



Content and Status of Active Amendments

July 9, 2018

[Click to jump or use the Navigation Pane to find a specific amendment](#)

[Snapper Grouper](#)

[Dolphin Wahoo](#)

[Golden Crab](#)

[Coral](#)

[Mackerel](#)

[Spiny Lobster](#)

[Generic Amendments](#)

Snapper Grouper

Recently implemented or submitted:

Snapper Grouper Amendment 43 (red snapper and recreational reporting) Council lead: Chip Collier

The Council requested that staff begin development of Amendment 43 in June 2016 to address items related to management of red snapper and other directly and indirectly related items that would ultimately result in an adaptive management approach and respond to items in the Vision Blueprint (i.e., recreational stamp, recreational season, time-area closures, etc.). In September 2016, the Council provided further guidance to staff on possible actions and alternatives and requested that a scoping document be prepared for review. At the December 2016 meeting, the Council approved the amendment for scoping meetings, which were held in late January/early February 2017. At their June 2017 meeting, the Council directed staff to finalize development of Amendment 43 with only one action: to remove the process currently in place to set ACLs (established through Amendment 28) and set an ACL for red snapper for 2018 and beyond in order to allow limited harvest. The remainder of the actions in Amendment 43 would continue to be developed in Amendment 46 in 2017-2018. The Council obtained public input and approved Amendment 43 for formal review at their September 2017 meeting. The amendment was submitted for formal review on November 20, 2017. The NMFS comment period for the proposed rule ended on June 18, 2018.

Abbreviated Framework 1 (Red Grouper)

During the June 2017 meeting, the Council discussed options for addressing the overfished and overfishing determinations for red grouper and staff explained that the projections delivered with the assessment were based on management starting in 2017. The Council passed a motion to request projections based on management starting in 2018, under both high and low recruitment scenarios for exploitations levels of 75% F_{MSY} and F_{MSY} . The SSC convened on October 24-26, 2017, and reviewed

the red grouper projections and recommended an ABC based on the low- recruitment scenario to manage the red grouper stock over the short-term. In September 2017, the Council directed staff to develop an abbreviated framework amendment to adjust the ACL based an ABC recommendation from the SSC using the low recruitment scenario. The abbreviated framework was submitted for formal review on December 21, 2017.

Postponed:

Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 (allocations for yellowtail) Council lead: John Hadley

In March 2016, the Council directed staff to begin development of a joint dolphin wahoo and snapper grouper amendment to examine different ways to allocate or share quota between the commercial and recreational sectors for dolphin and yellowtail snapper. Under consideration for yellowtail snapper are in-season allocations shifts as well as permanent re-allocation. Scoping meetings were held in August 2016. In December 2016, the Council separated the two amendments, and approved Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 (yellowtail only) for public hearings in late January/early February 2017 with an additional action that would consider merging the ACLs of yellowtail snapper for the Gulf of Mexico and the South Atlantic regions. In March 2017, the Council decided to postpone the amendment until revised MRIP data are available. In June 2017 the Council sent a letter to the Gulf Council to obtain input on a possible joint amendment to combine ACLs for yellowtail snapper. The Gulf Council sent a reply indicating their willingness to work with the South Atlantic Council on management solutions for yellowtail snapper. During the March 2018 meeting, the Council agreed to wait until revised MRIP data are available before revisiting long-term management options for yellowtail snapper. This amendment is expected to become active once the two visioning amendments are completed.

Under development:

Snapper Grouper Amendment 38 (blueline tilefish) - Council lead: Roger

At the March 2015 meeting, the Council approved a request for emergency actions to extend regulations in Snapper Grouper Amendment 32, once the amendment was approved, to the area that the SSC considers is represented by the stock assessment (SEDAR 32). At the SSC's April 2015 meeting, the SSC determined that SEDAR 32 applied to the entire eastern seaboard and was the best scientific information available. In September 2015, the Snapper Grouper Committee reviewed an Options Paper for a possible amendment, Amendment 38, to extend the snapper grouper fishery management unit north of the NC/VA border and adjust fishing levels for blueline tilefish to account for landings in the area north of the Council's jurisdiction. The Council had considered extending the FMU previously (during development of Amendment 18) but did not take action at the time. In September 2015 the Council opted to not move forward with development of Amendment 38 pending the completion of studies on the stock structure of blueline tilefish and to allow time for the MAFMC to develop a management strategy for blueline tilefish in their jurisdiction. Instead, actions to adjust fishing levels for blueline tilefish (based on the SSC's recommendations) and revise management measures were moved to Regulatory Amendment 25. SEDAR 50 was conducted in 2017 as a joint assessment between the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SEDAR Lead) with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council addressing the stock assessment(s) for Atlantic blueline tilefish. The SSC reviewed results of SEDAR 50 at their October 2017 meeting and provided catch level recommendations for blueline tilefish for the area south of Cape Hatteras, NC. SEFSC staff presented the Committee on the assessment results at the December 2017 meeting. As ABC recommendations that match the jurisdictional boundaries of the Mid- and South Atlantic Councils (boundary at the NC/VA state line) were needed to develop fishing levels and management measures, the SSC formed a workgroup whose task was to

determine a suitable approach to obtaining an ABC that would be useable under the existing management structure. The MAFMC SSC reviewed results of the workgroup at their March 2018 meeting and the SAFMC SSC reviewed the results during their May 2018 meeting and provide guidance to the Council. In June 2018, the Committee reviewed SSC recommendations on setting an ABC for blueline tilefish and development of this amendment was delayed by other priorities.

Vision Blueprint Recreational Regulatory Amendment 26 Council lead: Myra

In June 2016, the Council directed staff to begin development of an amendment to address items identified in the Vision Blueprint addressing recreational management measures. In September 2016 the Council reviewed an options paper and directed staff to prepare a scoping document. Scoping meetings were held in late January/early February 2017 and the Council reviewed public comments and gave direction to staff at their March 2017 meeting. In June 2017, the Council provided further guidance but did not approve the amendment for public hearings. Actions in the amendment include modification to the composition and limits of the recreational aggregates, measures to reduce discards, establishment or modification of recreational seasons, and gear restrictions/modifications. During the September 2017 meeting, the Council approved an alternative approach for structuring the amendment that would better reflect the Council's Vision and how the fishery currently operates. Because of this change, the Council also approved a revised timeline for amendment development with formal approval expected in September 2018. The Council reviewed analyses and approved the amendment for public hearings at their March 2018 meeting. Public hearings were held via webinar in May 2018. In June, the Council received public input and decided to narrow the focus of the amendment, removed several actions/sub-actions, and requested that additional public input be obtained in conjunction with scoping hearings for Regulatory Amendment 29 (Best Fishing Practices & Powerheads). As a result, the Council is expected to approve this amendment for formal review in December 2018.

Vision Blueprint Commercial Regulatory Amendment 27 - Council lead: Myra

In June 2016, the Council directed staff to begin development of an amendment to address items identified in the Vision Blueprint addressing commercial management measures. In September 2016 the Council directed staff to prepare a scoping document and scoping meetings were held in late January/early February 2017. The Council reviewed public comments and gave direction to staff at their March 2017 and June 2017 meetings. Actions include commercial split seasons and/or trip limit adjustments for several species/complexes; re-evaluation of the shallow water grouper closure for red grouper off the Carolinas, and gear restrictions/modifications. The Council revised alternatives at their September 2017 meeting and approved the same timeline for development as that for the recreational amendment (see above). The Council reviewed analyses and approved the amendment for public hearings at their March 2018 meeting. Public hearings were held via webinar in May 2018. In June, the Council received public input, finished selecting preferred alternatives, and directed staff to prepare the amendment to approve for formal review at the September 2018 meeting.

Regulatory Amendment 28 (golden tilefish) - Council lead: Brian

The status of the golden tilefish stock in the South Atlantic was assessed through SEDAR 25 (2011) and an update was conducted in 2016 with data through 2014 (SEDAR 25 update 2016). The update determined the golden tilefish stock is undergoing overfishing but is not overfished. The updated assessment indicates that a large reduction in harvest is needed to end overfishing. In March 2017, the Council requested the SSC consider recommending an interim ABC at 75% F_{MSY} and requested that the SEFSC conduct an update to the assessment to address key uncertainties raised during the prior SSC and Council deliberations. However, the SEFSC indicated that such an update could not be completed in 2017 due to concerns with analyst availability and otolith evaluation. At its April 2017 meeting, the SSC discussed the Council's request but chose not to deviate from their previous ABC recommendation

(based on the P* approach). In June 2017, the Council requested that NMFS issue interim regulations to reduce overfishing of golden tilefish and set the ACL for 2018 at 323,000 pounds, the projected yield at 75% F_{MSY} . The interim rule became effective on January 2, 2018. Regulatory Amendment 28 is being developed to establish permanent measures to end overfishing and revise management measures. At their March 2018 meeting, the Council requested that the SSC again reconsider their ABC recommendation at their May 2018 meeting. The Council directed staff to continue work on the amendment with the intent of approving or formal review in June 2018 and thus allow time for implementation before the interim rule expires. In addition to adjusting catch levels, the amendment considers changing the fishing year start date for the hook-and-line component of the commercial sector. In June, the Council approved the amendment for formal review.

Snapper Grouper Amendment 46 (recreational permit and reporting) Council lead: Chip Collier

In June 2017, the Council instructed staff to move actions formerly in Amendment 43, except an action to specify a red snapper ACL in 2018, to Amendment 46. The amendment would specify OFL/ABC/ACL for red snapper, address recreational permitting and reporting for private recreational fishermen, best fishing practices (also include an option to remove circle hook requirements for snapper grouper fishing), and removing powerhead restrictions in special management zones off South Carolina (action formerly included in the Visioning amendments). OFL/ABC/ACL for red snapper based on SEDAR 41 (2017) have not been adopted through the amendment process; however, the SEFSC could not provide new projections due to the time since the last amendment, uncertainty in recreational landings and discards, and upcoming changes to recreational landings estimates. During their meeting in October 2017, the SSC formed a workgroup whose task is to determine an approach to obtain an ABC for red snapper. In December 2017 the Council directed staff to remove actions pertaining to red snapper from the amendment and focus on recreational reporting and best fishing practices. In March 2018, the Council directed staff to retain actions on recreational permitting and reporting in Amendment 46 and develop the remainder of the actions (best fishing practices and powerhead regulations) in a framework amendment (Regulatory Amendment 29). The Council approved the amendment for scoping but did not include it as an agenda item for the September 2018 Meeting.

Amendment 47 (For-Hire Permit Modifications) Council Lead: John Hadley

The Council has held several discussions in recent years on limiting the number of Atlantic Snapper Grouper Charter/Headboat permits, and potential benefits to the for-hire component from this management approach. In June 2017, the Council instructed staff to begin work on an amendment that would explore a limited-entry program or a moratorium on the for-hire component of the snapper grouper fishery. The Council discussed options at their December 2017 meeting and provide further guidance to staff on the scope of the amendment and timing. In March 2018, the Council provided detailed input and directed staff to develop a scoping document based on their direction to consider at the June 2018 meeting. The Council directed staff to broaden the title of the amendment, approved the addition of numbering permits for tracking purposes and modifying the permit condition that prohibits permit holders from possessing snapper grouper species in state waters when the species are closed to harvest in federal waters, and approved a round of webinar-based scoping hearings ahead of the September 2018 meeting.

Regulatory Amendment 29 (Best Fishing Practices and Powerhead Regulations) Council Lead: Christina

At their March 2018 meeting, the Council removed actions pertaining to best fishing practices and powerhead regulations from Amendment 46 and requested that staff begin development of a framework

amendment. The Council was concerned that other actions in Amendment 46 (recreational permitting and reporting) would take significant time to be developed and did not want to delay action on other issues. The Council reviewed an options paper at their June 2018 meeting and approved the amendment for scoping with actions addressing venting and descending devices, circle hooks, allowable rigs, and powerheads. Scoping hearings will be held in July/August 2018. The Council will review scoping comments and approve actions and alternatives to be analyzed at their September 2018 meeting.

Regulatory Amendment 30 (Red Grouper Rebuilding) Council Lead: John Hadley

The recent red grouper assessment (SEDAR 53) indicated that the stock is undergoing overfishing and is not making adequate progress towards rebuilding, which is supposed to take place by 2020 under the current rebuilding plan. The Council was formally notified of the red grouper stock status via a letter from NMFS dated September 17, 2017. The Council has moved to end overfishing through the revised ABC and ACL for red grouper that will be implemented via Abbreviated Framework Amendment 1 but has not yet revised the red grouper rebuilding plan. Hence, the Council will need to begin development of an amendment to revise the current rebuilding plan before the next red grouper assessment is completed (currently scheduled as a standard assessment in 2021) in order to meet the statutory deadline of September 17, 2019. At their March 2018 meeting, the Council directed staff to begin work on a framework amendment to revise the red grouper rebuilding schedule. The Council discussed options at their June 2018 meeting and directed staff to consolidate actions addressing red grouper into Regulatory Amendment 30. Hence, actions to modify the seasonal closure of red grouper in the EEZ off the Carolinas were moved over from the Visioning Amendments (Regulatory Amendments 26 & 27). In addition, the Council added an action to consider a trip limit for red grouper. Public hearings for this amendment will be held during the September 2018 meeting.

Regulatory Amendment 32 (Yellowtail Snapper ACL and AMs) Council Lead: Myra

In 2016 and early 2017 the Council began developing Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 to consider modifications to jurisdictional and sector allocations as well as commercial trip limits for yellowtail snapper. In March 2017, the Council approved a motion to suspend work on Amendment 44 until revised MRIP data are available. At the June 2017 meeting, the Council approved sending a letter to the Gulf Council to get input on developing a joint amendment to combine ACLs for yellowtail snapper. The Gulf Council discussed the letter at their October 2017 meeting and sent a reply to the South Atlantic Council stating that they are willing to work jointly to develop solutions for yellowtail snapper. In March 2018, the Council directed staff to begin development of an amendment to address short-term management of yellowtail snapper to provide timely relief for commercial fishermen (in light of hurricanes in summer 2017) via a framework amendment. The amendment would consider changing AMs to remove in-season closures for either sector until the total ACL is met or projected to be met. In June, the Council approved the amendment for scoping hearings to be held in August 2018.

Amendment 42 (Sea Turtle Release Gear and Revisions to Snapper Grouper Framework) Council Lead: Christina

The NMFS Release Protocols for protected species were originally published in 2004. Revised editions were released in 2008 and 2010, and a new update is ready for publication. In the pending update, the SEFSC approved three additional turtle release gear types for use in handling and releasing incidentally caught sea turtles when fishing for reef fish. The new gear requires less space on vessels while still providing the necessary functionality; however, fishermen who participate in the snapper grouper fishery cannot use the approved gear until it is listed as acceptable gear in a fishery management plan and made a requirement in the regulations. Amendment 42 would include the new gear in the regulations for the snapper grouper fishery and consider modifications to the snapper grouper

framework so the Council may more quickly modify sea turtle and other protected resources release gear and handling requirements in the future. The Council approved the amendment for scoping at their March 2018 meeting. Scoping webinars were held on April 23rd and 24th, 2018. At their June 2018 meeting the Council reviewed scoping comments and approved actions and alternatives to be analyzed. Amendment 42 will be reviewed at a future meeting.

Amendment 45 (ABC Control Rule Revisions for Snapper Grouper) Council Lead:
John C.

See Generic Amendments below

Wreckfish ITQ Review Council Lead: Brian

In June of 2017, the Council directed staff to begin a subsequent formal review of the Wreckfish ITQ program in accordance with NMFS guidelines. The review itself will not contain actions and alternatives. It could recommend actions and alternatives for the Council to consider in a future Snapper Grouper amendment to the FMP.

A meeting of shareholders was held in August of 2017 to get their input on how the program was working and problems they had encountered. Council and NMFS staff presented information on the development of the review at the September 2017 and March 2018 Council meetings. The SSC and Snapper Grouper AP reviewed the ongoing development in the fall of 2017. The SSC referred review of the document to the Socioeconomic Panel (SEP) of the SSC for further review in February 2018.

The review includes data from the 2009/2010 through 2016/2017 fishing years. The most significant issues identified were putting the data together in a meaningful way and securing waivers from current and past fishery participants. In January 2018, at least one fishery participant and one dealer declined signing the waiver that would release access to confidential landings. Therefore, analyses will only be in the aggregate for each year. In March 2018, the Council directed staff to have the SG and LE APs along with the SSC review the document. The SSC will review the SEP recommendations. Another meeting of Wreckfish shareholders is planned for July 9, 2018 in Daytona Beach, FL.

The Council will next consider the review at their September 2018 meeting and consider the input of the APs, the SSC, and shareholders, prior to deciding when they will give final to the review.

Abbreviated Framework 2 (Vermilion Snapper and Black Sea Bass)

During the December 2017 meeting, the Council discussed options for addressing the stock status for vermilion snapper and black sea bass. The SSC had convened in October of 2017 and reviewed the vermilion snapper (SEDAR 55) and black sea bass (SEDAR 56) projections. Additionally, the SSC recommended an ABC for each of the two species. In June 2018, the Council directed staff to develop an abbreviated framework amendment to adjust the ACLs based on the ABC recommendations from the SSC. The Council is scheduled to take public comment and vote to send the abbreviated framework for Secretarial review at their September 2018 meeting.

[Back to top](#)

Dolphin Wahoo

Recently implemented:

Dolphin Wahoo Regulatory Amendment 1 (commercial trip limit for dolphin) Council lead: Brian

In September 2015, the Council directed staff to begin development of a regulatory amendment to consider commercial trip limits for dolphin. Public hearings were held via webinar in November 2015 and at the December 2015 Council meeting. The Council's preferred alternative would implement a 4,000 pound commercial trip limit once 75% of the commercial ACL has been caught. The Council approved the amendment for formal review at the December 2015 meeting and it was sent for formal review on February 16, 2016. The proposed rule published on June 30, 2016, and the comment period ended on August 1, 2016. The final rule published on December 30, 2016, with an effective date of January 30, 2017. The effective date was delayed until March 21, 2017, in accordance to the memorandum from the White House to delay implementation of all new federal regulations.

Postponed:

Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10 (allocations for dolphin) Council lead: John Hadley

In March 2016, the Council directed staff to begin development of a joint dolphin wahoo and snapper grouper amendment to examine different ways to allocate or share quota between the commercial and recreational sectors for dolphin and yellowtail snapper. In June 2016, the Council approved the amendment for scoping hearings, which were held in August 2016. Options included a common pool allocation, a reserve category, temporary or permanent shifts in allocation, combined annual catch limits, and creating gear allocations in the commercial dolphin fishery. In December 2016, the Council considered approving the amendment, which was being developed jointly with Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 (see Snapper Grouper section above), for public hearings in early 2017. Instead, the Council directed staff to continue to develop Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10 but separately from SG Am 44 and include an action to revise the ABC Control Rule to include a carry-over provision from one fishing year to the next. The Council also directed staff to develop an action that would eliminate the operator card requirement in the Dolphin Wahoo FMP. Consequently, the DW FMP actions were not approved for public hearings. In March 2017, the Council decided to stop work on the amendment until the revised MRIP data are available.

Under development:

Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 11 (ABC Control Rule Revisions for Dolphin Wahoo)

Council Lead: John Carmichael

See Generic Amendments below

[Back to top](#)

Golden Crab

Coral 10/ Golden Crab 10/ Shrimp 11 (Access Areas, Transit Provision, Golden Crab VMS) Council Lead: Chip

In March 2018, the Council directed staff to begin development of a joint amendment for coral, golden crab, and shrimp to look at access areas in the golden crab northern zone, eastern edge of the Oculina Bank Extension established in Coral Amendment 8, shrimp trawl gear stowage requirements when transiting closed areas, and VMS for golden crab vessels. The Council approved the amendment for scoping but did not include it as an agenda item for the September 2018 Meeting.

[Back to top](#)

Coral

See Golden Crab

[Back to top](#)

Shrimp

See Golden Crab

[Back to top](#)

Mackerel Cobia

Recently implemented:

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

This amendment contains 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 was held January/February 2015 and Gulf scoping was held in April 2015. Public hearings were held in January/February 2016. The South Atlantic Council approved the amendment for Secretarial review in March 2016, and the Gulf Council approved the amendment in April 2016. The amendment was submitted for formal review on July 7, 2016. The Notice of Availability published on December 15, 2016, with a comment period until February 13, 2017. The proposed rule published on December 29, 2016, and the comment period closed on January 30, 2017. The final rule published on April 11, 2017, and regulations became effective May 11, 2017.

Framework Amendment 4 (Atlantic cobia) Council lead: Christina

In March 2016, the Council directed staff to develop an amendment with actions that could lengthen the recreational season for Atlantic cobia. In 2016, the recreational season will close on June 20 due to the landings in 2015 exceeding the recreational ACL. Actions include changes to measures for rec bag limits, rec vessel limits, rec minimum size limit, rec accountability measures, and commercial trip limit. The amendment had an action to change the rec fishing year, but the current framework procedure does not allow changes to the fishing year through a framework amendment. The Council moved the action to Amendment 30 at their September 2016 meeting.

Public input meetings were held in May 2016 to get additional recommendations from fishermen. The Council reviewed public comments and the potential actions/alternatives at their June 2016 meeting, and public hearings were held in August 2016. The Council approved the amendment for Secretarial review in September 2016. The amendment was submitted for Secretarial review on October 28, 2016. The proposed rule published on February 21, 2017, with a comment period through March 23, 2017. The final rule published on August 4, 2017 and became effective on September 5, 2017.

Framework Amendment 5 (modify permit restrictions) Council lead: Christina

This amendment includes one action to modify regulations to remove restrictions on commercial king mackerel and Spanish mackerel permits that prohibit retaining the bag limit on recreational (non-commercial and non-charter/headboat) trips on federally permitted vessels when commercial harvest is closed in that zone. King mackerel and Spanish mackerel are the only two species with this restriction on federally permitted vessels. Initially this framework amendment included an action that would apply in the Gulf only. After June 2016, it is a joint framework amendment with actions applying to the Gulf, South Atlantic, and Mid-Atlantic regions. The South Atlantic Council approved for formal review in September 2016 and the Gulf Council approved the amendment in October 2016. The amendment was submitted for Secretarial review on December 2, 2016. The proposed rule published on March 1, 2017, with a comment period through March 31, 2017. The final rule published on August 1, 2017 and became effective on August 31, 2017.

Postponed:

Joint Amendment 29 (Gulf king mackerel quota sharing) Council lead: Christina

CMP Amendment 26 included an action to revise commercial and recreational allocations of the Gulf king mackerel ACL. The Councils selected No Action for this action so that the amendment could be submitted for formal review, but the Gulf Council directed staff to begin development of Amendment 29 to consider different ways to allocate quota for Gulf king mackerel. The amendment includes also includes an action to revise the recreational AMs for Gulf king mackerel and an action to modify the framework procedure, to align with the potential quota sharing/allocation system. The Gulf Council approved the amendment for public hearings in October 2016. The hearings are scheduled for late November/ early December 2016. The Gulf Council will review public input and take final action in January/February 2017, and the South Atlantic Council is scheduled to take final action in March 2017 (final action was initially included in the December 2016 agenda, but the Gulf Council requested that it be moved to the March 2017 meeting). At their January/February 2017 meeting, the Gulf Council decided to postpone work on the amendment indefinitely. In March 2017, the South Atlantic Council also postponed work on the amendment indefinitely.

Amendment 30 (Atlantic cobia rec fishing year) Council lead: Christina

This amendment includes one action to change the recreational fishing year for Atlantic cobia. This action was previously included in Framework Amendment 4, but the current framework procedure does not allow changes to the fishing year through a framework amendment. The Council moved the action to Amendment 30 at their September 2016 meeting. The action was included in the materials for the August 2016 public hearings, and a webinar public hearing was held October 25, 2016. The Gulf Council approved the amendment in October 2016. In December 2016, the South Atlantic Mackerel Cobia Committee amended the action to change both the recreational and commercial fishing years. However, the Council decided to postpone work on Amendment 30 until after the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission finalizes their interstate cobia plan.

Under Development:

Amendment 31 (Atlantic cobia management) Council lead: Christina

In June 2017, ASMFC requested that the Councils consider transferring management of Atlantic cobia to the ASMFC, which would require that Atlantic cobia be removed from the federal fishery management plan. In June 2017, the South Atlantic Council discussed the request and directed staff to start work on an amendment with an option for complementary management of Atlantic cobia, and an option to remove Atlantic cobia from the federal FMP. A scoping webinar was held on August 15, 2017. The South Atlantic Council reviewed public input and approved the actions and alternatives to be

analyzed in September 2017. At their December 2018 meeting, the Council reviewed a draft document and selected Alternative 2 (Remove Atlantic cobia from the CMP FMP) as their preferred. Public hearings were held January 22, 23, and 24, 2018 with listening stations available in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Majority of comments received supported removing Atlantic cobia from federal management as soon as possible. At the March 2018 Council meeting, the Committee discussed enforcement of Atlantic cobia in federal waters under Preferred Alternative 2, and the timing for Amendment 31 relative to the upcoming Stock ID Workshop for Atlantic cobia and the amount of time the State of South Carolina may need to get regulations approved in state waters given that have to go through the S.C. Legislature. The Council chose to wait until the June 2018 meeting to take final action requesting that staff revise the draft amendment to address NOAA GC concerns and send a letter to ASMFC requesting information on how they intend to handle regulations in federal waters under the preferred alternative. At the June 2018 meeting, the Council received an update on the SEDAR 58 Stock ID Workshop and Review as well as ASMFC actions relative to future management of Atlantic cobia in federal waters under the Atlantic Coastal Act. After reviewing the revised document, the Council approved Amendment 31 for formal review. The Gulf Council will review Amendment 31 at their June 2018 meeting and approved the amendment formal review.

Framework Amendment 6 (King mackerel trip limits). Council lead: Christina

The new regulations for king mackerel established in CMP Amendment 26 became effective on May 11, 2017, including updated commercial trip limits for the Atlantic Southern zone. Stakeholders and the AP/Sub-Panel have recommended that the Council consider revising the trip limits to allow for a higher trip limit north of the Volusia/Brevard county line, which would mirror trip limits prior to Amendment 26. In September 2017, the Council reviewed a document with options for alternatives to be included in a framework amendment addressing Atlantic king mackerel commercial trip limits. In December 2018, the Council approved the amendment for scoping at their March 2018 meeting. The Council reviewed public input during the March 2018 meeting and directed staff to bring a draft of Framework Amendment 6 to the June 2018 meeting. The Council also selected Alternative 3 (Season 1: 75-fish in March, 3,500 lb. from April – September for Volusia County) as their preferred. At the June 2018 meeting, the Council approved Framework Amendment 6 for public hearings at the September 2018 Council meeting. The Council will consider taking final action on this amendment at the September 2018 meeting.

[Back to top](#)

Spiny Lobster

Under development:

Spiny Lobster Regulatory Amendment 4 (spiny lobster ACL and rec traps) Council lead: Kari

The Gulf and South Atlantic SSCs recommended that the spiny lobster OFL and ABC be calculated based on landings data from 1991 through the most recent data (2015/16). This amendment includes actions to update the OFL, ABC/ACL, and ACT based on the SSCs' recommendation, in addition to an action to prohibit traps for recreational harvest of spiny lobster in the South Atlantic EEZ. In December 2016, the South Atlantic Council provided recommendations for the recreational trap action, which were incorporated into the Gulf Council's option paper presented at their January/February 2017 meeting. The South Atlantic Council reviewed the draft amendment in March 2017. A webinar public hearing was held in May 2017. Both Councils approved the amendment for formal review in June 2017. The

document was submitted to NMFS for review on July 12, 2017. The proposed rule published on February 2, 2018, and the comment period closed March 4, 2018.

Spiny Lobster Amendment 13 (update procedure for coordinated management with Florida and bully net regulations) Council lead: Christina

There is a procedure and protocol in place in the Spiny Lobster Joint FMP to allow NMFS to update federal regulations to align with Florida regulations without necessary action by the Councils. However, the procedure and protocol need to be updated before the process can be used again to update federal regulations to align with the Florida bully net regulations. The Gulf Council (administrative lead on the amendment) directed staff to start work on the amendment at their April 2017 meeting, and the South Atlantic Council approved an identical motion at their June 2017 meeting. The Gulf Council reviewed an options paper at their October 2017 meeting. The South Atlantic Council reviewed the draft Gulf actions and alternatives in December 2017. Both Councils approved a motion to actions to this amendment that would address inconsistencies between State of Florida spiny lobster regulations and those in federal waters concerning bag limits, degradable panels, and the definition of artificial habitat. Scoping webinars were held January 8th and 9th, 2018. The Gulf Council approved actions and alternatives to be analyzed in January 2018. South Atlantic Council reviewed public input and approved the actions and alternatives to be analyzed in March 2018. At the June 2018 meeting, the South Atlantic Council reviewed the amendment, selected preferred alternatives, moved the actions addressing degradable panels and artificial habitat to the considered but rejected appendix, and approved the document for public hearings. The Gulf Council reviewed the document and concurred with the motions passed by the South Atlantic Council at their June 2018 meeting. The South Atlantic Council will consider taking final action on Amendment 13 and their September 2018 meeting. The Gulf Council will consider taking final action at their August or October meeting.

[Back to top](#)

Generics

Comprehensive ABC Control Rule Amendment Council Lead: John C.

In December 2016, the Council directed staff to start work on a plan amendment that would modify the ABC Control Rule to address flexibility allowed under the MSA and revise how uncertainty and risk tolerance are addressed in setting ABCs. The Amendment includes actions to: 1) revise how the SSC evaluates assessment uncertainty; 2) revise how the risk tolerance is specified; and 3) allow phase-in and carry-over of ABCs. An IPT was formed to develop actions and alternatives, and the SSC and Council have regularly reviewed progress and provided guidance during 2017 and 2018. In June 2018 the Council directed that scoping of this amendment be conducted in the Fall of 2018.

Recreational AMs (SG Reg 31/CMP Framework 7/ DW Reg 2) Council Lead: Brian

Over the past five years, the Council has requested information on possible approaches to improve recreational landings estimates, particularly for species that are infrequently intercepted in the recreational survey. However, the accuracy of such estimates has not improved enough to allow efficient tracking of recreational annual catch limits (ACLs) and has led to mounting frustration among fishery managers, stock assessment analysts, and recreational anglers. The Council is already working on methods to obtain additional data (e.g., Amendment 46, MyFishCount App) that could eventually be used to improve management of recreational fisheries in the region. A possible avenue to lessen the impact of uncertain recreational data on stakeholders is revision of accountability measures. At their March 2018 meeting, the Council directed staff to begin development of an amendment that would revise recreational accountability measures to allow more flexibility in managing recreational fisheries.

Bycatch Reporting Amendment (formerly CE-BA 3) Council lead: Chip

The action in the Bycatch Reporting Amendment 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.

The Council reviewed the measures in CE-BA 3 in September 2015. The Council received a briefing from NMFS at the March 2016 meeting. The Council has postponed development until after NMFS publishes the rule for the Standard Bycatch Reporting Methodology.

South Atlantic For-Hire Electronic Reporting Amendment Council lead: John C.

During the March 2015 meeting, the South Atlantic Council approved actions and alternatives to require weekly electronic reporting by charter vessels, patterned after headboat electronic reporting requirements. The South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Councils reviewed the amendment at the Joint Council meeting in Key West in June 2015. In September 2015, the South Atlantic Council directed staff and the IPT to revise the amendment to apply to charter vessels in South Atlantic fisheries only. In December 2015, the Council approved the amendment for public hearings, which were held in January/February 2016. At the March 2016 meeting, the Council revised the expected timeline for the amendment, to allow time to develop core data elements. The Council reviewed the revised amendment in June 2016, developed a list of core variables and scheduled final approval for December 2016 to allow consideration of preliminary feedback from the SAFMC-ACCSP electronic reporting pilot study. In December 2016, the Council approved the amendment for formal review. The Gulf Council approved the CMP portion of the amendment at their January/February 2017 meeting. The amendment was transmitted for formal review on March 4, 2017.

In May 2017, SERO convened a group, called the Southeast For Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting team (SEFHIER), to develop guidance for the regulations necessary to implement this amendment as well as a similar reporting amendment submitted by the Gulf Council. The group met regularly through early 2018 to address topics such as reporting approaches and standards, data management, compliance and enforcement, and outreach and training.

The Notice of Availability and request for comment on proposed rules to implement this amendment published on March 14, 2018, with a comment period through May 13, 2018. The proposed rule published on April 4, 2018, with a comment period through May 4, 2018. The Council was notified on June 12, 2018, that the amendment was approved by NMFS.

Joint Commercial Logbook Amendment Council lead: John Carmichael

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. The Council receives updates at each Council meeting. SA Council staff will work with Gulf staff and NMFS staff to allow fishermen to voluntarily provide their data electronically and to plan for completion of the amendment incorporating results from year 1 of the pilot study. As of April 2016, voluntary reports may be provided through the ACCSP SAFIS system and available to the SEFSC.

Marine Aquaculture Plan for the South Atlantic Region Council lead: Roger Pugliese

The Council at their June meeting approved a motion to begin development of an aquaculture plan for the South Atlantic Region. The Habitat Protection and Ecosystem Based Management Advisory Panel who developed the standing Policy Statement on Aquaculture will continue to review and compile information and background on State and Federal activities to support future consideration of development.

[Back to top](#)