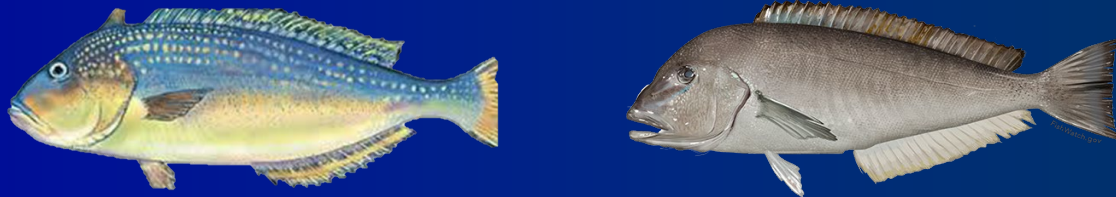




Private Recreational Tilefish Permitting and Reporting: Outreach and Evaluation Update



Executive Director's Report
Council meeting
February 2024

Background

- August 2020, private recreational permitting and reporting requirements for golden and blueline tilefish went into effect
 - Requirements are intended to improve our understanding of tilefish catch and effort
- The Council reviews these requirements annually
 - Since implementation, angler reporting rates have been low
 - Mismatch between the number of permits and number of reported tilefish trips
- Recently awarded ACCSP funding to support efforts to improve awareness of and compliance with requirements
- Recent Council feedback supportive of conducting an evaluation of the entire program

Proposed Projects

1. Improving Catch and Effort Data Collection from Recreational Tilefish Anglers
2. Program Evaluation: Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Private Angler Tilefish Reporting



Photo courtesy: Ken Neill

Improving Catch and Effort Data Collection from Recreational Tilefish Anglers

Approach:

- Create and improve existing outreach/informational materials (e.g., flyers, brochures, presentations)
- Submit a publication on tilefish permitting and reporting requirements in *On the Water Magazine* and their social media
- Attend and have a booth at a minimum of 4 major fishing shows
- Present at a minimum of 4 fishing clubs
- Enhance eFin application analytics infrastructure
- Pursue opportunities to collaborate with/leverage resources of NOAA HMS given overlap in user groups

ATTENTION TILEFISH ANGLERS!

Blueline and Golden Tilefish Permitting and Reporting Requirements

Our Tilefish Fishery

- Both blueline (or gray) and golden tilefish are popular targets for offshore anglers in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic.
- Recreational fishermen are thought to account for a sizable amount of harvest for both species.



Blueline (or gray) tilefish (left) and golden tilefish (right)

Management Challenges

- Due to their deep-water habitat and unique life-history, both tilefish species are considered “data-poor,” making effective management challenging.
- It is particularly difficult to estimate how many tilefish are harvested by private anglers.
- **Fishery scientists and managers urgently need to understand how many anglers target tilefish, how much time they spend fishing, and how many fish they catch to better assess these species’ overall health and ensure a strong fishery into the future.**



If you own or operate a private recreational vessel and target tilefish from Virginia northward, you are required to possess a free recreational tilefish permit and submit a trip report within 24 hours of returning to port from a tilefish trip. Here’s how to stay legal.

Step 1: Get a Permit

- The **free** annual permit helps managers understand the potential “universe” of tilefish anglers. It is required for both private vessels and for-hire vessels fishing privately.
- This is a vessel permit; you do not need to obtain it if fishing on someone else’s vessel.
- To obtain the permit, visit the NOAA Fisheries’ **Fish Online** website, create an account, and apply for a Private Recreational Tilefish Permit.
- Fishing for/keeping tilefish without a permit can result in a civil violation of \$500.

NOAA
Fish Online:



Plan Ahead: The permit can take up to 30 days to be issued, so be sure to apply well before your first trip targeting tilefish this season.

Step 2: Submit Trip Reports

- Vessel owners/operators must submit electronic trip reports for all trips on which tilefish are targeted, **even if you didn’t catch or keep any fish.**
- A mobile app called **eFin Logbook** has been developed for tilefish reporting.
 - Download the app to your smartphone or tablet and log in using your Fish Online credentials.
 - After each trip, submit key information such as: number of anglers, time spent fishing, and number of tilefish kept/discarded.
- Learn more at bit.ly/efinlogbook

eFin
for iPhone:



eFin
for Android:



Remember: Trip reports must be submitted within 24 hours of returning to port from any trip on which you fished for tilefish, even if you targeted other species.

The Data That YOU Report Will Help Ensure Healthy Fisheries for Years to Come

Accurate reporting of catch and fishing effort will help improve our understanding of the blueline and golden tilefish fisheries and ensure that these fisheries are being monitored and managed appropriately. **Your efforts now are an investment in long-term fishery health.**

Learn More: Visit bit.ly/mafmc for additional information, resources, and contacts.



List of Upcoming Events

Event	Event Type	Location	Date(s)
Canyon Runner Offshore Seminar Series	Show	Atlantic City, NJ	Feb. 3
Ocean City Boat Show	Show	Ocean City, MD	Feb. 16-18
Castafari Offshore Fishing Seminar	Show	Quincy, MA	Mar. 2-3
New England Saltwater Fishing Show	Show	Providence, RI	Mar. 8-10
South Shore Marlin and Tuna Club	Club	Bay Shore, NY	Mar. 12
Ocean City Marlin Club	Club	Ocean City, MD	TBD
Staten Island Tuna Club	Club	Staten Island, NY	TBD
Norfolk Anglers Club	Club	Norfolk, VA	TBD

Program Evaluation

- Will conduct small in-person meetings with rec tilefish community leaders (e.g., tackle shop owners, club board members, etc.)
 - Solicit candid views, identify potential barriers to compliance, and identify opportunities for improvement
 - Meetings will be regionally focused to areas with tilefish effort (NY, NJ, MD, and VA)
- Outcomes will be synthesized and recommendations for potential next steps will be presented to the Council

