

**Joint South Florida Management Issues
South Atlantic Council Staff Recommendations & Council Actions
Presented to South Atlantic Council March 3-7, 2014**

March 18, 2014

[Note: SAFMC Staff drafted this document based on output from the January 7-9, 2014 meeting of the Joint Council Committee on South Florida Management Issues and from the February 14, 2014 meeting of the IPT.]

SAFMC Executive/Finance March 2014 Committee Report:

Jessica McCawley presented the Joint Council Committee on South Florida Management Issues and Ad Hoc Goliath Grouper Joint Council Steering Committee Summary Report. She summarized the results of the joint meeting held January 7-9, 2014 in Key Largo, Florida. Jessica referred to and discussed a number of highlights of the meeting. Jessica (South Atlantic) and Martha Bademan (Gulf) were elected as co-chairs of the committee. Items discussed at the meeting addressed a wide range of issues centered on developing compatible South Florida Management strategies and regulations.

Gregg Waugh presented SAFMC staff recommendations for follow-up to the South Florida Management Issues meeting. Items discussed included: Goliath Grouper, Speckled hind and Warsaw grouper, a SAFMC only Snapper Grouper Amendment to remove Nassau grouper dog snapper, schoolmaster, mahogany snapper and black snapper from the Snapper Grouper FMU and a Joint Amendment to address all other species and/or actions. Preliminary actions and alternatives to be included in a Joint Snapper Grouper and Reef Fish Amendment were also discussed, along with future modifications as a number of stock assessments are completed as well as the timing for moving forward.

Discussions related to these presentations resulted in motions to (1) remove Nassau grouper, dog snapper, school master, mahogany and black snapper from the Snapper Grouper FMU as an item to take out to scoping in August, (2) approve the process described for how the Joint South Florida Management Issues Committee would operate and (3) approve the timeline and draft actions and alternatives as presented by staff.

Individual Items:

I. Goliath Grouper

- a. SSC/Assessment group to determine if sufficient data exist for another assessment – Carrie/Luiz Gulf lead. If yes, FWC staff have volunteered to be lead on the stock assessment. If no, the SSC group would provide a coordinated scientific sampling plan to address any missing data needs.
- b. SEDAR representative as we move forward – Julie Neer

II. Speckled hind/Warsaw grouper

- a. South Atlantic & Gulf SSC Subcommittee to explore methods to determine stock status of speckled hind and warsaw grouper and suggest a path forward – John Carmichael (SAFMC Lead) working with Luiz and Carrie to organize meeting; may need to meet several times.
- b. Timing - can the group meet prior to July 22-24, 2014 Jt. Committee meeting?
- c. Education program to help people distinguish snowy grouper from warsaw grouper – handle through normal Information & Education activities.

III. SAFMC Only Snapper Grouper Amendment – Gregg Waugh (SAMFC Lead)

- a. Species to remove (Gulf removed these species from Reef Fish FMU in 2011):
 - i. Nassau grouper
 - ii. Dog snapper
 - iii. Schoolmaster
 - iv. Mahogany snapper
 - v. Black snapper
- b. Vermilion snapper – change to 10” TL (same as Gulf). Florida would take their own action to make this change.

**MOTION #1: TAKE AN ACTION TO REMOVE NASSAU GROUPEr, DOG SNAPPER, SCHOOL MASTER, MAHOGANY AND BLACK SNAPPER FROM THE SNAPPER GROUPEr FMU.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL [Intent to scope in August 2014]**

IV. Joint Amendment to address all other species/actions

- a. Prepared by Joint Council Committee on South Florida Issues – document preparation, actions/alternatives, analysis and recommendation of preferred alternatives.
- b. Draft Amendment provided to Gulf Council and South Atlantic Council for consideration by full Councils not committees.
- c. IPT-like group to guide development (work assignments, timeframes for deliverables, etc.):
 - i. South Atlantic Council – Bob Mahood & Gregg Waugh
 - ii. Gulf of Mexico Council – Doug Gregory & Carrie Simmons
 - iii. NMFS SERO – Jack McGovern
 - iv. NOAA GC – Monica Smit-Brunello
 - v. Florida – Jessica McCawley, Martha Bademan, Luiz Barbieri & John Hunt

**MOTION #2: APPROVE THE PROCESS DESCRIBED FOR HOW THE JOINT SOUTH FLORIDA MANAGEMENT ISSUES COMMITTEE WOULD OPERATE.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL**

- V. Preliminary Actions/Alternatives** to be included in Joint Snapper Grouper/Reef Fish Amendment – taken from summary report of Joint Council Committee on South Florida Management Issues and Ad Hoc Goliath Grouper Joint Council Steering Committee (January 7-9, 2014 in Key Largo, FL)
- a. Action 1. Modifications to Fishery Management Unit/ACLs
 - i. Option 1. No action
 - ii. Option 2. Delegate management of yellowtail snapper, mutton snapper, black grouper, hogfish, and gray (mangrove) snapper to the State of Florida (either throughout Council jurisdictions or in the EEZ off Florida.
 - iii. Option 3. Allocate a portion of the commercial and recreational ACLs for yellowtail snapper, mutton snapper, black grouper, hogfish, and gray (mangrove) snapper to the State of Florida.
 - b. Action 2. Mutton snapper recreational bag limit
 - i. Option 1. No action. If Options 2 or 3 were chosen for Action 1, taking no action here would allow Florida to make the bag limit change on their own.
 - ii. Option 2. Set a bag limit for mutton snapper during the regular season of 5 per person and during the spawning season (May-June) of 2 per person.
 - iii. Option 3. Others?
 - c. Action 3. Review of shallow water grouper closure length, months, species, etc. for both Gulf and South Atlantic
 - i. Option 1. No action.
 - ii. Option 2. Remove the closure.
 - iii. Option 3. Modify the closure.
 - d. Action 4. Review circle hook requirement in the Gulf
 - i. Option 1. No action.
 - ii. Option 2. Remove circle hook requirement for yellowtail snapper in the entire Gulf.
 - iii. Option 3. Remove circle hook requirement for all reef fish south of 28 degrees north latitude in the Gulf.
 - e. Action 5. Permit requirements
 - i. Option 1. No action.
 - ii. Option 2. Change permit requirements.
- VI. Future modifications as assessments are completed** – consider similar regulations for the following species:
- a. Gag
 - b. Black grouper
 - c. Scamp
 - d. Greater amberjack
 - e. Gray triggerfish

VII. Preliminary Timing

- a. Data compilation, actions/alternatives (based on guidance from January meeting), analyses – FL FWC and IPT
- b. Jt. Council Committee – review/guidance at July 22-24, 2014 meeting
- c. Continued analyses
- d. Jt. Council Committee – meet prior to South Atlantic’s December 1-5, 2014 meeting and Gulf’s October 20-24, 2014 meeting to finalize recommendations
- e. Gulf Council reviews and approves for public hearings at their October 20-24, 2014 meeting
- f. South Atlantic Council reviews and approves for public hearings at their December 1-5, 2014 meeting
- g. Public hearings – SAFMC in January/February 2015; GMFMC ?
- h. June 2015 Joint Council’s meet in Key West, FL – final approval of Joint Amendment for formal review.

MOTION #3: APPROVE THE TIMELINE AND DRAFT ACTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES AS PRESENTED.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL