

Port Meeting Summary

Raleigh, NC

March 19, 2014, 6-8 p.m.

1) Improve reporting using technology

Issues/Not Working --

- Commercial trip reporting – still hand written instead of electronic

Solutions --

- Mandatory electronic reporting for commercial and for-hire sectors
- Reporting via app, email, photo stream
- Bring recording of catches into 21st century
- Electronic versions of trip tickets, trip reports, and discard reports
- electronic reporting for all sectors (commercial, for-hire, and recreational)

2) Threat of recreational catch shares

- Threat of recreational catch shares
- Little discussion on this topic; individuals voiced opposition to recreational catch shares

3) Reducing and quantifying discards / reduce discard mortality

Issues/Not Working --

- Discards – reducing and tabulating
- Terminal gear / mortality studies
- How to set seasons (examples - vermilion snapper and gray triggerfish)

Solutions --

- Setting seasons – continuous vs. contiguous; by state
- Allow for catch # vs. size limits – using bag limits instead size limits will help decrease dead discards
- Recreational season – new tools to reduce baurotrauma
- Reduce / eliminate size limits
- Descending tools – simple releasing device
- Baurotrauma education
- Group was interested in reducing discards and improving discard estimate calculations and timeliness of those calculations
- bycatch allowances

4) Improve data collection and data quality (biological and economic)

Issues/Not Working --

- Recreational landings data
- Data quality

- No way to ID bottom recreational fishers
- Economic Value – lack of info, particularly for recreational sector
- Terminal gear / mortality studies
- How to set Seasons (examples - vermilion snapper and gray triggerfish)

Solutions --

- Can ask questions on recreational saltwater fishing license (to help identify offshore bottom fishermen)
- ID bottom fishermen - recreational (offshore? reef?) permit
- Additional data collection during licensing process
- Get valid information from saltwater anglers
- Identify fishing types
- Modestly priced recreational permit for Snapper Grouper fishery (example: HMS permit)
- Underwater video surveillance for fishery independent surveys
- Better reporting strategies; examples - phone calls to recreational saltwater licensed fishermen, electronic trip reporting
- Give Monroe County in Florida to Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
- Some of the participants had misunderstanding of how MRIP survey works; distrustful of recreational data collection. Few members of group noted that snapper grouper are 'rare event' fishery in the South Atlantic in MRIP data.
- Participants thought recreational data are bad; noted many recreational fishermen would not have problems with the closures if they trusted the data used to support the closures
- Changes to the effort component of the MRIP survey -- saltwater license frame is better than the random digit dialing; based on MRIP pilot surveys best effort information is from mail surveys using the license frame

5) Confusing regulations – bags, seasons, etc.

Issues/Not Working --

- Confusing regulations – bags, seasons, etc.; noted regulations were especially confusing in NC because both the South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic Councils have jurisdiction in some areas

Solutions --

- Improve communication between South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic Councils on overlapping issues
- Maintain consistency in regulations between Councils for NC; fewer changes
- Eliminate overlapping Council jurisdictions in NC
- Participants wanted stability in the fishery; one participant noted there may be a need to move to a specific X month snapper grouper season (group did not discuss this idea in detail)

6) One-size-fits-all management vs. regional management

Issue/Not Working --

- More state control

Solutions --

- Management by state
- Manage migratory stocks and stationary stocks differently; stationary stocks could be managed by states
- Group noted that one size fits all management doesn't work for species that don't migrate (i.e., black seabass)

7) Manage for possible user conflicts

Issue/Not Working --

- Limit chance for user conflicts – commercial vs. recreational

Solutions --

- Separate Seasons – suggestion to have separate recreational and commercial weeks/weekends to stop user conflict; idea that commercial and recreational fishermen would not be fishing for the same species at the same time; was also noted this would be difficult to do because the commercial sector's livelihood is dependent on catch and many recreational fishermen are on the water for fun
- Consistent size limits for both sectors – i.e., black seabass
- Prioritize fisheries – look at the economic and social value to see which sectors need to be open and when they should be open; more important for recreational fisheries to be open in the summer; economic information in the recreational sector was weak in the FMP; weather is not consistent so need flexibility in season opening/closing
- Transparent allocation system

8) Variety of spatial management tools

Issue/Not Working --

- MPA's - are MPAs the 'right' tool for spatial management?

Solutions --

- Spawning season closures –close known spawning areas during spawning season, then open areas up again once spawning done
- Artificial reefs -- develop new artificial reefs for MPAs, do not close existing artificial reefs
- Consider smaller MPA's and need for research to determine if smaller MPA's work
- Research, assessment, and monitoring of MPA's is not really done and this kind of work is expensive to do; don't really know if they are working
- Did NOT support Big Rock being part of an MPA

9) Information on how quotas and stock assessments are done

Issue/Not Working --

- How are quotas decided (example – gag) – confusion on how gag ACL was set (confusion seemed to be on the recent addition of discards from shallow water grouper closure in ACL calculation)

Solutions --

- MREP should be held in all states in the region; need more outreach opportunities and materials
- Consider ways to incorporate anecdotal information into decision making process; one individual noted that the in the Mid-Atlantic fishermen put together a report that is used in the annual specification setting

10) Other Issues/Solutions

- Council meetings occur during the day; hard for people who work to attend meetings; would prefer meetings on weekends or evening; Council staff noted that meetings are broadcast via webinar, draft committee reports are available during the meeting, final reports available at end of week, summary of motions available ~1 month after meeting, and meeting transcripts are available upon request.