

Dolphin Wahoo Advisory Panel Atlantic Dolphin Fishery Performance Report April 2017

The South Atlantic Dolphin Wahoo Advisory Panel (AP) is being tasked to provide information to develop a fishery performance report (FPR) for Atlantic dolphin. The purpose of the FPR is to assemble information from AP members' experience and observations on the water and in the marketplace to complement scientific and landings data. The FPR format is based on the Mid-Atlantic Council's FPRs (available here: <http://www.mafmc.org/fishery-performance-reports/>). The FPR for Atlantic dolphin is the first Dolphin Wahoo FPR for the South Atlantic, and will be provided to the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and the Socio-Economic Panel (SEP). The format of future FPRs may change based on input from the AP, SSC, SEP, and the South Atlantic Council.

Fishery Overview:

The Report to Congress on the Status of U.S. Stocks indicates dolphin is not overfished, and is not undergoing overfishing (<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/statusoffisheries/SOSmain.htm>). Prager (2000) conducted an exploratory assessment of dolphin, but the results were not conclusive due to several issues including limitations on knowledge of the stock structure and lack of fishery independent indices. These issues have not been overcome, and a Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) stock assessment for dolphin is not expected within the next 5 years.

To inform management decisions on the status of the Atlantic dolphin fishery and stock, the AP is asked to provide input on:

- Trends in catch levels and any recent changes
- Markets and economic information
- Appropriateness of existing management measures
- Observations on environmental/ecological factors
- Other observations

The following general information on commercial and recreational landings trends and economics is being provided to elicit discussion and assist the AP in providing information to answer the specific questions that follow.

Overall Landings Trends and Annual Catch Limits (ACLs)

Figure 1 below shows the annual landings of dolphin in pounds whole weight (lbs ww) from the U.S. east coast by sector from 2005-2015. Additionally, **Table 1** shows landings for dolphin in comparison to the current sector and total ACLs. This table is a retrospective analysis and does not pair landings with their respective sector allocation at the time (please note that revised sector allocations went into place in 2016), rather it shows how previous landings relate to the current sector and total ACLs.

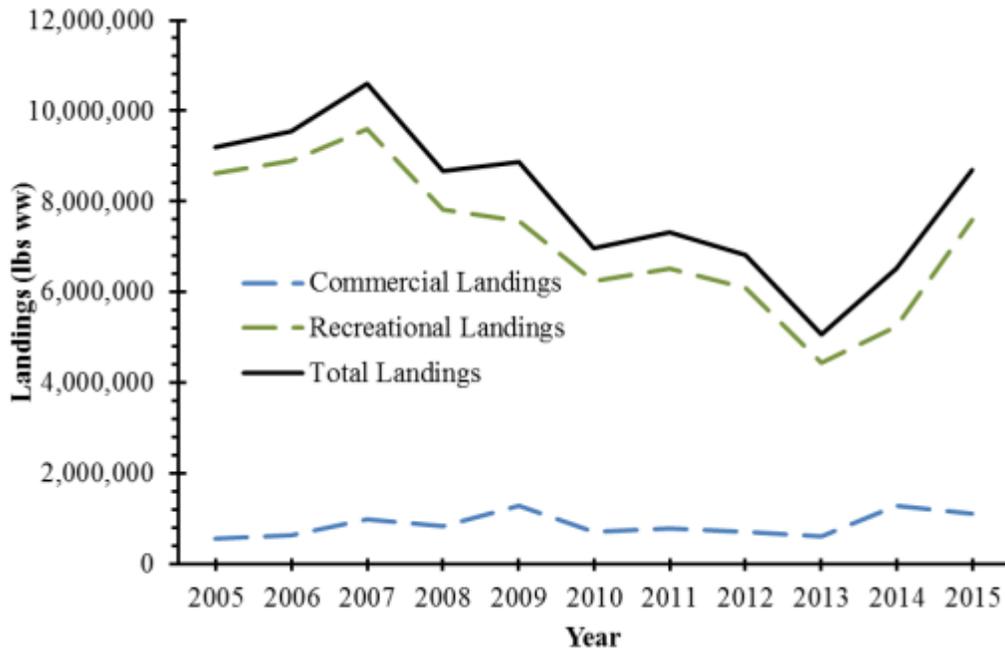


Figure 1. Annual landings of dolphin (lbs ww) for the New England, the Mid- Atlantic, and the South Atlantic Regions during 2005-2015.

Table 1. Dolphin landings (lbs ww) by sector and percentage (%) of current sector ACL harvested each year from 2005-2015. The current commercial ACL is 1,534,485 lbs ww, and the recreational ACL is 13,810,361 lbs ww (as per Amendment 8; effective February 22, 2016).

Year	Commercial landings (lbs ww)	% of Current (2017) Commercial ACL Harvested	Recreational Landings (lbs ww)	% of Current (2017) Recreational ACL Harvested	Total Landings	% of Current (2017) Total ACL Harvested
2005	577,655	38%	8,629,313	62%	9,206,968	60%
2006	650,121	42%	8,898,207	64%	9,548,328	62%
2007	998,023	65%	9,598,943	70%	10,596,966	69%
2008	835,177	54%	7,833,547	57%	8,668,724	56%
2009	1,296,014	84%	7,570,195	55%	8,866,209	58%
2010	715,334	47%	6,243,399	45%	6,958,733	45%
2011	792,293	52%	6,529,705	47%	7,321,998	48%
2012	709,131	46%	6,104,412	44%	6,813,543	44%
2013	616,953	40%	4,029,380	29%	4,646,333	30%
2014	1,301,757	85%	5,249,693	38%	6,551,450	43%
2015	1,109,581	72%	7,556,535	55%	8,666,116	56%
Average	883,672	58%	7,113,030	47%	7,985,943	48%

Commercial data is from ACL_FILES_12152016.xlsx

Recreational data is from MRIPACLspec_rec81_16wv4_10Nov16_14and15LACreel.xlsx. Landings include north, mid, and south Atlantic regions.

Recreational Sector

The distribution of Atlantic for-hire (charter and headboat) permits by state from 2011-2015 are shown in **Table 2** along with the distribution of recreational landings by region or state in **Table 3**. **Table 4** includes recreational effort for dolphin in the Atlantic by region or state as well as by fishing mode (charter or private/rental vessel).

Table 2. Distribution of Atlantic for-hire dolphin wahoo permits, by homeport state, 2011-2015.

Year	North Carolina	South Carolina	Georgia	Florida	Other States	Total
2011	323	111	20	873	358	1,685
2012	297	107	21	895	330	1,650
2013	281	117	22	844	313	1,577
2014	281	121	25	843	303	1,573
2015	292	142	23	858	286	1,601
Average	295	120	22	863	318	1,617

Source: NMFS SERO Permits Dataset.

Table 3. Distribution of total recreational landings by region/state for dolphin harvested from the Atlantic Ocean, 2011-2015.

Year	NE	MA	NC	SC	GA	FL-E
2011	0%	5%	55%	1%	0.1%	40%
2012	0.3%	2%	43%	8%	0.1%	46%
2013	3%	3%	37%	2%	0.0%	56%
2014	2%	12%	26%	3%	0.5%	56%
2015	11%	12%	39%	1%	0.0%	37%
Average	3%	7%	40%	3%	0.1%	47%

Source: NMFS MRIP Query System

Table 4. Estimated number of angler trips that caught dolphin, by mode and by state, 2011-2015.

Year	NE	MA	NC	SC	GA	FL-E	Total
Charter Mode							
2011	0	1,610	68,181	1,951	122	20,304	92,168
2012	0	1,047	65,227	1,718	204	17,096	85,292
2013	0	44,702	39,996	1,765	30	20,276	106,769
2014	0	3,525	28,821	12,657	401	25,124	70,528
2015	27	6,030	48,423	12,070	268	43,154	109,972
Average	5	11,383	50,130	6,032	205	25,191	92,946
Private/Rental Vessel Mode							
2011	1,774	25,446	48,850	1,281	0	260,479	337,830
2012	1,462	10,736	44,595	23,833	0	256,773	337,399
2013	13,479	8,195	48,518	1,602	0	173,485	245,279
2014	1,764	52,102	24,638	5,285	0	260,668	344,457
2015	10,482	40,988	69,590	612	0	250,859	372,531
Average	5,792	27,493	47,238	6,523	0	240,453	327,499
All Modes							
2011	1,774	27,056	117,031	3,232	122	280,783	429,998
2012	1,462	11,783	109,822	25,551	204	273,869	422,691
2013	13,479	52,897	88,514	3,367	30	193,761	352,048
2014	1,764	55,627	53,459	17,942	401	285,792	414,985
2015	10,509	47,018	118,013	12,682	268	294,013	482,503
Average	5,798	38,876	97,368	12,555	205	265,644	420,445

Source: NMFS MRIP Query System

Commercial Sector

Similarly, **Table 5** shows the current distribution of commercial dolphin wahoo permits by region or state. **Table 6** shows the distribution of commercial landings by region or state. **Figure 2** is included to show the seasonality of commercial landings by gear (pelagic longline v. all other commercial gears), and **Figure 3** displays the inflation adjusted ex-vessel value and price per pound for dolphin from the Atlantic.

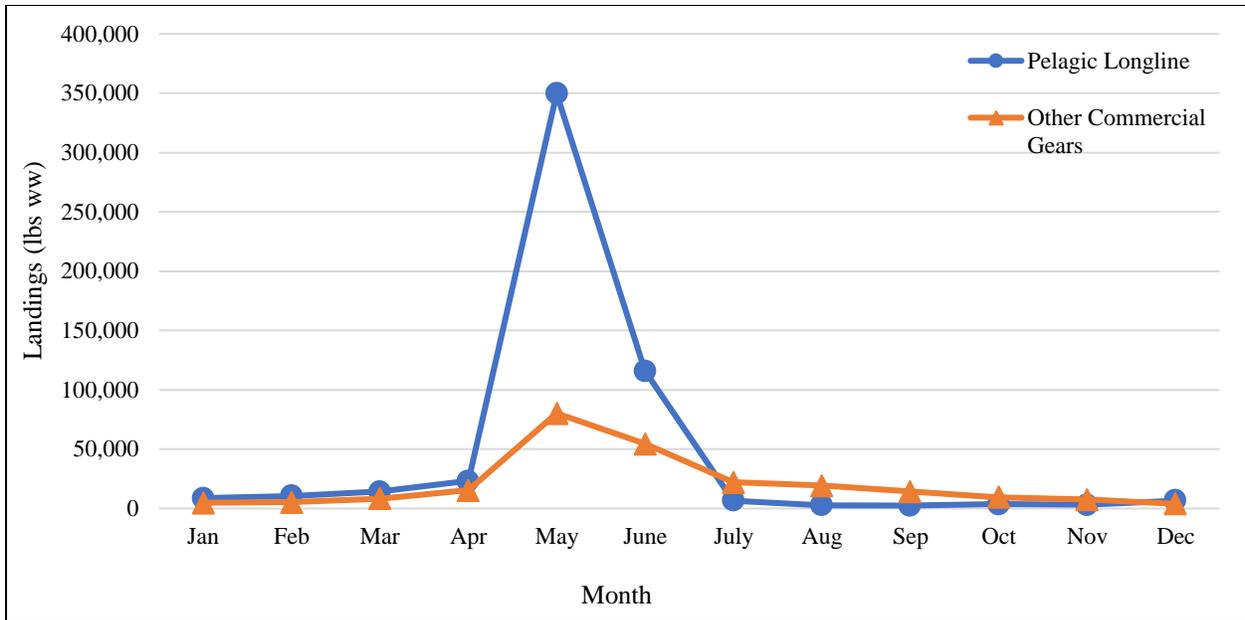
Table 5. Distribution of Commercial Atlantic dolphin wahoo permits, by homeport state, April 11, 2017.

New England	Mid-Atlantic	North Carolina	South Carolina	Georgia	Florida	Other States	Total
47	150	414	89	14	1,421	54	2,189

Table 6. Distribution of total commercial landings by region/state for dolphin harvested from the Atlantic Ocean, 2011-2015.

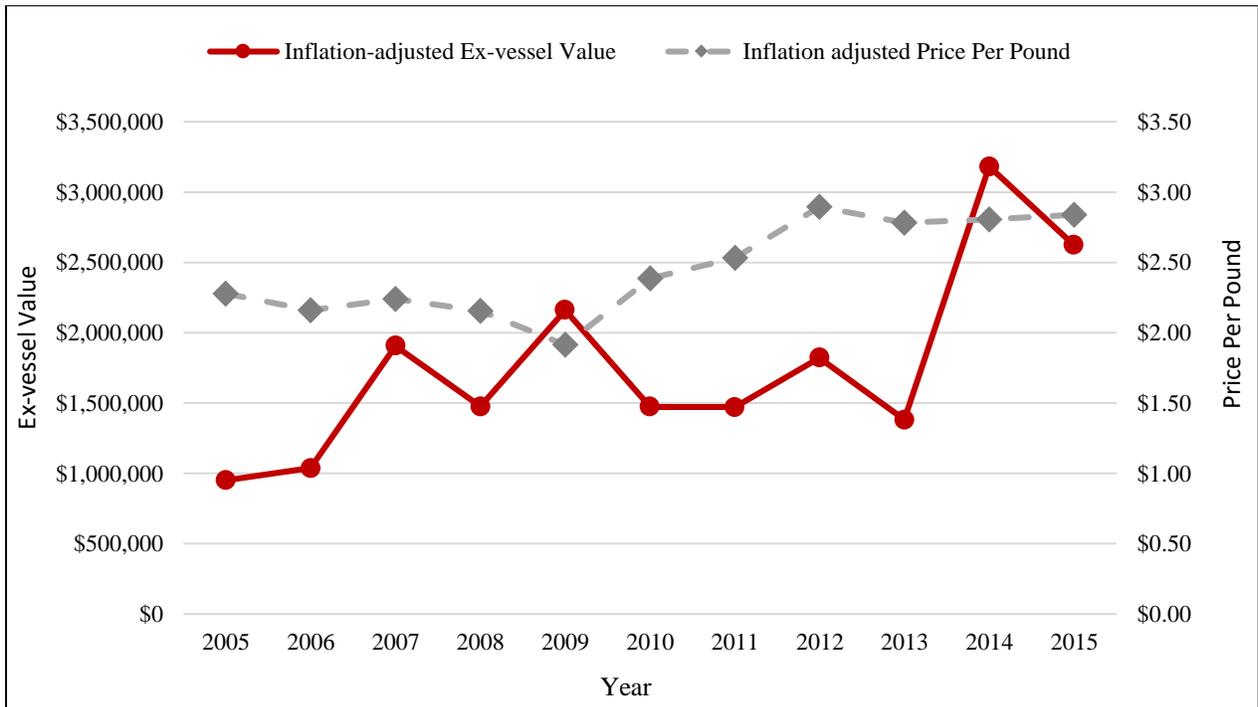
Year	New England	Mid-Atlantic	North Carolina	South Carolina	Georgia	Florida-East Coast
2011	4%	3%	16%	30%	0%	48%
2012	7%	6%	40%	9%	0%	39%
2013	3%	4%	37%	9%	0%	46%
2014	4%	4%	38%	19%	0%	35%
2015	3%	3%	35%	27%	0%	32%
Average	4%	4%	33%	19%	0%	40%

Source: NMFS Commercial Landings Query



Source: NMFS SEFSC SAFE Dataset

Figure 2. Average monthly commercial landings (lbs ww) of dolphin harvested from the Atlantic Ocean by general gear categories, 2011-2015.



Source: NMFS Commercial Landings Query.

Figure 3. Inflation adjusted ex-vessel value and price per pound (in 2015 dollars) for commercial dolphin, 2005-2015.

Questions for Advisory Panel:

The AP is asked to provide the following information about Atlantic dolphin based on their expertise, as appropriate:

- 1) Catch levels and demand over the past 5 years:
 - For the commercial sector, how has the price and demand for dolphin changed?
 - How is the demand for charter/headboat trips targeting dolphin, and has it changed?
 - How is the demand for private recreational trips targeting dolphin, and has it changed?
 - Has the availability of dolphin changed?
 - Has the average size of dolphin changed?
 - Have there been effort shifts to/from dolphin?
- 2) Assessment of the current fishery:
 - How would you rate the stability of the fishery?
 - How would you rate the quality of the fishery?
- 3) Management measures:
 - Is the 20-inch minimum size limit off of the east coast of Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina for the recreational and commercial sectors appropriate?
 - Is the 4,000 pound commercial trip limit that is effective after 75% of the commercial ACL has been landed set at the appropriate level? What about the 10 dolphin per person/60 dolphin per vessel recreational limit?
 - Other fishery management measures?
- 4) Environmental/ecological:
 - Have you noticed a shift in the dolphin migration due to environmental variability such as a mild winter or shorter spring “migration” season?
- 5) Other
 - Where should the Council focus their research priorities for Atlantic dolphin?
 - Is there anything else that is important for the Council to know about Atlantic dolphin?