

**Data Collection Committee
April 3, 2017
Greg Stunz – Chair**

SEFSC presentation on recreational data procedures

Dr. Vivian Matter gave a presentation (**Tab F, No. 4**) summarizing SEFSC practices and procedures for handling recreational data from MRIP, SRHS, TPWD, and LA Creel. Adjustments to these data are necessary for a variety of purposes, including assigning landings to the appropriate management region, converting units from whole weight to gutted weight, or calibrating data to the appropriate units for ACL monitoring. Additionally, the SEFSC uses different procedures than MRIP for estimating average weights and uses a minimum of 30 fish per stratum to calculate mean weight. This procedure is more robust than the MRIP protocol that only requires two fish to estimate mean weight. The final data set for each species reflects the best estimate of landings that also matches the management region and units necessary for ACL monitoring.

Discussion of MRIP percent standard error (PSE) methods and protocols

Dr. Clay Porch led a discussion regarding the procedures for recreational fisheries data with unusually high variance estimates. This typically occurs with rare-event species but may occur for other reasons as well. Dr. Porch expressed interest in convening a workshop that considers methods to improve estimates for rare-event species and methods to incorporate fisheries data with high variance estimates into management. Dr. Porch was interested in gauging the Council's support for this potential workshop. Mr. Donaldson noted that the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program has previously held a similar workshop and recommended a review of their findings when developing the proposed workshop. The South Atlantic Council has previously expressed support for the proposed workshop and would work closely with the Gulf to develop terms of reference for the meeting. The Committee was supportive of the proposed workshop and recommends that the Council work closely with the South Atlantic Council and NMFS to facilitate this workshop. Staff will draft a letter to the SEFSC indicating the desire of the Council to support and participate in the proposed workshop.

South Atlantic Council exemption request

The South Atlantic Council reviewed the Gulf Council's For-Hire Electronic Reporting Amendment at their March 2017 meeting. The South Atlantic Council approved the Gulf's Amendment but requested an exemption from Gulf for-hire reporting requirements for vessels with Gulf and South Atlantic for-hire permits when fishing solely in South Atlantic waters (**Tab F, No. 6**).

The Committee discussed the exemption request but did not develop a recommendation regarding this request. The exemption would primarily affect vessels with both Gulf and South Atlantic for-hire permits that are homeported in the South Atlantic. Based on the 2016 permits database, there are currently 387 vessels with for-hire permits from the Gulf and South Atlantic regions. Region is

determined through the vessel homeport (hailing port) listed on the permit application (Table 1). The proposed exemption would have little effect on the 251 vessels based in the Gulf, but the 136 vessels based in the South Atlantic, Florida Keys, or other regions may be affected. The Committee noted that accommodating this exemption request would require modification of the Gulf For-Hire Electronic Reporting Amendment, which would require additional review and approval by the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils. These modifications could also require additional Council meetings and public hearings to gather stakeholder input; thus, delaying the implementation of the Gulf or-hire electronic reporting program.

Table 1. Number of for-hire permitted vessels by homeport in 2016 with a Gulf and South Atlantic federal for-hire permit. The assigned region indicates the homeport provided on the permit application. For-hire permits are managed in the SERO permits office. Other region includes homeport in DE, IN, MD, NJ, PA, RI, and VA.

| Homeport Region | Vessels | Percentage |
|------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| East (S. Atlantic) | 33 | 9% |
| Other | 16 | 4% |
| Gulf of Mexico | 251 | 65% |
| Florida Keys | 87 | 22% |
| Total | 387 | 100% |

Madam Chair, this concludes my report.