Draft Golden Tilefish Limited Access Privilege (LAP) Program Exploratory Workgroup Report

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Overview
Six of the seven commercial golden tilefish fishermen that comprise the Golden Tilefish Limited Access Privilege (LAP) Workgroup met on October 28th and 29th in North Charleston to discuss management of the commercial sector of the fishery. 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 and substantial landings in the fishery. The longline gear sector representatives would like to include fishermen that have harvested at least 2000 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 1000 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.

How this Report is Organized
This report begins with a brief description of the program type that was developed by the Workgroup and then provides detail about each program type. When available, analysis for each program is provided.

Program Types

Preferred Option 1: Species and gear specific endorsement on snapper grouper permit and change in start date to August 1st.

Eligibility Requirements
Hook and Line Endorsement

Sub-Option 1. Best 3 of 5 years from 2001-2005 averaging 1000 pounds or more.

Sub-Option 2. Best 3 of 5 years from 2001-2005 averaging 500 pounds or more.

Longline Endorsement (implies longline and bandit gear possibly onboard and being used to fish)

Sub-Option 1. Total greater than or equal to 2,000 pounds golden tilefish caught between January 2005 and November 2007.

Note: Use logbooks to check catch history and trip tickets to verify.

Commercial Quota Split

Preferred Sub-Option 1: 10% H & L, 90% LL hard allocation

Option 2: LAP Program

Eligibility Requirements

Hook and Line

Sub-Option 1: Best 3 of 5 years from 2001-2005 averaging 1000 pounds or more.

Longline

Sub-Option 1. Total greater than or equal to 2,000 pounds golden tilefish caught between January 2005 and November 2007.

Initial Allocation Methodology

Hook and Line

Sub-Option 1: Methodology that averages 4000 lbs per person.

Longline

Sub-Option 1: Allocate based on the following equation where an individual's allocation is equal to

50% * (average landings 2004-06) + 50% * (average landings 2007-08)

Sub-Option 2: Average of an individual's landings from the best 3 of 5 years 2004-2008

Commercial Quota Split

Preferred Sub-Option 1: 10% H & L, 90% LL hard allocation

Transferability on quota and pounds

Preferred Sub-Option 1: Transferability for both quota and pounds whereby there is one type of quota and one type of pounds for both longline and hook and line.

Ownership cap on quota

Sub-Option 1: No cap
Sub-Option 2: 49% cap

Ownership cap on pounds

Preferred Sub-Option 1: No cap

Rollover allowances

Preferred Sub-Option 1: Underage allowance
Preferred Sub-Option 2: Overage allowance

Recreational/Commercial Allocation

Under an LAP or endorsement type program, the Workgroup would like a hard and unchanging allocation between recreational and commercial sectors.

Enforcement and Monitoring
Sub-Option 1. Hail in for dockside monitoring (cell phone until 8 miles, weather, arrive early morning)

The LAP Workgroup opposes VMS due to the added cost ~$1200/yr and maintenance and repair time (10+ days sometimes). The Workgroup felt that the fines are a major deterrent to illegal activity such as harvesting over quota. The group of also felt that the number of participants was small enough so that they could police another. The group felt

that the paper trail could be a sufficient monitoring mechanism. The Workgroup is open to monitoring options that do not cost money.

Cost Recovery

An assessment needs to be done to gauge incremental increases in administrative costs so that cost recovery needs can be estimated.

Referendum

The Workgroup would like a referendum before final action is taken on a golden tilefish LAP amendment by the Council.

Eligibility requirements

Sub-Option 1: To qualify to participate in the referendum, the permit holder must be currently active in the fishery harvesting 500 pounds or more per year between 2005 and 2008.

Voting Rules

1 vote per pound harvested between
Sub-Option 1: 2004 and 2008
Sub-Option 2: 2005 and 2008

The LAP Workgroup does not endorse Option 2 (LAP Program) at this time due to low quotas. They prefer Option 1 (Endorsement and August 1st start date). A low stock assessment does not leave an individual in an economically viable position. Some Workgroup members felt that, in the future, if the commercial quota is equal to or greater than 480,000 pounds, the LAP Workgroup is in favor of LAPs. Others were in favor of an LAP if the commercial quota were equal to current levels or a little higher.

October 2008 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.

Note: If an endorsement system is not pursued in Amendment 17, then the LAP Workgroup would like to consider other options to secure economic viability for current participants.

Note: Amendment 17 would not be implemented until January 2010 at the earliest.