

Steven Atran

From: Steven Atran
Sent: Monday, September 10, 2007 9:55 AM
To: Wayne Swingle; 'Teehan, William'; 'Minton, Vernon'
Cc: All Technical Staff; 'Robin Riechers'; 'Alex Chester'
Subject: RE: goliath
Attachments: AHFSAP2b.pdf

Actually, the reason for the goliath grouper overfishing threshold was the recommendation in the 1998 report of the Second Ad Hoc Finfish Stock Assessment Panel (attached). They recommended a higher SPR for GG and Nassau grouper than for other reef fish because of their depressed stock size, and because their sedentary habits and large spawning aggregations made them particularly susceptible to overfishing. The exact wording from the Ad Hoc FSAP is:

Jewfish and Nassau grouper species have been fully protected by the Gulf Council with ABCs of zero harvest. These fisheries were closed due to concerns that they were especially susceptible to overfishing because their populations were small in size and at depressed levels as the result of fishermen being able to easily find and target large sedentary individuals, as well as, spawning aggregations. These species are, therefore, generally believed to be neither very resistant nor resilient to overfishing. **Therefore, the Panel recommends that the Gulf Council establish a MSY SPR proxy of 40-60 percent for jewfish and Nassau grouper.**

Although that FSAP report is nine years old, it still represents the best available scientific information with respect to setting overfishing thresholds. If the Council wants to consider changing the goliath grouper threshold without having a stock assessment, I recommend convening a Third Ad Hoc Finfish Stock Assessment Panel meeting to provide updated scientific information for that purpose, and include as many of the members from the Second Ad Hoc meeting as possible (a list of the panel members is on page 1 of the attached).

Also, the Council is working on a rebuilding plan for goliath grouper. It's Amendment 18B, which also includes a rebuilding plan for Nassau grouper.

Steven Atran
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

From: Wayne Swingle
Sent: Monday, September 10, 2007 6:54 AM
To: Teehan, William; Minton, Vernon
Cc: Steven Atran; All Technical Staff; Robin Riechers; Alex Chester
Subject: RE: goliath

Bill and Vernon, the 50% SPR was set as overfishing threshold in the Sustainable Fisheries Act Amendment (1999) for both goliath and Nassau grouper because they were data poor stocks. Nassau still is a data poor stock, whereas there was sufficient data for NMFS to remove goliath grouper as a species of concern under the ESA. I think the overfishing threshold SPR level for goliath probably should be set the same as other groupers, i.e., 30%

From: Teehan, William [mailto:william.teehan@MyFWC.com]
Sent: Friday, September 07, 2007 12:45 PM

To: Minton, Vernon
Cc: Wayne Swingle; Steven Atran
Subject: RE: goliath

Vernon,

I think the 50% SPR was set arbitrarily as a benchmark, much the same as Florida has set high SPR's on snook and red drum.....

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From: Minton, Vernon [mailto:Vernon.Minton@dcnr.alabama.gov]
Sent: Friday, September 07, 2007 1:41 PM
To: Teehan, William
Cc: wayne.swingle@gulfcouncil.org; steven.atran@gulfcouncil.org
Subject: RE: goliath

I think it would be good to discuss in October. How do they estimate the SPR currently with no take?

Vern

R. Vernon Minton, Director
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From: Teehan, William [mailto:william.teehan@MyFWC.com]
Sent: Friday, September 07, 2007 9:45 AM
To: Minton, Vernon
Subject: goliath

Vernon,

I have been speaking with Andy Strelcheck and Luiz Barbieri about the goliath grouper limited take issue. It appears that since goliath have a 50% SPR benchmark, that in order to allow any take what-so-ever, that benchmark must be lowered to 40%. I believe that this is outlined in the white paper that Clay Porch and Luiz wrote to discuss the number of fish that could be taken for a research project. Further, there may be an

issue with the fact that there is not a rebuilding plan for goliath. I don't know if the council is aware of these issues, and I think we should discuss this at the reef fish committee meeting in October. Could we place goliath on the committee agenda? Let me know what you think.....cheers

Bill

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