

**FINAL**  
**SUMMARY REPORT**  
**FULL COUNCIL SESSION I**  
**SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**  
**September 13, 2021**

The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council convened the afternoon of September 13, 2021, via webinar. The Council approved minutes from the June 2021 meeting and approved the agenda for the meeting week. NMFS Regional Administrator Andy Strelcheck administered the oath the newly appointed and reappointed Council members.

**Agency and Liaison Reports**

Representatives from NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (OLE), and the U.S. Coast Guard provided updates to the Council. Subsequently, Gulf and Mid-Atlantic Councils' liaisons briefed the Council on their respective Councils' recent activities followed by state representatives. Among the updates the Council received were that Trish Murphey would be replacing Steve Poland as the proxy representative for the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission will be discussing a draft rule for limited harvest of Goliath grouper at their upcoming meeting in October.

**Acceptable Biological Catch Control Rule Amendment**

Staff presented the most recent actions and alternatives language drafted by the IPT concerning the acceptable biological catch (ABC) control rule, carry-overs, and revisions to framework procedures. The SSC Chair provided the SSC's recommendations on ABC control rule and carry-over alternatives.

The Council approved the approach of implementing carry-overs through framework procedures and addition of an action to modify framework procedures. The Council also approved the most recently drafted language and directed continued development of the amendment. The Council provided the following guidance:

**DIRECTION TO STAFF**

- CONTINUE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMENDMENT USING THE SSC'S RECOMMENDED METHOD FOR SPECIFYING ABC FOR UNASSESSED SPECIES.
- PILOT THE SSC'S RECOMMENDED METHOD FOR SPECIFYING ABC FOR UNASSESSED SPECIES WITH A SMALL GROUP OF SPECIES, POSSIBLY WITH A VARIETY OF CHARACTERISTICS, BEFORE APPLYING BROADLY\*
- REMOVE SUB-ACTION 3.2-ALTERNATIVE 3.
- ADD ACTION 4, MODIFYING FRAMEWORK PROCEDURES TO INCLUDE CARRY-OVER.

\*Council clarified that the amendment will continue to be developed on the current schedule. First round of SSC's unassessed stocks' method will be applied after amendment completion.

### **Allocations Decision Tool**

Council staff presented the draft Decision Tree Approach developed thus far, reviewed the questions and potential outcomes within the decision trees, and feedback provided by reviewers and the Council's advisors. The Committee provided the following guidance:

#### **DIRECTION TO STAFF:**

- GENERAL APPROVAL OF THE APPROACH AS DEVELOPED AND TO CONTINUE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ALLOCATION DECISION TREE TOOL.
- CONSIDER NEXT REVIEW OF THE DECISION TREE APPROACH AT A SPECIAL MEETING RATHER THAN AT THE DECEMBER 2021 MEETING.
  - AS PART OF THIS REVIEW, USE GREATER AMBERJACK AS AN EXAMPLE SPECIES.
- WHILE CLIMATE CHANGE IS AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IN MANAGEMENT, READILY AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AS IT PERTAINS TO SECTOR ALLOCATIONS DOES NOT FIT WELL INTO THE DECISION TREE APPROACH. DO NOT INCLUDE CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE INITIAL VERSION OF THE APPROACH BUT CONSIDER INCORPORATING IT IN FUTURE VERSIONS.

### **Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan Update**

NOAA Fisheries intends to begin a rulemaking process that will amend the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALW TRP) to reduce the risk of mortalities and serious injuries of North Atlantic right whales and other large whales caused by entanglement in commercial trap/pot and gillnet fisheries along the U.S. East Coast. Jessica Powell, NMFS Protected Resources, presented information on the management options discussed by the ALW Take Reduction Team (TRT). A series of scoping meetings will be held to solicit public input. The Council will continue discussion of this item and receive feedback from its designated representative on the ALW TRT, Charlie Phillips, during Session II on Thursday, September 16, 2021.

### **Brief on Congressional directive to NMFS on shark and dolphin depredation issues in South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico fisheries**

Rick DeVictor, NMFS SERO, briefed the Council on the Congressional Directive issued to NOAA Fisheries to review and report on assessing and better understanding conflicts between sharks and dolphins with commercial, for-hire, and recreational fishing vessels in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. The Council received a request from NOAA Fisheries (via letter dated August 25, 2021) requesting input on this issue by September 30, 2021. During the discussion, it was noted that Council staff already provided feedback received on this issue (e.g., minutes of meetings, public comments, presentations) from 2017 to date to the agency. NMFS will provide a presentation for Council staff to distribute to APs, along with a link to an online comment form, to gather additional input.

### **Citizen Science Update**

Julia Byrd, Citizen Science Program Manager, provided an update on the program, highlighting activities that have occurred since the June 2021 Council meeting. Activity highlights included the addition of a new Citizen Science Project Coordinator, Nick Smillie; the SAFMC Release

project expanding to collect data on all shallow water grouper and moving to the new citizen science SciFish mobile app; and an overview of findings from the SciFish citizen science app scoping meetings held in Spring 2021.