

Summary Report
Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Meeting
April 18-19, 2012
Charleston, SC

The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP) met in Charleston on Wednesday, April 18, and Thursday, April 19, 2012 to discuss two main items: possible Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) for speckled hind and warsaw grouper and Snapper Grouper Amendment 18B (golden tilefish). In addition the AP held elections for Chair and Vice-Chair and discussed a few items under Other Business. Below is a summary of the AP's motions and recommendations:

Marine Protected Areas for Speckled Hind and Warsaw Grouper

The AP discussed the importance of clear transit provisions for any future MPAs. Additionally, the AP discussed the inability to transit through the Oculina Experimental Closed Area. The motion below pertains to the latter:

MOTION: AP RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL ALLOW TRANSIT IN THE OCULINA BANK AND BE CONSISTENT WITH TRANSIT PROVISIONS FOR ALL MPAs
APPROVED BY AP

The AP spent a considerable time discussing the possibility of MPAs designed to curb bycatch mortality of speckled hind and warsaw grouper. The AP made the following motions pertaining to this issue:

MOTION: COUNCIL SHOULD CONSIDER A SMALL SCALE EXPERIMENTAL FISHERY FOR SPECKLED HIND AND WARSAW GROUPE AND REQUEST THAT HARVEST BE CONDUCTED BY FISHERMEN AND SAMPLING BE DONE BY NMFS OR DNR AGENCIES.

MOTION FAILS

MOTION: COUNCIL SHOULD APPROACH THE STATE OF FLORIDA AND REQUEST THAT HARVEST OF WARSAW GROUPE IN FLORIDA STATE (ATLANTIC) WATERS BE PROHIBITED

APPROVED BY AP (1 OPPOSED)

MOTION: AP SUPPORTS THE COUNCIL'S EFFORT TO FURTHER IDENTIFY AND EXPAND EFH AND HAPC FOR SPECKLED HIND AND WARSAW GROUPE AS A BASIS FOR POTENTIAL MPA DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

APPROVED BY AP (1 OPPOSED)

MOTION: REQUEST THAT RESEARCH TO DETERMINE THE EFFECT OF EXISTING MPAs ON SPECKLED HIND AND WARSAW GROUPER BE UNDERTAKEN
APPROVED BY AP (1 OPPOSED)

MOTION: SUGGEST TO THE COUNCIL THAT VMS BE MANDATORY FOR ANY VESSEL (COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL) HARVESTING FISH IN SA WATERS
APPROVED BY AP (3 OPPOSED)

MOTION: COUNCIL SHOULD REQUEST THAT ENFORCEMENT OF EXISTING MPAs BE STEPPED UP AND VERIFIED
APPROVED BY AP

MOTION: REQUEST THAT COUNCIL INCLUDE AN ACTION IN CE-BA 3 THAT REQUIRES AN EVALUATION AND ENFORCEMENT PLAN FOR ALL MPAs IMPLEMENTED AND MODIFIED THROUGH CE-BA 3. AND IN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE FACT THAT THERE IS NOT ENOUGH DATA TO PUT TOGETHER WELL-PLANNED MPAs, THE MPAs IN CE-BA 3 SHOULD BE DEVELOPED WITH SUNSET PROVISIONS WHICH WILL EFFECTIVELY REQUIRE SCIENTISTS AND POLICY-MAKERS TO REVISIT THE NEED FOR THE MPAs, REVIEW THE RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION, AND VERIFY THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MPAs IN ORDER TO KEEP THE AREAS CLOSED IN THE FUTURE.
APPROVED BY AP

MOTION: SUGGEST TO THE COUNCIL THAT MPAs BE DESIGNATED AS NO-FISHING.
MOTION FAILS (5 IN FAVOR 6 OPPOSED)

MOTION: AP REQUESTS AN ANALYSIS TO DETERMINE THE CUMULATIVE IMPACTS OF EXISTING REGULATIONS (4-MONTH CLOSURE ON GROUPER, LONGLINE CLOSURE, SMZs, SNOWY GROUPER REBUILDING PLAN, EXISTING MPAs, AND OTHERS AS APPROPRIATE) ON THE INCIDENTAL TAKE OF SPECKLED HIND AND WARSAW GROUPER
APPROVED BY AP

MOTION: RECOMMEND TO THE COUNCIL THAT THEY REQUEST THAT THE SEFSC CONDUCT THE ANALYSIS ABOVE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
APPROVED BY AP

Snapper Grouper Amendment 18B (golden tilefish)

The AP discussed actions currently included in Amendment 18B and made the motions below. The amendment will be approved for submission to the Secretary of Commerce at the Council's upcoming June meeting in Orlando.

MOTION: THE AP SUPPORTS THE COUNCIL'S PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE UNDER ACTION 1 TO ESTABLISH A LONGLINE ENDORSEMENT

Alternative 2 (Preferred). Limit golden tilefish effort through a golden tilefish longline endorsement program: Distribute golden tilefish longline endorsements for snapper grouper permit holders that qualify under the eligibility requirements specified under Action 2.

APPROVED BY AP

MOTION: SUPPORT THE ORIGINAL ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDED BY THE TILEFISH WORKGROUP FOR ACTION 2:

Sub-alternative 2a. To receive a golden tilefish longline endorsement, the individual must have a total of 2,000 pounds gw golden tilefish caught (with longline gear) between 2006 and 2008.

APPROVED BY AP

MOTION: SUPPORT THE COUNCIL'S PREFERRED UNDER ACTION 3 (ESTABLISH AN APPEALS PROCESS)

Alternative 2 (Preferred). A period of 90 days will be set aside to accept appeals to the golden tilefish endorsement program starting on the effective date of the final rule. The Regional Administrator (RA) will review, evaluate, and render final decisions on appeals. Hardship arguments will not be considered. The RA will determine the outcome of appeals based on NMFS' logbooks. If NMFS' logbooks are not available, the RA may use state landings records. Appellants must submit NMFS' logbooks or state landings records to support their appeal.

APPROVED BY AP

MOTION: AP SUPPORTS THE COUNCIL'S PREFERRED UNDER ACTION 4 (ALLOCATION OF ACL BETWEEN GEAR GROUPS)

Alternative 2 (Preferred). Allocate the golden tilefish commercial ACL as follows: 75% to the longline sector and 25% to the hook and line sector (currently would be 405,971 pounds gw to longlines and 135,324 pounds gw to hook and line).

APPROVED BY AP

MOTION: AP SUPPORTS THE COUNCIL'S PREFERRED UNDER ACTION 5 (TRANSFERABILITY OF ENDORSEMENT).

Alternative 2 (Preferred). A valid (not expired) golden tilefish endorsement or a renewable (expired but renewable) golden tilefish endorsement can be transferred between any two individuals or entities that hold, or simultaneously obtain a South Atlantic Unlimited Snapper Grouper Permit. Endorsements would be transferable, independently from the South Atlantic Unlimited Snapper Grouper Permit. Landings of golden tilefish using the golden tilefish longline endorsement would be associated with the South Atlantic Unlimited Snapper Grouper Permit to which the endorsement is linked at the time the landings take place.

APPROVED BY AP

MOTION: AP SUPPORTS THE COUNCIL'S PREFERRED UNDER ACTION 6 (RETAIN THE EXISTING FISHING YEAR)

Alternative 1 (No Action) (Preferred). Retain the existing calendar year as the golden tilefish fishing year (January 1 through December 31).

APPROVED BY AP

MOTION: SUPPORT THE COUNCIL'S PREFERRED UNDER ACTION 7 (REMOVE THE 300-POUND TRIP LIMIT)

Alternative 2 (Preferred). Remove the 300 pound gutted weight trip limit when 75% of the ACL is taken.

APPROVED BY AP

MOTION: SUPPORT THE COUNCIL'S PREFERRED UNDER ACTION 8:

Alternative 4 (Preferred). Establish trip limits of 500 pounds gw for the golden tilefish component of the snapper grouper fishery for commercial fishermen who do not receive a longline endorsement. Vessels with longline endorsements are not eligible to fish for this trip limit.

APPROVED BY AP

Snapper Grouper AP Chair and Vice-Chair Election

The AP made the following motions pertaining to the election of a new Chair and Vice-Chair and the protocol regarding attendance of AP representatives at Council meetings:

MOTION: NOMINATE ROBERT JOHNSON FOR AP CHAIR

APPROVED BY AP

MOTION: NOMINATE JIM ATACK FOR VICE-CHAIR

APPROVED BY AP

MOTION: LIMIT TERM FOR CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR TO 2 YEARS (4 MEETINGS)
APPROVED BY AP

RECOMMENDATION THAT THE COUNCIL COVER TRAVEL EXPENSES (AND POSSIBLY OFFER ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION) FOR ONE AP MEMBER TO REPRESENT THE AP AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

MOTION: REQUEST THAT A COMMERCIAL REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE AP ATTEND COUNCIL MEETINGS
MOTION WITHDRAWN

Other Business

MOTION: RECOMMEND THAT THE COUNCIL CONSIDER INCREASING THE GAG/BLACK GROUPER BAG LIMIT FROM 1 TO 2 AND THE AGGREGATE GROUPER LIMIT FROM 3 TO 4 (2 GAG AND/OR 2 BLACK GROUPER).
APPROVED BY AP (8 IN FAVOR, 2 OPPOSED)

MOTION: RECOMMEND THAT THE COUNCIL CONSIDER DISALLOWING RETENTION OF THE BAG LIMIT WHILE ON A COMMERCIAL SNAPPER GROUPER TRIP
MOTION FAILS (4 IN FAVOR, 10 OPPOSED)

MOTION: RECOMMEND THAT THE COUNCIL CONSIDER RELAXING THE COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL RED PORGY LIMITS AND ADDING ANOTHER 120 HEAD TO THE COMMERCIAL LIMIT (240 HEAD PER TRIP). ALSO RECOMMEND THAT THE RECREATIONAL BAG LIMIT BE INCREASED FROM 3 TO 4.
APPROVED BY AP

MOTION: RECOMMEND THAT THE COUNCIL CONSIDER CHANGING THE ALLOCATION OF THE GOLDEN TILEFISH ACL TO 90% COMMERCIAL AND 10% RECREATIONAL.
APPROVED BY AP (7 IN FAVOR, 3 OPPOSED)

MOTION: RECOMMEND THAT THE COUNCIL CONSIDER INCREASING THE MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT OF GRAY TRIGGERFISH AND HOGFISH TO 14 INCHES
APPROVED BY AP

MOTION: RECOMMEND THAT THE COUNCIL CONSIDER ADJUSTING THE BSB RECREATIONAL FISHING YEAR TO NOVEMBER 1 TO OCTOBER 31.

MOTION WITHDRAWN

MOTION: RECOMMEND THAT THE COUNCIL REQUIRE A FEDERAL RECREATIONAL SNAPPER GROUPER PERMIT (SIMILAR TO THE HMS PERMIT) AND MAKE IT AN ANNUAL PERMIT THAT HAS TO BE RENEWED.

APPROVED BY AP

MOTION: REQUEST THAT THE COUNCIL CONSIDER A RESTRUCTURING OF THE SNAPPER GROUPER FISHERY SIMILAR TO WHAT WAS DONE IN 1998 (AMENDMENT 8).

MOTION WITHDRAWN

MOTION: RECOMMEND THAT THE COUNCIL CONSIDER TAKING ACTION TO “CLEAN UP” THE SNAPPER GROUPER FISHERY OF LATENT PERMITS, SIMILAR TO WHAT WAS DONE IN 1998 BUT USING THE CONTROL DATE OF SEPTEMBER 17, 2010 AND USING THE SAME POUNDAGE QUALIFIERS.

APPROVED BY AP (2 OPPOSED)