

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PANEL OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE



SEP Meeting Overview

April 24-25, 2017

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

PURPOSE

This meeting is convened to discuss and provide input to the SSC and Council on:

- Recent and developing Council actions
- Social and economic sections in the updated Fishery Ecosystem Plan
- Potential red snapper management and analysis of fishing behavior
- ABC Control Rule -- economic and social indicators of stock status
- The outline of the Snapper Grouper socio-economic profile

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Attachment 2a. Recent and Developing SAFMC Amendments

Attachment 2b. Core Variables for the SAFMC logbook

Attachment 3. Summary of Social and Economic Components of FMPs.

Attachment 4a. Graphic of potential red snapper adaptive management plan

Attachment 4b. Snapper Grouper Amendment 43 Options Paper

Attachment 5a: ABC Control Rule SSC Decision Document (Oct 2016)

Attachment 5b: 2017 Mid-Atlantic Golden Tilefish Fishery Performance Report

Attachment 5c: 2016 Mid-Atlantic Bluefish Fishery Performance Report

Attachment 6. Outline for SG Socio-Economic Profile

1. Introduction

1.1. Documents

Agenda

Minutes, May 2016

1.2. ACTIONS

- Approve Agenda
- Approve May 2016 Minutes
- Introductions

2. Update on the Citizen Science Program

2.1. Documents

Attachment 1. SAFMC Citizen Science Program Blueprint Proposal

This is the guiding document generated by the SAFMC Citizen Science Planning Workgroup, which includes details on the program identity, goals and objectives, partnerships, and administration. More details about the Citizen Science Program are available here: <http://safmc.net/citizen-science-initiative/>.

2.2. Overview

For many years, the Council has grappled with the challenge of ensuring adequate and timely science to support management despite limited resources, a multitude of species to manage, and a complex and highly diverse ecosystem. Discussions of data shortcomings and the resulting scientific uncertainties often lead to offers from fishermen to provide their vessels as research platforms, collect samples and record their own observations to help increase scientific knowledge and 'fill the gaps'. The Council recognizes the desire of constituents to get involved and the need to have a well-designed program and accompanying sampling protocols to ensure that information collected through such efforts is useful. To meet this growing need, the Council developing a comprehensive Fishery Citizen Science Program. Amber Von Harten, SAFMC staff, will brief the SEP on the SAFMC Citizen Science Program and make the panel aware that the program is currently seeking applicants for the advisory panel.

2.3. Discussion

Amber Von Harten, SAFMC staff

2.4. ACTIONS

No specific action is being requested of the SEP, but interested SEP members are encouraged to apply for the SAFMC Citizen Science Advisory Panel.

3. Recent and Developing Council Actions

3.1. Document

Attachment 2a. Recent and Developing SAFMC Amendments

Attachment 2b. Core Variables for the SAFMC logbook

This document includes the variables that will have been included in the version of the for-hire electronic logbook that is currently being used in the SAFMC-ACCSP electronic reporting pilot study.

3.2. Overview

Council staff will provide a briefing on recent and upcoming amendments and actions (*Attachment 2a*). The briefing will go into specific details on the recently approved For-Hire Electronic Reporting Amendment and the Snapper Grouper visioning amendments (Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 26 and 27).

South Atlantic For-Hire Electronic Reporting Amendment

During the March 2015 meeting, the South Atlantic Council approved actions and alternatives to require weekly electronic reporting by charter vessels, patterned after headboat electronic reporting requirements. The South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Councils reviewed the amendment at the Joint Council meeting in Key West in June 2015. In September 2015, the South Atlantic Council directed staff and the IPT to revise the amendment to apply to charter vessels in South Atlantic fisheries only. In December 2015, the Council approved the amendment for public hearings, which were held in January/February 2016. At the March 2016 meeting, the Council revised the expected timeline for the amendment, to allow time to develop core data elements. The Council reviewed the revised amendment in June 2016, developed a list of core variables and scheduled final approval for December 2016 to allow consideration of preliminary feedback from the SAFMC-ACCSP electronic reporting pilot study. In December 2016, the Council approved the amendment for formal review. The Gulf Council approved the CMP portion of the amendment at their January/February 2017 meeting. The amendment was transmitted for formal review on March 4, 2017.

Council staff is working with partners at ACCSP and the states to pilot a mobile application for electronic reporting of charter trips. The application was designed with Harbor Lights Software, Inc., during spring 2016. Volunteer participants were identified and equipment purchased during Summer and Fall 2016 and data collection began in Winter 2016. As part of this data collection effort, a limited number of economic related questions are being included in the core variables (fuel usage, price per gallon, and charter fee) in an effort to help better estimate net operating revenue on charter trips, especially as they may pertain to certain species or groups of species managed by the SAFMC (*Attachment 2b*). Mike Errigo, SAFMC staff, will provide an update on the project.

Limited Entry for the for-hire component of the snapper grouper fishery

At recent meetings, the Council discussed several issues with the for-hire sector of the snapper grouper fishery that could be addressed through limiting the number of for-hire permits, and potential benefits to the for-hire component from this management approach. Possible challenges

that could be addressed include limiting the number of for-hire vessels interacting with red snapper thereby lowering discards and discard mortality, data quality issues, compliance with existing (headboats) and upcoming (charter vessel) reporting requirements, lack of stability for businesses to plan, and overcapacity in the for-hire fleet (too many boats, not enough fish). The Snapper Grouper AP has discussed limiting the number of for-hire (Charter/Headboat) permits in the past (most recently at their November 2016 meeting). Stakeholders also brought up the topic during the visioning process in 2014-2015. To inform the Council's discussion of this topic, staff prepared a white paper for the March 2017 Council meeting. However, the Council did not have sufficient time to discuss how or whether to move forward with possibly implementing limited entry for the for-hire component of the snapper grouper fishery. The Council intends to continue discussing this topic at their June 2017 meeting.

Snapper Grouper Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 26 – Recreational Management Measures

In June 2016, the Council directed staff to begin development of an amendment to address items identified in the Vision Blueprint addressing recreational management measures. In September 2016, the Council reviewed an options paper and directed staff to prepare a scoping document for review at the December 2016 meeting. Scoping hearings (conducted via webinar and in-person) were held from January 14 to February 8, 2017. At the March Council meeting, staff presented a summary of the scoping comments and the Council provided guidance on actions and alternatives that should remain in the document and be further analyzed. Actions being considered in this amendment pertain to the recreational sector and are listed below:

1. Establish a recreational aggregate bag limit and recreational season for deep-water species;
2. Establish a recreational aggregate bag limit for shallow-water grouper species;
3. Modify the 10-snapper and 20-fish recreational aggregate bag limits;
4. Modify the seasonal prohibition on recreational harvest and possession of shallow-water groupers;
5. Remove the recreational minimum size limits for deep-water snapper species;
6. Reduce the recreational minimum size limit for black sea bass; and
7. Reduce the recreational minimum size limit for gray triggerfish in federal waters off East Florida.

In June 2017, the Council will review and approve the amendment for public hearings.

Snapper Grouper Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 27 - Commercial Management Measures

In June 2016, the Council directed staff to begin development of an amendment to address items identified in the Vision Blueprint addressing commercial management measures. In September 2016, the Council directed staff to prepare a scoping document for review at the December 2016 meeting. Scoping hearings (conducted via webinar and in-person) were held from January 14 to February 8, 2017. At the March Council meeting, staff presented a summary of the scoping comments and the Council provided guidance on actions and alternatives that should remain in the document and be further analyzed. Actions being considered in this amendment pertain to the commercial sector and are listed below:

1. Establish a commercial split season for blueline tilefish;

2. Establish a commercial split season for red porgy;
3. Establish a commercial split season for snowy grouper;
4. Establish a commercial split season for greater amberjack;
5. Modify the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper in the second season;
6. Implement a commercial trip limit for the Other Jacks Complex;
7. Modify the seasonal prohibition on commercial harvest and possession of shallow-water groupers;
8. Remove the commercial minimum size limits for deep-water snapper species; and
9. Reduce the commercial minimum size limit for gray triggerfish in federal waters off East Florida.

In June 2017, the Council will review and approve the amendment for public hearings.

Limited Entry For-Hire Permits for Snapper Grouper

At several recent meetings, the Council has discussed establishing a limited entry permit for the for-hire sector of the Snapper Grouper fishery. Currently, the for-hire permit is open access, with approximately 1,400 to 1,600 active permits. To inform the Council's discussion of this topic, staff prepared a [white paper](#) for the March 2017 Council meeting. However, the Council did not have sufficient time to discuss how or whether to move forward with possibly implementing limited entry for the for-hire component of the snapper grouper fishery, and will continue the discussion at the next meeting in June 2017.

3.3. Presentation and Discussion

John Hadley, SAFMC staff

3.4. ACTIONS

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

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

4. Social and economic information for the updated Fishery Ecosystem Plan

4.1. Documents

Attachment 3. Summary of Social and Economic Components of fishery management plans.

This document provides an overview of the social and economic components included in the "Description of the Economic Environment" and "Description of the Social Environment" sub-chapters of SAFMC FMPs.

Additional reference for discussion:

L. Colburn, M. Jepson, C. Weng, T. Seara, J. Weiss, J. Hare. Indicators of climate change and social vulnerability in fishing dependent communities along the Eastern and Gulf Coasts of the United States. *Marine Policy*, 74 (2016) 323–333. Available online at: http://ac.els-cdn.com/S0308597X16302123/1-s2.0-S0308597X16302123-main.pdf?_tid=d9487a14-1baf-11e7-86ff-00000aab0f01&acdnat=1491582953_fb57857b20e569ed77708967a75b3a1a

4.2. Overview

The Fishery Ecosystem Plan, will again be the vehicle to update and refine information supporting designation and future review of EFH and EFH-HAPCs for managed species as well as supporting the Councils move to Ecosystem Based Fishery Management (EBFM). The Council’s Habitat Protection and Ecosystem Based Management Advisory Panel is central to supporting the cooperative regional process to develop Fishery Ecosystem Plan II. Fishery Ecosystem Plan II writing and review teams composed of Panel members and other regional experts, have been working on the next generation FEP. This new effort has engaged innovative coordination, facilitation and interactive online capabilities and engaged participants far beyond the initial members identified.

Core sections of FEP II were drafted during 2016 leading to a complete core document in 2017. An innovative process was undertaken to refine and update snapper grouper and other managed species information for FEP II and make that information more useful and accessible during the stock assessment process, during EFH policy development and permit review and by the Council and other regional partners as well as the amendment development process. This process involved developing concise species summaries for FEP II as well as operationalizing the South Atlantic Ecospecies online species information system (<http://saecospecies.azurewebsites.net/>) cooperatively developed with FWRI in lieu of exclusively updating text from the original FEP. Detailed species life history, habitat, and fisheries will be available online through Ecospecies and other supporting Council- (e.g., SAFMC Habitat and Ecosystem Atlas - <http://safmc.net/habitat-and-ecosystems/safmc-habitat-and-ecosystem-atlas/> and Digital Dashboard - http://ocean.floridamarine.org/safmc_dashboard/) and regional partner links (e.g., <http://www.southatlanticlcc.org/blueprint/>).

Updating EFH support information and integrating newly approved EFH policies is critical to advancing the EFH conservation directive and meeting the needs identified in the past 5 Year EFH Review. This more concise and focused Fishery Ecosystem Plan II has core issue areas highlighted in new sections on “South Atlantic Food Webs and Connectivity” and “South Atlantic Climate Variability and Fisheries” as the basis for further policy development, consideration in habitat and fish stock assessment and future management of fisheries and habitat supporting more a more comprehensive view of conservation and management supporting the move to EBFM in the South Atlantic Region.

With completion of the core Fishery Ecosystem Plan II in mid-2017, the Council will be again engage the Habitat and Ecosystem Advisory Panel and regional partners in developing a focused implementation strategy. The current version of the FEP is available online at <http://safmc.net/ecosystem-management/fishery-ecosystem-plan/>. Council staff will provide background information on the FEP and the progress of the FEP II development.

4.3. Presentation

Roger Pugliese, SAFMC staff, will provide an overview of FEP II development and anticipated structure and function.

4.4. ACTIONS

SAFMC staff will provide an overview of Socio-Economic Sections for Fishery Management plans which is what is being used as the core of the FEP II development (*Attachment 3*). This provides the most up to date information for the fishery accessible through links and interactive capabilities of FEP II which will support future amendment development process. The Panel will discuss the existing Section structure and provide input to the staff on potential refinements or enhancements of social and economic information supporting FEP II into implementation. Future refinement of information for analyzing community and fisheries to assess and add vulnerability as was done for the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions (*see additional reference material*) will be possible once baseline work on species vulnerabilities is accomplished by NOAA Fisheries in cooperation with regional partners.

Specific Questions:

1. Does the social and economic information provided in FMPs represent the best readily available information to profile a species and fishery?
2. Are there other readily available social or economic data that should be included?

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

5. Red snapper management and analysis of fishing behavior

5.1. Document

Attachment 4a. Graphic of potential red snapper adaptive management plan
Attachment 4b. Snapper Grouper Amendment 43 Options Paper

Additional references for discussion:

National Geographic Blog Post: [Can Behavioral Economics Help Save Coral Reefs and Fisheries?](#)

Excerpt from: M. Cassell, C. Jackson, and B. Chevront. Health communication on the Internet: an effective channel for health behavior change? *Journal of Health Communication*, 3 (1998) 71–79.

5.2. Overview

During the March 2017 Council meeting, the Snapper Grouper Committee received a briefing from Dr. Bonnie Ponwith (Southeast Fisheries Science Center, SEFSC) on the Council's request for red snapper ABC projections under a discards-only scenario. Dr. Ponwith explained that the SEFSC was not able to provide those projections due to the length of time since the completion

of the assessment, uncertainty in the landings since most landings are coming from discards, and the change in MRIP methodology for estimating landings and discards. Council staff presented a summary of the scoping comments received on Amendment 43 during the January/February rounds of hearings and the Snapper Grouper Committee discussed options for management approaches for red snapper. Dr. Roy Crabtree went on record stating that the Council has likely taken sufficient actions to address overfishing of red snapper in the South Atlantic and should focus on developing a methodology to obtain an ABC for red snapper. Council staff were directed to continue work on Amendment 43 but focus on best fishing practices items pending resolution on obtaining an ABC for red snapper. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and the SEFSC will collaborate to explore approaches to arrive at an ABC for red snapper.

The Council is working to development management measures that will allow for red snapper to be harvested, but are challenged with the current removal levels and dead discards estimates as the red snapper stock grows. One primary management objective for the Council is to discourage targeting of red snapper should limited harvest be allowed in order to keep recreational harvest near target levels. Another primary objective is to reduce the number of dead discards through regulations or through best practices. In addition to actions addressing these management objectives, the Council will also need to be able to provide data to verify that fishermen are complying and that the actions are actually reducing dead discards and discard mortality.

Council staff will facilitate discussion of recently considered management options (*Attachment 4a* and *4b*) to reduce discards of red snapper and improve the survival of released fish.

5.3. Presentation

John Hadley/Kari MacLauchlin, SAFMC staff

5.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and provide recommendations to the Council and staff on potential ways to change fishing behavior, and how to measure the effects of such changed behavior.

Specific Questions:

1. Are there ways to economically or socially incentivize a change in fishing behavior for the private recreational sector to use best release practices or to actively avoid red snapper “hot spots” and targeting in an effort to reduce the number of dead discards? Can you think of examples from other areas of social science study (ex: healthcare, behavioral economics, workforce management) that could be applied to help build “conservation inertia” as it relates to recreational fishing behavior?
2. What methods could be used to quantitatively measure how fishing behavior changes to provide guidance in how discard mortality estimates should be adjusted in reaction to a change in fishing behavior?
3. In regards to a potential Red Snapper or Snapper Grouper Permit: What type of socio-economic or behavioral data should be reported by the permit holder (who, where fishing, demographic information, trip costs)? What data elements could be included with the permit or as a stipulation of the permit as a way to measure a change in fishing behavior?

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

6. ABC Control Rule - economic and social indicators of stock status

6.1. Documents

Attachment 5a: ABC Control Rule SSC Decision Document (Oct 2016)

Attachment 5b: 2017 Mid-Atlantic Golden Tilefish Fishery Performance Report

Attachment 5c: 2016 Mid-Atlantic Bluefish Fishery Performance Report

6.2. Overview

The SSC is considering modifying to the Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) Control Rule, and created an ABC Control Rule sub-group to discuss and provide recommendations to the SSC in May 2016. The SSC continued the discussion at their October 2016 meeting and have made some recommendations for alternatives for the control rule (*Attachment 5a*). The SSC will be continuing development of the modified ABC Control Rule and may consider incorporating economic and social indicators into the Control Rule.

One example that has been used in the Mid-Atlantic is incorporating feedback provided via fishery performance reports (*Attachment 5b* and *5c*). The Mid-Atlantic SSC receives annual reports from the FMP Advisory Panels on fishery performance, which are incorporated into the SSC's decision for setting the ABCs for the managed species. Similar to the [Beige Book](#) generated by the Federal Reserve, the fishery performance reports are intended to supplement quantitative data with anecdotal and qualitative data from the field. Examples of the fishery performance reports are available here: <http://www.mafmc.org/fishery-performance-reports/>.

At the South Atlantic Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP), Mackerel Cobia AP, and Dolphin Wahoo AP meetings (April 17-21, 2017), Council staff will facilitate discussions with the APs to create fishery performance reports for cobia, dolphin, and red grouper. The draft performance reports will be provided to the SEP as soon as they are available. These reports will focus on feedback from questions such as:

- How would you rate the stability of the fishery?
- How would you rate the quality of the fishery?
- What factors have influenced recent landings (market or otherwise)?
- Are there recent major changes that you have observed in the fishery?
- Are the current fishery regulations appropriate? How could they be improved?

6.3. Presentation

John Hadley/Kari MacLauchlin, SAFMC staff

6.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and provide guidance to staff on the usefulness and content of fishery performance reports in setting ABCs; discuss other ways that social and economic information can be incorporated into the ABC Control Rule.

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

7. Socio-economic profile of the Snapper Grouper fishery

7.1. Document

Attachment 6. Outline for SG Socio-Economic Profile

7.2. Overview

As part of Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 27 (Commercial Management Measures), the public was asked to comment on management approaches that would meet the needs of “traditional bandit boats.” In addition, the Council expressed the need for an in-depth characterization of the fishery before considering substantial changes to how the fishery is managed. Hence, in March 2017 the Council directed staff to begin work on a socio-economic characterization of the commercial Snapper Grouper (SG) fishery that would address items such as descriptive statistics (location, permit portfolios, corporation v. individual, demographics, etc.) about SG permit holders and changes over time; leased permits (via vessel leasing); latent permits; vessel characteristics (for evaluation of ‘traditional bandit boat’ definition); qualitative descriptions of fishing communities; SG participant catch portfolios; SG dealer information; economic importance of the total fishery and by species sub-complex; seasonality and regional distribution of landings; and growth potential analysis (*Attachment 6*). Council staff will provide an overview of the work plan, timing for the project, and preliminary results as available.

Council staff will also present on a potential social/economic survey for the region.

7.3. Presentation

John Hadley/Kari MacLauchlin, SAFMC staff

7.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and provide guidance to the staff on the SG characterization project (specific questions included in the attachment), and recommendations for a potential social/economic survey.

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

8. Other Business

9. Report and Recommendations Review

10. Next SEP Meeting

- Spring 2018, Charleston SC