

**Ad Hoc Red Snapper Private Recreational Advisory Panel  
Meeting Summary  
New Orleans, LA  
May 8-9, 2017**

**Council, Facilitators, Council Staff and  
NMFS Staff**

Camp Matens  
Angela Collins  
Betty Staugler  
John Froeschke  
Karen Hoak  
Emily Muehlstein  
Roy Crabtree  
Peter Hood

**Advisory Panel Members**

Bryan Anderson  
William (Butch) Blankenship  
Ray Box  
Jim Brown  
Charlie Caplinger  
Ken Creel  
Chris (JD) Duca  
JD Dugas  
Nate Duvall  
Marcus Kennedy  
John Kimbrough  
Ed Landgraf  
Mark Luitien  
Johnny Marquez, Jr.  
Michael McDermott  
Charlie McVea, Jr.

Brad Miller  
Ronald Moser  
Kellie Ralston  
Charles (Wendy) Taylor  
Mark Turner  
Rodolfo (Rudy) Valenciano  
Troy Williamson, II

**Others**

Kevin Anson  
Patrick Banks  
Scott Bannon  
Leann Bosarge  
Dick Brame  
Dave Donaldson  
Ken Haddad  
Brian Hartz  
Sharon McBreen  
Michael McDermott  
Dennis McKay  
Dave Nieland  
Ted Venker

The Ad Hoc Red Snapper Private Angler Advisory Panel (AP) was convened May 8-9, 2017 in New Orleans, LA to provide recommendations to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) on private recreational red snapper management measures which would 1) provide more quality access to the resource in federal waters, 2) reduce discards, and 3) improve fisheries data collection. Betty Staugler and Angela Collins, from Florida Sea Grant facilitated the meeting. The facilitators provided an overview of the agenda and described the goals and objectives of the meeting. Council staff provided background presentations about the federal fishery management process and the role of the Council in fishery management.

Council staff also provided a summary of the red snapper fishery and associated management actions that have affected private recreational fishing opportunities for red snapper.

To facilitate discussion, summaries were provided from previous efforts that considered private recreational management. Mr. Ken Haddad provided a summary of the Gulf Angler Focus Group Report that aimed to identify challenges and opportunities to increase access to red snapper for private anglers. He described various options their group considered and noted that additional analyses were necessary to evaluate options and provide recommendations. The AP agreed that more information is necessary to evaluate specific options.

Emily Muehlstein summarized the Recreational Angler Participation (RAP) Sessions that the Council held throughout the Gulf of Mexico in 2014. These sessions were held to engage stakeholders about their perspective on recreational fishing opportunities and how the fishing experience could be improved. Dr. Roy Crabtree (Southeast Regional Office) presented the results from NOAA's recreational round table sessions, that were held nationwide, to address issues concerning recreational fishing. The AP acknowledged that many factors contribute to the declining red snapper fishing season including increasing size and catch rates, longer state water seasons, and the requirement to constrain landings to the annual catch limit. However, the AP expressed a lack of confidence in the science and data supporting management, as well as the management constraints of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Given the complexity of red snapper management, the AP felt that a meeting with additional background information is necessary prior to making recommendations to the Council. Below is a list of requested information and the supporting rationale that AP provided. They requested summary presentations from appropriate staff or agencies and will use this information to make recommendations to the Council regarding red snapper management.

### **Fishery Dependent Data**

- An overview of the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP)
- State specific red snapper data collection programs

Fishery dependent data are used to calculate the harvest of private recreational anglers and anglers fishing on charter vessels. These data are also used in stock assessments and determining allocation between sectors and sub-sectors. The AP requests greater clarity of the process used to arrive at the estimates and how this could be improved to determine red snapper harvest in the Gulf of Mexico.

### **Fishery Independent Data**

- Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program SEAMAP
- NMFS bottom longline survey
- NMFS fishery independent reef survey

Fishery independent data are used to develop indices of abundance and examine changes in spatial distribution over time. These surveys use standardized methods and several gear types targeting various species and life stages. The survey results can be used to identify trends in

population abundance over time and are critical inputs in stock assessments. Given the importance of these data in determining population size, stock status, and allowable harvest, the AP is requesting a summary of the methods, geographic coverage, and habitat types sampled with the various fishery independent sampling programs.

### **Fisheries Economics**

- Overview of the role of economic considerations in the management process
- The difference between how economic data are derived from recreational and for-profit fisheries.

The AP understands that economic considerations are part of the fishery management decision-making process. However, they would like additional information about how this information is evaluated for particular management actions or policy decisions.

### **Legislative Issues**

- Potential legislative opportunities and challenges to improve red snapper management
- Defining for-hire boats as a part of the commercial sector rather than as the recreational sector.

The AP was interested in a wide range of options to improve management of red snapper. However, some options may not be possible within the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Some AP members were interested in the effects of various legislative proposals that have been introduced at the congressional level. The AP requested a summary of the proposals that could affect red snapper management.

### **Allocation**

- How the commercial recreational allocation was determined
- How the sector separation apportionment was determined
- How the most recent allocation adjustment was made and how did Council arrive at that adjustment

The AP discussed the current allocation of red snapper between the commercial (51%) and recreational (49%) sectors. They are interested in a greater historical context of how this allocation was determined and how potential changes in recreational fisheries data could affect this allocation. The AP also asked about the sub-allocation that was determined in Reef Fish Amendment 40.

### **Stock Assessment and Determination of Harvest Levels (quota)**

- Overview of the stock assessment process and harvest recommendations

The AP requested a presentation describing the stock assessment process and how the various data sources are combined to determine stock status and harvest levels.

### **Scientific and Statistical Committee**

- Overview of the role and responsibility of the SSC in reviewing scientific information and providing advice to the Council.

The AP was interested in the role of the SSC in establishing harvest levels. Staff explained that the SSC is the scientific advisory panel to the Council, composed primarily of state and university scientists, that establishes the acceptable biological catch which the Council cannot exceed when establishing annual catch limits.

### **Scientific (other)**

- Presentation by Bob Shipp

The AP is aware that a diverse suite of opinions exist regarding the biological and management aspects of red snapper. The AP discussed Dr. Bob Shipp, who has a long historical knowledge of both aspects, and would be a valuable source of information for the AP. Council staff informed the AP that Dr. Shipp serves on the Gulf SSC and has a formal role in the fishery management process.

At the conclusion of the meeting the AP elected Charlie Caplinger as Chair and Troy Williamson II, as Vice-Chair. Staff informed the AP that this summary will be presented to the Council at their June 2017 meeting in Naples, FL.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m. on May 9, 2017.