

Ad Hoc Recreational Red Snapper AP

Committee Charge: To evaluate and recommend innovative management strategies for the private and for-hire recreational red snapper fisheries of the Gulf of Mexico. Approaches to consider include, but are not limited to, random distribution systems such as lotteries, community-based approaches, incentive-based approaches such as IFQs, effort control measures such as license limitations, and, any other novel approaches deemed relevant by the AP;

The Council encourages the Ad Hoc Red Snapper Recreational AP to continue working on the following ideas

Alternative Management Ideas:

- a) Develop a program for regional management of recreational management of red snapper (regional seasons, bag limits, size limits, TAC etc.)
- b) Explore limited access privilege programs (LAPP) for the for- hire and private recreational sectors along with improved data and monitoring of harvest and bycatch including:
- c) Explore the use of a ~~catch card~~ and fish tag system to manage the recreational harvest.
- d) Explore mechanisms for red snapper quota shares to be leased or sold back and forth between commercial and recreational sectors and either banked or fished recreationally.
- e) Explore establishment a reef fish permitting system and red snapper endorsement for private recreational fishermen (or vessels)

Bycatch Reduction Ideas:

Committee Charge: To evaluate and recommend innovative approaches to minimizing bycatch and bycatch mortality in the private and for-hire recreational red snapper fisheries of the Gulf of Mexico. Approaches to consider include, but are not limited to, methods to improve the survival of released fish such as gear requirements or fisherman training, methods to avoid the capture of undersized or out-of-season fish such as seasonal area closures or fisherman training, and, methods to account for otherwise unavoidable regulatory discards such as bycatch banking/exchange programs or reclassification of regulatory discards to legal harvest; and,

- Explore the possibility of a first fish rule to reduce bycatch mortality.
- Limit the number of hooks dropped per line to two for the recreational red snapper for-hire sector

Refer the following ideas to the Council Data Committee

- Mandatory headboat and charter boat reporting systems (including electronic logbooks/web-based reporting) on all reef fish permitted vessels.
- Expanding the current observer system to for-hire vessels in order to validate logbook records.
- Explore a voluntary option for a video monitoring system for those for-hire vessels that wish to carry one
- Catch cards

Mandatory headboat and charter boat reporting systems (including electronic logbooks/web-based reporting) on all reef fish permitted vessels

Brief Description:

In March 2008 there was a notice of federal data collection requirement in the for-hire fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic. Presently, operators of headboats in the following fisheries: South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Coastal Migratory Pelagics, Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish, and South Atlantic Dolphin-Wahoo can be selected to report to the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) Director. If selected, operators are required to supply fishing reports of all fishing trips made to authorized statistical reporting agents. Reports should be sent in the mail, postmarked 7 days after the end of each month. Operators must report the following: U.S. Coast Guard license number, vessel number, the number of each fish species taken, estimated total weight of each species, number of anglers, date(s), location and duration of fishing, number of anglers that actually fished, pay type of trip (charter vs. per-person), distance from shore, and condition of released fishes (dead or alive). The renewal of charter vessel/headboat permits is based on accurate and timely reporting of logbooks. Reporting is currently completed on a per vessel basis, through the mail, and presently not all vessel operators must provide this information. Logbooks are not electronic or web-based at this time.

Places where the idea is currently being implemented:

All charter boats and headboats that target Highly Migratory Species (HMS) must have a permit and follow the mandatory reporting systems for recreational swordfish and billfish non-tournament landings. The permit owner must document fish landed within 24 hours. If the fish are landed in a particular state that requires a state landing card system then it must be used, other times the internet reporting system can be used.

Pros:

- Detailed information about size and season reef fish species are caught and location landed
- Could improve season monitoring where needed, better estimates for accountability measures
- Detailed bycatch information

Cons:

- High costs for processing data
- A national salt water registry is already being developed to improve recreational statistics
- High variability and reporting differences in vessel operator surveys

Expand the Current Observer System to For-Hire Vessels in Order to Validate Logbook Records

Brief Description:

Amendment 22, implemented July 5, 2005, contained the following preferred alternative: "Direct NOAA Fisheries to develop and manage an observer program for the reef fish fishery. NOAA Fisheries will develop a random selection procedure for determining vessels that will be required to carry observers in order to collect bycatch information. In selecting vessels, the agency will consider the suitability of the vessel for such purpose and ensure that the universe of vessels included are representative of all statistical sub-zones in the Gulf. Vessel permits will not be renewed for vessels that fail or refuse to carry observers in accordance with this process. The implementation of the observer program shall be initiated as soon as NOAA Fisheries obtains sufficient funding for the program." The discussion following the alternative suggested the following sampling rates: 2,170 days for commercial vessels (8% of commercial trips), **2,242 days for charter vessels (1% of charter trips), and 520 days for headboat vessels (4% of headboat trips)**. To date, the observer program has only been implemented for commercial vessels.

An observer program on for-hire vessels could serve two purposes beyond those of other data collection methods. It could be used to validate self-reporting systems such as logbooks, and it could be used to collect third-party observations on bycatch.

Two major drawbacks are the cost of an observer program, and the lack of space for an observer on many charter boats. In Amendment 22, it was reported that observer program is estimated to cost \$450 to \$2,000 per day, or roughly an average of \$1,200 per day (NMFS, 2003b). Smaller, "six-pack" charter boats may not have space for an observer, or may have space only at the cost of replacing a paying customer. In such cases it may be less intrusive to use technology to create a "virtual" observer. For example, mounting an on-board video camera that is monitored by a land-based observer.

Places where the idea is currently being implemented:

The NMFS HMS Division operates a voluntary observer program for charter/headboats to more effectively monitor catch and release rates, and condition and survival of released fish. A mandatory headboat observer program is under consideration, but has been put on hold pending the outcome of the MRIP program. In the mid-Atlantic region, the ASFMC Tautog FMP calls for an observer program in both the commercial and for-hire fisheries (the status of this program could not be determined prior to the August Council meeting).

Pros:

- Can improve the accuracy and consistency of bycatch information by transferring the burden of bycatch reporting to the observers.
- Can validate data collected from logbooks.

Cons:

- Intrusive

- A voluntary observer program could lead to bias in the data.
- Many charter vessels cannot readily accommodate an observer.
- Cost. An observer program is estimated to cost \$450 to \$2,000 per day, or roughly an average of \$1,200 per day (NMFS, 2003b).
- Additional costs for selected vessels (food and accommodations, plus loss of revenue if the observer replaces a paying customer).

Explore a Voluntary Option for a Video Monitoring System for those For-Hire Vessels that Wish to Carry One

Brief Description:

As a way to supplement observer data on a larger number of for-hire vessels, the AHRRSAP felt that the Council should evaluate having a video monitor system installed on selected vessels. Such a system would be installed on a per trip basis, not for 365 days per year.

Places where the idea is currently being implemented:

There do not appear to be any video monitoring systems currently in use on recreational for-hire vessels.

Since 2000 researchers in Kodiak, Alaska have been developing integrated hardware and software for a video monitoring system that allows for the at-sea capture of multiple streams of high-resolution video, plus other data. The data are stored on removable hard drives. On the vessel's return to port, the data are taken to an office where custom software affords efficient review by "virtual observers". This system has been deployed on Alaska trawlers and longliners and in 2004 underwent a successful trial in the Gulf of Alaska. See www.digital-observer.com (note: website is currently inactive). To be successful, a video observer program will require that fisheries regulators establish a regulatory regime that will specify goals for video data collection, authorize the deployment of video monitoring technologies in lieu of human fisheries observers, and offer explicit protections for the confidentiality of video and other electronic data.

Archipelago Marine Research Ltd, Victoria, BC, has developed a custom on-board video monitoring system for west coast crab and longline fisheries that includes a number of sensors, such as the winch, hydraulic pressure transducer, and in the case of the crab fishery, the radio frequency identification scanner. Overall, compared to using traditional at-sea observers, the electronic monitoring system is 20% of the cost with 100% monitoring across the crab fishery, while within the long line fishery, video-based catch estimates were within 2% of observer based catch estimates. Within the crab fishery, the system was found to have paid for itself in the first year and provided fishermen a sense of fairness that all within the industry were abiding to the rules. The Archipelago system has also been evaluated in the northeast haddock longline fishery to monitor bycatch of cod. While catch estimates between observer and EM for haddock and Atlantic cod were within 5%, issues hindering the implementation of an EM-based monitoring program include expanding fleet awareness of EM program requirements, local infrastructure to support such a program, and solidifying data sharing agreements that specify what information would be collected and how it would be used.

Intrafish (<http://www.intrafish.no>) reported in a July 23, 2008 article that a skipper of a prawn trawler in north-east England has been recording his catches using CCTV cameras in an experiment to provide a system demonstrating that catches are being made according to the rules should fisheries officers board the boat. The system involved the mounting of two infrared cameras to provide 24/7 monitoring of the type and amount of fish coming aboard as the level of any discards. The cost of the installed system was £1450 (approx. \$2,891).

Pros:

- Can provide more complete coverage than an observer program.
- Videos can be reviewed at the reviewer's schedule.
- Video can be archived for future uses.

Cons:

- Existing video monitoring systems are still experimental.
- Existing video monitoring systems do not appear to be portable enough for a "per-trip" basis
- Infrastructure, and data confidentiality protocols need to be established.

Explore the use of catch cards to manage recreational harvest

Brief Description

A catch card program issues to participating fishermen cards (or booklets) on which fish caught and kept and fish caught and released are recorded. Catch card programs usually require all participating anglers to return their cards at the end of the fishing season.

Catch cards programs vary in their provisions concerning the number of cards issued, eligible participants, and methods of distribution. The number of cards could be either unlimited or capped. Eligible participants could be required to purchase an additional license or a generic license. Distribution methods include lotteries, free distribution to all who request them, on a first come first-served basis, with or without a fee. The primary focus of catch card programs is generally to improve data collection. However, depending on the design of the program, catch card systems could be characterized as a LAPP, used to manage catch and change incentives in a fishery.

Places where the idea is currently being implemented or considered

Catch card programs have been implemented in various fisheries. Examples include NOAA's catch card survey (CCS) in Washington, North Carolina, and Maryland, the Yukon salmon conservation card (Canada), catch record cards in the Puget Sound crab fishery (allows internet submission).

Pros

Potential data collection improvement
Financial contribution to program administration

Cons

Self reported data
Volume of data generated
Administrative Costs of the program