

**FINAL  
SUMMARY REPORT  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
Jekyll Island, GA  
March 2-3, 2020**

The Committee approved the agenda and discussed the following items of business.

**Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS)**

The Committee received two presentations. One from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) on potential actions it suggests the Council might want to weigh in on regarding the FKNMS Restoration Blueprint DEIS. The FKNMS made a presentation updating the Committee on public comment received since the Council last heard from the FKNMS in December 2019, as well as the actions in the Restoration Blueprint DEIS that the FKNMS saw as affecting fishing within the Council's portion of the EEZ. NOAA GC weighed in on interpreting the Council's role in managing fisheries in the FKNMS.

The Committee decided to respond to the Restoration Blueprint by commenting on specific proposed actions through a letter to the FKNMS.

**MOTION: APPROVE THE DRAFT LETTER TO THE FKNMS AS THE COUNCIL'S COMMENTS REGARDING THE FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY RESTORATION BLUEPRINT DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT AS MODIFIED.  
APPROVED BY COUNCIL**

**Determining the Need for Conservation and Management of Select Species**

Council staff presented an overview of the guidance in the MSA to help Councils determine whether stocks are in need of conservation and management through a federal fishery management plan. The overview included possible data/information sources to conduct such an evaluation in the future. Staff requested guidance on whether three species – little tunny, African pompano, and barrelfish – should be considered for federal management. Staff also asked whether the Council wanted to develop a policy/process to add or remove species and/or consider them for ecosystem component designation. The Committee expressed concern over developing a policy since different FMPs may have different needs and guidance in the MSA is clear regarding the factors that must be considered to determine whether a stock is in need of conservation and management. Committee members offered pros and cons of federal management for the three species and decided not to consider managing them in federal waters of the South Atlantic at this time. Little tunny are abundant in the South Atlantic and they are targeted commercially for use as bait and for non-human consumption. In NC they are an important recreational species but targeted mostly in state waters. Little tunny are highly migratory so coordinated management would likely involve a joint management plan with the Mid-Atlantic and Gulf Councils. It was noted that the state of Florida has extended management of African pompano into federal waters of both coasts. Barrelfish are caught as bycatch in deep-water fisheries and don't appear frequently in landings and are rarely intercepted in recreational catches. The Committee requested that staff prepare a white paper to evaluate ecosystem

component designation for the species the SSC suggested be considered for this designation: cubera snapper, margate, sailor’s choice, coney, yellowfin grouper, and saucereye porgy.

**Allocations**

The Committee reviewed two presentations on allocations. The first was a general story map that provided a general overview of fishery sector allocations. The second presentation was more specific and explained the main amendments that established the Council’s allocations and the history of how the Council has established sector allocation in the past. The Committee was presented different methods that could be considered in determining allocations, including landings and qualitative considerations. It was clarified that the Council is not required (by the MSA) to have allocations for every species. Committee members expressed concern as to how requiring mandatory reporting in the for-hire sector could affect landing estimates (and hence allocations) for the future. The Committee expressed interest in using qualitative sources of data such as oral histories, as appropriate, along with more quantitative data sources such as landings history, to determine allocations. The Committee also received information from NOAA GC that separate sector allocations are not required by the MSA. For example, some Gulf Council species such as yellowtail snapper only have a single total ACL.

For the next discussion, the Committee directed staff to present PSEs for species using both MRIP calculation methods (household telephone survey and FES). The Committee indicated that it would, in general, like to consider a hybrid quantitative/qualitative approach when considering allocation changes in the future. The Committee indicated the application of the following criteria would most likely vary across species based on the specific characteristics of the species.

Landings history	Importance of fishery to a sector
Market needs	Which fisheries might best be served by managing using a single allocation
Fairness	Expected discard rate – if expected rate is high, should a sector be allocated more fish?
Equity	
Cultural importance of a species	
Accountability of a fishing sector	

**ACLs and Allocations for Unassessed Species**

The Committee reviewed tables of landings vs. ACLs by sector and total ACL for unassessed Snapper Grouper species. In December 2019, the Council was presented with new ABCs from the SSC for unassessed species based on MRIP FES recalculations that they had determined to be the best scientific information available. The Committee asked to see new tables with the recreational ACLs using the new MRIP FES calculations and show the percent sector allocations using the Bow Tie Allocation Method ( $(50\% * \text{mean landings } 1986 - 2008) + (50\% * \text{mean landings } 2006 - 2008) = \text{sector allocation}$ ) as used in the Comprehensive ACL Amendment (2011). The Committee expressed interest in developing an amendment that would look at additional allocation methods, including alternatives that could modify years considered in the Bow Tie Allocation Method. Additionally, consideration of ecosystem component species could be in the same amendment. In the future, once the Council has considered the requested information, the Council could consider passing a motion to direct staff to begin formal development of a EC, ACL, and an allocation amendment to the Snapper Grouper FMP for unassessed species.

**Other Business**

There was no other business discussed.

**MOTION (TIMING AND TASK):**

Committee directed staff to complete the following tasks:

- Prepare a letter to be signed by the Council Chair to the Superintendant of the FKNMS with comments regarding the Restoration Blueprint DEIS.
- Bring back to the Snapper Grouper Committee a white paper regarding ecosystem component species designation for cubera snapper, margate, sailor's choice, coney, yellowfin grouper, and saucereye porgy.
- Bring back to the Snapper Grouper Committee the information regarding ACLs and allocations for unassessed species as directed above.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL