

Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel
Black Sea Bass Fishery Performance Report
Discussion Questions
April 2022

The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP) is being asked to provide information to develop a fishery performance report (FPR) for black sea bass. 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 black sea bass will be provided to the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and the Socio-Economic Panel (SEP) to complement material being used in the upcoming operational stock assessment (SEDAR 76) and to inform future management.

Information specifically requested by the SEDAR 76 analytical team

Questions for Advisory Panel:

The AP is asked to provide the following information about black sea bass based on their expertise, as appropriate:

- 1) Have there been **substantial changes** in the black sea bass fishery? If so, when and what do you think caused the change?

- 2) **Fishing Behavior/Catch Levels:**
 - Have there been effort shifts to/from black sea bass? If so, please describe, including the time frame for when these shifts occurred.
 - Have there been considerable changes in fishing techniques and/or gears used to target black sea bass? If so, please describe, including the time frame for when these changes occurred.
 - How much fishing for black sea bass typically occurs during the day versus at night? Has this changed?
 - Do you actively avoid fishing for black sea bass 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 black sea bass discarded? What are the reasons they are discarded?
 - Do you encounter black sea bass as bycatch when fishing for other species? If so, what species are being targeted on these trips?
 - Do you think discard mortality is a significant factor for this species? Has this changed? If so, please describe, including the time frame when the change occurred.
 - Have there been any recent changes to the level of discards for black sea bass (each sector/component)?

- How attentive are each sector's participants to accurate discard reporting for black sea bass? Do you think discard records are accurate for black sea bass (for each sector)?
- How well is each sector adhering to size/bag/trip limits?

3) Social and economic influences:

- For the commercial sector, how has price and demand for black sea bass changed?
 - Is there increased demand for a specific size of black sea bass (e.g. plate sized)?
- How has demand for charter/headboat trips targeting black sea bass changed?
- Among the species you target, how important are black sea bass to your overall business (charter or commercial)?
- What communities are dependent on the black sea bass fishery?
- Have changes in infrastructure (docks, marinas, fish houses) affected fishing opportunities for black sea bass?
- How have fishermen and communities adapted to changes in the black sea bass 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 black sea bass 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 black sea bass? If so, please describe.
- What are your observations on the timing and length of the black sea bass spawning season in your area (time periods when fish are observed with large ovaries or eggs spilling out externally or while venting)?
- What do you see now in terms of recruitment? Where are the small fish? Are large and small fish found in the same locations?
- 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 black sea bass over the years or seasonally?

6) Other:

- What else is important for the Council to know about black sea bass?