Regulatory Amendment 24 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region

Options Paper

(5/19/15)

Regulatory Amendment 24 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Regulatory Amendment 24) would potentially include several actions pertaining to management of the snapper grouper fishery. To date, the Council has indicated that the following items should be included in the amendment:

- Revision to the composition of the Jacks Complex and commercial management measures for almaco jack,
- removal of size limits for deepwater species (silk snapper, queen snapper, and blackfin snapper),
- modification to spawning season closure for shallow water grouper,
- modification of size limit for red grouper, and
- modification of bag limit for black sea bass.

Possible additional actions would address commercial management measures for red porgy and fishing level specifications for mutton snapper in response to the new stock assessment.

Why is the Council Considering Action?

Jacks Complex

The Council held a brief discussion at the December 2012 meeting regarding possible re-structuring of the Jacks Complex and the Deepwater Complex. One of the factors mentioned to support such a revision involved the productivity levels of both almaco jack and banded rudderfish. From the perspective of the commercial industry, the productivity of these two species is much higher than the established annual catch limit for the Jacks Complex. At that time, the reason for suggesting a re-structuring of the Deepwater Complex involved high levels of yellowedge grouper discards when fishermen target snowy grouper.

At the March 2013 Council meeting, the Council approved the following motion: THE SNAPPER GROUPER COMMITTEE WOULD LIKE TO CONSIDER RE-STRUCTURING OF THE SNAPPER GROUPER FMU TO REMOVE JACKS.

In June 2014, discussion ensued regarding the composition of the Jacks Complex. The Complex currently includes almaco jack, banded rudderfish, and lesser amberjack. The Council approved the following motion: DIRECT STAFF TO DETERMINE THE BEST VEHICLE TO SEPARATE ALMACO JACK FROM THE JACKS COMPLEX.

In December 2014, the Council approved the following motion: DIRECT STAFF TO DEVELOP ALTERNATIVES FOR AN ALMACO TRIP LIMIT. BRING TO AP FOR THEIR INPUT IN 2015. DEVELOP ALTERNATIVES THAT WOULD ALLOW FOR YEAR-ROUND FISHERY.

While discussing this motion, Council members agreed that the ACL for almaco jack is being caught very early. Also, the species is encountered very frequently when fishing commercially for other snapper grouper species. A trip limit would allow the ACL to last longer and fishermen would benefit economically, especially once the ACLs for other, more popular species, are met.

In March 2015, the Council approved the following motions:

1. DIRECT STAFF TO ADD AN ACTION TO AMENDMENT 37 TO EXAMINE ALTERNATIVES TO DISAGGREGATE THE JACKS COMPLEX.
2. DIRECT STAFF TO ADD AN ACTION TO AMENDMENT 37 TO EXAMINE A COMMERCIAL TRIP LIMIT FOR ALMACO JACK.

Amendment 37 previously included actions addressing management of other snapper grouper species, in addition to hogfish. However, because the South Atlantic Council needs to specify a rebuilding plan for the FLK/EFL stock and such a change has to be done through a Fishery Management Plan Amendment (as opposed to a regulatory amendment), the Interdisciplinary Plan Team (IPT) suggested retaining the hogfish action in Amendment 37 and moving the remaining actions to a regulatory amendment (Regulatory Amendment 24). The South Atlantic Council chair and vice-chair were notified of this suggestion and both were in agreement that it was the best way to proceed. Hence, two separate Options Papers (Am 37 and RA 24) were developed for discussion during the June 2015 Council meeting.

Removal of size limits for deepwater species

Numerous snapper grouper species were placed in Complexes through the Comprehensive ACL Amendment, which implemented ACLs for all unassessed snapper grouper species. Complexes were formed based on a suite of criteria, including biological factors and co-occurrence with other species. Species in the Deepwater Complex tend to be found in deep water and therefore are typically associated with high discard mortality. Three species currently included in the Deepwater Complex – silk snapper,

queen snapper, and blackfin snapper – have a 12" minimum size limit. These size limits were put in place long ago, before estimates of discard mortality were available and long before the creation of the various Complexes. To curb discard losses, the Council is considering action to eliminate minimum size limit requirements for these deepwater species.

Adjustment to spawning season closure for shallow water grouper

During stakeholder meetings held as part of the Council's Visioning Project in 2014, fishermen in North Carolina stated that the current annual 4-month spawning season closure does not fit the spawning periodicity of red grouper at that latitude. Fishermen maintain that red grouper harvested off North Carolina are frequently in spawning condition when they are allowed to be harvested starting on May 1.

Stakeholders have also urged the Council to revisit the current 4-month spawning season closure for the rest of the species to which the closure applies to determine whether it is still necessary and whether it covers the appropriate timeframe. Species to which the current closure applies are: gag, black grouper, red grouper, scamp, red hind, rock hind, yellowmouth grouper, yellowfin grouper, graysby, and coney.

The Council is concerned about the decline in red grouper and is considering extending the spawning season closure.

Adjustment to minimum size limit for red grouper

In December 2011, the Council approved Amendment 24 to the Snapper Grouper FMP. The amendment specified ABC and fishing levels for red grouper in response to the stock assessment (SEDAR 19). Amendment 24 also specified a rebuilding schedule and a rebuilding strategy for red grouper. The following became effective on July 11, 2012:

- Rebuilding schedule = 2011-2020
- ABC = yield at 75%F_{MSY}
- Allocations - commercial = 44%; recreational = 56%
- ACL = OY = ABC. Specify commercial and recreational ACLs for red grouper for 2012, 2013, and 2014 and beyond. The ACL for 2014 would remain in effect until modified.
  2014 ACL = 780,000 lbs ww.
  2014 commercial ACL = 343,200 lbs ww
  2014 recreational ACL = 436,800 lbs ww

The table below shows how commercial and recreational landings (lbs ww) compared to the ACLs that have been in place since 2012 as a result of actions taken through Amendment 24. As of 2014, the commercial and recreational fisheries combined only took 20% of the ACL. Additionally, a preliminary look at MARMAP data for red grouper shows a steady decline in CPUE in their samples from about 2003 (The South East Reef Fish Survey, 2014 Update, Sampling Activities and Chevron Trap CPUE, presentation to the SSC, April 2015).

Year	ACL	Comm ACL	Comm Landings	Rec ACL	Rec Landings	Total Landings	% under ACL	% of ACL Landed
2011	573,000	252,120	*221,388	320,880				
2012	647,000	284,680	157,479	362,320	101,604	259,083	60.0%	40.0%
2013	718,000	315,920	117,461	402,080	87,123	204,584	71.5%	28.5%
2014	780,000	343,200	130,139	436,800	26,107	156,246	80.0%	20.0%

* excludes GA landings due to confidentiality

Below are commercial landings (lbs ww; from ACCSP online data excluding GA landings due to confidentiality). Additionally, according to the SCDNR, total commercial landings of red grouper for SC in 2014 were down to 10,019 lbs.

Year	FL	NC	SC	Total
2004	18,325	159,700	47,882	225,907
2005	19,762	140,333	30,590	190,685
2006	17,915	240,782	72,411	331,108
2007	22,940	448,580	127,869	599,389
2008	12,541	474,404	159,049	645,994
2009	9,292	296,255	100,525	406,072
2010	5,501	231,780	75,816	313,097
2011	9,116	154,273	57,999	221,388
2012	10,356	111,781	23,988	146,125
2013	11,270	72,259	16,467	99,996

The Council is concerned about the decline in red grouper landings and is considering a change in the size limit.

Adjustment to recreational bag limit of black sea bass

Regulatory Amendment 9 implemented a reduction in the bag limit for black sea bass from 15 fish to 5 fish. This change became effective on June 22, 2011. At that time, the Council provided the following rationale for their decision:

"The Council chose as their preferred alternative a reduction in the bag limit from 15 fish to 5 fish (**Preferred Sub-Alternative 13b**). Their decision was based on public support for a reduced bag limit and the fact that a large percentage of recreational trips result in approximately 5 black sea bass per person. Hence the Council considered this appropriate as an interim measure until the results of the stock assessment are available late in 2011. Data presented to the Council in March indicate that if the recreational ACL remains at 409,000 pounds gutted weight, it is projected that the season would close on March 6, 2012 assuming the 2011/12 catch rate is similar to the 2010/2011 catch rate. It is important to note that current regulations dictate that the recreational ACL be reduced by the amount of the overage during the following fishing season. At the same time, the black sea bass population is continuing to grow such that the encounters will be more frequent and individual fish will weigh more resulting in the ACL being reached sooner. All this points to a projected closing date sooner than March 6, 2012. The Council's intent is to have this bag limit reduction in place by the start of the next fishing year on June 1, 2011. The Council recognizes that the recreational ACL for the 2011/12 fishing year that

begins on June 1st will be reduced by the amount of the recreational overage and expects the reduced bag limit to help lengthen the season."

Since then, the recreational ACL for black sea bass increased substantially and the stock assessment indicated that black sea bass in the South Atlantic are neither overfished nor undergoing overfishing (SEDAR 25 Update 2013).

Below are recreational landings compared to the recreational ACL for fishing years 2011/2012 through 2013/2014 (preliminary). Preliminary data indicate that only 56% of the recreational ACL was met during the 2013/2014 fishing season. Therefore, the Council is exploring options to increase the bag limit to allow the recreational sector to land more of their ACL.

Year	Recreational ACL	Total Recreational Landings	% ACL	Closure
2011/2012	341,747	491,676	144%	10/17/11
2012/2013	409,000	428,785	104%	9/4/12
2013/2014	1,033,980	579,678	56%	--

Commercial Split Season for Red Porgy

Harvest of red porgy is prohibited annually from January 1 through April 30 during their spawning season. Similarly, a spawning season closure is in place annually from January through April for shallow water groupers. Gray triggerfish and vermilion snapper are two species that can be harvested during this time. There is concern that commercial harvest of vermilion snapper and gray triggerfish is resulting in significant discards of red porgy. Both vermilion snapper and gray triggerfish* are managed commercially under a split season (Jan-June and July-Dec). Members of the Council are interested in possibly implementing a commercial split season for red porgy and/or a bycatch allowance for the commercial sector to minimize the amount of discards.

*NMFS recently approved Snapper Grouper Amendment 29, which will implement a commercial split season for gray triggerfish.

Mutton Snapper

Snapper Grouper FMP Amendment 11 (SAFMC 1999) and the Generic Annual Catch Limits/Accountability Measures Amendment (GMFMC 2011), specified $F_{30\%}$ as a proxy for F_{MSY} or the Maximum Fishing Mortality Threshold (MFMT) and the corresponding yield at $F_{30\%}$ as a proxy for Overfishing Limit, and specified the yield at $F_{40\%}$ as a proxy for the Acceptable Biological Catch. The SEDAR 15A (2008) Assessment Workshop panel did not recommend changing any of the management criteria for mutton snapper at that time.

An update to the stock assessment for mutton snapper in the southeastern U.S. (SEDAR 15A Update 2015) was conducted in 2015 with data through 2013. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) reviewed the results at their April 28-30 meeting and made the following fishing level recommendations:

Mutton Snapper recommendations from SEDAR 15A Update (2015).

Criteria	Deterministic	Probabilistic
Overfished evaluation	Not overfished: $SSB/SSB_{F30\%}$=1.13	
Overfishing evaluation	Not overfishing: $F/F_{30\%SPR}$=0.65	
MFMT ($F_{30\%SPR}$)	0.18	
$SSB_{30\%SPR}$ (lbs females)	4,649,200	
MSST (lbs females)	4,137,700	
Y at $F_{30\%SPR}$ (MSY proxy, lbs)	912,500	
Y at $F_{40\%SPR}$ (lbs)	874,000	
ABC Control Rule Adjustment		20%
P-Star		30%

OFL RECOMMENDATIONS				
Year	**Landed LBS**	**Discard LBS**	**Landed Number**	**Discard Number**
2014	664,876	30,708	113,300	17,341
2015	664,877	44,496	125,245	25,215
2016	713,492	54,005	148,995	29,298
2017	751,711	55,962	164,150	29,660
2018	793,823	56,994	173,656	30,071
2019	835,318	58,170	180,716	30,430
2020	850,077	58,857	184,868	30,780

ABC RECOMMENDATIONS (P* = 0.03)				
Year	**Landed LBS**	**Discard LBS**	**Landed Number**	**Discard Number**
2014	664,900	30,700	113,300	17,300
2015	664,900	44,800	125,800	25,400
2016	692,000	52,800	145,400	28,600
2017	717,200	53,700	157,500	28,400
2018	746,800	53,900	164,500	28,300
2019	774,400	54,400	169,300	28,300
2020	798,300	54,500	172,700	28,300

The Comprehensive ACL Amendment (SAFMC 2011) established a jurisdictional allocation between the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Councils for the mutton snapper ABC based on the Florida Keys (Monroe County) jurisdictional boundary between the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils: the South Atlantic Council was allocated 82% of the ABC and the Gulf Council received 18% of ABC (established using 50% of average landings from 1990-2008 + 50% of average landings from 2006-2008). The following parameters (lbs ww) were implemented for mutton snapper in the South Atlantic through the Comprehensive ACL Amendment:

Parameter	Value
OFL	1,515,300
ABC	926,600
ACL	926,600
Comm ACL	157,707
Rec ACL	768,893
Rec ACT	668,937

The current commercial ACL (17.023851%) is 157,743 lbs ww and the recreational ACL (82.976149%) is 768,857 lbs ww *(NOTE: The commercial allocation in the Comp ACL was 17.02% and the recreational allocation was 82.98%. However the ACLs that were implemented were calculated using this allocation to 6 decimal places instead of 2)*.

The Council needs to take action to implement biological benchmarks and fishing levels recommended by the latest stock assessment update/SSC review and consider commercial and recreational management measures, as appropriate.

Possible Actions and Alternatives

Action 1. Modify the Composition of the Jacks Complex

Alternative 1 (No action). Do not modify the composition of the Jacks Complex. The Jacks Complex comprises almaco jack, lesser amberjack, and banded rudderfish. Each species in the Jacks Complex contributes to the total ACL, and the ACLs and AMs are monitored and applied at the complex level, not at the individual species level.

	Commercial ACL (lbs ww)	Recreational ACL & ACT (lbs ww)	Total ACL (lbs ww)	Comm allocation	Rec allocation
Jacks Complex	189,422	ACL=267,799 ACT=165,590	457,221		
Almaco Jack	147,322	ACL=155,195 ACT=109,288	302,517	48.70%	51.30%
Banded Rudderfish	37,829	ACL = 107,605 ACT=53,802	145,434	26.01%	73.99%
Lesser Amberjack	4,270	ACL=5,000 ACT=2,500	9,270	46.07%	53.93%

Alternative 2. Remove almaco jack from the Jacks Complex and track ACLs for almaco jack separately:

Total ACL=302,517 lbs ww
Commercial ACL=147,322 lbs ww (48.70%)
Recreational ACL=155,195 lbs ww (51.30%)
Recreational ACT=109,288 lbs ww

The Jacks Complex would comprise banded rudderfish and lesser amberjack and the commercial and recreational ACLs and recreational ACT would be specified as follows:

	Commercial ACL (lbs ww)	Recreational ACL & ACT (lbs ww)	Total ACL (lbs ww)	Comm allocation	Rec allocation
Jacks Complex	42,100	ACL=112,604 ACT=56,302	154,704		
Banded Rudderfish	37,829	ACL=107,605 ACT=53,802	145,434	26.01%	73.99%
Lesser Amberjack	4,270	ACL=5,000 ACT=2,500	9,270	46.07%	53.93%

Alternative 3. Disaggregate the Jacks Complex and track individual ACLs and recreational ACTs for each species in the Jacks Complex separately:

Almaco jack:

Total ACL=302,517 lbs ww
Commercial ACL=147,322 lbs ww (48.70%)
Recreational ACL=155,195 lbs ww (51.30%)
Recreational ACT=109,288 lbs ww

Banded rudderfish:

Total ACL = 145,434 lbs ww
Commercial ACL=37,829 lbs ww (26.01%)
Recreational ACL=107,605 lbs ww (73.99%)
Recreational ACT=53,802 lbs ww

Lesser amberjack:

Total ACL=9,270 lbs ww
Commercial ACL=4,270 lbs ww (46.07%)
Recreational ACL=5,000 lbs ww (53.93%)
Recreational ACT=2,500 lbs ww

Discussion and preliminary data summary/analysis:

Rationale for creation of the Jacks Complex (excerpted and edited from SERO-LAPP-2010-06: Species groupings for SAFMC Snapper-Grouper FMU, February 15, 2011. Appendix O in the Comprehensive ACL Amendment):

The three managed jack species (e.g., greater amberjack, banded rudderfish, and almaco jack) were most frequently encountered by the Headboat Survey (HBS) and Commercial Vertical Line (CVL) sectors. In the HBS, almaco jack and greater amberjack clustered tightly with each other. In the CVL, no strong associations between jacks were observed. Data from trained observers in the Reef Fish Observer Program (RFOP) suggested some association between banded rudderfish and almaco jack. A cluster of the MRFSS data suggested associations between all the jack species. Analyses suggest moderate levels of cluster association between the jack species. SEDAR 15 (2009) concluded that almaco jack were correctly identified in most instances, but smaller greater amberjack and banded rudderfish were often misidentified. Issues with misidentification might lead to issues computing single-species ACLs for these species unless the rate of misidentification is quantifiable or has been (and remains) constant through time. The use of a 'Jacks' complex would mitigate issues with species identification by regulating misidentified species together. These findings are reasonably consistent with Shertzer and Williams (2008); using hierarchical cluster analysis, they identified a complex including banded rudderfish and almaco jack in the HBS, and greater amberjack and almaco jack in the commercial sector. Lesser amberjack, which was added to the list of species requiring an ACL in December 2010, would fit well into the banded rudderfish and almaco jack complex. Atlantic spadefish and blue runner are probably best-suited to individual management, given the unique angling techniques to pursue these stocks.

Comments from IPT:

- The composition of the Jacks Complex had strong support from SSC due to ID issues and data issues.
- Landings for lesser amberjack are so low that disaggregating from Complex would not be advisable.
- Weekly dealer reporting came online too late last year (2014): Jacks Complex closed in July and weekly reporting was implemented in August.
- Changing the composition of a species complex cannot be done through the existing Framework. If Council still wants to re-structure the Complex, the action would need to be moved to Amendment 37 or to another plan amendment.
- If the Jacks Complex was left intact and a trip limit was put in place for the Complex, that should address the issue of ACL overages AND it could be addressed in a Regulatory Amendment.
- Revisit AMs since the ACL has been exceeded in the last three years?
- Get a report on commercial side and recreational side on why monitoring programs are not allowing us to close in time to not have ACL overages.

Commercial landings for the Jacks Complex

Species	Fishing Year	Fishing Season	Total Landings	ACL	Quota %	Closure Date
Jacks*	2014	Jan 1 - Dec 31	283,292	189,422	149.56	7/15/14
	2013		201,398	189,422	106.32	6/18/2013
	2012		333,561	193,999	171.94	7/2/2012

Source: SERO website.

Snapper Grouper AP Recommendation:

MOTION: AP SUPPORTS ALTERNATIVE 3 TO DISAGGREGATE THE JACKS COMPLEX AND TRACK ACLs INDIVIDUALLY
APPROVED BY AP

COMMITTEE ACTION:

OPTION 1. APPROVE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 1 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.
OPTION 2. ADD/MODIFY ALTERANTIVES (COMMITTEE TO SPECIFY) UNDER ACTION 1 AND APPROVE MODIFIED ALTERNATIVES.
OPTION 3. OTHERS?

Action 2. Establish a commercial trip limit for almaco jack

Alternative 1 (No action). Do not establish a commercial trip limit for almaco jack. There is no trip limit for almaco jack and the commercial ACL=147,322 pounds whole weight (lbs ww).

Alternative 2. Establish a commercial trip limit for almaco jack of X lbs ww.

IPT suggestions for possible additional alternatives:

Alternative 3. Establish a commercial trip limit for the Jacks Complex of X lbs ww.

Alternative 4. Establish a trip limit for the Jacks Complex and greater amberjack of X lbs ww.

Others??

Discussion and preliminary data summary/analysis:

Comments from IPT:

- Perhaps look at trip limits for the entire complex due to ID issues and "noise" in recreational landings?
- If the Jacks Complex was left intact and a trip limit was put in place for the Complex, that should address the issue of ACL overages AND it could be addressed in a Regulatory Amendment.
- Also consider trip limit for Jacks and greater amberjack? Current trip limit for greater amberjack is 1,200 lbs ww.

Projected percent that would be landed under various trip limits for All Jacks (greater amberjack, lesser amberjack, banded rudderfish, and almaco jack).

TRIP LIMIT (lbs ww)	2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		MEAN 2010-2014	
NO TRIP LIMIT	1,249,215	100	1,299,152	100	1,289,959	100	1,068,641	100	1,164,544	100	1,214,302	100
2000	1,235,010	98.9	1,285,923	99	1,255,649	97.3	1,061,400	99.3	1,157,331	99.4	1,199,063	98.78
1500	1,211,303	97	1,257,690	96.8	1,232,279	95.5	1,048,764	98.1	1,145,186	98.3	1,179,044	97.14
1000	1,105,605	88.5	1,139,962	87.7	1,084,342	84.1	953,463	89.2	1,051,652	90.3	1,067,005	87.96
750	963,549	77.1	992,993	76.4	929,448	72.1	834,120	78.1	927,787	79.7	929,579	76.68
500	764,898	61.2	788,786	60.7	727,227	56.4	664,702	62.2	747,714	64.2	738,665	60.94
400	665,000	53.2	686,225	52.8	629,846	48.8	579,101	54.2	652,290	56	642,492	53
300	549,137	44	567,353	43.7	519,546	40.3	478,839	44.8	540,943	46.5	531,164	43.86
250	484,222	38.8	501,073	38.6	457,876	35.5	422,404	39.5	478,156	41.1	468,746	38.7
200	413,382	33.1	428,114	33	390,746	30.3	360,498	33.7	408,645	35.1	400,277	33.04

Projected percent that would be landed under various trip limits for Jacks Complex (lesser amberjack, banded rudderfish, and almaco jack).

TRIP LIMIT (lbs ww)	2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		MEAN 2010-2014	
NO TRIP LIMIT	266,450	100	343,858	100	327,121	100	203,902	100	226,345	100	273,535	100
2000	265,114	99.5	340,387	99	322,080	98.5	202,182	99.2	223,699	98.8	270,692	99
1500	262,513	98.5	334,115	97.2	312,365	95.5	199,425	97.8	218,731	96.6	265,430	97.12
1000	250,584	94	312,822	91	287,950	88	191,019	93.7	207,525	91.7	249,980	91.68
750	236,612	88.8	289,453	84.2	264,689	80.9	181,861	89.2	197,058	87.1	233,935	86.04
500	210,922	79.2	253,215	73.6	228,067	69.7	165,232	81	178,006	78.6	207,088	76.42
400	195,329	73.3	231,475	67.3	207,638	63.5	153,893	75.5	164,531	72.7	190,573	70.46
300	173,852	65.2	204,005	59.3	181,344	55.4	136,654	67	145,721	64.4	168,315	62.26
250	160,165	60.1	186,964	54.4	164,958	50.4	125,106	61.4	133,627	59	154,164	57.06
200	142,951	53.7	166,736	48.5	145,457	44.5	110,709	54.3	119,027	52.6	136,976	50.72

Projected percent that would be landed under various trip limits for almaco jack.

TRIP LIMIT (lbs ww)	2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		MEAN 2010-2014	
NO TRIP LIMIT	208,760	100	207,985	100	225,277	100	133,033	100	162,680	100	187,547	100
2000	207,424	99.4	207,985	100	220,551	97.9	132,340	99.5	160,358	98.6	185,732	99.08
1500	205,599	98.5	207,091	99.6	212,624	94.4	130,998	98.5	157,319	96.7	182,726	97.54
1000	196,399	94.1	200,104	96.2	194,958	86.5	127,446	95.8	150,230	92.3	173,827	92.98
750	185,524	88.9	190,522	91.6	180,553	80.1	122,501	92.1	142,845	87.8	164,389	88.1
500	166,813	79.9	172,896	83.1	158,964	70.6	114,130	85.8	129,719	79.7	148,504	79.82
400	155,586	74.5	160,646	77.2	146,650	65.1	108,559	81.6	120,936	74.3	138,475	74.54
300	139,689	66.9	144,050	69.3	130,133	57.8	99,094	74.5	108,227	66.5	124,239	67
250	129,226	61.9	133,453	64.2	119,207	52.9	91,960	69.1	99,918	61.4	114,753	61.9
200	115,820	55.5	120,608	58	105,913	47	82,382	61.9	89,694	55.1	102,883	55.5

Snapper Grouper AP Recommendations:

MOTION: RECOMMEND THE COUNCIL CONSIDER COMMERCIAL TRIP LIMITS OF 300-500 POUNDS FOR ALMACO JACK
APPROVED BY AP (3 OPPOSED)

MOTION: RECOMMEND THE COUNCIL CONSIDER A RECREATIONAL BAG LIMIT OF 1 FISH PER PERSON FOR ALMACO JACK
APPROVED BY AP (2 OPPOSED)

MOTION: RECOMMEND THE COUNCIL CONSIDER ESTABLISHING A MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT FOR ALMACO JACK
APPROVED BY AP (3 OPPOSED)

COMMITTEE ACTION:

ACTION 2, ALTERNATIVE 2:

OPTION 1. SPECIFY AND APPROVE A RANGE OF SUB-ALTERNATIVES FOR ALTERNATIVE 2 (COMMERCIAL TRIP LIMIT FOR ALMACO JACK OF XX TO XX POUNDS).
OPTION 2. OTHERS??

ACTION 2, ALTERNATIVES 3 AND 4:

OPTION 1. APPROVE INCLUSION OF ALTERNATIVE 3 UNDER ACTION 2 AND SPECIFY AND APPROVE SUB-ALTERNATIVES.
OPTION 2. APPROVE INCLUSION OF ALTERNATIVE 4 UNDER ACTION 2 AND SPECIFY AND APPROVE SUB-ALTERNATIVES.
OPTION 3. OTHERS??

BAG AND SIZE LIMITS:

OPTION 1. REQUEST THAT STAFF ADD AN ACTION TO REGULATORY AMENDMENT 24 TO CONSIDER BAG LIMIT ALTERNATIVES FOR ALMACO JACK.
OPTION 2. REQUEST THAT STAFF ADD AN ACTION TO REGULATORY AMENDMENT 24 TO CONSIDER MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT ALTERNATIVES FOR ALMACO JACK.
OPTION 3. OTHERS??

Action 3. Remove minimum size limits for deepwater snapper grouper species

Alternative 1 (No action). Do not remove the minimum size limits for queen snapper, silk snapper, and blackfin snapper. The minimum size limit for these deepwater species is 12 inches total length (TL).

Alternative 2. Remove the 12" TL minimum size limit for queen snapper.

Alternative 3. Remove the 12" TL minimum size limit for silk snapper.

Alternative 4. Remove the 12" TL minimum size limit for blackfin snapper.

Discussion and preliminary data summary/analysis:

Comments from IPT:

- Is there consistency with Gulf and FL regulations? No size limits or trip limits in Gulf federal waters.

Florida has 12-inch size limit (rec and commercial) for blackfin, silk, and queen snappers in Atlantic and Gulf state waters. Species are included in the recreational 10-snapper daily aggregate.
South Carolina and North Carolina also have 12" size limit and include in 10-snapper aggregate. These regulations were developed to be consistent with federal regulations. If federal regulations change the Council would recommend the states change their regulations accordingly.

Snapper Grouper AP Recommendation:

MOTION: AP RECOMMENDS REMOVING MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT FOR ALL THREE SPECIES
APPROVED BY AP

COMMITTEE ACTION:

OPTION 1. SELECT ALTERNATIVE(S) X-X AS PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES FOR ACTION 3.
OPTION 2. DO NOT SELECT PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE(S) AT THIS TIME FOR ACTION 3.
OPTION 3. OTHERS?

Action 4. Adjustment to annual spawning season closure for shallow water grouper

Alternative 1 (No action). Do not modify the annual January 1 through April 30 spawning season closure for shallow water grouper. Commercial and recreational harvest of the following species is prohibited annually from January 1 to April 30: gag, black grouper, red grouper, scamp, red hind, rock hind, yellowmouth grouper, yellowfin grouper, graysby, and coney.

Alternative 2. Extend the spawning season closure for red grouper by one month. Commercial and recreational harvest of red grouper would be prohibited annually from January 1 through May 31.

***Alternative 3.** Remove the annual spawning season closure for all affected grouper species in the South Atlantic:

Sub-alternative 3a. North of 28 degrees North latitude.

Sub-alternative 3b. Throughout the Council's jurisdiction.

(*Alternative structured to match what is being proposed in the Joint Amendment on South Florida Management)

Discussion and preliminary data summary/analysis:

Comments from IPT

- Council needs to clarify whether they intend to consider changes to the spawning season closure for all shallow water groupers or just some species (e.g., only red grouper? Gag and red grouper? Etc.)
- Note that the Gulf Council's Reef Fish Committee voted to remove action that would establish identical regulations for shallow-water grouper seasonal closures throughout the Gulf and South Atlantic in the Joint South Florida Amendment.

Average commercial landings (lbs ww) by month of South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper (gag, black grouper, red grouper, scamp, red hind, rock hind, yellowmouth grouper, yellowfin grouper, graysby, and coney), 2009-2013.

	2009-2013	2011-2013	2013
Jan	*105,629*	*96,226*	*84,391*
Feb	*81,562*	*74,301*	*65,163*
Mar	*89,590*	*81,614*	*71,577*
Apr	*118,837*	*108,258*	*94,944*
May	210,733	226,981	229,305
Jun	186,646	168,342	140,124
Jul	121,649	112,104	105,690
Aug	103,888	96,420	88,206
Sep	91,160	82,477	69,189
Oct	103,791	84,173	89,836
Nov	73,005	48,686	23,741
Dec	56,722	44,057	10,980
Total with closure	947,594	863,240	757,071
Total without closure	1,343,212	1,223,639	1,073,146

Source: SEFSC Commercial ACL Dataset (July 2014)

Note: Jan-April landings were backfilled using the mean ratio of landings Jan-Apr 1986-1990.

Average recreational landings (lbs ww) by wave of South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper (gag, black grouper, red grouper, scamp, red hind, rock hind, yellowmouth grouper, yellowfin grouper, graysby, and coney), 2009-2013, including projected landings in the absence of Jan-Apr annual closure.

	2009-2013	2011-2013	2013
Jan/Feb	*116,182*	*110,082*	*111,314*
Mar/Apr	*243,541*	*230,755*	*233,338*
May/June	171,209	140,843	103,421
July/Aug	120,366	122,545	203,973
Sept/Oct	58,867	59,574	47,115
Nov/Dec	55,344	61,521	34,277
Total with closure	405,786	384,483	388,786
Total without closure	765,509	725,320	733,438

Source: SEFSC Recreational ACL Dataset (Feb 2015)
Note: Jan-April landings were backfilled using the mean ratio of landings Jan-Apr 1986-1990.
Note: 2014 data lacks headboat, so it is not included in this analysis.

Snapper Grouper AP Recommendations:

- Rolling closures would result in effort shifts and, therefore, not be beneficial.
- Extending the spawning season closure for red grouper off North Carolina would likely lead to an increase in regulatory discards. Moreover, effort has declined on red grouper off NC in recent years.
- In Florida, there is no need to modify the spawning season closure for red grouper since peak spawning activity is in March and April.
- Some AP members supported the removal of the spawning season closure for the recreational (charter) sector.
- AP members would support the future removal of the spawning closure if Spawning SMZs were to be identified and put in place for shallow water groupers.

MOTION: AP RECOMMENDS ALTERNATIVE 1, NO ACTION, ON REMOVING THE SPAWNING SEASON CLOSURE FOR SHALLOW WATER GROUPERS.
APPROVED BY AP (2 OPPOSED)

MOTION: THE AP RECOMMENDS THE COUNCIL MOVE FORWARD WITH IDENTIFYING SPAWNING AREAS FOR SHALLOW WATER GROUPERS THAT MAY BE APPROPRIATE, AT SOME POINT, TO DESIGNATE AS SPAWNING SMZs.
APPROVED BY AP (2 OPPOSED)
INTENT IS TO EVENTUALLY REMOVE THE SPAWNING SEASON CLOSURE ONCE SPAWNING AREAS ARE IDENTIFIED AND PROTECTED*

COMMITTEE ACTION:
OPTION 1. MOVE ACTION 4 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTEDAPPENDIX.
OPTION 2. APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 4 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.
OPTION 3. ADD/MODIFY ALTERNATIVES FOR ACTION 4 (COMMITTEE TO SPECIFY) AND APPROVE THE MODIFIED ALTERNATIVES FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.
OPTION 4. OTHERS??

Action 5. Adjustment to minimum size limit for red grouper

Alternative 1 (No Action). Do not adjust the minimum size limit for red grouper. The minimum size limit (commercial and recreational) for red grouper is 20 inches total length (TL).

Alternative 2. Increase the minimum size limit (commercial and recreational) for red grouper to 21 inches TL.

Alternative 3. Increase the minimum size limit (commercial and recreational) for red grouper to 22 inches TL.

Discussion and preliminary data summary/analysis:

Comments from IPT:

- Add alternatives for reducing size limit? Look at size limits in states also.

Florida Commercial Regulations:
20" TL in Atlantic and Monroe County state waters
18" TL in Gulf state waters

Florida Recreational Regulations:
20" TL in Atlantic and Monroe County state waters; up to 3 per person within the 3 grouper daily aggregate
20" TL in Gulf state waters; up to 4 per person within the 4 grouper daily aggregate; 2 per person effective May 7.

Snapper Grouper AP Recommendation:

MOTION: AP RECOMENDS ALTERNATIVE 1, NO ACTION, ON MODIFYING THE MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT FOR RED GROUPER
APPROVED BY AP

COMMITTEE ACTION:

OPTION 1. MOVE ACTION 5 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX.
OTPION 2. APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 5 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.
OPTION 3. ADD/MODIFY ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 5 (COMMITTEE TO SPECIFY) AND APPROVE THE MODIFIED ALTERNATIVES FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS:

- Increase size limit to 24"? This was suggested at port meetings in NC – 24" for all groupers.
- Remove minimum size limit?? Has been suggested numerous times during Visioning to reduce discards…
- Adjust size limit for each sector separately?

OPTION 4. OTHERS?

Action 6. Adjustment to recreational bag limit of black sea bass

Alternative 1 (No action). Do not adjust the recreational bag limit for black sea bass. The recreational bag limit of black sea bass is 5 fish per person per day.

Alternative 2. Increase the recreational bag limit of black sea bass to 6 fish per person per day.

Alternative 3. Increase the recreational bag limit of black sea bass to 7 fish per person per day.

Alternative 4. Increase the recreational bag limit of black sea bass to 8 fish per person per day.

Alternative 5. Increase the recreational bag limit of black sea bass to 9 fish per person per day.

Alternative 6. Increase the recreational bag limit of black sea bass to 10 fish per person per day.

Discussion and preliminary data summary/analysis:

Projected change in landings under proposed bag limits (Alternatives 2-6) for recreationally harvested South Atlantic black sea bass reported to MRFSS, assuming potential catch is **unlimited** by anything but the bag limit.

Year	Status Quo	6 fish	7 fish	8 fish	9 fish	10 fish
2012	100%	103%	110%	117%	124%	131%
2013	100%	101%	108%	115%	122%	129%
AVG 2012-2013	100%	102%	109%	116%	123%	130%

Source: SEFSC MRFSS Catch-Effort Files (2014).

Projected change in landings under proposed bag limits (Alternatives 2-6) for recreationally harvested South Atlantic black sea bass reported to MRFSS, assuming potential catch is **capped** by observed total catch (A+B1+B2).

Year	Status Quo	6 fish (capped)	7 fish (capped)	8 fish (capped)	9 fish (capped)	10 fish (capped)
2012	100%	102%	107%	112%	117%	121%
2013	100%	100%	104%	107%	111%	114%
AVG '12-13	100%	101%	105%	110%	114%	117%

Source: SEFSC MRFSS Catch-Effort Files (2014).

Projected change in landings under proposed bag limits (Alternatives 2-6) for recreationally harvested South Atlantic black sea bass reported to the Southeast Headboat Survey, assuming potential catch is **unlimited** by anything but the bag limit.

Year	Status Quo	6 fish	7 fish	8 fish	9 fish	10 fish
2012	100%	104%	107%	111%	115%	119%
2013	100%	102%	105%	107%	110%	112%
AVG 2012-2013	100%	103%	106%	109%	112%	115%

Source: SEFSC Headboat Survey Catch-Effort Files (2014).

Projected change in landings under proposed bag limits (Alternatives 2-6) for recreationally harvested South Atlantic black sea bass reported to the Southeast Headboat Survey, assuming potential catch is **capped** by captain self-reported discards.

Year	Status Quo	6 fish	7 fish	8 fish	9 fish	10 fish
2012	100%	103%	106%	109%	112%	114%
2013	100%	102%	104%	106%	108%	109%
AVG 2012-2013	100%	103%	105%	108%	110%	111%

Source: SEFSC Headboat Survey Catch-Effort Files (2014).

Snapper Grouper AP Recommendation:

MOTION: AP RECOMMENDS ALTERNATIVE 3 AS PREFERRED

Alternative 3. Increase the recreational bag limit of black sea bass to 7 fish per person per day.

APPROVED BY AP

COMMITTEE ACTION:

OPTION 1. SELECT ALTERNATIVE X AS PREFERRED FOR ACTION 6.

OPTION 2. DO NOT SELECT A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE AS THIS TIME FOR ACTION 6.

OPTION 3. OTHERS?

Action 7. Remove the spawning season closure and establish a commercial split season for red porgy

Alternative 1 (No action). Commercial and recreational harvest of red porgy is prohibited annually from January 1 to April 30. The commercial fishing year is the calendar year, January 1 to December 31.

Alternative 2. Remove the annual January 1 to April 30 spawning season closure for red porgy. Allocate the directed commercial red porgy ACL into two quotas: 50% to the period January 1 through June 30 and 50% to the period July 1 through December 31. Any remaining quota from season 1 would transfer to season 2. Any remaining quota from season 2 would not be carried forward.

Alternative 3. Remove the annual January 1 to April 30 spawning season closure for red porgy for the commercial sector only. Allocate the directed commercial red porgy ACL into two quotas: 50% to the period January 1 through June 30 and 50% to the period July 1 through December 31. Any remaining quota from season 1 would transfer to season 2. Any remaining quota from season 2 would not be carried forward.

Discussion and preliminary data summary/analysis:

Commercial ACL (2015) = 164,000 lbs ww (157,692 lbs gw)

Commercial Management Measures: 14" TL; trip limit 120 fish; Commercial sale prohibited during Jan-April. Possession limited to bag limit: 3 per person/day or 3 per person/trip (whichever is more restrictive).

Current Commercial Accountability Measures:
In-season: If commercial landings, as estimated by the Science and Research Director, reach or are projected to reach the commercial ACL, the Assistant Administrator will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to close the commercial sector for the remainder of the fishing year. On and after the effective date of such a notification, all sale or purchase is prohibited and harvest or possession of this species in or from the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone (EEZ) is limited to the bag and possession limit. This bag and possession limit applies in the South Atlantic on board a vessel for which a valid Federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic snapper grouper has been issued, without regard to where such species were harvested, i.e., in state or Federal waters.
Post-season: If commercial landings exceed the ACL, and the species is overfished, based on the most recent Status of U.S. Fisheries Report to Congress, the Assistant Administrator will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register, at or near the beginning of the following fishing year to reduce the ACL for that following year by the amount of the overage in the prior fishing year.

Proposed Commercial Accountability Measures: (Generic ACL Amendment):
In season: If commercial landings as estimated by the Science and Research Director reach or are projected to reach the commercial annual catch limit (ACL), or quota component (i.e. golden tilefish), the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to close the commercial sector for the remainder of the fishing year. On and after the effective date of such a notification, all sale or purchase is prohibited and

harvest or possession of this species in or from the South Atlantic EEZ is limited to the bag and possession limit. This bag and possession limit applies in the South Atlantic on board a vessel for which a valid Federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic snapper grouper, or golden crab has been issued as appropriate, without regard to where such species were harvested, i.e., in state or federal waters.

Post-season: If the commercial ACL is exceeded, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the commercial ACL in the following fishing year by the amount of the commercial overage, only if the species, or one or more species in a species complex, is overfished and the total ACL (commercial ACL and recreational ACL) is exceeded.

Historical commercial landings (SERO ACL monitoring webpage, accessed 3/25/15):

Fishing Year	Fishing Season	Total Landings	ACL	Units	Quota %	Closure Date
2014	Jan 1* - Dec 31	140,192	154,500	ww	90.74	
2013		155,967	153,000	gw	101.94	12/2/2013
2012		155,346	190,050		81.74	
2011		195,049	190,050		102.63	
2010		152,743	190,050		80.37	
2009		158,221	190,050		83.25	
2008		165,461	127,000		130.28	
2007		136,382	127,000		107.39	
2006		80,293	127,000		63.22	
2005		46,844	None			
2004		47,848	None			

*Commercial harvest of red porgy is closed from January 1 to April 30 each year.

Stock Status

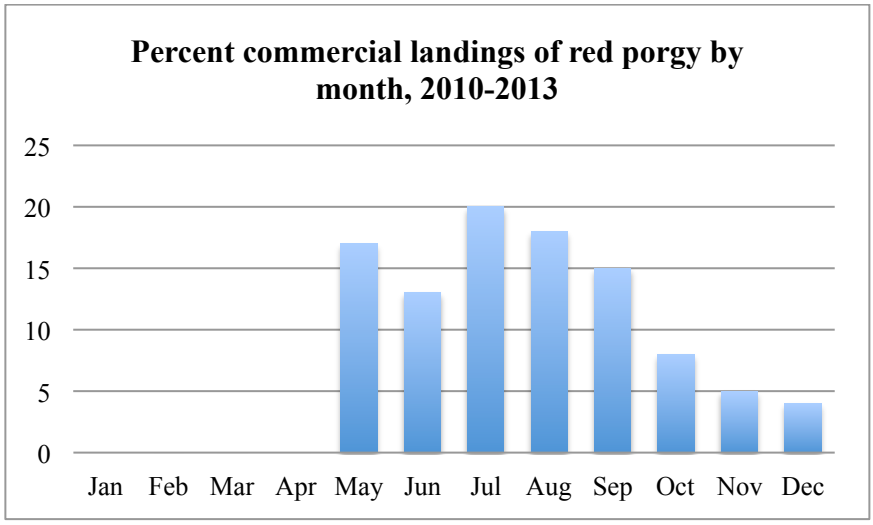
(Excerpted from the SEDAR 1 Update (2012) Executive Summary)

The South Atlantic stock of red porgy was assessed in 2012 (SEDAR 1 Update 2012) with data through 2011. Results suggest that spawning stock biomass has increased modestly since the benchmark assessment. The 1998 estimate of SSB was about 19% of SSB_{MSY}, and the 2012 estimate was about 47% of SSB_{MSY}. These estimates corresponded to about 25% and 61% of MSST, using the Council's definition of MSST as (1 - M)*SSB_{MSY} and assuming a natural mortality rate of M = 0.225. The $F_{2009-2011}/F_{MSY}$ estimate is about 64% and results suggest the stock has generally been exploited below the MFMT (represented by F_{MSY}) since the late 1990s. Thus, the stock assessment update indicated that the stock is overfished, but is no longer undergoing overfishing.

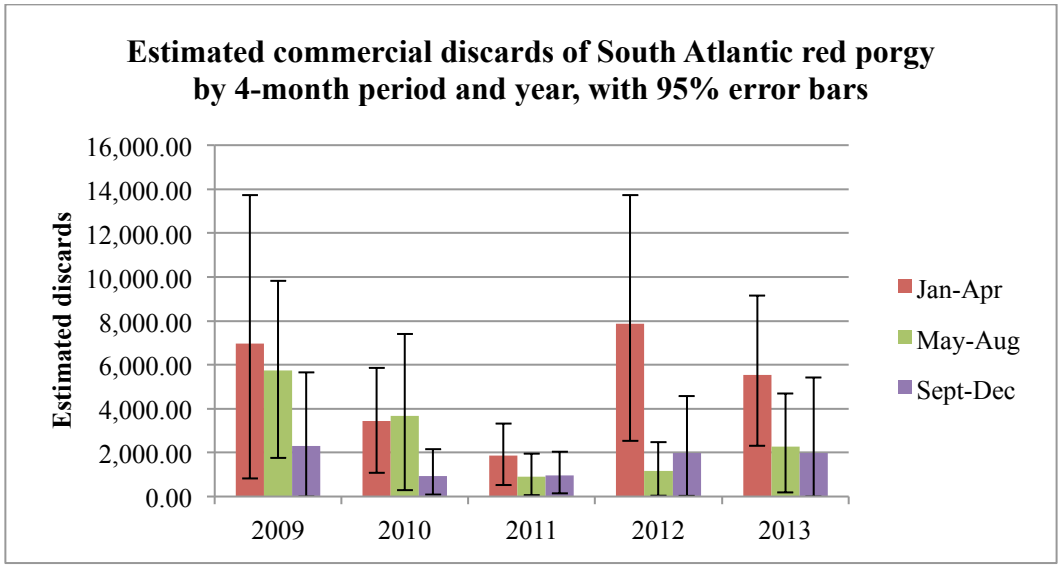
As this stock is currently under a rebuilding plan, projections were used to evaluate the potential for stock recovery. Several management scenarios were evaluated: (1) no fishing mortality (F = 0), (2) current fishing mortality (fishing mortality rate fixed at the geometric mean of the fishing mortalities estimated during 2009-2011, and (3) multiple constant fishing mortality rates based on F_{MSY}, 85%F_{MSY}, 75%F_{MSY}, and 65%F_{MSY}. Under no management scenarios, including F = 0, was the red porgy population projected to have a 50% or greater chance of SSB > SSB_{MSY} during the current rebuilding time period ending in 2018. Additionally, it is only theoretically possible to achieve F = 0 owing to discard mortality that will inevitably occur by fisheries targeting other stocks. Among all scenarios

considered, the red porgy stock exhibits a range of 2% to 18% probability of rebuilding by 2018 and a range of 12% to 89% probability of rebuilding by 2026.

Red Porgy Commercial Landings and Discards



Note: Landings for Jan-Apr were 1,298 lbs ww for the entire time series.



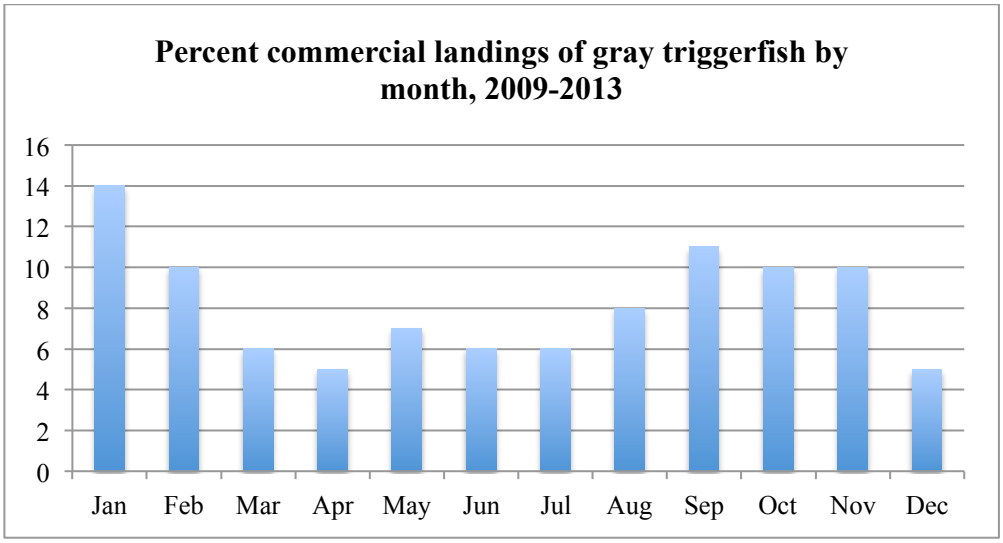
Note: commercial discards are poorly estimated. Estimation is based upon extrapolation from captain self-reported discard logbooks, which are a ~20% subsample of the federally permitted commercial snapper grouper fleet.

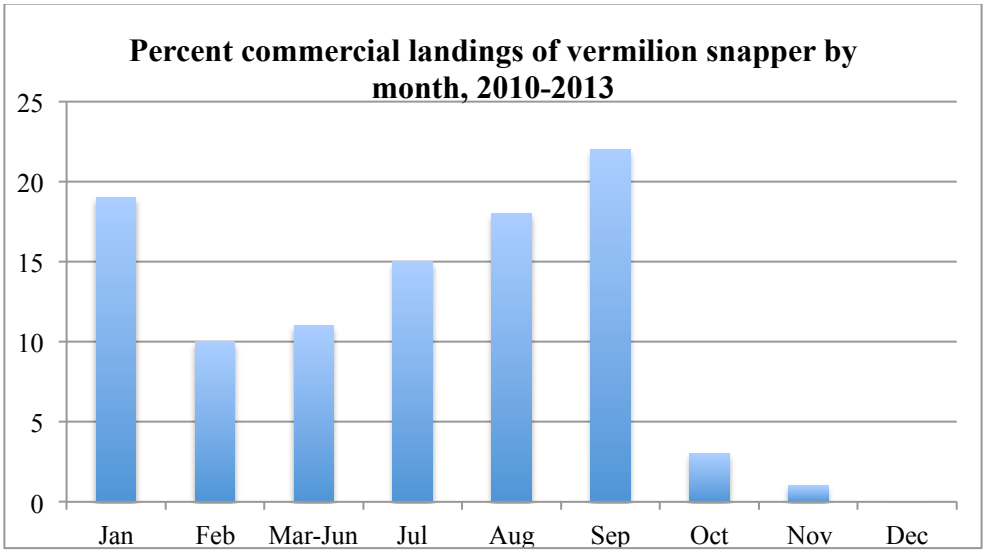
South Atlantic red porgy discard estimates (lbs ww) by 4-month period.

Year	Jan-Apr	May-Aug	Sept-Dec
2009	6,976.20	5,731.81	2,308.75
2010	3,451.63	3,677.37	927.82
2011	1,867.84	892.42	973.02
2012	7,871.81	1,154.51	1,989.87
2013	5,522.81	2,277.58	1,982.97

Source: SEFSC Commercial Logbook and Commercial Discard Logbook (Nov 2014).

Commercial Landings for Gray Triggerfish and Vermilion Snapper





Note: Landings were aggregated for March-June since in-season closures occurred in 2011-2014 due to commercial landings meeting the ACL.

Snapper Grouper AP Recommendations:

- The AP supports the idea of a commercial split season for red porgy that coincides with those for vermilion snapper and gray triggerfish (once Amendment 29 is approved) with the commercial ACL equally split between the two. This would help reduce red porgy discards.
- A suggestion was made for reducing the commercial trip limit from 120 fish to 80 fish.
- The intent is for the spawning season closure to be removed for the commercial sector and a split season implemented instead.

MOTION: AP RECOMMENDS THE COUNCIL CONSIDER A COMMERCIAL SPLIT SEASON FOR RED PORGY (SIMILAR TO VERMILION SNAPPER) AS WELL AS COMMERCIAL TRIP LIMITS.
APPROVED BY AP

COMMITTEE ACTION:
OPTION 1. APPROVE INCLUSION OF ACTION 7 IN REGULATORY AMENDMENT 24 AND APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 7 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.
OPTION 2. ADD/MODIFY ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 7 (COMMITTEE TO SPECIFY) AND APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 7 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.
OPTION 3. DO NOT APPROVE INCLUSION OF ACTION 7 IN REGULATORY AMENDMENT 24.
OPTION 4. OTHERS??

Action 8. Specify Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) for mutton snapper

Alternative 1 (No Action). Do not modify the current definition of MSY for mutton snapper. Currently, MSY equals the yield produced by F_{MSY}. $F_{30\%SPR}$ is used as the F_{MSY} proxy.

Alternative 2. MSY equals the yield produced by F_{MSY} or the F_{MSY} proxy. MSY and F_{MSY} are recommended by the most recent SEDAR/SSC.

Alternatives	Equation	F_{MSY}	MSY Values (lbs whole weight)
Alternative 1 (No Action)	Do not change the current definition of MSY for mutton snapper. Currently, MSY equals the yield produced by F_{MSY}. $F_{30\%SPR}$ is used as the F_{MSY} proxy.	$F_{30\%SPR}$	Unknown?
Alternative 2	MSY equals the yield produced by F_{MSY} or the F_{MSY} proxy. MSY and F_{MSY} are recommended by the most recent SEDAR/SSC.	$F_{30\%SPR}$	912,500

COMMITTEE ACTION:

OPTION 1. APPROVE INCLUSION OF ACTION 8 IN REGULATORY AMENDMENT 24 AND APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 8 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.
OPTION 2. ADD/MODIFY ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 8 (COMMITTEE TO SPECIFY) AND APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 8 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.
OPTION 3. DO NOT APPROVE INCLUSION OF ACTION 8 IN REGULATORY AMENDMENT 24.
OPTION 4. OTHERS??

Action 9. Specify Minimum Stock Size Threshold (MSST) for mutton snapper

Alternative 1 (No Action). Do not modify the current definition of MSST for mutton snapper. MSST = SSB_{MSY} ((1-M) or 0.5, whichever is greater).

Alternative 2. MSST = 50% of SSB_{MSY} = 2,324,600 lbs ww.

Alternative 3. MSST = 75% of SSB_{MSY} = 3,486,900 lbs ww

Alternatives	MSST Equation	M	MSST Values (lbs whole weight)
1 (No Action)	Do not change the current definition of MSST for mutton snapper. MSST equals SSB_{MSY} ((1-M) or 0.5, whichever is greater).	0.11	4,137,788
2	MSST = 50% of SSB_{MSY}	0.17	2,324,600
3	MSST = 75% of SSB_{MSY}	0.17	3,486,900

Discussion:

Regulatory Amendment 21, effective November 6, 2014, changed the definition for MSST for select snapper grouper species with low natural mortality (M) from MSST = SSB_{MSY}*((1-M) or 0.5, whichever is greater) to MSST = 75% SSB_{MSY}. When the natural mortality rate is low, less than 0.25, even small fluctuations in biomass due to natural variations not related to fishing mortality may cause a stock to vary between an overfished or rebuilt condition. When a species is identified as overfished, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) requires that a plan be implemented to rebuild the stock. The snapper grouper species with low natural mortality rates addressed in Regulatory Amendment 21 were red snapper, blueline tilefish, gag, black grouper, yellowtail snapper, vermilion snapper, red porgy, and greater amberjack. Redefining MSST for these species was done to help prevent unnecessary overfished designations when small drops in biomass are due to natural variation in recruitment or other environmental variables, and ensure that rebuilding plans are applied to stocks when truly appropriate. Natural mortality for mutton snapper is estimated at 0.17, which is within the range of natural mortality values for species addressed in Regulatory Amendment 21 (0.08 – 0.23). The following is taken directly from the mutton snapper updated assessment:

0 until the following January when they become age-1 fish. In addition to assigning ages to lengths, the von Bertalanffy growth curve formed the basis of age-specific natural mortality that followed a Lorenzen curve (1996, 2005). With a maximum observed age of 40 years, we scaled the age-specific natural mortality to an average of 0.11 per year (Hoenig 1983, Hewitt and Hoenig 2005) for ages three (the age when fish were fully selected by fleets and gear overall in SEDAR 15A) and greater (Table 2.2.1). Late in the development of this update, Then, *et al.* (2015) examined the relationship between t_{max} and natural mortality (this is the third paper in the Hoenig natural mortality series) and concluded that when t_{max} was available, the best estimate of natural mortality came from the equation: $M = 0.899\ t_{max}^{-0.916}$. For a t_{max} of 40 years, the new average natural mortality rate would be 0.17 per year and we ran a sensitivity run using that estimate.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

OPTION 1. APPROVE INCLUSION OF ACTION 9 IN REGULATORY AMENDMENT 24 AND APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 9 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.

OPTION 2. ADD/MODIFY ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 9 (COMMITTEE TO SPECIFY) AND APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 9 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.

OPTION 3. DO NOT APPROVE INCLUSION OF ACTION 9 IN REGULATORY AMENDMENT 24.

OPTION 4. OTHERS??

Action 10. Revise Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) and Optimum Yield (OY) for mutton snapper in the South Atlantic region

Alternative 1 (No action). Do not adjust Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) for mutton snapper in the South Atlantic. The current ABC for mutton snapper is 926,600 lbs ww. The current commercial ACL is 157,743 lbs ww and the recreational ACL is 768,857 lbs ww.
(NOTE: The commercial allocation in the Comp ACL was 17.02% and the recreational allocation was 82.98%. However the ACLs that were implemented were calculated using this allocation to 6 decimal places instead of 2).

Alternative 2. The jurisdictional allocation for the South Atlantic is 82% of the ABC. Specify ACLs and OY for the South Atlantic using the existing sector allocations (17.02% commercial and 82.98% recreational):

Sub-alternative 2a. ACL = OY = ABC.
Sub-alternative 2b. ACL = OY = 95% ABC.
Sub-alternative 2c. ACL = OY = 90% ABC.

ACL = OY = ABC (Sub-alternative 2a)					
Year	**ABC (SA and Gulf)**	**SA ABC (lbs ww)**	**SA Total ACL (lbs ww)**	**SA comm ACL (lbs ww)**	**SA rec ACL (lbs ww)**
2014	664,900	545,218	545,218	92,796	452,422
2015	664,900	545,218	545,218	92,796	452,422
2016	692,000	567,440	567,440	96,578	470,862
2017	717,200	588,104	588,104	100,095	488,009
2018	746,800	612,376	612,376	104,226	508,150
2019	774,400	635,008	635,008	108,078	526,930
2020	798,300	654,606	654,606	111,414	543,192
ACL = OY = 95% ABC (Sub-alternative 2b)					
2014	664,900	545,218	517,957	88,156	429,801
2015	664,900	545,218	517,957	88,156	429,801
2016	692,000	567,440	539,068	91,749	447,319
2017	717,200	588,104	558,699	95,091	463,608
2018	746,800	612,376	581,757	99,015	482,742
2019	774,400	635,008	603,258	102,674	500,583
2020	798,300	654,606	621,876	105,843	516,032
ACL = OY = 90% ABC (Sub-alternative 2c)					
2014	664,900	545,218	490,696	83,516	407,180
2015	664,900	545,218	490,696	83,516	407,180
2016	692,000	567,440	510,696	86,920	423,776
2017	717,200	588,104	529,294	90,086	439,208
2018	746,800	612,376	551,138	93,804	457,335
2019	774,400	635,008	571,507	97,271	474,237
2020	798,300	654,606	589,145	100,273	488,873

COMMITTEE ACTION:

OPTION 1. APPROVE INCLUSION OF ACTION 10 IN REGULATORY AMENDMENT 24 AND APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 10 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.
OPTION 2. ADD/MODIFY ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 10 (COMMITTEE TO SPECIFY) AND APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 10 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.
OPTION 3. DO NOT APPROVE INCLUSION OF ACTION 10 IN REGULATORY AMENDMENT 24.
OPTION 4. OTHERS??

Action 11. Revise Recreational Annual Catch Target for mutton snapper in the South Atlantic region

Alternative 1 (No Action). Do not modify the ACT for mutton snapper for the recreational sector. The current ACT is 668,906 lbs ww and applies to mutton snapper throughout the South Atlantic Council's jurisdiction. The ACT = recreational ACL*(1-PSE) or ACL*0.5, whichever is greater, and where Percent Standard Error (PSE) = 13% = average PSE 2005-2009 (for South Atlantic only).

Alternative 2. Revise the ACT for mutton snapper for the recreational sector.

Sub-alternative 2a. ACT = recreational ACL*(1-PSE) or ACL*0.5, whichever is greater.

Sub-alternative 2b. ACT =85% recreational ACL.

Sub-alternative 2c. ACT = 75% recreational ACL.

Year	PSE
2010	10.2
2011	15.2
2012	21.2
2013	15.1
2014	17.9
Average	**15.9**

ACL = OY = ABC					
Year	**Total ACL (lbs ww)**	**Rec ACL (lbs ww)**	**Rec ACT (lbs ww) (2a)**	**Rec ACT (lbs ww) (2b)**	**Rec ACT (PSE) (lbs ww) (2c)**
2014	545,218	452,422	380,487	384,559	339,316
2015	545,218	452,422	380,487	384,559	339,316
2016	567,440	470,862	395,995	400,232	353,146
2017	588,104	488,009	410,415	414,807	366,007
2018	612,376	508,150	427,354	431,927	381,112
2019	635,008	526,930	443,148	447,890	395,197
2020	654,606	543,192	456,825	461,713	407,394
ACL = OY = 95%ABC					
2014	517,957	429,801	361,462	365,331	322,351
2015	517,957	429,801	361,462	365,331	322,351
2016	539,068	447,319	376,195	380,221	335,489
2017	558,699	463,608	389,895	394,067	347,706
2018	581,757	482,742	405,986	410,331	362,057
2019	603,258	500,583	420,990	425,496	375,437
2020	621,876	516,032	433,983	438,628	387,024

ACL = OY = 90%ABC					
Year	Total ACL (lbs ww)	Rec ACL (lbs ww)	Rec ACT (lbs ww) (2a)	Rec ACT (lbs ww) (2b)	Rec ACT PSE (lbs ww) (2c)
2014	490696	407,180	346,103	346,103	305,385
2015	490696	407,180	346,103	346,103	305,385
2016	510696	423,776	360,209	360,209	317,832
2017	529294	439,208	373,327	373,327	329,406
2018	551138	457,335	388,734	388,734	343,001
2019	571507	474,237	403,101	403,101	355,678
2020	589145	488,873	415,542	415,542	366,655

COMMITTEE ACTION:

OPTION 1. APPROVE INCLUSION OF ACTION 11 IN REGULATORY AMENDMENT 24 AND APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 11 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.
OPTION 2. ADD/MODIFY ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 11 (COMMITTEE TO SPECIFY) AND APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 11 FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.
OPTION 3. DO NOT APPROVE INCLUSION OF ACTION 11 IN REGULATORY AMENDMENT 24.
OPTION 4. OTHERS??

MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR MUTTON SNAPPER

Consideration of mutton snapper management measures is complicated because there are alternatives being considered in the Joint South Florida Amendment. Assuming the Joint South Florida Amendment moves forward, the Council could not address management measures in Regulatory Amendment 24.

COMMITTEE ACTION ON MANAGEMENT MEASURES:

OPTION 1. RETAIN ACTIONS TO SPECIFY MANAGEMENT MEASURES IN SOUTH FLORIDA AMENDMENT AND NOT ADD MANAGEMENT MEASURES TO REGULATORY AMENDMENT 24.
OPTION 2. ADD ACTIONS TO SPECIFY MANAGEMENT MEASURES TO REGULATORY AMENDMENT 24 (COMMITTEE TO SPECIFY ACTIONS) AND APPROVE THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT FISHING LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MUTTON SNAPPER

MSY and MSST cannot be changed via the expedited framework (updated in Amendment 27). However, the Council could use the expedited framework procedure to implement the new OFL, ABC, and ACL values (but not management measures). This would get the new ACLs implemented more quickly than if they were left in Regulatory Amendment 24.

OPTION 1. MOVE ACTIONS TO UPDATE FISHING LEVELS (OFL, ABC, & ACL) FOR MUTTON SNAPPER OUT OF REGULATORY AMENDMENT 24 AND ADDRESS VIA EXPEDITED FRAMEWORK PROCEDURE.
OPTION 2. KEEP THE FISHING LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS IN REGULATORY AMENDMENT 24.
OPTION 3. OTHERS??

Timing

COMMITTEE ACTION:
OPTION 1. APPROVE REGULATORY AMENDMENT 24 AS MODIFIED FOR SCOPING.
OPTION 2. DIRECT STAFF TO DEVELOP DOCUMENT MORE FULLY PRIOR TO SCOPING AND CONSIDER IN SEPTEMBER 2015.
OPTION 3. OTHERS?