

**Port Meetings**  
**Savannah, GA**  
**4/14/14, 6:00 p.m.**

**1) Regulations = dated, ineffective, based on inaccurate data, no stakeholder confidence**

Issues/Not Working--

- Too many regulations – basis for regulations are best available science. Why not change that to eliminate regulations that don't meet the highest scientific standard? Councils have erred on side of caution too much. If Council doesn't know, they'll go an extra mile to penalize fishermen.
- Are the Councils misinterpreting the MSA? Information is not necessarily science, and perhaps information from fishermen (what is seen on the water) needs to be taken advantage of as a data source when the science lacks an adequate picture of what is happening with a particular stock.
- Data needs to be collected, and it also needs to be separated from each region where it is caught. We need more transparency in the data – where does it come from (region)? Are our data collection programs as good as we want them to be? The Council seems to act conservatively because of the lower confidence they have in the data.
- Circle hooks – the rule should be revisited; no more requirement of circle hooks. Council should consider having them used voluntarily.

Solutions—

- High level peer review on all science before decisions are made to raise confidence level
- Let anglers vote on new regs/changes – a vote from stakeholders, define stakeholders first
- Larger number of fishermen reporting catch – if there were more private rec anglers reporting catch, we'd have better data. Rec anglers don't have an issue with reporting catch.
  - Radical change from catch limit to weight limit – a different way of measuring catch (no bag limit, a catch limit overall based on weight; also applies to release mortality); an individual daily poundage limit

**2) Data collection & Stock Assessments**

Issues/Not Working--

- Methods to assess fish stocks
- Stock assessments take too long
- Assessments and how they are established – recreational angler discussed going offshore, and having trouble getting bait down through the red snapper, clearly a replenishing of the population is going on. Seeing so many of them defies our understanding of learning they are undergoing overfishing.
- Economics not considered

Solutions--

- More fishermen input – on stock assessments; best data the Council could use is what would come from the fishermen. Fishermen's anecdotal information is not utilized in the stock assessment process.
- Sector management of fish – collect the data and conduct the analyses regionally, not the region as a whole;
- Consider regional stock assessments.

- Real time data collection using information from recreational fishermen and divers –
  - web based data collection platforms;
  - A voluntary recreational program where GoPro cameras are used in data collection (underwater).
- Federal should mimic data collection used by states – DNR; otolith studies are being done by our local DNR scientists, the federal scientists should do the same.
- Use angler collected data – real experience of anglers (show photos/videos as proof)

### 3) Red Snapper Management

#### Issues/Not Working--

- Open red snapper for rec fishermen
- Give us a real season for red snapper (40+ days) like the Gulf
- Closing snapper fishery without input from fishermen

#### Solutions—

- Minimum 60 day season 1 or 2 fish limit recreational
- Harvest tag - limit for season / black sea bass / red snapper – let's wait and find out what is going on with the fishery; would not be hard to develop a tag program through an app
- Open red snapper just like Gulf

### 4) Council Appointment Process

#### Issues/Not Working--

- Not enough seats per state (on Council) – Council appointment process, more folks should be involved in nominating, selecting candidates. \*This particular fishermen recognized he's been on the short list of Council appointment candidates several times and has taken an issue with how the preferred candidate is selected and sent to the governor by the state (DNR) as a recommendation.
- More fishermen involvement in appointing Council members

#### Solutions—

- More fishermen voices and more voting members – the states need more than 3 voting members; Kari reminded folks about the MSA and this would require a change in law
- Appointments chosen by other anglers

### 5) Black sea bass Management

#### Issues/Not Working--

- Black sea bass size limits – bag limit 10 fish; last 4-5 years go offshore to catch sheepshead and can't get bait through bsb to catch the sheepshead
- Bsb limits – what data was used?

#### Solutions—

- 11" size limit; 10 fish bag limit
- 11" bsb with limit of 10 per angler

### 6) Law Enforcement

#### Issues/Not Working--

- Not enough law enforcement – rarely seen on the water;

#### Solutions—

- Increase license cost (state) that goes directly to saltwater fishing – raise the license fee by \$5, and that goes back to state of GA;
- Send law enforcement to most active ports

## 7) Release Mortality

### Issues/Not Working--

- Release mortality

### Solutions—

- Have fish limit (bag) not length limit – be able to keep
- Release weights – descending devices/help the fish to get back to the bottom.
- Many snapper die when released; change rules to 1 fish per person or 6 fish whichever is greater – red snapper in particular.
- Bag limit not size limit; release mortality is higher than we thought
- Consider change from current length limits – total creel LE noted or weight

## 8) Sector Management – one size fits all vs. regional management does not work

### Issues/Not Working--

- Not enough recreational representation
- Treating recreational and commercial the same (Discussion: *when seasons are shut down, it seems it's because of overfishing commercially; they put recreational fishermen in the same basket as the commercial fishermen. We need a plan to get those two sectors differentiated. What happens to one sector should not affect the other. You have commercial guys that can clean off a reef in 2 hours (spearfishing; scuba, etc.), and they aren't coming back in until they are completely done. The hook and line guys using circle hooks, if you hook a grouper, you have about a 50/50 chance of bringing it in. Commercial spearfishermen clean out the area.*)
- Sector separation is important - the quotas should not be mixed (recreational sector should not be able to borrow quota from commercial). This isn't necessarily an allocation issue. Suggestion to not combine the quota (commercial and recreational).

### Solutions—

- Break down states into geographical zones – regional management; How does GA get a bigger piece of the pie?
- Establish GA coast as its own sector – with own quota
- Different rules for each state