**Angler Survey Subcommittee**

**Meeting Summary**

**January 29, 2025**

The Angler Survey Subcommittee met virtually with staff and advisors to continue development of surveys to inform future management decisions for summer flounder and black sea bass.

Staff briefly reviewed existing reporting forms for individual anglers that constitute the NJFW Volunteer Angler Survey, including an online form for computer users, an online form for mobile devices, and a paper form. The group confirmed that using the existing platforms was an efficient path forward instead of developing new forms. Participants requested the addition of a question on avidity to better characterize responses. Staff also indicated that more precise fishing location information would be needed to better identify where geographic splits should be investigated, and the group agreed to have NJFW staff work out the details in consultation with the chair and report back to the group.

Staff also presented a draft form to collect information from for hire vessels. The committee made a recommendation to include both species on a single form that includes all relevant lengths and discussed how to get sufficient precision in fishing location.

The group also discussed the discrete choice experiment (DCE) conducted by NMFS. Results of the survey are used in the recreational demand model (RDM) that evaluates different management options and may be beneficial for evaluating angler preferences for different options. NMFS staff confirmed that the RDM can handle options that allow NJ to split the state in various ways but recommended avoiding a few types of options the model has trouble evaluating. The RDM is not currently available, but NMFS will update the model with additional NJ (and coastwide) data in time to evaluate 2026 options.

Finally, the group talked about a timeline that included finalizing the VAS forms in February for final review by the subcommittee in March. Staff will begin advertising the project in April with implementation occurring when the summer flounder and black sea bass seasons open.

There was a brief discussion on developing an angler preferences survey. This survey, if conducted, would be made available towards the end of the summer to help inform development of management options.

Subcommittee: Eleanor Bochenek, Bob Rush, Pat Donnelly

Advisors: Paul Haertel, Adam Nowalsky, Ray Bogan, Mickey Sherry

Staff: Jeff Brust, Mike Celestino, Heather Corbett, Peter Clarke, Brian Scott