

**Sustainable Fisheries Committee Report
October 21, 2019
Mr. Dale Diaz, Chair**

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab E, No. 1**) and approved the minutes of the August 2019 meeting (**Tab E, No. 2**).

Final Action: Framework Action: Modification of For-hire Multi-day Trip Possession Limits (Tab E, No. 4)

Council staff reviewed the updated data in the document, which characterize the frequency of for-hire trips by headboat and charter vessels exceeding given trip durations in the Gulf. Public comments received on the document were summarized, and the Reef Fish Advisory Panel's concurrence with the Council's current preferred alternative was noted. This framework action, if implemented, would result in different multi-day possession limit regulations between Gulf and South Atlantic Council jurisdictions, creating the need for additional regulatory compliance awareness for vessels conducting multi-day trips in both jurisdictions. Law enforcement representatives at the Law Enforcement Technical Committee expressed concern about enforcing a multi-day possession limit based on hours fished as opposed to calendar days. Law enforcement was also concerned about weather or other circumstances that could bring a vessel in early. Committee members noted that receipts detailing the duration of the for-hire trip are required to be carried by passengers at all times. A hail-out process for the for-hire fleet is expected in the future. To clarify when multi-day trips are scheduled to begin and end, the Committee recommended requiring that the departure and arrival times for these trips be printed on the receipts required to be carried by passengers. The revised codified text is available.

The Committee recommends, and I so move: **to approve the Framework Action to Modify Federal For-hire Trip Limits and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for review and implementation, and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial license to make the necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to the codified text as necessary and appropriate.**

Motion carried with no opposition.

Draft Amendment Reef Fish 48/Red Drum 5: Status Determination Criteria and Optimum Yield for Reef Fish and Red Drum (Tab E, No. 5)

Council staff presented the revised actions and alternatives in the document. The Committee was satisfied with the range of alternatives for Actions 1 through 3 including maximum sustainable yield (MSY), maximum fishing mortality threshold (MFMT), and minimum stock size threshold (MSST). Staff presented three different approaches to the action to define Optimum Yield (OY) for several reef fish stocks and red drum. Ms. Levy indicated that OY definitions for goliath grouper and red drum should be considered separately from other reef fish species to accurately reflect the unique management strategies for goliath grouper and red drum. She also recommended presenting an alternative that would allow for calculating OY as a ratio of ACL and the overfishing limit (OFL). Dr. Porch stated that setting OY as the long-term yield

at a percentage of the FMSY proxy would require an extra projection step during the assessment process. He suggested that using a scalar relating the MSY proxy to OY would be more efficient for defining OY. Dr. Barbieri indicated that the SSC recommended a range of possible options for defining OY that were scientifically defensible. He also stated that social and economic information is required for defining OY but these data are generally unknown; therefore, explicitly defining OY would be more appropriate as a Council decision rather than a SSC determination. The Committee requested that staff develop a public hearing draft of this document to be presented at the January 2020 Council meeting with the revised OY alternatives for red drum and goliath grouper, along with an alternative using the ACL/OFL ratio multiplied by the MSY proxy for each stock. Staff will bring a draft public hearing document to the January 2020 Council meeting for Committee review.

Council Research and Monitoring Priorities for 2020 – 2024 (Tab E, No. 6)

Staff reviewed the Council's Updated List of Fisheries Monitoring and Research Priorities, which have been reviewed and approved by the Council's SSC. The Committee asked about the recommendation to expand the SEAMAP Video Survey, and whether the direction was to expand that survey off the west Florida shelf. Staff replied that the SEAMAP video survey is one component of a combined video index of abundance used in stock assessments in the Gulf, and by not specifying where and how to expand the survey, the recommendation avoids being too prescriptive. The Committee also noted that data needs necessary for better defining optimum yield are found under research priorities with priority codes A and B.

The Committee recommends, and I so move: **to approve the Gulf Council's Council Research and Monitoring Priorities for 2020 – 2024 as written.**

Motion carried with no opposition.

Eye on the Gulf: An Electronic Monitoring Presentation on the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Fishery (Tab E, No. 7)

Ms. Neidig of Mote Marine Laboratory gave a presentation on electronic monitoring (EM). Ms. Neidig noted the importance of EM for the management of Gulf reef fish fisheries and discussed the objectives of the Center for Fisheries Electronic Monitoring at Mote. The EM applications discussed included the documentation of shark bycatch and incidental marine mammal encounters. Ms. Neidig summarized commercial fisheries data collection in pilot studies and discussed modeling efforts that are underway. Committee members inquired about the length of time needed to process the data collected. Ms. Neidig indicated that the process is costly and time consuming but artificial intelligence is expected to offer alternatives to reduce costs and viewing times. In response to a question relative to information sharing, Ms. Neidig replied that information collected is shared with fishermen.

Presentation on Allocation Review Criteria (Tab E, No. 8)

Council staff gave a presentation on allocation review. The presentation provided the allocation review triggers selected by the Council and discussed the review procedures and criteria considered by the Allocation Review workgroup. Procedures listed by the workgroup include

Council input, recommendations by the SSCs, and input from advisory panels. Criteria and variables suggested by the workgroup for possible inclusion in future allocation reviews include ABCs, ACLs, quota utilization rates, landings histories, discards, participation trends, and social indicators. Committee members noted that allocation reviews could be lengthy and suggested that placing time limits may be needed. A Committee member suggested that biomass distribution across the Gulf could be considered as an additional criterion in allocation reviews. Dr. Luiz Barbieri noted that the SSC was supportive of a tiered allocation review approach and that data for some of the criteria discussed may not be available or may be challenging to compile.

Remaining items from the SSC Summary Report (Tab E, No. 9)

Dr. Barbieri discussed an SSC review of the variability in yield projections from stock assessments. Typically, the yields in the first year or two following a stock assessment are higher than the previous landings, often regardless of stock status. The SSC reviewed a presentation to this effect during its September 2019 meeting and, along with the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, will investigate the nuances of yield projections in the near future.

Dr. Dan Holland provided a presentation to the SSC on technical guidance for implementing new provisions under National Standard 1, specifically carryover and phase-in in Council ABC Control Rules. Councils are not required to incorporate these provisions in their control rules; however, if they choose to do so, the technical guidance is designed to assist with that incorporation. Comments are expected back to the responsible NOAA working groups prior to the end of the year. The SSC will be convening the ABC Control Rule working group via webinar in the near future to evaluate improvements to the Council's current control rule.

Committee Discussion on Allocation Issues

Dr. Frazer noted that this installment of the ongoing discussion on allocation would be used to introduce discussions on the red grouper stock assessment (SEDAR 61). Potential impacts of recreational data recalibration on the red grouper sector allocations will be considered during SEDAR 61 discussions.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.