



DECISION DOCUMENT

**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**



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South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
North Charleston, South Carolina 29405
(843) 571-4366; (843) 769-4520 (FAX)

Website: www.safmc.net Email scoping comments: mike.collins@safmc.net



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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.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

OPTION 1. APPROVE THE PURPOSE AND NEED FOR SNAPPER GROUPE AMENDMENT 35.

OPTION 2. MODIFY AND APPROVE THE PURPOSE AND NEED FOR SNAPPER GROUPE AMENDMENT 35.

OPTION 3. OTHERS??

The Council is considering the following actions in Amendment 35:

- Remove the following 4 species from the Snapper Grouper FMU:
 - Black Snapper (*Apsilus dentatus*)
 - Dog Snapper (*Lutjanus jocu*)
 - Mahogany Snapper (*Lutjanus mahogoni*)
 - Schoolmaster (*Lutjanus apodus*)

Action 1. Remove four 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 the following 4 species from the Snapper Grouper FMU:

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

Sub-Alternative 2b. Remove dog snapper (*Lutjanus jocu*) from the Snapper Grouper FMU.

Sub-Alternative 2c. Remove mahogany snapper (*Lutjanus mahogoni*) from the Snapper Grouper FMU.

Sub-Alternative 2d. 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)(see Attachment 9a). SFA ECFS supports the actions to remove black snapper, dog snapper, mahogany snapper, and schoolmaster from the Snapper Grouper FMU.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

OPTION 1. APPROVE THE WORDING OF ACTION 1 AND THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES.

OPTION 2. MODIFY AND APPROVE THE WORDING OF ACTION 1 AND THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES.

OPTION 3. OTHERS??

What Next?

At the September 2014 meeting, the Council is reviewing scoping comments and providing guidance to staff for alternatives to be analyzed. 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 Committee/Council will provide 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 scoping meetings will begin at 4 p.m. and end at 7 p.m.

January 27, 2015 Bay Watch Resort & Conference Center 2701 S. Ocean Boulevard N. Myrtle Beach, SC 29582 Phone: 843-272-4600	January 28, 2015 DoubleTree by Hilton Atlantic Beach Oceanfront 2717 West Fort Macon Road Atlantic Beach, NC 28512 Phone: 252-240-1155
January 29, 2014 Manteo, NC	
February 2, 2015 Key Largo or Marathon?	February 3, 2015 DoubleTree by Hilton Cocoa Beach Oceanfront 2080 N. Atlantic Avenue Cocoa Beach, FL 32931 Phone: 321-783-9222
February 4, 2015 Wyndham Jacksonville Riverwalk 1515 Prudential Drive Jacksonville, FL 32207 Phone: 904-396-5100	February 5, 2015 Richmond Hill

Written comments must be received by 5 P.M. on February __, 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.**

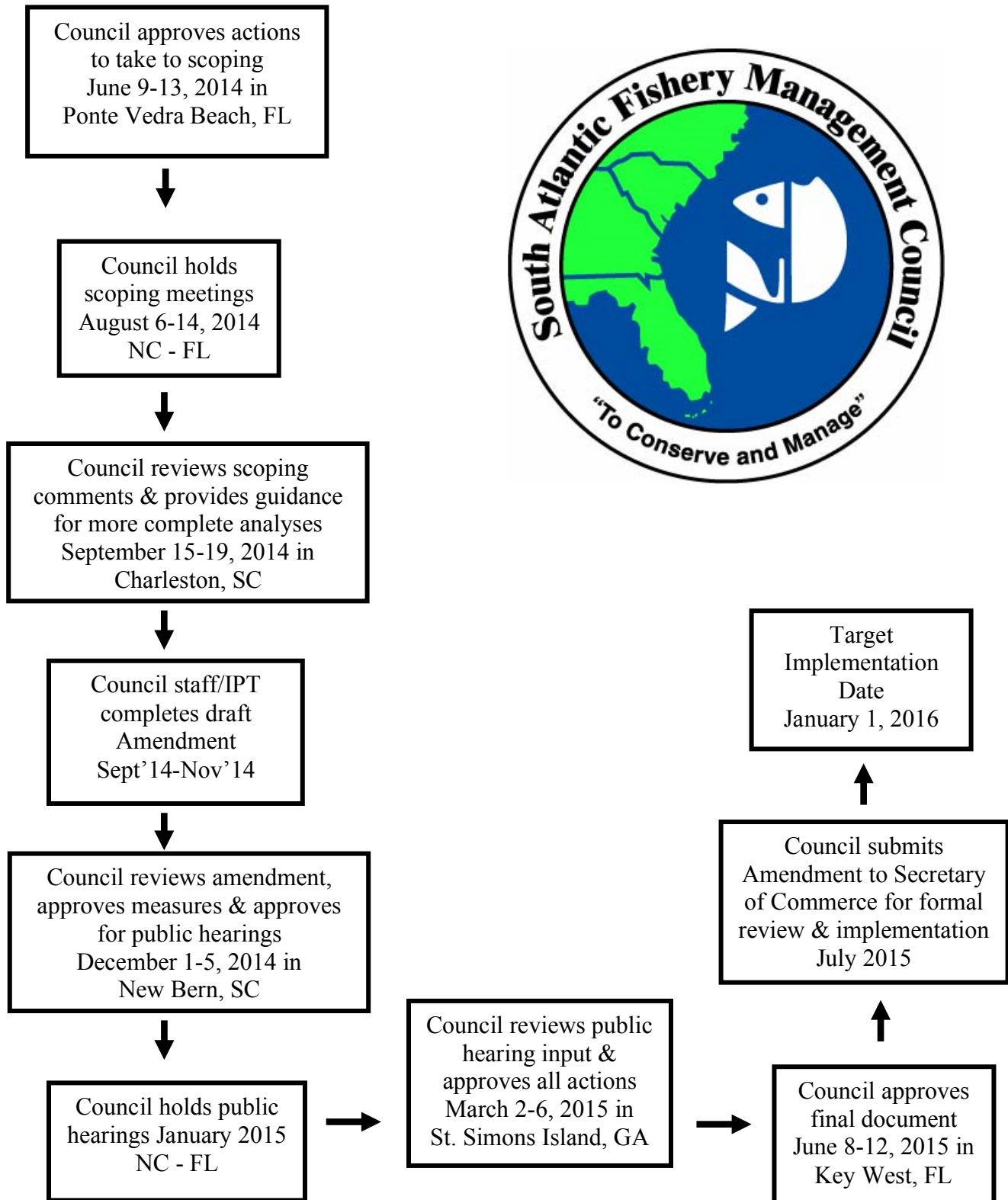
References

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

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

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.