

**Port Meeting Summary:**  
*Shallotte, NC*  
*March 17, 2014, 1:30 p.m. session*

**1) Better data collection/science**

Issues/Not Working --

- Need better science for decision making
- Stock assessments
- Increase research on black sea bass/grouper
- Numbers used by SAFMC don't reflect what fishermen see on the water

Solutions --

- Tag fish = information such as mortality rate, location, distance/depth; only by tagging fish are you going to be able to tell more about growth, range, natural mortality; bsb migrate, by tagging fish locally, we can track fish (CCA has done a tagging study on bsb in NC); several colleges in NC deal with marine science, it's a great resource to use for getting out to tag fish; bsb fishery would be a prime example as a good start for that. In order to make the data collection better, \$ must go into tag program.
- Streamline reporting methods
- Hire fishermen for better data
- Exclusively use charter as data source for recreational sector
- Put folks on the boats to see firsthand how many fish are present
- Need to fix problems in MRIP = we went from the same director coordinating MRFSS to MRIP, which is a problem in itself; information collected through this system isn't accurate according to what fishermen see on the water. SC DNR is handling surveys themselves as compared to FL FWC is collecting information at dock as well as people hired through MRIP to collect data. DNR is using the \$ the MRIP folks were paying others to collect the data, to collect the data themselves. If each state would step up (like SC) and collect the data themselves, it would result in improvements in data collection.

**2) Reducing discards**

Issues/Not Working --

- Too many regulatory discards
- Gag mortality rate

Solutions --

- No size limits; bag limit only
- Establish a bycatch allowance – need a limit/quota per trip/per boat on bycatch instead of throwing fish back that won't survive. To keep people from abusing this, set a limit on X number of allowances per X lbs. fish.
- Sliding trip limits – when a certain percent of the quota is met, then the trip limit needs to decrease; adaptive management of the quotas to decrease limits when nearing quota (comment in reference to everything in SG fishery). Socioeconomic impacts would need to be analyzed (including taking fish out of the market, no availability)

**3) User Conflicts (specific to black sea bass)**

#### Issues/Not Working --

- Charter/headboat/for-hire fishery needs a zone where they can fish for black sea bass without conflicting with commercial fishermen, who are under a different size limit (13" TL rec vs. 11" TL comm). Issue seems to be regional in scope – Little River, SC, to southern NC

#### Solutions --

- Limit areas for trapping to outside of 20+ miles (have a no-trap zone but it's 12 miles, not 20)
- Enforce trap permit: no trap permit = no trapping.
- Establish seasons: April = headboats fish in the 20+ mile zone for half the day (this is mainly an issue outside of the winter months since there are few charters in winter and commercial trapping is limited in the summer)
- Open the pot fishery from November through April

### **4) Reduce Socio-economic impacts of regulations**

#### Issues/Not Working --

- Trip limits for commercial harvest – keeps benefits of fishery local – how to reduce economic impacts of regulations; local economic impact
- Per season limits vs. per trip limits
- Sliding trip limits
- Increase research on bsb/grouper
- Snowy grouper limits
- Increase bag limits for b-liners & vermilion

#### Solutions --

- Trip limits that match expense to participate but keep limits lower to encourage local participation
- trip limit per state = we see boats come up from FL that fish during NC's off season; coming up with a way to divide commercial limits by state (regional management); seems to be an issue with vermilion with FL anglers coming up to NC waters. Enforcement issues may arise here; however, wherever you land fish is where quota should be attributed. When FL is closed then FL vessels shouldn't be allowed to land in NC. But since the permits are associated with the region as a whole, you would need to change the system to have federal permits attributed to each state.
- Per season limits vs. per trip = Consider having a season limit on the number of fish. For snowies, for example, this would be more efficient than a 1-fish/trip limit. The current recreational ACL is 523 snowies. If you were to require a jaw tag to catch a snowy, you would know exactly how many were caught.

### **5) MPAs**

#### Issues/Not Working --

- MPAs (no more; one participant was on the MPA Advisory Panel, doesn't feel Council is meeting the original intention for designating/implementing existing MPAs; there are other ways to accomplish improvements in a fishery than shutting it down altogether).
- Asked if you have good information about an area being important spawning area, would that be ok to target site as an MPA? = no.

#### Solutions –

- MPAs aren't the solution to reducing discards
- With small bag limits, don't close bottom to fish

- No more MPAs until stock assessments are done in the area we have now
- Must be monitored and proven to increase numbers of fish
- Suggestion that the 4-month closure should be a rolling seasonal closure

## 6) Open Access vs. Limited Entry (for-hire)

### Issues/Not Working --

- Need to consider limited entry for for-hire fishing
- Consider limited entry for charter/headboat

### Solutions --

- Use methods used in commercial fishery (limit access; 2-for-1 vs. open access)
- Establish a date for limited entry on for hire permits (control date)
- Stop new licenses from being issued (oversight for issuance; if you have a for-hire permit need to have landings history associated with this, for-hire permits shouldn't be used for hobbyists)
- Income requirement for for-hire entry
- Examine historical landings; % income required for permit.
- Should have an educational/training requirement in order to keep permit valid

## 7) Other Issues/Solutions

- Consider 10% overage allowance on trip limit (commercial)
- Need to line up fishing seasons.
- When MSA is reauthorized, and we have additional flexibility, what will we see in return? Depends on type of flexibility we'll be given; the most complaints seem to be economic harm to fishermen; what kills people occurs when we have to whack quota in order to end overfishing; flexibility in cutting quota, be able to phase it in. We need flexibility to fish again not because of endangered species.
- State-by-state quotas or put FL in their own Council
- Would love the opportunity to have further input on an informal level with Council members – open conversations and discussion.