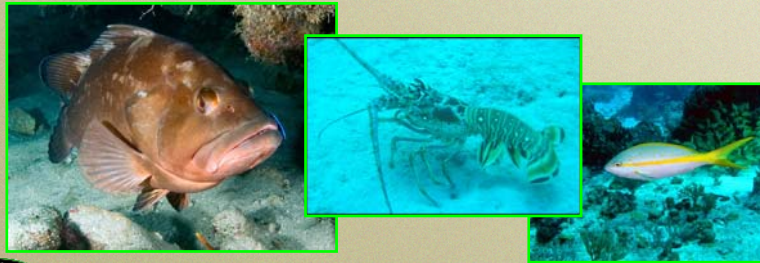


# Marine Fisheries State-Federal Coordination Workshop

Options for Future Coordination and Influencing



Report date: May 22, 2009

**Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**  
Division of Marine Fisheries Management

There are a number of things that FWC is doing now and could employ in the future to enhance coordination on federal issues and better influence the decision-making process.

## Working with the Federal System to Influence Outcomes

### What's working now

- Commissioner – Council member dialog
- Minimize meeting conflicts
- Highlight federal issues on FWC agenda
- Participate on Council advisory panels and committees
- Use State commenting process
- Increase resources for data collection and assessment



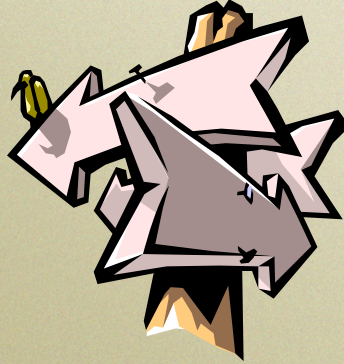
It is in the best interest of FWC to continue working with our federal partners on shared goals for marine fisheries. Federal waters surround Florida and some of our most important and valued fisheries occur in both state and federal waters. There are things we are doing now that enhance this coordination and enable FWC to influence outcomes.

Today's meeting is a good example of how direct dialog among Commissioners and Council members can improve the management process. Staff is also working hard to schedule FWC meetings to avoid direct conflicts with Council meetings. We are now highlighting important federal actions as "stand-alone" items on Commission meeting agendas to ensure adequate direction can be provided to staff. FWC staff and other Florida subject-matter experts already participate on a large number of federal advisory groups. In addition, FWC scientists directly participate, and occasionally serve a lead role, in federal stock assessment reviews. We are increasingly taking advantage of our opportunity to comment on proposed federal actions through the state coastal zone consistency review process. Finally, we are seeking ways to increase and improve our own data collection and assessment processes, which in turn are used to improve the quality of the science that federal managers must use in their decision-making.

## Working with the Federal System to Influence Outcomes

### Potential new opportunities

- FWC public workshops on federal issues
- Delegate management of species to Florida
- Promote state-specific management options
- Seek more flexible federal time frames
- Engage Florida's Congressional Delegation
- Other Ideas?



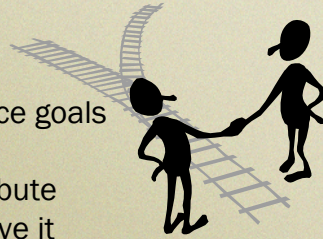
There may be challenges to further influencing federal management, but we see several opportunities that could be pursued. FWC staff could hold public workshops on proposed federal actions. There has already been some discussion of delegating authority over certain federally-managed species to Florida, such as lobster. This may not always be in Florida's best interest but has the potential to increase FWC influence over species of importance to Florida. FWC could pursue a general policy of encouraging more state-specific management actions in Council management plans, rather than facing a one-size-fits-all approach.

A more politically-oriented approach would be to pursue more flexible time frames in federal law for addressing overfished and overfishing conditions. As part of a political strategy, the FWC may wish to engage Florida's Congressional Delegation.

There may be other avenues FWC can pursue as well, and staff welcomes your suggestions.

## Summary and Future Direction

- We share common goals
- Consistent regulations desirable
  - Essential for enforcement
  - Minimize public confusion
  - Contribute to the common resource goals
- Federal science is our science
  - We actively participate and contribute
  - We can and should work to improve it
- Fishing pressure and habitat degradation
  - Reason for ever-tightening regulations
- Processes different, but...
  - State-federal coordination is essential to meet FWC goals
  - Continue working together toward common goals



Florida is surrounded by federal waters and it remains in our best interest to continue working with federal fishery managers toward our common goals. All the waters surrounding Florida, state and federal, are important and heavily used by Florida's fishing public. This means that consistent regulations are of great value. Enforcement is more effective, the public is less confused, and all fishery management partners are contributing more or less equally to conservation goals.

The data systems and science behind federal management decisions can always be improved. But FWC is a major contributor to the information-gathering and scientific analysis that has so frequently come under fire. Our goal as an agency should be to assist in using data appropriately and conveying the limits of that science for management purposes. Wherever possible FWC should continue to improve our own data collection system in cooperation with federal managers.

Fishing pressure, especially in Florida, continues to increase. Habitat degradation further dampens fishery population growth and resilience. These dual pressures mean that fishermen will continue to be affected by ever-tightening restrictions. Thus, it is necessary to work with federal partners to minimize burdens and maximize long-term positive impacts of regulations.

As we have heard today, federal laws and processes dictate a different approach to regulating marine fisheries from that normally employed by FWC. We may view it as more complicated and less flexible than our approach. However both federal managers and FWC have the same basic goals. We all want to ensure that marine fisheries resources are managed for maximum abundance and long term sustainable harvests. We share the same goal of a healthy, productive marine ecosystem and should continue working together to achieve that goal.

# Questions or Discussion?

