

## FISHERY PERFORMANCE REPORTS

➤ The purpose of fishery performance reports (FPR) is to assemble information from the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) fishery advisory panel members' experience and observations on the water and in the marketplace to complement scientific and landings data.

Council staff are currently developing an allocation decision tree tool to help the Council in examining allocations across all managed species. An important source of information is data on the needs of a fishery based on Council member knowledge and feedback from constituents. FPRs are one way to gather information from constituents that can help inform allocation discussions.

*Example FPR for Blueline Tilefish: [https://safmc.net/download/Blueline-Tilefish-FPR\\_April2019.pdf](https://safmc.net/download/Blueline-Tilefish-FPR_April2019.pdf)*

### The Process

➤ Fishery Performance Reports are typically conducted for a given species during the relevant advisory panel meeting in advance of an upcoming stock assessment.

1. An overview of the fishery is prepared by Council staff and provided to advisory panel members prior to their scheduled meeting. The fishery overview, containing the following, is presented via an interactive web application (shinyapp).
  - a. general biology,
  - b. stock status as determined by the most recent assessment,
  - c. management history,
  - d. commercial statistics (landings by year, area, month, and season, if applicable),
  - e. recreational statistics (landings by year, area, wave, and number of directed trips, if applicable),
  - f. economic performance (ex-vessel price, ex-vessel value, and economic impacts).
2. Discussion questions (**Appendix 1**) addressing the following, are also prepared by Council staff and provided to the advisory panel members prior to the meeting.
  - a. landing and discard level and trends over the last five years,
  - b. current management measure performance,
  - c. environmental conditions and ecology,
  - d. social and economic influences,
  - e. other concerns or data gaps.
3. During the advisory panel meeting, Council staff review the fishery overview and answer any questions advisory panel members may have before beginning the discussion. Using the list of discussion questions, advisory panel members discuss their thoughts and observations on the record.
4. Using notes and meeting minutes, Council staff prepares an FPR which summarizes the discussion that took place.

## NEW PUBLIC INPUT TOOL

➡ In addition to conducting fishery performance reports, the Council has requested staff develop an online form to gather input from the public, similar to the [Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council’s Fishermen Feedback](#) (formerly ‘Something’s Fishy’) tool. This tool would be made available at the same time a fishery performance report was conducted.

| Positives:  | Challenges:  |
|---|--|
| An online form would provide a wide range of stakeholder input.   | May require some level of Paperwork Reduction Act approval. <sup>1</sup> |
| Data gathered through an online form could undergo text analysis. | Would be an additional ask of stakeholders.                              |

### Possible Analyses to be Conducted:

- Word clouds and word trees to depict key words and phrases used in comments,
- Sentiment analysis to explore the attitudes reflected in the comments,
- Simple thematic analysis to understand shared patterns across comments.

\*Information typically collected through the public comment process would allow us to look at these patterns across location and across sector.\*

## ALLOCATION DECISION TREE TOOL NEEDS

➡ During their February 2022 meeting, the Council reviewed the draft allocation decision tree tool and expressed interest in gathering information from Advisory Panel members and other stakeholders to ensure they had adequate information when discussing decision tree questions that require the use of informed judgement.


More information on the following topics was requested:

- Species distribution shifts that could affect allocations in the near-term (next five-years).
  - **Currently addressed by this FPR question:** When/where are the fish available, and has this changed? For instance, has there been any shift in catch (annually/seasonally) inshore/offshore or north/south? If so, please describe.
  - **Proposed addition to the FPR:** If there has been a shift in catch, does it have the potential to affect current sector (or regional) allocations?
- Whether there is an important catch and release aspect to the species (the importance of abundance to the recreational sector).
  - **Currently addressed by this FPR question:** none.

<sup>1</sup> The Council is able to solicit public comment from stakeholders. However, formal survey work typically requires approval through the Office of Management and Budget.

- **Proposed addition to the FPR:** How common is the practice of catch and release in this fishery? Please describe.
- Cultural and historical significance of a species within communities.
  - **Currently addressed by this FPR question:** What communities are dependent on this fishery?
  - **Proposed FPR addition:** Have there been any festivals or events that highlight this species (past or present)? Is this species an important driver of tourism? Do you see imagery of fisherman and working waterfronts being used in marketing material? Please describe.
- Changes in price and demand for seafood throughout the seafood supply chain.
  - **Currently addressed by this FPR question:** For the commercial sector, how has price and demand for shadow shark changed?
  - **Proposed addition to the FPR:** Beyond what the boat gets paid, has price and demand from the end consumer changed?

## QUESTIONS FOR THE SOCIOECONOMIC PANEL

 Provide input to staff on how to modify the fishery performance reports and develop a new public input tool in order to solicit information for use in the allocation decision tree tool.

1. Are the proposed additional discussion questions for developing the Fishery Performance Reports sufficient to gather the information needed for future discussions of allocations?
2. What improvements could be made to the discussion questions to produce more valuable information? Are there topics important to allocations that are missing from the Fishery Performance Reports?
3. Fishery Performance Reports are time consuming to conduct with advisory panel members, are there any questions that seem redundant or unnecessary?
4. The public is asked to provide input to the Council often (public hearings, meeting public comment etc.) How can staff ensure that the new public input tool stands out and isn't overly burdensome on stakeholders?
5. Given constraints associated with the PRA, how can staff structure the tool to elicit information that is important for the Council's allocation discussions?
6. Given time constraints, other than the analyses listed, are there other ways to present the data gathered through the new public input tool.
7. Any ideas for a catchy name for the new public input tool?

## APPENDIX 1: FISHERY PERFORMANCE REPORT QUESTIONS

➡ Spring 2017 was when the first Fishery Performance Reports were conducted. The discussion questions have changed slightly over years. The questions below reflect the most recent version.

Have there been **substantial changes** in the shadow shark fishery? If so, when and what do you think caused the change?

### **Fishing Behavior/Catch Levels:**

- Have there been effort shifts to/from shadow shark? If so, please describe, including the time frame for when these shifts occurred.
- Have there been considerable changes in fishing techniques and/or gears used to target shadow shark? If so, please describe, including the time frame for when these changes occurred.
- How much fishing for shadow shark typically occurs during the day versus at night? Has this changed?
- Do you actively avoid fishing for shadow shark in certain areas to avoid catching undersized fish or highly regulated fish to lessen bait loss?
- What do you see in terms of discards in the commercial sector? In the recreational sector?
  - How often are shadow shark discarded? What are the reasons they are discarded?
  - Do you encounter shadow shark as bycatch when fishing for other species? If so, what species are being targeted on these trips?
  - Do you think discard mortality is a significant factor for shadow shark? Has this changed? If so, please describe, including the time frame when the change occurred.

### **Social and Economic Influences:**

- For the commercial sector, how has price and demand for shadow shark changed?
  - Is there increased demand for a specific size of shadow shark (e.g., plate sized)?
- How has demand for charter/headboat trips targeting shadow shark changed?
- Among the species you target, how important are shadow shark to your overall business (charter or commercial)?
- What communities are dependent on the shadow shark fishery?
- Have changes in infrastructure (docks, marinas, fish houses) affected fishing opportunities for shadow shark?
- How have fishermen and communities adapted to changes in the shadow shark fishery?

### **Management Measures:**

- Are there new management measures that the Council should consider or are there existing management measures (such as size limit, trip limit, bag limit, season, etc.) that should be changed?
- Are the current annual catch limits and allocations appropriate for each sector?

**Environmental, Ecological, and Habitat:**

- Do you perceive that the abundance of shadow shark has changed over the past ten years? If so, how has it changed?
- When/where are the fish available, and has this changed? For instance, has there been any shift in catch (annually/seasonally) inshore/offshore or north/south? If so, please describe.
- Has the size of the fish that you typically encounter changed? If so, could you briefly describe the trend?
- Have you noticed any unique effects of environmental conditions on shadow shark? If so, please describe.
- What are your observations on the timing and length of the shadow shark spawning season in your area (time periods when fish are observed with large ovaries or eggs spilling out externally or while venting)?
- What do you see now in terms of recruitment? Where are the small fish? Are large and small fish found in the same locations?
- Have you observed changes in catch depth or apparent bottom type fished on?
- How have sea conditions (monthly/seasonally) affected fishable days?
- Have you noticed any change in the species caught with shadow shark over the years or seasonally?

**Other:**

- What else is important for the Council to know about shadow shark?