

Sector Summary – 2014 Port Meetings

A total of 26 port meetings were held in NC, SC, GA and FL between February and April 2014 as part of the South Atlantic Council’s Visioning Project. 372 stakeholders participated in the port meetings with representation from the commercial, private recreational, for-hire, chef/restaurant owners/seafood consumers, and conservation sectors. Below is a breakdown of sector participation during the port meetings.

Figure 1: Sector Participation by State

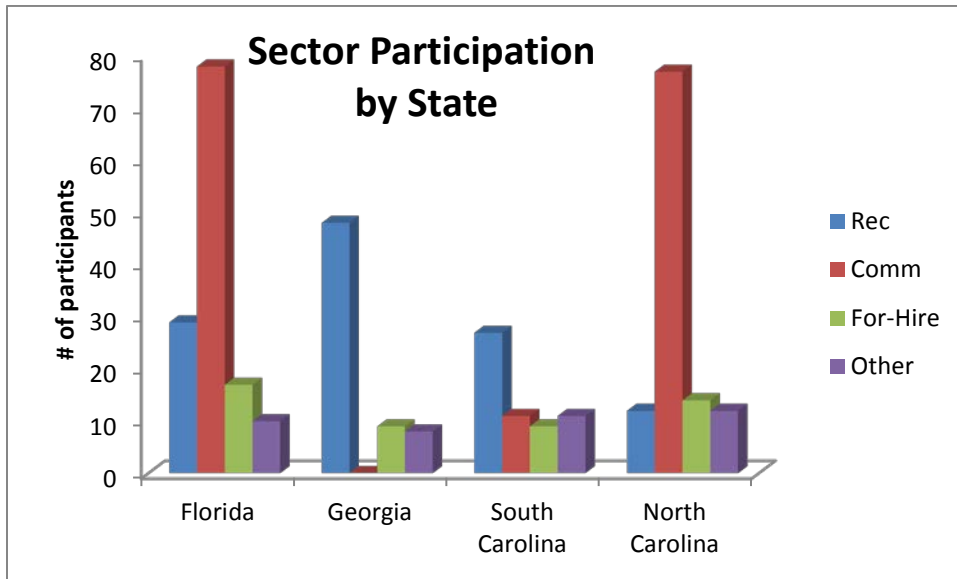
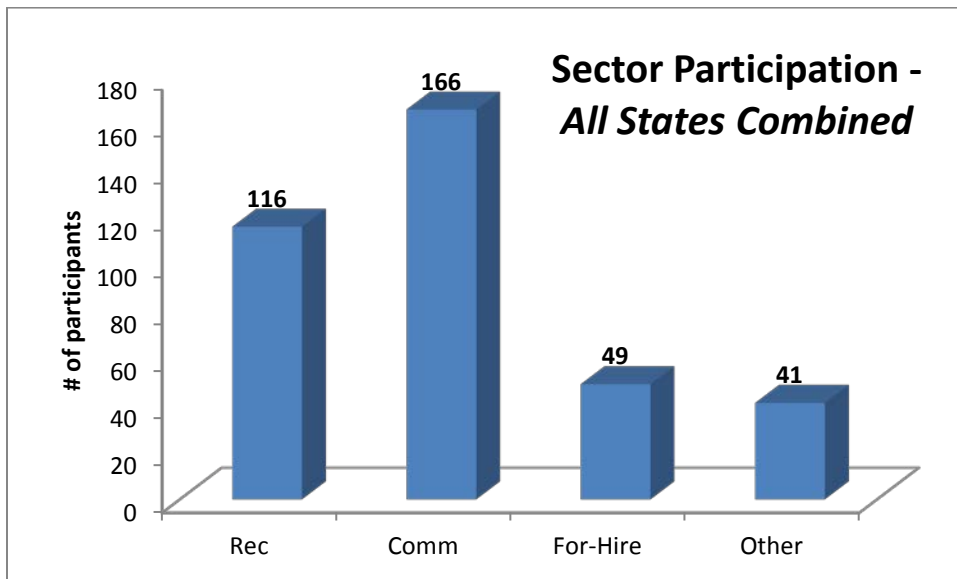
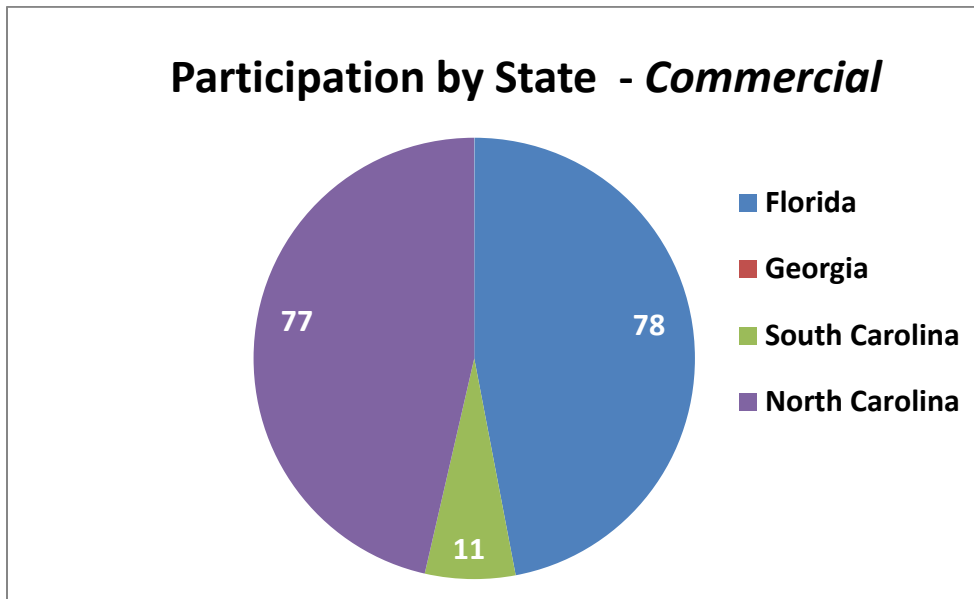


Figure 2: Total Participation by Sector – All States Combined



Key issues and solutions for each major sector are highlighted below.

Commercial



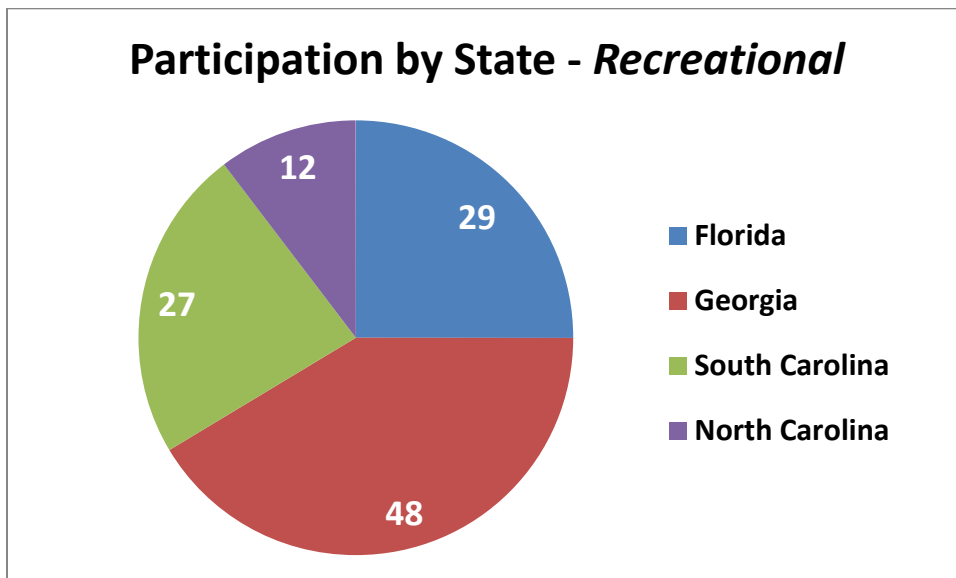
The highest participation in the port meetings came from the commercial sector with a total of 166 commercial fishermen, seafood dealers, and seafood business owners participating. Common issues and solutions from the commercial sector throughout the region include:

COMMERCIAL SECTOR	
Key Issue:	Recommended Solution:
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Require electronic reporting/logbooks & streamline reporting (less duplication of reporting to state and federal)
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Test new technology for collecting data (mobile and web-based)
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Prioritize stock assessments regionally and by economic importance
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Train dealers on new weekly reporting requirements and forms
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Increase cooperative research opportunities with commercial sector
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Allow for 3 rd party review of stock assessments & aim for real time assessments
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Develop methods to collect and incorporate anecdotal information from fishermen in stock assessments and analyses to be used in management
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	More funding for more stock assessments and data collection programs
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Use underwater cameras on vessels to collect data on fish/fishing activity
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Address shifts in abundance due to climate change
Reducing Discards/Minimizing Waste	Develop a bycatch allowance (species specific for different states) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Limit/quota per trip/per boat</i> • <i>Consider pounds or % of catch</i> • <i>Look at black grouper in S. FL, other states consider red snapper, gag, black sea bass</i>
Reducing Discards/Minimizing Waste	Consider the use of descending devices and use in management

COMMERCIAL SECTOR	
Key Issue:	Recommended Solution:
Reducing Discards/Minimizing Waste	Give credits towards the Annual Catch Limit for the use of descending devices
Reducing Discards/Minimizing Waste	Align seasons to reduce bycatch
Reducing Discards/Minimizing Waste	No size limits and full retention
Reducing Discards/Minimizing Waste	Implement a 12-inch minimum size limit on red porgy
Reducing Discards/Minimizing Waste	Utilize step-down trip limits and split seasons for more snapper grouper species
Reducing Discards/Minimizing Waste	Collaborate with the states and develop best management practices training for fishing - fish handling training
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures, Market	Address seasonal spawning closure for shallow-water grouper: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider rolling spawning closures (close fishing when fish are actually spawning in each state or smaller sub-region) • FL – close gag January and February only in southern FL; Open gag and red snapper in January and February in northern FL; close red and scamp in March and April only • Shorten the closure to a 2-month closure that aligns with spawning in specific areas; let the states choose the months.
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures, Market	Consistent seafood supply; Develop management measures that allow availability of 3-5 snapper grouper species for chefs/restaurants.
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures, Market	Address latent commercial effort in the fishery to determine true capacity of the fishery.
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures, Market	Address and consider the value of owner-operators when making management decisions.
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures, Market	Address methods and eligibility requirements for allowing new entrants to the fishery; specifically the endorsement programs for black sea bass and golden tilefish; no new endorsement programs
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures, Market	Conflicting views – majority of stakeholders opposing catch shares; minority of stakeholders supporting catch shares
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures, Market	Separate the Jacks complex and implement individual species level Annual Catch Limits for these species
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures, Market	Weekly trip limits instead of daily trip limits (specifically grouper and tilefish) in order to make trips economically feasible
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures, Market	Split seasons for more species (similar to vermilion); consider red porgy, gray triggerfish
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures, Market	Align fishing seasons to allow co-occurring species to be caught together.
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures, Market	Address trip limits for snowy grouper, red snapper, deepwater species (500-lb)
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures, Market	Consider use of fishing one week on/one week off to extend the season
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures, Market	Consider how to use any ACL that is remaining at the end of the fishing year; roll-over to next fishing year.
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures, Market	Allow underages in one sector to roll over to other sectors within a season; this would allow the total ACL to be utilized.

COMMERCIAL SECTOR	
Key Issue:	Recommended Solution:
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures, Market	Consider limited harvest of goliath grouper (1 fish per boat during certain times of the year; harvest tags, etc.)
Regional Management	Consider making South Florida a separate management zone
Regional Management	Consider regional or sub-regional quotas for certain species
Regional Management	Streamline and align state and federal regulations
Regional Management	Consider different trip limits for different regions of the fishery
Regional Management	State by state approaches to quota management, trip limits and seasons.
Regional Management	Develop separate joint agreements between federal and state management agencies for regional management.
Habitat/Ecosystems	Consider sunset clauses on closed areas (MPAs, etc.)
Habitat/Ecosystems	Monitoring and law enforcement for existing closed areas to show they are working (MPAs)
Habitat/Ecosystems	Consider placement of more artificial reef habitat.
Habitat/Ecosystems	No new MPAs
Allocation	Consider more recent catch history instead of historical catch history when addressing sector allocations; this concern arose from the decline in commercial fishing activities in recent years.
Allocation	Address allocations – equity issues between sectors, for deepwater complex, gear types (golden tilefish sectors).

Private Recreational



Participation by the recreational sector was the second highest during the port meetings with 116 participants. The highest percentage of recreational participants was from Georgia followed by Florida and South Carolina. Common issues and solutions from the recreational sector throughout the region include:

RECREATIONAL SECTOR	
Key Issue:	Recommended Solution:
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Consider voluntary or mandatory reporting for recreational fishermen.

Recreational continued

RECREATIONAL SECTOR	
Key Issue:	Recommended Solution:
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Develop and test new technology for collecting data (mobile and web-based)
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Increase cooperative research opportunities with recreational sector
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Develop methods to collect and incorporate anecdotal information from fishermen in stock assessments and analyses to be used in management
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	More funding for more stock assessments and data collection programs
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Use underwater cameras on vessels to collect data on fish/fishing activity
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Develop a recreational snapper grouper stamp/permit for the recreational sector
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Utilize state/University generated research in stock assessments.
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Develop incentives for accurate self-reporting of catch by the recreational sector.
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	More funding for stock assessments and more real time assessments
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Readdress MRIP sampling design/sample frame; need better methodologies
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Develop joint agreements with the states for data improvements (similar to the Joint Enforcement Agreements currently in place for law enforcement).
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Create complex-specific permits for recreational (and for-hire) sectors based on the HMS model -- This would help identify users fishing for snapper grouper resources
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Add a check off box on each state license for 'offshore bottom fishing' to help identify the universe of recreational fishermen in the fishery and assist with MRIP and other data collection programs.
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Implement a recreational tag harvest program for tracking harvest of certain species (recreational and for-hire sectors).
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	A voluntary recreational program where GoPro cameras are used in data collection (underwater).
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Develop a pool of local anglers willing to provide recreational catch data
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Develop a training program to teach fishermen how to voluntarily collect data using standardized methods that could be used in analyses and stock assessments.
Reducing Discards/Minimizing Waste	Consider the use of descending devices and use in management
Reducing Discards/Minimizing Waste	Consider a total fish or bag limit with no size limits for specific species
Reducing Discards/Minimizing Waste	Adjust current size limits on certain species
Reducing Discards/Minimizing Waste	Consider full retention – set a daily poundage limit
Reducing Discards/Minimizing Waste	Develop more outreach on barotrauma
Reducing Discards/Minimizing Waste	Collaborate with the states and develop best management practices training for fishing - fish handling training
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures	Address spawning season closure to account for temporal/latitudinal differences in spawning activity of some species
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures	Develop staggered fishing seasons for recreational sector to allow longer fishing seasons; example of two weeks on and two weeks off for fishing was given.

Recreational continued

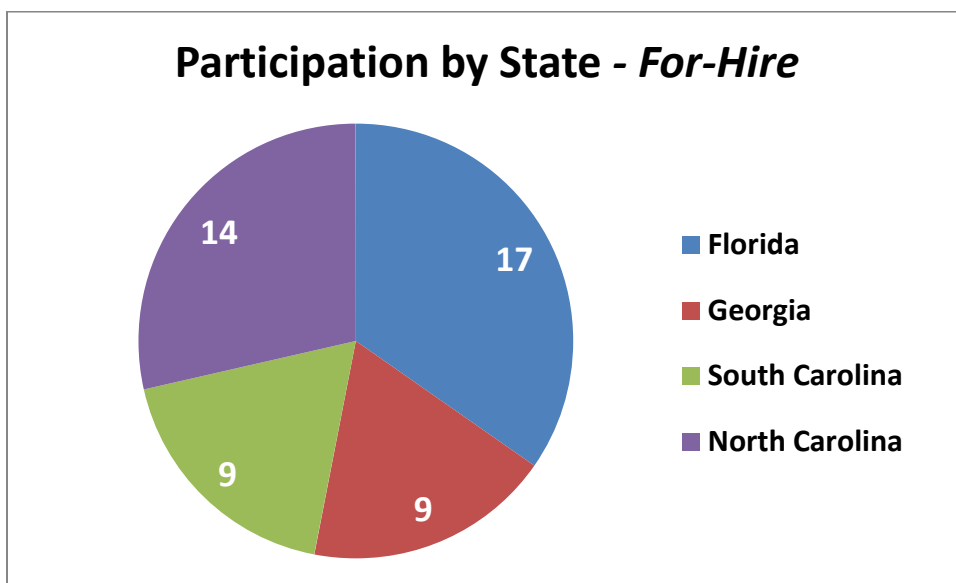
RECREATIONAL SECTOR	
Key Issue:	Recommended Solution:
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures	Allow for in-season bag limit adjustments for the recreational sector; Allow for an increase in bag limits when it is evident that the recreational ACL for some species will not be met for the year to allow full access to the recreational ACL.
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures	Utilize “step-down” approach currently used in the commercial sector for a reduction in bag limits once 75% of the ACL has been met;
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures	Allow for an increase in bag limits when it is evident that the recreational ACL for some species will not be met for the year to allow full access to the recreational ACL.
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures	Consider a rolling spawning season closure (for shallow-water groupers) that accounts for when the fish are actually spawning in different areas of the region
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures	Black sea bass management – size limits and bag limits need to be readdressed.
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures	Increase the recreational minimum size limit for lane snapper to 10-inches.
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures	Increase the recreational minimum size limit for mangrove snapper (gray) to 12-inches.
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures	Use a slot limit for mutton snapper (no recommendation on range for slot).
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures	Implement a recreational bag limit of 5 fish per species across all species.
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures	Address size limit for hogfish
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures	Allow limited harvest of goliath grouper; slot limit; harvest tags through lottery system; open fishery when shallow-water groupers are closed
Regional Management	Develop separate joint agreements between federal and state management agencies for regional management.
Regional Management	Separate South FL and Keys into its own management zone; would be better able to handle Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic conflicting regulations
Regional Management	Regional quotas - Separate South FL quotas from other jurisdictions
Regional Management	Regional stock assessments on economically important species
Regional Management	State management of the recreational fishery (SC and FL)
Regional Management	Subdivide or “grid” a few areas by similar characteristics for management purposes
Regional Management	Use research to clearly define zone management for some species in the recreational sector; fishermen mentioned the use of genetics research to better delineate zones.
Regional Management	SC: Allow the state to manage certain species (black sea bass and red snapper) for the recreational sector.
Habitat/Ecosystems	Creation, restoration and protection of critical habitats for snapper grouper species
Habitat/Ecosystems	Identify and protect known spawning areas.
Habitat/Ecosystems	Reconfigure existing Marine Protected Areas to encompass known spawning areas.; No more new MPAs

Recreational continued

RECREATIONAL SECTOR	
Key Issue:	Recommended Solution:
Habitat/Ecosystems	Place more artificial reef materials in federal waters where fish could spawn.
Allocation	Need to address sector allocations for some species
Communication	Regional stakeholder meetings with forecasting during meetings (similar to format of port meetings); Ask each stakeholder what is happening in each area at these meetings – also goes under incorporating fishermen’s knowledge into data collection
Communication	Local education Public Service Announcements (where does the public go to buy local fish; educate them about seasons, what is in season locally; lionfish and invasive species)
Communication	More outreach tools available for understanding data
Communication	A moderated forum by Council staff to answer questions posed by the public
Communication	Q/A webinar, provide a forum for folks to ask questions of Council staff
Communication	Develop condensed information on stock assessments in layman’s terms (not just what the newsletter provides)
Communication	1-pagers delivered to marinas on stock assessments – brief summary after an assessment
Communication	Develop short segments regarding the “science” on YouTube
Communication	Send notification of closures to fishing clubs not just to individuals

For-hire

Approximately forty nine, for-hire captains and headboat operators participated in the port meetings. Participation from the for-hire sector was highest in Florida followed by North Carolina. Common issues and solutions from the for-hire sector are similar to the recreational sector. However, some specific for-hire issues/solutions include:



FOR-HIRE SECTOR	
Key Issue:	Recommended Solution:
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Consider voluntary or mandatory reporting for the for-hire sector
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Develop electronic reporting mechanisms for the for-hire sector
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Streamline reporting requirements for state and federal reporting (for those states that have mandatory reporting in the for-hire sector)
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Increase cooperative research opportunities with recreational sector
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Develop methods to collect and incorporate anecdotal information from fishermen in stock assessments and analyses to be used in management
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	More funding for more stock assessments and data collection programs
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Use underwater cameras on vessels to collect data on fish/fishing activity
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Create complex-specific permits for the for-hire sector based on the HMS model -- This would help identify users fishing for snapper grouper resources
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Improve recreational discard estimates headboat vs. charter/for-hire vs. private recreational
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Separate the for-hire sector from the recreational sector; concerns over discard mortality rates differing between the two sectors making estimates inaccurate
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	Need to characterize the for-hire sector of the fishery (and how much the fishery can sustain).
Reducing Discards/Minimizing Waste	Consider a “by the pound” limit, not a size limit on fish
Reducing Discards/Minimizing Waste	Test and utilize fish descending devices and other ways to reduce barotrauma
Reducing Discards/Minimizing Waste	Collaborate with the states and develop best management practices training for fishing - fish handling training
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures, Market	Coordinate the fishing seasons to align the seasons to maximize fishing opportunity.
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures, Market	Consideration of implementing a limited entry program for the for-hire sector.
Regional Management	State-by-state management of certain species and quotas
Regional Management	Subdivide or “grid” a few areas (within a state or between states) by similar characteristics for management purposes
Habitat	No new MPAs
Habitat	Consider creating additional artificial reefs in federal waters
Allocation	Need to address sector allocations for some species
Communication	Develop condensed information on stock assessments in layman’s terms (not what the newsletter provides) (Note: Charter folks haven’t felt involved in the SEDAR process or with providing their data.)

Chefs/Restaurants/Seafood Consumers

In all four states, the port meetings drew participation from chefs, restaurants and others that provide access to the seafood consuming public. A special port meeting for area chefs was held in Charleston, SC with eight chefs from fine dining restaurants in Charleston participating. Common issues and solutions from the recreational sector throughout the region include:

CHEFS/RESTAURANTS/SEAFOOD CONSUMER SECTOR	
Key Issue:	Recommended Solution:
Data Collection/Science/Reporting	More funding to produce the science needed for better and more timely stock assessments

CHEFS/RESTAURANTS/SEAFOOD CONSUMER SECTOR	
Key Issue:	Recommended Solution:
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures, Market	Consistent seafood supply
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures, Market	Develop management measures that allow availability of 3-5 snapper grouper species for chefs/restaurants; having 3-5 allows chefs flexibility in their menus, purchasing practices and ability to plan.
Flexibility, Availability & Access to Fishing – ACLs, Closures, Market	Need to consider trip limits and measures that will ensure reliable supply of seafood to chefs/consumers
Communication	Develop a “one-stop shop” for chefs/consumers to access region by region information on available quota, fishery openings and closures.
Communication	More representation of this sector in Council advisory panels, activities, and outreach programs

Conservation

Only one conservation group attended several port meetings and submitted formal comments. The comments from this group are summarized below.

Management Issues

- Prevent overfishing and rebuild overfished stocks.
- Incorporate ecosystem-based fishery management (EBFM) as an explicit fishery management plan (FMP) objective and develop ecosystem-based management goals, operational objectives and performance measures through the revised fishery ecosystem plan (FEP) for subsequent regulatory amendments.
- Require essential information to be gathered and analyzed before new fisheries or gears are authorized or existing fisheries expand into new areas.
- Explore management tools that better align recreational fishing effort with available resources.

Science Issues

- Build a robust data collection, catch monitoring and bycatch reporting system to support management objectives and information needs for preventing overfishing, rebuilding overfished stocks, and accounting for bycatch and discard mortality.
- Improve the Snapper-Grouper FMP’s procedures for specifying and adjusting catch limits to achieve a more efficient, predictable and timely process for compiling, reviewing and transmitting best scientific information available in the catch-setting process.