

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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



SEP Meeting Overview

April 8-9, 2019

**Town & Country Inn
2008 Savannah Highway
Charleston SC 29407**

PURPOSE

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

- Recent and developing Council actions
- The System Management Plan socioeconomic action items
- Social and economic risk tolerance for the ABC Control Rule amendment
- Recreational accountability measures modifications
- The SEFSC technical memorandum on the economics of the commercial snapper grouper fishery
- The social and economic components of Fishery Performance Reports
- Recreational reporting and MyFishCount survey results

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1. Introduction

1.1. Documents

Attachment 1a. Agenda

Attachment 1b. Minutes of the February 2018 meeting

1.2. ACTIONS

- Review and approve the agenda
- Approve the February 2018 Minutes
- Introductions
- Opportunity for public comment

2. Recent and Developing Council Actions

2.1. Document

Attachment 2. Recent and Developing SAFMC Amendments

2.2. Overview

Council staff will provide a briefing on developments in the Citizen Science Program as well as recent and upcoming amendments and actions (**Attachment 2**). The briefing will go into specific details on the Snapper Grouper visioning amendments (Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendments 26 and 27), recreational reporting and best practices amendments (Snapper Grouper Amendment 46 and Regulatory Amendment 29), Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10 (Revise Dolphin and Wahoo Management Measures), and Coastal Migratory Pelagics Amendment 31 (Atlantic Cobia Management).

Snapper Grouper Vision Blueprint Recreational Regulatory Amendment 26 - Council lead: Myra

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. Actions in the amendment that was eventually approved include modifications to aggregate bag limits and minimum size limits for several snapper grouper species. The Council approved the amendment for formal review in December 2018.

Snapper Grouper Vision Blueprint Commercial Regulatory Amendment 27 - Council lead: Myra

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. Actions in the amendment that was eventually approved include commercial split seasons and/or trip limit adjustments for several snapper grouper species/complexes as well as removal of the size limit for multiple deepwater snapper species. The Council approved the amendment for formal review at their October 2018 meeting and the amendment was submitted to NMFS on January 24, 2019.

Snapper Grouper Amendment 46 (recreational permit and reporting) - Council lead: Chip

In June 2017, the Council instructed staff to move actions formerly in Amendment 43, except an action to specify a red snapper ACL in 2018, to Amendment 46. The amendment would specify OFL/ABC/ACL for red snapper, address recreational permitting and reporting for private recreational fishermen, best fishing practices (also include an option to remove circle hook requirements for snapper grouper fishing), and removing powerhead restrictions in special management zones off South Carolina (action formerly included in the Visioning amendments). In December 2017 the Council directed staff to remove actions pertaining to red snapper from the amendment and focus on recreational reporting and best fishing practices. In March 2018, the Council directed staff to retain actions on recreational permitting and reporting in Amendment 46 and develop the remainder of the actions (best fishing practices and powerhead regulations) in a framework amendment (Regulatory Amendment 29). The Council approved the amendment for scoping and it is on the agenda for the September 2019 meeting.

Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 29 (Best Fishing Practices and Powerhead Regulations) - Council Lead: Christina

At their March 2018 meeting, the Council removed actions pertaining to best fishing practices and powerhead regulations from Amendment 46 and requested that staff begin development of a framework amendment. The Council reviewed an options paper at their June 2018 meeting and approved the amendment for scoping. The Council reviewed scoping comments at their September 2018 meeting. Actions and alternatives addressing venting and descending devices, circle hooks, and powerheads were approved for analysis while the action pertaining to allowable rigs was removed. The Council reviewed a draft public hearing document at their March 2019 meeting. Preferred alternatives were selected that would require a descending device be on board vessels fishing for or possessing snapper grouper species, require vessels fishing for or possessing snapper grouper species to use non-offset circles, and would allow the use of powerheads to harvest snapper grouper species in federal waters off South Carolina. The Council also requested input from the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel and the Law Enforcement Advisory Panel on the definition of descending devices used in the document. Additionally, the Council requested that staff work with NMFS to put together a research and monitoring plan for descending device usage and work with the SSC to determine how best fishing practices requirements may be considered in future stock assessments. Lastly, the Council approved Regulatory Amendment 29 for public hearings. At the June 2019 meeting the Council will review public comments and input from the APs and consider modifications to the document, if necessary.

Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10 (Revise Dolphin and Wahoo Management Measures) - Council lead: John H.

In March 2016, the Council directed staff to begin development of a joint dolphin wahoo and snapper grouper amendment to examine different ways to allocate or share quota between the commercial and recreational sectors for dolphin and yellowtail snapper. Options included a common pool allocation, a reserve category, temporary or permanent shifts in allocation, combined annual catch limits, and creating gear allocations in the commercial dolphin fishery. In December 2016, the Council considered approving the amendment, which was being developed jointly with Snapper Grouper Amendment 44, for public hearings in early 2017. Instead, the Council directed staff to continue to develop Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10 but separately from SG Am 44 and include an action to revise the ABC Control Rule to include a carry-over provision from one fishing year to the next. The Council also directed staff to develop actions that would eliminate the operator card requirement in the Dolphin Wahoo FMP, revised optimum yield, and allow properly permitted vessels with gear onboard that are not authorized for use in the dolphin wahoo fishery to possess dolphin or wahoo. In March 2017, the Council decided to stop work on the amendment until the revised MRIP data were available. At the December 2018 meeting, the Council directed staff to start work again on the amendment with the inclusion of additional items to allow bag limit sales of dolphin for dually permitted for-hire and commercial permit holders, modify gear, bait, and training requirements in the commercial longline fishery for dolphin and wahoo to align with HMS requirements, reduce the recreational vessel limit for dolphin, revised the ACLs to accommodate new MRIP data, and revise sector allocations. The Council will next consider Amendment 10 at the June 2019 meeting.

Coastal Migratory Pelagics Amendment 31 (Atlantic cobia management) Council lead: Christina

In June 2017, the ASMFC requested that the Councils consider transferring management of Atlantic cobia to the ASMFC, which would require that Atlantic cobia be removed from the federal fishery management plan. In June 2017, the South Atlantic Council discussed the request and directed staff to start work on an amendment with an option for complementary management of Atlantic cobia and an option to remove Atlantic cobia from the federal FMP. At their December 2018 meeting, the Council reviewed a draft document and selected Alternative 2 (Remove Atlantic cobia from the CMP FMP) as their preferred. At the June 2018 meeting, the Council approved Amendment 31 for formal review. Amendment 31 was transmitted for formal review on July 13, 2018. The proposed rule published on November 9, 2018. The final rule published on February 19, 2019 with an effective date of March 21, 2019.

2.3. Presentation and Discussion

John Hadley, SAFMC staff

2.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and make recommendations as appropriate. In general, this agenda item is meant to brief the SEP on Council actions that were largely driven by social or economic concerns or may be presented to the group for review later in the meeting.

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

3. System Management Plan Socioeconomic Action Items

3.1. Documents

Attachment 3. System Management Plan Socioeconomics

3.2. Overview

Council staff will provide an update on the Council’s System Management Plan Workgroup. The System Management Plan Workgroup, a body of scientists, outreach/communication specialists, law enforcement officers, and industry representatives discussing and drafting a report to evaluate the effects of marine protected areas and special management zones in the South Atlantic. The workgroup will periodically evaluate the management effectiveness of protected areas. The Spawning Special Management Zones and Deep-water Marine Protected Areas have system management plans with Socio-Economic sections. These sections should be reviewed to determine if the action items are appropriate and achievable.

Presentation

Dr. Chip Collier, SAFMC staff

3.3. ACTIONS

SAFMC staff will provide a presentation with background information on the System Management Plan (Attachment 2). The SEP will be asked to provide feedback on the action items and rankings included in the system management plans.

Discussion Questions:

Should additional actions items be included in the system management plans for Spawning Special Management Zones (Snapper Grouper Amendment 36) or Deep-water Marine Protected Areas (Snapper Grouper Amendment 14)?

Are the action items appropriate and achievable? If not, should other items be used instead?

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

4. Social and economic attributes in setting risk tolerance for the ABC Control Rule amendment

4.1. Documents

Attachment 4a. Story map SEP discussion on ABC Control Rule Amendment (see: <https://arcg.is/004KLP>)

Attachment 4b. Approach for Determining Acceptable Risk of Overfishing: Social Concerns

4.2. Overview

The Council is developing a comprehensive amendment to revise the ABC Control Rule, to address flexibility allowed in the MSA and address issues raised over the last few years by the SSC with the existing rule. The purpose of the amendment is to revise the acceptable biological catch control rule; simplify incorporation of scientific uncertainty; modify the approach used to determine the acceptable risk of overfishing, and address flexibility in specifying catch levels. The need for this amendment is to ensure catch level recommendations are based on the best scientific information available, prevent overfishing while achieving optimum yield, and include flexibility in setting catch limits as allowed per recent changes to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act implementing regulations.

Council staff has developed a preliminary application of the risk tolerance determination process. Within this application are several social and economic attributes that can potentially help the Council and SSC when determining risk tolerance for a specific species. The SEP is asked to provide comments on these attributes at this meeting. Council staff will provide an overview of the social and economic attributes, how they are determined, and how they are intended for use in setting risk tolerance.

4.3. Presentation

Christina Wiegand, SAFMC staff

4.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and provide feedback to staff on appropriate social and economic measures for risk tolerance that the Council and SSC could use in application of the ABC Control Rule.

Discussion Questions:

1. Keeping in mind that the social and economic attributes are intended for use across several species, many of which may be data poor, are there other attributes that the SEP recommend examining?
2. Does the SEP feel as though the social and economic attributes are calibrated to adequately convey a “low”, “moderate”, and “high” risk setting?
3. What thresholds should be used to determine whether a community is reliant on the commercial or recreational fishery for a given species?
4. How does the SEP feel qualitative and quantitative information should be balanced in determine community dependence?

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

5. Recreational accountability measure modifications

5.1. Document

Attachment 5. Discussion document on recreational accountability measure modifications

5.2. Overview

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) is proposing modifications to recreational (rec) accountability measures (AMs) so they would be consistent across species as much as practicable in order to simplify them and avoid unintended negative social and economic effects. At the June 2018 meeting, the Council decided to include only species in the Snapper Grouper and Dolphin Wahoo fishery management plans (FMP). Coastal Migratory Pelagics (CMP) species were not included for several reasons: 1) the recreational sector does not typically meet its recreational ACL; and 2) AMs currently are managed differently for these species. In the last year the Council has taken this amendment out for scoping and worked on revising/refining the actions and alternatives. The Council seeks input from the SEP on the social and economic efficacy of these actions and whether there are other related issues that the Council ought to consider. Council staff will provide an overview of the amendment and facilitate SEP review of the amendment.

5.3. Presentation

John Hadley, SAFMC staff

5.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and provide feedback to staff on appropriate social and economic considerations for modifying recreational accountability measures.

Discussion Questions:

Purpose and Need

1. Is the Purpose and Need statement fully inclusive of all of the concepts the Council needs to consider when modifying recreational accountability measures?
 - a. Are there other social or justice issues that should be considered?
 - b. Are there other economic issues that should be considered?

Action 1

2. Scoping comments received pointed out that in season closures cause disruptions in the for-hire sector. Anglers sometimes book trips with the idea of being able to target specific species. Another issue is that in season closures are confusing and anglers would like some consistency across species/species groupings.
 - a. Are there other social/economic considerations the Council should consider either by retaining or removing in season closures?

Action 2

3. The Council will need to choose at least one accountability measure from **Action 1** or **Action 2**, as per MSA requirements. From a socioeconomic perspective, which type of AM, a possible in season closure versus a modification to allowable fishing behavior in the following season, would best meet the purpose and need for the amendment?
4. One of the stated purposes of the amendment is to provide stability across seasons. If any of the **Alternative 5** or **6** sub-alternatives are chosen, whether or not a species is affected could fluctuate from year to year due to changes in its PSE from one year to the next. While this does not happen frequently for most species, the potential is there. Others argue that catch level

estimates are more reliable for those species that have a lower PSE and that modifications to ACLs or allowable fishing behavior should be restricted only to those species whose MRIP catch estimates are less reliable.

- a. What recommendation does the SEP have for the Council when it comes to taking into account catch estimate reliability when determining whether an AM ought to be implemented?
5. Are there other alternatives or sub-alternatives that the Council ought to consider implementing as post season AMs that would better take into account social and economic considerations?

Action 3

6. Should the Council consider **Alternative 2** and either of the sub-alternatives as their preferred course of action, are there other sub-alternatives the Council ought to consider?
7. What are the economic and social benefits or costs associated with either of the alternatives?

Action 4

8. Are there other alternatives or sub-alternatives that the Council ought to take into account for implementing as post season AMs that would better take into account social and economic considerations?

Action 5

9. What are the economic and social benefits or costs associated with either of the alternatives?
10. In the past, the recreational sector has not exceeded its ACL for either dolphin or wahoo. However, recently revised MRIP catch estimates indicate that this could be a possibility in the future. Even though this hasn't occurred in the past, should the Council implement measures in the event it could happen in the future?

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

6. Technical memorandum on the economics of the commercial snapper grouper fishery

6.1. Document

Attachment 6a. NOAA Technical Memorandum: Economics of the U.S. South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery - 2016

Attachment 6b. Presentation slides for SEP discussion of technical memorandum on the economics of the commercial snapper grouper fishery

6.2. Overview

In the fall of 2018, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) released the technical memorandum *Economics of the U.S. South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery – 2016* (**Attachment 6a**). The tech memo provides summary information and economic estimates for the snapper grouper fishery as a whole and for specific Segments of Interest (SOI) that consist of species or groups of species within the snapper grouper management complex. The Committee will receive a summary presentation from the SEFSC on the methods and major findings from the tech memo (**Attachment 6b**).

6.3. Presentation

Dr. Christopher Liese, SEFSC staff

6.4. ACTIONS

Review the analysis, discuss the uncertainties, and determine if it is the best scientific information available.

Discussion Questions:

1. Among the findings in the tech memo are estimates of net revenue and net cash flow that are potentially useful for better analyzing the economic effects of fishery management actions on the commercial sector. These results are intended to be incorporated into amendments to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan either by reference or direct application to estimate net economic effects to commercial participants and net costs or benefits. In doing so, it is assumed that this tech memo represents best scientific information available.
 - a. Does the SEP agree that the tech memo should be considered best scientific information available?
2. Does the SEP have any additional recommendations?

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

7. Social and economic components of Fishery Performance Reports

7.1. Document

Attachment 7. Fishery performance report overview

7.2. Overview

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. The FPRs are provided to the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and the Socioeconomic Panel (SEP) to complement stock assessment reports and aid in developing stock status recommendations. They can also be useful to inform future Council management decisions. Additionally, the FPRs are posted publicly on the [Council's website](#). Council staff will present background information on the FPRs that have already been developed by Council staff using input from Advisory Panel discussions.

7.3. Presentation

Christina Wiegand, SAFMC staff

7.4. ACTIONS

Discuss and provide feedback to staff on appropriate social and economic considerations for modifying Fishery Performance Reports.

Discussion Questions:

1. FPRs are time consuming to conduct and summarize. It can be challenging to balance completing FPRs with other Council priorities.
 - a. Is there a way to streamline the FPR process to make it more effective and efficient?
2. What improvements could be made to the discussion questions to produce more valuable information? Is the wording appropriate or are the question too ambiguous? Is the order of the questions appropriate? Are there additional social or economic questions that should be considered?
3. In some cases, one or more advisory panel members may dominate the conversation. There is concern that this will result in a narrow picture of the fishery. Additionally, there are concerns about how the social desirability effect (respondents will answer in a way they think will make the look good) may influence advisory panel responses given the public nature of meetings.
 - a. How can staff encourage active and honest participation from advisory panel members?
4. Council staff would like to ensure the FPR process avoids the expectancy effect (getting responses that staff expect because they have shaped responses through their expectations).
 - a. How can staff work to improve the FPR process to ensure a complete and unbiased picture of the fishery, particularly when summarizing advisory panel input?
5. How should the information gathered during the FPR process be presented so that it is beneficial/engaging for both scientists and managers? Should fishermen and/or the general public be considered as an audience?
 - a. For example, using an interactive website to house all completed FPRs as well as the background information provided for each report.
<https://testsafmcouncil.shinyapps.io/FPRAll/>
6. Currently, FPRs are being completed before a stock assessment and/or to provide a baseline for a fishery. There is no other standard timeline for when FPRs are to be reviewed by advisory panels. Stocks are projected to be reassessed every four years with interim analyses done between assessments. Additionally, given the similarity of the discussion questions, there is a concern that advisory panel members will experience fatigue if FPRs are conducted at every meeting.
 - a. How often should FPRs be updated to keep the content relevant and useful?
7. Many species remain unassessed through the SEDAR process. These species often have lower levels of landings than the assessed species.
 - a. When should FPRs be done for species that have not been assessed? Is there a recommendation for how often these should be updated?

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

8. Recreational reporting and MyFishCount survey results

8.1. Document

Attachment 8a. MyFishCount Survey Methods

Attachment 8b. MyFishCount Survey Results Presentation

8.2. Overview

MyFishCount is an app designed for recreational fishermen to report various aspects of their trip ranging from effort, gear type, species, and length. The webportal was available for use in the fall of 2017 and the app in the summer of 2018. To gauge fishermen's perceptions of electronic reporting, two surveys were conducted. The SEP reviewed the survey at the February 2018 meeting and the SEP comments were included in the survey. The first survey was conducted in March 2018 (before 2018 red snapper season) and the second survey was conducted in November 2018 (after 2018 red snapper season). The results of the surveys will be presented.

Presentation

Dr. Chip Collier, SAFMC staff
Erin Spencer, Graduate student with UNC-Chapel Hill

8.3. Actions

Discuss and provide recommendations to staff on future electronic reporting surveys and potential biases in the current surveys.

Discussion Questions:

1. How often should surveys on MyFishCount be conducted to track fishermen's perceptions? Should surveys be conducted when management is considering electronic reporting requirements, annually, or every other year?
2. Are there additional questions that should be included in future surveys to better understand fishermen's perception of electronic reporting?
3. What is the potential impact of identified biases and are there additional biases that should be considered?

SEP RECOMMENDATIONS:

9. Other Business

10. Opportunity for Public Comment

11. Report and Recommendations Review

12. Next SEP Meeting

- Spring 2020, Charleston SC