



## Content and Status of Amendments and Projects

September 2020 Council Meeting

[Click to jump or use the Navigation Pane to find a specific amendment](#)

[Snapper Grouper](#)

[Dolphin Wahoo](#)

[Golden Crab](#)

[Coral](#)

[Shrimp](#)

[Mackerel](#)

[Spiny Lobster](#)

[Generic Amendments](#)

### Snapper Grouper

Recently Submitted or Implemented:

*Regulatory Amendment 29 (Best Fishing Practices and Powerhead Regulations) Staff Lead: Christina Wiegand*

At their March 2018 meeting, the Council removed actions pertaining to best fishing practices and powerhead regulations from Amendment 46 and requested that staff begin development of a framework amendment. The Council was concerned that other actions in Amendment 46 (recreational permitting and reporting) would take significant time to be developed and did not want to delay action on other issues. The Council reviewed an options paper at their June 2018 meeting and approved the amendment for scoping with actions addressing venting and descending devices, circle hooks, allowable rigs, and powerheads. Scoping hearings were held on August 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> 2018. The Council reviewed scoping comments at their September 2018 meeting. Actions and alternatives addressing venting and descending devices, circle hooks, and powerheads were approved for analysis. The action pertaining to allowable rigs was removed. The Council reviewed a draft public hearing document at their March 2019 meeting. Preferred alternatives were selected that would require a descending device be on board vessels fishing for or possessing snapper grouper species, require vessels fishing for or possessing snapper grouper species to use non-offset circles, and would allow the use of powerheads to harvest snapper grouper species in federal waters off South Carolina. The Council also requested input from the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel and the Law Enforcement Advisory Panel on the definition of descending devices used in the document. The Council also request that staff work with NMFS to put together a research and monitoring plan for descending device usage and work with the SSC to determine how best fishing practices requirements may be considered in future stock assessments. Lastly, the Council approved Regulatory Amendment 29 for public hearings which will occurred via webinar on April 30<sup>th</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. At the June 2019 meeting the Council reviewed public comments and input from the Snapper Grouper AP, Law Enforcement AP, and the SSC. The Council modified the definition of descending

device based on AP comment and directed staff to bring a finalized document to the September 2019 meeting, including discussion of different types of commercially available and homemade descending devices. The Council further revised the definition of a descending device and approved this amendment for formal review at the September 2019 meeting. The amendment was submitted to NMFS on January 13, 2020. The final rule published on June 15, 2020 and regulations became effective on July 15, 2020.

*Regulatory Amendment 33 (Red Snapper Seasons Modifications)* Staff Lead: Myra Brouwer

During the March 2019 meeting, the Council discussed modifying the days of the week that are open to red snapper recreational harvest starting in 2020, should harvest be allowed, to maximize fishing opportunity in the event of bad weather. The Committee was concerned that limiting the recreational season to consecutive “weekends” during the summer months could increase the chances of losing an entire weekend to fishing opportunities for red snapper because of poor weather conditions. The Committee also expressed interest in having periodic review of how limited openings are working and providing the public an opportunity to provide feedback on the seasons. Additionally, the Council intends to explore changing the start dates for the commercial and recreational seasons to minimize fishing mortality when red snapper are spawning, and removing the minimum number of days requirement to allow harvest. The Council reviewed an option paper at the June 2019 meeting and approved the amendment for public hearings to be held in August 2019. The Council reviewed public comment in September 2019, removed two actions (modifying the start and the days of the week for the recreational sector), and selected preferred alternatives for the remaining two actions. In December 2019, the Council made modifications to the Purpose and Need and selected the no action alternative to change the start date for the commercial red snapper season. The Council approved the amendment for formal review. At the March 2020 meeting, SERO informed the Council that the 2020 red snapper recreational season would be three days IF Regulatory Amendment 33 were to be implemented before July 2020. The proposed rule published on May 14, 2020 with a comment period through June 15, 2020. During the June 2020 meeting, NMFS announced that the recreational season for red snapper in 2020 would be four days.

*Abbreviated Framework 3 (blueline tilefish)* - Staff lead: Roger Pugliese

At the March 2015 meeting, the Council approved a request for emergency actions to extend regulations in Snapper Grouper Amendment 32, once the amendment was approved, to the area that the SSC considers is represented by the stock assessment (SEDAR 32). At the SSC’s April 2015 meeting, the SSC determined that SEDAR 32 applied to the entire eastern seaboard and was the best scientific information available. In September 2015, the Snapper Grouper Committee reviewed an Options Paper for a possible amendment, Amendment 38, to extend the snapper grouper fishery management unit north of the NC/VA border and adjust fishing levels for blueline tilefish to account for landings in the area north of the Council’s jurisdiction. The Council had considered extending the FMU previously (during development of Amendment 18) but did not take action at the time. In September 2015 the Council opted to not move forward with development of Amendment 38 pending the completion of studies on the stock structure of blueline tilefish and to allow time for the MAFMC to develop a management strategy for blueline tilefish in their jurisdiction. Instead, actions to adjust fishing levels for blueline tilefish (based on the SSC’s recommendations) and revise management measures were moved to Regulatory Amendment 25. SEDAR 50 was conducted in 2017 as a joint assessment between the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SEDAR Lead) with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council addressing the stock assessment(s) for Atlantic blueline tilefish. The SSC reviewed results of SEDAR 50 at their October 2017 meeting and provided catch level recommendations for blueline

tilefish for the area south of Cape Hatteras, NC. SEFSC staff presented the Committee on the assessment results at the December 2017 meeting. As ABC recommendations that match the jurisdictional boundaries of the Mid- and South Atlantic Councils (boundary at the NC/VA state line) were needed to develop fishing levels and management measures, the SSC formed a workgroup whose task was to determine a suitable approach to obtaining an ABC that would be useable under the existing management structure. The MAFMC SSC reviewed results of the workgroup at their March 2018 meeting and the SAFMC SSC reviewed the results during their May 2018 meeting and provide guidance to the Council. In June 2018, the Committee reviewed SSC recommendations on setting an ABC for blueline tilefish and development of this amendment was delayed by other priorities. The SSC was going to review blueline tilefish at the January 25th webinar which was rescheduled and took place February 25. Based on the review the SSC decided not to use the revision assessment to update the ABC recommendation they made after SEDAR 50.

At their April 2019 meeting, the SSC reaffirmed their previous ABC recommendations from SEDAR 50 and the blueline tilefish ABC Workgroup. Therefore, the SSC recommended that progress could commence on Amendment 38 at the June 2019 Council meeting to consider options to implement a new ABC for blueline tilefish in the South Atlantic. The revised ABC and ACL would be based on recommendations for the southern area developed as part of SEDAR 50 in combination with the approved Workgroup recommendations for the area north of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina.

At the June Committee meeting, Council staff presented background on catch level recommendations for blueline tilefish and options to implement these catch levels. Recommendations are based on results of the SEDAR 50 assessment and the acceptable biological catch (ABC) for the area between Cape Hatteras and the North Carolina/Virginia border.

Council approved a motion to begin development of an abbreviated framework Amendment 3 to Establish a New South Atlantic Blueline Tilefish ACL. The Committee/Council approved a motion to revise the ACL and recreational ACT for Blueline Tilefish to reflect the actions in the decision document and maintain as an Abbreviated Framework and return to the December Council meeting. The IPT/Staff will conduct analyses to be completed for December Council meeting. The Committee/Council reviewed Abbreviated Framework Amendment 3 and public comment provided during the meeting and approved it for formal review at the December 2019 meeting. The proposed rule published on April 15, 2020 with a comment period through May 15, 2020. The final rule published on July 16 and becomes effective on August 17, 2020.

### *Regulatory Amendment 34 (SMZs in North and South Carolina)* Staff Lead: Myra Brouwer

The process to designate SMZs around artificial reefs was established in the Snapper Grouper FMP in 1983 with the main intent being to “*create incentive to create artificial reefs and fish attraction devices that will increase biological production and/or create fishing opportunities that would not otherwise exist*”.

In March 2019, the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries and the South Carolina Marine Resources Division submitted requests to the Council to designate artificial reefs located in the EEZ off those states as Special Management Zones. The NCDMF requested designation of 30 artificial reef sites in the EEZ off North Carolina. Fishing gear other than handline, rod and reel, and spear would be prohibited within the proposed SMZs. Further, harvest of snapper grouper species with spearfishing gear would be limited to the recreational bag limit for those species.

In South Carolina, 29 artificial reef sites in the EEZ have already been designated as SMZs. Four additional artificial reef sites have been established in recent years and the SCMRD has requested the sites be designated as SMZs with the same restrictions on fishing gear as other SMZs, namely limiting

angling activities to handheld hook and line gear and spearfishing gear (excluding powerheads). In addition, the use of fish traps, longlines, gill nets, and trawls would be prohibited, and harvest of snapper grouper species would be limited to the applicable recreational bag limits.

In June 2019 the Council directed staff to begin development of an amendment, with the intent to hold public hearings in the fall and consider the amendment for final approval in December 2019. At the September 2019 meeting, the Council revised the timeline for developing this amendment. Public scoping was held during fall 2019 and the Council reviewed public input and provided guidance to staff at the March 2020 meeting. The Council approved the amendment for public hearings that were held on May 4 and 5, 2020. At the June 2020 meeting the Council approved the amendment for formal review. The amendment was submitted to NMFS on August 11, 2020.

Under Development:

*Amendment 48 (Wreckfish ITQ Program Modernization) Staff Lead: Brian Chevront/Christina Wiegand*

The Council finished its second review of the Wreckfish ITQ program in September of 2019. As part of the review there were several recommendations made to modernize the program. This amendment begins development in September 2020 and will review the ITQ goals and objectives, and actions from the 2019 review such as electronic reporting, changes to allowable landing procedures, cost recovery, etc. In addition, the Council will consider adopting updated goals and objectives for the entire Snapper Grouper FMP as part of this amendment.

*Amendment 50 (Red Porgy Rebuilding and Allocations) Staff Lead: Myra Brouwer*

The Council received a report of the results of SEDAR 60 for Red Porgy at their June 2020 meeting. Red Porgy are overfished and overfishing is occurring and the stock is not making adequate progress towards rebuilding. The Council is required to revise the rebuilding plan for Red Porgy no later than June 12, 2022. The Council is beginning development of Amendment 50 in September of 2020 to address catch levels, rebuilding, management measures, and sector allocations.

Planned or Postponed:

*Regulatory Amendment 31 (Recreational AMs) Staff Lead: Brian Chevront*

In recent years, the Council has requested information on possible approaches to improve recreational landings estimates, particularly for species that are infrequently intercepted in the recreational survey. However, the accuracy of such estimates has not improved enough to allow efficient tracking of recreational annual catch limits (ACLs) and has led to mounting frustration among fishery managers, stock assessment analysts, and recreational anglers. The Council is already working on methods to obtain additional data (e.g., Amendment 46, MyFishCount App) that could eventually be used to improve management of recreational fisheries in the region. A possible avenue to lessen the impact of uncertain recreational data on stakeholders is revision of accountability measures. At their March 2018 meeting, the Council directed staff to begin development of an amendment that would revise recreational accountability measures to allow more flexibility in managing recreational fisheries. The Council reviewed some preliminary actions/alternatives and decided that this Recreational AM would apply only to the snapper grouper and dolphin wahoo FMPs. The Council continued work on this amendment at the December 2018 meeting. Scoping sessions occurred in January 2018. The Council reviewed scoping comments and continue development of the amendment at the March 2019 meeting. At the June 2019 Council meeting, the Council decided to move the dolphin and wahoo actions to Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10. The Council reviewed draft actions/alternatives at the December 2019

meeting and approved modifications to the Purpose and Need. The Council intends to pause future work on Regulatory Amendment 31 until December 2020 when more will be known about how MRIP revisions will affect ACL and allocation revisions.

*Amendment 46 (Recreational Permits and Reporting) Staff Lead: Brian Chevront*

Once begun this amendment will investigate requiring a permit for anglers to participate in the recreational snapper grouper fishery and whether there will be or what type of trip reporting requirements would be required for anglers to participate in the snapper grouper fishery.

*Amendment XX (Designation of Ecosystem Component Species) Staff Lead: Brian Chevront*

In October 2019 the SSC recommended designation of 8 snapper grouper species as EC species. The proposed species for such designation are: Cubera Snapper, Margate, Sailor's Choice, Coney, Saucereye Porgy, Yellowfin Grouper, Misty Grouper, and Blackfin Snapper. At the December 2019 meeting, the Council requested that a white paper be developed for the June 2020 meeting. Due to disruptions caused by the pandemic, work on this amendment was suspended.

*Amendment XX (Greater Amberjack Assessment/Allocations) Staff Lead: Brian Chevront*

In June 2020 the Council received the results of SEDAR 59 for Greater Amberjack. Greater Amberjack were determined to be neither overfished nor was overfishing occurring. This amendment will consider modifications to management measures and sector allocations.

*Amendment XX (Red Snapper Assessment/Allocations) Staff Lead: Brian Chevront*

The Council is expected to receive the results of SEDAR for Red Snapper in June 2021. This amendment will consider modifications to management measures and sector allocations.

*Amendment XX (Yellowtail Snapper Assessment/Allocations) Staff Lead: Brian Chevront*

The Council is expected to receive the results of SEDAR 64 for Yellowtail Snapper in December 2020. This amendment will consider modifications to management measures and sector allocations.

*Amendment XX (Snowy Grouper Assessment/Allocations) Staff Lead: Brian Chevront*

The Council is expected to receive the results of SEDAR 36 (Update) for Snowy Grouper in December 2020. This amendment will consider modifications to management measures and sector allocations.

*Amendment XX (Golden Tilefish Assessment/Allocations) Staff Lead: Brian Chevront*

The Council is expected to receive the results of SEDAR 66 for golden Tilefish in June 2021. This amendment will consider modifications to management measures and sector allocations.

*Amendment XX (Unassessed Snapper Grouper Species ABCs/ACLs/Allocations) Staff Lead: Brian Chevront*

*Almaco Jack White Paper Staff Lead: Brian Chevront*

Work has not yet begun on this white paper. The purpose of this paper is to look at the possibility of determining the possibility and the pros and cons of removing Almaco Jack from the Jacks Complex.

[Back to top](#)

## Dolphin Wahoo

### Recently Submitted or Implemented

#### Under Development:

*Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10 (dolphin and wahoo management measures)* Staff lead: John Hadley

In March 2016, the Council directed staff to begin development of a joint dolphin wahoo and snapper grouper amendment to examine different ways to allocate or share quota between the commercial and recreational sectors for dolphin and yellowtail snapper. In June 2016, the Council approved the amendment for scoping hearings, which were held in August 2016. Options included a common pool allocation, a reserve category, temporary or permanent shifts in allocation, combined annual catch limits, and creating gear allocations in the commercial dolphin fishery. In December 2016, the Council considered approving the amendment, which was being developed jointly with Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 (see Snapper Grouper section above), for public hearings in early 2017. Instead, the Council directed staff to continue to develop Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10 but separately from SG Am 44 and include an action to revise the ABC Control Rule to include a carry-over provision from one fishing year to the next. The Council also directed staff to develop actions that would eliminate the operator card requirement in the Dolphin Wahoo FMP, revised optimum yield, and allow properly permitted vessels with gear onboard that are not authorized for use in the dolphin wahoo fishery to possess dolphin or wahoo. Consequently, the DW FMP actions were not approved for public hearings. In March 2017, the Council decided to stop work on the amendment until the revised MRIP data are available. At the December 2018 meeting, the Council directed staff to start work again on the amendment with the inclusion of additional items to allow bag limit sales of dolphin for dually permitted for-hire and commercial permit holders, modify gear, bait, and training requirements in the commercial longline fishery for dolphin and wahoo to align with HMS requirements, reduce the recreational vessel limit for dolphin, revised the ACLs to accommodate new MRIP data, and revise sector allocations. At the June 2019 meeting, the Council removed the action that would allow bag limit sales of dolphin, moved actions from the Recreational Accountability Modifications Amendment (Dolphin Wahoo Regulatory Amendment 2) to Amendment 10, and added an action that would allow filleting of dolphin at sea onboard for-hire vessels in the waters north of the Virginia/North Carolina state border. The Council reviewed Amendment 10 at the December 2019 meeting and voted to postpone discussion on the amendment until the June 2020 meeting.

*Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 12 (bullet and frigate mackerel as ecosystem component species)* Staff lead: John Hadley

At the March 2019 meeting, the Council discussed a white paper on mechanisms and regulatory parameters for adding ecosystem component (EC) species to a FMP, ways that other Councils have addressed EC species in FMPs, as well as background information on fisheries for bullet mackerel and frigate mackerel. The Council voted to send the topic of adding bullet and frigate mackerel to the Dolphin Wahoo FMP as EC species out for scoping in the spring of 2019. At the June 2019 meeting,

the Council reviewed the scoping comments received and directed staff to start work on Amendment 12 that would add bullet and frigate mackerel to the Dolphin Wahoo FMP as EC species. The Council reviewed an options paper for this amendment at the September 2019 meeting and requested guidance from NMFS on parameters regarding the Council's ability to add EC species to an FMP and implement regulatory measures. The guidance is expected at the March 2020 meeting. The Council reviewed Amendment 12 at the December 2019 meeting, approved changes to the purpose and need statements. At the March 2020 meeting, the Council received the above noted guidance from NMFS and decided to move forward with a single action that would add the two mackerel species to the Dolphin Wahoo FMP as EC species. The Council will review Amendment 12 at their June 2020 meeting and will potentially vote on final approval of the amendment at their September 2020 meeting.

Planned or Postponed

*Amendment 13 (Pelagic Longlines in the Dolphin Fishery) Staff Lead: Brian Chevront*

[Back to top](#)

## Golden Crab

Recently Submitted or Implemented:

Under Development:

Planned or Postponed:

[Back to top](#)

## Coral

Recently Submitted or Implemented:

Under Development/Planned Postponed:

*Coral 10 (CHAPC Modifications) Staff Lead: Roger Pugliese*

In September 2019, the Council directed staff to remove actions related to establishing new allowable fishing areas in deepwater Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (CHAPCs) from the joint amendment with Golden Crab Amendment 10 and Shrimp Amendment 11. In addition, shrimp vessel transit provisions were removed and developed in a separate Shrimp Amendment. Coral Amendment 10 now includes one action to explore expanding deepwater CHAPCs based on recent mapping and remotely operated vehicle dives which discovered extensive distribution of new and continuous deepwater coral habitat and one action addressing the eastern boundary of the northern extension of the Oculina Bank CHAPC, which was expanded in [Coral Amendment 8](#). The Council requested this item be put on the June 2020 agenda. However, due to Covid-19, it was delayed until a later Council meeting. A brief report on Coral Amendment 10 will be made during the Executive Committee during the September Council meeting.

Planned or Postponed:

[Back to top](#)

## Shrimp

### Recently Submitted or Implemented

*Shrimp 11 (Shrimp Trawler Transit Provision)* Staff Lead: Chip Collier

in September 2019, the Council directed staff to separate Shrimp Amendment 10 from the joint amendment with Coral Amendment 10 and Golden Crab Amendment 10. Shrimp Amendment 10 includes one action which will address cold-weather transit provisions for shrimp trawlers. Shrimp Amendment 10 was scoped in November and public hearings were held in February. The Council approved new transit provisions for cold-weather closed areas (Option 2) that include non-stop progression and gear stowage to mean doors in the rack (cradle), nets in the rigging and tied down, and try net on the deck. The amendment was sent for review by the Secretary April 29, 2020.

### Under Development:

### Planned or Postponed:

[Back to top](#)

## Mackerel Cobia

### Recently Submitted or Implemented:

*Framework Amendment 8 (King mackerel trip limits, Season 2)* Staff Lead: Christina Wiegand

At the March 2019 meeting the Council reviewed Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel concerns regarding low commercial trip limits in the Atlantic southern zone during season two (October to the end of February). During the winter months, fishermen are only able to fish a small number of days due to the weather. Additionally, due to changes in the fishery, more fish are on the market during this time of the year, resulting in lower prices. When the weather is decent, AP members felt it would be helpful if fishermen had access to a higher trip limit to make trips worthwhile. The Council directed staff to begin work on a framework amendment to address season two trip limits for Atlantic king mackerel. At the June 2019 meeting the Council approved actions and alternatives to be included in Framework Amendment 8. The Council also requested emergency action to raise the season two trip limit south of the Flagler/Volusia County line from 50-fish to 75-fish for the 2019/2020 season. This amendment is intended to make a permanent change to the season two trip limit. At the September 2019 meeting the Council reviewed the analysis and added an additional alternative which they subsequently selected as their preferred (100-fish during season 2 with no step up in February). The amendment was approved for public hearings which occurred on October 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. At the December 2019 meeting the Council reviewed public comment, updated analysis and approved the amendment for formal review. The amendment was submitted to NMFS on February 19, 2020. A proposed rule published on May 19, 2020 with comments due June 18, 2020.

### Under Development:

### Planned or Postponed:



*Framework Amendment 9 (Commercial Spanish mackerel AMs) Staff Lead: Christina Wiegand*

During the June 2019 meeting the Council reviewed concerns from the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel and directed staff to prepare a white paper with a thorough analysis of effort in the commercial Spanish mackerel fishery. The white paper also included discussion of possible avenues to control effort, including: a limited access commercial permit, a limited access gillnet endorsement in the southern zone, and collaboration with state agencies. Staff presented the results contained in the white paper during the September 2019 meeting. After reviewing the white paper, the Council directed staff to begin an amendment to address commercial Atlantic Spanish mackerel accountability measures and trip limits for the Northern Zone. The Council reviewed a draft public hearing document at the December 2019 that contained three actions (in-season AMs, post-season AMs, and trip limits). Robert Beal, Executive Director of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), clarified that the ASMFC Interstate Fisheries Management Plan for Spanish Mackerel does not require states to close their waters to commercial harvest of Spanish mackerel when a federal closure occurs. Based on the information provided by ASMFC, the Committee determined that it was no longer necessary to immediately address Spanish mackerel accountability measures, but that a trip limit reduction in the Northern Zone would help to extend the commercial Spanish mackerel season in federal waters. The Council approved the inclusion of an action to reduce the commercial Spanish mackerel trip limit in the Northern Zone. The amendment was approved for public hearings which occurred in January 2020. At the March 2020 meeting staff noted that the analysis predicts the range of alternatives would only extend the commercial Spanish mackerel season in the Northern Zone by two to five days. In addition, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NC DMF) staff stated they intend to issue proclamations with new regulations for the commercial small mesh gill net fishery, including yardage limits and attendance requirements. Based on this information, the Council chose to discontinue work on this amendment until results from the upcoming stock assessment are available. The Spanish mackerel operational stock assessment is currently in the planning stage and is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2021.

*Amendment XX (King Mackerel Assessment and Allocations) Staff Lead: Christina Wiegand*

In June 2020 the Council received the results of SEDAR 38 Update for King Mackerel. King Mackerel were determined to be neither overfished nor was overfishing occurring. This amendment will consider modifications to management measures and sector allocations. The Mackerel Cobia AP will discuss the amendment at their November 2020 meeting and the Council will review an options paper at their December 2020 meeting.

*Mackerel Port Meetings Staff Lead: Christina Wiegand*

Mackerel port meetings were proposed as a way to get input from participants in the mackerel fishery similar to those that were completed for the snapper grouper fishery. The Council has not discussed details of how these port meetings would occur, where, or when.

[Back to top](#)

## **Spiny Lobster**

Recently Submitted or Implemented:

Under development:

SAFMC AMENDMENTS AND PROJECTS  
OVERVIEW

August 28, 2020

*Spiny Lobster Regulatory Amendment 5 (commercial trip limit for vessels with an SG1 and LT permit off NC, SC, and GA)* Staff lead: Christina Wiegand

At the March 2019 meeting the Council passed a motion requesting options for vessels with a snapper grouper unlimited permit (SG1) and a spiny lobster tailing permit (LT) to be able to retain commercial quantities of spiny lobster (excluding federal waters off Florida). At the June 2019 meeting Council staff presented an options paper with information on current spiny lobster trip limits, permitting, and gear restrictions relevant to both spiny lobster and snapper grouper. The Council clarified that the intent of the amendment is to allow for an increased vessel limit for the diving component of the spiny lobster fishery only. Additionally, the vessel limit would only apply to federal waters off North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Currently, the daily possession limit is two spiny lobster per person. An increased vessel limit would allow dive fishermen with an SG1 and LT permit on their vessel to supplement their snapper grouper trips with a commercial amount of spiny lobster. The Council will review draft a draft action and alternatives at a future meeting.

Planned or Postponed:

[Back to top](#)

## Generic Amendments

Recently Submitted or Implemented:

Under Development:

*Comprehensive ABC Control Rule Amendment* Staff Co-Lead: Mike Schmidtke/Mike Errigo

In December 2016, the Council directed staff to start work on a plan amendment that would modify the ABC Control Rule to address flexibility allowed under the MSA and revise how uncertainty and risk tolerance are addressed in setting ABCs. The Amendment includes actions to: 1) revise how the SSC evaluates assessment uncertainty; 2) revise how the risk tolerance is specified; and 3) allow phase-in and carry-over of ABCs. An IPT was formed to develop actions and alternatives, and the SSC and Council have regularly reviewed progress and provided guidance during 2017 and 2018. Scoping was held in January 2019 and comments reviewed in March 2019.

*Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology* Staff lead: Mike Schmidtke

The action in the Bycatch Reporting Amendment considers improvements in bycatch/discard data collection methods to better quantify all sources of fishing mortality in South Atlantic fisheries. Alternatives consider expanding aspects of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program's Release, Discard and Protected Species Module to coastal migratory pelagic (SA Council area only) and dolphin and wahoo fisheries; and also implementing a commercial observer program at 2-5% coverage levels for snapper grouper, coastal migratory pelagic (SA Council area only), dolphin and wahoo, and golden crab vessels.

Based on discussions at the September 2014 Council meeting, the SEFSC/SERO agreed to draft a comprehensive bycatch reporting system for the southeast. The SEFSC and SERO will provide an update on their efforts at each Council meeting. The Council's intent is that the bycatch reporting system would be specified and implemented through this amendment.

NMFS has now issued guidance that the Council will need to complete any amendments needed to come into compliance with the MSA requirements for bycatch reporting no later than February 2022. SERO will present a path for meeting the deadlines at the September 2020 meeting.

### *Commercial Logbook Amendment Staff lead: Brian Chevront*

Currently, logbook reports from commercial fishermen targeting snapper grouper, coastal migratory pelagic, and dolphin/wahoo must be submitted to the Science and Research Director postmarked no later than 7 days after the end of each fishing trip. Logbook reporting forms for golden crab must be submitted to the Science and Research Director postmarked no later than 30 days after sale of the golden crab offloaded from a trip. The amendment also considers requiring that the components of the commercial logbooks (landings, economic, and bycatch) be submitted within 21 days after the end of each trip. This would increase the timeline for snapper grouper, coastal migratory pelagic, and dolphin/wahoo fishermen to complete logbooks, and decrease the timeline for golden crab fishermen. Commercial electronic logbooks, as proposed in this amendment, would not be used to monitor annual catch limits; however, they could serve as a means to verify dealer reports and comply with the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program standards that require two sources for verification of quota-monitored species. It is the Council's intent that NMFS use the commercial logbook landings, with the new timing and compliance requirements specified in this amendment, to compare with commercial trip ticket landings to help ensure the commercial ACLs are not exceeded.

At their June 2013 meeting, the Council approved scheduling a NMFS SEFSC presentation on the details of the commercial electronic logbook pilot study at the September 2013 meeting. The Council receives updates at each Council meeting. SA Council staff will work with Gulf staff and NMFS staff to allow fishermen to voluntarily provide their data electronically and to plan for completion of the amendment incorporating results from year 1 of the pilot study. As of April 2016, voluntary reports may be provided through the ACCSP SAFIS system and available to the SEFSC.

### Planned or Postponed:

[Back to top](#)

## **Other Work Items**

### Recently Submitted or Implemented:

#### *COVID Emergency Rules Staff Lead: Multiple Council Staff*

Staff have submitted emergency rule requests to increase the coastwide King Mackerel recreational bag limit to 4 fish and to increase the commercial trip limit to 1500 lb gw for Vermilion Snapper for 180 as a way to provide relief to fishers who are not likely to otherwise meet OY for these species in 2020.

### Under Development:

#### *Joint Recreational Working Group Section 102 Staff Lead: John Carmichael*

#### *COVID Emergency Rules Staff Lead: Multiple Council Staff*

In September 2020 the Council will consider the possibility of submitting a request to NMFS to carryover unused ACL by sector from fishing year 2020 into fishing year 2021 for certain species.

*South Atlantic Ecopath with Ecosim Model Development and Review Staff Lead: Roger Pugliese*

Staff is a member of the Modeling Team and provides oversight and support for an SSC Ecopath Model Review Workgroup (WG) which is providing an initial review of the South Atlantic Ecopath with Ecosim (EwE) model. The review is guided by the Terms of Reference developed by the WG with the balanced and functioning SA EwE model available in advance of the initial Ecopath Model Review Workgroup Webinar. Webinars were scheduled to complete the review during February 2020 to review the South Atlantic EwE Model and in March 2020 to review the Ecosim component of the model. However, the next WG webinar was cancelled because the NOAA response to the COVID 19 pandemic limited access to critical information needed to complete the draft report. In July 2020 the WG, after being provided an update on model progress, the review process and timeline, reinitiated the review engaging members and a new WG Chair in drafting the report. The WG will meet via Webinar in August to review vulnerability analyses, and review/edit the draft report and reconvene via webinar in September to review and provide input to finalize the report. The WG Chair will present the report during the October SSC meeting.

Planned or Postponed:

[Back to top](#)