

Commercial Permit and Management Measures

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THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

# Snapper Grouper Amendment 60

## Scientific and Statistical Committee
## October 2026

# ACTION SUMMARY

Most recent Draft Amendment is available in the September 2026 Council Meeting Briefing Book (Actions on Red Porgy and Commercial Sale were removed during that meeting)

1. Remove the 2-for-1 requirement for SG 1 commercial permits
2. Revise bottom longline gear requirements to allow switching to/from bottom longline gear within a trip

3-8. Increase commercial trip limits for:

3. Greater amberjack
4. Vermilion snapper
5. Hogfish (GA-NC)
6. Red Grouper
7. Gray Triggerfish
8. Golden Tilefish

# WHERE ARE WE IN THE PROCESS?

| Timing | Council Action |
|---|---|
| June 2025 | Review initial actions and consider approval for scoping |
| July 25-August 8, 2025 | Scoping |
| June 2026 | Approval for public hearings |
| August 10, 11, 19, and 31, and September 16, 2026 | Public hearings |
| September 2026 | Review public comment and approve all actions |
| December 2026 | Final Council approval |
| 2027 | NMFS Rulemaking and implementation<br>*Timing may vary for some actions |

# SG 1 COMMERCIAL PERMIT

- Established through SG Amd 8 (effective 1998)
- No overall limit of snapper grouper species per trip (though, still subject to species-specific trip limits and regulations)
- Limited access permit
- For a permit to be transferred to a new (non-immediate family) permit holder, the new permit holder must acquire 2 existing permits and exchange them for a single new permit
  - This requirement was established due to overcapitalization of the fishery and overfishing concerns at the time
  - 1,075 vessels that qualified for SG 1 permits in 1998; 494 SG 1 permits in 2026
  - Several breakdowns of permits by state, activity, etc. are available in presentations made in March 2026 and April 2026

# ACTION 1 – SG 1 PERMIT 2-FOR-1

Alternative 1 (No Action) – To acquire an SG 1 permit, an entity must obtain and exchange two such permits for one new permit.

Preferred Alternative 2. To acquire an SG 1 permit, an entity must obtain and exchange two such permits for one new permit.

Notes

- SG 1 permit would continue to be limited access
- Intent is to stop the reduction in permits caused by the 2-for-1 requirement and maintain the current number of permits
- Could reduce the number of permits that are owned but not actively used

# ACTION 2 – BOTTOM LONGLINE GEAR FLEXIBILITY

Alternative 1 (No Action). A snapper grouper commercial vessel that fishes in the EEZ with bottom longline (BLL) gear on board may only possess: snowy grouper, yellowedge grouper, misty grouper, golden tilefish, blueline tilefish, and sand tilefish.

All of Alternatives 2-4. Commercial SG vessels with BLL gear may possess any SG species.

- The only SG that may be harvested using BLL gear are snowy grouper, yellowedge grouper, misty grouper, golden tilefish, blueline tilefish, and sand tilefish
- Other SG species may be harvested by other gears on a trip with BLL gear on board if BLL hooks are not baited or are stowed off the deck of the vessel.
- Harvest and effort for different gears must be recorded as separate entries in commercial logbooks for each gear change on that trip.

# ACTION 2 – BOTTOM LONGLINE GEAR FLEXIBILITY

All of Alternatives 2-4. Commercial SG vessels with BLL gear may possess any SG species.




Alternative 2. No notification requirement.
Alternative 3. Communicate intent to switch to/from BLL gear using a NMFS-approved method.
Alternative 4. Vessel operators who intend to switch to/from BLL gear on a single trip must carry an active and approved vessel monitoring system (VMS) and send a notification via VMS before changing to/from BLL gear.

# ACTION 2 – BOTTOM LONGLINE GEAR FLEXIBILITY

Notes

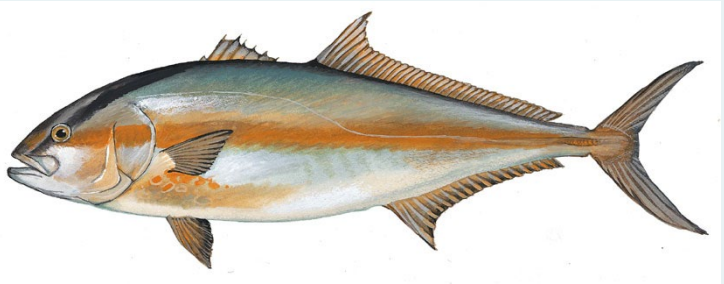
- Any notification/VMS requirements from Alternatives 2-4 would ONLY apply to vessels that intend to switch to/from BLL gear within a single trip
  - Example trips where these would not apply:
    - Vessel fishes only hook and line
    - Vessel fishes only BLL
    - Vessel fishes hook and line and spearfishes



# ACTIONS 3-8 – TRIP LIMIT INCREASES

- Council reviewed species-specific trip limits for species that (generally) have not reached their ACL in recent years
- Intent of these actions is to allow additional flexibility for fishermen
- Expectation is not for every trip to harvest every limit
  - Snapper grouper commercial fishery operates as a portfolio fishery
  - Few trips are currently limited by the trip limits (see June 2026 Presentation)
  - Higher trip limits would enable trips that are effectively catching a species on a given trip the opportunity to harvest more of that species
- Annual catch limits would continue to prevent overfishing
- FI Survey/SERFS Report September 2026

# ACTION 3 – GREATER AMBERJACK TRIP LIMIT



- Managed in 2 seasons, Season 1 (March – August) and Season 2 (September – February)

Alternative 1 (No Action). Current commercial trip limit: 1,200 lbs ww or gw (both seasons)

Preferred Alternative 2. Increase the trip limit during Season 1 to:

Sub-Alternative 2a. 1,500 lbs gw.

Preferred Sub-Alternative 2b. 1,750 lbs gw.

Sub-Alternative 2c. 2,000 lbs gw.

Preferred Alternative 3. Increase the trip limit during Season 2 to:

Sub-Alternative 3a. 1,500 lbs gw.

Preferred Sub-Alternative 3b. 1,750 lbs gw.

Sub-Alternative 3c. 2,000 lbs gw.

# ACTION 4 – VERMILION SNAPPER TRIP LIMIT

- Managed in 2 seasons, Season 1 (January - June) and Season 2 (July - December)

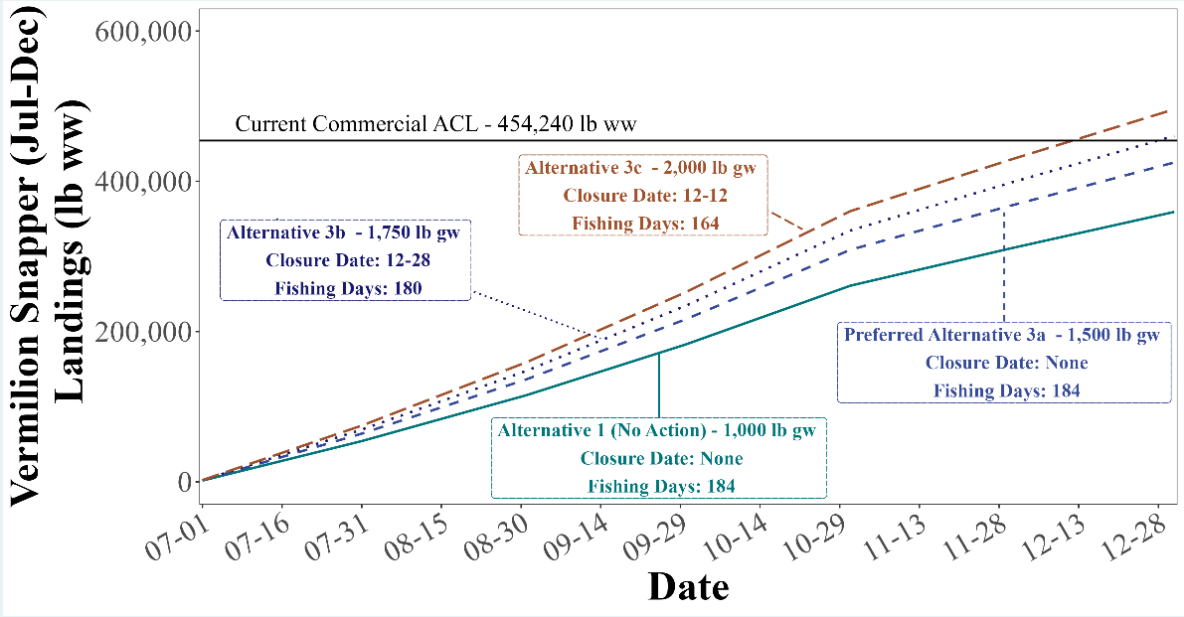
Alternative 1 (No Action). Current commercial trip limit: 1,000 lbs gw (both seasons)

Preferred Alternative 2. Increase the trip limit during Season 1 to:

- Preferred Sub-Alternative 2a. 1,500 lbs gw.
- Sub-Alternative 2b. 1,750 lbs gw.
- Sub-Alternative 2c. 2,000 lbs gw.

Preferred Alternative 3. Increase the trip limit during Season 2 to:

- Preferred Sub-Alternative 3a. 1,500 lbs gw.
- Sub-Alternative 3b. 1,750 lbs gw.
- Sub-Alternative 3c. 2,000 lbs gw.



# ACTION 5 – HOGFISH (GA-NC) TRIP LIMIT

Alternative 1 (No Action). Current commercial trip limit: 500 lbs ww

Preferred Alternative 2. Increase the trip limit to 750 lbs ww.

Alternative 3. Increase the trip limit to 1,000 lbs ww.

- Stock Status unknown; ABC/ACL from ORCS approach

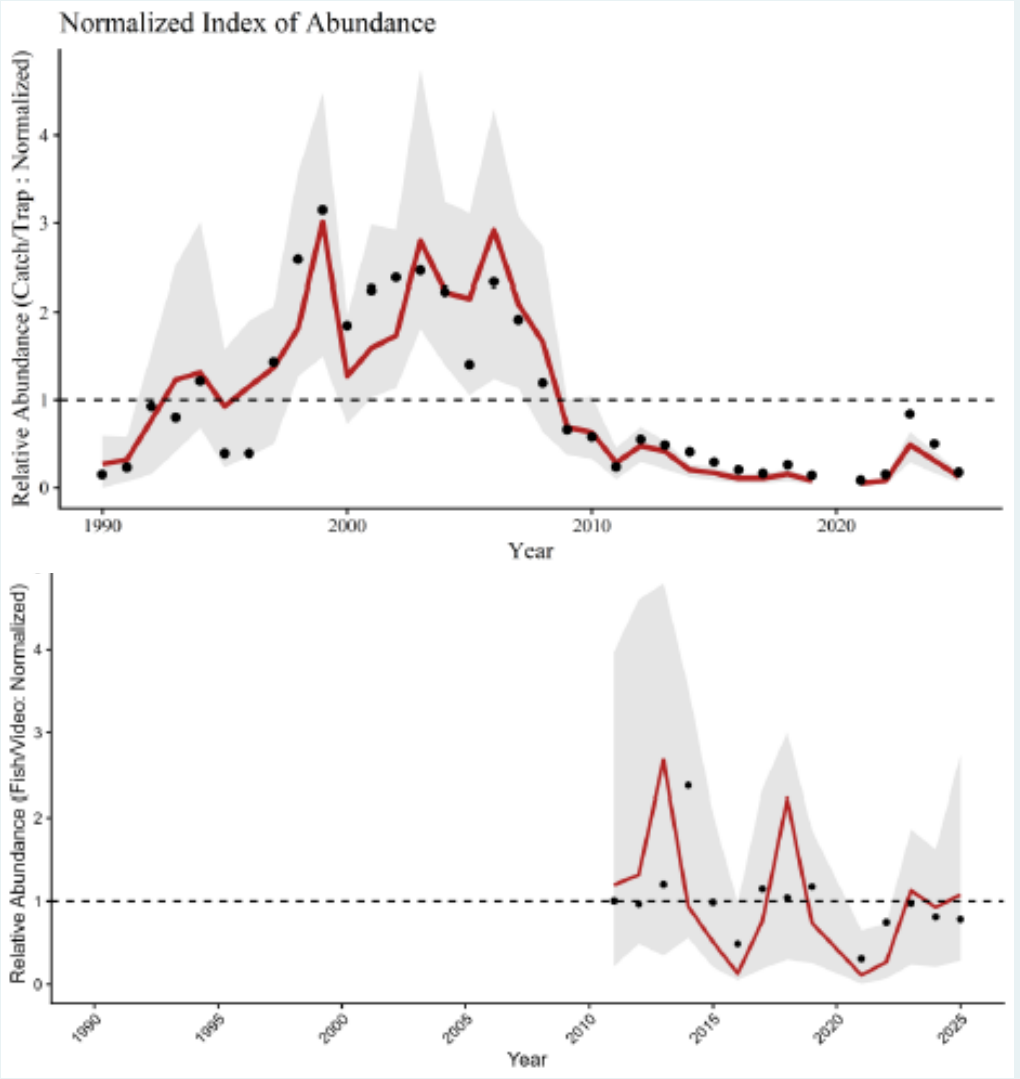


# ACTION 6 – RED GROUPER TRIP LIMIT

Alternative 1 (No Action). Current commercial trip limit: 200 lbs gw; 236 lbs ww

Preferred Alternative 2. Increase the trip limit to 300 lbs gw; 354 lbs ww.

- Rebuilding plan since 2011; current plan ends in 2028



# ACTION 7 – GRAY TRIGGERFISH TRIP LIMIT

- Managed in 2 seasons, Season 1 (January - June) and Season 2 (July - December)

Preferred Alternative 1 (No Action). Current commercial trip limit: 1,000 lbs ww (both seasons)

Alternative 2. Increase the trip limit to 1,200 lbs ww (both seasons)

Alternative 3. Increase the commercial trip limit to 1,400 lbs ww (both seasons)



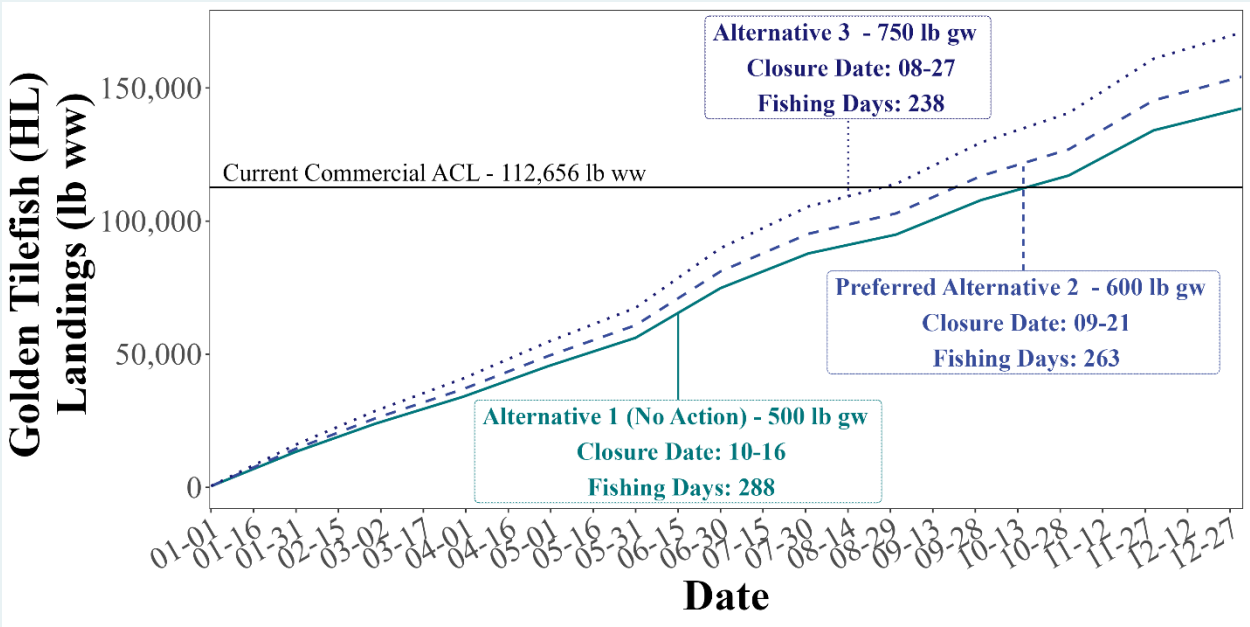

- Stock Status unknown; ABC/ACL from ORCS approach

# ACTION 8 – GOLDEN TILEFISH (HOOK AND LINE) TRIP LIMIT

Alternative 1 (No Action). Current commercial trip limit: 500 lbs gw; 560 lbs ww.

Preferred Alternative 2. Increase the trip limit to 600 lbs gw; 672 lbs ww.

Alternative 3. Increase the trip limit to 750 lbs gw; 840 lbs ww.




- Far offshore; little bycatch; trip/fuel efficiency