



**GULF OF MEXICO SECTOR SEPARATION WORKSHOP**  
**NOVEMBER 8-10, 2010**  
**TAMPA, FL**

**OUTCOMES FROM BREAKOUT SESSIONS 1 AND 2 AND WRAP-UP**

The following document is a compilation of the breakout sessions and the wrap up from the Gulf of Mexico Sector Separation Workshop, hosted by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and the Fisheries Leadership & Sustainability Forum, November 8-10 in Tampa, FL.

The following slides are a summary of the various comments, questions and issues raised by participants in each of the four breakout groups. The summary reflects the range of diverse perspectives and does not represent consensus or agreement within the breakout groups

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**BREAKOUT SESSION #1:  
EXPLORING PERSPECTIVES  
ON SECTOR SEPARATION**

Red Group

# Definition

- Ranges from stealing recreational fish to a viable alternative to status quo
- And from precursor to catch shares or a tool for better management or accountability

# Goals for the For-Hire Sector

- Better data
- More days to fish
- Increased representation in decision-making
- Accountable, sustainable fishery

# Goals for the Recreational Sector

- Better data
- More fishing days
- Increased representation
- Sustainability of fish stocks

## **Which goals will sector separation help?**

- All of them
- Specifically accountability

## **Which goals will sector separation not help?**

- None of them
- Dilution of voice of recreational sector as a whole

**If conditions changed, would your  
perceptions change?**



Green Group

## **Points of Agreement**

- Maintain the health of the marine environment
- Accountability: A desire to be accountable for all fish caught
- Data: Need to improve data for entire recreational sector and the timing of data needs

## **Outstanding Questions**

- Who would be included in sector separation and/or what they will qualify as either private or private angler i.e., in-state boats? What are the ground rules?
- How does this affect me and/or my business?
- In sector separation are the state boats be on the charter for-hire or recreational side?
- If sector separation goes through, can holders require a vote?
- How would this be managed?

## **Other Discussion Points**

- Geographic Area Management
- Habitat and Reef Structures – Removal of Rigs
- Closed Areas – Madison-Swanson, etc.

Blue Group

## Goals

- Separation of Groups (who, why?)
- Preserve Public Access
- Will accomplish: define access, provide accountability, and change participation (out of business)
- Will not accomplish: better data, days, rebuild stocks, private recreational landings data, mandate catch shares, change size of sector
- For Hire Goals: Stay in business, rebuild fisheries, preserve historical access, flexibility in fishing days, maintain lifestyle, and better data
- Private Recreational Goals: Better data

Yellow Group

All of these issues were raised by individuals – not indicative of consensus

Skepticism about process

### **Industry Issues**

- Too short of a season
- Derby fishery
- Accountability/data quality
- Safety
- Consistency/stability – business planning
- Increasing level of participation by private anglers

### **Concerns**

- Season length
- Allocation – who gets what
- Non-fishing interest
- Suspicion of data collection and stock assessment
- Lack of accountability

# **Breakout Session #1:**

## **Goals Articulated by All Four Breakout Groups**

### Mutual Goals

- Maintain the health of the marine environment
- Accountability: A desire to be accountable for all fish caught
- Data: Need to improve data for entire recreational sector and the timing of data needs

### For Hire Goals:

- Stay in business, rebuild fisheries, preserve historical access, flexibility in fishing days, maintain lifestyle, and better data; more days to fish; increased representation in decision-making; accountable, sustainable fishery

### Private Recreational Goals:

- Better data; More fishing days; Increased representation; Sustainability of fish stocks

**BREAKOUT SESSION #2:  
SECTOR SEPARATION VERSUS  
STATUS QUO**



Red Group

# Issues, challenges, benefits with status quo?

- Dissatisfaction with status quo (system and data)

## Social

- Reduced fishing days; less fish
- Frustration with system
  - Two total separate entities managed as one
  - Inconsistency between research and laws
  - Long-term red snapper rebuilding

## Economic

- Business uncertainty (not enough flexibility)

## Ecological

- Poor harvest control (including total mortality)
- Lag in stock assessment information

## **Does sector separation solve status quo issues?**

- Improves data issue and flexibility
- Improves use of technology
- Allows regional management
- Eliminate a derby

## **Does sector separation have negative consequences?**

- Increases animosity and divisiveness
- Increases complexity of regulations
- Presents unknowns consequences
  - No guarantees (benefits for sector or stock)

## **Other strategies that will address status quo issues?**

- Use of improved technologies (MRIP, elogbooks)
- More flexibility in MSA
- Other regulatory measures (bag and size limits, fish tags)

## **Additional information to make informed decision?**

- More details of proposed plan for sector separation
- Common vocabulary (accountability, sector separation, catch shares, flexibility)

Blue Group

# Issues, challenges, benefits with status quo?

## Economic/Social

- Further economic loss (private and for-hire)
- For-hire fleet will be reduced due to private angler overharvesting
- Commercial fishers having a larger part of the pie
- A growing stock may give more fishing days in the future

## Political / Management:

- Creating regulations that allow for-hire to stay in business
- Managing larger fish with bag limits while quota is in pounds
- Develop ACLs and AMs without making the situation worse
- Data is insufficient/not being used as intended (MRFSS)
- Influence of outside groups

## **Would Goals be met with Status Quo?**

- No

# Issues, challenges, benefits with sector separation?

## Economic/Social

- Economic loss to private anglers and coastal communities
- Economic gain to for-hire sector, more accountability
- Economic consequences not known – only guesses
- Potential for more derby fishing
- Reduced participation in the fishery

## Political / Management:

- Violation of MSA – would not be fair and equitable
- Fishing rights would be restored for the for-hire sector
- Creating separate ACLs and AMs

## **Would goals be met with Sector Separation?**

- Maybe / No
- Too much time spent on SS instead of allocation

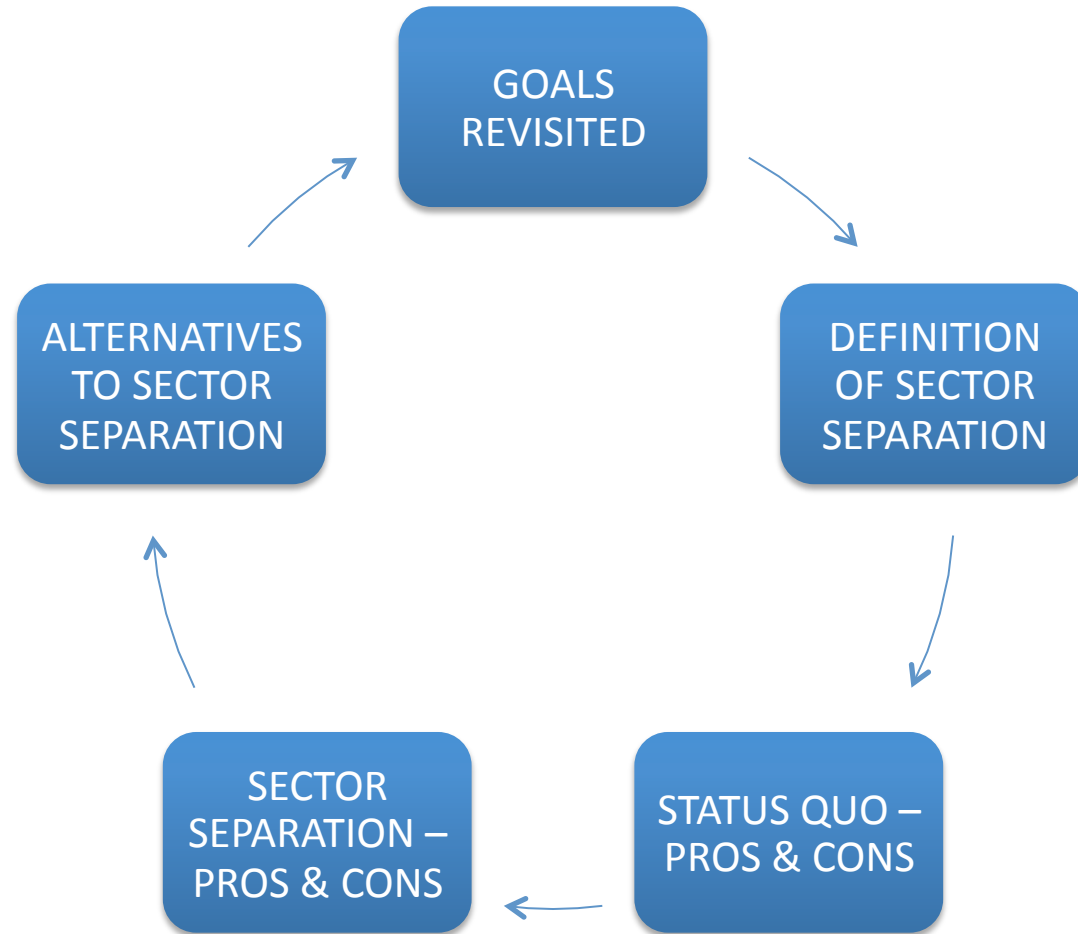
## **Variations in Sector Separation design that might work?**

- Tweak to focus on each sector's specific needs
- Address allocation
- Area management may affect how sector separation would operate
- Some other improvements are already underway (logbooks)
- Be aware of resource rent and compensated allocation



Yellow Group

# DISCUSSION EVOLUTION



# **DEFINITION OF SECTOR SEPARATION**

Division of the recreational sector (targeting all federally managed species) between the for-hire head boats and charter boats (including state-licensed non-federally permitted vessels) and private recreational anglers.

# STATUS QUO - CONS

- Fishing days are limited
- Limited access fishery inhibits growth
- Inconsistent seasons & bag limits a challenge for business planning
- Income concentrated in a short period of time
- Negative growth in charter industry
- MSA goal of optimizing catch conflicts with recreational fishing experience.
- Continue to overfish & keep getting penalized

# STATUS QUO - PROS

- Twenty years of management
- Greater certainty
- Existing management works
- Private recreational sector continues to grow
- Recreational pie does not get further divided
- Recent events (BP oil spill) provide opportunity to develop solutions.
- Collectively, recreational anglers have more socio-economic power and political clout.

# SECTOR SEPARATION - CONS

- Uncertainty how it will affect each individuals' business.
- Dual permit holders not addressed. Would they be allowed to benefit?
- Going to have to rewrite the rulebook.
- Concern about fleet reduction and potential job loss.
- Cut down on the fish available to pure recreational fishermen
- Accountability measures may be triggered differently by different sectors.
- Data will be accurate and reflect what is being caught

# SECTOR SEPARATION - CONS

- Will be hard to get data from private anglers.
- May not consider the number of recreational fishermen
- Possibility of inter-sector trade could make “fish barons” out of some.
- Fewer fishing days
- May not be equitable allocation of fish
- Creates another layer of bureaucracy.
- Catch shares are likely to follow

# SECTOR SEPARATION - PROS

- If the for-hire sector was treated separately, it is a known universe and will improve data collection opportunities.
- Charter boats would remove themselves from an uncontrolled fishery. Would have more control over catch and avoid overages.
- Opens the possibility for inter-sector trade.
- Eliminate the derby fishery and provide greater safety at sea.
- Accountability measures may be triggered differently by different sectors.
- Data will be accurate and reflect what is being caught



# MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES TO SECTOR SEPARATION

- Days-at-Sea program
- IFQs based on historical catch data
- Grant allocation based on catch history. Longer in industry, the greater percentage of the quota
- Charter boat buyout
- Electronic data reporting system
- Make private boats get a reef permit
- Fish tag system for everyone
- Web-based reporting system for all recreational anglers.
- Yearly stock assessment for red snapper and all reef fish.
- Catch sharing system like in Alaska
- Continue to tighten existing regulations (size restrictions & seasonal closures)

Green Group

# Discussion Roadmap

- Reviewed goals
- Began discussing goals under status quo and sector separation scenarios
- Proposal by participants: define sector separation (we need a consistent definition for comparison to status quo)
- Shift discussion: let's use our time to work on this definition
- Developed one definition (below)
- Differentiated between what we think IS and what is NOT included in a sector separation decision, and where this definition would be further developed during the decisionmaking process
- Idea: there are multiple pathways to achieving desirable outcomes.\* Some pathways require sector separation and some do not.

\*Definition may vary!

# Sector Separation: Working Definition

- At this stage sector separation means splitting the recreational sector into two sectors.
- In the future the council could further split the for-hire sector, but we don't need to make this decision now.
- This working definition of sector separation does not specify how a for-hire ACL is apportioned among members of the for-hire community.

# Management Pathways

- You can achieve many outcomes without sector separation (ex. adjust timing of season, ...)
- Some outcomes can be achieved with OR without sector separation (ex. flexibility in season, DAS ...)
- Some outcomes can only be achieved with sector separation (ex. LAPPs)

Other discussion points:

- data collection is improving with or without sector separation
- the for-hire sector is already distinguished by permitting and data collection requirements (potential implications for management pathways)

# Breakout Sessions Wrap Up

# Common Themes

- Need for greater accountability
- Need for better data
- Need for greater certainty in scientific management and business planning
- Concern about changing from the status quo
- Potential loss of bargaining power and disempowerment of private anglers if sector separation is implemented
- Currently limited negotiating authority for the for-hire, charter and head boats

# Outstanding Questions

- How is sector separation defined?
  - Who would be included in the for-hire sector, i.e. charterboat, headboat, state permitted boats?
- What would sector separation look like if it is implemented?
- How would sector separation affect fishermen directly? (Impacts to individuals)