

Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel
Mutton Snapper Fishery Performance Report
Discussion Questions
April 2021

The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP) is being asked to provide information to develop a fishery performance report (FPR) for Mutton Snapper. The purpose of the FPR is to assemble information from AP members' experience and observations on the water and in the marketplace to complement scientific and landings data. The FPR for Mutton Snapper will be provided to the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and the Socio-Economic Panel (SEP) to complement material being used in the upcoming benchmark stock assessment (SEDAR 79) and to inform future management.

Questions for Advisory Panel:

The AP is asked to provide the following information about Mutton Snapper based on their expertise, as appropriate:

1) Have there been **substantial changes** in the Mutton Snapper fishery? If so, when and what do you think caused the change?

2) **Fishing Behavior/Catch Levels:**

- Have there been effort shifts to/from Mutton Snapper? If so, please describe.
- Have there been considerable changes in fishing techniques and/or gears used to target Mutton Snapper? If so, please describe.
- Are there more or fewer vessels fishing for Mutton Snapper in both the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico regions than there were 10 years ago?
- How much fishing for Mutton Snapper typically occurs during the day versus at night? Has this changed?
- Do you actively avoid fishing in certain areas to avoid catching undersized fish or highly regulated fish (e.g., Red Snapper) to lessen bait loss?
- What do you see in terms of discards in the commercial sector? In the recreational sector?
 - How often are Mutton Snapper discarded? What are the reasons they are discarded?
 - Do you encounter Mutton Snapper as bycatch when fishing for other species?

3) **Social and economic influences:**

- For the commercial sector, how has price and demand for Mutton Snapper changed?
 - Is there increased demand for a specific size of Mutton Snapper (e.g. plate sized)?
- How has demand for charter/headboat trips targeting Mutton Snapper changed?
- Among the species you target, how important are Mutton Snapper to your overall business (charter or commercial)?

- What communities are dependent on the Mutton Snapper fishery?
- Have changes in infrastructure (docks, marinas, fish houses) affected fishing opportunities for Mutton Snapper?
- How have fishermen and communities adapted to changes in the Mutton Snapper fishery?

4) Management measures:

- Are there new management measures that the Council should consider or are there existing management measures (such as size limit, trip limit, bag limit, season, etc.) that should be changed?
- Are the current ACL and allocations appropriate for each sector?

5) Environmental/ecological/habitat:

- Do you perceive that the abundance of Mutton Snapper has changed over the past ten years? If so, how has it changed?
- When/where are the fish available, and has this changed? For instance, has there been any shift in catch (annually/seasonally) inshore/offshore or north/south? If so, please describe.
- Has the size of the fish that you typically encounter changed? If so, could you briefly describe the trend?
- Have you noticed any unique effects of environmental conditions on Mutton Snapper? If so, please describe.
- What are your observations on the timing and length of the Mutton Snapper spawning season in your area?
- Have you observed pre-spawning aggregations of Mutton Snapper in spring and summer (April – June) on the middle shelf (120 ft deep and greater)? If so, have you noted any changes in when or where such aggregations occur or with what frequency?
- What do you see now in terms of recruitment? Where are the small fish? Are large and small fish found in the same locations or not?
- Have you observed changes in catch depth or apparent bottom type fished on?
- How have sea conditions (monthly/seasonally) affected fishable days?
- Have you noticed any change in the species caught with Mutton Snapper over the years or seasonally?

6) Other:

- What else is important for the Council to know about Mutton Snapper?