that each State Director appoint a member to the new committee. L. Kiffe seconded. G. McCarty amended motion to require that the new committee revise Commission policy instead of modifying Council policy. L. Simpson stated that Commission policy is in place but will need to be updated. The motion passed.

State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee (S-FFMC) Report

Because the S-FFMC had met just prior to this session, L. Simpson did not give a detailed report of their discussions (see minutes). He did however note, that the Jerry Mambretti from Texas was current chairman of the Menhaden Advisory Committee. The MAC is working on using fishery-independent data to forecast the season, an education pamphlet and reviewing current stock assessments.

L. Simpson directed the Commissioners to an overview and update on the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Management Program provided by R. Leard. As stated, all attending this meeting had already heard an update. J. Roussel asked how the ASMFC FMP processed worked. E. Conklin stated that ASMFC process was similar to the GMFMC. They used Advisory Panel, Management Boards and Technical Committees. The Advisory Panels and Technical Committees submit draft proposals to the Management Board. The Management Board consist of higher level public and state employees representing the State. The Commissioners actually consider recommendations from the Management Board. Once adopted, it is up to each State to come into compliance. There is certain flexibility built

into the various FMPs. The ASMFC is experiencing problems with this process. It sometimes takes a very long time for each State to come into compliance. In some instances, a State has challenged the FMP.

R. Lukens stated that he would like to see a routine procedure where an FMP would undergo a regular revision and/or amendment process when changes occur in the fishery or when a re-evaluation may be necessary. L. Simpson stated that in fact an annual report is done on the active FMPs and although no written policy is in place, an active FMP will be revised every five years. This has worked well in the past.

J. Roussel thought that it would be beneficial if fishermen (both recreational and commercial) were somehow made aware of the existence of IJF FMPs. He would like to see them involved in the process. E. Conklin agreed with J. Roussel but does not see how this will change. He stated that the FMPs are written for State and Federal guidance. D. Donaldson stated that this kind of information could be made available on the Internet in particular on the GSMFC home page.

D. Donaldson provided an overview and an update on RecFIN/ComFIN. He provided historical information about the development of these programs dating to 1980s and 1990s. RecFIN and ComFIN address State and Federal fishery managers concern for the need of coordinated collection of marine recreational and commercial fisheries data. NMFS in conjunction with the States, Regional Councils and Commissions initiated development of a cooperative State-Federal Program in 1992 for RecFIN and 1994 for ComFIN. The programs include examination of total information needs; coordination of integration of existing data collection programs; development of alternate survey designs; and, development of a comprehensive data management and retrieval system to provide information to managers. Initially the RecFIN Programs was supported by inkind contributions by participating agencies. Current funding is being provided by NMFS through a cooperative agreement with the GSMFC. RecFIN and ComFIN Committees have been established and have met numerous times to discuss issues and problems associated with the collection of marine recreational and commercial data, as well as establish procedures and protocols for the programs. As part of the full implementation of the programs, the States, through the GSMFC have developed a strategy for the Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey (MRFSS) that provides a detailed description of how the States envision the MRFSS in the Gulf of Mexico to function. Implementation is based on using existing State monitoring programs to provide data. It is scheduled to be implemented in January 1997.

State Directors' Reports

Texas - G. McCarty reported that Texas is currently going through what they call a regulation sunset. It similar to what the Federal government is undergoing with the National Performance Review but they have a deadline. If the deadline is met - if regulations have not been revised or readopted - they will no longer be in effect. The TPWD has already reduced redundancy and clarified the intent of fisheries regulations by 25 percent. They are still working on shrimp and oyster regulations. A part of the process to accomplish these goals have included public hearings. Eleven public hearings have been held, over 1,500 people have provided information regarding additional regulations - no reductions were proposed.

G. McCarty stated that the TPWD is revamping their public hearing process in an effort to remove the perception that decisions are made prior to the hearing. The department has completed proposed regulations for flounder and they are out for public review. They have proposed a reduced bag limit for the recreational fishery; an increase in minimum size; and, a possession limit for commercial fishermen. Other regulatory efforts involve blue crab. The department is concerned with problems with the blue crab stock and other issues impacting the fishery including a lack of a license and concerns with trap tagging.

The TPWD is continuing an early retirement incentive program through September 1, 1997. G. McCarty reported that the menhaden industry in Texas gained a new corporation - Gulf Protein. Activities in the Texas legislatures will include interim subcommittee workshops to be held during the summer. Aquaculture and mariculture workshops will be of major importance and will guide the department in their efforts in these areas.

Louisiana - J. Roussel reported that Louisiana had a good shrimp season with a 7 percent increase in production for brown and white shrimp. In regards to the oyster fishery, they are currently addressing two major issues. Coastal restoration efforts have caused conflicts with the oyster leasing system. The LDWF is working with the Department of Natural Resources and lease holders to resolve some of the problems. J. Roussel stated that the coastal restoration efforts will have the long-term benefit that will enhancing the fishery but will unfortunately impact the fishery adversely for a short period of time. The LDWF is administering a compensation program for fishermen who have been impacted on public tonging reefs in Sabine Lake.

Most recent activities of the LDWF have dealt with the recently passed gill net legislation. On the last seven (7) regular meetings and two (2) special meetings of the departments Commission, implementation of the gill net legislation has been addressed. There are currently two court cases pending, one in the State court and one in the Federal court. In the Federal case the judge has issued a temporary injunction to block enforcement of some of the provisions of the act. Specifically, the provision requiring a permit to fish in the EEZ; the weekend closure provision; and, some of the qualifying criteria for participating in the commercial rod and reel fishery. The State court has held a full trial hearing but no ruling has been issued.

Another issue of concern within the LDWF is the Louisiana Offshore Oil Port (LOOP) which became operational in the early 1980s. The department has been involved in extensive environmental monitoring of this facility for many years. There is now an effort underway to reduce this monitoring program. The LDWF has not been under contract to do this monitoring since January 1996. Although LSU is doing some environmental monitoring, it has not been as extensive as the program done by LDWF and there remains some concerns as to whether or not the extensive program should continue.

Mississippi - T. Van Devender reported that G. Woods and T. Gollott were currently in Jackson, MS while the Mississippi legislature was in session. T. Van Devender reported that the Mississippi Marine Resource Commission recently enacted boating and safety legislation. There was quite a lot of response and protest from the public which resulted in the Commission repealing the legislation. Other problems addressed by the Commission include gill net legislation. The Commission will meet on March 26 to revisit this issue. The public seems to want additional restrictions imposed in the fishery.

T. Van Devender reported that although the MDMR has not in the past received any of the tideland funds that accrue from rents that the State receives from the casinos it is anticipated that this will change. Approximately \$3 to \$4 million dollars will be collected annually. The MDMR will receive 50 percent of these funds. Some of the funds will be used for such projects as mapping grass beds around the barrier islands; conducting studies of the effects of trawling in the grass beds; and, monitoring artificial reefs in Mississippi waters.

He reported that crab landings are down in Mississippi. The department is looking into possibly reducing traps for recreational and commercial fishermen. He stated that H. Perry and the GSMFC Crab Subcommittee are studying recruitment problems, etc.

Other projects being accomplished and maintained in Mississippi include work with Stennis Space Center on side-scan sonar, mapping of oyster reefs in the western sound; a new tide rips project south of the barrier islands; continued fishery assessment and monitoring activities; continued cobia tagging programs; and, support of the Bonne Carre project.

Alabama - W. Tatum reported that Alabama continues to work with blue crab concerns. He is glad that the GSMFCs Crab Subcommittee will be addressing some of the problems being experienced in this fishery at the next meeting. The gill net emergency issues are moving along successfully although there is some concern regarding the catch of one year old mullet in the gill net fishery. He feels that this has been caused by the demand for mullet from the State of Florida since their gill net ban. This is also evident when you look at the January and February landing of mullet which is three (3) times higher than the last ten year average. Alabama has based its conservation management on age

three and higher fish. There is some concern regarding age one and two fish so the department is closely monitoring the situation to see what management measures may be necessary.

W. Tatum stated that the ADCNR were dissatisfied with the split of Wallop-Breaux funds between fresh and salt water resources. They developed a survey to address the problem. The survey was successful since they were able to increase the amount of funds they were receiving from 12 percent to 23 percent. He offered to share Alabama's formula with other States who have experienced the same dissatisfaction with the split.

W. Tatum reported that the department was conducting a study on spotted seatrout. It should be complete in October 1996 and a final assessment should be available in early 1997. His agency is also compiling information regarding pompano as a gamefish. He requested other States present to share any information they may already have.

Florida - E. Conklin reported that the State of Florida is also in the middle of a legislative session. He reported that FDEP is also undergoing a gubernatorial request to reduce regulations by 50 percent. They have been somewhat successful but the majority of the industry and legislators do not want too much reduction. The Florida Marine Fisheries Commission is currently regulating species that had not before been regulated such as African pompano, flounder, sheepheads and triple tail. The constitutional net ban continues to be cause concern. There has already been one hundred fifty cases of violation of the gill net ban. Even though cases are difficult to make the violators are often able to plea bargain and/or judges are extremely lenient. There continues to be a substantial amount of violations.

Revenues from saltwater recreational fishing licenses in the State of Florida have remained steady although the State continues to experience a loss in commercial license revenues. He reported that the legislature is seriously contemplating an aquaculture bill which will consolidate every kind of aquaculture permit and place it under the authority of the Division of Marine Resources. As a point of interest, E. Conklin reported that more West Indian manatees had been recorded in Florida waters than ever before - over 2,400, which is conservative. Unfortunately they have discovered fifty-three (53) dead manatees in southeast Florida in the last ten (10) days. All were large animals suffering from a respiratory illness - not cold stress.

Federal Legislative Issues

L. Simpson discussed the Emergency Fishery Funds status, specifically Section (d) which deals with grants to commercial fishermen. He stated that as a result of several natural disasters impacting commercial fisheries, the Secretary of Commerce allocated \$65 million to persons engaged in commercial fisheries who have suffered an uninsured loss. The Commission was involved in meetings with persons responsible for implementing these funds. L. Simpson held meetings with the State Directors to discuss administering funds. NMFS will administer the funds and procedures to implement the program will be published in the Federal Register shortly. L. Simpson stated that it was his understanding that an amendment to Section (d) has been proposed. This amendment would not only provide grants to persons but also to entities to directly benefit commercial fisheries. This would allow State agencies to provide such assistance as planting shells to restore fishing beds. B. Sutter stated that Mike Grable, NMFS, Silver Springs, MD would be running the program. He was unaware of any proposed amendments at this time. C. Perret requested that L. Simpson find out what the final language would be and to distribute same to the Commissioners.

L. Simpson discussed amendment to Section 404 of Public Law 102-567. He stated that the three Commissions had met with attorney Penny Dalton to discuss legal problems associated with entering into cooperative agreements between the Commission and NMFS. P. Dalton suggested modifying P.L. 102-567 for sole source authority in those instances when the States and the Commissions have been specifically identified by law as being the recipients of Federal funds. The language seems to clearly state that a State or Commission may receive sole-source awards. D. Furlong pointed out that at the various levels of procurement, this public law may not always be followed. L. Simpson pointed out that this type of procurement procedure is not always cost effective. That States and Commissions may at times cost more but that job performance should be considered as an important factor in procurement.

Selection of 1996 Recipient for "Charles H. Lyles Award"

L. Kiffe nominated T. Candies, former law enforcement officer for LDWF who recently retired from service. He served on the GSMFCs LEC for many years and he felt that he would be an excellent selection for the award. The nominations were closed. T. Candies was nominated by acclamation.

Financial Statement

G. Herring presented a financial statement for December 31, 1995. She reported no overages or problems with FY95 budget. C. Perret questioned health care cost. She stated that cost had actually gone down due to Commission policy which encourages employees to purchase health care at a lesser cost to the Commission either through their spouses employment or other means available. She anticipated no problems with the 1995 audit which should be available at the October 1996 meeting.

She also presented a financial statement for February 29, 1996. She reported that SEAMAP and IJF are currently funded at only 50 percent of requested amount. Full funding is anticipated in the near future.

Future Meetings

G. Herring reported that additional bids were solicited from various New Orleans hotels at C. Perrets' suggestion. The best bid was received from Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza and a contract was entered into to hold the October 1996 meeting there.

G. Herring reported that G. Sekul had contacted the Isle of Capri on behalf of the Commission and was able to assist her in negotiating a good room rate. A contract has been signed for the March 1997 meeting.

C. Perret expressed concern with the problem that the March timeframe presents for the legislative members of the Commission. He asked L. Simpson to look a various scenarios that might increase Commissioner attendance.

Publications List

L. Simpson provided a copy of the Commissions current list of publications. C. Perret stated that he was very impressed with a recent brochure put out by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. G. Herring provided copies to the Commissioners and reported that the total cost for these brochures was \$25,000 (\$2.50 each). C. Perret would like a nice brochure but does not want to spend that much.

Home Page

D. Donaldson reported that per instructions at the last meeting construction of a home page for the Commission is complete and should be on the internet soon. He distributed a schematic of what would be on the home page and provided a picture of what it looks like. The home page gives an overview of the Commission and background information. He discussed various hyperlinks that connect to the States that also have a home page as well as other sites that are involved with the Commission and/or marine fisheries. Various information will be provided including Commission ongoing programs such as SEAMAP, Sport Fish Restoration and Interjurisdictional Fisheries Program. Also included will be Annual Reports, draft minutes, publication list as well as future meeting dates. As of January of this year there are 45 million internet users and so he feels that this will be an excellent way to get information from the Commission to these users and others interested parties. L. Simpson stated that he was pleased with D. Donaldson's efforts and stated that his work has been a real asset to the Commission. He looks forward to comments and suggestions from the Commissioners and others involved in Commission activities regarding the home page.

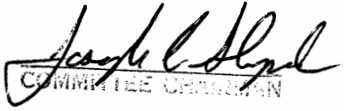
Position Announcement

C. Perret reported that R. Leard would be leaving the Commission employ in mid April. He has taken a position with the GMFMC. C. Perret wished him well.

C. Perret distributed a position announcement for a program coordinator. He stated that a review committee would be established to interview prospective applicants. The committee will consist of the Executive Director, TCC

Chairman and Commission Chairman. Since C. Perret is currently both TCC and Commission Chairman, the Commission Vice Chairman would serve on the committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm.


COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

**STOCK ASSESSMENT TEAM
MINUTES
April 10, 1996
Pensacola, FL**

Joe Shepard, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m. The following were in attendance:

Members

Billy Fuls, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Skip Lazauski, ADCNR/MRD, Gulf Shores, AL
Behzad Mahmoudi, FDEP/FMRI, St. Petersburg, FL
Bob Muller, FDEP/FMRI, St. Petersburg, FL
Mike Murphy, FDEP/FMRI, St. Petersburg, FL
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
James Warren, GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS

Staff

Richard L. Leard, Program Coordinator, Ocean Springs, MS
Cynthia B. Yocom, Staff Assistant, Ocean Springs, MS

Adoption of Agenda

Behzad Mahmoudi moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Skip Lazauski seconded the motion which was unanimously approved.

Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held September 6-7, 1996, in Pensacola, Florida, were reviewed by the SAT. After several corrections were noted, Behzad Mahmoudi moved to approve the minutes. Bob Muller seconded, and the corrected minutes were approved by consensus.

Review of Individual State's Stock Assessments

The SAT agreed to extend the data used in stock assessments through 1995 rather than 1994. Stock assessments will include unweighted SPRs, transitional SPRs, F_{20} , F_{30} , F_{35} , F_{max} , and $F_{.1}$. Projections will use equilibriums.

Bob Muller reported that Florida's stock assessment is approximately one quarter complete, and he anticipates completion in July. Skip Lazauski noted that Alabama's creel survey will be completed in September, and Alabama's portion of the stock assessment will be complete in December. Tut Warren reported that Mississippi's portion of the stock assessment will be complete in July. Billy Fuls reported that Texas' portion of the stock assessment is basically complete and should be final at the end of April. Major tables were distributed to the team for their review. Joe Shephard reported the Louisiana portion of the stock assessment should be complete in July.

The SAT agreed that the next step in completion of the spotted seatrout stock assessment would be to meet and review individual state assessments. Mark Fisher, Joe Powers, and others from the NMFS should be invited to the meeting for their input. At that time, a decision will be made on the feasibility of integrating the assessments to show an overall condition of the fishery in the Gulf of Mexico.

Flounder Stock Assessment

Rick Leard reported that the organizational meeting of the Flounder TTF is scheduled for April 25. Information and available data sets are being gathered by the TTF. He noted the uniqueness of flounder in that more than one species will be addressed in this FMP. Billy Fuls distributed catch-curve data on southern flounder in Texas and noted that southern flounder is the dominant species in Texas. The SAT requested information gathered by the TTF be distributed to them. The SAT will decide necessary action on the flounder stock assessment once they have ascertained what information is available.

Additional Assignments

SAT members should send any available data on flounder to the GSMFC office for full distribution to the SAT and TTF.

Time Table

The next meeting of the SAT is scheduled for late July. Stock assessments for Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida will be reviewed at that time. Availability of flounder data will also be discussed.

Other Business

The SAT noted SEAMAP cruises would be a good source for flounder otoliths. Skip Lazauski moved to request that the SEAMAP Subcommittee add flounder (*Paralichthys*) to SEAMAP collection cruises (collection of otoliths and data on length, weight, and sex) from all Gulf States' waters. Mike Murphy seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Joe Shepard volunteered to draft a letter to the Walter Tatum (SEAMAP Chairman) and Scott Nichols (Program Manager) outlining the request. A draft will be distributed to the SAT for input prior to transmission.

Skip Lazauski voiced concerns that the State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee may have the opinion that state personnel could simply attend the stock assessment workshops and then be expected to go back to their states and perform stock assessments. He noted the necessary training was more extensive than that received in the workshops. Rick Leard noted that it was the original intent of the state directors to train more state personnel to perform stock assessments, and a series of workshops over time will facilitate their instruction in this discipline.

Behzad Mahmoudi noted Rick Leard would be leaving the Commission to accept the position as senior fishery biologist with the Gulf Council. On behalf of the entire SAT, he thanked Rick Leard for his work with the group.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

APPROVED BY:

R. H. B. Blanchet
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

**SPOTTED SEATROUT TECHNICAL
TASK FORCE
MINUTES
April 11, 1996
Pensacola, Florida**

Bob Muller (acting as proxy for Chairman Harry Blanchet) called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. The following were in attendance:

Members

Harry Blanchet, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Jim Duffy, ADCNR/MRD, Gulf Shores, AL
Billy Fuls, TPWD, Rockport, TX (*proxy for Larry McEachron*)
Thomas Hults, Seabrook Seafood, Inc., Kemah, TX
Bob Muller, FMRI, St. Petersburg, FL
Jerald K. Waller, ADCNR/MRD, Dauphin Island, AL
James "Tut" Warren, GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS

Others

Joey Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA

Staff

Rick Leard, Program Coordinator, Ocean Springs, MS
Cindy Yocom, Staff Assistant, Ocean Springs, MS

Adoption of Agenda

Tut Warren moved to accept the agenda as written. The motion was seconded by Jim Duffy and approved by consensus.

Approval of Minutes

After one correction was noted by Bob Muller, Jim Duffy moved to accept the minutes of the meeting held September 7-8, 1995, in Pensacola, Florida. The motion was seconded by Jerry Waller and approved by consensus.

Review of Draft Sections of the Spotted Seatrout FMP

The task force reviewed draft sections of the spotted seatrout FMP for content. Editorial markups will be sent to the GSMFC office as development progresses. The TTF agreed to consistently refer to the species as spotted seatrout throughout the FMP after the classification in section 3.

Section 1, Summary - Staff - to be written just prior to completion.

Section 2, Introduction - Staff - no changes.

Section 3, Description of the Stocks - Staff

Bob Muller will send in some juvenile drawings

3.2.1.2, page 3-2, third paragraph - when averaging use $N=$; put oddities like pugheadedness in this section

3.2.1.2, page 3-3, third paragraph - check for distinct differences in morphology

3.2.2, page 3-4 - change "Growth, Maturation, and Age" to "Age and Growth"

3.2.2, page 3-4 - note the dramatic difference in size between males and females on average by adding a size at age table for males/females for each state

3.2.2.1 - 3.2.2.5 - incorporate data already received from Florida and Texas, incorporate data from the Louisiana FMP, need data from Alabama and Mississippi

3.2.3.1, page 3-5 - check Weinstein and Yerger (1976) - Are protein banding patterns the same as electrophoretic studies or a different method?

3.2.3.2, page 3-6 - add "Maturation" as 3.2.3.2.1

3.2.3.2.1, page 3-6 - insert first paragraph from page 3-7; using the existing studies cited, add a table denoting the season and type of study by state

3.2.3.2.2.3, page 3-7 - delete section title "Duration" altogether; move second and third paragraphs beginning, Miles (1951) to 3.2.3.2.3 (Fecundity) between the second and third paragraphs; check the Miles (1951) cite - is it referring to egg release and fertilization or actual spawning; Adkins *et al.* cite - year needed

3.2.3.2.2.4.2, page 3-8 - change section title to read Effects of Salinity, Temperature, and Photoperiod; move salinity paragraph up to introduce section

3.2.4, page 3-9 - check Overstreet 1983 - does it really say "Although most species do not have detrimental affects to the host..."

3.2.5, page 3-11 - Louisiana to provide more information on the feeding habits of spotted seatrout between 30 mm - 150 mm; check McMichael and Peters (1989) - "larvae at <15 mm"

Section 4, Description of the Habitat of the Stock(s) Comprising the Management Unit - Habitat Representative - need habitat representative - write according to expanded outline agreed upon by the TCC Habitat Subcommittee

Section 5, Fishery Management Jurisdictions, Laws, and Policies Affecting the Stock(s) - All

5.1, page 5-1 - change unique to unusual

5.1.1, page 5-1 - change last sentence to read ...quality of spotted seatrout as seafood.

5.1.1.4, page 5-2 - add Everglades National Park

Table 5.1, page 5-4 - Bob Muller - rulemaking authority wordage for FDEP

5.1.2.2, page 5-6 - second paragraph, add Director of Agriculture

5.4.1.6.4, page 5-14 - Bob Muller - rework second paragraph to include restricted species endorsement

5.4.2, page 5-14 - Alabama's changes will be sent to GSMFC office

5.4.3, page 5-16 - Mississippi - no change

5.4.4, page 5-19 - Louisiana - Harry to check section numbers under legislative authorization

5.4.5, page 5-23 - Texas - no change

Section 6, Description of Fishing Activities Affecting the Stocks - Staff - need Alabama's description of the fishery

Section 7, Description of Processing, Marketing, and Economic Characters of the Fishery - Chuck Adams - Chuck Adams was unable to attend the meeting but reported by correspondence that he has received information from each Gulf state representative concerning the wholesale marketing of spotted seatrout. He has also gathered studies concerning the recreational fishery. Landings data including landings by month, by state, and by gear type along with monthly volume and value are needed. In the event a quick survey can be done, he will need the names of wholesalers for Texas and Louisiana. He has been informed this data is not available in Alabama.

Section 8, Social and Cultural Framework of Domestic Fishermen and Their Communities - Steve Thomas/Cecilia Formichela, University of South Alabama, have agreed to develop this section but were unable to attend the meeting.

Section 9, Management Considerations - Bob Muller - needs input from all

Section 10, Potential Management Measures - All - need drafted input from all

Section 11, Management Recommendations - All - be thinking about

Section 12, Regional Research Priorities and Data Requirements - All - need drafted input from all

Section 13, Review and Monitoring of the Plan - Staff - boilerplate

Section 14, References - All - provide complete references as necessary

Section 15.1 Stock Assessment - incomplete

Discussion of Stock Assessment

Joey Shepard, Chairman of the Stock Assessment Team, presented a brief overview of their meeting held just prior to the task force meeting. The SAT agreed to extend data used in stock assessments through 1995 rather than 1994. Standards provided in each stock assessment will include unweighted SPRs, transitional SPRs, F_{20} , F_{30} , F_{35} , F_{max} , and $F_{.1}$. Projections will use equilibriums. The Texas state stock assessment is basically complete, and all other states except Alabama expects completion by July. Alabama expects completion by December. The next meeting will include review of completed stock assessments and discussion on the feasibility of integrating

the assessments to show an overall condition of the fishery in the Gulf of Mexico. Final completion for incorporation into the FMP is expected in early 1997.

Next Meeting

The next FMP work session is tentatively scheduled for the second full week in August. Work on draft sections will continue.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Note: Harry Blanchet, Chairman of the Spotted Seatrout TTF, arrived as soon as possible from a LDWF Commission Meeting. An informal work session was held Friday, April 12, from 8:30 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. to incorporate his comments into the FMP. Harry Blanchet, Joey Shepard, Billy Fuls, Rick Leard, and Cindy Yocom were in attendance.

APPROVED BY
Michael R. Johnson
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

**FLOUNDER TECHNICAL
TASK FORCE MINUTES
April 25-26, 1996
New Orleans, Louisiana**

The organizational meeting of the Flounder Technical Task Force (TTF) was called to order at 1:04 p.m. by Ron Lukens, Assistant Director for the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC). The following were in attendance:

Members

Chuck Adams, Florida Sea Grant Program, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL
Mike Brainard, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, Biloxi, MS
Steve Hein, Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries, Marine Fisheries Division,
Bourg, LA
Rebecca Hensley, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, Coastal Fisheries Division,
Corpus Christi, TX
Mike Johnson, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, South Florida Regional
Laboratory, Marathon, FL
Jack King, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, Law Enforcement Division, Austin, TX
Mark Van Hoose, Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, Marine
Resources Division, Dauphin Island, AL

Staff

Ronald R. Lukens, Assistant Director, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Cindy Yocom, Staff Assistant, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Introductions

Ron Lukens told the task force to feel free to ask questions at any time during the meeting. He noted that the organizational meeting is an orientation, fact-finding session so that everyone can get comfortable with the GSMFC, the IJF Program and the tasks it entails of them, and where the program fits into the bigger picture of fisheries management in the Gulf region. He asked each participant to introduce themselves and give a little background information.

Ron Lukens has been with the GSMFC since 1987. Prior to the Commission, he worked with the Sea Grant Advisory Service in Biloxi, Mississippi, for approximately three years and had been a biotechnician at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory in Ocean Springs, Mississippi, working primarily on striped bass. Lukens noted the recent loss of the Commission's Interjurisdictional Fisheries Program Coordinator and stated he is happy to assist with the program in the interim.

Cindy Yocom has been with the Commission for eight years, and one of her main duties is to assist with the IJF Program. Another duty is processing all Commission travel, and she will brief task force members on travel guidelines later during the meeting. She noted she had been with the IJF Program since its inception and will provide support to develop the flounder fishery management plan (FMP) throughout its progress.

Rebecca Hensley has been with the Coastal Fisheries Division of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for approximately three years and works in the capacity of a fisheries biologist. She previously worked for the North Carolina Department of Marine Fisheries and had been in Guam for four years prior. She helps in the management of the monitoring programs at the field stations near Corpus Christi, Texas. This is her first experience on an FMP task force.

Chuck Adams is a marine economic specialist with the Florida Sea Grant Program and professor in the Food, Resource, and Economics Department at the University of Florida. He has been with the university for 15 years, 12 of those years as faculty. His background consists of an undergraduate degree in fisheries from Texas A&M. He then moved into the economic arena. He recently completed a MARFIN project that examined economic characteristics of swordfish long lining in the Gulf and South Atlantic and a detailed and comprehensive state-wide survey examining seafood consumption by Florida residents. He spends a great deal of time on economic feasibility analyses for marine aquaculture and is currently looking at various types of molluscan shellfish, hard clams in particular. He recently spent a week in Havana, Cuba, comparing their fisheries management structures as related to the Florida seafood industry in the event the U.S. ever resumes trade. He is currently assisting on the Spotted Seatrout TTF.

Mike Brainard has been with the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources for six years. His work with the department began with the Mississippi Recreational Creel Survey which is now in its ninth year. He has a degree in marine biology, and this is his first experience on an FMP TTF.

Mike Johnson has been with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for three years. He primarily has a fish ecology background and has a degree from the University of Central Florida. He works with a fisheries monitoring program that has field laboratories all over the state and is working on the life history of Gulf flounder. He has recently begun to delve into fisheries management concepts, and this is his first experience with an FMP TTF.

Jack King is with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Enforcement Division. He has been with the agency for 21 years. His first 18½ years were spent with coastal enforcement in Corpus Christi focused on shrimp and commercial finfish fishermen, and in the last two years, he has been involved with state-wide programs such as Operation Game Theft, the Civil Restitution Program, and the Emergency Management Program. His predecessor, Bill Robinson, was assigned to the task force but has since retired. Although this is his first assignment on an FMP TTF, he is familiar with and has attended other GSMFC meetings.

Steve Hein has been with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries for 15 years and is based at the Bourg Field Station where he deals with coastal marine fisheries. One of their ongoing programs is the development of management plans for the state of Louisiana. This is his first assignment to a GSMFC TTF.

Mark Van Hoose has been with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Marine Resource Division for 15 years. He is stationed on Dauphin Island, Alabama, and

is the finfish and oyster biologist for the state. He previously served on the GSMFC's oyster and black drum TTFs.

Adoption of Agenda

Ron Lukens felt the task force would be in a better position to elect a chairman at the close of the meeting and suggested deferring that agenda item. By general concurrence, the agenda was adopted with this change.

Review of the GSMFC

Ron Lukens encouraged any members who have access to the Internet to visit the GSMFC's home page at <http://www.southwind.com/gsmfc> to gain a better understanding of the Commission's background and organization. The idea behind the Commission is roughly similar to that which formulated the federal Councils. The organizational structure of the GSMFC is similar to the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC) and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). The PSMFC was founded in 1942, the ASMFC in 1947, and the GSMFC in 1949. Coastal marine and estuarine resources don't recognize jurisdictional boundaries. Mechanisms to provide opportunities for joint programs and policies addressing common state issues were needed to solve those shared problems. Prior to the late 1970s, the Commission functioned mainly as a focal point for discussion and development of policies and position statements to interact between the states as a unit and with federal agencies, primarily the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Over the last several years, opportunities to develop programs have arisen, and with this development, administrative funds have been acquired to establish a coordinating staff at the GSMFC. Since the late 1970s, the Commission staff has grown from three to nine. There are several distinct programs coordinated through the GSMFC. The State-Federal Fisheries Program was funded as a companion to the Commercial Fisheries Research and Development Act (P.L. 88-309) that provided funding to the states to perform marine fish research and other work. It was also designed to develop interstate fishery management plans, and under this program the Shrimp FMP and original Menhaden FMP were developed. The GSMFC provides the administrative coordination for the Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP) which is a fishery-independent program to collect data on fish and shellfish in the coastal area. The GSMFC has an administrative program through the Fish and Wildlife Service's Sport Fish Restoration Program which covers artificial reef management and development and was integral in the establishment of two data programs, RecFIN and ComFIN. RecFIN and ComFIN were established to coordinate recreational and commercial fishery data programs in the Gulf. The Interjurisdictional Fisheries Program replaced the 88-309 Program and provides the funding to states for fisheries research and data collection and also provides funding to the Commission for the development of fishery management plans for the Gulf region.

The Commission is structured through enabling legislation. Each state in the Gulf passed legislation which allowed them to join into a Compact with the other Gulf States. The Compact was

endorsed through a federal law (Public Law 81-66). The Commission is composed of three members from each of the five Gulf States. The head of the marine resource agency of each state is an *ex-officio* member. This seat is typically occupied by the state's top marine fisheries head such as Gene McCarty in Texas, Corky Perret in Louisiana, Glade Woods in Mississippi, Vernon Minton in Alabama, and Ed Conklin in Florida. The second Commission seat is appointed by each state legislature and is generally a legislator involved in one of that state's natural resource committees. The third Commission seat is a citizen who shall have knowledge of and interest in marine fisheries and is appointed by the governor from a variety of arenas such as commercial, recreational, and environmental interests. Larry B. Simpson is the Executive Director of the Commission, and he takes his general direction from the Commissioners. The Commissioners meet twice a year, once in October and once in March. These meetings generally last four days and have technical meetings early in the week and policy issues midweek. At the end of the week, the Commissioners meet to review progress over the meeting and during the previous six months. Standing committees of the Commission include the State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee, the Technical Coordinating Committee, the Law Enforcement Committee, the Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee, and the Commercial Fisheries Advisory Committee. Under the TCC, there are myriad of species-specific or issue-specific subcommittees such as the TCC Artificial Reef and Habitat Subcommittees. The Commission often addresses hot topics such as alternative management strategies during general sessions held at the March meeting.

Discussion of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Management Program

The Interjurisdictional Fisheries Management Program (IJF) provides direct funding to the Commissions to establish interstate fishery management plans. Through the IJF Act, the states will coordinate with the Commission to develop fishery management plans and will then use their state IJF funding to conduct research and data collection activities as well as enhancing enforcement efforts which will support recommendations of the FMPs. The S-FFMC prioritizes species for FMP development. At this time, spotted seatrout and flounder FMPs are being developed, and the Crab FMP is undergoing revision. The Commission organizes technical task forces (TTF) to develop FMPs. The function of the TTF is to review all relevant technical material pertaining to the species and to develop a draft FMP incorporating a synthesis of current biological, sociological, economic, and other necessary knowledge on the species and fishery as well as management scenarios based on the best scientific information available. A TTF is comprised of five state representatives, a representative each from the Law Enforcement Committee, the TCC Habitat Subcommittee, the Commercial and Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committees, and experts from other disciplines as deemed necessary.

IJF Plan Development and Approval Process

The TTF is the heart of the FMP development process. The TTF coordinates with the Stock Assessment Team and Data Management Subcommittee in the development of a stock assessment which will be incorporated into the FMP. Once the TTF has developed a draft FMP, it is sent to the Technical Coordinating Committee for their review and approval. If the TCC rejects the draft FMP,

it is returned to the TTF for revision as requested. After the TTF has approved the FMP, the S-FFMC reviews it. If they reject the FMP, they may send it back to the TCC and TTF for revision or make the revisions themselves. Once the S-FFMC approves the FMP, it is sent out for public review. After public review, the S-FFMC considers all comments received and either makes revisions, returns the plan to the TCC, or approves the plan and sends it on for Commission action. The full Commission may either accept or reject the FMP. If the draft FMP is rejected, it is returned to the S-FFMC with comments. If the Commission accepts the FMP, it is published and management recommendations are forwarded to the states for their consideration and implementation as they deem appropriate.

Section by Section Discussion and Assignments

Ron Lukens noted the Flounder FMP will be unique in that it will be the first multi species plan and will include both Southern and Gulf flounder. The FMP will focus on the directed fishery but should note other impacted fishes. State representatives noted a data problem; MRFSS data is not collected species specifically and is noted as “flounders” in general. The dominant catch in Florida is Gulf flounder, but the dominant catches in Texas and Mississippi are Southern flounder.

Sections 1 and 2 (Summary and Introduction) will be completed by staff with input from the entire TTF.

Section 3 (Description of the Stock Comprising the Management Unit) will be completed through the coordination of M. Johnson, R. Hensley, and S. Hein.

Section 4 (Description of Essential Habitats) will be completed by D. Ruple. The TTF requested Contaminant Impacts be added as Section 4.4. Impacts from such substances as dioxin and mercury should be discussed, including the quality of water as it impacts the fish and the potential threat to the utilization of the fish.

Section 5 (Fishery Management Jurisdiction, Laws, and Policies Affecting the Stock) will be completed by J. King. A boilerplate of this section through section 5.3 is available; specific state laws affecting flounder stocks will be added.

Section 6 (Description of the Fishery) will be completed by M. Van Hoose. Net ban effects should be included under section 6.1.1. Bycatch occurrences should be included under section 6.3.

Section 7 (Description of Processing, Marketing, and Economic Characteristics of the Fishery) will be completed by C. Adams. Data can be obtained through a quick market channel survey which will include where wholesalers are obtaining flounder, who they are selling it to, how much of the catch remains in the Gulf region, and how much is exported. A consumption survey is available for Florida, and Louisiana has seafood consumption data. A consumption section will be added as section 7.7. Import numbers are difficult to obtain since Customs doesn't have a 10 digit code specified for flounder.

Section 8 (Description of the Economic Characteristics of the Fishery) will also be completed by C. Adams. He will try to have data for both the commercial and recreational sectors and has requested monthly landings by state. There may be a confidentiality problem at the monthly level though. He requested that task force members send him any pertinent economic studies. He also requested a meeting with himself, Steve Thomas, and Ron Lukens to discuss the possibility of a joint survey for sections 7, 8, and 9.

Section 9 (Social and Cultural Framework of Domestic Fishermen and Their Communities) will be completed by S. Thomas. Task force members should send in any available information that would contribute to the section.

Sections 10, 11, and 12 (Management Considerations, Potential Management Measures, and Management Recommendations) will be completed by the entire task force. The stock assessment portion of the plan will be included in section 10.3. Section 11 includes ideas to protect the resource and may address problems such as gig and spear fishing on spawning aggregations of flounder on reefs. Section 12 will have the actual management recommendations. All members should note their ideas for these sections.

Section 13 (Regional Research Priorities and Data Requirements) will be completed by all task force members. Members should note ideas for this section as the FMP develops. One item discussed is gaps in data to document spawning aggregations.

Section 14 (Review and Monitoring of the Plan). This section is basically boilerplate, but the task force has an option to deliberate for a more structured review plan.

Section 15 (References). All references should be in complete form, no abbreviations. Note the format of the Mullet FMP. Each task force member should check references for content. The task force was asked to compile any available literature to provide for a repository at the GSMFC office.

Stock Assessment

Data for a flounder stock assessment should be gathered and sent to the GSMFC office so that it can be forwarded to the Stock Assessment Team. Available data includes some age and growth work from Alabama, and Texas has some data. The lack of data on the fishery should heavily influence the research and data needs section.

Timetable

The next meeting of the Flounder TTF will be scheduled for the week of August 26. Progress and needed action will be discussed.

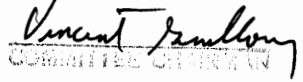
Election of Chairman

Ron Lukens noted that task force meetings are work sessions, and the main job of the Chairperson is to lead the sessions keeping them on track to make sure that progress is made. Most of the organizational workload before and after the meetings will be handled by staff in conjunction with the Chairperson. By unanimous consent, Mike Johnson was elected chairman of the Flounder TTF.

Other Business

Cindy Yocom gave a brief overview of travel guidelines. She noted what receipts are needed to process travel claims and explained procedures regarding rental cars.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned Friday, April 26 at 9:00 a.m.


COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

**CRAB TECHNICAL
TASK FORCE
Conference Call Minutes
Friday, May 3, 1996**

After roll call by the AT&T Conference Call Operator, Chairman Vince Guillory called the conference call to order at 9:00 a.m. The following participated:

Members

Vince Guillory, LDWF, Bourg, LA
Phil Steele, FDEP/FMRI, St. Petersburg, FL
Harriet Perry, USM, IMS/GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS
Tom Wagner, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Steve Heath, ADCNR/MRD, Dauphin Island, AL

Staff

Ron Lukens, Assistant Director, Ocean Springs, MS
Cindy Yocom, Staff Assistant, Ocean Springs, MS

Adoption of the Agenda

Vince Guillory added an agenda item under other business to include discussion of a trip to the GCRL in June to examine fishery independent data. With this addition, the agenda was approved by consensus.

Baltimore Symposium - Status of State Reports

Vince Guillory requested written drafts of state reports as soon as they are complete so that he can incorporate them into the fisheries section of the FMP. Tom Wagner was not sure when the Texas report will be complete, but all other states indicated completion by the end of May. V. Guillory will contact Paul Hammerschmidt in Texas to check the status of the Texas report. Phil Steele informed members that state reports should follow the format of *The Journal of Shellfish Research*. The deadline for submission of symposium proceedings is unknown, has not been announced, but V. Guillory agreed to check for the group. V. Guillory and Harriet Perry are developing the Gulf report. Upon receipt of state reports, they should have it mailed to state representatives for their review by mid-June.

Crab TTF Membership

It was noted that Walter Keithly and Steve Thomas volunteered to assist the task force with economic and social sections, respectively, and Perry Joyner has agreed to represent the law enforcement sector.

Vince Guillory moved Paul Prejean, LDWF, be added to the technical task force. Mr. Prejean worked extensively on Louisiana's Blue Crab Profile and Fishery Management Plan.

In addition, he currently assists with numerous blue crab projects in Louisiana and can contribute statistical expertise in summarizing juvenile independent data. P. Steele seconded the motion which passed with unanimously. Staff noted this request will be forwarded to the S-FFMC for their action.

Harriet Perry requested that Butch Pellegrin, NMFS Pascagoula Laboratory, be invited to task force meetings for his input and expertise in analyses of fishery independent data. She requested a formal letter be sent from the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission inviting him to participate. The Crab TTF agreed his input would contribute significantly to FMP development and approved her request unanimously. Staff noted that Commission funding cannot be used to reimburse federal employees.

The group discussed commercial and recreational representation for the task force, and T. Wagner volunteered to recruit a recreational representative from Texas. Steve Heath offered to enlist a commercial representative from Alabama. P. Steele moved that the Crab TTF accept Wagner and Heath's selections for recreational and commercial representation. H. Perry seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Next Meeting

Harriet Perry asked that the TTF discuss review of the FMP by fishermen at their next meeting. The TTF agreed to add this discussion to the meeting agenda. Two full days should be allotted for the meeting which was tentatively scheduled for the week of August 5.

Recap of Assignments

P. Steele felt in good shape for his sections given the amount of literature available on both species biology and habitat. V. Guillory will send P. Steele life history information. V. Guillory requested staff send him a copy of the 1990 Blue Crab FMP (either E-mail or disk). T. Wagner reported he has received regulations from Florida, Louisiana, Texas, and Alabama. H. Perry reported Mississippi has several new regulations working through the legislature at this time; she will keep him updated. Staff noted that T. Wagner may want to coordinate this section with P. Joyner. The TTF agreed to maintain historical information in the revision. Literature cited should follow the format of the recently published Mullet FMP (full cites, no abbreviations).

Other Business

Vince Guillory noted the need for himself, P. Prejean, H. Perry, S. Heath, and B. Pellegrin to meet at GCRL in early June to examine available fishery independent data. They would need one day to meet, and V. Guillory requested that the Commission fund travel costs for the meeting. Staff indicated funding should be available. V. Guillory and H. Perry will work with staff regarding details.

An updated TTF roster will be sent to members. The roster will include E-mail addresses.

There being no further business, the conference call adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Jon Dodrill
2/20/97

TCC ARTIFICIAL REEF SUBCOMMITTEE
Tuesday, May 7, 1996
Key West, Florida

Walter Tatum, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 8:40 am. The following were in attendance:

Members

Mike Buchanan, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Jan Culbertson, TPWD, Seabrook, TX
Les Dauterive, MMS, New Orleans, LA
Jon Dodrill, FDEP, Tallahassee, FL
Rick Kasprzak, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Walter M. Tatum, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Mark Thompson, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Harold (Wally) Wahlquist, FWS, Atlanta, GA

Others

Craig Lilyestrom, DNER, San Juan, PR
Jerry Smith, Reefball Development Group, Doraville, GA

Staff

Ronald R. Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Nancy K. Marcellus, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Adoption of Agenda

The addition of state/federal reports was added under "other business." R. Lukens mentioned that after approval of the minutes, the Subcommittee consider Les Dauterive's (Minerals Management Service) membership on the Subcommittee.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held August 31, 1995, in Tampa, Florida, were adopted as presented.

* A motion was made by Mike Buchanan to accept Les Dauterive of the Minerals Management Service as a full voting member of the Artificial Reef Subcommittee. The motion was seconded by M. Thompson and passed unanimously.

Status of GSMFC Sport Fish Restoration Administrative Program

R. Lukens reported that the current year's artificial reef activities for the Sport Fish Restoration Program are restricted to the data base activities. Things are not as far along on the data base project due to the inability of the Subcommittee to meet. The data elements need to be

TCC ARTIFICIAL REEF SUBCOMMITTEE

Tuesday, May 7, 1996

Page -2-

reviewed, and then the compilation of that data can be started. Plans are to hire a person to enter that data. Lukens advised that completion of the Materials Criteria Document is behind schedule. Review of the document will be top priority at this meeting.

Lukens also reported that he will be in Atlanta at the end of the month to talk with Bob Cooke and Wally Wahlquist regarding activities for the next year.

Completion of Materials Guidelines Document

The Subcommittee conducted a page by page review of the final draft of the materials guidelines document. As each page was reviewed, changes were incorporated directly to the document. This activity consumed the rest of the day. The document itself will serve as the administrative record of this portion of the meeting.

Election of Officers

Jon Dodrill was elected Chairman for the Subcommittee. Dodrill appointed Mike Buchanan to serve as Vice-Chairman.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Jon W. Dodrill
8/22/96

TCC ARTIFICIAL REEF SUBCOMMITTEE
Tuesday, May 7, 1996
Key West, Florida

Walter Tatum, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 8:40 am. The following were in attendance:

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Les Dauterive, MMS, New Orleans, LA
Jon Dodrill, FDEP, Tallahassee, FL
Rick Kasprzak, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Walter M. Tatum, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Mark Thompson, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Harold (Wally) Wahlquist, FWS, Atlanta, GA

Others

Craig Lilyestrom, DNER, San Juan, PR
Jerry Smith, Reefball Development Group, Doraville, GA

Staff

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Nancy K. Marcellus, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

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TCC ARTIFICIAL REEF SUBCOMMITTEE

Tuesday, May 7, 1996

Page -2-

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Election of Officers

Jon Dodrill was elected Chairman for the Subcommittee. Dodrill appointed Mike Buchanan to serve as Vice-Chairman.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

GSMFC/ASMFC JOINT ARTIFICIAL REEF MEETING
Wednesday, May 8, 1996
Key West, Florida

Mel Bell, Atlantic States Artificial Reef Committee Chairman, called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. The following were in attendance:

Jim Banks, Artificial Reef Program, Palm Beach County, FL
Ken Banks, Artificial Reef Program, Broward County, FL
Larry Beggs, Reefball Development Group, Doraville, GA
Mel Bell, SCDNR, Charleston, SC
Mike Buchanan, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Sue Cocking, Miami Herald Outdoors Writer, Miami, FL
Jan Culbertson, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Les Dauterive, MMS, New Orleans, LA
Jon Dodrill, FDEP, Tallahassee, FL
Robin Dye, Monroe Co. Marine Resources, Monroe County, FL
Bill Figley, New Jersey Fish & Game
Kurtis Gregg, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC
Douglas Gregory, Florida Sea Grant, Key West, FL
John Halas, NOAA/Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, FL
Ben Haskell, Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, FL
Steve Heins, NYS DEC, East Setauket, NY
Bill Horn, FDEP, Tallahassee, FL
John Iliff, NMFS, Miami, FL
Rick Kasprzak, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Craig Lilyestrom, DNER, San Juan, PR
Andrew Loftus, American Sportfishing Association, Washington, DC
Lauri MacLaughlin, NMS, Florida Keys, FL
Mike Meier, VMRC, Newport News, VA
Steve Murphey, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC
DeWitt Myatt, Maryland DNR
Alan Pedigo, Reefball Development Group, Doraville, GA
Bill Price, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD
Don Pybas, Florida Sea Grant, Miami, FL
Gary Reinitz, FWS, Washington, DC
Maryanne Rockett, Looe Key Artificial Reef Association, Looe Key, FL
Karen Rypka, MDMF, Sandwich, MA
Robin Sherman, NOVA Southeastern University
Jerry Smith, Reefball Development Group, Doraville, GA
Richard Sprelian, NOVA Southeastern University
Frank Steimle, NMFS, Sandy Hook, NJ
Walter Tatum, ADCNR/MRD, Gulf Shores, AL
Mark Thompson, NMFS, Panama City, FL
Jeff C. Tinsman, DDFW, Dover, DE

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Jim Vaughan, Palm Beach County, FL
Harold (Wally) Wahlquist, FWS, Atlanta, GA

Staff:

Ronald R. Lukens, Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
Richard Christian, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
Nancy Marcellus, Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

Adoption of Agenda

M. Bell briefly reviewed the agenda for the day. Since state/federal reports were covered in the individual committee meetings on the previous day, they were removed from the agenda. The agenda was adopted with that change.

Introductions

A few moments were taken for each person to introduce themselves and their affiliation.

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Management Plan and Artificial Reefs

J. Halas gave a slide presentation to the committee on projects that have been undertaken in the Keys with respect to artificial reefs. Since the establishment of the Florida Keys Sanctuary (28,000 square miles which wrap around all of the Keys), they have inherited the responsibility for 20 previously permitted reef sites. A variety of materials have been placed on those sites. The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Management Plan does not specifically earmark money for artificial reefs, but plans are to have volunteers access the artificial reefs that are out there, conduct more research, and then determine which direction needs to be taken with regards to artificial reefs within the Sanctuary.

Program Updates

REEF-EX - W. Tatum reported that there is not a lot of REEF-EX activity going on, but there is still interest in the program. Bill Higgins, Defense Logistics Agency, feels that tanks will continue to be available, but may require some pressure from the states. Higgins is also looking toward the use of decommissioned Navy ships, but the issue of PCBs and ships will continue to be significant. NAVSEA is currently conducting research on this issue. Lukens noted that the Gulf Subcommittee is including a section on military hardware in the materials criteria document.

National Recreational Fisheries Conservation Plan - B. Price from NMFS reported that he was hired into his current position in 1995, with the catalyst for the position being the Executive Order signed by President Clinton on June 7, 1995, creating the National Recreational Fisheries Coordination Council. This Coordination Council consists of seven members, one member designated by each of the following Secretaries - Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, Energy, Transportation, and Defense - and one by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Rollie Schmitt, NMFS, and Mollie Beattie, FWS, serve as co-chairs on the Council. Within 12 months the Coordination Council will develop a Recreational Fishery Resources Conservation Plan. There are seventeen agencies involved in the development of the Conservation Plan. The Conservation Plan will establish measurable objectives to conserve and restore aquatic systems that support viable and healthy recreational fishery resources; actions to be taken by the identified federal agencies; a method of ensuring the accountability of such federal agencies; and a comprehensive mechanism to evaluate achievements. The federal agencies' efforts will be evaluated by an outside organization called the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council. This council is appointed by the Secretary of the Interior and consists of CEOs, general managers, and vice-presidents of some Fortune 500 companies. These people took these appointments because they were convinced by Secretary Babbitt that this Council would be effective in formulating and implementing national policy. The Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council will monitor specific federal activities affecting aquatic systems and the recreational fisheries they support; review and evaluate the relationship of federal policies and activities to the status and conditions of recreational fishery resources; and prepare and annual report of its activities, findings, and recommendations for submission to the Coordination Council.

The Plan contains details regarding how federal agencies will operate to promote recreational fisheries. June 6, 1996 is the deadline for completion of the Plan, which will coincide with National Fishing Week. With completion of the Plan, agency specific plans will be due by December. One of the national strategies is to improve access to recreational fishing, and included in that improvement is the use of artificial reefs. The national goal of the Plan is to provide for increased recreational fishing opportunities nationwide through the conservation, restoration, and enhancement of aquatic systems and fish populations, and by increasing fishing access, education and outreach, and partnership opportunities. There are four implementation strategies to achieve the national goal. The first implementation strategy is conserve, enhance, and restore recreational fisheries habitats and fish stocks, emphasizing self-sustaining populations where feasible. The second is develop and maintain recreational fishing facilities and access. Two different success indicators, how federal agencies will be graded by the partnership council, state "New Sites or Increased Capacity of Developed Recreational Fishing Sites: Number of visitors who use the facility for recreational fishing. Facilities include any location on federal land or under federal water with improvements such as artificial reefs, boat ramps, parking areas, fishing piers, or fish cleaning stations that contribute to, create, or enhance recreational fishing opportunities." The Plan also contains agency outputs listing Strategy 2: Outputs for facilities and access - Number of facilities constructed or reconstructed to enhance recreational fishing opportunities (artificial reefs, fishing piers/docks, boat ramps, parking areas, cleaning stations, camp sites, universal access facilities, etc.). With this emphasis, artificial reefs will get a real boost at the national level from

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the agencies represented. NMFS will have as a major agency specific goal the promotion of artificial reefs. The Executive Summary of the National Artificial Reef Plan, states as one of the goals of the original Act, to enhance fishery resources to the maximum extent practical and secondly, to facilitate access and utilization by U.S. recreational and commercial fishermen. The first two goals in the Act that created the National Artificial Reef Plan are completely compatible with the National Recreational Fisheries Conservation Plan.

American Sportfishing Association (ASA) - A. Loftus reported that the sport fishing industry has been involved with artificial reefs for a number of years. The industry people, manufacturers, and retailers do recognize the importance of artificial reefs, the importance of assisting with construction and development, new reef technologies, and evaluation of the reef programs. ASA has also helped fund some reef programs through some of their grant programs. ASA is most directly involved with most of the other programs through the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program (Wallop-Breaux), which relies on an excise tax on selected fishing and related equipment. In the 1950s, when the Sport Fish Restoration Program was originally formed, and later during the 1984 amendments to the establishing legislation, sport fishing industry representatives went to the U.S. Congress in support of proposed taxes on the industry. These taxes are the funds that are apportioned to the states to support the important research, data collection, and management work that they do. It is very important to recognize that it is a user-pay, user-benefit tax. The industries see a long-term financial gain from re-investing in the resources. The primary goal of the American Sportfishing Association is to maintain and foster a healthy, sustainable fishery resource. ASA is committed to the resources and to reef programs, and they want to work together with the state and federal agencies to manage responsible reef programs.

In 1994 there was a major change within the sport fishing industry. Several organizations, one being the Sport Fishing Institute and the other being the American Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Association (AFTMA), merged to create the American Sportfishing Association. The AFTMA was a business oriented agency, while the Sport Fishing Institute was resource oriented. Loftus indicated that the reorganization has progressed well, and work has begun to rejuvenate some of the programs that were originally de-emphasized. When the ASA was created, it was recognized that one of the biggest downfalls in working with state agencies and local businesses was that there were no regional ASA offices around the country, and they did not have the capability to staff and maintain regional or states offices. As a compromise to accommodate those needs and work closer with the local issues, six regional councils were created. The regional councils roughly follow the FWS regions geographically. There is no clear cut distinction between the issues that one of the councils may work on that may have impact on another council across the nation. The two councils that encompass most of the states here are the northeast council and the southeast council. Loftus encouraged all of those present to work with them through these councils. Meetings of these councils are held two to four times a year to work on a variety of issues. The merger of these two organizations also broadened the membership base, so it no longer is just a manufacturing, retail, or business oriented organization, but also resource

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oriented. Loftus again encouraged all those present to take an active role with the ASA and get to know some of the industry members since they are some of their strongest allies.

Report on International Conference - While none of the committee members present attended the International Conference on Artificial Habitats for Fisheries, held in Japan during 1995, the members held a brief discussion regarding that conference and the implications of the prospect that it may again be held outside the United States. This creates difficulties for state and federal agency employees regarding approval and funding for foreign travel.

Report from August 1995 AFS Symposium - Lukens summarized the symposium saying that the main premise of the symposium was to explore the issue of attraction versus production of fish regarding artificial reefs. A secondary premise was the perceived lack of communication between state artificial reef programs and researchers that conduct research projects on artificial reefs or some aspect of resources that are around artificial reefs. The symposium provided participants an opportunity to elevate the issues and to dispel some of the myths surrounding the issues. There is some agreement that the model postulated by Jim Bohnsack, that artificial reefs both attract and produce depending on a number of environmental factors, sufficiently describes the interaction between artificial reefs and associated fauna. A major factor is the life history of associated fish and invertebrates. The big issue is whether habitat for those target species a limiting factor in their survival, expansion, or reproduction. In those cases where overfishing is the most important factor, adding a reef, artificial or otherwise, is not going to do any good. While that does not answer the question, Mel Bell summed it up in his panel remarks saying that we should move on to other issues and cease focusing on attraction versus production, since there does not appear to be a clean cut answer to the question. Artificial reefs are really not very different from natural geologic sites, they are simply comprised of different material. There may be some implications regarding things that are different, like chemical composition or how organisms may or may not attach to it, but basically an artificial reef is a reef site. The focus should be on artificial reefs as habitat rather than as fishing tools. There was general agreement that we should move in that direction.

Lukens also mentioned that he attended a recent meeting in New Orleans of the Minerals Management Service where the use of oil and gas structures as artificial reefs was discussed. There was a question and answer period at the end of that meeting and the issue of attraction versus production was raised. There were about 300 people in attendance from a variety of backgrounds, and Lukens had the opportunity to rebut the misconception that artificial reefs only attract fish, making them easier to deplete. That encounter reinforced the notion that the artificial reef community should be diligent about redirecting concerns about whether artificial reefs attract or produce to being concerned about evaluating artificial reef function on a site specific basis. He emphasized the need to think about this issue before an artificial reef is built. Will a particular reef likely be an attractor or a producer, based on one or more factors that may affect that reef's success?

Another important thing that came out of the meeting was there probably is not as big a gap between the concerns of artificial reef managers and the kinds research projects that are being

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conducted. There was a general feeling that there is consistency between what artificial reef managers want and what the researchers are doing. There was also general agreement that there should be more emphasis on conducting research and data collection projects, not to the exclusion of reef building, but certainly in balance with reef building. Building reefs has been the main priority, with only minor attention given to research. Even less thought has been given to routine monitoring and data collection.

M. Bell mentioned that some time was spent discussing a mechanism for improving communications between the scientific community and researchers and reef managers. Traditionally, one international artificial reef conference has been held every five years where the reef management and research communities meet. Several alternatives were discussed to increase the frequency and quality of interaction between managers and researchers.

Status of USFWS Federal Aid Program - G. Reinitz reported on the notice that was in the *Federal Register* several weeks ago announcing the availability of \$750,000 in administrative funds for the upcoming fiscal year with the deadline for those applications into the Washington office by June 1. Reinitz mentioned that he sits on a panel of six individuals which select projects to receive reverted Federal Aid funds, and that process was completed the week prior to the present meeting. Those recommendations go to Director Mollie Beattie for final approval. Gary Edwards, Assistant Director for Fisheries, is in charge of the reverted funds process, and this is the first year that the National Biological Service did not control the selection process. Reverted funds are difficult to get due to variability in the availability and amount. At this point, Edward's plan is to accept proposals on an annual cycle with emphasis being placed on fishery research projects.

It was too early to predict the 1997 apportionments to the states, but Reinitz was confident that there will be an increase over 1996. Reinitz indicated that the 4.3% gas tax repeal would not affect the Federal Aid program, since the program has never gotten any of the funds from the 4.3% increase when it was enacted.

Reinitz mentioned that Bob Lange is the new Chief of the Division of Federal Aid. He indicated that Lange is trying to introduce more accountability into the program in general. He is hoping to have "transparent budgeting," where everyone is welcome to look at the fiscal disposition of the program.

Lukens asked for clarification about the two million dollars in the administrative fund which was set aside for hatchery transfers. Lukens noted that currently very little of the two million actually went to facilitate those transfers this past year. The projection was that the FWS would, for a three year period of time, withhold funds out of the administrative fund to facilitate that process. Since most of that money did not get used this year, will that money stay in the pot for the hatchery transfers, with additional money being allocated for 1997? Reinitz replied that currently the intent is that the original two million dollars will be dedicated to hatchery transfers, and it is not clear if new administrative monies will be allocated in 1997 or out years for that purpose. Lukens expressed his interest because this artificial reef committee would be eligible to submit a proposal to the administrative fund for the National Plan activity. The problem is there is currently only 750,000 dollars available, and that will make the process extremely competitive.

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W. Wahlquist from the FWS Atlanta regional office provided some comments on future direction. Wahlquist indicated that he, Dale Beaumarriage, and Bob Cooke have been discussing future areas that the states should be looking toward. The two primary areas are inventories/surveys and research. Inventories/surveys are the routine collecting of data, primarily for monitoring purposes. Wahlquist continued saying that research is setting up a hypothesis, and then testing that hypothesis. These are the kind of project areas that the Federal Aid office would like the states to consider when submitting work plans.

Wahlquist added that the FWS is encouraging states to consider using geographic information system (GIS) technology whenever applicable. A case in point is the Florida Marine Research Institute in St. Petersburg which has set up a marine recreational GIS program. They can produce a variety of maps, providing graphic output of the relationship among a number of variables such as catch, habitat, related but competing activities, among a host of others.

Research Projects of Interest - Mel Bell indicated that he would like for the committee members to briefly discuss any ongoing research and monitoring activities. He indicated that he knew of several Atlantic states that have completed or are in the process of conducting research projects, and would like to have them discussed.

B. Figley, New Jersey, indicated that his program had conducted two research projects. In 1993 and 1994, study results indicated that the state contributed about \$25,000 per year to the artificial reef program, which translated into a total of \$ 2.2 million spent annually associated with reef construction offshore New Jersey.

New Jersey also conducted a project in 1991 to monitor fishing and scuba activities on the artificial reefs. The study, which was repeated in 1995, included artificial natural reef locations. The approach of the study is to take a snapshot of the reefs in 1991, again in 1995, and again in 1999. This is a longitudinal study that will allow comparison of the reefs, both from the biological and use perspectives across a number of years. In 1995, bad weather caused fishing effort to decline. That year, overall reef associated catch was 3.8 million pounds, of which 1.1 million pounds were harvested from artificial reefs.

J. Dodrill, Florida, conveyed that Palm Beach County had conducted a socio-economic dive study during the last quarter of 1995, involving a limited analysis of charter dive boat operators in Palm Beach County. That study found that those operators contributed a total of about \$15.5 million dollars to the Palm Beach County economy. About 43% of that was directly attributable to artificial reefs.

Dodrill continued saying that Florida has just completed a study comparing concrete and shredded automobile tires in concrete. It was a 3 years study paid for with waste tire manufacturers tire tipping fees. The results are not yet available.

He indicated that Florida is also involved in a multi-year study of juvenile fish recruitment to artificial reefs, which is now in its second year. That study is assessing the effects of predation and other factors that affect juvenile recruitment.

Dr. Bill Linberg, University of Florida has been studying gag movement and residency on artificial reefs that were deployed about six years ago. He is currently in the process of putting radio telemetry tags on 80 fish at several different reef sites in order to monitor their movements.

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The study reefs have either been unfished or very lightly fished for the entire time period that they have been deployed. He just completed the 5 year study, and a final report will be available in the near future.

J. Culbertson, Texas, indicated that Hal Osborn attended the International Conference on Artificial Habitats for Fisheries held in Japan. He gave a presentation on a study of the charter boat, dive boat, party boat industry as they relate to artificial reefs off Texas. Copies of the report are available upon request. The study was primarily documenting which user groups, in terms of recreational anglers and divers, were using the reefs, including possible commercial and economic benefits.

In 1995 Texas started a project to get preliminary data on fish trapping around artificial reefs. In the study, trap/video units, using standard SEAMAP protocol, were set on the bottom and brought to a safe divers depth. Fish in the trap were tagged and observed to determine mortality. The premise was to evaluate tagging underwater versus tagging on the surface. There was also an attempt to estimate the population based upon tagged versus untagged fish.

K. Gregg, North Carolina, indicated that North Carolina is currently monitoring reef materials. There are 230 individual coordinates for artificial reefs on 38 ocean sites, and to date diver inspections have been conducted on about 50% of the sites to assess condition of the materials. Monitoring on the oceanic sites has been conducted using side scan sonar. Gill net surveys, scheduled for 1997, will be conducted to assess fish populations on seven estuarine artificial reefs. To assess use of artificial reefs off North Carolina, the state has just completed a 2 year oceanic aerial survey that provides the number of boats using particular artificial reefs at the time of the overflight. The survey will probably be repeated in 1998 or 1999. A one year estuarine aerial survey was completed during 1995. Regarding research, North Carolina is currently planning a comparison study to assess stability and durability of a high profile ship versus low profile concrete pipes on the same site.

W. Tatum, Alabama, indicated that in Mobile Bay there is a natural phenomena related to winds and tides that causes low levels of dissolved oxygen. This phenomenon, which has occurred historically, brings about jubilees, during which oxygen starved fish come to the surface and are available for harvest. Two oyster reefs, historically viable, are no longer living as a result of continued low oxygen conditions. Some of the sport fishermen asked the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources/Marine Resources Division if artificial reefs could be built on those old reef sites. Concerned about the real possibility of future low oxygen events in those locations, the Department did not want to place an artificial reef on the bottom. Instead Tatum indicated that they are working with the Department of Transportation to set long concrete pilings, about 18 inches high, around the perimeter of the reef and then place oyster shells inside the pilings, thus bringing the shell 18 inches off the bottom. It is hoped that this approach will rehabilitate the oyster beds and provide fishing opportunities, while avoiding the low oxygen that clings to the bottom. Tatum indicated that they will monitor the locations for the next several years to determine if it works.

M. Bell, South Carolina, reported that their research project to analyze tissue samples for PCBs and heavy metals is nearly complete. He indicated that samples have been taken from invertebrates and fish from various ships and landing craft reefs. Some of the sites have been

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deployed for 20 years or more, while some of them fairly new. The purpose of the project is to determine if PCBs or heavy metals suspected to be associated with ships and vessels are having any impact on the associated organisms. A project entitled NAVSEA is slated to take place in 1997, and will collect PCB and heavy metal data from Navy ships that have been sunk for a number of years. Bell indicated that his program is likely to cooperate with NAVSEA, and the work conducted offshore South Carolina may be useful in that regard. Bell indicated that South Carolina has an ongoing routine monitoring and evaluation program. The program is designed to assess fish assemblages on the reefs, as well as documenting the stability and structural integrity of the materials.

R. Kasprzak, Louisiana, indicated that they have a routine monitoring program using side scan sonar. They are also using hydro-acoustic equipment to monitor fish populations associated with artificial reefs. He indicated that they are attempting to assess the fish populations associated with an oil or gas structure before it is toppled and becomes an artificial reef. A post-toppling assessment will allow a comparison with the pre-toppling assessment to determine if there is any impact as a result of the toppling.

J. Lucy, Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences, indicated that he has completed an economic impact analysis of estuarine and offshore reefs. Lucy also assigned a student to assess fish assemblages on a mid-Atlantic reef off Virginia Beach. The student spent about 18-20 months at one reef site doing a diver point census. Year one of the study was significantly different from year two. It was felt that water temperature was a major contributor to the observed differences. Lucy expressed concern that such large variability can make it difficult to determine what is normal for a given artificial reef.

Lucy indicated that he is conducting an economic assessment of the recreational saltwater fishery in Virginia. A major component of that study is to address some reef issues. Part of the study will be to ask anglers to prioritize Chesapeake Bay monies regarding whether funds should be used for reef enhancement or development, fishing access, research, monitoring, or other subjects. He indicated that that study is nearing completion.

In addition, Lucy's program is conducting a project using anglers to tag fish. Finally, Lucy is starting up a project this year to assess oyster shell reefs relative to the small non-targeted fish that they attract in Chesapeake Bay. The study will assess recruitment, production, and habitat use.

D. Myatt, Maryland, indicated that they have been conducting a biofouling study on various types of substrates in Chesapeake Bay from 1992 through 1995. The report from the study is not yet available.

A. Loftus, ASA, told the committees that on the way to this meeting he had contacted Paul Brouha at the American Fisheries Society (AFS) to find out AFS's position statement on artificial reefs. While looking in the policy manual it was discovered that AFS had no position statement on artificial reefs. He suggested that with the reformulation of the National Plan that the two committees think about developing a policy statement for AFS to adopt. It was suggested that such a request should be submitted through one of the sections, probably the Marine Fish Section of AFS, to be approved by the general membership at the annual meeting. R. Christian suggested

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that Henry Ansley from Georgia may be able to pursue the issue since he is routinely involved with AFS.

Discussion of National Artificial Reef Plan

W. Tatum reported that on March 7, 1996, a planning meeting of the GSMFC Chairman and Vice-chairman, the ASMFC Chairman, Lukens and Christian was held to discuss approaches to amending or revising the National Artificial Reef Plan (Plan). The result of that meeting was a decision to undertake revising the Plan, and additionally to adopt the following goal statement:

To review and revise, as appropriate, the National Artificial Reef Plan.

Minutes of that planning meeting were distributed to the committees and Lukens gave an overview of the meeting. As mentioned, the purpose of the meeting was to decide whether to go forward with an effort to review and revise the Plan, and if so, how to go about accomplishing that goal. It is worth noting that the committees do not have the authority to do this, since the authority for development and adoption of the Plan rests with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), as provided for by the National Fishing Enhancement Act. Lukens pointed out that the committees would not be assuming that authority, but would be volunteering to conduct the exercise in order to provide the results of those efforts to the NMFS with a request that they consider adopting the revision as the official Plan. Assuming that that occurs, the revised Plan would have to go through the public review process, publication in the federal register, and any other administrative requirements of the law.

Lukens stressed that everybody should understand that the small group meeting that was held in Washington in no way subverts the authority of the committees. So, any of the decisions made there are not binding, but rather provide a framework to encourage discussion.

One of the actions taken as a result of the meeting was to draft a letter to Rollie Schmitten, NOAA Assistant Secretary for Fisheries, indicating that the two committees want to take the lead on revising the Plan. The letter also requested that since NMFS has the authority through the Act, that they need to have representatives involved in the planning activity so that concerns from the NMFS perspective, as well as experience and knowledge on behalf of NMFS, would be included in the process. That letter was sent and copies were provided to committee members. A concern regarding the process is the need to involve the Pacific coast. Since it is a national plan it is imperative to provide an opportunity for the Pacific coast to be involved. Artificial reef development along the Pacific coast has been significantly less intense than throughout the Gulf and Atlantic. For that reason, and probably some others, the Pacific states, through the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, have not developed an organizational arrangement similar to the two committees for the GSMFC and the ASMFC. Two individuals from the Pacific coast were contacted, and they indicated an interest in being included in the letter to Schmitten. They also indicated support for the initiative to revise the Plan, and stated that they would like to participate at some level. As of the meeting, a response has not been received from Schmitten.

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Officially, it is not known how the request is going to be received. Unofficially, feelings are fairly positive. Lukens reported on a recent meeting with Rollie Schmitten, Nancy Foster, Bill Fox, and the three Commission directors, during which Schmitten was asked if there would be an interest from the NMFS in reviewing and revising the Plan. Schmitten's response were extremely positive, indicating the possibility of some funding to assist in the process.

There ensued a great deal of discussion regarding the Plan, and the question was asked why should the committees want to undertake the task of reviewing and revising the Plan. It was pointed out that there have been significant developments since the 1985 Plan was adopted. Artificial reef development has increased, state programs have been established, a lot of research has taken place, all of which will likely have some influence on various parts of the Plan. The Plan itself indicates that it should be updated periodically. There was general agreement that there was sufficient justification to go forward with the activity. Having answered the why, focus was then directed at how. There ensued a discussion whether it would be necessary to amend the National Fishing Enhancement Act which authorized the Plan. The discussion resulted in a decision that the possibility of amending the National Fishing Enhancement Act should be a long term goal which should be pursued only if specific benefits to the state programs could result.

The joint committees then determined that the goal statement adopted at the Washington meeting, "To review and revise as appropriate the National Artificial Reef Plan," should be adopted. The implementation process was then discussed, and it was agreed that it is appropriate for the states to take the lead in reviewing and revising the Plan, because over the past 10 years or 11 years the states are the primary entities that have been building and managing artificial reefs. Once the original Plan was finished, there was very little institutional activity within the NMFS related directly to artificial reefs, and the day to day activities of developing and managing artificial reefs was dealt with at the state and local level.

It was suggested that there is a need to start viewing artificial reefs as a habitat issue than a fishing issue, because what artificial reef development is really doing is creating habitat for fish and invertebrates. Regarding the process, it was suggested that the two committees should review the Plan and provide general comments regarding four categories: 1) what is good about the Plan, 2) what needs to be enhanced about the Plan, 3) what no longer needs to be in Plan, and 4) what is not in the Plan that needs to be in the Plan. Work group assignments should be identified and assigned and deadlines for draft products should be established. When all drafting assignments are completed, another joint meeting should be held to compile a first rough draft. That draft should be mailed to a broad group for review and comment. Pertinent comments should be considered, and the draft appropriately amended. Finally, plans should be made to hold a widely attended workshop or summit for final consideration of the Plan and to develop the final draft of the Plan to be sent forward to NMFS for their consideration.

There was general agreement on the proposed process and to look toward the end of 1997 to hold the final workshop to wrap up the activity. This would allow the remainder of 1996 and the majority of 1997 to complete the process as outlined above. Plans are to give people plenty of time to write on the sections, and those not directly involved in the writing plenty of time to review and provide comments.

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Bell noted that Dick Stone was at the Washington meeting. Stone no longer works for the NMFS, but is now working as a private consultant. Because of his involvement in the original plan development, he expressed an interest in working with the committees on the activity.

Bell then gave a brief overview on the proposed activity from his perspective to make sure everybody was clear on the limitations. The National Fishing Enhancement Act of 1984 (PL. 98-623) states national policy for artificial reef development should be:

- To enhance fishery resources
- To facilitate access and utilization by U.S. recreational and commercial fishermen
- To minimize conflicts among competing users
- To minimize environmental risks and risks to personal health
- To be consistent with generally accepted principles of international law and not create unreasonable obstructions to navigation.

To accomplish the purposes of the Act, Congress directed the Secretary of Commerce to develop the Plan, and specifically states that the Plan shall address the following:

- Geographic, hydrographic, geologic, biologic, ecological, economic, and other criteria for siting.
- Design material and other criteria for construction of reefs
- Mechanisms and methodologies for monitoring and compliance
- Mechanisms and methodologies for managing the use of artificial reefs
- Synopsis of existing information on artificial reefs and needs for future research
- Evaluation of alternatives for facilitating the transfer of artificial reef construction materials.

The Plan is divided into sections that basically address all six of the identified requirements. This arrangement sets limits for revision because anything proposed to be done to revise the Plan, must adhere to the guidelines established in the Act. The framework does not preclude the addition of other pertinent information based upon new developments.

The three major functions of the Plan are:

- To provide general guidance for artificial reef development,
- To serve as a guide and technical reference for federal and state agencies and their programs, and
- To encourage and provide guidance for the development of detailed, regional, state, local plans, and site-specific plans.

Bell again stressed the importance of the Act, and reiterated that the joint committee does not have any legal authority to conduct this activity. One reason it is important that the committees should be involved in the activity is because of the increase in interest in artificial reefs as highlighted by FWS, NMFS, and other agencies and organizations. How well artificial reefs

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are doing and how well they are working should be a focus in the coming years. With that increasing interest and focus, there is a likelihood that NMFS or some other group might step forward to amend the Plan. Bell indicated that he would rather see the state program managers take that leadership.

R. Christian indicated that he will prepare an SK proposal to conduct the review and revision of the Plan. The proposal will have three objectives, including:

- Revision of the Plan,
- Updating the profiles data base, and
- Revising the materials criteria document to be compatible with the document that the GSMFC is developing.

Christian noted that the ASMFC will have more responsibility regarding the proposal because of the inclusion of the data base and materials document tasks; consequently, it was agreed that they would submit the proposal and work out appropriate financial arrangements with the GSMFC. The committees spent considerable time discussing the formulation of work groups and their role in the revision of the National Plan.

* S. Murphey made the motion that the following work groups be adopted. R. Kasprzak seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**National Artificial Reef Plan Revision
Work Groups**

Section	Contact Person	Group Members
<i>Roles</i>	R. Lukens	R. Kasprzak
<i>Siting</i>	S. Murphey	W. Tatum
<i>Materials and Design</i>	J. Culbertson	J. Tinsman
<i>Regulatory Requirements</i>	R. Kasprzak	M. Thompson, K. Rypka, J. Culbertson
<i>Construction</i>	B. Figley	M. Meier
<i>Management</i>	M. Bell	R. Christian, B. Figley
<i>Liability</i>	R. Lukens	R. Kasprzak
<i>Existing Information and Research Needs</i>	F. Steimle	J. Dodrill, S. Murphey (K. Gregg)

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Section	Contact Person	Group Members
<i>Ecosystem Management</i>	W. Tatum	J. Dodrill, M. Buchanan, H. Ansley
<i>New Topics</i>	D. Myatt	S. Heins
<i>Introduction</i>	R. Lukens	

Each work group member will review the section assigned to them, and forward their comments to the contact person for that section.

* J. Culbertson made the motion that a private contractor be hired to review all the information collected by the work groups. The motion was seconded by J. Dodrill and passed unanimously (4 committee members voted against the motion).

W. Tatum mentioned that whether funding is received or not, work groups can still proceed with their comments and the information could be forwarded to NMFS to amend the Plan. The joint committee agreed.

Future Joint Meetings

The week of November 18th was selected to hold the next joint artificial reef meeting. A site was not selected; however, the committees instructed Lukens and Christian to recommend a location for the next meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.

APPROVED BY:

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

SEAMAP SUBCOMMITTEE CONFERENCE CALL
MINUTES

Thursday, May 30, 1996

Chairman Walter Tatum called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. The following personnel were present:

Terry Cody, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Jim Hanifen, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Mark Leiby, FMRI, St. Petersburg, FL
Richard Waller, GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS
Joanne Shultz, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
Walter Tatum, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Scott Nichols, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
Terry Henwood, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
Perry Thompson, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
David Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

D. Donaldson stated that the topic of the conference call is the possible discontinuation of the long-term collection of chlorophyll. He stated that J. Hanifen was concerned about this possibility and thus the need for the conference call. The group discussed the issue and S. Nichols stated the long-term goal is to develop calibration factors between the spectrophotometric and fluorometric methods for collecting chlorophyll. The group discussed this issue and agreed that this should be a long-term goal of the program. The NMFS and Louisiana will continue working on this issue and periodically present their results to the Subcommittee. Although this is an important issue, W. Tatum suggested and the group agreed to initially focus on their effort on the immediate problem of collecting chlorophyll during the Summer Shrimp/Groundfish Survey. T. Henwood stated that the reason the NMFS cannot continue to collect chlorophyll at each station is due to lack of personnel onboard the NOAA ships. The NMFS has been losing personnel and has not been able to replace them. Therefore, there will only be 7 scientific personnel onboard for the Summer Shrimp/Groundfish Survey (usually there are at least 10 personnel). T. Henwood stated that it would be necessary to have 3 additional personnel to collect the necessary chlorophyll data. W. Tatum suggested that the states provide personnel from their agencies to participate in the third leg (July 3 - 18, 1996) of Summer Shrimp/Groundfish Survey. He stated that Alabama would probably be able to provide a person to participate. J. Hanifen said that Louisiana would probably be able to place someone on board also. R. Waller, M. Leiby, and T.

Cody stated that they would check but it would be very unlikely that personnel from their states could participate. All members will check within their agencies and contact D. Donaldson by June 5, 1996 if they will be able to provide personnel for the survey. It was agreed that if only 2 extra people could be found to participate in the survey (a likely scenario), the NMFS will conduct only 2/3 of the chlorophyll sampling.

The next issue addressed by the group concerned the processing of the chlorophyll samples. There is no longer personnel at the NMFS dedicated to process chlorophyll samples. Currently, Louisiana and Florida process SEAMAP chlorophyll samples within their agency. R. Waller stated Mississippi has the personnel but need several pieces of equipment to process chlorophyll samples. It was suggested that the Mississippi personnel utilize the NMFS-Pascagoula Laboratory equipment to process the samples. R. Waller stated that he could process Mississippi's and Alabama's samples. The group discussed the possibilities for processing Texas' samples. After some deliberations, the group agreed that Texas would reduce its samples by 50% (240 samples to 120 samples) and continue to send them to NMFS-Pascagoula. R. Waller stated that with the reduction of Texas samples, Mississippi might be able to process Texas samples as well as others.

S. Nichols stated the budget situation for the NMFS is very critical. To date, a leg of one cruise had to be canceled since funding has not been received by the agency. The NMFS is in a severe budget deficit. The NMFS may have to curtail or delay several surveys due to the situation. One possible solution would be to delay distributing SEAMAP funds to the states and commission until October 1, 1996. He stated that hopefully it will not be necessary to use this method and would talk with each agency about this possibility.

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

APPROVED BY:


COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

SEAMAP Subcommittee Meeting
MINUTES
Gulf Shores, Alabama
August 4 and 6, 1996

Chairman Walter Tatum called the meeting to order at 1:20 p.m. He noted that Kim Williams will be the Florida representative for this meeting. The following members and others were present:

Members:

Walter Tatum, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Jim Hanifen, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Terry Cody, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Richard Waller, GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS
Joanne Shultz, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
Kim Williams, FDEP/FMRI, St. Petersburg, FL

Others:

Scott Nichols, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
Buck Sutter, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Ken Savastano, NMFS, SSC, MS
Perry Thompson, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS

Staff:

Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Cheryl Noble, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Adoption of Agenda

W. Tatum and T. Cody will also discuss items under No. 6; with these additions the Agenda was adopted as submitted.

Approval of Minutes

The March 18, 1996 and May 31, 1996 minutes were approved as submitted.

Administrative Report

The Spring Plankton Survey was conducted April - May 1996. This survey covers Gulf waters from Florida Bay to Brownsville, Texas. Samples were taken at approximately 220 stations. Vessels from Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and NMFS participated. The purpose of this survey is to assess abundance and distribution of bluefin tune eggs and larvae.

The Summer Shrimp/Groundfish survey was conducted June - July 1996. The purpose of the survey is to determine abundance and distribution of demersal organisms in the Gulf of Mexico. Vessels from NMFS, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Texas participated in this survey. Approximately 350 stations were sampled.

The Reef Fish Survey began in May and is continuing. NMFS, Alabama and Texas participate in this survey.

The Longline Shark Survey began in July. This is the second year for this survey. NMFS is studying the feasibility of conducting a shark survey in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic regions. Perry Thompson will give a presentation of the results and activities at the Joint meeting.

Seven weekly Real-time mailings were sent to approximately 285 interested persons during June/July. The FY95 Joint Annual Report and the 1993 Atlas were distributed. The General Session Proceedings will be published and distributed later this year.

GSMFC now has a homepage as well as SEAMAP. To date, there has been approximately 300 visitors to the home page. D. Donaldson suggested the Subcommittee set up links to SEAMAP (GSMFC) and asked them to contact him to establish links to their page(s). The addresses for SEAMAP and GSMFC are:

SEAMAP	www.southwind.com/gsmfc/seamap.html
GSMFC	www.southwind.com/gsmfc

Update of Chlorophyll Sampling

J. Hanifen said that he and P. Thompson discussed Louisiana doing the chlorophyll samples that NMFS has collected. R. Waller said that he processed Mississippi's samples at the NMFS laboratory in Pascagoula. J. Shultz thanked W. Tatum for Alabama providing a person on the Summer Shrimp/Groundfish Cruise to collect chlorophyll samples and apologized for the miscommunication that he did not collect chlorophyll samples. They will try to collect chlorophyll samples on the fall cruise since it will be in the same area but it will be different seasons. A discussion ensued on resolving the issue of comparability between the three methods of processing chlorophyll samples. R. Waller stated that SEAMAP has to supply everybody with the necessary units to do the on-board chlorophyll sampling or have only those who can conduct the on-board chlorophyll sampling, collect samples. The Subcommittee agreed to charge the Environmental Work Group with resolving this problem. The Work Group will not be able to meet before the next SEAMAP meeting in October but should be able to meet before the March meeting. P. Thompson said NMFS will still collect and analyze samples at least once a day and if they can they'll do more. K. Williams said Florida will sample using all three methods and they may be able to do additional comparisons.

J. Hanifen said that another use of this data set will be the hypoxia issue in Louisiana. The Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund has filed a law suit against the State of Louisiana and the Environmental Protection Agency for their failure to control non-point source pollution in the Mississippi River. It seems the farming community is being blamed

for causing the hypoxia problems off Louisiana, so this will be a big issue, and the SEAMAP data may be very important. The Subcommittee agreed that with this issue, funds may be available through EPA to do a coast wide study and SEAMAP, through the GSMFC, should submit a proposal to EPA to obtain funding to do sampling or maybe help fund the intercalibration of doing the samples. D. Donaldson, J. Shultz and J. Hanifen will meet to develop the proposal.

J. Hanifen also suggested to invite David Stanley to give a presentation at the October meeting on the effects of hypoxia on the stratification of fish around oil rigs. The Subcommittee agreed that this information would be very interesting and he should be invited.

B. Sutter reminded the Subcommittee that this will be the end of a 3-year cycle and if they are going to have changes or if they want to buy new equipment, it needs to be reflected in the new application.

Data Coordinating Work Group

* K. Savastano distributed the SEAMAP Data Management Report and Funding Information (Attachment I) report on SEAMAP Data Management from 1986-1996. He reviewed each item of the report and explained that all ORACLE development has stopped due to NMFS funding problems. He then reviewed the funding report and stated data management will run out of funds at the end of September. There is no more contract money and the only thing left in data management is internal staff. There was a discussion on the funding problems in SEAMAP, particularly in data management. T. Cody moved that D. Donaldson write a letter for W. Tatum's signature expressing their concern about the funding problems in data management. The letter should be sent to A. Kemmerer, B. Brown and S. Nichols. J. Hanifen seconded it and it passed unanimously. They also agreed the state's should also write letters expressing their concerns.

J. Hanifen informed the group about a GIS based application that will inventory natural resources. He said the name of the program is Archview and said people from Texas will be coming to their office to show them the system and invited everyone to come over for the presentation. The General Land Office in Texas is developing this program.

Discussion of SEAMAP Archiving Center Backlog of Samples

J. Shultz informed the Subcommittee that she became aware this winter that the accessioning of identified specimens and data into the SEAMAP archiving system were becoming backlogged due to loss of personnel and funding. She wrote a letter to B. Sutter expressing her concern and asked that he look into this. It seems the problem has been resolved but the Subcommittee expressed their concerns on how this matter was handled. The Subcommittee decided that in the future, any problems should be brought to the Subcommittee first and they will decide how to handle the situation.

T. Cody said the Texas Parks and Wildlife now has an interest in tarpon and asked if there was any SEAMAP data available. He said TPWD asked about catching, tagging and learning more about their Texas life history. He also asked if they can pull plankton nets to catch tarpon larvae in Texas. K. Williams suggested he contact Dr. Roy Crabtree who has done a Tarpon study. It was also suggested he contact Reneé Bishop Pierce and Ken Edds.

Status of FY1997 Budget

S. Nichols reported that the Senate has appropriated \$1.2 million for SEAMAP and the House \$900,000, and recommended the Subcommittee consider level funding when discussing the 1997 budget. He also mentioned that two things could happen with the NOAA vessels in the Southeast Region. One would be the full allocation of days and the other will be tying up the CHAPMAN. He said the schedule he sent to B. Brown insures that all SEAMAP work will be completed. If they tie up the CHAPMAN the shark efforts may not occur. D. Donaldson said the allocation for the Gulf will be \$512,403.

Activities and Budget Needs for FY1997

All of the Gulf components agreed to go status quo. The main problem being faced now is an increase in boat rates. D. Donaldson said that at the present funding level, SEAMAP will not be able to have any work group meetings. The breakdown for the Gulf is as follows:

Florida	\$ 93,840
Alabama	68,000
Mississippi	94,495
Louisiana	120,700
Texas	54,804
GSMFC	<u>80,564</u>
Total	\$512,403

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Tuesday, August 6, 1996

Vice-Chairman R. Waller called the meeting to order at 8:50 a.m.

Preparation of Cooperative Agreements

A. Review of Annual Operations Plan

D. Donaldson distributed the Annual Operations Plan for review. After discussion, he asked that everyone send changes to him no later than August 31, 1996.

b. NMFS Portion of Cooperative Agreement

D. Donaldson distributed the NMFS portion of the Cooperative Agreement and stated there will be no significant changes but it must be included in the documents to make it a cooperative agreement.

Other Business

1. Inkind Support Reporting - the Subcommittee discussed doing Inkind Support reporting because J. Dunnigan asked if the Gulf will be interested in doing so because the South Atlantic is now doing this report. The Subcommittee decided to wait in doing this form and to ask J. Dunnigan or R. Peuser for the exact formula that they are using. D. Donaldson will report on this at the next Subcommittee meeting in October.

2. Meeting duration - D. Donaldson said this is the first time the Gulf component has met on the second day at a Joint Annual Meeting in several years. He suggested having the separate components meet only one half day during the Joint Annual Meeting and if more time is needed they can meet after the Joint Meeting. It is not beneficial to keep planning the second day meeting because even though the room is canceled, SEAMAP still has to pay for it. He said they can leave it flexible, depending on the agenda. D. Donaldson will discuss this with A. Rosario and R. Peuser and report at the next Subcommittee meeting in October.

3. MARFIN Funding - R. Waller asked B. Sutter the status on MARFIN funding. B. Sutter said it depends on when Congress signs the budget and expects a late fall solicitation for 1997 MARFIN funding. R. Waller suggested that if NMFS will be doing a tag/release study for Red Drum, maybe the Red Drum Work Group could submit to MARFIN a multi-state administrative proposal for an age structure study offshore. The advantage being this would be two different "pots" of funding. After discussion, the Subcommittee decided to set up a conference call for the Red Drum Work Group, after the GMFMC Stock Assessment Panel meets, and discuss submitting a proposal to MARFIN.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

August 2, 1996

SEAMAP DATA MANAGEMENT

A. Data Processing Status

Status reports for the 1982 through 1996 SEAMAP data are shown in Attachments 1-10. All cruise data in the SEAMAP on-line data base have been reformatted to SEAMAP versions 3.0, 3.1, or 3.2. Data processing of 1995-1996 data and 1993-1994 Caribbean data is in progress. Reprocessing of some of the 1982-1988 Gulf data is also being performed.

B. Gulf Atlas Processing

Processing of the 1993 SEAMAP Atlas has been completed. Processing of the 1994 Atlas is approximately 15% complete.

C. Data Requests

One hundred and seventy-five SEAMAP requests have been received to date. One hundred and seventy-three have been completed and work is being done on the remaining requests. Ten requests were filled since October 1995.

D. Software/System Progress

Version 3.21 of the SEAMAP Data Management system was prepared and sent out to all field sites December 1, 1995. Version 3.22 of the SEAMAP Data management system is currently in progress and scheduled for release in December 1996. This version will have fixes for any problem identified to date. It will have a new plot/graphic software program that was designed to plot SEAMAP data. It will also be able to run under the OS/2 or Windows 95 operating system.

Continued work up to July 22, 1996 on re-engineering the main frame SEAMAP software in order to take advantage of the ORACLE data base software. The development work was being performed on the SGI work station in Pascagoula because the Miami SGI had insufficient resources to accommodate the ORACLE version of SEAMAP and the current workload on the system. All ORACLE development has stopped due to NMFS funding problems and will not resume until this can be resolved.

E. On-line Data Base Status

Status of the SEAMAP data as of October 18, 1995 is shown in Attachment 11. The SEAMAP on-line data base had 301 cruises with a total of 2,054,520 records (approximately 80 megabytes of data). Since October 1995, thirty new cruises were processed through version 3.2 and added to the on-line data base as shown in Attachment 12. The SEAMAP on-line data base now contains 331 cruises with a total of 2,222,003 records (approximately 87.5 megabytes of data).



Kenneth Savastano
Data Manager

Attachment 1

02-Aug-96

SEAMAP 1982

DATA SOURCE VESSEL CRUISE			INVENTORY STATUS	BIOLOGICAL STATION SPECIES	ENVIRONMENTAL	GENERAL L/F	SHRIMP STATION	L/F L/F	MERISTICS STATION	ICHTHYOPLANKTON SAMPLE SPECIES L/F	TOTAL	SEAMAP VERSION	DATE DBASED			
AL	23	821 CRUISE 821	3	13	11	86	11	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	121	3.0	17-Jun-94
MS	17	821 CRUISE 821	3	21	21	415	20	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1842	3.2	18-Apr-96
TOTAL				34	32	501	31	1365						1963		

02-Aug-96

SEAMAP 1983

DATA SOURCE VESSEL CRUISE			INVENTORY STATUS	BIOLOGICAL STATION SPECIES	ENVIRONMENTAL	GENERAL L/F	SHRIMP STATION	L/F L/F	MERISTICS STATION	ICHTHYOPLANKTON SAMPLE SPECIES L/F	TOTAL	SEAMAP VERSION	DATE DBASED			
AL	23	831 CRUISE 831	3	18	18	217	18	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	271	3.0	27-Jun-94
MS	17	831 CRUISE 831	3	26	14	385	14	*1	14	832	*1	12	35	1320	3.2	18-Apr-96
TOTAL				44	32	602	32		14	832		12	35	1591		

02-Aug-96

SEAMAP 1984

DATA SOURCE VESSEL CRUISE			INVENTORY STATUS	BIOLOGICAL STATION SPECIES	ENVIRONMENTAL	GENERAL L/F	SHRIMP STATION	L/F L/F	MERISTICS STATION	ICHTHYOPLANKTON SAMPLE SPECIES L/F	TOTAL	SEAMAP VERSION	DATE DBASED			
AL	23	841 CRUISE 841	3	10	10	120	10	613	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	763	3.0	27-Jun-94
MS	17	841 SUMMER SEAMAP	3	24	24	357	24	*1	6	165	*1	*1	*1	600	3.2	17-Aug-95
MS	17	842 ICHTHYOPLANKTON SURVEY	3	10	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	10	30		40	3.1	25-Jul-95
TOTAL				44	34	477	34	613	6	165		10	30	1403		

02-Aug-96

SEAMAP 1985

DATA SOURCE VESSEL CRUISE			INVENTORY STATUS	BIOLOGICAL STATION SPECIES	ENVIRONMENTAL	GENERAL L/F	SHRIMP STATION	L/F L/F	MERISTICS STATION	ICHTHYOPLANKTON SAMPLE SPECIES L/F	TOTAL	SEAMAP VERSION	DATE DBASED			
AL	23	851 SUMMER SEAMAP	3	20	18	286	20	*1	5	68	*1	2	4	421	3.0	22-Oct-93
AL	23	852 FALL SEAMAP	3	11	11	226	10	237	6	22	*1	*1	*1	523	3.0	22-Oct-93
MS	17	851 SUMMER SEAMAP	3	36	31	754	31	*1	27	474	*1	5	15	1368	3.1	23-Feb-95
MS	17	852 FALL SEAMAP	3	60	40	893	40	1839	*1	*1	*1	20	60	2932	3.1	05-May-95
MS	17	853 WINTER SEAMAP	3	42	40	960	42	2752	40	1327	*1	2	6	5209	3.1	13-Jun-95
MS	17	854 FALL SEAMAP	3	16	15	290	15	785	*1	*1	*1	5	15	1136	3.1	19-May-95
US	4	153 SUMMER SEAMAP	3	355	317	6737	191	5226	292	15972	*1	38	112	29202	3.2	28-May-96
US	4	156 FALL SEAMAP	3	411	407	9261	322	19609	188	5261	*1	2	5	35464	3.2	15-Sep-95
TOTAL				951	879	19407	671	30448	558	23124		74	217	76255		

STATUS CODES:

*1 NOT TAKEN
 2 ENTERED IN P.C.
 3 ENTERED ON MIAMI UNISYS A10 SYSTEM(VERIFIED AND DATA BASED)

Attachment 2

02-Aug-96

SEAMAP 1986

DATA SOURCE	VESSEL	CRUISE	INVENTORY STATUS	BIOLOGICAL STATION	SPECIES	ENVIRONMENTAL	GENERAL L/F	SHRIMP STATION	L/F	MERISTICS	STATION	ICHTHYOPLANKTON SAMPLE	SPECIES	L/F	TOTAL	SEAMAP VERSION	DATE DBASED
AL	23	861	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	13	12	210	13	*1	11	76	*1	1	3	338	3.0	13-Oct-93
AL	23	862	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	*1	*1	16	*1	*1	*1	*1	16	32	64	3.0	28-Oct-93
AL	23	863	FALL SEAMAP	3	6	6	123	6	44	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	185	3.0	13-Oct-93
MS	17	861	BUTTERFISH	3	51	38	817	15	*1	*1	*1	*1	16	46	967	3.1	14-Sep-94
MS	17	862	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	20	14	378	18	833	12	233	*1	6	18	1526	3.1	11-Jan-95
MS	17	863	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	14	14	412	12	624	13	165	*1	*1	*1	1254	3.1	17-Jan-95
MS	17	864	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	9	*1	*1	9	*1	*1	*1	*1	9	27	45	3.1	17-Jan-95
MS	17	865	FALL SEAMAP	3	18	18	327	18	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	381	3.1	11-Jan-95
SC	51	861	FALL SEAMAP	3	68	68	1641	68	16326	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	18171	2.02	03-Feb-93
SC	51	862	WINTER SEAMAP	3	44	22	532	44	2683	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	3325	2.02	03-Feb-93
SC	51	863	FALL SEAMAP	3	70	70	1792	70	9865	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	11867	2.02	03-Feb-93
US	4	160	SUMMER SHRIMP/GROUNDFISH	3	214	165	4114	159	4885	128	4574	*1	43	129	14368	3.1	05-Dec-94
US	4	161	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	128	*1	*1	119	*1	*1	*1	*1	91	273	520	3.0	04-Mar-94
US	4	163	FALL SHRIMP/GROUNDFISH	3	306	305	6025	300	19008	*1	*1	*1	64	192	26136	3.1	26-Oct-94
TOTAL				977	732	16371		867	54268	164	5048		246	720	79147		

02-Aug-96

SEAMAP 1987

DATA SOURCE	VESSEL	CRUISE	INVENTORY STATUS	BIOLOGICAL STATION	SPECIES	ENVIRONMENTAL	GENERAL L/F	SHRIMP STATION	L/F	MERISTICS	STATION	ICHTHYOPLANKTON SAMPLE	SPECIES	L/F	TOTAL	SEAMAP VERSION	DATE DBASED
AL	23	871	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	1	1	31	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	33	3.0	26-Jul-93
AL	23	872	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	12	12	124	12	*1	3	4	*1	*1	*1	167	3.0	08-Oct-93
AL	23	873	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	10	*1	*1	10	*1	*1	*1	*1	10	10	30	3.0	08-Oct-93
AL	23	874	FALL SEAMAP	3	5	5	42	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	52	3.0	08-Sep-93
AL	23	875	FALL SEAMAP	3	8	8	45	8	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	69	3.0	08-Oct-93
MS	17	871	BUTTERFISH CRUISE	3	53	53	1349	*1	4310	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	5765	3.0	04-Aug-93
MS	17	872	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	76	68	1979	70	3827	41	807	*1	8	24	6892	3.0	06-Dec-93
MS	17	873	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	19	*1	*1	19	*1	*1	*1	*1	19	42	80	3.0	09-Jul-93
MS	17	874	FALL SEAMAP	3	22	18	488	18	593	*1	*1	*1	4	9	1148	3.0	16-Jul-93
SC	51	871	SPRING SEAMAP	3	52	52	2065	52	7455	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	9676	2.02	15-Jan-93
SC	51	872	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	52	52	2018	52	6919	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	9093	2.02	19-Jan-93
SC	51	873	FALL SEAMAP	3	52	52	1811	52	4847	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	6814	2.02	15-Jan-93
SC	51	874	FALL SEAMAP	3	54	54	2213	54	5269	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	7644	2.02	15-Jan-93
SC	51	875	WINTER SEAMAP	3	52	52	2075	52	5455	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	7686	2.02	19-Jan-93
US	4	167	SEAMAP SHRIMP/GROUNDFISH	3	509	463	9063	240	58315	308	7008	*1	44	131	76037	3.0	10-Nov-94
US	4	169	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	91	*1	*1	91	*1	*1	*1	*1	91	273	455	3.0	18-Feb-94
US	4	171	SEAMAP FALL SHRIMP/GROUNDFISH	3	359	350	7968	163	35358	*1	*1	*1	24	72	44270	3.0	06-May-94
TOTAL				1427	1240	31271		893	132348	352	7819		200	561	175911		

STATUS CODES:

*1 NOT TAKEN
 2 ENTERED IN P.C.
 3 ENTERED ON MIAMI UNISYS A10 SYSTEM(VERIFIED AND DATA BASED)

Attachment 3

02-Aug-96

SEAMAP 1988

DATA SOURCE	VESSEL	CRUISE	INVENTORY STATUS	BIOLOGICAL STATION	SPECIES	ENVIRONMENTAL	GENERAL L/F	SHRIMP STATION	L/F	MERISTICS	STATION	SAMPLE	SPECIES	L/F	TOTAL	SEAMAP VERSION	DATE DBASED	
AL	23	881	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	7	7	136	7	288	2	7	*1	*1	*1	*1	454	2.02	17-May-93
AL	23	882	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	4	4	43	4	85	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	140	2.02	17-May-93	
AL	23	883	RED DRUM/KING MACKEREL	3	10	*1	*1	10	*1	*1	*1	*1	10	10	30	2.02	17-May-93	
FL	36	881	SPRING ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	17	*1	*1	17	*1	*1	*1	*1	17	47	81	2.0	16-Nov-92	
FL	36	882	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	36	*1	*1	36	*1	*1	*1	*1	36	107	179	2.0	16-Nov-92	
LA	25	883	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	21	21	195	21	2064	*1	*1	*1	21	21	2343	3.2	30-Jul-96	
LA	25	885	FALL SEAMAP	3	21	21	193	21	1410	*1	*1	*1	21	21	1687	3.2	30-Jul-96	
LA	35	881	SPRING SEAMAP	3	24	24	563	24	7323	*1	*1	*1	11	26	7984	3.1	12-Oct-94	
LA	35	882	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	24	24	571	24	7888	19	328	*1	12	36	8914	3.1	17-Jan-95	
LA	35	884	FALL SEAMAP	3	20	20	489	20	5255	18	278	*1	10	27	6127	3.1	19-Jun-95	
MS	17	881	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	47	41	926	47	6200	24	525	*1	6	17	7827	3.0	01-Jul-93	
MS	17	882	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	33	*1	*1	33	*1	*1	*1	*1	33	82	148	2.02	04-Jun-93	
MS	17	883	FALL SEAMAP	3	26	23	644	26	4377	*1	*1	*1	3	9	5105	3.0	01-Jul-93	
SC	51	881	SPRING SEAMAP	3	52	52	1593	32	4096	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	5825	2.02	20-Nov-92	
SC	51	882	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	52	52	1839	50	5518	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	7511	2.02	01-Dec-92	
SC	51	883	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	52	52	2063	44	9235	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	11446	2.02	02-Dec-92	
SC	51	884	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	52	52	1988	52	7234	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	9378	2.02	20-Nov-92	
SC	51	885	FALL SEAMAP	3	52	52	2347	52	8807	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	11310	2.02	20-Nov-92	
SC	51	886	FALL SEAMAP	3	52	52	2190	52	7501	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	9847	2.02	01-Dec-92	
SC	51	887	FALL SEAMAP	3	52	52	2223	52	6533	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	8912	2.02	26-Nov-92	
SC	51	888	FALL SEAMAP	3	52	52	2351	42	7552	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	10049	2.02	02-Dec-92	
TX	31	881	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	344	16	1706	13	442	*1	*1	*1	2553	2.02	04-Aug-93	
TX	31	882	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	76	16	160	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	284	2.02	05-Aug-93	
TX	32	881	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	299	16	1312	14	290	*1	*1	*1	1963	2.02	04-Aug-93	
TX	32	882	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	225	16	969	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1242	2.02	05-Aug-93	
TX	33	881	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	117	16	330	5	13	*1	*1	*1	513	2.02	04-Aug-93	
TX	33	882	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	247	16	1003	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1298	2.02	05-Aug-93	
TX	34	881	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	144	16	644	10	43	*1	*1	*1	889	2.02	04-Aug-93	
TX	34	882	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	210	16	920	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1178	2.02	05-Aug-93	
TX	40	881	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	239	16	905	16	249	*1	*1	*1	1457	2.02	04-Aug-93	
TX	40	882	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	131	16	461	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	640	2.02	05-Aug-93	
US	4	172	STRIPED BASS SURVEY	3	571	374	327	82	*1	*1	*1	*1	176	*2	1354	3.0	20-Jan-94	
US	4	173	SPRING ICHTHYOPLANKTON SURVEY	3	165	*1	*1	165	*1	*1	*1	*1	143	290	1569 2348	4537	3.0	20-Sep-95
US	4	174	SEAMAP SHRIMP/GROUNDFISH	3	408	387	7465	192	40083	220	4850	*1	5	19	57	53667	3.0	11-Dec-93
US	4	176	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON SURVEY	3	168	*1	*1	82	*1	*1	*1	*1	166	159	1464 3126	4999	3.1	26-Aug-94
US	4	177	SEAMAP FALL SHRIMP/GROUNDFISH	3	598	595	12342	210	54937	*1	*1	98	39	117	68897	3.0	02-Dec-93	
TOTAL					2776	2117	42520	1557	194796	341	7025	103	723	1026	3033 5474	260768		

STATUS CODES:

*1 NOT TAKEN
 *2 NOT ENTERED
 2 ENTERED IN P.C.
 3 ENTERED ON MIAMI UNISYS A10 SYSTEM(VERIFIED AND DATA BASED)

Attachment 4

02-Aug-96

SEAMAP 1989

DATA		INVENTORY		BIOLOGICAL		ENVIRONMENTAL		GENERAL L/F		SHRIMP L/F		ICHTHYOPLANKTON			TOTAL	SEAMAP	DATE	
SOURCE	VESSEL	CRUISE	CRUISE/REPORT TITLE	STATUS	STATION	SPECIES		L/F	STATION	L/F	MERISTICS	STATION	SAMPLE	SPECIES	L/F	VERSION	DBASED	
AL	23	891	SEAMAP CRUISE AL 891	3	7	7	103	7	363	3	96	*1	*1	*1	*1	586	2.0	19-Mar-92
AL	23	892	SEAMAP CRUISE AL 892	3	10	10	205	10	991	7	166	*1	*1	*1	*1	1399	2.0	19-Mar-92
AL	23	893	RED DRUM-KING MACKEREL CRUISE	3	10	*1	*1	10	*1	*1	*1	*1	10	10		30	2.0	19-Mar-92
AL	23	894	SEAMAP FALL GROUND FISH CRUISE	3	12	12	293	12	1452	11	164	*1	*1	*1	*1	1956	2.0	19-Mar-92
FL	36	891	SPRING 1989 ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	25	*1	*1	25	*1	*1	*1	*1	25	75		125	2.0	22-Jul-92
FL	36	892	FALL 1989 ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	36	*1	*1	36	*1	*1	*1	*1	36	108		180	2.0	22-Jul-92
LA	35	891	LA 1989 SPRING SEAMAP	3	24	24	614	24	7914	21	140	*1	8	21		8782	2.0	28-Jul-92
LA	35	892	LA 1989 SUMMER SEAMAP	3	22	22	439	22	3984	17	292	*1	12	36		4834	2.0	28-Jul-92
LA	25	893	LA 1989 AREA SUMMER SEAMAP	3	21	21	163	21	1106	11	118	*1	21	24		1485	2.0	28-Jul-92
LA	35	894	LA 1989 FALL SEAMAP	3	24	24	572	24	4390	24	499	*1	12	36		5593	2.0	28-Jul-92
LA	25	895	LA 1989 AREA FALL SEAMAP	3	21	21	228	21	1943	11	224	*1	21	42		2511	2.0	28-Jul-92
LA	35	896	LA OREGON 2 PELICAN COMPARISON	3	10	10	286	10	2719	9	185	*1	*1	*1	*1	3229	2.0	28-Jul-92
LA	35	897	LA 1989 WINTER SEAMAP	3	16	16	493	16	3635	16	567	*1	7	21		4780	2.0	28-Jul-92
MS	17	891	SUMMER SHRIMP/GROUND FISH SVY	3	41	34	989	41	7581	20	261	*1	7	21		8988	2.0	31-Oct-91
MS	17	892	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON SURVEY	3	65	*1	*1	65	*1	*1	*1	*1	65	75		205	2.0	30-Oct-91
MS	17	893	FALL SHRIMP/GROUND FISH SURVEY	3	20	17	568	20	4631	*1	*1	*1	3	9		5265	2.0	01-Nov-91
SC	51	891	SUMMER 89 SOUTH ATLANTIC	3	212	212	7690	212	12944	179	2299	*1	*1	*1	*1	23748	2.0	08-Jul-92
SC	51	892	SUMMER 89 SOUTH ATLANTIC	3	106	106	2693	106	5930	48	808	*1	*1	*1	*1	9797	2.0	08-Jul-92
SC	51	893	FALL SEAMAP 89 SOUTH ATLANTIC	3	212	212	5753	212	9372	116	1902	*1	*1	*1	*1	17779	2.0	08-Jul-92
TX	31	891	CRUISE 891 GULF OF MEXICO	3	16	16	174	16	575	9	115	*1	*1	*1	*1	921	2.0	18-May-92
TX	32	891	CRUISE 891 GULF OF MEXICO	3	16	16	323	16	1991	13	709	*1	*1	*1	*1	3084	2.0	18-May-92
TX	33	891	CRUISE 891 GULF OF MEXICO	3	16	16	354	16	1965	16	546	*1	*1	*1	*1	2929	2.0	18-May-92
TX	34	891	CRUISE 891 GULF OF MEXICO	3	16	16	268	16	1481	16	651	*1	*1	*1	*1	2464	2.0	18-May-92
TX	40	891	CRUISE 891 GULF OF MEXICO	3	16	16	205	16	1035	15	382	*1	*1	*1	*1	1685	2.0	18-May-92
TX	31	892	TX CRUISE 892	3	16	16	199	16	582	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	829	2.0	18-May-92
TX	32	892	TX CRUISE 892	3	16	16	307	16	1826	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	2181	2.0	18-May-92
TX	33	892	TX CRUISE 892	3	16	16	312	16	1421	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1781	2.0	18-May-92
TX	34	892	TX CRUISE 892	3	16	16	204	16	1112	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1364	2.0	18-May-92
TX	40	892	TX CRUISE 892	3	16	16	263	16	1462	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1773	2.0	18-May-92
US	4	179	SA-SEAMAP/BEAUFORT ECOSYSTEM	3	571	438	847	37	2176	*1	*1	*1				4069	2.0	05-Nov-92
US	4	180	OREGON II SUMMER SEAMAP	3	244	237	4178	172	26040	140	4815	*1	21	63		35889	2.0	21-Oct-92
US	4	183	SEAMAP ICHTHYOPLANKTON/PLUME	3	114	*1	*1	113	*1	*1	*1	*1	77	150	1855 4205	6437	2.02	02-Nov-92
US	4	184	SEAMAP SHRIMP/GROUND FISH	3	512	490	11997	229	66970	*1	*1	*1	6	39	117	80321	2.0	06-Oct-92
US	49	892	SEAMAP ICHTHYOPLANKTON/THERMAL	3	141	*1	*1	131	*1	*1	*1	*1	125	212		484	2.0	15-Dec-92
TOTAL					2636	2073	40720	1736	177591	702	14939	6	489	1020	1855 4205	247483		

STATUS CODES:

*1 NOT TAKEN
 2 ENTERED IN P.C.
 3 ENTERED ON MIAMI UNISYS A10 SYSTEM(VERIFIED AND DATA BASED)

Attachment 5

02-Aug-96

SEAMAP 1990

DATA SOURCE	VESSEL	CRUISE	CRUISE REPORT TITLE	INVENTORY STATUS	BIOLOGICAL STATION	SPECIES	ENVIRONMENTAL	GENERAL L/F	SHRIMP STATION	L/F	MERISTICS	STATION	SAMPLE	SPECIES	L/F	TOTAL	SEAMAP VERSION	DATE DBASED	
AL	23	901	SPRING SHRIMP GROUND FISH SURVEY	3	14	14	159	14	684	5	74	*1	*1	*1	*1	964	2.0	26-Mar-92	
AL	23	902	AL JULY SHRIMP-GROUND FISH	3	1	1	15	1	36	1	3	*1	*1	*1	*1	58	2.0	26-Mar-92	
AL	23	903	FALL KING MACKEREL/REDDRUM/PLAN	3	10	*1	*1	10	*1	*1	*1	*1	10	10		30	2.0	26-Mar-92	
AL	23	904	FALL SHRIMP GROUND FISH	3	13	13	203	9	775	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1013	2.0	26-Mar-92	
FL	36	901	SPRING 1990 ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	21	*1	*1	21	*1	*1	*1	*1	21	61		103	2.0	22-Jul-92	
FL	36	902	FALL 1990 ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	30	*1	*1	30	*1	*1	*1	*1	30	90		150	2.0	22-Jul-92	
LA	35	901	LA WINTER SEAMAP	3	24	18	457	23	3581	15	128	*1	6	15		4261	2.0	28-Jul-92	
LA	35	902	LA SUMMER SEAMAP	3	31	24	444	31	3151	15	171	*1	7	21		3888	2.0	28-Jul-92	
LA	25	903	LA AREA SEAMAP CRUISE 903	3	21	21	142	21	1436	9	202	*1	21	42		1894	2.0	28-Jul-92	
LA	35	904	LA FALL SEAMAP	3	31	24	381	25	2954	18	174	*1	7	20		3627	2.0	28-Jul-92	
LA	25	905	LA FALL SEAMAP	3	21	21	125	21	833	7	121	*1	21	42		1191	2.0	28-Jul-92	
LA	35	906	LA WINTER SEAMAP	3	25	21	554	24	5978	20	952	*1	4	12		7586	2.0	28-Jul-92	
MS	17	901	SUMMER SHRIMP/GROUND FISH	3	44	40	1086	44	8868	10	395	*1	4	12		10499	2.0	01-Nov-91	
MS	17	902	FALL SHRIMP/GROUND FISH SURVEY	3	107	*1	*1	107	*1	*1	*1	*1	107	113	32	91	450	2.0	10-May-94
MS	17	903	FALL SHRIMP/GROUND FISH SURVEY	3	24	24	727	20	4470	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	5265	2.0	01-Nov-91	
SC	51	901	SPRING SEAMAP SURVEY SOUTH ATL	3	210	210	4529	208	15747	60	702	*1	*1	*1	*1	21666	2.0	08-Jul-92	
SC	51	902	SUMMER SEAMAP S. ATLANTIC 90	3	156	156	4552	156	14060	91	1432	*1	*1	*1	*1	20603	2.0	08-Jul-92	
SC	51	903	FALL SEAMAP SURVEY SOUTH ATL	3	182	182	6041	182	12663	128	2884	*1	*1	*1	*1	22262	2.0	08-Jul-92	
TX	31	901	SUMMER SHRIMP/GROUND FISH	3	16	16	128	16	456	9	69	*1	*1	*1	*1	710	2.0	27-Mar-92	
TX	32	901	SUMMER SHRIMP/GROUND FISH	3	16	16	267	16	1569	11	431	*1	*1	*1	*1	2326	2.0	27-Mar-92	
TX	33	901	SUMMER SHRIMP/GROUND FISH	3	16	16	289	16	1605	14	205	*1	*1	*1	*1	2161	2.0	27-Mar-92	
TX	34	901	SUMMER SHRIMP/GROUND FISH	3	16	16	125	16	606	5	101	*1	*1	*1	*1	885	2.0	27-Mar-92	
TX	40	901	SUMMER SHRIMP/GROUND FISH	3	16	16	120	16	786	7	218	*1	*1	*1	*1	1179	2.0	27-Mar-92	
TX	31	902	SHRIMP/GROUND FISH SURVEY	3	16	16	127	16	288	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	463	2.0	30-Mar-92	
TX	32	902	SHRIMP/GROUND FISH SURVEY	3	16	16	244	16	894	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1186	2.0	30-Mar-92	
TX	33	902	SHRIMP/GROUND FISH SURVEY	3	16	16	146	16	497	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	691	2.0	30-Mar-92	
TX	34	902	SHRIMP/GROUND FISH SURVEY	3	16	16	99	16	496	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	643	2.0	30-Mar-92	
TX	40	902	SHRIMP/GROUND FISH SURVEY	3	16	16	197	16	872	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1117	2.0	30-Mar-92	
US	4	187	SEAMAP ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	151	*1	*1	139	*1	*1	*1	*1	139	408		698	2.0	07-Jan-92	
US	4	189	SPRING SHRIMP/GROUND FISH	3	290	267	5620	230	34308	219	6083	*1	19	57		47074	2.0	27-Sep-91	
US	4	190	PLANKTON SURVEY GULF OF MEXICO	3	133	*1	*1	131	*1	*1	*1	*1	108	320		584	2.0	20-Sep-91	
US	4	191	SEAMAP/GROUND FISH SURVEY GOM	3	293	290	6725	218	39457	*1	*1	*1	2	39	117	47102	2.0	23-Sep-91	
US	28	901	SEAMAP ECOSYSTEM S ATLANTIC	3	136	80	70	62	*1	*1	*1	*1	40	*2	*2	348	2.0	10-Jun-92	
TOTAL					2128	1566	33572	1887	157070	644	14345	2	583	1340	32	91	212677		

STATUS CODES:

*1 NOT TAKEN
 *2 NOT ENTERED
 2 ENTERED IN P.C.
 3 ENTERED ON MIAMI UNISYS A10 SYSTEM(VERIFIED AND DATA BASED)

Attachment 6

02-Aug-96

SEAMAP 1991

DATA SOURCE	VESSEL	CRUISE	CRUISE REPORT	TITLE	INVENTORY STATUS	BIOLOGICAL STATION	SPECIES	ENVIRONMENTAL	GENERAL L/F	SHRIMP STATION	L/F	MERISTICS	STATION	SAMPLE	ICHTHYOPLANKTON SPECIES	L/F	TOTAL	SEAMAP VERSION	DATE DBASED	
AL	23	911	SUMMER	SHRIMP GROUND FISH GOM	3	10	10	159	10	450	7	155	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	801	2.0	26-Mar-92
AL	23	912	KING MACKEREL	RED DRUM PLANKTON	3	10	*1	*1	10	*1	*1	*1	*1	10	10			30	2.0	26-Mar-92
AL	23	913	GROUND FISH	SURVEY GOM	3	7	7	174	7	935	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1130	2.0	26-Mar-92
FL	36	911	SPRING 1991	ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	13	*1	*1	13	*1	*1	*1	*1	13	39			65	2.0	22-Jul-92
FL	36	912	FALL 1991	ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	23	*1	*1	23	*1	*1	*1	*1	23	68			114	2.0	22-Jul-92
LA	25	913	SUMMER SEAMAP		3	21	21	130	21	1479	6	62	*1	21	42			1782	2.02	30-Nov-92
LA	25	915	FALL SEAMAP		3	21	21	193	21	1716	12	230	*1	21	42			2256	2.02	30-Nov-92
LA	35	911	SPRING SEAMAP		3	29	22	602	29	6570	19	188	*1	7	21			7480	2.02	30-Nov-92
LA	35	912	SUMMER SEAMAP		3	31	24	360	31	3368	12	251	*1	7	21			4098	2.02	30-Nov-92
LA	35	914	FALL SEAMAP		3	31	24	461	30	3096	22	395	*1	7	21			4080	2.02	30-Nov-92
LA	35	916	WINTER SEAMAP		3	31	24	606	30	5814	24	779	*1	7	16			7324	2.02	01-Dec-92
MS	17	911	SHRIMP/GROUND FISH	SURVEY	3	41	39	856	38	6402	27	989	*1	2	6	88	248	8734	2.0	10-May-94
MS	17	912	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	SUR GOM	3	118	*1	*1	118	*1	*1	*1	*1	101	107	35	132	510	2.0	19-May-94
MS	17	913	SEAMAP CRUISE MS 913		3	27	27	657	27	4652	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	5390	2.0	26-Feb-92
PR	56	911	CARIBBEAN SURVEY		3	417	417	415	*1	*1	*1	*1	1741	*1	*1	*1	*1	2990	3.2	01-Jul-96
PR	57	912	CARIBBEAN SURVEY		3	102	102	89	*1	*1	*1	*1	341	*1	*1	*1	*1	634	3.2	24-Jun-96
SC	51	911	SPRING SOUTH ATLANTIC	SURVEY	3	210	210	6022	210	15930	108	1931	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	24621	2.0	15-Apr-92
SC	51	912	SUMMER SOUTH ATLANTIC	SEAMAP SUR	3	156	156	3979	156	12688	75	1155	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	18365	2.0	05-May-92
SC	51	913	FALL SEAMAP SOUTH ATLANTIC		3	172	172	4732	172	12249	99	2061	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	19657	2.0	12-May-92
TX	31	911	SUMMER SEAMAP		3	16	16	250	16	1354	10	76	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1738	2.0	28-Sep-92
TX	32	911	SUMMER SEAMAP		3	16	16	270	16	1406	13	156	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1893	2.0	28-Sep-92
TX	33	911	SUMMER SEAMAP		3	16	16	182	16	596	10	99	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	935	2.0	28-Sep-92
TX	34	911	SUMMER SEAMAP		3	16	16	138	16	681	10	51	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	928	2.0	28-Sep-92
TX	40	911	SUMMER SEAMAP		3	16	16	187	16	891	12	182	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1320	2.0	28-Sep-92
TX	31	912	FALL SEAMAP		3	16	16	154	16	639	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	841	2.0	16-Oct-92
TX	32	912	FALL SEAMAP		3	16	16	236	16	1015	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1299	2.0	16-Oct-92
TX	33	912	FALL SEAMAP		3	16	16	112	16	352	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	512	2.0	16-Oct-92
TX	34	912	FALL SEAMAP		3	16	16	148	16	563	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	759	2.0	16-Oct-92
TX	40	912	FALL SEAMAP		3	16	16	137	16	545	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	730	2.0	16-Oct-92
US	4	192	ATLANTIC SEAMAP		3	314	208	*1	107	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	629	2.0	30-Oct-91
US	4	194	SEAMAP GULF PLANKTON	SUR	3	159	*1	*1	139	*1	*1	*1	*1	159	442			740	2.0	15-Apr-92
US	4	195	SEAMAP SPRING GROUND FISH	SURVEY	3	288	267	6546	223	40667	186	7976	*1	37	111			56264	2.0	12-Dec-91
US	4	197	FALL BOTTOM FISH	SURVEY	3	327	293	7389	241	42639	*1	*1	*1	40	120	1353	3335	55697	2.0	19-May-94
US	28	914	FALL SEAMAP ICHTHYOPLANKTON	SUR	3	166	*1	*1	138	*1	*1	*1	*1	96	286	1102	2487	4179	2.0	17-May-94
TOTAL						2884	2204	35184	1954	166697	652	16736		551	1352	2578	6202	238525		

STATUS CODES:

*1 NOT TAKEN
 2 ENTERED IN P.C.
 3 ENTERED ON MIAMI UNISYS A10 SYSTEM(VERIFIED AND DATA BASED)

Attachment 7

02-Aug-96

SEAMAP 1992

DATA SOURCE	VESSEL	CRUISE	CRUISE REPORT TITLE	INVENTORY STATUS	BIOLOGICAL STATION	BIOLOGICAL SPECIES	ENVIRONMENTAL	GENERAL L/F	SHRIMP L/F STATION	SHRIMP L/F L/F	MERISTICS	ICHTHYOPLANKTON STATION	ICHTHYOPLANKTON SAMPLE	ICHTHYOPLANKTON SPECIES	L/F	TOTAL	SEAMAP VERSION	DATE DBASED	
AL	23	920	REEFFISH TRAP/VIDEO	3	7	7	3	*1	*1	*1	*1	20	*1	*1	*1	*1	37	3.0	28-Jan-94
AL	23	921	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	332	16	2059	6	78	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	2523	2.1	08-Jan-93
AL	23	922	FALL SEAMAP	3	9	*1	*1	9	*1	*1	*1	*1	9	9		27	2.1	08-Jan-93	
AL	23	923	FALL SEAMAP	3	8	8	193	8	1099	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1316	2.1	08-Jan-93
FL	26	921	SPRING ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	21	*1	*1	21	*1	*1	*1	*1	21	57	837	1521	2457	2.02	18-May-94
FL	26	922	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	14	*1	*1	14	*1	*1	*1	*1	13	37	426	834	1325	2.02	20-Sep-95
LA	35	921	SPRING SEAMAP	3	30	24	625	30	7061	24	233	*1	6	18		8045	3.0	16-Nov-93	
LA	35	922	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	31	24	373	31	4215	12	88	*1	7	21		4795	3.0	16-Nov-93	
LA	35	923	FALL SEAMAP	3	25	20	342	23	2551	19	315	*1	5	10		3305	3.0	16-Nov-93	
LA	35	924	WINTER SEAMAP	3	31	24	659	31	7812	23	674	*1	7	20		9274	3.0	16-Nov-93	
MS	17	921	SEAMAP TRAP/VIDEO SURVEY	3	16	16	13	16	48	*1	*1	48	*1	*1	*1	*1	157	3.0	02-Mar-93
MS	17	922	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	44	42	1093	38	8408	32	916	*1	2	6		10579	2.02	08-Mar-93	
MS	17	924	FALL GROUND FISH	3	15	15	335	15	2445	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	2825	3.0	08-Oct-93
PR	56	921	CARIBBEAN SURVEY	3	600	600	734	*1	*1	*1	*1	2674	*1	*1	*1	*1	4608	3.2	22-Jul-96
PR	56	922	CARIBBEAN SURVEY	3	647	647	327	*1	*1	*1	*1	709	*1	*1	*1	*1	2330	3.2	22-Jul-96
PR	57	922	CARIBBEAN SURVEY	3	90	90	160	*1	*1	*1	*1	628	*1	*1	*1	*1	968	3.2	03-Jul-96
SC	51	921	SPRING SOUTH ATLANTIC SURVEY	3	210	210	5045	210	13967	95	1053	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	20790	2.02	29-Sep-92
SC	51	922	SUMMER SOUTH ATLANTIC SURVEY	3	156	156	3801	156	8568	50	537	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	13424	2.02	30-Dec-92
SC	51	923	FALL SEAMAP	3	188	188	4958	188	9692	89	1198	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	16501	2.02	27-Jan-93
TX	31	921	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	168	16	827	12	159	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1214	2.02	25-Mar-93
TX	32	921	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	197	16	1043	7	34	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1329	2.02	25-Mar-93
TX	33	921	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	195	16	805	7	23	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1078	2.02	26-Mar-93
TX	34	921	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	158	16	769	12	90	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1077	2.02	26-Mar-93
TX	40	921	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	147	16	727	9	63	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	994	2.02	26-Mar-93
TX	31	922	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	227	16	1141	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1416	3.0	01-Jul-93
TX	32	922	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	291	16	1655	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1994	3.0	01-Jul-93
TX	33	922	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	160	16	454	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	662	3.0	01-Jul-93
TX	34	922	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	270	16	1442	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1760	3.0	01-Jul-93
TX	40	922	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	193	16	910	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1151	3.0	01-Jul-93
US	4	199	SPRING ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	248	*1	*1	208	*1	*1	*1	*1	147	436		892	2.02	09-Mar-93	
US	4	200	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	284	260	6763	221	39987	174	3463	*1	41	123		51275	2.02	19-Jan-93	
US	4	201	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	49	*1	*1	49	*1	*1	*1	*1	27	79	1046	2236	3459	3.0	24-May-94
US	4	202	FALL BOTTOMFISH SURVEY	3	294	273	7061	220	43846	*1	*1	6	30	90	378	732	52900	3.0	20-Sep-95
US	28	923	REEFISH CRUISE	3	179	147	113	149	*1	*1	*1	607	29	147		1342	3.0	14-Jul-93	
US	28	925	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	118	*1	*1	116	*1	*1	*1	*1	73	219		453	3.0	02-Sep-93	
VI	58	922	VIRGIN ISL REEFFISH 1992	3	63	63	85	*1	*1	*1	*1	128	*1	*1	*1	*1	339	3.1	19-May-95
VI	59	922	VIRGIN ISL REEFFISH 1992	3	16	16	12	*1	*1	*1	*1	20	*1	*1	*1	*1	64	3.1	19-May-95
TOTAL					3569	3006	35033	1929	161531	571	8924	4840	417	1272	2687	5323	228685		

STATUS CODES:

*1 NOT TAKEN
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 3 ENTERED ON MIAMI UNISYS A10 SYSTEM(VERIFIED AND DATA BASED)

Attachment 8

02-Aug-96

SEAMAP 1993

DATA SOURCE	VESSEL	CRUISE	CRUISE REPORT TITLE	INVENTORY STATUS	BIOLOGICAL STATION	SPECIES	ENVIRONMENTAL	GENERAL L/F	SHRIMP STATION	L/F	MERISTICS	STATION	SAMPLE	SPECIES	L/F	TOTAL	SEAMAP VERSION	DATE DBASED
AL	23	930	COMPARITIVE TOW	3	22	22	494	18	441	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1		997	3.0	19-Jan-94
AL	23	931	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	10	10	212	10	953	5	95	*1	*1	*1	*1	1295	3.0	19-Jan-94
AL	23	932	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	9	*1	*1	9	*1	*1	*1	*1	9	9	*1	27	3.0	19-Jan-94
AL	23	933	FALL SEAMAP	3	9	9	199	9	1108	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1		1334	3.0	19-Jan-94
AL	23	934	REEFFISH TRAP/VIDEO	3	11	11	24	11	*1	*1	*1	343	*1	*1	*1	400	3.0	06-Jul-94
FL	26	932	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	36	*1	*1	36	*1	*1	*1	*1	36	108		180	3.0	15-Feb-94
FL	30	931	SPRING ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	19	*1	*1	19	*1	*1	*1	*1	19	57		95	3.0	10-Nov-93
LA	35	931	SPRING SEAMAP	3	31	24	680	30	8117	20	189	*1	7	21		9112	3.0	08-Apr-94
LA	35	932	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	31	24	443	30	5597	22	535	*1	7	21		6703	3.0	08-Apr-94
LA	35	933	FALL SEAMAP	3	31	24	501	29	5012	19	414	*1	7	21		6051	3.0	18-Apr-94
LA	35	934	WINTER SEAMAP	3	29	24	619	29	7615	23	721	*1	5	15		9075	3.0	18-Apr-94
MS	17	930	SEAMAP COMPARATIVE TOW	3	22	22	551	*1	409	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1004	3.0	15-Oct-93
MS	17	931	TRAP/VIDEO	3	8	8	2	8	*1	*1	*1	4	*1	*1	*1	30	3.0	08-Mar-94
MS	17	932	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	37	35	908	37	7420	29	832	*1	2	6		9304	3.0	08-Mar-94
MS	17	933	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	48	*1	*1	48	*1	*1	*1	*1	48	48		144	3.0	17-Jun-94
MS	17	934	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	47	*1	*1	47	*1	*1	*1	*1	47	53		147	3.0	05-Jul-94
MS	17	935	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	27	25	688	27	4713	*1	*1	*1	2	6		5486	3.0	07-Jun-94
PR	56	931	CARIBBEAN CRUISE	3	600	600	466	*1	*1	*1	*1	1297	*1	*1	*1	2963	3.2	22-Jul-96
PR	56	932	CARIBBEAN CRUISE	3	563	563	468	*1	*1	*1	*1	1106	*1	*1	*1	2700	3.2	24-Jul-96
SC	51	931	SPRING SEAMAP	3	210	210	4267	210	8920	80	1080	*1	*1	*1	*1	14977	3.0	03-Feb-94
SC	51	932	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	156	156	3680	156	8484	65	1604	*1	*1	*1	*1	14301	3.0	28-Jan-94
SC	51	933	FALL SEAMAP	3	188	188	4471	188	8600	105	1868	*1	*1	*1	*1	15608	3.0	28-Jan-94
TX	31	931	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	328	16	1807	14	106	*1	*1	*1	*1	2303	3.0	24-Mar-94
TX	32	931	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	250	16	1414	10	37	*1	*1	*1	*1	1759	3.0	30-Mar-94
TX	33	931	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	271	16	874	8	98	*1	*1	*1	*1	1299	3.0	30-Mar-94
TX	34	931	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	110	16	513	2	14	*1	*1	*1	*1	687	3.0	30-Mar-94
TX	40	931	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	213	16	1056	11	345	*1	*1	*1	*1	1673	3.0	30-Mar-94
TX	31	932	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	215	16	882	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1145	3.0	01-Jul-94
TX	32	932	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	253	16	1040	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1341	3.0	01-Jul-94
TX	33	932	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	304	16	1057	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1409	3.0	01-Jul-94
TX	34	932	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	113	16	331	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	492	3.0	01-Jul-94
TX	40	932	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	200	16	1189	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1437	3.0	01-Jul-94
US	4	203	MARINE MAMMAL/ICHTHYO	3	212	*1	*1	107	*1	*1	*1	*1	116	425		744	3.0	16-Nov-93
US	4	204	ICHTHYOPLANKTON MAMMALS	3	274	*1	*1	160	*1	*1	*1	*1	121	367	1267 2168	4236	3.0	20-Sep-95
US	4	205	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	298	277	6899	222	40984	178	5465	*1	41	122		54445	3.0	06-May-94
US	4	207	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	11	*1	*1	11	*1	*1	*1	*1	10	30		52	3.0	31-May-94
US	4	208	FALL GROUND FISH	2	303	285	7624	245	46394	*1	*1	*1	36	108		54959	3.1	15-Jul-94
US	28	934	SPRING ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	91	*1	*1	82	*1	*1	*1	*1	82	235	1096 1840	3344	3.0	20-Sep-95
US	28	935	REEFFISH ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	213	185	89	180	*1	*1	*1	387	28	107		1161	3.0	16-Feb-94
US	28	936	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	162	*1	*1	159	*1	*1	*1	*1	72	216		537	3.0	04-May-94
VI	58	931	VIRGIN ISL REEFFISH 1993	3	15	15	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	30	3.1	23-May-95
VI	59	932	VIRGIN ISL REEFFISH 1993	3	30	30	8	*1	*1	*1	*1	9	*1	*1	*1	77	3.1	19-May-95
VI	60	932	REEFFISH SURVEY	3	24	24	43	*1	*1	*1	*1	92	*1	*1	*1	183	3.1	10-Nov-94
TOTAL					3937	2931	35593	2277	164930	591	13403	3238	695	1975	2363 4008	235246		

STATUS CODES:

- *1 NOT TAKEN
- 2 ENTERED IN P.C.
- 3 ENTERED ON MIAMI UNISYS A10 SYSTEM(VERIFIED AND DATA BASED)

Attachment 9

02-Aug-96

SEAMAP 1994

DATA SOURCE	VESSEL	CRUISE	INVENTORY STATUS	BIOLOGICAL STATION	SPECIES	ENVIRONMENTAL	GENERAL L/F	SHRIMP STATION	L/F	ICHTHYOPLANKTON MERISTICS STATION	SAMPLE	SPECIES	L/F	TOTAL	SEAMAP VERSION	DATE DBASED	
AL	23	941	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	8	8	223	8	1570	5	202	*1	*1	*1	2024	3.1	08-Nov-94
AL	23	942	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	9	*1	*1	9	*1	*1	*1	*1	9	9	27	3.1	17-Jul-95
AL	23	943	FALL SEAMAP	3	8	8	159	8	1036	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1219	3.1	26-Jun-95
AL	23	944	TRAP/VIDEO	3	11	11	25	11	*1	*1	*1	379	*1	*1	437	3.1	04-Aug-95
FL	36	941	SPRING ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	5	*1	*1	5	*1	*1	*1	*1	5	15	25	3.1	19-Oct-94
FL	36	942	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	29	*1	*1	29	*1	*1	*1	*1	29	87	145	3.1	16-Feb-95
LA	35	940	COMPARATIVE TOW	3	49	49	1433	11	398	42	268	*1	*1	*1	2250	3.1	21-Sep-94
LA	35	941	SPRING SEAMAP	3	31	24	697	31	9424	23	153	*1	7	19	10402	3.1	21-Sep-94
LA	35	942	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	31	24	539	31	6411	17	465	*1	7	21	7539	3.1	28-Apr-95
LA	35	943	FALL SEAMAP	3	31	24	588	31	5943	23	439	*1	7	21	7100	3.1	28-Apr-95
LA	35	944	WINTER SEAMAP	3	24	20	465	24	4253	20	571	*1	4	10	5387	3.1	28-Apr-95
MS	17	940	COMPARATIVE TOW	3	49	49	1427	*1	496	*1	*1	*1	4	*1	2021	3.0	21-Sep-94
MS	17	941	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	39	37	993	39	8131	28	923	*1	2	6	10196	3.1	17-May-95
MS	17	942	REEFFISH SURVEY	3	9	9	20	9	*1	*1	*1	99	*1	*1	146	3.1	07-Apr-95
MS	17	943	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	47	*1	*1	47	*1	*1	*1	*1	47	51	145	3.1	25-Jul-95
MS	17	944	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	2	*1	*1	2	*1	*1	*1	*1	2	6	10	3.1	25-Jul-95
MS	17	945	FALL GROUND FISH	3	23	23	562	12	4204	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	4824	3.1	07-Apr-95
PR	56	941	CARIBBEAN SURVEY	3	170	170	237	*1	*1	*1	*1	775	*1	*1	1352	3.2	03-Jul-96
SC	51	941	SPRING SEAMAP	3	210	210	4051	210	7228	52	454	*1	*1	*1	12415	3.1	21-Sep-94
SC	51	942	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	156	156	3360	156	7227	56	1109	*1	*1	*1	12220	3.1	13-Oct-94
SC	51	943	FALL SEAMAP	3	188	188	5319	188	11833	116	2903	*1	*1	*1	20735	3.1	16-Feb-95
TX	31	941	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	200	16	1278	6	70	*1	*1	*1	1602	3.1	21-Jun-95
TX	32	941	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	199	16	1124	8	34	*1	*1	*1	1413	3.1	21-Jun-95
TX	33	941	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	147	16	353	5	35	*1	*1	*1	588	3.1	21-Jun-95
TX	34	941	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	127	16	675	10	117	*1	*1	*1	977	3.1	21-Jun-95
TX	40	941	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	129	16	668	5	28	*1	*1	*1	878	3.1	21-Jun-95
TX	31	942	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	270	16	1519	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1837	3.1	21-Jun-95
TX	32	942	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	251	16	1456	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1755	3.1	21-Jun-95
TX	33	942	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	140	16	538	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	726	3.1	21-Jun-95
TX	34	942	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	121	16	525	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	694	3.1	21-Jun-95
TX	40	942	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	146	16	562	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	756	3.1	21-Jun-95
US	4	209	SPRING ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	217	*1	*1	155	*1	*1	*1	*1	122	505	877	3.1	12-Oct-94
US	4	210	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	273	246	6212	239	42521	193	5352	*1	42	125	55161	3.1	16-Feb-95
US	4	214	FALL GROUND FISH	3	288	253	7781	251	51577	*1	*1	*1	48	144	60294	3.1	18-May-95
US	28	944	ICHTHYOPLANKTON SURVEY	3	60	*1	*1	60	*1	*1	*1	*1	60	173	293	3.1	19-Oct-94
US	28	945	REEFFISH SURVEY	3	191	160	111	159	291	*1	*1	432	30	115	1459	3.1	23-Mar-95
US	28	946	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	121	*1	*1	88	*1	*1	*1	*1	88	264	473	3.1	22-Mar-95
VI	59	941	VIRGIN ISL REEFFISH 1994	3	88	88	38	*1	*1	*1	*1	63	*1	*1	277	3.1	19-May-95
VI	60	941	REEFFISH SURVEY	3	34	34	62	*1	*1	*1	*1	167	*1	*1	297	3.1	09-Nov-94
TOTAL					2561	1951	36032	1973	171241	609	13123	1915	509	1571	230976		

STATUS CODES:

*1 NOT TAKEN
 2 ENTERED IN P.C.
 3 ENTERED ON MIAMI UNISYS A10 SYSTEM(VERIFIED AND DATA BASED)

Attachment 10

02-Aug-96

SEAMAP 1995

DATA SOURCE	VESSEL	CRUISE	INVENTORY STATUS	BIOLOGICAL STATION	SPECIES	ENVIRONMENTAL	GENERAL L/F	SHRIMP STATION	L/F	MERISTICS	STATION	SAMPLE	SPECIES	L/F	TOTAL	SEAMAP VERSION	DATE DBASED
AL	23	950	TRAP/VIDEO	3	1	1	*1	1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	3	3.1	04-Aug-95
AL	23	951	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	10	10	205	10	1440	10	316	*1	*1	*1	2001	3.2	01-Aug-96
AL	23	952	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	9	*1	*1	9	*1	*1	*1	9	9	*1	27	3.2	01-Aug-96
AL	23	953	WINTER SEAMAP	3	6	6	127	6	942	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1087	3.2	01-Aug-96
FL	26	951	SPRING ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	15	*1	*1	15	*1	*1	*1	15	45	*1	75	3.1	04-Aug-95
FL	26	952	FALL ICHTHYOPLANKTON	3	25	*1	*1	25	*1	*1	*1	25	74	*1	124	3.2	01-Mar-96
LA	35	951	SPRING SEAMAP	3	31	24	534	31	5361	20	166	*1	7	21	6188	3.2	30-Jul-96
LA	35	952	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	25	18	404	25	5024	15	352	*1	7	21	5884	3.2	30-Jul-96
LA	35	953	FALL SEAMAP	3	31	24	385	31	3316	19	271	*1	7	21	4098	3.2	30-Jul-96
MS	17	951	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	40	38	1126	40	9015	34	1051	*1	2	6	11350	3.2	23-May-96
MS	17	953	TRAP/VIDEO	3	8	8	5	8	29	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	58	3.2	23-May-96
MS	17	954	FALL SEAMAP	3	26	25	531	26	3103	*1	*1	*1	1	3	3714	3.2	23-May-96
SC	51	951	SPRING SEAMAP	3	210	210	4696	210	10439	92	987	*1	*1	*1	16844	3.1	21-Jul-95
SC	51	952	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	156	156	4075	156	11806	95	2053	*1	*1	*1	18497	3.2	01-Mar-96
SC	51	953	FALL SEAMAP	3	188	188	4229	188	9885	99	2206	*1	*1	*1	16983	3.2	12-Mar-96
TX	31	951	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	233	16	1184	6	55	*1	*1	*1	1526	3.2	30-Jul-96
TX	32	951	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	372	16	2621	15	365	*1	*1	*1	3421	3.2	30-Jul-96
TX	33	951	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	175	16	466	7	22	*1	*1	*1	718	3.2	30-Jul-96
TX	34	951	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	149	16	507	8	11	*1	*1	*1	723	3.2	30-Jul-96
TX	40	951	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	16	16	161	16	796	11	352	*1	*1	*1	1368	3.2	30-Jul-96
TX	31	952	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	237	16	780	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1065	3.2	24-Jul-96
TX	32	952	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	287	16	1581	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1916	3.2	24-Jul-96
TX	33	952	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	206	16	943	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	1197	3.2	24-Jul-96
TX	34	952	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	182	16	758	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	988	3.2	24-Jul-96
TX	40	952	FALL SEAMAP	3	16	16	120	16	363	*1	*1	*1	*1	*1	531	3.2	24-Jul-96
US	4	217	SUMMER SEAMAP	3	233	220	6353	203	45116	172	7538	*1	21	62	59897	3.2	20-Mar-96
US	4	219	FALL SEAMAP	3	249	234	7114	208	46287	*1	*1	*1	23	64	54156	3.2	11-Apr-96
TOTAL				1423	1322	31906	1352	161762	603	15745	117	326			214439		

02-Aug-96

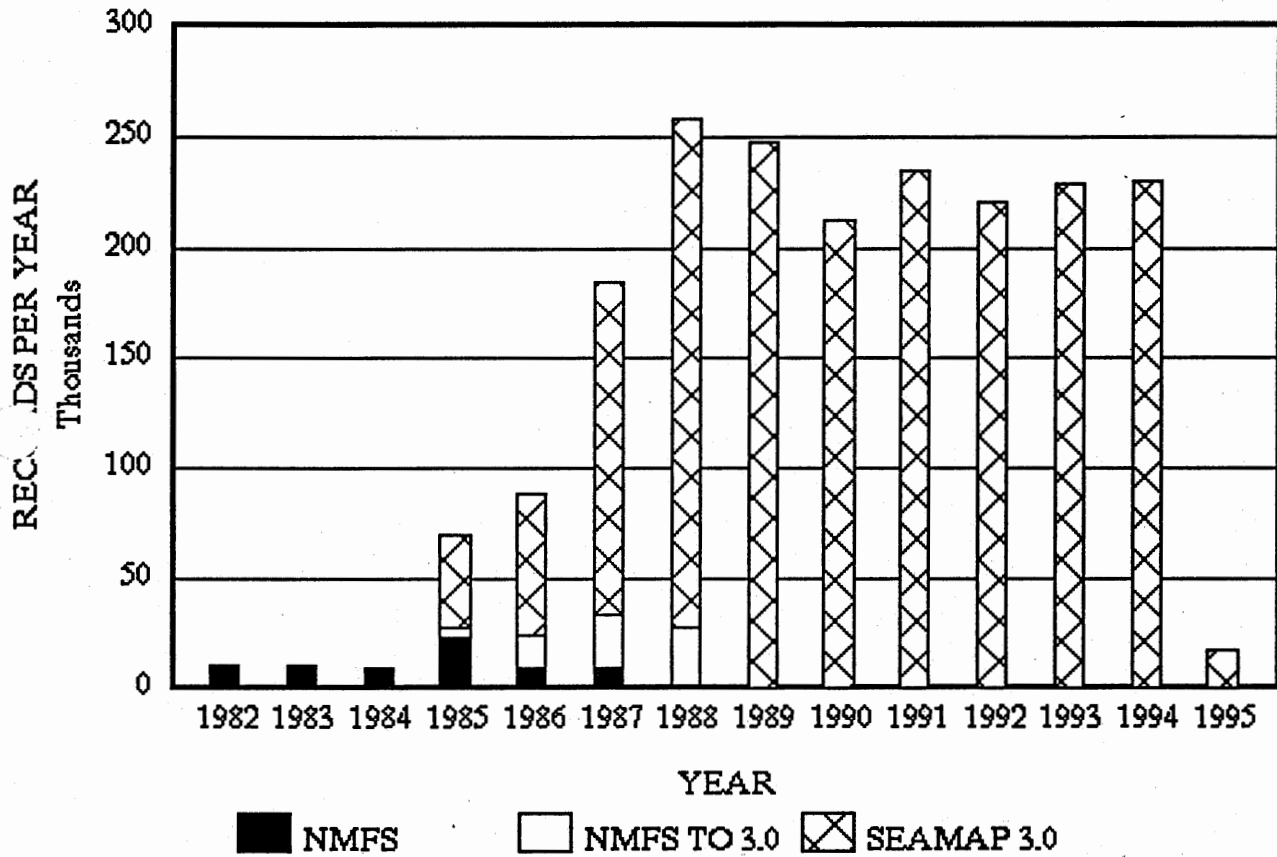
SEAMAP 1996

DATA SOURCE	VESSEL	CRUISE	INVENTORY STATUS	BIOLOGICAL STATION	SPECIES	ENVIRONMENTAL	GENERAL L/F	SHRIMP STATION	L/F	MERISTICS	STATION	SAMPLE	SPECIES	L/F	TOTAL	SEAMAP VERSION	DATE DBASED
LA	35	954	WINTER SEAMAP	3	31	24	462	31	4915	23	426	*1	7	19	5931	3.2	30-Jul-96
SC	51	961	SPRING SEAMAP	3	210	210	2615	210	7502	37	219	*1	*1	*1	11003	3.2	11-Jul-96
TOTAL				241	234	3077	241	12417	60	645	7	19			16934		

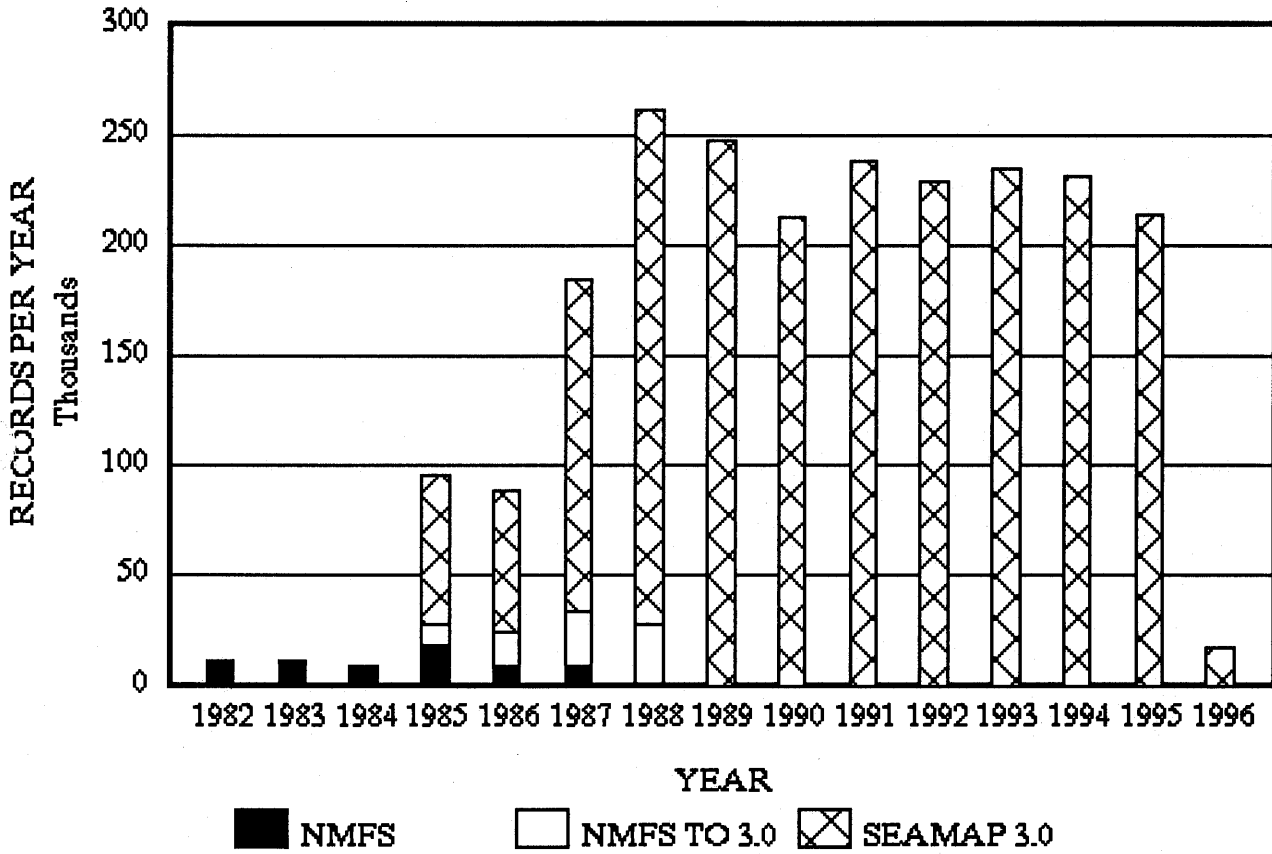
STATUS CODES:

- *1 NOT TAKEN
- 2 ENTERED IN P.C.
- 3 ENTERED ON MIAMI UNISYS A10 SYSTEM(VERIFIED AND DATA BASED)

SEAMAP TOTAL RECORDS BY YEAR



SEAMAP TOTAL RECORDS BY YEAR



SEAMAP - GULF, SOUTH ATLANTIC
AND CARIBBEAN SUBCOMMITTEES
JOINT MINUTES
Gulf Shores, Alabama
Monday, August 5, 1996

APPROVED BY:


COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Chairman Roger Pugliese called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. The following members and others were present:

Richard Waller, GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS
Joanne Shultz, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
James Hanifen, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Terry Cody, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Kim Williams, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL
Scott Nichols, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
Frederick "Buck" Sutter, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Ken Savastano, NMFS, SSC, MS
Walter Tatum, ADNCR, Gulf Shores, AL
Alan Huff, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL
David Whitaker, SCDNR, Charleston, SC
Roger Pugliese, SAFMC, Charleston SC
Jack Dunnigan, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Ginny Fay, NMFS/SERO, St. Petersburg, FL
John Merriner, NMFS/SEFSC, Beaufort, NC
Henry Ansley, GADNR, Brunswick, GA
Perry Thompson, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
David Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Robin Peuser, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Aida Rosario, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR
Cheryl Noble, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Adoption of Agenda

On Item 4, A. Rosario will give the overview of the Caribbean component and on Item 9, change FY1996 to FY1997. With these changes, the agenda was adopted.

Approval of Minutes

* On page 3, first line, delete no before logistics and on page 3, last line change Lyles to Lyle S. The budget figures on page 7 should be: Caribbean - \$113,700; Gulf - \$512,403; South Atlantic - \$285,387; NMFS - \$220,510; Total - \$1,132,000. **J. Hanifen moved to accept the amended minutes from the joint SEAMAP meeting held on August 6-7, 1995 in St. Croix, VI.** R. Waller seconded and it passed unanimously.

Overview of SEAMAP-Caribbean

Aida Rosario said the coordination and administration of the Caribbean SEAMAP Program was transferred last year from the Caribbean Fisheries Management Council to the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources. She said they are facing several problems but the main problem is there is no Director at the Fisheries Research Lab, which is the official host of their program. They are in the process of adjusting to these changes and trying to start over under this new management body.

They were able to finish the Queen Conch Survey last year. They sampled 60 stations off the west coast of Puerto Rico and 20 stations off the east coast. The population size of the conch on the west coast of Puerto Rico was estimated to be 373,000 conch and 697,000 conch on the east coast. There were several problems with the new stratification for this survey. Stratification of the conch fishery was difficult for the east coast due to the fact that the fishermen were not able to specifically pinpoint the area where they fished. So the results showed the densities found in "conch" and "non-conch" areas on the east coast were basically the same. They are looking forward to having a better idea/better stratification to establish the population conch size for the east coast when they do more conch surveys in the future.

The Virgin Islands have not started their conch survey due to circumstances beyond their control -- the loss of vessels during Hurricanes Marilyn and Bertha. They hope to start the survey by the end of this year and Puerto Rico hopes to start their Lobster survey by the end of the year also.

J. Hanifen asked if the Caribbean will know by the end of the year if they'll be able to spend this year's money. She said Puerto Rico will but she is not sure about the Virgin Islands. W. Tatum asked how soon will they know their ability to spend out the funds. She said she would have to check with S. Meyers because it depends on if they contract somebody or if they're going to do it within the Virgin Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife. If they have to contract, it will take a different time frame maybe 4-5 months. She doesn't know exactly where the Virgin Islands stands but their project year ends in March 1997. W. Tatum asked B. Sutter that in the event that the Caribbean is not going to be able to spend the remaining money is it possible to get an extension? He said yes, they will have the capability to extend the award period, the money will not be lost.

Overview of SEAMAP - Gulf

W. Tatum welcomed everyone to Alabama. He reported the Gulf distributed the following publications since the last Joint meeting: 1993 Atlas, Joint Annual Report, Annual Report to the GSMFC TCC, 1996 Marine Directory and the 1996 Real-time Shrimp/Groundfish summaries. They are currently working on the 1994 biological atlas. These publications are available through the GSMFC if anyone would like a copy.

The Gulf completed the following surveys: the 1995 Fall Plankton Survey which was conducted from September 9-September 29; the 1995 Fall Shrimp/Groundfish Survey which was conducted from October 12-January 12; the Louisiana Seasonal Trawl Surveys; the 1996 Spring

Ichthyoplankton survey which was conducted April 16-26; and the Reef Fish survey which began June 25 and will continue into late fall 1996, with NMFS, Alabama, Mississippi and Texas all participating; and the 1996 Summer Shrimp/Groundfish Survey has been conducted and all agencies with the exception of Florida participated.

The Gulf Subcommittee met in October 1995, in Mobile, Alabama, and at that meeting SEAMAP-Gulf sponsored a workshop regarding uses of fishery-independent data to management within marine fisheries management. It was a very successful workshop which was well attended and everybody learned a lot of useful information. The Red Drum Work Group met via conference call to discuss the status of the Red Drum tag/recapture study, an alternative to obtain information concerning the red drum stocks in the northern Gulf of Mexico

Overview of SEAMAP South Atlantic

R. Pugliese reported the South Atlantic was very active this year and they have distributed information that was used directly in management decisions. The most important component, the Shallow Water Trawl Survey, which is basically conducted by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, is a fishery-independent study designed to monitor the distribution and abundance of coastal species in the South Atlantic Bight and to measure environmental parameters in nearshore waters. This information is provided to cooperating agencies and there have been a significant number of requests for this information. Sampling during the 1996 cruises are conducted in three phases: Spring (April/May); Summer (June-August) and Fall (October/November). The strata used has been determined by the South Atlantic to be used from Cape Hatteras through Cape Canaveral, Florida. He stated that recent efforts in this survey have been posted on OMNET and the information has also been used in a MARFIN project that was investigating age, growth and reproductive biology of spot croaker, kingfish, weakfish, bluefish and flounder. Tissue samples were used by FISHTECH from weakfish, silver trout, flounder, penaeid shrimp for genetic stock assessment, and it was also used in biocontamination for menhaden, scad, grey trigger and black seabass. Age growth and reproductive biology was provided to NMFS for DNA analysis for sharks and rays.

The second major component, the Bottom Mapping Project, was initiated in 1985 but online information has only been available in the last couple of years. The intent of this project, because of the decline of reef fish species, is to determine what the distribution of hard bottom coral live bottom habitat is in the South Atlantic region. The idea is to compile all existing databases, have one unified group and make it fairly flexible and available on PC format so the information can be utilized. Eventually, detailed information on reef species will be extracted from the data sets but to date, the data base in Georgia evaluated FY93 and FY94 for North Carolina. In this last year Florida has been compiling information off of Florida and the SEAMAP-South Atlantic is at a very critical stage in terms of compiling all of this as a baseline to take the next step in the program and this will be discussed later in what is anticipated for the future of the bottom mapping project. This is very critical information. It has been used this year in the Rock Shrimp Plan, Shrimp Amendment 1 to the Council Plan where they closed a larger area, and has been useful in determining baseline

information for habitat distribution with amendments to Magnuson. The GMFMC has been directed to identify all critical essential habitats and this information will be used for that.

Another component, the Benthic Characterization Study, in which FDEP characterized structures and the general ecology of the South Atlantic benthic communities based on 1983, 1985 and 1987 SEAMAP cruises. This data has been compiled and provided to the SEAMAP data system and hopefully, by the end of this year we will have the ability to have some preliminary analysis of this information. Also, in cooperation with Florida, we have budgeted for GIS applications information to be available for distribution on benthic species use.

The Pamlico Sound survey in North Carolina is continuing. Trawl surveys are conducted in Pamlico Sound to obtain fishery-independent data on the distribution and relative abundance of size composition of important species and that data will be available to the SEAMAP data management system. The actual funding is still through the state but is identified as a SEAMAP component.

An additional survey that has been conducted since 1988 by the NCDNR is the tagging of striped bass off northeast North Carolina and it occurs between mid - January/February and has additional species such as red drum and blue fish, bluefin tuna, etc.

Publications distributed by the South Atlantic are the Annual Report, Trawl Survey Report, which was this year's analysis of the Shallow Water Trawl Survey with emphasis on important penaeid shrimp species and also important species such as king and spanish mackerel and weakfish. This report will guide additional stock assessment work in the South Atlantic on those species and will also help guide the GMFMC in developing protocol for future BRD testing in terms of identifying areas that may have more significant distributions of these species. A report on the estimate of finfish bycatch in the South Atlantic fishery has been completed and the GMFMC used this information in submitting Amendment 2 to the FMP in the South Atlantic region which requires the use of bycatch reduction devices in the region. Work is continuing on the management plan for 1996-2000 but the Executive Summary is complete and has been distributed at this meeting. In reference to the management plan and executive summary, the Subcommittee agreed that the main objective in distributing these documents are to get them to key people who will be making future fishery management decisions.

Status of NMFS Research Vessels

J. Dunnigan said that at the last ASMFC Annual Meeting, the Commission passed a resolution recommending to the states and congress that all steps necessary be taken to maintain the capability of doing at-sea research by having sufficient platforms available. Most of the fleet are NOAA research vessels and they are rapidly deteriorating. In June, all three Commissions sponsored a workshop to address this issue and the fishing community and NMFS people from all over the country attended. The main issue is that we have needs for research and we have to have the vessels to do the fishery-independent research and it doesn't matter who owns the vessels as long as they are available. The workshop participants came up with a series of findings and recommendations

and they are in the document *Maintaining Current & Future Fisheries Resource Survey Capabilities* (Attachment I). ASMFC endorsed these recommendations, GSMFC has sent out a mail ballot for endorsement, PSMFC will consider the document at their next annual meeting and MAFAC adopted a resolution supporting the need for maintaining and examining the need to rebuild at-sea research capabilities. This document will be distributed in several weeks and work is being done on a full set of proceedings from the workshop. J. Dunnigan said this is a very important issue and the Commissions need to keep Congress and key personnel in NOAA aware of how important it is.

Presentation of NMFS Long-Line Shark Survey

Perry Thompson from the NMFS Laboratory in Pascagoula, MS gave a presentation on the 1995 and ongoing 1996 Shark Assessment Survey in the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic. A summary of the presentation with figures and tables is attached (Attachment II).

Discussion of the Executive Summary of the SEAMAP Management Plan 1996-2000

R. Peuser distributed the *Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program Management Plan: 1996-2000 Executive Summary*. The strategic planning subgroup met in September for a final edit of the management plan and they also discussed a plan for distribution of the summary and plan. It was decided that the Directors of the Commissions and the Directors of the state agencies need to distribute the report to upper level NOAA/NMFS personnel and to key people in congress to try to get more money back into the SEAMAP budget. The group also discussed different possibilities in having more copies printed.

The Subcommittee also decided the 3 coordinators need to develop a presentation that can be used at scientific meetings to inform the scientific community about SEAMAP to let them know the data is available. The presentation should be a power-point presentation consisting of slides, summaries of the different surveys, overheads, etc. When the presentation is complete, it will also be put on the SEAMAP web page.

Status of FY1997 Funds

S. Nichols reported that the Senate has appropriated \$1.2 million for SEAMAP and the House \$900,000, and recommended the components consider level funding when discussing the 1997 budget and if there is a significant difference in the amount received, he and the chairs will meet to decide how the money will be allocated. The amount to be considered should be \$1,132,000.00.

Last year's breakdown is as follows:

Caribbean	\$ 113,700
Gulf	512,403
South Atlantic	285,387
NMFS	<u>220,510</u>
TOTAL	\$1,132,000

Joint Discussion of SEAMAP Budget Needs

After extensive discussion, each component decided to stand at level funding. W. Tatum expressed his concerns on the SEAMAP becoming an analytical program, he feels each component should stay with the basic concept of SEAMAP by gathering data not analyzing it. If the Virgin Islands are not able to spend out their portion of the money, and it goes back into SEAMAP, the Chairmen and the Program Manager will meet to decide how the money will be distributed. Also, if SEAMAP receives a different amount than anticipated, the Chairmen and the Program Manager will meet to decide how the money will be distributed.

The breakdown is as follows:

Caribbean	\$ 113,700
Gulf	512,403
South Atlantic	285,387
NMFS	<u>220,510</u>
TOTAL	\$1,132,000

Grants Administration - Document Preparation

B. Sutter distributed a new *Guidelines for Noncompetitive Financial Awards* document and stated it is more user friendly than previous documents. He also informed the group that D. Pritchard may be retiring soon and he will keep them informed.

Planning for 1997 Joint Annual Meeting

The next joint meeting will be in Charleston, SC tentatively scheduled for August 3-5, 1997.

Other Business

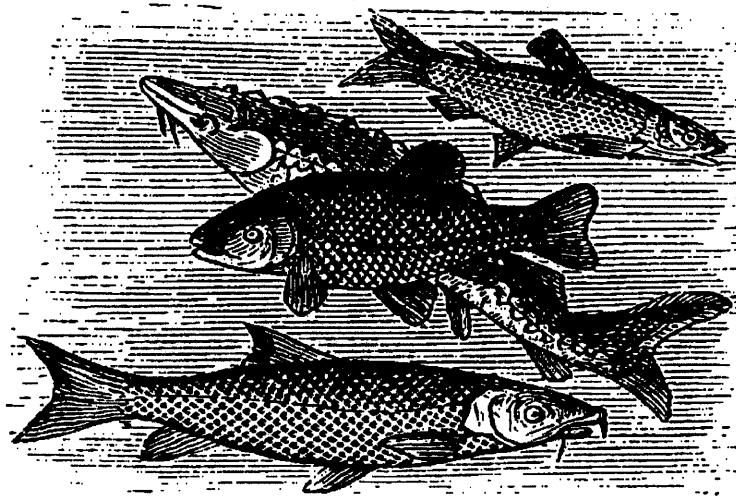
J. Dunnigan distributed a 1995 State Contributions's in kind support form of the SEAMAP-South Atlantic and stated it is very important to show the state contributions for SEAMAP and asked the Gulf to consider doing a similar form. After discussion, the Gulf component said they would discuss this at their next meeting.

J. Dunnigan congratulated Walter Tatum on his upcoming retirement and thanked him for all of his contributions to the SEAMAP program.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

ATTACHMENT I

Maintaining Current & Future
Fisheries Resource Survey
Capabilities
Workshop Findings & Recommendations



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

June 1996

Introduction

The Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commissions convened a *Workshop on Maintaining Current & Future Fisheries Resource Survey Capabilities* in Alexandria, Virginia on June 10 & 11, 1996. Participants included: representatives of state, interstate, federal, and academic organizations involved in marine fisheries research and management; representatives of the fishing industry; representatives from federal, state, industry, university, and private sector organizations which provide vessel capability for sea-going research; and other interested persons. The Workshop's goal was to develop consensus recommendations for maintaining the capability of collecting long-term fishery-independent data from fishery surveys, while ensuring the viability and comparability of past survey data to current and future data. The objectives of the workshop were: (1) to identify and discuss critical technical and scientific issues on maintaining the capability to collect long-term fisheries resource data; (2) to develop broad standards for the collection of long-term data to ensure continuity and quality of the data; (3) to develop and compare various options for conducting long-term fishery resource surveys with consideration of existing and possible future resources from federal, state, private (industry), and university sources; and (4) to recommend preferred options or actions for both the short-term (one to five years) and the long-term (greater than five years).

Background

Fisheries scientists and managers rely on the Department of Commerce (DOC) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) data collection capabilities to support scientific assessment of the status of fishery resources and fishery management decision-making at the federal, regional, interstate, and state levels. NOAA currently maintains and operates a fleet of research vessels, eight of which are used by the National Marine Fisheries Service for conducting fisheries research, including long-term resource surveys. The NOAA fleet consists of aging vessels, some of which are fast approaching the end of their usefulness. NOAA has developed a plan for replacing/modernizing their fleet for Congress' consideration; however, it has not been submitted to Congress for approval. In addition, Congress has been considering several proposals which may affect NOAA's future capability to conduct fisheries resource surveys, including proposals to dismantle the DOC, to privatize the NOAA fleet, to use alternatives to a NOAA-owned and -operated fleet, and to eliminate or reduce funding for the NOAA fleet.

- There have been conflicts between scientists and survey vessel captains concerning vessel operations, other than safety-related operations, which adversely impact accomplishment of survey objectives.
- For some resource surveys (e.g., those using trawls as samplers), survey vessel noise and its effects on sampled resources may have a significant effect on precision and accuracy of survey results (e.g., causing a bias in estimates of population trends when survey vessels are changed).

Opportunities for Improvements

- Adequacy of scientific information needed for management depends on the established goals and the degree of acceptable risk or uncertainty. Increased precision and accuracy of fishery-independent data require improved survey design and, often, increased commitment, sample sizes, and/or sampling frequency.
- Several new promising technologies are currently being developed which could enhance collection of important fishery-independent data sets.
- Cooperative state/federal programs, such as the Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP), have proven to be a cost-effective means of producing viable long-term fishery-independent data.
- The private sector has indicated a strong interest and capability to provide fishery research platforms and operations in cooperation with fishery management agencies.
- Increased communication of scientific survey methodologies and of the need for fishery-independent data collection is necessary to foster understanding of the value of such data and/or to generate support among fisheries constituents for replacement of NOAA's aging fisheries research fleet.

Develop Cooperative Fisheries Survey Programs

- Efforts should be continued for developing new cooperative partnerships to address research vessel survey needs.
- Expansion of existing regional state/federal cooperative vessel reliant programs, such as SEAMAP, is encouraged throughout the U.S. to improve and develop cost-effective, long-term fishery independent data sets.
- Flexibility should be incorporated into the overall research vessel survey program to allow timely response to unexpected research needs and changes in stock status.
- A coalition should be formed to design (a) comprehensive resource survey program(s) that has buy-in from all stakeholders and a long-term commitment in terms of statistical design and long-term funding. The program should involve broad input and flexibility.
- A research planning process that ensures incorporation of input from all affected constituents, responsible management agencies and interested parties should be adopted to enhance fisheries data collection stock assessment activities.

Increase Communications

- Communication should be improved among marine fisheries management agencies and relevant constituents (commercial and recreational fishing sectors, environmental conservation organizations, academia, general public) concerning the need for and use of long-term fishery-independent data.
- A plan should be developed to more effectively communicate with constituents.
- In addition, fishery management agencies and other interested parties should clarify to decision-makers and fisheries constituents that reduction of current fishery resource survey capability and/or decreases in parameter estimate precision will result in greater uncertainty in stock status, hence requiring more conservative management regimes.

For more information or to obtain a copy of the workshop summary report,
please contact:



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1444 Eye Street, N.W.
Sixth Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202)289-6400 (phone) (202)289-6051 (fax)



Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
P.O. Box 726
Ocean Shores, MS 39566-0726
(601)875-5912 (phone) (601)875-6604 (fax)



Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
45 Southeast 82nd Drive
Suite 100
Gladstone, OR 97927-2522
(503)650-5400 (phone) (503)650-5426 (fax)

I. SHARK LANDINGS

COMMERCIAL LANDINGS OF COASTAL AND OCEANIC SHARKS IN THE

ATLANTIC AND GULF OF MEXICO INCREASED FROM 135 METRIC TONS IN 1979

TO 7,122 MTS IN 1989. RECREATIONAL LANDINGS DURING THIS SAME 10 YEAR

PERIOD DECREASED FROM 11,512 MTS TO 1,666 MTS.

II. A FMP FOR SHARKS WAS IMPLEMENTED IN 1993 (TABLE 2)

A. ONE OF THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVES OF THE FMP WAS TO ESTABLISH A DATA COLLECTION, RESEARCH AND MONITORING PROGRAM.

B. THE FMP SEPARATED SHARKS INTO THREE GROUPS FOR MANAGEMENT PURPOSES:

1. LARGE COASTAL SHARKS ARE DIRECTLY TARGETED PRIMARILY FOR THEIR MEAT IN THE U.S. AND FINS FOR THE ASIAN MARKET.
2. SMALL COASTAL SHARKS ARE CAUGHT PRIMARILY INSIDE OF THE EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE (EEZ) IN STATE CONTROLLED WATERS AND ARE NOT YET SUBJECT TO A QUOTA.
3. PELAGICS SHARKS ARE TAKEN BY THE TUNA/SWORDFISH LONGLINE FISHERY.

III. INTEGRATED SHARK RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT PROJECT (ISHARK) DEVELOPED A NMFS-WIDE COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM IN 1995

A. ISHARK RESEARCH GOALS:

1. COLLECT BIOLOGICAL DATA- LENGTH, WEIGHT, SEX AND AGE; INFORMATION ON TAGGING DATA TO STUDY MIGRATION PATTERNS AND NATURAL MORTALITY; DNA DATA; BEHAVIORAL STUDIES; INFORMATION ON NURSERY GROUNDS AND HABITATE.
2. COLLECT SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA- FROM COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FISHERMAN, COLLECT DATA ON NUMBER OF FISHERMAN, LOCATION, AVERAGE PRICE, INCOME, ETC.
3. CONDUCT RESEARCH ASSESSMENT SURVEYS- TO DETERMINE ABUNDANCE AND DISTRIBUTION OF SHARK STOCKS.

IV. MISSISSIPPI LABORATORIES IMPLEMENTED A GULF/ATLANTIC SHARK ASSESSMENT SURVEY IN 1995. (FIGURE 1 & 2)

1. OBJECTIVE- TO ASSESS THE ABUNDANCE AND DISTRIBUTION OF COASTAL SHARKS AND ASSOCIATED FINFISH CAUGHT ON BOTTOM LONGLINE.
2. AREA OF OPERATIONS- GULF OF MEXICO AND ATLANTIC TO KITTY HAWK, NC
3. SURVEY DESIGN- SURVEY SITES WERE SELECTED AT RANDOM WITHIN 3 DEPTH STRATA (10 TO 20, 20 TO 30 AND 30 TO 40 FATHOMS) WITHIN CONSECUTIVE 60 NAUTICAL MILE GRIDS, 3 SITES/GRID. THE ATLANTIC STATIONS WERE RANDOMLY SELECTED BETWEEN 10 TO 40 FATHOMS FROM STATIONS SAMPLED DURING A 1986 SHARK TAGGING CRUISE.
4. GEAR- BOTTOM LONGLINE 1.2 NM (FIGURE 3)
 - A. MAINLINE- 0.4 MM DIAMETER 940 LB TEST MONO

- B. GANGIONS – 0.35 MM DIAMETER 730 LB TEST MONO
- C. HOOKS – 100 3/0 MUSTAD HOOKS
- D. AK SNAPS
- E. BUOYS AND RADAR REFLECTORS
- F. ANCHORS (28-LB)

5. METHODOLOGY – THE MAINLINE IS DEPLOYED AT APPROXIMATELY 4 KNOTS OFF THE STERN. 100 GANGIONS/HOOKS ARE BAITED WITH ATLANTIC MACKEREL AND ATTACHED TO THE MAINLINE AT 60-FT INTERVALS. SOAK TIME IS ONE HOUR FROM THE TIME THE LAST WEIGHT WENT OVER TO THE INITIATION OF RETRIEVAL OF THE MAINLINE.

THE MAINLINE WAS RETRIEVED FROM THE BOW AT APPROXIMATELY 2 KNOTS DIRECTLY ONTO THE WINCH.

THE CATCH WAS EITHER HELD AT THE SURFACE TO BE TAGGED, IDENTIFIED AND TO OBTAIN AN ESTIMATED LENGTH/WEIGHT OR BROUGHT ABOARD FOR MEASUREMENTS, TETRACYCLINE INJECTION FOR AGE DETERMINATION AND TAGGED BEFORE BEING RELEASED. DEAD SHARKS AND OTHER SPECIES WERE BROUGHT ABOARD, TAGGED WITH A SPECIMEN TAG AND PUT ASIDE TO WORKED UP AFTER THE SET. DEAD SHARKS AND OTHER SPECIES WERE WEIGHTED, MEASURED AND DISECTED FOR PARASITES AND DNA.

6. RESULTS FROM THE 1995 SHARK SURVEY (TABLE 3)

1996 MISSISSIPPI LABORATORY GULF AND ATLANTIC SHARK SURVEY.

V. A. SURVEY AREA INCLUDES GULF OF MEXICO AND FROM MIAMI TO CANADA FROM JULY 31 TO SEPTEMBER 22, 1996 (FIGURE 4)

B. SAME GEAR AS USED IN THE 1995 SHARK ASSESSMENT SURVEY.

C. SAMPLING DESIGN WAS IDENTICAL TO THE 1995 GULF SURVEY WITH STATIONS RANDOMLY SELECTED WITHIN THREE DEPTH STRATA WITHIN CONSECUTIVE 60 NAUTICAL MILE GRIDS.

OTHER SHARK ACTIVITIES

VI. A. THE GULF AND SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERIES FOUNDATION IS CURRENT BUILDING A DATA BASE WITH MARFIN MONEY TO DEVELOP A OBSERVER PROGRAM TO COLLECT SHARK DEPENDENT DATA.

B. NMFS PANAMA CITY LAB AND MOTE MARINE INSTITUTE ARE DEVELOPING GILL NET SURVEY TECHNIQUES WHICH WILL BE USED TO ID NURSERY AREAS.

C. NARRAGANSETT LAB INVOLVED IN STUDING THE SHARK BIOLOGY AND MIGRATION.

D. UNIVERSITIES ARE ACTIVELY PARTICIPANTS ON SURVEYS AND COLLECTING DNA, PARASITES, ETC

E. STATES – A NUMBER OF STATES ARE SUPPLYING SHARK DATA FROM THEIR GILLNET SURVEYS. TEXAS HAS INVITED NMFS TO PARTICIPATE IN THEIR GILL NET SURVEYS. MARK GRACE WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH THE STATES IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

VII. SEAMAP SHARK SURVEY?

A. SEAMAP WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT VEHICLE FOR CONDUCTING A SHARK SURVEY.

THE STATES WOULD SAMPLE THE SMALL COASTAL SHARKS (0 TO 10 FATHOM) WHILE NMFS WOULD SAMPLE THE LARGE COASTAL AND PELAGIC SHARKS.

**PRESENTATION TO THE
GULF, ATLANTIC AND CARIBBEAN SEAMAP SUBCOMMITTEE
ON THE
1995 AND 1996 GULF AND ATLANTIC BOTTOM LONGLINE SHARK SURVEY
CONDUCTED BY THE
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
SOUTHEAST FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER
MISSISSIPPI LABORATORIES**

– SHARK LANDINGS IN THE ATLANTIC AND GULF OF MEXICO

	1979		1989
COMMERCIAL	135 MTS	TO	7,122 MTS
RECREATIONAL	11,512 MTS	TO	1,666 MTS

– THE INCREASE IN LANDINGS WAS DUE TO A COMBINATION OF FACTORS

- A. INCREASED FISHING EFFORT**
- B. FAVORABLE MARKET FOR SHARK PRODUCTS**
- C. IMPROVED FISHING TECHNIQUES**

TABLE 2. MANAGEMENT UNITS FOR SHARKS OF THE ATLANTIC AND GULF OF MEXICO (NOAA 1993).

LARGE COASTAL SHARKS	
SANDBAR	CARCHARHINUS PLUMBEUS
BLACKTIP	CARCHARHINUS LIMBATUS
DUSKY	CARCHARHINUS OBSCURUS
SPINNER	CARCHARHINUS BREVIPPINNA
SILKY	CARCHARHINUS FALCIFORMIS
BULL	CARCHARHINUS LEUCAS
BIGNOSE	CARCHARHINUS ALTIMUS
NARROWTOOTH	CARCHARHINUS BRACHYURUS
GALAPAGOS	CARCHARHINUS GALAPAGENSIS
NIGHT	CARCHARHINUS SIGNATUS
CARIBBEAN REEF	CARCHARHINUS PEREZI
TIGER	GALEOCERDO CUVIERI
LEMON	NEGAPRION BREVIROSTRIS
SAND TIGER	ODONTASPIS TAURUS
BIGEYE SAND TIGER	ODONTASPIS NORONHAI
NURSE	GINGLYMOSTOMA CIRRATUM
SCALLOPED HAMMERHEAD	SPHYRNA LEWINI
GREAT HAMMERHEAD	SPHYRNA MOKARRAN
SMOOTH HAMMERHEAD	SPHYRNA ZYGAENA
WHALE	RHINCODON TYPUS
BASKING	CETORHINUS MAXIMUS
WHITE	CARCHARODON CARCHARIAS

SMALL COASTAL SHARKS	
ATLANTIC SHARPNOSE	RHIZOPRIONODON TERRAENOVAE
CARIBBEAN SHARPNOSE	RHIZOPRIONODON POROSUS
FINETOOTH	CARCHARHINUS ISODON
BLACKNOSE	CARCHARHINUS ACRONOTUS
SMALLTAIL	CARCHARHINUS POROSUS
BONNETHEAD	SPHYRNA TIBURO
ATLANTIC ANGEL	SQUATINA DUMERILI

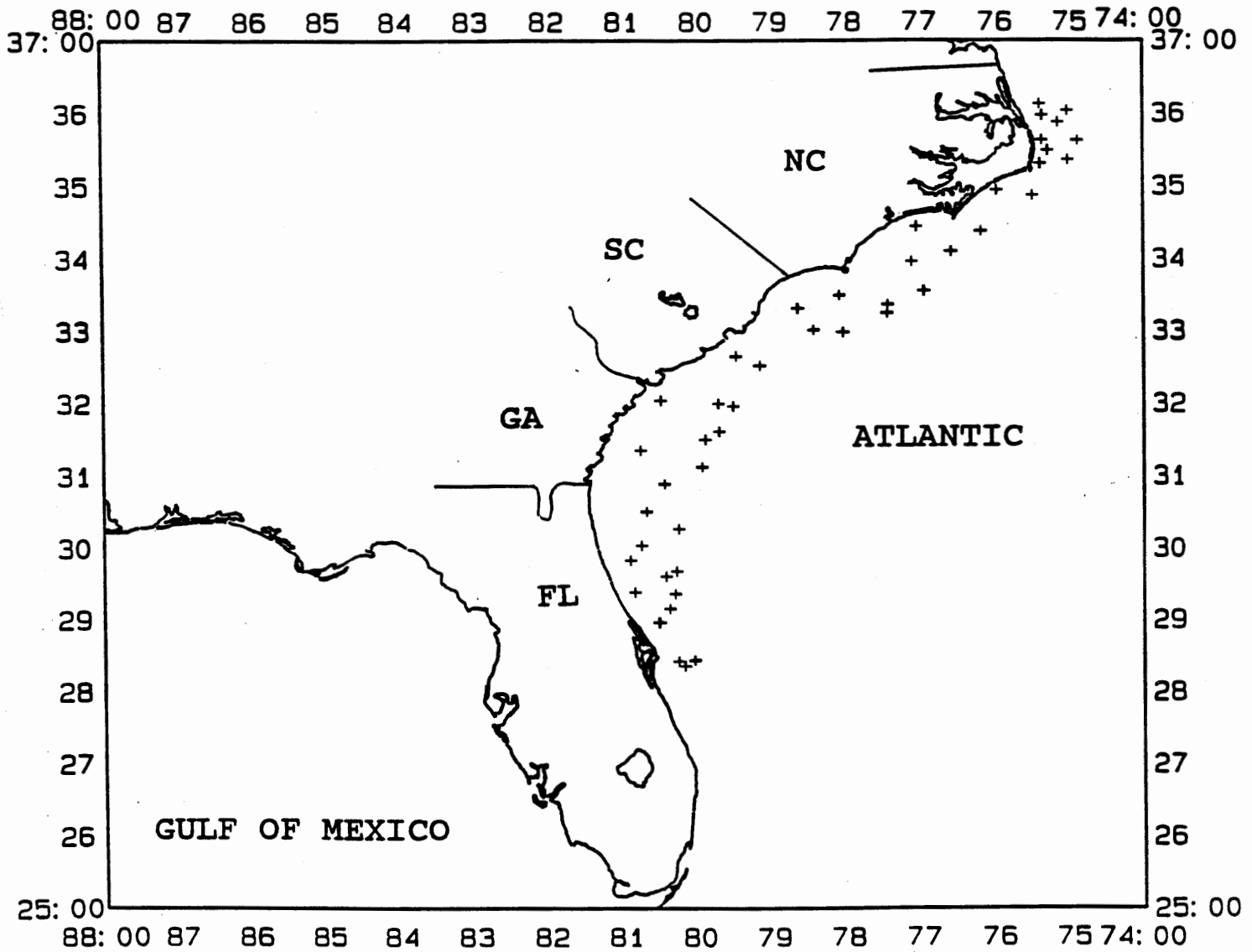
PELAGIC SHARKS	
SHORTFIN MAKO	ISURUS OXYRINCHUS
LONGFIN MAKO	ISURUS PAUCUS
PORBEAGLE	LAMNA NASUS
THRESHER	ALOPIAS VULPINUS
BIGEYE THRESHER	ALOPIAS SUPERCILIOUSUS
BLUE	PRIONACE GLAUCA
WHITETIP	CARCHARHINUS LONGIMANUS
SEVENGILL	HEPTRANCHIAS PERLO
SIXGILL	HEXANCHUS GRISEUS
BIGEYE SIXGILL	HEXANCHUS VITULUS

**INTEGRATED SHARK RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT PROJECT (ISHARK)
DEVELOPED A NMFS – WIDE COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM IN 1995.**

A. ISHARK RESEARCH GOALS:

- 1. COLLECT BIOLOGICAL DATA– LENGTH, WEIGHT, SEX AND AGE; INFORMATION ON TAGGING DATA TO STUDY MIGRATION PATTERNS AND NATURAL MORTALITY; DNA DATA; BEHAVIORAL STUDIES; INFORMATION ON NURSERY GROUNDS AND HABITATE.**
- 2. COLLECT SOCIO–ECONOMIC DATA– FROM COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FISHERMAN COLLECT DATA ON NUMBER OF FISHERMAN, LOCATION, AVERAGE PRICE, INCOME, ETC.**
- 3. CONDUCT RESEARCH ASSESSMENT SURVEYS– TO DETERMINE ABUNDANCE AND DISTRIBUTION OF SHARK STOCKS.**

Figure 1. Location of sites sampled during the Atlantic Shark Assessment Survey by the NOAA Ship RELENTLESS in depths of 10 to 40 fathoms between Cape Canaveral, FL and Kitty Hawk, NC, cruise 952 August 10-24, 1995.



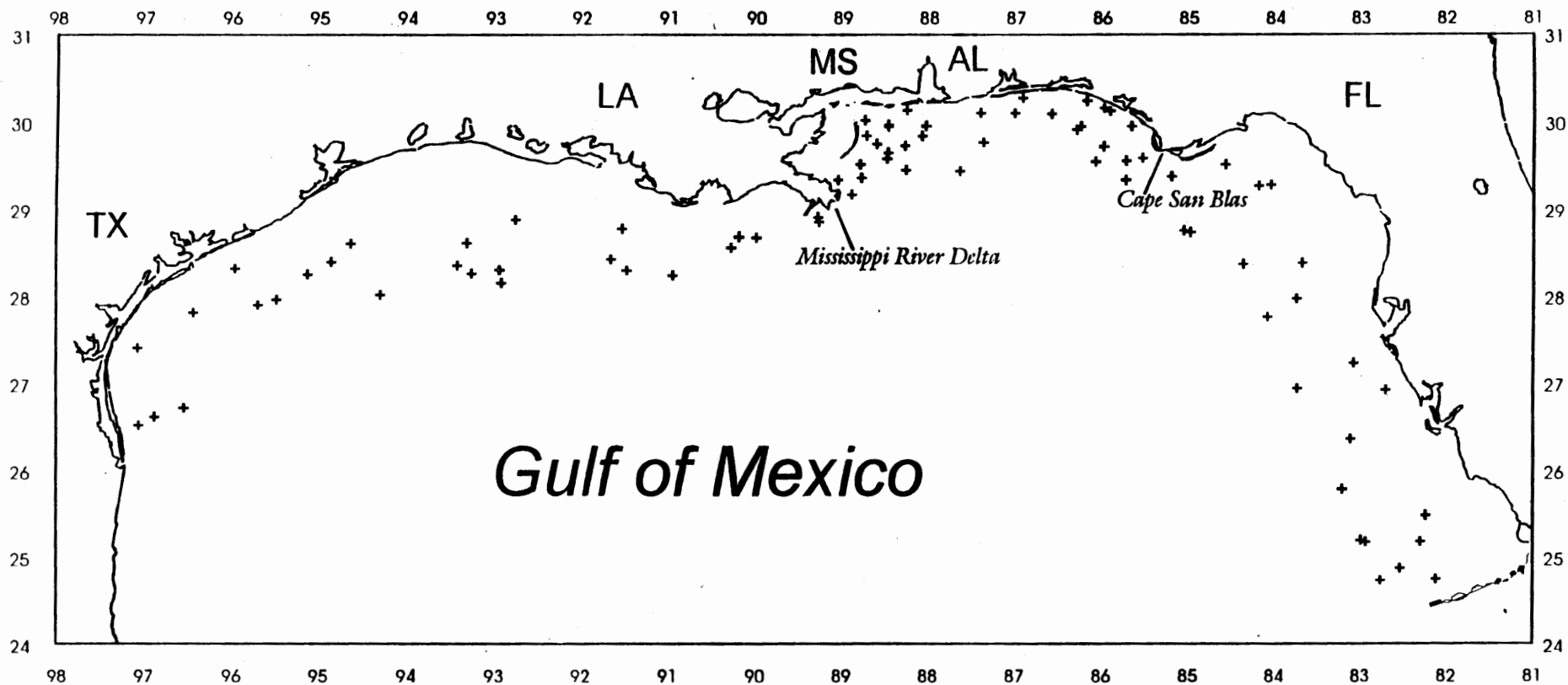


Figure 2. Location of sites sampled during the Gulf of Mexico Shark Assessment Survey by the NOAA Ship OREGON II in depths of 10 to 40 fathoms between Brownsville, TX and the Florida Keys, FL, Cruise 218 July 23 to August 17, 1995.

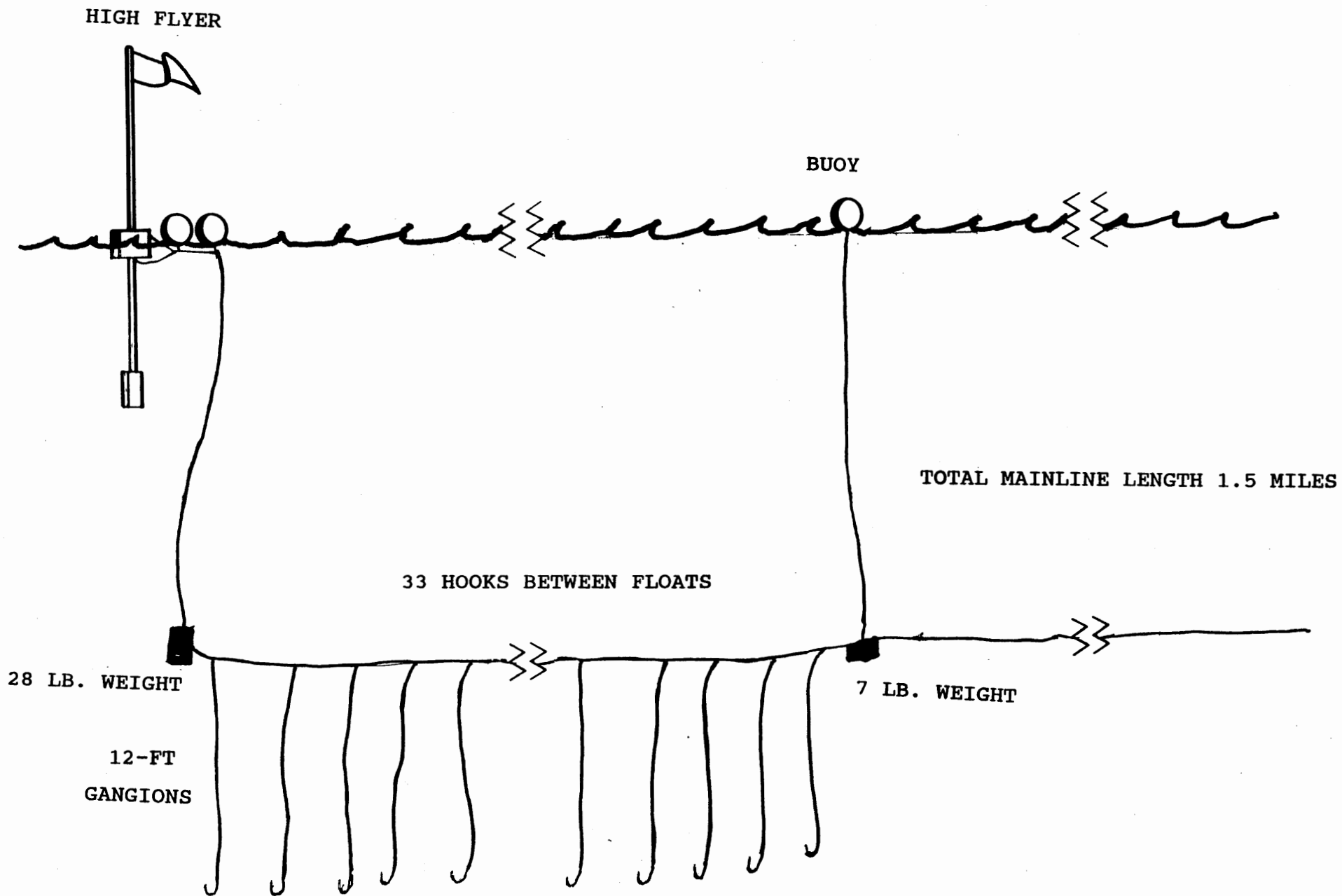


Figure 1a. Bottom longline gear configuration used to conduct the 1995 Shark Assessment survey in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic.

TABLE 3. NUMBER AND CATCH PER UNIT EFFORT (CPUE)/SET OF SHARKS COLLECTED BY NMFS IN THE 1995 GULF OF MEXICO AND ATLANTIC SHARK ASSESSMENT SURVEY.

SHARK SPECIES	ATLANTIC		GULF OF MEXICO	
	NUMBER	CPUE	NUMBER	CPUE
ATLANTIC SHARPNOSE	109	2.422	150	1.829
TIGER	50	1.111	17	0.207
SANDBAR	15	0.333	16	0.195
BLACKTIP	0	—	26	0.317
BLACKNOSE	0	—	17	0.207
SCALLOPED HAMMERHEAD	3	0.067	8	0.098
GREAT HAMMERHEAD	4	0.089	5	0.061
SMOOTH DOGFISH	0	—	8	0.098
BULL	0	—	7	0.085
SILKY	0	—	6	0.073
NURSE	4	0.089	2	0.024
SPINNER	0	—	6	0.073
FINETOOTH	0	—	4	0.049
SAND TIGER	1	0.022	0	—
DUSKY	1	0.022	0	—
TAGGED/RELEASED	130	—	133	—
SPECIMENS SAMPLED	51	—	111	—
LOST	6	—	28	—
TOTAL SPECIES CAUGHT	187	4.156	272	3.290
NUMBER SETS	45	—	82	—
NUMBER HOOKS SET	4492	—	8200	—

FIGURE 4. 1996 ATLANTIC AND GULF OF MEXICO SHARK SURVEY AREA

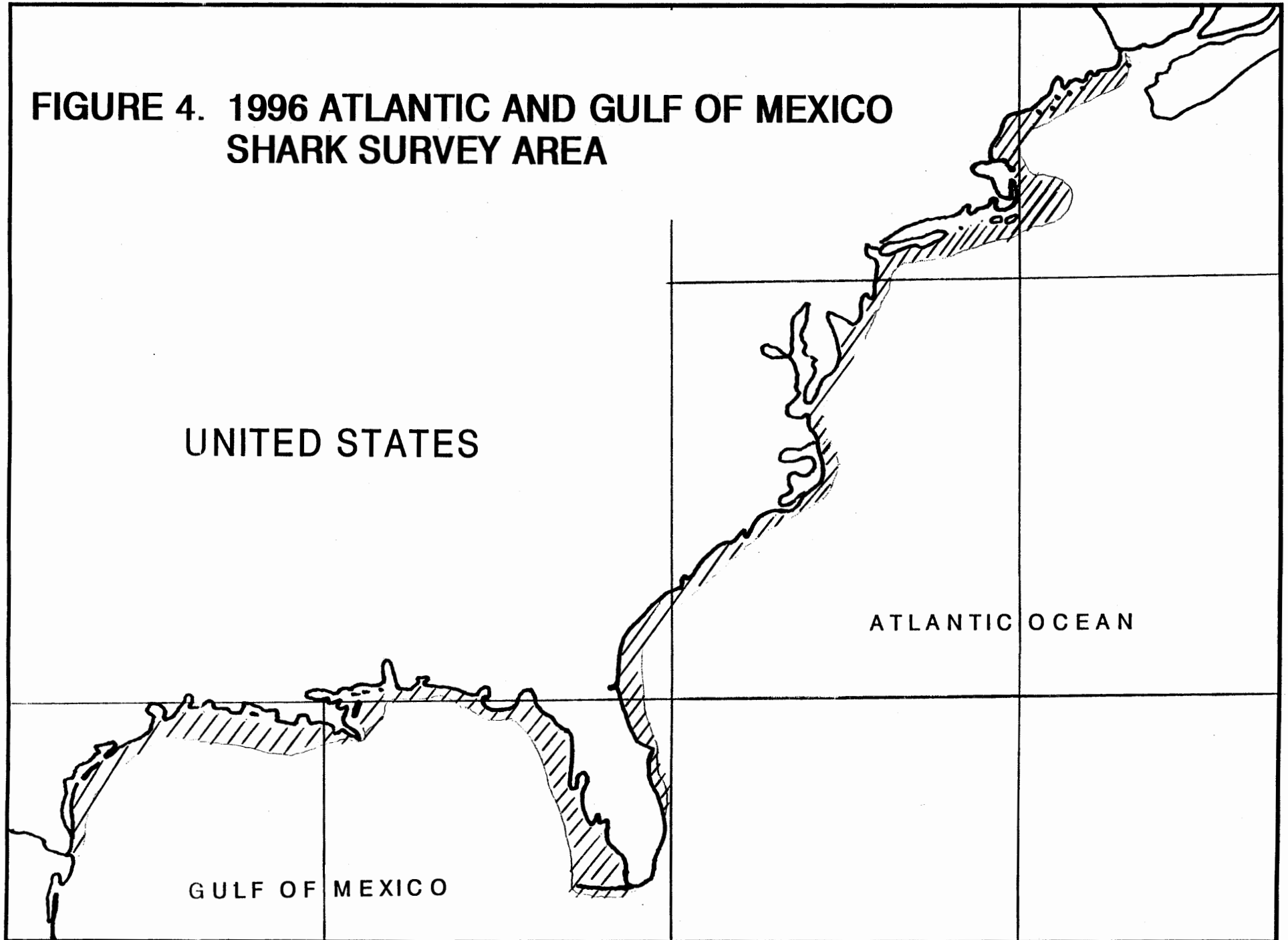


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APPROVED BY:


COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

**FLOUNDER TECHNICAL
TASK FORCE MINUTES
August 29-30, 1996
New Orleans, Louisiana**

Chairman Mike Johnson called the Flounder Technical Task Force (TTF) to order at 1:40 p.m. The following were in attendance:

Members

Chuck Adams, Florida Sea Grant Program, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL
Mike Brainard, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, Biloxi, MS
Steve Hein, Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries, Marine Fisheries Division,
Bourg, LA
Rebecca Hensley, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, Coastal Fisheries Division,
Corpus Christi, TX
Mike Johnson, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, South Florida Regional
Laboratory, Marathon, FL
Mark Van Hoose, Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, Marine
Resources Division, Dauphin Island, AL

Staff

Jim Duffy, Program Coordinator, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Cindy Yocom, Staff Assistant, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Introductions

Jim Duffy introduced himself to the group as the new IJF Program Coordinator and stated that he looked forward to working with the group on the development of the flounder FMP. He stressed that his role is to support the task force in any way possible throughout plan development.

Adoption of Agenda

Chuck Adams moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Mike Johnson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Adoption of Minutes

The Flounder Technical Task Force (TTF) reviewed the minutes from their organizational meeting held April 25-26, 1996, in New Orleans, Louisiana. Mike Brainard noted one change, and Mark Van Hoose moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Mike Johnson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Commercial, Recreational, and Sociological Representatives

Jim Duffy informed the TTF that Paul Seymour, President of Seymour & Sons, Seafood, Inc. in D'Iberville, Mississippi, has agreed to represent the commercial sector on the task force. Unfortunately, Steve Thomas, the sociological expert, has resigned. Vacancies on the TTF include the recreational and sociological positions. Duffy asked if TTF members had suggestions for these positions. Steve Hein volunteered to contact a fishing guide who works out of Empire, Louisiana, and Chuck Adams will contact Susanna Smith, a sociologist from the University of Florida.

Stock Assessment Team Update

Jim Duffy reported that the Stock Assessment Team met August 14-15, 1996, in Gulf Shores, Alabama. Available data were reviewed by the SAT, and the SAT is attempting to determine whether there are enough available data to perform (a) stock assessment/assessments for flounder. Several SAT members noted broad flounder and asked if the TTF might consider including that species also.

Mike Johnson noted that everything west of Mobile should provide a good assessment for southern flounder, but east of Mobile may be problematic since the data will have to include the combination of gulf and southern flounder. The TTF agreed that broad flounder is too small a component of the fishery to speciate in the FMP. The TTF requested the SAT look at available data and take an approach similar to that of the spotted seatrout stock assessment where individual state stock assessments were done.

Discussion ensued by the task force regarding the problems associated with a multi-species plan. The consensus of the group was that for most sections, a multi-species FMP including southern and gulf flounder will not be difficult. The only section that may prove problematic is the stock assessment section.

Review of Section Progress

Sections 1 & 2 (Summary and Introduction) - will be completed by staff with input from the entire TTF.

Section 3 (Description of the Stock Comprising the Management Unit) - Drafts of section 3 were distributed by Mike Johnson, Rebecca Hensley, and Steve Hein. R. Hensley requested age and growth and genetics literature from the task force. Chuck Adams will contact the Florida Marine Fisheries Commission to obtain data on gig users in the fishery and will forward to R. Hensley. Staff will distribute the Frick paper to Hensley as well as the Colura memos to Hein and Johnson. Hein agreed to combine drafts of section 3, and Johnson will send his portion to Hein on disk.

Section 4 (Description of Essential Habitats) - Due to other commitments, Dave Ruple was unable to attend the task force meeting. Jim Duffy noted the Habitat Subcommittee is enthusiastic about their role in the development of FMPs. Mr. Ruple will act as the point-man on flounder activity and will obtain input from the entire Habitat Subcommittee as the section develops.

Section 5 (Fishery Management Jurisdiction, Laws...) - Jack King is working with the state representatives on the Law Enforcement Committee to obtain a comprehensive compilation of laws affecting the flounder fishery. Unfortunately, he was unable to attend the task force meeting due to legislative conflicts.

Section 6 (Description of the Fishery) - Mark Van Hoose reported that he has a rough draft in hand but needs landings and catch per unit of effort data from each state. Chuck Adams has landings by state for 1985 through 1995 and will send to Van Hoose. Mike Brainard will send available Mississippi information. Van Hoose noted the problem with the validity of landings data since recreational fishermen may be gigging flounder and selling them to restaurants.

Section 7 & 8 (Description of Processing/Economic Characters) - Chuck Adams has been collecting data and has enough information to compile a draft of section 8 by October. The Market Survey for Section 7 is being drafted and will be sent to the TTF for their input prior to distribution. R. Hensley will obtain a list of dealers for Texas, and Alabama's list is being obtained by GSMFC staff. The survey will be brief and sent out via GSMFC to processors with prepaid return postage. A follow-up postcard will also be sent.

Section 9 (Social and Cultural Framework) - Chuck Adams agreed to contact Susanna Smith at the University of Florida. Task Force members should send in any information that might be helpful in the development of this section.

Section 10 (Management Considerations) - All representatives should send in problems and perceived problems of the fishery to be included in this section. Once complete, data from the stock assessment will be included.

Section 11 (Potential Management Measures) - Jim Duffy agreed to draft a section specific to the flounder fishery.

Section 12 (Management Recommendations) - This section will be written as the FMP progresses.

Section 13 (Regional Research Priorities and Data Requirements) - All groups associated with the development of the flounder FMP will have input on this section. The TTF should note research priorities and data needs throughout plan development to include here.

Section 14 (Review and Monitoring of the Plan) - Staff

Section 15 (References) - Jim Duffy will compile references as received by the TTF. Task Force members were requested to send all documents that will be referenced in the FMP to the GSMFC office.

Timetable/Next Meeting

The task force agreed to have section drafts by December 1996. A tentative meeting to review progress was scheduled for January 16-17, 1997, in New Orleans.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned Friday, August 30, 1996, at 10:30 a.m.

APPROVED BY:


COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

ComFIN COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, September 25, 1996
St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands

Vice Chairman, Joe Moran, called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. The following members, staff, and others were present:

Members:

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL
Theo Brainerd, SAFMC, Charleston, SC
Julie Califf, GDNR, Brunswick, GA
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dee Lupton, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR
Steve Meyers, USVIDFW, St. Thomas, VI
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

Others:

Aaron Adams, USVIDFW, Frederiksted, VI
Mary Ann Camp, NMFS, Miami, FL
Joe Desfosse, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Ginny Fay, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
William Tobias, USVIDFW, Frederiksted, VI

Staff:

David Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Madeleine Travis, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as written.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on February 27, 1996 in New Orleans, Louisiana were approved as written.

TIP Workshop Proceedings

A Trip Interview Program workshop was held in New Orleans, Louisiana on February 26, 1996 and the draft minutes of that workshop were reviewed in detail by the ComFIN Committee. After a lengthy discussion and correction process, **R. Lukens moved to have the minutes of the Trip Interview Program (TIP) workshop approved as amended. Amended minutes will be sent to committee members for comment, with a two-week deadline for response. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The revised minutes of the workshop represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting.

During the discussion, the topic of data error correction was dealt with by the Committee. It was suggested that this topic should be addressed via a symposium or workshop. The Committee decided that a work session on developing a data error identification and correction process should be conducted during the 1997 spring ComFIN meeting. Staff, Chairman, and Vice-Chairman will develop an agenda for this workshop.

Review of List of Personnel with Access to Confidential Data

M. Camp distributed lists of personnel with access to confidential data for each state. Committee members checked the lists for accuracy, and notified M. Camp if there were corrections. D. Donaldson stated that he would forward lists to J. O'Hop, S. Lazauski, and J. Shepard, who were not present at the meeting, and request that they contact M. Camp with any changes.

Discussion of CSP Cooperative Agreements

G. Fay reported that all states in the southeast have cooperative statistics projects, and are in the third year of a three-year cycle. During fiscal year 1997 all agreements must be renegotiated with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Current agreements should be reviewed and the negotiation process should be completed by December. Applications must be returned to the NMFS by January 1997. G. Fay, B. Sutter, and J. Poffenberger will be available to assist in this process.

Discussion of Data Elements Matrix

D. Donaldson explained the Data Elements Matrix and asked committee members to review for accuracy, additions, and deletions. The purpose of the matrix is to identify gaps in data elements and complete matrix for each state. L. Kline stated that the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) is currently identifying a list of data elements, which is similar to the ComFIN matrix. There was general discussion on having this information based on trips. R. Lukens stated that the ComFIN committee has indicated in the past that it recommends a trip-based ticket system. J. Poffenberger suggested adding a trip ticket data category to the matrix. J. Moran polled state representatives and found that most states have, are planning, or are considering a trip ticket program. The committee discussed the necessary elements for a trip ticket system. It was suggested that a generic system be developed and used as a framework for setting up a trip ticket system. As a result of this discussion, **R. Lukens moved that the Future Needs Work Group be assigned the task of constructing a trip ticket program that is modular in design and incorporates the identified gaps in the matrix. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Discussion of Non-reported Sources of Landings

D. Donaldson reported on the *Legal Flow of Product in the Southeast Region*, and explained the need to identify potential sources of legally unreported catch. This information was reviewed by the Committee, and it was decided that this information should be used by the Future Needs Work Group in the development of the above mentioned trip ticket program. D. Donaldson requested that members review the document in an attempt to identify these sources and contact him by October 31, 1996 with any changes.

Discussion of Compilation Report of all Commercial Licenses in the Southeast Region

D. Donaldson requested that committee members carefully review *Licensing Information for the Commercial Fisheries Information Network Participants*. The Committee decided that this information will also be used by the Future Needs Work Group for the development of the trip ticket system. The Committee decided that any corrections should be forwarded to D. Donaldson by the October 31, 1996.

Data Collection Work Group Report

J. Poffenberger reported that the Data Collection Work Group met, via a conference call, to discuss the development of data collection planning and tracking processes. . The Data Collection Work Group developed these processes and presented them to the ComFIN Committee for their review and approval. The Committee reviewed the processes and made several changes in format and content. To help facilitate the data collection planning process, staff developed a matrix to determine type and amount of data needed for stock assessments for the priority species. After some discussion, the Committee approved the revised processes which are attached.

Operations Plan

a. Status of 1996 Activities

D. Donaldson presented the identified tasks for 1996 and their status (attached) which was reviewed by the Committee. All tasks to be completed or started in 1996 have been addressed by the Committee, subcommittees, work groups, and/or staff.

b. Development of 1997 Operations Plan

A draft copy of the 1997 Operations Plan was distributed to the Committee. The Committee completed a thorough review of each task. After some discussion, **S. Meyers moved to adopt the 1997 Operations Plan as amended. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The revised 1997 Operations Plan represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting.

Other Business

M. Camp distributed copies of *Data Currently Available in SEFIN*. The table presented various types of commercial data that are available on the SEF Host for the agencies in the Southeast Region. The Committee reviewed that data and J. Moran suggested reviewing and updating the table annually in the fall. The Committee decided that this issue should become a standing agenda item during the fall ComFIN meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

**FISHERIES INFORMATION NETWORK
MINUTES****Thursday, September 26, 1996****St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands**

Vice-Chairman Joe Moran called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. The following members, staff, and others were present:

Members

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL
Theo Brainerd, SAFMC, Charleston, SC
Julie Califf, GDNR, Brunswick, GA
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
Stephen Holiman, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dee Lupton, NCDMF, Morehead City, NC
Daniel Matos, PRDNER, Mayaguez, PR
Steve Meyers, VI DFW, St. Thomas, USVI
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC
Nick Nicholson, GDNR, Brunswick, GA
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Springs, MD
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

Others

Aaron Adams, VIDFW, Frederiksted, USVI
Mary Anne Camp, NMFS, Miami, FL
Joe Desfosse, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Ginny Fay, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Barbara Kojis, VIDFW, St. Croix, USVI
Tom Serota, USFWS, Corpus Christi, TX

Staff

David Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Madeleine Travis, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was approved as written.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) meeting held on February 28, 1996 in New Orleans, Louisiana were approved as written.

Status of Memorandum of Understanding for RecFIN/ComFIN

D. Donaldson reported that the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed by all participants with the exception of the U.S. Virgin Islands, which is in the process of signing it.

Final review of Framework Plan for RecFIN/ComFIN

D. Donaldson stated that as a result of the editing completed at the last FIN meeting, the FIN Framework Plan has been modified and corrected. The committee reviewed the document and **S. Meyers moved to accept the Fisheries Information Network (FIN) Framework Plan as amended. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The committee discussed the publication of the Plan, and decided to have 500 copies of the Framework Plan printed.

Update and Status of Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP)

L. Kline reported on the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP). The Coordinating Council is responsible for making decisions on recreational and commercial fisheries, data, bycatch, social/economic policy and trip-based data. The ACCSP Operations Plan provides the basis of the design of the program. The Operations Committee prioritizes the tasks, and provides liaison between the Coordinating Council and the Technical and Advisory Committees. The work completed in the Southeast Region by RecFIN and ComFIN has been used as the basis for the design of the ACCSP technical committees. A workshop will be held in November focusing on evaluating existing programs. A survey is being conducted to evaluate computer hardware/software being used by participating agencies, with the goal of having all participants operating at the same level, as in RecFIN and ComFIN. The program partners, which includes member states, federal agencies,

fishery management councils, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) have contributed to the budget. Outreach and public input is to be a major part of the program.

Discussion ensued regarding the most efficient and effective way to relay information from ACCSP technical and operations committees to FIN. L. Kline stated that until the ACCSP Coordinating Council adopts the recommendations of the committees, the design of the program is not finalized. J. Moran noted that there are many similarities between the RecFIN/ComFIN and the ACCSP.

Discussion of Potential Development of FIN Brochure

The committee discussed publication of a FIN color brochure with style, size, and format being considered. The target group for this brochure would be members of congress, stock assessment personnel, and the general public. This will be discussed further at the Spring meeting. Emphasis will be on the organizational makeup of FIN. J. Moran suggested the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) staff create a draft brochure/booklet for committee members' consideration at the next FIN meeting.

Schedule and Location for Next Meeting

After some discussion, the committee decided that the next FIN meeting will be held during the week of March 3, 1997 in Washington, DC. If hotel accommodations cannot be obtained, Charleston, South Carolina was selected as a secondary site. Staff will advise committee members of specifics as the meeting time nears.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

APPROVED BY:

Nick Nicholson
CHAIRMAN

RecFIN(SE) COMMITTEE MINUTES
September 26 - 27, 1996
St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands

Chairman Stephen Meyers called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.. The following members and others were present:

Members:

Steven Atran, GMFMC, Tampa, FL
Theo Brainerd, SAFMC, Charleston, SC
Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Stephen Holiman, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Wilson Laney, USFWS, Raleigh, NC
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dee Lupton, NCDNR, Morehead City, NC
Stephen Meyers, USVIDFW, St. Thomas, VI
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC
Nick Nicholson, GADNR, Brunswick, GA
Maury Osborn, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL
Tom Schmidt, USNPS, Homestead, FL
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

Others:

Aaron Adams, USVIDFW, Frederiksted, VI
Joe Desfosse, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Bob Dixon, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
Ginny Fay, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Barbara Kojis, USVIDFW, St. Thomas, VI
Tom Serota, USFWS, Corpus Christi, TX
William Tobias, USVIDFW, Frederiksted, VI

Staff:

David Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Madeleine Travis, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as written.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on February 28 - 29, 1996 in New Orleans, Louisiana were approved with the following clarifications:

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) abstained from approving the minutes of the September 26, 1995 meeting held in Miami, Florida because S. Atran was not present for that meeting.

Discussion of Recommendations Document Developed from the Facilitated Session

D. Donaldson stated that the ad hoc Recommendations Work Group met in June 1996 to discuss the review and revision of the *Recommendations document* developed from the RecFIN(SE) facilitated session. The Work Group modified the format of the document by identifying an overall recommendation and assigning specific tasks for accomplishing the recommendation. The Committee went through a thorough review of the document. The Committee focused on the content of the recommendations and tasks as well as assigning a time frame for beginning each item. During the discussion, it was noted that these recommendations were already prioritized during the facilitated session. The Committee decided to let staff assign a time frame for addressing the items, based on the priorities developed at the facilitated session, and focus on the content of the recommendations and tasks. D. Donaldson stated he would develop a 5-year time table from this information and include it in the document and the 1997 Operations Plan. The *Recommendations document* will provide the Committee with tasks and activities for the next five years. After the discussion, **R. Lukens moved to accept the list of recommendations and tasks as work objectives for the next five years. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The revised *Recommendations document* represents the administrative record for this portion of the meeting.

Discussion of Definitions for Recreational For-Hire Vessels

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) has asked the RecFIN(SE) Committee to develop definitions for recreational for-hire vessels for use in collecting landings data. S. Atran stated that the issue of the way a boat fishes rather than how many people are on board was

raised during the Charterboat Evaluation Workshop held in February. L. Kline stated that the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) had approved charterboat and headboat definitions developed as a result of a workshop conducted in 1994. T. Brainerd stated that the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council (SAFMC) definitions distinguish between the types of fishing activities. J. Moran stated that the method of payment is the determining factor in defining charterboats vs. headboats. M. Osborn stated that for Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) purposes, the method of fishing (how the boat is hired) is more important than the number of people on board. R. Lukens commented on the necessity of differentiating between data collection and application purposes and that the definitions offered by the GMFMC Reef Fish Advisory Panel do not clarify the issue. R. Lukens suggested that the committee wait until the pilot charterboat survey is completed before attempting to devise specific definitions for charter, head, and guide boats, since alternate methodologies are being utilized. After lengthy discussion by the committee, **R. Lukens made the following motion: In response to the GMFMC letter, we recommend that the Reef Fish Advisory Panel definitions be rejected, believing that there is considerable overlap among them, and they do not clarify the issue. We do however, support the requirement that U.S. Coast Guard licenses for all for-hire vessels are included in any accepted definitions. There is currently an initiative underway to conduct a pilot charterboat study that will likely provide data to assist in clarifying the desired definitions. That study should be completed by the end of 1998. We recommend that changes to the current definitions be postponed until the completion of that study, at which time these definitions will be reconsidered by the RecFIN(SE) Committee.** After further discussion, M. Osborn made the following **amendment to the above motion: Language should be included regarding the alternate method that we are testing and include a recommendation on variables that can be used to post-stratify catches and catch rates and will aid in a more workable definition in the future.** The amended motion was seconded and passed with J. Moran abstaining. S. Atran stated that the GMFMC would only like guidance on the definitions, not necessarily acceptance, rejection, or modification. W. Laney proposed a **friendly amendment to change the language from saying, we recommend they reject these definitions, to say in response to their letter, that the RecFIN(SE) Committee has considered the issue of these definitions and in our opinion there**

is too much overlap between them for us to employ these definitions. R. Lukens withdrew the original motion and offered the following substitute motion: We have considered the definitions offered by the Reef Fish Advisory Panel and conclude there is too much overlap among them for the RecFIN(SE) Committee to concur. There is currently an initiative underway to conduct a pilot Charterboat study that will likely provide assistance in clarifying definitions for the for-hire fisheries. That study should be completed by the end of 1998. We recommend that changes to the current definitions be postponed until the completion of that study at which time the definitions will be reconsidered by the RecFIN(SE) Committee. In addition we will have enough data to allow us to look at post-stratification. J. Moran suggested that the committee adopt the definition of a charterboat as six passengers or less and a headboat as seven passengers or more and after the pilot study is completed, if it needs to be changed then change it. After further lengthy deliberation, R. Lukens moved that the following will be in the form of a letter to the GMFMC:

During the 1996 Fall meeting of the RecFIN(SE), the RecFIN Committee conducted an in depth discussion regarding your request for definitions of guideboats, charterboats, and headboats. As you know, this is a very complicated issue made more so by the variability of operating methods throughout the fishery. Over the past five or six years there have been a number of efforts in the Southeast to resolve this issue with little or no concurrence. There is currently an initiative underway to conduct a pilot study of the for-hire fishery that will likely provide ways to assist in developing standard definitions. The study is scheduled to be completed by 1998. In addition, sufficient data will be collected to allow post-stratification to get data and catch rates for the guide, charter and headboat components.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) has adopted standard definitions for Atlantic Coast charter and headboats based on these criteria. The major components of that definition states that, "for-hire vessels that carry six or less passengers are charterboats, and those that carry seven or more passengers are headboats." If the Council feels that adopting standard definitions is time-critical, the definitions adopted by the ASMFC do not conflict with current plans to conduct the for-hire study. It should be noted however, that upon completion of the study, the issue of these definitions will be reconsidered. These

definitions may be refined.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this important issue and provide the Council with the committee's input. While we realize that 1998 is a considerable distance in time, we ask your forbearance while we make every effort to gather the required data and information needed to provide definitions that accurately reflect the fishery component that they are defining. If we can be of further service, please feel free to contact us.

The motion was seconded. J. Moran made a substitute motion: Amend the letter to say that the RecFIN(SE) does accept the six and seven rule. We will use the six passengers or less for a charterboat and seven passengers or more for a headboat, and at the time that the study is completed, we will revisit the definitions. The substitute motion was seconded and failed to pass. S. Atran made a substitute motion: Remove from the letter the sentence describing the ASMFC provision, and in the following sentence delete the phrase, "... if it is time-critical". The substitute motion was seconded. R. Lukens restated the letter as follows: The definitions adopted by the ASMFC do not conflict with the current plan to conduct a for-hire study and are consistent with your Reef Fish FMP definitions for charter and headboat. The substitute motion was seconded and failed to pass with M. Osborn abstaining. The original motion by R. Lukens passed.

Update on the Integration of Charterboat Data

M. Osborn reported on the MRFSS Charterboat estimates, explaining some of the difficulties in the past and the reasons for conducting a Charterboat pilot project. An alternate method has been proposed using a weekly schedule for calling charterboat captains. This method is being used for the second year in Maine, with a fleet of 35 boats, and for the first time in North Carolina with a fleet of 230 boats. West Florida was chosen for this project because of the complex conditions in this area. There are approximately 2,500 boats involved in the inshore and offshore fleets and only about 20% of those have a telephone listed. B. Dixon has prepared a list of boats operating as headboats which he will continue to monitor. All other charterboats, guideboats and headboats operating inshore will be covered in the alternative study. The base MRFSS will be compared to the alternate weekly telephoning of captains. The National Marine Fisheries Panama City Laboratory staff will design

a statistically-valid logbook survey so there will be a three-way comparison. Accuracy of the estimates, response rates, costs, and other factors will be compared. Budget figures are being prepared for a start up in 1997. GSMFC has been asked to participate and is currently contacting member states for input. Florida is working on the sampling frame of captains and will assist with a quarterly update. It is hoped that a cooperative agreement for the telephone calling can be developed with either Florida or GSMFC. The intercept sampling will probably be done through the contractor. Verification and cross-checking will be required. A summary of the last meeting should be completed by next week and will be sent to RecFIN(SE) participants.

Discussion of Duplicative Data Collection and Management Efforts

D. Donaldson reported that the "Evaluation of Current MRF Sampling Programs" matrix was created over the past two years. The goal was to identify individual programs and eliminate duplicative efforts. This matrix included only the surveys that were identified as high priority by the Committee and it was noted that it needs to include all current data collection surveys. Therefore, the Committee members will review the matrix and have any additions or changes to D. Donaldson by October 31, 1996 and matrices for the other surveys will be mailed to the appropriate agencies. This information will be compiled by staff and presented at the next RecFIN(SE) meeting.

Discussion of Licensing Structure Report for RecFIN(SE) Participants

D. Donaldson reported on the status of the evaluation of licensing systems as a sampling frame. This information was culled from the American Sportfish Association (ASA) licensing document. This document requires review for accuracy before continuing and should cover each of the major modes of fishing. Once the information is completed, staff will develop a matrix which outlines the information. This matrix will be used to determine the utility of using licensing as a sampling framework. The Committee will discuss this issue at the 1997 spring RecFIN(SE) meeting. Committee members will determine if the information is complete and accurate and provide corrections to D. Donaldson by October 31, 1996.

Discussion of Establishment of Annual Review Process of MRFSS Data

M. Osborn explained the review process whereby the data are sent out to the participating states at the frequency requested. Data are examined by the states, and wave meetings are held every two months at which time the regional representatives review the estimates and original data. In March the program staff makes corrections and develops final estimates. There was general discussion on the method to use for the states to review this data before it becomes finalized. The possibility of forming an ad hoc committee for this purpose was discussed and R. Lukens suggested having an annual review as a standing agenda item for the spring RecFIN(SE) meeting. An ad hoc committee was formed with the following members: L. Kline, R. Lukens, P. Phares, D. Mumford, and J. Shepard. This work group was charged with developing a process to review the MRFSS data before they become final. The group will meet in early 1997 and present its findings to the Committee at the 1997 spring meeting.

Reporting of Inkind Support

D. Donaldson reported that staff is not getting the inkind support information required for it to be effective. Since this information is not being provided, it is apparently not a good use of members' time and D. Donaldson asked the Committee if this activity should be discontinued. After some discussion, **R. Lukens moved to discontinue the reporting of inkind support. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

Evaluation of Results from the ASMFC Saltwater Participation Workshop

J. Desfosse reported that in November 1995, the ASMFC sponsored a workshop concerning the estimation of saltwater fishing participation rates. There were presentations on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Survey, the NMFS MRFSS, and a Georgia independent survey. Workshop participants evaluated each of these surveys and developed a set of recommendations to assist the states in determining how to estimate the split between saltwater and freshwater participation rates for Wallop-Breaux funding. The three methods were evaluated on a state by state basis.

The meeting recessed at 4:35 p.m.

September 27, 1996

The meeting reconvened at 8:05 a.m.

Work Group Reports

a. Biological/Environmental

S. Meyers reported that the Biological/Environmental Work Group met, via conference call, to discuss the development of a data collection planning process. It was noted that there was a similar process developed by ComFIN, and it was suggested that the RecFIN(SE) document could be modified to use the same format. There was general discussion on the importance of stock assessment workshops, having a process in place, and a proposal developed.

M. Osborn moved to instruct staff to modify the document as needed. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. S. Meyers reported that the Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) document will be the subject of a Biological/Environmental Work Group meeting to be held on December 3, 1996 in Charleston, South Carolina and the findings from that meeting will be presented at the spring RecFIN(SE) meeting. The minutes from the Biological/Environmental Work Group meeting are attached.

b. Social/Economic

R. Lukens reported that the Social/Economic Work Group met in Washington, DC on June 27, 1996. As a result of that meeting, there are several action items that require the attention of the RecFIN(SE) Committee. The first issue dealt with the membership of the Work Group. The group decided there needed to be more than RecFIN(SE) members on the Work Group. Therefore, **R. Lukens moved that the recommendation for a change in membership that should include two economists, one sociologist, one anthropologist, and representatives from the Atlantic, Caribbean, and the Gulf of Mexico regions. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** Related to the issue of membership, the group discussed utilizing the Social/Economic Work Group for both recreational and commercial issues since the social and economics topics are usually similar for the recreational and commercial arenas. Therefore, **R. Lukens moved that the RecFIN(SE) Committee recommend to the ComFIN Committee that the Social/Economic Work Group be adopted to function for both Committees. The motion**

was seconded and passed unanimously. The last issue dealt with the development of a mission statement. The group established a mission statement and **R. Lukens moved that the following statement be adopted: The mission of the Social and Economic Work Group of the Southeast Fisheries Information Network is to facilitate the collection and management of social and economic data as necessary for use in the fisheries management process in the Southeast Region. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The minutes from the Social/Economic Work Group meeting are attached.

Operations Plan

a. Status of 1995 Activities

D. Donaldson provided a list of tasks from the 1996 Operations Plan. Their status handout was distributed, and the Committee reviewed the tasks individually. After reviewing the list, the Committee agreed that all the activities identified in the 1996 Operations Plan have been completed, or work is currently being conducted to complete them in the allotted time frame. The list of tasks and their revised status is attached.

b. Development of the 1997 Operations Plan

D. Donaldson reported on the development of 1997 Operations Plan. As a result of the current meeting and tasks identified in the Recommendations document, there is a basis for 1997 Operations Plan. The Committee directed the staff to develop a draft plan and distribute it for changes and comments. Once a final document has been developed, it would be discussed at the 1997 spring RecFIN(SE) meeting for final approval.

Election of Officers

The Committee discussed the election of officers. The procedure for the election of chairman is that the vice-chairman becomes the chairman. Therefore, **W. Laney moved to elect N. Nicholson as Chairman by acclamation. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.** The Committee has rotated the vice-chairmanship among the three areas in the Southeast. It was noted that someone from the Gulf of Mexico area should be nominated for vice chairman. Therefore,

R. Lukens moved to elect J. Shepard as Vice Chairman. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Other Business

M. Osborn reported that Macro, Inc. of Burlington, Vermont is the new MRFSS telephone contractor beginning with wave three. With this contractor it is possible to again have five optional questions on the telephone survey. Some of these questions can be customized to suit a particular area. Social and economic questions may also be addressed, however, there are some problems with questions regarding annual household income. This refusal rate has not affected the base, and the survey continues to be evaluated. M. Osborn suggested utilizing the wealth of biological, social and economic data becoming available in the southeast through RecFIN(SE).

During the similar work being conducted by the ComFIN/RecFIN(SE) and the ACCSP, S. Holiman suggested developing a six-month calendar of ASMFC and GSMFC meetings. D. Donaldson stated that the schedule of GSMFC meetings is currently on the GSMFC homepage on the Internet. L. Kline stated that ASMFC is currently scheduling meetings in a three-month block and that information is readily available.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

RecFIN(SE) Biological/Environmental Work Group

Conference Call Summary

August 27, 1996

The call convened at 9:00 a.m. The following members and others were present:

Members

Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Al Jones, NMFS, Miami, FL
Joe Moran, SCDNR, Charleston, SC
Ron Salz, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD
Steve Meyers, USVIDFW, St. Thomas, VI

Staff

David Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Others

Joe Desfosse, ASMFC, Washington, DC
John Poffenberger, NMFS, Miami, FL

D. Donaldson stated that the purpose of the call was to compare the RecFIN(SE) Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) document to the various NMFS QA/QC documents, and where applicable, integrate the standards and develop a process for integrating the RecFIN(SE) into the stock assessment process. The group began reviewing the various QA/QC documents. It was suggested that information concerning collection of scales, otoliths, stomach, etc. be included in the RecFIN(SE) QA/QC document and the group agreed. The group discussed the level of preciseness for of the document. The group believed that the QA/QC document should be general and the details should be included in standard operating procedures manuals for the various marine recreational fisheries programs. A. Jones noted that it might be useful to cite these standard operating procedures manuals in the RecFIN(SE) QA/QC document and the group agreed. The group then began discussing the content of the QA/QC document. As the discussion progressed, it became apparent that the Work Group needed to convene a meeting to discuss the various issues raised by the group. The group will notify the RecFIN(SE) Committee of their plans for conducting a meeting and present the findings from that meeting at the spring meeting. The meeting was scheduled for December 3, 1996 in Charleston, South Carolina.

The group then discussed the issue of developing a process for integrating the RecFIN(SE) into the stock assessment process. D. Donaldson noted the ComFIN had addressed this issue and the ComFIN Data Collection Work Group developed a data collection planning process which addressed this issue. The process was modified to meet RecFIN(SE) needs and presented to the group. The group discussed the process and made several minor changes. The revised process is attached. The group accepted the revised process and will present it to the RecFIN(SE) Committee in September for their consideration.

Being no further business, the conference call was concluded at 9:50 a.m.

DATA COLLECTION PLANNING PROCESS

Objective: Determine the species that will be targeted for size frequency and bioprofile sampling.

Procedures:

- Each participant will coordinate with his/her agency to identify species of priority (that will need stock assessments), the type and amount of data needed, and the geographic area over which the data need to be collected. This information will be provided to the GSMFC. Staff will compile the information and provide it to the Committee at the September RecFIN(SE) meeting.
- Each year, during the September RecFIN(SE) meeting, the Committee will review progress regarding current year's data collection efforts.
- Based on the identified needs of the participants, a data collection plan will be developed, which will contain state, interstate, and federal priority species, type and amount of data needed, and the geographic distribution of the proposed data collection.
- That plan will provide guidance to the states, NMFS, and FWS for the development of funding mechanisms that are implemented to provide funding support for collecting the data.
- During the September RecFIN(SE) meeting, the Committee will conduct an evaluation of the prior year's effort, including:
 - a. evaluation of adherence to prior year's plan
 - b. final review of prior year's data
- Appropriate RecFIN(SE) personnel will participate in stock assessment workshops for fisheries that have a significant recreational component.

**RecFIN(SE) SOCIAL & ECONOMIC
WORK GROUP MEETING**

June 27, 1996
Washington, DC

The meeting convened at 9:00 a.m. The following people were present:

Theo Brainerd, SAFMC, Charleston, SC
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Amy Gautam, NMFS, Silver Spring, MD
Steve Holiman, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Lisa Kline, ASMFC, Washington, DC
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Vishwanie Maharaj, ASA, Alexandria, VA
Steve Meyers, VIDWF, St. Thomas, VI

D. Donaldson stated that the purpose of the meeting was to assess that status of the group, determine what tasks need to be addressed, and develop a process for accomplishing the identified tasks. It was noted that one of the overall goals of the group is to develop a process for integrating social and economic issues into fisheries management. The first part of the meeting dealt primarily with an overview of the RecFIN(SE) and the relationships of the Atlantic and Gulf commissions to the RecFIN(SE). The discussions provided a summary of the structure and operations of the RecFIN(SE). It was stated that the RecFIN(SE) is a forum for all interested agencies to discuss issues related to the collection and management of marine recreational fisheries data. One of the issues that was identified during these discussions pertained to the development of an outreach strategy for the RecFIN(SE). The RecFIN(SE) needs to formalize a process which provides information concerning the program to interested people as well as getting input from users regarding the program. After some discussion, the group decided that the development of a formal process should be discussed at the upcoming Fisheries Information Network meeting in September.

It was noted that currently there are a limited number of social and economic scientists on the Work Group. It was suggested that the membership be expanded to include personnel more knowledgeable about social and economic issues. The Social and Economic Work Group will serve both the RecFIN(SE) and ComFIN to address social and economic issues and problems. When necessary, smaller subgroups of the Work Group can be convened to discuss issues specific to marine recreational or commercial fisheries topics. The group discussed the membership of the Work Group and recommended that there should be two economists, one sociologist, one anthropologist and a representative from the Atlantic (Lisa Kline), Caribbean (Steve Meyers), and the Gulf of Mexico (Ron Lukens) regions. Since the issue of the membership of the Work Group will be discussed by the RecFIN(SE) Committee in September, the group developed a list of potential participants on the Work Group to assist the Committee. They included: Mike Orbach, Tony Fedler, Sara Melzoff, Bob Grambling, Steve Holland, Mike Jepson, Steve Thomas, David Laverne, and Priscilla Weeks. However, this list is not comprehensive and others may be considered for participation on the Work Group.

The next order of business was the development of mission statement for the Social and Economic Work Group. After some discussion, the group agreed to the following statement:

The mission of the Social and Economic Work Group of the Southeast Fisheries Information Network is to facilitate the collection and management of social and economic data as necessary for use in the fisheries management process in the Southeast Region.

Another topic discussed by the group was an upcoming workshop. S. Holiman noted that the NMFS is planning a workshop regarding recreational utility demand models. The workshop will address a variety of issues concerning the collection of social and economic data and will develop recommendations regarding these issues. It was suggested that the RecFIN(SE) endorse this workshop. S. Holiman stated that he would send the appropriate information concerning the workshop to staff and they would distribute it to the Committee. The Committee would then make a decision, via mail ballot, regarding endorsement of the workshop.

The group also examined the specific task identified in the 1996 RecFIN(SE) Operations Plan regarding social and economic issues. The first task was to identify necessary socioeconomic data elements and encourage the collection of these elements. Currently, the ASMFC Social and Economic Committee is addressing this issue. The Committee will produce a document which should be available later this year. The group recommended that the RecFIN(SE) Social and Economic Work Group wait for the outcome of the ASMFC Committee and review and modify the document, as appropriate. The other task was to identify and determine standards for sociological and economic data collection, including statistical, training, and quality assurance and quality control standards. The group expressed some concern that it might be difficult for the Work Group to accomplish this task. It was noted that the Biological/Environmental Work Group has developed a Quality Assurance and Quality Control Document for the Recreational Fisheries Information Network in the Southeast Region which focuses on the biological and environmental components. It was decided that the group should review this document and assess if the document can be modified to include information regarding the social and economic aspects of data collection or if it will be necessary to develop a separate document. This issue will be further discussed by the entire Work Group at a meeting later this year.

The last issue was discussion of the next work group meeting. The group agreed that the Work Group needed to meet in the November-December time frame to further explore some of the issues that were discussed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

TASKS FROM THE 1996 OPERATIONS PLAN AND THEIR STATUS

Task 1: Annual Operations Plan, 1997 (Goal 1, Objective 3)

Objective: Develop 1997 Annual Operations Plan including identification of available resources, that implements the Strategic Plan.

Status: The Plan was sent to the Committee in August 1996 and submitted for approval by the Committee at the fall 1996 meeting.

Task 2: Information Dissemination (Goal 1, Objective 4)

Objective: Distribute program information to cooperators and interested parties.

Status: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task 3: Identification of Socioeconomic Data Collection (Goal 2, Objective 2)

Objective: Identify necessary socioeconomic data elements and encourage the collection of these elements.

Status: Currently, the ASMFC Committee of Economics and Social Sciences is addressing this issue and will produce a document which should be available later this year. The RecFIN(SE) Social and Economic Work Group will wait for the outcome of the ASMFC Committee and review and modify the document, as appropriate.

Task 4: Comparison of RecFIN(SE) Quality Assurances /Quality Control Documents (Goal 2, Objective 3)

Objective: Compare the QA/QC documents for RecFIN(SE) and the NMFS.

Status: The Biological/Environmental Work Group reviewed the various documents and integrated them, where appropriate.

Task 5: Development of a RecFIN(SE) Policy regarding Evaluation of Methodological Changes (Goal 2, Objective 3)

Objective: Develop a policy statement regarding the evaluation of changes to existing survey methodologies.

Status: A policy statement was discussed and approved at the spring 1996 meeting.

Task 6: Establishment of Annual Review Process of MRFSS Data (Goal 2, Objective 3)

Objective: Establish an annual review process, through the RecFIN(SE), to evaluate MRFSS data.

Status: This task will be discussed at the fall 1996 meeting.

Task 7: Social/Economic Quality Assurance and Quality Control (Goal 2, Objective 3)

Objective: Identify and determine standards for sociological and economic data collection, including statistical, training, and quality assurance and quality control standards.

Status: The Work Group is reviewing the RecFIN(SE) QA/QC document and will assess if the document can be modified to include information regarding the social and economic aspects of data collection or if it will be necessary to develop a separate document. This issue will be further discussed by the Work Group at a meeting later this year.

Task 8: Identification and Evaluation of Current Programs (Goal 2, Objective 4)

Objective: Identify and evaluate the adequacy of current programs for meeting RecFIN(SE) requirements.

Status: This task will be discussed at the fall 1996 meeting. It is an ongoing activity.

Task 9: Evaluation of Integration of NMFS charterboat data (Goal 2, Objective 4)

Objective: Evaluate the integration of MRFSS and Panama City charterboat data.

Status: An update concerning this issue will be presented at the fall 1996 meeting.

Task 10: Evaluation of the Results of the ASMFC Saltwater Participation Workshop (Goal 2, Objective 4)

Objective: Evaluate the results of the ASMFC workshop on salt water participation.

Status: This task will be discussed at the fall 1996 meeting.

Task 11: Combining Duplicative Data Collection and Management Activities Goal 2, Obj. 4)

Objective: Identify and combine duplicative data collection and management effort.

Status: This task will be addressed by the Committee at the fall 1996 meeting. This is an ongoing activity.

Task 12: Evaluation of Licensing System as Sampling Framework (Goal 2, Objective 5)

Objective: Evaluate the licensing systems for the Southeast Region.

Status: Licensing information of the participants was compiled by staff and will be presented at the fall 1996 meeting

Task 13: Integration into the Stock Assessment Process (Goal 2, Objective 5)

Objective: Develop a process for integrating the RecFIN(SE) into the stock assessment process to accommodate the stock assessment data needs.

Status: The Biological/Environmental Work Group developed a process which will be considered by the Committee at the fall 1996 meeting.

Task 14: Coordination and Integration of Data Collection Efforts (Goal 2, Objective 5)

Objective: Encourage coordination, integration, and augmentation, as appropriate, of data collection efforts to meet the RecFIN(SE) requirements.

Status: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task 15: Evaluation of Innovative Data Collection Technologies (Goal 2, Objective 6)

Objective: To evaluate and recommend innovative data collection technologies.

Status: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task 16: Design, Implementation and Maintenance of Data Management System (Goal 3, Objective 3)

Objective: To design, implement, and maintain an MRF data management system to accommodate fishery management/research and other needs (e.g., trade and tourism).

Status: The MRFSS system was implemented in the spring of 1996. The schedule for creation of systems for other data bases has not been decided.

Task 17: Standards/Protocols/Documentation for Data Management (Goal 3, Objective 4)

Objective: Develop standard protocols and documentation for data formats, input, editing, quality control, storage, access, transfer, dissemination, and application.

Status: Documentation and standardization of MRFSS intercept and telephone historical data bases was begun in 1993. The final intercept format was adopted by MRFSS staff by March 1995 and is available for distribution as well as similar documentation for the telephone data base. Basic documentation of the catch and trip estimate data bases exists and will be added to the MRFSS Home Page. Standardization of variables was achieved by the MRFSS staff during the clean-up effort during 1994 and 1995 prior to re-estimation.

Task 18: Evaluation of Information Management Technologies (Goal 3, Objective 6)

Objective: To evaluate and recommend innovative, cost-effective information management technologies.

Status: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task 19: Long-term National Program Planning (Goal 4, Objective 1)

Objective: Provide for long-term national program planning.

Status: This task is an ongoing activity.

Task 20: Coordination, Consistency and Comparability with Other Cooperative MRF

Programs (Goal 4, Objective 2 and Objective 3)

Objective: Coordinate RecFIN(SE) with other regional cooperative MRF programs and encourage consistency and comparability among regional programs over time.

Status: This task is an ongoing activity.

APPROVED BY:


COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

**SEAMAP Subcommittee Meeting
MINUTES
New Orleans, Louisiana
Monday, October 14, 1996**

Chairman Walter Tatum called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. The following members and others were present:

Members:

Walter Tatum, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Jim Hanifen, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Terry Cody, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Richard Waller, GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS
Joanne Shultz, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
Mark Leiby, FDEP/FMRI, St. Petersburg, FL

Others:

Scott Nichols, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
Buck Sutter, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Ken Savastano, NMFS, SSC, MS
Dalton Berry, Zapata Protein, Inc., Mandeville, LA
Terry L. Romaine, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Michelle Kasprzak, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
David Stanley, LSU, Baton Rouge, LA

Staff:

Larry Simpson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Cheryl Noble, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as submitted.

Approval of Minutes

The August 4 & 6, 1996 minutes were approved as submitted.

Administrative Report

The Fall Plankton Survey was conducted in late September through early October 1996. The survey covers Gulf waters from Florida Bay to Brownsville, Texas. Approximately 220 stations were sampled. Vessels from Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and NMFS participated. The purpose of the survey is to assess abundance and distribution of king mackerel and red drum eggs and larvae.

The Fall Shrimp/Groundfish Survey started in October and will continue through December 1996. Vessels from NMFS, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Texas participate in the survey. The purpose of the survey is to determine abundance and distribution of demersal organisms in the Gulf of Mexico.

SEAMAP is in the third phase of a three-phase project of conducting comparative tow surveys between NMFS and the state vessels. In the first two parts of the survey, it was determined that all of the state vessels were essentially fishing the same. The last part of the survey compared the state vessels with the Federal vessels. Earlier this October, the TOMMY MUNRO and the OREGON II did comparative tows but due to weather, only 30 stations were completed. NMFS will be working on the data and hopefully will have a report at the March meeting. This completes the comparative tow surveys and there should be enough information to answer questions that has arisen.

The Annual Report to the GSMFC TCC Committee has been completed and will be distributed at this meeting to the SEAMAP Subcommittee, the TCC and Commissioners and Proxies. The 1996 Joint Annual Report information has been sent to the South Atlantic and Caribbean components for their changes and should be published by the end of the year. The General Session Proceedings should be published and distributed later this year.

Funds were received to publish two Atlases this year but they will not be published because key personnel from NMFS Pascagoula Laboratory retired. A no-cost extension has been submitted and the Atlases should be published by March 1997.

Since April, there has been approximately 400 visitors to the GSMFC SEAMAP homepage and D. Donaldson reminded the Subcommittee to contact him to establish links to SEAMAP and their homepages. There will be a presentation on the GSMFC homepage at the Commission business meeting.

Update on SEAMAP Chlorophyll Sampling Proposal to EPA

J. Hanifen said that per the Subcommittee's direction, the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission will submit a proposal to the EPA Gulf of Mexico Program to conduct an intercalibration study of several methods for the collection of chlorophyll samples. The final proposal should be completed within the next two weeks. The EPA GOMP is not actively soliciting proposal so there is no way of knowing if or when it will get funded. He said NASA was soliciting proposals for ground truth information and Terry Romaine and Michelle Kasprzak from his staff prepared a proposal in one week and submitted it to NASA. He said they should know in January 1997 if the proposal was funded.

R. Waller stated that there is a possibility that the state of Mississippi may purchase a CTD Fluorometer and other equipment for the TOMMY MUNRO. If these purchases are made Mississippi will be able to participate in these studies.

Discussion of Inkind Reporting for SEAMAP

* At the last SEAMAP Joint Annual meeting, the SEAMAP-SA reported that they do inkind reporting and suggested the SEAMAP-Gulf do this also. The SEAMAP-Gulf at its last meeting asked D. Donaldson to investigate what formula the SEAMAP-SA uses to do this reporting. D. Donaldson distributed a sample of the Inkind Report form the SA uses. Before the Gulf component received dedicated funding for SEAMAP they did do inkind reporting but stopped after they had dedicated funding. After discussion, the Subcommittee decided there were too many disadvantages in submitting this form. **Mark Leiby moved to not proceed with this type reporting and to write a letter to the SEAMAP-SA component explaining why and to caution them on the Gulf's behalf for doing this.** J. Hanifen seconded and it passed unanimously.

Status Report of the SEAMAP Archiving Center

Mark Leiby submitted the following report:

Since February 1, 1996, personnel have cataloged an additional 6,067 lots of ichthyoplankton from 12 different cruises. Collection years include 1985, 1986 and 1993. Due to a loss of personnel in December, a backlog of samples has accumulated, with an additional 33 cruises, from 1985, 1986, 1993 and 1994 in line to be cataloged. New personnel are working expeditiously to rectify the situation.

Three loan and data requests have been processed and updating from loaned material is being done by NMFS personnel at the Pascagoula Lab. On February 12 the ichthyoplankton collection closed in order to move into new housing.

As of March 9 the collection is in its new expanded location and there will now be sufficient room to house all collection years. Due to ongoing construction in the building where the Ichthyoplankton Collection is housed, much of the collection is still inaccessible, but are working to rectify this situation.

The SEAMAP data files are still undergoing editing resulting from the conversion to the SEAMAP Data Management System (DMS), as well as by the use of SEAMAP investigators.

R. Waller said that the GCRL has a new person in their archiving center, a post doctorate fellow from Poland and he is very enthusiastic and is doing an excellent job.

Presentation of the Effects of Hypoxia on Stratification of Fishes on Oil Rigs

David Stanley from the Coastal Fisheries Institute, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA gave a slide presentation on a project sponsored by the Coastal Marine Initiative by the Minerals Management Service. A summary of this presentation is attached (Attachment I).

Data Coordinating Work Group

W. Tatum distributed a letter from A. Kemmerer (Attachment II) in response to the Subcommittee's letter expressing concern over funding for SEAMAP's data management functions. The Subcommittee was satisfied with the positive response and NMFS's commitment to the SEAMAP program.

K. Savastano distributed the SEAMAP Data Management Report (Attachment III) and reviewed each item. He said that since the joint meeting, processing of the 1993 SEAMAP Atlas has been completed and the 1994 SEAMAP Atlas is approximately 45% complete; funding has been obtained to continue the ORACLE development; 180 SEAMAP requests have been received to date and 179 have been completed; the SEAMAP on-line data base now contains 332 cruises with a total of 2,230,802 records.

Red Drum Work Group

D. Donaldson gave a brief update on the aerial survey and tag recapture portion for red drum. He said NMFS was not able to secure a contract with a purse seiner to do the mark/recapture this year but he understands that funding will be available to do it next year. The aerial survey was completed and like the stock assessment it indicated very little change in populations. L. Simpson informed the Subcommittee that funding from the Gulf Disaster Fund may be allocated to do the red drum survey.

Election of Officers

* T. Cody, on behalf of the Subcommittee thanked Walter Tatum for his excellent job in being the SEAMAP Subcommittee chairman for all of these years. The nominating committee nominated Richard Waller for Chairman and Jim Hanifen for Vice Chairman. T. Cody moved to accept these nominations by acclamation. M. Leiby seconded and it passed unanimously.

Other Business

T. Cody informed the Subcommittee that the southern division of the American Fisheries Society will hold a meeting in San Antonio in February 1997. He said with the Subcommittee's approval he would like to submit an abstract on the SEAMAP Program. The Subcommittee agreed that he should do this and D. Donaldson and R. Peuser will help him with a presentation and/or poster if the abstract is accepted.

R. Waller reiterated that SEAMAP should have a traveling display to be used at meetings such as the American Fisheries Society. It could be used for presentations and should have slides, overheads, videos, etc. from boat work and could be housed at the Commission office. All agreed that this would be a worthwhile project to pursue.

T. Cody said he also has information on the red tide, public outreach and tarpon study in Texas if anyone is interested.

R. Waller said just for FYI that when he was in D.C. working on SK proposals, in reference to red tide, there were several proposals submitted that involved developing electronic probes to be able to field test quickly the presence of toxins from various types of blooms in both animals and in the water column. He said he assumed this would be used for rapid identification so certain areas could be closed if necessary particularly for shellfish beds.

J. Shultz asked that in reference to the SEAMAP fall plankton survey, if Louisiana will plan to do the cruise earlier in the season, preferably the third week of September. The reason being they can do the federal sampling in Louisiana at the same time. She also asked if Florida could start the first week of October and that would improve the coordination of the timing of the survey.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

ATTACHMENT I

David Stanley from the Coastal Fisheries Institute at the Louisiana State University gave a slide presentation on research he has done around gas/oil platforms for the last five years. This project has been funded over the years by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, offshore oil companies, and most recently the Minerals Management Service.

He showed a slide of the distribution of oil and gas platforms in the northern Gulf of Mexico. He said he views this as the largest artificial reef program in the world although it wasn't designed as that. The slide represents approximately 4,000 platforms. While the effects of the discharges are generally well known, it hasn't been established what the impacts of the physical presence of the platforms themselves are. He said this was a goal of their research. He then showed a slide of their various research stations. The initial research took place in western Louisiana at about 50 miles offshore. The current MMS project is around three platforms which happen to be right in the middle of an hypoxic area. Another goal of the project is to determine or profile the species composition and the number of fishes at these sites and how it changes with depth. One of the reasons little is known about the assemblage of fishes around these platforms is the difficulty in sampling.

Traditionally, visual surveys are used when sampling artificial reefs. While that works fairly well in coral reef situations it doesn't work well in the northern Gulf. Visual surveys are of limited value because of the nephroid layer and deeper depths in the Gulf of Mexico. Also, earlier surveys showed the presence of scuba divers reduced fish density by 50% around a petroleum platform, so visual surveys by divers bias results. It also decreases the mean size.

Dual beam hydroacoustics were used for this project. They used the same technique as used in the northwest to sample fishes associated with hydroelectric facilities. The northwest was having the same problems as the Gulf in that traditional fishery sampling methods can not be used around those structures. The hydroacoustics is basically a fishery sonar system. By the amount of energy that is reflected, you can determine how large the object is, where in the water column the object is, and how many objects are there. It detects mainly fish, not trash so it works well for sampling around the platforms. The system is not affected by visibility so sampling can be done 24 hours a day and it's unobtrusive, the fish can't detect it. Sampling can not be done within the confines of the platform itself because of the structural cross members and turbulence but the system is set up immediately adjacent to the platform. They work from the platform, not vessels and usually sample five days at a time.

Transducers are set up on each side of the platform and with a downward orientation you can see from about 5-10 meters to the bottom. With this set up they miss the fish in the upper water column so they suspend the transducers at a depth of approximately 20 meters then look up towards the surface, thus getting total coverage throughout the water column. They can't sample simultaneously upward and downward because they don't have enough transducers and don't foresee obtaining more in the near future. Because the sonar gear can not identify the species of fish a ROV is used to do visual surveys. It is used throughout the water column and they sample at the same strata as the acoustic gear. The ROV doesn't seem to have the same avoidance as the divers do. They also collect environmental data while doing the surveys and found that hypoxia caused the compression of fishes in the upper water column.

He stated that in summary they feel that the acoustics coupled with the visual surveys is the best available assessment technique around petroleum platforms. Using the two techniques together gives a total view.

APPROVED BY:


COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

**TCC CRAB SUBCOMMITTEE
& BLUE CRAB TECHNICAL TASK
FORCE - JOINT MEETING MINUTES
October 14, 1996
New Orleans, Louisiana**

Vince Guillory, Chairman of the TCC Crab Subcommittee and Blue Crab Technical Task Force, called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m. The following were in attendance:

Members

Theresa Bert, FDEP/FMRI, St. Petersburg, FL
Vince Guillory, LDWF, Bourg, LA
Steve Heath, ADCNR, Dauphin Island, AL
Ed Holder, Port Arthur News, Groves, TX
Harriet Perry, GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS
Paul Prejean, LDWF, Bourg, LA
Phil Steele, FDEP/FMRI, St. Petersburg, FL
Tom Wagner, TPWD, Rockport, TX

Others

Charles Moss, Lake Jackson, TX
Brandt Savoie, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Richard E. Tillman, Texas Marine Advisory, Aransas Pass, TX
Doug Vaughan, NMFS, Beaufort, NC

Staff

James J. Duffy, Program Coordinator, Ocean Springs, MS
Larry B. Simpson, Executive Director, Ocean Springs, MS
Cynthia B. Yocom, Staff Assistant, Ocean Springs, MS

Adoption of Agenda

V. Guillory requested that an additional item, "Blue Crab Predator-Prey Relationships," be placed on the agenda. P. Steele requested that item 10, "Crustacean Genetics and Stone Crab Fishery Update" be placed under item 4a, the Florida state report. Phil Steele moved to accept all additions/changes to the agenda which was then adopted by consensus.

Approval of Minutes

Phil Steele moved that the minutes from the meeting held March 19, 1996, in Brownsville, Texas, be approved as written. The motion was seconded by Harriet Perry and approved by consensus.

State Reports

Alabama - Steve Heath reported that Alabama's greatest concern is user conflict among the fisheries. Alabama has been meeting with the Alabama Seafood Association's Blue Crab Subcommittee. The subcommittee has crab fishermen and processors from Alabama's two coastal counties. The state is facilitating

their efforts of self-governing and acknowledges their endeavors to recognize problems in the fishery and their subsequent focus to develop solutions to reduce the level of conflict. Alabama crab fishermen disagree with a proposed requirement to have biodegradable panels in their traps; they report that the traps "grass over" thus eliminating the problem of ghost fishing. Another conflict stems from navigation problems caused by crab traps. Pleasure boaters have become irate in some coastal areas, and a proposed solution was to remove crab traps from all coastal rivers. Alabama will continue to work toward alleviating conflicts in the fishery. Processing in Alabama continues to thrive.

Florida - Phil Steele noted several additions that should be made to the FMP including the impact of imports on the fishery, the socio-economic impact, how endangered species affect the crab fishery, and an "update" since the 1990 document to show management progress. Theresa Bert reported on several studies being conducted in Florida. A 10-year project is being completed which looked at the physiology of *Menippe mercenaria*. In collaboration with H. Perry, B. Lindberg, and R. Henry, data was gathered at all life stages on the effects of temperature and salinity on growth and mortality rates of post-settlement juveniles and mortality rates on larger crabs. Other studies being conducted include investigating the longevity of wooden slats and trap configurations (throat size, escape rings, etc.). Florida is also in the eighth year of trapping study. Stone crabs are being trapped off Tampa Bay using 20 traps with four trap lines. This is the first study of this type where actual independent, quantitative data is being gathered on a single site over an extended period of time. Dr. Bert distributed several papers including an article from *Evolution* that provides a method of classifying stone crab individuals from hybrids. Blue crab genetics studies continue. Based on previous genetic analysis, most blue crab larvae from a given area recruit back to that area or a close vicinity of that area. There is not a strong argument for regional blue crab stocks within bays. A much more exhaustive analysis is now being performed looking at three kinds of DNA of blue crabs— mitochondrial DNA; introns (a noncoding region of DNA); and anomalous single copy DNA.

Louisiana - Vince Guillory reported an estimate of hard crab landings for January through August is down from the last four years at 21.5 million pounds. There are five pieces of legislation up for consideration concerning the blue crab fishery including a recreational creel limit, dual liability for undersized crabs, degradable panels, escape rings, and correction of a peeler crab loophole. The Louisiana Crab Task Force has recommended limiting entry. They propose an annual income requirement of 50% from commercial fishing and prior proof of activity in the fishery (licensed two years from during the years 1993-1996). The proposed limit is 2,000 licenses. Paul Prejean distributed catch trend graphs for Louisiana.

Mississippi - Harriet Perry reported that at their January 1996 meeting, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council moved to not exercise any management options for the golden crab (*Chaecon fenneri*) fishery in the Gulf of Mexico. Management regulations, however, have been implemented for the golden crab fishery along the Atlantic Coast. The Gulf Council decision was based upon the low fishing effort in the Gulf of Mexico fishery; there were seven active vessels in 1995, but by January 1996 all but one vessel had moved to the Atlantic Coast. P. Steele moved, H. Perry seconded, and the Crab Subcommittee agreed that despite the small size of the fishery, a letter of concern is drafted to the Gulf Council requesting they reconsider their decision on the Gulf of Mexico golden crab fishery. Justifications for this request centers around three points:

- 1) In contrast to other portunid species such as the blue crab, life history characteristics of the golden crab make the species very vulnerable to over exploitation. The golden crab is moderately fecund, exhibits very low growth rates, attains sexual maturity at a late age, and is very long lived. The species is estimated to enter the fishery at 16 years of age, and some individuals may be more than 30 years of age.

2) The Gulf fishery is based primarily upon females. North of Tampa, more than 80% of trap catches are females; south of Tampa, the proportion of females decline. Along some areas of the South Atlantic, males comprise 95% of the catch.

3) A limited entry program is now in effect for the Atlantic Coast golden crab fishery. Some vessels may have moved from the Gulf to the Atlantic fishery in 1995 in order to qualify under the limited access program, and may later return to the Gulf of Mexico. In addition, new entrants to the golden crab fishery will be diverted to the Gulf. In consideration of the potential vulnerability of the golden crab to over exploitation and the possibility of future expansion of the fishery in the Gulf, a more proactive approach to management of the golden crab in the Gulf of Mexico is recommended.

In Mississippi, settlement collection has begun, but data are not yet available. Fishery-independent data from commercial gear are needed for development of the blue crab stock assessment.

Texas - Tom Wagner reported that Texas is in the process of holding public workshops to gather blue crab fishery information from processors, dealers, and fishermen. These workshops will allow input for potential solutions to problems in the fishery. The blue crab fishery in Texas is the third most valuable fishery in the state following shrimp and oysters with preliminary landings of 5.8 million pounds in 1995. Blue crab data collected by TPWD and the NMFS indicate that the state fishery is in decline. Commercial catch/trap and total commercial landings are down, and overall abundance and distribution of blue crabs 5 inches and greater in size has dropped. These downward trends in the blue crab fishery are symptomatic of excessive fishing effort with indications of growth overfishing.

Blue Crab Symposium

A symposium on the blue crab fisheries of North America addressing research, conservation, and management was held April 18-19, 1996, in association with the 88th Annual Meeting of the National Shellfish Association in Baltimore, Maryland. V. Guillory inquired into the status of publication for the proceedings and found that two papers have not been received. The deadline for submission of papers was June 1996, but publication will not proceed until all papers are received. The Crab Subcommittee requested the GSMFC write a letter requesting the NSA to begin review and proceed with publication in a timely manner.

Crab Trap Identification

Presentations will be made by V. Guillory at the Technical Coordinating Committee and Commission Business Session on crab trap identification. Criteria for crab trap identification will be discussed, and a variety of crab trap tags will be presented. With the input of state representatives, V. Guillory is able to report that crab trap identification systems are implemented for a variety of reasons including reduction of crab trap abandonment (and ghost traps), reduction of trap/crab theft, implementation of trap limits, or any combination of the above reasons. The Subcommittee agreed that crab trap tags should be durable and fouling resistant, low cost, easily visible, difficult to remove, and contain traceable information such as license number, name, and address. For implementation of trap limits, tags must be unique (not easily duplicated) and numbered serially. To reduce ghost traps, a dated tag that is periodically replaced may be needed. In general, trap limits are one of the most difficult management programs to implement and enforce. The main problem with the use of serially numbered tags for a trap limit program is how to deal with the replacement of tags due to lost traps. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for enforcement agents to check an individual fisherman for duplicate tags. To reduce fishing effort,

trap limits should be in conjunction with a license reduction or stabilization program, and vice versa. If a tag is easily removed, then trap theft will probably not be reduced significantly. V. Guillory will distribute information on limited entry and trap marks for the Gulf States and several East Coast states (Attachment A).

Chesapeake Bay Blue Crab Stock Assessment Methods

H. Perry reported that both NOAA and the VIMS had performed stock assessments on Chesapeake Bay blue crab. Neither has released papers to the public, but the VIMS papers will be published in the November issue of *Bulletin of Marine Science*.

National Shellfish Association Workshop

H. Perry reported that the National Shellfish Association will meet in April. Both the VIMS and the NOAA blue crab stock assessments will be reviewed and discussed. A Blue Crab Technical Task Force meeting has been tentatively scheduled to convene in conjunction with the NSA meeting. A stock assessment ad hoc meeting is tentatively scheduled prior to the NSA meeting (tentatively late November) to review Gulf data. Tut Warren, Butch Pellegrin, Harriet Perry, Steve Heath, Vince Guillory, and Commission staff will assemble to review fishery-independent data.

Blue Crab FMP Development

V. Guillory reported that the Blue Crab TTF met September 25-26 at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory in Ocean Springs. The meeting was well-attended and significant progress has been made on several sections. Drafts were distributed on the description of essential habitat, fishery management laws, description of the fishery, management considerations, and potential management measures. The next meeting of the TTF is tentatively scheduled to be held in conjunction with the National Shellfish Association meeting in April.

Blue Crab Predator-Prey Relationships

V. Guillory distributed a handout of potential topics for a predator-prey symposium (Attachment B). The Crab Subcommittee would like to hold the symposium in conjunction with the GSMFC 48th Annual Spring Meeting in March 1998. Overall predation on blue crab will be reviewed, but the effect of red drum predation on blue crab will be explored.

Election of Chairman

T. Wagner moved to reelect Vince Guillory as Chairman. H. Perry seconded the motion which was approved by unanimous acclamation.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

LIMITED ENTRY AND TRAP MARKS - BLUE CRABS

TEXAS

LICENSE LIMITS: None, but one is under development.

TRAP LIMITS: 200 per person

TRAP/BUOY TAGS: A dated tag with the owner's name and address must be placed on each buoy and replaced every 30 days. Each crab trap must also have a trap tag, costing \$1.50 and issued by the State.

LOUISIANA

LICENSE LIMITS: From Jan 1, 1996 through December 31, 1998, no person may purchase a commercial crab trap gear license unless that person possessed a valid commercial crab trap gear license for the year 1993, 1994, or 1995. A license reduction proposal is being developed by the Crab Task Force.

TRAP LIMITS: None.

TRAP/BUOY TAGS: Each crab trap ceiling must be tagged with a ½ inch stainless steel, self-locking tag containing the fishermen's license number.

MISSISSIPPI

LICENSE LIMITS/TRAP LIMITS: None.

TRAP/BUOY TAGS: Traps must be visibly marked with the liense number of fishermen, or have a registered color code on the buoy.

ALABAMA

LICENSE LIMITS/TRAP LIMITS/TRAP, BUOY TAGS: None.

FLORIDA

LICENSE LIMITS: To purchase a commercial crab license, a person must have earned \$5,000 per year or 25% of their income from commercial fishing.

TRAP LIMITS: None.

TRAP/BUOY TAGS: Each buoy must have the license number of the commercial fisherman in letters at least two inches high and the buoy color and license number permanently and conspicuously displayed on the boat. A recreational trap fisherman must have a "R" at least two inches high on the buoy and their name and address permanently affixed to the trap.

GEORGIA

LICENSE LIMITS: From April 1, 1995 through July 1, 1997, a commercial crab license will be issued only to those individuals who: a) was in possession of a valid 1994-1995 license year commercial fishing license; b) was listed as an owner or a captain on a valid 1993-1994 or 1994-1995 nontrawler commercial fishing boat license; and, c) can provide evidence satisfactory to the Department that they sold crabs ex-vessel during the 1993-1994 or 1994-1995 license years.

The Department may issue a commercial crabbing license to an individual who because of hardship reasons was unable to obtain a commercial fishing license during the 1994-1995 license year.

TRAP LIMITS: None.

TRAP/BUOY TAGS: Each buoy must be marked with an alphanumeric identification code issued by the Department; each letter or number must be at least one inch in height, of a color which contrasts with the color of the float, of block character, and spaced so as to be readable from left to right.

SOUTH CAROLINA

LICENSE LIMITS/TRAP LIMITS/TRAP, BUOY TAGS: None.

NORTH CAROLINA

LICENSE LIMITS: Beginning in 1994, no new commercial fishing licenses will be issued; a moratorium committee will be proposing mechanisms to reduce number of fishermen in the future.

TRAP LIMITS: None.

TRAP/BUOY TAGS: Each buoy must have the fishermen's name and license number.

VIRGINIA

LICENSE LIMITS:

Crab dredge

The total number of dredge licenses issued beginning in the 1994-1995 season will be limited to the number of 1993-1994 licenses and will be based upon the following: a) any person who held a 1993 or 1994 dredge license and who did not harvest crabs during the 1993-94 dredge season will not be eligible to participate beginning in the 1994-1995 dredge season; b) no new dredge licenses will be issued to any applicant after March 31; c) no new crab dredge licenses will be issued to any new applicant until the number of dredge licenses drops to 220 or below as of December 10 of any year.

The Commission may grant exceptions to the above limitations based on scientific, economic, biological, sociological, and hardship factors. A person may transfer their license to a member of their immediate family (father, mother, daughter, son, brother, sister, or spouse) or to the buyer of their boat and dredge gear provided that the buyer holds a current commercial registration license.

Crab trap

Sale of hard crab or peeler pot licenses for the calendar year 1996 will be limited to the following: a) any registered commercial fisherman who held a 1995 hard crab pot (or peeler pot) license; b) any registered commercial fishermen who held one or more of the following licenses, crab pot, hard crab pot, peeler pot license, during at least two years during the calendar years 1990 through 1994 and who is in compliance with all provisions of Regulation 4 VAC 20-610-10 pertaining to harvest reporting; and, c) any registered commercial fishermen who can document to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that he was regularly employed as a mate or crew member on a vessel engaged in the commercial pot fishery.

Exceptions may be granted by the Commission if a significant hardship exists; an exception cannot be granted solely on economic hardship. A person may transfer their license to a member of their immediate family (father, mother, daughter, son, brother, sister, or spouse) providing that the family member holds a current commercial registration license or to the buyer of their boat and gear provided that the buyer holds a current commercial registration license.

TRAP LIMITS: 500 total, but with no more than 300 in Chesapeake Bay tributaries. Individuals will be limited to the number of hard crab pots they held previously. Individuals who did not hold a 1995 hard crab pot license, but who are licensed under other provisions, will be limited to 100 hard crab pots in 1996.

TRAP/BUOY TAGS: None. [Proposed but not passed: All pot buoys must be marked with a serially numbered tag issued by the Commission; the tags may not be transferred to another person.]

MARYLAND

LICENSE LIMITS: After April 1996, criteria for a primary candidate for a commercial crabbing license include: a) at least 12 years of age; b) is a current tidal fish licensee who has a license for another fishing activity; c) has been a crew member for at least two years in any commercial fishery as certified by three licensed fishermen; and, d) has a commercial fish license from another state.

Separate waiting lists of primary and secondary candidates, in order of the date and time that applications are received, are maintained. A family member (spouse, child, step child, son- or daughter-in-law, sibling, parent or grandparent, or father- or mother-in-law) who meets the above criteria will be placed at the waiting list of primary candidates. A secondary candidate for a commercial crabbing license is any applicant who is at least 12 years of age and who cannot qualify as a primary candidate.

A license may be transferred to a family member if the person is currently on the commercial crab license primary candidate list or, upon death of the licensee, if the licensee had indicated that person's name on the license application on file with the Department. The license, with the Department's approval, may be transferred for 30 to 90 days regardless of whether the transferee is on a waiting list. A person may not transfer a license in exchange for any type of remuneration.

TRAP LIMITS: 300 per commercial crab license, with the following exception: for the license year ending August 1994, a licensee who previously held a commercial crab license may set and fish 300 additional crab pots for each additional crew member authorized on the license, but not more than 600 additional crab pots.

TRAP/BUOY TAGS: Each buoy will be marked with the identification number of the licensee in letters at least two inches high.

NEW JERSEY

LICENSE LIMITS: To qualify for a 1994 commercial crab pot license, an applicant must have held the same license in 1991, 1992, or 1993 prior to July 9; in subsequent years, the applicant must provide a copy of a previously valid commercial crab pot license for the previous year. Exceptions were provided for persons on active military duty during the period of qualification.

The Department will issue additional (not more than 20% of the number of 1993 licenses) licenses by a lottery system from a pool of applicants between July 9, 1993 and April 20, 1994. No additional licenses will be issued until the number licenses decreases below the number issued in 1991.

A similar license system for crab dredges is in effect, except that no additional crab dredge licenses will be issued until the number of licenses issued decreases below the number issued in 1993 plus 20%. Commercial licenses are non-transferable except that a license holder may transfer the license at any time to their spouse, son, or daughter.

TRAP LIMITS: 600 in Delaware Bay and 400 in all other areas.

TRAP/BUOY TAGS: None, although the license number must be displayed on both sides of the boat in numerals not less than 12 inches high and of a color contrasting with the background.

DELAWARE

LICENSE LIMITS: After March 1990, no new crab pot and dredge licenses will be issued until the number drops to 82 or below and to 18 or below, respectively, as of October 31 of any year; at that time, a lottery will be held by the Department to allow the number to increase to 100 pot and 21 dredge licenses.

A crab pot or dredge license may be transferred at any time, including posthumously, to their immediate family (parent, child, sibling, or spouse). A commercial pot license may also be transferred to a designee [Up to two designees may be listed on the license; a designee is authorized to set and tend crab pots in the absence of the license holder] provided that the designee has been listed as same on the license for at least two consecutive years and such license has not been previously transferred to a designee on or after July 1995. No license may be transferred to someone less than 16 years of age. No person will buy, offer to buy, sell, offer to sell, barter, trade, or otherwise transfer for value a license or the privilege of being designated a designee.

TRAP LIMITS: 200 pots. No more than three commercial crab pot licensees may list the same vessel and the maximum number of crab pots that these three licensees may use is 500.

TRAP/BUOY TAGS: Each buoy will be colored a specific color combination as assigned. The crabbing vessel must display the same color code on a panel measuring at least two feet by two feet.

NEW YORK

LICENSE LIMITS/TRAP LIMITS: None.

TRAP/BUOY TAGS: Traps must be marked with the owner's and operator's crabbing permit number in clearly visible and legible characters readable from the outside of the trap; this marking may be placed on a tag or nameplate or similar device made of a material that is not deteriorated by seawater and must be firmly attached to the side or top of the trap. Buoys must, in clearly visible and legible markings, be marked with the owner's and operator's crabbing permit number.

GSMFC/CRAB SUBMCOMMITTEE SYMPOSIUM:

BLUE CRAB PREDATOR-PREY RELATIONSHIPS, WITH EMPHASIS ON RED DRUM

Potential Topics

Introduction to Issue

Review of Overall Predation on Blue Crab

Review of Blue Crab Tethering Experiments

Review of Effects of Blue Crab Predation

Review of Effects of Marine Fish Predators on Prey Abundance

Determination of Blue Crab Food Ration

State/Regional Trends in Abundance of Red Drum and Blue Crab

Others?

Summary/Conclusions

APPROVED BY:


COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
03/17/97

TCC ANADROMOUS FISH SUBCOMMITTEE
Monday and Tuesday, October 14-15, 1996
New Orleans, Louisiana

Chairman Doug Frugé called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm. The following were in attendance:

Members

Norman Boyd, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Doug Frugé, USFWS, Ocean Springs, MS
Alan Huff, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL
Charles Mesing, FGFFC, Midway, FL
Larry Nicholson, GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS
Gary Tilyou, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA

Staff

Ronald R. Lukens, Assistant Director
Nancy K. Marcellus, Administrative Assistant

Others

Laura Jenkins, USFWS, Panama City, FL
Buck Sutter, NMFS/SERO, St. Petersburg, FL
Wally Walquist, USFWS, Atlanta, GA

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as presented.

Approval of Minutes

A. Huff moved to adopt the minutes from the March 18, 1996, meeting held in Brownsville, Texas. The motion was seconded by L. Nicholson, and the minutes were approved as presented.

State/Federal Reports

Florida - C. Mesing, Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission (Commission), noted that Forrest Ware, the original Subcommittee member, has retired since the last meeting and Mesing has been named as the temporary official representative. Florida's status has not changed since the last meeting. Plans are to maintain their presence on the Apalachicola River, at least from a broodstock/stocking perspective. The Apalachicola River striped bass project is no longer funded by Wallop-Breaux, but rather is now funded by the state, which makes it vulnerable to state budget reductions. The Lake Talquin study, that has been going on for the last six years, will end in 1996. Data will be collected in November, and plans are to recommend continuing to stock only Gulf genotype striped bass in Lake Talquin. The primary purpose for the continued stocking is to develop a source of broodfish other than the Apalachicola River. There is interest in exploring another river in the State of Florida to try to establish a fishery.

The Commission looked into the possibility of enhancing some thermal refuges on the Apalachicola River, mainly small creeks in the upper portion of the river. Two years ago the Corps of Engineers dug out a

creek called Blue Spring, but last year there was not sufficient numbers of fish to properly evaluate the effort. This year there were a lot of age 1+ fish in the river, so it was extremely productive. For 1 ½ or 2 minutes of using the shocking rig, they collected around 60 to 70 fish. Most of them were age 1+ fish. Those positive results indicate that deepening and enlarging the appropriate thermal refuges could positively impact the striped bass population. The Corps had dredged Blue Spring to about five feet in depth.

One reason for working on the River this past summer was to look at the effects of navigation windows established by the Corps of Engineers. These navigation windows withhold water until specified times, when it is released to accommodate barge traffic. Five creeks in the upper river all held young of the year striped bass, 1995 being a very good year class. During periods when water levels were lowered, most of the creeks were cut off or had only six inches to a foot of water, and they were not used by stripers. When the water level rose, Blue Spring, the only one that had been dredged out, held significant numbers of stripers. As a result, the Corps of Engineers has expressed interest in evaluating some of the other creeks for possible dredging. Only creeks that had water temperatures of less than 78 degrees were selected, since temperatures in excess of 78 degrees are typically avoided by striped bass. Cooperative efforts are continuing with the Corps of Engineers in an effort to provide additional cold water habitat in the river.

A. Huff updated the Subcommittee on the first meeting of the Florida Sturgeon Production Work Group which was held recently in Gainesville, Florida. This working group was created by an Act of the Florida Legislature in their last session. The six member working group is charged with promoting the production of sturgeon for stock enhancement and for aquaculture. Two members are appointed by the Aquaculture Research Council (ARC) of the State of Florida, one committee member represents the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission, one represents the Department of Agriculture consumer services, one represents Florida Department of Environmental Protection (Huff), and one represents the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. The working group will probably focus its efforts on aquaculture, more so than stock enhancement, since there are significant biological issues related to stock enhancement. The next meeting is scheduled for November 15, 1996 to develop research needs associated with advancement of sturgeon commercial aquaculture and stock enhancement. It was pointed out that the commercial production of the American alligator represents a model for how to successfully create a commercial trade for a threatened or endangered species. Even so, there are still a number of concerns that must be considered. The working group must submit a report to the Florida Legislature by September 1997.

Lukens added that he felt the Gulf Sturgeon Recovery Team should be kept informed on what is going on so they can provide any comments or support for positions. Huff advised that the interaction between the working group and the Recovery Team was already occurring and he was strongly promoting that some interaction occur on a continuing basis.

Louisiana - G. Tilyou reported that the only striped bass activity in the past year was stocking. Tilyou reported that there are two ongoing projects on the Pearl River. One is the Walquai Bluff project to divert some water into Mississippi from Louisiana. Tilyou noted that they are not opposing this project, but staying neutral on the water distribution. Lukens added that there was another issued tied to that. He understood that if Louisiana would go along with the water diversion for Mississippi, then Mississippi would give the water quality certification for the West Pearl River navigation project.

Gulf sturgeon work is continuing in the Pearl River system. Louisiana biologists and two Corps of Engineer employees presented a paper at 1996 Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Conference on monitoring Gulf sturgeon in the west Pearl River. This monitoring program was initiated in March

1994 to evaluate population status, habitat preference, and migration patterns of Gulf sturgeon in the lower Pearl River system. Copies of the draft abstract were distributed to the Subcommittee.

Louisiana continued stocking the Indian Creek Reservoir for the fifth year. The water level has been low. The reservoir had been drawn down at Indian Creek while building the new hatchery. Following the draw down, there was a drought for about a year and a half; consequently, the lake stayed low for about a year and a half. Stocking continued but no sampling was conducted. The Department plans to conduct sampling during the winter of 1996/1997.

Mississippi - L. Nicholson reported that his project had a fairly productive year with 25% overall survival of Phase 1 fish. Nicholson and Frugé were involved in a study to evaluate comparative growth and survival of Gulf and Atlantic race fish; however, due to difficulty in getting fish, the study turned out to be a comparison of B1s and C2s. The lateral line scale counts were used as a primary basis for these two races. They had a 25% overall survival of the original 500,000 fry. Approximately 110,000 Phase 1 fish were released, averaging greater than 50 mm in total length. They were stocked primarily in the Pascagoula and Pearl Rivers, with some being stocked in the Tchouticabouffa River. There were no observed differences between the B1 and C2 fish during the project.

Phase 2 fish will be ready to harvest in early November. Survival has been good. Nicholson discussed the problem of uninflated swim bladders. He has documented between 5 and 10% with uninflated swim bladders. He has a student who is going to be investigating the issue and conducting a search of the literature regarding swim bladder inflation.

Nicholson reported that they should have approximately 15,000 Phase 2 fish to tag and release the first two weeks in November. Tag returns below last year, with about 200 reported as opposed to 300 at this time last year. Nicholson noticed a distinct correlation between the amount of public information they receive on the stocking programs and the number of tag returns they receive. Right now the public information office at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory is empty.

Texas - N. Boyd reported that Texas is no longer stocking striped bass along the coast, but continues to stock numerous inland reservoirs. Texas received Gulf race striped bass from Mammoth Springs, which were sent to the Inks Dam National Hatchery. They took delivery of 200,000 fry, but due to a problem with largemouth bass in the ponds, only about 23,000 Phase 1 striped bass were harvested.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - D. Frugé reported that the final report of the Sabine River radio telemetry study, which began in 1991, was completed last month. Subcommittee members will each receive a copy. The FWS Federal Aid office has been directed to sponsor a symposium or workshop on Gulf striped bass restoration. It is in the 1997 budget for Federal Aid and there has been preliminary planning. The Atlanta office will be responsible for coordination of the workshop, which will be held sometime in 1997.

Frugé mentioned that he had contacted two zoologists regarding whether or not the Gulf race striped bass warranted being described as a subspecies. Both of them felt that this was an interesting idea and that there was probably enough information available to warrant such a distinction. Mesing added that Ike Wirgin will be submitting a paper to a genetics journal on the analysis of the preserved fish, encompassing the entire background of the Gulf fish and looking at their genetics. The topic of subspecific designation will be suggested in that paper. He added that it is just a matter of time before greater reliance is placed genetics as a management tool, and since the Gulf striped bass has been the subject of much genetics work, it is probably one of the best

test cases for taxonomic listing based on genetics. This issue will be discussed further at next meeting after Doug receives proposals from interested zoologists regarding tasks and costs.

Status of Update of "Anadromous Fish Restoration Programs in the Gulf of Mexico"

Lukens advised that a lot of progress has been made on updating this publication. The introduction will be rewritten when all sections are received. Lukens noted that he is waiting on funding information from the FWS so a new table and pie chart can be created to illustrate the distribution of funds. The discontinuation of funds since 1991 from Congress to the FWS will be reflected in that as well. Lukens also completed a short section on the Commission. Lukens emphasized that when the document is completed, it will be used again to emphasize the need for funding for striped bass restoration in the Gulf. Lukens also mentioned that there is more support within FWS, particularly at the headquarters level, for getting additional funding for striped bass. As soon as all sections are completed, a first draft will be sent to the Subcommittee for editing. A final draft is anticipated by the next meeting.

1996 GSMFC Sport Fish Restoration Administrative Program

Lukens noted that the Commission receives funding every year from the Sport Fish Administrative Program, administered by the FWS. This money is administered from the Region IV Office in Atlanta. The program contains a striped bass component, both for coordination of state and federal activities and for demonstration projects. One project is the continuation of striped bass DNA research. This will be the last such project. Ike Wirgin is conducting an analysis of the preserved specimens regarding the nuclear DNA. He is beginning his second year of a three year project. Lukens also discussed a proposal to conduct a contaminants survey of the Pascagoula River. This project will review data that might be available on non-point and point sources of contaminants into the Pascagoula River system. The data will be geo-referenced for GIS application. This is an effort to try and document the water quality of the habitat in the Pascagoula River as well as sediments that may be harboring contaminants.

A second project is to document the availability of cool water for striped bass in the Pascagoula River system. Cool water is a major contributing factor for survival and success. Plans are to work with the U.S. Geological Survey office in Jackson, Mississippi, to conduct a thermal survey of the Pascagoula, Leaf, and Chickasawhay Rivers.

Lukens also mentioned that work will begin soon on setting up the data base for striped bass in the Commission office. The data base will be set up in dBASE 5. As work progresses on this, Lukens will be contacting each of the Subcommittee members to discuss their data.

Status of Gulf Sturgeon Recovery Activities

Laura Jenkins, FWS-Panama City, reported that they currently have a cooperative agreement with North Carolina State University to conduct research on the Choctawhatchee River. To date, he has put radio tags on 24 fish. At this time he is looking for specific spawning habitat. He has software for use in the field. It will record data on transects across the river for bottom profiles, temperature, and velocity. There are certain places in the river that the fish are staying all summer and he is trying to figure out why they are picking those particular spots.

The Panama City FWS has recently purchased 25 sonic tags. Frank Parauka has begun putting these tags on fish that are less than 40 pounds and will attempt to track them out into the estuarine and marine waters.

Bill Whalen continues to make progress on the sonic/radio tag that he has been developing. The contract had to be extended again, but this will probably be the last year. Whalen advised that he has finished a prototype tag, and should be able to make tags available for use in October 1996. The tags should have a 5-10 year life expectancy because of the new battery technology.

The Gainesville office is conducting a study on the Suwannee River with sonic/radio tags. They are using the NMFS research vessel to track fish offshore. The engineers who developed these sonic/radio tags are accompanying them and doing some experiments to see if the tags are working. They have some tags that will record depth, temperature, and eventually latitude/longitude.

The Panama City FWS office submitted a project for Watchable Wildlife for Gulf sturgeon which was accepted. The project is to develop a poster which can be placed at boat ramps throughout the Gulf. It is a cooperative effort with the Wildlife Federations of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks, and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. The posters should be ready by the end of October 1996. They will be put up at boat ramps inform people about Gulf sturgeon.

The ACF Restoration Plan has been finalized. The Plan covers everything that is currently being funded and a section was added regarding actions that are needed if funding becomes available.

One thousand Phase 2 fish were stocked in the Apalachicola River this year. Originally anchor tags were used, but recently dart tags have been used. Only 1,000 fish were stocked, because it was felt that tagging 15,000 fish with internal anchor tags would be too labor intensive. It was also felt that the tagging was stressing the fish, and may result in significant mortality.

Lake Talquin Update

Mesing reported that 1996 is the final year for the Lake Talquin study. Plans are to maintain Lake Talquin as a Gulf broodstock source. Mesing will recommend that only "2" genotypes be used in the event that "2" genotypes are needed to conduct any studies. With this known source, waiting for the genetics analysis will not be necessary. This is the second year only "2s" have been put into the system. When the project is finished, there will be four year classes available. This year is critical for the growth issue. For two years, there was a difference in growth between the Gulf and Atlantic fish. The 1992 year class is 4 years old in 1996, and if there is a difference in growth in 1996, there will be 3 out of 4 years of positive growth data. That may provide sufficient justification for using Gulf fish as opposed to Atlantics. Based on samples taken in 1995 and 1996, differences in survival, if documented, may indicate that the Atlantics are better at surviving in a reservoir situation than the Gulfs. Sampling will be completed in November and December 1996. Preliminary information should be available for the 1997 Morone Workshop and the March Subcommittee meeting. Publication of the results will probably be in the fall of 1997.

Striped Bass Production and Allocation - State and Federal

Frugé provided a handout for the Subcommittee entitled "Gulf Race Striped Bass Stocking Summary - 1996." The preliminary data included information on stocking location, planned stocking/fry requests, actual

stocking, date stocked, hatchery, genetics information, and broodstock source/identification. Frugé noted that the difference between this summary and those previously distributed to the Subcommittee was that it only includes Gulf race fish.

Discussion of Possible Revision of the Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan

Lukens gave the Subcommittee an overview of the original Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan which was published in 1986, prior to the passage of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act. The significance of that is that the Plan was created prior to the established protocol for plan development. The Plan was also developed ten years ago. A limited regulatory amendment was completed and approved in 1991. It is a good practice to review a fishery management plan every 3-5 years to determine the appropriateness of revising it. A revision would be a complete rewriting of the plan. The other significant point about the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act is that under that program a format has been developed which is different from the format of the Striped Bass FMP. Because of the work on the genetics, among others, Lukens felt it might be a good idea to consider the appropriateness of revising the Plan under the auspices of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Program. Under the Interjurisdictional Program, the Subcommittee, with additions of other expertise, would function as a Technical Task Force to guide the development of the revision. Revisions are typically a little easier than starting a new plan.

The fishery management plans serve at least two purposes: 1) to provide regulatory recommendations to the states, addressing the fishery from a regional perspective; and 2) to provide a central focus for the most updated information on the species at the time of publishing. Even though there is not a lot going on with striped bass in the Gulf, Lukens contends that it is probably worth updating the Plan so there is a fresh framework to work from in the event funding becomes available.

W. Walquist, FWS, suggested bringing up the issue at the upcoming striped bass workshop to be held in 1997. He advised to table a decision about the revision until after the workshop to take advantage of the expertise there. The Subcommittee agreed to let the workshop guide the plans for revision. They also agreed that some preliminary work could be done with each state doing a section by section review of the plan, looking for new information that could be added, things that could be updated, and things that can be removed. Each member should also write down their agency's goals and objectives for coastal striped bass in their state. This information should be brought to the next meeting.

Election of Officers

Doug Frugé was re-elected as Chairman of the Subcommittee. Charlie Mesing was appointed to serve as Vice-Chairman.

Other Business

Lukens briefly discussed the redistribution of anadromous funds from NMFS. He contacted Paul Perra at the headquarters office in Silver Spring, Maryland, and was told that from the NMFS perspective it is legitimate to reconsider the distribution of those funds. The current available funding is \$2.1 million nationwide, with \$65,000 currently going to the Gulf region. B. Sutter added that NMFS is putting together a survey to be sent to all the states that lists all the priorities and to see if they need to be refocused. In the next month or so the NMFS will be distributing a letter inquiring about these priorities. Lukens noted that perhaps it might be a good idea to wait until that survey comes out and based on it, send a letter about the disproportionment distribution of those funds, and emphasize how important these anadromous resources are to the southeast.

Due to the relatively low level of activity occurring with striped bass in the Gulf, Frugé brought up the issue of meeting frequency for the Subcommittee. Currently the Subcommittee is meeting two times a year. Tilyou recommended considering the need for a meeting on a case by case basis. It was agreed that a meeting was warranted in March 1997 to discuss the upcoming FWS workshop. Lukens also mentioned that he would discuss meeting at Tara Wildlife Management Area in the fall time frame. The final consensus was the Subcommittee would meet in March 1997, recommend late summer for the FWS workshop, and then schedule the Tara meeting for sometime in the fall to follow up on the workshop.

C. Mesing also discussed the possibility of inviting a speaker for the next meeting. Mesing advised that he could contact Dave Yeager, hatchery manager, to give a presentation on the Blackwater striped bass fishery. The Subcommittee agreed.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:40 am.

DATA MANAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

MINUTES

Tuesday, October 15, 1996

New Orleans, Louisiana

Chairman Skip Lazauski called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. The following members and others were present:

Members

Page Campbell, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Joe Shepard, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Joe O'Hop (proxy for F. Kennedy), FMRI, St. Petersburg, FL
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Skip Lazauski, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL

Staff

Larry Simpson, Executive Director
Ron Lukens, Assistant Director
David Donaldson, SEAMAP Coordinator
Jim Duffy, IJF Coordinator
Madeleine Travis, Staff Assistant

Others

Richard Waller, GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS
Joe Smith, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
Doug Vaughan, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
Buck Sutter, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Vince Guillory, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Wally Wahlquist, USFWS, Atlanta, GA

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was approved as written.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the meeting held on March 19, 1996 in Brownsville, Texas were approved with minor editorial changes.

State/Federal Reports

Louisiana - J. Shepard reported that the Louisiana legislature will be dealing with fiscal as well as other matters this session. One of the issues being addressed is funding for the trip ticket program. The Corps of Engineers is interested in the trip ticket program and may provide some funding for the program. The Corps is interested in the program because of water diversion projects and the ability of the program to provide area-specific information regarding the impacts and benefits of the water diversion projects. The initial cost for beginning the trip ticket program is \$500K and \$370K for yearly operation of the program. The outlook for receiving the funding looks pretty optimistic. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is obligated to conduct stock assessments for sheepshead, black drum, mullet, and flounder. The Department has been collecting information on these species and the assessments will begin shortly since the assessments need to be presented to the legislature by the end of the year. The Department also conducted an assessment on spotted seatrout and a draft report has been complete but the process is not finalized.

Texas - P. Campbell reported that there is a massive red tide occurring off Texas. The bloom is caused by

Gymnodium breve and is occurring from Matagorda to Brownsville. To date, approximately 1 to 1½ million fish have been killed and all affected areas have been closed to shellfish harvesting. The concentrations of red tide have been extremely high. The legislature is preparing to meeting and the Texas Department of Wildlife and Parks is seeking general authority for licensing of all commercial fisheries. This will allow the Department to establish license limitations. The Department has implemented flounder regulations in September. There are 10 per person, recreationally, 60 per person, commercially, and 14 inch size limit. Point of sale system for hunting and fishing licenses is now operational. With this system, the license purchase and pertinent information is immediately entered into a computer database.

Florida - J. O'Hop reported that Florida's trip ticket program is currently on time. He stated that data collected from the trip ticket program is in the system 6 to 8 weeks after it has been collected. Florida is continuing validation in the field and conducting more extensive checks on area fished versus type of gear. Florida is working on improving precision on size categories for particular species. Florida is planning to sample king mackerel during some of the local tournaments to assist Texas A&M University with at project. The purpose of the sampling is to determine stock separation, genetically for king mackerel. Florida is continuing its sampling of red drum and aging these fish. Florida has just begun aging these fish and they have ranged in age from 5 to 21 years. On September 11, 1996, Florida took part in a meeting to discuss its participation in the intercept portion of the MRFSS. It was decided that Florida would not be able to conduct the intercepts of the MRFSS, at that time, but is still interested in participating in the intercept portion of the MRFSS. The state of Florida is facing budget cuts of approximately \$2.8 million. Florida is in the process of prioritizing their programs and projects in an effort to determine the most important activities. The Florida Game and Fish Commission is in charge of selling fishing licenses in the state. The Commission is willing to provide computerized files of the license sales.

Mississippi - T. Van Devender reported that Mississippi Department of Marine Resources has hired Corky Perret as their Chief of Marine Fisheries. Gill net issue in Mississippi was not resolved during the last legislative session. The Mississippi Commission impose some more stringent regulations on the gill net fishery. The latest issue concerns the use of degradable material for construction of gill nets. The Commission has tasked the Department with examining this issue. The Department is continuing its work with the Cooperative Statistics Program. Mississippi has one port agent that collect shrimp information in one coastal county and the NMFS provided two other agents to collect data in the other counties. Mississippi is in its ninth year of collection of recreational data via a creel survey. The tidelands fund is providing funding for a variety of projects such as mapping of sea grass beds, effects of trawling in grass beds, aging roe mullet, impact of saltwater wedge in coastal rivers, water quality, etc. The Department now has the authority to implement limited entry management programs. Personnel are currently in the process of compiling information concerning these programs. The Bonne Carre project has been stalled and currently there is no activity on the project.

Alabama - S. Lazauski reported that Alabama addressed the saltwater/freshwater angler percentage for determining the split of W/B monies. Alabama Division of Marine Resources conducted survey and determined the percentage was actually 23% instead of 12%. The freshwater personnel believed that percentage was not accurate and helped fund another survey to determine the percentage of salt and freshwater anglers. The results of this survey showed that the split was actually 27%. The increased percentage means that the W/B monies to the Division will more than double and enable the Division to increase its W/B projects. Alabama is starting an inshore creel survey. Alabama just finished a speckled trout stock assessment and age and growth study. The analysis shows that the SPR was 34%. New legislation enables Alabama to collect data and implement a trip ticket system, if desired. Non-resident dealers are now required to submit a monthly report of landings. For residents, the port agents collect data for a variety of fisheries. Any dealer who buys mullet is required to complete a the mullet trip ticket form. Alabama has found that landings of mullet are at the highest level in history in Alabama waters. The seafood licenses have been computerized but the recreational licenses are still sold throughout the state and are not on computer.

RecFIN/ComFIN Discussion

MRFSS/RecFIN - R. Lukens stated that the GSMFC submitted a cooperative agreement which outlined the details for the Gulf States to conduct the intercept portion of the MRFSS in the Gulf of Mexico. This agreement was rejected and a letter outlining the reasons for denial was received. The GSMFC asked the MRFSS staff for a full critique of the proposal so staff can better understanding the shortcomings of the proposal. R. Lukens noted that although NMFS rejected the proposal, Dr. Bill Fox remains supportive of the concept of the cooperative agreement and it is probably just a matter of time before the states enter into a cooperative agreement to conduct the proposed work. R. Lukens noted that 1996 appropriation act for the U.S. Congress stated that there is \$2.9 million, to be split among the three interstate commissions, for implementation of the RecFIN. The same language was included in the 1997 appropriations act as well as an additional \$500K for a total of \$3.4 million. In the recent passage of amendments to the Magnuson Act, there is language which directs the NMFS to establish a national data collection program. R. Lukens noted that this is very similar to RecFIN/ComFIN. He outlined some of the highlights of the amendments which clearly allows the commissions to work cooperatively with the NMFS to conduct data collection programs. In an effort to clearly state the Commission's stance on cooperative data collection programs, R. Lukens presented a resolution regarding state/federal marine fisheries data program. After some discussion and minor changes, **T. Van Devender moved to accept the resolution and forward it to the TCC for their consideration.** The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. R. Lukens noted that the GSMFC has submitted the 1997 cooperative agreement to the NMFS. This agreement included administrative monies for RecFIN(SE) and ComFIN. In addition, two new tasks were added which are coordination of menhaden and headboat samplers. These tasks were added to the cooperative agreement since both jobs fit very nicely under recreation and commercial data collection activities.

State License Systems - D. Donaldson stated that the RecFIN(SE) is currently in the process of compiling information regarding the licensing systems for each of the states in the Southeast Region. The purpose of this activity is to determine the feasibility of utilizing licensing databases as sampling frames for marine recreational fisheries data collection programs.

Demonstration Charterboat Survey - D. Donaldson stated that in September 1996, there was a meeting of MRFSS, NMFS, Florida, and GSMFC personnel to discuss conducting a charterboat pilot survey in the Gulf of Mexico. The purpose of this survey is to examine alternative methods for estimating effort in the charterboat fishery. There will be three methods studies; the current MRFSS, a telephone survey of charterboat operators, and a statistically design logbook panel. Florida was initially targeted since it will be the hardest environment to sample and if the methodology works there, it will work anywhere. It was noted that it could be expanded to include all of the Gulf States (except Texas since the MRFSS is not conducted there) if the states were interested. D. Donaldson asked if Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama were interested in participating in the pilot survey. Each state expressed an interest in participating in the survey. D. Donaldson then distributed a list of charterboat operators for each state. This list will be the basis for the sampling frame for the survey. The lists need to be checked to ensure that all the charterboat operators are included and that all the information is included and accurate. It was noted that the Data Management Subcommittee should get approval to participate in the survey. Therefore, **J. Shepard moved to recommend to the TCC that the GSMFC work cooperatively with the NMFS to conduct the pilot charterboat survey in the Gulf of Mexico.** The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Stock Assessment Training Workshop

J. Duffy stated that there was stock assessment team meeting and the group discussed the need for new personnel to begin learning stock assessment techniques. Several member agreed to begin exploring the possibility of developing a formal process to teaching assessment techniques to interested personnel. It is possible that a course could be offered via a state university, to teach these techniques. There is also a need to continue the education of the established stock assessment personnel via a variety of workshops that address new techniques and methods.

Protocols and Guidelines for Aging Using Otoliths

J. Shepard stated that Mike Murphy from Florida is current developing a process for aging fish using otoliths. This activity includes the initial development of the process and protocols, review of these protocols and once a final set of protocols and guidelines are developed, conducting a series of workshops to describe and explain how to use these guidelines for aging fish. Staff stated that they will call M. Murphy to determine the status of the process and report back to the Subcommittee.

Election of Officers

After some discussion, Skip Lazuski was reelected as Chairman and Joe Shepard was reelected as Vice-Chairman.

Other Business

S. Lazuski informed the Subcommittee about a new federal citation called the "fix-it ticket". This ticket relaxes the fishing regulations for recreational fishing. This ticket allows recreational fishermen to possess undersize fish or exceed the bag limit (to varying degrees) without getting fined for breaking the regulations. Although this is for federal waters only, state personnel are concerned about the impacts this ticket will have on state waters. The Subcommittee will make sure the Law Enforcement Committee is aware of this issues so they are able to discuss the implications.

J. O'Hop discussed the TIP Workshop proceedings document. He stated he had some comment regarding this document and the group briefly reviewed the document and J. O'Hop stated he would provide his detailed comments to staff for incorporation into the document.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

APPROVED BY:

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

**S-FFMC MENHADEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
Tuesday, October 15, 1996
New Orleans, LA**

Jerry Mambretti, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m., with the following in attendance:

Members

Dalton Berry, Zapata Protein (USA), Inc., Mandeville, LA (*Alternate for Pryor Bailey*)
Randy Rader, Gulf Protein, Inc., Amelia, LA
Wilmer LaPointe, Daybrook Fisheries, Inc., Empire, LA (*Alternate for Borden Wallace*)
Vince Guillory, LDWF, Bourg, LA
Joseph Smith, NMFS, Beaufort, NC (*Proxy for John Merriner*)
Jerry Mambretti, TPWD, Port Arthur, TX

Staff

Larry Simpson, Executive Director, Ocean Springs, MS
Jim Duffy, IJF Program Coordinator, Ocean Springs, MS
Cindy Yocom, Staff Assistant, Ocean Springs, MS
Ron Lukens, Sportfish Restoration Program Coordinator, Ocean Springs, MS

Others

Richard Condrey, LSU, Baton Rouge, LA
Janaka de Silva, LSU, Baton Rouge, LA
Jeff Rester, LSU, Baton Rouge, LA
Doug Vaughan, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
Skip Lazauski, ADCNR/MRD, Gulf Shores, AL

Introductions, Review of Membership

L. Simpson noted the addition of Randy Rader of Gulf Protein, Inc. to the group, and introduced new Commission staff, Jim Duffy. J. Mambretti welcomed both parties to the MAC.

Adoption of Agenda

J. Duffy noted the absence of Nancy Rabalais, and suggested action be taken to modify the agenda accordingly. J. Smith suggested that there was a need to discuss the hypoxic zone issue, regardless of Nancy's presence, with agreement from the group. J. Smith suggested that agenda item 6, Stock Assessment Update, be moved between items 8 and 9, for smoother flow. V. Guillory moved and D. Berry seconded that the agenda be adopted as amended. The motion carried without objection.

Approval of Minutes

J. Smith suggested the following change to the minutes of the March 19, 1996 meeting held in Brownsville, TX. The first sentence under Other Business should read '...Gulf Protein, Inc. was **preparing to fish (securing licensure)** in Texas...' instead of '...open a reduction facility...' in Texas. D. Berry moved and V. Guillory seconded that the minutes of the March meeting be approved as edited. The motion carried without objection.

Marine Mammal Protection Act Status

L. Simpson updated the MAC on the status of categorization of Gulf menhaden fisheries under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Menhaden fisheries are currently considered *category three*, which is the lowest priority category for marine mammal concerns. This status will not change at least through 1997.

Review of 1996 Gulf of Mexico Menhaden Fishing Season

J. Smith provided a 1996 fishing season review. Through September, Gulf landings totaled about 442,000 mt (1,456 million standard fish). This represents a three percent increase over the same period in 1995, but a decrease of 12% on the five year average for 1990-1995. This has been accomplished with only five plants operating instead of six. If the historical October average is realized in 1996, total season landings will approach 500,000 mt (seven percent increase over 1995). April, May, and June landings went well, but schools scattered in July, making fishing difficult until September. The hypoxic zone and red tides may have affected the landings during mid-season. About 50 vessels have operated in the gulf menhaden fishery during 1996. Age-II fish are running about 60% of the port samples, while age-I's are running about 30-32%. April projections of 525,000 mt will come close to actual season landings, assuming a good October.

Incidental notes included: NMFS has devoted increased sampling effort to the Gulf bait fishery in 1996; Net logs (Captain's Daily Fishing Reports, or CDFRs) from 1996 will be edited and available by spring 1997; researchers have discovered that encapsulated fish oil helps intestinal cancer patients stay in remission; a 19.25 inch, 3.4 pound menhaden, determined to be seven years old, was caught off Smith Point, VA. It was noted if an unusual catch like this occurs in the future, the plant should hold samples for aging and archiving.

Use of Fishery-Independent Data to Predict Menhaden Catch

V. Guillory indicated some success in Louisiana predicting menhaden catches using fishery-independent data. He suggested that Louisiana and Texas might work together to improve each state's ability to predict menhaden harvest. D. Vaughan suggested that fishery-independent data is very valuable in tuning VPAs during stock assessment.

J. Mambretti reported that TPWD now has about ten years of fishery-independent menhaden data for the Sabine Lake system. It appears that bag seine indices are better indicators of potential landings than are gillnets or trawls. It was noted by the group that many non-resource factors, including weather and economics, can have dramatic, short-term effects on landings. R. Condrey discussed the value of documenting seemingly unimportant phenomena such as "good vs. bad" weather years, variations in plant / vessel effort, etc., in describing menhaden and other fisheries. J. Mambretti agreed, citing events such as red tides and hypoxic zone fluctuations as potentially strong influences on fish abundance and location. V. Guillory suggested that frequency of occurrence in bag seines may be more indicative of menhaden abundance than CPUE. R. Condrey suggested categorical modeling may be appropriate for relating indices of abundance to catches of menhaden.

Stock Assessment Update

D. Vaughan provided an update regarding menhaden stock assessment. Apparently, the extended season has had little effect on menhaden stocks or fisheries. Fishing mortality rates do not appear to have increased significantly due to the extended season, and therefore he felt that a new stock assessment now was unwarranted. He stated that typically, a full stock assessment is done by NMFS about every five years, which would time the

next one after the 1997 fishing season. He was optimistic about the use of fishery-independent data discussed above in tuning VPAs during that assessment. J. Smith reported that port samples will be collected through the 1996 extended season.

Bycatch Study Final Report

R. Condrey indicated that during the course of the bycatch characterization study, they had inadvertently succeeded in developing a wonderful photo-documentation of the operation of the menhaden purse seine fishery. He also mentioned a pending range extension for the hawksbill sea turtle that resulted from an encounter that his student, Jeff Rester, had with a hawksbill off western Louisiana while documenting menhaden bycatch. The animal was released unharmed.

J. Rester gave a report on suction hose cage design and large fish excluders ("shark cages") for bycatch reduction in gulf menhaden fisheries. He discussed various designs for both devices, and indicated that variations in design and use are largely a matter of captain preference. Through captain interviews and on-board observance, Mr. Rester concluded that large hose cages with many small openings would likely maximize menhaden pumping efficiency while minimizing large fish mortality.

J. de Silva provided a characterization of the makeup and disposition of bycatch of the gulf menhaden fishery during 1994 - 1995. Bycatch percentages by set ranged from 0% to 4% during the study, with an overall average of 0.16%. Atlantic croaker and sand seatrout comprised the greatest percentage of retained and released bycatch by numbers and weight during the study, followed by spot and silver trout. Sharks and red drum were noticeably represented in released bycatch. Areas east of the Mississippi River produce more bycatch (numbers and weight) during menhaden fishing operations than do areas to the west. Species diversity of bycatch differs between areas east and west of the river, with western areas exhibiting richer species assemblages. Small individual bycatch fishes are typically gilled by the purse seine or retained with the menhaden. Sharks, rays, and red drum are typically released dead or disoriented. Spotted seatrout, Spanish mackerel, and shrimp are typically kept for consumption. All three sea turtles encountered during the study were released alive.

Hypoxic Zone Update

In N. Rabalais' absence, R. Condrey opened a discussion regarding potential effects of the hypoxic zone on menhaden and other fisheries. He suggested that one of the obvious effects is the possible concentration of fish, including menhaden and their predators, in areas where habitat is less than prime. This increases natural mortality due to predation, starvation, and disease. Fishing mortality can increase due to increases in effort on concentrated stocks. Condrey suggested that restoration of normal coastal marsh functioning in Louisiana will reduce the size and frequency of occurrence of hypoxic areas in the Gulf, because the nutrients that feed the hypoxia will be filtered out by the marsh.

Other Notes of Interest from Condrey

Condrey noted that an his recent S-K proposal to test the exclusion efficiency of various hose cage designs in the menhaden fishery had been refused for funding. He indicated that he would protest the decision, and request reconsideration.

Condrey mentioned an apparent symbiotic relationship between pelicans and menhaden/menhaden fishers. He will be proposing to Sea Grant for funding to study the possible benefits to both the birds and menhaden fisheries.

Port Sampler Cooperative Agreement Update

L. Simpson reviewed the two-year cooperative agreement between GSMFC and NMFS to help supply menhaden port samplers. He related that the system is working very well. Simpson indicated an enhanced commitment by GSMFC to formalize data collection for recreational and commercial fisheries under RecFIN and ComFIN. The menhaden port sampling is consistent with GSMFC efforts with regard to data collection and coordination.

J. Smith agreed with the statements of Simpson regarding the quality and efficiency of the current port sampling scenario. He indicated that several samplers in 1997 would be veterans, speaking to the stability of the cooperative agreement.

R. Condrey inquired as to the methodology for the routine aging of menhaden. J. Smith replied that the majority are aged using scales. Periodic paired aging of menhaden using otoliths and scales produces high agreement, so scales are used in routine sampling for efficiency. Condrey noted that he and Bruce Thompson are exploring using otolith weight for aging.

Gulf Menhaden Fishery Pamphlet Development

J. Smith updated the MAC on development of an informational brochure for menhaden fisheries. He shared a copy of the brochure done on the Atlantic coast, and distributed a draft of one he proposes for the Gulf. He requested editorial input from the group, with production of a final draft for the March, 1997 MAC meeting in Biloxi, MS. R. Condrey offered the use of some of J. Rester's photographs of menhaden fishing operations in the development of the brochure. V. Guillory moved and D. Berry seconded that the MAC develop and produce the brochure. J. Smith requested editorial input be sent to him in Beaufort by the end of 1996. GSMFC will support the printing costs associated with the brochure. Development of a companion video or slide show will be discussed at the March meeting.

L. Simpson noted a tape he has of an NBC news clip on menhaden "chantymen." The MAC requested that the video be presented at the March meeting.

Election of Officers

The 1997 rotation of the chairmanship is to industry. D. Berry nominated and W. LaPointe seconded R. Rader of Gulf Protein, Inc., as chairman of the MAC for 1997. He was elected unanimously.

Other Business

L. Simpson read a letter to the MAC from David Etzold in which Etzold thanked the MAC, the Gulf states, the Commission, and MARFIN for all the support over 23 years of attempts to drive the Bonnet Carre' Freshwater Diversion Project to fruition. In the letter, Etzold pointed out some of the beneficial projects (e. g., Caernarvon) that have been completed as a result of the work toward Bonnet Carre'.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

COMMERCIAL FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE**MEETING SUMMARY**October ~~26~~, 1996 (16)

New Orleans, Louisiana

The following attended the Commercial Fisheries Advisory Committee Meeting:

Chris Nelson, Bon Secour, AL
George Sekul, Biloxi, MS
Vince Piazza, New Orleans, LA
Shepard Baumer, New Orleans, LA
Jim Duffy, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Cheryl Noble, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

C. Nelson gave an overview of the Commission to Shepard Baumer and Vince Piazza. The group decided not to follow the agenda exactly and to discuss the item *To Soak or Not to Soak? A Discussion of the Use of Sodium Tri-Polyphosphate*. After an extensive discussion, the group agreed that using Sodium Tri-Polyphosphate is safe but there is a fine line between enhancing and abusing the product. They agreed that if phosphates are not abused and used moderately, you have a better product because the shrimp retains their moisture and does not dehydrate. The label should reflect the use of the additives and the moisture content. If too much phosphate is used, the shrimp lose their muscle texture. If phosphate usage is abused by the processors they stand the risk of losing consumer confidence and the FDA may start enforcing when and how much may be used. Processors should decide how and when (during the process of the shrimp) they are going to use the product and follow those guidelines. C. Nelson will ask the Commission to draft a letter on behalf of the CFAC to the American Shrimp Processors Association recommending these suggestions.

The group then viewed a TEDs/BRDs tape from the NMFS. They were all in agreement that the tape was very informative and they recommend the Commission should write a letter encouraging NMFS to continue this testing and to be more aggressive in making these tapes and information more available to the industry. They also recommend NMFS increase funds on TEDs/BRDs research through NMFS and within the industry. They should keep testing new designs and keep trying to improve old designs.

Jim Duffy explained the IJF program and his plans for the future of the CFAC. He is going to work to increase participation on this committee. He said he would like to see more industry participation in the development of the FMP process. He said they are going into the third year in the development of a FMP for Spotted Seatrout and it is taking unusually long because this is a very controversial animal. He hopes to have a draft FMP for Spotted Seatrout sometime in 1997. He also expects to have draft FMPs for Flounder and Crab in 1997 and will keep the CFAC informed.

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m. The group then attended a presentation by Chef Brigtsen on the Supply of Local Seafood in Louisiana.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE (LEC)
MINUTES
October 16, 1996
New Orleans, Louisiana**

APPROVED BY:


COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Jerry Waller, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. The following were in attendance:

Members

Terry Bakker, MDWFP, Biloxi, MS
Suzanne Horn, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Mark Johnson, USCG, New Orleans, LA
Perry Joyner, FMP, Tallahassee, FL
Jack King, TPWD, Austin, TX
Jeff Mayne, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Jerry Waller, ADCNR/MRD, Dauphin Island, AL

Others

Ronald Dearmin, NMFS, Carriere, MS
Dan Furlong, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Nat Jackson, FHWA, St. Worth, TX
John Jenkins, ADCNR/MRD, Dauphin Island, AL
David Rose, MDWFP, Biloxi, MS
Robert Stone, NMFS, Newport News, VA

Staff

Jim Duffy, Program Coordinator, Ocean Springs, MS
Cindy Yocom, Staff Assistant, Ocean Springs, MS

Opening Remarks

Jerry Waller, Chairman, introduced guest speaker Nat Jackson, Federal Highway Administration, who will answer questions on interstate transportation and motor carrier provisions; Sergeant Jeff Mayne, LDWF, new committee member for Louisiana; and Jim Duffy, new program coordinator for GSMFC.

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as presented.

Adoption of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held March 20, 1996, in Brownsville, Texas, were adopted as presented.

Interstate Transportation & Motor Carrier Provisions

Nat Jackson from the Office of Motor Carriers, Federal Highway Administration in Fort Worth, Texas, answered questions from the LEC regarding general provisions for motor carriers. Mr. Jackson explained that most fresh fish and marine products are "exempt commodities" and are not subjected to federal licensing except

safety regulations. States have, within their jurisdiction, the right to regulate transportation; states do not, however, have the right to impede interstate transportation. Mr. Jackson will send the committee definition and legal interpretation of what is considered "prohibitive" toward interstate transportation.

The LEC agreed to request permission and funding for a meeting to address transportation of marine products within and across state lines. Federal interpretations will also be reviewed. The meeting should include the LEC, a representative from the FDA and the ISSC, and each state's marine agency's legal counsel.

Interjurisdictional Fisheries Management Program

Jim Duffy reported on the progress of the development of fishery management plans for seatrout, blue crab, and flounder. Drafts of the biology section, description of the stock, and management considerations have been completed for the spotted seatrout FMP. Stock assessments by gulf state have been completed, and a gulf-wide qualitative and quantitative stock assessment is being discussed. Publication of the spotted seatrout FMP is anticipated in 1998. The Seatrout TTF will meet after the first quarter of 1997. The Flounder TTF has met twice this year, and rough drafts of the description of the stock, description of the fishery, and description of processing have been developed and are being revised. The next meeting of the Flounder TTF is tentatively scheduled for January 1997. The Blue Crab TTF has met twice this year and convened a conference call to discuss progress and membership. Drafts of the habitat section, law section, description of the fishery, management considerations, and potential management measures have been developed and are being edited. A stock assessment ad hoc meeting is scheduled for late November, and a TTF meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 1997. Law enforcement input by Jerry Waller, Jack King, and Perry Joyner is invaluable and very much appreciated in the development of fishery management plans.

ISSC Issues

At the recent ISSC Executive Board Meeting, J. Waller was elected to represent Region 5 which consists of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. He is the only law enforcement representative on the board. He reported on the difficulty of conforming to patrol evaluations developed by the FDA, the USCG, and the NMFS. The ISSC is developing a video on illegal harvesting practices and encourages the states to target viewers such as judges so they might better understand the impacts of illegal harvesting. Terry Bakker has been nominated for 1997 chairman of the Patrol Committee. J. Waller encouraged LEC members to participate and actively support ISSC activities. In particular, the tagging committee needs enforcement input.

ASMFC Law Enforcement Committee

J. Waller reported on the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Law Enforcement Workshop which was held September 10-11, 1996. Participants included law enforcement officers from eleven coastal states and representatives from the NOAA, the USCG, the USFWS, the GSMFC, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the New England, Mid-Atlantic, and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils. The workshop was convened in acknowledgment of the emphasis on state/federal cooperation and law enforcement partnerships under the provisions of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act of 1993. Goals of the workshop were to enhance integration of state and federal law enforcement with interjurisdictional fishery management decisions and to strengthen state/federal collaboration and communications concerning associated Act program priorities along the Atlantic seaboard. J. Waller agreed to distribute workshop proceedings (when received) via the GSMFC.

J. Waller noted several differences in the way the ASMFC operates their LEC compared to the GSMFC LEC. The ASMFC pays per diem when their committee members meet. However, LEC members on ASMFC task forces do not have a vote. On GSMFC task forces, LEC members have a full vote. The ASMFC has developed a form for their LEC to rate regulations and recommendations made within an FMP; J. Waller will copy the GSMFC.

National Marine Fisheries Service

S. Horn reported that the second annual state/federal enforcement meeting will be held this afternoon (October 16) and all day October 17 at the Del a Post Hotel on Charters Street. The meeting will specifically address updating cooperative agreements and contracts. Several personnel changes have occurred within the NMFS. Two uniformed officers have been hired to assist in the voluntary compliance program. Bob Stone, Deputy Special Agent in Charge, has replaced Dick Livingston who was promoted. Ron Dearmin is the new Squad Leader based in Carriere, Mississippi, and is in charge of five agents. Ron replaces Tom Shuler who transferred to Seattle. J. Waller noted that he had received a letter from Dr. Andrew Kemmerer requesting state input in the development of the National Strategic Plan for the NMFS. The Stakeholder's Meeting will be held October 25. The enforcement objective is increased compliance.

United States Coast Guard

M. Johnson reported higher compliance rates are a direct result of rigid enforcement over the last two years. TED compliance is above 95%, and Magnuson Act compliance is at 99%. As of this date, the NMFS Fix-It Policy has not been implemented by the USCG, although similar programs are being used for safety inspections.

NMFS Fix-It Policy

The LEC discussed the NMFS Fix-It Policy. The LEC strongly disagreed with the penalty schedule set by the Office of General Counsel. The NMFS has a one year commitment to the schedule and will revisit the schedule after that time. This "kinder and gentler" policy was a reaction to two things: an executive request and legislative action in the Congressional passage of the Small Business Equity Fairness Act. Although this policy is workable with some vessel/gear violations, the policy will have negative effects on state fisheries causing the resource to suffer and the citizenry to relax toward regulations. By consensus, the LEC agreed to alert Commissioners and request the concerns of the LEC be forwarded to David McKinney, NMFS Head of Enforcement.

Law Summary, 1996 Update

Each member received a copy of the revised *Law Summary*. C. Yocom apologized for not being able to deliver copies to the committee in bulk by the scheduled delivery date, but the binding machine at the GSMFC office is undergoing repair. All printing is complete, and distribution will be made as soon as possible.

Election of Officers

T. Bakker moved to nominate J. Waller as chairman. S. Horn seconded the motion which passed by unanimous acclamation.

There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

APPROVED BY:
[Signature]
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

4/2/97

**TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
MINUTES
Wednesday, October 16, 1996
New Orleans, Louisiana**

Chairman Corky Perret called the meeting to order at 8:50 a.m. The following members and others were present:

Members

Doug Frugé (proxy for Noreen Clough), USFWS, Ocean Springs, MS
Terry Cody (proxy for H. Osburn), TPWD, Rockport, TX
Page Campbell, (proxy for G. McCarty), TPWD, Rockport, TX
Alan Huff, FDEP, St. Petersburg, FL
Skip Lazauski (proxy for V. Minton), ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Tom McIlwain (proxy for B. Brown), NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
Corky Perret, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
John Roussel, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Walter Tatum, ADCNR, Gulf Shores, AL
Tom Van Devender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS

Staff

Larry Simpson, Executive Director
Ron Lukens, Assistant Director
David Donaldson, SEAMAP Coordinator
Jim Duffy, IJF Coordinator
Madeleine Travis, Staff Assistant

Others

John Abendroth, FDEP, Tallahassee, FL
Vince Guillory, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Wally Wahlquist, USFWS, Atlanta, GA
Richard Waller, GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS
Buck Sutter, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Doug Vaughn, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
Phil Steele, FMRI, St. Petersburg, FL
Gary Reintz, USFWS, Washington, DC
Walter Penry, GSMFC, Daphne, AL
Warren Triche, GSMFC, Thibodaux, LA
Joseph Smith, NMFS, Beaufort, NC

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was approved as written.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the meeting held on March 20, 1996 in Brownsville, TX were approved as written.

State/Federal Reports

Florida - A. Huff stated that there is a red tide currently affecting Florida waters, specifically oyster harvest. In 1995, the oyster beds were closed for 45 days and in 1996, the beds were closed for 30 days due to the effects of red tide. In Apalachicola Bay, approximately 250,000 cubic feet of shell have been planted this year. Florida has implemented regulations that allows people to get all the necessary permits for coastal aquaculture from one agency. On October 10, 1996, there was a work group meeting which addressed the issue of enhancement and/or aquaculture for gulf sturgeon. There has been general challenges to the net ban. Most of these challenges have failed and one constitutional challenge has not been considered. Some of the fishermen are using parachutes and tarps to fish while the challenges are being considered. There is a petition circulating which would establish an initiative to combine the marine and freshwater fisheries resources agencies in Florida, however, this initiative is not supported by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

Alabama - W. Tatum stated that Alabama Division of Marine Resources conducted a separate survey for determining the split of Wallop/Breaux funds. Historically, approximately 12% was designated for the marine sector. The new survey determined that the percentage was actually 23%. The freshwater personnel disputed that number and designed a more detailed survey which estimated the split at 27%. Alabama is working on the issue of conflicts in the blue crab fishery. There was a meeting in early October which focused on limiting the number of traps which are used in the fishery. Alabama is conducting a spotted seatrout stock analysis which showed that the stock is within the 30% conservation measure (the actual measure is approximately 34%-35%). Alabama is conducting a fall saltwater boating survey which consists of aerial surveys (6 per month) and roving boat survey checks at public access points. The oyster fishery in Alabama was closed for the first time this year due to small size of the oysters which may have been caused by overfishing.

Mississippi - T. Van Devender stated that Mississippi recently received \$4.3 million from the tidelands monies which are paid by the casinos. However, there are some stipulations to how the money may be spent and a certain amount has to be used to build fishing infrastructure. Some of the projects that will be funded using this money include mapping of grass beds, effects of trawling on the grass beds, aging roe mullet, marsh edge composition of fishes, saltwater wedge impacts, water quality studies in Bay St. Louis, aging flounder, and marine education programs. The majority of the projects will be conducted through the GCRL. Mississippi is continuing its cobia and spotted seatrout tagging projects as well as being in the eighth year of their creel survey. Mississippi is currently involved in regulation of nets. The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources Commission decided that gill nets need to be constructed of biodegradable material (untreated cotton and linen). Unfortunately, no manufacturer makes these types of nets. Mississippi is expecting a good oyster harvest this year. The legislature has asked the Commission to enact a limited entry system.

C. Perret stated that Mississippi is also working on a crab trap study to check the success of diamondback terrapin excluder devices. And Mississippi is deploying a nearshore reef which will be in approximately 100 feet of water, using discarded airport runway rubble.

Louisiana - J. Roussel stated that the Louisiana recently went through a sunset review which reauthorized the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries for 1 year. Also, a joint natural resources committee is considering whether to merge the Department and Natural Resources agencies although it is not likely to happen. Louisiana has deployed four new platforms and secured three new permits. They also have

completed the sulphur platform permits and work is scheduled to be completed by next fall. There is a meeting scheduled in New Orleans regarding international interest in artificial reef development. One of the issues to be discussed is underwater obstruction in fishing grounds. The shrimp harvest in Louisiana has been below average for both the spring and fall. Work is progressing with a limited entry program for the blue crab fishery in Louisiana. The oyster harvest was closed on October 7 due to a tropical storm but it opened again on October 16. The landings are at an all-time high which may be due to the large amount of shell that has been plant to help mitigate the impacts of Hurricane Andrew.

Texas - P. Campbell reported that there is a massive red tide occurring off Texas. The bloom is caused by *Gymnodium breve* and is occurring from Matagorda to Brownsville. To date, approximately 1 to 1½ million fish have been killed and all affected areas have been closed to shellfish harvesting. The concentrations of red tide have been extremely high. The legislature is preparing to meeting and the Texas Department of Wildlife and Parks is seeking general authority for licensing of all commercial fisheries. This will allow the Department to establish license limitations. The Department has implemented flounder regulations in September. There are 10 per person, recreationally, 60 per person, commercially, and 14 inch size limit. Point of sale system for hunting and fishing licenses is now operational. With this system, the license purchase and pertinent information is immediately entered into a computer database.

National Marine Fisheries Service - T. McIlwain stated that the Magnuson Act has been reauthorized and there is a variety of information regarding data collection and other issues encapsulated in the Act. The Earth Island Institute has won its lawsuit regarding the use of TEDs by U.S. shrimpers. The lawsuit excluded imports from non-TED countries. There is growing interest in aquaculture throughout the United States which relates to the growing impact of viruses. The Taura virus has been detected in Texas and South Carolina and has been traced to a hatchery in Mexico operated by a U.S. company.

B. Sutter reported about the disaster fund monies. There is approximately \$5 million available and the NMFS has received 304 applications for these funds. The application deadline will be extended for another 30 days and applications will no longer be accepted after the end of November. In addition, there is approximately \$10 million for the states to administer. A Federal Register notice is being prepared and should be published in about 30-60 days. The money will be used by the states to promote sustainable effects and may be available as early as March 1997. B. Sutter is planning on meeting with the individual states to discuss this issue.

Fish & Wildlife Service - D. Frugé stated that Dr. John Rogers is the acting director of the FWS and there probably will not be a new director named until after the general election. The FWS has transferred some of their fish hatcheries to the states. In October, the FWS convened a stakeholders meeting which was attended by approximately 30 people. The group discussed the vision document for the FWS. The Corpus Christi office is currently monitoring the movement of brown mussels. To date, brown mussels have been located as far north a Brazosport and there is some indication that the mussels are being harvested by local fishermen.

Status of Freshwater Introduction Projects

* L. Simpson read a letter (attached) from David Etzold which outlined the current status of the Bonne Carré project. The Louisiana Governor declined to approve the construction of the freshwater diversion structure. There was a study conducted to determine the impacts of the project. The study shoed that water would benefit Lake Pontchartrain. Mississippi is still supportive of the original design and Louisiana and

the Corps of Engineers still stand behind the project. The governor of Louisiana is against the project and will not spend the money for the project. The Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (currently the sponsoring agency in Louisiana) is not in favor of the project. The DNR fears that it will damage the oyster reefs and believes the beneficial effects are unproven. After the status was presented, **W. Tatum moved that the TCC draft a resolution expressing the GSMFC thanks and recognition to David Etzold for all the work he has devoted to this and other freshwater diversion projects.** The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Status of Clearinghouse for Toxic Blooms

D. Donaldson stated that a standardized form has been developed to record bloom events in the Gulf of Mexico. There is a link on the GSMFC home page where bloom events will be posted when an event occurs. D. Donaldson asked that each state to make sure to send any information regarding toxic blooms in their jurisdiction as soon as possible. A. Huff stated that K. Steidinger is producing a video and manual for the Gulf of Mexico on how to identify blooms, how to present it to the media, and all aspects of handling an event.

Presentation on Tri-state Watershed Issue

J. Abendroth stated that a comprehensive study is being conducted which focuses on water resources issues in two basins: The Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa (ACT) in the states of Alabama and Georgia and the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) in Alabama, Georgia and Florida. It is estimated that approximately \$16 million will be spend over the next 5 years on this study. The study does not focus on management for environmental concerns. It is primarily designed to look at water availability and future forecasting of water allocation needs. The study consists of process support elements, water demand elements, water resources availability and a comprehensive management strategy. The study focuses on basinwide management. It will utilize shared vision models (using STELLA II software), for both ACT and ACF systems, for the evaluation of structural, operation, and demand management alternatives. The coordination mechanism for this project is an interstate compact which is currently being negotiated. It is hoped that the compact will be ratified by the three states legislatures and Congress by December 31, 1997. The water allocation formula will be determined by the compact commission after completion of the comprehensive study.

Discussion of Mercury Levels in Fish in the Gulf of Mexico

* A. Huff stated that Florida has been concerned with the levels of mercury in fishes. Numerous health advisories have been issues for a variety of species including sharks, king mackerel, etc. King mackerel is of great concern due to its popularity. Studies have shown that the cleaner the water and older the fish, the more accumulation of mercury. W. Tatum reported that one month after Florida issues a warning, Alabama issued a release for high levels of mercury in king mackerel in Alabama waters. He asked if the TCC was interested in sending a letter to the FDA asking for more widespread release and advise concerning mercury levels in marine species. T. Van Devender stated that Mississippi is also testing king mackerel for mercury levels and have found several instances where the levels were above the established levels. Mississippi is also considering separate levels of advisories base on the length of the fishes. J. Roussel stated that Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) initiated a statewide program in 1990 to examine mercury levels. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries provides samples from 7 coastal sites to the DEQ. Most of these samples indicate no harmful levels of mercury. There have been no advisories

issues in Louisiana and the DEQ will continue to sample. Louisiana is going towards a systematic sampling program to monitor mercury levels. P. Campbell reported that the Texas Department of Health is responsible for measurement of mercury levels. The Department has found certain species have harmful levels of mercury. These species were collected from Galveston to Port Aransas. After some discussion, **W. Tatum moved that the GSMFC send a letter to the FDA expressing concern that there has not been more federal involvement in this issue which has the potential of creating health risks.** The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Discussion of FWS Ecosystem Plan

D. Frugè stated that motivation for the ecosystem approach is due to loss of biodiversity, continued degradation of natural systems, increasing development pressure, increased population growth and resource consumption, and other factors. The idea of ecosystem management began with the establishment of Ecological Society of America in 1932. A variety of naturalists and scientists, including Aldo Leopold supported the idea of ecosystem management. In 1991, California stated management policies based on ecosystems. And in 1993, the U.S. government established an Interagency Ecosystem Management Task Force to better coordinate ecosystem management. Under an ecosystem approach, biological systems are considered dynamic and ever changing, plant and animal populations are considered inseparable from the environment and each other, humans are considered as important to natural systems and considers human needs, and it represents a movement away from single species management. The goal of FWS ecosystem approach is to effectively conserve biological diversity through perpetuation of dynamic, healthy ecosystems. The FWS ecosystem delineation is based on watersheds and there are currently 53 ecosystem units defined throughout the nation. The ecosystem approach is being implemented through a variety of organizational components and activities. Eventually, the budget planning and allocation will be done on an ecosystem basis, however, it may be a number of years before this is fully implemented. It is still too early to determine the impacts of the ecosystem approach, however, significant administrative progress has been made within the agency.

Subcommittee Reports

Anadromous Fish - D. Frugè reported that the Subcommittee review various activities by the states regarding striped bass and sturgeon. The Subcommittee discussed three anadromous fisheries projects that will be funded this year. They are a continuation of nuclear DNA study to identify striped bass genotypes; compilation of existing information on point and non-point contaminant sources in the Pascagoula River basin; and a preliminary summer temperature survey in the Pascagoula River. The FWS is conducting sonic tagging of gulf sturgeon in various areas in the Gulf of Mexico. The Subcommittee discussed stocking of striped bass. There has been 2.5 million phase I striped bass stocking throughout the 5 gulf states. Approximately 200,000 phase II fishes will be available later this year. The Subcommittee decided that the group needs to work on updating and revising the Striped Bass Management Plan. And Doug Frugè was reelected chairman and Charlie Mesing was appointed Vice-Chairman.

* **Artificial Reef** - R. Lukens reported for Chairman Jon Dodrill that the Subcommittee is working on updating the National Artificial Reef Plan and is seeking S/F funds for this project. The Subcommittee is also developing a Gulf-wide artificial reef database. The Subcommittee recently developed the structure of the database. He distributed an outline of the proposed structure to the group. The database will consist of two parts: state program description and data element for each artificial reef. R. Lukens stated that the Artificial Reef Guidelines document has been distributed to the TCC and the Subcommittee is seeking

approval of the document. **W. Tatum moved to approve the Artificial Reef Guidelines document.** The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. R. Lukens then presented a resolution regarding the use of retired navy vessels as artificial reef material. The TCC discussed this issue and **W. Tatum moved to accept the resolution and forward it to the GSMFC for their consideration.** The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

* **Crab** - V. Guillory reported that the Subcommittee is working on reviewing the Blue Crab Management Plan and has met several times to discuss this issue. The group has already developed drafts for several sections of the plan and plans to meet later this year. Several members of the Subcommittee attended a national symposium of blue crab management and each state provided a description of their fishery. The proceedings of this symposium will be published and available to interested personnel. The Subcommittee discussed the management of golden crab fishery. The golden crab is a deepwater organism (200-300 fm). The crabs are slow growing, and late maturing. The crab is approximately 16 years old before it enters into the fishery. The Gulf Council recently decided to take no management action on the fishery. The Subcommittee believes that this could jeopardize the fishery and asked the Council to reconsider. After some discussion, **W. Tatum moved that the GSMFC asked the Gulf Council to reconsider its decision to take no management action on the golden crab.** The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. V. Guillory reported that the Subcommittee is developing a crab trap tag workshop. He presented an outline which presented the purpose of tags, criteria of tags, and associated problems. Lastly, Vince Guillory was reelected Chairman.

Data Management - S. Lazauski stated that each state reported a variety of data management activities. The group discussed the RecFIN/ComFIN activities including the states' participation in the MRFSS intercept survey in the Gulf of Mexico. The GSMFC submitted a cooperative agreement which outlined the details for the Gulf States to conduct the intercept portion of the MRFSS in the Gulf of Mexico. This agreement was rejected and a letter outlining the reasons for denial was received. It was noted that although NMFS rejected the proposal, Dr. Bill Fox remains supportive of the concept of the cooperative agreement and it is probably just a matter of time before the states enter into a cooperative agreement to conduct the proposed work. In an effort to clearly state the Commission's stance on cooperative data collection programs, the Subcommittee developed a resolution regarding state/federal marine fisheries data program. After some discussion and minor changes, **S. Lazauski moved on behalf of the Subcommittee to accept the resolution and forward it to the Commission for their consideration.** The motion passed unanimously. The Subcommittee also discussed participation in a charterboat pilot survey in the Gulf of Mexico. The purpose of this survey is to examine alternative methods for estimating effort in the charterboat fishery. There will be three methods studies; the current MRFSS, a telephone survey of charterboat operators, and a statistically design logbook panel. Each state expressed an interest in participating in the survey. It was noted that the Subcommittee should get approval to participate in the survey. Therefore, **S. Lazauski moved on behalf of the Subcommittee to recommend to the GSMFC to work cooperatively with the NMFS to conduct the pilot charterboat survey in the Gulf of Mexico.** The motion passed unanimously. Skip Lazauski was reelected Chairman and Joe Shepard was reelected Vice-Chairman.

SEAMAP - W. Tatum reported that the Annual Report to the TCC has been published and distributed to the Subcommittee, TCC, and Commissioners. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has submitted proposal to NASA for calibration study of several methods for collection of chlorophyll. In addition, the chlorophyll work group is planning on modifying and submitting the proposal to EPA Gulf of Mexico Program. The Subcommittee discussed the issue of inkind support reporting. Currently, the SEAMAP-South Atlantic collects inkind support information and asked the SEAMAP-Gulf

of Mexico to consider also collecting this information. The SEAMAP-Gulf decided not to collect this information and to send letter to SEAMAP-South Atlantic expressing potential dangers of providing this information. The Subcommittee heard a presentation regarding the effects of hypoxia on stratification of fish on oil rigs. The conclusion was that the hypoxia compresses the fish into upper layer of rig although number of fish on rig stays constant. Richard Waller was elected Chairman and Jim Hanifen was elected Vice Chairman.

Election of Officers

After some discussion, Corky Perret was reelected as Chairman and he appointed John Roussel as Vice-Chairman.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

APPROVED BY:


COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
3/18/97

**TCC HABITAT SUBCOMMITTEE
MINUTES
Wednesday, October 16, 1996
New Orleans, Louisiana**

Chairman, David Ruple, called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. The following members and others were present:

Members

David Ruple, Chairman, MDMR, Biloxi, Mississippi
Bob Spain, TPWD, Austin, Texas
Dale Shively, TPWD, Austin, Texas
Phil Steele, FDEP/FMRI, St. Petersburg, Florida
Philip Bowman, LDWF, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Rickey Ruebsamen, NMFS, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Staff

Ron Lukens, Assistant Director
Nancy Marcellus, Administrative Assistant

Others

George Sekul, GSMFC Commissioner, Biloxi, Mississippi
Al Green, TPWD, Austin, Texas

Adoption of Agenda

*It was suggested that discussion of the workshop be moved up on the agenda from 8 to 4. P. Steele made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded and passed without objection.

Approval of Minutes

*P. Bowman made a motion to approve the minutes as presented from the December 1995 meeting. The motion was seconded and passed without objection.

State/Federal Reports

Florida - Phil Steele reported that Florida's ecosystem management plan is complete and available for distribution. He indicated that he could send copies to Lukens for distribution. Steele indicated that the State of Florida prefers to pursue management of natural resources through the ecosystem approach.

Steele reported briefly on Florida Bay, indicating that investigations have been ongoing for several years. He indicated that progress has been made regarding algal blooms, sea grass mortalities, lobster habitat, and the pink shrimp fishery.

Karen Steidinger, FDEP/FMRI, has develop a video along with a report regarding toxic events, with topics ranging from guidelines for news media interaction to how to monitor red tides.

Steele then reported that Florida has been experiencing a lengthy red tide event, which has been identified as the agent that has caused significant manatee mortalities. Investigators are not sure whether the manatees are ingesting the dinoflagellates or inhaling them into the lungs, but the interaction has proven to be lethal to the manatees.

The Florida shrimp fishery is managed by defining essential habitat for the shrimp and closing those areas, such as sea grass beds and saltwater marshes, to fishing. Currently about one million acres are closed to all shrimping activities. The idea is to protect essential habitat areas, which in turn would enhance reproduction, survival, and recruitment of shrimp. In areas where such habitat is protected, the count law governing shrimp harvest has been repealed. More areas are being considered for this approach to management.

Texas - Bob Spain indicated that a significant red tide event appeared during September on the mid-Texas coast. Since it first appeared it has expanded and as of the meeting had spread south to Brownsville. There has been significant fish mortality associated with the red tide, including menhaden, mullet, and isolated cases of red drum spotted seatrout. It is hopeful that as the air temperature cools, the red tide will dissipate. The TPWD is monitoring the event in an attempt to document total fish mortality.

Al Green, TPWD, provided the Subcommittee with a presentation regarding fresh water inflows and impacts on bays and estuaries resulting from a reduction in fresh water. An effect of fresh water inflows to establish a salinity gradient. High fresh water inflow pushes the gradient seaward, causing the salinity regime in the bays and estuaries to be much lower, sometimes reaching fresh water conditions. With low fresh water inflows, the gradient migrates upstream, causing the bays and estuaries to have higher salinities. These salinity changes are common and cyclical in nature, and in large part define the organisms that have adapted themselves to living in such a dynamic environment. However, when fresh water inflows are altered one way or the other over long periods of time, the flora and fauna are altered significantly to reflect the altered habitat characteristics.

There are natural shifts in fresh water inflows related to rainfall levels; however, the most significant impact on fresh water inflows is related to damming and channelization of river systems. Damming reduces the amount of fresh water entering the bays and estuaries, and channelization redirects the fresh water that is available, so that it is not spread out over as large an area inshore. This change in salinity most dramatically affects submerged and emergent sea and marsh grasses. Green provided data depicting the floral changes, primarily in grasses, in some Texas bays and estuaries as a result of a reduction of fresh water flowing into these areas. His purpose in developing the presentation is to elevate the awareness and importance of the impacts of reductions in fresh water available to nearshore, coastal areas, affecting available flora and fauna, water quality, and coastal erosion. He emphasized the need to determine minimum flow requirements to maintain the quality of bays and estuaries and assure that any developments upstream that may affect the amount of fresh water flowing into the bays and estuaries do not reduce flow below the minimum requirements. Discussion followed Green's presentation, and it was pointed out by the members that fresh water inflow problems exist throughout the Gulf of Mexico, including Apalachicola River, the Pearl River, Florida Bay, among other areas.

Louisiana - Phil Bowman reported on the status of three fresh water diversion projects. The Caernarvon project has been completed and is online. Assessments indicate that stocks in the Breton Sound area are higher than in recent memory, indicating that the project has probably had some positive effects on the resources. There continues to be litigation over the operation of the Caernarvon structure related to displacement of the oyster fishery. The Davis Pond project is in the construction phase. In preparation for the structure coming online, the LDWF and Department of Natural Resources are working together to develop an oyster mitigation plan in an effort to relocate oyster fishermen who may be displaced by operation of the structure. The Bonne Carre project

is still being negotiated. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) is facilitating the negotiation process. The COE will soon be conducting a study on six alternatives to the Bonne Carre project, in the event that the project is rejected.

Bowman indicated that the federal task force is developing a project priority list for coastal restoration projects. There are currently approximately 20 candidate projects. Bowman pointed out, as did Green, that with fresh water inflow projects, which are among the projects being considered, the positive effects of the projects may take a long time to realize. Likewise, wetlands restoration effects are long term in nature, so it is not appropriate to try to evaluate the success of such projects shortly after they have been implemented.

Bowman reported on the hypoxic event that occurred in 1996, indicating that it again covered a significant amount of bottom acreage. This year, however, several days of strong northwest winds transported the hypoxic water near shore, where it caused a limited jubilee, or fish kill. He stated that the artificial reef program is still acquiring offshore oil and gas platforms for artificial reef application. A big project in the near future is the deployment of the Freeport Sulfur Platform off Grand Isle. Siting plans are currently underway, with the plan to topple the large rig in place. Since it is in shallow water, there will have to be special consideration given regarding marking and navigation issues. Bowman indicated that, like the other areas mentioned, Louisiana has some significant fresh water inflow problems.

Bowman reported that there are two major coastal restoration projects underway. The first is reestablishment of the barrier islands along the central part of coastal Louisiana, while the other is evaluating redistribution of water in the lower Mississippi River for potential diversion of water and how that redirection will affect the areas. There ensued a discussion regarding the artificial reef deployment of the Freeport Sulfer platform.

National Marine Fisheries Service - Rickey Ruebsamen reported that the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) National Habitat Plan was finalized in August and is available for distribution. He indicated that each NMFS regional office is required to develop their own regional implementation plan under the auspice of the national plan. He added that the Southeast Region is just now beginning development of that plan, with a deadline of sometime in January. It is not clear at present how the document will be configured.

Ruebsamen reported that Ed Keppner, NMFS, Panama City Laboratory, has retired. Ruebsamen indicated that he is replacing Keppner on the Subcommittee only for the current meeting, since Andy Mager has not yet determined with whom to replace Keppner. Ruebsamen indicated that his office is getting more involved in mitigation banking. He indicated that funding has been included in the NMFS budget regarding mariculture development. He was not sure how those funds would be spent. He discussed the development of the Conservation Plan. That plan will dictate that federal-state cost share for wetlands restoration projects in Louisiana will change from 75% federal and 25%state to 85% federal and 15% state. This could have a significant positive benefits for projects that the state wants to implement.

Mississippi - Dave Ruple indicated that the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) has been heavily involved in artificial reef development in recent months, using concrete rubble taken from an airport runway skirt. Most of the material is being placed in relatively shallow water, creating some concerns over navigation. He reported on coastal restoration projects, pointing out the new coastal preserves program that has accumulated about 25 thousand acres of coastal wetlands and associated upland habitat. The program is in the process of developing management plans for the acreage. Ruple reported that the MDMR has submitted to the Governor a nomination for National Estuarine Research Reserve status for a site in coastal Mississippi. He

discussed the situation regarding the relatively small coastline in Mississippi and the rather massive development along the coast as a result of the gaming industry, not only directly related to the casinos, but also the secondary development related to housing and support businesses. While Mississippi does not have notable fresh water inflow problems related to amount of water, there are significant concerns regarding the quality of water that flows into the Mississippi Sound. Recently the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources requested a federal environmental impact statement (EIS) to address the recent level of development and possible associated environmental impacts. This is expected to be a large undertaking, but should provide the Department with important information regarding habitat status along the Mississippi coastline.

Shrimp Aquaculture and Pathogens

Steele initiated a discussion regarding shrimp aquaculture and the recent proliferation of viruses associated with that activity. He indicated that the potential release of some of the viruses into the wild from aquaculture operations poses one of the most significant threats to wild shrimp stocks than any other threat. It appears that the viruses are also introduced through imported shrimp products into the U.S. Aquaculture and wild caught shrimp products are shipped into the U.S. and repackaged. The wash water used during the repackaging process is discharged into the coastal waters and most likely will contain some of the viruses. It has been shown in laboratory experiments that some of the shrimp viruses can be transmitted to native stocks in the Gulf of Mexico. There is currently no effective way to stem the introduction of the viruses into U.S. waters.

Bowman indicated that the virus can move from a processed product into a solid waste landfill, through wastage in the repackaging process. In the landfill, a seagull can pick up the virus, becoming a vector, and pass it into a aquaculture operation, thus infecting the aquaculture product. Studies have shown that the virus is present in raw shrimp product available from seafood markets and grocery stores. Bowman indicated that a researcher from the University of Arizona bought a five pound box of shrimp in downtown Tucson, took the shrimp to the lab for analysis, and isolated two live viruses, the yellowhead and whitespot viruses. Steele indicated that researchers went to Los Angeles, Tucson, Kansas City, and other cities, bought shrimp from markets, and found live viruses at 60% of the sites from which shrimp were bought. Bowman indicated that the Chinese aquaculture operations will harvest a pond as soon as any indication of the virus is detected. He stated that that is why the average size of *Peneus monodon* in U.S. markets has declined. Obviously, this activity assures that the viruses will be introduced into the U.S. The Subcommittee agreed that this issue is one of the most significant facing shrimp management in the U.S. today.

Discussion of Habitat Managers Workshop

Lukens introduced a discussion regarding the possibility of sponsoring a workshop, and indicated that as a result of earlier actions, the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) had already given its consent for the Subcommittee to pursue a workshop. The original workshop was to attempt to deal with policy and operational differences among the various federal and state regulatory offices that deal with permitting and habitat management. Several discussions have revealed that that approach is probably too potentially confrontational, and that another approach might be more productive.

Lukens indicated that, prior to the current meeting, he had met with Dave Ruple, Larry Goldman, and Dave Smith regarding several issues, one of which was the possibility of a workshop patterned largely after a workshop sponsored by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). He pointed out that the proceedings from the ASMFC workshop will likely be available by the end of 1996. Of significance in the ASMFC workshop, and of particular importance to the possibility of conducting a workshop in the Gulf of

Mexico, was the session regarding essential fish habitats. Lukens referred to three discussion papers in the Subcommittee folder that deal with the issues and approaches related to identifying essential fish habitats. He also pointed out that the 1996 amendments to the Magnuson/Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act provide specific language regarding the identification of essential fish habitats, and that protection and enhancement of such habitats should be and integral part of federal fishery management plans. This is also an important area for improvement of state and interstate fishery management plans.

Lukens pointed out that a GSMFC workshop does not have to follow the ASMFC workshop agenda, but rather should provide presentations on issues and topics that relate to managing habitat as it relates to our collective responsibilities to manage fish. Lukens then asked the Subcommittee to decide if they felt it would be beneficial to proceed with planning a habitat workshop for late in 1997. Ruple indicated that the Subcommittee had been striving to find a way to bring a focus to the importance of habitat as it relates to fisheries management, and supported the concept of the workshop as presented. The question was asked if such a workshop would primarily focus on exchange of information, or would the workshop result in some kind of product. Lukens responded that the workshop should do both. He elaborated that valuable information would be exchanged and a proceedings of the workshop would be produced that would document all the information exchanged. Also, if formatted right, the workshop would provide an opportunity to formulate recommendations on a variety of related topics and provide a springboard for future action. The latter point is related to a later agenda item in which the Subcommittee will discuss long-term responsibilities of the Subcommittee and possible alternatives for state-federal cooperation with the National Marine Fisheries Service's National Habitat Program. Bowman indicated that he favored the concept of the workshop, stressing that most of fisheries management focuses on a variety of regulations devised to reduce or distribute fishing mortality. Historically, fisheries management agencies have not actively involved themselves in working with habitat as a component of their fisheries management program. Bowman continued that focusing only on fishing mortality does not address the reality that habitats in the Gulf of Mexico cannot currently produce the amount of fishery product that were possible many years ago, and this is directly tied to degradation and loss of essential habitats. Louisiana is losing coastal wetlands at the rate of 35 square miles per year. This loss negatively impacts associated estuarine and marine resources. Ruple elaborated that in most cases the fisheries managers and habitat managers in the state agencies, and even in the federal agencies, have not historically worked together to achieve common goals, which is why it is a good idea to approach habitat management responsibilities from the perspective of the function and value of the habitat for fisheries. Several comments were made regarding recognizing that development will and should continue. The general feeling is that we must all find a way to encourage development in an atmosphere that provides the greatest potential to minimize impacts to the natural environment.

Steele indicated that habitat workshops have been held for many years, habitat issues have been raised for many years, and currently habitat seems to be the buzz word. He asked if the workshop would ask specific questions to arrive at specific solutions to real problems, recognizing that one workshop would not solve all the problems, rather than be a general informational workshop. Following up on Steele's question, it was pointed out that the title and description of the ASMFC workshop was such that it is not very appealing to fisheries managers, but rather focused the workshop on habitat management for habitat managers. The content of the topics, however, did address the critical tie to fisheries management. The response was that if the Subcommittee wanted to pursue a workshop, it should be clear from the inception that the workshop will be designed to integrate habitat management with fisheries management.

Lukens suggested to the Subcommittee a different method of getting the message of the importance of habitat out to the right people. He indicated that the real decisions that are made that regularly affect near shore, coastal habitat is at the county and municipal level. In that regard it might be beneficial to see if state municipal

and county organizations would be interested in developing a process whereby habitat and fisheries managers have the opportunity to regularly interact with them to discuss issues related to habitat/environment and economic development issues. The Subcommittee agreed that the approach might be beneficial. Lukens asked the Subcommittee to allow him to approach the county and municipal organizations in Mississippi, as a pilot effort, on behalf of the Subcommittee and the GSMFC, to discuss the possibility of developing such a process. The Subcommittee agreed.

Lukens pointed out that Larry Goldman, USFWS, suggested that the Subcommittee appoint a work group to plan the workshop very carefully, since there would be expectations for actions resulting from the workshop. After some discussion the Subcommittee agreed that a workshop should be held and that a work group should be formed to take the lead in planning the workshop. Lukens indicated that he would provide staff support to the work group. Chairman Ruple asked for volunteers, and the following are the Subcommittee members that agreed to serve on the work group:

- Phil Steele, FDEP/FMRI
- Larry Goldman, USFWS
- Bob Spain, TPWD
- NMFS representative

Lukens indicated that he would contact Andy Mager to get an individual appointed to the work group. The Subcommittee charged the work group to provide feedback on workshop planning by the end of November.

Administration of Habitat Subcommittee Activities

Lukens informed the Subcommittee that Dr. Richard Leard, who initially coordinated and administered the Subcommittee's activities, moved to a position with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, as the Senior Fisheries Biologist. In that regard the Subcommittee was primarily supported under the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Program. With Dr. Leard's departure, the Subcommittee activities were put on hold for a short period until decisions could be made regarding those duties.

Lukens indicated that he had agreed to coordinate and administer the Subcommittee's activities, and would be supporting their meetings and other activities primarily under the Sport Fish Restoration Administrative Program. However, he indicated that the Subcommittee would continue to have a significant role in the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Program, primarily regarding the development of the habitat sections of interstate fishery management plans. In that regard, there may be times when funding to support the Subcommittee's activities might come from both the Sport Fish Restoration Administrative Program and the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Program. He also pointed out that the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Program coordinator has been hired, and he is Jim Duffy, formerly of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources/Marine Resources Division.

Ruple asked how often Lukens thought the Subcommittee would meet. Lukens replied that the Subcommittee should meet based upon need for action. Several subcommittees meet twice per year, in conjunction with the annual Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission meetings; however, Lukens encouraged the Subcommittee to consider meeting outside the annual meeting time frame, because the outside meetings tend to be more productive, and staff support for additional meetings during the annual meeting schedule is very difficult. Ruple pointed out to Lukens that for the last two years, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources/Marine Resources Division has not had a Subcommittee member appointed. He asked Lukens

if he had any information regarding that situation. Lukens indicated that he was aware of the vacancy and had attempted to contact the Marine Resources Division Director, but had not been able to contact him regarding this issue. Lukens indicated that he will be trying to get an individual appointed in the near future.

Status of FMP Habitat Sections

Chairman Ruple reminded the Subcommittee that one of their functions is to develop the habitat sections of the interstate fishery management plans (FMP) under development by the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission. In that regard he also reminded the Subcommittee that the FMP development process had been amended such that a representative of the Habitat Subcommittee will be a member of the technical task forces (TTF) charged with plan development.

Spotted Seatrout - Dale Shively reported that he recently attended the Spotted Seatrout TTF meeting, and talked with Lukens at that time regarding some of his concerns about the process of development of the habitat sections. He pointed out that he has not yet had an opportunity to put any information on paper. He does have the table of contents for the section, and he plans to discuss the information needs for the section with individuals within each state agency. By compiling the information he will be able to begin writing the section. Shively indicated that he would like to go beyond just compiling general habitat information as it relates to the selected species and begin to tie the stock status to the habitat condition or status, perhaps employing geographic information system (GIS) technology to create visual products to assist in understanding the relationship between the habitat and the species. The Subcommittee generally agreed with Shively's comments on trying to establish a quantitative approach to dealing with habitat for fisheries.

Blue Crab - Phil Steele reported that the Blue Crab Subcommittee met the previous day, and indicated that the Subcommittee members are largely the members on the Blue Crab TTF, which is currently revising the Blue Crab FMP. He indicated that he also has the standard table of contents for the habitat section. He stated that he had written the habitat section of the original Blue Crab FMP; however, the current habitat section format is much more detailed, and the new section will require much additional information. He indicated that there is undoubtedly additional literature available regarding blue crab habitat issues, and he will be trying to find those. He has currently written about eight pages, and indicated that there is a long way to go. Steele plans to have enough written on the section by the next meeting of the Subcommittee to ask the membership for a review and some assistance in carrying it further.

Flounder - Dave Ruple indicated that he had a conflict and missed the initial Flounder TTF meeting. As a result he has not had an opportunity to start on the section. He pointed out that the first meeting was a general orientation session and an opportunity to begin identifying available information pertinent to the flounder fishery. Lukens added that to his knowledge nothing has yet been done on the habitat section, including compiling any habitat literature; however, the TTF had only had one additional meeting, so the habitat section status is not a concern at the current time. Lukens pointed out, however, that the TTF had made a lot of progress since their first meeting and that work on the habitat section should begin as soon as possible.

General Process - Lukens reported that during his recent conversation with Shively at the Spotted Seatrout TTF meeting, Shively had indicated that the Subcommittee should spend some time talking about a process for dealing with development of the habitat sections for FMPs. Currently, the only process is that the Habitat Subcommittee will appoint a person to serve on the TTFs, and that person will be responsible for development of the section. There is no direction for how the Subcommittee representative will develop the section. Several scenarios were mentioned, including the representative taking sole writing responsibility with

informational support from others, the Subcommittee dividing up the writing responsibilities and sharing the informational support, naming an individual or asking for an individual to volunteer to write the section with informational support from others. Under any scenario, it was agreed that the Subcommittee's role will include periodic review of the section during development, and final review and approval of the section prior to inclusion into the FMP.

It was then suggested that, rather than establishing a single process that forces the section to be handled one way, the Subcommittee may want to keep its options regarding the process for individual FMPs open. In this way, there would be flexibility to take advantage of whatever resources may be available at the time the section is under development. There was general agreement regarding the benefits of keeping the options open for developing the habitat sections. Ruple asked if it were known what FMPs would be coming up for review and what species may be in the offing for FMP development. Lukens responded that beyond spotted seatrout, blue crab, and flounder, he did not know what species would be named for plan development. That call will be made by the State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee. He responded that each of the FMPs that are currently implemented have habitat sections; however, they are, as Phil Steele indicated, inadequate to meet the standard set by the more recently adopted table of contents for the section. He followed up by saying that, to his knowledge, none of the FMPs have any quantitative treatment of habitat. In that regard, there will be plenty of work for the Subcommittee over the next several years, as plan revisions are required. There ensued a discussion regarding the use of fishery independent and environmental data to begin to quantify the condition of the habitat for the various life stages of selected species. There was general agreement that there is a lot of data available, and that those data bases need to be identified and used in application to recommendations within the FMPs.

Habitat Protection, Enhancement, and Restoration Plan

Chairman Ruple introduced this agenda item, indicating that in several past meetings the Subcommittee had discussed the possibility of developing a comprehensive habitat plan that would represent the status and trends regarding fisheries habitat in the Gulf of Mexico. He reminded the Subcommittee that no progress had been made toward the plan and that he felt that such a plan should be deferred until after a number of the items discussed at the current meeting have been completed. There was general discussion regarding the plan, and the Subcommittee agreed that it should not be pursued at the current time.

Discussion of Habitat Coordination

S-K Proposal - Lukens indicated that the GSMFC had submitted an S-K proposal along with its sister commissions on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. The purpose of the proposal was to conduct a series of workshops to develop alternatives for implementation of the NMFS National Habitat Program. That proposal was not approved; however, there was considerable interest in the concept forwarded by the proposal. Since the proposal was developed quickly, due to the submission deadline, there were several problems with the proposal, the majority of which related to the budgets. Lukens indicated that if it remained appropriate, the three Commissions may want to resubmit the proposal during the next cycle.

NMFS National Habitat Program - Lukens made reference to the NMFS National Habitat Strategy in the Subcommittee folder. He indicated that that document would have formed the basis for the workshops that were proposed in the above referenced proposal. Ruebsamen indicated that the copy in the folder is a review draft, and that the final document has been approved and is available. He indicated that he had just sent a copy to Lukens for distribution to the Subcommittee. Lukens pointed out that the 1996 amendments to the Magnuson Act had passed and contained language that gives the NMFS greater responsibility for habitat conservation and

protection. The most far-reaching change as a result of the Magnuson Act amendments is the concept of essential fish habitat. This requires fishery management plans from the regional councils to identify essential fish habitats for the species under management. Much of what needs to take place between the states and the NMFS is to develop a mechanism to jointly identify essential fish habitats and to formulate recommendations for actions regarding those habitats.

Concept Document - Lukens pointed out to the Subcommittee that he had drafted a concept paper regarding the interaction between the states and the NMFS regarding habitat management, conservation, and protection. He indicated that it is not very detailed, but outlines broadly the idea of a state-federal habitat program that would be proactive, in regards to the identification of essential fish habitats and formulating recommendations for action, and reactive, in regards to the development of joint responses to permit requests for coastal development that have the potential to impact essential fish habitats. There was some discussion regarding the document, and Chairman Ruple recommended that further discussion be postponed until the next meeting, at which time a full discussion could take place. The Subcommittee agreed.

Other Business

After much discussion regarding meeting protocol for time and place, the Subcommittee agreed to hold a day-long session around February 19, 1997.

Dave Ruple was elected Chairman and Dale Shively was elected Vice-chairman.

There being no further business, the Subcommittee adjourned at 4:45pm.

APPROVED BY.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

**STATE-FEDERAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**Thursday, October 17, 1996
New Orleans, Louisiana**

Chairman Larry Simpson called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. The following members and others were present:

Members

Vernon Minton, ADCNR, MRD, Gulf Shores, AL
Ed Irby, FDEP, Tallahassee, FL
John Roussel, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA
Corky Perret, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Glade Woods, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Terry Cody, TPWD, Rockport, TX
Gene McCarty, TPWD, Austin, TX
Dan Furlong, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Doug Fruge, USFWS, Ocean Springs, MS
Larry Simpson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Staff

Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Jim Duffy, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Madeleine Travis, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Others

Tom McIlwain, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
Buck Sutter, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Doug Vaughan, NMFS, Beaufort, NC
Tom VanDevender, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Jerry Mambretti, TPWD, Port Arthur, TX
Walter Penry, Daphne, AL
James Warren, GCRL, Ocean Springs, MS
Dale Shively, TPWD, Rockport, TX

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as presented.

Approval of Minutes

W. Perret moved and V. Minton seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on March 21, 1996 in Brownsville, Texas be approved as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Menhaden Advisory Committee Report

J. Mambretti reported that the Menhaden Advisory Committee (MAC) met on October 15, 1996. Jim Duffy, the new Interjurisdictional Fisheries (IJF) Coordinator and Randy Rader, a new committee member, were introduced.

L. Simpson, reported on the update of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). C. Oravetz of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in St. Petersburg, Florida stated that there would be no change to the MMPA classification of the menhaden purse seine fishery in 1997.

Mambretti reported that J. Smith of the NMFS Beaufort Lab reviewed the 1996 Gulf of Mexico menhaden fishing season. Preliminary information indicates that the landings of Gulf menhaden for reduction through September 1996 totaled 442,600 metric tons. This is up approximately 3% over the total landings for 1995, but 12% less than the previous 5 year average. Putting the 1996 landings in perspective, the landings represent five reduction plants, while six reduction plants were in operation between 1992 and 1995. If the landings for October approach the average monthly landings for the previous three years, then the 1996 total Gulf landings may reach 496,400 metric tons. Landings of this magnitude would be about 7% greater than landings in 1995, but 9% less than the previous 5 year average. If the exceptional landings for 1994 were removed from the 5 year average, the 1996 projected landing would be equivalent to the 5 year mean. Approximately 50 boats were unloading menhaden for reduction this year. The weather for 1996 was generally conducive to purse seining. Landings through June were very good to excellent. However, from early July to mid August, catch dropped considerably. After mid August, menhaden were again abundant and catches improved. Catches along the northern Texas coast have been significant.

The MAC reviewed the use of fishery independent data to predict menhaden catch. V. Guillory reintroduced a 2 year study in which fishery independent data was used to make predictions of the industry's catch. J. Mambretti gave a presentation introducing coastal fisheries data and how that could be used for the industry.

One of the concerns expressed at the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) Spring meeting held in Brownsville last March was a stock assessment being made as a result of the expanded season this year. D. Vaughan of the NMFS Beaufort Lab reported that the effect of the one week extended season would be minimal, however, he feels the next virtual population analysis (VPA), conducted every five years, should be done on schedule after the 1997 fishing season.

Two bycatch study reports were presented to the MAC. One report was by Jeff Rester of Louisiana State University (LSU) on bycatch reduction devices. Janaka de Silva, also of LSU, Dept. Of Oceanography & Coastal Science, presented a report on bycatch in the U.S. menhaden fishery in the Gulf of Mexico in the 1994-95 season.

R. Condrey of LSU commented on the hypoxic zone. He is interested in soliciting Sea Grant funds to study how the hypoxic zone has impacted on the commercial and recreational fishery in Louisiana.

J. Mambretti reported that the GSMFC is supporting the following NMFS programs: RecFIN, menhaden port sampling, and head boat sampling programs.

There was discussion of a pamphlet being used on the Atlantic coast and the feasibility of developing one for the Gulf of Mexico states. This fact sheet is primarily used for public education on the menhaden fishery and products. The MAC is currently working on such a pamphlet and it will be presented to the Commission in the future.

Randy Rader of Gulf Protein was elected as new Chairman of the Menhaden Advisory Committee.

Status of IJF Fishery Management Plans

J. Duffy reported that drafts of the biology section, description of the stock, and management considerations of the Spotted Seatrout FMP have been completed. The stock assessment for spotted seatrout in each Gulf state has now been completed. A form of gulfwide qualitative and possibly quantitative stock assessment is being considered at this time. The Technical Task Force (TTF) is comprised of a commercial representative, a recreational representative, a sociologist, and an economist. A complete draft is expected by the end of 1997 and publication in 1998.

J. Duffy reported that the Flounder TTF has met twice this year and rough drafts of the description of stock, description of the fishery, and description of processing have been developed. The Flounder TTF is tentatively scheduled to meet in January 1997. Susannah Smith, a sociologist from Florida, will be working with the Flounder TTF. Based on progress made to date, a draft should be ready for review in 1997 and publication hopefully in 1998.

J. Duffy reported that the Blue Crab TTF has met twice this year and held a conference call to discuss progress and membership. The Blue Crab TTF would like to apply some of the techniques used on the Atlantic coast to the data available in the gulf states in developing a stock assessment. Drafts of the habitat section, law section, description of the fishery, management considerations, and management measures have been developed and are being edited. A draft for review should be ready in 1997. It was suggested that the management plan include recommendations on how to reduce the number of traps.

J. Duffy requested that the agenda be amended to change the order of presentation of items 5 b, 5 c, and 5 d. Approval was given.

Age and Growth Workshop Update

J. Duffy reported that an age and growth workshop has been a topic of discussion for more than three years. An attempt is being made to formalize a group to address this subject in the Gulf of Mexico. There is the question of whether only technical people should be involved at this point or if stock assessment experts should also be included now or brought in later.

Stock Assessment Training Workshop Update

J. Duffy reported that stock assessment in the gulf states has progressed to cutting edge status. Those involved in stock assessment are developing techniques to fine tune VPA. High level expertise in government and academia are being sought to continue to update their skills. At the same time individuals are being sought for training for future stock assessment needs.

FMP Compliance Report Card

L. Simpson and J. Duffy reviewed the *Implementation of IFJ Fishery Management Plan Recommendations by State* (attachment A).

R. Lukens reported that GSMFC, in the process of developing FMP's, collects a tremendous amount of journals and reprints. These titles are now being entered into a literature database called ProCite. This will be an online database with hard copies available at GSMFC.

RecFIN/ComFIN Report

D. Donaldson gave a brief history of RecFIN/ComFIN, explaining that there was a need for a comprehensive state-federal data collection program in the southeast region. The GSMFC Data Management Subcommittee held several workshops as did the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). As a result of these workshops, recommendations were presented to the Commissioners in March 1990, and they directed staff to investigate avenues for the GSMFC to become more involved in data collection. The Data Management Subcommittee of GSMFC developed the concept of RecFIN. The NMFS developed a proposal and in April 1992 this was presented to GSMFC and ASMFC. A development team was organized and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was drafted. The MOU was signed in early 1993 and formally established RecFIN. The first three years of RecFIN were in the pilot stage and the culmination of this was a facilitated session and external program review held in October 1995. Recommendations were developed and these were used to form the basis of the operating plan for the future.

One of the primary goals of RecFIN is to implement a coordinated state-federal marine recreational data collection program. A full partnership between the states and NMFS to conduct a unified data collection program has yet to be realized. The GSMFC has developed a strategy to conduct the intercept portion of the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statics Survey (MRFSS). A detailed description of how the states would implement RecFIN in the Gulf of Mexico region was submitted to the MRFSS staff in 1995. In 1996 a cooperative agreement proposal outlining the budget and tasks required was developed and submitted to NMFS. This proposal was rejected by NMFS and since the rationale was very general, GSMFC has requested a formal critique. The proposal will be modified and clarified and hopefully GSMFC will be conducting the intercept portion of the MRFSS in the near future. The MRFSS staff suggested we become involved in the charterboat pilot study which investigates alternative methods for estimating charterboat effort. The gulf states are now working with NMFS on this project.

In order to fully implement RecFIN, and for this to be a truly cooperative state-federal program, the gulf states believe that the intercept portion of the MRFSS should be conducted by the states.

Magnuson Act Amendments

L. Simpson reported that in the area of state jurisdiction: a state may regulate a fishing vessel outside the boundary of the state if the vessel is registered in the state and there is no fishery management plan in place, and management measures are consistent, or if the council, by 3/4 majority vote, designates authority back to that state. The importance of central data registration was addressed. The Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act has been re-authorized. Fishing quotas and bycatch issues were addressed.

Status of Red Drum Offshore Tagging Study

L. Simpson reported that in the first year of the red drum offshore tagging program, \$250,000 was appropriated for an aerial survey, the second year was \$580,000 for tagging, and the third year was \$830,000

for recapture and aerial surveys. The first year of the study was completed by NMFS/Pascagoula, with the appropriated funds being used for the aerial survey. There is approximately \$500,000 remaining to complete the study. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) reviewed the work and determined that the offshore tagging program was necessary to complete the stock assessment and passed a motion to encourage the GMFMC, with the states, to continue to seek funding for the tagging program. Simpson stated that there was the possibility of using Gulf Disaster funds to accomplish this.

Alabama Pompano Designation Update

V. Minton reported that it appears there will not be designation of pompano as a gamefish species in Alabama. Information has been received from the Florida Marine Fisheries Commission on a stock assessment that has been completed for pompano which would indicate that summer closure may be appropriate. The situation is being reviewed and further information will be forthcoming in the spring.

Freshwater/Saltwater Funding Split

V. Minton reported that a study has been conducted by the University of South Alabama polling group, using 1,000 Alabama households. Currently the marine division in Alabama receives 12.5% of the Sportfish Restoration Fund. The results of the survey indicate that they should be receiving 23%. An additional survey was conducted by the University of Alabama using a more complex method and the results of that survey indicated the marine division should be receiving 27% of funds. Therefore, these increases will provide the marine division in Alabama with more than double the funds they had been receiving. Funds will be used to provide additional public access areas in south Alabama.

Finalization of State Directors' Meeting Plans

L. Simpson reported that the time-frame for the State Directors Meeting will be December 3 and 4 or December 4 and 5 near Gulf Shores, Alabama. V. Minton will present a program on red snapper at the mariculture facility early on the first day. The State Directors Meeting will convene at noon and adjourn at approximately 4:00 p.m. the following day. Simpson requested a count as soon as possible. J. Bullard of the Department of Commerce will address the group on data, disaster money and other programs. R. Schmitt and B. Sutter of NMFS will also be included.

Election of Officers

L. Simpson was re-elected as Chairman of the State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee.

Other Business

Chef Frank Brigtsen was originally scheduled to speak to the Commercial Fisheries Advisory Committee at this time. However, due to the number of participants, Chef Brigtsen will present his program at the close of State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee meeting. An outline of his speech, Gulf Fisheries Management: A Chef's Perspective, is attached to these minutes as Attachment B.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m..

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

Interjurisdictional Fisheries Management Program

**Implementation of IJF Fishery Management Plan
Recommendations by State**

October 1996

Menhaden

Recommendations	FL	AL	MS	LA	TX
Establish uniform seasons (third Monday in April through November 1)	NI ¹	I	I	I	I
Industry provide data on fleet composition & Captain's Daily Fishing Reports	I	I	I	I	I

¹bait fishery only, seasons not determined necessary

Key:

I = implemented

NI = not implemented

PI = partially implemented

PR = proposed

Blue Crab

Recommendations	FL	AL	MS	LA	TX
Establish fees and permits to identify commercial and/or recreational effort	I	I	I	I	I
Establish minimum carapace width of 5" for hard blue crabs	I	I	I	I	I
Establish a trap identification system	I	PR	I	I	I
Mandate biodegradable escape panels	I	PR	NI	PR	NI

Key:

I = implemented

NI = not implemented

PI = partially implemented

PR = proposed

Spanish Mackerel

Recommendations	FL	AL	MS	LA	TX
Establish fishing year of April 1 - March 31	I	I	NI	I	NA ¹
Establish annual TAC consistent with annual stock assessments conducted by NMFS	I	I	NI	I	NA ¹
Prohibit use of purse seines	I	I	PI ²	I	I
Gill & trammel nets - mesh size of 3½" stretch or larger & maximum length of 1,800'	NA	PI ³	PI ⁴	I	NA
Establish minimum size limit (recreational) of 12" fork length (14" total length)	I	NI	NI	I	I
Establish bag limits (recreational)	I	I	NI	I	I

¹no commercial fishery

²percentage by weight allowed as bycatch

³mesh size only

⁴net length yes, mesh size seasonally

Key:

I = implemented

NI = not implemented

PI = partially implemented

PR = proposed

NA = not applicable

Oyster

Recommendations	FL	AL	MS	LA	TX
Increase cultch planting	PR	PI ¹	PI ¹	PR	PR
Develop uniform size limits on reefs that are continuous with two state's boundaries	I	I	I	I	I
Establish uniform criteria for opening and closing reefs in close proximity to state boundaries	NI	NI	PR	PR	NA ²
Increase penalties for harvesting and possessing oysters from restricted or prohibited areas	NI	I	I	I	I
Establish uniform gear on reefs that are harvestable by fishermen from two or more states	I w/AL	I w/FL I w/MS	I w/AL NI w/LA	NI w/MS NA ² w/TX	NA ² w/LA

¹generally yes, varies annually due to fluctuations in state funding

²such oyster reefs are permanently closed

Key:

I = implemented

NI = not implemented

PI = partially implemented

PR = proposed

NA = not applicable

Black Drum

Recommendations	FL	AL	MS	LA	TX
Consider minimum size restrictions	I	I	I	I	I
Consider bag/possession limits	I	I	I	I	I
Allow sale only by licensed commercial fishermen, dealers, & processors	I	I	I	I	I
Landing with heads, tails, & flesh naturally attached	I	NI	PI ¹	I	I
Maintain equivalent of 20% SSB/R ratio	I	I	I	I	I

¹float plan legalizes cleaning on vessel

Key:

I = implemented

NI = not implemented

PI = partially implemented

PR = proposed

NA = not applicable

Striped Mullet

Recommendations	FL	AL	MS	LA	TX
Establish target SPR	I	I	I	I	NA
Establish regulations for minimum SPR of 30	I	I	I	I	NA
Establish fishing year	NI	NI	NI	NI	NA
Establish commercial quotas / trip limits	PI ¹	NI	NI	NI	NA
Establish minimum length limit for commercial and recreational food fisheries	I	NI	PI ²	NI	NI
Establish bag and possession limits for recreational and bait fisheries	PI ³	PI ³	NI	PI ³	NI
Allow sale only by licensed commercial fishermen, dealers, & processors	I	I	I	I	I
Landing with heads, tails, & flesh naturally attached	I	I	PI ⁴	I	I

¹trip limits yes

²commercial only, no length limit for recreational

³recreational only, no bag limit for bait

⁴float plan legalizes cleaning on vessel

Key:

I = implemented

NI = not implemented

PI = partially implemented

PR = proposed

NA = not applicable



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GULF FISHERIES MANAGEMENT: A CHEF'S PERSPECTIVE

by Frank Briigtsen

-
- I) Introduction - How gulf fisheries management affects me as a
- A) Chef - Availability of fresh local fish
 - Quality of fresh local fish vs. imports and farm-raised fish.
 - culinary differences between inshore fish (groundfish) and offshore fish (reef fish and pelagics)
 - B) Seafood Buyer
 - Sourcing the freshest fish at the best price.
 - Flexability in menu - utilizing so-called bycatch, such as: mangrove snapper, triggerfish, tripletail, etc.
 - Coping with rising food costs - the importance of overall menu price structuring.
 - Briigtsen's Early Evening specials - the difficulty in sourcing year-round supply of reasonably priced local fish.
 - C) Restaurant Owner
 - Education of staff and clientele on various finfish species and how legislation affects our menu.
 - Preservation of Louisiana culinary tradition.
 - D) Recreational Fishermen
 - The importance of resposable fisheries management for all people.

II) 1996: A Review of the First Three Quarters

JAN/FEB: Inshore - Plentiful supplies of Speckled Trout, Black Drum, and Sheepshead at excellent prices. Net season open until March 1st.

Reef Fish - Red Snapper season opens in mid-Feb. Plentiful supplies at good prices.

Pelagics - Yellowfin Tuna scarce and expensive. Some wahoo.

MARCH: Inshore - Net season closes. No speckled trout. Sporadic sheepshead at higher prices. Black drum tight and expensive (7.95/lb.)

Reef Fish - Red Snapper plentiful, price slightly higher. Hake utilized as alternative, reasonably priced local fish.

Pelagics - Tuna tight, expensive to very expensive (8.50/lb.)
Some wahoo, first cobia of season.

* Farm-raised Canadian salmon used on Early Evening menu.

APRIL: *Busiest time of year. Virtually no local fish for Easter.

Inshore - Sheepshead sporadic. Black Drum tight and very expensive (7.95/ lb.)

Reef Fish - Red Snapper season closes. Hake available, price up 14% due to demand.

Pelagics - Tuna tight and very expensive. Some wahoo.
Cobia sporadic.

MAY: Inshore - Sheepshead sporadic. Black Drum tight and very expensive.

Reef Fish - Some hake, occasional scorpionfish.

Pelagics - Tuna plentiful, price dropping. Cobia plentiful.
Amberjack plentiful, good prices. Returned a lot due to poor quality.

* Farm-raised salmon used for E.E. special.

JUNE/JULY: Inshore - Not much available. Some drum at 7.95.

Reef Fish - Mangrove Snapper, Triggerfish and some Scorpionfish starting to show at good prices. Some tripletail.

Pelagics - Tuna steady at fluctuating prices. Amberjack and cobia steady, though a lot returned due to poor quality. Some local mahi, mostly imports of poor quality at 6.75/lb.

* Farm-raised catfish used on E.E. menu.

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER:

Inshore - Pompano plentiful at fair price. In September, Drum finally becomes steady at good price (4.95).

Reef Fish - Mangrove Snapper plentiful at good price. Triggerfish and Tripletail reliable at 5.50 - 5.95/lb. Red Snapper season reopens with good supplies and prices.

Pelagics - Tuna plentiful at great prices. Some swordfish. Lots of Mahi, mostly imports, poor quality.

III) SUMMARY - Scarcity of fresh local fish in Spring and early Summer.

- Net ban having dramatic effect on seafood supplies.
- Black Drum and Sheepshead are sorely missed in restaurant(s).
- Increased efforts in purchasing, receiving, menu making, and education of staff and clientele.
- Preservation of traditional cuisine and culture.
- Sustainable coastal communities.
- Responsible fisheries management based on science with proper enforcement.

APPROVED BY:

Walter Penry
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

**COMMISSION BUSINESS MEETING
MINUTES - DAY 1
October 17, 1996
New Orleans, Louisiana**

Chairman Chris Nelson called the meeting to order at 1:13 p.m. L. Simpson noted that a quorum was present. He reviewed pertinent rules and regulations regarding the appropriate meeting procedures. C. Nelson stated that since there were several new Commissioners present that it would be appropriate for all present to briefly introduce themselves.

The following Commissioners and/or proxies were present:

Commissioners

Ed Irby, FDEP, Tallahassee, FL
Vernon Minton, ADCNR/MRD, Gulf Shores, AL (proxy for James Martin)
Walter Penry, AL House of Representatives, Daphne, AL
Chris Nelson, Bon Secour Fisheries, Bon Secour, AL
Gene McCarty, TPWD, Austin, TX (proxy for Andrew Sansom)
Glade Woods, MDMR, Biloxi, MS
Corky Perret, MDMF, Biloxi, MS (proxy for Glade Woods)
Ed Ryan, MS House of Representatives, Biloxi, MS
George Sekul, Gulf Central Seafoods, Inc., Biloxi, MS
Frederic Miller, Shreveport, LA
Warren Triche, LA House of Representatives, Thibodaux, LA
John Roussel, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA (proxy for James Jenkins)

Staff

Larry Simpson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Ginny Herring, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Jim Duffy, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Nancy Marcellus, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Madeleine Travis, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Cynthia Yocom, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Others

Dan Furlong, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Buck Sutter, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Doug Fruge, USFWS, Ocean Springs, MS
Tom McIlwain, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS
Jerry Waller, ADCNR/MRD, Dauphin Island, AL
John T. Jenkins, ADCNR/MRD, Dauphin Island, AL
John M. Ward, NMFS/HMSMD, St. Petersburg, FL

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted with the following changes: Delete Item 8, this discussion will be held during the TCC report on the Crab Subcommittee; consolidate Item 6d and 6e. **W. Penry motion to approve changes. V. Minton seconded. The motion passed.**

Approval of Minutes

G. Sekul motioned to approve the minutes of the March 21, 1996 meeting as presented. J. Roussel seconded. The motion was passed.

NMFS/Southeast Regional Office (SERO) Report

D. Furlong reported on behalf of the NMFS/SERO. He thanked L. Simpson for providing the Commissioners with budget information. He stated that NMFS FY97 budget appears financially solid. The Omnibus Budget Bill (a continuing resolution for the entire FY97 for those Government entities which did not have approved budgets) that was presented in September shows an increase in funds, but does not match the previously posted House or Senate Appropriation Bills at this time. Because it is not finalized he could not give specific amounts. He mentioned that in the Senate Bill funds have been designated in the amount of \$1,500,000 to initiate a consortium to develop technologies to enhance, supplement, and rehabilitate marine fishery resources on Mississippi's gulf coast.

C. Perret asked D. Furlong if he could report on the \$300,000 add on for aquaculture that was in the House Bill. D. Furlong and B. Sutter stated that it was too soon to attach dollars to specific projects. L. Simpson added that he had just received an updated version of the continuing resolution budget that identified the \$300,000 add on for Gulf of Mexico mariculture projects. In addition, his update showed an increase of \$500,000 for data collection and a line item increase for the interstate commissions for interstate plan development from \$4 million to \$5 million.

D. Furlong gave a brief historical review of the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Disaster Program. On August 2, 1995, the Secretary of Commerce declared a fisheries disaster in the Gulf of Mexico. Fifteen million dollars has been made available for hurricane-magnitude storms and floods, and their after effects occurring from August 23, 1992 to December 31, 1995. (This program was changed to include the March 13, 1996 storm.) The program provides \$5 million for gear compensation. Information regarding availability of funds and applications for gear compensation was publicized in the five Gulf States. The deadline for applications was October 7, 1996 but that has been extended at least 30 days. As of October 11, 1996, the following number of applications have been received from the various states: AL - 12; FL - 168; LA - 121; MS - 1; TX - 1; and, OH - 1. The application from Ohio involves a citizen of Ohio that operates in Mississippi. The program has been extended and all applications have not yet been reviewed and approved. D. Furlong stated that the program funding may change with FY 1996 Continuing Resolution. State projects are tentatively allocated \$10 million. State allocations are as follows: AL - 10%; FL - 22.5%; LA - 45%; MS - 10%; and, TX - 12.5%.

D. Furlong reported that on Friday, October 25, 1996 NMFS will make a 6 hour public presentation on their National Strategic Plan efforts. The meeting will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, New Orleans, LA. He stated that prior to this meeting, on Thursday, Rollie Schmitten, Director for Fisheries, NMFS will participate in a Town Hall meeting at the same location. He encouraged all present to attend and participate in these meetings.

C. Nelson asked D. Furlong if the new TED rules were available. He did not have a copy with him but referred to language contained in the briefing material that shows Congressional concern over NMFS continued effort to impose stringent shrimp regulations without addressing the need for such regulations despite the fact that the shrimp fishermen are complying with existing restrictions at a 97 to 99 percent rate. D. Furlong further stated that while Congress is questioning the need to continue to tighten regulations, since results are being achieved, other groups are pushing NMFS to increase regulations. While compliance studies are being conducted to monitor shrimp fishery regulations very little funds have been set aside to complete these studies. He does not see a change in NMFS attitude in regard to the TED rule.

C. Nelson asked if anyone knew the status of the soft TED. L. Simpson reported that NMFS has been directed to not decertify any TEDs until every effort is made working with industry and others to improve or modify existing devices to increase turtle escapement.

Report on Highly Migratory Species

John Ward, NMFS, Highly Migratory Species Management Division (HMSMD), St. Petersburg, FL discussed various management measures and goals of species that the HMS is addressing. Species discussed included bluefin tuna and other tuna; swordfish; sharks; and, billfish. A primary goal of the HMSMD is to increase the cooperation, continuity, and effectiveness of Federal and State management for Atlantic sharks. The HMS is currently addressing some of these issues with the Atlantic States by strongly urging that all Atlantic States 1) implement shark fishery regulations at least as restrictive as Federal regulations; 2) close state fisheries in conjunction with Federal shark fishery closures; and 3) prohibit fishing for sharks in important nursery areas. In support of these goals, HMS is developing a limited access program for the directed shark fishery and is considering other measures to reduce effective fishing effort.

In the interest of encouraging cooperation and continuity of Federal and State management, NMFS is establishing a communication framework between the HMS Division and States. A HMS Division staff will as a point contact to coordinate with the various State Directors and to provide research and other informational support. The HMS Division will contact the various States regarding this communication framework in the near future.

W. Triche asked J. Ward how HMS developed their standards by which you determine the poundage of bycatch. He was specifically concerned about bycatch by shrimp trawlers in Louisiana. J. Ward stated that observers were used to determine this figure. D. Furlong added that 4,000 sea days for observers are used to determine the data base upon which these estimates are based. W. Triche requested that D. Furlong send him information regarding NMFS bycatch effort in Louisiana.

J. Roussel asked if shark regulations have been implemented. J. Ward stated that Amendment #1 is currently being implemented which addresses 50% reduction in quota. Amendment #2 which proposed to implement limited access for the shark fishery will be finalized in January 1997 and will then go out for public comment.

USFWS Region 4 Office Report

D. Frugè reported on behalf of USFWS Region 4. He reported on the death of former FWS Director Mollie Beattie. He stated that during her tenure as Director she oversaw controversies and changes within the FWS and gained the respect and admiration of legislators and colleagues. He reported that John Rogers is

currently acting director. The appointment of a new director will not be addressed until after the presidential election.

He briefly updated the Commissioners on the status of fish hatcheries. In Mississippi there is an ongoing discussion regarding the Meridian hatchery. Plans are not definite regarding transfer of this facility at this time.

D. Frugè reported that FWS held a Southeastern Region Fisheries stakeholders meeting in Hot Springs, Arkansas on October 4, 1996. The meeting was held to get input from state agencies, other federal agencies and non-governmental organizations regarding their views on current and future FWS fisheries management activities. Other aspects of the meeting focused on the Southeast Region's draft Fisheries Vision document. He stated that they received valuable insight into how FWS programs, roles and responsibilities are perceived by partner agencies and organizations.

He briefly updated the Commissioners on continuing efforts to monitor distribution of brown mussels in Texas coastal waters. The mussels have been found as far north as the Brazosport area. New infestations are being found on every sampling trip. It appears that human harvest has begun at some sites, though settlement by juveniles appears to be replacing mussels removed.

He further reported that the Southeast Region's Sea Turtle Coordinator has been working with property owners at Longboat Key and Lido Key to resolve problems with beach lighting that has resulted in disorientation in hatchling turtles. He also reported that St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge in Florida reports that 1996 was the second best year on record for sea turtle nesting since data has been recorded for the refuge. There were 46 nests with 25 false crawls.

He reported that as of October 1, what had formerly been the National Biological Service was incorporated as a division of the U. S. Geological Survey. This includes the Fish and Wildlife Cooperative Research Units and the regional science centers which were at one time called fisheries research centers.

In regards to the FY 1997 budget, D. Frugè reported that there may be a 10 - 20% increase nationwide in Federal Aid funding. This is due in part to gasoline tax increases.

C. Perret asked D. Frugè to give an update on zebra mussels. He reported that in the Atchafalaya Basin the numbers of larvae increase every year. There appears to be no problems and users are dealing with their presence. They do not create problems for other species and the high salinities in that area keep them from spreading.

Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) Report

C. Perret reported that the TCC met on Wednesday, October 16, 1996. The committee received subcommittee reports and reports from the various State and Federal agencies. He stated that John Abendroth, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Tallahassee, FL, reported on a Tri-State Committee (GA, FL, AL) that has been working on a plan to make sure that all users are provided their fair share of freshwater flows by area rivers. C. Perret stated that this is a very important project to coastal areas since this does effect estuarine systems.

He briefed the Commissioners on a discussion held regarding mercury levels in fish. He expressed the TCC's concern for the public regarding potential health risks in eating contaminated fish, in particularly king

mackerel. Although each State deals with individual situations within their waters, they expressed concern that the FDA become more involved since many of the species are found in Federal waters. He stated that the TCC recommended that the Commission staff write a letter expressing its concern that the FDA is not more integrally involved in informing the public of potential health risk of eating fish contaminated with heavy metals and mercury. E. Irby discussed Florida's experience in dealing with this situation. He stated that there is no solid evidence that points to larger fish having elevated levels. In Florida there has been ongoing discussion between the health department and the FDEP. The FDA was involved in studies with large pelagics, but no conclusive resolution was found. **He motioned that instead of writing the FDA, that we invite the proper person from the FDA to a TCC meeting to discuss the danger of mercury levels in marine finfish species. F. Miller seconded.** V. Minton suggested that in addition to inviting the FDA, that State public health officials also be invited. E. Irby stated that he did not think the states should be put into a controversial situation. V. Minton withdrew his suggestion. **The motion passed.**

C. Perret stated that the TCC reviewed the status of the Bonné Carre freshwater diversion project. He stated that this project was one of three cooperative projects between the Corp of Engineers, Louisiana and Mississippi to provide freshwater to Southeast Louisiana and Mississippi. The State of Louisiana recently proposed to pull out of this 25 year project that is funded as follows: 75% - Corp of Engineers; 20% - LA; and, 5% - MS. On Wednesday, October 16, 1996, the parties involved met. Governor Foster's office presented Louisiana's position on this project. Preliminary options were presented and the Governor's office will evaluate those options for providing freshwater to Southeast Louisiana. C. Perret further stated that Dr. David Etzold formerly of the University of Southern Mississippi and now a private consultant has been and continues to be involved in this project. The TCC appreciates his tireless efforts without pay and drafted a resolution expressing gratitude to Dr. Etzold for his dedicated service to the betterment of the natural resources of the Gulf of Mexico on this project and others. **C. Perret motion to approve the resolution (Attachment A). The motion passed.**

On behalf of the Artificial Reef Subcommittee and the TCC, **C. Perret motioned to approve a resolution (Attachment B) on the use of retired Navy ships as artificial reef materials and directed staff to send it to the appropriate officials in the Department of Defense. V. Minton seconded. The motion passed.** V. Minton discussed retired Captain Higgins' heavy involvement in the REEF-EX program which provides a significant amount of decommissioned military battle hardware to the states for artificial reef application. V. Minton stated that although he is retired he would like to stay involved in this program without pay. He stated that he would need some kind of title or position that will provide him a basis to stay involved. L. Simpson stated that he has spoken on behalf of Captain Higgins to the National Recreational Fisheries Coordinator in Washington, D.C. and that office is working on something that would provide him with the ability to stay involved with artificial reef projects. He has relayed this information to Captain Higgins and will follow-up on this upon his return to the office.

Other business of the Artificial Reef Subcommittee included the Guideline for Marine Artificial Reef Materials. After review by the TCC, **C. Perret motioned to approve the guidelines. V. Minton seconded. The motion passed.**

V. Guillory reported that the TCC Crab Subcommittee met on Monday, October 14, 1996. The subcommittee addressed two major issues. The first was their concern regarding the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's action in January 1996 regarding the golden crab fishery. The Council moved not to consider any management options for this fishery. Their decision was based primarily on the small size of the

fishery. V. Guillory reported that in 1995 seven vessels were involved in the fishery and that 4.5 million pounds were landed in the Gulf. In 1996 all but one vessel involved in the Gulf fishery moved to that Atlantic Coast. The subcommittee feels that this may be due to a limited access program on the Atlantic Coast. If the vessels had not fished the Atlantic Coast in 1996, they could have lost a permit to fish in that fishery. The subcommittee feels like they will now return to the Gulf. Other concerns regarding the fishery include the life cycle of the golden crab. These crabs do not enter the fishery until age 16 or older. They are extremely vulnerable to over exploitation because of their slow growth rate and moderate number of eggs. In addition, the Gulf fishery is primarily based on females. In the Northern Gulf, trap data indicates that approximately 8% of the catch is females. Further south the male - female ratio is increased. In the Atlantic Coast fishery the take is 95% male. **On behalf of the Crab Subcommittee and the TCC, C. Perret motioned to ask the Council to reconsider their position on the golden crab fishery.** T. McIlwain commented that on the Atlantic Coast this fishery was a near shore fishery, in the Gulf it is a difficult fishery due to its offshore nature. V. Minton asked V. Guillory if there was any new information or scientific data that the Council has not considered. V. Guillory said no. **The motion failed.**

V. Guillory reported that at the March 1996 meeting of the Crab Subcommittee, the State of Alabama requested that the subcommittee compile available information on crab trap tag markings and buoy identification. V. Guillory reviewed the various state regulations on crab trap tags and buoy identification and showed the Commissioners examples of different types currently available. He reported that the States of TX, LA, MS and NY currently mandate some type of tag/buoy identification. He outlined the purposes of using tags and what criteria should be implemented for tags/identification. He stated several problems with the use of traps: difficult implementation of trap limit management programs; trap theft; and, difficult replacement of tags due to lost traps. The subcommittee recommended trap identification for trap limits to include use of serially numbered tags provided by the State; the limit of license purchases; stiff penalties for violators; and, the assistance of fishermen in reporting violators. Also recommended was the importance of dating tags to avoid problems with ghost traps. V. Guillory distributed a draft proposal prepared by the Crab Subcommittee for the purpose of discussion. This proposal was developed by the subcommittee during their meeting on Monday, October 14, 1996. It included proposed options for blue crab license limitation.

V. Minton stated that AL is looking at several of the options V. Guillory discussed. In regards to limiting the number of traps, V. Minton stated that he has been unable to find a State that is successfully using this type of management option. V. Guillory replied that some moderate success is being achieved on the Atlantic Coast in States where the fishermen are involved in and cooperating with the State agency. E. Irby stated that in Florida, the lobster trap fishery includes a limitation on the time a trap can remain in the water. This year traps that were not in compliance were removed from the water and owners were penalized. Unless penalties are paid, a license will not be reissued. W. Triche asked V. Guillory how a trap limit per fishermen should be established. V. Guillory said that many fishermen have 200 to 300 traps, and in some instances, as much as 1,000. No formula or standard exist for determining a trap limit, that it is a very difficult task, especially in Louisiana, although a license reduction proposal is being developed by the Crab Task Force.

C. Perret continued with the TCC report and **motioned on behalf of the Data Management Subcommittee (DMS), for approval of a resolution (Attachment C) regarding State-Federal marine fisheries data programs.** R. Lukens explained that this resolution was initiated because of requirements of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act, which requires the development of recommendations to establish a national data program. The resolution recommends to the Secretary of Commerce that the SEAMAP and Southeast RecFIN and ComFIN Programs be recognized as fulfilling these requirements in the Southeast Region, that full implementation of Southeast RecFIN Program be accomplished, and that a cooperative agreement entitled "Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission/National Marine Fisheries Service RecFIN in the Southeast Region" be approved and implemented. **The motion passed.**

D. Donaldson explained that the MRFSS has been conducting pilot studies to look at alternative methods for estimating charter boat efforts. A study has been done in Maine and is currently being done in NC. They expanded the study to the West Coast of Florida. NMFS asked the other Gulf States if they would be interested in participating in a study. The DMS discussed this and received a recommendation from the TCC to pursue participation in a MRFSS pilot charter boat survey to examine charter boat effort in the Gulf of Mexico. **G. Wood motioned to approve TCC recommendation. The motion passed.**

C. Perret distributed copies of the SEAMAP Report to the TCC for the Commissioners information. He reported that Walter Tatum, who has served as SEAMAP Chairman for 13 years, will be retiring soon. Richard Waller was elected to replace W. Tatum. J. Hanifen elected Vice Chairman.

C. Perret reported that he was re-elected Chairman of the TCC. He appointed John Roussel as Vice Chairman. He requested R. Lukens report on the TCC Habitat Subcommittee meeting held Wednesday, October 16.

R. Lukens reported that the Habitat Subcommittee met for four hours and among items discussed were the contribution the subcommittee expected to make in terms of fishery management plan development. The subcommittee plans to be more quantitative in determining what habitat is out there, how much there is, the quality of the habitat and what they think the impact of the habitat may be on certain fish stocks. Among other topics discussed was a concept document for working with the NMFS on the implementation of the National Habitat Program. In this regards, R. Lukens reported that the subcommittee discussed changing the theme of a previously approved workshop. Instead of attempting to standardize habitat policies among the various States and Federal agencies, it was the desire of the subcommittee to deal with issues in the MFCMA that call for identification and recommendation of action about essential fish habitat. The ASMFC recently held a similar workshop that addressed these issues. It seemed logical to the subcommittee that this would be a relevant and informative theme for their workshop. The title would be "Managing Habitat for Fisheries". **C. Perret motion to approve the subcommittee's request to commence planning this workshop. G. Sekul seconded. The motion passed.**

Law Enforcement Committee (LEC)

J. Waller reported that the LEC met on Wednesday, October 16, 1996. He reported that although the LEC has recently lost several members due to retirement, the committee now has a new member from Louisiana, Sergeant Jeff Mayne and Captain John Jenkins from Alabama will be attending with J. Waller. J. Waller feels that these new members will provide the LEC stability over the next 10 to 15 years.

Mr. Nat Jackson with the Federal Highway Administration met with the LEC to address problems regarding interstate transportation of seafood. Mr. Jackson was able to explain and clarify several issues. Most fish and marine products are "exempt commodities" and are not subjected to federal licensing. There has been confusion and misinformation as to what the State jurisdiction is in regards to interstate transportation. Mr. Jackson agreed to provide the LEC with a definition and legal interpretation of what is considered "prohibitive" in regards to interstate transportation. **The LEC requested permission and funding for a meeting to address transportation of marine products within and across State lines, and to review federal interpretations. The meeting will include members of the LEC, a representative from the Food and Drug Administration and the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Commission, as well as legal counsel from each State's marine agency. C. Nelson asked that a member of industry be included. G. Wood motioned to approve the**

request. G. Sekul seconded. The motion passed.

The major topic of discussion during the LEC meeting was in regards to a penalty schedule set by NOAA General Counsel. It was originally referred to as a "Fix-It Policy", this has since been changed to "Fix-it Notification" or FIN for short. The NMFS has a one year commitment to this schedule and will revisit this policy at the end of that time. It went into effect on August 30, 1996. J. Waller explained that this is a "kinder and gentler" policy that was the result of interpretations of both an Executive Order and Congressional action. The LEC strongly disagrees with this penalty schedule. They feel that this policy will have a negative impact on resources and fisheries management. In addition it will have an adverse affect on state regulations. Although it may be a workable policy in regards to vessel and gear violations, he sees problems with catch limits. The policy recommends that for 1 - 5 illegal fish, an enforcement officer issues a FIN ticket and advises the violators to return the fish to the sea. If the violator refuses, it is noted on the FIN ticket. There is no further action taken. J. Waller stated that if there were 5 fishermen on the same vessel, that 25 fish could be taken illegally (5 fish per fishermen) and no action other than a FIN ticket would be taken. The situation becomes worse when charter boats are involved. He distributed a copy of the on-scene guidance applications for various violations. The LEC is concerned about there ability to enforce the federal regulations as well as state regulations. They foresee problems in court cases that involved state violations, local judges could throw out any state violations based on these federal penalties. On behalf of the LEC, J. Waller asked that the Commission address their concerns and relate these concern in a letter to Dave McKinney, NMFS Director of Law Enforcement, with copies to Karen Raines, NMFS Southeast Legal Counsel. Following this presentation there was a great deal of discussion.

D. Furlong stated that the original intent of this policy was for small businesses in the Northeast who found themselves charged with violating pollution discharges into water systems. The EPA would fine them anywhere from \$100,000 to \$150,000. The intent of "Fix-it" was to allow these small businesses to take the money they would have had to pay in fines and fix problems within their small business so that they would be in compliance and not have to go out of business. The interpretation of the Executive Order was then expanded by NOAA General Counsel within the Department of Commerce, to include fishermen as small business owners. They initially addressed technical problems that could be fixed, it has now been expanded to include bag limits, possession of illegal fish, licensing, recreational fishing, etc. C. Perret says many State programs will suffer with this type of enforcement. E. Irby stated that it has caused contracting problems with NMFS for the State of Florida. V. Minton pointed out that it will cause problems when States develop regulations for bag limits - should they enforce a zero bag limit if their intent is 5 fish? V. Minton stated that if we agree to write a letter it should include specific scenarios, such as red drum, where you could land 5 fish from federal waters where there is no retention currently allowed. C. Nelson, stated that although some of the guidance provided in the FIN schedule is inappropriate when dealing with bag limits and quotas, he does agree that in the instance of small gear violations such as TED grate angles that a FIN ticket is appropriate.

After discussion it was agreed to relate the LEC concerns regarding FIN via a letter to the Secretary of Commerce with copies to NOAA General Counsel, NMFS Director of Law Enforcement, Southeast Legal Counsel and the Gulf Congressional Delegation. The letter will include specific scenarios, resource concerns and enforcement and State concerns. L. Simpson will distribute a draft letter to all Commissioners for their approval and comments prior to mailing the final letter to the Secretary of Commerce and others. **F. Miller made the motion. C. Nelson seconded. The motion passed.**

J. Waller stated that he was elected Chairman of the LEC for 1996-97.

State-Federal Fisheries Management Committee (S-FFMC) Report

L. Simpson stated that the S-FFMC met just prior to this meeting. He briefed the Commissioners on the

report from the Menhaden Advisory Committee (MAC). They projected landings through October of 496,000 metric tons which is 3% up over last years landings but 12% down over the 5 year average. They reported the fishery stock to be healthy with the spawning stock at over 40%. There has been no change in the *category three* classification of the fishery under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and no change will probably occur through 1997. Plants in operation in the Gulf this season numbered 5, there were 6 plants operating last year. The committee received a final report from LSU on a bycatch study. D. Vaughn provided an update on stock assessment, the committee will look into various fishery-independent data to predict menhaden catch. This information will enhance plans for the five year stock assessment that will be conducted in 1997. Other topics of discussion included the development of a fact sheet and slide show on the Gulf menhaden industry. Randy Rader was elected chairman for 1996-97.

Other reports received by the S-FFMC included the status of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Program. The program is currently working on three FMPs. Spotted seatrout FMP should be submitted for approval by late 1997. The Flounder FMP will also be finalized in 1997. The Crab Task Force is drafting a revision to the Crab FMP and action on this plan could be completed in 1997 also.

The S-FFMC discussed problems with the S-F coordinated data collection program entitled RecFIN/ComFIN. The GSMFC is working to get approval on a cooperative agreement that was recently denied.

Other business of the S-FFMC included setting a date for the next State Directors meeting to be held December 3-5, 1996 in Gulf Shores, Alabama. L. Simpson was elected chairman for the upcoming year.

G. McCarty motioned to approve L. Simpson's report. G. Woods seconded. The motion passed.

Commercial Fisheries Advisory Committee (CFAC)

C. Nelson reported that the CFAC met earlier in the day. It was a very good meeting but not well attended. Among topics discussed was the use of sodium tri-polyphosphate in shrimp processing. This has become an issue in the industry because although it is recognized as a safe food additive and can actually enhance products after it is cooked, the process has in some instances been abused and degradation of the product occurs. Establishing a correct moisture content for shrimp is difficult because the process differs with shrimp by the season, species and even time of day caught. In plant enforcement is not always possible and unfair, since imports do not undergo the same type of inspections that U.S. processors are required to undergo. **C. Nelson motioned on behalf of the CFAC that GSMFC staff draft a letter to the American Shrimp Processors and recommend the use of three options. These options are don't soak them, soak them, and submit the product to testing and verification. The moisture content should also be identified on the product. V. Minton seconded. The motion passed.**

The CFAC also discussed TEDs and BRDs. They viewed a very informative video made available to the industry by NMFS. The video showed different types of TEDS, what the industry needs to address and issues important to netmakers. The committee was impressed with the number of different designs that have been developed. **C. Nelson motioned on behalf of the committee to have the GSMFC encourage NMFS to make this video more readily available to the industry and to aggressively seek funding for similar research and development projects to inform and educate the industry on TEDs and BRDs . D. Furlong stated that this was a goal of the TED technology transfer conducted by NMFS. The motion passed.**

C. Nelson stated that the S-FFMC joined the CFAC during a presentation by Chef Frank Brigtsen,

Brigtsen's Restaurant, New Orleans, Louisiana. Chef Brigtsen was representing the Louisiana Seafood Promotions Board. His presentation was entitled "Gulf Fisheries Management: A Chef's Perspective" (a detailed report can be found in the S-FFMC minutes). The presentation was well received by both committees. C. Nelson requested a letter of appreciation be sent to Chef Brigtsen. The request was approved.

V. Minton motioned to adopt the CFAC report. E. Irby seconded. The motion passed.

Proposal for Increased Commercial and Recreational Input

L. Simpson reported that GSMFC staff have been looking at mechanisms to improve input from the commercial and recreational sectors. He asked J. Duffy to further explain.

J. Duffy stated that the IJF program, which he coordinates, legally requires input from commercial and recreational sectors in the development of FMPs. Although a formal process exists it is not always predictable and although input has always been achieved it has not always been an easy process. He further explained that R. Lukens has encountered similar problems with the Sport Fish Program when seeking input from these sectors. Together they drafted some proposed means to enhance the Commission's information network with these sectors. He presented a brief proposal for Commissioner's consideration.

The proposal states that the Commission is committed to the concept that users of the fishery resources over which the Commission exercises management should have a voice in the development of those fishery management regimes. It is Staff's goal to discuss revitalization of commercial and recreational groups charged with providing industry perspective for conducting Commission business. He reviewed proposed structure and function of these groups. The basic structure will include two separate and distinct panels consisting of 10 members. Membership will be proposed by the S-FFMC and confirmed by the Commissioners. They will provide input to the S-FFMC for consideration and elevation to the Commission. The function of the group will be to meet twice per year. At these meetings they will meet jointly for presentations and common agendas, separate for deliberations and other agenda items, then reconvene jointly for discussion and possible collective action. These panels will provide input into the FMP development process and other Commission business as necessary. It is proposed the initial travel funding will be provided by the IJF Program. IJF and Sportfish Restoration Program staff will monitor the meetings and assist with developing agendas. J. Duffy and R. Lukens emphasized the importance of input from the commercial and recreational sectors in FMP development. J. Duffy stated that mechanism will provide an atmosphere of cooperation between the sectors while providing valuable input into the FMP process.

C. Nelson stated that he felt that we needed to try something new because participation from the commercial and recreational sector was at an all time low. This fact hurts both sectors when they are not involved and/or knowledgeable of FMP and other Commission activities. F. Miller agreed that outside the State and Federal agencies involved in Commission business, industry was not really aware of the benefits and work done by the Commission. He added that the proposed structure was a good opportunity to provide a non-adversarial situation for recreational and commercial fishermen to work within. E. Irby offered assistance with researching various approaches to accomplishing this proposal. V. Minton suggested looking at various industry organizations when establishing membership for these proposed panels. It was generally agreed that it is a project worth trying to accomplish. V. Minton motioned to allow staff to develop a mechanisms to revitalize the recreational and commercial industry groups of the Commission. E. Irby seconded. F. Miller amended the motion to have staff submit a written proposal for action at the March 1996 meeting. The motion passed.

The meeting was recessed at 5:23 p.m. until 8:00 a.m. the next morning.



Larry B. Simpson
Executive Director

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

P.O. Box 726, Ocean Springs, MS 39566-0726
(601) 875-5912 (FAX) 875-6604

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

TO DR. DAVID ETZOLD

**FOR DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE BETTERMENT OF THE
NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE GULF OF MEXICO**

WHEREAS Dr. David Etzold has contributed many valuable years of service to the activities of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, and

WHEREAS he played a vital role in the establishment of the Marine Fisheries Initiative (MARFIN), which has provided and continues to provide funding for valuable research and data collection to address the management needs of many important marine fish species in the Gulf of Mexico region, and

WHEREAS his service and contributions to the development of interstate fishery management plans for such species as shrimp, menhaden, and blue crab was invaluable, and

WHEREAS his unyielding dedication to the pursuit of freshwater diversion projects, including the Davis Pond, Caernarvon, and Bonnet Carré projects, giving twenty-three years of service, attending over one hundred meetings, and spending over one thousand hours without monetary compensation, and

WHEREAS positive benefits have already accrued to Louisiana coastal resources as a result of the completion of Caernarvon projects and scheduled completion of Davis Pond, and

WHEREAS he has continued to encourage the completion of the Bonnet Carré project.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission recognizes the valuable contribution of Dr. David Etzold to the management of recreationally and commercially important fisheries species and their habitat in the Gulf of Mexico region, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission commends Dr. Etzold for his dedication to pursuing the completion of important freshwater diversion projects that have already provided positive benefits to Gulf of Mexico coastal resources, and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission expresses its gratitude to Dr. Etzold for his many contributions to the stewardship of the natural resources of the Gulf of Mexico.

Given this the 17th day of October in the year of Our Lord, One Thousand, Nine Hundred, Ninety-six.



Chris Nelson, Chairman



Larry B. Simpson
Executive Director

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

P.O. Box 726, Ocean Springs, MS 39566-0726

(601) 875-5912 (FAX) 875-6604

RESOLUTION ON THE USE OF RETIRED NAVY SHIPS AS ARTIFICIAL REEF MATERIALS

WHEREAS ships and ship hulls have been used successfully as artificial reefs over the past twenty years, and

WHEREAS ships and ship hulls are considered to be stable and long-lived in the marine environment, and

WHEREAS the Liberty and Victory Ship Program (P.L. 92-402 amended by P.L. 98-623) has provided a number of ships and ship hulls to the states for artificial reef application, but are now inactive, and

WHEREAS demand for ships and ship hulls for artificial reef application far exceeds the supply, making ships and ship hulls difficult and expensive to acquire, and

WHEREAS there is a significant number of decommissioned ships potentially available from the Department of the Navy, which pose both an environmental hazard and an economic burden on the tax payers of this Nation, and

WHEREAS salvage companies along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts of the United States have demonstrated their ability to economically remove hazardous materials during the salvaging process, leaving substantial hull components to function as artificial reefs in compliance with Environmental Protection Agency standards, and

WHEREAS past successes with a similar program, utilizing ghost-fleeted Liberty ships from the Maritime Administration, has demonstrated economic recoveries to salvage operations and excellent habitat for fisheries, enhancing fishing success for over twenty years, and

WHEREAS REEF-EX has provided a significant amount of decommissioned military battle hardware to the states for artificial reef application, and

WHEREAS there continues to be a demand for stable and long-lived material for artificial reef development through state programs and activities,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission strongly encourages the Department of the Navy to develop a mechanism to identify appropriate decommissioned Navy vessels and ships and to make those vessels and ships available through REEF-EX for transfer to state artificial reef programs for application as artificial reefs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that costs incurred in transporting vessels and ships to salvage facilities in the Gulf of Mexico and along the Atlantic coast will be borne by the Department of the Navy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that there should be established a central coordination position in the appropriate agency within Department of Defense, preferably someone intimately involved in the very successful REEF-EX Program, to ensure that vessels and ships are equitably allocated to coastal states wishing to participate in the program.

Given this the 17th day of October in the year of Our Lord, One Thousand, Nine Hundred, Ninety-six.



Chris Nelson, Chairman



Larry B. Simpson
Executive Director

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

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RESOLUTION REGARDING STATE-FEDERAL

MARINE FISHERIES DATA PROGRAMS

WHEREAS state marine fisheries management agencies are legislatively authorized to conduct — management activities for species under their jurisdictions, including the collection and management of data, and

WHEREAS many federal agencies, including the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, have legislative mandates regarding the collection and management of data to fulfill trust resource responsibilities, and

WHEREAS independent, uncoordinated state and federal data programs have significant potential to be duplicative, causing confusion for and overburdening participants in fisheries, and

WHEREAS the implementation of state-federal coordinated data programs, including the Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP), the Pacific Fisheries Information Network (PacFIN), the Pacific and Southeast Recreational Fisheries Information Networks (RecFIN), and the Southeast Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN), have proven to be beneficial, more comprehensive, more cost-effective, and provide for greater standardization and compatibility of data, and

WHEREAS the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, through its member states of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas, has a long and productive history in the development and administration of state federal coordinated data programs for fisheries, including SEAMAP, Southeast RecFIN, and ComFIN, and

WHEREAS the U.S. Congress has, for several years, recognized the benefit of state-federal coordinated data programs for fisheries by providing line-item funding in annual appropriations bills, including PacFIN, SEAMAP, and RecFIN, and

WHEREAS the U.S. Congress further expressed its support of and need for state-federal coordinated data programs for fisheries in Title II, Section 401 of the 1996 amendments to the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act, which requires the development of recommendations to establish a national data program, and

WHEREAS the standardized fishing vessel and information management system is required to be implemented on a regional basis,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission recommends to the Secretary of Commerce that the SEAMAP and Southeast RecFIN and ComFIN be recognized by the Department of Commerce as the appropriate programs for fulfilling, for the Southeast Region, some of the requirements of the 1996 Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act for developing recommendations for the establishment of a national data program to be implemented on a regional basis.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, while the Southeast RecFIN has been fully implemented as an administrative and coordinating structure to provide overall guidance to and recommendations for the collection and management of recreational fisheries data, the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission and its member states believe that full implementation of the Southeast RecFIN in the Gulf of Mexico region, as provided for in the 1995, 1996 and 1997 Congressional appropriations, will be realized only when the states are given the opportunity to work directly in partnership with the National Marine Fisheries Service to cooperatively collect and manage recreational fisheries data, through cooperative agreements with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, as a means of accomplishing full implementation of the Southeast RecFIN, the cooperative agreement proposal entitled "Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission(GSMFC)/National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Recreational Fisheries Information Network in the Southeast Region [RecFIN(SE)]" should be approved and implemented as quickly as possible.

Given this the 17th day of October in the year of Our Lord, One Thousand, Nine Hundred, Ninety-six.



Chris Nelson, Chairman



Larry B. Simpson
Executive Director

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

P.O. Box 726, Ocean Springs, MS 39566-0726
(601) 875-5912 (FAX) 875-6604

RESOLUTION ON THE USE OF RETIRED NAVY SHIPS AS ARTIFICIAL REEF MATERIALS

WHEREAS ships and ship hulls have been used successfully as artificial reefs over the past twenty years, and

WHEREAS ships and ship hulls are considered to be stable and long-lived in the marine environment, and

WHEREAS the Liberty and Victory Ship Program (P.L. 92-402 amended by P.L. 98-623) has provided a number of ships and ship hulls to the states for artificial reef application, but are now inactive, and

WHEREAS demand for ships and ship hulls for artificial reef application far exceeds the supply, making ships and ship hulls difficult and expensive to acquire, and

WHEREAS there is a significant number of decommissioned ships potentially available from the Department of the Navy, which pose both an environmental hazard and an economic burden on the tax payers of this Nation, and

WHEREAS salvage companies along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts of the United States have demonstrated their ability to economically remove hazardous materials during the salvaging process, leaving substantial hull components to function as artificial reefs in compliance with Environmental Protection Agency standards, and

WHEREAS past successes with a similar program, utilizing ghost-fleeted Liberty ships from the Maritime Administration, has demonstrated economic recoveries to salvage operations and excellent habitat for fisheries, enhancing fishing success for over twenty years, and

WHEREAS REEF-EX has provided a significant amount of decommissioned military battle hardware to the states for artificial reef application, and

WHEREAS there continues to be a demand for stable and long-lived material for artificial reef development through state programs and activities,

-Alabama-

-Florida-

-Louisiana-

-Mississippi-

-Texas-

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission strongly encourages the Department of the Navy to develop a mechanism to identify appropriate decommissioned Navy vessels and ships and to make those vessels and ships available through REEF-EX for transfer to state artificial reef programs for application as artificial reefs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that costs incurred in transporting vessels and ships to salvage facilities in the Gulf of Mexico and along the Atlantic coast will be borne by the Department of the Navy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that there should be established a central coordination position in the appropriate agency within Department of Defense, preferably someone intimately involved in the very successful REEF-EX Program, to ensure that vessels and ships are equitably allocated to coastal states wishing to participate in the program.

Given this the 17th day of October in the year of Our Lord, One Thousand, Nine Hundred, Ninety-six.



Chris Nelson, Chairman



Larry B. Simpson
Executive Director

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

P.O. Box 726, Ocean Springs, MS 39566-0726
(601) 875-5912 (FAX) 875-6604

RESOLUTION REGARDING STATE-FEDERAL

MARINE FISHERIES DATA PROGRAMS

WHEREAS state marine fisheries management agencies are legislatively authorized to conduct management activities for species under their jurisdictions, including the collection and management of data, and

WHEREAS many federal agencies, including the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, have legislative mandates regarding the collection and management of data to fulfill trust resource responsibilities, and

WHEREAS independent, uncoordinated state and federal data programs have significant potential to be duplicative, causing confusion for and overburdening participants in fisheries, and

WHEREAS the implementation of state-federal coordinated data programs, including the Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP), the Pacific Fisheries Information Network (PacFIN), the Pacific and Southeast Recreational Fisheries Information Networks (RecFIN), and the Southeast Commercial Fisheries Information Network (ComFIN), have proven to be beneficial, more comprehensive, more cost-effective, and provide for greater standardization and compatibility of data, and

WHEREAS the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, through its member states of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas, has a long and productive history in the development and administration of state federal coordinated data programs for fisheries, including SEAMAP, Southeast RecFIN, and ComFIN, and

WHEREAS the U.S. Congress has, for several years, recognized the benefit of state-federal coordinated data programs for fisheries by providing line-item funding in annual appropriations bills, including PacFIN, SEAMAP, and RecFIN, and

WHEREAS the U.S. Congress further expressed its support of and need for state-federal coordinated data programs for fisheries in Title II, Section 401 of the 1996 amendments to the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act, which requires the development of recommendations to establish a national data program, and

WHEREAS the standardized fishing vessel and information management system is required to be implemented on a regional basis,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission recommends to the Secretary of Commerce that the SEAMAP and Southeast RecFIN and ComFIN be recognized by the Department of Commerce as the appropriate programs for fulfilling, for the Southeast Region, some of the requirements of the 1996 Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act for developing recommendations for the establishment of a national data program to be implemented on a regional basis.

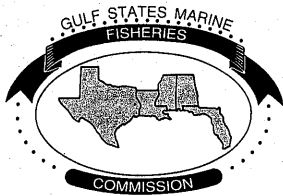
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, while the Southeast RecFIN has been fully implemented as an administrative and coordinating structure to provide overall guidance to and recommendations for the collection and management of recreational fisheries data, the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission and its member states believe that full implementation of the Southeast RecFIN in the Gulf of Mexico region, as provided for in the 1995, 1996 and 1997 Congressional appropriations, will be realized only when the states are given the opportunity to work directly in partnership with the National Marine Fisheries Service to cooperatively collect and manage recreational fisheries data, through cooperative agreements with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, as a means of accomplishing full implementation of the Southeast RecFIN, the cooperative agreement proposal entitled "Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission(GSMFC)/National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Recreational Fisheries Information Network in the Southeast Region [RecFIN(SE)]" should be approved and implemented as quickly as possible.

Given this the 17th day of October in the year of Our Lord, One Thousand, Nine Hundred, Ninety-six.



Chris Nelson, Chairman



Larry B. Simpson
Executive Director

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

P.O. Box 726, Ocean Springs, MS 39566-0726

(601) 875-5912 (FAX) 875-6604

RESOLUTION EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

TO DR. DAVID ETZOLD

FOR DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE BETTERMENT OF THE

NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE GULF OF MEXICO

WHEREAS Dr. David Etzold has contributed many valuable years of service to the activities of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, and

WHEREAS he played a vital role in the establishment of the Marine Fisheries Initiative (MARFIN), which has provided and continues to provide funding for valuable research and data collection to address the management needs of many important marine fish species in the Gulf of Mexico region, and

WHEREAS his service and contributions to the development of interstate fishery management plans for such species as shrimp, menhaden, and blue crab was invaluable, and

WHEREAS his unyielding dedication to the pursuit of freshwater diversion projects, including the Davis Pond, Caernarvon, and Bonnet Carré projects, giving twenty-three years of service, attending over one hundred meetings, and spending over one thousand hours without monetary compensation, and

WHEREAS positive benefits have already accrued to Louisiana coastal resources as a result of the completion of Caernarvon projects and scheduled completion of Davis Pond, and

WHEREAS he has continued to encourage the completion of the Bonnet Carré project.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission recognizes the valuable contribution of Dr. David Etzold to the management of recreationally and commercially important fisheries species and their habitat in the Gulf of Mexico region, and

-Alabama-

-Florida-

-Louisiana-

-Mississippi-

-Texas-

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission commends Dr. Etzold for his dedication to pursuing the completion of important freshwater diversion projects that have already provided positive benefits to Gulf of Mexico coastal resources, and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission expresses its gratitude to Dr. Etzold for his many contributions to the stewardship of the natural resources of the Gulf of Mexico.

Given this the 17th day of October in the year of Our Lord, One Thousand, Nine Hundred, Ninety-six.



Chris Nelson, Chairman

**COMMISSION BUSINESS MEETING
MINUTES - DAY 2
October 18, 1996
New Orleans, Louisiana**

APPROVED BY:

Walter Perry
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Chairman Chris Nelson called the meeting to order at 8:11 a.m. The following Commissioners and/or proxies were present:

Commissioners

Ed Irby, FDEP, Tallahassee, FL
Vernon Minton, ADCNR/MRD, Gulf Shores, AL (proxy for James Martin)
Chris Nelson, Bon Secour Fisheries, Bon Secour, AL
Gene McCarty, TPWD, Austin, TX (proxy for Andrew Sansom)
Corky Perret, MDMF, Biloxi, MS (proxy for Glade Woods)
Ed Ryan, MS House of Representatives, Biloxi, MS
George Sekul, Gulf Central Seafoods, Inc., Biloxi, MS
Frederic Miller, Shreveport, LA
John Roussel, LDWF, Baton Rouge, LA (proxy for James Jenkins)

Staff

Larry Simpson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Ron Lukens, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Ginny Herring, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Dave Donaldson, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS
Jim Duffy, GSMFC, Ocean Springs, MS

Others

Dan Furlong, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Buck Sutter, NMFS, St. Petersburg, FL
Doug Fruge, USFWS, Ocean Springs, MS
Tom McIlwain, NMFS, Pascagoula, MS

State Directors' Reports

Florida - E. Irby stated that in addition to hurricanes and floods the West Coast of Florida has experienced the longest red tide in over two years. At one time it stretched from St. Joe to Charlotte Harbor and had a significant impact on the Apalachicola area. On the East Coast a rare red tide occurred in Indian River. This strain of red tide has only occurred two other times in Florida and although it does not affect humans, it had a negative impact on fish. He reported that Florida lost one hundred forty-six manatees because of red tide and it is not yet clearly understood exactly how this happened.

He predicted a record oyster harvest for Apalachicola due to a two year closure of that fishery and sufficient rainfall. The big concerns in this area now is new development caused in part by the net ban and improved economy.

In regards to the net ban in Florida, he reported that innovative fishermen continue to create new gear. There is usually 4 to 5 court cases going on at any given time. One case has been sent to the Florida Supreme

Court. It is a big case that will look at all ramifications of the net ban and will address whether the net ban violates the U.S. Constitution.

E. Irby reported that the newest amendment drive in Florida is to create a new Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission which would combine the Game Commission and the Marine Fisheries Commission into one large Commission that would slowly, through attrition, shrink down to a seven person commission. It would combine certain functions of the FDEP which are currently funded from revenues collected from commercial and recreational fish licenses. E. Irby stated that a certain number of signatures need to be collected in order to get an amendment, he anticipates that this should be accomplished by the second week in November.

E. Irby reported that South Florida has had a record year for rainfall. Although current weather conditions (Hurricane Lily) may cause some flooding, water in this area is necessary since the Florida peninsula is considered a wet desert. If it does not rain enough, citizens are put on water restrictions due to the large population. There is a debate going on to move water from the panhandle in the north out of the rivers and springs and move it south to the peninsula. FDEP will be involved in these discussion since freshwater is extremely important in estuarine areas.

E. Irby stated that the Florida Legislature was very frustrated with the aquaculture industry saying permitting was too difficult in Florida. They passed a streamlined aquaculture permitting and promotion bill. This has caused a great deal of concern in the environmental community. The FDEP is charged with coordinating this activity along with the Water Management Districts which have regulatory authority over any freshwater projects. He will have more information on how well this aquaculture bill has been implemented in spring 1997. In regards to the aquaculture bill, the Florida Legislature also passed a sturgeon bill which permits sturgeon aquaculture.

C. Nelson asked about the jellyfish industry in Florida. E. Irby reported that although there are some problems with the high cost of processing and quality control, there are fishermen harvesting jellyfish in Florida. The Asian market will buy as much as can be harvested. Although nets are used to harvest, the nets are pulled so slowly that there is almost no bycatch.

Alabama - V. Minton reported that during the summer, Alabama experienced a tremendous price increase for oysters on the half shell. This caused increased fishing effort for small oysters which has resulted in increased citations being written for undersized and unculled catch. Information gathered by ADCNR indicated that the oyster population was down. As a result, the department closed a major portion of the oyster reefs. The areas that remained open have a large concentration of oysters that have mussels attached to them. The fishermen do not like this, but it has allowed them to keep working. Current evaluation of the closed reef show that 60% are legal size, 40% are small but very close to legal size. This information has allowed the department to reopen the reefs although there will be a reduction in allowable catch. The reefs will be evaluated again in one month and further action will be taken at that time. The main objective is to keep the fishery open through December.

V. Minton stated that ADCNR continues to meet with crab fishermen and other persons affected by the crab industry. This has been ongoing for almost two years. The first round of meetings were held with a facilitator to identify user conflicts and to identify regulatory changes and legislative changes that could reduce conflicts in this industry. They have determined that a reduction in traps is necessary to reduce conflicts between user groups involved. He is not sure how that will be accomplished but they are looking at capping the number of licenses sold. At this time they are not addressing trap limits or trap tags. They are also looking at opening the upper Mobile Bay to crab fishermen while the area is closed to shrimping. Data indicates, that the longer this

area remains closed to shrimping the better return to the shrimp fishery in other opened areas. He will continue to monitor these meetings and report on the status of the fishery.

V. Minton reported that his department has been talking to shrimp fishermen regarding several regulatory changes. The ADCNR will probably adopt measures that will not allow the use of skimmers (unless it is tied down) in the shrimp industry from January 1 through the 3rd Monday in August. In addition the use of bibs will not be permitted during this period. It is hoped that this will take the pressure off of the white shrimp season and also reduce finfish bycatch.

V. Minton updated the Commissioners regarding Alabama's gill net program. He stated that after one year with this program and with the Florida and Louisiana closure, a shift has occurred in the mullet fishery in Alabama which has caused some concern. He reported that landings are two to three times higher than in previous years. Traditionally, 70% of the fishery was harvested during roe season, with the increased landings, younger fish are being harvested. The ADCNR is looking at increasing mesh size of nets as well as setting harvest quotas. Recent demands for mullet drove the price to 90 cent per pound last summer. As the size of the fish decreased the price leveled out at 50 cent, still considerably higher than past years. The ADCNR is using a trip ticket to collect data in this fishery. It is a three part ticket which identifies species of mullet landed, total pounds, total price paid and the mesh size of the net used. Also included is the fishermen's permanent placard # and the dealers identification #. ADCNR gets the first copy, second copy goes to the fishermen and the third copy is retained by the dealer. The ADCNR hopes to get good cooperation from the fishermen in this effort so that the data can be collected and analyzed and the appropriate management measures can be taken to handle the rapid growth of this fishery. V. Minton stated that his department has a good working relationship with fishermen and dealers in Alabama and if the data collected with these trip tickets is successful in establishing good management for the mullet fishery its use may be expanded to other fisheries. It will take at least one year of collecting data to determine its reliability and success. E. Irby asked if there were more Florida fishermen in Alabama's gill net fishery now. V. Minton stated that Florida fishermen must meet the same criteria that Alabama fishermen do in order to be issued a license. The cost of the license was also increased for both resident and non-resident fishermen by five times. This has resulted in a decrease in resident license, from 680 to 216; and in non-resident licenses, 74 down to 17. C. Nelson stated that the staff of the ADCNR should be commended for their efforts on behalf of the net fishery in Alabama.

V. Minton reported on a survey that was done by the University of South Alabama regarding the split between saltwater and freshwater funds from the Sport Fish Restoration Program. The ADCNR was receiving 12.5 % of the States allocation. A survey of 1,000 households in the state demonstrated the need to increase that amount to 23%. The freshwater agency in the State of Alabama disagreed with the survey findings. They did another survey through the University of Alabama which was more extensive. This survey resulted in the marine resource users getting 27% of the funds allocated to the State. V. Minton was pleased with the result and feels that the marine resource users in South Alabama will benefit from these additional funds, which will be used for additional boat ramps and fishing piers.

Mississippi - C. Perret reported that the MDMR has just developed and received approval for a strategic plan that has set long-term budgetary goals as well as personnel needs. He stated that G. Woods, Director of MDMR was encouraged by approval of additional personnel and the support of this strategic plan.

He stated that the MDMR has received Tidelands funds for oyster projects. A cooperative effort was initiated in Jackson County in September, with the help of MDMR personnel, local fishermen and the Jackson County Sheriff to relay a little over 6,000 sacks of oysters to a reef in Jackson County. The oyster season opened

on October 7, and it is estimated that fishermen will receive approximately \$15 per sack. The price is somewhat higher due to flooding in Louisiana which has delayed the opening of their season. The cost of this project was approximately \$20,000 and should result in a harvest worth about \$90,000. He hopes to do additional relays later in the year. C. Perret stated that he was impressed with the way the department tracks to oyster harvest directly to the individual sacks. In the first five days of the oyster season, 7,300 sacks were harvested, slightly more than double for the same time last year. It appears that thong fishermen and dredge fishermen alike are getting their daily limit of 12 sacks and 30 sacks respectively. The oyster supply is healthy and shows signs of growth. Department personnel continue to monitor water quality and water samples appear good.

C. Perret reported that the State has just completed an artificial reef program which transferred concrete rubble from an area Sea Bee Base and planted in near shore reefs. Efforts are underway now to establish a deep water offshore reef. These efforts will require the relay of a oil rig from Louisiana waters to Mississippi waters. This would be the first artificial reef of this type in Mississippi waters.

Mississippi also has experienced conflicts in the crab fishery. Complaints of too many crab traps, too close together continue. At the September meeting of the MDMR Commission meeting, the department was directed to look into a limited access program for commercial fisheries including crab, shrimp, oyster, gill net, etc. They surveyed States from Maine to Texas and are summarizing the results found. Other efforts will be directed at compiling a computer list of fishermen by fisheries so that a survey and exchange of information can be accomplished. The attorney for the MDMR has advised them that the State may implement a limited entry program but does not have the authority to implement a moratorium.

C. Perret reported that gill nets continues to be an issue in Mississippi. Current problems with a directive which goes into effect January 1, 1997, regarding biodegradable nets has caused some concerns. This directive has been redefined from biodegradable to degradable. Enforcement is concerned with how to determine if a net is degradable. The department has not been able to find anyone who can make nets out of degradable material. There is a law suit pending which charges that the State does not have the authority to enforce this directive since degradable nets are not available, biological data does not support the theory that ghost nets create a danger, and if monofilament line is okay for one fishery (recreational) it should not be banned in another fishery. C. Perret will continue to update the Commission on this situation.

Finally, C. Perret reported that MDMR has entered into a contract with Dr. Wendell Lorio, Mississippi State University to continue a study he began in 1980. The study was done around the Mississippi barrier islands and addresses the biology of the spotted seatrout.

G. Sekul commented that he looked forward to working with C. Perret in the State of Mississippi and he considered his experience and knowledge an asset to the State and its resources.

Louisiana - J. Roussel reported that the LDWF has just gone through a legislative sunset review. The legislature reauthorized the agency for one year. In addition, they passed a resolution to study a proposal to combine the LDWF with the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources. This study is currently being done and will be revisited by the legislature in one year. J. Roussel will update the Commission at that time on this very important issues.

He reported that the Louisiana artificial reef program has been very active. They have added 8 new oil and gas platforms and replenished one inshore shell bed reef. Since most of the artificial reef activities takes place during the warmer months, his department has been busy planning and securing permits for 3 more

structures. One of these structures, off of Grand Isle, will be the largest artificial reef in the world. It will be in shallow waters and be permanently lighted. Cost for the reef will be high but donations from the owner of the structure will pay the cost. He explained that in many cases, it was less expensive for the owners to make donations to help pay for an artificial reef structure versus paying to remove the structure from the water. He hopes to have pictures and further updates at the next meeting.

J. Roussel briefed the Commissioners, on a series of public hearings that have been held to address underwater obstruction problems caused by the oil and gas industry. In particular, these hearings addressed problems regarding obstructions that have caused gear damage and loss of fishing bottom to fishermen. The problem occurs when the source of the obstructions cannot be identified. Although fishermen can get reimbursed for this type of gear damage, the hearings also addressed methods to remove or permanently mark these obstructions. The hearings have just concluded, J. Roussel will report back to the Commission on the results.

Other items of interest in the artificial reef program include an exchange of information from Louisiana to Australia. Australian personnel observed the Louisiana program and then provided funding to the State of Louisiana to allow Louisiana staff to visit and advise the Australian agency in the development of an artificial reef program. Additional program activities includes a workshop held in New Orleans to address problems with abandoned underwater obstructions. As a result of this workshop, an Underwater Coalition was established. This coalition is made up of oil and gas industry representatives, fishermen and state personnel. This forum will address the conflicts that arise due to abandoned underwater obstructions.

J. Roussel reported that oyster harvest on public grounds are near record levels. Other issues in the oyster industry include conflicts between oyster leases and coastal restoration. A moratorium on oyster leases is currently in affect to allow time to resolve these conflicts. Congress just recently authorized \$7.5 million to be used to fund a mitigation program in Louisiana to address this issue. Some ideas include planting new reefs in areas disrupted by coastal restoration. He reported that funds made available to the State of Louisiana after Hurricane Andrew have show significant and large returns to the oyster industry. He expects continued growth in the industry due to work done with these funds.

Louisiana is also addressing conflicts in the crab industry. A moratorium is in place while an industry task force continues to work on a limited entry program. There is some concern regarding excessive harvest of small crabs.

Finally, J. Roussel reported that the roe mullet season will open in Louisiana on October 21. This will be the first time a legal gill net has been permitted in Louisiana in many months.

Texas - G. McCarty reported that the State of Texas is also suffering from a red tide event that began in mid-September and is still ongoing. It began in the Gulf around Port Aransas and moved inshore effecting all major areas from Matagorda to Brownsville. He anticipates large numbers of fish to be killed. Between 12,000 to 15,000 adult red drum were killed in the third week of September alone. C. Nelson asked if the oyster fishery would be closed. G. McCarty responded that all oyster reefs from Matogorda Bay southward were closed.

TPWD have been completing interim committee reports for the Texas Legislature which reconvenes in January 1997. Primary issues include crab traps and developing a license limitation program for the crab fishery.

He briefed the Commissioners on the "Point of Sale" program which has been effective for one year. Point of Sale is an automated license system. A magnetic strip on the Texas driver license allows citizens to

provide data via the strip and to purchase different types of licenses. This also provides the State with accurate accounting of number of licenses sold and revenues collected. He reported that the system is working well.

Other programs that have been instituted within the past year includes the States authority to make their fishery regulations compatible with Federal regulations. This has resulted in some unusual attempts for fishermen to by pass these regulations. Also completing one full year of implementation was the shrimp limited entry program. As of September, the end of the first qualifying year, there has been a 13% reduction in licenses. As part of this program, funds are in reserve to buy back licenses. As of today, letters have gone out to holders of shrimp licenses to see what price they are willing to sell them back for. It is the goal to TPWD to reduce the number of licenses by 200.

The Texas legislature continues to work with the shrimp industry regarding problems with the use and abuse of the shrimp bait licenses. G. McCarty says this is a serious situation and he anticipates legislative changes to address this issue.

Magnuson Fishery and Conservation Management Act (MFCMA)

L. Simpson discussed amendment to the MFCMA which were introduced at the beginning of the current Congress on January 4, 1994. Five to six public hearing have been held nationwide as well as in the Gulf of Mexico region. There was a great deal of interest in this complex reauthorization in both houses. The bill was passed in the Senate and House and has been signed by the President. He reviewed some of the changes which included several new definitions. Some changes included a national standard for bycatch reduction; a required criteria for determining when a fishery is overfished; essential fishery habitat was addressed; administrative reform for the Councils; it added additional membership to the various Councils; and, simplified and streamlined the Council's FMP process. Of particular interest was a restating of existing laws as it relates to a state's ability to regulate fishing vessels registered in that state in federal waters. It allows states to regulate all fishing vessels in a fishery in the EEZ off that State if a FMP delegates such authority to the State. The reauthorization also provides for a central registry system for limited access permits and standardized data collection programs. It will provide for disaster funds to go to a State on behalf of individual fishermen. The Act has been amended to allow Commission staff to receive confidential data under the same criteria as the States and others. Other highlights included reauthorization of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act, the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Fisheries Act, the Anadromous Fish Conservation Act and other NOAA marine programs. L. Simpson stated that the MFCMA is now officially the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Status of Red Drum Offshore Tag and Recovery Project

L. Simpson that the Commission has been very supportive of the Red Drum Offshore Tag and Recovery Project. It is an attempt to replicate the study done by Scott Nichols, et al in the mid 1980s which provided essential information to fishery managers concerning the red drum fishery. This important project has been elevated to Congress where some funding has been made available, but not enough to complete the project. At this time only \$250,000 per year is being made available. Aerial surveys have been completed and efforts are underway to complete the tagging in 1997, so that the fish may be recaptured and data collected. This is a scientific effort being handled by the NMFS Pascagoula Lab. L. Simpson stated that he thought that some of the Disaster Funds could be used to help fulfill the funding for this project. J. Roussel stated that if Disaster Funds are used what would happen to the \$250,000 appropriated. L. Simpson stated that Dr. Kemmerer has stated that these funds will remain in place for use on this project only.

Review of GSMFC and GMFMC Aquaculture/Mariculture/Marsh Management Policy

L. Simpson presented the "Mariculture Policy and Guidelines" for the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. As chairman of that committee, he was asked by the Council Chairman to redefine these policy and guidelines. L. Simpson stated that they were very similar to the Commission's. V. Minton motioned to have the TCC Habitat Subcommittee revise and incorporate marsh management into the Commission's policy and to update the 1990 summary of aquaculture programs by States. G. Sekul seconded. G. McCarty suggested that the State summary become an annual review. It was decided that the Commission would consider any recommendations from the TCC Habitat Subcommittee regarding this issue at the next meeting. **The motion passed.**

Report on Commission Home Page on the Internet

D. Donaldson reported that per instructions at the last meeting he had completed construction of the Commission's home page and as of April 1, 1996 it has been on the Internet. Using a lap top computer, modem, and overhead projector D. Donaldson presented the various features and capabilities of the home page. He discussed various hyperlinks (over 100) that connect to the States that also have a home page, Federal agencies, as well as other sites that are involved with the Commission and/or marine fisheries. Various information is provided including Commission ongoing programs such as SEAMAP, Sport Fish Restoration, Interjurisdictional Fisheries Program, and RecFIN/ComFIN. Also included are approved minutes, publication list, future meeting dates, toxic bloom information and other programs of interest to the Commission and States. C. Nelson asked if the SEAMAP real-time data would be available online. D. Donaldson stated that plans were being finalized to do so. He looks forward to comments and suggestions from the Commissioners and others involved in Commission activities regarding the home page.

GSMFC Informational Brochure

G. Herring reported that at several Commissioner's request, the Commission staff developed an informational brochure that provides basic information regarding the GSMFC, its Commissioners, and ongoing programs. This brochure is now available for distribution. Several Commissioner's requested copies be sent to the offices.

NOAA Vessel Workshop Report

D. Donaldson distributed the findings and recommendations of a workshop held June 10-11, 1996. The main idea behind this workshop was to provide to Congress an outline of the potential risk of considering proposals to dismantle and/or eliminate or reduce funding for the aging NOAA Vessel fleet. The goal was to develop consensus recommendations for maintaining the capability of collecting long-term fishery-independent data from fishery surveys, while ensuring the viability and comparability of past survey data to current and future data. D. Donaldson stated that no action was necessary since the States have already reviewed the finding and recommendations and have endorsed them.

Shrimp Pathogens Workshop Report

T. McIlwain briefly discussed the history of shrimp aquaculture. In the 1960s and 1970s the NMFS Galveston Laboratory was actively involved in culturing shrimp. Although this expertise was not immediately used in the U.S. it was adopted in South America. Taiwan was a leader in shrimp aquaculture until 1984-85 when

a virus wiped out the majority of the industry. A group funded by a US/FDA program was interested in disease and pathogens so they were sent to Taiwan to investigate. This was the first catastrophic event that was recorded. He stated that this virus devastated the Taiwan industry because the shrimp were in a confined area. The virus would not have wiped out all of the shrimp were they in the wild.

Around this same time the industry began to develop in Texas, South Carolina and eventually throughout other countries. Taiwan was instrumental in this development, since they were unable to produce in their ponds, they funded efforts in other parts of the world while they rebuilt the industry in Taiwan. Unfortunately, the industry has not always practiced good management and crashes caused by shrimp pathogens have continued and are now an international and worldwide problem.

In the 1980s a virus called IHN virus completely destroyed one species of shrimp in Texas. In 1995 an outbreak of Taura virus in Texas occurred which wiped out 90% of the stock. Although these viruses did not appear to harm wild stocks, some studies continue to examine this issue. The industry in Texas rebuilt and restocked with native white shrimp, only to discover two more viruses that had only been seen before in the Far East. This raised new questions in the scientific community. How do these viruses move? How did they get in my shrimp pond? How do you clean-up after an outbreak? etc. Because the Taura virus did not appear as lethal to the native Gulf shrimp, scientist were somewhat encouraged.

When the research community looked into the Texas outbreak, it appeared that the virus was coming in on shrimp that are processed in this country. Extremely large amount of shrimp come into the US with shell and heads on and are reprocessed. The water used to wash these shrimp is discarded improperly and theoretically this wash water contains the virus. There is evidence that these viruses are very lethal to native shrimp.

This led to a workshop on shrimp pathogens held in New Orleans, LA in June 1996. It was sponsored by NMFS/EPA/USDA. It was a bi-national conference held with Mexico because of both countries concern with this issue and because of the large amount shrimp processed in Mexico. Representatives from State and Federal agencies from both countries attended as well as private industry and other scientist concern with shrimp pathogens. This was a major transfer of information. The proceedings have not yet been published because the Mexican participants have not yet completed their portion of the proceedings. Proceedings will include will answer questions and make recommendations to move forward with research and proposed management measures.

There was a lot of uncertainty and confusion as to what federal agency has jurisdiction. Currently the USDA, Animal-Plant Health Inspection Service, has proposed legislation to Congress that would give them blanket authority over this situation. There reaction to the problem has been to eliminate imports, which represents \$2.6 billion worth of products and over 400,000 jobs nationwide. This would create a devastating impact.

T. McIlwain stated that while this is going on the Joint Subcommittee on Aquaculture under the President's Office of Science and Technology has appointed a workgroup, of which T. McIlwain is currently Chairman, to look at doing a risk assessment. This was the number one recommendation that came out of the workshop held in June. This is a multi-agency workgroup and T. McIlwain will be in Washington, D.C. next week drafting the first report to be sent back to the Subcommittee during it regularly scheduled meeting in December. At that time, T. McIlwain hopes that they will make the recommendation to move forward with a full risk assessment that may lead to some management recommendations.

G. McCarty reported that the Taura virus has been reported in every hatchery in Texas this year. V. Minton asked if whitespot and yellow head virus impacted native stock. T. McIlwain are a problem in Taiwan now, but it does appear that they cause a problem with native white shrimp.

Executive Committee Report

C. Nelson reported that the Executive Committee met Thursday morning. He reported that the GSMFC audit report for FY95 had been sent out and approved by mail-in ballot.

He presented a slight change in the GSMFC travel guidelines that clarified Commission policy in regards to a travelers liability for any losses due to cancellation. **C. Perret motioned to change wording from will to may. G. Sekul seconded. The motion passed.**

C. Nelson discussed the financial statement of the Commission as of 9/30/96. No problems exist and spending was in line with Commission programs.

C. Nelson motioned on behalf of the Executive Committee to approve the budget as presented in the amount of \$923,694 (Attachment A). G. Sekul seconded. The budget was approved.

C. Nelson stated the L. Simpson recommended a 5% increase for all Commission employees with an additional \$1,000 for R. Lukens, D. Donaldson and V. Herring. **C. Perret motioned to approved the Executive Director's recommendations. G. McCarty seconded. The motion was approved.**

Future Meetings

G. Herring reported that the Spring 1997 meeting will be held at the Isle of Capri Crowne Plaza in Biloxi, MS, March 17-21, 1997. The Fall 1997 meeting will be held at the Quality Inn Beachside, Gulf Shores, AL, October 13-17, 1997.

The Commission will meet in Florida and Texas in 1998. No sites have been identified at this time.

Publications List

L. Simpson provided a copy of the Commissions current list of publications.

Election of Officers - 1997 Rotation

C. Perret nominated George Sekul for Second Vice Chairman. G. McCarty seconded. George Sekul was elected Second Vice Chairman 1997.

C. Perret nominated Gene McCarty for First Vice Chairman. J. Roussel seconded. Gene McCarty was elected First Vice Chairman 1997.

V. Minton nominated Walter Penry for Chairman. C. Perret seconded. Walter Penry was elected Chairman 1997.

Presentation to Outgoing Chairman

C. Nelson presented Mr. Corky Perret with a gift of appreciation for his service as Chairman during 1996. G. McCarty presented Mr. Chris Nelson with a gift of appreciation for his service as Chairman 1996 during the last few months.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 pm.

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

FY 97 Budget

January 1, 1997- December 31, 1997

	FY97 Operating Funds	FY97 Total Grants	FY97 Total Budget
EXPENSES			
SALARIES			
Personnel (designated)	56,709	237,350	294,059
Personnel (not designated)	0	0	0
Contract Labor	0	0	0
Health Insurance	5,078	45,867	50,945
Retirement	3,970	16,619	20,589
Payroll Taxes	4,954	19,118	24,072
MAINTENANCE/OPERATIONS			
Office Rental	498	19,962	20,460
Office Supplies	1,518	8,582	10,100
Postage	1,400	9,600	11,000
Professional Services	975	3,975	4,950
Travel (Staff)	9,023	18,853	27,876
Telephone	4,000	10,650	14,650
Office Equipment	572	4,679	5,251
Copying Expenses	1,714	9,286	11,000
Printing	1,500	15,500	17,000
Meeting Costs	10,000	9,900	19,900
Subscriptions/Dues	1,600	100	1,700
Auto Expenses	4,000	2,500	6,500
Insurance	1,600	3,900	5,500
Maintenance	1,739	3,261	5,000
Petty Cash	300	0	300
Commission Courtesies	300	0	300
Committee Travel	0	156,162	156,162
Contractual	9,550	206,830	216,380
TOTAL	\$121,000	\$802,694	\$923,694
INCOME			
STATE CONTRIBUTIONS			
Alabama	22,500		
Florida	22,500		
Louisiana	22,500		
Mississippi	22,500		
Texas	22,500		
TOTAL DUES			112,500
INTEREST	4,000		4,000
REGISTRATION FEES	4,500		4,500
FUNDS FROM RESERVES	0		0
GRANTS			
SEAMAP		80,564	
Interjurisdictional Fisheries		200,000	
Sport Fish Restoration		200,000	
Council		25,000	
FWS - FY97		13,725	
FWS - FY98		4,575	
RecFIN/ComFIN		278,830	
TOTAL GRANTS			802,694
TOTAL	\$121,000	\$802,694	\$923,694

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
FY97 Budget

OPERATING FUNDS

January 1, 1997 - December 31, 1997

SALARIES

Personnel	
Executive Director	42,830
Assistant Director	3,080
IFJ Coordinator	0
SM Coordinator	1,000
Executive Assistant	7,316
Administrative Assistant	2,483
IJF Staff Assistant	0
SM Staff Assistant	0
Staff Assistant	0
Personnel (not designated)	0
Contract Labor	0
Health Insurance	5,078
Retirement	3,970
FICA Taxes	4,338
Unemployment Taxes	616

MAINTENANCE/OPERATIONS

Office Rental	498
Office Supplies	1,518
Postage	1,400
Professional Services	975
Travel (Staff)	9,023
Telephone	4,000
Office Equipment	572
Copying Expenses	1,714
Printing	1,500
Meeting Costs	10,000
Subscriptions/Dues	1,600
Auto Expenses	4,000
Insurance	1,600
Maintenance	1,739
Petty Cash	300
Commission Courtesies	300
Committee Travel	
Contractual (auto payments)	9,550
TOTAL	\$121,000

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
FY97 Budget

SEAMAP

January 1, 1997 - December 31, 1997

SALARIES

Personnel	
Executive Director	0
Assistant Director	0
IFJ Coordinator	0
SM Coordinator	18,284
Executive Assistant	5,960
Administrative Assistant	2,426
IJF Staff Assistant	0
SM Staff Assistant	9,197
Staff Assistant	0
Personnel (not designated)	0
Contract Labor	0
Health Insurance	7,254
Retirement	2,511
FICA Taxes	2,745
Unemployment Taxes	0

MAINTENANCE/OPERATIONS

Office Rental	2,260
Office Supplies	1,629
Postage	3,000
Professional Services	700
Travel (Staff)	0
Telephone	1,600
Office Equipment	0
Copying Expenses	2,200
Printing	5,300
Meeting Costs	1,000
Subscriptions/Dues	0
Auto Expenses	0
Insurance	0
Maintenance	1,461
Petty Cash	0
Commission Courtesies	0
Committee Travel	13,037
Contractual	0
TOTAL	\$80,564

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
FY97 Budget

INTERJURISDICTIONAL FISHERIES

January 1, 1997 - December 31, 1997

SALARIES

Personnel	
Executive Director	6,392
Assistant Director	0
IFJ Coordinator	33,333
SM Coordinator	0
Executive Assistant	5,960
Administrative Assistant	2,426
IJF Staff Assistant	21,198
SM Staff Assistant	0
Staff Assistant	0
Personnel (not designated)	0
Contract Labor	0
Health Insurance	12,700
Retirement	4,851
FICA Taxes	5,303
Unemployment Taxes	300

MAINTENANCE/OPERATIONS

Office Rental	6,301
Office Supplies	2,539
Postage	3,000
Professional Services	1,000
Travel (Staff)	5,872
Telephone	3,000
Office Equipment	1,500
Copying Expenses	3,000
Printing	4,000
Meeting Costs	4,250
Subscriptions/Dues	100
Auto Expenses	2,500
Insurance	1,600
Maintenance	1,800
Petty Cash	0
Commission Courtesies	0
Committee Travel	67,075
Contractual	0
TOTAL	\$200,000

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
FY97 Budget

SPORT FISH RESTORATION

January 1, 1997 - December 31, 1997

SALARIES

Personnel	
Executive Director	1,918
Assistant Director	37,433
IFJ Coordinator	0
SM Coordinator	0
Executive Assistant	5,960
Administrative Assistant	13,341
IJF Staff Assistant	0
SM Staff Assistant	0
Staff Assistant	0
Personnel (not designated)	0
Contract Labor	0
Health Insurance	10,102
Retirement	4,106
FICA Taxes	4,487
Unemployment Taxes	300

MAINTENANCE/OPERATIONS

Office Rental	4,124
Office Supplies	2,500
Postage	2,000
Professional Services	1,300
Travel (Staff)	12,650
Telephone	3,600
Office Equipment	3,179
Copying Expenses	2,000
Printing	5,000
Meeting Costs	2,400
Subscriptions/Dues	0
Auto Expenses	0
Insurance	2,300
Maintenance	0
Petty Cash	0
Commission Courtesies	0
Committee Travel	23,300
Contractual	58,000
TOTAL	\$200,000

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
FY97 Budget

COUNCIL

January 1, 1997 - December 31, 1997

SALARIES

Personnel	
Executive Director	12,785
Assistant Director	0
IFJ Coordinator	0
SM Coordinator	0
Executive Assistant	5,676
Administrative Assistant	1,156
IJF Staff Assistant	0
SM Staff Assistant	0
Staff Assistant	0
Personnel (not designated)	0
Contract Labor	0
Health Insurance	1,820
Retirement	1,373
FICA Taxes	1,501
Unemployment Taxes	358

MAINTENANCE/OPERATIONS

Office Rental	0
Office Supplies	0
Postage	0
Professional Services	0
Travel (Staff)	331
Telephone	0
Office Equipment	0
Copying Expenses	0
Printing	0
Meeting Costs	0
Subscriptions/Dues	0
Auto Expenses	0
Insurance	0
Maintenance	0
Petty Cash	0
Commission Courtesies	0
Committee Travel	0
Contractual	0
TOTAL	\$25,000

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
FY97 Budget

FWS - FY97

January 1, 1997 - September 30, 1997

SALARIES

Personnel	
Executive Director	0
Assistant Director	0
IFJ Coordinator	0
SM Coordinator	0
Executive Assistant	1,064
Administrative Assistant	0
IJF Staff Assistant	0
SM Staff Assistant	0
Staff Assistant	5,454
Personnel (not designated)	0
Contract Labor	0
Health Insurance	2,430
Retirement	456
FICA Taxes	499
Unemployment Taxes	0

MAINTENANCE/OPERATIONS

Office Rental	3,064
Office Supplies	350
Postage	0
Professional Services	100
Travel (Staff)	0
Telephone	25
Office Equipment	0
Copying Expenses	283
Printing	0
Meeting Costs	0
Subscriptions/Dues	0
Auto Expenses	0
Insurance	0
Maintenance	0
Petty Cash	0
Commission Courtesies	0
Committee Travel	0
Contractual	0
TOTAL	\$13,725

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
FY97 Budget

FWS - FY98

October 1, 1997 - December 31, 1997

SALARIES

Personnel	
Executive Director	0
Assistant Director	0
IFJ Coordinator	0
SM Coordinator	0
Executive Assistant	354
Administrative Assistant	0
IJF Staff Assistant	0
SM Staff Assistant	0
Staff Assistant	1,819
Personnel (not designated)	0
Contract Labor	0
Health Insurance	810
Retirement	152
FICA Taxes	166
Unemployment Taxes	0

MAINTENANCE/OPERATIONS

Office Rental	1,021
Office Supplies	100
Postage	0
Professional Services	25
Travel (Staff)	0
Telephone	25
Office Equipment	0
Copying Expenses	103
Printing	0
Meeting Costs	0
Subscriptions/Dues	0
Auto Expenses	0
Insurance	0
Maintenance	0
Petty Cash	0
Commission Courtesies	0
Committee Travel	0
Contractual	0
TOTAL	\$4,575

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
FY97 Budget

RecFIN/ComFIN

January 1, 1997 - December 31, 1997

SALARIES

Personnel	
Executive Director	0
Assistant Director	2,079
IFJ Coordinator	0
SM Coordinator	18,283
Executive Assistant	5,958
Administrative Assistant	2,425
IJF Staff Assistant	0
SM Staff Assistant	9,197
Staff Assistant	7,272
Personnel (not designated)	0
Contract Labor	0
Health Insurance	10,751
Retirement	3,170
FICA Taxes	3,459
Unemployment Taxes	0

MAINTENANCE/OPERATIONS

Office Rental	3,192
Office Supplies	1,464
Postage	1,600
Professional Services	850
Travel (Staff)	0
Telephone	2,400
Office Equipment	0
Copying Expenses	1,700
Printing	1,200
Meeting Costs	2,250
Subscriptions/Dues	0
Auto Expenses	0
Insurance	0
Maintenance	0
Petty Cash	0
Commission Courtesies	0
Committee Travel	52,750
Contractual	148,830
TOTAL	\$278,830

SUMMARY
JOINT ARTIFICIAL REEF - CHAIRMEN'S SESSION
November 20, 1996
Washington, DC

Attendees

Mike Buchanan, Vice-chairman, GSMFC Artificial Reef Subcommittee
Mel Bell, Chairman, ASMFC Artificial Reef Committee
Ron Lukens, GSMFC
Richard Christian, ASMFC
Frank Steimle, NMFS, Highlands, NJ
Bill Price, NMFS, Washington, DC
Connie Young-Dubovsky, FWS, Arlington, VA
Nancy Marcellus, GSMFC

National Plan Review and Revision

Lukens updated the group on the progress of the National Plan review. Delays were experienced due to the inability to pursue the S-K funding. He indicated the need to regroup and get everybody started on reviewing and writing the sections that were agreed to at the Key West joint meeting. Lukens expressed the need to begin an emphasis on habitat aspects of artificial reefs instead of just focusing on the access and utilization aspects. It is known that artificial reefs constitute habitat, but in the past the emphasis within the state programs has been on access and utilization. Plans are to set an overall tone within the National Plan of the habitat importance of artificial reefs, and the impacts that artificial reefs have in attempting to simulate reef habitats.

Another National Plan issue discussed is mitigation. The group agreed that the Plan should include stronger precautionary language regarding mitigation, and that whatever is done is to the best benefit of the overall system. The group also agreed that there did not need to be a section on mitigation, but that it could be included under the management section.

Lukens also mentioned that as of the current meeting there has been no response to the letter sent to Rollie Schmitten, NMFS, regarding agreement for the committees to proceed with the revision of the National Plan. Bill Price advised that he would check on the letter and get a response as soon as he could.

SUMMARY - JOINT ARTIFICIAL REEF CHAIRMEN'S SESSION

November 20, 1996

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Lukens noted that his expectations for the National Plan are to set broad guidelines and policies that state programs can follow. It should be used as a resource by the state programs and, therefore, does not need to be too detailed.

The group agreed that the next joint meeting should be scheduled for the week of February 24 or March 3 in Jekyll Island, Georgia.

Christian mentioned that he and Lukens had discussed the evolution of the two committees working together on national issues and the need to legitimize the group through a formal document such as a memorandum of understanding. This would help with issues such as Reef-EX and other issues of national scope. Lukens added that he thought it would be a good idea from a number of perspectives. It may give a better position with both NMFS and FWS to show a national approach while still being able to address regional issues through the individual committees.

Christian noted that it was originally discussed between the Commissions, but may be something that NMFS and FWS may want to be included in. Price responded that his agency would probably look favorably at it because conceptually it fits in with the priorities of what the agency is looking towards regarding partnerships.

Lukens and Christian agreed to draft language for an MOU to work on national artificial reef issues for the next joint meeting. The MOU would not include any funding implications.

Artificial Reef Data Base

The group reviewed the Gulf of Mexico and state profiles data elements developed by the GSMFC Artificial Reef Subcommittee. The data base software will be dBASE 5. There will be a standard updating schedule every quarter, and there may be the capability to do the updates online. The next step will be for each state to take this file format and determine what historical data they have that can be entered.

Lukens and Christian agreed that it is important that a certain core of data elements be common and standardized between the Gulf and Atlantic data bases. Christian advised that he would build the Atlantic data base based on the Gulf and send it to his committee for comments.

SUMMARY - JOINT ARTIFICIAL REEF CHAIRMEN'S SESSION

November 20, 1996

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Lukens also mentioned that the GSMFC would like to be a repository for artificial reef literature for the Gulf region. Plans are to enter all the artificial reef literature currently held in hard copy at the GSMFC office into ProCite, a literature data base. Plans are to put the data base online for people to access and conduct searches.

Materials Guidelines Document

The materials documents, which was developed by the Gulf subcommittee, discusses existing and past uses of different materials, the pros and cons of the material, and then recommendations for use of the material. The draft document was approved by the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission at a recent meeting in New Orleans. Lukens noted that Brad Brown, who serves on the GSMFC Technical Coordinating Committee, passed the document to Jim Bonsack to review, who wrote a letter to Brown strongly encouraging him to accept the document. He mentioned that this type of document has never been published before and was very impressed with the way it was done.

Lukens reported that the subcommittee made a major effort to avoid making a judgement about a particular material. Because of that, they have already been criticized. The Subcommittee felt that it was not their place to make those kinds of judgements, but rather to provide enough information for a program manager to make an informed decision. The ASMFC committee will begin work on their document soon, using the Gulf document as a guide.

Ship-EX

Lukens reported that Bill Higgins has recently retired but still feels a real commitment to the Reef-EX program and would like to stay involved with it. The only way he could legitimately do this is to find someone who was willing to give him some office space and some minimal support. No money would be involved, just a place to function. Since he knows the military system so well, it was felt that it would be useful to have him involved if military materials continue to be available for artificial reef use. In that regard, the GSMFC developed a resolution to the Secretary of the Navy asking him to seriously consider making retired Navy ships available for artificial reefs. The

SUMMARY - JOINT ARTIFICIAL REEF CHAIRMEN'S SESSION

November 20, 1996

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second aspect of the resolution was to encourage them to designate someone as that focal point for the Department of Defense.

Bill Price was contacted to investigate the possibility of having Higgins housed at the Silver Springs headquarters. Price said that they would be willing to look into it. In the mean time, Higgins has met with Sherry Goodman, U.S. Department of Defense, regarding this issue. Goodman is signatory to the Recreational Fishery Resources Conservation Plan for DOD, and she also sits on the National Coordination Council for Recreational Fisheries. One of the strategies to meet the goals of the Recreational Fishery Resources Conservation Plan states, "Number of facilities constructed or reconstructed to enhance recreational fishing opportunities (artificial reefs, fishing piers/docks, boat ramps, parking areas, cleaning stations, camp sites, universal access facilities, etc.)." By agreeing to provide space for Higgins for these activities she will have met one of the major criteria of the Conservation Plan. Although he has not yet spoken to Higgins, Price is speculating that DOD will provide space for him at the Pentagon.

Bell added that he also sent a letter to the Secretary of the Navy supporting the GSMFC resolution and saying that although the Atlantic states did not have a formal resolution, they were interested in the topic of ships being utilized for artificial reefs.

AFS Position Statement

Lukens mentioned that he put this item on the agenda because at the Key West meeting Andy Loftus mention it and specifically stated that he thought we should discuss the relative merits of interacting with AFS regarding a position on artificial reefs. Lukens and Christian were not sure if there was any benefit. Ron said he could see utility for it, but indicated that the committees would have to have a great deal of influence in how the position statement turned out in order to achieve any real benefit. He continued that the possible benefit that he saw was regarding the habitat aspects of artificial reefs. AFS, purely from a scientific perspective, could support the movement away from a primary focus of access and utilization favoring a focus on the importance of habitat for fisheries. Plans are to discuss this issue with a few individuals in the Marine Fish Section of AFS. After those

SUMMARY - JOINT ARTIFICIAL REEF CHAIRMEN'S SESSION

November 20, 1996

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discussions it will be determined if such a position statement would be of benefit. This issue should be discussed at the next joint meeting.

Other Business

Bell mentioned the possibility of including representatives from Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands for the next joint meeting. Lukens added that the GSMFC has discussed the possibility of the Caribbean becoming a member of the Gulf Commission. Lukens agreed to contact both Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands to see if they would be interested in attending the next joint meeting, and also to continue to work with the two committees on national issues.

Agenda items were discussed for the next joint meeting. Those include:

- National Artificial Reef Plan
- Reef-Ex and Ship-Ex
- Monitoring (discuss possible approaches, possible outcomes, interest levels, etc.)
- Mechanism to communicate between meetings (from a chairman's perspective, Jon and Mel talked about, a semi-annual newsletter, some way to communicate between meetings, chairmen jointly putting out a newsletter or information just to update and keep everyone informed. Bill Price mentioned the Internet and maybe setting up a news group like Reef Net.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:45 pm.