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South Atlantic  
Fishery Mgmt. Council



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
1315 East-West Highway  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

8 August 2017

Dr. Michelle Duval  
Chair  
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
4055 Faber Place, Suite 201  
North Charleston, SC 29405

Dear Dr. Duval:

Thank you for your letter of June 27, and our subsequent telephone conversation, expressing the Council's concerns about alternative estimation methods for species that are rarely encountered in the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) on-site catch surveys. The results of this work are of great importance to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and our stakeholders in the South Atlantic.

NOAA Fisheries is committed to working collaboratively with the Fishery Management Councils to develop and certify statistically sound approaches that would be appropriate to apply in specific situations when standard MRIP estimates are not sufficiently precise. The information John Foster and Dave Van Voorhees presented to the SAFMC's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) in October 2015 exemplified a subset of potential methods that could be applied to select species. By jointly planning a workshop with the Council SSCs, we intended to expand the range of potential estimation approaches to be tested and evaluated for application in different situations. We believe it is important to engage the Council SSCs in identifying, developing, testing and evaluating alternative estimation methods for each species to ensure that diverse viewpoints and ideas are considered when matching any new estimation methods with management strategies being employed by the Councils.


Over the coming months, we will be working on a comprehensive, collaborative effort to develop and certify alternative estimation methods that will address the needs of all Councils. We are committed to completing that process as soon as possible while ensuring the thorough scientific evaluation needed to deliver statistically sound approaches that will be applicable to management needs.

I am happy to discuss these and other options with you in greater detail. Finally, I look forward to working with you to improve the effectiveness of MRIP estimation methods in the South Atlantic.



Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



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