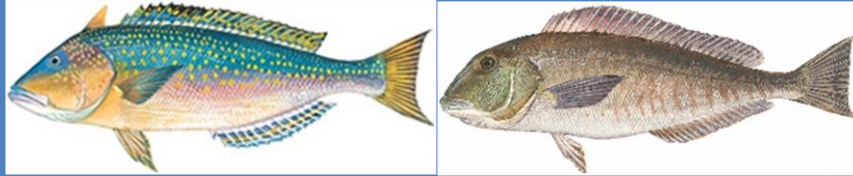


# Amendment 52



to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper  
Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region

*Catch Level Adjustments and Allocations for  
Golden Tilefish*

*Modification to recreational management of  
Blueline Tilefish*

Decision Document  
June 2022

## Background

### **Golden Tilefish**

Current management of South Atlantic golden tilefish is based on an update of SEDAR 25 completed in 2016 with an assessment period of 1962-2014 (SEDAR 2016). This amendment would address the SEDAR 66 operational assessment for golden tilefish, which was completed in 2020, and includes recreational landings estimates using the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) Fishing Effort Survey (FES). Revised catch levels would be specified based on the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)'s recommended acceptable biological catch (ABC) and this most recent assessment.

The Council received the results of the assessment and the SSC's recommendations for the overfishing limit (OFL) and ABC at their June 2021 meeting. The SSC determined the stock is

no longer experiencing overfishing, but there is a high degree of uncertainty in the stock status determination since the stock is being fished at or close to maximum sustainable yield (MSY). The Council directed staff to begin work on a plan amendment to adjust catch levels based on the SSC recommendations and [SEDAR 66](#).

An application providing an overview of the golden tilefish fishery, including management history, landings, and assessment information, can be found here: [https://safmc-shinyapps.shinyapps.io/SA\\_FisheryDataTilefish/](https://safmc-shinyapps.shinyapps.io/SA_FisheryDataTilefish/).

### **Blueline Tilefish**

In the last six years, landings of blueline tilefish in the South Atlantic region have often exceeded the sector and total annual catch limit (ACL), and the National Standard Guidelines contain the following language: *If the catch exceeds the ACL for a given stock, or stock complex, more than once in the last four years, the system of ACLs and accountability measures (AMs) should be reevaluated and modified if necessary to improve its performance and effectiveness.*

The recreational sector has a four-month season, May 1 through August 31, that was established in 2015 through Amendment 32. The amendment also established a 1 fish per vessel limit during the open season. The bag limit was increased to the current 3 fish per person per day through implementation of Regulatory Amendment 25 in 2016.

The in-season AM currently in place (in-season closure) is triggered when recreational landings meet, or are projected to meet, the recreational ACL. The post-season AM is triggered by an overage of the recreational ACL, an overage of the total (commercial and recreational) ACL, and an overfished determination for the stock. If those criteria are met, a payback of the overage and a reduction in next year's fishing season are implemented. These AMs have not been triggered for blueline tilefish despite overages of the recreational ACL. The in-season AM has not been triggered due to landings estimates not being available until after the season closes. Overage of the recreational ACL have not been corrected because blueline tilefish are currently not overfished. Hence, the Council intends to re-evaluate the system of AMs for the recreational sector and consider modification to recreational management measures.

An application providing an overview of the blueline tilefish fishery, including management history, landings, and assessment information, can be found here: [https://safmc-shinyapps.shinyapps.io/SA\\_FisheryDataBluelineTilefish/](https://safmc-shinyapps.shinyapps.io/SA_FisheryDataBluelineTilefish/)

## **Management actions in this amendment**

**Action 1:** Revise the golden tilefish acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield.

**Action 2:** Revise sector allocations and sector annual catch limits for golden tilefish

**Action 3.** Modify the fishing year for the commercial golden tilefish hook and line and longline sectors.

- Action 4.** Establish an incidental trip limit allowance for the longline sector once the longline quota is caught.
- Action 5.** Modify post-season recreational accountability measures for golden tilefish.
- Action 6.** Modify blueline tilefish recreational bag limit.
- Action 7.** Modify blueline tilefish recreational season.
- Action 8.** Modify post-season recreational accountability measures for blueline tilefish.

## Amendment timing

June 2021	Receive SSC comments and recommendations on SEDAR 66
December 2021	Review AP comments and options paper, and approve for scoping
February 2022	Conduct scoping hearings
March 2022	Review scoping comments and provide guidance to staff
April 2022	AP comments on actions and alternatives
<b>June 2022</b>	<b>Review modifications to the amendment, review AP input, select preferred alternatives, and approve for public hearings</b>
September 2022	Review analyses and obtain public comment (public hearings)
December 2022	Review final draft amendment and consider approval for formal review
2023	Regulations effective

## Council action at previous meeting

- Selected Preferred Alternatives for Actions 1 and 2.
- Clarified no change to golden tilefish commercial sectors allocations (25% Hook and Line and 75% Longline).
- Provided guidance on alternatives to modify the start of the fishing year for golden tilefish commercial hook and line and longline sectors.
- Clarified there should be no change to golden tilefish commercial accountability measures.
- Clarified inclusion of post-season accountability measures for recreational golden tilefish and recreational blueline tilefish.
- Provided guidance on analyses needed to evaluate blueline tilefish recreational bag limits and seasons.
- Discussed establishing a trip limit step-down for the golden tilefish longline component. This could be an item addressed during the endorsement holder meeting to determine long-term management of that sector.

## Objectives for this meeting

- Review modifications to the amendment
- Review AP input.
- Review action and alternatives and consider selecting preferred alternatives
- Consider approval and timing for public hearings

## Purpose and Need

**Purpose:** The purpose is to revise the acceptable biological catch, annual optimum yield, total annual catch limit and sector allocations for golden tilefish based on the most recent stock assessment. Additionally, the purpose is to consider modifications to management measures and accountability measures for golden tilefish and blueline tilefish.

**Need:** ~~The need is to achieve optimum yield while balancing biological, social and economic impacts.~~ The need is to base conservation and management measures on the best scientific information available and achieve optimum yield, consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and its National Standards.

### **Committee Action:**

REVIEW PURPOSE AND REVISED NEED

# Acceptable Biological Catch and Overfishing Limit

The SSC reviewed the golden tilefish stock assessment (SEDAR 66 2020) at their April/May 2021 meeting. The SSC found that the assessment addressed the terms of reference appropriately, was conducted using the best scientific information available, was adequate for determining stock status and supporting fishing level recommendations and addressed uncertainty consistent with expectations and available information. The SSC applied the ABC Control Rule and recommended ABCs and OFLs for golden tilefish (Table 1).

Recommendations were in total removals and were adjusted for discards so they are expressed in landings.

**Table 1.** South Atlantic golden tilefish OFL and ABC recommendations in pounds gutted weight (lbs gw) and numbers of fish (Source: SSC Report May 2021). Note: Any changes to catch levels would be effective in 2023 and the 2026 level would remain in place until modified.

OFL RECOMMENDATIONS		
Year	Landings (lbs gw)	Landings (numbers of fish)
2023	562,000	69,000
2024	552,000	68,000
2025	543,000	67,000
2026+	535,000	66,000
ABC RECOMMENDATIONS		
Year	Landings (lbs gw)	Landings (numbers of fish)
2023	435,000	53,000
2024	448,000	54,000
2025	458,000	55,000
2026+	466,000	56,000

# Proposed Actions

## Action 1. Revise the golden tilefish acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield

### Purpose of Action:

The golden tilefish total ACL is being revised to incorporate the new ABC recommendations of the SSC, based on the SEDAR 66 (2020) stock assessment, as well as the updated recreational landings from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s (MRIP) Fishing Effort Survey (FES).

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** The total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for golden tilefish are equal to the current acceptable biological catch (342,000 lbs gutted weight). The current acceptable biological catch is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Coastal Household Telephone Survey.

**Preferred Alternative 2.** Revise the acceptable biological catch and set it equal to the most recent recommendation from the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for golden tilefish and set them equal to the recommended acceptable biological catch. The 2026 acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield would remain in place after 2026 until modified. The recommended acceptable biological catch is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Fishing Effort Survey.

Year	ABC (lbs gw)	Annual OY (lbs gw)	Total ACL (lbs gw)
2023	435,000	435,000	435,000
2024	448,000	448,000	448,000
2025	458,000	458,000	458,000
2026+	466,000	466,000	466,000

**Alternative 3:** Revise the acceptable biological catch and set it equal to the most recent recommendation from the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for golden tilefish and set them equal to 95% of the recommended acceptable biological catch. The 2026 acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield would remain in place after 2026 until modified. The recommended acceptable biological catch is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Fishing Effort Survey.

Year	ABC (lbs gw)	Annual OY (lbs gw)	Total ACL (lbs gw)
2023	435,000	413,250	413,250
2024	448,000	425,600	425,600
2025	458,000	435,100	435,100
2026+	466,000	442,700	442,700

**Alternative 4:** Revise the acceptable biological catch and set it equal to the most recent recommendation from the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for golden tilefish and set them equal to 90% of the recommended acceptable biological catch. The 2026 acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield would remain in place after 2026 until modified. The recommended acceptable biological catch is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Fishing Effort Survey.

Year	ABC (lbs gw)	Annual OY (lbs gw)	Total ACL (lbs gw)
2023	435,000	391,500	391,500
2024	448,000	403,200	403,200
2025	458,000	412,200	412,200
2026+	466,000	419,400	419,400

**Discussion:**

- Per the guidance provided at 50 CFR §600.310(f)(4)(iv), the Council has chosen to specify optimum yield (OY) for golden tilefish on an annual basis and set it equal to the total ACL.
- SEDAR 66 included landings data using the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) Fishing Effort Survey (FES). A new ACL would be specified based on the SSC’s recommended ABCs and the most recent assessment.

**Table 2.** Difference in pounds (gw) between proposed commercial golden tilefish hook and line and longline ACLs and average landings (2017-2021).

	Commercial Longline	Commercial Hook and Line
<b>Average Landings 2017-2021</b>	282,922	92,284
<b>Proposed 2023 ACL</b>	316,462	105,488
<b>Difference Between Proposed ACL and Average Landings</b>	+33,540	+13,204

**Summary of Biological Effects:**

- Increasing golden tilefish catch levels as proposed in this amendment would not be expected to result in negative biological impacts since overall catch would be constrained to the ACL and AMs would prevent the ACL and OFL from being exceeded, correct for overages if they occur (if the stock is in an overfished condition), and prevent overfishing.
- The proposed increase in the total ACL for golden tilefish is based on the SSC’s recommended ABC for golden tilefish in the South Atlantic region.
- **Preferred Alternative 2** would result in the least biological benefit to the golden tilefish as there would be no buffer between the ABCs and the total ACLs. Biological benefits resulting from **Alternatives 3 and 4** would increase as the buffer increases.

- Although **Preferred Alternative 2** would allow the greatest amount of harvest of the action alternatives considered, it is based on the SSC's ABC recommendation and BSIA and represents a catch level that does not result in overfishing.

### Summary of Economic Effects:

- ACLs that allow for more fish to be landed can result in increased positive economic effects if harvest increases without notable long-term effects on the health of a stock.
- ACLs that are set above the observed landings in the fishery for a species and do not change harvest or fishing behavior may not have realized economic effects each year.
- There are potential economic benefits from ACLs that allow for a gap between ACLs and observed harvest providing the opportunity for increased landings and a reduced likelihood of triggering restrictive AMs
- **Alternative 1 (No Action)** is not a viable alternative since it does not implement BSIA. Among the viable alternatives, **Preferred Alternative 2** would allow for the highest potential economic benefits followed by **Alternative 3** and **Alternative 4**.

### Summary of Social Effects:

- ACL does not directly affect resource users unless AMs are triggered resulting in significant direct and indirect social effects because, when triggered, can restrict harvest in the current season or subsequent seasons.
- Restrictions on harvest contribute to sustainable management goals and are expected to be beneficial to fishermen and communities in the long term.
- Generally, the higher the ACL the greater the short-term social benefits that would be expected to accrue if harvest is sustainable.
- Among the action alternatives, **Preferred Alternative 2** would be the most beneficial for fishermen, followed by **Alternative 3**, and **Alternative 4**.

### AP Recommendations:

- Clarify that catch levels are dependent on when the amendment is implemented.
- Continued concern about uncertainty of recreational data, especially for deepwater species, and improving technology that allows more people to access them.

### Committee Action:

- REVIEW AP RECOMMENDATIONS
- REVIEW RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES AND EFFECTS UNDER ACTION 1, MODIFY AS NECESSARY.



## Action 2. Revise sector allocations and sector annual catch limits for golden tilefish

### Purpose of Action:

Allocations need to be reviewed since the recreational landings stream changed in the new assessment. Recreational landings are now estimated using data from the Fishing Effort Survey rather than the Coastal Household Telephone Survey.

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Retain the current recreational sector and commercial sector allocations as 3.00% and 97.00%, respectively, of the revised total annual catch limit for golden tilefish. Within the commercial sector 25% is allocated to hook and line (HL) component and 75% to the longline (LL) component.

Year	Total ACL= ABC	Commercial ACL (lbs gw) (97% of Total ACL)			Recreational ACL (numbers of fish) (3% of Total ACL)
		Total	HL (25%)	LL (75%)	
2023	435,000	421,950	105,488	316,462	2,946
2024	448,000	434,560	108,640	325,920	3,034
2025	458,000	444,260	111,065	333,195	3,102
2026+	466,000	452,020	113,005	339,015	3,156

Note: Recreational annual catch limit in numbers of fish is based on conversion (4.430052 lbs/fish) used in Regulatory Amendment 28 (2012).

**Preferred Alternative 2.** Allocate 96.70% of the revised total annual catch limit for golden tilefish to the commercial sector and 3.30% of the revised total annual catch limit for golden tilefish to the recreational sector. Within the commercial sector 25% is allocated to the hook and line (HL) sector and 75% to the longline (LL) sector.

Year	Total ACL= ABC	Commercial ACL (lbs gw) (96.7% of Total ACL)			Recreational ACL (numbers of fish) (3.3% of Total ACL)
		Total	HL (25%)	LL (75%)	
2023	435,000	420,645	105,161	315,484	3,240
2024	448,000	433,216	108,304	324,912	3,337
2025	458,000	442,886	110,722	332,165	3,412
2026+	466,000	450,622	112,656	337,967	3,471

Note: Recreational ACL in numbers of fish is based on conversion (4.430052 lbs/fish) used in Regulatory Amendment 28 (2012).

## Discussion:

- The current commercial ACL is 331,740 lbs gw, and the current recreational ACL is 2,316 fish. The commercial annual catch limit is allocated between two gear sectors: 25% is allocated to the hook and line sector and 75% to the longline sector. The recreational ACL in numbers of fish is based on weight conversion (4.430052 lbs/fish) used in Regulatory Amendment 28 (2018).
- Amendment 18B (2012) allocated 25% of the commercial ACL to the hook-and line component and 75% to the longline component. Such an allocation restored access to the resource by hook-and-line fishermen to proportions observed prior to 2006, and during periods when they have historically harvested golden tilefish (late summer to early fall). It was noted that if the hook-and-line component regularly reached its ACL in the future, the Council would consider increasing the allocation. The Council is only considering two sector allocation scenarios for golden tilefish because the update to the recreational landings stream did not substantially change the historical landings ratio between the commercial and recreational sectors.
- The current allocations for the recreational and commercial sectors are 3% and 97%, respectively. These allocation percentages were based on applying the formula of sector annual catch limit = ((mean landings 2006-2008)\*0.5) + ((mean landings 1986-2008)\*0.5) to the landings dataset used in Snapper Grouper Amendment 17B that included recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program's Coastal Household Telephone Survey.
- Applying the same allocation method to data used in SEDAR 66, including recreational FES data where applicable, would result in allocations of 96.70% and 3.30% for the commercial and recreational sectors, respectively.

## Summary of Biological Effects:

- Biological effects are not expected to be substantially different between **Alternative 1 (No Action)** and **Preferred Alternative 2**, since the allocation percentages would be similar and do not affect the total ACL specified in Action 1.
- Proposed sector and gear type allocations under this action would not be expected to result in any biological effects, positive or negative, on co-occurring species

## Summary of Economic Effects:

- Sector ACLs that allow for more fish to be landed can result in increased positive economic effects if harvest increases without notable long-term effects on the health of a stock.
- The sector ACL does not directly impact the fishery for a species unless harvest changes, fishing behavior changes, or the sector ACL is exceeded, thereby potentially triggering AMs such as harvest closures or other restrictive measures. As such, sector ACLs that are set above observed landings in a fishery for a species and do not change harvest or fishing behavior may not have realized economic effects each year.

- Nevertheless, sector ACLs set above observed average harvest levels do create a gap between the sector ACL and typical landings that may be utilized in years of exceptional abundance or accessibility of a species, thus providing the opportunity for increased landings and a reduced likelihood of triggering restrictive AMs. As such there are potential economic benefits from sector ACLs that allow for such a gap. Under this notion, **Alternative 1 (No Action)** would allow for comparatively higher potential economic benefits than **Alternative 2** for the commercial sector.
- The opposite would be true for the recreational sector, where **Alternative 2** would have comparatively higher economic benefits than **Alternative 1 (No Action)**.

### **Summary of Social Effects:**

- **Alternative 1 (No Action)** would maintain the current allocation percentages and may have few social effects. With **Preferred Alternative 2** there would be a less than 1% decrease in the commercial percentage compared to **Alternative 1 (No Action)**.
- The choice of an allocation would need to be assessed with other actions within this amendment to determine the overall social effects and whether short-term losses are offset by any long-term biological gains.

### **AP Recommendations:**

- Clarify that catch levels are dependent on when the amendment is implemented.
- Continued concern about uncertainty of recreational data, especially for deepwater species, and improving technology that allows more people to access them.

### **Committee Action:**

- REVIEW EFFECTS UNDER ACTION 2.
- PROVIDE ADDITIONAL RATIONALE FOR PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE.

## **Action 3. Modify the fishing year for the commercial golden tilefish hook and line and longline sectors**

**Purpose of Action:** The Council is responding to an industry request to vary the fishing year for commercial golden tilefish sectors which would avoid oversupplying the market and allow commercial longline vessels to remain fishing for golden tilefish during Lent when prices tend to be relatively high.

Note: Council may choose more than one alternative.

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Do not modify the fishing year for the commercial hook and line or commercial longline components. Current fishing year for both sectors is January 1- December 31.

**Alternative 2.** Modify the fishing year for the commercial hook and line component.

**Sub-Alternative 2a.** Modify the fishing year to start January 15.

**Sub-Alternative 2b.** Modify the fishing year to start January 22.

**Sub-Alternative 2c.** Modify the fishing year to start February 1.

**Alternative 3.** Modify the fishing year for the commercial longline component.

**Sub-Alternative 3a.** Modify the fishing year to start January 15.

**Sub-Alternative 3b.** Modify the fishing year to start January 22.

**Sub-Alternative 3c.** Modify the fishing year to start February 1.

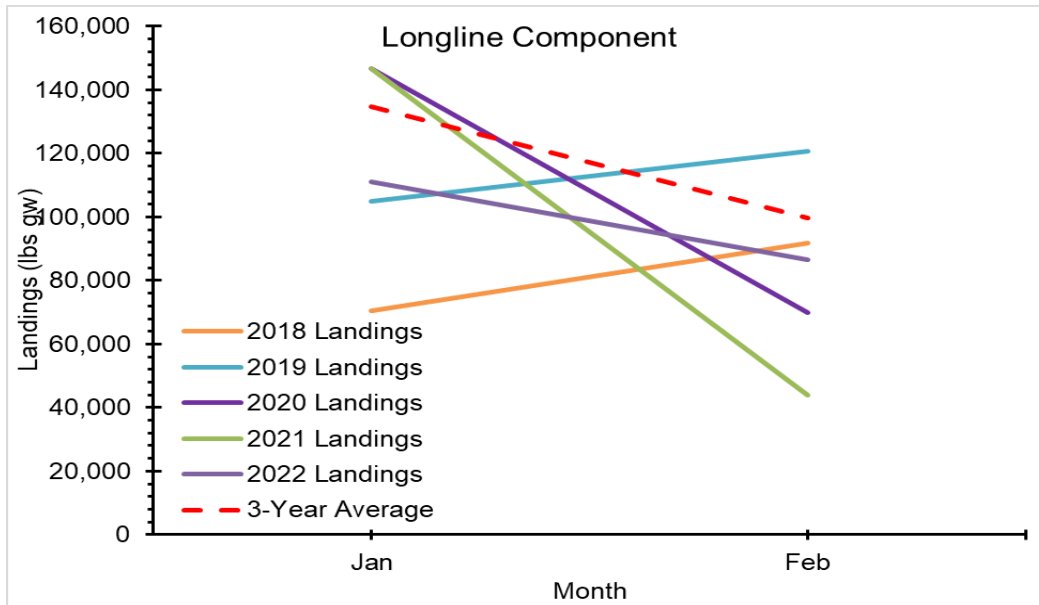
### **Discussion:**

The alternatives above are based on the Council's discussion at the March 2022 meeting.

## **Summary of Data or Preliminary Analyses**

### ***Longline Component***

- Preliminary analyses used recent commercial landings data to predict future landings and compare to the proposed catch levels. However, the data are limited due to numerous closures due to the ACL being met in-season.
- Since 2015, the longline component of the commercial golden tilefish fishery has typically closed due to meeting its ACL as early as mid-February and as late as early May.
- A three-year average of longline component landings by month were assumed to reflect future landings. However, no predictions were made from March through December because of frequent closures (see Appendix C for more detail on methodology used).

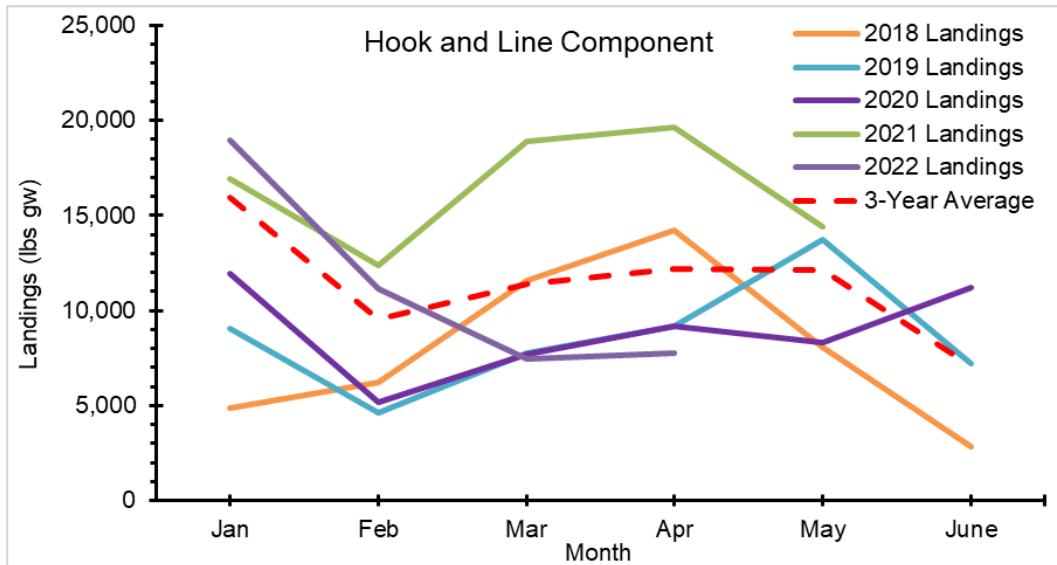


**Figure 1.** South Atlantic golden tilefish commercial longline component landings (lbs gw) by month from 2018 to 2022 and a three-year average of available monthly landings.

- The analysis predicts the adjusted commercial longline ACL would not be met before February 28.

### *Hook and Line Component*

- The South Atlantic golden tilefish hook and line component closed early every year since 2015. In 2021, the season closed on June 1, 2021. In previous years, the season had historically been longer. Since 2015, the season has progressively gotten shorter.
- Analyses for the hook and line component were conducted similarly to the longline component.
- However, the 3-year average landings (which total 68,259 lbs gw) were only available for the time period of January 1 through June 30. Therefore, the analysis shows that no closures are expected under any of the proposed ACLs before June 30.



**Figure 2.** South Atlantic golden tilefish commercial hook and line component landings by month from 2018 to 2022, and a three-year average of available monthly landings. All the landings are in pounds gutted weight.

### Summary of Biological Effects:

- Regardless of the alternative selected, this action is not anticipated to have negative biological impacts on golden tilefish because all of the action alternatives would result in a shortened recreational fishing season.
- None of the alternatives would modify the fishery in such a way that it would result in impacts to protected species.

### Summary of Economic Effects:

- There may be some economic benefits for both the commercial hook and line component (Alternative 2) and the commercial longline component (Alternative 3) if the start times vary avoiding oversupplying the market and leading to improved prices.
- A later start time for the commercial longline component would allow vessels to remain fishing for golden tilefish during Lent when prices tend to be relatively high. **Sub-alternative 3c** may then offer the highest economic benefits followed by **Sub-alternative 3b**, and **Sub-alternative 3c** in comparison to **Alternative 1 (No Action)**.

### Summary of Social Effects:

- Golden tilefish is an important commercial species in particularly in southern Florida.
- Changes to the fishing year could change the level of access to the golden tilefish stock during periods when golden tilefish are available.
- Long-term biological benefits of maintaining a healthy stock would contribute to future fishing opportunities for both the commercial and recreational sectors.

- The effects on commercial fishermen and related businesses would be associated with access to golden tilefish stock during periods when the dockside value is highest, and if the commercial ACL is met and an early closure occurs.

### **AP Recommendations:**

- Golden tilefish is important for the market when SWG are closed.
- Longline endorsement holders may benefit from a January 15 opening.
- Social benefits to families at the start of the year
- Extend fishing closer to Easter
- Retain the January 1 start date for the HL sector to allow them a “head start” for the year before the LL sector begins fishing.
- More and more participation in the HL fishery (also buoy gear in recent years) is rationale for consideration of a HL endorsement.

MOTION: RECOMMEND THAT THE COMMERCIAL LONGLINE SECTOR OPEN ON JANUARY 15.

MOTION: CONSIDER A GOLDEN TILEFISH HOOK-AND-LINE ENDORSEMENT AND BRING BACK TO THE AP AT A LATER DATE

MOTION: CONVENE A MEETING OF THE LONGLINE ENDORSEMENT HOLDERS TO DISCUSS WAYS TO MANAGE THEIR FISHERY

### **Committee Action:**

- REVIEW AP RECOMMENDATIONS
- REVIEW RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 3, MODIFY AS NECESSARY, AND SELECT A PREFERRED.

## **Action 4. Establish an incidental trip limit allowance for the golden tilefish longline sector once the longline quota is caught.**

**Purpose of Action:** To allow retention of golden tilefish caught incidentally while on trips fishing for other snapper grouper species to reduce potential golden tilefish discards.

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Do not establish an incidental trip allowance for the longline sector once the longline quota of golden tilefish is caught. After the commercial ACL for the longline component is reached or projected to be reached, golden tilefish may not be fished for or possessed by a vessel with a golden tilefish longline endorsement.

**Alternative 2.** Establish a 100 lbs. gutted weight incidental trip limit allowance of golden tilefish for the longline endorsement holders using hook and line gear once the longline quota is caught.

**Alternative 3.** Establish a 150 lbs. gutted weight incidental trip limit allowance of golden tilefish for the longline endorsement holders using hook and line gear once the longline quota is caught.

**Alternative 4.** Establish a 250 lbs. gutted weight incidental trip limit allowance of golden tilefish for the longline endorsement holders using hook and line gear once the longline quota is caught.

### **Discussion:**

- The incidental allowance would be subtracted from the annual allocation to the hook and line component. If adopted, the allowance would only be available once the longline component was closed and only until the allocation to the hook and line component was available.

### **Summary of Biological Effects:**

- Regardless of the alternative selected, this action is not anticipated to have negative biological impacts on golden tilefish.
- The biological effects of the proposed incidental trip limit allowance alternatives would be expected to be neutral compared to **Alternative 1 (No Action)**, because annual catch limits and accountability measures are in place to cap harvest and trigger corrective action if the annual catch limit is exceeded.
- None of the alternatives would modify the fishery in such a way that it would result in impacts to protected species.

### **Summary of Economic Effects:**

- All of the alternatives in **Action 4** would likely result in all of the commercial sector ACL being landed.



- Some economic benefits for vessels with a longline endorsement from allowing some level of harvest of golden tilefish when such harvest would otherwise be prohibited (**Alternatives 2-4**); however, this would come at the expense of harvest for vessels without such endorsement, thereby likely resulting in a transfer of economic benefits between fishery participants.
- From the perspective of potential benefits to vessels that have a golden tilefish longline endorsement, **Alternative 4** would provide the highest potential economic benefits followed by **Alternative 3**, **Alternative 2**, and **Alternative 1 (No Action)**. From the perspective of vessels within the commercial fishery without a longline endorsement, the economic ranking would be the opposite.

### **Summary of Social Effects:**

- Allowing incidental harvest via hook and line (**Alternative 2**, **Alternative 3**, and **Alternative 4**) would increase access for vessels that have a golden tilefish longline endorsement and is anticipated to result in direct social benefits to longline commercial fishing businesses in the form of increased revenue and indirect social benefits to fishing communities in the form of increased fish available to the market or for personal consumption.
- Allowing incidental harvest via hook and line for the longline component of the fishery may result in conflict with vessels that do not hold a longline endorsement and have historically been provided exclusive access to the hook and line ACL. This would be especially true if the additional landings result in the hook and line ACL being met or exceeded, triggering AMs, resulting in negative social effects associated with loss of access to the resource for fishing communities.

### **AP Recommendations:**

- Public comments provided to AP members:
  - incidental allowance for the LL sector is not acceptable
  - LL fishermen would like consideration of a bycatch allowance
- After LL fishing is over, there is bycatch of golden tilefish and a bycatch allowance would reduce unnecessary mortality and allow for the fish to enter the market
- Some vessels with LL endorsements continue to fish for yellow-edge grouper after the golden tilefish LL quota is caught. Also target sharks and wreckfish.
- Consider a hook and line endorsement to allow vessels that use longline to be allowed to retain golden tilefish after the LL quota is harvested
- Consider subtracting the bycatch allowance from the following year's LL quota
- Consider possible regional inequality in access (NC vs. FL)

MOTION: RECOMMEND THAT THE COUNCIL CONSIDER CONVENING A MEETING OF THE LONGLINE ENDORSMENT HOLDERS TO EXPLORE WAYS TO ADDRESS THE BYCATCH ISSUE

**Committee Action:**

- REVIEW AP RECOMMENDATIONS
- REVIEW RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 4, MODIFY AS NECESSARY, AND SELECT A PREFERRED IF APPROPRIATE.

## Action 5. Modify postseason recreational accountability measures for golden tilefish.

**Purpose of Action:** Modifications to recreational accountability measures for golden tilefish are being considered to prevent recreational landings from exceeding the ACL and correcting for overages if they occur.

	Post Season AMs	
	Trigger	Accountability Measure
<b>Alternative 1 (No action)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL</li> <li>Golden tilefish is identified as overfished;</li> <li>The combined commercial and recreational ACL is exceeded in the same calendar year.</li> </ul> <p><b>All triggers must be met.</b></p>	Recreational landings will be monitored for a persistence in increased landings and <i>if deemed necessary</i> , reduce the length of the recreational fishing season and the recreational ACL by the amount of the recreational ACL overage
<b>Alternative 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL</li> </ul>	Recreational landings will be monitored for a persistence in increased landings and <i>if deemed necessary</i> , reduce the length of the recreational fishing season and the recreational ACL by the amount of the recreational ACL overage
<b>Alternative 3</b>	NMFS would annually announce the recreational fishing season start and end. The fishing season will start on (date) and end on the date National Marine Fisheries Service projects the recreational annual catch limit will be met.	

### Discussion:

- The intent is that in season accountability measures for golden tilefish would stay in place under all alternatives being considered.
- Alternative 3 may be difficult due to the limited recreational landings. Projections are not likely to be very accurate if monthly landings over time are highly variable

### Summary of Biological Effects:

- Biological benefits would be expected to be greater for the alternative that provides the most timely and realistic option chosen to trigger and implement an AM.
- There is no mechanism to prevent the recreational ACL from being exceeded in-season since the current in-season AM requires the stock to be overfished. As such, **Alternative 2** could have negative biological effects to the golden tilefish stock. **Alternative 3** would result in biological benefit to the stock in that it is likely to prevent overages of the recreational ACL.

- Biological benefits to the golden tilefish stock would be greatest under **Alternative 3**, followed by **Alternative 2** and **Alternative 1 (No Action)**.

### **Summary of Economic Effects:**

- **Alternative 1 (No Action)** could result in short-term economic benefits for the recreational sector due to increased harvest and long-term potential economic costs to fishery participants. This alternative would not occur if the species is not overfished, therefore the economic effects are dependent on the status of the golden tilefish stock.
- The economic effects of **Alternative 2** would likely be similar to those of **Alternative 1 (No Action)**, but the AM would occur regardless of the stock status, thus has a higher likelihood of occurring.
- **Alternative 3** would result in a fishing season that is announced annually with set start and end dates. This AM would limit overall long-term harvest of golden tilefish but could result in economic benefits that mitigate the short-term cost of the AM itself by allowing more time to adjust to the changing harvest regulations through a consistent announcement of the season length.

### **Summary of Social Effects:**

- AMs can have direct and indirect social effects because, when triggered, can restrict harvest in the current season or subsequent seasons.
- **Alternative 2** would reduce the following fishing season in response to landings exceeding the recreational ACL. The fishing season may vary significantly from year to year due to changes in fishing behavior or environmental conditions. Inconsistent fishing seasons can make it challenging for private anglers and for-hire business to plan their fishing activities through the long-term.

### **AP Recommendations:**

MOTION: RECOMMEND ALTERNATIVE 2 AS PREFERRED

### **Committee Action:**

- REVIEW AP RECOMMENDATIONS
- REVIEW RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 5, MODIFY AS NECESSARY, AND SELECT A PREFERRED IF APPROPRIATE.

## Action 6. Modify blueline tilefish recreational bag limit.

**Purpose of Action:** The Council is considering lowering the recreational bag limit to lower the chance of the sector having overages and exceeding the ACL. In the last six years, landings of blueline tilefish in the South Atlantic region have often exceeded the sector and total ACL.

Note: Council can select more than one alternative to address bag limit modification as well as retention of blueline tilefish by captain and crew.

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** The current recreational blueline tilefish bag limit is 3 per person per day. Captains and crew of for-hire vessels with valid Federal South Atlantic Charter/Headboat Snapper Grouper Permits are allowed to retain bag limit quantities of all snapper grouper species during the open recreational season.

**Alternative 2.** Reduce recreational blueline tilefish bag limit to 2 fish per person per day.

**Alternative 3.** Reduce recreational blueline tilefish bag limit to 1 fish per person per day.

**Alternative 4.** Do not allow retention of blueline tilefish by captain and crew.

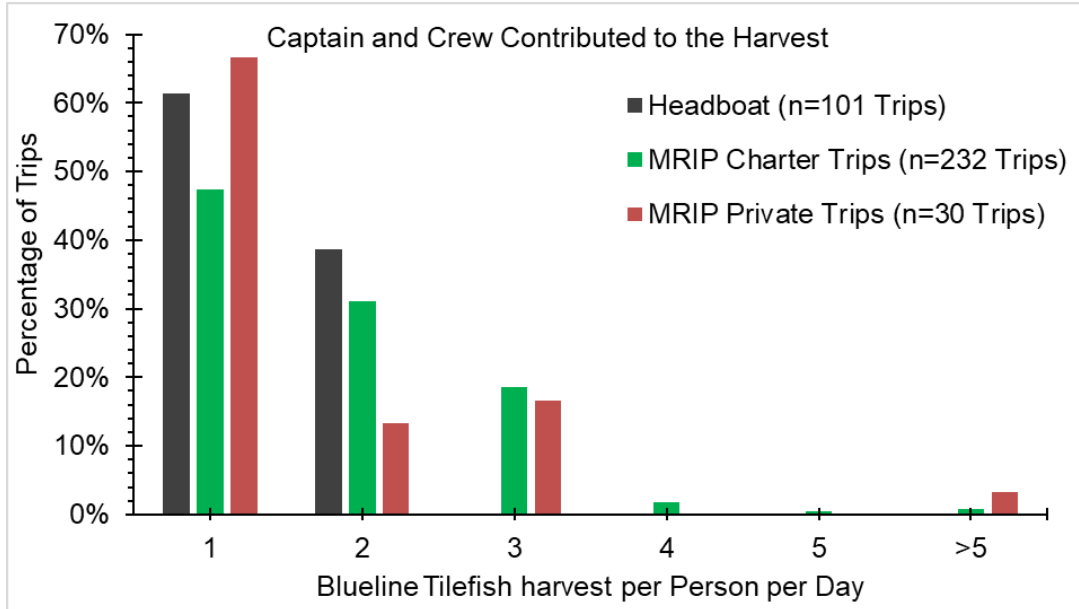
### Discussion:

- Effective January 27, 2014, federal rules were amended to allow captains and crew of for-hire vessels with valid Federal South Atlantic Charter/Headboat Snapper Grouper Permits to retain bag limit quantities of all snapper grouper species during the open recreational season (cite amendment where this was implemented).
- During the development of Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 26 (2019) the Council initially intended to tailor management measures to the group of deep-water species that are most frequently targeted by recreational fishermen in the region. The Council reasoned that creating an aggregate comprised of only these species would facilitate implementing regulations for species that have similar habitat requirements and life histories. However, fishermen's access to these species from different areas of the South Atlantic region is heavily influenced by factors such as distance to fishing grounds and weather. Consequently, management measures such as a recreational season are difficult to implement with the same level of success region-wide. Hence, the Council chose No Action as their preferred alternative.

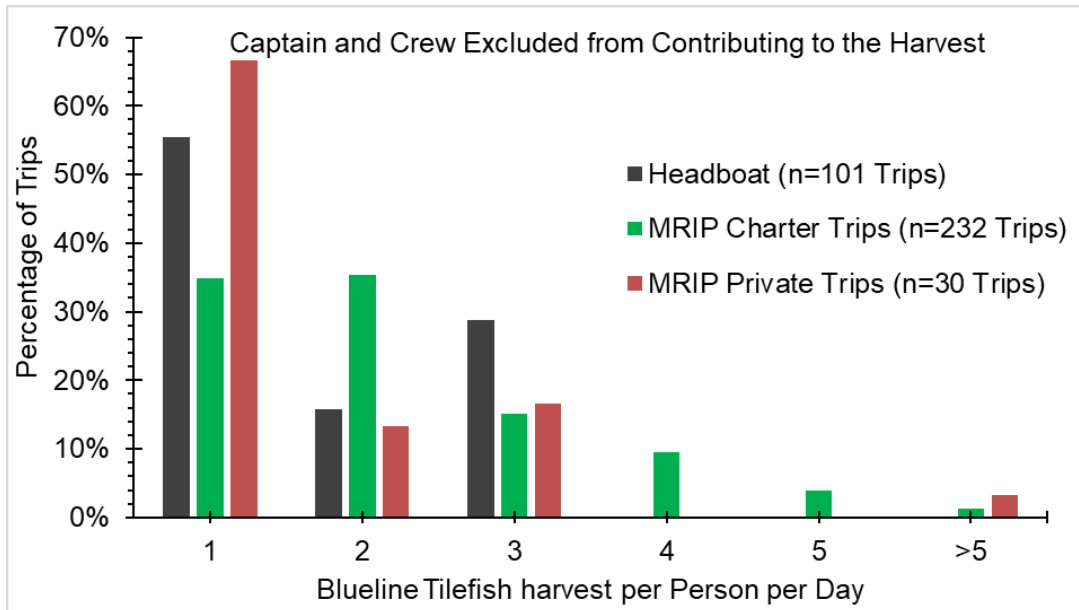
### Preliminary Data and Analyses:

*Note: See Appendix C for more details on the data analysis.*

The percentage of trips by blueline tilefish harvest per person per day and by mode (headboat, charter, and private) are shown **including the crew members in Figure 3** and **excluding the crew members in Figure 4**.



**Figure 3.** Percentage of trips for a range of South Atlantic blueline tilefish harvested per person by dataset and by mode. The harvest per person includes captain and crew to the contribution of the fish per person per day harvest. Data are from 2017 through 2021 for both headboat and MRIP.



**Figure 4.** Percentage of trips for a range of South Atlantic blueline tilefish harvested per person by dataset and by mode. The harvest per person excludes captain and crew from contributing to the fish per person per day harvest. Data are from 2017 through 2021 for both headboat and MRIP.

**Table 3.** Projected closure dates for the South Atlantic blueline tilefish recreational sector. The closure dates were generated from three different landings scenarios:

- 1) three-year average of the most recent years of complete data (2019-2021),
- 2) five-year average of the most recent years of complete data (2017-2021) and
- 3) the maximum landings in the last five years of complete data (2020).

Open Season Alternatives	Closure Date		
	Scenario 1: 3-Year Average	Scenario 2: 5-Year Average	Scenario 3: Max Landings
<b>3 Fish per Person per Day (Status Quo)</b>			
1. May-August	26-Jul	4-Aug	13-Jul
2. May-July	26-Jul	None	13-Jul
3. June-August	4-Aug	15-Aug	18-Jul
4. May-June	None	None	None
5. July-August	12-Aug	26-Aug	22-Jul
<b>2 Fish per Person per Day</b>			
1. May-August	30-Jul	10-Aug	15-Jul
2. May-July	30-Jul	None	15-Jul
3. June-August	8-Aug	20-Aug	20-Jul
4. May-June	None	None	None
5. July-August	16-Aug	None	24-Jul
<b>1 Fish per Person per Day</b>			
1. May-August	18-Aug	None	25-Jul
2. May-July	None	None	25-Jul
3. June-August	27-Aug	None	29-Jul
4. May-June	None	None	None
5. July-August	None	None	2-Aug
<b>No Retention for Captain and Crew</b>			
1. May-August	28-Jul	6-Aug	14-Jul
2. May-July	28-Jul	None	14-Jul
3. June-August	5-Aug	17-Aug	18-Jul
4. May-June	None	None	None
5. July-August	14-Aug	29-Aug	23-Jul

### Summary of Biological Effects:

- Reduction of the recreational bag limit under **Alternative 2** and **Alternative 3** would be expected to have a positive biological effect on the stock with less recreational pressure on the stock.
- **Alternative 4** would also lead to less recreational harvest if captain and crew are not allowed to retain bag limit quantities on each fishing trip.
- All of the action alternatives (**Alternative 2**, **Alternative 3** and **Alternative 4**) could result in a lengthened recreational fishing season due to this reduction in recreational harvest.

### **Summary of Economic Effects:**

- Setting the bag limit at 2 fish (**Alternative 2**) or 1 fish per person (**Alternative 3**) would have greater negative economic effects on a trip-level due to constraining harvest and related CS.
- Removing a captain and crew bag limit (**Alternative 4**) may also constrain harvest leading to similar effects in comparison to **Alternative 1 (No Action)**.
- Conversely, more restrictive retention limits would allow for longer open harvest seasons.

### **Summary of Social Effects:**

- In general, a reduction in the recreational bag limit (**Alternative 2** and **Alternative 3**) or prohibiting retention of fish by captain and crew (**Alternative 4**) may help slow the rate of harvest, lengthen a season, and prevent the ACL from being exceeded.
- Bag and vessel limits that are too low may make fishing trips inefficient and lower angler satisfaction.
- The higher bag limit under **Alternative 1 (No Action)** would likely have little effect on recreational fishermen in the short-term but could result in negative effects in the future if the recreational ACL is regularly exceeded.
- Slowing the rate of harvest and ensuring sustainable of harvest of the blueline tilefish stock would provide for long-term social benefits

### **AP Recommendations:**

- North of Cape Hatteras, blueline tilefish are abundant in shallow water
- Eliminating possession by captain and crew would be appropriate if needed; however, the Council could consider waiting until after the stock assessment is completed to consider changes to management measures
- Blueline tilefish is an important species for the for-hire sector in northeastern NC. When dolphin or tuna are not available, blueline tilefish fill that gap.
- Consider 3 per person with a maximum of 18?
- Consideration of current economic conditions to make changes to the possession limit for captain and crew

### **Committee Action:**

REVIEW RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 6, MODIFY AS NECESSARY, AND SELECT A PREFERRED IF APPROPRIATE.



## Action 7. Modify blueline tilefish recreational season.

### Purpose of Action:

The Council is modifying the recreational season to reduce recreational harvest and reduce the chance of the sector having overages and exceeding the ACL. In the last six years, landings of blueline tilefish in the South Atlantic region have often exceeded the sector and total ACL.

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** Do not modify the blueline tilefish recreational season. The current recreational season is May 1-August 31.

**Alternative 2.** Modify blueline tilefish recreational season to May 1 through July 30.

**Alternative 3.** Modify blueline tilefish recreational season to June 1 through August 31.

**Alternative 4.** Modify blueline tilefish recreational season to May 1 through June 30.

**Alternative 5.** Modify blueline tilefish recreational season to July 1 through August 31.

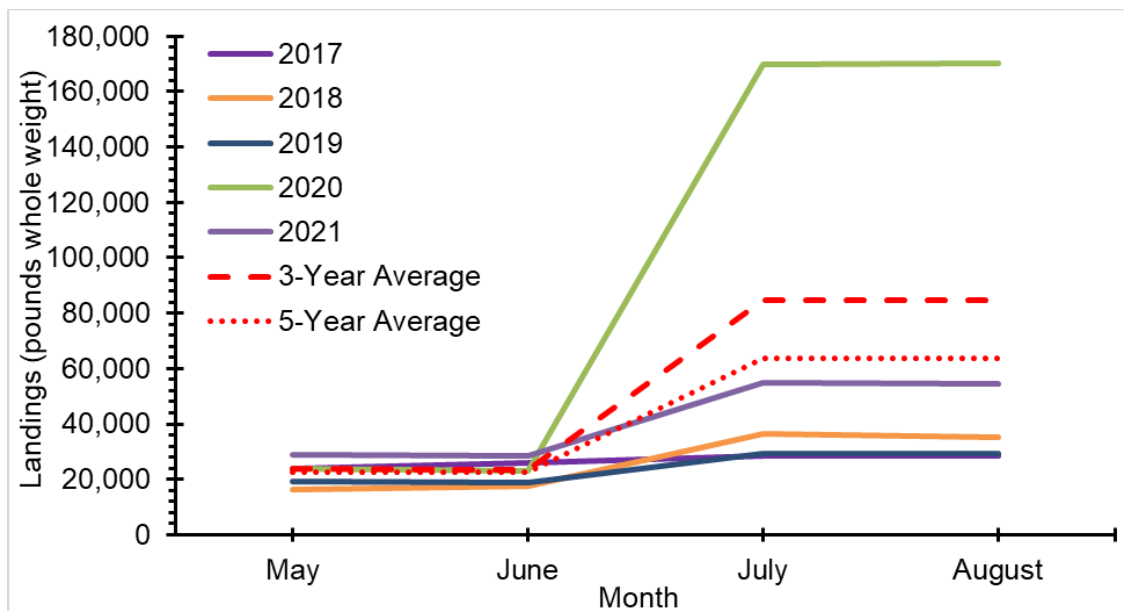
### Summary of Data or Preliminary Analyses:

*Note: See Appendix C for more details on the data analysis.*

Season lengths were projected by cumulatively summing the open season recreational landings for the three landings scenarios. The recreational ACL is 116,820 pounds whole weight (lbs ww).

**Table 4.** South Atlantic blueline tilefish recreational landings by month from 2017 through 2021 for the open season. The “3-Year Average” is average monthly landings (2019-2021). The “5-Year Average” is average monthly landings (2017-2021). The “Max Landings” are the landings from 2020.

Year	May	June	July	August	Total
2017	23,923	26,108	28,576	28,332	106,939
2018	16,531	17,642	36,536	35,009	105,717
2019	19,347	18,953	29,151	29,511	96,962
2020	23,811	23,082	169,839	170,421	387,152
2021	28,877	28,286	54,792	54,611	166,566
Scenario 1: 3-Year Average	24,012	23,440	84,594	84,848	216,893
Scenario 2: 5-Year Average	22,498	22,814	63,779	63,577	172,667
Scenario 3: Max Landings	23,811	23,082	169,839	170,421	387,152



**Figure 5.** South Atlantic blueline tilefish recreational landings by month from 2017 through 2021, three-year average, and five-year average for the open season.

Predicted closure dates were generated from the three different landings scenarios:

- 1) three-year average of the most recent years of complete data (2019-2021),
- 2) five-year average of the most recent years of complete data (2017-2021), and
- 3) the maximum landings in the last five years of complete data (2020 landings).

The closure dates were determined with cumulatively summing the recreational landings and comparing them to the ACL (116,820 lbs ww).

**Table 5.** Projected closure dates for the blueline tilefish recreational sector under proposed season alternatives.

Open Season Alternatives	Closure Date		
	3-Year Average	5-Year Average	Max Landings
1. May-August	26-Jul	4-Aug	13-Jul
2. May-July	26-Jul	None	13-Jul
3. June-August	4-Aug	15-Aug	18-Jul
4. May-June	None	None	None
5. July-August	12-Aug	26-Aug	22-Jul

### Summary of Biological Effects:

- The actions proposed would have a positive biological effect to the blueline tilefish stock because all of the action alternatives would result in a shortened recreational fishing season for blueline tilefish.
- This action is not anticipated to have negative biological impacts on blueline tilefish.
- Blueline tilefish have a spawning season which extends from February through October with a peak spawning period of April through September.

- Aligning season with other deepwater species would potentially reduce discards.
- None of the alternatives would modify the fishery in such a way that it would result in impacts to protected species.

### **Summary of Economic Effects:**

- Prolonged time periods when recreational harvest is allowed can result in increased economic benefits.
- If the ACL is not fully harvested during the established season, it can lead to fewer short-term economic benefits, thus there is the potential for **Alternative 2, Alternative 3, Alternative 4, and Alternative 5** to have lower economic benefits than **Alternative 1 (No Action)**.
- **Alternative 1 (No Action)** provides the longest fishing season (4 months), thus the greatest opportunity to fully harvest the ACL and the highest potential short-term economic benefits, followed by **Alternative 2 and Alternative 3** (three months), and **Alternative 3 and Alternative 4** (two months).

### **Summary of Social Effects:**

- The social effects of **Alternative 2, Alternative 3, Alternative 4, and Alternative 5** compared to **Alternative 1 (No Action)** would depend on when recreational effort is the highest for blueline tilefish.
- Social benefits for individual communities highly engaged in the recreational blueline tilefish fishery will vary based on when participation in the fishery is the highest in that community.

### **AP Recommendations:**

- Consider making the season coincide with the snowy grouper recreational season (alternative 4: May 1-June 30)

MOTION: RECOMMEND THE COUNCIL SELECT ALTERNATIVE 1 AS PREFERRED

### **Committee Action:**

- REVIEW AP RECOMMENDATIONS
- DISCUSSION IF AN ACTION TO ESTABLISH REGIONAL FISHING SEASONS IS FEASIBLE FOR THE RECREATIONAL BLUELINE TILEFISH FISHERY.

## Action 8. Modify postseason recreational accountability measures for blueline tilefish.

**Purpose of Action:** The Council is considering modifying the postseason recreational accountability measures to increase the ability to ensure the sector stays within the recreational ACL and has the ability to address overages regardless of whether the stock is overfished or the total ACL was exceeded. In the last six years, landings of blueline tilefish in the South Atlantic region have often exceeded the sector and total ACL however because all triggers were not met, post-season AMs were not implemented.

	Post Season AMs	
	Trigger	Accountability Measure
<b>Alternative 1 (No action)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL</li> <li>Blueline tilefish is identified as overfished;</li> <li>The combined commercial and recreational ACL is exceeded in the same calendar year.</li> </ul> <p><b>All triggers must be met.</b></p>	Recreational landings will be monitored for a persistence in increased landings and <i>if deemed necessary</i> , reduce the length of the recreational fishing season and the recreational ACL by the amount of the recreational ACL overage
<b>Alternative 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL</li> </ul>	Recreational landings will be monitored for a persistence in increased landings and <i>if deemed necessary</i> , reduce the length of the recreational fishing season and the recreational ACL by the amount of the recreational ACL overage
<b>Alternative 3</b>	NMFS will annually announce the recreational fishing season start and end. The fishing season will start on (date) and end on the date National Marine Fisheries Service projects the recreational annual catch limit will be met.	

### Discussion:

- The intent is that in season accountability measures for blueline tilefish would stay in place under all alternatives being considered.

### Summary of Biological Effects:

- Biological benefits would be expected to be greater for the alternative that provides the most timely and realistic option chosen to trigger and implement an AM.
- Under **Alternative 1 (No Action)**, the many triggers (recreational ACL and total ACL exceeded and the stock being overfished) would likely result in the post-season AM not being triggered.
- Alternative 2** would allow for the correction of recreational overages of the ACL in the following fishing season. There is no mechanism to prevent the recreational ACL from

being exceeded in-season since the current in-season AM requires the stock to be overfished. As such, the recreational ACL may be exceeded during the season and could result in a large season reduction from the previous year.

- **Alternative 3** would result in biological benefit to the stock in that it is likely to prevent overages of the recreational ACL. However, this alternative would not correct for an overage if it were to occur due to an unforeseen increase in recreational effort.
- Biological benefits to blueline tilefish would be greatest under **Alternative 3**, followed by **Alternative 2** and **Alternative 1 (No Action)**.

### Summary of Economic Effects:

- Recreational AMs typically consist of corrective measures that create short-term indirect negative economic effects by curtailing harvest and fishing activity when harvest has exceeded the sector ACL, thus potentially affecting net revenues of for-hire operations and CS on recreational fishing trips.
- **Alternative 1 (No Action)** would retain a post-season shortening of the season and a potential payback provision for an overage of the sector ACL that would reduce the sector ACL by the amount of the overage as long as blueline tilefish are overfished.
- There would continue to be no safeguard in place outside of the existing season to prevent the total ACL from being exceeded. This could result in short-term economic benefits for the recreational sector due to increased harvest and long-term potential economic costs to fishery participants.
- The economic effects of **Alternative 2** would likely be similar to those of **Alternative 1 (No Action)**, but the AM would occur regardless of the stock status, thus has a higher likelihood of occurring.
- **Alternative 3** would result in a fishing season that is announced annually and would limit overall long-term harvest of blueline tilefish but could result in economic benefits that mitigate the short-term cost of the AM itself by allowing more time to adjust to the changing harvest regulations through a consistent announcement of the season length.

### Summary of Social Effects:

- AMs can have direct and indirect social effects because, when triggered, can restrict harvest in the current season or subsequent seasons.
- While the negative effects are usually short-term, they may at times induce other indirect effects through changes in fishing behavior or business operations that could have long-term social effects
- Reducing the season length under **Alternative 1 (No Action)** is anticipated to result in direct negative social effects associated with loss of access to the resource.
- **Alternative 2**, would reduce the following fishing season in response to landings exceeding the recreational ACL, as such, the fishing season may vary significantly from year to year due to changes in fishing behavior or environmental conditions. Inconsistent fishing seasons can make it challenging for private anglers and for-hire business to plan their fishing activities through the long-term.

- Alternatively, **Alternative 3** would have NMFS announce the length of the recreational season for blueline tilefish. While the end date for blueline tilefish may shift each year, announcing at the beginning of the season would allow private anglers and for-hire businesses to plan their activities around the closure in advance.

**AP Recommendations:**

MOTION: RECOMMEND THE COUNCIL SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 AS PREFERRED

**Committee Action:**

- REVIEW AP RECOMMENDATIONS
- REVIEW RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 8, MODIFY AS NECESSARY, AND SELECT A PREFERRED IF APPROPRIATE.

## Appendix A.

**Table A1.** Table of past and present ABC, ACLs, landings, and closures for golden tilefish.

Management Measures	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
ABC (gw)	668,000	668,000	668,000	655,000	558,000	558,000	323,000	342,000	342,000	342,000
Total ACL (gw)	625,000	625,000	625,000	625,000	558,000	558,000	323,000	342,000	342,000	342,000
Com. ACL H&L(gw)	541,295	541,295	135,324	135,324	135,324	135,324	79,328	82,935	82,935	82,935
Com. ACL LL (gw)	Combined	Combined	405,971	405,971	405,971	405,971	234,982	248,805	248,805	248,805
Com. Landings H&L (gw)	517,188	537,946	144,678	143,872	121,962	131,941	74,445	85,141	87,616	82,279
Com. Landings LL (gw)			564,421	389,244	411,367	405,691	227,554	282,676	256,676	242,051
Com. Overage/ Underage H&L(%) Closure Date	95.5 2/17/12	99.4 5/5/13	106.9 8/29/14	106.3 12/8/15	90.1	97.5 11/29/17	93.8 8/14/18	102.7 7/23/19	105.6 7/23/20	100.8 6/1/21
Com. Overage/ Underage LL (%) Closure Date			139 3/5/14	95.9 2/19/15	101.3 3/15/16	99.9 5/19/17	96.8 3/25/18	113.6 3/14/19	103.1 2/18/20; 3/14- 23/20	94.3 2/10/21: 3/20- 30/21
Rec. ACL (# of fish)	3,019	3,019	3,019	3,019	3,019	3,019	2,187	2,316	2,316	2,316
Rec. Landings, "Old" MRIP (# of fish)	3,627	4,143	1,357	3,595	13,010	1,746	3,112	15,638	2,894	2,539
Rec. Overage/ Underage (%) Closure Date	120.1	137.2 6/3/13	44.9 6/7/14	119.1 8/11/15	430.9 8/27/16	57.8	142	675	125	110

## Appendix B.

**Table B1.** Table of past and present ABC, ACLs, landings, and closures for Blueline Tilefish.

Management Measures	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
ABC (ww)			224,100	224,100	224,100	224,100	233,968	233,968
Total ACL (ww)			174,798	174,798	174,798	174,798	233,968	233,968
Com. ACL (ww)	112,207	17,841	87,521	87,521	87,521	87,521	117,148	117,148
Com. Landings (ww)	159,300	80,337	100,392	87,558	93,051	95,904	116,563	119,781
Com. Overage/Underage (%)	142.0	450.3	114.71	100.04	106.32	109.58	99.50	102.20
Comm. closure date		4/7/15	6/1/16 Reopened 7/13/16; 8/30/16	7/18/17 Reopened 10/24/17- 11/1/17	8/22/18	7/30/19	8/11/20	8/1/21
Rec. ACL (ww)	111,893	17,791	87,277	87,277	87,277	87,277	116,820	116,820
Rec. Landings, MRIP-CHTS (ww)	95,712	45,323	172,286	153,959	116,597	110,113	392,253	189,224
Rec. Overage/Underage (%)	85.5	254.8	197.40	176.40	133.59	126.16	335.78	161.98
Rec. Closure date		6/10/15						

Note: Prior to 2014 Blueline Tilefish was part of the Deepwater Complex. 2021 Recreational landings are preliminary wave 1-4 MRIP landings. Recreational landings were provided from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center on October 25, 2021 and include both MRIP-CHTS and Southeast Region Headboat Survey landings.



## Appendix C.

### South Atlantic Golden Tilefish Commercial Sector Season Length Analyses for Snapper-Grouper Amendment 52

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Snapper-Grouper Amendment 52 (Amendment 52) is considering changes to management regulations for the golden tilefish stock. Amendment 52 is considering changes to the commercial sector's Annual Catch Limit (ACL).

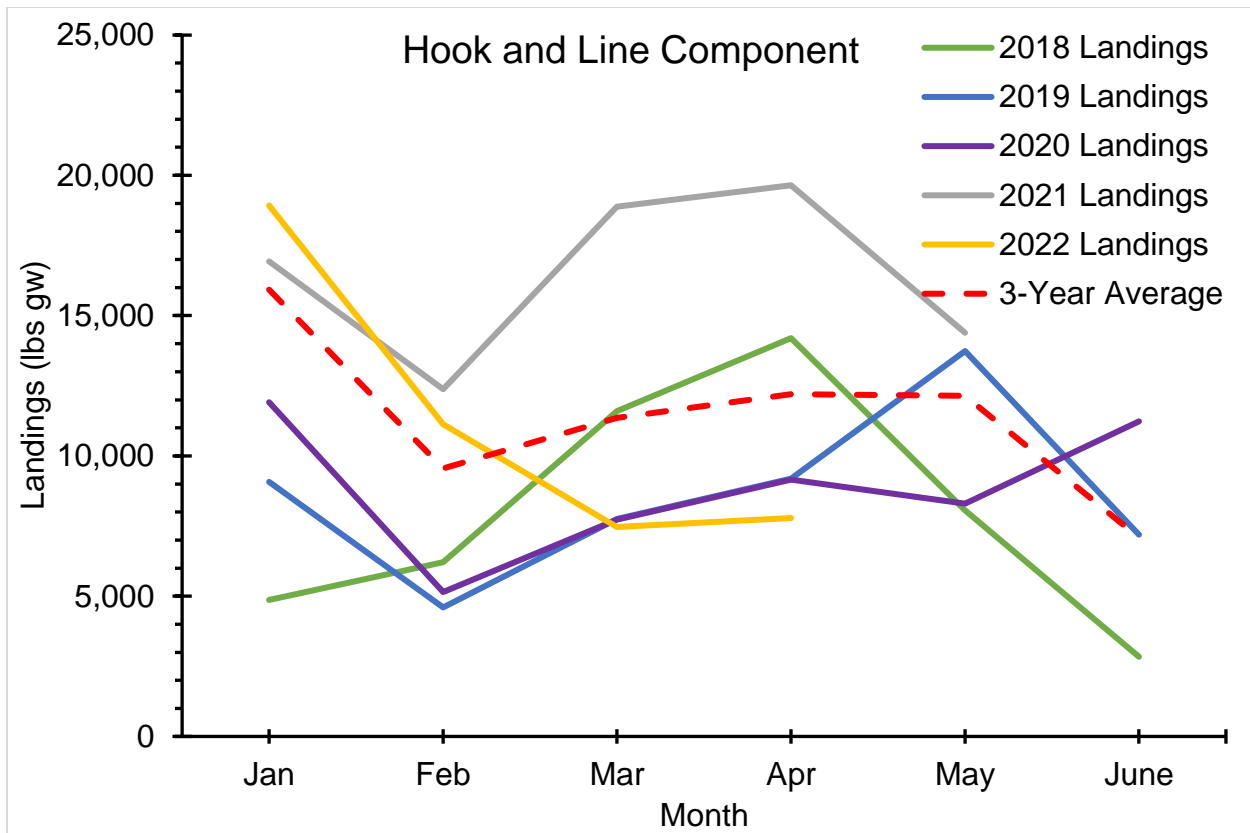
The South Atlantic golden tilefish commercial sector is separated into two gear specific components with individual ACLs: 1) hook and line and 2) long line. This amendment analysis was conducted to make predictions of the commercial landings for both of these gear components.

#### *Hook and Line Component*

Commercial landings data for South Atlantic golden tilefish were obtained from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) on May 13, 2022. All of the South Atlantic golden tilefish commercial landings are in pounds gutted weight (lbs gw). Future commercial landings were determined from reviewing recent commercial landings data, however, the recent commercial landings data is limited due to numerous closures of the hook and line component. Table 1 provides the past closure dates for the golden tilefish hook and line component from 2015 to 2021. A three-year average of landings by month was assumed to reflect future landings. Due to the numerous closures of the hook and line component different years were used to determine the average monthly landings. Average monthly landings for January through April came from 2020, 2021, and 2022. Average monthly landings for May came from 2019, 2020, and 2021. Average monthly landings for June came from 2018, 2019, and 2020. No predicted landings were done from July through December because this time period was frequently closed due to the commercial ACL being met in the past 10 years. Figure 1 shows the landings used in this analysis, and Table 2 provides the predicted landings for each month.

**Table 1.** Past closure dates for the South Atlantic golden tilefish hook and line component from 2015 to 2021. The commercial hook and line component was closed because the hook and line ACL was met.

<u>Closure Date</u>
December 8, 2015
None
November 29, 2017
August 14, 2018
July 23, 2019
July 23, 2020
June 1, 2021



**Figure 1.** South Atlantic golden tilefish commercial hook and line component landings by month from 2018 to 2022, and a three-year average of available monthly landings. All the landings are in pounds gutted weight.

**Table 2.** Predicted South Atlantic golden tilefish hook and line component commercial landings by month. The landings are in pounds gutted weight.

Month	Landings
January	15,925
February	9,552
March	11,359
April	12,197
May	12,139
June	7,087
<b>Total</b>	<b>68,259</b>

Amendment 52 is considering a range of commercial Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) for the hook and line component. Season lengths were projected by cumulatively summing the hook and line component 3-year average landings and compare the results to the ACLs show in Table 3. Closure dates were determined if the landings reached the ACL. Table 3 provides the predicted closure dates and none of the commercial hook and line ACLs were being met with the predicted landings. However, the 3-year average landings (which total 68,259 lbs gw) were only available

for the time period of January 1 through June 30. Therefore, the analysis shows that no closures are expected with any of the ACLs for the time period of January 1 through June 30.

**Table 3.** The projected closure dates for the golden tilefish commercial hook and line component for a range of commercial ACLs in Amendment 52. The closure dates came from comparing the 3-year average landings against the ACLs. However, the 3-year average landings are only available from January 1 through June 30.

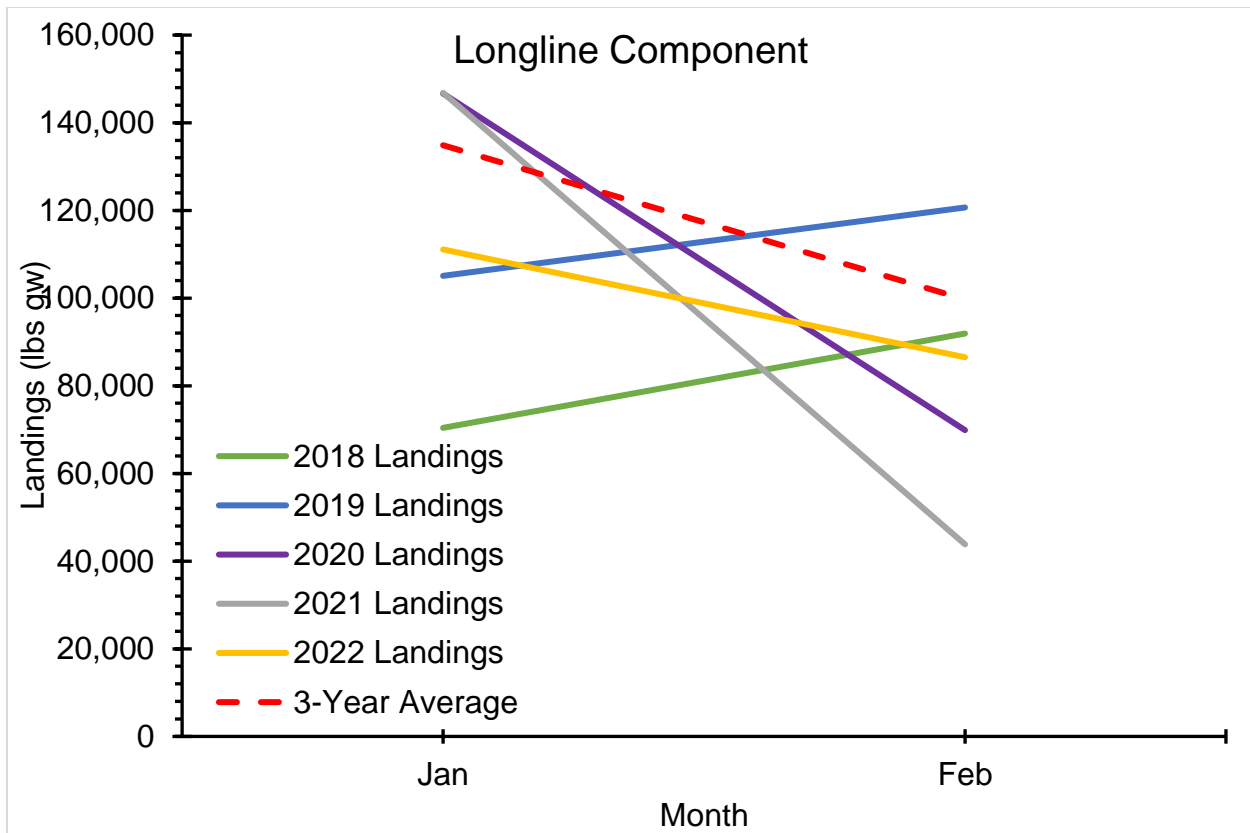
ACL	Closure Date
82,935	None
101,052	None
105,161	None
108,304	None
110,722	None
112,656	None

### *Longline Component*

As stated earlier, commercial landings data for South Atlantic golden tilefish were obtained from the SEFSC on May 13, 2022. All of the South Atlantic golden tilefish commercial landings are in pounds gutted weight (lbs gw). Future commercial landings were determined from reviewing recent commercial landings data, however the recent commercial landings data is limited due to numerous closures of the longline component. Table 4 provides the past closure dates for the golden tilefish longline component from 2015 to 2022. A three-year average of longline component landings by month were assumed to reflect future landings. Due to the closures different years were used to determine the average monthly landings. Average monthly landings for January came from 2020, 2021, and 2022. Average monthly landings for February came from 2018, 2019, and 2022. No predicted landings were done from March through December because this time period was frequently closed due to the commercial ACL being met in the past years. Figure 2 shows the landings used in this analysis, and Table 5 provides the predicted landings for each month.

**Table 4.** Past closure dates for the South Atlantic golden tilefish longline component from 2015 to 2022. The commercial longline component was closed because the longline ACL was met.

Closure Date
February 19, 2015
None
May 9, 2017
March 25, 2018
March 14, 2019
February 18, 2020
February 10, 2021
March 16, 2022



**Figure 2.** South Atlantic golden tilefish commercial longline component landings by month from 2018 to 2022 and a three-year average of available monthly landings. The landings are in pounds gutted weight.

**Table 5.** Predicted South Atlantic golden tilefish longline component commercial landings by month. The landings are in pounds gutted weight.

Month	Landings
January	134,866
February	99,701
Total	234,567

Amendment 52 is considering a range of commercial ACLs for the longline component. Season lengths were projected by cumulatively summing the commercial 3-year average landings and compare the results to the ACLs show in Table 6. Closure dates were determined if the landings reached the ACL. Table 6 provides the predicted closure dates and none of the commercial longline ACLs were predicted to be met. However, the 3-year average landings (totaling 234,567 lbs gw) were only available for the time period of January 1 through February 28. Therefore, the analysis shows that no closures are expected for the commercial longline ACLs for the time period of January 1 through February 28.

**Table 6.** The projected closure dates for the golden tilefish commercial longline component for a range of commercial ACLs in Amendment 52. The closure dates came from comparing the 3-year average landings against the ACLs. However, the 3-year average commercial longline landings are only available from January 1 through February 28.

<u>ACL</u>	<u>Closure Date</u>
248,805	None
303,155	None
315,484	None
324,912	None
332,165	None
337,967	None