



THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Snapper Grouper Amendment 61

Evaluation of the Fishery Management Unit

September 2026

Background

Amendment 61 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 61) seeks to evaluate species managed under the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit (FMU) to better align the FMU with management obligations and mandates required under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). This amendment will potentially remove species from the FMU or designate appropriate species as ecosystem component (EC) species where full federal management measures are not necessary. This amendment is intended to reduce regulatory burden and free up capacity to dedicate to other species that need federal conservation and management, and support Executive Order 14276. Through this amendment, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) will determine which species will:

- Remain regulated under full federal management measures where appropriate (e.g., annual catch limits (ACLs) or accountability measures (AMs)),
- Be removed from the FMU and no longer be subject to any federal management measures, or
- Be designated as EC species, which would allow some federal measures to remain in place such as permit and reporting requirements or aggregate retention limits but there would be no ACLs or AMs.

Additionally, the Council directed staff to develop a report of annual landings for all unmanaged species, including EC species, from the South Atlantic region. The intent of this report is to monitor landings of unmanaged species in the region and potentially proactively implement management if the need arises. The Council has provided additional guidance for the report to be modeled after a similar report provided to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council¹. The first version of the South Atlantic Unmanaged Species Landings Report is expected to be available at the September 2026 Council meeting (see Full Council 1, Attachment 6).

¹ Mid-Atlantic Unmanaged Landings Reports can be found at: <https://www.mafmc.org/unmanaged-landings-reports>.

Summary of last meeting (June 2026)

[June 2026 Snapper Grouper Committee Report](#)

[June 2026 Amendment 61 Decision Document](#)

At the June 2026 meeting, the Snapper Grouper Committee (Committee) provided feedback on and approved the purpose and need statements as well as the actions in the amendment. The Committee included actions that would potentially remove species from the Snapper Grouper FMU, designate species as EC species, require a permit for EC species, and implement an aggregate recreational bag limit for EC species. The Committee chose not to further consider an action that would implement a commercial trip limit for EC species.

Species being considered in Amendment 61

The species being considered for evaluation of the need for federal conservation and management are listed with their sector ACLs in Table 1. Species that are part of a complex are listed with their complex sector ACLs as well. Species in each complex that are not being considered for further evaluation are shaded in gray and provided for context. Complexes are managed under a single, collective ACL for all species in the complex. Commercial and recreational ACLs for individual species within complexes are shown in italics to indicate expected distributions of catch within complexes at the time that the ACLs were set.

Table 1. Sector and total ACLs for Snapper Grouper species requested by the Council for further evaluation of the need for conservation and management*.

Complex/Species	Com ACL (lbs ww)	Rec ACL (CHTS lbs ww)	Total ACL (lbs ww)	Percent of Total Complex ACL
Atlantic Spadefish	150,552	661,926	812,478	-
Bar Jack	13,228	49,021	62,249	-
Deepwater Complex	131,268	38,628	169,896	-
Misty Grouper	2,388	475	2,863	1.7%
Sand Tilefish	1,770	6,213	7,983	4.7%
Blackfin Snapper	1,096	2,569	3,665	2.20%
Queen Snapper	8,756	710	9,466	5.60%
Yellowedge Grouper	50,464	5,132	55,596	32.7%
Silk Snapper	66,794	23,529	90,323	53.2%
Other Porgies Complex	36,348	106,914	143,262	-
Jolthead Porgy	1,571	36,315	37,886	26.4%
Knobbed Porgy	34,515	32,926	67,441	47.1%
Saucereye Porgy	0	3,606	3,606	2.5%
Scup	0	9,306	9,306	6.5%
Whitebone Porgy	262	24,762	25,024	17.5%
Grunts Complex	217,903	618,122	836,025	-
White Grunt	203,405	440,484	643,889	77.0%
Sailor's Choice	0	22,674	22,674	2.7%
Tomtate	0	92,670	92,670	11.1%
Margate	14,498	62,294	76,792	9.2%

* Species in each complex that are not being considered for further evaluation are shaded in gray and provided for context.

Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP) Recommendations

The AP initially reviewed Amendment 61 at their [October 2025 meeting](#). At the [April 2026 AP meeting](#), Council staff briefed the panel on revisions made to the amendment. The AP provided the following revised feedback captured in Table 2.

Table 2. SG AP revised consensus recommendations for species considered in Amendment 61.

Species	1) Status quo (maintain federal management)	2) Remove from FMP all together	3a) EC w/ no other measures	3b) EC + permit and reporting	No AP consensus at this time
Jolthead Porgy	X				
Knobbed Porgy	X				
Saucereye Porgy	X				
Scup	X				
Whitebone Porgy	X				
Misty Grouper	X				
Blackfin Snapper	X				
Bar Jack		X		X	
Atlantic Spadefish				X	
Sand Tilefish				X	
White Grunt				X	
Tomtate				X	
Sailor's Choice				X	
Margate				X	

Potential amendment timeline

Table 3. Potential timing for Amendment 61 development.

Timing	Council Action
✓December 2024	Council began to review species to include in AM 61
✓June 2025	Reviewed National Standard criteria for evaluating species in need of federal conservation and management.
✓September 2025	Reviewed decision document and approved for scoping.
✓Fall 2025	Snapper Grouper AP review. Scoping conducted (online).
✓December 2025	Reviewed scoping comments and provided guidance on draft actions and alternatives.
✓March 2026	Reviewed requested information, draft purpose and need statements, and clarified species to include in the amendment.
✓April 2026	Snapper Grouper AP review.
✓June 2026	Reviewed and approved draft purpose and need statements and draft actions and alternatives.
September 2026	Review actions and analyses.
December 2026	Review draft amendment and analyses, select initial preferred alternatives, and approve for public hearings.

Winter 2026	Conduct public hearings.
March 2027	Review public comment and approve all actions. Approve for Secretarial review.
Late 2027 or 2028	Regulation changes effective.

Objectives for this meeting (September 2026)

- Provide feedback and direction to staff with the intent of developing an amendment that can be approved for public hearings at the December 2026 meeting.
 - Provide feedback on actions and alternatives.
 - Is the list of species to be considered for Actions 1 and 2 in the final stage?
 - Is the range of alternatives that the Committee wants to consider adequately captured?

Purpose and need statements

Purpose for Action

The **purpose** of Amendment 61 is to evaluate the removal of select species from management and to evaluate the designation of additional ecosystem component species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Need for Action

The **need** is to reduce regulatory burden, narrow the scope of species managed, free up management resources to dedicate towards species that need federal conservation and management, and support Executive Order 14276.

Committee Direction in June 2026:

- The Committee approved the above purpose and need statements for the amendment.

Committee Action

- Review the purpose and need statements and confirm that no additional edits are needed.

Actions and alternatives

Action 1. Remove species from the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan and adjust annual catch limits

Purpose of the Action: This action is necessary to remove bar jack, misty grouper, or Atlantic spadefish from the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Alternative 1 (No Action). Retain bar jack, misty grouper, and Atlantic spadefish in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan with the existing annual catch limits.

Alternative 2. Remove one or more species from the following list from the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan and adjust the remaining annual catch limits as appropriate:

Sub-alternative 2a. Bar jack

Sub-alternative 2b. Misty grouper

Sub-alternative 2c. Atlantic spadefish

Note: Annual catch limits would only be adjusted for species that are within a complex. For species not within a complex, the ACL would be removed from the regulations.

AP Recommendations:

- (See **Table 2**) The AP felt that:
 - **Misty grouper** should remain status quo and be maintained under federal management.
 - **Bar jack** could either be removed from the FMP or designated as an EC species.
 - **Atlantic spadefish** could be designated as an EC species.

IPT Comments:

- From an essential fish habitat (EFH) perspective, when a species is removed from the management complex, their EFH designation is also removed. If this happens, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) cannot provide conservation recommendations on projects that could impact that species' habitat. These species can occur in areas where activities such as mineral mining and energy operations could be sited in the future.

Committee Action:

- Confirm that the alternatives in Action 1 cover the range that the Committee wants to consider.

Action 2. Designate additional ecosystem component species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan and adjust annual catch limits

Purpose of the Action: This action is necessary to add additional EC species to the Snapper Grouper FMP. Currently there are five EC species in the FMP (bank sea bass, cottonwick, longspine porgy, ocean triggerfish, and rock sea bass).

Alternative 1 (No Action). Do not designate additional ecosystem component species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan and retain the existing annual catch limits.

Alternative 2. Designate species in the **Other Porgies Complex** as ecosystem component species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan and revise annual catch limits as appropriate.

Sub-alternative 2a. Jolthead porgy

Sub-alternative 2b. Knobbed porgy

Sub-alternative 2c. Saucereye porgy

Sub-alternative 2d. Scup

Sub-alternative 2e. Whitebone porgy

Alternative 3. Designate species in the **Grunts Complex** as ecosystem component species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan and revise annual catch limits as appropriate.

Sub-alternative 3a. White grunt

Sub-alternative 3b. Sailor's choice

Sub-alternative 3c. Tomtate

Sub-alternative 3d. Margate

Alternative 4. Designate species within the **Deepwater Complex** as ecosystem component species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan and revise annual catch limits as appropriate.

Sub-alternative 4a. Misty grouper

Sub-alternative 4b. Sand tilefish

Sub-alternative 4c. Blackfin snapper

Alternative 5. Designate **Atlantic spadefish** as ecosystem component species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

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

Note: Annual catch limits would only be adjusted for species that are within a complex. For species not within a complex, the ACL would be removed from the regulations.

Committee Direction in June 2026:

- Add bar jack to Action 2.

Discussion and analysis:

- For these species to be removed from the FMP or designated as EC species, the Committee and staff will need to continue to work through the evaluation criteria found in Appendix 1.
 - NS Guidelines specify that factors 1 through 3 “should be considered first, as they address maintaining a fishery resource and the marine environment”. These factors are as follows:
 - The stock is an important component of the marine environment.
 - The stock is caught by the fishery.
 - Whether an FMP can improve or maintain the condition of the stock.
- At the June 2025 meeting, the Committee reviewed information on diet, predators, and landings to provide feedback on these criteria (Appendix 2).
 - Of note is that almost the entire Committee identified white grunt as a species that is “caught by the fishery”.
- Tables 4 through 6** show landings in pounds whole weight (lbs ww) grouped by the alternatives being considered in Action 2.
 - Annual landings **over 10,000 lbs ww** are highlighted in yellow, **over 100,000 lbs ww** are highlighted in orange, and **over 1,000,000 lbs ww** are highlighted in red.
- Table 7** shows landings for the current EC species in the Snapper Grouper FMP.

Table 4. Landings (lbs ww) for species considered in **Alternative 2** of Action 2 (2020 through 2024).

Sector	Year	Jolthead porgy	Knobbed porgy	Saucereye porgy	Scup	Whitebone porgy
Com.	2020	5,053	11,018	0	confidential	confidential
Com.	2021	confidential	7,830	confidential	confidential	confidential
Com.	2022	confidential	7,285	0	confidential	confidential
Com.	2023	5,050	5,648	0	confidential	confidential
Com.	2024	2,808	5,376	0	confidential	confidential
Com.	<i>Average com. landings</i>	<i>4,304</i>	<i>7,432</i>	<i>confidential</i>	<i>confidential</i>	<i>confidential</i>
Rec.	2020	80,486	6,239	confidential	18,703	20,732
Rec.	2021	202,486	15,393	confidential	24,945	63,501
Rec.	2022	163,224	12,992	confidential	16,676	42,663
Rec.	2023	78,168	18,750	confidential	16,981	36,778
Rec.	2024	111,594	8,620	confidential	13,447	57,309
Rec.	<i>Average rec. landings</i>	<i>127,191</i>	<i>12,399</i>	<i>confidential</i>	<i>18,150</i>	<i>44,196</i>

Table 5. Landings (lbs ww) for species considered in **Alternative 3** of Action 2 (2020 through 2024).

Sector	Year	White grunt	Sailor's choice	Tomtate	Margate
Com.	2020	16,437	confidential	confidential	0
Com.	2021	7,844	confidential	confidential	0
Com.	2022	7,575	confidential	confidential	0
Com.	2023	6,773	confidential	confidential	confidential
Com.	2024	5,006	confidential	confidential	confidential
Com.	<i>Average com. landings</i>	<i>8,727</i>	<i>confidential</i>	<i>confidential</i>	<i>confidential</i>

Rec.	2020	256,433	5,075	191,779	1,676
Rec.	2021	369,511	45,001	106,304	10,707
Rec.	2022	386,014	27,574	111,474	2,127
Rec.	2023	420,738	41,732	173,239	4,702
Rec.	2024	255,816	51,678	94,094	16,016
Rec.	<i>Average rec. landings</i>	<i>337,702</i>	<i>34,212</i>	<i>135,378</i>	<i>7,046</i>

Table 6. Landings (lbs ww) for species considered in **Alternatives 4** through **6** of Action 2 (2020 through 2024).

Sector	Year	Misty grouper	Sand tilefish	Blackfin snapper	Atlantic spadefish	Bar jack
Com.	2020	confidential	1,116	2,294	11,187	confidential
Com.	2021	confidential	1,398	1,945	5,612	confidential
Com.	2022	confidential	929	2,455	6,836	confidential
Com.	2023	confidential	1,730	2,400	4,470	confidential
Com.	2024	confidential	1,549	4,444	3,749	3,161
Com.	<i>Average com. landings</i>	<i>confidential</i>	<i>1,344</i>	<i>2,708</i>	<i>6,371</i>	<i>confidential</i>
Rec.	2020	0	14,190	481	1,056,683	164
Rec.	2021	0	6,122	1,415	327,793	15,318
Rec.	2022	0	2,471	9,639	1,448,016	17,500
Rec.	2023	0	44,990	14,110	349,421	102,797
Rec.	2024	confidential	21,563	5,042	806,941	36,353
Rec.	<i>Average rec. landings</i>	<i>confidential</i>	<i>17,867</i>	<i>6,137</i>	<i>797,771</i>	<i>34,426</i>

Table 7. Landings (lbs ww) for EC species in the Snapper Grouper FMP (2020 through 2024).

Sector	Year	Bank sea bass	Cottonwick	Longspine porgy	Ocean triggerfish	Rock sea bass
Com.	2020	confidential	0	confidential	123	104
Com.	2021	confidential	0	0	945	76
Com.	2022	confidential	0	0	356	168
Com.	2023	confidential	0	0	168	300
Com.	2024	0	0	0	1,752	71
Com.	<i>Average com. landings</i>	<i>confidential</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>confidential</i>	<i>669</i>	<i>144</i>
Rec.	2020	2,566	258	confidential	25,536	511
Rec.	2021	4,662	168	confidential	126,962	2,183
Rec.	2022	6,906	582	confidential	9,260	2,873
Rec.	2023	4,568	140	confidential	109,378	1,510
Rec.	2024	1,213	431	75	57,776	27
Rec.	<i>Average rec. landings</i>	<i>3,983</i>	<i>316</i>	confidential	<i>65,782</i>	<i>1,421</i>

- Several species considered in Amendment 61 were rarely encountered over the time series examined when analyzing logbook and intercept data.
 - Atlantic spadefish, bar jack, misty grouper, scup, sailor's choice, and tomtate were rarely harvested by the commercial fishery (less than 100 trips).

- On the recreational side, misty grouper (n = 2) and saucereye porgy (n = 28 trips) had particularly low encounter rates (Appendix 3).

AP Recommendations:

- (See **Table 2**) The AP felt that:
 - **Misty grouper, blackfin snapper**, and the **Other Porgies Complex** should remain status quo and be maintained under federal management.
 - **Bar jack** could either be removed from the FMP or designated as an EC species.
 - **Atlantic spadefish, sand tilefish**, and the **Grunts Complex** could be designated as an EC species.

IPT Comments:

- Although additional information is being gathered by the IPT, it initially appears that EC species could have associated EFH designated for them but that ability may be limited since such species are not in need of management. The Committee would need to build a record for how the designation of EC species is tied to a specific ecosystem benefit and how the associated EFH designation would also be necessary to achieve that benefit.
 - If the Committee intends to maintain EFH for EC species being considered in this action, then the Committee needs to specify such guidance and provide rationale.
- Many of the species being considered, such as those in **Alternative 2** and **Alternative 3**, are estuarine dependent as juveniles.
 - Since several species within the Snapper Grouper complex are estuarine dependent, maintaining EFH for managed or EC species could strengthen the ability to protect habitat for a notable portion of the complex. Additionally, this could address the Council's ecosystem management objectives.

Committee Action:

- Discuss whether to add **DRAFT Alternative 6**.
- Confirm that the alternatives in Action 2 cover the range that the Committee wants to consider.
 - Are there species that the Committee does not intend to further consider in this action?
- Clarify whether it is the intent of the Committee to maintain EFH for species that are being designated ecosystem components.

DRAFT MOTION: APPROVE DRAFT ALTERNATIVE 6 FOR INCLUSION IN ACTION 2.

Action 3. Establish a permit and reporting requirement for ecosystem component species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan

Purpose of the Action: This action would establish a permit requirement for EC species currently in the FMP and maintain the commercial and for-hire permit and reporting requirements for the species being newly designated as EC species in Amendment 61.

Alternative 1 (No Action). There is no permit or reporting requirement to harvest or possess ecosystem component species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Alternative 2. Require a South Atlantic **Unlimited Transferable Snapper Grouper permit (SG1)** or South Atlantic **Snapper Grouper 225-lb permit (SG2)** and associated reporting requirements to commercially fish for or harvest any ecosystem component species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Alternative 3. Require a South Atlantic **Snapper Grouper Charter/Headboat permit** and associated reporting requirements to recreationally fish for or harvest any ecosystem component species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan onboard for-hire vessels.

Council direction in June 2026:

- Remove “unlimited” in reference to SG 1 permits.
- Include both the existing and potential new ecosystem component species in consideration of the action.
- In discussion of the action, note that maintaining the commercial permit requirement (SG 1 or SG 2 permit) in **Alternative 2** is being considered for the purposes of this multi-species fishery to help with enhanced data collection, to address bycatch mitigation, and to address other ecosystem issues by continuing to prohibit problematic gears that may damage habitat. These reasons are consistent with guidance provided in the National Standard Guidelines.

AP Comments and Recommendations:

- (See **Table 2**) The AP felt that designation of new EC species should also be accompanied by a permit and reporting requirement.

IPT Comments and Recommendations:

- It is the understanding of the IPT that the reference to the SG1 permit in **Alternative 2** will follow how it is referred to in Snapper Grouper Amendment 60.
 - Need to be consistent across amendments if “Unlimited” is removed in reference to the SG 1 permit.
- Based on guidance from the agency, there currently is not a permit requirement in place to land any of the existing EC species in the Snapper Grouper FMP. Regulatory text notwithstanding, the underlying FMP amendment that established EC species in the FMP (the Comprehensive ACL Amendment) and associated rulemaking text does not support regulatory requirements remaining on the EC species or an intent to limit commercial harvest. Thus, the “status quo” in **Alternative 1 (No Action)** is structured so there is no permit requirement to land EC species found within the Snapper Grouper FMP.

- Additionally, there are concerns about requiring limited access commercial permits for EC species. This is one of the more restrictive management measures that can be placed upon a fishery, and it would create an undue burden when fishing for species that are deemed as not needing conservation and management.
 - To address this concern, the Council could consider also allowing vessels holding other existing federal commercial permits that are open access to harvest EC species (e.g., Dolphin Wahoo or Spanish Mackerel permits).
- If the Council pursues this action, they would be building a record to support a permit and reporting requirement for all EC species in the Snapper Grouper FMP (existing and newly considered). It is the discretion of the Council whether to include the limited access commercial Snapper Grouper permits in the choice of preferred alternatives and ultimately up to the agency whether such a permit requirement would be implemented if the amendment is fully approved or partially approved.

Committee Action:

- Confirm that the alternatives in Action 3 cover the range that the Committee wants to consider.

Action 4. Establish an aggregate recreational bag limit for ecosystem component species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan

Purpose of the Action: This action would establish an aggregate recreational bag limit **as a cap on harvest** for EC species currently in the FMP and the species being removed from federal conservation and management but newly designated as EC species. **This limit would be separate from the limits for managed species.**

Alternative 1 (No Action). There is no aggregate recreational bag limit for ecosystem component species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Alternative 2. Establish an aggregate recreational bag limit for ecosystem component species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

Sub-alternative 2a. 20 fish per person.

Sub-alternative 2b. 30 fish per person.

Sub-alternative 2c. 40 fish per person.

Council direction in June 2026:

- Include “cap” in the context of an EC species bag limit.
- The bag limit for EC species would be separate from limits for managed species.

Discussion and analysis:

- Analyses of landings per person for the potential and existing EC species are provided in **Figures 1** through **6** below. These analyses are based on combined MRIP and headboat data from 2020 through 2024.
- The majority of recreational trips harvested two or fewer fish of each species per trip.
- White grunt, tomtate, scup, and blackfin snapper were the species that exhibited higher landings per person at times (**Figures 4** through **6**).

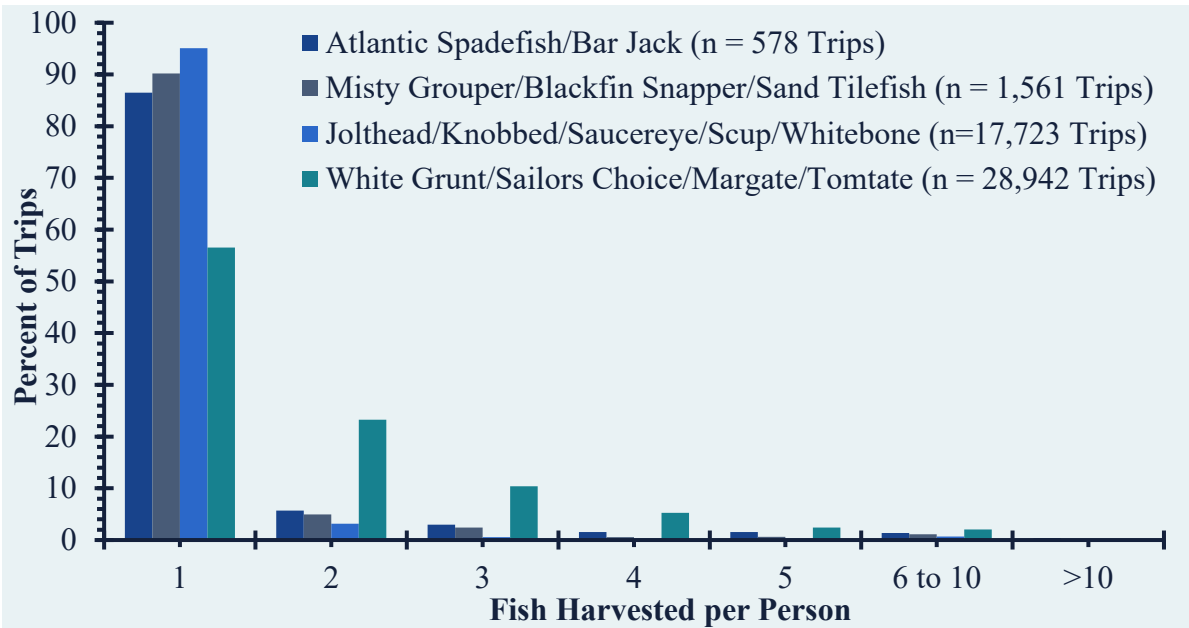


Figure 1. Distribution of South Atlantic recreational harvest per person from 2020 through 2024 for potential new EC species.

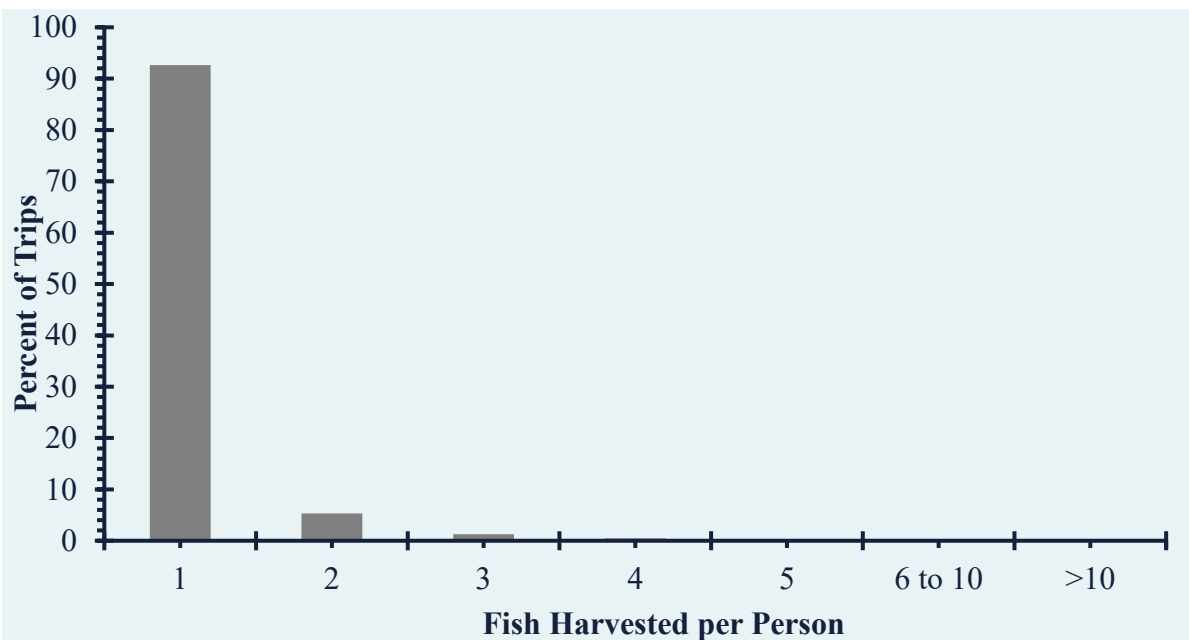


Figure 2. Distribution of South Atlantic species recreational harvest per person from 2020 through 2024 for the existing EC species of bank sea bass, cottonwick, longspine porgy, ocean triggerfish, and rock sea bass. The data was generated from 4,813 trips.

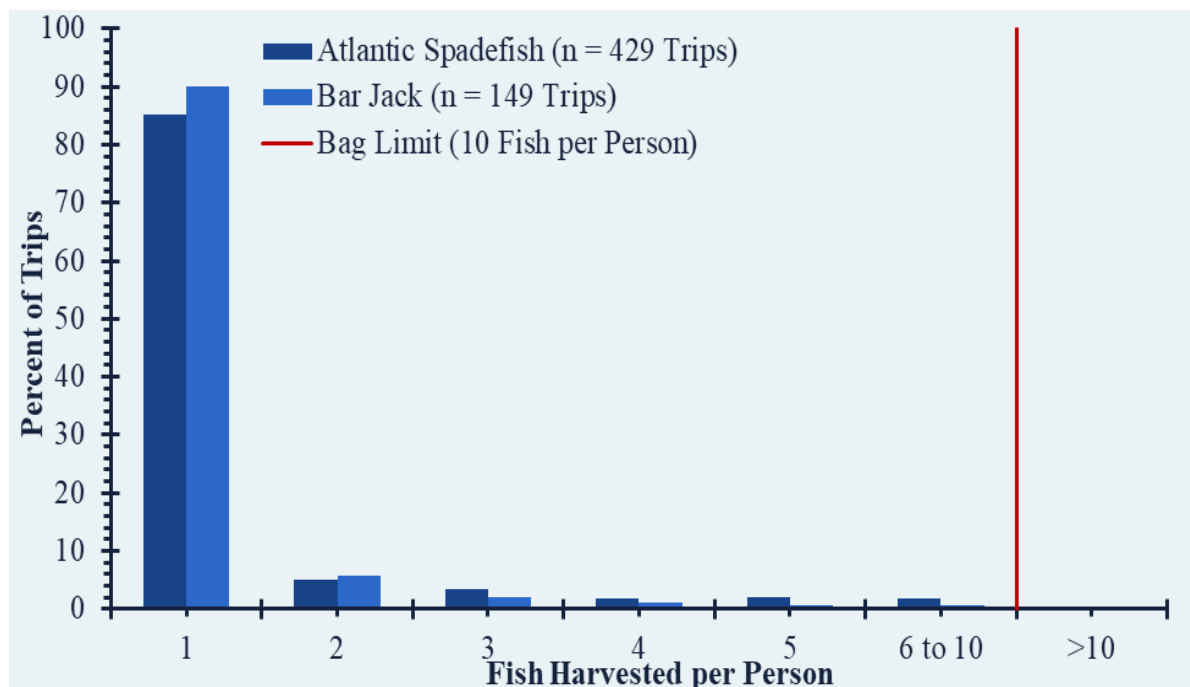


Figure 3. Distribution of South Atlantic **spadefish** and **bar jack** harvest per person from 2020 through 2024.

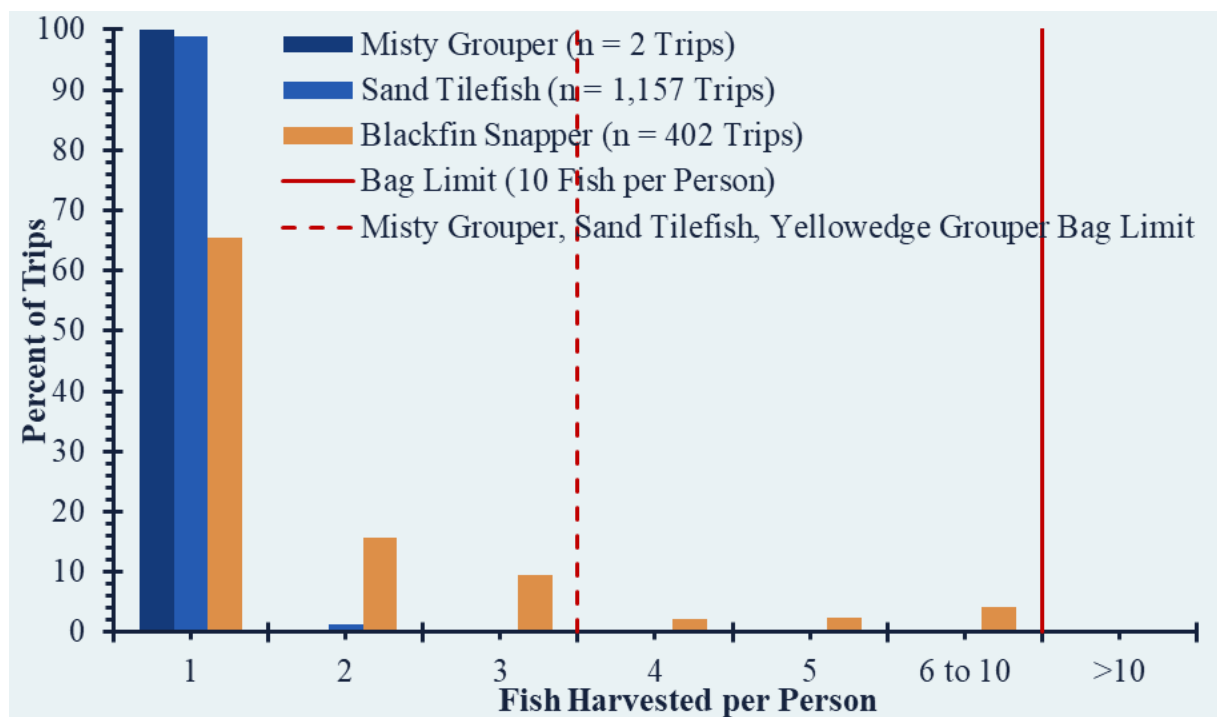


Figure 4. Distribution of harvest per person for select species from the South Atlantic **Deepwater Complex** (misty grouper, sand tilefish, and blackfin snapper) from 2020 through 2024.

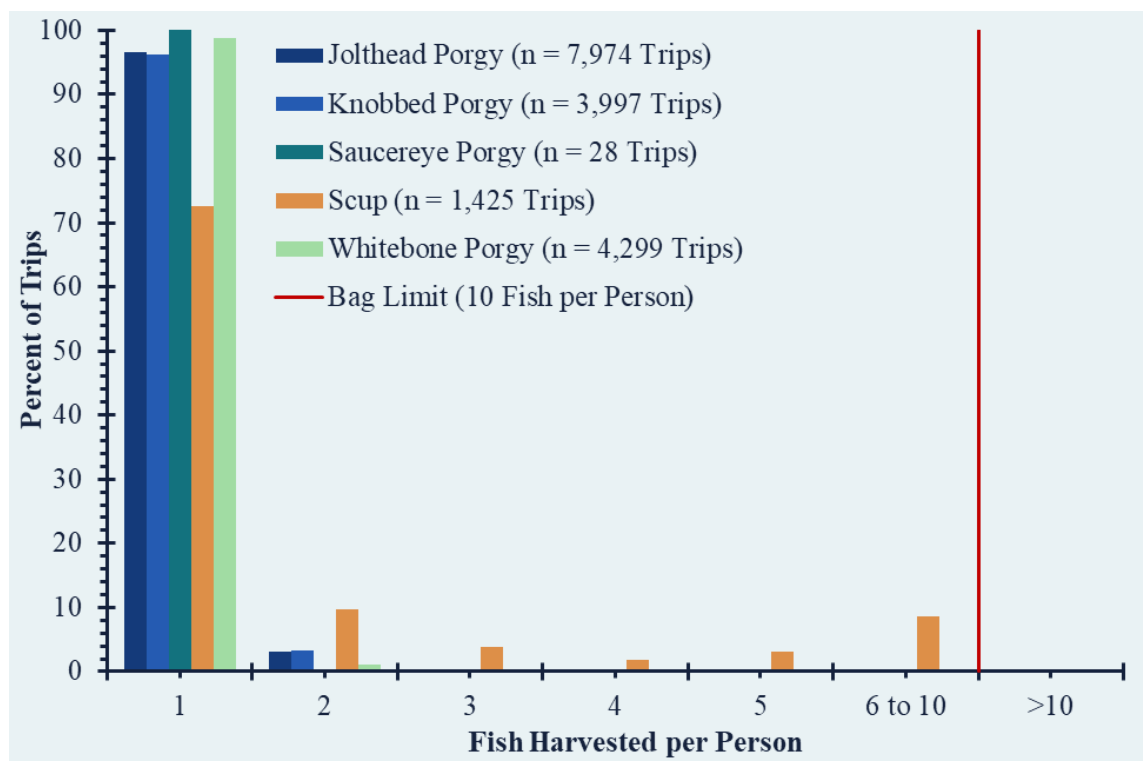


Figure 5. Distribution of South Atlantic **Other Porgies Complex** (jolthead porgy, knobbed porgy, saucereye porgy, scup, and whitebone porgy) harvest per person from 2020 through 2024.

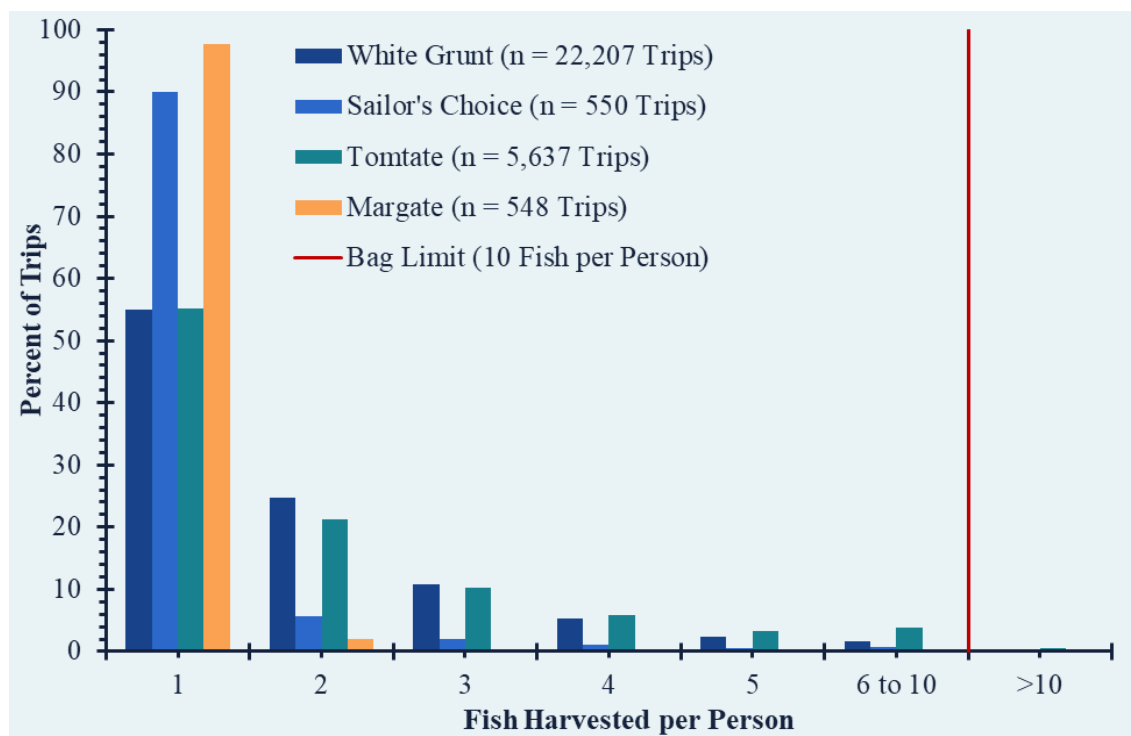


Figure 6. Distribution of South Atlantic **Grunts Complex** (white grunt, sailor's choice, tomtate, and margate) harvest per person from 2020 through 2024.

AP Comments and Recommendations:

- Regarding potential trip and bag limits for EC species, it was noted that the starting point for potential limits appears to be fairly high.

IPT Comments and Recommendations:

- Some IPT members felt that this action could be contrary to the need statement since it does not reduce regulatory burden or support Executive Order 14276.

Committee Action:

- Confirm that the alternatives in Action 4 cover the range that the Committee wants to consider.
- Provide guidance on whether to direct staff to prepare Amendment 61 for approval for public hearings at the December 2026 meeting.

Appendix 1. Evaluation criteria

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) section 302(h)(1) requires that a council prepare a fishery management plan (FMP) for each fishery under its authority that requires conservation and management. Not every fishery requires federal management. Any stocks that are predominately caught in federal waters and are overfished or subject to overfishing, or likely to become overfished or subject to overfishing, are considered to require conservation and management (50 CFR § 600.305(c)(1)). Beyond such stocks, councils may determine that additional stocks require “conservation and management.” (see Magnuson-Stevens Act definition at 16 U.S.C. 1802(5)). Based on this definition, and other relevant provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, a council should consider the following non-exhaustive list of factors when deciding whether additional stocks require conservation and management:

- i. The stock is an important component of the marine environment.
- ii. The stock is caught by the fishery.
- iii. Whether an FMP can improve or maintain the condition of the stock.
- iv. The stock is a target of a fishery.
- v. The stock is important to commercial, recreational, or subsistence users.
- vi. The fishery is important to the Nation or to the regional economy.
- vii. The need to resolve competing interests and conflicts among user groups and whether an FMP can further that resolution.
- viii. The economic condition of a fishery and whether an FMP can produce more efficient utilization.
- ix. The needs of a developing fishery, and whether an FMP can foster orderly growth.
- x. The extent to which the fishery is already adequately managed by states, by state/federal programs, or by federal regulations pursuant to other FMPs or international commissions, or by industry self-regulation, consistent with the requirements of the MSA and other applicable law.

[50 CFR § 600.305\(c\)\(4\)](#): When considering removing a stock from, or continuing to include a stock in, an FMP, Councils should prepare a thorough analysis of factors in [paragraphs \(c\)\(1\)\(i\) through \(x\)](#) of this section, and any additional considerations that may be relevant to the particular stock. As mentioned in [paragraph \(c\)\(3\)](#) of this section, if the amount and/or type of catch that occurs in Federal waters is a significant contributing factor to the stock's status, such information would weigh heavily in favor of continuing to include a stock in an FMP. Councils should consider weighting the factors as follows. Factors in [paragraphs \(c\)\(1\)\(i\) through \(iii\)](#) of this section should be considered first, as they address maintaining a fishery resource and the marine environment. See [16 U.S.C. 1802\(5\)\(A\)](#). These factors weigh in favor of continuing to include a stock in an FMP. Councils should next consider factors in [paragraphs \(c\)\(1\)\(iv\) through \(ix\)](#) of this section, which set forth key economic, social, and other reasons contained within the MSA for an FMP action. See [16 U.S.C. 1802\(5\)\(B\)](#). Finally, a Council should consider the factor in [paragraph \(c\)\(1\)\(x\)](#) of this section before deciding to remove a stock from, or continue to include a stock in, an FMP. In many circumstances, adequate management of a fishery by states, state/Federal programs, or another Federal FMP would weigh in favor of removing a stock from an FMP. See e.g., [16 U.S.C. 1851\(a\)\(7\)](#) and [1856\(a\)\(3\)](#).

Appendix 2. Preliminary review of evaluation criteria

The following slides summarize the Committee's June 2025 review of the evaluation criteria found in Appendix 1. Unanimous or nearly unanimous answers from the Committee are highlighted in yellow.

JOLTHEAD PORGY				
	Yes	No		
i. Is the stock an important component of the marine environment?	6	6		
ii. Is the stock caught by the fishery?	7	5		
iii. Could an FMP improve or maintain the condition of the stock?	1	10		
iv. Is the stock the target of a fishery?	0	12		
v. Is the stock important to commercial, recreational, or subsistence users?	4	8		
vi. Is the stock important to the Nation or to the regional economy?	1	11		
vii. Is there a need to resolve competing interests and conflicts among user groups?	0	12		
viii. Considering the economic condition of the fishery, could an FMP produce more efficient utilization?	1	11		
ix. Considering the needs of the developing fishery, could an FMP foster orderly growth?	1	11		
x. Is the fishery already adequately managed by states, state/federal programs, or by federal regulations under other FMPs, international commissions, or industry self-regulation?	10	2		

KNOBBED PORGY				
	Yes	No		
i. Is the stock an important component of the marine environment?	7	5		
ii. Is the stock caught by the fishery?	6	6		
iii. Could an FMP improve or maintain the condition of the stock?	4	8		
iv. Is the stock the target of a fishery?	0	12		
v. Is the stock important to commercial, recreational, or subsistence users?	4	8		
vi. Is the stock important to the Nation or to the regional economy?	1	11		
vii. Is there a need to resolve competing interests and conflicts among user groups?	0	12		
viii. Considering the economic condition of the fishery, could an FMP produce more efficient utilization?	1	11		
ix. Considering the needs of the developing fishery, could an FMP foster orderly growth?	1	11		
x. Is the fishery already adequately managed by states, state/federal programs, or by federal regulations under other FMPs, international commissions, or industry self-regulation?	10	2		

SAUCEREYE PORGY



	Yes	No
i. Is the stock an important component of the marine environment?	6	6
ii. Is the stock caught by the fishery?	3	9
iii. Could an FMP improve or maintain the condition of the stock?	0	11
iv. Is the stock the target of a fishery?	0	12
v. Is the stock important to commercial, recreational, or subsistence users?	0	11
vi. Is the stock important to the Nation or to the regional economy?	0	11
vii. Is there a need to resolve competing interests and conflicts among user groups?	0	12
viii. Considering the economic condition of the fishery, could an FMP produce more efficient utilization?	0	12
ix. Considering the needs of the developing fishery, could an FMP foster orderly growth?	0	12
x. Is the fishery already adequately managed by states, state/federal programs, or by federal regulations under other FMPs, international commissions, or industry self-regulation?	10	2

SCUP



	Yes	No
i. Is the stock an important component of the marine environment?	6	5
ii. Is the stock caught by the fishery?	4	7
iii. Could an FMP improve or maintain the condition of the stock?	0	10
iv. Is the stock the target of a fishery?	0	11
v. Is the stock important to commercial, recreational, or subsistence users?	2	9
vi. Is the stock important to the Nation or to the regional economy?	0	11
vii. Is there a need to resolve competing interests and conflicts among user groups?	0	11
viii. Considering the economic condition of the fishery, could an FMP produce more efficient utilization?	0	11
ix. Considering the needs of the developing fishery, could an FMP foster orderly growth?	1	10
x. Is the fishery already adequately managed by states, state/federal programs, or by federal regulations under other FMPs, international commissions, or industry self-regulation?	9	2

WHITEBONE PORGY



	Yes	No
i. Is the stock an important component of the marine environment?	5	6
ii. Is the stock caught by the fishery?	4	7
iii. Could an FMP improve or maintain the condition of the stock?	0	10
iv. Is the stock the target of a fishery?	1	10
v. Is the stock important to commercial, recreational, or subsistence users?	2	9
vi. Is the stock important to the Nation or to the regional economy?	1	10
vii. Is there a need to resolve competing interests and conflicts among user groups?	0	11
viii. Considering the economic condition of the fishery, could an FMP produce more efficient utilization?	1	10
ix. Considering the needs of the developing fishery, could an FMP foster orderly growth?	1	10
x. Is the fishery already adequately managed by states, state/federal programs, or by federal regulations under other FMPs, international commissions, or industry self-regulation?	9	2

WHITE GRUNT



	Yes	No
i. Is the stock an important component of the marine environment?	9	3
ii. Is the stock caught by the fishery?	11	1
iii. Could an FMP improve or maintain the condition of the stock?	6	6
iv. Is the stock the target of a fishery?	4	8
v. Is the stock important to commercial, recreational, or subsistence users?	7	4
vi. Is the stock important to the Nation or to the regional economy?	2	10
vii. Is there a need to resolve competing interests and conflicts among user groups?	1	11
viii. Considering the economic condition of the fishery, could an FMP produce more efficient utilization?	3	9
ix. Considering the needs of the developing fishery, could an FMP foster orderly growth?	3	9
x. Is the fishery already adequately managed by states, state/federal programs, or by federal regulations under other FMPs, international commissions, or industry self-regulation?	9	3

SAILOR'S CHOICE



	Yes	No
i. Is the stock an important component of the marine environment?	6	6
ii. Is the stock caught by the fishery?	6	6
iii. Could an FMP improve or maintain the condition of the stock?	0	12
iv. Is the stock the target of a fishery?	1	11
v. Is the stock important to commercial, recreational, or subsistence users?	1	10
vi. Is the stock important to the Nation or to the regional economy?	0	12
vii. Is there a need to resolve competing interests and conflicts among user groups?	0	12
viii. Considering the economic condition of the fishery, could an FMP produce more efficient utilization?	0	12
ix. Considering the needs of the developing fishery, could an FMP foster orderly growth?	0	12
x. Is the fishery already adequately managed by states, state/federal programs, or by federal regulations under other FMPs, international commissions, or industry self-regulation?	9	3

TOMTATE



	Yes	No
i. Is the stock an important component of the marine environment?	9	3
ii. Is the stock caught by the fishery?	9	3
iii. Could an FMP improve or maintain the condition of the stock?	4	8
iv. Is the stock the target of a fishery?	1	11
v. Is the stock important to commercial, recreational, or subsistence users?	4	7
vi. Is the stock important to the Nation or to the regional economy?	0	11
vii. Is there a need to resolve competing interests and conflicts among user groups?	0	12
viii. Considering the economic condition of the fishery, could an FMP produce more efficient utilization?	0	12
ix. Considering the needs of the developing fishery, could an FMP foster orderly growth?	2	10
x. Is the fishery already adequately managed by states, state/federal programs, or by federal regulations under other FMPs, international commissions, or industry self-regulation?	8	4

MARGATE



	Yes	No
i. Is the stock an important component of the marine environment?	6	6
ii. Is the stock caught by the fishery?	7	5
iii. Could an FMP improve or maintain the condition of the stock?	0	11
iv. Is the stock the target of a fishery?	1	11
v. Is the stock important to commercial, recreational, or subsistence users?	2	9
vi. Is the stock important to the Nation or to the regional economy?	0	12
vii. Is there a need to resolve competing interests and conflicts among user groups?	0	12
viii. Considering the economic condition of the fishery, could an FMP produce more efficient utilization?	0	12
ix. Considering the needs of the developing fishery, could an FMP foster orderly growth?	0	12
x. Is the fishery already adequately managed by states, state/federal programs, or by federal regulations under other FMPs, international commissions, or industry self-regulation?	9	3

MISTY GROUPE



	Yes	No
i. Is the stock an important component of the marine environment?	5	7
ii. Is the stock caught by the fishery?	4	7
iii. Could an FMP improve or maintain the condition of the stock?	0	11
iv. Is the stock the target of a fishery?	0	11
v. Is the stock important to commercial, recreational, or subsistence users?	2	10
vi. Is the stock important to the Nation or to the regional economy?	1	11
vii. Is there a need to resolve competing interests and conflicts among user groups?	0	12
viii. Considering the economic condition of the fishery, could an FMP produce more efficient utilization?	2	10
ix. Considering the needs of the developing fishery, could an FMP foster orderly growth?	2	10
x. Is the fishery already adequately managed by states, state/federal programs, or by federal regulations under other FMPs, international commissions, or industry self-regulation?	11	1

SAND TILEFISH



	Yes	No
i. Is the stock an important component of the marine environment?	6	6
ii. Is the stock caught by the fishery?	6	5
iii. Could an FMP improve or maintain the condition of the stock?	2	9
iv. Is the stock the target of a fishery?	0	11
v. Is the stock important to commercial, recreational, or subsistence users?	4	8
vi. Is the stock important to the Nation or to the regional economy?	1	11
vii. Is there a need to resolve competing interests and conflicts among user groups?	0	12
viii. Considering the economic condition of the fishery, could an FMP produce more efficient utilization?	2	10
ix. Considering the needs of the developing fishery, could an FMP foster orderly growth?	2	9
x. Is the fishery already adequately managed by states, state/federal programs, or by federal regulations under other FMPs, international commissions, or industry self-regulation?	11	1

BLACKFIN SNAPPER



	Yes	No
i. Is the stock an important component of the marine environment?	6	6
ii. Is the stock caught by the fishery?	6	5
iii. Could an FMP improve or maintain the condition of the stock?	1	10
iv. Is the stock the target of a fishery?	1	11
v. Is the stock important to commercial, recreational, or subsistence users?	5	7
vi. Is the stock important to the Nation or to the regional economy?	1	11
vii. Is there a need to resolve competing interests and conflicts among user groups?	0	12
viii. Considering the economic condition of the fishery, could an FMP produce more efficient utilization?	1	11
ix. Considering the needs of the developing fishery, could an FMP foster orderly growth?	1	10
x. Is the fishery already adequately managed by states, state/federal programs, or by federal regulations under other FMPs, international commissions, or industry self-regulation?	11	1

ATLANTIC SPADEFISH



	Yes	No
i. Is the stock an important component of the marine environment?	6	5
ii. Is the stock caught by the fishery?	8	4
iii. Could an FMP improve or maintain the condition of the stock?	3	9
iv. Is the stock the target of a fishery?	4	8
v. Is the stock important to commercial, recreational, or subsistence users?	5	7
vi. Is the stock important to the Nation or to the regional economy?	3	9
vii. Is there a need to resolve competing interests and conflicts among user groups?	0	12
viii. Considering the economic condition of the fishery, could an FMP produce more efficient utilization?	2	10
ix. Considering the needs of the developing fishery, could an FMP foster orderly growth?	3	9
x. Is the fishery already adequately managed by states, state/federal programs, or by federal regulations under other FMPs, international commissions, or industry self-regulation?	10	2

BAR JACK



	Yes	No
i. Is the stock an important component of the marine environment?	6	5
ii. Is the stock caught by the fishery?	4	8
iii. Could an FMP improve or maintain the condition of the stock?	2	10
iv. Is the stock the target of a fishery?	1	11
v. Is the stock important to commercial, recreational, or subsistence users?	1	11
vi. Is the stock important to the Nation or to the regional economy?	2	10
vii. Is there a need to resolve competing interests and conflicts among user groups?	0	12
viii. Considering the economic condition of the fishery, could an FMP produce more efficient utilization?	1	11
ix. Considering the needs of the developing fishery, could an FMP foster orderly growth?	1	11
x. Is the fishery already adequately managed by states, state/federal programs, or by federal regulations under other FMPs, international commissions, or industry self-regulation?	11	1

Appendix 3. Recreational harvest per person for selected species in Amendment 61

Amendment 61 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 61) is in the process of modifying the bag limit for a range of species. Recreational harvest information needed for bag limit analysis is collected from two different recreational surveys in the South Atlantic region: the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) and the Southeast Region Headboat Survey (Headboat). Harvest data from 2020 through 2024 for MRIP was downloaded from the NOAA fisheries recreational landings website (fisheries.noaa.gov) in April of 2026. Specifically, the MRIP catch and trip files were downloaded. The MRIP trip and catch files were merged and a trip was defined as data coming from the same party identification code (defined as the PRT_CODE variable). Harvest for each party was calculated by summing all fish harvest (harvest data came from the LANDING variable) from each party (defining each party from the distinct party identification code: PRT_CODE). Headboat data was provided from the Fisheries Science Center in April 2026 and catch per trip came from using the Headboat ANGLERS and CAUGHT variables. The data were explored and appropriate data bins were chosen. The percentage of trips for the different species being considered in Amendment 61 for the number of fish harvested per person are provided in Figures 1 through 4. Amendment 61 is considering bag limits changes for 23 different species. The species were grouped and then harvest per person were provided (Figures 1 through 4).

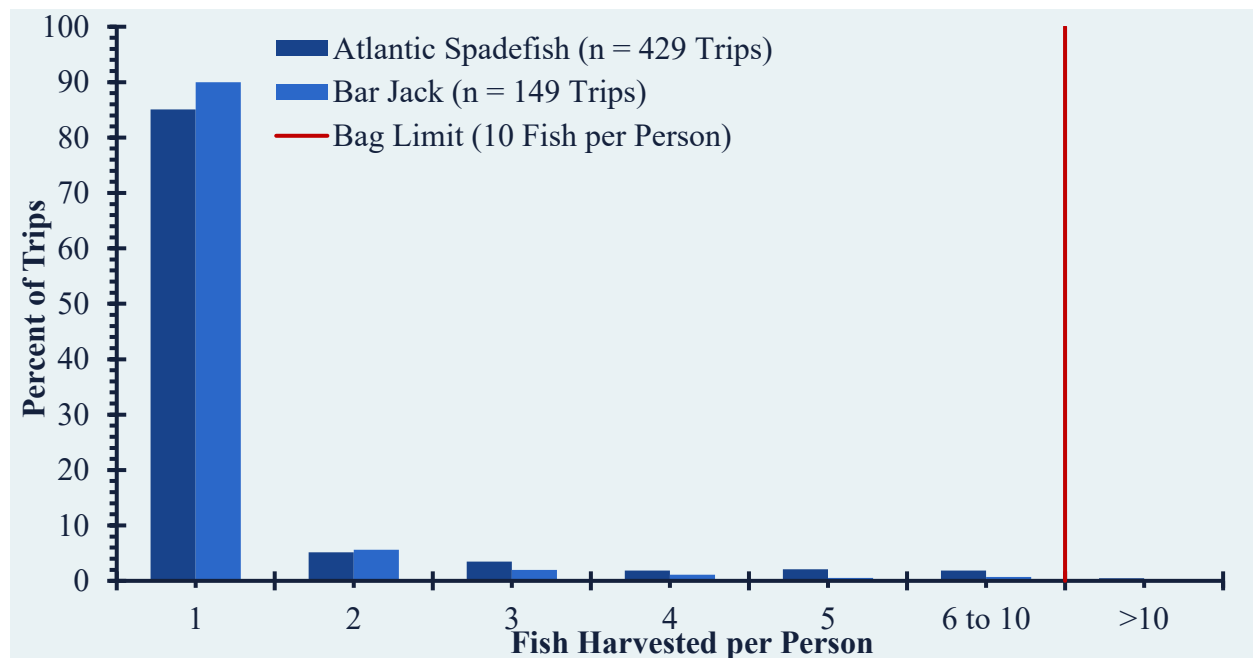


Figure A-1. Distribution of South Atlantic spadefish and bar jack harvest per person from 2020 through 2024. The data came from combined MRIP and Headboat data. The red line is the current bag limit of 10 fish per person.

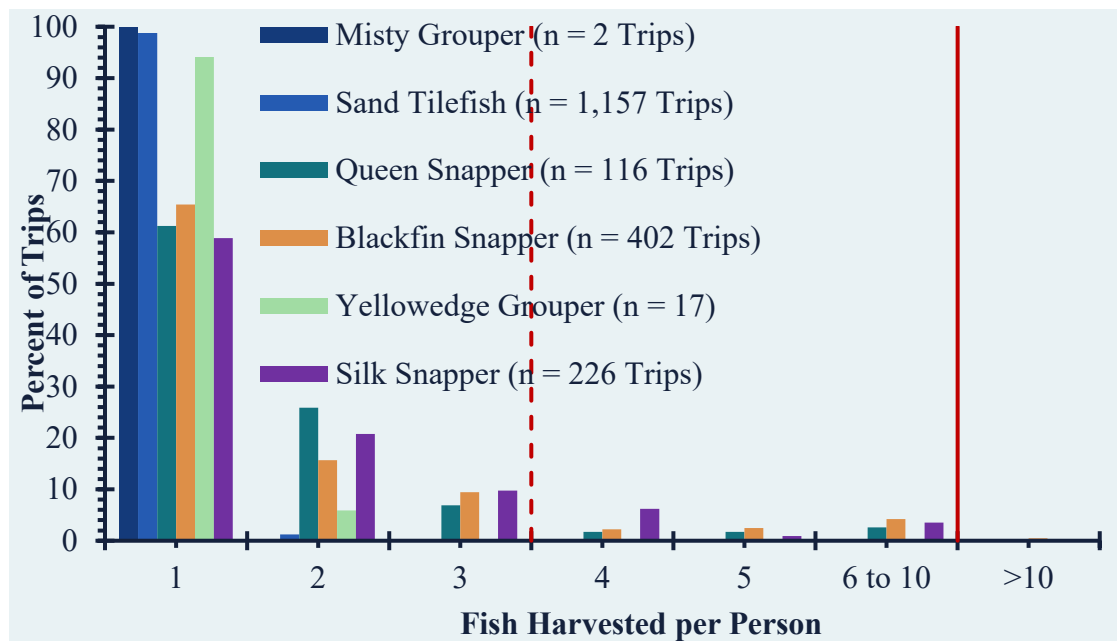


Figure A-2. Distribution of South Atlantic misty grouper, sand tilefish, queen snapper, blackfin snapper, yellowedge grouper, and silk snapper harvest per person from 2020 through 2024. The data came from combined MRIP and Headboat data. The red line is the current bag limit of 10 fish per person, however, the dashed red line is the current bag limit for misty grouper, sand tilefish, and yellowedge grouper.

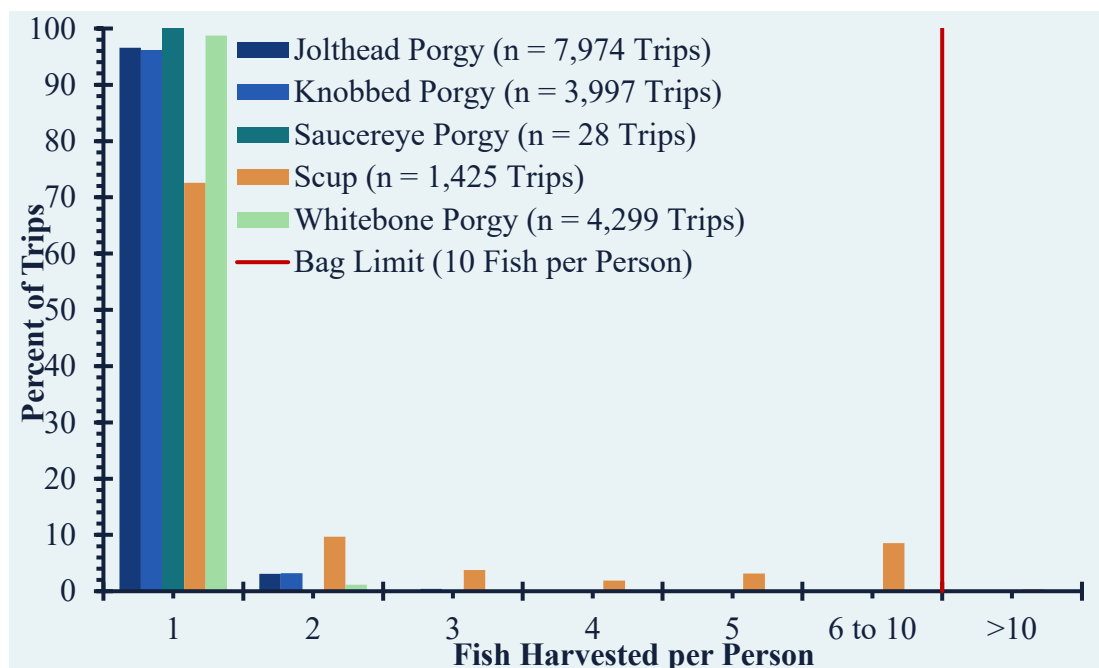


Figure A-3. Distribution of South Atlantic jolthead porgy, knobbed porgy, saucereye porgy, scup, and whitebone porgy harvest per person from 2020 through 2024. The data came from combined MRIP and Headboat data. The red line is the current bag limit of 10 fish per person.

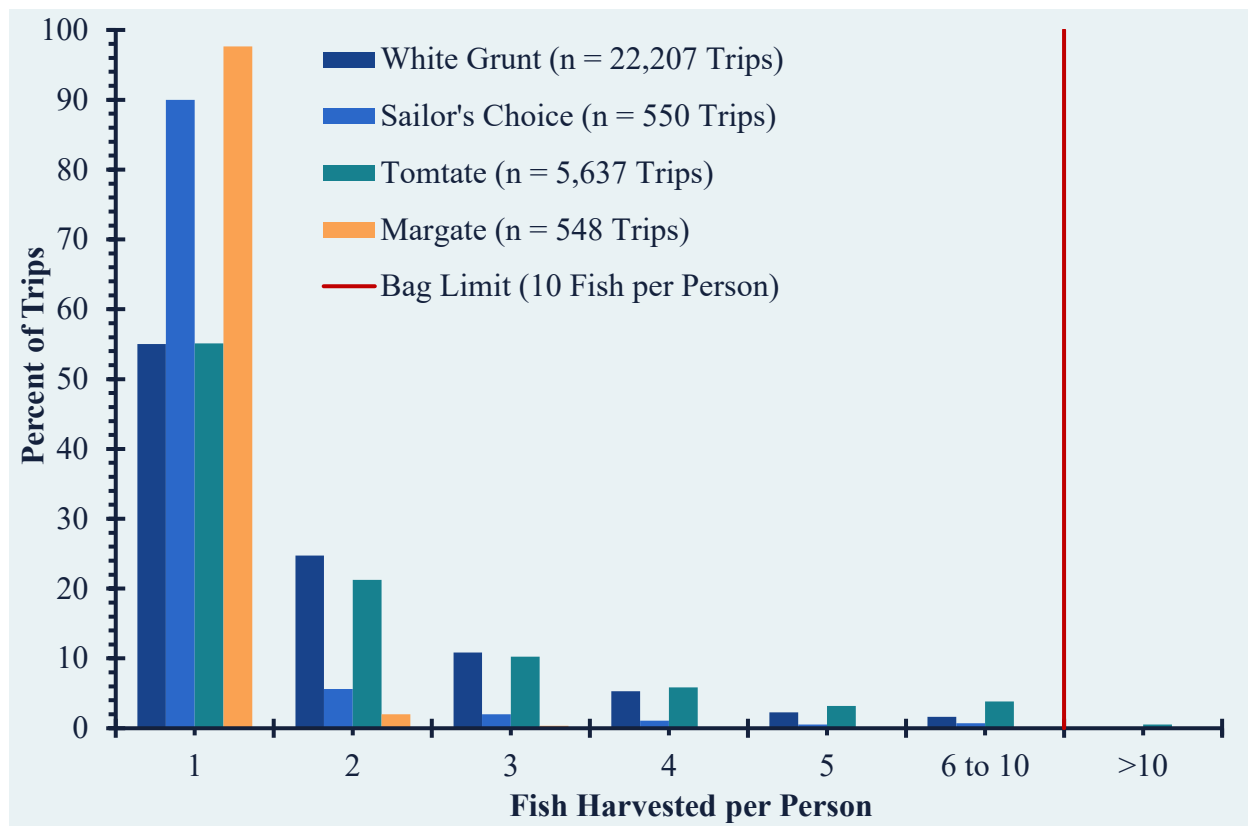


Figure A-4. Distribution of South Atlantic white grunt, sailor’s choice, tomtate, and margate harvest per person from 2020 through 2024. The data came from combined MRIP and Headboat data. The red line is the current bag limit of 10 fish per person.