

# Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission



Molluscan Shellfish  
Subcommittee

Introductory Meeting  
March 11, 2020

# Purpose

The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission is a compact of the states, authorized under Public Law 81-66. It was signed by the representatives of the five Gulf Governors on July 16, 1949.

The Commission has as its principal objective,  
“the conservation, development, and full utilization of the fishery resources of the Gulf of Mexico, to provide food, employment, income, and recreation to the people of these United States.”

# Commissioners

Fifteen Commissioners work to set policy, approve the Commission's budget, and provide direction for activities.

Five are appointed by the state legislatures, five are private citizens with a knowledge of and interest in marine fisheries who are appointed by the states' governors, and the remaining five are state fishery resource agency directors.

The officers are rotated annually among the states.

# Function

One of the most important functions of the Commission is to serve as a forum for the discussion of various problems and programs of marine management, industry, research, etc. and to develop a coordinated policy to address those issues for the betterment of the resource and all who are concerned.

The Commission serves in an advisory capacity to Governors, Legislators and US Congress on matters regarding fisheries management.

*NOTE: Regulatory authority remains with the States.*

# Funding

The Commission's activities are funded through dues from its member states, federal grants and special contracts.

# Organization

**Gulf States Marine Commission**  
(15 Commissioners)

Executive  
Committee

Technical Coordinating  
Committee

Law Enforcement  
Committee

State/Federal Fisheries  
Management Committee

Anadromous Fish  
Subcommittee

Artificial Reef  
Subcommittee

Molluscan Shellfish  
Subcommittee

Crab  
Subcommittee

Data Management  
Subcommittee

Habitat  
Subcommittee

SEAMAP  
Subcommittee

Species-Specific  
Subcommittees

Menhaden Advisory  
Committee

Commercial/Recreational Fishery  
Advisory Committee

Stock Assessment  
Team

Technical Task Forces  
Forces

Blue Crab  
Black Drum  
Derelict Trap  
Flounder  
Gulf Shrimp  
Otolith Workgroup  
Oyster  
Sheepshead  
Spanish Mackerel  
Spotted Seatrout  
Striped Bass  
Striped Mullet

# Programs

- Interjurisdictional Fishery Program (IJF)
- Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP)
  - Sport Fish Restoration Program (SFR)
    - Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS)
  - Fisheries Information Network (FIN)
    - Aquaculture

# GSFMC and Oysters

The Commission has a long history of working with the states on a variety of oyster related issues and oyster management.

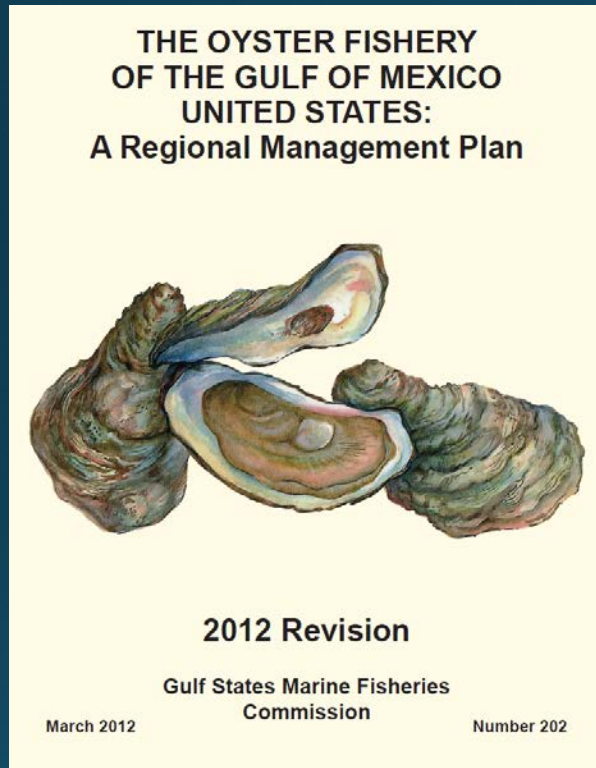
Following the hurricanes of 2004 and 2005, the Commission coordinated Gulf-wide disaster recovery efforts which included support for displaced fisherman as well as cleanup and planting of many state oyster resources.



# OYSTERS

In 2012, the IJF program completed an extensive Fishery Management Plan for Oysters in the Gulf.

The Commission expanded its disaster program to support the states following the BP Deepwater Horizon Disaster in 2011, coordinating funding and activities around shell planting, relaying, and restoring public reefs.



# OYSTERS

In 2016, the Gulf Commission began a cooperative effort with NOAA's Office of Aquaculture to develop and manage a small grants program to address the technical and regulatory opportunities and challenges of oyster farming in the Gulf region and six projects were funded.

In 2017, seven additional off-bottom related projects were selected for about \$400,000. These included continuations of a few from the first year and several 'new innovation' based projects.

# OYSTERS

In 2018 and 2019, the Commission moved to a single, large project oyster research effort and selected an Oyster Consortium to begin a coordinated exploration of oyster genetics and breeding.

NOAA expanded the program after the Gulf's first year to include all three coasts.

Funding for oyster work provided by the Gulf, Atlantic, and Pacific Commissions in 2019 totaled around \$3M.

# OYSTERS

Finally, in 2019, seeing a need for a working group with expertise in oyster biology and management, the TCC and the Commission approved development of the molluscan shellfish Subcommittee whose purpose is to

“provide status of the molluscan shellfish regulatory programs for each of the five gulf states. The status shall include, but not be limited to: environmental, regulatory, research, monitoring, program and industry metrics.”

# MSSC

The molluscan shellfish Subcommittee (MSSC) is made up of two representatives from each of the five states. Members are appointed by their respective state marine resources agency and may include agency staff or experts from other agencies or academia.

Oversight is provided by the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and the MSSC will provide a report following each MSSC meeting.

# MSSC

The Commission provides funding and staff support for the MSSC through the IJF Program.

The MSSC will meet twice a year in conjunction with the Commission annual meetings in March and October.

The Commission will provide travel for the members to attend the two meetings. Should additional meetings, symposiums, or workshops be required, the Commission will work with the MSSC to assist in logistics.

# MSSC

The goals of the MSSC are to:

1. Improve communication between the five Gulf states on the status and condition of their respective molluscan shellfish industry and regulatory programs.
2. Provide the TCC relevant updated information on each Gulf states' molluscan shellfish industry and regulatory programs.
3. Provide a mechanism to the molluscan shellfish industry to provide feed-back to the MSSC and TCC.

# MSSC

4. Collection of pertinent molluscan shellfish industry data (e.g. landings, resource condition and relevant molluscan shellfish program input) that may be used in stock assessments.
5. Encourage conservation of molluscan shellfish resources targeted by the molluscan shellfish industry.
6. Improve the overall value of the molluscan shellfish industry.



# QUESTIONS