

Overview

Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel

April 13-14, 2015

1. Status of amendments under development and recently implemented
(Attachment 1)

Myra Brouwer, Council staff, will present an overview of the content and status of recent amendments to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan (FMP).

2. Regulatory Amendment 16 (black sea bass pot closure; Attachment 2)

Brian Chevront, Council staff, will present the Decision Document for Regulatory Amendment 16. The document contains the actions and alternatives as modified by the Council at the March 2015 meeting. The document also contains preliminary biological, economic, and social analyses. Work on the amendment is ongoing, and the Council is scheduled to approve it for public hearings at their June 2015 meeting in Key West, FL. The AP should provide recommendations on preferred alternatives, as appropriate.

3. Amendment 37 (multiple species; Attachment 3)

The Council approved development of this amendment at their March 2015 meeting. The amendment includes several actions pertaining to hogfish as a result of the recent stock assessment. In addition, the amendment contains actions addressing the Jacks Complex, the annual spawning season closure for shallow water groupers, modification of size limits for red grouper and three deepwater species, and modification of the bag limit for black sea bass.

Myra Brouwer, Council staff, will present an overview of possible alternatives under each action. The AP should comment on the range of alternatives and provide recommendations. The Council will review that AP's recommendations at their June 2015 meeting and make modifications to the amendment as appropriate. Approval for public hearings would take place at the September 2015 meeting and public hearings would be held in November 2015.

4. Workshop on Spawning SMZs (Amendment 36)

Workshop during AP meeting in N. Charleston on 4/13/15 beginning at 5:30 pm:

- a. Overview of Approach, Sample Locations & SMP (*Attachment 4b*) - Gregg (10 min + 5 min Q&A)
- b. Results of recent monitoring – Will Heyman (10 min + 5 min Q&A)
- c. Council's GIS system & How to provide suggested areas - Roger (10 min + 5 min Q&A)

- d. Open Exchange of Ideas/Information – laminated charts on tables with the opportunity for attendees to provide suggested areas. Gregg, Will, Roger, Other staff if needed at each table.
- e. Input = boxes drawn on the charts at the meeting. Also can provide input via the Council’s GIS site by 5 pm on May 1, 2015.

5. Amendment 36 (Spawning SMZs; Attachments 4a & 4b)

Gregg Waugh, Council staff, will review the Decision Document (Attachment 4a) for Amendment 36 so that the AP can see how their input was presented to the Council and the Council’s responses. The AP will provide their input using the Public Hearing Document (*Attachment 4b*).

6. System Management Plan for Deepwater MPAs (Attachment 5)

Gregg Waugh, Council staff, will review the status of the System Management Plan for Deepwater MPAs and the AP will be asked to provide their input. This document will be sent to the AP prior to the meeting.

7. Regulatory Amendment 23 (golden tilefish; Attachments 6a & 6b)

At their March 2015 meeting, the Council instructed staff to begin developing an amendment to address issues in the commercial golden tilefish fishery. In particular, the Council wants to again explore ways to lengthen the fishing season for the longline sector and change the fishing year start date for the hook-and-line sector (as was suggested by the AP). The Options Paper for Regulatory Amendment 23 (*Attachment 6a*) contains preliminary alternatives for the Council’s consideration. In addition, based on public input, the Council requested that staff prepare a briefing (*Attachment 6b*) on the reasoning behind the Council’s decision to retain landings history with the snapper grouper permit instead of the endorsement. The Council discussed that issue while developing Amendment 18A, which put in place endorsements for black sea bass pot fishermen.

Myra Brouwer, Council staff, will provide the overview. The AP is encouraged to provide recommendations on alternatives the Council could consider.

8. Joint SAFMC/GMFMC Amendment on South Florida Issues (yellowtail snapper, mutton snapper, black grouper; Attachment 7)

Gregg Waugh, Council staff, will brief the AP on the current status of the amendment and timing. The amendment focuses on issues pertinent to South Florida and, therefore, is being developed jointly with the Gulf Council. The intent is to consider options that would streamline the management process and simplify regulations. The AP should comment on the range of alternatives the Councils are considering and provide recommendations. Both Councils will discuss the amendment during a joint meeting in June 2015 in Key West, FL. It is expected that public hearings will take place in August.

9. Update on blueline tilefish

The SEDAR 32 (2013) stock assessment, conducted with data through 2011, determined the blueline tilefish stock was undergoing overfishing. In December 2013, the Council requested temporary emergency action from NOAA Fisheries to reduce harvest and began development of Amendment 32. The amendment proposes further reduction of the annual catch limit (ACL) for blueline tilefish to 35,632 pounds for 2015, a commercial trip limit of 100 pounds (gutted weight), and a recreational bag limit of one blueline tilefish per vessel per day from May through August with no retention for the rest of the year. The new regulations are expected to be in place by Mid-April (when the temporary rule expires) from the NC/VA border southward through the east coast of FL.

Although the blueline tilefish the stock is currently treated as one unit along the entire East Coast, the new regulations would only apply to vessels in the South Atlantic Council's area of jurisdiction. Concerns about rapidly increasing commercial and party/charter landings of blueline tilefish north of the NC/VA boundary, particularly in New Jersey, prompted the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council in February to request emergency action to implement a commercial trip limit of 300 pounds (whole weight) and a recreational possession limit of 7 fish per person within its jurisdiction. Commercial landings from Virginia and farther north increased on average from 11,000 pounds to 217,000 pounds in 2014 and party/charter vessel landings increased on average from 2,400 fish per year to over 10,000.

Representatives from the Mid-Atlantic Council attended the South Atlantic Council's March 2015 meeting in St. Simons Island, GA and discussed concerns about applying the 2013 blueline tilefish stock assessment results throughout the species' range. The South Atlantic Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), along with participating members from the Mid-Atlantic Council SSC, will review the stock assessment during its April 28-30, 2015 meeting in N. Charleston, SC and provide recommendations. If the SSC determines that the stock assessment should be applied north of the NC/VA boundary, the South Atlantic Council will request an emergency action to apply the more restrictive measures north of the boundary as well. The final decision to implement emergency actions will be made by the Secretary of Commerce.

10. Electronic Reporting in the South Atlantic Region (Attachments 8a-8c)

Gregg Waugh, Council staff, will review the final Electronic Reporting Implementation Plan for the southeast and point out comments the Council provided. This information is being provided to the AP so that they are aware of this effort and the potential impacts to their reporting.

11. Joint SAFMC/GMFMC Charterboat Electronic Reporting Amendment (Attachment 9)

Gregg Waugh, Council staff, will review the draft Charterboat Reporting Amendment. The AP is encouraged to provide input on the range of actions/alternatives and any specific alternatives they prefer. This amendment will be discussed during the Joint SA/GM Council meeting in June 2015 in Key

West and approved for public hearings. Hearings are scheduled for August 2015. The Councils intend to complete this amendment by the end of 2015 with implementation occurring during mid to late 2016.

12. Update on Vision Blueprint for the Snapper Grouper Fishery (*Attachments 10a-10d*)

Amber Von Harten, Council staff, will bring the AP up to date on development of the Council's Vision Blueprint for the Snapper Grouper Fishery. The Council began the process of developing a vision statement and strategic goals and objectives in December 2012. The four draft strategic goals (Science, Management, Governance, and Communication) and objectives (*Attachments 10a-10d*) have been developed over the course of the past two years with input from fishery stakeholders. The Council will collect public input on the draft strategic goals from June through September, review public input and finalize the draft goals and objectives in September, and prioritize short- and long-term action items during a Council workshop in October 2015. The AP will have the opportunity to provide guidance to staff on the draft strategic goals and strategies being planned to collect public input.