

Gulf & South Atlantic News



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Foundation Honors Wayne Swingle

At the Annual Meeting of the Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation President Bob Jones presented outgoing Director of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, Wayne Swingle, with an Eagle Award. Mr. Jones presented the award on behalf of the Foundation for Mr. Swingle's outstanding career as the director for the Gulf Council since its inception in 1976 and as a "Keeper of the Flame."

In addition, the Board of Trustees re-elected **Mr. Robert Jones**, representing Southeastern Fisheries Association, Inc., President; **Mr. Mike Voisin**, Louisiana Seafood Processors Council, was elected Vice President; and **Mr. Rutledge Leland**, South Carolina-At-Large, was elected Secretary/Treasurer.

New Trustees include **Captain John Woods** representing the Georgia Shrimp Association and **Captain James Ruhle** filling the North Carolina At-Large seat.

In other business the Board of Trustees approved several projects for funding. Dr. Linda Lampl received funds to examine the recent Stan Mayfield Working Waterfront program for the state of Florida. Dr. Lampl will provide an overview of project applications and those that are funded. In addition, she will develop an overview of Florida waterfront communities that may have benefited from the program. A review of other programs throughout the country will contribute to a final template for similar programs to assist communities with working waterfronts throughout the Gulf and South Atlantic region.

Funding was also approved for the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference to conduct workshops assisting states within the Gulf of Mexico to develop *Vibrio*



vulnificus management plans. Plans must be in place and implemented by May of 2010 and may involve a variety of measures to decrease the number of illnesses.

Another project that was approved for funding will allow recent research by Dr. Trevor Kenchington to be published in a peer reviewed journal. Dr. Kenchington recently presented results of his research on the mortality rates for gag grouper to the Gulf Council in June of 2008. In his paper he argues that the mortality rate used in the most recent stock assessment SEDAR 10 is too low at $M = 0.15$ and should be more in the range of 0.2 to 0.3. The Foundation project will assist Dr. Kenchington in preparing the results for submission to a peer reviewed journal.

Other funding was approved for Dr. Benny Gallaway's research on the bycatch reduction capabilities of TEDs. Results were presented at a recent Industry/NMFS BRD workshop which indicated that the new larger TEDs actually have reduced bycatch from earlier versions. Unfortunately, it seems that TEDs do not receive a credit in the calculation of bycatch reduction used for overall reduction criteria.

Bycatch Reduction Device Workshop Held in Tampa

Industry/NMFS Meeting Held to Review New Regulations and Research

An Industry/NMFS BRD Workshop was held in Tampa, Florida at the Sheraton Suites on November 12 & 13, 2008. The Workshop was to review recent changes to the Bycatch Reduction Device (BRD) protocol, the decertification of the Gulf Fisheye BRD and recent research funded by the Foundation. The effective date for decertification of the Gulf Fisheye is May 18, 2009 and was recently published in the Federal Register dated November 18, 2008. This rule means fishermen will no longer be able to use the fisheye BRD in a location further forward than 9 ft (2.7 m) from the cod end draw-string (tie off rings) facing in the direction of the mouth of the trawl. This final rule includes a response to recent Foundation research presented at the workshop by Dr. Benny Gallaway.

Dr. Gallaway's research analyzed new bycatch data to review the certification criteria of newly certified and pre-certified BRDs. Although his research showed that many of the BRDs currently in use do not meet the certification criteria under the new analysis, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has decided to continue its two year plan of allowing fishermen to test certified and pre-certified BRDs. New BRD designs are also eligible for testing under the new protocol with approval from NMFS. The Foundation has several BRD



Dr. Benny Gallaway, LGL Ecological Research Associates

projects that will be testing new and currently certified BRDs.

Other presentations included an over-view of the annual shrimp fishery economic survey by Dr. Michael Travis (NMFS); a review of TED regulations and recovery status of sea turtles by Michael Barnette (NMFS) who also discussed the recent issue of sea turtle interactions within the reef fish longline fishery; Karyl Brewster-Geiz of the Highly Migratory Species Division of NOAA Fisheries gave an update on the scoping document for Amendment 3 to the Consolidated HMS Fishery Management Plan. Of special interest was the overfished status of blacknose shark which are allegedly suffering a significant amount of mortality from the Gulf shrimp trawl fishery. Several workshop participants requested a review of the blacknose stock assessment since the mortality rates from shrimp trawls seemed highly overstated.

Updates were provided by NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Director, Dr. Roy Crabtree, on several pending actions by the Agency and upcoming Council Actions.

The Final report is currently being drafted.



Executive Director Judy Jamison with Industry Workshop Participants Grant Erickson (FL) and Charles Burnell (TX)

NMFS Offers Weekly Podcast: Weirdfins

NOAA Fisheries Service has a new Web site that offers a weekly podcast "feed" about strange - and sometimes bizarre - creatures that inhabit the sea. Each edition is approximately two minutes long, and offers some new and interesting facts about the sea and its inhabitants. If you've

heard of a weird sea creature that you would like to see featured on Weirdfins, contact NOAA at: weirdfins@noaa.gov. The website is: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/rss/podcasts/weirdfins>

Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts Program

Gulf & South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation (GSAFF) is sponsoring research that tracks the Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts Program and identifies and reviews working waterfront programs in other parts of the United States. The intent is to develop information that can be applied to working waterfronts in all coastal areas in the South Atlantic – Gulf of Mexico regions to develop recommendations and/or models for creating similar programs in other states within the GSAFF mission area. The study will also review other Florida land acquisition and development programs that currently exclude or limit commercial uses e.g. the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP) for opportunities for funding for capital improvements.

The SMWWP is the latest in Florida's attempts to save or otherwise preserve waterfront access for traditional water-dependent businesses, which was severely affected by the Constitutional Amendment that banned the use of most nets in state waters after 1994. The Waterfronts Florida Partnership Program (WFPP), created under the Florida Department of Community Affairs (FDCA) shortly after the "net ban", initially focused on working waterfronts; however, the program and its definitions have been broadened over

a decade by practice and statute now includes other types of waterfront activities and less emphasis on commercial fishing. The Coastal Partnership Initiative (CPI) is funded by the federal government, yet works through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to provide grants to communities on four topics, including improvements to Working Waterfronts. Neither program offers funding for land acquisition.

In 2006, the Legislature offered a tax deferral program for individual property owners, if approved by local governments, to provide relief from rapidly increasing ad valorem taxes associated with waterfront real estate prices in the early 2000s. That program was poorly received by property owners, who were concerned that the market—and property values -- would collapse, yet they would be held accountable for taxes based on the higher values. More recently, the Florida electorate approved a constitutional amendment that is expected to give county tax assessors the right to assess individual properties according to current use, not by the traditional standard of "highest and best use."

The Gulf & South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Inc. research is scheduled to be completed by June 2009.

Gulf & South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation, Inc. Program Update

“An Assessment of Turtle Excluder Devices Within the Southeastern Shrimp Fishery”

(NA04NMF4540112; GSAFFI #92)

As outlined by language within the 2004 Congressional Record, the Foundation conducted a series of TED studies aimed at answering questions raised by the southeastern U.S. shrimp fishery. These included: (1) an innovative TED technology study aimed at maximizing shrimp retention while reducing sea turtle mortality, (2) reevaluating historic naked net/TED data using the most up-to-date statistical methods to better determine the shrimp loss attributable to TEDs, and (3) increasing industry's participation in cooperative research and gear development.

To assist the commercial shrimp industry in maximizing shrimp catch, while reducing sea turtle mortalities, the Foundation conducted an innovative TED technology study. By employing fishery observers to collect data on catch rates of legal TED configurations, the Foundation wanted to better inform industry of what TED combinations work best (i.e., retain more shrimp) in particular geographic regions. Thirty-



one (31) experimental trips were completed. Experimental trips were conducted onboard one of thirteen participating vessels operating within the Gulf of Mexico (Florida to Texas) and South Atlantic (Georgia, South Carolina). Treatments tested during these efforts include top vs. bottom opening, pipe vs. flat bar, pipe vs. solid rod, single vs. double cover flap, and medium vs. large frame (top and bottom shooting positions).

The Foundation convened a Closing Conference on February 6th & 7th to discuss the results of this project;

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particularly the data analyses. Overall, in the final analysis TEDs constructed with flat bars retained significantly more shrimp than those constructed of pipe/rod and TEDs constructed of large frame retained significantly more shrimp than those having medium frames. On one test, a bottom-shooting TED with a single flap retained significantly more juvenile red snapper than the same TED equipped with a double-cover flap.

Another objective of this project was to involve fishermen in the process of developing and testing new gears. Over the duration of this project the Foundation provided funds for 10 individual fishermen to develop and test gear at the NMFS annual hydrodynamic evaluations of fishing gear in Panama City. Some of the gears tested included: a large mesh panel BRD, a TED/BRD combination, a large mesh trawl net with small otter trawl doors, a funnel BRD, a plastic Fisheye BRD, a plastic TED and a flat trawl net.

The final objective included the Foundation's reanalysis of historic shrimp loss data that was completed through cooperative efforts with Foundation contractors and the National Marine Fisheries Service in late 2005. The results suggest that the original estimates of shrimp loss attributed to TEDs are accurate for problem free tows. However, for those tows where problems are encountered, shrimp loss can be considerably higher. Due to the limited number of samples in time and space, this project illuminated that a more comprehensive TED-shrimp loss program should be initiated. Results have been published in the North American Journal of

Fishery Management Volume 28.

The Final report and Closing Conference report are available on the Foundation Website or by contacting the Foundation office.

“*Vibrio vulnificus* Education and Social Marketing: Implementing Strategies Needed to Reduce Illnesses Related to the Consumption of Raw Oysters”

(NA03NMF4270393; GSAFFI #93)

The purpose of this project is to implement a series of educational initiatives outlined within the Foundation's Strategic Plan aimed at reducing *Vibrio vulnificus* illnesses resulting from the consumption of raw oysters. The individual goals of this project are to: finalize the Foundation's Strategic Plan; implement a select number of objectives contained within the Strategic Plan; and provide support to state marketing and promotion agencies to assist in the distribution of educational materials.

To assist with the performance of this project, the Foundation has contracted Beuerman Miller Fitzgerald, Inc. (BMF), a marketing-communications firm based in New Orleans, LA, to act as the project Education Consultant. It is the responsibility of the Education Consultant to implement those strategies outlined within the Strategic Plan and to coordinate the efforts necessary to complete project objectives.

Allocation Becomes Pressing Topic for both South Atlantic and Gulf Council

With recent changes to the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the addition of Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures, the issue of allocation and reallocation of fishery resources has become a rather urgent topic for both the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils. Annual catch limits will be required for all stocks subject to overfishing by 2010 and all others by 2011. In addition, accountability measures to prevent ACLs from being exceeded must also be put in place.

The Gulf Council allocation committee first met in April 2008 to adopt its charge. The committee met again in June and discussed allocation principles which should include future changes as well as historic and present participation. A set of general principles were developed by staff and presented at the August meeting of the committee.

The South Atlantic Council formed their Allocation Committee in December of 2007. The SAFMC began

development of a Comprehensive Allocation Amendment that would address allocation in all

fishery management plans. The Council chose to drop the comprehensive amendment at their June meeting as they will be setting ACLs for each FMP. They also adopted an allocation scheme that would include commercial, recreational and for-hire sectors.

As both Councils move forward with adopting allocation guidelines for the setting of ACLs and AMs they will be forming important procedures that will affect all fishery management plans. Look for future changes and keep informed on their progress.





The strategies contained within the Plan have been finalized (as per the Foundation's Advisory Group) and the Strategic Plan has been distributed to a variety of interested groups and is available from the Foundation office and on the BeOysterAware.com website.

In addition to the finalization of the Strategic Plan, the Education Consultant has developed a new *Vibrio vulnificus* consumer education brochure which highlights the medical conditions that place an individual in the at-risk consumer category. Although there are similar educational brochures that have been developed by the ISSC and other organizations, the Foundation's brochure highlights alternative ways to eat oysters safely and leaves space to allow for partnering with other groups and organizations. The brochure is printed in English and Spanish.

The placement of print ads in primary literature medical journals that target medical/health professionals on a regional and national level was also accomplished as part of the strategic plan. Journals where ads appeared were: Annals of Internal Medicine, Texas Medicine, Louisiana Journal of Medicine and Florida Medical Association.

Most recently a Webinar was held with the Louisiana Restaurant Association. The Webinar discussed the risks of raw oyster consumption by consumers, what was at stake for restaurants and consumers and discussed shellfish handling guidelines.

“A Project to Augment the Data Collection and Development of an Electronic Logbook System used within the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery”

(NA05NMF4540044; GSAFFI #94)

The dynamics of the red snapper fishery are complex and various fishing sectors have an impact on the stock. As such, disagreement exists regarding the mortality, age composition, and monthly distribution of juvenile trawl-caught red snapper. To alleviate this confusion, the Foundation was

awarded funds to augment a currently funded ELB project with contracted fishery observers to collect catch data. It is the task of each observer to collect total shrimp landings and red snapper bycatch data, on a per tow basis. Data collected during this project were used to conduct a formal cohort analysis (VPA), compute mortality estimates for all Foundation collected red snapper data (both past and present), and verify the algorithms used to place effort in statistical cells. Results were used to validate ELB landings estimates by region and to assist fisheries managers in the assessment of the red snapper stock.

Since January 2006, observers have been deployed aboard 11 different vessels completing 17 trips. Preliminary data analyses suggest that the growth information will be able to provide estimates of natural and fishing mortality for red snapper from the observer data. A manuscript from this research has been submitted for publication to the North American Journal of Fishery Management.

“A Continuation of Technology Transfer of New Turtle Excluder Device Modifications and Updated Bycatch Reduction Device Information to the Southeastern Shrimp Industry”

(NA05NMF4331074; GSAFFI #95)

This project involves the networking of Foundation gear specialists throughout the Southeastern United States to disseminate information regarding recent changes to TED and BRD regulations to the Southeast shrimp fishing industry. Gear experts from the Foundation/Sea Grant will collaborate with NMFS Harvesting Branch specialists to assist in the dissemination of this information. Efforts will be conducted through formal workshops and one-on-one dockside meetings from the Virginia- North Carolina border to Texas.

From industry meetings sponsored by the Foundation, it is apparent that many fishermen are concerned about the speed



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in which BRD regulations are being considered, especially when reliable estimates of fishing effort are not known. With the publication of the final protocols in the Federal Register, the Foundation's Regional Coordinators have stepped up their efforts to hold workshops and dockside outreach. The final rule for decertification of the Gulf Fisheye has been published and the date at which time the Gulf Fisheye will no longer be allowable as a BRD unless placed in a location no further forward than nine (9) feet from the cod end tie off rings is May 18, 2009.

“Implementation of Strategies Needed to Reduce *Vibrio vulnificus* Related Illnesses: A Focus on Core States”

(NA03NMF4270393; GSAFFI #96)

This project allows for the implementation of a subset of goals and objectives contained within the Strategic Plan. These strategies include (1) Contract with prominent individuals within the medical and/or academic community to function as *V. vulnificus* experts and relay, to a diverse audience, the risks associated with raw oyster consumption; (2) Develop a *V. vulnificus* logo that will act as a recognition tool identifying organizations and institutions committed to the reduction of oyster related *V. vulnificus* illnesses; (3) Initiate and augment direct mailing campaigns within each of the Core States targeting medical/health professionals and the at-risk oyster consumer; (4) Provide funding and support to state, university, and non-profit organizations in their participation at national and regional medical conferences for the purpose of educating medical/health professionals about the risks of *V. vulnificus*, raw oysters,

and the at-risk consumer; (5) Create, produce, and purchase airtime for a series of educational radio and television advertisements targeting the at-risk consumer; (6) Design, create and maintain a dedicated *V. vulnificus* website that can be used for informing the public about the risks associated with consuming traditional raw oysters, the at-risk oyster consumer, and safe and flavorful alternatives to traditional raw oysters; (7) Create educational partnerships with pharmaceutical companies that produce and distribute medications for at-risk consumers; and (8) Partner and provide support for local, state, regional, and national health organizations and non-profit groups to assist in educating the at-risk population.

As with the Foundation's other *Vibrio vulnificus* education projects, Beerman Miller Fitzgerald, Inc. has been contracted as the Education Consultant. To assist in the dissemination of educational materials to the at-risk consumer, the Foundation provided funds to produce the brochure which targets at-risk consumers (see above, GSAFFI project #93). The brochure was added to and can be downloaded on the www.BeOysterAware.com website. Brochure reproductions have been sent to organizations requesting *Vibrio vulnificus* educational materials and will greatly increase the number of individuals who receive this important information.

Radio and television educational advertisements have been created to inform oyster consumers about *Vibrio vulnificus*. The purpose of these educational advertisements is to educate the at-risk and general oyster consumers that only healthy individuals should consume raw oysters and that at-risk individuals should eat their oysters thoroughly cooked. Both television and radio advertisements have been produced in English and Spanish and have aired recently in several media

NOAA Recognizes Service with Awards

Patrick F. Riley, Capt. Manuel Calderón, and Capt. Louis Stephenson were the recipients of the Stewardship and Sustainability Award from NOAA for their leadership in the development and assessment of effective, efficient equipment to reduce the incidental catch and mortality of sea turtles and sharply reduce fuel use in the Gulf and South Atlantic shrimp industry.

Doug Gregory, Florida Sea Grant Extension agent in Key West, Fla., received the *Public Education, Community Service, and Media Award* for his work in the Florida Keys to improve the public's understanding of commercial fishing, and for helping fishermen see the importance of sustainable fishing.

NOAA's Fisheries Service also recognized **Ralph Rayburn**, who was honored posthumously for his lifetime contributions to ensure conscientious management of marine resources in the Gulf of Mexico. Rayburn, who died this past January, worked cooperatively with shrimp fishermen and conservationists to help solve sea turtle bycatch in the shrimp fishery. In his career, he represented the shrimp industry as executive director of the Texas Shrimp Association, worked for state and federal resource management agencies and helped direct university research as Associate Director of the Texas Sea Grant College program. Ralph served as a GSAFFI Board Trustee from 1984-1989 and was a past President.

markets and are available on the website.

Significant progress has been made on the Foundation's educational website www.BeOysterAware.com.

To help educate the at-risk consumer, a companion banner advertising campaign was conducted in 2007 and 2008. The banner advertisement was placed on regional and national health websites (WebMD, Houston Chronicle, Miami Herald, etc.) and generated considerable increased traffic to the site. This significant increase in the number of unique visitors to the site means that internet advertising can be an effective method for educating the at-risk and general oyster consumer.

To assist in educating the medical/health community and the at-risk consumer about *Vibrio vulnificus*, the Foundation has contracted with Dr. Fred Lopez (New Orleans) and Dr. Sally Soileau of Louisiana State University (AgCenter). Dr. Lopez has appeared in numerous print, radio and TV media interviews outlining the risks of eating raw oysters and *Vibrio vulnificus*. Dr. Soileau has conducted many educational efforts in conjunction with this project. Most of these efforts included general food safety curriculum where *Vibrio vulnificus* was discussed with target audiences (at-risk consumer and medical/health professionals). Additionally, to target the medical/health community, she has attended/presented information at several local and state education workshops and national conferences including the American Association of Diabetes Educators and the "Liver Meeting" and the Louisiana Restaurant Association meeting.

The Foundation partially sponsored the Florida Bureau of Seafood and Aquaculture Marketing staff to attend and man a booth at the Boston Seafood Show in Boston, MA in 2008 where much of the above mentioned media were distributed.

A contract was executed between the Foundation and the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Commission in September as a result of the Advisory Group recommendation to support the Commission's efforts in *Vibrio Vulnificus* education.

“Consumer Market Research of VAP and PHP Oyster Products to Increase Gulf Oyster Consumption and Reduce *Vibrio vulnificus* Related Illnesses”

(NA16RG2195; GSAFFI #97 & #100)

The Foundation has completed the objectives of this project to (1) Conduct market segmentation studies to determine oyster consumer groupings and their demographic and oyster eating preferences to better direct educational and marketing efforts to reach the general and at-risk oyster consuming population; and (2) Utilize the results of the consumer segmentation research to initiate and conduct a complementary educational campaign targeting the general oyster consumer to increase awareness of VAP and PHP oyster products and the risk of *V. vulnificus*; (3) Disseminate

results of the consumer segmentation analysis to the Gulf oyster industry and other interested parties to allow them to assess the market/business potential of PHP and VAP oyster products in underdeveloped and new oyster consuming markets; and (4) Disseminate results of a concurrent Oyster Sensory research program during educational efforts to allow oyster consumers and interested parties to identify and connect with the inherent flavor differences between oysters.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources established a subcontract with Mississippi State University and Dr. Benedict Posadas who completed all work related to the analysis. Additionally, staff from the Department of Marine Resources reproduced copies of postharvest process (PHP) educational materials to distribute to oyster consumers and oyster processors to increase awareness about PHP products and processes.

With completion of the segmentation analysis, the results were offered to the Gulf of Mexico oyster industry. The results will allow industry to better understand who consumes oysters and the psychographic behaviors of consumer groups. By providing this information to the oyster industry, they can more efficiently utilize marketing dollars to target potential oyster consumers. Educators will also be able to utilize this information to better focus educational efforts on target audiences (both general and at-risk oyster consumers).

“Catch Characterization and Discards within the Snapper Grouper Vertical Hook-and-Line Fishery of the South Atlantic United States”

(NA06NMF4540059; GSAFFI #99)

After discussions with individuals from the South Atlantic snapper grouper bandit reel fishery, the Foundation solicited funds through the Cooperative Research Program (administered by the National Marine Fisheries Service) to initiate an observer based program to characterize the catch and discards within the South Atlantic bandit reel fishery.

More specifically, this program aimed to: (1) Implement a pilot observer program within the snapper-grouper vertical hook-and-line fishery of the South Atlantic United States; (2) contract and train fishery observers to collect data to quantify total catch, effort, and discards (including fate) within the fishery; and (3) actively solicit the participation of cooperating vessels to ensure a random sample of vessels is included in the study, and disseminate the results of data collected during the pilot program.

The Foundation Observer/Vessel Coordinator Mr. Daniel Parshley has worked with the Foundation's South Atlantic Regional Coordinator (Captain Lindsey Parker) and industry coordinator for this project (Mr. Mark Marhefka) to solicit participation from the fishery to allow the placement of observers aboard vessels. Mr. Parshley is uniquely qualified to

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act as the Observer/Vessel Coordinator based on his extensive experiences in other observer programs and scientific projects.

The Foundation received all applicable state experimental permits to allow the collection and retention of fish species for purposes of identification for the duration of this project. In addition, the Foundation received an Exempted Fishing Permit through the National Marine Fisheries Service to allow the collection and retention of 500 undersized or out-of-season fish for the purpose of identification and/or scientific samples.

Observers have been deployed aboard vessels since December 2006 and have completed the entire 200 allocated sea days with 28 trips on 24 vessels on this project. Data analysis has been completed and was presented to the South Atlantic Council at its June 2008 meeting in Orlando, Florida. A final report is available from the Foundation and can be downloaded from the website.

The Foundation submitted a proposal to the National Marine Fisheries Service to continue this project. (See Update for #107).

“Reduction Rates, Species Composition, and Effort: Assessing Bycatch within the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Trawl Fishery.”

(NA07NMF4330125, GSAFFI #101)

In conjunction with this project, a meeting was convened at the NMFS Laboratory in Galveston, TX on May 20-22, 2008. Individuals who are knowledgeable about BRDs met to assess the performance of BRDs within the Gulf of Mexico based on the new certification criteria set forth by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council which required a 30% reduction in overall finfish bycatch in the shrimp fishery. The analyses assessed total finfish reduction rates achieved by currently certified and experimental BRDs within the Gulf of Mexico,

species specific reduction rates, and spatiotemporal finfish reduction rates (or any combination thereof).

Dr. Benny Gallaway and staff of LGL Ecological Research Associates, Inc., performed the analysis and presented results to the workshop panel. In addition, the research assessed changes in shrimp trawl bycatch over time; available databases and relevant literature was analyzed and reviewed.

To provide a qualitative assessment of the impact of shrimp fishing on finfish population, a limited number of spatial analyses were conducted. Finally, the results of this project have been disseminated to the commercial fishing industry and fisheries managers at a recent Industry/NMFS BRD workshop held in November 2008 coordinated by the Foundation.

“A Program to Enhance Industry Evaluations of Complex Bycatch Reduction Devices within the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Trawl Fishery”

(NA07NMF4540077, GSAFFI #102)

This project will distribute a variety of complex BRDs to “high liners” within the shrimp trawl fishery to allow for evaluations of alternative BRD designs. The devices that will be distributed include the Modified Jones Davis, Composite Panel BRD, and other devices that show potential for reducing finfish from trawl nets.

To allow for a comparison of catch rates between devices, the outermost nets will have either the complex BRD (experimental net) or Gulf fisheye BRD (control net) installed. The participating captain will be asked to photograph the codends of the nets at the end of each tow. Although this data is a qualitative estimate of BRD performance, it serves as a quick comparison between catches. Once the captain and crew of the vessel have completed preliminary evaluation trials, they will be asked to collect more detailed data on the catch rates of shrimp (measured in weight) and total bycatch (measured in bushel baskets).

At the conclusion of the project, the final report will summarize the comments of the participating fishermen (e.g., would participating fishermen utilize the more complex gears, or are there any changes that could be used to increase performance) and elementary analyses of the data collected on shrimp and bycatch catch rates.

“Development of Social Indicators for Fishing Communities of the Southeast: Measures of dependence, vulnerability, resilience and gentrification”

(NA08NMF4270412, GSAFFI #103)

The Foundation received funding through the grant competition to create social indicators for fishing communities. These indicators will serve as proxies for potential threats to the commercial and recreational fishing communities in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico.

This research will identify broad areas of concern in a workshop convened to develop a protocol for the construction of social indicators applicable to coastal fishing communities and their evaluation through field research in a few select communities. These concerns will be operationalized into a community-level information system utilizing secondary data as indicators. To assess the validity of the indicators, field research has been conducted in selected communities along the Texas coast.

“Industry/NMFS Bycatch Reduction Device Workshop”

(NA08NMF4540398, GSAFFI #104)

The Foundation originally received funding to hold this workshop in July 2008, however scheduling was delayed until several new regulations were published. Establishing newly certified Bycatch Reduction Devices (BRDs) and de-certifying the Gulf Fisheye BRD and Expanded Mesh were two important

changes to the regulations that were discussed at the workshop. The workshop was convened in November 2008 to cooperatively discuss the current state of knowledge regarding BRD research, technology, and regulations and provide critical



guidance to the commercial shrimp industry at a time when important changes to gear regulations could create significant disruption with regard to technology transfer. Information provided at the workshop will assist the commercial shrimp industry with the transition to development and utilization of new BRD designs and compliance with new regulations. The final deliverable will be a workshop report, which will include an overview of the workshop discussions, research priorities, presentations and handouts, and is currently being drafted.

“Development and Assessment of Bycatch Reduction Devices within the Southeastern Shrimp Trawl Fishery”

(NA08NMF4330406, GSAFFI #105)

The objective of this project is to field test three new or promising bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) for certification following the NMFS BRD Certification Testing Protocol for the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic. Devices will be field tested aboard commercial fishing vessels with onboard observers collecting data outlined within the current Testing Protocols. Collected data will be analyzed to identify the reduction in fishing mortality achieved by BRDs. To increase industry’s involvement in the process of BRD research and development, the Foundation will solicit industry designed BRDs, contribute funds for industry BRD development, and reimburse the travel of industry members to Panama City to observe underwater hydrodynamic performance tests of fishing gear.

“Comparative Ethnography in the Development of Impact Assessment Methodologies: Profiling Two South Carolina Fishing Communities”

(NA08NMF4330407, GSAFFI #106)

The project will be conducted over 24 months, with a year of ethnographic fieldwork, testing and refinement of methodologies, and analysis followed by a year of continued data analysis, feedback from communities and experts on methodologies. The project will provide descriptions of the community, commercial and recreational fishing-related activities and businesses, historical information on fishing related activities, community structure and social ties based on fishing, and changes in the community due to federal regulations on the fisheries. During the course of research, working interactively with community residents and expert observers of fishing communities, the project will test and refine impact assessment methodologies to determine those most effective in assessing economic and social impacts of fishing regulations.

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“A Continuation of Catch Characterization and Discards within the Snapper Grouper Vertical Hook-and-Line Fishery of the South Atlantic United States”

(NA08NMF4330406, GSAFFI #107)

To enhance the universe of data that are available to stock assessment scientists, the Foundation is continuing to conduct the fishery observer program within the snapper grouper vertical hook-and-line (bandit reel) fishery of the South Atlantic United States. Through cooperation of Contractors (both Industry and Foundation), participation of the commercial fishing industry will be solicited to voluntarily assist in the performance of this project. An observer will be placed onboard cooperating vessels to collect a variety of data quantifying the participation, gear, effort, catch, and discards within the fishery. The intent of this project is not to form a standalone dataset, but to augment currently available



datasets. As such, most data analyses will be descriptive (proportional catch, discards, etc.), although some statistical tests will be conducted.

As in Year I of this project, the Foundation requested and received an Exempted Fishing Permit and appropriate state and Federal permits.

NMFS Conducting Referendum on Gulf Grouper/Tilefish Individual Fishery Quota Program

NOAA Fisheries Service is currently conducting a referendum to determine if commercial grouper and tilefish fishermen approve of a Grouper/Tilefish individual fishing quota (IFQ) program for the Gulf of Mexico. Referendum ballots were mailed to 301 eligible voters on December 5, 2008. Return of these ballots was due by 4:30 p.m. eastern time on January 5, 2009. Eligible voters are those individuals who possess an active or renewable commercial Gulf of Mexico reef fish permit with combined average annual grouper and tilefish landings of at least 8,000 pounds (gutted weight) during 1999-2004 (with the allowance of dropping one year). Results of the referendum will be posted at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov> and announced at the January 2009 Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) meeting. The Council meeting will be January 26 - 29, 2009 at the Hollywood Casino, 711 Hollywood Boulevard, Bay St. Louis, MS.

According to Amendment 29 everyone who owns an active or renewable Gulf of Mexico reef fish permit and who had grouper or tilefish landings reported under their qualifying permit during the qualifying time period of 1999 through 2004 would receive IFQ shares and allocation. Those who own an active or renewable Gulf of Mexico reef fish permit, but did not have any landings reported in association with their qualifying permit during the qualifying time period, would not receive IFQ shares or allocation but would be able to purchase shares or allocation

from IFQ shareholders after the program is established. Everyone who possesses a valid commercial Gulf of Mexico reef fish dealer permit would be eligible to participate in the IFQ program as a dealer.

The IFQ share distributed to each program participant would be determined by the average annual landings of grouper and tilefish from logbooks associated with their active or renewable Gulf of Mexico reef fish permit(s) during the time period 1999 through 2004, with an allowance for dropping 1 year. The allowance for dropping a year would allow an eligible participant to potentially boost his/her allocation by dropping the year with the lowest landings. IFQ shares would be distributed in direct proportion to the amount of grouper and tilefish landings reported under their current Gulf of Mexico reef fish permit during the qualifying time period relative to that of other Gulf of Mexico reef fish permits.

Everyone who owns an active or renewable commercial Gulf of Mexico reef fish permit is eligible to purchase IFQ shares and allocation from current IFQ shareholders for the first 5 years of the IFQ program. After 5 years, all U.S. citizens and permanent resident aliens would be eligible to purchase IFQ shares and allocation.

Results of the referendum will be announced at the January 2009 meeting of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council.

NOAA Fisheries to Establish Recreational Fishing Registry

NOAA Fisheries released its final rule on December 28, 2008 to create a national saltwater angler registry of all marine recreational fishermen to help the nation better protect our shared marine resources. A requirement to establish a registry was included in a statute approved by Congress in 2007. The final rule requires anglers and spearfishers who fish recreationally in federal ocean waters to be included in the national saltwater angler registry by Jan. 1, 2010. Beginning January 2009, NOAA will exempt anglers from the federal registration rule if they are licensed in states that have a system to provide complete information on their saltwater anglers to the national registry.

If anglers are not licensed or registered by a state that has been exempted and want to fish in federal waters, they will be required to register with NOAA. They also must register if they fish in tidal waters for migratory fish such as striped bass and salmon that spawn in rivers and spend their adult lives in estuaries and oceans. However, those who fish recreationally for these migratory species inland of tidal waters need not register, according to the final rule.

Jane Lubchenco chosen to lead NOAA by President-elect Obama

Dr. Jane Lubchenco, a marine biologist from Oregon State University, has been asked to lead the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration by the Obama administration. Dr. Lubchenco will be

the first woman to head NOAA. She has been a member of the Pew Oceans Commission and has recommended steps to overcome damage to the world's oceans from overfishing and pollution.

Executive Director meets with USF College of Marine Science Dean Hogarth

Executive Director Judy Jamison and Program Director Dr. Michael Jepson were recently invited to meet with the new USF College of Marine Sciences Dean Dr. Bill Hogarth. The College has embarked on a new venture with Mote Marine forming a Joint Center for Coastal Ocean Studies.

Dr. Al Hine presented a history of the College and a summary of current research. Dr. Kent Fanning discussed student enrollment and activities and Tom Piazze provided a tour of the College labs and introduced several other faculty.

Much of the work being conducted at the college is advanced technologies for the purpose of understanding ocean processes and providing potential strategies that will help provide real time or near real time data for coastal managers to facilitate decision making. Several technologies being developed at the College have direct implications to the commercial fishing enterprise.

Gulf Aquaculture Amendment

The Gulf Council proposed final action on the Aquaculture Fishery Management Plan (FMP) that would implement a regional permitting process for regulating aquaculture in the federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. A

final public hearing will be held during the January Council meeting in Bay St. Louis, MS, at the Hollywood Casino Hotel. Public testimony is scheduled to begin Wednesday, January 28, 2009 at 1:15 p.m.

South Atlantic Amendment 16 Interim Rule will not be Implemented

The National Marine Fisheries Service has decided not to implement the Interim Rule for Amendment 16 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan. The amendment is supposed to address overfishing in gag, red grouper and black grouper. The interim rule could not have become effective until February 2009, therefore the agency has determined that the benefits of the interim rule do not outweigh the cost to fishermen from implementing the rule earlier than the anticipated late Spring or early summer

implementation.

The amendment includes measures to end overfishing of gag grouper and vermilion snapper, including a 4-month spawning season closure for gag and shallow water grouper, reductions in bag limits, commercial quotas, and other measures. For additional information regarding Amendment 16, visit www.safmc.net or contact the Council office at 843-571-4366.

Program Director Position Vacancy

The Foundation released a Position Announcement for the Program Director position. Should you be interested or know someone who might qualify, please see the Foundation's website for additional details (www.gulfsouthfoundation.org). Resumes must be received by February 15, 2009.

2009 UPCOMING EVENTS

January

26 - 29 **Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council**
Hollywood Casino
711 Hollywood Blvd.
Bay St. Louis, MS 39520
1-866-758-2591

February

2 - 5 **ASMFC Winter Meeting**
Crowne Plaza Old Town
Alexandria
901 N. Fairfax Street
Alexandria, Virginia
1-800-333-3333

2 - 5 **NFI Conference on Seafood**
The Francis Marion Hotel
387 King Street
Charleston, SC 29403

24 - 25 **Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Wave Meeting**
Hilton
St. Petersburg, FL

March

2 - 6 **South Atlantic Fishery Management Council**
Jekyll Island Club Hotel
371 Riverview Drive
Jekyll Island, GA 31527
1-800-535-9547

15-17

International Boston Seafood Show
Boston Convention & Exhibition Center
415 Summer Street
Boston, MA

16 - 19

Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
Royal Sonesta
New Orleans, LA

April

13 - 17

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
W Hotel
333 Poydras Street
New Orleans, LA 70130
1-504-525-9444

May

5-7

ISSC Spring Meeting
Radisson Hotel
Manchester
Manchester, NH

June

8 - 12

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Hutchinson Island Marriott
555 NE Ocean Boulevard
Stuart, FL 34996
1-800-775-5936

15 - 18

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Quorum
700 N. Westshore Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33609
1-813-289-8200

August

10 - 13

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
Perdido Beach Resort
27200 Perdido Beach Blvd.
Orange Beach, AL 36561
1-251-981-9811

September

14 - 18

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
The Charleston Marriott Hotel
170 Lockwood Boulevard
Charleston, SC 29403
1-800-968-3569

23 -25

NFI 2009 Annual Meeting
The Ritz-Carlton
921 Canal Street
New Orleans, LA 70112

October

17-23

ISSC 2009 Biennial Meeting
Radisson Hotel
Manchester
Manchester, NH