



## Update on Snapper Grouper Amendments

October 2022

### *Amendment 50 (Red Porgy)*

**Purpose of Amendment:** Respond to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 60). Red porgy are overfished and overfishing is occurring. The Council is required to establish a rebuilding plan by June 2022 and adjust catch levels and management measures to end overfishing.

**Action Summary:** establish a rebuilding plan, revise annual catch limits (ACL), sector allocations, management measures for the commercial and recreational sectors, and accountability measures (AM) for the recreational sector.

**Key Events:**

- May 3, 2022: Amendment submitted.
- **September 9, 2022: Proposed rule published.**

### *Amendment 49 (Greater Amberjack)*

**Purpose of Amendment:** Respond to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 59). Greater amberjack are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.

**Action Summary:** Adopt recommended ABC, adjust total ACL and annual OY, sector allocations (and sector ACLs), consider modifications to minimum size limits, seasonal commercial trip limits, and the April spawning closure, and remove recreational ACT for species managed under the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan (FMP).

**Key Events:**

- June 2022: Public hearing held.
- **September 2022: Amendment approved for formal review.**

### Summary of Actions

**Action 1. Revise the greater amberjack acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield**

**Preferred Alternative 2.** ABC=SSC’s recommendation based on SEDAR 59; Total ACL=Annual OY=ABC

Fishing Year	ABC (lbs ww)	Annual OY (lbs ww)	Total ACL (lbs ww)
2022/2023	4,380,000	4,380,000	4,380,000
2023/2024	3,233,000	3,233,000	3,233,000
2024/2025	2,818,000	2,818,000	2,818,000
2025/2026	2,699,000	2,699,000	2,699,000

2026/2027+	2,669,000	2,669,000	2,669,000
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**Action 2. Revise the greater amberjack sector allocations and sector annual catch limits**

**Preferred Alternative 3.** 65.00% recreational; 35.00% commercial

Year	Recreational ACL (lbs ww)	Commercial ACL (lbs gw)	Commercial Season 1 Quota (lbs gw)	Commercial Season 2 Quota (lbs gw)
2022/2023	2,847,000	1,474,038	884,423	589,615
2023/2024	2,101,450	1,088,029	652,817	435,212
2024/2025	1,831,700	948,365	569,019	379,346
2025/2026	1,754,350	908,317	544,990	363,327
2026/2027+	1,734,850	898,221	538,933	359,288

**Action 3. Reduce the commercial minimum size limit for greater amberjack**

**Preferred Alternative 2.** Commercial minimum size limit: 34 inches fork length

**Action 4. Increase the seasonal commercial trip limits for greater amberjack**

**Preferred Alternative 3.** Modify the September 1 through the end of February (Season 2) commercial trip limit for greater amberjack to be:

**Preferred Sub-Alternative 3a.** 1,200 pounds gutted or whole weight.

(The Season 1 commercial trip limit remains 1,200 pounds gutted or whole weight)

**Action 5. Revise the April spawning closure for greater amberjack**

**Preferred Alternative 2.** Full closure of both the commercial and recreational sectors during April each year. No sale, purchase, harvest, or possession of greater amberjack from the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone during April.

**Action 6. Remove recreational annual catch targets from the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan**

**Preferred Alternative 2.** Remove recreational annual catch targets from the Snapper Grouper FMP.

*Amendment 48 (Wreckfish ITQ Program Modernization)*

**Purpose of Amendment:** The Council finished its second review of the Wreckfish ITQ program in September of 2019. As part of the review there were several recommendations made to modernize the program, which will be addressed in this amendment.

**Action Summary:** moving away from a paper coupon-based program to an electronic program; fishing season and spawning closure; cost recovery; wreckfish permit requirement; allocation issues; offloading sites and times; and vessel monitoring system requirements.

**Key Events:**

- Summer 2022: Meeting of the wreckfish shareholders to discuss amendment development.
- September 2022: Council selected preferred alternatives and approved document for public hearings at the March 2023 meeting.

### **Additional Notes**

- The Council requested an alternative be added to Amendment 48 that would allow for harvest or sale of wreckfish with a permit for South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, removing the requirement for the permit holder to also be a wreckfish shareholder.

### *Amendment 51 (Snowy Grouper)*

**Purpose of the Amendment:** Respond to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 36 Update). Snowy grouper are overfished and undergoing overfishing. The Council is required to adjust catch levels and management measures to end overfishing.

**Action Summary:** adopt recommended ABC, adjust total ACL and annual OY, sector allocations (and sector ACLs), consider modifications to management measures and recreational AMs.

**Key Events:**

- June 2022: Approved the amendment for public hearings
- September 2022: Public hearings held Sept 6 & 7. Council approved all actions.

### *Amendment 52 (Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish)*

**Purpose of Amendment:** Respond to the latest stock assessment for golden tilefish (SEDAR 66). Golden tilefish are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. The amendment would also respond to increased recreational effort on blueline tilefish.

**Action Summary:** Adjust catch levels and sector allocations for golden tilefish, consider modifications to commercial seasons (longline and hook-and-line) and accountability measures. Adjust the recreational bag limit for blueline tilefish and modify recreational accountability measures.

**Key Events:**

- June 2022: Approved the amendment for public hearings
- September 2022: Public hearings held Sept 6 & 7. Council approved all actions.

### *Amendment 53 (Gag Grouper)*

**Purpose of the Amendment:** Respond to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 71). Gag are overfished and undergoing overfishing. The Council is required to establish a rebuilding plan and adjust catch levels and management measures to end overfishing.

**Action Summary:** establish a rebuilding plan, adjust catch levels, sector allocations, management measures for the commercial and recreational sectors, and accountability measures (AM).

**Key Events:**

- September 2022: Revised recreational vessel limit Sub-Action, added actions to modify recreational management measures for black grouper, approved for public hearings, public hearing planned for in-person in January 2023.

### *Regulatory Amendment 35 (Release Mortality Reduction and Red Snapper Catch Levels)*

**Purpose of the Amendment:** Respond to the latest stock assessment for Red Snapper (SEDAR 73). Red Snapper are overfished and overfishing is occurring, mainly due to the large number of

Red Snapper that are released dead. Dead releases are a major issue in the snapper grouper fishery as a whole and affect many species within the complex.

**Action Summary:** Modify the Red Snapper ABC and ACLs and reduce dead releases in the snapper grouper fishery through gear restrictions to automatic reels and use of multiple hooks per line by the recreational sector, as well as expansion of best fishing practices outreach and education efforts. These actions are designed to reduce widespread discarding of snapper grouper species and end overfishing of red snapper.

**Key Events:**

- June 2022: Additional analyses presented for Red Snapper. Council directed consideration of some actions and additional analyses of impacts to the snapper grouper fishery (other than Red Snapper).
- September 2022: Analyses presented on snapper grouper recreational catch and releases. Council reviewed preliminary actions and provided guidance on alternatives to include and adjusted the development timeline for final approval in March 2023.

*Amendment 46 (Private Recreational Permits and Reporting)*

**Purpose of the Amendment:** Address deficiencies in recreational data through the creation of a permit and reporting requirement for private recreational vessels.

**Action Summary:** This amendment will investigate requiring a permit for anglers to participate in the recreational snapper grouper fishery and whether there will be or what type of trip reporting requirements would be required for anglers to participate in the snapper grouper fishery.

**Key Events:**

- June 2022: Ad hoc AP appointed
- Augusts 2022: AP convened
- September 2022: Council directed to reconvene the AP prior to the December 2022 meeting.

*Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 (Yellowtail Snapper)*

**Purpose of Amendment:** Respond to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 64). Yellowtail snapper are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.

**Action Summary:** adopt recommended ABC, adjust jurisdictional allocation between the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Councils, adjust ACLs, and sector allocations (SA only).

**Key Events:**

- December 2021: Work on the amendment suspended pending an interim analysis to include three additional years of data (through 2020).
- September 2022: Interim analysis results presented to Council. Direction to reinstate work on the amendment.

*Comprehensive ABC Control Rule Amendment*

**Purpose of Amendment:** To modify the ABC Control Rule to address flexibility allowed under the MSA and revise how uncertainty and risk tolerance are addressed in setting ABCs.

**Action Summary:** modify the ABC Control Rule, including specification of scientific uncertainty and management risk components, application of the Control Rule to rebuilding stocks, criteria and procedures for phase-in of ABC changes, criteria and procedures for carry-

over of unused portions of the annual catch limit, and establishment a framework procedure to allow carry-overs.

**Key Events:**

- June 2022: Council reviewed the draft amendment (all actions) and approved for public hearings.
- August 2022: Joint meeting of Dolphin Wahoo, Golden Crab, and Snapper Grouper AP representatives and public hearing held.
- September 2022: Council selected preferred alternatives and approved all actions.