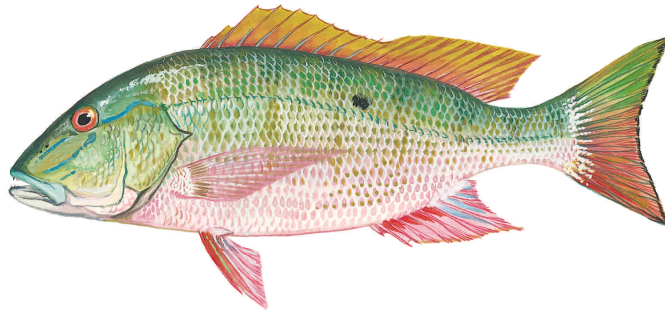
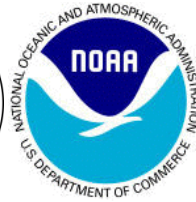


# Amendment 41 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region

Summary for Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel



October 11, 2016



Environmental Assessment    Regulatory Impact Review    Regulatory Flexibility Analysis  
Fishery Impact Statement

A publication of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council pursuant to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Award Number FNA15NMF4410010

## Why is the South Atlantic Council considering action?

In 2012, the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limits (ACL) Amendment (SAFMC 2011) allocated the mutton snapper Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) between the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Councils based on the Florida Keys (Monroe County) jurisdictional boundary. The South Atlantic Council received 82% of the ABC and the Gulf Council received 18% of the ABC (established using 50% of average landings from 1990-2008 + 50% of average landings from 2006-2008). The following parameters (pounds whole weight; lbs ww) were implemented for mutton snapper in the South Atlantic through the Comprehensive ACL Amendment:

Parameter	Value
Overfishing Limit (OFL)	1,515,300
Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC)	926,600
Annual Catch Limit (ACL)	926,600
Commercial ACL	157,707
Recreational ACL	768,893
Recreational Annual Catch Target (ACT)	668,937

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).*

In 2015, an update to the stock assessment for mutton snapper in the southeastern U.S. was conducted with data through 2013 (SEDAR 15A Update 2015). The South Atlantic Council needs to take action to implement biological benchmarks and fishing levels recommended by the latest stock assessment update (SEDAR 15A Update 2015). However, **based on improvements to the modeling approach, the 2015 assessment estimated a smaller adult population compared to the 2008 assessment. Because of this finding the assessment recommends a lower ABC to maintain sustainable harvest.** Consequently, the Council may modify existing management measures for mutton snapper to achieve the desired level of harvest.

## What is the acceptable biological catch recommendation for mutton snapper?

### *What is Acceptable Biological Catch?*

#### **ABC = Acceptable Biological Catch**

The ABC is the maximum amount of fish stock than can be harvested without adversely affecting recruitment of other components of the stock. The ABC level can be set above the total annual catch limit, leaving a buffer between the two.

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, 2015 meeting and made the following fishing level recommendations for mutton snapper in the South Atlantic:

**Table S-1.** Mutton Snapper recommendations from SEDAR 15A Update (2015). ABC to be specified based on landings projections in numbers of fish.

Criteria	Deterministic	Probabilistic
Overfished evaluation	Not overfished: $SSB/SSB_{F_{30\%}}=1.13$	
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%

Year	OFL RECOMMENDATIONS					
	Landings (lbs)	Discards (lbs)	Catch (lbs)	Landings (numbers)	Discards (numbers)	Catch (numbers)
2017	751,711	55,962	807,673	164,150	29,660	193,810
2018	793,823	56,994	850,817	173,656	30,071	203,727
2019	835,318	58,170	893,488	180,716	30,430	211,146
2020	850,077	58,857	908,934	184,868	30,780	215,648

Year	ABC RECOMMENDATIONS ( $P^* = 0.03$ )					
	Landings (lbs)	Discards (lbs)	Catch (lbs)	Landings (numbers)	Discards (numbers)	Catch (numbers)
2017	717,200	53,700	770,900	157,500	28,400	185,900
2018	746,800	53,900	800,700	164,500	28,300	192,800
2019	774,400	54,400	828,800	169,300	28,300	197,600
2020	798,300	54,500	852,800	172,700	28,300	201,000

## What actions are being proposed in this amendment?

Amendment 41 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Snapper Grouper FMP) proposes the following 8 actions for mutton snapper in the South Atlantic Region:

### 1. Specify maximum sustainable yield (MSY)

**Currently:** not specified

**Preferred Alternative 2.** 912,500 pounds whole weight (lbs ww)

### 2. Specify minimum stock size threshold (MSST)

**Currently:** not specified

**Preferred Alternative 3.** MSST = 75% SSB<sub>MSY</sub> = 3,486,900 lbs ww

### 3. Revise annual catch limits (ACLs) and optimum yield (OY)

**Currently:** ACL = OY = ABC = 926,600 lbs ww

Commercial ACL = 157,743 lbs ww

Recreational ACL = 768,857 lbs ww

**Preferred Sub-alternative 2a.** ACL = OY = ABC = 129,150 fish for 2017.

Commercial ACL = 100,015 lbs ww (for 2017)

Recreational ACL = 116,127 fish (for 2017)

**Table S-2.** Proposed acceptable biological catch values and annual catch limits for mutton snapper in the South Atlantic based on **Sub-alternative 2a (Preferred)**.

Preferred Sub-alt 2a - ACL = OY = ABC						
Year	Total ABC (SA + Gulf) num	SA ABC num	Yield ABC lbs	Comm ACL (lbs)	Comm ACL (num)	Rec ACL (num)
2017	157,500	129,150	587,633	100,015	13,023	116,127
2018	164,500	134,890	612,401	104,231	13,572	121,318
2019	169,300	138,826	634,435	107,981	14,060	124,766
2020	172,700	141,614	654,257	111,354	14,499	127,115

**Table S-3.** Commercial and recreational landings of mutton snapper, by sector, for the South Atlantic region, 2010-2014.

Year	Recreational		Commercial	Total
	number	lbs ww	lbs ww	lbs ww
2010	130,249	477,647	74,833	552,480
2011	60,151	251,446	66,160	317,606
2012	86,108	505,583	77,231	582,814
2013	126,241	660,449	75,010	735,459
2014	157,501	538,122	91,173	629,295
<b>Mean</b>	<b>112,050</b>	<b>486,650</b>	<b>76,881</b>	<b>563,531</b>

**4. Revise the recreational annual catch target (ACT)**

**Currently:** ACT = recreational ACL\*(1-PSE) or ACL\*0.5, whichever is greater = 668,906 lbs ww

**Preferred Sub-alternative 2b.** ACT =85% recreational ACL = 98,708 fish

**5. Modify the minimum size limit**

**Currently:** minimum size limit = 16 inches total length (TL)

**Preferred Alternative 3.** 18 inches TL

**Table S-4.** Projected recreational landings of mutton snapper (numbers of fish) and closure dates for each of the three proposed ACLs, under the current bag limit (10 mutton snapper within the aggregate), and with no further restrictions during May and June. Preferred minimum size limit alternative in bold.

Size Limit	Bag Limit	Estimated Landings	% Reduction	Projected Closure Date		
				ACL=ABC	ACL=95%ABC	ACL=90%ABC
16	10	111,966	0.0%	No	27-Dec	9-Dec
17	10	56,284	49.7%	No	No	No
<b>18 (Pref)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>44,143</b>	<b>60.6%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
19	10	36,273	67.6%	No	No	No
20	10	30,049	73.2%	No	No	No

Source: SAFMC

**6. Designate the “spawning months” for regulatory purposes**

**Currently:** commercial restrictions apply in May-June: 10 fish/person/day or 10 fish/person/trip, whichever is more restrictive. There are no additional restrictions for the recreational sector during May-June.

**Preferred Sub-alternative 2a.** For regulatory purposes, designate April-June as “spawning months”. The remainder of the year would be the “regular season.”

**7. Modify the recreational bag limit**

**Currently:** 10 fish/person/day, included in the 10-snapper aggregate bag limit.

**Preferred Sub-alternative 4c.** Retain mutton snapper within the recreational 10 snapper aggregate bag limit in the South Atlantic, but specify bag limit of 5 fish/person/day within the aggregate bag limit year round.

**Table S-5.** Projected recreational landing of mutton snapper (numbers of fish) for sub-alternatives under **Preferred Alternative 4** (year round bag limits) at the various minimum size limits considered under **Action 5** (preferred indicated in bold)

Bag limits	Minimum size limit (inches TL)				
	16 (current)	17	18	19	20
4a - 2pp	107,968	54,960	43,945	36,118	29,463
4b - 3pp	110,840	55,726	44,085	36,238	29,718
<b>4c (Pref) - 5pp</b>	<b>111,796</b>	<b>56,121</b>	<b>44,140</b>	<b>36,271</b>	<b>29,970</b>

## 8. Modify the commercial trip limit

**Currently:** Commercial restrictions apply May through June - 10 fish/person/day or 10 fish/person/trip, whichever is more restrictive.

**Preferred Sub-alternative 2c.** Establish a commercial trip limit of 500 pounds for mutton snapper during the “regular season” (i.e., non-spawning months) in the South Atlantic.

**Preferred Sub-alternative 3f.** Specify a commercial trip limit for mutton snapper during the “spawning months” in the South Atlantic of 5 fish/person/day or 5 fish/person/trip, whichever is more restrictive.

**Table S-6.** Percent decreases in commercial landings for trip limits proposed under **Preferred Alternative 2** of **Action 8**. Preferred indicated in bold.

Regular Season	Trip Limit		
	300 lbs ww	400 lbs ww	500 lbs ww
July - April	-6.0%	-4.6%	<b>-3.7%</b>
<b>July - March</b>	<b>-5.9%</b>	<b>-4.5%</b>	<b>-3.7%</b>
August - March	-4.1%	-3.0%	<b>-2.3%</b>
August - April	-4.2%	-3.0%	<b>-2.3%</b>

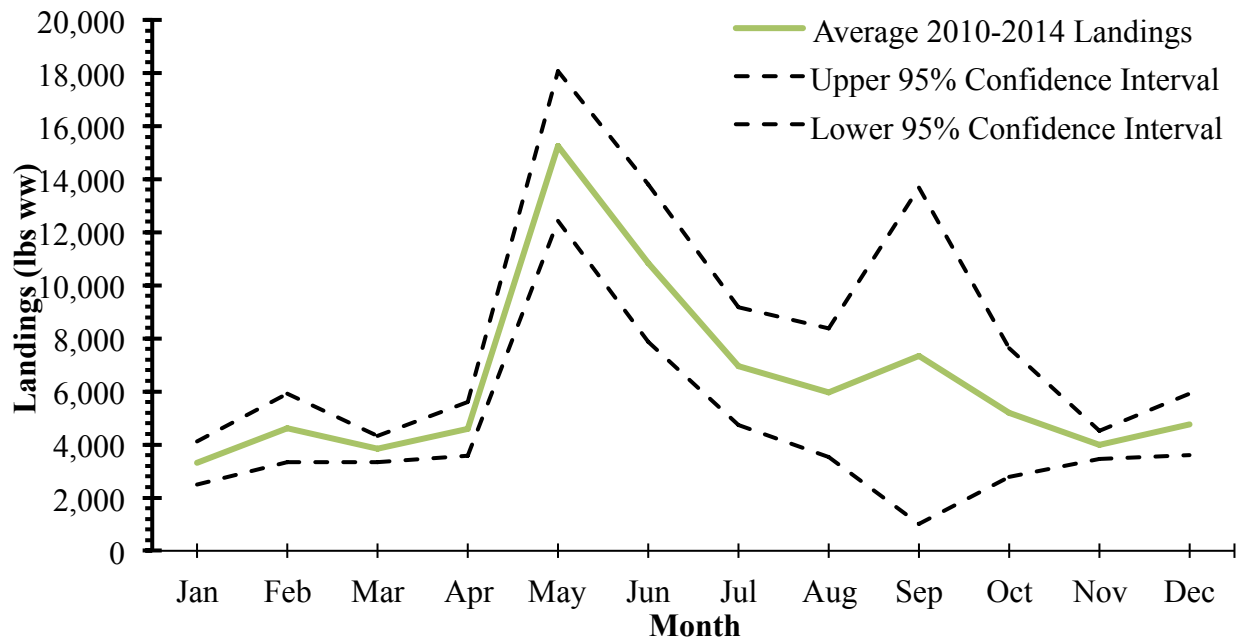
Source: NMFS SERO.

NOTE: Estimates are from commercial logbook data from 2012 to 2014 and percent reductions were calculated for imposing a trip limit during the ‘regular season’.

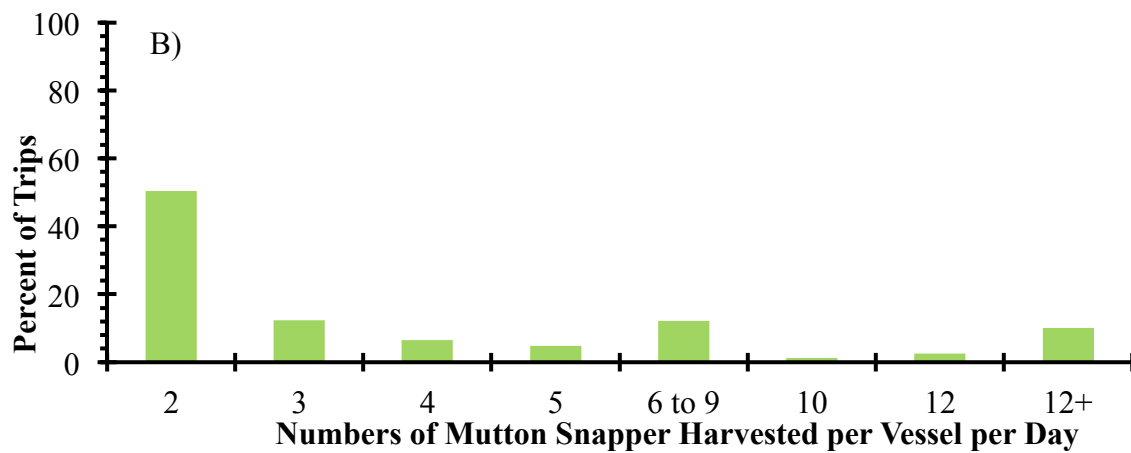
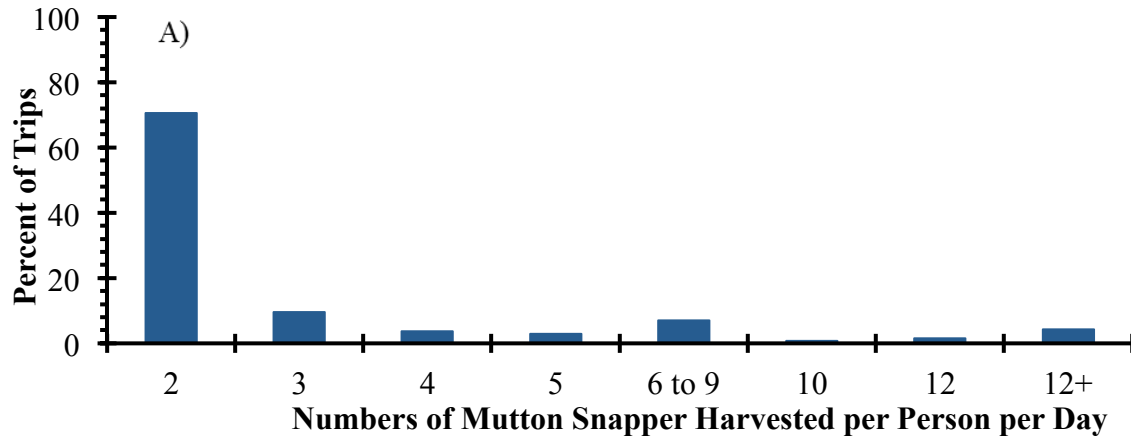
**Table S-7.** Projected percent decrease in commercial landings of mutton snapper for commercial trip limits proposed under **Preferred Alternative 3** of **Action 8**. Preferred alternatives indicated in bold.

Spawning Season	Trip Limit					
	No Retention	2 fish/ person/day	3 fish/ person/day	<b>5 fish/ person/day</b>	10 fish/ vessel/day	12 fish/ vessel/day
May-June	-35.8%	-20.0%	-16.3%	<b>-8.6%</b>	-4.1%	-2.8%
<b>April-June</b>	<b>-41.7%</b>	<b>-23.5%</b>	-19.3%	<b>-13.6%</b>	-5.0%	-3.5%
April-July	-52.6%	-29.6%	-24.2%	<b>-17.1%</b>	-6.9%	-5.1%
May-July	-46.6%	-29.6%	-21.3%	<b>-14.9%</b>	-6.0%	-4.5%

Source: NMFS SERO. Commercial logbook data 2012-2014



**Figure S-1.** Average annual South Atlantic commercial mutton snapper landings by month from 2010-2014 and 95% confidence intervals.  
 Source: Commercial ACL dataset.



**Figure S-2.** Distribution of the numbers of mutton snapper harvested per person per day (A) and per person per vessel per day (B) in the South Atlantic region during May and June. Data are from the commercial logbook dataset from 2012 through 2014 (n = 1,411 trips).