



THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Snapper Grouper Amendment 60

Commercial Management Measures

Decision Document, September 2026

PG: AVH

Background

In June 2024, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) established the Snapper Grouper Commercial Sub-Committee (Sub-Committee) and tasked them with identifying and developing potential management responses to issues in the commercial sector of the South Atlantic snapper grouper fishery. Through its discussions, the Sub-Committee identified two major objectives to be addressed through an amendment: 1) commercial snapper grouper unlimited (SG 1) permit issues, and 2) increasing commercial trip efficiency.

Scoping was conducted from July 25 through August 8, 2025. Comments received during scoping were summarized in the [September 2025 Discussion Document](#).

Public hearings were conducted in-person on August 10 (Morehead City, NC), 11 (Bolivia, NC), and 19 (Jacksonville, FL), 2026. A webinar hearing is scheduled for August 31, 2026. This document will be updated by September 3, 2026, with a summary of written public comments submitted by September 1, 2026, as well as those received through the in-person and webinar hearings. Comments submitted online can be viewed [HERE](#). An additional hearing will also be held on September 16, 2026, in Charleston, SC, in conjunction with the September 2026 Council meeting's public comment session.

Last Meeting (June 2026)

In June 2026, the Snapper Grouper Committee (Committee) reviewed a draft of Amendment 60 and approved the amendment for public hearings. During the meeting, the Committee received a presentation on analyses of considered trip limit changes, made edits to the Purpose and Need statements, selected preferred alternatives for several actions, and added an action that would

require the sale of all harvest from commercial trips. Further details of this meeting are summarized in the [Committee Report](#).

Objectives for this Meeting (September 2026)

- Review public comments.
- Receive a presentation on vessel monitoring systems (VMS).
- Review additional or revised language for the Purpose and Need statements, actions, and alternatives.
- Provide direction to staff on edits to actions and alternatives.
 - Discuss and develop rationale for preferred alternatives.
- Identify additional information needed prior to final Council approval in December 2026.
- Review the amendment timeline and revise as necessary.
- Consider approval of all actions for Amendment 60.

Public Comment Summary

Public hearings were conducted in-person on August 10 (Morehead City, NC), 11 (Bolivia, NC), and 19 (Jacksonville, FL), 2026, and via webinar on August 31, 2026. Meetings were attended by fishery stakeholders, as well as state or other management agency staff. South Atlantic Council members and staff are not included in attendee counts. One stakeholder (2 total attendees) attended the Morehead City hearing, and this individual did not provide comments for the record. Two stakeholders (5 total attendees) attended the Bolivia hearing, and these individuals did not provide comments for the record. Twelve stakeholders (12 total attendees) attended the Jacksonville hearing, with 8 individuals providing comments. Seven stakeholders (9 total attendees) attended the webinar hearing, with one individual providing a comment. Several meeting attendees across all the hearings stated that they preferred not to comment during that hearing but would be submitting comments in writing or during the September 2026 Council Meeting.

Written public comments have been accepted throughout the development of this amendment. The specific public comment period related to the hearings is from July 27, 2026, through 5:00 p.m. on September 18, 2026. Comments included in this summary were received by September 1, 2026. Comments from 10 entities were received during this time period via the Council's online comment form. All comments related to Amendment 60 are available [here](#).

Seven comments specifically addressed Action 1 (2-for-1 SG 1 permit requirement). Six of these comments were in favor of removal of the 2-for-1 requirement (**Preferred Alternative 2**). Commenters stated that the 2-for-1 requirement makes entry into the fishery overly difficult and noted the need for younger fishermen to continue the industry. One comment was in favor of keeping the 2-for-1 requirement (**Alternative 1 (No Action)**). This comment noted that several primary snapper grouper species have experienced closures or shortened seasons recently and preferred not to ease access to permits until populations for main species have recovered.

Two comments specifically addressed Action 2 (bottom longline species restriction and stowage requirement). One comment was in favor of removing the species restriction for possession and

requiring a notification to law enforcement when switching gear, using an approved method (not specifically a vessel monitoring system [VMS]) (**Alternative 3**). This commenter stated this as a middle ground that would have less regulatory burden on fishermen than a VMS requirement, while still providing information to law enforcement. One comment supported more flexibility for bottom longline fishermen by removal of the species restriction but stated that the stowage requirements are overly burdensome and negate and flexibility benefits gained for golden tilefish fishermen. This commenter stated that current depth- and area-based restrictions are sufficient to keep fishermen from using bottom longline gear to harvest shallow water snapper grouper species, so the species restriction should be removed without any additional gear stowage requirements.

Four comments generally supported increased commercial trip limits (Actions 3-9). One comment stated that all of the considered trip limits should be increased by 50% to allow better access for multi-day vessels.

Two comments generally opposed increases to commercial trip limits (Actions 3-9). One comment disagreed with commercial trip limit increases if there is no recreational season. The other comment disagreed with increasing trip limits when annual catch limits are not being met and without more recent stock assessments for these species, stating that ACLs not being met is an indication that the fish are not abundant enough for the fishery to meet the ACLs. This comment additionally noted that the Southeast Reef Fish Survey indices for most of the species considered for increased trip limits are below their long-term average abundances.

Four comments specifically addressed Action 3 (greater amberjack trip limit). All supported increasing the trip limit for greater amberjack, with one comment specifically supporting a 1,750 lbs gw limit (**Sub-Alternatives 2b** and **3b**).

Six comments specifically addressed Action 4 (vermilion snapper trip limit). All these supported increasing the trip limit for vermilion snapper, with three comments specifically supporting a 1,500 lbs gw limit (**Preferred Sub-Alternatives 2a** and **3a**). One comment additionally stated that a December closure of vermilion snapper is not problematic and could actually be perceived as positive, as it means that the fishery benefitted from catching the entire quota. Many fishermen dial back activity in December and could potentially afford to take that time off if enough money is made earlier in the year.

Five comments specifically addressed Action 5 (red porgy trip limit). All these supported increasing the trip limit for red porgy. One comment specifically supported a 45 fish limit (**Sub-Alternatives 2b** and **3b**). One comment specifically supported a 30 fish limit (**Sub-Alternatives 2a** and **3a**). Two comments supported limits higher than 45 fish, with proposed limits up to 120 fish.

Two comments specifically addressed Action 6 (GA-NC hogfish trip limit). These both supported increasing the trip limit for GA-NC hogfish. One comment noted that an increased hogfish limit would be particularly beneficial for the spearfishing component of the fishery.

One comment specifically addressed Action 7 (red grouper trip limit) and supported increasing the trip limit for red grouper to 300 lbs gw (**Alternative 2**).

One comment specifically addressed Action 8 (gray triggerfish trip limit) and supported increasing the trip limit for gray triggerfish.

Three comments specifically addressed Action 9 (golden tilefish trip limit). One comment supported maintaining the current trip limit of 500 lbs gw (**Alternative 1 (No Action)**). One comment supported increasing the trip limit to 600 lbs gw (**Alternative 2**). One comment supported increasing the trip limit to 750 lbs gw (**Alternative 3**).

Five comments specifically addressed Action 10 (commercial sale requirement). One comment supported **Alternative 1 (No Action)** stating that commercial fishermen should be able to sample their catch. This comment also opposed the use of commercial permits to fish recreationally at higher limits. Two comments supported requiring sale of all commercial snapper grouper (**Alternative 2**). One comment generally supported the intent to ensure commercial permits are held by fishermen that intend to fish commercially. One comment stated that **Alternative 2** would improve catch reporting, and if fishermen want to take personal fish home, they should be required to record those fish as a \$0 transaction on the trip ticket. One comment supported the intent of Action 10, but stated that further work should be done on the language to ensure that commercial fishermen can retain fish that are legally harvested under recreational regulations.

Two commenters additionally commented that new fishermen may need help locating permits that are for sale.

One comment stated that the Council should consider how many latent snapper grouper permits are truly latent, versus those that are used for non-sale retention. This comment also stated that unreported catch should be considered when evaluating Action 1 to consider easier access to SG 1 permits.

Two commenters generally supported fewer regulations on the commercial fishery.

Purpose and Need

Purpose: The purpose of this amendment is to increase long-term stability of the commercial fishery by maintaining the current number of permits and increase flexibility, accessibility (i.e. lowering the barrier to entry), adaptability, and economic profitability in the snapper grouper commercial sector.

Need: The need for this amendment is to modify commercial snapper grouper permit requirements to maintain the current number of commercial participants, improve monitoring of commercial catches, allow flexibility for changing fishing gear at sea, modify trip limits to more consistently achieve optimum yield while minimizing, to the extent practicable, commercial closures and other adverse social and economic effects, consistent with Executive Order 14276 – Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness.

Committee Action

Review Purpose and Need statements and provide any necessary edits.

Actions and Alternatives

Action 1. Remove the two-for-one requirement for the snapper grouper transferable (SG 1) commercial permit

Purpose of Action: Facilitate transfer of permits in the snapper grouper commercial sector by removing the two-for-one requirement for obtaining a snapper grouper transferable (SG 1) commercial permit.

Alternative 1 (No Action). Do not change the current permit requirements. To acquire a limited access, transferable South Atlantic snapper grouper (SG 1) commercial permit, an entity must obtain and exchange **two** such permits for one new permit.

Preferred Alternative 2. To acquire a limited access, transferable South Atlantic snapper grouper (SG 1) commercial permit, an entity must obtain and exchange **one** such permit for one new permit.

Discussion

- This action maintains the SG 1 permit as a limited access permit.
- Currently, after one SG 1 permit has been acquired, the new owner has one year after the expiration date of that permit to acquire a second SG 1 permit to exchange the two permits for a new SG 1 permit. Ownership of each permit is not transferred in the federal system until both permits are exchanged.
- The Council has received information on limited access permit pools and has decided not to consider a permit pool at this time.
- A letter was mailed to SG 1 permit holders in January 2026, informing them that the Council is considering a change from the two-for-one policy.
- The Sub-Committee discussed that high amounts of latent effort may be affecting the fishery's ability to harvest some of the ACLs.
 - While the Sub-Committee decided against implementing specific strategies to directly address latent effort (e.g. use or lose provisions), the Sub-Committee recommends monitoring latency in the years following implementation and revisiting the discussion about direct strategies to reduce latency, if necessary.
- SG 2 permits are unaffected by this action. The Sub-Committee has discussed potential changes to SG 2 permits but determined any changes to the SG 2 permit should be considered through a separate amendment.

Preliminary Summary of Effects

- For current SG 2 permit holders that desire a larger role in the snapper grouper commercial fishery, under **Preferred Alternative 2**, there could be some decline in SG 2 permits due to these fishermen acquiring and switching to an SG 1 permit (only one snapper grouper permit can be on a vessel).
- **Preferred Alternative 2** could have effects on the cost of SG 1 permits, though there would still be easier acquisition of SG 1 permits by only needing to find one permit holder to transfer, rather than two.

- If easier acquisition of SG 1 permits reduces latency under **Preferred Alternative 2**, increased effort could make the commercial sector more likely to reach ACLs, increase revenue, as well as diminish the risk of closures.
- There would be some administrative benefit under **Preferred Alternative 2** as the Permits Office would no longer need to verify and “retire” two existing permits to issue a new SG 1 permit, which could simplify permit-tracking and transfer processing.

Committee Action

- Review alternatives and information and provide direction for any necessary edits to language or additional information for future discussions.

Action 2. Revise bottom longline gear stowage requirements and species that may be harvested while gear is on board and stowed

Purpose of Action: Provide additional flexibility for commercial fishermen that use bottom longline gear to be able to deploy multiple gears within a trip, improving trip efficiency, while maintaining law enforcement's ability to monitor the gear used to catch snapper grouper species.

Alternative 1 (No Action). A vessel that has on board a valid Federal commercial permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper that fishes in the EEZ on a trip with bottom longline gear on board may possess only the following South Atlantic snapper-grouper species: snowy grouper, yellowedge grouper, misty grouper, golden tilefish, blueline tilefish, and sand tilefish.

Alternative 2. Modify the regulations restricting possession of snapper grouper species to allow possession of any snapper grouper species on commercial trips with bottom longline gear on board. Species other than snowy grouper, yellowedge grouper, misty grouper, golden tilefish, blueline tilefish, and sand tilefish may only be harvested if bottom longline gear is appropriately stowed. Appropriately stowed means longline hooks are not baited **or** are not on the deck of the vessel.

Alternative 3. Modify the regulations restricting possession of snapper grouper species to allow possession of any snapper grouper species on commercial trips with bottom longline gear on board. Species other than snowy grouper, yellowedge grouper, misty grouper, golden tilefish, blueline tilefish, and sand tilefish may only be harvested if bottom longline gear is appropriately stowed. Appropriately stowed means longline hooks are not baited **or** are not on the deck of the vessel. **Vessels that intend to switch to or from bottom longline gear on a single trip must communicate their intent to switch gears to the National Marine Fisheries Service using an approved method.**

Alternative 4. Modify the regulations restricting possession of snapper grouper species to allow possession of any snapper grouper species on commercial trips with bottom longline gear on board. Species other than snowy grouper, yellowedge grouper, misty grouper, golden tilefish, blueline tilefish, and sand tilefish may only be harvested if bottom longline gear is appropriately stowed. Appropriately stowed means longline hooks are not baited **or** are not on the deck of the vessel. **Vessel operators who intend to switch to or from bottom longline gear on a single trip are required to carry an active and approved vessel monitoring system on board and send a notification via the vessel monitoring system to the National Marine Fisheries Service before each gear change on that trip.**

Discussion

- Relevant CFR reference: [50 CFR 622.188\(g\)](#)
- The LE AP has commented that there still may be enforcement difficulties due to illegal gear potentially being cut (and needing to be retrieved by law enforcement for prosecution) and identifying fish that were harvested by each gear on multi-gear trips (see [January 2026 LE AP Report](#) for a more complete summary of the discussion).

- The Sub-Committee discussed the prohibition of wreckfish on vessels with bottom longline gear aboard and directed for wreckfish to be incorporated into all alternatives. Under all alternatives, wreckfish may not be harvested using bottom longline gear.
- **Alternative 3** requires an at-sea call-in/notification system that would inform law enforcement that a trip intends to switch to or from bottom longline gear. Only vessels that intend to switch to or from bottom longline gear within a trip would be required to provide these notifications. For information on this potential system, reference the April 2026 Sub-Committee presentation.
- **Alternative 4** requires an active vessel monitoring system (VMS) that could be used for law enforcement to verify when a trip switches to or from bottom longline gear. Only vessels that intend to switch to or from bottom longline gear within a trip would be required to have VMS. Additional discussions about VMS minimum requirements will occur at the September Council meeting.
 - The Sub-Committee discussed the potential for fishermen to apply for federal financial assistance in initial acquisition of VMS systems.
- Determination of the action as ‘regulatory’ or ‘de-regulatory’ and any associated timing impacts would be largely determined by the final alternatives and the expected tradeoff between flexibility and additional monitoring requirements.

Preliminary Summary of Effects

- Expected effects depend on the number of snapper grouper commercial fishermen that would participate in switching to or from bottom longline gear within a trip.
 - Most discussion of fisheries that would use this flexibility has centered around the bottom longline fisheries for shark and golden tilefish.
 - 40 vessels have directed shark permits and either an SG 1 or an SG 2 permit. This does not necessarily mean that all of these vessels fish for shark using bottom longline.
 - 22 vessels have golden tilefish longline endorsements.
 - These numbers likely represent an overestimate of the number of vessels that would be impacted by selection of **Alternatives 2** through **4**, as owning the permit/endorsement does not directly translate to usage of that permit/endorsement in the specific way that would benefit from this action (switching to/from bottom longline gear within a trip).
- **Alternatives 2** through **4** could result in additional fishing mortality for snapper grouper species, but negative effects from this would be mitigated by catch being limited to the ACL.
- **Alternatives 2** through **4** could have economic or social benefits from increased harvests and more efficient commercial trips, potentially lowering overall fuel costs for commercial fishermen.
- Requirements for notification (**Alternatives 3** and **4**) could have mixed effects, with costs of installing and learning any new, required equipment, but benefits of improved communication with law enforcement and access to additional flexibility on the water.
- **Alternatives 3** or **4** would have substantial administrative effects, as federal reporting systems would need to be established or adjusted and maintained to include the required reporting methods.

Committee Action

- Review alternatives and information and provide direction for any necessary edits to language or additional information for future discussions.
- Consider selection of a preferred alternative.

Action 3. Revise commercial trip limit for greater amberjack

Purpose of Action: Increase commercial trip limits for greater amberjack to better enable commercial fishermen to harvest the annual catch limit (ACL).

Alternative 1 (No Action). Do not increase the commercial trip limits for greater amberjack. The current trip limit for greater amberjack during Season 1 (March 1 through August 31) and Season 2 (September through February) is 1,200 lbs ww or gw.

Preferred Alternative 2. Increase the commercial trip limit for greater amberjack during Season 1 to:

Sub-Alternative 2a. 1,500 lbs gw.

Preferred Sub-Alternative 2b. 1,750 lbs gw.

Sub-Alternative 2c. 2,000 lbs gw.

Preferred Alternative 3. Increase the commercial trip limit for greater amberjack during Season 2 to:

Sub-Alternative 3a. 1,500 lbs gw.

Preferred Sub-Alternative 3b. 1,750 lbs gw.

Sub-Alternative 3c. 2,000 lbs gw.

Discussion

- Regulatory Amendment 27 specified trip limits in pounds whole weight OR pounds gutted weight for greater amberjack, noting the small conversion factor between these units.
- April 2026 discussions among the Commercial Sub-Committee recommended that the trip limits be set in pounds gutted weight to reduce confusion and because that is the unit in which commercial harvest is tracked against the ACL during the season.

Table 1. Commercial regulations for greater amberjack in the most recent fishing year (2025-2026).

Season	Annual Catch Limit (ACL)	Trip Limit	Minimum Size Limit (total length)	Seasonal Closure
March-August	544,990 lbs gw	1,200 lbs ww or gw	34 inches	No harvest in April
September-February	363,327 lbs gw*	1,200 lbs ww or gw	34 inches	None

*If the March-August ACL is not met, unused ACL from this season is added to the September-February ACL. Unused ACL from September-February is not added to a future season.

Table 2. Greater amberjack commercial trip limit and recent (2021/2022-2023/2024) commercial landings relative to the commercial annual catch limit (ACL). September-February percentages are relative to the ACL for that season, not including any rollover from the March-August season.

Species	Trip Limit	Commercial ACL % (In-Season Closure Date, if applicable)		
		2023/2024 (Preliminary)	2022/2023	2021/2022
Greater Amberjack	1,200 lbs ww or gw	Mar 2023-Aug 2023: 45.4%	Mar 2022-Aug 2022: 66.5%	Mar 2021-Aug 2021: 69.0%
		Sept 2023-Feb 2024: 33.1%	Sept 2022-Feb 2023: 59.0%*	Sept 2021-Feb 2022: 61.9%

Source: [NOAA Fisheries Southeast Region Annual Catch Limit \(ACL\) Monitoring Website](#)

*Management change became effective during this year/season

Preliminary Summary of Effects

- No closures are predicted under any of the considered trip limits, assuming average landings.
- Because the stock is not overfished, harvest increases below the ACL are not expected to impact stock status, resulting in relatively neutral biological effects among the considered trip limits.
- Some economic and social benefits are expected under the higher trip limits.

Committee Action

- Review alternatives and information and provide direction for any necessary edits to language or additional information for future discussions.

Action 4. Revise commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper

Purpose of Action: Increase commercial trip limits for vermilion snapper to better enable commercial fishermen to harvest the ACL.

Alternative 1 (No Action). Do not increase the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper. The current trip limit for vermilion snapper during Season 1 (January through June) and Season 2 (July through December) is 1,000 lbs gw.

Preferred Alternative 2. Increase the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper during Season 1 to:

Preferred Sub-Alternative 2a. 1,500 lbs gw.

Sub-Alternative 2b. 1,750 lbs gw.

Sub-Alternative 2c. 2,000 lbs gw.

Preferred Alternative 3. Increase the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper during Season 2 to:

Preferred Sub-Alternative 3a. 1,500 lbs gw.

Sub-Alternative 3b. 1,750 lbs gw.

Sub-Alternative 3c. 2,000 lbs gw.

Discussion

Table 3. Commercial regulations for vermilion snapper in the most recent fishing year (2025).

Season	Annual Catch Limit (ACL)	Trip Limit	Minimum Size Limit (total length)	Seasonal Closure
January-June	454,240 lbs ww	1,000 lbs gw	12 inches	None
July-December	454,240 lbs ww*	1,000 lbs gw	12 inches	None

*If the January-June ACL is not met, unused ACL from this season is added to the July-December ACL. Unused ACL from July-December is not added to a future season.

Table 4. Vermilion snapper commercial trip limit and recent (2022-2024) commercial landings relative to the commercial annual catch limit (ACL). July-December percentages are relative to the ACL for that season, not including any rollover from the January-June season.

Species	Trip Limit	Commercial ACL % (In-Season Closure Date, if applicable)		
		2024 (Preliminary)	2023	2022
Vermilion Snapper	1,000 lbs gw	Jan-Jun: 65.3% Jul-Dec: 56.4%	Jan-Jun: 61.9% Jul-Dec: 92.6%	Jan-Jun: 61.7% Jul-Dec: 88.2%

Source: [NOAA Fisheries Southeast Region Annual Catch Limit \(ACL\) Monitoring Website](#)

Preliminary Summary of Effects

- December closures are predicted for the highest trip limits considered for Season 2 (Figure 1), assuming average landings. However, these analyses do not include unused ACL that is carried over from Season 1 to Season 2. Including carry-over ACL, Season 2 closures are unlikely.

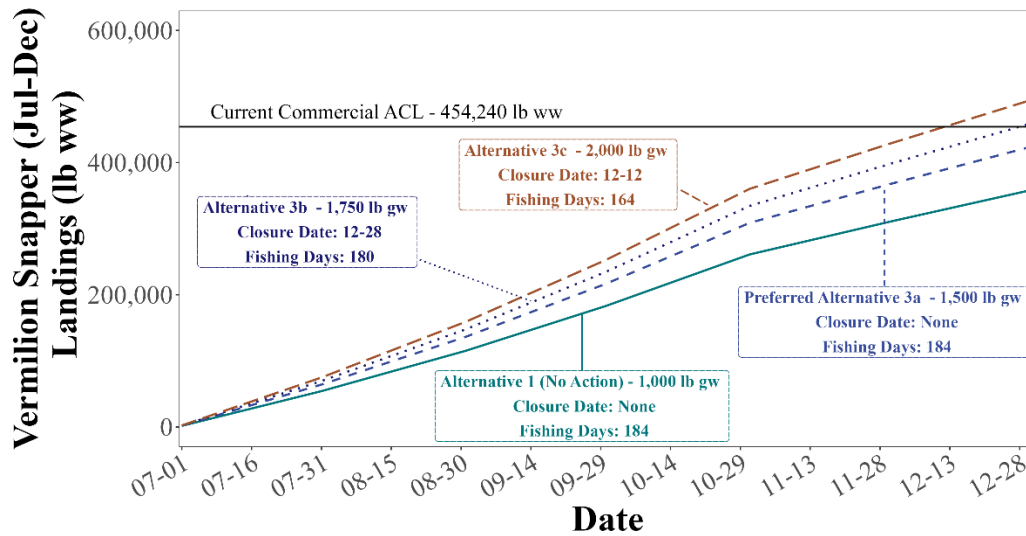


Figure 1. Estimated cumulative vermilion snapper landings for each Action 4 commercial trip limit alternative in Season 2 (July to December), based on the average landings scenario.

- Because the stock is not overfished, harvest increases below the ACL are not expected to impact stock status, resulting in relatively neutral biological effects among the considered trip limits.
- Some economic and social benefits are expected under the higher trip limits.

Committee Action

- Review alternatives and information and provide direction for any necessary edits to language or additional information for future discussions.

Action 5. Revise commercial trip limit for red porgy

Purpose of Action: Increase commercial trip limits for red porgy to better enable commercial fishermen to harvest the ACL.

Preferred Alternative 1 (No Action). Do not increase the commercial trip limit for red porgy. The current trip limit for red porgy during Season 1 (January through April) and Season 2 (May through December) is 15 fish.

Alternative 2. Increase the commercial trip limit for red porgy during Season 1 to:

Sub-Alternative 2a. 30 fish.

Sub-Alternative 2b. 45 fish.

Alternative 3. Increase the commercial trip limit for red porgy during Season 2 to:

Sub-Alternative 3a. 30 fish.

Sub-Alternative 3b. 45 fish.

Discussion

Table 5. Commercial regulations for red porgy in the most recent fishing year (2025).

Season	Annual Catch Limit (ACL)	Trip Limit	Minimum Size Limit (total length)	Seasonal Closure
January-April	13,500 lbs gw	15 fish	14 inches	None
May-December	31,501 lbs gw*	15 fish	14 inches	None

*If the January-April ACL is not met, unused ACL from this season is added to the May-December ACL. Unused ACL from May-December is not added to a future season.

Table 6. Red porgy commercial trip limit and recent (2022-2024) commercial landings relative to the commercial annual catch limit (ACL). May-December percentages are relative to the ACL for that season, not including any rollover from the January-April season.

Species	Trip Limit	Commercial ACL % (In-Season Closure Date, if applicable)		
		2024 (Preliminary)	2023	2022
Red Porgy	15 fish	Jan-Apr: 47.3% May-Dec: 44.8%	Jan-Apr: 54.1%* May-Dec: 57.0%	Jan-Apr: 35.2% May-Dec: 38.8%

Source: [NOAA Fisheries Southeast Region Annual Catch Limit \(ACL\) Monitoring Website](#)

*Management change became effective during this year/season

Preliminary Summary of Effects

- No closures are predicted under any of the considered trip limits, assuming average landings.
- Because the stock is overfished, current trip limits and annual harvests may facilitate faster rebuilding than higher trip limits and annual harvests.
 - Red porgy rebuilding is more dependent on improved recruitment, so while low trip limits and resultant harvests may provide the best biological scenario, that action alone would not be expected to rebuild the stock.

- The difference in predicted annual harvests under the considered trip limits is small, so the biological differences among trip limit alternatives are likely small, as well.
- Some economic and social benefits are expected under the higher trip limits.

Committee Action

- Review alternatives and information and provide direction for any necessary edits to language or additional information for future discussions.

Action 6. Revise commercial trip limit for hogfish (Georgia-North Carolina)

Purpose of Action: Increase commercial trip limits for hogfish (Georgia-North Carolina) to better enable commercial fishermen to harvest the ACL.

Alternative 1 (No Action). Do not increase the commercial trip limit for hogfish from Georgia-North Carolina. The current trip limit for hogfish from Georgia-North Carolina is 500 lbs ww.

Alternative 2. Increase the commercial trip limit for hogfish from Georgia-North Carolina to 750 lbs ww.

Alternative 3. Increase the commercial trip limit for hogfish from Georgia-North Carolina to 1,000 lbs ww.

Discussion

Table 7. Commercial regulations for hogfish (Georgia-North Carolina) in the most recent fishing year (2025).

Season	Annual Catch Limit (ACL)	Trip Limit	Minimum Size Limit (fork length)	Seasonal Closure
January-December	23,456 lbs ww	500 lbs ww	17 inches	None

Table 8. Hogfish (Georgia-North Carolina) commercial trip limit and recent (2022-2024) commercial landings relative to the commercial annual catch limit (ACL).

Species	Trip Limit	Commercial ACL % (In-Season Closure Date, if applicable)		
		2024 (Preliminary)	2023	2022
Hogfish (GA-NC)	500 lbs ww	72.6%	74.1%	74.7%

Source: [NOAA Fisheries Southeast Region Annual Catch Limit \(ACL\) Monitoring Website](#)

Preliminary Summary of Effects

- No closures are predicted under any of the considered trip limits, assuming average landings.
- Because the stock is not overfished, harvest increases below the ACL are not expected to impact stock status, resulting in relatively neutral biological effects among the considered trip limits.
- Some economic and social benefits are expected under the higher trip limits.

Committee Action

- Review alternatives and information and provide direction for any necessary edits to language or additional information for future discussions.
- Consider selection of a preferred alternative.

Action 7. Revise commercial trip limit for red grouper

Purpose of Action: Increase commercial trip limits for red grouper to better enable commercial fishermen to harvest the ACL.

Alternative 1 (No Action). Do not increase the commercial trip limit for red grouper. The current trip limit for red grouper is 200 lbs gw; 236 lbs ww.

Alternative 2. Increase the commercial trip limit for red grouper to 300 lbs gw; 354 lbs ww.

Discussion

Table 9. Commercial regulations for red grouper in the most recent fishing year (2025).

Season	Annual Catch Limit (ACL)	Trip Limit	Minimum Size Limit (total length)	Seasonal Closure
January-December	71,280 lbs ww	200 lbs gw	20 inches	No harvest January-May off NC and SC; No harvest January-April off GA and FL

Table 10. Red grouper commercial trip limit and recent (2022-2024) commercial landings relative to the commercial annual catch limit (ACL).

Species	Trip Limit	Commercial ACL % (In-Season Closure Date, if applicable)		
		2024 (Preliminary)	2023	2022
Red Grouper	200 lbs gw	52.6%	27.1%	25.4%

Source: [NOAA Fisheries Southeast Region Annual Catch Limit \(ACL\) Monitoring Website](#)

Preliminary Summary of Effects

- No closures are predicted under any of the considered trip limits, assuming average landings.
- Because the stock is overfished, current trip limits and annual harvests may facilitate faster rebuilding than higher trip limits and annual harvests.
 - Red grouper rebuilding is more dependent on improved recruitment, so while low trip limits and resultant harvests may provide the best biological scenario, that action alone would not be expected to rebuild the stock.
 - The difference in predicted annual harvests under the considered trip limits is small, so the biological differences among trip limit alternatives are likely small, as well.
- Some economic and social benefits are expected under the higher trip limits.

Committee Action

- Review alternatives and information and provide direction for any necessary edits to language or additional information for future discussions.
- Consider selection of a preferred alternative.

Action 8. Revise commercial trip limit for gray triggerfish

Purpose of Action: Increase commercial trip limits for gray triggerfish to better enable commercial fishermen to harvest the ACL.

Alternative 1 (No Action). Do not increase the commercial trip limit for gray triggerfish. The current trip limit for gray triggerfish is 1,000 lbs ww.

Alternative 2. Increase the commercial trip limit for gray triggerfish to 1,200 lbs ww.

Alternative 3. Increase the commercial trip limit for gray triggerfish to 1,400 lbs ww.

Discussion

- The Council has discussed some concern with the recent declining stock trajectory for gray triggerfish, based on the Southeast Reef Fish Survey.

Table 11. Commercial regulations for gray triggerfish in the most recent fishing year (2025).

Season	Annual Catch Limit (ACL)	Trip Limit	Minimum Size Limit (total length)	Seasonal Closure
January-June	156,162 lbs ww	1,000 lbs ww	12 inches	None
July-December	156,162 lbs ww*	1,000 lbs ww	12 inches	None

*If the January-June ACL is not met, unused ACL from this season is added to the July-December ACL. Unused ACL from July-December is not added to a future season.

Table 12. Gray triggerfish commercial trip limit and recent (2022-2024) commercial landings relative to the commercial annual catch limit (ACL). July-December percentages are relative to the ACL for that season, not including any rollover from the January-June season.

Species	Trip Limit	Commercial ACL % (In-Season Closure Date, if applicable)		
		2024 (Preliminary)	2023	2022
Gray Triggerfish	1,000 lbs ww	Jan-Jun: 34.2% Jul-Dec: 47.7%	Jan-Jun: 54.1% Jul-Dec: 73.1%	Jan-Jun: 58.9% Jul-Dec: 92.2%

Source: [NOAA Fisheries Southeast Region Annual Catch Limit \(ACL\) Monitoring Website](#)

Preliminary Summary of Effects

- No closures are predicted under any of the considered trip limits, assuming average landings.
- Stock status for gray triggerfish is unknown. Therefore, there may be some biological benefit to not increasing trip limits and annual harvests. However, the difference in predicted annual harvests under the considered trip limits is small, so the biological differences among trip limit alternatives are likely small, as well.
- Some economic and social benefits are expected under the higher trip limits.

Committee Action

- Review alternatives and information and provide direction for any necessary edits to language or additional information for future discussions.
- Consider selection of a preferred alternative.

Action 9. Revise commercial trip limit for golden tilefish (hook and line only)

Purpose of Action: Increase commercial trip limits for golden tilefish (hook and line component) to better enable commercial fishermen to harvest the ACL.

Alternative 1 (No Action). Do not increase the commercial trip limit for the golden tilefish hook and line component. The current trip limit for the golden tilefish (hook and line) is 500 lbs gw; 560 lbs ww.

Preferred Alternative 2. Increase the commercial trip limit for golden tilefish (hook and line) to 600 lbs gw; 672 lbs ww.

Alternative 3. Increase the commercial trip limit for golden tilefish (hook and line) to 750 lbs gw; 840 lbs ww.

Discussion

- The Council has discussed that a relevant economic tradeoff for golden tilefish is between the benefits from increasing the trip limit versus the negative effects of a potentially shortened season.

Table 13. Commercial regulations for golden tilefish (hook and line) in the most recent fishing year (2025).

Season	Annual Catch Limit (ACL)	Trip Limit	Minimum Size Limit	Seasonal Closure
January-December	110,722 lbs gw	500 lbs gw	None	None

Table 14. Golden tilefish (hook and line) commercial trip limit and recent (2022-2024) commercial landings relative to the commercial annual catch limit (ACL).

Species	Trip Limit	Commercial ACL % (In-Season Closure Date, if applicable)		
		2024 (Preliminary)	2023	2022
Golden Tilefish (H&L)	500 lbs gw	94.2%	84.5%* (10/31/2023; Re-opened 12/7/2023)	107.7% (7/6/2022)

Source: [NOAA Fisheries Southeast Region Annual Catch Limit \(ACL\) Monitoring Website](#)

*Management change became effective during this year/season

Preliminary Summary of Effects

- Closures are predicted under all trip limits considered (Figure 2).
 - Alternative 1 (No Action)** (500 lbs gw trip limit) is expected to result in a closure on October 16.

- **Preferred Alternative 2** (600 lbs gw trip limit) is expected to result in a closure on September 21.
- **Alternative 3** (750 lbs gw trip limit) is expected to result in a closure on August 27.

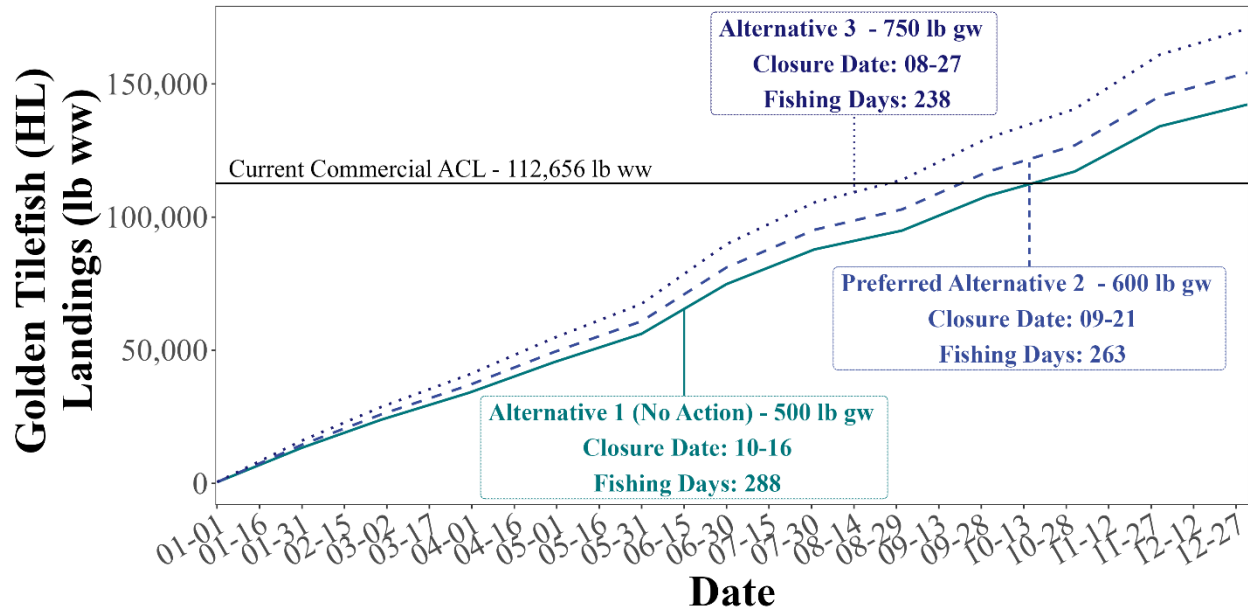


Figure 2. Estimated cumulative golden tilefish (hook and line) landings for each Action 9 commercial trip limit alternative, based on the average landings scenario.

- Golden tilefish is not overfished. Under all trip limits considered, the ACL is predicted to be harvested, and the fishery would be closed. Because annual harvest is the same and at a sustainable level under all scenarios, biological effects are neutral under all trip limits considered.
- Some economic and social benefits are expected under the higher trip limits, through greater revenue per golden tilefish trip. Since the higher trip limits are also expected to result in earlier closures, there is a possibility for negative effects if golden tilefish are in-demand and unavailable to be harvested after a closure.

Committee Action

- Review alternatives and information and provide direction for any necessary edits to language or additional information for future discussions.
- Consider selection of a preferred alternative.

Action 10. Require sale of all snapper grouper caught on commercial trips

Purpose of Action: Improve commercial reporting accuracy and professionalize the commercial fleet.

Alternative 1 (No Action). Snapper grouper harvest from commercial trips is not required to be sold, but if sold, it must be sold to a permitted dealer.

Alternative 2. All snapper grouper harvest on commercial snapper grouper trips is required to be sold to a permitted dealer. A commercial snapper grouper trip is a trip on which a vessel that holds either snapper grouper commercial permit (SG 1 or SG 2) either: 1) harvests any snapper grouper species in an amount that exceeds the recreational bag limit for that species, or 2) sells any amount of snapper grouper species that were harvested on that trip.

Discussion

- This action is intended to ensure that commercial permits are being used for harvest with intent to sell.
- Some states already have similar requirements at the state level.
- This action would only require sale of snapper grouper species. Requirements for other species caught on the same trip would be determined by their respective fishery management plans (FMP).
 - E.g. If gag and king mackerel are caught on the same trip, the gag must be sold, but king mackerel requirements are according to the Coastal Migratory Pelagics FMP.
- Commercial vessels can still be used as recreational vessels as long as:
 - All harvest of snapper grouper is within recreational bag limits.
 - No snapper grouper from that trip are sold.

Preliminary Summary of Effects

- This action is not expected to have any biological effects on snapper grouper populations. With **Alternative 2** providing more comprehensive reporting that accounts for fish kept for personal consumption, there may be some increase in the numbers in dealer reports. This should not necessarily be perceived as an increase in harvest.
 - The number of fish caught on commercial trips, kept for personal consumption, and not currently reported is not known, but is expected to be minimal.
- Minimal economic benefit from **Alternative 2** by requiring catch that previously was not sold to be sold to dealers.
- Potential social effects for fishermen that harvest commercial quantities but do not sell their fish. More accurate reporting and a more professionalized commercial fleet is expected to have long-term social benefits.

Committee Action

- Discuss how fish that are spoiled or otherwise rejected by the dealer should be addressed for this requirement.

- Review alternatives and information and provide direction for any necessary edits to language or additional information for future discussions.

Potential Amendment Timeline

Beginning with the June 2026 Council meeting, further development of Amendment 60 will be done by the full Snapper Grouper Committee, rather than the Commercial Sub-Committee, until completion of the amendment.

March 2025	Amendment 60 initiated
June 2025	Review initial actions and consider approval for scoping
July 5-August 8, 2025	Scoping
September 2025	Review scoping comments; provide direction for actions and alternatives
December 2025	Review available analyses and draft action and alternative language
March 2026	Review available analyses and draft action and alternative language. Approve suite of actions and range of alternatives for analysis.
April 2026	Review additional analyses and further develop actions and alternatives
June 2026	Consider approval for public hearings
August 10, 11, 19, and 31, and September 16, 2026	Public hearings
September 2026	Review public comment and approve all actions
December 2026	Final Council approval

Committee Action

Review the amendment timeline and edit as necessary.

Consider approval of all actions.

DRAFT MOTION: APPROVE ALL ACTIONS FOR AMENDMENT 60.