



## Content and Status Summary of Amendments and Projects April 2025

### Dolphin Wahoo

#### Recently Submitted or Implemented:

*Joint Commercial Logbook Amendment (Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 4)*

**Purpose of Amendment:** To allow submittal of electronic commercial logbooks.

**Action Summary:** This amendment is being developed jointly with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. The amendment modifies the FMPs for South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Atlantic Dolphin Wahoo, Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Gulf Reef Fish to require commercial logbooks be submitted via electronic reporting forms instead of the currently used paper-based forms.

**Development level:** Under review. Amendment submitted on February 27, 2024.

#### Under development:

*Regulatory Amendment 3 (Minimum Size Limit and Recreational Retention Limits for Dolphin)*

**Purpose of the Amendment:** This amendment will seek to extend the applicable range of the minimum size limit for dolphin and modify recreational retention limits for dolphin.

**Action Summary:** This amendment includes actions that would extend the applicable geographic range of the minimum size limit, modify recreational bag and vessel limits, and remove captain and crew bag limits for dolphin.

**Development Level:** Scoping has been conducted and work on the amendment has been delayed.

#### Planned or Postponed:

*Pelagic Longlines in the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery*

**Staff Lead:** John Hadley

**Purpose of the Amendment:** This amendment would consider implementing changes to the commercial longline fishery for dolphin and wahoo to better align with HMS requirements and potentially respond to recommendations from the forthcoming updated Biological Opinion for the dolphin wahoo fishery.

**Action Summary:** TBD

#### Key Events:

- September 2020: The Council moved, from Amendment 10, actions that would modify gear, bait, and training requirements in the commercial longline fishery for dolphin and wahoo to better align with HMS requirements to a new amendment. The Council also added an alternative

that would prohibit the use of pelagic longline gear in the dolphin wahoo fishery unless a vessel has the limited entry HMS permits that allows the use of this gear.

- June 2021: Guidance to examine this potential amendment once the updated biological opinion for the Dolphin Wahoo fishery is available.
- December 2022: paused consideration to allow for completion of the Dolphin MSE (led by the SEFSC). The MSE is expected to be completed by 2026.

### **Non-SAFMC activities:**

#### *Caribbean Fishery Management Council*

**Action Summary:** The Caribbean Fishery Management Council approved Amendment 3 to the Puerto Rico, St. Croix, and St. Thomas and St. John Fishery Management Plans. This amendment is intended to implement the following measures:

- A 24-inch fork length minimum size limit for dolphin,
- A 32-inch fork length minimum size limit for wahoo,
- A 5 fish bag limit and 15 fish vessel limit for dolphin off Puerto Rico,
- A 5 fish bag limit and 10 fish vessel limit for wahoo off Puerto Rico,
- A 10 fish bag limit and 32 fish vessel limit for dolphin off St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John, and
- A 2 fish bag limit and 10 fish vessel limit for wahoo off St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John.

#### *Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission*

**Action Summary:** The Western Central Atlantic Fisheries Commission (WECAFC) is a regional fisheries body that acts in an advisory capacity to promote the effective conservation, management, and development of living marine resources in the Wider Caribbean. It has 34 members, including the United States. WECAFC's Flyingfish-Dolphinfish Working Group held its first meeting in San Juan, PR, on June 4-5, 2024, with representatives of Barbados, Colombia, Dominica, France, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, United States, and Venezuela. [Highlights](#) of the meeting included:

- Each country gave a presentation describing their dolphin fisheries and regulations.
- Many Working Group participants suggested the need for increased biological sampling throughout the wider Caribbean, collection of life history data, and genetic studies that could eventually help to inform our understanding of stock dynamics, stock structure and status of Atlantic dolphin.
- There was enthusiasm among some meeting participants to work toward the development of a regional stock assessment for dolphin.
- In order to increase data collection and reporting, the Working Group recommended that dolphin, along with wahoo, should both be prioritized within WECAFC's Data Collection Reference Framework.
- Also broad support for beginning to consider the key elements and steps towards precautionary management of dolphin in the wider Caribbean.

## **Snapper Grouper**

### **Under Development:**

#### *Amendment 46 (Private Recreational Permit and Education Requirement)*

**Purpose of the Amendment:** Address deficiencies in recreational data through the creation of a permit requirement for private recreational vessels or anglers. Additionally, considers establishing a required

education component to encourage best fishing practices that help reduce discard mortality in the snapper grouper fishery.

**Action Summary:** This amendment considers establishing a permit and education requirement for anglers or vessels to participate in the private recreational component of the snapper grouper fishery.

**Development Level:** Scoping has been conducted and the amendment is being developed. Approval for public hearings is expected at the June 2025 meeting.

### *Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation*

**Purpose of the Amendment:** Dead releases are a major issue in the snapper grouper fishery as a whole and affect many species within the complex. The Council has directed a management strategy evaluation (MSE) project that would consider multispecies effects of potential management changes and be used to develop a more holistic approach to management of the snapper grouper fishery. The amendment will follow the MSE project and consider implementation of management changes evaluated through the MSE.

**Action Summary:** This amendment will provide actions intended to incorporate recommendations from the MSE project.

## **Generic Amendments**

### **Under Development:**

#### *Comprehensive Recreational For-Hire Limited Entry Amendment*

**Purpose of Amendment:** To establish limited entry for the for-hire components of the snapper grouper, coastal migratory pelagics, and dolphin wahoo fisheries.

**Action Summary:** TBD

**Development Level:** Pre-scoping.

#### **Key Events:**

- December 2023: Amendment development initiated. Additional control dates of December 8, 2023, for for-hire permits and December 5, 2023, for reporting to SEFHIER established.
- March 2024: Reviewed a discussion document on the existing control date for the for-hire fishery, previous consideration of limited entry in the snapper grouper for-hire fishery, and permit information through 2020.
- June 2024: Paused development until updated permit data are available.

#### *Comprehensive For-Hire Reporting Improvement Amendment*

**Purpose of Amendment:** To improve compliance with for-hire reporting requirements

**Action Summary:** TBD

**Development Level:** Scoping.

#### **Key Events:**

- June 2024: Direction to initiate amendment to improve the SEFHIER program in the South Atlantic.
- September 2024:
  - Appointed some members to the For-Hire Reporting AP (FHR AP). Additional appointments will occur in December 2024.
  - Revised Purpose and Need statement to include economic data.

- Reviewed draft list of actions and requested additional information from SERO to be presented at the December 2024 meeting.
- December 2024: appointed remaining members for the FHR AP and directed staff to convene FHR AP and Law Enforcement AP prior to the March 2025 meeting.
- March 2025: Reviewed APs input, expanded purpose and need to potentially include the Southeast Region Headboat Survey, approved for scoping. Direction to gather feedback from the finfish APs.