

Visioning and Strategic Planning

DECISION DOCUMENT



MARCH 2013

Background

The South Atlantic Council (Council) recognizes the need to state its vision for future management of South Atlantic fishery resources under its jurisdiction and to lay out the path to achieve that vision. Whereas all of the Council's Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) each contain a series of objectives, a comprehensive evaluation of the objectives and whether those objectives have been met and/or continue to be applicable, has not been undertaken. The Council engaged in more concerted efforts to define a clear path for future management in the past.

In December 2012 the South Atlantic Council began a process to discuss a future vision and strategic plan for the snapper grouper fishery. Development of a future vision and strategic plan is intended to help guide Council decisions with clear fishery goals and objectives. The process will incorporate public input into building the vision and include measurable objectives to define success in reaching the FMP goals that can be integrated into future management actions.

This Decision Document is intended to help the Council choose how they would like to undertake the visioning and planning process.

Goals, objectives and strategies

- A **goal** is where you want to be, a destination. Usually broad and general.
- An **objective** is the direction you have to take to get to your destination. These are obtainable actions and the steps to take to reach the goals.
- A **strategy** is what you have to do to get there, steps to take to reach the objectives.

An analogy:

My goal is to become a millionaire.

My objective is to increase my wealth.

One strategy I will employ is to undertake education to give me the skills I need.

Decision #1: What fisheries will be included?

1. Snapper Grouper
 - Largest fishery, multi-species
 - Snapper Grouper Committee includes all Council members
 - Start with one fishery and then address the others
2. Mackerel
 - Joint management with the Gulf may make it difficult to keep the process from becoming unwieldy and costly
 - Some Council members have expressed interest in addressing strategic planning for this fishery
3. All managed fisheries
 - Will preclude a small-scale project and cost will increase significantly

Decision #2: How does the Council want to refer to this process?

1. Vision and Strategic Planning
 - Concise
 - Most people have an understanding of what a strategic plan is
 - “Strategic Planning” is a specialized field that is tied to specific tools and approaches. As such, it may limit the Council’s ability to be creative and achieve the outcome it wants
2. Strategic Review of Management Objectives and Performance Metrics
 - Wordy
 - Better reflects what the outcome will be and does not put the Council in a box
3. Other Suggestions??

Decision # 3: How does the Council want to approach evaluating existing objectives?

The Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan (FMP) contained several objectives for the fishery. The objectives were initially a part of plan amendments and management actions were tied to specific objectives. Over time, the list of management objectives changed and eventually stopped being included in plan amendments because the actions related to existing objectives (e.g., end overfishing). **Appendix 1** contains a description of the original objectives in the Snapper Grouper FMP and their transformation over time. **Appendix 2** similarly describes the management objectives for the Coastal Migratory Pelagics FMP. In order to chart a course for the future through the development of goals and objectives, the Council could refer to those that were envisioned early on in the history of the fishery and evaluate those objectives in the context of current management.

1. The Council could undertake evaluation of original objectives before soliciting input from stakeholders
 - Would allow the Council to be more specific as to the type of input it will request from stakeholders afterwards
 - Would be more time and cost-effective
 - Could perpetuate the notion among stakeholders that the Council “has already made up its mind” before reaching out to them
 - Would risk excluding viable and creative options that stakeholders have to offer
2. The Council could request stakeholder input before evaluating the original management objectives
 - Input may be a repetition of what the Council has already heard
 - Would risk receiving complaints and recommendations about issues that the Council cannot do anything about
 - Would promote transparency and solidify the Council’s intent to involve stakeholders throughout the process
 - Would take longer and cost more

Decision #4: Which stakeholders would be involved?

1. Advisory Panels
 - AP members can represent stakeholder groups
 - AP members are familiar with the management process and the issues the Council can and cannot address
 - AP members may have become frustrated with the management process and therefore offer limited creativity
 - May promote the opinion that the Council is too selective in how it solicits input from stakeholders
 - Would be time and cost effective
2. “Key Stakeholders”
 - Would have to first agree on what defines a “key stakeholder”
 - May create some level of conflict among stakeholders who are not included
 - Would promote focused discussions and result in relevant input
 - Would be time and cost effective
3. Attempt to reach out to all stakeholders
 - Would require more time and may be costly
 - Would promote transparency and enhance collaboration
 - Could provide varied and creative perspectives that may or may not be relevant
4. Engage Advisory Panel members AND “key stakeholders”
 - Would promote collaboration
 - Could elicit conflicting opinions as to who should be considered a “key stakeholder” among AP members
 - The Council could request that the AP(s) submit a list of “key stakeholders” for the Council to consider

Decision #5: How would the stakeholders be involved?

1. Should the public comment on the Council’s management goals?
 - Would make stakeholders feel invested in the process
 - Could result in process delays due to “wordsmithing” instead of comments on appropriateness of goals
2. Should stakeholders provide input on how to meet the management objectives?
 - Would allow stakeholders to bring forward creative strategies to meet objectives
 - Might result in suggestions that are not allowable under the MSA
3. Does the Council want to rely primarily on public meetings to obtain stakeholder input?
 - The public has expressed a preference for public meetings

- The Mid-Atlantic Council indicated that the port meetings were the most important and useful part of their visioning and planning process
- Although meetings are costly, the Council could opt to rely on stakeholders to organize and host port meetings with the understanding that the Council would consider providing financial assistance as appropriate

Proposed Plan for Stakeholder Involvement

- An initial round of meetings could be held in conjunction with public hearings in August 2013. They would be intended to inform the public of the process and their role. Stakeholders could submit suggestions for broad goals and/or objectives at public meetings in addition to social media/online comment collection.
- The Advisory Panel(s) would provide specific comments on a vision for the fishery and management goals during their scheduled meetings in 2013 as appropriate. AP members would be encouraged to speak with other fishermen in their community and sector, and provide input that represents broad groups of stakeholders.
- Smaller focused port meetings would be held in fall 2013 to discuss objectives in a strategic plan to meet management goals. Council members would be strongly encouraged to attend all meetings or at least those in their state.
- In spring of 2014, the AP(s) would provide specific comments on the draft strategic plan and objectives. As with the first round of AP involvement, AP members would be encouraged to discuss items with other fishermen in their community/sector and provide input that represents a broad stakeholder group.

Decision #6: Does the Council want meetings to be facilitated?

1. Does the Council want a facilitator for Council workshops in addition to port meetings?
 - Port meeting attendees may not feel as comfortable with a facilitator
 - A facilitator would ensure organized meetings that would produce results
 - There may be a cost associated with hiring a facilitator
 - The Council may want a facilitator to assist with Council workshops only
2. Does the Council want to consider a staff member to serve as facilitator?
 - No additional cost associated
 - A staff member could serve as facilitator for the port meetings only

Options for facilitators:

1. Council staff (Amber von Harten, Outreach Specialist)
 - Amber received training in facilitation and planning while employed with Sea Grant
 - Familiar with Council process and policy issues in the region
 - Familiar with regional fisheries issues
2. Gulf of Maine Research Institute
 - Based in Portland, ME
 - Expertise in fisheries issues, may help tie the visioning process to the goals of the Marine Resources Education Program
 - Have expressed interest in facilitating port meetings in particular

- Would be contract work similar to hiring a consulting group
3. NOAA Coastal Services Center
 - Experts in coastal issues but not necessarily fisheries issues
 - Trained facilitators and strategic planners
 - Cannot commit over the long-term
 - Current travel restrictions would not allow their involvement in meetings outside of Charleston
 - They have indicated they could host a strategic planning workshop during the September meeting
 4. Group Solutions
 - Based in southeast
 - Expertise in environmental conflict resolution and strategic planning
 - Completely outside of fisheries/neutral party
 - Cost?
 4. Gulf and South Atlantic Fisheries Foundation?

Appendix 1. Management Objectives for the South Atlantic Snapper Grouper Fishery

The current management objectives in the snapper grouper FMP as amended are:

1. Prevent overfishing.
2. Collect necessary data.
3. Promote orderly utilization of the resource.
4. Provide for a flexible management system.
5. Minimize habitat damage.
6. Promote public compliance and enforcement.
7. Mechanism to vest participants.
8. Promote stability and facilitate long-run planning.
9. Create market-driven harvest pace and increase product continuity.
10. Minimize gear and area conflicts among fishermen.
11. Decrease incentives for overcapitalization.
12. Prevent continual dissipation of returns from fishing through open access.
13. Evaluate and minimize localized depletion.
14. End overfishing of snapper grouper stocks undergoing overfishing.
15. Rebuild stocks declared overfished.

A history of management objectives for Snapper Grouper

In the original FMP and earlier amendments, objectives and revised objectives were linked to identified problems in the fishery.

The Fishery Management Plan listed 3 problems and 3 associated objectives.

Amendment 4 added to these and had 5 problems and 6 objectives.

Amendment 5 included 11 problems and 12 objectives.

Amendment 8 revised to have 12 problems and 14 objectives.

Amendment 9 listed the 12 problems and 14 objectives in the abbreviated versions.

Amendment 15 listed 13 objectives.

Amendment 17A included 15 objectives.

FMP (1983):

Problems listed in the FMP included:

- 1) Thirteen species in the complex are in a documented state of growth overfishing.
- 2) Many of the species south of Cape Canaveral will likely experience growth overfishing in the near future.
- 3) Data necessary to quantitatively document growth overfishing in other species or recruitment are very limited.

Management objectives to address the problems included:

- 1) Prevent recruitment overfishing in all species and prevent growth overfishing of each species except where growth overfishing is justified by social and economic considerations. Method to achieve objective: Minimum sizes will control growth overfishing and prevent recruitment

overfishing. The Secretary is authorized to take whatever emergency action is necessary in the unlikely event of recruitment overfishing.

- 2) Collect the necessary data to monitor the fisheries. Method of achieving objective: Authorize data collection and analysis to monitor the status of the fishery.
- 3) Promote orderly utilization of the resource. Method of achieving objective: Restrictions on fish traps and prohibitions on poisons, explosives, and spearing jewfish.

Amendment 4 (1991)

The Council identified several new problems and added new FMP objectives.

Problems in the fishery were revised to include:

- 1) NEW: 1) Excessive fishing mortality is jeopardizing the biological integrity of the snapper grouper resource of the South Atlantic.
- 2) NEW: 2) Adequate management has been hindered by lack of current and accurate biological, statistical, social and economic information. Data necessary to document growth and/or recruitment overfishing and to calculate SSRs is very limited. Since the universe of participants is unknown, scientists are unable to estimate catch, effort, and other important information with desired accuracy. The present system of fishery dependent and fishery independent data collection provides limited information for assessment purposes and practically no economic or social data.
- 3) NEW: 3) Intense competition exists among recreational, part-time and full-time commercial users of the snapper grouper resources; and between commercial users employing different gears.
- 4) NEW: 4) Habitat degradation by some types of fishing gear and poor water quality have adversely affected fish stocks and associated habitat.
- 5) NEW: 5) The existence of inconsistent state and federal regulations makes it difficult to coordinate, implement and enforce management measures and may lead to overfishing. Inconsistent management measures create public confusion and hinder voluntary compliance.

FMP objectives were revised as:

- 1) Prevent overfishing in all species by maintaining the spawning stock ratio (SSR) at or above target levels.
- 2) Collect necessary data to develop, monitor, and assess biological, economic, and social impacts of management measures designed to prevent overfishing, obtain desired SSR levels, and address the other stated problems.
- 3) Promote orderly utilization of the resource. Method of achieving objective: Restrictions on fish traps and prohibitions on poisons, explosives, and spearing jewfish.
- 1) NEW: 4) Provide for a flexible management system that minimizes regulatory delays while retaining substantial Council and public involvement in management decisions, and rapidly adapts to changes in resource abundance, new scientific information, and changes in fishing patterns among user groups.
- 2) NEW: 5) Minimize habitat damage due to direct and indirect effects of recreational and commercial fishing activities.
- 3) NEW: 6) Promote public comprehension of, voluntary compliance with, and enforcement of the management measures.

Amendment 5 (1991)

Amendment 5 established the ITQ program for the wreckfish commercial fishery. The Council identified new problems and added associated management objectives that were specifically related to the wreckfish

fishery. In later amendments these objectives would be revised to be broader and applicable to other components of the snapper grouper fishery.

Problems in the fishery were revised in Amendment 5 as:

- 1) Excessive fishing mortality is jeopardizing the biological integrity of the snapper grouper resource of the South Atlantic.
- 2) Adequate management has been hindered by lack of current and accurate biological, statistical, social and economic information. Data necessary to document growth and/or recruitment overfishing and to calculate SSRs is very limited. Since the universe of participants is unknown, scientists are unable to estimate catch, effort, and other important information with desired accuracy. The present system of fishery dependent and fishery independent data collection provides limited information for assessment purposes and practically no economic or social data.
- 3) Intense competition exists among recreational, part-time and full-time commercial users of the snapper grouper resources; and between commercial users employing different gears.
- 4) Habitat degradation by some types of fishing gear and poor water quality have adversely affected fish stocks and associated habitat.
- 5) The existence of inconsistent state and federal regulations makes it difficult to coordinate, implement and enforce management measures and may lead to overfishing. Inconsistent management measures create public confusion and hinder voluntary compliance.
- 6) Excess capacity [in the wreckfish fishery]. The size and capacity of the wreckfish fleet exceeds that needed for present TACs as well as the range of TACs the Council is likely to approve in the foreseeable future. Additional vessels in the future would exacerbate the situation since the derby nature of an open access fishery encourages fishermen to add harvest capacity even when gains in production are marginal or when economies of scale are not necessarily realized.
- 7) Inefficiency [in the wreckfish fishery]. Past and present measures to control harvest (TAC, gear restrictions, trip limits) and future measures that would likely be needed under continued open access, increase fishing costs and decrease potential consumer and producer benefits from the fishery.
- 8) Low conservation and compliance incentives [in the wreckfish fishery]. Under open access, incentives to promote conservation and voluntary compliance with regulations are low because the benefits of doing so may be appropriated by other fishermen or new entrants.
- 9) Potential conflicts [in the wreckfish fishery]. Competitive fishing conditions may eventually lead to gear and area conflicts as a large number of vessels compete for available TAC.
- 10) High regulatory costs [in the wreckfish fishery]. Management and enforcement costs are unnecessarily high and are expected to increase under open access as the number of vessels increases and stricter management measures are needed to control excess fishing effort.
- 11) Low marketing incentives [in the wreckfish fishery]. Efforts by fish dealers to augment consumer acceptance of wreckfish have been thwarted by short-run oversupply and lack of product continuity. The likelihood of additional harvest restrictions under open access increases uncertainty and instability and discourages long-run planning and investment by dealers.

The FMP objectives were revised as follows:

- 1) Prevent overfishing in all species by maintaining the spawning stock ratio (SSR) at or above target levels.
- 2) Collect necessary data to develop, monitor, and assess biological, economic, and social impacts of management measures designed to prevent overfishing, obtain desired SSR levels, and address the other stated problems.

- 3) Promote orderly utilization of the resource. Method of achieving objective: Restrictions on fish traps and prohibitions on poisons, explosives, and spearing jewfish.
- 4) Provide for a flexible management system that minimizes regulatory delays while retaining substantial Council and public involvement in management decisions, and rapidly adapts to changes in resource abundance, new scientific information, and changes in fishing patterns among user groups.
- 5) Minimize habitat damage due to direct and indirect effects of recreational and commercial fishing activities.
- 6) Promote public comprehension of, voluntary compliance with, and enforcement of the management measures.
 - 1) NEW: 7) Develop a mechanism to vest fishermen in the wreckfish fishery and create incentives for conservation and regulatory compliance whereby fishermen can realize potential long-run benefits from efforts to conserve and manage the wreckfish resource.
 - 2) NEW: 8) Provide a management regime which promotes sustainability and facilitates long-range planning and investor by harvesters and fish dealers while avoiding, where possible, the necessity for more stringent management measures and increasing management over time.
 - 3) NEW: 9) Develop a mechanism that allows the marketplace to drive harvest strategies and product forms in order to maintain product continuity and increase total producer and consumer benefits from the fishery.
 - 4) NEW: 10) Promote management regimes that minimize gear and area conflicts among fishermen.
 - 5) NEW: 11) Minimize the tendency for over-capitalization in the harvesting and processing/distribution sectors.
 - 6) NEW: 12) Provide a reasonable opportunity for fishermen to make adequate returns from commercial fishing by controlling entry so that returns are not regularly dissipated by open access, while also providing avenues for fishermen not initially included in the limited entry program to enter the program.

Amendment 8 (1996)

Amendment 8 established the limited entry system for the snapper grouper commercial fishery.

The Council revised some of the identified problems and added a few additional ones:

- 1) Excessive fishing mortality is jeopardizing the biological integrity of the snapper grouper resource of the South Atlantic.
- 2) Adequate management has been hindered by lack of current and accurate biological, statistical, social and economic information.
- 3) Intense competition exists among recreational, part-time and full-time commercial users of the snapper grouper resources; and between commercial users employing different gears.
- 4) Habitat degradation caused by some types of fishing gear and poor water quality have adversely affected fish stocks and associated habitat.
- 5) The existence of inconsistent state and federal regulations makes it difficult to coordinate, implement and enforce management measures and may lead to overfishing. Inconsistent management measures create public confusion and hinder voluntary compliance.
 - 1) [problems 6-10 were revised to include all snapper grouper species, not just wreckfish]
- 6) Excess capacity. The size and capacity of the fleet have increased significantly in recent years. Despite bag and trip limits, and other regulatory measures, some of the stocks are still overfished or near the overfished stage. Any gains from current regulatory measures under open access are likely to attract new entrants to the fishery and provide incentive for those already in the fishery to

increase harvest capacity even when gains in production are marginal or when economic of scale are not necessarily realized.

- 7) Inefficiency. Past and present measures to control harvest (TAC, gear restrictions, trip limits) and future measures that would likely be needed under continued open access, increase fishing costs and decrease potential consumer and producer benefits from the fishery.
- 8) Low conservation and compliance incentives. Under open access, there is little incentive on the part of the fishermen to promote conservation and to voluntarily comply with regulations. This is because the benefits from doing so may accrue to other fishermen or new entrants. A controlled access management system would provide a mechanism for those who participate in conservation measures to share in the resulting benefits.
- 9) Potential conflicts among participants. As the number of vessels continues to increase, competitive fishing conditions may eventually lead to gear and area conflicts as a large number of vessels compete for the available resources on the same fishing grounds. (At the other extreme, stocks may decline to the point where marginal fishermen may not find it economically viable to fish. This situation could lead to a decline in fishing effort.)
- 10) High regulatory costs. The progression of regulatory measures already implemented in the snapper grouper fishery has resulted in increasing management and enforcement costs. However, the full benefit from these measures has not been realized due to the open access nature of the fishery. More management measures under open access would further increase these costs to the point where management costs could outweigh the benefits.
- 11) Low marketing incentives. Short-run oversupply and lack of product continuity continues to create price fluctuation and uncertainty in the marketplace for these species. The likelihood of additional harvest restrictions under open access increases uncertainty and instability and discourages long-run planning and investment by dealers.
- 12) Localized depletion. Localized depletion where a species' abundance in an area is reduced by high fishing effort can cause conflict among fishermen.

FMP objectives were revised as follows:

- 1) Prevent overfishing in all species by maintaining the spawning potential ratio (SPR) at or above target levels.
- 2) Collect necessary data to develop, monitor, and assess biological, economic, and social impacts of management measures designed to prevent overfishing, obtain desired SPR levels, and address the other stated problems.
- 3) Promote orderly utilization of the resource.
- 4) Provide for a flexible management system that minimizes regulatory delays while retaining substantial Council and public involvement in management decisions, and rapidly adapts to changes in resource abundance, new scientific information, and changes in fishing patterns among user groups.
- 5) Minimize habitat damage due to direct and indirect effects of recreational and commercial fishing activities as well as other non-fishery impacts.
- 6) Promote public comprehension of, voluntary compliance with, and enforcement of the management measures.
- 7) Mechanism to vest participants. A controlled access system provides a means whereby participants have a stake in conserving the resource. This ensures that participants consider the long-run benefits of conserving the resource because they know it is in their best interest. Unlike open access, controlled access would ensure that those who conserve the resource share in the long-run benefits. This gives fishermen incentive to protect the resource and expose those who are

violating regulations. As a result, voluntary compliance would increase and enforcement costs would likely decrease.

- 8) Promote sustainability and facilitate long-run planning. Participants in the fishery will have access to the resource based on certain criteria to be determined by the Council after reviewing public comments. This would give participants the flexibility to employ the most profitable way to fish and also fish when it is most profitable in terms of market conditions. Such a system will promote stability in the fishery by providing a regular supply of fish throughout the fishing year, and maintain stable prices. Both fishermen and fish dealers will have the incentive to engage in long-run planning and investment activities.
- 9) Create Market-Driven Harvest Pace and Increase Product Continuity. A system that ensures participants can harvest their allocations (whether in terms of individual quotas, effort units, trip limits, etc.) anytime during the fishing year would ensure that fishermen conduct their fishing activities to supply the market according to its structure and demand situation. There would be no incentive on the part of fishermen to flood the market with fish. This could result in product continuity, improved product quality, and better prices.
- 10) Minimize Gear and Area Conflicts among Fishermen. Presently, allowable gear provision (implemented under snapper Grouper Amendment 6) controls the types of gear in the fishery. Controlled access and effort unit controls would limit the number of allowable gear in the fishery.
- 11) Decrease Incentives For Overcapitalization. If some form of vested interest is provided to fishermen, their objective would be to maximize profits subject to certain conditions. In order to maximize profits they would explore the least cost method for harvesting in the fishery. This means they would employ fishing effort only to the point where the difference between the anticipated total revenue and total cost is greatest. This practice would reduce incentives for overcapitalization.
- 12) Prevent Continual Dissipation of Returns from Fishing through Open Access. It is a well known fact that under open access any measure(s) that generate "pure profits" will provide an opportunity for those already in the fishery to dissipate those profits and also attract new entrants into the fishery. This can only be prevented if measures are taken to prevent those already in the fishery from increasing their effort without any restriction and also to create a barrier against unlimited entry into the fishery. A controlled access system will reduce the incentive for present participants to violate the regulations, and also prevent unlimited entry into the fishery.
- 13) Evaluate and minimize localized depletion. High fishing mortality rates have resulted in localized depletion of some species in certain areas. Certain species are overfished throughout their range; however, there are particular areas where the overfishing rate is more severe than in the rest of the range. There may also be some cases where the stock as a whole is not overfished, but the numbers in a localized area have been significantly reduced.
- 14) Minimize bycatch. Reflects greater responsibility under recent Magnuson-Stevens Act amendment which added the following national standard: "(9) Conservation and management measures shall, to the extent practicable, (A) minimize bycatch and (B) to the extent bycatch cannot be avoided, minimize the mortality of such bycatch."

Amendment 9 (1997)

The first time the identified problems and FMP objectives are listed using the abbreviated versions.

Problems included:

- 1) Excessive fishing mortality
- 2) Lack of current and accurate biological, statistical, social and economic information.
- 3) Intense competition
- 4) Habitat degradation

- 5) Inconsistent state and federal regulations
- 6) Excess capacity.
- 7) Inefficiency.
- 8) Low conservation and compliance incentives.
- 9) Potential conflicts among participants.
- 10) High regulatory costs.
- 11) Low marketing incentives.
- 12) Localized depletion.

FMP objectives were listed as:

- 1) Prevent overfishing.
- 2) Collect necessary data.
- 3) Promote orderly utilization of the resource.
- 4) Provide for a flexible management system.
- 5) Minimize habitat damage.
- 6) Promote public compliance and enforcement.
- 7) Mechanism to vest participants.
- 8) Promote stability and facilitate long-run planning.
- 9) Create market-driven harvest pace and increase product continuity.
- 10) Minimize gear and area conflicts among fishermen.
- 11) Decrease incentives for overcapitalization.
- 12) Prevent continual dissipation of returns from fishing through open access.
- 13) Evaluate and minimize localized depletion.
- 14) Minimize bycatch.

Amendment 15A (2008)

Objective #14 was omitted from this list in Amendment 15A.

Amendment 17A (2010)

This amendment the Council listed the abbreviated 13 objectives and added two additional objectives:

- 1) 14. End overfishing of snapper grouper stocks undergoing overfishing.
16. Rebuild stocks declared overfished.

Appendix 2. Management Objectives for the CMP Fishery

The current management objectives in the joint mackerel FMP as amended are:

- 1) The primary objective of this FMP is to stabilize yield at MSY, allow recovery of overfished populations, and maintain population levels sufficient to ensure adequate recruitment.
- 2) to provide a flexible management system for the resource which minimizes regulatory delay while retaining substantial Council and public input in management decisions and which can rapidly adapt to changes in resource abundance, new scientific information, and changes in fishing patterns among user groups or by areas.
- 3) to provide necessary information for effective management and establish a mandatory reporting system for monitoring catch.
- 4) to minimize gear and user group conflicts.
- 5) to distribute the TAC of Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel between recreational and commercial user groups based on the catches that occurred during the early to mid 1970s, which is prior to the development of the deep water run-around gill net fishery and when the resource was not overfished.
- 6) to minimize waste and bycatch in the fishery.
- 7) to provide appropriate management to address specific migratory groups of king mackerel.
- 8) to optimize the social and economic benefits of the coastal migratory pelagic fisheries.

A history of management objectives for mackerel

In the original FMP and earlier amendments, objectives and revised objectives were linked to identified problems in the fishery.

The Fishery Management Plan listed 4 problems and 8 objectives.

Amendment 1 listed 4 problems and 4 objectives.

Amendment 3 listed 6 problems and 5 objectives.

Amendment 4 listed 7 problems and 6 objectives.

Amendment 5 listed 9 problems and 7 objectives.

Amendment 6 listed 13 problems and 8 objectives.

Amendment 8 listed 10 problems and 8 objectives.

Amendment 9 listed 12 problems and 8 objectives.

All subsequent amendments have mentioned but not included lists of identified problems or management objectives.

FMP (1982):

Problems listed in the FMP included:

- 4) Current and accurate biological and economic data needed as a basis for management decisions are not available.
- 5) Intense conflicts exist between recreational and commercial users of mackerel stocks; and between commercial users employing different gears.
- 6) Rapidly increasing fishing effort for king mackerel could soon result in overfishing if no action is taken.
- 7) Cobia are presently harvested at a size below that necessary for maximum yield and may be overfished in some areas beyond the management area.

Management objectives to address the problems included:

King mackerel-

- 1) Institute management measures necessary to prevent exceeding MSY.
- 1) Establish a mandatory statistical reporting system for monitoring catch.
- 2) Minimize gear and user conflicts.

Spanish mackerel-

- 1) Institute management measures necessary to prevent exceeding MSY.
- 1) Establish a mandatory statistical reporting system for monitoring catch.

- 2) Minimize gear and user conflicts as they arise.
- 3) Promote the maximum use of the resource up to the OY estimate.

Cobia-

- 1) Institute management measures necessary to increase yield per recruit and average size and to prevent overfishing.

Amendment 1 (1985)

The Councils revised the list of identified problems and FMP objectives.

Problems included:

- 1) Fishing effort is jeopardizing the biological integrity of the king mackerel fishery. That portion of the stock which inhabits the Gulf of Mexico during the summer and supports the winter fishery in southeast Florida appears to be severely overfished, and fishing mortality on this group needs to be reduced. That portion of the stock which inhabits the Atlantic coast has been exploited to a lesser degree, and fishing mortality rate on that group is below the level which will produce maximum yield.
- 2) Adequate management has been hindered by lack of current and adequate biological and statistical and economic information. The present system does not provide a mechanism which insures rapid incorporation of new data into stock assessments. Further, there is no coordinated plan to generate stock assessment data.
- 3) Intense conflicts and competition exist between recreational and commercial users of the mackerel stocks; and between commercial users employing different gears.
- 4) The existence of separate state and federal jurisdiction and lack of coordination between the two makes biological management difficult, since in some instances, the resource may be fished beyond the allocation in state waters.

The objectives were refined as:

- 1) To stabilize yield at MSY, allow recovery of overfished populations and maintain population levels sufficient to ensure adequate recruitment.
- 2) To provide a flexible management system for the resource which minimizes regulatory delay while retaining substantial Council and public input into management decisions and which can rapidly adapt to changes in resource abundance, new scientific information, and changes in fishing patterns among user groups or by area.

- 3) To provide necessary information for effective management and establish a mandatory statistical reporting system for monitoring catch.
- 4) To minimize gear and user group conflicts.

Amendment 3 (1989)

The Councils identified two additional problems and one new objective.

The problems in the fishery were revised as:

- 1) Fishing effort is jeopardizing the biological integrity of the king mackerel fishery. That portion of the stock which inhabits the Gulf of Mexico during the summer and supports the winter fishery in southeast Florida appears to be severely overfished, and fishing mortality on this group needs to be reduced. That portion of the stock which inhabits the Atlantic coast has been exploited to a lesser degree, and fishing mortality rate on that group is below the level which will produce maximum yield.
- 2) Adequate management has been hindered by lack of current and adequate biological and statistical and economic information. The present system does not provide a mechanism which insures rapid incorporation of new data into stock assessments. Further, there is no coordinated plan to generate stock assessment data.
- 3) Intense conflicts and competition exist between recreational and commercial users of the mackerel stocks; and between commercial users employing different gears.
- 4) The existence of separate state and federal jurisdiction and lack of coordination between the two makes biological management difficult, since in some instances, the resource may be fished beyond the allocation in state waters.
- 5) NEW: Cobia are presently harvested at a size below that necessary for maximum yield and may be overfished in some areas beyond the management areas. (from original FMP) Most southeastern states have not yet adopted the recommended minimum size limit. Also no management action has been taken by states which have jurisdiction over cobia populations in Chesapeake Bay, which appear to have been overfished. Federal enforcement capability is limited and not believed to be very effective in this case.
- 6) NEW: Development of a fishery targeting large, mature king mackerel in the wintertime off Louisiana may eventually reduce recruitment to the resource. Total catch of large, mature king mackerel has greatly increased due to development of a commercial fishery in Louisiana during the winter months. Reported commercial catch increased from zero during 1981-82 to 1.2 million lbs during the 1982-83 winter season. Given the already excessive fishing effort on smaller fish in the Gulf of Mexico, increasing fishing effort on the spawning population could result in recruitment declines.

Updated objectives included:

- 1) To stabilize yield at MSY, allow recovery of overfished populations and maintain population levels sufficient to ensure adequate recruitment.
- 2) To provide a flexible management system for the resource which minimizes regulatory delay while retaining substantial Council and public input into management decisions and which can rapidly adapt to changes in resource abundance, new scientific information, and changes in fishing patterns among user groups or by area.
- 3) To provide necessary information for effective management and establish a mandatory statistical reporting system for monitoring catch.
- 4) To minimize gear and user group conflicts.

- 5) NEW: To minimize waste and bycatch in the fishery. Waste includes both discarded catch and economic wastage due to product quality.

Amendment 4 (1989)

In this amendment, the Councils identified one new problem and an associated management objective.

The problems in the fishery were defined as:

- 1) Fishing effort is jeopardizing the biological integrity of the king mackerel fishery. That portion of the stock which inhabits the Gulf of Mexico during the summer and supports the winter fishery in southeast Florida appears to be severely overfished, and fishing mortality on this group needs to be reduced. That portion of the stock which inhabits the Atlantic coast has been exploited to a lesser degree, and fishing mortality rate on that group is below the level which will produce maximum yield.
- 2) Adequate management has been hindered by lack of current and adequate biological and statistical and economic information. The present system does not provide a mechanism which insures rapid incorporation of new data into stock assessments. Further, there is no coordinated plan to generate stock assessment data.
- 3) Intense conflicts and competition exist between recreational and commercial users of the
1) of the deep water run-around gill net fishery and when the resource was not overfished. mackerel stocks; and between commercial users employing different gears.
- 4) The existence of separate state and federal jurisdiction and lack of coordination between the two makes biological management difficult, since in some instances, the resource may be fished beyond the allocation in state waters.
- 5) Cobia are presently harvested at a size below that necessary for maximum yield and may be overfished in some areas beyond the management areas. (from original FMP) Most southeastern states have not yet adopted the recommended minimum size limit. Also no management action has been taken by states which have jurisdiction over cobia populations in Chesapeake Bay, which appear to have been overfished. Federal enforcement capability is limited and not believed to be very effective in this case.
- 6) Development of a fishery targeting large, mature king mackerel in the wintertime off Louisiana may eventually reduce recruitment to the resource. Total catch of large, mature king mackerel has greatly increased due to development of a commercial fishery in Louisiana during the winter months. Reported commercial catch increased from zero during 1981-82 to 1.2 million lbs during the 1982-83 winter season. Given the already excessive fishing effort on smaller fish in the Gulf of Mexico, increasing fishing effort on the spawning population could result in recruitment declines.
- 7) NEW: Current allocations of Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel do not reflect the distribution (i.e. recreational/commercial ratios) of catches during the early to mid 1970s, which was prior to development

The revised list of management objectives include:

- 1) To stabilize yield at MSY, allow recovery of overfished populations and maintain population levels sufficient to ensure adequate recruitment.
- 2) To provide a flexible management system for the resource which minimizes regulatory delay while retaining substantial Council and public input into management decisions and which can rapidly adapt to changes in resource abundance, new scientific information, and changes in fishing patterns among user groups or by area.
- 3) To provide necessary information for effective management and establish a mandatory statistical reporting system for monitoring catch.

- 4) To minimize gear and user group conflicts.
- 5) To minimize waste and bycatch in the fishery. Waste includes both discarded catch and economic wastage due to product quality.
- 6) NEW: Distribute the total allowable catch of Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel between recreational and commercial user groups based on the catches that occurred during the early to mid 1970s, which is prior to the development of the deep water run-around gill net fishery and when the resource was not overfished.

Amendment 5 (1990)

The Councils made some changes to the list of identified problems and added an additional objective.

Problems were revised as:

- 1) The stocks of Spanish mackerel and Gulf king mackerel are below the level of producing MSY, and spawning stocks have been reduced such that recruitment has been affected. The harvest levels of Atlantic king mackerel are close to their upper limit. Uncontrolled fishing would further reduce biomass.
- 2) A) Available recreational catch statistics were not designed to track catch for quota purposes.
- 1) B) Additional biological and statistical data on both the recreational and commercial fisheries are needed and economic information that assesses the impact of regulations and allocations is not available.
- 2) Intense conflicts and competition exist between recreational and commercial users of the mackerel stocks and between commercial users employing different gears.
- 3) The existence of separate state and federal jurisdiction and lack of coordination between the two makes biological management difficult, since in some instances, the resource may be fished beyond the allocation in state waters.
- 4) The condition of the cobia stock is not known and increased landings over the last ten years have prompted concern about overfishing.
- 5) Lack of information on multiple stocks or migratory groups of king mackerel which may mix seasonally confounds and complicates management.
- 6) Large catches of mackerel over a short period cause quotas and TAC to be exceeded before closures could be implemented. Therefore, some users obtained a share in excess of their allocation.
- 7) Closures of a fishery and reversion of bag limits to zero due to the filling of a quota have deprived geographic areas of access to a fishery.
- 8) Fish caught under the bag limit and sold contribute to the filling of both the recreational and commercial quotas.
- 9) Part-time commercial fishermen compete with full-time commercial fishermen for the available quota.

The list of management objectives included:

- 1) To stabilize yield at MSY, allow recovery of overfished populations and maintain population levels sufficient to ensure adequate recruitment.
- 2) To provide a flexible management system for the resource which minimizes regulatory delay while retaining substantial Council and public input into management decisions and which can rapidly adapt to changes in resource abundance, new scientific information, and changes in fishing patterns among user groups or by area.
- 3) To provide necessary information for effective management and establish a mandatory statistical reporting system for monitoring catch.

- 4) To minimize gear and user group conflicts.
- 5) ~~to minimize waste and bycatch in the fishery. Waste includes both discarded catch and economic wastage due to product quality.~~ [this one was not included in Am 5]
- 6) distribute the total allowable catch of Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel between recreational and commercial user groups based on the catches that occurred during the early to mid 1970s, which is prior to the development of the deep water run-around gill net fishery and when the resource was not overfished.
- 7) to provide appropriate management to address specific migratory groups of king mackerel.

Amendment 6 (1992)

In this amendment, the Councils revised the list of identified problems to reflect changes in the fisheries and management, and added an additional objective.

The list of identified problems was revised to include:

- 1) The stocks of Spanish mackerel and Gulf king mackerel are below the level of producing MSY, and spawning stocks have been reduced such that recruitment has been affected. The harvest levels of Atlantic king mackerel are close to their upper limit. Uncontrolled fishing would further reduce biomass.
- 2) A) Available recreational catch statistics were not designed to track catch for quota purposes.
B) Additional biological and statistical data on both the recreational and commercial fisheries are needed and economic information that assesses the impact of regulations and allocations is not available.
- 3) Intense conflicts and competition exist between recreational and commercial users of the mackerel stocks and between commercial users employing different gears.
- 4) Inconsistencies in state and federal regulations make management and enforcement difficult and can result in fishing the resource beyond allocation.
- 5) The condition of the cobia stock is not known and increased landings over the last ten years have prompted concern about overfishing.
- 6) The extent of mixing and the appropriate boundaries between some migratory groups are uncertain. This complicates management and could result in allocation of landings to the wrong group, thus affecting ABC estimates for both groups.
- 7) Large catches of mackerel over a short period cause quotas and TAC to be exceeded before closures could be implemented. Therefore, some users obtained a share in excess of their allocation.
- 8) Excessive effort and low quotas have resulted in closures which deprive some traditional fisheries of access to the resource and which precludes access to some valuable markets.
- 9) Fish caught under the bag limit and sold contribute to the filling of both the recreational and commercial quotas.
- 10) Part-time commercial fishermen compete with full-time commercial fishermen for the available quota.
- 11) NEW: Bycatch needs to be quantified better.
- 12) NEW: Violations of state and federal regulations continue.
- 13) NEW: There may be a problem of localized depletion of dolphin due to heavy localized fishing pressure.

The revised list of management objectives included:

- 1) To stabilize yield at MSY, allow recovery of overfished populations and maintain population levels sufficient to ensure adequate recruitment.
- 2) To provide a flexible management system for the resource which minimizes regulatory delay while retaining substantial Council and public input into management decisions and which can

rapidly adapt to changes in resource abundance, new scientific information, and changes in fishing patterns among user groups or by area.

- 3) To provide necessary information for effective management and establish a mandatory statistical reporting system for monitoring catch.
- 4) To minimize gear and user group conflicts.
- 5) To minimize waste and bycatch in the fishery. Waste includes both discarded catch and economic wastage due to product quality.
- 6) Distribute the total allowable catch of Atlantic migratory group Spanish mackerel between recreational and commercial user groups based on the catches that occurred during the early to mid 1970s, which is prior to the development of the deep water run-around gill net fishery and when the resource was not overfished.
- 7) To provide appropriate management to address specific migratory groups of king mackerel.
- 8) To optimize the social and economic benefits of the coastal migratory pelagic fisheries.

Amendment 8 (1996)

This amendment listed only ten identified problems and omitted some that were added in Amendment 6. The objectives were not changed.

Problems included:

- 1) The stocks of Spanish mackerel and Gulf king mackerel are below the level of producing MSY, and spawning stocks have been reduced such that recruitment has been affected. The harvest levels of Atlantic king mackerel are close to their upper limit. Uncontrolled fishing would further reduce biomass.
- 2) A) Available recreational catch statistics were not designed to track catch for quota purposes.
- 1) B) Additional biological and statistical data on both the recreational and commercial fisheries are needed and economic information that assesses the impact of regulations and allocations is not available.
- 2) Intense conflicts and competition exist between recreational and commercial users of the mackerel stocks and between commercial users employing different gears.
- 3) The existence of separate state and federal jurisdiction and lack of coordination between these two make biological management difficult; since, in some instances, the resource may be fished beyond the allocation in state waters.
- 4) The condition of the cobia stock is not known and increased landings over the last ten years have prompted concern about overfishing.
- 5) Lack of information on multiple stocks or migratory groups of king mackerel that may mix seasonally confounds and complicates management.
- 6) Large catches of mackerel over a short period cause quotas and TAC to be exceeded before closures could be implemented. Therefore, some users obtained a share in excess of their allocation.
- 7) Closures of a fishery and reversion of bag limits to zero due to the filling of a quota have deprived geographic areas of access to a fishery.
- 8) Fish caught under the bag limit and sold contribute to the filling of both the recreational and commercial quotas.
- 9) Part-time commercial fishermen compete with full-time commercial fishermen for the available quota.

Amendment 9 (2000)

This amendment included a revised list of problems but no changes to the list of objectives.

The revised problems included:

- 1) The stocks of Spanish mackerel and Gulf king mackerel are below the level of producing MSY, and spawning stocks have been reduced such that recruitment has been affected. The harvest levels of Atlantic king mackerel are close to their upper limit. Uncontrolled fishing would further reduce biomass.
- 2) A) Available recreational catch statistics were not designed to track catch for quota purposes. B) Additional biological and statistical data on both the recreational and commercial fisheries are needed and economic information that assesses the impact of regulations and allocations is not available.
- 3) Intense conflicts and competition exist between recreational and commercial users of the mackerel stocks and between commercial users employing different gears.
- 4) The existence of separate state and federal jurisdiction and lack of coordination between these two make biological management difficult; since, in some instances, the resource may be fished beyond the allocation in state waters.
- 5) The condition of the cobia stock is not known and increased landings over the last ten years have prompted concern about overfishing.
- 6) Lack of information on multiple stocks or migratory groups of king mackerel that may mix seasonally confounds and complicates management.
- 7) Large catches of mackerel over a short period cause quotas and TAC to be exceeded before closures could be implemented. Therefore, some users obtained a share in excess of their allocation.
- 8) Closures of a fishery and reversion of bag limits to zero due to the filling of a quota have deprived geographic areas of access to a fishery.
- 9) Fish caught under the bag limit and sold contribute to the filling of both the recreational and commercial quotas.
- 10) Part-time commercial fishermen compete with full-time commercial fishermen for the available quota.
- 11) NEW: Localized reduction in abundance of fish due to high fishing pressure.
- 12) NEW: Disruption of markets.