



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

4055 FABER PLACE DRIVE, SUITE 201
NORTH CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA 29405
TEL 843/571-4366 FAX 843/769-4520
Toll Free 866/SAFMC-10
Email: safmc@safmc.net Website: www.safmc.net

Duane Harris, Chairman
David Cupka, Vice Chairman

Robert K. Mahood, Executive Director
Gregg T. Waugh, Deputy Executive Director

OVERVIEW

Dolphin Wahoo Committee Meeting

March 3, 2009
Jekyll Island Club Hotel
371 Riverview Drive, Jekyll Island, GA

The Dolphin Wahoo Committee needs to: (A) receive an overview of the FMP and (B) receive a summary of scoping comments, discuss the comments, and provide direction to staff.

A. Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plan (Attachment 1)

The Fishery Management Plan for the Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery off the Atlantic States was partially approved on December 23, 2003. The FMP represents a proactive approach to maintaining healthy stocks of dolphin and wahoo, with action intended to cap participation, effort, and landings in the fishery. Approved actions provide equitable harvesting restrictions to the recreational and commercial sectors and maintain the historical participation by both user groups. The intended effects of the FMP are to conserve and manage dolphin and wahoo off the Atlantic states (Maine through the east coast of Florida) and to ensure that no new fisheries for dolphin and wahoo develop.

The following regulations were effective on June 28, 2004: (1) a 20-inch fork length minimum size limit for dolphin off the coasts of Georgia and Florida with no size restrictions elsewhere; (2) prohibition of longline fishing for dolphin and wahoo in areas closed to the use of such gear for highly migratory pelagic species; and (3) allowable gear to be used in the fishery (hook-and-line gear including manual, electric, and hydraulic rods and reels; bandit gear; handlines; longlines; and spearfishing (including powerheads) gear. In addition, other approved portions of the FMP were also effective on this date, including (1) the management unit and designations of stock status criteria for the unit; (2) a fishing year of January 1 through December 31; (3) a 1.5 million pound (or 13% of the total harvest) cap on commercial landings; (4) establishment of a framework procedure by which the SAFMC may modify its management measures; and (5) designations of Essential Fish Habitat and Essential Fish habitat-Habitat Areas of Particular Concern.

The following regulations were effective on September 24, 2004: (1) owners of commercial vessels and/or charter vessels/headboats must have vessel permits and, if selected, submit reports; (2) dealers must have permits and, if selected, submit reports; (3) longline vessels must comply with sea turtle protection measures; (4) a recreational bag limit of 10 dolphin and 2 wahoo per person per day, with a limit of 60 dolphin per boat per day (headboats are excluded from the boat limit); (5) prohibition on recreational sale of dolphin and wahoo caught under a bag limit except for allowing for-hire vessels that possess the necessary state and Federal commercial permits to sell dolphin harvested under the bag limit in or from the Atlantic EEZ; and (6) a commercial trip limit of 500 pounds for wahoo.

The following regulations were effective on November 23, 2004: (1) operators of commercial vessels, charter vessels and headboats that are required to have a federal vessel permit for dolphin and wahoo must display operator permits.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION:

1. Committee discussion

B. Summary of Scoping Comments (Attachments 2 & 3)

Scoping meetings for the Comprehensive ACL Amendment were held January 26 – Feb 4, 2009 and comments were accepted through February 6, 2009. Scoping comments for the Comprehensive ACL Amendment addressing mackerel will be presented to the Mackerel Committee. The Mackerel Committee will discuss and provide direction to staff on possible alternatives.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION:

1. Committee discussion
2. Provide guidance to staff on items to include