



Content and Status Summary of Amendments and Projects

March 2024

Note: A summary table of progress towards rulemaking and implementation is in Appendix A.

Recently Submitted or Implemented:

Joint Commercial Logbook Amendment

Staff lead: Myra Brouwer

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.

Most recent document: Final Amendment in Administrative Record February 2028

Development level: under review

Key Events:

- March 2022: Council directed staff to begin work on an amendment.
- June 2022: Direction to include the following FMPs in the amendment and work jointly with the Gulf Council: Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, Dolphin Wahoo, and Gulf Reef Fish.
- Fall 2022: Advisory panel meetings in Gulf and South Atlantic (Snapper Grouper, Mackerel Cobia, Reef Fish, Coastal Migratory Pelagics)
- December 2022: revised development timeline (final approval by both councils expected in June 2023)
- March 2023: SA Council approved for public hearings.
- June 2023: presentation from SEFSC on electronic coastal logbook program.
- July 2023: public hearings
- September 2023: SA Council approved for formal review
- October 2023: Gulf Council approved for formal review
- February 2024: Amendment submitted on February 27, 2024

Snapper Grouper

Recently Submitted or Implemented: None

Under Development:

Amendment 48 (Wreckfish ITQ Program Modernization)

Staff Lead: Christina Wiegand

Purpose of Amendment: The Council finished its second review of the Wreckfish ITQ program in September of 2019. As part of the review there were several recommendations made to modernize the program, which will be addressed in this amendment.

Action Summary: moving away from a paper coupon-based program to an electronic program; fishing season; cost recovery; wreckfish permit requirement; allocation issues; offloading sites and times; and monitoring requirements.

Most recent document: March 2024 Draft Amendment

Development Level: Public Hearings

Key Events:

- September 2020: Amendment development initiated.
- October 2020: Meeting of the wreckfish shareholders to discuss amendment development.
- March 2021: Scoping held during the Council meeting.
- September 2021: Decision made to have Amendment 48 come to the Council every other or every third meeting, depending on workload.
- Summer 2022: Meeting of the wreckfish shareholders to discuss amendment development.
- September 2022: selected preferred alternatives and approved document for public hearings at the March 2023 meeting.
- March 2023: public hearings held as part of meeting public comment session, requested the addition of an action to consider hail-in and hail-out requirements.
- April 2023: SG AP input.
- June 2023: Creation of a Wreckfish Advisory Group and Wreckfish Committee
- September 2023: Meeting of the WAG and Sub-Committee
- December 2023: SG Committee reviews and approves Sub-Committee decisions.
- February 2024: Wreckfish Sub-Committee selects preferred alternatives.
- March 2024: SG Committee reviews and approves sub-committee decisions and approves document for public hearings.

Regulatory Amendment 35 (Discard Mortality Reduction and Red Snapper Catch Levels)

Staff Lead: Mike Schmidtke

Purpose of the Amendment: Respond to the latest stock assessment for Red Snapper (SEDAR 73).

Red Snapper are overfished and overfishing is occurring, mainly due to the large number of Red Snapper that die after catch and release. Dead discards are a major issue in the snapper grouper fishery as a whole and affect many species within the complex.

Action Summary: Modify the Red Snapper ABC and ACLs and reduce dead releases in the snapper grouper fishery through prohibiting use of multiple, separate hooks per line by the recreational sector, as well as expansion of best fishing practices outreach and education efforts. These actions are designed to implement Red Snapper catch levels based on the best scientific information available, reduce widespread discarding of snapper grouper species, and address overfishing of red snapper.

Most recent document: Draft Amendment March 2023

Development Level: Final Approval; pending submission to NMFS

Key Events:

- June 2021: received the results of SEDAR 73 and requested the SSC review the recommended ABC.
- September 2021: Reviewed the SSC's recommendation and requested additional information in preparation to initiate the regulatory amendment.

- Winter 2022: Initial analyses developed and preliminary scoping conducted Jan18-Feb 4.
- March 2022: Regulatory amendment initiated and additional information and input requested of staff, the Snapper Grouper AP, and the SSC.
- April 2022: AP and SSC met and provided recommendations.
- September 2022: Analyses presented on snapper grouper recreational catch and releases. Council reviewed preliminary actions and provided guidance on alternatives to include and adjusted the development timeline for final approval in March 2023.
- October 2022: AP provided recommendations for preferred alternatives.
- December 2022: Removed action to prohibit electric reels and approved for public hearings.
- January 2023: Public hearings (6 in person and 1 webinar).
- March 2023: Approved for submission.
- September 2023: Requested delaying submittal to discuss in December 2023.
- December 2023: Rescinded approval of the amendment.

Amendment 46 (Private Recreational Permit and Education Requirement)

Staff Lead: John Hadley

Purpose of the Amendment: Address deficiencies in recreational data through the creation of a permit requirement for private recreational vessels or anglers. Additionally, considers establishing a required education component to encourage best fishing practices that help reduce discard mortality in the snapper grouper fishery.

Action Summary: This amendment considers establishing a permit and education requirement for anglers or vessels to participate in the private recreational component of the snapper grouper fishery.

Most recent document: March 2024 decision document.

Development Level: Scoping has been conducted and amendment is being developed. Approval for public hearings is expected at the September 2024 meeting.

Key Events:

- November 2020: Suspended work on the amendment (which was initiated in 2017) and directed staff to convene a workgroup to explore approaches for a private recreational permit and reporting requirements in the South Atlantic region. The workgroup convened three times during 2021.
- December 2021: Requested that discussion on this amendment be added to the March 2022 agenda.
- March 2022: Reviewed background information, recommendations from the workgroup, and directed staff to assemble candidates for an ad hoc advisory panel (AP) to be selected in June 2022.
- June 2022: Ad hoc AP appointed. AP met August 2022.
- September 2022: Direction to reconvene the AP in November 2022.
- December 2022: Removed consideration of reporting requirement, included consideration of an education component, and approved for scoping.
- Jan/Feb 2023: Scoping hearings (Jan 30 and Feb 6 via webinar)
- March 2023: Reviewed scoping comments and revised amendment. AP met May 2023.
- June 2023: Reviewed AP comments and revised amendment. Approved purpose and need statements and revised actions for inclusion in the amendment.
- September 2023: Reviewed AP comments and modified actions and alternatives. Council directed staff to assemble candidates for an ad hoc advisory panel made up of private anglers.
- December 2023: Reviewed AP comments, selected preferred alternatives for Actions 1 and 2, and provided direction for amendment development including AP review in the first half of 2024

and that the amendment would not come back for consideration of approval for public hearings until the June 2024 meeting. Also appointed the Private Recreational Ad Hoc Advisory Panel.

- March 2024: Reviewed Law Enforcement AP comments and revised amendment actions.

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

Staff Lead: Allie Iberle

Purpose of Amendment: Respond to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 64). Yellowtail snapper are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.

Action Summary: adopt recommended ABC, adjust jurisdictional allocation between the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Councils, adjust ACLs, and sector allocations (SA only).

Most recent document: September 2023 decision document

Development Level: Post-scoping

Key Events:

- December 2020: Amendment development initiated (jointly with the Gulf Council).
- June 2021: Review the APs input on the fishery's performance, a fishery overview, and a draft options paper including actions previously considered (in 2018).
- September 2021: Review preliminary analyses and approve for scoping. Request input from stakeholders on commercial management measures (commercial trip limits) and get feedback from advisors (SG and Reef Fish APs) and the Gulf Council.
- November 2021: Scoping hearings held on November 2 and 3.
- December 2021: Work on the amendment suspended pending an interim analysis to include three additional years of data (through 2020).
- September 2022: Interim analysis results presented to Council. Direction to reinstate work on the amendment.
- December 2022: Direction to resume work on the amendment in June 2023.
- June 2023: Gulf and South Atlantic Councils reviewed actions and alternatives, preliminary analysis and draft amendment.
- September 2023: Paused development to allow time for SSCs (SA and Gulf) to reconsider the recommended stock ABC because of MRIP-FES issue and to determine whether the assessment can be re-done with FL State Reef Fish Survey data.
- October 2023: Gulf Council made a motion to de-prioritize work on the amendment until after a new assessment is completed that incorporates SRFS data.
- December 2023: Motion to de-prioritize work on the amendment until after a new assessment is completed that incorporates SRFS data.

Amendment 55 (Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper)

Staff Lead: Allie Iberle

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.

Most recent document: March 2024 decision document and draft amendment

Development Level: scoping

Key Events:

- March 2023: Reviewed an overview of the assessment and directed to staff to begin work on a plan amendment.

- June 2023: Reviewed decision document. Additional guidance requested for the parameters of the rebuilding plan and OFL levels.
- July-August 2023: scoping webinars held July 31-Aug 2, 2023.
- September 2023: Modified the suite of alternatives for some actions and provided direction to modify the Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper ACL.
- December 2023: Reviewed SG AP feedback, selected preferred alternatives for some actions, and added management actions to the amendment.
- March 2024: Reviewed an updated decision document including management actions and an updated analysis and selected several preferred alternatives.

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

Staff Lead: Mike Schmidtke

Purpose of Amendment: Consider addition of on-demand pots currently used under an exempted fishing permit as an allowable gear for commercial harvest of black sea bass. Revise recreational bag limits for gag and black grouper.

Action Summary: Add on-demand pots as an allowable commercial gear for black sea bass; revise the bag limits for gag and black grouper to be an aggregate bag limit including both species.

Most recent document: December 2023 decision document

Development Level: Pre-scoping

Key Events:

- September 2023: Amendment development initiated.
- December 2023: Approved for scoping.
- March 2024: Reviewed scoping comments and provided direction for further amendment development.

Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 56 (Black Sea Bass)

Staff Lead: Mike Schmidtke

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

Action Summary: Establish a rebuilding plan, revise catch levels, consider revision of sector allocations, other black sea bass management measures.

Most recent document: NA

Development Level: Pre-scoping

Key Events:

- June 2023: Amendment development initiated.
- September 2023: Council informed by the SSC that a work group is further evaluating projections of future catch, so overfishing limit and acceptable biological catch recommendations will not be available until the March 2024 Council meeting.
- March 2024: Acceptable biological catch recommendations made by the SSC. Initial discussions about information necessary to evaluate management changes.

Planned or postponed:

Evaluation for the Need of Continued Management for 9 Snapper Grouper Species

Staff Leads: Myra Brouwer & Mike Schmidtke

Purpose of the Amendment: In October 2019, the SSC recommended designation of Cubera Snapper, Margate, Silk Snapper, Coney, Saucereye Porgy, Yellowfin Grouper, Misty Grouper, Blackfin Snapper, and Yellowedge Grouper as ecosystem component (EC species).

Action Summary: To determine the need for conservation and management of 9 snapper grouper species.

Most recent document: None

Key Events:

- November 2020: The Snapper Grouper AP discussed and provided recommendations.
- December 2020: Direction to include an action in a future amendment to the Snapper Grouper FMP (possibly the amendment addressing unassessed species' ABCs) to address this topic but exclude Margate, Yellowedge Grouper, Yellowfin Grouper, Silk Snapper, and Cubera Snapper. Directed staff to work with the SEFSC on a possible approach for data-poor species to set a single ACL with an assessed indicator species.

Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation

Staff Lead: Chip Collier, Judd Curtis

Purpose of the Amendment: Dead releases are a major issue in the snapper grouper fishery as a whole and affect many species within the complex. The Council has directed a management strategy evaluation (MSE) project that would consider multispecies effects of potential management changes and be used to develop a more holistic approach to management of the snapper grouper fishery. The amendment will follow the MSE project and consider implementation of management changes evaluated through the MSE.

Action Summary: This amendment will provide actions intended to incorporate recommendations from the MSE project.

Most recent document: None

Key Events:

- June 2021: Received the results of SEDAR 73 that indicated Red Snapper is not yet rebuilt and is undergoing overfishing.
- September 2021: Reviewed the SSC's recommendations and provided direction to staff to begin development of a long-term amendment to revise management measures in the snapper grouper fishery.
- December 2021: Reviewed a proposed work plan for a management strategy evaluation for the fishery and directed staff to continue development of this project. The management strategy evaluation is intended to inform the Council on potential tradeoffs in the fishery if different suites of actions are selected. The MSE began in June 2022 and will take two years to complete.
- October 2022: Snapper Grouper AP and SSC received initial presentations on the MSE process.
- December 2022: The Council directed that a guidance document detailing the MSE process and project responsibilities be developed. The Council also directed for the contractors to present a description of the process (similar to what was provided for the Snapper Grouper AP) at the March 2023 Council meeting.
- March 2023: The contractors (Blue Matter Science) presented an overview of MSE and description of the snapper grouper MSE to the Council.
- April 2023: The contractors discussed objectives of the MSE with the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel and a public scoping hearing was held.
- October 2023: Discussion with Snapper Grouper AP.

- March 2024: Presentations and discussions with the SSC and Council about management strategies to be included for evaluation.

Unassessed Snapper Grouper Species ABCs/ACLs/Allocations

Staff Lead: TBD

Purpose of the Amendment: Update the ABCs, ACLs, and sector allocations for unassessed snapper grouper species based on catch level recommendations from the SSC.

Action Summary: adjust ABCs, ACLs, and sector allocations for unassessed snapper grouper species to incorporate revised recreational landings based on updated MRIP-FES methodology.

Most recent document: None

Key Events:

- October 2019: The SSC provided updated catch level recommendations.
- December 2021: Council decided to update catch level recommendations for the unassessed snapper grouper species once the ABC Control Rule Amendment is implemented (likely late 2023).

Dolphin Wahoo

Under development:

Regulatory Amendment 3 (Minimum Size Limit and Recreational Retention Limits for Dolphin)

Staff Lead: John Hadley

Purpose of the Amendment: This amendment will seek to extend the applicable range of the minimum size limit for dolphin and modify recreational retention limits for dolphin.

Action Summary: This amendment includes actions that would extend the applicable geographic range of the minimum size limit, modify recreational bag and vessel limits, and remove captain and crew bag limits for dolphin.

Most recent document: June 2023 decision document.

Development Level: Scoping has been conducted and work on the amendment is paused until December 2024.**Key Events:**

- June 2021: Amendment initiated to examine extending the geographic coverage of the minimum size limit for dolphin, reducing or removing captain and crew bag limits onboard for-hire vessels, and specifying different retention limits for dolphin and wahoo onboard private vessels and charter vessels.
- September 2021: Information paper and direction to staff to continue developing options that would extend the applicable range of the minimum size limit for dolphin, establish separate retention limits for dolphin onboard for-hire and private vessels, and reduce or remove for-hire captain and crew bag limits for dolphin.
- March 2022: Approved the amendment for scoping.
- June 2022: Revised options.
- December 2022: Paused work on amendment until June 2023 to allow for completion of dolphin stakeholder workshops being held for the Dolphin MSE (led by the SEFSC).
- June 2023: Reviewed comments received during MSE stakeholder workshops and postponed further development of the amendment until the December 2024 meeting or the Dolphin MSE report is available, whichever comes first.

- December 2023: Received the Dolphin Wahoo AP report and an update on the progress of the Dolphin MSE, noting that the MSE report is now scheduled for the middle part of 2025. The Council reiterated their intent to review Regulatory Amendment 3 at the December 2024 Council meeting.

Planned or Postponed:

Pelagic Longlines in the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery

Staff Lead: John Hadley

Purpose of the Amendment: This amendment would consider implementing changes to the commercial longline fishery for dolphin and wahoo to better align with HMS requirements and potentially respond to recommendations from the forthcoming updated Biological Opinion for the dolphin wahoo fishery.

Action Summary: TBD

Most recent document: None

Key Events:

- September 2020: The Council moved, from Amendment 10, actions that would modify gear, bait, and training requirements in the commercial longline fishery for dolphin and wahoo to better align with HMS requirements to a new amendment. The Council also added an alternative that would prohibit the use of pelagic longline gear in the dolphin wahoo fishery unless a vessel has the limited entry HMS permits that allows the use of this gear.
- June 2021: Guidance to examine this potential amendment once the updated biological opinion for the Dolphin Wahoo fishery is available.

December 2022: paused consideration to allow for completion of the Dolphin MSE (led by the SEFSC). The MSE is expected to be completed by the middle part of 2025.

Golden Crab

Recently Submitted or Implemented: None

Under Development: None

Planned or Postponed: None

Coral

Recently Submitted or Implemented: None

Under Development:

Coral 10 (CHAPC Modifications)

Staff Lead: Kathleen Howington

Purpose of the Amendment: To establish a Shrimp Fishery Access area along the western boundary of the northern extension of the Oculina Bank Habitat Area of Particular Concern (OHAPC) where fishing for rock shrimp would be allowed. The area under consideration was once utilized by the fishery but access to it was restricted with implementation of Coral Amendment 8 in 2014.

Action Summary: to establish an area within the existing OHAPC where rock shrimp fishing would be allowed to restore access to historic grounds to the fishery while maintaining protection for Oculina coral.

Most recent document: Final amendment in Administrative Record

Key Events:

- September 2019: removed actions related to CHAPCs from the joint amendment with Golden Crab Amendment 10 and Shrimp Amendment 11.
- September 2020: included a single action to consider establishing a shrimp fishery access area along the eastern boundary of the northern extension of the Oculina Bank CHAPC.
- October 2020: Habitat and Ecosystem, Coral, and Deepwater Shrimp APs input.
- February 2021: Scoping meetings were held via Webinar on February 8 and 9.
- May 2021: Public hearings were held on May 12-13.
- September 2021: approved for submission to the Secretary of Commerce.
- December 2021: amendment submitted and subsequently disapproved
- December 2022: Council directs staff to resubmit at a later date.
- December 2023: Council directs staff to reassemble IPT and begin process of resubmitting.
- March 2024: Update to Council on resubmission plan and timing.

Planned or Postponed: None

Shrimp

Recently Submitted or Implemented: None

Under Development: None

Planned or Postponed: None

Mackerel Cobia

Recently Submitted or Implemented:

Under Development

Planned or Postponed:

Framework Amendment 13 (Atlantic Spanish mackerel catch levels)

Staff Lead: Christina Wiegand

Purpose of Amendment: Responds to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 78). Atlantic Spanish Mackerel are neither overfished nor undergoing overfishing. This amendment will update catch levels based on the SSC recommendations.

Action Summary: adoption of new catch level recommendations.

Most recent document: December 2023 decision document

Development Level: Scoping

Key Events:

- June 2023: amendment development initiated.

- September 2023: approved for scoping
- November 2023: Mackerel Cobia AP discussion
- December 2023: work on amendment paused until after port meetings are completed.

Amendment 33 (Gulf King Mackerel Assessment and Allocations)

Staff Lead: Christina Wiegand

Purpose of Amendment: Responds to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 38 Update). Gulf king mackerel are not overfished nor undergoing overfishing. This amendment will update catch levels based on Gulf SSC recommendations and update allocations.

Action Summary: adoption of updated catch levels; sector allocations.

Most recent document: December 2022 Meeting Document

Development Level: Scoping

Key Events:

- December 2021: South Atlantic Council reviewed options.
- March 2022: South Atlantic Council reviewed options.
- September 2022: South Atlantic Council reviews and proposed revisions to the CMP FMP objectives.
- October 2022: Gulf Council stops work on amendment.

Spiny Lobster

Recently Submitted or Implemented: None

Planned or Postponed:

Spiny Lobster Regulatory Amendment 5 (commercial trip limit for vessels with an SG1 and LT permit off NC, SC, and GA)

Staff lead: Christina Wiegand

Purpose of Amendment: to allow vessels with a snapper grouper unlimited permit (SG1) and a spiny lobster tailing permit (LT) to retain commercial quantities of spiny lobster, allowing them to supplement their snapper grouper trips with additional income from lobster.

Action Summary: allow vessels with an SG1 and LT permit to retain 20/30/40 lobster per trip harvested via diving, off NC, SC, and GA.

Most recent document: None

Key Events:

- March 2019: Amendment development initiated.
- June 2019: Options paper reviewed during meeting.

Generic Amendments

Under Development:

Comprehensive Recreational For-Hire Limited Entry Amendment

Staff Leads: John Hadley & Myra Brouwer

Purpose of Amendment: To establish limited entry for the for-hire components of the snapper grouper, coastal migratory pelagics, and dolphin wahoo fisheries.

Action Summary: TBD

Most recent document: March 2024 Meeting Document

Development Level: Pre-scoping.

Key Events:

- December 2023: Amendment development initiated. Additional control dates of December 8, 2023, for for-hire permits and December 5, 2023, for reporting to SEFHIER established.
- March 2024: Reviewed a discussion document on the existing control date for the for-hire fishery, previous consideration of limited entry in the snapper grouper for-hire fishery, and permit information through 2020.

Other Work Items

South Atlantic Ecopath with Ecosim Model Application

Staff Lead: Chip Collier

The SSC reviewed the SAFMC EwE model development in October 2020 and recommended that the model was ready for applying to specific questions of interest to the Council. In December 2020, the Council identified 4 potential questions to address with the model. Staff is working with FL FWC staff to provide a contract to support FWC leading the effort to apply the model to 2 of the Councils questions. The impact of high Red Snapper recruitment was reviewed by the SSC in October 2021 and presented to the Council in December 2021. The second product will be the development of a model of intermediate complexity for ecosystem analysis (MICE). The MICE model was completed in June 2022 and a preliminary model was developed. A new contract was developed in 2023 to add Ecospace module into the Ecopath model to describe potential shifts in species distribution. The pilot species is Black Sea Bass.

Appendix A. Rulemaking progress for SAFMC amendments (updated 5/6/24)

Amendment	Council voted final action	Council submitted to NMFS	NOA published (comments due)	Proposed rule published (comments due)	Final rule published	Approval date	Implementation date
Joint Commercial Electronic Logbook	Sept 2023 (SA) Oct 2023 (Gulf)	2/27/2024					

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.