South Atlantic Fishery Management Council
Full Council and Committee
SUMMARY MOTIONS
September 14-18, 2026

This is a summary of the motions approved by the Council. Motions addressing actions and alternatives for FMP amendments are followed by text showing the result of the approved motion. Complete details on motions and other committee recommendations are provided in the Committee Reports available on the SAFMC website.

Full Council (Session 1)

MOTION 1: REQUEST THAT SOUTHEAST FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER STAFF PROVIDE A PRESENTATION TO THE MACKEREL COBIA ADVISORY PANEL AT THEIR NOVEMBER 2026 MEETING AND TO THE COUNCIL AT THEIR MARCH 2027 MEETING ON HOW IN-SEASON CATCH MONITORING OCCURS FOR COMMERCIAL ATLANTIC SPANISH MACKEREL.

MOTION 2: DIRECT STAFF TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

- PREPARE COMMENT LETTER ON PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO THE ATLANTIC LARGE WHALE TAKE REDUCTION PLAN AND SUBMIT BY OCTOBER 16.
- PREPARE A COMMENT LETTER TO HMS ON PROPOSED REVISIONS TO FISHING GEAR REGULATIONS AND SUBMIT BY OCTOBER 13.
- REQUEST A PRESENTATION FROM THE SEFSC ON THE IN-SEASON CATCH ESTIMATION PROCESS FOR ATLANTIC SPANISH MACKEREL TO BE GIVEN TO THE MACKEREL COBIA AP IN NOVEMBER 2026 AND TO THE COUNCIL IN MARCH 2027.
- PREPARE A LETTER INDICATING THAT THE COUNCIL HAS NO INTENT TO MANAGE COWNOSE RAYS IN FEDERAL WATERS AND SUBMIT IT TO THE FWC BEFORE THE DECEMBER 2026 COUNCIL MEETING.

Habitat and Ecosystem

MOTION 3: APPROVE THE FOOD WEBS AND CONNECTIVITY POLICY.

MOTION 4: APPROVE THE ALTERATIONS TO RIVERINE, ESTUARINE, AND NEARSHORE WATER QUALITY AND FLOWS POLICY.

MOTION 5: ADOPT THE FOLLOWING TIMING AND TASKS:

- Hold the January HEAP meeting via webinar addressing the items listed in the workplan on slide 15 of Attachment 1B.

SEDAR Catch Advice and Data

MOTION 6: APPROVE THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SOUTH ATLANTIC RED GROUPER, SOUTH ATLANTIC SNOWY GROUPER, AND SOUTH ATLANTIC

VERMILION SNAPPER. ALLOW THE COMMITTEE CHAIR TO APPROVE ANY SUBSEQUENT EDITS RECOMMENDED BY THE COMMITTEE.

Snapper Grouper Committee

Fishery Management Unit Revision (Amendment 61)
MOTION 7: APPROVE DRAFT ALTERNATIVE 6 FOR INCLUSION IN ACTION 2.
Action 2. Designate additional ecosystem component species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan and adjust annual catch limits

> **DRAFT Alternative 6.** Designate bar jack as ecosystem component species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Yellowtail Snapper & Mutton Snapper (Amendment 44)
MOTION 8: APPROVE SNAPPER GROUPER AMENDMENT 44 REEF FISH AMENDMENT 55 FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS.

Evaluate Sunsetting of Spawning Special Management Zones (Regulatory Amendment 39)
MOTION 9: APPROVE THE PURPOSE AND NEED FOR REGULATORY AMENDMENT 39.

> The purpose of this framework amendment is to examine the current spawning protections provided by the established South Cape Lookout, Georgetown Hole/Devil's Holes, and Warsaw Hole spawning special management zones and modify the sunset provisions to allow for continued protection, research, and monitoring to occur within the areas.
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> The need for this framework amendment is to continue to protect spawning fish and spawning habitat in the established spawning special management zones and allow for continued research and monitoring within these areas which would contribute to achieving optimum yield and providing positive social and economic effects for snapper grouper fishermen and fishing communities.

MOTION 10: SELECT OPTION 3 AS THE PREFERRED FOR ACTION 1.
Action 1. Modify the sunset provision for the South Cape Lookout spawning special management Zone.

> **Preferred Option 3.** Extend the sunset provision for the South Cape Lookout spawning special management zone by 10 years, starting August 3, 2027, and ending August 2, 2037.

MOTION 11: SELECT OPTION 3 AS THE PREFERRED FOR ACTION 2.
Action 2. Modify the sunset provision for the Georgetown Hole spawning special management Zone.

> **Preferred Option 3.** Extend the sunset provision for the Georgetown Hole spawning special management zone by 10 years, starting August 3, 2027, and ending August 2, 2037.

MOTION 12: SELECT OPTION 3 AS THE PREFERRED FOR ACTION 3.

Action 3. Modify the sunset provision for the Warsaw Hole spawning special management Zone.

Preferred Option 3. Extend the sunset provision for the Warsaw Hole spawning special management zone by 10 years, starting August 3, 2027, and ending August 2, 2037.

MOTION 13: APPROVE REGULATORY AMENDMENT 39 FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS.

Commercial Permit and Trip Efficiency (Amendment 60)

MOTION 14: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 4 (REQUIRE VMS TO SWITCH TO/FROM BOTTOM LONGLINE GEAR) AS PREFERRED UNDER ACTION 2.

Action 2. Revise bottom longline gear stowage requirements and species that may be harvested while gear is on board and stowed

Alternative 4. Modify the regulations restricting possession of snapper grouper species to allow possession of any snapper grouper species on commercial trips with bottom longline gear on board. Species other than snowy grouper, yellowedge grouper, misty grouper, golden tilefish, blueline tilefish, and sand tilefish may only be harvested if bottom longline gear is appropriately stowed. Appropriately stowed means longline hooks are not baited or are not on the deck of the vessel. Vessel operators who intend to switch to or from bottom longline gear on a single trip are required to carry an active and approved vessel monitoring system on board and send a notification via the vessel monitoring system to the National Marine Fisheries Service before each gear change on that trip.

MOTION 15: MOVE ACTION 5 TO CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED.

Action 5. Revise commercial trip limit for red porgy

MOTION 16: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 AS PREFERRED UNDER ACTION 6.

Action 6. Revise commercial trip limit for hogfish (Georgia-North Carolina)

Alternative 2. Increase the commercial trip limit for hogfish from Georgia-North Carolina to 750 lbs ww.

MOTION 17: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 AS PREFERRED FOR ACTION 7

Action 7. Revise commercial trip limit for red grouper

Alternative 2. Increase the commercial trip limit for red grouper to 300 lbs gw; 354 lbs ww.

MOTION 18: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION) AS PREFERRED FOR ACTION 8.

Action 8. Revise commercial trip limit for gray triggerfish

Alternative 1 (No Action). Do not increase the commercial trip limit for gray triggerfish. The current trip limit for gray triggerfish is 1,000 lbs ww.

MOTION 19: MOVE ACTION 10 TO THE 'SUNDAY SALE' AMENDMENT.

Action 10. Require sale of all snapper grouper caught on commercial trips

MOTION 20: APPROVE ALL ACTIONS FOR AMENDMENT 60.

Headboat Vessel Limits (Regulatory Amendment 39)
MOTION 21: APPROVE THE PURPOSE AND NEED FOR REGULATORY AMENDMENT 39.

Purpose: The purpose of this framework amendment is to revise the for-hire vessel limit for gag and black grouper, to allow vessels that have a valid South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Charter/Headboat (Open Access) Permit and a valid certificate of inspection (COI) to retain a per-six-passenger limit of gag and black grouper.

Need: The need for this framework amendment is to allow for greater efficiency and increased profitability for federally permitted headboats that meet the criteria for the headboat vessel limit, while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse social and economic effects.

NOTE: the Council added an action to this amendment to adjust catch levels for golden tilefish so the purpose and need will be revised.

Golden tilefish
MOTION 22: INITIATE A FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT TO ESTABLISH A RECREATIONAL FISHING SEASON FOR GOLDEN TILEFISH WITH THE GOAL OF IT ALIGNING WITH THAT FOR OTHER DW SPECIES (BLUELINE, SNOWY).

Timing and Tasks
MOTION 23: DIRECT STAFF TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

- CONVENE MEETINGS OF THE SNAPPER GROUPER AND WRECKFISH ADVISORY PANELS IN FALL 2026.
- CONTINUE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WRECKFISH ITQ REVIEW FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NOVEMBER 2026 WRECKFISH AP MEETING AND THE DECEMBER 2026 COUNCIL MEETING.
- CONTINUE DEVELOPMENT OF AMENDMENT 60 FOR CONSIDERATION OF FINAL COUNCIL APPROVAL AT THE DECEMBER 2026 COUNCIL MEETING.
- CONTINUE DEVELOPMENT OF AMENDMENT 61 FOR CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC HEARING APPROVAL AT THE MARCH 2027 MEETING.
- DEVELOP REGULATORY AMENDMENT 40 (BLACK SEA BASS CLOSED AREAS) FOR CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC HEARING APPROVAL IN DECEMBER 2026.
- CONDUCT WEBINAR PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR AMENDMENT 44 (YELLOWTAIL & MUTTON SNAPPER) IN CONJUCTION WITH THE GULF COUNCIL.
- CONDUCT A WEBINAR PUBLIC HEARING FOR REGULATORY AMENDMENT 39 (SUNSET PROVISION FOR SSMZs).
- CONTINUE DEVELOPMENT OF REGULATORY AMENDMENT 38 (HEADBOAT) AND ADD GOLDEN TILE CATCH LIMIT ADJUSTMENT
- INITIATE A FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT TO ADDRESS A GOLDEN TILEFISH RECREATIONAL FISHING SEASON.

Full Council (Session 2)

MOTION 24: REQUEST NMFS REVIEW AND ASSESS THE EFFICACY AND NEED FOR THE CURRENT SEA TURTLE RELEASE GEAR REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERALLY PERMITTED CHARTER FOR-HIRE AND COMMERCIAL SNAPPER GROUPER VESSELS AND DOLPHIN WAHOO PELAGIC LONGLINE VESSELS. AS PART OF THIS ASSESSMENT, NMFS CONSIDER STREAMLINING THE CURRENT REGULATORY BURDEN ON THESE FLEETS, INCLUDING PROPOSING A SIMPLIFIED GEAR KIT THAT REPRESENTS THE MOST RECENT RESEARCH ON INTERACTIONS WITH SEA TURTLES WHEN FISHING FOR SNAPPER GROUPER AND DOLPHIN WAHOO SPECIES.