Frequently Asked Questions for the Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper and Grouper-Tilefish Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) Programs

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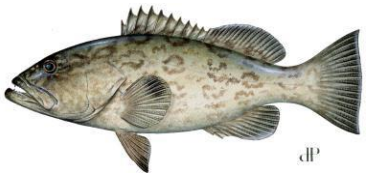

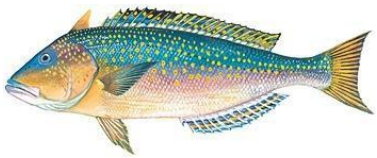

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR ACTIVE IFQ PARTICIPANTS

IFQ SPECIES AND FLEXIBILITY MEASURES

WHAT SPECIES ARE INCLUDED IN EACH SHARE CATEGORY OF THE IFQ PROGRAM?

IFQ SHARE CATEGORY	SPECIES
DEEP-WATER GROUPER (DWG)	SNOWY GROUPER SPECKLED HIND WARSAW GROUPER YELLOWEDGE GROUPER
GAG	GAG
SHALLOW-WATER GROUPER (SWG)	BLACK GROUPER SCAMP YELLOWFIN GROUPER YELLOWMOUTH GROUPER
RED GROUPER	RED GROUPER
RED SNAPPER	RED SNAPPER
TILEFISH	BLUELINE (GREY) TILEFISH GOLDEN TILEFISH GOLDFACE TILEFISH

- The following species were part of the IFQ program from 2010-2011, but were removed in 2012:
    - Misty grouper from the deep-water grouper share category
    - Red hind and rock hind from the other shallow-water grouper share category
    - Anchor and blackline tilefish from the tilefish share category

CAN SOME SPECIES BE LANDED USING MORE THAN ONE SHARE CATEGORY?

- Yes, the Grouper-Tilefish IFQ program has several built-in flexibility measures to reduce discards.
- Deep-water grouper and other shallow-water grouper flexibility measures:
    - The primary share category for landing warsaw grouper and speckled hind is deep- water grouper. However, when all of a fisherman's deep-water grouper allocation related to their shareholder account (e.g., in shareholder and associated vessel accounts) has been used, warsaw and speckled hind may be landed using shallow-water grouper allocation.
    - The primary share category for landing scamp is shallow-water grouper. However, when all of a fisherman's shallow-water grouper allocation related to their shareholder account (e.g., in shareholder and associated vessel accounts) has been used, scamp may be landed using deep-water grouper allocation.
- Gag and red grouper multi-use flexibility measures:
    - When quota is released, a portion of the gag or red grouper allocation may be reserved for multi-use allocation, which can be used to land either gag or red grouper. These percentages are based on a formula and may change each year.
    - Multi-use allocation cannot be used until the fisherman has landed or transferred all of the species-specific allocation related to their shareholder account (e.g., in shareholder and associated vessel accounts). For example, gag may not be landed under gag-multiuse or red-multiuse allocation, unless there is no gag allocation available in the shareholder or associated vessel accounts.

- The system automatically determines the order of the allocation deduction from each eligible share category. The allocation will always first be deducted from the primary category, followed by the secondary and tertiary (if applicable) categories. For all landing transactions, the primary category is used first for species belonging to that category, including those that do not have flexibility measures.
    - Example: Gag is deducted in the following order: gag, gag multi-use, and finally red grouper multi-use.
    - Example: Scamp is deducted from shallow-water grouper before deep-water grouper.
        - All deep-water grouper is deducted from the deep-water grouper category, and all shallow-water allocation must be used before scamp is deducted from the deep-water category.

DOES THE IFQ PROGRAM HAVE A LANDING OVERAGE PROVISION FOR IFQ SHAREHOLDERS?

- Yes, applicable by share category for IFQ fishermen who hold shares. The overage cannot exceed the amount of allocation generated from the shares for that account.
- IFQ shareholders can land 10% over their *remaining* allocation on the last fishing trip of the year as long as the amount does not exceed the equivalent amount of allocation from shares held in the account.
- The system automatically processes the 10% overage provisions when an eligible vessel submits a landing transaction for more allocation than is available in the shareholder or associated vessel accounts. Overages may occur early in the year for accounts that have minimal allocation. Please check your allocation balance before processing a landing transaction to ensure appropriate use of the 10% overage provision.
- When submitting the landing, a confirmation box will appear notifying the dealer that a 10% overage will be used. The vessel operator or shareholder must input the vessel signature PIN a second time to confirm the 10% overage.
- All overages will be subtracted from the shareholder's allocation at the start of the next fishing year, before the shareholder has access to their allocation.
- For example, if a shareholder lands 110 pounds of red snapper, but only has 100 pounds of red snapper allocation, they system will automatically apply the 10% overage if they shareholder has red snapper shares. The additional 10 pounds (110 landed – 100 available) will be subtracted from the shareholder's allocation on January 1, the following year.
- Because overages need to be subtracted from the shareholder's allocation at the start of the following year, share transfers will not be allowed that would reduce the shareholder's IFQ shares lower than the amount needed to pay back the overage.

SHARE AND ALLOCATION TRANSFERABILITY

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE IFQ SHARES OR ALLOCATION?

- For the first five years of each program, anyone who owned a valid or renewable commercial Gulf of Mexico reef fish permit and an active IFQ shareholder account was eligible to receive IFQ shares and allocation from current IFQ shareholders.
- After January 1, 2012, all U.S. citizens and permanent resident aliens with an IFQ shareholder account are eligible to open a shareholder account and receive red snapper IFQ shares and allocation
- After January 1, 2015, all U.S. citizens and permanent resident aliens with an IFQ

shareholder account are eligible to open a shareholder account and receive grouper and tilefish IFQ shares and allocation.

CAN MULTI-USE ALLOCATION BE TRANSFERRED?

- Multi-use allocation may only be transferred after landing or transferring all the corresponding species-specific allocation related to their shareholder account (e.g., in shareholder and associated vessel accounts).
    - For example, a fisherman can only transfer his gag multi-use allocation if he has used all of his gag allocation in his shareholder and all associated vessel accounts.
- The restrictions on the transfer of multi-use allocation ensure a fisherman has allocation to use if either gag or red grouper are landed as bycatch.

HOW ARE SHARES AND ALLOCATION TRANSFERRED?

- All transfers take place online via the Catch Share Web site (https://SECatchShares.Fisheries.NOAA.gov; see Troubleshooting Guide for details).
- Transfer of shares and associated allocation are independent. To transfer both shares and allocation, the transferor must complete both a share transfer and an allocation transfer.
- An individual who has been sanctioned may not transfer shares or allocation.
- For share transfers, approval is required from both the transferor and transferee.
    - After the transferor has initiated the share transfer, the transferee must log into his/her shareholder account to accept the transfer. Share transfers may be accepted by going to the **Receive Transferred Shares** page under the Shares menu, selecting the share transfer, indicating the price paid, and then accepting the share transfer.
    - Both steps of the share transaction must be completed before the shares are transferred to the transferee's shareholder account.
    - A share transfer transaction that remains in pending status (i.e., has not been accepted by the transferee) after 30 days from the date the transferor initiated the transfer will be cancelled. The pending shares are then available to the shareholder who initiated the transfer.
- For allocation transfers, approval is only required from the transferor. In order to reduce allocation transfers to an incorrect account, please use the vessel's registration number when transferring directly to another shareholder's vessel account.
- When transferring shares or allocation, complete Step 4 - Select the reason for the transfer.
    - The reasons listed in the drop down help managers analyze data when evaluating IFQ program performance.
    - Below are the available choices and their definitions:
        - Sale to Another Shareholder: Sold the allocation and/or shares to another, unrelated account.
        - Transfer to Related Account: Transferred (including sales and gifts) to an account that you are the owner or similar association.
        - Bartered Trade for Shares: Bartered or traded shares/allocation for one share category to receive shares for a different share category.
        - Bartered Trade for Allocation: Bartered or traded shares/allocation for one share category to receive allocation for a different share category.
        - Package Deal (e.g., purchased vessel with shares): Bought shares and/or

allocation in conjunction with another purchase (such as shares/allocation were bought alongside the Gulf Reef Fish commercial fishing permit or a fishing vessel).
        - Loan Program: Transferred allocation to the NMFS Loan account held by the Fisheries Finance Loan program for an associated loan.
        - Gift: Gift to another shareholder.
        - No Comment
    - If you select either of the **Bartered Trade** options, Step 4a will appear which asks that you provide the bartered share categories.

LANDING LOCATIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS

WHAT ARE THE LANDING AND OFFLOADING TIME REQUIREMENTS?

- For the purposes of these regulations, the term "landing" means to arrive at a dock, berth, beach, seawall, or ramp.
- A vessel can land at any time during the day and night, provided that a landing notification has been given between 3 to 24 hours prior to landing.
- A vessel must land within 1 hour **after** the arrival time given in the landing notification. If a vessel is going to be more than 1 hour after the arrival time, a new notification with an updated arrival time must be submitted. The captain is not required to wait an additional 3 hours if only one superseding landing notification has been submitted for the trip and the location or dealer has not changed.
- Vessels are allowed to land prior to the 3-hour landing notification time of arrival if an authorized officer is present, is available to meet the vessel at the landing site, *and* authorizes the owner or operator of the vessel to land early.
- "Offloading" is the removal of IFQ species from a vessel.
- Offloading is restricted to the hours of 6 a.m. to 6 p.m, local time. Offloads beginning before 6 p.m. may continue after 6 p.m. if an authorized officer is present, is available to remain at the offloading site while the offloading continues, *and* authorizes the vessel to continue offloading.
- Fishermen only need to notify law enforcement in advance of landing, not offloading.

WHY MUST PRE-APPROVED LANDING LOCATIONS BE USED?

- Landing locations must be approved in advance to ensure the sites actually exist and law enforcement agents can access these sites. Landing locations must be publicly accessible by land and water.
- Vessels landing IFQ species must only land at approved IFQ landing locations. Gulf for-hire landing locations are not approved for commercial vessels.
- Approved landing locations can be viewed through the Catch Share Web site or on the region's Frequent Freedom of Information Act Requests (https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/resources-fishing/frequent-freedom-information-act-requests-southeast-region) under the Gulf Commercial IFQ Landing Location Codes list.
- Proposed landing locations can be submitted via the Catch Share Web site (https://SECatchShares.Fisheries.NOAA.gov) or by calling Catch Share Customer Support 1- 866-425-7627 (option 2) during normal business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.).
- New landing locations will be approved only at the end of each calendar-year quarter. To

have a landing location approved by the end of the calendar-year quarter, it must be submitted at least 45 days before the end of the calendar-year quarter.

HOW AND WHY IS A LANDING NOTIFICATION REPORTED?

- The landing notification requirement is intended to provide law enforcement officers the opportunity to be present at the time of landing so they can monitor and enforce IFQ requirements dockside.
- Landing notifications can be made by using the form on the vessel monitoring system (VMS) screen, by calling 1-866-425-7627 (option 1), or by logging into their online IFQ account.

WHAT INFORMATION MUST BE PROVIDED ON THE IFQ LANDING NOTIFICATION?

- IFQ participants must report a landing notification at least 3 hours, but no more than 24 hours, prior to any landing. Information required for a landing notification includes (but may not be limited to):
    - Vessel identification
    - Approved landing location
    - Dealer's business name
    - Time of arrival
    - Estimated pounds to be landed in each share category
- The vessel landing IFQ species must have sufficient IFQ allocation in the IFQ vessel account, or its linked IFQ shareholder account, at least equal to the pounds in gutted weight of all IFQ species on board (except for any overage up to the 10 percent allowed on the last fishing trip) at the time of the advance notice of landing.

Please Note: The confirmation code does not automatically give the fisherman permission to land the vessel. It simply provides NOAA Fisheries a confirmation that a landing notification was made.

The fisherman is responsible for ensuring all regulations are satisfied (i.e., waiting 3 hours before landing, etc). Additionally, a vessel may land prior to a 3-hour notification if an authorized officer is present, is available to meet the vessel at the landing site, *and* authorizes the owner or operator of the vessel to land early.

ARE MULTIPLE LANDING NOTIFICATIONS NEEDED IF LANDING AT MORE THAN ONE LOCATION OR WITH MORE THAN ONE DEALER?

- Yes, if a vessel containing IFQ species intends to land at more than one location or with more than one dealer, separate landing notifications must be made for each landing location or dealer. The required 3-24 hour notification applies to both notifications and may be submitted sequentially.
- If landing at the same landing location for two dealers, both landing notifications should specify the ***total*** amount of fish onboard.
- If landing at two different landing locations (offloading some fish then moving the vessel to another landing location with the remaining fish onboard), the first landing notification should specify the ***total*** amount of fish onboard. The second landing notification should then specify the ***remaining*** fish onboard that is being moved to the second landing location.

WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES FOR MAKING CHANGES TO A LANDING NOTIFICATION?

- All notifications submitted for the same vessel will override a previous notification for that vessel for that trip.
- A previous notification is considered "changed" when any of the information in the notification is changed.
- If the landing location changes or an earlier time than previously submitted is needed, then the new notification will need to be submitted with at least 3 hours' notice prior to landing.
- If the change is to the dealer, the weights, or an arrival time that is later than previously submitted, the new notification does **not** require an additional 3 hours' notice.
- Only one "change" to a landing notification can be made before an additional 3 hours' notice is required.

Landing Notification Examples

- A landing notification is submitted for 3PM, but the captain wishes to land early at 2PM. Because the captain wishes to land earlier, a new notification must be submitted and is required 3 hours prior to the new arrival time. Because it is already 11:30AM, the captain submits a new notification to land at 2:30PM, overriding the original.
- A landing notification is submitted for 3PM, but the captain decides to land at 4:20PM instead. Because this is going to be more than 1 hour after the arrival time, a new notification with an updated arrival time must be submitted to override the original. Because no other superseding landing notification has been submitted for the trip and the change is only for a later time, the new notification can be submitted without needing to provide an additional 3 hour notice,
- For day trip vessels: A landing notification is submitted before or shortly after the vessel leaves the dock and specifies the estimated pounds anticipated to be landed. After fishing is completed, a new landing notification specifying the revised estimated pounds of IFQ species to be landed must be made without needing to provide an additional 3 hour notice,
- For day trip vessels: A landing notification is submitted before the vessel leaves the dock and specifies the estimated pounds anticipated to be landed. However, the vessel fails to land any IFQ species, a new landing notification specifying zero pounds of IFQ species must be made without needing to provide an additional 3 hour notice,
- A landing notification is submitted, but the captain decides to change dealers. A new notification can be submitted without needing to provide an additional 3 hour notice, because no other superseding landing notification has been submitted for the trip.
- A landing notification is submitted, but the captain needs to change dealers. A new notification is submitted to override the original and does

not require an additional 3 hour notice. Sometime after submitting the second notification, the captain realizes that the weights reported in the notification were incorrect. Weight changes submitted in new landing notifications usually do not require an additional 3 hour notice, but because this will be a second change to the original notification, an additional 3 hour notice is required. The captain will have to either extend the fishing time, or wait nearshore before landing to allow for the 3 hour notice.

VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEM (VMS)

HOW DO I FIX PROBLEMS WITH MY VMS UNIT?

- To contact the Southeast Regional Office VMS Support, call (800) 758-4833.
- If the VMS unit (all vendors) is not positioning turn power off, then repower unit. This may clear any internal errors and restart unit positioning. If you still experience non-reporting contact your VMS vendor directly.
- Vendor-specific troubleshooting:
    - **Orolia/McMurdo/Boatracs (**1-800-262-8722)
        - If the amber light appears on the right side of your unit, it indicates that the unit is not reporting or that forms may not send from unit.
    - **Faria Beede Instruments** (1-877-888-5569)
        - Use the 2.5" gauge to confirm if your unit is functioning properly. The GSN (cellular) and SAT (satellite) antennas will display a 0-5 with zero indicating no signal. If the signal is zero for either antenna, this indicates that your unit may need to be serviced. Similarly, if your GPS reading is 9999, this indicates the GPS antenna is not receiving a signal and the unit will be unable to send positions or forms as required.
    - **Network Innovations (**1-888-664-6727)
        - To check the status of your Thrane and Thrane unit open the Easy Mail software. On the top of the main screen, all three status bars on the display should be green. If the bars are red, this indicates that the unit is not getting a signal and is unable to send positions or forms as required.
    - **Skymate (**1-703-961-5800)
        - To check the status of your Skymate unit, go to the main screen. The Skymate tablet will display two sets of bars on the bottom of the screen. These bars display the signal strength of both GPS (left) and Iridium satellite (right). These will display green bars for strong signal strength, and black bars for weak or no signal.
        - The tablets Bluetooth connection is displayed at the top right of the main screen. Strong Bluetooth connection is represented by white rings, if the rings are greyed out there is poor or no Bluetooth connection. To troubleshoot this issue, power off the tablet and restart the tablet. This may reestablish the Bluetooth connection. If the Bluetooth fails to connect, contact Skymate directly to troubleshoot unit.

- **CLS/Woodshole Group (**301-925-4411)
    - The main screen of CLS tablet will display both GPS status and Iridium Satellite statuses. If you click on the Iridium tab, it will display the signal strength in green bars. GPS signal is indicated by Latitude and Longitude being displayed on screen. If latitude and longitude are missing, there is a problem with the GPS feature on the unit.
    - Forms should automatically be sent from tablet when submitted. You can confirm form has been sent by clicking on Thorium button on the top left side of the screen, then select Submitted. All forms will be visible here. If form has sent successfully, there will be a green check mark. If there is a grey circle next to the form it means that the form is stuck and has not been sent. This is likely due to a Bluetooth connection issue.
    - To troubleshoot Bluetooth connection issues, contact CLS/Woodshole Group directly.
- **Nautic Alert** (800-385-1674)
    - Contact your vendor.
- **Addvalue** (954-736-8829)
    - Contact your vendor.

LANDING TRANSACTIONS

HOW ARE LANDING TRANSACTIONS COMPLETED?

- The dealer enters the pounds (gutted weight) and actual ex-vessel value of landed fish of each species, along with other information.
    - *Actual ex-vessel value* means the price paid per pound of fish before any deductions are made for transferred (leased) allocation and goods and services (e.g., bait, ice, fuel, repairs, machinery replacement, etc.).
    - A single landing transaction may include multiple entries per species to allow for different prices per pound (e.g., 100 lbs of red snapper at $4.50 and 50 lbs at $5.00).
    - Landing transactions must be entered on the day of the offload and within 96 hours of the arrival time given on the pre-landing notification.
    - Ice and water weight may not be deducted from the landing transaction, unless the actual weight of ice and water are determined using a scale.
- The fisherman validates the dealer transaction report by entering the unique vessel signature Personal Identification Number (PIN). The vessel signature PIN is only used to process landing transactions and never expires.
- After the dealer submits the report and NOAA Fisheries verifies the information, the online system sends a transaction approval code to the dealer and the allocation holder. This approval code is necessary to verify the transaction and that the vessel account has the correct amount of grouper, tilefish, and/or red snapper allocation before the fish can be transported.

  If a discrepancy regarding the landing transaction is discovered after approval, the dealer or vessel account holder (or his or her authorized agent) can initiate a landing transaction correction form.

What is THE EX-VESSEL VALUE OF MY IFQ FISH?

- *Actual ex-vessel value* is the total pounds multiplied by the price paid per pound of fish before any deductions are made for transferred (leased) allocation and goods and services (e.g., bait, ice, fuel, repairs, machinery replacement, etc.).
- This allows NOAA Fisheries to more accurately analyze the total value of the Gulf red snapper and grouper/tilefish component of the reef fish fishery.

HOW ARE OVERAGES ADDRESSED?

- Sufficient allocation to complete the landing transaction must be in the vessel account or the linked shareholder account at the time of the landing notification.
- If the fisherman **does not hold shares** and has caught an amount of IFQ species for that share category that exceeds the existing allocation in the vessel and/or shareholder account, the fisherman must transfer allocation to the vessel account prior to the time of landing in order to complete a landing transaction.
- If the fisherman **holds shares** and has caught an amount of IFQ species for that share category that exceeds the existing allocation in the vessel and/or shareholder account, the fisherman may either transfer allocation into the vessel account prior to the time of landing or use the overage provision. The overage provision allows a fisherman to exceed once for each share category, by up to 10%, the amount of the allocation remaining on that last trip of the fishing year. See overage provision under "IFQ SPECIES AND FLEXIBILITY MEASURES" section for more information. The overage is deducted in the following year.
- The 10% overage provision is automatically implemented and calculated by the system if a vessel attempts to land more allocation than available. When processing the landing transaction, a confirmation box will appear notifying the vessel operator or shareholder that a 10% overage will be used. The vessel operator or shareholder must input the Vessel Signature PIN a second time to confirm the use of the 10% overage.

WHEN CAN IFQ SPECIES BE TRANSPORTED ON LAND?

- A landing transaction with a dealer must be completed and the transporter must have the approval code and a copy of the IFQ dealer endorsement before the IFQ species can be transported on land by the fisherman or dealer.

ARE COST RECOVERY FEES COLLECTED FOR THE IFQ PROGRAM?

- IFQ fishermen are charged a cost recovery fee to recover a portion of the costs required to administer, manage, and enforce the IFQ programs.
- The current cost recovery fee is 3% of the ex-vessel value of the landed fish and will be re- evaluated each year.
- IFQ dealers are responsible for collecting the cost recovery fee from the shareholder at the time of the landing transaction and submitting fees to NOAA Fisheries on a quarterly basis through the IFQ program using the pay.gov website.

IF THE DEALER OVERPAYS THE COST RECOVERY FEE, HOW IS THE DEALER REIMBURSED?

- Credits cannot be applied to future cost recovery fees.
- If the dealer paid the cost recovery fees by credit card, the Catch Share program will reimburse the dealer's credit card.
- If the dealer paid the cost recovery fees by debit or check, they must fill out a reimbursement form provided by Catch Share Customer Support staff. The dealer

should mail the completed form to NOAA Fisheries, 263 13th Avenue S., St. Petersburg, FL 33701, and the Catch Share staff will submit the paperwork for reimbursement**.**

IFQ ACCOUNTS AND GULF REEF FISH PERMITS

HOW IS A GULF REEF FISH PERMIT RELATED TO MY IFQ ACCOUNT?

- An IFQ account must be related to a Gulf Reef Fish Permit in order to possess and land IFQ species. The exact same names must be on both the IFQ account and Gulf Reef Fish Permit. Any change of names on a permit (e.g., adding or removing a spouse or partner) will separate the permit from the IFQ account. A new IFQ account must then be established based on the names on the permit and the vessel account must be transferred to the new shareholder account

WHEN THE PERMIT HOLDER'S NAME(S) CHANGE, HOW DOES THIS AFFECT MY IFQ ACCOUNT?

- If the permit holders have changed, the permit is no longer related to your IFQ account. You must call Catch Share Customer Support (866-425-7627, option 2; 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday) to establish a new IFQ account that will match the name(s) on the permit. All permit holders must establish proof of U.S. citizenship through either their permit application or the IFQ online account application.
- Please allow adequate time to establish an IFQ account, as it may take a few days for the new account's UserID and PIN to be mailed to you. UserIDs and PINs may ***only*** be mailed to new account holders and may not be emailed or given out over the phone.

IF MY PERMIT IS TRANSFERRED TO ANOTHER VESSEL, HOW DOES THIS AFFECT MY IFQ ACCOUNT?

- Any vessel without an associated permit needs to transfer the allocation back to the shareholder account. Vessels without an associated permit are inactive and cannot be used to land IFQ species.
- If the vessel was not previously in the IFQ system, you will need to create a vessel account through your shareholder account. Before a vessel can be associated with an IFQ account, the relationship between the permit and IFQ account must be established. See the Trouble- shooting Guide for detailed information on how to create a vessel account.
- If the vessel was previously in the IFQ system, the vessel account must be manually moved between IFQ accounts by Catch Share Customer support staff. Before a vessel account can be transferred to a different IFQ account, all allocation in that vessel account must be transferred back to its shareholder account. You may contact Catch Share Customer Support to begin the process. As this process is dependent upon the previous owner's transfer of allocation from the vessel account to the shareholder account this may take several days to complete.

IF I SELL OR TRANSFER MY VESSEL AND/OR PERMIT, WHAT HAPPENS TO MY IFQ SHAREHOLDER AND RELATED VESSEL ACCOUNT?

- At this time, vessels and/or permits are not required to open or maintain a shareholder account. Your shareholder account will stay active until you submit a form requesting the account to be closed or it is closed by Catch Shares Customer Support staff if inactive for 12 months. Accounts will not be closed if they contain shares or allocation.
- Shares and allocation are not linked to permits or vessels. Shares and allocation remain in your shareholder account until you transfer the shares and/or allocation to another shareholder account.

- If the sale agreement of the vessel/permit includes shares and/or allocation, the transferor must log into their shareholder account and transfer the shares/allocation to the new shareholder.
- If the vessel is sold and associated with another commercial reef fish permit, the vessel account will be linked to the shareholder account associated with the permit. Before a vessel account can be linked with that shareholder account, you must transfer any allocation in the vessel account to your shareholder account.
- If the vessel is sold but is not associated with another commercial reef fish permit, the vessel account will still appear under the shareholder account that last held the vessel/permit in an "inactive" status. The vessel account will remain in an inactive status until such a time as it is associated with a commercial reef fish permit. Vessels in inactive status cannot receive allocation nor land fish.

CHANGING OWNERSHIP OF AN IFQ ACCOUNT

I AM SELLING MY BUSINESS, WHAT HAPPENS TO MY IFQ ACCOUNT?

- Selling the business but retaining the shares and allocation:
  - The shareholder must transfer the shares/allocation to another existing account or create a new account for the shares and allocation.
  - The IFQ account holder must provide the new owner with the shareholder UserID and PIN. The new owner now controls the IFQ account.
- Selling the business with the shares and allocation:
  - The IFQ account holder must provide the new owner with the shareholder UserID and PIN. The new owner now controls the IFQ account.

HOW DOES SOMEONE HANDLE AN ACCOUNT FOR A DECEASED SHAREHOLDER?

- If the account has multiple shareholders and the surviving shareholder(s) has the UserID and PIN, the surviving shareholder(s) can access the account.
- If the personal representative/executor/administrator of the deceased shareholder's estate seeks access to the shareholder's account, the personal representative/executor/administrator must provide the following to the Southeast Regional Office Catch Share staff: (1) a copy of the court order appointing the personal representative/executor/administrator; and (2) a notarized statement requesting access to the shareholder's account.
- If you have questions about a deceased shareholder's account, call Catch Share customer support at 1-866-425-7627 and select option 2 during normal business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.)
- If the deceased shareholder(s) has a commercial Gulf of Mexico reef fish permit, contact the Permit Office at 727-824-5326 for instructions on how to transfer a reef fish permit.

IFQ ENDORSEMENTS

ARE DEALERS REQUIRED TO HAVE AN IFQ ENDORSEMENT?

- Yes, dealers may access and print their IFQ endorsement in their online account. Endorsements are valid when a dealer's Gulf and South Atlantic Dealer (GSAD) permit is active and they do not have any outstanding Cost Recovery Fees. A copy of the IFQ dealer endorsement must accompany vehicles used to transport IFQ species on land.

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

HOW DO I RECOVER MY IFQ SHAREHOLDER OR DEALER PIN?

- Click the "Forgot PIN?" button on the login page and enter the account UserID.
- Answer the two secret questions established during account set up.
- A temporary PIN will be displayed on the screen.
- After logging in with the temporary PIN, create a new personalized account PIN.

HOW DO I GET ANSWERS TO GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE IFQ PROGRAMS?

- If you have a customer service inquiry, please call 1-866-425-7627 and follow the prompts for Catch Share customer support. Customer service calls will be answered from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30
  p.m. Eastern time, Monday to Friday, excluding federal holidays. Any message left after hours, on weekends, or holidays will be addressed during normal working hours. *Please do not leave a landing notification on the voice mail.*
- You may also search for answers in the Troubleshooting Guide, which is located on the website, under Additional Documents. This has screen shots and step-by-step instructions for many of the online actions.

WHEN DOES END OF YEAR MAINTENANCE OCCUR AND WHAT DOES IT AFFECT?

- The maintenance window is from 6 p.m. on December 31 to 2 p.m. on January 1.
- No landing transactions, share transfers, or allocation transfers may be completed during the maintenance window.
- IFQ participants may still submit an advanced notice of landing via phone or through their vessel monitoring system during the maintenance window, ***but the landings will be deducted from the next year's allocation.***

ARE THERE ANY FEDERAL LOANS FOR THE COMMERCIAL FISHING INDUSTRY?

- Yes, NOAA's Fisheries Finance Program offers loans for fishing vessels, federal harvesting privileges, fisheries shore-side facilities, aquaculture facilities, as well as reimbursement of previous capital expenditures.
- Basic Requirements:
  - Applicants must be U.S. citizens in the commercial fishing or charter fishing industry, have good credit history, and be able to provide three years of financial statements.
  - Entities must be (at minimum) 75% U.S. owned.
  - Vessels must be USCG documented.
- There is no loan minimum and the total amount cannot exceed 80 percent of the eligible project cost.
- For more information, contact NOAA's Southeast Fisheries Financial Services Division at (727) 824-5377 or visit

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE IFQ PROGRAM

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS AND ACCOUNT INFORMATION

WHAT ARE THE ELECTRONIC REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IFQ PROGRAM?

- The administrative functions associated with this IFQ program, such as account setup, landing transactions, and transfers are designed to be completed online; therefore, all participants need access to a computer and the Internet to participate.
- The Web site can be found at https://SECatchShares.Fisheries.NOAA.gov.

WHAT TYPE OF ACCOUNT DOES A PARTICIPANT NEED?

- Eligible GSAD dealers need an IFQ dealer account, which allows them to obtain a free IFQ dealer endorsement and to complete landing transactions.
- Reef fish permit holders or non-permitted entities that have completed an IFQ online account application need an IFQ shareholder account, which is used to manage shares and allocation.
- Within a shareholder's account, a vessel account is needed for each permitted vessel used to fish for and land IFQ species. Vessel accounts can be created through the shareholder account (see Troubleshooting guide for more details).
    - The purpose of the vessel account is to hold allocation required to land IFQ species. Before a landing notification for the vessel is submitted, the vessel account or linked shareholder account must have enough allocation in the appropriate share categories for the fish on board.
    - Vessel accounts can only hold allocation for use in landing and selling catch of IFQ species. Vessel accounts cannot hold shares. Allocation can be transferred **into** a vessel account from any IFQ shareholder account. However, allocation can only be transferred **out of** a vessel account by the shareholder account for which it is associated.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE GULF OF MEXICO IFQ PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS?

- The regulations for each the IFQ program describe the complete list of program requirements. For current information about the program requirements, see the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/ECFR. Select Title 50, Volume 12, and Part 622.21 (Red Snapper IFQ Program) or Part 622.22 (Grouper-Tilefish IFQ Program).
- Amendment 26 to the Gulf Council's Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan is available to download at: https://gulfcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/Reef-Fish-Amendment-26_508Compliant.pdf
- Amendment 29 to the Gulf Council's Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan is available to download at: https://gulfcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/Reef-Fish-Amdt-29-Dec-08_508Compliant.pdf
- Historical rules and amendments to the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan are available to download at: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/management-plan/gulf-mexico-reef-fish-fishery-management-plan
- For additional information or specific questions about the IFQ program, please call the Catch Share Customer Support line at 1-866-425-7627, option 2.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR AN IFQ ACCOUNT

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE IFQ PROGRAM?

- In order to participate in the individual fishing quota programs (red snapper or grouper-tilefish), participants must have an active online account. Only U.S. citizens or permanent resident aliens can hold an IFQ account. Information required on the application will include:
    - Contact information (name, address, phone number)
    - Certification that the entity is a U.S. citizen or permanent resident alien
    - Tax identification number
- The online account application will be offered at no charge and all shareholder accounts will be required to update the application every 2 years in order to maintain an active online account.
    - Anyone who holds an active IFQ shareholder account is eligible to purchase red snapper and grouper-tilefish shares and allocation.
    - ***Only participants with shareholder accounts, allocation, and a commercial reef fish permit are allowed to land and sell IFQ species.***
- Anyone who possesses a valid Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Dealer (GSAD) permit and active IFQ dealer account is eligible to participate in the IFQ program as a dealer.

WHY IS THE IFQ ONLINE ACCOUNT APPLICATION NECESSARY?

- The IFQ online account application is necessary to collect information from the non-permitted
  U.S. citizens and permanent resident aliens who are trying to establish IFQ accounts.
- It collects required information, such as citizenship information and contact information for participants.
- IFQ online account applications can ***only*** be accepted by mail and may not be emailed or faxed.

CAN A NON-PERMITTED PARTICIPANT PURCHASE SHARES AND ALLOCATION?

- Currently, non-permitted shareholder accounts are eligible to purchase red snapper and grouper- tilefish shares and allocation (i.e. pounds). ***Only participants with shareholder accounts, allocation, and a commercial reef fish permit are allowed to land and sell IFQ species.***
- Shares held by an entity may not exceed the share cap specified for each share category.

WILL A NON-PERMITTED PARTICIPANT BE ABLE TO LAND AND SELL COMMERCIAL IFQ SPECIES?

- No, only shareholders with a valid commercial reef fish permit and sufficient allocation in their IFQ vessel account are allowed to land and sell commercial IFQ species.

HOW CAN A FISHERMAN OR DEALER SET UP AN ACCOUNT?

- For Shareholder accounts, you may download the IFQ Online Account Application from the website, or contact Catch Share customer support either by e-mail or phone to request an IFQ Online Account Application to be mailed or emailed to you.
- Dealers are not required to complete an IFQ Online Account Application, but need to contact Catch Share customer support in order to create an account. Dealers must have a valid Gulf and South Atlantic Dealer permit.
- After the new user account is created by Catch Share customer support, a package will be

mailed to the new user with information for setting up the account. The package includes information for accessing the online IFQ system, how to go fishing on an IFQ trip, a fact sheet, a copy of the regulations, a troubleshooting guide for using the online system, and a letter containing the UserID.

- The PIN for their IFQ account will be sent in a separate letter.
- Because the information *may only* be mailed to the new account holder, it may be a few days before the account may be accessed by the participant.
- Assistance with online functions is available from Catch Share customer support, 1-866-425- 7627, (select option 2) Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Eastern time.

HOW DO I SET UP AN IFQ ACCOUNT FOR A TRUST?

- In order to open or renew an IFQ account for a trust, the following information is required:
  - Trust name, address, and phone number
  - Trust tax identification number and date the trust was established
  - Names and information of all trustees and beneficiaries, including address, phone number, date of birth, and social security number
- If the Trust is the permit holder, this information may have been completed at the time of the permit application; if the Trust is not a permit holder, an IFQ Online Account Application must be completed and mailed to Catch Share Customer support (see Who is Eligible to Participate in the IFQ Program section). Please allow adequate time to establish an IFQ account, as it may take a few days for the new account's sign-on and password to be mailed to you.

ALLOCATION AND SHARES

HOW DO I CALCULATE MY ALLOCATION (POUNDS) FROM MY SHARE PERCENTAGES?

- Convert the amount of shares you hold from a percentage to a number, by dividing the percentage by 100.
  - **Example:**
    - Amount of Shares Expressed as a Percentage: 1%
    - Divide 1 by 100.
    - 1/100 = 0.01
    - Amount of Shares Expressed as a Number: 0.01
  - Multiply the commercial quota (gutted weight) for the share category you are converting, by the amount of shares you hold in that category.
  - **Example for calculating Red Grouper Allocation:**
    - The commercial quota for 2014 is 5,630,000 pounds gutted weight.
    - Amount of Shares: 0.01
    - Commercial Quota: 5,630,000 pounds gutted weight
    - 5,630,000 X 0.01 = 56,300 pounds gutted weight
    - Therefore, the 2014 IFQ allocation for 1% shares is 56,300 pounds gutted weight.

HOW WILL ADJUSTMENTS IN ALLOCATIONS OR SHARES BE DISTRIBUTED?

- Adjustments in quota can occur if the status of a stock changes as a result of new assessments, or through reallocation between the commercial and recreational fishing sectors.
- Adjustments in a quota will be distributed proportionately among eligible IFQ shareholders based on the percentage of shares each holds at the time of the adjustment. Allocation will be distributed to the current holder of the shares.
- If an IFQ shareholder's commercial reef fish vessel permit has been permanently revoked, at the beginning of the next fishing year the Regional Administrator (RA) for NOAA Fisheries will redistribute the shares held by that shareholder proportionately among remaining eligible shareholders based upon the amount of shares each held just prior to the redistribution. Shareholders already at the share cap will receive no additional shares.

HOW DO THE IFQ PROGRAMS PREVENT ENTITIES FROM ACQUIRING AN EXCESSIVE SHARE OF THE FISHERY?

- The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires fishery managers to ensure any entity does not acquire an excessive share of the total allowable catch of an IFQ fishery.
- Share caps are defined as the maximum IFQ share issued to a person, corporation, or other entity.
- The intent of the IFQ Share Cap is to prevent one or more entities from purchasing an excessive amount of IFQ shares and monopolizing the fishery.
- An allocation cap limits the amount of allocation that can be purchased or held cumulatively by a person or corporation during a given calendar year.
- The allocation cap for the Grouper-Tilefish IFQ Program equals the total amount of pounds that corresponds to all share caps combined. There is no allocation cap for the Red Snapper IFQ Program.
- Share caps have been established for each share category:

Share Category	**Share Cap**
Deep-water grouper	14.704321%
Gag	2.349938%
Other shallow-water grouper	7.266147%
Red grouper	4.331882%
Red snapper	6.0203%
Tilefish	12.212356%

WHAT IS THE HISTORICAL MULTI-USE ALLOCATION FOR GAG AND RED GROUPER?

Percentage of Multi-Use Allocation		
Year	**Gag Multi-Use**	**Red Grouper Multi-Use**
2010	8%	4%
2011	8%	0%
2012	8%	0%
2013	70%	0%
2014	47%	0%
2015	33%	4.8%
2016	33%	4.8%
2017	43.6%	3.5%
2018	43.6%	3.5%
2019	17%	9.2%
2020	17%	9.2%
2021	17%	9.2%
2022	13.8%	11.5%
2023	75.30%	2.10%
2024	100%	0%
2025	73.5%	0%
2026	58.8%	0%

APPORTIONMENT OF INITIAL IFQ SHARES

WHO WAS ELIGIBLE FOR THE INITIAL DISTRIBUTION OF SHARES AND ALLOCATION?

Red Snapper IFQ Program:

- Everyone who owned a valid red snapper license on November 22, 2006, received IFQ shares and allocation if red snapper landings were reported under their qualifying license during the qualifying time period.
    - The qualifying time period for Class 1 licenses is 1990 through 2004.
    - The qualifying time period for Class 2 licenses, and for Class 1 licenses issued on the basis of historical captain status, is 1998 through 2004.
- Those who owned a valid red snapper license on November 22, 2006, but did not have any landings reported in association with their qualifying license during the qualifying time period did not receive IFQ shares or allocation because they did not demonstrate a historical dependence on the fishery as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Grouper-Tilefish IFQ Program:

- Everyone who owned a valid or renewable commercial Gulf of Mexico reef fish permit as of October 1, 2009, and who had grouper or tilefish landings reported under their permit during the qualifying time period of 1999 through 2004 received initial IFQ shares and allocation.
- Owners of a valid or renewable commercial Gulf of Mexico reef fish permit that did not have any landings during the qualifying time period did not receive initial IFQ shares or allocation but are able to purchase shares or allocation from IFQ shareholders.

HOW WERE INITIAL IFQ SHARES DETERMINED?

Red Snapper IFQ Program:

- The red snapper IFQ share allocated to each program participant was determined by the amount of the red snapper landings reported under his or her qualifying license during a specific time period:
    - The IFQ share allocated each current owner of a Class 1 license was based on the ten consecutive years from 1990 through 2004 during which landings reported under the license were highest.
    - The IFQ share allocated each current owner of a Class 1 license issued on the basis of historical captain status was based on the seven years of landings data reported under the license from 1998 through 2004.
    - The IFQ share allocated each current owner of a Class 2 license was based on the five years from 1998 through 2004 during which landings reported under the license were highest.

Grouper-Tilefish IFQ Program:

- The initial grouper and tilefish IFQ shares distributed to each participant was determined by the average annual landings of grouper and tilefish from logbooks associated with their reef fish permit(s) during the time period 1999 through 2004, with an allowance for dropping 1 year. Dropping a year allows a participant to remove the year with the lowest landings.
- All grouper and tilefish landings associated with a valid or renewable commercial reef fish permit for the qualifying period were attributed to the permit holder as of October 1, 2009, including those reported by a person who held the permit prior to the current owner. Anyone purchasing a reef fish permit after September 30, 2009, did not receive grouper or tilefish shares associated with that permit.

HOW WERE MISIDENTIFICATION OF GAG AND BLACK GROUPER HANDLED FOR THE GROUPER-TILEFISH IFQ PROGRAM?

- The initial distribution of IFQ shares was based on landings adjusted for misidentification of gag and black grouper. Adjustments to landings were only made to fishing trips that reported landing gag or black grouper, but not both. For trips reporting both gag and black grouper, landings were assumed to be reported accurately and were not adjusted.
- Gag and black grouper landings for each fisherman were determined by trip and statistical area fished. Gag and black grouper landings were then adjusted for each trip using gag: black grouper landing ratios observed by dockside interviewers for each statistical area fished.
    - Adjusted gag grouper landings were used in determining gag shares.
    - Adjusted black grouper landings were used in determining Other SWG shares.
- Adjustments to gag and black grouper landings were appealable.

APPEALS

WERE FISHERMEN ABLE TO APPEAL THEIR INITIAL IFQ SHARES?

- Yes, items subject to appeal under the IFQ system included initial eligibility for IFQ shares based on ownership of a valid commercial reef fish permit, the accuracy of the amount of landings, correct assignment of landings to the permit owner, and correct assignment of gag versus black grouper landings. Hardship arguments were not considered.
- The RA conducted reviews, evaluations, and rendered final decisions on appeals.
- Red snapper appeals had to be filed by April 1, 2007 and Grouper-Tilefish appeals had to be filed by April 1, 2010.
- The RA determined the outcome of appeals based on NOAA Fisheries logbooks.
    - Appellants were required to submit logbooks and/or other supporting documentation to support their appeal. Logbooks are available from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center.
    - If logbooks were not available, the RA may have used state landings records.

WHAT EFFECT DID APPEALS HAVE ON INITIAL APPORTIONMENT OF IFQ SHARES?

- Ninety-seven percent of the IFQ shares were distributed to qualifying shareholders at the start of the programs and the remaining 3% was set-aside to settle appeals.
- The full amount held in reserve was not used to complete the appeals process and the remaining amount of the 3% set-aside after the appeals process was completed was proportionately distributed to the IFQ shareholders who initially received shares.

**Photos courtesy of Diane Peebles and Duane Raver