

Limited Access Privileges Update

The following paragraphs provide a brief summary of Council action and discussion with regard to limited access privilege programs (LAPs) for any of the species under the jurisdiction of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

In March 2007, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council formed the Limited Access Privilege Program (LAP) Exploratory Workgroup. The Workgroup was composed of fishery stakeholders including fishermen from each gear group (longline, hook and line, dive) and state, fish house owners, an environmental representative, Sea Grant staff, and NMFS staff. The Workgroup met nine times and compiled a report on the appropriateness of LAPs for the South Atlantic commercial snapper grouper fishery and what characteristics the Workgroup thought a LAP should have. The Workgroup also expressed the possible positive and negative impacts they could foresee of a LAP, prerequisites for a LAP, and goals and objectives for a LAP. These were incorporated into the document. The document also contains background information on various aspects of a LAP.

In early March 2008, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council received the LAP Exploratory Workgroup's Final Report and discussed whether to move ahead with development of an amendment that would explore the potential impacts of an LAP for the commercial snapper grouper fishery. The Council decided not to move ahead with development of an amendment at this time. The Council requested that Sea Grant conduct an outreach program to gather information from the fishing industry about their ideas for LAPs and similar programs. The Council also directed Council staff to contact tilefish fishermen to ask about their interest in a possible LAP for the tilefish fishery. In June, the Council expects to hear back from Council staff on this issue.

A revised update will be provided following the June 9-13 Council meeting in Orlando.

Information about LAP Workgroup members, the Workgroup's final report, meeting minutes, and background information on LAPs are all available on the Council website.