



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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JUNE 12-16, 2017 COUNCIL MEETING REPORT PONTE VEDRA BEACH, FLORIDA

The following summary highlights the major issues discussed and actions taken at the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council’s June 2017 meeting in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida.

Briefing materials, presentations, and public comments are available on the Council’s website at: <http://safmc.net/briefing-books/2017-june-council-meeting-briefing-book/>. Final Committee Reports contain more details of what was accomplished for each committee and are located on the June 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 June 2017 Council Meeting Round-up Story Map: <http://arcg.is/2sKqYiV>. The Meeting News Release is available at: <http://safmc.net/?p=21975&preview=true>.

| Issue: | Action Taken: | Schedule: |
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| <p>Red Snapper</p> | <p>Based on a report from NMFS, the estimated number of red snapper removed (landings plus dead discards) exceeded the acceptable biological catch in 2016, a situation that has kept the fishery closed for the past two years under the current management plan.</p> <p>The Council modified Amendment 43 to develop options for a 2018 red snapper season opening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • single action to revise annual catch limits • remove the current process and equation used to specify the annual catch limit • alternatives for establishing an annual catch limit for 2018 ranging from 23,623 - 76,041 fish. <p>The Council clarified their intent to continue development and consideration of the other actions in Amendment 43 addressing best fishing practices and other management measures. However, those actions would be developed in a separate amendment.</p> | <p>Official notice about the 2017 fishing season will be available from NMFS very soon.</p> <p>The intent is to expedite Amendment 43 by holding public hearings via webinar in August and in-person at the Council’s September meeting, and approving the amendment for Secretarial review at that time. The Council’s goal is to have measures in place in time to allow limited harvest beginning in July of 2018.</p> <p>The Council will review a new red snapper amendment at the December 2017 meeting.</p> |

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| Spiny Lobster | <p>Approved Regulatory Amendment 4 for review by Secretary of Commerce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the acceptable biological catch from 7.32 million pounds to 9.6 million pounds. • The amendment would also prohibit the use of traps for recreational harvest of spiny lobster in the South Atlantic EEZ. | Send for formal review in June or July. |
| Recreational Visioning Amendment | Regulatory Amendment 26: Provided guidance to staff. | Review & approve for public hearings at the September 2017 meeting. |
| Commercial Visioning Amendment | Regulatory Amendment 27: Provided guidance to staff. | Review & approve for public hearings at the September 2017 meeting. |
| Yellowtail Snapper | Options to combine the Gulf/Atlantic ABCs/ACLs were discussed. | Contact Gulf Council to determine their interest in addressing this issue. |
| Golden Tilefish | <p>The Council requested that NMFS implement interim measures to reduce overfishing by setting the ACL for 2018 at the projected yield at 75%F_{MSY} (323,000 pounds gutted weight).</p> <p>Requested new update & projections.</p> | <p>Implement the new ACL prior to the start of the 2018-fishing season.</p> <p>Review at December 2017 meeting.</p> |
| Mackerel Cobia | <p>The Council reviewed a request from the Advisory Panel to go back to the stock boundary and ACLs in Amendment 18. After reviewing analyses of the request, the Council approved a motion to not request emergency action.</p> <p>The Council requested MRIP recalculate the 2015 and 2016 Atlantic cobia recreational harvest using annual estimates of catch and effort.</p> <p>The Council reviewed a request from ASMFC to transfer management of Atlantic cobia from the Councils to the Commission and approved work to evaluate options for a complementary plan and removal of Atlantic Cobia from the FMP.</p> <p>Atlantic king mackerel commercial trip limits for the Southern Zone.</p> | <p>Stock ID workshop and stock assessment beginning in 2018.</p> <p>Review new estimates at the September meeting if MRIP can provide the analyses in time.</p> <p>Review the options at the September meeting.</p> <p>Work with Council members and fishermen to develop a framework to evaluate alternatives to revise trip limits.</p> |

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| For-hire Permit Moratorium | The Council approved a motion to begin work on an amendment to establish a moratorium on the issuance of Federal For-Hire Snapper Grouper Permits. | Bring draft amendment to Council at a future meeting. |
| Citizen Science | Approved individuals to the Citizen Science Pool and A-Teams. | A-Teams begin work on developing program details. |

For details on any item listed above or other items addressed during the meeting, please refer to the Final Committee reports available on the Council's website at: <http://safmc.net/briefing-books/2017-june-council-meeting-briefing-book/>.