Public comments received via the online comment form during the data process

SEDAR94-DW-24

10 October 2025

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Assessment

SEDAR 94 Florida Hogfish

Submit Date	Submitted By	Comment	Row	Include an Upload File	File_Upload
5/22/25	First Name: Paul Last Name: Whiting Email: pfwfish@gmail.com	1. In the Atlantic Florida coast and keys, the commercial fisherman can keep 25 lb per day of hogfish all year long. While the recreational fisherman is limited to one fish during a half year season. This is totally unfair to the recreational fishermen. The local fisherman supply much more income to the state with their purchases of boats, fuel, fishing, tackle, etc. 2. The larger hogfish are mostly being taken by spear fishermen and divers rather than recreational fishermen. Therefore, there should be a different rule for the taking of hogfish by spear fishing and divers. The average fisherman does not even know how to catch hogfish on a consistent basis since they tend to bite quite differently than most other fish. 3. Hogfish caught in state Waters seldom reach the 16-in minimum fork length to be kept even during the limited season. The 14-in fork length measurement used on the Gulf side should also apply to the Florida Keys and Atlantic state and federal waters. This change would allow local fishermen who do not venture far offshore and confine their fishing to state Waters or near state waters could easily keep a few hogfish. The limit of one fish per person should be expanded back to the five fish per person that it used to be. Your assessment of the stock being depleted seems to be miscalculated. I regularly fish state Waters on the patch reefs off Islamorada and out to the far reef in federal waters. I've done so for more than 30 years and consistently catch hogfish on nearly every trip, often releasing a dozen or more that are in the 12 to 14-in size. The larger hogfish that I've caught recently in the 16-in plus fork length were all caught and released during the closed 6th month season. As the water warms, the larger ones seem to go much further offshore than most fishermen are willing to go to target them.	18		
6/25/25	First Name: Raymond Last Name: Alexander Email: raymondalexander3@icloud.com	I have been spearfishing hogfish out of Saint Petersburg for the last 12 years. The population has changed significantly over my time here. Once people figured out how to Rod and reel hogfish the population really started to change. The size of the hogfish now is much smaller, they turn into males most times now when they are not even of legal size. The bag limit regulations are really not helping out the species. In order to get the numbers and size back to where they once were I suggest a few regulation changes. 1. Drop the bag limit from 5 to 3 per person 2. Increase the size limit to 16in to the fork just like the east coast, to help create bigger hogfish in the gene pool 3. Create a vessel bag limit of 10 during spawning months December-May 4. Mandatory descending device (seaqualizer, return em right) on board anytime someone is targeting hogfish or has caught hogfish. If they do not ticket, they do not survive well after being released without the seaqualizer regardless of depth	19		
7/29/25	First Name: BEN Last Name: CHOI Email: benchoi89@gmail.com	The hogfish population in West FL has traditionally been a spearfishing gear fishery. With the recent popularity of hook and line fishing for hogfish, we have seen higher harvest rates. Hook and line fishing for hogfish a destructive and unsustainable practice due to the high amount of discard mortality primarily due to barotrauma, which these fish are highly susceptible to. It is my opinion that any management practices by the Council should take into account the high discard mortality of the hook and line fishery and not punish the spearfishermen who are the traditional gear type of harvest for this species. If more stringent regulations are going to be placed on the fishery, it should be for Hook and line ONLY. The spearfishing harvest has not increased, it is the destructive hook and line fishing for this fish that has caused any population decreases found by this SEDAR. I would recommend the council enforce a gear restriction on the hogfish fishery to make it SPEARFISHING ONLY. A precedent has already been set for this by making the take of triple tail, snook, redfish and sea trout hook and line fishing only harvest. Spearfishing is the most sustainable type of harvest with zero by catch.	25		
7/29/25	First Name: Scott Last Name: Noyes Email: noyesscott@gmail.com	The hogfish population in West FL has traditionally been a spearfishing gear fishery. With the recent popularity of hook and line fishing for hogfish, we have seen higher harvest rates. Hook and line fishing for hogfish is a destructive and unsustainable practice due to the high amount of discard mortality primarily due to barotrauma, which these fish are highly susceptible to. It is my opinion that any management practices by the Council should take into account the high discard mortality of the hook and line fishery and not punish the spearfishermen who are the traditional gear type of harvest for this species. If more stringent regulations are going to be placed on the fishery, it should be for Hook and line ONLY. The spearfishing harvest has not increased, it is the destructive hook and line fishing for this fish that has caused any population decreases found by this SEDAR. I would recommend the council enforce a gear restriction on the hogfish fishery to make it SPEARFISHING ONLY. A precedent has already been set for this by making the take of triple tail, snook, redfish and sea trout hook and line fishing only harvest. Spearfishing is the most sustainable type of harvest with zero by catch. Thank you for your time.	26		
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7/31/25	First Name: Lisa Last Name: Sparling Email: oceanloveher@gmail.com	The hogfish population in West FL has traditionally been a spearfishing gear fishery. With the recent popularity of hook and line fishing for hogfish, we have seen higher harvest rates. Hook and line fishing for hogfish is a destructive and unsustainable practice due to the high amount of discard mortality primarily due to barotrauma, which these fish are highly susceptible to. It is my opinion that any management practices by the Council should take into account the high discard mortality of the hook and line fishery and not punish the spearfishermen who are the traditional gear type of harvest for this species. If more stringent regulations are going to be placed on the fishery, it should be for Hook and line ONLY. The spearfishing harvest has not increased, it is the destructive hook and line fishing for this fish that has caused any population decreases found by this SEDAR. I would recommend the council enforce a gear restriction on the hogfish fishery to make it SPEARFISHING ONLY. A precedent has already been set for this by making the take of triple tail, snook, redfish and sea trout hook and line fishing only harvest. Spearfishing is the most sustainable type of harvest with zero by catch. Thank you for your time. Brought to you by your Florida Skin Divers Association	31		