

Port Meetings
St. Augustine, FL
3/25/14, 1:30 p.m.

1) Need to Improve Data Collection

Issues/Not Working—

- Lack of transparency in the datasets / too dependent on landings /lack of credibility and trust.
- Results do not reflect the reality that fishermen see on the water – currently there is a flaw in overall scientific process for data collection.
- Lack of transparency in the stock assessment process and how the models are chosen.
- Science – without science, none of our other concerns matter – lack of data over years, there have been some improvements, however not enough yet.
- Lack of funding at federal level for data collection programs.
- Scientists and managers working on assessments need to refine and better manage how to count.

Solutions—

- Fishermen need to have industry scientists (scientists hired by industry, and these scientists should be paid for by government) involved as panelists on the assessment/review/and data workshops
- Ask fishermen about data through collection of anecdotal information.
- Improve MRIP
- Improve mobile technology for data collection (i.e. iSnapper App - like Gulf Council utilizes)
- Require states to get more involved in data collection efforts
- Consider a rolling spawning season closure with consideration of how do you prevent pressure from out of state fishermen.
- Aim for more real time assessments
- Utilize cooperative research for data collection
- More funding for more scientists (assessment)
- Use realistic procedures to collect fish data

2) Improve stock assessments –

Issues/Not Working—

- Need for an increase in the quota for vermilion snapper; stock assessment is flawed.
- Port sampling methods
- Triggerfish assessment
- Red porgy – the assessment – scientists/managers need to figure out how to sample better – do we have the spawning closure right?
- Stock assessments do not reflect reality
- Improve stock assessments

Solutions—

- More independent scientists/reviewers
- Rely on states' research for stock assessments
- Include industry scientists on assessment panels as a panelist
- Re-evaluate the SEDAR process (SEDAR currently lacks credibility with stakeholders)

- Need to prioritize stock assessments based on economic value (Red porgy/trigger/vermillion = these fisheries represent the backbone of our fishery in southeast FL)
- Funding for stock assessment needs to be redistributed to higher priority species.

3) Reduce Discards/Minimize Waste

Issues/Not Working--

- Unused allocations – Magnuson Act says must use all MSY ; fishermen should be allowed to harvest all the quota available.
- Quota should be able to be transferred from commercial to recreational and vice-versa as needed to ensure quota is used.
- Dead discards
- Regulatory discards

Solutions—

- Reduce size limits = yield goes up
- No size limits and full retention for commercial sector
- Align seasons together
- Open small fisheries at the same time
- 3,000 lb trip limit any species no size limit

4) Providing Access to Seafood Consumers

Issues/Not Working—

- Seafood consumer is not represented at the Council/AP/SSC meetings.
- Commercial fishermen/wholesale dealers are left to represent the non-fishing public and this is an issue with fairness to consumers who aren't represented in the management process.
- Quit destroying commercial sector

Solutions—

- Designate an AP/Council seat for restaurants /seafood consumers representative
- Create a seafood consumer AP (across fisheries, not just shrimp)
- Trip limits are working because shorter trips provide a better quality product to consumers; Fish are better quality at dock, the fishermen get better prices for them, better products are delivered to fish houses and subsequently, the consumer.
- Examine sector allocation, if one sector isn't using all of their ACL, then give allocation to another sector that would catch fish to meet the ACL.
- Start inviting consumer organizations to meetings
- Develop outreach to the seafood consuming sector that isn't represented (outreach about where local seafood comes from, how allocated, where distributed)

5) Need Year-Round Access to Fisheries

Issues/Not Working—

- Short seasons
- Pressuring species by closing other species
- Set fishing year change
- Spawning closures

- Grouper spawn closure too long
- Trip limits that allow for year round fishing opportunities.

Solutions—

- Set trip limits year round to use all TAC.
- Lower trip limits on species with shorter seasons – i.e., vermilion, when the quota reaches 75%, lower the trip limit to 500 lbs. Doing so would allow us to continue to fish and pay bills.
- Open red /scamp grouper through February – doing so would accurately reflect the spawning season closure (in this area of Florida).
- Base trip limits on average landings for specific species – i.e. gray triggerfish, not that many trips with huge landings; take an average of for all of the trips that have gray triggerfish landings and then re-evaluate the trip limits.
- Open vermilion, triggerfish & red porgy seasons all together
- Align seasons to be open together
- Split season for gray triggerfish and for red porgy (i.e., vermilion snapper)

6) Additional Issues/Solutions:

These issues were addressed but no solutions were suggested.

- No catch shares
- Consider addressing requirement for crew size limits (larger boats with more crew are catching a majority of the quota more quickly)
- Consistency in state-federal regulations