

**Dolphin Wahoo Advisory Panel**  
**Dolphin Fishery Performance Report**  
**Discussion Questions**  
**March 2022**

The Dolphin Wahoo Advisory Panel (AP) is being asked to provide information to develop a fishery performance report (FPR) for dolphin. The purpose of the FPR is to assemble information from AP members' experience and observations on the water and in the marketplace to complement scientific and landings data. The FPR will be provided to the Council to assist in their discussions on the need for management actions and potential implications of such actions.

**Questions for the Advisory Panel:**

The AP is asked to provide the following information about dolphin based on your expertise and experience:

**1) Catches and fishing behavior over the past 10 years:**

- a) When/where are dolphin available, and has this changed in recent years? Specifically, has the seasonality, timing, or geographic range of dolphin catches changed?
- b) Has the average size of the fish changed? If so, how has it changed?
- c) Do you perceive that abundance of dolphin has changed over the past ten years? If so, how has it changed?
- d) Have there been effort shifts to or from dolphin?
- e) Has there been a considerable change in fishing techniques or gear used to target dolphin?

**2) Social and economic influences:**

- a) Demand
  - i) For the commercial sector, how has the dockside and retail/restaurant price and demand for dolphin changed?
  - ii) For the recreational sector, how has demand for trips targeting dolphin changed?
    - (1) Charter vessels?
    - (2) Private vessels?
  - iii) Among the species you target, how important are dolphin to your overall business (charter, commercial, or retail)?
  - iv) How important are dolphin to trip satisfaction on recreational trips?
- b) Importance to community

- i) What communities are dependent on the dolphin fishery?
- ii) Have changes in infrastructure (docks, marinas, fish houses) affected fishing opportunities for dolphin?
- iii) How have fishermen and communities adapted to changes in the dolphin fishery?

**3) Environmental/ecological/habitat influences:**

- a) Have you noticed any unique effects of environmental conditions on dolphin? If so, please describe.
- b) What do you see now in terms of recruitment? Where are the small fish? Are large and small fish found in the same locations?
- c) Have you noticed any change in the species caught with dolphin over the years or seasonally?
- d) Have you noticed a change in typical location where dolphin are found (depth, distance from shore, water feature such a temperature break, current edge, bottom structure, etc.)?

**4) Management measures:**

- a) Are the general recreational retention limits appropriate?
  - i) 10 fish per person
  - ii) Soon to be 54 fish vessel limit for private and charter vessels, headboats excluded but limited to 10 fish per paying passenger
  - iii) 20" minimum size limit from FL to SC and no size limit from NC through ME
- b) Are the general commercial retention and gear limits appropriate?
  - i) No initial trip limit and 4,000 lbs ww trip limit when 75% of the sector ACL is landed
    - (1) 200 lbs combined dolphin and wahoo limit for vessels that do not have commercial permit and fishing north of 39 degrees N. latitude
    - (2) Soon to be 500lbs gw for vessels with trap, pot, or buoy gear onboard
  - ii) Use of longline gear prohibited in areas closed to the use of such gear for HMS species (such as off of East FL)
  - iii) 20" minimum size limit from FL to SC and no size limit from NC through ME
- c) Are the soon to be revised allocations of the total annual catch limit appropriate for each sector (93% recreational: 7% commercial)?

**5) Other:**

- a) What else is important for the Council to know about dolphin?