

Blueline tilefish EFP

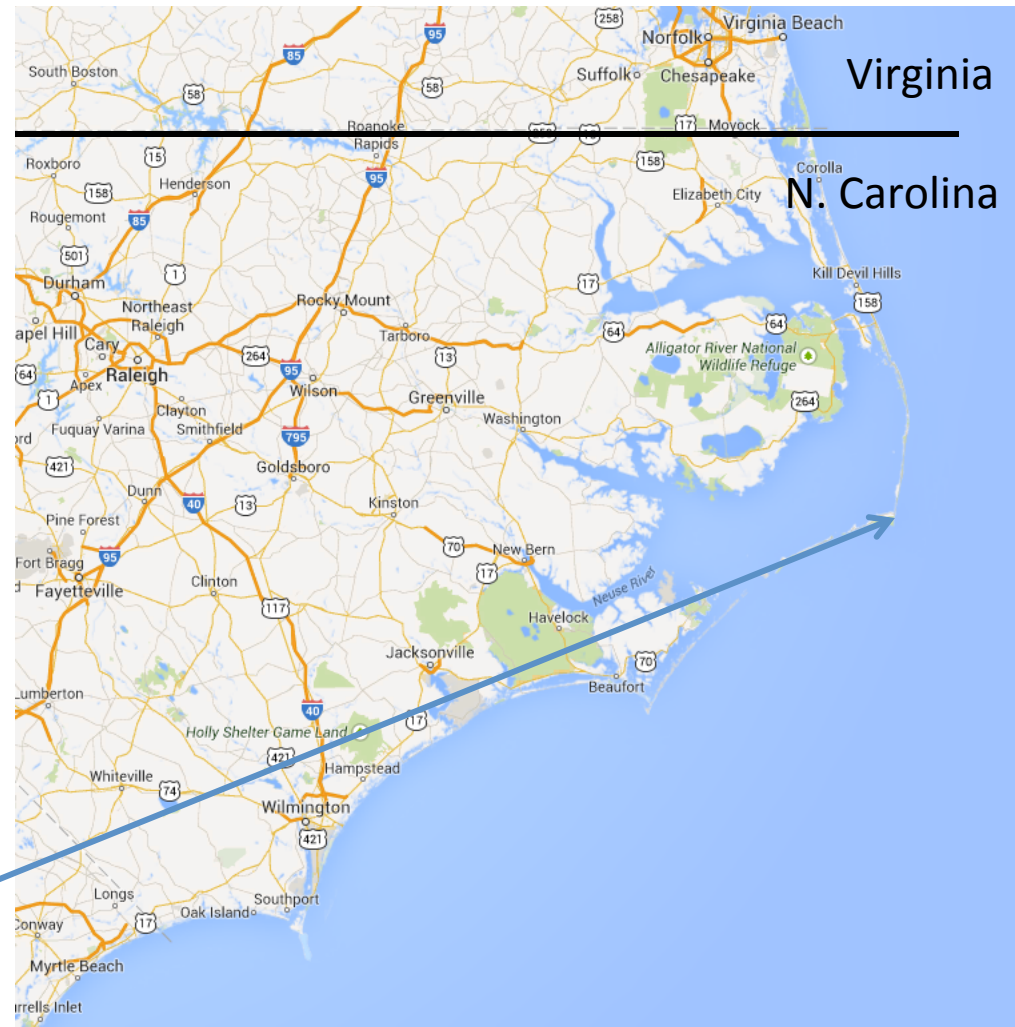
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Background

- The SAFMC established a prohibition on the possession or harvest of deepwater snapper grouper species, including blueline tilefish.
 - From 40 fathoms seaward for the entire South Atlantic EEZ
 - To reduce bycatch of speckled hind and warsaw grouper, both of which have an ABC = 0
 - As there was no independent data collection, if the fishery was stopped, there would be no new information collected on blueline tilefish.

- Fishermen, state trip tickets, and federal logbooks indicated that speckled hind and warsaw grouper had not been caught north of Cape Hatteras.



Fishery characteristics

- Prosecuted during daylight hours
- 28 – 38 nautical miles ENE of Oregon Inlet
- Depths of 39 – 73 fathoms
- Primary gear was longline with #12 circle hooks, average longline length was 2 miles with 400 hooks
- Avg. number of sets was 8, with a one hour soak time
- Primary bait used was squid

What prompted the EFP?

- Fishermen wanted the opportunity to prove that speckled hind and warsaw grouper did not occur north of Cape Hatteras
- Life history information was needed for blueline tilefish in advance of the 2013 stock assessment
- Determine what other non-targeted fish were being caught along with blueline tilefish

How did the EFP come together?

- The players
 - Blueline tilefish fishermen
 - State of NC fisheries managers
 - NOAA fisheries employees at SERO
- Each of the players had an important role

Blueline tilefish fishermen

- Fishermen want to fish
 - Fear was being shut out of a fishery that didn't interact with the species of concern
 - Without data, the fishery wouldn't be reopened
 - One fisherman volunteered to organize and recruit the other fishermen in the area

NC State Fisheries Managers

- Prepared the EFP
- Negotiated details with NMFS and made sure they were not unnecessarily burdensome on fishermen
- Monitored the EFP
- Reported the final results of the data collection

NOAA Fisheries

- Encouraged the submission of the EFP
- Assigned staff to work with the state agency to help insure that the submitted EFP proposal would meet federal requirements
- Was flexible in negotiating the terms of the EFP

Difficulties encountered in getting the EFP prepared

- NC DMF acted as intermediaries and had to provide resources to support the development and implementation of the EFP
- NOAA Fisheries wanted more observer coverage than the state could provide
- The key contact fisherman had to get the other fishermen to sign agreements that they would abide by the terms of the EFP

Agreed Upon Conditions

- Maximum trip length of 72 hours
- Hail out/hail in requirement with gear/area details
- Full retention, except for live sharks
- No sale of speckled hind or warsaw grouper
- 20% of all trips had observers
- Criteria for ending the EFP (100 trips, or 350k lbs of blueline tilefish, or 50 speckled hind/warsaw grouper, or 30 other deepwater complex species, or one year from date of issuance)

Approval process

- The EFP was negotiated and written between two Council meetings
- The final EFP agreed to by NMFS, the fishermen, and NC DMF was presented to the Council for their approval at a regular meeting
- After approval by the Council, the EFP went into effect approximately 6 weeks later

Conducting the work

- Monitoring and fishing under the EFP was difficult for both the fishers and the NC DMF
 - Fishermen had more reporting requirements
 - NC DMF Marine Patrol logged the hail out/hail in and dispatchers had to notify the SAFMC liaison of scheduled trips
- The data collection ended after approximately 10 months when the 100th trip was concluded

Compliance

- There was one unauthorized trip that landed blueline tilefish and that trip and landings were included in the overall counts for the EFP
- Twenty trips carried observers
- 52 of the 100 trips had their catches sampled at the dock
- Additional sampling of blueline tilefish was completed at sea by observers on some trips

Results

- 161,107 lbs of blueline tilefish landed (of 350,000 lbs allowed)
- 21% of landings came from observed trips
- No speckled hind or warsaw grouper
- No other deep water complex species except snowy grouper
- Non-targeted species included conger eel, sharks, dolphin, black sea bass and bluefish

What made this EFP successful?

- Willingness on the part of everyone involved to make it work in spite of the extra work
- The fleet was small and concentrated in one area
- The state agency already had an observer program in place prior to the EFP
- NMFS recognized the need and was supportive

Lessons Learned

- Ensure all the parties involved really want the EFP to be successful from the start
- This took a lot of effort from planning and coordination through execution, especially for the NC DMF
- Having the EFP run through NC DMF gave it legitimacy and NMFS assurances it would be done well
- Make sure the necessary resources are in place to meet all the requirements of the EFP



Questions?