

# Summary Report

## Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel

Crowne Plaza  
4831 Tanger Outlet Boulevard  
North Charleston, SC

October 31-November 1, 2016

### **Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 (Yellowtail Snapper Allocation)**

Actions to address sector allocations of Yellowtail Snapper are being addressed in a joint amendment to the Snapper Grouper and Dolphin Wahoo Fishery Management Plans. John Hadley, Council staff, presented an overview of actions under consideration to modify sector allocations for Yellowtail Snapper to avoid in-season closures. Scoping for this amendment was conducted in August 2016 and the Council is scheduled to approve it for public hearings at their December meeting. Hearings would be held in late January/early February 2017. Important points of the discussion that ensued are below:

- AP members expressed concern that the fishery was closed in 2016 based on projections that left a large portion of the ACL unharvested. They asked “How will NMFS be able to monitor landings to apply some of the alternatives being considered in Amendment 44 when landings cannot be reliably tracked right now?”
- Concern was also expressed about the timeliness of recreational landings; estimates might not be available in time for some of the alternatives under consideration in Amendment 44 to be feasible.
- AP members expressed concern about Alternatives 3, 5, & 6 – they are complex to execute and there is much concern about re-allocations of quotas.
- Common pool alternative (Alt. 4) – AP members expressed support for this approach because it does not seem to pit the sectors against each other.
- Some concern about taking away the ability to “leave fish in the water” for conservation and to avoid possible overfishing.
- Concern about sectors going against each other under the approach proposed in Alternative 2. However, if the need is to achieve OY, then Alternative 2 is the best way to achieve that without harming either sector.
- It was noted that none of the alternatives under consideration in Amendment 44 would be needed if NMFS could effectively monitor the landings.
- It was noted that the fishing year for Yellowtail Snapper just changed to August 1 three months ago. It is expected that this will make a big difference in terms of the commercial sector reaching its ACL; it is likely that there will not be early closures anymore.
- If the commercial sector catches its entire ACL under the new fishing year but the recreational sector does not, then this is good for the fishery especially because the uncaught fish would be in spawning condition and they should not be harvested.

- AP members suggested waiting to see the effect of the fishing year change and then consider making changes if needed.
- Alternative 4 – suggestion to initially establish the “common pool” with underages from previous year so as not to take it off the ACL in the first year.

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 1 AS PREFERRED

APPROVED BY AP (1 OPPOSED) (Note: Alternative 1 is No Action.)

**Consideration of Limited-Entry for the For-Hire Sector (Amendment 45)**

At their meetings in March 2016 and June 2016, the Council discussed possible implementation of a limited-entry program for the for-hire sector for the Snapper Grouper, Dolphin Wahoo, and Coastal Migratory Pelagics fisheries. At their September 2016 meeting, the Council discussed the pros and cons of implementing a for-hire permit limited entry program. The Council will deliberate at their December 2016 meeting whether or not to move forward with establishing a limited entry program for any of the three for-hire permits. If they do proceed with developing this amendment, the Council could approve the amendment for scoping in January/February 2017. A control date of June 15, 2016 has been approved by the Council. John Hadley, Council staff, facilitated discussion of this topic. Highlights from the discussion are below:

Do you think limiting entry into the for-hire sector is warranted at this time?

- Some AP members were not in favor of limiting entry for the for-hire sector because it could lead to sector separation like in the Gulf of Mexico.
- It was stated that the number of for-hire operators in the region is not the issue; data collection and management are the issues. Another issue that will have significant issues on the for-hire sector is Red Snapper management. There is concern among the for-hire industry that if large areas are closed because of Red Snapper, there will not be a charter business anymore.
- Why is there a for-hire permit if for-hire businesses are lumped in with the private recreational sector for management and monitoring purposes? The for-hire sector needs to be made accountable and managed in a way that will allow charter captains to stay in business.
- Concern that for-hire sector is being harmed due to “unaccountability” of the private recreational sector. In that sense, sector separation seems like a good idea. However, this needs to be explained very clearly to the public.
- There is continued concern that the MRIP survey is not adequate for managing the for-hire sector. Council staff clarified that the MRIP sampling methodology will continue for charter vessels until after the proposed logbook program for charter vessels is implemented and validated. So, there will be some overlap. Also, states would need to require a logbook program for their for-hire vessels as well before the methodology could shift from the current MRIP sampling to a MRIP-certified logbook sampling program.
- AP members felt that as soon as a control date is set on an open access permit, it is no longer perceived as an open access permit. Permits should be numbered because there is no way to identify permits that were in existence prior to the control date.

What impact do you think the upcoming weekly electronic requirement for the for-hire sector will have on limiting entry?

- Can't have one without the other because otherwise there will be no compliance and a lot of effort will be spent setting up the program but the benefits will be minimal.
- As long as the weekly reporting requirement goes in to place at the federal and state levels, there is no need for limiting entry. The reporting requirement will take care of identifying the number of users in the charterboat industry. If we then find that there are too many fishermen, then limited entry can be considered at that time.
- The most important thing is to get accurate data. Implementing limited entry is not going to keep some fishermen from engaging in charter fishing without a permit. Currently there are many charterboat captains that are not aware of the requirement for a federal permit.
- Some charter captains feel the reporting burden should be placed on the individual fisherman, the customer.
- Concern is that private recreational fishermen could soon be looking to obtain a for-hire permit just so they can go fishing since possible closures or seasons are likely to be implemented to address management of Red Snapper.
- Some AP members felt that the for-hire sector should be separate from the overall recreational sector in order to survive. This will be contentious but necessary.
- It was noted that the number of permits outside the Council's area would complicate a limited entry program for Coastal Migratory Pelagics (CMP) and for Dolphin Wahoo (DW). Also, DW permits are open access for both the recreational and commercial sectors whereas the CMP and snapper grouper fisheries already have limited entry for the commercial sector. This would complicate things further.
- Limited entry program could create an economic incentive to consolidate permits, etc. However, in the Gulf, the limited entry permits are still inexpensive.
- The current system does not allow for tracking of permits since they are not numbered. When a permit is transferred from one boat to another, the NMFS Permits Office simply issues a new one since the permits are open access. According to an AP member, the NMFS Permits Office agrees that there should be a way of identifying the permits individually.

MOTION: SUPPORT LIMITED ENTRY FOR THE SNAPPER GROUPER FOR-HIRE PERMIT

APPROVED BY AP (3 OPPOSED)

### **Update on For-Hire Electronic Reporting Amendment**

The Council reviewed the For-Hire Electronic Reporting Amendment at their September 2016 meeting. The amendment contains 3 actions: implementing mandatory electronic reporting for charter boat trips, changing the timing for report submission for headboat electronic reports to the Tuesday following the reporting week ending on the prior Sunday, and requiring charter trips to provide location information by degrees and

minutes of latitude and longitude as now required for headboat trips. Over the last several meetings, the Council reviewed and approved a list of core variables to be collected through the program for each trip. The Council will consider final approval at the December 2016 meeting, with implementation expected in mid-2017. We anticipate initial voluntary participation in 2017 as the reporting system is developed and possible mandatory participation in January 2018.

John Carmichael, Council staff, presented an overview of the amendment. The AP had the following comments:

- Once implemented, for-hire electronic reporting (ER) will be running side-by-side with current MRIP survey for a number of years to calibrate and adjust new program, etc.
- Concern about the magnitude of discrepancy between MRIP and new survey. Fishermen will be pleased to hear that the programs will need to run side-by-side for some time.

### **Citizen Science Proposals**

Council staff gave a brief overview of proposals that are being submitted to NMFS to fund Citizen Science Projects addressing management of the snapper grouper fishery. Below is a summary of each of the three projects:

#### **PROJECT #1: South Atlantic Council Outreach for Electronic Reporting Activities**

Interest in programs to improve the timeliness and accuracy of data collected in all fishery sectors is increasing in the South Atlantic region. Electronic reporting has recently been implemented for federal dealers and headboats in the region and the South Atlantic Council is currently developing an amendment to require electronic reporting in the charter vessel sector. With the development of these new data collection mechanisms, fishermen need to understand the importance of the data they report, why they are being asked to report trip level data, how those data are being used, and how the reporting frequency plays a role in being able to more accurately track landings to better manage fisheries. Additionally, in order to encourage early adoption of reporting compliance once the requirement is made effective, fishermen need to be trained on the use of electronic reporting platforms and have access to customer service support to troubleshoot issues that may arise with using the reporting platform. Furthermore, law enforcement officers need training support outlining electronic reporting requirements in order to be able to effectively enforce reporting compliance regulations. To support the upcoming electronic reporting requirements in the South Atlantic charter vessel sector, the project will develop pre-implementation and implementation training and outreach programs about electronic reporting systems targeting charter captains and law enforcement officers throughout the region. The project will also develop a customer service support system to provide real-time troubleshooting guidance to charter captains and law enforcement officers on issues that may arise with the electronic reporting system.

## **PROJECT #2: Development of an Application for Fishermen to Provide Discard Information for Scamp.**

Removal of fish from a population due to discarding is an increasingly significant source of total mortality for stocks managed by the South Atlantic Council. Unfortunately, discard estimates are highly uncertain and information to assign discard mortalities to size and age classes is lacking because discards are not available to the shore-based samplers who provide the vast majority of fishery-dependent data in the South Atlantic. The standard approach to collecting discard characterization information, which involves placing observers on vessels, is not practical for the private recreational vessels. In addition, current observer coverage of for-hire and commercial vessels is inadequate.

Reliable discard characterization information for many species is not available due to the lack of adequate sampling and monitoring, and as a result improving information on discarded fish and the practices associated with discarding is a commonly identified assessment research need. The South Atlantic Council is pursuing Citizen Science as a way to increase fishermen's involvement in data collection, and collecting information on discarded fish is a top priority due to the difficulty in efficiently sampling such fish by conventional methods. Using mobile applications to collect and submit data electronically (see below) is a promising approach to increasing fishermen's involvement in data collection.

## **PROJECT # 3: Recreational Reporting Via Web Application**

The private recreational fishery is a significant component of the catch and harvest of snapper grouper species in the South Atlantic region; however, data are limited on the number of participants, catch and harvest, and the size distribution of discards. Of particular concern is Red Snapper, which has not had an open season since 2014. To gather additional data, an app would be modified by the Snook & Gamefish Foundation that would create a recreational snapper grouper permit for individual fishermen and provide a platform to report recreational catch and discard data electronically. The data would then flow through an application program interface to the SAFIS database, where the data can be accessed by the public and managing partners. The application would also be used to collect information on the size composition of discards and alert fishermen of managed areas. When fully implemented, the application will result in an improved estimate of landings and discards, potentially reduce bycatch of Red Snapper in closed areas, and provide additional data previously unavailable that can be incorporated into stock assessments.

The South Atlantic Council proposes developing a mobile application that will enable fishermen to submit detailed information on discarded scamp to improve discard estimates and characterization for the SEDAR stock assessment that will be conducted during 2018 and 2019. Under this proposal, a software developer will be contracted to develop a new, or modify an existing, mobile device application that will allow fishermen to submit information on discarded Scamp. Data to be collected include date, capture location, depth, fishing methods, length, release condition, reason for discard (minimum size limit, seasonal closure, etc.), use of descending device, and a picture of a scamp that they intend to discard. Data collected will be made available for the planned SEDAR scamp assessment. Improving information on discards may have a significant impact on

the scamp assessment, since over the last 10 years discards have accounted for nearly 30% of the scamp reported through the MRIP program.

MOTION: SG AP SUPPORTS CITIZEN SCIENCE PROPOSALS AS THEY ARE BEING SUBMITTED  
APPROVED BY AP

#### **Update on Amendment 41 (Mutton Snapper)**

Public hearings on Amendment 41 were held in August 2016 and the Council reviewed public input during their September 2016 meeting. The Council also reviewed the actions proposed in Amendment 41 and changed preferred alternatives for both commercial and recreational management measures to mirror measures that were recently approved to manage Mutton Snapper in Florida waters (Atlantic). Myra Brouwer, Council staff, updated the AP on revisions to preferred alternatives, analyses to-date, and timing. The AP provided recommendations on this amendment in April 2016; the AP did not provide further input at this meeting. If approved, regulations in federal waters off the South Atlantic would be effective in mid-2017. Regulations in state waters off Florida, where the bulk of mutton snapper occur, will be effective in January 2017.

#### **Amendment 43 (Red Snapper)**

Chip Collier, Council staff, facilitated discussion of the actions under consideration in Amendment 43. Possible actions and alternatives address management of Red Snapper and other directly and indirectly related items that would ultimately result in an adaptive management approach and respond to items in the Vision Blueprint. The Council is scheduled to review and approve a scoping document at their December 2016 meeting. Scoping meetings would be held in January/ February 2017.

Action 1 – MSY – Concern that there is no estimate of the magnitude of overfishing that is occurring. Red Snapper will become a “choke” species.

Action 3 – ACLs – commercial and recreational allocations changed slightly due to changes in methodology (recreational allocation increased slightly, 1-2%). AP had no comments or recommendations.

Action 6 – Closed Area to Reduce Bycatch Mortality

- Using discards to determine closed area (Alternative 4) does not make much sense.
- Council needs to stay away from closed areas because too many people will be impacted, especially commercial and charter industries.
- Trouble is that for-hire is considered “recreational” in this region. Council should consider options that minimize impact to “professional” fishermen, those who derive a living from the fishery.
- Charter industry would support seasonal closures over spatial closures.

#### Action 7 – Commercial Sector Management Measures

- Avoid fishing during spawning months.
- Line up Red Snapper fishing season(s) with start of vermilion seasons. Or consider opening with start of grouper season in May.
- Commercial sector has learned to avoid catching Red Snapper. It would be best to try to control recreational catch of Red Snapper instead of focusing on commercial management measures.
- Consider specifying a bycatch allowance with size limits to provide data.
- Suggestion to maintain mini-season and open up with shallow water groupers. ACL would be caught well before the Red Snapper started spawning.
- Recommendation to structure alternatives without bundling.

#### Action 8 – Recreational management measures

- Concern that Council is focusing on developing management measures for such a low ACL.
- Size limits make no sense when you are trying to reduce discards. However, the discard mortality for Red Snapper is low.
- Consider raising the minimum size limit. Smaller fish tend to go down easier than the big ones.

#### Action 9 – Private Recreational Permit

- Suggestion to also have a permit/stamp to harvest deepwater species.
- Suggestion to not consider a permit/stamp for all snapper grouper species (Sub-alternative 2c).
- Suggestion to consult with HMS division.
- Suggestion to consult with NOAA GC on how to address permit violations. There needs to be accountability. But the main purpose of the stamp/permit program is to obtain better data.
- Main purpose should be to identify the universe of reef fishermen.
- Consider also requesting economic data from private rec fishermen.

#### Action 10 – Modify Reporting Requirements for Private Recreational

- Hail-in hail-out requirement is not feasible.
- The simpler the better. Need to identify who the people are first of all.
- Consider not placing any requirements *prior* to a fishing trip.

#### Action 12 – Require Use of Best Fishing Practices

- Consider requiring some type of certification to ensure fishermen are applying Best Fishing Practices.
- Commercial sector has learned fishing techniques/approaches to avoid catching Red Snapper.
- Single rig vs. double rig – not sure it will be effective for Red Snapper.
- Post release mortality for Red Snapper can be influenced by temperature – in the Gulf it has been shown that Red Snapper survival is lower when the fish come

through a strong thermocline (related to density of water at different temperatures).

### **Golden Tilefish Endorsements & Catch History Discussion**

- AP members clarified the rationale behind the fishermen's request to discuss possibly allowing catch history to be transferred along with a longline endorsement that is sold: Fishermen who are anticipating implementation of a catch share program for the Golden Tilefish fishery would benefit from being able to obtain catch history of Golden Tilefish when buying a longline endorsement.
- Currently, a vessel's catch history is tied to the permit and is not transferred when the vessel's longline endorsement is sold.
- However, there is currently no representative of the Golden Tilefish longline sector on the advisory panel. Therefore, the AP did not have a recommendation on this issue.

### **Vision Blueprint Recreational Regulatory Amendment 26**

At their June 2016 meeting, the Council instructed staff to begin development of two separate amendments (one commercial and one recreational) that would address priority items in the *Vision Blueprint*. The Council specified a list of items to include in each amendment and requested development of Options Papers to narrow down possible actions to take out to scoping. Myra Brouwer, Council staff, presented a preliminary list of such actions and requested the AP's input. The Council is scheduled to review the Options Paper in December and approve it for scoping in January/ February 2017. The AP had the following comments and recommendations under each of the possible actions:

#### **Action 1. Evaluate and modify the composition of the recreational aggregate bag limits**

- Remove Almaco Jack from the Jacks Complex and assign its own bag limit. However, it is acknowledged that there may be issues with fish identification with other jacks.
- Jacks Complex may not be appropriate. Consider a separate bag limit for banded rudderfish. AP recommends removing the Jacks Complex altogether (commercial and recreational).
- Recommend removing Gray Triggerfish from the 20 fish aggregate and specifying a lower bag limit – consider specifying a bag limit for Gray Triggerfish of 10-15 fish.
- For both the 20-fish and 10-fish aggregates, specify that no more than 5 fish can be of any one species.
- Consider specification of single-hook rigs for the deepwater species beyond 240 feet.
- Consider limiting retention of deepwater species to 1 fish per vessel.
- Consider requiring descending devices to fish for snapper grouper species.
- Evaluate landings of deepwater species to determine composition of the catch
- Suggest promoting education on use of descending devices, perhaps couple with issuance of recreational stamp/permit.



- Consider revising the bag limit for Red Grouper, Scamp, and Gag (suggestion of 1 fish/person/day; suggestion to reduce the aggregate to 2 fish and only 1 of each species, etc.)
- Consider reducing the aggregate grouper limit to 2 fish.

MOTION: DO NOT CHANGE THE COMPOSITION OF THE AGGREGATE BAG LIMITS AT THIS TIME BUT REQUIRE USE OF DESCENDING DEVICES (OF PROPER DESIGN) IN ORDER TO HARVEST OR POSSESS SNAPPER GROUPEL SPECIES

APPROVED BY AP

Action 2. Modify the annual recreational prohibition on harvest and possession of shallow water groupers

- Shallow water grouper closure is working fine as it is. Do not make any modifications at this time.
- AP acknowledges there are specific needs for south Florida.

MOTION: AP RECOMMENDS TAKING NO ACTION ON REMOVING OR MODIFYING THE SHALLOW WATER GROUPEL CLOSURE

APPROVED BY AP

Action 3. Remove recreational minimum size limits for deepwater species

MOTION: AP RECOMENDS REMOVING THE MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT ON ALL THREE SPECIES (QUEEN SNAPPER, SILK SNAPPER, BLACKFIN SNAPPER)

APPROVED BY AP

*(See Appendix for verbatim minutes from the meeting for an account of the efficacy of descending devices from Dr. Todd Kellison, SEFSC, Snapper Grouper AP member)*

Action 4. Modify the recreational minimum size limit for black sea bass

MOTION: RECOMMEND THE COUNCIL CONSIDER REDUCING THE RECREATIONAL MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT OF BLACK SEA BASS

APPROVED BY AP

**Vision Blueprint Commercial Regulatory Amendment 27**

The AP made the following recommendations/motions on possible actions to address management of the commercial sector:

Action 1. Implement commercial split seasons for Snowy Grouper, Blueline Tilefish, Yellowedge Grouper, and Golden Tilefish fishery (hook-and-line sector only)

- Golden Tilefish are caught separately from other deepwater species so it may be appropriate to exclude.
- Split season may not be appropriate for Snowy Grouper. May consider a split season for Snowy Grouper along with a reduction in the trip limit to 100 pounds.
- Yellowedge Grouper is currently in the Deepwater Complex and has not been assessed.
- Consider including sub-alternatives for each species to allow flexibility.

Action 2. Exclude red porgy from the January through April annual prohibition on commercial harvest and establish a commercial split season

- Alternative 2 would reduce dead discards of Red Porgy and is supported by the AP. This approach may enable the ACL to be landed.

Action 3. Modify/Establish Trip limits  
*“Traditional Bandit Boats”*

Council members have discussed possibly tailoring the management approach (trip limits and possibly other management elements) to the needs of “traditional bandit boats” vs. “day boats”. Arguably, characterizing what constitutes a “traditional bandit boat” and a “day boat” would have to be the first step if the Council were to follow this approach.

The AP had the following comments:

- Traditional bandit boats are boats that stay overnight (48 hrs). They typically fish 3 days.
- AP members stated that fishermen might be changing and the Council needs to decide whether to manage towards keeping traditional vessels or allowing the fishery to change.

*Vermilion Snapper*

The Snapper Grouper AP has discussed recommending to the Council that the trip limit for Vermilion Snapper in the second season (July-December) be lowered. Currently, a 1,000-pound (gw) commercial trip limit is in effect until 75% of the commercial ACL is met or projected to be met. Thereafter, the trip limit is reduced to 500 pounds. Some AP members, however, are concerned that, unless there is a restriction placed on the number of trips, a lower trip limit in the second season would be ineffective in extending the harvest since some commercial operations would simply increase their effort. The AP had the following comments:

- During the second opening, there are more species available. Changing from 1,000 pounds to 750 might slow down some of the targeting.
- Explore lowering commercial trip limit on vermilions in the second season to 750 pounds. The intent would be for the step down to 500 pounds to remain in place.

*Jacks Complex*

- Commercial trip limits of 300 to 500 pounds could be considered for the Jacks Complex.
- There is a market for Banded Rudderfish throughout the year.
- Recommendation to explore trip limits for the Jacks Complex.

Action 4. Modify the annual commercial prohibition on harvest and possession of shallow water groupers

- Any modifications to the closure for one sector should be the same for the other sector.
- Current closure is working fine; do not make any changes at this time.

Action 5. Modify the fishing year start date for the hook-and-line sector of the commercial Golden Tilefish fishery

- Intent is to start fishing for Golden Tilefish with hook-and-line after the longline ACL has been met to keep product available throughout the year.
- Possible alternatives presented in the Options Paper are fine.

### **Update on SEDAR Activities**

Julia Byrd, SEDAR staff, updated the AP on upcoming assessments and those that are underway:

- SEDAR 50 (Blueline Tilefish) and SEDAR 53 (Red Grouper) are currently underway.
- SEDAR 48 (Black Grouper) – SSC will review assessment in Spring 2018
- Black Sea Bass Assessment (Standard)
- SEDAR 51 (Gulf Gray Snapper) – may impact fishermen in the South Atlantic; stock ID workshop is being planned because genetic evidence suggests there is mixing between Gulf and South Atlantic populations.

### **Update on Fall 2016 Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Meeting**

Mike Errigo, Council staff, presented an overview of topics discussed during the SSC meeting on October 18-20, 2016. AP members had the following comments regarding Red Snapper:

- AP members had questions on the amount of overfishing for Red Snapper and whether there was any indication that biomass is improving. The assessment did indicate that the biomass and abundance have recovered some (abundance more so than biomass).
- AP is concerned that the Council is considering actions that may have very significant negative impacts on fishermen yet there is significant uncertainty as to the magnitude of overfishing that is occurring.

### **Characterization of the Snapper Grouper Commercial Fishery**

Kari MacLauchlin, Council staff, presented a preliminary data analysis characterizing the commercial snapper grouper fishery. Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistic Program (ACCSP) data were used to present a snapshot of how the fishery is conducted in North Carolina and South Carolina in terms of gear used, numbers of participating entities, and species composition of the catch. The project is ongoing and the AP will continue to receive updates as it progresses.

### **Other Business**

AP members raised the following issues:

1. The closure on commercial harvest of Vermilion Snapper in 2016 was announced when the region was under threat of a hurricane. AP members were of the opinion that notification of closures should consider such circumstances to avoid safety issues. The process to issue notification of a fishery closure, however, is initiated weeks in advance. Nonetheless, the NMFS Southeast Regional Office was made aware of this concern.
2. Wreckfish – current reporting system is duplicative and burdensome and should be modified.

Gregg Waugh, Executive Director, indicated that the Council would be undertaking a review of the wreckfish ITQ program beginning in 2017. Part of the reason such a review was not undertaken before is that there will need to be a cost recovery program established for the current ITQ program (there is a cap of 3%). The concern has been whether wreckfish landings are sufficient to justify the cost of operating the program, etc. The Council will look at all of these issues in 2017 and AP members will be kept informed of progress.

3. Gray Triggerfish size limit – off the east coast of Florida, the minimum size limit is currently 14 inches whereas it is 12 inches elsewhere in the South Atlantic. This change was implemented recently to make the regulation consistent on the east and west coasts of Florida. However, the FWC has approved lowering the minimum size limit back to 12 inches off east Florida and reducing the bag limit to 10 fish.

MOTION: RECOMMEND THAT THE COUNCIL TAKE ACTION TO REDUCE THE MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT FOR GRAY TRIGGERFISH OFF EAST FLORIDA TO 12 INCHES.

APPROVED BY AP

4. Black Sea Bass pot fishery – fishermen that did not qualify for an endorsement would like the Council to reconsider allowing them to participate in the pot fishery. Michelle Duval, Council Chair, explained that the issue that is driving the amount of effort in that fishery is the risk of interactions with right whales. In order to allow more participants in the pot fishery, the Council would have to re-evaluate the total number of endorsements, etc. This would not only take a long time, but pushback from protected resources advocates would complicate the matter immensely.
5. MOTION: AP RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL CONSIDER MANAGING SOUTH FLORIDA FISHERIES SEPARATELY  
APPROVED BY AP

## Appendix

Excerpt from Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel verbatim minutes:

DR. KELLISON: I was just going to tell a good science story quickly about descending devices. We have heard, I think, from the west coast, how effective they've been documented for a number of rockfish species. From your experiences, they appear to be effective for species here, in the Gulf or on the east coast. For the last hour, I've been looking at some videos that Mark took of red snapper that he's been putting down with a Seaqualizer, which is one of the commercially available devices.

In January, at the Citizen Science Workshop, I became aware of a dataset of a recreational tagging program that South Carolina DNR has been running since maybe the 1980s, or maybe before that. It's a long-term program. They don't put a lot of resources into it. Basically, it's one guy, and he gets some tags. If he talks to recreational anglers, he gives them some tags, and they can tag some things. Then, if people catch them, they get reported. There's not a lot of information in the database. Often they don't have locations of where they tagged them and where they recaptured them, but there's a lot of information on warsaw grouper.

There were a lot of warsaw grouper that were tagged in it, and it turned out that they are tagged almost all by one captain off of the coast of Florida in the 1990s and the early 2000s, and we ended up talking to that captain, and he was pretty proactive at the time. He was a charter captain, and he stumbled across a wreck that he felt like only he knew about it. It had a lot of warsaw on it, and, over a couple of decades, he would stop there with his party at the end of his trips and let people -- I can't remember when the limit went away for warsaw, but he let them catch one and keep one, take one home, but, if they were small, he would tag them and throw them back. He took good care of his fish. He made his own venting tools and vented all of them. If they didn't go back down, he netted them back up, and made his own descender device. He estimated that he did that with about 25 or 30 percent of them, but, over the period, he tagged 196 warsaw for one little wreck, and seventy-one of those he and his party recaptured, which is more than 36 percent, and so this is -- It's at the shallower end of the warsaw range. It's in about fifty meters of water, but, still, it's pretty good. He recaptured more than 36 percent of those, and then I think this is the most amazing part. Of those 36 percent that he recaptured, he recaptured thirty-two of those a single time, twenty-three of them twice, ten of them three times, four of them four times, one of them five times, and one of them six times. The one that he recaptured six times, unfortunately, he ended up keeping it. He ended up harvesting that fish, and so it might have even survived to another recapture, but, to me, that just suggests that, if fish are taken care of, they can survive that release. This is kind of conflating two different things, but, talking about red snapper and seasons and maybe considering not catching them during the spawn, I know, in the Gulf, there is data that suggests that their mortality is a lot higher when they come up through a strong thermocline, and so when that water is hot on top, and so maybe thinking about a couple of these things, when fish are being released and how they're being released. It could have a real effect on their post-release mortality. Thanks.