



Content and Status Summary of Amendments, Projects, and Non-SAFMC Activities

As of the September 2023 SAFMC Meeting

Dolphin Wahoo

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 amendment is being developed.

Key Events:

- June 2021: Amendment initiated to examine extending the geographic coverage of the minimum size limit for dolphin, reducing or removing captain and crew bag limits onboard for-hire vessels, and specifying different retention limits for dolphin and wahoo onboard private vessels and charter vessels.
- September 2021: Information paper and direction to staff to continue developing options that would extend the applicable range of the minimum size limit for dolphin, establish separate retention limits for dolphin onboard for-hire and private vessels, and reduce or remove for-hire captain and crew bag limits for dolphin.
- March 2022: approved the amendment for scoping.
- June 2022: Reviewed Dolphin Wahoo AP comments and revised options.
- December 2022: Paused work on amendment until June 2023 to allow for completion of dolphin stakeholder workshops being held for the Dolphin MSE (led by the SEFSC).
- June 2023: Reviewed comments received during MSE stakeholder workshops and postponed further development of the amendment until the Dolphin MSE report is available. The MSE report is expected to be available by December 2024.

Joint Commercial Logbook Amendment (Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 4)

Purpose of Amendment: To provide the authority 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 would modify 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: The amendment has been approved by the Council to submit for Secretarial review.

Key Events:

- March 2022: Council directed staff to begin work on an amendment.
- June 2022: Direction to include the following FMPs in the amendment and work jointly with the Gulf Council: Snapper Grouper, Coastal Migratory Pelagics, Dolphin Wahoo, and Gulf Reef Fish.
- Fall 2022: Advisory panel meetings in Gulf and South Atlantic (Snapper Grouper, Mackerel Cobia, Reef Fish, Coastal Migratory Pelagics)
- December 2022: revised development timeline (final approval by both councils expected in June 2023)
- March 2023: SA Council approved for public hearings.
- June 2023: presentation from SEFSC on electronic coastal logbook program.
- July 2023: public hearings
- September 2023: SA Council approved for formal review

Planned or Postponed:

Pelagic Longlines in the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery

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

Most recent document: None

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 December 2024.

Non-SAFMC activities:

Caribbean Fishery Management Council

Action Summary: The Caribbean Fishery Management Council is currently developing [Amendment 3](#) to the Puerto Rico, St. Croix, and St. Thomas and St. John Fishery Management Plans. Final Council action could be taken at the December 2023 meeting. This amendment considers:

- Establishing a 20” or 24” fork length minimum size for dolphin (recreational and commercial).
- Establishing a recreational 10 dolphin per person bag limit with a 30 or 32 dolphin per vessel limit or a 5 dolphin per person bag limit with a 15 dolphin per vessel limit.
- Establishing a 32” or 40” fork length minimum size for wahoo (recreational and commercial).
- Establishing a recreational bag limit between 2 and 5 wahoo per person and a recreational vessel limit between 6 and 20 wahoo per vessel (varies by island).

Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission

Action Summary: The Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC) operates as a regional fisheries body under the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. It is an advisory body aiming to promote effective conservation, management, and development of living marine resources in the Wider Caribbean. WECAFC has developed a Flyingfish-Dolphinfish Working Group that is scheduled to meet in mid-2024. Goals of this working group include identifying regional needs and priorities, highlighting areas for potential collaboration, and developing a work plan and recommendations for future activities. The SAMFC will receive an update on preparations for the upcoming WECAFC meeting at the March 2024 Council meeting.

Hudson Canyon Sanctuary Advisory Council

Action Summary: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) established a Sanctuary Advisory Council for the proposed [Hudson Canyon National Marine Sanctuary](#). The advisory council is intended to bring members of the local community together to provide advice to NOAA and help guide the designation of the sanctuary.

The Hudson Canyon National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council (AC) includes 15 voting members and 15 alternates representing a variety of community interests. The AC also has 10 government agencies that serve in a non-voting capacity. SAFMC staff is part of the AC in a non-voting capacity. NOAA initiated the scoping process for the proposed sanctuary in the summer of 2023, with potential measures that could affect participants in the Dolphin Wahoo fishery utilizing the area. As the potential measures are further identified and refined, NOAA will be developing a draft environmental impact statement specifying and assessing the anticipated effects of the measures.

Snapper Grouper

Under Development:

Amendment 46 (Private Recreational Permitting 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 amendment is being developed.

Key Events:

- November 2020: suspended work on the amendment (which was initiated in 2017) and directed staff to convene a workgroup to explore approaches for a private recreational permit and reporting requirements in the South Atlantic region. The workgroup convened three times during 2021.
- December 2021: requested that discussion on this amendment be added to the March 2022 agenda.
- March 2022: reviewed background information, recommendations from the workgroup, and directed staff to assemble candidates for an ad hoc advisory panel (AP) to be selected in June 2022.
- June 2022: Ad hoc AP appointed. AP met August 2022.

- September 2022: Council directed to reconvene the AP prior to the December 2022 meeting. AP met November 2022.
- December 2022: Removed consideration of reporting requirement, included consideration of an education component, and approved for scoping.
- Jan/Feb 2023: Scoping hearings (Jan 30 and Feb 6 via webinar)
- March 2023: Reviewed scoping comments and revised amendment. AP met May 2023.
- June 2023: Reviewed AP comments and revised amendment. Approved purpose and need statements and revised actions for inclusion in the amendment.
- September 2023: Reviewed AP comments and modified actions and alternatives. Council directed staff to assemble candidates for an ad hoc advisory panel made up of private anglers.

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.

Most recent document: None

Key Events:

- June 2021: The Council received the results of SEDAR 73 that indicated Red Snapper is not yet rebuilt and is undergoing overfishing.
- September 2021: The Council reviewed the SSC's recommendations and provided direction to staff to begin development of a long-term amendment to revise management measures in the snapper grouper fishery.
- December 2021: The Council reviewed a proposed work plan for a management strategy evaluation for the fishery and directed staff to continue development of this project. The management strategy evaluation is intended to inform the Council on potential tradeoffs in the fishery if different suites of actions are selected. The MSE began in June 2022 and will take two years to complete.
- October 2022: Snapper Grouper AP and SSC received initial presentations on the MSE process.
- December 2022: The Council directed that a guidance document detailing the MSE process and project responsibilities be developed. The Council also directed for the contractors to present a description of the process (similar to what was provided for the Snapper Grouper AP) at the March 2023 Council meeting.
- March 2023: The contractors (Blue Matter Science) presented an overview of MSE and description of the snapper grouper MSE to the Council.
- April 2023: The contractors discussed objectives of the MSE with the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel and a public scoping hearing was held.