

Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Quota Bank

Frequently Asked Questions
December 8, 2020

1. How does the Shareholders' Alliance decide who gets allocation?

The Shareholders' Alliance Board of Directors will review every complete application and apply the following evaluation to determine an applicant's eligibility for the program:

- Is the application complete?
- Does the applicant meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the Quota Bank Operations Plan?
- If the applicant is a returning member, was she/he compliant with Quota Bank requirements in previous years?

If the answers are "yes," the following criteria will be applied to each eligible applicant:

- Gear type
 - Top priority: bottom longline
 - Medium priority: bandit/rod and reel/handgear
 - Low priority: spear
- Meeting participation
 - Top priority: Participating in *more than* 3 meetings (2 policy, 1 Quota Bank)
 - Regular priority: Participating in 3 meetings (2 policy, 1 Quota Bank)

2. How many pounds of allocation will I get?

Allocation will be distributed in 2020 based on a standard formula:

Pounds requested	Membership	Gear	Allocation
3,000 lbs. or more	Returning	All	3,000 lbs.
3,000 lbs. or more	New	All	2,000 lbs.
1000 lbs. to 2,999 lbs.	All	LLB	100% of request
1000 lbs. to 2,999 lbs.	All	Non-LLB	80% of request or 1,000 lbs., whichever is greater

3. What's the allocation lease price and how is it set?

The lease price is calculated once applications have been submitted and approved by using an objective and pre-determined formula:

- Step 1: The Deputy Director shall consult publicly available sources of information about the price at which allocation was leased in 2019 and is currently being offered for lease in 2020.
- Step 2: The Deputy Director shall select one data point from at least five of these publicly available sources of information. That data point will be (i) the

- price per pound at which 2020 allocation was most recently offered for lease through that publicly available source or, (ii) in the case of NMFS Annual Reports or “Catch Up On Catch Shares” analysis, historical information reflecting average 2019 or 2020 lease price per pound.
- Step 3: The Deputy Director shall then determine the average lease price across these publicly available sources by summing them together and dividing by the number of data points.
- Step 4: That average price will be the price at which the Deputy Director shall lease the 2019 allocation, except that the Deputy Director is authorized to reduce the lease price by up to 50 percent from the average lease price calculated in order to account for inflated offers or otherwise to carry out the Shareholders’ Alliance’s conservation and management objectives.

The Shareholders’ Alliance Board of Directors has determined that the Deputy Director should have sole responsibility and authority to determine the lease price for the Quota Bank allocation without any involvement of the Board or its individual members. Further, the Shareholders’ Alliance has adopted a formal policy that prohibits Board Members from discussing lease prices for allocation in their capacity as Board Members for the Shareholders’ Alliance.

4. Who makes decisions about the program?

The Shareholders’ Alliance Deputy Director oversees the daily operations of the Quota Bank, including but not limited to tracking, accounting for, and transferring red snapper allocation; analysis of catch reporting; management of applications; and management of allocation lease price and Quota Bank finances.

The role of the Shareholders’ Alliance Board of Directors is to manage and oversee the Quota Bank program, including but not limited to program admission and operations; enforcement of program policies, Best Practices; and addressing of grievances.

5. How do I appeal a decision I believe was unfair?

Members may appeal to the Board of Directors by emailing the Deputy Director if they feel a decision was unfairly or unjustly made, or if extreme circumstances intervened that resulted in noncompliance with the program. Members are encouraged to communicate concerns and feedback to Quota Bank staff and the Board in a timely, transparent, and constructive manner.

6. Why do I have to attend meetings in order to receive allocation?

The Shareholders’ Alliance and the *de facto* Quota Bank Advisory Committee are in agreement that it is essential the Quota Bank members are active and involved in the regulatory process so that their voices are heard and they play a role in the regulatory decision-making that impacts their businesses. Doing so builds capacity for fishermen-driven solutions that protect commercial fishing businesses and seafood access, support science-based management, reinforce accountability, and promote sustainability.

7. Why do I have to carry a descending device or venting tool onboard to be part of the program?

A top priority for the Quota Bank is to reduce discards and discard mortality. Properly using descending devices or venting tools increases the chances that a discarded fish will live to spawn another day and will help rebuild the resource for today and future generations.