



Overview of Past Recreational Fisheries Initiative Efforts

October 29, 2024

Recreational Initiative Past Efforts

1. Recreational Angler Participation (RAP) sessions
2. Gulf Angler Focus Group (Angler Focus Group)
3. Joint Council Recreational 102 Working Group

Each group was designed with a different purpose and end products in mind.



Recreational Angler Participation Sessions

- **Purpose:** Engage with stakeholders and highlighting angler frustration and concern with current federal oversight of recreational fisheries.
- **Process:**
 - Council-led; staff facilitated
 - 2014: 9 public meetings throughout the Gulf, 1 webinar
 - Meeting locations and venues tailored to communities
350 participants Gulf-wide
 - No formal membership structure; different participants at different meetings
 - Press releases were published to create awareness of meeting times and location



Recreational Angler Participation Sessions

■ ***Themes:***

- Season length
- Speed of management
- Environmental impacts on short seasons
- Data poor species and challenges with accurate representation of fishing effort by the recreational fleet
- Data and assessments misrepresenting the population
- Allocation of resources
- Consideration of artificial reef habitat as Essential Fish Habitat - not currently in the Magnuson-Stevens definition of EFH

Key Takeaways:

Increased public engagement and awareness of Council process
Highlight key themes where the Council could address management struggles



Gulf Angler Focus Group

- **Purpose:** Allow the recreational sector to identify and evaluate a suite of alternative management options that could provide for reasonable access and the sustainable harvest of Gulf reef fish fisheries. Red snapper was specific focus for this effort.
- **Process:**
 - Stakeholder led: American Sportfishing Association, Coastal Conservation Association, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, and Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
 - Facilitated
 - September 2015- Nov 2016 bi-monthly meetings (FL, MS, LA)
 - No formal membership structure; 20-52 participants depending on meeting.
 - Private anglers, For-hire, Environmental NGO, Industry
 - Groups, state and federal regulators



Gulf Angler Focus Group

■ **Themes:**

- Fishing Access and opportunity
- Harvest tags distributed to recreational anglers
- Dynamic closed areas for recreational fishing of red snapper
- Real-time management
- Wholistic ecosystem management vs species specific management.
- Currency of management-managing in removals by fishing versus ACL set by pounds by historical harvest amounts.

Key Takeaways:

Solution oriented approach resulted in good engage with the Council resulted in the Council gaining traction, and action was taken to address regional management efforts for red snapper:

- Regional management efforts by state for red snapper: [Reef Fish Amendment 50A – State Management Program for Recreational Red Snapper](#)



Joint 102 Working Group

- **Purpose:** Address the goals of the Modern Fish Act Section 102 and to expand recreational fishing opportunities through enhanced marine fishery conservation and management, and for other purposes.
 - Extraction rates; fishing mortality rates; conditional AMs, possibility of annual assessments to allow for more timely updates to ACLs
- **Process:**
 - Gulf and South Atlantic Council initiated and supported
 - Led by Council Chairs and Council staff support
 - 4 Virtual Meetings: May '20, Sept '20, June '21, and Oct '22
 - 11 Council members (6 Gulf: 5 SA)
 - Council staff participation with presentations from Regional Office & Science Center
 - Open to the public; public engagement through a public comment session.



Joint 102 Working Group

■ **Themes:**

- Data collection
- Headboat collaborative program
- Interim analyses by Science Center
- Zone management
- Carry over and phase in provisions
- Accountability Measures

Key Takeaways: Council Review of summary report:

Motion 1: To direct staff to initiate a document that would first review the state specific private angler licensing and reporting requirements that are currently used to define the universe of offshore anglers in each state.

Motion 2: To have the Council better incorporate Optimum Yield to fully consider biological, social, and economic aspects in achieving fleet-specific objectives during the management process.

- Ongoing discussion on what Optimum yield (OY) means for the recreational sector and how best to achieve OY
- For many recreational fishermen, OY= access and opportunity to fish



How is the Recreational Initiative Different?

- Focus on Five Highly Important Reef Fish Species
- Size of Group
- Group Composition – Geographically Balanced Across Gulf
- Exploratory Process – Discussion of Ideas and Concepts
- Open Ended Process – Without Predetermined Outcomes
- Facilitated Meetings with Consensus Style Process
- Council Awareness and Leadership Support
- Well Thought Out Public Engagement Process

