

**SUMMARY REPORT
FROM THE SNAPPER GROUPEE COMMITTEE
Raleigh, NC
December 7-8, 2011**

SEFSC update included an explanation of the 2011 commercial vermilion snapper overage. Theo Brainerd presented this information on behalf of the SEFSC. Mike Cahall (ACCSP) provided further details in response to the SEFSC's recommendations. Mike Cahall stated that the failure in the system that allowed the overage to occur was in the automation procedure itself. ACCSP agrees that compliance monitoring should be improved but it was in fact this compliance monitoring system that flagged the problem. ACCSP is working on obtaining direct access to federal permit information. ACCSP already does this for the NE region; the intent is to expand to the SE. The system is fairly new, however (went online in June 2011) and is fairly complex. ACCSP does not expect further problems in the system. The problem that caused the overage did not stem from dealers not reporting their data. The SEFSC stated that there is a considerable lag time in HB reporting. The SEFSC anticipates the lag time will be decreased once the new electronic monitoring system is adopted. The SEFSC stated they can provide and estimate of how much this lag time will diminish at a subsequent Council meeting.

The SERO provided an update on the status of the Comprehensive ACL Amendment – the Notice of Availability (NOA) published on October 20 and the Proposed Rule (PR) published on Dec 1. The comment period on both the Amendment and the PR ends on Dec 19. Proposed Rule on Regulatory Amendment 11 – will publish within the next two weeks.

Dr. Andy Strelcheck (SERO) gave a presentation on the various programs that NMFS utilizes to monitor recreational data. Dr. Strelcheck explained how the data are gathered for the private, charter and headboat sectors and how the effort and catch components of the surveys work. Dr. Strelcheck spoke directly to the recreational overage in the back sea bass fishery and explained how the projections are done to figure out the date the fishery needs to be closed. Dr. Strelcheck stated that the time lag in calculating the ACL overages, etc. is tied to when the SEFSC provides the HB information.

Bobby Cardin provided an overview of the AP recommendations.

Dr. Carolyn Belcher provided an overview of SSC recommendations.

Dr. Strelcheck presented an analysis of whether the preferred management alternatives in 18A would have an effect on lengthening the season and minimizing impacts to right whales. The analysis indicated that, under the preferred alternatives, the season would only be extended by a moderate amount and the season would not likely to extend into right whale season (Nov-April). The only qualifier that substantially increased the season is the 10,000-pound qualifier (would extend season into November). The analysis indicated that the lower the trip limit, the longer the season is potentially extended but the analysis could not account for an increase in the frequency of trips.

Bottom line: based on preferred alts extends the season thru August and does not pose risk to right whales through 2013/2014 fishing season.

The Snapper Grouper Committee made the following motions:

MOTION: BEGIN WORK ON A GENERIC AMENDMENT THAT WILL IMPLEMENT DEALER PERMITS AND UPDATE TIMING REQUIREMENTS APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

AMENDMENT 18A

ACTION 1A. Modify Rebuilding Strategy and Set ABC for Black Sea Bass

MOTION: TRACK THE LANDINGS OF BSB FOR COMMERCIAL AND REC SECTORS AND REFLECT AS WHOLE WEIGHT. DO NOT CHANGE NUMBERS IN AMENDMENT 18A DOCUMENT BUT REFLECT IN THE FINAL RULE. INCLUDE A TABLE IN DOCUMENT THAT EXPRESSES THE CONVERSION FACTORS FOR WW & GW. APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 4 WITH MODIFICATION AS PREFERRED:
Alternative 4. Define a rebuilding strategy for black sea bass that holds catch constant (847,000 pounds whole weight; recreational ACL = 409,000 lbs gw and commercial ACL = 309,000 lbs gw) in fishing years 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 and then changes to Frebuild A CONSTANT FISHING MORTALITY STRATEGY THAT MAINTAINS THE 66% PROBABILITY OF RECOVERY fishing mortality rate throughout the remaining fishing seasons of the rebuilding timeframe. After the 2015/2016 fishing season the fishing mortality rate would be held constant until modified.

MOTION FAILS (6 IN FAVOR 7 OPPOSED)

MOTION: RECONSIDER ABOVE MOTION APPROVED BY COMMITTEE (2 OPPOSED)

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 4 WITH MODIFICATION AS PREFERRED:
Alternative 4. Define a rebuilding strategy for black sea bass that holds catch constant (847,000 pounds whole weight; recreational ACL = 409,000 lbs gw and commercial ACL = 309,000 lbs gw) in fishing years 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 and then changes to Frebuild A CONSTANT FISHING MORTALITY STRATEGY THAT MAINTAINS THE 66% PROBABILITY OF RECOVERY fishing mortality rate throughout the remaining fishing seasons of the rebuilding timeframe. After the 2015/2016 fishing season the fishing mortality rate would be held constant until modified.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE (2 OPPOSED)

MOTION: CREATE A NEW ALTERNATIVE 5 INSTEAD OF MODIFYING ALTERNATIVE 4. MAKE ALTERNATIVE 5 THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

ACTION 2. Limit Participation in the Black Sea Bass Pot Fishery through an Endorsement Program

MOTION: SELECT SUB-ALTERNATIVE 2A AS PREFERRED

Alternative 2. Limit endorsement and tag distribution to entities with a valid or renewable Unlimited Snapper Grouper Permit on the effective date of the final rule whose average annual black sea bass landings using black sea bass pot gear between 1/1/99 and 12/31/10 were at least:

Sub-Alternative 2a - 500 lbs whole weight. Exclude those with no reported commercial landings of black sea bass using black sea bass pot gear between January 1, 2008, and December 31, 2010.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: SELECT SUB-ALTERNATIVE 2G AS PREFERRED:

Sub-Alternative 2g - 2,500 lbs whole weight. Exclude those with no reported commercial landings of black sea bass using black sea bass pot gear between January 1, 2008, and December 31, 2010.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION APPROVED

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE (9/4)

ACTION 4. Allow for Transferability of Black Sea Bass Endorsements

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2, SUB-ALTERNATIVE 2A AS THE PREFERRED:

Alternative 2. Black sea bass pot endorsements can be transferred between any two individuals or entities that hold a valid or renewable Unlimited Snapper Grouper Permit. The endorsement and associated landings history of black sea bass can be transferred regardless of whether or not the Unlimited Snapper Grouper Permit is transferred.

Sub-Alternative 2a. Transferability allowed upon program implementation.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: MODIFY LANGUAGE IN ALTERNATIVES 2 AND 3 AS FOLLOWS:

Alternative 2. A VALID OR EXPIRED Black sea bass pot endorsement can be transferred between any two individual(S) or entity(IES) that hold OR SIMULTANEOUSLY OBTAIN a valid or renewable Unlimited Snapper Grouper Permit.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

ACTION 5. Limit Effort in the Black Sea Bass Pot Fishery Each Permit Year

MOTIONS: ADOPT THE IPT'S RECOMMENDATION: change the wording in all the alternatives for Action 5 to reflect permit year, not fishing year.

MOTION TABLED UNTIL FULL COUNCIL

MOTION: ENDORSEMENT SHOULD BE RENEWED WITHIN THE YEAR
SUBSTITUTE MOTION: ENDORSEMENTS SHOULD BE RENEWED AT THE
SAME TIME THE SNAPPER GROUPER PERMIT IS RENEWED
SUBSTITUTE MOTION APPROVED
MAIN MOTION APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

ACTION 6. Implement Measures to Reduce Black Sea Bass Bycatch

MOTION: CLARIFY THAT “BROUGHT BACK TO SHORE” MATCHES THE
DEFINITION IN THE CODIFIED TEXT
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

ACTION 7. Modify Accountability Measures for Black Sea Bass

MOTION: ADD THE FOLLOWING ALTERNATIVE UNDER ACTION 7 AND
MAKE IT THE PREFERRED:

Alternative 3. For the recreational sector: Remove the three-year running average provision used to determine recreational ACL overages. The recreational AM would be: If the recreational sector black sea bass ACL is met or is projected to be met, independent of stock status, prohibit the harvest and retention of black sea bass. If the recreational sector black sea bass ACL is exceeded, independent of stock status, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the recreational sector ACL in the following season by the amount of the overage.

For the commercial sector: If the commercial sector black sea bass ACL is met or is projected to be met, independent of stock status, all subsequent purchase and sale of black sea bass is prohibited and harvest and/or possession is limited to the black sea bass bag limit. If the commercial sector black sea bass ACL is exceeded, independent of stock status, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the commercial sector black sea bass ACL in the following season by the amount of the overage.

Note: ACL increases specified under the rebuilding strategy are contingent upon the total commercial and recreational landings not exceeding the combined ACL.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: CLARIFY LANGUAGE IN AMs TO INDICATE THAT PAYBACKS ARE
NOT REQUIRED WHEN NEW PROJECTIONS ARE ADOPTED THAT
INCORPORATE QUOTA OVERRUNS AND THE ACLs ARE ADJUSTED IN
ACCORDANCE WITH THOSE PROJECTIONS
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

ACTION 8. Establish a Spawning Season Closure for Black Sea Bass

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 1 AS THE PREFERRED: Alternative 1 (No
Action). Do not implement a spawning season closure for black sea bass.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

ACTION 9. Establish a Commercial Trip Limit for Black Sea Bass

MOTION: CHANGE PREFERRED TO ALTERNATIVE 4: Alternative 4. Establish a 1,000 pounds gw (1,180 pounds ww) trip limit.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

ACTION 10. Modify Commercial and/or Recreational Black Sea Bass Size Limits

MOTION: SELECT SUB-ALTERNATIVE 2A AND SUB-ALTERNATIVE 3A AS PREFERRED:

Sub-Alternative 2a. Increase the recreational size limit from 12" TL to 13" TL.

Sub-Alternative 3a. Increase the commercial size limit from 10" TL to 11" TL.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE (8/3)

ACTION 11. Improvements to Commercial Data Reporting

MOTION: ADD ALTERNATIVE 4 AS A PREFERRED:

Alternative 4. Require that commercial landings and catch/effort data be submitted in accordance with ACCSP standards, using the SAFIS system.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: DESELECT ALTERNATIVE 3 AS THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

ACTION 12. Improvements to For-Hire Data Reporting

MOTION: IN TERMS OF DEFINING OVERFISHING, USE THE OFL LEVEL IN YEARS WHEN WE DON'T HAVE A CURRENT ASSESSMENT (AND CONTINUE TO USE MFMT DURING YEARS WHEN THERE IS AN ASSESSMENT)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

AMENDMENT 20A

Action 1. Define and revert inactive wreckfish shares.

MOTION: ACCEPT THE IPT'S RECOMMENDED LANGUAGE AND RETAIN ALTERNATIVE 3 AS THE PREFERRED

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE (1 OPPOSED)

Action 4. Establish an appeals process.

MOTION: RECOMMEND TO THE COUNCIL APPROVAL OF AMENDMENT 20A FOR FORMAL REVIEW

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT AS NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: THE COMMITTEE CONCURS WITH THE PROPOSAL TO ADJUST THE
WRECKFISH ACL THROUGH THE PROCESS PROPOSED BY NOAA GC
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE