

Final Summary: December 16, 2013
RED SNAPPER RECREATIONAL CATCH ACCOUNTING METHODS
WORKSHOP

Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission/Gulf Fisheries Information Network/National Marine
Fisheries Service/Marine Recreational Information Program
Royal Sonesta Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana
November 4-5, 2013

Monday November 4, 2013

The workshop commenced with introductions and a review of the agenda and Terms of Reference. After lunch, two presentations were made to give an overview of the red snapper fishery and stock assessment needs.

The overall themes that occurred throughout the day were

1. Should a red snapper-specific survey be integrated with the current general survey (MRIP) or should a species specific survey be considered
2. Regardless of the survey method, it needs to characterize anglers that have the potential to catch red snapper (offshore)
3. Timeliness of the recreational fisheries data (in-season management vs. more stable fishing seasons)
4. Anglers fishing from private access sites need to be considered and accounted for
5. A major hurdle for collecting timely information is accurately assessing fishing effort
6. There is a need to coordinate all efforts to be able to integrate all recreational data collection programs between state and federal partners
7. There is a need to maintain a consistent time series of red snapper removals and other parameters/statistics

The first presentation outlined the ongoing needs, challenges, and regional management challenges of the red snapper fishery, as well as for implementing a regional management structure.

Following the presentation there was discussion that briefly focused on the potential scenarios of 1) managing the stock as a whole with the same or similar method as current or 2) regional management. It was also mentioned that it would be beneficial to have a set level of precision that is acceptable, and it is likely to change by state.

The second presentation of the day addressed the needs of stock assessment inputs. After the presentation, discussion focused on estimating selectivity under a regional management structure

and the need to integrate information from multiple data sets and make this information more accessible to stakeholders and the public.

After the initial overview presentations, there was a long discussion about two specific goals of the workshop

1. Evaluate sampling programs for implementation under two scenarios (status quo or regional management)
2. Outline the actions needed to develop a pilot study that can provide supplemental information to be used in conjunction with MRIP, specifically for red snapper

The discussion continued and outlined specific challenges to both sampling scenarios (uncertainty of quotas, quota monitoring, temporal and spatial resolution needed, how important is real time management, cost, what is feasible). The group determined that the current, multi-species monitoring program (MRIP) that is conducted on a broad scale may not be suitable for fisheries, such as red snapper, that are executed during short periods of time. However, it was also determined that a regional management structure will create the issue of trying to meet the survey needs for each individual state, but maintaining a design that will also serve to provide Gulf-wide, accurate estimation.

Discussion continued to include a wide variety of challenges and benefits for the current survey and moving towards regional management. The group acknowledged that this workshop should outline a sampling design for red snapper, while maintaining an approach that could be used for other species. Four approaches were identified.

1. Enhancing the existing MRIP survey to provide greater statistical precision on catch rate statistics for offshore species like red snapper.
2. Development of red snapper (and other pulse/rare species) surveys
3. Increase the sample size under the existing survey framework to account for pulse/rare species fisheries
4. A combination of the above three options

The group identified that offshore catch statistics are not sufficiently precise for red snapper with the current sample sizes, sample stratification, and sample allocations. Offshore catch is difficult to sample due to the variability of offshore access sites within each state and the definition used among surveys.

The second half of the afternoon was reserved for presentation of survey designs to be evaluated. The majority of discussion for all presentations revolved around the challenges, precision of results, and cost for implementing the survey.

Tuesday November 5, 2013

The second day of the workshop resumed with a review of the previous day's events and discussions. The Day 1 summary was edited by the group to correctly convey major topics and points of discussion. After a consensus of the notes, there were four presentations on proposed projects and state survey designs.

Proposals pertaining to red snapper that were submitted to MRIP for FY14 funding included two from Alabama: 1) Private Recreational Angler Electronic Census Reporting of Red Snapper Catch Data in Alabama and 2) For-Hire Electronic Census Reporting of Red Snapper Catch Data in Alabama and one from Texas: Implementation of the iSnapper smartphone application to collect data across all recreational sectors in the Gulf of Mexico. An update on results from a previously funded project, Pilot Project for Gulf of Mexico Charter Boat Logbook and Dockside Validation, were also presented. The morning session concluded with a final presentation from Mississippi outlining a plan to implement an offshore landing permit.

After the presentations, discussion resumed and focused on the upcoming intent of several states to carry out additional survey design testing and implementation. One common theme across all of the states was that more data needs to be collected from offshore anglers to gain better estimates of red snapper.

Texas

- Texas will continue to rely upon NMFS Headboat survey for red snapper headboat landings
- Texas is hoping to run a pilot project using iSnapper to collect additional information from the charter boat sector.
- May add additional sample days to TX creel survey

Louisiana

- Propose a similar program for quota monitoring to what was previously tested in the state and covered on Day 1

Mississippi

- Propose to implement an offshore landing permit
- Required to report all trips, data collection tools utilize smartphone app, web site, telephone
- Proposes similar validation methods, also suggested using aerial surveys as an additional method

Florida

- Propose a similar program for quota monitoring to what was previously tested in the state and covered on Day 1
- Implement an offshore landing permit
- Would like to continue at-sea sampling in east Florida and expand it to west Florida
- Collect more detailed information from private boat anglers

It was suggested that a table comparing all Gulf state's 2014 survey designs to the current MRIP general survey would be beneficial to the statistical consultants involved with the workshop. A small group, with representatives from each state, convened at lunch to create this table.

After reconvening from lunch, the two present statistical consultants provided the following list of considerations that were adjusted and discussed.

1. Expand/improve current survey (MRIP or TX/LA) to improve red snapper estimates (overall or during target fishing season); increasing sample size
 - Specifically, further stratifying APAIS ('bluewater'), allocating more of the sample to new strata
 - Expand both APAIS and effort survey
2. Logbooks and/or mandatory reporting combined with on-site validation (likely would involve an app to self-report data)
 - This method will also capture effort data, however validation of private access is an issue
3. Permits with contact information to delimit target population, then on-site survey for catch and off-site survey for effort
 - e.g. LA or LPS
4. Longitudinal panel survey (if no decent frame of anglers/boats available)
 - Can identify panel participants via phone survey or mail survey
5. Small area estimation (model for overall catch based on only for-hire reporting and a relationship with rest of fishery)
 - Would need to be used in conjunction with another method

Several of these have already been done (#3 in LA) or have been proposed (#2 in AL) and the project team will be able to take advantage of this information and assess feasibility of each option.

The workshop concluded with closing remarks and a list of next steps for the project team.

Next Steps

1. A workshop summary will be finalized and made available to participants
2. Identify team members as needed for the actual sampling design to be tested
 - representatives of states and organizations
3. All 4 consultants will define pros and cons of potential survey methods and present this to the project team for review
 - final recommendations will come from the project team
4. Identify all potential funding opportunities

