

Summary Report
Snapper Grouper Recreational Permitting and Reporting
Technical Advisory Panel
Meeting 1: August 18, 2022

The South Atlantic Council's Snapper Grouper Recreational Permitting and Reporting Technical Advisory Panel (AP) convened via webinar on August 18, 2022.

AP members introduced themselves and approved the agenda for the meeting.

1. Advisory Panel Process and Charge

John Carmichael, Executive Director for the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council), and Spud Woodward, Council member and Chair of the Private Recreational Reporting Workgroup, provided opening remarks for the AP.

The AP was informed of the following guidance that the Council provided at their June 2022 meeting:

"Convene a meeting of the Recreational Permitting and Reporting AP before the September 2022 SAFMC meeting. Direct the AP to review the Mid-Atlantic recreational tilefish reporting program with consideration of its applicability to the South Atlantic snapper grouper complex. Present AP recommendations at the September 2022 SAFMC meeting."

2. Private Recreational Reporting Workgroup Recommendations

Council staff provided an overview of recommendations from the Private Recreational Reporting Workgroup. The Private Recreational Reporting Workgroup met five times throughout 2021 and 2022. The briefing materials and summary reports for these meetings can be found on the [Council's website](#). The Council's Private Recreational Workgroup last met on February 9, 2022 to continue discussing approaches to private recreational reporting and how a recreational permit could be integrated with existing programs to improve estimates of recreational catch and effort.

3. Southeast For-Hire Electronic Reporting (SEFHIER) Program update

Michelle Masi, SEFHIER Program Manager at the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office, provided an update to the AP on the program including information on compliance, lessons learned, and data usability.

4. Mid-Atlantic Recreational Tilefish Reporting Program

Council staff provided an overview of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (MAFMC) Recreational Tilefish Reporting Program, including the Program's permitting and reporting requirements that are applicable to private recreational vessels fishing for blueline tilefish or golden tilefish. MAFMC staff were also in attendance and provided additional feedback to the AP on the Program.

5. AP comments and recommendations

After reviewing background information, the AP worked through a series of discussion questions, providing the following comments and recommendations for the Council's consideration:

***AP recommendations are *italicized*.**

Implementing a permit requirement:

- **Resources:** *Carefully consider the resources that are going to be needed and whether these resources will realistically be available to fully support any sort of permit or reporting requirement. These efforts take a great deal of resources dedicated towards outreach, compliance, and data acquisition as well as storage.*
 - Specify the requirements ahead of time and try to estimate how much outreach it is going to take to implement an action and gain sufficient compliance before moving ahead with a program that will take a great deal of resources which may not be available to fully support it.

- **Timeline:** Based on previous efforts, 5 years may be an appropriate expectation to fully develop and calibrate a permit and/or survey for use in management.
 - Timeline can vary depending on initial design. Census vs survey route for reporting will affect challenges, resources needed, and time period necessary to get program fully ready for use in management.
 - Can also impact how much of the data would be useful for management.
 - Pilot study- if small scale then perception of burden is lower. Could be a way to avoid or mitigate issues with fully bringing permit or reporting requirement up to speed for use in management.
 - 3 years would be ideal for a pilot study. It is good to have a clear end point and do not want a pilot study to go on for too long as it will lose interest among anglers.

Getting the most out of a permit:

- **Permit Type:** *Recommend a vessel rather than individual permit since it helps reduce "the universe" of how many permits will need to be issued.*
 - Helps with survey design and validation.
 - Easier to write down vessel ID that is easily visible rather than require asking for individual permit number or paperwork.
 - Consistent with existing permits issued by SERO for commercial and for-hire vessels.
 - A vessel permit doesn't create an impediment to integrate with other programs (such as MRIP).

- **Validation and Data Collection:**
 - Vessel vs Angler Permit: not likely to make much a difference from statistical design standpoint.
 - Note previous comment regarding ease identifying if vessel. Accuracy is improved by vessel permit and may streamline questionnaire during

interview if intercepted (ability to interview one representative for vessel or all anglers at once).

- *Recommend annual renewal requirement to purge inaccurate or inactive vessel information.*
- *An open access permit with a specified permit number would be preferred. If there is an enforcement issue or a vessel/individual has multiple permits then a specific permit number is easier to track.*
- “Over-subscription” could be an issue (i.e. vessels or individuals obtain a permit without the intent to use it). To address this some sort of barrier or burden could be associated with obtaining the permit.
 - Consider evaluation of charging a fee to obtain a permit.
 - At what level would it be a barrier to entry and where could it be beneficial?
 - Simply the requirement of setting up an account and entering information to get permit (i.e. burden and time) may be enough of a barrier to get the permit and mitigate the “oversubscription” issue. Only those that intend to use the permit would go through the trouble to get it.
- *Separate the private recreational permit application from the existing application for commercial and for-hire permits. The existing permit application is fairly lengthy and many fields are not necessary for private vessels.*

Implementing a reporting requirement:

- See comments above regarding resources and timeline.
- *Suggest that the Council establish clear goals on the expectations and intended outcomes from requiring reporting. This will help shape future AP recommendations as well as reporting design.*
- Broaden the concept of what a reporting requirement could look like. It doesn’t have to be a census. Could be a survey approach for sub-set of permit holders with a requirement to respond to the survey.
 - In developing a reporting requirement, consideration should be given regarding when to report or which trips will need to report. Trips that land? Trips that target? All trips? Identifying which trips need to report is an important consideration.
- Additional considerations:
 - Reporting frequency may be impacted by resources available to support such a requirement.
 - Awareness, compliance, and enforcement takes a notable amount of resources.
 - Reporting requirement is not useful unless enforceable. To develop something enforceable, keep in mind resources need to make that happen.
 - It is possible that a permit may not accomplish much without being linked to reporting requirement.
 - It would help to have a good sense of the size of “the universe” of potential permits to determine resources needed for reporting requirements and the extent of requirement (census vs survey, sub-set, design, etc.).
 - Is the burden (reporting and administration) justifiable: Can you do the same thing with a survey vs a census?

Species that should be covered (all species vs sub-set):

- All species
 - Notable issues with bycatch and regulatory discards for many species in the complex.
 - In Florida, 13 species are covered by the State Reef Fish Survey. The Snapper Grouper fishery is truly a multi-species fishery so being inclusive of all species would be helpful and increase utility the program.
 - Would be beneficial to cover all species with one program (i.e. one permit, one reporting system).
- Sub-set of species
 - Including all species will increase sampling universe and may “washout” some participants that specialize in one fishery. Reporting requirement for specific species or group of species could be helpful to integrate with the permit.
 - Concern if Mid-Atlantic Tilefish Permit approach were used to cover all South Atlantic Snapper Grouper species that it would create a major reporting burden, both for anglers and administration of such a reporting system.
 - Additional concern that a survey for some species and mandatory reporting for others could lead to issues with comparability of data with existing data streams.

Available information to determine potential number of permits that will be needed:

- Some information regarding vessels and anglers is available from sampling conducted during the red snapper season in Florida.
- Potential extrapolations from counts of angler permits in Florida. Could use Florida as an anchor and expand to the region.
 - Could assume a certain number of anglers and convert to potential vessels.
 - MRIP can be used to provide a relative distribution of effort.
 - Would require a lot of assumptions but could provide “ball park” estimate and order of magnitude.
 - Complication with Florida permit is that it is for entire state but could make assumptions based on address of angler. Most anglers that live on Atlantic coast typically fish in the Atlantic and those that live on the Gulf coast fish in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Could also extrapolate potential vessel count from HMS permitted vessels (would provide a lower bound estimate).
 - Same potential issue above for Florida (i.e. applicable to the South Atlantic vs Gulf of Mexico).
- Possible to examine Gulf states that have sampling separate from MRIP to extrapolate estimate of potential permits.
- This exercise would be interesting from retrospective analysis if permit goes into place.
- Look at MRIP or state-based sampling to determine how many anglers are fishing on a vessel to get rough estimate. Total effort estimates from MRIP could be used to

determine how many people typically fish together on a vessel and how many times of year they fish (i.e. avidity).

Implementing permitting and reporting requirements at the same time versus separately:

- The Council has opportunity to think this through. Based on permit design, what are some of the metrics be that could be designed before implementing a reporting requirement?
 - Total costs and necessary resources could be forecast before full implementation of reporting.
- Having permit in place would be helpful to get a handle on “the universe” of anglers or vessels that a reporting requirement will be covering.
- In a “perfect world,” if resources and outreach were off the table:
 - Getting permit in place and established first would be a reasonable approach. Could be integrated into existing sampling of private recreational anglers. This would also help with future outreach and demonstrate compliance rates. Get to a stable place with permit and help inform design decisions with reporting.
 - Could avoid growing pains seen in other programs where permitting and reporting were all rolled out at once and required adapting to issues on the fly.
 - Small scale pilot study could help determine “full scale” costs and potential barriers to overcome.

Integrating data collected via permits and reporting with existing monitoring programs to add to the value of those efforts and reduce reporting burden:

- *Have clear plan in place for how a permit is going to be used and potential future reporting requirement.*
 - Have an idea of what can and cannot be done if permitting and reporting move forward.
 - Any permit or reporting requirement benefit should be identified.
 - Need to have plan for how the permit is going to be fully implemented and how it will help with data collection including integrating with other survey efforts or future reporting requirements.
- *Would be beneficial to start outreach ASAP and the first year of implementation is very important to successfully get requirement in place and good compliance.*
 - Keep in mind the existing permit in Florida and also make sure actions are fully supported by the states. Perception of state agencies vs federal agencies is often very different and having states fully onboard will go a long way towards creating a successful program.
 - Many anglers connect more with state agencies and look to states to determine which requirements may affect them.
 - Go to state agencies to help figure out where they may need to go to get a new permit or satisfy a new requirement.
 - Private anglers and for-hire operators often share information and the for-hire component of the recreational sector could be helpful for outreach.

- Research methods and best way to get information out to private recreational anglers ahead of time.

Other Business

There were no items under other business

Advisory Panel Members

Luiz Barbieri, FL FWC

Drew Cathey, NC DMF

Amy Dukes, SC DNR

John Foster, NMFS/S&T/MRIP

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