



Content and Status of Amendments and Projects

September 2021 Council Meeting

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Snapper Grouper

Recently Submitted or Implemented:

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. The amendment also includes review of the ITQ goals and objectives and adoption of updated goals and objectives for the entire Snapper Grouper FMP.

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.

Key Events:

- September 2020: amendment development initiated.
- October 2020: meeting of the Wreckfish shareholders and wholesale dealers held 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.
- Winter 2022: meeting of the wreckfish shareholders to discuss amendment development and voluntary pilot program for the commercial electronic logbook.

Amendment 50 (Red Porgy Rebuilding and Allocations)

Staff Lead: Myra Brouwer

Purpose of Amendment: According to the latest assessment (SEDAR 60 2020), red porgy are overfished and overfishing is occurring. The Council is required to establish a rebuilding plan for red porgy no later than June 12, 2022, and adjust catch levels to end overfishing.

Action Summary: establish a rebuilding plan, revise annual catch limits (ACL), sector allocations, management measures for the commercial and recreational sectors, and accountability measures (AM) for the recreational sector. A

Key Events:

- June 2020: amendment development initiated
- December 2020: reviewed preliminary analyses, recommendations on management measures from the Snapper Grouper AP, and approved the amendment for scoping.
- February 3 & 4, 2021: scoping hearings held via webinar
- June 2021: reviewed updated analyses and selected some preferred alternatives, removed consideration of recreational vessel limits, added alternative for a recreational fishing season and a modified recreational accountability measure. The Council approved the amendment for public hearings.
- September 2021: public hearing held on Wednesday, September 15, 2021
- December 2021: the Council will review, modify if needed, and approve all actions.

Amendment 49 (Greater Amberjack Catch Levels and Allocations and Snapper Grouper Recreational Annual Catch Targets)

Staff Lead: Mike Schmidtke

Purpose of Amendment: To respond to latest stock assessment of greater amberjack (SEDAR 59) through consideration of adjustments to ABC, catch levels, allocations, and other management measures for greater amberjack, as well as remove recreational annual catch targets (ACT) in the snapper grouper fishery.

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.

Key Events:

- June 2020: Council received the results of SEDAR 59
- March 2021: the Council approved Amendment 49 for scoping.
- April 2021: Scoping hearings were held on April 14 and 15, 2021. The Snapper Grouper AP reviewed and made recommendations.
- September 2021: Council reviewed scoping comments, comments from the Snapper Grouper AP, and preliminary analyses.
- December 2021: Council will review and consider approving for public hearings

Amendment 44 (Yellowtail Snapper Catch Levels/Allocations)

Staff Lead: Myra Brouwer

Purpose of Amendment: Revise ABC based on latest assessment (SEDAR 64 2019) and revised landings (MRIP-FES)

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

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.

Amendment 51 (Snowy Grouper Catch Level Adjustments/Allocations)

Staff Lead: Allie Iberle

Purpose of the Amendment: The South Atlantic stock of Snowy Grouper was reassessed in 2020 through SEDAR 36 Update which indicated that the stock is both overfished and undergoing overfishing. This assessment included landings data which incorporated the new MRIP FES methods. Because previous annual catch limits (ACL) and allocations were based on old methods, this amendment offers the Council the opportunity to update both the ACL and allocations based on these new methods.

Action Summary: This amendment currently has 3 proposed actions:

1. Modify the Snowy Grouper ACL
2. Modify the Snowy Grouper sector allocations
3. Modify commercial management measures

Key Events:

- March 2021: Council received assessment results and directed staff to begin a plan amendment
- September 2021: Council was presented the initial options paper and directed staff to gather additional input from the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel
- October 2021: The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel will review the options paper and provide feedback
- December 2021: The Council will review the Advisory Panel feedback and potentially approve the amendment for scoping

Amendment 52 (Golden Tilefish Assessment/Allocations)

Staff Lead: Roger Pugliese

Purpose of Amendment: To respond to the latest stock assessment for golden tilefish in the South Atlantic region.

Action Summary: Adjust catch levels and sector allocations in response to the latest stock assessment.

Key Events:

- June 2021: The Council received the results of SEDAR 66
- October 2021: the Snapper Grouper AP will discuss and provide recommendations
- December 2021: The Council will review the AP’s recommendations and an options paper and consider approving the amendment for scoping.

Amendment 53 (Gag Grouper Rebuilding/ABCs/ACLs/Allocations)

Staff Lead: Allie Iberle

Purpose of the Amendment: The South Atlantic stock of Gag Grouper was reassessed in 2020 through SEDAR 71 which indicated that the stock is both overfished and undergoing overfishing. The South Atlantic stock of Gag Grouper does not currently have a rebuilding plan. This assessment included landings data which incorporated the new MRIP FES methods. Because previous annual catch limits (ACL) and allocations were based on old methods, this amendment will establish and rebuilding plan as

well as offer the Council the opportunity to update both the ACL and allocations based on these new methods.

Action Summary: This amendment will provide actions to establish a rebuilding timeframe, modify the ACL and modify sector allocations

Key Events:

- June 2021: Council received assessment results and directed staff to begin a plan amendment
- September 2021: Additional clarification was given to the Council on the timeframe for rebuilding
- October 2021: The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel will review the Fishery Performance Review and provide comments for the Council
- December 2021: The Council will review the Advisory Panel feedback, the options paper, and consider approval for scoping

Snapper Grouper Framework Amendment for Gear Modifications, Time and Area Closures, and Red Snapper Slot or Maximum Size Limits

Staff Lead: TBD

Purpose of the Amendment: The Council received the results of SEDAR 73 for red snapper in June 2021. The SSC recommended an overfishing limit and acceptable biological catch at their July 2021 meeting, after further review and discussion of projection methods. At their September 2021 meeting, the Council discussed the SSC's recommendations and results of SEDAR 73 noting that discards account for 90% of the fishing mortality experienced by the red snapper stock. Also noting that discards are a major issue in the snapper grouper fishery as a whole and affect many species within the complex, the Council directed staff to develop a framework amendment that considers:

- Gear modifications including single hook rigs, minimum hook sizes, leader modifications, and a natural bait prohibition
- Time and area closures of the snapper grouper fishery
- Slot or maximum size limits for red snapper

Action Summary: This amendment will provide actions intended to reduce discards in the snapper grouper fishery as a whole and reduce overfishing of red snapper as well as establish potential size limits for red snapper.

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 framework amendment.
- December 2021: The Council will review the Advisory Panel feedback, an information paper, and provide guidance to staff on how to proceed.

Planned or Postponed:

Amendment 46 (Recreational Permits and Reporting)

Staff Lead: TBD

Purpose of the Amendment: Once begun this amendment will investigate requiring a permit for anglers to participate in the recreational snapper grouper fishery and whether there will be or what type of trip reporting requirements would be required for anglers to participate in the snapper grouper fishery.

Action Summary:

Key Events:

- November 2020: Council discussed during November 9, 2020, webinar and opted to suspend work on the amendment. The Council directed staff to convene a workgroup to include state and MRIP representatives, and Council staff to explore approaches for a private recreational permit and reporting requirements in the South Atlantic region. The workgroup has convened twice during 2021.

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.

Key Events:

- November 2020: The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel 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. In addition, the Committee 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 Amendment for Long-Term Measures in the Snapper Grouper Fishery
Staff Lead: TBD

Purpose of the Amendment: The Council received the results of SEDAR 73 for red snapper in June 2021. The SSC recommended an overfishing limit and acceptable biological catch at their July 2021 meeting, after further review and discussion of projection methods. At their September 2021 meeting, the Council discussed the SSC's recommendations and results of SEDAR 73. The Council directed staff to develop an amendment that:

- Would revise catch level recommendations and sector allocations for red snapper.
- Incorporate recommendations of the SAFMC Recreational and Joint Section 102 working groups.
- Incorporate results of a management strategy evaluation (MSE) project.
- Consider alternative harvest season timing.
- Consider establishment of a recreational federal fishing license for the snapper grouper fishery.

Action Summary: This amendment will provide actions intended to revise catch level recommendations and sector allocations for red snapper, establish harvest seasons and a recreational license for the snapper grouper fishery, and incorporate recommendations from the SAFMC Recreational workgroup, Joint Section 102 working group, and MSE project.

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 will review the Advisory Panel feedback, an information paper, and provide guidance to staff on how to proceed.

Unassessed Snapper Grouper Species ABCs/ACLs/Allocations.

Staff Lead: TBD

Almaco Jack White Paper

Staff Lead: TBD

Work has not yet begun on this white paper. The purpose of this paper is to determine the feasibility of removing Almaco Jack from the Jacks Complex. At the March 2021 meeting the Council approved moving this topic into the Unassessed SG Species Amendment (above).

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Dolphin Wahoo

Recently Submitted or Implemented

Under Development:

Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10 (Dolphin and Wahoo Management Measures)

Staff lead: John Hadley

Purpose of the Amendment: This amendment implements catch level recommendations from the Council's SSC and revises sector allocations and ACLs for dolphin and wahoo, addresses deficiencies in the recreational AMs for dolphin and wahoo, and responds to public comments received on changes needed in the dolphin wahoo fishery.

Action Summary: Revise the total ACLs, sector allocations, and accountability measures for dolphin and wahoo. Also allow the retention of dolphin and wahoo when trap, pot, or buoy gear are onboard a vessel, remove the operator card requirement, and reduce the recreational vessel limit for dolphin from 60 fish to 54 fish.

Key Events:

- March 2016: The Council directed staff to begin development of a joint dolphin wahoo and snapper grouper amendment to examine different ways to allocate or share quota between the commercial and recreational sectors for dolphin and yellowtail snapper.
- June 2016: Approved for scoping.
- December 2016: The Council split Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10 from Snapper Grouper Amendment 44.
- March 2017: The Council decided to stop work on the amendment until revised MRIP data were available.
- December 2018: The Council directed staff to start work again on the amendment.
- June 2020: The Council received revised catch level recommendations for dolphin and wahoo.
- March 2021: Approve for public hearings.
- June 2021: Final vote to approve amendment for submittal to NMFS.

Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 13 (Minimum Size Limits and Retention Limits in the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery)

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 will include actions that extend the applicable range of the minimum size limit for dolphin, establish separate recreational retention limits for dolphin onboard for-hire and private vessels, and remove or reduce captain and crew bag limits for dolphin.

Key Events:

- June 2021: The Council provided guidance to staff to begin developing an amendment that would 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: The Council discussed an information paper and provided 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.

Planned or Postponed

Pelagic Longlines in the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery

Staff Lead: John Hadley

Purpose of the Amendment: This amendment will 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

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 approved a motion to add a new 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 allow the use of this gear.
- June 2021: The Council provided guidance to staff to examine this potential amendment once the updated biological opinion for the Dolphin Wahoo fishery is available, likely in early to mid 2022.

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Golden Crab

Recently Submitted or Implemented:

Under Development:

Planned or Postponed:

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Coral

Recently Submitted or Implemented:

Under Development:

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.

Key Events:

- September 2019: the Council directed staff to remove actions related to CHAPCs from the joint amendment with Golden Crab Amendment 10 and Shrimp Amendment 11.
- September 2020: the Council recommended including 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: An options paper was reviewed by the Habitat and Ecosystem, Coral, and Deepwater Shrimp APs.
- December 2020. The Council received comments from the APs and approved the amendment for scoping.
- February 2021: Scoping meetings were held via Webinar on February 8 and 9.
- March 2021: the Council approved Coral Amendment 10 for public hearings as modified.
- May 2021: Public hearings were held on May 12-13.
- September 2021: the Council approved Amendment 10 for submission to the Secretary of Commerce.

Planned or Postponed:

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Shrimp

Recently Submitted or Implemented

Under Development:

Planned or Postponed:

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Mackerel Cobia

Recently Submitted or Implemented:

Under Development:

Amendment 34(King Mackerel Assessment and Allocations)

Staff Lead: Christina Wiegand

Purpose of Amendment: in June 2020 the Council received the results of the SEDAR 38 Update for King Mackerel. Atlantic King Mackerel were determined to be neither overfished nor was overfishing occurring. 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; minimum size limit; requirement to land with heads and fins intact.

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: Mackerel Cobia AP discussed actions and alternatives.
- June 2021: Gulf Council reviewed amendment.
- September 2021: South Atlantic Council approved amendment for public hearings.
- October 2021: Gulf Council to review amendment, select preferred alternatives, approve for public hearings.

Amendment 32(Gulf Cobia Assessment and Allocations)

Staff Lead: Christina Wiegand

Purpose of Amendment: the results of SEDAR 58 for Gulf cobia indicate that the stock is currently undergoing overfishing, this amendment includes actions to end overfishing of Gulf cobia and update the CMP framework procedures to clarify the language about the responsibilities of each Council

Action Summary: adoption of new catch level recommendations; Gulf and FLEC Zone apportionment; sector allocations; ACTs; bag limits, vessel limits, and size limits; framework procedure.

Key Events:

- April 2021: Mackerel Cobia AP discusses amendment.
- August 2021: Gulf Council approves amendment for public hearings.
- September 2021: South Atlantic Council approves amendment for public hearings.
- October 2021: public hearings to be held.
- October 2021: Gulf Council scheduled to take final action.
- December 2021: South Atlantic Council scheduled to take final action.

Amendment 33(Gulf King Mackerel Assessment and Allocations)

Staff Lead: Christina Wiegand

Purpose of Amendment: the SEDAR 38 Update assessment found Gulf king mackerel to be healthy and not overfished or 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.

Key Events:

- December 2021: South Atlantic Council schedule to review options.

Planned or Postponed:

Framework Amendment 9 (Commercial Spanish mackerel AMs)

Staff Lead: Christina Wiegand

Purpose of Amendment: stakeholders and the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel had expressed concerns about recent closures in the commercial Spanish mackerel fishery. This amendment aimed to modify management measures to extend the commercial fishing season.

Action Summary: commercial trip limits for the Northern Zone.

Key Events:

- June 2019: Council directs staff to develop a white paper detailing effort in the commercial Spanish mackerel fishery and possible avenues to control effort, including: a limited access commercial permit, a limited access gillnet endorsement in the southern zone, and collaboration with state agencies.
- September 2019: amendment development initiated.
- December 2019: modification of commercial accountability measures removed from the amendment; remaining action approved for public hearings.
 - Robert Beal, Executive Director of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), clarified that the ASMFC Interstate Fisheries Management Plan for Spanish Mackerel does not require states to close their waters to commercial harvest of Spanish mackerel when a federal closure occurs.
- January 2020: public hearings held.
- March 2020: work on amendment discontinued until results from the upcoming stock assessment are available.

Mackerel Port Meetings

Staff Lead: Christina Wiegand

Purpose of Project: Mackerel port meetings were proposed as a way to get input from participants in the mackerel fishery similar to those that were completed for the snapper grouper fishery. The Council has not discussed details of how these port meetings would occur, where, or when.

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Spiny Lobster

Recently Submitted or Implemented:

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.

Key Events:

- March 2019: amendment development initiated.

- June 2019: options paper reviewed during meeting.

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Generic Amendments

Recently Submitted or Implemented:

Under Development:

Comprehensive ABC Control Rule Amendment

Staff Co-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.

Key Events:

- December 2016: Council directed staff to begin work on a plan amendment
- 2017 and 2018: Council and SSC provided guidance on various aspects of the amendment
- January 2019: scoping hearings were held
- March 2019: Council reviewed scoping comments
- December 2020 and March 2021: Council provided additional guidance to staff.
- October 2020 and April 2021: SSC reviewed topics related to this amendment and provided recommendations to the Council.
- March 2021: The Council reviewed part of the actions and alternatives language.
- September 2021: Council received additional comments from the SSC, reviewed the remainder of the actions and alternatives language, and provided further guidance for development of the draft amendment.
- June 2022: Council will review a draft amendment and consider approving for public hearings.

Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology Review

Staff lead: Mike Schmidtke

Purpose of Review: Per the MSA, all FMPs must identify the required standardized procedure or procedures to collect, record, and report bycatch data in a consistent manner for the fishery. The Council has specified standardized bycatch reporting methodologies (SBRM) for all its South Atlantic and Joint FMPs. A final rule, effective on February 17, 2017, requires Councils to explain how the current SBRMs meet the statutory purpose of a SBRM based on an analysis of four required considerations:

1. Bycatch characteristics
2. Feasibility of methodology (cost, technical, operational)
3. Data uncertainty
4. Data use for assessing amount and type.

The Councils, in consultation with NMFS, must review the current SBRMs within five years of the final rule's effective date (by March 2022), and must conduct follow up reviews at least once every five years. Council FMPs already include SBRMs, so these are being reviewed by an IPT to determine whether they are in compliance with MSA requirements and if any actions are necessary to bring SBRMs into compliance.

Key Events:

- 2019 and 2020: Council received periodic updates of review being conducted by an IPT
- October 2021: The SSC will discuss and provide recommendations on criteria 3 and 4 to include in the review.
- December 2021: The Council will receive the result of the review and determine whether action is needed to improve SBRMs.

Commercial Logbook Amendment

Staff lead: TBD

Currently, logbook reports from commercial fishermen are submitted on paper forms. Fishermen have asked that the Council consider actions to allow electronic reporting of the required logbook information. The Council supported SEFSC developing a voluntary electronic logbook reporting system and making it available to fishermen as a way of piloting the program prior to taking formal action. The Council has received updates on the SEFSC effort at each Council meeting since 2013. As of April 2016, voluntary reports could be provided, in some instances, through the ACCSP SAFIS system and available to the SEFSC. The SEFSC has worked since then to revise and improve the system.

Planned or Postponed:

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Other Work Items

Recently Submitted or Implemented:

Under Development:

Joint Recreational Working Group Section 102

Staff Lead: John Carmichael

Workgroup convened by the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils to address recreational management flexibility as identified in Section 102 of the Modernizing Fish Act. It is comprised of members of the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils. Meetings were held in May and September 2020 via webinar. In May, the workgroup reviewed the scope of work and background materials. In September, the workgroup reviewed a wide range of data and management topics. Next steps are to identify potential problems and stocks to address, clarify the level of flexibility available to the workgroup with other MSA provisions (especially regarding ACL and AMs), consider alternative metrics to monitor catch and fisheries, and develop specific recommendations.

Private Recreational Reporting Workgroup

Staff Lead: John Carmichael

During a special Council meeting devoted to recreational fishery issues, the Council created a working group to investigate the use of state managed permitting and reporting systems for improving catch estimates for private recreational fisheries. The workgroup will meet as needed in 2021 and report back to the Council at each Council meeting. Any recommendations from the group will be considered by the Council through the FMP amendment development process. During the March 2021 meeting the Council received a briefing on the meeting held in February 2021. At that meeting, the workgroup reviewed approved goals and objectives, reviewed Florida's State Reef Fish Survey, and discussed MRIP's Rare Event Species approaches. The workgroup has convened twice during 2021 and reports presented to the Council at the March and June meetings.

Habitat & Ecosystem 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 AP.

Key events:

- December 2020: the Council directed staff 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: The workgroup held a 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. The Council stated its intent to focus work on habitat-related topics and address ecosystem and climate-related items separately.
- April 2021: the workgroup met to develop draft goals and objectives for the Habitat Program, reviewed supporting documentation for the Blueprint, and provide guidance on the scope of work.
- June 2021: the Council approved the draft goals and objectives and reviewed the scope of work for the project.
- July 2021 and September 2021: workgroup meetings
- Winter 2022: The Draft Blueprint will be discussed at a special Council meeting (to be scheduled).

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 gives staff direction to develop the decision tree approach and approves timeline.
- April 2021: SSC and SEP review draft decision tree approach.
- July 2021: SERO and SEFSC staff review draft decision tree approach.
- August 2021: AP Chairs and others review draft decision tree approach.
- September: Council approved a special meeting to discuss the draft decision tree approach and requested greater amberjack as a test species.
- Winter 2022: Special meeting to review and approve approach.

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. This will include holding workshops with the model development team and the SSC EwE

working group, leading up to a presentation and review of findings at the October 2021 SSC meeting. Results and SSC recommendations will be provided to the Council in December 2021.

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