

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
FULL COUNCIL SESSION II
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
September 16-17, 2021

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened the afternoon of September 16 and morning of September 17, 2021, via webinar. The Council approved the agenda with minor modifications. Council Chair, Mel Bell, was re-elected for another term and Dr. Carolyn Belcher was elected Vice-Chair.

Protected Resources

Staff reviewed the Endangered Species Act/Magnuson Stevens Act Integration Agreement between the Council and NMFS SERO, focusing on the level of involvement the Council can request when formal section 7 consultation is (re)initiated. Jenny Lee, SERO PRD, provided an update on the Dolphin Wahoo Biological Opinion (BiOp) currently underway. The Council requested involvement level two for the Dolphin Wahoo BiOp.

Charlie Phillips, the Council's liaison to the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (ALW TRT), presented his thoughts on recent ALW TRT discussions on ways to reduce the risk of mortalities and serious injuries of North Atlantic right whales and other large whales caused by entanglement in commercial trap/pot and gillnet fisheries along the U.S. East Coast. The Council reviewed the ALW TRT scoping presentation given by Jessica Powell, SERO PRD, on Monday and provided the following input:

- The Council is supportive of continued discussions on the utilization of ropeless gear for black sea bass pots.
- There is a significant amount of effort nearshore (within five miles of the beach) when compared to waters farther offshore.

The deadline to submit written comments on the ALW TRT discussions is October 21, 2021. Written comments can be submitted to nmfs.gar.ALWTRT2021@noaa.gov.

Jenny Lee, SERO PRD, briefed the Council on other protected resource topics of interest to the Council.

Outreach and Communication Update

Staff provided an update on outreach and communication efforts, including information on the ongoing website redesign project, For-Hire Electronic Reporting, topics for discussion at the next Outreach and Communications Advisory Panel Meeting, the Marine Resources Education Program (MREP), and Climate Change Scenario Planning.

Litigation Brief

Monica Smit-Brunello, NOAA General Counsel, briefed the Council on pending litigation cases in the Gulf of Mexico, etc.