



THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 35

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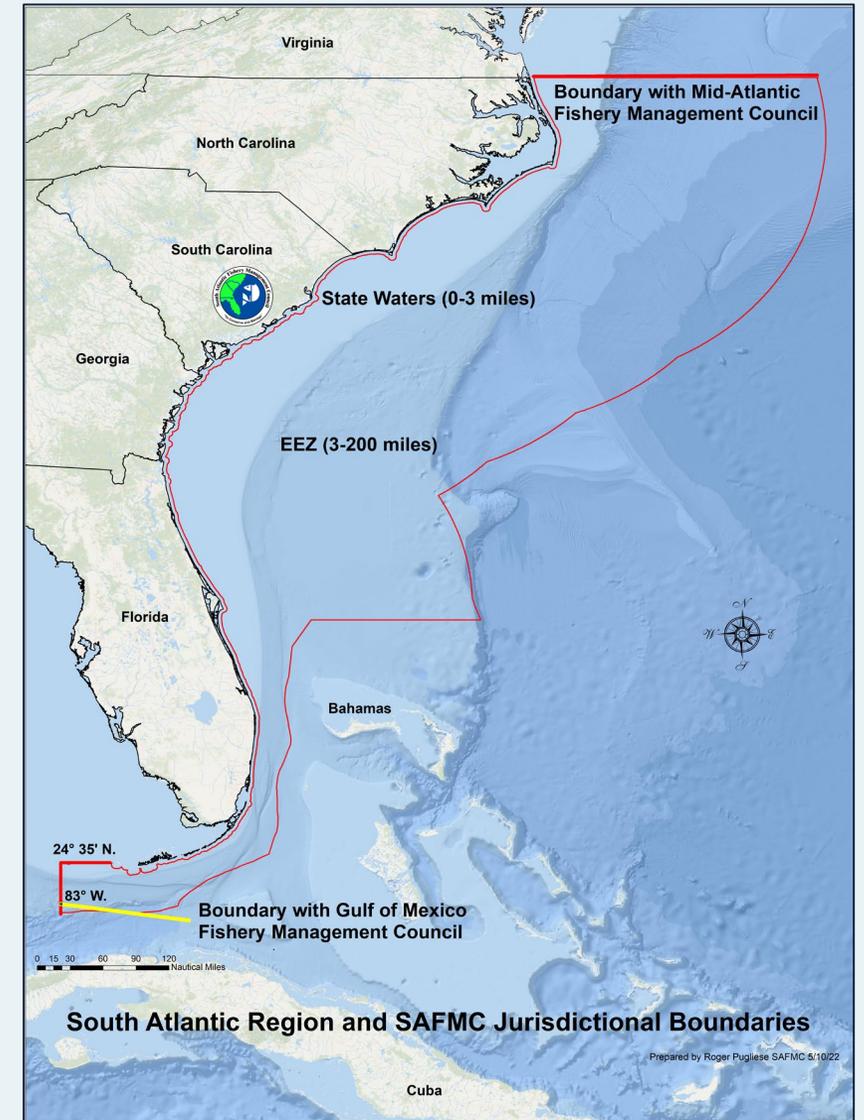
HOUSEKEEPING FOR THIS HEARING

The purpose of this hearing is to gather public input on the Council's proposed actions and preferred alternative for Regulatory Amendment 35. Public input will help shape the Council's final decisions on the amendment.

1. Reg Amendment Presentation
2. Clarifying Questions
3. Public Comments

ABOUT THE COUNCIL

- 1 of 8 regional fishery management Councils
- Jurisdiction:
 - Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) ranges from 3-200 miles
 - South Atlantic Region: NC, SC, GA, East Coast of FL
- Council Makeup:
 - Include recreational and commercial fishermen, state marine agency reps, and federal partners
 - 17 members, 13 voting, 4 non-voting
 - Representatives from each state in the region.
- The Council provides recommendations to NOAA Fisheries



BACKGROUND

- South Atlantic red snapper have been in a rebuilding plan since 2011, estimated to be rebuilt by 2044
- SEDAR 73 (2021) stock assessment
 - Overfished
 - Overfishing is occurring
- SSC recommended new overfishing limit (OFL) and acceptable biological catch (ABC) levels based on SEDAR 73
- Magnuson-Stevens Act requires the Council to set catch levels at or below the ABC recommendation (Action 1)



HOW IS STOCK STATUS DETERMINED?

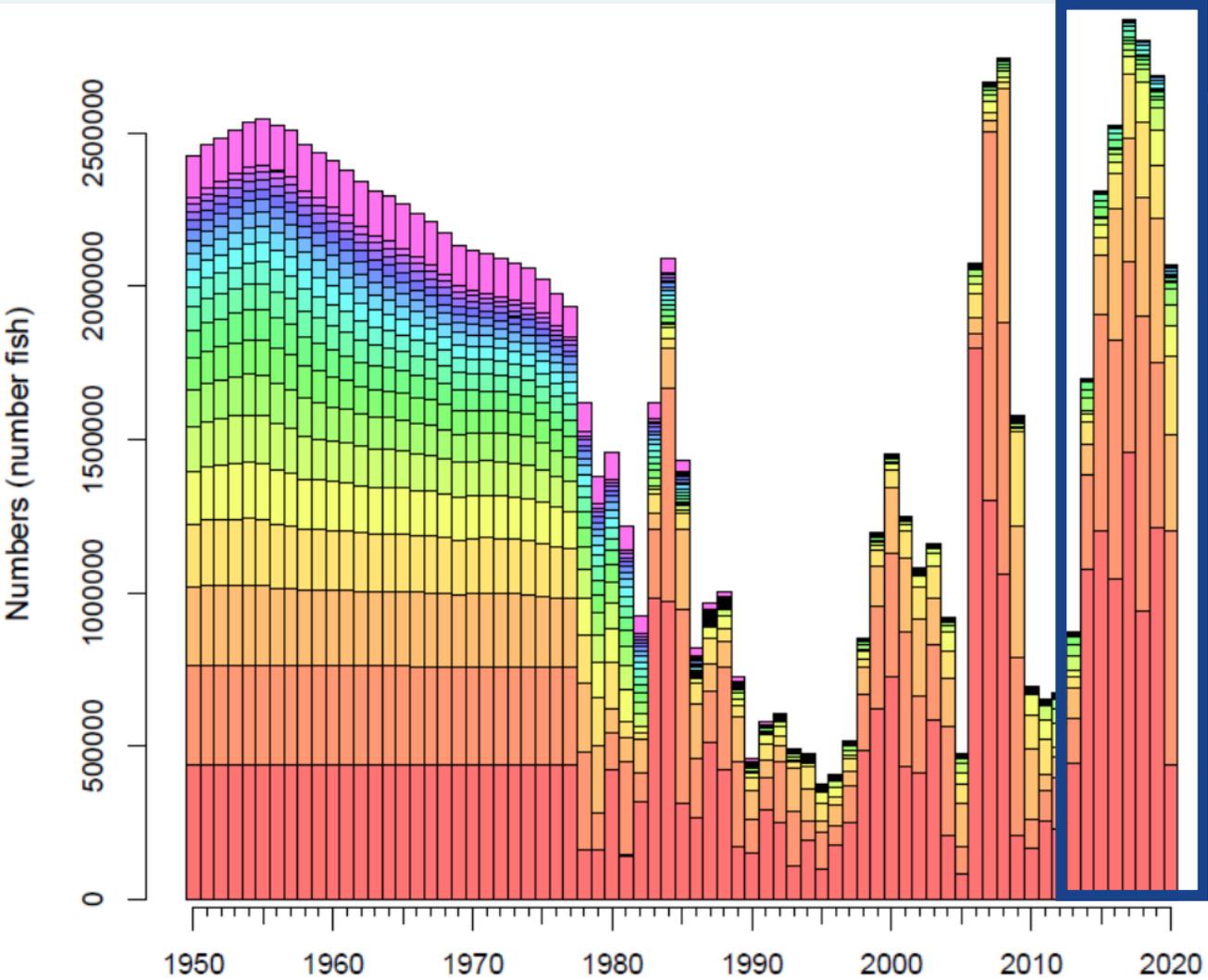
Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY):

Largest long-term average catch that can be sustainably removed

Overfished: Population size/production is unlikely to allow MSY to be sustainably removed.

Overfishing: Removal rate is higher than the removal rate that produces MSY.

HOW ARE RED SNAPPER OVERFISHED?



HIGH
ABUNDANCE!

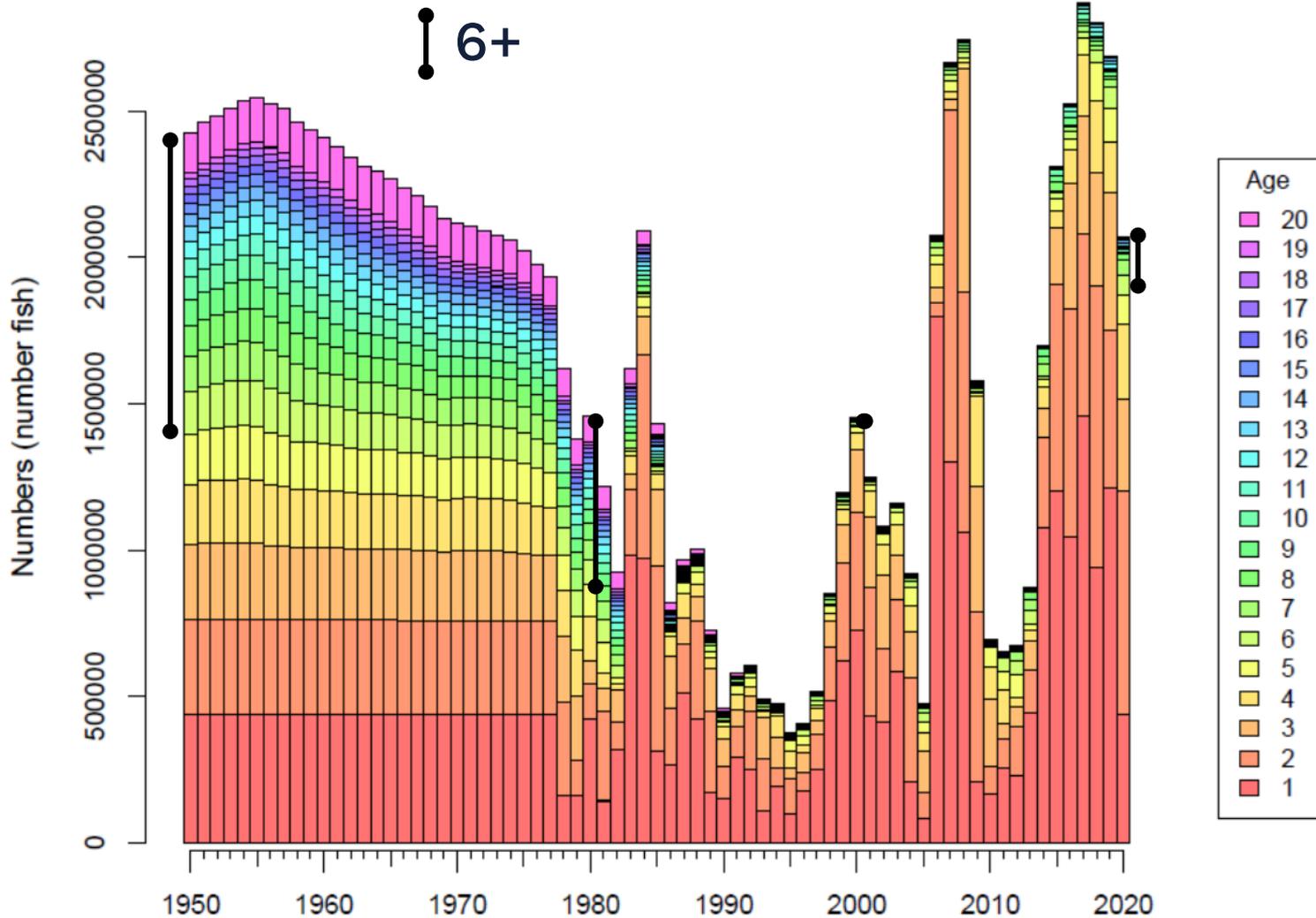
TO REBUILD A
STOCK:
✓ Grow the
abundance

HOW ARE RED SNAPPER OVERFISHED?

FEW OLD/LARGE FISH;

OLD FISH PROVIDE:

- More biomass per fish
- MANY more eggs per fish
- More stability



TO REBUILD A STOCK:

- ✓ Grow the abundance
- Stabilize the production

HOW IS OVERFISHING OCCURRING?

- Removals can be from fish caught & landed (landings) or fish that die after being caught and released (dead releases/discards)
- Fishing mortality rate (F) estimates the rate of fishing removals relative to the size of the population
- If F is greater than the rate that produces MSY (F_{MSY}), overfishing is occurring
 - Long-term overfishing typically results in population decline, so federal law requires the Council to end overfishing
- Most removals of red snapper occur as dead releases caught by the recreational sector
- Even if there were no red snapper landings, the removal rate from dead releases would still be greater than F_{MSY} , so overfishing would still be occurring
- To end overfishing, the Council must reduce dead releases/discards

HOW IS THE COUNCIL REDUCING DEAD RELEASES/DISCARDS OF RED SNAPPER?

- Dead releases/discards reduced in 2 ways:
 1. Improve survival of released fish
 - Regulations: circle hook and descending device requirements
 - Best Fishing Practices (BFP)
 - Council is expanding BFP outreach and education efforts
 2. Decrease the number of released fish; reduce effective effort (e.g. avoid fishing in areas where species that can't be kept are easily caught, alter gear to catch fewer fish overall or catch more slowly)
 - Reg Amendment 35
- S Atlantic Snapper Grouper fishery is multispecies; fishing effort direct at 1 species results in effective effort for many species
- **To reduce red snapper releases/discards, must reduce releases/discards for snapper grouper fishery overall**

NOT JUST RED SNAPPER...

- Dead releases/discards affect many snapper grouper species
- Large numbers of dead releases/discards affect annual catch limits
 - Stock assessments primarily use historical rates to predict future dead releases/discards
 - Dead releases/discards reduce the number of fish that can be sustainably kept and landed
 - E.g. Red snapper: 230,000 fish can be sustainably removed in 2023
 - 202,000 fish are projected to be removed as dead releases/discards
 - This leaves 28,000 fish to be removed as landings
 - E.g. Gag grouper: 195,082 lbs gw can be sustainably removed in 2023
 - 19,450 lbs gw are projected to be removed as dead releases/discards
 - This leaves 175,632 lbs gw to be removed as landings

NOT JUST REG AM 35...

- In addition to Reg Amendment 35, several other ongoing projects are expected to collectively reduce dead releases, end overfishing of red snapper, and improve overall management of the snapper grouper fishery:
 - BFP Outreach & Education Expansion
 - Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation
 - Amendment 46 – considers establishment of a federal recreational snapper grouper permit
 - Estimation of US Atlantic Red Snapper Abundance (a.k.a. South Atlantic Red Snapper Count)
 - Red Snapper SEDAR Research Track Stock Assessment – Completion in 2026
 - Red Snapper SEDAR Operational Stock Assessment – Completion in 2027
 - Multiple Council & Southeast Fisheries Science Center research projects – recreational gear efficiency comparison, management effects on multispecies fishery, fishery-independent spatial abundance

WHAT CHANGES ARE PROPOSED IN REG AMENDMENT 35?

- Reduce the ABC, annual catch limits (ACL), and annual optimum yield (OY) based on the most recent stock assessment
- Prohibit the use of more than 1 hook per line while recreationally fishing for snapper grouper



CATCH LEVEL UNITS: POUNDS VERSUS NUMBERS OF FISH?

Because of the differences in landings reporting and monitoring,

The commercial sector is monitored in pounds whole weight

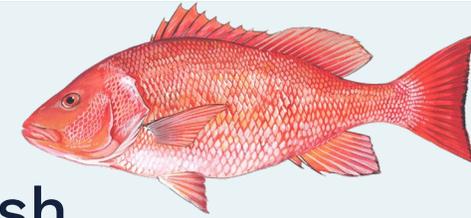
The recreational sector is monitored in numbers of fish

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR REG AMENDMENT 35?

- The amendment will be considered for final approval in March 2023
- Changes in management expected to be implemented mid to late 2023



Action 1. Reduce the acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and sector annual catch limits, and establish an annual optimum yield for South Atlantic red snapper



WHY?

- To incorporate best available science through the new ABC and OFL recommended by the SSC

Alternative 1 (No Action). (Not a viable alternative because SSC recommended a lower ABC)

- ABC: 53,000 fish
- Total ACL: 42,510 fish
- Commercial ACL: 124,815 lbs ww
- Recreational ACL: 29,656 fish

Action 1. Reduce the acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and sector annual catch limits, and establish an annual optimum yield for South Atlantic red snapper

Fishing Year	ABC (numbers of fish)	Preferred Alternative 2			Alternative 3
		Annual OY = Total ACL (numbers of fish)	Commercial ACL (lbs ww)	Recreational ACL (numbers of fish)	Annual OY = Total ACL = 0 fish
2023	28,000	28,000	77,016	19,119	
2024	31,000	31,000	85,268	21,167	
2025	33,000	33,000	90,769	22,533	
2026	35,000	35,000	96,270	23,899	
2027+	36,000	36,000	99,021	24,581	

Action 2. Prohibit the use of more than one hook per line for the snapper grouper recreational sector

WHY?

- To address overfishing of red snapper and reduce dead releases of snapper grouper species by the recreational sector

Alternative 1 (No Action).

- North of 28°N latitude: Non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hooks required when fishing for snapper grouper using hook-and-line and natural bait
- South of 28°N latitude: Non-stainless steel hooks required when fishing for snapper grouper using hook-and-line and natural bait

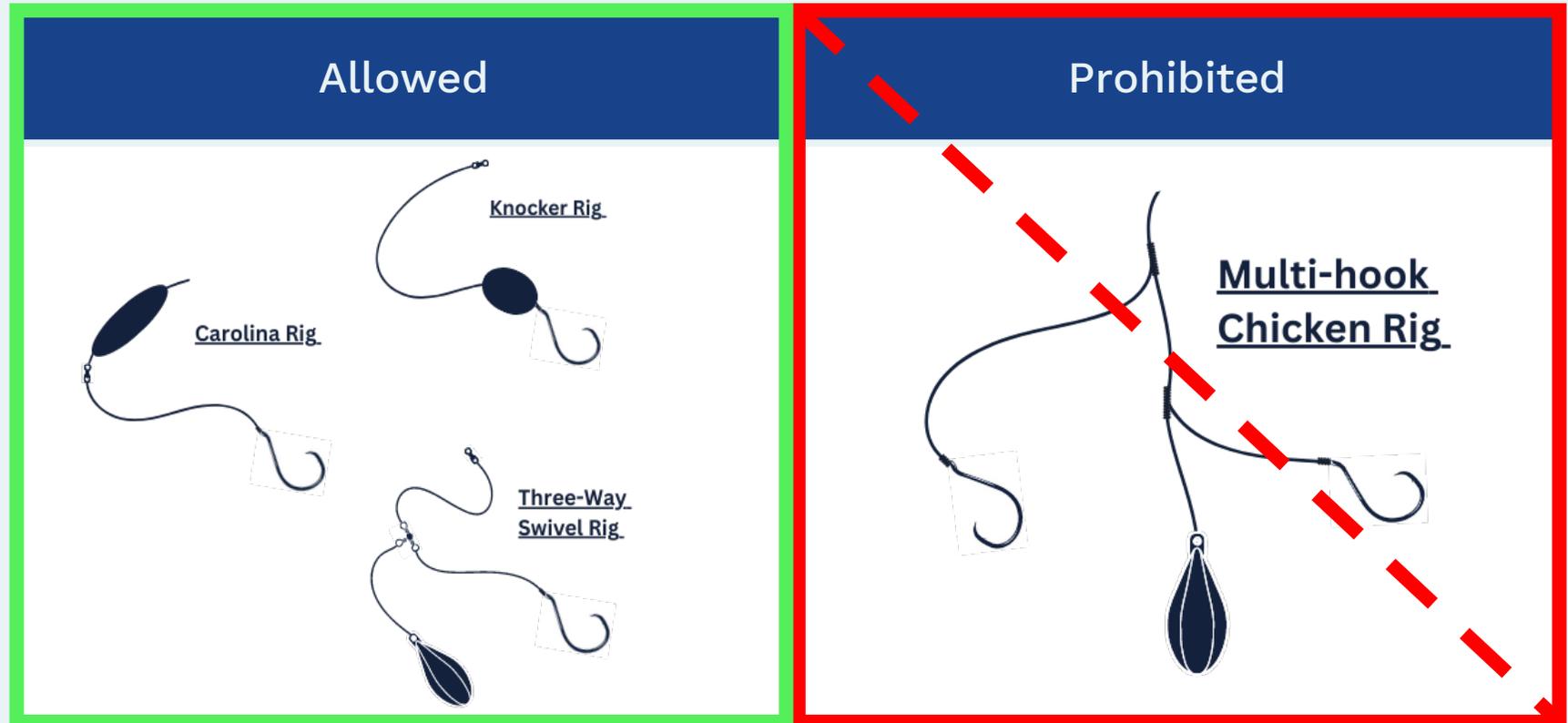
Action 2. Prohibit the use of more than one hook per line for the snapper grouper recreational sector

Alternative 2.

- North of 28°N latitude: **ONE** non-offset, non-stainless steel circle hook required when fishing for snapper grouper using hook-and-line and natural bait
- South of 28°N latitude: **ONE** non-stainless steel hook required when fishing for snapper grouper using hook-and-line and natural bait
- Commercial regulations do not change (i.e. still required to use circle hooks but not prohibited from multiple hooks)

Action 2. Prohibit the use of more than one hook per line for the snapper grouper recreational sector

Alternative 2.





COMMENT OPPORTUNITIES

(CLICK [HERE](#) FOR MORE INFO)



In-Person Public Hearings – All hearings at 6pm ET

- January 17th; Richmond Hill, GA
- January 18th; Charleston, SC
- January 19th; Morehead City, NC
- January 24th; Jacksonville, FL
- January 25th; Cocoa, FL
- January 26th; Key Largo, FL

Webinar Hearing

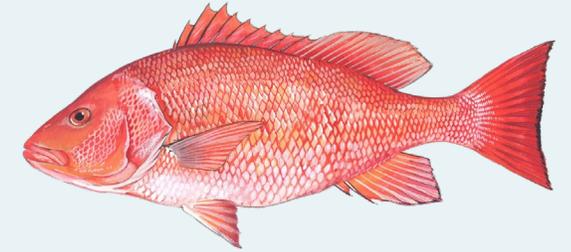
- January 31st; REGISTER [HERE](#)

Written Comments – MUST BE RECEIVED BY 5:00 PM ON FEBRUARY 3, 2023

- Online Comment Tool: CLICK [HERE](#)
- Mail: John Carmichael, Executive Director, SAFMC, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, N. Charleston, SC 29405
- Fax: 843-769-4520

CONTACT US

For general Council information: www.safmc.net



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For information on [Reg Amendment 35](#) or the [Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan](#):

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Fishery Scientist
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CLARIFYING QUESTIONS



PUBLIC COMMENTS



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES



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Reg Am 35 Webinar Hearing

- January 31st; REGISTER [HERE](#)

[Amendment 46 \(Recreational Permit\) Scoping Webinars](#)

- January 30, 2023, and February 6, 2023

Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation

- Updates and upcoming participation opportunities on the Council's [MSE webpage](#)

