

Port Meetings
Marathon, FL – Key Fisheries
4/1/2014
4-6 p.m.

1) IF IT AIN'T BROKEN, DON'T FIX IT

Issues/Not Working--

- Yellowtail take care of themselves – don't catch fish responsible for 90% of spawn; yellowtail are everywhere; no more closures

Solutions--

- **Larger quota for yellowtail** – make quota large enough so it won't be met during the fishing season; want quota to reflect how well the stock is doing

2) SECTOR ALLOCATIONS NEED TO BE READDRESSSED

Issues/Not Working--

- Unfair allocation between recreational and commercial sectors
- Grouper conservation good; grouper deprivation is unacceptable
- Most grouper harvest is recreational

Solutions--

- Refer to economic data; economic value should play a role in allocation decisions
- Review allocations based on good science; have equality between user groups
- Slot limit of 24-34 inches for grouper to protect young and ones responsible for the spawn; Open grouper season during winter months

3) WHO'S IN CHARGE?

Issues/Not Working—

- Conflicting laws for 3 jurisdictions
- Geographic difference in fisheries in the Council's jurisdiction and the Keys are unique; have different fisheries in the FL keys (example - yellowtail)
- Too many regulating agencies

Solutions--

- Have consistent regulations between FL, GMFMC, and SAFMC
- 1 fishery – state and federal; tough to have different regulations between state and federal waters; what is right for state waters should be right for federal waters

4) WHAT'S BEST FOR ONE SECTOR MAY NOT BE FOR OTHER SECTORS

Issues/Not Working—

- Conflict between users about acceptable regulations (divers vs. for-hire vs. recreational vs. commercial)

Solutions—

- Consider resource use by different sectors
- Limit spearfishing differently
- Divide rules for different user groups; need finer distinction among user groups

5) PROBLEMS WITH PREDATORS

Issues/Not Working—

- Too many predators
- Lionfish
- Goliath groupers are rampant (black groupers just as bad)

Solutions—

- **Open minimal catch of goliath with stringent regulations**
 - **Allow commercial sector 1 goliath per boat**
 - **Slot limit on goliath**
 - **Open Goliath when others groupers close**

6) ECONOMIC IMPACT

Issues/Not Working—

- Grouper harvest is limited during parts of the year – this hurts tourist and charter business; bad for local economy; need something to fish for during 4-month grouper spawning closure
- Group further discussed this topic; summary of discussion points below; bold text are the management strategies the group identified
 - **Longer seasons / lower limits for recreational;** have step downs like commercial sector?
 - **Combine sector allocation with economic data**
 - **Against slot limit for groupers**
 - **Opening goliath could boost tourism**
 - **Rec fishermen deserve more for their buck;** state saltwater fishing licenses are expensive; need species to catch during winter months (e.g. during grouper spawning closure)
 - Individual noted that opening grouper during spawning closure would take pressure off hogfish; Council needs to make sure management efforts are balanced so regulations don't cause all effort to shift to different species

7) TIMELINESS OF COUNCIL IMPLEMENTING POLICY CHANGE

Issues/Not Working—

- Council continues to stay with failed policies (gave snowy grouper as an example)

Solutions—

- Faster actions (when stock recovers; general timeliness of amendment process)
- Better and more prompt notification of law changes

8) OTHER ISSUES/SOLUTIONS

- Hogfish need more regulations - Hogfish size limit too small; doesn't provide enough protection
- Eliminate cormorants
- Group noted it was difficult to know all of the relevant regulations; must be an easier way to notify fishermen of closures