

Sustainable Fisheries Committee Report
October 24, 2022
Dr. CJ Sweetman, Chair

The Committee adopted the agenda (**Tab E, No. 1**) and approved the minutes (**Tab E, No. 2**) of the August 2022 meeting as written.

Review of Florida pompano landings and requirements for consideration for federal fisheries management (Tab E, No. 4)

Council staff reviewed the landings from Florida pompano, which is landed predominantly in state waters regardless of state or fleet. Factors to consider when evaluating a species for federal conservation and management as outlined in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) were reviewed and discussed. A Committee member from Florida noted that landings trends for Florida pompano have been steady (recreational) or increasing over time (commercial), and that the State of Florida has conservation measures in place to adequately manage the stock (i.e., harvest controls along with catch and effort data collection). Further, the State of Florida produces status and trends reports for many of the species that it manages, and offered to provide this information¹ to the Committee for Florida pompano. NOAA General Counsel reminded the Committee of a petition received by NOAA Fisheries to consider federal management of Florida pompano, and that a determination about the necessity for federal management is requested of the Council. Committee members noted that a majority of harvest is coming from state waters and that Florida has measures in place to ensure the conservation and management of the stock; thus, it may not require federal management. Another Committee member asked whether the factors included in the MSA were to be quantitatively or qualitatively evaluated. NOAA General Counsel replied that the level of evaluation was dependent on the data available to inform that evaluation. The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission representative added that Florida pompano is on its list for future development of a fisheries profile or management plan, if necessary.

A Committee member asked about the limitations on where certain quantities of Florida pompano can be landed and why those regulations exist. The State of Florida replied that those regulations were implemented to help rebuild the stock in the late 2000s. Unlimited landings of Florida pompano are allowed only when harvested from federal waters off Florida within the Pompano Endorsement Zone by licensed commercial harvesters who hold a commercial Pompano Endorsement using gill nets, hook and line, cast nets, or beach or haul seines. Florida pompano harvested from the Pompano Endorsement Zone pursuant to a Pompano Endorsement may only be transported through state waters and landed in Florida between Cape Sable and Hurricane Pass in Collier County. Florida pompano may also be commercially targeted and directly harvested without a Pompano Endorsement in state and federal waters off Florida with beach or haul seines, cast nets, and hook and line with a limit of 250 fish which can be landed anywhere in Florida. Up to 100 Florida pompano can be taken commercially as bycatch in gillnets while fishing for other species in federal waters such as Spanish mackerel. They can be

¹ <https://myfwc.com/media/26224/status-trends-florida-pompano.pdf>

landed anywhere in Florida; however, commercial harvesters in possession of Florida pompano and gill or entangling nets must return from federal waters and transit directly and continuously through state waters to land such fish in Florida.

The Committee recommends, and I so **move**, that **Florida Pompano is not in need of federal conservation and management at this time.**

Motion carried without opposition.

The Committee also discussed the merits of considering African pompano for federal management. Several Committee members expressed interest in exploring potential federal management given the discussion on Florida pompano while other members contended that Florida pompano management represented a separate issue. Ultimately, the Committee decided that, if desired, the subject of African pompano could be brought up at full Council.

SSC Recommendations from the September 2022 Gulf SSC (Tab B, No. 10a)

Dr. Sean Powers (Standing Scientific and Statistical Committee [SSC] representative member) provided a review of the Socioeconomic Stock Assessment Workshop report. A Committee member inquired if NMFS had plans to implement any of the recommendations within the workshop report or were going to assign any priorities for the report recommendations. Dr. John Walter (Southeast Fisheries Science Center) stated that recently considered management strategy evaluation approaches have been used to investigate ways of achieving maximum sustainable yield in a manner that does not solely rely on yield to achieve management objectives. He continued that the agency would work with the SSC to prioritize the report recommendations and further stated that the Council's SSC was the first regional SSC to consider the report findings.

Other Business

The Committee discussed the merits of considering tripletail for federal management. Anecdotally, tripletail has been observed on restaurant menus with increasing frequency. The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission representative informed the Committee that a genetic study is being conducted by the Commission. A sampling of commercial sales of tripletail indicated that they were mainly imported fish. The Committee determined that further discussion would be appropriate for full Council.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.