

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Full Council II
June 17, 2022

Legal Brief

There were no legal activities to report on at this meeting.

Council Coordination Committee Report

Council Executive Director John Carmichael reported on the Council Coordination Committee (CCC) meeting held May 17 – 19, 2022 in Annapolis, Maryland. Updates on a wide range of NOAA Fisheries activities detailed in the CCC meeting summary were reviewed along with progress on ongoing projects related to wind power, climate change and governance, legislation, equity and environmental justice, and the 30x30 initiative. The next CCC meeting will be hosted by NMFS in Washington DC in October 2022.

Council staff report

Council Executive Director John Carmichael provided a summary of staff activities and recent events not covered elsewhere during the meeting. Nick Smillie was introduced as the new Digital Media and Communication Specialist. Upcoming activities in the Scenario Planning project and recent Best Practices outreach campaign activities were highlighted.

Large Whale Take Reduction Team Report

Charlie Phillips provided a report of recent activities of the Large Whale Take Reduction Team. Mr. Phillips noted that compared to other regions, South Atlantic fisheries have low interactions with large whales.

SSC input on items not on agenda

SSC Chair Dr. Jeff Buckel reported on the remaining SSC topics. For Goliath Grouper, the SSC recommended assigning their Unassessed Stocks Working Group to begin developing alternatives for addressing ABC recommendations for Goliath Grouper and the other stocks with ABCs of zero.

NMFS Southeast Regional Office Report

Jennifer Lee provided an overview of protected resources activities since the March 2022 Council meeting. Regional Administrator Andy Strelcheck noted that SERO staff continued to work remotely due to ongoing COVID transmission rates.

NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) Report

SEFSC Director Clay Porch updated the Council on a possible revision to the spending plan for \$1.8 million initially allotted to the South Atlantic Red Snapper Count. Due to reduced sample processing costs and better than anticipated sample sizes obtained during the first two years of the project, the additional year of funding is not required to meet the initial project objectives. Therefore, the SEFSC requested Council input on redirecting the FY2022 funding to several

other SAFMC research needs, including support for MARMAP to resolve an otolith backlog, for FWC to expand coverage of their hook and line survey, for Sea Grant to expand the outreach component of the South Atlantic Red Snapper Count, and for increased commercial fishery observer coverage. It was also noted that these funds were intended for agency-independent study and that the Atlantic Red Snapper Count awardee, Dr. Patterson, suggested add-on, complementary expansion studies to the project that could inform reef fish management during a recent SSC meeting. The Council supported redirecting the funding with some revisions and discussed projects that could be initiated or expanded.

The Council supported the proposed funding for MARMAP, Sea Grant, and the FWC survey detailed in the alternative spend plan provided by SEFSC. The Council further supported redirecting the majority of the funding toward recreational fishery discard characterization and estimation projects that were discussed during the meeting, rather than additional commercial observer coverage as initially proposed by SEFSC. The recent Red Snapper assessment indicates that recreational discards are the largest source of mortality and orders of magnitude greater than commercial discards. While increasing existing observer coverage of the commercial fishery would improve validation of commercial discard reporting, there is a greater need to address the lack of validation for private recreational discards. Two approaches for evaluating private recreational discards were discussed and supported by the the Council for further consideration and possible funding. The first was a suggestion from FL FWC to expand FWC's monitoring approach used for the Red Snapper mini-seasons to a longer period of time so that discards can be evaluated similar to how catch and effort are evaluated during the open season. The other project, described at the meeting by SEFSC as suggested by the Red Snapper Count team and based on red snapper tagging, could be useful for validating recreational discard rates if conducted in a way that is representative of the gear and fishing practices of the recreational reef fish fishery at large.

Committee Reports

The Council received reports from the Committees that met during the week. Results of those discussions are included in the final Committee reports.

Meetings and Work Plan

John Carmichael and John Hadley reviewed the Council workplan as modified based on progress made during this meeting. The September 2022 meeting will convene Monday morning and adjourn Friday afternoon. Changes made to balance the September 2022 meeting workload include:

- Convene a webinar Council Meeting to discuss the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Proposed Rule and receive a report on the Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) and its newly created Dolphin-Flying Fish working group.
- Delay discussion of Dolphin Wahoo Regulatory Amendment 3 until December 2022; staff will coordinate with SEFSC to schedule stakeholder workshops during the Fall to gather input for scoping and the SEFSC Dolphin MSE project.
- Reduce scheduled discussion time for Snapper Grouper Amendment 46 (recreational permitting and reporting); the Committee will review recommendations from the Private Recreational Permitting and Reporting AP.