

**FLORIDA
SPORTSMAN**
SINCE 1969



January 4, 2022

Ms. Janet Coit
Assistant Administrator, NOAA Fisheries
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Via email: janet.coit@noaa.gov

Dear Ms. Coit:

Please accept this letter as public comment on behalf of Florida Sportsman Magazine, South Atlantic Fishing Environmentalists (SAFE), The Billfish Foundation, International Game Fish Association, Yamaha Motor Corp, Contender Boats, AFTCO, Maverick Boat Group, Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation, West Palm Beach Fishing Club, Wild Ocean, Hook & Tackle Clothing, Sailfish Boats, Jacksonville Bluewater Club, Gainesville Offshore Fishing Club, Stuart Rod & Reel Club, Bajio Sunglasses, D.O.A. Lures, Young Boats, Danco Sports Inc., Central Florida Offshore Association, Invincible Boats, Biscayne BoatWorks, Don's Bait & Tackle, Salt Strong, and Engel Coolers.

We also are writing on behalf of over **5,000 individual anglers** who have signed the *Save The Mahi* petition. *(full file of names attached)*

We're writing today regarding Atlantic Mahi Mahi and Wahoo – Amendment 10.

Anglers remain steadfast in objecting to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's approval of Amendment 10 as written. The amendment now with the Secretary of Commerce for final approval is yet to be approved. Anglers and charter captains insist more is needed to insure the two species will remain available for sportfishing, which are the backbone of the fishery. If the amendment isn't modified to reduce recreational bag and vessel limits and no approval of a commercial landing limit is included, many fear the stocks will collapse in a few years.

Dolphin are an extremely important species for recreational fishing, in Florida alone over 1-million anglers pump more than 9-billion dollars into the economy annually. In fact surveys regularly show dolphin are the most popular catch among offshore sport fishermen. Downward trends apparent in NOAA Fisheries data for both recreational catches and commercial landings are cause for alarm. Equally concerning is NOAA's ongoing failure to invest in a current stock assessment.

Scientists may assume dolphin populations are abundant and insulated from overfishing due to the fact that the species is a prolific spawner and widely distributed throughout tropical/subtropical oceans. However, U.S. anglers and charterboat captains by the thousands are seeing a fishery in trouble. Hundreds of public comments made on the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's public comment section for Amendment 10 were calling for stricter limits to the dolphin fishery.

We urge you to take immediate measures to help the fishery become more sustainable and provide enhanced enjoyment, recreational opportunities, travel and tourism, and long-term economic stability to the many citizens and businesses that rely so strongly upon the health of the dolphin fishery. These measures we feel are essential to achieve the best overall benefit to our nation and protect the fishery for future generations and include:

- Reduce the recreational vessel limit for dolphinfish to 30 fish
- Create a 2,000-pound commercial trip limit
- Maintain the current 10-fish per angler bag limit
- Implement a 20-inch minimum for all areas it doesn't already exist



The following organizations and corporations support the position calling for the Secretary to disprove Amendment 10 as written and provide guidance back to the SAMFC on how to amend the proposal.

Sincerely,

Blair Wickstrom
Publisher
Florida Sportsman Magazine

Jason Schratwieser
President
International Game Fish Association

Bill Shedd
Chairman - CEO
AFTCO

Tom Twyford
President
West Palm Beach Fishing Club

Matthew Vetzner
VP Sales
Sailfish Boats

Fred Bartlett
President
Stuart Rod & Reel Club

Rob Young
President
Young Boats

Ben Dorton
VP, Brand Strategy
Invincible Boats

Joe Simonds
CEO
Salt Strong

Jonathon Reynolds
President
South Atlantic Fishing Environmentalists

Martin Peters
Division Manager,
Government Relations
Yamaha Motor Corp, USA

Cory Dugger
President
Maverick Boat Group

Rob Kramer
President
Wild Ocean

Tim Altman
President
Jacksonville Bluewater Club

Al Perkinson
Founder, CEO
Bajío Sunglasses

Mitch Dreisbach
President
Danco Sports Inc.

Manny Sarmiento
Owner
Biscayne BoatWorks

Michael Dixon
VP
Engel Coolers

Ellen M. Peel
President
The Billfish Foundation

Joe Neber
President
Contender Boats

Guy Harvey, PhD.
Owner & Founder
Guy Harvey
Ocean Foundation

Stan Rudman
Owner
Hook & Tackle Clothing

Dale Reed
Board Member,
Past President
Gainesville Offshore
Fishing Club

Mark Nichols
President
D.O.A. Lures

David Clark
President
Central Florida
Offshore Association

Wesley Berry
Owner
Don's Bait & Tackle

CC via email:

- Dr. Richard Spinrad - NOAA Administrator - rick.spinrad@noaa.gov
- Mr. Andy Strelcheck - NOAA Southeast Regional Administrator - andy.strelcheck@noaa.gov
- Mr. Rick Devictor - NOAA Southeast Regional Branch Chief - rick.devictor@noaa.gov
- Ms. Jessica McCawley - Director of Marine Fisheries Management
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- Mr. John Carmichael - Executive Director - South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council
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