



## **PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY**

### **AMENDMENT 17B TO THE SNAPPER GROUPER FMP**

**NOVEMBER 2009**

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The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council is soliciting public input on possible options under consideration by the Council. The Council is considering: (a) Specifying ACLs, ACTs, and AMs for 9 species undergoing overfishing; (b) modifying management measures to limit harvest to or less than ACL or ACT; and (c) updating the framework procedure to include ACLs, ACTs, and AMs.

## NEED FOR ACTION

New Reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act) requirements include establishing annual catch limits (ACLs), which may be thought of as a type of quota, and accountability measures (AMs) for all species undergoing overfishing by the year 2010. The purpose of this amendment is to fulfill these requirements and implement management measures to reduce the probability that catches will exceed the stocks' ACLs. The Council will also consider the specification of Annual Catch Targets (ACT), which is typically set lower than the ACL. Amendment 17B would establish ACLs and AMs for **black grouper, black sea bass, gag, golden tilefish, red grouper, snowy grouper, vermilion snapper, speckled hind, and warsaw grouper**. Additionally, Amendment 17B would allocate the golden tilefish total allowable catch between the commercial and recreational sectors and update the current framework procedure for the snapper-grouper fishery management plan. A framework procedure is a vehicle by which management measures may be easily modified, including ACLs, AMs, and ACTs.

Table 1. Assessment information for 10 species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit undergoing overfishing.

Species	Most Recent Stock Assessment Source & Year Completed	Data Thru	Date SSC Approved	Overfishing?	Overfished?	Next Assessment Begins
Golden tilefish <sup>1</sup>	SEDAR 4 (2004)	2002		Yes	No	2010
Snowy grouper <sup>1</sup>	SEDAR 4 (2004)	2002		Yes	Yes	2010
Speckled hind	Potts and Brennan (2001)	1999	n/a	Yes	Unknown	2011
Warsaw grouper	Huntsman <i>et al.</i> (1992)	1990	n/a	Yes	Unknown	2011
Black grouper <sup>1</sup>	Potts and Brennan (2001)	1999	10/21/05	Yes	Unknown	2009
Black sea bass <sup>1</sup>	SEDAR Update 1 (2005)	2003	5/12/05	Yes	Yes	2010
Gag <sup>1</sup>	SEDAR 10 (2006)	2004	6/12/07	Yes	No	2011
Red grouper <sup>1</sup>	Potts and Brennan (2001)	1999	10/21/05	Yes	Unknown	2009
Vermilion snapper <sup>1</sup>	SEDAR Update #3 (2007)	2006	6/12/07	Yes	Unknown	2012
Red snapper	SEDAR 15 (2008)	2006	6/11/08	Yes	Yes	2010

<sup>1</sup>Actions were implemented to reduce fishing mortality to a level expected to end overfishing. These stocks are declared undergoing overfishing until a stock assessment confirms otherwise.

## *ACL Guidelines*

Revisions to the Magnuson-Stevens Act in 2006 require that by 2010, Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) for fisheries determined by the Secretary of Commerce to be subject to overfishing must establish a mechanism for specifying ACLs at a level that prevents overfishing and does not exceed the recommendations of the respective Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) or other established peer review processes. These FMPs also are required to establish within this time frame measures to ensure accountability. By 2011, FMPs for all other fisheries, except fisheries for species with annual life cycles, must meet these requirements.

NMFS guidelines define the following terms:

- Overfishing limit (OFL) means “the annual amount of catch that corresponds to the estimate of MFMT applied to a stock or stock complex’s abundance and is expressed in terms of numbers or weight of fish.
- Acceptable biological catch (ABC) means “a level of a stock or stock complex’s annual catch that accounts for the scientific uncertainty in the estimate of OFL and should be specified based on the ABC control rule.
- Annual catch limit (ACL) means “the level of annual catch of a stock or stock complex that serves as the basis for invoking accountability measures.” Setting the ACL provides an opportunity to divide the total ACL into sector-specific ACLs.
- Annual catch target (ACT) means “an amount of annual catch of a stock or stock complex that is the management target of the fishery. NMFS guidelines indicate that specifying an ACT is optional and up to the discretion of the Council. A stock or stock complex’s ACT should usually be less than its ACL and results from the application of the ACT control rule. If sector-ACLs have been established, each one should have a corresponding sector-ACT.”
- Catch is the total quantity of fish, measured in weight or numbers of fish, taken in commercial, recreational, subsistence, tribal, and other fisheries. Catch includes fish that are retained for any purpose, as well as mortality of fish that are discarded.
- Accountability measures (AMs) means “management controls that prevent ACLs or sector-ACLs from being exceeded (in-season AMs), where possible, and correct or mitigate overages if they occur.”

### *ABC Recommendations*

The SSC provided OFL and ABC recommendations in terms of pounds of fish at their June 2008 meeting, but the SSC did not have an ABC control rule to assist them with estimating ABC and indicated that they considered the values to be “interim” until more robust methods for estimating these parameters could be made available. For stock and stock complexes required to have an ABC, NOAA Fisheries Service’s final guidelines recommend that each Council should establish an ABC control rule based on scientific advice from its SSC. At their December 2008 meeting, the SSC considered advice from the proposed NS1 guidelines and rescinded all estimates of ABC with the exception of an ABC = 0 for speckled hind and warsaw grouper. Furthermore, the SSC recommended at their December 2008 meeting that the ABC levels for snowy grouper, black sea bass, and red snapper be set consistent with the rebuilding plans for those species until they can be further amended on better scientific information. The SSC met in March and June 2009 to identify protocol for determining ABCs, which will be included in the Comprehensive ACL amendment. At their June 2009 meeting, the SSC provided ABC recommendations for gag and vermilion snapper. For Gag, the ABC for 2010 includes 805,000 pounds for landings and 18,000 fish (80,000 pounds gutted weight) for dead discards, and 885,000 pounds gutted weight inclusive of landings and discards, corresponding to a  $P^* = 0.30$  from “A probability-based approach to setting annual catch limits: Gag, *Mycteroperca microlepis*, off the Southeastern United States (Report to SSC 2007). For vermilion snapper, the SSC recommended ABC levels interpolated from Tables 3.19 and 3.20 of the Southeast Data Assessment and Review (SEDAR) vermilion assessment workshop report to obtain the  $P^*$  value of 0.275. For 2010 this corresponds to 1,078,000 pounds whole weight for landings, 31,000 pounds whole weight for dead discards, and 1,109,000 pounds whole weight inclusive of landings and discards. The ABCs for landed catch for gag and vermilion snapper assumes the current level of discards would continue. The SSC stated at their March 2009 meeting that it does not support ABCs and ACLs that require the monitoring of discards.

The SSC recommended waiting for the results of the stock assessments for both black grouper and red grouper, which will be completed in 2010, to determine ABC values for those species. The SSC did not provide an ABC value for golden tilefish because of the age of the assessment and lack of a current estimate of abundance.

Table 2. Values for Overfishing Level (OFL) and Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) recommendations from the SSC.

Species	OFL	ABC
Black grouper <sup>1</sup>	OFL = MFMT	-
Black sea bass	OFL = MFMT	ABC = rebuilding plan
Gag <sup>2</sup>	OFL = MFMT	805,000 lbs gw (landed catch); 885,000 lbs gw (total kill)
Golden tilefish <sup>3</sup>	OFL = MFMT	-
Red grouper <sup>1</sup>	OFL = MFMT	-
Snowy grouper	OFL = MFMT	ABC = rebuilding plan
Speckled hind <sup>5</sup>	SSC Recommendation=Unknown	0
Vermilion snapper <sup>4</sup>	OFL = MFMT	1,078,000 lbs ww (landed catch); 1,109,000 lbs ww (total kill)
Warsaw grouper <sup>5</sup>	SSC Recommendation=Unknown	0

1. Given stock assessments have been scheduled for both black and red grouper, the SSC requested that estimates of the OFLs come from the Science Center. In Amendment 17B, the Council is considering establishing the commercial and recreational ACLs for black grouper and red grouper equivalent to (1) the expected catch resulting from management measures in Amendment 16 or (2) to the expected catch resulting from management measures in Amendment 16 and the gag ACL.
2. In December 2007, the SSC motion indicated that the values for gag are ABC=694,000 pounds and OFL=yield at MFMT. In June 2008, the SSC stated that for species assessed through SEDAR, ABC=yield at 75%F<sub>MSY</sub> and OFL=yield at MFMT. In December 2008, the SSC withdrew the ABC and OFL recommendations for gag established at the June 2008 meeting. The SSC previously specified MFMT for gag in Amendment 16. At their June 2009 meeting, the SSC recommended an ABC = 805,000 pounds gutted weight in landed catch and 18,000 discarded fish.
3. At their June 2009 meeting, the SSC did not provide an ABC value for golden tilefish because of the age of the assessment and lack of a current estimate of abundance. The Council has determined that the current commercial quota of 331,000 pounds ww (295,000 pounds gw) is the status quo commercial ACL. This value is set at the F<sub>MSY</sub> level. The Council is considering alternatives for the commercial ACL that would be set at the F<sub>OY</sub> level.
4. In December 2007, the SSC motion indicated that the values for vermilion snapper are ABC=628,459 pounds and OFL=yield at MFMT. In June 2008, the SSC stated that for species assessed through SEDAR, ABC=yield at 75%F<sub>MSY</sub> and OFL=yield at MFMT. A new age-based assessment was completed for vermilion snapper in 2008. In December 2008, the SSC withdrew the ABC and OFL recommendations for vermilion established at the June 2008 meeting. The SSC previously specified MFMT for vermilion snapper in Amendment 16. At their June 2009 meeting, the SSC recommended an ABC = 1,109,000 lbs ww inclusive of landings and dead discards. The landed portion of this ABC is 1,078,000 lbs ww.
5. At their December 2008 meeting, the SSC recommended an ABC = 0 for speckled hind and warsaw grouper.

## ACTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES

### 1.1 Speckled hind/warsaw grouper

**Alternative 1 (Status Quo).** Retain existing regulations for deepwater species (snowy grouper, blueline tilefish, yellowedge grouper, warsaw grouper, speckled hind, misty grouper, queen snapper, and silk snapper). Do not specify commercial and recreational ACLs, ACTS, or AMs. Existing regulations include: 622.32(4)(c)(3). One speckled hind per vessel per trip included in the 3 grouper aggregate bag limit and one warsaw grouper per vessel per trip included in the 3 grouper aggregate bag limit. 622.45(d)(4) A warsaw grouper or speckled hind in or from the South Atlantic EEZ may not be sold or purchased.

**Alternative 2.** Establish an ACL = 0 for speckled hind and warsaw grouper. Prohibit all commercial and recreational fishing for, possession and retention of speckled hind and warsaw grouper.

**Alternative 3.** Establish an ACL = 0 for speckled hind and warsaw grouper. Prohibit all commercial and recreational fishing for, possession, and retention of deepwater species (snowy grouper, blueline tilefish, yellowedge grouper, warsaw grouper, speckled hind, misty grouper, queen snapper, and silk snapper).

**Alternative 4 (Preferred).** Establish an ACL = 0 for speckled hind and warsaw grouper. Prohibit all fishing for, possession, and retention of deepwater snapper species (snowy grouper, blueline tilefish, yellowedge grouper, warsaw grouper, speckled hind, misty grouper, queen snapper, and silk snapper) beyond a depth of 240 feet (40 fathoms; 73 m).

Figure 1. Generalized 240 ft. depth contour line.

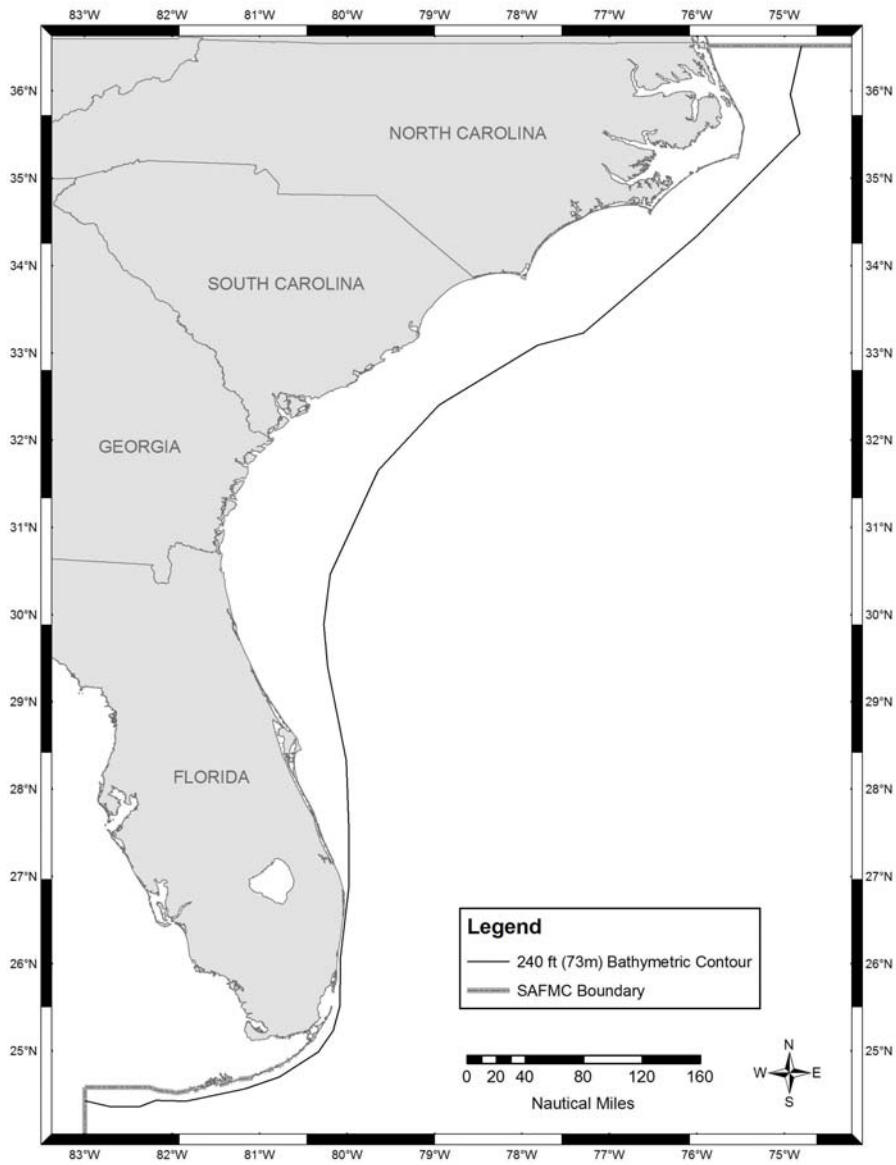


Table 3. Waypoints used to plot the 240ft. boundary.

Point	Latitude N (Degrees Minutes Seconds)	Longitude W (Degrees Minutes Seconds)
1	36°31'01"	74°48'10"
2	35°57'29"	74°55'49"
3	35°30'49"	74°49'17"
4	34°19'41"	76°00'21"
5	33°13'31"	77°17'50"
6	33°05'13"	77°49'24"
7	32°24'03"	78°57'03"
8	31°39'04"	79°38'46"
9	30°27'33"	80°11'39"
10	29°53'21"	80°16'01"
11	29°24'03"	80°13'28"
12	28°19'29"	80°00'27"
13	27°32'05"	79°58'49"
14	26°52'45"	79°58'49"
15	26°03'36"	80°04'33"
16	25°31'03"	80°04'55"
17	25°13'44"	80°09'40"
18	24°59'09"	80°19'51"
19	24°42'06"	80°46'38"
20	24°33'53"	81°10'23"
21	24°25'20"	81°50'25"
22	24°25'49"	82°11'17"
23	24°21'35"	82°22'32"
24	24°21'29"	82°42'33"
25	24°25'37"	83°00'00"

**Alternative 5.** Establish an ACL = 0 for speckled hind and warsaw grouper. Prohibit all fishing for, possession, and retention of deepwater snapper species (snowy grouper, blueline tilefish, yellowedge grouper, warsaw grouper, speckled hind, misty grouper, queen snapper, and silk snapper) beyond a depth of 300 feet (50 fathoms; 92 m).



Figure 2. Generalized 300 ft. depth contour line.

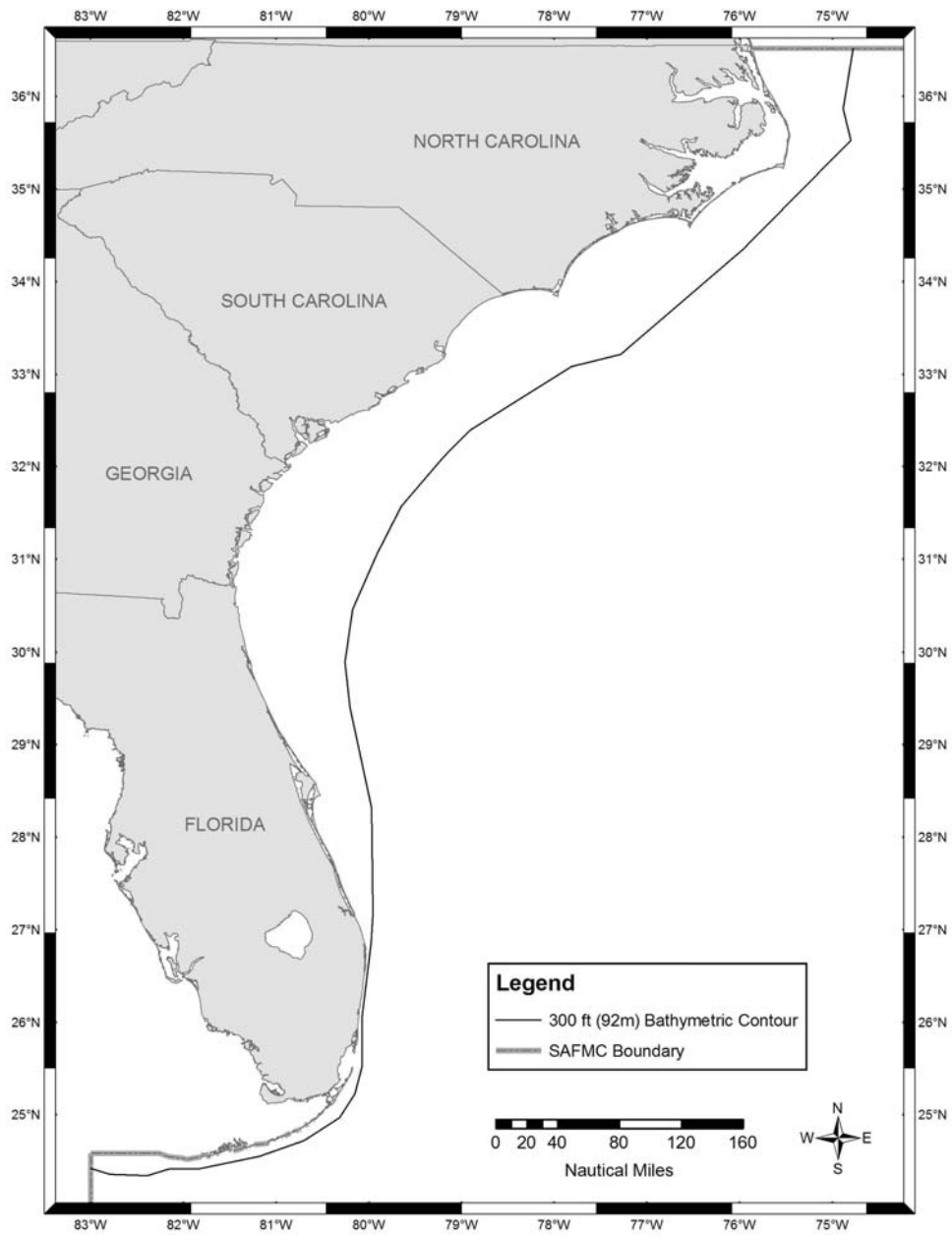


Table 4. Waypoints used to plot the 300ft. boundary.

Point	Latitude N (Degrees Minutes Seconds)	Longitude W (Degrees Minutes Seconds)
1	36°31'01"	74°46'21"
2	35°51'59"	74°52'52"
3	35°31'36"	74°47'57"
4	34°20'35"	75°57'53"
5	33°12'48"	77°16'60"
6	33°04'48"	77°48'37"
7	32°23'28"	78°54'32"
8	32°06'03"	79°11'41"
9	31°34'08"	79°38'57"
10	31°03'17"	79°54'37"
11	30°27'19"	80°10'34"
12	29°53'31"	80°15'25"
13	29°24'24"	80°12'13"
14	28°18'51"	79°58'12"
15	27°10'16"	79°57'23"
16	26°51'22"	79°58'25"
17	26°03'30"	80°04'19"
18	25°31'19"	80°04'28"
19	25°13'28"	80°09'02"
20	24°57'56"	80°18'48"
21	24°43'11"	80°41'59"
22	24°33'04"	81°10'52"
23	24°24'50"	81°50'05"
24	24°24'50"	82°09'16"
25	24°20'29"	82°23'23"
26	24°21'15"	82°47'46"
27	24°24'55"	83°00'00"

### 1.1.1 Effects

**Alternative 1 (Status Quo)** would have the least positive biological effect on the species, and would incur the least socioeconomic impact relative to **Alternatives 2-5**, which would specify an ACL of 0. Biologically, **Alternatives 2-5** would have a greater positive impact compared to **Alternative 1 (Status Quo)**, since harvest of speckled hind and warsaw grouper would be prohibited and total mortality would be limited to that related only to discards. However, it is possible that prohibiting the harvest of speckled hind and warsaw grouper alone without prohibiting the harvest of co-occurring species would not reduce fishing mortality enough to end overfishing of the species due to discard mortality, as would be the case under **Alternative 2**. **Alternative 3** would provide a greater biological benefit over **Alternative 2** because it would prohibit the harvest of *all* deepwater snapper grouper species that co-occur with adult speckled hind and warsaw grouper. Closing the area beyond 240 feet (**Alternative 4 (Preferred)**), to deepwater snapper grouper fishing, with the exception of golden tilefish, would provide protection to the largest, most fecund fish and ensure a natural sex ratio into the future. Speckled hind are thought to form spawning aggregations, which can be susceptible to targeted fishing pressure (G. Gilmore, Dynamac Corporation, personal communication). Prohibiting all harvest of deepwater snapper grouper species beyond 240 feet would also protect these spawning aggregations, as well as decrease bycatch mortality of speckled hind, warsaw grouper, and other co-occurring deepwater snapper grouper species. The biological effects of **Alternative 5** would be very similar to those under **Alternative 4 (Preferred)**. However, under **Alternative 5** the prohibition on fishing for deepwater species and associated protections would be pushed out to 300 ft. Overall biological benefits would be slightly less under **Alternative 5** when compared to the preferred alternative.

Economically, the most negative impact would be incurred under **Alternative 3**, whereas the least negative impact would be expected under **Alternative 2**. Administratively, **Alternatives 2 and 3** would produce equally negative administrative impacts relative to each other; however, such impacts would be minimal. **Alternative 4 (Preferred)** is likely to yield biological benefits that are slightly less than **Alternative 3**, but **Alternative 4 (Preferred)** would have a lower negative socioeconomic impact than **Alternative 3** since it would allow fishing in waters shallower than 240 ft. Administratively, **Alternative 4 (Preferred)** is the most burdensome since a boundary would need to be monitored for deepwater grouper fishing violations.

**Alternative 1 (Status Quo)** is not a viable alternative because it would not establish required components of FMPs. **Alternative 4 (Preferred)** would be expected to result in greater adverse social effects than **Alternative 2**, because it would also prohibit the harvest of additional deepwater species, but fewer adverse social effects than **Alternative 3** because only harvests of these additional species from deeper waters would be prohibited. Because **Alternative 5** would impose less severe harvest restrictions than **Alternative 4 (Preferred)**, it would be expected to result in lower adverse social effects relative to **Alternative 4 (Preferred)**.

## 1.2 Golden Tilefish

### 1.2.1 Golden Tilefish Allocations

**Alternative 1 (Status Quo).** Do not define allocations for golden tilefish.

**Alternative 2.** Define allocations for golden tilefish based upon landings from the ALS, MRFSS, and headboat databases. The allocation would be based on landings from the years 2006-2008. The allocation would be 96% commercial and 4% recreational. Beginning in 2010, the commercial allocation would be 288,365 lbs gutted weight and the recreational allocation would be 2,167 fish (12,015 lbs gutted weight). The commercial and recreational allocation specified for 2010 would remain in effect beyond 2010 until modified.

**Alternative 3. (Preferred)** Define allocations for golden tilefish based upon landings from the ALS, MRFSS, and headboat databases. The allocation would be based on the following formula for each sector:  
Sector apportionment = (50% \* average of long catch range (lbs) 1986-2008) + (50% \* average of recent catch trend (lbs) 2006-2008). The allocation would be 97% commercial and 3% recreational. Beginning in 2010, the commercial allocation would be 291,369 lbs gutted weight and the recreational allocation would be 1,625 fish (9,011 lbs gutted weight). The commercial and recreational allocation specified for 2010 would remain in effect beyond 2010 until modified.

**Alternative 4.** Split the allocations for golden tilefish equally among the two sectors. The allocation would be 50% commercial and 50% recreational. Beginning in 2010, the commercial allocation would be 150,190 lbs gutted weight and the recreational allocation would be 27,087 fish (150,190 lbs gutted weight). The commercial and recreational allocation specified for 2010 would remain in effect beyond 2010 until modified.

#### 1.2.1.1 Effects

**Alternative 1 (Status Quo)** would not specify a commercial or recreational allocation for golden tilefish. If an allocation was not specified then it would not be possible to identify the ACL in the recreational sector. Allocation **Alternatives 2-4** would range from 50% commercial/50% recreational (**Alternative 3**) to 97% commercial/3% recreational (**Alternatives 2**). Alternatives that allocate a greater portion of the harvest to the commercial sector could have a greater negative impact on habitat since some snowy grouper are taken with longline gear, which is considered to do greater damage to hard bottom habitat than vertical hook and line gear (SAFMC 2007). However, damage to bottom habitat with longline gear has not been very well documented. **Alternative 4** would divide golden tilefish allocations equally among the recreational and commercial sectors. This could result in a substantial reduction in the commercial harvest while

allowing a potential increase in recreational harvest that may not be attainable with the current restriction of one fish per person per day. As a result, an overall decrease in harvest of golden tilefish could occur under **Alternative 4** resulting in biological benefits for the species. Therefore, the biological benefit of **Alternative 4** would exceed all other alternatives, while there would be little difference among **Alternatives 2** through **4**.

**Alternative 1 (Status Quo)** is not a viable alternative because it would not support sufficient sector monitoring and management consistent with the needs of ACLs and AMs. The expected social effects of **Alternative 2** and **Alternative 3 (Preferred)** would be expected to be virtually indistinct because each would establish allocations that effectively mirror historic harvest patterns. **Alternative 4** would result in the greatest deviation from historic harvest patterns and, as a result, would be expected to result in the greatest adverse social effects.

### 1.2.2 Golden Tilefish ACLs and AMs

**Alternative 1 (Status Quo).** Retain existing regulations for golden tilefish. The commercial ACL, based on the commercial quota (currently set at the  $F_{MSY}$  level), equals 331,000 lbs ww (295,000 lbs gw). The commercial AM for this stock is to prohibit harvest, possession, and retention when the quota is met. All purchase and sale is prohibited when the quota is met. Do not implement ACLs or AMs for the recreational sector.

**Alternative 2 (Preferred).** Establish the commercial ACL (quota) at the  $F_{OY}$  level. The commercial quota would be based on the allocation alternative selected in **Section 1.2.1**. The commercial AM for this stock is to prohibit harvest, possession, and retention when the quota is met. All purchase and sale is prohibited when the quota is met.

Specify a recreational ACL in numbers of fish based upon the allocation decision in **Section 1.2.1** and the yield at  $F_{OY}$ . Implement Accountability Measures (AMs) for the recreational sector for golden tilefish. If the ACL is exceeded, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the length of the following fishing year by the amount necessary to ensure landings do not exceed the sector ACL for the following fishing year. Compare recreational ACL with recreational landings over a range of years. For 2010, use only 2010 landings. For 2011, use the average landings of 2010 and 2011. For 2012 and beyond, use three-year running average.

**Alternative 3.** Establish a *single* ACL (commercial and recreational) using the total of the commercial ACL (quota) at the  $F_{OY}$  level and the recreational allowable harvest at the OY level. The total ACL would be 326,554 lbs ww (291,566 lbs gw). The AM would prohibit harvest in the commercial and recreational sectors when the ACL is projected to be met.

**Alternative 4.** Establish a recreational accountability measure that would implement a 1 golden tilefish *per vessel* per day when the *single* ACL (the total of the commercial ACL (quota) at the F<sub>OY</sub> level and the recreational allowable harvest at the OY level, 326,554 lbs ww (291,566 lbs gw), is projected to be met.

**Alternative 5.** Establish an ACL (commercial and recreational) based on the yield at F<sub>OY</sub> for the commercial fishery (Table 5). The AM for the commercial and recreational sectors is to prohibit harvest, possession, and retention in both sectors when commercial landings exceed the ACL.

Table 5. Commercial quota (ACL) and recreational ACL for **Alternatives 2 and 5** under on the various allocation alternatives specified in **Section 2.2.1.**

Allocation (Comm/Rec)	Comm Allocation (lbs)	Rec Allocation (lbs)	Rec Allocation (numbers)	Comm quota (lbs) OY	Rec ACL lbs (OY)	Rec ACL number (OY)
Alternative 2 (97%/3%)	291,369	9,011	1,625	282,819	8,747	1,578
Alternative 3 (96%/4%)	288,365	12,015	2,167	279,903	11,663	2,103
Alternative 4 (97%/3%)	291,369	9,011	1,625	282,819	8,747	1,578
Alternative 5 (50%/50%)	150,190	150,190	27,087	145,783	145,783	26,293

### 1.2.2.1 Effects

**Alternative 1 (Status Quo)** would maintain the current golden tilefish quota based on the yield at F<sub>MSY</sub>, which would serve as the golden tilefish ACL for the commercial sector. It would also maintain the prohibition on all fishing for golden tilefish once the quota is met; thereby, acting as a commercial and recreational AM. **Alternative 1 (Status Quo)** would satisfy Reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act requirements without implementing further harvest restrictions or incurring additional socioeconomic impacts. **Alternatives 2 (Preferred), 3, and 5** would establish ACLs based on the yield associated with F<sub>OY</sub>, which is a more conservative approach to rebuilding the fishery since F<sub>OY</sub> is 75% of F<sub>MSY</sub>. **Alternative 2 (Preferred)** would also implement AMs for the recreational sector. Under **Alternatives 2 and 5** the current commercial quota, which is 295,000 lb gw, would depend on the preferred allocation alternative. Under **Alternative 3**, the total commercial and recreational ACL would be 291,566 lbs gw. These reductions would likely yield more biological benefits than **Alternatives 1 (Status Quo)** and **4**; however,

negative socioeconomic impacts would be incurred proportionate to the level of respective harvest reductions. Furthermore, under **Alternatives 4 and 5**, if commercial fishermen met the quota early in the year and the ACL in the various alternatives was met, it could reduce the chance for recreational fishermen to catch golden tilefish during the period of the year when they have historically targeted the species.

**Alternative 1 (Status Quo)** would allow the largest total harvest, which would suggest the greatest amount of social benefits as long as the stock is adequately protected, but equity issues would be expected to arise as the recreational sector would not be subjected to the same harvest control or accountability measures as the commercial sector.

**Alternative 2 (Preferred)** would establish limits and sector-specific accountability measures, eliminating the equity issues of **Alternative 1 (Status Quo)**, but would reduce the overall allowable harvest. Although **Alternative 3** would allow the same total harvest as **Alternative 2 (Preferred)**, it would be expected to result in lower social benefits because it would allow one sector to gain at the expense of the other and would require no individual sector accountability. **Alternative 4** would be expected to result in greater social benefits than **Alternative 3** in the short-term, but may result in greater adverse long-term effects if harvest overages degrade the resource. **Alternative 5** may result in the lowest social benefits of all the alternatives considered because of the possibility that the fishery may be restricted to half of its total annual average historic harvests.

### 1.3 Snowy grouper

**Alternative 1 (Status Quo).** Retain existing regulations for snowy grouper. The commercial ACL (82,900 lbs gw) is based on the current TAC of 102,960 lbs ww (87,254 lbs gw), which is based on the yield at  $F_{OY}$ . The commercial AM for this stock is to prohibit harvest, possession, and retention when the quota is met. All purchase and sale is prohibited when the quota is met. The recreational ACL equals 523 fish. Do not implement AM for the recreational sector. Do not implement an ACT for the commercial or recreational sector.

**Alternative 2 (Preferred).** Establish a recreational daily bag limit of 1 snowy grouper *per vessel*. Implement Accountability Measures (AMs) for the recreational sector for snowy grouper. If the ACL is exceeded, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the length of the following fishing year by the amount necessary to ensure landings do not exceed the sector ACL for the following fishing year. Compare recreational ACL with recreational landings over a range of years. For 2010, use only 2010 landings. For 2011, use the average landings of 2010 and 2011. For 2012 and beyond, use three-year running average.

**Alternative 3.** Establish a single ACL (commercial and recreational) based on the current TAC of 102,960 lbs ww (87,254 lbs gw). The AM for both sectors would be a closure when the ACL is projected to be met.

**Alternative 4.** Establish a recreational AM that would implement a 1 snowy grouper *per vessel* limit when the ACL (the commercial quota) is projected to be met. The AM for the commercial sector would be closure when the quota is met.

### 1.3.1 Effects

Under **Alternative 1 (Status Quo)** the catch level for snowy grouper in 2009 would approximate the yield at 75%  $F_{MSY}$  and would drop below that level as the stock rebuilds. **Alternative 1 (Status Quo)** would implement a prohibition on harvest once the quota is met with no designation of a recreational AM, and would end overfishing and satisfy the requirements of the Reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act. **Alternative 2 (Preferred)** would establish a recreational bag limit of 1 snowy grouper per vessel and would allow the Regional Administrator to reduce the length of the following fishing year to compensate if the ACL (under **Alternative 1 (Status Quo)**) is exceeded. The commercial AM under **Alternative 2 (Preferred)** would be a closure of the commercial fishery when the quota is met.

Socioeconomic impacts under **Alternative 3** would be approximately the same as those under **Alternative 2 (Preferred)**. However, the Regional Administrator would not be able to take any action to compensate for any ACL overages in the following fishing year; therefore, **Alternative 3** may yield a slightly less biological benefit than **Alternative 2 (Preferred)**.

**Alternative 4** would establish a recreational accountability measure that would implement a 1 snowy grouper per vessel limit when the commercial quota is projected to be met. As some recreational harvest would be allowed after the ACL is met, the biological benefits, of **Alternative 4** would be less than **Alternatives 2 and 3**, and about the same as **Alternative 1 (Status Quo)**. **Alternative 4** would incur less negative socioeconomic impacts than **Alternatives 2 and 3**, and would likely be comparable to those under **Alternative 1 (Status Quo)**.

**Alternative 1 (Status Quo)** would allow the same total harvest as **Alternative 2 (Preferred)** and **Alternative 3**, but would be expected to invoke equity issues as the recreational sector would not be subjected to the same harvest control or accountability measures as the commercial sector. **Alternative 2 (Preferred)** would establish limits and sector-specific accountability measures and eliminate the equity issues of **Alternative 1 (Status Quo)**. Although **Alternative 3** would allow the same total harvest as **Alternative 2 (Preferred)** (and **Alternative 1 (Status Quo)**), it would be expected to result in lower social benefits because it would allow one sector to gain at the expense of the other and would require no individual sector accountability. **Alternative 4** would be expected to result in greater social benefits than **Alternative 3** in the short-term, but may result in greater adverse long-term effects if harvest overages degrade the resource.



## 1.4 Black grouper, black sea bass, gag, red grouper, and vermilion snapper

**Alternative 1 (Status Quo).** Retain existing regulations for black grouper, black sea bass, gag, red grouper, and vermilion snapper (Tables 7 and 8).

### ACLs

The commercial and recreational ACLs are specified in Table 6. The ACLs for black sea bass are based on a constant catch rebuilding strategy. The gag, vermilion snapper, and black sea bass ACLs are based on the yields at  $F_{OY}$ , and would remain in effect beyond 2009 until modified. The ACLs for black grouper and red grouper are not specified.

### AMs

The commercial AM for black sea bass, gag, and vermilion snapper is to prohibit harvest, possession, and retention when the quota for each species is met. The commercial AM for black grouper and red grouper is to prohibit harvest, possession, and retention when the quota for gag is met. All purchase and sale is prohibited when a quota is met. There are no recreational AMs for black grouper, black sea bass, gag, red grouper, and vermilion snapper.

### ACTs

ACTs are not specified in the commercial or recreational sectors for black grouper, black sea bass, gag, red grouper, and vermilion snapper.

Table 6. The current commercial and recreational ACLs for black sea bass, gag, and vermilion snapper.

Species	Commercial ACL	Recreational ACL
Black sea bass	309,000 lbs gw	409,000 lbs gw
Gag <sup>1</sup>	353,940 <sup>1</sup>	340,060 <sup>1</sup>
Black grouper	None	None
Red grouper	None	None
Vermilion snapper <sup>2</sup>	315,523 lbs gw (January – June) and 302,523 lbs gw (July – December) <sup>2</sup>	307,315 lbs gw <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Amendment 16 established gag commercial and recreational ACLs of 353,940 lbs gw and 340,060 lbs gw, respectively.

<sup>2</sup>Amendment 16 also established a vermilion snapper commercial ACL of 315,523 lbs gw (January – June) and 302,523 lbs gw (July – December) and a recreational ACL of 307,315 lbs gw.

## **ACL Alternatives**

**Alternative 2.** Establish commercial and recreational ACLs.

**Alternative 2a.** The commercial and recreational ACLs for black grouper are 86,886 lbs gw and 31,863 lbs gw, respectively. The commercial and recreational ACLs for red grouper are 221,577 lbs gw and 276,740 lbs gw, respectively. These values are equivalent to the expected catch resulting from the implementation of management measures for red grouper and black grouper in Amendment 16.

**Alternative 2b (Preferred).** Retain the current commercial ACL for gag of 353,940 lbs gw and the commercial AM to prohibit commercial harvest of shallow water groupers when met. Retain the current recreational ACL of gag 340,060 lbs gw.

In addition, establish an ACL for gag, black grouper, and red grouper of 662,403 lbs gw (commercial) and 648,663 lbs gw (recreational). [These values are equivalent to the expected catch resulting from the implementation of management measures for red grouper and black grouper in Amendment 16 and the gag ACL specified in Amendment 16.]

Prohibit the commercial possession of shallow water groupers when the gag or the gag, black grouper, and red grouper ACL is met.

*\* Note: The Council may consider establishing separate ACLs for red grouper and black grouper using information from the SEDAR workshop held in October 2009*

## **ACT Alternatives**

**Alternative 3.** Establish an ACT for the recreational sector.

**Alternative 3a.** The recreational sector ACT equals 85% of the recreational sector ACL.

**Alternative 3b.** The recreational sector ACT equals 75% of the recreational sector ACL.

**Alternative 3c.** The recreational sector ACT equals sector ACL[(1-PSE) or 0.5, whichever is greater].

**AM Alternatives**

**Alternative 4 (Preferred).** For black grouper, black sea bass, gag, red grouper, and vermilion snapper, compare recreational ACL with recreational landings over a range of years. For 2010, use only 2010 landings. For 2011, use the average landings of 2010 and 2011. For 2012 and beyond, use three-year running average.

**Alternative 5.** Implement Accountability Measures (AMs) for the recreational sector for black grouper, black sea bass, gag, red grouper, and vermilion snapper.

**Alternative 5a.** Regardless of stock status, do not implement in season AMs if the sector ACT is projected to be met. If the ACL is exceeded, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice in the federal register to reduce the length of the following fishing year by the amount necessary to ensure landings do not exceed the sector ACL for the following fishing year.

**Alternative 5b (Preferred).** If a species *is overfished* and the sector ACL is projected to be met, prohibit the harvest and retention of species or species group. If the ACL is exceeded, independent of stock status, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice in the federal register to reduce the sector ACL in the following year by the amount of the overage.

**Alternative 5c.** If a species *is overfished* and the sector ACT is projected to be met, prohibit the harvest and retention of species or species group. If the ACT is exceeded, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the sector ACT in the following year by the amount of the overage.

Table 7. Current commercial regulations for shallow water and mid-shelf species.

COMMERCIAL REGULATIONS						
Species	Size Limit	Limited Access	Gear Restrictions	Annual Quota	Seasonal Closures	Area Closures
Black Grouper	24" TL	√	√		Jan-Apr <sup>2</sup>	√
Black Sea Bass	10" TL	√	√	309,000 lbs <sup>1</sup>		√
Gag	24" TL	√	√	416,469 lbs ww 352,940 lbs gw <sup>2</sup>	Jan-Apr <sup>2</sup>	√
Red Grouper	20" TL	√	√		Jan-Apr <sup>2</sup>	√
Vermilion Snapper	12" TL	√	√	315,523 lbs gw (Jan-June) 302,523 lbs gw (July-Dec) <sup>2</sup>		√
Red Snapper	20" TL	√	√			√
<sup>1</sup> Based on TAC of 718,000 lbs gutted weight (847,000 lbs whole weight).						
<sup>2</sup> Preferred alternatives in Snapper Grouper Amendment 16.						

Table 8. Current recreational regulations for shallow water and mid-shelf species.

RECREATIONAL REGULATIONS						
Species	Allowable Catch	Size Limit	Gear Restrictions	Possession Limit	Seasonal Closures	Area Closures
Black Grouper		24" TL	√	No more than 1 black grouper and/or gag individually or in combination (included in 3 grouper per person per day) <sup>1,2</sup>	Jan-Apr <sup>1</sup>	√
Black Sea Bass	409,000 lbs gw <sup>3</sup>	12" TL	√	Daily bag limit = 15		√
Gag		24" TL	√	No more than 1 black grouper and/or gag individually or in combination (included in 3 grouper per person) <sup>1,2</sup>	Jan-Apr <sup>1</sup>	√
Red Grouper		20" TL	√	Included in 3 grouper per person per day <sup>1,2</sup>	Jan-Apr <sup>1</sup>	√
Vermilion Snapper		12" TL	√	5 (in addition to the aggregate snapper bag limit of 5) <sup>1,2</sup>	Nov-Mar <sup>1</sup>	√
Red Snapper		20" TL	√	2 per person per day (included in the 10 aggregate snapper per person limit) <sup>1,2</sup>		√
<sup>1</sup> Preferred alternatives in Snapper Grouper Amendment 16 <sup>2</sup> Exclude the captain and crew on for-hire vessels from possessing a bag limit for groupers. <sup>3</sup> Based on TAC of 718,000 lbs gutted weight (847,000 lbs whole weight).						

#### 1.4.1 Comparison of Alternatives

Designating the current quotas and seasonal closures implemented through Snapper Grouper Amendments 13C, 15A, and 16 as ACLs and AMs would fulfill the ACL requirements of the Reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act for black sea bass, gag, and vermilion snapper. These measures would not incur additional negative socioeconomic impacts beyond the status quo since they have already been implemented.

**Alternative 2a** would establish ACLs equivalent to commercial and recreational catch levels of black grouper and red grouper resulting from management measures under Amendment 16. Amendment 16 will reduce the catch of black grouper and red grouper through a January-April commercial and recreational spawning season closure, a reduction in the recreational bag limit, and a closure of the commercial fishery for black grouper and red grouper when the gag quota is met. Therefore, the resultant catch levels of black grouper and red grouper, after these measures are implemented, would be designated as the respective ACLs. The AMs for the commercial sector would be a closure when the gag quota is met, as outlined in Amendment 16. **Alternatives 1 (Status Quo)** and **2** would both yield the same biological benefits; however, **Alternative 1 (Status Quo)** would not comply with reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act ACL requirements for the recreational sector. Socioeconomic impacts of these alternatives are

detailed in Amendment 16, which is hereby incorporated by reference. **Alternative 2b (Preferred)** would establish one single ACL for gag, black grouper, and red grouper based on catch levels after implementation of Amendment 16. Under **Alternative 2b (Preferred)** biological benefits would likely be similar to those under **Alternative 2a**.

**Alternative 3** would establish ACTs for the recreational sector. Each of the sub-alternatives differs in their degree of conservativeness. **Alternative 3a** is the least conservative of the action alternatives and would set the recreational sector ACT for gag, black grouper, red grouper, black sea bass, and vermilion snapper equal to 85 percent the ACL. A greater biological benefit would be attained through **Alternative 3b**, which would set the ACT to 75 percent of ACL. **Alternative 3c** attempts to capture the difference in uncertainty associated with recreational catches of black sea bass, gag, black grouper, red grouper, and vermilion snapper by incorporating the PSE in the estimate of ACT. Therefore, the ACT for species such as vermilion snapper and black sea bass would be higher than the ACT for species such as black grouper with higher estimates of PSE, which are less frequently encountered.

**Alternative 4 (Preferred)** would use a range of landings to determine overages of ACLs. In the first year (2010), only 2010 recreational landings would be used. In the second year (2011), the average landings of 2010 and 2011 would be used to determine if an overage had occurred. For 2012 and beyond, a three-year running average would be employed to determine if there was an overage of the ACL. Recreational landings data can be highly variable, particularly for species that are infrequently encountered. Therefore, using average landings for comparison with the ACL can buffer peaks in the recreational landings that may be a function of sampling rather than a true estimation of actual harvest.

**Alternatives 5a, 5b (preferred), and 5c** are similar in that they each establish a mechanism by which the Regional Administrator can compensate for exceeding the ACL by reducing harvest during the following year. Under **Alternative 5a**, if the ACL was exceeded, the Regional Administrator would reduce the length of the following fishing year by the amount necessary to ensure landings did not exceed the sector ACT for the following fishing year. Under **Alternative 5b (Preferred)**, if a species is overfished and the sector ACL is projected to be met, harvest and retention of species or species group would be prohibited. If the ACL is exceeded, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the sector ACL in the following year by the amount of the overage, regardless of stock status. Under **Alternative 5c**, exceeding the ACT for an overfished species, rather than the ACL, would trigger the need for the Regional Administrator to publish a notice to reduce the ACT the following year by the amount of the overage.

**Alternative 1 (Status Quo)** is not a viable long-term alternative because it would not fully satisfy the requirements of the Reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act for certain species. Its selection would require additional subsequent management action, with duplicative administrative costs. Not all of the remaining alternatives under this action deal with the same management component and, therefore, are not directly comparable. Instead, only sub-sets of alternatives are comparable. **Alternative 2a** would allow

current harvests, not be expected to require any additional management measures, and not be expected to result in any adverse social effects. **Alternative 2b (Preferred)** would establish an aggregate ACL for gag, red grouper, and black grouper in addition to single species ACLs and an AM based on single species or aggregate species harvest thresholds. As a result of this aggregate approach, social benefits may increase or decrease, depending on resultant fishery performance and behavior, as gag harvests could result in closure of the fisheries for all three species (diminished social benefits), or increased harvest of the other species could substitute for decreased gag harvests (increased social benefits). The gag resource, and associated social and economic benefits, however, would be expected to be better safeguarded by **Alternative 2b (Preferred)** than under **Alternative 2a**. **Alternative 3** would only establish ACT benchmarks, with no associated necessary management change, and would not be expected to result in any change in social benefits. Because the multi-year perspective of **Alternative 4 (Preferred)** would be capable of addressing the potential variability of recreational harvest estimates, it would be expected to result in increased social benefits relative to single-year assessment and management action. Both **Alternative 5a** and **Alternative 5b (Preferred)** contain sufficient uncertainty of net social effects that ranking is not possible. Neither contains payback provisions for recreational harvest overages, so both could lead to subsequent deterioration of the resources and subsequent management action, though **Alternative 5b (Preferred)** would impose a shorter timeframe of action and, as a result, reduce the potential magnitude of any overage. However, **Alternative 5b (Preferred)** would also base management action on projected harvests rather than actual (final data) and, as a result, may result in unnecessary corrective action, with associated unjustified adverse social effects. Both alternatives would delay corrective action until the subsequent fishing year, which should allow greater flexibility for fishermen and associated businesses to plan activities, resulting in greater social and economic benefits than same-year correction. **Alternative 5c** would be expected to result in social effects similar to **Alternative 5b (Preferred)**. However, because the ACT for a stock will generally be less than the ACL for that stock, using the ACT as the AM-trigger threshold under **Alternative 5c** increases protection of the resource while also increasing the likelihood of reduced social and economic benefits relative to **Alternative 5b (Preferred)** if stock and/or fishery conditions do not warrant the additional stock protection the more conservative ACT limit affords.

## **1.5 Update the framework procedure for specification of TAC for the Snapper Grouper FMP to incorporate ACLs and ACTs and AMs.**

### **Update the framework procedure for specification of TAC**

The FMPs framework procedure for setting total allowable catch (TAC) provides a mechanism for making changes to allowable catch levels and related management of stocks or stock complexes in a timely manner when stock assessments or new assessment information indicates that changes are needed. Changes that can be made through a Regulatory Amendment (also known as a framework Action) include biomass levels, age-structured analyses, target dates for rebuilding overfished species, MSY, ABC, TAC quotas, trip limits, bag limits, minimum sizes, gear restrictions, seasonal or area closures, definitions of essential fish habitat (EFH), EFH-HAPCs or Coral HAPCs, and restrictions on gear and fishing activities applicable in EFH and EFH-HAPCs. Under the Reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act and the amended guidelines for National Standard 1 (74 FR 3178), it is also necessary to be able to adjust OFLs, ACLs and ACTs. This action revises the current Snapper Grouper FMPs Framework Procedure to allow such adjustments under the framework.

The Council is proposing the establishment of ACLs and ACTs, where needed. Currently, the framework procedures (below) specify that if changes are needed to the TAC, a Council appointed Assessment Group (Group) will advise the Regional Administrator in writing of their recommendations accompanied by the Group's report (where appropriate), relevant background material, draft regulations, Regulatory Impact Review and public comments. The Council is considering updating the procedures for specification of TAC in order to incorporate the ACL and ACT vernacular. With this revision, the specification of TAC section of the framework procedure would be renamed to reflect the 2009 National Standard 1 guidelines, which define ACL is the primary unit set through management to control harvest levels. As used in the framework procedure, ACL is analogous to the term TAC, and to eliminate redundancy, TAC is no longer used.

**Alternative 1 (Status Quo).** Do not include the ability to modify ACLs, ACTs, and AMs in the existing framework procedure.

**Alternative 2. (Preferred)** Update the framework procedure for specification of Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for the Snapper Grouper FMP to incorporate ACLs, ACTs, and AMs. Such modifications would be based upon new scientific information indicating such modifications are prudent.

Table 9. Proposed framework modifications

<b>Items retained from current framework</b>	<b>Items removed from current framework</b>	<b>Items added to current framework</b>
Adjustments to or establishment of MSY	The use of the term total allowable catch (TAC) which is replaced with ACL	The use of the term ACL in place of TAC
Adjustments to ABC	Provision that would not allow fishing year or spawning season closure to be adjusted by more than one month for wreckfish.	Use of SEDAR reports or other documentation the Council deems appropriate to provide biological analyses
Adjustments to or implementation of quotas including closing any commercial fishery when the quota is filled	References to the Council-appointed “assessment group”	The SSC prepares a written report to the Council specifying OFL and a range of ABCs for species in need of catch reductions to achieve OY.
Adjustments to or implementation of trip limits	References to the assessment group report.	The SEDAR report or SSC will recommend rebuilding periods
Adjustments to or implementation of bag limits including zero bag limits		Adjustment to ACLs and/or sector ACLs
Adjustments to or implementation of minimum sizes		Adjustment to or implementation of ACTs
Adjustments to or implementation of gear restrictions		Adjustments to or implementation of AMs
Adjustments to or implementation of seasonal/area closures		
Adjustment to or implementation of timeframes for recovery of an overfished species.		
Initial specification and subsequent adjustments of biomass levels and age structured analysis.		
Inclusion of public input in the framework adjustment process		
SSC’s role in providing the Council advise and recommendations for framework adjustments		



### 1.5.1 Effects

**Alternative 1 (Status Quo)** would not modify the current framework procedures to include adjustments to ACLs, ACTs, and AMs. This would maintain the Regional Administrator's current ability to adjust TAC, quotas, trip limits, bag limits, size limits, seasonal closures, and area closures; however, there would exist no means of making needed adjustments to the NS1 harvest parameters in a timely manner. Under **Alternative 2 (Preferred)**, adjustments to ACLs, ACTs, and AMs could be made with relative ease as new fishery and stock abundance information becomes available. **Alternative 2 (Preferred)** would likely be biologically beneficial for any species to which an ACL, ACT, and/or AM is assigned. By changing the current framework procedures to allow for periodic adjustments to NS 1 harvest parameters, management measures could be altered in a timely manner to implement harvest level changes or AMs in response to stock assessment or survey results.

**Alternative 1 (Status Quo)** would not modify the framework procedure for setting TAC and would not support more efficient and effective management of the fishery. **Alternative 2 (Preferred)** would increase the types of management measures that could be modified under the framework. This would be expected to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of management change, potentially allowing less severe corrective action when necessary, or the quicker receipt of social and economic benefits associated with less restrictive management. In the long term, positive social and economic effects, relative to the status quo, would be expected from more timely management adjustments.

**SNAPPER GROUPE AMENDMENT 17B  
PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING SITES AND DATES**

Public hearings will be held from 3:00 P.M –7:00 P.M. at the following locations. The November 16<sup>th</sup> public hearing in Virginia will begin at 6:00 P.M. Written comments must be received by 5 P.M on November 25, 2009. The Council accepts comments sent by mail, fax, or E-mail ([SGAmend17BPH@safmc.net](mailto:SGAmend17BPH@safmc.net)).

<p><b><u>Monday, 11/2/09</u></b>  <b>Hilton Garden Inn Charleston Airport</b>  <b>5265 International Boulevard</b>  <b>North Charleston, South Carolina 29418</b>  <b>Phone: 843-308-9330</b></p>	<p><b><u>Tuesday, 11/3/09</u></b>  <b>Hilton New Bern Riverfront</b>  <b>100 Middle Street</b>  <b>New Bern, North Carolina 28562</b>  <b>Phone: 252-638-3585</b></p>
<p><b><u>Thursday, 11/5/09</u></b>  <b>Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum</b>  <b>175 Bourne Avenue</b>  <b>Pooler, Georgia 31322</b>  <b>Phone: 912-748-8888</b></p>	<p><b><u>Tuesday, 11/10/09</u></b>  <b>Key Largo Grande</b>  <b>97000 Overseas Highway</b>  <b>Key Largo, Florida 33037</b>  <b>Phone: 305-852-5553</b></p>
<p><b><u>Wednesday, 11/11/09</u></b>  <b>Radisson Resort at the Port</b>  <b>8701 Astronaut Boulevard</b>  <b>Cape Canaveral, Florida 32920</b>  <b>Phone: 321-784-0000</b></p>	<p><b><u>Thursday, 11/12/09</u></b>  <b>Crowne Plaza Jacksonville Riverfront</b>  <b>1201 Riverplace Boulevard</b>  <b>Jacksonville, Florida 32207</b>  <b>Phone: 904-396-8800</b></p>
<p><b><u>November 16, 2009</u></b>  <b>Virginia Marine Resources Commission</b>  <b>2600 Washington Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor</b>  <b>Newport News, VA 23607</b>  <b>Phone: 757/247-2200</b></p>	

Council staff and local Council representatives will be on hand to answer questions concerning Amendment 17B and other topics covered during this series of public hearings. Members of the public will have the opportunity to provide comments on the record at any time during the hours posted above.

Other topics being covered during these scoping meetings include Amendments 17A and 18 to the Snapper Grouper FMP. Copies of the scoping documents for these topics can be accessed at [www.safmc](http://www.safmc) or by contacting the Council office.

## **What Next?**

Comments must be provided to the Council by 5 P.M. on November 25, 2009. All comments will be considered by the Council in drafting Amendment 17B to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan. The Council will review the comments and discuss them at their December 2009 Council meeting. The Council is scheduled to submit the amendment to the Secretary of Commerce and for regulations to become effective sometime in 2010. A simplified schematic of the Council process is presented in Appendix C.

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## Appendix B: Species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit.

Almaco jack, <i>Seriola rivoliana</i>	Ocean triggerfish, <i>Canthidermis sufflamen</i>
Atlantic spadefish, <i>Chaetodipterus faber</i>	Porkfish, <i>Anisotremus virginicus</i>
Banded rudderfish, <i>Seriola zonata</i>	Puddingwife, <i>Halichoeres radiatus</i>
Bank sea bass, <i>Centropristis ocyurus</i>	Queen snapper, <i>Etelis oculatus</i>
Bar jack, <i>Caranx ruber</i>	Queen triggerfish, <i>Balistes vetula</i>
Black grouper, <i>Mycteroperca bonaci</i>	Red grouper, <i>Epinephelus morio</i>
Black margate, <i>Anisotremus surinamensis</i>	Red hind, <i>Epinephelus guttatus</i>
Black sea bass, <i>Centropristis striata</i>	Red porgy, <i>Pagrus pagrus</i>
Black snapper, <i>Apsilus dentatus</i>	Red snapper, <i>Lutjanus campechanus</i>
Blackfin snapper, <i>Lutjanus buccanella</i>	Rock hind, <i>Epinephelus adscensionis</i>
Blue runner, <i>Caranx crysos</i>	Rock Sea Bass, <i>Centropristis philadelphica</i>
Blueline tilefish, <i>Caulolatilus microps</i>	Sailors choice, <i>Haemulon parra</i>
Bluestriped grunt, <i>Haemulon sciurus</i>	Sand tilefish, <i>Malacanthus plumieri</i>
Coney, <i>Cephalopholis fulva</i>	Saucereye porgy, <i>Calamus calamus</i>
Cottonwick, <i>Haemulon melanurum</i>	Scamp, <i>Mycteroperca phenax</i>
Crevalle jack, <i>Caranx hippos</i>	Schoolmaster, <i>Lutjanus apodus</i>
Cubera snapper, <i>Lutjanus cyanopterus</i>	Scup, <i>Stenotomus chrysops</i>
Dog snapper, <i>Lutjanus jocu</i>	Sheepshead, <i>Archosargus probatocephalus</i>
French grunt, <i>Haemulon flavolineatum</i>	Silk snapper, <i>Lutjanus vivanus</i>
Gag, <i>Mycteroperca microlepis</i>	Smallmouth grunt, <i>Haemulon chrysargyreum</i>
Golden tilefish, <i>Lopholatilus chamaeleonticeps</i>	Snowy grouper, <i>Epinephelus niveatus</i>
Goliath grouper, <i>Epinephelus itajara</i>	Spanish grunt, <i>Haemulon macrostomum</i>
Grass porgy, <i>Calamus arctifrons</i>	Speckled hind, <i>Epinephelus drummondhayi</i>
Gray (mangrove) snapper, <i>Lutjanus griseus</i>	Tiger grouper, <i>Mycteroperca tigris</i>
Gray triggerfish, <i>Balistes capriscus</i>	Tomtate, <i>Haemulon aurolineatum</i>
Graysby, <i>Cephalopholis cruentata</i>	Yellow jack, <i>Caranx bartholomaei</i>
Greater amberjack, <i>Seriola dumerili</i>	Yellowedge grouper, <i>Epinephelus flavolimbatus</i>
Hogfish, <i>Lachnolaimus maximus</i>	Yellowfin grouper, <i>Mycteroperca venenosa</i>
Jolthead porgy, <i>Calamus bajonado</i>	Yellowmouth grouper, <i>Mycteroperca interstitialis</i>
Knobbed porgy, <i>Calamus nodosus</i>	Yellowtail snapper, <i>Ocyurus chrysurus</i>
Lane snapper, <i>Lutjanus synagris</i>	Vermilion snapper, <i>Rhomboplites aurorubens</i>
Lesser amberjack, <i>Seriola fasciata</i>	Warsaw grouper, <i>Epinephelus nigritus</i>
Longspine porgy, <i>Stenotomus caprinus</i>	White grunt, <i>Haemulon plumieri</i>
Mahogany snapper, <i>Lutjanus mahogoni</i>	Whitebone porgy, <i>Calamus leucosteus</i>
Margate, <i>Haemulon album</i>	Wreckfish, <i>Polyprion americanus</i>
Misty grouper, <i>Epinephelus mystacinus</i>	
Mutton snapper, <i>Lutjanus analis</i>	
Nassau grouper, <i>Epinephelus striatus</i>	

**Appendix C. A Simplified Schematic of the Council Process.**

