



## Content and Status of Amendments and Projects

Updated January 2021

### Snapper Grouper

#### Recently Submitted or Implemented:

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

The process to designate SMZs around artificial reefs was established in the Snapper Grouper FMP in 1983 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 (NCDMF) and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) submitted requests to the Council to designate artificial reefs located in the EEZ off those states as Special Management Zones. The NCDMF requested SMZ designation for 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 and harvest of snapper grouper species with spearfishing gear would be limited to the recreational bag limit for those species.

The SCDNR requested SMZ designation for four sites with the same restrictions on fishing gear as in other SMZs, namely limiting angling activities to handheld hook and line gear and spearfishing gear (excluding powerheads) and limiting harvest of snapper grouper species to the applicable recreational bag limits.

The amendment was submitted to NMFS on August 11, 2020. A proposed rule for this amendment was published on November 16, 2020 with a comment period through December 16, 2020.

#### Under Development:

*Wreckfish ITQ Program Modernization (Amendment 48)* Staff Lead: 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. Development of this amendment began in September 2020 and will address 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.

At the September 2020 Council meeting the Council directed staff to hold a meeting with the Wreckfish shareholders and wholesale dealers to discuss the potential actions for the amendments and timing for the amendment ahead of the December 2020 meeting. A meeting of the Wreckfish shareholders and wholesale dealers was held on October 26, 2020. At their December 2020 meeting the Council reviewed input from the shareholders and dealers, provided guidance to staff on actions and alternatives to develop, and approved the amendment for scoping at the March 2021 meeting.

### *Red Porgy Rebuilding and Allocations (Amendment 50) 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, overfishing is occurring, and the stock is not making adequate progress towards rebuilding. The Council is required to establish a rebuilding plan for Red Porgy no later than June 12, 2022. The amendment addresses catch levels, rebuilding, management measures, and sector allocations. Public scoping hearings are scheduled for February 3 and 4, 2021.

### *Greater Amberjack Assessment/Allocations (Amendment 49 ) Staff Lead: Mike Schmidtke*

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 the annual catch limit, optimum yield, and sector allocations and will be developed during 2021.

## **Dolphin Wahoo**

### Recently Submitted or Implemented

#### *Bullet and frigate mackerel as ecosystem component species (Amendment 12) Staff Lead: John Hadley*

This amendment would add bullet mackerel and frigate mackerel to the Dolphin Wahoo FMP as ecosystem component species. The two mackerel species have been documented as important forage species, particularly for wahoo and to a lesser extent for dolphin. The purpose of Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 12 is to acknowledge the ecological role of bullet mackerel and frigate mackerel as forage fish and achieve ecosystem management objectives. The amendment was submitted to NMFS on December 3, 2020 and is undergoing rulemaking.

### Under Development:

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

Actions currently in this amendment would accommodate updated recreational data from the Marine Recreational Information Program and catch level recommendations from the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) by revising the annual catch limits and sector allocations for dolphin and wahoo. The amendment also contains actions that implement various other management changes in the fishery including revising recreational accountability measures; allowing the possession of limited quantities of dolphin or wahoo on vessels with trap, pot, or buoy gear onboard; removing the operator card requirement, reducing the recreational vessel limit for dolphin, reducing the recreational bag limit for wahoo and/or implementing a vessel limit for wahoo, and allowing filleting of dolphin at sea onboard for-hire vessels north of the Virginia/North Carolina border. Public hearings for this amendment will take place January 26-28, 2021. The Council will review the amendment at their March 2021 meeting and consider approving the amendment for Secretarial review at their June 2021 meeting.

### Planned or Postponed

#### *Amendment 13 (Pelagic Longlines in the Dolphin Fishery) Staff Lead: TBD*

At the September 2020 meeting, the Council moved actions that would modify gear, bait, and training requirements in the commercial longline fishery for dolphin and wahoo to align with HMS requirements to a new amendment. The Council also approved a motion to add a new 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 allow the use of this gear. The Council is scheduled to begin work on this amendment in September 2021.

## **Coral**

### Under Development:

#### *CHAPC Modifications (Amendment 10) Staff Lead: Roger Pugliese*

The amendment includes a single action to consider establishing a Shrimp Fishery Access Area along the eastern boundary of the northern extension of the Oculina Bank CHAPC where fishing for rock shrimp has historically occurred. The Council approved the amendment for scoping in December 2020. Scoping meetings will be held via Webinar on February 8 and 9, 2021. During the March 2021 meeting, the Council will review scoping comments and consider approving Coral Amendment 10 for public hearings to be held prior to the June 2021 Council meeting. The LE AP is encouraged to provide comments at any point during the amendment's development.

## **Shrimp**

### Recently Submitted or Implemented:

#### *Shrimp Trawler Transit Provisions (Amendment 11) Staff Lead: Chip Collier*

Shrimp Amendment 10 modifies provisions for shrimp trawl vessels transiting through cold weather closed areas in federal waters of the South Atlantic. Specifically, the transit and fishing gear appropriately stowed provisions now allow trawl doors in the rack (cradle), nets in the rigging and tied down, and try net on the deck. A final rule for this amendment published on October 22, 2020 with regulations effective on November 23, 2020.

## **Mackerel Cobia**

### Under Development:

#### *King Mackerel Assessment and Allocations (Framework Amendment 10) 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 catch levels, sector allocations, and management measures, including changes to the recreational bag limit in Florida, the minimum size limit, and regulations related to cut/damaged fish.

Currently, commercial king mackerel fishermen can keep cut/damaged fish that meet minimum size limits. Given issues with damaged king mackerel and the increase in shark depredation, the Council is considering the same provision for the recreational sector. However, there are concerns about how this regulation would be enforced (and is currently enforced with the commercial sector) with conflicting regulations in state waters.

## **Other Items**

### *Emergency Rules*

A temporary rule was implemented to increase the coastwide King Mackerel recreational bag limit to 4 fish and to increase the commercial trip limit for Vermilion Snapper to 1,500 lb gw for 180 to

provide relief to fishers affected by the pandemic. The temporary rule was published and became effective on September 17, 2020 and will remain in effect until March 16, 2021.