

## **SAFMC Staff Report June 2023**

### **Allocations Review Guidelines**

In 2019, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) conducted a review of how the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Councils conduct allocations (e.g., sector, gear) and concluded that the Councils would benefit from documented processes for allocation reviews.

In the South Atlantic:

- The Council has established an allocation review trigger policy.
- The Council has documented its allocation reviews through amendments to a fishery management plan in the Council's Conclusions portion of the amendment (i.e., Chapter 5).
- If a FMP amendment is not being developed to consider changes to allocations, the Council documents its allocation reviews in the Council meeting summaries/minutes. The meeting summaries/minutes include the Council's rationale for not developing an amendment to change allocations.
- Staff maintains an internal spreadsheet to track allocation discussions for all species managed by the Council. This includes a column indicating when the next allocation review is scheduled to occur in accordance with the Council's Allocation Review Trigger Policy as well as a column for past allocation reviews that is updated as reviews occur.
- The Council developed an allocation decision tree process in direct response to recommendations from the GAO. The process allows the Council to consider available and relevant biological, social, and economic information on a given managed species ahead of making allocation decisions. The process also allows the Council to systematically consider and document allocation decisions and discussions.

To better respond to the GAO's recommendations, staff recommends developing an Allocation Review Guidelines document to outline the Council's process for allocation reviews, including the allocation decision tree process and the allocation review trigger policy. Staff propose to prepare a draft of this document for review at the September 2023 meeting and approval at the December 2023 meeting. Once finalized, the document would be posted to the Council's website.

### **Council Staff Operations Meeting**

Deputy Directors for several of the FMCs met on Monday of the CCC's May meeting in Key West to discuss and share best practices and lessons learned to address challenges and increase staff efficiency. Discussions focused on common obstacles and broadly applicable approaches or collective opportunities. Deputies discussed: tools for improving coordination with external agencies (NMFS, Commissions), Regional Operating Agreements, level of science support from NMFS, and strategies for adapting to the changing work environment (remote work, burnout, morale).

## **Website and Digital Communications Updates**

- Council Meeting briefing books archived back to 2008 found [HERE](#).
  - Will now focus on archiving AP and SSC briefing books.
- Developed a new SAFMC brochure for distribution at tackle shops, outreach events, and more.
- Collaborated with other Council outreach staff in a workgroup to improve the general US Regional Fishery Councils website: <https://www.fisherycouncils.org/>
- Developed MSE outreach flyer.
- Aided staff in various design projects.
- Continued general website maintenance.
- Continued social media activity.
- Continued FishRules updates and management.

## **Marine Resource Education Program (MREP) Update**

Staff continue to serve on the MREP Southeast Plan Team and the Steering Committee. For 2023, MREP Southeast will hold a single 5-day [Science and Management Workshop](#), November 13-17, 2023 at the TradeWinds Resort in St. Pete Beach, Florida. This year's workshop combines the two 3-day workshops typically held at different times and locations, into a single week-long event. This new approach has been used in other regions and will be evaluated for MREP Southeast. Applications for this year's workshop are now being accepted. Council members interested in participating should contact John Carmichael or Kim Iverson.

## **ICAST 2023**

The Council will once again be represented at [ICAST 2023](#), the world's largest recreational trade show, scheduled for July 11-14, 2023 in Orlando, Florida. This year's 10' X 20' SAFMC exhibit is part of the convention's Conservation Corner, featuring the Council's Best Fishing Practices Program and the Citizen Science project SAFMC Release. A special event, "Donuts and Descending Devices" is planned for Thursday morning of the show. The collaborative event, involving FWC, SAFMC, Return 'Em Right, The Nature Conservancy, SCDNR, and other exhibitors within the Conservation Corner, will emphasize the importance of best fishing practices and associated programs as conference attendees and exhibitors enjoy hot coffee and donuts. Council staff have been hard at work upgrading the exhibit, coordinating with partners, and outlining goals and objectives for this year's conference. Sponsored by the American Sportfishing Association, the trade-based show is open to manufacturers and dealers and offers a unique outreach opportunity.

## **South Atlantic Stakeholder Meetings**

Staff has recently brainstormed town hall/open house meetings as a way to meet fishermen where they are and under more positive circumstances than often occur during the public hearing process. These meetings will ideally provide an opportunity to foster productive dialog with stakeholders, including those who have not historically been involved in the fishery management process. Council leadership was briefed on the concept and is supportive of the approach. Staff has begun developing a framework for these meetings with the tentative goal being to hold the

first round in late-2024. Staff will present details to the Council for discussion during the September 2023 meeting.

### **Sea Grant Reef Fish Extension/Communication Fellowship**

The Sea Grant Team recently hired David Hugo as the new Reef Fish Communication Fellow. David will be continuing the extension project which focuses on outreach and communication relative to best fishing practices. Check out this [news release](#) and look for David at a tackle shop near you soon!

### **NMFS Recreational Economic Constituent Workshop**

Council member Spud Woodward and Council staff attended the NMFS Recreational Economic Constituent Workshop that was held in Tampa, Florida from April 25-26, 2023. This workshop was held with the intention of:

- Increasing understanding of how economics plays a role in recreational fisheries management decisions, including what primary roles various contributors play, when in the decision-making process they participate, what from their vantage point is essential to consider/have when making management decisions, and what gaps currently exist;
- Understanding constituents' perceptions of data, research gaps and/or deficiencies;
- Identifying how participant groups can contribute to improving recreational fisheries; economic data collection and analysis; and
- Identifying several tangible ways groups can collaborate to communicate about recreational fisheries economic data and analysis, and ways to support future information sharing and collaboration.

A summary report for the workshop will be available this summer.

### **Participation in Conferences**

- Citizen Science staff participated and presented at the American Fisheries Society Florida Chapter's annual meeting held in St. Augustine, FL in May 2023. A symposium at the meeting focused on integrating stakeholders in fisheries. Staff presented a poster on the SAFMC Release project and a presentation on the FISHstory project.
- Citizen Science staff participated and presented at the Citizen Science Association's C\*Sci 2023 national meeting in Tempe, AZ in May 2023. Staff presented at discussion sessions focused on participant engagement and biodiversity and presented posters on the SAFMC Release and FISHstory projects. Additionally, staff participated in workshops on the Zooniverse and SciStarter platforms.
- Council staff attended the North American Association of Fisheries Economists 2023 Forum which was held in Woods Hole, Massachusetts from May 23-26. The forum's theme was science and governance for sustainable fisheries in a changing ocean. Forum sessions featured presentations on economic research being conducted regionally, nationally, and internationally on recreational fisheries, commercial fisheries, and aquaculture.