



# South Atlantic Update

Published for fishermen and others interested in federal marine resource conservation issues Spring 2016

## Council Approves Five Spawning Special Management Zones

*Designated areas offer protection for spawning snapper grouper species and associated habitat*

After considering public comment from two rounds of public hearings, input from its advisory panels, recommendations received earlier from the Council's Marine Protected Area workgroups and the results of cooperative research, members of the Council approved the designation of five offshore areas as Spawning Special Management Zones or Spawning SMZs during its March 2016 meeting. The designations, as outlined in Amendment 36 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan, will help protect spawning fish and the unique habitat associated with spawning activities.

The five areas, ranging in size from 3 to 5 square miles, include an area off eastern North Carolina, portions of an elbow-shaped ledge off the coast of South Carolina known as "Devils Hole" or "Georgetown Hole", two experimental artificial reefs off South Carolina, and a deep sinkhole off the Florida Keys (see page 6 for details). If approved by the Secretary of Commerce, the areas would be the first Spawning SMZs designated in federal waters in the South Atlantic.

Bottom fishing for snapper grouper species and anchoring would be prohibited within the proposed Spawning SMZs; anchoring would be allowed in the experimental artificial reef areas. Trolling for pelagic species such as dolphin, tuna, and billfish would be allowed. Restricting bottom fishing helps protect habitat and fish that gather there to spawn, resulting in the production of more eggs and larvae that could help recruitment.

The Spawning SMZs would also help reduce bycatch and bycatch mortality for snapper grouper species, including speckled hind and warsaw grouper, two species that have been candidates for listing as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act.

The Council considered eleven candidate sites during its March meeting, narrowing its focus based on the characteristics and data available for each site and additional public input.

*(Continued page 6)*



Commercial fishermen and scientists have collaborated on a cooperative research project to collect samples from areas proposed as Spawning SMZs. Here, commercial fisherman Mark Marhefka (left) offloads his boat in Mt. Pleasant, SC after a trip with Dr. Will Heyman, (center) an expert on spawning fish aggregations. They had just returned from an area known as

Georgetown Hole off the coast of South Carolina. Samples included a juvenile speckled hind, seen here in its yellow immature state. The adult fish is reddish brown in color. The species is a candidate for listing as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act.

Dr. Joey Ballenger, a chief scientist managing the MARMAP fishery independent sampling program (far right) was also on hand with fellow biologists from SCDNR to collect samples. Cooperative research projects can aid in better understanding spawning activity while reducing sampling costs and utilizing the extensive knowledge of fishermen.



**June 13 - 17, 2016  
Council Meeting  
Cocoa Beach, FL**  
See page 7 for details

**Formal Public Comment  
Wednesday, June 15  
at 5:30 PM**

### Inside This Issue:

From the Chair .....	2
In The News .....	3
Red Snapper Options .....	3
Regulations Snapshot .....	4
Mutton Mania: New Regs Proposed .....	4
Amendments at a Glance .....	6
From the Executive Director's Desk .....	6
June 2016 Meeting Agenda .....	7
Calendar .....	8

# SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

**Gregg T. Waugh**      **Dr. Brian Chevront, Deputy**  
Executive Director      John Carmichael, Deputy

## VOTING MEMBERS

### Designated State Officials

<p><b>Dr. Michelle Duval - Chair</b> Morehead City, NC (252) 808-8011</p> <p><b>Doug Haymans</b> Brunswick, GA (912) 264-7218</p>	<p><b>Jessica McCawley</b> Tallahassee, FL (850) 487-0554</p> <p><b>Mel Bell</b> Charleston, SC (843) 953-9007</p>
---	--

### Appointed Obligatory Members

<p><b>Ben Hartig</b> Hobe Sound, FL (772) 546-1542</p> <p><b>Zack Bowen</b> Savannah, GA (912) 398-3733</p>	<p><b>Jack Cox</b> Morehead City, NC (252) 728-9548</p> <p><b>Chris Conklin</b> Murrells Inlet, SC 843/543-3833</p>
---	---

### Appointed At-Large Members

<p><b>W. Chester Brewer</b> West Palm Beach, FL (561) 655-4777</p> <p><b>Mark Brown</b> Mt. Pleasant, SC (843) 881-9735</p>	<p><b>Charlie Phillips, Vice Chair</b> Townsend, GA (912) 832-3149</p> <p><b>Anna Barrios Beckwith</b> Morehead City, NC (252) 671-3474</p>
---	---

### NMFS Regional Administrator

**Roy Crabtree**  
St. Petersburg, FL  
(727) 824-5301

### Non-Voting Members

<p><b>Robert Beale</b> ASMFC Washington, DC (202) 289-6400</p> <p><b>LTJG Tara Pray</b> U. S. Coast Guard Miami, FL (305) 415-6778</p>	<p><b>Dr. Wilson Laney</b> U. S. Fish &amp; Wildlife Raleigh, NC (919) 515-5019</p> <p><b>Deidra Warner-Kramer</b> State Department Washington, DC (202) 647-2883</p>
--	---

## *Editor's Note*

The *South Atlantic Update* is published by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Its purpose is to report developments in fisheries management that would be of interest to its readers. Please credit the Council when reprinting articles used in this newsletter. Submissions may be mailed to Kim Iverson, Editor, *South Atlantic Update*, 4055 Faber Place Dr., Suite 201, N. Charleston, SC 29405, or may be sent via the internet; Email address: kim.iverson@safmc.net.

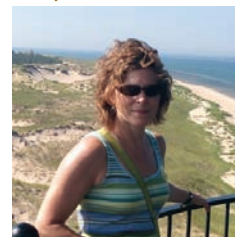
A publication of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Award No. NFA15NMF4410010.



## Chairman's Perspective

*Dr. Michelle Duval, Council Chair*

### Partnerships: the Importance of Differing Viewpoints



"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." This famous quote from Dickens came to mind as I was thinking about some of the major issues the Council has successfully tackled over the past year, as well as some of the challenges we have in front of us. Our accomplishments include participation in a deepwater survey design workshop to explore cooperative methods of gathering data for our deepwater species; completion of a Vision Blueprint for our snapper grouper fishery to help guide future actions and management; and the launching of a Citizen Science Program to engage stakeholders in filling information gaps. Of the ordeals before us, we continue to struggle with the unexpected in the management of some of our rarely-intercepted and "pulse" recreational species; cross-jurisdictional issues as the range of several of our managed species expands; and of course, red snapper.

As I've contemplated how to move forward, both building on our achievements and addressing the (often unexpected) adversities, a critical piece is the role of partnerships. It was a collaborative effort of NOAA Fisheries Science Center staff, Council staff, state agency partners, and fishermen that made for a successful Deepwater Survey Design Workshop (now we just need resources to put those recommendations into action). Likewise, the collective efforts of staff, Council members, and stakeholders resulted in the *Vision Blueprint*. Finally, the success of the Citizen Science workshop was due to the cross-sectional efforts of Council members, staff, state and federal agency partners, stakeholders, and experts from outside of the fisheries management universe.

One thing that is important to highlight regarding these accomplishments is that not everyone agreed with one another along the way. There were quite a few differences of opinion – and not small ones – on components of all three of the above examples. Those differences were healthy, and certainly led to better outcomes. The point is that such differences of opinion are important to the products of our partnerships; and just because we have differences of opinion with others doesn't mean we cannot consider them *partners*. As a fisherman friend said to me recently, "when everyone thinks alike, nobody thinks."

So as we move forward over the next several months and Council meetings to address our challenges as partners, I simply ask that everyone keep the above in mind. While I do not expect us all to think alike (in fact, it's the one thing I'm counting on), I do ask that we all think together. Thank you.

**Michelle**

## In the News:

### 2015 Status of U.S. Fisheries Report to Congress

The number of domestic fish stocks listed as overfished or subject to overfishing remain near all-time lows, according to the 2015 Status of U.S. Fisheries report to Congress. The 2015 report highlights the United States' continued progress towards managing fish stocks sustainably. This is a result of the combined efforts of NOAA Fisheries, commercial and recreational fishermen, the regional fishery management councils, states, and other partners.

"It's fitting that this report aligns with the 40th anniversary of the Magnuson-Stevens Act," said Eileen Sobeck, assistant NOAA administrator for fisheries. "Magnuson-Stevens provided the dynamic, science-based management process that is proving successful year after year at keeping U.S. fisheries among the world's most sustainable and resilient. This year's report highlights the act's continued success."

Learn more at: [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/publications/feature\\_stories/2016/status\\_of\\_stocks\\_2015.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/publications/feature_stories/2016/status_of_stocks_2015.html)

### Paying it Forward: Cooperative Research Leads to Food Pantry *NC commercial fishermen recognized for donations, volunteer service*

Commercial fishermen participating in a cooperative research project to collect data to be used in future assessments of blueline tilefish were recently acknowledged in an article posted by the NC Coastal Federation. The fishermen include Dewey Hemilright, a commercial fisherman from Wanchese, NC who serves as a Mid-Atlantic Council liaison to the South Atlantic Council. The research, funded through a grant from NOAA Fisheries, allowed trained observers onboard to collect data that will be used to better understand the stock distribution and different depth ranges for the species.

While the work on the cooperative research project is important, it was Hemilright's continued efforts to share with his community that made headlines. Fish captured as part of the research project couldn't be sold, so Hemilright and the other fishermen worked with local organizations to donate the fish to a local food pantry. Read more at: <http://www.nccoast.org/2016/03/paying-it-forward-in-blue-line-tilefish/>.



**Commercial fisherman Dewey Hemilright delivers blueline tilefish to a local food pantry in NC. More than 750 pounds of fish were donated after being landed as part of a cooperative research project with NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fishery Science Center in Beaufort, NC.**

## Council Considers Options for Red Snapper as Fishery Remains Closed in 2016

*Total removals continue to exceed annual catch limits; Council will review new benchmark stock assessment*

NOAA Fisheries recently announced that there would not be a red snapper season for recreational or commercial fishermen in 2016 after determining that the total number of red snapper removed from the population in 2015 was more than double the annual catch limit. This is the second year in a row that the fishery has remained closed to harvest as the stock continues to rebuild.

The fishery was first closed in 2010 following a 2008 stock assessment showing the stock was severely overfished and undergoing overfishing. It appeared that closing the fishery wouldn't be sufficient to end overfishing because of the large number of red snapper discarded when fishermen targeted co-occurring species such as vermilion snapper and gray triggerfish. The Council considered a large area closure for all snapper grouper fishing to address the issue of discards but analyses from an updated assessment in 2010 showed the closure was not required.

The red snapper fishery opened for "mini" recreational seasons in 2012, 2013 and again in 2014. These seasons consisted of brief weekend openings with a 1 fish per person bag limit and no minimum size limit. Commercial harvest

also opened under a reduced trip limit. Amendment 28, approved in 2013, established a process for determining if the fishing season would occur each year, an equation for determining the annual catch limit, and measures if a season is allowed.

As the stock continues to rebuild, the number of discards is also likely to increase, frustrating both fishermen and managers.

#### ***A New Approach?***

Stakeholders have been urging different management measures for red snapper. At the March 2016 meeting the Council reviewed a discussion paper with various options to address the issue of discards for red snapper. Options for discussion include area closures where all snapper grouper fishing would be prohibited, seasonal closures that would apply to all snapper grouper fishing and all sectors, depth closures, a combination of these measures, and possible state-by-state allocations. The discussion paper also includes options for engaging fishermen in data collection.



**The 2015 annual catch limit for red snapper was 114,000 fish under the current rebuilding program. NOAA Fisheries estimates removals (landings and dead discards) totaled 276,729 fish and therefore the fishery will not open in 2016. Fish landed in state waters that remain open when harvest is prohibited in federal waters count against annual catch limits.**

The Council will continue to discuss management options during its June meeting. In addition, it will receive a presentation by NOAA Fisheries on the calculations used for the 2015 red snapper discard estimates and review a recently completed benchmark stock assessment for red snapper (SEDAR 41). Meeting information is available the Council's website at [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net).

Additional information is available from NOAA Fisheries at: [http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/fishery\\_bulletins/index.html](http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/fishery_bulletins/index.html)

# Snapper Grouper Regulations Snap Shot



## Recreational

### Aggregate Grouper Bag Limit

3 grouper per person/day includes: *black, gag, misty, red, scamp, snowy, yellowedge, yellowfin, yellowmouth grouper*, and also includes *golden tilefish, sand tilefish, coney, graysby, red hind and rock hind*.

- No more than 1 may be a gag OR black grouper; size limit for either is 24" Total Length (TL)
- Snowy grouper-1 fish per vessel per day. *Open May 1 - August 31*
- Blueline tilefish -1 fish per vessel per day. *Open May 1-August 31*
- Golden tilefish - 1 per person/day
- Wreckfish -1 per vessel per day. *Season open July 1 - August 31*

### Aggregate Snapper Bag Limit

- Aggregate bag limit of 10 snapper (excluding vermilion snapper) per person/day
- Maximum of 2 cubera snapper per person (not to exceed 2 per vessel) for fish 30" TL or larger off Florida. These are not included in the 10 snapper bag limit. *Cubera less than 30" TL are included in the 10 fish bag limit.*
- Red snapper - *Closed to harvest*

### In addition, fishermen may also retain:

- 1 greater amberjack per person/day (NOTE: in April, for-hire/charter vessels limited to 1 per person/day or 1 per person/trip)
- 5 black sea bass per person/day - 13" TL;
- 3 red porgy per person/day or 3 per person/trip, whichever is more restrictive - 14" TL
- 5 vermilion snapper per person/day - 12" TL

There is an aggregate bag limit of 20 fish per person inclusive of all fish in the snapper grouper management unit currently *not under the bag limit*, excluding tomate. You may catch your bag limits and in addition retain up to 20 other fish for which there are no individual bag limits.

## Commercial

### Commercial Trip Limits

- Snowy Grouper - 200-lbs (gw)
- Blueline tilefish - 100-lbs (gw); **NOTE:** CLOSED June 1, 2016
- Black sea bass - 1,000-lbs (gw) / 1,180-lbs (ww)
- Gag - 1,000-lbs (gw)
- Red porgy - 120 fish per trip
- Greater amberjack - 1,200-lbs (gw)
- Red snapper - Closed to harvest
- Gray triggerfish - 1,000-lbs (ww); **NOTE:** CLOSED April 2, 2016 and reopens June 13, 2016
- Vermilion snapper - 1,000-lbs (gw); **NOTE:** CLOSED March 29, 2016 and reopens July 1, 2016
- Golden tilefish - Hook-and-line: 500-lbs (gw); Longline: 4,000-lbs (gw); **NOTE:** Longline CLOSED March 15, 2016

### Other Regulations

- Dehooking tools are required
- The sale of bag limit snapper grouper is prohibited
- The following are closed year-round to harvest or possession: goliath grouper, Nassau grouper, speckled hind, and warsaw grouper.
- Non-stainless steel circle hooks are required for both commercial and recreational fishermen targeting snapper grouper species north of 28 degrees N. latitude when fishing with natural baits.

Visit <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov> for the latest information on the status of annual catch limits

**NOTE:** Regulations are subject to change.  
For the latest updates, download the *SA Fishing Regulations App* or visit [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net).

## Mutton Snapper Mania: New regulations proposed to ease fishing pressure on spawning populations

Each spring, following the first full moon in April, mutton snapper form large spawning aggregations off the coast of South Florida - and fishermen follow in pursuit of the tasty fish in what some refer to as "mutton moon madness" or "mutton mania". In May and June, fishermen target the spawning fish, with a bag limit of 10 fish per person/day as part of the 10-snapper aggregate bag limit. Fish topping 10 pounds are fairly common and local charter captains lure customers with promises of the chance to catch their limit of fish weighing up to 25 pounds each. Night-time fishing is also popular around the full moon.

Both the Council and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) have heard from constituents concerned about the increased fishing pressure on the spawning populations, along with illegal harvest including fishermen making multiple trips in a single day. The Council's Law Enforcement and Snapper Grouper Advisory Panels have also expressed concerns.

A 2015 stock assessment (using data through 2013) estimates the adult population is smaller compared to an assessment conducted in 2008. As a result, the Council is developing Amendment 41 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan with options to reduce harvest and modify annual catch limits and other management parameters for mutton snapper.

The Council held public scoping meetings in January and February 2016 to gather public input on options in the amendment. Meetings in Florida were held in conjunction with FWC workshops as the agency is working to develop complimentary regulations in state waters. The Council will continue to modify options in Amendment 41 in June, with public hearings scheduled in August 2016.

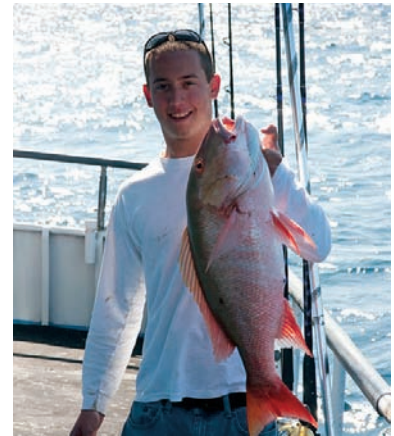


Photo Credit: Yankee Capts

### Amendment 41 Options for Mutton Snapper

- Modify management parameters including **annual catch limits**
- **Specify months to consider as the "spawning season"**
- **Reduce the recreational bag limit:**  
*Regular Season* - options range from 10 to 4 per person/day  
*Spawning Season* - options range from zero retention to 3 per person/day or vessel limits ranging from 10-12 fish/day
- **Establish a commercial trip limit:**  
*Regular Season* - options range from 300 to 500 pounds (ww)  
*Spawning Season* - options range from zero to 2-3 per person/day or a range of 10-12 fish per vessel/day
- **Modify the minimum size limit:**  
Increase the current size limit of 16 inches total length to options ranging from 17 - 20 inches TL

The Council will continue to work on options during its June meeting and public hearings will be held in August. Visit [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net).

## Amendments at a Glance - A quick reference for proposed and recently implemented measures

Keeping track of the various amendments to fishery management plans as they are being developed and subsequent regulation changes can be a challenge. Below is a brief overview of amendments in various stages of development and implementation. Draft copies of the amendments are available in the briefing book materials for each Council meeting. Public hearing summaries and scoping documents outlining proposed management measures are also available prior to scheduled meetings. Materials are posted on the Council's web site at [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net) as they become available. Information on all amendments is available from the "Fishery Management Plan" page of the website.

### Currently Under Development by the Council

#### Snapper Grouper Amendment 37 – Hogfish

Recent studies indicate there are two separate genetic stocks of hogfish in the South Atlantic. The amendment would specify two separate stocks: 1) the Florida Keys/East Florida stock and 2) the GA/NC stock. A 2014 benchmark stock assessment was completed for hogfish and it was determined that the FL Keys/EFL stock was overfished and undergoing overfishing. The amendment establishes a rebuilding plan for the FL Keys/EFL stock and would reduce bag limits and commercial trip limits, increase minimum size limits, implement a recreational season of July-September for the FL Keys/E FL stock, and other measures. **Status:** Public hearings were held in Jan/Feb 2016. The Council will review measures in June and is scheduled to approve the amendment in September 2016.

#### Snapper Grouper Amendment 41 – Mutton Snapper

The amendment revises biological parameters, catch levels, and management measures for mutton snapper. Actions include reducing the recreational bag limit and commercial trip limit during spawning months and increasing the minimum size limit. Scoping meetings were held in Jan/Feb 2016 and comments reviewed in March 2016. **Status:** Alternatives are being developed and public hearings are scheduled for August 2016.

#### Coastal Migratory Pelagics Framework Amendment 4

##### Atlantic Migratory Cobia

In March 2016, the Council began development of this framework amendment with actions intended to lengthen the recreational season for Atlantic cobia (GA through NY) beginning in 2017. The recreational season will close in Federal waters on June 20, 2016 due to the landings in 2015 exceeding the recreational annual catch limit. Actions may include changes to bag limits, vessel limits, minimum size limits, accountability measures, and the start of the recreational fishing year. A step-down for commercial harvest once landings have reached a percentage of the annual catch limit may also be included. **Status:** Public hearings scheduled for August 2016 with final approval by the Council in September 2016.

#### South Atlantic For-Hire Electronic Logbook Amendment

##### Requirement for Weekly Reporting by Charter Vessels

The amendment would require weekly trip-level electronic reporting for charter (6-pack) vessels to better monitor landings and discards, and better assess the impacts of regulations on the charter/for-hire industry fishing in federal waters. The amendment would also modify the current timing of headboat reporting. **Status:** Public hearings were held in Jan/Feb 2016. The Council will review the revised amendment in June 2016.



Once an amendment is approved by the Council, the document is then sent to NOAA Fisheries as part of the Secretarial review process. Additional public comment is accepted on actions proposed in the amendment before they are approved, partially approved, or disapproved by the Secretary of Commerce.

### Approved by Council and Under Secretarial Review

#### Snapper Grouper Amendment 36

##### Spawning Special Management Zones

Establishes a process for identifying spawning sites/aggregations for snapper grouper species, including speckled hind and warsaw grouper, based on characteristics of sites important to spawning. Proposed regulations would prohibit fishing for and/or possessing snapper grouper species in five areas designated as Spawning SMZs (see page 1). **Status:** Approved by Council in March 2016.

#### Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 25

##### Blueline Tilefish, Yellowtail Snapper and Black Sea Bass

Includes actions to increase the blueline tilefish recreational bag limit to 3 fish per person/day (included in the grouper aggregate) May - August and increase the commercial trip limit to 300 pounds (gutted weight), based on a new ABC for blueline tilefish. The amendment would also change the fishing year for yellowtail snapper (start date August 1) and increase the recreational bag limit for black sea bass to 7 fish per person/day. **Status:** Approved by Council in December 2015.

#### Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 16

##### Commercial black sea bass pot closure and gear markings

The amendment would modify the current prohibition on the use of black sea bass pots November - April and specify new black sea bass pot gear modifications to aid in gear identification in the event of a whale entanglement. **Status:** Approved by the Council in December 2015.

#### Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 8 – Dolphin Commercial Trip Limit

The amendment would implement a 4,000 pound commercial trip limit once 75% of the commercial annual catch limit has been landed. **Status:** Council approved in December 2015.

#### Coastal Migratory Pelagics Amendment 26 – King Mackerel

##### ACLs, boundary and mixing zone changes, other measures

A joint amendment with the Gulf of Mexico Council, it updates annual catch limits for Gulf and Atlantic king mackerel based on the latest stock assessment, modifies the stock boundary consistent with the one used in the assessment, allows bag limit sales of Atlantic king mackerel in the small coastal shark gillnet fishery, and other measures. **Status:** Approved by the South Atlantic Council in March 2016 and the Gulf Council in April 2016.

### Recently Implemented (New Regulations)

#### Dolphin Wahoo Amend 7/ SG Amend 33

##### Transport of fillets from the Bahamas

Revises the landing fish intact provisions for vessels that lawfully harvest dolphin, wahoo, or snapper grouper species in or from Bahamian waters and return to the U.S. EEZ by allowing fillets to be brought back from the Bahamas. Skin must be left intact on the entire fillet and two fillets are equivalent to one fish. All U.S. federal limits apply and documentation and transit and stowage provisions are required. **Status:** Final Rule published December 28, 2015 and regulations effective January 27, 2016.

**Note:** This is an overview and is not all-inclusive. For a complete list of amendments, visit the *Resource Library* at [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net).

*Spawning SMZs (Continued from page 1)*

### System Management Plan

Research and monitoring, enforcement, and outreach needs for the Spawning SMZs will be addressed through a System Management Plan that includes goals and objectives to guide researchers and managers. The Plan also addresses evaluation, funding needs, timelines, and characterizations for each site as well as data collection.

The Council also included a provision that the Spawning SMZs (all except Areas 51 and 53) would sunset 10 years after implementation if not reauthorized. If approved by the Secretary of Commerce, the new measures may be implemented in early 2017.



Chris Parsons

Mutton snapper gather to spawn.

## Proposed Spawning Special Management Zones

### North Carolina

#### *South Cape Lookout*

Location: 64 miles from South Inlet

Depth: 246-543 feet

Size: 5.1 square miles

### South Carolina

#### *Devil's Hole (Georgetown Hole)*

Location: 56 miles from Georgetown

Depth: 203 - 656 feet

Size: 3.03 square miles

#### *Area 51 and Area 53 \**

Research areas designated by SCDNR

Size: Approximate 3 square miles each

\*Locations are not shown on the map.

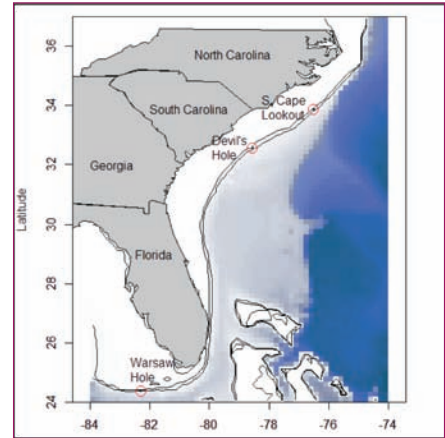
### Florida

#### *Warsaw Hole (50 Fathom Hole)*

Location: 35 miles from Key West

Depths: 230 – 443 feet

Size: 3.6 square miles



Spawning SMZs are designed to help protect spawning fish and unique habitat associated with spawning activity. Fishing for or possession of snapper grouper species would be prohibited within the areas. Trolling for species such as dolphin, tuna, and billfish would be allowed along with transit provisions.

The five areas approved by the Council through Amendment 36 include two experimental artificial reef areas in SC (Areas 51 and 53) previously established by the SC Department of Natural Resources and the locations are not disclosed on the map. The amendment must be approved by the Secretary of Commerce before implementation.

## From The Executive Director's Desk



Gregg Waugh

Our first meeting of 2016 came and went in a blur of activity. The Council accomplished a lot at the March

meeting - addressing public comments on the hogfish amendment, scoping comments on the mutton snapper amendment, and public comments on the for-hire amendment. They also discussed dolphin & yellowtail snapper allocations and received a briefing on Atlantic Migratory Group Cobia and adjustment to the 2016 recreational season. Council members approved the Oculina Review Report, the Endangered Species Act/Magnuson-Stevens Act Integration Agreement, Coastal Migratory Pelagic Amendment 26 (King mackerel), and last but certainly not least, approved Snapper Grouper Amendment 36 addressing the establishment of Spawning Special

Management Zones (Spawning SMZs) along with System Management Plans for the Spawning SMZs and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

I would like to focus on the Spawning SMZs and System Management Plans and congratulate the Council on taking a big step forward to address concerns raised by stakeholders about the lack of research, monitoring, and evaluation in protected areas. The System Management Plans present detailed plans for the enforcement, research and monitoring, outreach, and evaluation of our Spawning SMZs and MPAs. The Council will work very hard to ensure these plans are put into place. In fact meetings are being held/planned near each proposed Spawning SMZ to organize the research and monitoring efforts. The work of Dr. Will Heyman, funded by PEW, developed some of the methodology for monitoring included in the System Management Plans.

The proposed Spawning SMZs were located to maximize the production of

eggs and sized to minimize the short-term impacts on fishermen. There is a sunset provision included such that if each area is not documented to produce spawning, then the area will reopen in 10 years. Preliminary work by Dr. Heyman and participating fishermen, funded by PEW and the Council, provided samples that were analyzed by the MARMAP program in SC to document spawning. Historical MARMAP data and other research, combined with input from the Council's MPA Workgroup (scientists and fishermen), was used to choose the proposed sites. The amendment will be sent for formal review prior to the June 2016 meeting, and, if approved, regulations would be expected around January 2017.

The Council is very excited about the potential biological benefits this approach offers to ensure a sustainable harvest into the future, and we will keep you informed of our progress to document spawning in these areas.

Gregg

## Know Before You Go!

SA Fishing Regulations App Now Available  
Keep up with the latest federal fishing regulations



Scan the appropriate QR code below or search "SA Fishing Regulations" to download your free App today!

Apple/iphone



Android



## SAFMC Meeting Dates and Locations 2016 Schedule

**March 7-11, 2016**  
Westin Jekyll Island  
110 Ocean Way  
Jekyll Island, GA 31527  
Phone: 912/635-4545

**September 12-16, 2016**  
Marina Inn at Grand Dunes  
8121 Amalfi Place  
Myrtle Beach, SC 29572  
Phone: 843/913-1333

**June 13-17, 2016**  
Hilton Cocoa Beach  
1550 N. Atlantic Ave.  
Cocoa Beach, FL 32931  
Phone: 321/799-0003

**December 5-9, 2016**  
Doubletree Oceanfront  
2717 W. Ft. Macon Rd.  
Atlantic Beach, NC 28512  
Phone: 252/240-1155

## South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Meeting



**June 13-17, 2016**

Hilton Cocoa Beach Oceanfront  
1550 N. Atlantic Avenue  
Cocoa Beach, FL 32931  
Phone: 321/799-0003

A detailed agenda is posted on the Council's website at [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net) or contact the Council office toll free at 1-866/SAFMC-10 or 843/571-4366.

### MEETING AGENDA

<b>Monday</b>	<b>1:30 - 5:30</b>	<b>Habitat Protection &amp; Ecosystem-Based Committee</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>8:30 - 9:00</b>	<b>SSC Selection Committee (Closed Session)</b>
	<b>9:00 - 10:00</b>	<b>SEDAR Committee (Partially Closed Session)</b>
	<b>10:00 - 10:30</b>	<b>Advisory Panel Selection Committee</b>
	<b>10:30 - 12:00</b>	<b>Jt. Dolphin/Wahoo and Snapper Grouper Committee</b>
	<b>1:30 - 5:30</b>	<b>Snapper Grouper Committee</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>8:30 - 5:30</b>	<b>Snapper Grouper Committee (continued)</b>
	<b>5:30</b>	<b>Formal Public Comment</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>8:30 - 9:30</b>	<b>Law Enforcement Committee (Partially Closed Session)</b>
	<b>9:30 - 10:30</b>	<b>Spiny Lobster Committee</b>
	<b>10:30 - 11:30</b>	<b>Protected Resources Committee</b>
	<b>1:00 - 2:30</b>	<b>Data Collection Committee</b>
	<b>2:30 - 3:30</b>	<b>Executive Finance Committee</b>
	<b>3:30 - 5:30</b>	<b>Mackerel Committee</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>8:30 - 1:00</b>	<b>- Council Session -</b>

**Note!** Follow the Council meeting live online

Watch the Council meeting via webinar from Cocoa Beach, Florida. Registration information is available from the June 2016 Meeting Information page at [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net).



[www.facebook.com/SouthAtlanticCouncil](http://www.facebook.com/SouthAtlanticCouncil)

### Acronyms

**ABC** - Allowable Biological Catch  
**ACCSP** - Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program  
**ACL** - Annual Catch Limit  
**AM** - Accountability Measure  
**ACT** - Annual Catch Target  
**AP** - Advisory Panel  
**ASMFC** - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
**BRD** - Bycatch Reduction Device  
**EEZ** - Exclusive Economic Zone  
**EFH** - Essential Fish Habitat  
**EFH/HAPC** - Essential Fish Habitat/Habitat Area of Particular Concern  
**FMP** - Fishery Management Plan  
**HMS** - Highly Migratory Species  
**ITQ** - Individual Transferable Quota  
**MSA** - Magnuson-Stevens Act  
**MSY** - Maximum Sustainable Yield  
**MRIP** - Marine Recreational Information Program  
**NMFS** - National Marine Fisheries Service  
**OY** - Optimum Yield  
**SEDAR** - Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (stock assessment process)  
**SSC** - Scientific & Statistical Committee  
**TAC** - Total Allowable Catch  
**VMS** - Vessel Monitoring System

## Mark your calendar...

- June 14-16** *Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Meeting*  
Newark, DE [www.mafmc.org](http://www.mafmc.org)
- June 20-24** *Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Meeting*  
Clearwater Beach, FL [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org)
- June 25-July 1** *National Marine Educators Association Conference*  
Orlando, FL [www.marine-ed.org](http://www.marine-ed.org)
- August 1-17** *SAFMC Public Hearing and Scoping Meetings*  
Region-wide [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net)
- August 2-4** *Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Meeting*  
Alexandria, VA [www.asafc.org](http://www.asafc.org)
- August 4-5** *SAFMC Joint Law Enforcement Committee/ Advisory Panel Meeting*  
Charleston, SC [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net)
- August 21-15** *American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting*  
Kansas City, MO [www.2016.fisheries.org](http://www.2016.fisheries.org)

South Atlantic Fishery  
Management Council  
Meeting  
**June 13-17, 2016**  
Cocoa Beach, FL



*Know Before You Go!*  
Download the FREE  
SA Fishing Regulations  
mobile App today.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**  
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201  
North Charleston, SC 29405

Electronic Service Requested

Presorted  
First Class  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Charleston, SC  
Permit 25

[www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net)



Printed on  
recycled paper