

Science, Service, Stewardship



Minimizing Discards in the Snapper Grouper Fishery

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**NOAA
FISHERIES
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Discards regulations project (Crosson et al.)

- 1) Compute improved discard estimates for the reef fish fishery in the U.S. South Atlantic
- 2) Model the economic and biological effects of a limited number of significantly different regulatory regimes that would minimize those discards *while potentially increasing retained catch*.

Workgroup: Rick DeVictor (SERO), Erik Williams and Kyle Shertzer (SEFSC), Genny Nesslage and Chris Dumas (SSC), Scott Crosson (PI/SEFSC/SSC)

Discards Project timeline

One in person meeting in Beaufort in May 2022, online since then

Hired a contractor to go through logbooks and develop statistically defensible methods to adjust missing discards information

Biological assessment modeling underway by Kyle Shertzer

Scenario Modeling

Shorter term options—area and time closures

Longer term options—individually-oriented effort reduction (tags etc)

Tradeoff between regulatory ease and “angler freedom” (ability to fish when and how you would like to)

Key species

Eventually needs to be multispecies to be truly effective

Start with RS model and add rest of SG complex

- Red snapper, BSB, red grouper, gag, scamp, red porgy, vermilion, gray triggerfish, greater amberjack (cluster together and have assessments, and high landings & discards)
- Add deepwater (blueline, golden, snowy complex) later if well received

SERO EFP

SERO developing an Exempted Fishing Permit to deal with red snapper in the South Atlantic

Objective 1: To provide unbiased information about recreational catch composition in areas where red snapper are abundant and being discarded.

Objective 2: To provide information on angler behavior under a tag-based vs seasonal fishing regulations.

An example methodology

X participants in the study, 1 year study

1/2 participants would be issued X red snapper tags for the year. Once they reach the number of tags, they must stop bottom fishing for the annual study period. They have mandatory retention of all snapper grouper species.

1/2 participants would be allowed to fish on July 14 and 15, 2024 with a 1 fish red snapper bag limit (control). This group does not have mandatory retention.

Request for Proposals

Will be coming out later this spring from SERO, still being finalized. Eligible applicants may be institutions of higher education, nonprofits, commercial organizations, individuals, and state, local, and Indian Tribal governments.

Projects will be scored on Technical/scientific merit, Application to the priorities list (IE needs), Costs, and Data policies

Selected projects will get an Exempted Fishing Permit for participants.