

**DECISION DOCUMENT
MARCH 2016 COUNCIL MEETING**

**Modifications to Charter Vessel and
Headboat Reporting Requirements**



**Amendment 39 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper
Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region**

**Amendment 9 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Dolphin and
Wahoo Fishery of the Atlantic**

**Amendment 27 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Coastal
Migratory Pelagics Fishery of the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic
Region**

February 16, 2016

Document Navigation

- Track changes is used to show edits resulting from the IPT review, and these sections are highlighted in **yellow**
- Committee actions are highlighted in **blue**.

1.2 Purpose and Need

The *purpose* is to increase the accuracy and timeliness of landings, discards, effort and socio-economic data of federally permitted for-hire vessels participating in the South Atlantic managed fisheries.

The *need* ~~for this action~~ is to improve charter vessel and headboat fishery data used for management and to improve monitoring and compliance of federally permitted for-hire vessels in the South Atlantic managed fisheries.

ACTION

1. **ACCEPT THE IPT RECOMMENDED MODIFICATION**
2. **REJECT THE RECOMMENDED MODIFICATION**
3. **SUGGEST ALTERNATIVE LANGUAGE**

CHAPTER 2. MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Action 1: Modify Frequency and Mechanism of Data Reporting for Charter Vessels

Alternative 1 (No Action). Under current regulations, the owner or operator of a charter vessel with a charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic coastal migratory pelagic (CMP) species, South Atlantic snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin and wahoo has been issued, or whose vessel fishes for or lands such ~~Coastal Migratory Pelagic ((CMP))~~ species, snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin or wahoo in or from state waters adjoining the applicable South Atlantic or Atlantic exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and who is selected to report by the Science and Research Director (SRD) must maintain a fishing record for each trip, or a portion of such trips as specified by the SRD, on forms provided by the SRD. Completed fishing records must be submitted to the SRD weekly, postmarked no later than 7 days after the end of each week (Sunday). Information to be reported is indicated on the form and its accompanying instructions.

For South Atlantic snapper grouper, charter vessels selected to report by the SRD must participate in the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)-sponsored electronic logbook and/or video monitoring program as directed by the SRD. Completed fishing records may be required weekly or daily, as directed by the SRD.

Note: The requirement to participate in a video monitoring program if selected is not changed by any of the alternatives in this amendment.

Preferred Alternative 2. Require that federally permitted charter vessels, while operating as a charter vessel, submit fishing records **for each trip** to the SRD weekly, or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD, via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). **Electronic reports would be due by Tuesday following the week that ends on Sunday. Weekly = Tuesday following each fishing week.** Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel preferred.

ACTION: CLARIFY THAT TRIP LEVEL REPORTING IS REQUIRED, AND THE DAYS INTENDED FOR THE WEEK.

- 1. ACCEPT THE IPT RECOMMENDED MODIFICATION TO CLARIFY THE ENDING POINT OF THE WEEK.**
- 2. REJECT THE RECOMMENDED MODIFICATION**
- 3. SUGGEST ALTERNATIVE LANGUAGE**

NOTE FOR THIS ACTION: There is a defined “reporting week” but not a defined “fishing week”. (*Reporting week means the period of time beginning at 12:01 a.m., local time, on Sunday and ending at 11:59 p.m., local time, the following Saturday.*) The intent is to be explicit in the alternatives that the weekly reporting period is a 7-day period that starts on a Monday and ends the following Sunday.

- Alternatives in the prior for-hire reporting amendment defined the week as ending on Sunday.

- The codified text accompanying the generic for-hire (headboat reporting amendment referred to both a week as ending Sunday, for charterboats, and an undefined “reporting week”, for headboats:

“Electronic logbook reports for South Atlantic snapper-grouper, South Atlantic coastal migratory pelagic fish, and Atlantic dolphin and wahoo, required by paragraphs (b)(1)(ii)(A), (b)(1)(iii)(A), and (b)(1)(iv)(A) of this section for **headboats** must be submitted at weekly intervals (or intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD) by 11:59 p.m., local time, the Sunday following a **reporting week.**”

“ Completed fishing records required by paragraphs (b)(1)(i), (b)(1)(ii)(B), (b)(1)(iii)(B), and (b)(1)(iv)(B) of this section for **charter vessels** must be submitted to the SRD weekly, postmarked no later than 7 days after the **end of each week (Sunday).**”

Preferred Sub-alternative 2a. Report all fish harvested/discarded on all trips regardless of where harvested. (current HB requirement)

Sub-alternative 2b. Report only South Atlantic federally-managed fish harvested/discarded on all trips regardless of where harvested. (snapper grouper, dolphin/wahoo, & ~~and~~ CMP species)

Sub-Alternative 2c. Report all federally-managed fish harvested/discarded on all trips regardless of where harvested.

Alternative 3. Require that federally permitted charter vessels, while operating as a charter vessel, submit fishing records to the SRD daily via electronic reporting via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). Daily = by noon of the following day.

Sub-alternative 3a. Report all fish harvested/discarded on all trips regardless of where harvested. (current HB requirement)

Sub-alternative 3b. Report only South Atlantic federally-managed fish harvested/discarded on all trips regardless of where harvested. (snapper grouper, dolphin/wahoo, & CMP species)

Sub-Alternative 3c. Report all federally-managed fish harvested/discarded on all trips regardless of where harvested.

Discussion

For both **Alternative 2** and **Alternative 3**, is the intent of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (South Atlantic Council) that during catastrophic conditions the use of paper forms for basic required reporting may be authorized by the Regional Administrator (RA) through publication of timely notice. During catastrophic conditions, the RA also has the authority to waive or modify reporting time requirements.

For both Alternative 2 and Alternative 3, is the intent of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (South Atlantic Council) that an electronic report not received within the

time specified is delinquent. A delinquent report automatically results in a prohibition on harvesting or possessing the applicable species by the permit holder, regardless of any additional notification to the delinquent permit owner and operator by NMFS. This prohibition is applicable until all required and delinquent reports have been submitted and received by NMFS according to the reporting requirements.

If no fishing activity took place during a reporting period, the permit holder would be required to submit an electronic report stating that no fishing activity occurred and this report must be submitted at the same time interval specified in the regulations (local time). **A preliminary list of data elements for charter vessels participating in the effort portion of the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) For Hire Survey is shown in Table 2.1.1.**

Statement is not relevant to the no fishing activity reporting requirement, and is addressed below

The current reporting regulations for the snapper grouper fishery were implemented through a series of amendments, starting in 1991 with Amendment 4 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic (Snapper Grouper FMP) (SAFMC, 1991) which required charterboat and headboat permits and required charterboats and headboats to report, if selected. Amendment 4 also required that recreational fishermen must make snapper grouper species, or parts thereof, available for inspection by the NMFS Science and Research Director or an authorized representative, upon request.

Amendment 15B (SAFMC 2008) required that “commercial vessels with a snapper grouper permit, for-hire vessels with a for-hire permit, and private recreational vessels if fishing for snapper grouper species in the EEZ, if selected, shall use observer coverage, logbooks, electronic logbooks, video monitoring, or any other method deemed necessary to measure by catch by NOAA Fisheries.

Amendment 31 to the Snapper Grouper FMP/Amendment 6 to the Dolphin Wahoo FMP/Amendment 22 to the CMP FMP (SAFMC 2013a) required electronic logbook reporting for headboat vessels fishing for Snapper Grouper, Dolphin Wahoo, and Coastal Migratory Pelagics.

Charter vessels are operationally defined as for-hire vessels that carry six or fewer passengers that also meet the requirements of the U.S. Coast Guard. To date, none of these vessels have been selected by the SRD to submit fishing records as described in **Alternative 1 (No Action)**. Rather, these vessels have been monitored through the MRIP For-Hire Survey (measures effort) and the MRIP dockside intercept survey (measures catch). The MRIP For-Hire Survey includes charter vessels operating in the South Atlantic from eastern Florida through North Carolina. Charter vessel operators are required to report all trips taken during selected weeks (effort only) whenever they are selected to participate in the survey. Charter vessel operators are contacted by telephone (a weekly sample of 10% of the fleet) to collect these data (**Table 2.1.1**). Catch data are collected in a separate dockside intercept survey of anglers. Adjustment factors for active

charter vessels that are not in the sample frame (new to fleet, no contact information known, etc.) are produced from field intercept survey questions and applied to the raw effort estimate.

Table 2.1.1. Required data reporting elements for charter vessels participating in MRIP For-Hire Survey.

Reporting Elements
Area fished
Number of anglers who fished
Hours of actual fishing activity
Method of fishing
Target species (if any)

To enforce the mandatory reporting requirement for federally permitted charter vessels in the telephone component of the For-Hire Survey, permit holders who refuse to participate in the survey are notified by letter of their obligation to report as a condition for permit renewal. However, if a charter vessel operator cannot be contacted after five attempts for a selected week, the final interview status is “unsuccessful contact”. It is impossible to identify permit holders who are deliberately evading the survey. Telephone contact rates vary by wave (i.e., MRIP 2-month sample period), state, and region, and the percent of selected vessels that are unable to be contacted by phone is quite high in some strata.

Preferred Alternative 2 would require federally permitted charter vessels participating in the subject fisheries to submit fishing records weekly or at intervals shorter than a week via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). **Preferred Alternative 2** could improve fishery dependent data in several ways. For example, fishery dependent data from charter vessels could be available for inclusion into the science and management process faster, potentially reducing the likelihood of exceeding annual catch limits (ACLs). **Preferred Alternative 2** could also improve data accuracy as reports would be completed shortly after each trip, potentially reducing problems associated with recall errors and reporting by Tuesday would standardize charter vessel logbook reporting with commercial logbook reporting (and headboats if **Alternative 2** is chosen for **Action 2**). However, **Preferred Alternative 2** would reduce the timing flexibility for report preparation by charter vessel operators and this burden could be acute during peak season when the number of trips taken, the number of passengers carried, and catch are greatest.

Alternative 3 would require charter vessels participating in the subject fisheries to submit a report for each day. As with **Preferred Alternative 2**, this report would be submitted electronically and received by NMFS (due noon the following day). **Alternative 3** could further reduce the likelihood of exceeding ACLs with reduced recall error compared to **Alternative 1 (No Action)** and **Preferred Alternative 2**. However, **Alternative 3** would add additional burden and reduced flexibility compared to **Alternatives 1 (No Action)** and **Preferred Alternative 2**.

The South Atlantic Council’s intent is that charter vessels with federal permits for snapper grouper, dolphin wahoo, and coastal migratory pelagics meet the minimum data elements

currently collected for federal headboats (see **Table 2.1.2** and **Appendix D**) and for charter vessels and headboats in South Carolina (see **Table 2.1.3** and **Appendix C**). However, there needs to be sufficient flexibility in the structure and design of the data collection program to ensure that the system can be built in a timely and efficient manner.

Potential additional data elements:

1. Vessel Identification Number – helpful to match trips to federal vessel permit.
2. Fishing method – trolling, bottom fishing, diving.
3. Actual hours fished – time spent fishing excluding travel time.
4. Estimated pounds of kept species.
5. Condition of fish released – live versus dead.

Additional data that could be collected on a sample or voluntary basis from both charter vessels and headboats includes:

- releases/discards measured and specific location (depth) of release recorded
- retained catch at specific location (depth) recorded
- economic data (similar to what is currently being collected from commercial fishermen)
- social data

Table 2.1.2. Required data reporting elements for headboats participating in the SRHS. Reporting Elements

Depart Date:Time
Return Date:Time
Vessel Name
Captain Name
Number of Anglers
Number of Paying Passengers
Number of Crew
Fuel used (gallons)
Price per gallon (estimate)
Minimum depth fished
Maximum depth fished
Primary depth fished
Latitude/Longitude Degrees
Latitude/Longitude Minutes
Species caught
Number kept
Number released

Table 2.1.3. South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) Logbook data elements and

descriptions	
Field_Name	Field_Description
LDate	Date of charter trip – Only a single entry, most trips are one day, exception that we have seen are overnight swordfish trips, hours fished is the identifier
LicenseNum	Permit number of the charter – Matched to SC License Data, unique number each fiscal year/new license
TripNum	Trip number, if the charter vessel takes multiple trips in a single day, Time fishing trip started is the identifier, internally completed, not on the form
Location	Specific location of fishing trip as shown on the charter grid map, attached
Locale	Locale of fishing trip, identified as estuarine, nearshore (0 – 3 miles) or offshore (>3 miles)
NumAnglers	Number of anglers fishing
Method	Method of fishing, identified as troll, bottom, gig, dive, cast/fly, and combinations of such
TargetSp	Species targeted while fishing
Hours	Hours spent fishing
Reef	Artificial reef fished, name provided
TripStart	Time fishing trip started
ShallowDepth	Shallowest depth fished (feet)
DeepDepth	Deepest depth fished (feet)
StartLocation	Place where the fishing trip started from, name provided for location where the trip started (marina or boat ramp name)
Notes	Notes about the trip the captain wants to provide
SpCode	Species code of species caught
NumKept	Number of that particular species caught and kept
LbsLanded	Pound of that particular species kept
NumReleaseLive	Number of fish of that species released alive
NumReleaseDead	Number of fish of that species released dead

ACTION

1. SPECIFY MINIMUM DATA ELEMENTS IN THE AMENDMENT
2. DO NOT SPECIFY MINIMUM DATA ELEMENTS IN THE AMENDMENT
3. OTHER APPROACHES?

Specifying minimum elements in the amendment will require that any future change in those minimum elements will also require an amendment. However, doing so will be favorably viewed by those constituents who are concerned with 'reporting' creep and adding variable to data collection programs without fully considering if the additional information is required and how it would impact their ability to report.

2.2 Action 2: Modify Frequency and Mechanism of Data Reporting for Headboats

Alternative 1 (No Action). Under current regulations, the owner or operator of a headboat with a charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic ~~Coastal Migratory Pelagic (CMP)~~ species, South Atlantic snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin and wahoo has been issued, or whose vessel fishes for or lands such CMP species, snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin or wahoo in or from state waters adjoining the applicable South Atlantic or Atlantic exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and who is selected to report by the Science and Research Director (SRD) must submit an electronic fishing record for each trip of all fish harvested via the SRHS. Electronic fishing records must be submitted at weekly intervals (or intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD) by 11:59 p.m., local time, the Sunday following a reporting week. If no fishing activity occurred during a reporting week, an electronic report stating so must be submitted for that reporting week by 11:59 p.m., local time, the Sunday following a reporting week.

Note: The catastrophic conditions provisions, delinquent reporting, and the requirement to participate in a video monitoring program if selected are not changed by any of the alternatives in this amendment (described in further detail in **Section 1.1**).

During catastrophic conditions, the use of paper forms for basic required functions may be authorized by the Regional Administrator (RA) by publication of timely notice. During catastrophic conditions, the RA also has the authority to waive or modify reporting time requirements.

When an electronic report is not received within the time specified, it is delinquent. A delinquent report automatically results in a prohibition on harvesting or possessing the applicable species, regardless of any additional notification to the delinquent owner and operator by NMFS. This prohibition is applicable until all required and delinquent reports have been submitted and received by NMFS according to the reporting requirements.

For South Atlantic snapper grouper, headboats selected to report by the SRD must participate in the NMFS-sponsored electronic logbook and/or video monitoring program, as directed by the SRD. Completed fishing records may be required weekly or daily, as directed by the SRD.

Preferred Alternative 2. Require that headboats, while operating as a headboat, submit fishing records to the SRD weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). **Electronic reports would be due by Tuesday following each week that ends on Sunday, instead of reports being due on Sunday.** Weekly = Tuesday following each fishing week. *Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel preferred.*

ACTION

- 1. ACCEPT THE IPT RECOMMENDED MODIFICATION**
- 2. REJECT THE RECOMMENDED MODIFICATION**
- 3. SUGGEST ALTERNATIVE LANGUAGE**

Alternative 3. Require that headboats, while operating as a headboat, submit fishing records to the SRD daily via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). Daily = by noon of the following day.

Discussion

Historically, headboat vessels reported logbook information using paper forms. Beginning January 1, 2013, vessel owners/operators have been required to submit electronic logbooks. Vessel operators selected to report are required to report 100% of their vessel trips, regardless of whether the trips occur in the EEZ or in state waters. The current reporting requirements place the responsibility for submitting required information directly on the permit holder, and compliance is monitored and enforced as a condition for permit renewal. However, the Federal For-Hire Permit is open access, and a fisherman can purchase a new permit if a permit is lost or expired. If a vessel is delinquent for any trips, an e-mail reminder is sent to the vessel owner after the reporting week ends. If the vessel continues to be non-compliant, the Permit Office is notified to place the vessel permit renewal on hold. In some cases, the vessel permit is not up for renewal for several months; if a vessel in this status remains non-compliant, law enforcement is notified to prohibit this vessel from harvesting and possessing federally managed species. The obligation to report is reinforced annually via certified letter to each permit holder.

The SRHS, which is administered by the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC), includes approximately 76 large capacity headboats operating in the South Atlantic from Florida through North Carolina (**Table 1.4.1**). Vessels included in this survey are required to report catch and effort data weekly to NMFS (**Table 2.1.2**).

Alternative 1 (No Action) requires headboats participating in South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Atlantic Dolphin Wahoo, or Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic CMP fisheries, if selected by the SRD (Note: The headboat amendment required all headboats to report.), to submit electronic reports weekly (or at intervals less than a week if requested by the SRD) due seven days after the end of each week (Sunday).

Preferred Alternative 2 would continue the requirement for headboats participating in the subject fisheries to report weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). The difference between **Alternative 1 (No Action)** and **Preferred Alternative 2** is the time between the end of the fishing week (Sunday) and report submission. **Alternative 1 (No Action)** allows 7 days to prepare and submit reports while **Preferred Alternative 2** would allow only 2 days. **Preferred Alternative 2** could improve fishery data in several ways. Fishery data could be available in the science and management process faster, potentially reducing the likelihood of exceeding ACLs. **Preferred Alternative 2** could also improve accuracy as reports would be completed soon after each trip reducing problems associated with recall errors, and reporting by Tuesday would standardize headboat logbook reporting with commercial logbook reporting (and charter vessels if **Alternative 2** is chosen for **Action 1**). However, **Preferred Alternative 2** would reduce the flexibility of the headboat operators for the timing of report preparation and this could be acute during peak season when the number of trips, the number of passengers, and catch are greatest.

Alternative 3 would require headboats participating in the subject fisheries to submit a report each day. This report would be submitted electronically and would need to be received by NMFS (by noon the following day). **Alternative 3** could further reduce the likelihood of exceeding ACLs and reduce recall error compared to **Alternative 1** or **Preferred Alternative 2**. However, **Alternative 3** would add additional burden and reduced flexibility in comparison to **Alternative 1** or **Preferred Alternative 2**.

2.3 Action 3: Modify Electronic Reporting Requirements to Require Vessel or Catch Location Reporting

Alternative 1 (No Action). Current regulations require charter vessels participating in the for-hire survey to report area fished (inshore, state, or federal waters), if selected as part of the survey. Headboats participating in the ~~Southeast Region Headboat Survey (SRHS)~~ are required to report latitude and longitude of area fished (degrees and minutes only; within 1 nm²-nautical mile (nm)² area) or by selecting the area fished from the headboat chart (10 by 10 nautical square miles).

Preferred Alternative 2. Require federally permitted charters vessels to report location electronically by latitude/longitude in degrees and minutes or by clicking on a headboat chart. Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel preferred.

Two Alternatives Considered

Section 1502.14(a) of the National Environmental Policy Act states that “agencies shall: rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives....” Two reasonable alternatives for this action, including the no action alternative, have been identified by NMFS and the South Atlantic Council. The South Atlantic Council is considering requiring charter vessels to report catch location in the same manner as is currently required for headboats.

Preferred Alternative 2 reflects the current manner in which headboats are required to report area fished. The South Atlantic Council and NMFS could consider a third alternative to not require charter vessels to report area fished, but that would not meet the purpose and need and is therefore unreasonable.

Discussion

Charter vessels that are surveyed using the MRIP for-hire survey (i.e., 10% weekly) are asked to report area fished (i.e., area fished, state, or federal waters) in addition to the other elements listed in **Table 2.1.1**.

Alternative 1 would maintain the current self-reporting systems in place, that is, report area fished if selected in the for-hire survey (charter vessel) or latitude/longitude of area fished within 1 nm² area (headboat).

Preferred Alternative 2 would require charter vessels to report location fished manually by latitude/longitude in degrees and minutes or by clicking on a geographic grid, which is currently required for headboats in the South Atlantic.

The South Atlantic Council’s goal is to have the for-hire sector’s landings available weekly similar to commercial landings. Headboats are currently required to report data weekly and, if the For-Hire Reporting Amendment is implemented, charter vessels would also be required to report weekly. Having the for-hire catches updated weekly would help inform the projection process for the private recreational sector’s catches that are available 45 days after a 2-month wave.

Currently headboat catches are being reported 45 days after each 2-month wave at the same time the MRIP catches are available. Part of the reason for this time period is that the South Atlantic Council has specified the recreational ACL in pounds and this requires the numbers of fish to be converted to pounds. Generating catch estimates in pounds requires the integration of mean weights collected by angler intercepts. This is accomplished for the headboat catches during the 45 day period after a 2-month wave. The MRIP catches are reported in numbers and weight. However, the SEFSC has developed a methodology for generating weight that they concluded is more accurate for the southeast. This adds an unspecified period of time after the MRIP data are released for the SEFSC to apply their conversion factors and provide a catch estimate in weight.

Electronic reporting would facilitate the availability of catch in numbers sooner than catch in pounds. The South Atlantic Council is considering specifying recreational ACLs in numbers of fish so that the headboat sector (and the charter vessel sector once this amendment is approved) can be tracked weekly. Specifying the recreational ACL in numbers of fish could also reduce the time in which MRIP data are available to track recreational ACLs.

IPT Recommendation is that the following text is out of place here, in the discussion of Action 3, as it addresses the overall outcomes of the amendment rather than Action 3. Details of the Technical Sub-Committee are provided by through an appendix providing the entire report from the group, and how the Council's preferred alternatives address the group's recommendations will be addressed in the Council Conclusions chapter.

~~The Technical Sub-Committee met in XXX and developed recommendations for the system design. The complete list of recommendations are in Appendix E.~~

~~The system design addresses the following recommendations from the Technical Sub-Committee (Appendix E):~~

~~3. Development of compliance tracking procedures that balance timeliness with available staff and funding resources.~~

~~5. Use validation methods developed in the Gulf of Mexico logbook pilot study as a basis to ensure that the actual logbook report is validated and standardized validation methodologies are employed among regions.~~

~~8. Require and maintain a comprehensive permit/email database of participants.~~

~~10. Include procedures for expanding estimates for non-reporting.~~

~~11. Allow multiple authorized applications or devices to report data as long as they meet required data and transferability standards.~~

~~The Technical Sub-Committee recommended a multi-faceted approach where a number of reporting platforms can be used so long as the minimum data standards and security protocols are met. Data standards would need to be developed and the subcommittee agreed that NMFS, the GulfFIN (for Gulf data), and ACCSP (for Atlantic data) could work collaboratively to develop appropriate standards.~~

The Technical Subcommittee recommended this process for data storage and management:

1. Logbook data collected via authorized platform, ex. web, tablet, phone, or VMS application
2. Data submitted to ACCSP or GulfFIN;
3. Data integrated by ACCSP or GulfFIN into single composite data set;
4. Composite data set distributed to appropriate agencies for analyses and use.

This process could eliminate duplicate reporting for some participants (e.g., South Carolina headboats and charter vessels) as long as appropriate data standards are in place and the respective agencies agree to confidentiality standards, which would allow sharing and accepting one another's data for use. Elimination of duplicate reporting (e.g., separate state and federal reports) would be a substantial benefit to participants in this survey program and could mitigate any additional reporting requirements for comparison to the current MRIP survey program.

The Technical Subcommittee recommended building upon the validation methodology developed in the Gulf of Mexico MRIP pilot study.

The Technical Subcommittee recommended use of a MRIP certified methodology for validation with the following elements: Gulf of Mexico MRIP pilot study methodologies, including dockside validation of catch and vessel activity, and maintenance of site and vessel registries.

The Technical Subcommittee recommended dual survey methods (existing and new) for no less than three years. Data from the new program would not be expected to provide management advice during the first year of operation. Moreover, this would allow the possibility of an initial phase-in or limited implementation to identify and solve significant problems prior to implementation for all participants.

The Technical Subcommittee recommended that the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council) and the South Atlantic Fishery Management (South Atlantic Councils) move forward with development of a reporting system that includes federally permitted for hire vessels while also exploring ways to determine the impact of state permitted vessels on landings estimates of federally managed species. Long term, the subcommittee recommends that both state and federally permitted charter vessels participate in this census to include the entire fleet of charter vessels harvesting federally managed species.

Weekly electronic dealer and headboat reporting are fully implemented. However, there are still delays in having updated landings available to the public for their use in planning trips and to the South Atlantic Council for monitoring ACLs. A solution, in the Atlantic, would be to have the raw weekly data fed to ACCSP and made available to the public via the ACCSP website. The "official" numbers for quota closures would continue to be the numbers maintained by NMFS and available on the NMFS website but this would provide more timely and useful updates to the public for charter vessels and headboats.

The result would be updated and current catch data (weekly for charter vessels and headboats; 45 days after a wave for private recreational vessels) available on a daily basis for the public, states,

The South Atlantic Council concluded it is important for the public to understand the timing of full implementation:

1. South Atlantic Council approves document for formal review – June 2016
2. Document review by NMFS and approved/partially approved/disapproved – late 2016
3. Target implementation date – January 1, 2017. Charter vessels and headboats required to report minimum data elements according to the specifics in the final amendment. Begin collecting data submitted electronically.

4.5 Recommendations to NMFS

It is the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (South Atlantic Council) intent to extend the reporting requirements of the For-Hire Reporting Amendment through the Mid-Atlantic and New England Fishery Management Councils' areas for vessels with a federal for-hire permit for Snapper Grouper, Dolphin Wahoo, and Coastal Migratory Pelagic species. Further, it is the South Atlantic Council's intent not to have duplicate reporting by individual vessels; one report submitted to, for example, Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) would then be available to each agency needing the data. One issue to be resolved is the timing for reports: any South Atlantic permitted vessel would be required to report electronically via the charter vessel logbook the Tuesday following the end of the week (Sunday) whereas the vessel reports for the Greater Atlantic Region permitted vessels are currently due on or before 11:59 pm the Saturday following the end of the fishing week that is Sunday through Saturday.

The NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) would develop the specific details of how the reporting and data management system would operate and would provide the Council the opportunity to have input into the system design. The reporting and data management system would include the following items as recommended by the Technical Sub-committee:

- a) Logbook data collected via authorized platform, ex. web, tablet, phone, or vessel monitoring system (VMS) application
- b) Data submitted to ACCSP or Gulf Fisheries Information Network (GulfFIN);
- c) Data integrated by ACCSP or GulfFIN into single composite data set;
- d) Composite data set distributed to appropriate agencies for analyses and use, and made available to the public via ACCSP.
- e) NMFS and/or ACCSP/GulfFIN are to develop a compliance tracking procedure that balances timeliness with available staff and funding resources.
- f) NMFS is to use validation methods developed in the Gulf of Mexico logbook pilot study and the Marine Resources Information Program /South Carolina validation project as a basis to ensure that the actual logbook report is validated and standardized validation methodologies are employed among regions.
- g) Dual survey methods (existing MRIP and new mandatory reporting) maintained for no less than 3 years, and no management advice expected from the new method during the first year.
- h) NMFS is to require and maintain a comprehensive permit/email database of

participants.

- i) NMFS is to include procedures for expanding estimates for non-reporting.
- j) NMFS is to allow multiple authorized applications or devices that can transmit data from sea to report data as long as they meet required data and transferability standards.
- k) Explore ways to determine the impact of state permitted vessels on landings of federally managed species, and pursue a long-term strategy of including the entire fleet, federal and non-federally permitted, in the reporting program.;

TIMING

- March 7-11, 2016 (Jekyll Island, GA) – Council reviews public comments, modified preferred alternatives as required, and approves all actions. Public comment on Wednesday, March 9th beginning at 5:30 pm
- June 13-17, 2016 (Cocoa Beach, FL) – Council reviews complete document and approves for formal review. Public comment on Wednesday, June 15th beginning at 5:30 pm
- June 30, 2016 - Send for review and implementation by Secretary of Commerce/NMFS
- January 1, 2017 – target date for regulations to be effective; operators of charter vessels begin electronic reporting and new deadline effective for headboats

Note: The Mid-Atlantic is developing a for-hire amendment and have hired a contractor to work on minimum data elements. Public comments have suggested we also coordinate with HMS and MRIP and the New England Council. If the Council delays final approval to September, we may be able to obtain agreement on a coast-wide set of minimum data elements.

In addition, the Council should clarify their intent for January 1, 2017. If all elements are not ready to go, is it ok to have the effective date slide into 2017?

ACTION

1. KEEP CURRENT TIMING
2. DELAY FINAL APPROVAL UNTIL SEPTEMBER 12-16, 2016 MEETING TO OBTAIN AGREEMENT ON ATLANTIC COAST-WIDE MINIMUM DATA ELEMENTS
3. CLARIFY THAT WHILE THE INTENT IS TO HAVE THE REPORTING REGULATIONS EFFECTIVE 1/1/17, THE COUNCIL RECOGNIZES THERE MAY BE A NEED TO DELAY FULLY IMPLEMENTATION UNTIL LATER IN 2017.