

Port Meeting Summary:
Murrells Inlet, SC
February 11, 2014 at 2:00 PM

What is not working with current management?

- Lack of **monitoring** (of vessels, for data collection, etc. – use of VMS, on-board cameras)
- Gear allocations (specifically referring to golden tilefish and black sea bass; interest from participants in addressing opportunity for letting more people into both endorsement programs.)
- Data collection (need more streamlined approach; too much duplicity).
- Too many discard (need to reduce # of discards; provide a bycatch allowance).
- Timing of stock assessments (not enough and process is too slow).
- Inaccurate reporting (dealers reporting all grouper as gag and this accounting for early closure of this species).
- Methods used to set the Annual Catch Limits need to be readdressed.
- Not enough quota (commercial).
- Not enough focus on the economics of the fishery (when it comes to allocations).
- Fishery closures – timing and resulting shift in pressure to other fisheries.
- Region-wide management approach (“one-size fits all”) does not always work.
- Gear and area conflicts between sectors (specifically setting black sea bass pots too close to shore where other recreational fishermen and divers are fishing).
- Not enough access to the black sea bass pot fishery.
- The 4-month shallow water grouper spawning closure (too long and not targeted for when fish are truly spawning in each state; need a rolling closure)
- Opportunity for new participants (will this be revisited, specifically for black sea bass pot fishery and golden tilefish?).
- Closures shift pressure to other species; leads to biological issues for some species and economic issues when the market is flooded with one species, driving prices down.
- Eligibility for endorsements.

Summary of Discussion on Current Issues/Solutions:

1. Reducing Discards:

Proposed Solutions

- Consider catch shares
- Coordination of fishing seasons.
- Open more than 1 species at 1 time; Set trip limits to allow keeping bycatch
- Reduce size limit on species in order to keep them (and not throw back) – so fishermen can keep a percentage of catch that is undersized.
- Allow % of shorts to keep or spear only, no discards

2. Addressing Allocations

Proposed Solutions

- Better use of the data (on catch/landings) that already exists and is reported
- Look at best economics, not historical
- Must keep recreational sector open at all cost
- Don't take any additional quota from commercial
- Focus allocations on more recent history/catch

- Address new entrants to the fishery – need to ensure there is opportunity and/or a mechanism to support new entrants (mainly referring to golden tilefish and black sea bass endorsement programs).

3. Reporting Improvements

Proposed Solutions

- Move to e-reporting, allow no fishing until reports are submitted from last trip
- One report for state and federal reporting requirements for recreational headboats
- Data should be compiled Only one source of information; agencies can cross reference what fishermen provide
- Streamline commercial reporting
- All fed dealers should be required mandatory weekly reporting

4. Time/Area Management

Proposed Solutions

- Move to a rolling grouper spawning closure – from south to north in the region; start with area closure from the Keys up to Palm Beach, and then move North in sections, etc. that considers actual spawning time in the different regions.
- No more MPAs
 - *Put sunset laws on current MPAs*
- 2-month grouper spawning closures for April-May in SC.
 - *Short spawning closure – shorter than 4 months*
- Develop regional management strategies (Carolinas & GA/FL)