

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
SNAPPER GROUPEL COMMITTEE
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
December 7-8, 2021

The Committee approved the minutes from the September 2021 meeting and the agenda for the December 2021 meeting. Two items concerning the Fort Pierce Offshore Reef Special Management Zone (SMZ) and blueline tilefish were added for discussion under Other Business.

Ecopath project on red snapper recruitment

An Ecopath with Ecosim (EwE) model was developed and examined the effects of high red snapper recruitment on the South Atlantic ecosystem. This project was reviewed by the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) at their October meeting. The Council received a presentation describing the project, and the SSC Chair presented the SSC's comments and recommendations.

Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Revisions – AP Comments and Recommendations

At their October 2021 meeting, the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP) responded to questions from the Council regarding release mortality reduction and more holistic management for the snapper grouper fishery. The AP Chair presented the AP's comments and recommendations.

Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Revisions – Release Mortality Reduction Framework

In September 2021, the Council directed staff to begin work on a framework amendment to reduce dead releases of snapper grouper species. Staff presented a discussion document that provided information on previous Council discussions and actions to reduce release mortality, as well as some management methods used by another multispecies management plan, Pacific Groundfish. The Committee gave the following direction to staff:

- Compile information or analyses to inform whether a demonstrable change in recreational dead releases can be estimated, such that it could be used in estimation of the acceptable biological catch (ABC), by the following potential management changes:
 - Area closure:
 - By depth
 - Defined area identified as a species hot spot
 - Gear modifications:
 - Single hook
 - Leader length
 - Hook Size
 - Lines per person
 - Weight limit per person (red snapper-specific)
 - Seasons
 - Consider sector differences and regional differences as possible and appropriate

- In March 2022, Staff will present the information or analyses to the Committee. Also in March 2022, the Committee will select potential management changes for the SSC to consider at their meeting in April 2022.
- Continue to promote best practices through outreach.
- Direct staff to add an action to set ABC, including options to set at the SSC's recommended level and considering potential adjustments resulting from gear modification or other potential actions.
- Allocation revisions would be considered after an ABC is determined.
- Begin gathering general public input through informal scoping prior to the March 2022 Council meeting via online means (e.g. wufoo) to solicit additional ideas.
- Request that the SSC review potential management changes in April 2022 and determine whether the gathered information could adequately support an estimated change in dead releases and an adjustment to the recommended ABC for red snapper.
- Continue to gather public input after the March 2022 Council meeting, possibly through more structured in-person meetings and AP meetings.

Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Revisions – Update from Private Recreational Workgroup

The Council's Private Recreational Workgroup met on December 1, 2021 to continue discussing approaches to private recreational reporting. The Workgroup Chair provided an update on the group's progress and next steps. The Committee gave the following direction to staff:

- Hold the next Workgroup meeting prior to the March 2022 Council meeting and present the Workgroup's final recommendations at the March 2022 Council meeting.
- Provide presentations/information on the following items prior to the March 2022 meeting:
 - Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council – Mid-Atlantic recreational tilefish permit and reporting
 - US Fish and Wildlife Service – Federal Duck Stamp
 - Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) – State Reef Fish Survey
 - NOAA Fisheries – Atlantic Highly Migratory Species permit
 - NOAA Fisheries – How recreational permit system could fit with MRIP
 - Staff would provide synthesis of information to facilitate discussion in March 2022.

Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Revisions – Red Snapper Response and Holistic Management Approach

In September 2021, the Council directed staff to begin work on an approach to manage the snapper grouper fishery in a more holistic manner. Staff presented a proposed work plan for a project evaluating management strategies for the snapper grouper fishery to address this directive. The work plan included a project description, potential timeline, participants, budget, and preliminary goals. The Committee directed work on this project to continue as proposed and will continue to receive updates as this project progresses.

Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Revisions – White Paper on Commercial Snapper Grouper Permits

In 2020, the Council provided a response to Executive Order (EO) 13921: Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth, identifying the 2 for 1 provision for the South Atlantic Unlimited Snapper Grouper permit as an item to be evaluated and to consider if changes would provide social or economic benefits to the fishery. The Committee reviewed information describing background of the provision, an evaluation of trends in the commercial Snapper Grouper fishery and commercial permits, as well as input from the AP provided during their October 2021 meeting. The Committee indicated that the information presented at the September 2021 and December 2021 Council meetings provided a satisfactory response to the EO and that further consideration of changes to the commercial Snapper Grouper permit could be considered in the Management Strategy Evaluation that will examine holistic management changes in the Snapper Grouper fishery.

SEDAR 68 Scamp Research Track Assessment

SEDAR 68 is the first research track assessment and the first assessment of Atlantic scamp through the SEDAR process. Southeast Fisheries Science Center staff presented the assessment's results to the Committee. The SSC reviewed the results of SEDAR 68 in October 2021. The SSC Chair presented the SSC's comments and recommendations. An operational assessment will begin in 2022, using methods developed through the SEDAR 68 research track assessment to provide management advice for Atlantic scamp.

Snowy Grouper (SG Amendment 51)

The Committee reviewed the AP's recommendations regarding the commercial trip limit, commercial spawning season closure, recreational management measures, and recreational accountability measures. The Committee then reviewed the updated options paper which included modifications from the Interdisciplinary Planning Team (IPT) and feedback from the AP. The Committee accepted the IPT changes, approved the following motion, and gave the following direction to staff:

- Include an action within the amendment that would shift the recreational season to non-peak spawning months.
- Gather information from the public on how the alterations to the snowy grouper season would affect blueline tilefish.

MOTION 1: APPROVE AMENDMENT 51 FOR SCOPING.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Golden Tilefish (SG Amendment 52)

The AP Chair presented the AP's comments and recommendations on Amendment 52, addressing catch levels and management measures for golden tilefish. Staff presented an options paper. The Committee reviewed the AP recommendations and options paper. The Committee approved the following motion and gave the following direction to staff:

- Include actions for different start dates for commercial hook and line and long line seasons.
- Include actions to revise accountability measures.

MOTION 2: APPROVE AMENDMENT 52 (CATCH LEVEL ADJUSTMENTS AND ALLOCATIONS FOR GOLDEN TILEFISH) FOR SCOPING.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Gag Grouper (SG Amendment 53)

The Committee was provided an overview of the SSC's discussion during their October 2021 meeting along with the AP's recommendations regarding gag grouper. Staff then reviewed the options paper. The Committee made the following motion and gave the following direction to staff:

- Request a rebuilding projection based on $P_{rebuild}$ of 60%. Request that the SSC provide ABC values based on this projection to minimize social and economic impacts while preventing overfishing. The Committee noted willingness to deviate from standard application of the ABC Control Rule for this amendment.
- Incorporate an allocation action that uses the most recent year of gag grouper landings currently available (2020) for each sector to split the harvest reduction in year one and split the subsequent increases from year 2 through the final year of the rebuilding plan.
 - Consider other baseline scenarios for the year 1 reduction split (average of most recent 3 or 5 year).
- Estimate sector ACLs (Action 3) based on the ACL being set equal to the ABC (Action 2 – Option 2).
- Include the following potential commercial management modifications for scoping:
 - Reduction in commercial trip limit to 200 - 500 pounds gutted weight.
 - Increase in the commercial minimum size limit.
 - Establish a commercial slot size limit.
 - Restriction of spear fishing gear (including bang sticks) for certain times of the year.
 - Removing spearfishing gear (including bang sticks) from allowable gear when harvesting gag grouper during the duration of the rebuilding plan.
- Include the following potential recreational management modifications for scoping:
 - Increase in the minimum size limit.
 - Establish a recreational slot size limit.
 - Modify the recreational bag limit from 1 fish/person/day to 1-6 fish/vessel/day.
 - Including headboats.
 - Excluding headboats.
 - Modify the recreational season (accounting for regional differences).
 - Modify the recreational spawning closure.
 - Restriction of spear fishing gear (including bang sticks) for certain times of the year.
 - Removing spearfishing gear (including bang sticks) from allowable gear when harvesting gag grouper during the duration of the rebuilding plan.

- Include the following potential modifications to recreational accountability measures for scoping:
 - Remove the in-season accountability measure and modify the post-season accountability measure similar to proposed modifications in Amendment 50 (red porgy).
 - Also include alternatives for the post-season AM being triggered by exceeding the total ACL OR stock status.

MOTION 3: APPROVE AMENDMENT 53 FOR SCOPING.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Greater Amberjack (Amendment 49)

Staff presented a decision document summarizing the draft amendment and preliminary analyses of the current actions. The Committee reviewed proposed actions and corresponding analyses, approved the following motions, and provided the following direction to staff:

- Incorporate the IPT’s recommended edits to the Draft Purpose and Need and add revision of the ABC to the Draft Purpose and Need statements.
- Add revision of the ABC to Action 1.

MOTION 4: REMOVE ACTION 1, ALTERNATIVE 5 FROM FURTHER CONSIDERATION.

Action 1. Revise the greater amberjack total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield

Alternative 5. Revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for greater amberjack. For the 2022/2023 season through the 2024/2025 season, set the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield equal to the middle value of the updated acceptable biological catch projected for 2022/2027. For the 2025/2026 season through the 2026/2027 season, set the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield equal to the updated acceptable biological catch. The 2026/2027 total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield would remain in place until modified.

Fishing Year	Total ACL (lbs ww)
2022/2023	2,818,000
2023/2024	2,818,000
2024/2025	2,818,000
2025/2026	2,699,000
2026/2027+	2,669,000

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 5: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION) AS THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR ACTION 2.

Action 2. Revise the greater amberjack sector allocations and sector annual catch limits

Alternative 1 (No Action). Retain the current commercial sector and recreational sector allocations as 40.66% and 59.34%, respectively, of the revised total annual catch limit for greater amberjack. Apply these percentages to the revised total annual catch limit. The percentages are based on applying the formula of sector annual catch limit = ((mean landings 2006-2008)*0.5) + ((mean landings 1986-2008)*0.5) to the landings dataset used in the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment (Amendment 25 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region) that included recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey.

Year	Total ACL (lbs ww)	Commercial ACL* (lbs gw)	Commercial Season 1 Quota (lbs gw)	Commercial Season 2 Quota** (lbs gw)	Recreational ACL (lbs ww)
2022/2023	4,380,000	1,712,412	1,027,447	684,965	2,599,092
2023/2024	3,233,000	1,263,979	758,387	505,591	1,918,462
2024/2025	2,818,000	1,101,730	661,038	440,692	1,672,201
2025/2026	2,699,000	1,055,205	633,123	422,082	1,601,587
2026/2027+	2,669,000	1,043,476	626,086	417,391	1,583,785

*The total annual catch limit (ACL) is allocated in pounds whole weight (lbs ww) to the commercial and recreational sectors. The commercial allocation is then converted to pounds gutted weight (lbs gw) for regulatory use in the commercial ACL and seasonal quotas.

**Any remaining quota from commercial Season 1 (March-August) transfers to Season 2 (September-February). Remaining quota from Season 2 is not carried forward.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 6: ADD AN ALTERNATIVE TO ACTION 3 TO INCREASE THE RECREATIONAL MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT TO 30 INCHES FORK LENGTH.

Action 3. Increase the recreational minimum size limit for greater amberjack

Alternative 4. Increase the recreational minimum size limit to 30 inches fork length.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 7: SELECT THE ALTERNATIVE FOR 30 INCHES FORK LENGTH FOR THE RECREATIONAL MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT AS THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR ACTION 3.

Action 3. Increase the recreational minimum size limit for greater amberjack

Alternative 4. Increase the recreational minimum size limit to 30 inches fork length.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 8: ADD AN ALTERNATIVE TO ACTION 4 TO DECREASE THE COMMERCIAL MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT TO 30 INCHES FORK LENGTH.

Action 4. Reduce the commercial minimum size limit for greater amberjack

Alternative 4. Reduce the commercial minimum size limit to 30 inches fork length.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 9: SELECT THE ALTERNATIVE FOR 30 INCHES FORK LENGTH FOR THE COMMERCIAL MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT AS THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR ACTION 4.

Action 4. Reduce the commercial minimum size limit for greater amberjack

Alternative 4. Reduce the commercial minimum size limit to 30 inches fork length.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 10: EDIT ACTION 5 TO PERTAIN TO BOTH COMMERCIAL SEASONS AND ADD ALTERNATIVES FOR 1,500, 2,000, AND 2,500 POUNDS FOR EACH OF COMMERCIAL SEASONS 1 AND 2.

Action 5. Increase the Season 2 commercial trip limit for greater amberjack

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 11: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 UNDER ACTION 7 AS THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE.

Action 7. Remove recreational annual catch targets from the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan

Alternative 2. Remove recreational annual catch targets for species managed under the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

- The Committee will consider approving Amendment 49 for public hearings at the March 2022 meeting.

At Full Council, the Council reviewed additional information provided by staff concerning rationale for the establishment of the April spawning closure. The Council then approved the following motion:

MOTION 12: ADD AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE ACTION THAT CONSIDERS THE APRIL SPAWNING CLOSURE TO REMOVE THE CLOSURE.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Yellowtail Snapper (SG Amendment 44)

The Snapper Grouper AP Chair summarized input from the AP and staff briefed the Committee on feedback from the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council meeting and comments received during scoping in November 2021. The Committee provided the following direction to staff:

- Suspend work on this amendment and request that FWC conduct an update to the assessment to incorporate three additional years of data and a constant catch projection to set an ABC.

Red Porgy (SG Amendment 50)

Staff reviewed changes to the language of some actions and alternatives and input from the Snapper Grouper AP pertaining to the action to reduce the recreational bag limit. The Committee requested that staff obtain additional feedback from the Law Enforcement AP before the March 2022 Council meeting. Additionally, staff reviewed draft rationale for each of the actions in the amendment. The Committee approved the following motion:

MOTION 13: APPROVE ALL ACTIONS AS MODIFIED IN SNAPPER GROUPE AMENDMENT 50.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

AP comments on items not previously covered

The Snapper Grouper AP met on October 19-21, 2021, and discussed a list of topics other than those addressed in this Committee meeting. The AP Chair presented the AP's comments and recommendations on items not scheduled for discussion at this meeting, including vermilion snapper commercial trip limits, barrelfish management, and aquaculture.

Updates on South Atlantic Red Snapper Count and Greater Amberjack Count

Council staff updated the Committee on the status of research projects to obtain abundance estimates for red snapper and greater amberjack.

Other Business

Correcting A Regulatory Error for the Fort Pierce Offshore Reef Special Management Zone

A mistake was made in the rulemaking for Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 2 (CE-BA 2 2011) that resulted in limiting possession of snapper grouper species within the Fort Pierce Offshore Reef SMZ to the recreational bag limit. NOAA General Counsel indicated work would be initiated as soon as possible to correct the issue through independent rulemaking (not associated with South Atlantic amendments already undergoing rulemaking).

Blueline Tilefish

SERO staff presented a report detailing the management history, recent landings and ACLs, and current management and accountability measures for blueline tilefish in the South Atlantic region. The Committee discussed the report information, approved the following motion, and gave the following direction to staff:

- Look into use of interim analyses (~1-2 years to develop) and management procedures for longer-term consideration.

At Full Council, the Council revisited discussion of changes to the blueline tilefish accountability measures and recreational bag limit, as well as how best to develop an amendment to implement these changes. The Council approved the following motion and gave the following direction to staff:

MOTION 14: ADD AN ACTION TO ADJUST THE RECREATIONAL BAG LIMIT FOR BLUELINE TILEFISH. ADD THIS ACTION AND THE ACTION TO MODIFY

RECREATIONAL AMs TO AMENDMENT 52 (GOLDEN TILEFISH). INTENT TO CONDUCT SCOPING IN WINTER 2022.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

- Include alternatives that consider modification to captain and crew bag limit and different seasonal bag limits.

Timing and Tasks:

MOTION 15: DIRECT STAFF TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

- Compile information or analyses to inform whether a demonstrable change in recreational releases can be estimated, such that it could be used in estimation of the ABC, by potential management changes.
- Conduct informal scoping for the Release Mortality Reduction Framework Amendment
- Conduct scoping meetings for Amendment 51 (snowy grouper), Amendment 52 (golden tilefish and blueline tilefish), and Amendment 53 (gag grouper).
- Schedule an SSC meeting before the March 2022 Council meeting for consideration of other $P_{rebuild}$ and ABC values for gag grouper.
- Prepare Amendment 49 (greater amberjack) as modified for discussion and approval for public hearings at the March 2022 Council meeting.
- Suspend work on Amendment 44 (yellowtail snapper) and request that FWC conduct an update to the yellowtail snapper assessment.
- Prepare Amendment 50 (red porgy) for final approval at the March 2022 Council meeting.
- Add Amendment 46 (recreational permit) to the Snapper Grouper Committee agenda for the March 2022 Council meeting.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
SNAPPER GROUPEL COMMITTEE
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
March 8-10, 2022

The Committee approved the minutes from the December 2021 meeting and the agenda for the March 2022 meeting.

Status of Exempted Fishing Permit Requests

NMFS SERO presented current Exempted Fishing Permits and the timing of projects in the South Atlantic.

Release Mortality Reduction Framework

In September 2021, the Council directed staff to begin work on a framework amendment to reduce dead releases of snapper grouper species in response to concerns over red snapper dead discards. The Law Enforcement Advisory Panel (LE AP) discussed this topic at their February meeting, and Chair Capt. Scott Pearce provided the LE AP's recommendations. Council staff presented data depicting the scale of releases in the recreational snapper grouper fishery, as well as a decision document summarizing current information, scoping commentary, and potential next steps in the development of the framework amendment. The Committee approved the following motions and gave the following direction:

MOTION 1: DEVELOP THE FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT BASED ON TIME, AREA, AND DEPTH RESTRICTIONS.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Guidance to staff:

Develop analyses of potential effects on snapper grouper (prioritizing red snapper) releases based on time, area, and depth restrictions. In conducting analyses, consider:

- Depth zone definition and delineation options (shallow, middle, offshore), considering effects of barotrauma by depth on species that have information available.
 - Use nautical charts and identify major nautical landmarks that may be useful in identifying depth zones (Note: delineation of areas will take time to develop and may not be feasible for June).
- Estimates of commercial and recreational discards and discard mortalities for assessed stocks.
 - Develop annual estimates; also, investigate regional or seasonal variability for red snapper and overfished stocks.
- Species that should be considered for exemption from seasonal regulations.
- Table of spawning seasons (focusing on red snapper and overfished stocks).
- Annual, seasonal, and regional trips targeting or catching red snapper or overfished stocks.
- Pros/cons of impacts to commercial and for-hire sectors of potential management approaches.
 - Impacts of changes to sectors/components.

- Fishery-independent surveys for spatial area analysis to identify hotspots.
- Qualitative scaling of benefits/challenges.
- Compile previous discussions of social and economic impacts from the recent Commercial 2 for 1 Permit white paper, Commercial Visioning Blueprint, Buck (2018), and Amendment 17A.
- Have SEP and SSC discuss information that could be considered in analyses for this amendment.

MOTION 2: INITIATE A REGULATORY AMENDMENT TO INCORPORATE CATCH LEVELS FOR RED SNAPPER BASED ON SEDAR 73.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

NOTE: THE “FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT” OF **MOTION 1** AND THE “REGULATORY AMENDMENT” OF **MOTION 2** ARE THE SAME AMENDMENT. REGULATORY AMENDMENT 35 WILL CONSIDER BOTH TIME, AREA, OR DEPTH RESTRICTIONS **AND** RED SNAPPER CATCH LEVELS BASED ON THE MOST RECENT SSC RECOMMENDATION.

Private Recreational Permitting and Reporting Amendment (SG Amendment 46)

Amendment 46 was previously developed in the first half of 2018 and was approved for scoping at the June 2018 Council meeting. Due to time constraints over the Council’s workplan and the need to obtain more information on potential approaches for private recreational data gathering, the amendment was never scoped. From 2018 through 2020 staff focused instead on piloting the MyFishCount mobile app and portal. Other related efforts have also been underway, most notably the development of the Private Recreational Reporting Workgroup which has met five times in 2021 and 2022.

The Workgroup Chair, Spud Woodward, provided an update on the group’s progress and presented the group’s recommendations. The Committee reviewed an options paper on the amendment and provided the following guidance:

1. Establish a Private Recreational Snapper Grouper Permit to Fish For, Harvest, or Possess Snapper Grouper Species in the South Atlantic Region

- Develop options that would establish a permit covering all snapper grouper species.
 - Examine options for a vessel and individual permit.
 - Add discussion on whether there would be a fee associated with the permit.

2. Implement Reporting Requirements for Private Recreational Fishermen or Vessels

- Develop options that would phase in reporting at a later date.
- Bring back information covering how a permit could be incorporated into a survey or supplementing existing sampling efforts vs census-level reporting.
 - What future survey or sampling efforts could be enhanced or implemented via existing regulations?
 - Maintain flexibility to develop the best survey possible as the opportunity arises.

3. Ad Hoc Advisory Panel

- Work with technical experts and state agencies to develop an ad hoc advisory panel for private recreational permitting and reporting. Initial membership will be reviewed during AP selection at the June 2022 meeting.

Wreckfish ITQ Modernization (SG Amendment 48)

A review of the Wreckfish ITQ Program was completed in 2019 and included recommendations for improvement, particularly with respect to confidentiality issues and related constraints; moving away from a paper coupon-based program to an electronic program; cost recovery; wreckfish permit requirement; allocation issues; offloading sites and times; and economic data collection. Staff presented a decision document with updated actions and alternatives for consideration. The Committee provided the following input:

- Compare the value of the wreckfish fishery to the cost of moving to an electronic individual transferable quota system.
- Discuss the pros and cons of removing the wreckfish permit requirement with the wreckfish shareholders, specifically with respect to share ownership and transferability.
- Continue to consider a VMS requirement for the wreckfish fishery and discuss monitoring needs with the wreckfish shareholders.
- Consider matching the wreckfish individual transferable quota cost recovery system with the system utilized in the Gulf of Mexico individual fishing quota programs.

A meeting of the wreckfish shareholders will be organized this spring. The Committee approved the following agenda topics:

- Update on Snapper Grouper Amendment 48 (Wreckfish ITQ Modernization)
- Discussion of electronic reporting for the coastal logbook requirements and possible voluntary pilot program.
- Fishery Performance Report for wreckfish.

Additional direction to staff: move SG FMP goals and objectives out from SG Amendment 48 to SG Amendment 49.

Greater Amberjack (SG Amendment 49)

Staff presented a decision document summarizing the draft amendment and preliminary analyses of the current actions. The Committee reviewed proposed actions and corresponding analyses, made the following motions, and provided the following direction:

MOTION 3: CHANGE THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE UNDER ACTION 3 TO ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION) OF 28 INCHES FORK LENGTH.

Action 3. Increase the recreational minimum size limit for greater amberjack

Alternative 1 (No Action). The recreational minimum size limit is 28 inches fork length.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 4: DE-SELECT ALTERNATIVE 3 UNDER ACTION 4 AS THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE.

Action 4. Reduce the commercial minimum size limit for greater amberjack

Alternative 3. Reduce the commercial minimum size limit to 30 inches fork length.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 5: CHANGE PREFERRED IN ACTION 2 (SECTOR ALLOCATIONS) FROM ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION) TO ALTERNATIVE 3 (65% RECREATIONAL/35% COMMERCIAL)
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 6: ADD ALTERNATIVES TO ACTION 2 (SECTOR ALLOCATIONS) FOR A 50-50 ALLOCATION AND A 55% RECREATIONAL AND 45% COMMERCIAL ALLOCATION.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 7: APPROVE AMENDMENT 49 FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Direction to conduct the public hearing during the public comment session at the June 2022 Council meeting.

Additional guidance to staff:

- Include review of the most recent Amendment 49 alternatives and associated analyses in the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel's agenda, requesting feedback on recreational and commercial minimum size limits, commercial trip limits, and the April spawning closure.
- Provide information on spawning, considering regional differences in timing or behavior.
- Add language to **Action 6-Alternative 2**, noting addition of the recreational sector to the April spawning closure.

Red Porgy (SG Amendment 50)

Staff reviewed minor changes to language of alternatives addressing sector allocations and the Committee discussed rationale for only considering two alternatives. The Committee received input from the Law Enforcement AP pertaining to proposed changes to the recreational bag limit. Additionally, staff briefly reviewed draft conclusions for each of the actions in the amendment. The Committee approved the following motion:

MOTION 8: APPROVE AMENDMENT 50 TO THE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE SNAPPER GROUPE FISHERY OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION FOR FORMAL SECRETARIAL REVIEW AND DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT AS NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE. GIVE STAFF EDITORIAL LICENSE TO MAKE ANY NECESSARY EDITORIAL CHANGES TO THE DOCUMENT/CODIFIED TEXT AND GIVE THE COUNCIL CHAIR AUTHORITY TO APPROVE THE REVISIONS AND RE-DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Gag Grouper (SG Amendment 53)

The Committee was provided an overview of the Scientific and Statistical Committee's discussion during their February 2022 meeting along with summary of scoping comments. Staff then reviewed the discussion document. The Committee made the following motions and gave the following guidance:

The Committee had no further discussion on the $P_{REBUILD}$ percentage, accepting the SSC's continued recommendation of a 70% $P_{REBUILD}$ value.

MOTION 9: SELECT OPTION 3 AS THE PREFERRED OPTION FOR ACTION 1.

Action 1. Establish a rebuilding plan for gag.

Option 3. Establish a rebuilding plan with a rebuilding timeframe to equal T_{max} . This would equal 10 years with the rebuilding period ending in 2032. 2023 would be Year 1.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 10: SELECT OPTION 2 AS THE PREFERRED OPTION FOR ACTION 2.

Action 2. Revise the total acceptable biological catch, annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield for gag grouper.

Option 2. Revise the acceptable biological catch and set it **equal to** the most recent recommendation from the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for gag grouper and set them equal to the **recommended** acceptable biological catch. The recommended acceptable biological catch is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program's Fishing Effort Survey.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Additional direction to staff:

Action 2. Revise the total acceptable biological catch, annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield for gag grouper.

- Remove Option 5 from Action 2:

Option 5. Revise the acceptable biological catch and set it equal to the most recent recommendation from the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for gag grouper and set them equal to 80% of the recommended acceptable biological catch. The recommended acceptable biological catch is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program's Fishing Effort Survey.

Action 3. Revise the sector allocations and sector annual catch limits for gag grouper.

- Remove Option 4a and modify Option 4b from 2018-2020 to 2017-2019 for Action 3:

Option 4a. To determine allocations throughout the rebuilding plan, use the following method: total the commercial and recreational landings from 2020 as a baseline for reductions; apply the percent reduction from the following total landings scenarios to the 2023 total ACL evenly between sectors; apply each subsequent annual increase in the total ACL evenly to each sector ACL for Year 2 and each year thereafter throughout the rebuilding plan.

Options 4b. To determine allocations throughout the rebuilding plan, use the following method: total the commercial and recreational landings from ~~2018-2020~~ 2017-2019 as a baseline for reductions; apply the percent reduction from the following total landings scenarios to the 2023 total ACL evenly between sectors; apply each subsequent annual increase in the total ACL evenly to each sector ACL for Year 2 and each year thereafter throughout the rebuilding plan.

Action 4. Modify gag grouper commercial management measures.

- Remove Option 3 from Action 4.

Option 3. Modify the gag grouper commercial minimum size limit.

Action 5. Modify gag grouper recreational management measures.

- Remove Options 2a, 2c, 2e, 3, and 4 from Action 5.
- Consider the effect of a vessel limit on recreational headboats for Action 5.

Option 2a. Establish a recreational gag grouper vessel limit of 1 fish per vessel per day.

Option 2c. Establish the recreational gag grouper vessel limit of 3 fish per vessel per day.

Option 2e. Establish the recreational gag grouper vessel limit of 5 fish per vessel per day.

Option 3. Establish a gag grouper recreational vessel limit, not to exceed the daily bag limit, whichever is more restrictive, for **private recreational vessels only**.

Option 4. Increase the size limit or implement a slot limit.

MOTION 11: REMOVE ACTION 6.

Action 6. Restrict spearfishing gear (including powerheads) during the gag grouper rebuilding plan.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Action 7. Modify gag grouper accountability measures.

- Modify Action 7 to include language for both the commercial and recreational sectors.

Snowy Grouper (SG Amendment 51)

The Committee reviewed the scoping comments summary then an updated decision document which included suggestions from the IPT and scoping comments. The Committee made the following motions, and gave the following guidance:

MOTION 12: SELECT OPTION 2 AS THE PREFERRED OPTION FOR ACTION 1.

Action 1. Revise the acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield for snowy grouper.

Option 2: Revise the acceptable biological catch and set it equal to the most recent recommendation from the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for snowy grouper and set them equal to the **recommended** acceptable biological catch. The recommended acceptable biological catch is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program's Fishing Effort Survey.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 13: SELECT OPTION 2 AS THE PREFERRED OPTION FOR ACTION 2.

Action 2. Revise sector allocations and sector annual catch limits for snowy grouper.

Option 2. Allocate 12.45% of the revised total annual catch limit for snowy grouper to the recreational sector and 87.55% of the revised total annual catch limit for snowy grouper to the commercial sector.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 14: SELECT OPTION 1 AS THE PREFERRED OPTION FOR ACTION 3.

Action 3. Reduce the snowy grouper commercial trip limit.

Option 1 (no change). The commercial trip limit for snowy grouper is 200 pounds gutted weight.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Additional guidance to staff:

- Work with the Council's CitSci Program to explore development of a project to gather supplemental snowy grouper data
 - Include outreach to dealers
 - Consider creating a workgroup (Design Team) to include science center, state TIP samplers, CitSci workgroup, dealers, and Sea Grant members
 - Consider state data collection when developing a project
- Provide an update to the Committee at the June 2022 meeting on the following items:
 - Workgroup members identified
 - Potential data needs
- Remove Action 4 (Establish a commercial spawning season closure) from the range of actions with the following rationale:
 - MPAs are currently protect spawning snowy grouper
 - The commercial sector has been experiencing closures in between seasons that have acted as a spawning season closure
 - Collection of gonadal data may be advantageous
- Gather additional input from the Snapper Grouper AP on what might be the best recreational season to account for regional differences since the season is already short
- Include two single wave season options, a wave 3 (May - June) and wave 4 (July-August) season option within Action 5
- Include analysis based on recent time periods with more stable data
- Have the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel discuss the following items for Action 3 (commercial trip limit):
 - The AP's response to the selected preferred alternative (Option 1 (No Action); 200 lbs gw).
 - Consider a high trip limit and possible seasonal closures.
 - Consider regional management of snowy grouper.
- Direct staff to consider a weekly trip limit option in the future for deepwater species (example: 200 lbs gw trip limit would become a 1,400 lbs gw 7-day trip limit) for other

snapper grouper species other than snowy due to the timeline and stock status of snowy grouper.

Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish (SG Amendment 52)

Golden Tilefish:

MOTION 15: SELECT ACTION 1 OPTION 2 AS PREFERRED.

Action 1: Revise the golden tilefish acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield (OY)

Option 2: Revise the acceptable biological catch and set it equal to the most recent recommendation from the of the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for golden tilefish and set them equal to the recommended acceptable biological catch. The 2026 acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield would remain in place after 2026 until modified. The recommended acceptable biological catch is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Fishing Effort Survey.

Year	ABC (lbs gw)	Annual OY (lbs gw)	Total ACL (lbs gw)
2022	418,000	418,000	418,000
2023	435,000	435,000	435,000
2024	448,000	448,000	448,000
2025	458,000	458,000	458,000
2026+	466,000	466,000	466,000

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 16: SELECT ACTION 2 OPTION 2 AS PREFERRED.

Action 2. Revise sector allocations and sector annual catch limits for golden tilefish

Option 2: Allocate 96.70% of the revised total annual catch limit for golden tilefish to the commercial sector and 3.30% of the revised total annual catch limit for golden tilefish to the recreational sector.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 17: ADD AN ACTION TO MODIFY THE COMMERCIAL FISHING YEAR FOR GOLDEN TILEFISH.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Additional guidance to staff:

- Do not add an action to modify commercial gear allocations.
- For fishing year alternatives, include January 15 to the third week in January but no later than February 1 start, with options for longline and hook and line.
- Convene a meeting of longline endorsement holders to discuss management of that gear

sector.

- Add an option for a bycatch allowance for the longline sector once the longline quota is caught of up to 250 pounds.
- Obtain input from longline endorsement holders on potential trip limit step downs for the longline component.
- Remove Action 4 (Modify Golden Tilefish Commercial Accountability Measures).
- Consider the same post-season AMs for golden tilefish as are being considered for blueline tilefish.

Blueline Tilefish:

- Analyze recreational bag limits for blueline tilefish of 3, 2 and 1 fish per person per day.
- Analyze disallowing retention of recreational bag limit of blueline tilefish by captain and crew.
- Analyze modifying the blueline tilefish recreational season:
 - Consider closures by month (May, June, July, August) so the Council can explore combinations of months
 - Consider feasibility of regional seasons.
- Analyze options for post season recreational accountability measures and add table for blueline tilefish similar to how accountability measures were presented for golden tilefish.

Update on 2022 Red Snapper Season

SERO staff presented preliminary 2021 recreational landings for Red Snapper and other information that will be used to determine the duration of the 2022 recreational season.

Update on Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation

Council staff updated the Committee on the status of the Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation. A request for proposals has been published. Submitted proposals will be reviewed prior to the June Council meeting.

Updates on South Atlantic Red Snapper Count and Greater Amberjack Count

Council staff updated the Committee on the status of research projects to obtain abundance estimates for red snapper and greater amberjack.

Law Enforcement AP input not covered in previous agenda items

The Law Enforcement AP met on February 10, 2022, and discussed a list of topics other than those addressed in this and other Committee meetings. The AP Chair presented the AP's comments and recommendations on items not scheduled for discussion at this Council meeting, including compliance with electronic for-hire reporting and snapper grouper descending device requirements.

Approve Topics for Snapper Grouper AP Meeting

The Snapper Grouper AP is scheduled to convene in person on April 18-20, 2022. The Committee reviewed the list of topics below and approved it for staff to develop the AP's agenda.

- Black Sea Bass Fishery Performance Report

- Snapper Grouper Release Mortality Reduction Framework (Reg Am 35)
- Amendment 46 (Recreational Permitting/Reporting)
- Amendment 49 (Greater Amberjack)
- Amendment 51 (Snowy Grouper)
- Amendment 52 (Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish)
- Update: Amendment 53 (Gag Grouper)
- Elect Chair/Vice Chair

The Committee also directed consideration of a separate webinar meeting between June and September for the AP to discuss the following topics.

- Amendment Updates: Amendment 48 (Wreckfish), Amendment 50 (Red Porgy),
- Other Updates: Citizen Science, SEDAR, Climate Change Scenario Planning, Reef Fish Fellowship
- SERFS Update
- Commercial electronic logbook discussion

Other Business

Timing and Tasks:

MOTION 18: DIRECT STAFF TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

- Develop analyses that could inform future actions for Regulatory Amendment 35 (Snapper Grouper Release Mortality Reduction).
- Work with technical experts and state agencies to develop an ad hoc advisory panel for private recreational permitting and reporting. Initial membership will be reviewed during AP selection at the June 2022 Council meeting.
- Convene a meeting of the wreckfish shareholders this spring.
- Prepare a public hearing draft of Amendment 48 (Wreckfish) for approval at the September 2022 Council meeting.
- Conduct public comment for Amendment 49 (Greater Amberjack), including a public hearing during the public comment session at the June 2022 Council meeting.
- Convene a meeting of the golden tilefish longline endorsement holders to discuss alternative ways to manage that fishery.
- Convene a meeting of the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel in April and consider convening another meeting of the AP prior to the September Council meeting.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL