



THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Regulatory Amendment 39 Overview

Spawning Special Management Zone Sunset Provision

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WHY IS THE COUNCIL TAKING ACTION?

- In 2017, the Council established 5 spawning special management zones (SSMZs) to protect to protect spawning fish and their habitat, aiming to increase recruitment of juvenile fish:

South Cape Lookout (NC)

Area 51 (SC)

Area 53 (SC)

Georgetown/Devil's Hole (SC)

Warsaw Hole (FL)

- Currently, within the SSMZs fishing for, or harvesting snapper grouper species is prohibited year-round. A vessel may possess snapper grouper species within the SSMZs if it is transiting with gear appropriately stowed and there is no anchoring, use of an anchor and chain or grapple and chain (except for Area 51 and 53).
- 3 of the SSMZs (**South Cape Lookout, Georgetown/Devil's Hole, and Warsaw Hole**) were established with a **sunset provision** of 10 years, to expire **August 2, 2027**.
- Area 51 and Area 53 are artificial reefs constructed by the SCDNR and do not have sunset provisions.



ACTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES

Actions 1-3 will modify the sunset provision for each of the 3 SSMZs.

Alternative 1 (No Action). No change, all 3 SSMZs will sunset August 2, 2027.

Alternative 2. Extend the sunset provision by **7 years**.

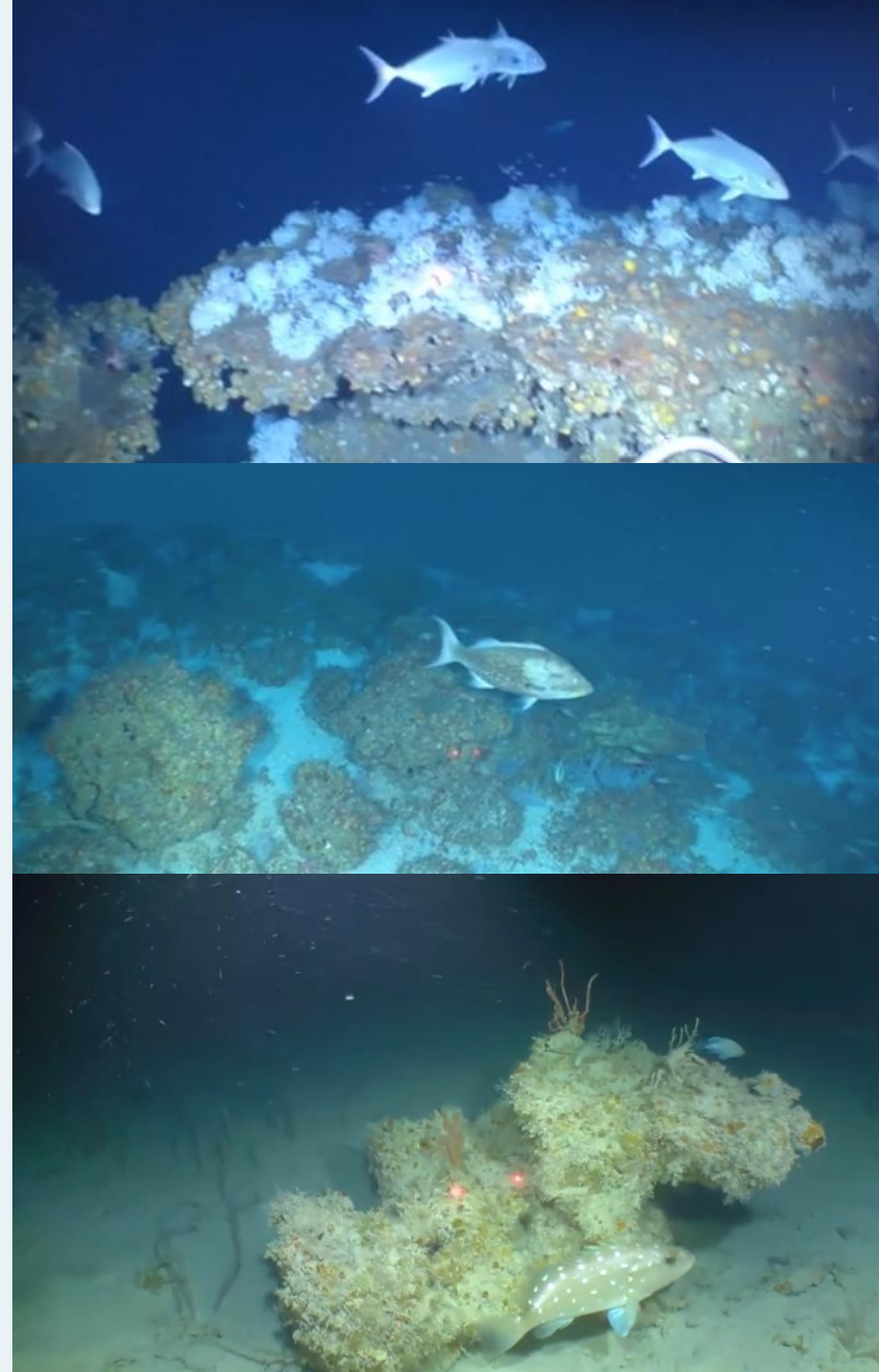
Alternative 3. Extend the sunset provision by **10 years**.

Alternative 4. Extend the sunset provision by **20 years**.

Alternative 5. Remove the sunset provision for the SSMZ. Removing the sunset provision would retain the SSMZs and their applicable regulations, until further action is taken.

SSC ACTION

If the Council retains a sunset provision, what duration (e.g., 7 years, 10 years, 15 years, or another period) would provide a realistic opportunity for new scientific information to become available that could meaningfully inform a future review?



A large school of Nassau grouper swimming in clear blue water. The fish are characterized by their dark bodies with prominent white horizontal stripes. They are densely packed in the center of the frame, with many others visible in the background, creating a sense of a large aggregation. The water is a deep, clear blue, and the lighting is bright, highlighting the details of the fish's scales and fins.

QUESTIONS?