

24 October, 2023. Merida Yucatan, Mexico.

Dear Editorial Board

PeerJ.

We submit the revised version of the paper entitled **Factors affecting the relative abundance in an overfished stock: Red grouper (*Epinephelus morio*) in the southeastern Gulf of Mexico** by Iván Ali Oribe-Pérez, Iván Velázquez-Abunader and Carmen Monroy-García, to be considered for publication in the PeerJ, after completing the review and replying the suggestions made by the reviewers.

We expect the revised version of the manuscript can fulfill the requirements of the journal. We attach the response to specific queries of the reviewers.

We also want to thank the comments and suggestions of two referees, who have helped us improve our manuscript.

Looking forward prompt response, receive our kind considerations

Sincerely,



Iván Velázquez-Abunader
Marine Resources Department
jvelazquez@cinvestav.mx

Reviewer 1 (Julia Saltzman)	Status	Response
<p>Basic reporting</p> <p>The authors fixed the previous grammatical errors in the paper; as such, clear and unambiguous English is now used throughout. Throughout their manuscript they have added references where I previously suggested additional literature was necessary.</p> <p>The authors have fixed the previously noted structural issues in the manuscript.</p> <p>Within figure 2, the authors should change "Kilometer" to "Kilometers".</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Agree</p>	<p>The authors are grateful for the valuable comments provided by the reviewer, which have contributed to improving the paper.</p> <p>The authors thank the reviewers for their suggestions to improve the structure of the manuscript.</p> <p>Within Figure 2, the word "kilometers" was used.</p>
<p>Experimental design</p> <p>The authors have responded to all of my comments, and have met the necessary standards for publication.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>The authors are grateful for the valuable comments provided by the reviewer.</p>
<p>Validity of the findings</p>		

The authors have responded to all of my comments, and have provided robust, statistically sound, interpretations of their results.	Agree	The authors are grateful for the valuable comments provided by the reviewer.
Reviewer 2 (Anonymous)	Status	Response
<p>Basic reporting</p> <p>No comment</p>		
<p>Experimental design</p> <p>No comment</p>		
<p>Validity of the findings</p> <p>No comment</p>		
<p>Additional comments</p> <p>I would like to congratulate the authors for the effort they have invested in the review of the manuscript “Factors affecting the relative abundance in an overfished stock: Red grouper (<i>Epinephelus morio</i>) in the southeastern Gulf of Mexico”.</p> <p>In my opinion, the manuscript is clear and should be accepted for publication. Some minor changes that the authors might want to</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>Agree</p>	<p>The authors are grateful for the valuable comments provided by the reviewers, which have contributed to improving the manuscript.</p> <p>The authors are grateful for reviewer's suggestions and are willing to incorporate them into the manuscript.</p>

consider incorporating are listed below		
The aim of the study appearing in lines 87-92 seems a bit misplaced. In my opinion it would be more fitting to place it after the section "Fishery background" and just before the Materials and Methods.	Agree	The authors have placed the aim of the study in the section suggested by the reviewer (see lines 147-152).
Line 88: for the red grouper stock	Agree	We have used the suggestion by the reviewer (see lines 147-149).
Lines 151-152: whose the number of fishers, the vessel sizes and catch levels are unknown.	Agree	We have used the suggestion by the reviewer (see lines 145-146).
Line 220: (used during the octopus season).	Agree	We have used the suggestion by the reviewer (see line 220).
Line 225: Perhaps the term "monthly compositions" is not the best, but (since I am not an expert in meteorology) the case might be that it is some technical jargon. Kindly check that it is correct in conveying what you are trying to say.	Revised	<p>We have revised the term and it is more appropriate to use "monthly composites" (see lines 224-226). This expression clearly conveys the idea and is widely used in several research papers:</p> <p>Hobson et al. (2008). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dsr.2007.11.003</p> <p>Martinez et al. (2011). https://doi.org/10.1029/2010JC006836</p>

		Hu et al. 2023. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rse.2023.113515
Lines 386-387: ideal for the benthic habits of larger red grouper adults.	Agree	We have used the suggestion by the reviewer (see lines 385-387).
Line 431: Moreover, the importance	Agree	We have used the suggestion by the reviewer (see lines 431-433).
Line 455: Fishing effort has been defined as effective fishing days and effective fishing hours	Agree	We have used the suggestion by the reviewer (see lines 455-458).
Lines 463, 465 and 467: if you are referring to legislation here, perhaps it is better to use “law” instead of “rule”.	Revised	We have used the suggestion by the reviewer (see lines 463-470).