

Recreational Catch Shares

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Key Realities

- Population growth means increasing demand for recreational angling
- Anglers are seafood consumers who will pay more to catch their own fish
- Commercial catch shares result in job losses as fishers / processors consolidate
- Job growth in coastal communities depends on increased recreational use

Key Realities (cont.)

- Catch share programs tend to be in perpetuity – no examples yet of sunset
- Catch share programs create a historical snapshot of fishery use and allocation
- Absent mechanism for transfer between sectors, catch share programs increase allocation conflicts among sectors

Catch Share Programs Should

- Allow the best use of the resource to change over time based on market forces
- Create jobs in coastal communities
- Allow full transferability between sectors
- Improve conservation of the resource
- Be tailored for each fishing sector

Problems Applying Catch Shares to Recreational Fisheries

- Recreational anglers catch fish not pounds
- Reducing participation is not the goal
- Consolidation does not provide benefits
- No economies of scale
- Angler participation is transitory
- Buying quota requires long time horizon
- Privatization of public resource a concern
- Allocating individual quotas is expensive

Recreational Catch Shares

- Must be transparent to anglers
- Must address allocation issues
- Must promote resource conservation
- Should be tailored to each fishery
- Should promote job creation

Transparent to Anglers

- Anglers catch fish, not pounds
- Too many anglers to allocate catch shares
- Someone must hold angler catch shares
- An angler pool is one approach
- A pool allows anglers to fish as before

Angler Catch Share Pool

- Non-profit holds recreational sector allocation as pool available to all anglers
- Anglers purchase annual stamp to be able to access recreational catch share pool
- Revenue from stamps used to purchase catch shares from commercial holders
- Non-profit controls recreational harvest using bag limits, seasons, limit on stamps

Address Allocation Issues

- Demand for recreational fish is growing
- Catch share programs today freeze historical allocation and use
- Absent mechanism for transfer between sectors, anglers oppose catch shares
- Recreational pool can buy out commercial catch share holders, changing allocation

Optimize Resource Use

- Recreational pool managers will purchase quota for times when stocks are low
- This results in the recreational sector holding too much quota when stocks high
- To optimize use of resource, commercial catch share holders should be allowed to fish excess recreational quota for free

Promote Conservation

- Creating a recreational catch share pool can promote conservation
- Pool managers would be responsible for keeping anglers within limit using bag limits, season lengths, and angler limits
- Data collection can be improved through use of permit pricing to encourage anglers to submit catch data

Problems for Anglers

- Lack of economic data / analysis on benefits from recreational fisheries
- Lack of organization / funding among recreational anglers
- Commercial opposition to sale of catch shares to recreational sector
- Lengthy Council Process / Balance of Council representation

Conclusion

- Angler catch share pools should be considered to address allocation issues
- Templates and legal guidance are needed if recreational catch shares are desired
- NOAA needs to provide resources for economic analysis of recreational fisheries
- NOAA's Catch Share Policy encourages anglers to consider the pool concept