

Marine Resource Education Program Southeast Region

Building Capacity to Deliver in the Southeast Fisheries Region

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Navigating Fisheries Science & Management

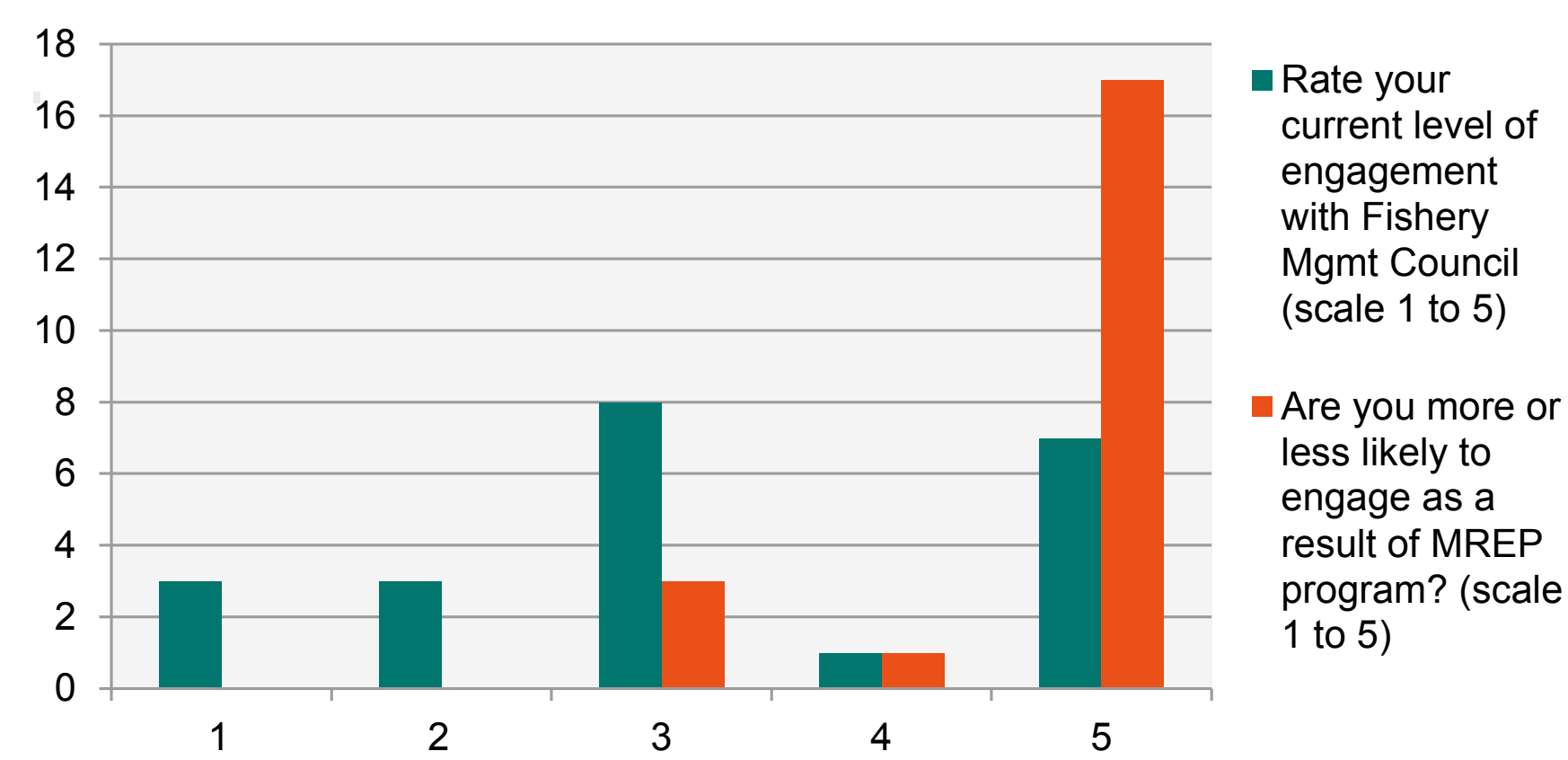
The fisheries management councils provide the mechanism for fishermen to comment on specific fisheries issues and help shape fisheries regulations, but this system is complex and can be very confusing and intimidating. As well, the science underlying the decision-making process is often unclear. MREP provides the science and management foundational knowledge to enable fishermen to participate effectively in this process, as critical stakeholders in our nations fisheries.



Senior scientist, Clay Porch, provides a very simple and easily understood introduction to the methods used in stock assessments; Caribbean fishermen in the foreground ask questions about sources of data used in the process.

Building Industry Leadership Capacity

This effort is modeled after the highly successful New England MREP, but tailored to the southeast region. A program steering committee of recreational and commercial fishermen from diverse fisheries, geographical regions, and gear types has a direct hand in shaping the program curriculum, presenter selection and overall content. The committee members represent the program at public meetings and other events, and help to build program awareness within their communities.



MREP educates fisheries stakeholders in the fundamentals of fisheries science and management through a series of workshops. This experience enables fishermen and others to participate productively in the fisheries management process, and leads to improved cooperation and trust between fishermen, scientists and managers

What Fisherman Are Saying

“You always feel scientists are hiding behind the “best available data” phrase, but I now believe they are continuously trying to improve the system by looking at new options. This program gave me a new respect for the process.”

—ANGIE BOEHM, FL

“I may not agree with it all, but it gives you a better understanding.”

—CAPT. SONNY SHINDLER, NC

“Fishermen need this as a basis for action and knowledge.”

—SHANE CANTRELL, TX

“Education is the key, there are so many rumors in the fishing world.”

—CAPT. K HUGHART, FL

“Great experience to be able to talk to put faces with the people behind the council roles, and learn what each is doing, and explain why the rules are what they are.”

—DEBRA & JACK WILHITE, AL

“Still wouldn’t want to do the math, but I now have a basic understanding about fishery cohorts and the importance of following the entire cohort in comparison to others.”

—NANCY JONES, FL

“Interactions between scientists and the fishing community are really lacking, so this opportunity was valuable for increasing communication.”

—MANDY KARNAUSKAS, FL

“It will be easier to comment and participate [in the fishery management council process] with a good general base knowledge.”

—GARY BRYANT, FL

Improved collaboration and trust

Presenters for the workshops are drawn from a wide variety of organizations such as: National Marine Fisheries Service, Fisheries Management Council, Florida Fish & Wildlife Research Institution, local Universities, and others. The personal connections formed between fishermen and the presenters during the program are at the core of the program’s long-term success and build a foundation of trust within the fisheries science & management arena.



Fishermen and scientists review collaborative conservation engineering projects and new techniques for safe release of Red Snapper.

Neutral Educational Forum

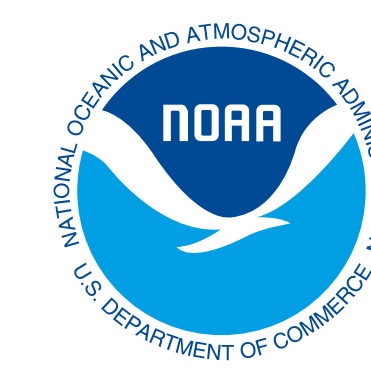
Stakeholders from different groups (scientists, managers, fisherman) hold a wide spectrum of views and opinions. The MREP workshops provide a neutral forum where these opinions can be explored in detail, through an interactive workshop agenda, with a mix of hands-on stations, presentations, and discussion periods. An industry discussion moderator for each workshop helps connect the content with specific issues in the fisheries.



Recreational fisherman and radio show host, Captain Mike Anderson, is offered a chance to cut an otolith—a fish bone, which is used to ascertain the age of fish, a critical data input to the fishery stock assessment process.

Acknowledgements

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www.gmri.org/community