

Southeast Regional Office  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
St. Petersburg, Florida

**SECTION 515 PRE-DISSEMINATION REVIEW & DOCUMENTATION FORM**

AUTHOR/RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: Mr. Peter Hood, Sustainable Fisheries Division,  
Southeast Regional Office, National Marine Fisheries Service, St. Petersburg, FL.

TITLE/DESCRIPTION: Amendment 24 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef  
Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico. The amendment would establish a limited access  
system for the commercial fishery for Gulf of Mexico reef fish.

PRESENTATION/RELEASE DATE: March 10, 2005

MEDIUM: Proposed Rule to be published in the *Federal Register*.

PRE-DISSEMINATION REVIEW:

Name and Title of Reviewing Official: Ms. Virginia M. Fay, Assistant Regional  
Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division.

Pursuant to Section 515 of Public Law 106-554 (Data Quality Act), this product has  
undergone a pre-dissemination review.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## SECTION 515 INFORMATION QUALITY DOCUMENTATION

### 1. Utility of Information Product

Explain how the information product meets the standards for **utility**:

#### **A. Is the information helpful, beneficial or serviceable to the intended user?**

Amendment 24 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico would establish a limited access system for the commercial fishery for Gulf of Mexico reef fish. The intended effects of Amendment 24 are to limit the number of permitted commercial fishing vessels participating in the fishery.

#### **B. Are the data or is the information product an improvement over previously available information? Is it more current or detailed? Is it more useful or accessible to the public? Has it been improved based on comments from or interactions with customers?**

The document is an amendment to the FMP for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico with new analyses regarding the resource and the fishery for that resource. These analyses are based on the most current landings information, economic analyses, and stock assessments. The proposed action, and the basis for the action, was made available for public comment during all deliberative phases of review by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council). Public hearings were held in Brownsville, Texas; Port Aransas, Texas; Biloxi, Mississippi; Mobile, Alabama; Panama City, Florida; and Key West, Florida in 2004. Additional public hearings on the proposed amendment were also held during separate Council meetings during 2004. Comments received from the public have been used to improve this amendment. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will announce the availability of the amendment in the *Federal Register*. Public news bulletins will also be distributed. Similarly, NMFS will publish the proposed rule in the *Federal Register* and will solicit comments from the public.

**C. What media are used in the dissemination of the information? Printed publications? CD-ROM? Internet? Is the product made available in a standard data format? Does it use consistent attribute naming and unit conventions to ensure that the information is accessible to a broad range of users with a variety of operating systems and data needs?**

The amendment is available from the Council in both printed form and on CD-ROM in a widely accepted format (Adobe Acrobat \*.pdf). The naming and unit conventions follow the English system. The proposed rule will use both English and metric units as necessary. The proposed rule will be available in print form or accessible via the Internet in a variety of standard software forms (Adobe Acrobat \*.pdf format; Web page \*.html format, and ASCII DOS \*.txt format). It will be available on NMFS Southeast Regional Office's website (<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>).

**2. Integrity of Information Product**

Explain how the information product meets the standards for **integrity**:

**A. All electronic information disseminated by NMFS adheres to the standards set out in Appendix III, "Security of Automated Information Resources," OMB Circular A-130; the Computer Security Act; and the Government Information Security Reform Act.**

As with all electronic information disseminated by NMFS, the amendment adheres to the referenced standards.

**B. Other/Discussion**

This amendment complies with the applicable regulations regarding Confidentiality of Statistics of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act); NOAA Administrative Order 216-100 - Protection of Confidential Fisheries Statistics; and 50 CFR 229.11, Confidentiality of information collected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

3. Objectivity of Information Product

(1) Indicate which of the following categories of information products apply for this product:

- Original Data
- Synthesized Products
- Interpreted Products
- Hydrometeorological, Hazardous Chemical Spill, and Space Weather Warnings, Forecasts, and Advisories
- Experimental Products
- Natural Resource Plans
- Corporate and General Information

(2) Describe how this information product meets the applicable objectivity standards.

The basis for establishing the amendment's preferred alternative is carefully defined in the Magnuson-Stevens Act, 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*, and its implementing regulations. This hinges, in part, on compliance with National Standard 2, 50 CFR 600.315, which requires conservation and management measures shall be based upon the best scientific information available. The proposed actions described in this amendment were designated by the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center as based on the best available scientific information as required under the Magnuson-Stevens Act and determined via scientific review. The amendment used and cited this scientific information in supporting each alternative. The amendment and supporting documentation, in identifying and comparing a reasonable range of alternatives for the proposed action, complies with the implementing regulations of the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and NMFS review procedures at NAO 216-6 Section 6.03.d.1 (Fisheries Actions that Require an Environmental Assessment). The amendment and associated analytical documents prepared in support of the action distinguish the alternative policy choices and the underlying science upon which they are based. Information is presented in an accurate, clear, complete, and unbiased manner, and in proper context. The substance of the information is accurate, reliable, and unbiased. The scientific and other materials supporting the analysis are, as noted above, appropriately cited within the associated analytical documents. This document, from its inception to completion, has been developed and reviewed by an interdisciplinary plan team comprised of Council, NMFS, and NOAA General Counsel staff. Additionally, the amendment has been reviewed by NMFS's Habitat Conservation Division, Protected Resources Division, and Southeast Fisheries Science Center staff for consistency for compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other regulations.