

**Modifications to Coastal Migratory
Pelagics, Gulf Reef Fish, Atlantic Dolphin
Wahoo, and South Atlantic Snapper
Grouper Fishery Management Plans:
Charter Vessel Reporting**

DECISION DOCUMENT

**JOINT SAFMC/GMFMC MEETING
JUNE 11, 2015
KEY WEST, FLORIDA**

**Includes Motions from the SAFMC March 2015
and GMFMC March/April 2015 Meetings**

May 19, 2015

Background

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) and South Atlantic Council (SAFMC) are considering alternatives that would change the method, frequency, and required data elements of fishery data reporting by charter vessel operators. The Councils are considering several changes that would require electronic reporting for the reef fish, snapper grouper, dolphin wahoo, and coastal migratory pelagic species for this component of the recreational sector. The Councils recognize that improved data reporting in these fisheries could reduce the likelihood that ACLs are exceeded and accountability measures (AMs) are triggered. Additional data elements that could be collected could also improve estimates of discard mortality and bycatch, metrics characterized by imprecise estimates under the current reporting requirements. The harvest from charter vessels contributes to recreational landings that count towards the recreational ACLs and quotas. Charter vessel harvest is monitored with the MRIP dockside intercept survey while effort is calculated based on a 10% monthly phone sample of federally permitted charter vessels. The current management system is inadequate for in-season monitoring for stocks with short recreational seasons. Also, the survey methods can be imprecise for some species leading to greater scientific and management uncertainty that requires larger buffers to prevent ACL overages and may prevent the OY from consistently being achieved. The proposed changes could reduce uncertainty in catch and effort data for this component of the recreational fishery increasing the likelihood that the optimum yield will be achieved and ACL overages will be avoided.

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

- Responsible for conservation and management of fish stocks
- Consists of 17 voting members: 11 appointed by the Secretary of Commerce; 1 representative from each of the 5 Gulf states, the Southeast Regional Director of National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS); and 4 non-voting members
- Responsible for developing fishery management plans and amendments, and recommends actions to NMFS for implementation

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

- Responsible for conservation and management of fish stocks
- Consists of 13 voting members: 8 appointed by the Secretary of Commerce, 1 representative from each of the 4 South Atlantic states, the Southeast Regional Director of NMFS; and 4 non-voting members
- Responsible for developing fishery management plans and amendments, and recommends actions to NMFS for implementation

National Marine Fisheries Service

- Responsible for data needed by the Councils for management
- Responsible for conservation and management of fish stocks
- Approves, disapproves, or partially approves Council recommendations
- Implements regulations

This amendment affects headboat and charter vessel reporting requirements for species managed in the Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) for Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico (Reef Fish), Snapper Grouper Resources of the South Atlantic, South Atlantic Dolphin Wahoo and Coastal Migratory Pelagics of the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico (CMP) (**Figure 1.1.1**).

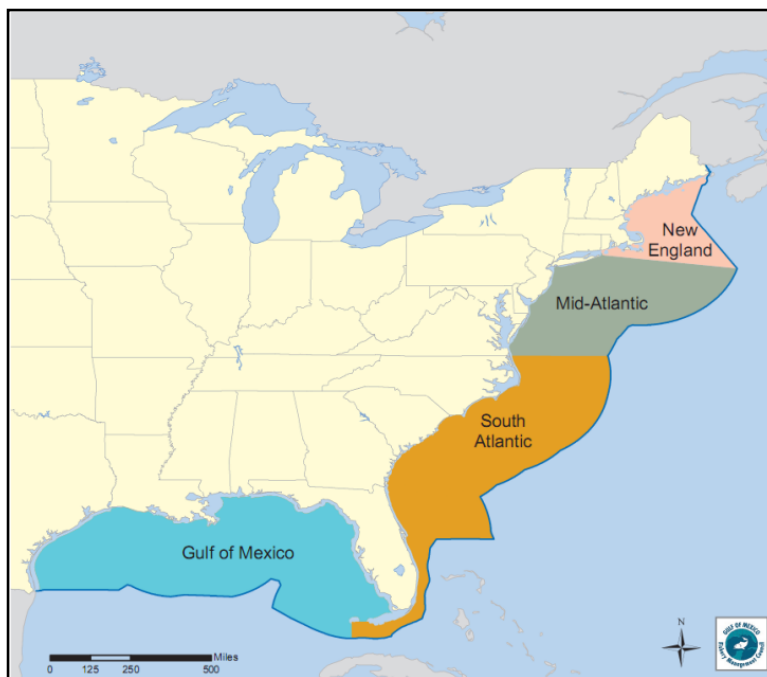


Figure 1.1.1. Jurisdictional boundaries of the Gulf of Mexico (blue), South Atlantic (orange), Mid-Atlantic (green), and New England (peach) Fishery Management Councils. Modifications to the reef fish FMP would only affect the GMFMC; the snapper grouper FMP modifications would affect only the SAFMC; the coastal migratory pelagics FMP modifications would affect the MAFMC, SAFMC, and GMFMC; and the dolphin wahoo FMP modifications would affect the NEFMC, MAFMC, and SAFMC.

Actions/Alternatives/Purpose & Need Wording and Voting:

The wording shown for Purpose & Need and each Action/Alternative without highlight reflects the guidance provided by the South Atlantic Council during their March 2015 meeting and Gulf Council during their March/April 2015 meeting. Text shown in **yellow highlight** represents recommendations from the IPT/Council staff/Council Decisions to be made.

The wording for Purpose & Need and Actions/Alternatives will be projected during the Joint Council meeting and motions will be made to indicate the Councils' directions to Staff/IPT. Each Council will vote separately. The Gulf Council's Data Committee and the South Atlantic Council's Data Committee will review these decisions prior to the Joint Council meeting and any motions will be added to the Decision Document and

emailed to all Council members. The Decision Document with Committee Motions will be projected during the Joint Council meeting.

Purpose and Need

The purpose and need shown below was modified from the Joint Headboat Reporting Amendment in the South Atlantic and approved by the SAFMC in March 2015. The Gulf Council did not take action on this at their March/April meeting.

Purpose for Action

The ***purpose*** of the Joint South Atlantic/Gulf of Mexico Generic Charter Reporting Amendment is to: Improve **charter** data collection methods to increase the accuracy and timeliness of recreational **charter** data in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic fisheries.

Need for Action

The ***need*** for the Joint South Atlantic/Gulf of Mexico Generic Charter Reporting Amendment is to: Improve data collection methods and timeliness of reporting to limit overages of annual catch limits, to improve stock assessments, and to improve compliance in Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic fisheries.

Note: If the Councils approve headboats being included, then the Title of the Document and the Purpose & Need would require modification by changing “charter” to “for-hire”.

COUNCIL ACTION:

Option 1. Approve the Purpose & Need shown above.

Option 2. Modify by changing “charter” to “for-hire” and Approve the Modified Purpose & Need.

Option 3. Others??

Actions/Alternatives Wording

The wording for Action 1 shown below was modified slightly from the Joint Headboat Reporting Amendment in the South Atlantic. Some additional actions have been included. The South Atlantic Council approved Action 1 during their March 2015 meeting. At their March/April meeting, the GMFMC approved a motion changing “via computer or internet” to “via NMFS approved hardware/software in Alternatives 2-5.

Action 1: Amend the Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Atlantic Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery Management Plans to modify data reporting for charter vessels

Alternative 1 (No Action). Retain existing permits and data reporting systems for the charter sector. Currently, the owner or operator of a vessel for which a charter vessel permit for Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fish, South Atlantic coastal migratory pelagic fish, Gulf reef fish, South Atlantic snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin and wahoo has been issued, or whose vessel fishes for or lands such coastal migratory pelagic fish, reef fish, snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin or wahoo in or from state waters adjoining the applicable Gulf, South Atlantic, or Atlantic exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and who is selected to report by the Science and Research Director (SRD), must maintain a fishing record for each trip, or a portion of such trips as specified by the SRD, on forms provided by the SRD. Completed records for charter vessels must be submitted to the Science and Research Director weekly, postmarked no later than 7 days after the end of each trip (Sunday). Currently, all headboats are required to submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD via electronic reporting (via computer or internet). Weekly = 7 days after the end of each week (Sunday).

Alternative 2. Require that charter vessels submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) weekly via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software ~~computer or internet~~). Weekly = 7 days after the end of each week (Sunday).

Alternative 3. Require that charter vessels submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) daily via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software ~~computer or internet~~). Daily = by noon of the following day.

Sub-Alternative 3a. Noon of the following day.

Sub-Alternative 3b. Prior to arriving at the dock.

Alternative 4. Require that charter vessels submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software ~~computer or internet~~). Weekly = 7 days after the end of each week (Sunday).

Alternative 5. Require that charter vessels submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software computer or internet). Weekly = Tuesday following each fishing week.

The IPT recommends the following changes to the wording of the Action and the Alternatives

Action 1: Modify Frequency and Mechanism of Data Reporting Requirements for Charter Vessel Data Reporting Requirements for Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Atlantic Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery Management Plans

Alternative 1 (No Action). Retain existing permits and data reporting systems for charter vessels. Currently, the owner or operator of a charter vessel for which a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf or South Atlantic coastal migratory pelagic fish, Gulf reef fish, South Atlantic snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin and wahoo has been issued, or whose vessel fishes for or lands such coastal migratory pelagic fish, reef fish, snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin or wahoo in or from state waters adjoining the applicable Gulf, South Atlantic, or Atlantic exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and who is selected to report by the Science and Research Director (SRD) must maintain a fishing record for each trip, or a portion of such trips as specified by the SRD, on forms provided by the SRD. Completed fishing records must be submitted to the SRD weekly, postmarked no later than 7 days after the end of each week (Sunday). Information to be reported is indicated on the form and its accompanying instructions.

For South Atlantic snapper grouper, charter vessels selected to report by the SRD must participate in the NMFS-sponsored electronic logbook and/or video monitoring program as directed by the SRD. Completed fishing records may be required weekly or daily, as directed by the SRD.

Alternative 2. Require that federally permitted charter vessels submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). Weekly = Tuesday following each fishing week.

Alternative 3. Require that federally permitted charter vessels submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) daily via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). Daily = by noon of the following day.

Alternative 4. Require that federally permitted charter vessels submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) for each trip via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software) prior to arriving at the dock.

COUNCIL ACTION:

Option 1. Approve the range of original Action 1 alternatives, with the GMFMC change, shown above for detailed analyses.

Option 2. Approve the IPT recommendations for Action 1 and the alternatives and approve the modified range of Action 1 alternatives for detailed analyses.

Option 3. Add additional alternatives and/or modify the Action 1 alternatives and approve for detailed analyses.

Option 4. Others??

Compliance Measure

It is the Councils' intent that charter vessels must remain in compliance with the reporting requirements to be authorized to conduct trips to fish for reef fish, snapper grouper, dolphin wahoo, and coastal migratory pelagic species (compliance measure). NMFS has also specified measures to be used in cases of catastrophic conditions when electronic means to report data are not feasible. Under the alternatives with weekly reporting, Monday through Sunday is the fishing week and reports are due seven days after the end of each week that ends on Sunday. The reports are due by midnight of the following Sunday. This is contained in the current regulations for charter vessels. Under the alternative with daily reporting, reports would have been due by noon of the following day to ensure the data are available more frequently than weekly.

“No-fishing forms” must be submitted at the same frequency, via the same process as specified in **Action 1**.

Reporting is currently a condition of the permits issued for the reef fish, snapper grouper, dolphin/wahoo, and coastal migratory pelagic fisheries. Not reporting does not meet the conditions of the permit and the permit becomes invalid. Under the current reporting scenario, it is difficult to determine which permits have met the reporting frequency requirements due to the lag between the submittal of reports and the processing of the data. Electronic reporting would allow for better enforcement of current permit conditions. Any delinquent reports would need to be submitted and received by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) before a charter vessel could legally harvest and/or possess the affected species.

In situations where there is no fishing occurring, either by choice or due to a closed fishing season, “no fishing reports” are currently required to be submitted. These forms would still be required and could be submitted electronically, and should be submitted by the timeframe specified to remain in compliance with the permit requirements.

A charter vessel would only be authorized to harvest and/or possess species in the Reef Fish, Snapper Grouper, Dolphin/Wahoo, and Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources Fishery Management Plans if the charter vessel's previous reports have been submitted by the charter vessel owner and received by the NMFS in the time specified. Any delinquent reports would need to be submitted and received by NMFS before a charter vessel could legally harvest and/or possess the affected species. Charter vessel reporting ahead of time if they are closed/not fishing for an extended period, meets the intent of the weekly reporting.

Catastrophic Measure

It is the Councils' intent that the charter vessel program would be allowed to use paper-based reporting only as a backup during catastrophic conditions, when electronic means to report data are not feasible. The Regional Administrator (RA) would determine when catastrophic conditions exist, the duration of the catastrophic conditions, and which participants or geographic areas are deemed affected by the catastrophic conditions. The RA would provide timely notice to affected participants via publication of notification in the *Federal Register*, NOAA weather radio, fishery bulletins, and other appropriate means and would authorize the affected participants' use of paper-based components for the duration of the catastrophic conditions. The paper forms would be available from NMFS. The RA would have the authority to waive or modify reporting time requirements. The need for paper-based reporting is expected to occur infrequently and for relatively short time periods.

Discussion

Action 1 addresses the following recommendations from the Technical Sub-Committee:

1. Complete census of all participants.
2. Mandatory, trip level reporting with weekly electronic submission. Give flexibility to require submission more frequently than weekly if necessary. Give flexibility to declare periods of inactivity in advance.
4. Implementation of accountability measures to ensure compliance.
7. Maintain capability for paper-based reporting during catastrophic conditions.

The subcommittee agreed that the potential for bias is too great to recommend any voluntary reporting program and mandatory participation is necessary for vessel/owner-operators selected. This is recommended to best achieve the overarching objectives of the proposed program.

The technical subcommittee recommends the development and implementation of an electronic logbook *census* program (i.e., 100% reporting) to estimate catch and effort for southeast region charter vessels, including procedures for expanding for non-reporting. This recommendation was based in part on the inability of the current survey to meet the

needs of science and management applications and the requirement of timeliness beyond which is readily achievable through a survey approach.

The technical subcommittee recommends trip level reporting with weekly submission due the Tuesday following each fishing week. This would include no activity reports that could be submitted in advance if periods of inactivity are known. The technical subcommittee discussed that a daily reporting requirement may not be feasible or enforceable, however, reporting systems and user interfaces should be designed to encourage “real-time” at-sea reporting of catch and catch related data elements (e.g. fishing location, fishing method, target species).

The subcommittee recommends accountability measures and reporting requirements similar to those implemented for commercial seafood dealers in the southeast region (i.e., weekly submission of trip level reports, including periods of no activity due Tuesday following each week). A charter vessel owner/operator would only be authorized to harvest or possess federally managed species if previous reports have been submitted by the charter vessel owner/operator and received by NMFS (NMFS) in a timely manner. Any delinquent reports would need to be submitted and received by NMFS before a charter vessel owner/operator could harvest or possess federally managed species from the EEZ or adjacent state waters.

This measure would require that charter vessels remain current on their reports as a requirement to continue legally harvesting and/or possessing the affected species. This would improve timeliness and accuracy of charter vessel reporting, decreasing the likelihood of exceeding recreational annual catch limits (ACLs) for species that have in-season closures like black sea bass. For species with a recreational AM that shortens the length of the following fishing season, better and more timely data could help ensure landings do not exceed the ACL in the year following an overage. The requirement to submit no-fishing forms reduces the uncertainty of reported charter vessel landings. NMFS would be better able to differentiate between periods when charter vessels were fishing and periods with missing reports.

A preliminary list of data elements for charter vessels is shown in **Table 2.2.1**. South Carolina has already implemented a state logbook program for headboats and charter vessels (**Attachments 1 and 2**). They are in the process of moving from paper to electronic reporting. The final list of data elements for charter vessels in the South Atlantic would need to collect the same data as currently collected in South Carolina as a minimum; additional data may be collected from a sample of or all federally-permitted charter vessels.

Charter vessels are operationally defined as federally permitted for-hire vessels that carry six or fewer passengers. To date, none of these vessels have been selected by the SRD to submit fishing records as described in **Alternative 1** and have been monitored in combination through the MRIP For-Hire survey (effort) and the MRIP dockside intercept (catch). The MRIP For-Hire Survey includes charter vessels operating in the Gulf of Mexico from Louisiana through Florida and eastern Florida through North Carolina in the

South Atlantic Management region are required to report all trips taken during selected weeks (effort only) whenever they are selected to participate in the survey. Charter vessel operators are contacted by telephone to collect these data (**Table 2.1.1**). Catch data are collected in a separate dockside intercept survey of anglers. Adjustment factors for active charter vessels that are not in the sample frame (new to fleet, no contact information known, etc.) are produced from field intercept survey questions and applied to the raw effort estimate.

Table 2.1.1. Required data reporting elements for charter vessels participating in MRIP For-Hire survey.

Reporting Elements
Area fished
Number of anglers who fished
Hours of actual fishing activity
Method of fishing
Target species (if any)

To enforce the mandatory reporting requirement for federally permitted charter vessels in the For-Hire Telephone Survey, permit holders who refuse the survey over the phone are notified by letter of their obligation to report as a condition for permit renewal. However, if a vessel operator cannot be contacted after five attempts for a selected week, the final interview status is “unsuccessful contact” and it is impossible to identify permit-holders who are passively evading the survey. Contact rates in the For-Hire Telephone Survey vary by wave (2 month sample period), state, and region, and the percent of selected vessels that are unable to be contacted by phone is quite high in some strata.

Charter vessel catch and effort in Texas are monitored via the Texas Parks and Wildlife Survey. This survey is a field-intercept survey of boat-based fishing, including for-hire vessels. This survey estimates fishing effort and catch (harvest only) on a seasonal basis.

Alternative 2 would require charter vessels participating in the fisheries (noted above) to submit fishing records weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). **Alternative 2** could improve fishery data in several ways. For example, fishery data would be available into the science and management process faster, potentially reducing the chance of exceeding ACLs. **Alternative 2** could also improve accuracy, as reports would be completed soon after each trip reducing problems associated with recall errors. However, **Alternative 2** would reduce flexibility for timing of report preparation by charter vessel operators and this could burden could be acute during peak season when trip intensity, passenger capacity, and catch are greatest. It is during these periods of high catches when data are needed more quickly to ensure ACLs are not exceeded.

Alternative 3 would require charter vessels participating in the fisheries (noted above) to submit a report for each day. As with **Alternative 2**, this report would be submitted electronically and received by NMFS (due by noon the following day). **Alternative 3** could further reduce the likelihood of exceeding ACLs with reduced recall error as compared to **Alternative 1** and **Alternative 2**. However, **Alternative 3** would add additional burden and reduced flexibility in comparison to **Alternatives 1** and **2**.

Alternative 4 would require charter vessels participating in the fisheries (noted above) to submit a report for each trip. This report would need to be submitted electronically and received by NMFS prior to returning to the dock and would require multiple reports per day if more than a single trip occurred on a given day. **Alternative 4** would offer the greatest ability to prevent ACL overages and add additional rigor to trip validation of catch and effort that are not possible with **Alternatives 1-3**. However, **Alternative 4** offers charter vessel operators the least flexibility in how and when they prepare and submit their fisheries reports and could be burdensome during periods of peak activity or inclement weather.

The IPT recommends a new Action 2 addressing headboats:

Action 2: Modify Frequency and Mechanism of Headboat Data Reporting Requirements for Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and South Atlantic Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery Management Plans

Alternative 1 (No Action). Retain existing permits and data reporting systems for headboats. Currently, the owner or operator of a headboat for which a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf or South Atlantic coastal migratory pelagic fish, Gulf reef fish, South Atlantic snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin and wahoo has been issued, or whose vessel fishes for or lands such coastal migratory pelagic fish, reef fish, snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin or wahoo in or from state waters adjoining the applicable Gulf, South Atlantic, or Atlantic exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and who is selected to report by the Science and Research Director (SRD) must submit an electronic fishing record for each trip of all fish harvested via the Southeast Region Headboat Survey. Electronic fishing records must be submitted at weekly intervals (or intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD) by 11:59 p.m., local time, the Sunday following a reporting week. If no fishing activity occurred during a reporting week, an electronic report so stating must be submitted for that reporting week by 11:59 p.m., local time, the Sunday following a reporting week.

During catastrophic conditions the use of paper forms for basic required functions may be authorized by the RA by publication of timely notice. During catastrophic conditions, the RA also has the authority to waive or modify reporting time requirements.

An electronic report not received within the time specified is delinquent. A delinquent report automatically results in a prohibition on harvesting or possessing the applicable species, regardless of any additional notification to the delinquent owner and operator by NMFS. This prohibition is applicable until all required and delinquent reports have been submitted and received by NMFS according to the reporting requirements.

For South Atlantic snapper grouper, headboats selected to report by the SRD must participate in the NMFS-sponsored electronic logbook and/or video monitoring program as directed by the SRD. Completed fishing records may be required weekly or daily, as directed by the SRD.

Alternative 2. Require that headboats submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). Weekly = Tuesday following each fishing week.

Alternative 3. Require that headboats submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) daily via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). Daily = by noon of the following day.

Alternative 4. Require that headboats submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) for each trip via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software) prior to arriving at the dock.

COUNCIL ACTION:

Option 1. Approve the IPT recommendations for new Action 2 and the alternatives, and approve the range of new Action 2 alternatives shown above for detailed analyses.

Option 2. Add additional alternatives and/or modify the Action 2 alternatives and approve for detailed analyses.

Option 3. Others??

Discussion

Action 2 addresses the following recommendations from the Technical Sub-Committee:

1. Complete census of all participants.
2. Mandatory, trip level reporting with weekly electronic submission. Give flexibility to require submission more frequently than weekly if necessary. Give flexibility to declare periods of inactivity in advance.
4. Implementation of accountability measures to ensure compliance.
7. Maintain capability for paper-based reporting during catastrophic conditions.

The subcommittee agreed that the potential for bias is too great to recommend any voluntary reporting program and mandatory participation is necessary for vessel/owner-operators selected. This is recommended to best achieve the overarching objectives of the proposed program.

The technical subcommittee recommends the development and implementation of an electronic logbook *census* program (i.e., 100% reporting) to estimate catch and effort for southeast region for-hire vessels, including procedures for expanding for non-reporting. This recommendation was based in part on the inability of the current survey to meet the needs of science and management applications and the requirement of timeliness beyond which is readily achievable through a survey approach.

The technical subcommittee recommends trip level reporting with weekly submission due the Tuesday following each fishing week. This would include no activity reports that could be submitted in advance if periods of inactivity are known. The technical

subcommittee discussed that a daily reporting requirement may not be feasible or enforceable, however, reporting systems and user interfaces should be designed to encourage “real-time” at-sea reporting of catch and catch related data elements (e.g. fishing location, fishing method, target species).

The subcommittee recommends accountability measures and reporting requirements similar to those implemented for commercial seafood dealers in the southeast region (i.e., weekly submission of trip level reports, including periods of no activity due Tuesday following each week). A for-hire vessel owner/operator would only be authorized to harvest or possess federally managed species if previous reports have been submitted by the charter vessel owner/operator and received by NMFS (NMFS) in a timely manner. Any delinquent reports would need to be submitted and received by NMFS before a for-hire vessel owner/operator could harvest or possess federally managed species from the EEZ or adjacent state waters.

This measure would require that for-hire vessels remain current on their reports as a requirement to continue legally harvesting and/or possessing the affected species. This would improve timeliness and accuracy of for-hire vessel reporting, decreasing the likelihood of exceeding recreational annual catch limits (ACLs) for species that have in-season closures like black sea bass. For species with a recreational AM that shortens the length of the following fishing season, better and more timely data could help ensure landings do not exceed the ACL in the year following an overage. The requirement to submit no-fishing forms reduces the uncertainty of reported for-hire vessel landings. NMFS would be better able to differentiate between periods when charter vessels were fishing and periods with missing reports.

Headboats are operationally defined as vessels participating in the Southeast Region Headboat Survey (SRHS). Historically, federally permitted headboat vessels reported using paper forms. As of January 1, 2013, vessel operators have begun electronic submission of their fisheries data. Vessel operators are required to report 100% of their vessel trips. This data collection method places responsibility for submitting required information directly on the permit holder, and compliance is monitored and enforced as a condition for permit renewal. The obligation to report is periodically reinforced via certified letter to each permit holder.

The Southeast Region Headboat Survey (SRHS), which is administered by NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center, includes approximately 140 large capacity headboats operating in the Gulf of Mexico and U.S. South Atlantic from Texas through North Carolina. Vessels included in this survey are required to report catch and effort weekly to National Marine Fisheries Service (**Table 2.2.1**).

Alternative 1 requires headboat participating in Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Atlantic Dolphin Wahoo, or Gulf and South Atlantic Coastal Migratory Pelagic fisheries to submit electronic reports weekly (or at intervals less than a week if requested by the SRD) due seven days after the end of each week (Sunday).

Table 2.2.1. Required data reporting elements for headboats participating in the Southeast Regional Headboat Survey (SRHS).

Reporting Elements
Depart Date:Time
Return Date:Time
Vessel Name
Captain Name
Number of Anglers
Number of Paying Passengers
Number of Crew
Fuel used (gallons)
Price per gallon (estimate)
Minimum depth fished
Maximum depth fished
Primary depth fished
Latitude/Longitude Degrees
Latitude/Longitude Minutes
Species caught
Number kept
Number released

Alternative 2 would require headboats participating in the fisheries (noted above) to report weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). The difference between **Alternative 1** and **Alternative 2** is the difference in delay between the end of the fishing week (Sunday) and report submission. **Alternative 1** allows 7 days to prepare and submit reports while **Alternative 2** allows two days. **Alternative 2** could improve fishery data in several ways. Fishery data would be available into the science and management process faster, potentially reducing the chance of exceeding ACLs. **Alternative 2** could also improve accuracy, as reports would be completed soon after each trip reducing problems associated with recall errors. However, **Alternative 2** would reduce flexibility for timing of report preparation and this could be acute during peak season when trip intensity, passenger capacity, and catch are greatest. It is during these periods of high catches when data are needed more quickly to ensure ACLs are not exceeded.

Alternative 3 would require headboats participating in the fisheries (noted above) to submit a report for each day). This report would be submitted electronically and received by NMFS (due noon the following day). **Alternative 3** could further reduce the likelihood of exceeding ACLs and reduce recall error as compared to **Alternative 1** or **Alternative 2**. However, **Alternative 3** would add additional burden and reduced flexibility in comparison to **Alternatives 1** or **Alternative 2**.

Alternative 4 would require headboats participating in the fisheries (noted above) to submit a report for each trip. This report would need to be submitted electronically and received by NMFS prior to returning to the dock. **Alternative 4** would require trip-level reporting where each report is submitted and received by NMFS prior to arriving at the dock. **Alternative 4** would offer the greatest ability to prevent ACL overages and add additional rigor to trip validation of catch and effort that are not possible with **Alternatives 1-3**. However, **Alternative 4** offers headboat operators the least flexibility in how and when they prepare and submit their fisheries reports and could be burdensome during periods of peak activity or inclement weather.

Action 32: Amend the Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Atlantic Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery Management Plans to require vessel or catch location reporting for charter vessels

Alternative 1 (No Action). There are no requirements for charter vessels to report vessel location electronically. Fishing location is required to be reported on the vessel logbook report using designated grids.

Alternative 2. Require charterboats to report catch location:

Sub-Alternative 2a. By latitude/longitude in degrees and minutes.

Sub-Alternative 2b. By headboat grid.

Alternative 3. Require the use of an electronic device that automatically records vessel location for later transmission along with the logbook information:

Sub-Alternative 3a. In the South Atlantic.

Sub-Alternative 3b. In the Gulf of Mexico.

Alternative 4. Require the use of Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) for charter vessels in the Gulf of Mexico.

The IPT recommends the following changes to the wording of the Action and the Alternatives

Action 3: Modify Electronic Reporting Requirements Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Atlantic Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery Management Plans to Require Vessel or Catch Location Reporting

Alternative 1 (No Action). Charter vessels participating in the For-Hire survey are required to report area fished (inshore, state, or federal waters), if selected as part of the survey. Headboats participating in the SRHS self report latitude and longitude of area fished (degrees and minutes only; within 1 nm² area).

Alternative 2. Require the use of a NMFS approved electronic device that automatically records vessel location at specified time intervals for later transmission:

Sub-Alternative 3a. In the Gulf of Mexico (headboat)

Sub-Alternative 3b. In the Gulf of Mexico (charter vessel)

Sub-Alternative 3c. In the South Atlantic (headboat)

Sub-Alternative 3d. In the South Atlantic (charter vessel)

Alternative 3. Require the use of a NMFS approved Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) to record vessel location at specified time intervals for selected for-hire vessels in the Gulf of Mexico:

Sub-Alternative 3a. In the Gulf of Mexico (headboat)

Sub-Alternative 3b. In the Gulf of Mexico (charter vessel)

COUNCIL ACTION:

Option 1. Approve the IPT recommendations for Action 3 and the alternatives, and approve the range of Action 3 alternatives shown above for detailed analyses.

Option 2. Add additional alternatives and/or modify the Action 3 alternatives and approve for detailed analyses.

Option 3. Others??

Discussion

Action 3 addresses the following recommendations from the Technical Sub-Committee:

6. Minimize reporting burden to anglers by reducing (or preferably eliminating) paper reporting and eliminating duplicate reporting.

The South Atlantic Council is interested in charter vessels and headboats using a GPS enabled laptop, tablet, phone, or other electronic device similar to the one recently demonstrated by ACCSP to the Council and the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel. The South Atlantic Council has concluded that VMS is not feasible for South Atlantic Council fisheries at this time due to cost and issues related to the operation of VMS on small vessels prevalent in many fisheries.

The vessel location data would be collected automatically and would be treated as highly confidential information. Fishing locations would not be available to the public. These data would only be used to conduct analyses to support stock assessments, describe fishing operations, and inform law enforcement for future operations.

The Gulf Council has directed staff to begin developing a charter vessel reporting plan amendment that would consider the use of VMS.

Charter vessels that are surveyed using the For-Hire survey (i.e., 10% weekly) are asked to report area fished among other elements (See Chapter 2.1). **Action 3** considers changing the location reporting element for charter vessels and headboats from a self-reported system to an electronic system where location information is recorded passively by a device on board the vessel. **Alternative 1** would maintain the current self-reporting systems in place (i.e., report area fished if selected in the For-Hire survey (charter vessel) or latitude/longitude of area fished within 1 nm² area (headboat). **Alternative 2** would

require the use of a NMFS approved electronic device to record and later transmit specific location information (latitude/longitude). Four sub-alternatives are considered that would require this for Gulf of Mexico headboats (**Sub-Alternative 3a**); Gulf of Mexico charter vessels (**Sub-Alternative 3b**); South Atlantic headboats (**Sub-Alternative 3c**); or South Atlantic charter vessels (**Sub-Alternative 3d**). **Alternative 2** and **Sub-Alternatives** would permit improved accuracy, timeliness, and effort validation protocols relative to **Alternative 1**; they would also improve the estimates of bycatch mortality used in stock assessments by incorporating depth of capture. **Alternative 3** would apply only to the Gulf of Mexico and would require the use of VMS technology to monitor and report location information. **Alternative 3** is expected to yield similar benefits to **Alternative 2** as compared to **Alternative 1**.

Action 43: Amend the Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Atlantic Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery Management Plans to specify certain aspects of reporting for commercial and for-hire vessels

Alternative 1 (No Action). There is no specified time for data to be made available to the public and to the Councils.

Alternative 2. Specify the following data flow ~~for and timing aspects of~~ electronic reporting:

- a) Logbook data collected via authorized platform, ex. web, tablet, phone, or VMS application
- b) Data submitted to ACCSP or GulfFIN;
- c) Data integrated by ACCSP or GulfFIN into single composite data set;
- d) Composite data set distributed to appropriate agencies for analyses and use.

Sub-alternative 2a. Apply to charterboat reporting.

Sub-alternative 2b. Apply to headboat reporting.

Alternative 3. Specify the following aspects of electronic reporting:

- (i) NMFS and/or ACCSP/GulfFIN ~~are is~~ to develop a compliance tracking procedure that balances timeliness with available staff and funding resources.
- (ii) NMFS is to use validation methods developed in the Gulf of Mexico logbook pilot study as a basis to ensure that the actual logbook report is validated and standardized validation methodologies are employed among regions.
- (iii) NMFS is to require and maintain a comprehensive permit/email database of participants.
- (iv) NFMS is to include procedures for expanding estimates for non-reporting.
- (v) NMFS is to allow multiple authorized applications or devices ~~that can transmit data from sea~~ to report data as long as they meet required data and transferability standards.

Sub-alternative 3a. Apply to charterboat reporting.

Sub-alternative 3b. Apply to headboat reporting.

The above changes were considered by the Gulf Council but not approved; South Atlantic Council Staff recommends the above changes to the wording of the Action and the Alternatives. NOAA GC and the SEFSC have concerns about Action 4. The Technical Sub-Committee developed these recommendations.

COUNCIL ACTION:

Option 1. Approve the above recommendations for Action 4 and the alternatives, and approve the range of Action 4 alternatives shown above for detailed analyses.

Option 2. Add additional alternatives and/or modify the Action 4 alternatives and approve for detailed analyses.

Option 3. Others??

Discussion

The South Atlantic Council is concerned about the extensive delays in tracking headboat catches even though headboats are required to report electronically every weekly beginning in 2014. The 2014 headboat data was not available until April of 2015. The current blueline recreational ACL versus recreational catches is currently unknown pending receipt of the first wave of MRIP data (should be available 45 days after the end of February) and any headboat catches. Part of the headboat delay is that the Council has specified the recreational ACL in pounds and this requires the numbers of fish to be converted to pounds. This adds an unspecified period of time after the MRIP data are released for the SEFSC to apply their conversion factors and provide a catch estimate. The South Atlantic Council is considering specifying recreational ACLs in numbers of fish so that the headboat sector (and the charter vessel sector once this amendment is approved) can be tracked weekly. Specifying the recreational ACL in numbers of fish will also reduce the delay in using the MRIP data to track recreational ACLs.

Action 4 addresses the following recommendations from the Technical Sub-Committee:

3. Development of compliance tracking procedures that balance timeliness with available staff and funding resources.
5. Use validation methods developed in the Gulf of Mexico logbook pilot study as a basis to ensure that the actual logbook report is validated and standardized validation methodologies are employed among regions.
8. Require and maintain a comprehensive permit/email database of participants.
10. Include procedures for expanding estimates for non-reporting.
11. Allow multiple authorized applications or devices to report data as long as they meet required data and transferability standards.

The subcommittee recommends a multi-faceted approach where a number of reporting platforms can be used so long as the minimum data standards and security protocols are met. Data standards would need to be developed and the subcommittee agreed that NOAA Fisheries, the GulfFIN, and ACCSP could work collaboratively to develop appropriate standards.

The subcommittee recommends this process for data storage and management:

1. Logbook data collected via authorized platform, ex. web, tablet, phone, or VMS application
2. Data submitted to ACCSP or GulfFIN;
3. Data integrated by ACCSP or GulfFIN into single composite data set;
4. Composite data set distributed to appropriate agencies for analyses and use.

This process could eliminate duplicate reporting for some participants (e.g., South Carolina headboats and charter vessels) so long as appropriate data standards are in place and the respective agencies agree to confidentiality standards, which would allow sharing and accepting one another's data for use. Elimination of duplicate reporting (e.g., separate state and federal reports) would be a substantial benefit to participants in this survey program and could mitigate any additional reporting requirements for comparison to the current MRIP survey program.

The technical subcommittee recommends building upon the validation methodology developed in the Gulf MRIP pilot study.

The subcommittee recommends use of an MRIP certified methodology for validation with the following elements: Gulf MRIP pilot study methodologies, including dockside validation of catch and vessel activity, and maintenance of site and vessel registries.

The subcommittee recommends dual survey methods (existing and new) for no less than three years. Data from the new program would not be expected to provide management advice during the first year of operation. Moreover, this would allow the possibility of an initial phase-in or limited implementation to identify and solve significant problems prior to implementation for all participants.

The subcommittee recommends that the Councils move forward with development of a reporting system that includes federally permitted for-hire vessels while also exploring ways to determine the impact of state permitted vessels on landings estimates of federally managed species. Long term, the subcommittee recommends that both state and federally permitted charter vessels participate in this census to include the entire fleet of charter vessels harvesting federally managed species.

Weekly electronic dealer and headboat reporting are fully implemented. However, there are still delays in having updated landings available to the public for their use in planning trips and to the Councils for monitoring ACLs. A solution, in the Atlantic, would be to have the raw weekly data fed to ACCSP and made available to the public via the ACCSP website. The "official" numbers for quota closures would continue to be the numbers maintained by NMFS and available on the NMFS website but this would provide more timely and useful updates to the public.

The result would be updated and current catch data available on a daily basis for the public, states, NMFS, and the Councils to use in monitoring ACLs and planning fishing trips.

MAFMC AND NEFMC FOR-HIRE VESSEL REPORTING

The CMP FMP includes the Mid-Atlantic Council's area of authority. The Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo FMP includes both the Mid-Atlantic and New England Councils' areas of authority. All federally permitted for-hire vessels fishing in the Mid-Atlantic and New England areas are required to report via the northeast Vessel Trip Report (VTR) program (<http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/evtr/index.html>).

The South Atlantic and Gulf Councils could choose to extend this amendment through New England and the Mid-Atlantic or they could choose to use the VTR data to track recreational ACLs in the area north of North Carolina. The Councils should provide guidance to staff on how they wish to proceed.

COUNCIL ACTION:

Option 1. Extend the requirements of this amendment through the Mid-Atlantic Council's area for CMP species and through the New England Council's area for Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo.

Option 2. Use the existing VTR data from the Mid-Atlantic and New England areas to track recreational ACLs.

Option 3. Others??

TIMING – Based on timing approved by the SAFMC in December 2014

- A. ✓ Technical Sub-Committee finalized report – November 2014.
- B. ✓ Council reviews final report
 - a. ✓ SAFMC – December 2014
 - b. ✓ GMFMC – January 2015
- C. ✓ Council reviews options and provide guidance to Staff/IPT
 - a. ✓ SAFMC – March 2015
 - b. ✓ GMFMC – March 30 – April 2, 2015
- D. Council reviews and approves for public hearings
 - a. SAFMC – June 2015
 - b. GMFMC – June 2015
- E. Public hearings – July (GMFMC)/August (SAFMC) 2015
- F. Council reviews public hearing input and approves actions
 - a. SAFMC – September 2015
 - b. GMFMC – August/October 2015
- G. Councils approves for final review
 - a. SAFMC – December 2015
 - b. GMFMC – October 2015/January 2016

COUNCIL ACTION:

Option 1. Approve the Joint For-Hire Reporting Amendment, as modified, for public hearings.

Option 2. Direct staff to further develop the amendment and bring back to each Council at their next meeting for approval to take to public hearings.

Option 3. Others??



SOUTH CAROLINA HEADBOAT LOG

Section 50-5-1915 of the South Carolina Code of Laws requires all licensed headboats to maintain a trip log, copies of which must be submitted monthly to the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. **A report must be received even if no trips were made during the month. To submit a no trips report, write “No Business For (month) in the middle of a report form. (For example, No Business For January).** Date and sign the report.

To fulfill both the mandatory reporting of the NMFS and the requirements of state law without an undue burden on the permit holder, South Carolina will use the existing NMFS Headboat logbook. The white copy should be mailed or faxed to the address below so it is received no later than the 10th of the month following the report month. For example, June reports should reach our office by 10 July. The yellow copy should be retained for the NMFS representative, and the pink copy should be retained for your records. Complete a separate form for each trip. Should you need more reports, attach a note to your reports or call our office.

Please mail or FAX the white copies to the:

SCDNR - Fisheries Statistics Program
P.O. Box 12559
Charleston, SC 29422-2559
TELEPHONE: (843) 953-9313 **FAX:** (843) 953-9362

INSTRUCTIONS

To complete a trip report, record the following information in the proper blanks:

VESSEL: Enter vessel name and SC Charterboat Permit Number.

DATE: Enter the date(s) of the trip.

DEPART TIME: Enter the time of departure from the dock.

ARRIVE TIME: Enter the time of arrival back at the dock.

OPERATOR’S LICENSE NUMBER: Enter the vessel USCG or state documentation #.

FULL DAY, 3/4 DAY, ETC.: Check the appropriate box for the length of trip.

NIGHT: Check 1st if the trip departed between 6:00PM and midnight. Check 2nd if the trip departed after 12:00 midnight.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: Check the appropriate box.

PAY TYPE: Check the appropriate box.

LOCATION: Please enter the location code for your fishing area using the grid printed inside the flip cover.

Example: Refer to the grid and the small block marked **X** in grid 32-78 (lat/long) . Read up or down the column to determine the letter code (C in this example) . Read left or right across the row to determine the number code (1 in this example). This location code entry would be **32-78-C1**. Each individual small square is 10 miles long by 10 miles wide or roughly 100 square miles.

NUMBER OF ANGLERS: Enter the number of passengers who went to fish.

NUMBER OF ANGLERS WHO FISHED: Enter the number of passengers who actually fished.

CATCH INFORMATION

SPECIES: Use blank lines to list additional species caught.

NUMBER AND WEIGHT: Enter the total number and weight (to the nearest whole pound) of all species retained in the NUMBER CAUGHT and TOTAL WEIGHT columns.

NUMBER RELEASED: Regardless of disposition, ALL FISH must be reported. Please enter the number of each species released in the appropriate column. DO NOT include releases in the number caught or total weight columns.

SOUTH CAROLINA CHARTERBOAT LOGBOOK

ATTACHMENT 2
Revised 4-2012

Vessel (Please Print): _____ Date: _____ Permit No.: _____

Number of Anglers: _____ Trip Start Time: _____ Actual Hours Fished: _____ Location: _____
Example: 32-78-C1 (see map)Trip Start _____ Artificial _____ Target _____
Location: _____ Reef Name: _____ Species: _____
(Please specify)Locale: ☐ Estuarine Method: ☐ Troll ☐ Cast / Fly Water Depth: Shallowest: _____ feet
☐ 0 – 3 miles ☐ Bottom ☐ Dive ☐ Gig Deepest: _____ feet
☐ Offshore

AGENCY USE ONLY

Yr Mo Day Permit # Location Locale Ang# Meth

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Target Sp. Hrs. Reef Trip Start Shallowest Deepest

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MAIL OR FAX REPORT BY
THE 10TH OF THE MONTH TO:
SCDNR Fisheries Statistics Section, P.O.
Box 12559, Charleston, SC 29422-2559
FAX: (843) 953-9362 Phone: (843) 953-9313

	Species	# Kept	Lbs Kept	# Released Alive	# Released Dead		Species	# Kept	Lbs Kept	# Released Alive	# Released Dead						
1050	Dolphin					1423	Gag										
4710	Wahoo					1424	Scamp										
4655	Yellowfin Tuna					1414	Snowy Grouper										
4658	Blackfin Tuna					1416	Red Grouper										
3026	Sailfish					1410	Other Grouper										
2177	White Marlin						(Specify)										
2179	Blue Marlin					3302	Red Porgy (Pinks)										
1940	King Mackerel					3295	Other Porgies										
3840	Spanish Mackerel						(Specify)										
4653	Little Tunny					3764	Red Snapper										
0330	Bonita					3765	Vermillion Snapper										
4654	Skip Jack					3360	Black Sea Bass										
0180	Barracuda					3314	Spottail Pinfish										
3810	Spadefish					1441	White Grunt										
0030	Amberjack					1440	Other Grunts										
0870	Crevalle Jack						(Specify)										
0230	Bluefish					4560	Triggerfish										
0570	Cobia					1082	Red Drum										
4350	Tarpon					1081	Black Drum										
	Other Fish					3447	Spotted Seatrout										
	(Specify)					3446	Weakfish										
						1209	Flounder										
						3560	Sheepshead										
						4410	Ladyfish										
						1970	Whiting										
Captain's Notes: <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>												2670	Inshore Pinfish				
3518	Sharpnose Shark																
3495	Blacktip Shark																
3483	Bonnethead Shark																
3521	Spiny Dogfish																
3511	Smooth Dogfish																
3508	Other Sharks																
	(Specify)			Joint Council Meeting													
				Key West, FL													
2860	Stingrays																

Signature: _____

Decision Document for Joint
Charterboat Amendment

Print Name: _____

SOUTH CAROLINA CHARTERBOAT LOG

Section 50-5-1915 of the South Carolina Code of Laws requires all permitted charter vessels to submit daily trip reports for all trips to the Marine Resources Division on a monthly basis. These reports must specify: 1) the number of persons fishing, 2) the number of hours fished, 3) the number of fish of each species caught, and 4) their total weight. Subsequent charter vessel permits will not be issued unless these requirements are met.

Please complete a logsheet for each trip following the instructions below. If you made two or more trips on a particular date, complete a separate report for each trip. Trip reports are required even if no fish were caught. Mail or FAX the white copy to the address below by the 10th of the following month. Retain the yellow copy for your records.

SCDNR - Fisheries Statistics Program

P.O. Box 12559

Charleston, SC 29422-2559

TELEPHONE - (843) 953-9313 **FAX** - (843) 953-9362

A report must be received even if no trips were made during the month. To submit a no trip report, write "No Business For The Month Of (month) on the middle of a report form. Date and sign the report.

The Captain's Notes space may be used to record trip data such as weather, fuel, addresses, etc.

INSTRUCTIONS

- **VESSEL:** Enter the name of your vessel. If unnamed, enter the registration number of your boat, e.g. SC-1234-AB.
- **DATE:** Enter the date of the trip.
- **PERMIT NO.:** Enter your SC charter vessel permit number (number provided on your license).
- **# ANGLERS:** Enter the number of persons who fished, not including crew.
- **TRIP START TIME:** Enter the time the boat left the dock or landing, e.g. 11:30 AM, 1:00 PM, 3:30 PM, etc.
- **HOURS FISHED:** Enter the number of hours actually fished to the nearest hour, not including travel time.
- **LOCATION:** Enter the location code where MOST of your fishing took place. Refer to the map printed on the inside of the flip cover and the following example. If you fished in the grid marked **X**, Grid 32-78, read up or down the column to determine the letter code (C here). Read left or right across the row to determine the number code (1 here). The proper entry for this location is **32-78-C1**.
- **TRIP START LOCATION:** Enter the marina/boat landing name where this trip originates/end (i.e. where you pick up/drop off customers).
- **ARTIFICIAL REEF:** If you fished at an artificial reef, enter the reef name in the blank.
- **TARGET SPECIES:** Enter the name of the species you were MOST interested in catching, whether any were caught or not. Enter ANY if you had no preference.
- **LOCALE:** Check the appropriate zone fished.
- **METHOD:** Check the fishing method.
- **WATER DEPTH:** Enter the shallowest water depth and deepest water depth (in feet) that were fished.
- **CATCH INFORMATION:** Enter the number of each species kept and their weight to the nearest whole pound in the appropriate spaces. Enter the number of each species released in the proper columns. Additional species may be added on the blank spaces or if additional space is needed, you may cross out an existing name and add the new species.

