



May 31, 2017

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*Managing fish and wildlife
resources for their long-term
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of people.*

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Dr. Michelle Duval
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
North Charleston, South Carolina 29405

Re: Extension of Sheepshead Regulations into Federal Waters

Dear Dr. Duval:

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is evaluating the management of the sheepshead (*Archosargus probatocephalus*) fishery, including the possibility of extending state regulations into adjacent federal waters. Sheepshead is managed in state waters through FWC rule 68B-59, Florida Administrative Code, there are currently no regulations pertaining to sheepshead in federal waters off of Florida. The FWC is currently considering modifying state sheepshead regulations for commercial and recreational harvest and extending these regulations into federal waters.

According to the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Title 16 U.S.C. Section 1856, a state has the ability to extend their regulations into federal waters if there is no federal fishery management plan or if there are no regulations for federal waters.

Staff will be presenting a draft rule amendment on sheepshead management at the July 10-11, 2017, FWC meeting in Orlando. The draft rule will include the possibility of the extension of modified state regulations for sheepshead into adjacent federal waters.

It is our understanding that the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council has no imminent plans to consider managing sheepshead in federal waters. The FWC is committed to conserving these resources for the future and is considering extending its regulatory authority into federal waters. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about this proposal.

Sincerely,


Jessica McCawley
Director