

AMENDMENT 17 OPTIONS PAPER

May 18, 2008

Amendment 17 contains five categories of actions:

- (1) Establish management reference points (MSY, OY) for greater amberjack and mutton snapper.
- (2) Specify Annual Catch Limits (ACL), Annual Catch Targets (ACT), and Accountability Measures (AM) for species undergoing overfishing and for two recently assessed species.
- (3) Extend the range of the snapper grouper fishery management plan north through the Mid-Atlantic Council's area of authority. This would not apply to black sea bass, scup, and golden tilefish since they are covered by FMPs in the Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic.
- (4) Promote fair and equitable regulations in the commercial fishery for snowy grouper.
- (5) Reduce fishing mortality in the deepwater, recreational fishery.

The purpose of this document is to outline the need for each action, potential alternatives, and decisions required to be made by the Council. It also provides the amendment timeline.

1.0 ACTION 1: Management Benchmarks for Greater Amberjack and Mutton Snapper Stocks

1.1 Need for Action

Greater amberjack and mutton snapper stocks have been assessed through SEDAR. The assessments indicate that both greater amberjack and mutton snapper are not undergoing overfishing and are not overfished. The Committee and SSC will review the assessments at their June meeting. Amendment 17 will contain management measures establishing MSY and OY for mutton snapper and greater amberjack. The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) requires each FMP define four management reference points. Reference points are biological signposts against which the status of a stock can be judged and allow managers to measure fishery status and performance. More specifically, by evaluating the current stock biomass (B) and fishing mortality rate (F) in relation to these reference points, fishery managers can

determine whether a fishery is overfished or undergoing overfishing, and whether current management measures are sufficient to prevent overfishing and achieve the OY.

1.2 Alternatives

1.2.1 Greater amberjack

Table 1. MSY alternatives under consideration for greater amberjack.

Alternatives	MSY equation	F _{MSY} equals	MSY value
Alternative 1 (no action).	The yield produced by F _{MSY} . F _{30%SPR} is used as the F _{MSY} proxy.	not specified	*
Alternative 2	MSY equals the yield produced by F _{MSY} . MSY and F _{MSY} are defined by the most recent SEDAR.	0.424**	2,005,000 lbs whole weight**

*Source: Legault and Turner 1999 provided a range of values for M, F_{MSY}, and MSY using F_{MSY} proxies = F_{40% SPR} and F_{0.1}. See Table 3 for the values.
 **Source: SEDAR 15 (2008)

Table 2. OY alternatives under consideration for greater amberjack.

Alternatives	OY equation	F _{OY} equals	OY value
Alternative 1 (no action).	OY equals the yield produced by F _{OY} . F _{40%SPR} is used as the F _{OY} proxy.	not specified	not specified*
Alternative 2.	OY equals the yield produced by F _{OY} . If a stock is overfished, F _{OY} equals the fishing mortality rate specified by the rebuilding plan designed to rebuild the stock to SSB _{MSY} within the approved schedule. After the stock is rebuilt, F _{OY} = a fraction of F _{MSY} .	(65%)(F _{MSY})	1,925,000 whole weight**
Alternative 3.		(75%)(F _{MSY})	1,968,000 lbs whole weight**
Alternative 4.		(85%)(F _{MSY})	1,993,000 lbs whole weight**

*Source: * Legault and Turner 1999 provided a range of values for M, F_{MSY}, and MSY using F_{MSY} proxies = F_{40% SPR} and F_{0.1}. See Table 3 for the values.
 **Source: SEDAR 15 (2008).

Table 3. Maximum sustainable yield medians and inner 50% from 400 Monte Carlo/bootstrap runs of 18 combinations of tuning indices used, M, F_{MSY} proxy, and maturity schedule (Legault and Turner 1999).

# Indices	M	F_{MSY} Proxy	Maturity Schedule	MSY (million pounds)			
				Median	Inner	50%	Range
one	0.2	$F_{40\%SPR}$	Early	12.50	10.48	-	15.38
one	0.2	$F_{40\%SPR}$	Late	11.51	9.65	-	14.14
one	0.2	$F_{0.1}$	N/A	10.67	8.95	-	13.12
one	0.25	$F_{40\%SPR}$	Early	15.54	12.61	-	18.98
one	0.25	$F_{40\%SPR}$	Late	14.07	11.42	-	17.18
one	0.25	$F_{0.1}$	N/A	12.48	10.14	-	15.24
one	0.3	$F_{40\%SPR}$	Early	19.53	15.78	-	23.95
one	0.3	$F_{40\%SPR}$	Late	17.42	14.08	-	21.36
one	0.3	$F_{0.1}$	N/A	14.70	11.90	-	18.02
four	0.2	$F_{40\%SPR}$	Early	4.43	4.13	-	4.78
four	0.2	$F_{40\%SPR}$	Late	4.09	3.82	-	4.42
four	0.2	$F_{0.1}$	N/A	3.79	3.54	-	4.09
four	0.25	$F_{40\%SPR}$	Early	4.94	4.58	-	5.37
four	0.25	$F_{40\%SPR}$	Late	4.48	4.16	-	4.88
four	0.25	$F_{0.1}$	N/A	4.00	3.71	-	4.34
four	0.3	$F_{40\%SPR}$	Early	5.80	5.33	-	6.36
four	0.3	$F_{40\%SPR}$	Late	5.18	4.77	-	5.68
four	0.3	$F_{0.1}$	N/A	4.42	4.07	-	4.84

1.2.2 Mutton Snapper

Table 4. MSY alternatives under consideration for mutton snapper in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic.

Alternatives	MSY equation	F _{MSY} equals	MSY value
Alternative 1 (no action).	The yield produced by F _{MSY} . F _{40%SPR} is used as the F _{MSY} proxy.	0.23*	not specified
Alternative 2	MSY equals the yield produced by F _{MSY} . MSY and F _{MSY} are defined by the most recent SEDAR.	0.34**	1,516,779 lbs whole weight**
*Source: Huntsman et al. (1992) **Source: SEDAR 15A 2008			

Table 5. OY alternatives under consideration for mutton snapper.

Alternatives	OY equation	F _{OY} equals	OY value
Alternative 1 (no action).	OY equals the yield produced by F _{OY} . F _{40%SPR} is used as the F _{OY} proxy.	not specified	not specified
Alternative 2.	OY equals the yield produced by F _{OY} . If a stock is overfished, F _{OY} equals the fishing mortality rate specified by the rebuilding plan designed to rebuild the stock to SSB _{MSY} within the approved schedule. After the stock is rebuilt, F _{OY} = a fraction of F _{MSY} .	F _{40%SPR}	1,155,222 lbs whole weight**
Alternative 3.		(75%)(F_{MSY})	X lbs whole weight**
Alternative 4.		(85%)(F_{MSY})	X lbs whole weight**
*Source: SEDAR 15A (2008).			

1.3 Council Decisions Required

- (1) Determine if this amendment should contain this action or if MSY/OY/ACL/ACT/AM determinations for greater amberjack and mutton snapper should be in the comprehensive ACL amendment due to the number of actions in Amendment 17 and the desire to focus on the overfishing species only.
- (2) Determine if red snapper should be included in Amendment 17 or remain in Amendment 18 as both amendments are on the same timeline.
- (3) The stock for mutton snapper includes harvest from the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. Discuss how this affects the MSY and OY values in the FMP.
- (4) Ensure all reasonable alternatives are included in the MSY action.
- (5) Ensure all reasonable alternatives are included in the OY action.
- (6) Specify preferred alternatives when possible.
- (7) Clarify that the allocations for species in Amendment 17 will be specified in the Comprehensive Allocation Amendment.

2.0 ACTION 2: Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures

2.1 Need for Action

Revisions to the Magnuson-Stevens Act in 2006 require that by 2010, Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) for fisheries determined by the Secretary to be subject to overfishing must establish a mechanism for specifying Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) at a level that prevents overfishing and does not exceed the recommendations of the respective Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) or other established peer review processes. These FMPs also are required to establish within this time frame measures to ensure accountability. Accountability measures are management controls that ensure that the ACLs are not exceeded; examples include corrective measures if overages occur and implementation of an in-season monitoring program. By 2011, FMPs for all other fisheries, except fisheries for species with annual life cycles, must meet these requirements.

Amendment 17 will specify ACLs and accountability measures for the following species undergoing overfishing (the use of species groupings will be considered) and two species recently assessed. The amendment will also include management measures to limit catch to equal to or below the Annual Catch Target (ACT).

SEDAR-assessed stocks undergoing overfishing

- (1) Black sea bass (overfishing expected to end in 2009)
- (2) Gag (undergoing overfishing)
- (3) Golden tilefish (overfishing expected to have ended in 2007)
- (4) Snowy grouper (overfishing expected to end in 2009)
- (5) Vermilion snapper (undergoing overfishing)

Non SEDAR-assessed stocks undergoing overfishing

- (6) Black grouper (undergoing overfishing)
- (7) Red grouper (undergoing overfishing)
- (8) Speckled hind (undergoing overfishing)
- (9) Warsaw grouper (undergoing overfishing)

Recently SEDAR-assessed species

- (10) Greater amberjack (assessment results to be presented to Council and SSC in June 2008)
- (11) Mutton snapper (assessment results to be presented to Council and SSC in June 2008)

Two species groupings under consideration

- (1) Shallow water snapper grouper management unit (includes gag, black grouper, red grouper, scamp, red hind, rock hind, yellowmouth grouper, tiger grouper, yellowfin grouper, graysby, and coney)
- (2) Deepwater snapper grouper management unit (includes snowy grouper, yellowedge grouper, warsaw grouper, speckled hind, misty grouper, queen snapper, blueline tilefish, and golden tilefish)

2.2 Alternatives

2.2.1 Annual Catch Limits

Alternative 1 (no action). Do not specify ACLs for snapper grouper stocks undergoing overfishing and for greater amberjack and mutton snapper.

Alternative 2. Establish a Commercial Sector ACL for snapper grouper species undergoing overfishing and greater amberjack and mutton snapper.

Sub-alternative 2A. The Commercial Sector ACL is equivalent to the commercial sector's portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Sub-alternative 2B. The Commercial Sector ACL = 95% of the commercial sector's portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Sub-alternative 2C. The Commercial Sector ACL = 90% of the commercial sector's portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Sub-alternative 2D. The Commercial Sector ACL = 85% of the commercial sector's portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Sub-alternative 2E. The Commercial Sector ACL = the midpoint between the commercial sector's portion of ABC and the yield at F_{OY} . If the yield at F_{OY} is not available, use the Commercial Sector ACT.

Sub-alternative 2F. Set the Commercial Sector ACL according to the data levels of a stock. For species assessed under SEDAR, the ACL=95% of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC. For species that have not been assessed under SEDAR and with the average annual landings from 2000-2007 of less than 5,000 lbs, the ACL=80% of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC. For all other species, the ACL=90% of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Alternative 3. Establish a Recreational Sector ACL for snapper grouper species undergoing overfishing and greater amberjack and mutton snapper.

Sub-alternative 3A. The Recreational Sector ACL is equivalent to the recreational sector's portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Sub-alternative 3B. The Recreational Sector ACL = 90% of the recreational sector's portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Sub-alternative 3C. The Recreational Sector ACL = 80% of the recreational sector's portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Sub-alternative 3D. The Recreational Sector ACL = 70% of the recreational sector's portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Sub-alternative 3E. The Recreational Sector ACL = 50% of the recreational sector's portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Sub-alternative 3F. The Commercial Sector ACL = the midpoint between the commercial sector's portion of ABC and the yield at F_{OY} . If the yield at F_{OY} is not available, use the Recreational Sector ACT.

Sub-alternative 3G. Set the Recreational Sector ACL according to the data levels of a stock. For species assessed under SEDAR, the ACL=95% of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC. For species that have not been assessed under SEDAR and with the average annual landings from 2000-2007 of less than 5,000 lbs, the ACL=80% of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC. For all other species, the ACL=90% of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Alternative 4. Others?

2.2.2 Annual Catch Targets (ACTs)

Alternative 1 (no action). Do not specify ACTs for snapper grouper species undergoing overfishing and greater amberjack and mutton snapper.

Alternative 2. Establish a Commercial Sector ACT for snapper grouper species undergoing overfishing and greater amberjack and mutton snapper.

Alternative 2A. The Commercial Sector ACT is equivalent to the commercial portion of the ACL.

Alternative 2B. The Commercial Sector ACT = the commercial sector's yield at F_{OY} for the stock. If the yield at F_{OY} is not available, the Commercial Sector ACT is 95% of the commercial portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Alternative 2C. The Commercial Sector ACT = the commercial sector's yield at F_{OY} for the stock. If the yield at F_{OY} is not available, the Commercial Sector ACT is 90% of the commercial portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Alternative 2D. The Commercial Sector ACT = the commercial sector's yield at F_{OY} for the stock. If the yield at F_{OY} is not available, the Commercial Sector ACT is 85% of the commercial portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Alternative 2E. The Commercial Sector ACT is 95% of the commercial portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Alternative 2F. The Commercial Sector ACT is 90% of the commercial portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Alternative 2G. The Commercial Sector ACT is 85% of the commercial portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Alternative 3. Establish a Recreational Sector ACT for snapper grouper species undergoing overfishing and greater amberjack and mutton snapper.

Alternative 3A. The Recreational Sector ACT is equivalent to the Recreational portion of the ACL.

Alternative 3B. The Recreational Sector ACT = the recreational sector's yield at F_{OY} for the stock. If the yield at F_{OY} is not available, the Recreational Sector ACT is 95% of the recreational portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Alternative 3C. The Recreational Sector ACT = the recreational sector's yield at F_{OY} for the stock. If the yield at F_{OY} is not available, the Recreational Sector ACT is 90% of the recreational portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Alternative 3D. The Recreational Sector ACT = the recreational sector's yield at F_{OY} for the stock. If the yield at F_{OY} is not available, the Recreational Sector ACT is 85% of the recreational portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Alternative 3E. The Recreational Sector ACT is 90% of the recreational portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Alternative 3F. The Recreational Sector ACT is 80% of the recreational portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Alternative 3G. The Recreational Sector ACT is 70% of the recreational portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Alternative 3H. The Recreational Sector ACT is 50% of the recreational portion of the ABC specified for the stock or stock complex by the Council's SSC.

Alternative 4. Others?

2.2.3 Accountability Measures (AMs)

2.2.3.1 Accountability Measures for the Commercial Sector

Alternative 1. Do not implement Accountability Measures for the commercial sector for species undergoing overfishing and greater amberjack and mutton snapper.

Alternative 2. Implement Accountability Measures for the commercial sector for species undergoing overfishing and greater amberjack and mutton snapper. The AM would not vary depending on stock status.

Sub-alternative 2A. If the sector ACT is projected to be met, prohibit the harvest and retention of species or species group. If the sector ACL is exceeded, the Assistant Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the sector ACT in the following year by the amount of the overage.

Sub-alternative 2B. If the sector ACT is projected to be met, prohibit the harvest and retention of species or species group. If the sector ACL is exceeded, the Assistant Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the length of the following fishing year by the amount necessary to recover the overage from the prior fishing year.

Alternative 3. Implement Accountability Measures for the commercial sector for species undergoing overfishing and greater amberjack and mutton snapper. The AM would vary depending on stock status.

Sub-alternative 3A. If the species is overfished or not overfished and the sector ACT is projected to be met, prohibit the harvest and retention of species or species group. If the species is overfished and the sector ACL is exceeded, the Assistant Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the sector ACT in the following year by the amount of the overage. If the species is not overfished and the sector ACL is exceeded, the Assistant Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the length of the following fishing year by the amount necessary to recover the overage from the prior fishing year.

2.2.3.2 Accountability Measures for the Recreational Sector

Alternative 1. Do not implement Accountability Measures for the recreational sector for species undergoing overfishing and greater amberjack and mutton snapper.

Alternative 2. Implement Accountability Measures for species undergoing overfishing and greater amberjack and mutton snapper. The AM would not vary depending on stock status.

Sub-alternative 2A. Do not implement AMs if the sector ACT is projected to be met. If the sector ACL is exceeded, the Assistant Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the length of the following fishing year by the amount necessary to ensure landings do not exceed the sector ACT for the following fishing year.

Sub-alternative 2B. Do not implement AMs if the sector ACT is projected to be met. If the sector ACL is exceeded, the Assistant Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the sector ACT in the following year by the amount of the overage.

Sub-alternative 2C. If the sector ACT is projected to be met, prohibit the harvest and retention of species or species group. If the sector ACL is exceeded, the Assistant Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the length of the following fishing year by the amount necessary to recover the overage from the prior fishing year.

Sub-alternative 2D. If the sector ACT is projected to be met, prohibit the harvest and retention of species or species group. If the sector ACL is exceeded, the Assistant Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the sector ACT in the following year by the amount of the overage.

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Alternative 3. Implement Accountability Measures for the recreational sector for species undergoing overfishing and greater amberjack and mutton snapper. The AM would vary depending on stock status.

Sub-alternative 3A. Do not implement AMs if the sector ACT is projected to be met. If the species is overfished and the ACL is exceeded, the Assistant Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the sector ACT in the following year by the amount of the overage. If not overfished and the ACL is exceeded, the Assistant Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the length of the following fishing year by the amount necessary to ensure landings do not exceed the sector ACT for the following fishing year.

Sub-alternative 3B. If the sector ACT is projected to be met, prohibit the harvest and retention of species or species group. If the species is overfished and the ACL is exceeded, the Assistant Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the sector ACT in the following year by the amount of the overage. If not overfished and the ACL is exceeded, the Assistant Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the length of the following fishing year by the amount necessary to ensure landings do not exceed the sector ACT for the following fishing year.

Alternative 4. Compare ACL in Alternatives 2 and 3 with recreational landings over a range of years. For 2010, use only 2010 landings. For 2011, use the average landings of 2010 and 2011. For 2012 and beyond, use three year running average.

2.4 Council Decisions Required

- (1) Determine if this Amendment should only contain ACL/ACT/AM alternatives for species undergoing overfishing. If yes, determine which amendment should contain the ACL/ACT/ACTs for greater amberjack and mutton snapper.
- (2) Determine if ACLs/ACTs/AMs will be described for single species or groups of species.
- (3) If species groupings are used, should alternative groupings be evaluated.
- (4) Ensure all reasonable alternatives are included in the ACL action.
- (5) Ensure all reasonable alternatives are included in the ACT action.
- (6) Ensure all reasonable alternatives are included in the AM action.
- (7) Note that allocation decisions for the overfishing species that do not have the allocation specified in a FMP (everything but black sea bass and snowy grouper) will be included in the Comprehensive Allocation Amendment.
- (8) Specify preferred alternatives when possible.

3.0 ACTION 3: Extension of Snapper Grouper Regulations

3.1 Need for Action

The Council is concerned about a northward expansion of a fishery for snapper and grouper species, resulting in large catches of tilefish and groupers. For example, the Council's Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel presented information documenting increasing catches of blueline tilefish and snowy grouper off the coast of Virginia. In addition, Virginia reported state records of recreationally-caught blueline tilefish and snowy grouper. (The Virginia Marine Resources Commission has since established commercial and recreational limits on the harvest and landing of tilefish and grouper off the coast of Virginia.) **In response, the Council is considering extending the range of the snapper grouper fishery management plan for some species north through the Mid-Atlantic Council's area of authority. The current boundaries would not be changed for black sea bass, golden tilefish, and scup since they are currently covered by fishery management plans in the Mid-Atlantic and the South Atlantic.**

3.2 Alternatives

Alternative 1 (no action). Do not change the current management boundaries of the Snapper Grouper FMU.

Alternative 2. Extend the management boundaries for all species in the Snapper Grouper FMU northward to include the Mid-Atlantic Council's jurisdiction (except for black sea bass, golden tilefish, and scup).

Alternative 3. Others?

3.3 Council Decisions Required

- (1) Ensure all reasonable alternatives are included in this action.
- (2) Specify a preferred alternative when possible.

4.0 ACTION 4: Regional Commercial Quotas

4.1 Need for Action

Implement regulations for the deepwater, commercial fishery to increase the probability that there is a portion of the commercial quota available to users of all states/regions before the primary fishing season off each state/region begins. Average monthly landings (commercial) of snowy grouper by state are outlined in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 6. Average monthly commercial landings (lbs whole weight) of snowy grouper by state during 2001-2006.

Month	FL	GA	SC	NC
1	8,066	85	2,539	2,604
2	9,631	35	4,068	5,527
3	9,145	689	8,992	6,549
4	10,470	899	10,603	14,337
5	10,097	427	8,075	18,118
6	10,192	145	9,484	13,556
7	5,477	545	7,972	10,011
8	6,699	218	3,996	7,204
9	5,483	80	3,085	4,496
10	7,372	28	3,500	1,969
11	4,061	55	3,698	800
12	4,426	52	2,324	675
Total	91,120	3,258	68,336	85,844
Percent	37%	1%	27%	35%

Table 7. Percentage of snowy grouper landings by month for each state during 2001-2006.

Month	FL	GA	SC	NC
1	9%	3%	4%	3%
2	11%	1%	6%	6%
3	10%	21%	13%	8%
4	11%	28%	16%	17%
5	11%	13%	12%	21%
6	11%	4%	14%	16%
7	6%	17%	12%	12%
8	7%	7%	6%	8%
9	6%	2%	5%	5%
10	8%	1%	5%	2%
11	4%	2%	5%	1%
12	5%	2%	3%	1%

4.2 Alternatives

Alternative 1 (no action). Retain the existing commercial regulations for snowy grouper. Table 8 describes the management measures.

Table 8. Current commercial regulations.

SPECIES	COMMERCIAL REGULATIONS				
	LIMITED ACCESS ¹	GEAR RESTRICTIONS ²	ANNUAL QUOTA (gutted weight)	TRIP LIMITS	AREA CLOSURES ³
Snowy Grouper	√	√	151,000 lbs. year 1 118,000 lbs year 2 84,000 lbs year 3 and onwards until modified	275 lbs year 1, 175 lbs year 2, and 100 lbs year 3 and onwards until modified	√

Alternative 2. Divide the commercial quota for snowy grouper by region/state. Allocate X% to states in the MAFMC’s jurisdiction (excluding North Carolina) (X pounds gutted weight), Y% to North Carolina and South Carolina (Y pound gutted weight), and Z% to Georgia and Florida (Z pounds gutted weight). Each region’s directed quota (after adjustment for PQBM) would be tracked by dealer reporting. After the commercial quota is met in either region, all purchase and sale is prohibited in that region and harvest and/or possession is limited to the bag limit in that region.

Alternative 3. Divide the commercial quota for snowy grouper by region/state. Allocate V% to states in the MAFMC’s jurisdiction (excluding North Carolina) (V pounds gutted weight), W% to North Carolina (W pound gutted weight), X% to South Carolina (X lbs gutted weight) and Y% to Georgia (Y pounds gutted weight), and Z% to Florida (Z pounds gutted weight). Each state/region’s directed quota (after adjustment for PQBM) would be tracked by dealer reporting. After the commercial quota is met in either region, all purchase and sale is prohibited in that state/region and harvest and/or possession is limited to the bag limit in that state/region.

The Council may also want to consider the following alternative introduced by staff:

Alternative 4. Divide the commercial quota for snowy grouper by region/state. Allocate Y% to states in the MAFMC’s jurisdiction (including North Carolina) (Y pounds gutted weight) and Z% to South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida (Z pounds gutted weight). Each state/region’s directed quota (after adjustment for PQBM) would be tracked by dealer reporting. After the commercial quota is met in either region, all purchase and sale is prohibited in that state/region and harvest and/or possession is limited to the bag limit in that state/region.

Alternative 5. Others?

Note: states in MAFMC’s jurisdiction include New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina.

4.3 Council Decisions Required

- (1) Specify allocations for each state/region in each alternative (See Tables 6-8 below).
- (2) Discuss how North Carolina should be handled as they are in both MAFMC and SAFMC's jurisdiction.
- (3) Ensure all reasonable alternatives are included in this action.
- (4) Specify a preferred alternative when possible.

Commercial and recreational landings by state/region are contained in Tables 9-11. The preferred alternative for snowy grouper allocations in Amendment 15B utilize landings from 1986-2005 from the ALS, MRFSS, and headboat databases. If similar years are used, the allocation for Alternative 2 would be 60% North Carolina/South Carolina and 40% Georgia/Florida. If landings from 1986-2007 are used, the percentages would be the same.

Table 9. Commercial lbs whole weight of snowy grouper. FL-NC landings from ALS. NJ landings from Web

Year	Florida	Georgia	South Carolina	North Carolina	New Jersey
1986	208,640	60,333	112,420	93,617	
1987	126,742	22,397	122,535	123,607	
1988	136,844	13,465	121,528	63,871	
1989	143,566	17,528	212,895	147,062	
1990	122,374	15,146	229,759	237,327	
1991	172,633	12,392	106,469	208,299	
1992	167,666	16,518	88,857	304,021	
1993	197,754	14,419	98,158	158,347	
1994	107,135	19,270	74,365	121,340	
1995	189,860	6,936	58,864	140,227	
1996	145,832	5,756	64,948	123,223	
1997	266,948	10,453	116,607	162,933	
1998	147,342	1,918	65,375	123,209	
1999	162,889	7,429	73,965	217,494	1,677
2000	137,698	3,599	71,390	186,787	625
2001	130,453	4,957	97,279	106,742	
2002	110,758	2,055	93,261	110,334	
2003	106,175	7,585	79,843	104,645	
2004	103,731	3,837	63,112	97,470	70
2005	102,856	2,549	71,952	86,021	
2006	91,158	2,083	78,373	102,567	
2007	80,690	63	6,555	48,281	

Table 10. Headboat lbs whole weight for snowy grouper.

Year	South FL	GA and NFL	South Carolina	North Carolina
1986	351	26	3,571	283
1987	424	42	3,863	86
1988	238	55	2,930	57
1989	1,674		1,790	563
1990	723	22	1,939	162
1991	844	4	1,183	155
1992	195	35	413	234
1993	230	3	620	234
1994	112	5	525	88
1995	174	11	413	130
1996	732	11	2,471	208
1997	603	114	1,298	194
1998	507	51	177	563
1999	344	39	109	23
2000	417	41	13	42
2001	175	21	495	261
2002	147	17	313	101
2003	34	26	245	163
2004	262	26	2	97
2005	1,034	210	303	70
2006	42	33		594
2007	Not available			

Table 11. MRFSS lbs whole weight for snowy grouper. There are no landings from MRFSS from the Mid-Atlantic States.

Year	Florida	Georgia	South Carolina	North Carolina
1986	0	0	0	0
1987	0	0	0	3,404
1988	3,578	0	0	99
1989	0	0	0	0
1990	0	0	0	287
1991	0	0	0	284
1992	0	0	0	0
1993	87,498	1,431	0	0
1994	0	0	0	0
1995	13,192	0	0	0
1996	0	0	0	1,005
1997	157,748	0	0	1,470
1998	5,814	0	0	0
1999	14,978	0	0	0
2000	963	0	0	0
2001	11,111	0	0	28,137
2002	130	0	0	8,382
2003	2,269	0	0	11,146
2004	22,516	0	0	4,010
2005	2,606	0	0	29,050
2006	152,997	0	0	13,904
2007	185	0	0	26,764

5.0 ACTION 5: Regulations to Reduce Mortality in the Recreational, Deepwater Fishery

5.1 Need for Action

Implement regulations for the deepwater, recreational fishery to decrease fishing mortality. As the daily bag limit for snowy grouper is one per person (and one warsaw grouper and one speckled hind per vessel per day), the Council believes that restricting the number of hooks may decrease discards when it is possible that multiple fish may be caught per line.

5.2 Alternatives

Alternative 1 (no action). Retain the existing recreational regulations for snowy grouper. Table 12 describes the management measures.

Table 12. Current recreational regulations.

	RECREATIONAL REGULATIONS		
SPECIES	DAILY BAG LIMIT	GEAR RESTRICTIONS ¹	AREA CLOSURES ³
Snowy Grouper	1 per person per day	√	√

Alternative 2. Restrict the number of hooks in the deepwater recreational fishery to one per line.

The Council may also want to consider the following alternative introduced by staff:

Alternative 3. Implement a recreational limit of snowy grouper per vessel per day.

Alternative 4. Others?

5.3 Council Decisions Required

- (1) Determine if this action should include when fishing for other deepwater species besides snowy grouper. These regulations could apply when fishing beyond a depth contour or if targeting certain species.
- (2) Ensure all reasonable alternatives are included in this action. Are there any other alternatives that would meet the purpose of this action (to reduce discards in the deepwater, recreational fishery)?
- (3) Specify a preferred alternative when possible.

6.0 ACTION 6: Regulations to Ensure the Catch is Equal To or Below the ACT

Amendment 17 will specify Annual Catch Targets (ACT). The Council is responsible for implementing regulations that ensure annual catches are equal to or below the ACT specified for that year. The Council must compare the ACT values produced by the preferred ACT alternatives and compare those values to historical landings data. The Council should consider adjusting regulations if there is a low probability that future landings will be equal to or below the ACT. These regulations will be included in Amendment 17.

7.0 Timing for Snapper Grouper Amendment 17:

- Scoping through February 22, 2008.
- Council reviews scoping comments and Options Paper & provides direction to Staff/Team – March 3-7, 2008 meeting in Jekyll Island, GA.
- Scientific & Statistical Committee reviews Options Paper– June 8-10, 2008 meeting in Orlando, FL.
- Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel and Committee, and Council reviews Options Paper & provides direction to Staff/Team – June 9-13, 2008 meeting in Orlando, FL.
- Staff/Team revise document and have ready by August 15, 2008.
- Council approves Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement for public hearings – September 15-19, 2008 meeting in Charleston, SC.
- Public hearings – October 27-30, 2008.
- SSC and Council - Review informal & public hearing comments and DEIS comments and approve all actions – November 30-December 5, 2008 meeting in Wilmington, NC.
- Review complete document and approve for formal review by the Secretary of Commerce – March 2-6, 2009 meeting in Savannah, GA.
- Estimated effective date of January 1, 2010 (required by Reauthorized MSA).