

## Summarized notes from Oct. 2023 TCC discussion on approaches to federal private recreational management

### Current approaches used by states

**LA:** Has a Recreational Offshore Landing Permit (ROLP) and reports that this approach works well. They require the angler to navigate to a separate website to obtain the ROLP which is not associated with obtaining a fishing license. This helps reduce oversubscription and focus the universe of offshore anglers. Required for landing tunas, billfish, swordfish, amberjacks, groupers, snappers, hinds, cobia, wahoo, gray triggerfish, and dolphin fish. The ROLP is free and avoids any legislative directive. The state does submit angler information to the National Saltwater Angler Registry (NSAR).

<https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/rolp>

**MS:** Will be implementing a permit approach similar to Louisiana. This will require approval by their commission but not hurdles are expected. Looking to begin making the permit available by January 2024.

**FL:** Also has no-cost State Reef Fish Survey designation. Any angler over 16 years old intending to harvest particular reef fish species (mutton, yellowtail, hogfish, red snapper, vermilion, gag, red grouper, black grouper, greater amberjack, lesser amberjack, banded rudderfish, almaco jack, and gray triggerfish) must have the designation. Currently does not have a separate mechanism for obtaining the reef fish designation from a general fishing license. This could be contributing to some oversubscription. The state does submit angler registry information to NSAR and are able to differentiate which of those anglers have the reef fish designation. It is likely possible to add to the list of particular species for the designation but unsure at this time how much of an obstacle that may be.

<https://myfwc.com/license/recreational/saltwater-fishing/>

**AL:** State requires a Reef Fish Endorsement for any angler over the age of 16 years and the cost is \$10 for private anglers. The endorsement applies to anglers harvest a number of reef fish species (gray triggerfish, 4 species of jacks, hogfish, 11 species of snappers, 3 species of tilefish, and 11 species of groupers). When an angler signs up for a state license they are automatically enrolled in NSAR and that information is provided by the state to NSAR monthly. Anglers with the endorsement can then be identified based on what is provided to NSAR.

<https://www.outdooralabama.com/saltwater-fishing/saltwater-reef-fish-endorsement#:~:text=A%20Reef%20Fish%20Endorsement%20will,in%20Rule%20220%2D3%2D>

**TX:** To date, does not have a separate offshore permit or designation. If the state created something, a cost-free permit would only need authorization through its commission. There is some concern about how this collected data may be used and what an associated enforcement measure may look like.

Themes from TCC discussion

- All states allow some type of exemption for general fishing licenses and they are different for each state. Therefore, a program goal should be to identify existing data gaps for identifying the universe of offshore anglers (what groups of folks may be slipping through the sampling frame or included when perhaps they shouldn't be).
  - Existing commonality: many states do not allow for exemptions for offshore permit/endorsement for anyone over 16 years of age.
  
- No-cost permits or endorsements can be more easily implemented through commissions rather than fee-required licenses which require legislative approval. However, incurring some type of cost could help focus the quantification of the offshore universe since only anglers serious about fishing offshore would pay for the extra requirement.
  - Potential approach: Have a no-cost offshore permit/endorsement with a sign-up that is separate webpage from the general fishing license so some extra effort is required on the angler's behalf or require a fee for obtaining certain offshore species (would be a slower process through the state legislature).
  
- Many states have some existing offshore permit/endorsement but species list differs greatly between states. Could be possible to amend those lists but would require some further exploration by each state.
  - Potential approach: TCC noted that another goal of a program would be to identify species that are most likely representative of offshore effort, often targeted by anglers, and/or provide a characterization of the private offshore angling universe. For example, species such as gray snapper or Spanish mackerel may not work as these species are also frequently encountered in near-shore state waters. HMS species may already be covered through HMS management measures. It may be that identifying a few representative popular offshore species could even help elucidate some information on species not listed on the permit/endorsement (i.e. cobia).
  
- Some type of enforcement will be needed to help with compliance.
  - Potential approach: Perhaps instituting a small fine to anglers who land listed species without the proper permit/endorsement can aid in compliance without discouraging stakeholder participation. Enforcement could initially serve more as a teaching/outreach opportunity with fines being handed out for frequent violations.
  
- States using a permit/endorsement are doing so at angler-level.
  - Potential approach: While other effort estimation methods use vessel-based level of inference, the states are collecting at the angler-level. So, this information would most readily available based on current programs.