

**SUMMARY REPORT
FROM THE GOLDEN TILEFISH LAP WORKGROUP MEETING
North Charleston, South Carolina
October 28-29, 2008**

The Golden Tilefish LAP Workgroup met on October 28th and 29th in North Charleston, South Carolina.

The Workgroup

- ❖ Received presentations from Council staff on the future outlook of the golden tilefish fishery that included an overview of current amendments, a summary of problems in the golden tilefish fishery, and the role of the Workgroup.
- ❖ Held a brainstorming session to develop a preferred management program. The fishermen developed two fairly detailed draft management programs they would like to see implemented under various circumstances. Under status quo management, the Workgroup members would like to see a gear specific golden tilefish endorsement program implemented that would exclude fishermen that do not have historical landings in the fishery. The longline gear sector representatives would like to include fishermen that have harvested at least 2,000 pounds of golden tilefish between 2005 and 2007. The hook and line sector created two eligibility options for the purposes of analysis. The hook and line representative suggested including fishermen with at least 500 or 1,000 pounds of golden tilefish landings on average between 2001 and 2005 using the three best of each individual's five years. The endorsement program would also specify a change in the fishery start date from January 1st to August 1st. The change in the start date would allow South Carolina fishermen to start fishing at the same time as the Florida fishermen and for hook and line fishermen to participate in the fishery. In recent years, the commercial quota has been met before hook and line fishermen were able to focus effort on golden tilefish (usually in September) due to their participation in other fisheries.

The second program developed was an LAP program. According to some Workgroup members, the second program the Golden Tile LAP Workgroup developed was only considered to have potential for success if the golden tilefish commercial quota was about 480,000 pounds or greater. Others felt LAPs would be successful at a lower commercial quota. However, they did not feel that a LAP was a viable option at the currently projected commercial ACT levels specified in the Amendment 17 materials (between 196,455 and 276,265 pounds whole weight). The current commercial quota is 331,000 pounds whole weight. The LAP program developed included separate gear sector quotas for longline and hook and line. The program had different eligibility requirements for initial allocation for longline and hook and line quota. All other details developed for the LAP program were applicable to both gear users. The full report of the Golden Tilefish LAP Workgroup contains further details.

The Workgroup made the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1. The LAP WG recommends that the Council choose the average of 1986-2007 to use as the commercial golden tilefish allocation in Amendment 17. This recommendation is unanimous.

Recommendation 2. The LAP WG recommends an emergency rule be implemented in the golden tilefish fishery that develops a gear endorsement as specified above that would include a change in the opening date from January 1st to August 1st.

Recommendation 3. The LAP Workgroup recommends a control date on golden tilefish of December 31st, 2007.

Recommendation 4. The LAP Workgroup requests that the Council request the Science Center to make 2008 logbook data available to NMFS analysts and Council staff for LAP analytical purposes.

Recommendation 5. The LAP Workgroup requests that the Workgroup be allowed to meet to discuss any LAP program details the Council devises after the Workgroup hands in their recommendations.

Recommendation 6. The LAP Workgroup recommends that Amendment 17 incorporate an alternative with a golden tilefish LL endorsement and a golden tilefish H&L endorsement with a start date of August 1st.

The Workgroup made the following requests of staff:

1) Evaluate number of participants, average landings, and the distribution of quota under each eligibility and initial allocation scenario.