

Summary for the Ad Hoc
Headboat Reef Fish Advisory Panel
New Orleans, LA
May 19, 2015

Panel Members

Pam Anderson
Randy Boggs
Clifton Cox
Jim Green
Chad Haggert
Mark Hubbard

Council and Staff

Myron Fischer
Assane Diagne
Ava Lasseter
Karen Hoak

Panel Members cont'd

Kelly Owens
Charles Paprocki
Tom Steber
Skipper Thierry
Dustin Trochesset
John Williams

Attendance-Others

Jeff Barger
Kristen McConnell
Jessica Stephen
Shane Cantrell
Ken Brennan
J.P. Brooker
Tim Hobbs
Elbert Whorton

The meeting was convened at 8:30 a.m. The AP elected Randy Boggs as Chair and Mark Hubbard as Vice-Chair. The Chair read the charge to the AP, which is to make recommendations to the Council relative to the design and implementation of flexible measures for the management of reef fish for the headboat component of the for-hire sector.

Ken Brennan gave a presentation on the geographical distribution of headboats participating in the Southeast survey and their reef fish landings. AP members discussed how to differentiate charter boats and headboats and staff added that for the purpose of a management plan, headboats would be defined as those participation in the Southeast Headboat Survey (HBS).

AP members discussed the species to include in a management plan for the headboat fleet. Staff noted the reef fish species for which sector allocations currently exist and the AP passed the following motion:

- **To investigate the possibility of managing all 6 major reef fish species in this management plan (red snapper, gag, red grouper, greater amberjack, gray triggerfish, and black grouper).**

AP members discussed whether headboats should be managed as a stand-alone component and the benefits and obstacles of different management approaches. Staff noted that headboats

participating in the HBS had recorded landings histories, while charter boats do not. An AP member expressed concern with further dividing the recreational sector, stating the sector will be stronger if they do not separate into subgroups, which diminishes their collective voice. The AP member added that aiming toward a year-round fishery would require catch shares, but providing flexibility for different fishing seasons could be accomplished under regional management. Other AP members preferred to be managed separately, citing the increased access provided to passengers fishing under the headboat collaborative and the flexibility of the allocation-based headboat collaborative which allows operators to decide when to fish and use quota. The AP passed the following motions:

- **That headboats be acknowledged as a stand-alone component of the recreational sector. This would include all vessels with federal for-hire reef fish permits that participate in the Southeast Region Headboat Survey (Beaufort survey).**
- **To recommend to the Council to develop a management approach that provides year round fishing opportunities for headboat businesses and anglers, stability in business plans, safety at sea, improved data collection, reduced discards, and accountability to catch limits.**
- **To recommend to the Council that the headboat management plan be allocation based on reported landings by the Beaufort headboat survey (HBS).**

AP members discussed enforcement and validation tools, such as vessel monitoring systems (VMS) or fish tags. Those opposed to VMS felt it was expensive and unnecessary for hailing out and hailing in, especially for headboats which follow tight, predictable schedules, and that other options were available. Other AP members responded to those concerns, noting the reliability of the VMS units and flexibility to use other options for hailing in. The AP passed the following motion:

- **To recommend to Council that enforcement tools for monitoring are:**
 - **VMS used for hail-out/hail-in on all trips, landings notification on fishing trips**
 - **Tags used to improve enforcement**
 - **Electronic logbooks submitted to the Beaufort survey on the same day as each fishing trip.**

AP members discussed the transferability of allocation under an allocation-based management system. Concern was expressed that transferability could result in increased costs for passengers to retain fish, and that allocated fish should not be purchasable by other vessels, but be returned and be redistributed fairly. Those in support of transferability argued it allowed for flexibility in the management plan. The AP also discussed management costs of a new headboat management plan. The AP passed the following motions:

- **The advisory panel supports transferability of headboat allocations among participants in the headboat component, consistent with MSA guidelines on transferability, but without inter-sector trading.**

- **To recommend to the Council to consider how management costs can be shared between the NMFS and the headboat component of the fishery.**

Staff noted that both the Ad Hoc Charter AP and this Ad Hoc Headboat AP passed motions recommending separate management of charter boats and headboats. To accomplish separate management, the for-hire component's quota would need to be divided between charter boats and headboats. Headboats that participate in the HBS have landings histories which could be used as the basis for allocating between the for-hire components and an AP member stated that headboats have accounted for 32 to 36% of red snapper landings. The AP passed the following motions:

- **To recommend to the Council that the headboat component become a subsector of the for-hire sector/component, and that allocation based fisheries be deemed from our historical Beaufort headboat survey data, using the formula from Amendment 40.**
- **To recommend to the Council that this panel reconvenes as soon as possible to continue advising on the headboat component for the reef fish fishery.**

Continuing to manage headboats with bag limits, size limits, and seasons was discussed, but those opposed stated that traditional management approaches have not worked. Additional discussion concerned identifying data needs and improving accountability for the fleet, with the goal of reducing uncertainty and removing the 20% buffer to the recreational quota. AP members asked headboat collaborative participants about the program, including customer perceptions, use of tags, and bag limits. An AP member noted that one of the challenges of the program was that more people could not participate. The AP passed the following motion:

- **To recommend to the Council that the key components of the headboat EFP be considered for allocation-based management of headboats.**

Following review of their recommendations, the AP meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.

All meeting motions including substitute and failed motions:

Motion: That red snapper and gag grouper be the primary species that this management plan encompasses.

Substitute motion: To investigate the possibility of managing all 6 major reef fish species in this management plan (red snapper, gag, red grouper, greater amberjack, gray triggerfish, and black grouper)

Substitute Motion carried 8 to 3

Motion: That headboats be acknowledged as a stand-alone component of the recreational sector. This would include all vessels with federal for-hire reef fish permits that participate in the Southeast Region Headboat Survey (Beaufort survey).

Motion carried 11 to 1

Motion: To recommend to the Council to develop a management approach that provides year round fishing opportunities for headboat businesses and anglers, stability in business plans, safety at sea, improved data collection, reduced discards, and accountability to catch limits.

Motion carried 11 to 1

Motion: To recommend to the Council that the headboat management plan be allocation based on reported landings by the Beaufort headboat survey (HBS).

Motion carried 10 to 2

Motion: To recommend to Council that enforcement tools for monitoring are:

- VMS used for hail-out/hail-in on all trips, landings notification on fishing trips
- Tags used to improve enforcement
- Electronic logbooks submitted to the Beaufort survey on the same day as each fishing trip

Motion carried 8 to 4

Substitute motion: To recommend to the Council that enforcement tools, an app, or a traditional logbooks be used, with a call-in/call-out component that do not require VMS.

Motion failed 4 to 7

Second substitute motion: To use an allocation based management system, that a VMS system will be required. With a traditional management system (size limits, bag limits, seasons, etc.) that VMS not be required.

Motion failed for lack of a second

Motion: The advisory panel supports transferability of headboat allocations among participants in the headboat component, consistent with MSA guidelines on transferability, but without inter-sector trading.

Motion carried 11 to 1

Substitute motion: That if the Council chooses to move towards an allocation based management system, that there will not be a monetary value assigned to the allocation for transferability.

Motion failed 10 to 2

Motion: To recommend to the Council to consider how management costs can be shared between the NMFS and the headboat component of the fishery.

Motion carried 9 to 2

Motion: To recommend to the Council that the headboat component become a subsector of the for-hire sector/component, and that allocation based fisheries be deemed from our historical Beaufort headboat survey data, using the formula from Amendment 40.

Motion carried 11 to 1

Motion: To recommend to the Council that this panel reconvenes as soon as possible to continue advising on the headboat component for the reef fish fishery.

Motion carried with no opposition

Motion: To recommend to the Council to manage the headboat fleet with seasons, bag limits, and size limits along with additional appropriate accountability measures, allowing scientists to determine what data they need, and applying that request of data to the current headboat survey.
Motion failed 2 to 9

Motion: To recommend to Council that a management plan for the headboat sector be designed closely mirroring the headboat EFP.
Motion carried 10 to 2

Motion: to reconsider prior motion
Motion carried 7 to 3

Substitute Motion: To recommend to the Council that the key components of the headboat EFP be considered for allocation-based management of headboats.
Revised Substitute Motion carried 8 to 3