



# WEST PALM BEACH FISHING CLUB

~ Established 1934 ~



November 15, 2021

Jessica McCawley, Director  
Division of Marine Fisheries Management  
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
2590 Executive Center Circle E, Suite 201  
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Dear Jessica:

On behalf of the more than 1,400 members of the West Palm Beach Fishing Club (WPBFC), I would like to submit comments regarding the recreational management of dolphinfish in Atlantic state waters. When surveyed years ago WPBFC members responded that dolphinfish were the number one species they targeted when fishing offshore. Our anecdotal observations based upon member comments and fish entries in our annual contests and tournaments is that dolphin fishing is not what it once was. Many WPBFC members have raised concerns about declines in abundance and the notable absence of big fish. In our view, yearly fluctuations in recruitment and migratory patterns are not solely to blame. Clearly there is more pressure from the recreational sector than ever before. Additionally, since dolphinfish travel long distances, the WPBFC has long had concerns related to exploitive longlining efforts in not only the South Atlantic, but also the Caribbean. The WPBFC's recommendations below are based upon our many decades of observations.

- Reduce the recreational bag limit for dolphinfish from 10 per person, to 5 per person.
- Reduce the daily recreational vessel limit for dolphinfish from 60 to 30 fish.
- The WPBFC supports the sale of dolphin from the For-Hire sector. We believe giving charter boats the ability to sell their catch supports local businesses like restaurants and fish houses, and it provides a sustainable supply of high quality fresh fish to local consumers.
- We do not support any proposal that would create a seasonal closure for dolphinfish.

We recognize that the management of pelagic species like dolphinfish presents unique challenges. The WPBFC believes that State and Federal dolphinfish recreational regulations should be the same. In our location adopting stricter regulations in state waters would likely have little impact since most of the time dolphinfish are caught in federal waters. We encourage the FWC to work closely with the South Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Fishery Management Councils to help implement consistent management measures throughout the fishes range since there is so much regional interconnectivity.

Respectfully,

Tom Twyford  
President