

Fishery Performance Report Overview

Socioeconomic Panel

April 2019



Background

The purpose of fishery performance reports (FPR) is to assemble information from the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) fishery advisory panel members' experience and observations on the water and in the marketplace to complement scientific and landings data. The FPRs are provided to the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and the Socioeconomic Panel (SEP) to complement stock assessment reports and aid in developing stock status recommendations. They can also be useful to inform future Council management decisions. Additionally, the FPRs are posted publicly on the [Council's website](#).

The FPR Process

1. Fishery background information is prepared by Council staff and provided to advisory panel members two weeks prior to the meeting. Originally background information was presented to advisory panel members as an attachment in the meeting briefing book. However, recently background information has been presented via an interactive web application. The background document and web application contain the following information for the species that will be discussed:
 - a. general biology,
 - b. stock status as determined by the most recent assessment,
 - c. management history,
 - d. commercial statistics (landings by year, area, month, and season, if applicable),
 - e. recreational statistics (landings by year, area, wave, and number of directed trips, if applicable),
 - f. economic performance (average ex-vessel price, ex-vessel value, and economic impacts by year).

[Example for Greater Amberjack](#) (full informational document)

[Example for King Mackerel](#) (full informational document)

[Example for Golden Tilefish](#) (interactive app only)

2. Discussion questions are also prepared by Council staff and provided to the advisory panel members two weeks prior to the meeting. The discussion questions have been standardized across fisheries, excluding a few additions and minor variations to account for differences among fisheries and stock assessment data needs. Questions address the following topics:
 - a. landing and discard level and trends over the last five years,
 - b. current management measure performance,
 - c. environmental conditions and ecology,
 - d. social and economic influences,
 - e. other concerns or data gaps.

[Example for Greater Amberjack](#)

[Example for King Mackerel](#)

Discussion questions specific to social and economic aspects of the fishery:

1. For the commercial sector, how has price and demand for *species x* changed?
2. How has demand for charter/headboat trips targeting *species x* changed?
3. What communities are dependent on the *species x* fishery?
4. Have changes in infrastructure (docks, marinas, fish houses) affected fishing opportunities for *species x*?
5. How have fishermen and communities adapted to changes in the *species x* fishery?

3. During the advisory panel meeting, Council staff provide an overview of background information available via the interactive web application and answer any questions advisory panel members may have before beginning the discussion. Questions are posed to the advisory panel in the same order as provided in the briefing book and members can discuss their thoughts and observations on the record.
4. Using notes and meeting minutes, Council staff prepares an FPR which summarizes the discussion that took place during the advisory panel meeting. The FPRs are organized by topic and geographic area.

[Example for Greater Amberjack](#)

[Example for King Mackerel](#)

Questions for the Socioeconomic Panel

1. FPRs are time consuming to conduct and summarize. It can be challenging to balance completing FPRs with other Council priorities.
 - a. Is there a way to streamline the FPR process to make it more effective and efficient?
2. What improvements could be made to the discussion questions to produce more valuable information? Is the wording appropriate or are the question too ambiguous? Is the order of the questions appropriate? Are there additional social or economic questions that should be considered?
3. In some cases, one or more advisory panel members may dominate the conversation. There is concern that this will result in a narrow picture of the fishery. Additionally, there are concerns about how the social desirability effect (respondents will answer in a way they think will make the look good) may influence advisory panel responses given the public nature of meetings.
 - a. How can staff encourage active and honest participation from advisory panel members?

4. Council staff would like to ensure the FPR process avoids the expectancy effect (getting responses that staff expect because they have shaped responses through their expectations).
 - a. How can staff work to improve the FPR process to ensure a complete and unbiased picture of the fishery, particularly when summarizing advisory panel input?
5. How should the information gathered during the FPR process be presented so that it is beneficial/engaging for both scientists and managers? Should fishermen and/or the general public be considered as an audience?
 - a. For example, using an interactive website to house all completed FPRs as well as the background information provided for each report.
<https://testsafmcouncil.shinyapps.io/FPRAll/>
6. Currently, FPRs are being completed before a stock assessment and/or to provide a baseline for a fishery. There is no other standard timeline for when FPRs are to be reviewed by advisory panels. Stocks are projected to be reassessed every four years with interim analyses done between assessments. Additionally, given the similarity of the discussion questions, there is a concern that advisory panel members will experience fatigue if FPRs are conducted at every meeting.
 - a. How often should FPRs be updated to keep the content relevant and useful?
7. Many species remain unassessed through the SEDAR process. These species often have lower levels of landings than the assessed species.
 - a. When should FPRs be done for species that have not been assessed? Is there a recommendation for how often these should be updated?

Additional Challenges for the Snapper Grouper Fishery

1. While completing FPRs for fishery management plans (FMP) with a small number of species is feasible, the Snapper Grouper FMP contains a large number of species and may be better suited to a different FPR process. Some species such as hinds, other jacks, deep-water species etc. may need to be grouped to cover species that have not been assessed through the SEDAR process.
2. Focusing on one or two species at a time does not describe larger trends in the snapper grouper fishery.