

Dear All,

Below is an email I received from Undersecretary Lautenbacher this morning. It appears they are going to implement an interim rule for red snapper that will go into affect January 1, 2007. My best guess is that they will lower the bag limit to 2, but hopefully will allow us our 6 month season. There are consequences that go with the 6 month season and a lower TAC though. Historically the recreational sector has landed their current allowable catch with all recreational anglers averaging 2 red snapper per trip. Of course we will expect some reduction in harvest for angler trips who are landing their current 4 fish bag limit and reduction in effort due to the storms. Will keep you posted on any additional information I receive.

Best Regards,
Bobbi Walker

----- Original Message -----

From: [Conrad C Lautenbacher](#)

To: [Bobbi Walker](#)

Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2006 7:37 AM

Subject: Re: Hogarth Letter Re: Conference Call

Bobbi,

Many thanks for your note. I understand you have concerns and have discussed them with our folks. I also appreciate that addressing overfishing of Gulf of Mexico red snapper is a difficult issue, particularly given the impacts of the 2005 hurricane season on the affected fisheries. However, as you know, red snapper has been overfished and undergoing overfishing since the late 1980s. Consequently, I believe you agree action is needed to ensure overfishing is ended within the timeframe the Council approved in the red snapper rebuilding plan.

If NOAA Fisheries Service waited until January 1 for the Council to resume work on Amendment 27/14, then we could not implement any regulatory actions proposed in that amendment in time to effectively address overfishing during the 2007 fishing year. Delaying needed regulatory action until 2008 would result in even more severe harvest reductions and associated impacts. Consequently, we have determined interim measures are needed.

I encourage you to take advantage of opportunities for public comment as we move forward. NOAA Fisheries Service will carefully consider all comments before finalizing interim measures for the 2007 fishing year. Additionally, the agency will carefully examine the points raised in all comments prior to making a recommendation to approve or disapprove the Council's proposed individual fishing quota (IFQ) program. We look forward to continuing to work with you and the Council to achieve the best possible outcome.

Best regards,
Conrad

Bobbi Walker wrote:

Dear Vice Admiral Lautenbacher,

I wrote you awhile back and expressed my concern over the Gulf of Mexico red snapper and Dr. Crabtree's threat for emergency action.

Today Gulf Council members received via email a letter from Dr. Hogarth, which is attached for your review. Additionally I have pasted below my comments sent to my fellow council members after reading the letter.

Thank you for your time.

Best Regards,
Bobbi M. Walker

To All,

I am deeply concerned about Dr. Hogarth's letter that we received this morning for two reasons.

1. I understood from the council motion that was passed with a 10-5 vote that we were delaying (by four months) acting on Reef Fish Amendment 27/Shrimp Amendment 14. This delay never indicated that the Gulf Council was not going to act on these amendments, only that we were waiting until all of the data was available before we considered any economically and socially devastating management options for areas that had already been devastated by the 2004-05 storms. This fishery has been managed for 16 years with a number of years left in the rebuilding period. When the council was told that bycatch reduction devices were only obtaining 12% reduction when we had been told to expect 44% I asked Dr. Crabtree if emergency action was needed to get us back on track. In my mind this discovery had a significant impact on the recovery and the stock assessment. I think if we check the minutes Dr. Crabtree told us emergency action was not needed. Now we are being told a 4 month delay warrants an emergency action, doesn't add up to me.
2. I am very concerned about the public's perception and certainly mine with Dr. Hogarth's statement, "We are moving quickly to enable 2007 individual quota allocations based on a reduced final TAC quota to be implemented as soon as possible." First, the IFQ amendment is still open for public comment and to my knowledge NMFS could not have considered all of these public comments as they move forward with this amendment. In my opinion this is telling the public they don't care about their comments and intend to take action regardless of them. This has been one of the major problems the public has associated with the NMFS since the beginning. They don't listen to the public or give due consideration to their comments. This comment is going to continue to confirm public perception. Second the IFQ amendment includes a clause

to hold back some of the quota should the IFQ amendment become law and a new TAC has not been set. I don't think it expires until July 2007, so where is the emergency?

My two cents. Thanks for listening.
Bobbi