

**Port Meetings**  
**Lake Park, FL**  
**3/27/14, 6:00 p.m.**

**1) Better Recreational Data/Recreational Data Collection Issues**

Issues--

- Better understanding of the amount of fish taken recreationally.
- State of FL defines a recreationally caught fish different than federally caught fish.

Solutions—

- at sea observers to help improve recreational discard rates/estimates
- Improve recreational discard estimates headboat vs. charter/for-hire vs. private recreational
- Best Management Practices workshop for handling and releasing fish
- Require fish handling release workshops in order to obtain a saltwater fishing license

**2) Timeliness; Council Efficiency/ Checks & Balances**

Issues--

- Snapper grouper regulations need a sunset clause.
- There is a delay in assessments and a delay in gathering data. If you incorporate a sunset clause, that is a function to make processes work faster in government.

Solutions—

- Realign staff (Council staff) at least 60% attributed to science – structure of Council staff is overloaded with administrative staff. Attendee cited Council web site staff directory list.
- Increase Council staff to 40% science; 45% administrative; 15% other (i.e. Outreach)

**3) Separate complex ACLs into species ACLs**

Issues—

- Almaco & banded rudderfish – these two species are lumped together in one quota; this results in issues with this quota.
- A fisherman at meeting was told these species were lumped into one complex/quota because LE has difficulty with identification.

Solutions—

- Separate yellowedge from the deepwater complex
- Develop a separate jacks ACL

**4) Tilefish - Reporting & Fairness between gear types**

Issues—

- Collection of data needs to be accurate; March 1<sup>st</sup> for hook-line; reporting needs to be submitted more quickly.
- Hook and line tilefish quota

Solutions—

- Open hook & line on March 1<sup>st</sup>

**5) Pest Control**

Issues--

- Goliath management – consider a lottery
- Sharks overabundant dive boat feeding – causing same problems

Solutions—

- Goliath grouper lottery – goliath grouper are out there like gators
- Open fishing for sharks in winter, don't cave to the Carolinas

## 6) Regional Management

Issues—

- Confusion over regulations.
- South FL gets short-changed.
- Create regional quotas for vermilion & red porgy – so that vermilion is open when quota isn't caught; porgies have a season.
- Vermilion / red porgy open up at same time.
- Southeast too large, need rules for south FL.
- State and Federal problems – divergent regulations; fear of transferring management to FWC.

Solutions—

- Split season on snapper grouper – vermilion; line up seasons for red porgy and vermilion; we get the short end of the stick down here; right about the time we start seeing vermilion, the quota closes; we need regional quotas and a step-down approach.
- Establish a south FL region with quotas
- Give Palm Beach county some bottom fish vermilion respect – regional vermilion quota
- FWC doesn't base management on scientific principles, but economic principles. FWC wants people to be able to sell fish.

## 7) Better science

Issues--

- Up to-date red snapper assessment
- Lack of efficient data collection

Solutions—

- Increase funding
- Re-allocate staff, increase science from 40-60%
- As far as the science goes, the solution is additional funding and an increase in assessment scientists
- Discussion that charter/for-hire should not be lumped into the recreational sector; discard mortality rates likely differ between casual recreational anglers and the for-hire sector; an understanding of who and what the recreational sector really is needs to be re-addressed. It is all lumped together as a recreational discard, which is bad science.
- Provide an opportunity for Council and NMFS staff to go out on boats to observe what is going on.

## 8) Habitat Creation, Restoration, and Protection

Issues—

- Ecosystem – seems to take a back burner; whatever you were trying to do, was being drowned out by freshwater discharge (the Indian River Lagoon) – don't see enough of ecosystem management in the Council's process
- Create more deepwater habitat

Solutions—

- Dropping habitat out there (artificial reef) – make that a 'no fishing area'
- Build very deep artificial reefs that are difficult to fish & result in a fish refuge
- Estuary restoration
- No more artificial wrecks, no fishing on new wrecks – place wrecks in deeper waters if you don't want people fishing on them

**9) Fairness - small vs. big**

Issues--

- Diversity of user size in recreation- to-regulation
- Don't give all the large boats all the power in the snapper grouper fishery

Solutions—

- Days on the water factor – people that would only go out 1/month, maybe they have a different set of regulations they can follow

**10) Fishing Pressure**

Issues--

- Charter / headboat permits – how many is enough, how many can the Council support?
- Spearfishing pressure exists
- Local depletion issues

Solutions--

- Prohibit spearfishing with scuba gear, as is the case in the Bahamas
- 10 pp/bag limit – there is support for a limited entry for snapper grouper headboat permit holders. Everything in the complex can be caught in state waters in areas near West Palm Beach, the science is thrown way off.
- Council needs to discuss what is a "head-boat", what "isn't a head-boat" \*\*
- Professionalize the fishery – come up with a sustainable number of charter/headboat permits the South Atlantic can handle. Everyone is a charter captain now, the Gulf Council has refined how they define charter headboats, the South Atlantic Council needs to do that.