



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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DECEMBER 3-7, 2018 COUNCIL MEETING REPORT KITTY HAWK, NORTH CAROLINA

The following summary highlights the major issues discussed and actions taken at the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council’s December 2018 meeting in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. Briefing materials, presentations, and public comments are available on the Council’s website at: <http://safmc.net/safmc-meetings/council-meetings/>

Final Committee Reports contain more details of what was accomplished for each committee and are located on the December 2018 briefing book page. In addition, the Summary of Motions on the Council’s website includes all motions from the meeting. Read further details and see images and other links at the December 2018 Council Meeting Round-up Story Map:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=073b19ccdf1540e78247f2b03e33724f>

The December 2018 Meeting Summary is also available at:

http://safmc.net/download/Dec2018-SAFMC_MeetingSummaryFinal.pdf

Issue:	Action Taken:	Schedule:
Recreational Visioning Amendment	<p>Regulatory Amendment 26: reviewed & modified document, chose preferred alternatives, selected no action on 3 actions and approved 3 actions for formal review:</p> <p>Selected No Action On:</p> <p>Action 1. Establish a deep-water species aggregate</p> <p>Alternative 1 (No Action). The following recreational Snapper Grouper aggregates are in place in the South Atlantic Region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snapper Aggregate: lane snapper, yellowtail snapper, gray snapper, mutton snapper, cubera snapper, queen snapper, blackfin snapper, and silk snapper. • Grouper and Tilefish Aggregate: gag, black grouper, red grouper, scamp, yellowfin grouper, yellowmouth grouper, red hind, rock hind, graysby, coney, sand tilefish, snowy grouper, misty grouper, yellowedge grouper, blueline tilefish, and golden tilefish. • 20-Fish Aggregate: whitebone porgy, jolthead porgy, knobbed porgy, saucereye porgy, scup, gray triggerfish, bar jack, almaco jack, banded rudderfish, lesser amberjack, white grunt, margate, sailor’s choice, and Atlantic spadefish. 	<p>Revise document and send for formal review by the Secretary of Commerce based on guidance from the= the December 3-7, 2018 meeting.</p> <p>Approved Actions:</p> <p>Action 4. Remove the 12-inch fork length recreational minimum size limits for queen, silk, & blackfin snapper.</p> <p>Action 5. Reduce the recreational minimum size limit for gray triggerfish in the exclusive economic zone off east Florida to 12-inches fork length.</p> <p>Action 6. Modify the aggregate bag limit for the 20-fish aggregate –Specify no more than 10 fish can be of any one species within the 20-fish aggregate.</p>

	<p>Action 2. Specify the recreational season for the deep-water species aggregate Alternative 1 (No Action). Recreational fishing for blueline tilefish and snowy grouper is allowed from May 1 through August 31, annually. Recreational fishing for wreckfish is allowed from July 1 through August 31, annually. Recreational fishing for other deep-water species (misty grouper, yellowedge grouper, and golden tilefish) is allowed year-round.</p> <p>Action 3. Specify the aggregate bag limit for the deep-water species aggregate Alternative 1 (No Action). The following bag limits are in place for the grouper and tilefish aggregate and for wreckfish in the South Atlantic Region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grouper and Tilefish Aggregate Bag Limit: Three per person per day: gag¹, black grouper¹, red grouper, scamp, yellowfin grouper, yellowmouth grouper, red hind, rock hind, graysby, coney, sand tilefish, snowy grouper², misty grouper, yellowedge grouper, blueline tilefish, and golden tilefish³. <p>¹Maximum of one gag or black grouper (but not both) per person per day ²Maximum of one snowy grouper per vessel per day ³Maximum of one golden tilefish per person per day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recreational bag limit for wreckfish is one per vessel per day. 	
Red Grouper	<p>Regulatory Amendment 30: discussed the AP comments, reviewed and modified the document, and approved all actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the rebuilding schedule to the maximum time allowed (Tmax) which is 10 years ending in 2028 with 2019 = Year 1 • Jan thru April no recreational or commercial harvest/possession/sale/purchase of any shallow-water grouper (gag, black grouper, scamp, red grouper, yellowfin grouper, yellowmouth grouper, red hind, rock hind, grasby, or coney) and extend the closure off NC & SC for red grouper in May • Establish a commercial red grouper trip limit = 200 pounds gutted weight 	<p>Due to the timing of the SSC’s review of the updated stock assessment that incorporates revisions to the MRIP estimates, the Council requested that staff bring Regulator Amendment 30 back at the March 2019 meeting for further review and consideration for final approval.</p>
Sea Turtle Release Gear & Framework Modification	<p>Regulatory Amendment 42 – the Council reviewed and approved the amendment for public hearings.</p>	<p>A public hearing session will be held during the March 2019 meeting. The Council will consider public comments and the need to modify the document.</p>
Allocation Review Trigger Plan	<p>This action would establish a policy that determines which triggers would automatically initiate a review of allocations. The Council reviewed options and provided guidance to staff on drafting an allocation trigger review policy.</p>	<p>The Council will review a draft allocation trigger review policy for review at the March 2019 meeting.</p>

Issue:	Action Taken:	Schedule:
Yellowtail Snapper	Regulatory Amendment 32: The Council reviewed comments on the proposal to modify the accountability measure as a short-term solution to the early closure of the commercial fishery. Based on public and AP input, the Council postponed consideration until after the next yellowtail snapper stock assessment.	The Council will consider this amendment after the next yellowtail snapper stock assessment currently scheduled for completion in late 2019. The SSC will review in early 2020, and the Council will consider the results at the June 2020 meeting.
Recreational Accountability Measures Amendment	The Council provided guidance to staff on items in the document, indicated this amendment would only address snapper grouper and dolphin wahoo FMPs, and approved the amendment for scoping.	Scoping meetings will be held prior to the March 2019 meeting.
Vision Blueprint Biennial Evaluation	<p>The Council provided the following guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a webpage/story map to update stakeholders on actions accomplished to-date and those left to be addressed and solicit their input. • Provide list of actions in the Vision Blueprint appendix that were not prioritized for development in 2016-2020 and provide to the Committee in 2019. • Also, during 2019, conduct a stakeholder survey once projects that are still under development are completed (e.g., best fishing practices amendment, recreational permit/stamp, etc.). • Provide evaluation of FMP objectives that was conducted in 2014 as part of the Visioning Project. Bring this material to the Committee at the March 2019 meeting. 	The Council directed staff to develop a webpage/story map to update stakeholders on progress to date on vision blueprint activities during 2016-2018 and bring to the committee in March or June 2019 for approval.
Characterization of the Commercial Snapper Grouper Fishery	<p>The Council requested additional details of the study be presented to inform discussions about the “2 for 1” permit reduction program. The Council requested the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the original intent/rationale of the 2 for 1 program at its inception and was there a target number of permits specified? • Include a permit application in the March 2019 briefing book • Bring back information to March 2019 meeting on total commercial ACL available to the commercial sector. • Consolidate a list of topics/questions to provide to the SERO Permits Office to include in presentation being requested for March 2019. 	The requested information will be presented at the March 2019 meeting. The NMFS SERO permits office will also give a presentation at the March 2019 meetng.

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Citizen Science Program	The Council reviewed and approved the SOPPs which detail how the program will operate. They were also updated on the Scamp app to collect discard data for the next assessment and a new project to document the historical catch and length distribution for early headboat catches.	Work will continue on the program and these two projects. The Scamp app will be available in January 2019.
Dolphin Wahoo	<p>The Council discussed the Mid-Atlantic Council’s request that the South Atlantic Council manage bullet and frigate mackerel as important prey for dolphin and wahoo and provided guidance to staff. The Council also reviewed items for inclusion in Amendment 10 and provided guidance to staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 1. Revise the optimum yield (OY) definition for dolphin. • Action 2. Modify the recreational annual catch target (ACT) for dolphin. • Action 3. Establish a commercial annual catch target (ACT) for dolphin. • Action 4. Allow adaptive management of sector annual catch limits (ACLs) for dolphin. • Action 5. Revise the accountability measures for dolphin. • Action 6. Revise the acceptable biological catch (ABC) control rule for dolphin and wahoo. Action 6 was removed because it is addressed in another amendment. • Action 7. Allow properly permitted vessels with gear onboard that are not authorized for use in the dolphin wahoo fishery to possess dolphin or wahoo. • Action 8. Remove the requirement of vessel operators or crew to hold an Operator Card in the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery. • New Item: Allow bag limit sales of dolphin for dually permitted for-hire and commercial permit holders. • New Item: Modify gear, bait, and training requirements in the commercial longline fishery for dolphin and wahoo to align with HMS requirements (excluding monitoring). • New Item: Reduce the recreational vessel limit to 40 fish for dolphin. • New Item: Revise the ACLs of dolphin and wahoo to accommodate new MRIP data. • New Item: Revise sector allocations for dolphin and wahoo. 	<p>Staff will present a white paper at the March 2019 meeting on managing important prey species for dolphin and wahoo.</p> <p>A draft list of options for items to be included in Amendment 10 will also be presented at the March 2019 meeting.</p>

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For-Hire Recreational Reporting	<p>The Council received an update on the amendment: The Amendment was approved on June 12, 2018 and the Final Rule is expected to publish in March or April 2019.</p> <p>Council staff conducted a training session on Thursday evening.</p>	<p>A March/April 2019 effective date will allow ACCSP to complete a phone app, so charter captains will not have to purchase a tablet. Also, dual permit holders will not be required to learn two systems. The training will continue, and details will be shared.</p> <p>For-Hire reporting training and outreach and NMFS information meetings will continue in 2019.</p>
Habitat and Ecosystem Based Management	<p>The Council provided guidance on the issue of species expanding northwards and requested the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prior to February CCC meeting staff will prepare the following support information to inform and support SAFMC input during the joint session during the March Council meeting: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Table of recreational and commercial species in the Snapper Grouper and Coastal Migratory Pelagic Management Units for MA/NE regions in pounds caught including identification of management jurisdiction, to include non-managed species b. Table of management and coordination alternatives available to the Council to address species change in distribution and movement north c. Pros and cons on permits d. Tables of ACL for managed species <p>The Council also received a presentation on a proposed wind project off Kitty Hawk.</p>	<p>The Council will have further talks with the MAFMC and NEFMC at the March 2019 meeting.</p>
SEDAR	<p>The Council made appointments to SEDAR 58 (Atlantic Cobia), SEDAR 66 (Golden tilefish), and SEDAR 68 (Scamp). The Council approved terms of reference for the SEDAR snowy grouper update and terms of reference and schedule for SEDAR 68 (Scamp). The Council also received updates on assessment projects and the next SEDAR Steering Committee.</p>	<p>The next SEDAR Steering Committee meeting will be May 16-17, 2019 in Charleston, SC to discuss project planning, long-term priorities, and other issues.</p>

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MyFishCount	Council staff gave an update on progress with increasing usage of the app and is exploring how to include a way for fishermen to report losing a catch to sharks.	The app is now available and Council staff will continue working with private recreational fishermen to have them report. This experience will be used by the Council as they continue to work on the permitting and reporting amendment at the June 2019 meeting.