



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 4, 2018 COUNCIL MEETING REPORT CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

The following summary highlights the major issues discussed and actions taken at the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council’s rescheduled September 2018 meeting in Charleston, South 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 September 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 September 2018 Council Meeting Round-up Story Map:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=c706c1054d4f401c8206d8cb1f470dde>

The Meeting Summary is also available at:

http://safmc.net/download/Oct2018_SAFMC_Meeting_Summary_Final.pdf

Issue:	Action Taken:	Schedule:
<p>The American Sportfishing Association (ASA), in partnership with the Coastal Conservation Association and Yamaha Marine Group, coordinated a workshop to discuss fresh approaches for management of the private recreational sector of the Snapper Grouper fishery. Participants included Council members, representatives from ASA, CCA and Yamaha Marine Group, along with representatives from the Snapper Grouper AP and SSC.</p>	<p>Based on input during the workshop, the Steering Committee will discuss the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exploring options for harvest rate management of key Snapper Grouper species; - Use of harvest tags for certain deepwater species (e.g., low ACL or naturally low abundance species) to collect information on anglers targeting these species and options to track recreational harvest of these species; - Input on information that would be needed to explore seasons (for all Snapper Grouper species or specific species/complexes); - Latitudinal management to incorporate regional differences in seasonality, key species, angler preferences, and recreational effort; - Electronic recreational reporting, specifically how to improve acceptance and willingness to participate; - Registration or recreational stamp for federal reef fish to get information on who is participating each year, which could also lead to voluntary or selective recreational reporting; - Release mortality reduction with best practices, descending devices, etc., along with discussing obstacles for anglers to use best practices or descending devices. 	<p>The ASA, CCA, and Yamaha team will hold regional meetings with recreational anglers in each State from NC through FL in the coming months and will present their recommendations to the Council at the March 4-8, 2019 meeting in Jekyll Island, Georgia. The Council will discuss and determine how to proceed.</p>

Issue:	Action Taken:	Schedule:
Recreational Visioning Amendment	<p>Regulatory Amendment 26: reviewed & modified document, chose preferred alternatives and approved all actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep-water species aggregate to include snowy grouper, misty grouper, yellowedge grouper, golden tilefish, blueline tilefish, and wreckfish • Season for the deep-water aggregate – January & February and May through August (6 months) • Aggregate bag limit for deep-water species aggregate – 3 fish per person per day with a maximum of 1 golden tilefish (per person), snowy grouper (per vessel), and/or wreckfish (per vessel) • Remove the 12” TL minimum size limit for the three deep-water snappers (queen snapper, blackfin snapper, and silk snapper) • Reduce the 14” FL gray triggerfish minimum size limit off Florida to 12” FL (so that folks in FL will match the rest of the South Atlantic region and east FL state waters) • Recreational bag limits for the current 20-Fish Aggregate species without any bag limit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ no more than 10 of any one species 	Review and approve for formal review by the Secretary of Commerce at the December 3-7, 2018 meeting.
Red Snapper & other snapper grouper species	<p>The Council provided guidance on Regulatory Amendment 29:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify requirements for the use of descending devices and/or venting devices; removed specifying allowable rigs • Modify the requirement for the use of non-stainless-steel circle hooks • Adjust Powerhead Prohibitions in the South Atlantic (allow in the EEZ off SC or prohibit use of powerheads in entire EEZ) 	The Council will review and consider approving for public hearings at the March 2019 meeting.
For-Hire Moratorium Amendment	The Council directed staff to stop all work on this amendment.	No further work.
Red Grouper	<p>The Council considered public input, made changes, selected preferreds, 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 2027 with 2018 = 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 	The Council was scheduled to give final approval for formal review in December 2018 but data issues will delay final approval to the March 2019 meeting.

Issue:	Action Taken:	Schedule:
Commercial Visioning Amendment	<p>Regulatory Amendment 27: reviewed & modified document and approved for formal review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blueline tilefish commercial trip limit = 100 pounds gutted weight Jan 1 thru April 30 and 300 pounds gutted weight May 1 thru Dec 31 • Commercial split season for snowy grouper = 70% quota Jan 1 thru June 30 & 30% July 1 thru Dec 31; quota remaining from Season 1 goes to Season 2; any from Season 2 not carried forward • Commercial split season for greater amberjack & trip limit = 60% quota Mar 1 thru Aug 31 (Season 1) & 40% Sept 1 thru end of Feb (Season 2); quota remaining from Season 1 goes to Season 2; any from Season 2 not carried forward; no sale in April & possession limit = 1 per person per day or trip whichever is more restrictive; Season 1 trip limit = 1,200 pounds whole weight & Season 2 = 1,000 pounds whole weight • Commercial split season for red porgy & trip limit = 30% quota Jan 1 thru April 30 (Season 1) & 70% May 1 thru Dec 31 (Season 2); quota remaining from Season 1 goes to Season 2; any from Season 2 not carried forward; remove closed season and retain commercial trip limit of 120 fish May 1 thru Dec 31 and specify a commercial trip limit of 60 fish Jan 1 thru April 30 • Commercial vermilion snapper trip limit = 1,000 pounds gutted weight in both seasons with no trip-limit reduction • Establish a commercial minimum size limit of 20" FL for almaco jack • Establish a commercial trip limit for the other jacks complex of 500 pounds gutted weight • Remove the 12" TL commercial minimum size limit for queen snapper, silk snapper, and blackfin snapper • Reduce the commercial minimum size limit for gray triggerfish off Florida to 12" FL 	Council staff will send the amendment for review by the end of October/early November.
Yellowtail Snapper	<p>The Council is proposing to modify the accountability measure as a short-term solution to the early closure of the commercial fishery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An in-season commercial closure will occur if the commercial ACL has been met & the total catch (commercial and recreational) reaches or is projected to reach 80% of the total ACL 	The Council will consider approval for formal review at the December meeting.
Vermilion Snapper & Black Sea Bass	<p>Abbreviated Framework 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the total vermilion ACL from 1.269 million pounds whole weight to 1.579 M lbs in 2019, 1.478 M lbs in 2020, 1.408 M lbs in 2021, 1.362 M lbs in 2022, and 1.336 M lbs from 2023 until modified • Decrease the total black sea bass ACL from 1,756,450 million pounds whole weight to 760,000 lbs in 2019, 669,000 lbs in 2020, and 643,000 lbs from 2021 until modified 	Council staff will send the amendment for review by the end of October/early November.

Issue:	Action Taken:	Schedule:
Spearfishing	The Council directed staff to prepare a white paper examining the extent of use of spearfishing gear in the commercial & recreational sectors of the snapper grouper fishery and existing ways to track its use, and potential biological & ecological effects; include possible ways to reduce effort by means of a season and include how this relates to National Standard 5 (efficiency)	Council staff will bring this information to the March or June 2019 meeting.
Mackerel Cobia	The Council approved Coastal Migratory Pelagics Framework Amendment 6 for formal review by the Secretary of Commerce. The amendment increases the Atlantic king mackerel commercial trip limit.	The South Atlantic Council has authority to set management measures for the Atlantic migratory group of king mackerel. Council staff will send the amendment for review by the end of October/early November.
Spiny Lobster	The Council approved Spiny Lobster Amendment 13 (Update Management Procedure and Bully Nets) for formal review by the Secretary of Commerce.	This is a joint Amendment with the Gulf Council. Council staff will work with Gulf staff to prepare the amendment for formal review; expected to be sent by the end of October/early November.
Habitat and Ecosystem Based Management	The Council provided guidance on the issue of species expanding species northwards and on comments on the NOAA Fisheries EBFM Implementation Plan for the South Atlantic Region. Due to the change in meeting dates, the session with the New England and Mid-Atlantic Councils will be rescheduled for the March 2019 Council meeting.	The Council will review additional data on king & Spanish mackerel and snapper grouper species to prepare for further talks with the MAFMC and NEFMC. The Council will send a comment letter to NOAA on the South Atlantic EBFM implementation plan.
Citizen Science Program	The Council received a report on the Citizen Science Operations Committee meeting and the Scamp app to collect discard data for the next assessment.	The Council will review and approve the standard operating policy and procedures for the Citizen Science program at the December meeting. The Scamp app will be available January 2019.
For-Hire Recreational Reporting	The Council received an update on the amendment: the Amendment was approved on June 12, 2018 and the Final Rule is expected to publish sometime soon. Council staff gave an update on the training/outreach and the NMFS information meetings.	Regulations are hopefully going to be effective 1/1/19. For-Hire reporting training and outreach and NMFS information meetings will continue in 2018/19.

Issue:	Action Taken:	Schedule:
MyFishCount	Council staff gave an update on progress with increasing usage of the app and reviewed data from the recent red snapper seasons.	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.
SEDAR	The Council appointed Council members to SEDAR 58 (Cobia) and SEDAR 60 (Red Porgy). The Council also received updates on assessment projects and the recent SEDAR Steering Committee.	The next SEDAR Steering Committee meeting will be in Spring 2019 to discuss project planning, long-term priorities, and a SEFSC update on Wreckfish assessment plans.
Advisory Panel Selection	<p>The Council made appointments to the System Management Plan Workgroup and to various Advisory Panels. The Council also discussed ways to improve communication and effectiveness when working with Advisory Panels and approved the following as recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee chair and vice-chair provide more specific guidance on items they want AP members to address for upcoming AP meetings. (Have the AP Chair, Committee Chair and staff confer before upcoming AP meetings). • Include these items in the AP meeting agenda, using the SSC Roadmap as an example <i>when feasible</i>. • Structure the Advisory Panel Report to include the specific items requested by the committee. • When the Advisory Panel Report is presented to the committee, the specific items identified earlier by the committee chair and vice-chair will be addressed at the committee level. • Staff could provide a PowerPoint slide or two to highlight recommendations in the AP Report and help facilitate discussion during the committee meeting. • Have the committee chair provide an update to AP members on actions/discussions by the committee at each AP meeting. 	Follow up letters will be sent to AP members and applicants as appropriate. Open seats will be advertised in time for consideration at the Council's March 2019 meeting. In the future, AP reports will be formatted to be consistent when presented to Council committees.