



Spiny Lobster Update: Focus on the Bully Net Fishery

Review and Discussion

September 8, 2016

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Division of Marine Fisheries Management

Photo courtesy of Sam G2016

This presentation is a review and discussion of the spiny lobster fishery, with a focus on the bully net fishery. This presentation will review Florida's lobster fishery; summarize stakeholder concerns about the influx of participants into the commercial bully net fishery in recent years, conflicts between fishery participants and other stakeholders, stakeholder input received through public workshops; and discuss potential management actions for the bully net fishery.

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Report date: August 29, 2016

Recent Timeline – Lobster Bully Net Fishery

Nov. 2014: Stakeholders expressed concerns about the bully net fishery at the November Commission meeting

Jan. 2015: Public meeting to hear concerns about conflicts between waterfront homeowners and bully netters

Feb. 2015: Public workshops on management of the commercial bully net fishery

July 2015: Statewide marine fisheries workshops

July/Sept. 2015, Aug. 2016: Staff ride-alongs with bully netters and Law Enforcement

Today: Review and discussion of bully net fishery



At the November 2014 Commission meeting, staff presented a review and discussion of the lobster fishery as part of an agenda item about management of the lobster dive fishery. Stakeholders in attendance at that meeting also expressed concern about the status of the bully net portion of the fishery. Commercial fishers expressed concerns over increased participation in the fishery and waterfront homeowners expressed frustration with nighttime disturbances from bully netters as well as concerns about the safety of their property when a large number of people are on the water nearshore at night.

At the Commission's direction, staff subsequently met with stakeholders from many groups to gain insight into concerns related to this traditional fishery. In January 2015, staff hosted a public meeting in Islamorada to hear concerns from the community specific to the conflict between landowners and bully netters. Approximately 75 members of the public attended this meeting. In February 2015, staff hosted three public workshops on the topic of regulation and management of the commercial bully net fishery. These workshops were held in Key West, Key Colony Beach, and Key Largo, with approximately 140 commercial and recreational bully netters and concerned citizens in attendance.

Staff also heard additional input and feedback about management of the bully net fishery at the open-agenda statewide marine fisheries management workshops held in south Florida during the summer of 2015. Management staff has also made several trips to the Keys (July/September 2015 and August 2016) to observe the fishery through ride-alongs with fishermen and Law Enforcement staff.

Today's Review and Discussion presentation is the culmination of all the feedback and public input gathered as a result of these efforts.

Overview – Spiny Lobster Fishery

- Lobster is one of Florida's most valuable commercial fisheries
 - Dockside value averaging \$20-24 million annually
- Culturally important to south Florida
 - Commercial harvest dates back to the early 1800s
- Development of overseas market for live lobster has changed the commercial fishery in recent years
- Recreational fishery important for tourism and south Florida economy
- Majority of Florida's lobsters are spawned in the Caribbean
 - Harvest rates have a limited impact on fishery productivity in subsequent years



Spiny lobster supports one of Florida's most valuable commercial fisheries. It is consistently one of the top commercial fisheries for Florida, with a dockside value averaging \$20-24 million. Recent increases in landings and price per pound generated a dockside value of approximately \$50 million in 2013.

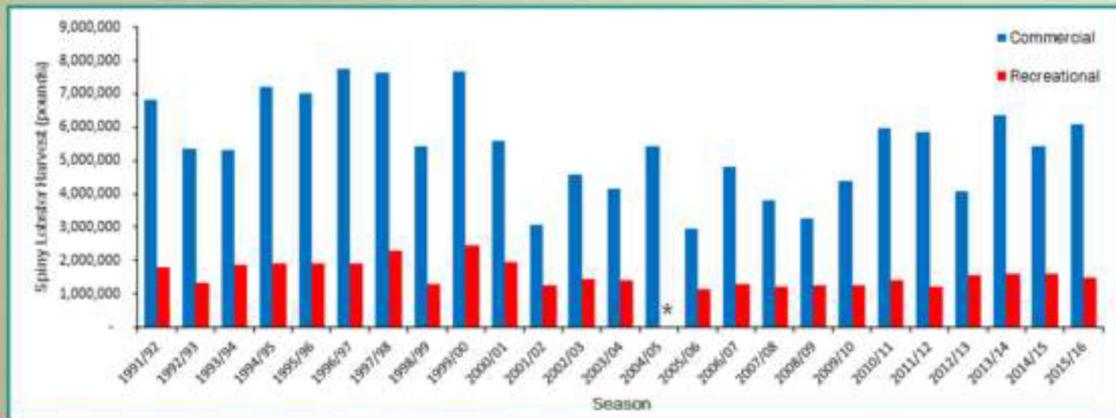
This fishery has a long, rich cultural history in Florida, particularly in south Florida. The commercial fishery in the Lower Keys dates back to the 1800s, when lobsters were harvested primarily for use as bait.

Declining prices impacted the commercial fishery between 2008 and 2010, but the development of an export market for live lobster has helped to increase the value of this fishery in recent years. This new market has also driven changes to the fishery, with live lobsters selling for roughly twice the price of dead lobsters.

The recreational fishery is also a very important component of south Florida's economy, serving as a major tourism driver during both the two-day recreational sport season and the regular lobster season.

The lobster fishery is also relatively unique in that the majority of adult lobster harvested in state and federal waters off Florida are actually spawned elsewhere in the Caribbean. Therefore, harvest rates here in Florida have a limited impact on the local fishery's productivity in future years.

Lobster Landings by Sector



* Recreational landings are not available for 2004/2005



The spiny lobster fishery is important to both the commercial and the recreational sector. This graph shows the distribution of lobster landings (in pounds) by the recreational and commercial sectors since 1991. Recreational lobster landings are not available for the 2004/2005 fishing season. Total commercial harvest varies annually, but accounts for the largest proportion of total lobster harvest in every year. Recreational harvest levels tend to be less variable.

Traditional Methods of Lobster Harvest

Trap

- Commercial fishery only
- Historically, trap landings consisted of greater than 90% of total commercial catch
 - Trap reduction program in place since 1993



Dive

- Began in the 1950s and increased in popularity in the 1990s
- An increase in commercial landings from the dive fishery led to creation of the Commercial Dive endorsement (CD) in 2004

Bully Net

- Bully netting is one of the oldest methods of lobster harvest
- Open-access commercial fishery



The spiny lobster fishery is primarily carried out by three different means of harvest: traps (commercial fishery only), diving, and bully netting. In recent history, the trap fishery has been responsible for more than 90% of the commercial catch. As this portion of the fishery and the number of participants grew, fishermen placed more and more traps in the water in an attempt to maintain their individual portion of the catch. This eventually resulted in an overcapitalized fishery, with more traps in the water than were needed to harvest the available lobsters. Thus, in 1993, the Marine Fisheries Commission in conjunction with the Florida Legislature developed an effort limitation program called the Spiny Lobster Trap Certificate Program. This program limited the number of traps allowed in the water in a given year to those that had been issued a trap certificate by the state. This program was designed to not only cap the number of traps in the fishery, but to reduce the number of traps and increase the efficiency of the trap fishery by lowering the total number of certificates issued over time. The lobster trap fishery has been under some version of a trap reduction program since that time.

Although the dive fishery first developed in the 1950s, it has always been a relatively minor component of the commercial fishery. During the early to mid 1990s, the dive fishery accounted for only about 3% of the total commercial harvest. Landings from the dive fishery began to increase in the late 1990s. The increase in the portion of catch harvested by the dive fishery, compounded by the decline in the overall fishery, led to user conflicts between participants in the trap fishery (that was managed by a limited effort program) and the dive fishery (that was not subject to effort limitation). These factors contributed to the reevaluation of the dive fishery and ultimately resulted in the development of the commercial dive (CD) endorsement program, which remains a limited access program.

Bully netting, while one of the earliest methods of commercial lobster harvest, is not managed with any type of effort limitation. This lack of a limited entry program has allowed a number of new participants to enter the fishery in recent years when the price of lobster has been high.

Current Lobster Fishery Issues

Bullynet fishery

- Increased participation
- Conflicts among waterfront homeowners and bully netters

Trap fishery

- Cut-offs and trap loss
- Habitat impacts
- Not meeting trap reduction goals

Enforcement

- Individuals making multiple trips in a day
- Trap robbing
- Untagged traps

Federal management considerations



As with any major fishery, there are a variety of competing interests in the lobster fishery. These interests, compounded by factors related to how the fishery operates have led to a wide variety of management issues in need of attention in the coming years. Issues identified include increased participation in the bully net fishery, user conflicts, trap loss and trap cut-offs by passing vessels, habitat impacts from lobster traps and trap debris, and the need to make further progress in meeting the goals of the spiny lobster trap reduction program. Enforcement issues related to the spiny lobster fishery include recreational harvesters taking multiple daily bag limits in a single day, trap robbing and trap molestation, and the use of lobster traps without the required Commission-issued trap tags.

Spiny lobster are also managed in federal waters by the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils. Council issues will be reviewed on the following slide.

Federal Management

- Managed jointly in federal waters by the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils
 - Councils set the annual catch limit (ACL) and annual catch target (ACT) that also apply to harvest in state waters
- ACL and ACT exceeded in recent fishing years
- Both Councils considering revising spiny lobster management benchmarks and establishing new measures to monitor the fishery



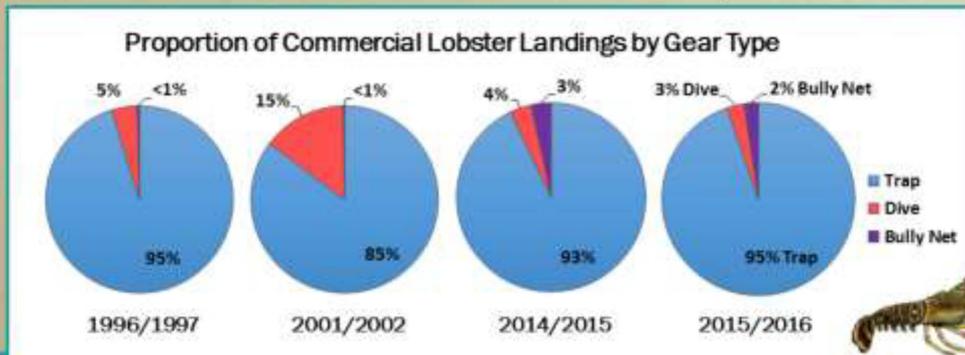
The spiny lobster fishery is managed jointly in federal waters by the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils. The Councils set the ACL and ACT benchmarks, in addition to other harvest regulations. Harvest in state waters counts toward the ACL and ACT. In recent fishing years, the fishery has exceeded both the ACL and ACT. Based on federal regulations, exceeding the ACT requires a meeting of the Councils' Spiny Lobster Review Panel to review landings and other aspects of the fishery, and to provide management advice to the Councils.

In 2016, the Review Panel, the South Atlantic Spiny Lobster Advisory Panel (AP), and the Gulf Spiny Lobster AP met to review landings and discuss whether management changes were necessary. All three panels noted that the current benchmarks are based on a period of unusually low landings. The panels recommended that the benchmarks be revised using a longer time series of data that was more representative of the fishery.

Based on the Review Panel recommendations, the Councils have decided to explore using a new time series to set the ACL and ACT. However, there is still a great deal of uncertainty about how the Councils will ultimately address recent harvest overages in the lobster fishery and if that will affect management of the fishery in state waters.

Changing Commercial Fishery

- Proportion of commercial catch harvested by gear type has shifted over time
 - Traps have dominated the catch since the mid-1900s
 - Dive fishery expanded, peaking in the early 2000s
 - Bully net fishery has experienced a resurgence in recent years
- These shifts result in user conflicts within the fishery



Some of the historical and recent issues in the fishery are related to changes in the distribution of the catch among various gear-related sub-sections within the commercial fishery. These figures illustrate how the proportions of commercial catch (by pounds landed) attributable to each method of harvest has varied since the mid-1990s.

Although the bully net is the oldest method of lobster harvest still active in the fishery, lobster traps have dominated commercial harvest since its introduction in the 1940s.

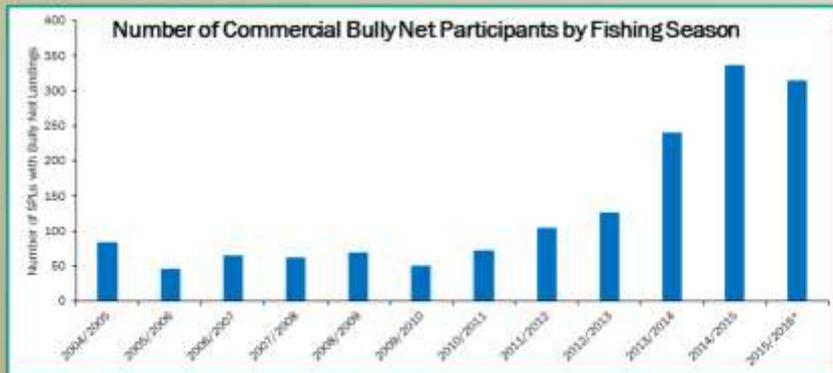
During the 1990s, the commercial fishery settled into a harvest pattern where roughly 95% of landings were produced by traps, 5% from the divers, and less than 1% from bully nets. However, by the early 2000s, the dive sector began harvesting a greater share of lobsters. Coincidentally, this shift occurred at the same time that a lobster virus caused a decline in the lobster population. Expansion of the commercial dive sector peaked during the 2001/2002 lobster season, when the dive sector contributed 15% of commercial landings. The loss of catch to the dive fishery and the population decline caused by the virus led to an economic loss for the trap sector. This spurred harvesters in the trap sector to request that the Commission develop management measures aimed at ensuring the sustainability for all aspects of the commercial lobster fishery. Management changes implemented since that time, including the CD endorsement program, contributed to the fishery's harvest patterns returning to those in the 1990s.

During the past two lobster seasons, however, the bully net sector has seen a resurgence. Bully net landings have risen from a 1% share to 2-3% share of commercial landings during this time. Recent increases in the price of lobster and absence of effort restrictions for use of this gear has spurred expansion within this sector. Though the overall shift in the catch to the bully net sub-sector is relatively small (from 1 - 3%), this shift makes up a larger portion of the catch early in the season when bully netting is at its peak.

Commercial Bully Net Participation

Reminder: Bully net is the only sector of the commercial lobster fishery that is open access

- Influx of participants in recent years



*2015/2016 data is preliminary



As previously stated, the number of participants in the commercial bully net fishery has increased in recent years, with participation peaking in the 2014/2015 season. Between 2004 and 2011, the number of participants was less than 100 per fishing season. In 2011, the number of participants began to increase, peaking at more than 300 participants in the 2014/2015 season.

This increase in participation may be the result of an increase in lobster prices for the export market of live lobster. This increase in participation corresponds with the increase in harvest by the bully net sub-sector, which is the only remaining portion of the commercial fishery that remains open access.

The rest of this presentation will focus on issues and possible management solutions for the bully net portion of the commercial and recreational fishery.

Bully Net Fishery

- Nighttime operation requiring clear skies and clear, calm water
- Harvests in shallow water, often near to shore
- Primarily occurs in the early months of the season
 - Conditions in winter months generally unfavorable
- Relatively minor but viable component of the commercial fishery
 - Economically feasible means of entering into commercial fishery
 - Provides lobsters in best condition for live market
- Also popular with recreational fishers
 - Family-friendly alternative to diving for lobster



Bully net harvesters operate at night under clear skies in shallow, clear water by using lights directed at the seafloor to help the harvester locate lobsters that are out foraging on the bottom. Once the harvester locates a lobster, he or she uses the bully net, which is essentially a specialized dip net, to capture the lobster. This harvest method is dependent on calm seas and a relatively dark night in order to operate effectively. Commercial bully netting is typically conducted during the first few months of the season when weather and water conditions are most favorable. Commercial bully netters are limited to a daily harvest and possession limit of 250 lobsters (unlike trappers who are limited by the number of traps they can place in the water, but who are not subject to a daily bag limit).

Although the bully net sector is a relatively minor component of the commercial lobster fishery, bully netting provides an economically feasible option for new harvesters to enter the commercial fishery. Bully netting also provides lobsters in the best condition to be sold in the live market. The bully net sector is open to any licensed commercial harvester with a Restricted Species endorsement (RS), spiny lobster (crawfish) endorsement (C#). Other sectors of the commercial lobster fishery require a much larger financial investment to participate. To commercially harvest lobsters by diving, a harvester must purchase an existing commercial dive endorsement (CD) from another harvester leaving the fishery (reportedly valued at approximately \$30,000). The CD became transferable effective July 1, 2015, and the cost to transfer an endorsement is variable and based on current market value at the time of the transfer. To commercially harvest lobsters with lobster traps, a harvester must purchase and transfer an existing trap certificate for each trap from another harvester (average of \$100-\$200 per certificate in the 2014/2015 license year).

Bully netting is popular with recreational harvesters as well, during both the two-day recreational sport season and the regular season. Recreational bully netting is a family-friendly alternative to diving for lobster.

Bully Net Fishery – General Stakeholder Concerns

- Staff received input from stakeholders at Commission meetings, bully net-specific workshops, statewide marine fisheries workshops, and other public meetings

Concerns identified by stakeholders

- Increased participation in the commercial bully net sector may reduce the financial viability of the fishery for individual harvesters
- Potential for bully net fishery to be used as a cover for illegal lobster harvest
- Conflicts between waterfront homeowners and bully netters



Staff have received input and heard concerns about bully netting from stakeholders during public testimony at the November 2014 Commission meeting, as well as during bully net-specific public workshops, general statewide marine fisheries management workshops held in south Florida, and during other public meetings.

Established, long-time commercial bully netters expressed concern regarding a recent increase in the number of commercial harvesters participating in the bully net fishery, and that this increase in participation would reduce catch rates and thus reduce the economic viability of the bully net fishery for individual harvesters. Stakeholders also expressed concern that because the fishery operates at night, the bully net fishery could potentially be used as a cover for illegal lobster harvest, including trap robbing and commercial dive harvest without a CD, or illegal harvest from casitas.

In addition, staff have heard concerns regarding conflicts between recreational and/or commercial bully netters and waterfront homeowners related to bully netters fishing close to shore and during late hours of the night.

Management Options Considered

Management options presented at bully net public workshops

- Create a bully net endorsement program
- Limit time of day bully net catch can be on a vessel
- Prohibit trap pullers on bully net vessels
- Establish a more limited bully net season
- Reduce the bully net trip limit

Additional suggestions received

- Prohibit bully netting during the 2-day sport season
- Prohibit dive equipment on a vessel with commercial bully net harvest
- Prohibit use of a single C# on multiple bully net vessels
- Prohibit harvest of lobster (bully nets or diving) within 300 ft. of shore
- Require bully netters to possess a measuring device
- Require lobsters harvested by bully net to be measured immediately upon removal from the water



To address concerns expressed by stakeholders, staff presented a suite of potential management options for public feedback at bully net-specific public workshops held throughout the Keys in February 2015. The potential management options presented at these workshops included creating a commercial bully net endorsement program (either open access or limited entry), limiting the time of day bully net catch can be onboard a vessel, prohibiting trap pullers on bully net vessels (to reduce the potential for bully netting to be used as a cover for trap robbing), establishing a more limited season for bully net harvest, and reducing the commercial daily bag and possession limit for bully net lobsters (currently 250).

Through input at public workshops, email and telephone correspondence, and a survey completed by bully net workshop attendees, staff received many additional suggestions for possible management options related to the bully net fishery. Additional suggestions included prohibiting bully netting during the two-day recreational sport season, prohibiting the possession of dive equipment onboard a vessel with commercial bully net harvest (to address the potential for unlicensed or illegal lobster harvest by diving), prohibiting the use of a single C# on more than one bully net vessel, prohibiting the harvest of lobsters by bully nets or by diving within 300 feet of shore, requiring bully netters to possess a measuring device, and specifically requiring in rule that lobsters harvested by bully nets must be measured immediately upon removal from the water.

Factors to Consider for Bully Nets

- Inherently a self-limiting fishery
- Results in very little bycatch with minimal impact to habitat
- Provides an economically feasible entrance into the commercial lobster fishery
 - Allows opportunities for young/new fishers
 - Preserves the culture of participation in the Key's commercial lobster fishery
 - Allows commercial harvesters that rely on harvesting a variety of species to include some lobster harvest in their diverse fishing portfolio

Staff recommend pursuing minor changes to management of the fishery at this time in order to better determine the scope of the bully net fishery and improve enforceability



Because bully netting requires calm, clear water and dark nights to be effective, this fishery is inherently self-limiting. Bully netting is also a highly selective method of harvest where the fisher visually targets and harvests individual lobsters. Therefore, this method results in very little bycatch with minimal habitat impacts.

Bully netting provides an economically feasible entrance into the fishery and provides opportunities to young and new lobster harvesters, which preserves the culture of participating in the Key's lobster fishery.

In addition, because bully netting is currently open access, commercial fishers that rely on harvesting a variety of species can include some lobster harvest in their fishing portfolio at a lower cost than could be achieved with the commercial trap or commercial dive fisheries. In the Keys, commercial fishermen have historically harvested a wide variety of species, targeting different species as they become abundant in the area throughout the year. The open access nature of the bully net fishery preserves this opportunity with respect to lobster. Limited access programs, like those found in other commercial fisheries (along with catch limits and seasonal closures), limit the opportunity for harvesters to operate in this fashion.

Staff recommend pursuing minor changes to the management of the commercial bully net fishery at this time in order to better determine the scope of the fishery and to improve enforceability.

Proposed Commercial Bully Net Endorsement

Options

1. Status quo: harvester must possess an SPL, RS, and lobster endorsement (C#)
2. Open-access bully net endorsement (*staff recommendation*)
3. Limited-entry bully net endorsement with qualification requirements
 - Similar to the lobster dive endorsement

Stakeholder Input

- A bully net-specific endorsement is generally supported by commercial fishery
 - Many support a limited-entry endorsement

Staff recommend creating an open-access, bully net-specific lobster endorsement (option 2)



The first potential management change staff considered was the creation of a commercial bully net endorsement program. Under this consideration, the first management option is to maintain the status quo (no endorsement requirement) and allow any commercial harvester with a Saltwater Products License (SPL), an RS, and a C# to commercially harvest lobster with bully nets.

The second option (**staff recommendation**) is to create a no-cost, open-access bully net endorsement that would be required in conjunction with a C# to commercially harvest lobster with a bully net. This endorsement would make it possible to better determine the size of the commercial bully net fishery. If a bully net endorsement is created, many items will have to be considered in how that endorsement is administered and managed. A bully net-specific endorsement is generally supported by the commercial fishery.

The third option is to create a limited-entry bully net endorsement program with specific qualification requirements, similar to the commercial dive endorsement. A limited-entry bully net endorsement would make the entire commercial lobster fishery limited access, also making it very difficult for new participants to enter the fishery. This option would require establishing initial qualification requirements, and could include limiting the number of endorsements available after the initial qualification period. An example of a possible qualification requirement would be documentation of a pre-determined level of commercial lobster landings harvested by bully net during a given qualification timeframe. If previous landings are used as part of the qualification requirements, an appeals procedure will also need to be created for individuals who believe they qualify but are initially denied, likely increasing the amount of time needed to implement this type of endorsement.

An open-access endorsement program could potentially be ready in time for the 2017/2018 lobster season. Administrative challenges associated with creating a limited entry program would require delaying the start of such a program until at least the 2018/2019 season. A limited-entry endorsement was initially requested by members of the bully net fishery, and was supported by many workshop attendees and survey respondents.

Staff recommend the second management option: creating an open-access bully net endorsement.

Additional Proposed Management Measures

Regulatory measures

1. Limit bully net endorsements to only be issued on vessel SPLs
2. Require bully net-specific commercial vessel marking
3. Prohibit trap pullers on bully net vessels
4. Require a CD for possession of a commercial quantity of lobster and dive equipment

Stakeholder input: Moderate support for each proposed regulatory measure

Proposed outreach effort

- “Respectful Bully Netting” outreach campaign



Staff also recommends implementing several additional regulatory management measures in conjunction with creating an open-access commercial bully net endorsement: (1) allow a bully net endorsement to be issued on a vessel SPL (not an individual or crew SPL); (2) require that commercial bully net vessels be marked with their endorsement number; (3) prohibit trap pullers on bully net vessels; and (4) require a CD for simultaneous possession of a commercial quantity of lobster and dive equipment (dive tanks, surface-supplied diving rigs, hookahs, or other underwater breathing apparatus, but not including masks, snorkels, or fins).

Stakeholders expressed moderate support for options 1 through 3. Option 4 was recommended by stakeholders at public workshops.

In addition to these proposed regulatory measures, staff suggests developing a “Respectful Bully Netting” outreach campaign to address some of the user conflicts that have developed with the expansion of the commercial and recreational bully net fishery.

Benefits of Proposed Management Measures

Open-access bully net endorsement

- Continue to allow opportunities for participation in the commercial lobster fishery
- Obtain better information about fishery participation

Limit the potential for the bully net fishery to be used as a cover by individuals who are violating existing regulations

- Prohibit trap pullers on bully net vessels
- Require a CD in order to possess commercial quantities of lobster and dive equipment at the same time

Address waterfront homeowner/fishery participant conflicts

- Require commercial bully net vessels to be marked
- Launch a “Respectful Bully Netting” outreach campaign



Creating an open-access commercial bully net endorsement will support the management goals of preserving the viability of bully netting as a traditional method of harvest while continuing to allow opportunities for participation in the commercial lobster fishery. The bully net endorsement will also allow staff to obtain better information about participation in this portion of the commercial lobster fishery. Given the self-limiting nature of this fishery and the fact that participation appears to have already peaked, staff does not believe a limited entry program is necessary at this time to ensure the economic viability of the fishery. However, the open-access endorsement would lay the groundwork for a more restrictive program if it were to be deemed necessary in the future.

Prohibiting trap pullers on bully net vessels and requiring a CD in order to possess commercial quantities of lobster and dive equipment (dive tanks, surface-supplied diving rigs, hookahs, or other underwater breathing apparatus, but not including masks, snorkels, or fins) at the same time, will support the management goal of reducing the potential for the bully net fishery to be used as a cover for illegal lobster harvest, as requested by members of the fishery.

Requiring commercial bully net vessels to be marked with their bully net endorsement number and launching a “Respectful Bully Netting” outreach campaign are expected to help minimize the user conflicts between waterfront homeowners and participants in the recreational and commercial bully net fishery. Requiring commercial bully net vessels to be marked will create consistency with the lobster trap and dive fisheries, which are already subject to this requirement and create accountability for professional behavior on the water. The outreach campaign would target both recreational and commercial harvesters as well as homeowners to try and minimize negative interactions and build a sense of mutual respect among these various stakeholders.

Staff Recommendation

- Staff recommend proceeding with rulemaking to:
 - Create an open-access commercial bully net lobster endorsement that must be associated with a vessel SPL
 - Require commercial bully net vessels be marked with their endorsement number
 - Prohibit trap pullers on bully net vessels
 - Prohibit the simultaneous possession of a commercial quantity of lobster and dive equipment unless the harvester possesses a CD
- Staff also recommend launching a “Respectful Bully Netting” outreach campaign
- Staff will continue to work with the fishery on trap-related issues
- Staff will continue to work with the Councils on federal lobster issues



If directed, staff will return with a draft rule at the Nov. Commission meeting

Staff recommend proceeding with rulemaking to provide an open-access commercial bully net lobster endorsement that must be associated with a vessel SPL, require commercial bully net vessels to be marked with their bully net endorsement number, prohibit trap pullers on bully net vessels, and prohibit simultaneous possession of commercial quantities of lobster and dive tanks or other underwater breathing apparatus (not including masks, snorkels, or dive fins).

Staff also recommend developing a “Respectful Bully Netting” outreach campaign to reduce user conflicts between waterfront homeowners and participants in the bully net fishery.

Staff will continue to work with the commercial spiny lobster fishery on other trap-related issues.

Staff will also continue to work with the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils on federal issues related to the lobster fishery.

If approved and directed, staff will return with a draft rule at the November Commission meeting.

The following slides are considered backup material
and are not anticipated to be part of the actual
presentation



Current Bully Net Regulations

- Minimum size limit: 3" carapace length
- Lobster must be landed whole
- Harvest of egg-bearing lobster is prohibited
- Bully nets may be no larger than 3 feet in diameter

Commercial

- **License requirements:** SPL, RS, and crawfish endorsement (C#)
- **Season:** Aug. 6 - March 31
- **Daily bag and possession limit:** 250 lobster per person or vessel

Recreational

- **License requirements:** recreational license and a lobster permit
- **Season:** 2-day sport season and Aug. 6 - March 31
- **Bag limit**

- Regular season: 6
- Sport season: 6 or 12 depending on location

