

Overview

Joint Law Enforcement Advisory Panel & Law Enforcement Committee

Crowne Plaza
4831 Tanger Outlet Boulevard
North Charleston, SC

August 4-5, 2016

A. Enforcing New Regulation on the Transport of Fillets from The Bahamas

During the March 2016 meeting, the Law Enforcement Advisory Panel (LEAP) discussed regulations governing the transport of snapper grouper, dolphin, and wahoo fillets into the U.S. EEZ from The Bahamas. Regulations became effective on January 27, 2016. At that time, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) was in the process of developing consistent regulations for state waters. The FWC enforcement representatives will brief the LEAP and Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) on progress to date, etc.

B. Proper Stowage of Spearfishing Gear (Attachment 1)

During the March 2016 LEAP meeting, members also discussed whether current regulations pertaining to proper stowage of fishing gear also applied to spearguns or whether language to describe proper stowage for that specific gear was needed. The LEAP requested that Council staff obtain draft language to review and make a recommendation.

C. For-Hire Reporting Amendment (Attachments 2a-2c)

The For-Hire Reporting Amendment contains 3 actions: (1) mandatory, trip-level electronic reporting by federally licensed charter vessels, (2) modification to the existing headboat reporting, requiring trip level reports filed by the Tuesday following each Monday-Sunday reporting week, and (3) reporting of fishing location by charter vessels to the minute of latitude/longitude as required for the headboat vessels. The amendment was taken for public hearings in January-February 2016 and will be considered for final approval and submission in December 2016. Comment is desired on the Council's chosen alternatives. Comments on ways of determining compliance and validating that vessels file the required trip reports are also requested.

A pilot project is underway to test the feasibility and utility of a tablet-based electronic logbook program for use in the charterboat sector of the South Atlantic in preparation for implementation of mandatory electronic reporting for charterboats within the South Atlantic region beginning on January 1, 2017. The South Atlantic Council is working with Harbor Light Software (project co-lead) and the 4 state partners to test electronic logbook reporting on 23 vessels from North Carolina to Florida. An existing ACCSP tablet-based system is being modified to automatically record vessel location and reporting will be done during and at the end of the trip. Data obtained through this tablet-based system will be compatible with Atlantic

Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) standards and with developing Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) validation criteria. Outreach materials and training programs will be developed for captains prior to implementation. Since enforcement will be a critical component to the implementation success of an electronic reporting system, a phone application will be created for state enforcement officers to determine if a vessel is in compliance and document any actions taken.

Task 3 of the project focuses on developing a smart phone application designed for enforcement officers to check reporting compliance. The application will be compatible with Apple iOS 8.x, Android 4.x, and Windows 10. This application will interface to a secure server at the ACCSP's Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS) data warehouse to enable enforcement officers to check both vessel and captain for reporting compliance and valid permits. Officers would be able to note any enforcement action taken. Upon completion of this tool, enforcement officers would be able to reliably and securely access compliance and permit data in the ACCSP permit and license database. Validation of compliance status should be easier and quicker using this tool, which should therefore increase the level of compliance and the reliability of the data.

Mike Errigo, Council staff, will provide an overview of the project and progress to date. Comments to improve the law enforcement component of the project are encouraged.

D. Utility of Operator Cards in other U.S. Regions (Attachment 3)

During the September 2015 meeting, the Law Enforcement Committee received a presentation on the use of operator cards in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Regions. The presentation was requested following discussions of the utility, value, and need for Operator Cards in South Atlantic fisheries and how those who participate in multiple fisheries may be affected. South Atlantic Council members were particularly interested in learning how Operator Cards are used across regions and fisheries. The LEAP and LEC will receive a presentation to this effect from NOAA GC and have the opportunity to discuss pros/cons of how the cards are currently being used in the South Atlantic Region and make recommendations for improvements/changes for the Council to consider.

E. Marine managed areas mapping project (Attachment 4)

The Anthropocene Institute's Marine Managed Area project is an active public-private partnership between the Anthropocene Institute (AnthInst) and the NOAA Marine Protected Area Center. AnthInst will demonstrate its map of marine protected and marine managed areas and provide a brief description of the mapping process with the goal to make members of the South Atlantic law enforcement community aware that this resource exists and to solicit feedback on the map from the enforcement perspective to maximize its effectiveness. With this effort, AnthInst seeks to provide a comprehensive, accurate, and free resource to all coastal and ocean users. In addition to basic boundaries, AnthInst's map includes area specific restrictions, regulation citations, and links to management authority resources in order to enhance situational awareness of regulations and conservation measures for long-term marine management.

The Anthropocene Institute is a small business focused on ocean conservation, located in Menlo Park, CA; please feel free to visit the following website for more information on this project and AnthInst's other ocean projects: www.protectedseas.net

F. Inclusion of SAFMC managed areas in navigation charts (Attachment 5)

The South Atlantic Council has finalized the development of Spawning Special Management Zones (Snapper Grouper Amendment 36) and is addressing the issue of managed areas on NOAA charts. Kyle Ward, Southeast Navigation Manager with NOAA's Office of Coast Survey, will update the LEAP and LEC on NOAA protocol and procedures for charting to clarify how the Council's proposed or existing managed areas would qualify to be included in NOAA navigation charts.

In addition, Chip Collier, Council staff, will provide information on efforts to include Council-managed areas in electronic navigation products.

G. Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) Activities Update

Federal and state agency representatives on the LEAP will provide updates on the status of Joint Enforcement Agreements and supported activities.

H. Other Business (Attachment 6)

Discuss compliance with dealer reporting requirements and recommend ways to improve.