Vision Blueprint Commercial Regulatory Amendment 27

Decision Document

With guidance from the October 2018 Snapper Grouper Committee Meeting

Background

During the June 2018 meeting, the Committee reviewed public comment, revised preferred alternatives, reviewed updated analyses, and approved suggested edits to the draft amendment. The Committee moved the action pertaining to management of red grouper to Regulatory Amendment 30. The Committee approved all the actions in the amendment and directed staff to prepare the document to consider approving for formal review in September 2018.

Actions in this amendment

- **Action 1**: Establish a commercial split season and modify the commercial trip limit for blueline tilefish
- **Action 2**: Establish a commercial split season for snowy grouper
- **Action 3**: Establish a commercial split season and modify the commercial trip limit for greater amberjack
- **Action 4**: Establish a commercial split season and modify the commercial trip limit for red porgy
- **Action 5**: Modify the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper
- **Action 6**: Establish a minimum size limit for almaco jack for the commercial sector
- **Action 7**: Establish a commercial trip limit for the Other Jacks Complex
- **Action 8**: Remove the commercial minimum size limits for certain deep-water species
- **Action 9**: Reduce the commercial minimum size limit for gray triggerfish in the exclusive economic zone off east Florida

Expected amendment timing

October 2018 Review completed analyses and consider approving for formal review

Purpose and need statement

Purpose for Actions

The purpose of this amendment is to address commercial stakeholder input to enable equitable access for fishermen participating in the snapper grouper fishery, and to minimize discards TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE WHILE IMPROVING MARKETABILITY FOR SOME SPECIES.

Need for Actions

The need for this amendment is to improve management of the commercial sector of the snapper grouper fishery to achieve optimum yield, while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse socio-economic effects for commercial fishermen in the South Atlantic Region.

Proposed Actions and Alternatives

Action 1. Establish a commercial split season and modify the commercial trip limit for blueline tilefish

Alternative 1 (No Action). The commercial fishing year for blueline tilefish in the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone is from January 1 to December 31. The commercial trip limit is 300 pounds gutted weight.

Alternative 2. Specify two commercial fishing seasons for blueline tilefish. Allocate the blueline tilefish commercial annual catch limit into two quotas: 40% to the period January 1 through June 30 (Season 1), and 60% to the period July 1 through December 31 (Season 2). Any remaining quota from Season 1 would transfer to Season 2. Any remaining quota from Season 2 would not be carried forward.

Sub-alternative 2a. Season 1 trip limit equals 100 pounds gutted weight, Season 2 trip limit equals 300 pounds gutted weight.

Sub-alternative 2b. Season 1 trip limit equals 150 pounds gutted weight, Season 2 trip limit equals 300 pounds gutted weight.

Preferred Alternative 3. Retain the January 1 through December 31 commercial fishing year for blueline tilefish in the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone. Modify the commercial trip limit for blueline tilefish:

Preferred Sub-alternative 3a. 100 pounds gutted weight from January 1 through April 30 and 300 pounds gutted weight from May 1 through December 31.

Sub-alternative 3b. 150 pounds gutted weight from January 1 through April 30 and 300 pounds gutted weight from May 1 through December 31.

Sub-alternative 3c. 100 pounds gutted weight from January 1 through June 30 and 300 pounds gutted weight from July 1 through December 31.

Discussion:

- According to fishermen, blueline tilefish and snowy grouper are commonly caught together. This is supported in trip co-occurrence analyses in **Table D-1** of **Appendix D** (in draft document, **Attachment 4b**) that show a high percentage of snowy grouper caught on trips where at least one pound of blueline tilefish was landed.
- It is expected that reduced trip limits for blueline tilefish in the earlier part of the year as proposed under **Alternatives 2** and **Preferred Alternative 3** (and their respective sub-alternatives) would help reduce snowy grouper discards by allowing retention of blueline tilefish as incidental catch in the northern range of the South Atlantic Council's area of jurisdiction.
- Data obtained through the Commercial Discard Logbook, however, show low numbers of snowy grouper discards relative to landings (**Table D-2** in **Appendix B** of draft amendment). Available data on discards preclude any quantitative analyses of the effect of proposed alternatives under this action on the level of snowy grouper discards.
- **Table 1** presents projected closures for blueline tilefish based on the SSC-recommended model ("Last 3").

- **Sub-alternative 2b** is expected to generate the greatest net economic benefits, while **Alternative 1 (No Action)** is expected to generate the least net economic benefits to the Nation among the alternatives considered. **Preferred Sub-alternative 3a** only ranks 5th of the six alternatives being considered in terms of net economic benefits (**Table 2**).

Table 1. Projected mean, and 95% lower and upper (L95, U95) confidence limits, closure dates for commercial harvest of blueline tilefish under different alternatives proposed for **Action 1**. Preferred alternative indicated in bold.

Alternative	Season	L95	MEAN	U95
1: No Action	N/A	No closure	7-Jul	22-Apr
2a: 40% of ACL; 100 pounds	1		12-Jun	28-Mar
60% of ACL; 300 pounds	2		11-Aug	27-Jul
2b: 40% of ACL; 150 pounds	1		14-May	20-Mar
60% of ACL; 300 pounds	2		11-Aug	27-Jul
3a: 100 pounds Jan-Apr; 300 pounds May-Dec	N/A		**30-Jul**	16-Jun
3b: 150 pounds Jan-Apr; 300 pounds May-Dec	N/A		24-Jul	4-Jun
3c: 100 pounds Jan-Jun; 300 pounds July-Dec	N/A		8-Aug	6-Jul

Source: SERO

Table 2. Expected annual gross revenue for blueline tilefish, expected changes in gross revenue (net economic benefits) and economic rank by alternative for **Action 1**. Preferred alterantive indicated in bold.

Alternative	Expected Annual Gross Revenue (2016$)	Expected Change in Annual Gross Revenue (2016$)	Expected Change in Gross Revenue per Vessel (2016$)	Economic Rank (net economic benefits)
Alt. 1 (No Action)	$211,194	$0	$0	6
Sub-alt. 2a	$217,957	$6,059	$45	2
Sub-alt. 2b	$217,993	$6,061	$45	1
Pref. Sub-alt. 3a	**$214,079**	**$1,714**	**$13**	**5**
Sub-alt. 3b	$214,684	$3,150	$24	4
Sub-alt. 3c	$217,580	$5,824	$43	3

Action 2. Establish a commercial split season for snowy grouper

Alternative 1 (No Action). The commercial fishing year for snowy grouper in the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone is from January 1 to December 31.

Alternative 2. Specify two commercial fishing seasons for snowy grouper. Allocate the snowy grouper commercial annual catch limit into two quotas: 60% to the period January 1 through June 30 (Season 1) and 40% to the period July 1 through December 31 (Season 2). Any remaining quota from Season 1 would transfer to Season 2. Any remaining quota from Season 2 would not be carried forward.

Preferred Alternative 3. Specify two commercial fishing seasons for snowy grouper. Allocate the snowy grouper commercial annual catch limit into two quotas: 70% to the period January 1 through June 30 (Season 1) and 30% to the period July 1 through December 31 (Season 2). Any remaining quota from Season 1 would transfer to Season 2. Any remaining quota from Season 2 would not be carried forward.

Discussion:

- **Table 3** presents projected closures for snowy grouper based on the SSC-recommended model ("Last 3").
- The primary effect of **Alternative 2** is to redistribute landings from June to September compared to **Alternative 1 (No Action)** and **Preferred Alternative 3** (**Table 4**).
- The expected change in annual gross revenue approximates the change in net economic benefits for the alternatives under **Action 2**.
- **Alternative 2** is expected to generate net economic benefits of about $1,038 relative to **Alternative 1 (No Action)** and **Preferred Alternative 3.** There are no net economic benefits under **Preferred Alternative 3** relative to **Alternative 1 (No Action) (Table 5)**.
- Because projected monthly and annual landings are the same under **Alternative 1 (No Action)** and **Preferred Alternative 3**, **Preferred Alternative 3** is not expected to generate additional gross revenue and thus net economic benefits relative to **Alternative 1 (No Action)**.

Table 3. Projected mean, and 95% lower and upper (L95, U95) confidence limits, closure dates for commercial harvest of snowy grouper under different alternatives proposed for **Action 2**. Preferred alternative indicated in bold. Nc= No closure.

Alternative	Season	L95	MEAN	U95
1. (No Action)	N/A	No closure	21-Sep	1-Jul
2. 60% of ACL	1		21-Jun	8-May
40% of ACL	2		26-Sep	26-Sep
3. 70% of ACL	**1**		**Nc**	**21-May**
30% of ACL	**2**		**21-Sep**	**14-Sep**

Source: SERO

Table 4. Projected monthly and annual landings (lbs ww), monthly ex-vessel price, and expected gross revenue of snowy grouper by alternative for **Action 2**. Preferred indicated in bold.

Month	Alt 1 (No Action) Landings	Alt 2 Landings	Pref. Alt 3 Landings	Price	Alt 1 Gross Revenue	Alt 2 Gross Revenue	Pref. Alt 3 Gross Revenue
Jan	15,722	15,722	**15,722**	$4.27	$67,198	$67,198	**$67,198**
Feb	15,055	15,055	**15,055**	$4.32	$64,978	$64,978	**$64,978**
Mar	23,016	23,016	**23,016**	$4.41	$101,516	$101,516	**$101,516**
Apr	19,866	19,866	**19,866**	$4.35	$86,381	$86,381	**$86,381**
May	28,601	28,601	**28,601**	$4.16	$119,118	$119,118	**$119,118**
Jun	26,477	18,535	**26,477**	$4.06	$107,376	$75,165	**$107,376**
Jul	22,998	22,998	**22,998**	$3.90	$89,659	$89,659	**$89,659**
Aug	16,773	16,773	**16,773**	$3.94	$66,076	$66,076	**$66,076**
Sep	33,769	41,809	**33,769**	$4.14	$139,648	$172,897	**$139,648**
Oct	0	0	**0**	$3.68	$0	$0	**$0**
Nov	0	0	**0**	$4.14	$0	$0	**$0**
Dec	0	0	**0**	$3.91	$0	$0	**$0**
TOTAL	202,277	202,374	**202,277**		$841,950	$842,988	**$841,950**

Source: Landings estimates are from N. Farmer, pers. comm., 7/6/2018. Price data are from https://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/commercial-fisheries/commercial-landings/monthly-landings/index, accessed 7/5/2018.

Table 5. Expected annual gross revenue for snowy grouper, expected change in gross revenue (net economic benefits), and economic rank by alternative for **Action 2**. T=tie

Alternative	Expected Annual Gross Revenue (2016$)	Expected Change in Annual Gross Revenue (2016$)	Expected Change in Gross Revenue per Vessel (2016$)	Economic Rank
Alt 1 (No Action)	$841,950	0	0	2T
Alt 2	$842,988	$1,038	$7	1
Pref. Alt 3	**$841,950**	**0**	**0**	**2T**

Action 3. Establish a commercial split season and modify the commercial trip limit for greater amberjack

Action Alternatives:

Alternative 1 (No Action). The commercial fishing year for greater amberjack in the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone is from March 1 to the end of February. During April each year, no person may sell or purchase greater amberjack harvested from the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone, and the harvest and possession limit is one per person per day or one per person per trip, whichever is more restrictive. The commercial trip limit in March and from May through the end of February each fishing year is 1,200 pounds whole weight.

~~**Preferred**~~ **Alternative 2.** Specify two commercial fishing seasons for greater amberjack. Allocate the commercial annual catch limit for greater amberjack into two quotas: 50% to the period March 1 through August 31 (Season 1) and 50% to the period September 1 through the end of February (Season 2). Any remaining quota from Season 1 would transfer to Season 2. Any remaining quota from Season 2 would not be carried forward. During April each year, no person may sell or purchase a greater amberjack harvested from the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone and the harvest and possession limit is one per person per day or one per person per trip, whichever is more restrictive.

Sub-alternative 2a. Season 1 trip limit equals 1,200 pounds whole weight, Season 2 trip limit equals 1,000 pounds whole weight.

Sub-alternative 2b. Season 1 trip limit equals 1,000 pounds whole weight, Season 2 trip limit equals 800 pounds whole weight.

~~**Preferred**~~ **Sub-alternative 2c.** Trip limit equals 1,000 pounds whole weight in both seasons.

Sub-alternative 2d. Trip limit equals 1,000 pounds whole weight in both seasons. A trip limit reduction to 500 pounds whole weight would occur in each season once 75% of the seasonal quota is met or projected to be met. A trip limit reduction would not occur in Season 2 unless 75% of the Season 2 quota is met or is projected to be met by January 31.

Preferred Alternative 3. Specify two commercial fishing seasons for greater amberjack. Allocate the commercial annual catch limit for greater amberjack into two quotas: 60% to the period March 1 through August 31 (Season 1) and 40% to the period September 1 through the end of February (Season 2) .Any remaining quota from Season 1 would transfer to Season 2. Any remaining quota from Season 2 would not be carried forward. During April each year, no person may sell or purchase a greater amberjack harvested from the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone and the harvest and possession limit is one per person per day or one per person per trip, whichever is more restrictive.

Preferred Sub-alternative 3a. Season 1 trip limit equals 1,200 pounds whole weight, Season 2 trip limit equals 1,000 pounds whole weight.

Sub-alternative 3b. Season 1 trip limit equals 1,000 pounds whole weight, Season 2 trip limit equals 800 pounds whole weight.

Sub-alternative 3c. Trip limit equals 1,000 pounds whole weight in both seasons.

Alternative 4. Retain the March through February fishing year. During April each year, no person may sell or purchase a greater amberjack harvested from the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone and the harvest and possession limit is one per person per day or one per person per trip, whichever is more restrictive. Reduce the greater amberjack commercial trip limit to:

Sub-alternative 4a. 1,000 pounds whole weight.

Sub-alternative 4b. 800 pounds whole weight.

Discussion:

- **Table 6** shows predicted closures for greater amberjack for alternatives and sub-alternatives) based on the SSC-recommended model ("Last 3").
- **Table 7** shows predicted closures for greater amberjack for **Preferred Alternative 3** and **Alternative 4** (and respective sub-alternatives) based on the SSC-recommended model ("Last 3").
- Commercial landings of greater amberjack are projected to be highest under **Alternative 1 (No Action)** (possibly exceeding the current ACL of 769,388 lbs gw) followed by **Sub-alternatives 4b, 4a, 3c,** and **Preferred Sub-alternative 3a**. Projected annual landings are significantly lower under **Sub-alternatives 3b**, **2a**, **2c**, and **2b** (**Table 8**).
- **Sub-alternative 4a** is expected to generate the greatest net economic benefits, followed by **Alternative 1 (No Action)**, **Sub-alternative 4b**, **Preferred Sub-alternative 3a**, **Sub-alternative 3c**, **Sub-alternative 2a**, **Sub-alternative 3b**, **Sub-alternative 2c**, **Sub-alternative 2d**, with **Sub-alternative 2b** expected to generate the least net economic benefits (**Table 9**).

Table 6. Projected mean, and 95% lower and upper (L95, U95) confidence limits, closure dates for commercial harvest of greater amberjack under **Preferred Alternative 2**. Nc=no predicted closure. Preferred sub-alternative indicated in bold.

Alternative	Season	L95	MEAN	U95
1: No Action	N/A	Nc	8-Nov	30-Sep
Alt 2: Commercial ACL split 50% Season 1 and 50% Season 2				
2a: 1,200 lbs	1	8-Jul	10-Jun	28-May
1,000 lbs	2	Nc	Nc	Nc
2b: 1,000 lbs	1	27-Jul	21-Jun	4-Jun
800 lbs	2	Nc	Nc	Nc
2c: 1,000 lbs	1	27-Jul	21-Jun	4-Jun
1,000 lbs	**2**	Nc	Nc	Nc
2d: 1,000 lbs to 500 lbs once 75% of quota met	1	10-Aug	5-Jul	16-Jun
1,000 lbs to 500 lbs unless 75% of quota met by 1/31	2	Nc	Nc	Nc

Source: SERO

Table 7. Projected mean and 95% lower and upper (L95, U95) confidence limits closure dates for greater amberjack for Alternatives 3 and 4 under Action 3. Nc = no closure. Preferred indicaed in bold.

Alternative	Season	L95	MEAN	U95
Alt 3: Commercial ACL split 60% Season 1 and 40% Season 2				
3a: 1,200 lbs	**1**	**8-Jul**	**10-Jun**	**28-May**
1,000 lbs	**2**	**Nc**	**Nc**	**13-Jan**
3b: 1,000 lbs	1	27-Jul	21-Jun	4-Jun
800 lbs	2	Nc	Nc	Nc
3c: 1,000 lbs	1	27-Jul	21-Jun	4-Jun
1,000 lbs	2	Nc	Nc	12-Jan
Alt 4: No commercial split season				
4a: 1,000 lbs	N/A	Nc	26-Dec	14-Oct
4b: 800 lbs	N/A	Nc	27-Feb	5-Nov

Source: SERO

Table 8. Projected monthly and annual landings (lbs ww) of greater amberjack by alternative for **Action 3**.

Month	Alt 1 (No Action)	Sub-alt 2a	Sub-alt 2b	Sub-alt 2c	Sub-alt 2d	Pref. Sub-alt 3a	Sub-alt 3b	Sub-alt 3c	Sub-alt 4a	Sub-alt 4b
Mar	142,576	142,576	130,220	130,220	130,220	**142,576**	130,220	130,220	130,220	115,154
Apr	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0
May	211,499	211,499	191,618	191,618	181,373	**211,499**	191,618	191,618	191,618	171,032
Jun	95,334	31,778	62,863	62,863	66,289	**95,334**	89,804	89,804	89,804	82,940
Jul	66,808	0	0	0	7,870	**12,931**	12,327	51,363	63,690	59,526
Aug	80,227	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	76,269	69,744
Sep	75,463	70,860	65,401	70,860	70,860	**70,860**	65,401	70,860	70,860	65,401
Oct	89,238	84,181	77,042	84,181	84,181	**84,181**	77,042	84,181	84,181	77,042
Nov	8,977	30,006	26,932	30,006	30,006	**30,006**	26,932	30,006	30,006	26,932
Dec	0	39,218	34,958	39,218	39,218	**39,218**	34,958	39,218	32,892	34,958
Jan	0	38,463	36,004	38,463	38,463	**38,463**	36,004	38,463	0	36,004
Feb	0	34,809	32,220	34,809	34,809	**34,809**	32,220	34,809	0	31,069
TOTAL	770,121	683,389	657,258	682,237	683,287	**759,876**	696,526	760,541	769,540	769,802

Source: N. Farmer, pers. comm., 2/8/2018

Table 9. Expected annual gross revenue for greater amberjack, expected changes in gross revenue, private costs, and net economic benefits, and economic rank by alternative for **Action 3**. T=tie.

Alternative	Expected Annual Gross Revenue (2016$)	Expected Change in Annual Gross Revenue (2016$)	Expected Increase in Private Costs (Rank)	Economic Rank (net economic benefits)
Alt 1 (No Action)	$1,125,026	$0	1	2
Sub-alt 2a	$1,013,660	-$111,366	2T	6
Sub-alt 2b	$969,484	-$155,542	7T	10
Sub-alt 2c	$1,007,773	-$117,253	5T	8
Sub-alt 2d	$1,008,542	-$116,484	10*	9
Pref. Sub-alt 3a	**$1,116,196**	**-$8,830**	**2T**	**4**
Sub-alt 3b	$1,022,462	-$102,564	7T	7
Sub-alt 3c	$1,114,991	-$10,035	5T	5
Sub-alt 4a	$1,134,709	$9,683	4	1
Sub-alt 4b	$1,128,138	$3,112	9	3

*Sub-alternative 2d is also expected to significantly increase public costs.

Committee Action:

MOTION: CHANGE PREFERRED TO ALT 3/SUB-ALT 3A UNDER ACTION 3

Alternative 3. Specify two commercial fishing seasons for greater amberjack. Allocate the commercial annual catch limit for greater amberjack into two quotas: 60% to the period March 1 through August 31 (Season 1) and 40% to the period September 1 through the end of February (Season 2). Any remaining quota from Season 1 would transfer to Season 2. Any remaining quota from Season 2 would not be carried forward. During April each year, no person may sell or purchase a greater amberjack harvested from the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone and the harvest and possession limit is one per person per day or one per person per trip, whichever is more restrictive.

Sub-alternative 3a. Season 1 trip limit equals 1,200 pounds whole weight, Season 2 trip limit equals 1,000 pounds whole weight.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Action 4. Establish a commercial split season and modify the commercial trip limit for red porgy

Alternative 1 (No Action). The commercial fishing year for red porgy in the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone is from January 1 to December 31. During January 1 through April 30 each year, no person may sell or purchase red porgy harvested from the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone, and the harvest and possession limit is three per person per day or three per person per trip, whichever is more restrictive. From May 1 through December 31 each year, the commercial trip limit for red porgy is 120 fish.

Preferred Alternative 2. Specify two commercial fishing seasons for red porgy. Allocate the commercial red porgy annual catch limit into two quotas: 30% to the period January 1 through April 30 (Season 1) and 70% to the period May 1 through December 31 (Season 2). Any remaining quota from Season 1 would transfer to Season 2. Any remaining quota from Season 2 would not be carried forward. Remove the sale and purchase prohibition and the possession limit of three per person per day or three per person per trip, whichever is more restrictive, during January 1 to April 30 each year. Retain the commercial trip limit of 120 fish from May 1 through December 31 and specify a commercial trip limit from January 1 through April 30 of:

Sub-alternative 2a. 30 fish.
Sub-alternative 2b. 45 fish.
Preferred Sub-alternative 2c. 60 fish.

Alternative 3. Specify two commercial fishing seasons for red porgy. Allocate the commercial red porgy ACL into two quotas: 50% to the period January 1 through April 30 (Season 1) and 50% to the period May 1 through December 31 (Season 2). Any remaining quota from Season 1 would transfer to Season 2. Any remaining quota from Season 2 would not be carried forward. Remove the sale and purchase prohibition during January 1 to April 30 each year and the possession limit of three per person per day or three per person per trip, whichever is more restrictive. Retain the commercial trip limit of 120 fish from May 1 through December 31 and specify a commercial trip limit from January 1 through April 30 of:

Sub-alternative 3a. 30 fish.
Sub-alternative 3b. 45 fish.
Sub-alternative 3c. 60 fish.

Alternative 4. Remove the sale and purchase prohibition and the possession limit of three per person per day or three per person per trip, whichever is more restrictive, for red porgy from the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone during January 1 to April 30 each year. Specify a commercial trip limit of 120 fish from January 1 through December 31.

Discussion:

- **Table 10** shows predicted red porgy closures based on the SSC-recommended model (Seasonal Auto Regressive Integrated Moving Average (SARIMA)).
- Expected landings (and annual gross revenue) are greatest under **Alternative 4**, followed by **Preferred Sub-alternative 2c** and **Sub-alternative 3c**, **Sub-alternatives 2b** and **3b**,

and **Sub-alternatives 2a** and **3a**, with expected landings and gross revenue being considerably lower under **Alternative 1 (No Action) (Table 11)**.

- **Sub-alternative 4a** is expected to generate the greatest net economic benefits, followed by **Preferred Sub-alternative 2c** and **Sub-alternative 3c**, **Sub-alternatives 2b** and **3b**, and **Sub-alternatives 2a** and **3a**, with expected net economic benefits being the least under **Alternative 1 (No Action)** (**Table 12**).

Table 10. Projected mean, and 95% lower and upper (L95, U95) confidence limits, closure dates for red porgy under different alternatives proposed for **Action 4**. NC=no closure. Preferred alternative indicated in bold. Nc=No closure.

Alternative	Season	L95	MEAN	U95
1 (No Action)	Jan-Dec	Nc	Nc	23-Jul
Alt 2: Commercial ACL split 30% Jan-Apr and 70% May-Dec				
2a: 30 fish/120 fish	Jan-Apr	**No closure**	**No closure**	8-Mar
	May-Dec			2-Jul
2b: 45 fish/120 fish	Jan-Apr			20-Feb
	May-Dec			2-Jul
2c: 60 fish/120 fish	Jan-Apr			**13-Feb**
	May-Dec			**2-Jul**
Alt 3: Commercial ACL split 50% Jan-Apr and 50% May-Dec				
3a: 30 fish/120 fish	Jan-Apr	No closure	No closure	24-Apr
	May-Dec			15-Jun
3b: 45 fish/120 fish	Jan-Apr			28-Mar
	May-Dec			15-Jun
3c: 60 fish/120 fish	Jan-Apr			13-Mar
	May-Dec			15-Jun
Alt 4: No split seasons				
4: 120 fish year-round	Jan-Dec	Nc	Nc	18-Apr

Source: SERO

Table 11. Projected monthly and annual landings (lbs ww) of red porgy by alternative for **Action 4**. Preferred sub-alternative indicated in bold.

Month	Alt 1 (No Action)	Sub-alt 2a	Sub-alt 2b	Pref. Sub-alt 2c	Sub-alt 3a	Sub-alt 3b	Sub-alt 3c	Alt 4
Jan	0	5,080	6,686	**7,925**	5,080	6,686	7,925	10,680
Feb	0	6,291	8,279	**9,814**	6,291	8,279	9,814	13,226
Mar	0	2,348	3,091	**3,663**	2,348	3,091	3,663	4,937
Apr	0	3,284	4,322	**5,122**	3,284	4,322	5,122	6,904
May	13,444	13,444	13,444	**13,444**	13,444	13,444	13,444	13,444
Jun	11,203	11,203	11,203	**11,203**	11,203	11,203	11,203	11,203
Jul	26,702	26,702	26,702	**26,702**	26,702	26,702	26,702	26,702
Aug	22,429	22,429	22,429	**22,429**	22,429	22,429	22,429	22,429
Sep	15,484	15,484	15,484	**15,484**	15,484	15,484	15,484	15,484
Oct	5,249	5,249	5,249	**5,249**	5,249	5,249	5,249	5,249
Nov	4,291	4,291	4,291	**4,291**	4,291	4,291	4,291	4,291
Dec	3,369	3,369	3,369	**3,369**	3,369	3,369	3,369	3,369
TOTAL	102,170	119,173	124,547	**128,693**	119,173	124,547	128,693	137,916

Table 12. Expected annual gross revenue for red porgy, expected changes in gross revenue and economic rank by alternative for Action 4. Preferred sub-alternative indicated in bold. T=tie.

Alternative	Expected Annual Gross Revenue (2016$)	Expected Change in Annual Gross Revenue (2016$)	Economic Rank (net economic benefits)
1 (No Action)	$206,490	$0	8
Sub-alt 2a	$240,837	$34,347	5T
Sub-alt 2b	$251,692	$45,202	4T
Pref. Sub-alt 2c	**$260,068**	**$53,578**	**2T**
Sub-alt 3a	$240,837	$34,347	5T
Sub-alt 3b	$251,692	$45,202	4T
Sub-alt 3c	$260,068	$53,578	2T
Alt 4	$278,698	$72,208	1

Action 5. Modify the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper

Alternative 1 (No Action). The commercial fishing year for vermilion snapper in the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone is from January 1 to December 31. The commercial annual catch limit is split into two quotas: 50% to the period January 1 through June 30 (Season 1) and 50% to the period July 1 through December 31 (Season 2). Any remaining quota from Season 1 transfers to Season 2. Any remaining quota from Season 2 is not carried forward. The commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper in the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone is 1,000 pounds gutted weight.
For both seasons, when 75% of the vermilion snapper seasonal quota is met or is projected to be met, the trip limit is reduced to 500 pounds gutted weight.

~~**Preferred**~~ **Alternative 2.** Retain the commercial fishing year for vermilion snapper in the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone from January 1 to December 31; and the 50% split quotas of the commercial ACL between the two seasons. Retain the commercial trip limit and trip limit reduction in Season 1 (January 1 through June 30). For Season 2 (July 1 through December 31), modify the commercial trip limit to 750 pounds gutted weight and remove the trip limit reduction. Any remaining quota from Season 1 transfers to Season 2. Any remaining quota from Season 2 is not carried forward.

Alternative 3. Retain the commercial fishing year for vermilion snapper in the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone from January 1 to December 31; and the 50% split quotas of the commercial ACL between the two seasons. Retain the commercial trip limit and trip limit reduction in Season 1 (January 1 through June 30). For Season 2 (July 1 through December 31), modify the commercial trip limit to 500 pounds gutted weight and remove the trip limit reduction. Any remaining quota from Season 1 transfers to Season 2. Any remaining quota from Season 2 is not carried forward.

Preferred Alternative 4. Retain the commercial fishing year for vermilion snapper in the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone from January 1 to December 31; and the 50% split quotas of the commercial ACL between the two seasons. Modify the commercial trip limit for both seasons and remove trip-limit reductions:

Preferred Sub-alternative 4a. 1,000 pounds gutted weight
Sub-alternative 4b. 850 pounds gutted weight
Sub-alternative 4c. 700 pounds gutted weight

Discussion:

Note: Analyses do not take into account changes to fishing levels based on lates assessment. It is expected that the annual catch limit will increase.

- **Table 13** shows predicted dates for trip limit reduction (step-down) and closure dates for vermilion snapper during ***Season 1*** based on the SSC-recommended model (SARIMA). In-season closures would still occur under all proposed alternatives during Season 1.
- **Table 14** shows predicted dates for trip limit reduction and closure dates for vermilion snapper during ***Season 2*** based on the SSC-recommended model (SARIMA).

- There are differences in the projected annual landings across alternatives, though the differences are relatively minor.
- **Preferred Sub-alternative 4a** is expected to generate the greatest net economic benefits, followed by **Sub-alternative 4b, Alternative 1 (No Action), Alternative 2,** and **Sub-alternative 4c**, while **Alternative 3** is expected to generate the least net economic benefits (**Table 15**).
- The change in net economic benefits under **Alternative 2** is expected to be slightly negative because gross revenue is expected to decrease slightly and harvesting costs are expected to increase slightly, even though costs to the government are expected to decrease to some degree. Of the action alternatives, **Preferred Sub-alternative 4a** and **Sub-alternative 4b** are the only ones expected to generate positive net economic benefits **(Table 15)**.

Table 13. Projected mean, and 95% lower and upper (L95, U95) confidence limits, closure dates for commercial harvest of vermilion snapper during ***Season 1*** for alternatives under **Action 5**. Preferred alternative indicated in bold. Nc = no closure.

Alternative	L95	Mean	U95
Trip Limit Reduced			
1: 1,000 pounds with reduction	27-May	27-Feb	6-Feb
2: 1,000 pounds with reduction	27-May	27-Feb	6-Feb
3: 1,000 pounds with reduction	27-May	27-Feb	6-Feb
Fishery Closed			
1: 1,000 pounds with reduction	Nc	29-Apr	26-Feb
2: 1,000 pounds with reduction	Nc	29-Apr	26-Feb
3: 1,000 pounds with reduction	Nc	29-Apr	26-Feb
4a: 1,000 pounds, no reduction	**23-Jun**	**14-Apr**	**19-Feb**
4b: 850 pounds, no reduction	Nc	27-Apr	24-Feb
4c: 700 pounds, no reduction	Nc	6-May	7-Mar

Table 14. Projected mean, and 95% lower and upper (L95, U95) confidence limits, closure dates for commercial harvest of vermilion snapper during ***Season 2*** for alternatives under **Action 5**. Preferred alternative indicated in bold. Nc = no closure.

Alternative	L95	Mean	U95
Trip Limit Reduced			
1: 1,000 pounds with reduction	4-Oct	22-Aug	4-Aug
1: 1,000 pounds with reduction	Nc	16-Sep	23-Aug
Fishery Closed			
2: 750 pounds, no reduction	Nc	19-Sep	25-Aug
3: 500 pounds, no reduction	Nc	12-Oct	11-Sep
4a: 1,000 pounds, no reduction	**14-Nov**	**7-Sep**	**16-Aug**
4b: 850 pounds, no reduction	28-Dec	13-Sep	20-Aug
4c: 700 pounds, no reduction	Nc	22-Sep	27-Aug

Table 15. Expected annual gross revenue for vermilion snapper, expected changes in gross revenue, private costs, and public costs, and economic rank by alternative for **Action 5**. Preferred alternative indicated in bold. T=tie.

Alternative	Expected Annual Gross Revenue (2016$)	Expected Change in Annual Gross Revenue (2016$)	Expected Change Private Costs (Rank)	Expected Change in Public Costs (Rank)	Economic Rank (net economic benefits)
Alt 1 (No Action)	$2,986,002	$0	2	6	3
Alt 2	$2,984,256	-$1,746	3	4T	4
Alt 3	$2,967,100	-$18,902	5	4T	6
Pref. Sub-alt 4a	**$2,977,311**	**-$8,691**	**1**	**1T**	**1**
Sub-alt 4b	$2,978,283	-$7,719	4	1T	2
Sub-alt 4c	$2,933,877	-$52,125	6	1T	5

Committee Action:

MOTION: CHANGE PREFERRED UNDER ACTION 5 TO ALTERNATIVE 4/SUB-ALTERNATIVE 4A

Alternative 4. Retain the commercial fishing year for vermilion snapper in the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone from January 1 to December 31; and the 50% split quotas of the commercial ACL between the two seasons. Modify the commercial trip limit for both seasons and remove trip-limit reductions:

Sub-alternative 4a. 1,000 pounds gutted weight

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

THE COUNCIL ALSO REQUESTED CLARIFYING LANGUAGE IN THE ALTERNATIVES TO INDICATE THAT UNCAUGHT QUOTA CAN ROLL OVER FROM SEASON 1 TO SEASON 2, AS IS CURRENTLY THE CASE.

Action 6. Establish a minimum size limit for almaco jack for the commercial sector

Alternative 1 (No Action). There is no commercial minimum size limit specified for almaco jack.

Alternative 2. Establish a minimum size limit for almaco jack for the commercial sector:

Preferred Sub-alternative 2a. 20 inches fork length
Sub-alternative 2b. 22 inches fork length
Sub-alternative 2c. 24 inches fork length
Sub-alternative 2d. 26 inches fork length

Discussion:

- Under current conditions, using data from 2014 through 2016, 88.5% of almaco jack landed commercially (by weight) in the South Atlantic are above 20 inches and 66% of the catch is above 26 inches.
- **Table 16** shows the estimated closure dates and 95% confidence intervals (CI) for **Alternatives 1 (No Action)** and **Preferred Alternative 2**.
- **Alternative 1 (No Action)** is expected to generate the greatest net economic benefits, followed by **Preferred Sub-alternative 2a**, **Sub-alternative 2c**, **Sub-alternative 2b**, with **Sub-alternative 2d** expected to generate the least net economic benefits. Moreover, because all of the other alternatives are expected to result in lower annual gross revenue and higher private costs relative to **Alternative 1 (No Action)**, the changes in net economic benefits are expected to be negative under these other alternatives (**Table 17**).

Table 16. Estimated closure dates for the Other Jacks Complex and estimated total landings with 95% confidence interval (CI) based on proposed almaco jack minimum sizes limit alternatives. Preferred indicated in bold.

Alt Num	Alternatives	Lower 95%	Closure Date	Upper 95%
1	No Size Limit	No Closure	7/2	6/2
2a	**20 in**	**No Closure**	**7/14**	**6/9**
2b	22 in	No Closure	7/26	6/13
2c	24 in	No Closure	8/18	6/19
2d	26 in	No Closure	9/23	6/27

Source: SAFMC

Table 17. Expected annual gross revenue for Other Jacks, expected changes in gross revenue and private costs, and economic rank by alternative for **Action 6**. Preferred sub-alternative indicated in bold.

Alternative	Expected Annual Gross Revenue (2016$)	Expected Change in Annual Gross Revenue (2016$)	Expected Increase in Private Costs (Rank)	Economic Rank (net economic benefits)
1 (No Action)	$207,932	$0	1	1
Pref. Sub-alt 2a	**$207,195**	**-$737**	**2**	**2**
Sub-alt 2b	$205,884	-$2,049	3	4
Sub-alt 2c	$206,259	-$1,674	4	3
Sub-alt 2d	$205,743	-$2,189	5	5

Action 7. Establish a commercial trip limit for the Other Jacks Complex

Alternative 1 (No Action). There is no commercial trip limit for the Other Jacks Complex (lesser amberjack, almaco jack, and banded rudderfish).

Preferred Alternative 2. Establish a commercial trip limit for the Other Jacks Complex:

Preferred Sub-alternative 2a. 500 pounds gutted weight.
Sub-alternative 2b. 400 pounds gutted weight.
Sub-alternative 2c. 300 pounds gutted weight.

Discussion:

- **Table 18** shows predicted closure dates for Other jacks Complex under the trip limit alternatives considered in **Action 7**.
- **Alternative 1 (No Action)** is expected to generate the greatest net economic benefits, followed by **Preferred Sub-alternative 2a**, **Sub-alternative 2b**, with **Sub-alternative 2c** expected to generate the least net economic benefits. Moreover, because all of the other alternatives are expected to result in lower annual gross revenue and higher private costs relative to **Alternative 1 (No Action)**, the changes in net economic benefits are expected to be negative under these other alternatives (**Table 19**).

Table 18. Estimated closure dates for each trip limit sub-alternative under **Preferred Alternative 2** analyzed in combination with minimum size limits proposed under Action 6. Preferred alternatives indicated in bold.

Trip Limit Alt (Action 7)	Size Limit Alt (Action 6)	Lower 95%	Closure Dates	Upper 95%	Est. Landings (gw)
2a (500 lbs)	1 (No size limit)	No Closure	16-Aug	6/9	182,138
	2a (20 inches)	**No Closure**	**14-Sep**	**6/10**	**182,138**
	2b (22 inches)	No Closure	3-Oct	6/11	182,138
	2c (24 inches)	No Closure	4-Nov	6/15	182,138
	2d (26 inches)	No Closure	17-Dec	6/27	182,138
2b (400 lbs)	1 (No size limit)	No Closure	9-Sep	6/16	182,138
	2a (20 inches)	No Closure	11-Oct	6/17	182,138
	2b (22 inches)	No Closure	1-Nov	6/17	182,138
	2c (24 inches)	No Closure	6-Dec	6/22	182,138
	2d (26 inches)	No Closure	No Closure	6/29	178,291
2c (300 lbs)	1 (No size limit)	No Closure	28-Oct	6/27	182,138
	2a (20 inches)	No Closure	2-Dec	6/28	182,138
	2b (22 inches)	No Closure	20-Dec	6/29	182,138
	2c (24 inches)	No Closure	No Closure	7/4	176,195
	2d (26 inches)	No Closure	No Closure	7/12	164,759

Source: SAFMC

Table 19. Expected annual gross revenue for other jacks, expected changes in gross revenue, and private costs, and economic rank by alternative for **Action 7**. Preferred alternatives indicated in bold. T=tie.

Action 6 Alternative	Action 7 Alternative	Expected Annual Gross Revenue (2016$)	Expected Change in Annual Gross Revenue (2016$)	Expected Increase in Private Costs (Rank)	Economic Rank (net economic benefits)
Alt 1 (No action)	Alt 1 (No action)	$207,932	$0	1	1
Sub-alt 2a	Alt 1 (No action)	$207,195	-$737	2	2
Sub-alt 2b	Alt 1 (No action)	$205,884	-$2,049	3	4
Sub-alt 2c	Alt 1 (No action)	$206,259	-$1,674	4	3
Sub-alt 2d	Alt 1 (No action)	$205,743	-$2,189	5	5
Alt 1 (No action)	Sub-alt 2a	$202,180	-$5,752	6T	6
Sub-alt 2a	**Sub-alt 2a**	**$202,090**	**-$5,843**	**6T**	**7**
Sub-alt 2b	Sub-alt 2a	$201,700	-$6,233	6T	8
Sub-alt 2c	Sub-alt 2a	$201,083	-$6,849	6T	9
Sub-alt 2d	Sub-alt 2a	$201,041	-$6,892	6T	10
Alt 1 (No action)	Sub-alt 2b	$200,823	-$7,109	11T	11
Sub-alt 2a	Sub-alt 2b	$200,741	-$7,191	11T	12
Sub-alt 2b	Sub-alt 2b	$200,597	-$7,335	11T	14
Sub-alt 2c	Sub-alt 2b	$200,665	-$7,268	11T	13
Sub-alt 2d	Sub-alt 2b	$195,985	-$11,947	11T	17
Alt 1 (No action)	Sub-alt 2c	$200,107	-$7,825	15T	16
Sub-alt 2a	Sub-alt 2c	$199,607	-$8,326	15T	18
Sub-alt 2b	Sub-alt 2c	$200,123	-$7,810	15T	15
Sub-alt 2c	Sub-alt 2c	$192,928	-$15,004	15T	19
Sub-alt 2d	Sub-alt 2c	$180,639	-$27,293	15T	20

Action 8. Remove the commercial minimum size limit for certain deep-water species

Alternative 1 (No Action). The commercial minimum size limit for queen snapper, silk snapper, and blackfin snapper in the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone is 12 inches total length.

Preferred Alternative 2. Remove the 12-inch total length commercial minimum size limit for queen snapper, silk snapper, and blackfin snapper in the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone.

Discussion:

- Available data suggest minimal changes in discard or harvest rates would be expected under **Preferred Alternative 2**.
- Any potential changes in ex-vessel revenue relative to **Alternative 1 (No Action)** would also be expected to be minimal. If in fact harvest rates increase noticeably as a result of **Preferred Alternative 2**, it could result in an overall increase in aggregate annual ex-vessel revenue relative to the status quo. Such an increase would be constrained, however, by the ACL for the Deep-Water Complex.
- As commercial fishing vessels have only harvested about 43% of the commercial ACL the last two years (after blueline tilefish was removed from the deep-water complex), landings could increase significantly without any concern of exceeding the commercial ACL.
- With the elimination of the minimum size limit, vessels would be able to increase their landings of these species per unit of effort. Thus, the costs of harvesting these species would also be expected to decrease on a per pound basis. So, net economic benefits under **Preferred Alternative 2** would be expected to be higher than under **Alternative 1 (No Action).**

Action 9. Reduce the commercial minimum size limit for gray triggerfish in the exclusive economic zone off east Florida

Alternative 1 (No Action). The commercial minimum size limit for gray triggerfish in the exclusive economic zone off the east coast of Florida is 14 inches fork length.

Preferred Alternative 2. Reduce the commercial minimum size limit for gray triggerfish in the exclusive economic zone off the east coast of Florida to 12 inches fork length.

Discussion:

- **Preferred Alternative 2** would result in approximately 18% increase in gray triggerfish landings (**Table 19**).
- **Preferred Alternative 2** is projected to shorten the fishing season by seven days relative to **Alternative 1 (No Action)**. For Season 2 (Jul-Dec), **Preferred Alternative 2** is only projected to shorten the fishing season by four days relative to **Alternative 1 (No Action)** (**Table 20**).
- The difference in the projected annual landings between **Alternative 1 (No Action)** and **Preferred Alternative 2** is relatively small (less than 750 lbs ww). The differences in expected annual gross revenue are also relatively small, with **Preferred Alternative 2** expected to generate about $2,200 in additional gross revenue per year. A relatively small part of that increase is because **Preferred Alternative 2** distributes relatively more landings to months with higher average ex-vessel prices.
- **Preferred Alternative 2** is expected to generate greater net economic benefits relative to **Alternative 1 (No Action) (Table 21)**.

Table 19. Estimated percent increase in whole weight of commercial gray triggerfish landings in federal waters off east Florida at 1-inch intervals between 12-14 inches fork length (FL). The increases were generated with TIP data from January 2014 to June 2015 from a sample of 2,616 fish.

Minimum Size Limit (inches FL)	Percent Increase
12	17.9
13	11.4
14	0.0

Source: SERO

Table 20. Projected mean, and 95% lower and upper (L95, U95) confidence limits, closure dates for commercial harvest of gray triggerfish under each alternative proposed in **Action 9** by season.

Alternative	Season	ACL (lbs ww)	L95	Mean	U95
1	Jan-Jun	156,162	24-Jun	**16-Apr**	26-Mar
1	Jul-Dec	156,162	No Closure	**6-Nov**	4-Oct
2	Jan-Jun	156,162	7-Jun	**9-Apr**	20-Mar
2	Jul-Dec	156,162	No Closure	**2-Nov**	30-Sep

Table 21. Expected annual gross revenue for gray triggerfish, expected changes in gross revenue (net economic benefits) and economic rank by alternative for **Action 9**. Preferred alternative indicated in bold.

Alternative	Expected Annual Gross Revenue (2016$)	Expected Change in Annual Gross Revenue (2016$)	Expected Change in Gross Revenue per Vessel (2016$)	Expected Change in Private Costs (Rank)	Economic Rank
Alt 1 (No Action)	$764,589	0	0	2	2
Alt 2	**$766,761**	**$2,172**	**$10**	**1**	**1**