

**Data Collection Committee Report
October 26, 2022
Ms. Susan Boggs, Chair**

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

Abbreviated Framework Action to modify for-hire trip declaration requirements (Tab F, No. 4a and 4b; Tab B, No. 6b)

Southeast Regional Office (SERO) staff reviewed two administrative modifications related to hail-out timing and dually permitted commercial and for-hire vessels. These administrative changes are not directly incorporated into the document but will be included in the proposed rule where these changes will be made available for public comment during the rule making process. Council staff reviewed updates to the abbreviated framework action, proposed action alternatives, and Law Enforcement Technical Committee recommendations. Capt. Walker (Reef fish Advisory Panel Chair) reported that the panel agreed that some of the issues related to the multiple hail-out implementation had been addressed in the action but that some burdens still remained.

A Committee member inquired as to why hail-outs on non-fishing charters, such as cruises, were needed. Staff replied that the hail-outs on non-fishing charters are necessary to collect socioeconomic data and aide in program enforcement. A Committee member asked Capt. Walker how long it took him to report a hail-out and he replied approximately 10 minutes. SERO staff stated addressing issues in the program, such as a multiple hail-out provision, is complicated due to the diversity of fishing practices in the for-hire industry. Capt. Walker replied that the industry was experiencing some hesitation about the program in its current form and encouraged progress towards a more directed data collection program for the for-hire industry. The Committee selected a preferred option in the document so that the Council could consider final action early next year.

The Committee recommends, and I so move, to make **Option 4 the preferred**.

Option 4: Require federally-permitted for-hire vessel owners and/or operators to submit a trip declaration for trips that will be engaging in any type of fishing or chartered activity.

Motion carried with no opposition.

Review of South Atlantic Council workgroup discussions on federal private angling reef fish permit (Tab F, No. 5a)

Ms. Myra Brouwer summarized discussions by a South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) workgroup that investigated the feasibility of a federal private recreational fishing permit for harvesting snapper and grouper species. The workgroup recommended implementing the permit, development of a data collection program associated of that universe of anglers, and

the creation of a grouper snapper permit technical advisory panel. Other workgroup recommendations included managing expectations, especially in the early years of the permit's implementation, and other research recommendations. Mr. Chester Brewer (SAFMC Council Member) outlined the concerns of the SAFMC with respect to the estimation of fishing effort in the South Atlantic region, and the SAFMC's years-long efforts to seek improvements to effort estimation. He added that development of this permit has substantial support in the South Atlantic, and that the permit and standardizing the data collected across states is a priority. Mr. Brewer used the State of Florida's annual no-cost Gulf Reef Fish Angler permit endorsement as an example of how this permit might be implemented.

A Committee member asked about how funding for this proposed permit would be achieved. Ms. Brouwer replied that the SAFMC doesn't have details about how it would be funded at this time. She added that the amendment in development will help define the structure of the permit, but expected that other nuances would be resolved in the implementation effort. Another Committee member agreed that a uniform method of licensing would be beneficial for recreational fisheries in the Gulf also, with such a permit managed through the states. They supported a private angling reef fish licensing program, and encouraged the Committee to explore methodologies to implement such a permit in the Gulf. SERO agreed with a goal of uniformity in any regional permit, and added that any federal permit may only recoup administrative costs, while a state permit may use those funds for other purposes as well. Ms. Brouwer noted that the SAFMC will continue to work with state and federal partners as it develops the amendment.

Update from GSMFC on fisheries data collection and management (Tab F, No. 6)

Mr. Gregg Bray (Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission staff) provided an overview of multiple data collection and other programs overseen by the GSMFC. These programs are wide ranging and address a number of fishery management objectives. He emphasized that the GSMFC fosters working relationships between private, academic, Gulf state agencies, and federal partners to achieve management goals.

The Committee applauded the GSMFC on their work throughout the Gulf. Specifically, the GSMFC has provided their resources during the recent changes in data collection in the shrimp industry which has aided the Council in managing that fishery. The Committee encouraged the GSMFC to continue engaging the Council and provide updates on future work.

Update on commercial electronic reporting (Tab F, No. 7a and b; Tab B, No. 6b)

Council staff provided a verbal update on the progress of transitioning the commercial coastal logbook program towards electronic submission. A joint document with the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is being developed to implement this modification. Capt. Walker reported that the Reef Fish AP received a presentation from Southeast Fishery Science Center (SEFSC) demonstrating the reporting application and was supportive of a transition to electronic reporting.

A Committee member inquired as to whether the SEFSC had any plans to test the electronic platform before implementing the requirement. Dr. John Walter replied he would check with SEFSC staff and provide an answer at full Council. The SAFMC has convened two of its advisory panels to discuss the program modification and Ms. Brouwer indicated there was support from those groups to integrate towards an electronic reporting platform. Council staff indicated that the Coastal Migratory AP would meet in December to discuss commercial electronic reporting and that a draft of the document would be available for review by the Committee at the January 2023 meeting.

Mr. Chair, this concludes my report.