

**Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel
Gag Fishery Performance Report
Discussion Questions
September 2020**

The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP) is being asked to provide information to develop a fishery performance report (FPR) for Gag. The purpose of the FPR is to assemble information from AP members' experience and observations on the water and in the marketplace to complement scientific and landings data. The FPR for Gag will be provided to the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) and the Socio-Economic Panel (SEP) to complement material being used in the upcoming operational stock assessment (SEDAR 71) and to inform future management.

Questions for Advisory Panel:

The AP is asked to provide the following information about Gag based on their expertise, as appropriate:

1) Have there been **substantial changes** in the Gag fishery? If so, when and what do you think caused the change?

2) **Catch levels over the past 10 years:**

- When/where are the fish available, and has this changed?
- Has the size of the fish changed? If so, could you briefly describe the trend?
- Have there been effort shifts to/from Gag? If so, please describe.
- What do you see in terms of discards in the commercial sector? In the recreational sector?
 - How often are Gag discarded during the open season? What are the reasons they are discarded during the open season?
 - How often are Gag discarded during the closed season?
 - Do you encounter Gag as bycatch when fishing for other species?
 - How feasible is it to avoid Gag (and other shallow water groupers) during the closed season?

3) **Social and economic influences:**

- For the commercial sector, how has price and demand for Gag changed?
- How has demand for charter/headboat trips targeting Gag changed?
- Among the species you target, how important are Gag to your overall business (charter or commercial)?
- What communities are dependent on the Gag fishery?
- Have changes in infrastructure (docks, marinas, fish houses) affected fishing opportunities for Gag?
- How have fishermen and communities adapted to changes in the Gag fishery?

4) Management measures:

- Are there new management measures that the Council should consider or are there existing management measures (such as size limit, trip limit, bag limit, season, etc.) that should be changed?
- Are the current ACLs appropriate for each sector?

5) Environmental/ecological/habitat:

- Have you noticed any unique effects of environmental conditions on Gag? If so, please describe.
- What are your observations on the timing and length of the Gag spawning season in your area?
- Have you observed pre-spawning aggregations of Gag in the fall (October-December) on the inner and middle shelf (60-150 ft. deep)? If so, have you noted any changes in when or where such aggregations occur or with what frequency?
- Do you perceive that abundance of Gag has changed over the past ten years? If so, how has it changed?
- What do you see now in terms of recruitment? Where are the small fish? Are large and small fish found in the same locations or not?
- Has there been any shift in catch (annually/seasonally) inshore/offshore or north/south? If so, please describe.
- How have sea conditions (monthly/seasonally) affected fishable days?
- Have you observed changes in catch depth or apparent bottom type fished on?
- Have you noticed any change in the species caught with Gag over the years or seasonally?

6) Other:

- What else is important for the Council to know about Gag?
- Are the current monitoring efforts (trap index and catch estimates) sufficiently monitoring the stock?