

# Summary of Stakeholder Input: Georgia Port Meetings April 2014

## Top issues and suggested solutions:

### ISSUE 1: Data Collection/Science/Stock Assessments Issues

#### Solutions -

- More fishermen input – on stock assessments; best data the Council could use is what would come from the fishermen.
- Use angler collected data – real experience of anglers (show photos/videos as proof). Fishermen's anecdotal information is not utilized in the stock assessment process.
- Sector management of fish – collect the data and conduct the analyses regionally, not the region as a whole;
- Real time data collection using information from recreational fishermen and divers –
  - web based data collection platforms;
  - A voluntary recreational program where GoPro cameras are used in data collection (underwater).
- Federal scientists should mimic data collection used by states – DNR; otolith studies are being done by our local DNR scientists, the federal scientists should do the same.
- Cooperative data reporting – recreational and charter folks should have to report;
- Web based reporting for recreational (Note: *lots of discussion about a tag program, and how it would be administered and updates on SG Amendment 22*)
- Incentive based reporting – give a reward for reporting
- Harvest tag program; reward (incentive based); an analogy to alligator harvest tag program in other states.
- Collecting biological data – report this information electronically
- More remote sensing data should be considered when making regulations
- Tag program - mark and recapture – to monitor fishery
- Adopt a biologist program- bringing scientists out on the boats
- Opportunities for cooperative research
- Have a fishing club representative as a part of a recreational voluntary fishing data collection program
- Develop a pool of local anglers willing to provide recreational catch data
- Gauge release mortality
- Survey fishermen catch

### ISSUE 2: Reducing Discards

#### Solutions -

- Have fish limit (bag) not length limit – be able to keep
- Release weights – descending devices/help the fish to get back to the bottom.
- Many snapper die when released; change rules to 1 fish per person or 6 fish whichever is greater – red snapper in particular.
- Consider change from current length limits – total creel noted or weight
- Promote fishing and catching optional species
- Set bag limit and keep what you catch
- No bycatch killed (full retention)
- What you catch is what you count or keep (full retention)

### **ISSUE 3: Regional Management to Address Regional Differences (both state and sector)**

#### **Solutions -**

- Break down states into geographical zones – regional management;
- Figure out a way for GA to get a bigger piece of the pie
- Establish GA coast as its own sector – with own quota
- Different rules for each state
- Council input on changing Magnuson-Stevens Act
- Subdivide or “grid” a few areas by similar characteristics for management purposes
- Segregate into more site specific areas
- Keep Floridians out of our fishery; longitudinal boundaries
- 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

### **ISSUE 4: Communication**

#### **Solutions -**

- 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)
- Make data more understandable and available – more outreach tools available for understanding data
- A moderated forum by Council staff to answer questions posed by the public
- Q/A webinar, provide a forum for folks to ask questions of Council staff
- Buy in from for-hire sector – rebuilding trust an issue with this sector
- Funding for Council marketing – port meetings are a start;
- 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)
- 1-pagers delivered to marinas on stock assessments – brief summary after an assessment
- Clarify/simplify dates and reasons – trying to navigate between federal and state is confusing; fishermen need to know what they can and can’t fish for and when between state and federal regulations
- Quarterly updates, not every few weeks (on quota monitoring)
- Remove old information from internet (web site), including outdated regulations
- Develop short segments regarding the “science” on YouTube
- Give a longer notice for closures (one week prior to closure is not enough)
- Send notification of closures to fishing clubs not just to individuals

#### **Other issues of importance:**

- Dated and ineffective regulations that are based on inaccurate data.
- No stakeholder confidence in data that is used to base management decisions.
- Management of red snapper in the region is not working (concerns about data, length of mini-season, timing of season, etc.)
- Concern about the Council member appointment process; Need to have appointees endorsed by stakeholders not just governor.
- Black sea bass management – size limits and bag limits need to be readdressed.
- Law enforcement – need to support more on the water enforcement.
- Lack of consistent supply of fish and access to the fishery affecting year round availability of fish to both fishermen and consumers (chefs/restaurants).

- Representation of the seafood consumer on the Council and within Council activities.
- Consideration of how regulations impact local economies (tourism, etc.)
- Fishing effort shifts because of seasons, closures and access to fishery.
- Concern that the resource is unable to support future harvest and effort.
- Management of the commercial vs. the recreational sector and impacts of fishing.
- Georgia has limited habitat available for the fishery and not enough habitat development programs.
- Complexity of state and federal regulations and the jurisdictions for enforcing them.
- Management of quotas - paybacks for overage but no reward for underages.
- Lack of consideration about the economic feasibility of trips with current regulations.
- Recreational representation on the Council and in general, in the fisheries management arena.