



Content and Status of Active Amendments

January 28, 2015

Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 14 (management measures for snapper grouper species)

Regulatory Amendment 14 includes actions to: (1) modify the commercial and recreational fishing years for greater amberjack, (2) modify the recreational fishing year for black sea bass; (3) modify the recreational accountability measure for black sea bass; (4) modify the commercial fishing year for black sea bass; (5) change the commercial fishing seasons for vermilion snapper; (6) modify the trip limit for gag; and (7) modify the recreational accountability measure for vermilion snapper.

Public hearings were held in August 2013 and the Council approved this amendment for submission to the Secretary of Commerce at their September 2013 meeting. The Final Rule for Regulatory Amendment 14 published in the *Federal Register* on November 7, 2014, and regulations became effective on December 8, 2014.

Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 16

The amendment addresses the prohibition on the use of black sea bass pots that was implemented through Regulatory Amendment 19 and became effective on October 23, 2013. The second action specifies potential new black sea bass pot gear modifications. The Council reviewed the analyses for this amendment at their December 2014 meeting, made modifications to the amendment, and revised the timeline for development. In March 2015, the Council will continue to review analyses and, if appropriate, select preferred alternatives. The Council is scheduled to approve the amendment for public hearings at their June 2015 meeting. Public hearings would be held in August 2015. The Council will review public hearing comments and make final decisions for the document. The Council is scheduled to approve the document to send to the Secretary at the December 2015 Council meeting.

Snapper Grouper Amendment 36 (Spawning Special Management Zones)

Amendment 36 would specify a process for identifying spawning sites/aggregations for snapper grouper species, including speckled hind and warsaw grouper, based on the characteristics of sites important for spawning (bottom topography, current systems, etc.). Spawning SMZs would only consider prohibiting fishing for and/or possession of snapper grouper species (species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit); fishing for all other species would be allowed. The amendment would also revise the boundary of the Charleston Deep Reef MPA, and include an action to address transit and anchoring provisions within newly designated Spawning SMZs. Note: The Spawning SMZ approach would not make any changes to the existing MPAs. The Council is developing a System

Management Plan to specify the outreach, law enforcement, and monitoring/research projects necessary to effectively monitor and evaluate the existing MPAs.

Scoping for this amendment took place in August 2014 and development continued in 2014. The Council will review the amendment at their March 2015 meeting and approve it for public hearings. Public hearings will be held via webinar in Spring 2015 and during the June 2015 Council meeting. The Council will consider public comment at their June 2015 meeting and approve the amendment for formal review.

Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 20 (snowy grouper)

Regulatory Amendment 20 proposes to adjust the rebuilding strategy, acceptable biological Catch (ABC), annual catch limit (ACL), maximum sustainable yield (MSY), minimum stock size threshold (MSST), and optimum yield (OY), and revise management measures for snowy grouper.

At their March 2014 meeting, the Council approved the Purpose and Need, reviewed options, and selected a range of alternatives for each action. The Council opted to use the normal framework procedure to develop this amendment. Public hearings were held in August 2014 and the Council approved the amendment for submission to the Secretary of Commerce at their September 2014 meeting. The amendment is undergoing formal review.

Snapper Grouper Amendment 22 (recreational tag program)

The Council initiated development of Amendment 22 to address annual harvest levels of snapper grouper species with exceptionally low recreational annual catch limits (ACLs). The Council requested that an amendment be developed to create a recreational tag program for these species. Recreational fishery participants would be issued tags through a pre-determined process. Tags issued to individuals or entities would allow the tag holder to harvest a set number of fish from federal waters in the South Atlantic Region.

The Council reviewed a revised Options Paper at their December 2013 meeting but suspended further development of the amendment pending NOAA CG's input on several issues, including whether a recreational harvest tag program would be considered a Limited Access Privilege Program (LAPP) and thus be subject to specific requirements. NOAA CG provided further guidance to the Council at their September 2014 meeting. At the December 2014 meeting, the Council received a presentation from the NC Division of Marine Fisheries on the state's catch card program for highly migratory species. The Council is scheduled to discuss whether to continue development of this amendment during the March 2015 meeting and, if so, provide guidance on how a harvest tag program should be structured.

Snapper Grouper Amendment 29 (ORCS and ABC Control Rule)

At the June 2013 Council meeting, the SSC presented to the Council their recommended changes to the ABC Control Rule. In addition, the SSC provided ABC recommendations for "Only Reliable Catch Stocks". To implement these recommendations, the Council requested development of Amendment 29. A Decision Document/Options Paper was presented to the Council at their September 2013 meeting. At that time, the Council also added actions to implement management measures for gray triggerfish.

Public hearings on this amendment were held in January 2014 and the Council reviewed comments at their March 2014 meeting. The Council took public comment on the amendment at their September 2014 meeting and approved submission of the amendment to the Secretary of Commerce. The amendment is undergoing formal review.

Snapper Grouper Amendment 32 (blueline tilefish)

The SSC reviewed the stock assessment for blueline tilefish (SEDAR 32) in October 2013 and found it to be suitable for management. The assessment indicated the stock is overfished and undergoing

overfishing. The Council is required to take action to end overfishing and/or establish a rebuilding plan within two years of being notified that a stock is undergoing overfishing and/or is overfished. The Council received the notification on the status of the blueline tilefish stock on December 6, 2013. However, the Council adopted an alternate definition of MSST (through Regulatory Amendment 21) that indicates the stock is in fact not overfished and a rebuilding plan is not necessary. A scoping document was developed and a scoping webinar was held on November 7, 2013.

At the December 2013 meeting the Council requested that NMFS take emergency action to set the blueline tilefish ACL at 224,100 pounds whole weight, the yield at 75%F_{MSY}. The emergency rule became effective in April 2014. At their June 2014 meeting, the Council reviewed the actions and alternatives in the amendment and approved it for public hearings in August 2014. At their September 2014 meeting, the Council requested an extension of the emergency rule to allow completion of Amendment 32 and approved the amendment for submission to the Secretary of Commerce. The amendment is undergoing formal review.

Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 22 (gag and wreckfish)

At their June 2014 meeting, the Council approved development of Regulatory Amendment 22 to address adjustments to the ABC, ACLs, and OY for gag and wreckfish based on results of the stock assessment for those two species. The amendment also includes an action to consider modifying the bag limit for gag; however, the Council chose to take no action at this time.

The Council reviewed the amendment at their September meeting and approved it for public hearings, which were held via webinar in fall 2014. The Council reviewed public hearing comments at their December 2014 meeting and approved the amendment for submission to the Secretary of Commerce.

Snapper Grouper Amendment 33 (transport of snapper grouper fillets from the Bahamas)

This amendment modifies what is currently allowed by recreational fishermen to bring snapper grouper species fillets from the Bahamas into the US EEZ. Also included for consideration is leaving skin on the fillets, onboard documentation requirements, as well as determining how many Bahamian fillets may be aboard the vessel in the U.S. EEZ.

At the March 2014 Council meeting, the Council received input on the proposed actions and alternatives from the Law Enforcement Advisory Panel and the Law Enforcement Committee. The Council made revisions to the Purpose and Need and revised actions and alternatives. In June 2014, the Council approved the amendment for public hearings in August 2014. Approval for submission to the Secretary of Commerce took place in December 2014.

Snapper Grouper Amendment 34 (accountability measures for snapper grouper species)

The Generic Accountability Measures and Dolphin Allocation Amendment considers changes in accountability measures for snapper grouper species to determine when ACL overages need to be paid back and to bring consistency to accountability measures. A scoping webinar was held in February 2014 and the Council reviewed the amendment at their March 2014 meeting. The Council approved the Purpose and Need and revised the range of alternatives. The Council also clarified that payback of an ACL overage would apply only to the amount above the total ACL, not the sector ACL. In June 2014, the Council approved the amendment for public hearings in August 2014. The Council approved the amendment for formal review in December 2014.

Snapper Grouper Amendment 35 (removal of species from the FMU)

This amendment would remove 4 species from the Snapper Grouper FMU: black snapper, dog snapper, mahogany snapper, and schoolmaster. Representatives from the State of Florida requested the

South Atlantic Council remove the above 4 species from the Snapper Grouper FMU as well as Nassau grouper. At their June 2014 meeting, however, the Council opted to retain Nassau grouper in the FMU given its ESA status. Florida regulations would be extended into federal waters off Florida to manage the remaining 4 species.

Scoping for Amendment 35 took place in August 2014. At their September meeting, the Council reviewed the scoping comments and provided guidance to continue development of the amendment. Additionally, the Council added an action to the amendment to address issues with golden tilefish longline endorsements. The Council reviewed the amendment at their December 2014 meeting and approved it for public hearings in January 2015. The Council will consider public comment during the March 2015 meeting, make any necessary modifications, and approve all actions. Approval for submission to the Secretary is scheduled to take place during the June 2015 Council meeting.

Dolphin Wahoo

Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 7 (bringing dolphin and wahoo fillets from the Bahamas into the US EEZ)

This amendment considers allowing recreational fishermen to bring dolphin and wahoo fillets from the Bahamas into the US EEZ as is currently allowed with snapper grouper species. Also included for consideration is leaving skin on the fillets, onboard documentation requirements, as well as determining how many Bahamian fillets may be aboard the vessel in the U.S. EEZ.

At the March 2014 Council meeting, the Council received input on the proposed actions and alternatives from the Law Enforcement Advisory Panel and the Law Enforcement Committee. The Council made revisions to the Purpose and Need and revised actions and alternatives. In June 2014, the Council approved the amendment for public hearings in August 2014. The Council approved the amendment for formal review in December 2014.

Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 8 (sector allocations for dolphin)

The Generic Accountability Measures and Dolphin Allocation Amendment considers changes in how dolphin is allocated between commercial and recreational sectors. In June 2014, the Council approved the amendment for public hearings in August 2014. The Council approved the amendment for formal review in December 2014.

Golden Crab

Golden Crab Amendment 9 (ABCs/ACLs/ACTs/AMs, trip limits)

The Generic Accountability Measures and Dolphin Allocation Amendment considers changes in accountability measures for golden crab to determine when ACL overages need to be paid back and to bring consistency to accountability measures. In June 2014, the Council approved the amendment for public hearings in August 2014. The Council approved the amendment for formal review in December 2014.

Coral

Coral Amendment 8 (modifications to coral HAPCs)

This amendment considers expansion of the northern and western boundaries of the Oculina Bank Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC); transit through the Oculina Bank HAPC; expansion of the western boundary of the Stetson-Miami Terrace CHAPC; and expansion of the northern boundary of the Cape Lookout CHAPC. The Council approved the amendment for public hearings at their June 2013 meeting. The proposed rule was published on June 3, 2014, and the comment period closed on July 3, 2014. The Secretary approved the amendment August 20, 2014 but publication of the final rule is still pending.

Mackerel

Joint Amendment 20B (previously Amendment 20) (zones and quotas)

This joint amendment with the Gulf Council changes the hook and line trip limits and fishing year for some of the Gulf group king mackerel zones/subzones, and establishes a provision to allow transit through closed king mackerel areas. The amendment also includes an action to establish regional allocations of the Atlantic group king mackerel commercial ACL and the Atlantic group Spanish commercial ACL to a Northern Zone and Southern Zone (boundary at the NC/SC line). The amendment also updates language in the framework procedure. The last action updates the cobia ACLs based on the 2012 stock assessment, and allocates part of the Gulf group cobia ACL to the Florida East Coast because of the designation of the biological boundary between the Gulf and Atlantic stocks at the GA/FL line. The amendment was submitted to NMFS on May 22, 2014. The proposed rule published on October 31, 2014 and the comment period closed on December 16, 2014. The final rule published on January 27, 2015, and will be effective on March 1, 2015.

South Atlantic CMP Framework Action 2013 (transfer at sea provision and king mackerel trip limits)

This amendment would establish provisions to allow transfer at sea of Spanish mackerel caught in gillnet when one set exceeds the trip limit. The amendment also includes an action to modify the trip limit for the Florida East Coast subzone by moving the potential step-up to 75 fish/day in the last month of the season and if less than 70% of the subzone's ACL has been met. The amendment was submitted for Secretarial review on December 18, 2013. The proposed rule was published March 19, 2014 and the public comment period closed on April 18, 2014. The final rule published on November 19, 2014 and regulations became effective on December 19, 2014.

CMP Framework Amendment 1 (Spanish mackerel ACLs)

This amendment updates the ACLs for Atlantic group and Gulf group Spanish mackerel based on the recent stock assessment (SEDAR 28). Previously this amendment was called the South Atlantic and Gulf Joint Framework Actions 2014. The South Atlantic Council took final action in March 2014, and the Gulf Council took final action in April 2014. The amendment was submitted for Secretarial review on May 28, 2014. Proposed rule published on July 31, 2014 and the final rule published on November 20, 2014. Regulations became effective on December 22, 2014.

CMP Framework Amendment 2 (Atlantic Spanish mackerel trip limits for Southern Zone)

This amendment would revise the quota and trip limit system for commercial harvest of Atlantic Spanish mackerel in the Southern Zone (which is proposed in Amendment 20B, and includes SC, GA and Florida East Coast). Public hearings were held in August 2014. The South Atlantic Council took final action in September 2014, and the Gulf Council reviewed and approved the amendment in October 2014. The amendment was submitted for Secretarial review on November 5, 2014.

Joint Amendment 24 (sector allocations)

This amendment originally considered changes in the recreational/commercial allocations for Atlantic Spanish mackerel and Gulf king mackerel. South Atlantic scoping meetings were held in January 2014. The Gulf Council reviewed the scoping comments and options in February 2014 and decided to postpone further work on the amendment until after SEDAR 38 is finalized. In June 2014, staff presented an options paper on permanent re-allocation, an in-season “ACL shift,” and pre-season ACL shift for Atlantic Spanish mackerel. In December 2014, the South Atlantic Council postponed further work on this amendment until 2016.

Joint Amendment 26 (king mackerel ACLs, re-designation of KM boundaries and mixing zone, and other king mackerel actions)

This amendment may contain actions to update the Gulf and Atlantic king mackerel ACLs based on the results of SEDAR 38; modify the stock boundary to be consistent with the stock boundary used in SEDAR 38; updated zone/subzone commercial quotas for Gulf king mackerel; revised sector allocations for Gulf king mackerel; provision to allow bag limit sales of Atlantic king mackerel in the small coastal shark gillnet fishery; potential changes in management measures for the Florida East Coast subzone.

South Atlantic scoping is being held January/February 2015. The South Atlantic Council will review scoping comments and give direction to staff on actions and alternatives in March 2015. The Gulf Council is reviewing the stock assessment results and recommendations from the Gulf SSC in January 2015.

Joint Amendment 28 (modification of king mackerel and Spanish mackerel commercial permits)

This amendment considers ways to separate the commercial permits for king and Spanish mackerel into designated permits for each region. Currently there is one commercial king mackerel permit and one Spanish mackerel that allows harvest in the Gulf and South Atlantic regions. South Atlantic scoping was held in January 2014. The Gulf Council decided to postpone further development until after the results of SEDAR 38 are final. The South Atlantic Council directed staff presented a white paper at the September 2014 meetings on methods to separate permits for the regions. In March 2015 NOAA GC will present considerations for separating the FMP.

Generics

Joint Commercial Logbook Amendment

During the December 2012 meeting, the South Atlantic Council approved a motion moving the commercial logbook reporting action out of CE-BA 3 and indicated their wish to work with the Gulf Council on a joint amendment to address commercial logbook issues in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico.

The amendment includes an action to consider modifying the timing of reporting requirements for commercial logbooks in fisheries for snapper grouper, coastal migratory pelagic resources, dolphin/wahoo, and golden crab fisheries, and providing an option for logbooks to be submitted electronically. Currently, logbook reports from commercial fishermen targeting snapper grouper, coastal migratory pelagic, and dolphin/wahoo must be submitted to the Science and Research Director postmarked no later than 7 days after the end of each fishing trip. Logbook reporting forms for golden crab must be submitted to the Science and Research Director postmarked no later than 30 days after sale of the golden crab offloaded from a trip. The amendment also considers requiring that the components of the commercial logbooks (landings, economic, and bycatch) be submitted within 21 days after the end of each trip. This would increase the timeline for snapper grouper, coastal migratory pelagic, and dolphin/wahoo fishermen to complete logbooks, and decrease the timeline for golden crab fishermen. Commercial electronic logbooks, as proposed in this amendment, would not be used to monitor annual catch limits; however, they could serve as a means to verify dealer reports and comply with the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program standards that require two sources for verification of quota-monitored species. It is the Council's intent that NMFS use the commercial logbook landings, with the new timing and compliance requirements specified in this amendment, to compare with commercial trip ticket landings to help ensure the commercial ACLs are not exceeded.

At their June 2013 meeting, the Council approved scheduling a NMFS SEFSC presentation on the details of the commercial electronic logbook pilot study at the September 2013 meeting. SA Council staff will work with Gulf staff and NMFS staff to plan for completion of the amendment incorporating results from year 1 of the pilot study and target regulations being effective on January 1, 2016.

Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 3 (bycatch)

The action in CE-BA 3 considers improvements in bycatch/discard data collection methods to better quantify all sources of fishing mortality in South Atlantic fisheries. Alternatives consider expanding aspects of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program's Release, Discard and Protected Species Module to coastal migratory pelagic (SA Council area only) and dolphin and wahoo fisheries; and also implementing a commercial observer program at 2-5% coverage levels for snapper grouper, coastal migratory pelagic (SA Council area only), dolphin and wahoo, and golden crab vessels.

Based on discussions at the September 2014 Council meeting, the SEFSC/SERO agreed to draft a comprehensive bycatch reporting system for the southeast. The SEFSC and SERO will provide an update on their efforts at each Council meeting. The Council's intent is that the bycatch reporting system would be specified and implemented through this amendment.