

# Review of Mid-Atlantic Tilefish Recreational Mandatory Reporting Program



**GULF**  
**COUNCIL**

# Background: Blueline and Golden Tilefish

- Increasing trend in harvest since the early 2000/2010s
- Mid-Atlantic Council began mandatory reporting in 2020 as part of adding blueline to tilefish FMP (2017)
  - The Council did not get into details of building out the logbook
  - GARFO used pre-existing reporting framework for commercial/for-hire logbooks

# Background: The Logbook Reporting Fields

Vessel name	USGS or State registration #
Permit number	Date/time sailed
Date/Time landed	Trip type
Number of anglers	Species
Gear fished	Quantity and size of gear
Soak time	Depth
Chart area	Lat/Long where fishing occurred
Count of tilefish harvest and discarded	Port and state landed

Requires no-cost vessel-based permit

Logbooks are to be reported electronically within 24 hours of landing



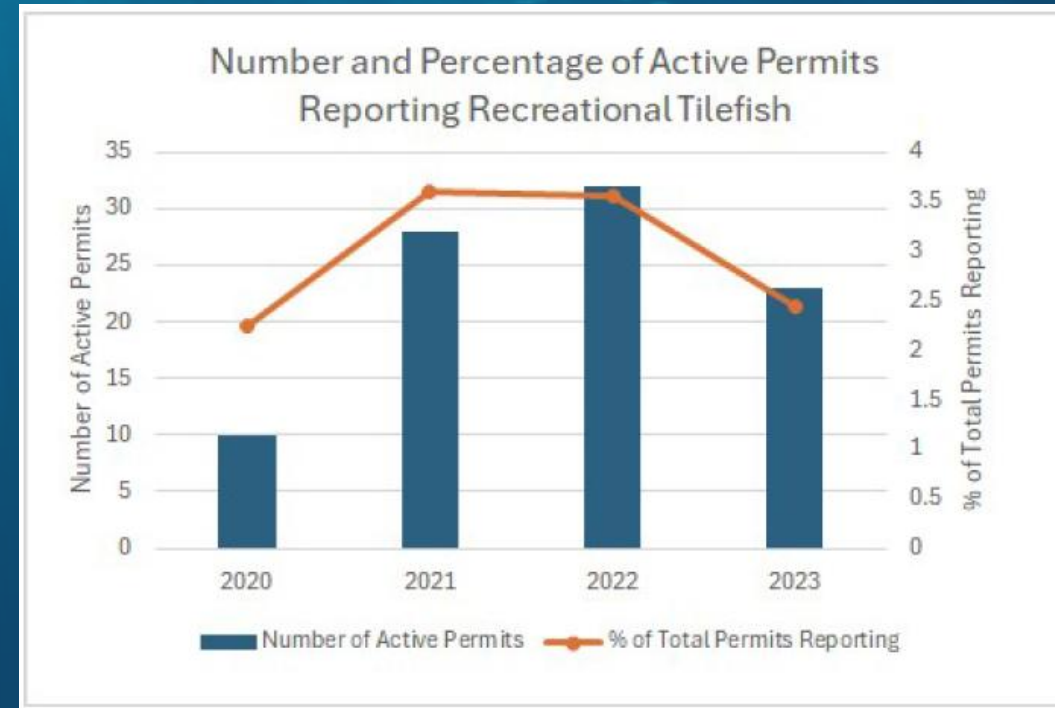
# Issues with the Program

- Since permit is free, angler universe likely overestimated
- Too many reporting apps (competitive process)
- Reporting fields not easily understood by anglers
- Small angler universe difficult to enforce
- Reporting rates low and program estimates not useable for management or stock assessment for either blueline or golden tilefish

# Addressing the Issues: Program evaluated in 2024

## Key Findings

- Prioritize outreach
- Increase staff comm. (Council and RO)
- Explore needs for regulatory changes
- Make reporting apps easy
- Develop OLE strategy
- Increase comm. (managers and outreach staff)
- Engage industry, state agencies, and sampling staff frequently
- Develop clear goals and evaluate progress



# Recent Developments from Mid-Atlantic April 2026 Meeting

- Mid-Atlantic Council developed framework action to streamline and simplify logbook
- Council was informed by GARFO that many of those changes would “break” database structure
- GARFO staff indicated that if framework action was passed with current preferred alternatives, document may only be partially approved, any changes to the system would take years
- Council passed motion to submit document as written with Council’s current preferred alternatives

# Lessons Learned From the Mid-Atlantic Program

- Ask anglers only what is needed to achieve program goal
- Limit number of questions at first; add more if needed in future
  - Have dedicated database for program
- Relatively small angler universe does not mean creating a mandatory reporting program is simpler
- OLE will be need to be consulted
- You only get one chance to make a first impression

# What does this mean for the Gulf? What is goal?

- Angler universe (“quickest”)
  - State-specific offshore endorsements
  - Ask during renewal if angler participated in deep-drop fishery and if so, how many deep-water grouper were harvested
- Use in stock assessment and management (years long endeavor)
  - Industry workgroups and staff collaboration
  - Have dedicated database for program
  - Comprehensive logbooks
  - OLE development plan to enforce mandatory reporting
  - Outreach, outreach, outreach, outreach

# Acknowledgements

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## Golden Tilefish

*Lopholatilus chamaeleonticeps*



## Blueline Tilefish

*Caulolatilus microps*

