




UNITED STATE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Fisheries Science Center
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May 21, 2007

MEMORANDUM TO: Wayne Swingle, Executive Director
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

FROM: Alex Chester, Acting Director 

SUBJECT: Progress Report—Economic Modeling for Allocation of Red Grouper

This memo responds to your request on April 4 for a progress report about the economic model for allocation of red grouper in the Gulf of Mexico. The SEFSC provided progress reports to the Gulf Council's Socio-Economic Panel (SEP) at its meeting in Miami on May 3-4, 2007. Dr. Juan Agar presented preliminary work about the commercial fishery for red grouper, and Dr. David Carter presented preliminary work about the recreational fishery. Their reports are attached.

Dr. Agar has preliminary estimates for his model of the longline and vertical line sectors of the commercial harvest of red grouper based on data from 2001-2004 from the Florida Trip Ticket database. His work needs to address the effect of the recent prohibition on the use of fish traps on the overall harvest of red grouper and investigate the impacts of discards. A draft report should be available for the SEP to review at its next meeting in November, 2007. The report will apply to the allocation of red grouper rather than all shallow water groupers.

Dr. Carter has developed a model for angler valuation of recreational harvest by the charter boat sector. Currently, he is acquiring data on charter fees and average catch and keep rates to estimate the model. Information about charter fees was collected with economic questions added to the MRFSS For-Hire survey in 2002/03 and the MRFSS intercept survey in 2006. Estimates of average catch and keep rates for trips originating from Gulf counties are available from MRFSS intercept surveys. Dr. Carter will report initial estimates for his model at the SEP meeting in November. The expected date for completing this effort will depend on the review and feedback received from the SEP at its November meeting.

Dr. Carter is focusing only on the charter boat sector given that Dr. John Whitehead, an economist at Appalachian State University, has a MARFIN grant to study angler valuation of recreational harvest by the private boat sector. Dr. Whitehead presented his project to the SEP in May, and then met with Dr. Carter to discuss the use of their models in the analysis of allocation for the entire recreational fishery. We do not expect that a final model for the full recreational sector will be available before the November SEP meeting.

Cc: Roy Crabtree
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David W. Carter