

Port Meetings
St. Simon's, GA
4/15/14, 10:00 a.m.

1) Lack of consistent supply and access

Issues/Not Working--

- No local fish – availability
- Lack of local fish
- Availability of fish year round
- Supply affects what is offered to consumers (Discussion: *Wild striped bass – most popular fish on menu (also salmon, flounder) – customers want local fish and are also focused on preparation and there's also a health component to it all. Salmon is most popular because it's the only fish on the menu, it's the only fish we get regularly and in assured quantities. The price point on the menu – folks aren't going to spend \$45 on a local fish, which is often what we'd need to charge to make \$ on local product (like grouper). 60% waste depending on the size of the head of the grouper; when we put a 6 oz. portion on a plate, we're looking at \$30-40. People want to buy the story – the local Brunswick fisherman and his product. It's an embarrassment to not offer local product. Using halibut on our menus does not make any sense. Price point. Shrimp is another thing – we can buy shrimp from overseas vendors, it's the same size every time, it's affordable, the price point drives us to demand the foreign product. Our integrity is questioned – we offer shrimp when they aren't in season/aren't local. Majority of customers in our restaurants, they don't have the passion of where it is coming from, they just demand dinner.*)
- Fishery not open year round

Solutions—

- Consider some type of catch share for the commercial sector:
 - Equal allocation or tiered IFQ or ITQ, for commercial
 - Regional fishing association for GA – pool historic allocation – the hook association, it's a way to pool your allocation and fishing year round (this is done in the West Coast)
 - Voluntary or pilot IFQ
- Consider staggered season
- Lionfish – develop a fishery and market for this species.

2) Seafood consumer representation

Issues/Not Working--

- Consumer is an afterthought

Solutions—

- More \$ for educating the consumer about alternative approaches
- Report on consumer studies summarized by Council staff
- Change advertising of certain species (some are no longer “trash fish” and highly sought after in other markets because they are local) Eg., change perception of the local skate that could be on the menu

3) Improve communication – data; seafood consumers; Council; fishermen

Issues/Not Working--

- Consumer education – new fish (consumer education came through in the 70-80s and made portabello mushroom and Chilean sea bass popular; how can we translate this into our fisheries); bycatch education – in the north Asian carp became a popular item, but it took awhile; skate is becoming a delicassen and is used as imitation scallops; from a South Atlantic standpoint, you're dealing with tradition here. How do we break our consumers away from snapper and grouper on the menu. Can we educate the consumer on a broad level to help restaurants transition to a different focus fish on the menu?
- Bycatch education
- Understanding closures
- Lack of communication between for-hire and Council

Solutions—

- Local education Public Service Announcements (where does the public go to buy local fish; educate them about seasons, what is in season locally; lionfish and invasives;
- Make data more understandable and available – more outreach tools available for understanding data;
- A moderated forum by Council staff to answer questions posed by the public
- Q/A webinar, provide a forum for folks to ask questions of Council staff
- Buy in from for-hire sector – rebuilding trust an issue with this sector
- Funding for Council marketing – port meetings are a start;
- Develop condensed information on stock assessments in layman's terms (not what the newsletter provides) (Note: Charter folks haven't felt involved in the SEDAR process or with providing their data)
- 1-pagers delivered to marinas on stock assessments – brief summary after an assessment

4) Consideration of impacts to local economies

Issues/Not Working--

- Tourism – guests at restaurant, folks less inclined to come down if they can't catch what they keep, trickle affect with a closure
- Local economy tourism

Solutions—

- Keep fishery open at all times
- Stand-alone document from Chapter 3 (of amendment documents produced by Council staff) on community impacts – a lot of the information on economic impacts is contained within the amendment, make this information more available to the public
- Fishermen driven co-op

5) Fishing effort shifts (because of seasons)

Issues/Not Working--

- Pressure on inshore fishing – as more things close, fuel prices, cost of going offshore is putting more pressure on inshore

Solutions—

No solutions offered by the group.

6) Discards/Discard mortality; regulatory discards

Issues/Not Working--

- Why throw back – 75% chance the fish won't survive, discard mortality
- Closing red snapper = closing bottom fishing – we catch 10 red snapper : 1 grouper; 2/3 of every red snapper thrown back they are consumed by barracuda and sharks.

Solutions—

- Open fishing and promote fishing and catching optional species

7) Regional differences (inequities, etc.)

Issues/Not Working--

- Current trip limits favor FL – all these closures and look where the % of landings have occurred, (FL) – bc they have short distance to travel offshore, they can make quick trips to catch quota.
- Regional discrepancy in how fisheries are managed; one size fits all approach – discussion about how to allocate quota by states/sectors

Solutions—

- Council input on changing Magnuson-Stevens Act

8) Cooperative data sharing (Sectors can't say the data is flawed if they are providing it)

Issues/Not Working--

- Work closer with for-hire for data

Solutions—

- Cooperative data reporting – recreational and charter folks should have to report;
- Collecting biological data – report this information electronically

9) Dated limits -

Issues/Not Working—

- Current limits are not working
- Limits lead to derby fishing

Solutions--

- Season limits
- Spearfishing limits

10) Resource unable to support future harvest & effort

Issues/Not Working--

- If data supports figuring out a season for closing – spawning season closure – the time period hasn't been a significant factor;
- It's hard to get offshore during those times;
- Grouper isn't caught Jan-Apr in GA

Solutions—

- Consider endorsement programs