

**SUMMARY REPORT
DOLPHIN WAHOO COMMITTEE
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Webinar
March 3-4, 2021**

The Committee approved amended minutes from the December 2020 meeting and the agenda.

Status of Amendments under Formal Review

The Committee was updated on the status of Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 12 that adds bullet mackerel and frigate mackerel to the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plan and designates them as Ecosystem Component species. This amendment was submitted to the NMFS Southeast Regional Office on December 3, 2020 and is undergoing rule making.

Review of the updated Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plan Goals and Objectives

The Fisheries Allocation Review Policy (NMFS Policy Directive 01-119) issued in July 2016 encourages the use of adaptive management in respect to allocation revisions, which includes “periodic re-evaluation and updating of the management goals and objectives to ensure they are relevant to current conditions and needs.” As part of the Council’s process for creating an Allocation Review Trigger Policy, the goals and objectives of FMPs that include sector allocations will be reviewed and updated as appropriate.

The Dolphin Wahoo Committee reviewed the updated FMP goals and objectives and made the following motion:

Preamble: The original and ongoing intent of the Fishery Management Plan for the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery of the Atlantic is to sustainably manage the stocks of dolphin and wahoo for the long-term benefit of all participants. Owing to the substantial importance of the fisheries for dolphin and wahoo, particularly to the recreational sector, this fishery management plan seeks to manage these fisheries using a precautionary approach that maintains access, minimizes competition, preserves the social and economic importance of the fisheries, as well as promotes research and incorporation of ecosystem considerations where practicable.

Goal 1 (Precautionary Approach): Management of the dolphin and wahoo fisheries is precautionary, risk-averse, and maintains historic catch levels while preventing overfishing.	
<i>Objective 1</i>	Maintain catch levels that do not exceed catch level recommendations for dolphin or wahoo and do not directly change the balance of landings in comparison to the historic fishery to the extent that conflict is created between the recreational and commercial sectors.
<i>Objective 2</i>	Minimize bycatch of dolphin and wahoo in non-directed fisheries.
Goal 2 (Access): The recreational and commercial sectors retain access to the dolphin and wahoo resource.	

<i>Objective 1</i>	For the recreational sector, adopt management measures that ensure consistent and predictable access to dolphin and wahoo when they are regionally available as well as maintain abundant stock levels that lead to high encounter rates and elevated trip satisfaction.
<i>Objective 2</i>	For the commercial sector, adopt management measures that ensure consistent and predictable access to dolphin and wahoo when they are regionally available.
<i>Objective 3</i>	Address concerns as practicable over localized reduction in fish abundance and the resulting perceived decline in local availability of dolphin and wahoo.
Goal 3 (Minimize Competition Between User Groups): Competition between user groups is minimized.	
<i>Objective 1</i>	Ensure effort and catch levels of dolphin and wahoo by distinct user groups does not notably expand beyond their traditional share of the fishery.
<i>Objective 2</i>	Exercise caution in allowing development of new fisheries or expansion of existing fisheries that may increase competition between user groups.
Goal 4 (Economic and Social Importance): Management of the dolphin and wahoo fisheries recognizes and preserves their economic and social importance to both the recreational and commercial sectors.	
<i>Objective 1</i>	Manage the dolphin and wahoo resources to achieve optimum yield on a continuing basis in order to maximize the economic and social net benefits of the fishery.
<i>Objective 2</i>	Minimize market disruption. In the short-term, commercial markets (mainly local) may be disrupted if large quantities of dolphin are landed from intense commercial harvest or unregulated catch.
<i>Objective 3</i>	Encourage research that improves knowledge about the social and economic elements of the dolphin and wahoo fishery.
<i>Objective 4</i>	Improve awareness and understanding of how social and economic issues are linked to dolphin and wahoo fishery management measures.
Goal 5 (Ecosystem Based Management and Research Priorities): Management of the dolphin and wahoo fisheries recognizes the importance of biological information and incorporating ecosystem considerations.	
<i>Objective 1</i>	Support improved and expanded monitoring and reporting programs for the dolphin and wahoo fishery. Promote collection of quality data to support management plans and programs considered by the Council.
<i>Objective 2</i>	Support measures that incorporate ecosystem considerations for the management of dolphin and wahoo where practicable.
<i>Objective 3</i>	Promote research aimed at developing ecosystem based management of dolphin and wahoo.
<i>Objective 4</i>	Promote research that enhances collection of biological and habitat data on dolphin and wahoo stocks and fisheries.

MOTION 1: ACCEPT THE IPT'S SUGGESTED EDITS TO THE REVISED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE DOLPHIN WAHOO FMP. DIRECT STAFF TO INCLUDE THE REVISED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES IN AMENDMENT 10 TO THE DOLPHIN WAHOO FMP.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Revise Dolphin and Wahoo Management Measures: Amendment 10

Amendment 10 includes actions that accommodate updated catch level recommendations and recreational data from the Marine Recreational Information Program and revise the annual catch limits and sector allocations for dolphin and wahoo accordingly. The amendment also contains actions that implement various other management changes in the fishery including revising recreational accountability measures; accommodating possession of dolphin and wahoo on vessels with trap, pot, or buoy gear onboard; removing the operator card requirement, reducing the recreational vessel limit for dolphin, reducing the recreational bag limit or implementing a recreational vessel limit for wahoo, and allowing filleting of dolphin at sea onboard for-hire vessels in the waters north of the Virginia/North Carolina border. Public Hearings for this amendment were held via webinar on January 26-28, 2021.

The Committee reviewed public hearing comments, discussed the amendment, and provided the following guidance as well as made the following motions:

MOTION 2: APPROVE THE IPT'S SUGGESTED EDITS TO THE PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENTS IN AMENDMENT 10.

The *purpose* of Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10 is to revise the catch levels [acceptable biological catch (ABC) and annual catch limits (ACL)], sector allocations, accountability measures, and management measures for dolphin and wahoo. Management measures address authorized gear, ~~and~~ the operator card requirement, ~~and recreational bag/vessel limits~~ in the dolphin and wahoo fisheries, as well as ~~recreational vessel limits and~~ allowing fillets at sea onboard for-hire vessels in the dolphin fishery.

The *need* for Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10 is to base conservation and management measures on the best scientific information available and increase net benefits to the Nation, consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and its National Standards.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 3: REPLACE ALTERNATIVE 2 IN ACTION 5 WITH THE IPT PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE 2.

Action 5. Revise the trigger for the post-season recreational accountability measures for dolphin

~~**Alternative 2.** Implement post-season accountability measures in the following fishing year if 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.

IPT PROPOSED Alternative 2. Implement post season accountability measures in the following fishing year if the recreational annual catch limits are constant and the 3-year mean (*Sub-alternative 2a or 2b*) of landings exceeds the recreational sector annual catch limit. When the recreational sector annual catch limit is changed, use a single year of landings, beginning with the most recent available year of landings, then a two-year average of landings from that single year and the subsequent year, then a three-year average of landings from those two years and the subsequent year, and thereafter a progressive running three-year average to trigger the recreational accountability measure.

Sub-alternative 2a. Use the arithmetic mean to calculate average landings.¹

Sub-alternative 2b. Use the geometric mean to calculate average landings.²

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 4: ACCEPT THE IPT PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE 5 TO REPLACE THE CURRENT ALTERNATIVE 5 IN ACTION 6.

Action 6. Revise the post-season recreational accountability measures for dolphin

~~**Preferred Alternative 5.** In the following fishing year monitor landings and if landings are projected to meet the sector ACL, reduce the bag limit and/or the vessel limit (*Sub-alternatives 5a and/or 5b*) first and if needed reduce the length of the recreational fishing season by the amount necessary to prevent the annual catch limit from being exceeded. However, the vessel limit, bag limit, and/or recreational fishing season will not be reduced if the Regional Administrator determines, using the best available science, that it is not necessary.~~

~~**Sub-alternative 5a.** Reduce the bag limit by the amount necessary but not below X fish per person per day (*Council to fill in the number*).~~

~~**Sub-alternative 5b.** Reduce the vessel limit by the amount necessary but not below X fish per vessel per day (*Council to fill in the number*).~~

IPT PROPOSED Alternative 5. In the following fishing year monitor landings, and if by September 1 of each year landings are projected to meet the sector ACL that fishing year, reduce the bag limit to prevent the annual catch limit from being exceeded (*Sub-alternatives 5a through 5e*). If reductions in the bag limit are projected to be insufficient to constrain harvest to the ACL, then also reduce the vessel limit to prevent the annual catch limit from being exceeded (*Sub-alternatives 5f through 5i*). If reductions in the bag limit and vessel limit are not implemented or are projected to be insufficient to constrain harvest to the ACL, then also reduce the length of the recreational fishing season to prevent the annual catch limit from being exceeded.³ However, the vessel limit, bag limit, and/or recreational fishing season will not be reduced if the Regional Administrator determines, using the best available science, that it is not necessary.

Bag Limit Sub-Alternatives:

¹ The arithmetic mean is calculated by adding the values of a set of numbers and then dividing the sum by the number of values in the set.

² The geometric mean is calculated by multiplying the values of a set of numbers and then taking the nth root of the product, where n is equal to the number of values in the set.

³ The intent of this alternative is that NMFS would implement the reduction in bag limit, vessel limit, and/or season length through a single in-season action, but implementation via separate regulations would not be precluded.

Sub-alternative 5a. Reduce the bag limit by the amount necessary but not below 2 fish per person per day.

Sub-alternative 5b. Reduce the bag limit by the amount necessary but not below 3 fish per person per day.

Sub-alternative 5c. Reduce the bag limit by the amount necessary but not below 4 fish per person per day.

Sub-alternative 5d. Reduce the bag limit by the amount necessary but not below 5 fish per vessel per day.

Sub-alternative 5e. Do not reduce the bag limit.

Vessel Limit Sub-Alternatives:

Sub-alternative 5f. Reduce the vessel limit by the amount necessary but not below 10 fish per vessel per day.

Sub-alternative 5g. Reduce the vessel limit by the amount necessary but not below 20 fish per vessel per day.

Sub-alternative 5h. Reduce the vessel limit by the amount necessary but not below 30 fish per vessel per day.

Sub-alternative 5i. Do not reduce the vessel limit.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 5: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 IN ACTION 6 AS PREFERRED.

Action 6. Revise the post-season recreational accountability measures for dolphin

Alternative 2. Reduce the length of the following recreational fishing season by the amount necessary to prevent the annual catch limit from being exceeded in the following year. However, the length of the recreational season will not be reduced if the Regional Administrator determines, using the best available science, that it is not necessary.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 6: ACCEPT THE IPT'S WORDING FOR ALTERNATIVE 2 IN ACTION 7.

Action 7. Revise the trigger for the post-season recreational accountability measures for wahoo

~~**Preferred Alternative 2.** Implement post season accountability measures in the following fishing year if 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.~~

IPT PROPOSED Alternative 2. Implement post season accountability measures in the following fishing year if the recreational annual catch limits are constant and the 3-year mean (*Sub-alternative 2a or 2b*) of landings exceeds the recreational sector annual catch limit. When the recreational sector annual catch limit is changed, use a single year of landings, beginning with the most recent available year of landings, then a two-year average of landings from that single year and the subsequent year, then a three-year average of landings from those two years and the subsequent year, and thereafter a progressive running three-year average to trigger the recreational accountability measure.

Sub-alternative 2a. Use the arithmetic mean to calculate average landings.⁴

Sub-alternative 2b. Use the geometric mean to calculate average landings.⁵

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 7: CHOOSE SUB-ALTERNATIVE 2B UNDER ACTION 7 AS PREFERRED.

Action 7. Revise the trigger for the post-season recreational accountability measures for wahoo

IPT PROPOSED Alternative 2. Implement post season accountability measures in the following fishing year if the recreational annual catch limits are constant and the 3-year mean (*Sub-alternative 2a or 2b*) of landings exceeds the recreational sector annual catch limit. When the recreational sector annual catch limit is changed, use a single year of landings, beginning with the most recent available year of landings, then a two-year average of landings from that single year and the subsequent year, then a three-year average of landings from those two years and the subsequent year, and thereafter a progressive running three-year average to trigger the recreational accountability measure.

Sub-alternative 2b. Use the geometric mean to calculate average landings.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 8: ACCEPT THE IPT'S SUGGESTED EDITS IN ACTION 11.

Action 11. Reduce the recreational vessel limit for dolphin

Note: **Alternative 1 (No Action), Alternative 2 and Alternative 3** (including their respective sub-alternatives) do not apply to headboats. The current limit of 10 dolphin per paying passenger onboard a headboat will not change under this action and its alternatives.

Alternative 1 (No Action). 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.~~

Alternative 2. The recreational daily bag limit is 10 dolphin per person, not to exceed:

Sub-alternative 2a. 30 dolphin per vessel, whichever is less, ~~except on board a headboat where the limit is 10 dolphin per paying passenger.~~

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

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

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

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

Alternative 3. In Florida only, the recreational daily bag limit is 10 dolphin per person, not to exceed:

⁴ The arithmetic mean is calculated by adding the values of a set of numbers and then dividing the sum by the number of values in the set.

⁵ The geometric mean is calculated by multiplying the values of a set of numbers and then taking the nth root of the product, where n is equal to the number of values in the set.

Sub-alternative 3a. 30 dolphin per vessel, whichever is less, except on board a headboat where the limit is 10 dolphin per paying passenger.

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

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

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

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

Alternative 4. In South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida only, the recreational daily bag limit is 10 dolphin per person, not to exceed:

Sub-alternative 4a. 30 dolphin per vessel, whichever is less.

Sub-alternative 4b. 40 dolphin per vessel, whichever is less.

Sub-alternative 4c. 42 dolphin per vessel, whichever is less.

Sub-alternative 4d. 48 dolphin per vessel, whichever is less.

Sub-alternative 4e. 54 dolphin per vessel, whichever is less.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 9: SELECT SUB-ALTERNATIVE 2D AS PREFERRED IN ACTION 11.

Action 11. Reduce the recreational vessel limit for dolphin

Alternative 2. The recreational daily bag limit is 10 dolphin per person, not to exceed:

Sub-alternative 2d. 48 dolphin per vessel, whichever is less.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 10: ACCEPT ACTION 12 TO BE INCLUDED IN AMENDMENT 10.

Action 12. Reduce the recreational bag limit and establish a recreational vessel limit for wahoo

Alternative 1 (No Action). The recreational daily bag limit is 2 wahoo per person. There is no recreational vessel limit for wahoo.

Alternative 2. The recreational daily bag limit is 1 wahoo per person.

Alternative 3. The recreational vessel limit is:

Sub-alternative 3a. 2 wahoo per vessel.

Sub-alternative 3b. 3 wahoo per vessel.

Sub-alternative 3c. 4 wahoo per vessel.

Sub-alternative 3d. 5 wahoo per vessel.

Sub-alternative 3e. 6 wahoo per vessel.

Sub-alternative 3f. 7 wahoo per vessel.

Sub-alternative 3g. 8 wahoo per vessel.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 11: ACCEPT ALTERNATIVE 2 AS PREFERRED IN ACTION 12.

Action 12. Reduce the recreational bag limit and establish a recreational vessel limit for wahoo

Alternative 2. The recreational daily bag limit is 1 wahoo per person.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 12: REMOVE ACTION 13 IN AMENDMENT 10 AND PUT IT IN THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED SECTION.

Action 13. Allow filleting of dolphin at sea on board charter or headboat vessels in the Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone north of the Virginia/North Carolina border.

Preferred Alternative 1 (No Action). Dolphin possessed in the Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone must be maintained with head and fins intact, with specific exceptions for fish lawfully harvested in the Bahamas. Such fish harvested from the Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone may be eviscerated, gilled, and scaled, but must otherwise be maintained in a whole condition.

Alternative 2. Exempt dolphin from regulations requiring head and fins be intact on board properly permitted charter and headboat vessels in the Atlantic Exclusive Economic Zone north of the Virginia/North Carolina border where dolphin may be filleted under the following requirement(s):

Sub-alternative 2a. Skin must remain intact on the entire fillet of any dolphin carcass.

Sub-alternative 2b. Two fillets of dolphin, regardless of the length of each fillet, is the equivalent to one dolphin.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 13: APPROVE ALL ACTIONS IN DOLPHIN WAHOO AMENDMENT 10, AS MODIFIED, FOR REVIEW AT THE JUNE 2021 MEETING.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

DIRECTION TO STAFF:

- 1) DEVELOP A FRAMEWORK ACTION OR OTHER APPROPRIATE ACTION TO CONSIDER MAKING THE MINIMUM SIZE REQUIREMENTS CURRENTLY IN PLACE FOR FL, GA, AND SC APPLY THROUGHOUT THE MANAGEMENT ZONE FOR DOLPHIN.
- 2) DEVELOP A FRAMEWORK OR OTHER APPROPRIATE ACTION TO CONSIDER EXEMPTING THE CHARTER FLEET FROM THE DOLPHIN AND WAHOO VESSEL LIMITS.

Timing for the next Dolphin Wahoo Advisory Panel meeting

The Committee discussed the timing of potential upcoming amendments to the Dolphin Wahoo FMP and were in generally agreement to tentatively schedule the next Dolphin Wahoo AP meeting in the Spring of 2022.

Other Business

There were no items discussed under other business.

Timing and Tasks

MOTION 14: APPROVE THE FOLLOWING TIMING AND TASKS:

- 1) CONTINUE WORK ON AMENDMENT 10 AND PREPARE THE AMENDMENT FOR A VOTE OF APPROVAL FOR SECRETARIAL REVIEW AT THE JUNE 2021 MEETING.
- 2) PREPARE INFORMATION ON IDENTIFIED TOPICS REGARDING THE USE OF PELAGIC LONGLINE GEAR IN THE DOLPHIN WAHOO FISHERY, DOLPHIN SIZE LIMITS, AND EXEMPTIONS TO THE DOLPHIN AND WAHOO VESSEL LIMITS ONBOARD FOR-HIRE VESSELS. THE COUNCIL WILL REVIEW THIS INFORMATION AT THE JUNE 2021 MEETING.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL