

Amendment 51 Snowy Grouper Overview



Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel
October 2021



Management History



History of Snowy Grouper Stock Status		
Assessment	Overfished	Overfishing
SEDAR 4 (2006)	X	X
SEDAR 36 (2014)	X	
SEDAR 36 Update (2020)	X	X

- Rebuilding plan in place
 - 34-year plan
 - Established in 2006 through Amendment 15A
 - Terminal year 2042



Amendment 51 Timeline



October 2021	Gather input from Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel
December 2021	Review AP comments and approve for scoping
January/February 2022	Conduct scoping
March 2022	Review scoping comments, review preliminary analysis, and provide guidance to staff
April 2022	SG AP Review
June 2022	Review AP comments and modifications to the amendment
September 2022	Review modifications to the amendment, select preferred alternatives, and approve for public hearing
October/November 2022	Conduct public hearings
December 2022	Review public hearing comments and approve all actions
March 2023	Review final draft amendment and consider approval for formal review



ABC and OFL



- The SSC applied the ABC Control Rule and recommended the following ABC and OFL for snowy grouper. Recommendations are based on landings and expressed in total removals.
- ABC/OFL recommendations are converted to pounds gutted weight using a 1.18 NMFS conversion factor. According to SEDAR 36 Update, 95.4% of total removals of snowy grouper are landings and 4.6% are dead discards.** Landings recommendations have been calculated to account for dead discards.

OFL RECOMMENDATIONS					
Year	Removals (lbs ww)	Removals (lbs gw)	Removals (numbers of fish)	Landings (lbs gw)	Landings (numbers of fish)
2023	194,000	164,407	21,000	156,844	20,034
2024	193,000	163,559	20,000	156,035	19,080
2025	192,000	162,712	20,000	155,227	19,080
2026	188,000	159,322	20,000	151,993	19,080
ABC RECOMMENDATIONS					
Year	Removals (lbs ww)	Removals (lbs gw)	Removals (numbers of fish)	Landings (lbs gw)	Landings (numbers of fish)
2023	148,000	125,424	16,000	119,954	15,624
2024	150,000	127,119	16,000	121,272	15,624
2025	152,000	128,814	16,000	122,889	15,624
2026	152,000	128,814	16,000	122,889	15,624



Proposed Actions



- **Action 1: Revise the snowy grouper total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield**
 - New ACLs are needed since the SSC recommended new OFL and ABC values
 - Current specifications:
 - Commercial sector (ACL and trip limit) specified in lbs gw
 - Recreational sector (ACL and vessel limit) specified in numbers of fish



Proposed Actions



- **Action 1: Revise the snowy grouper total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield**
- **Option 1 (no change):** ACL = 218,848 lbs ww, 185,464 lbs gw
- **Option 2:** ACL=ABC
- **Option 3:** ACL = 95% of ABC
- **Option 4:** ACL = 90% of ABC
- **Option 5:** ACL = 80% of ABC



Proposed Actions



- **Action 1: Revise the snowy grouper total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield**

Alternative	Pounds Guttled Weight			
	2023	2024	2025	2026*
Alternative 1 (No Action)	185,464	185,464	185,464	185,464
Alternative 2	119,954	121,272	122,889	122,889
Alternative 3	113,956	115,208	116,745	116,745
Alternative 4	107,959	109,145	110,600	110,600
Alternative 5	95,963	97,018	98,311	98,311



Proposed Actions



- **Action 2: Revise the snowy grouper sector allocations and sector annual catch limits**
 - Allocations need to be reviewed because the method for determining the ACL has changed from the Coastal Household Telephone Survey (CHTS) to the Marine Recreational Information Program's Fishery Effort Survey method (MRIP FES)
 - Current allocations were determined using average CHTS landings from 1986-2005 and are 83% commercial and 17% recreational
 - For options 2-4 the total ACL listed is reflective of **option 2 (ACL=ABC)** from **Action 1**



Proposed Actions



- **Action 2: Revise the snowy grouper sector allocations and sector annual catch limits**
- **Option 1 (no change): 83% commercial, 17% recreational**
 - Current allocations applied to updated ACL
- **Option 2: 87.6% commercial, 12.5% recreational**
 - Executing previously used method on MRIP FES landings
- **Option 3: 73.4% commercial, 26.6% recreational**
 - Apply the allocation formula



Proposed Actions



- **Action 2: Revise the snowy grouper sector allocations and sector annual catch limits**

Year	Recreational Allocation of the Total ACL	Recreational ACL (Numbers of fish)
Alternative 1 (No Action)		
2023	17%	2,656
2024		2,656
2025		2,656
2026		2,656
Alternative 2		
2023	12.5%	1,953
2024		1,953
2025		1,953
2026		1,953
Alternative 3		
2023	26.6%	4,156
2024		4,156
2025		4,156
2026		4,156



Proposed Actions



- **Action 2: Revise the snowy grouper sector allocations and sector annual catch limits**

Year	Commercial Allocation of the Total ACL	Commercial ACL (lbs gw)	Commercial Season 1 (lbs gw) 70%	Commercial Season 2 (lbs gw) 30%
Alternative 1 (No Action)				
2023	83%	99,562	69,693	29,869
2024		100,656	70,459	30,197
2025		101,998	71,399	30,599
2026		101,998	71,399	30,599
Alternative 2				
2023	87.6%	109,038	76,327	32,711
2024		110,236	77,165	33,071
2025		111,706	78,194	33,512
2026		111,706	78,194	33,512
Alternative 3				
2023	73.4%	88,046	61,632	26,414
2024		89,014	62,310	26,704
2025		90,201	63,141	27,060
2026		90,201	63,141	27,060



Potential Actions 3 and 4



• **Action 3*: Reduce the commercial trip limit**

- The current commercial trip limit for snowy grouper is 200 lbs gw. Regulatory Amendment 20 implemented the current trip limit in 2015. The previous trip limit was 100 lbs gw
- Commercial landings of snowy grouper in the South Atlantic averaged 106.6% percent of the commercial ACL from 2015 through 2020. Commercial closures have occurred each year from 2015-2020

Year	Season(s) and Closures	ACL (lbs gw)	% ACL
2020	Jan 1 - Jun 30, Jul 1 - Dec 31 (closure 12/12/20)	153,935	100.5
2019	Jan 1 - Dec 31 (closure: 8/3/19)	144,315	105.2
2018	Jan 1 - Dec 31 (closure: 7/24/18)	144,315	101.8
2017	Jan 1 - Dec 31 (closure: 6/22/17)	135,380	100.3
2016	Jan 1 - Dec 31 (closure: 6/14/16)	125,760	118.8
2015	Jan 1 - Dec 31 (closure: 7/6/2015, re-opened 8/20/2015, 9/22/15)	115,451	112.7

Source: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/acl_monitoring/index.html

• **Action 4*: Establish a commercial spawning season closure**

- Snowy grouper spawn from January through October. Kolmos et al. indicates that that spawning during these months is closely related to the cycle of the moon, with increased effect on spawning probability observed during the new moon



Potential Actions 3 and 4



- Action 3:**

Current Trip Limit (lbs gw)	Potential Trip Limit (lbs gw)	Predicted Change in Landings
200-lb	150-lb	-16%
200-lb	100-lb	-38%

Table A-2. The projected 2023 closure dates with an ACL of 99,562 lbs gw for snowy grouper by season with different trip limit options and 95% confidence interval (CI). Note that 70% of the ACL is allocated to the January through June season and 30% to the July through December season.

Season	ACL (lbs gw)	Trip Limit (gw)	Closure Date	Season Length (95% CI)
January 1 – June 30	69,693	200-lb	April 15	Apr 2 – May 1
January 1 – June 30	69,693	150-lb	April 29	Apr 15 – May 19
January 1 – June 30	69,693	100-lb	June 3	May 14 – No Closure
July 1 – December 31	29,869	200-lb	August 20	Aug 8 – Sep 28
July 1 – December 31	29,869	150-lb	September 2	Aug 16 – Nov 21
July 1 – December 31	29,869	100-lb	October 8	Sep 5 – No Closure



Potential Actions 3 and 4

Discussion



Action 3

- Consider a reduction of the commercial trip limit to 150 or 100 lbs gw
 - How will a reduction in trip limit affect different areas?
 - Would a reduced trip limit during different times (similar to blueline tilefish) be considered by the AP?
 - If so what times of the year?

Action 4

- Consider the creation of a spawning season closure for the commercial sector
 - When do you notice increase spawning activity?
 - What month would you consider for a spawning season closure?
- Should a spawning season closure be put in place for both sectors?



Potential Action 5



- **Action 5*: Modify recreational management measures**

- The current recreational bag limit for snowy grouper is 1 per vessel/day with no size limit. This bag limit was reduced in October 2006
- Recreational landings of snowy grouper in the South Atlantic averaged 63.8% percent of the recreational ACL from 2015 through 2020. The last recreational closure was in in 2015

Year	Season and Closures	ACL (numbers of fish; MRIP CHTS)	% ACL
2020	May 1 – Aug 31	5,315	24.6
2019	May 1 – Aug 31	5,315	36.6
2018	May 1 – Aug 31	4,983	55.5
2017	May 1 – Aug 31	4,819	40.6
2016	May 1 – Aug 31	4,483	140.8
2015	May 1 – Aug 31 (closure: 9/1/15)	4,152	84.7

Source: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/acl_monitoring/index.html



Potential Action 5



- **Action 5*:** Modify recreational management measures

Table A-3. Average number of Snowy Grouper landed by the recreational sector by wave from the South Atlantic from 2015 to 2019. The landings included trips reported from Monroe County, FL. The confidence interval was developed based on the standard deviation of the five years.

Wave	Average	Confidence Interval	Avg Number Per Month
Jan-Feb	351	0 - 1,372	175.5
Mar-Apr	395	0 - 1,256	197.5
May-Jun	2,354	0 - 5,520	1,177.00
Jul-Aug	1,674	138 - 3,210	837
Sep-Oct	45	0 - 230	22.5
Nov-Dec	30	0 - 163	15

Action 2 Alternative	Recreational Allocation	Recreational ACL (Numbers of Fish)	Predicted Season Length*
Alternative 1 (No Action)	17%	2,656	1 wave
Alternative 2	12.5%	1,953	1 wave
Alternative 3	26.6%	4,156	2 waves

*Prediction based on landings from 2015-2019 by waves with a standard deviation of +/- 1.96 . Allocations are based on ACL=ABC within Action 1.



Potential Action 5 Discussion



- **Action 5*: Modify recreational management measures**
 - The Council reviewed the AP's recommendation for a recreational stamp/endorsement for deepwater species
 - The Council formed the Recreational Workgroup to explore how to build a stamp/endorsement program
 - Any additional recreational modifications the AP recommends?
 - Gear restrictions?
 - Single hook rigs?



Potential Action 6



- **Action 6*: Modify recreational accountability measures**
 - The Council requested a review of the post-season recreational accountability measures
 - Current post-season AM:
 - Trigger:
 - ☑ recreational ACL exceeded
 - ☑ total ACL is exceeded
 - ☑ stock if overfished
 - Post-season AM:
 - Reduce the length of the following recreational season
 - Reduce the recreational ACL by the overage of the sector ACL



Potential Action 6 Discussion



- **Action 6*:** Modify recreational accountability measures
- Snowy grouper currently has an in-season AM, however it is not practical due to data availability
- Does the AP recommend modifying the recreational accountability measure?
- If so, what changes does the AP recommend?
- Would the AP consider a 3yr average option as a post season AM trigger?

