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Cobia Q&A May 9, 2016

Q: The mail survey has been a source of confusion, as some anglers think that data is already being used, but it is just a calibration, pilot project and did not contribute to the MRIP estimates of 2015

A: ok, thanks

Q: My question, is how did the overcatch occur in 2015 and in what specific areas?

A: Hi, the recreational data provided by the National Marine Fisheries Service indicated that most landings were from NC (mostly May/June) and VA (Jun-Aug).

Audience Question:

Q: how slow is the data to report?

A: The recreational data comes from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) and comes in 2-month waves, available 45 days after the wave ends. You can look up MRIP data through 2015 here-->  
<http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/st1/recreational/queries/>

Audience Question:

Q: are there specifics in the reporting of this data that is available? also, is there any cross reference of this data from an outside source?

A: MRIP uses data collected from phone interviews and from dockside interviews about what people fish for and catch. There is more info about how MRIP works here:  
<http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/recreational-fisheries/Understanding-Estimation/index>

Q: are there specifics in the reporting of this data that is available? also, is there any cross reference of this data from an outside source?

A: Some of this will be covered in the next presentation

Q: Ok, thank you! Sorry to ask so much. thank you

A: That's what this webinar is for! Thx for the good questions, and I shared the answers with everyone. [this is Kari MacLauchlin, SAFMC staff]

Q: Ending the season early across the board will completely kill Virginia's season and most of North Carolina's. What sense does that make?

A: Hi, the Council is considering changes to the cobia management that they hope will extend the season. We will cover that in the presentation about Framework Amendment 4 (Presentation V).

Audience Question:

Q: MSY?

A: Maximum Sustainable Yield-- this comes from the stock assessment and scientific advisors to the Council, and it is the maximum fish that can be harvested but still allow the stock to replenish itself

Q: Roughly how many people are present in Kitty Hawk? (AKA, attending the meeting in person?)

A: about 50

Audience Question:

Q: need a manual for acronyms

A: We have an acronym webpage! <http://www.safmc.net/Library/Acronyms>

Audience Question:

Q: Can we access these presentations after the meeting? (Link on the website and/or via email?)

A: Yes, the presentations are available here <http://safmc.net/meetings/cobia-qa-public-meeting-may-9-2016>. scroll down and you will see the PDF link and YouTube links.

Audience Question:

Q: How does a cobia know what group he/she is in, and how do they know where the line is? Q: What happens to a cobia when they cross the line

A: The stock assessment used genetic information and tagging information to estimate where the two stocks mix, and used that to set the stock boundary. It's possible that some cobia move between the Gulf and Atlantic.

Q: totally agree... I have no idea where 2015 is coming from

Q: I watch the fishery from Ocean Isle to Oregon Inlet.

Q: I did not see this in 2015

A: Gregg will talk about this more in the presentation, but the MRIP data is considered the best available science. The Council wants to put in the charter and headboat logbook reporting requirements to get more data.

Q: something is missing

Q: 15 was not the year

Q: 13-14 was better

**Audience Question:**

Q: I understand, but best - and accurate -- are different terms

A: The mandates in the law require the Councils to put in the annual catch limits, which are tracked with the MRIP data. For places with lots of recreational fishermen, this has been very challenging for the Councils. The US Congress is currently considering some changes to the law (Magnuson-Stevens Act) that may give some flexibility.

Q: this is why I was asking about data, something is suspect from the charter guys who are out everyday -- Logs are being kept

Q: What if NC goes out of compliance with what yall want?

A: The states have authority over their state waters and they may decide to do something different than NOAA/Council for federal waters. However, any landings from state waters will still be counted towards the annual catch limit, and that could affect the next year's season (which could affect the other states).

Q: There is no commercial fisherie so move the commercial quota to recreational fisherie

A: That would be a great suggestion for the Council-- be sure to email it to [mike.collins@safmc.net](mailto:mike.collins@safmc.net) so we can pass it along to the Council members. w

Q: How was this data collected? Show me the exact data from the surveys that were taken

A: The recreational data is provided by the MRIP program-- you can get more info here-- <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/recreational-fisheries/Understanding-Estimation/index>

Q: For the first time in 40 years I did not catch a legal cobia off of E. Cen Fl. Last year was poor too, and I caught a few legal fish. Raise the size to 36" fork, require netting of all smaller fish and establish a 6 fish boat limit! This one of the few times I support SAFMC

A: Please email your comments to [mike.collins@safmc.net](mailto:mike.collins@safmc.net) so we can send them out to the Council members for June. Thanks!!

Q: For the first time in 40 years I did not catch a legal cobia off of E. Cen Fl. Last year was poor too, and I caught a few legal fish. Raise the size to 36" fork, require netting of all smaller fish and establish a 6 fish boat limit! This one of the few times I support SAFMC.

A: These are great suggstions for the council.

Q: I totally agree with Reece.. he is a charter guy that knows

Q: he sees it.[ then they report it on their websites -- all the boat harbours

Q: In Ga I have never been checked

Q: tough crowd!!

**Audience Question:**

Q: Do you have a number of how many boats were surveyed during this stock assessment. Because I've been cobia fishing for 10 year and have been checked maybe twice in those 2 years and don't know anyone that has been checked in the last 5 years. I also work in the fishing industry and have personally seen the number of cobia getting caught and being seen dramatically increase in the last 5 years

A: The stock assessment used recreational data (headboat/charter/private) from 1981-2011 [the stock assessment was completed in 2012, so this was the most recent data]. I don't know how many boats were surveyed during that period.

Q: Can yall show me an economic impact study on these new regs?

A: Amendment 20B was the amendment that set up the annual catch limit and accountability measures for Atlantic cobia, and as required, there was an assessment of the potential economic impacts.

Q: How is this the best science available when your own peer reviewers say "I cannot recommend any of the model runs for this assessment. The abundance indices are not defensible. The composition data were not properly prepared (and are over-weighted). The model was over-parameterized." - Patrick L. Cordue Independent Peer Review for the SEDAR28 Stock Assessment?

A: Gregg will be reviewing the stock assessment process in the next presentation and we can pass along your question to him when we get to that part.

**Q:** Cobias that were sampled from the coastal waters of Virginia, Mississippi, and Louisiana were genetically homogeneous based on assays of microsatellite genotypes and mtDNA haplotypes. This finding is consistent with observed migration patterns and tag-and-release studies of Cobias- Texas A&M this refutes the ACL zone split based on two different "migratory groups"

**Q:** How can you accurately tell us the data then and expect us to believe it if you don't have the number of boats that were surveyed was available? That should be a number that is available to the public to view.

**A:** The information is available, I just don't know exactly where to look for it in the stock assessment documents-- but all data and information used in the stock assessment is available here. <http://sedarweb.org/sedar-28-data-workshop>

**Audience Question:**

**Q:** How is a singular accountability measure that is an end of season closure not discriminatory against the states at the end of the migratory pattern? This seems like a clear violation of National Standard 4. The fact that the negative impact is directly proportional to the amount of representation present on the council is problematic

**A:** We will be able to put you on line with Gregg at the end of the presentation(s)

**Audience Question:**

**Q:** I just think that the data is the biggest issue, The guys who are mainly on the water, who are being chased for both information and literally, seem to not agree with 15, but are honest enough to say that the two previous years were much better. I know this is hearsay -- but in general, the data must be improved -- is there any thing that the council can suggest to improve the data?

**A:** I think the Council would agree with that more data is always better for decision-making. You could check out the potential charter/headboat reporting requirements that the Council is working on, and you could suggest other ways to improve data collection. The council is also working on developing a Citizen Science Program, in which fishermen collect data-- we just had a workshop for that <http://www.safmc.net/citizen-science-initiative>

**A:** -

**Q:** Virginia established a 1-cobia bag limit in 2002. Rob

**A:** Thanks Rob. This is Kari at the SAFMC office on the webinar.

**Q:** Virginia lowered to 1 fish per day

**Q:** that was a very insensitive comment -- how can guys who rely on the cobia fishery for charter boats, and then ask them to take their now limited funds, come together and pay attorney's to sue

**A:** I'll pass your comment along to the presenter

**Q:** Has it not occurred to anyone that the reason for the spike in catches in nc/va is due to climate change, higher temperatures and longer summers therefore ,the fish are here longer and more get caught

**A:** Hi, there are some folks doing research about that at VIMS, and that information could be incorporated into the stock assessment and other management decisions. Definitely send this comment to the council-- email them to [mike.collins@safmc.net](mailto:mike.collins@safmc.net) so we can pass them along to all council members.

**Q:** How many Fish has Michelle caught in her life???

**Q:** Why is EVERY Fishes Size and Bag Limit been Lowered for the last 14 Years? Why is MIS MANAGEMENT not looked at???? Why is no one in Fisheries Management Held Responsible????John A. Mortensen

**A:** Not every has a size limit/bag limit, and some have not changed since federal management went into place. Minimum size limits are in place to allow the fish to spawn at least once before possibly getting caught, and bag limits are in place to slow the rate of harvest when that's necessary. The council process is in place so that management decisions are made by people from that region, and also that there be flexibility to make changes in management systems when something is not working or there is a better way to manage.

**Q:** We have to consider all states not just North Carolina

**Q:** Seems management is failing..

**Q:** Why not limit Florida from catching all the fish to allow the other states to catch some of the fish

**A:** Florida is not part of the Atlantic cobia quota, so management south of the GA/FL line would not affect the quota north of the GA/FL line.

**Q:** The fish come from Florida

**Q:** As a Citizen of North Carolina I vote for NO COMPLY...

Q: Specks, Greys, Drum, Blues, Flounder, Black Drum Cobia, all reduced bag and size???

A: Most of those are managed by the states, not the SAFMC. You would have to contact your state to ask about the management for those species.

Q: The fish do not reach North Carolina until the closure period

Q: Or TRYING TOO??????

Q: I am in Ga and have never been checked in over 10 years

Q: Why do you not go to charter captains

Q: Then why SAFMC regulating Cobia in NC??? REALLY?????

A: SAFMC manages cobia because there are landings in federal waters, and also because cobia are migratory. Maybe the council will consider giving management of cobia to the states, and you can email those suggestions to [mike.collins@safmc.net](mailto:mike.collins@safmc.net).

Q: Menhaden are more of a concern because if you take out the foundation of a house it falls, you ever think maybe the fish are hungry because all their foods getting sucked up by a floating vacuum factory !!!

Q: The whole issue I see, The base line data has no backbone, because the people who come out to get data at the boat ramps and piers are given very false data on a daily bases. The fact is you can't take 1500 miles of coast 3 miles out from shore and manage it, it is not possible for anyone or any science to figure out ... It's a joke.

A: Shawn, the more data, the better! This is the biggest challenge for the council, and they are always looking at ways to improve data collection ---- even though NMFS is actually the agency responsible for data collection and monitoring. The Council is trying to put in charter/headboat reporting requirements and also developing a Citizen Science Program, to get fishermen involved in data collection

Q: What percentage of Cobia Landings are in Federal Waters for all States affected???

A: Varies each year, but between 50-80% in state waters

Q: Why not do away with commercial.

Audience Question:

Q: I can tell you this and thousands of others will agree when menhaden are being overfished it affects every species of fish that swims in our waters and maybe if you guys would crack down on the paid politicians, we as fisherman as a whole would give more accurate data

A: all the comments in this Questions panel will be saved and distributed to Council members, staff and be placed in the Administrative Record

Q: What is a rolling average

Q: How many Cobia have Kari Maclachlin caught??

Q: Does that mean we are not going to be allowed an opportunity to speak?

A: Gregg will direct me to turn on your mic when those in person have finished

Q: what are the repercussions for not complying?

A: The states have authority over their state waters and they may decide to do something different than NOAA/Council for federal waters. However, any landings from state waters will still be counted towards the annual catch limit, and that could affect the next year's season (which could affect the other states).

Q: what happened to states rights?

Q: Whai about June 20 closure

Q: Eleminate Commercial limit

A: Do you mean eliminate the commercial quota (one ACL for both commercial and rec)? or get rid of the possession limit of 2 fish/day for commercial?

Q: In Ga it appears that there is no commercial permit.

A: There is no federal commercial permit requirement for cobia. The states have license requirements to sell fish, and you would still need the state license.

Q: This is the first time a state boundry has been used that I can tell

Audience Question:

Q: email address again?

A: for the NC Marine Fisheries Commission, it's [nancy.fish@ncdenr.gov](mailto:nancy.fish@ncdenr.gov)

Audience Question:

Q: email address again?

A: For the South Atlantic Council, it's [mike.collins@safmc.net](mailto:mike.collins@safmc.net). You can just copy Mike Collins on your email to Nancy. Thx!