



THE
PEW
ENVIRONMENT GROUP



**END OVERFISHING
IN THE SOUTHEAST**
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Testimony of Holly Binns, Pew Environment Group, before the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

September 17, 2009

Good morning, Chairman Harris and South Atlantic Council members. My name is Holly Binns and I manage the Pew Environment Group's campaign to End Overfishing in the Southeast. Pew Environment Group is the conservation arm of the Pew Charitable Trusts.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Council regarding Amendments 17A and 17B to the snapper grouper fishery management plan. We appreciate the hard work that you and the staff at the Council and at NMFS have put into the development of these amendments.

I think that there has been a lot of good discussion over the last couple days and that your decisions have relied heavily on the advice of your SSC. This is both the right thing to do for the resource, and is required by law.

We are also pleased that both of these documents look to be ready to send out to public hearing this fall.

However, we are concerned about the optimistic assumptions that compliance with the closed areas will be 100%. You are asking the folks in this room and in the region to make significant sacrifices to ensure the long term health of red snapper. No one wants to go through this exercise again because of overly optimistic assumptions.

We also appreciate the discussion this morning about relying on the SSC's catch level recommendations in 17-B. We urge the Council to request a formal presentation of the SSC's ABC control rule at the December meeting, and that you adopt the ABC control rule at that time. This will allow the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment to go forward and facilitate getting it in place by the 2011 deadline.

We also urge the Council to request OFL numbers for species with no stock assessment from the Science Center. This is central to the ability of the Council to establish annual catch limits for these species by the congressionally mandated 2011 deadline.

Thank you again for your hard work to ensure the long term health of species in the South Atlantic region, and thank you for considering these suggestions. We look forward to continuing to work with you and your staff to end overfishing.