

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
DOLPHIN WAHOO COMMITTEE
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Stuart, FL
June 12-13, 2019

The Committee edited and approved minutes from the March 2019 meeting and the agenda.

Status of commercial & recreational catches versus ACLs

NMFS Southeast Regional Office (SERO) staff delivered briefings to the Committee on the status of commercial and recreational landings of dolphin and wahoo relative to ACLs. Neither the commercial nor the recreational sectors were close to reaching their respective sector ACLs for either species.

Review of the goals and objectives of the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plan

The Council began a review of the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plan (FMP) goals and objectives in an effort to update them to reflect the current needs of the fisheries for dolphin and wahoo as well as part of the Council's process for creating an Allocation Review Trigger Policy. The Committee provided the following guidance:

DIRECTION TO STAFF:

Goals:

- Change the overall format of the goals and objectives to a table format similar to the goals and objectives of the Snapper Grouper FMP.
- In reference to "status quo" in the objectives, change to "historic fisheries", "historic levels" or a similar appropriate term.
- Maintain that the FMP is intended to be precautionary and encompass a risk averse approach.
- Investigate whether "maintaining status quo" in relation to landings has been successful.
- Add a new goal to maintain access for both the recreational and commercial sectors.
- Emphasize the social and economic importance of the recreational and commercial fisheries for dolphin and wahoo.
- Add language that is inclusive of ecosystem management.

Objectives:

- Objective 1 (localized depletion): Split into two objectives. One objective will address concerns over localized depletion and shifts in effort. The other objective will seek to maintain access to locally harvested dolphin (both recreational and commercial). For the commercial sector address the importance of access to commercially harvest dolphin and wahoo when the fish are available. For the recreational sector emphasize the importance of access to recreationally harvest an adequate quantity of dolphin and wahoo while maintaining high catch rates.
 - This should address the different OY related goals of the commercial and recreational sectors.

- Objective 3 (minimize conflict between sectors): Split into two objectives with one objective seeking to minimize conflict between sectors while maintaining access and another objective addressing longline effort.
 - Recognize changes that have occurred in the pelagic longline (PLL) fleet through HMS and ICCAT related management measures.
- Objective 5 (bycatch): Streamline language to reflect the Council’s intention to minimize bycatch of dolphin and wahoo and not allow overfishing to occur
- Objective 6 (predator prey relationship): Change wording to reflect a broader ecosystem management statement and include language similar to “where practicable incorporate ecosystem management”.
- Maintain Objective 2 (minimize market disruption), Objective 4 (optimize social and economic benefits), and Objective 7 (directed research) “as is.”

General:

- Provide commercial and recreational landings of dolphin and wahoo by gear type and by state. Include information on PLL landings of dolphin by permit type (HMS permitted vessels vs non-HMS permitted vessels).
- Contact the Dolphinfish Research Program to see if the program would be willing to present information gathered through tag returns.

Amendment 10 (Revise Dolphin and Wahoo Management Measures)

The amendment would accommodate revised recreational data from the Marine Recreational Information Program, redefine optimum yield in the dolphin fishery, accommodate adaptive management of sector annual catch limits, and implement various other management revisions in the dolphin wahoo fishery. The Committee discussed actions in the amendment and a request from the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council to allow filleting of dolphin at sea onboard recreational vessels in the waters north of Cape Hatteras. The Committee provided the following guidance and made the following motions:

DIRECTION TO STAFF:

- In Action 1 and 2, provide sub-alternatives that allow for a buffer between the ABC and the ACL.
- In Action 10, add language that would allow options to encompass buoy gear and all trap or pot gear. Also add language to implement incidental trip limits that would apply for dolphin when these gears are onboard. Look at a range of 250 to 1,000 lbs gutted weight by 250 lbs increments.
- Request further information from the Office of Protected Resources on timing of the new biological opinions for Dolphin Wahoo and Highly Migratory Species.
- An action will potentially be added to Amendment 10 that would allow filleting of dolphin at sea onboard for-hire vessels in the waters north of the Virginia/North Carolina border.

MOTION #1: APPROVE ACTION 1 AND THE PROPOSED MODIFIED RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION IN AMENDMENT 10.

Action 1. Revise total annual catch limits (ACLs) for dolphin

Alternative 1 (No Action). The total annual catch limit for dolphin is set equal to the acceptable biological catch. The current total annual catch limit for dolphin is 15,344,846 pounds whole weight.

Alternative 2. The total annual catch limit for dolphin is set equal to the acceptable biological catch. Revise the total annual catch limit for dolphin to reflect the updated acceptable biological catch level.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #2: APPROVE ACTION 2 AND THE PROPOSED MODIFIED RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION IN AMENDMENT 10.

Action 2. Revise total annual catch limits (ACLs) for wahoo

Alternative 1 (No Action). The total annual catch limit for wahoo is set equal to the acceptable biological catch. The current total annual catch limit for wahoo is 1,794,960 pounds whole weight.

Alternative 2. The total annual catch limit for wahoo is set equal to the acceptable biological catch. Revise the total annual catch limit for wahoo to reflect the updated acceptable biological catch level.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #3: ADD ALTERNATIVE 5 TO ACTION 9.

Action 9. Revise the accountability measures for dolphin

Alternative 5. The commercial AM will include a shortening of the commercial season that may be triggered if the commercial ACL is exceeded, but only after commercial landings have been monitored for persistence in increased landings. The length of the commercial season will not be reduced if the RA determines the best available science shows that it is not necessary. If a reduction is necessary, the commercial season may be reduced and the ACL in the following fishing year will be reduced by the amount of the commercial overage only if the species is overfished and the total ACL is exceeded.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #4: MOVE ACTIONS 4 AND 5 FROM THE RECREATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES MODIFICATIONS AMENDMENT TO DOLPHIN WAHOO AMENDMENT 10.

Action 4. Revise post season, recreational accountability measures

Alternative 1 (No Action). Retain the current post season accountability measures for the recreational sector for dolphin and wahoo.

Alternative 2. Do not specify post season accountability measures.

Alternative 3. Only specify post season accountability measures if:

Sub-alternative 3a. The recreational annual catch limits are constant and the 3-year geometric mean of landings exceed the recreational sector annual catch limit. If in any year the recreational sector annual catch limit is changed, the moving multi-year geometric mean of landings will start over.

Sub-alternative 3b. The recreational annual catch limits are constant and the summed total of the most recent past three years of recreational landings exceeds the sum of the past three years recreational sector annual catch limits.

Sub-alternative 3c. The recreational annual catch limits are constant and recreational landings exceed the recreational sector annual catch limit in two of the previous three fishing years or exceeds the total acceptable biological catch in any one year.

Sub-alternative 3d. The total (commercial and recreational combined) annual catch limit is exceeded.

Sub-alternative 3e. The stock is overfished based on the most recent Status of U.S. Fisheries Report to Congress.

Alternative 4. If the post-season accountability measure is triggered, reduce the recreational sector annual catch limit by the amount of the overage in the following fishing season.

Alternative 5. If the post-season accountability measure is triggered, reduce the length of the following recreational fishing season by the amount necessary to reduce the probability that the annual catch limit will be exceeded in the following year.

Action 5. Announce starting and ending dates before a season starts

Alternative 1 (No Action). The fishing year for dolphin and wahoo are the same as the calendar year. There are no in-season closures for the recreational sector for dolphin and wahoo.

Alternative 2. The National Marine Fisheries Service will annually announce the recreational fishing season start and end dates in the Federal Register and by other methods, as deemed appropriate. The fishing season will start at the beginning of the fishing year and end on the date the National Marine Fisheries Service projects the recreational annual catch limit will be met.”

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #5: REMOVE ACTION 13 FROM AMENDMENT 10.

~~*Action 13. Allow bag limit sales of dolphin for dually permitted for-hire and commercial permit holders*~~

~~**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Bag limit sales of dolphin landed from a vessel that is issued a federal for-hire dolphin-wahoo permit is prohibited if operating on a trip under a for-hire mode. If the vessel is also issued a federal commercial dolphin-wahoo permit and necessary state commercial permits, dolphin landed from the vessel may be sold if not operating on a trip under a for-hire or private recreational mode.~~

~~**Alternative 2.** Allow bag limit sales of dolphin landed from a vessel that is issued a federal for-hire dolphin-wahoo permit, commercial dolphin-wahoo permit, and necessary state commercial permits, regardless of whether on a commercial or for-hire trip.~~

~~APPROVED BY COMMITTEE~~

~~APPROVED BY COUNCIL~~

MOTION #6: ADD ALTERNATIVE 3 TO ACTION 14.

Action 14. Modify the recreational vessel limit for dolphin

Alternative 3. In the EEZ north of Florida, the recreational daily bag limit is 10 dolphin per person, not to exceed 60 dolphin per vessel, whichever is less, except on board a headboat where the limit is 10 dolphin per paying passenger. In Florida only, maintain the recreational daily bag limit of 10 fish per person, not to exceed the vessel limit, whichever is less. Modify the recreational vessel limit to:

Sub-alternative 3a. 40 dolphin per vessel, except on board a headboat where the limit is 10 dolphin per paying passenger.

Sub-alternative 3b. 42 dolphin per vessel, except on board a headboat where the limit is 10 dolphin per paying passenger.

Sub-alternative 3c. 48 dolphin per vessel, except on board a headboat where the limit is 10 dolphin per paying passenger.

Sub-alternative 3d. 54 dolphin per vessel, except on board a headboat where the limit is 10 dolphin per paying passenger.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #7: ACCEPT THE IPT'S SUGGESTED EDITS TO ACTION 14.

Action 14. Modify the recreational vessel limit for dolphin

Alternative 2. Maintain the recreational daily bag limit of 10 fish per person, not to exceed the vessel limit, whichever is less. ~~The recreational daily bag limit is 10 dolphin per person, not to exceed.~~ Modify the recreational vessel limit to:

Sub-alternative 2a. 40 dolphin per vessel, ~~whichever is less,~~ except on board a headboat where the limit is 10 dolphin per paying passenger.

Sub-alternative 2b. 42 dolphin per vessel, ~~whichever is less,~~ except on board a headboat where the limit is 10 dolphin per paying passenger.

Sub-alternative 2c. 48 dolphin per vessel, ~~whichever is less,~~ except on board a headboat where the limit is 10 dolphin per paying passenger.

Sub-alternative 2d. 54 dolphin per vessel, ~~whichever is less,~~ except on board a headboat where the limit is 10 dolphin per paying passenger.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #8: ALLOW FILLETING OF DOLPHIN NORTH OF NORTH CAROLINA FOR CHARTER/FOR-HIRE ONLY. INTENT BEING SKIN ON THE ENTIRE FILLET AND TWO FILLETS EQUALING ONE FISH. NO FRAMES NEED TO BE RETAINED.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Bullet mackerel and frigate mackerel as ecosystem component species in the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plan

At the March 2018 meeting, the Council instructed staff to conduct scoping for the topic of adding bullet and frigate mackerel to the Dolphin Wahoo FMP. Scoping sessions were held via webinar on May 7th and 9th. The Committee reviewed scoping comments, provided the following guidance, and passed the following motions:

DIRECTION TO STAFF:

- Provide an options paper that includes further information on the options presented in the scoping document.

MOTION #9: DIRECT STAFF TO INITIATE AN AMENDMENT THAT WOULD DESIGNATE BULLET AND FRIGATE MACKEREL AS ECOSYSTEM COMPONENT

SPECIES WITHIN THE DOLPHIN WAHOO FMP TO ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR ROLE AS FORAGE FOR DOLHPIN AND WAHOO.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Other Business

There was no other business discussed.

MOTION #10 (TIMING AND TASKS):

DIRECT STAFF TO:

1. CONTINUE WORK ON AMENDMENT 10 FOR REVIEW AT THE SEPTEMBER 2019 MEETING.
2. CONTINUE WORK ON REVISING THE DOLPHIN WAHOO FMP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR REVIEW AT THE SEPTEMBER 2019 MEETING.
3. PROVIDE AN OPTIONS PAPER ON ADDING BULLET AND FRIGATE MACKEREL AS ECOSYSTEM COMPONENT SPECIES TO THE DOLPHIN WAHOO FMP FOR REVIEW AT THE SEPTEMER 2019 MEETING.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL