

DRAFT REVISED South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Allocation Review Trigger Policy

Updated September 2023

In a letter to the NOAA Assistant Administrator dated July 16, 2019, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) responded to NOAA's Fisheries Allocation Review Policy (NMFS Policy Directive 01-119) and the associated Procedural Directive on allocation review triggers (NMFS Procedural Directive 01-119-01). The Policy established the responsibility for the Regional Fishery Management Councils to set allocation review triggers and consider three types of trigger criteria: indicator, public interest, and time. Councils were directed to establish triggers for consideration of allocation reviews by August 2019. The Council's response has since been updated to reflect subsequent allocation reviews and other allocation related discussions that have occurred since 2019. The revised Council allocation review trigger policy is as follows:

The Council has reviewed species allocations on numerous occasions in the past. However, these reviews may not have been formally documented in a fishery management plan amendment if a decision was made not to modify sector allocations. This revised policy, along with the Council's allocation review guidelines, will ensure all species currently having sector allocations will be reviewed on a regular basis and will formalize the allocation review process so the Council's consideration of allocations will be documented. The Council has reviewed their current sector allocations and has adopted two main types of criteria for triggering consideration of an allocation review: indicator and time. A public interest-based criterion was not selected because the Council currently receives substantial and regular comment from the public through scoping and public hearing sessions, general public comment periods held at every Council meeting, the public comment form on the Council's website, and through other more informal channels. Thus, the Council decided that the existing Council process provides sufficient opportunity for public input on allocation.

The Council has chosen the following indicator-based criteria as triggers for an allocation review:

- Either sector exceeds its annual catch limit (ACL) or closes prior to the end of its fishing year in three out of five consecutive years,
- Either sector under harvests its ACL or annual optimum yield (OY) by at least 50% in three out of five consecutive years,
- After a stock assessment or change to catch level recommendations is approved by the Scientific and Statistical Committee and presented to the Council, and
- After the Council reviews a species Fishery Performance Report if a review of allocations is advised in the report.

The Council has chosen a time-based trigger to ensure allocation reviews are regularly considered. Each species will have its sector allocations reviewed at least every seven years. The timing for when the next sector allocation review will be considered by the Council is provided on the Council's website under the allocations webpage (**INSERT LINK**). Regardless of whether

consideration of an allocation review is triggered by an indicator or time criterion, once it occurs the next allocation review will automatically be scheduled seven years later. For species which are jointly managed with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, the timing for consideration of allocation reviews will be coordinated with that council.