



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES
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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CMR Approves Marine Turtle Study Resolution

BILOXI, Miss. – The Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources (CMR) voted unanimously to approve a Marine Turtle Study Resolution, which was presented to them for approval Tuesday, at the Aug. 16 CMR meeting.

The approved resolution was submitted to the U.S. Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and requested a comprehensive Gulf of Mexico sea turtle population and distribution study to provide vital baseline data on the status of current sea turtle populations and furthermore, to more fully investigate all possible causes of sea turtle mortality.

The Marine Turtle Study Resolution acknowledges that increased turtle strandings are occurring in the northern Gulf of Mexico states, and there is a need to explore all options because timing of increased strandings does not correlate with spatial distribution of shrimping effort. The resolution also acknowledges the numerous proactive precautionary measures that have been taken by the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (MDMR) to address fisheries interactions, which may affect sea turtles in state waters.

Additionally, the Marine Turtle Study Resolution states that the CMR's management of marine sea turtles is essential, and recognizes the need to know the status and distribution of the listed sea turtle species in the state and all Gulf of Mexico waters before enacting regulations, which may severely impact shrimp fisheries and dependent communities within the Mississippi Coast region.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources is dedicated to enhancing, protecting and conserving marine interests of the state by managing all marine life, public trust wetlands, adjacent uplands and waterfront areas to provide for the optimal commercial, recreational, educational and economic uses of these resources consistent with environmental concerns and social changes. Visit the DMR online at www.dmr.ms.gov.

Attached: Marine Turtle Study Resolution

—END—



COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources is a duly constituted governmental entity, created to serve the Great State of Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, said service includes the protection and management of Mississippi's marine resources; and

WHEREAS, increased sea turtle strandings are occurring in the northern Gulf of Mexico states; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to explore all options because timing of increased strandings does not match spatial distribution of shrimping effort; and

WHEREAS, the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources has responded proactively and taken precautionary measures to address fisheries interactions which may affect sea turtles in state waters, including education, free gear distribution, increased monitoring and enforcement efforts and temporary tow time restrictions; and

WHEREAS, the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources recognizes the economic and cultural importance of the shrimping industry from the Mississippi Sound and the public's inherent right to access the plentiful, fresh, natural, American shrimp food resource; and

WHEREAS, on June 20, 2011, the U.S. Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration issued a "Scoping Document for Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement to Reduce Incidental Catch and Mortality of Sea Turtles in the Southeastern U.S. Shrimp Fishery" including potential alternatives to enact new restrictions on the shrimp fishery including additional gear requirements and seasonal area closures; and

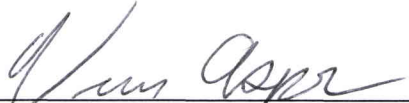
WHEREAS, the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources considers its role in the management of marine sea turtles essential and recognizes the need to know the status and distribution of the listed sea turtle species in the state and all Gulf of Mexico waters before enacting regulations which may severely impact shrimp fisheries and dependent communities.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, in a duly constituted and assembled meeting, that the Mississippi Commission on Marine Resources is requesting the U.S. Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to conduct a comprehensive Gulf of Mexico sea turtle population and distribution study to provide vital baseline data on the status

of current populations and furthermore, to more fully investigate all possible causes of sea turtle mortality.

DONE AND RESOLVED in this duly constituted and assembled meeting on this the 16th day of August, 2011.

MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON MARINE RESOURCES



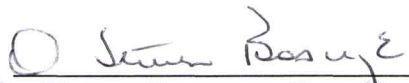
Vernon Asper, Ph.D. Chairman




Jimmy Taylor, Vice-Chairman



Richard Gollott, Commissioner



Steven Bosarge, Commissioner



Shelby Drummond, Commissioner

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES



William W. Walker, Executive Director