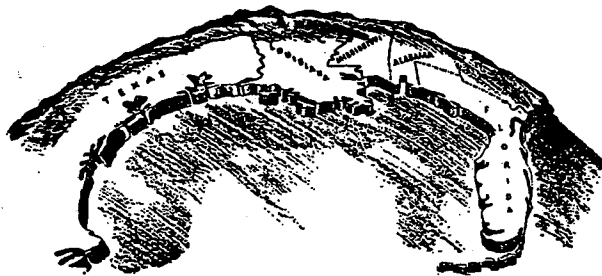


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Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission

MEMBER STATES
ALABAMA
FLORIDA
LOUISIANA
MISSISSIPPI
TEXAS



P.O. BOX 726
OCEAN SPRINGS, MS.
39564
(601) 875-5912

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT

1976 - 1977

TO THE

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

AND TO THE

GOVERNORS AND LEGISLATORS

OF

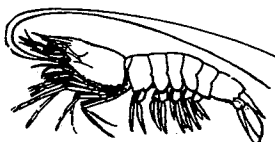
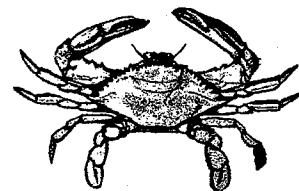
ALABAMA

FLORIDA

LOUISIANA

MISSISSIPPI

TEXAS



THE GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION IS AN ORGANIZATION OF THE FIVE STATES, WHOSE COASTAL WATERS ARE THE GULF OF MEXICO. THIS COMPACT, AUTHORIZED UNDER PUBLIC LAW 81-66, WAS SIGNED BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNORS OF THE FIVE GULF STATES ON JULY 16, 1949, AT MOBILE, ALABAMA. IT 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.

GULF STATES MARINE
FISHERIES COMMISSION
TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT
1976 - 1977
TO THE
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
AND TO THE
GOVERNORS AND LEGISLATORS
OF
ALABAMA
FLORIDA
LOUISIANA
MISSISSIPPI
TEXAS

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TWENTY-EIGHT ANNUAL REPORT

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by BOURGEOIS, BENNETT, THOKEY & HICKEY, CPA	



TWENTY-EIGHT ANNUAL REPORT (1976-77)
Of The
GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
TO THE
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
And To The
GOVERNORS AND LEGISLATORS
Of
ALABAMA
FLORIDA
LOUISIANA
MISSISSIPPI
TEXAS

Presented in compliance with the terms
of the Compact and the State enabling
Acts creating such commission and Pub-
lic Law 66-81st Congress Assenting
thereto.

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
P. O. Box 726
Ocean Springs, Mississippi 39564

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In submitting this Twenty-Eighth Annual Report, the Commissioners wish to express their most sincere appreciation for the splendid cooperation of the members of the Congress and the Governors and Legislators of the compact States. The Commission fully appreciates that such measure of success as has been attained in the past twenty-seven years could not have been possible without such valued assistance. This acknowledgement is also extended to the directorates and staffs of federal, state and interstate agencies and to representatives of all organizations and individuals who have contributed toward the realization of the objectives of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Burton Angelle, Chairman

Nat Sonnier, Vice Chairman

Charles H. Lyles, Executive Director

IN MEMORIAM

JAMES H. SUMMERSGILL

for his untiring efforts to promote
Marine Conservation and Utilization.

COMMISSION COMMITTEE MEMBER

GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

ROSTER - OCTOBER 1976 - OCTOBER 1977

J. Burton Angelle

Chairman

Nat Sonnier

Vice-Chairman

Carlton Jackson, Acting Executive Director

Charles H. Lyles, Executive Director

COMMISSIONERS*

ALABAMA

John W. Hodnett, Director

Alabama Department of Conservation

Montgomery

L. D. Owen, Senator

State of Alabama

Bay Minette, Alabama

Nat Sonnier, Representative

State of Alabama

Mobile, Alabama

FLORIDA

Harmon Shields, Director

Florida Department of Natural Resources

Tallahassee, Florida

Eugene Hodges, Representative

State of Florida

Tallahassee, Florida

Clyde Richbourg

Pensacola, Florida

LOUISIANA

J. Burton Angelle, Director

Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission

New Orleans, Louisiana

Conway LeBleu, Representative

State of Louisiana

Cameron, Louisiana

Leroy Kiffe

Lockport, Louisiana

MISSISSIPPI

Richard L. Leard, Director

Mississippi Marine Conservation Commission

Biloxi, Mississippi

Ted Millette, Representative

State of Mississippi

Pascagoula, Mississippi

William Gray Slay
Biloxi, Mississippi

TEXAS

Clayton T. Garrison, Executive Director
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Austin, Texas

Leroy Wieting, Representative
State of Texas
Portland, Texas

John A. Mehos
Galveston, Texas

*Order of listing - Administrator - Legislator - Governor's
Appointee

SUCCESSIONS ON THE COMMISSION DURING THE YEAR

Leroy Kiffe	vice	James Summersgill
W. Gray Slay	vice	William Gillis
Richard L. Leard	vice	Charles H. Lyles
Henry Burkett	vice	Clayton T. Garrison

COMMISSION OFFICERS ELECTED OCTOBER, 1976

FOR YEAR 1976 - 1977

CHAIRMAN: J. Burton Angelle, succeeding Harmon Shields

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Nat Sonnier, succeeding J. Burton Angelle

STANDING COMMITTEES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Harmon Shields, Chairman

TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Ted Ford, Chairman

INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Leroy Kiffe, Chairman

RECREATIONAL FISHERIES COMMITTEE

Guy Billups, Jr., Chairman

SEA GRANT COMMITTEE

Willis Clarke, Chairman

COMMITTEE TO CORRELATE FISHERY LAWS

Wings Benton, Chairman

COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

OCTOBER 1976 - OCTOBER 1977

The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission met twice in regular session during the period covered by this report. The Annual Fall session was held at the Monteleone Hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana on October 20, 1976. The meeting was concerned primarily with the problem of locating and employing a new Executive Director and with efforts to increase the annual contribution of the member states. Mr. Colson, the previous Executive Director resigned as of September 15, 1976 and Mr. Carlton Jackson had been named as Acting Director until a replacement could be found. Since Mr. Jackson occupied a full time position with the Florida Department of Natural Resources, he could only spend a limited amount of time on Commission business. The selection of a Director was of paramount importance and occupied almost all of the time of the Executive Session. Charles H. Lyles applied for the position, stating that he planned to resign his position with the Mississippi Marine Conservation Commission as of December 31, 1976. The offer was contingent upon moving the headquarters to Ocean Springs. Such matters as obtaining space and the salary of the Director were discussed and agreed upon. The matter of state dues came under considerable discussion and a new formula was adopted which would keep the Commission solvent.

The Spring meeting of the Commission was held at the Biloxi Hilton Hotel on March 16-18, 1977. Since the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council had recently been formed, a staff appointed and headquarters established in Tampa, Florida, the theme of the meeting was an interface of the states and the council. Emphasis was placed on full utilization of the fishery resources of the Gulf. Speakers pointed to the futility of spending millions of dollars to manage a resource just for the sake of management and that such a course could only lead to foreign exploitation of these resources. Responsibility of the states and the federal government was dealt with by several speakers.

The Executive Session dealt with resolutions on matters which the Commission felt was of immediate concern. A list

of the resolutions passed are a part of this report.

The activities of the Commission during the year October 1, 1976 through September 30, 1977 were concerned with completion of the Eastland Survey, publishing the document and mailing it out to interested persons. The history of the Eastland study goes back to February 3, 1973, when Senator James O. Eastland of Mississippi and 41 co-sponsors introduced Senate Concurrent Resolution 11, with the purpose of obtaining in document form a comprehensive review of the opinions of the fishing community, including the consumers, as to what should be done in the form of legislation to enhance the coastal and offshore fishery resources of the U.S. The Resolution was enthusiastically supported throughout the Senate with numerous speeches which became part of the Congressional Record on this piece of legislation. On December 4, 1973, the House of Representatives considered the Resolution, which in the House carried the title of House Report No. 93-686, and was carried without opposition. The Senate acted on the House Report on December 21, 1973 and it then became the official policy of the U.S. Government.

In order to implement the Resolution, Congress authorized and appropriated \$500,000 and directed the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to distribute the funds to the three Commissions, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Pacific Marine Fisheries Commission. The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission was given \$200,000 for work in the Gulf, Caribbean and for certain inland fish farming operations such as catfish and crayfish. Also within the responsibility of the Gulf States was a survey of the federal agencies with fishery responsibility. This study was contracted to Cooper-Lybrand and was completed on September 15, 1975.

Work on the main project was begun in late 1975 and completed in late 1976. The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission accepted the final draft document at its Fall Meeting on October 20, 1976.

In late November and early December 1976, a conference of a selected group of participants in the local area surveys, convened in Washington, D.C. at the Airport Howard

Johnson Motel. For most of a week the conference, which had been divided into small groups and given specific topics to deal with, hammered away at policy statements which could be acceptable to the entire conference. The results of this meeting were given to Dr. Mason Lawrence to edit in final form for publication. Items that appeared to be controversial were again recirculated to obtain concurrence. Finally in March of 1977, the three compact Directors met with Dr. Mason Lawrence in Biloxi, Mississippi and made preparation for the printing. Few changes resulted from the meeting and the printed document was released in May 1977. It is a comprehensive document and has been widely recognized as a landmark in fisheries work. At a meeting in Washington, D.C. in August between the three compact Directors and certain legislative representatives it was decided that Senator Eastland would forward the document to the Secretary of Commerce for an approval and for suggestions for specific action on parts considered urgent. The matter is in the process as this is being written.

A major concern of the Commission during the period covered by this report has been the preparation of Management Plans for the shrimp and menhaden fisheries of the Gulf of Mexico. The contract for these plans (#03-6-042-35109) was awarded to the Mississippi Marine Conservation Commission by the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission as a result of funds made available from National Marine Fisheries Service through the State-Federal Program. The two contracts totalled \$37,125.00. The Mississippi Marine Conservation Commission subsequently passed the contract over to its primary research agency the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory. Mr. J. Y. Christmas and Dr. David Etzold were selected as leaders of the two projects. Considerable time was devoted to preparing for public meetings around the perimeter of the Gulf to obtain input into the problems in the shrimp and menhaden industry. The Menhaden Plan was completed in December of 1976 and the Shrimp Plan in May 1977. Immediately upon completion of these plans it became necessary to determine priorities and begin a process of implementation. One of the first steps was to change the menhaden fishing closing date to Friday following the 2nd Tuesday of October. The change was one of convenience and was not intended to materially affect landings.

With the passage of Public Law 94-265, and the formation of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council the responsibilities and work load of the Executive Director increased

tremendously. Not only does the Council's activities require about 25 percent of his time, but reading the back up material from the Council also requires a great deal of work.

The Executive Director in cooperation with the two other compact Directors made a concerted effort to obtain increased funding of Public Law 88-309. For the past decade this statute has been level funded during some of this nation's most devastating inflationary periods. The States have thus suffered severe restrictions and cutback in essential fishery research programs. This comes at a time when the data necessary for preparation of management plans is woefully lacking. This is even more disastrous in the Gulf where 90 percent of the species harvested in the 200 mile zone are dependent to a large extent on the estuarine areas for a part of their life cycle.

The effort to obtain increased funding resulted in the Senate adding \$1.2 million. The House did not add any and in conference the \$1.2 million was lost, primarily for lack of support. It was indeed a bitter disappointment. We shall try again.

The Director attended two Marine Fishery Advisory Committee meetings (MAFAC). The Committee advises the Administrator of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on marine fishery matters. The Gulf area has been woefully neglected in representation on this and other government committee's. The matter was discussed at the Fall meeting resulting in correspondence being directed to NOAA on this matter. The issue remains unresolved.

Minutes of the meeting and Resolutions adopted by this Commission will be included at the end of this report.



GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING
OCTOBER 20-21, 1976
MONTELEONE HOTEL
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

WEDNESDAY - OCTOBER 20, 1976

- 1:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M. - Registration
- 1:30 P.M. - 5:00 P.M. - Executive Committee Meeting
Harmon Shields, Commission Chairman
- 6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M. - Cocktail Hour
- 7:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M. - Banquet

THURSDAY - OCTOBER 21, 1976

- 9:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon - Technical Coordinating Committee
Dr. Ted Ford, Chairman
1. Call to Order - Dr. Ted Ford, Chairman
 2. Menhaden Sub-Committee - Dr. Lyle St. Amant
A. Progress Report from Menhaden Plan Task Force - J. Y. Christmas
 3. Progress Report from Shrimp Plan Task Force - J. Y. Christmas
 4. Other Business
- 1:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M. - Law Enforcement Committee
Col. Cliff Willis, Chairman
1. Call to Order - Col. Cliff Willis, Chairman
 2. Consideration of Fishery Problem Areas.
 3. Enforcement of Laws relating to stolen boats, motors, and other marine equipment.
 4. Cooperation with U.S. Government Enforcement Agencies.

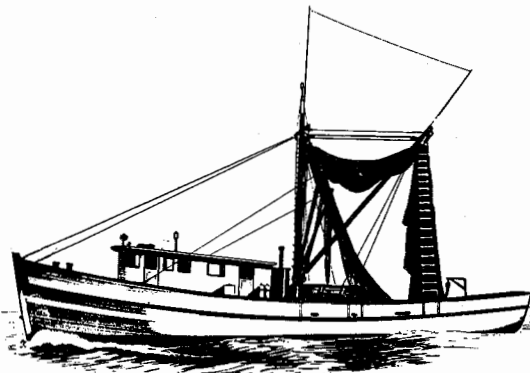
5. Consideration of the authority of proxies as it relates to the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission.
6. Research activities of the National Marine Fisheries Service as it relates to Article 7 of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Compact.

1:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M. - Obstruction Committee
 Carlton Jackson, Acting Chairman

1. Call to Order - Carlton Jackson, Acting Chairman
2. Presentation by National Marine Fisheries Service relating to underwater obstructions.
3. Other Business

2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M. - General Session
 Harmon Shields, Commission Chairman

1. Call to Order - Harmon Shields, Chairman
2. Presentation by the National Marine Fisheries Service on P.L. 94-265 (Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976)
3. Other Business as determined by Chairman
4. Meeting Adjourned.



LARGE SHRIMP TRAWLER

MINUTES
ANNUAL FALL MEETING
GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

OCTOBER 20, 1976
MONTELEONE HOTEL - NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

The Annual Fall Meeting of the Executive Committee was opened by the Executive Committee Chairman, Charles H. Lyles, on the afternoon of October 20, 1976. The meeting was held at the Monteleone Hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana. Minutes of the last meeting were distributed for review as were copies of the audit of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission through July of 1976. Mr. Harmon Shields, Commission Chairman, discussed the overall financial status of the Commission this past year commenting that it was a bad year from a financial standpoint. The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission lost its Executive Director, Joe Colson, and Mr. Carlton Jackson, his own administrative officer, was taking Mr. Colson's place on a temporary basis. Mr. Jackson will give an interim report later in the meeting.

Summarizing some of the events that have transpired in the past year, Mr. Shields stated that since we last met, the 200 mile limit bill, P.L. 94-265, had passed and is now the law of the land. The Federal Government, through the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Regional Management Council, will be bringing forth management plans for specific fisheries and the Councils thus far seem to be doing a good job. Mr. Shields further stated that "he had reluctantly reached the conclusion that, in view of developments since passage of Public Law 94-265, the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission is more important now than ever and that we need this Commission to keep our independence and the independence of the councils that some of us serve on. The importance of this Commission is greater than it has ever been before. I would like to see the Commission held together because we have a cooperative arrangement here that can achieve a great deal in the management of our fisheries in the inshore areas." Mr. Shields stated that "we need to do the best job that we can in the months ahead."

Mr. Shields then brought up the consideration of the Commission budget and the formula to be arrived at for the con-

tributions of each state since finances are critical in survival of the Commission. At this point Mr. Shields called on Mr. Mehos to discuss the formation of a budget. Mr. Mehos indicated that the uncertainty of how we are going to operate makes the development of a budget a very difficult thing. He further stated that the lack of any knowledge of the man who is going to head up this Commission and what we are going to have to pay makes preparation of the budget a difficult task. He stated that we really need to know something in the way of our financial status and he requested the report to be given by Mr. Carlton Jackson. Mr. Mehos stated that various methods of arriving at a formula could be considered but that it would be a good idea to take a look at the formula utilized in the 88-309 funds. In the meantime, we can perhaps find the right man to head up the staff. Then we can make some basic policy decisions and draft a proposal to the states regarding funds. We need to adopt a final budget at the Spring Meeting. Dr. St. Amant pointed out that we are using a sort of modified 88-309 plan at present. There are three maximum states in the Gulf. These are Louisiana, Texas and Florida. Mr. Mehos suggested that perhaps we might use a formula of the three top states - Texas, Louisiana and Florida - taking one quarter share each and Alabama and Mississippi accounting for one eighth each. Mr. Lyles spoke up and stated that when you consider production, the number one state is Louisiana and the number two is Mississippi, and that while we feel the influence of the Mississippi River in the production of fish and shellfish in our state waters, we nevertheless are a harvesting segment of that and from the standpoint of influencing the economy, this volume is influencing Mississippi's economy. Consider fish meal, for example. Louisiana and Mississippi produce all of the fish meal in the Gulf states and when you consider the volume and the distribution to the poultry business over the entire region, it has tremendous influence over the economy of all the Gulf states. Mr. Lyles stated that he felt that Mississippi should bear its fair share of the financial responsibility of the Commission.

There was considerable further discussion on the formula and its relative merits. There were those present who seemed to think that since all states shared equally in benefits of the Commission that an equal formula might be a better way of dividing it up. In the final analysis, Mr. Mehos agreed to work on the interim budget and to not rush to get

the top man. Mr. Angelle moved and Mr. Harmon Shields seconded a resolution that Louisiana, Texas and Florida contribute 25 percent each of the proposed budget and that Mississippi and Alabama pay twelve and a half percent each and that Alabama and Mississippi pay \$7,500.00 annually and Texas, Louisiana and Florida pay \$15,000.00 each. The vote was unanimous.

Dr. St. Amant raised the question that, before proposing a budget, we need to know where we are going from here and how we are going to operate. At this point, there was considerable discussion of Public Law 94-265 and what it does regulate and what it does not regulate. It was pointed out that not all fisheries are included under Public Law 94-265 and if we do not do something about caring for these fisheries and managing them for a sustained yield, the Federal Government most certainly will take over this responsibility.

It was also pointed out that the Gulf region needs some input from the federal level. There is need for research dollars. We have thirty-one percent of the research money. It was pointed out that there is a need to interface with the other commissions for a common good and for more research dollars. Here in the Gulf it is particularly important for the Commission to interface with the council in order to see that funds are programmed into the right area and in an amount needed to do the job. Mr. Mehos pointed out the need to interface with the coastal commissions - Sea Grant and other agencies, and that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission was the proper agency to do this as well as whatever representation is to be made to the United States Congress.

The Commission also serves a useful function in dealing with other agencies, keeping track of legislation and other federal agencies, and particularly in keeping all of the commissioners informed of the activities. Mr. Shields suggested that he did not think that the Commission should accept grant funds from the Regional Management Council for operational purposes. He further stated that if funds are received by the Commission, it would be a payment for services rendered. Mr. Mehos pointed out that it would not preclude contracting with the council for a specific service on a cost basis.

At this point, Mr. Carlton Jackson was called on to render a report on the finances for the past year. He distributed a copy of the auditor's report to all present. He said that

the requirements for a financial report would be part of the administrative manual. Mr. Jackson pointed out the move of the executive offices to Room 203 of the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission building. The rental fee is fifty dollars per month plus utilities. Mr. Jackson also brought out that he received a letter from Mr. Frank Bruno requesting a sum of \$1,500.00 for damages and non-payment of rent at the old address. Mr. Mehos moved that the Commission adopt the recommendations made by the auditor and that Mr. Carlton Jackson be commended for doing a fine job. This was seconded by Charles Lyles. The vote was unanimous. Mr. Jackson stated that he would be happy to help on any basis he could.

Dr. St. Amant indicated that Charles Lyles had indicated an interest in the job as Executive Director and would like to hear an expression from him. Mr. Lyles gave the Commission some of his background and interest in the job. He said that he would be willing to take any salary offered to him but that he must operate out of Mississippi. He said the area is of prime consideration. Dr. St. Amant questioned him as to how long he thought he would work for the Commission if he was selected for the job and he replied "about three years, possibly more depending on conditions." Dr. St. Amant said that it may take a change in the by-laws to change the location of the Executive Director and thought that it would be important to know how long he would be able to take the job. Dr. St. Amant asked Mr. Lyles that if political conditions were resolved in his state, would he stay or return. Mr. Lyles indicated that his decision at this stage was irrevocable and that he would accept the Commission position if he were offered the job. Mr. Mehos moved that this Commission make an offer to Charles Lyles for the job and the acceptance must be made by December 31. The salary for the Executive Director was discussed and \$17,000.00 was recommended. Mr. Mehos moved that this Commission hereby offer Charles Lyles the Executive Director position of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission at a salary of \$17,000.00 per year and said offer to be kept open until December 31, 1976. Vote was unanimous.

Leroy Wieting moved that the 1978 annual meeting in October be held in the Tampa area. Motion was seconded by Charles Lyles. Vote was unanimous.

This was necessary to coordinate with the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute. It was moved by Charles Lyles and seconded by Leroy Wieting that J. Burton Angelle be named Chairman of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission for the coming year and Nat Sonnier of Alabama be named Vice-Chairman.

The following Resolutions were approved by the Commission:

1. Commending Wayne Swingle on the Eastland Survey.
2. Commending Joe Colson for his contribution.
3. Recommending extension and increased funding for the Commercial Fisheries Research and Development Act which provides federal aid to the states.
4. Recommending that future federal budget allocations for extended jurisdiction include funding for the state management role under P. L. 94-265.
5. Recommending that the state-federal fisheries management program be continued to cover work on species not covered by P. L. 94-265.
6. Recommending changes in the FY 77 budget for extended jurisdiction similar to those expressed in your letter to Mr. Schoning.
7. Commending Mr. Harmon Shields and Carlton Jackson for taking over the Commission operations during the absence of an executive director.

There being no further business the Commission adjourned.



GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL SPRING MEETING
MARCH 16-18, 1977
BILOXI HILTON HOTEL
BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI

WEDNESDAY - MARCH 16, 1977

- 1:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M. - Registration
- 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon - Industry Advisory Committee
- 8:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon - Federal Aid Coordinators Workshop,
Gulf Coast Research Laboratory
- 1:30 P.M. - 5:00 P.M. - Sea Grant Committee
David Veal
- 1:30 P.M. - 5:00 P.M. - Technical Coordinating Committee
- 1:30 P.M. - 5:00 P.M. - Law Coordination Committee
- 1:30 P.M. - 5:00 P.M. - Law Enforcement Committee
- 1:30 P.M. - 5:00 P.M. - Executive Committee
- 6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M. - Chairman's Reception

THURSDAY - MARCH 17, 1977

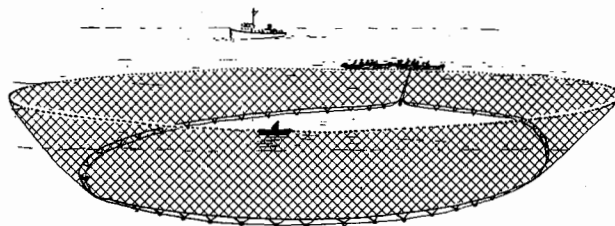
- 8:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M. - Registration
- 9:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. - General Session
J. Burton Angelle, Chairman
- 9:15 A.M. - John Mehos - The Gulf Regional Fishery Management - Its origin, responsibility and functions in managing Gulf fish populations for a sustaining yield. An interface, the Council and the States
- 9:40 A.M. - H. Gary Knight - The work of the scientific and statistical committee in support of the Council and the States.

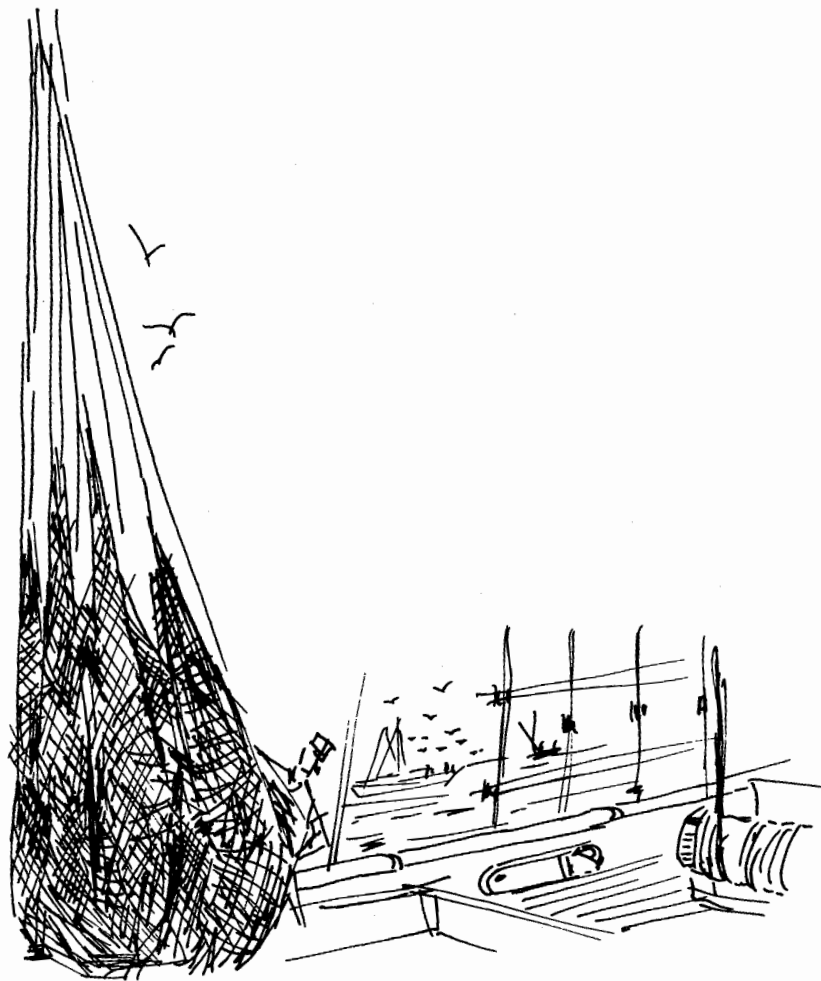
- 10:05 A.M. - Edward W. Swindell - Chairman, Industry Advisory Committee, Gulf Regional Fishery Management Council. Advisory panels and their role in providing advice and input into the Council.
- 10:45 A.M. - Captain B. J. Putnam - How the recreational groups can make their views and wants known to the Council.
- 11:10 A.M. - William H. Stevenson - Regional Director, National Marine Fisheries Service. The National Marine Fisheries Service - Its responsibilities to the Council and the States.
- 11:35 A.M. - Admiral Winford W. Barrow - Commander 8th Coast Guard District, New Orleans, Louisiana. Enforcement of Public Law 94-265.
- 1:30 P.M. - John W. Hodnett - Commissioner, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.
- 1:45 P.M. - Harmon Shields - Director, Florida Department of Natural Resources.
- 2:00 P.M. - J. Burton Angelle - Director, Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission.
- 2:15 P.M. - J. E. Thomas - Acting Director, Mississippi Marine Conservation Commission.
- 2:30 P.M. - Terrance Leary - Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.
- 2:45 P.M. - Dr. David Veal - Sea Grant Advisory Service. Sea Grant - Vehicle for communication between fishermen and regulatory agencies.
- 3:00 P.M. - Robert Mauerman - Director, Texas Shrimp Association. Will management insure utilization.
- 3:20 P.M. - Dr. Roger Anderson - Director, Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Research Foundation, Inc. How the Foundation can assist in development of Gulf Fisheries.

- 3:40 P.M. - Harvey Bullis - Director, National Marine Fisheries Services, Southeast Fisheries Center. Gulf resources not now being used.
- 4:00 P.M. - William H. Stevenson - Regional Director, National Marine Fisheries Service. A buyout package for the menhaden fishery.
- 7:00 P.M. - Till - Banquet

FRIDAY, MARCH 18, 1977

- 8:00 P.M. - 9:00 A.M. - Executive Breakfast
- 9:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon - General Session
 - Harry Seagran - The southeastern utilization center and plans to better utilize our fishery resources.
 - Spencer Garrett - A report on the molluscan shellfish study by NMFS.
 - Don Geagan - Summary report of the Grants Administration Branch.
 - J. Burton Angelle - The Chairman's Report. Resolutions reported as adopted and other business of the Commission
- 1:00 P.M. - 2:30 P.M. - Gulf State-Federal Fisheries Management Board.
 - Meeting Adjourned.





MINUTES
ANNUAL SPRING MEETING
GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

MARCH 18, 1977
BILOXI HILTON - BILOXI, MISSISSIPPI

Dr. St. Amant called for adoption of the Agenda. John Mehos moved adoption, Tom Moore seconded - carried. Adoption of the Minutes of the October 20th meeting was moved by Nat Sonnier and seconded by John Mehos - motion passed. The Chairman then asked the Director to explain the bookkeeping system. The Director explained that we now have a system, rather simple, of recording the expenditures. Briefly these are:

1. Set up a Cash Receipt Ledger, Cash Disbursement Ledger and a Payroll Ledger to begin March 1, 1977. Posting will be from the checkbook using the Chart of Accounts prepared by the CPA office, at least once a month.
2. In the past the CPA office kept the ledgers and books with the Commission Secretary going there periodically to post the books. Now the Secretary is in full charge of the books and they are kept in the Commission office.
3. The Chairman of the Commission will be sent a Statement of Cash Receipts and Disbursements which is a breakdown of monies received and paid by the Commission, once a month.

A financial statement was presented and made part of the minutes. The possibility of having the Chairman's tenure run concurrently with the fiscal year was raised by the Executive Director and after considerable discussion it was decided it would be best to change the fiscal year of the Commission from July 1 through June 30 to October 1 through September 30 of each year. Nat Sonnier moved that the fiscal year run from October 1 through September 30 which would be concurrent with the Chairman's tenure. Seconded by John Mehos - carried.

The matter of permitting the Chairman's proxy to serve as Chairman was rejected without vote.

The question of whether not to bond the Director and the Chairman was discussed and it was suggested that we bond the positions and in this way no change will be necessary. The question of a budget formula was raised and it was the unanimous opinion of those present that this had already been done and that the formula is Texas, Florida and Louisiana - \$15,000 each, Alabama and Mississippi - \$7,500 each.

The Executive Director requested permission to purchase a printing calculator for use in accounting - approximately \$150.00. Nat Sonnier moved for approval, seconded by John Mehos - passed.

Item 9 on the Agenda dealt with guidelines the Director must follow in contacting Congress. It was pointed out, after some discussion that the Director should exercise judgment in these matters and that if there is any doubt he should call the Commissioners by phone.

The Director explained the plan of the three compact Director's to support the Leggett Bill (HR4576). Testimony before the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee will be required of the Executive Director and perhaps 1 or 2 state people in support of this. Commissioners agreed this is an important piece of legislation and should be supported.

Other bills listed in the minutes were discussed briefly.

John Mehos moved that a resolution be prepared to support the AuCoin Bill (HR 2564) on foreign investment in U.S. fisheries, seconded by Tom Moore - passed.

The Executive Director raised the question of goals for the coming year. The consensus seemed to be that the Executive Director should be alert to any development affecting Gulf States and should call this to the attention of the Commissioners immediately.

Wayne Swingle made a brief report on the Eastland Study stating that the Gulf South Research Institute had completed its work and now only the national publication needs completion and publishing. There remains \$13.6 thousand in Gulf funds, a part of which will be required to pay for the National Conference, November 30, December 1 and 2, 1976.

The Executive Director requested permission to dispose of publications in the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Building that are part of the files of the Commission. He pointed out that the Library of the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory is available and that maintaining these publications in a suitable system constitutes a major task. Conway LeBleu requested that we look into the possibility of storing microfilm of same at the State Archives in Baton Rouge. The Director agreed to look into the matter. John Mehos moved that we clean the files, including publications and old correspondence and that the Executive Director is to use his own judgement in disposing of same. Motion seconded by Tom Moore - motion carried.

John Mehos moved that a permanent minute book be prepared and that the minutes of each meeting be made a permanent record of the Commission, seconded by Nat Sonnier - motion carried.

John Mehos moved that the bookkeeping system be adopted. Seconded by Nat Sonnier - motion carried.

John Mehos moved that we draw up a 15 month budget, working from the current funding - that we also draw up a change in the By-Laws making the fiscal year October 1 through September 30 of each year, seconded by Nat Sonnier - motion passed.

Mr. D. Y. Aska, Florida Sea Grant Advisory Service presented a report on the publications of the snapper-grouper colloquium to the committee and thanked the Commission for its cooperation in this matter.

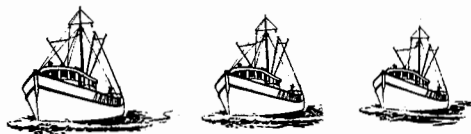
The Executive Director then pointed out that the Spring Program for 1978, March 14-17, 1978 (tentative) will be held in Brownsville, Texas and the subject will be the mackerel's. Mexico and Cuba (?) will be invited since they too are exploiting this population of fish.

The Executive Director explained the action taken by the three Commissions in support of an increase in funding for the Gulf Regional Fishery Management Councils. While it is not likely that we will get the full \$3.0 million requested, there is a good possibility that about half of that will be forthcoming for operation of the Councils and for support of the State Directors.

Nat Sonnier brought up the question of the Secretary's salary and stated that since we had been plagued with poor help, the salary should be raised by \$500 now and in that way expect better performance. Based on performance the Commission could again consider the matter in October. John Mehos seconded and the motion carried.

There being no further business the Commission adjourned. The following Resolutions were passed and made a part of the minutes of the Commission.

1. Recommended that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission cooperate with the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Mexican Fisheries Service and the fisheries services of other countries in devising the best available data bases to cooperatively establish sound management practices for the reasonable and rational use of the fishes of the Gulf of Mexico.
2. Recommended the support of the AuCoin Bill (HR 2564).
3. Recommended support of HR 4576 to increase funding.
4. Recommended that the Congress request necessary funds to perform the feasibility study of utilizing fresh water from the Mississippi River on a seasonal basis and to support passage of such funds.
5. Recommended that the Port Aransas Laboratory be continued and funded properly.



STATE ACTIVITIES

OCTOBER 1976 - OCTOBER 1977

ALABAMA

FISHERY SURVEYS

A survey was completed on marine recreational fishing in Alabama. During 1975 recreational fishermen spent \$5 million while catching 8,027,780 pounds of saltwater fishes from the inshore and offshore waters of the state. The private boat fishery landed 76% of these landings and the private and charter boat fishery each landed about four times as many pounds per man-hour as did the pier or shoreline fishery. Commercial finfish landings from the area surveyed during the same period were 11,221,400 pounds landed in Alabama, 1,418,200 pounds landed in Florida and 163,416,500 landed in Mississippi.

More than 3000 fish were tagged to obtain information on migratory patterns. Snapper showed little movement from the area where tagged. Pompano and Spanish mackerel moved down along the Florida coast during late fall. Redfish released along the Gulf beaches were later caught within the bays and sounds.

SHRIMP

A continuous shrimp monitoring program was started in May. Beam trawl sampling stations were selected to collect post-larvae which may be later correlated with summer harvest. A PL index has shown some promise in predicting commercial catches in other areas. Juvenile sampling allowed better management and certain areas were opened and closed during the year based upon this monitoring. The shrimp biologist was assigned as liaison to the shrimp management plan for the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council.

Commercial landings during 1977 were the highest on record, exceeding 1976 by some 5 million pounds heads on.

OYSTERS

The western edge of Cedar Point Reef was planted with

clam shells in 1975 under P.L. 88-309(4b) funds. Production from this area during 1977 was the highest since 1967 and was instrumental in convincing oyster fishermen the value of clam shell. All areas planted under 88-309(4b) since 1972 were evaluated under a federal aid project. In certain areas currents are strong enough to wash clam shell off the reefs into the mud but in most areas clam shell makes better cultch material than reef oyster shell. Alabama oyster fishermen now prefer clam shell over shop oyster shell because clam shell produces mostly single oysters requiring less culling.

Studies in using oyster dredges to expose existing buried shell for cultch material showed that dredging disrupted the bottom causing the shell to settle into the bottom with a subsequent loss of relief followed by an accumulation of silt. Reefs on more firm substrate than is typical of Alabama reefs may benefit from cultivation.

FISH CULTURE

Culture studies were conducted on pompano, rainbow trout, bull minnows (Gulf killifish), red drum, and white and brown shrimp. Red drum showed good potential, growing from 1/2 ounce to 1/2 pound in 152 days. Studies on raising bull minnows for bait produced up to 700 pounds per acre and indicated that this species could be grown commercially. Interest in pompano mariculture, which declined because this species cannot be grown to a 1 pound size without overwintering, received some stimulation when pond raised pompano 1/2 pound and smaller were sold for \$2.39 a pound through a marketing study by Auburn University. Polyculture of pompano with brown shrimp showed considerable promise in production of these valuable species. Rainbow trout have been raised successfully for several years during the winter months when ponds would otherwise be unutilized. Rainbow trout also sold for \$2.39 a pound at a retail outlet at Auburn University.

ANADROMOUS FISH

During the year 1.1 million striped bass fingerlings were released into the coastal waters of Alabama. This is the second consecutive year that more than 1 million fingerlings have been released from the recently completed hatchery facilities at Gulf Shores. A total of 2.3 million striped bass have been released into the coastal waters of Alabama since 1974. Striped bass are becoming established in major tidal systems and catches

are becoming relatively common.

ARTIFICIAL REEFS

Under the artificial reef program, the Marine Resources Division sunk a 105-foot tug boat, a 36-foot shrimp boat and 1500 tons of concrete pipe in the Gulf and constructed an inshore reef of car tires. Snapper fishing on the artificial reefs was very productive during the year.

LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

A total of 418 arrests were made on seafood violations. The courts were extremely cooperative as the conviction rate was 96%. Almost for the first time, district courts took seafood violations seriously fining many violators \$500.00, the maximum allowed by law. Effective law enforcement has greatly strengthened the state's management efforts. Division enforcement officers participated in numerous search and rescue missions and in surveillance activities.



FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF MARINE RESOURCES
BUREAU OF MARINE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Bureau personnel participated in task forces that developed Fishery Management Plans for shrimp and menhaden.

A cooperative tagging program with the National Marine Fisheries Service and several other states was continued. King mackerel were tagged and released in Florida and Texas to provide a better understanding of trans-Gulf migration.

A taxonomic and ecological study of fishes of the family Sciaenidae from the west Florida Shelf was initiated. These fishes were captured during Project Hourglass, a 20-month systematic sampling program extending out to water depths of 73 meters.

Shellfish propagation activities continued, with plantings of reefs in Brevard County (27 acres) and Bay County (10 acres). These reefs consist of oyster and scallop shells to which the young oysters will attach. A comprehensive atlas of waters approved for shellfish harvesting was completed, and distributed to local Florida Marine Patrol offices, County Health Departments, and Department of Environmental Regulation offices. The Comprehensive Shellfish and Blue Crab Control Code was established. This new code provides that all shucked shellfish products be labeled with an open terminal sales date (like milk) rather than a coded canning date. This will greatly improve shellfish market quality and consumer confidence.

Studies continued on data from 20,000 tagged stone crabs, for determination of migrations, abundance, and spawning periodicity.



LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES
SEAFOOD DIVISION

Pursuant to the provisions of Act 513 (Reorganization of State Government) of the 1976 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is comprised of the Office of Secretary, the Office of Management and Finance, the Office of Coastal and Marine Resources, and the Office of Wildlife.

The Seafood Division is the successor to the Oysters, Water Bottoms and Seafoods Division, and is placed under the Office of Coastal and Marine Resources.

The Seafood Division maintains, protects, and manages approximately one-half million acres of state waterbottoms essential to the continuation of the oyster industry in Louisiana. Regulation of these areas is through facilities established adjacent to primary natural reef areas of the state. The division annually supplements and enhances production by planting shells or establishing cultch material for seed oysters. Seasons for taking both sack and seed oysters are established and regulated.

Monitoring of various hydrological parameters with constant recording meters was continued and biological samples with specialized gear were continued on a regularly scheduled basis.

At the Division's Marine Laboratory, located on Grand Terre Island, experiments continued on speckled sea trout, red drum, salt water shrimp, menhaden and oysters. Numerous field trips, tours and lectures were given to visiting college and high school groups.

Striped bass were raised in brackish ponds, located at Grand Terre Island, for release in the Barataria Bay complex. While in the ponds, the fish were studied for growth rates and survival. Approximately 45,000 fingerlings were stocked in the Barataria Bay system as part of a statewide restocking program.

Division personnel also cooperated in a mark-recapture

study of Spanish and king mackerel; this was part of a Gulf and South Atlantic states tagging program.

A study of the seabob was undertaken for the purpose of determining seasonal occurrence and abundance and to correlate selected hydrological parameters to abundance.

Triangulation stations (monuments) were placed in the important oyster producing parishes of Plaquemines and St. Bernard. Approximately 150 monuments were placed in these areas. The placing of these monuments brings approximately 18,000 additional waterbottom acres under monument control.

A study to establish oyster density and distribution on state seed grounds, to determine areas of heavy fishing activity as it relates to density and distribution, and to correlate selected hydrological parameters to abundance, was completed during this period. Results are in press.

Work continued on the study of commercial finfish in coastal Louisiana. The objectives of this project are to estimate relative abundance of speckled trout and red drum, to determine seasonal and areal abundance, and to delineate movement and migration.

A survey of the recreational shrimp and finfish harvest of the Vermilion Bay area and its impact on commercial fishery resources was undertaken to determine the effects of recreational pressure on the finfish and shrimp resources.

A white and brown shrimp mark-recapture program was initiated in cooperation with Louisiana State University and the National Marine Fisheries Service, for the purpose of obtaining growth data and to quantitatively define this growth rate. An alternate objective is to determine natural mortality.

The brown pelican reintroduction program, initiated in 1968, was continued. One hundred Florida pelicans were placed on the Chandeleur Island chain located in southeast Louisiana. It appears that this group of birds has established a colony on this group of islands, and mortality (to date) has been low.

MISSISSIPPI
MISSISSIPPI MARINE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Landings of commercial marine fish and shellfish in Mississippi during the fiscal year 1976-1977 amounted to 242.7 million pounds valued at \$23.6 million, representing a 19.5 per cent increase volume and a 40.1 percent increase in value over the prior fiscal year. Mississippi ranked second among the Gulf states and fifth in the nation in total landings. The following is a brief summary of each of the major fisheries in Mississippi for the fiscal year 1977.

MENHADEN

Menhaden landings were 225 million pounds, which represented an increase of 19.6 percent in volume. The value increase was 39 percent, amounting to a total of \$9.8 million. The greater percentage increase in value was due to an increase in the prices of all three menhaden products (fish meal, fish oil, fish solubles). Oil yields were lower than normal this year. The overall yield for the three products was approximately 23 percent of the total gross weight of the fish.

SHRIMP

Heads-on landings of shrimp were 10.9 million pounds representing a value of \$10.7 million, an increase of 45.5 percent and 46.3 percent, respectively. Low rainfall, high salinities and warm water provided an excellent year. Over 80 percent of the catch consisted of brown shrimp. The 1976 brown shrimp season was opened on June 9, with catches in the Mississippi Sound consistently above average in quantity. The 1977 season was opened on June 13. Analysis of data collected by Gulf Coast Research Laboratory Fisheries Assessment and Monitoring personnel indicated that the shrimp would be of sufficient size to open the season by May 30. However, after considering socio-economic factors influencing the optimal yield the Mississippi Marine Conservation Commission set the shrimp season for June 13. The main factors considered were a severe ice shortage and the low value of small shrimp in Louisiana. It was felt that greater economic benefit would result by waiting until the shrimp were larger and more valuable.

OYSTERS

Landings of 1.6 million pounds of meats valued at \$1.3 million were up 28.4 percent in volume and 47.2 percent in value over the same period in 1975-76. The bulk of Mississippi catches were used by firms producing raw shucked oysters. Due to a sharp market demand, raw shucked oysters brought very high prices in the last quarter of 1976.

In an attempt to replenish and revitalize the Mississippi oyster fishery, the Mississippi Marine Conservation Commission relayed 28,800 barrels of oysters from restricted areas to approved state reefs. Sixty-five hundred barrels were transferred from restricted waters in the Gautier-Pascagoula area to approved tonging grounds in the Bayou Cumbest areas. The remainder of the oysters were transferred from polluted areas of Biloxi Bay to the dredging reefs in Pass Christian. In addition, the state planted 4,335 cubic yards of clam shells for cultch material to expand portions of "St. Joe" and "Buccaneer" reefs off Waveland.

CRABS

Landings of hard blue crabs were 1.3 million pounds, valued at \$343.8 thousand, representing a 1.4 percent decrease in volume, but a 34.6 percent increase in value. Prices for crabs were high throughout the year and increased significantly in the last quarter of 1976.

Soft-shell and peeler-crab landings for 1976-77 were 300 pounds, valued at \$240. No data are available for the 1975-76 period. Based on the popularity of soft-shell crabs in coastal seafood restaurants, it appears the landings data are incomplete and inaccurate.

EDIBLE FINFISH

Landings of edible finfish were 4 million pounds valued at \$1.5 million, a decrease of 14.4 percent in volume and 2.1 percent in value. Catches of mullet, redfish and sharks were markedly increased; however, landings of snapper, white trout, mackerel and pompano declined significantly.

INDUSTRIAL FISH

Landings of 86.2 million pounds of bottom fish, used primarily for making pet food, was valued at \$2.6 million, an

increase of 9.6 percent in volume and 12.6 percent in value over the previous year. Canned pet food is the most important canned fishery product in Mississippi.

RECREATIONAL FISHING

Sportsfishing followed the usual seasonal fishing patterns. Catches of cobia (lemonfish) were better than the previous year and there were many large catches of redfish. Sports fishermen took advantage of the artificial reefs created by sunken "Liberty Ships" to land some nice catches of small snapper, grouper, spadefish and several other species. Salt-water sports fishermen contribute significantly to Mississippi sales and income through the purchase of bait, tackle, boats, motors and other items associated with this fine sport.

Unfortunately, adequate data on the marine recreational catch is not available. There is presently no accurate list of marine recreational fishermen in Mississippi because the state does not require a marine fishing license.

It would be wise to consider the possibility of requiring marine recreational anglers to purchase licenses similar to those required by fresh water fishermen. In the long run it would be of direct benefit to the fishermen in two respects. First, it would provide additional funds for research needed to provide information with which to better manage both recreational and commercial fisheries and second, it would provide more accurate data on the number of people involved in marine recreational fishing.

ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

Enforcement activities were markedly increased in FY77. A record number of 251 arrests which resulted in \$10,699.00 in fines was recorded. Additionally, 81 percent of the arrests resulted in fines. This is opposed to FY76 where 110 arrests resulted in \$1,680.00 in fines with an arrest/conviction percentage of 58 percent.

The increase in arrests was mainly attributed to an increased number of patrols. Patrols were stepped up during the latter part of May and the first part of June to prevent illegal harvest of shrimp before they could reach the legal size of 68 shrimp per pound. These patrols continued throughout shrimp season; however, arrests during the season were

mainly for violations of closed areas and illegal gear.

Additionally, patrol efforts were increased in restricted areas to prevent the illegal harvest of "polluted" oysters. Regular patrols were maintained on open oyster reefs to prevent the use of dredges on tonging grounds, to enforce culling laws, and to prevent other violations.



TEXAS
PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

COASTAL FISHERIES

Coastal Fisheries activities, divided into Finfish, Shellfish and Environmental Management programs, provide essential management information on finfish populations, sports and commercial finfish harvests, shrimp fishery management, oyster reef rehabilitation and fish propagation research. Data from these studies are available for use in all coastal counties.

Coastal Fisheries personnel provide expertise and field assistance through interagency contracts and cooperative programs with the General Land Office, the Texas Department of Water Resources, Texas A & M Extension Service, National Marine Fisheries Service and the Texas Coastal and Marine Council.

FINFISH PROGRAM

The goal of the finfish program is to investigate, conserve, enhance, and manage the Texas coastal finfish resources. Trends in abundance of important species and harvest by sport and commercial fishermen are monitored in order to manage effectively the fishery stocks. Additionally, research on marine fish propagation develops techniques and procedures for enhancement of the fishery resource through stocking.

The second year of the bay finfish monitoring program ended in September. Quantitative trend data on finfish populations in Galveston, East Matagorda, Matagorda, San Antonio, Aransas, Corpus Christi, Upper Laguna Madre, and Lower Laguna Madre were gathered through a highly structured and standardized sampling program. A total of 440 experimental gill net, 192 trammel net, 64 bag seine, and 16 rotenone samples were made in the eight bay systems. Fish tags were implanted in several thousand game species and these fishes released in the area of capture. Return of these tags by fishermen provides vital information on movement, territoriality, behavior, and growth of game species.

The third year of the sport and commercial harvest monitoring program was completed in August. Through this investigation, information on the recreational fishery is generated

for seasonal harvest of each game species in the coastal bay systems, the average length and weight of the species, the species composition of the catch, the catch per unit of fishing effort, the angling pressure in man-hours and number of trips, the Texas county or state of angler origin, the proportion of successful fishing parties, and the catchability of different bait types. The monthly commercial harvest of the resource is also compiled for each by system along with the average size of each species.

About 2.5 million striped bass fry were received at the Palacios Marine Fisheries Research Station and placed in ponds. A total of 979,000 fingerlings were harvested. San Antonio Bay was stocked with 222,000 fingerlings, Sabine Lake with 10,000, Corpus Christi Bay with 3,000 and inland waters with the remainder. One striped bass, 13 inches in length, from the 1976 stocking was recaptured by a recreational fisherman near Espiritu Santo. About 139,775 black drum fingerlings were produced at the facility and stocked in inland waters. Research on the life history of sciaenid fishes resulted in description of the eggs and larvae of black drum, sand sea-trout, and spotted seatrout. Current studies also include techniques for spawning southern flounder and interspecific competition of native and non-native white shrimp.

SHELLFISH PROGRAM

The goal of the shellfish program is to preserve, manage, utilize and, where possible, to expand the shellfish resource of the State of Texas. Studies were carried out on brown shrimp, white shrimp, oysters, habitat improvement and on shrimp and finfish in the Gulf of Mexico.

Brown shrimp growth during spring was intensively monitored to establish the starting date and duration of the closed Gulf season. The season allows a portion of brown shrimp leaving the bays to reach a larger size before harvest. Samples indicated that the 1977 brown shrimp crop grew slower and thus left the bays later than in 1976. The standard June 1 through July 15 Gulf closed season was retained and samples from aboard the Department's research vessel, Western Gulf, verified the later movement. Gulf sampling during July indicated that central coast populations were equal to or greater than in 1976 when the value of shrimp landed exceeded \$100 million for the first time.

Studies to determine abundance and growth of white shrimp indicated that shrimp less than 1/2 inch long in early June reached legal count size (4-1/2 inches) by the opening, August 15 - December 16 fall season. The largest percentage of legal size white shrimp on bay fishing grounds before and during the open season were found in August through October. Movement of large shrimp to the Gulf coupled with migration of small shrimp from nursery areas reduced the percentage of legal size shrimp in major bays during the cooler months of the season.

Studies in the Gulf of Mexico with a large mesh fish trawl provided data on numerous adult fish species. The black drum, southern kingfish, sand seatrout and Atlantic sharpnose shark were the most abundant species by weight. The probable black drum spawning area in the Gulf was located in the 11-15 fathom depth zone from February through April. Shrimp trawls were used to evaluate shrimping regulations and determine the types of finfish found on the white shrimp grounds.

The oyster program was involved in the inspection and approval of five new lease applications and the issuance of 68 transplant and harvest permits. There was also an experimental, supervised operation during the closed season in which private oyster boats transplanted 635 sacks of oyster from polluted water to open water where they would be available for harvesting during the fall season. Department personnel also transplanted disease-free oysters from Port Isabel to Corpus Christi Bay for brood stock. Cultch plantings and reef cultivation tests as means of increasing oyster spat setting were continued. About 450 bushels of clean, dry oyster shell were planted and two plots were cultivated to reduce shell fouling and enhance spat setting.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Six artificial reefs, made from used tires, were constructed in Sabine Lake, Galveston, Tres Palacios, Aransas and Corpus Christi Bays. Over 10,000 tires were baled and placed in shallow bay waters to improve fishing for saltwater fishermen. Buoys and PVC pipe reef markers were maintained on natural oyster reefs to provide easy location for anglers fishing those areas. Map showing marker locations were made available for public distribution.

Vegetation transplants were conducted in Redfish, Aransas, Corpus Christi and Dickinson Bays. Saltmarsh cordgrass and black mangroves were successfully transplanted in areas experiencing erosion. The saltmarsh cordgrass was successful in stopping sediment erosion. Some plant mortality was caused from shifting spoil sediments, drifting dead vegetation and low temperatures.

A study began in January 1977 to determine the effects of environmental factors (primarily freshwater inflow) on Texas commercial shrimp populations. The completed report will relate the abundance of shrimp in major estuaries to freshwater inflow.

SEAFOOD MARKETING

The redesigned seafood marketing program placed emphasis on expansion of consumer services. Participation of retail cooperators in the material distribution program was increased. About 300 retail seafood markets have qualified for the recipe card program. The program staff presented 23 seafood television presentations and 35 workshops on seafood handling and preparation. Materials were distributed at trade shows, conventions, and professional food service activities. Direct advisory service to the consumer and retailer was provided to aid in selection and merchandising quality products. Retailers were continually supplied with current operation manuals, posters, brochures, and recipes.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The passage of P.L. 94-265, the Fishery Conservation Act, has had substantial effect on the activities of the Branch. The fisheries of the new Federal zone extending seaward from the outer limit of State jurisdiction to 200 miles in the Gulf of Mexico are managed by the Gulf Regional Council composed of representatives of the five Gulf states. Technical assistance on the management of offshore fisheries is provided to the Council by the staff of the Gulf states fishery agencies and the National Marine Fisheries Service. The Branch Chief works with Texas Council members as Department liaison, which involves about five man-days per month. Staff members provide technical expertise on the various fishery considerations, which also involves about five man-days per month.

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
SOUTHEAST REGION

ANNUAL SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

During the period from October 1976 through September 1977, many changes were implemented in the Southeast Region, National Marine Fisheries Service. Many of these were brought about by the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-265). The Act Authorized Regional Fishery Management Councils, three of which lie in the geographic area of the Southeast Region - The Gulf, South Atlantic, and Carribbean Councils.

The Councils have now completed a year of operations and are facing difficult, substantive issues. As a voting member of the three Councils in the Southeast, the Regional Director or his designee has participated in the work of the Councils.

In order to respond to the needs of extended jurisdiction, NMFS in the Southeast underwent a major reorganization. More responsibility was delegated to the field from Washington. The four research centers in the Southeast were consolidated into one - the Southeast Fisheries Center.

The SEFC is comprised of the Center Director, his staff, and eight supporting laboratories. The Center headquarters is located in Miami, Florida, near to the geographic middle of the area of SEFC responsibilities. The area in which SEFC is responsible for NOAA/NMFS research extends from the U.S. - Mexican border through the Gulf of Mexico and the Carribbean Seas to the Atlantic Coast of South America (to the southern extent used by U.S. fishermen) and up the U.S. Atlantic Coast to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. Location from west to east and a brief summary of 1976-1977 programs of SEFC laboratories are:

(1) Port Aransas Laboratory - Port Aransas, Texas. Marine recreational fisheries and reimbursable studies for the Federal Energy Administration and the Bureau of Land Management.

(2) Galveston Laboratory - Galveston, Texas. Reimbursable environmental assessment research project of the Buccaneer Oil Field for the Environmental Protection Agency; reim-

bursable research study of the south Texas outer continental shelf for the Bureau of Land Management; aquaculture research; shrimp fishery assessment studies.

(3) National Fisheries Engineering Laboratory - Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. Satellite applications and data management.

(4) Pascagoula Laboratory - Pascagoula, Mississippi. Groundfish surveys; industrial bottomfish and foodfish surveys; shrimp fleet discard survey; sea turtle conservation; shrimp separator trawl.

(5) Panama City Laboratory - Panama City, Florida. Mac-kerel and bluefish migration and yield studies; impact of habitat alterations; sedimentation and hydrologic studies of St. Andrew Bay estuary.

(6) Miami Laboratory - Miami, Florida. Atlantic bluefin tuna program; oceanic gamefish investigations; MARMAP I ichthyoplankton surveys; MARMAP II invertebrates; research on population dynamics of Brazil - Guiana shrimp; biological studies of sea turtles.

(7) College Park/Charleston Laboratory - College Park, Maryland/ Charleston, South Carolina. Improved public health vectors; identification of nutritive requirements of selected aquatic species; evaluation of nutrient factors in industrial fishery products to improve processing and marketing; development of technological information base; increase public awareness of and confidence in fishery products.

(8) Beaufort Laboratory - Beaufort, North Carolina. Biological effects of contaminants; structure and function of estuarine ecosystems; studies of coastal pelagic fishes; research of offshore bottom and reef fishes; Atlantic and Gulf menhaden fishery studies.

In addition to its eight laboratories, the SEFC includes a Fisheries Management Division which interfaces and provides service to three Councils; and a Technical Information Management Service (TIMS), which includes data management services for the component biological laboratories and other groups. The statistics activity formerly with the Southeast Region was transferred to the Center and became a part of TIMS.

In the Southeast Region at St. Petersburg, activities were grouped into four divisions - fisheries management, fisheries development, environmental and technical services, and law enforcement.

Fisheries management is responsible for the State-Federal fisheries management program, regional aspects of international agreements, fishery management plans, and regulations and programs on endangered species.

Fisheries development brings into focus all NMFS developmental work in the Southeast. It provides financial assistance and marketing programs and is the interface with the Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Development Foundation.

Environmental and technical services administers the grant program (P.L. 88-309 and 89-304) and provides comments to appropriate authorities on water development projects that affect the living marine resources of the Southeast.

Law Enforcement is responsible for enforcing laws and regulations, principally the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976, the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, and the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

The National Seafood Quality and Inspection Laboratory (Pascagoula, Mississippi) and the Southeast Inspection Office (St. Petersburg, Florida) were not changed by the reorganization and continue to report to Washington. They provide a voluntary fishery products inspection service and laboratory back-up.



DIRECTOR'S ACTIVITIES

Attended 8 Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Meetings

- 1/77 - New Orleans, Louisiana
- 2/77 - Brownsville, Texas
- 3/77 - Mobile, Alabama
- 4/77 - Biloxi, Mississippi
- 6/77 - New Orleans, Louisiana
- 8/77 - Tarpon Springs, Florida
- 9/77 - Dallas, Texas

Attended 5 Gulf State-Federal Fisheries Management Board Meetings

- 1/77 - Shrimp Task Force - New Orleans, LA
- 5/77 - Shrimp Task Force - New Orleans, LA
- 6/77 - Shrimp Task Force - New Orleans, LA
- 6/77 - Groundfish Mgmt. Plan - University of So. Alabama
- 8/77 - Menhaden Advisory Committee - New Orleans, LA

Attended 1 MAFAC Meeting

- 5/77 - Washington, D.C.

Attended 1 State Directors Meeting

- 5/77 - Washington, D.C.

Attended 2 Industry Meetings

- 6/77 - Optimum Yield Meeting - Houston, Texas
- 8/77 - Billfish Meeting - Mobile, Alabama

Attended 3 Eastland Meetings

- 3/77 - Biloxi, Mississippi
- 8/77 - Bayou LaBatre
- 8/77 - Washington, D.C.

Other

- 3/77 - Testified before the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee - Washington, D.C.
- 8/77 - Testified at Public Hearing regarding U.S.-Joint Ventures - New Orleans, LA

BOURGEOIS, BENNETT, THOKEY & HICKEY

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

HIBERNIA BANK BUILDING

NEW ORLEANS 70112

CHARLES BENNETT, C.P.A.
JAMES W. THOKEY, C.P.A.
MAUNSEL W. HICKEY, C.P.A.
HAROLD J. MOLLERE, C.P.A.
JAMES F. PINNER, C.P.A.
GEORGE W. HILL, C.P.A.
RICHARD A. KELLEY, C.P.A.
CLAUDE NIXON, JR., C.P.A.
LOUIS S. NUNES, JR., C.P.A.
ARTHUR E. FAULK III, C.P.A.
RALPH C. COX, JR., C.P.A.
ROBERT D. WINSTON, JR., C.P.A.

SIDNEY S. BOURGEOIS, JR., C.P.A., 1900-1971
FRANK V. RUSSELL, C.P.A., 1908-1952
JOHN B. MANES, C.P.A., 1917-1971

WALTER BROWN, C.A., C.P.A. (RET.)

MEMBER OF THE
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PROFESSIONAL CENTER BUILDING

To the Commissioners,
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission,
Gulf Coast Research Laboratory,
Ocean Springs, Mississippi.

We have examined the balance sheet of Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission as of September 30, 1977, and the related statement of revenues, expenses and changes in fund balances for the three months then ended. Our examination was made in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, and accordingly included such tests of the accounting records and such other auditing procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.

As explained in Note 3 of the Notes to Financial Statements (Exhibit C) certain funds received under the Eastland Resolution Study Grant may be subject to reduction upon Federal Audit.

In our opinion, subject to the adjustment, if any, which may result from the matter referred to in the preceding paragraph, the accompanying financial statements present fairly the financial position of Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission at September 30, 1977 and the results of its operations and changes in fund balances for the three months then ended, in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding fiscal year.

A separate management letter containing our observations pertaining to the internal administration of the Commission's financial affairs has been furnished to you.

Bougeois, Bennett, Thoburn & Hickey
Certified Public Accountants.

New Orleans, La.,
October 27, 1977.

BALANCE SHEET

Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
Ocean Springs, Mississippi

September 30, 1977

ASSETS

Cash		\$62,057.50
Furniture, fixtures and equipment	\$4,304.38	
Less accumulated depreciation	<u>1,619.04</u>	<u>2,685.34</u>
Total		<u>\$64,742.84</u>

LIABILITY

Accounts payable	\$ 303.29	
Payroll taxes withheld and accrued	<u>1,247.86</u>	\$ 1,551.15

FUND BALANCES (Exhibit B)

Operating Fund	\$47,596.72	
Eastland Fund	10,996.07	
State-Federal Fisheries Management Fund	<u>4,598.90</u>	<u>63,191.69</u>
Total		<u>\$64,742.84</u>

See the accompanying Notes to Financial Statements (Exhibit C).

STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES AND
CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES

Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
Ocean Springs, Mississippi

For the three months ended September 30, 1977

<u>REVENUES</u>	<u>Operating Fund</u>	<u>Eastland Fund</u>	<u>State-Federal Fisheries Management Fund</u>	<u>Combined</u>
Member states appro- priations:				
Florida	\$15,000.00			\$15,000.00
Louisiana	15,000.00			15,000.00
Grants			\$5,892.25	5,892.25
Miscellaneous	<u>300.00</u>			<u>300.00</u>
Total revenues	<u>\$30,300.00</u>		<u>\$5,892.25</u>	<u>\$36,192.25</u>
 <u>EXPENSES</u>				
Salaries	\$5,916.66			\$ 5,916.66
Depreciation	122.64			122.64
Meetings			\$ 39.45	39.45
Miscellaneous	374.57			374.57
Postage	73.51			73.51
Professional fees	1,575.00			1,575.00
Supplies	102.60	\$124.68		227.28
Taxes - payroll	362.84			362.84
Telephone	533.60			533.60
Travel and entertain- ment	<u>762.74</u>	<u>394.90</u>	<u>228.74</u>	<u>1,386.38</u>
Total expenses	<u>\$9,824.16</u>	<u>\$519.58</u>	<u>\$268.19</u>	<u>\$10,611.93</u>
Excess of revenues over (-under) expenses	\$20,475.84	\$ -519.58	\$5,624.06	\$25,580.32
Fund balance, July 1, 1977	<u>27,120.88</u>	<u>11,515.65</u>	<u>-1,025.16</u>	<u>37,611.37</u>
Fund balance, September 30, 1977	<u>\$47,596.72</u>	<u>\$10,996.07</u>	<u>\$4,598.90</u>	<u>\$63,191.69</u>

See the accompanying Notes to Financial Statements (Exhibit C).

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
Ocean Springs, Mississippi

September 30, 1977

Note 1 - Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

- a) Effective July 1, 1977 the Commission's fiscal year end was changed from June 30 to September 30. Accordingly, the Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Fund Balances is presented for the three month period ended September 30, 1977.
- b) The accounting and reporting practices of the Commission conform to generally accepted accounting principles applicable to governmental units applied on a consistent basis between periods. The accrual basis of accounting is followed with these modifications:
 - i) Revenues from member states appropriations are recorded when received in cash.
 - ii) Revenues received by the Eastland Fund and the State-Federal Fisheries Management Fund are recorded as received in cash or when official request has been made for grant funds.
- c) Depreciation of furniture, fixtures and equipment is calculated using the straight-line method over ten year estimated useful lives.

Note 2 - Organization

Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission was created with the consent of the 81st Congress of the United States, granted by Public Law 66 approved May 19, 1949, authorizing an interstate compact relating to the better utilization of the fisheries of the Gulf of Mexico. Parties to the agreement are the states of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.

Note 3 - Eastland Resolution Study Grant

In June 1975, the Commission received a grant-in-aid award entitled "Eastland Resolution Study" from the U.S. Department of Commerce. The grant provides for the survey of Federal agencies concerned directly or indirectly with the fishing industry for the period, as amended, from June 1, 1975 to September 30, 1977 for an amount not to exceed \$200,000.00.

Note 3 - Eastland Resolution Study Grant (Continued)

The Commission has allocated an aggregate of \$20,000.00 of indirect costs to this grant. That amount is subject to reduction upon Federal audit as provided in the grant.

Note 4 - State-Federal Fisheries Management Program

Effective August 15, 1975, the Commission entered into a contract with the U.S. Department of Commerce to provide administrative support of the State-Federal Fisheries Management Program in the Gulf of Mexico coastal states. The total contract, as amended, is not to exceed \$53,625.00 of which \$24,199.00 is fixed price and \$29,426.00 is cost reimbursable. The contract expires September 30, 1978.

