

## 4/5/16 Tilefish Advisory Panel (AP) Meeting Summary

### Afternoon – Blueline Tilefish

#### Attendance (\*AP Members)

\*Dave Arbeitman  
\*Jeff Gutman  
\*Ron Callis  
\*Skip Feller  
\*Jan McDowell  
\*Mike Johnson

Jason Didden (MAFMC Staff)  
EC Newellman/Dan Kulsar  
Dewey Hemilright  
Fred Akers  
Laurie Nolan  
Paul Nitschke  
Rick Robins  
Rob O'Reilly  
Steve Doctor

Jason Didden provided an overview of the Blueline Tilefish Amendment and then the call participants (AP members and others) asked questions and provided comments, summarized below.

#### Summary Comments:

D. Hemilright asked for the numbers of party/charter vessels that have been reporting via vessel trip reports (VTRs) and where the recreational time series came from given the ranges of the Delphi Process results. J. Didden referenced the public hearing document and staff memos that addressed these questions and summarized the available information. D. Hemilright also questioned whether the current emergency/VA/MD regulations had any biological basis. R. O'Reilly offered to distribute relevant Old Dominion University biological research.

S. Feller – What if we closed Jan-April and had a season May 1 – Dec 31, leaving the possession limit at 7 fish for party/head boats? (Don't want random catch estimates from Jan-April hurting fishery in the long run.) He supported a variable trip limit for private/charter/head boats. He doesn't want to see a lower bag limit anytime, but after summertime (Sept-May) he has "diehard" fishermen where 7-fish is more important. If I had to go lower (5 fish) do it June-August but really think limit needs to stay at 7.

J. Gutman – Headboats have concern about minimal data from private and charter sectors and don't want to see any spikes of catch estimates that didn't really happen – this is part of the reason for keeping Jan-April closed. For party boats, having different trip limits across the year would just result in people shifting effort into the part of the year with higher trip limits. Starting the season during better weather allows more of the general public to access the fishery. Since we don't know the extent of the charter boat fleet, consider using the control date as an indicator of who true charters are so that private boats don't "convert" to charter boats in order to get higher trip limits. Agrees with D. Arbeitman regarding daily trip limit (see below) – cited practice in Gulf of Mexico where headboats with two crews can catch a double daily limit for multi-day trips.

The ABC seems to go against the Delphi process. Also, the emergency rules were chosen partly because those rules have worked for a number of years in VA/MD without decimating the population and it seems wrong for some/any participants to have to go to lower trip limits given 7 fish/person is working. If the bag limit gets too low then you will run into issues with people high-grading fish and creating a discard problem.

J. Gutman also has "diehard fishermen" but they also fish in summertime to get decent weather. He would rather give up season rather than bag-limit, and during a closed season you know you won't get any landings. We (NJ) don't have the summer seabass that folks in VA can mix in and can't go below 7 fish. Maybe have Nov or Dec or both closed – all areas have access to black sea bass in Nov/Dec. Perhaps close Nov/Dec and not Jan/Feb since there is nothing else to fish for in Wave 1.

M. Johnson – You have to consider the recreational X-factor and the uncertainty about the recreational sector and what we don't know about them and the potential for real and significant impact re: catch & accountability.

There should be a mechanism (like a 10-20% percentage of a golden tilefish trip) to address circumstances where blueline (grey) tilefish are caught during golden tilefishing. There are some places where you can get 40%-50% catch ratio of bluelines to golden tilefish and you could get a lot of discards. The commercial sector would be in agreement to avoid waste and this needs to be addressed. At 275 pounds there is the potential for a good bit of discards. There's not a big history of large catches but there should be consideration for areas in more southern areas with more bluelines – there were some sets I didn't make last year to avoid throwing away bluelines while golden fishing. Guys won't target for 200 pounds more fish (i.e. ~500 pounds total). Need a mechanism to allow boats on multi-day days trips that are IFQ fishing for goldens to retain a little bit more blueline tilefish to avoid regulatory discarding and wasting the resource.

D. Arbeitman – What about a daily bag limit versus a trip limit – it is not fair for trips that have to run much further (NJ) to only be able to catch what a vessel further south (VA) can catch in one day. For a 2-day trip in NJ you get one trip limit, and two 1-day trips further south can catch double that. The whole ABC is not right. How they [SSC] came up with this in such a data-poor fishery goes beyond reason. How did the SSC determine the ABC for bluelines versus golden tilefish. Based on this ABC it's like saying there are 20 times more golden tilefish and how could they come up with totally different ABCs for species that are both considered to be

sedentary and slow growing? [P. Nitschke noted that Golden Tilefish uses an ASAP model projection & J. Didden noted that at this point there is not sufficient information for a similar assessment off the mid-Atlantic but the goal is to move in that direction and to gather more data.] D. Arbeitman noted that with such a low ABC you may never get the information that tells you more catch is possible, especially when paybacks kick in for any overages, in a similar fashion as black sea bass - this is a no-win situation for anybody and the cart is before the horse.

Ron Callis & D. Arbeitman – In agreement to stay at 7 fish and have a closed season in the early part of the year.

D. Kulsar – At a 275 pound trip limit, what happens to unused quota? (J.Didden noted that there are no provisions for quota roll-over.) Could the limit be raised at the end of the year if there is a substantial amount of quota remaining in the last months of the fishing year? D. Kulsar agreed with M. Johnson regarding avoiding discarding bluelines while fishing for golden tilefish (see above).