

Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan Objectives and Vision Blueprint Guidance

September 2019

In December 2015 the Council approved the Vision Blueprint for the Snapper Grouper Fishery, a strategic plan to guide management of the fishery into the future. The Vision Blueprint includes goals, objectives, and strategies to address issues identified by stakeholders. During its development, the Council reviewed the original management objectives adopted in the fishery management plan (FMP; SAFMC 2013) and requested input from its advisors. The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP) provided recommendations during their March 2013 meeting (see below). Although the Council went on to approve the Vision Blueprint, the management objectives within were not adopted as the new objectives of the fishery management plan. Such an action would require an amendment to the FMP. This document presents information to inform Council discussions on how to proceed regarding revisions to the FMP objectives.

Current Management Objectives for the South Atlantic Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan

1. Prevent overfishing.
2. Collect necessary data.
3. Promote orderly utilization of the resource.
4. Provide for a flexible management system.
5. Minimize habitat damage.
6. Promote public compliance and enforcement.
7. Mechanism to vest participants.
8. Promote stability and facilitate long-run planning.
9. Create market-driven harvest pace and increase product continuity.
10. Minimize gear and area conflicts among fishermen.
11. Decrease incentives for overcapitalization.
12. Prevent continual dissipation of returns from fishing through open access.
13. Evaluate and minimize localized depletion.
14. End overfishing of snapper grouper stocks undergoing overfishing.
15. Rebuild stocks declared overfished.

In the original FMP and earlier amendments, objectives and revised objectives were linked to identified problems in the fishery. The FMP listed 3 problems and 3 associated objectives. Amendment 4 added to these and identified 5 problems and 6 objectives. Amendment 5 included 11 problems and 12 objectives. Amendment 8 had 12 problems and 14 objectives. Amendment 9 listed the 12 problems and 14 objectives in the abbreviated versions. Amendment 15 listed 13 objectives, and Amendment 17A included 15 objectives.

For a detailed description of how the problems and objectives changed over time as the FMP was amended, please refer to **Appendix A**.

Advisory Panel Input on Current FMP Objectives

During the March 2013 Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel meeting, Council staff reviewed the guidance the Council provided at their March 2013 meeting regarding a vision statement and a draft strategic plan for the snapper grouper fishery. Staff also presented the existing objectives in the Snapper Grouper FMP and requested that the AP provide feedback on whether the objectives are still applicable as written or changes need to be made. The AP provided the following feedback regarding the objectives in the FMP:

Objective 1. Prevent overfishing – THE AP REASONED THAT THE OBJECTIVE IS PART OF THE COUNCIL’S MANDATE UNDER THE MAGNUSON ACT AND SHOULD NOT BE INLCUDED IN THE LIST OF OBJECTIVES.

Objective 2. Collect necessary data – CONSIDER RE-WORDING TO: “IMPROVE AND EXPAND DATA COLLECTION.” CONSIDER THINGS LIKE RECREATIONAL REEF FISH STAMP, ELECTRONIC REPORTING FOR ALL PERMITTED VESSELS OPERATING IN THE EEZ? GIVE AUTHORITY TO RA TO MAKE NECESSARY CHANGES?

Objective 3. Promote orderly utilization of the resource – ADDED WHEN WRECKFISH ITQ PROGRAM WAS PUT IN PLACE. IT IS NO LONGER APPLICABLE.

Objective 4. Provide for a flexible management system – INSERT THE WORD “MORE” BEFORE “FLEXIBLE”. DOES FLEXIBLE INCLUDE MANAGEMENT SUCH AS STATE-BY-STATE QUOTAS OR REGIONAL MANAGEMENT? THIS IS DEPENDENT ON IMPROVING DATA COLLECTION.

Objective 5. Minimize habitat damage. – IS THERE ANY DAMAGE CURRENTLY HAPPENING??

Objective 6. Promote public compliance and enforcement – THIS OBJECTIVE SHOULD ADDRESS CONSISTENCY BETWEEN STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS (STATES SHOULD BE AT LEAST AS RESTRICTIVE AS FEDS), LACK OF FAIRNESS OF PENALTIES FOR DIFFERENT SECTORS, CONSIDER RE-WORDING: “PROMOTE COMPLIANCE THROUGH PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION”

Objective 7. Mechanism to vest participants – NOT APPLICABLE TO RECREATIONAL SECTOR, CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES TO ITQs OR CATCH SHARES THAT ARE NOT BASED ON MONETARY VALUE, CONSIDER WAYS TO VEST RECREATIONAL PARTICIPANTS

Objective 8. Promote stability and facilitate long-run planning – AIM TO END OVERLAPPING SEASONS FOR THE FOR-HIRE SECTOR, CONSIDER REGULATIONS THAT WILL ALLOW BUSINESS OWNERS TO HAVE BUSINESS PLAN

Objective 9. Create market-driven harvest pace and increase product continuity – IS THIS WITHIN THE COUNCIL’S RESPONSIBILITIES?

Objective 10. Minimize gear and area conflicts among fishermen – NOT MUCH OF GEAR CONFLICT ANYMORE.

Objective 11. Decrease incentives for overcapitalization – DOES NOT APPLY TO RECREATIONAL SECTOR...

Objective 12. Prevent continual dissipation of returns from fishing through open access.

Objective 13. Evaluate and minimize localized depletion – PERHAPS STATES SHOULD BE THE ONES TO DO? STATE-BY-STATE QUOTAS, REGIONAL STOCK EVALUATION?

Objective 14. End overfishing of snapper grouper stocks undergoing overfishing – COUNCIL HAS ALREADY ADDRESSED OVERFISHING...

Objective 15. Rebuild stocks declared overfished – ALREADY MANDATED BY MSA

- CONSIDER EXCLUDING OBJECTIVES/GOALS THAT ARE ALREADY PART OF THE COUNCIL'S MANDATE.
- SPECIFY THE ITEMS THAT THE COUNCIL IS ALREADY DOING AND THOSE THAT THE COUNCIL SHOULD FOCUS ON ACHIEVING.
- SHORTEN THE LIST OF OBJECTIVES.

Objectives adopted in the 2016-2020 Vision Blueprint for the Snapper Grouper Fishery

The following table presents the objectives in the Vision Blueprint for the Snapper Grouper Fishery, as approved in December 2015, under the 4 strategic goals: science, management, communication, and governance. Note that objectives marked with an asterisk are long-term objectives that were not prioritized for the 2016-2020 Vision Blueprint.

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| Goal 1 (Science): Management decisions for the snapper grouper fishery are based upon robust, defensible science that considers qualitative and quantitative data analyzed in a timely, clear, and transparent manner that builds stakeholder confidence. | |
| <i>Objective 1</i> | Promote collection of quality data to support management plans and programs considered by the Council. |
| <i>Objective 2</i> | Encourage development of mechanisms to effectively engage and collaborate with stakeholders on cooperative research, data collection and analysis. |
| <i>Objective 3*</i> | Improve knowledge about the social and economic elements of the snapper grouper fishery in the South Atlantic. |
| <i>Objective 4*</i> | Support improved and expanded monitoring and reporting programs for the snapper grouper fishery. |
| <i>Objective 5*</i> | Promote data collection and analysis to support ecosystem and habitat considerations for the snapper grouper fishery. |
| Goal 2 (Management): Adopt management strategies for the snapper grouper fishery that rebuild and maintain fishery resources, adapt to regional differences in the fishery, and consider the social and economic needs of fishing communities. | |
| <i>Objective 1</i> | Develop management measures that consider sub-regional differences and issues within the fishery. |
| <i>Objective 2</i> | Develop innovative management measures that allow consistent access to the fishery for all sectors. |
| <i>Objective 3</i> | Ensure that management decisions help maximize social and economic opportunity for all sectors. |
| <i>Objective 4*</i> | Develop management measures that reduce and mitigate discards. |
| <i>Objective 5*</i> | Support management measures that incorporate ecosystem and habitat considerations for the snapper grouper fishery. |
| <i>Objective 6*</i> | Develop management measures that support optimal sector allocations for the snapper grouper fishery. |

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| Goal 3 (Communication): Employ interactive outreach strategies that encourage continuous participation and support two-way engagement between managers and snapper grouper fishery stakeholders while building a greater understanding of science and management. | |
| <i>Objective 1</i> | Develop communication approaches that provide streamlined and timely information to increase awareness and engage stakeholders. |
| <i>Objective 2</i> | Improve awareness and understanding of fishery science and research and how these inform management. |
| <i>Objective 3*</i> | Ensure that Council communication encourages and supports engagement with a diverse audience of stakeholders. |
| <i>Objective 4*</i> | Improve awareness and understanding of how social and economic issues are linked to fisheries management measures. |
| Goal 4 (Governance): Commit to a transparent, balanced, and timely decision-making process that allows flexible yet well-defined protocols and strategies for managing the snapper grouper fishery. | |
| <i>Objective 1</i> | Create an accountable and flexible decision-making process for development and evaluation of management measures. |
| <i>Objective 2</i> | Build capacity to streamline management efforts and better coordinate with management partners. |
| <i>Objective 3*</i> | Improve communication with stakeholders to insure the needs of the fishery are understood and considered throughout the Council process. |

*These objectives were not prioritized for the 2016-2020 Vision Blueprint for the Snapper Grouper Fishery in the South Atlantic (Vision Blueprint) and can be found in Appendix B to the Vision Blueprint.

Advisory Panel Input on Vision Blueprint Objectives

At their March 2019 meeting, the Council requested that the AP provide feedback on the current objectives in the Snapper Grouper FMP. As stated above, the AP last provided input on objectives in 2013 as part of the visioning project. AP members had the following comments:

- Port meetings held as part of the Visioning Project were very effective in engaging stakeholders. AP members recommended that the Council consider holding more of such meetings.
- Enforcement should figure more prominently in the management process. Consider requesting that an enforcement representative attend AP meetings.
- Port samplers help create and maintain communication and could assist with outreach.

The AP approved the following motion:

MOTION #4: RECOMMEND THAT THE COUNCIL ADOPT THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES IN THE VISION BLUEPRINT FOR THE SNAPPER GROUPER FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN
APPROVED BY AP (UNANIMOUS)

Excerpt from the Evaluation Plan for the 2016-2020 Vision Blueprint (Appendix D)

Comprehensive Review

Purpose: Review and update the 2016-2020 Vision Blueprint and Appendices.

Timing: January – June 2020; Adoption of 2021-2026 Vision Blueprint in December 2020

Tasks:

- Solicit public input on items in the existing blueprint (short- and long-term action items and items not considered in 2015) and any new ideas.
- Use a similar port meeting approach to collect public input and revise the Vision Blueprint based on stakeholder and Council member input.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

- PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON ADOPTION OF REVISED OBJECTIVES UNDER THE SNAPPER GROUPER FMP
 - INSTRUCT STAFF TO BEGIN A NEW PLAN AMENDMENT TO ADOPT THE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES OF THE VISION BLUEPRINT AS THE FMP OBJECTIVES?
 - INSTRUCT STAFF TO BEGIN A NEW PLAN AMENDMENT TO ADOPT ALL THE OBJECTIVES OF THE VISION BLUEPRINT AS THE FMP OBJECTIVES?
 - WAIT FOR THE NEXT PLAN AMENDMENT TO ADOPT THE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES OF THE VISION BLUEPRINT AS THE FMP OBJECTIVES?
 - WAIT FOR THE NEXT PLAN AMENDMENT TO ADOPT ALL THE OBJECTIVES OF THE VISION BLUEPRINT AS THE FMP OBJECTIVES?
 - OTHERS?
- PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON NEEDED INFORMATION AND TIMING TO BEGIN DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2021-2026 VISION BLUEPRINT FOR THE SNAPPER GROUPER FISHERY.
- OTHERS?

Appendix A. Problems and Objectives in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan and Subsequent Amendments

Fishery Management Plan (1983):

Problems listed in the FMP included:

- 1) Thirteen species in the complex are in a documented state of growth overfishing.
- 2) Many of the species south of Cape Canaveral will likely experience growth overfishing in the near future.
- 3) Data necessary to quantitatively document growth overfishing in other species or recruitment are very limited.

Management objectives to address the problems included:

- 1) Prevent recruitment overfishing in all species and prevent growth overfishing of each species except where growth overfishing is justified by social and economic considerations. Method to achieve objective: Minimum sizes will control growth overfishing and prevent recruitment overfishing. The Secretary is authorized to take whatever emergency action is necessary in the unlikely event of recruitment overfishing.
- 2) Collect the necessary data to monitor the fisheries. Method of achieving objective: Authorize data collection and analysis to monitor the status of the fishery.
- 3) Promote orderly utilization of the resource. Method of achieving objective: Restrictions on fish traps and prohibitions on poisons, explosives, and spearing jewfish.

Amendment 4 (1991)

The Council identified several new problems and added new FMP objectives. Problems in the fishery were revised to include:

- 1) NEW: 1) Excessive fishing mortality is jeopardizing the biological integrity of the snapper grouper resource of the South Atlantic.
- 2) NEW: 2) Adequate management has been hindered by lack of current and accurate biological, statistical, social and economic information. Data necessary to document growth and/or recruitment overfishing and to calculate SSRs is very limited. Since the universe of participants is unknown, scientists are unable to estimate catch, effort, and other important information with desired accuracy. The present system of fishery dependent and fishery independent data collection provides limited information for assessment purposes and practically no economic or social data.
- 3) NEW: 3) Intense competition exists among recreational, part-time and full-time commercial users of the snapper grouper resources; and between commercial users employing different gears.
- 4) NEW: 4) Habitat degradation by some types of fishing gear and poor water quality have adversely affected fish stocks and associated habitat.
- 5) NEW: 5) The existence of inconsistent state and federal regulations makes it difficult to coordinate, implement and enforce management measures and may lead to overfishing. Inconsistent management measures create public confusion and hinder voluntary compliance.

FMP objectives were revised as:

- 1) Prevent overfishing in all species by maintaining the spawning stock ratio (SSR) at or above target levels.
- 2) Collect necessary data to develop, monitor, and assess biological, economic, and social impacts of management measures designed to prevent overfishing, obtain desired SSR levels, and address the other stated problems.
- 3) Promote orderly utilization of the resource. Method of achieving objective: Restrictions on fish traps and prohibitions on poisons, explosives, and spearing jewfish.
- 1) NEW: 4) Provide for a flexible management system that minimizes regulatory delays while retaining substantial Council and public involvement in management decisions, and rapidly adapts to changes in resource abundance, new scientific information, and changes in fishing patterns among user groups.
- 2) NEW: 5) Minimize habitat damage due to direct and indirect effects of recreational and commercial fishing activities.
- 3) NEW: 6) Promote public comprehension of, voluntary compliance with, and enforcement of the management measures.

Amendment 5 (1991)

Amendment 5 established the ITQ program for the wreckfish commercial fishery. The Council identified new problems and added associated management objectives that were specifically related to the wreckfish fishery. In later amendments these objectives would be revised to be broader and applicable to other components of the snapper grouper fishery.

Problems in the fishery were revised in Amendment 5 as:

- 1) Excessive fishing mortality is jeopardizing the biological integrity of the snapper grouper resource of the South Atlantic.
- 2) Adequate management has been hindered by lack of current and accurate biological, statistical, social and economic information. Data necessary to document growth and/or recruitment overfishing and to calculate SSRs is very limited. Since the universe of participants is unknown, scientists are unable to estimate catch, effort, and other important information with desired accuracy. The present system of fishery dependent and fishery independent data collection provides limited information for assessment purposes and practically no economic or social data.
- 3) Intense competition exists among recreational, part-time and full-time commercial users of the snapper grouper resources; and between commercial users employing different gears.
- 4) Habitat degradation by some types of fishing gear and poor water quality have adversely affected fish stocks and associated habitat.
- 5) The existence of inconsistent state and federal regulations makes it difficult to coordinate, implement and enforce management measures and may lead to overfishing. Inconsistent management measures create public confusion and hinder voluntary compliance.
- 6) Excess capacity [in the wreckfish fishery]. The size and capacity of the wreckfish fleet exceeds that needed for present TACs as well as the range of TACs the Council is likely to approve in the foreseeable future. Additional vessels in the future would exacerbate the situation since the derby nature of an open access fishery encourages fishermen to

add harvest capacity even when gains in production are marginal or when economies of scale are not necessarily realized.

- 7) Inefficiency [in the wreckfish fishery]. Past and present measures to control harvest (TAC, gear restrictions, trip limits) and future measures that would likely be needed under continued open access, increase fishing costs and decrease potential consumer and producer benefits from the fishery.
- 8) Low conservation and compliance incentives [in the wreckfish fishery]. Under open access, incentives to promote conservation and voluntary compliance with regulations are low because the benefits of doing so may be appropriated by other fishermen or new entrants.
- 9) Potential conflicts [in the wreckfish fishery]. Competitive fishing conditions may eventually lead to gear and area conflicts as a large number of vessels compete for available TAC.
- 10) High regulatory costs [in the wreckfish fishery]. Management and enforcement costs are unnecessarily high and are expected to increase under open access as the number of vessels increases and stricter management measures are needed to control excess fishing effort.
- 11) Low marketing incentives [in the wreckfish fishery]. Efforts by fish dealers to augment consumer acceptance of wreckfish have been thwarted by short-run oversupply and lack of product continuity. The likelihood of additional harvest restrictions under open access increases uncertainty and instability and discourages long-run planning and investment by dealers.

The FMP objectives were revised as follows:

- 1) Prevent overfishing in all species by maintaining the spawning stock ratio (SSR) at or above target levels.
- 2) Collect necessary data to develop, monitor, and assess biological, economic, and social impacts of management measures designed to prevent overfishing, obtain desired SSR levels, and address the other stated problems.
- 3) Promote orderly utilization of the resource. Method of achieving objective: Restrictions on fish traps and prohibitions on poisons, explosives, and spearing jewfish.
- 4) Provide for a flexible management system that minimizes regulatory delays while retaining substantial Council and public involvement in management decisions, and rapidly adapts to changes in resource abundance, new scientific information, and changes in fishing patterns among user groups.
- 5) Minimize habitat damage due to direct and indirect effects of recreational and commercial fishing activities.
- 6) Promote public comprehension of, voluntary compliance with, and enforcement of the management measures.
 - 1) NEW: 7) Develop a mechanism to vest fishermen in the wreckfish fishery and create incentives for conservation and regulatory compliance whereby fishermen can realize potential long-run benefits from efforts to conserve and manage the wreckfish resource.
 - 2) NEW: 8) Provide a management regime which promotes sustainability and facilitates long-range planning and investment by harvesters and fish dealers while avoiding, where

possible, the necessity for more stringent management measures and increasing management over time.

- 3) NEW: 9) Develop a mechanism that allows the marketplace to drive harvest strategies and product forms in order to maintain product continuity and increase total producer and consumer benefits from the fishery.
- 4) NEW: 10) Promote management regimes that minimize gear and area conflicts among fishermen.
- 5) NEW: 11) Minimize the tendency for over-capitalization in the harvesting and processing/distribution sectors.
- 6) NEW: 12) Provide a reasonable opportunity for fishermen to make adequate returns from commercial fishing by controlling entry so that returns are not regularly dissipated by open access, while also providing avenues for fishermen not initially included in the limited entry program to enter the program.

Amendment 8 (1996)

Amendment 8 established the limited entry system for the snapper grouper commercial fishery.

The Council revised some of the identified problems and added a few additional ones:

- 1) Excessive fishing mortality is jeopardizing the biological integrity of the snapper grouper resource of the South Atlantic.
- 2) Adequate management has been hindered by lack of current and accurate biological, statistical, social and economic information.
- 3) Intense competition exists among recreational, part-time and full-time commercial users of the snapper grouper resources; and between commercial users employing different gears.
- 4) Habitat degradation caused by some types of fishing gear and poor water quality have adversely affected fish stocks and associated habitat.
- 5) The existence of inconsistent state and federal regulations makes it difficult to coordinate, implement and enforce management measures and may lead to overfishing. Inconsistent management measures create public confusion and hinder voluntary compliance. [problems 6-10 were revised to include all snapper grouper species, not just wreckfish]
- 6) Excess capacity. The size and capacity of the fleet have increased significantly in recent years. Despite bag and trip limits, and other regulatory measures, some of the stocks are still overfished or near the overfished stage. Any gains from current regulatory measures under open access are likely to attract new entrants to the fishery and provide incentive for those already in the fishery to increase harvest capacity even when gains in production are marginal or when economic of scale are not necessarily realized.
- 7) Inefficiency. Past and present measures to control harvest (TAC, gear restrictions, trip limits) and future measures that would likely be needed under continued open access, increase fishing costs and decrease potential consumer and producer benefits from the fishery.
- 8) Low conservation and compliance incentives. Under open access, there is little incentive on the part of the fishermen to promote conservation and to voluntarily comply with regulations. This is because the benefits from doing so may accrue to other fishermen or

- new entrants. A controlled access management system would provide a mechanism for those who participate in conservation measures to share in the resulting benefits.
- 9) Potential conflicts among participants. As the number of vessels continues to increase, competitive fishing conditions may eventually lead to gear and area conflicts as a large number of vessels compete for the available resources on the same fishing grounds. (At the other extreme, stocks may decline to the point where marginal fishermen may not find it economically viable to fish. This situation could lead to a decline in fishing effort.)
 - 10) High regulatory costs. The progression of regulatory measures already implemented in the snapper grouper fishery has resulted in increasing management and enforcement costs. However, the full benefit from these measures has not been realized due to the open access nature of the fishery. More management measures under open access would further increase these costs to the point where management costs could outweigh the benefits.
 - 11) Low marketing incentives. Short-run oversupply and lack of product continuity continues to create price fluctuation and uncertainty in the marketplace for these species. The likelihood of additional harvest restrictions under open access increases uncertainty and instability and discourages long- run planning and investment by dealers.
 - 12) Localized depletion. Localized depletion where a species' abundance in an area is reduced by high fishing effort can cause conflict among fishermen.

FMP objectives were revised as follows:

- 1) Prevent overfishing in all species by maintaining the spawning potential ratio (SPR) at or above target levels.
- 2) Collect necessary data to develop, monitor, and assess biological, economic, and social impacts of management measures designed to prevent overfishing, obtain desired SPR levels, and address the other stated problems.
- 3) Promote orderly utilization of the resource.
- 4) Provide for a flexible management system that minimizes regulatory delays while retaining substantial Council and public involvement in management decisions, and rapidly adapts to changes in resource abundance, new scientific information, and changes in fishing patterns among user groups.
- 5) Minimize habitat damage due to direct and indirect effects of recreational and commercial fishing activities as well as other non-fishery impacts.
- 6) Promote public comprehension of, voluntary compliance with, and enforcement of the management measures.
- 7) Mechanism to vest participants. A controlled access system provides a means whereby participants have a stake in conserving the resource. This ensures that participants consider the long-run benefits of conserving the resource because they know it is in their best interest. Unlike open access, controlled access would ensure that those who conserve the resource share in the long-run benefits. This gives fishermen incentive to protect the resource and expose those who are violating regulations. As a result, voluntary compliance would increase and enforcement costs would likely decrease.
- 8) Promote sustainability and facilitate long-run planning. Participants in the fishery will have access to the resource based on certain criteria to be determined by the Council after reviewing public comments. This would give participants the flexibility to employ

the most profitable way to fish and also fish when it is most profitable in terms of market conditions. Such a system will promote stability in the fishery by providing a regular supply of fish throughout the fishing year, and maintain stable prices. Both fishermen and fish dealers will have the incentive to engage in long- run planning and investment activities.

- 9) Create Market-Driven Harvest Pace and Increase Product Continuity. A system that ensures participants can harvest their allocations (whether in terms of individual quotas, effort units, trip limits, etc.) anytime during the fishing year would ensure that fishermen conduct their fishing activities to supply the market according to its structure and demand situation. There would be no incentive on the part of fishermen to flood the market with fish. This could result in product continuity, improved product quality, and better prices.
- 10) Minimize Gear and Area Conflicts among Fishermen. Presently, allowable gear provision (implemented under snapper Grouper Amendment 6) controls the types of gear in the fishery. Controlled access and effort unit controls would limit the number of allowable gear in the fishery.
- 11) Decrease Incentives For Overcapitalization. If some form of vested interest is provided to fishermen, their objective would be to maximize profits subject to certain conditions. In order to maximize profits they would explore the least cost method for harvesting in the fishery. This means they would employ fishing effort only to the point where the difference between the anticipated total revenue and total cost is greatest. This practice would reduce incentives for overcapitalization.
- 12) Prevent Continual Dissipation of Returns from Fishing through Open Access. It is a well known fact that under open access any measure(s) that generate "pure profits" will provide an opportunity for those already in the fishery to dissipate those profits and also attract new entrants into the fishery. This can only be prevented if measures are taken to prevent those already in the fishery from increasing their effort without any restriction and also to create a barrier against unlimited entry into the fishery. A controlled access system will reduce the incentive for present participants to violate the regulations, and also prevent unlimited entry into the fishery.
- 13) Evaluate and minimize localized depletion. High fishing mortality rates have resulted in localized depletion of some species in certain areas. Certain species are overfished throughout their range; however, there are particular areas where the overfishing rate is more severe than in the rest of the range. There may also be some cases where the stock as a whole is not overfished, but the numbers in a localized area have been significantly reduced.
- 14) Minimize bycatch. Reflects greater responsibility under recent Magnuson-Stevens Act amendment which added the following national standard: "(9) Conservation and management measures shall, to the extent practicable, (A) minimize bycatch and (B) to the extent bycatch cannot be avoided, minimize the mortality of such bycatch."

Amendment 9 (1997)

The first time the identified problems and FMP objectives are listed using the abbreviated versions. Problems included:

- 1) Excessive fishing mortality
- 2) Lack of current and accurate biological, statistical, social and economic information.

- 3) Intense competition
- 4) Habitat degradation
- 5) Inconsistent state and federal regulations
- 6) Excess capacity.
- 7) Inefficiency.
- 8) Low conservation and compliance incentives.
- 9) Potential conflicts among participants.
- 10) High regulatory costs.
- 11) Low marketing incentives.
- 12) Localized depletion.

FMP objectives were listed as:

- 1) Prevent overfishing.
- 2) Collect necessary data.
- 3) Promote orderly utilization of the resource.
- 4) Provide for a flexible management system.
- 5) Minimize habitat damage.
- 6) Promote public compliance and enforcement.
- 7) Mechanism to vest participants.
- 8) Promote stability and facilitate long-run planning.
- 9) Create market-driven harvest pace and increase product continuity.
- 10) Minimize gear and area conflicts among fishermen.
- 11) Decrease incentives for overcapitalization.
- 12) Prevent continual dissipation of returns from fishing through open access.
- 13) Evaluate and minimize localized depletion.
- 14) Minimize bycatch.

Amendment 15A (2008)

Objective #14 was omitted from this list in Amendment 15A.

Amendment 17A (2010)

This amendment the Council listed the abbreviated 13 objectives and added two additional objectives:

14. End overfishing of snapper grouper stocks undergoing overfishing.
15. Rebuild stocks declared overfished.