

Port Meetings
Stuart, FL
3/27/2014, 1-3 p.m.

1) HABITAT/BEACH RENOURISHMENT

Issues--

- Lake Okeechobee discharges – the impacts on juvenile snapper grouper.
- Beach renourishment issues – causes habitat destruction.

Solutions--

- No artificial reefs.
- Council needs to re-evaluate the use of artificial reefs.

2) INCONSISTENT STATE/FEDERAL REGULATIONS

Issues—

- Federal and state regulations should match.
- Enforcement is difficult because of different regulations.

Solutions—

- Make state and federal regulations the same in each area.

3) WASTED FISH/DISCARDS

Issues—

- Releasing injured, undersized fish (discards)
- Red porgy discards

Solutions—

- Implement a 12-inch minimum size limit for red porgy.

4) MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT – NEED MORE FLEXIBILITY OR RANGE

Issues—

- Need range for size limits - \pm 1-inch
- Kill too many black sea bass to get five, 13-inch keepers; Discards are too high.
- Size limits for black sea bass off southeast Florida are too big.

Solutions—

- Lower the size limit for black sea bass to 12-inches (in order to reduce discard mortality).
- Implement a smaller size limit for red porgy (see #3 above for size recommendation)
- Increase the recreational minimum size limit for lane snapper to 10-inches.
- Increase the recreational minimum size limit for mangrove snapper (gray) to 12-inches.
- Use a slot limit for mutton snapper (no recommendation on range for slot).

5) RECREATIONAL LIMITS TOO HIGH

Issues—

- Recreational bag limits in the local area are too high;

Solutions—

- Implement a recreational bag limit of 5 fish per species.

6) SCIENCE & UNCERTAINTY

Issues—

- MSY set at 100%.
- Quota based on poor science.

Solutions—

- More fisherman involvement in fisheries science.
- Increase the golden tilefish commercial quota to 900,000-lbs; 20% allocation to the commercial hook and line sector.

7) COMPLEX ANNUAL CATCH LIMITS (ACLs) SHOULD BE SEPARATE ACLs

Issues—

- Jacks complex ACL is too small.

Solutions—

- Give more ACL to the Jacks complex; golden tilefish; deepwater complex

8) ACCESS TO FISH INCONSISTENT (SEASONS ARE TOO CHOPPED UP)

Issues—

- Not able to multi-species fish.
- Seasons are short; quotas are caught too fast.
- IFQ program for golden tilefish (longline sector).
- Seasons not aligned.

Solutions—

- Split seasons for snapper grouper species (commercial sector) with quota roll-over to the second half of the season if the quota from the first half of the season was not caught.
- Align the start dates of snapper grouper species at the same time to allow for multi-species fishing trips.
- Allow fishermen to catch fish when they want = more \$\$ - more fish does not equal more \$ (i.e., catch shares, specifically for golden tilefish longline).

9) CLOSURES (TOO LONG)

Issues—

- Shallow-water grouper closure is too long.

Solutions—

- Change shallow-water grouper closure to only January through February.

10) INTERACTIONS WITH SHARKS & GOLIATH GROUPEL (wasted food source)

Issues—

- Florida is disadvantaged by the management plan for sharks (NOAA Highly Migratory Species).
- Need a shark season; incorporate sharks, etc. into quota and limits.
- How to avoid sharks eating hooked fish?
- Why no harvest of goliath grouper at this point?

Solutions—

- Allow for consistent shark fishery at some level.
- Open seasons for sharks twice a year.
- Split shark season.
- Allow a limited harvest of sharks to control population of certain shark species. (which species?)
- Identify areas with overabundance of sharks and allow harvesting.
- Lottery system for goliath grouper harvest – similar to what is in place for alligator harvest in Florida.

11) NEED TO DEFINE “WHAT IS A COMMERCIAL FISHERMAN?”

Issues—

- The Council is not able to define what is a commercial fisherman. This is important in developing management measures to protect commercial fishermen who depend on fishing (i.e., professional fishermen), not part-timers.

Solutions—

- Define or professionalize commercial fishing to help minimize effort in the fishery.
- Proposed definition: a commercial fisherman is defined as a fisherman with \$50,000 cross income from fishing annually – assumed to mean income derived from multiple fisheries, not just snapper grouper.

12) Additional Issues (non-snapper grouper related):

COBIA MANAGEMENT MEASURES

- Size limits on Cobia
- Use total length on cobia
- Allow for a 1-inch underage for cobia
- Commercial bag/trip limit of 6 per boat for cobia