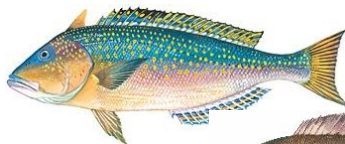
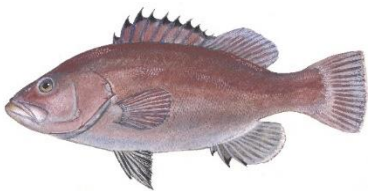


SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL



Amendments 51, 52, and 53 Scoping Document

**Snowy Grouper, Golden Tilefish & Blueline
Tilefish, Gag Grouper**



**Scoping Session
Date and Time:
February 1st, 2nd,
3rd 2022
6 pm**

To Register: Visit:
<https://safmc.net/safmc-meetings/public-hearings-scoping-meetings/>

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SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

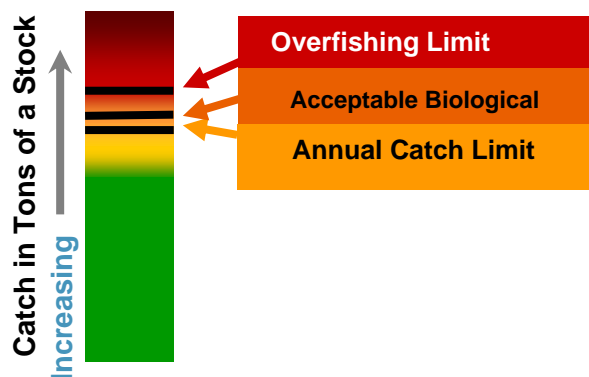


Catch Levels

OFL (Overfishing Limit): The catch level above which fish would be removed from the population faster than they would be replaced (i.e. overfishing would be occurring). The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) determines this limit using information from the most recent stock assessment.

ABC (Acceptable Biological Catch): The highest catch level recommended by the SSC. The SSC determines this level by estimating a buffer between OFL and ABC that accounts for scientific uncertainty. More uncertainty means a larger OFL-ABC buffer and a lower ABC.

ACL (Annual Catch Limit): The limit for how many fish (or pounds of fish) can be landed in a year. The ACL is set by the Council and must be less than or equal to the ABC. The Council can set the ACL lower than the ABC to further decrease the risk of overfishing, but for many species, $ACL=ABC$.



Recreational Effort Survey Updates

In 2006, the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) reviewed the methods used to collect recreational fishing data. Prior to this review, the surveyors contacted households with landline phones and asked participants about their fishing activity. This survey method was the Coastal Household Telephone Survey (CHTS). As the number of households with landlines decreased, a new survey method was needed.



In 2018, the new mail-based Fishing Effort Survey (FES) was implemented. Households are sampled from a national database of mailing addresses and receive a survey in the mail. This information is supplemented with information from state-based license programs. A comparison of these methods determined that the FES better represents the fishing population, is less susceptible to bias and increases sampling efficiency. To learn more about this sampling method, visit:

[NOAA Fisheries Effort Improvement Site](https://www.noaa.gov/fishing-effort-improvement-site)

For More Information Visit:

safmc.net

Contact Us: 843-571-4366



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Amendment 51 Snowy Grouper



WHY IS THE COUNCIL TAKING ACTION?

The most recent stock assessment of South Atlantic snowy grouper indicated that the stock is both overfished and experiencing overfishing. This stock assessment also incorporated the new Marine (MRIP) Fishing Effort (FES) method of estimating recreational landings. Both the stock status and the incorporation of new survey data mean that new catch levels, and sector allocations based on those updated catch levels, are required.

WHAT IS THE COUNCIL REQUIRED TO DO?

- Address overfished status and continue rebuilding
- End overfishing immediately
- Reduce catch levels at or below the updated acceptable biological catch (ABC) set by the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)

To accomplish these items substantial reductions in harvest are required

WHAT WILL REDUCTIONS IN CATCH LOOK LIKE?

Based on the stock assessment results roughly a **35% decrease** in harvest will be required.

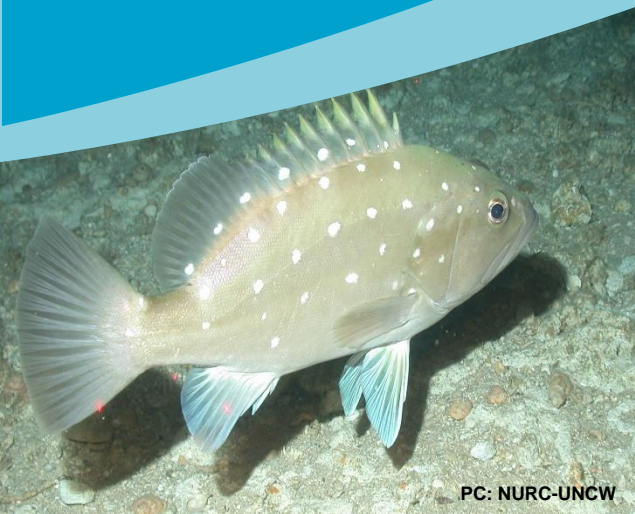
WHAT ARE THE COUNCIL'S IDEAS RIGHT NOW?

To accomplish the necessary reductions in harvest the following items have been discussed:

- Reduction to the commercial trip limit (current trip limit: 200 lbs gutted weight)
- Modifications to the commercial season (current seasons: Jan 1- Jun 30 & Jul 1 – Dec 31)
- Modifications to recreational management measures (current measures: 1 fish/vessel/day, season: May 1 – Aug 31)
- Modifications to the recreational accountability measures

HOW SOON WOULD ACTIONS GO INTO PLACE?

In June 2021 the Council received a notice from the National Marine Fisheries Service that they are required to address overfishing within 2 years. The Council is scheduled to take final action in December 2022 with implementation in the summer of 2023.



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For More Information on snowy grouper or other fishery management amendments Visit:

safmc.net

Amendment 52 - Golden Tilefish



WHY IS THE COUNCIL TAKING ACTION?

The most recent stock assessment of South Atlantic golden tilefish indicated that the stock is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing. This stock assessment also incorporated the new Marine Recreational Information Program's (MRIP) Fishing Effort Survey (FES) method of estimating recreational landings. Both the stock status and the incorporation of new survey data mean that new catch levels, and sector allocations based on those updated catch levels are required.

WHAT IS THE COUNCIL REQUIRED TO DO?

For golden tilefish the Council is required to revise the acceptable biological catch, annual optimum yield, total annual catch limit and sector allocations based on the results of the most recent stock assessment.

WHAT ARE THE COUNCIL'S IDEAS RIGHT NOW?

- Increase the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for golden tilefish (up to 22%).
- Revise sector allocations.
- Modify management measures?
 - Change fishing year for each commercial golden tilefish gear sector (longline and hook and line).
- Modify the commercial and recreational accountability measures for golden tilefish?

HOW SOON WILL ACTIONS GO INTO PLACE?

Council is scheduled to make final decisions on Amendment 52 in December 2022, with implementation in 2023.



PC: B. Cardin



PC: K. Johnson

Staff Contact: Roger Pugliese

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For more information on golden and blueline tilefish or other managed species visit:

safmc.net

Amendment 52 - Blueline Tilefish



WHY IS THE COUNCIL CONSIDERING ACTION?

In the last six years, landings of blueline tilefish in the South Atlantic have often exceeded the sector and total annual catch limits. Overages of the recreational annual catch limit have been particularly large (see table below). The Council wants to look at ways to adjust recreational management to reduce the likelihood of annual catch limit overages.

The next blueline tilefish assessment is projected to start in 2026

Currently:

- Commercial ACL = 117,148 pounds
- Recreational ACL = 116,820 pounds

	Commercial Landings vs ACL	Recreational Landings vs ACL
2021	102.2%	160.8%
2020	99.5%	335.8%
2019	109.6%	126.2%
2018	106.32%	133.6%
2017	100%	176.4%
2016	114.7%	197.4%

WHAT ARE THE COUNCIL'S IDEAS RIGHT NOW?

- Review the recreational blueline tilefish accountability measures and modify if necessary?
- Adjust recreational bag/possession limits? Different limits for captain and crew? Seasonal limits?
- Adjust the length of the recreational season?

HOW SOON WOULD ACTIONS GO INTO PLACE?

Council is scheduled to make final decisions on Amendment 52 in December 2022, with implementation in 2023.



PC: Cherry Point Seafood

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For more information on golden and blueline tilefish or other managed species visit:

safmc.net

Amendment 53 Gag Grouper



WHY IS THE COUNCIL TAKING ACTION?

The most recent stock assessment of South Atlantic gag grouper indicated that the stock is both overfished and experiencing overfishing. This stock assessment also incorporated the new Marine Recreational Information Program's (MRIP) Fishing Effort Survey (FES) method of estimating recreational landings. Both the stock status and the incorporation of new survey data mean that new catch levels, and sector allocations based on updated catch levels are required.

WHAT IS THE COUNCIL REQUIRED TO DO?

- End overfishing immediately
- Create a rebuilding plan with a maximum rebuilding timeframe of 10 years
- Reduce catch levels at or below the updated acceptable biological catch (ABC) set by the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)

To accomplish these items substantial reductions in harvest are required

WHAT WILL REDUCTIONS IN CATCH LOOK LIKE?

A roughly a **50% decrease** in harvest will be required.

WHAT ARE THE COUNCIL'S IDEAS RIGHT NOW?

To accomplish the necessary reduction in harvest the following items have been discussed:

- Adjustments to sector allocation methods
- Reducing the commercial trip limits (currently: 1,000 lbs gw, step down to 500 lbs gw when 75% of ACL is met) and recreational bag limit (currently 1 fish/person/day).
- Increasing minimum size limit for both sectors (currently: 24in)
- Creating a slot limit for both sectors
- Restricting or removing spear gear during the rebuilding plan
- Modifying the recreational spawning season closure (currently Jan 1 – Apr 30)

HOW SOON WOULD ACTIONS GO INTO PLACE?

In June 2021 the Council received a notice from the National Marine Fisheries Service that they are required to address overfishing and create a rebuilding plan. The Council is scheduled to take final action in December 2022 with implementation in 2023.



PC: FWC-FWRI



PC: D. DeMaria

Staff Contact: Allie Iberle

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For more information on gag grouper or other fishery management amendments Visit:
safmc.net

SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL



The Council Needs Your Feedback

The Council will host online scoping sessions to hear public input on the following actions in progress for snowy grouper, golden tilefish and blueline tilefish, and gag grouper. Comments on any aspect of these fisheries are welcome, but the Council also requests input specifically on the following questions.

AMENDMENT 51 SNOWY GROUPE

- Reductions in harvest are needed to rebuild the snowy grouper stock. What management measures could be used to achieve these reductions?
- When fishing for snowy grouper in your area, do you often catch blueline tilefish? Does this differ with different geographic locations?
- Will changes in the snowy grouper season affect how or when you fish for blueline tilefish or vice versa?

AMENDMENT 52 GOLDEN AND BLUELINE TILEFISH

- Should there be a change to the start of the fishing year for each golden tilefish commercial gear sector (longline and hook and line)?
- Are there changes needed to golden tilefish commercial or recreational accountability measures?
- Do you have recommendations on how to modify blueline tilefish recreational management measures in your area?

AMENDMENT 53 GAG GROUPE

- Reductions in harvest are needed to rebuild gag grouper stock. What management measures could be used to achieve these reductions?
- What other strategies should the Council consider when managing the gag fishery?



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SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL



How Do I Comment?

Comments taken during webinars

Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at 6 PM

Wednesday, February 2, 2022 at 6 PM

Thursday, February 3, 2022 at 6 PM

Written comments

Using the online form available from the Public Hearings and Scoping Meetings page on the Council's website

(www.safmc.net). Submit by 5:00 PM on February 4, 2022

Comments by mail

Send comments to John Carmichael, Executive Director,
SAFMC, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, N. Charleston,
SC 29405

Comments by fax

843-769-4520

Scoping Session
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