

Port Meeting Summary

Wanchese, NC

March 20, 2014, 10 a.m.

1) Regulations for blueline tilefish should be regional

Issues/Not Working --

- NC has a sustainable fishery for blueline tilefish north of Hatteras
- Concern that there was not enough fishery-independent data for the area north of Hatteras; no fishery independent index north of Hatteras
- Concerns that there may be two separate stocks of blueline tilefish in the Atlantic; noted need for genetic studies
- Asked many questions about the SEDAR 32 blueline tilefish assessment
- Noted that the increase in recreational blueline tilefish is likely due to charter fishery; when they can't catch tuna, they will typically target blueline tilefish

Solutions --

- Separate blueline tilefish allocation for Hatteras to Virginia border; base quota on percent of landings that come from that area (~10 boats fish out of this area)
- Endorsement program for blueline tilefish.

2) No fishery independent sampling for blueline tilefish north of Cape Hatteras

Issues/Not Working --

- Individual asked whether the Council had a plan on how to collect fishery-independent data on blueline tilefish north of Hatteras in the future; Council staff noted there would have to be an expansion of existing surveys (MARMAP; likely won't occur due to budgetary issues) or could potentially pursue cooperative research funding to collect this kind of data

Solutions --

- Seek funding for cooperative research projects?

3) Shift in recreational effort for blueline tilefish due to decrease in tuna fishing

- Limited discussion on this topic, other than noting it was a problem

4) Communication/coordination problems between South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic councils & between NMFS northeast and southeast permitting offices for overlapping issues

Issues/Not Working --

- Many fishermen had to give up their incidental take permit from the Northeast because of the South Atlantic's requirement for not having certain gear types on board with certain species

Solutions --

- Consider creating a joint SAFMC and MAFMC committee to address overlapping issues (similar to South FL joint committee)

- Improve coordination and communication between the NE and SE permit offices

5) Bad recreational data / mistrust of recreational data

Issues/Not Working --

- Recreational data are inaccurate and there are inadequate data reporting requirements for the recreational sector – particularly for the charter sector

Solutions --

- Have recreational fishermen fill out trip reports (similar to commercial fishermen); consider requiring recreational trip reports for whole region; this would be easier for the for-hire/charter sector and may not be realistic for other recreational fishers
- Add check box to recreational saltwater license to help identify offshore (maybe specific to snapper grouper fishermen?) anglers; potential low cost solution
- Electronic reporting for the recreational sector

6) Lack of accountability in recreational catch data collection

Issues/Not Working --

- Concern that recreational data are being used to calculate allocations between sectors; more fish may be taken but not reported in the recreational sector
- Group did not identify specific solutions for this topic different than those listed in #5.

7) Unfair allocation calculations

Issues/Not Working --

- Concerns about allocations being set by changing demographics
- Concern that current allocation formula doesn't reflect changes happening in the fishery in recent years
- Concern with allocations based only on numbers of fishermen; final end user consumer needs to be taken into account (doesn't matter if one fishermen or 100 catching the fish – need to keep consumer in mind)

Solutions --

- Consider consumer when making allocation decisions

8) Unfair accountability measures for recreational sectors (especially the charter sector)

- Limited discussion on this topic

9) Decrease of fishery-dependent data when strict regulations / closures

Issues/Not Working --

- Concern that low limits on snowy grouper affected the amount of data available for the assessment (SEDAR 36)
- Better to limit a fishery instead of closing it to allow for some fishery-dependent data collection

- Limited discussion on solutions for this topic

10) **ACL reductions create derby fisheries and destabilize the market**

Issues/Not Working --

- Specifically mentioned the blueline tilefish fishery and the safety concerns associated with a derby fishery for this species
- Noted likely loss of blueline tilefish markets that would likely occur due to closures

Solution --

- Bycatch allowance for blueline tilefish

11) **Need more fishermen involvement in stock assessment review and SSC**

Issues/Not Working --

- Concern that stock assessment reviewers may not be familiar with fishery; noted that fishermen (elected by permit holders) should be part of review team
- Individual noted that it is better to have more fishermen involved in the management process and that it is often frustrating participating in the 'normal' Council process (public hearing, etc.) because fishermen often feel like they are not being heard; liked the format of this meeting and would come back to other meetings structured like this

Solutions --

- More fishermen on the SSC

12) **Need more stakeholder involvement developing NEPA alternatives for amendments**

Issues/Not Working --

- Industry may be partially at fault by not organizing; more fishermen interested in participating in process now; unless they feel like they are being heard, this interest will likely drop off

Solutions --

- Allow stakeholders to develop management alternatives (staff noted this is already part of the scoping process)

13) **Discards**

Issues/Not Working --

- **Too many discards**

Solutions --

- Full retention; no size limits (for recreational sector?); individual gave example - have one large size limit and all fish caught together could not measure larger than the specified limit

14) **Other Issues/Solutions**

- Need to consider stock enhancement for snapper grouper species

- Individual asked about the black seabass pot closure for right whales and why the South Atlantic put a closure in place when nothing is happening with the lobster pots in the northeast
- Individual asked whether or not federally permitted commercial snapper grouper fishermen can fish in federal waters north of the NC/VA border and return to NC for pack out
- Individual noted concern that South Atlantic, Mid-Atlantic, and Northeast Councils are causing fishermen to target the largest fish; for some species this means harvest primarily on females
- Suggestion for Council to try a different style of management – managing by maximum economic yield; assign monetary value to individual based on length of boat, historic landings, etc.; would allow individual to fish until reach specified monetary value, regardless of species; provide economic incentive to fish responsibly