

# Fishery Performance Reports

- New report that will be completed at meetings of the Dolphin Wahoo, Snapper Grouper, and Mackerel Cobia APs
  - Dolphin Wahoo AP – dolphin
  - Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP)- red grouper
  - Mackerel Cobia AP- cobia (Atlantic cobia and Florida east coast)
  - Other species will be covered at future AP meetings
  - Questions and format may change based on feedback from AP, SSC, and the Council
- Based on Mid-Atlantic Council's fishery performance report
  - Designed as a mechanism to provide feedback and observations from the APs to the SSC and the Council
  - Incorporated into the Mid Atlantic Council's SSC decision for setting the ABC of managed species
  - Source of qualitative social and economic information to compliment quantitative data
    - Federal Reserve's *Beige Book*
- These reports focused on feedback from questions such as:
  - How would you rate the quality of the fishery?
  - What factors have influenced recent landings (market or otherwise)?
  - Are there recent major changes that you have observed in the fishery?
  - Are the current fishery regulations appropriate? How could they be improved?



# Dolphin- Discussion Questions

- Catch levels and demand over the past 5 years:
  - For the commercial sector, how has the price and demand for dolphin changed?
  - How is the demand for charter/headboat trips targeting dolphin, and has it changed?
  - How is the demand for private recreational trips targeting dolphin, and has it changed?
  - Has the availability of dolphin changed?
  - Has the average size of dolphin changed?
  - Have there been effort shifts to/from dolphin?
- Assessment of the current fishery:
  - How would you rate the stability of the fishery?
  - How would you rate the quality of the fishery?



# Dolphin- Discussion Questions

- Management measures:
  - Is the 20-inch minimum size limit off of the east coast of Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina for the recreational and commercial sectors appropriate?
  - Is the 4,000 pound commercial trip limit that is effective after 75% of the commercial ACL has been landed set at the appropriate level? What about the 10 dolphin per person/60 dolphin per vessel recreational limit?
  - Other fishery management measures?
- Environmental/ecological:
  - Have you noticed a shift in the dolphin migration due to environmental variability such as a mild winter or shorter spring “migration” season?
- Other
  - Where should the Council focus their research priorities for Atlantic dolphin?
  - Is there anything else that is important for the Council to know about Atlantic dolphin?



# Overall- Dolphin

- Availability varies each year and depends on environmental factors. 2015 was a good year, 2016 was less successful (especially in South Florida).
- Large fish seem to be migrating further offshore, negatively impacting availability for smaller recreational vessels and profitability of some charter trips but not commercial vessels as much since these vessels typically operate further offshore (SC).
- Some increased recreational effort in FL due to low fuel prices and increased vessel ownership.
- Charter demand is consistent overall. Outer Banks charter demand for dolphin can inversely align with tuna abundance. Still an important secondary target species.
- Commercial demand is increasing, with noted increase in local demand for restaurants.
- Imports play a large role in price. With imports down in recent years, prices have risen. Large domestic longline landings can depress the ex-vessel price until the market clears.
- No major, prolonged effort shifts observed towards or away from dolphin.
- Recommend supporting satellite tagging research.



# Red Grouper- Discussion Questions

## 1) Catch levels over the past 5 years:

- For the commercial sector, how has price and demand for red grouper changed?
- How has demand for charter/headboat trips targeting red grouper changed?
- When/where are the fish available, and has this changed?
- Has the size of the fish changed?
- Have there been effort shifts to/from red grouper?

## 2) Management measures:

- Is the 20-inch minimum size limit for the commercial sector appropriate?
- Is the 20-inch minimum size limit for the recreational sector appropriate?
- Are there new measures that the Council should consider?
- Are there other existing measures (i.e. 4-month closure) that should be changed?



# Red Grouper- Discussion Questions

## 3) Environmental/ecological

- Has there been a shift in red grouper abundance/availability due to environmental factors such as mild winter, storms, cold-water intrusions?
- Are you observing low Red Grouper recruitment on the water? Can environmental or ecological drivers of recruitment be identified?
- Are there well-defined zoogeographic breaks (e.g., Florida keys, Cape Hatteras) that could inform stock structure?
- What are your observations concerning the timing and length of the red grouper spawning season in your area?

## 4) Other

- Do you have suggestions for research priorities for Red Grouper?
- What else is important for the Council to know about Red Grouper?



# Overall- Red Grouper

- Size and availability have been generally consistent
- Rare to catch recreationally in past two years
- Regional fishery primarily off NC
- Less available since about 2008
- Primarily a bycatch species on commercial trips targeting other species (e.g., scamp, triggerfish)
- Smaller fish caught in shallow waters, estuaries
- Not a desirable restaurant fish
- Increased popularity for spearfishers in Florida
- Recommend more research on juveniles and impact of lionfish



# Overall- Cobia

- Available primarily in the summer only for VA/NC
- Cobia are being caught further north in the Chesapeake
- Increase in sight cast fishing and number of recreational boats (Chesapeake and NC)
- Abundant catch, but the size of “big” cobia is smaller
- Females with eggs all summer long in Chesapeake
- Increase in directed commercial trips (VA/NC)
- Increase in charter demand specifically for cobia (VA/NC)
- Availability is low in southern SC (Port Royal Sound), but will be more available for a year or two after Waddell stock is released, then become rare
- Cobia hard to find in Port Royal Sound, but have been showing up Calabogie Sound (south of HHI)
- In NE Florida, Cobia available nearshore for about 6 weeks (with rays) and then are available year-round offshore
- Cobia move with bull sharks in south Florida
- Sizes in Florida have not changed, have always been smaller than in VA/NC
- More cobia on bayside in Florida Keys than on Atlantic side, no change in abundance or sizes

