

SAFMC OPTIONS PAPER

Regulatory Amendment 14 to the Fishery Management Plan of the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region



September 2012

Background

Regulatory Amendment 14 to the Fishery Management Plan of the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Regulatory Amendment 14) is being developed to address management of five species within the snapper grouper fishery management unit. The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (South Atlantic Council) identified additional management measures regarding greater amberjack, mutton snapper, gray triggerfish, black sea bass, and vermilion snapper at the South Atlantic Council meeting in June 2012.

Possible Actions in Regulatory Amendment 14

1. Modify the fishing year and reduce the trip limit for greater amberjack
2. Implement additional regulations to protect mutton snapper during the spawning season
3. Modify the minimum size limit for gray triggerfish
4. Modify the commercial and recreational fishing years for black sea bass
5. Modify the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper

Proposed Timeline

1. An interdisciplinary planning team (IPT) will be formed (completed July 2012).
2. The IPT will develop an options paper and present it to the South Atlantic Council at the September 2012 meeting.
3. The IPT will develop alternatives based on the South Atlantic Council's guidance in September 2012.
4. The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP) and the Scientific and Statistical Committee will review the draft amendment in fall 2012 and provide their input for the South Atlantic Council's consideration.
5. The South Atlantic Council will review the draft amendment at the South Atlantic Council meeting in December 2012, provide further guidance, and approve for public hearings.
6. Public hearings will be held in January/February 2013.
7. The South Atlantic Council will review public input and approve the amendment for formal review at their March 2013 meeting.

I. Greater amberjack

Management Background

Amendment 4 (1991); regulations effective Jan 1, 1992 -- defined overfishing/overfished and established rebuilding timeframe for greater amberjack ≤ 10 years (year 1 = 1991); established 28 inch fork length (FL) limit (recreational only) and 3 greater amberjack bag limit; established 36 inch FL or 28inch core length – greater amberjack (commercial only); spawning season closure – commercial harvest greater amberjack > 3 fish bag limit prohibited in April south of Cape Canaveral, Florida.

Amendment 9 (1998); regulations effective Feb 24, 1999 -- 1 fish recreational bag limit; no harvest or possession $>$ bag limit, and no purchase or sale during April; quota = 1,169,931 pounds gutted weight (gw); began fishing year May 1; prohibited coring.

Amendment 9 (resubmitted); regulations effective Oct 13, 2000 -- commercial trip limit of 1,000 pounds gw for greater amberjack.

Regulatory Amendment 9 (2010); regulations effective July 15, 2011 – increased commercial trip limit to 1,200 pounds gw. The South Atlantic Council considered the alternatives below:

Alternative 2. Change the commercial trip limit for greater amberjack.

Sub-Alternative 2a. Increase the greater amberjack commercial trip limit to 2,000 pounds gw.

Sub-Alternative 2b. Increase the greater amberjack commercial trip limit to 1,500 pounds gw.

Sub-Alternative 2c (Preferred). Increase the greater amberjack commercial trip limit to 1,200 pounds gw.

Alternatives Considered but Rejected:

- Change the commercial trip limit for greater amberjack to 2,000 pounds gw (2,080 pounds whole weigh (ww)) for vessels making multi-day trips north of Cape Canaveral, Florida. For all other trips the 1,000 pounds gw trip limit would apply.
- Change the commercial trip limit for greater amberjack to 2,500 pounds gw (2,600 pounds ww) for vessels making multi-day trips north of Cape Canaveral, FL. For all other trips the 1,000 pounds gw trip limit would apply.

Rationale: The South Atlantic Council was concerned that enforcing the proposed trip limits in Alternatives 3 and 4 would not be feasible because vessels could easily traverse back and forth to points north and south of the Cape Canaveral, Florida boundary.

Comprehensive ACL Amendment (2011); regulations effective April 16, 2012 – ABC = 1,968,000 pounds ww.

Allocations = 40.66% commercial; 59.34% recreational.

*Commercial annual catch limit (ACL) = 800,163 pounds ww.

Recreational ACL = 1,167,837 pounds ww.

Recreational annual catch target (ACT) = 992,662 pounds ww.

In-season and post-season accountability measures (AMs):

Commercial - If the commercial sector ACL is met or projected to be met, all purchase and sale is prohibited and harvest and/or possession is limited to the bag limit. If the commercial sector ACL is exceeded, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the commercial sector ACL in the following season by the amount of the overage only if the species is overfished.

Recreational - If the recreational sector 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.

*A Supplemental Final Rule was issued by NOAA Fisheries published in the *Federal Register* on July 18, 2012, (effective August 17, 2012), to implement the greater amberjack commercial ACL. The latter was inadvertently left out of the Comprehensive ACL Amendment Final Rule that was effective on April 16, 2012. In the Supplemental Final Rule NOAA Fisheries notes: *preliminary greater amberjack commercial landings data for the 2011–2012 fishing year indicate that commercial landings may have exceeded the revised commercial quota being implemented through this rule, and might have triggered a closure had this rule been in place for the 2011–2012 fishing year. However, the Council cannot set the ACL at a level that exceeds the ABC. NMFS will monitor commercial landings for the 2012–2013 fishing year, and subsequent years, to determine if the AM will be triggered and the commercial sector should be closed in-season.*

Current status/issues:

- Greater amberjack is on Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) schedule for 2014.
- Prior to implementation of the Comprehensive ACL Amendment and Regulatory Amendment 9, the commercial quota was 1,169,931 pounds gw and trip limit was 1,000 pounds gw. The Comprehensive ACL Amendment decreased commercial quota and Regulatory Amendment 9 increased the commercial trip limit.
- A few fishermen in the Florida Keys have requested the South Atlantic Council consider changing the start date of the fishing year from May 1 to Jan 1. They claim that greater amberjack migrate out of the Florida Keys by mid-May. Also, it is important that the month of March remain open because it is prior to Lent and is also a very productive month for fishing.
- Some fishermen have commented that the current trip limit (1,200 pounds gw) is economically profitable and they would not like this trip limit reduced.
- As of July 30, 2012, 37% of the commercial ACL had been met.

Possible Actions

Modify the fishing year for greater amberjack.

Option 1. No Action. Do not modify the fishing year for greater amberjack. The current fishing year begins on May 1.

Option 2. Modify the fishing year for greater amberjack to begin on January 1.

Option 3. Modify the fishing year for greater amberjack to begin on March 1.

Others???

Reduce the trip limit for greater amberjack.

Option 1. No Action. Do not reduce the trip limit for greater amberjack. The current trip limit is 1,200 pounds gw.

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

Option 3. Reconsider one of the alternatives from Regulatory Amendment 9?

Others???

II. Mutton snapper

Management Background

Amendment 4 (1991); regulations effective Jan 1, 1992 -- Established 12 inch TL minimum size limit for mutton snapper; established aggregate snapper bag limit – 10/person/day, excluding vermilion snapper and allowing no more than 2 red snappers; spawning season closure – commercial harvest of mutton snapper greater than the 10/person/day snapper aggregate is prohibited during May and June.

Amendment 7 (1994); regulations effective Jan 1, 1995 -- Increased minimum size limit to 16 inches TL.

Comprehensive ACL Amendment (2011); regulations effective April 16, 2012 – Jurisdictional allocations - South Atlantic = 82% of ABC, Gulf of Mexico = 18% of ABC.

South Atlantic acceptable biological catch (ABC) = 926,600 pounds ww.

Allocations = 17.02% commercial; 82.98% recreational.

Commercial ACL = 157,743 pounds ww.

Recreational ACL = 768,857 pounds ww.

Recreational ACT = 668,937 pounds ww

In-season and post-season AMs:

Commercial - If the commercial sector ACL is met or projected to be met, all purchase and sale is prohibited and harvest and/or possession is limited to the bag limit. If the commercial sector ACL is exceeded, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the commercial sector ACL in the following season by the amount of the overage only if the species is overfished.

Recreational - If the recreational sector 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.

Current status/issues:

- In 2010, the Snapper Grouper AP made the following recommendation:
- AP RECOMMENDS THE COUNCIL CONSIDER A TRADITIONAL SPAWNING AREA (E.G. WESTERN DRY ROCKS) AND/OR SEASONAL CLOSURE IN MAY AND JUNE (BOTH COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL) TO PROTECT SPAWNING AGGREGATIONS OF MUTTON SNAPPER AND REDUCE THE BAG LIMIT TO 3 FISH PER ANGLER PER DAY
- The South Atlantic Council considered removal of mutton snapper from snapper grouper fishery management unit (FMU) during development of the Comprehensive ACL Amendment.
- Snapper Grouper AP recommended against removal of the species from the FMU.
- Stock assessment underway - results due November or December 2012.
- Derby fishing is taking place in Florida Keys on spawning aggregations.
- Fishermen target greater amberjack to obtain roe to use as bait for mutton snapper.
- Fishermen have requested a reduction in the mutton snapper bag limit.

Possible Actions

Implement additional regulations to protect mutton snapper during the spawning season.

Option 1. No Action. Do not implement additional regulations to protect mutton snapper during the spawning season. 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.

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

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

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

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

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

Option 5. Modify the commercial spawning season closure.

Sub-option 2a. All commercial and recreational harvest is prohibited in May and June.

Sub-option 2b. All commercial and recreational harvest is prohibited in April-June.

Others????

III. Gray triggerfish

Management Background

Regulatory Amendment 6 (1994); regulations effective May 22, 1995 -- Established 12-inch TL minimum size limit off Florida.

Amendment 9 (1998); regulations effective Feb 24, 1999 -- All snapper grouper species without a bag limit: aggregate recreational bag limit 20 fish/person/day, excluding tomtate and blue runner.

Comprehensive ACL Amendment (2011); regulations effective April 16, 2012 –

ABC = 672,565 pounds ww.

Allocations = 45.39% commercial; 54.61% recreational.

Commercial ACL = 305,262 pounds ww.

Recreational ACL = 367,303 pounds ww.

Recreational ACT = 312,208 pounds ww.

In-season and post-season AMs:

Commercial - If the commercial sector ACL is met or projected to be met, all purchase and sale is prohibited and harvest and/or possession is limited to the bag limit. If the commercial sector ACL is exceeded, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the commercial sector ACL in the following season by the amount of the overage only if the species is overfished.

Recreational - If the recreational sector 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.

Current status/issues:

- Latest (July 30, 2012) landings report from Southeast Regional Office indicates that 72% of the commercial ACL had been landed.
- Stock assessment scheduled for 2013.
- Snapper Grouper AP recommendations:
 - October 2011 – increase size limit to 14 inches TL (both rec and comm) and limit recreational catch to 5 fish per person per day.
 - April 2012 - increase minimum size limit to 14 inches TL.
- Changing the size and bag limit for gray triggerfish was included as a possible action in CE-BA 3 and taken out to scoping in Jan/Feb 2012. It was also considered during the early development Amendment 13C to the Snapper Grouper FMP. The majority of the people who commented on the issue were in favor of the proposed changes.
- In 2011, the Snapper Grouper AP provided the input below regarding gray triggerfish:
 - Commercial landings show drop off after 1996 and also for the for-hire sector
 - In Florida, they are not targeted
 - When groupers close Jan-April, fish houses stockpile triggerfish to replace the grouper. Last couple of years have seen increases in triggerfish landings
 - For hire – have started targeting them much more since other grouper regulations have gone into place
 - For-hire target triggerfish quicker than they used to – hard to avoid the fish
 - Little bit of a downward trend in sizes that fishermen are seeing them but they are abundant
 - Minimum size should be placed on gray triggerfish
 - Private – increase is opposite than commercial and for-hire – landings decreased in late 1990s and have gone back up since 2001
 - People have changed their perception on triggerfish – people are realizing they are a good food fish
 - Data that show an increase in private landings may not be accurate because economy has affected effort
 - In FL there has been a sharp increase in the fishery for gray trigger due to regulations in other species
 - Not more trips being made off NC overall but effort has shifted to other species. Better publicized in the marketplace

In 2012, the Snapper Grouper AP made the following recommendation:

- RECOMMEND THAT THE COUNCIL CONSIDER INCREASING THE MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT OF GRAY TRIGGERFISH AND HOGFISH TO 14 INCHES

Possible Actions

Modify the minimum size limit for gray triggerfish.

Option 1. No Action. Do not modify the size limit for gray triggerfish. The current size limit is 12 inches TL *off east Florida only* for both recreational and commercial sectors.

Option 2. Implement a 12-inch TL minimum size limit for gray triggerfish throughout the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone (EEZ) for both commercial and recreational sectors.

Option 3. Implement a 14-inch TL minimum size limit for gray triggerfish *off east Florida only* for both commercial and recreational sectors.

Option 4. Implement a 14-inch TL minimum size limit for gray triggerfish throughout the South Atlantic EEZ for both commercial and recreational sectors.

Option 5. Modify bag limit. (Need analysis to determine what appropriate bag limit would be).

Option 6. Establish a commercial trip limit. (Need analysis to determine what appropriate trip limit would be).

Others??

IV. Black sea bass

Management Background

Amendment 13C (2006) - regulations effective Oct. 23, 2006 - implemented the following management measures for black sea bass:

Commercial: Commercial quota (gutted weight) of 477,000 pounds gw in year 1, 423,000 pounds gw in year 2, and 309,000 pounds gw in year 3 onwards. Require use of at least 2 inch mesh for the entire back panel of black sea bass pots effective 6 months after publication of the final rule. Require black sea bass pots be removed from the water when the quota is met.

Change fishing year from calendar year to June 1 – May 31.

Recreational: Recreational allocation of 633,000 pounds gw in year 1, 560,000 pounds gw in year 2, and 409,000 pounds gw in year 3 onwards. Increase minimum size limit from 10 inches to 11 inches in year 1 and to 12 inches in year 2. Reduce recreational bag limit from 20 to 15 per person per day. Change fishing year from the calendar year to June 1 through May 31.

Rationale for fishing year change: Changing the commercial fishing year would likely reduce socio-economic impacts by shifting the potential filling of the quota to the months where the least amount of fishing effort occurs. The recreational fishing year was changed to be consistent with the commercial fishing year.

Regulatory Amendment 9 (2010) – the amendment originally included a suite of harvest management measure for black sea bass, including a change in the fishing year. The South Atlantic Council received public input on the alternatives below:

Alternative 3. Retain the June-May fishing year. Specify separate commercial ACLs for June-November and December-May based on landings from 2006-2009.

Alternative 4. Retain the June-May fishing year. Specify commercial ACLs for June-December and January-May based on landings from 2006-2009.

Alternative 5. Change the black sea bass fishing year to November-October. Specify separate commercial ACLs for November-April 30 and May 1-October based on landings from 2006-2009.

Alternative 6. Change the black sea bass fishing year to January-December. Separate commercial ACLs for January-June and July-December based on landings from 2006-2009.

During discussions, the Snapper Grouper Committee recommended selecting Alternative 6 as the South Atlantic Council's preferred as well as considering a spawning season closure. The Committee also discussed the possibility of rolling closures to account for north/south differences in the fishery (i.e., spawning begins sooner off Florida than off North Carolina). During Full Council discussions, however, Alternative 6 was removed as the preferred and Alternative 3 was chosen instead. Below are minutes from that discussion that explain the rationale:

COUNCIL MEMBER: It seems that Alternative 6 kind of reallocates a large portion of the landings or the harvest, if you will, because North Carolina headboats don't fish in, say, December, January and February and not much in March, so there is going to be a big change there. The fall season is very important to the headboats of North Carolina. It's like their bread and butter. By cutting them out of their fall season with Alternative 6, if there is that possibility, it's going to be devastating to them. At this time my justification for bringing this up would be that also the stock assessment that's going to come before the council and the numbers associated with that.

COUNCIL MEMBER: If I could, Mr. Chairman, it seems there was a lot of interest in having different closures in the north and the south recreationally, and we couldn't get that done at this meeting. We could do that for a framework, though, and we probably could get that done by the end of the year. I guess that's a possibility. You could decide to leave this fishing year alone for now, work on another framework that you would try to vote up by, say, the September meeting and then address the geographically different start dates somehow and see if you couldn't come out to an accommodation that would work for you, whether we could or not.

I understand it seems like no matter what we do with the start date, I think where the start date is now is advantageous to the northern part of the South Atlantic, but clearly is very unpopular in the southern part of it. I'm sympathetic to these guys in the southern part because everything seems to be closed in those months whereas in North Carolina in those late spring months grouper opens back up, vermilion opens back up, there are other things to fish for, but I can't think of a way to solve the problem other than to have some differences in a northern season and a southern season, which I think we could do by next year. We just can't do it at this meeting, so it's something for you to think about.

COUNCIL MEMBER: So you're saying like more of a regional approach to keeping everybody happy, if you will?

COUNCIL MEMBER: Well, you'd have – to do it, you're going to have to divide the quota into a northern quota and a southern quota, and then you'd have I guess a different closed season in each area to push the fishing. Now you get into some allocation decisions and things like that, so it may be more complicated than you think. I don't know how else to get at it. With the lower bag limit, maybe the season stretches out enough that everybody gets a crack at it. I think you could go ahead and change the fishing year now, but then come back and keep working on this and try to come up with some separate closed seasons to kind of even it out or you could decide to just hold off on the fishing year and work on a second regulatory amendment that gave you some more options in terms of the rolling closures or different closures and try to get that done by the end of the year.

You don't need to get the fishing year business changed until next year sometime – I guess before the end of the year and you could work it because it wouldn't kick in until January, anyway. The thing you need to do immediately is the bag limit reduction and then you could probably spend another meeting or two working on this. It's just up to you guys how you want to handle it, but I don't see any other way to accommodate each other. If we don't do something like a northern/southern season, then we're just going to have to make a decision that is going to be popular in one part and unpopular in another.

Current status/issues:

- Right whale calving season in the South Atlantic is November through April. Interactions with commercial black sea bass pots are a concern. However, Amendment 18A implemented measures to limit participation and reduce effort in the commercial fishery. When ABC increases as the stock rebuilds, fishing with pots during the November-April calving season could be a concern.
- The black sea bass fishing year north of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina is the calendar year. Black sea bass are managed by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council north of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina.
- In 2010, the Snapper Grouper AP made the following recommendations:
 - COUNCIL SHOULD CONSIDER A SEPARATE BSB ALLOCATION FOR POT FISHERY FOR THE STATE OF FLORIDA (ADDITIONAL, SEPARATE QUOTA). COUNCIL SHOULD DIRECT STAFF TO COME UP WITH ALTERNATIVES TO CONSIDER THE ABOVE.
 - AP SUPPORTS A SPAWNING CLOSURE FOR BSB (COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL).
- In 2011, the Snapper Grouper AP made the following recommendations:
 - CHANGE THE RECREATIONAL FISHING YEAR FOR BLACK SEA BASS TO BEGIN APRIL 1ST
 - REQUEST THAT THE COUNCIL ONCE AGAIN CONSIDER REGIONAL APPROACHES TO RECREATIONAL MANAGEMENT AS APPROPRIATE
 - ALLOCATE THE BLACK SEA BASS COMMERCIAL ACL TO HOOK & LINE AND POT SECTORS AT THE HISTORICAL LEVELS. THE PERCENTAGE THAT THE DISQUALIFIED POT FISHERMEN WOULD HAVE LANDED IS ADDED TO THE HOOK AND LINE FISHERY
 - COUNCIL SHOULD CONSIDER ESTABLISHING SPAWNING SEASON CLOSURES FOR BSB BY REGIONS UNTIL THE STOCK IS REBUILT
- Amendment 18A became effective on June 1, 2012 and implemented the following regulations:
 - Commercial Sector:
 - (1) An endorsement program for the commercial black sea bass pot segment of the snapper-grouper fishery, where only endorsement holders who meet certain landings criteria and also have a valid South Atlantic Unlimited Snapper Grouper Permit are allowed to use pot gear to harvest black sea bass; (2) an appeals process for the black sea bass pot endorsement program; (3) modifications to commercial AMs; (4) a limit of 35 black sea bass pot tags issued to each endorsement holder each permit year; (5) a requirement to bring black sea bass pots back to shore at the end of each trip; (6) a 1,000 pounds gw (1,180 pounds ww) commercial trip limit for the black sea bass commercial sector; and (7) an increase to the commercial minimum size limit for black sea bass from 10 inches TL to 11 inches TL.
 - *The commercial fishing season for black sea bass in the 2012-2013 fishing year opened July 1, 2012.
 - Recreational Sector:
 - (1) An increase to the recreational minimum size limit for black sea bass from 12 inches TL to 13 inches TL; (2) modifications to recreational AMs; and (3) a requirement for

selected for-hire vessels to report landings information electronically on a weekly or daily basis.

Possible Actions

Modify the commercial and recreational fishing years for black sea bass.

NOTE: South Atlantic Council would chose more than one preferred.

Option 1. No Action. Do not modify the commercial or recreational fishing years for black sea bass. The current fishing year for both sectors begins June 1.

Option 2. Modify the commercial fishing year to begin on:

Sub-option 2a. January 1

Sub-option 2b. November 1

Sub-option 2c. December 1

Sub-option 2d. July 1 (Note: several black sea bass pot fishermen have stated that opening black sea bass when vermilion snapper opens would take pressure off black sea bass. A July opening could be an issue in the future if fishing with pots extends into November)

Sub-option 2e. March 1 (this starts the fishing year to begin after right whale calving season)
Others???

Option 3. Modify the recreational fishing year to begin on:

Sub-option 3a. January 1

Sub-option 3b. April 1

Sub-option 3c. Adopt the same fishing season as the commercial sector.

Others???

V. Vermilion Snapper

Management Background

The South Atlantic Council initially considered implementing commercial trip limits for vermilion snapper in **Amendment 16**. However, the alternative was moved to the Considered but Rejected Appendix:

“Rejected Alternative 6. Implement commercial trip limits for vermilion snapper.

Rationale for elimination: The primary purpose of a trip limit would be to extend the fishing season. However, the Council believes that trip limits could impose significant hardship to fishermen, particularly with the high cost of fuel. Instead, the Council is considering splitting the year into two quotas as a method to extend the fishing season. The two quota system also has the added benefit of ensuring that retention of vermilion would be allowed later in the fishing season when a large portion of the catch has historically been taken. The Council also chose not to consider establishing a trip limit for the 225-pound trip-limited permit holders because their catch is a very small portion of the overall catch. Amendment 15B proposes to prohibit all bag limit sales and this is not expected to affect the proportion caught by trip-limited permit holders.”

Regulatory Amendment 9 (2010); regulations effective July 15, 2011 -- implemented a 1,500-pound commercial trip limit for this species. Below are the alternatives that the Council considered:

Alternative 1. No Action. Commercial ACL (quota) 618,046 pounds gw (686,031 pounds ww) which is split into two ACLs (quotas), 315,523 pounds gw (350,231 pounds ww) during January-

June and 302,523 pounds gw (335,800 pounds ww) during July-December. There is no commercial trip limit.

Alternative 2. Establish a 1,000 pounds gw (1,110 pounds ww) commercial trip limit.

Sub-Alternative 2a. Establish a 1,000 pounds gw (1,110 pounds ww) commercial trip limit and reduce to 500 pounds gw (555 pounds ww) when 75% of the ACL (quota) is met or projected to be met.

Alternative 3 (Preferred). Establish a 1,500 pounds gw (1,665 pounds ww) commercial trip limit.

Sub-Alternative 3a. Reduce the trip limit to 500 pounds gw when 75% of the commercial ACL (quota) is met or projected to be met.

Alternative 4. Establish a 750 pounds gw (833 pounds ww) trip limit.

Sub-Alternative 4a. Establish a 750 pounds gw (833 pounds ww) commercial trip limit and reduce to 400 pounds gw (444 pounds ww) when 75% of the commercial ACL (quota) is met or projected to be met.

Alternative 5. Establish a 500 pounds gw (555 pounds ww) commercial trip limit.

Alternative 6. Establish a 400 pounds gw (444 pounds ww) commercial trip limit.

Current status/issues:

- SEDAR assessment being conducted in 2012
- In 2010 the Snapper Grouper AP supported the 1,500-pound trip limit.
- Others?

Possible Actions

Modify the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper

Option 1. No Action. Do not modify the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper. The current commercial trip limit is 1,500 pounds gutted weight (gw)

Option 2. Reconsider any of the alternatives in Regulatory Amendment 9??
Others???

Modify the bag limit for vermilion snapper (options would depend on outcome of assessment)?

Modify the commercial and recreational minimum size limits for vermilion snapper?

Modify the split season quota (have seasonal closure instead)?