

# **SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC PANEL OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE**



**SEP Meeting Overview**

**April 17-18, 2023**

**Town and Country Inn  
2008 Savannah Highway  
Charleston, SC 29407**

## PURPOSE

This meeting is convened to discuss and provide input to the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) on:

- Recent and developing Council actions and amendments,
- The Citizen Science Program,
- Research on using Portfolio Theory to improve the management of living marine resources,
- Research on the socio-economic impacts of COVID,
- Using Portfolio Theory to Improve the Management of Living Marine Resources: a Demonstration for South Atlantic Fisheries,
- Feedback on SAFMC Research Recommendations,
- Mackerel Port Meeting recommendations,
- Socio-economic components of the SAFMC Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation,
- SEFSC recreational discards of red snapper and other snapper grouper species, and
- Status of and potential improvements to economic analysis of recreational fisheries

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**Attachment 1a.** Socio-Economic Panel Agenda Overview

**Attachment 1b.** Minutes from the April 2022 meeting

**Attachment 2.** Recent and Developing South Atlantic Council Amendments

**Attachment 3a.** Citizen Science Program update presentation

**Attachment 3b.** Citizen Science Evaluation Proposal: Decoding the Motivations of Fishers Considering Participation in Citizen Science Projects

**Attachment 3c.** Citizen Science Evaluation Proposal presentation

**Attachment 4a.** Marine Fisheries and the COVID-19 Pandemic presentation

**Attachment 4b.** Marine Fisheries and the COVID-19 Pandemic report

**Attachment 5a.** Portfolio Analyses of South Atlantic Fisheries

**Attachment 5b.** Presentation on Portfolio Analyses of South Atlantic Fisheries

**Attachment 6.** South Atlantic Research and Monitoring Plan 2023-2027: Socio-Economic Panel review

**Attachment 7.** Mackerel Port Meetings presentation

**Attachment 8.** SAFMC Management Strategy Evaluation summary for the Socio-Economic Panel

**Attachment 9.** Presentation slides for SEFSC research on recreational discards of red snapper and other snapper grouper species

**Attachment 10.** Summary of common economic analyses in SAFMC amendments

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Documents**

- **Attachment 1a.** Socio-Economic Panel Agenda Overview
- **Attachment 1b.** Minutes from the April 2022 meeting

### **1.2. ACTIONS**

- Introductions
- Review and approve the agenda
- Approve April 2022 transcript
- Opportunity for public comment

## **2. Recent and Developing Council Actions**

### **2.1. Document**

- **Attachment 2.** Recent and Developing South Atlantic Council Amendments

### **2.2. Overview**

Council staff will provide a briefing on recent and upcoming amendments and actions (**Attachment 2**). The following amendments may be of particular interest to SEP members.

### *Amendment 48 (Wreckfish ITQ Program Modernization)*

**Staff Lead:** Christina Wiegand

**Purpose of Amendment:** The Council finished its second review of the Wreckfish ITQ program in September of 2019. As part of the review there were several recommendations made to modernize the program, which will be addressed in this amendment.

**Action Summary:** Moving away from a paper coupon-based program to an electronic program; fishing season and spawning closure; cost recovery; wreckfish permit requirement; allocation issues; offloading sites and times; and vessel monitoring system requirements.

**Development Level:** public hearings complete, consider for formal review in September 2023.

### *Regulatory Amendment 35 (Discard Mortality Reduction and Red Snapper Catch Levels)*

**Staff Leads:** Mike Schmidtke

**Purpose of the Amendment:** Respond to the latest stock assessment for Red Snapper (SEDAR 73). Red Snapper are overfished and overfishing is occurring, mainly due to the large number of Red Snapper that die after catch and release. Dead discards are a major issue in the snapper grouper fishery as a whole and affect many species within the complex.

**Action Summary:** Modify the Red Snapper ABC and ACLs and reduce dead releases in the snapper grouper fishery through prohibiting use of multiple, separate hooks per line by the recreational sector, as well as expansion of best fishing practices outreach and education efforts. These actions are designed to implement Red Snapper catch levels based on the best scientific information available, reduce widespread discarding of snapper grouper species, and address overfishing of red snapper.

**Development Level:** Final Approval; pending submission to NMFS.

### *Amendment 46 (Private Recreational Permitting)*

**Staff Lead:** John Hadley

**Purpose of the Amendment:** Address deficiencies in recreational data through the creation of a permit requirement for private recreational vessels or anglers. Additionally, consider establishing an education component to encourage best fishing practices and reduce discard mortality in the snapper grouper fishery.

**Action Summary:** This amendment will investigate establishing a permit and education requirement for anglers to participate in the recreational snapper grouper fishery.

**Development Level:** Scoping conducted and amendment being developed.

### *Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation*

**Staff Lead:** Chip Collier and Judd Curtis

**Purpose of the Amendment:** Dead releases are a major issue in the snapper grouper fishery as a whole and affect many species within the complex. The Council has directed a management strategy evaluation (MSE) project that would consider multispecies effects of potential management changes and be used to develop a more holistic approach to management of the snapper grouper fishery. The amendment will follow the MSE project and consider implementation of management changes evaluated through the MSE.

**Action Summary:** A future amendment will provide actions intended to incorporate recommendations from the MSE project.

**Development Level:** MSE in progress, amendment to follow.

### *Unassessed Snapper Grouper Species ABCs/ACLs/Allocations*

**Staff Lead:** Mike Schmidtke

**Purpose of the Amendment:** Update the ABCs, ACLs, and sector allocations for unassessed snapper grouper species based on catch level recommendations from the SSC.

**Action Summary:** Adjust ABCs, ACLs, and sector allocations for unassessed snapper grouper species to incorporate revised recreational landings based on updated MRIP-FES methodology.

**Development Level:** Scheduled to begin development in December 2023.

### *Comprehensive ABC Control Rule Amendment*

**Staff Leads:** Mike Schmidtke and Judd Curtis

**Purpose of Amendment:** To modify the ABC Control Rule to address flexibility allowed under the MSA and revise how uncertainty and risk tolerance are addressed in setting ABCs.

**Action Summary:** Modify the ABC Control Rule, including specification of scientific uncertainty and management risk components, application of the Control Rule to rebuilding stocks, criteria and procedures for phase-in of ABC changes, criteria and procedures for carry-over of unused portions of the annual catch limit, and establishment a framework procedure to allow carry-overs.

**Development Level:** Final Approval; pending submission to NMFS.

#### 2.3. Presentation and Discussion

John Hadley and Christina Wiegand, SAFMC staff

#### 2.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and make recommendations as appropriate. In general, this agenda item is meant to brief the SEP on potential Council actions that may be presented to the group for review later in the meeting or at a future SEP meeting.

### **SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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### **3. Citizen Science Program update**

#### 3.1. Document

- **Attachment 3a.** Citizen Science Program update presentation
- **Attachment 3b.** Citizen Science Evaluation Proposal: Decoding the Motivations of Fishers Considering Participation in Citizen Science Projects
- **Attachment 3c.** Citizen Science Evaluation Proposal presentation

#### 3.2. Overview

Julia Byrd, SAFMC staff, will provide an update on program activities and recent efforts of the [SAFMC's Citizen Science Program](#). The presentation will include updates on the SMILE and SAFMC Release projects; share findings from the FISHstory pilot project; and share interview results from initial Program evaluation and stakeholder assessment work. To continue the evaluation work, the Citizen Science Program will collaborate with Rick Bonney, Dr. Jennifer

Sweeney Tookes, and Dr. Tracy Yandle. Dr. Sweeney Tookes will provide an overview of the work she and Dr. Yandle will be doing to gather further information from fishermen as part of these efforts. SEP members will be asked to provide input on this work through the discussion questions below.

### Presentation and Discussion

Julia Byrd and Meg Withers, SAFMC staff

### 3.3. ACTIONS

Provide feedback and guidance for the Citizen Science Program evaluation based on the discussion questions below.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. Does the SEP have recommendations on alternative configurations for the geographic zones for the study? Other resources to determine where most King Mackerel and snapper grouper are currently being landed? (See Figure 1 and Table 2)
2. Regarding the angler sector:
  - Suggestions for enhancing randomization in sampling, especially considering the fundamental characteristics of the population are unknown?
  - Suggestions for additional strategies for recruiting in this sector?
  - Suggestions for contacts in fishing clubs or other fishing organizations?
3. Thoughts on likely preferences of participants for phone vs video vs in person by sector?
4. We plan for the interview guides to address themes of:
  - Attitudes to and willingness to work with management
  - Fishery conditions
  - Trust & well-being (social and economic)
  - Social networks
5. If time allows, are there any additional themes you would recommend be addressed?

### **SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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## **4. The COVID-19 Pandemic and South Atlantic Fisheries - Findings to Date**

### 4.1. Document

- **Attachment 4a.** The COVID-19 Pandemic and South Atlantic Fisheries presentation
- **Attachment 4b.** Marine Fisheries and the COVID-19 Pandemic report

## 4.2. Overview

*Marine Fisheries and the COVID-19 Pandemic: Calendar Year 2020 Survey Data and Analysis* describes elements of a large-scale survey program implemented by NOAA Fisheries to examine domestic fishery impacts associated with the COVID-19 pandemic at the year-one mark of the pandemic in the United States. The origins of this project relate to NOAA's need for information regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the fishing industry and fishing dependent businesses across the United States, knowing that the novel coronavirus COVID-19 would generate profound challenges across the various domestic fishing and seafood distribution sectors.

## 4.3. Presentation

Ed Glazier, NOAA Southeast Regional Office  
Matt McPherson, NOAA Southeast Fisheries Science Center

## 4.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and provide recommendations for how impacts associated with the COVID-19 pandemic should be considered in the management process.

### Discussion Questions

1. Given the unusual fishing behavior exhibited during the pandemic, does the SEP have recommendations for how staff should consider data from 2020/2021 when conducting analysis for the purposes of management?
  - a. Commercial data?
  - b. Recreational data?
2. Based on the study, what aspects of pandemic impacts are likely to continue to persist into the future (such as participation rates, loss of infrastructure, movement of commercial landings to online sales or "dock to dish", etc.)?

### **SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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## **5. Using Portfolio Theory to Improve the Management of Living Marine Resources: A Demonstration for South Atlantic Fisheries**

### 5.1. Documents

- **Attachment 5a.** Portfolio Analyses of South Atlantic Fisheries
- **Attachment 5b.** Presentation on Portfolio Analyses of South Atlantic Fisheries

### 5.2. Overview

Staff from NOAA Fisheries and UMASS Dartmouth are working together to develop an ecosystem-based fishery management approach using portfolio theory to help maximize commercial revenue. The project focuses on the commercial sector for which landings and revenue were available. The frontier analysis of the snapper grouper commercial fishery indicated that observed revenue could have been achieved with less risk of foregone yield or

more revenue could have been obtained with the same risk. This is the first review of the approach for South Atlantic Fisheries.

### 5.3. Presentation

Jason Link, NOAA Northeast Fisheries Science Center

Steve Cadrin, Lauren Brewster, and Fiona Edwards, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

### 5.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and make recommendations on how to refine the frontier analysis and determine the sensitivity to the approach.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. Does the treatment of the data seem appropriate for the analysis?
2. Are the methods to analyze the frontier gap appropriate?
3. Describe how the revenue and risk change in the frontier approach.
4. Provide recommendations on how to improve the optimizer tolerance and precision.
5. How could the Council use this information in management?

## **SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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## **6. Feedback on SAFMC Research Recommendations**

### 6.1. Document

- **Attachment 6.** South Atlantic Research and Monitoring Plan 2023-2027: Socio-Economic Review

### 6.2. Overview

The Council revises their research and monitoring plan every two years. The research and monitoring plan is used by Council and NOAA Fisheries staff to develop research concepts that are intended for use in management, provided to NOAA Fisheries for potential inclusion in research grants as priorities, and used by other researchers during development of research proposals. The Panel is provided an opportunity to review the 2023-2027 South Atlantic Research and Monitoring plan. The Council will consider the plan at its June 2023 meeting.

### 6.3. Presentation

Chip Collier, SAFMC Staff

### 6.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and make recommendations as appropriate.



Discussion Questions:

1. Do the social and economic priorities in the South Atlantic Research and Monitoring Prioritization Plan accurately reflect the needs in this region?
2. Are there any additional priorities that should be added to the current list? Consider general needs as well as recent nation-wide initiatives such as “30 for 30” or increased integration of Equity and Environmental Justice.

**SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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## **7. Mackerel Port Meeting recommendations**

### 7.1. Document

- **Attachment 7.** Mackerel Port Meetings Presentation

### 7.2. Overview

Based on recommendations from the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel, the Council directed staff to begin work on a plan to conduct port meetings for king and Spanish mackerel. The purpose of these port meetings will be to gain a comprehensive understanding of the mackerel fisheries to improve management efforts. Port meetings will *tentatively* be conducted in key communities throughout the Gulf of Mexico and along the Atlantic up to the southern end of Massachusetts in cooperation with other councils, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, and state agencies. After port meetings have been conducted, staff will develop a final report that includes notes from all conducted port meetings and a thematic analysis identifying patterns and themes among the different meetings.

### 7.3. Presentation

Christina Wiegand, SAFMC staff

### 7.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and provide feedback on port meeting structure and outcomes.

Discussion Questions:

1. What types of facilitation methods should be considered? Sticky wall/dot exercises; break out groups; group consensus exercise, etc.
  - a. How might items identified by the Council be organized and prioritized for port meeting discussions?
  - b. What is the best way to gather thoughts on short and long-term management solutions?
2. How should staff identify the key communities to hold port meetings?

3. How can port meetings be distinguished from other stakeholder meetings such as MSE discussions and public comment opportunities?
4. Are there other analysis/products that may be helpful to include in the final report?
5. Does the SEP have any comments for the Council on the current objectives for the CMP FMP?

## SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

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## 8. Socio-economic components of the SAFMC Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation

### 8.1. Documents

- **Attachment 8.** SAFMC Management Strategy Evaluation summary for the Socio-Economic Panel

### 8.2. Overview

In 2021, the Council directed a management strategy evaluation (MSE) to be conducted for the South Atlantic snapper grouper fishery to develop management strategies that will consider addressing the number of released fish to improve yield throughout the snapper grouper fishery, balancing the needs for fishery access and resource use while preventing overfishing and rebuilding overfished stocks. During the development of the MSE, angler welfare and angler well-being were mentioned as objectives for evaluating outcomes of the MSE. Staff are requesting guidance on available data and methods that can be used to evaluate angler welfare and angler well-being.

### 8.3. Presentation

Chip Collier, SAFMC Staff

### 8.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and make recommendations as appropriate.

#### Discussion Questions:

1. How can angler welfare and angler well-being be incorporated into the current MSE process for the snapper grouper fishery?
2. What social or economic methods, data, or tools could be used to evaluate these two topics?
3. Does the SEP have recommendations on potential concepts, objectives, and strategies to address angler well-being and angler welfare that would be appropriate for the snapper grouper fishery?
  - a. An example from concept to strategy for an MSE would be concept: stakeholders identifying the lack of trophy fish being available, objective: increase the number of

trophy fish in the population, and strategy: increase the minimum size limit to allow for a higher percentage of fish reaching trophy fish.

**SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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**9. SEFSC research on recreational discards of red snapper and other snapper grouper species**

9.1. Documents

- **Attachment 9.** Presentation slides for SEFSC research on recreational discards of red snapper and other snapper grouper species

9.2. Overview

Mortality stemming from large numbers of fish being caught and released by recreational anglers has posed an ongoing challenge for the management of red snapper and other stocks of snapper grouper species in the South Atlantic region. Research is currently being conducted to compute improved discard estimates for the South Atlantic snapper grouper fishery. Additionally, the research includes efforts to model the economic and biological effects of certain regulatory regimes that would minimize discards while potentially increasing retained catch.

9.3. Presentation

Scott Crosson, NOAA Southeast Fisheries Science Center

9.4. ACTIONS

Evaluate the information presented, provide feedback on the nature of research, and make recommendations on the project. In general, this agenda item is meant to update the SEP on research relevant to fisheries in the Southeast.

**SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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**10. Discussion on the status of and potential improvements to economic analysis of recreational fisheries**

10.1. Documents

**Attachment 10.** Summary of common economic analyses in SAFMC amendments

10.2. Overview

NOAA Fisheries will be hosting a Recreational Economics Constituents Workshop from April 25-26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 in Tampa, Florida. The workshop is intended to engage the recreational fishing community to increase understanding of how economics plays a role in recreational fisheries management decisions, understand constituents' perceptions, identify ways to that constituents can contribute to economic data collection and analysis, and identify avenues to collaborate on

the communication of recreational fisheries economic data and analysis as well as support future information sharing.

As part of the workshop, there will be a panel discussion on understanding economic analysis needed for a regulatory review. The panel will discuss what analyses economists conduct that contribute to the regulatory process and how decisions are made with imperfect information. The panel will include Scott Crosson providing a Council SSC member's perspective on potential improvements to economic analysis.

### 10.3. Presentation

Scott Crosson, NOAA Southeast Fisheries Science Center  
John Hadley, SAFMC staff

### 10.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and make recommendations as appropriate. The SEP may want to incorporate topics and points brought forth earlier in the meeting into this discussion.

#### Discussion Questions:

- 1) Focusing on economic analysis of recreational fisheries, what type of analyses does the SEP feel are particularly strong? What types of analyses are not as strong or have the potential for notable improvements?
- 2) Where should future research priorities be directed for economic analyses of recreational fisheries? What sort of improvements could be made?

#### **SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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### **11. Other Business**

### **12. Opportunity for Public Comment**

### **13. Report and Recommendations Review**

### **14. Next SEP Meeting**

- Spring 2024 Annual Meeting in Charleston, SC