



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Summary Report **Information and Education** **Advisory Panel** October 10-11, 2017 N. Charleston, SC

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Information & Education Advisory Panel Meeting met on October 10th and 11th in Charleston, SC. The AP received presentations, reviewed and provided recommendations on the Council's current and upcoming outreach programs to include,

- 1) Mobile App Transition
- 2) Fishermen's Forum
- 3) MyFishCount Recreational Reporting Project
- 4) For-Hire Electronic Reporting Outreach Project
- 5) Red Snapper 2017 Season Voluntary Reporting Opportunity
- 6) Citizen Science Program
- 7) Marine Resources Education Program

1) Mobile App Transition

AP members provided staff guidance on how to ensure that both recreational and commercial fishermen are still engaged with the transition from the current SA Fish Regulations app to Fish Rules.

- Send information to fishing clubs in the region in order to ensure that recreational fishermen are aware of the transition
- Send letters to all commercial permit holders and seafood dealers to notify them of the transition

2) Fishermen's Forum

The Fishermen's Forum is a new online platform currently available to commercial snapper grouper federal permit holders to discuss current management issues and the status of fisheries in the South Atlantic. The AP briefly explored the Fishermen's Forum and discussed the need to possibly expand opportunity to other sectors in the future.

- AP members encouraged staff to reach out to other existing forums and magazines in order to boost engagement

3) **MyFishCount Recreational Reporting App Project**

MyFishCount is a mobile application currently in development in collaboration with the Snook and Gamefish Foundation and Elemental Methods. The app will allow fishermen in the South Atlantic to report their catch, creating a **possible** new data stream to complement other already established sources. The AP reviewed the MyFishCount Survey, the MyFishCount webpage content, and content for the Council's Best Practices Webpage.

MyFishCount Survey

The survey aims to assess potential user interest in recreational reporting and the MyFishCount App. The survey includes questions to gauge fisher avidity and perceptions.

- The AP encouraged including a “zero” trip option for Question 1 in the survey document.
- The AP asked that staff rephrase Question 1 and 2 of the survey to include options for weekly, monthly, and twice a month.
- Staff were challenged to find the link between folks who are just tagging along on fishing trips and those who are organizing the trips.
- The AP asked staff to consider providing a link to species included in the snapper grouper complex in order to clarify any confusion.
- Staff was asked to reiterate that reporting is voluntary but also explain that it could be a requirement in the future.
- The AP suggested adding a question about perceived advantages and/or barriers to reporting.
- Staff was encouraged to rearrange Question 6 to have consistent answers using the same ranges seen in earlier question. This will help simplify the survey and help participants move through the survey more quickly.
- The AP asked that staff add a neutral option to Question 7.
- The AP warned that Question 8 may be difficult to answer this because it is not species specific. They encouraged staff to make the question more species specific.
- AP members asked that a quiz be incorporated in the survey to assess how familiar users are with MRIP and how it works. This will allow for a baseline of their knowledge.
- Council staff was asked to avoid the matrices in Questions 11 and 12. Instead, the AP encouraged staff to use individual questions to reduce the amount of information in the question.
- AP members asked that staff be cautious about the language used in Question 12, especially in reference to the ways in which recreational reporting information may be used. The Council certainly doesn't want to lead anglers to believe that the

info will be used for assessments or management if that is not the case. The AP advised the use of a disclaimer that recreational reporting data will be used to complement MRIP data, not to replace it.

- The AP encouraged Council staff to reword Question 13 so that it is less specific about who will be doing the monitoring/data collection.

MyFishCount Webpage Content

The webpage, which will introduce the MyFishCount mobile application, showcases infographics and tools for recreational fishermen to better understand the benefits of reporting.

- The AP encouraged Council staff to balance infographics that won't encourage anglers to over or under-report.
- Staff was encouraged to consider using the word 'sampling' or 'reporting' instead of intercept.

Best Practices Webpage Content

The webpage outlines best practices for releasing fish, particularly those that are susceptible to the effects of barotrauma.

- FL Sea Grant would like to partner
- Gulf Council has also requested a similar web page and appreciates the focus on education.
- NOAA Fisheries is reworking their website to be one website for the entire agency. It will be topic based (species by region). It will also have a heavy focus on recreational fishing and NOAA is working on designing these pages. NOAA and the Gulf Council are interested in partnering too.
- States would also like to be involved in those conversations. SCDNR's position is to favor recompression vs. venting.
- The Gulf Council on the other hand prefers to keep it broad with the possibility of making the requirement to have tools on-board (venting, recompression, etc.) instead of a regulation to use the tools. This encourages the use of tools that best suit the needs of the individual angler.
- The AP warned that the term 'barotrauma' may not be so user-friendly and it might be wise to consider some other terms.
- The AP urged Council staff to consider how to shift the messaging about descending devices from talking about what devices are available to how an angler can make or purchase a device.

4) For-Hire Electronic Reporting Outreach Project

The federal for-hire fleet will likely be required to report as a result of a pending amendment. The project offers trainings, helpful resources, and guidance to charter fishermen in the South Atlantic. Staff demonstrated one of the electronic reporting tools (eTrips/mobile) and discussed outreach approaches.

The AP reviewed the project and offered feedback for developing training and outreach materials.

- Staff created a laminated paper tally sheet to keep track of handwritten catch information for their trips. This was created for those captains that did not want to take a tablet in the field to record their trip information. The AP agreed the laminated tally sheet would be a useful tool for captains.
- The AP pointed out that staff might need to consider going to the fishermen in places they feel most comfortable. They suggested using a hook to get people motivated to attend, something along the lines of free product to training participants.
- Staff was encouraged to consider that fishermen may prefer to have a phone-based mobile app and encourage the development of this type of tool for the future.
- Successful trip submission: Need to consider giving participants feedback when they have submitted a successful trip via the app or even via e-mail when the report they have submitted is correct.
- Information products: Think outside the box to encourage fishermen to think about how else they could use this information; what pieces of information are they reporting that they could use to improve their businesses, fishing practices; trends in their fishing to help better target their trips
- Try to identify some champions
- Incentivize participation in training sessions: Perhaps target free admission to fishing shows as a “reward” for coming to a training

5) Red Snapper 2017 Season Voluntary Reporting Opportunity

The AP received an update on the possible 2017 season and the recreational reporting opportunity available through MyFishCount.com. No additional input was provided by the AP.

6) Citizen Science Program

The AP received an update on the Council’s Citizen Science Program to include the creation of a Citizen Science Advisory Panel Pool and five topical Action Teams focusing on Volunteers, Communication/Outreach/Education, Projects/Topics Management, Data Management, and Finance & Infrastructure. No additional input was provided by the AP.

7) Marine Resources Education Program (MREP) South East

The AP received an update on MREP. No additional input was provided by the AP.