



# Content and Status Summary of Amendments and Projects

March 2022 Council Meeting

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## Snapper Grouper

**Recently Submitted or Implemented:** None

### Under Development:

*Amendment 48 (Wreckfish ITQ Program Modernization)*

**Staff Lead:** Christina Wiegand

**Purpose of Amendment:** The Council finished its second review of the Wreckfish ITQ program in September of 2019. As part of the review there were several recommendations made to modernize the program, which will be addressed in this amendment. The amendment also includes review of the ITQ goals and objectives and adoption of updated goals and objectives for the entire Snapper Grouper FMP.

**Action Summary:** moving away from a paper coupon-based program to an electronic program; fishing season and spawning closure; cost recovery; wreckfish permit requirement; allocation issues; offloading sites and times; and vessel monitoring system requirements.

### Key Events:

- September 2020: Amendment development initiated.
- October 2020: Meeting of the Wreckfish shareholders and wholesale dealers held to discuss amendment development.
- March 2021: Scoping held during the Council meeting.
- September 2021: Decision made to have Amendment 48 come to the Council every other or every third meeting, depending on workload.
- March 2022: Council reviewed actions and alternatives.
- Spring 2022: Meeting of the wreckfish shareholders to discuss amendment development and voluntary pilot program for the commercial electronic logbook.

### *Amendment 50 (Red Porgy)*

**Staff Lead:** Myra Brouwer

**Purpose of Amendment:** Respond to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 60). Red porgy are overfished and overfishing is occurring. The Council is required to establish a rebuilding plan by June 2022 and adjust catch levels and management measures to end overfishing.

**Action Summary:** establish a rebuilding plan, revise annual catch limits (ACL), sector allocations, management measures for the commercial and recreational sectors, and accountability measures (AM) for the recreational sector.

**Key Events:**

- June 2020: Amendment development initiated.
- December 2020: Reviewed preliminary analyses, recommendations on management measures from the Snapper Grouper AP, and approved the amendment for scoping.
- February 3 & 4, 2021: Scoping hearings held via webinar.
- June 2021: Reviewed updated analyses and selected some preferred alternatives, removed consideration of recreational vessel limits, added alternative for a recreational fishing season and a modified recreational accountability measure. Approved for public hearings.
- September 2021: Public hearing held on Wednesday, September 15, 2021.
- December 2021: Reviewed and approved all actions and rationale for each action.
- March 2022: amendment approved for formal review.

### *Amendment 49 (Greater Amberjack)*

**Staff Lead:** Mike Schmidtke

**Purpose of Amendment:** Respond to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 59). Greater amberjack are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.

**Action Summary:** adopt recommended ABC, adjust total ACL and annual OY, sector allocations (and sector ACLs), consider modifications to minimum size limits, seasonal commercial trip limits, and the April spawning closure, and remove recreational ACT for species managed under the Snapper Grouper FMP.

**Key Events:**

- June 2020: Amendment development initiated.
- March 2021: Approved for scoping.
- April 2021: Scoping hearings held on April 14 and 15, 2021. Snapper Grouper AP reviewed and made recommendations.
- September 2021: Reviewed scoping comments, comments from the Snapper Grouper AP, and preliminary analyses and added actions and alternatives.
- December 2021: Reviewed drafted actions and alternatives and directed further revisions and analyses.
- March 2022: Council approved for public hearings.

### *Amendment 51 (Snowy Grouper)*

**Staff Lead:** Allie Iberle

**Purpose of the Amendment:** Respond to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 36 Update). Snowy grouper are overfished and undergoing overfishing. The Council is required to adjust catch levels and management measures to end overfishing.

**Action Summary:** adopt recommended ABC, adjust total ACL and annual OY, sector allocations (and sector ACLs), consider modifications to management measures and recreational AMs.

**Key Events:**

- March 2021: Plan amendment initiated.

- September 2021: Options paper and additional input requested from the Snapper Grouper AP.
- December 2021: The Council reviewed the APs feedback and approved the amendment for scoping.
- February 2022: Scoping meetings scheduled for February 1, 2, and 3.
- March 2022: The Council reviewed scoping comments.

### *Amendment 52 (Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish)*

**Staff Lead:** Roger Pugliese & Myra Brouwer

**Purpose of Amendment:** Respond to the latest stock assessment for golden tilefish (SEDAR 66).

Golden tilefish are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. The amendment would also respond to increased recreational effort on blueline tilefish.

**Action Summary:** Adjust catch levels and sector allocations for golden tilefish, consider modifications to commercial seasons (longline and hook-and-line) and recreational postseason accountability measures. Adjust the recreational bag limit and season for blueline tilefish and modify recreational postseason accountability measures.

**Key Events:**

- June 2021: Plan amendment initiated.
- October 2021: Snapper Grouper AP provided recommendations.
- December 2021: Approved the amendment for scoping and added actions to address blueline tilefish recreational management.
- February 2022: Scoping meetings held February 1, 2, and 3.
- March 2022: The Council reviewed scoping comments.

### *Amendment 53 (Gag Grouper)*

**Staff Lead:** Allie Iberle

**Purpose of the Amendment:** Respond to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 71). Gag are overfished and undergoing overfishing. The Council is required to establish a rebuilding plan and adjust catch levels and management measures to end overfishing.

**Action Summary:** establish a rebuilding plan, adjust catch levels, sector allocations, management measures for the commercial and recreational sectors, and accountability measures (AM).

**Key Events:**

- June 2021: Plan amendment initiated.
- September 2021: NMFS provides additional clarification on the timeframe for rebuilding.
- October 2021: Snapper Grouper AP recommendations.
- December 2021: Requested additional rebuilding probability projections from the SSC, approved for scoping.
- February 2022: Scoping meetings scheduled for February 1, 2, and 3.
- March 2022: The Council reviewed scoping comments.

### *Release Mortality Reduction and Red Snapper Catch Levels*

**Staff Leads:** Mike Schmidtke & John Hadley

**Purpose of the Amendment:** Respond to the latest stock assessment for Red Snapper (SEDAR 73).

Red Snapper are overfished and overfishing is occurring, mainly due to the large number of Red Snapper that are released dead. Dead releases are a major issue in the snapper grouper fishery as a whole and affect many species within the complex. The amendment would consider management changes to reduce release mortality in the snapper grouper fishery that would lead to possible adjustment to the recommended ABC for Red Snapper.

**Action Summary:** reduce dead discards in the snapper grouper fishery as a whole and modify the Red Snapper ABC and ACLs.

**Key Events:**

- June 2021: The Council received the results of SEDAR 73 and requested the SSC review the recommended ABC.
- September 2021: Reviewed the SSC’s recommendation and initiated amendment.
- December 2021: Reviewed the Snapper Grouper AP’s feedback and an information paper. Staff directed to investigate management changes to reduce dead discards in the snapper grouper fishery such that a possible adjustment to the ABC for Red Snapper can be considered.
- Winter 2022: Initial scoping conducted January 18-February 4.
- March 2022: The Council defined a list of potential management changes to explore further and obtain SSC feedback in April 2022.

*Amendment 46 (Private Recreational Permits and Reporting)*

**Staff Lead:** John Hadley

**Purpose of the Amendment:** Address deficiencies in recreational data through the creation of a permit and reporting requirement for private recreational anglers.

**Action Summary:** This amendment will investigate requiring a permit for anglers to participate in the recreational snapper grouper fishery and whether trip reporting requirements would be required.

**Key Events:**

- November 2020: Council suspended work on the amendment (which was initiated in 2017) and directed staff to convene a workgroup to explore approaches for a private recreational permit and reporting requirements in the South Atlantic region. The workgroup convened three times during 2021.
- December 2021: Council requested that discussion on this amendment be added to the March 2022 agenda.
- February 2022: Recreational Reporting Workgroup met and formulated recommendations for the Council’s consideration.
- March 2022: Council reviewed background information, recommendations from the workgroup, and directed staff to assemble candidates for an ad hoc advisory panel to be selected in June 2022.

**Planned or Postponed:**

*Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 (Yellowtail Snapper)*

**Staff Lead:** Myra Brouwer

**Purpose of Amendment:** Respond to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 64). Yellowtail snapper are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.

**Action Summary:** adopt recommended ABC, adjust jurisdictional allocation between the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Councils, adjust ACLs, and sector allocations (SA only).

**Key Events:**

- December 2020: Amendment development initiated (jointly with the Gulf Council).
- June 2021: Review the APs input on the fishery’s performance, a fishery overview, and a draft options paper including actions previously considered (in 2018).
- September 2021: Review preliminary analyses and approve for scoping. Request input from stakeholders on commercial management measures (commercial trip limits) and get feedback from advisors (SG and Reef Fish APs) and the Gulf Council.
- November 2021: Scoping hearings held on November 2 and 3.

- December 2021: Work on the amendment suspended. Request will be made to the FWC to update the stock assessment with three additional years of data (through 2020).

### *Evaluation for the Need of Continued Management for 9 Snapper Grouper Species*

**Staff Leads:** Myra Brouwer & Mike Schmidtke

**Purpose of the Amendment:** In October 2019, the SSC recommended designation of Cubera Snapper, Margate, Silk Snapper, Coney, Saucereye Porgy, Yellowfin Grouper, Misty Grouper, Blackfin Snapper, and Yellowedge Grouper as ecosystem component (EC species).

**Action Summary:** To determine the need for conservation and management of 9 snapper grouper species.

**Key Events:**

- November 2020: The Snapper Grouper AP discussed and provided recommendations.
- December 2020: Council directed staff to include an action in a future amendment to the Snapper Grouper FMP (possibly the amendment addressing unassessed species' ABCs) to address this topic but exclude Margate, Yellowedge Grouper, Yellowfin Grouper, Silk Snapper, and Cubera Snapper. Directed staff to work with the SEFSC on a possible approach for data-poor species to set a single ACL with an assessed indicator species.

### *Holistic Approach to Snapper Grouper Fishery Management*

**Staff Lead:** TBD

**Purpose of the Amendment:** Dead releases are a major issue in the snapper grouper fishery as a whole and affect many species within the complex. The Council has directed a management strategy evaluation (MSE) project that would consider multispecies effects of potential management changes and be used to develop a more holistic approach to management of the snapper grouper fishery. The amendment will follow the MSE project and consider implementation of management changes evaluated through the MSE.

**Action Summary:** This amendment will provide actions intended to incorporate recommendations from the MSE project.

**Key Events:**

- June 2021: The Council received the results of SEDAR 73 that indicated Red Snapper is not yet rebuilt and is undergoing overfishing.
- September 2021: The Council reviewed the SSC's recommendations and provided direction to staff to begin development of a long-term amendment to revise management measures in the snapper grouper fishery.
- December 2021: The Council reviewed a proposed work plan for a management strategy evaluation for the fishery and directed staff to continue development of this project. The management strategy evaluation is intended to inform the Council on potential tradeoffs in the fishery if different suites of actions are selected. The MSE is scheduled to begin in June 2022 and take two years to complete.

### *Unassessed Snapper Grouper Species ABCs/ACLs/Allocations*

**Staff Lead:** TBD

**Purpose of the Amendment:** Update the ABCs, ACLs, and sector allocations for unassessed snapper grouper species based on catch level recommendations from the SSC.

**Action Summary:** adjust ABCs, ACLs, and sector allocations for unassessed snapper grouper species to incorporate revised recreational landings based on updated MRIP-FES methodology.

**Key Events:**

- October 2019: The SSC provided updated catch level recommendations.

- December 2021: Council decided to update catch level recommendations for the unassessed snapper grouper species once the ABC Control Rule Amendment is implemented (likely mid to late 2023).

### *Almaco Jack White Paper*

Staff Lead: *TBD*

Work has not yet begun on this white paper. The purpose of this paper is to determine the feasibility of removing Almaco Jack from the Jacks Complex. At the March 2021 meeting the Council approved moving this topic into the Unassessed SG Species Amendment (above).

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## **Dolphin Wahoo**

### **Recently Submitted or Implemented:**

#### *Amendment 10 (Dolphin and Wahoo Management Measures)*

**Staff lead:** John Hadley

**Purpose of the Amendment:** This amendment implements catch level recommendations from the Council's SSC and revises sector allocations and ACLs for dolphin and wahoo, addresses deficiencies in the recreational AMs for dolphin and wahoo, and responds to public comments received on changes needed in the dolphin wahoo fishery.

**Action Summary:** Revise the total ACLs, sector allocations, and accountability measures for dolphin and wahoo. Also allow the retention of dolphin and wahoo when trap, pot, or buoy gear are onboard a vessel, remove the operator card requirement, and reduce the recreational vessel limit for dolphin from 60 fish to 54 fish.

#### **Key Events:**

- March 2016: The Council directed staff to begin development of a joint dolphin wahoo and snapper grouper amendment to examine different ways to allocate or share quota between the commercial and recreational sectors for dolphin and yellowtail snapper.
- June 2016: Approved for scoping.
- December 2016: The Council split Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10 from Snapper Grouper Amendment 44.
- March 2017: The Council decided to stop work on the amendment until revised MRIP data were available.
- December 2018: The Council directed staff to start work again on the amendment.
- June 2020: The Council received revised catch level recommendations for dolphin and wahoo.
- March 2021: Approve for public hearings.
- June 2021: Final vote to approve amendment for submittal to NMFS.
- October 2021: The amendment was submitted to NMFS.

### **Under development:**

#### *Regulatory Amendment 2 (Minimum Size Limits and Retention Limits for Dolphin)*

**Staff Lead:** John Hadley

**Purpose of the Amendment:** This amendment will seek to extend the applicable geographic range of the minimum size limit for dolphin and modify recreational retention limits for dolphin.

**Action Summary:** This amendment will include actions that extend the applicable geographic range of the minimum size limit, modify bag and vessel limits, and remove or reduce captain and crew bag limits for dolphin.

**Key Events:**

- June 2021: Amendment initiated to examine extending the geographic coverage of the minimum size limit for dolphin, reducing or removing captain and crew bag limits onboard for-hire vessels, and specifying different retention limits for dolphin and wahoo onboard private vessels and charter vessels.
- September 2021: Information paper and direction to staff to continue developing options that would extend the applicable geographic range of the minimum size limit, modify bag and vessel limits, and reduce or remove for-hire captain and crew bag limits for dolphin.
- March 2022: The Council approved the amendment for scoping.

**Planned or Postponed:**

*Pelagic Longlines in the Dolphin Wahoo Fishery*

**Staff Lead:** John Hadley

**Purpose of the Amendment:** This amendment would consider implementing changes to the commercial longline fishery for dolphin and wahoo to better align with HMS pelagic longline requirements and potentially respond to recommendations from the forthcoming updated Biological Opinion for the dolphin wahoo fishery.

**Action Summary:** TBD

**Key Events:**

- September 2020: The Council moved, from Amendment 10, actions that would modify gear, bait, and training requirements in the commercial longline fishery for dolphin and wahoo to better align with HMS pelagic longline requirements to a new amendment. The Council also added an alternative that would prohibit the use of pelagic longline gear in the dolphin wahoo fishery unless a vessel has the limited entry HMS permits that allows the use of this gear.
- June 2021: Guidance to examine this potential amendment once the updated biological opinion for the Dolphin Wahoo fishery is available, likely in mid to late 2022.

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## Golden Crab

**Recently Submitted or Implemented:** None

**Under Development:** None

**Planned or Postponed:** None

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## Coral

**Recently Submitted or Implemented:**

*Coral 10 (CHAPC Modifications)*

**Staff Lead:** Roger Pugliese

**Purpose of the Amendment:** To establish a Shrimp Fishery Access area along the western boundary of the northern extension of the Oculina Bank Habitat Area of Particular Concern (OHAPC) where fishing for rock shrimp would be allowed. The area under consideration was once utilized by the fishery but access to it was restricted with implementation of Coral Amendment 8 in 2014.

**Action Summary:** to establish an area within the existing OHAPC where rock shrimp fishing would be allowed to restore access to historic grounds to the fishery while maintaining protection for Oculina coral.

**Key Events:**

- September 2019: removed actions related to CHAPCs from the joint amendment with Golden Crab Amendment 10 and Shrimp Amendment 11.
- September 2020: included a single action to consider establishing a shrimp fishery access area along the eastern boundary of the northern extension of the Oculina Bank CHAPC.
- October 2020: Habitat and Ecosystem, Coral, and Deepwater Shrimp APs input.
- December 2020: received comments from the APs and approved the amendment for scoping.
- February 2021: Scoping meetings were held via Webinar on February 8 and 9.
- March 2021: approved for public hearings.
- May 2021: Public hearings were held on May 12-13.
- September 2021: approved for submission to the Secretary of Commerce.
- December 2021: amendment submitted

**Planned or Postponed:** None

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## Shrimp

**Recently Submitted or Implemented:** None

**Under Development:** None

**Planned or Postponed:** None

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## Mackerel Cobia

**Recently Submitted or Implemented:** None

**Under Development:**

*Amendment 34 (King Mackerel Assessment and Allocations)*

**Staff Lead:** Christina Wiegand

**Purpose of Amendment:** Responds to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 38 Update). Atlantic King Mackerel are neither overfished nor undergoing overfishing. This amendment will update catch levels based on the SSC recommendations and make modifications to management measures aimed at increasing interest in the king mackerel fishery.



**Action Summary:** adoption of new catch level recommendations; sector allocations; recreational ACT; recreational bag limit; requirement to land with heads and fins intact.

**Key Events:**

- June 2020: amendment development initiated.
- November 2020: Mackerel Cobia AP met to discuss SSC recommendations and potential actions.
- March 2021: scoping held during the Council meeting.
- April: Mackerel Cobia AP discussed actions and alternatives.
- June 2021: Gulf Council reviewed amendment.
- September 2021: South Atlantic Council approved amendment for public hearings.
- October 2021: Gulf Council to review amendment, select preferred alternatives, approve for public hearings.
- December 2021: South Atlantic Council reviewed public hearing comments and removed actions addressing the Atlantic king mackerel minimum size limit.
- March 2022: South Atlantic Council took final action.
- April 2022: Gulf Council scheduled to take final action.

*Amendment 32 (Gulf Cobia Assessment and Allocations)*

**Staff Lead:** Christina Wiegand

**Purpose of Amendment:** Responds to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 58). Gulf cobia are not overfished but undergoing overfishing. This amendment includes actions to end overfishing of Gulf cobia and update the CMP framework procedures to clarify the language about the responsibilities of each Council.

**Action Summary:** adopt new catch level recommendations; Gulf and FLEC Zone apportionment; sector allocations; ACTs; bag limits, vessel limits, and size limits; framework procedure.

**Key Events:**

- April 2021: Mackerel Cobia AP discusses amendment.
- August 2021: Gulf Council approves amendment for public hearings.
- September 2021: South Atlantic Council approves amendment for public hearings.
- October 2021: public hearings held.
- October 2021: Gulf Council takes final action.
- December 2021: South Atlantic Council takes final action.

*Amendment 33 (Gulf King Mackerel Assessment and Allocations)*

**Staff Lead:** Christina Wiegand

**Purpose of Amendment:** Responds to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 38 Update). Gulf king mackerel are not overfished nor undergoing overfishing. This amendment will update catch levels based on Gulf SSC recommendations and update allocations.

**Action Summary:** adoption of updated catch levels; sector allocations.

**Key Events:**

- December 2021: South Atlantic Council reviewed options.
- January 2022: Gulf Council moves actions that would update catch levels to a separate framework action.
- March 2022: South Atlantic Council agrees to moving catch level actions out of Amendment 33 and into a Framework Action.

**Planned or Postponed:**

## *Framework Amendment 9 (Commercial Spanish mackerel AMs)*

**Staff Lead:** Christina Wiegand

**Purpose of Amendment:** stakeholders and the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel had expressed concerns about recent closures in the commercial Spanish mackerel fishery. This amendment aimed to modify management measures to extend the commercial fishing season.

**Action Summary:** commercial trip limits for the Northern Zone.

### **Key Events:**

- June 2019: Council directs staff to develop a white paper detailing effort in the commercial Spanish mackerel fishery and possible avenues to control effort, including: a limited access commercial permit, a limited access gillnet endorsement in the southern zone, and collaboration with state agencies.
- September 2019: amendment development initiated.
- December 2019: modification of commercial accountability measures removed from the amendment; remaining action approved for public hearings.
  - Robert Beal, Executive Director of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), clarified that the ASMFC Interstate Fisheries Management Plan for Spanish Mackerel does not require states to close their waters to commercial harvest of Spanish mackerel when a federal closure occurs.
- January 2020: public hearings held.
- March 2020: work on amendment discontinued until results from the upcoming stock assessment are available.

## *Mackerel Port Meetings*

**Staff Lead:** Christina Wiegand

**Purpose of Project:** Mackerel port meetings were proposed as a way to get input from participants in the mackerel fishery similar to those that were completed for the snapper grouper fishery. The Council has not discussed details of how these port meetings would occur, where, or when.

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## **Spiny Lobster**

**Recently Submitted or Implemented:** None

### **Planned or Postponed:**

*Spiny Lobster Regulatory Amendment 5 (commercial trip limit for vessels with an SG1 and LT permit off NC, SC, and GA)*

**Staff lead:** Christina Wiegand

**Purpose of Amendment:** to allow vessels with a snapper grouper unlimited permit (SG1) and a spiny lobster tailing permit (LT) to retain commercial quantities of spiny lobster, allowing them to supplement their snapper grouper trips with additional income from lobster.

**Action Summary:** allow vessels with an SG1 and LT permit to retain 20/30/40 lobster per trip harvested via diving, off NC, SC, and GA.

### **Key Events:**

- March 2019: amendment development initiated.
- June 2019: options paper reviewed during meeting.

## Generic Amendments

**Recently Submitted or Implemented:** None

### **Under Development:**

#### *Comprehensive ABC Control Rule Amendment*

**Staff Leads:** Mike Schmidtke & Judd Curtis

- **Purpose of Amendment:** To modify the ABC Control Rule to address flexibility allowed under the MSA and revise how uncertainty and risk tolerance are addressed in setting ABCs.
- **Action Summary:** modify the ABC Control Rule, including specification of scientific uncertainty and management risk components, application of the Control Rule to rebuilding stocks, criteria and procedures for phase-in of ABC changes, criteria and procedures for carry-over of unused portions of the annual catch limit, and establishment a framework procedure to allow carry-overs.
- **Key Events:**
  - December 2016: Council directed staff to begin work on a plan amendment
  - 2017 and 2018: Council and SSC provided guidance on various aspects of the amendment
  - January 2019: scoping hearings were held
  - March 2019: Council reviewed scoping comments
  - December 2020 and March 2021: Council provided additional guidance to staff.
  - October 2020 and April 2021: SSC reviewed topics related to this amendment and provided recommendations to the Council.
  - March 2021: The Council reviewed part of the actions and alternatives language.
  - September 2021: Council received additional comments from the SSC, reviewed the remainder of the actions and alternatives language, and provided further guidance for development of the draft amendment.
  - March 2022: Council reviewed draft language, direct any further changes to the actions and alternatives.
  - June 2022: Council will review a draft amendment and consider approving for public hearings.

#### *Standardized Bycatch Reporting Methodology Review*

**Staff lead:** Mike Schmidtke

**Purpose of Review:** Per the MSA, all FMPs must identify the required standardized procedure or procedures to collect, record, and report bycatch data in a consistent manner for the fishery. The Council has specified standardized bycatch reporting methodologies (SBRM) for all its South Atlantic and Joint FMPs. A final rule, effective on February 17, 2017, requires Councils to explain how the current SBRMs meet the statutory purpose of a SBRM based on an analysis of four required considerations:

1. Bycatch characteristics
2. Feasibility of methodology (cost, technical, operational)
3. Data uncertainty
4. Data use for assessing amount and type.

The Councils, in consultation with NMFS, must review the current SBRMs within five years of the final rule's effective date (by March 2022), and must conduct follow up reviews at least once every five years. Council FMPs already include SBRMs, so these are being reviewed by an IPT to determine

whether they are in compliance with MSA requirements and if any actions are necessary to bring SBRMs into compliance.

**Key Events:**

- 2019 and 2020: Council received periodic updates of review being conducted by an IPT
- October 2021: The SSC discussed and provided recommendations on criteria 3 and 4 to include in the review.
- December 2021: The Council received the result of the review and approved it.

**Planned or Postponed:**

*Commercial Logbook Amendment*

**Staff lead:** Myra Brouwer

**Purpose of Amendment:** To provide the authority to allow submittal of electronic commercial logbooks.

**Action Summary:** Currently, logbook reports from commercial fishermen are submitted on paper forms. Fishermen have asked that the Council consider actions to allow electronic reporting of the required logbook information. The Council supported SEFSC developing a voluntary electronic logbook reporting system and making it available to fishermen as a way of piloting the program prior to taking formal action. The Council has received updates on the SEFSC effort at each Council meeting since 2013. As of April 2016, voluntary reports could be provided, in some instances, through the ACCSP SAFIS system and available to the SEFSC. The SEFSC has worked since then to revise and improve the system. Currently, there is not the authority within the CFRs to allow submittal of electronic commercial logbooks outside of the snapper grouper fishery. This amendment will provide such authority for the Council’s other managed fisheries so electronic logbooks can be utilized once fully developed.

**Key Events:**

- March 2022 Council directed staff to begin work on an amendment.

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**Other Work Items**

*Joint Recreational Working Group Section 102*

**Staff Lead:** John Carmichael

Workgroup convened by the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils to address recreational management flexibility as identified in Section 102 of the Modernizing Fish Act. It is comprised of members of the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils. Meetings were held in in May and September 2020 via webinar. In May, the workgroup reviewed the scope of work and background materials. In September, the workgroup reviewed a wide range of data and management topics. Next steps are to identify potential problems and stocks to address, clarify the level of flexibility available to the workgroup with other MSA provisions (especially regarding ACL and AMs), consider alternative metrics to monitor catch and fisheries, and develop specific recommendations.

*Private Recreational Reporting Workgroup*

**Staff Lead:** John Carmichael

During a special Council meeting devoted to recreational fishery issues, the Council created a working group to investigate the use of state managed permitting and reporting systems for improving catch

estimates for private recreational fisheries. The workgroup will meet as needed in 2021 and report back to the Council at each Council meeting. Any recommendations from the group will be considered by the Council through the FMP amendment development process. During the March 2021 meeting the Council received a briefing on the meeting held in February 2021. At that meeting, the workgroup reviewed approved goals and objectives, reviewed Florida's State Reef Fish Survey, and discussed MRIP's Rare Event Species approaches. The workgroup convened three times during 2021 and in February 2022. Recommendations were presented to the Council in March 2022.

### *Habitat Blueprint*

**Staff Lead:** Myra Brouwer

**Purpose of Project:** to develop a blueprint to guide Council activities addressing habitat and better define the Council's role and that of regional partners and the Habitat AP.

**Key events:**

- December 2020: direction to convene a development team (workgroup) comprised of Council members and staff to begin work on the project with an intended completion date of December 2021.
- January 2021: workgroup planning call on January 14 to review its charge and develop a plan of work and outline for the blueprint.
- March 2021: the Council received an update and provided guidance regarding the blueprint's scope stating intent to focus work on habitat-related topics and address ecosystem and climate-related items separately.
- April 2021: workgroup developed draft goals and objectives for the Habitat Program
- June 2021: the Council approved the draft goals and objectives and scope of work
- July 2021 and September 2021: workgroup meetings
- 2022: The Draft Blueprint will continue to be developed with the intent to discuss and approve at a special Council meeting (to be scheduled).

### *Allocation Decision Tree Approach*

**Staff Leads:** Christina Wiegand/John Hadley/Mike Schmidtke

**Purpose of Project:** Create a consistent process for examining sector allocations and making decisions that is applicable across all Council-managed species and incorporates biological, social, and economic factors.

**Key Events:**

- December 2020: Council gives staff direction to develop the decision tree approach and approves timeline.
- April 2021: SSC and SEP review draft decision tree approach.
- July 2021: SERO and SEFSC staff review draft decision tree approach.
- August 2021: AP Chairs and others review draft decision tree approach.
- September 2021: Council approved a special meeting to discuss the draft decision tree approach and requested greater amberjack as a test species.
- February 2022: Special meeting to review approach and explore an example species (greater amberjack).
- March 2022: Council discussed additional ways to gather input (FPRs and online data-gathering tool) and directed staff to use the approach to explore allocations for Spanish mackerel.

## *South Atlantic Ecopath with Ecosim Model Application*

**Staff Lead:** Chip Collier

The SSC reviewed the SAFMC EwE model development in October 2020 and recommended that the model was ready for applying to specific questions of interest to the Council. In December 2020, the Council identified 4 potential questions to address with the model. Staff is working with FL FWC staff to provide a contract to support FWC leading the effort to apply the model to 2 of the Councils questions. The impact of high Red Snapper recruitment was reviewed by the SSC in October 2021 and presented to the Council in December 2021. The second product will be the development of a model of intermediate complexity for ecosystem analysis (MICE). The MICE model should be available by June 2022.

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