

**Agenda**  
**Data Collection Committee**

**Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council**  
**Marriott Beachside**  
**Flagler Ballroom**  
**Key West, Florida**

**Monday, June 8, 2015**  
**1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

- I. Adoption of Agenda (**Tab F, No. 1**) – Pearce
- II. Approval of Minutes (**Tab F, No. 2**) – Pearce
- III. Action Guide and Next Steps (**Tab F, No. 3**) - Pearce
- IV. Draft Options Paper – Joint Electronic Charter Vessel Reporting Amendment (**Tab F, No. 4(a)**) – Froeschke
  - a) Technical subcommittee report on electronic reporting (**Tab F, No. 4(b)**) – Froeschke
  - b) South Atlantic Council Decision Document (**Tab F, No. 4(c)**) – Froeschke
- V. MRIP Fishing Effort Survey Transition Plan – Van Voorhees
- VI. Other Business – Pearce

**Members**

Harlon Pearce, Chair  
John Greene, V. Chair  
Doug Boyd  
Roy Crabtree/Steve Branstetter  
Dave Donaldson  
Randy Pausina/Myron Fischer  
Greg Stunz  
David Walker

Staff: John Froeschke

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL  
DATA COLLECTION COMMITTEE

Golden Nugget Casino Hotel Biloxi, Mississippi

March 30, 2015

**VOTING MEMBERS**

- Harlon Pearce.....Louisiana
- Doug Boyd.....Texas
- Roy Crabtree.....NMFS, SERO, St. Petersburg, Florida
- Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
- Myron Fischer (designee for Randy Pausina).....Louisiana
- John Greene.....Alabama
- Greg Stunz.....Texas
- David Walker.....Alabama

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

- Kevin Anson.....Alabama
- Martha Bademan (designee for Nick Wiley).....Florida
- Leann Bosarge.....Mississippi
- Jason Brand.....USCG
- Pamela Dana.....Florida
- Dale Diaz (designee for Jamie Miller).....Mississippi
- Campo Matens.....Louisiana
- Corky Perret.....Mississippi
- Lance Robinson (designee for Robin Riechers).....Texas
- John Sanchez.....Florida
- Roy Williams.....Florida

**STAFF**

- Steven Atran.....Senior Fishery Biologist
- Assane Diagne.....Economist
- John Froeschke.....Fishery Biologist/Statistician
- Doug Gregory.....Executive Director
- Karen Hoak.....Administrative and Financial Assistant
- Ava Lasseter.....Anthropologist
- Mara Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
- Cathy Readinger.....Administrative Officer
- Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
- Charlotte Schiaffo.....Research & Human Resource Librarian
- Bryan Schoonard.....GIS Analyst

**OTHER PARTICIPANTS**

- Pam Anderson.....Panama City, FL

- 1 Randy Boggs.....Orange Beach, AL
- 2 Steve Branstetter.....NMFS
- 3 J.P. Brooker.....Ocean Conservancy, St. Petersburg, FL
- 4 Michael Drexler.....Ocean Conservancy, St. Petersburg, FL
- 5 Mike Eller.....Destin, FL
- 6 Cynthia Fenyk.....NOAA
- 7 Martin Fisher.....FL
- 8 Chuck Guilford.....FL
- 9 Ken Haddad.....American Sportfishing Association, Lloyd, FL
- 10 Chad Hanson.....Pew Environmental Trusts
- 11 Betty Harder.....FL
- 12 Ben Hartig.....SAFMC
- 13 Bill Kelly.....FKCFA, FL
- 14 Kristin McConnell.....EDF, Austin, TX
- 15 Jack McGovern.....NMFS
- 16 George Niles.....Summerland Key, FL
- 17 Daniel Padron.....Key West, FL
- 18 Bonnie Ponwith.....SEFSC
- 19 Jenny Thompson.....Oceana, Lafayette, LA
- 20 Bob Zales.....Panama City, FL

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24 The Data Collection Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery  
25 Management Council convened at the Golden Nugget Casino Hotel,  
26 Biloxi, Mississippi, Monday morning, March 30, 2015, and was  
27 called to order at 10:52 a.m. by Chairman Harlon Pearce.

28

29 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**  
30 **APPROVAL MINUTES**  
31 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**

33 **CHAIRMAN HARLON PEARCE:** The agenda is Tab F, Number 1. Are  
34 there any changes or additions to the agenda? If not, can I  
35 hear a motion to adopt the agenda as written?

37 **MR. JOHNNY GREENE:** So moved.

39 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** We've got a motion and a second. Any  
40 opposition to the adoption of the agenda? Hearing none, the  
41 agenda is adopted. The minutes are Tab F, Number 2. Any  
42 changes or additions to the minutes? If not, I would like to  
43 hear a motion to adopt the minutes as written.

45 **MR. GREENE:** So moved.

47 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** I've got a motion and a second by Greg. Any  
48 opposition to the approval of the minutes? Hearing none, the

1 approval of the minutes passes. Next is the Action Guide, Tab  
2 F, Number 3. The action guide basically is going to be to  
3 electronic charter boat reporting recommendation discussion  
4 paper and they are looking for our input to advise staff on the  
5 preferred course of action. Any questions about the action  
6 guide? Hearing none, we will move into the next part of the  
7 agenda, the Discussion Paper on Joint South Atlantic and Gulf of  
8 Mexico Generic Charter Boat Reporting Amendment, Tab F, Number  
9 4. Dr. Froeschke, are you ready?

10  
11 **DISCUSSION PAPER - JOINT SOUTH ATLANTIC AND GULF OF MEXICO**  
12 **GENERIC CHARTER BOAT REPORTING AMENDMENT**  
13

14 **DR. JOHN FROESCHKE:** Yes, I am. Good morning, everyone. Tab F-  
15 4, this is a joint document. As you recall from the last  
16 meeting, this was recommended that we proceed jointly with the  
17 South Atlantic Council.

18  
19 What we have done since the last time is we've appointed the IPT  
20 process, which does take some time. The South Atlantic Council  
21 met earlier this month, in March, and reviewed this document,  
22 which was put together by the South Atlantic Council. It, as  
23 you will see, is very early in the process and is really more of  
24 a proposed workflow or something to solicit your ideas in how to  
25 move forward.

26  
27 What will happen after this meeting is we will take your input  
28 and we will meet the IPT and get the full range of perspectives  
29 and we can fill out the appropriate range of actions and make  
30 sure that the no-action alternatives and those things are sort  
31 of characterized correctly and integrate whatever guidance you  
32 give us at this meeting.

33  
34 If you look through the document, it is a South Atlantic sort of  
35 document. By the next meeting -- We are the administrative lead  
36 and it will be more something that you're probably familiar  
37 working through.

38  
39 What I am going to do is just ask you to move to page 4, the  
40 purpose and need. As you all know, we've discussed the needs  
41 for better data and faster data for a long, long time and so I  
42 don't think we need a lot of background information on that. It  
43 seems I think we're all well aware.

44  
45 Some things to think about in this is the way that the South  
46 Atlantic Council has considered it, is to roll some aspect of  
47 headboat reporting modifications into this document and so I am  
48 curious as we move through this if that's something that you're

1 interested in at this time or you would prefer we address that  
2 separately in another item.

3  
4 Any questions on the purpose and need and whether that needs to  
5 be changed at this point? If not, we will proceed to talk about  
6 the actions.

7  
8 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** I don't see any questions and so keep going,  
9 John.

10  
11 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Let's move to Action 1 and it's on page 5. What  
12 this action is, it's really to modify the data reporting timing  
13 and for some of you who have also been through this process both  
14 with the dealer reporting and the headboat reporting -- We do  
15 have some experience with this.

16  
17 The action alternatives build on what we've learned in the  
18 process and so what we've done, just for a bit of background,  
19 the first thing we did was the dealer reporting and we have  
20 weekly reporting and the reports are due the Tuesday following  
21 the week end, which is on a Sunday. The week end is on Sunday  
22 and you would file your reports on Tuesday. That seems to work  
23 well.

24  
25 In headboats, we have weekly reporting, but the reports are not  
26 due for a week after. In terms of the timing that we're always  
27 pushing for, it might seem more appropriate that we have the  
28 reporting due Tuesday rather than a week following the Sunday  
29 and so it would be -- If we didn't address the headboats, which  
30 we could do later, it would be out of sync, but I think, based  
31 on the technical subcommittee and discussions and things,  
32 timeliness is always better and so that's one option.

33  
34 The status quo option really in here would be considered  
35 Alternative 2 and then Alternative 4. Alternative 5 is sort of  
36 what we have recommended, or at least discussed. It would be  
37 weekly or intervals shorter than a week for specific issues or  
38 fisheries that we have addressed in headboats, with the reports  
39 due the following Tuesday.

40  
41 Again, things for daily reporting and that are always possible  
42 as alternatives and at this point, I guess I'm just soliciting  
43 feedback as to whether this range of ideas is within the  
44 ballpark of what you all are thinking.

45  
46 **DR. GREG STUNZ:** John, I know we're early in the process and I  
47 have questions about the timing and the weekly nature of this  
48 and it concerns me a little bit not to have a little bit faster

1 of a reporting, one for just recall of the anglers and fishermen  
2 entering the data, but also from a validation standpoint.

3  
4 You know if you're reporting a week after the fact, that could  
5 be problematic in ensuring the quality of the data we're getting  
6 in and so what I would like to see is maybe another alternative  
7 for a more rapid response time and I believe that you're going  
8 to see that the charter captains are going to want that as well.

9  
10 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Do you have a motion or do you just want to  
11 talk about it or what?

12  
13 **DR. STUNZ:** I can offer a motion if we need one, or do we just  
14 need to talk about it? I am not sure. John had mentioned this  
15 was early in the phase and I guess I would leave to him what he  
16 needs to proceed.

17  
18 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Greg, two points. Alternative 3 in here has a  
19 daily reporting with two different reporting options and so  
20 that's one, but I do think we could get some clarification on  
21 this, but if it is weekly reporting, it doesn't mean that you  
22 can't turn in daily reports. It just means that it would be  
23 tabulated through the data flow process on a weekly basis.

24  
25 We could probably get some clarification, but yes, please  
26 provide any guidance like this that you want. We would love to  
27 have it, so it helps us flesh out the document.

28  
29 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** I kind of agree. You've got daily almost in  
30 three sections.

31  
32 **DR. BONNIE PONWITH:** In the pilot that was run in the Gulf, we  
33 ran into some challenges with reporting and certainly you do  
34 have a good range of alternatives here for the timing, including  
35 daily. I think it would be advantageous to add one more  
36 alternative, from a science perspective, and it is daily in real  
37 time.

38  
39 Another consideration is that if you are designing this to be a  
40 real time data collection and a census, then having an  
41 alternative that requires the vessels to report before they hit  
42 the dock, so that when they hit the dock their data have already  
43 been submitted and you can compare those submitted data against  
44 a dockside intercept, it enables you to do a one-to-one match.

45  
46 In the pilot study that we did, the validation was done based on  
47 averages and by that, I mean since it was impossible to match  
48 what people put into the system against the landings on a one-

1 to-one basis, we took what was the average catch of vessels that  
2 were intercepted versus the average catch of vessels that were  
3 not intercepted and reported electronically in this study and  
4 were there differences.

5  
6 When you do averages like that, you get a lot of variance and it  
7 confounds the signal, whereas if you have a requirement that you  
8 submit that before you know whether you are going to be sampled  
9 or not, it enables us to be able to match what was reported at  
10 sea to what was observed on that dock, to be able to look for  
11 reporting errors and do correction factors for those reporting  
12 errors.

13  
14 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** I think what Bonnie is saying is that she  
15 wants us to move at the speed of business this time and get  
16 things done a little quicker. I think, John, it's duly noted  
17 that both Greg and Bonnie want something in this document that's  
18 real time and so I think that's something you would -- If you  
19 could come back and figure that out for us, please.

20  
21 **DR. FROESCHKE:** If you have a chance, look at Alternative 3.  
22 There are two subalternatives. One is the reporting is noon of  
23 the following day and 3b is prior to arriving at the dock. Does  
24 that encapsulate what you are discussing or is something  
25 additional to that needed?

26  
27 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Greg, just follow that up and then I've got  
28 other people.

29  
30 **DR. STUNZ:** Yes, John, that would capture that. I guess Bonnie  
31 made my point better about that, but if you looked at via  
32 computer or the internet, I think that's what I was -- I know  
33 that's addressed later on in the document, but maybe some  
34 verbiage there about other means to enter that much more  
35 quickly, because the biggest complaint we had, and I hear from  
36 the captains, is the last thing they want to do is go log on a  
37 computer after they are cleaning up and preparing for the next  
38 day and so offer some of those options in 3.

39  
40 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** I think Mr. Greene has got something to solve  
41 that problem.

42  
43 **MR. GREENE:** I've got a motion I want to put up. I had emailed  
44 it earlier and it's specifically to what Dr. Stunz is talking  
45 about in Action 3, Subalternative b. **I move to change the**  
46 **language in Subalternative 3b that currently reads "via computer**  
47 **or internet" to read "via National Marine Fisheries Service**  
48 **approved electronic logbook devices".**

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** There is a motion on the board. Do we have a  
3 second to this motion? We have a second from David Walker. Is  
4 there discussion of the motion? It's pretty straightforward.

5  
6 **DR. FROESCHKE:** That would apply to just Alternative -- It would  
7 also apply to Alternative 3a and so would you just want to make  
8 that Alternative 3, rather than a subalternative?

9  
10 **MR. GREENE:** Yes, you're correct. I missed that. Thank you.

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Does the seconder agree with that? All right.  
13 It's not much of a change. Any more discussion on the motion?

14  
15 **MR. DOUG BOYD:** Would that exclude some method of reporting that  
16 may be in the near future?

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** John, any comments on that?

19  
20 **DR. FROESCHKE:** I don't think it would and since I've got the  
21 mic, perhaps what you should do is just to broaden it all the  
22 way and just make it appropriate for this action in general,  
23 because even if you chose a different alternative in this, you  
24 would still likely want that or very similar language and so  
25 perhaps we could just make it a NMFS approved electronic logbook  
26 for each alternative in this action.

27  
28 **MR. BOYD:** My concern is that there may be some limitation with  
29 technology moving so fast and I wouldn't want to limit us to  
30 something that the government is currently doing that may take a  
31 while to change when we have other alternatives available.

32  
33 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** I agree completely, Doug.

34  
35 **DR. FROESCHKE:** For example, in the commercial for VMS and  
36 things, there is a certification process and so long as your  
37 unit meets the qualifications and becomes certified, it is  
38 eligible to be used and it isn't restrictive of someone -- If I  
39 came out with a new one today and I got it certified, I could  
40 use it and so I don't think this would prohibit new things from  
41 coming to the market that are better than what we currently  
42 have.

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** I agree, John. There could be different  
45 options for each boat to utilize. One might like VMS and one  
46 might like iSnapper or different programs that could be  
47 certified by NMFS to use and so I think that would be an ongoing  
48 process, I would assume, and so that should cover the problems,

1 Doug. Any opposition to this motion?  
2

3 **MR. GREENE:** I just wanted to -- I think that Dr. Froeschke had  
4 said is prudent and I think that I would like to modify it just  
5 to change the language in Action 1 or in the document or however  
6 it needs to be. I just want to make sure they're straight with  
7 what we're doing. I think the intent is there, but I am just  
8 trying to get it to reflect on the board.  
9

10 **In Action 1 and then strike the "Alternative 3". I move to**  
11 **change the language in -- Just do it in the document. Just take**  
12 **out "Action 1" and just put it in the document, that should it**  
13 **read anywhere "via a computer or internet" that it's changed to**  
14 **"National Marine Fisheries Service approved electronic logbook**  
15 **devices".**  
16

17 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Does everyone understand the change?  
18

19 **DR. ROY CRABTREE:** That's saying that this is not going to be a  
20 program where you go home and get on your home computer, but I  
21 guess I don't understand changing it broadly like that, because  
22 we have alternatives here to report once a week and so why  
23 couldn't they just get on their home computer and access the  
24 internet? Why would we have to have a NMFS approved logbook if  
25 they are not going to report on the vessel?  
26

27 I can understand a logbook if we're going to have them report  
28 before they hit the dock, but if they're going to report after  
29 they hit the dock, it doesn't seem they need a NMFS approved  
30 logbook to do that, right?  
31

32 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** According to this, yes, you're right. John,  
33 have you got an answer for that?  
34

35 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Most of the applications I would see would kind  
36 of have a complementary PC-based login that you could do and so  
37 they would have a piece of software that you could use from your  
38 home computer that I would view that could be NMFS logbook  
39 approved and I don't see a PC at home being an unapproved device  
40 in this way and so it doesn't seem at odds to me.  
41

42 **MR. MYRON FISCHER:** Mr. Chairman, mine is more from the dumb  
43 side and so my question is who or what is the Science Research  
44 Director?  
45

46 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Dr. Ponwith.  
47

48 **MR. FISCHER:** In one action we discuss sending the information

1 directly there and in another action, we are discussing sending  
2 it through GulfFIN and so I want to make certain that we are not  
3 boxing ourselves in in the first action.

4  
5 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** I agree with you, Myron. I think there is  
6 some motions you will hear later on that will help us with that.

7  
8 **DR. STUNZ:** Mr. Chair, maybe just a point of clarification. I  
9 think this is probably implied, but in that Alternative 1, it  
10 talks about individuals, John, that aren't required and what  
11 they do have to report, but, just to be clear, we're talking  
12 about -- In all of these alternatives, we're talking about --  
13 Like in Alternative 3, we would require that all charter vessels  
14 submit these.

15  
16 In other words, just to alleviate what might be some confusion  
17 from this full census that we're talking about, or maybe I am  
18 confused, but, just to be clear, all of these other  
19 alternatives, other than 1, is talking about everyone is going  
20 to do this.

21  
22 **DR. FROESCHKE:** I guess depending on how you define everyone,  
23 but how I think we are discussing it is federally-permitted  
24 charter boats and so if you have that permit, then this would be  
25 applicable.

26  
27 **DR. STUNZ:** Right and so I am wondering if we just shouldn't, in  
28 a future modification, say something like require that all  
29 federally-permitted charter vessels, for clarification purposes,  
30 in those alternatives, where it's appropriate.

31  
32 **DR. FROESCHKE:** We could certainly add that to the wording.

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** All right. Let's get back. We've got a  
35 motion on the table. It's changed a little bit from the  
36 beginning motion. **Any opposition to the motion on the table?**  
37 **Hearing none, the motion carries.** John.

38  
39 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Next, let's go to the Action 2 on page 11. This  
40 action deals with the data reporting in terms of location, which  
41 we have heard from multiple sources that this is very important  
42 for release mortality and where effort is occurring and all  
43 sorts of things.

44  
45 As you are aware, there are lots of different ways that this  
46 potentially could be done. Some other preliminary discussions  
47 at the South Atlantic side, from what's been communicated to me,  
48 is they have a different idea of what they don't want, which is

1 they are not interested in VMS technology on charter vessels at  
2 this time.

3  
4 It doesn't mean that it couldn't happen in the Gulf by any means  
5 and that's for you all to decide, but just have a look at these  
6 kinds of things and if it's something where we want reports of  
7 primary area fished by a grid, sort of what we do with the  
8 headboats, and it would be a self-reported kind of thing or if  
9 we would rather that information be captured passively by a  
10 device, whether it be VMS or the app or something like that, or  
11 if we wanted to rely really on true VMS and so is there any  
12 discussion on that?

13  
14 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Anybody?

15  
16 **MS. MARA LEVY:** Just a question about Alternative 4. I  
17 understand what you just said about the South Atlantic not  
18 necessarily being interested at this time for doing VMS, but is  
19 there any reason not to structure it like Alternative 3, where  
20 you say require the use of VMS and then have an option for South  
21 Atlantic and Gulf, so there can be an explicit decision and  
22 reason for not doing it in the South Atlantic versus doing it in  
23 the Gulf?

24  
25 **DR. FROESCHKE:** In my view, the way that Alternative 2 and 3 are  
26 worded -- It would be appropriate for Alternative 4 and, again,  
27 this hasn't gone through the full IPT gamut and all that stuff  
28 and so some of this we can work out, but the reason that it is  
29 the way it is is that the South Atlantic -- I don't think they  
30 felt that VMS was in the range of appropriate alternatives for  
31 their region, based on what they feel their needs are, and so  
32 they didn't want that in there and so that's why it's that way  
33 and perhaps Ben or someone could provide a little more insight  
34 from them, but if you feel that it should be changed, please let  
35 us know.

36  
37 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Ben, did you want to chime in on this?

38  
39 **MR. BEN HARTIG:** Yes, Harlon. I mean he's right. I mean  
40 basically we've been told loud and clear by the fishermen in our  
41 area that VMS is not something that they want to use and so  
42 that's why it's been structured as just a Gulf option.

43  
44 Like I say, I mean looking at the way the other subalternatives  
45 are in the other two alternatives, I mean certainly you could do  
46 that, but it's just that we would not do it in the South  
47 Atlantic. I think we wanted to send a strong message from our  
48 fishermen that VMS -- We are not going to entertain VMS in the

1 South Atlantic.

2  
3 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** All right. Thank you. John, do you need a  
4 motion or you can handle this on your own?

5  
6 **DR. FROESCHKE:** I guess I'm not totally clear. Do you want me  
7 to leave it the same or make it different?

8  
9 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Let's hear from the committee.

10  
11 **DR. STUNZ:** I want to add something and I don't have specific  
12 changes to alternatives, but as a scientist, I am certainly not  
13 opposed to collecting more catch location information, but from  
14 a practical standpoint, when you go beyond just generalities,  
15 general locations, the charter captains probably aren't going to  
16 like doing that, but when you start specifying where you are  
17 fishing, that also implies you are going to have to keep  
18 separate catch logs of what you're catching at each location and  
19 before long, that becomes very, very problematic from a data  
20 entry standpoint and it gets very cumbersome.

21  
22 In some of our experiences, you don't want to disenfranchise  
23 them from having ease of entry kind of thing and so while I am  
24 very much for getting location information, I think we need to  
25 make it as simple as possible and as streamlined as possible.  
26 If they're fishing five spots in a day, how you're going to keep  
27 track of all that becomes very difficult.

28  
29 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Thanks for that, but let's go back to  
30 Alternative 3 and 4. Do we want to put a subalternative of in  
31 the Gulf of Mexico and in the South Atlantic as an option on 4?  
32 Any discussion? How does everybody feel? John, I guess no  
33 discussion means we keep it as is.

34  
35 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Okay. To summarize sort of the idea about the  
36 location, and I agree it's complicated, I think the biggest  
37 philosophical difference is do you want the location information  
38 to be specified by a person who reports a general area or do you  
39 want that location collected passively by a device and I guess  
40 the resolution and all that you could work out, but that seems  
41 to be the fundamental difference between Alternative 2 and then  
42 3 and 4.

43  
44 **MR. FISCHER:** I guess my question is what location data -- What  
45 are the needs of the data? Before we vote on -- I know this is  
46 the inception of this paper, but before we get into what  
47 elements we want taken, I think it should come from the top,  
48 meaning it should come from Bonnie's section telling us what we

1 need and not for us to build something with a whole series of  
2 data and find out they use 10 percent of it.

3  
4 I would like to know what's the necessary data points for a  
5 stock assessment and if they're going to use the standard grids  
6 in the Gulf and not the headboat grids, but the statistical  
7 zones, which are roughly sixty-miles across, then we don't have  
8 to micromanage to someone's private individual spot that no one  
9 else has and down to four decimals. I really think things like  
10 that, before we get into the details, we have to know what the  
11 needs are.

12  
13 **DR. PONWITH:** That's really smart, Mr. Fischer, to make sure  
14 that your data collection actually aligns with the questions  
15 that you're asking of the data and so I think that that's a  
16 right-minded way to approach this.

17  
18 The first thing is looking at this and what are we trying to  
19 accomplish? Are we trying to bypass the use of paper, where we  
20 collect data exactly the way we do right now except we don't use  
21 paper, or are we trying to create a completely new and different  
22 approach to the way we account for effort and landings in this  
23 segment of the fishery?

24  
25 If the latter, one of the things that having an electronic  
26 device that gives you location of that vessel does is validates  
27 the effort in addition to the location. Basically, we need  
28 effort to be able to understand what the landings are and if you  
29 see that a boat is afloat, that has a higher probability of  
30 being actual fishing effort than if you see the boat at the  
31 dock.

32  
33 The second thing that those data are for, and it gets back to  
34 Dr. Stunz's comment, and that is knowing the location of those  
35 landings is very, very valuable from a science standpoint and I  
36 don't necessarily think we need to go so far as to assign this  
37 fish right here, Fish Fred, was caught at this depth, but  
38 understanding the distribution of sampling effort in a trip  
39 gives us the ability to understand and assign release mortality  
40 ratios.

41  
42 As you know, our understanding is that there is a gradient in  
43 release mortality that maps to the depth that people were  
44 fishing and if a vessel fishes three different locations, we  
45 don't necessarily need to assign each individual fish to which  
46 location, but knowing that that happened at three different  
47 depths gives us an ability to further refine those discard  
48 mortality ratios.

1  
2 **MR. FISCHER:** Bonnie, one thing we've heard from discussion and  
3 one thing we have to remember, has to be considered, is it's not  
4 the depth the boat was in, but it's the depth the hook was in.  
5 They may be sitting in 200-foot of water and fishing sixty-foot  
6 down and from the videos I've seen and what I've seen personally  
7 in snapper, you could catch them on a fly rod on the surface  
8 these days and so release mortality is not this depth issue it  
9 once was. When the population drops back down, it will be.

10  
11 **MR. GREENE:** I think I'm just going to pass at this point. I am  
12 curious to see what the South Atlantic comes back with. I mean  
13 they're sending a pretty bold statement that they don't want  
14 VMS, but I am curious to see what they are interested in and as  
15 Ben mentioned earlier, they can certainly choose not to pursue  
16 an option that we have laid out in front of us and so that's  
17 really all I've got right at this particular moment.

18  
19 **MR. DONALDSON:** I was just going to ask Ben what options are you  
20 looking at other than VMS?

21  
22 **MR. HARTIG:** We are looking at a tablet. I mean we've had some  
23 presentations on a tablet that has GPS within the tablet, so it  
24 can give you the location. We are not so much looking at the  
25 VMS, but we are looking at locations through GPS and so we are  
26 certainly looking to get location information from this.

27  
28 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Anything else on Action 2?

29  
30 **MR. GREENE:** I just want to go back to Mr. Hartig for a minute  
31 and I want to make sure I understood. You said you were looking  
32 at a tablet that does do location as opposed to a VMS and that's  
33 correct?

34  
35 **MR. HARTIG:** That is correct, Mr. Greene.

36  
37 **MR. DAVID WALKER:** Is this a tablet because of the cost versus  
38 the VMS?

39  
40 **MR. HARTIG:** Yes, that's a good point. There is a cost  
41 associated with the tablet and I am not sure what that is. I  
42 will have to ask Gregg and I will get back with you about that,  
43 but it's been used. In New England, they had a pretty  
44 interesting pilot program and we had an extensive presentation  
45 on it and actually the fishermen designed the tablet.

46  
47 They designed the buttons and they had these bells and whistles  
48 that they wanted in that tablet and that actually helped them

1 participate more in the project, because they were collaborators  
2 in developing that tablet itself and so that helped as well in  
3 the project as far as getting participation and so that's kind  
4 of the direction that we're going in, as we've seen this  
5 presentation. I will get back with you on the cost.

6  
7 **MR. WALKER:** Of course, they're not opposed to like a hail-in  
8 and hail-out and so forth?

9  
10 **MR. HARTIG:** I don't know that we've talked about the hail-in  
11 and hail-out so much, but I may be wrong. Maybe John can answer  
12 that.

13  
14 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Do we need to discuss hail-in and out? Is  
15 this the place for it? If so, just let me know.

16  
17 **DR. FROESCHKE:** One thing I would like your input on regarding  
18 this is there's a little paragraph at the end of page 11 and it  
19 deals with what or how these data from a VMS or any sort of  
20 geolocation device would be used.

21  
22 I think what would be helpful is to have some background, which  
23 I am not privy to necessarily, about how the commercial VMS data  
24 are used, because it's a similar device, and whether it's a law  
25 enforcement tool or do we intend this to be a science tool or  
26 something like that, because I think that could affect your  
27 perspective on what data are collected in terms of what's being  
28 used.

29  
30 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Before we leave this, Mike Eller, are you in  
31 the audience?

32  
33 **MR. MIKE ELLER:** Yes, I'm here.

34  
35 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** You have got a device you wanted to show us  
36 quickly, so there is other alternatives out there.

37  
38 **MR. ELLER:** This is a VMS that came off my boat. It was  
39 installed about a week or so ago. It's also what the partyboats  
40 use for their collaborative effort. It's an Android device and  
41 it Bluetooth's to a little box on my boat. It's about this big  
42 and then that has an antenna.

43  
44 On my boat, there is a little box about this big and then  
45 there's an antenna and that's it. The boat is out fishing right  
46 now and that thing is pinging and it's doing its thing and then  
47 I have the interaction device right here. I could submit his  
48 trip ticket right now from here. This is what they gave me and

1 it's waterproof and it's pretty simple.

2  
3 The greatest thing about is that it's -- The things that you  
4 have to fill out, once you fill it out one time, that's it.  
5 It's done and it saves that and so I don't have to go in there  
6 and put my boat name in there, like I do with a paper logbook,  
7 put my boat name and my boat number and all that stuff.

8  
9 I hit the button and it pulls it up and it's already pre filled  
10 out and then if there's any data that changes for today, I can  
11 enter that in pretty quickly and hit "submit". The future is  
12 here and we've got it and it works really well and it's pretty  
13 basic and it's very, very user friendly.

14

15 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** You are doing that at sea?

16

17 **MR. ELLER:** Yes, sir. That is correct.

18

19 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Thank you for coming up. Any other questions  
20 or anything on Action 2?

21

22 **MR. SANCHEZ:** I am just curious. How specific are these GPS  
23 coordinates that you're interested in, because it seems like a  
24 fisherman works all his life to find his spots in areas that are  
25 kind of likened to a business trade secret and then for you to  
26 just be putting them out there and God knows where they're going  
27 to go, there is some reluctance.

28

29 We seem to manage other things in very large square-mile grids  
30 and I am just curious to see how this is going to evolve into  
31 something extremely specific or not.

32

33 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** I know in discussions with what Bonnie has  
34 said, it's important they know the pretty much exact areas to  
35 help them with their management tools and also in the last  
36 paragraph, the vessel location would be treated as highly-  
37 confidential information and so it's something that's not public  
38 information and it's not public knowledge. I think those two  
39 together kind of make it work. Any other discussions on Action  
40 2? All right, John Froeschke, what else?

41

42 **DR. FROESCHKE:** The next thing I have for you is Action 3 and it  
43 says to amend the Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper  
44 Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Atlantic Dolphin and  
45 Wahoo to specify certain aspects of reporting for for-hire  
46 vessels.

47

48 What this is really outlining, that we haven't talked much

1 about, is specifying a flow of data. I talked a little bit with  
2 Harlon this morning about this and so there are a couple of  
3 alternatives in here and we won't go into the details unless you  
4 want to, but I think there are two ways.

5  
6 One is we could do something like this and you could specify the  
7 data go from here to here to here and then it ultimately ends up  
8 at Bonnie's office for use or we could do something where we  
9 provide what we want at the end. We want it to be available at  
10 this quality at this time and let the process evolve how it does  
11 to accomplish what you all request.

12  
13 The other thing regarding this is would we want to address this  
14 sort of flow thing to charter boats and headboats or just  
15 charter boats and address headboats at a later time in a  
16 different amendment?

17  
18 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** A quick question. Myron, does this satisfy  
19 your GulfFIN thought or is there someplace else we need to put  
20 it?

21  
22 **MR. FISCHER:** No, it's fine.

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** You're fine? Okay.

25  
26 **MR. GREENE:** I had a motion I wanted to put up under Action 3  
27 and it will be the third motion that I had sent to staff earlier  
28 and it's going to work on Subalternative 3a. Basically, it's  
29 just going to incorporate the GulfFIN into the process. If I  
30 could get staff to pull the third motion I had sent to you.

31  
32 I will go ahead and read it for you. **It says I move to change**  
33 **the following language of Subalternative 3a. Number 1, in line**  
34 **i, include GulfFIN so that the line reads "National Marine**  
35 **Fisheries Service and/or ACCSP or GulfFIN". Number 2, in line**  
36 **v, include language that states "devices that can transmit data**  
37 **from sea". Number 3, add a line 6 that states "National Marine**  
38 **Fisheries Service is to specify data elements necessary for**  
39 **vessels to report that are equal to or greater than reporting**  
40 **requirements of the federally-permitted headboats".**

41  
42 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Okay. Do we have a second to the motion?  
43 David.

44  
45 **MS. LEVY:** Just a minor point. So I assume you want to change  
46 the language in 3, right? Because then 3a and b give you the  
47 choice of charter boat and headboat, but it's really 3 that you  
48 want to change.

1  
2 **MR. GREENE:** Yes and that's the same mistake I made earlier and  
3 that's correct.

4  
5 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Are you okay with that, David? Okay. Thank  
6 you, Mara. Is there discussion?

7  
8 **DR. FROESCHKE:** I guess just to broaden this discussion a little  
9 bit, do you have any guidance on whether you would like to  
10 restrict the document entirely to just charter boats at this  
11 time and address headboats later, to simplify and keep us from  
12 getting off the path, or is this something you would want to  
13 consider incorporating headboat in various actions where it's  
14 appropriate? If not, we could just make perhaps some sort of  
15 broad motion that we want to just address charterboats now.

16  
17 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Do you want to handle this one and maybe come  
18 back to that, Johnny?

19  
20 **MR. GREENE:** We will get to that I guess as we go through this.  
21 I was just trying to use the headboats as the data that -- The  
22 reporting requirements that they're using kind of is similar to  
23 what we're trying to do as well.

24  
25 **MR. BOYD:** Just a question. I am not sure I really understand  
26 what we're doing here. Are we saying that we might propose or  
27 we would propose to have different types of reporting for  
28 charter boats and headboats, when we're talking about a common  
29 recreational fish?

30  
31 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Right now, they are not together. They are  
32 independent and that is what John Froeschke is talking about, is  
33 to pull them together, so they are under the same program.

34  
35 **MR. DONALDSON:** Wouldn't it make it simpler if we included both  
36 headboats and charter boats, so they are both reporting?  
37 Because they are both for-hire vessels and obviously there is  
38 some characteristics between the two types of vessels, but I  
39 would think it would make it simpler if we just included both  
40 headboats and charter boats.

41  
42 **MR. BOYD:** That's my question also, because by having two  
43 subalternatives, one for charter and one for headboat, you are  
44 implying that you can have separate types of reporting and  
45 implicit in any reporting is going to be the intercepts and  
46 dockside validation and enforcement and I don't think you want  
47 to have separate reporting methods for enforcement at some point  
48 in time.

1  
2 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** I agree with both of you guys. Johnny, do you  
3 have something later on that you're going to present that's  
4 going to do this?

5  
6 **MR. GREENE:** Yes and I am just trying to get my notes.

7  
8 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Do you want to get through this one and then  
9 come to the next one or what do you want to do?

10  
11 **MR. GREENE:** Let's see what Dr. Froeschke has got.

12  
13 **DR. FROESCHKE:** One challenge is that we currently have  
14 different reporting requirements for charter boats and headboats  
15 and if you recall when we started revising the current headboat  
16 requirements to what they are now two or three years ago,  
17 originally we discussed if we would want to just address this  
18 for charter boats and headboats at the same time.

19  
20 After some preliminary discussions, you all decided that no,  
21 they are different both in the number of vessels that are  
22 affected -- It's an order of magnitude different, but the  
23 biggest difference is the headboats were reporting through the  
24 Headboat Survey Program, whereas the charter boats were not.

25  
26 I think that's the reason why we discussed whether or not -- One  
27 thing that concerns me is I wouldn't want to run into something  
28 that we hadn't thought about and then get tangled up and delayed  
29 and so that would be, I guess, one rationale for just doing  
30 charterboats, but you're right that it certainly could be done  
31 both ways. I don't know if that would lead to some  
32 complications that I am not anticipating.

33  
34 **DR. CRABTREE:** That was going to be my point, that you already  
35 have separate reporting methods for charter boats and headboats.  
36 You already have electronic reporting on the headboats and  
37 whether you want to make changes to that or not, I don't know,  
38 but I would think you would want to look at how well the  
39 headboat program is performing right now before you start  
40 changing it again, but you have had, for many years, separate  
41 reporting methods for the two fleets.

42  
43 **MR. GREENE:** To Dr. Crabtree's point, I think he's right and  
44 that's why when I was putting this together that I wanted to  
45 make sure it was either greater than or equal to what the  
46 headboats have done. That seems like it's worked pretty well  
47 and that was my attempt here to do that and I may need to just  
48 circle back and pick this up a little bit later, but I mean I

1 certainly think that we're trying to combine them, I would  
2 assume, although having separate requirements is something we're  
3 going to have to work through.

4

5 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Any other discussion?

6

7 **MR. FISCHER:** What are the requirements for headboats, being  
8 it's part of the motion? I don't know what the requirements  
9 are.

10

11 **DR. FROESCHKE:** I don't know the flow off the top of my head.  
12 We could certainly find that out and get back to you, but in  
13 terms of the -- To me, the crux of the matter is the reporting  
14 timing and the headboats are weekly, with reports due one week  
15 after. That part is relevant.

16

17 **MR. FISCHER:** The motion says to specify the data elements and I  
18 would like to know what the data elements are before I vote on  
19 it and that's all I was getting to.

20

21 **DR. FROESCHKE:** I don't have those at the tips of my fingers.  
22 We could get them and one of the things that I mentioned earlier  
23 is perhaps another course of action, instead of getting into  
24 this part, is to allow that to be worked out in conjunction with  
25 the Science Center and you specify the output, the management  
26 metrics, that you all are interested in in terms of timing.

27

28 If the elements are exhaustive, but they don't get you what you  
29 need in the time to make the decisions that you require, that  
30 doesn't do you any good and so I think you could do it a  
31 different way if you chose and I am not even suggesting that you  
32 need to decide that now.

33

34 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Remember we are in the early stages of this  
35 whole document and so we're trying to shape it right now.

36

37 **DR. PONWITH:** The way this action is worded, it doesn't seem to  
38 match what the alternatives are. The action says to specify  
39 certain aspects of reporting for for-hire vessels. Certain  
40 aspects. Then Alternative 1 says there is no time for the data  
41 to be made available to the public and the councils and then  
42 Alternative 2 says specify the following data flow and there is  
43 no mention of the councils and there is no mention of the  
44 public.

45

46 You have two things that seem completely disconnected from one  
47 another and then Alternative 3 says to specify the following  
48 aspects of data reporting and so I don't know whether you are

1 getting at flow or whether you are getting at timing the way  
2 this is structured.

3  
4 My view is this needs a lot of work to be able to bring clarity  
5 and so there is point number one and point number two is it  
6 seems odd, to me, to dictate the data flow in a regulatory  
7 amendment. It seems odd to me.

8  
9 It seems less odd to say we are regulating the fishing fleet to  
10 have this desired outcome and I am concerned about regulating  
11 the flow of what direction the data go in what steps as opposed  
12 to saying the council's desire is to have a weekly estimate of  
13 what landings are in-season, so we know whether the fishery  
14 needs to be open or needs to be closed.

15  
16 That is the kind of question that I think should be answered and  
17 then if you put your requirements in, what is the council's aim,  
18 and you put that in as a requirement, then it becomes a  
19 technical task to figure out what are the many ways of achieving  
20 that requirement and, of those, which one is the most  
21 affordable, the most expedient, the most advisable?

22  
23 It is concerning to see those interim steps put in a regulation  
24 and so I think it would strengthen the document to have a  
25 clarity in the title of what that action is intended to do and  
26 then some continuity in the actions so each of those actions can  
27 be connected to the action or the alternatives can be properly  
28 connected to the action that's stated.

29  
30 That's the flow issue and then in the timing, timing is  
31 mentioned, but I don't see a lot on timing in here and it could  
32 be that the other action, where we talked about the timing of  
33 the reporting, was mentioned, but I am not seeing a lot of  
34 timing in this one and so I think it's a matter of thinking  
35 about what you want to achieve in terms of timing and stating it  
36 explicitly.

37  
38 **MR. GREENE:** I guess I am guilty of just trying to give too much  
39 information and trying to do too many things at once here. With  
40 that, I want to modify the motion and just delete Number 3 on  
41 the board and that should clarify it a little bit. I was just  
42 trying to add in the option for GulfFIN, after going to the Gulf  
43 States meeting the other day. I just wanted to make sure that  
44 option was there if they chose to use it. Then Number 2 is  
45 pretty simple, but that's my motion, Mr. Chair.

46  
47 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Does the seconder agree? Okay.

48

1 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Just building off of Bonnie's comment, one thing  
2 that could be done is Gregg Waugh just emailed me and he  
3 reminded me that the reason the flow information I think is  
4 probably in there is that that was sort of a sketch of what was  
5 recommended from the technical subcommittee report.

6  
7 It doesn't necessarily mean, at least from my view, that it  
8 needs to be a regulation, apart from whatever consequence that  
9 it may happen. It seems like if you have it as a regulatory  
10 thing and you come up with some new and better flow, then it  
11 might slow down your ability to incorporate that in.

12  
13 One way to maybe address this is to strike the Action 3 as we  
14 have it and craft a new action entirely that focuses more on  
15 what you want out of it and the timing and leave that part to  
16 whomever else is best. Just focus on the deliverables instead  
17 of the mechanism.

18  
19 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** All right. Are we all thoroughly confused  
20 now?

21  
22 **DR. CRABTREE:** Is there a motion on the board anymore?

23  
24 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** There still is.

25  
26 **MS. LEVY:** I am just going to agree with that, that the issue  
27 with being so specific about something like a process, number  
28 one. Whether the process can actually happen the way you're  
29 saying it should, I don't know.

30  
31 Once you have it in your FMP that this is the process, that if  
32 anything happens that you want to change that process, you have  
33 to go back and go through the FMP amendment or something to  
34 change it and it seems more advisable to address what you want  
35 the regulated community to do, what do you want the permitted  
36 vessels to do and how you want them to do it, rather than how  
37 that information will be funneled through to someplace like the  
38 Science Center.

39  
40 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** We have a motion on the board and let's get  
41 some closure on this motion. Any more discussion before I shut  
42 the door? **Hearing none, all in favor of the motion raise your**  
43 **hands, two; all opposed raise your hand, three. The motion**  
44 **fails.**

45  
46 **DR. CRABTREE:** I only voted against it because I am not sure  
47 what it does, but I am coming back to what Mara said and others.  
48 I am just not sure we need this level of specificity in here.

1 We ought to be focused on how we want them to report and how  
2 quickly they want to report and those kinds of things, what  
3 units we want them to use. I don't see why we need to get into  
4 this level of detail.

5

6 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Got you. Dr. Froeschke, what's next?

7

8 **DR. FROESCHKE:** That's pretty much what I have at this time. I  
9 think you guys have had a really good discussion and so that  
10 gives us a lot of information that we can bring to the IPT and  
11 refine these. I guess do you want to give us some formal  
12 guidance about what to do with Action 3 in its entirety and if  
13 you would prefer us to come back with a revised action that  
14 deals more with deliverables and timing rather than nuts and  
15 bolts?

16

17 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** What is the pleasure of the committee? I  
18 think everybody must just be hungry or something.

19

20 **MR. GREENE:** I think we need to do what Dr. Froeschke is saying.  
21 I think that it makes a lot of sense and I want to look at it  
22 the way he's laid it out. I can offer some other stuff if he  
23 wants. I mean I want it to kind of get into some idea of how to  
24 handle people not reporting and that kind of stuff, but it may  
25 be too early. I was just trying to help it along as much as  
26 possible.

27

28 What are you looking for? Do you want more information from us?  
29 I can give you information until tomorrow, probably, and really  
30 slow things down, but I don't want to be too specific like I  
31 just attempted to be there earlier as well.

32

33 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** The only question I still have is Dr.  
34 Froeschke is asking us if we want to tie the charter boats, the  
35 private charters, with the headboats together and I would like  
36 to hear discussion on that before we get away, so he's got some  
37 ideas of what to do. No discussion?

38

39 **MR. GREENE:** Well, I mean I am curious to see the report from  
40 the headboat program. From everything that I've heard on the  
41 dock and offshore fishing, it seems like it's worked pretty well  
42 and most of the headboat users seem to like it. Now, I mean  
43 Captain Randy Boggs is out there and he might could speak to  
44 that.

45

46 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** I am going to ask Randy to come up, Johnny, if  
47 that's okay. Randy Boggs, can you come up and tell us about  
48 your program and any problems? I've got ten minutes left, Mr.

1 Chair.

2  
3 **MR. RANDY BOGGS:** With the headboat program that we're doing  
4 right now, we report daily instead of weekly. It's all  
5 computerized now and there's a smartphone app you can do it  
6 with. We have the same VMS that they're using on the commercial  
7 boats. We had very little to no reporting issues.

8  
9 There is a couple of things in there that we would like to see  
10 changed to maybe make it a little bit simpler, but it's no big  
11 deal to do, because you can do it on your cellphone or you can  
12 do it from the computer in your office or wherever you're at.  
13 It makes it really, really easy to work with.

14  
15 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** As a headboat, do you think we should put the  
16 headboats and the private charter boats under the same reporting  
17 program?

18  
19 **MR. BOGGS:** The headboats have always been held separate because  
20 we report to the Beaufort Center and so I think it would be --  
21 If you mirrored the headboat thing, I would be simpler, or  
22 expand the Beaufort Program to include them, but that's up to  
23 the Science Center and Beaufort, but I mean it is considered the  
24 best information available.

25  
26 **MR. KEVIN ANSON:** Just, Randy, you're talking about the Headboat  
27 Collaborative as far as your daily reporting and is there much  
28 difference between --

29  
30 **MR. BOGGS:** If you're not in the program, then it's weekly and I  
31 think it has to be completed within seven days of the final and  
32 so there is a small lag time.

33  
34 **MR. ANSON:** Is that also electronic? Is that through like an  
35 app or is that just by fax or how is that?

36  
37 **MR. BOGGS:** It is all electronic. You can do it on your  
38 computer or you can do it on your telephone app and we still  
39 have some of the old paper forms around and we keep up with them  
40 and we still keep them on the old paper forms just in case  
41 something goes wrong and we have to reproduce it, but that's  
42 just in my company for safeguards.

43  
44 **MR. DONALDSON:** As I stated earlier, and I realize that we've  
45 had different reporting systems in the past, but it just seems  
46 like a good opportunity to combine those and simplify things.

47  
48 However, if it's not going to simplify things and complicate it,

1 I certainly don't want to put more burden on the industry, but I  
2 think we ought to look at the possibility of if we combine the  
3 two, headboat and charter boat. If we can do it the same way,  
4 then it seems like a simpler way to do it.

5  
6 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Randy, thank you. John, I am hearing at least  
7 Dave say that we would like to look at the possibility of  
8 combining them together and so you can think about that as you  
9 move forward in the document.

10  
11 **MR. FISCHER:** I guess I have two questions. One is where are we  
12 in this document? We are just creating a paper that maybe after  
13 next meeting we may all agree to and it goes out for scoping?  
14 Would that seem close?

15  
16 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Perfect timing. What I was going to refer you  
17 to is page 16.

18  
19 **MR. FISCHER:** But I had a second one. The timing may not be --

20  
21 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Okay. It was just regarding the timing of the  
22 document.

23  
24 **MR. FISCHER:** Right and my timing may not be perfect on my  
25 second question and it was to Dave, because I was not at the  
26 Gulf States meeting and don't know what the TC agreed to, but  
27 you did have the five state directors and their data, with input  
28 from the data people in their home states, and I just wanted to  
29 know what decisions they may have made and how it works into  
30 what we're using, some of this information here.

31  
32 **MR. DONALDSON:** Are you referring to the NFWF RFP that's -- I  
33 mean we talked about -- The five state directors talked about  
34 looking at developing a reporting tool for federally-permitted  
35 vessels through NFWF. I know there is other groups that are  
36 submitting proposals as well, but we are examining the  
37 possibility of doing that. We haven't made a decision yet.

38  
39 **MR. FISCHER:** Okay and I am not sure what part of the meeting it  
40 was, because I was not at the meeting, but I heard some talk  
41 about the table briefly about attending and John said he was in  
42 attendance and I would like to make sure that whatever elements  
43 and whatever comes out of that is not excluded and that it's at  
44 least included in some type of way.

45  
46 **DR. FROESCHKE:** If we could just quickly look at page 16, it has  
47 the timing and the reason I ask this is Carrie Simmons just  
48 reminded me -- She is Deputy Direct-ing from afar, but the

1 timeline that we have on here essentially says that we would  
2 bring back a document that you could approve for public hearings  
3 in June.

4  
5 If we were to do that, I think we would need to have the actions  
6 reasonably well ironed out and I am still not certain about what  
7 your intent is about Action 3 or how we might bring that back to  
8 you at the next meeting and so I guess it's a two-part question.

9  
10 One is are you comfortable with the proposed timeline? If so,  
11 could we, either now or at full council, get some more guidance  
12 on Action 3?

13  
14 **MR. DONALDSON:** Action 3 -- As it was pointed out, I am  
15 concerned about putting it in this particular document because  
16 it could potentially tie our hands on how we want to do things.  
17 However, I think it's very important that data flow and those  
18 issues that are raised are addressed and I guess my question is  
19 where can we address those issues? If not in this document,  
20 where would that be appropriate?

21  
22 **MS. LEVY:** I think it can be addressed in the document. If you  
23 recall when we had the dealer reporting amendment where we went  
24 to electronic reporting, it wasn't a decision point. It wasn't  
25 a how do you want the data to flow? It was weekly requirements  
26 and this is what's going to be used and there was a description  
27 about how the data flows at that time, because that's what was  
28 going to happen. You would include it, but it just wouldn't be  
29 a decision point as to we want it to specifically flow in this  
30 way for all time.

31  
32 **MR. DONALDSON:** Then I think that that's how Action 3 needs to  
33 be presented, as a discussion and this is how we would like to  
34 see it, but not necessarily as action points.

35  
36 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Good point. Dr. Froeschke, any comment to  
37 that?

38  
39 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Sure. I think that the idea is when -- The flow  
40 and things perhaps the reason that you created the technical  
41 subcommittee in the beginning, is to hash out that stuff and  
42 provide guidance, which was done without obligating yourself  
43 forever in a regulatory thing, which seems now to have been a  
44 good way to go.

45  
46 If we provided the discussion and rationale in Action 3, I am  
47 not certain what the actions would be or alternatives at this  
48 point. If it was just rationale, if that was just something

1 that we would cover and the flow and the reporting is part of  
2 the rationale that we always do or if there is some actual  
3 management alternatives that we would be thinking about in terms  
4 of timing or something.

5  
6 **DR. PONWITH:** I have a suggestion and that is rather than  
7 getting down into the weeds about the design of this  
8 interworking of where the data go and in what chain, I think it  
9 would be a really valuable piece of input to that technical  
10 subcommittee -- These were the people named by the councils and  
11 by the states and by the FIN folks and by the fed to look at how  
12 do we tackle this long-term.

13  
14 They are really smart and capable people and my view if the best  
15 gift you could give them as the council is to say what are you  
16 trying to do? What do you want to be the outcome at the end of  
17 the day? Is that outcome the ability to make in-season course  
18 corrections if the burn rate of landings within that sector of  
19 the recreational fishery changes fast enough to be able to make  
20 a change to the way the fishery operates?

21  
22 I mean those are the kinds of things that I think would be  
23 valuable in this. What is the council trying to do and what  
24 kind of reporting rate would lend itself to enabling the council  
25 to do that?

26  
27 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Thank you, Bonnie. John, does that finish  
28 your report?

29  
30 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Yes, for now. Perhaps between now and full  
31 council we can hash it out in our brains a little bit and make  
32 sure that we're all on the same page moving forward.

33  
34 **CHAIRMAN PEARCE:** Thank you, John. Unless there is any other  
35 questions to come before the committee, we have done the  
36 business of the committee and the committee stands adjourned.

37  
38 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m., March 30,  
39 2015.)

40  
41 - - -

42

**Data Collection Committee: Action Schedule for Tab E**

**Discussion:** Electronic Charter Boat Reporting Recommendations Discussion Paper

**Council Input and Next Steps:**

- Consider if amendment should be split into separate charter and headboat amendments.
- Seek guidance from SEFSC on merits/effects of proposed Action 4.
- Discuss and provide guidance on range of actions and alternatives.
- Feedback on proposed Action 3 Alternatives, i.e., logbooks linked to vessel location; need input from science center on intended use. (catch/effort at trip/site/day/week level)

**Discussion:** Discussion of MRIP Fishing Effort Survey and Transition Plan.

# Modifications to Charter Vessel and Headboat Reporting Requirements



## Draft Generic Amendment to the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, South Atlantic Dolphin Wahoo, and Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic

June 2015



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# COVER SHEET

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## ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

ACL	Annual Catch Limit
AM	Accountability Measure
AVHRR	Advanced Very High Resolution Radiometer
Council	Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
CMP	Coastal Migratory Pelagics of the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ELog	Electronic Logbook
EJ	Environmental Justice
E.O.	Executive Order
FMP	Fishery Management Plan
Gulf	Gulf of Mexico
MMPA	Marine Mammal Protection Act
MRIP	Marine Recreational Information Program
NAO	NOAA's Administrative Order
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OY	Optimum Yield
RA	Regional Administrator
RFA	Regulatory Flexibility Act
RFAA	Regulatory Flexibility Act Analysis
RIR	Regulatory Impact Review
Secretary	Secretary of Commerce
SEDAR	Southeast Data Assessment and Review
SEFSC	Southeast Fisheries Science Center
SRD	Science and Research Director
SRHS	Southeast Region Headboat Survey

# CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) requires the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and regional fishery management councils to end overfishing, rebuild overfished stocks, and achieve, on a continuing basis, the optimum yield (OY) from federally managed fish stocks. These mandates are intended to ensure fishery resources are managed for the greatest overall benefit to the nation, particularly with respect to providing food production, recreational opportunities, and protecting marine ecosystems.

Accurate fisheries information about catch, effort, and discards is necessary to achieve OY from federally managed fish stocks. The for-hire component of the recreational sector harvests a substantial proportion of the annual catch limit (ACL) for several federally managed fish species in the management areas for the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils. The for-hire component of the recreational component includes headboats and charter vessels. Headboats carry recreational anglers where passage is charged on a per angler, or per head, basis. Charter vessels also carry recreational anglers but fees are paid for chartering the vessel rather than paying individual angler fees. In general headboats are larger and carry 15 or more passengers whereas charter vessels generally carry six or fewer passengers.

## 1.1 Background

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council) and South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (South Atlantic Council) are considering alternatives that would change the method, frequency, and required data elements of fishery data reporting by for-hire operators. The Councils are considering several changes that would require electronic reporting for the Reef Fish, Snapper Grouper, Dolphin Wahoo, and Coastal Migratory Pelagic (CMP) species for this component of the recreational sector. The Councils recognize that improved data reporting in these fisheries could reduce the likelihood that ACLs are exceeded and accountability measures (AMs) are triggered. Additional data elements that could be collected could also improve estimates of discard mortality and species discarded as bycatch. These metrics are not currently well estimated or characterized under the current reporting requirements. The harvest from charter vessels contributes to recreational landings that count towards the recreational ACLs and quotas. Charter vessel landings and discards are monitored with the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) a voluntary dockside intercept survey. Effort is calculated based on a monthly phone sample (10%) of federally permitted charter vessels in each Councils jurisdiction. Headboats (catch and effort) are monitored through the Southeast Regional Headboat Survey (SRHS) administered by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC).

The current for-hire data collection and monitoring system is reported in 2 month waves for all Gulf and South Atlantic States, except Texas. Texas has an independent monitoring program that reports data in two activity periods (high and low). Texas landings are subsequently converted to waves for management use. This current combination of data collection and monitoring systems is inadequate for in-season monitoring for stocks with short recreational seasons, resulting in large ACL (quota) overruns. Also, the survey methods (i.e., catch and effort

estimates) can be imprecise for some species leading to greater scientific and management uncertainty that requires larger buffers to prevent ACL overages and may prevent the OY from consistently being achieved. The proposed changes could reduce uncertainty in catch (i.e., landings and discards) and effort data for this component of the recreational fishery increasing the likelihood that the OY will be achieved and ACL overages will be avoided.

### ***Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council***

- Responsible for conservation and management of fish stocks
- Consists of 17 voting members: 11 appointed by the Secretary of Commerce; 1 representative from each of the 5 Gulf states, the Southeast Regional Director of National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS); and 4 non-voting members
- Responsible for developing fishery management plans and amendments, and recommends actions to NMFS for implementation

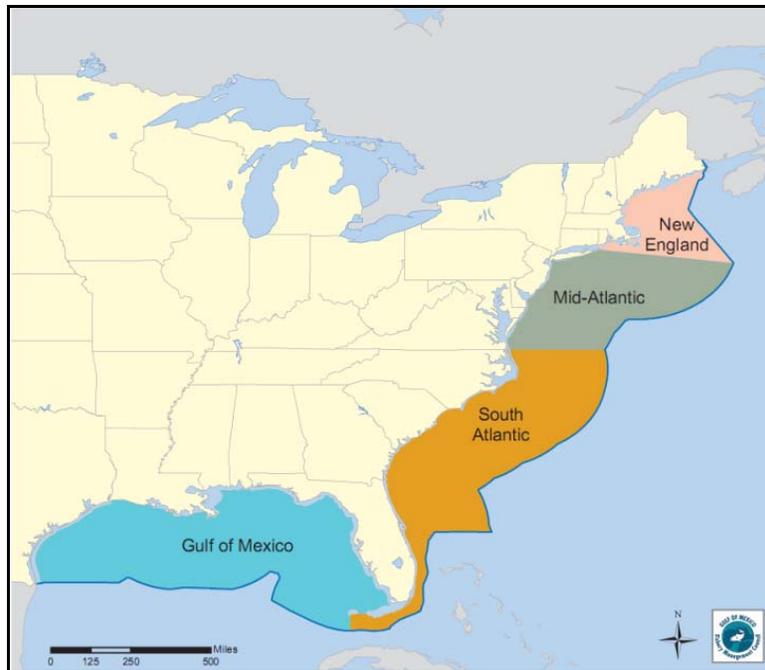
### ***South Atlantic Fishery Management Council***

- Responsible for conservation and management of fish stocks
- Consists of 13 voting members: 8 appointed by the Secretary of Commerce, 1 representative from each of the 4 South Atlantic states, the Southeast Regional Director of NMFS; and 4 non-voting members
- Responsible for developing fishery management plans and amendments, and recommends actions to NMFS for implementation

### ***National Marine Fisheries Service***

- Responsible for data needed by the Councils for management
- Responsible for conservation and management of fish stocks
- Approves, disapproves, or partially approves Council recommendations
- Implements regulations

This amendment affects headboat and charter vessel reporting requirements for species managed in the Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) for Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico (reef fish), Snapper Grouper of the South Atlantic, South Atlantic Dolphin Wahoo and CMPs (Figure 1.1.1).



**Figure 1.1.1.** Jurisdictional boundaries of the Gulf of Mexico (blue), South Atlantic (orange), Mid-Atlantic (MAFMC; green), and New England (NEFMC; peach) Fishery Management Councils.

## 1.2 Purpose and Need

The *purpose* of the Generic Modifications to Charter Vessel and Headboat Reporting Requirements Amendment is to increase the accuracy and timeliness of landings, discards, and effort of for-hire vessels participating in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic regions.

The *need* for this action is to improve charter vessel and headboat fishery data used for stock assessments and to improve monitoring and compliance of for-hire vessels in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic regions.

## 1.3 What is a Charter Vessel?

A charter vessel is less than 100 gross tons (90.8 metric tons) that meets the requirements of the U.S. Coast Guard to carry six or fewer passengers on a for-hire trip and possess at least one of the following valid permits: Gulf charter/headboat reef fish, South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper, South Atlantic Dolphin Wahoo, Coastal Migratory Pelagic, or Highly Migratory Species

([http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/compliance/guides/documents/8\\_rec\\_compliance\\_guide\\_charter.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/compliance/guides/documents/8_rec_compliance_guide_charter.pdf)).

## 1.4 What is a Headboat?

Headboats are generally defined as vessels that hold a valid Certificate of Inspection issued by the U.S. Coast Guard to carry more than six passengers for hire and possess a valid for-hire permit. In the Gulf, this definition was modified by the Southeast Regional Headboat Survey (SRHS) to include only large capacity vessels that sell passage to recreational anglers primarily as headboats (i.e., charges by the “head”). Currently, a vessel is selected by the Science and Research Director (SRD) to participate in the SRHS if it meets all, or a combination, of these criteria:

- 1) Vessel licensed to carry  $\geq 15$  passengers (Gulf);  $\geq 6$  (South Atlantic).
- 2) Vessel fishes in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) or state and adjoining waters for federally managed species.
- 3) Vessel charges primarily per angler (i.e., by the “head”).

The number of headboats surveyed in the SRHS by state between 2010 and 2015 is provided in **Table 1.4.1** (Gulf) and **Table 1.4.2** (South Atlantic).

**Table 1.4.1.** Total number of headboats in the Gulf of Mexico participating in the SRHS 2010-2015. Note: federal for-hire permits are under moratorium in the Gulf of Mexico.

Year	AL	FL	LA	MS	TX	Total
2010	7	38	4	3	16	68
2011	8	35	4	5	17	69
2012	9	34	4	5	16	68
2013	9	36	3	5	16	69
2014	9	37	2	5	16	69
2015	9	37	2	5	16	69

**Table 1.4.2.** Total number of headboats in the South Atlantic participating in the SRHS 2010-2015.

Year	FL	GA	NC	SC	Total
2010	47	3	10	20	80
2011	43	3	10	21	77
2012	43	3	11	21	78
2013	44	3	11	18	76
2014	45	3	10	18	76
2015	46	3	9	18	76

Note: Similar tables for charter vessels are under development.

## 1.5 History of Management

### Gulf Reef Fish

The following amendments to the FMP for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico contained actions that pertained to the for hire sector including permit and reporting requirements. For a complete history of management for the Reef Fish fishery, see Appendix X.

Amendment 11 (1996) to the Reef Fish FMP (implemented in 1996) required that charter vessels and headboats fishing in the Gulf EEZ have federal permits when fishing.

Amendment 20 (2002) to the Reef Fish FMP was submitted to NMFS in June 2001 and approved in May 2002. The amendment established a three-year moratorium on the issuance of charter vessel or headboat (for hire) permits for the reef fish fishery, coastal migratory pelagics in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the Gulf. NMFS promulgated the charter moratorium regulations (67 FR, 43558, June 28, 2002) to implement Amendment 14 to the CMP FMP and Reef Fish FMP and Amendment 20 to the Reef Fish FMP. However, after reviewing the administrative record, NMFS determined that the amendments contained an error that did not correctly reflect the actions approved by the Council. Thus, the regulations implementing the amendments also contained this error, and not all persons entitled to receive charter vessel/headboat (for-hire) permits under the moratorium approved by the Council would be able to receive permits under the promulgated regulations.

#### **Emergency Rule (2002<sup>[KG1]</sup>)**

The regulations promulgated under the charter vessel moratorium (67 FR 43558, June 28, 2002), also require all charter vessel/headboat operators in the Gulf EEZ have a valid limited access "moratorium permit," as opposed to the prior open access charter permit, beginning December 26, 2002. If these limited access permits had not been issued prior to this date, all legal fishing activities conducted by the recreational for-hire sector in the Gulf EEZ would have closed. Cessation of these fishing operations would have resulted in severe social and economic disruption to the for-hire sector and those coastal communities dependent on these fisheries. To ensure that no qualified participants in the fisheries were wrongfully excluded under the moratorium, due to an error in the rule, and to fully comply with Magnuson-Stevens Act requirements, NMFS promulgated an emergency rule (67 FR 77193, December 17, 2002) that extended certain permit-related deadlines contained in the final rule implementing the charter vessel/headboat permit moratorium for reef fish and coastal migratory pelagic fish in the Gulf. The emergency rule: 1) deferred the date for having a "moratorium permit" aboard vessels operating in these fisheries until June 16, 2003; 2) automatically extended the expiration date of valid or renewable "open access" permits for these fisheries until June 16, 2003; 3) extended the deadline for issuance of "moratorium permits" to no later than June 6, 2003; and 4) extended the deadline for resolution of appeals to February 18, 2003, or 30 days after an oral hearing, if applicable. Additionally, the emergency rule allowed those persons who were ineligible under the promulgated regulations to receive their open access charter vessel/headboat permits until they can obtain a new permit under the revised moratorium eligibility criteria approved by the Council.

Amendment 25 (2006) establishes a limited access system on for-hire reef fish and CMP permits. Permits are renewable and transferable in the same manner as currently prescribed for such permits. The Council will have periodic review at least every 10 years on the effectiveness of the limited access system.

Amendment 30B (2009) requires that all vessels with federal commercial or charter reef fish permits must comply with the more restrictive of state or federal reef fish regulations when fishing in state waters.

Amendment 34 (2012) addresses crew size limits for dually permitted vessels. Dually permitted vessels are vessels with both a charter for-hire permit and a commercial reef fish permit. The amendment eliminates the earned income qualification requirement for the renewal of commercial reef fish permits and increases the maximum crew size from three to four.

Framework Action (2013) modified the frequency of the headboat reporting to be on a weekly basis (or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD) via electronic reporting, and will be due by 11:59 p.m., local time, the Sunday following a reporting week. If no fishing activity occurs during a reporting week, and electronic report so stating must be submitted for that week.

### **Snapper Grouper FMP for the South Atlantic**

The following amendments to the FMP for the Snapper-Grouper fishery of the South Atlantic contained actions that pertained to the for hire sector including permit and reporting requirements. For a complete history of management for the snapper-grouper fishery in the South Atlantic, see Appendix X.

Amendment 4 (1991) established a permit requirement for for hire vessels and specified data collection regulations. Amendment 4 also designated prohibited gear, defined overfishing and established rebuilding timeframes, established gear marking requirements for black sea bass traps, size limits, bag limits and spawning season closures.

Amendment 7 (1994) established dealer permits for both charter and headboats, allowed sale under specified conditions, and adjusted bag limits and crew specifications for charter and headboats. Amendment 7 also adjusted specified size limits for hogfish and mutton snapper, modified the management unit to include scup and specified allowable gear and made allowances for experimental gear.

Amendment 16 (2009) established a prohibition on captain and crew on for-hire trips retaining the bag limit of vermilion snapper and species within the 3-fish grouper aggregate. Amendment 16 also specified allocations for gag and vermilion snapper, required dehooking tools for sea turtle bycatch, established a spawning season closure for gag and a reduced bag limit and recreational closed season for vermilion. Directed commercial quotas were also established for both gag and vermilion snapper.

Amendment 15 B (2008) prohibited the sale of bag-limit caught snapper grouper species; reduced the effects of incidental hooking on sea turtles and smalltooth sawfish; adjusted

commercial renewal periods and transferability requirements; implemented plan to monitor and assess bycatch; established reference points for golden tilefish; established allocations for snowy grouper (95% commercial & 5% recreational) and red porgy (50% commercial & 50% recreational).

Amendment 27 (2014) modified the restriction on retention of bag limit quantities of some snapper grouper species by captain and crew of for-hire vessels; established the South Atlantic Council as the responsible entity for managing Nassau grouper throughout its range including federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico; modified the crew member limit on dual-permitted snapper grouper vessels; minimized regulatory delay when adjustments to snapper grouper species' ABC, ACLs, and ACTs are needed as a result of new stock assessments; and addressed harvest of blue runner by commercial fishermen who do not possess a South Atlantic Snapper Grouper Permit.

### **South Atlantic Dolphin Wahoo**

The following amendments to the FMP for the Dolphin Wahoo fishery of the South Atlantic contained actions that pertained to the for hire sector including permit and reporting requirements. For a complete history of management for the dolphin wahoo fishery in the South Atlantic, see Appendix X.

The dolphin wahoo FMP was implemented in 2003 contained many management measures for the operation of the fishery such as minimum size limits, allowable gear, closed areas, and quotas. The FMP required owners of commercial vessels and/or charter vessels/headboats to have vessel permits and, if selected, submit reports and required dealers to have permits and, if selected, submit reports. In 2004, the FMP required that operators of commercial vessels, charter vessels and headboats that are required to have a federal vessel permit for dolphin and wahoo must display operator permits.

Amendment 6 (2014) to the Dolphin Wahoo FMP required electronic logbook reporting for headboat vessels fishing for dolphin wahoo.

### **CMP Fishery**

The following amendments to the FMP for the CMP of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic contained actions that pertained to the for hire sector including permit and reporting requirements. For a complete history of management for the CMP fishery, see Appendix X.

**Amendment 2 (1987)** to the CMP FMP (implemented in 1987) required that charter vessels and headboats fishing in the EEZ of the Gulf or Atlantic for coastal migratory pelagic species have permits.

**Amendment 14 (2002)** to the CMP FMP (implemented 2002) established a 3-year moratorium on the issuance of charter vessel and head boat permits unless sooner replaced by a comprehensive effort limitation system. The control date for eligibility was established as

March 29, 2001. Also includes other provisions for eligibility, application, appeals, and transferability.

**Amendment 17 to the CMP FMP (2006)** established a limited access system on for-hire reef fish and CMP permits. Permits are renewable and transferable in the same manner as currently prescribed for such permits. The Council will have periodic review at least every 10 years on the effectiveness of the limited access system

## CHAPTER 2. MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

### 2.1 Action 1: Modify Frequency and Mechanism of Data Reporting for Charter Vessels Harvesting Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, South Atlantic Dolphin Wahoo, or Coastal Migratory Pelagics<sup>[SGH2]</sup>

**Alternative 1** <sup>[JTF3]</sup> **(No Action)**. The owner or operator of a charter vessel for which a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) or South Atlantic coastal migratory pelagic (CMP) species, Gulf reef fish, South Atlantic snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin and wahoo has been issued, or whose vessel fishes for or lands such CMP species, reef fish, snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin or wahoo in or from state waters adjoining the applicable Gulf, South Atlantic, or Atlantic exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and who is selected to report by the Science and Research Director (SRD) must maintain a fishing record for each trip, or a portion of such trips as specified by the SRD, on forms provided by the SRD. Completed fishing records must be submitted to the SRD weekly, postmarked no later than 7 days after the end of each week (Sunday). Information to be reported is indicated on the form and its accompanying instructions.

For South Atlantic snapper grouper, charter vessels selected to report by the SRD must participate in the NMFS-sponsored electronic logbook and/or video monitoring program as directed by the SRD. Completed fishing records may be required weekly or daily, as directed by the SRD.

**Alternative 2.** Require that federally permitted charter vessels submit fishing records to the SRD weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). Weekly = Tuesday following each fishing week.

**Alternative 3.** Require that federally permitted charter vessels submit fishing records to the SRD daily via electronic reporting via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). Daily = by noon of the following day.

**Alternative 4.** Require that federally permitted charter vessels submit fishing records to the SRD for each trip via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software) prior to arriving at the dock.

Note: It is the intent of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils that during catastrophic conditions the use of paper forms for basic required reporting may be authorized by the Regional Administrator (RA) through publication of timely notice. During catastrophic conditions, the RA also has the authority to waive or modify reporting time requirements. An electronic report is not received within the time specified is delinquent. A delinquent report automatically results in a prohibition on harvesting or possessing the applicable species by the permit holder, regardless of any additional notification to the delinquent permit owner and operator by NMFS. This prohibition is applicable until all required and delinquent

reports have been submitted and received by NMFS according to the reporting requirements. If no fishing activity took place during a reporting period, the permit holder would be required to submit an electronic report stating that no fishing activity occurred and this report must be submitted at the same time interval specified in the regulations (local time). A preliminary list of data elements for charter vessels is shown in Table 2.1.1.

**Discussion**

Charter vessels are operationally defined as federally permitted for-hire vessels that carry six or fewer passengers. To date, none of these vessels have been selected by the SRD to submit fishing records as described in **Alternative 1**. Rather, these vessels have been monitored in through the MRIP For-Hire Survey (measures effort) and the MRIP dockside intercept survey (measures catch). The MRIP For-Hire Survey includes charter vessels operating in the Gulf of Mexico from Louisiana through the west coast of Florida, and those operating in the South Atlantic from eastern Florida through North Carolina. Charter vessel operators are required to report all trips taken during selected weeks (effort only) whenever they are selected to participate in the survey. Charter vessel operators are contacted by telephone (a weekly sample of 10% of the fleet) to collect these data (**Table 2.1.1**). Catch data are collected in a separate dockside intercept survey of anglers. Adjustment factors for active charter vessels that are not in the sample frame (new to fleet, no contact information known, etc.) are produced from field intercept survey questions and applied to the raw effort estimate.

**Table 2.1.1** Required data reporting elements for charter vessels participating in MRIP For-Hire Survey.

<b>Reporting Elements</b>
Area fished
Number of anglers who fished
Hours of actual fishing activity
Method of fishing
Target species (if any)

To enforce the mandatory reporting requirement for federally permitted charter vessels in the telephone component of the For-Hire Survey, permit holders who refuse to participate in the survey are notified by letter of their obligation to report as a condition for permit renewal. However, if a charter vessel operator cannot be contacted after five attempts for a selected week, the final interview status is “unsuccessful contact”. It is impossible to identify permit-holders who are deliberately evading the survey. Telephone contact rates vary by wave (i.e., MRIP 2-month sample period), state, and region, and the percent of selected vessels that are unable to be contacted by phone is quite high in some strata [SGH4][JTF5]. Charter vessel catch and effort in Texas are monitored by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Survey. This survey is a field-intercept survey of boat-based fishing, including for-hire vessels. This survey estimates fishing effort and catch (harvest only) on a seasonal (high-use and low-use) basis.

**Alternative 2** would require federally permitted charter vessels participating in the subject fisheries to submit fishing records weekly or at intervals shorter than a week via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). **Alternative 2** could improve fishery

dependent data in several ways. For example, fishery data would be available for inclusion into the science and management process faster, potentially reducing the likelihood of exceeding annual catch limits (ACLs). **Alternative 2** could also improve data accuracy as reports would be completed shortly after each trip, potentially reducing problems associated with recall errors. However, **Alternative 2** would reduce the timing flexibility for report preparation by charter vessel operators and this burden could be acute during peak season when the number of trips taken, the number of passengers carried, and catch are greatest.

**Alternative 3** would require charter vessels participating in the subject fisheries to submit a report for each day. As with **Alternative 2**, this report would be submitted electronically and received by NMFS (due noon the following day). **Alternative 3** could further reduce the likelihood of exceeding ACLs with reduced recall error compared to **Alternative 1** and **Alternative 2**. However, **Alternative 3** would add additional burden and reduced flexibility compared to **Alternatives 1** and **2**.

**Alternative 4** would require federally permitted charter vessels participating in the fisheries subject to submit a report for each trip. This report would need to be submitted electronically and received by NMFS prior to returning to the dock and would require multiple fishing records per day if more than one trip occurred on a single day. Charter vessel operators would need to have access to a NMFS approved electronic device on their vessel to submit a logbook prior to reaching the dock. **Alternatives 3** and **4** would offer the greatest ability to prevent ACL overages. **Alternative 4** provides additional rigor to trip validation of catch and effort that are not possible with **Alternatives 1-3** because reports must be submitted prior to arriving at the dock. However, **Alternative 4** offers charter vessel operators the least flexibility in how and when they prepare and submit their fishing reports and could be burdensome during periods of peak activity or inclement weather.

## 2.2 Action 2: Modify Frequency and Mechanism of Data Reporting for Headboats Harvesting Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, South Atlantic Dolphin Wahoo, or Coastal Migratory Pelagics

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** [JTF6] The owner or operator of a headboat for which a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf or South Atlantic CMP species, Gulf reef fish, South Atlantic snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin and wahoo has been issued, or whose vessel fishes for or lands such CMP species, reef fish, snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin or wahoo in or from state waters adjoining the applicable Gulf, South Atlantic, or Atlantic EEZ, and who is selected to report by the SRD must submit an electronic fishing record for each trip of all fish harvested via the SRHS. Electronic fishing records must be submitted at weekly intervals (or intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD) by 11:59 p.m., local time, the Sunday following a reporting week. If no fishing activity occurred during a reporting week, an electronic report stating so must be submitted for that reporting week by 11:59 p.m., local time, the Sunday following a reporting week.

During catastrophic conditions, the use of paper forms for basic required functions may be authorized by the RA by publication of timely notice. During catastrophic conditions, the RA also has the authority to waive or modify reporting time requirements.

When an electronic report is not received within the time specified, it is delinquent. A delinquent report automatically results in a prohibition on harvesting or possessing the applicable species, regardless of any additional notification to the delinquent owner and operator by NMFS. This prohibition is applicable until all required and delinquent reports have been submitted and received by NMFS according to the reporting requirements.

For South Atlantic snapper grouper, headboats selected to report by the SRD must participate in the NMFS-sponsored electronic logbook and/or video monitoring program, as directed by the SRD. Completed fishing records may be required weekly or daily, as directed by the SRD.

**Alternative 2.** Require that headboats submit fishing records to the SRD weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). Weekly = Tuesday following each fishing week.

**Alternative 3.** Require that headboats submit fishing records to the SRD daily via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). Daily = by noon of the following day.

**Alternative 4.** Require that headboats submit fishing records to the SRD for each trip via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software) prior to arriving at the dock.

### Discussion

Historically, federally permitted headboat vessels reported using paper forms. Beginning January 1, 2013, vessel operators have been required to submit electronic logbooks. Vessel operators are required to report 100% of their vessel trips, regardless of whether the trips occur in the EEZ or in state waters.. This data collection method places responsibility for submitting required information directly on the permit holder, and compliance is monitored and enforced as a condition for permit renewal. The obligation to report is reinforced annually via certified letter to each permit holder.

The SRHS, which is administered by the NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center, includes approximately 140 large capacity headboats operating in the Gulf and South Atlantic from Texas through North Carolina. Vessels included in this survey are required to report catch and effort data weekly to NMFS (**Table 2.2.1**).

**Table 2.2.1 Required data reporting elements for headboats participating in the SRHS.**

<b>Reporting Elements</b>
Depart Date:Time
Return Date:Time
Vessel Name
Captain Name
Number of Anglers
Number of Paying Passengers
Number of Crew
Fuel used (gallons)
Price per gallon (estimate)
Minimum depth fished
Maximum depth fished
Primary depth fished
Latitude/Longitude Degrees
Latitude/Longitude Minutes
Species caught
Number kept
Number released

**Alternative 1** requires headboats participating in Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Atlantic Dolphin Wahoo, or Gulf and South Atlantic CMP fisheries, if selected by the SRD, to submit electronic reports weekly (or at intervals less than a week if requested by the SRD) due seven days after the end of each week (Sunday).

**Alternative 2** would require headboats participating in the subject fisheries to report weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). The difference between **Alternative 1** and **Alternative 2** is the difference in delay between the end of the fishing week (Sunday) and report submission.

**Alternative 1** allows 7 days to prepare and submit reports while **Alternative 2** would allow only 2 days. **Alternative 2** could improve fishery data in several ways. Fishery data would be available into the science and management process faster, potentially reducing the likelihood of exceeding ACLs. **Alternative 2** could also improve accuracy as reports would be completed soon after each trip reducing problems associated with recall errors however, **Alternative 2** would reduce the flexibility for the timing of report preparation and this could be acute during peak season when the number of trips, the number of passengers, and catch are greatest.

**Alternative 3** would require headboats participating in the subject fisheries to submit a report for each day. This report would be submitted electronically and would need to be received by NMFS (by noon the following day). **Alternative 3** could further reduce the likelihood of exceeding ACLs and reduce recall error compared to **Alternative 1** or **Alternative 2**. However, **Alternative 3** would add additional burden and reduced flexibility in comparison to **Alternatives 1** or **Alternative 2**.

**Alternative 4** would require headboats participating in the subject fisheries to submit a report for each trip. This report would need to be submitted electronically and would need to be received by NMFS prior to returning to the dock. **Alternative 4**<sup>[CMS7]</sup> would offer the greatest ability to prevent ACL overages and add additional rigor to trip validation of catch and effort that are not possible with **Alternatives 1-3**. However, **Alternative 4** offers headboat operators the least flexibility in how and when they prepare and submit their fisheries reports and could be burdensome during periods of peak activity or inclement weather.

## 2.3 Action 3: Modify Electronic Reporting Requirements Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Atlantic Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery Management Plans to Require Vessel or Catch Location Reporting

**Alternative 1** (No Action). Charter vessels participating in the For-Hire survey are required to report area fished (inshore, state, or federal waters), if selected as part of the survey. Headboats participating in the SRHS are required to report latitude and longitude of area fished (degrees and minutes only; within 1 nm<sup>2</sup> area).

**Alternative 2.** Require federally permitted for-hire vessels to use a NMFS approved electronic device that automatically records vessel location at specified time intervals for later transmission:

**Sub-Alternative 3a.** In the Gulf (headboat)

**Sub-Alternative 3b.** In the Gulf (charter vessel)

**Sub-Alternative 3c.** In the South Atlantic (headboat)

**Sub-Alternative 3d.** In the South Atlantic (charter vessel)

**Alternative 3.** Require federally permitted for-hire vessels in the Gulf to use a NMFS approved Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) to record vessel location at specified time intervals [SGH8]:

**Sub-Alternative 3a.** In the Gulf (headboat)

**Sub-Alternative 3b.** In the Gulf (charter vessel)

### Discussion

Charter vessels that are surveyed using the For-Hire survey (i.e., 10% weekly) are asked to report area fished (i.e., area fished, state, or federal waters) in addition to the other elements listed in Table 2.1.1 [CMS9]. **Action 3** considers changing the location reporting element for charter vessels and headboats from a self-reported system to an electronic system where location information is recorded passively by a device on board the vessel. **Alternative 1** would maintain the current self-reporting systems in place (i.e., report area fished if selected in the For-Hire survey (charter vessel) or latitude/longitude of area fished within 1 nm<sup>2</sup> area (headboat)). **Alternative 2** would require the use of a NMFS approved electronic device to record and later transmit specific location information (latitude/longitude). Four sub-alternatives are considered that would require this for Gulf of Mexico headboats (**Sub-Alternative 3a**); Gulf charter vessels (**Sub-Alternative 3b**); South Atlantic headboats (**Sub-Alternative 3c**); or South Atlantic charter vessels (**Sub-Alternative 3d**). **Alternative 2** and **Sub-Alternatives 3a-3d** would permit improved accuracy, timeliness, and effort validation protocols relative to **Alternative 1**; they could also improve the estimates of bycatch mortality used in stock assessments as depth fished could be determined and is a primary factor in release mortality. **Alternative 3** would apply only to the Gulf of Mexico and would require the use of VMS technology to monitor and report location information. **Alternative 3** is expected to yield similar benefits to **Alternative 2** as compared to **Alternative 1**.

## 2.4 Action 4: Amend the Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Atlantic Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery Management Plans to Specify Certain Aspects of Reporting for For-Hire Vessels

**Alternative 1** (No Action). There is no specified time for data to be made available to the public and to the Councils.

**Alternative 2.** Specify the following data flow via electronic reporting:

- a) Logbook data collected via authorized platform, ex. web, tablet, phone, or VMS application
- b) Data submitted to ACCSP or GulfFIN;
- c) Data integrated by ACCSP or GulfFIN into single composite data set;
- d) Composite data set distributed to appropriate agencies for analyses and use.

**Sub-alternative 2a.** Apply to charter vessels reporting.

**Sub-alternative 2b.** Apply to headboat reporting.

**Alternative 3.** Specify the following aspects of electronic reporting:

- a) NMFS and/or ACCSP develop a compliance tracking procedure that balances timeliness with available staff and funding resources.
- b) NMFS is to use validation methods developed in the Gulf of Mexico logbook pilot study as a basis to ensure that the actual logbook report is validated and standardized validation methodologies are employed among regions.
- c) NMFS is to require and maintain a comprehensive permit/email database of participants.
- d) NMFS is to include procedures for expanding estimates for non-reporting.
- e) NMFS is to allow multiple authorized applications or devices to report data as long as they meet required data and transferability standards.

**Sub-alternative 3a.** Apply to charter vessel reporting.

**Sub-alternative 3b.** Apply to headboat reporting.

### **Discussion**

The technical subcommittee recommends a multi-faceted approach where a number of reporting platforms can be used so long as the minimum data standards and security protocols are met.

Data standards would need to be developed and the subcommittee agreed that NOAA Fisheries, the GulfFIN, and ACCSP could work collaboratively to develop appropriate standards.

The subcommittee recommends this process for data storage and management:

1. Logbook data collected via authorized platform, ex. web, tablet, phone, or VMS application
2. Data submitted to ACCSP or GulfFIN;
3. Data integrated by ACCSP or GulfFIN into single composite data set;
4. Composite data set distributed to appropriate agencies for analyses and use.

This process could eliminate duplicate reporting for some participants (e.g., South Carolina headboats and charter vessels) so long as appropriate data standards are in place and the respective agencies agree to confidentiality standards, which would allow sharing and accepting one another's data for use. Elimination of duplicate reporting (e.g., separate state and federal reports) would be a substantial benefit to participants in this survey program and could mitigate any additional reporting requirements for comparison to the current MRIP survey program.

The South Atlantic Council is concerned about the extensive delays in tracking headboat catches even though headboats are required to report electronically every week beginning in 2014. The 2014 headboat data was not available until April of 2015. The current South Atlantic blueline tilefish recreational ACL versus recreational catches is currently unknown pending receipt of the first wave of MRIP data (should be available 45 days after the end of February) and any headboat catches. Part of the headboat delay is that the Council has specified the recreational ACL in pounds and this requires the numbers of fish to be converted to pounds. This adds an unspecified period of time after the MRIP data are released for the SEFSC to apply their conversion factors and provide a catch estimate. The South Atlantic Council is considering specifying recreational ACLs in numbers of fish so that the headboat sector (and the charter vessel sector once this amendment is approved) can be tracked weekly. Specifying the recreational ACL in numbers of fish will also reduce the delay in using the MRIP data to track recreational ACLs.

**Action 4** addresses the following recommendations from the Technical Sub-Committee:

- Development of compliance tracking procedures that balance timeliness with available staff and funding resources.
- Use validation methods developed in the Gulf of Mexico logbook pilot study as a basis to ensure that the actual logbook report is validated and standardized validation methodologies are employed among regions.
- Require and maintain a comprehensive permit/email database of participants.
- Include procedures for expanding estimates for non-reporting.
- Allow multiple authorized applications or devices to report data as long as they meet required data and transferability standards.

The technical subcommittee recommends building upon the validation methodology developed in the Gulf MRIP pilot study.

The technical subcommittee recommends use of an MRIP certified methodology for validation with the following elements: Gulf MRIP pilot study methodologies, including dockside validation of catch and vessel activity, and maintenance of site and vessel registries.

The technical subcommittee recommends dual survey methods (existing and new) for no less than three years. Data from the new program would not be expected to provide management advice during the first year of operation. Moreover, this would allow the possibility of an initial

phase-in or limited implementation to identify and solve significant problems prior to implementation for all participants.

The technical subcommittee recommends that the Councils move forward with development of a reporting system that includes federally permitted for-hire vessels while also exploring ways to determine the impact of state permitted vessels on landings estimates of federally managed species. Long term, the subcommittee recommends that both state and federally permitted charter vessels participate in this census to include the entire fleet of charter vessels harvesting federally managed species.

Weekly electronic dealer and headboat reporting are fully implemented. However, there are still delays in having updated landings available to the public for their use in planning trips and to the Councils for monitoring ACLs. A solution, in the Atlantic, would be to have the raw weekly data fed to ACCSP and made available to the public via the ACCSP website. The “official” numbers for quota closures would continue to be the numbers maintained by NMFS and available on the NMFS website but this would provide more timely and useful updates to the public.

The result would be updated and current catch data available on a daily basis for the public, states, NMFS, and the Councils to use in monitoring ACLs and planning fishing trips.

## CHAPTER 3: LIST OF PREPARERS

<b>Name</b>	<b>Expertise</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Agency</b>
John Froeschke	Fishery biologist/statistician	Co-Team Lead - Amendment Development	GMFMC
Rich Malinowski	Fishery biologist	Co-Team Lead - Amendment Development	NMFS/SERO
Gregg Waugh	Deputy Director	Co-Team Lead - Amendment Development	SAFMC
Karla Gore	Fishery Biologist	Biological analyses	NMFS/SERO
Randy Blankinship	SE Branch of Highly Migratory Species	Reviewer	NMFS/SERO
Steven Atran	Fishery Biologist	Reviewer	GMFMC
Kenneth Brennan	Coordinator, Southeast Region Headboat Survey	Biological analyses	NMFS/SEFSC
Myra Brower	Fishery Biologist	Reviewer	SAFMC
Brian Chevront	Economist	Economic analyses	GMFMC
Anik Clemens	Technical Writer Editor	Regulatory writer	NMFS/SERO
Chip Collier	Fishery Biologist	Reviewer	SAFMC
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Carrie Simmons	Deputy Executive Director	Reviewer	GMFMC
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NMFS = National Marine Fisheries Service  
 SAFMC = South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
 GMFMC = Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council  
 SEFSC = Southeast Fisheries Science Center  
 SERO = Southeast Regional Office  
 GC = General Counsel

## CHAPTER 4. REFERENCES

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# APPENDIX A

## Relevant Federal Regulations

### Code of Federal Regulations: Title 50

#### § 622.2 Definitions and acronyms.

Charter vessel means a vessel less than 100 gross tons (90.8 mt) that is subject to the requirements of the USCG to carry six or fewer passengers for hire and that engages in charter fishing at any time during the calendar year. A charter vessel with a commercial permit, as required under § 622.4(a)(2), is considered to be operating as a charter vessel when it carries a passenger who pays a fee or when there are more than three persons aboard, including operator and crew, except for a charter vessel with a commercial vessel permit for Gulf reef fish or South Atlantic snapper-grouper. A charter vessel that has a charter vessel permit for Gulf reef fish and a commercial vessel permit for Gulf reef fish or a charter vessel permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper and a commercial permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper (either a South Atlantic snapper-grouper unlimited permit or a 225-lb (102.1-kg) trip limited permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper) is considered to be operating as a charter vessel when it carries a passenger who pays a fee or when there are more than four persons aboard, including operator and crew. A charter vessel that has a charter vessel permit for Gulf reef fish, a commercial vessel permit for Gulf reef fish, and a valid Certificate of Inspection (COI) issued by the USCG to carry passengers for hire will not be considered to be operating as a charter vessel provided--

(1) It is not carrying a passenger who pays a fee; and

(2) When underway for more than 12 hours, that vessel meets, but does not exceed the minimum manning requirements outlined in its COI for vessels underway over 12 hours; or when underway for not more than 12 hours, that vessel meets the minimum manning requirements outlined in its COI for vessels underway for not more than 12-hours (if any), and does not exceed the minimum manning requirements outlined in its COI for vessels that are underway for more than 12 hours.

Headboat means a vessel that holds a valid Certificate of Inspection (COI) issued by the USCG to carry more than six passengers for hire.

(1) A headboat with a commercial vessel permit, as required under this part, is considered to be operating as a headboat

when it carries a passenger who pays a fee or--

(i) In the case of persons aboard fishing for or possessing South Atlantic snapper-grouper, when there are more persons aboard than the number of crew specified in the vessel's COI; or

(ii) In the case of persons aboard fishing for or possessing coastal migratory pelagic fish, when there are more than three persons aboard, including operator and crew.

(2) However a vessel that has a headboat permit for Gulf reef fish, a commercial vessel permit for Gulf reef fish, and a valid COI issued by the USCG to carry passengers for hire will not be considered to be operating as a headboat provided--

(i) It is not carrying a passenger who pays a fee; and

(ii) When underway for more than 12 hours, that vessel meets, but does not exceed the minimum manning requirements outlined in its COI for vessels underway over 12 hours; or when underway for not more than 12 hours, that vessel meets the minimum manning requirements outlined in its COI for vessels underway for not more than 12-hours (if any), and does not exceed the minimum manning requirements outlined in its COI for vessels that are underway for more than 12 hours.

Science and Research Director (SRD), for the purposes of this part, means the Science and Research Director, Southeast Fisheries Science Center, NMFS (see Table 1 of § 600.502 of this chapter).

## **SUBPART B—REEF FISH RESOURCES OF THE GULF OF MEXICO**

### **§ 622.20 Permits and endorsements.**

(b) Charter vessel/headboat permits. For a person aboard a vessel that is operating as a charter vessel or headboat to fish for or possess Gulf reef fish, in or from the EEZ, a valid charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf reef fish must have been issued to the vessel and must be on board.

(1) Limited access system for charter vessel/headboat permits for Gulf reef fish. No applications for additional charter vessel/headboat permits for Gulf reef fish will be accepted. Existing permits may be renewed, are subject to the restrictions on transfer in paragraph (b)(1)(i) of this section, and are subject to the renewal requirements in paragraph (b)(1)(ii) of this section.

(i) Transfer of permits--(A) Permits without a historical captain endorsement. A charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf reef fish that does not have a historical captain endorsement is fully transferable, with or without sale of the permitted vessel.

(B) Permits with a historical captain endorsement. A charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf reef fish that has a historical captain endorsement may only be transferred to a vessel operated by the historical captain and is not otherwise transferable.

(C) Procedure for permit transfer. To request that the RA transfer a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf reef fish, the owner of the vessel who is transferring the permit and the owner of the vessel that is to receive the transferred permit must complete the transfer information on the reverse side of the permit and return the permit and a completed application for transfer to the RA. See § 622.4(f) for additional transfer-related requirements applicable to all permits issued under this part.

(ii) Renewal. (A) Renewal of a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf reef fish is contingent upon the permitted vessel and/or captain, as appropriate, being included in an active survey frame for, and, if selected to report, providing the information required in one of the approved fishing data surveys. Surveys include, but are not limited to--

(1) NMFS' Marine Recreational Fishing Vessel Directory Telephone Survey (conducted by the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission);

(2) NMFS' Southeast Headboat Survey (as required by § 622.26(b)(1));

(3) Texas Parks and Wildlife Marine Recreational Fishing Survey; or

(4) A data collection system that replaces one or more of the surveys in paragraph (b)(1)(ii)(A), (1), (2), or (3) of this section.

(B) A charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf reef fish that is not renewed or that is revoked will not be reissued. A permit is considered to be not renewed when an application for renewal, as required, is not received by the RA within 1 year of the expiration date of the permit.

(iii) Requirement to display a vessel decal. Upon renewal or transfer of a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf reef fish, the RA will issue the owner of the permitted vessel a vessel decal for Gulf reef fish. The vessel decal must be displayed on the port side of the deckhouse or hull and must be maintained so that it is clearly visible.

(iv) Passenger capacity compliance requirement. A vessel operating as a charter vessel or headboat with a valid charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf reef fish, which is carrying more passengers on board the vessel than is specified on the permit, is prohibited from harvesting or possessing the species identified on the permit.

(2) A charter vessel or headboat may have both a charter vessel/headboat permit and a commercial vessel permit. However, when a vessel is operating as a charter vessel or headboat, a person aboard must adhere to the bag limits. See the definitions of "Charter vessel" and "Headboat" in § 622.2 for an explanation of when vessels are considered to be operating as a charter vessel or headboat, respectively.

(3) If Federal regulations for Gulf reef fish in subparts A or B of this part are more restrictive than state regulations, a person aboard a charter vessel or headboat for which a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf reef fish has been issued must comply with such Federal regulations regardless of where the fish are harvested.

## **§ 622.26 Recordkeeping and reporting.**

(b) Charter vessel/headboat owners and operators--(1) General reporting requirement--(i) Charter vessels. The owner or operator of a charter vessel for which a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf reef fish has been issued, as required under § 622.20(b), or whose vessel fishes for or lands such reef fish in or from state waters adjoining the Gulf EEZ, who is selected to report by the SRD must maintain a fishing record for each trip, or a portion of such trips as specified by the SRD, on forms provided by the SRD and must submit such record as specified in paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

(2) Reporting deadlines--(i) Charter vessels. Completed fishing records required by paragraph (b)(1)(i) of this section for charter vessels must be submitted to the SRD weekly, postmarked no later than 7 days after the end of each week (Sunday). Information to be reported is indicated on the form and its accompanying instructions.

## **SUBPART I--SNAPPER-GROUPER FISHERY OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION**

### **§ 622.170 Permits and endorsements.**

(b) Charter vessel/headboat permits--(1) South Atlantic snapper-grouper. For a person aboard a vessel that is operating as a charter vessel or headboat to fish for or possess, in or from the EEZ, South Atlantic snapper-grouper, a valid charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper must have been issued to the vessel and must be on board. A charter

vessel or headboat may have both a charter vessel/headboat permit and a commercial vessel permit. However, when a vessel is operating as a charter vessel or headboat, a person aboard must adhere to the bag limits. See the definitions of "Charter vessel" and "Headboat" in § 622.2 for an explanation of when vessels are considered to be operating as a charter vessel or headboat, respectively.

## **§ 622.176 Recordkeeping and reporting**

(b) Charter vessel/headboat owners and operators--(1) General reporting requirement--(i) Charter vessels. The owner or operator of a charter vessel for which a charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper has been issued, as required under § 622.170(b)(1), or whose vessel fishes for or lands such snapper-grouper in or from state waters adjoining the South Atlantic EEZ, who is selected to report by the SRD must maintain a fishing record for each trip, or a portion of such trips as specified by the SRD, on forms provided by the SRD and must submit such record as specified in paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

(iii) Electronic logbook/video monitoring reporting. The owner or operator of a vessel for which a charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper has been issued, as required under § 622.170(b)(1), or whose vessel fishes for or lands such snapper-grouper in or from state waters adjoining the South Atlantic EEZ, who is selected to report by the SRD must participate in the NMFS-sponsored electronic logbook and/or video monitoring program as directed by the SRD. Compliance with the reporting requirements of this paragraph (b)(1)(iii) is required for permit renewal.

(2) Reporting deadlines--(i) Charter vessels. Completed fishing records required by paragraph (b)(1)(i) of this section for charter vessels must be submitted to the SRD weekly, postmarked no later than 7 days after the end of each week (Sunday). Completed fishing records required by paragraph (b)(1)(iii) of this section for charter vessels may be required weekly or daily, as directed by the SRD. Information to be reported is indicated on the form and its accompanying instructions.

## **SUBPART M--DOLPHIN AND WAHOO FISHERY OFF THE ATLANTIC STATES**

### **§ 622.270 Permits.**

(b) Charter vessel/headboat permits. (1) For a person aboard a vessel that is operating as a charter vessel or headboat to fish for or possess Atlantic dolphin or wahoo, in or from the Atlantic EEZ, a valid charter vessel/headboat permit for Atlantic dolphin and wahoo must have been issued to the vessel and must be on board. (See paragraph (c)(1) of this section for the requirements for operator permits in the dolphin and wahoo fishery.)

(2) A charter vessel or headboat may have both a charter vessel/headboat permit and a commercial vessel permit. However, when a vessel is operating as a charter vessel or headboat, a person aboard must adhere to the bag limits. See the definitions of "Charter vessel" and "Headboat" in § 622.2 for an explanation of when vessels are considered to be operating as a charter vessel or headboat, respectively.

## **§ 622.271 Recordkeeping and reporting.**

(b) Charter vessel/headboat owners and operators--(1) General reporting requirement--(i) Charter vessels. The owner or operator of a charter vessel for which a charter vessel/headboat permit for Atlantic dolphin and wahoo has been issued, as required under § 622.270(b)(1), or whose vessel fishes for or lands Atlantic dolphin or wahoo in or from state waters adjoining the Atlantic EEZ, who is selected to report by the SRD must maintain a fishing record for each trip, or a portion of such trips as specified by the SRD, on forms provided by the SRD and must submit such record as specified in paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

(2) Reporting deadlines--(i) Charter vessels. Completed fishing records required by paragraph (b)(1)(i) of this section for charter vessels must be submitted to the SRD weekly, postmarked no later than 7 days after the end of each week (Sunday). Information to be reported is indicated on the form and its accompanying instructions.

# **SUBPART Q—COASTAL MIGRATORY PELAGIC RESOURCES (GULF OF MEXICO AND SOUTH ATLANTIC)**

## **§ 622.370 Permits.**

(b) Charter vessel/headboat permits. (1) For a person

aboard a vessel that is operating as a charter vessel or headboat to fish for or possess, in or from the EEZ, Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fish or South Atlantic coastal migratory pelagic fish, a valid charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fish or South Atlantic coastal migratory pelagic fish, respectively, must have been issued to the vessel and must be on board.

(i) See § 622.373 regarding a limited access system for charter vessel/headboat permits for Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fish.

(ii) A charter vessel or headboat may have both a charter vessel/headboat permit and a commercial vessel permit. However, when a vessel is operating as a charter vessel or headboat, a person aboard must adhere to the bag limits. See the definitions of "Charter vessel" and "Headboat" in § 622.2 for an explanation of when vessels are considered to be operating as a charter vessel or headboat, respectively.

### **§ 622.374 Recordkeeping and reporting.**

(b) Charter vessel/headboat owners and operators--(1) General reporting requirement--(i) Charter vessels. The owner or operator of a charter vessel for which a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fish has been issued, as required under § 622.370(b)(1), or whose vessel fishes for or lands Gulf or South Atlantic coastal migratory fish in or from state waters adjoining the Gulf or South Atlantic EEZ, who is selected to report by the SRD must maintain a fishing record for each trip, or a portion of such trips as specified by the SRD, on forms provided by the SRD and must submit such record as specified in paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section.

(2) Reporting deadlines--(i) Charter vessels. Completed fishing records required by paragraph (b)(1)(i) of this section for charter vessels must be submitted to the SRD weekly, postmarked no later than 7 days after the end of each week (Sunday). Information to be reported is indicated on the form and its accompanying instructions.

11/26/2014

# Technical Subcommittee Report to the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils: Recommendations for Electronic Logbook Reporting



November 2014



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## Abbreviations used in this Document

ACCSP	Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FHS	For-hire-survey
FWC	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
FIN	Fisheries Information Network
GulfFin	Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Information Network
GMFMC	Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
GSMFC	Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
GPS	Global Positioning System
HMS	Highly Migratory Species
MRIP	Marine Recreational Information Program
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NCDENR	North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources
NRC	National Research Council
PPS	Proportional Probability Sampling
SAFMC	South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council
SCDNR	South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
SERO	Southeast Regional Office
SRHS	Southeast Region Headboat Survey
SEFSC	Southeast Fisheries Science Center
TPWD	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Catch from recreational anglers comprises a substantial proportion of total catch for many species in the regions managed by the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils. For-hire charter vessels are an important component of the recreational fishery both in terms of fishing effort and harvest. There is a need to improve data collection practices for charter vessels to address evolving needs of science and management and to capitalize on the improvements of emerging electronic reporting technologies. The Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils are considering changes in management for these purposes and formed a technical subcommittee to provide recommendations to implement electronic logbook reporting for charter vessels in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils respective jurisdictions.

Currently, for-hire data collection programs gather information on fishing effort and catch by marine recreational anglers fishing on professionally licensed for-hire vessels (including charter, guide, and large party boats). NOAA Fisheries, in coordination with the states, ACCSP, and FINS, support regional programs to collect these statistics, with the ultimate goal of building a system of data collection programs that are responsive to regional needs and are coordinated at the national level to provide standard data elements for both regional and national assessments of fish stocks and associated fisheries management.

The technical subcommittee was formed from state and federal biologists and resource managers that have the requisite experience to develop best practices for an improved for-hire data collection program. The technical subcommittee was instructed to provide these recommendations by December 1, 2014 and this report reflects these recommendations. The group met May 27-28, 2014 and drafted initial recommendations for the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils' review. This guidance has been integrated into the report to the extent practicable yet, the recommendations remain those of the technical subcommittee.

The subcommittee recommends a census style, electronic reporting system that builds upon the Gulf of Mexico electronic logbook pilot program, the electronic reporting program for headboats, and the recently implemented electronic dealer reporting program. A brief overview of the recommendations is below:

- Complete census of all participants;
- Mandatory, trip level reporting with weekly electronic submission. Give flexibility to require submission more frequently than weekly if necessary. Give flexibility to declare periods of inactivity in advance;
- Development of compliance tracking procedures that balance timeliness with available staff and funding resources;
- Implementation of accountability measures to ensure compliance;

- Use validation methods developed in the Gulf of Mexico logbook pilot study as a basis to ensure that the actual logbook report is validated and standardized validation methodologies are employed among regions;
- Minimize reporting burden to anglers by reducing (or preferably eliminating) paper reporting and eliminating duplicate reporting;
- Maintain capability for paper-based reporting during catastrophic conditions;
- Require and maintain a comprehensive permit/email database of participants;
- Develop and implement the program in close coordination with MRIP, SERO, SEFSC, HMS, state agencies, ACCSP, and GulfFIN;
- Include procedures for expanding estimates for non-reporting; and,
- Allow multiple authorized applications or devices to report data as long as they meet required data and transferability standards.

The technical subcommittee has provided these recommendations within the framework of finite fiscal and personnel resources with consideration of reporting burden and technology requirements for charter vessel operators. The recommended program should be flexible enough to accommodate changes in technology or funding availability without compromising the integrity of the long-term data series. The technical subcommittee also realizes that advances in data collection technologies will continue and the program will require evaluation, and likely subsequent improvement to meet the evolving needs of science and management.

## SECTION 1. BACKGROUND

Catch from recreational anglers comprises a substantial proportion of total catch for many species in the regions managed by the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils (GMFMC, SAFMC). For-hire data collection programs gather information on fishing effort and catch by marine recreational anglers fishing on professionally licensed for-hire vessels (including charter, guide, and large party boats). NOAA Fisheries, in coordination with the states, ACCSP, and FINs, supports regional programs to collect these statistics, with the ultimate goal of building a system of data collection programs that are responsive to regional needs and are coordinated at the national level to provide standard data elements for both regional and national assessments of fish stocks and associated fisheries management.

Recreational harvest from for-hire vessels in the Southeast Region are monitored through a combination of effort and dockside intercept surveys. The Marine Recreational Information Program's (MRIP) for-hire survey (FHS) and the Southeast Region Headboat Survey. The FHS estimates charter vessel catches of state and federally managed species off the U.S. Atlantic and Gulf coast states, with the exception of Texas and more recently Louisiana. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department conducts their own creel survey to estimate private and charter landings. Since 1993, South Carolina has administered a paper-based logbook reporting program for every licensed six-pack charter operator. These data are primarily used for state management and quota monitoring for federally managed species occurs as part of the MRIP for-hire survey. North Carolina is also developing an electronic logbook system for their own use with the goal of supplanting the MRIP for-hire survey once fully operational and compatible with MRIP. In recent years, interest by constituents and the Councils has been growing to implement electronic reporting requirements in the for-hire sector. There is general distrust of MRIP landings estimates for the for-hire survey and managers and fishermen have expressed a need for more timely and accurate data to support fishery monitoring, science, and management. Additionally, the National Research Council's (NRC) review of recreational survey methods concluded that in most cases charter boats should be required to maintain logbooks of fish landed and kept. These factors led to an electronic logbook pilot study of Texas and Florida charter vessels in 2010-11 and new electronic reporting regulations for headboats in 2014. Four additional projects have also been funded by MRIP or the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in 2014 to test new approaches for monitoring charter vessel catch and effort. The GMFMC and SAFMC have also passed motions at recent meetings expressing their interest in electronic reporting by charter vessels and they formed this technical subcommittee to develop recommendations for the Councils' consideration by December 1, 2014, on how to best achieve an electronic reporting system for charter vessels. The technical subcommittee met May 27-28, 2014 to develop recommendations to the Councils. The technical subcommittee reached consensus of several aspects on a proposed program and identified a framework for implementation.

## SECTION 2. OBJECTIVES

The Councils appointed this technical subcommittee (membership list below) to develop recommendations to implement an improved data collection program to support the needs of science, fisheries management, and address stakeholder concerns about data quality and redundancy in reporting. Specifically, the technical subcommittee was charged with developing recommendations to implement electronic reporting for charter vessels in the Gulf of Mexico and US South Atlantic in support of the following objectives:

- Increasing the timeliness of catch estimates for in-season monitoring;
- Increasing the temporal (and/or spatial) precision of catch estimates for monitoring;
- Providing vessel-specific catch histories for management;
- Reducing biases associated with collection of catch statistics; and,
- Increasing stakeholder trust and buy-in associated with data collection.

## **SECTION 3. TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS**

### **3.1 Membership**

- Gregg Bray – GSMFC
- Ken Brennan – SEFSC
- Mike Cahall – ACCSP
- Mike Errigo – SAFMC
- Mark Fisher - TPWD
- John Froeschke – GMFMC
- Eric Hiltz – SCDNR
- Doug Mumford – NCDENR
- Ron Salz – MRIP
- Beverly Sauls – FWC
- George Silva – HMS
- Andy Strelcheck – SERO

### **3.2 Timeline**

- May 2014 – Technical subcommittee meeting in Tampa, Florida
- June 2014 - Provide meeting summary to Councils for review and guidance;
- July 2014 - Technical subcommittee conference call to discuss Councils’ review and guidance;
- September 2014 - Technical subcommittee webinar to discuss items needed to complete the report;
- November 2014 - Draft report sent to subcommittee for review;
- December 1, 2014 - Provide report to Gulf and South Atlantic Councils.

## SECTION 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The technical subcommittee discussed trade offs and limitations of potential modifications to fisheries reporting in for-hire fisheries. The subcommittee agreed (by consensus) on preferred approaches for several aspects and discussed barriers to implementation of a new program. The subcommittee solicited and received preliminary input from both Councils following the May 27-28 meeting. This guidance has been integrated into the report to the extent practicable yet, the recommendations remain those of the technical subcommittee.

The subcommittee emphasized that the program should *not* be designed around a single species, and should be flexible enough to accommodate different reporting requirements for different segments of the for-hire fleet. For example, if federally permitted vessels were required to report more frequently during the recreational red snapper season, other vessels that do not participate in this fishery should be able to continue reporting at their normal frequency. Similarly, an electronic reporting system should be able to accommodate vessels already required to carry VMS units for participation in commercial fisheries without necessarily requiring all for-hire vessels to report through VMS. Although not currently required, the Gulf Council expressed interest in using VMS and hail-out, hail-in protocols to improve effort estimates. This practice certainly could improve the quality of effort estimation in the for-hire fleet, although, implementation would not be without challenges. The cost of a VMS program both in terms of vessel equipment and agency staff/infrastructure would require additional, long-term funding (see section about costs). This may be beyond current resource availability. Rather than recommend fleet-wide implementation of VMS and hail-out, hail-in requirements, the subcommittee recommends structuring the charter fishery monitoring program such that it is scaleable and expandable as management needs, technology, and funding availability change. This recommendation would allow improved data collection in the near term building on the recently implemented electronic reporting system for southeast region headboats (i.e., weekly, electronic reporting) and the MRIP charter vessel pilot program, yet would not require full implementation of VMS to move beyond the current process.

The current survey methodology was deemed inadequate to meet the objectives posed to the group (although not necessarily the original intent of the charter vessel survey). Specifically, timeliness, bias reduction, and stakeholder buy-in could be improved with an electronic reporting system without the inherent expense and time for implementation of VMS technology in the charter fleet (of course, the introduction of new biases is possible). These improvements are necessary given the requirement to establish annual catch limits for federally managed species and close the fishery when the target harvest level has been caught each year. This requirement for in-season quota monitoring is far beyond the management needs when the original charter vessel survey was designed and implemented and the guidance herein attempts to match the data collection effort to the needs of the current and future fisheries management.

### 4.1 Mandatory or voluntary participation

The technical subcommittee discussed participation in any new charter vessel monitoring program. Specifically, the subcommittee considered if participation in the program by charter vessel owner/operators could be voluntary or if mandatory participation is necessary. Voluntary

reporting programs can be advantageous in that reporting burden is reduced (or absent) from participants that do not wish to participate. This would also reduce the number of reports that require processing for catch and effort estimation. However, in absence of a complete sample, estimation procedures are necessary. Estimation procedures can be accurate and robust in a well-designed survey, however, likely at the expense of reduced timeliness. Developing estimates of total catch from a volunteer program is problematic as the proportion of participants may be highly variable through time or across the survey area and volunteer participants may not be representative of all possible participants in this survey. This pattern has been demonstrated previously (e.g., angler avidity) in other studies of volunteer programs and will bias estimates when expanded to the total sector. Voluntary programs would also require careful consideration of the characteristics of the participants and those who choose not to participate as it is impossible to compare catch patterns with participants and non-participants; and an assumption that they are identical is necessary but likely inaccurate. The subcommittee agreed that the potential for bias is too great to recommend any voluntary reporting program and suggested that any program (i.e., census or survey) require reporting from participants be mandatory if selected (e.g., Southeast Region Headboat Survey (SRHS)).

**The subcommittee agreed that the potential for bias is too great to recommend any voluntary reporting program and mandatory participation is necessary for vessel/owner/operators selected. This is recommended to best achieve the overarching objectives of the proposed program.**

## 4.2 Survey or census

Both census and statistical surveys can (and are) used to estimate catch and effort in marine fisheries. Surveys are beneficial in that a representative sample of anglers (as opposed to the entire "population" of anglers in the fishery) and their catch is used to estimate the total catch. However, management often requires these estimates over relatively small areas, short-time scales, or for rare event species. In these situations, survey estimates sometimes lack the precision necessary or desired for management decisions. The common remedy is to increase sample effort (i.e., sample size) to achieve desired precision levels, however, the necessary sample size may exceed program resources. An additional challenge of surveys is that the strata (e.g., area, time-period) require complete coverage before making an estimate. In practice, this means that surveys generally have a longer lag between the time fishing occurs and when the resulting data are available for use.

A census provides a sum of the total effort and catch by tabulating these metrics from all participants in the fishery. In theory, reporting and subsequent use of these data in management can be rapid as no additional estimation procedures are necessary and the report submission frequency can be established (e.g., weekly) to balance management needs with reporting burden on fishery participants. In practice, estimating catch and effort from a census can be challenging if some participants do not report their catch and effort data within the specified reporting periods. In this event, the census is incomplete and requires an expansion factor to calculate the total catch and effort. As with any survey design, this estimation routine requires additional time, resources, and reduces precision of the estimate. In extreme cases, expanding an incomplete census to a total estimate can be difficult or impossible if the proportion of non-compliant

participants is large or if the non-compliant participants are markedly different than those that are reporting as required. Nonetheless, this capability is essential in a real-world census and is important to consider when developing reporting requirements (frequencies and accountability measures) and minimum acceptable lag-time for use in fisheries management.

**The technical subcommittee recommends the development and implementation of an electronic logbook *census* program to estimate catch and effort for southeast region charter vessels, including procedures for expanding for non-reporting. This recommendation was based in part on the inability of the current survey to meet the needs of science and management applications and the requirement of timeliness beyond which is readily achievable through a survey approach.**

### 4.3 Reporting frequency

The subcommittee discussed how often reports need to be submitted to provide timely data for science and management. Frequent reporting has at least two benefits. Reporting as frequently as practicable reduces recall error/bias when producing catch reports. Frequent reporting also can make these data available for use sooner. Currently, the GMFMC and SAFMC require electronic reporting on a weekly basis for commercial seafood dealers and federally permitted headboat operators. Similarly, the subcommittee recommends mandatory weekly reporting, or at shorter intervals if necessary (e.g., The Gulf Council may want to require daily logbook submission during the recreational red snapper season) for a new charter vessel program. A second recommendation was that reports be due from the prior fishing week as soon as practicable. Commercial seafood dealer reports must be submitted by the Tuesday following the previous fishing week (Monday through Sunday). This was considered preferable over the headboat reporting requirements where trip reports are due one week after the end of the fishing week. The reduced lag addresses both advantages identified above.

**The technical subcommittee recommends trip level reporting with weekly submission due the Tuesday following each fishing week. This would include no activity reports that could be submitted in advance if periods of inactivity are known. The technical subcommittee discussed that a daily reporting requirement may not be feasible or enforceable, however, reporting systems and user interfaces should be designed to encourage "real-time" at-sea reporting of catch and catch related data elements (e.g. fishing location, fishing method, target species).**

### 4.4 Data collection

A variety of software applications are available for data collection and submission including web, smart phone, and tablet based technology. Web-based software provide the capability to report fisheries data after completing the trip. Smart phone or tablet technology could be used for at-sea or real time reporting of catch and effort. This approach may limit the complexity of reporting options but could provide enhanced validation methods because catch and effort data could be submitted before returning to port allowing enhanced dockside validation. Smart phone and tablet technology can also allow for data input without a current

network connection and are also capable of recording vessel positions during a trip via global positioning system (gps) (a far cheaper technology than VMS, but not in real-time).

**The subcommittee recommends a multi-faceted approach where a number of reporting platforms can be used so long as the minimum data standards and security protocols are met. Data standards would need to be developed and the subcommittee agreed that NOAA Fisheries, the GulfFIN, and ACCSP could work collaboratively to develop appropriate standards.**

These recommendations encompass two overarching objectives of the monitoring program: 1) Flexibility for specific regions, species, or time periods; 2) A flexible framework to allow incorporation of improved technologies as they become available. Electronic monitoring and reporting capabilities are rapidly evolving and the options available in the near-future may far exceed the current suite of tools. It is necessary to allow (and encourage) this development such that it can be leveraged effectively to meet the needs of fisheries management.

## 4.5 Data storage and management

The subcommittee discussed data storage and management that would be necessarily expanded from the status quo in a census based monitoring program. The ACCSP and GulfFIN expressed willingness to handle these raw data and indicated this could be accomplished with extant resources.

### **The subcommittee recommends this process:**

1. Logbook data collected via authorized platform, ex. web, tablet, phone, or VMS application
2. Data submitted to ACCSP or GulfFIN;
3. Data integrated by ACCSP or GulfFIN into single composite data set;
4. Composite data set distributed to appropriate agencies for analyses and use.

This process could eliminate duplicate reporting for some participants so long as appropriate data standards are in place and the respective agencies agree to confidentiality standards, which would allow sharing and accepting one another's data for use. Elimination of duplicate reporting (e.g., separate state and federal reports) would be a substantial benefit to participants in this survey program and could mitigate any additional reporting requirements for comparison to the current MRIP survey program.

## 4.6 Validation and estimation

A successful electronic for-hire program will require adequate validation of catch and effort data and will require collaboration among state, federal, and fishery information network (FIN) programs. A census is likely to be incomplete and estimation procedures for adjusting catch estimates will need to be developed in cooperation with MRIP. The time lag necessary to expand an incomplete census to an estimate (of harvest or effort) should be built into the

timeliness need for science and management applications. The Gulf MRIP pilot program tested new validation procedures and provided guidance on improvements necessary before full implementation. The pilot program was successful in that electronic reporting was used (almost exclusively) and supported many of the goals (e.g., more timely, simplified reporting process) yet, many participants failed to submit reports within the required time frame complicating the use of these data for management. The rates of compliance increased over the length of the pilot study period and similar result would be expected with full implementation highlighting the need for validation and an estimation procedure to calculate total catch and effort.

**The technical subcommittee recommends building upon the validation methodology developed in the Gulf MRIP pilot study. An overview of the proposed methodology is below.**

### **Dockside Validation of Logbook Trip Reports (Catch and Effort)**

Validation procedures are critical to assessing the accuracy and completeness of submitted logbook reports. Critical components of validation include the creation and review of a site and vessel registry, and methods to validate catch and effort of self-reported data. There is currently a MRIP funded project; *Pilot Project; Validation Methods for Headboat Logbooks*, which is testing dockside sampling methods that could be used to validate headboat logbooks. Results from this project will be available in the spring of 2015.

#### *Site and Vessel Registry*

A registry of all vessels required to report via logbooks should include detailed docking location information for each vessel. The port city and mailing address for owners of all federally permitted vessels (both active and non-active) is available from the permit frame maintained by NMFS SERO, and may be used as a starting point for indentifying where vessels are located. A regularly updated list of all active charter vessels (both federal and state permitted) with docking site information is also maintained in states where the MRIP FHS is administered. From the vessel registry, a list of all known docking locations should be generated and each site should be given a unique identification code. Information contained in the site list should also include site location descriptions, site telephone numbers, contact person at the site, GPS location coordinates, and the total number of vessels located at the site. The site registry should be used to randomly select sites for dockside validation assignments (described below).

#### *Validation of Catch*

Dockside assignments for validating harvest should be randomly selected from the site registry and stratified by region (e.g. state or sub-region within large states) using probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling with replacement, with the size measure being the number of vessels at each site. This method is used in statistical sampling designs where sample clusters (e.g. sites where charter vessels dock) differ widely with respect the number of sample units (charter vessels) contained within. PPS sampling selects sites with a higher number of vessels more frequently and prevents potential sample bias by insuring that vessels at low pressure sites do not have a higher probability for selection. Sample days should be distributed across weeks and across weekend/weekday strata, and more weight should be given towards high fishing activity periods (summer and weekends). It is recommended that the site selection program be run monthly by a regional coordinating entity, such as GSMFC, who provides draw files to local

coordinators (states or other entities). Local coordinators should report tallies for the number of completed assignments and successful interviews to the regional entity weekly.

During an assignment, field samplers should arrive at the assigned site at least one hour before half-day charter fishing trips are expected to return. For sites where overnight fishing trips take place, field staff should call or visit the site the day before the assignment to determine if overnight trips are returning and arrive on site early if necessary to intercept those vessels. Upon arrival, samplers should survey the site and attempt to locate each vessel listed on the vessel register for that site. Each vessel at the site should be recorded on an Assignment Summary Form and coded as one of the following:

- 1 = vessel in
- 2 = vessel out, charter fishing (this must be verified)
- 3 = unable to validate (vessel sold, moved to unknown location, etc.)
- 4 = vessel out, NOT charter fishing (this must be verified)
- 5 = vessel out, fishing status unknown (use when unable to verify the fishing status)

For vessels coded as 2 (out charter fishing), the field sampler should attempt to verify the expected return time and record this time on the Assignment Summary Form. As each vessel returns from fishing, the sampler should record on a separate Dockside Intercept Survey Form the vessel name, vessel ID number, and the return date and time. Samplers should first approach the vessel operator for permission to weigh and measure all harvested fish, and the sampler should then observe the harvested catch and record the total number of fish for each species, as well as length at the mid-line (mm) and weight (kg) of whole fish that can be measured. After the catch is inspected, the field sampler should then conduct an interview in person with a crew member (captain and/or mate). It is important to conduct interviews directly with vessel operators, rather than with charter vessel clients, since the purpose of the dockside validation is to measure recall error and bias in trip data recorded by vessel operators on logbook trip reports. During the in-person interview, the following information should be recorded:

- Departure date
- Departure and return time
- Number of passengers (fishing and non-fishing, not including crew)
- Number of anglers (total number of passengers that fished at any time during the trip)
- Number of crew, including captain
- Target species
- Primary area fished (crew should be asked to identify the statistical area where the majority of fishing took place during the trip using statistical maps provided)
- The minimum and maximum depths (in feet) fished for the trip
- The percent of fishing time spent fishing in federal waters, state waters, and inland waters
- Primary fishing methods (bottom fishing, drifting, trolling, spear fishing)

- Hours fished (number of hours spent with gear in the water)
- For each species released or could otherwise not be observed by the field sampler, the total number released for each disposition:
  - 1 – Thrown back alive
  - 3 – Eaten/plan to eat
  - 4 – Used for bait/plan to use for bait
  - 5 – Sold/plan to sell
  - 6 – Thrown back dead/plan to throw away
  - 7 – Other purpose

Samplers should remain on site until the last vessel known to be out fishing has returned (with the exception of overnight trips).

#### *Validation of Vessel Activity and Inactivity (Effort)*

Validation of vessel activity (or inactivity) is critical to determining compliance with logbook reporting requirements. Information on whether or not a vessel is in or out of port on a particular day can be matched with logbook records or hail out/hail in requirements to determine if vessel activity was accurately reported. To validate vessel activity and inactivity before reporting in the logbook reporting system, sites should be clustered into groups of sufficient size that all sites within the selected region may be visited within a 6 to 8 hour time period, including driving time. Site clusters should be selected each week within a month using simple random sampling, without replacement. For small states where all sites may be visited in a single day, sites may all be included in a single cluster that is validated each week.

During a scheduled vessel activity validation assignment, the field sampler should visit all sites within a selected vessel activity validation region and attempt to verify the fishing status for all vessels at each site within that region. The sampler should record the fishing status and time for each vessel on a Vessel Status Validation Form using the following codes:

- 1 – Vessel in
- 2 – Vessel out, charter fishing (must be verified)
- 3 – Unable to validate
- 4 – Vessel out, not charter fishing (must be verified)
- 5 – Vessel out, status unknown

If possible, the sampler should verify the fishing status with someone at the dock or in the booking booth. If unable to verify the fishing status of a vessel, the sampler should use code 5.

Dockside validation will also serve the secondary, and essential, function of collecting biological samples from the for-hire fishery. These samples are necessary to characterize the

catch for use in stock assessments and to monitor the health of the stocks. If practicable, the subcommittee recommends using observers on six-pack charter vessels. Additionally, VMS in conjunction with hail-out, hail-in to improve validation could be considered to improve validation and data quality, although at the expense of additional cost and reporting burden.

**The subcommittee recommends use of an MRIP certified methodology for validation with the following elements: Gulf MRIP pilot study methodologies, including dockside validation of catch and vessel activity, and maintenance of site and vessel registries.**

The following additional elements should also be considered:

- At-sea observer coverage; and,
- Fine-scale discard data, depths of capture, area fished, release mortality.

If VMS and hail in/hail out requirements are implemented, methods for validation could be modified as VMS technicians could validate when trips occur through vessel position coordinates.

## **4.7 Accountability measures**

Procedures to ensure timely and accurate reporting of data are essential to the success of any program. Late or missing reports can reduce accuracy (recall bias), increase uncertainty (e.g., requires procedure to estimate catch from missing reports), and can prevent timely use of these data for science and management. The Councils recently began requiring electronic submission of reports from commercial seafood dealers. Dealer reports and the associated problems with late or missing reports were discussed at length by the Councils. The Councils now require timely submission (weekly, with reports submitted by the Tuesday following the previous fishing week) and that seafood dealers are *only* authorized to purchase seafood if they are up to date on previous reports. A similar procedure should be developed for charter vessels requiring submission of previous reports to maintain a valid charter vessel permit and take passengers on for-hire trips. The subcommittee recognizes that accountability will be challenging and costly to implement due to the mobility, turnover and sheer number of charter vessels.

The principle objective is to encourage compliance without issuing fines and/or penalties. However, the full range of potential accountability measures should be enumerated in consultation with NOAA General Counsel through development of management regulations and penalty schedules. Similar (or identical) reporting requirements should be established between the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico management regions that will ease reporting burden and aid in compliance. Extensive outreach, training (as necessary), positive messaging, and industry participation in the design of the data collection system should aid in reporting compliance and meeting the goals of the program.

**The subcommittee recommends accountability measures and reporting requirements similar to those implemented for commercial seafood dealers in the southeast**

region (i.e., weekly submission of trip level reports, including periods of no activity due Tuesday following each week). A charter vessel owner/operator would only be authorized to harvest or possess federally managed species if previous reports have been submitted by the charter vessel owner/operator and received by NMFS (NMFS) in a timely manner. Any delinquent reports would need to be submitted and received by NMFS before a charter vessel owner/operator could harvest or possess federally managed species from the EEZ or adjacent state waters.

## 4.8 Calibration with existing survey

Transitioning into the proposed program will require an upstart period of at least one year to conduct outreach and ensure a high level of compliance. **The subcommittee recommends dual survey methods (existing and new) for no less than three years.** This overlap in survey periods will provide a basis to calibrate the new census results to the historical catch and effort data from the existing charter vessel survey. Historical catch data are critical inputs for science (e.g., stock assessments) and management (e.g., season length) and implementation of a new system without calibration would compromise the value of the historical catch information. Additionally, implementation of the new program is likely to have start-up difficulties that require modification, as such, the *existing survey would not be expected to provide the best scientific information available (at least for the first year)* until the new program is deemed operational.

**Data from the new program would not be expected to provide management advice during the first year of operation. Moreover, this would allow the possibility of an initial phase-in or limited implementation to identify and solve significant problems prior to implementation for all participants.**

## 4.9 Should state permitted for-hire vessels be required to participate?

The subcommittee discussed the objectives of the proposed program (i.e., improved estimates of catch both in terms of timeliness and accuracy), as well as the importance of mandating participation from state permitted for-hire vessels. The possibility of state vessels landing federally managed species in state waters does exist but the magnitude of those landings is unknown at this time, but expected to be relatively small for most federally managed species. The difficulties in establishing rules to mandate state vessel participation may be too great and should not be a barrier to developing a reporting program for federally permitted vessels. However, incorporation of state vessels into the program should be a long-term objective that would aid in timeliness and accuracy of data from the entire for-hire fleet and could simplify validation protocols that would not require distinguishing between state and federally permitted vessels.

**The subcommittee recommends that the Councils move forward with development of a reporting system that includes federally permitted for-hire vessels while also exploring ways to determine the impact of state permitted vessels on landings estimates of federally**

managed species. Long term, the subcommittee recommends that both state and federally permitted charter vessels participate in this census to include the entire fleet of charter vessels harvesting federally managed species.

## 4.10 Program coordination

The subcommittee discussed that the success of the program requires a smooth and well-coordinated program throughout the region. This is to meet timeliness needs, improve accuracy (and precision), and minimize duplication of effort.

**To this end, the subcommittee recommends that GulfFIN and ACCSP committees work jointly with end users (i.e., MRIP, SERO, SEFSC, HMS, and state agencies) to coordinate this new reporting program. Both quality control and quality assurance units in the program to ensure data meets required standards. A timeline for program implementation must be developed with the Councils, states, and other agencies.**

## 4.11 Budgetary implications

The vision of the subcommittee is that the proposed census program may be funded through MRIP and incorporate MRIP certified validation and estimation procedures but operation would be decentralized from MRIP to regional and state entities through their FINs. **It is expected that the census approach recommended by this subcommittee would result in additional costs for monitoring compliance and validating trip activity. Additional infrastructure and personnel may be necessary to maintain and process these data.**

### Electronic Logbook Costs

Cost estimates are an important component to the development of any new reporting program, and provide resource managers and scientists with a sense of how much funding is needed to support both implementation and maintenance of a program. Costs for electronic reporting may include: software development, reporting and/or monitoring hardware, monthly service fees, and personnel for data management, validation, and estimation. Costs are incurred both by the government, as well as fishermen who report these data. The following provides a summary of estimated costs for the electronic reporting program developed by the Technical Subcommittee. Cost estimates from existing programs and pilot studies, such as MRIP, the Southeast Headboat Survey, the commercial coastal logbook program, and the MRIP electronic logbook pilot study, are also provided for comparative purposes. Implementation of a new reporting program would require side-by-side comparative testing for calibration purposes, and those costs are not considered herein. Costs for observer coverage are also not included. Rather, costs are focused on the initial implementation, ongoing administration, data management, and statistical estimation of an electronic reporting program in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic.

### Current and Pilot Study Program Costs

The Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) is the primary source of charter for-hire data in the Southeast Region. MRIP collects catch and effort data from both state-licensed and

federally-permitted charter vessels from North Carolina through Mississippi. Charter vessel catch and effort data are also collected by the Louisiana Department of Fish and Wildlife and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department through creel surveys, and side-by-side comparison testing is planned for Louisiana in 2015. Annually, MRIP spends approximately \$4.3 million dollars to conduct dockside sampling and validation in the Southeast Region (North Carolina to Louisiana) for both private and charter vessels. Costs for specifically conducting charter sampling were not estimated, as those costs are difficult to estimate due to a combination of factors (survey procedures, contractual pricing, fixed costs and staffing/administrative considerations), but obviously would be less than the overall costs indicated above. An additional \$600 thousand dollars is spent conducting the for-hire telephone survey annually. A total of 3,920 charter vessels are currently included in the MRIP for-hire survey frame.

Headboat catch for 145 vessels is monitored through electronic logbooks by the SEFSC. A total of 13 federal, state, and contract personnel are involved in administering the program and monitoring fishing activity from North Carolina to Texas, including biological sampling and validation of reports of landings and effort. Costs for the program include salaries and benefits, vehicles, travel, supplies, and software development and maintenance. Total funding for the Southeast Headboat Survey is approximately \$888 thousand dollars, which equates to \$6,124 per vessel annually.

The SEFSC coastal logbook program for commercial fisheries is a paper-based logbook program, which obtains data from about 3,000 permit holders (vessels). Annually, the SEFSC spends \$775 thousand dollars for data entry, personnel, printing, storage, software maintenance, and overhead for this program. These costs do not include Trip Interview Program sampling, which is used for validation and biological sampling of commercial landings. The costs also do not include compliance enforcement.

Lastly, MRIP conducted an electronic logbook pilot study in 2011. The study included 410 vessels from the Florida Panhandle and Port Aransas, Texas. Costs for the pilot program included \$213.5 thousand dollars for start-up expenses, including a stakeholder workshop, software development, certified letters, outreach meetings, and working group meetings. Project expenses for logbook reporting and validation for one-year totaled \$385.6 thousand dollars. These expenses included salaries and overhead for a full-time coordinator, a database manager, and four field staff. Expenses were also included for travel and training expenses, equipment, printing costs, at-sea observer passenger fares, and GSMFC administrative costs. The average cost per vessel was \$1,340 for Texas vessels and \$658 for Florida vessels. Many more vessels were concentrated in a small geographic area in the Florida Panhandle, resulting in lower costs relative to Texas. In-kind contributions from NMFS and state employees were not included for many staff who served on the project team for the pilot study and conducted analyses, customer service, and database management. Therefore costs presented in the final report are less than the true costs of the project. On average, the cost per vessel as reported in the pilot study was \$911 after excluding observer passenger fares and paper-based logbook printing.

**Table 1.** Estimated Costs for an Electronic Logbook Program. Estimates are based on 2,555 federally permitted charter vessels. Headboat vessels are excluded from cost estimates, as well as vessels already possessing a commercial reef fish permit and VMS unit.

Activity	Cost Type	Estimated Expenses	Comments/Source
Software Development	Start-up (gov't)	\$100,000	Costs for Web site/app development. These costs could be reduced if existing software applications (SE Headboat Survey or iSnapper) are used instead of any new software developed. However, modifications of data fields, data storage and data export procedures would be required to accommodate the increased number of vessels.
Hardware/database infrastructure	Start-up (gov't)	\$25,000	Purchase of a server to store data.
Hardware/database maintenance	Reoccurring (gov't)	\$20,000	There would be reoccurring costs for hardware/software and database maintenance.
Database manager(s) and administration	Reoccurring (gov't)	\$150,000	Salaries and administrative costs for database management.
Certified Letters	Start-up, with period reoccurring compliance letters (gov't)	\$15,858	2,643 vessels @ \$6 per letter
Stakeholder Outreach Workshops	Start-up (gov't)	\$30,000	15 meetings @ \$2,000 per meeting
Field Samplers – Salaries, Benefits, and Overhead	Reoccurring (gov't)	\$3,392,000	53 port agents @ 50 vessels per port agent. \$64,000 for salary, benefits, and overhead per port agent – source SE Headboat Survey. If costs per vessel (\$658-\$1,340) from MRIP pilot study are used, then total costs range from \$1.74 to \$3.54 million.
Data Analyst(s) – Salary and Benefits	Reoccurring (gov't)	\$215,000	1 Gulf and 1 South Atlantic analyst @ GS-13 salary + benefits
Training, Travel, and Equipment for Field Samplers	Reoccurring (gov't)	\$158,700	~\$60 per vessel – source MRIP pilot study; costs are higher for more remote areas vs. ports with large concentrations of vessels.
Enforcement and Compliance Monitoring – Enforcement officer salaries, benefits, and overhead.	Reoccurring (gov't)	\$800,000	Data timeliness is critical for a logbook program. Additional compliance monitoring and enforcement for misreporting and non-compliance with reporting will be required. To properly conduct compliance an increase of 5 Enforcement Officers and 1 Supervisory Enforcement Officer are estimated to be needed.

VMS units (if required)	Start-up (gov't or industry)	\$5,750,000 (low estimate) \$7,750,000 (high estimate) (Reimbursement to fishermen for the purchase of VMS units may be available from NOAA Fisheries' Electronic Monitoring Grant Fund, but this money is currently not in hand and OLE would need to request funds through the budgetary process)	Currently 107 charter for-hire vessels have a commercial reef fish permit and VMS unit and another 145 vessels participate in the SE Headboat Survey. Approximately 2,500 charter for-hire vessels would need to obtain a VMS, if required. Costs for VMS units range from \$2,300 to \$3,800. Up to \$3,100 is currently authorized for reimbursement.
VMS installation	Start-up (industry)	\$500,000 (low estimate) \$1,500,000 (high estimate)	2,500 vessels x \$600 for marine technician to install VMS unit. Installation costs range from \$200 to \$600 depending upon proximity of vessel to marine electrician.
VMS personnel	Reoccurring (gov't)	\$530,000	Salary and benefits for five VMS technical staff (monitor 500+ vessels each) and one OLE Helpdesk person.
VMS annual service charges	Reoccurring (industry)	\$1,800,000	\$60 per month per vessel; \$720 annually per vessel x 2,500 vessels
VMS unit software	Reoccurring (gov't)	\$50,000	If VMS units will report any unique information, units will need to have initial and periodically updated software installed at a cost up to \$50,000.
Total Costs (w/o VMS)		\$170,858 (Start-up) \$4,735,700 (Reoccurring) \$4,906,558 (Start-up + reoccurring)	
Total Costs (w/ VMS)		\$6,420,858 (Start-up – low est.) \$9,420,858 (Start-up – high est.) \$7,115,700 (Re-occurring) \$13,536,558 (Total – low est.) \$16,536,558 (Total – high est.)	If VMS is required, some expenses for port sampling validation of fishing effort and enforcement compliance may be reduced.

## SECTION 5. CHALLENGES

### 5.1 Calibration with existing survey

The subcommittee recommends the use of dual survey methods (existing and new) for no less than three years. This overlap in survey periods will provide a basis to calibrate the new census results to the historical catch and effort data from the existing charter vessel survey. Historical catch data are critical inputs for science (e.g., stock assessments) and management (e.g., season length) and implementation of a new system without calibration would compromise the value of the historical catch information. Additionally, implementation of the new program is likely to have start-up difficulties that require modification, as such, the *proposed census would not be expected to provide the best scientific information available (at least for the first year)* until the new program was deemed operational.

### 5.2 Reporting burden

Although frequent reporting with as short as practicable lags between end of fishing period and report submission is desirable, the burden of reporting on vessel operators is an important concern. Wherever feasible, the reporting burden should be minimized. Implementation of this new program would require additional reporting burden over the status quo. To mitigate this requirement, the subcommittee recommends reducing duplicate reporting (submission of reports to multiple agencies, possibly in different formats) to ease reporting requirements. For example, charter vessels selected for the current For-Hire telephone survey should be able to submit their data electronically satisfying the submission requirements for both programs.

### 5.3 Compliance

Ensuring compliance is likely the biggest barrier to achieving the objectives for this program; more timely data with improved accuracy and stakeholder confidence. The MRIP Gulf logbook pilot project was negatively affected by late or missing reports from participants. In a census program, this is detrimental to both timeliness and accuracy as complete catch estimates cannot be generated with missing reports. Late reporting also affects accuracy because of recall bias (i.e., difficult to remember what was caught several weeks earlier). In addition, an incomplete census will require an estimation procedure to account for un-reported landings that requires time and adds uncertainty to the final catch and effort estimates.

Adequate accountability measures are essential to achieving high compliance rates (i.e., 100% timely reporting). The subcommittee recommended an approach similar to the accountability measures recently developed for commercial seafood dealers and headboats. Briefly, commercial seafood dealers are only authorized (i.e., possess valid permit) to purchase seafood if their weekly purchase reports have been submitted. As is the case with headboat reporting, charter boats would not be allowed to harvest or possess federally managed species from the EEZ or adjacent state waters until previous trip (including no activity) reports have been submitted. The effectiveness of this accountability measure is dependent of the capability of law

enforcement to enforce reporting requirements. **The subcommittee recommends consultation with the Office of Law Enforcement and NOAA General Counsel to explore the selection of appropriate and enforceable accountability measures.**

## 5.4 Collaboration with states

Individual States would be tasked with data collection and validation within their collective states. State requirements vary regarding reporting of fishery data with some states (e.g., South Carolina) requiring the submission of paper-based reporting. Other states (e.g., North Carolina) are progressing rapidly toward electronic logbooks with the other states within this range. **Long term, the subcommittee recommends that both state and federally permitted charter vessels participate in this census to include the entire fleet of charter vessels harvesting federally managed species.** In the near-term, implementation of electronic logbook reporting for the federally permitted for-hire fleet would substantially improve the data collection program but not depend on delays and uncertainties associated with requiring similar regulations for state-permitted vessels at this time. Consideration of only federally permitted vessels would ease the implementation of this process with the caveat that a large proportion of charter vessels would not be included in the census and their catch (and effort) would have to be estimated via other means that would reduce effectiveness of the census program. However, for state-permitted vessels, requiring electronic reporting without duplicate paper reporting may require legislative changes in some states (e.g., South Carolina) and there is uncertainty if or when this could be accomplished.

**Modifications to Coastal Migratory  
Pelagics, Gulf Reef Fish, Atlantic Dolphin  
Wahoo, and South Atlantic Snapper  
Grouper Fishery Management Plans:  
Charter Vessel Reporting**

**REVISED**

**DECISION DOCUMENT  
SHOWING GULF STAFF CHANGES**

**JOINT SAFMC/GMFMC MEETING  
JUNE 11, 2015  
KEY WEST, FLORIDA**

**Includes Motions from the SAFMC March 2015  
and GMFMC March/April 2015 Meetings and  
Gulf Staff Changes from Amendment Document**

**JUNE 2, 2015**

## Background

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) and South Atlantic Council (SAFMC) are considering alternatives that would change the method, frequency, and required data elements of fishery data reporting by charter vessel operators. The Councils are considering several changes that would require electronic reporting for the reef fish, snapper grouper, dolphin wahoo, and coastal migratory pelagic species for this component of the recreational sector. The Councils recognize that improved data reporting in these fisheries could reduce the likelihood that ACLs are exceeded and accountability measures (AMs) are triggered. Additional data elements that could be collected could also improve estimates of discard mortality and bycatch, metrics characterized by imprecise estimates under the current reporting requirements. The harvest from charter vessels contributes to recreational landings that count towards the recreational ACLs and quotas. Charter vessel harvest is monitored with the MRIP dockside intercept survey while effort is calculated based on a 10% monthly phone sample of federally permitted charter vessels. The current management system is inadequate for in-season monitoring for stocks with short recreational seasons. Also, the survey methods can be imprecise for some species leading to greater scientific and management uncertainty that requires larger buffers to prevent ACL overages and may prevent the OY from consistently being achieved. The proposed changes could reduce uncertainty in catch and effort data for this component of the recreational fishery increasing the likelihood that the optimum yield will be achieved and ACL overages will be avoided.

### ***Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council***

- Responsible for conservation and management of fish stocks
- Consists of 17 voting members: 11 appointed by the Secretary of Commerce; 1 representative from each of the 5 Gulf states, the Southeast Regional Director of National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS); and 4 non-voting members
- Responsible for developing fishery management plans and amendments, and recommends actions to NMFS for implementation

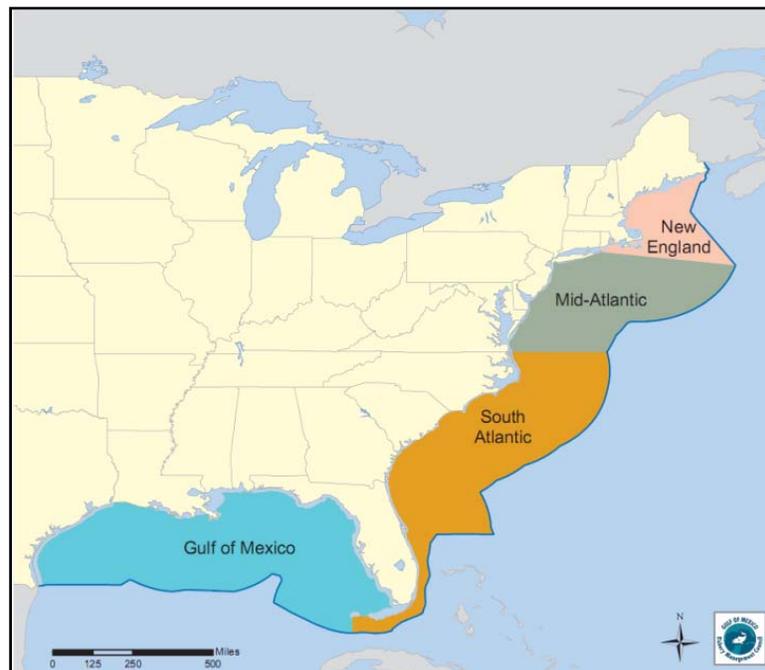
### ***South Atlantic Fishery Management Council***

- Responsible for conservation and management of fish stocks
- Consists of 13 voting members: 8 appointed by the Secretary of Commerce, 1 representative from each of the 4 South Atlantic states, the Southeast Regional Director of NMFS; and 4 non-voting members
- Responsible for developing fishery management plans and amendments, and recommends actions to NMFS for implementation

### ***National Marine Fisheries Service***

- Responsible for data needed by the Councils for management
- Responsible for conservation and management of fish stocks
- Approves, disapproves, or partially approves Council recommendations
- Implements regulations

This amendment affects headboat and charter vessel reporting requirements for species managed in the Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) for Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico (Reef Fish), Snapper Grouper Resources of the South Atlantic, South Atlantic Dolphin Wahoo and Coastal Migratory Pelagics of the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico (CMP) (**Figure 1.1.1**).



**Figure 1.1.1.** Jurisdictional boundaries of the Gulf of Mexico (blue), South Atlantic (orange), Mid-Atlantic (green), and New England (peach) Fishery Management Councils. Modifications to the reef fish FMP would only affect the GMFMC; the snapper grouper FMP modifications would affect only the SAFMC; the coastal migratory pelagics FMP modifications would affect the MAFMC, SAFMC, and GMFMC; and the dolphin wahoo FMP modifications would affect the NEFMC, MAFMC, and SAFMC.

## **Actions/Alternatives/Purpose & Need Wording and Voting: Not in Gulf Staff Amendment**

The wording shown for Purpose & Need and each Action/Alternative without highlight reflects the guidance provided by the South Atlantic Council during their March 2015 meeting and Gulf Council during their March/April 2015 meeting. Text shown in yellow highlight represents recommendations from the IPT/Council staff/Council Decisions to be made.

The wording for Purpose & Need and Actions/Alternatives will be projected during the Joint Council meeting and motions will be made to indicate the Councils' directions to Staff/IPT. Each Council will vote separately. The Gulf Council's Data Committee and the South Atlantic Council's Data Committee will review these decisions prior to the

Joint Council meeting and any motions will be added to the Decision Document and emailed to all Council members. The Decision Document with Committee Motions will be projected during the Joint Council meeting.

## Purpose and Need

The purpose and need shown below was modified from the Joint Headboat Reporting Amendment in the South Atlantic and approved by the SAFMC in March 2015. The Gulf Council did not take action on this at their March/April meeting.

### *Purpose for Action*

The *purpose* of the Joint South Atlantic/Gulf of Mexico Generic Charter Reporting Amendment is to: Improve **charter** data collection methods to increase the accuracy and timeliness of recreational **charter** data in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic fisheries.

### *Need for Action*

The *need* for the Joint South Atlantic/Gulf of Mexico Generic Charter Reporting Amendment is to: Improve data collection methods and timeliness of reporting to limit overages of annual catch limits, to improve stock assessments, and to improve compliance in Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic fisheries.

Note: If the Councils approve headboats being included, then the Title of the Document and the Purpose & Need would require modification by changing “charter” to “for-hire”.

### **Gulf Staff changes from Amendment:**

The *purpose* of the Generic Modifications to Charter Vessel and Headboat Reporting Requirements Amendment is to increase the accuracy and timeliness of landings, discards, and effort of for-hire vessels participating in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic regions.

The *need* for this action is to improve charter vessel and headboat fishery data used for stock assessments and to improve monitoring and compliance of for-hire vessels in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic regions.

### **COUNCIL ACTION:**

**Option 1. Approve the Purpose & Need shown above.**

**Option 2. Modify by changing “charter” to “for-hire” and Approve the Modified Purpose & Need.**

**Option 3. Approve Gulf staff wording for the Purpose & Need.**

#### **Option 4. Others??**

### **Actions/Alternatives Wording**

The wording for Action 1 shown below was modified slightly from the Joint Headboat Reporting Amendment in the South Atlantic. Some additional actions have been included. **The South Atlantic Council approved Action 1 during their March 2015 meeting.** At their March/April meeting, **the GMFMC approved a motion changing “via computer or internet” to “via NMFS approved hardware/software in Alternatives 2-5.**

### **Action 1: Amend the Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Atlantic Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery Management Plans to modify data reporting for charter vessels**

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Retain existing permits and data reporting systems for the charter sector. Currently, the owner or operator of a vessel for which a charter vessel permit for Gulf coastal migratory pelagic fish, South Atlantic coastal migratory pelagic fish, Gulf reef fish, South Atlantic snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin and wahoo has been issued, or whose vessel fishes for or lands such coastal migratory pelagic fish, reef fish, snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin or wahoo in or from state waters adjoining the applicable Gulf, South Atlantic, or Atlantic exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and who is selected to report by the Science and Research Director (SRD), must maintain a fishing record for each trip, or a portion of such trips as specified by the SRD, on forms provided by the SRD. Completed records for charter vessels must be submitted to the Science and Research Director weekly, postmarked no later than 7 days after the end of each trip (Sunday). Currently, all headboats are required to submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD via electronic reporting (via computer or internet). Weekly = 7 days after the end of each week (Sunday).

**Alternative 2.** Require that charter vessels submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) weekly via electronic reporting (via **NMFS approved hardware/software** ~~computer or internet~~). Weekly = 7 days after the end of each week (Sunday).

**Alternative 3.** Require that charter vessels submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) daily via electronic reporting (via **NMFS approved hardware/software** ~~computer or internet~~). Daily = by noon of the following day.

Sub-Alternative 3a. Noon of the following day.

Sub-Alternative 3b. Prior to arriving at the dock.

**Alternative 4.** Require that charter vessels submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the

SRD via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software computer or internet). Weekly = 7 days after the end of each week (Sunday).

**Alternative 5.** Require that charter vessels submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software computer or internet). Weekly = Tuesday following each fishing week.

## **The IPT recommends the following changes to the wording of the Action and the Alternatives**

### **Action 1: Modify Frequency and Mechanism of Data Reporting Requirements for Charter Vessel Data Reporting Requirements for Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Atlantic Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery Management Plans**

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Retain existing permits and data reporting systems for charter vessels. Currently, the owner or operator of a charter vessel for which a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf or South Atlantic coastal migratory pelagic fish, Gulf reef fish, South Atlantic snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin and wahoo has been issued, or whose vessel fishes for or lands such coastal migratory pelagic fish, reef fish, snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin or wahoo in or from state waters adjoining the applicable Gulf, South Atlantic, or Atlantic exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and who is selected to report by the Science and Research Director (SRD) must maintain a fishing record for each trip, or a portion of such trips as specified by the SRD, on forms provided by the SRD. Completed fishing records must be submitted to the SRD weekly, postmarked no later than 7 days after the end of each week (Sunday). Information to be reported is indicated on the form and its accompanying instructions.

For South Atlantic snapper grouper, charter vessels selected to report by the SRD must participate in the NMFS-sponsored electronic logbook and/or video monitoring program as directed by the SRD. Completed fishing records may be required weekly or daily, as directed by the SRD.

**Alternative 2.** Require that federally permitted charter vessels submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). Weekly = Tuesday following each fishing week.

**Alternative 3.** Require that federally permitted charter vessels submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) daily via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). Daily = by noon of the following day.

**Alternative 4.** Require that federally permitted charter vessels submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) for each trip via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software) prior to arriving at the dock.

**Gulf Staff changes to IPT recommendations from Amendment; previously approved wording not shown in Amendment (in green and ~~strikethrough~~):**

### **Action 1: Modify Frequency and Mechanism of Data**

#### **Reporting Requirements for Charter Vessels Harvesting Data Reporting Requirements for Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, South Atlantic Dolphin Wahoo, or Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Atlantic Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery Management Plans**

**Note: The DW FMP is Atlantic not South Atlantic.**

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** ~~Retain existing permits and data reporting systems for charter vessels. Currently, t~~ The owner or operator of a charter vessel for which a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf of Mexico (Gulf) or South Atlantic coastal migratory pelagic (CMP) species fish, Gulf reef fish, South Atlantic snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin and wahoo has been issued, or whose vessel fishes for or lands such CMP species coastal migratory pelagic fish, reef fish, snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin or wahoo in or from state waters adjoining the applicable Gulf, South Atlantic, or Atlantic exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and who is selected to report by the Science and Research Director (SRD) must maintain a fishing record for each trip, or a portion of such trips as specified by the SRD, on forms provided by the SRD. Completed fishing records must be submitted to the SRD weekly, postmarked no later than 7 days after the end of each week (Sunday). Information to be reported is indicated on the form and its accompanying instructions.

For South Atlantic snapper grouper, charter vessels selected to report by the SRD must participate in the NMFS-sponsored electronic logbook and/or video monitoring program as directed by the SRD. Completed fishing records may be required weekly or daily, as directed by the SRD.

**Alternative 2.** Require that federally permitted charter vessels submit fishing records to the ~~Science and Research Director (SRD)~~ weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). Weekly = Tuesday following each fishing week.

**Alternative 3.** Require that federally permitted charter vessels submit fishing records to the ~~Science and Research Director (SRD)~~ daily via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). Daily = by noon of the following day.

**Alternative 4.** Require that federally permitted charter vessels submit fishing records to the ~~Science and Research Director (SRD)~~ for each trip via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software) prior to arriving at the dock.

**COUNCIL ACTION:**

**Option 1. Approve the range of original Action 1 alternatives, with the GMFMC change, shown above for detailed analyses.**

**Option 2. Approve the IPT recommendations for Action 1 and the alternatives and approve the modified range of Action 1 alternatives for detailed analyses.**

**Option 3. Approve Gulf staff wording for Action 1 and the alternatives.**

**Option 4. Add additional alternatives and/or modify the Action 1 alternatives and approve for detailed analyses.**

**Option 5. Others??**

Compliance Measure

It is the Councils' intent that charter vessels must remain in compliance with the reporting requirements to be authorized to conduct trips to fish for reef fish, snapper grouper, dolphin wahoo, and coastal migratory pelagic species (compliance measure). NMFS has also specified measures to be used in cases of catastrophic conditions when electronic means to report data are not feasible. Under the alternatives with weekly reporting, Monday through Sunday is the fishing week and reports are due seven days after the end of each week that ends on Sunday. The reports are due by midnight of the following Sunday. This is contained in the current regulations for charter vessels. Under the alternative with daily reporting, reports would have been due by noon of the following day to ensure the data are available more frequently than weekly.

“No-fishing forms” must be submitted at the same frequency, via the same process as specified in **Action 1**.

Reporting is currently a condition of the permits issued for the reef fish, snapper grouper, dolphin/wahoo, and coastal migratory pelagic fisheries. Not reporting does not meet the conditions of the permit and the permit becomes invalid. Under the current reporting scenario, it is difficult to determine which permits have met the reporting frequency requirements due to the lag between the submittal of reports and the processing of the data. Electronic reporting would allow for better enforcement of current permit conditions. Any delinquent reports would need to be submitted and received by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) before a charter vessel could legally harvest and/or possess the affected species.

In situations where there is no fishing occurring, either by choice or due to a closed fishing season, “no fishing reports” are currently required to be submitted. These forms

would still be required and could be submitted electronically, and should be submitted by the timeframe specified to remain in compliance with the permit requirements.

A charter vessel would only be authorized to harvest and/or possess species in the Reef Fish, Snapper Grouper, Dolphin/Wahoo, and Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources Fishery Management Plans if the charter vessel's previous reports have been submitted by the charter vessel owner and received by the NMFS in the time specified. Any delinquent reports would need to be submitted and received by NMFS before a charter vessel could legally harvest and/or possess the affected species. Charter vessel reporting ahead of time if they are closed/not fishing for an extended period, meets the intent of the weekly reporting.

### Catastrophic Measure

It is the Councils' intent that the charter vessel program would be allowed to use paper-based reporting only as a backup during catastrophic conditions, when electronic means to report data are not feasible. The Regional Administrator (RA) would determine when catastrophic conditions exist, the duration of the catastrophic conditions, and which participants or geographic areas are deemed affected by the catastrophic conditions. The RA would provide timely notice to affected participants via publication of notification in the *Federal Register*, NOAA weather radio, fishery bulletins, and other appropriate means and would authorize the affected participants' use of paper-based components for the duration of the catastrophic conditions. The paper forms would be available from NMFS. The RA would have the authority to waive or modify reporting time requirements. The need for paper-based reporting is expected to occur infrequently and for relatively short time periods.

### Discussion

**Action 1** addresses the following recommendations from the Technical Sub-Committee:

1. Complete census of all participants.
2. Mandatory, trip level reporting with weekly electronic submission. Give flexibility to require submission more frequently than weekly if necessary. Give flexibility to declare periods of inactivity in advance.
4. Implementation of accountability measures to ensure compliance.
7. Maintain capability for paper-based reporting during catastrophic conditions.

The subcommittee agreed that the potential for bias is too great to recommend any voluntary reporting program and mandatory participation is necessary for vessel/owner-operators selected. This is recommended to best achieve the overarching objectives of the proposed program.

The technical subcommittee recommends the development and implementation of an electronic logbook *census* program (i.e., 100% reporting) to estimate catch and effort for

southeast region charter vessels, including procedures for expanding for non-reporting. This recommendation was based in part on the inability of the current survey to meet the needs of science and management applications and the requirement of timeliness beyond which is readily achievable through a survey approach.

The technical subcommittee recommends trip level reporting with weekly submission due the Tuesday following each fishing week. This would include no activity reports that could be submitted in advance if periods of inactivity are known. The technical subcommittee discussed that a daily reporting requirement may not be feasible or enforceable, however, reporting systems and user interfaces should be designed to encourage “real-time” at-sea reporting of catch and catch related data elements (e.g. fishing location, fishing method, target species).

The subcommittee recommends accountability measures and reporting requirements similar to those implemented for commercial seafood dealers in the southeast region (i.e., weekly submission of trip level reports, including periods of no activity due Tuesday following each week). A charter vessel owner/operator would only be authorized to harvest or possess federally managed species if previous reports have been submitted by the charter vessel owner/operator and received by NMFS (NMFS) in a timely manner. Any delinquent reports would need to be submitted and received by NMFS before a charter vessel owner/operator could harvest or possess federally managed species from the EEZ or adjacent state waters.

This measure would require that charter vessels remain current on their reports as a requirement to continue legally harvesting and/or possessing the affected species. This would improve timeliness and accuracy of charter vessel reporting, decreasing the likelihood of exceeding recreational annual catch limits (ACLs) for species that have in-season closures like black sea bass. For species with a recreational AM that shortens the length of the following fishing season, better and more timely data could help ensure landings do not exceed the ACL in the year following an overage. The requirement to submit no-fishing forms reduces the uncertainty of reported charter vessel landings. NMFS would be better able to differentiate between periods when charter vessels were fishing and periods with missing reports.

A preliminary list of data elements for charter vessels is shown in **Table 2.2.1**. South Carolina has already implemented a state logbook program for headboats and charter vessels (**Attachments 1 and 2**). They are in the process of moving from paper to electronic reporting. The final list of data elements for charter vessels in the South Atlantic would need to collect the same data as currently collected in South Carolina as a minimum; additional data may be collected from a sample of or all federally-permitted charter vessels.

Charter vessels are operationally defined as federally permitted for-hire vessels that carry six or fewer passengers. To date, none of these vessels have been selected by the SRD to submit fishing records as described in **Alternative 1** and have been monitored in combination through the MRIP For-Hire survey (effort) and the MRIP dockside intercept

(catch). The MRIP For-Hire Survey includes charter vessels operating in the Gulf of Mexico from Louisiana through Florida and eastern Florida through North Carolina in the South Atlantic Management region are required to report all trips taken during selected weeks (effort only) whenever they are selected to participate in the survey. Charter vessel operators are contacted by telephone to collect these data (**Table 2.1.1**). Catch data are collected in a separate dockside intercept survey of anglers. Adjustment factors for active charter vessels that are not in the sample frame (new to fleet, no contact information known, etc.) are produced from field intercept survey questions and applied to the raw effort estimate.

**Table 2.1.1.** Required data reporting elements for charter vessels participating in MRIP For-Hire survey.

<b>Reporting Elements</b>
Area fished
Number of anglers who fished
Hours of actual fishing activity
Method of fishing
Target species (if any)

To enforce the mandatory reporting requirement for federally permitted charter vessels in the For-Hire Telephone Survey, permit holders who refuse the survey over the phone are notified by letter of their obligation to report as a condition for permit renewal. However, if a vessel operator cannot be contacted after five attempts for a selected week, the final interview status is “unsuccessful contact” and it is impossible to identify permit-holders who are passively evading the survey. Contact rates in the For-Hire Telephone Survey vary by wave (2 month sample period), state, and region, and the percent of selected vessels that are unable to be contacted by phone is quite high in some strata.

Charter vessel catch and effort in Texas are monitored via the Texas Parks and Wildlife Survey. This survey is a field-intercept survey of boat-based fishing, including for-hire vessels. This survey estimates fishing effort and catch (harvest only) on a seasonal basis.

**Alternative 2** would require charter vessels participating in the fisheries (noted above) to submit fishing records weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). **Alternative 2** could improve fishery data in several ways. For example, fishery data would be available into the science and management process faster, potentially reducing the chance of exceeding ACLs. **Alternative 2** could also improve accuracy, as reports would be completed soon after each trip reducing problems associated with recall errors. However, **Alternative 2** would reduce flexibility for timing of report preparation by charter vessel operators and this could burden could be acute during peak season when trip intensity, passenger capacity, and catch are greatest. It is during these periods of high catches when data are needed more quickly to ensure ACLs are not exceeded.

**Alternative 3** would require charter vessels participating in the fisheries (noted above) to submit a report for each day. As with **Alternative 2**, this report would be submitted electronically and received by NMFS (due by noon the following day). **Alternative 3** could further reduce the likelihood of exceeding ACLs with reduced recall error as compared to **Alternative 1** and **Alternative 2**. However, **Alternative 3** would add additional burden and reduced flexibility in comparison to **Alternatives 1** and **2**.

**Alternative 4** would require charter vessels participating in the fisheries (noted above) to submit a report for each trip. This report would need to be submitted electronically and received by NMFS prior to returning to the dock and would require multiple reports per day if more than a single trip occurred on a given day. **Alternative 4** would offer the greatest ability to prevent ACL overages and add additional rigor to trip validation of catch and effort that are not possible with **Alternatives 1-3**. However, **Alternative 4** offers charter vessel operators the least flexibility in how and when they prepare and submit their fisheries reports and could be burdensome during periods of peak activity or inclement weather.

**The IPT recommends a new Action 2 addressing headboats:**

**Action 2: Modify Frequency and Mechanism of Headboat Data Reporting Requirements for Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and South Atlantic Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery Management Plans**

**Note: The DW FMP is Atlantic not South Atlantic.**

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Retain existing permits and data reporting systems for headboats. Currently, the owner or operator of a headboat for which a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf or South Atlantic coastal migratory pelagic fish, Gulf reef fish, South Atlantic snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin and wahoo has been issued, or whose vessel fishes for or lands such coastal migratory pelagic fish, reef fish, snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin or wahoo in or from state waters adjoining the applicable Gulf, South Atlantic, or Atlantic exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and who is selected to report by the Science and Research Director (SRD) must submit an electronic fishing record for each trip of all fish harvested via the Southeast Region Headboat Survey. Electronic fishing records must be submitted at weekly intervals (or intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD) by 11:59 p.m., local time, the Sunday following a reporting week. If no fishing activity occurred during a reporting week, an electronic report so stating must be submitted for that reporting week by 11:59 p.m., local time, the Sunday following a reporting week.

During catastrophic conditions the use of paper forms for basic required functions may be authorized by the RA by publication of timely notice. During catastrophic conditions, the RA also has the authority to waive or modify reporting time requirements.

An electronic report not received within the time specified is delinquent. A delinquent report automatically results in a prohibition on harvesting or possessing the applicable species, regardless of any additional notification to the delinquent owner and operator by NMFS. This prohibition is applicable until all required and delinquent reports have been submitted and received by NMFS according to the reporting requirements.

For South Atlantic snapper grouper, headboats selected to report by the SRD must participate in the NMFS-sponsored electronic logbook and/or video monitoring program as directed by the SRD. Completed fishing records may be required weekly or daily, as directed by the SRD.

**Alternative 2.** Require that headboats submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). Weekly = Tuesday following each fishing week.

**Alternative 3.** Require that headboats submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) daily via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). Daily = by noon of the following day.

**Alternative 4.** Require that headboats submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) for each trip via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software) prior to arriving at the dock.

**Gulf Staff changes to IPT recommendations from Amendment (in green and strikethrough):**

**Action 2: Modify Frequency and Mechanism of ~~Data Reporting for Headboats Harvesting Data Reporting Requirements for Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, South Atlantic Dolphin and Wahoo, or Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and South Atlantic Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery Management Plans~~**

**Note: The DW FMP is Atlantic not South Atlantic.**

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Retain existing permits and data reporting systems for headboats. Currently, the owner or operator of a headboat for which a charter vessel/headboat permit for Gulf or South Atlantic coastal migratory pelagic fish, Gulf reef fish, South Atlantic snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin and wahoo has been issued, or whose vessel fishes for or lands such coastal migratory pelagic fish, reef fish, snapper grouper, or Atlantic dolphin or wahoo in or from state waters adjoining the applicable Gulf, South Atlantic, or Atlantic exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and who is selected to report by the Science and Research Director (SRD) must submit an electronic fishing record for each trip of all fish harvested via the Southeast Region Headboat Survey. Electronic fishing records must be submitted at weekly intervals (or intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD) by 11:59 p.m., local time, the Sunday following a reporting week. If no fishing activity occurred during a reporting week, an electronic report so stating must be submitted for that reporting week by 11:59 p.m., local time, the Sunday following a reporting week.

During catastrophic conditions the use of paper forms for basic required functions may be authorized by the RA by publication of timely notice. During catastrophic conditions, the RA also has the authority to waive or modify reporting time requirements.

An electronic report not received within the time specified is delinquent. A delinquent report automatically results in a prohibition on harvesting or possessing the applicable species, regardless of any additional notification to the delinquent owner and operator by NMFS. This prohibition is applicable until all required and delinquent reports have been submitted and received by NMFS according to the reporting requirements.

For South Atlantic snapper grouper, headboats selected to report by the SRD must participate in the NMFS-sponsored electronic logbook and/or video monitoring program as directed by the SRD. Completed fishing records may be required weekly or daily, as directed by the SRD.

**Alternative 2.** Require that headboats submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). Weekly = Tuesday following each fishing week.

**Alternative 3.** Require that headboats submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) daily via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). Daily = by noon of the following day.

**Alternative 4.** Require that headboats submit fishing records to the Science and Research Director (SRD) for each trip via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software) prior to arriving at the dock.

#### **COUNCIL ACTION:**

**Option 1. Approve the IPT recommendations for new Action 2 and the alternatives, and approve the range of new Action 2 alternatives shown above for detailed analyses.**

**Option 2. Add additional alternatives and/or modify the Action 2 alternatives and approve for detailed analyses.**

**Option 3. Approve Gulf staff wording for new Action 2 and the alternatives.**

**Option 4. Others??**

#### **Discussion**

**Action 2** addresses the following recommendations from the Technical Sub-Committee:

1. Complete census of all participants.
2. Mandatory, trip level reporting with weekly electronic submission. Give flexibility to require submission more frequently than weekly if necessary. Give flexibility to declare periods of inactivity in advance.
4. Implementation of accountability measures to ensure compliance.
7. Maintain capability for paper-based reporting during catastrophic conditions.

The subcommittee agreed that the potential for bias is too great to recommend any voluntary reporting program and mandatory participation is necessary for vessel/owner-

operators selected. This is recommended to best achieve the overarching objectives of the proposed program.

The technical subcommittee recommends the development and implementation of an electronic logbook *census* program (i.e., 100% reporting) to estimate catch and effort for southeast region for-hire vessels, including procedures for expanding for non-reporting. This recommendation was based in part on the inability of the current survey to meet the needs of science and management applications and the requirement of timeliness beyond which is readily achievable through a survey approach.

The technical subcommittee recommends trip level reporting with weekly submission due the Tuesday following each fishing week. This would include no activity reports that could be submitted in advance if periods of inactivity are known. The technical subcommittee discussed that a daily reporting requirement may not be feasible or enforceable, however, reporting systems and user interfaces should be designed to encourage “real-time” at-sea reporting of catch and catch related data elements (e.g. fishing location, fishing method, target species).

The subcommittee recommends accountability measures and reporting requirements similar to those implemented for commercial seafood dealers in the southeast region (i.e., weekly submission of trip level reports, including periods of no activity due Tuesday following each week). A for-hire vessel owner/operator would only be authorized to harvest or possess federally managed species if previous reports have been submitted by the charter vessel owner/operator and received by NMFS (NMFS) in a timely manner. Any delinquent reports would need to be submitted and received by NMFS before a for-hire vessel owner/operator could harvest or possess federally managed species from the EEZ or adjacent state waters.

This measure would require that for-hire vessels remain current on their reports as a requirement to continue legally harvesting and/or possessing the affected species. This would improve timeliness and accuracy of for-hire vessel reporting, decreasing the likelihood of exceeding recreational annual catch limits (ACLs) for species that have in-season closures like black sea bass. For species with a recreational AM that shortens the length of the following fishing season, better and more timely data could help ensure landings do not exceed the ACL in the year following an overage. The requirement to submit no-fishing forms reduces the uncertainty of reported for-hire vessel landings. NMFS would be better able to differentiate between periods when charter vessels were fishing and periods with missing reports.

Headboats are operationally defined as vessels participating in the Southeast Region Headboat Survey (SRHS). Historically, federally permitted headboat vessels reported using paper forms. As of January 1, 2013, vessel operators have begun electronic submission of their fisheries data. Vessel operators are required to report 100% of their vessel trips. This data collection method places responsibility for submitting required information directly on the permit holder, and compliance is monitored and enforced as a condition for permit renewal. The obligation to report is periodically reinforced via certified letter to each permit holder.

The Southeast Region Headboat Survey (SRHS), which is administered by NMFS Southeast Fisheries Science Center, includes approximately 140 large capacity headboats operating in the Gulf of Mexico and U.S. South Atlantic from Texas through North Carolina. Vessels included in this survey are required to report catch and effort weekly to National Marine Fisheries Service (**Table 2.2.1**).

**Alternative 1** requires headboat participating in Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Atlantic Dolphin Wahoo, or Gulf and South Atlantic Coastal Migratory Pelagic fisheries to submit electronic reports weekly (or at intervals less than a week if requested by the SRD) due seven days after the end of each week (Sunday).

**Table 2.2.1.** Required data reporting elements for headboats participating in the Southeast Regional Headboat Survey (SRHS).

<b>Reporting Elements</b>
Depart Date:Time
Return Date:Time
Vessel Name
Captain Name
Number of Anglers
Number of Paying Passengers
Number of Crew
Fuel used (gallons)
Price per gallon (estimate)
Minimum depth fished
Maximum depth fished
Primary depth fished
Latitude/Longitude Degrees
Latitude/Longitude Minutes
Species caught
Number kept
Number released

**Alternative 2** would require headboats participating in the fisheries (noted above) to report weekly or at intervals shorter than a week if notified by the SRD via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/software). The difference between **Alternative 1** and **Alternative 2** is the difference in delay between the end of the fishing week (Sunday) and report submission. **Alternative 1** allows 7 days to prepare and submit reports while **Alternative 2** allows two days. **Alternative 2** could improve fishery data in several ways. Fishery data would be available into the science and management process faster, potentially reducing the chance of exceeding ACLs. **Alternative 2** could also improve accuracy, as reports would be completed soon after each trip reducing problems associated with recall errors. However, **Alternative 2** would reduce flexibility for timing

of report preparation and this could be acute during peak season when trip intensity, passenger capacity, and catch are greatest. It is during these periods of high catches when data are needed more quickly to ensure ACLs are not exceeded.

**Alternative 3** would require headboats participating in the fisheries (noted above) to submit a report for each day). This report would be submitted electronically and received by NMFS (due noon the following day). **Alternative 3** could further reduce the likelihood of exceeding ACLs and reduce recall error as compared to **Alternative 1** or **Alternative 2**. However, **Alternative 3** would add additional burden and reduced flexibility in comparison to **Alternatives 1** or **Alternative 2**.

**Alternative 4** would require headboats participating in the fisheries (noted above) to submit a report for each trip. This report would need to be submitted electronically and received by NMFS prior to returning to the dock. **Alternative 4** would require trip-level reporting where each report is submitted and received by NMFS prior to arriving at the dock. **Alternative 4** would offer the greatest ability to prevent ACL overages and add additional rigor to trip validation of catch and effort that are not possible with **Alternatives 1-3**. However, **Alternative 4** offers headboat operators the least flexibility in how and when they prepare and submit their fisheries reports and could be burdensome during periods of peak activity or inclement weather.

## **Action 32: Amend the Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Atlantic Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery Management Plans to require vessel or catch location reporting for charter vessels**

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** There are no requirements for charter vessels to report vessel location electronically. Fishing location is required to be reported on the vessel logbook report using designated grids.

**Alternative 2.** Require charterboats to report catch location:

Sub-Alternative 2a. By latitude/longitude in degrees and minutes.

Sub-Alternative 2b. By headboat grid.

**Alternative 3.** Require the use of an electronic device that automatically records vessel location for later transmission along with the logbook information:

Sub-Alternative 3a. In the South Atlantic.

Sub-Alternative 3b. In the Gulf of Mexico.

**Alternative 4.** Require the use of Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) for charter vessels in the Gulf of Mexico.

### **The IPT recommends the following changes to the wording of the Action and the Alternatives**

## **Action 3: Modify Electronic Reporting Requirements Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Atlantic Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery Management Plans to Require Vessel or Catch Location Reporting**

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Charter vessels participating in the For-Hire survey are required to report area fished (inshore, state, or federal waters), if selected as part of the survey. Headboats participating in the SRHS self report latitude and longitude of area fished (degrees and minutes only; within 1 nm<sup>2</sup> area).

**Alternative 2.** Require the use of a **NMFS approved** electronic device that automatically records vessel location at specified time intervals for later transmission:

Sub-Alternative 3a. In the Gulf of Mexico (headboat)

Sub-Alternative 3b. In the Gulf of Mexico (charter vessel)

Sub-Alternative 3c. In the South Atlantic (headboat)

Sub-Alternative 3d. In the South Atlantic (charter vessel)

**Alternative 3.** Require the use of a NMFS approved Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) to record vessel location at specified time intervals for selected for-hire vessels in the Gulf of Mexico:

Sub-Alternative 3a. In the Gulf of Mexico (headboat)

Sub-Alternative 3b. In the Gulf of Mexico (charter vessel)

**Gulf Staff changes to IPT recommendations from Amendment; previously approved wording not shown in Amendment (in green and ~~striketrough~~):**

### **Action 3: Modify Electronic Reporting Requirements Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Atlantic Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery Management Plans to Require Vessel or Catch Location Reporting**

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Charter vessels participating in the For-Hire survey are required to report area fished (inshore, state, or federal waters), if selected as part of the survey. Headboats participating in the SRHS ~~self~~ **are required to** report latitude and longitude of area fished (degrees and minutes only; within 1 nm<sup>2</sup> area).

**Alternative 2.** Require **federally permitted for-hire vessels to use** ~~the use of a~~ **NMFS approved** electronic device that automatically records vessel location at specified time intervals for later transmission:

Sub-Alternative 3a. In the Gulf of Mexico (headboat)

Sub-Alternative 3b. In the Gulf of Mexico (charter vessel)

Sub-Alternative 3c. In the South Atlantic (headboat)

Sub-Alternative 3d. In the South Atlantic (charter vessel)

**Alternative 3.** Require **federally permitted for-hire vessels to use** ~~the use of a~~ NMFS approved Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) to record vessel location at specified time intervals ~~for selected for-hire vessels in the Gulf of Mexico:~~

Sub-Alternative 3a. In the Gulf of Mexico (headboat)

Sub-Alternative 3b. In the Gulf of Mexico (charter vessel)

#### **COUNCIL ACTION:**

**Option 1. Approve the IPT recommendations for Action 3 and the alternatives, and approve the range of Action 3 alternatives shown above for detailed analyses.**

**Option 2. Add additional alternatives and/or modify the Action 3 alternatives and approve for detailed analyses.**

**Option 3. Approve Gulf staff wording for Action 3 and the alternatives.**

**Option 4. Others??**

## Discussion

**Action 3** addresses the following recommendations from the Technical Sub-Committee:

6. Minimize reporting burden to anglers by reducing (or preferably eliminating) paper reporting and eliminating duplicate reporting.

The South Atlantic Council is interested in charter vessels and headboats using a GPS enabled laptop, tablet, phone, or other electronic device similar to the one recently demonstrated by ACCSP to the Council and the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel. The South Atlantic Council has concluded that VMS is not feasible for South Atlantic Council fisheries at this time due to cost and issues related to the operation of VMS on small vessels prevalent in many fisheries.

The vessel location data would be collected automatically and would be treated as highly confidential information. Fishing locations would not be available to the public. These data would only be used to conduct analyses to support stock assessments, describe fishing operations, and inform law enforcement for future operations.

The Gulf Council has directed staff to begin developing a charter vessel reporting plan amendment that would consider the use of VMS.

Charter vessels that are surveyed using the For-Hire survey (i.e., 10% weekly) are asked to report area fished among other elements (See Chapter 2.1). **Action 3** considers changing the location reporting element for charter vessels and headboats from a self-reported system to an electronic system where location information is recorded passively by a device on board the vessel. **Alternative 1** would maintain the current self-reporting systems in place (i.e., report area fished if selected in the For-Hire survey (charter vessel) or latitude/longitude of area fished within 1 nm<sup>2</sup> area (headboat). **Alternative 2** would require the use of a NMFS approved electronic device to record and later transmit specific location information (latitude/longitude). Four sub-alternatives are considered that would require this for Gulf of Mexico headboats (**Sub-Alternative 3a**); Gulf of Mexico charter vessels (**Sub-Alternative 3b**); South Atlantic headboats (**Sub-Alternative 3c**); or South Atlantic charter vessels (**Sub-Alternative 3d**). **Alternative 2** and **Sub-Alternatives** would permit improved accuracy, timeliness, and effort validation protocols relative to **Alternative 1**; they would also improve the estimates of bycatch mortality used in stock assessments by incorporating depth of capture. **Alternative 3** would apply only to the Gulf of Mexico and would require the use of VMS technology to monitor and report location information. **Alternative 3** is expected to yield similar benefits to **Alternative 2** as compared to **Alternative 1**.

**Action 43: Amend the Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Atlantic Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery Management Plans to specify certain aspects of reporting for commercial and for-hire vessels**

**Note: The revised Action 4 should only refer to for-hire vessels and should not include commercial.**

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** There is no specified time for data to be made available to the public and to the Councils.

**Alternative 2.** Specify the following data flow ~~for and timing aspects of~~ electronic reporting:

- a) Logbook data collected via authorized platform, ex. web, tablet, phone, or VMS application
- b) Data submitted to ACCSP or GulfFIN;
- c) Data integrated by ACCSP or GulfFIN into single composite data set;
- d) Composite data set distributed to appropriate agencies for analyses and use.

**Sub-alternative 2a.** Apply to charterboat reporting.

**Sub-alternative 2b.** Apply to headboat reporting.

**Alternative 3.** Specify the following aspects of electronic reporting:

- a) NMFS and/or ACCSP/GulfFIN are ~~is~~ to develop a compliance tracking procedure that balances timeliness with available staff and funding resources.
- b) NMFS is to use validation methods developed in the Gulf of Mexico logbook pilot study as a basis to ensure that the actual logbook report is validated and standardized validation methodologies are employed among regions.
- c) NMFS is to require and maintain a comprehensive permit/email database of participants.
- d) NFMS is to include procedures for expanding estimates for non-reporting.
- e) NMFS is to allow multiple authorized applications or devices ~~that can transmit data from sea~~ to report data as long as they meet required data and transferability standards.

**Sub-alternative 3a.** Apply to charterboat reporting.

**Sub-alternative 3b.** Apply to headboat reporting.

## **Not in Gulf Staff Amendment**

**The above changes were considered by the Gulf Council but not approved; South Atlantic Council Staff recommends the above changes to the wording of the Action and the Alternatives. NOAA GC and the SEFSC have concerns about Action 4. The Technical Sub-Committee developed these recommendations.**

**Gulf Staff changes to IPT recommendations from Amendment; previously approved wording not shown in Amendment (in green and ~~striketrough~~):**

**Action 43: Amend the Gulf Reef Fish, South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Atlantic Dolphin and Wahoo Fishery Management Plans to ~~s~~Specify ~~e~~Certain ~~a~~Aspects of ~~r~~Reporting for ~~e~~ommercial and ~~f~~lor-hire ~~v~~Vessels**

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** There is no specified time for data to be made available to the public and to the Councils.

**Alternative 2.** Specify the following data flow ~~via for and timing aspects of~~ electronic reporting:

- a) Logbook data collected via authorized platform, ex. web, tablet, phone, or VMS application
- b) Data submitted to ACCSP or GulfFIN;
- c) Data integrated by ACCSP or GulfFIN into single composite data set;
- d) Composite data set distributed to appropriate agencies for analyses and use.

**Sub-alternative 2a.** Apply to charterboat ~~vessels~~ reporting.

**Sub-alternative 2b.** Apply to headboat reporting.

**Alternative 3.** Specify the following aspects of electronic reporting:

- a) NMFS and/or ACCSP ~~GulfFIN are is~~ to develop a compliance tracking procedure that balances timeliness with available staff and funding resources.
- b) NMFS is to use validation methods developed in the Gulf of Mexico logbook pilot study as a basis to ensure that the actual logbook report is validated and standardized validation methodologies are employed among regions.
- c) NMFS is to require and maintain a comprehensive permit/email database of participants.
- d) NFMS is to include procedures for expanding estimates for non-reporting.
- e) NMFS is to allow multiple authorized applications or devices ~~that can transmit data from sea~~ to report data as long as they meet required data and transferability standards.

**Sub-alternative 3a.** Apply to charterboat ~~vessel~~ reporting.

**Sub-alternative 3b.** Apply to headboat reporting.

## **COUNCIL ACTION:**

**Option 1. Approve the above recommendations for Action 4 and the alternatives, and approve the range of Action 4 alternatives shown above for detailed analyses.**

**Option 2. Add additional alternatives and/or modify the Action 4 alternatives and approve for detailed analyses.**

**Option 3. Approve Gulf staff wording for Action 4 and the alternatives.**

**Option 4. Others??**

## **Discussion**

The South Atlantic Council is concerned about the extensive delays in tracking headboat catches even though headboats are required to report electronically every weekly beginning in 2014. The 2014 headboat data was not available until April of 2015. The current blueline recreational ACL versus recreational catches is currently unknown pending receipt of the first wave of MRIP data (should be available 45 days after the end of February) and any headboat catches. Part of the headboat delay is that the Council has specified the recreational ACL in pounds and this requires the numbers of fish to be converted to pounds. This adds an unspecified period of time after the MRIP data are released for the SEFSC to apply their conversion factors and provide a catch estimate. The South Atlantic Council is considering specifying recreational ACLs in numbers of fish so that the headboat sector (and the charter vessel sector once this amendment is approved) can be tracked weekly. Specifying the recreational ACL in numbers of fish will also reduce the delay in using the MRIP data to track recreational ACLs.

**Action 4** addresses the following recommendations from the Technical Sub-Committee:

3. Development of compliance tracking procedures that balance timeliness with available staff and funding resources.
5. Use validation methods developed in the Gulf of Mexico logbook pilot study as a basis to ensure that the actual logbook report is validated and standardized validation methodologies are employed among regions.
8. Require and maintain a comprehensive permit/email database of participants.
10. Include procedures for expanding estimates for non-reporting.
11. Allow multiple authorized applications or devices to report data as long as they meet required data and transferability standards.

The subcommittee recommends a multi-faceted approach where a number of reporting platforms can be used so long as the minimum data standards and security protocols are met. Data standards would need to be developed and the subcommittee agreed that

NOAA Fisheries, the GulfFIN, and ACCSP could work collaboratively to develop appropriate standards.

The subcommittee recommends this process for data storage and management:

1. Logbook data collected via authorized platform, ex. web, tablet, phone, or VMS application
2. Data submitted to ACCSP or GulfFIN;
3. Data integrated by ACCSP or GulfFIN into single composite data set;
4. Composite data set distributed to appropriate agencies for analyses and use.

This process could eliminate duplicate reporting for some participants (e.g., South Carolina headboats and charter vessels) so long as appropriate data standards are in place and the respective agencies agree to confidentiality standards, which would allow sharing and accepting one another's data for use. Elimination of duplicate reporting (e.g., separate state and federal reports) would be a substantial benefit to participants in this survey program and could mitigate any additional reporting requirements for comparison to the current MRIP survey program.

The technical subcommittee recommends building upon the validation methodology developed in the Gulf MRIP pilot study.

The subcommittee recommends use of an MRIP certified methodology for validation with the following elements: Gulf MRIP pilot study methodologies, including dockside validation of catch and vessel activity, and maintenance of site and vessel registries.

The subcommittee recommends dual survey methods (existing and new) for no less than three years. Data from the new program would not be expected to provide management advice during the first year of operation. Moreover, this would allow the possibility of an initial phase-in or limited implementation to identify and solve significant problems prior to implementation for all participants.

The subcommittee recommends that the Councils move forward with development of a reporting system that includes federally permitted for-hire vessels while also exploring ways to determine the impact of state permitted vessels on landings estimates of federally managed species. Long term, the subcommittee recommends that both state and federally permitted charter vessels participate in this census to include the entire fleet of charter vessels harvesting federally managed species.

Weekly electronic dealer and headboat reporting are fully implemented. However, there are still delays in having updated landings available to the public for their use in planning trips and to the Councils for monitoring ACLs. A solution, in the Atlantic, would be to have the raw weekly data fed to ACCSP and made available to the public via the ACCSP website. The "official" numbers for quota closures would continue to be the numbers maintained by NMFS and available on the NMFS website but this would provide more timely and useful updates to the public.

The result would be updated and current catch data available on a daily basis for the

public, states, NMFS, and the Councils to use in monitoring ACLs and planning fishing trips.

## **Not in Gulf Staff Amendment**

### **MAFMC AND NEFMC FOR-HIRE VESSEL REPORTING**

The CMP FMP includes the Mid-Atlantic Council's area of authority. The Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo FMP includes both the Mid-Atlantic and New England Councils' areas of authority. All federally permitted for-hire vessels fishing in the Mid-Atlantic and New England areas are required to report via the northeast Vessel Trip Report (VTR) program (<http://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/aps/evtr/index.html>).

The South Atlantic and Gulf Councils could choose to extend this amendment through New England and the Mid-Atlantic or they could choose to use the VTR data to track recreational ACLs in the area north of North Carolina. The Councils should provide guidance to staff on how they wish to proceed.

#### **COUNCIL ACTION:**

**Option 1. Extend the requirements of this amendment through the Mid-Atlantic Council's area for CMP species and through the New England Council's area for Atlantic Dolphin/Wahoo.**

**Option 2. Use the existing VTR data from the Mid-Atlantic and New England areas to track recreational ACLs.**

**Option 3. Others??**

**TIMING – Based on timing approved by the SAFMC in December 2014**

- A. □ Technical Sub-Committee finalized report – November 2014.
- B. □ Council reviews final report
  - a. □ SAFMC – December 2014
  - b. □ GMFMC – January 2015
- C. □ Council reviews options and provide guidance to Staff/IPT
  - a. □ SAFMC – March 2015
  - b. □ GMFMC – March 30 – April 2, 2015
- D. Council reviews and approves for public hearings
  - a. SAFMC – June 2015
  - b. GMFMC – June 2015
- E. Public hearings – July (GMFMC)/August (SAFMC) 2015
- F. Council reviews public hearing input and approves actions
  - a. SAFMC – September 2015
  - b. GMFMC – August/October 2015
- G. Councils approves for final review
  - a. SAFMC – December 2015
  - b. GMFMC – October 2015/January 2016

## **Not in Gulf Staff Amendment**

### **COUNCIL ACTION:**

**Option 1. Approve the Joint For-Hire Reporting Amendment, as modified, for public hearings.**

**Option 2. Direct staff to further develop the amendment and bring back to each Council at their next meeting for approval to take to public hearings.**

**Option 3. Others??**