

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
RECREATIONAL REPORTING WORKSHOP
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
December 5, 2017

The workshop was focused on recreational reporting methods in order to aid in the development of Snapper Grouper Amendment 46. Currently there are several different options under consideration for private recreational reporting to include in Amendment 46. The goal of the workshop is to provide Council members an opportunity to talk with program managers/biologists in order to discuss how different programs operate and how the different methods could improve catch and discard estimates in the private recreational fishery.

Recreational Reporting Workshop Panel

- CarolAnne Feehan – NC Wildlife Resources Commission
- Tara Topping – Texas A&M Corpus Christi
- Carly Somerset – MS Department of Marine Resources
- Bev Sauls – FL Fish and Wildlife Commission
- Nicole Smith – LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- Kelsey Dick – South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
- Geoff White – Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program

One option the Council has considered is a tagging program similar to tagging program for the big game management in North Carolina. North Carolina requires hunters to report takes of all bear, turkey, and deer. Last year they changed their system to a completely electronic system. Prior to this change many of the hunters were reporting through the phone and other electronic means. Several lessons learned were discussed through their lessons learned and it was recommended to consult with the Organization of Fish and Wildlife Information Managers (OFWIM) if there are issues with electronic programs.

Voluntary reporting was requested to be considered as an alternative. iSnapper is a voluntary reporting program to report red snapper catches run by the Harte Institute at Texas A&M University. When the program was developed, fishermen were concerned about sector separation in the Gulf. Based on their program design, they are able to expand the reported catch estimates to catch estimates for Texas.

Mississippi requires reporting of red snapper catches through the Tails n' Scales program. Prior to leaving the dock, fishermen must acquire a trip number before heading offshore. The number can be acquired through a smartphone application, webportal, or phone. Fishermen must complete their trip, prior to starting another trip. The requirement to acquire a trip number has been beneficial for law enforcement and sampling.

Two different survey designs were presented to improve catch estimates in the private recreational fishery. In Florida, fishermen landings red grouper, red snapper, gag, black grouper,

vermillion snapper, triggerfish, and amberjack in Florida are required to have a Gulf Reef Fish Angler designation on their license. This has resulted in sub-strata be developed to improve the catch estimates. A mail survey is conducted for the fishermen with a Florida Gulf Reef Fish designation on their saltwater license. This survey has increased the precision of catch estimates for multiple reef fish species.

In Louisiana, LA Creel has replaced Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) as the method to estimate catch in the recreational fishery. Fishermen that fish offshore are required to have a recreational offshore landings permit (ROLP) to harvest: tunas, billfish, swordfish, amberjacks, groupers, snappers, hinds, cobia, wahoo and dolphin. The survey has more precise estimates than previously estimated through MRIP and can provide estimates of catch typically two weeks later.

The Council is currently piloting an electronic reporting program, MyFishCount. Fishermen were able to report their red snapper catches in 2017 through a web-portal and will be available in 2018 as a phone app for several different species. Fishermen were also able to report abandoned trip reports. These reports were considered in the re-opening for another weekend in December for red snapper. The program will continue into 2018.

Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) is a data warehouse for fisheries data along the Atlantic Coast. They support planning to integrate and combine information in the region. The development of reporting tools to complement other data streams already funneling into ACCSP and recommends a multi-species approach and cooperation among states in the South Atlantic.

The Council discussed the different recreational reporting methods with the Recreational Reporting Panel.

MOTIONS

No motions were made.