

**Port Meetings
St. Augustine, FL
3/25/14, 6:00 p.m.**

1. Recreational Access to Red Snapper

Issues/Not Working—

- Red snapper closures – discussion about enforcement and data collection during the red snapper mini seasons – fishermen said there wasn't/isn't a web site available where recreational fishermen can go access to report their data about red snapper.
- Red snapper ACL is too low and won't improve until a new stock assessment is in place.
- Snapper season limited to 3 day weekends are not good – the timing and length of season.
- Overabundance of red snapper makes bottom fishing for other species difficult.
- Setting the red snapper mini-season during hurricane season causes issues.

Solutions—

- Reopen red snapper with a bag limit.
- Address bag limit; Suggestions include: allow 2 red snapper per vessel/trip; 1-2 fish per person limit
- Allow more days of fishing during the mini-season.
- Schedule mini-season during different times of the year
- Consider a varied season for red snapper; 2 days in February, 2 days in May, and 2 days August
- Implement a “day permit” for recreational red snapper anglers where the angler chooses the day they want to fish and use the permit.
- Require data reporting for day permit holders; if you don't report, you aren't allowed issuance of a new permit next year.
- Under current mini-season, require recreational anglers to report red snapper landings.

2. Need to Improve Recreational Data Collection

Issues/Not Working--

- Better science.
- Funding for adequate research.
- Method used to collect data is not realistic .
- Lack of up to-date stock assessments.

Solutions—

- Develop a Reef Fish Stamp (this has been developed for recreational anglers in Gulf, with oil spill funds) – something that allows MRIP to refine their sampling pool.
- Update research on discard mortality rate.
- Use underwater cameras to count fish as opposed to asking fishermen to report landings – counting of underwater fish.
- Have website for reporting.
- Provide recreational anglers with logbook for reporting .
- Mandate a reef license for recreational anglers.

3. Spawning Season not Accurate – need more information about when they spawn to make a more informed decision

Issues/Not Working--

- Spawning closures are possibly inaccurate –not enough data to base the decision to increase to the current 4-month closure.
- Make closures only during spawning.
- Both snapper and grouper are closed too long – a longer season would work better.

Solutions—

- Re-address spawning times; Consider opening the season up in Jan & Feb (possibly just Jan) and/or moving the closure into just May.
- No change to spawning season

4. Reducing Discards

Issues/Not Working—

- Death by catch from closed seasons.
- Discard mortality because of species closures.

Solutions—

- Consider the use of descending devices.
- Give credit towards the ACL for those using descending device
- Implement bag-limits that allow for year round fishing.
- Consider a “by the pound” limit, not a size limit on fish

5. Inconsistency in Enforcement state & fed regulations - causing enforcement issues

Issues/Not Working--

- Enforcement of existing laws.
- Fishermen find loopholes in regulations when state and federal regulations don't match.
- Consistency between federal/state regulations

Solutions—

No solutions were offered.

6. Discards into Landings

Issues/Not Working--

- Figuring out a way to turn dead discards into landings .
- Red snapper- the dead discards are greater than our allowable catch. How can we take the inadvertent catch and turn this number into something we can bring home and eat?

Solutions—

- MRIP improvements – figure out who is fishing before we can get discard estimates.

7. ACLs not flexible enough

Issues/Not Working--

- Jack complex - ACL is too low and needs to be raised.
- ACL is not always met in certain sectors; Underutilizing some of the resource when ACL is not met.
- Triggerfish ACL is met too fast and is too low and

- Some management measures are forcing fishermen to take a % of landings off TAC this year with regard to last year's quota. (i.e., gag grouper closure forcing all shallow-water groupers to close).

Solutions—

- More proactive management.
- Triggerfish season needs to coincide with vermilion season.
- Consider removing a % of TAC based upon prior year closures

8. Need Improvements to Reporting – Too Slow

Issues/Not Working--

- Reporting is too slow and needs to be improved

Solutions—

- Website reporting and voluntary phone calls
- Electronic reporting for commercial sector

9. Balance Allocation & Fairness

Issues/Not Working--

- Match commercial and recreational limits 50/50 – not a fair allocation for the ACL currently.
- Lobbyist influence results in ACL ending up at a higher setting for some sectors. Lobbyists typically funded by commercial fishermen interests.
- Anglers should be allowed to keep gag & black grouper not 1 or the other
- Council needs to be more proactive and making quicker decisions vs. reactive

Solutions—

No solutions were offered.