

**Port Meeting Summary**  
*Murrells Inlet, SC*  
*February 11, 2014, 6 p.m. session*

**What specific management strategies could be improved (are not working)?**

- Noticing of quotas (annual catch limits) and impending closures; notice of pending closures are not given with enough advance notice, 48 hours isn't enough time for adequate planning for a closure (commercial and for-hire sectors)
- Duplicate reporting forms/mechanisms required of fishermen; seems to be no cross-referencing by managers (state & federal agencies)
- Lack of electronic reporting; most if not all fishermen are on a computer daily and/or have access to one, yet this technology isn't utilized by managers; viewed as a lost opportunity
- Inefficiency in data collection/surveys; the information requested of fishermen isn't necessarily information that is useful for analysis
- Fishermen do not believe or trust in the data that comes from the SouthEast Fisheries Science Center and used by the Council to make management decisions.
- Need to expedite the management process and shorten the length of time developing an amendment /regulatory amendment
- Fishing seasons; currently seasons aren't structured in a way that is stable for business and business planning purposes
- Universal fishing season start dates are currently in place throughout the South Atlantic and may not be the best approach; regional management approaches for the snapper grouper fishery should be considered
- Economics in the fishery (i.e. charter fishermen in FL are making more \$\$\$ than charter guys here) and regional discrepancies are not considered.
- Snowy grouper fishery; assessment results and specifically the rebuilding schedule are not accurate
- Red snapper mini-season is not structured appropriately; management for this fishery needs to change. A short weekend opening for this fishery is not adequate. This should be managed through a tag program or use a different approach than a 3-day opening.
- The stock assessment process needs to be expedited.
- Decrease release mortality (reduce discards) through bycatch allowances – for aging data like otoliths, etc. bycatch allowances may benefit managers.
- More timely response by management when a stock is in recovery.
- Management should consider alternative methods to stock assessments (example provided that Dr. Aaron Burch putting cameras down on live fish); counting live fish as opposed to dead fish; consider new and different (outside of the box) approaches
- Better data and improvements in data collection strategies for the recreational fishery is needed;
- Improved understanding of management process, stock assessment process and data collection programs– fishermen get so many letters in mail from different sources, NMFS, HMS, ASMFC, SAFMC. Oftentimes, unfamiliarity with each agency's role.
- Improvements in outreach and education could help fishermen understand the process; difficult to give recommendations for improvement when some fishermen are not clear about the existing process
- The locations of existing MPAs are not well known. A lot of illegal fishing currently taking place inside MPAs.

## Summary of Discussion on Current Issues/Solutions:

### 1. Fishing Seasons (not stable for business)

#### Solutions

- Coordinate fishing seasons.
- Management strategies to allow year-round black sea bass fishing.
- Separate demographics and utilize regional management approaches
- Make the recreational and commercial size limits the same for black sea bass.
- Modify trip limits (commercial) and bag limits (recreational).
- Separate charter/for-hire sector from recreational fishery.
- Step-down bag limit for the recreational fishery for certain species after a certain percentage of quota is met (occurs in commercial fishery currently, but not recreational sector).

### 2. Regional Management vs. One Size Fits All Approach

#### Solutions

- Draw lines on the South Atlantic regional map to delineate management for specific geographic regions. Management and subsequent regulations are changed within the geographic location.
- Regional/sub-regional management.
- State-by-state management and quotas.
- Economics of the geographical areas in South Atlantic are different, needs to be better accounted for.

### 3. Improve Data Collection

#### Solutions

- Utilize electronic data collection – using underwater video cameras to collect data for stock assessments.
- Mandatory reporting for the recreational and for-hire sector.
- Create and implement a voluntary (pilot) reporting data collection system utilizing mobile app technology (recreational sector).
- Use web-based and mobile technologies for reporting for the recreational sector & streamline data collection process (i.e. iSnapper).
- Provide incentives for accurate reporting of catch (all sectors).
- Use data collected by fishermen themselves. (If data is actually collected by the fishermen, this may alleviate some trust issues currently plaguing incentive to input accurate information. Fishermen could collect data while fishing.)
- Develop a training program to teach fishermen how to collect fishery dependent data using standardized protocols for use in analyses and stock assessments.
- Provide more opportunity for cooperative research.
- Implement a recreational tagging program for tracking harvest – only way to land the fish (red snapper). Good idea for short-term management instead of a mini-season like what is in place for red snapper that isn't working.