

Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Quota Bank

Frequently Asked Questions
December 8, 2023

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

The Shareholders' Alliance Board of Directors will review every complete application and apply the following evaluation criteria 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 he/she 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: Participation in *more than* 3 meetings (2 Fishery Management, 1 Membership)
 - Regular priority: Participation in 3 meetings (2 Fishery Management, 1 Membership)

2. How many pounds of allocation will I get?

Allocation will be distributed in 2024 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 |

However, this amount may be reduced based on demand, availability, and other factors.

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 predetermined formula:

- Step 1: The Deputy Director shall consult publicly available sources of information about the price at which allocation was leased in 2023 and is currently being offered for lease in 2024.
- 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 2023/2024 allocation was most recently offered for lease through that publicly available

source or, (ii) in the case of NOAA Fisheries' Annual Reports or "Catch Up On Catch Shares" analysis, historical information reflecting average 2021, 2022 or 2023 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 2024 allocation in each quarter of the year. 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. Furthermore, 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 and Policy Director oversee 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 and 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 non-compliance 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, they play a role in the regulatory decision-making that impacts their businesses, and they establish industry relationships that support their business. 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. I've just gone through a hurricane, how can the Quota Bank help?

Hurricanes have very real and damaging impacts on commercial fishermen, their businesses, and their

communities. The Shareholders' Alliance is committed to helping Quota Bank members persevere through these challenging situations and has historically waived membership fees and assisted with allocation on occasions.

If you are a Quota Bank member whose business and community has been harmed by a hurricane, please contact Eric Brazer, Deputy Director as soon as you are able. He will work with you to help you recover.