

**Port Meetings
Titusville, FL
3/26/14, 6:00 p.m.**

1) Annual Catch Limits too low

Issues—

- Recreational fishing quotas are too low to support the charter industry.
- Quotas are so small they don't allow fishermen to cover trip expenses.
- Golden tilefish quota is too low for the longline sector.
- Allocation between the longline and hook and line sector in the golden tilefish fishery is disproportionate.

Solutions—

- Weekly trip limits for certain species instead of daily trip limits (specifically for grouper and tilefish; this approach makes trips economically feasible).
- Get rid of accountability measures that cause ACLs to go down.
- Electronic reporting should be able to monitor trip limits – this is data in real time, this is easy for fishermen, and accessible.
- Do away with precautionary step downs.
- New stock assessment for golden tilefish to address the ACL being too low.
- Up to date stock assessments.

2) Quota Monitoring – Program Improvements and Timeliness

Issues—

- Better landings information for the recreational sector.
- Closure notice came out about golden tilefish closing because the quota was met, and fishermen thought they still had 7 days, so they bought all tackle/bait.
- Dealers not reporting in a timely fashion.

Solutions—

- Fine late reporting dealers or dealers that are not properly reporting; incur fine within a reasonable timeframe.

3) Dead discards

Issues—

- There should be no discard mortality.
- Red snapper are 10:1 in abundance over other species.
- Gag grouper need a bycatch allowance.

Solutions—

- Develop a bycatch allowance (for gag, red snapper, and other species).
- Create a realistic bycatch allowance – 2 per person per boat.

4) Regional differences in fishery/management

Issues—

- Realistic quotas – red grouper vs. snowy grouper

- Distance to fishing grounds from shore – regionally different in each state.

Solutions—

- State management of the recreational fishery.
- Different trip limits for different regions of the fishery.
- Develop spawning area closures and openings that match when specific species are in the area (fish spawn at different times/places).
- State by state approaches to quota management/allocation, trip limits, and openings.

5) Underutilizing the resource

Issues—

- Process must have accountability for maximizing the resource – currently does not for many species (and other fisheries).

Solutions—

- Address underages in meeting the quota for certain species (so much emphasis is put on quota overages but management doesn't reward for fishermen fishing under their quota.)
- Implement a weekly trip limit for snowy grouper (commercial).
- Extend fishing seasons and open red snapper with a 400-lb trip limit.

6) Closures – Spawning and ACLs being met

Issues—

- Science doesn't match what is seen on the water.
- Creates derby fishing.
- Creates flooding of market.
- Red snapper issues – needs a real trip limit; overabundance of the species.
- Gag grouper spawning closure is not working.
- Could develop more of a local/regional market if season was longer

Solutions—

- Consider closing gag (and other shallow water grouper) January and February only.
- Close fisheries when the fish are spawning, not based on quotas. Would help season stay open longer to close during spawning.

7) Need to address current MPAs

Issues—

- Science does not support current MPAs; need more research on the existing MPAs.
- Anytime a closure is put into place, there is no sunset clause

Solutions—

- Fishermen want proof of why the existing MPAs are needed.
- No new MPAs until studies are conducted showing they are meeting management goals.

8) Lack of Economic Considerations in Management Decisions

Issues—

- Lack of economic consideration when making management considerations – it has to be equitable economics.

- Poor economic studies – level the playing field with ex-vessel price and recreational price for the fishery.
- Multipliers are used to assign economic value of recreationally harvested fish. Dockside values are used for commercially harvested fish. This gives a false estimation of value of fish when comparing the economic impact of the two sectors.
- Not enough emphasis is placed on economic devastation to fishing communities and industries when fisheries are closed or severely reduced.
- Present management practices have destroyed the fishing infrastructure – businesses are not sustainable.
- SAFMC has never recognized the true value of commercially harvested fish as the fish reach their ultimate destination (i.e., consider value at each level of the supply chain and not just dockside value).
- Need to look at global environmental effects – what happens when exports are brought in.

Solutions—

- Look at the economics of recreational vs. commercial equally.
- More comprehensive economic analysis of the impacts of amendments on the fishery; value of the commercial catch; market value of the fishery.
- Talk to fishermen and use sales trends as part of data in management decisions.
- Use the true value of fish that are commercially harvested instead of just the dockside price when estimating economic impacts.

9) Cooperative Research

Issues—

- Not enough money for research
- Fishermen feel the research is not accurate.
- Lack of cooperation between scientists and fishermen to conduct needed research.

Solutions—

- Scientists need to use fishermen for collecting data/research.
- More cooperative research opportunities to help lower cost of research and to get the scientists to where the fish are located.

10) Science & Data Issues;

Issues—

- Lack of trust in data/science.
- Lack of transparency.
- Data doesn't match what is seen on the water; the historical data is inaccurate.
- Stock assessments are poor and take too long.
- Using imaginary historical data creates impossible goals.
- Scientists are uninformed and out of touch with the abundance of species.
- No genetic science to measure biomass.
- Need better recreational catch data; MRIP.

Solutions—

- Stop funding research providing incorrect data.

- Allow for an external scientist to review assessments; Allow for a 3rd party review that isn't affiliated with the SSC or SAFMC.
- Researchers should be familiar with species, location, environment, and abundance and make quotas reflect area being fished
- More funding for stock assessments.
- Require SSC/scientists to go fishing on a red snapper trip with commercial vessels.
- Quotas should be based on scientific certainty, not speculation of the Council.
- Allow for a benchmark assessment on red snapper immediately.
- More realistic data collection.
- No more endorsement programs.
- Provide permits to fishermen.
- No catch shares, no discussion until 5 years since an endorsement is issued (i.e. tilefish; and black sea bass).
- No transfer without history in golden tilefish.

11) Inconsistent Supply of Seafood to Consumers

Issues—

- Need a year round supply of local fish.
- More emphasis on a safe food supply.
- No marketing program to help improve the commercial 'profile'/image.
- Recognizing the fishery as part of the food supply to the U.S.
- Restaurants can't get fresh local fish that guests want during the busiest times of the year.

Solutions—

- Develop a seafood sustainability certification under the reauthorized Magnuson Stevens Act.
- Create a seafood marketing board can help dispel wrong information (like SeaFood Watch); and promote the benefits of domestic seafood.
- Provide a consistent supply in the fishery; coordinate openings and closures so that a variety of species are available to the market putting less pressure on one species.

12) Need Management that Allows Year Round Fishing & Economic Feasibility

Issues—

- Snowy grouper trip limit is too low and underutilized.
- Lining up seasons and increasing the trip limits; this would allow fishermen to do their own thing without any derby fishing or pressure on one specific fishery.

Solutions—

- Year round red snapper fishing w/ a 300 pound trip limit.
- Trip limits should be high enough to meet trip expense.
- 400 pound trip limit on snowy or a weekly trip limit.
- Align seasons.
- Should have state-state management.
- Fish one week and then take a week off. Require this of all permit holders and this would allow the season to be extended and quotas would not be reached as quickly.

13) Checks and Balances

Issues—

- Conflict of interest when council members vote in favor of area interests as opposed to the region as a whole;
- Too much pressure from NGOs;
- Closing a fishery is not managing a fishery; outright closures should not be used as a management tool.
- Precautionary approaches are killing the quotas.
- Management decisions are reactive and not proactive.
- Pressure from lawsuits are guiding management decisions.
- Management decisions are sometimes based on politics and not on scientific evidence.
- Regulations are obsolete and don't reflect a reasonable solution.

Solutions--

- Oversight, checks & balances within the Council need to be implemented.
- Research/data must be proven accurate before submitting to regulation.
-

14) Others Issues

- No catch shares.
- Equal share of the quota between sectors.
- Regulations that are good for the commercial sector must be good for the recreational sector.
- Equal enforcement of all sectors.
- Relative vs Absolute Management
- Can we compare size frequency?
- How is golden tile assessed in NE, is it managed as one stock; **fishermen have asked for golden tile stock comparison by size and region.
- Unnecessary equipment, too much turtle release gear for my bandit boat
- No more endorsements; this has created a greed affect; when you are given a share or an endorsement, greed has come into play, the endorsements are given a different type of value (could put a 5 year term limit on endorsements); fishermen can't own the permits, only wealthy can, who can afford the permits who then hire the fishermen.
- Why close a fishery such as red snapper when it was in its best shape in 20 years; it was seen as politics; greatest thing that happened to red snapper was the 20" size limit