

Gulf Commercial Fisheries Summit

Report

September 17-18, 2025
New Orleans, Louisiana



Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
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Executive Summary

The Gulf Commercial Fisheries Summit brought together more than 60 stakeholders from across all five Gulf states, including commercial fishermen, processors, wholesalers, retailers, restaurants, supply chain participants, non-governmental organizations, and state and federal agencies. Hosted by the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Louisiana Sea Grant, and Texas Sea Grant, the Gulf Commercial Fisheries Summit provided a forum for collaboration, information-sharing, and strategy development to strengthen the Gulf's commercial seafood industry.

Summit Purpose and Goals

The Gulf Commercial Fisheries Summit built upon prior state and regional meetings to create the first Gulf-wide dialogue focused on uniting the commercial seafood industry. The goal was to identify shared challenges, strengthen advocacy, and chart a path toward a profitable, sustainable, and publicly trusted industry. Participants emphasized that unity is key to building influence in policy, improving consumer trust, and ensuring a future for the next generation of fishermen.

Key Issues Identified

Through pre-meeting surveys, live polling during the meeting, and breakout sessions, attendees identified pressing challenges that limit the industry's growth. Priority concerns included:

- Seafood imports and labeling – ensuring fair competition, truthful labeling, and strong enforcement against fraud.
- Public perception and consumer education – addressing misinformation, humanizing fishermen, and building trust in Gulf seafood.
- Labor and workforce shortages – stabilizing income, attracting younger generations, improving training, and reforming work visa programs.
- Infrastructure and working waterfronts – preserving docks, vessels, and processing capacity critical to sustaining the industry.
- Equity in fisheries management – ensuring commercial voices are represented alongside recreational and other interests.
- Environmental and regulatory challenges – addressing water quality, disaster response, outdated rules, and mismanagement concerns.

Shared Vision for the Future

Participants described success as a unified, profitable, and sustainable industry with fair wages, viable businesses, and opportunities for new entrants. Priorities include maintaining access to fishing grounds, preventing corporate consolidation, ensuring accurate science and fair representation in management, and strengthening the domestic market by reducing reliance on imports.

Top Three Priority Issues

Attendees identified the top three issues they felt were keeping the commercial seafood industry from thriving and could be addressed within the next three years. These issues were:

1. Inclusion of commercial fisheries in the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Bill to ensure fishermen are treated as food producers with access to insurance, loans, and federal programs.

2. Country-of-origin labeling to advance truthful and consistent seafood labeling at both state and federal levels.
3. Improved recreational fisheries data and accountability to ensure accurate, mandatory reporting to balance management and allocation decisions.

Next Steps

Attendees strongly supported the formation of a formal Gulf seafood coalition to coordinate advocacy, policy engagement, and unified messaging. Consensus was identified as the key to building influence, similar to successful agricultural models. Proposed next actions include developing a coalition structure, engaging congressional representatives, and advancing the top three priority solutions identified during the Gulf Commercial Fisheries Summit.

Conclusion

The Gulf Commercial Fisheries Summit underscored that while the Gulf commercial seafood industry faces significant challenges, they also have unparalleled opportunities. By working together, industry leaders, managers, and partners can strengthen consumer trust, secure fair treatment in federal policy, and ensure a sustainable and profitable future for Gulf seafood.

Introduction

The Gulf Commercial Fisheries Summit (Summit) was held September 17-18, 2025 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Summit's purpose was to bring together stakeholders from across all five Gulf states to share perspectives, identify opportunities, and work toward solutions that benefit the entire commercial fishing industry. Attendees included commercial fishermen, seafood wholesalers and processors, dealers, retailers, restaurants, supply chain participants, non-governmental organizations, and state and federal management agencies.

Jeff Rester, from the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the Summit that was hosted by the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, Louisiana Sea Grant, and Texas Sea Grant. Jeff introduced the Summit's Steering Committee (Appendix 1) and thanked the Summit's sponsors (Appendix 2). He went over the ground rules for the meeting and stressed that he hoped the Summit would help foster collaboration amongst the various groups and organizations in attendance.

Julie Lively, from Louisiana Sea Grant, next introduced the Mentimeter polling system that would be used throughout the Summit to provide real time input from attendees. The first question asked was where everyone was from. The results are provided in Figure 1 with the majority of attendees living in Florida. The next question asked attendees what fisheries they were associated with, with reef fish being the top choice (Figure 2). The third question asked participants their primary sector in the seafood industry with harvester being the most common choice (Figure 3).

Summit Overview and Purpose

Ashford Rosenberg, from the Gulf of America Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance, next provided a meeting overview where she stated that the Summit was building on the Southeast Shrimp Strategy and Planning meeting that was held April 30 – May 1, 2024, sponsored by Louisiana Sea Grant, Texas Sea Grant, and the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, and the Florida Commercial Fishing Industry Summit that was held May 21-22, 2024, sponsored by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Division of Marine Fisheries Management. After the Florida Commercial Fishing Industry Summit several Florida fishing organizations started holding monthly discussions to stay informed on issues affecting the commercial fishing industry. These groups approached the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission in October 2024 and requested help in planning a Gulf-wide meeting to identify issues that kept the Gulf commercial seafood industry from thriving. Ashford stated that the goal of the Summit was to unite the Gulf's commercial seafood industry by bringing together stakeholders from across the region to identify and address shared challenges, promote the sustainability, heritage, and culture of the Gulf, and build lasting unity that strengthens advocacy efforts and earns consumer trust.

Next, Ashford discussed how the Summit could identify and address shared challenges, build stronger networks and partnerships, provide information exchange, help in crisis management and emergency response, and build a stronger future for the next generation of fishermen. She stated that by coming together, the seafood industry could have more influence on policy and advocacy. Ashford reported that the hopes for the Summit were to identify and prioritize threats to the commercial seafood industry, create a Gulf-wide coalition, foster collaboration and unity, and continue these discussions after the Summit ended. She finished by stated that there was strength

in unity and that if united, the Gulf commercial seafood industry could shape the future of Gulf fisheries.

Identify and Prioritize Issues that Keep the Commercial Fishing Industry from Thriving

Laura Picariello, from Texas Sea Grant, next discussed identifying and prioritizing issues that keep the commercial seafood industry from thriving. She stated that an online form (Appendix 3) was sent out before the meeting for attendees to provide input on what they viewed as the most pressing issues facing the commercial seafood industry. She reported that seafood labeling, public education on Gulf seafood, and imported seafood were identified as the top three issues, but all of the issues included on the online form were highly ranked as important issues. The results of the online form are located in Appendix 4.

Laura stated that while ten issues were identified on the premeeting form, she knew there might be other issues that were not included. She then asked attendees to use the Mentimeter to list additional issues that were not already included. The new issues identified by attendees are listed below.

- Aging fleets
- Access to capital for new entrants
- Tariff reform
- Recreational data and accountability and limited access for recreational fishermen
- Allowing family members to inherit shrimp moratorium permits
- USCG/FCC vessel safety issues, approval of communication devices
- Action, not just talk. We need to get all seafood associations to work together on top issues and act together
- Commercial fishing included in with agriculture
- More assessment work in the Southeast Fisheries Science Center
- Better public perception of commercial fishing industry
- Reinforcing the federal law that requires sustainable fisheries
- Water runoff issues
- Government mismanagement declining fishery stocks
- Water release from the Mississippi River cut into estuary grounds impacting all fish, shrimp, and many forms of marine life
- Fishery management simplification
- No accountability for the recreational sector
- Economic impact from the commercial industry and the amount of revenue it provides for each state
- ADA corporate website compliance
- Unfair representation in the state and federal fishery management process
- Access to working capital
- Lack of enforcement of current regulations
- Outdated regulations and data

- IFQ allocation owner's ability to steer decisions that are harmful to non-allocation owners. IFQ allocation owners taking the lion's share of profits from harvesting boats on deck fishers through lease.
- All are important, but most important is cohesively working together to make them happen
- Water hypoxic zones in the Gulf because of the Mississippi River runoff. Nothing lives in those zones.
- Help create a national seafood meeting once a year at the Boston seafood show to unite the whole seafood industry to help get a government program to save the seafood industry!
- Split the SEFSF/SERP into 3 separate centers for each region they are responsible for
- Misrepresenting domestic products as imports with new requirements

Attendees then broke into smaller groups for roundtable discussion on ranking priority issues, which issues span the most fisheries and/or sectors, where was the problem coming from, who was impacted, the timescale for addressing these issues, and trying to find any overlapping issues.

Below are the ranked issues from each breakout group.

Group 1 – 1) Public perception 2) Lack of industry education 3) Faster disaster recovery 4) Need more people 5) Imports and labeling

Group 2 – 1) Seafood labeling and public education 2) Imported seafood 3) New participants and labor 4) Working waterfronts 5) Resource allocation

Group 3 – 1) Lack of infrastructure including working waterfronts 2) Recreational conflict 3) Environmental issues 4) Lack of commercial economic data to show economic impact of commercial fisheries 5) Funding availability

Group 4 – 1) Imports 2) Consumer education and labeling 3) Working waterfronts 4) Equitable access 5) Labor

Group 5 – 1) Labor 2) Labeling 3) Enforced/education 4) Infrastructure 5) Sustainability

Group 6 – 1) Seafood labeling and public education 2) Imports 3) Government programs to support the industry like land-based support 4) Environmental issues 5) New participants including allocation

Group 7 – 1) Imports and seafood testing 2) Recreational pressures 3) Proper fisheries management 4) Workforce 5) Consumer education, changing perceptions, and federal labeling laws

What Does a Successful Commercial Fisheries Industry Look Like in the Future?

In the second breakout session, participants discussed what a successful commercial seafood industry looks like in the future. Participants described a successful future for the seafood industry as one that is unified, profitable, and sustainable. They emphasized the importance of maintaining economically viable businesses, ensuring fair wages for crews, and profitability that would attract

the next generation into the industry. Key priorities included securing continued access to fishing grounds, reducing barriers to entry into the various fisheries, and preventing consolidation by corporations or monopolies so that fisheries remain in the hands of American businesses. Participants also highlighted the need for accurate and timely scientific data, balanced representation on fisheries management bodies at both the states and federal level, and policies that recognize the industry's role in U.S. food production. A strong domestic market, reduced reliance on imports, and greater public awareness of the value of Gulf seafood were identified as essential to long-term success. Above all, fishermen stressed that sustainability, healthy ecosystems, and robust management were critical to supporting an industry that is both self-sustaining and publicly valued.

Ways to Achieve a Successful Future

In the third breakout session, participants were asked to provide input on marketing and consumer education, policy, workforce training, and management.

Marketing and Consumer Education

For the marketing and consumer education topic, participants were asked how can we strengthen demand and consumer trust in Gulf seafood? Participants emphasized that strengthening demand and consumer trust in Gulf seafood will require a coordinated, well-funded, and sustained marketing strategy that extends beyond state-level efforts. They noted the public often misunderstands the challenges of commercial fishing, and campaigns should work to humanize fishermen, highlight the industry's role in feeding the nation, and market U.S. seafood as a healthy, sustainable, and premium product. A recurring theme was the need for federal leadership and support, including the creation of a National Seafood Council, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) backed certification or labeling (similar to "organic"), and access to federal purchasing programs. Fishermen also underscored the importance of country-of-origin labeling, stronger enforcement against mislabeling and fraud, and consumer education to differentiate Gulf seafood from imports. Participants pointed to successful models such as the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute and prior Gulf Seafood Marketing Coalition as examples of how consistent funding and national branding can build consumer trust. They also highlighted cost-effective approaches, such as social media, storytelling, and partnerships with restaurants and education organizations, to connect directly with consumers. Finally, participants stressed that efforts must be industry-led but federally supported, simple in messaging, and designed to be sustainable over time, with the goal of elevating Gulf seafood from a commodity to a recognized, high-value product.

Policy

Regarding policy, participants were asked what structures would give fishermen a stronger voice in policy decisions and what changes in policy would most help you succeed? Participants emphasized that wild-harvested seafood should be fully integrated into USDA programs, noting that aquaculture operations already receive significant support. They discussed the value of creating a dedicated seafood office within the USDA, as outlined in Senator Sullivan's Seafood Policy Integration initiative, and recommended that USDA positions include individuals with commercial fishing experience. Stronger coordination between the USDA and the Department of Commerce was also highlighted as essential. Many participants stressed that fishermen should be recognized as food producers, similar to farmers, since agricultural producers benefit from the

broader support and stability offered under USDA programs, while commercial fishermen remain under the Department of Commerce with less institutional backing.

Policy changes were seen as necessary to expand fishermen's access to USDA programs. Current barriers exist because fishermen do not technically "own" their product until it is landed, making it difficult to utilize programs such as crop insurance like the Whole Farm Revenue Protection program and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish program. Participants noted opportunities to adapt existing models, such as the USDA Hurricane Insurance Protection Wind Index program, which could potentially be applied to fisheries through mechanisms like trip ticket data. Broader questions were raised about how fishermen are defined relative to farmers, given that fisheries rely on a public resource while agricultural products are privately managed. Oyster aquaculture was cited as an example of inconsistent treatment under USDA programs, with different qualifications applied to leased bottom versus caged production.

Finally, participants stressed that the long-term stability and viability of the fishing industry should not rely solely on annual appropriations. Instead, fisheries should benefit from the multi-year consistency of the USDA Farm Bill, which provides a more durable and comprehensive framework for agricultural producers.

Workforce Training

Three questions were asked regarding workforce training. Participants were asked what could help stabilize your income throughout the year, what would make commercial fishing more attractive to younger generations, and what role should workforce training or apprenticeships play in securing the future workforce? Participants identified a range of strategies to stabilize income, strengthen the appeal of commercial fishing to younger generations, and secure the industry's future workforce.

A major theme was the need for commercial fishing to receive the same kinds of federal support provided to farmers. Expanding USDA programs and creating loan and grant opportunities similar to those available for beginning farmers and ranchers were seen as essential steps. Participants highlighted that access to affordable financing, insurance, and subsidies would lower barriers to entry, particularly for new fishermen. Expanding the number of permits, easing transfer rules, and redistributing unused permits through pools or lotteries were also proposed as ways to ensure broader and more equitable access to resources. Visa reform that included issuing H-2B visas in the correct numbers and at the appropriate time was considered a long-term necessity to address labor shortages while keeping opportunities available for American workers.

Participants stressed that commercial fishing must be presented as a viable, respected, and rewarding career path. Educational opportunities were considered central to this effort, ranging from early engagement in elementary and high school to formal vocational programs and apprenticeships at the college level. Cooperative education programs, where high school students split time between school and fishing, and the creation of training vessels dedicated to workforce development were highlighted as promising approaches. Veterans and individuals in prison vocational programs were identified as underutilized recruitment pools with transferable skills. However, participants cautioned that training programs must be paired with realistic opportunities for profitability, or else younger fishermen will be discouraged from staying in the industry.

Participants strongly supported expanded training through Sea Grant, universities, and industry associations. Apprenticeships and cooperative training programs modeled on cooperative research were recommended, alongside on-the-job training supported by federal grants. A key barrier identified was insurance, which makes it difficult for captains to take on trainees. Addressing this challenge through partnerships with government and industry would open new training opportunities. Beyond fishing skills, participants suggested that training should also include professional development in legislation and policy, equipping future fishermen to navigate regulatory and business challenges.

Improving the public image of commercial fishing was seen as a high priority. Participants emphasized that fishermen are often unfairly portrayed negatively and that society undervalues the industry's contributions. Campaigns such as "Meet Your Fisherman," tied to October's National Seafood Month, were recommended to highlight the role of fishermen in local communities. Broader marketing efforts, similar to USDA campaigns for agriculture, could help elevate the industry's profile and make fishing careers more attractive.

The group underscored the importance of equitable treatment for fishermen across government programs. They argued that the industry is overregulated and under-supported compared to other sectors, and that Congress should act to create fairer access to programs and resources. Encouraging minority participation was also identified as a priority, as few minority voices were represented in current discussions.

Participants also discussed practical needs, including more boats and docks, modernized seafood processing infrastructure, and reduced regulatory burdens, particularly in collaboration with the U.S. Coast Guard. Expanding inspection capacity for imported seafood was noted as another interconnected issue affecting the domestic industry. Personal stories highlighted the importance of word-of-mouth recruitment, with family and community recommendations often playing a decisive role in bringing people into the industry.

Management

The first management question was what role do fishermen want to play in monitoring and protecting resources? Participants expressed a strong desire to play an active role in monitoring and protecting resources, emphasizing that their daily presence on the water provides unique knowledge of fish populations and catch-per-unit-effort that cannot be captured by science alone. They believe fishermen's observations and experience should be given equal weight to scientific data in management decisions and called for more accurate, timely science that incorporates their input. Participants noted frustration with current management structures, citing limited representation, lack of accountability in some states, and disproportionate influence of lobbyists. They stressed the need for fairer representation on councils, task forces, and management bodies, greater recognition of fishermen's contributions to monitoring, and the need for stronger accountability for recreational fisheries. Overall, fishermen want to be treated as essential partners in resource management, with their knowledge and experience integrated into decision-making to ensure sustainable and balanced fisheries.

The next question was what changes in regulations would most help you succeed? Participants identified several regulatory changes that would help the commercial seafood industry succeed. A central theme was the need for mandatory and accountable reporting in the recreational sector, including real-time data and better tracking of effort, as unreported discards undermine both stock assessments and fair allocation. Participants also called for greater equity and balance on the Gulf Council, including reconsideration of state voting seats and ensuring commercial interests were fairly represented in decision-making. They stressed that management should not only regulate but also support the survival of the commercial sector, recognizing its role in food production and exploring assistance through agencies such as USDA. Other priorities included revisiting long-closed fisheries such as Red Drum, addressing shark abundance, ensuring fair allocation, and improving the cost and accessibility of IFQ programs. Overall, fishermen emphasized the importance of sustainability, accountability, and management systems that support abundance while keeping commercial fishing viable.

Participants were then asked how management decisions could be made more fair, transparent, and responsive? Participants emphasized that fair, transparent, and responsive management requires balanced representation on decision-making bodies, with equal consideration of commercial and recreational interests. They called for open meetings, clearer processes, and decisions based on accurate and comprehensive data, including biological, effort, and economic information that reflects the true impact of commercial fishing. Participants highlighted the need for mandatory reporting in the recreational sector to ensure accountability and improve stock assessments, as well as testing fishery models before implementation to avoid unintended consequences. They also urged management to consider how policies affect the viability of commercial fisheries, including opening underutilized fisheries such as shark, and recommended establishing a seafood office within USDA to strengthen federal support. Overall, participants stressed that management must prioritize equity, accountability, and transparency to build trust and ensure sustainable fisheries.

The final management question was what types of research or pilot programs would be most useful for fishermen? Participants identified several areas where research and pilot programs could provide meaningful support to the industry. A top priority was improving recreational fisheries data and accountability, including testing tools such as mobile reporting apps and strengthening enforcement to ensure reliable reporting. Participants supported cooperative research partnerships between commercial fishermen and scientists, emphasizing the need for timely feedback on data they already provide. They also highlighted interest in exploring whether observer coverage affects fishing behavior, as well as investigating the ecological impacts of oil dispersants on baitfish and eggs. Beyond science, fishermen suggested policy-oriented research, such as evaluating the benefits of treating commercial fisheries like agriculture under the USDA Farm Bill, with programs such as crop insurance adapted for fishermen. Overall, participants stressed that research and pilot programs must be practical, transparent, and directly tied to improving accountability, sustainability, and long-term industry viability.

What 2-3 Priority Solutions Can We Address Immediately?

Attendees started the second day by prioritizing the thirteen priority issues that were identified the day before. The thirteen issues in no particular order were:

- 1) Recreational fisheries data collection and accountability
- 2) Catch share reform
- 3) Forming an organized industry with government marketing coalition
- 4) Tools, such as social media, for seafood promotion
- 5) Country of origin labeling with both state and federal seafood labeling laws
- 6) Labor challenges associated with the H-2B visa program and USCG 75% rule issue
- 7) Balanced representation on fisheries management council and state management bodies
- 8) Creating a recognized, government backed domestic seafood label
- 9) Inclusion in the USDA Farm Bill
- 10) Disaster management policy
- 11) Improved equity and access to fisheries associated with permit challenges
- 12) Capital funding for new entrants (subsidies, loans, grants for startup)
- 13) Improved support and education for American seafood workers

Attendees were asked to vote for the top three issues affecting the Gulf commercial seafood industry and consider whether these issues could be addressed within the next three years. Attendees' top three issues were the inclusion of commercial fisheries in the USDA Farm Bill, country of origin labeling, and increased recreational data collection and accountability. The voting results are presented in Figure 4.

Attendees were next asked to identify what policy, management, education and marketing, and workforce training actions and solutions could be taken to address the three priority issues.

Inclusion of Commercial Fisheries in the USDA Farm Bill

Participants discussed strategies for ensuring commercial fisheries were included in the USDA Farm Bill. The USDA Farm Bill is a package of legislation that sets policy and funding for America's agricultural, food, and conservation programs. Much of the conversation centered on policy and legislative engagement. Attendees recommended working directly with congressional representatives, noting that Florida's representation on the Agriculture Subcommittee could help advance this effort. They also proposed developing a database of elected officials and staff contacts to better coordinate outreach across the industry.

Several participants emphasized the importance of aligning fisheries with existing agricultural programs. Farmers currently pay into insurance programs that provide stability and protection, and fishermen expressed interest in securing similar benefits through closer cooperation with USDA and the Department of Commerce. Building support among commissions, task forces, and other stakeholder groups and encouraging them to submit letters of support was viewed as a necessary step to strengthen the case for inclusion.

Attendees agreed that progress would come primarily from targeted policy advocacy rather than broad public campaigns. While large-scale marketing or education efforts were seen as less effective in this context, educating USDA officials and decision-makers about the seafood industry's needs was identified as a critical step toward long-term inclusion in the USDA Farm Bill.

Country of Origin Labeling

Participants identified a need for greater consistency and transparency in labeling. They suggested working first at the state level to improve and standardize requirements before building momentum for national change. While federal action was seen as desirable for consistency, concerns were raised that a federal mandate could create significant burdens for wholesalers, dealers, restaurants, and others in the supply chain.

Education and outreach were identified as critical components of improving country of origin labeling. Participants stressed the importance of truth in labeling and of educating consumers on what to look for when buying seafood. Social media was highlighted as a powerful tool, particularly if a centralized message were developed that industry members and partners could amplify across platforms. Public-facing campaigns could also build trust and recognition, especially by leveraging the ongoing “Gulf of America” rebranding effort.

Finally, attendees emphasized the importance of a coordinated, industry-led approach. They called for collaboration not only among Gulf stakeholders but also with commercial groups from other regions to strengthen advocacy. A dual strategy was recommended where they pursued short-term outreach to raise awareness and build consumer demand for accurate labeling, while also developing a long-term plan to press for stronger state and federal labeling laws.

Increased Recreational Data Collection and Accountability

Participants emphasized that stronger accountability in recreational fisheries data collection was essential for effective management. Many called for federal and state agencies, including NMFS and state fishery commissions, to expand and improve data collection programs. Suggested measures included mandatory registration for fishing tournaments, requiring anglers to report harvests and discards through smartphone apps, and tying accountability directly to state or federal licenses and permits. Louisiana’s reporting app was highlighted as a model that could be replicated elsewhere. However, participants also noted concerns about poor compliance, stressing that without reliable participation, data will remain of limited value.

Education and outreach were identified as key to building buy-in from the recreational sector. Attendees stressed that anglers must understand the importance of accurate reporting for stock assessments and long-term access to fisheries. Social media and other outreach tools could be used to normalize reporting, while stories that highlight the commercial industry’s success in accountability could help shift recreational perspectives. Examples such as the Florida Stone Crab Association’s public-facing efforts show how organized industry advocacy can change public attitudes.

Finally, participants discussed the need for a campaign that balances incentives with clear laws and enforcement, the “carrot versus stick” approach. While such an effort would require significant resources, many believed it should be industry-led and supported by states. Overall, attendees agreed that accountability not only strengthens management but also ensures continued access to fisheries, making it a priority for both policy change and cultural change within the recreational community.

“Consensus is the Key” Finding Common Ground is Crucial to Effective Advocacy

Jim Simon, from the American Sugar Cane League (ASCL), discussed the similarities between sugar cane growers and processors and the commercial seafood industry. Jim stated that the ASCL was a non-profit organization of Louisiana sugarcane growers and processors dedicated to supporting the Louisiana sugar industry through research, legislation, product promotion, education, and public relations. Jim described how the ASCL was also active in legislative matters on the state and national levels and was constantly monitoring the public policy decision-making process that affects the sugar industry. He stated that the ASCL’s legislative efforts helped ensure that American families had a safe, dependable and domestically produced supply of this essential food ingredient. With many parallels to the seafood industry, Jim discussed how all groups in the ASCL worked towards consensus on the issues that affected everyone involved so they can present a united message. He stated that consensus was absolutely necessary when presenting a want or need to elected officials.

How Can a Coalition Take the Next Steps to Ensure a Successful Future?

Participants were next asked if a formal Gulf seafood coalition or working group would be useful to help address the issues that had been identified before and during the Summit. The majority of respondents stated that a formal coalition would be helpful (Figure 5). Participants were then asked how involved they would like to be in a coalition (Figure 6) and how involved their organization would like to be (Figure 7). All questions indicated that the majority of attendees wanted to form a coalition and would be actively involved.

Next Steps

After agreeing that forming a coalition would be beneficial and that most attendees wanted to form a coalition, Bob Gill, representing the Organized Fishermen of Florida, next discussed a possible governing structure for how a coalition could operate (Appendix 5). Attendees asked questions about the roles of the various coalition bodies and how the coalition would operate. Bob stressed that the governing structure was just a draft and could be changed as needed. Everyone felt that the best way forward would be to request volunteers for an initial steering committee that would finalize a coalition governing structure. A finalized governing structure would allow prospective groups and organizations to decide if they wanted to join the coalition. Emails would be sent to all attendees requesting if they would like to be kept up to date on coalition activities and provide the option for them to volunteer to serve on the steering committee.

Figures

Where are you from? (select all that apply)

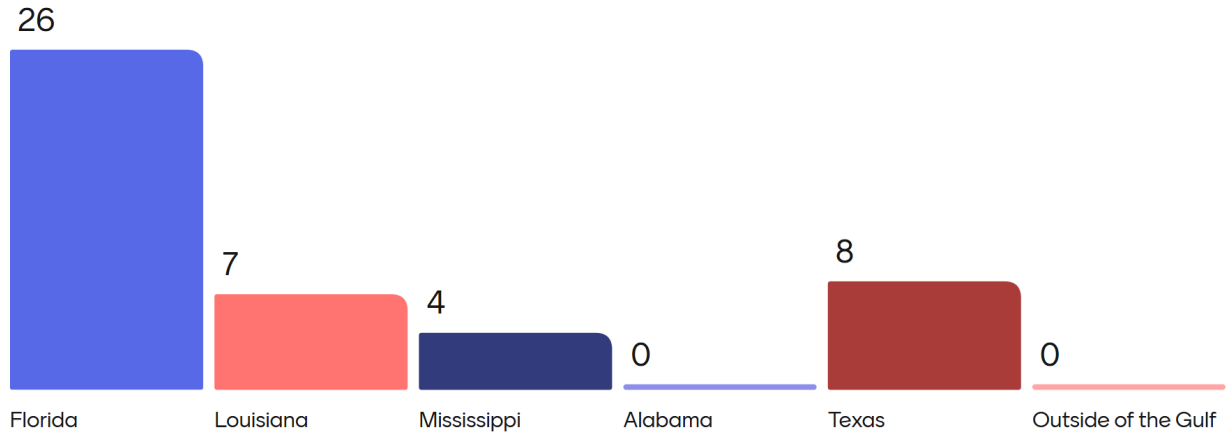


Figure 1. Results from the Mentimeter poll asking attendees where they were from.

What fisheries do you associate with? (select all that apply)

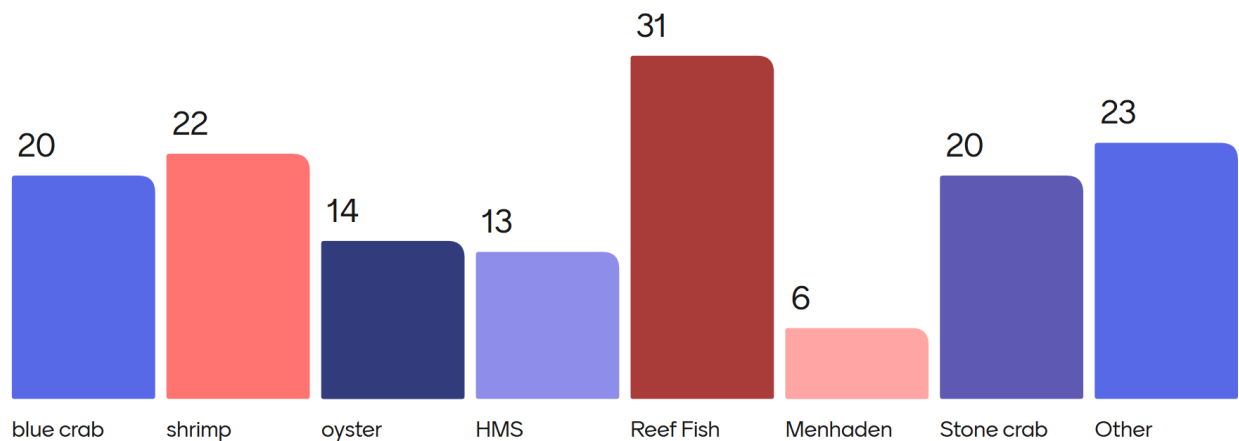


Figure 2. Results from the Mentimeter poll asking attendees their main fishery.

What is your primary sector in the seafood industry?

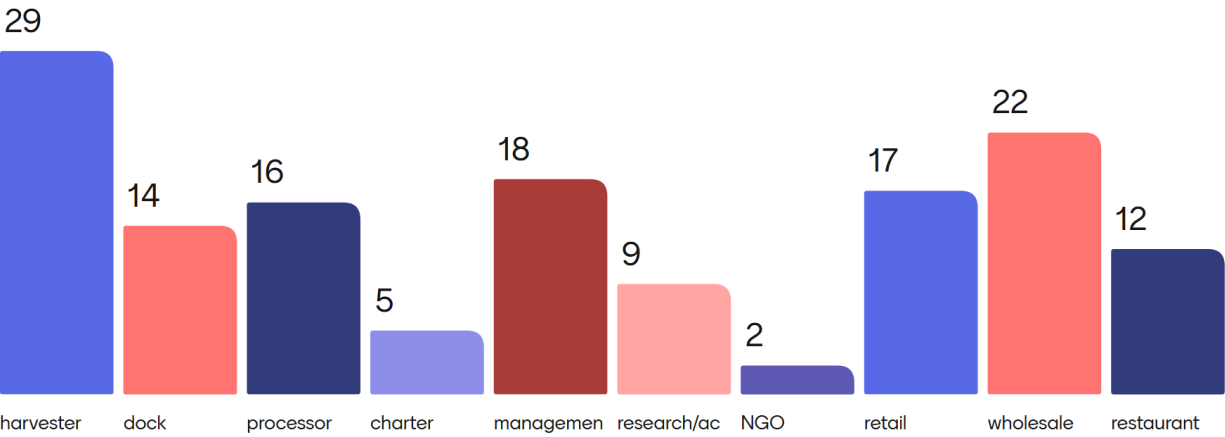


Figure 3. Results from the Mentimeter poll asking attendees what seafood industry sector they were representing.

Select your top 3 priorities that are short term, actionable, and broadly applicable to the Gulf Seafood Industry

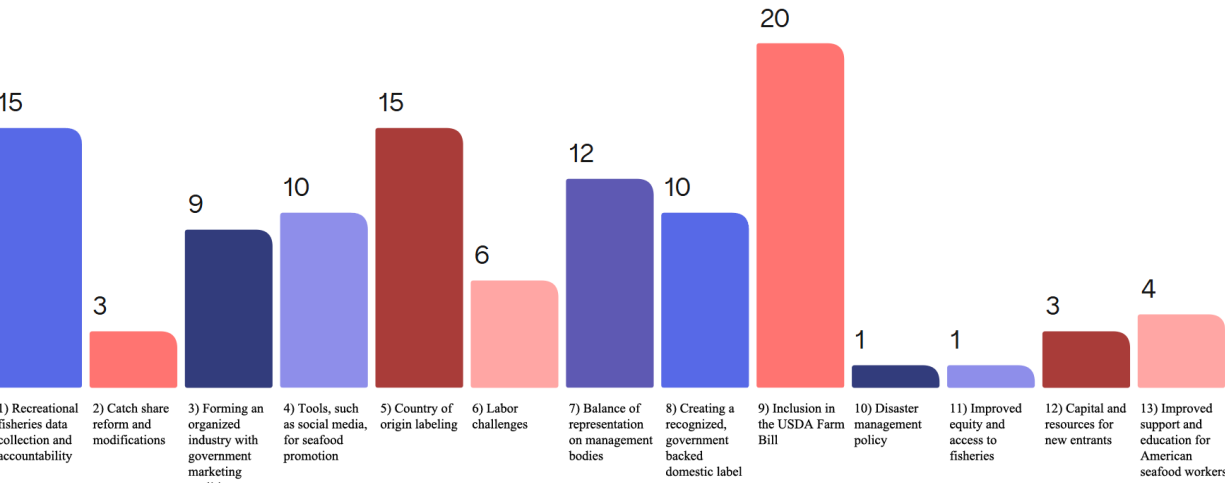


Figure 4. Results from the Mentimeter poll asking attendees what they felt were the top three issues affecting the Gulf commercial seafood industry and could be addressed within the next three years.

Is a formal coalition or working group useful to you to move these actions forward?

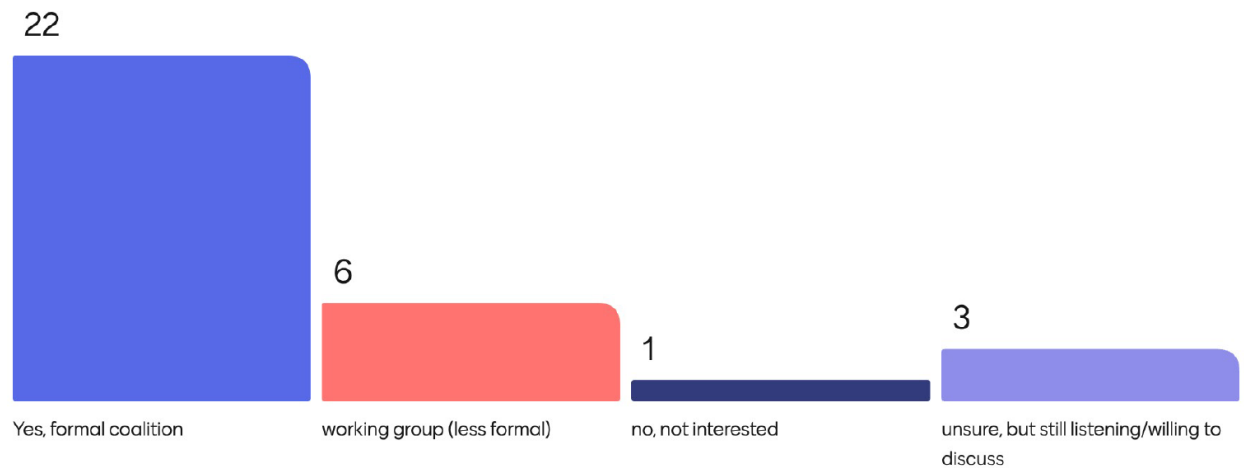


Figure 5. Results from the Mentimeter poll asking attendees whether they felt forming a coalition would be useful to address the identified issues that were affecting the Gulf seafood industry.

As an individual, what level of involvement would you like to have ?

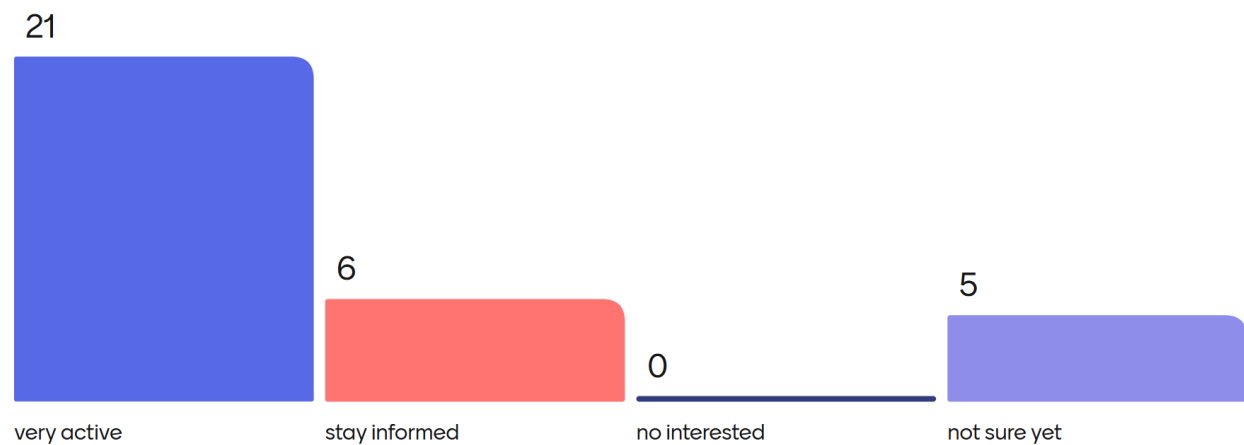


Figure 6. Results from the Mentimeter poll asking attendees how involved they would like to be involved in a coalition.

As an organization (if applicable), what level on involvement do you think your group would like to have?

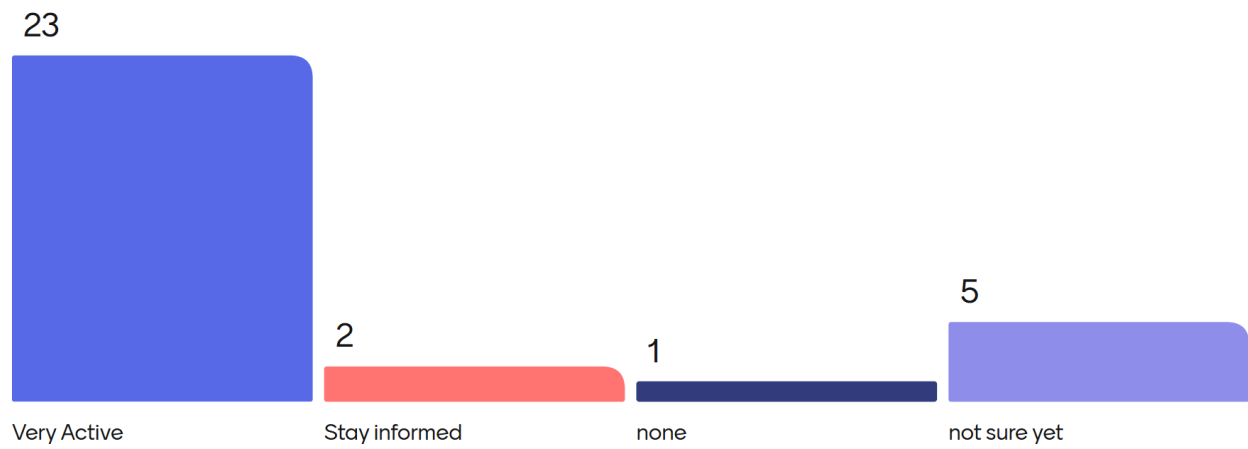


Figure 7. Results from the Mentimeter poll asking attendees how involved they their group or organization would like to be in a coalition.

Appendix 1 – Steering Committee Members

Steering Committee

Ashford Rosenberg – Gulf of America Reef Fish Shareholders’ Alliance

Bob Gill – Organized Fishermen of Florida

Bob Zales – Southeastern Fisheries Association

Dan Ellinor – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Dave Donaldson – Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

Eric Brazer – Gulf of America Reef Fish Shareholders’ Alliance

Jeff Plumlee – Louisiana Sea Grant

Jeff Rester – Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

Jerome Young – Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association

John Fallon – Audubon Nature Institute

Julie Lively – Louisiana Sea Grant

Laura Picariello – Texas Sea Grant

Matthew Kammann – Texas Sea Grant

Niki Pace – Louisiana Sea Grant

Appendix 2 – Meeting Sponsors

Thank you to all of the generous sponsors that helped make the Gulf Commercial Fisheries Summit a success.

Sponsors

Dickie Brennan & Co. Catering
Southeastern Fisheries Association
Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association
Gulf of America Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance
Water Street Seafood
Greg Abrams Seafood, Inc.
Katie's Seafood Market

Appendix 3 – Identify and Prioritize Issues that Keep the Commercial Seafood Industry from Thriving Pre-Summit Online Survey

In order to identify issues and concerns that prevent the Gulf commercial seafood industry from thriving, we need you to rate the issues that affect the seafood industry to help us prioritize the issues. We also need your input on potential solutions to these problems. Please rate the following issues with 1 being a minor concern and 10 being a major concern. After rating each issue, please provide a possible way that the issue can be addressed.

Imported Seafood

Imported seafood poses several challenges to Gulf seafood and the domestic industry as a whole. It often enters the market at lower prices, undercutting U.S. producers who follow stricter environmental, labor, and safety regulations. Many imports come from countries with unfair labor practices and less oversight, increasing the risk of unsustainable or even illegal fishing. Imported seafood can also be of lower quality, contributing to consumer confusion, especially when it is mislabeled as a domestic product. How significant is the impact of imported seafood on the Gulf seafood industry?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

Now that you have rated how imported seafood impacts the Gulf commercial seafood industry, please provide a way that imported seafood can be addressed.

Based on your proposed solution, what is the expected timeframe for implementation and completion?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Under 12 months
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 2-3 years
- ☐ Over 3 years

Lack of Working Waterfronts

Working waterfronts are essential hubs that provide access to the water for commercial fishing, support the landing and processing of seafood, and sustain a network of related industries. They play a critical role in the economic health of coastal communities and the preservation of fishing heritage. However, these areas are increasingly threatened by coastal development, rising property values, and environmental change. As a result, fishing operations risk losing access to the infrastructure they depend on, leading to the displacement of businesses and erosion of traditional livelihoods. How serious is the threat posed by the loss of working waterfronts to the Gulf commercial fishing industry?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

How can the lack of working waterfronts throughout the Gulf be addressed?

Based on your proposed solution, what is the expected timeframe for implementation and completion?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Under 12 months
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 2-3 years
- ☐ Over 3 years

Public Education on Gulf Seafood

Gulf seafood is among the most sustainably managed in the world, thanks to rigorous regulations and responsible harvesting practices. Public education plays a vital role in helping consumers understand that choosing Gulf seafood supports both environmental stewardship and the livelihoods of thousands of Americans working in fishing, aquaculture, processing, transportation, and hospitality, especially in coastal communities. Raising awareness about the economic value of the Gulf seafood industry encourages greater support for local and regional fisheries. Additionally, educating consumers about where their seafood comes from and the importance of traceability empowers them to make informed, ethical choices. How significant is the need for increased public education about Gulf seafood?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

In what ways can we educate the public on the importance of Gulf seafood so they can make informed decisions on their purchase?

Based on your proposed solution, what is the expected timeframe for implementation and completion?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Under 12 months
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 2-3 years
- ☐ Over 3 years

Seafood Labelling

Labeling seafood with the country of origin is critically important for reasons related to consumer transparency, food safety, sustainability, ethical practices, and economic impact. Consumers have the right to know where their food comes from, just like with produce or meat. Seafood labeling provides transparency and helps people make informed choices aligned with their values (e.g., environmental, ethical, health). How significant is seafood labelling to the viability of the Gulf commercial seafood industry?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

How can we address the issue of seafood labelling to ensure that all consumers know where their seafood was produced?

Based on your proposed solution, what is the expected timeframe for implementation and completion?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Under 12 months
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 2-3 years
- ☐ Over 3 years

New Participants Entering the Seafood Industry

The future of the commercial seafood industry depends on bringing in new participants as current workers retire. However, entering the industry is challenging due to significant barriers, including the high cost of vessels and equipment, limited access to licenses and permits, and the steep learning curve required to develop the necessary skills. Without support and training for the next generation, the industry risks losing valuable capacity, local knowledge, and long-term viability. How important is it to invest in helping and training new participants to enter the seafood industry?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

How can we help new participants enter the seafood industry?

Based on your proposed solution, what is the expected timeframe for implementation and completion?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Under 12 months
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 2-3 years
- ☐ Over 3 years

Government Programs

Including the Gulf commercial seafood industry in U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Bill programs would provide financial stability, promote sustainability, improve infrastructure, develop human capital, and boost market opportunities, ultimately supporting the health and resilience of this vital sector. The Gulf commercial seafood industry has not historically been included in the Farm Bill or other USDA programs, despite fundamental contributions to the food system. How important is it that the Gulf commercial seafood industry be included in USDA programs?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

How can we make sure that the Gulf commercial seafood industry is included in all government programs that would help the industry?

Based on your proposed solution, what is the expected timeframe for implementation and completion?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Under 12 months
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 2-3 years
- ☐ Over 3 years

Environmental Issues

Protecting the Gulf of Mexico's environment is not only a matter of conservation. It is essential to securing the future of a multi-billion-dollar seafood industry that supports tens of thousands of jobs and sustains the cultural identity of Gulf Coast communities. Today, the region faces mounting environmental threats, including hurricanes, oil spills, water pollution, red tides, hypoxia, habitat loss, and long-term environmental change. Declining water quality has already led to system-wide impacts on the health and productivity of the Gulf's fisheries. How serious are environmental challenges to the long-term viability of the Gulf commercial seafood industry?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

What can be done to address environmental issues in the Gulf?

Based on your proposed solution, what is the expected timeframe for implementation and completion?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Under 12 months
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 2-3 years
- ☐ Over 3 years

Seafood Sustainability Certification

Seafood sustainability certification plays a key role in ensuring that seafood is harvested or farmed in ways that protect the long-term health of ocean ecosystems, fish populations, and coastal communities. These certifications help promote responsible practices and provide assurance to consumers. However, challenges remain. Certification programs can be costly, vary in their standards, and often lead to consumer confusion due to inconsistent labeling. How critical is the role of sustainability in the future of the seafood industry?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

What can be done to improve seafood sustainability certification?

Based on your proposed solution, what is the expected timeframe for implementation and completion?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Under 12 months
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 2-3 years
- ☐ Over 3 years

Ocean Planning and Development

Ensuring that seafood, tourism, offshore wind energy, oil and gas development, and marine transportation can coexist requires thoughtful, comprehensive ocean planning. While each of these industries contributes to economic growth, their development must be coordinated in a way that protects fishing livelihoods, preserves working waterfronts, and maintains access to healthy, domestically harvested seafood. Without careful planning, competition for ocean space could threaten the long-term viability of the Gulf commercial seafood industry. How critical is ocean planning to the future of the Gulf's fishing communities and seafood supply?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

Now that you have rated how critical ocean planning is to sustaining the Gulf commercial seafood industry, please provide a way that ocean planning can make sure that the Gulf commercial seafood industry is considered and consulted when discussing future ocean development.

Based on your proposed solution, what is the expected timeframe for implementation and completion?

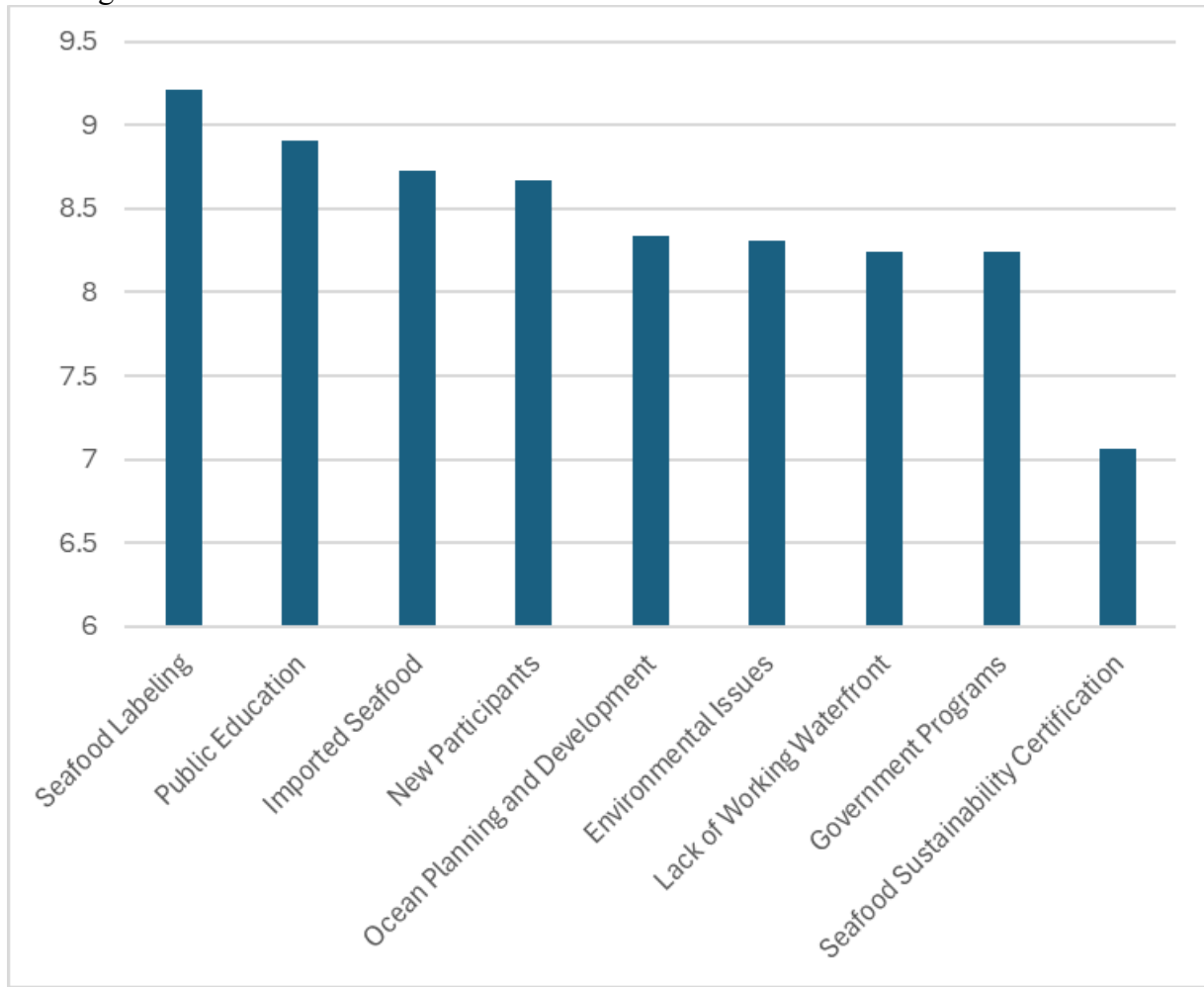
Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Under 12 months
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 2-3 years
- ☐ Over 3 years

Are there other issues or challenges that we did not list that affect the seafood industry's ability to thrive? If so, please list all of those issues below.

Appendix 4 – Results of the Pre-Summit Online Survey Form

Rankings of all issues identified on the form



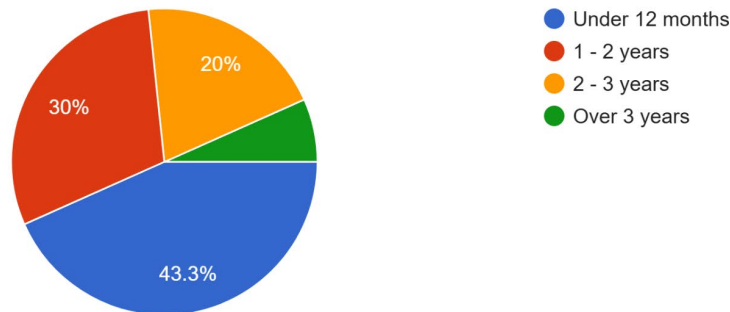
Seafood Labeling

How can we address the issue of seafood labeling?

- **Labeling and Enforcement:**
 - Mandate and enforce proper seafood labeling with a clear country of origin. This includes requiring restaurants to provide this information.
 - Create a national program for all domestic seafood.
- **Legislation and Policy:**
 - Write rules for seafood labeling into both local and national law.
 - Pass new laws that require labeling, similar to the oyster industry.
 - Secure more federal and state Gulf leadership to help with this.
- **Stricter Compliance:**
 - Increase compliance enforcement with tougher regulations, including hefty fines for mislabeling.
 - Track repackaging to ensure the country of origin is accurately listed.

- **Traceability and Inspections:**
 - Create a traceability program for imports and increase inspections to ensure proper labeling.

Based on your proposed solution, what is the expected timeframe for implementation and completion?

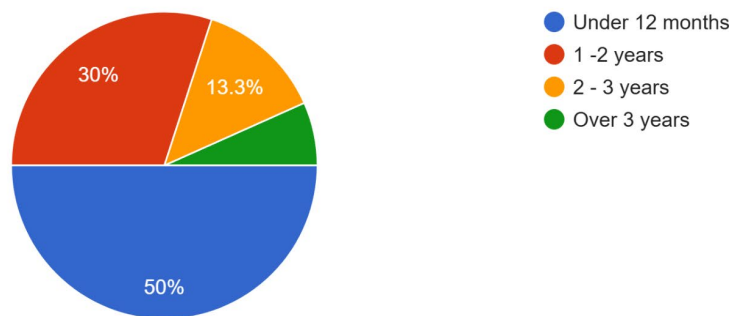


Public Education

How can we address the issue of public education on Gulf seafood?

- **Marketing and Campaigns:**
 - Conduct strong regional and nationwide marketing campaigns using various media like social media, television commercials, and traditional advertising. These campaigns should highlight the superior quality, safety, and sustainability of domestic seafood.
- **Education and Awareness:**
 - Educate consumers, starting in schools, about the seafood industry and why it's important to buy domestic. Teach them how to identify domestic shrimp and understand that price often indicates origin.
 - Work with independent sources like the GSMFC and Sea Grant to raise awareness and provide information.
- **Collaboration:**
 - Collaborate with local, state, and federal agencies, as well as local governments and seafood organizations, to promote U.S. harvested seafood.
- **Accessibility:**
 - Make Gulf seafood readily available and encourage restaurants to state the origin of their seafood.

Based on your proposed solution, what is the expected timeframe for implementation and completion?

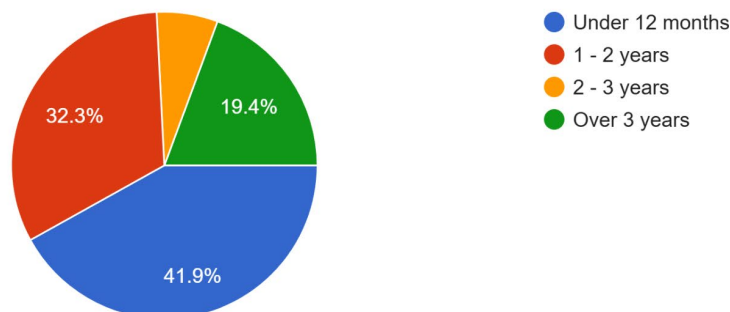


Imported Seafood

How can we address the issue of imported seafood?

- **Tariffs and Quotas:**
 - Implement and increase tariffs on imported seafood, particularly shrimp, and establish quotas to limit the quantity of imports.
- **Marketing and Labeling:**
 - Create better marketing programs to promote domestic seafood as a superior product.
 - Require labeling of all imported food to differentiate it from domestic products and educate consumers on the differences between tariffs and subsidies.
- **Regulations and Inspections:**
 - Work with state and federal legislators to enact and enforce stricter regulations. This includes more FDA inspections and quality screening for imported seafood.
- **Government Backing:**
 - Secure government backing to curb or tax imports and gain stronger federal Gulf leadership to help push for stricter import duties.
- **Education:**
 - Educate consumers to ask where the shrimp on the menu comes from.

Based on your proposed solution, what is the expected timeframe for implementation and completion?

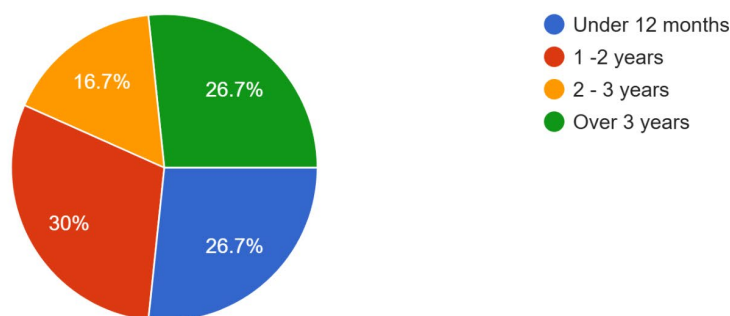


New Participants

How can we address the issue of new participants in the seafood industry?

- **Training and Education:**
 - Create and fund programs to train new fishermen, potentially through CTE-type programs in schools or a national tech school.
 - Provide training and support to help new entrants get a "foot in the door," such as through apprenticeship programs.
 - Work with Workforce Education and maritime agencies to support young fishermen's development.
- **Financial and Economic Support:**
 - Provide access to capital and pre-planning for new fishermen to get started.
 - Offer low-interest financing for fishing vessels.
 - Get the word out that commercial fishing can be a way to earn a good income.
- **Policy and Regulation:**
 - Work with legislators to open new commercial allocations and opportunities for access into commercial fisheries.
 - Work with regulatory agencies to deregulate and reduce barriers to entry.
 - Secure more federal and state Gulf leadership to address these issues.
- **General Support:**
 - Provide educational and financial advice.

Based on your proposed solution, what is the expected timeframe for implementation and completion?



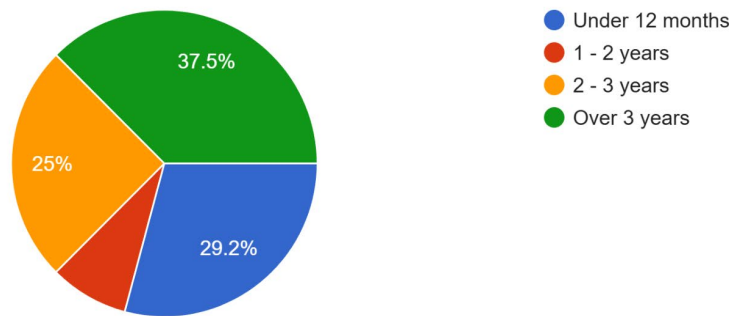
Ocean Planning & Development

How can we address the issue of ocean planning and development?

- **Planning and Collaboration:**
 - Conduct ocean planning on a bottom-up approach.

- Involve all stakeholders, especially fishermen and other industry members, in the dialogue.
- Work with commerce, BOEM, states, and other agencies.
- **Regulation and Policy:**
 - Address the issue of wind turbine farms, which some fishermen see as detrimental.
 - Come in with historical fishing ground data to support fishermen's claims.
 - Aquaculture siting concerns
 - Recreational vs. commercial use challenges
- **Political Action:**
 - Secure more federal Gulf leadership in the House and Senate.
 - Include members of the commercial fishing sector at all levels of dialogue.

Based on your proposed solution, what is the expected timeframe for implementation and completion?

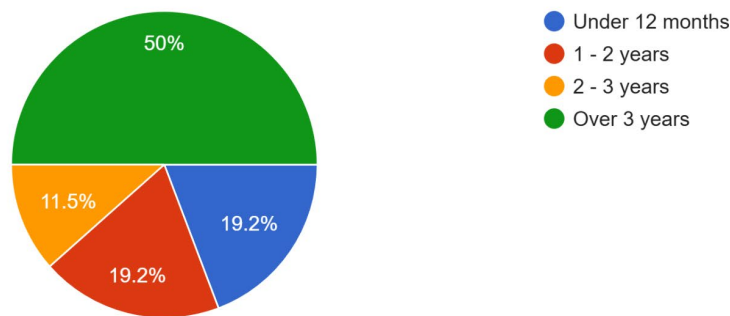


Environmental Issues

How can we address the environmental issues that affect Gulf seafood?

- **Water Quality and Environmental Protection:**
 - Maintain clean, viable estuaries for fisheries.
 - Reduce land runoff and stop allowing septic companies to dump human waste.
 - Implement restrictions on fertilizers.
 - Require new industries to be accountable and control their environmental impact.
 - Make the recreational sector accountable for its impact.
- **Collaboration and Advocacy:**
 - Develop a group of all stakeholders in the Gulf region to address environmental issues.
 - Secure more federal Gulf leadership in the House and Senate to address environmental concerns.
 - Talk to representatives and work through red tape to address environmental issues.
- **Funding:**
 - Address the critically low and inadequate funding for science.

Based on your proposed solution, what is the expected timeframe for implementation and completion?

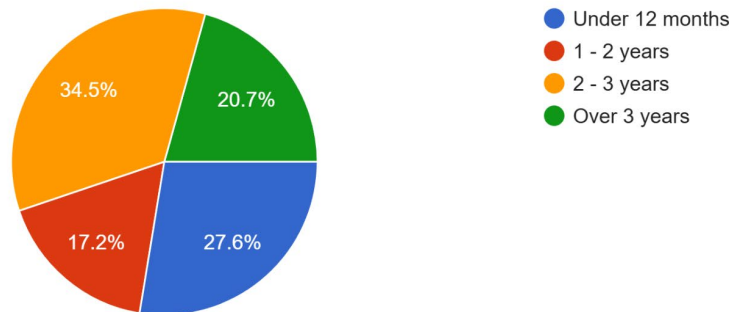


Lack of Working Waterfronts

How can we address the issue of the lack of working waterfronts?

- **Zoning and Land Use:**
 - Implement proper zoning and land use policies, and write them into laws to protect waterfront access for fishermen.
 - Issue tax breaks to encourage commercial land use.
- **Legislation and Government Support:**
 - Get federal support through legislation, and work with local, state, and federal agencies to support physical and economic development projects.
 - Secure more federal Gulf leadership in the House and Senate to address all the issues.
- **Funding and Infrastructure:**
 - Provide funding and grants for affordable access, infrastructure improvements, and to help working waterfronts improve and expand.
 - Use additional tariff money to fund these seafood initiatives.
 - The text also mentions that infrastructure may need to be moved due to coastal erosion.
- **Financial Incentives:**
 - Offer more financial and insurance breaks, along with tax benefits and breaks for true commercial working waterfronts.

Based on your proposed solution, what is the expected timeframe for implementation and completion?

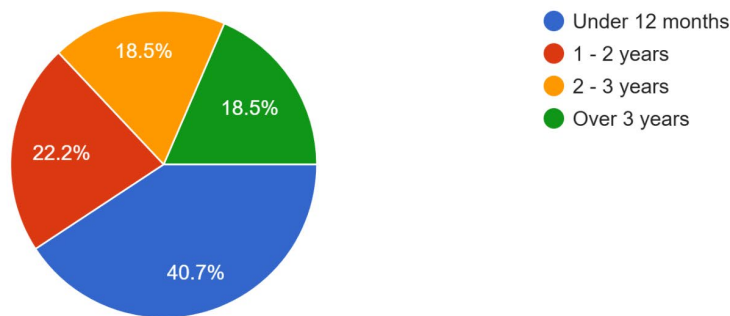


Government Programs

How can we address the issue of government programs?

- **Political Advocacy and Legislation:**
 - Get Congress on board with the issue.
 - Work with the legislature and federal government to pass legislation.
 - Lobby on Capitol Hill and talk to local and state representatives.
 - Secure more federal Gulf leadership in the House and Senate.
 - Have the Departments of Commerce and Agriculture work together.
- **Funding and Representation:**
 - Access funds and seek financial help from the government.
 - Include commercial fishermen in the USDA Farm Bill.
 - Work on getting more money and DC representation for fishermen.
- **Collaboration:**
 - Work closely with the USDA on developing programs.
 - Inform and meet with representatives.
- **Economic Solutions:**
 - Open bidding for products.
- **Protection:**
 - Either through the USDA or Department of Commerce, make sure that affordable insurance is available.

Based on your proposed solution, what is the expected timeframe for implementation and completion?

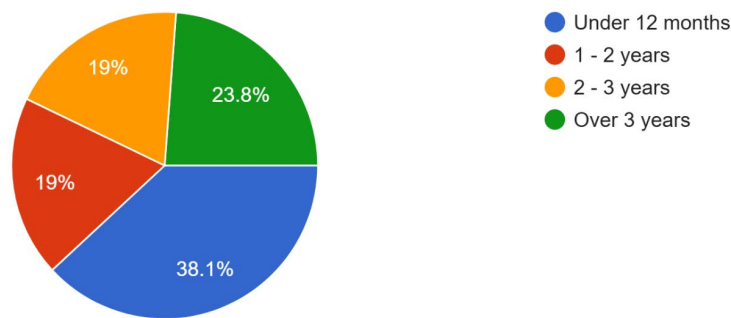


Seafood Sustainability Certification

How can we address the issue of seafood sustainability certification?

- **Sustainability and Certification:**
 - Implement consistent sustainability metrics across all managed fisheries.
 - Investigate and apply a seafood certification on a broader scale.
 - Promote sustainability through state and federal programs and not a for profit private organization.
 - Emphasize the extraordinary efforts that U.S. fishermen make in the name of sustainability and how that differs from worldwide practices
- **Regulation and Enforcement:**
 - Ensure the recreational fishing sector stays within its federal regulations.
 - Develop a more consistent process and understanding of regulations.
- **Industry Accountability:**
 - Encourage wholesalers to refuse to accept or sell subpar fish.
- **Political Action:**
 - Secure more federal Gulf leadership in the House and Senate.
- **Management:**
 - Ensure that sustainability programs are not managed by politicians.
 - The text also notes that a large percentage of imported seafood is not sustainably managed.

Based on your proposed solution, what is the expected timeframe for implementation and completion?



Other issues:

- **Labor and Crew:**
 - The H-2B visa and 75/25 immigration and vessel crew issues are making it difficult to get crew for boats. The labor shortage is a significant problem.
- **Fisheries Management and Competition:**
 - The recreational discard rate is a major issue.
 - The competition with recreational fisheries for the same resource is a problem.
 - The current fisheries council system is seen as unbalanced.
 - There are attacks on the commercial fishing industry.
- **Insurance:** There are significant insurance issues, including the inability to get insurance and the inability to afford it. Good data in a timely manner is a factor that makes insurance good for a fishery.
- **Shrimp Industry:** The Louisiana Shrimp Industry suffered four consecutive years without work due to the inhumane dockside prices.
- **Policy:** The text mentions that despite what shrimpers are being told, President Trump put out Executive Orders for foreign shrimp.
- **General:** There is a need for better utilization of seafood.

Appendix 5 – Draft Coalition Governing Structure

Mission & Purpose

- Unite all Gulf commercially related fisheries (shrimp, crab, oyster, finfish, processors, dealers, etc.) under one coalition.
- Provide a unified voice on shared issues such as imports, state and federal regulations, infrastructure, environmental impacts, and market access.
- Respect the unique needs of each fishery while emphasizing collaboration on industry-wide challenges.

Establish Initial Action Plan

- Keep it simple
- Agree on criteria for making the choice of action items, such as
 - Reasonably achievable
 - Likely high universality among Gulf seafood industry participants
 - Possible completion < 2-3 years
 - Gulf centric

Governing Structure

1. Coalition Council (Primary Decision-Making Body)

- Composition:
 - 2 representatives from each major fishery sector (shrimp, crab, oyster, finfish, others as identified).
 - 1 representative from seafood processors/distributors.
 - 1 at-large seat for small-scale/multi-gear fishermen.
- Responsibilities:
 - Set policy priorities and advocacy positions.
 - Approve coalition budgets and strategic plans.
 - Represent coalition to policymakers, regulators, and the public.
- Voting:
 - Each fishery sector has equal voting weight (not proportional by size), to avoid dominance by one industry.
 - Decisions made by consensus when possible; otherwise by a 2/3 majority vote.

2. Executive Committee

- Composition: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary/Treasurer, and two rotating members (different fisheries each year).
- Responsibilities:
 - Handle day-to-day operations.
 - Coordinate staff or contracted support (policy advisors, communications).
 - Prepare issues for discussion by the full Council.

3. Advisory Committees (Issue Specific)
 - Committees formed around shared issues such as:
 - Imports & Trade
 - Environmental & Habitat Protection
 - Regulations & Compliance
 - Infrastructure & Working Waterfronts
 - Marketing & Consumer Education
 - Open to coalition members, scientists, NGOs, and invited stakeholders.
 - Report recommendations back to the Coalition Council.
4. General Membership
 - Open to any licensed Gulf commercial fisherman, seafood processor, or affiliated business.
 - Members:
 - Elect sector representatives to the Council.
 - Receive regular updates and opportunities to provide input.
 - Participate in coalition advocacy campaigns.

Ground Rules for Operation

1. Respect and Inclusion
 - All fisheries and sectors are respected equally.
 - No one fishery dominates the coalition's agenda.
 - Listen to understand, speak to be understood
2. Shared Focus
 - Coalition addresses cross-cutting issues (e.g., imports, regulations, infrastructure, consumer awareness).
 - Fishery-specific concerns remain the responsibility of sector associations, unless they affect multiple groups.
3. Decision Making
 - Seek consensus first; if not possible, use a 2/3 majority vote by the Council.
 - Minority opinions are recorded and respected.
 - Support decisions if you can, no detraction if you cannot.
4. Transparency
 - All meeting agendas, minutes, and decisions are shared with members.
5. Accountability
 - Representatives are responsible for communicating back to their sectors.
 - Council members serve fixed terms (e.g., 2 years) with the possibility of re-election.
6. Conflict Resolution
 - Goal is to speak with one voice, if possible.
 - Disputes handled first within committees, then elevated to the Council.

- If unresolved, a neutral mediator may be brought in.
7. Advocacy Rule
 - Coalition speaks only on shared issues agreed upon by the Council.
 - Individual fisheries retain the right to advocate separately on sector-specific matters.
 8. Rotation and Fresh Voices
 - Leadership rotates across sectors to ensure diversity of perspective.
 - Committee chairs change every 2 years.

Benefits of This Structure

- Promotes equal participation from multiple sectors.
- Creates clear channels for input and decision-making.
- Balances unity on broad issues with flexibility for individual fisheries.
- Builds trust, transparency, and accountability across the industry.

Appendix 6 – Attendees

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Adam Abrams	Greg Abrams Seafood
Amy Wirtz	Pelican Point Seafood
Andrew Ropicki	Florida Sea Grant/University of Florida
Annie Trinh	Jensen Tuna
Ashford Rosenberg	Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance
Barbara Hewlett	Hewlett Enterprises
Ben Landry	Omega Protein
Billy Wright	
Bob Gill	Organized Fishermen of Florida
Bob Zales	Southeastern Fisheries Association
Bubba Cochrane	Southern Seafood LLC
Butch Hewlitt	BK Fisheries
Carrie Doxsee	Florida Stone Crabber's Association
Christopher Merrifield	Wild Ocean Seafood Market
Collins Abrams	Greg Abrams Seafood
Dan Ellinor	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Darin Topping	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Dave Donaldson	Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
Dave Williams	DW Seed Consulting
David Krebs	Ariel Seafoods, Inc.
David Maginnis	Jensen Tuna
Eugene Raffield	Raffield Fisheries
Francois Kuttel	Westbank Fishing, LLC
Frank Helies	National Marine Fisheries Service
Gary Jarvis	Brotula's Seafood House
Greg Abrams	Greg Abrams Seafood
Harlon Pearce	Harlon's LA Seafood
Holly Dudley	Florida Stone Crabber's Association
Jason Delacruz	Gulf Wild Seafood Co.
Jason Froeba	Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Jeff Plumlee	Louisiana Sea Grant
Jeff Rester	Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
Jeff Tenta	Refrigerated Express
Jerome Young	Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association
Joe Ferrer	Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
John Fallon	Audubon Nature Institute
Julie Lively	Louisiana Sea Grant
Justin Versaggi	Versaggi Shrimp Corp
Karen Bell	A.P. Bell Fish Co
Kelly Kirk	Kirk Fish Company

Kindra Arnesen	Louisiana Sea Grant
Kyle Kimball	Port Arthur Shrimpers Association
Laura Picariello	Texas Sea Grant
Leann Bosarge	Bosarge Boats, inc
Mallory Shetley	Texas Sea Grant
Maria Jaross	Texas Shrimp Association
Martin Peat	Refrigerated Express
Matt Kammann	Texas Sea Grant
Matt Pless	
Mike Lombardi	Lombardi's Seafood
Mike Nelson	GW Fins
Nick Ruland	Fishmongers
Niki Pace	Louisiana Sea Grant
Nikki Fitzgerald	Texas Sea Grant
Pat Barker	Refrigerated Express
Rachal Hisler	George W. Hisler II, Inc.
Randy Schwab	Florida Stone Crabs & Seafood
Rick Burris	Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
Ryan Bradley	Mississippi Commercial Fisheries United, Inc.
Ryan Prewitt	Peche Restaurant
Steven Rash	Water Street Seafood
Thu Bui	Louisiana Sea Grant
Tracy Roberts	Southeastern Fisheries Association
Tricia Kimball	Port Arthur Shrimpers Association