

# Southeastern Fisheries Association, Inc.



## Hotlines - Online Edition



February 2001

### FWC's PROPOSAL TO CRIPPLE FLORIDA GROUPER INDUSTRY



According to Alan Barton, writer for the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, "Florida Wildlife officials and others have already endorsed changes in federal fishing rules that would essentially do away with long-line grouper fishing by outlawing the gear in less than 300 feet of water." What a sad commentary on governance and regulatory management. All the players know there are a minimum number of red grouper outside 300 feet of water.

During a recent FWC meeting in Tallahassee the longline grouper fishermen presented a brief, well thought out and quantifiable reason for managing this fishery. They left the meeting thinking

This newsletter is published by Southeastern Fisheries Association. Please pass it along and encourage others to be added to our mailing list.

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SFA is a non-profit association founded in 1952, charged with maintaining a viable seafood industry in the Southeast.

Robert P. Jones, Editor

the FWC had an open mind and would wait for completion of the scientific reports and other inputs before taking "another bite out of the elephant". Unfortunately it seems this did not happen

Remember when CCA's Ted Forsgren was making a point at a meeting on the demise of the Florida commercial fishing industry and said his leaders told him, "the way you eat an elephant is one bite at a time." Make no mistake that the commercial fishing industry is the elephant and those who wish to see us disappear are simply taking "one bite at a time". This would be a very big bite. There is absolutely no justification other than greed on the part of the recreational fishermen to curtail 70% of the Florida red grouper harvest. Not only will fishermen from Collier County through Pensacola suffer, the restaurants and retail markets that provide grouper to consumers will suffer greatly. Alan Barton further stated in his article that the Gulf Council had made several major decisions to cut grouper fishing.

In a January 25, 2001 letter to writer Alan Barton from the Chairman of the Gulf Council, Kay Williams states, "**Perhaps the most serious inaccuracies (in his article) are the statements that the Council "passed the controversial restrictions at a meeting in Texas on Thursday", and other statements implying that the Council made**

**decisions on specific regulatory actions concerning grouper. No such decisions have been made. Aside from being a misrepresentation of Council activities, these type of statements discourage fishermen and other concerned citizens from participating in the Councils rule making process, since they are led to believe that the decision have already been made and their input is irrelevant t".**

The Florida votes on the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council are stacked against commercial fishing. The vote to ban grouper longlines may see Karen Bell voting against it while Roy Williams (FWC designee), Alex Jernigan (CCA), Jim Fensom (anti-longline lawyer) voting for the ban.

### HACCP TRAINING AVAILABLE

Many companies are having additional employees trained and certified in the HACCP program. If you desire to certify more people in your firm let the office know. FDA and DACS are placing more and more emphasis on sanitation requirements. There are some things any firm can do to improve their operation. HACCP offers a very good plan and provides a record keeping system that doesn't have to be cumbersome. Call or fax SFA for more information and how a class might be set up at your facility or in your community.

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**Welcome to SFA New Members:** SFA is proud to welcome the following new members into its growing family of successful seafood companies. We encourage each member to support one another for the overall good of maintaining an economic and cultural presence for commercial fishing in America as well as providing marine protein to the people.

### Special HACCP Membership

Bluepoints International of Apalachicola,  
*Keith Smith, President*

**MATTHEW L. JONES**

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### BACKDOOR SALES OF SEAFOOD AT RESTAURANTS STILL RAMPANT

At an industry meeting in St. Petersburg Beach on February 5<sup>th</sup>, several seafood restaurant owners said many of the restaurants in Pinellas County were being inundated by sport fishermen trying to sell their grouper for cash. *When will any state or federal agency look at this situation?*

### SHRIMP BEING STOLEN FROM TORTUGAS NURSERY

A few renegade shrimp boats still sneak into the Tortugas Shrimp nursery with abandon and steal shrimp from the closed waters. This reflects poorly on the entire industry and it must be stopped. When

will NMFS/FWC start protecting Florida's number one fishery resource like it is supposed to?

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