

Amendment 46 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region

Options Paper



Amendment 46 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 46) would consider a permit to fish for snapper grouper species for fishermen on private recreational vessels, revise private recreational reporting requirements, and adjust powerhead regulations.

1/23/2018

Purpose for Action

The *purpose* of Snapper Grouper Amendment 46 is to improve catch and release estimates for snapper grouper species, reduce bycatch in the snapper grouper fishery, and enable equitable access for fishermen participating in the snapper grouper fishery.

Need for Action

The *need* for the amendment is to improve data collection for snapper grouper species, reduce bycatch of red snapper and other snapper grouper species, and enable equitable access to the dive component of the snapper grouper fishery while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse social and economic effects.

Why is the Council Considering Action?

To aid in the improvement of recreational estimates, the Council may consider developing a permit or reporting requirement for red snapper and other snapper grouper species. Red snapper and other snapper grouper species are rarely encountered through the survey used to develop recreational catch (landings + released) estimates from the charter boat and private recreational components of the recreational sector. Permits and reporting requirements can be designed in many different ways to improve the estimate of landed and released fish.

Although the absolute number of red snapper released has been questioned, the increasing trend in the number of released fish has been reported by fishermen and observed in the release estimates. As the number of released fish increases, a portion of the fish will die due to foul hooking, injuries caused by barotrauma (injury due to expansion of gas when reeled up from depth), and predation when released. To improve the survivorship of released fish and reduce the number of released fish, best fishing practices can be considered by the Council as either mandatory or voluntary options.

Another issue that has been identified by fishermen is unequitable access for the dive component of the snapper grouper fishery. Powerheads or bang sticks (spears with a charge that is fired when in contact with target) are not allowed in federal waters off South Carolina. To have more equitable access for the dive component, the Council may consider lifting the powerhead prohibition in federal waters off South Carolina.

How Does This Amendment Match the Council's 2016-2020 Vision Blueprint for the Snapper Grouper Fishery?

The 2016-2020 Vision Blueprint for the Snapper Grouper Fishery (Vision Blueprint) was approved in December 2015 and is intended to inform management of the snapper grouper fishery through 2020. As such, the Vision Blueprint serves as a “living document” to help guide future management, builds on stakeholder input and how the South Atlantic Council envisions future management of the fishery, guides the development of new amendments that address priority objectives and strategies, and illustrates actions that could be developed through the regular amendment process. The Vision Blueprint is organized into four strategic goal areas: (1) Science, (2) Management, (3) Communication, and (4) Governance. Each goal area has a set of objectives, strategies, and actions. The actions in Amendment 46 correspond to different objectives and strategies in the Vision Blueprint.

During Vision Meetings and scoping of Amendment 43, fishermen requested a recreational stamp/permit for snapper grouper fishing, **Action 1**, and to improve recreational estimates by requiring recreational fishermen to report their catch, **Action 2**. Several fishermen expressed concern with the estimates of harvest from the Marine Recreational Information Program. These actions would be used to develop a new method to estimate private recreational harvest. Headboats are required to fill out a logbook for every trip and there is an amendment in development to require charter boats to submit electronic logbooks for each trip. Commercial fishermen must submit logbooks for each trip.

Action 3 includes best fishing practices to reduce the bycatch and discard mortality of red snapper. Some of the alternatives were suggested during Vision Meetings including the use of single hook rigs for when targeting deepwater species and requiring descending devices. The circle hook alternatives were developed based on management in other areas and include an option to remove circle hooks.

Action 4 includes alternatives to provide equitable access in the dive component of the snapper grouper fishery. Currently, South Carolina is the only state where powerheads are not allowed. The alternatives include options to remove the powerhead restriction off South Carolina or consider not allowing powerheads when fishing in federal waters.

Possible Actions and Alternatives

Action 1. Establish a Private Recreational Snapper Grouper Permit or Tag Program for Recreational Fishermen to Fish For, Harvest, or Possess Red Snapper in the South Atlantic Region.

Alternative 1 (No Action). Recreational snapper grouper fishing from private recreational vessels in Federal Waters is an open access fishery with no federal requirement for a recreational permit or fish tag.

Alternative 2. Require a federal recreational permit in the South Atlantic Region (federal waters only) for recreational fishermen to fish for, harvest, or possess:

Sub-alternative 2a. red snapper.

Sub-alternative 2b. all species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit.

Sub-alternative 2c. species included in the deepwater complex.

Alternative 3. Require a federal recreational permit in the South Atlantic Region be issued to:

Sub-alternative 3a. vessel.

Sub-alternative 3b. individual.

Alternative 4. Establish conditions to renew or maintain a valid permit.

Sub-alternative 4a. A permit is only valid if a completed logbook is filed for the previous time block (**Action 2**) including no fishing reports.

Sub-alternative 4b. A permit cannot be renewed until all logbook reports for the previous year have been filed.

Discussion:

A private recreational snapper grouper permit would not be required for fishermen fishing on headboats or charter boats. Headboats already have reporting requirements to report number of anglers through the Joint South Atlantic/Gulf of Mexico Generic Charter/Headboat Reporting in the South Atlantic Amendment (2013) and there is a charter boat amendment under review, which is considering requiring electronic reporting for the charter boat sector (South Atlantic For-Hire Amendment).

The permit (**Alternative 2**) would be used to improve estimates of fishing effort for trips that target species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit and match the Visioning Blue 2016-2020 where stakeholders requested a recreational stamp (or permit). Less than 10% of the fishing trips occurring in the South Atlantic region fish in federal waters based on Marine Recreational Intercept Program (MRIP) data. Trips in federal waters include trips targeting cobia, dolphin, king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and tuna as well as snapper grouper species. In order to improve estimates of snapper grouper fishing without substantially increasing sampling effort in MRIP, a permit could be required. **Table 1.** Includes the number of intercepts of private recreational vessels by species from 2014 to 2016. Very few species have sufficient samples to

analyze the effects of regional management or seasonal management (likely need at least 5 samples per state and wave to compare change).

State issued permits are required to harvest some snapper grouper species in the Gulf of Mexico and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council is proposing to implement a permit similar to the Highly Migratory Species system for golden and blueline tilefish in the Blueline Tilefish Amendment to the Tilefish Fishery Management Plan. The permits were designed with a goal to improve catch estimates for certain focal management species. In the Gulf of Mexico, catch estimates were developed through specific sampling of the permitted fishermen or by requiring reporting.

During the Vision process for the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan, stakeholders suggested state by state or regional quotas. However the resolution of the private recreational landings data may be too imprecise to enable analyses at a scale smaller than a South Atlantic region. Establishing a permit could help to improve effort and landings estimate for the private recreational fishery therefore enabling state by state or regional management.

Table 1. Number of MRIP intercepts from 2014 to 2016 for the private vessel component of the recreational sector for species included in Amendment 26. Species listed average greater than 30 intercepts per year. Red = less than or equal to 10 intercepts, yellow = 11 to 30 intercepts, and green = greater than 30 intercepts.

Component	Year	Species	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6
Private	2014	Black Sea Bass	26	45	219	207	145	77
Private	2014	Gray Snapper	40	16	126	120	66	78
Private	2014	Mutton Snapper	18	9	35	22	11	27
Private	2014	Gray Triggerfish	10	12	39	48	11	11
Private	2014	Yellowtail Snapper	33	3	37	37	13	14
Private	2014	Lane Snapper	14	5	34	28	12	22
Private	2014	White Grunt	21	5	27	29	10	10
Private	2014	Greater Amberjack	1	2	17	25	2	4
Private	2014	Vermilion Snapper	1	1	13	31	3	7
Private	2014	Gag	12	4	10	13	12	13
Private	2014	Almaco Jack	0	1	2	7	1	2
Private	2014	Hogfish	9	1	2	12	1	3
Private	2014	Red Grouper	15	2	10	5	0	8
Private	2014	Jolthead Porgy	10	3	8	2	3	2
Private	2014	All SG Species	244	121	619	638	304	295
Private	2015	Black Sea Bass	8	51	209	172	130	75
Private	2015	Gray Snapper	65	54	102	114	69	47
Private	2015	Mutton Snapper	16	26	37	27	21	14
Private	2015	Gray Triggerfish	4	20	36	21	14	12
Private	2015	Yellowtail Snapper	12	28	45	27	23	14
Private	2015	Lane Snapper	11	14	24	11	20	12
Private	2015	White Grunt	4	8	30	18	5	7
Private	2015	Greater Amberjack	0	5	26	17	6	4
Private	2015	Vermilion Snapper	0	12	22	16	9	5
Private	2015	Gag	6	6	9	12	16	6
Private	2015	Almaco Jack	0	2	18	23	24	1
Private	2015	Hogfish	3	14	6	13	0	0
Private	2015	Red Grouper	1	5	4	3	2	2
Private	2015	Jolthead Porgy	4	9	6	1	8	3
Private	2015	All SG Species	143	280	625	516	367	212
Private	2016	Black Sea Bass	31	127	207	146	154	106
Private	2016	Gray Snapper	30	31	80	78	62	49
Private	2016	Mutton Snapper	12	14	35	29	4	13
Private	2016	Gray Triggerfish	11	14	39	31	10	17
Private	2016	Yellowtail Snapper	7	16	18	17	2	14
Private	2016	Lane Snapper	7	11	18	13	4	11
Private	2016	White Grunt	8	9	27	20	5	18
Private	2016	Greater Amberjack	3	3	38	35	6	1
Private	2016	Vermilion Snapper	5	3	27	22	3	12
Private	2016	Gag	3	2	16	13	7	7
Private	2016	Almaco Jack	2	0	9	3	0	0
Private	2016	Hogfish	1	2	15	6	2	5
Private	2016	Red Grouper	7	4	8	5	1	10
Private	2016	Jolthead Porgy	3	5	8	9	1	2
Private	2016	All SG Species	139	259	586	456	264	282

Questions from IPT to consider in development of a permit

1) Is this a fisher permit or a vessel permit? Currently, only the dealer permit and operator cards are by person; the rest are vessel permits. Many of the aspects of the permit will be linked to reporting requirements and will need to be considered when developing a permit (Action 2 in the amendment).

- For instance, we need to know what kind of data will be collected from the permit application. Name and address of every recreational angler fishing for red snapper? If so, that means we need a permit that is issued *per person*. An individual permit will give us a count of effort, and could be used to collect various socio-economic data about these fishers. However, we lose linkage to the vessel and cannot threaten to deny permit renewal for vessel non-compliance (below).
- Do we want to collect information for every vessel that goes fishing, including vessel number, owner name and address? Vessel permits will give us a better linkage to vessel logbooks/reports (if required), but we won't know how many total fishers are out there and who they are.

2) What type of data will be reported by the permit holder (who, where fishing, demographic information, etc.)?

3) What will the permit requirement be (fish for or possess, similar to charter/headboat requirements)?

- For example, the charter/headboat requirement is as follows: For a person aboard a vessel that is operating as a charter vessel or headboat to fish for or possess, in or from the EEZ, South Atlantic snapper-grouper, a valid charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper must have been issued to the vessel and must be on board.

4) Is the permit required to fish for and possess red snapper or all snapper grouper species?

5) If just for fishing for or possessing red snapper, would the permit be required for all the South Atlantic or a specific region(s)? Would the permit be required for fishing the entire fishing year or only during specific times?

6) Would this permit be for private angling with all approved fishing gear types for rec red snapper?

7) Who will be responsible for logistics, NOAA or states?

8) Will the permit be limited access (limit on the number of permits)?

9) If there is limited access, is the permit transferable?

10) What is the renewal period for the permit? Typically, permits must be renewed within 1 year, by the birthdate of the permit holder.

11) What are the permit renewal requirements? Such as reporting or landings information from the previous year needed for renewal.

12) Would there be any unique permit display requirements? (A regular vessel permit is currently an 8.5x11 piece of paper.)

Issues to consider

The permit office will need a substantial increase in staff to process the potential number of permits. There could be administrative costs to IT and SEFSC also.

There will be a delay (estimated to be between 30-60 days) between when someone applies for a permit and when they receive the permit.

Making this permit obtainable via online will greatly reduce administrative costs to the agency.

Can information be collected through the state license without creating a new permit?

NMFS will charge a cost that will cover the administrative costs of the permit.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

OPTION 1. APPROVE INCLUSION OF ACTION 1 IN AMENDMENT 46 AND APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 1 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.

OPTION 2. ADD/MODIFY ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 1 (COMMITTEE TO SPECIFY) AND APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 1 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.

OPTION 3. DO NOT APPROVE INCLUSION OF ACTION 1 IN AMENDMENT 46.

OPTION 4. OTHERS??

Action 2. Modify Reporting Requirements for Private Recreational Fishermen.

Alternative 1 (No Action). There is no reporting requirement for recreational anglers although the Council approved an action which would require owner or operator to complete fishing records if selected by the Science and Research Director (SAFMC 2008).

Alternative 2. Require private recreational anglers to complete electronic logbooks. This would require all fishermen with a recreational snapper grouper permit **to report all catch and discards electronically** when fishing for or catching species listed in the **Action 1**.

Sub-alternative 2a. 5% of private recreational anglers would be randomly selected each year to electronically report their catch.

Sub-alternative 2b. 20% of private recreational anglers would be randomly selected each year to electronically report their catch.

Sub-alternative 2c. 25% of private recreational anglers would be randomly selected each year to electronically report their catch.

Sub-alternative 2d. 50% of private recreational anglers would be randomly selected each year to electronically report their catch.

Sub-alternative 2e. All private recreational anglers would be randomly selected each year to electronically report their catch.

Note: Species listed will come from the preferred list of species in Action 1.

Alternative 3. Require that private recreational fishermen with a snapper grouper permit submit fishing records for each trip to report:

Sub-alternative 3a. To the SRD **monthly**, or at intervals shorter than a **month** if notified by the SRD, via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/ software). Electronic reports would be due by seven days following the last day of the month.

Sub-alternative 3b. To the SRD **weekly**, or at intervals shorter than a **week** if notified by the SRD, via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/ software). Electronic reports would be due by Tuesday following the week that ends on Sunday.

Sub-alternative 3c. To the SRD via electronic reporting (via NMFS approved hardware/ software). **Electronic reports would be required to be completed prior to disembarking from the fishing vessel.**

Alternative 4. Require private recreational anglers with a recreational snapper grouper permit to **complete logbooks for trips** when fishing for or catching species listed in the **Action 1 (Permit or Tag)**.

Sub-alternative 4a. Require that private recreational fishermen with a snapper grouper stamp submit fishing records for trips catching or discarding red snapper to the SRD **monthly**, or at intervals shorter than a **month** if notified by the SRD, via NMFS approved reporting sheet. Reports would be required to be post marked seven days following the last day of the month.

Sub-alternative 4b. Require that private recreational fishermen with a snapper grouper stamp submit fishing records for trips catching or discarding red snapper to the SRD **weekly**, or at intervals shorter than a **week** if notified by the SRD, via NMFS approved reporting

sheet. Reports would be required to be post marked by Tuesday following the week that ends on Sunday.

Sub-alternative 4c. Require that private recreational fishermen with a snapper grouper stamp submit fishing records for trips catching or discarding red snapper to the SRD via NMFS approved reporting sheet. **Reports would be required to be completed prior to disembarking from the fishing vessel.**

Note: Species listed will come from the preferred list of species in Action 1.

Alternative 5. Require reporting to the NMFS or state agency prior to returning to shore of incidental red snapper catch. Fishermen would be required to inform of location and approximate time of returning to port.

Alternative 6. Require recreational fishermen to hail out via phone or electronic device if targeting species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit. The fishermen would be provided a number issued to the phone or electronic device.

Discussion:

Reporting requirements for headboats developed in the Joint South Atlantic/Gulf of Mexico Generic Charter/Headboat Reporting in the South Atlantic Amendment (2013) require headboats to report each trip electronically. A similar amendment is under development for charter boats which is considering requiring electronic reporting for charter boats (South Atlantic For-Hire Amendment).

The current language for private recreational vessel reporting requirements was developed in Amendment 15A (SAFMC 2008). Although the language was approved by the Council, it has not been approved by the Office of Management and Budget and not effective until done so. The language states “the owner or operator of a vessel that fishes for or lands South Atlantic snapper grouper in or from the South Atlantic EEZ who is selected to report by the Science and Research Director (SRD) must--

- (1) Maintain a fishing record for each trip, or a portion of such trips as specified by the SRD, on forms provided by the SRD. Completed fishing records must be submitted to the SRD monthly and must either be made available to an authorized statistical reporting agent or be postmarked not later than 7 days after the end of each month. Information to be reported is indicated on the form and its accompanying instructions.
- (2) Participate in the NMFS-sponsored electronic logbook and/or video monitoring reporting program as directed by the SRD.”

It is not known if or when this language would be approved by the Office of Management and Budget.

Alternative 2 specifies a percentage of the fishery to participate in the reporting. It is estimated that less than 1% of the trips are intercepted through MRIP. Therefore the intercept of a single fish through MRIP will be expanded by a significant amount to account for the trips that are not intercepted. Self-reported logbooks could be used to increase the sample size of numbers of trips reporting. The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council is proposing to require 100%

reporting for blueline and golden tilefish since they are rare event species. Many species in the snapper grouper fishery management complex could be considered rare event species including red snapper (**Table 8**). Requiring reporting of landings could help to improve the accuracy and precision of the private recreational landings.

Alternative 3 specifies the reporting timeframe for fishermen with a private recreational snapper grouper permit. The fishermen could report on a monthly, weekly, or per trip basis. In the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council’s Blueline Tilefish Amendment, it is proposed to require recreational fishermen report their landings via an electronic reporting application prior to removing tilefish from the vessel or removing the vessel from the water.

Alternative 4 would allow fishermen to complete either paper or electronic logbooks whereas **Alternative 2** would only allow electronic logbooks be available for use.

Alternative 5 would require fishermen to report an incidental catch of red snapper. This would increase the number of trips reporting red snapper and potential assist in determining where areas of high red snapper bycatch occur.

Alternative 6 would require fishermen to hail out if they are going to target species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit and a permit would be sent to an electronic device for the trip. A similar system is used by Mississippi Department of Natural Resources to track red snapper landings. In addition to the hail-out requirement, the Mississippi DNR requires fishermen to hail-in with information on catch. The fishermen would not be able to hail out again until a hail-in is completed for the previous trip. Currently Mississippi program only requires reporting of red snapper but it could be modified to include additional species. There are approximately 2,000 anglers using the application. Some of the fishermen request being able to report through other means and are accommodated by the DNR through a phone-in system.

Table 8. Number of private vessel trips catching red snapper (landings and discards) and number of red snapper observed (A) or reported (B1 and B2) through MRIP intercepts for private recreational vessels, 2011-2015.

Number of Trips Intercepted Reporting Red Snapper and Numbers of Red Snapper Intercepted Through MRIP					
Year	Private				
	Trips	AB1	A	B1	B2
2011	21	0	0	0	72
2012	48	8	8	0	182
2013	58	12	12	0	129
2014	183	138	111	27	629
2015	122	1	0	1	588

COMMITTEE ACTION:

OPTION 1. APPROVE INCLUSION OF ACTION 2 IN AMENDMENT 46 AND APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 2 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.
OPTION 2. ADD/MODIFY ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 2 (COMMITTEE TO SPECIFY) AND APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 2 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.
OPTION 3. DO NOT APPROVE INCLUSION OF ACTION 2 IN AMENDMENT 46.
OPTION 4. OTHERS??

Action 3. Require Use of Best Fishing Practices When Fishing for Snapper Grouper Species With Hook-and-Line Gear to Reduce Mortality and Bycatch of Red Snapper.

Alternative 1 (No Action). Fishermen are required to use non-stainless steel circle hooks when fishing for snapper grouper species with hook and line gear north of 28 degrees. It is unlawful to possess snapper grouper species without possessing non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hooks. The regulation for the use of circle hooks applies to the use of natural baits only. Additionally fishermen are required to have dehooking devices onboard.

Alternative 2. Require descending device and/or venting be onboard a vessel possessing species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit to increase survivorship of released red snapper.

Sub-alternative 2a. Require **venting tool** to be onboard a **recreational** vessel possessing species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit to increase survivorship of released fish.

Sub-alternative 2b. Require **venting tool** to be onboard a **commercial** vessel possessing species in the snapper grouper management unit to increase survivorship of released fish.

Sub-alternative 2c. Require **descending device** to be onboard a **recreational** vessel possessing species in the snapper grouper management unit to increase survivorship of released fish.

Sub-alternative 2d. Require **descending device** to be onboard a **commercial** vessel possessing species in the snapper grouper management unit to increase survivorship of released fish.

Alternative 3. Require use of single hook rigs in the recreational snapper grouper fishery to reduce number of red snapper caught.

Alternative 4. Modify requirement for the use of non-stainless steel circle hooks when fishing for snapper grouper species with hook and line gear north of 28 degrees (approximately 25 miles south of Cape Canaveral, FL). The circle hook requirement applies only to natural baits.

Sub-alternative 4a. Require the use of **non-offset, non-stainless steel hooks** when fishing for snapper grouper species with hook-and-line gear. Apply to the use of natural baits only.

Sub-alternative 4b. Require the use of **non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hooks** when fishing for snapper grouper species with hook and line gear **north of 28 degrees**. It is unlawful to possess snapper grouper species without possessing non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hooks. Apply to the use of natural baits only.

Sub-alternative 4c. Require the use of **non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hooks** when fishing for snapper grouper species with hook and line gear in **depths greater than xx**. It is unlawful to possess snapper grouper species without possessing non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hooks. Apply to the use of natural baits only.

Sub-alternative 4d. Require the use of **non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hooks** when fishing for snapper grouper species with hook and line gear in the **South Atlantic**

EEZ. It is unlawful to possess snapper grouper species without possessing non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hooks. Apply to the use of natural baits only.

Sub-alternative 4e. Remove the requirement for use of circle hooks for **commercially-permitted vessels** when fishing for snapper grouper species with hook and line gear in the **South Atlantic EEZ.**

Sub-alternative 4f. Remove the requirement for use of circle hooks for **recreational vessels** when fishing for snapper grouper species with hook and line gear in the **South Atlantic EEZ.**

Discussion:

Best fishing practices can be effective in reducing mortality and bycatch by planning ahead and avoiding areas where bycatch is likely, avoiding non-target size or species through fishing techniques or gear, using appropriate gear to minimize impacts of capture, releasing the fish with minimal time out of the water and handling. Common examples of best fishing include recompressing fish, reducing the number of hooks fished, avoiding areas where bycatch is likely, avoiding “high grading”, using to hooks that reduce or minimize gut hooking or foul-hooking, using knotless landing nets, etc. Several groups have developed recommendations for best fishing practices and information on best fishing practices can be found at FishSmart.org, [Florida Sea Grant](http://FloridaSeaGrant.org), [North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries](http://NorthCarolinaDivisionofMarineFisheries.org), and [NOAA](http://NOAA.gov).

COMMITTEE ACTION:

OPTION 1. APPROVE INCLUSION OF ACTION 3 IN AMENDMENT 46 AND APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 3 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.

OPTION 2. ADD/MODIFY ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 3 (COMMITTEE TO SPECIFY) AND APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 3 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.

OPTION 3. DO NOT APPROVE INCLUSION OF ACTION 3 IN AMENDMENT 46.

OPTION 4. OTHERS??

Action 4. Adjust Powerhead Prohibitions in the South Atlantic Region

Alternative 1 (No Action). A powerhead may not be used in the EEZ off South Carolina to harvest South Atlantic snapper-grouper. The possession of a mutilated South Atlantic snapper-grouper in or from the EEZ off South Carolina, and a powerhead is prima facie evidence that such fish was harvested by a powerhead.

Alternative 2. Allow use of powerhead gear in the EEZ off South Carolina to harvest South Atlantic snapper-grouper species.

Alternative 3. A powerhead may not be used in the EEZ of the South Atlantic Region to harvest South Atlantic snapper-grouper species.

Discussion:

Fishermen are allowed to use powerheads to harvest snapper-grouper species in South Atlantic EEZ in all waters except off South Carolina (**Figure 3**). To have equitable access for fishermen in all states, the powerhead prohibition can be modified to allow the use of powerheads off South Carolina or prohibit their use in the South Atlantic EEZ.

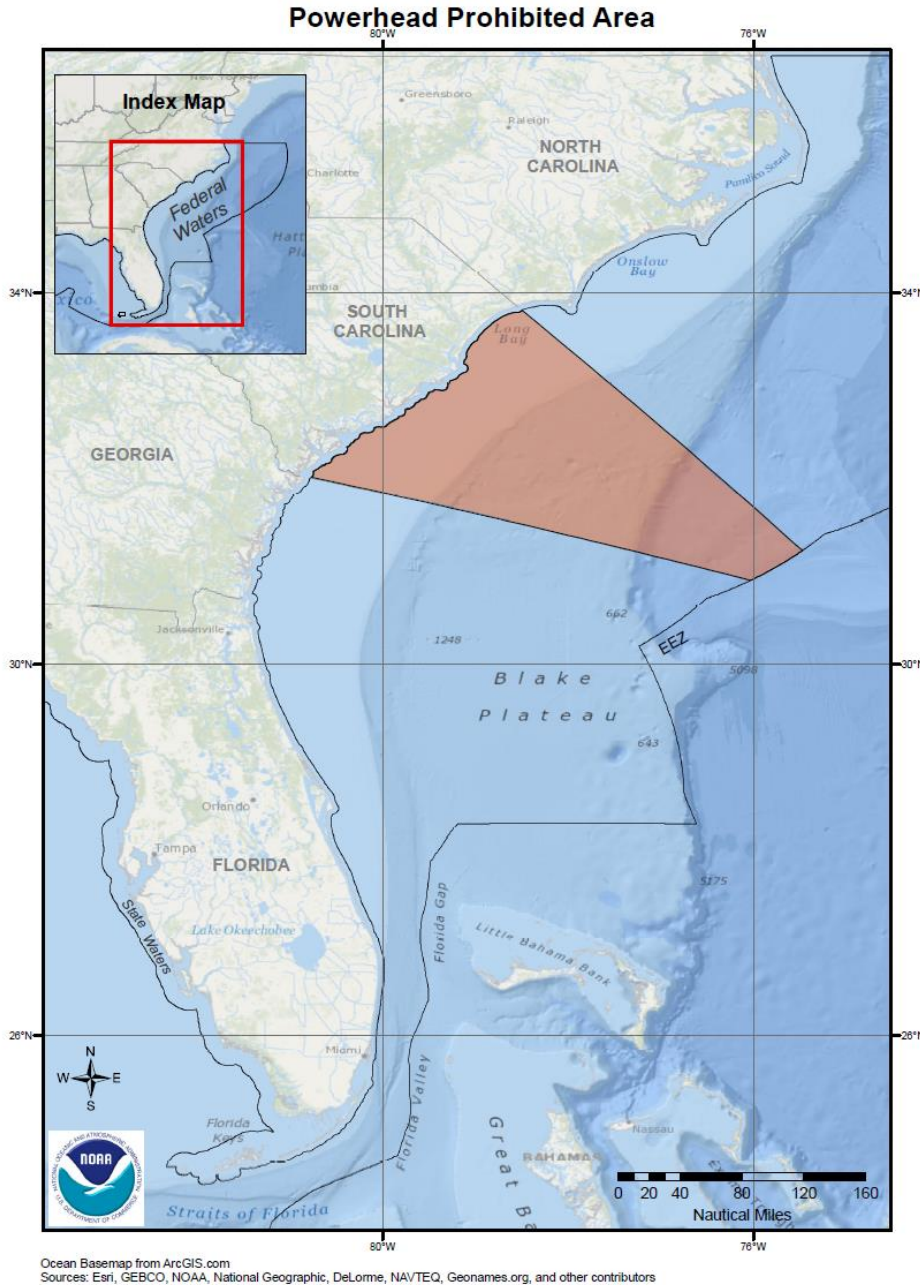


Figure 3. Map of the powerhead prohibited area. Source: SERO GIS website.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

OPTION 1. APPROVE INCLUSION OF ACTION 4 IN AMENDMENT 46 AND APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 4 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.

OPTION 2. ADD/MODIFY ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 4 (COMMITTEE TO SPECIFY) AND APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 4 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.

OPTION 3. DO NOT APPROVE INCLUSION OF ACTION 4 IN AMENDMENT 46.

OPTION 4. OTHERS??