



THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

# Snapper Grouper Amendment 53 Public Hearing



Allie Iberle

[allie.iberle@safmc.net](mailto:allie.iberle@safmc.net)

843-225-8135

[safmc.net](http://safmc.net)



# HOUSEKEEPING FOR THIS HEARING



The purpose of this hearing is to gather the public's input on the Council's proposed actions and preferred alternatives in Amendment 53. Public input will help shape the Council's final decisions on the amendment.



**FIRST**, I will review the amendment in its entirety



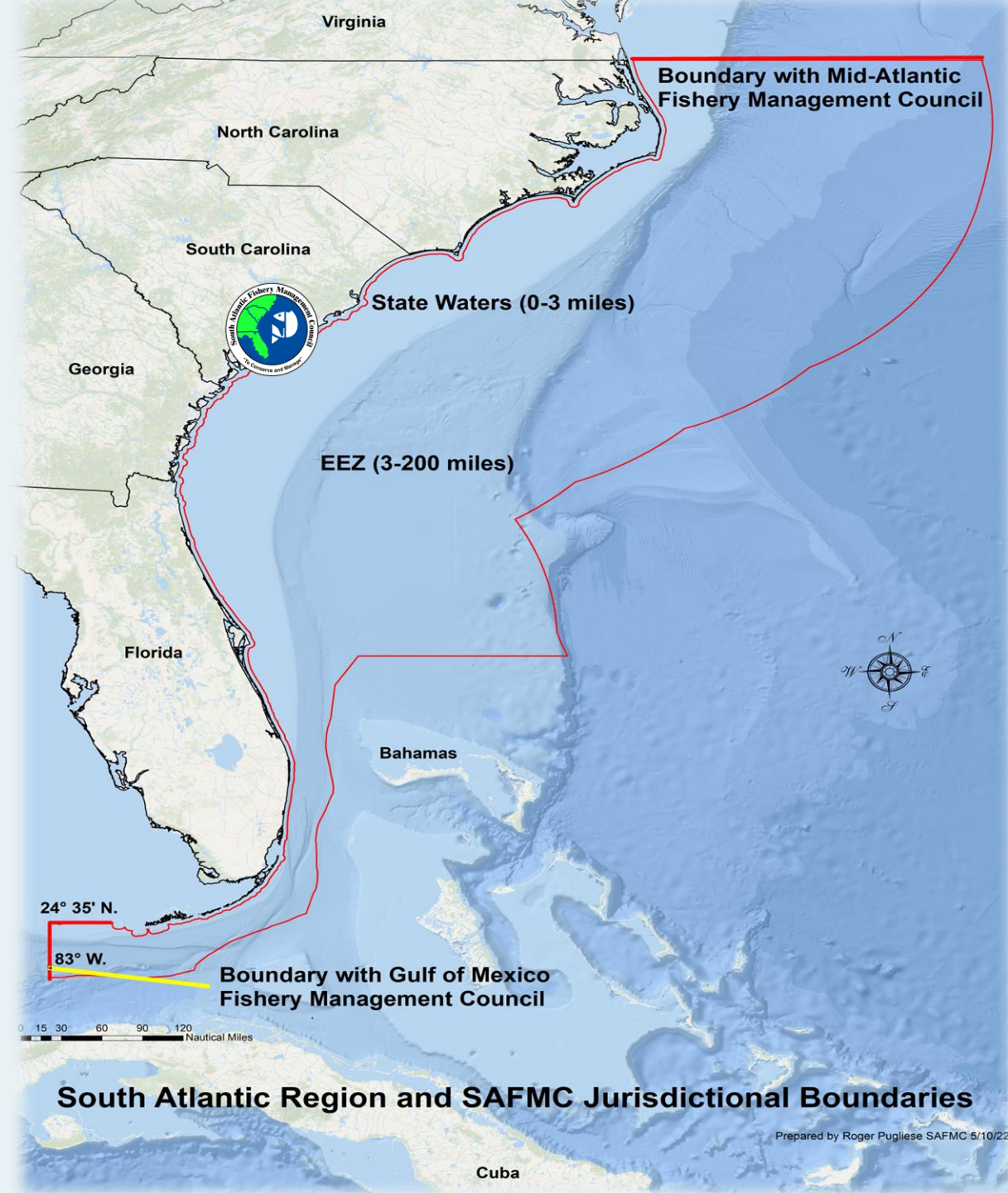
**NEXT**, I will answer any clarifying questions pertaining to this amendment



**FINALLY, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY**, a Council member is here to take your comment

# ABOUT THE COUNCIL

- Jurisdiction:
  - Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) ranges from 3-200 miles
  - South Atlantic Region: NC, SC, GA, East Coast of FL
- Council Makeup:
  - recreational and commercial fishermen, state marine agency reps, and federal partners
  - 17 members, 13 voting, 4 non-voting
  - Representatives from each state in the region.
- The Council provides recommendations to NOAA Fisheries





# BACKGROUND

The South Atlantic stock of **gag** was assessed in 2021 through **SEDAR 71**

This assessment indicated that the stock is **overfished** and is **experiencing overfishing**

An approximate **70% decrease** in harvest is needed to achieve catch levels to end overfishing

**Black grouper** was added to this amendment due to concerns over **identification issues**

## HOW IS OVERFISHING DETERMINED?

**Overfished Status:** The stock biomass is below the minimum stock size threshold (MSST)

**Overfishing Status:** The rate of fishing is above the maximum fishing mortality threshold (MFMT)

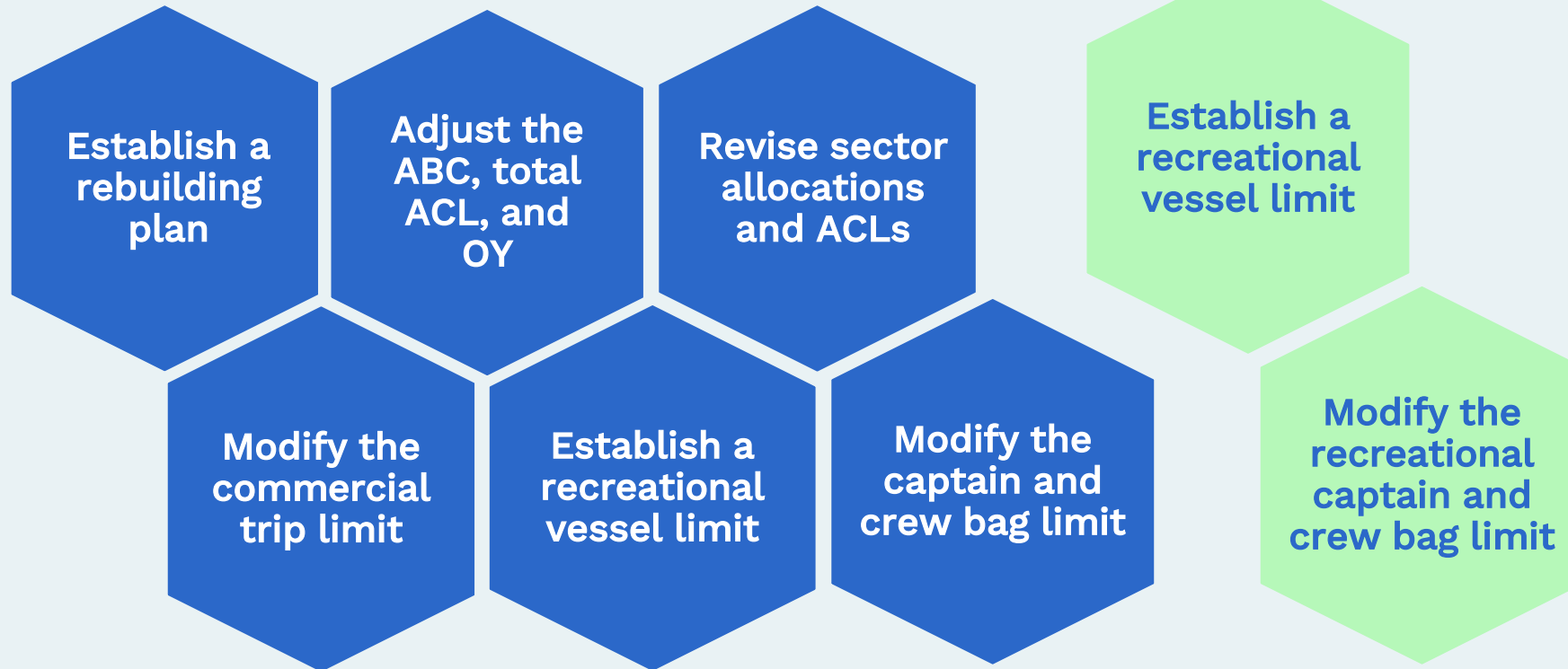
# WHAT CHANGES ARE PROPOSED IN AMENDMENT 53?



**Gag**



**Black Grouper**



# WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR AMENDMENT 53?



## March 2023:

Council will review public comment, and approve for formal review

**Mid/Late 2023:**  
Implementation of final rule

**January 2023:**  
Public Hearings



**June 2021:** Council reviewed results of SEDAR 71

**February 2022:** Scoping sessions held





# Action 1. Establish a rebuilding plan for gag

## WHY?

- To end overfishing and rebuild the stock in accordance with National Standard 1 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act

## Action 1. Alternatives

| Alternative               | Rebuilding Timeframe         | Terminal Year |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| Alternative 1 (no change) | 0 years                      | NA            |
| Alternative 2             | 7 Years                      | 2029          |
| Preferred Alternative 3   | 10 Years (maximum timeframe) | 2032          |

Under **National Standard 1**, if the stock is projected to rebuild under 10 years in the absence of fishing mortality then the rebuilding plan **may not exceed 10 years**



# **Action 2.** Revise the acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield for **gag**

## **WHY?**

- To incorporate best available science through the new ABC and OFL recommended by the SSC
- To incorporate recreational landings estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program's (MRIP) Fishing Effort Survey (FES)

### **CHTS vs FES RECREATIONAL ESTIMATES**

In 2018 the Coastal Household Telephone Survey (CHTS) was replaced with MRIP's FES method due to the dwindling number of landline phones and decreased survey bias of FES methods

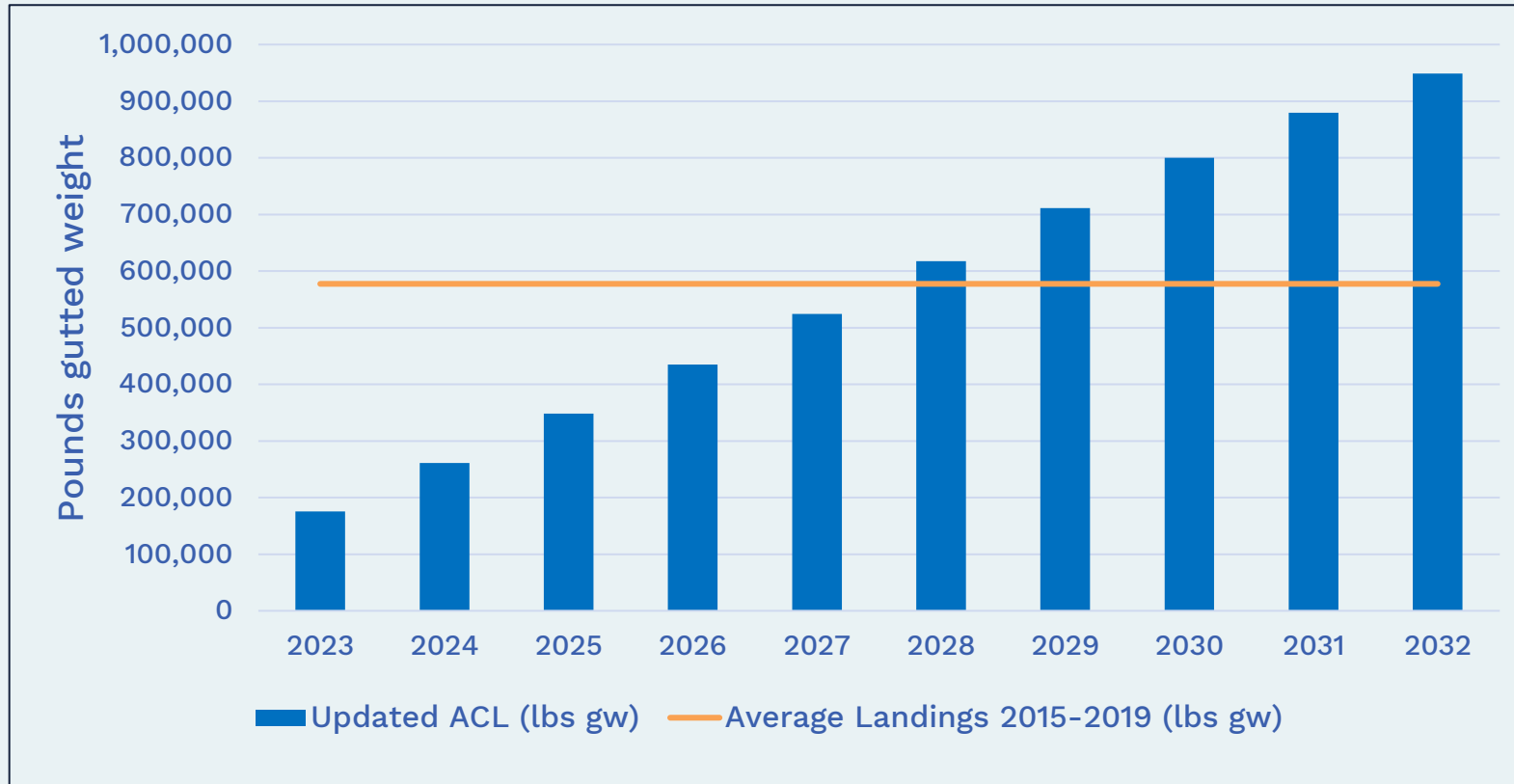


# Action 2. Alternatives



|                         | ACL (pounds gw) |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
|-------------------------|-----------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|                         | 2023            | 2024    | 2025    | 2026    | 2027    | 2028    | 2029    | 2030    | 2031    | 2032*   |
| Alternative 1           | 734,350         | 734,350 | 734,350 | 734,350 | 734,350 | 734,350 | 734,350 | 734,350 | 734,350 | 734,350 |
| Preferred Alternative 2 | 175,632         | 261,171 | 348,352 | 435,081 | 524,625 | 617,778 | 711,419 | 800,088 | 879,758 | 948,911 |
| Alternative 3           | 166,850         | 248,112 | 330,934 | 413,327 | 498,394 | 586,889 | 675,848 | 760,084 | 835,770 | 901,465 |
| Alternative 4           | 158,069         | 235,054 | 313,517 | 391,573 | 472,163 | 556,000 | 640,277 | 720,079 | 791,782 | 854,020 |

# Action 2 Analysis



The comparison of the total gag landings (i.e. commercial and recreational) from 2015-2019 (orange line) and proposed total ACLs (blue) under Preferred Alternative 2 for Action 2.



# Action 3. Revise the **gag** sector allocations and sector annual catch limits

## WHY?

Allocations are being updated to include: Updated catch levels (Action 2) and updated recreational landings estimates

## Action 3. Alternatives

| Alternative                    | Commercial/Recreational Allocation                                       | Basis for allocation   |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Alternative 1 (No Action)      | 51.00%/49.00%  | Landings distribution 1999-2003 used in Amendment 16 that incorporated CHTS recreational landings        |
| Alternative 2                  | 36.37%/63.63%  | Updated landings distribution 1999-2003 incorporating MRIP FES recreational landings                     |
| Alternative 3                  | 43.06%/56.94%  | Comp ACL Amendment Allocation Formula (0.5*landings from 1986 to 2008)+(0.5*landings from 2006 to 2008). |
| <b>Preferred Alternative 4</b> |  |  |
| Sub-alternative 4a             | Changes each year depending on initial decrease and subsequent increases | Distribution of commercial and recreational (MRIP FES) landings from 2017-2019                           |
| Preferred Sub-alternative 4b   | Changes each year depending on initial decrease and subsequent increases | Distribution of commercial and recreational (MRIP FES) landings from 2015-2019                           |

# Example – Preferred Sub-Alternative 4b



## Basis for Allocation:

2015-2019 Average Landings by Sector



### Commercial Average Landings 2015-2019

100,000 lbs



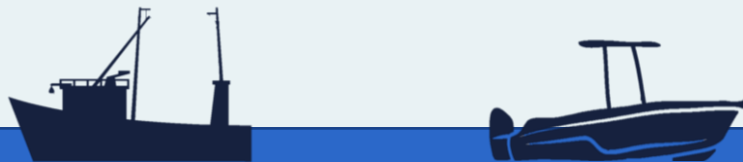
### Recreational Average Landings 2015-2019

200,000 lbs



### Total Average Landings 2015-2019

300,000 lbs



## Total Landings 2015-2019

300,000 lbs



## Updated Harvest Levels

Year 1: 75,000 lbs

Compared to the 2015-2019 total average landings a **75% reduction** in harvest would be needed to achieve the new catch level in Year 1



## Updated Harvest Levels

Year 1: 75,000 lbs

Compared to the 2015-2019 total average landings a **75% reduction** in harvest is needed



## Year 1 Allocations: Sharing the Initial Reduction

Because of the 75% reduction needed (based on each sector's 5-yr avg) each sector takes a 75% reduction proportional to their 5-year average



Commercial Year 1 ACL: 25,000 lbs (100K lbs – 75K lbs)



Recreational Year 1 ACL: 50,000 lbs (200K lbs -150K lbs)

This results in an allocation of 33% commercial and 67% recreational



## Year 2 and Throughout the Rebuilding Plan: Splitting the Increase in Pounds

**Year 2 Catch Level = 160,000 lbs  
(+85,000 lbs)**

Com: 25,000 lbs + 42,500 lbs = 67,500 lbs, 42% allocation  
Rec: 50,000 lbs + 42,500 lbs = 92,500 lbs, 58% allocation



**Year 3 Catch Level = 247,000 lbs  
(+87,000 lbs)**

Com: 67,500 lbs + 43,500 lbs = 111,000 lbs, 45% allocation  
Rec: 92,500 lbs + 43,500 lbs = 136,000 lbs, 55% allocation



**Year 4 Catch Level = 333,000 lbs  
(+86,000 lbs)**

Com: 111,000 lbs + 43,000 lbs = 154,000 lbs, 46% allocation  
Rec: 136,000 lbs + 43,000 lbs = 179,000 lbs, 54% allocations



**Year 5 Catch Level = 422,000 lbs  
(+89,000 lbs)**

Com: 154,000 lbs + 44,500 lbs = 198,000 lbs, 47% allocation  
Rec: 179,000 lbs + 44,500 lbs = 223,000 lbs, 53% allocation

# Preferred Sub-Alternative 4b



| Year | Commercial ACL (lbs gw) | Commercial Allocation % | Recreational ACL (lbs gw) | Recreational Allocation % |
|------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2023 | 85,326                  | 49%                     | 90,306                    | 51%                       |
| 2024 | 128,096                 | 49%                     | 133,075                   | 51%                       |
| 2025 | 171,687                 | 49%                     | 176,666                   | 51%                       |
| 2026 | 215,051                 | 49%                     | 220,030                   | 51%                       |
| 2027 | 259,823                 | 50%                     | 264,802                   | 50%                       |
| 2028 | 306,400                 | 50%                     | 311,379                   | 50%                       |
| 2029 | 353,220                 | 50%                     | 358,199                   | 50%                       |
| 2030 | 397,555                 | 50%                     | 402,534                   | 50%                       |
| 2031 | 437,390                 | 50%                     | 442,369                   | 50%                       |
| 2032 | 471,966                 | 50%                     | 476,945                   | 50%                       |





# Action 3. Revise the **gag** sector allocations and sector annual catch limits

## Analysis:

| Action 3, Preferred Sub-Alternative 4b: 5-year average shared reduction |           |                         |                   |                          |           |                          |                    |                           |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Year  | Rec. ACL* | Predicted Rec. Landings | Rec. Closure Date | Days Open in Rec. Season | Comm. ACL | Predicted Comm. Landings | Comm. Closure Date | Days Open in Comm. Season |
| 2023  | 90,306    | 311,339                 | Jun 17            | 47                       | 85,327    | 231,667                  | Jun 25             | 55                        |
| 2027  | 264,802   |                         | Oct 22            | 174                      | 259,823   |                          | None               | 245                       |
| 2032  | 476,945   |                         | None              | 245                      | 471,966   |                          | None               | 245                       |



# Action 4. Modify the commercial trip limit for gag

## WHY?

To achieve the reduction in harvest needed to constrain catch to the updated commercial ACLs, while maintaining an extended commercial season

## Action 4. Alternatives

| Alternatives                   | Trip Limit   |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Alternative 1 (No Action)      | 1,000 lbs gw until 75% of the commercial ACL is met then 500 lbs gw                        |
| Alternative 2                  | 200 lbs gw   |
| <b>Preferred Alternative 3</b> | <b>300 lbs gw</b>  |
| Alternative 4                  | 400 lbs gw   |
| Alternative 5                  | 500 lbs gw   |
| Alternative 6                  | 300 lbs gw in 2023, 500 lbs gw in 2026, 1,000 lbs gw in 2027 and thereafter until modified |



# Action 4. Modify the commercial trip limit for gag (cont'd)

## Alternative 6.

Alternative 6 was developed based on the years when, according to projections, the commercial ACL would not be met, and therefore would be appropriate to increase the commercial trip limit. Table 10 displays when overages are expected to end under different trip limits.

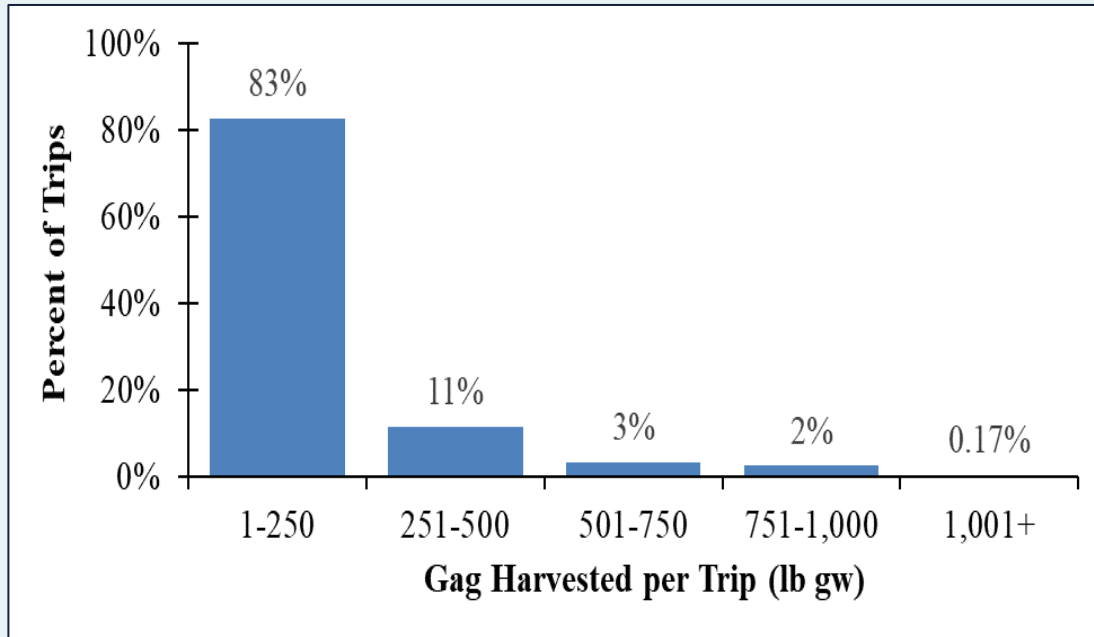
The expected years where the commercial ACL is expected to be met under the 300 lbs gw trip limit for Alternative 6 for Action 4.

| Year | Allocations Alternative     | Trip Limit | Commercial ACL Projected to be met? Y/N |
|------|-----------------------------|------------|---|
| 2023 | Split Reduction, 5 yr basis | 300 lbs gw | Y                                       |
| 2024 | Split Reduction, 5 yr basis | 300 lbs gw | Y                                       |
| 2025 | Split Reduction, 5 yr basis | 300 lbs gw | Y                                       |
| 2026 | Split Reduction, 5 yr basis | 300 lbs gw | N                                       |
| 2027 | Split Reduction, 5 yr basis | 300 lbs gw | N                                       |
| 2028 | Split Reduction, 5 yr basis | 300 lbs gw | N                                       |
| 2029 | Split Reduction, 5 yr basis | 300 lbs gw | N                                       |
| 2030 | Split Reduction, 5 yr basis | 300 lbs gw | N                                       |
| 2031 | Split Reduction, 5 yr basis | 300 lbs gw | N                                       |
| 2032 | Split Reduction, 5 yr basis | 300 lbs gw | N                                       |

# Action 4. Modify the commercial trip limit for gag



## Analysis:



| Year | Alternative             | Alternative/Trip Limit | Approximate Date ACL will be Met |
|------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2023 | Preferred Alternative 3 | 300 lbs gw             | July 15th                        |
| 2027 | Preferred Alternative 3 | 300 lbs gw             | No Closure                       |
| 2032 | Preferred Alternative 3 | 300 lbs gw             | No Closure                       |



# Action 5. Modify the recreational management measures for gag

**Sub Action 5a.** Establish a recreational vessel limit

**Sub Action 5b.** Prohibit the retention by captain and crew



# Sub-Action 5a. Establish a recreational vessel limit for gag

## WHY?

To achieve the reduction in harvest needed to constrain catch to the updated recreational ACLs, while maintaining recreational access

## Sub-Action 5a. Alternatives

| Alternative                  | Recreational Component | Vessel Limit*      |
|------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Alternative 1 (No Change)    | Both                   | none               |
| Preferred Sub-Alternative 2a | Private Recreational   | 2 fish/vessel/day  |
| Sub-Alternative 2b           | Private Recreational   | 4 fish/vessel/day  |
| Preferred Sub-Alternative 3a | For-Hire               | 2 fish/vessel/trip |
| Sub-Alternative 3b           | For-Hire               | 4 fish/vessel/trip |

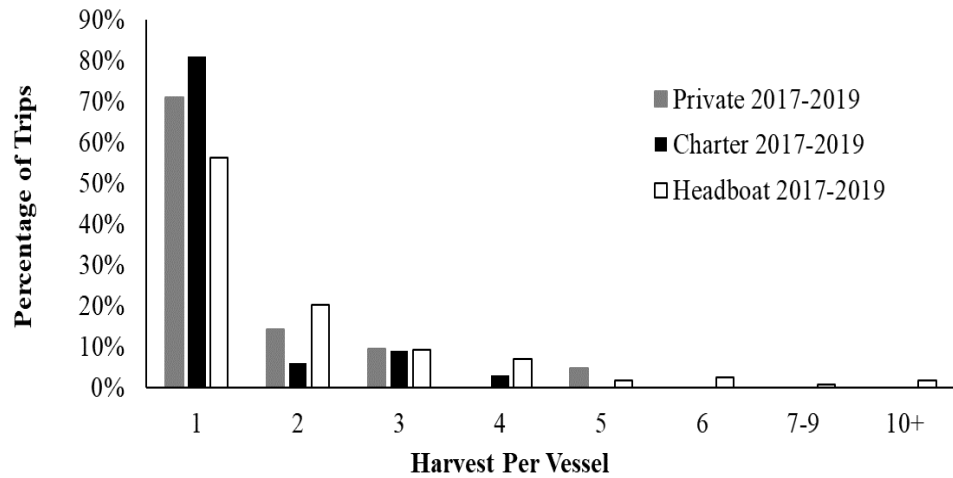
\*not to exceed the daily bag limit of 1 fish per person per day, whichever is more restrictive



# Sub-Action 5a. Establish a recreational vessel limit for gag (cont'd)

## Analysis:

The predicted percent change in landings per trip from the current 1 fish per person per day (pp/day) limit.



Distribution of South Atlantic gag harvested per vessel trip from the two recreational datasets: MRIP FES (n = 21 private trips and 33 charter trips), and SRHS (n= 897 headboat trips).

| Action 5 Alternatives      | Potential Vessel Limit (# of fish)                   | Change Private Vessel Landings | Change in Charter Vessel Landings | Change in Headboat Landings |
|----------------------------|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Alternative 1 (No Action)  | 1 fish pp/day  | 0%                             | 0%                                | 0%                          |
| <b>Pref. Alternative 2</b> | <b>Private Vessel Limit</b>                          |                                |                                   |                             |
| Alternative 2a             | 2 fish per vessel per day                            | -20%                           | --                                | --                          |
| Alternative 2b             | 4 fish per vessel per day                            | -3%                            | --                                | --                          |
| <b>Pref. Alternative 3</b> | <b>For-Hire Vessel Limit (Charter and Headboats)</b> |                                |                                   |                             |
| Pref Alternative 3a        | 2 fish per vessel per trip                           | --                             | -13%                              | -30%                        |
| Alternative 3b             | 4 fish per vessel per trip                           | --                             | 0%                                | -11%                        |



# **Sub-Action 5b. Prohibit the retention of gag by captain and crew**

## **WHY?**

To constrain recreational harvest to the updated catch levels and contribute to rebuilding

## **Sub-Action 5b. Alternatives:**

**Alternative 1 (No Action):** The captain and crew on a for-hire vessel with a Federal for-hire permit may retain the daily bag limit of gag as allowed for each passenger

**Preferred Alternative 2:** The gag bag limit for captain and crew on a for-hire vessel with a Federal for-hire snapper-grouper permit is zero





# **Action 6.** Modify the **gag** recreational accountability measures

## **WHY?**

To prevent recreational landings from exceeding the recreational ACL and correct for overages if they occur

# Action 6. Modify the gag recreational accountability measures



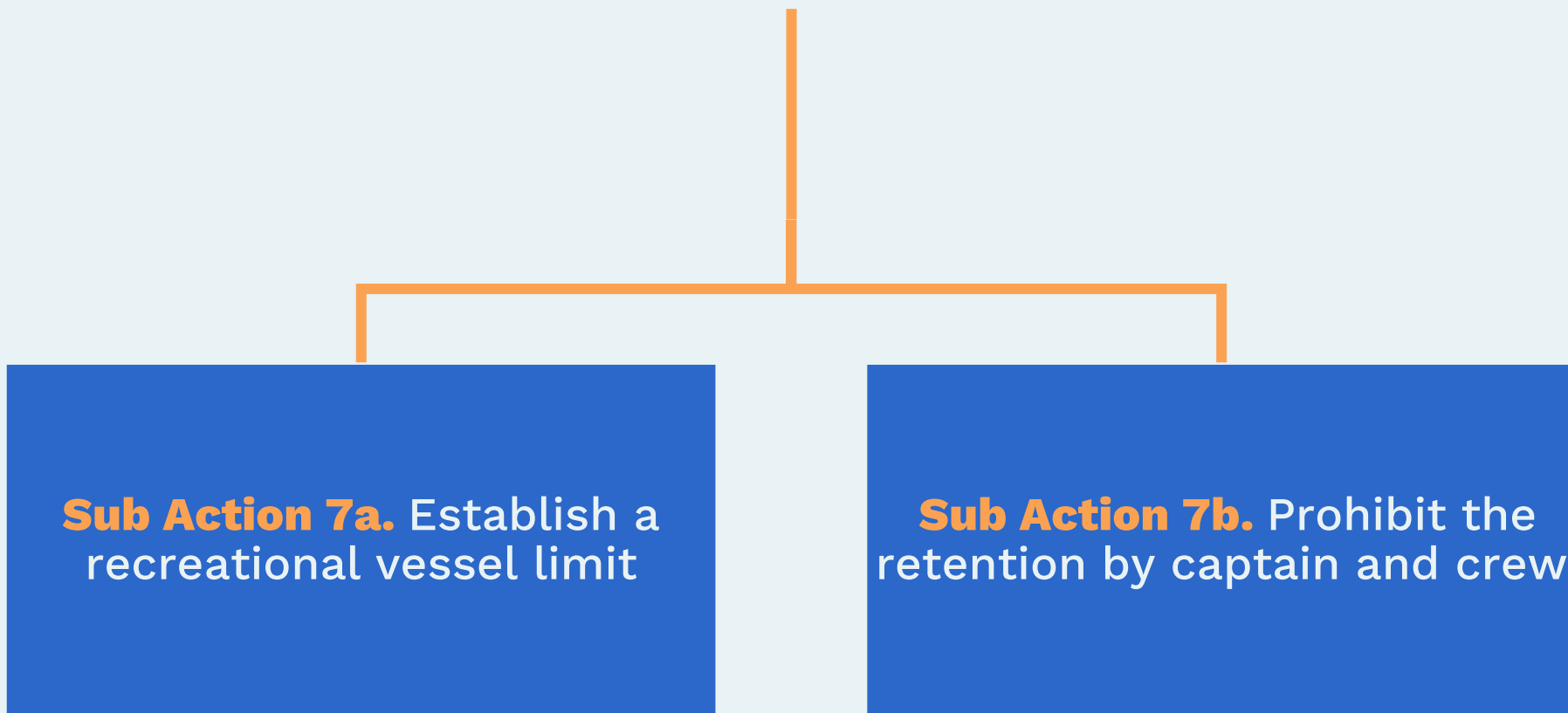
|                                      | IN-SEASON AM  |                                    | POST SEASON AM   |  |
|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|--|--|
|                                      | TRIGGERS  | AM                                 | TRIGGERS   | AM   |
| <b>ALTERNATIVE 1<br/>(NO ACTION)</b> | Recreational landings reach/projected to reach recreational ACL                 | Current recreational season closes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreational landings exceed recreational ACL</li> <li><del>Total ACL exceeded</del></li> <li><del>Stock is overfished</del></li> </ul> *All 3 must occur for AM to take effect | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreational ACL for the following year reduced by the recreational overage</li> <li>Recreational season for the following year is reduced by the amount of the recreational overage</li> </ul> |
| <b>ALTERNATIVE 2</b>                 | NMFS will annually announce the recreational fishing season start and end dates |                                    |  |  |
| <b>ALTERNATIVE 3</b>                 | NONE  |                                    | Recreational landings exceed recreational ACL<br><br>*no longer tied to total ACL and stock status   | Recreational season for the following year is reduced by the amount necessary to prevent the recreational ACL from being exceeded  |
| <b>PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE 4</b>       | Recreational landings reach/projected to reach recreational ACL                 | Current recreational season closes | Recreational landings exceed recreational ACL<br><br>*no longer tied to total ACL and stock status   | Recreational season for the following year is reduced by the amount necessary to prevent the recreational ACL from being exceeded  |

**REMOVING IN-SEASON, UN-COUPLING RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL POST-SEASON**

**RETAINING IN-SEASON, UN-COUPLING RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL POST-SEASON**



# Action 7. Modify the recreational management measures for **black grouper**





# Sub-Action 7a. Establish a recreational vessel limit for **black grouper**

## WHY?

Because of concerns over identification between gag and black grouper in the recreational sector

## Sub-Action 7a. Alternatives

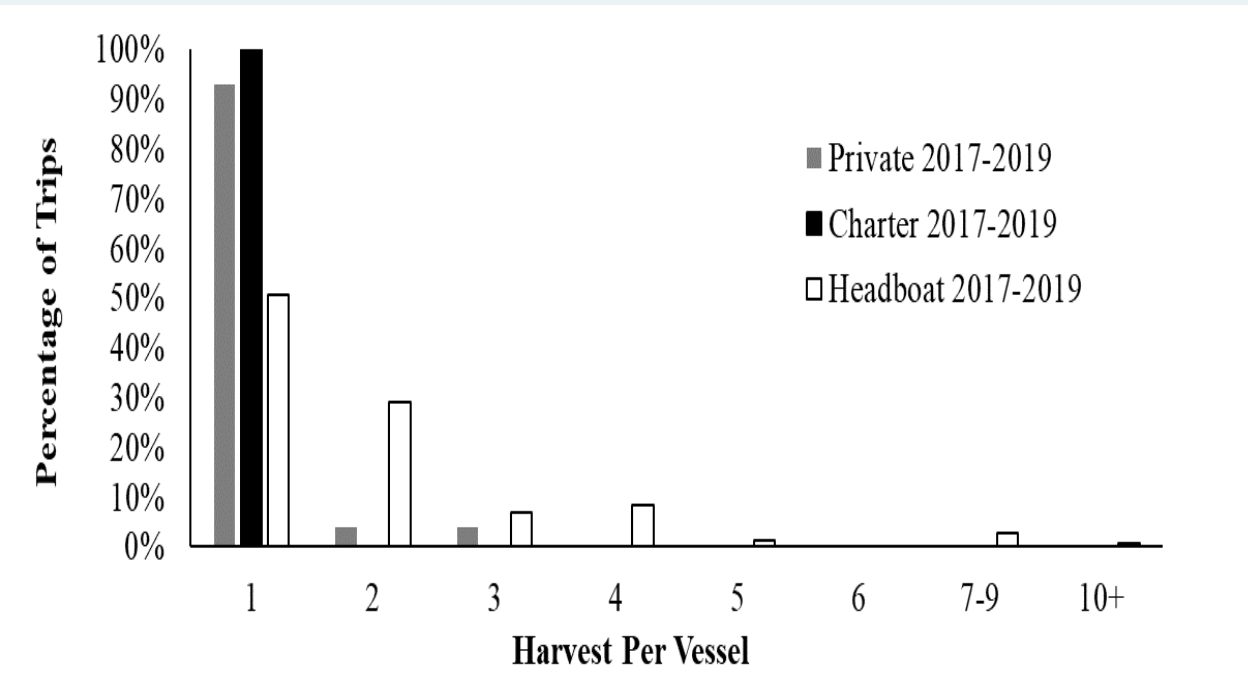
| Alternative                     | Recreational Component | Vessel Limit*      |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Alternative 1 (No Change)       | Both                   | none               |
| <b>Preferred Alternative 2a</b> | Private Recreational   | 2 fish/vessel/day  |
| Alternative 2b                  | Private Recreational   | 4 fish/vessel/day  |
| <b>Preferred Alternative 3a</b> | For-Hire               | 2 fish/vessel/trip |
| Alternative 3b                  | For-Hire               | 4 fish/vessel/trip |

\*not to exceed the daily bag limit of 1 fish per person per day, whichever is more restrictive



# Sub-Action 7a. Establish a recreational vessel limit for **black grouper** (cont'd)

## Analysis:



| Action 7 Alternatives     | Potential Vessel Limit (# of fish) | MRIP Private Predicted Change in Landings | For-hire Predicted Change in Landings |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Alternative 1 (No Action) | 1 fish pp/day                      | 0%  | 0%                                    |
| Alternative 2             | 2 per vessel                       | -6%                                       | -24%                                  |
| Alternative 3             | 4 per vessel                       | 0%  | -7%                                   |

| Year                | Percentage of ACL Harvested |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2017                | 52%                         |
| 2018                | 73%                         |
| 2019                | 19%                         |
| 2020                | 49%                         |
| 2021                | 44%                         |
| <b>5-yr Average</b> | <b>47%</b>                  |



# **Sub-Action 7b. Prohibit the retention of black grouper by captain and crew**

## **WHY?**

Because of concerns over identification between gag and black grouper in the recreational sector

## **Sub-Action 7b. Alternatives:**

**Alternative 1 (No Action):** The captain and crew on a for-hire vessel with a Federal for-hire permit may retain the daily bag limit of black grouper as allowed for each passenger

**Preferred Alternative 2:** The black grouper bag limit for captain and crew on a for-hire vessel with a Federal for-hire snapper-grouper permit is zero



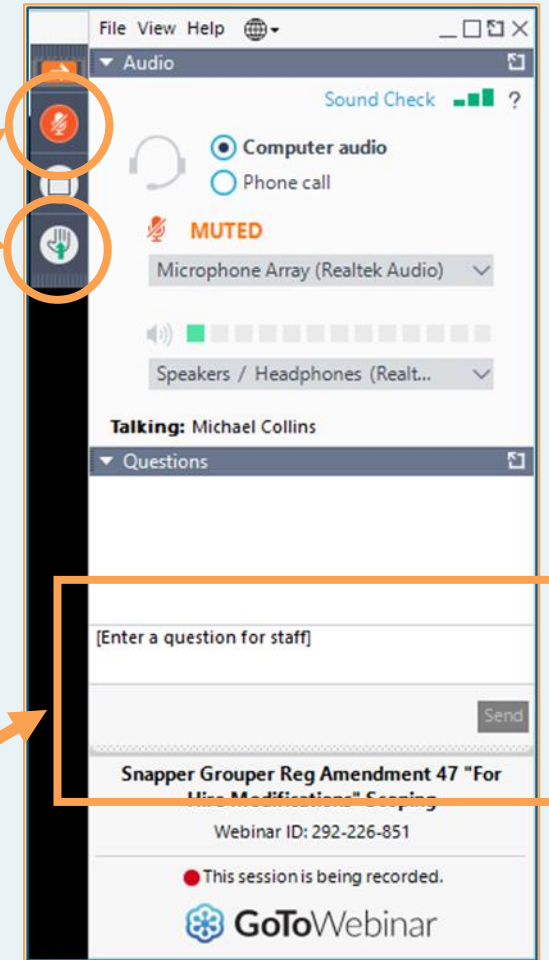
# WEBINAR CONTROLS



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After we give you the ability to unmute, you can unmute (or mute) your microphone by clicking the microphone icon. Red is muted, green is unmuted. Please remain muted when not speaking

You can also type a question into the text box







# **CLARIFYING QUESTIONS?**

**Any clarifying questions pertaining  
to Amendment 53**



# PUBLIC COMMENT



Allie Iberle  
[allie.iberle@safmc.net](mailto:allie.iberle@safmc.net)  
843-225-8135

## Other ways to comment:

1. Through the [Online Comment Form](#) on the Council's website.
2. Through a handwritten submission. Written comments should be addressed to John Carmichael, Executive Director, SAFMC, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, N. Charleston, SC 29405. Written comments must be received by February 13, 2023, by 5 p.m.