

Port Meeting Summary

Key West, FL

March 31, 2014, 4-6 p.m.

1) Fish id / communication

Issues/Not Working --

- Proper ID for dealers – issue was identified by a port agent; dealers are misidentifying snapper grouper species; this info. is reported on trip tickets and can affect ACLs and other management; common names vs. scientific names; dealers need more training

Solutions --

- Develop trip ticket data entry training programs for each state
- Make Fish ID training mandatory for dealers
- Need dealer training to improve trip ticket data
- Either educate the dealer to make the correct ID or spend money to educate the fishermen
- No common names listed on trip ticket forms – different common names are used in different regions; would be fewer ID issues if use scientific names
- Heavy fine or loss of license for multiple infractions
- Fines for selling wrong species
- Species ID issues identified by participants included:
 - Gag vs. black grouper vs. scamp
 - Gray vs. ocean triggerfish
 - Spadefish vs. angelfish
 - Irish pompano = sand perch

2) Overconsumption of juvenile snapper by other abundant fish

Issues/Not Working --

- Goliath grouper and lionfish are eating lots of juvenile snapper and grouper

Solutions --

- Allow bag and size limit for goliath
- Permit tags – permits could be sold via lottery; similar to what is done for alligators
- Funding for studies on lionfish fishery
- Encourage recreational anglers to get saltwater products license – would become dealer and be able to sell lionfish
- Keep goliath protected and increase eradication of lionfish

3) Need for regional management

Issues/Not Working --

- Lack of regional management
- South FL very different than northern states

- Conflicting regulations in Gulf and South Atlantic
- 4 month closure grouper too long; refers to spawning season closures; individual noted closure was too long and there were not enough species to target during the closure; also noted that the closure was put in place to protect spawning gag which do not really occur in south FL
- Regulations need to be based on best available science to protect fish stocks and traditional harvesters
- Define role between National Marine Sanctuaries and SAFMC

Solutions --

- Make South FL or all of FL separate management zone
- Allow people knowledgeable about the local waters and fisheries to be involved directly in management (it was noted that no one from the FL Keys is on the Joint Council South FL Management Committee)
- Create South FL Council or at least a South FL Advisory Panel
- Separate South FL and Keys into its own management zone; would be better able to handle Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic conflicting regulations
- Separate South FL quotas from other jurisdictions

4) Need better way to address allocations

Issues/Not Working --

- ACLs/allocations need to be reviewed and adjusted, specifically the deepwater complex. Many of the allocations are not fair and the perception is that they were based on bad science. There is a lot of recreational interest in the deepwater complex and the recreational allocation for this complex should be higher

Solutions --

- Adjust ACL allocation based on true user participation (how do this?)
- Consider ITQs?

5) Improving data management, collection & assessments

Issues/Not Working --

- MRFSS/MRIP not working; does not ID participants in various fisheries; data are not reliable
- Fisheries scientists do not study full range of SAFMC. Certain areas within the SAFMC jurisdiction are more data poor than others. It was mentioned that no one comes to South FL to collect data, specifically the MARMAP survey.
- Stock assessments are too infrequent
- NOAA tightening civil penalties and sanctions – why are regulations not reduced based on science?

Solutions --

- Increase funding for collection of best available science
- 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; suggestions for separate

shallow-water and deep-water complex permits; online permit, minimal cost, can print out yourself; individual mentioned the state of FL is proposing Gulf recreational reef fish permit?

- Require dealers (and other permittees required to report) to fill out every category on trip tickets, logbooks, etc. -- when the headboat sector switched to electronic reporting, enforcement has been focused on getting people used to reporting electronically; however, people are not filling out the forms completely and this is not being enforced. This could be a training issue.
- Electronic reporting in for-hire and recreational sectors -- web-based reporting could be more accurate than MRIP; fishers could fill out at their leisure; any recreational electronic reporting would need to be standardized and accepted by the scientific community so it can be used in assessments and for management.
- Require different species to be reported separately on trip tickets to address misreporting – for example, if fisher only lands a minimal amount of species X, it will often get thrown in with species Y for reporting purposes; this is a problem for red and silk snapper in particular.

6) Mismanagement of spatial closures

Issues/Not Working --

- Spatial closures – define failure, not management; 240 seaward closure given as an example of spatial management not working, wiped out the majority of bottom fishing; individual noted that spatial closures should be the last line of defense
- Spawning fish should not be closed to commercial fishing; maybe different size and quantity limits for recreational

Solutions --

- Well thought out spawning area closures; allow fishing year round outside closed areas; better identify spawning areas and make smaller, more specific spawning area closures
- Make better use of data/users to prevent area closures
- Increase size of marine sanctuaries
- Ban fishing in spawning areas and compensate fishermen for their losses
- Obtain funding to help fishermen during closures
- Consider sunset clauses on spatial closures/closed areas

7) Readdress size limits (hogfish)

Issues/Not Working --

- Hogfish should not be sold commercially only kept recreationally
- Hogfish not reproduce quickly so the size limit needs to be addressed
- Size limit on hogfish too small

Solutions --

- Increase size limit for hogfish to 14"-16" size limit
- Ban commercial fishing of hogfish
- Act on recommendations of Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel

8) Need to keep seafood local (local marketing of seafood)

Issue/Not Working --

- Sell fish only locally; good for tourists and fishermen; transportation hurts quality which lowers price of fish

Solutions --

- Limit import, cap export
- Inform 'Fresh from FL' incentives

9) Need to address Council process & priorities

Issue/Not Working --

- SAFMC top-heavy in administration vs. science
- Takes too long for SAFMC to make decisions; example - hogfish size limit, Snapper Grouper AP has made recommendations to increase the size limit on hogfish multiple times and there has been no action

Solutions --

- More common sense approach to management
- Council budget allocations; restructure composition of Council staff – decrease administrative staff, increase scientific staff
- Utilize fishermen for data collection (for-hire sector specifically mentioned); make exempted fishing permits easier to get; compensate fishermen for collecting data to help improve South FL data

10) Lack of plan to keep year round fishing

Issue/Not Working --

- No plan to manage for year round fisheries (how to avoid closures); need long term plan to keep folks fishing year round

Solutions --

- ITQs
- Use more common sense
- Separate Southeast FL or all FL for management
- Make fishing seasonal and compensate fishermen for losses
- Size limits working in this area (examples – yellowtail, mutton, gray snapper); keep using them; don't change management strategy; prefer management by size limits instead of ITQ/spawning closures/etc.

11) Lack of plan for snapper grouper commercial & for-hire permits

Issues/Not Working --

- 2 for 1 snapper grouper commercial permits with no end goal
- Charter fishery is open access

Solutions --

- Include end plan for all aspects of fisheries management -- when management regulations are put in place they should include metrics to monitor/evaluate success and provide guidance for when regulation could be removed
- Cap limit of for-hire permits but do not commodify (for-hire) – when a permit is retired it should go back to a pool
- Remove the 2 for 1 permit requirement

12) Other

- Funds to help fishermen during snapper grouper closures; need permanent funding so fishermen can apply for disaster relief; similar to farming subsidies
- Gray snapper and yellowtail snapper populations are healthy and should be left alone
- Maze of zones closed to trapping because of endangered coral
- Need sunset clauses on management measures
- Closed area, marine sanctuaries – clean up the mess; seemed to be misunderstanding on management of the marine sanctuaries vs. MPAs, etc.
- Council reactive; doesn't take the time to evaluate whether management actions are working before new regulations are put in place
- Concern that black grouper size limit is too small; they are being caught before they mature
- Water quality effects on snapper grouper habitat need to be addressed; water quality is one of the biggest problems facing the future health of fish stocks; group had strong feelings about this and felt that the Council should be more active on this topic