



Best Fishing Practices Outreach Guidance

Socioeconomic Panel Meeting

April 2022

- 1. Use the correct language
Avoid using the phrases “release mortality” or “discard mortality”. Use “regulatory releases”. Instead of “reduce discard mortality”, phrase things in a positive way and use “improve survivorship of released fish”.
- 2. Don’t group fishermen together
Avoid lumping fishermen into a group. Use the word “we” instead of “you” so that it’s known this is a collaborative effort.
- 3. Use visuals where appropriate
Visuals are extremely helpful to show the severity of barotrauma. When on media tours or somewhere without a presentation, have some barotrauma pictures saved on phone to show.
- 4. Focus on snapper grouper species
Note that BFP can be applied to all fish but keep conversations focused on the snapper-grouper species because those are the species that regularly experience barotrauma. Provide business card to correct SAFMC staff member or organization when asked about other species groups or topics.
- 5. Don’t focus on venting
Venting tools can be used to release gasses out of a fish’s swim bladder, but we are not promoting them. Use requires greater skill and can harm the fish more if done incorrectly. If venting is asked about, answer and be clear that the practice is allowed, but that descending devices are still required to be on board and are the best method to use to recompress a fish.
- 6. Don’t show favoritism
Avoid talking pros and cons about commercially made descending devices. Focus on the benefits of each type (i.e., inverted hook, jaw clamp, weighted crate) and that it’s based on the fishermen’s preference. This is particularly important when speaking with store staff so that we are not showing preference on commercially made descending devices.
- 7. Don’t choose a side
Commercial and recreational fishermen will likely express frustration with the opposite sector and their discarded fish. Either way, discards come from each sector and all discards affect the fishery negatively.

Questions for the Socioeconomic Panel:

1. How can staff present best fishing practices as the responsibility of an ethical fishermen without inadvertently offending fishermen or sounding unsympathetic to the practicalities of being on the water?
2. Are there key words or jargon that staff should be using (i.e., “floaters” instead of “experiencing barotrauma”) when communicating with fishermen?
3. How can staff make an immediate impression on tackle shops, considering both time and financial constraints.
4. How can staff help encourage those who are influential in fishing communities to not just utilize but share information related to best fishing practices?