



# **SNAPPER GROUPE AMENDMENT 55 SCOPING DOCUMENT**



**SCAMP AND  
YELLOWMOUTH GROUPE**  
[July 31, August 1 and 2 2023, 6PM](#)



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## SCAMP AND YELLOWMOUTH GROUPER

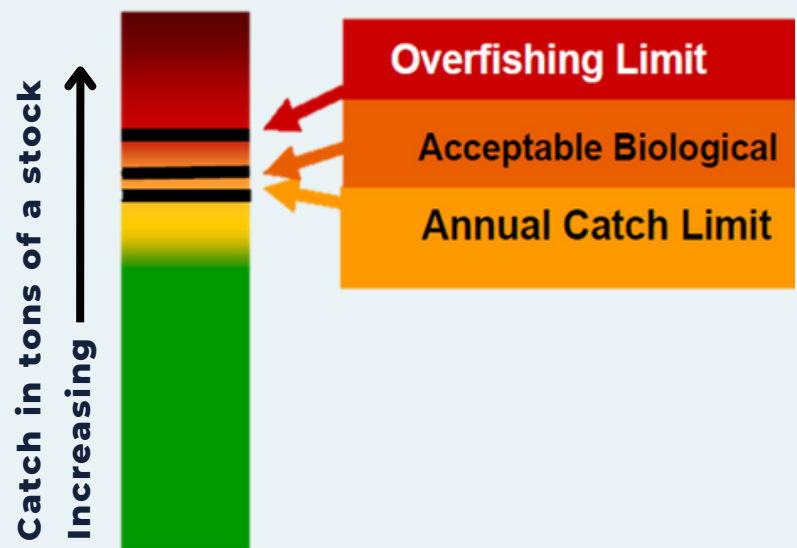
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## BACKGROUND: CATCH LEVELS

### OFL (Overfishing Limit):

The number or amount (usually in pounds) of fish above which fishing activities would be removing fish from the population faster than they could be replaced (i.e., overfishing would be occurring). The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) determines this limit using information from the most recent stock assessment.



### ABC (Acceptable Biological Catch):

The highest number or amount of fish, harvest and discards (fish that are released dead), that can be removed from the population. The scientific and statistical committee recommends this level by estimating a buffer between OFL and ABC that accounts for scientific uncertainty. More uncertainty means a larger OFL-ABC buffer and a lower ABC.

### ACL (Annual Catch Limit):

The limit for how many fish (or pounds of fish) can be landed in a year. The ACL is set by the Council and must be less than or equal to the ABC. The Council can set the ACL lower than the ABC to further decrease the risk of overfishing and account for management uncertainty.



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## BACKGROUND: SURVEY UPDATES



In 2018, the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) adopted a new method to collect recreational fishing data. The new Fishing Effort Survey (FES) is mailed to a sample of households from a national database. The previous method (the Coastal Household Telephone Survey or CHTS) used landline phones to contact households and gather information about fishing activity from anglers.

The FES method better represents the current fishing population, is less susceptible to bias, and is more efficient. To learn more visit the **NOAA Fisheries Effort Improvement Website**. Recreational data from the updated FES have been used in recent stock assessments. However, some catch levels and sector allocations - including those for scamp, yellowmouth grouper and the shallow water groupers - were set with the “old” recreational data. So, the catch levels and sector allocations must be updated to include the new estimates. That way, we can have an “apples-to-apples” comparison between catch limits and current landings.



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## SCAMP AND YELLOWMOUTH GROUPER

### Why is the Council taking action?

The most recent stock assessment analyzed scamp and yellowmouth grouper together due to mis-identification issues between the two species. The assessment also indicated that the stock is **overfished** but **NOT** experiencing overfishing. The assessment also used recreational landings estimates obtained with the new fishing effort survey methodology.

In response to the assessment the Council must create a new Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper Complex and establish the following:

- Benchmark levels for the stock (e.g., maximum sustainable yield)
- Rebuilding plan
- Annual catch limit and annual optimum yield
- Sector allocations and sector annual catch limits
- commercial and recreational accountability measures



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## OTHER SHALLOW WATER GROUPER

Yellowmouth grouper is currently included in the Other Shallow Water Grouper Complex. After yellowmouth grouper is removed from this complex, five species will remain: red hind, rock hind, coney, graysby, and yellowfin grouper.

Because the current ACL for the complex includes yellowmouth grouper, the ACL must be modified. The Council may consider the following options:

### Consider the need for federal management

Ten criteria must be met to determine if a species is in continued need for federal management. The Council may explore whether the remaining 5 species meet these criteria. If a species does not require federal conservation and management, management measures and catch levels are not needed.

### Updating the Annual Catch Limit

After the portion of the ACL attributed to harvest of yellowmouth grouper is removed, the ACL for the complex will need to be updated. There are no stock assessments the 5 remaining species in the complex; therefore, the Scientific and Statistical Committee must calculate an ABC using other methods to recommend to the Council for use in management.



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## **HOW DO I COMMENT?**

### **Comments taken during webinars**

**Monday, July 31, 2023 at 6 PM**

**Tuesday, August 1, 2023 at 6 PM**

**Wednesday, August 2, 2023 at 6 PM**

### **Written comments**

**Using the online form available from the Public Hearings and Scoping Meetings page on the Council's website ([www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net)). Submit by 5:00 PM on August 4, 2023**

### **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**

### **MY CONTACT INFO**

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