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Social and Economic Panel
Chair

THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Social and Economic Panel Meeting (April 2026) Summary Report

June 2026



General Updates



Active Amendments



**Citizen
Science**

Citizen Science Program Projects



Resilient Fisheries Projects: South Atlantic
Fishing Communities

Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation Economics

- The Snapper Grouper MSE will include an economic component to landings and discards streams that would allow the Council to make a comparison of estimated net economic benefits between various management scenarios to evaluate tradeoffs. The SEP suggested:
 - Conduct a meta-analysis of studies currently available and sensitivity analyses to determine if changes in willingness to pay result in significant changes to the relative outcome.
 - Review recent research at WHOI that looks at angler WTP for harvested and discarded fish, including black sea bass, and explore the applicability and use of that study in the South Atlantic.
 - Investigate historical MRIP data to look at discard data when biomass was at an equivalent level to try and determine where economic estimates should be placed.



Economic Value Analysis



- SEFSC staff provided details on analyses being used to evaluate the economic value of South Atlantic Council managed species.
 - The SEP agreed that this effort could be a good indicator of the economic contribution to GDP but need to think about what goes into that calculation.
 - The SEP notes that careful consideration needs to be given to weighting on economic contribution estimates vs social aspects.
 - SEP expressed concern about using value added given distribution of trips and ex vessel value, and that economic contribution analyses, estimated from input/output softwares, may be missing essential fishery context.

Social Value Analysis

- SEFSC staff provided details on analyses being used to evaluate the social value of South Atlantic Council managed species.
 - The SEP strongly recommends that the development of this tool continue regardless of other developments on the economic and environmental components of the risk value matrix. The SEP would like to see sufficient time and resources allowed to the Science Center to continue to work in this direction, as it holds great promise.
 - The SEP felt the design of the survey questions regarding species group adds to the complexity of evaluating and responding appropriately to the survey.
 - SEP recommends including a question about how confident respondents are in their responses to the survey to also account for respondents' knowledge about the species.



Understanding citizen scientists' experience with the SMILE Project



- In 2025, REEF collaborated with social scientists to develop a structured survey designed to identify the factors that may interest and motivate snorkelers and divers to engage with SMILE.
 - The SEP recommended reviewing open-sources digital libraries of non-app-based citizen science work in the tech industry and contextualizing findings to marine based work.
 - SEP suggested explaining the management process and the Council in the training materials to make sure citizen scientists feel their data are meaningful.
 - SEP felt that future research could be a good opportunity to test out how recruitment may change based on how data is shared.

Fishery Performance Report Text Analysis

- Council and SEDAR staff have developed a new FPR report that utilizes automated text analysis to summarize key trends and themes found in the meeting minutes.
 - The SEP expressed concern about the lexicon and sentiment analyses, particularly in how each analysis handles terms that could be both positive or negative depending on context. They warned against words being coded as neutral and suggested defining some words as uncoded instead.
- The SEP noted that human-conducted qualitative data analysis more referable but acknowledges that this is time-costly and provided suggestions for how best utilize AI technology.
- The SEP felt that this type of analysis could be a great help for public comment and reporting back rapidly to help participants feel heard.



Introduction to Social Science and Economics for Fishermen



- Council staff are developing an introductory presentation for fishermen on the role of social science and economics in the fisheries management process. The SEP suggested:
 - Driving home that their opinions matter and it filters into the management process. It is an opportunity for fishermen to provide information directly. Without their participation, data collection falls apart.
 - Tie in the social science in not effectively voting, it shows how communities will be affected and experience changes.
 - Show that in the long-run information (or lack thereof) can notably effect management decisions (interactive or real-world examples).



Questions?