

Dolphin Management Strategy Evaluation background document and discussion questions

Dolphin Wahoo Advisory Panel, November 2023

Background

The Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) is conducting a management strategy evaluation (MSE) for the Atlantic dolphin fishery. The goal of this project is to develop an index-based management procedure that may provide catch level and management advice that best achieves the multiple operational management objectives of the fishery. As part of the MSE process, SEFSC staff and SAFMC staff conducted stakeholder workshops along the U.S. east coast to gather feedback on dolphin management and regional aspects of the dolphin fishery. A total of 9 in-person workshops were conducted in the fall of 2022 and the winter of 2022/2023 along with a webinar in May 2023.

Additional Resources:

Council update presentation from the June 2023 meeting:

https://safmc.net/documents/dw_a1_dolphinmseupdate_202306-pdf/

News story: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/scientists-consider-more-adaptive-approaches-atlantic-dolphinfish-management>

Requested AP action

SEFSC staff will brief the AP on summary feedback gathered during the stakeholder workshops and provide an update on the MSE progress. The AP will be asked to provide feedback on the dolphin MSE stakeholder workshop findings and discussion questions.

Discussion questions

- 1) As part of the MSE process, the Council would like to evaluate potential distributional shifts or impacts of climate on dolphin. Does the AP have recommendations for climate-related aspects that should be considered? Such as:
 - a. Changes in availability of dolphin including availability to new fishery participants or to historic fishery participants?
 - b. Changes in biological productivity of the dolphin stock?
- 2) Does the AP have any comments on the conceptual management objectives that have been identified so far for the dolphin fishery?
 - a. Ensure opportunity/access to the fishery
 - b. Prevent fishery closures
 - c. Large sizes preferred
 - d. Stability in regulations
 - e. Recognize the regional and sector difference in the fishery goals and objectives

- 3) Is there any additional feedback on the dolphin MSE effort thus far?
- 4) The SEFSC is currently looking for volunteers to serve on the MSE stakeholder working group to advise the MSE modeling effort, including identification of management objectives and management procedures. Are there AP members that would be interested in this working group? If so, please contact Cassidy Peterson (cassidy.peterson@noaa.gov) or John Hadley (john.hadley@safmc.net).