

**Port Meeting Summary:**  
*Snead's Ferry, NC*  
*March 18, 2014, 1:00 p.m. session*

**1) Reduce paperwork burden**

- Less paperwork – confusion about filling out trip tickets when dealers submit this information; redundancy; burdensome; don't mind working or filling trip ticket forms out, but pay me for that time!

**2) No ITQs/Catch Shares**

Issues/Not Working --

- No catch shares – this is what money buys, it's not what fishing does for you; many of us in this room would like to see longer fishing seasons;
- Individual not Corporation oriented – (opposition to catch shares)

Solutions --

- Allow fishermen to determine how to manage their share of the TAC by 2/3 majority vote by permit holders

**3) Adjusting Size Limits**

Issues/Not Working --

- 20" size limit on grouper is too small; grouper fishery has grown since the size limit was put into place; in 1991 the limit helped gag out a lot. The gag grouper population in this area has grown a lot; raise the limit and when you catch an undersized fish, increase the penalty; close the season just when the spawning is happening, it's currently not capturing spawning season.
- Straighten size limit/pot limit

Solutions --

- Increase size limit on all grouper to 24"

**4) Unfair eligibility requirement for black sea bass pot endorsement**

Issues/Not Working --

- No special permits (pot endorsement); endorsement program needs to be addressed; fishermen feel this program was put into place based on unfair measures and needs to be re-designed to allow for full-time commercial fishermen eligibility in the endorsement program.

Solutions --

- Equal opportunity for every permit holder

**5) Law Enforcement issue**

- Perception that recreational fishermen are filleting and releasing

**6) One size fits all vs. considering regional differences**

Issues/Not Working --

- Season closures (i.e. triggers closed while vermilion is open) – fish spawn in different areas at different times, what occurs in FL is different than NC. Biological decisions are not matching what we are seeing on the water.
- Spawning months should be addressed – differences in spawning times in different states

- Longer fishing seasons

#### Solutions –

- Data taken from each state (use a boat registration from the state, where fish are landed, by home port)
- State-state allocation for spawning closure – what size limit works in NC vs. FL – state approach based on biological differences between states;
- Address spawning season closure: fish off NC spawning May-June, but only 2 months closed in NC (April and May); in NC, bsb spawn in April and May; we can fish in Jan/Feb in NC and not hurt anything, but if we fish in May we are severely hurting the fish; if you fish for triggerfish during day you're going to catch vermilion.
- Allow states to manage their share of the TAC

### **7) Reducing Discards**

#### Issues/Not Working --

- Too much bycatch weight taking from gag grouper (not necessarily going to catch a lot of gag with the red grouper at that time of the year; why couldn't 27K lbs be used towards a bycatch allowance? constantly taking away fish but not getting anything in return)

#### Solutions –

- bycatch allowance
- some discussion about how to guesstimate the poundage of your catch while you're on the boat: say it's a 1K lb trip limit, we might be 50lbs over and while trying to abide by the current trip limit, it's hard to comply with.
- bycatch allowance by region

### **8) Line up & extend fishing seasons**

#### Issues/Not Working --

- Concurrent openings – if we're all doing our own thing at the same time, seasons would stay open; shouldn't be hard to figure out limits for a trip to keep the season open; discussion about number of permits being fished; need to line up the seasons so it's more economical/efficient for fishermen
- Trip limits that keep seasons open; if everything is open at the same time, there would be less pressure on one specific fishery
- All fish open sometime
- Put more input on fish closures
- Manage quota with split seasons, possession limits, and bycatch allowances
- Pressure to revise MSA

#### Solutions –

- Trip limits set so we can fish 10 months out of year
- No more than 2 mos. closure on any fish.

### **9) Focused research for regional management**

#### Issues/Not Working --

- Revise data collection /research to incorporate nature
- Balance (bsb being closed 3-4 years, what does this mean to ecosystem issues that may have arisen during this time)

## Solutions --

- True data assessment and no guesswork
- Better scientific data that matches what fishermen see

### **10) Other Issues/Solutions**

- Implement overage allowance of X%
- Red grouper: fishermen stated that they are killing all the pregnant females, 99% of fish in May are pregnant females. Red grouper is an issue in NC. Going to put pressure on gags. When you have openings, it will shift pressure to certain fisheries.
- Bsb fishing has been good this year because there aren't any king mackerel. Fishermen feel they should be eligible for an endorsement if that's what they've always done.
- Discussion about the need to incorporate full time commercial fishermen back into eligibility for an endorsement.
- Why is there not a spawning season closure for bsb? Comments about why the Council would not want to implement a spawning closure on bsb after they've taken so many regulatory measures in this fishery. Rolling spawning closures up the coast would be helpful.
- Discussion about the Council selection process and how NC's preferred candidate did not get appointed as the NC representative (Kenny Fex). Fishermen felt that they want to suggest a change in the law to restrict the power of Sec. Commerce in selection capability.
- Consider a pilot program for lionfish trapping off NC coast; target male lionfish using female lionfish reproductive organs as bait – no bycatch; talked about this at MREP program.
- Leave red snapper alone for 4-5 years; fishermen are still bringing them in; hook and line bass fishing this year, we haven't caught a single one which seems unusual, they should be there and we aren't catching them. There aren't any here. Species needs to be regionally managed.
- Stock assessment on rock hind and strawberry grouper; they aren't present in NC. Scientists need to look at those species.