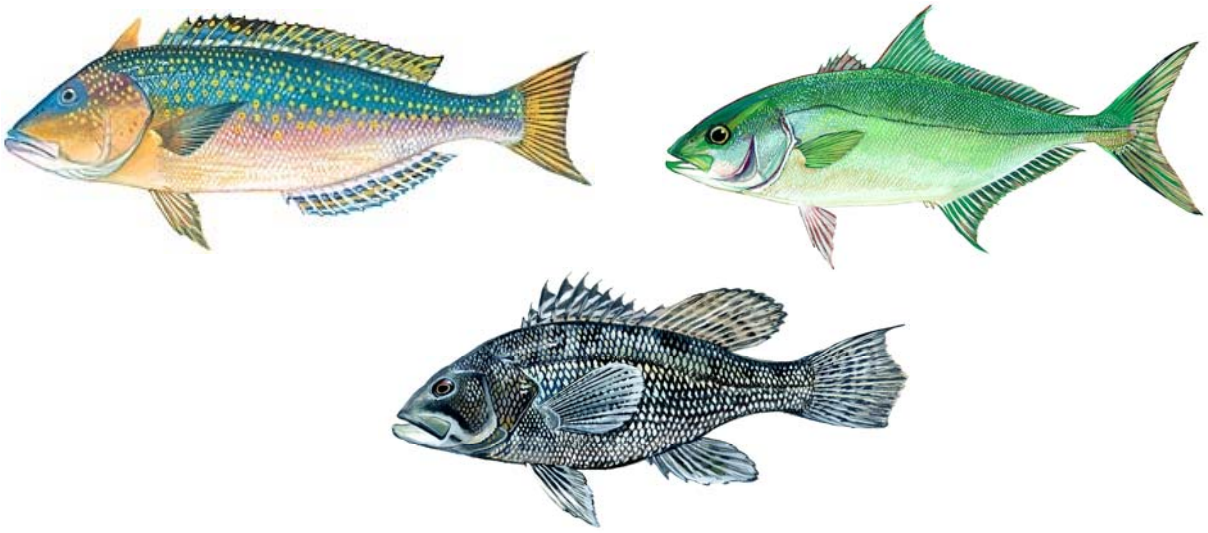

Regulatory Amendment 23
to the Fishery Management Plan
for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region

DECISION DOCUMENT

September 2015

Background

At their October 2014 meeting, the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP) recommended the Council revise the fishing year start date for the commercial hook-and-line sector of the golden tilefish fishery. The AP recommended a start date of March 15. The recommendation was aimed at separating when the longline sector and the hook-and-line sector can operate since the fishing year for both sectors begins on January 1. Golden tilefish can only be harvested commercially using longline gear by 23 vessels that obtained endorsements and under a trip limit of 4,000 pounds. Since the endorsement program became effective, the ACL for the longline component has been met very early in the season (5 March in 2014 and 19 February in 2015). Fishermen who harvest golden tilefish using hook-and-line claim that the market is flooded early in the year so they would prefer to begin fishing on their quota after the longliners have met theirs to increase the value of their product and extend the time that golden tilefish is available to consumers. Therefore, the Council wants to explore options in Regulatory Amendment 23 to change the fishing year start date for the golden tilefish hook-and-line sector.

In December 2014, the Council expressed concern over the ACL for almaco jack being caught very early. Also, the species is encountered very frequently when fishing commercially for other snapper grouper species. A trip limit would allow the ACL to last longer and fishermen would benefit economically, especially once the ACLs for other, more popular species, are met. In March 2015, the Council directed staff to explore options to disaggregate the Jacks Complex and establish a commercial trip limit for almaco jack. The Council was scheduled to review preliminary analyses on these items at their June 2015 meeting; however, due to timing constraints, the Council was not able to review the analyses. Instead the Council requested that scoping be conducted to explore options for a commercial trip limit for the Jacks Complex.

Regulatory Amendment 9 (SAFMC 2010) implemented a reduction in the bag limit for black sea bass from 15 fish to 5 fish. This change became effective on June 22, 2011. At that time, the Council provided the following rationale for their decision:

"The Council chose as their preferred alternative a reduction in the bag limit from 15 fish to 5 fish (**Preferred Sub-Alternative 13b**). Their decision was based on public support for a reduced bag limit and the fact that a large percentage of recreational trips result in approximately 5 black sea bass per person. Hence the Council considered this appropriate as an interim measure until the results of the stock assessment are available late in 2011. Data presented to the Council in March indicate that if the recreational ACL remains at 409,000 pounds gutted weight, it is projected that the season would close on March 6, 2012 assuming the 2011/12 catch rate is similar to the 2010/2011 catch rate. It is important to note that current regulations dictate that the recreational ACL be reduced by the amount of the overage during the following fishing season. At the same time, the black sea bass population is continuing to grow such that the encounters will be more frequent and individual fish will weigh more resulting in the ACL being reached sooner. All this points to a projected closing date sooner than March 6, 2012. The Council's intent is to have this bag limit reduction in place by the start of the next fishing year on

June 1, 2011. The Council recognizes that the recreational ACL for the 2011/12 fishing year that begins on June 1st will be reduced by the amount of the recreational overage and expects the reduced bag limit to help lengthen the season."

Since then, the recreational ACL for black sea bass increased substantially (from 482,620 lbs ww to 1,033,980 lbs ww) and the stock assessment indicated that black sea bass in the South Atlantic are neither overfished nor undergoing overfishing (SEDAR 25 Update 2013).

Purpose and Need

The *purpose* of Regulatory Amendment 23 is to shift the fishing year start date of the commercial hook-and line component for the golden tilefish portion of the snapper grouper fishery, establish a commercial trip limit for the Jacks Complex, and modify he recreational bag limit for black sea bass.

The *need* for this amendment is to optimize harvest and profitability for fishermen participating in the commercial golden tilefish and Jack Complex portions of the snapper grouper fishery, and to increase the opportunity of the black sea bass recreational annual catch limit (ACL) being landed.

COMMITTEE ACTION:
OPTION 1. ACCEPT THE PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENTS AS PRESENTED AND APPROVE.

OPTION 2. MODIFY THE PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENTS AND APPROVE.

OPTION 3. OTHER?

Possible Actions and Alternatives

Action 1. Modify the fishing year start date for the hook-and-line sector of the commercial golden tilefish fishery

Alternative 1 (No action). Do not modify the fishing year start date for the hook-and-line sector of the commercial golden tilefish fishery. The fishing year begins on January 1 and ends on December 31.

Alternative 2. Change the fishing year for the hook-and-line sector of the commercial golden tilefish fishery to:

Sub-alternative 2a. March 1 to February 28/29
Sub-alternative 2b. April 1 to March 31
Sub-alternative 2c. May 1 to April 30

Alternative 3. Allow the start date of the fishing year for the hook-and-line sector to coincide with closure of the longline sector.

Snapper Grouper AP Recommendations:

MOTION: AP REQUESTS THAT THE COUNCIL ALSO CONSIDER A START DATE FOR THE HOOK AND LINE SECTOR OF MARCH 15
APPROVED BY AP

- The AP did not support inclusion of Alternative 3, but did not make a motion to that effect.
- AP members stated that the intent of modifying the fishing year start date for the hook-and-line sector is to bring back the fall fishery.

Socio-Economic Sub-Panel (SEP) Recommendations:

- The effects of changing the hook and line fishing year should consider how ITQ-managed Gulf and Mid-Atlantic golden tile fisheries interact with the market for the South Atlantic golden tilefish (i.e., do the Gulf and Mid-Atlantic plan based on the South Atlantic openings, and does this lessen the derby conditions?)
- The SEP recommends examining price on a monthly basis to determine if the derby fishing conditions are hurting the overall performance of the fishery.

Discussion and preliminary data summary/analysis:

Golden tilefish data for 2000-2013 were obtained from the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) annual catch limit (ACL) Dataset (accessed July 2014). Additional data for 2014 and 2015 were obtained from the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) trip ticket data warehouse. Data were summarized as pounds whole weight (lbs ww) by month and gear (i.e., 'longline' and 'other'). Gears other than longline were assigned to the 'hook-and-line' ACL and included hook-and-line, handline, and trawls. Effort and catch-per-unit effort (CPUE)

data were attained from the SEFSC's commercial Coastal Logbook program (accessed July 2015).

Due to the numerous quota closures in the golden tilefish commercial landings time series, a variety of projection methods were used to capture the uncertainty in monthly catch rates:

- Constant 2015 catch rates
- Constant 2014 catch rates
- Average 2012-2014 catch rates
- Seasonal Auto-Regressive Integrated Moving Average (SARIMA) regression model

To predict precise closure dates and to utilize landings data from months subject to historical quota closures, projections were run on daily catch rates that assumed landings were uniformly distributed within months. For scenarios using observed historical catch rates, months without data were backfilled using SARIMA model fits for that month. Mean monthly price per pound was derived from the SEFSC ACL Dataset and values from 2013 were assumed to persist for 2014-2016 for projection purposes. Total effort from the Coastal Logbook was expressed as hook-hours. Standardized CPUE was computed by gear following methods described in SEDAR (2008) and Farmer (2014). Standardized CPUEs for 2014 were assumed constant for 2015-2016. Total fishing season days were computed by summing the number of days open to golden tilefish harvest, by gear, in federal waters, for each season; 2015 fishing season days were assumed to be 365.

Monthly commercial longline landings for golden tilefish have historically been higher than hook-and-line landings (**Figure 1**), with a monthly peak of 314,480 lb ww in January 2014. The onset of early closures appears to have created a derby condition (i.e., "a race to fish") for both gear types, which was characterized by high monthly landings at the opening of the fishing season and early quota closures. This condition appears somewhat reduced for hook-and-line in 2015.

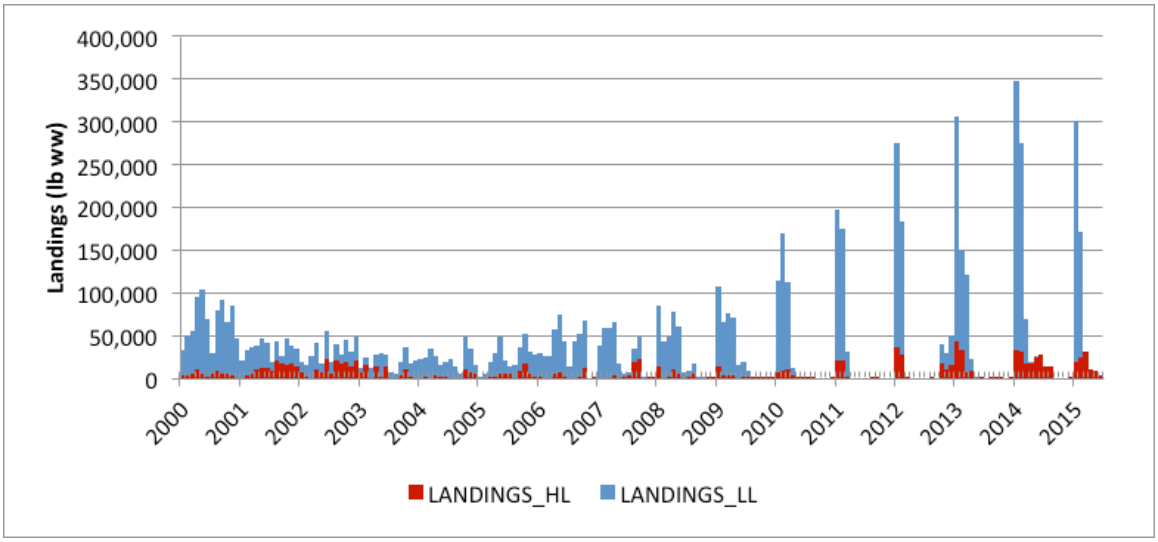

Figure 1. Monthly commercial landings, in pounds whole weight, of golden tilefish in South Atlantic waters by longline and hook and line gear. Source: SEFSC ACL Data and ACCSP Trip Tickets.

Monthly price per pound has increased through time, with hook and line sometimes earning slightly more per pound (**Figure 2**). Pricing has been consistent between the two gear types in recent years and has been relatively high despite possible market saturation.

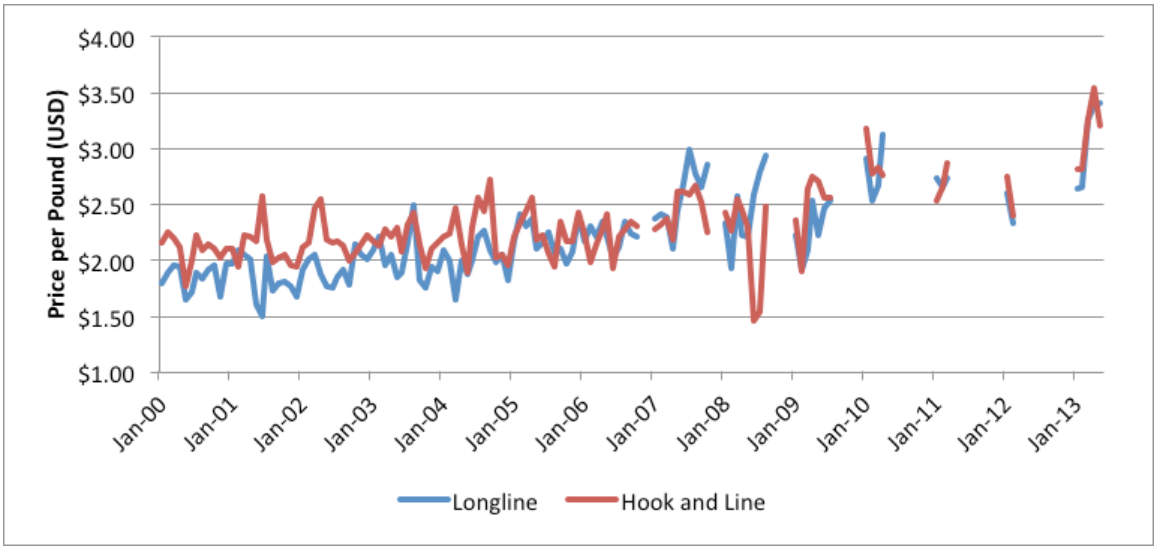

Figure 2. Monthly commercial price per pound, in non-adjusted U.S. Dollars, of golden tilefish in South Atlantic waters for longline and hook and line gear. Source: SEFSC ACL Data.

Standardized CPUE for commercial golden tilefish landed by longline was relatively low until 2005, then increased through 2010 and fell from 2010-2014 (**Figure 3**). Standardized CPUE for commercial golden tilefish landed by hook and line has increased steadily since 2003 (**Figure 4**).

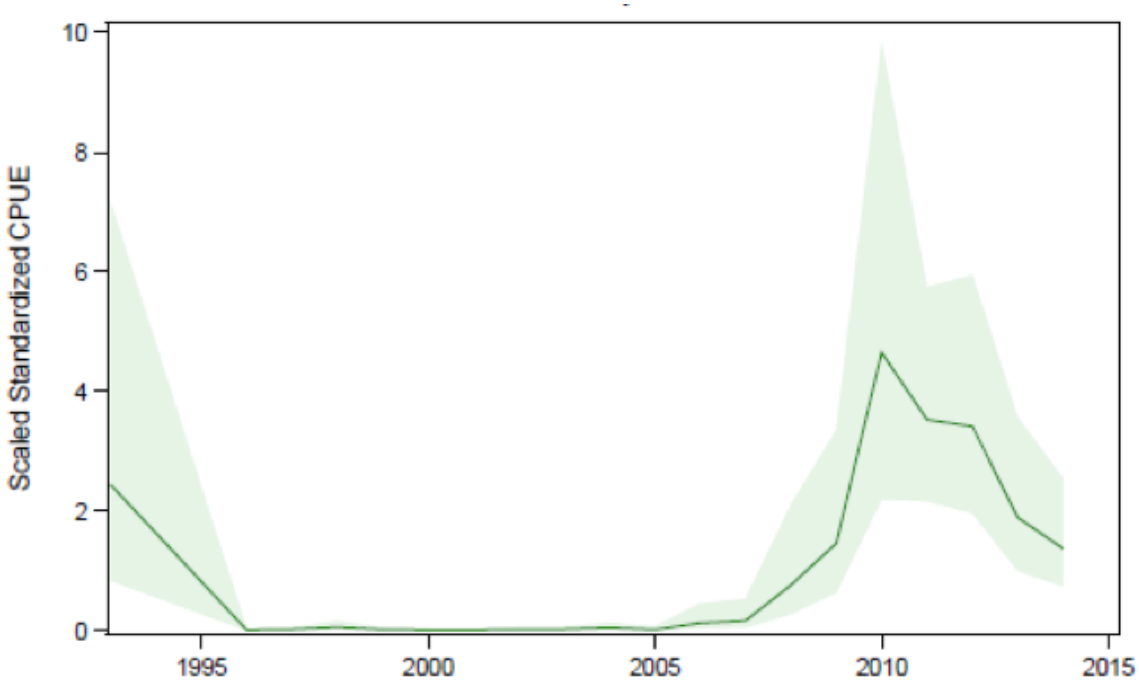

Figure 3. Monthly commercial standardized CPUE for golden tilefish in South Atlantic waters for **longline gear**, with delta-lognormal regression model factors of year and area. Green band denotes 95% confidence interval. Source: SEFSC Coastal Logbook (July 2015).

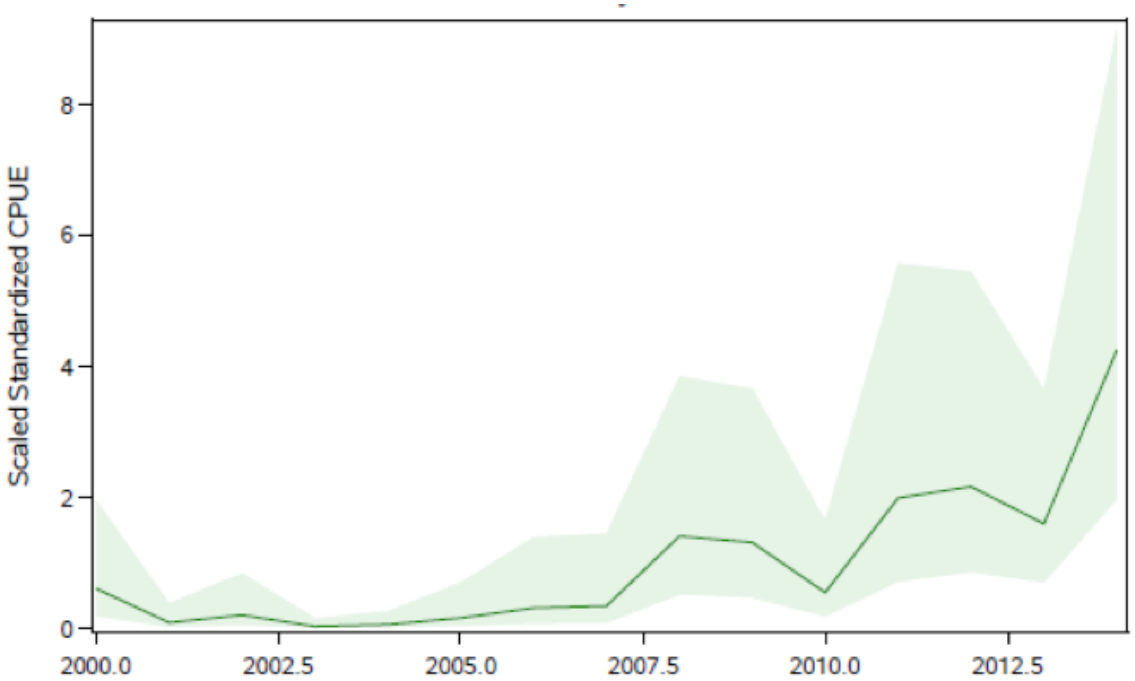

Figure 4. Monthly commercial standardized CPUE for golden tilefish in South Atlantic waters for **hook-and-line gear**, with delta-lognormal regression model factors of year and area. Green band denotes 95% confidence interval. Source: SEFSC Coastal Logbook (July 2015).

Due to quota closures, the length of the federal fishing season for golden tilefish (both gear types combined) declined steadily from 2005-2012 (**Figure 5**). In 2012, Amendment 18B specified separate quotas for the hook-and-line sector and longline sector. Since then, the length of the hook-and-line fishing season has increased steadily The longline season increased slightly 2012-2013, but declined from 2013-2015 (**Figure 5**).

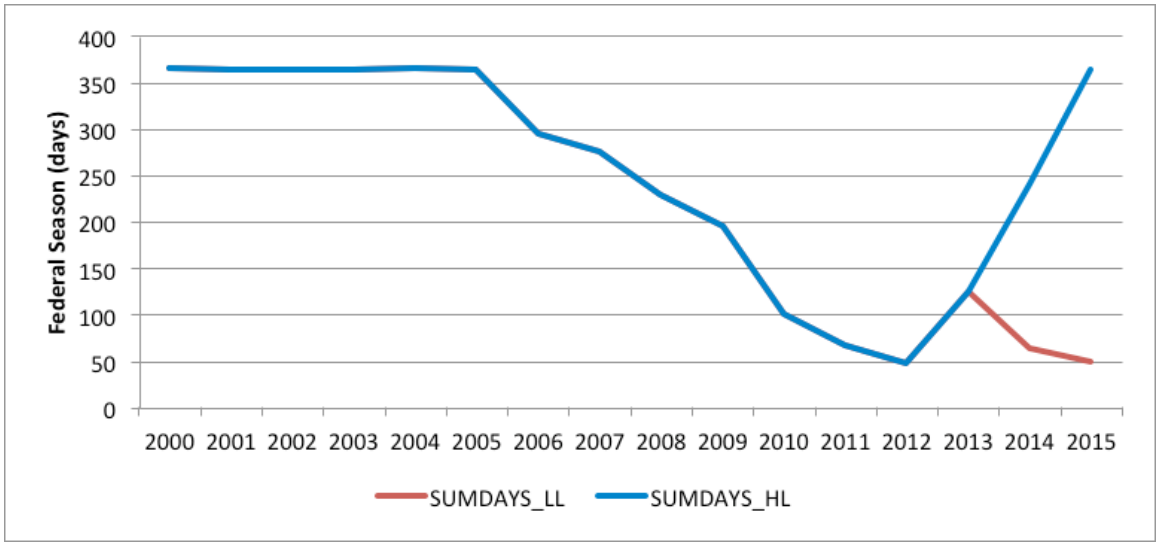

Figure 5. Monthly commercial effort for golden tilefish in South Atlantic waters, by gear. Source: SEFSC Coastal Logbook (July 2015).

Predicted monthly catch rates for the four scenarios and two gear are presented in **Table 1**. In general, projections for late season catch rates were less robust than projections for early season catch rates, which would be expected given the many years of early quota closures in the input data. Longline catch rates were much higher than hook and line daily catch rates. SARIMA modeled catch rates were higher than catch rates based on recent landings for most months.

Projected landings and closure dates are presented in **Table 2**. Longline projections were robust to uncertainty, with closure dates ranging from February 1 to February 15. Projected closure dates for hook-and-line gear were more uncertain. Under **Alternative 1** (**No Action**; January 1 opening), hook-and-line closure dates for the 2016 fishing year ranged from May 28 to October 28. Under **Sub-alternative 2a** (March 1 opening), projected hook-and-line closure dates for the 2016/17 fishing season ranged from October 31-February 11. Under **Sub-alternative 2b** (April 1 opening), projected hook-and-line closure dates for the 2016/17 fishing season ranged from January 5, 2017 to March 18, 2017. Under **Sub-alternative 2c** (May 1 opening), projected hook-and-line closure dates for the 2016/17 fishing season ranged from January 21, 2017 to March 27, 2017. Under **Alternative 3**, which would start the hook-and-line fishing year to start when the longline sector closed, projected hook-and-line closure dates for the 2016/17 fishing season ranged from August 23, 2016 to January 26, 2017.

Table 1. Predicted catch rates (lbs ww/day) for commercial golden tilefish in 2016, by month and gear.

	Hook and Line				Longline			
Month	**const 2015**	**const 2014**	**avg '12-'14**	**SARIMA**	**const 2015**	**const 2014**	**avg '12-'14**	**SARIMA**
1	611	1,061	1,213	498	9,120	10,145	8,787	12,534
2	877	1,152	1,648	802	7,730	8,700	8,822	11,248
3	1,031	594	646	1,227	11,533	10,218	7,521	13,605
4	337	572	505	242	10,881	9,167	7,924	12,596
5	265	768	526	54	10,852	9,138	7,895	12,567
6	116	922	370	116	10,816	9,101	7,858	12,530
7	117	450	150	450	10,785	9,070	7,827	12,499
8	489	477	220	500	10,683	8,969	7,726	12,398
9	49	49	49	9	10,535	8,820	7,577	12,249
10	587	575	564	598	11,486	9,771	8,528	13,200
11	304	292	281	315	11,176	9,462	8,219	12,891
12	147	136	124	158	10,583	8,868	7,625	12,297

Table 2. Predicted commercial golden tilefish landings (lbs ww) and quota closure dates for the 2016/2017 season under different Regulatory Amendment 23 alternatives, by month and gear (HL: hook-and-line, LL: longline).

		HOOK AND LINE				LONGLINE			
Alternative	**Variable**	**constant 2015**	**constant 2014**	**avg 2012-2014**	**SARIMA**	**constant 2015**	**constant 2014**	**avg 2012-2014**	**SARIMA**
Alt. 1: Both Jan 1-Dec 31	Landings	135,275	135,288	135,306	135,182	127,683	131,879	131,804	125,340
	Closure	10/28/16	06/10/16	05/28/16	10/27/16	No Closure	No Closure	No Closure	No Closure
Alt. 2a: LL Jan 1-Dec 31, HL Mar 1-Feb 28/29	Landings	134,477	135,198	134,406	134,942	398,676	401,478	404,718	399,801
	Closure	02/11/17	10/31/16	01/24/17	02/08/17	02/15/16	02/10/16	02/15/16	02/01/16
Alt. 2b: LL Jan 1-Dec 31, HL Apr 1-Mar 31	Landings	134,944	134,922	135,054	135,038	398,676	401,478	404,718	399,801
	Closure	03/17/17	01/05/17	02/07/17	03/18/17	02/15/16	02/10/16	02/15/16	02/01/16
Alt. 2c: LL Jan 1-Dec 31, HL May 1-Apr 30	Landings	135,146	135,305	135,236	135,147	398,676	401,478	404,718	399,801
	Closure	03/27/17	01/21/17	02/16/17	03/24/17	02/15/16	02/10/16	02/15/16	02/01/16
Alt. 3: LL Jan 1-Dec 31, HL opens when LL closes	Landings	135,314	135,280	135,281	135,317	398,676	401,478	404,718	399,801
	Closure	01/26/17	08/23/16	01/04/17	12/24/16	02/15/16	02/10/16	02/15/16	02/01/16

COMMITTEE ACTION:

OPTION 1. CONSIDER THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 1, MODIFY AS NEEDED, AND APPROVE.

OPTION 2. ADD A NEW SUB-ALTERNATIVE 2C. MARCH 15 – MARCH 14.

OPTION 3. SELECT A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE.

OPTION 4. OTHER?

Action 2. Establish a commercial trip limit for the Jacks Complex

Alternative 1 (No Action). Do not establish a commercial trip limit for the Jacks Complex. There is currently no commercial trip limit for the Jacks Complex. A greater amberjack commercial trip limit of 1,200 lbs gutted weigh (gw) is currently in effect.

Alternative 2. Establish a commercial trip limit for the Jacks Complex of X lbs ww.

Alternative 3. Establish a trip limit for the Jacks Complex and greater amberjack of X lbs ww.

Snapper Grouper AP Recommendations:

MOTION: RECOMMEND THE COUNCIL CONSIDER COMMERCIAL TRIP LIMITS OF 300-500 POUNDS FOR ALMACO JACK
APPROVED BY AP (3 OPPOSED)

MOTION: RECOMMEND THE COUNCIL CONSIDER A RECREATIONAL BAG LIMIT OF 1 FISH PER PERSON FOR ALMACO JACK
APPROVED BY AP (2 OPPOSED)

MOTION: RECOMMEND THE COUNCIL CONSIDER ESTABLISHING A MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT FOR ALMACO JACK
APPROVED BY AP (3 OPPOSED)

Discussion and preliminary data summary/analysis:

Commercial landings (2012-2015) for the Jacks Complex and closure dates due to the commercial ACL being met are shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Commercial landings for the Jacks Complex, 2012-2014.

Species	Fishing Year	Fishing Season	Total Landings	ACL	Quota %	Closure Date
	2015	Jan 1 - Dec 31	231,248	189,422	122	6/23/16
Jacks	2014		283,292	189,422	150	7/15/14
	2013		201,398	189,422	106	6/18/2013
	2012		333,561	193,999	172	7/2/2012

Source: SERO website.

The excerpt below illustrates the rationale for the creation of the Jacks Complex (excerpted and edited from SERO-LAPP-2010-06: Species Groupings for SAFMC Snapper Grouper FMU, February 15, 2011. Appendix O in the Comprehensive ACL Amendment):

The three managed jack species (e.g., greater amberjack, banded rudderfish, and almaco jack) were most frequently encountered by the Headboat Survey (HBS) and Commercial Vertical Line (CVL) sectors. In the HBS, almaco jack and greater amberjack

clustered tightly with each other. In the CVL, no strong associations between jacks were observed. Data from trained observers in the Reef Fish Observer Program (RFOP) suggested some association between banded rudderfish and almaco jack. A cluster of the MRFSS data suggested associations between all the jack species. Analyses suggest moderate levels of cluster association between the jack species. SEDAR 15 (2009) concluded that almaco jack were correctly identified in most instances, but smaller greater amberjack and banded rudderfish were often misidentified. Issues with misidentification might lead to issues computing single-species ACLs for these species unless the rate of misidentification is quantifiable or has been (and remains) constant through time. The use of a 'Jacks' complex would mitigate issues with species identification by regulating misidentified species together. These findings are reasonably consistent with Shertzer and Williams (2008); using hierarchical cluster analysis, they identified a complex including banded rudderfish and almaco jack in the HBS, and greater amberjack and almaco jack in the commercial sector. Lesser amberjack, which was added to the list of species requiring an ACL in December 2010, would fit well into the banded rudderfish and almaco jack complex. Atlantic spadefish and blue runner are probably best-suited to individual management, given the unique angling techniques to pursue these stocks.

Estimates of the amount of fish that would be landed under various trip limit alternatives are shown in **Tables 4** and **5** for the Jacks Complex (almaco jack, banded rudderfish, and lesser amberjack) and the Jacks Complex and greater amberjack, respectively. Greater amberjack is not included in the Jacks Complex and a commercial trip limit of 1,200 lbs gutted weigh (gw) is currently in effect.

Table 4. Pounds landed (lbs ww) and projected percent that would be landed under various trip limits for Jacks Complex (lesser amberjack, banded rudderfish, and almaco jack).

	2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		MEAN 2010-2014	
Trip Limit (lbs ww)	Lbs	%	Lbs	%	Lbs	%	Lbs	%	Lbs	%	Lbs	%
No trip limit	266,450	100	343,858	100	327,121	100	203,902	100	226,345	100	273,535	100
2000	265,114	99.5	340,387	99	322,080	98.5	202,182	99.2	223,699	98.8	270,692	99
1500	262,513	98.5	334,115	97.2	312,365	95.5	199,425	97.8	218,731	96.6	265,430	97.1
1000	250,584	94	312,822	91	287,950	88	191,019	93.7	207,525	91.7	249,980	91.7
750	236,612	88.8	289,453	84.2	264,689	80.9	181,861	89.2	197,058	87.1	233,935	86
500	210,922	79.2	253,215	73.6	228,067	69.7	165,232	81	178,006	78.6	207,088	76.4
400	195,329	73.3	231,475	67.3	207,638	63.5	153,893	75.5	164,531	72.7	190,573	70.5
300	173,852	65.2	204,005	59.3	181,344	55.4	136,654	67	145,721	64.4	168,315	62.3
250	160,165	60.1	186,964	54.4	164,958	50.4	125,106	61.4	133,627	59	154,164	57.1
200	142,951	53.7	166,736	48.5	145,457	44.5	110,709	54.3	119,027	52.6	136,976	50.8

Source: NMFS SERO

Table 5. Pounds landed (lbs ww) and projected percent that would be landed under various trip limits for All Jacks (greater amberjack, lesser amberjack, banded rudderfish, and almaco jack).

	2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		MEAN 2010-2014	
Trip Limit (lbs ww)	Lbs	%	Lbs	%	Lbs	%	Lbs	%	Lbs	%	Lbs	%
No trip limit	1,249,215	100	1,299,152	100	1,289,959	100	1,068,641	100	1,164,544	100	1,214,302	100
2000	1,235,010	98.9	1,285,923	99	1,255,649	97.3	1,061,400	99.3	1,157,331	99.4	1,199,063	98.8
1500	1,211,303	97	1,257,690	96.8	1,232,279	95.5	1,048,764	98.1	1,145,186	98.3	1,179,044	97.1
1000	1,105,605	88.5	1,139,962	87.7	1,084,342	84.1	953,463	89.2	1,051,652	90.3	1,067,005	88
750	963,549	77.1	992,993	76.4	929,448	72.1	834,120	78.1	927,787	79.7	929,579	76.7
500	764,898	61.2	788,786	60.7	727,227	56.4	664,702	62.2	747,714	64.2	738,665	61
400	665,000	53.2	686,225	52.8	629,846	48.8	579,101	54.2	652,290	56	642,492	53
300	549,137	44	567,353	43.7	519,546	40.3	478,839	44.8	540,943	46.5	531,164	43.9
250	484,222	38.8	501,073	38.6	457,876	35.5	422,404	39.5	478,156	41.1	468,746	38.7
200	413,382	33.1	428,114	33	390,746	30.3	360,498	33.7	408,645	35.1	400,277	33

Source: NMFS SERO

COMMITTEE ACTION:

OPTION 1. CONSIDER THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 2, SELECT A TRIP LIMIT FOR ALTERNATIVES 2 & 3, MODIFY AS NEEDED, AND APPROVE.

OPTION 2. SELECT A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE.

OPTION 3. OTHER?

Action 3. Adjustment to recreational bag limit of black sea bass

Alternative 1 (No action). Do not adjust the recreational bag limit for black sea bass. The recreational bag limit of black sea bass is 5 fish per person per day.

Alternative 2. Increase the recreational bag limit of black sea bass to 6 fish per person per day.

Alternative 3. Increase the recreational bag limit of black sea bass to 7 fish per person per day.

Alternative 4. Increase the recreational bag limit of black sea bass to 8 fish per person per day.

Alternative 5. Increase the recreational bag limit of black sea bass to 9 fish per person per day.

Alternative 6. Increase the recreational bag limit of black sea bass to 10 fish per person per day.

Snapper Grouper AP Recommendation:

MOTION: AP RECOMMENDS ALTERNATIVE 3 AS PREFERRED

> **Alternative 3.** Increase the recreational bag limit of black sea bass to 7 fish per person per day.

APPROVED BY AP

Discussion and preliminary data summary/analysis:

Potential increases in the number of black sea bass allowed per angler were analyzed with two different methods that modified the trips that met the 5 fish per angler bag limit. Trips that harvested less than 5 fish per angler or more than 5 fish per angler were not modified. The first of the two methods assumed that all trips that met the 5 fish per angler bag limit would also meet the 6-10 fish per angler bag limits. The second method isolated, or "capped" the trips that met the 5 fish bag limit and assumed they met the 6-10 bag limits if those trips also had discards of 1 to 5 black sea bass, respectively. For example, a trip that met the 5 fish bag limit and had at least two discarded black sea bass was analyzed by assuming 7 black sea bass (5 harvested fish plus the 2 discarded fish) could have been harvested for that trip. It must be noted that the second method assumes discarded black sea bass were only discarded because the trip limit was met. However, these discards could have been because these fish were below the minimum size limit of 13 inches total length. The length of the discarded fish is not available so it is not possible to distinguish if the discards were because the fish was below the minimum size. The calculated percent increase in landings for each of the proposed bag limits is shown for the private recreational sector using Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) data in **Tables 6** and **7** for each of the two methods described above, respectively. Similarly, **Tables 8** and **9** present the estimated percent increase in landings for the headboat sector.

Table 6. Projected percent increase in landings under proposed bag limits (Alternatives 2-6) for recreationally harvested South Atlantic black sea bass reported to the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS), assuming potential catch is **unlimited** by anything but the bag limit.

Year	Status Quo	6 fish	7 fish	8 fish	9 fish	10 fish
2012	No change	3%	10%	17%	24%	31%
2013	No change	1%	8%	15%	22%	29%
AVG 2012-2013	No change	2%	9%	16%	23%	30%

Source: SEFSC MRFSS Catch-Effort Files (2014).

Table 7. Projected percent increase in landings under proposed bag limits (Alternatives 2-6) for recreationally harvested South Atlantic black sea bass reported to the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS), assuming potential catch is **capped** by observed total catch (A+B1+B2).

Year	Status Quo	6 fish (capped)	7 fish (capped)	8 fish (capped)	9 fish (capped)	10 fish (capped)
2012	No change	2%	7%	12%	17%	21%
2013	No change	No change	4%	7%	11%	14%
AVG '12-13	No change	1%	5%	10%	14%	17%

Source: SEFSC MRFSS Catch-Effort Files (2014).

Table 8. Projected percent increase in landings under proposed bag limits (Alternatives 2-6) for recreationally harvested South Atlantic black sea bass reported to the Southeast Headboat Survey, assuming potential catch is **unlimited** by anything but the bag limit.

Year	Status Quo	6 fish	7 fish	8 fish	9 fish	10 fish
2012	No change	4%	7%	11%	15%	19%
2013	No change	2%	5%	7%	10%	12%
AVG 2012-2013	No change	3%	6%	9%	12%	15%

Source: SEFSC Headboat Survey Catch-Effort Files (2014).

Table 9. Projected percent increase in landings under proposed bag limits (Alternatives 2-6) for recreationally harvested South Atlantic black sea bass reported to the Southeast Headboat Survey, assuming potential catch is **capped** by captain self-reported discards.

Year	Status Quo	6 fish (capped)	7 fish (capped)	8 fish (capped)	9 fish (capped)	10 fish (capped)
2012	No change	3%	6%	9%	12%	14%
2013	No change	2%	4%	6%	8%	9%
AVG 2012-2013	No change	1%	5%	8%	10%	11%

Source: SEFSC Headboat Survey Catch-Effort Files (2014).

This analysis assumes the same number of anglers make the same number of trips in the future. If the number of anglers or the number of trips increase, the projected change in landings would be higher.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

OPTION 1. CONSIDER THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 3, MODIFY AS NEEDED, AND APPROVE.

OPTION 2. SELECT A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE.

OPTION 3. OTHER?

Timing for Regulatory Amendment 23

- Review scoping comments – September 2015
- Approve for public hearings – December 2015
- Public hearings – Jan/Feb 2016
- Review public comment and approve all actions – March 2016
- Final approval – June 2016

Note: If the Council decides to develop the following items it will impact the timing of Regulatory Amendment 23. The Snapper Grouper Committee should provide some guidance for the Executive Committee on priorities.

1. Dolphin/Wahoo Regulatory Amendment – to establish a commercial trip limit
2. Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment – to modify the blueline ABC/ACL
3. Snapper Grouper Amendment – to address an alternative management program for red snapper

COMMITTEE ACTION:

OTPION 1. APPROVE TIMING OF REGULATORY AMENDMENT 23 AS PRESENTED

OPTION 2. DELAY DEVELOPMENT OF REGULATORY AMENDMENT 23 UNTIL 2016.

OPTION 3. OTHERS?