





Recreational - Charter Fishing Working Group

Recommendations to the Sanctuary Advisory Council



Capt. Will Benson, Sanctuary Advisory Council, Charter Flats Fishing, Working Group Chair Nicole Uibel, FKNMS Program Coordinator

Working Group Membership

Working Group Chair - Will Benson, SAC Charter Flats Fishing

Advisory Council Representatives:

Suzy Roebling – SAC Citizen at Large, Upper Keys

Martin Moe – SAC Education and Outreach

Joe Weatherby – SAC Tourism, Lower Keys

Shelly Krueger – SAC Research and Monitoring

Community Experts:

Brice Barr – Key West Charter Boat Association

Steve Freidman - Florida Keys Fishing Guides Association

Brooke Black – Bonefish Tarpon Trust

Trip Aukeman – Coastal Conservation Association

Gary Jennings – Keep Florida Fishing

Mike Weinhofer – Compass Rose Charters

Recreational - Charter Fishing Working Group Meetings

Workshops:

Wednesday January 25th 9:30am-3:30pm City of Marathon Council Chambers 9805 Overseas Highway Marathon, FL 33050

Wednesday February 22nd 9:30am-3:30pm City of Marathon Council Chambers 9805 Overseas Highway Marathon, FL 33050

Public Engagement Meetings:

Wednesday February 1st 6:00pm-8:00pm City of Marathon Council Chambers 9805 Overseas Highway Marathon, FL 33050

Wednesday February 8th 6:00pm-8:00pm Monroe County Public Library – Islamorada 81830 Overseas Highway Islamorada, FL 33036

Wednesday February 15th 6:00pm-8:00pm Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center 35 E. Quay Road Key West, FL 33040

Working Group Objectives

Cultivate a voluntary recognition program which will:

- 1. Recognize charter fishing operators who meet set criteria to educate their customers to conserve the special ecosystem of the Florida Keys,
- 2. Increase the awareness and stewardship of the FKNMS within the resident and visiting angling community,
- 3. Increase communication and partnership between FKNMS and the recreational and charter fishing community, and
- 4. Promote FKNMS as a multiple use recreational area.

Mission and Goal of Blue Star - Fishing Guides

Mission

The mission of Blue Star Fishing Guides is to promote responsible angling in South Florida through education, communication, and partnership.

Goal

The goal of the program is to develop a voluntary education, recognition, and endorsement program for charter fishing operators to expand on their awareness and knowledge, and ultimately that of their clients, about responsible angling practices, the South Florida ecosystem, and the FKNMS.

Working Group Discussion Topics

- Best Practices
- Process for Participation
 - Eligibility to Participate
 - Required Initial Training
 - Periodic Evaluation
 - Annual Refresher Training
 - Continuing Education
 - Conservation Activity
- Incentives for Participation

Best Practices for Blue Star Fishing Guides

- Serve as ambassadors for understanding and protecting the environment
- Comply with legal standards, exceed ethical standards
- Create a positive atmosphere through educational briefing
- Treat other anglers, boaters, and property owners with respect
- Choose appropriate tackle and bait for best handling practices
- Report illegal actions (including hazards), set an example
- Limit and dispose of waste properly
- Practice ethical fish harvesting take only what you need
- Ensure guest safety

Process for Program Participation: Eligibility & Initial Training

Eligibility to Participate:

 Open to charter captains regardless of their license type or experience level to ensure broad participation, as long as they agree to the mission statement.

Required Initial Training:

 Training should be rigorous and include aspects of inshore, offshore, and flats fishing, the best practices, and information about different habitats and wildlife. Training could be done in person or online.

Process for Program Participation: Evaluation & Refresher Training

Periodic Evaluation:

 Meet and greet at the docks as the charter returns, captains could opt-in to a ride along, online survey for clients, checks into TripAdvisor comments.

Annual Refresher Training:

- On-line and take less time than initial trainings. However should keep the program and participants up to date and maintain the level of excellence expected of participating captains.
- Quarterly newsletters could help maintain education throughout the year and provide an avenue to highlight participating guides.

Process for Program Participation: Continuing Education & Conservation

Continuing Education:

- Community lectures, council meetings, trainings, etc.
- Annual dialogue meeting to discuss the program and interact with sanctuary management.

Conservation Activity:

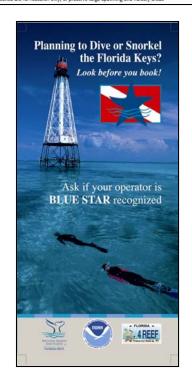
- Multiple activities could fulfill this requirement
- Encourage creativity (i.e. beach cleanup, outreach event, etc)

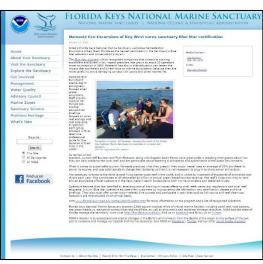
Incentives to Participate



- Promotion of participating guides by NOAA
- Receiving educational materials for clients
- Networking with other guides, agencies, advisory council
- Marketing opportunities through articles, radio shows, outreach, website promotion, etc









Recreational Charter Fishing Working Group Recommendations Summary

- We acknowledge the commitment and contribution of Advisory Council and community members who served on the Recreational – Charter Fishing Working Group.
- 2. We request that the Recreational Charter Fishing Working Group Recommendations be forwarded to the Sanctuary Superintendent for development of a Blue Star Fishing Guide program.

Working Group Resources

Website: http://floridakeys.noaa.gov/sac/blueAngler/blueAngler.html



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Recreational & Charter Fishing Working Group



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The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary is working with charter fishing operators to develop a voluntary education and recognition program. This Blue Angler program may be modeled after the current Blue Star program for charter dive and snorkel operators.

The Sanctuary Advisory Council created a community

The Sanctuary Advisory Council created a community working group to help develop this program. Following a series of meetings, this working group will provide recommendations to the Advisory Council in April of 2017. Upon consideration of these recommendations, the Advisory Council may direct FKNMS to move forward in developing Blue Angler for 2018.

Advisory Council Lead - Will Benson

Objectives Members Schedule Notes

Meeting Notes

Meeting Agendas and Meeting Summaries will be posted as available.

January 25th Initial Workshop

- 🔁 Agenda for Initial Workshop (190 kb)
- Meeting Summary of Initial Workshop (125 kb)

Other Materials

Nicole Uibel Program Coordinator 33 East Quay Road Key West, FL 33040 305-809-4711 nicole.uibel@noaa.gov

