

Summary of Stakeholder Input: North Carolina Port Meetings March 2014

Top issues and suggested solutions:

ISSUE 1: One-size-fits-all management is not working

Solutions -

- Data taken from each state (use a boat registration from the state, where fish are landed, by home port)
- State-state allocation for spawning closure – based on biological differences between states
- Address spawning season closure to account for temporal/latitudinal differences in spawning activity of some species
- Allow states to manage their share of the Total Allowable Catch
- Divide quota among states evenly
- Year round availability -- catch shares
- Set coastwise season fair to all – adjust opening/closure dates based on what state you are in; set up seasons differently dependent on what state you are in
- Divide quota among commercial permits
- Adjust seasons geographically
- Manage migratory stocks and stationary stocks differently; stationary stocks could be managed by states
- Regional management – consider state by state management (golden tilefish and snowy grouper); if can't do state by state management, create separate regions (NC/SC and GA/FL)

ISSUE 2: Manage to reduce discards

Solutions -

- No size limits; bag limit only
- Establish a bycatch allowance – need a limit/quota per trip/per boat on bycatch.
- Sliding trip limits – when a certain percent of the quota is met, then the trip limit needs to decrease.
- Bycatch allowance by region
- Go to a size limit that allows for a year-round fishery
- Split seasons, trip limits
- Promote use of descending devices and educate public on barotrauma
- Allow a bycatch amount per trip (pounds or %)
- Open recreational season year round with strict creel limits and no size limits;
- Make recreational and commercial black sea bass size limits the same
- Set seasons – continuous vs. contiguous; by state

ISSUE 3: Improve data collection

Solutions -

- Tag fish to obtain information such as mortality rate, location, distance/depth. Work with universities or other institutions on tagging programs.
- Hire fishermen to obtain better data

- Exclusively use charter as data source for recreational sector
- Put observers on boats to see firsthand how many fish are present
- Cooperative data collection w/ universities (a lot of ways to get states together to get assessments done correctly)
- Trip tickets for recreational fishermen
- Commercial/rec sector underwater video data collection
- State saltwater fishing license for offshore fishing
- Can ask questions on recreational saltwater fishing license (to help identify offshore bottom fishermen)
- ID bottom fishermen - recreational (offshore? reef?) permit
- Additional data collection during licensing process
- Get valid information from saltwater anglers
- Identify fishing types
- Modestly priced recreational permit for Snapper Grouper fishery (example: HMS permit)
- Underwater video surveillance for fishery-independent surveys
- Better reporting strategies such as phone calls to recreational saltwater licensed fishermen, electronic trip reporting
- Give Monroe County in Florida to Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
- Have recreational fishermen fill out trip reports (similar to commercial fishermen); consider requiring recreational trip reports for whole region; this would be easier for the for-hire/charter sector and may not be realistic for other recreational fishers
- Add check box to recreational saltwater license to help identify offshore (maybe specific to snapper grouper fishermen?) anglers; potential low cost solution
- Electronic reporting for the recreational sector
- Management and research/monitoring programs need to adapt to shifts in abundance, etc. due to climate change
- Find ways to incorporate anecdotal information into science, assessments, and management

ISSUE 4: Improve reporting

Solutions -

- Streamline reporting methods
- Trip tickets for all stakeholders
- Check box for reef fish on recreational saltwater fishing license to help identify recreational snapper grouper fishermen
- Pilot program for (voluntary?) self reporting system for recreational sector
- Change accountability measures - individuals expressed interest in closures impacting all sectors the same; once one sector reaches their ACL for a species, all sectors would close; to allow for this recreational regulations may have to be adjusted so that they would be able to reach their ACL in the allotted time.
- Reporting via app, email, photo stream
- Electronic versions of trip tickets, trip reports, and discard reports
- Mandatory electronic reporting for all sectors (commercial, for-hire, and recreational)

Other issues of importance:

- Opposition to catch shares (commercial and recreational)
- Confusing/complex regulations
- User conflicts (mainly for-hire vs. commercial)
- Disapproval of endorsement program/eligibility requirements
- Lack of communication/coordination between agencies
- Lack of fishery-independent sampling north of Cape Hatteras
- Consider limited entry program for for-hire sector
- Unfair sector allocations
- Consider climate change in management decisions
- Conduct focused research for regional management
- Inconsistent supply of seafood
- Concern about decrease in quantity and quality of fishery-dependent data due to regulations
- Consider spatial management tools other than MPAs
- Line up fishing seasons
- More fishermen & stakeholder involvement