

- Provide participants with additional fishing opportunities through access to seasonal Restricted Areas;
- Collect data on the deployment and retrieval of on-demand gear, usage of gear location marking systems, and any occurrences of gear conflicts or gear deployment failures;
- Provide support and training for participating fishers on the use of on-demand technologies;
- Trial gear location marking systems that promote interoperability for fishers and reduce the potential for gear conflict;
- Collect timing data on hauling efficiency of on-demand versus traditional fishing gear; and
- Provide feedback to on-demand manufacturers to increase performance under commercial fishery conditions.

This permit would only exempt vessels from the specified Federal regulations in Federal waters. It would not exempt the vessels from any requirements imposed by any state, the Endangered Species Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, or any other applicable laws. The applicant would be responsible for obtaining all required state authorizations. Other than gear markings, all trap/pot trawls would be consistent with the regulations of the management area where the vessel is fishing and would be fished in accordance with the participating vessels' standard operations (number and length of trips, soak times, trap limits, *etc.*).

Participants would be required to virtually mark the location of each end of their trawls using the gear-marking technology associated with the on-demand system they were fishing. This may include gear marking applications designed by the respective manufacturers to mark gear when set using GPS-based locations and visually remove the mark from applications when the gear is moved or retrieved. Set and haul information would be integrated into the ER Buoy gear location cloud-based database so that participants would have access to all set on-demand gear within 5 miles (8.05 kilometers). MA DMF would also have access to all on-demand set locations through the RMW Hub enforcement and manager platform.

MA DMF would provide standardized data collection sheets to all participants. Data deemed confidential, including but not limited to on-demand specific deployment locations and catch information, may be collected but will not be made public.

MA DMF proposes the following best practices and risk reduction measures:

- All vessels would report all right whale sightings to NMFS via ne.rw.survey@noaa.gov or NOAA (866–755–6622) or the U.S. Coast Guard (Channel 16) and record sightings on data sheets;
- All vessels would retrieve on-demand vertical lines as quickly as possible to minimize time in the water column;
- If any large whale species came within 500 yards (457.2 meters) of a participating vessel during hauling, fishing would immediately cease, by either removal or resetting, and be reinitiated only after it was reasonable to assume the whale(s) had left the area;
- All vessels would provide mandatory, weekly gear loss reports; MA DMF would provide monthly gear conflict/loss reports to GARFO;
- All vessels would operate within a 10-knot (18.52-km) speed limit when transiting Restricted Areas or when whales are observed;
- RMW hub, the ER Buoy app, or an equivalent application will be utilized for identifying any on-demand gear currently set within the work areas;
- Stowed hauling lines in on-demand units will contain a unique colored marking consisting of 12" of yellow twine above each regional ALWTRP marking;
- A unique flag will be flown by each vessel within ALWTRP vertical line closure areas for enforcement recognition;
- All participants would carry a MA DMF scientist on a subset of trips to collect additional data and oversee trial performance;
- No floating groundline would be used on research trawls, including where otherwise legally allowed between the first trap and anchor or on-demand unit; and
- Law enforcement agencies will be notified of project participants and activities in advance of the project start date.

Under the previous EFP (#25048), 2 vessels participated, completing 15 total trips. Both vessels used Sub Sea Sonics on-demand gear, with differing success. Some release failures occurred due to a dead battery, tablet or release unit malfunctions. Retrieval success ranged from 100 percent at <70 fathoms down to approximately 50 percent at greater depths. Both vessels worked with the manufacturer to resolve issues. While some issues persist, they are being addressed by the manufacturer. All on-demand units were retrieved. No gear conflicts were reported by the participants; both participants expressed interest in continuing to trial on-demand gear.

If approved, the applicant may request minor modifications and extensions to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the proposed research and have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: October 8, 2026.

Shannon Bettridge,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2026–20877 Filed 10–9–26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XG093]

Gulf Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of a hybrid meeting.

SUMMARY: The Gulf Fishery Management Council (Council) will convene a 3-day meeting to consider actions affecting fisheries in the Gulf of America exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

DATES: The meeting will be held Tuesday, October 27, through Thursday, October 29, 2026, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., (CDT), each day.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Tremont House Hotel, 2300 Ships Mechanic Row, Galveston, TX 77550; telephone: (409) 763–0300. Members of the public who wish to listen virtually may access login information at www.gulfcouncil.org.

Council address: Gulf Fishery Management Council, 4107 W Spruce Street, Suite 200, Tampa, FL 33607; telephone: (813) 348–1630.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Carrie Simmons, Executive Director, Gulf Fishery Management Council; telephone: (813) 348–1630.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Tuesday, October 27, 2026; 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m., CDT

The meeting will begin in Full Council with a review and adoption of the proposed Council Committee

assignments for October 2026 through August 2027, as well as the current Council Committee assignments. NMFS will provide a brief overview of the Executive Order: Restoring American Saltwater Angling and Recreation.

The *Reef Fish* Committee will then receive updates on *Reef Fish* Landings and review and discuss final action items for *Reef Fish* Amendment 55/*Snapper Grouper* Amendment 44: *Mutton Snapper* and *Yellowtail Snapper* Management Measures, modifications to *Red Snapper* Private Recreational Post-Season Accountability Measures, and draft options for management flexibility for the Federal For-hire component of the *Red Snapper* fishery.

Following lunch, the *Reef Fish* Committee will review the September 2026 Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) meeting summary and recommendations; consider Draft for *Reef Fish* Amendment 59A: Permit Requirements in Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Programs; receive a presentation on *Greater Amberjack* Count; review draft *Reef Fish* 65—Regional Management of Recreational *Greater Amberjack*; and discuss Exempted Fishing Permits, if any.

Wednesday, October 28, 2026; 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m., CDT

The meeting will begin with a litigation update, followed by the *Shrimp* Committee's review of draft membership list for the Review Panel for the *Shrimp* Permit Pool, Draft *Shrimp* Amendment 20—Status Determination Criteria for the *Penaeid Shrimp*, and recommendations from the *Shrimp* Advisory Panel (AP). The committee will discuss the 2024 *Shrimp* Effort in Relation to Threshold for Juvenile *Red Snapper*, Status Update on Working Group to Address Interactions and Bycatch of Protected Resources in *Shrimp* Trawl and any remaining items from the *Shrimp* Advisory AP meeting summary.

The Data Collection Committee will review and discuss the results of the Marine Recreational Information Program-Fishing Effort Survey Pilot Study, SSC Recommendations, and next steps. The committee will also receive an overview of the Mississippi and Alabama Creel Surveys and related SSC recommendations.

The Law Enforcement Committee will provide a summary report from the October Law Enforcement Technical Committee.

Following lunch, the Council will reconvene in Full Council for the Call to Order, announcements and introductions, adoption of the agenda, and approval of minutes. The Council

will receive public testimony beginning at 1:40 p.m.–4:30 p.m., CDT for public comment on Final Action Items—*Reef Fish* Amendment 55/*Snapper Grouper* Amendment 44: *Mutton Snapper* and *Yellowtail Snapper* Management Measures and Modifications to *Red Snapper* Private Recreational Post-Season Accountability Measures, Exempted Fishing Permits; and any Open Testimony on other Fishery Issues or Concerns.

The Council will then receive committee reports from the Law Enforcement and Data Collection Committees.

Thursday, October 29, 2026; 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m., CDT

Meeting will return to Committee Sessions starting with the Sustainable Fisheries Committee will give an overview of the Southeast Fisheries Observer Program, followed by a presentation on Regulatory Streamlining and SSC Recommendations, SSC Report from September 2026 meeting, including Spawning Habitat and Early-Life Linkages to Fisheries (SHELF) Egg Project and Social Sciences Gulf Species Questionnaire.

The Migratory Species Committee will provide presentations on *Shark* Depredation and updates on Highly Migratory Species documents.

Following lunch, the Council will return to Full Council and receive committee reports from *Reef Fish*, *Shrimp*, Sustainable Fisheries and Migratory Species Committees.

The Council will then receive updates from supporting agencies, including the South Atlantic Council Liaison, Texas Law Enforcement, NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (OLE), Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Department of State.

Finally, the Council will receive an update on documents transmitted for rulemaking, discuss Council planning and primary activities, and consider any other business including an update from NMFS on Advancing Agency-Level Reforms to Restore American Seafood Competitiveness.

—Meeting Adjourns

This meeting will be conducted in a hybrid format, with both in-person and virtual participation options available. Members of the public may register to listen to the meeting via webinar by visiting www.gulfcouncil.org and selecting the Council meeting from the calendar.

The timing and order of agenda items are subject to change to accommodate the needs of the Council. The most

current agenda and meeting materials will be posted on the Council's website as they become available.

Although non-emergency issues not included in this notice may come before the Council for discussion, in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, those issues may not be the subject of formal Council action. Formal action will be limited to those issues specifically identified in this notice and any issues arising after publication that require emergency action under Section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

These meetings are physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids or accommodations should be directed to Kathy Pereira at (813) 348–1630 at least 15 days prior to the meeting.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: October 8, 2026.

Key Israel Marquez,

Acting Deputy Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2026–20862 Filed 10–9–26; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648–XF854]

Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; Taking Marine Mammals Incidental to the City and Borough of Juneau's Seawalk Extension Project, Juneau, Alaska

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice; proposed incidental harassment authorization; request for comments on proposed authorization and possible renewal.

SUMMARY: NMFS has received a request from the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) for authorization to take marine mammals incidental to the Seawalk Extension Project in Juneau, Alaska (AK). Pursuant to the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), NMFS is requesting comments on its proposal to issue an incidental harassment authorization (IHA) to incidentally take marine mammals during the specified activities. NMFS is also requesting