

# Summary of Recreational Participation Sessions

## Ocean Springs, Mississippi January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014

### **30-60 day seasons are too short**

- Manage using the number of fish rather than the pounds because as the size increases, it takes less fish to harvest the quota and shortens the fishing seasons.
- More fisheries independent sampling will show that there are more fish that we currently think there are.
- Effort reporting is inaccurate. Enhance fisheries dependent data so we know how much fishing is occurring.
- Use weekend only seasons to allow more opportunity throughout the year.
- Reconsider season structure and use weekends, weekdays or combination of the two.
- Use weather & buoy data when making season decisions to ensure that days are actually fishable.
- Use federal species stamps or endorsements to narrow down the universe of anglers for more accurate data.
- Reconsider bag limit to allow a longer season.
- Consider using slot limits to reduce harvest of breeders and to decrease the number of pounds of fish harvested.
- Find and support novel ways to reduce discard mortality.
- Increase the Annual Catch Limit by reducing uncertainty buffers.
- Consider supporting stock enhancement programs for federal species to increase the amount of fish that can be harvested.

### **Fishing opportunity is limited and there is too much pressure at one time (derby).**

- Create two different seasons in the year.
- Recognize that as the season gets shorter the effort is compressed, and consider lengthening the season again to better understand the effects of the derby season.
- Use a Federal Stamp System or landings permits to spread out effort.
- Eliminate single species seasons.

### **The season timing often interferes with scheduled rodeos/tournaments.**

- Create special permits for harvest during scheduled rodeos so they aren't affected if there is a quota closure.

### **Seasons are not consistent or announced within a reasonable time period.**

- Give more advance notice for red snapper season.

- Give warning before a quota closure occurs.

### **Allocation of fish between commercial and recreational sectors**

- Reconsider the structure of fisheries
- Reconsider economic value of fisheries
- Allow sale of fish by rec. fishery

### **Seasons when there is only a single species to target**

- Create target season & bycatch season for different species to allow multi-species on boat. For example, during red snapper season, allow one trigger and one amberjack per boat.

### **Commercial fishermen are targeting fish first and high discard mortality**

- Eliminate commercial size limit & apply catch to quota

### **Artificial reefs are not being managed or accounted for**

- Empower states/regional management to regulate reefs.
- Create open fishing zones and no fishing zones, and rotate them among the reefs to manage pressure.
- Council needs to continue to address rig removal by any means possible.

### **Bycatch mortality in the recreational fishery**

- Allow anglers to retain a few fish that would otherwise be dead discards.
- Reduce the size limit for recreationally harvested fish.

### **Red Drum closure in federal waters**

- Perform a stock assessment and consider a recreational season.

### **Fisheries dependent data is lacking**

- Consider ways to tighten licensing by tying it to some kind of mandatory reporting system or survey.
- Conduct more targeted surveys on actual anglers.

### **Fishery science limited in scope**

- Account for variables that cause mortality other than fishing
- Conduct directed studies of bait shops and use data on inventories of what they're selling (especially bait) to better quantify fishing effort.

### **One size fits all regulations for the entire Gulf**

- Use regional management and allow local entities more control over the resource.
- Base allocation decisions for regional management on biological abundance of the species.
- Allow species to be targeted based on tourism seasons.

## **Spanish Fort, Alabama**

### **January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

#### **Lack of accountability for angler catch**

- Self-reported data programs should be incorporated into the stock assessments
- Mandatory reporting requirements
- Voluntary reporting should be available
- Tag Systems should be used to track angler activity
- Electronic monitoring system should be mandated for Charter For Hire industry
- Hail in/Hail out requirements for all recreational anglers fishing in offshore waters will determine effort
- Federal Stamp or Endorsement should be used to narrow the field of offshore anglers

#### **Allocation between Rec & Commercial fisheries for red snapper**

- The recreational sector should have a greater portion of the allocation
- The economic value of recreational fishing to local communities must be weighted very heavily
- The cultural value (way of life) of recreational angling in local coastal communities should be considered
- The social value of recreational angling (passing on a pastime and spending time with family and friends) should be considered

#### **Ownership of IFQs without fishing them**

- IFQ owners should fish at least a portion of their own shares.
- There should be a limit on the percentage of shares that can be leased
- Ownership records should be made public

#### **One size fits all management**

- Control of the fishery should be relinquished to a more local level
- Regional Management should be implemented
- Complete control should be given to the states
- Any regional management program should ensure State & Federal recognition of the Charter-For-Hire industry.

#### **Limited Annual Catch Limit**

- Decrease uncertainty buffers
- Allow actual harvest of Maximum Sustainable Yield
- Reconsider the scientific methodology which does not match what anglers are seeing on the water.

- Increase accountability in the recreational sector as a mechanism for enhancing accuracy of stock assessment to reduce uncertainty.
- Reconsider size structure of a rebuilt stock – it may be more useful for a stock to contain many small fish rather than the sought after larger/older fish (anglers are happy with two relatively small fish and a longer season.
- Improve fisheries independent data collection for a more accurate stock assessment

### **Discard Mortality**

- Use a slot limit to allow bigger, more reproductively important fish to remain in the stock.
- Consider limiting allowable hook size while fishing for red snapper to avoid catching larger fish
- Consider requiring the use of weak hooks to allow larger fish to escape
- Require improved release methods such as recompression device or descending tools.
- Create a first fish limit where anglers must retain their first fish and discontinue fishing once that has been harvested.
- Transition to an ecosystem-based approach to management so that anglers can harvest on a trophic level. Let them keep what is abundant in their area rather than throw back fish while targeting fish caught with similar techniques.
- Create a mixed size/bag limit where anglers can keep some fish over and some fish under the size limit.

### **Compressed Season - Red Snapper season (limited opportunity for fishing)**

- Consider a tag system for the entire recreational fishery to allow flexibility in the fishery.
- Focus more on the science to ensure an accurate fish count, which should increase the ACL and allow for more fishing opportunity
- Allow monthly allocations so that June is not the only month for fishing.
- Convert the allocation to a certain number of fish
- Sub-sector management to allow for a LAPP program in the for-hire sector.
- Insist on accountability for the charter-for-hire sector

### **Inequality in charter-for-hire management**

- The recreational sector should be managed as a whole, not in sub-sectors
- The charter-for-hire operators should be allowed different regulations because they operate differently from the private anglers
- Mandatory reporting should be required for the for-hire fishery because the universe of those anglers is defined

- For-hire operators should be managed under LAPP programs to allow more flexibility in when they can fish.

### **State Incompliance**

- Federal enforcement of regulations off of states with inconsistent regulations should be robust
- States that make consistent regulations should be incentivized

### **Inaccurate Stock Assessments**

- Artificial reefs and the fish on them should be given greater weight in stock assessments of red snapper
- The landings data programs need to be improved
- There should be a way to incorporate the different habitats and their frequency into the assessments
- Less attention should be given to reef fish surveys done over sandy bottom
- More funding should be directed to the assessments
- The frequency of the assessments should be increased

### **Prioritize Fishery Management Issues**

- Council should first focus on getting numbers in order by put forth major effort to improve the stock assessments and the landings information
- Accountability should be developed for each fishery
- Start making management changes with known user groups (permit holders)
- Make a private angler reporting program

**Destin, Florida**  
**January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

### **Invasion of lionfish**

- Initiate emergency actions that support aggressive Gulf-wide population control programs.
- Motivate diver participation through tournaments and incentive programs.
- Develop an options paper to allow lionfish trapping in the federal waters.

### **Sector Separation and the fair division of recreational fishery**

- Increase accountability in fishery so that no separation of sectors is needed
- Some sort of endorsement program should be developed to narrow the scope of anglers and as a condition of receiving an endorsement mandatory surveys or reporting should be required.

- Permits or stamps for federal species (like the snook and lobster program in Florida) may be needed but cost of such a program would need to be very carefully considered.
- Federal fish tag program should be used for the entire recreational fishery rather than a sector separation scenario.

### **Lack of data on universe of recreational anglers**

- Electronic reporting and a hail-in hail-out requirement should be mandatory in the charter-for-hire industry.
- More transparency on scientific counting methods, details on how it is done should be published.
- Involve enforcement in accountability process since they are stopping and checking catch anyway.
- Online reporting programs and phone apps should be available and should be used to identify trends in effort and catch.
- Council should advocate for more federal and state funding of fisheries dependent sampling programs.
- Annual angler surveys should be required as a condition of holding a fishing license.
- Mandatory & voluntary reporting programs should be used and compared.
- Advocate for enhancement of academic participation in data collections from University and high school students or citizen science programs.
- Rotating weigh stations should be put at landing sites to better quantify catch.

### **Lack of fisheries independent science**

- More cooperative research programs with recreational anglers should be used to enhance data and credibility.
- Methods to quickly assess data, too much lag time
- Dr. Shipp's input should be used more readily.

### **Constrained seasons**

- When determining season length consider the angling days lost due to weather.
- Increase biomass of stocks through restocking programs.
- Decrease uncertainty buffers that decrease the allowable harvest.
- Consider a tagging system for the recreational fishermen so that they can choose their days to fish.
- Make a license that allows different people to participate in different seasons or split licenses to odd and evens and allow fishing every other day.

### **Private ownership of public resource**

- Consider how land-based management is done.
- The commercial fishery should be eliminated.
- Aquaculture should be used to take the place of commercial fisheries.
- Seafood imports should be limited.
- Consider how other natural resources are managed- oil, gas, etc.
- Tags should be used by individuals to harvest and sell their catch.
- A public resource tax should be placed on the commercial fishery.
- Use it or lose it clause should be instated in the commercial IFQ fishery. Those who own shares should have to harvest a portion of them directly.
- Commercial fishing rights (IFQ's) should be purchases from the government every year without automatic renewal.

### **Allocation between commercial and recreational anglers**

- Once the commercial red snapper is back at its original level allocate any increases to recreational fishery.
- Accountability must be enhanced in the recreational sector so that better allocation decisions can be made.
- Consider splitting the red snapper allocation 50/50.

### **Foreign fishing activity**

- Ensure there is enough enforcement in place to stop foreign fishing in the Gulf.

### **Local management is needed because the Council and NOAA too far removed from local needs.**

- There needs to be more local data gathering on both the science and the fisherman's needs and habits.

### **Biomass of stocks and habitat needs to be increased**

- Write letters to the Army Core of Engineers encouraging them to make habitat creation less of a difficult process.
- Encourage the building of more non-published juvenile artificial habitat

### **Predation from sharks and dolphins on red snapper and other reef fish**

- Consider encouraging non-lethal methodology to deter predation on reef fish.
- Focus more scientific studies on the effects of discard predation and mechanisms to stop it.

### **Knowledge and understanding of fisheries management lacking**

- Increase outreach effort and outreach funding.

- Council votes need to be recorded and made public so that people can have a better understanding of how each member stands on issues.
- Public comments need to be quantified so that the public can see that their opinions are counted.
- The management process itself needs to be streamlined to allow for easier access.

**Fair access to the fishery needs to be a major consideration.**

- A better definition of fisheries ownership and rights are needed.
- Social, cultural, and economic issues need to be considered when making decisions about opportunities to fish.

**Season consistency needs to be enhanced**

- New regulations and immediate closures need to be phased in and noticed with plenty of time.

**Mortality of release in the recreational sector decreases the allowed harvest**

- Management should be based on fishing mortality in the recreational sector (Dr. Shipp's theory or management.)
- Reconsider size limits
- Suggest Council endorsement of recompression or other methodology to reduce mortality

**Special interest groups are too influential in the Council**

**Scientific information needs to be incorporated into models, management, and regulatory actions quicker.**

**Port Aransas, Texas**  
**January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

**Short red snapper season, particularly for small vessels.**

- Shift seasons to later in the year to accommodate more fishing days. Changing to a July 1<sup>st</sup> opening would be helpful for smaller vessels fishing out of Texas.
- Use a tag system to allow year round fishing opportunities
- Initiate a voluntary Charter IFQ System to make the fishery accountable which will in turn allow Council to reduce uncertainty buffers that limit the amount of fish that can be harvested.

**Only allowing one target species to be open at a time is wasteful for both discards and for efficiency of trips.**

- Open amberjack and snapper at same time



**Discard mortality in the commercial industry is a major problem**

- Limit bycatch for shrimpers to ensure that they don't kill too many finfish while targeting shrimp.
- Do more studies of the discard in the commercial industry and ensure their waste is counted against their Annual Catch Limit.

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**Removal of rigs and loss of habitat is a huge concern**

- Council needs to do everything in their power to influence the folks responsible for rig removal. Write letters, make phone calls, and make a great effort to reduce or eliminate the removal of the rigs.

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**More artificial habitat needs to be put into the Gulf**

- Council should influence the federal governments and other reefing programs to continue and enhance efforts to create artificial reefs.

**Commercial red snapper effort off the Texas coast reduces the local fish population**

- Zones should be created in the commercial fishery to distribute the number of commercial fishermen that target an area
- Commercial fishermen should be limited in the distance they can fish from their home port.

**The current allocation of red snapper needs to be reconsidered.**

- Council needs to consider the economic impact each sector has on the national and local scale.
- A system needs to be created to make everyone accountable for what they catch. That way each sector will fish within their allocation.
- Create a system that makes everyone accountable to fish within their allocation.
- A system can be made without going to IFQs/Catch Shares-such as a tag system without sub-sectors.
- State/Regional/local management for private recreational anglers and charter boats is a form of catch shares that can be considered in lieu of IFQs.
- Cultural value of recreational fishing needs to be considered the resource shared among more anglers in the recreational sector.
- Reducing the amount of commercially caught fish will drive up the price per pound allowing recreational anglers more allocation without harming commercial entities.
- Consider recent historical landings. Recreational anglers have been harvesting greater than their share and should be given at least what they've been catching.
- Use land-based game management programs like duck stamps and the gator lottery.
- Consider allowing recreational sector to harvest commercial allocation. Allow commercial fishermen to voluntarily sell or lease shares to a pool

that can be harvested by the recreational sector. Be sure that there are equal standards of accountability and reporting.

- Recreational anglers need a way to get a year-round red snapper season.

#### **Scientific data need to be more accurate and transparent**

- Anglers need to be given a better explanation for why there is such a disconnect between scientists and angler experience.
- Habitat needs to be incorporated into data more.
- A head count of fish, with larger ones weighted differently against the quota
- Each state needs more specific data and enhanced local fisheries independent sampling

#### **Market exchange of the rights to fish is a problem**

- Disallow the buying and leasing of fish shares within the commercial sector and among sectors.

#### **More enforcement is needed**

**Having sub-sectors in fishery can be a problem if not done fairly.**

**Pearland, Texas**  
**January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

#### **Short unpredictable season**

- Consider a study on slots, paying special attention to discard mortality.
- Create a tag/stamp system that would allow year-round season.
- Allow charter boats to have their own allocation.
- Initiate an IFQ program for charter boats.
- Create an off-shore endorsement for fishermen targeting federally managed fish.
- Implement better accountability measures.
- Stop trying to count every fish, go by extraction rate, in conjunction with yearly stock assessments.
- Initiate more angler contact by using a different, more accurate survey.

#### **Enforcement of current federal regulations needs to be stronger**

- Every permitted CB should have VMS

**Some get to fish year-round and others are limited to a short season. Impacts fish populations that are easily targeted, leaving less for others. Creates sense of unfairness because it guarantees fish to one group.**

- Eliminate inequitable access and allow fishing rights in areas based on size of vessel.
- Geographically restrict fishing zones so that local areas are fished by local fishermen.
- Use tags to track catch and charge more for extra opportunity to fish outside season.
- Remove the clause that limits charter fishing during state water seasons.
- Remove state season to enhance federal season.
- Limit charter vessels to 1 trip per day.

#### **Lack of a program that grants year-round access to rec anglers**

- Support sector separation and give the charter for hire sector and IFQ program and use harvest tags in the private sector.
- Allow transfer of commercial quotas to private boats.
- Use a lottery to dispense commercial IFQs to all anglers.
- Mandate all boats fishing offshore to hail in and hail out.

#### **Texas anglers are disadvantaged with June 1<sup>st</sup> start date because it gives them less fishing days because weather doesn't cooperate until later**

- Start the red snapper season after July 15<sup>th</sup>
- Split the Gulf into to East and West regions and manage them separately.
- Initiate a days at sea program to allow fishermen to choose their days.
- VMS on all CB

#### **Accuracy of scientific data used to allocate stock**

- Put Vessel Monitoring Systems on all charter boats to increase accountability.
- Regional differences in seasonal abundance need to be accounted for in data.
- The lack of accountability in harvest needs to be solved with real time landings data.
- More fisheries independent data needs to be collected.
- A tag system should be used but council must be sure that extra tags that aren't fished roll back into the program to be available to anglers.
- iSnapper should be used for the charter boats.
- A federal stamp/endorsement should be used with funds directed only to program, not general government funds.
- More fishery independent data needs to be funded by congressional programs.
- Consideration of habitats needs to be taken into account for each state as pertains to allocation.

#### **Mistrust of federal managements desire for accurate data.**

- Have private industry take over fishery science.

- Less government science and more academic-based data should be used.

### **Discard mortality**

- Encourage venting and the use of other devices to reduce discard mortality.
- Enact a rule that makes each person keep their first two fish and then discontinue fishing.
- Eliminate the size limit for red snapper.
- Mandate barotrauma release devices on charter boats fishing in water deeper than 12 fathoms.

### **Timeliness of stock assessments and enhanced fishery independent data.**

- Texas data are incomplete and needs to be enhanced and incorporated into Gulf-wide data.
- Council should take action to prevent Texas from under-reporting and skewing landings data.
- Data collection needs to be addressed at state level rather than on a federal scale.
- Council should recognize that data are incomplete when making allocation decisions.
- Council needs to encourage states to improve reporting, data timeliness and accuracy.

### **Charter boats are held to higher standards, but under same system of management.**

- Sectors should be separated and managed with different fishery management plans.
- Amendment 30B should be rescinded to allow for-hire vessels to fish along with the rest of the recreational sector.
- For-hire crews should be allowed to keep fish.
- Charter boats should be allowed to harvest the commercial quota while for-hire as long as commercial accountability requirements are fulfilled.

### **Proposed regional management allocation alternatives are inequitable to Texas**

- When making allocation decisions consider biomass, percentage of state coastlines, population of anglers per capita, and water depth.
- Habitat composition off of each state should be taken into account.
- Consider that biomass in Western Gulf supplies fish to Eastern Gulf.
- Figure out the number of people fishing privately in federal waters before making allocation decisions.
- Use an offshore endorsement to define who is fishing federally before making allocation decisions.

- Require mandatory reporting for the for-hire component of the recreational fishery before making allocation decisions.

#### **Privatization of public resource**

- The resource should remain an open domain for everyone, without ownership rights.

#### **Council does not know number of people fishing privately in federal waters**

- Require an offshore endorsement to fish for federal species.
- Require the for-hire fishermen to be fully accountable.

#### **Council does not take action towards reasonable solutions; no solutions-just restrictions**

## **Baton Rouge, Louisiana January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

#### **The exempted fishing permit for headboats grants unequal access to the fishery**

- Council should discontinue the headboat pilot program and manage the headboats with the same seasons as the rest of the recreational sector.
- The numbers in the EFP are skewed and because a different system of accountability is used. Harvest should be counted using the same system for all components of the recreational fishery in order to make fair allocation decisions.

#### **NOAA influence over the Council is too strong; NOAA has too much power to override Council.**

- Voting members from NOAA should be prohibited from voting on the Council.

#### **There is not enough recreational red snapper fishing opportunity**

- Red snapper should be considered a gamefish and commercial harvest should be disallowed.

#### **Regional management should be considered for Gulf stocks**

- Red snapper management should be based on the separate eastern and western stocks.

#### **Sector separation should not take away the private anglers right to fish**

- A portion of the red snapper quota should be taken from the commercial allocation and used for the for-hire component of the fishery.
- The for-hire community should not have special rights to the fish at all. They should be managed along with the rest of the recreational sector.

### **Habitat conservation, rig removal, and artificial reefs need to be given more attention**

- Council should move forward in declaring artificial reefs as Essential Fish Habitat.

### **The responsibilities and role of Council is confusing.**

- More outreach and education must be conducted to inform anglers about the management process.

### **The Council process is inaccessible to recreational anglers who work and don't have money to travel**

- Public participation-more visitor friendly meeting places needed to encourage attendance.

## **Lafayette, Louisiana January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

### **Red snapper have become a nuisance because there are so many out there**

#### **Constrained season for red snapper**

- Consider using weekend seasons to extend the time period throughout the year that harvest can occur.
- Make federal regulations that are consistent with the Louisiana laws.
- Create a season that is open for three day weekends all summer long.

#### **The way the fish are counted is inaccurate**

- The abundance of fish should be weighed based on biomass of fish in certain areas of the coast.
- Management and research should be done in smaller, local areas.
- Increased sampling needs to be done at more sites, especially at artificial structures.

#### **Regional management**

- Red snapper should not be assessed as a gulf-wide stock.

### **Fishing pressure is not as great as Council believes**

- A program that mirrors water-fowl management and reporting should be considered in the recreational sector.
- Fishery dependent data needs to be enhanced.

### **Rig removal is harming habitat and fish populations**

- Council needs to let responsible parties know that the effect rig removal has on fish needs to be reconsidered.
- Council should allow a rig to be fished openly before it is removed. That way the fish won't go to waste and angler opportunity will be increased.

### **There needs to be more artificial habitat in the Gulf**

- Council should encourage the building of artificial structure.

### **Council trying to put red snapper fisheries out of business**

- Management needs to be done on a regional or state level rather than by the Council.

### **Predation of various species due to over-abundance of red snapper**

- The red snapper stock needs to be re-assessed.
- Allow greater harvest of red snapper.

### **Menhaden, porgy, and other forage species being fished out by party boats-population of species that feed on them (amberjack, mackerel, etc.) are reduced.**

- Council should encourage agencies responsible for forage fish to consider the effects management has on the food chain and the fishermen that depend on those resources.

### **As average size of fish increases the season is shortened**

- Lower size limit and increase the bag limit for the smaller fish

### **Lack of fishery sampling**

- More funding should be directed towards fisheries science.
- The species that anglers intend to target should be incorporated into the licensing process.

### **Inequity in the commercial and recreational allocation**

- The socio-economic benefit of commercial vs. recreational fisheries needs to be taken into account when making allocation decisions.
- Council should consider the huge discrepancy in the number of commercial fishermen vs. the number of recreational fishermen accessing the resource.
- Commercial fisheries should be shut down all together.
- If sector separation occurs the allocation for the for-hire component should be taken from the commercial sector.

**One per boat Warsaw Grouper limit is causing discard mortality**

- Council should consider increasing the Warsaw limit.

**Council is trying to discourage rec fishing by limiting catch and seasons too strictly**

**Louisiana has a shallow coast and fishable weather doesn't happen till after the summer red snapper season is mostly over.**



## **Pinellas Park, Florida**

### **January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2014**

#### **Flawed data**

- Council should not accept data that are inaccurate and use it to make management decisions.
- Council needs to pressure NMFS to enhance data collection and follow MSA.
- Follow National Resource Council report suggestions on enhancing the data.
- Create an angler registry and survey the known universe of fishermen.
- Create an APP that allows you to use your fishing license number to report data on catch and effort.
- Create and offshore permit/endorsement to define the universe of saltwater anglers that target federal fish.
- Replace Random dialing Coastal Household Telephone Survey.
- Get more money from Congress for data collection.
- Find a way to validate data supplied by anglers (self-reported).
- Council needs to take an active role in convincing NMFS to incorporate Charter data to enhance MRIP.
- Council should initiate a survey fashioned after the duck survey that is conducted during license renewal.
- FWC/FWRI should take over data collection.
- Council should request that NMFS data are peer reviewed by scientists that do not work for NMFS.
- Unreliable data should be discarded and Council should request independent review of the stock assessments.
- Council should act on Dr. Bob Shipp's advice regarding the abundance of red snapper.

#### **Managing recreational fishermen with commercial concepts does not work**

- Use numbers of fish rather than pounds to make management measures.
- Make a system that makes the recreational sector accountable for what is harvested.

#### **There is no faith that the Council listens to anglers**

- Provide more information on the position of stakeholders in the Gulf (quantify).
- Provide more rationale for council decisions.
- Council discussions and votes should be kept on the record.

#### **Sector Separation/Amendment 40 is bias and Council continues to consider it**

- Be sure to use all the input that has already submitted on the issue to make the decision to do away with sector separation.

- Understand that a recreational angler is a recreational angler whether on a for-hire vessel or on private boat.
- Push forward and take the amendment into the scoping process.
- Don't move forward until accurate data are available to determine allocation between sub-sectors.

### **Hogfish closure was abrupt and unnecessary**

- Set a proper Annual Catch Limit that is based off of science rather than flawed harvest history.
- Raise size limit so that the Annual Catch Limit is not harvested within the year.

### **Unequal access to fish (EFP) means that headboats have no competition and will overharvest allocation (based on 5 lb. estimate vs. actual average size)**

- Get rid of the headboat pilot program
- Find a way to allow the maximum number of fishing days for all fishermen to increase opportunity for everyone.
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### **Short seasons and reduced opportunity to fish are a problem**

- Recognize condensing effort by shortening seasons doesn't work.
- Allow weekend harvest for recreational anglers year round.
- Council needs to tell NMFS that short seasons and effort compression should not be used.

### **The Council does not know how many anglers access federal fisheries**

- Ensure that all salt-water anglers must be registered (use existing angler registry).

### **There is a lack of targeted involvement/outreach with for-hire customers**

- Initiate a mechanism for collecting data from fishermen participating in for-hire fishery.
- Conduct more dockside intercept surveys.

### **Too much of the budget is focused on creating catch shares rather than enhancing science**

- Council needs to push back on catch share issues and require better data before moving forward with other management schemes.

### **Moratorium on for-hire permits has reduced the fleet and driven up the price of permits**

- Council should begin issuing permits again until we reach original number that existed before the moratorium went into place.
- Council should leave the permit moratorium as is.

- Council should disallow the sale or transfer of permits among fishermen. Instead, permits should go back to the government for redistribution.

#### **The economic impact analysis in amendments is lacking and bias**

- Council should hire independent consultant to do analysis (not from the Center for Independent Experts).
- Analysis should be broadened beyond ex-vessel price and incorporate more economic factors from industry suppliers including bait shops, tackle manufactures, hotels, etc.
- Council needs to stand up to NMFS when there is an obvious bias in the analysis.

#### **Bad weather is not accounted during the red snapper season**

- NMFS should work with the National Weather Service to determine fishable days or develop some sort of fishability index.
- Ground truth current data with defined universe of anglers.

#### **There is a lack of accountability both Council and NMFS**

- Council members should be held liable for their decisions. Right now they can't be sued for bad decisions.
- Conflict of interest rules should be strictly enforced.
- Council should not be allowed to vote one way, take a lunch break, then change a vote. Sunshine laws must be used in the Council process.

#### **Rig removal and loss of Essential Fish Habitat**

- Readdress Essential Fish Habitat Amendment and provide a rationale for why Council tabled discussion on the amendment.
- Revisit the rigs-to-reefs initiative and encourage agencies to reconsider the destruction of habitat.
- Add a mitigation clause requiring agencies to counteract their destruction.
- Allow for targeted removal of fish before a structure is removed.

#### **Too much influence from environmental groups on both Council and NMFS level**

- Council members should abstain from votes on issues where there's a conflict of interest.
- Make it illegal for anyone to pay for others to attend Council meetings.

#### **Regulations are not updated or announced sufficiently**

- Make regulation changes less frequent.
- Council needs to suggest that NMFS provide a minimum of 60-days public notice before making a regulatory change or closure.

#### **The make-up of advisory panels are bias**

- Council should ensure that a sector appropriate Council member is at each advisory panel meeting.
- The selection process needs to be made public.
- Panels should meet periodically even if there are no issues for consideration (to at least meet each other).

## **Fort Myers, Florida** **January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014**

### **Goliath populations are expanding**

- Create a limited tag system where anglers apply for quota or lottery (i.e., gator program) and require carcass be turned in for scientific research.
- Transport adult breeding goliath to other locations so they can repopulate other regions.
- Take a cautionary approach to allowing harvest.

### **Discard mortality due to predation**

- Cull the population of goliath.
- Encourage NOAA to develop an outreach/education program to educate anglers about goliath, dolphin, and shark predation of released fish.

### **Allocation between the commercial and recreational sectors**

- **Council needs to** consider the overwhelming economic value of the recreational fishery (beyond ex-vessel price).

### **Lack and inaccuracy of fisheries dependent data**

- Council need to encourage an increase in data collection.
- Programs such as iAngler and the Fishrules App should be used and encouraged by Council.
- The scientific collection process needs to be speed up.

### **Recreational release mortality**

- Council should encourage the use of decompression tools.
- The size limits and bag limits should be removed and management should be based on pounds or overall length of fish caught.
- Fishing models have not been adjusted based on use of circle hooks, dehooking devices, and venting tools (descending devices). Council needs to ensure that those factors are considered when setting mortality levels in the recreational fishery.

### **Lack of education on the council existence and Council process**

- Outreach efforts should be regionally based (especially targeting South West Florida).

- Efforts should be directed at trade shows such as the Florida Sportsman show.
- More emphasis needs to be put on the MREP program and its availability to anglers.

**The current gag season doesn't work for Ft. Myers area which is one of the most important areas for gag fishing.**

- Regional management needs to be used for gag grouper.
- Re-consider a November – March season for Ft. Myers/South Florida.

**Harmful algae blooms/Excessive release of water from Lake Okeechobee is harming fish populations.**

- Council needs to encourage NMFS to factor that mortality into assessments.
- Council should encourage the appropriate agency to consider and resolve the issue.

**Red grouper bag limit excessive**

- Drop the bag limit back down to two-fish per person.

**Hogfish closure**

- Increase the minimum size limit.
- Require a hogfish stamp with a mandatory reporting requirement.

**Red snapper season is inappropriate**

- Use regional management to make appropriate management measures.
- Account for geographical variation when setting regulations.

**Sector Separation**

- Consider sector separation a mechanism for accountability.
- If initiated include a mandatory sunset clause.
- Subdivides the voice of the recreational sector.
- Fisheries dependent data doesn't fairly distribute the resource and should be reconsidered before a decision is made.

**There is too much of a time lag between stock assessment and regulations**

- Speed up the amendment process

**Rig removal and Essential Fish Habitat**

**Commercial long lining causes mortality of recreationally targeted fish**

**Disparity between state and federal regulations**

## **Webinar**

### **January 27, 2014**

#### **Council continues to support Sector Separation despite overwhelming opposition**

- Listen to the people, not the money, while deciding how to proceed with the sector separation issue.
- Formulate a management plan that addresses all recreational (private and for-hire) fishermen equally.
- Enhance fishery dependent data with the OFS permit plan (hail in/hail out) rather than using accountability as a reason for sector separation.
- Council needs to address the discrepancy in the Texas charter days.

#### **Data collection is insufficient**

- Council should encourage the use of the National Saltwater Angler Registry
- Random statistical survey of the known universe of anglers (as per NRC recommendation) should be used.
- Greater accountability of the for-hire component of the recreational fishery should be required.

#### **Data poor species subject to 40% chance of closure**

- SSC needs to consider that a P-Star value = percentage of fisheries subject to closure

#### **Council is inaccessible/ the management process does not accommodate private recreational fishermen**

- Use the SAFMC model and convene public input in the evening during Council meetings
- Council needs to create forums where anglers can discuss problems and solutions among themselves.

#### **Unequal access to the fish within the recreational sector**

- The headboat pilot program should be discontinued because it is illegal and unfair.

#### **NOAA Fisheries is not the proper way to refer to NMFS**

- The Gulf Council should use the proper term when referencing NMFS.

#### **Dr. Shipp's Red Snapper Testimony and socio-economic impact are not taken into account**

- Ensure artificial reefs are included in the stock assessments.
- Rely on Dr. Shipp's understanding of the fishery.

### **Continuous reduction in recreational fishing opportunities**

- SSC discussed this specific issue at their last meeting and Council should review that discussion.
- Look to Office of Science and Technology and encourage movement towards the use of the angler registry.

### **Incentive for investors does not belong in the fishery**

- Transferability of the rights to fish should be disallowed.

### **There is over-representation of commercial sector and under-representation of the larger recreational sector in management**

- Consider different forms of public input to reach more private anglers and gather more comment.

### **Council needs to be held more accountable**

- Explain in the EFP how the amount of fish for each boat in the program was calculated (8879 fish to one vessel).
- Consider requiring vessels with stake in sector separation to submit tax records for public review.
- Council needs to take a voice/role call vote when amendments are advanced; not only for final action.

### **Council makes decisions without required data to do so**

- Council needs to make a pronounced effort on data before moving forward on management programs.

### **Overall management scheme for the recreational fishery that isn't quota based should be used**

- The FWC CPUE method of setting management limits should be used as a tool in place of ACL's and ACT's.

### **Council and NMFS have lost credibility with the public**

- Anyone with possible financial gain from decision making should not serve on the Council.

### **Overstatement of recreational effort**

- Council needs to remove the incentive to misreport especially in the for-hire component of the fishery.
- Council needs to take the overstatement into account before moving forward with Amendment 40.

### **Council should be driving options for improving data and management instead of asking private recreational sector to do it**

### **Appears to be a movement toward privatization of a public resource**