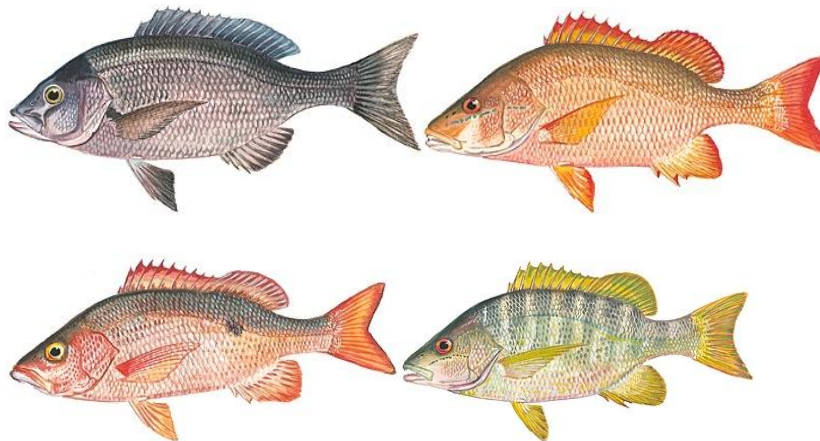




# DECISION DOCUMENT

## With September 2014 Council Motions

**Amendment 35 to the Fishery Management Plan  
For the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region:  
Remove Black Snapper, Dog Snapper,  
Mahogany Snapper, & School Master  
from the Snapper Grouper FMU**



**OCTOBER 7, 2014**

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## **BACKGROUND – WHY ARE WE HERE?**

- 1. Landings of black snapper, dog snapper, mahogany snapper, and school master are very low especially in states other than Florida** – landings data for these 4 species is discussed in **Appendix B**.
- 2. South Atlantic Council has removed other species** – The South Atlantic Council removed 13 species from the Snapper Grouper FMU through the Comprehensive ACL Amendment (SAFMC 2011) due to low landings and the high percentage of landings in Florida state waters. The South Atlantic Council also removed blue runner from the Snapper Grouper FMP through Amendment 27 (SAFMC 2013) due in part to the large percentage of landings (99%) in waters off Florida and the fact that the State of Florida was willing to extend existing regulations into federal waters and put in place any other management measures the state deems appropriate for the sustainable management of the species.
- 3. Gulf Council removed these species from the Reef Fish FMU in 2011** – The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council removed these 4 species and Nassau grouper from their Reef Fish Fishery Management Unit in their Final Generic Annual Catch Limit/Accountability Measures Amendment dated September 2011 (GMFMC 2011) due to low landings. It was agreed that the South Atlantic Council would assume responsibility for managing Nassau Grouper in the Gulf and this was done in Amendment 27 (SAFMC 2013).
- 4. So who would manage these species?**
  - a. Representatives from the State of Florida have requested the South Atlantic Council remove these 4 species from the Snapper Grouper FMP.
  - b. Florida regulations would be extended into federal waters off Florida. The State of Florida is willing to extend existing regulations into federal waters and put in place any other management measures the state deems appropriate for the sustainable management of these species.

## PURPOSE & NEED FOR ACTION

**Purpose:** The purpose of Amendment 35 is to: remove 4 species from the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit (FMU) that do not need federal management. Taking into account mandated specifications to provide ACLs and AMs for species in a fishery management plan other than annual stocks or designated ecosystem component species, the Council is simplifying its system of ACLs by removing some of the less frequently landed species that are not in need of federal management.

**Need:** The need for Amendment 35 is to: Simplify federal management without reducing the protection for 4 species rarely caught in states other than Florida.

### SEPTEMBER COUNCIL ACTION:

MOTION: APPROVE THE PURPOSE AND NEED FOR SNAPPER GROUPE  
AMENDMENT 35.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

The Council is considering the following actions in Amendment 35:

- Remove the following species from the Snapper Grouper FMU:
  - Black Snapper (*Apsilus dentatus*)
  - Dog Snapper (*Lutjanus jocu*)
  - Mahogany Snapper (*Lutjanus mahogoni*)
  - Schoolmaster (*Lutjanus apodus*)
  
- Address the golden tilefish endorsement issue

## **Action 1. Remove species from the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit (FMU)**

**Alternative 1. No Action.** Retain the four species in the Snapper Grouper FMU.

**Alternative 2.** Remove black snapper (*Apsilus dentatus*) from the Snapper Grouper FMU.

**Alternative 3.** Remove dog snapper (*Lutjanus jocu*) from the Snapper Grouper FMU.

**Alternative 4.** Remove mahogany snapper (*Lutjanus mahogoni*) from the Snapper Grouper FMU.

**Alternative 5.** Remove schoolmaster (*Lutjanus apodus*) from the Snapper Grouper FMU.

**Scoping Comments** – 1 comment was received from Southeastern Fisheries Association (SFA), East Coast Fisheries Section (ECFS). SFA ECFS supports the actions to remove black snapper, dog snapper, mahogany snapper, and schoolmaster from the Snapper Grouper FMU.

### **SEPTEMBER COUNCIL ACTION:**

MOTION: MODIFY AND APPROVE THE WORDING OF ACTION 1 AND THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES.  
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE  
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Note: The Council modified Alternative 2 to remove “four” from the wording of the action and to have each species included as a separate alternative. This revision is shown above.

## **Action 2. Address the Golden Tilefish Endorsement Issue**

**Alternative 1. No Action.**

**Alternative 2.** See **Attachment 6b** for the alternatives.

### **SEPTEMBER COUNCIL ACTION:**

MOTION: ADD AN ACTION TO AMENDMENT 35 TO ADDRESS GOLDEN TILEFISH ENDORSEMENT ISSUE.

\*\*\*DIRECTION TO STAFF: MODIFY THE P&N OF AM 35 AS APPROPRIATE\*\*\*

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

## What Next?

At the September 2014 meeting, the Council reviewed scoping comments and provided guidance to staff for alternatives to be analyzed. The Council added an action to address the golden tilefish endorsement issue. At the December 2014 meeting, the Council will choose which of these alternatives will be included for public hearings to be held in January/February 2015.

**Public hearings for Amendment 35** are currently scheduled as shown below. The Council provided guidance on format, dates, and locations at the September 2015 meeting. The public hearing document, PowerPoint presentation, and video presentation will be made available on the Council's website prior to the public hearings. An informal question/answer webinar will be held prior to the public hearings.

### **DRAFT DATES & REQUESTED LOCATIONS.**

**The public hearings will begin at 5:30 or 6:00 p.m. Staff will give a presentation, questions will be answered, and then public testimony taken all in the same room.**

<b><u>January 13, 2015</u></b> Key West, Florida  Same hotel as Joint South Florida Amendment meeting	<b><u>January 21, 2015</u></b> DoubleTree by Hilton Cocoa Beach Oceanfront 2080 N. Atlantic Avenue Cocoa Beach, FL 32931 Phone: 321-783-9222
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**Written comments must be received by 5 P.M. on February 2, 2015.** All comments will be considered by the Council in drafting Snapper Grouper Amendment 35. There will be a number of opportunities to provide public input if the Council moves forward to develop an amendment. A simplified schematic of the Council process is presented in **Appendix A.**

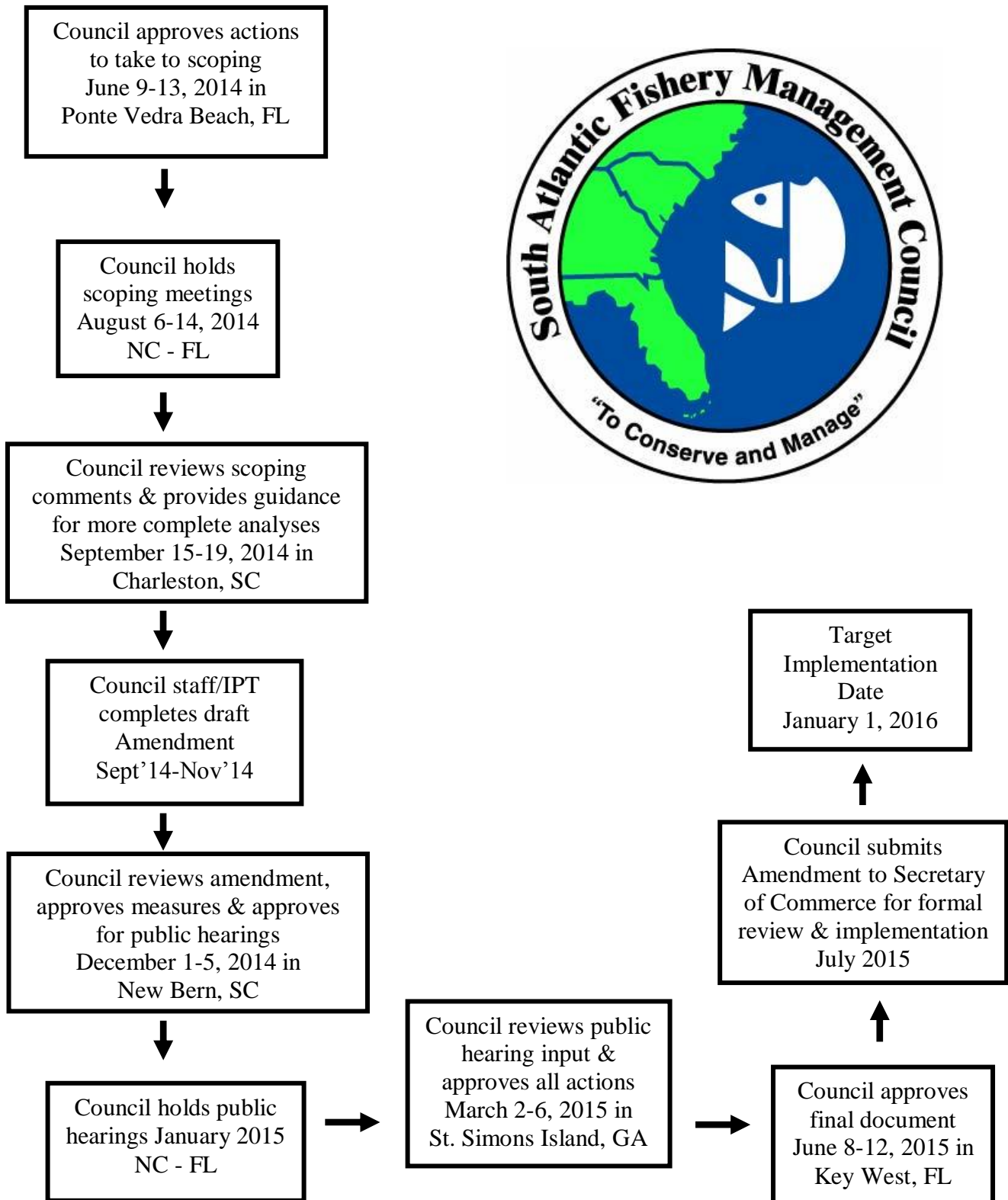
## References

GMFMC (Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council). 2011. Final Generic Amendment Annual Catch Limits/Accountability Measures Amendment for the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's Red Drum, Reef Fish, Shrimp, Coral and Coral Reefs Fishery Management Plan. Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 2203 North Lois Avenue, Suite 1100, Tampa, Florida 33607.

SAFMC (South Atlantic Fishery Management Council). 2011. Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment for the South Atlantic Region with Final Environmental Impact Statement, Regulatory Flexibility Analysis, Regulatory Impact Review, and Social Impact Assessment/Fishery Impact Statement. South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Ste 201, Charleston, S.C. 29405. 755 pp. plus appendices. Available online at: [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net)

SAFMC (South Atlantic Fishery Management Council). 2013. Snapper Grouper Amendment 27 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region. South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Ste 201, Charleston, S.C. 29405. Available online at: [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net)

**Appendix A.** A Simplified Schematic of the Council Process for this amendment.





## **Appendix B. Landings data for these 4 specie off NC, SC, GA, and FL**

**Note:** The bulk of commercial landings and headboat landings for these species are confidential and cannot be presented. A general discussion for each species is presented to give an idea of the level of landings for each species.

**Source:** Mike Errigo, SAFMC Staff, compiled 1986 through 2012 landings from the NMFS SERO ACL Database.

### **Black Snapper**

Total landings (recreational and commercial) of black snapper were 0 pounds whole weight (lb ww) from 1986 through 1990; less than 500 lb ww in 1991 and 1992; less than 5,000 lb ww in 1993 and 1994; less than 600 lb ww with some years of 0 lb ww from 1995 through 2010; and 0 lb ww in 2011 and 2012. There were no landings of black snapper in Georgia through North Carolina from 1986 through 2012.

### **Dog Snapper**

Total landings (recreational and commercial) of dog snapper were less than 8,000 pounds whole weight (lb ww) from 1986 through 2012 except 2007 when landings increased to less than 25,000 lb ww. Total landings in Georgia through North Carolina from 1986 through 2005 were 0 lb ww except 2000 when total landings were less than 6,000 lb ww; from 2006 through 2012, total landings were less than 400 lb ww.

### **Mahogany Snapper**

Total landings (recreational and commercial) of mahogany snapper were less than 600 pounds whole weight (lb ww) from 1986 through 2012 except 1999 and 2007 when landings increased to less than 4,000 lb ww. There were no landings of mahogany snapper in Georgia through North Carolina from 1986 through 2012.

### **Schoolmaster**

Total landings (recreational and commercial) of schoolmaster were less than 15,000 pounds whole weight (lb ww) from 1986 through 2012. There were no landings of schoolmaster in Georgia through North Carolina from 1986 through 2012 except 1995 when less than 5 lb ww were landed.