

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
FULL COUNCIL II
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
March 2025

The Council reconvened on Friday, March 7, 2025, in Jekyll Island, Georgia, to go over reports from each of the committees that met during the week. Results of committee discussions are included in those reports. The Council also discussed the workplan, focusing on items for June and September 2025, and planned meetings for the remainder of the year. The Council reviewed draft discussion points for its comment letter on Secretarial Amendment 59 to the Snapper Grouper FMP.

Workplan

Council staff reviewed changes to the Council workplan based on committee and Council actions during the week. The Council discussed the following:

- Work on the amendment to make management changes to the commercial snapper grouper fishery will begin upon completion of the Golden Tilefish Abbreviated Framework (in late June or late September 2025).
- Requested an in-person meeting of the Snapper Grouper Commercial Sub-Committee during the June 2025 meeting week.
- Discussion of Dolphin Wahoo Regulatory Amendment 3 will be delayed until the Dolphin Management Strategy Evaluation is completed and reviewed (anticipated for early 2026).
- The federal deregulatory environment will likely affect the Council's work and should be considered during upcoming amendment discussions.
- The newly named Data, Assessment and Catch Advice Committee (formerly SEDAR Committee) does not need to convene in June 2025.
- Clarified that aggregate bag limits for the recreational snapper grouper fishery would be explored through the Management Strategy Evaluation for the Snapper Grouper Fishery. This is part of the Council's long-term approach to addressing issues in the fishery and allows time to obtain results of the FWC Exempted Fishing Permit program

Council Operation and Financial Issues

- John Carmichael, Executive Director, indicated the Council has received about 40% of expected 2025 funding from the National Marine Fisheries Service and there is potential for federal funding cuts that will affect the Council's activities. Until 2025 funding levels are known, precautionary spending measures are underway, including pausing purchasing, curtailing some travel, and reducing Council and staff attendance at some meetings.

- The Southeast Regional Administrator, Andy Strelcheck, indicated he would have a more structured report to share with the Council in June regarding activities at the Southeast Regional Office and funding for projects the Council is developing (e.g., improvements to for-hire data collection and private recreational permit for snapper grouper species).
- Andy will also work directly with the Executive Director to inventory actions that could meet the new deregulatory requirements.
- The Executive Committee is scheduled to convene in April 2025 to discuss the Council's budget.