

Draft Joint Generic Amendment to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Resources of the South Atlantic Region

List of Actions/Alternatives from July 22-24, 2014 Joint Committee Meeting in Key Largo, Florida

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Note: There is disagreement over guidance related to Action 1: managing as a single unit with an overall combined multijurisdictional ACL and AM (see alternative below). It is not clear in the report from the July 2014 meeting that this was a direction to staff.

Action 1: Modifications to the Fishery Management Plans of the Gulf and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils

Alternative 1: No action. Retain management of black grouper, mutton snapper, and yellowtail snapper in the Reef Fish and Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plans for the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, respectively.

Alternative 2: Delegate management of any of the species listed below to the State of Florida.

Option 2a: black grouper

Option 2b: mutton snapper

Option 2c: yellowtail snapper

Alternative 3: Remove any of the species listed below from the Reef Fish and Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plans for the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, respectively.

Option 4a: black grouper

Option 4b: mutton snapper

Option 4c: yellowtail snapper

Alternative 4: Remove any of the species listed below from the Reef Fish Fishery Management Plan of the Gulf Council and request the Secretary of Commerce designate the South Atlantic Council as the responsible Council.

Option 5a: mutton snapper

Option 5b: yellowtail snapper

Possible New Alternative: Manage each stock as a single unit with an overall combined multijurisdictional annual catch limits (ACLs) and accountability measures (AMs). Any or all of these species would be retained in the Reef Fish and Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plans for the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, respectively: Option a: black grouper, Option b: mutton snapper, and Option 3: yellowtail snapper.

Action 2: Delegate Commercial and Recreational Management of Yellowtail Snapper to the State of Florida

Alternative 1: No action. Retain management of Yellowtail Snapper in the Reef Fish and Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plans for the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, respectively.

Alternative 2: Determine specific recreational management items for delegation to the State of Florida for yellowtail snapper:

Option 2a: Size limits

Option 2b: Seasons

Option 2c: Bag limits

Option 2d: Minor modifications to existing allowable gear (Re: circle hook requirement)

Option 2e: Fishing year

Alternative 3: Determine specific commercial management items for delegation to the State of Florida for yellowtail snapper:

Option 2a: Size limits

Option 2b: Seasons

Option 2c: Commercial trip limits

Option 2d: Minor modifications to existing allowable gear (Re: circle hook requirement)

Option 2e: Fishing year

Action 3: Allocate Yellowtail Snapper Sector Annual Catch Limits to the State of Florida and Create a Bycatch Allowance for other Gulf and South Atlantic States

Alternative 1. No action. Maintain the current commercial and recreational ACLs for yellowtail snapper based on the South Atlantic Council's Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan and maintain the current total ACL for yellowtail snapper in the Gulf based on the Reef Fish FMP.

Alternative 2. Use both Council's agreed upon ABC for yellowtail snapper and allocate the commercial and recreational ACLs for the Gulf and South Atlantic:

Option 2a: Use the South Atlantic Council's current sector allocation formula (bowtie approach): divide the sector allocations based on the ratio of landings with 50% of the weighting given to the mean of the landings from 1986-2008, and 50% on the mean of the landings from 2006-2008.

Option 2b: Base sector allocations for waters off Florida on average landings from 2008-2012

Option 2c: Base sector allocations for waters off Florida on average landings from 200x-20xx

Alternative 3. Use both Council's agreed upon ABC for yellowtail snapper and create Gulf commercial and recreational sector ACLs from the current ABC jurisdictional split: 75% of the ABC for South Atlantic Council jurisdictional waters, and 25% for Gulf Council jurisdictional waters. Gulf sector allocations would be derived from one of the options below, and the subsequent Gulf and South Atlantic sector allocations would be combined to create sector allocations off Florida:

Option 3a: Use the South Atlantic Council's current sector allocation formula: divide the sector allocations based on the ratio of landings with 50% of the weighting given to the mean of the landings from 1986-2008, and 50% on the mean of the landings from 2006-2008.

Option 3c: Base sector allocations for waters off Florida on average landings from 2008-2012

Option 3d: Base sector allocations for waters off Florida on average landings from 200x-20xx

Alternative 4. Create a bycatch allowance for the other Gulf (TX, LA, MS, AL) and other South Atlantic States (GA, SC, NC).

Option 4a: Adjust ABC by 1% to address bycatch of in the other Gulf and South Atlantic States.

Option 4b: Adjust ABC by 2% to address bycatch of in the other Gulf and South Atlantic States.

Action 4: Delegate Commercial and Recreational Management of Mutton Snapper to the State of Florida

Alternative 1: No action. Retain management of Mutton Snapper in the Reef Fish and Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plans for the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, respectively.

Alternative 2: Determine specific recreational management items for delegation to the State of Florida for Yellowtail Snapper:

Option 2a: Size limits

Option 2b: Seasons

Option 2c: Bag limits

Option 2d: Minor modifications to existing allowable gear

Option 2e: Fishing year

Alternative 3: Determine specific commercial management items for delegation to the State of Florida for Yellowtail Snapper:

Option 2a: Size limits

Option 2b: Seasons

Option 2c: Commercial trip limits

Option 2d: Minor modifications to existing allowable gear

Option 2e: Fishing year

Action 5: Allocate Mutton Snapper Sector Annual Catch Limits to the State of Florida and Create a Bycatch Allowance for other Gulf and South Atlantic States

Alternative 1. No action. Maintain the current commercial and recreational ACLs for mutton snapper based on the South Atlantic Councils Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan and maintain the current total ACL for mutton snapper in the Gulf based on the Reef Fish FMP.

Alternative 2. Use both Council's agreed upon ABC for mutton snapper and allocate the commercial and recreational ACLs for the Gulf and South Atlantic:

Option 2a: Use the South Atlantic Council's current sector allocation formula (bowtie approach): divide the sector allocations based on the ratio of landings with 50% of the weighting given to the mean of the landings from 1986-2008, and 50% on the mean of the landings from 2006-2008.

Option 2b: Base sector allocations for waters off Florida on average landings from 2008-2012

Option 2c: Base sector allocations for waters off Florida on average landings from 200x-20xx

Alternative 3. Use both Council's agreed upon ABC for mutton snapper and create Gulf commercial and recreational sector ACLs from the current ABC jurisdictional split: 82% of the ABC for South Atlantic Council jurisdictional waters, and 18% for Gulf Council jurisdictional waters. Gulf sector allocations would be derived from one of the options below, and the subsequent Gulf and South Atlantic sector allocations would be combined to create sector allocations off Florida:

Option 3a: Use the South Atlantic Council's current sector allocation formula: divide the sector allocations based on the ratio of landings with 50% of the weighting given to the mean of the landings from 1986-2008, and 50% on the mean of the landings from 2006-2008.

Option 3b: Base sector allocations for waters off Florida on average landings from 2008-2012

Option 3c: Base sector allocations for waters off Florida on average landings from 200x-20xx

Alternative 4. Create a bycatch allowance for the other Gulf (TX, LA, MS, AL) and other South Atlantic States (GA, SC, NC).

Option 4a: Adjust ABC by 1% to address bycatch of in the other Gulf and South Atlantic States.

Option 4b: Adjust ABC by 2% to address bycatch of in the other Gulf and South Atlantic States.

Action 5. Mutton snapper recreational bag limit in Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic

Alternative 1: No action. Mutton snapper is part of the aggregate 10 snapper bag limit in the Gulf of Mexico* and the South Atlantic**.

Alternative 2: Remove mutton snapper from the recreational aggregate bag limit and change the recreational bag limit for mutton snapper during the regular season (July-April) and during the spawning season (May-June).

Option 2a: 10 fish/person/day in the regular season, 2 fish/person/day during the spawning season

Option 2b: 5 fish/person/day in the regular season, 2 fish/person/day during the spawning season

Alternative 3: Retain mutton snapper within the aggregate 10 snapper bag limit.

Action 6. Mutton snapper commercial trip limit in Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic

Alternative 1: No action. During May-June, the commercial sector in the South Atlantic is restricted to 10 mutton snapper per day or 10 mutton snapper per trip, whichever is more restrictive. There is no bag or trip limit for the commercial sector in the Gulf or South Atlantic during the July-April regular season.

Alternative 2: Establish a commercial trip limit for mutton snapper during the regular season (July-April).

Option 2a: 10 fish/person/day

Option 2b: Some higher bag or trip limit.

Alternative 3: Specify a commercial trip limit for mutton snapper during the spawning season (May-June).

Option 3a: 2 fish/person/day

Option 3b: 5 fish/person/day

Option 3c: 10 fish/person/day

Option 3d: No bag or trip limit

Action 7: Delegate Recreational Management of Black Grouper to the State of Florida

Alternative 1: No action. Retain recreational management of black grouper in the Reef Fish and Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plans for the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, respectively.

Alternative 2: Determine specific recreational management items for delegation to the State of Florida for black grouper:

Option 2a: Size limits

Option 2b: Seasons

Option 2c: Bag limits

Option 2d: Minor modifications to existing allowable gear

Option 2e: Fishing year

Action 8: Allocate Black Grouper Recreational Annual Catch Limits to the State of Florida and Create a Recreational Bycatch Allowance for other Gulf and South Atlantic States

Alternative 1. No action. Maintain the current recreational ACLs based on the Reef Fish and Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plans for the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, respectively.

Alternative 2. Use both Council's agreed upon ABC for black grouper and allocate the recreational ACLs for the Gulf and South Atlantic:

Option 2a: Combine the current recreational allocations (i.e., 63.12% of the ACL for the South Atlantic and 27% of the ACL for the Gulf) for black grouper into a single recreational allocation for delegation to the State of Florida.

Option 2b: Use the South Atlantic Council's current sector allocation formula (Bowtie approach): divide the sector allocations based on the ratio of landings with 50% of the weighting given to the mean of the landings from 1991-2008, and 50% on the mean of the landings from 2006-2008.

Option 2c: Base sector allocations for waters off Florida on average landings from 2008-2012

Option 2d: Base sector allocations for waters off Florida on average landings from 200x-20xx

Option 2e: Employ some other allocation formula

Alternative 3. Use both Council's agreed upon ABC for black grouper and create Gulf commercial and recreational sector ACLs from the current ABC jurisdictional split: 47% of the ABC for South Atlantic Council jurisdictional waters, and 53% for Gulf Council jurisdictional waters. Gulf sector allocations would be derived from one of the options below, and the subsequent Gulf and South Atlantic sector allocations would be combined to create sector allocations off Florida:

Option 3a: Use the South Atlantic Council's current sector allocation formula: divide the sector allocations based on the ratio of landings with 50% of the weighting given to the mean of the landings from 1991-2008, and 50% on the mean of the landings from 2006-2008.

Option 3b: Base sector allocations for waters off Florida on average landings from 2008-2012

Option 3c: Base sector allocations for waters off Florida on average landings from 200x-20xx

Option 3d: Employ some other allocation formula

Alternative 4. Create a recreational bycatch allowance for the other Gulf (TX, LA, MS, AL) and other South Atlantic States (GA, SC, NC).

Option 4a: Adjust ABC by 1% to address bycatch of in the other Gulf and South Atlantic States.

Option 4b: Adjust ABC by 2% to address bycatch of in the other Gulf and South Atlantic States.

Option 3c: Adjust ABC by 3% to address bycatch of in the other Gulf and South Atlantic States.

Action 9: Specify Accountability Measures for South Florida Species

Note: Under some circumstances more than one alternative could be selected as preferred.

Direction to Staff: The Committee briefly discussed Action 3: Accountability Measures for South Florida species. Based on the previous discussions and additions to the document, the Committee wanted to simplify the accountability measures and staff will draft accountability measures for a commercial and recreational ACL that would close the fishery for yellowtail snapper and mutton snapper when the total ACL was met; this would not include the bycatch allowance (1-2%) from other Gulf and South Atlantic States. For black grouper, the recreational ACL would close when landings from all jurisdictions had met the ACL.

Alternative 1: No action. Maintain the current recreational and commercial accountability measures (AMs) for Yellowtail Snapper, Mutton Snapper, and Black Grouper based on the Reef Fish and Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plans for the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, respectively.

South Atlantic: Commercial AM – In-season closure when the ACL expected to be met and ACL reduced in following fishing season if species is overfished and ACL is exceeded. Recreational AM – if ACL is exceeded, monitor landings in following season for persistence in landings and reduce the length of the following fishing season, if necessary.

Gulf: For Yellowtail Snapper and Mutton Snapper, if the combined commercial and recreational landings exceed the stock ACL, in-season AMs are in effect for the following year. If the combined landings reach or are projected to reach the stock ACL, both sectors will be closed for the remainder of that fishing year. For black grouper, this AM applies to the ACL for the other shallow-water grouper aggregate (black grouper, scamp, yellowmouth grouper, and yellowfin grouper).

Alternative 2: If the sum of the commercial and recreational landings exceeds the stock ACL, then during the following fishing year, if the sum of commercial and recreational landings reaches or is projected to reach the stock ACL, the commercial and recreational sectors will be closed for the remainder of that fishing year. On and after the effective date of a closure, all sale or purchase is prohibited and harvest or possession of this species in or from the EEZ is prohibited.

Alternative 3: If commercial landings as estimated by the Science and Research Director reach or are projected to reach the commercial ACL, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to close the commercial sector for the remainder of the fishing year. On and after the effective date of such a notification, all sale or purchase is prohibited and harvest or possession of this species in or from the EEZ is limited to the bag and possession limit. Additionally,

Option 3a: If the commercial ACL is exceeded, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the commercial ACL in the following fishing year by the amount of the commercial overage, only if the species is overfished.

Option 3b: If the commercial ACL is exceeded, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the commercial ACL in the following fishing year by the

amount of the commercial overage, only if the total ACL (commercial ACL and recreational ACL) is exceeded.

Option 3c: If the commercial ACL is exceeded, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the commercial ACL in the following fishing year by the amount of the commercial overage, only if the species is overfished and the total ACL (commercial ACL and recreational ACL) is exceeded.

Alternative 4: If recreational landings, as estimated by the Science and Research Director, exceed the recreational ACL, then during the following fishing year, recreational landings will be monitored for a persistence in increased landings.

Option 4a: If necessary, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the length of fishing season and the recreational ACL in the following fishing year by the amount of the recreational overage, only if the species is overfished. The length of the recreational season and recreational ACL will not be reduced if the Regional Administrator determines, using the best scientific information available, that a reduction is unnecessary.

Option 4b: If necessary, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the length of fishing season and the recreational ACL in the following fishing year by the amount of the recreational overage, only if the total ACL (commercial ACL and recreational ACL) is exceeded. The length of the recreational season and recreational ACL will not be reduced if the Regional Administrator determines, using the best scientific information available, that a reduction is unnecessary.

Option 4c: If necessary, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the length of fishing season and the recreational ACL in the following fishing year by the amount of the recreational overage, only if the species is overfished and the total ACL (commercial ACL and recreational ACL) is exceeded. The length of the recreational season and recreational ACL will not be reduced if the Regional Administrator determines, using the best scientific information available, that a reduction is unnecessary.

Alternative 5: If recreational landings reach or are projected to reach the recreational annual catch limit, National Marine Fisheries Service will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to close the recreational sector for the remainder of the fishing year, unless, using the best scientific information available, the Regional Administrator determines that a closure is unnecessary.

Option 5a: If the species is overfished.

Option 5b: Regardless of stock status.

Alternative 6: Both Councils agree on an overall ABC and ACL and Councils close jurisdictions only when the overall ACL is met. Each Council would agree to a recreational and commercial ACL split for the following species:

Option 6a: Black Grouper

Option 6b: Mutton Snapper

Option 6c: Yellowtail Snapper

Action 10. Modify the shallow-water grouper species compositions and seasonal closures in the Gulf and South Atlantic

Alternative 1: No action. Retain the existing respective shallow-water grouper species compositions* and seasonal closures in the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils.

Alternative 2: Remove the shallow-water grouper closure for all affected grouper species in the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic:

Option 2a: South of 28° North latitude.

Option 2b: Throughout each Council's jurisdiction.

Alternative 3: Establish identical regulations for shallow-water grouper species compositions for the Gulf and South Atlantic South of 28° North latitude:

Option 3a: Adopt the Gulf shallow-water grouper species composition for the Gulf and South Atlantic.

Option 3b: Adopt the South Atlantic shallow-water grouper species composition for the Gulf and South Atlantic.

Option 3c: Specify a new shallow-water species complex for the Gulf and South Atlantic.

Alternative 4: Establish identical regulations for the shallow-water grouper seasonal closures in the Gulf and South Atlantic South of 28° North latitude:

Option 4a: Adopt the Gulf shallow-water grouper seasonal closures for the Gulf and South Atlantic.

Option 4b: Adopt the South Atlantic shallow-water grouper seasonal closures for the Gulf and South Atlantic.

Option 4c: Establish identical regulations for shallow-water grouper seasonal closures in the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic.

Alternative 5: Establish identical regulations for the shallow-water grouper seasonal closures throughout the Gulf and South Atlantic:

Option 4a: Adopt the Gulf shallow-water grouper seasonal closures for the Gulf and South Atlantic.

Option 4b: Adopt the South Atlantic shallow-water grouper seasonal closures for the Gulf and South Atlantic.

Option 4c: Establish identical regulations for shallow-water grouper seasonal closures in the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic.

Alternative 6: Remove black grouper from the shallow-water grouper closures of the recreational season in the Gulf and of the recreational and commercial seasons in the South Atlantic.

Alternative 7: Establish a seasonal closure for black grouper (potential separation between recreational and commercial).

Option a: January - March

Option b: January

Option c: February

Option d: March

Alternative 8: Establish a one fish recreational bag limit for black grouper in Florida with an optional seasonal closure during: (Note: consider removing black grouper from the aggregate bag limit.)

Option a: January - March

Option b: January - February

Action 11. Changes to Circle Hook Requirement in Gulf and South Atlantic Jurisdictional Waters

Alternative 1: No action – Retain the current non-stainless circle hook requirements in the exclusive economic zone of the Gulf of Mexico.

Alternative 2: Remove the requirement to use circle hooks when fishing with natural bait for yellowtail snapper in the exclusive economic zone of the Gulf of Mexico.

Option 2a: For the recreational fishing sector

Option 2b: For the commercial fishing sector

Alternative 3: Remove the requirement to use circle hooks when fishing with natural bait for all reef fish south of 28° North latitude in the exclusive economic zone of the Gulf of Mexico.

Option 3a: For the recreational fishing sector

Option 3b: For the commercial fishing sector

Alternative 4. Remove the requirement to use circle hooks when fishing with natural bait for all species in the snapper grouper complex north of 28° North latitude in the exclusive economic zone of the South Atlantic.

Option 4a: For the recreational fishing sector

Option 4b: For the commercial fishing sector

Alternative 5. Remove the requirement to use circle hooks when fishing for yellowtail snapper south of 26° N latitude in the exclusive economic zone of the Gulf of Mexico

Option 5a: For the recreational fishing sector

Option 5b: For the commercial fishing sector