



Content and Status Summary of Amendments and Projects

March 2023 Council Meeting

Snapper Grouper

Recently Submitted or Implemented:

Amendment 51 (Snowy Grouper)

Staff Lead: Allie Iberle

Purpose of Amendment: Respond to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 36 Update). Snowy grouper are overfished and overfishing is occurring. The Council is required to adjust catch levels and management measures to ensure rebuilding under the current rebuilding plan.

Action Summary: revise annual catch limits (ACL), sector allocations, recreational season, and recreational accountability measures (AM).

Most recent document: Final document in Administrative Record

Development Level: Pending implementation

Key Events:

- March 2021: Amendment development initiated.
- February 2022: Scoping hearings 1st, 2nd, and 3rd via webinar
- September 2022: Public hearing held 6th and 7th via webinar
- December 2022: amendment approved for formal review
- March 2023: amendment submitted

Amendment 53 (Gag and Black Grouper)

Staff Lead: Allie Iberle

Purpose of Amendment: Respond to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 71). Gag are overfished and overfishing is occurring. The Council is required to establish a rebuilding plan, adjust catch levels and management measures to end overfishing.

Action Summary: revise annual catch limits (ACL), sector allocations, commercial and recreational management measures, and recreational accountability measures (AM).

Most recent document: Final document in Administrative Record

Development Level: Pending implementation

Key Events:

- June 2021: Amendment development initiated.
- February 2022: Scoping hearings 1st, 2nd, and 3rd via webinar
- January 2023: Public hearing held 10th and 11th via webinar
- March 2023: amendment approved for formal review
- May 2023: amendment submitted

Amendment 49 (Greater Amberjack)

Staff Lead: Mike Schmidtke

Purpose of Amendment: Respond to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 59). Greater amberjack are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.

Action Summary: Adopt recommended ABC, adjust total ACL and annual OY, sector allocations (and sector ACLs), consider modifications to minimum size limits, seasonal commercial trip limits, and the April spawning closure, and remove recreational ACT for species managed under the Snapper Grouper FMP.

Most recent document: September 2022 draft amendment.

Development Level: Final Approval; pending submission to NMFS

Key Events:

- June 2020: Amendment initiated.
- April 2021: Scoping hearings April 14 and 15, 2021. Snapper Grouper AP reviewed and made recommendations.
- March 2022: Council approved for public hearings.
- April 2022: Snapper Grouper AP reviewed
- June 2022: Public hearing held.
- September 2022: approved for submission.
- April 2023: amendment submitted

Amendment 52 (Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish)

Staff Lead: Roger Pugliese & Myra Brouwer

Purpose of Amendment: Respond to the latest stock assessment for golden tilefish (SEDAR 66).

Golden tilefish are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. The amendment would also respond to increased recreational effort on blueline tilefish.

Action Summary: Adjust catch levels and sector allocations for golden tilefish, consider modifications to commercial seasons (longline and hook-and-line) and accountability measures. Adjust the recreational bag limit for blueline tilefish and modify recreational accountability measures.

Most recent document: Draft Amendment December 2022

Development Level: Final Approval; pending submission to NMFS

Key Events:

- June 2021: Plan amendment initiated.
- October 2021: Snapper Grouper AP input.
- December 2021: Approved the amendment for scoping and added actions to address blueline tilefish recreational management.
- February 2022: Scoping meetings February 1, 2, and 3.
- April 2022: Snapper Grouper AP input.
- June 2022: approved the amendment for public hearings
- September 2022: public hearings held Sept 6 & 7.
- December 2022: approved for submission.
- May 2023: amendment submitted.

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 and spawning closure; cost recovery; wreckfish permit requirement; allocation issues; offloading sites and times; and vessel monitoring system requirements.

Most recent document: March 2023 Draft Amendment

Development Level: public hearings complete, considering for formal review in September 2023.

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.

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

Staff Leads: 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 January 18-February 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: Council 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.

Amendment 46 (Private Recreational Permitting)

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, consider establishing an education component to encourage best fishing practices and reduce discard mortality in the snapper grouper fishery.

Action Summary: This amendment will investigate establishing a permit and education requirement for anglers to participate in the recreational snapper grouper fishery.

Most recent document: March 2023 decision document

Development Level: Scoping conducted and amendment being developed.

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
- August 2022: AP convened
- September 2022: Council directed to reconvene the AP prior to the December 2022 meeting.
- November 2022: AP convened
- 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.

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: Not yet developed.

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.

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: Not yet developed.

Development Level: pre-scoping

Key Events:

- March 2023: overview of the assessment and direction to staff to begin work on a plan amendment

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: Council directed staff 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: The Council received the results of SEDAR 73 that indicated Red Snapper is not yet rebuilt and is undergoing overfishing.
- September 2021: The Council 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: The Council 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.

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 for dolphin, modify recreational bag and vessel limits, and remove captain and crew bag limits for dolphin.

Most recent document: June 2022 Options paper

Development Level: Approved for scoping.

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).

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 in mid-2024.

Golden Crab

Recently Submitted or Implemented: None

Under Development: None

Planned or Postponed: None

Coral

Recently Submitted or Implemented:

Coral 10 (CHAPC Modifications)

Staff Lead: Roger Pugliese

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

NOTE: *This amendment was disapproved, and the Council directed staff to resubmit during the September 2022 meeting*

Planned or Postponed: None

Shrimp

Recently Submitted or Implemented: None

Under Development: None

Planned or Postponed: None

Mackerel Cobia

Recently Submitted or Implemented:

Amendment 34 (King Mackerel Assessment and Allocations)

Staff Lead: Christina Wiegand

Purpose of Amendment: Responds to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 38 Update). Atlantic King Mackerel are neither overfished nor undergoing overfishing. This amendment will update catch levels based on the SSC recommendations and make modifications to management measures aimed at increasing interest in the king mackerel fishery.

Action Summary: adoption of new catch level recommendations; sector allocations; recreational ACT; recreational bag limit; requirement to land with heads and fins intact.

Most recent document: Final Doc in Admin Record

Development Level: Proposed Rule

Key Events:

- June 2020: amendment development initiated.
- November 2020: Mackerel Cobia AP met to discuss SSC recommendations and potential actions.
- March 2021: scoping held during the Council meeting.
- April 2021: Mackerel Cobia AP input.
- June 2021: Gulf Council reviewed amendment.
- Fall 2021: Councils approved amendment for public hearings.
- December 2021: South Atlantic Council reviewed public hearing comments and removed actions addressing the Atlantic king mackerel minimum size limit.
- March 2022: South Atlantic Council took final action.
- April 2022: Gulf Council took final action.
- Summer 2022: Amendment submitted August 5, 2022
- March 2023: Proposed rule published, comments due March 30, 2023.
- Implementation: June 8, 2023.

Planned or Postponed:

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:

Key Events:

- March 2019: amendment development initiated.
- June 2019: options paper reviewed during meeting.

Generic Amendments

Recently Submitted or Implemented:

Comprehensive ABC Control Rule Amendment

Staff Leads: Mike Schmidtke & Judd Curtis

Purpose of Amendment: To modify the ABC Control Rule to address flexibility allowed under the MSA and revise how uncertainty and risk tolerance are addressed in setting ABCs.

Action Summary: modify the ABC Control Rule, including specification of scientific uncertainty and management risk components, application of the Control Rule to rebuilding stocks, criteria and procedures for phase-in of ABC changes, criteria and procedures for carry-over of unused portions of the annual catch limit, and establishment a framework procedure to allow carry-overs.

Most recent document: Draft Amendment December 2022

Development Level: approved for submission

Key Events:

- December 2016: work on a plan amendment initiated
- 2017 and 2018: Council and SSC provided guidance on various aspects of the amendment
- January 2019: Scoping hearings were held.
- December 2020 and March 2021: Council provided additional guidance to staff.
- October 2020 and April 2021: SSC provided input.
- September 2021: Council received additional comments from the SSC, reviewed actions and alternatives language modifying the ABC Control rule (Action 1) and carry-overs (Actions 3 and 4).
- March 2022: Council reviewed draft language for modifying the ABC Control rule (Action 1) and carry-overs (Actions 3 and 4).
- June 2022: Council reviewed the draft amendment (all actions) and approved for public hearings.
- September 2022: Public hearings held. Council selected preferred alternatives and approved all actions.
- December 2022: approved for submission.

Under Development:

Joint Commercial Logbook Amendment

Staff lead: Myra Brouwer

Purpose of Amendment: To provide the authority 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 would modify 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: Draft Amendment March 2023

Development level: approved for public hearings (SA)

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.

Other Work Items

Habitat Blueprint

Staff Lead: Myra Brouwer

Purpose of Project: to develop a blueprint to guide Council activities addressing habitat and better define the Council's role and that of regional partners and the Habitat and Ecosystem AP.

Key events:

- December 2020: direction to convene a development team (workgroup) comprised of Council members and staff to begin work on the project with an intended completion date of December 2021.
- January 2021: workgroup planning call on January 14 to review its charge and develop a plan of work and outline for the blueprint.
- March 2021: the Council received an update and provided guidance regarding the blueprint's scope stating intent to focus work on habitat-related topics and address ecosystem and climate-related items separately.
- April 2021: workgroup developed draft goals and objectives for the Habitat Program
- June 2021: the Council approved the draft goals and objectives and scope of work
- July 2021 and September 2021: workgroup meetings.
- March 2023: workgroup meeting to reinitiate work.

Allocation Decision Tree Approach

Staff Leads: Christina Wiegand/John Hadley/Mike Schmidtke

Purpose of Project: Create a consistent process for examining sector allocations and making decisions that is applicable across all Council-managed species and incorporates biological, social, and economic factors.

Key Events:

- December 2020: Council gave staff direction to develop the decision tree approach and approves timeline.
- April 2021: SSC and SEP reviewed draft decision tree approach.
- July 2021: SERO and SEFSC staff reviewed draft decision tree approach.
- August 2021: AP Chairs and others reviewed draft decision tree approach.

- September 2021: Council approved a special meeting to discuss the draft decision tree approach and requested greater amberjack as a test species.
- February 2022: Special meeting to review approach and explore an example species (greater amberjack).
- March 2022: Council discussed additional ways to gather input (FPRs and online data-gathering tool) and directed staff to use the approach to explore allocations for Spanish mackerel.
- April 2022: SEP reviewed revised decision tree questions.
- June 2022: Council reviewed and approved public input tool.

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.