

Proposed Actions in Regulatory Amendment 14

NOTE: This amendment will be developed in 2013. The Council has requested an Options Paper to review at the March 2013 meeting.

Greater Amberjack Actions:

Action 1. Modify the commercial fishing year for greater amberjack.

Alternative 1 (No Action). The current commercial fishing year begins on May 1 and ends on April 30.

Alternative 2. Modify the commercial fishing year for greater amberjack to begin on January 1 and end on December 31.

Alternative 3. Modify the commercial fishing year for greater amberjack to begin on March 1 and end on February 28.

Action 2. Reduce the trip limit for greater amberjack.

Alternative 1 (No Action). The current trip limit is 1,200 pounds gutted weight (gw).

Alternative 2. Reduce the commercial trip limit to 1,000 pounds gw.

Mutton Snapper Actions:

Action 3. Implement additional regulations to protect mutton snapper during its spawning season.

Alternative 1 (No Action). During May and June, commercial snapper-grouper permit holders are limited to a commercial harvest of mutton snapper of 10 fish per person or 10 fish per trip, whichever is more restrictive, which is equivalent to the aggregate snapper recreational bag limit.

Alternative 2. Designate area closures coinciding with known spawning aggregation sites and close them to fishing for mutton snapper during May and June.

Sub-alternative 2a. Designate Western Dry Rocks as a mutton snapper spawning aggregation area closure.

Sub-alternative 2b. Designate Eyeglass Bar as a mutton snapper spawning aggregation area closure.

Alternative 3. Implement a reduction in the bag limit to 5 mutton snapper per person per day during May and June.

Alternative 4. Implement a reduction in the bag limit to 3 mutton snapper per person per day during May and June.

Alternative 5. Modify the commercial spawning season closure for mutton snapper.

Sub-alternative 5a. All commercial and recreational harvest is prohibited during May and June.

Sub-alternative 5b. All commercial and recreational harvest is prohibited during April, May and June.

NOTE: Bag limit changes for mutton snapper are already being considered in Amendment 27 (if the transfer of management to the SA Council proceeds as planned).

Alternative 6. Reduce the bag limit of mutton snapper year-round.

Sub-alternative 6a. Reduce the bag limit of mutton snapper year-round to 3 per person per day (included in the aggregate 10-snapper bag limit).

Sub-alternative 6b. Reduce the bag limit of mutton snapper year-round to 5 per person per day (included in the aggregate 10-snapper bag limit).

Sub-alternative 6c. Reduce the bag limit of mutton snapper year-round to 7 per person per day (included in the aggregate 10-snapper bag limit).

Gray Triggerfish and Hogfish Actions:

Action 4. Change the measurement method for gray triggerfish to have consistency between state and federal waters.

Alternative 1 (No Action). Currently, the minimum size limit for gray triggerfish is specified in inches total length (TL) in federal waters off east Florida only. In Florida state waters, the minimum size for gray triggerfish is specified in inches fork length (FL).

Alternative 2. Specify the minimum size limit for gray triggerfish in inches fork length (FL) in federal waters off east Florida.

Action 5. Increase the minimum size limit for hogfish.

Note: There is a discrepancy in current minimum size specifications (FL vs. TL) for hogfish.

Alternative 1 (No Action). Currently, the minimum size limit for hogfish is 12 inches fork length (FL) in federal waters of the South Atlantic Region, and state waters of South Carolina and Florida. The minimum size limit for hogfish is 12 inches total length (TL) in state waters of North Carolina. There is no minimum size limit for hogfish in state waters of Georgia.

Alternative 2. Increase the minimum size limit for hogfish in federal waters to 13 inches fork length (FL).

Alternative 3. Increase the minimum size limit for hogfish in federal waters to 14 inches fork length (FL).

Black Sea Bass Actions:

Action 6. Modify the fishing year for the black sea bass recreational sector.

Alternative 1 (No Action). The recreational fishing year for black sea bass begins on June 1 and ends on May 31.

Alternative 2. Modify the recreational fishing year for black sea bass to begin on January 1 and end on December 31.

Alternative 3. Modify the recreational fishing year for black sea bass to begin on April 1 and end on March 31.

Alternative 4. Modify the recreational fishing year for black sea bass to begin on October 1 and end on September 30.

Action 7. Modify the fishing year for the black sea bass commercial sector.

Alternative 1 (No Action). The commercial fishing year for black sea bass begins on June 1 and ends on May 31.

Alternative 2. Modify the commercial fishing year for black sea bass to begin on July 1 and end on June 30.

Alternative 3. Open the black sea bass commercial season only to the hook and line sector on June 1, with a trip limit of 50 pounds. The trip limit ends with the opening of the black sea bass pot season.

Alternative 4. Open the black sea bass commercial season only to the hook and line sector on May 1, with a trip limit of 50 pounds. The trip limit ends with the opening of the black sea bass pot season.

Vermilion Snapper Actions:

Action 8. Modify the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper.

Alternative 1 (No Action). The current commercial trip limit is 1,500 pounds gutted weight (gw).

Alternative 2. Remove the current commercial trip limit of 1,500 pounds gw for vermilion snapper.

Alternative 3. Reduce the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper to 1,000 pounds gw.

Alternative 4. Reduce the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper to 500 pounds gw.

Alternative 5. Reduce the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper to 400 pounds gw.

Action 9. Modify the recreational bag limit for vermilion snapper.

Alternative 1 (No Action). The current recreational bag limit is 5 per person per day.

Alternative 2. Reduce the recreational bag limit for vermilion snapper to 3 per person per day.

Alternative 3. Reduce the recreational bag limit for vermilion snapper to 4 per person per day.

Alternative 4. Increase the recreational bag limit for vermilion snapper to 6 per person per day.

Alternative 5. Increase the recreational bag limit for vermilion snapper to 8 per person per day.

Alternative 6. Increase the recreational bag limit for vermilion snapper to 10 per person per day.

Action 10. Modify the opening of the second commercial fishing season for vermilion snapper.

Alternative 1 (No Action). The commercial fishing year for vermilion snapper is split into two seasons of equal duration, each with its own ACL. The first season begins on January 1 and ends on June 30 (6 months). The second season begins on July 1 and ends on December 31 (6 months).

Alternative 2. Modify the commercial fishing year for vermilion snapper.

Sub-alternative 2a. The first season begins on January 1 and ends on May 31 (5 months). The second season begins on June 1 and ends on December 31 (7 months).

Sub-alternative 2b. The first season begins on January 1 and ends on April 30 (4 months). The second season begins on May 1 and ends on December 31 (8 months).

Action 11. Modify the recreational closed season for vermilion snapper.

Alternative 1 (No Action). Recreational harvest of vermilion snapper is prohibited annually from November 1 to March 31 (5 months).

Alternative 2. Modify the recreational closed season for vermilion snapper

Sub-alternative 2a. Recreational harvest of vermilion snapper is prohibited annually from November 1 to January 31 (3 months).

Sub-alternative 2b. Recreational harvest of vermilion snapper is prohibited annually from December 1 to February 28 (5 months).

Sub-alternative 2c. Recreational harvest of vermilion snapper is prohibited annually from October 1 to April 30 (7 months).

Red Porgy Actions:

(Note: Actions may change as a result of the red porgy stock assessment)

Action 12. Increase the recreational bag limit for red porgy.

Alternative 1 (No Action). The current recreational bag limit for red porgy is 3 per person per day or 3 per person per trip, whichever is more restrictive.

Alternative 2. Increase the recreational bag limit for red porgy to 4 per person per day or 4 per person per trip, whichever is more restrictive.

Alternative 3. Increase the recreational bag limit for red porgy to 5 per person per day or 5 per person per trip, whichever is more restrictive.

Action 13. Increase the commercial head count for red porgy.

Alternative 1 (No Action). The current commercial head count is 120 fish per trip.

Alternative 2. Increase the commercial head count for red porgy to 160 fish per trip.

Alternative 3. Increase the commercial head count for red porgy to 200 fish per trip.

Alternative 4. Increase the commercial head count for red porgy to 240 fish per trip.

Grouper Actions:

Action 14. Modify the aggregate grouper bag limit.

Alternative 1 (No Action). The current aggregate grouper bag limit is 3 fish. Within this limit, only one fish can be a gag or black grouper.

Alternative 2. Modify the aggregate grouper bag limit.

Sub-alternative 2a. Increase the aggregate grouper bag limit from 3 to 4 fish. Within this limit, two fish can be gag grouper.

Sub-alternative 2b. Increase the aggregate grouper bag limit from 3 to 4 fish. Within this limit, 1 fish can be a gag grouper.