

Summary of the Data Collection Committee
April 18, 2012
Omni Bayfront Hotel
Corpus Christi, TX

Members:

Pearce, Chair
Crabtree/Steele/Branstetter
Fischer
Greene

The agenda was adopted as written and the minutes of the February 1, 2012 meeting were approved with no modifications.

Dr. Froeschke provided a summary report of the MRIP calibration workshop held March 27-29, 2012 in Raleigh, NC. The purpose of this workshop was to propose a methodology for calibrating MRFSS to MRIP data. Estimates using both methodologies are available from 2004 to 2011 and paired estimates from this period can be used to calibrate the two estimates and hindcast MRIP estimates for years prior to 2004. The working group recommended a plan for implementing the calibration methodology into updated and benchmark stock assessments and will release a full report for review and comment in 2012.

Dr. Froeschke reviewed the dealer reporting scoping document (Tab E, No. 3). The committee considered the revised actions and alternatives from the March 2012 South Atlantic Council meeting. Action 1 considers what dealer permits would be required and for which species. For Action 1, three alternatives are included in the document: 1) No action, do not modify the current six Federal dealer permits, 2) Establish one universal Federal dealer permit, 3) Establish separate Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Federal dealer permits. At their March 2012 meeting, the South Atlantic Council moved Alternatives 2a and 3a to the considered but rejected appendix as it fails to meet the purpose and need of the amendment. Proposed options 2a and 3a were added:

Proposed Option 2a. Require a universal dealer permit to purchase all federally-managed species, except south Atlantic coral, south Atlantic *sargassum*. The universal dealer permit would be required to purchase species in the following fishery management plans:

- Atlantic Dolphin-Wahoo
- Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish
- South Atlantic Golden Crab
- South Atlantic Rock Shrimp
- South Atlantic Snapper Grouper (including wreckfish)
- *Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Coastal Migratory Pelagics*
- *Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Spiny Lobster*
- *Gulf of Mexico Coral and Coral Reefs*
- *Gulf of Mexico Red Drum*
- *Gulf of Mexico Shrimp*
- *South Atlantic Shrimp*
- *Gulf of Mexico Shrimp*

Proposed Option 3a. Require dealer permits to purchase all federally-managed species, except south Atlantic coral, south Atlantic *sargassum*. Dealer permits would be required to purchase species in the following fishery management plans:

- Atlantic Dolphin-Wahoo
- Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish
- South Atlantic Golden Crab
- South Atlantic Rock Shrimp
- South Atlantic Snapper Grouper (including wreckfish)
- *Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Coastal Migratory Pelagics*
- *Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Spiny Lobster*
- *Gulf of Mexico Coral and Coral Reefs*
- *Gulf of Mexico Red Drum*
- *Gulf of Mexico Shrimp*
- *South Atlantic Shrimp*
- *Gulf of Mexico Shrimp*

(Note: Italics designate alterations from species that currently require dealer permits.)

Action 2 addresses the frequency and method of reporting by seafood dealers. The South Atlantic Council provided revised versions of Alternatives 2 and 3 to clarify the language regarding frequency of reporting. Alternative 4 was added to provide the potential to phase-in electronic reporting in the Gulf of Mexico if separate dealer permits are created in Action 1. This alternative would permit submission of forms via fax or electronically in year 1 and electronically in year 2 and beyond. Alternative 5 was also added to provide a provision to use paper-based components for basic required functions as a backup.

There was some inquiry about why the language “as determined by the SRD” was added to Alternative 2, 3, and 4. Ms. McCawley stated that this language allows greater flexibility to increase frequency of reporting as an ACL is approached.

Dr. Crabtree asked how this system would work and if frequency of reporting could vary by species noting the potential complications.

Mr. Perret asked about the ability of NMFS to receive and process data reported daily. Dr. Ponwith stated that this would not be burdensome if reporting was electronic, however, the agency could not process these data on a daily basis if submitted via fax. Dr. Crabtree further noted that the decision to include shrimp in reporting requirements (Action 1) could substantially increase the administrative burden of daily reporting.

Action 3 addresses requirements to maintain a dealer permit and five alternatives are proposed in this action. The South Atlantic Council recommended that Alternative 4 be moved to the rejected alternatives appendix. Proposed Alternative 4 was added: First infraction, a fine in accordance with NOAA GC penalty schedule is administered.

Alternative 5 was also added by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council at their March 2012 meeting: “No purchase forms” must be submitted at the same frequency, via the same process, and for the same species as specified for “purchased forms” in Actions 1 and 2”. A dealer would only be authorized to receive commercially-harvested species if the dealer’s

previous reports have been submitted by the dealer and received by NMFS in a timely manner. Any delinquent reports would need to be submitted by the dealer and received by NMFS before a dealer could receive commercially harvested species from a federally-permitted us vessel.

Ms. Muehlstein summarized the comments received during scoping meetings and at site visits across the Gulf coast (**Tab E, 3a**). Specifically, fishermen in Fort Myers, Florida suggested that seafood dealers report online weekly until 75% of the quota caught, at which point daily reporting should be required. In Key West, Florida, fishermen wondered if creation of a universal permit would allow fishermen to transit to get a better price for fish. They did not want separate Gulf and South Atlantic permits. During site visits across the coast seafood dealers suggested that all reporting be consolidated into one central location to reduce the administrative burden. Some dealers thought that weekly reporting was too frequent. Dealers asked that the reporting system would send them reminders and prompt them to report before penalties were levied against them. They also asked that there be forgiveness for failure to report as long as non-reporting was not malicious. At the Destin FL, scoping hearing Mr. Krebs and Mr. Morgan provided comments on this document. Both spoke in support of electronic reporting for seafood dealers.

Dr. Ponwith provided an update on the status electronic reporting programs being evaluated for headboats and the for-hire sector in the Gulf of Mexico. She stated that they are making good progress on implementing electronic reporting for head boats and they are working toward full implementation this year. In reference to the for-hire pilot program Dr. Ponwith stated that compliance was too low to recommend implementation of a census survey in this sector. A final report is being prepared, will be submitted and reviewed by MRIP, and released for public review and comment. Dr. Ponwith indicated that she would like to decouple the electronic and census components of the pilot program as electronic reporting may be viable even if a census survey program in the for-hire sector is not feasible. Drs. Crabtree and Ponwith discussed the increased time to produce catch estimates from a survey and that continued use of paper-based reporting could further delay this process. Dr. Ponwith stated the need to work in concert with MRIP to develop this program. Dr. Crabtree noted that a panel survey where individuals are selected and repeatedly sampled could be used to expand survey estimates that may increase timeliness and accuracy over the status quo methodology. Dr. Ponwith suggested that the correlation between the headboat and for-hire sector could be evaluated as headboat catch data are expected to be available near real time with a electronically reported census survey. If catch patterns between the headboat and for-hire groups are similar, this relationship could be used to improve harvest in the for-hire sector.

There was some discussion about the factors affecting low compliance in Florida during the electronic reporting pilot program for the for-hire sector. Mr. Greene stated that he was unsure why compliance was low in Florida and Dr. Dana added that the Destin fleet with which she is most familiar was supportive of electronic reporting although the potential costs would have to be considered.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my report.