

Revised 8/22/11

PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY

of AMENDMENT 24 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region

The SEDAR stock assessment of the red grouper stock in the South Atlantic was completed in 2010 with data through 2008. The assessment showed red grouper are **overfished** (population biomass or pounds in the water is too low) and **undergoing overfishing** (rate of removal or numbers of fish removed from the water is too high).

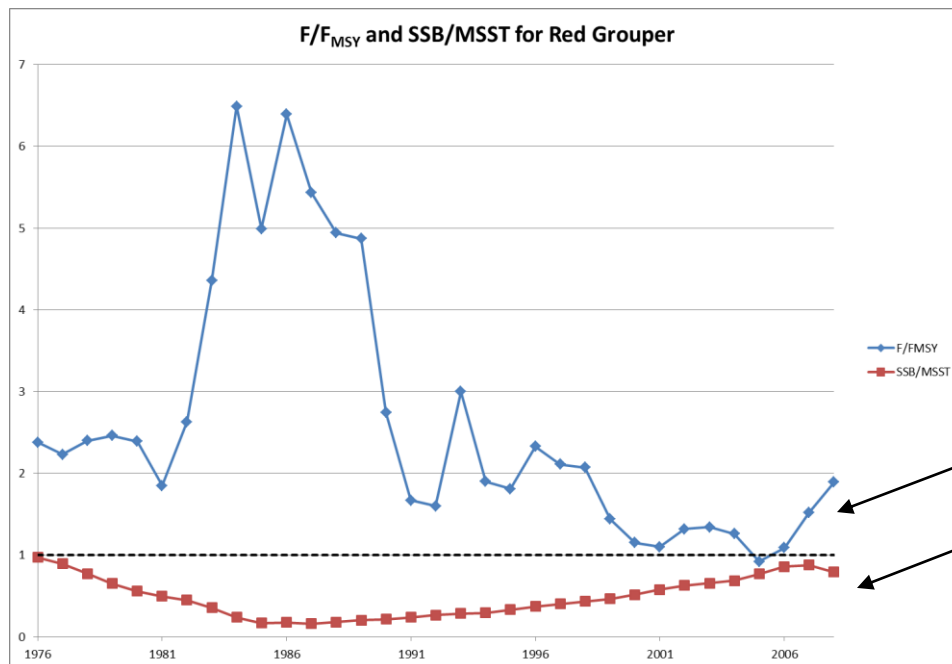
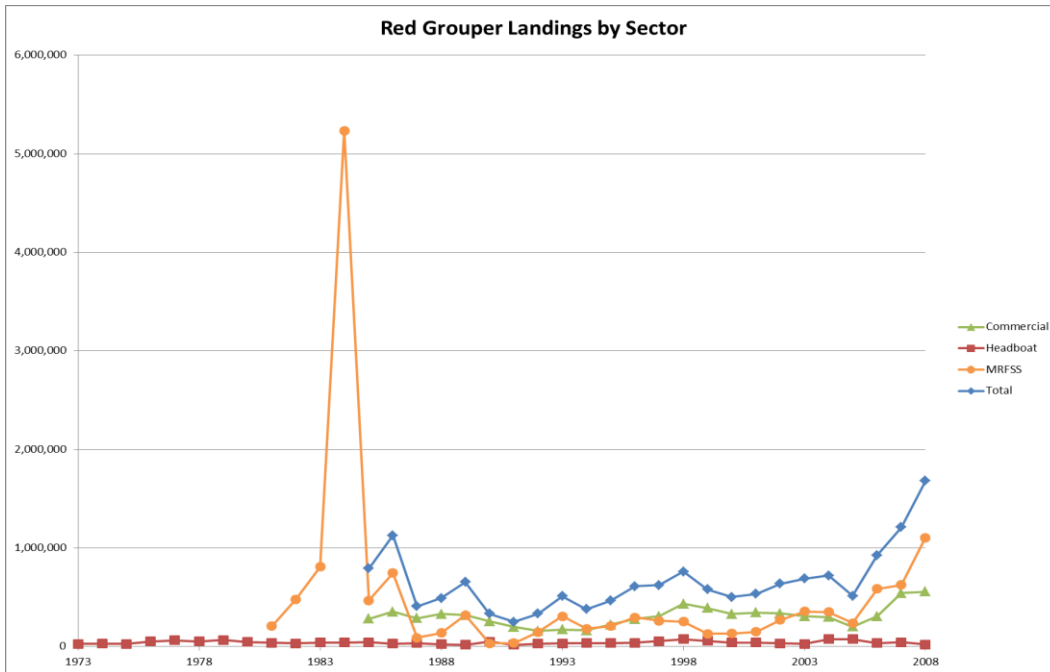
The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (South Atlantic Council) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service) are required by law to implement a rebuilding plan. The primary purpose of Amendment 24 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery (Amendment 24) is to implement the rebuilding plan to end overfishing and rebuild the spawning stock of red grouper. However, the South Atlantic Council is also required to specify management benchmarks (called maximum sustainable yield and minimum stock size threshold).

On July 29, 2009, the South Atlantic Council's Amendment 16 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan that included a four-month spawning season closure for gag grouper and shallow water groupers (including red grouper) was implemented by NOAA Fisheries Service. Based on 2010 red grouper catch data, current management measures may be sufficient to limit recreational landings below the recreational ACL proposed in this amendment; however, the commercial ACL is expected to be exceeded before the end of the year once implemented in 2012.

This document is intended to serve as a SUMMARY for all the actions and alternatives in Amendment 24. It also provides background information and includes a summary of the expected biological, social, and economic effects from the management measures.

Why is the South Atlantic Council taking Action?

The stock assessment of red grouper in the South Atlantic Council's area was completed in 2010 using data through 2008. The assessment showed red grouper to be **overfished** (population too low) and **undergoing overfishing** (rate of removal too high) (see figures below). The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (South Atlantic Council) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service) are required by law to implement a rebuilding plan to end overfishing and rebuild the spawning stock of red grouper.

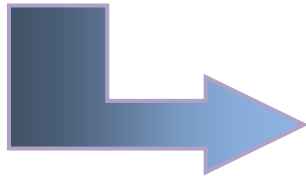


Overfishing if
 $F/F_{MSY} > 1$

Overfished if
 $SSB/MSST < 1$

What Are the Proposed Actions?

There are 8 actions in Amendment 24. Each *action* has a range of *alternatives*, including a “no action alternative” and a “preferred alternative”.



The Council’s Preferred Alternatives are shown in yellow highlight and look for a black arrow.



Proposed Actions in Amendment 24

1. Maximum Sustainable Yield
2. Minimum Stock Size Threshold
3. Rebuilding Schedule
4. Rebuilding Strategy and Acceptable Biological Catch Levels
5. Allocations
6. Annual Catch Limits and Optimum Yield
7. Accountability Measures for the Commercial Sector
8. Accountability Measures for the Recreational Sector

What Are the Alternatives?

1. Maximum Sustainable Yield

Proposed Actions in Amendment 24

1. **Maximum Sustainable Yield**
2. Minimum Stock Size Threshold
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8. Accountability Measures for the Recreational Sector

Alternatives	Equation	F _{MSY}	MSY Values (lbs whole weight)
Alternative 1 (No Action)	MSY equals the yield produced by F _{MSY} . F _{30%SPR} is used as the F _{MSY} proxy.	F _{30%SPR} =0.178 ¹	not specified
Alternative 2 (Preferred)	MSY equals the yield produced by F _{MSY} or the F _{MSY} proxy. MSY and F _{MSY} are recommended by the most recent SEDAR/SSC.	0.221 ²	1,110,000 ³

¹Estimate from the Beaufort catch-age model
^{2,3}SEDAR 19 (2010)

Impacts

Biological: The preferred alternative (Alternative 2) would have beneficial effects to the red grouper stock as it provides a reference point to monitor the long-term performance of the stock.

Economic: Alternative 2 (Preferred), which is recommended in the most recent SEDAR and by the SSC, has a better scientific basis. Hence, it provides a more solid ground for management actions that have economic implications.

Social: Alternative 2 (Preferred) will likely have few negative social effects if the threshold is above the mean landings and not substantially reduced by other management action.

2. Minimum Stock Size Threshold (MSST)

Proposed Actions in Amendment 24

1. Maximum Sustainable Yield
2. **Minimum Stock Size Threshold**
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4. Rebuilding Strategy and Acceptable Biological Catch Levels
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8. Accountability Measures for the Recreational Sector

Alternatives	MSST Equation	M equals	MSST Values (lbs whole weight)
Alternative 1 (No Action)	MSST equals $SSB_{MSY} ((1-M) \text{ or } 0.5, \text{ whichever is greater})$.	0.14 ¹	4,914,053
Alternative 2	MSST equals 50% of SSB_{MSY}	n/a	2,857,162
Alternative 3 (Preferred)	MSST equals 75% of SSB_{MSY}	n/a	4,285,742
Alternative 4	MSST equals 85% of SSB_{MSY}	n/a	4,857,175
Alternative 5	MSST at which rebuilding to the MSY level would be expected to occur within 10 years at the MFMT level.		

Impacts

Biological: Taking no action could result in the red grouper stock's biomass fluctuating frequently between an overfished and rebuilt status because the current MSST is set too close to SSB_{msy} (the stock biomass expected to exist under equilibrium conditions when fishing at F_{MSY}). **Alternatives 2-4** would establish a larger buffer between what is considered to be an overfished and rebuilt condition. The benefits of the preferred alternative (**Alternative 3**) are intermediate between **Alternatives 2 and 4**.

Economic: Like MSY, MSST does not alter the current harvest or use of the resource, and thus would have no direct economic effects on fishery participants and associated industries or communities. However, a low MSST level would be associated with lower probability of enacting rebuilding actions that would alter the economic environment. The economic effects of the preferred alternative (**Alternative 3**, $MSST = 75\% SSB_{msy}$) fall in between those of taking no action (**Alternative 1**) and setting the MSST at 50% of the SSB_{msy} (**Alternative 2**).

Social: The preferred alternative (**Alternative 3**) is expected to result in greater short-term social impacts than **Alternative 2** from closures and other regulations that limit harvest due to MSST being reached, but less long-term social impacts than **Alternative 4**.

3. Rebuilding Schedule

Proposed Actions in Amendment 24

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Alternatives

Definition

Alternative 1 (No Action)	There currently is not a rebuilding plan for red grouper. Snapper Grouper Amendment 4 (regulations effective January 1992) implemented a 15-year rebuilding plan beginning in 1991, which expired in 2006.
Alternative 2	Define a rebuilding schedule as the shortest possible period to rebuild in the absence of fishing mortality (T_{MIN}). This would equal <u>3 years</u> with the rebuilding time period ending in 2013. 2011 is Year 1.
Alternative 3	Define a rebuilding schedule as the mid-point between the shortest possible and maximum recommended period to rebuild. This would equal <u>7 years</u> with the rebuilding time period ending in 2017. 2011 is Year 1.
Alternative 4	Define a rebuilding schedule as the mid-point between the shortest possible and maximum recommended period to rebuild. This would equal <u>8 years</u> with the rebuilding time period ending in 2018. 2011 is Year 1.
Alternative 5 (Preferred)	Define a rebuilding schedule as the maximum period allowed to rebuild (T_{MAX}). This would equal <u>10 years</u> with the rebuilding time period ending in 2020. 2011 is Year 1.

Impacts

Biological: The Council is proposing the longest time period to rebuild the red grouper stock (**Preferred Alternative 5**). A longer rebuilding schedule would, in general: 1) offer lower beneficial impacts to the biological environment, 2) allow stocks to be harvested at higher rates as they rebuild, and 3) increase the risk that environmental or other factors could prevent the stock from recovering.

Economic: The preferred alternative (**Alternative 5**) would provide the longest rebuilding period (10 years) and hence possibly the least restrictive management measures over the rebuilding timeframe. The degree of short-term adverse economic consequences would vary according to the restrictiveness of management measures. It can be expected that more future benefits would accrue soonest under **Alternative 1 (No Action)** and latest under the preferred alternative.

Social: Generally, the shorter the rebuilding schedule, the more severe the necessary harvest restrictions. The more severe the harvest restrictions, the greater the short-term adverse effects associated with business failure, job or living dislocations, and overall adjustments for the social environment. **Alternative 5 (Preferred)** would allow the longest possible rebuilding timeframe would be expected to allow the greatest flexibility to recover red grouper and minimize the adverse social and economic effects on associated fisheries.

4. Rebuilding Strategy and ABC

Alternatives	Rebuilding strategy (F _{0Y} Equal To)		ABC (lbs whole weight) Landings & Discards	ABC (lbs whole weight) Landings (Preferred)
	Scenario	F rate		
Alternative 1 (No Action)	F _{45%SPR}	0.1055	399,000 (2011)	374,000 (2011)
			468,000 (2012)	442,000 (2012)
			537,000 (2013)	511,000 (2013)
			602,000 (2014)	575,000 (2014)
Alternative 2	F _{REBUILD} (10 years)	0.181	665,000 (2011)	622,000 (2011)
			737,000 (2012)	693,000 (2012)
			806,000 (2013)	762,000 (2013)
			866,000 (2014)	822,000 (2014)
Alternative 3 (Preferred)	75%F _{MSY}	0.166	613,000 (2011)	573,000 (2011)
			687,000 (2012)	647,000 (2012)
			759,000 (2013)	718,000 (2013)
			821,000 (2014)	780,000 (2014)
Alternative 4	65%F _{MSY}	0.144	535,000 (2011)	501,000 (2011)
			610,000 (2012)	575,000 (2012)
			683,000 (2013)	648,000 (2013)
			749,000 (2014)	713,000 (2014)
Alternative 5	F _{REBUILD} (7 years)	0.157	583,000 (2011)	545,000 (2011)
			657,000 (2012)	619,000 (2012)
			730,000 (2013)	691,000 (2013)
			794,000 (2014)	755,000 (2014)
Alternative 6	F _{REBUILD} (8 years)	0.168	620,000 (2011)	580,000 (2011)
			695,000 (2012)	654,000 (2012)
			765,000 (2013)	724,000 (2013)
			828,000 (2014)	787,000 (2014)

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Impacts

Biological: This action determines the target level of fishing mortality during the rebuilding time frame. The greatest biological benefit would be provided by **Alternative 3 (Preferred)**, which would specify an ABC equal to the yield 75%F_{MSY}. A larger sustainable biomass associated with the preferred fishing mortality rate would be beneficial for the stock.

Economic: The preferred alternative (**Alternative 3**) would provide the third highest economic benefits (after **Alternatives 2 and 6**). From a regional perspective, **Alternative 2** is economically superior in that it makes all constituents better off without making anybody worse off.

Social: The rebuilding strategy decision determines the ABC for red grouper, which will be used by the Council to select the ACL, a number that can be set at but not higher than the ABC. Although a more conservative fishing mortality rate (F) rate would likely result in a higher probability of rebuilding over a shorter period of time, the strategy proposed under the preferred alternative (**Alternative 3**) provides more long-term social benefits than **Alternatives 2 or 6**.

5. Allocations

Alternative 1 (No Action). Do not establish sector allocations for red grouper.

Alternative 2. Specify allocations for the commercial and recreational sectors based on criteria as outlined in one of the following options below. (using SEDAR data)

Subalternative 2a. Commercial = 47% and recreational = 53% (Established by using catch history from 1986-2008).

Subalternative 2b. Commercial = 50% and recreational = 50% (Established by using catch history from 1986-1998).

Subalternative 2c. Commercial = 45% and recreational = 55% (Established by using catch history from 1999-2008).

Subalternative 2d. Commercial = 37% and recreational = 63% (Established by using catch history from 2006-2008).

Subalternative 2e (Preferred). Commercial = 40% and recreational = 60% (Established by using 50% of catch history from 1991-2008 + 50% of catch history from 2006-2008).



Alternative 3. Specify allocations for the commercial, for-hire, and recreational sectors based on criteria as outlined in one of the following options below. (using totals from SERO ACL database)

Subalternative 3a. Commercial = 60%, for-hire = 28%, and recreational = 12% (Established by using catch history from 1986-2008).

Subalternative 3b. Commercial = 67%, for-hire = 20%, and recreational = 13% (Established by using catch history from 1986-1998).

Subalternative 3c. Commercial = 55%, for-hire = 34%, and recreational = 11% (Established by using catch history from 1999-2008).

Subalternative 3d. Commercial = 43%, for-hire = 49%, and recreational = 8% (Established by using catch history from 2006-2008).

Subalternative 3e. Commercial = 45%, for-hire = 28%, and recreational = 27% (Established by using 50% of catch history from 1991-2008 + 50% of catch history from 2006-2008).

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Impacts

Biological: The biological effects of options that allocate more of the ACL to the commercial sector could have a greater biological benefit because there is less of a change than a commercial ACL is exceeded than a recreational ACL. Commercial data can be more closely monitored as they are based on dealer reports; whereas much of the recreational data (except headboat data) are based on survey information. The preferred allocation alternative (**Subalternative 2e**) balances historical and recent catches in determining the allocation.

Economic: Since **Subalternative 2e (Preferred)** equals the recent sector allocations (see table on following page), the economic model does not predict any effects.

Social: The preferred allocation alternative (**Subalternative 2e**) reflects a more recent distribution between the commercial and recreational sector than other alternatives and provides the 2nd highest recreational allocation among the alternatives considered. This would benefit the recreational sector by allowing continued fishing opportunities. However, the allocation scenario could impact the commercial sector by limiting growth.

Red Grouper Catches by Recreational & Commercial Sectors and Percentages from data in the SEDAR Assessment (pounds whole weight):

Year	Recreational	% Rec	Commercial	%Com	Total
1986	775,164	69%	353,202	31%	1,128,366
1987	122,558	30%	285,679	70%	408,237
1988	160,621	33%	329,624	67%	490,245
1989	335,050	51%	319,067	49%	654,117
1990	78,198	23%	255,077	77%	333,275
1991	50,803	20%	198,562	80%	249,365
1992	176,044	53%	156,617	47%	332,661
1993	337,910	66%	171,300	34%	509,210
1994	216,995	57%	162,735	43%	379,730
1995	241,106	52%	222,171	48%	463,277
1996	333,076	55%	276,945	45%	610,021
1997	316,706	51%	305,940	49%	622,646
1998	327,083	43%	433,301	57%	760,384
1999	187,357	32%	391,232	68%	578,589
2000	172,432	34%	329,150	66%	501,582
2001	188,190	35%	344,748	65%	532,938
2002	300,258	47%	336,392	53%	636,650
2003	383,175	56%	305,646	44%	688,821
2004	423,043	59%	297,475	41%	720,518
2005	314,667	61%	199,761	39%	514,428
2006	619,598	67%	307,212	33%	926,810
2007	667,750	55%	541,960	45%	1,209,710
2008	1,125,328	67%	556,286	33%	1,681,614

Landings data from the Red Grouper SEDAR Stock Assessment was used to determine allocations (www.sefsc.noaa.gov/sedar).

Here's how the Council determined red grouper allocations using catch data from the SEDAR stock assessment.

South Atlantic Council's Preferred Allocation Formula for each sector:

Sector apportionment = (50% * (average of long catch range (lbs) 1991-2008 + (50% * average of recent catch trend (lbs) 2006-2008. The commercial and recreational allocations specified would remain in effect until modified.

$$\text{Com Sector \%} = \frac{(50\% \times \text{Average Com 1991-2008}) + (50\% \times \text{Average Com 2006-2008})}{(50\% \times \text{Avg Com 1991-2008} + 50\% \times \text{Avg Com 2006-2008}) + (50\% \times \text{Avg Rec 1991-2008} + 50\% \times \text{Avg Rec 2006-2008})}$$

$$\text{Rec Sector \%} = \frac{(50\% \times \text{Average Rec 1991-2008}) + (50\% \times \text{Average Rec 2006-2008})}{(50\% \times \text{Avg Rec 1991-2008} + 50\% \times \text{Avg Rec 2006-2008}) + (50\% \times \text{Avg Com 1991-2008} + 50\% \times \text{Avg Com 2006-2008})}$$

6. Annual Catch Limits and Optimum Yield

Note: More than one preferred alternative may be chosen.

Alternative 1 (No Action). An individual ACL is currently not in place for red grouper. Retain aggregate recreational and commercial ACLs for black grouper, red grouper, and gag. The commercial sector ACL for gag, black grouper, and red grouper is 662,403 gw (781,636 ww) and 648,663 gw (765,422 ww) for the recreational sector. The total group ACL is 1,311,066 gw (1,547,058 ww). These values are equivalent to the expected catch resulting from the implementation of management measures for red grouper in Amendment 16 and specified in Amendment 17B.

Proposed Actions in Amendment 24

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➔ **Alternative 2 (Preferred).** ACL = OY = ABC. Specify commercial and recreational ACLs for red grouper as indicated in the table below (**Table S-1**). ACLs will not increase in a subsequent year if present year projected catch has exceeded the ACL.

Alternative 3. ACL = OY = 90% of the ABC. Specify commercial and recreational ACLs for red grouper as indicated in the table below (**Table S-2**). ACLs will not increase in a subsequent year if present year projected catch has exceeded the ACL.

Alternative 4. ACL = OY = 80% of the ABC. Specify commercial and recreational ACLs for red grouper as indicated in the table below (**Table S-3**). ACLs will not increase in a subsequent year if present year projected catch has exceeded the ACL.

➔ **Alternative 5 (Preferred).** Eliminate the commercial sector aggregate ACL of 662,403 lbs gw for black grouper, gag, and red grouper. Eliminate the in-season AM that specifies a prohibition on possession of all shallow water groupers once the commercial aggregate ACL is projected to be met.

➔ **Alternative 6 (Preferred).** Eliminate the recreational sector aggregate ACL of 648,663 lbs gw for black grouper, gag, and red grouper. Eliminate the in-season AM that specifies a prohibition on possession of black grouper, gag, and red grouper once the ACL is projected to be met if any one of the three species is listed as overfished. Eliminate the post-season AM that specifies a reduction in a subsequent year's ACL by the amount of an overage if landings exceed the aggregate ACL. Eliminate the regulation that states that the recreational landings are evaluated relative to the ACL as follows: For 2010, only 2010 recreational landings will be compared to the ACL; in 2011, the average of 2010 and 2011 recreational landings will be compared to the ACL; and in 2012 and subsequent fishing years, the most recent 3-year running average recreational landings will be compared to the ACL.

Table S-1. The ACL values (lbs whole weight) for red grouper in **Preferred Alternative 2** (ACL=OY=ABC). ACL values are based on preferred allocation alternative (40% commercial/60% recreational). **The Council's proposed values are shown in yellow.**

Alt. 2 ACL=ABC						
Total						
	Year	F_{REBUILD} (10years)	75%F_{MSY}	65%F_{MSY}	F_{REBUILD} (7 years)	F_{REBUILD} (8 years)
	2012	693,000	647,000	575,000	619,000	654,000
landings	2013	762,000	718,000	648,000	691,000	724,000
	2014	822,000	780,000	713,000	755,000	787,000
	2012	737,000	687,000	610,000	657,000	695,000
landings & discards	2013	806,000	759,000	683,000	730,000	765,000
	2014	866,000	821,000	749,000	794,000	828,000
Commercial (40%)						
	Year	F_{REBUILD} (10years)	75%F_{MSY}	65%F_{MSY}	F_{REBUILD} (7 years)	F_{REBUILD} (8 years)
	2012	277,200	258,800	230,000	247,600	261,600
landings	2013	304,800	287,200	259,200	276,400	289,600
	2014	328,800	312,000	285,200	302,000	314,800
	2012	294,800	274,800	244,000	262,800	278,000
landings & discards	2013	322,400	303,600	273,200	292,000	306,000
	2014	346,400	328,400	299,600	317,600	331,200
Recreational (60%)						
	Year	F_{REBUILD} (10years)	75%F_{MSY}	65%F_{MSY}	F_{REBUILD} (7 years)	F_{REBUILD} (8 years)
	2012	415,800	388,200	345,000	371,400	392,400
landings	2013	457,200	430,800	388,800	414,600	434,400
	2014	493,200	468,000	427,800	453,000	472,200
	2012	442,200	412,200	366,000	394,200	417,000
landings & discards	2013	483,600	455,400	409,800	438,000	459,000
	2014	519,600	492,600	449,400	476,400	496,800

Table S-2. The ACL values (lbs whole weight) for red grouper in **Alternative 3** (ACL=OY=90%ABC). ACL values are based on preferred allocation alternative (40% commercial/60% recreational).

Alt. 3 ACL=90% ABC						
Total						
	Year	F_{REBUILD} (10years)	75%F_{MSY}	65%F_{MSY}	F_{REBUILD} (7 years)	F_{REBUILD} (8 years)
	2012	623,700	582,300	517,500	557,100	588,600
landings	2013	685,800	646,200	583,200	621,900	651,600
	2014	739,800	702,000	641,700	679,500	708,300
	2012	663,300	618,300	549,000	591,300	625,500
landings & discards	2013	725,400	683,100	614,700	657,000	688,500
	2014	779,400	738,900	674,100	714,600	745,200
Commercial (40%)						
	Year	F_{REBUILD} (10years)	75%F_{MSY}	65%F_{MSY}	F_{REBUILD} (7 years)	F_{REBUILD} (8 years)
	2012	249,480	232,920	207,000	222,840	235,440
landings	2013	274,320	258,480	233,280	248,760	260,640
	2014	295,920	280,800	256,680	271,800	283,320
	2012	265,320	247,320	219,600	236,520	250,200
landings & discards	2013	290,160	273,240	245,880	262,800	275,400
	2014	311,760	295,560	269,640	285,840	298,080
Recreational (60%)						
	Year	F_{REBUILD} (10years)	75%F_{MSY}	65%F_{MSY}	F_{REBUILD} (7 years)	F_{REBUILD} (8 years)
	2012	374,220	349,380	310,500	334,260	353,160
landings	2013	411,480	387,720	349,920	373,140	390,960
	2014	443,880	421,200	385,020	407,700	424,980
	2012	397,980	370,980	329,400	354,780	375,300
landings & discards	2013	435,240	409,860	368,820	394,200	413,100
	2014	467,640	443,340	404,460	428,760	447,120

Table S-3. The ACL values (lbs whole weight) for red grouper in **Alternative 4** (ACL=OY=80%ABC). ACL values are based on preferred allocation alternative (40% commercial/60% recreational).

Alt. 4 ACL=80%ABC						
Total						
	Year	F_{REBUILD} (10years)	75%F_{MSY}	65%F_{MSY}	F_{REBUILD} (7 years)	F_{REBUILD} (8 years)
	2012	554,400	517,600	460,000	495,200	523,200
landings	2013	609,600	574,400	518,400	552,800	579,200
	2014	657,600	624,000	570,400	604,000	629,600
	2012	589,600	549,600	488,000	525,600	556,000
landings & discards	2013	644,800	607,200	546,400	584,000	612,000
	2014	692,800	656,800	599,200	635,200	662,400
Commercial (40%)						
	Year	F_{REBUILD} (10years)	75%F_{MSY}	65%F_{MSY}	F_{REBUILD} (7 years)	F_{REBUILD} (8 years)
	2012	221,760	207,040	184,000	198,080	209,280
landings	2013	243,840	229,760	207,360	221,120	231,680
	2014	263,040	249,600	228,160	241,600	251,840
	2012	235,840	219,840	195,200	210,240	222,400
landings & discards	2013	257,920	242,880	218,560	233,600	244,800
	2014	277,120	262,720	239,680	254,080	264,960
Recreational (60%)						
	Year	F_{REBUILD} (10years)	75%F_{MSY}	65%F_{MSY}	F_{REBUILD} (7 years)	F_{REBUILD} (8 years)
	2012	332,640	310,560	276,000	297,120	313,920
landings	2013	365,760	344,640	311,040	331,680	347,520
	2014	394,560	374,400	342,240	362,400	377,760
	2012	353,760	329,760	292,800	315,360	333,600
landings & discards	2013	386,880	364,320	327,840	350,400	367,200
	2014	415,680	394,080	359,520	381,120	397,440

PROPOSED 2012 ACL VALUES

Red Grouper ACL	=	647,000 pounds
Commercial Sector ACL	=	258,800 pounds
Recreational Sector ACL	=	388,200 pounds

ACLs will increase in 2013 and 2014 as long as the quota monitoring programs work well enough to prevent commercial or recreational overages. **If there are overages, the ACL will not increase.**

Impacts

red grouper. Alternatives 3 and 4 would have a greater alternative (**Alternative 2**) because they would create a buffer between the ACL and ABC would provide greater **Alternatives 5 and 6 (Preferreds)** would eliminate the aggregate ability measures (AMs) currently in place for red grouper, which is being established through the Comprehensive ACL

provide the largest ACL, and would also result in the largest aggregate quota for red, gag, and black (**Preferred**) economic effects based on the analysis.

equal to the ABC, the highest possible ACL, and would consider alternatives that set the ACL at a percentage of the aggregate previously established aggregate ACL and AMs. It would be expected to result from a species-specific limit of red grouper.

7. Accountability Measures - Commercial

Alternative 1 (No Action). Do not specify new commercial AMs for red grouper.

Alternative 2. Specify individual Annual Catch Targets (ACT) for red grouper.

➔ **Subalternative 2a (Preferred).**

Do not establish a commercial sector ACT.

Subalternative 2b. The ACT equals 90% of the ACL.

Subalternative 2c. The ACT equals 80% of the ACL.

➔ **Alternative 3 (Preferred).** If the ACL is met or is projected to be met, all subsequent purchase and sale of red grouper is prohibited and harvest and/or possession is limited to the bag limit.

➔ **Alternative 4 (Preferred).** If the ACL is exceeded, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the ACL in the following season by the amount of the overage.

Proposed Actions in Amendment 24

1. Maximum Sustainable Yield
2. Minimum Stock Size Threshold
3. Rebuilding Schedule
4. Rebuilding Strategy and Acceptable Biological Catch Levels
5. Allocations
6. Annual Catch Limits and Optimum Yield
7. **Accountability Measures for the Commercial Sector**
8. Accountability Measures for the Recreational Sector

PROPOSED 2012
COMMERCIAL ACL = 258,800
POUNDS

2010 RED GROUPE
COMMERCIAL CATCH =
322,730 POUNDS

In 2012 will
compare with
2011 landings

EXPECTED COMMERCIAL
CLOSURE BEFORE THE END
OF 2012 AFTER
IMPLEMENTED IN JUNE 2012;
LANDINGS COUNTED FROM
MAY 1, 2011 ONWARDS

Impacts

Biological: By prohibiting harvest, sale, and possession of red grouper after the commercial ACL is met or projected to be met, **Alternative 3 (Preferred)** would benefit the biological environment by providing a disincentive to target red grouper once the ACL has been reached. **Alternative 4 (Preferred)** would complement **Alternative 3 (Preferred)** because it would implement a payback provision to correct for any ACL overages post-season. A reduced ACL due to paying back an overage could result in a shortened season the following fishing year which could in turn increase regulatory discards. However, **Alternative 3 (Preferred)** would alleviate the discards problem by allowing commercial fishermen to retain the bag limit after the ACL has been met. Overall, the effects of the two preferred alternatives on the biological environment would be positive.

Economic: **Alternative 3 (Preferred)** would provide greater short-term economic benefits to the commercial sector compared to **Alternative 4 (Preferred)** but less than **Alternative 1 (No Action)**. **Alternative 4 (Preferred)** would provide the greatest long-term economic benefits to the commercial sector compared to **Alternatives 1 (No Action)** and **Alternative 3 (Preferred)**.

Social: **Alternatives 3 (Preferred)** and **4 (Preferred)** would provide sufficient protection with some beneficial social effects through the payback provision. While payback does incur short-term negative social impacts, the long-term benefits of stock protection should contribute to the overall benefits as stock status should remain at sustainable levels.

CURRENT COMMERCIAL REGULATIONS

- 20 inch total length minimum size limit (effective 1/1/92)
- Vessels with longline gear can only possess deepwater species (no red grouper) (effective 2/24/99)
- Aggregate ACL of 662,403 lbs gutted weight for black grouper, gag, and red grouper (effective 1/31/11)
- Once the aggregate ACL is projected to be met, all possession of shallow water groupers is prohibited (effective 1/31/11)
- January through April annual closure of all shallow water groupers (effective 7/29/09)

8. Accountability Measures – Recreational

Alternative 1 (No Action). Do not specify new recreational AMs for red grouper.

Decision 1. Specify an ACT?

Alternative 2. Specify an ACT.

Subalternative 2a. Do not specify an ACT.

Subalternative 2b. The ACT equals 85% of the ACL.

Subalternative 2c. The ACT equals 75% of the ACL.

Subalternative 2d (Preferred). The ACT equals $ACL \cdot (1 - PSE)$ or $ACL \cdot 0.5$, whichever is greater.

What is PSE?

PSE stands for Proportional Standard Error and is a measure of precision. The smaller the PSE, the better the estimate of recreational landings.

PSE Values (weight)

2004	24.7
2005	22.7
2006	26.0
2007	27.1
2008	25.6
3 Yr Avg	26.2
5 Yr Avg	25.2

Council using PSE=25%

Decision 2. What is the AM trigger?

Alternative 3. Specify the AM trigger.

Subalternative 3a. Do not specify an AM trigger.

Subalternative 3b (Preferred). If the annual landings exceed the ACL in a given year.

Subalternative 3c. If the mean landings for the past three years exceed the ACL.^{1,2}

Subalternative 3d. If the modified mean landings exceeds the ACL. The modified mean is the most recent 5 years of available landings data with highest and lowest landings estimates from consideration removed.^{1,2}

Subalternative 3e. If the lower bound of the 90% confidence interval estimate of the MRFSS landings' population mean plus headboat landings is greater than the ACL.

Notes:

¹ *Start the clock over.* In any year the ACL is reduced or increased, the sequence of future ACLs will begin again starting with a single year of landings compared to the ACL for that year, followed by a 2-year average of landings compared to the 2-year average annual catch limits in the next year, followed by a 3-year average of landings compared to the 3-year average of ACLs for the third year, and so on.

² For 2011, use only 2011 landings. For 2012, use the mean landings of 2011 and 2012. For 2013 and beyond, use the most recent three-year running mean.

Proposed Actions in Amendment 24

1. Maximum Sustainable Yield
2. Minimum Stock Size Threshold
3. Rebuilding Schedule
4. Rebuilding Strategy and Acceptable Biological Catch Levels
5. Allocations
6. Annual Catch Limits and Optimum Yield
7. Accountability Measures for the Commercial Sector
8. **Accountability Measures for the Recreational Sector**

Decision 3. Is there an in-season AM?

Alternative 4. Specify the in-season AM.

Subalternative 4a. Do not specify an in-season AM.

Subalternative 4b (Preferred). The Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to close the recreational sector when the ACL is projected to be met.

Decision 4. Is there a post-season AM?

Alternative 5. Specify the post-season AM.

Subalternative 5a. Do not specify a post-season AM.

Subalternative 5b. For post-season accountability measures, compare ACL with landings over a range of years. For 2011, use only 2011 landings. For 2012, use the mean landings of 2011 and 2012. For 2013 and beyond, use the most recent three-year running mean.¹

Subalternative 5c. *Monitor following year.* If the ACL is exceeded, the following year's landings would be monitored for persistence in increased landings. The Regional Administrator would take action as necessary.

Subalternative 5d. *Monitor following year and shorten season as necessary.* If the ACL is exceeded, the following year's landings would be monitored in-season for persistence in increased landings. The Regional Administrator will publish a notice to reduce the length of the fishing season as necessary.

Subalternative 5e. *Monitor following year and reduce bag limit as necessary.* If the ACL is exceeded, the following year's landings would be monitored for persistence in increased landings. The Regional Administrator will publish a notice to reduce the bag limit as necessary.

Subalternative 5f. *Shorten following season.* If the ACL is exceeded, the Regional 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 ACL for the following fishing season.

Subalternative 5g (Preferred). *Payback.* If the ACL is exceeded, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the ACL in the following season by the amount of the overage.

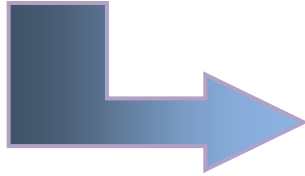
Why an ACT for the recreational sector?

An ACT can be considered a "soft target" because the Council's goal is to have recreational landings fluctuate around the ACT level. The Council uses the ACT to determine whether a change in management is needed. If the current recreational catch is above the ACT, the Council uses bag/size limits and seasons to reduce the recreational catch. If catches are below the ACT, no change in management measures is necessary.

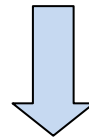
The goal is to have our estimate of landings from MRFSS/MRIP fluctuate around the ACT without exceeding the ACL. Using PSE which is a measure of the variability of our estimate of the recreational catch provides the best approach to keep catches below the ACL as long as the necessary management measures are specified to limit the recreational catch. To ensure catches do not exceed the ACL, the Council is specifying Accountability Measures to close the recreational fishery when NMFS projects the recreational catch will be met. This requires in-season availability of the headboat and MRFSS/MRIP data. Delays in either of these data sources could result in the ACL being exceeded.

**PROPOSED 2012 RECREATIONAL ACL =
368,790 POUNDS**

RECREATIONAL ACT
Rec ACT = Rec ACL *(1-PSE)
= 388,200*(1-0.25)
= 291,150 pounds whole weight



**2010 RED GROUPER
RECREATIONAL CATCH =
102,734 POUNDS**



In 2012 will
compare with
2011 landings

**NO RECREATIONAL CLOSURE IS
EXPECTED BEFORE THE END OF 2012
AFTER IMPLEMENTED IN JUNE 2012;
LANDINGS COUNTED FROM MAY 1,
2011 ONWARDS BUT EXPECTED TO BE
BELOW PROPOSED ACL & ACT. NO
CHANGE TO RECREATIONAL
MANAGEMENT MEASURES REQUIRED
BASED ON 2010 RECREATIONAL
CATCHES.**

Impacts

Biological: The combination of preferred subalternatives under this action constitutes the Accountability Measure for the recreational sector. An ACT would be set under **Subalternative 2d (Preferred)**, since timely monitoring of recreational landings is more difficult than tracking commercial harvest. Then, landings would be monitored on an annual basis to determine if the ACL has been exceeded (**Subalternative 3b**). If an overage is projected to occur, then the recreational fishery would be closed (**Subalternative 4b**) and the following year's ACL would be reduced by the amount of the overage (**Subalternative 5g**). This series of steps is expected to result in positive effects on the biological environment.

Economic: The suite of preferred alternatives under this action may result in short-term negative economic effects but positive long-term effects since the setting of Accountability Measures would help prevent overfishing and allow for a sustainable fishery.

Social: The setting of AMs, and ACTs, can have significant direct and indirect effects on the social environment as they usually impose some restriction on harvest, either during the current season or the next. The long-term effects should be beneficial as they provide protection from further negative impacts on the stock. While the negative effects are usually short-term, they may at times induce other indirect effects through changes in fishing behavior or business operations that could have long-term social effects.

CURRENT RECREATIONAL REGULATIONS

- 20 inch total length minimum size limit (effective 1/1/92)
- Aggregate grouper bag limit of 3 per person per day (effective 7/29/09)
- Aggregate ACL of 648,663 lbs gw for black grouper, gag, and red grouper (effective 1/31/11)
- Once the ACL is projected to be met, possession of black grouper, gag, and red grouper is prohibited if any one of the three species is listed as overfished (effective 1/31/11)
- If the aggregate ACL exceeded, the subsequent year's ACL is reduced by the amount of the overage (effective 1/31/11)
- Recreational landings are evaluated relative to the ACL as follows: For 2010, only 2010 recreational landings will be compared to the ACL; in 2011, the average of 2010 and 2011 recreational landings will be compared to the ACL; and in 2012 and subsequent fishing years, the most recent 3-year running average recreational landings will be compared to the ACL (effective 1/31/11)
- January through April annual closure of all shallow water groupers (effective 7/29/09)

PUBLIC HEARING DATES & LOCATIONS

All hearings are from 5 pm – 7 pm

<p>Monday, August 22, 2011 – Hilton Wilmington Riverside 301 North Water Street Wilmington, NC 28401 Phone: 910-763-5900</p>	<p>Wednesday, August 24, 2011 – Jacksonville Marriott 4670 Salisbury Road Jacksonville, FL 32256 Phone: 904-296-2222</p>
<p>Tuesday, August 23, 2011 – Hilton Garden Inn 5265 International Boulevard North Charleston, SC 29418 Phone: 843-308-9330</p>	<p>Thursday, August 25, 2011 – Radisson Resort at the Port 8701 Astronaut Boulevard Cape Canaveral, FL 32920 Phone: 321-784-0000</p>

Written comments:

Bob Mahood, Executive Director
South Atlantic Fishery Management
Council
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201
North Charleston, SC 29405

Email:

SGAmend24PHcomment@safmc.net for

What's Next?

- Public Hearings from NC thru FL (8/22/11-8/25/11)
- Comments due by 5 p.m. on Thursday, September 1, 2011
- Snapper Grouper Committee & Council review hearing comments and approve all actions (9/12/11-9/16/11) in Charleston, SC
- Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (10/5/11-10/6/11) in Charleston, SC; final review of Amendment 24
- NMFS Files DEIS on 10/14/11 with comment period ending by 12/5/11
- Scientific & Statistical Committee (11/8/11 - 11/10/11) in Savannah, GA; final review of Amendment 24
- Public Comment at Council meeting (12/8/11) in Raleigh, NC
- Council (12/8/11-12/9/11) in Raleigh – Final Approval
- Send to Secretary of Commerce by December 15, 2011
- Public Comment on proposed rule
- Public Comment on amendment to Secretary of Commerce
- Regulations effective by June 9, 2012 to meet Congressionally-mandated deadline
- Monitor commercial & recreational catches and close as necessary

DEADLINE

All comments must be received by
5 p.m. on September 1, 2011