



Position Statement on Sector Separation Revised April 2013

Harvest of marine fish stocks in federal waters is presently allocated between the commercial and recreational sectors at levels determined by the regional fishery management councils. The concept of subdividing the recreational allocation of some fish stocks into separate private angler and for-hire components, known as sector separation, has recently been discussed for potential consideration by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. Under the sector separation model, managers would assign quotas to the commercial sector, private boat anglers sector, and charter/for-hire sector. ASA is opposed sector separation because:

1. A fair process for allocation between sectors and schedules for revisiting allocation among sectors has not been developed by the Fishery Management Councils or the National Marine Fisheries Service, and as a result many outdated and inequitable allocations remain in place. Standard guidance for addressing allocation that is measurable and predictable is needed before any discussions of sector separation.
2. Sector separation will create imbalances in quota allocations between for-hire/charter boat fishing and private boat anglers and will lead to serious conflicts within the recreational fishing community, particularly with no process in place for fairly determining allocation.
3. Sector separation will likely result in disparate public seasons for most offshore recreational fishing. Private boat anglers will often be unable to pursue many species unless they pay a charter/for-hire vessel.
4. The socioeconomic impacts of sector separation have not been adequately addressed.

Until these concerns are fully addressed, ASA urges federal fishery managers to remove saltwater recreational sector separation from all management plan discussions. ASA believes that federal fishery managers should focus on more pressing concerns, such as addressing the significant underlying issues within federal fisheries data collection and developing a fair allocation process.

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