

Public Comment Summary
Reef Fish Amendment 44 – Minimum Stock Size Threshold for Reef Fish

Webinar Public Hearing Summary
May 23, 2017

Council/Staff

Steven Atran
Emily Muehlstein
Karen Hoak

5 members of the public attended.

0 members of the public commented.

Written Comment Summary

- The Council should take a scientifically appropriate approach to setting MSST by either selecting Alternative 2 which would set $MSST=(1-M)*B_{MSY}$ (or proxy) OR creating a new preferred alternative that would set $MSST = .85 B_{MSY}$. This would accommodate the diverse biology of the stocks by accounting for natural mortality and take a cautionary approach to ensure that rebuilding stays on track.
- The Council should consider a new alternative that would set $MSST = .90 B_{MSY}$ (or proxy) for all stocks.
- The Southeast Fisheries Science Center and the Council's SSC should do additional analysis on the pros and cons of various MSST levels.

Other Comments Received

- Concern expressed for the cobia population in the Gulf of Mexico. The stock is in decline and the Council needs to create new regulations to help. The last stock assessment acknowledges that there needs to be more current cobia data to ensure an accurate assessment.
- Anglers would prefer longer seasons even at the risk of raising size limits or lowering bag limits.