

## **Council Members' Draft Vision Statements for the Snapper Grouper Fishery**

**June 2013**

“The Snapper-Grouper fishery will be a sustainable fishery for all species that economically and socially benefits all fishing sectors and fishing communities to the highest extent possible.”

"Fish for Today, fish for tomorrow"

“Open fisheries”

- 1) Fishery that matches the number of vessels to the available biomass.
- 2) Fishery with catch rates that facilitate long term planning.
- 3) Size limits that reduce regulatory discards.
- 4) Seasons that align as much as possible with the season length defined at the beginning of the fishing year.
- 5) Define a profitable trip with a suite of species instead of the monolithic derbies under which the fleet currently operates.
- 6) Seasons that allow the public a longer time frame to enjoy fresh fish.
- 7) Continue to professionalize the commercial fishery with continued sale prohibitions for recreationally caught fish, and a possible apprentice program for new entrants.
- 8) Involve commercial and recreational fishermen in the data collection process directly and through Co/Op research. Industry should provide monies for research by deducting a fixed % of a trip or a .05 cents per pound for all species landed.
- 9) Catch Share fisheries should have a set aside for new entrants in the initial assignment of allocations and a portion of any quota increase would also be allocated to the set aside for new entrants.”

“A fishery in which management is forward-looking, and fishermen are integral to data collection efforts; a fishery in which bycatch is minimized, biological productivity is sustained, and seasons are economically viable.”

“The Snapper Grouper fishery should start May 1st [major species that caught together]. Trip limits should decrease when 75% of the ACL is met. Regulatory discards should be a concern and addressed [one species open another one closed] by trip limits if possible. When and if ACL's go up adjust trip limits to address discards, maintain profits and lengthen the season.”

“The snapper grouper is a public resource and must be managed with buy-in from the recreational and commercial fishermen or the regulations will be ignored. Full-time fishermen need flexibility to be profitable through options like voluntary ITQ's and other tools that can slow or stop derby fisheries. Trip limits, especially low limits can slow derby fishing but also lower profitability for many larger boats while having very little effect on small, short trip or part-time boats.”

“ A fishery that provides year round fishing opportunities; takes into account temporal and geographic differences in regards to species composition, spawning, and growth; minimizes bycatch; is managed with a minimum of easily understandable regulations; and provides for economic efficiency.”

“I'd love to be able to go back to the late 1950's and early 1960's before grouper/snapper were so severely impacted all along SE Fla. from Ft. Pierce to Key West. The northern Bahamas as well. Not possible today. But to see just half of that once dramatic biomass again along some of the reef lines would be an overwhelming accomplishment. Even at 25% would be significant. I know because I dove the entire coast as it once was and witnessed its diversity and abundance with my eyes (approx. 5000 hours logged with scuba below 40 Ft). My memory remains intact. Few alive today can make such a claim.”

“All managed stocks within the snapper grouper complex (perhaps a shorter list) should be maintained at healthy and sustainable levels through a minimum amount of proactive, effective, science-based, publicly developed regulatory actions.

Regulatory actions pertaining to management of individual stocks within the overall fishery should be designed and implemented in a manner that is sensitive to, and fine-tuned for accommodation of the socio-economic needs of the various sectors and components dependent upon the fishery, throughout the region and over the course of an entire business year, to promote the stability and predictability necessary to allow for the long-termed success of key businesses and communities.

Management decisions regarding the regulation of the fishery would be made in a publicly inclusive, easy to understand, time sensitive, and appropriately flexible manner that conserves the resources, fairly accommodates the needs of diverse stakeholders, and builds public confidence in the process and outcomes.”

“Healthy enough populations to sustain longer fishing season that take into consideration regional differences in species availability/composition and interactions to align catch in an efficient way to promote market availability and reduce discards in the commercial fishery while supporting the commercial infrastructure. Populations that allow for fishing seasons that help support tourism and recreational fishing infrastructure.”

“My personal vision for the future South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery, is to have a fishery in which all of the SG stocks have been fully and rigorously assessed; in which NONE of the stocks are overfished; in which NO OVERFISHING is occurring; in which all sectors of the fishery are heaping kudos on the Council members, Council SSC, PDT and staff for the exemplary manner in which the fishery is being managed; and for which all the time at Snapper-Grouper Committee meetings during Council meeting weeks may be spent on snapper-grouper habitat issues, because there are no allocation issues left to discuss.”