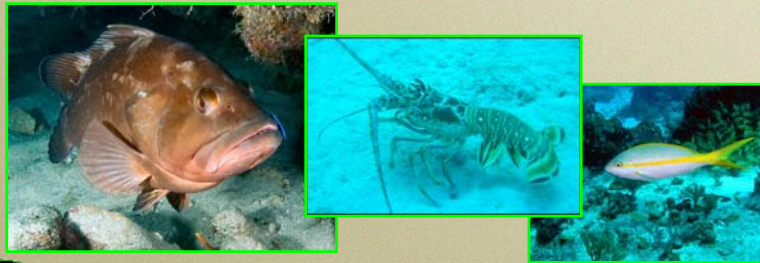


Marine Fisheries State-Federal Coordination Workshop

State/Federal Coordination – Regulatory Coordination



Report date: May 22, 2009

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Division of Marine Fisheries Management

The FWC interacts regularly with federal fishery management Councils when species occur in both federal and state waters. Issues arise when federal and state management actions do not concur, such as when size and bag limits differ or fundamental differences in management approaches occur. Such differences require extra effort to coordinate and resolve.

Federal fishery management plan amendments generally take at least a year to develop but occasionally other federal actions, such as interim or emergency actions, may be developed in a shorter time frame.

For these reasons, FWC staff have adopted an approach to ensure effective agency coordination.

Why Coordination is Important

- Certain Council issues warrant more in-depth Commission direction or review
- FWC and Council schedules are often out of sync
- Guidance at early stages of federal rule development is most effective

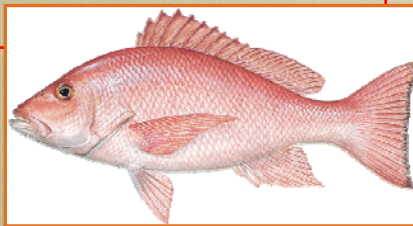


As the Councils develop management plans the Commission may want to provide guidance to staff representatives regarding positions or policies. The pace of federal actions has quickened because of the recent changes to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Act) and this has complicated our coordination efforts.

The GMFMC holds five meetings per year, whereas the SAFMC holds four meetings per year. The FWC generally holds five meetings annually. At times, there have been direct conflicts in the meeting schedules among the Councils and the FWC. Because of inevitable scheduling problems, the most effective way for staff to apprise Commissioners is to use an “early-and-often” approach, advising of possible federal actions even at the earliest stages of development. The Council process is dynamic and major changes can occur within a couple of hours. This often requires the FWC representatives on federal Councils to be able to make management decisions on the fly. As such, FWC staff benefit from early discussions with Commissioners on key points of management, even though final management actions are often much different than the those that are initially discussed.

How We Coordinate

- Focus on issues that affect Florida's citizens or resources for more detailed discussion and direction
- Highlight key issues by moving them into the main agenda as stand-alone "issues"



Many of Florida's important fisheries occur in both state and federally-managed waters and are jointly managed by the Councils and the FWC. Grouper and spiny lobster are two good examples of such fisheries. Florida has an interest in how these species are managed and how that management affects Floridians. When federal management plans address significant regulatory changes for species that occur in both federal and state waters, consistency in regulations becomes an important consideration for the FWC. As we have recently seen with red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico, federal managers often assume that states will go along with similar or the same regulations in support of federal harvest reduction goals.

Because consistent regulations in state waters are a critical coordination issue for high-profile species like reef fish, FWC staff are now highlighting certain issues on Commission meeting agendas outside of the "federal issues" topic as stand alone items. This has enabled Commissioners to provide direction to staff and establish agency positions. Coordination with federal managers is enhanced because there is a better understanding of the level of state support (or concerns) for a proposed federal action before it's implemented.

Issues Important to FWC

- Sector allocation
- Consistency regulations
 - Size limits
 - Bag limits
 - Seasons
- Extended Closed Seasons/Areas
- Federal actions that affect state waters or a specific sector



Examples of federal issues that are important to the Commission include the allocation of fishing between commercial and recreational sectors; consistency regulations (e.g. size limits, bag limits, seasons); extended closed seasons and areas; federal actions that affect fishers in state waters; and federal actions that would differentially affect one sector of a fishery.

Questions or Discussion?

UP NEXT: Data Collection and
Assessment



Gil McRae will now provide an overview of how our agency coordinates state data collection and assessment work with our federal partners.