FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Full Council Session I (Closed Session)
September 14, 2026

The Council met in Closed Session on Monday, September 14, 2026, and discussed the following items:

Proposed changes to the Advisory Panel (AP) Policy
The Council discussed edits to the AP appointment process and member term limits. In doing so, the Council provided clarification on travel reimbursement, exemptions to term limits, and how to account for AP member 3-year terms in years when an AP does not meet. The Council recommended the following edits and motion for consideration during the open session. Revisions to the existing policy are highlighted in blue.

C. Appointment Process

All AP appointments are made by the Council and members serve at the pleasure of the Council. Council staff announces AP vacancies and solicits applications for consideration by the Council.
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4. Some seats are filled by representatives of specific agencies or other Councils. These seats are not advertised, and instead, Council staff contacts the appropriate organization to solicit nominations for the seat. These individuals are not required to complete the SAFMC AP application. The nominated individuals are officially appointed to the Panel by the Council. If the nominating entity is a federal agency or other council, that entity is responsible for travel reimbursement.

D. Membership Terms

Members are appointed by the Council for three-year terms and may be reappointed for two additional three-year terms. Except as noted below, AP members cannot be appointed to more than three terms in succession. A member may be reappointed to the same advisory panel after having been off the advisory panel for at least one year and will be eligible to serve 3 additional three-year terms.

Advisory Panel member terms take effect on July 1 for appointments made in June and January 1 for appointments made in December. The Council will specify the effective date for appointments made at other times.

Exceptions to term limits:
Advisory Panel members serve at the discretion of the Council and the Council may deviate from the membership terms to ensure that APs have adequate experience and expertise. As such exceptions to term limits include but are not limited to the following.

1. If the Council determines specific expertise is needed and no qualified persons have applied

for an open position held by a member who has reached the limit of 3 consecutive three-year terms, the outgoing member may be appointed to an additional ~~one-year~~ term, the length of which will be specified by the Council but is not to exceed three years. In such cases, each new term will be viewed as if it were a third term. This term limit policy does not apply to the SEDAR or Citizen Science APs (Pools).

2. Term limits do not apply to the Coral, Deepwater Shrimp, Golden Crab, Wreckfish, Spiny Lobster, and Shrimp Advisory Panels. These are small, specialized fisheries with relatively few participants and it is difficult to find qualified new applicants to fill AP vacancies.

3. Years when an AP does not meet will not be counted against the three-year term for the members of that AP. The terms for AP members are intended to last at least three AP meetings before the member must re-apply to be reappointed to that AP.

4. Some APs have membership seats designated to specific agencies. The Council may remove the term limit requirements for such seats.

MOTION 1: APPROVE REVISIONS TO THE COUNCIL'S AP POLICY FOR THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS AND MEMBERSHIP TERMS.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Consider establishing chair and vice chair positions for the Citizen Science Operations
The Citizen Science Program SOPPS do not specify chair or vice chair positions for the Citizen Science (CitSci) Operations AP. At its June 2026 meeting, the CitSci Operations AP discussed whether establishing these leadership roles would be beneficial, recommending that the Council consider establishing chair and vice chair positions for the AP.

The Council reviewed the recommendation from the CitSci Operations AP and provided the following draft motion for consideration during the open session:

MOTION 2: ESTABLISH CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR POSITIONS FOR THE CITIZEN SCIENCE OPERATIONS ADVISORY PANEL.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Executive Committee membership discussion
At the June 2026 meeting the Council requested discussion of membership on the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee serves as the primary administrative entity for the Council, handling budget, personnel and planning topics. The Committee does not address fishery management issues. The Council discussed the membership of the Executive Committee and provided the following guidance:

- Council staff reviewed the existing structure of the Executive Committee and clarified that the Council can change the composition of the Committee if they wish. Also, all members are invited to sit in on meetings of the Executive Committee, even if they are closed sessions.

- The Executive Committee is included in the list of committees that Council members can request to sit on. All members can indicate if they are interested in serving on this Committee.
- Council members did not want to change the existing structure of the Executive Committee with the understanding that all Council members are eligible to serve on the Committee.

Executive Committee report
The South Atlantic Council's Executive Committee met in closed session via webinar on June 22, 2026. The meeting was convened to consider Paid Parental Leave (PPL) for Council staff. The Committee reviewed policies of the 4 states represented on the Council, other Regional Fishery Management Councils, and the Federal government. The Council discussed the information provided and decided to further take-up the conversation during the next Executive Committee meeting in October 2026.

Appointments
The Council was asked to fill open AP seats for the designated state agency seat for Georgia on the Law Enforcement AP and the designated Law Enforcement AP seat on the Wreckfish AP. Additionally, the Council was asked to approve SSC members for the upcoming SEDAR and other assessment project components, and to identify Council observers for upcoming SEDAR workshops. The Council provided the following draft motions and comment for consideration during the open session:

MOTION 3: Appoint Captain David Brady to the state agency seat for Georgia on the Law Enforcement AP.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 4: Appoint Captain Scott Pearce to the Law Enforcement AP seat on the Wreckfish AP.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION 5: Approve the SSC members listed in the table below to SEDAR projects.

Start Year	Project	Assessment Component	SSC Participant
2026	**S108: Black Sea Bass**	Review Panel (Chair)	Marcel Reichert
		Review Panel	Steve Turner
		Review Panel	Alexei Sharov
		Review Panel	Matt Damiano
2026	**Black Grouper MSE**	SSC Subgroup	Wally Bubley
		SSC Subgroup	Matt Damiano
		SSC Subgroup	Jim Gartland
		SSC Subgroup	Genny Nesslage
		SSC Subgroup	Marcel Reichert
		SSC Subgroup	Jason Walsh
2027	**S106: Gag Grouper**	TWG-ReproDynamics	*Wally Bubley
		TWG-ReproDynamics	Jim Gartland

		TWG-ReproDynamics	*Luiz Barbieri
2028	**Snowy Grouper**	TWG-SADL	Wally Bubley
		TWG-SADL	Jim Gartland
		TWG-SADL	Marcel Reichert

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

NOTE: The following Council members were identified as observers for SEDAR projects:

- **S108: Black Sea Bass**: Jimmy Hull and Tom Roller
- **Black Grouper MSE (AT SSC MEETING):** Carolyn Belcher
- **S106: Gag Grouper**: Kerry Marhefka and Jessica McCawley
- **Snowy Grouper**: Tom Roller

Other Business

The Council discussed the annual SAFMC Award of Excellence. With multiple applications received each year, and with only one award made annually, the Executive Committee selection group is often faced with tough decisions across multiple worthy candidates. To maintain interest in the award and ensure that recognition can be given for the range of contributions noted in the award documentation, the Executive Committee recommended adding flexibility to present multiple awards in a single year. The Council agreed with providing additional flexibility and allowing more than one award per year as appropriate.

Timing and Tasks:

MOTION 5: DIRECT STAFF TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

- Send notification letters to AP appointees.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL