

Sustainable Fisheries Committee: Action Guide and Next Steps for Tab E

Agenda Item IV: Review of Mackerel Landings and Bag Limit Analysis

Timeline Status: Landings status report

Council input and next steps: NMFS staff will review the commercial and recreational king mackerel landings relative to ACLs. The Council also requested a breakdown of recreational landings before and after the recreational bag limit changed from two to three per person per day that became effective on May 11, 2017. It requires no action by the Committee unless determined necessary.

Agenda Item V: Options Paper – Carryover of Unharvested Quota

Timeline Status: SSC Report on simulation analyses

Council input and next steps: Based on an SSC request made at its May 2017 meeting, SEFSC staff provided simulations of the effect of carrying unused ACL over to the following fishing year. The SSC representative will summarize the results of those simulations and any comments by the SSC. Based on these results, the Committee should review the alternatives contained in the options paper, and may recommend changes to the set of options.

Agenda Item VI: Public Hearing Draft Amendment 49 – Modifications to the Sea Turtle Release Gear and Framework Procedure for the Reef Fish Fishery

Timeline Status: Public Hearing Draft of Amendment

Council Input and Next Steps: Staff will provide an overview of the public hearing draft of Amendment 49. The document currently has two draft actions, the first action considers including the three new approved sea turtle release gears for commercial and charter vessels/headboat with federal Gulf reef fish permits to use. The second action would modify the framework procedure to allow new gears to be approved for use without a full amendment to the fishery management plan. The Committee should select preferred alternatives and provide feedback on any other modifications to the document. In appropriate, the Committee should approve the document for a webinar public hearing. Staff will take any suggestions into consideration and bring a final draft to the Council to review and approve in April.

Agenda Item VII: Draft Policy and Outreach – Descending Devices and Venting Tools

Timeline Status: Draft of Policy Statement and Outreach Program

Council Input and Next Steps: Staff will present a draft policy statement for the Council to encourage the use of venting tools or descending devices when appropriate, plus an outline for the development of an outreach program. The Committee may choose to revise the policy statement and outreach program, or may recommend accepting them for implementation. If accepted, the policy statement will be posted on the Council’s website and distributed to supporting agencies through the outreach strategy.

Staff also drafted a letter to NRDA in support of distribution, use, and research for descender devices. The Committee should review and provide any feedback for incorporation before submittal.

Agenda Item VIII: Review of EAFM by the Gulf Council and Other Regional Approaches

Timeline Status: Discussion

Council Input and Next Steps: Staff will present a summary of other Councils’ approaches to EAFM and will identify existing management measures in the Gulf that already incorporate ecosystem considerations. Staff will present possible approaches to achieve the national goals of ecosystem management. Staff will update the Council on the regional implementation plan timeline and efforts. The Committee should provide feedback on the various approaches, and consider if it would like staff to initiate a fishery ecosystem plan or policy for the Council to consider for a future meeting.

Staff will also briefly update the Committee on the EBFM regional roadmap progress and provide a timeline for the Council.

Agenda Item IX: Reef Fish Charter For-hire Permit Transfers and Potential Management Actions

Timeline Status: Preliminary review

Council Input and Next Steps: Staff will present an evaluation of reef fish for-hire permit transfers. The Committee is expected to discuss current regulations relative federally-permitted vessels following a permit transfer and, if warranted, consider potential management measures to regulate the transfer of reef fish for-hire permits

Agenda Item X: Environmental Assessment and Exempted Fishing Permits (EFP) for Lionfish Trap Testing in the Gulf and South Atlantic

Timeline Status: EFP application for review and approval

Council Input and Next Steps: The SERO staff will provide an overview of the EFP for lionfish trap testing in the Gulf and South Atlantic. Staff will also present the Environmental Assessment as background information. The Committee should vote to recommend to the full Council and NMFS whether to approve the trap testing lionfish EFP or if more information is necessary.

Agenda Item XI: Discussion on Dead Zone Regarding RESTORE Act

Timeline Status: Discussion

Council Input and Next Steps: In 2017, the hypoxic zone (dead zone) off Louisiana and Mississippi has been reported to be the largest ever. The size of this dead zone is primarily influenced by agricultural runoff from interior states. Mr. Glenn Constant will lead a discussion on potential efforts by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to address this issue through their Natural Resource Damage Assessment process. No action is required by the Council. However, the Committee may choose to recommend that the Council draft a letter regarding the use of RESTORE Action funds on this issue.

Agenda Item XII: Other Business

Timeline Status: Additional items that can be brought up for discussion, but no action can be taken since they have not been announced

Council Input and Next Steps: Additional items may be brought up for discussion by Committee members, time permitting. If the committee wishes to pursue action, then action can be scheduled at a future Council meeting.