



THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Snapper Grouper Amendment 46

*Private Recreational Permitting Scoping
Document*

Scoping Session Date and Time

January 30th and February 6th, 2023 at 6:00pm

Registration Link and More Details

<https://safmc.net/public-hearings-and-scoping/>

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Background

Fishermen and fisheries managers alike have expressed concern at times with existing estimates of recreational catches resulting from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP). In response, stakeholders have requested that the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) explore a private recreational permit for snapper grouper fishing. This recommendation has also been put forth by the Council's Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel numerous times.

Permits have been implemented for the federal for-hire component of the recreational sector and the commercial sector for the Snapper Grouper, Dolphin Wahoo, and Coastal Migratory Pelagic fisheries in part to improve estimates of catch and effort in the South Atlantic region. However, these permitting requirements do not cover the private recreational component.



Why is the Council considering taking action?

Catch and effort data (i.e., how many fish are being caught, released, and/or harvested as well as how many fishing trips are taken) for the private angler component of the recreational sector is currently estimated by MRIP. In many circumstances, these data have relatively high levels of uncertainty, leading to notable challenges in managing several species in the Snapper Grouper fishery.

One of the ways that catch and effort data could be improved is through the implementation of a private recreational permit. A permit would help better identify how many private anglers or vessels may be participating in the Snapper Grouper fishery and could potentially be integrated into MRIP sampling to help improve the precision of recreational catch and effort estimates.

Additionally, several Snapper Grouper species are experiencing high mortality due to fish that are caught but do not survive being released. One of the ways to address this issue is through improving outreach and education on best fishing practices: proper fish handling techniques, use of dehooking tools, and use of descending devices. To help accomplish this, the Council is considering an education component along with the development of a private recreational permit.



What is the intended outcome?

At a recent meeting, the Council discussed the potential benefits of a private recreational permit and approved the following vision statement:



Vision Statement: A permit for the private recreational sector of the South Atlantic Snapper Grouper fishery will facilitate the collection, validation, and analysis of harvest and discard data to improve the catch and effort estimates used for fisheries science and management decision-making.

Potential Amendment timing

Timing	Council Action
December 2022	Reviewed options paper and approved amendment for scoping.
Winter 2023	Conduct scoping.
March 2023	Review scoping comments.
June 2023	Review amendment and preliminary analysis.
September 2023	Review modifications to the amendment, select preferred alternatives, and approve for public hearings.
Fall 2023	Conduct public hearings.
December 2023	Review public hearing comments and provide guidance.
March 2024	Review final draft amendment and consider approval for formal review.
2024/2025	Regulation changes effective.



What are the Council's ideas right now for implementing a private recreational permit?

- The Council is considering establishing a private recreational permit to fish for, harvest, or possess Snapper Grouper species in the South Atlantic Region.
- Should the permit be issued to a vessel or to an individual angler?
- If issued to a vessel, all anglers fishing onboard that vessel would be covered by the permit.
- If issued to an angler, the Council would need to specify which anglers should obtain the permit:
 - All private anglers regardless of what platform they are fishing from?
 - All private anglers fishing from a private vessel only?
 - At least one or more private anglers fishing from a private vessel only?





What species should be covered by a permit?

Currently the Council is considering the following groups of species:

- All 55 species within the Snapper Grouper complex.
- The 15 species within the Snapper Grouper complex that have a peer-reviewed stock assessment in the South Atlantic.
 - Mutton snapper, yellowtail snapper, hogfish, red snapper, vermilion snapper, gag, red grouper, black grouper, greater amberjack, black sea bass, blueline tilefish, golden tilefish, red porgy, snowy grouper, and wreckfish.
- The 13 species that are covered by the Florida State Reef Fish Angler Designation.
- Mutton snapper, yellowtail snapper, hogfish, red snapper, vermilion snapper, gag, red grouper, black grouper, greater amberjack, lesser
 - amberjack, banded rudderfish, almaco jack, and gray triggerfish.





What are the Council's ideas right now for establishing an education component?

- An education component would provide an opportunity to educate anglers on several measures including best fishing practices, the use of descending devices, the species that make up the Snapper Grouper complex, species ID, helpful tools for remembering fishing regulations, and other topics.
- This component could be implemented immediately when the permit is developed or possibly at a later date.
- The Council may also want to specify whether the education component would be mandatory to obtain a permit or would be voluntary.





What your thoughts? The Council wants to hear from you!

The Council wants to hear from you on how they should move forward with developing a private recreational permit for the Snapper Grouper fishery.

Private Recreational Permit

1. Type of Permit: vessel-based or angler-based?

If Angler-Based: Who should get the permit?

- All anglers regardless of the platform from which they are fishing?
- All anglers fishing from a private vessel only?
- At least one angler onboard a private vessel?

2. Species Covered: What species should be covered by the permit?

- All Snapper Grouper species?
- Only the species with a peer-reviewed stock assessment?
- Only the species that fall within Florida's State Reef Fish Angler designation.
- Other?

Education Component

1. Timing of implementation: should it be established immediately with implementation of a permit or delayed until a future date?

2. Mandatory or Voluntary: If an education component is implemented, should it be mandatory or voluntary to allow private recreational anglers to participate in the Snapper Grouper fishery?



How Do I Comment?

Comments must be received by 5:00 PM on Friday, February 10, 2023. There are several ways that you can submit your comment to the Council including:

Comments taken during webinars

Monday, January 30, 2023 at 6 PM

Monday, February 6, 2023 at 6 PM

Written comments

Written comments may be read and submitted on Amendment 46 using the online public comment form at the following links:

[Submit Comment](#)

[Read Public Comments](#)

Comments by mail

Send comments to: John Carmichael, Executive Director, SAFMC. 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201. N. Charleston, SC 29405

Comments by fax

843-769-4520