



**Snapper  
Grouper  
Advisory Panel  
October 2022**

Allie Iberle  
[allie.iberle@safmc.net](mailto:allie.iberle@safmc.net)  
843-225-8135

THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

**Amendment 53 Gag and Black  
Grouper Overview**



Background Overview		
SEDAR History	Stock Status	
Assessment	Overfished	Overfishing
SEDAR 10 (2006)		X
SEDAR 10 Update (2014)		X
SEDAR 71 (2021)	X	X

Pre-Amendment Action Schedule	
Assessment results reviewed	June 2021
Direction to start amendment	June 2021
Rebuilding timeframe ( $T_{\max}$ ) provided	21-Sep
NFMS letter received	July 23rd, 2021



June 2021	Reviewed SEDAR 71 results and direct staff to begin a plan amendment
Fall 2022	Conduct public hearings
December 2022	Review public hearing comments, select preferred alternatives, and approve all actions
March 2023	Review final amendment and approval for final review



**ACTION 1.** Establish a rebuilding plan for gag



**WHY?**

SEDAR 71 determined the stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing, therefore a rebuilding plan is required

**ALTERNATIVES:**

Alternative	Rebuilding Timeframe	Terminal Year
Alternative 1 (no change)	0 years	NA
Alternative 2	T <sub>min</sub> , 7 Years	2029
Preferred Alternative 3	T <sub>max</sub> , 10 Years	2032



**ACTION 2.** Revise the acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield for gag

**WHY?**

SEDAR 71 determined the stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing, therefore a rebuilding plan is required



**ACTION 2.** Revise the acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield for gag



ALTERNATIVES:

	ACL (pounds gw)									
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032*
Alternative 1	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350
Preferred Alternative 2	175,632	261,171	348,352	435,081	524,625	617,778	711,419	800,088	879,758	948,911
Alternative 3	166,850	248,112	330,934	413,327	498,394	586,889	675,848	760,084	835,770	901,465
Alternative 4	158,069	235,054	313,517	391,573	472,163	556,000	640,277	720,079	791,782	854,020

\*2032 values will remain in place until modified

**ACTION 2.** Revise the acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield for gag



The comparison of the total gag landings (i.e. commercial and recreational) from 2015-2019 (orange line) and proposed total ACLs (blue) under Preferred Alternative 2 for Action 2.

## ACTION 3. Revise the gag sector allocations and sector annual catch limits



Alternative	Commercial/Recreational Allocation	Basis for allocation
Alternative 1 (No Action)	51.00%/49.00%	Landings distribution 1999-2003 used in Amendment 19 that incorporated CHTS recreational landings
Alternative 2	36.37%/63.63%	Updated landings distribution 1999-2003 incorporating MRIP FES recreational landings
Alternative 3	43.06%/56.94%	Comp ACL Amendment Allocation Formula that uses $(0.5 \times \text{landings from 1986 to 2008}) + (0.5 \times \text{landings from 2006 to 2008})$ .
Preferred Alternative 4		
Sub-alternative 4a	Changes each year depending on initial decrease and subsequent increases	Distribution of commercial and recreational (MRIP FES) landings from 2017-2019
Preferred Sub-alternative 4b	Changes each year depending on initial decrease and subsequent increases	Distribution of commercial and recreational (MRIP FES) landings from 2015-2019



ACTION 3. Revise the gag sector allocations and sector annual catch limits

Alternative 1

Year	Total Commercial ACL (lbs gw) (51%)	Recreational ACL (lbs gw) (49%)
2023	89,572	86,060
2024	133,197	127,974
2025	177,660	170,692
2026	221,891	213,190
2027	267,559	257,066
2028	315,067	302,711
2029	362,824	348,595
2030	408,045	392,043
2031	448,677	431,081
2032	483,945	464,966

Alternative 2

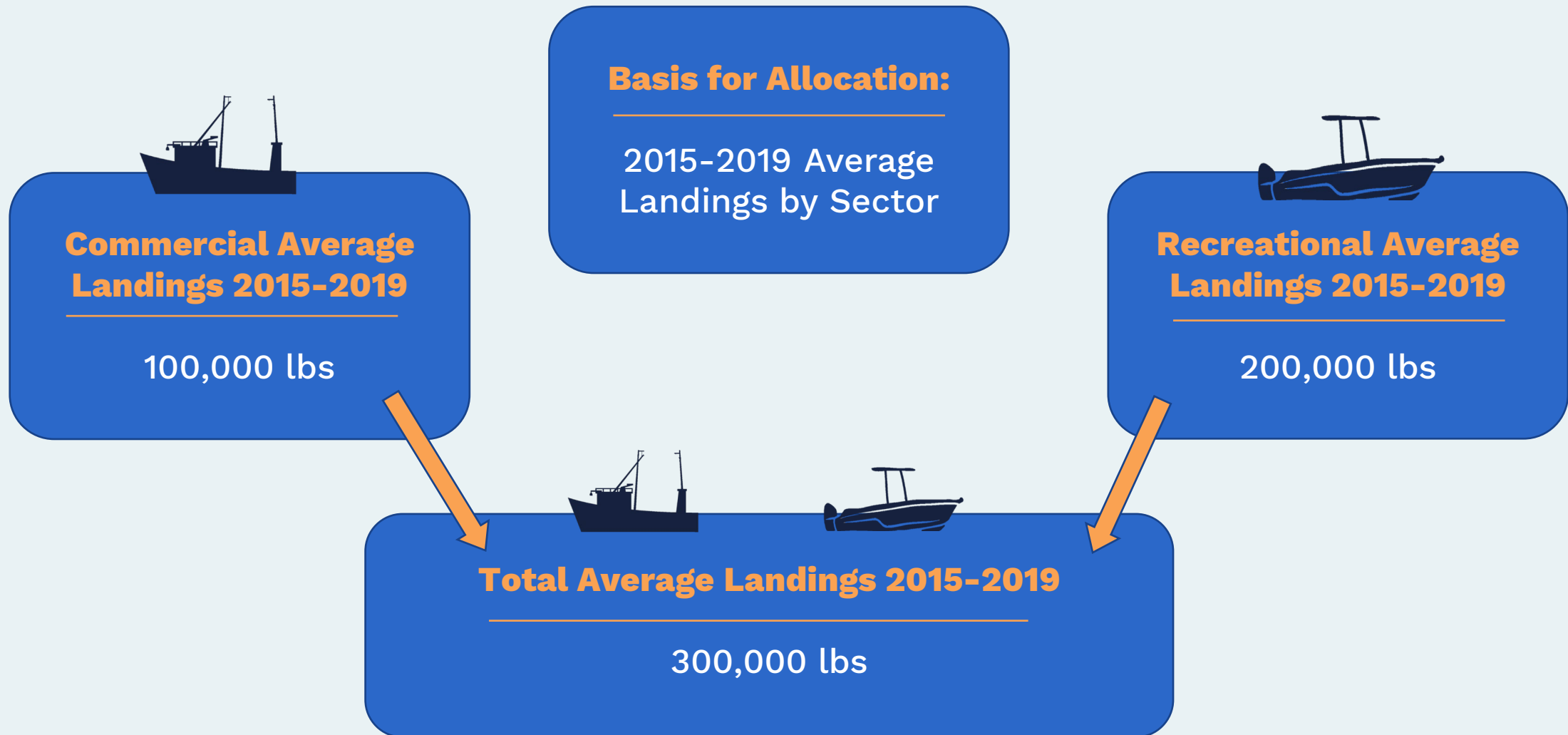
Year	Total Commercial ACL (lbs gw) (36.37%)	Recreational ACL (lbs gw) (63.63%)
2023	63,877	111,755
2024	94,988	166,183
2025	126,696	221,656
2026	158,239	276,842
2027	190,806	333,819
2028	224,686	393,092
2029	258,743	452,676
2030	290,992	509,096
2031	319,968	559,790
2032	345,119	603,792

**ACTION 3.** Revise the gag sector allocations and sector annual catch limits

**Alternative 3**

Year	Total Commercial ACL (lbs gw) (43.06%)	Recreational ACL (lbs gw) (56.94%)
2023	75,627	100,005
2024	112,460	148,711
2025	150,000	198,352
2026	187,346	247,735
2027	225,904	298,721
2028	266,015	351,763
2029	306,337	405,082
2030	344,518	455,570
2031	378,824	500,934
2032	408,601	540,310

# Alternative 4b Methods



# Alternative 4b Methods



# Alternative 4b Methods

## Updated Harvest Levels

Year 1: 75,000 lbs

Based on the 2015-2019 total average landings a **75% reduction** in harvest is needed



## Year 1 Allocations: Sharing the Initial Reduction

Each sector's ACL is sectors average 5-yr (2015-2019) average landings, reduced by 75%



Commercial Year 1 ACL: 25,000 lbs

Recreational Year 1 ACL: 50,000 lbs

This results in an allocation of 33% commercial and 67% recreational

# Alternative 4b Methods

## Year 2 and Throughout the Rebuilding Plan: Splitting the Increase in Pounds

### Year 2 Catch Level = 160,000 lbs (+85,000 lbs)

Commercial: 25,000 lbs + 42,500 lbs = 67,500 lbs, 42% allocation

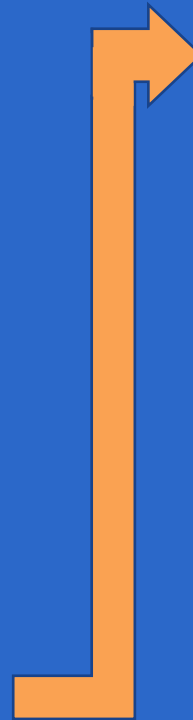
Recreational: 50,000 lbs + 42,500 lbs = 92,500 lbs, 58% allocation



### Year 3 Catch Level = 247,000 lbs (+87,000 lbs)

Commercial: 67,500 lbs + 43,500 lbs = 111,000 lbs, 45% allocation

Recreational: 92,500 lbs + 43,500 lbs = 136,000 lbs, 55% allocation



### Year 4 Catch Level = 333,000 lbs (+86,000 lbs)

Commercial: 111,000 lbs + 43,000 lbs = 154,000 lbs, 46% allocation

Recreational: 136,000 lbs + 43,000 lbs = 179,000 lbs, 54% allocations



### Year 5 Catch Level = 422,000 lbs (+89,000 lbs)

Commercial: 154,000 lbs + 44,500 lbs = 198,000 lbs, 47% allocation

Recreational: 179,000 lbs + 44,500 lbs = 223,000 lbs, 53% allocation



ALTERNATIVE 4A

Basis Years	Average Commercial Landings (lbs gw)	Average Recreational Landings (lbs gw)	Total Landings (lbs gw)	Year 1 Allocations				
Average from 2017-2019	231,736	364,331	596,067	Percent Reduction Needed	Commercial ACL (lbs gw)	Commercial Allocation %	Recreational ACL (lbs gw)	Recreational Allocation %
				71%	68,281	39%	107,350	61%

Remaining Rebuilding Years Allocations							
Years 2-10	Total ACL (lbs gw)	Total Increase from Previous Year	Total Increase for Each Sector	Commercial ACL (lbs gw)	Commercial Allocation %	Recreational ACL (lbs gw)	Recreational Allocation %
2024	261,171	85,539	42,770	111,051	43%	150,120	57%
2025	348,352	87,181	43,591	154,641	44%	193,710	56%
2026	435,081	86,729	43,365	198,006	46%	237,075	54%
2027	524,625	89,729	44,772	242,778	46%	281,847	54%
2028	617,778	89,544	46,577	289,354	47%	328,423	53%
2029	711,419	93,544	46,821	336,175	47%	375,244	53%
2030	800,088	88,669	44,335	380,509	48%	419,578	52%
2031	879,758	79,670	39,835	420,344	48%	459,413	52%
2032	948,911	69,153	34,577	454,921	48%	493,990	52%

ALTERNATIVE 4B

Basis Years	Average Commercial Landings (lbs gw)	Average Recreational Landings (lbs gw)	Total Landings (lbs gw)	Year 1 Allocations				
				Percent Reduction Needed	Commercial ACL (lbs gw)	Commercial Allocation %	Recreational ACL (lbs gw)	Recreational Allocation %
Average from 2015-2019	280,440	296,804	577,244	70%	85,326	49%	90,306	51%

Remaining Rebuilding Years Allocations							
Years 2-10	Total ACL (lbs gw)	Total Increase from Previous Year	Total Increase for Each Sector	Commercial ACL (lbs gw)	Commercial Allocation %	Recreational ACL (lbs gw)	Recreational Allocation %
2024	261,171	85,539	42,770	128,096	49%	133,075	51%
2025	348,352	87,181	43,591	171,687	49%	176,666	51%
2026	435,081	86,729	43,365	215,051	49%	220,030	51%
2027	524,625	89,729	44,772	259,823	50%	264,802	50%
2028	617,778	89,544	46,577	306,400	50%	311,379	50%
2029	711,419	93,544	46,821	353,220	50%	358,199	50%
2030	800,088	79,670	44,335	397,555	50%	402,534	50%
2031	879,758	79,670	39,835	437,390	50%	442,369	50%
2032	948,911	69,153	34,576	471,966	50%	476,945	50%

## ALLOCATION ANALYSIS

Action 3, Alternative 2: 63.63% recreational and 36.37% commercial								
Year	Rec. ACL*	Predicted Rec. Landings	Rec. Closure Date	Days Open in Rec. Season	Comm. ACL	Predicted Comm. Landings	Comm. Closure Date	Days Open in Comm. Season
2023	111,755	311,339	Jun 28	58	63,877	231,667	Jun 9	39
2027	333,819		None	245	190,806		Nov 4	187
2032	603,792		None	245	345,119		None	245
Action 3, Alternative 3: 43.06% recreational and 56.94% commercial								
Year	Rec. ACL*	Predicted Rec. Landings	Rec. Closure Date	Days Open in Rec. Season	Comm. ACL	Predicted Comm. Landings	Comm. Closure Date	Days Open in Comm. Season
2023	100,005	311,339	Jun 22	52	75,627	231,667	Jun 18	48
2027	298,721		Dec 9	222	225,904		Dec 22	235
2032	540,310		None	245	408,601		None	245
Action 3, Sub-Alternative 4a: 3-year average shared reduction								
Year	Rec. ACL*	Predicted Rec. Landings	Rec. Closure Date	Days Open in Rec. Season	Comm. ACL	Predicted Comm. Landings	Comm. Closure Date	Days Open in Comm. Season
2023	107,350	311,339	Jun 26	56	68,281	231,667	Jun 12	42
2027	281,847		Nov 9	192	242,778		None	245
2032	493,990		None	245	454,921		None	245
Action 3, Preferred Sub-Alternative 4b: 5-year average shared reduction								
Year	Rec. ACL*	Predicted Rec. Landings	Rec. Closure Date	Days Open in Rec. Season	Comm. ACL	Predicted Comm. Landings	Comm. Closure Date	Days Open in Comm. Season
2023	90,306	311,339	Jun 17	47	85,327	231,667	Jun 25	55
2027	264,802		Oct 22	174	259,823		None	245
2032	476,945		None	245	471,966		None	245

## **ACTION 4.** Modify gag commercial management measures



### **WHY?**

Under the updated catch levels, a reduction in harvest is needed. Modifications to commercial management measures will help to constrain harvest to these new catch levels while helping to ensure a commercial season

SUB-ACTION 4a: Modify the commercial trip limit for gag



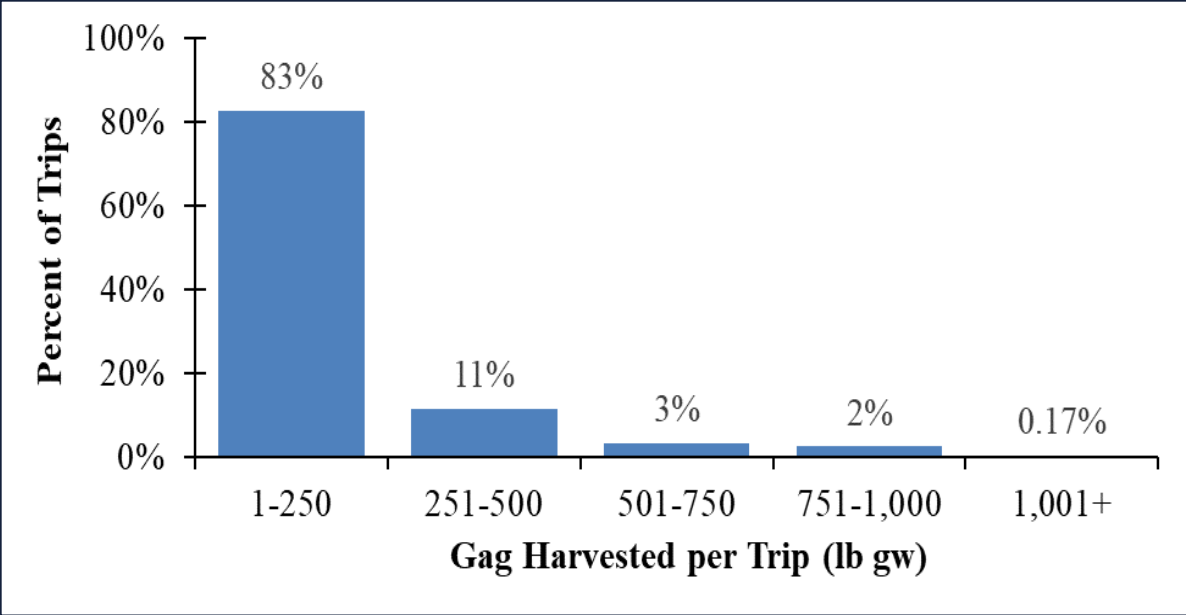
ALTERNATIVES:

Alternatives	Trip Limit
Alternative 1 (No Action)	1,000 lbs gw until 75% of the commercial ACL is met then 500 lbs gw
Alternative 2	200 lbs gw
Preferred Alternative 3	300 lbs gw
Alternative 4	400 lbs gw
Alternative 5	500 lbs gw
Alternative 6	300 lbs gw in 2023, 500 lbs gw in 2026, 1,000 lbs gw in 2027 and thereafter until modified

SUB-ACTION 4a: Modify the commercial trip limit for gag



ANALYSIS:



The percent of commercial trips (n=8,607) harvesting gag by bin from 2017 through 2019. Source: SEFSC commercial logbook (May 6, 2021).

Current Trip Limit (lbs gw)*	Potential Trip Limit (lbs gw)	Predicted Change in Landings
1,000	500	-8%
1,000	400	-13%
1,000	300	-20%
1,000	200	-32%

The predicted percent change in landings per trip from the current 1,000 lbs gw trip limit. UPDATE IF WE CAN AFTER NEW ANALYSIS TO INCLUDE ALT 6



**SUB-ACTION 4b:** Modify the commercial spawning season closure for gag grouper



## **WHY?**

Modifications to the spawning season closure are being considered to allow gag increased opportunity to spawn before they enter the fishery

SUB-ACTION 4b: Modify the commercial shallow water grouper spawning season closure for gag grouper



ALTERNATIVES:

- Season Closed
- Season Open

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

ALTERNATIVE 2

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

ALTERNATIVE 3

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

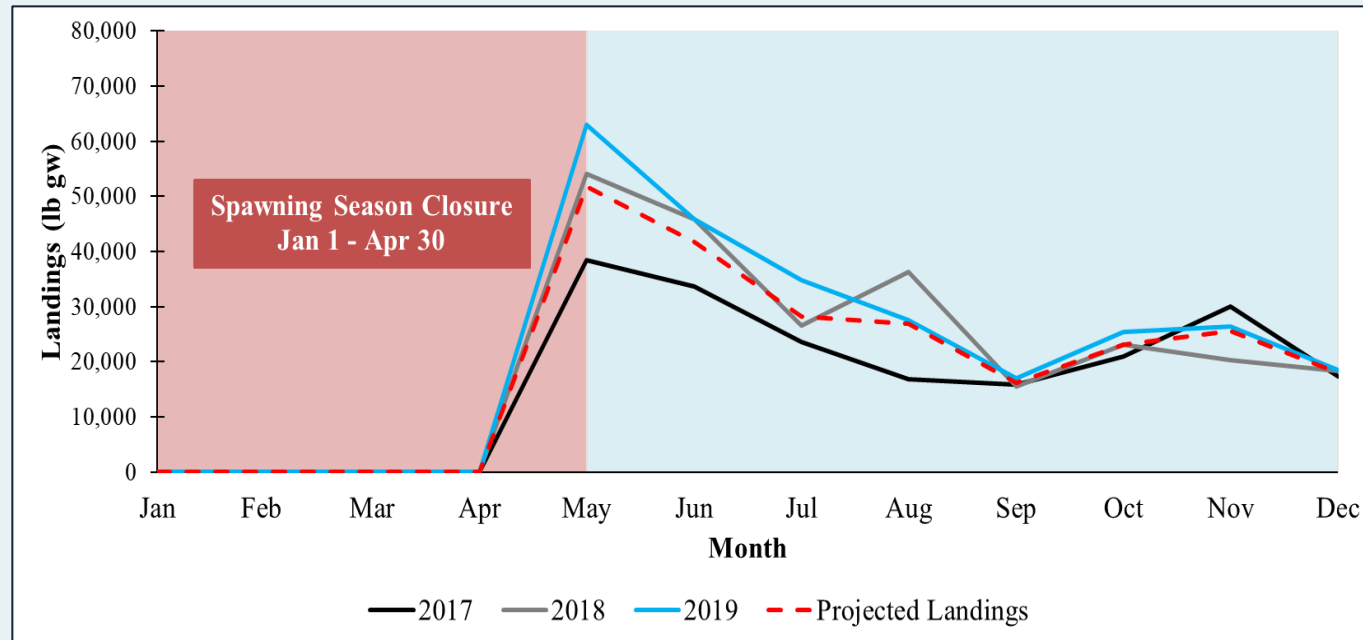
ALTERNATIVE 4

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

## SUB-ACTION 4a: Modify the commercial shallow water grouper spawning season closure for gag grouper



### ANALYSIS:



South Atlantic gag commercial landings by month from 2017-2019 and predicted 2023 landings. All of the landing projections assume no landings between January and April 30 for the spawning season closure.

### COUNCIL QUESTIONS:

- How does the AP feel about a May closure? The Council is considering selecting this as the preferred moving forward
- How does the AP feel about regionally specific spawning season closures and if so, what regional closures does the AP recommend?

**ACTION 5:** Modify the recreational management measures for gag



## **WHY?**

Modifications to recreational management are being considered to constrain harvest to the updated catch levels.

SUB-ACTION 5a: Establish a vessel limit for gag



ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative	Recreational Component	Vessel Limit*
Alternative 1 (No Change)	Both	none
Alternative 2		
Alternative 2a	Private Recreational	2 fish/vessel/ <b>day</b>
Alternative 2b	Private Recreational	4 fish/vessel/ <b>day</b>
Alternative 3		
Alternative 3a	For-Hire	2 fish/vessel/ <b>trip</b>
Alternative 3b	For-Hire	4 fish/vessel/ <b>trip</b>

SUB-ACTION 5b: Modify the recreational spawning season closure for gag grouper



ALTERNATIVES:

Season Closed

Season Open

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

ALTERNATIVE 2

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

ALTERNATIVE 3

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

ALTERNATIVE 4

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----



**SUB-ACTION 5c:** Prohibit the retention of gag by captain and crew



## ALTERNATIVES:

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** The captain(s) and crew of a for-hire vessel may retain the same daily bag limit of gag as allowed for each passenger

**Alternative 2.** The gag bag limit for captain(s) and crew of for-hire vessels is zero

**ACTION 6:** Modify the recreational accountability measures for gag



**ALTERNATIVES:**



	IN-SEASON AM		POST SEASON AM	
	TRIGGERS	AM	TRIGGERS	AM
ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)	Recreational landings reach/projected to reach recreational ACL	Current recreational season closes	<div>• Recreational landings exceed recreational ACL</div> <div><del>• Total ACL exceeded</del></div> <div><del>• Stock is overfished</del></div> <div>*All 3 must occur for AM to take effect</div>	<div>• Recreational ACL for the following year reduced by the recreational overage</div> <div>• Recreational season for the following year is reduced by the amount of the recreational overage</div>
ALTERNATIVE 2	NMFS will annually announce the recreational fishing season start and end dates			
ALTERNATIVE 3	NONE		Recreational landings exceed recreational ACL  *no longer tied to total ACL and stock status	Recreational season for the following year is reduced by the amount necessary to prevent the recreational ACL from being exceeded
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE 4	Recreational landings reach/projected to reach recreational ACL	Current recreational season closes	Recreational landings exceed recreational ACL  *no longer tied to total ACL and stock status	Recreational season for the following year is reduced by the amount necessary to prevent the recreational ACL from being exceeded

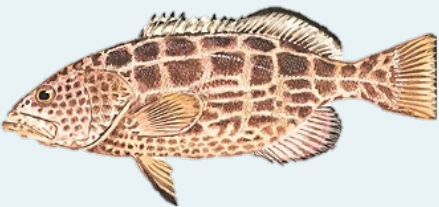
**ACTION 7:** Modify the recreational management measures for black grouper



**WHY?**

Black grouper was included in the Amendment at the September meeting because of concerns over identification issues in the recreational fishery

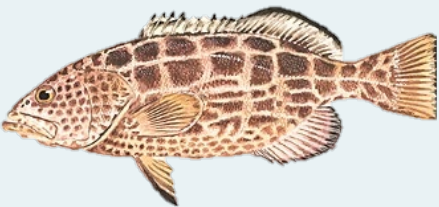
SUB-ACTION 7a: Establish a vessel limit for black grouper



ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative	Recreational Component	Vessel Limit*
Alternative 1 (No Change)	Both	none
Alternative 2		
Alternative 2a	Private Recreational	2 fish/vessel/ <b>day</b>
Alternative 2b	Private Recreational	4 fish/vessel/ <b>day</b>
Alternative 3		
Alternative 3a	For-Hire	2 fish/vessel/ <b>trip</b>
Alternative 3b	For-Hire	4 fish/vessel/ <b>trip</b>

SUB-ACTION 7b: Modify the recreational shallow water grouper spawning season closure for black grouper



ALTERNATIVES:

Season Closed

Season Open

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

ALTERNATIVE 2

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

ALTERNATIVE 3

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

ALTERNATIVE 4

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

**SUB-ACTION 7c:** Prohibit the retention of black grouper by captain and crew



**ALTERNATIVES:**

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** The captain(s) and crew of a for-hire vessel may retain the same daily bag limit of black grouper as allowed for each passenger

**Alternative 2.** The black grouper bag limit for captain(s) and crew of for-hire vessels is zero