



Update on Snapper Grouper Amendments

April 2026

Submitted

Joint Commercial Logbook Amendment

Purpose of Amendment: To allow submittal of electronic commercial logbooks.

Action Summary: This amendment is being developed jointly with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. The amendment modifies the FMPs for South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Atlantic Dolphin Wahoo, Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Gulf Reef Fish to require commercial logbooks be submitted via electronic reporting forms instead of the currently used paper-based forms.

Development level: Under review. Amendment submitted on February 27, 2024.

Amendment 55 (Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper)

Purpose of Amendment: Respond to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 68).

Action Summary: Establish a scamp/yellowmouth grouper complex, remove yellowmouth grouper from the shallow water grouper (SWG) complex, establish catch levels and sector allocations for the new complex, adjust catch levels and sector allocations for the SWG complex.

Development Level: Under review. Amendment submitted on December 9, 2024.

Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 36 (Gag and Black Grouper; On-Demand Gear)

Purpose of Amendment: Revise recreational vessel limits for gag and black grouper and specify requirements for on-demand black sea bass pots while transiting through closed areas

Action Summary: Revise the recreational vessel limits for gag and black grouper to be an aggregate bag limit including both species. Revise transit requirements for on-demand black sea bass pots.

Development Level: Under review. Amendment submitted to NMFS on March 31, 2025.

Abbreviated Framework 5 (Blueline Tilefish)

Purpose of the Amendment: adjust catch levels of blueline tilefish in the South Atlantic based on the most recent stock assessment (SEDAR 92)

Action Summary: Revise ABC, total ACL, and sector ACLs (retaining the current sector allocation)

Year	Total South Atlantic ABC and ACL (Landings)	Commercial Sector ACL (50.07%)	Recreational Sector ACL (49.93%)
2026 until modified	314,058 lbs ww	157,249 lbs ww	156,809 lbs ww

Development level: Under review. Submitted to NMFS on February 13, 2026.

Approved by Council for Submission

Regulatory Amendment 37 (Black Sea Bass Management Measures)

Purpose of the Amendment: Address depleted status of black sea bass in the South Atlantic immediately with management measures aimed at reducing regulatory discards and protecting the spawning stock.

Action Summary: establish recreational and commercial annual catch targets and revise accountability measures, reduce the recreational bag limit, and implementing an annual spawning season closure in February and March for both commercial and recreational sectors.

Action 1. Establish annual catch targets and revise the accountability measures for South Atlantic black sea bass

Preferred Alternative 2. Establish a commercial annual catch target of 48,557 pounds whole weight and a recreational annual catch target of 63,143 pounds whole weight for South Atlantic black sea bass. The annual catch limits for each sector would remain unchanged.

Sub-Action 1b. Revise in-season accountability measure for the commercial sector

Preferred Alternative 2. If the National Marine Fisheries Service estimates that commercial landings of South Atlantic black sea bass will reach or are projected to reach the commercial quota, set at the commercial **annual catch target** in Sub-Action 1a, Alternative 2, the National Marine Fisheries Service will close the commercial harvest of black sea bass for the remainder of the fishing year.

Sub-Action 1c. Revise accountability measure for the recreational sector

Preferred Alternative 2. The National Marine Fisheries Service will project the length of the South Atlantic black sea bass recreational fishing season based on when the recreational **annual catch target** is projected to be met and announce the recreational fishing season end date in the *Federal Register* prior to the start of the recreational fishing year on April 1.

Action 2. Establish a spawning season closure for South Atlantic black sea bass

Preferred Alternative 2. Establish a commercial seasonal closure during which commercial sale, purchase, harvest, or possession of black sea bass in or from South Atlantic federal waters south of Cape Hatteras, NC, is prohibited and the commercial trip limit is zero.

Preferred Sub-Alternative 2b. The commercial seasonal closure occurs from February 1 through the end of February.

Preferred Sub-Alternative 2c. The commercial seasonal closure occurs from March 1 through March 31.

Preferred Alternative 3. Establish a recreational seasonal closure during which recreational harvest or possession of black sea bass in or from South Atlantic federal waters south of Cape Hatteras, NC, is prohibited and the bag limit is zero.

Preferred Sub-Alternative 3b. The recreational seasonal closure occurs from February 1 through the end of February.

Preferred Sub-Alternative 3c. The recreational seasonal closure occurs from March 1 through March 31.

Action 3. Reduce the recreational bag limit for South Atlantic black sea bass

Preferred Alternative 4. Reduce the recreational bag limit for South Atlantic black sea bass to 3 fish per person per day.

Development level: Approved for submission.

Under Development

Snapper Grouper Amendment 44/ Reef Fish Amendment 55 (Yellowtail & Mutton Snapper)

Purpose of Amendment: Respond to the latest stock assessments for yellowtail snapper and mutton snapper (SEDAR 96 and SEDAR 79, respectively). Neither species is overfished nor undergoing overfishing.

Action Summary: Adopt recommended stock OFL and ABCs, adjust the jurisdictional apportionment between the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils, update regional ACLs, and update South Atlantic sector allocations.

Development Level: Pre-public hearings

Snapper Grouper Amendment 56 (Black Sea Bass)

Purpose of Amendment: Respond to most recent stock assessment (SEDAR 76).

Action Summary: Revise catch levels and status determination criteria, consider revision of sector allocations, other black sea bass management measures.

Development Level: Post-scoping. Paused until completion of an updated stock assessment.

Regulatory Amendment 38

Purpose of the Amendment: Modify vessel limits for South Atlantic headboats

Action Summary: TBD

Development level: Amendment initiated in March 2026.

Regulatory Amendment 39

Purpose of the Amendment: Evaluate sunseting of Spawning Special management Zones

Action Summary: TBD

Development level: Amendment initiated in March 2026.

Regulatory Amendment 40

Purpose of the Amendment: Evaluate re-opening of seasonal nearshore closed areas to on-demand black sea bass pots and modify the commercial trip limit for pots

Action Summary: TBD

Development level: Amendment initiated in March 2026.

Scheduled for Advisory Panel Discussion at the April 2026 Meeting

Amendment 61 (Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit Revision)

Purpose of the Amendment: Evaluate whether 14 species currently in the FMU should remain, be removed, or be designated as ecosystem component species. Note: this amendment supersedes an earlier proposed amendment to specify ABCs for unassessed snapper grouper species.

Action Summary: To determine the need for conservation and management of 14 snapper grouper species.

Development level: Post-scoping

Amendment 60 (Commercial management measures)

Purpose of the Amendment: The amendment has two main objectives: 1) address issues related to the commercial Snapper Grouper Unlimited (SG 1) permit, and 2) increase commercial trip efficiency.

Action Summary: Revise the 2-for-1 snapper grouper commercial unlimited permit policy; establish dynamic (step-down) trip limits; and revise existing stowage requirements for gear on board.

Development level: Post-scoping development

Appendix A. Rulemaking progress for SAFMC amendments (updated 8/19/25)

Amendment	Council voted final action	Council submitted to NMFS	NOA published (comments due)	Proposed rule published (comments due)	Final rule published	Amendment Approval date	Implementation date
SG Reg 36 (transit and bag limits)	9/20/24	3/31/25	n/a			n/a	
SG 55 (scamp and yellowmouth)	9/20/24	12/9/24	3/17/25 (5/16/25)	8/25/25 (9/24/25)			
Joint Commercial Electronic Logbook	Sept 2023 SA) Oct 2023 (Gulf)	2/27/2024				1/22/26	
SG AF 5 (blueline tilefish)	12/12/25	2/13/26					
SG Reg 37 (black sea bass)	12/12/25						

Note: Blank cells indicate that the action has not occurred.

Framework Amendments

- The approximate time frame from when Council submits a framework amendment to NMFS and the implementation date is 6-9 months.
- NMFS does not publish an NOA for a framework amendment.
- The public comment period for proposed rules is usually 30 days.

- Plan Amendments

- The approximate time frame from when Council submits a plan amendment to NMFS and the implementation date is 9-11 months.
- NMFS publishes an NOA for a plan amendment, followed by the proposed rule.
- The public comment period for proposed rules and amendments (NOA) are usually 30 and 60 days, respectively.