

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
FULL COUNCIL I
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
June 10, 2024

Reports

Agency representatives (NOAA Office of Law Enforcement and the USCG) and Council state representatives provided updates to the Council.

The USCG clarified they are not currently considering requiring Merchant Mariner Certification for commercial vessels.

Jessica McCawley briefed the Council on the lawsuit directed at marine reserve within Biscayne National Park (BNP). In December 2020, the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) sued the National Park Service (NPS) claiming they unlawfully failed to take action to protect BNP because they did not pursue the no-take marine reserve zone and a commercial fishing phase-out. In March 2024, a judge ruled that while the NPS delayed implementing the marine reserve zone, it was not bound to implement a commercial fishing phase-out. This is of interest to the Council since it has management authority for federally managed species in the park's federal waters but has traditionally deferred to the FWC and the NPS.

The US Army Corps of Engineers held a workshop to discuss activities in several of the major South Atlantic ports (Morehead, Charleston, Brunswick, Kings Bay, etc).

Best Fishing Practices and Citizen Science Update

In 2022, the Council approved expanded outreach initiatives for best fishing practices and SAFMC Release. Council staff provided a progress report on activities that have been completed to date as well as those that are upcoming.

Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting (SEFHIER) Program Improvement

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) has been undertaking a for-hire methodology technical review with goals that include more fully utilizing for-hire logbooks in MRIP catch statistics and setting specifications that allow Atlantic Coast logbook programs to adopt MRIP certified design requirements. Geoff White provided an overview of this effort. Council staff then reviewed information gathered to address Council requests from the March 2024 meeting as well as options to potentially improve the SEFHIER program to obtain higher compliance with reporting requirements. The Council approved the following motion:

MOTION 1: START A SEFHIER IMPROVEMENT AMENDMENT CONSIDERING THE ACCSP FOR-HIRE METHODOLOGY TECHNICAL REVIEW AS INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE.

- FOCUS ON INCORPORATING ACTIONS THAT CAN BE TAKEN IN THE NEAR-TERM WITHOUT AN AMENDMENT, INCLUDING ADDITIONAL OUTREACH.
- CONSIDER ACTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES BEING CONSIDERED BY THE GULF COUNCIL.

- CONSIDER ACTIONS TO MODIFY REPORTING FREQUENCY, HAIL IN, HAIL OUT, LANDING LOCATIONS, NO FISHING REPORTS, AND VALIDATION SURVEYS.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Dolphin Management Strategy Evaluation Update

SEFSC staff updated the Council on progress on the Dolphin MSE and recent stakeholder working group meetings. The following summary points were provided:

- Feedback from stakeholder workshops has helped design the operating models consisting of 7 regions, 4 in the US and 3 international.
- Key uncertainties – allow modelers to understand how the management procedures will perform under different scenarios.
- Three stakeholder meetings (virtual) have been held since selection of participants in December 2023 and have been very effective meetings.
- The project is secure funding-wise but looking into possibly tapping into additional IRA funds to explore ecosystem and climate factors.
- Expected completion date – summer or fall 2025.

Consideration of Limited-Entry in South Atlantic For-Hire Fisheries

SERO staff provided a summary of comments received on the requested control dates of December 5, 2023 and December 8, 2023. Council staff then provided an overview of a discussion document addressing guidance and requests from the March 2024 Council meeting and presenting possible options for a moratorium on for-hire permits as well as elements of a limited access program. NOAA General Counsel reminded the Council that a limited access program needs to address optimum yield. Council members noted that while it may be useful to refer to the Gulf Council’s limited access programs, it is important to note that the Gulf’s fisheries are very different from those in the South Atlantic and ACLs in the Gulf are often much higher.

The Council provided the following guidance and approved one motion:

Direction to staff:

- Postpone further discussion of for-hire limited access until updated for-hire permit data are available.
- Work on developing a discussion of OY in the context of limiting access in for-hire fisheries.
 - Consider on a stock by stock basis.
- Gather information on whether there are ways to take or suspend a for-hire permit for reporting violations if the permit is not limited access.
- Prepare a discussion to develop the purpose and need of a for-hire limited access amendment.
- Continue gathering further discussion and feedback from the appropriate APs.

MOTION 2: POSTPONE FURTHER DISCUSSION OF FOR-HIRE LIMITED ACCESS UNTIL UPDATED FOR-HIRE PERMIT DATA ARE AVAILABLE.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL (8 IN FAVOR, 4 OPPOSED, 1 ABSENT)