

Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10 and Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 Scoping Comments Summary

Scoping comments for Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10 and Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 were taken in July and August of 2016. Comments were accepted by U.S. mail, fax, email, online via the public comment forum on the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) website, and during a webinar held on August 4, 2016. Written comments were accepted from July 18, 2016 through August 19, 2016.

A total of 75 comments were received. There were 72 comments submitted in writing online via the public comment forum on the SAFMC website (**Table 1**), two comments provided verbally during the webinar public comment period, and one comment received in writing by email. The majority of commenters were from Florida, however the states of North Carolina, Virginia, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Maine, Colorado, Texas, and Arizona were also represented. All written comments can be found at the end of this document. Comments submitted online via the public comment forum on the SAFMC website can also be accessed at: <http://www.safmc.net/meetings/public-hearing-and-scoping-meeting-schedule#ph2>.

The most common subject matter of the comments received covered the dolphin fishery and allocation of the commercial Annual Catch Limit (ACL) between pelagic longlines and all other commercial gears. These comments tended to expressed interest in allocating commercial landings based on the year when pelagic longlines represented the lowest percentage of total commercial dolphin landings. This response was often accompanied by a perceived decline in the recreational dolphin fishery and was largely relayed by commenters from or fishing in the Florida Keys or South Florida. Additional comments not directly related to the subject matter of the scoping document included increasing the yellowtail snapper size limit, establishing a spawning season closure for yellowtail snapper, establishing a commercial trip limit for yellowtail snapper between 350 pounds and 500 pounds, eliminating the size limit on dolphin, and allowing the sale of dolphin caught on for-hire trips.

Summary of comments on allocation submitted via the online public comment forum:

- Changing the current dolphin allocation will negatively impact charter businesses and other recreational fishing related businesses.
- Dolphin allocation to longlines based on the year with lowest percentage of total commercial landings is the best management decision for all sectors and sustainability of the species.
- Protect the historic small scale hook and line commercial fishery and limit the longline fishery if necessary.
- Opposed to any change in sector allocation until comprehensive economic evaluation performed to determine most efficient allocation.
- Shifting allocations based on uncaught fish does not make sense and is not compatible with managing for a recreational fishery.
- Opposed to all allocation changes for both dolphin and yellowtail with the possible exception of the “carry over” ACL alternative. Need further explanation on how carry over would work.

- Original allocation of dolphin was put in place as a proactive measure addressing increased longline landings. Shift in allocation from recreational to commercial will face substantial public opposition.
- Address issues within commercial sector but do not support reallocation.
- Opposed to permanent allocation shifts of ALC.
- Opposed to combined ACL due to potential to generate “race to fish” for both sectors.
- Maintain current sector allocations.

Summary of comments on allocation submitted via the webinar comment period:

- Chose allocation options that minimize regulatory discards.
- Consider options that are most flexible to better achieve Optimal Yield (OY). Favorable opinion of combined ACL, rollover, or common pool to help either sector when needed.
- Splitting the commercial ACL based on gear type could have unintended consequences.
- In favor of adaptive management with triggers based on topics such as current use, timing, and social and economic indicators.
- In favor of reallocation and increasing total ACL.
- Not in favor of combined ACL due to change in fishing behavior that can go along with this type of management.
- For dolphin, examine options that keep commercial hook and line fishery open year round.
- Reallocation options need to be in place that add flexibility.

Summary of comments on allocation submitted via email:

- Caution against “one size fits all” solution due to substantial differences in species and the fisheries that target them.
- Prefer removal of sector allocations in the dolphin fishery to better achieve OY.
- No need to set gear allocations for commercial dolphin ACL. Setting such allocations may limit the growth of commercial hook and line fishery.
- Unused ACL rollover option is utilized by Highly Migratory Species (HMS) for Atlantic Bluefin tuna and swordfish, but is allowed under an exception that is apparently not available for use with dolphin. Legal clarification is pending.
- Unused ACL for dolphin does not necessarily benefit either sector.

Other comments received:

- Need consistent access to hook and line caught dolphin to provide fresh seafood to customers.
- Longlines target larger dolphin and have substantially greater impact on stock compared to other gears.
- Eliminate the use of longlines to land dolphin.
- Recreational harvest largely depends on abundance and ability to intercept a fish.
- Dolphin is an important secondary catch for longliners.
- Concerned over under-harvest and the potential US portion of a quota if international management occurs.
- Dolphin is gaining acceptance as a desirable food fish in the Northeast and increasingly seen on restaurant menus in the region. As such, increased demand is anticipated.

- For longlines, need better analysis to determine HMS boats vs non-HMS boats or “Council Boats”.
- Landings of dolphin with longline gear has had a detrimental impact on the recreational fishery.

19 August 2016

176 Mulberry Street
New York NY 10013

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
North Charleston SC 29405

Attention: Gregg Waugh, Executive Director

Re: **Am 10/Am 44 Scoping**
Public Comment on Dolphinfin Scoping

Dear Mr. Waugh,

The American Bluefin Tuna Association (ABTA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the dolphinfin scoping process recently undertaken by the SAFMC and, equally, appreciates the Council's present efforts to address some of the thornier issues in the management of this important fishery.

By way of background, ABTA (<http://www.theabta.com>) represents the interests of bluefin, yellowfin, bigeye and albacore handgear tuna fishermen on the East Coast of the U.S. Approximately 27,000 Highly Migratory Species Tunas permits were issued in 2015 to recreational, charter/headboat and commercial tunas fishermen. ABTA is also deeply involved in the domestic and international management of these species.

ABTA also takes a proprietary interest in the management of other pelagic species that are an inextricable part of the U.S. tropical tunas multi-species fishery, including skipjack tuna, dolphinfin, swordfish and wahoo.

Introduction

The Council's "purpose and need" statement for this scoping process discusses two species, dolphinfin and yellowtail snapper. The commercial dolphinfin and yellowtail snapper fisheries are managed by the SAFMC and they have a few things in common: Both commercial fisheries had to be closed early in 2015 due to premature utilization of commercial ACL. Also, both the dolphinfin and yellowtail snapper recreational fisheries have a history of significant underharvest of their ACL. Consequently, there is an abundance of unused ACL in both recreational fisheries whereas there is a shortage of commercial ACL in both fisheries. This is, in our view, where the similarities begin and end with these two fish stocks. In all other respects, these fisheries are quite different and should be treated as such. We

caution against seeking “one size fits all” solutions, notwithstanding the expediency of such solutions.

Yellowtail snapper is of the order, perciformes, a demersal species that inhabits tropical and subtropical waters in the Atlantic. As a demersal species, it is, in a sense, the “inverse” of dolphinfish, which is a pelagic species. Dolphinfish is a highly migratory and highly fecund species that inhabits the entire pelagic ecosystem of the tropical and subtropical Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans, supporting numerous recreational, commercial and artisanal fisheries virtually throughout its range. It is a species that regularly crosses international water boundaries, indicative of its mercurial migratory behavior. By contrast, yellowtail snapper reside in the coastal waters of the tropical and subtropical western Atlantic shelf.

Why is this important to fishery management? Dolphinfish is a highly migratory species whose movements are influenced by inter-annual and seasonal temperature changes as well as the relative abundance of a wide variety of prey fish and crustaceans to sustain their rapid growth rate. Therefore, high growth rate, early maturity and high fecundity enable sustained high exploitation rates of dolphinfish. The same cannot be said of yellowtail snapper to the same percentage degree. Consequently, for the purpose of the scoping exercise, the similarities shared by these two species exclusively relate to fishery management problems and not the fish themselves.

Scoping Alternatives – Draft Action 2

Preferred: Alternative 7 (Remove sector allocations and only use the total ACL as the upper harvest limit.)

Discussion

The most significant problem in the present management of dolphinfish stock is the fact that it does not address the mandate in National Standard 1 to achieve “optimum yield”. Of the 7 alternatives in the scoping document, only Alternative 7 comes closest to achieving or allowing for the achievement of optimum yield.

Scoping Alternatives – Draft Action 1

Preferred: None

Discussion

As we are advocating for draft alternative 7 (Draft Action 2), as mentioned above, there is no need to modify FMP percentages within the commercial sector (Draft Sub-alternatives, 1 and 2a-2d). We are an organization that represents hook and line fishermen and we see no utility in establishing separate allocations for hook

and line and PLL gear under a proposed regime in which sector allocations are removed.

Further, we wish to point out that, although dolphinfish is a long-standing, well-known and highly desirable food fish in the South and Mid-Atlantic, it is not so well known in the Northeast. However, dolphinfish is rapidly gaining acceptance and is increasingly seen on restaurant menus in the region. We anticipate increased demand for dolphinfish in the Northeast and we would hope that this demand would be met by increased landings by PLL and hook and line fishermen. Therefore, the potential growth of dolphinfish sales in the Northeast, while considered highly likely, cannot be quantified for the purposes of the scoping exercise. Consequently, we are very reluctant to support any of the alternatives under Draft Alternative 2, subalternatives 2a-2d. In doing so, we would be limiting the degree to which our fishermen can grow the commercial hook and line fishery for dolphinfish.

Clearly, removing sector allocations and only using the total ACL as the upper harvest limit will obviate the need for commercial trip limits and rollover/reserve.

Some further points:

1. Rollover/Reserve:

This very useful tool is used by the HMS Management Division for Atlantic bluefin and swordfish. These stocks are managed under international treaty and annual quota is set by ICCAT. It is possible that a rollover from one season to the next may result in a total quota that exceeds the stipulated annual quota for the second – or rollover - season. Even though this would under other circumstances be a violation of the concept of “ACL” as defined by Magnuson Stevens, the HMS Management Division operates under an exception that allows them to do this. However, this exception is evidently not available to NOAA for use with dolphinfish. We assume that there is a workaround for this problem and we have queried NOAA’s Legal Department on this. Unfortunately, we will only be able to obtain their advices on this problem after the August holiday.

2. “Paper” Fish:

The scoping document states in part (Page 11), “While the unharvested ACL does contribute to the well-being of the dolphin stock and the associated benefits of abundance for both sectors....”. Where is the scientific support for this contention? As mentioned earlier, yellowtail snapper is a demersal species, so this statement might apply to this stock. However, dolphinfish is a highly migratory, pelagic species whose habitat is the entirety of the equatorial and subequatorial Atlantic Ocean. Population dynamics of these two stocks are vastly different.

The “Paper Fish” concept, in this case, considers that recreational CPUE is protected, secured or possibly enhanced by maintaining, on an ongoing basis, an excessive

amount of unused ACL. We believe that this is just plain, "fuzzy" thinking that may apply to a coastal fish stock having a limited range but certainly not to a highly migratory species. It is important to keep in mind that dolphinfish is *ubiquitous* in all major oceans, not unlike skipjack tuna.

Praeger, 2000, the only attempt made by NOAA to assess dolphinfish stock, states as follows: "...targeting, especially on a schooling species, can cause catchability to increase with declining abundance".

Final Note:

There has been some discussion regarding "Council Boats", defined as vessels that do not contain an HMS permit but carry a commercial dolphinfish permit and do target dolphinfish using longline gear. Some minor statistical work needs to be done by NOAA in order for us to have a clearer picture of the universe of Council Boats, and this is necessary. We would support further discussion of this fleet in parallel with the scoping process with a view toward determining what negative effects it may have, if any, on the stock or the larger community of fishermen who depend upon dolphinfish.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on the dolphinfish scoping document.

Cordially,

David Schalit, Vice President
American Bluefin Tuna Association

Table 1. Comments on Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10/Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 submitted via the online public comment forum on the SAFMC website.

Name	Please provide your comment on Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10/Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 (dolphinfish and yellowtail snapper):
Durwood Keith Neal	<p>Any change from the current allocation will impact my business considerably. While I am but one small operation, I feel the impact that I would feel, is shared by many others. Limits already imposed are impacting my charter operations. We have trips that specifically target tilefish and dolphin. From the east coast of Virginia we have to run 60 miles to arrive at these fishing grounds. Further limits on this fishery, any closed season, reduction in bag limits will in most cases make the trip cost prohibitive for charter clients to spend their money for these trips. There has to be a better way rather than to potentially shutdown the recreational and charter operations that put more money back into the economy than commercial operations.</p> <p>I have additional comments and will send at a later date.</p>
Jonathon Reynolds	<p>Thank you for this opportunity. This comment represents my personal point of view as an experienced fisherman in the South Atlantic for the last 30 years, holding a 100 ton Masters license for the last 20 years as well as the views of many commercial fishermen, charter fishermen, the Islamorada Charter Boat Association, Key West Charter Boat Association, local restaurants, fish markets and recreational fishermen in this region. Addressing Amendment 10, we as fishermen in the entire South Atlantic region are extremely excited about this proposal. We feel it has been well researched by your staff and are hoping for the Draft Sub-alternative 2b to become effective. We feel this will be the most effective management decision for all sectors, economically and for the healthy spawn and sustainability of the species. We appreciate your hard work in this matter.</p>
brian cone	<p>I believe the most effective answer to managing our dolphin fishery is alternative 2b.</p> <p>I have been a dolphin fisherman in South Florida for over 30 years and have seen the ups and downs over the years. I am really scared in the direction our fishery is heading. I have always felt that if the larger breeder size dolphin were targeted with long lines it would slowly lead to the decline in the dolphin fishery as a whole. I understand that the oceans have more and more fisherman every year, but hook and line fisherman will never have the drastic impacts that long lines have, bottom line.</p> <p>thank you for allowing me top comment, capt. Brian Cone</p>
Captain Brian Reynolds	<p>Over the course of the last three years, I have seen a dramatic change in the South Florida Dolphin Fishery. After some research and discussion with fellow fishermen throughout the South Atlantic Region concerning commercial long line fishing, it is obvious that the lack of stock in the area that was once so abundant, needs some drastic changes to the current methods of fishing with regard to long lining.</p> <p>I am in support of the Draft Sub-alternative 2b, which I feel will help the sustainability of the dolphin fishery for our future generations.</p> <p>Thank you, Captain Brian Reynolds</p>
Benjamin Hyatt Spaulding	<p>i come from a 4 generation charter boat family here in south florida and am blown away with whats happening to our fisheries!!! I really appreciate what your are doing to help the future of our industry. I am on board in any way you need me to assist you in this enormus effort to preserve our future.Myself,father and two brothers all are still active charter boat captains in islamorada and will do what needs to be done to help in your effort.</p> <p>I'm voting for amendment 10 with sub alternative 2 B. P.S. Don't hesitate to call if theres anything i can do to help Thank You , Capt. Benjamin Spaulding</p>
Janice Drimet	<p>I am strongly in favor of sub alternative 2b.</p>

Richard E Berry	We need to eliminate longlining of dolphin anywhere. Its too effective and kills too many egg bearing females which destorys the stocks.The commercial fishery shold have about 10% of the catch recreational fishermen 90% that would be fair. On yellowtail the fishery is in reasonable shape but the minimum length needs to be 14" since 12" is waay too small.
David w. Galen	Thank you for listening to what I have to say and giving us a chance to improve a fishery for years to come.
Jake Roth	I am relatively new to the south Florida offshore fishing community but work with a captain that's been here for 30 years. So I hear many stories of how the fishing has declined dramatically in the last few years. With that said and my stake in this fishery at this time I support sub alternate 2B.
Jerome Sondag	The more strict the better.
Lee Jay Costigan Jr	In favor of Sub-alternative 2b Thank you...
BERNARDO CAREAGA	we need to stop the long liner killing so many dolphin and wahoo
CHRISTOPHER RYAN HARMAN	I HAVE BEEN FISHING IN ISLAMORADA FL FOR THE PAST 20 YEARS CONCERNING AMENDMENT 10, I AM IN FAVOR OF SUB-ARTICLE 2B
Captain Ross Early	Sub-alternative 2b
Bob Houghton	Drop size limits on Dolphin, and regulate by bag limits. Pompano Dolphin, a sub species of Dolphin, rarely if ever reach 20 inches in length, but provide great table fare.As limits on size now exist, that sub species is exempt from harvest. Do not consider allowing them to be harvested by species, as without killing the fish, and checking the tongue, it is almost impossible to determine whether the fish is a regular Dolphin or a Pompano Dolphin. Survival of released fish, is probably very low, as they both exert most of their energy, before being boated. Why not allow harvest , and set a daily boat or angler bag limit, that allows an annual 365 day season, rather than over harvest, followed by complete closure, is POOR MANAGEMENT. Trying to manage Dolphin, which are probably the fastest growing, least predictable fish, is to quote a friend Rick Ryals is " Like trying to control a herd of cats." There are Poor Years, and Great Years, and SAFMC, nor anyone else will change that. Mother Nature is in charge, no matter what you think, or try to regulate Clearly your MANAGEMENT, of Red Snapper, in North Florida, demonstrates your complete lack of MANAGEMENT skills.
Lazy Days Restaurant	We want our local fisherman to bring us local hook and line Dolphin on a regular basis to offer our customer fresh local Dolphin. Addressing Amendment #10 we are in favor of sub-alternative 2b.
Tony Spohn	I have been fishing Florida waters for 40 years. In the last few years our school sizes have diminished to almost nothing. I feel the lack of spawn of the Dolphin species has decreased mainly due to commercial long line overfishing. I am in favor of Amendment 10, Sub-alternative 2b.
Doald Chittick	I have been a captain fishing out of whale harbor for 26 years and have seen a marked decrease in the number of dolphin fish caught the last several years. This year was by far the worst summer I have ever experienced due to the lack of dolphin fish. There were days where I never saw a dolphin fish in 8 hrs of fishing, almost unheard of in past years. If this trend continues it will not only effect the charter industry, but additionally all the restaurants, motels and marinas that depend on those same clients. This is why I support amendment 10 sub-alternative 2b. Captain Don KAY K IV Fishing Charters LLC

Capt Kevin Brown	I have been running charters out of the Florida keys for 28 years. The last 3 or 4 years. Are sfisher has died down dramatically and I feel it is dou to the overfishing of long lines. As for Dolphine Wahoo Amendment 10 I favor sub - Alternative 2b
daniel p lowit	I favor sub alternative 2b. As a full time fisherman for the past 10 years , I have a seen a drastic reduction in average size and numbers of dolphinfish caught. I blame this almost entirely on poor oversight of the commercial dolphin fishing industry, I believe the longline fleet in federal atlantic waters much be regulated in order to maintain a healthy balance of the species
Paul Johnson	We need to curtail commercial longline dolphin fishing since we have seen a a a drastic decline in the the recreational and for hire industry
floyd m green	im hoping that the panel takes a good hard look at the charter boat fisher men in this very sensative matter..before the enormise increse of over fishing by the commercial fisher men it was the the recratioal fisher that keep the balance in the sales of dolphin to the market. I would like the panal to take a parcel look at this part of the total fish sales. I my own opinion would not to see owr industry to be completely elemanated out this very important issue. many thanks Capt. Floyd Green.
Garry Salyers	I have been fishing in the waters of Islamorada for 30 years. Never have I seen such a drastic decline in amout of schools and school sizes of Dolphin until the past three years. Not many of us down here were aware of the drastic increase of long line boats targeting Dolphin to the degree they have in the last three years until recently. We started doing more research. Fishermen we know even went to the docks in the Carolinas to witness this outrageous slaughter! This decline of our stock began when we lost our dolphin fish sales on charter boats. We provided fresh fish to local markets up and down the Florida Keys and Miami. This was great for everyone; customers on the boats, fish markets, local restaurants, the fishermen, tourists looking for local caught fish and most importantly indirectly sustained the fish stocks. A cow Dolphin lays 5% of her body weight in eggs every other day. When we provided part of the commercial ACL, the Dolphin spent much more time in the water reproducing. Long lining kills all of the large spawning fish in one shot (majority of the ACL is caught in two months). How does the species restock? It doesn't. It is extremely clear the result of this change. For these reasons, I and everyone in this South Florida community is strongly in favor of Dolphin/Wahoo Amendment 10, Sub-alternative 2b. This Amendment cannot be truly successful unless charter boats are able to sell Dolphin again. The future of our economy and fishery relies upon this. Thank you.
capt jack falcucci	in the past two years there has been a substantial decrease in our daily catches some days we dont catch at all the disapearnce of mahi in the past 2 years has taken its toll on the charter industry customers dont want to pay for a boat ride i dont know the solution but i do know something has to be done to protect this fishery
Wesley Todd Keel	I believe that the long liners have influenced dolphin fishing numbers for recreation anglers.
David M. Crowley	Please protect the recreational angler's interest by conserving/limiting the harvesting of dolphin & wahoo by large commercial fishing companies
Capt Edward C Yannetty	I have been fishing in on charter boats in the Florida for almost 30 years and see a big decline in the Dolphin fishing. Subject matter 10 best solution is sub-alternative 2b
Adeline Coyac	A major decline in the number and size of the schools of these fish have been observed over the last three years. I would also like to specify my favor for the sub-alternative 2b in Amendment 10.

The original intent of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) was to manage dolphin primarily as a recreational species and still allow the historic commercial fisheries to operate. The vast majority of the harvest has historically occurred in the recreational sector, which depends on abundance as a key factor in management to increase the encounter rates. Dolphin are a critical component of the private boat and for-hire fleet fishery all along the Atlantic coast.

The commercial fisheries were largely composed of incidental catches made while targeting other species. The commercial fishery changed significantly in 2014 and 2015 when dolphin caught in the longline fishery increased substantially, causing a closure of the commercial fishery in 2015.

We believe the SAFMC should, as a matter of policy, protect the historic small scale commercial fishery and limit the longline fishery if necessary. We are opposed to any change in sector allocation unless and until there has been a comprehensive economic evaluation to determine the most efficient allocation. NMFS Fishery Allocation Policy, released August 1, 2016, requires such an analysis. Such an evaluation would necessarily include the willingness to pay for catch as well as harvest. Recreational anglers prefer thick stocks of large fish, particularly for dolphin. Dolphin is often the "day saver" for both the for-hire and private fleet and it has earned that reputation because of its abundance and excellent food quality. Reducing the current allocation would most certainly reduce value and likely decrease economic efficiency and the recreational angler is owed a thorough examination of the values that would be taken from them.

Additionally, it is unfair and inequitable to require detailed and time-consuming studies each time a recreational sector asks for a change in allocation when the commercial sector need only propose a change in an amendment and it goes straight to a vote without any analysis. Shifting uncaught fish simply because they are uncaught makes little sense and is antithetical to managing for a recreational fishery

Under Action 2, the Coastal Conservation Association North Carolina (CCA NC) opposes Alternatives 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 and support Alternative 1, no action.

Alternative 3 is intriguing and although greater understanding is necessary as to how it might be implemented, it is possible CCA NC would not oppose the carry-over of a sectors uncaught Annual Catch Limit (ACL) for future harvest.

These same comments apply to the yellowtail snapper proposed management measures.

David Sneed

Raymond
McLaughlin

I favor sub-alternative 2b

Tim Nettles	<p>Dolphin Allocation Comments I've been on the Dolphin/Wahoo AP since the beginning. One of the reasons it was started was due to increased pressure by the longline fleet on dolphin and an unprecedented increase in commercial take of dolphin. To be proactive the council set allocations based on historical catch data. The council was applauded for being proactive instead of reactive to a fishery in distress. To the best of my memory (I'm currently in DC so I don't have all of my paperwork with me) it was originally based on 93% recreational and 7% commercial. Once again for some reason those numbers stick in my head but I can't verify it. Within the last few years it was changed to 90/10. At that time there was discussion to even change it to 87/13. There was a lot of push back from the AP and the recreational groups and stakeholders which resulted in the 90/10 allocation split. Why would the council now be going against the proactive approach they took for dolphin and wahoo and be willing to reallocate recreational fish to the commercial side? This is a bad idea. Why was the commercial fishery for dolphin suddenly shut down last year? Was it truly due to the longlines? It definitely was not due to the recreational fishermen. So why go after the recreational allocation? As has been discussed many times in the Dolphin /Wahoo AP, Committee and Council meetings, dolphin is a very valuable resource to the recreational fishing public. The data used by the council indicates such. The West Palm Beach Fishing Club in a questionnaire a few years ago asked its members what was their primary target when fishing offshore. The overwhelming answer was dolphin. In short, if there is a problem with the commercial take of dolphin then address their problems separate from the recreational allocation. If it is a gear issue, commercial hook and line versus long lines, then by all means address the commercial gear issues. The answers could be trip limits or simply not allowing a directed long line fishery for dolphin. Based on the historical catch rates of recreational versus commercial and the value of the recreational dolphin fishery, I feel that any shift in allocation from the recreational fishery to the commercial fishery will begin a large uproar. I foresee the recreational fishing groups, clubs and individuals rallying together to prevent a shift of allocation away from the recreational fishermen in this fishery. Due to mounting pressure on federal fishery management with other issues I do not see how this could be viewed favorably toward the council. Thank you for allowing my input. Tim Nettles</p>
Kevin Cannon	Over the last 3-5 years we have seen a severe decrease in the number and size of dolphin (mahi mahi) in Florida keys waters
Steven Rodger	In addressing amendment 10: I was born and raised in Key West Florida. As a son of a commercial fisherman, I began commercial fishing myself at 12 years old and still continue to do so today. I also started guiding at the age of 20 and have been a charter boat guide for 22 years. In the last 3 years, we have seen a major decline in the number and size of our schools of Dolphin. This is not an international issue. New Satellite tags prove those Carolina fish are the same fish that migrates through the keys! I favor Sub-alternative 2b. Thank you Capt. Steve Rodger
Haden Browning	I have been fishing here for 10 plus years in Islamorada and every year I see less and less Dolphin migrating through. I have noticed the fishery here in Islamorada diminishing substantially year after year due to industrialized fishing of more than one species of recreational gamefish. The drastic increase of long line fishing in the past three years is leading to the collapse of an extremely important gamefish. We can provide fresh fish to our entire eastern seaboard as charter boats and maintain a sustainable fishery while we do it. New data from satellite tags show that this is not an international problem, but created by our own long line fishery. For all these reasons, I choose Amendment 10, sub-alternative 2b.
Tommy king	Been fishing the east coast from the Carolina's, down to the Florida keys, the fishery hasn't gotten any better! This year has absolutely been the worst fishing, I as well as fellow fisherman have ever seen! Something needs to be done! I am strongly in favor of amendment 10 sub-alternative 2B thank you for your consideration and time!!
Tony Golden	I have been a fishermen in South Florida for 20 years. Never have I seen such a dramatic decrease in the size and number of Dolphin in our schools as the last three years. After looking through the profile info and some of my own research on spawning of the species and satellite tag proven migration paths, I would strongly favor Amendment 10, sub-alternative 2b. This amendment cannot successfully work unless charter boats are given Dolphin sales again. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.
Chuck Schimmelman	I have been fishing in Islamorada since 1975. All these years, we have seen massive schools of Dolphin and an extremely healthy fishery, while supplying our local fish markets with fresh catch. This has all collapsed since 2014. That was the last year of good spawn and lots of fish. Our entire economy is suffering greatly because of this. Long line catches in recent years have destroyed the spawn of this once great fishery. I choose Amendment 10, sub-alternative 2b. Thank you

Alysha Aratari	This is one of the worst pelagic seasons we have fished , fellow fisherman have the same result . Thank you for your time
Anthony DiGiulian	I am for both amendments & believe we need to seriously monitor & manage our resources. The species we depend on are getting scarce & the size of the best gamefish continues to decrease. Thank you.
Jonathon Reynolds	After further review and consideration to all factors involved, addressing Snapper Grouper Amendment 44, commercial trip limits need to be established. Long time commercial fishermen from the South Florida region tell me 350-500 pound trip limits would be good for the long term sustainability of the fishery. A commercial closure during spawning would be extremely important as well. Addressing Amendment 10, I change my favor toward the drafts in place and believe that a hook and line commercial fishery only on Dolphin would be the best decision for such an important recreational gamefish. This fish is entirely too important to the recreational side, charter side, and tourism to be open to any long line fishing. Thank you for your time and consideration in these matters.
Brandon Ashton	I am against permanent shifts to the ACL allocations between commercial and recreational sectors. I am even more strongly against blurring the line between the commercial and recreational sectors by creating one common/total ACL for both sectors (i.e. I'm strongly against Draft action #2, Alternative #7). This would potentially generate a "race to the finish" between the sectors that would be damaging to all parties involved. I support keeping the ACL allocations as is (Alternative #1, 90/10, fixed). I would potentially support development of Alternative #3, ACL credits from previous year; however, the council needs to explain this in detail prior to development. The current language for this alternative is vague and not clear.
Carl W Dunlap	I support Sub-alternative 2b
Scott Ponder	after seeing a decline in the fishery we favor sub alternative 2b, I have been fishing in the keys for years and the recent decline in the fishery must be addressed
Chris mitchell	Upon returning to Islamorada after not having been for 2 years and spending the day on the water on a charter boat I was amazed that we not only didn't catch a single Mahi but didn't even see one. Clearly they are being overfished.
Justin Baker	I am for sub alternative 2b. Full time fisherman in Islamorada for last 20 years for hire and commercial.
Johnny D Cauley	I enjoy fishing with my friends and family we have a great time fishing for Dolphins. We have done this every year for the last 8 years. There is 12 of us that stays in the local Hotel for 4-5 days and we eat at all the local restaurants. Last year we spent around \$22,000 dollars and had a great time doing it., We look forward to this every year. Really good times.
Carlos Gamio	My family and I have been going to the Keys almost every summer for the past 15 years. The charter fishing that we do there is amazing. We enjoy catching all the species and being able to take some home to San Antonio to eat, but can't replicate the fresh catch dinners we have at the wonderful restaurants in the Keys that cook our catch! We usually go for a week and spend quite a bit of money on rentals and charter fishing. Fishing is the main reason we visit! It's the Florida Keys, I don't know if it gets much better than that! Not having the phenomenal fishing would probably deter us from visiting.
Carl Carpenter	I bring family and friends to the Keys for some of the best fishing in the world... primarily Dolphin and Yellowtail Snapper.
Hunter Barron	I live and work on a charter boat in the Florida keys. 70% of our clients come here to catch and eat dolphin. We need to be able to catch these fish for our clients to survive.
Joe nodine	Me and my family spend a lot of money every year fishing for dolphin we do lodging gas chartering bring our catch to local eateries so it is very important for me and my family
Kenneth Rahmig	I come to the keys at least 6 times a year to fish. I go out on the charter boats and my own boat. I spend lots of money there and hope to continue to do so!
Sheila Mirchandani	i've grown up going recreational Dolphin fishing and it's a very important time as a family. Born in Miami and been doing this for 45 years. I've long moved from the sunshine state but go back often and spend money on lodging, gas, food and charters just to catch them.

Captain Scott Stanzick	My name is Captain Scott Stanzick. I have been charter fishing in Islamorada, FL for 37 years, 3 weeks and 1 day. I pay my IRS taxes, health insurance bills and even my inflated car insurance bills because of uninsured motorists in South Florida. Never have I seen such a drastic decline in the size and numbers of our schools of Dolphin as I have in the last two years. Dolphin are absolutely necessary to the survival of my charter business, as well as the entire fleet of charter boats at my Marina (Bud and Mary's) and throughout the entire Florida Keys. Dolphin sales from charter boat fish have played a large role in my survival and income throughout the years. I am pissed off at the management of this species!! I hope the correct changes can be made to ensure successful management of this very important species FOR ALL, especially to the South Florida region which relies so strongly upon them for economic stability.
Bob Brigham	I travel to the keys often with my family to fish and dive. We regularly go out to fish for Dolphin off of Islamorada. It is a regular and treasured family outing with Captain Jon of Drop Back Charters. We generally stay 4-5 days when we come and try to get out fishing at least twice each visit.
Phillip faltus	Looks to be ok
James Lyons	I have been fishing in south atlantic area for 10 years and I have seen a decline in the number and size of the schools of Dolphin over the past 3 years. I favor subalternative 2b of amendment 10
Kurt Knechtle	My friends and family come to Islamorada 2 times per year to charter fish and relax for 3 or 4 days.
Gus Pena	Over the past 5 years the quantity and quality of the dolphin fisheries are depleting to nothing. It is almost not financilally feasible to run out 12 miles just for a boat ride and no fish. The oceans seam dead with all this overfishing of our local stock. Long lines need to go else where.
Daniel Beverage	Every year twice a year as a family we go to South Florida to go fishing for Mahi, Wahoo and various groupers and snappers. Every time we go, we fly,rent a car, stay at a hotel and rent a couple of charters. Every trip we spend \$3,000- \$5,000 in the local economy. I believe it is of the utmost importance to minimize the affect of commercial Fishing on these fish and keep so many local small businesses in business by letting the charter boats and recreational fisherman have every opportunity to catch these fish instead of the already under regulated commercial boats.
Nick Stanczyk	I've been a captain the last 13 years but the last few years we are catching a fraction of the dolphin we used to catch. The fish are smaller on average and the schools of fish aren't as big. I'm addressing amendment 10 and I favor sub alternative 2b.
Dale Wills	The last few years we have seen a decline in the number and size of our schools of dolphin.
Larry Broome	Visiting the East coast of our home state to fish with a charter is a great vacation for us. Very satisfying to be able to check out the other side of FL seeing all the sights eating at new restaurants and fishing for dolphin. Fantastic change of pace.
Brice Barr	I have been a Charter fisherman in Key West for 23 years. We are in favor of hook and line fishing. The longline allocation has to be reduced in order for our businesses to survive. We have seen a decline in Dolphin fishing in South Florida and is mainly attributed to long line fishing. Please take action to reduce the long line allocation. in favor of sub-alternative 2b
Scott feltman	I feel that the commercial dolphin fishermen have been given way to much of a quota. They are destroying the fishery by not letting enough fish spawn to keep the species healthy.
Johna Rudzin	I have been apart of a charter boat fishing family since I was very young and the amount and sizes of Dolphin have noticeably declined since then. I have heard of my dad's friends who are also charter boat captains saying similar things as well, mostly that Dolphin are impossible to catch and when they are caught most are just above legal size. This fishery is an integral part of Florida Keys tourism and provides livelihoods to the hundreds of charter boat captains throughout the Keys. The reason my family ended up in the Keys was because my father moved here to pursue a career as a charter boat captain and target the Dolphin fishery. Please help sustain this fishery so that others can enjoy such a great livelihood and resource as the ones have had in the past.
Robert Malfa	As a 27 year visitor from Boston to Port St Lucie to Key West recreational fishing is most important to me. I recently purchased property in Port St Lucie for my retirement. As a fisherman from the Boston, MA area I am quite aware of how various amendments, decisions, etc. effect recreational fishing in a negative manner. I have spent thousands of dollars in Florida for fishing charters, lodging, etc. over the years as well as my friends I have

	<p>turned on. Dolphin is one of my favorite species to catch and eat. My bottom line comment is to "PROTECT THIS FISHERY TO THE RECREATIONAL ANGLER". IT WOULD BE AN INJUSTICE TO NOT DO THIS. THANK YOU</p>
Mel Walker	<p>These comments are intended for the proposed changes to the Dolphin/Wahoo ammendment 10.I own/operate a charter for hire operation in Islamorada.I have been in this industry fulltime since 1981,with no other source of income.My suggestion would be for the dolphin fishery be utilized to its maximum benefit,in other words how can we best insure we are getting maximum economic value of given resource.For instance a dolphin that is caught and recorded under "commercial "criteria,its economic value is market price per lb times weight of the fish.20# dolphin x 3.50 per # =70.00.This same dolphin caught in any manner and recorded under"recreational}criteria is certainly going to be worth way more than 70 bucks.There was likely a charterboat booked,a mate tipped,a hotel stay,a visit to the grocery store,restaurant bars,etc.Its a simple mathematics equation.If this means adjusting the seperate quotas to allow more benefit for the recreational sector I would be in support.Regards,Mel Walker</p>
Eric Darvill	<p>I am born and raised in south Florida. I have fished offshore for the last 30 years. I have been a charter boat captain for the last 20 years. I have relied on dolphin as a summer staple for my entire career. My customers count on a healthy dolphin fishery. I have noticed a significant decline in size and numbers of dolphin in the last two years. I fear my business will</p>
Christopher Homer de Moya	<p>I'm 38 years old and I've been dolphin fishing my whole life in South Florida. . In the last few years I've notice a significant drop in the population. It's hard to keep my son, the next generation, interested in our fishery. It is something my father and I did together and I would like to pass that on to my son and future grandkids. He loves fishing and I'm scared either there will be no fishery for him to embrace and teach his son or he will lose interest all around and I'll lose my fishing buddy. Please stop the long liners from ruining our fishery.</p>
David Schalit	<p>The American Bluefin Tuna Association (ABTA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the dolphinfish scoping process recently undertaken by the SAFMC and, equally, appreciates the Council's present efforts to address some of the thornier issues in the management of this important fishery. By way of background, ABTA (http://www.theabta.com) represents the interests of bluefin, yellowfin, bigeye and albacore handgear tuna fishermen on the East Coast of the U.S. Approximately 27,000 Highly Migratory Species Tunas permits were issued in 2015 to recreational, charter/headboat and commercial tunas fishermen. ABTA is also deeply involved in the domestic and international management of these species. ABTA also takes a proprietary interest in the management of other pelagic species that are an inextricable part of the U.S. tropical tunas multi-species fishery, including skipjack tuna, dolphinfish, swordfish and wahoo. Introduction The Council's "purpose and need" statement for this scoping process discusses two species, dolphinfish and yellowtail snapper. The commercial dolphinfish and yellowtail snapper fisheries are managed by the SAFMC and they have a few things in common: Both commercial fisheries had to be closed early in 2015 due to premature utilization of commercial ACL. Also, both the dolphinfish and yellowtail snapper recreational fisheries have a history of significant underharvest of their ACL. Consequently, there is an abundance of unused ACL in both recreational fisheries whereas there is a shortage of commercial ACL in both fisheries. This is, in our view, where the similarities begin and end with these two fish stocks. In all other respects, these fisheries are quite different and should be treated as such. We caution against seeking "one size fits all" solutions, notwithstanding the expediency of such solutions. Yellowtail snapper is of the order, perciformes, a demersal species that inhabits tropical and subtropical waters in the Atlantic. As a demersal species, it is, in a sense, the "inverse" of dolphinfish, which is a pelagic species. Dolphinfish is a highly migratory and highly fecund species that inhabits the entire pelagic ecosystem of the tropical and subtropical Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans, supporting numerous recreational, commercial and artisanal fisheries virtually throughout its range. It is a species that regularly crosses international water boundaries, indicative of its mercurial migratory behavior. By contrast, yellowtail snapper reside in the coastal waters of the tropical and subtropical western Atlantic shelf. Why is this important to fishery management? Dolphinfish is a highly migratory species whose movements are influenced by inter-annual and seasonal temperature changes as well as the relative abundance of a wide variety of prey fish and crustaceans to sustain their rapid growth rate. Therefore, high growth rate, early maturity and high fecundity enable sustained high exploitation rates of dolphinfish. The same cannot be said of yellowtail snapper to the same percentage</p>

degree. Consequently, for the purpose of the scoping exercise, the similarities shared by these two species exclusively relate to fishery management problems and not the fish themselves.

Scoping Alternatives – Draft Action 2 Preferred: Alternative 7 (Remove sector allocations and only use the total ACL as the upper harvest limit.)

Discussion The most significant problem in the present management of dolphin fish stock is the fact that it does not address the mandate in National Standard 1 to achieve “optimum yield”. Of the 7 alternatives in the scoping document, only Alternative 7 comes closest to achieving or allowing for the achievement of optimum yield.

Scoping Alternatives – Draft Action 1 Preferred: None

Discussion As we are advocating for draft alternative 7 (Draft Action 2), as mentioned above, there is no need to modify FMP percentages within the commercial sector (Draft Sub-alternatives, 1 and 2a-2d). We are an organization that represents hook and line fishermen and we see no utility in establishing separate allocations for hook and line and PLL gear under a proposed regime in which sector allocations are removed. Further, we wish to point out that, although dolphin fish is a long-standing, well known and highly desirable food fish in the South and Mid-Atlantic, it is not so well known in the Northeast. However, dolphin fish is rapidly gaining acceptance and is increasingly seen on restaurant menus in the region. We anticipate increased demand for dolphin fish in the Northeast and we would hope that this demand would be met by increased landings by PLL and hook and line fishermen. Therefore, the potential growth of dolphin fish sales in the Northeast, while considered highly likely, cannot be quantified for the purposes of the scoping exercise. Consequently, we are very reluctant to support any of the alternatives under Draft Alternative 2, subalternatives 2a-2d. In doing so, we would be limiting the degree to which our fishermen can grow the commercial hook and line fishery for dolphin fish. Clearly, removing sector allocations and only using the total ACL as the upper harvest limit will obviate the need for commercial trip limits and rollover/reserve.

Some further points:

- 1. Rollover/Reserve:** This very useful tool is used by the HMS Management Division for Atlantic bluefin and swordfish. These stocks are managed under international treaty and annual quota is set by ICCAT. It is possible that a rollover from one season to the next may result in a total quota that exceeds the stipulated annual quota for the second – or rollover - season. Even though this would under other circumstances be a violation of the concept of “ACL” as defined by Magnuson Stevens, the HMS Management Division operates under an exception that allows them to do this. However, this exception is evidently not available to NOAA for use with dolphin fish. We assume that there is a workaround for this problem and we have queried NOAA’s Legal Department on this. Unfortunately, we will only be able to obtain their advice on this problem after the August holiday.
- 2. “Paper” Fish:** The scoping document states in part (Page 11), “While the unharvested ACL does contribute to the well-being of the dolphin stock and the associated benefits of abundance for both sectors....”. Where is the scientific support for this contention? As mentioned earlier, yellowtail snapper is a demersal species, so this statement might apply to this stock. However, dolphin fish is a highly migratory, pelagic species whose habitat is the entirety of the equatorial and subequatorial Atlantic Ocean. Population dynamics of these two stocks are vastly different. The “Paper Fish” concept, in this case, considers that recreational CPUE is protected, secured or possibly enhanced by maintaining, on an ongoing basis, an excessive amount of unused ACL. We believe that this is just plain, “fuzzy” thinking that may apply to a coastal fish stock having a limited range but certainly not to a highly migratory species. It is important to keep in mind that dolphin fish is ubiquitous in all major oceans, not unlike skipjack tuna. Praeger, 2000, the only attempt made by NOAA to assess dolphin fish stock, states as follows: “..targeting, especially on a schooling species, can cause catchability to increase with declining abundance”.

Final Note: There has been some discussion regarding “Council Boats”, defined as vessels that do not contain an HMS permit but carry a commercial dolphin fish permit and do target dolphin fish using longline gear. Some minor statistical work needs to be done by NOAA in order for us to have a clearer picture of the universe of Council Boats, and this is necessary. We would support further discussion of this fleet in parallel with the scoping process with a view toward determining what negative effects it may have, if any, on the stock or the larger community of fishermen who depend upon dolphin fish. We thank you for the opportunity to comment on the dolphin fish scoping document.

Cordially, David

Frank Navarro	Several years ago they implemented size and bag limits on mahi for recreational anglers and instead of us benefiting from it, the commercial fishery is catching more than they ever have. The recreational fishery seems to be going downhill.
Frank Navarro	I favor Sub-Alternative 2b