

**Summary for the Ad Hoc  
Red Snapper For-Hire Advisory Panel  
Tampa, FL  
December 2-3, 2014**

**Panel Members**

Gary Bryant  
Shane Cantrell  
Daryl Carpenter  
Troy Frady  
James Green  
Charles Guilford  
Mark Hubbard  
Mark Kelley  
Robbie Langlinais  
Seth Macinko  
Greg Mercurio

**Panel Members cont'd**

Mike Nugent  
Richard (Rene) Rice  
Scott Robson  
Bill Staff  
Mike Sullivan  
Skipper Thierry  
Edward Walker  
Johnny Williams  
Troy Williamson  
Bob Zales

**Council and Staff**

Steven Atran  
Martha Bademan  
Doug Boyd  
Assane Diagne  
John Froeschke  
Johnny Greene  
Karen Hoak  
Morgan Kilgour  
Ava Lasseter  
Emily Muehlstein  
Carrie Simmons

**Attendance-Others**

Jeff Barger  
Randy Boggs  
Steve Branstetter  
Sue Gerhart  
Peter Hood  
Mara Levy  
Rich Malinowski  
Christina McConnell  
Dennis O'Hern  
Jessica Stephen  
Andy Strelcheck  
Tom Wheatley

The meeting was convened at 9:00 a.m. The AP elected Jim Green as Chair and Johnny Williams as Vice-Chair. Staff provided an overview of the reef fish for-hire component, a review of for-hire data collection, and information on the Headboat Collaborative. Staff also reviewed the Council's charge to the Ad Hoc Red Snapper For-hire AP:

**The charge to the Red Snapper For-Hire AP is to make recommendations to the Council relative to the design and implementation of flexible measures for the management of red snapper for the for hire sector.**

During the first day, much of the discussion highlighted the differences in perceived objectives and expectations relative to the outcome of the meeting. Through review of the information included in the scope of work and subsequent discussions, AP members improved their understanding of the meeting charge and made several recommendations to the Council.

A major theme of the discussion concerns the urgent need for more accurate data collection. In considering any change in management, concerns about red snapper discards were also expressed. Discussing data collection and validation methods, some AP members were supportive of requiring VMS usage while other members were expressly opposed. Participants in the Headboat Collaborative shared their experiences with dockside enforcement. The AP passed the following motion:

**To recommend that NMFS accelerate the development of an Electronic Logbook including some type of validation tools.**

Another theme of the discussion concerned Section 407(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Members were concerned about the management options available to for-hire operators under their own quota, since fishing by both private angling and for-hire vessels must end once the red snapper quota is met. Given the increasing amount of red snapper caught in state waters outside of the federal season and the inability of for-hire operators to participate in those fishing opportunities, some members expressed frustration about the for-hire component's uncertain access to its assigned portion of the quota before the recreational quota is met. Without knowing how the states will set their seasons, members were unsure of the possible actions which could improve access for the for-hire fleet before the total recreational quota is met.

The AP members took turns sharing their vision and goals for management, or expressed their concerns for future management. With these suggestions, AP members began to compile a list of objectives for management of the for-hire component. However, some members felt that the objectives were too broad and did not provide the Council with specific direction. The discussion shifted to the differences between charter boats and headboats, and the AP passed the following motion:

**To recommend to the Council the option of separating the for-hire component into a headboat and a charter component.**

One member raised the issue of regional management for the for-hire fleet. Some members supported the states managing the for-hire fleet while other members preferred to remain under federal management.

AP members discussed the option of reducing the bag limit from two to one red snapper, as a way to extend the length of the fishing season. There was concern that decreasing the red snapper bag limit would not extend the season as much as expected. AP members from the eastern Gulf were more supportive of a lower bag limit, while AP members

from the western Gulf generally opposed a lower bag limit because they take longer fishing trips offshore. By a vote of 15 to 5, the AP passed the following motion:

**That the Council adopt a 1 fish bag limit for 2015 for the charter-for-hire sector.**

AP members were also concerned about not exceeding their portion of the quota and recommended splitting the fishing season to allow landings from the first season to be reviewed before reopening the second season for harvest. They were supportive of a split-season until such time that real-time in-season electronic monitoring and reporting could be implemented. Following discussion, the AP passed the following motion by a vote of 12 to 5:

**To recommend that the Council establish a split season, with 66% of the quota allocated for the first season, and following determination of landings, open a second season in the fall for the remainder of the quota for 2015, or until an electronic reporting method is implemented.**

Following further discussion regarding short-term and long-term management options for the for-hire fleet, some members expressed concern that there was not enough time to get any type of a program in place for the for-hire fleet, due to the three year sunset adopted for sector separation. Some members did not support the sunset clause while other members did support the provision requiring the components of the recreational sector to be managed together, again. In support of the sunset clause, three members wanted to transfer management of the for-hire fleet to the Gulf States, although other members emphasized that they held federal permits and did not see how they could be managed by the states. After discussion, the AP passed the following motion:

**To recommend that the Council begin development of a charter-for-hire management plan.**

AP members asked questions about angler management organizations (AMOs) as a tool for management. They also discussed the pros and cons of AMOs as a vehicle for other types of programs including catch shares or tags. The AP then passed the following motion:

**That the Council consider management options, such as an Angling Management Organization made up of for-hire vessels, one part of which could feature dividing the for hires into regional groups, a catch share program, a tag system, and a days at sea program.**

The AP then discussed the administrative costs of new management approaches. One member wanted to exact resource rent from any management plan, and others discussed what types of management would trigger the collection of fees. By a vote of 11 to 9, the AP passed the following motion:

**That the Council consider how the cost of any new program will be shared between the charter-for-hire industry and the agencies charged with management of the program.**

The AP continued to discuss the Headboat Collaborative and whether the charter boats and headboats should be managed separately. There was interest by some AP members in expanding the Headboat Collaborative program and making it mandatory for all headboat vessels. If the Council were to support continuing to manage the for-hire component separate from private anglers, and potentially the charter fleet separate from headboats, the headboat operators would want to meet as a separate headboat AP. Contingent upon the Council separating the for-hire groups, the AP passed the following motion by a vote of 16 to 3:

**That the Council convene an Ad Hoc Headboat Red Snapper and Grouper AP.**

The AP expressed interest in continuing their discussion at another meeting. Given the short time before sector separation sunsets and the length of time needed to develop management actions, the AP expressed interest in meeting again as soon as possible and passed the following motion:

**To request that the Council reconvene this panel as soon as possible after January Council, preferably by the end of February, to continue discussions on charter-for-hire program development.**

There was discussion about for-hire permits that may not be actively used and suggestions for identifying latent permits. A permit buy-out program was suggested but was not supported by AP members. Following discussion, the AP passed the following motion:

**That the Council explore ways to identify latent effort in the charter for-hire fishing industry.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

**All motions, including failed and substitute motions. Motions that passed are in bold.**

Motion: **To elect Jim Green as Chair.**

Motion carried.

Motion: **To elect Johnny Williams as vice chair.**

Motion carried.

Motion: To request that NMFS accelerate the development of a VMS and Electronic Logbook Data Collection system for the for-hire sector.

Substitute motion: To recommend that NMFS accelerate the development of an Electronic Logbook Data Collection system for the for-hire sector.

Second substitute motion: **To recommend that NMFS accelerate the development of an Electronic Logbook including some type of validation tools.**

Second substitute motion carried.

Motion: To adopt the following list as the overall objectives (vision) of the panel

Flexibility

Accountability (for management also)

Sustainability

Predictable season

Stewardship

Good monitoring system

Increased Fishing days

Maintain industry

More access for the industry

Make sure the for-hire component does not exceed its quota

Do not make any allocation to be bought and sold or traded

Better data

Fair and equitable system for fishery participants

Move away from fixed season

Collect resource rent

Size and slot limits

Bag limits

Fishing season

Catch shares

Fish tags

Access for the public to the fishery

Motion failed.

Substitute Motion: To request that the Council develop a charter for hire management plan to meet the following management objectives: Red snapper management plan for the for hire industry. In that plan, include a permanent charter for hire charter plan, new entrants can access the fishery, no set seasons, flexibility to choose when to fish, flexibility in business decisions, accountable, equitable, robust data collection. Substitute motion withdrawn.

Motion: **To recommend to the Council the option of separating the for-hire component into a headboat and a charter component.**

Motion carried.

Motion: That the NMFS develop computer code for accepting the data generated by the charter-for-hire fleet.

Motion withdrawn.

Motion: To remove the charter-for-hire subsectors from Amendment 39

Motion failed.

## Day 2

Motion: To recommend to the Council to begin development of a charter-for-hire catch share permit-based program. Allocation would be awarded to the permit rather than the individual.

Motion withdrawn.

Motion: **That the Council adopt a 1 fish bag limit for 2015 for the charter-for-hire sector.**

Motion carried 15 to 5.

Motion: **To recommend that the Council establish a split season, with 66% of the quota allocated for the first season, and following determination of landings, open a second season in the fall for the remainder of the quota for 2015, or until an electronic reporting method is implemented.**

Motion carried 12 to 5.

Motion: **To recommend that the Council begin development of a charter-for-hire management plan.**

Motion carried 20 to 0 with 1 abstention.

Substitute motion: That the care, custody, and control of the charter-for-hire allocation be managed by the 5 Gulf states, FL, AL, MS, TX, and LA for the benefit of the recreational angler and the charter-for-hire sector.

Motion failed 3 to 16.

Motion: That the Council consider, as one of the management options, an AMO made up of for-hire vessels, one part of which could feature dividing the for hires into 5 groups, being administered by state agencies, and overseen by the NMFS.

Substitute motion: **That the Council consider management options, such as an Angling Management Organization made up of for-hire vessels, one part of which could feature dividing the for hires into regional groups, a catch share program, a tag system, and a days at sea program.**

Substitute motion carried with 1 opposed.

Motion: To recommend to the Council add the Headboat Collaborative to the list of management alternatives.

Motion withdrawn.

Motion: The Council consider implementing and collecting a resource rent from the charter-for-hire sector to pay for administrative expenses incurred as a result of any charter-for-hire management plan.

Substitute motion: The Council consider implementing and collecting a fee from the charter-for-hire sector to pay for any additional administrative costs incurred as a result of any charter-for-hire management plan.

Second substitute: **That the Council consider how the cost of any new program will be shared between the charter-for-hire industry and the agencies charged with management of the program.**

Motion carried 11 to 9.

Motion: Ask the Council to expand the Headboat Collaborative program to a program that includes all headboats.

Substitute motion: **That the Council convene an Ad Hoc Headboat Red Snapper and Grouper AP.**

Substitute motion carried.

Motion: To request that the Council reconvene this panel as soon as possible after January Council to continue discussions on charter-for-hire program development.

Substitute motion: To request that the Council reconvene this panel between the January and March Council meetings, to continue discussions on charter-for-hire program development.

Second substitute motion: **To request that the Council reconvene this panel as soon as possible after January Council, preferably by the end of February, to continue discussions on charter-for-hire program development.**

Second substitute motion carried with 2 abstentions.

Motion: **That the Council explore ways to identify latent effort in the charter for-hire fishing industry.**

Motion carried 18 to 1 with 1 opposed.

Motion: That the Council consider proposing to the NMFS a charter-for-hire permit buy-out program.

Motion failed 5 to 13.