



THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

## Snapper Grouper Amendment 55

Re-organization of complexes, Rebuilding Schedule, Catch Level and Allocation Establishment for South Atlantic Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper, and Catch Level Modification for the Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper complex

Decision Document, September 2024

### Background

A recent stock assessment (SEDAR 68 OA [2022]) for scamp and yellowmouth grouper indicated that the stock is overfished. Refer to the draft amendment (snapper grouper attachment 4b) for additional background information.

### Acceptable Biological Catch

Acceptable biological catch (ABC) recommendations for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex for 2025 through 2029 (**Table 1**) were based on Scenario 7 ([SEDAR 68 Follow-Up Analysis Presentation, April SSC, Table 6](#)), which is  $F=75\%$   $F40\%$  SPR using the **recent average (low) recruitment**. Landings and discards were combined since discards were a minor component. The ABC is provided in total removals. The Council typically sets ACLs in landings. Total removals comprise 95% landings and 5% dead discards (see Appendix D.1.2 of the draft amendment for methodology).

**Table 1.** OFL and ABC recommendations from the SSC (April 2023) in response to SEDAR 68 (2022). ABCs are based on projections at F=75%F40% with recent average (low) recruitment. Total removals include landings plus dead discards.

<b>OFL RECOMMENDATIONS</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Removals (lbs ww)</b>	
2025	97,000	
2026	119,000	
2027	171,000	
2028	227,000	
2029	270,000	
<b>ABC RECOMMENDATIONS</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Removals (lbs ww)</b>	<b>Total Removals (numbers)</b>
2025	71,000	12,000
2026	76,000	12,000
2027	79,000	13,000
2028	82,000	13,000
2029	84,000	14,000
<b>Year</b>	<b>Landings (lbs ww)</b>	<b>Dead Discards (lbs ww)</b>
2025	67,450	3,550
2026	72,200	3,800
2027	75,050	3,950
2028	77,900	4,100
2029	79,800	4,200

## Objectives for this Meeting (September 2024)

- Review the selected preferred for each action
- Review the codified text
- Review and provide guidance on draft rationale
- Consider amendment for final approval

## Tentative Amendment Timing

✓ June 2023	Review decision document and approve for scoping
✓ Summer 2023	Conduct scoping
✓ September 2023	Review scoping comments and provide additional guidance
✓ October 2023	SG AP review
✓ December 2023	Review draft document and preliminary analysis and provide additional guidance
✓ March 2024	Review updated analysis
✓ June 2024	Review updated analysis, selected preferreds, approve for public hearings
✓ July/August	Conduct public hearings
September 2024*	<b>Review public hearing comments/draft rationale and consider final approval</b>

## Purpose and Need Statements

**Purpose:** The *purpose* of this amendment is to modify the Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper complex by removing yellowmouth grouper from the complex and establishing a new Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex. For the new complex, establish conservation and management measures, stock status determination criteria, a rebuilding plan, catch levels, sector allocations, and accountability measures based on the results of the SEDAR 68 operational assessment (2022) stock assessment. For the South Atlantic Other Shallow Water Grouper complex, modify catch levels.

**Need:** The *need* for this amendment is to rebuild the scamp and yellowmouth grouper stock, and achieve optimum yield while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse social and economic effects.

### Committee Action

- REVIEW FINAL PURPOSE AND NEED – APPROVED IN MARCH 2024

# Action and Alternatives

## 1. Reorganize the Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper complex and establish a new Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex

**Purpose of Action:** SEDAR 68 (RT [2021] and OA [2022]) assessed the South Atlantic scamp and yellowmouth grouper together due to the low level of yellowmouth grouper landings, the overlap of vessels that land each species, and misidentification issues between the species. The SSC provided catch levels, based on the assessment for South Atlantic scamp and yellowmouth grouper combined; therefore, yellowmouth grouper must be removed from the Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper complex (OSASWG) to establish a new Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

	Complex/Stock Name	Species
Alternative 1 (No Action)	scamp	scamp ONLY
	Other SA Shallow Water Grouper complex	graysby, coney, red hind, rock hind, yellowfin grouper, yellowmouth grouper
Preferred Alternative 2	Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex (ACL established in <b>Action 4</b> )	scamp and yellowmouth grouper
	Other SA Shallow Water Grouper complex (OSASWG ACL modified, ABC and sector allocation percentages retained in <b>Action 11</b> )	graysby, coney, red hind, rock hind, yellowfin grouper

## Draft Rationale

- SEDAR 68 OA (2022) assessed the species together due to the low level of yellowmouth grouper landings, the overlap of vessels that land each species, and the misidentification issues between scamp and yellowmouth grouper. The assessment is considered BSIA for both species.
- Catch level recommendations that resulted from SEDAR 68 OA (2022) include both scamp and yellowmouth grouper which requires the Council create a complex for which to apply these catch levels.
- The Council selected **Preferred Alternative 2** to remain consistent with recommendations from SEDAR 68 OA (2022) and therefore BSIA.

## Committee Action

- REVIEW SELECTED PREFERRED.
- REVIEW DRAFT RATIONALE.

## 2. Establish the maximum sustainable yield, maximum fishing mortality threshold, minimum stock size threshold, and optimum yield for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex

*Purpose of Action:* Because the South Atlantic Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex is being established through this amendment, status determination criteria must be defined for the new complex.

	Alternative	MSY (1,000 lbs)	MFMT	MSST (metric tons)	OY (1,000 lbs)
2a	Alternative 1 (No Action)	none	-	-	-
	Alternative 2 (MSY = MSY proxy at $F_{30\%SPR}$ )	416.20	-	-	-
	<b>Preferred Alternative 3 (MSY = MSY proxy at <math>F_{40\%SPR}</math>)</b>	<b>372.28</b>	-	-	-
2b	Alternative 1 (No Action)	-	none	-	-
	Alternative 2 (MFMT = MSY proxy at $F_{30\%SPR}$ )	-	0.52	-	-
	<b>Preferred Alternative 3 (MFMT = MSY proxy at <math>F_{40\%SPR}</math>)</b>	-	<b>0.28</b>	-	-
2c	Alternative 1 (No Action)	-	-	none	-
	Alternative 2 ( $SSB_{MSY}$ (1-M) or 0.5)	-	-	601.12	-
	<b>Preferred Alternative 3 (75% of <math>SSB_{F40\%}</math>)</b>	-	-	<b>801.60</b>	-
2d*	Alternative 1 (No Action)	-	-	-	none
	Alternative 2 (OY = 75% of MSY)	-	-	-	279.21
	Alternative 3 (OY = 90% of MSY)	-	-	-	335.05
	<b>Preferred Alternative 4 (OY = 95% of MSY)</b>	-	-	-	<b>353.67</b>

### Draft Rationale

#### MSY

- In March 2023 the Council received a letter from the SEFSC noting that BSIA indicates that  $F_{40\%SPR}$  is more likely than  $F_{30\%SPR}$  to achieve a level of biomass that will produce the MSY.
- The Council decided to select the preferred alternative (**Preferred Alternative 3**) that was consistent with the SEFSC guidance.

#### MFMT

- Because the Council selected an MSY proxy at  $F_{40\%SPR}$  in Sub-action 2a, to follow the recommendations from the SEFSC and BSIA, the Council selected the alternative that set the MFMT equal to the MSY at  $F_{40\%SPR}$  (**Preferred Alternative 3**).

#### MSST

- SEDAR 68 OA (2022) recommended a MSST definition of 75% of  $SSB_{F40\%SPR}$ . Therefore, setting MSST at 75% of  $SSB_{F40\%SPR}$  is consistent with how the Council has set MSST for other snapper grouper species with low natural mortality and is consistent with BSIA.

#### OY

- The Council acknowledged the uncertainty in landings estimates for scamp and yellowmouth grouper but noted that scientific uncertainty had been accounted for within the P\* calculations and therefore selected **Preferred Alternative 4**.
- The Council felt that this OY value was sufficient to account for management uncertainty while helping to increase social and economic benefits for fishermen.

### **Committee Action**

- REVIEW SELECTED PREFERRED.
- REVIEW DRAFT RATIONALE.

### 3. Establish a rebuilding timeframe for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex

***Purpose of Action:** The results of the SEDAR 68 OA (2022) stock assessment indicate that the South Atlantic stock of scamp and yellowmouth grouper is overfished but not experiencing overfishing. A rebuilding plan must be established to rebuild the stock. Establishing the timeframe for rebuilding is part of the rebuilding plan.*

Alternative	Rebuilding Timeframe	End of rebuilding timeframe
Alternative 1 (No Action)	No timeframe for rebuilding	n/a
Alternative 2	Tmin - 5 years	2030
<b>Preferred Alternative 3</b>	<b>Tmax - 10 years</b>	<b>2035</b>

#### Draft Rationale

- The Council selected the longest allowable timeframe for rebuilding as mandated by MSA, given that the SSC’s recommended ABC levels result in a higher than 50% probability of rebuilding within the timeframe.
- The Council intends for this rebuilding time period to help reduce the severity of the required reduction in harvest and lead to fewer short-term negative social and economic impacts on fishing communities.

#### Committee Action

- REVIEW SELECTED PREFERRED.
- REVIEW DRAFT RATIONALE.



## 4. Establish the acceptable biological catch and total annual catch limit for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex

***Purpose of Action:** Catch levels are being established for the new South Atlantic Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex to respond to the most recent stock assessment, SEDAR 68 OA (2022). The recommended ABCs from SEDAR 68 OA (2022) are inclusive of recreational estimates from the MRIP-FES survey.*

Alternative	ACL (pounds whole weight)				
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Alternative 1 (No Action, no ABC)	n/a				
<b>Preferred Alternative 2 (ACL = ABC)</b>	<b>67,450</b>	<b>72,200</b>	<b>75,050</b>	<b>77,900</b>	<b>79,800</b>
Alternative 3 (95% of ABC)	64,078	68,590	71,298	74,005	75,810
Alternative 4 (90% of ABC)	60,705	64,980	67,545	70,110	71,820

### Draft Rationale

- The Council has been, and can legally, set the ACL equal to the ABC.
- The Council chose to not include a buffer between the ABC and ACL but instead rely on the following to account for management uncertainty:
  - The maximum allowed rebuilding timeframe established through Action 3.
  - Scamp and yellowmouth grouper management measures modifications to ensure the ACL is not exceeded, thus preventing overfishing.

### Committee Action

- REVIEW SELECTED PREFERRED.
- REVIEW DRAFT RATIONALE.

## 5. Establish sector allocations and sector annual catch limits for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex

***Purpose of Action:** Allocations need to be established for the new Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex in response to catch levels provided by the SSC from the most recent SEDAR 68 (2022) stock assessment.*

<b>COMMERCIAL ALLOCATIONS</b>	Alternative 1 (No Action)	<b>Preferred Alternative 2 Split Reduction (2018-2022)</b>	Alternative 3 Split Reduction (2013-2022)
Total ACL (Year) (ACL=ABC)	Commercial	<b>Commercial %, (lbs ww)</b>	Commercial %, (lbs ww)
67,450 (2025)	NO ALLOCATIONS	<b>64.90 (43,772)</b>	63.40 (42,763)
72,200 (2026)	NO ALLOCATIONS	<b>63.92 (46,147)</b>	62.51 (45,132)
75,050 (2027)	NO ALLOCATIONS	<b>63.39 (47,572)</b>	62.04 (46,561)
77,900 (2028)	NO ALLOCATIONS	<b>62.90 (48,997)</b>	61.60 (47,986)
79,800 (2029)	NO ALLOCATIONS	<b>62.59 (49,947)</b>	61.32 (48,933)

RECREATIONAL ALLOCATIONS	Alternative 1 (No Action)	Preferred Alternative 2 Split Reduction (2018-2022)	Alternative 3 Split Reduction (2013-2022)
Total ACL (Year) (ACL=ABC)	Recreational	Recreational %, (lbs ww)	Recreational %, (lbs ww)
67,450 (2025)	NO ALLOCATIONS	35.10 (23,678)	36.60 (24,687)
72,200 (2026)	NO ALLOCATIONS	36.08 (26,053)	37.49 (27,068)
75,050 (2027)	NO ALLOCATIONS	36.61 (27,478)	37.96 (28,489)
77,900 (2028)	NO ALLOCATIONS	37.10 (28,903)	38.40 (29,914)
79,800 (2029)	NO ALLOCATIONS	37.41 (29,853)	38.68 (30,867)

**Draft Rationale**

- The Council determined that the **Preferred Alternative 2** allocation method more fairly deals with the initial reduction in landings that results from the updated catch levels and reduces the proportion of each sector’s allowable catch based on recent landings so the effect on each sector is more equitable.
- Similarly, the Council noted that **Preferred Alternative 2** would strike a balance between the needs of both sectors and increase each sector’s allowable catch proportionately on a poundage basis throughout the rebuilding plan.
- The Council felt that the 2018 through 2022 basis was the most representative of the fishery in recent years.

**Committee Action**

- REVIEW SELECTED PREFERRED.
- REVIEW DRAFT RATIONALE.

## 6. Reduce the recreational fishing season for scamp and yellowmouth grouper

**Purpose of Action:** Because of both the stock status indicated by SEDAR 68 OA (2022) and the reduced catch levels recommended by the SSC, the Council is considering modifying the fishing season to achieve the reduction in harvest needed to constrain catch to the updated ACLs.

Alternatives	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Preferred Alternative 1</b>												
<b>Alternative 2</b>												
<b>Alternative 3</b>												

### Draft Rationale

- The Council noted that recreational landings of scamp and yellowmouth grouper are highest in May, when the shallow water grouper spawning season closure ends and then again in August, tapering off into September.
- The Council felt that closing the season at the end of August, as proposed under Alternative 2, might help to constrain landings while still maintaining access during peak landings months. However, stakeholders stated it was more important to maintain the length of the season at a lower bag limit than to reduce the length of the season.
- Based on input from the SG AP and the projections incorporating a reduced recreational bag limit (Action 7a), the Council felt that a season modification was not necessary.

### Committee Action

- REVIEW SELECTED PREFERRED.
- CONSIDER MOVING ACTION TO CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX (F).

**DRAFT MOTION:** MOVE ACTION 6 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX.

## 7. Modify the recreational retention limit for scamp and yellowmouth grouper

***Purpose of Action:** The Council is considering modifying the current bag limit or establishing a recreational vessel limit to achieve the reduction in harvest needed to constrain catch to the updated recreational ACLs, while maintaining recreational access.*

### 7a. Modify the recreational bag limit

Action	Alternative	Bag limit	Recreational Component	Vessel limit
Sub-Action 7a	Alternative 1 (No Action)	3 scamp or 3 YM within the grouper aggregate	private, for-hire	none
	Alternative 2	2 fish (either scamp or YM grouper) within the grouper aggregate	private, for-hire	none
	<b>Preferred Alternative 3</b>	<b>1 fish (either scamp or YM grouper) within the grouper aggregate</b>	<b>private, for-hire</b>	<b>none</b>

### Draft Rationale

- The bag limit reduction is being considered due to the reductions in catch levels compared to the current scamp (individually) and yellowmouth grouper (within the OSASWG complex) catch levels.
- Any modifications to the bag limit establish an **aggregate** bag limit since the catch levels for the complex are for both species. This also absolves anglers from having to identify between the species.
- Based on the following, **Preferred Alternative 3** was selected:
  - The SG AP stressed that recreational anglers would prefer a bag limit reduction over shortening the season.
  - The projections for the 1 fish aggregate bag limit predicted no closures from 2025-2029, which demonstrates that a reduced bag limit will likely constrain recreational harvest to the recreational ACL.

### Committee Action

- REVIEW SELECTED PREFERRED.
- REVIEW DRAFT RATIONALE.

## 7b. Establish a recreational vessel limit

Action	Alternative	Bag limit	Recreational Component	Vessel limit
Sub-Action 7b	<b>Preferred Alternative 1 (No Action)</b>	3 fish within the grouper aggregate	private, for-hire	none
	Alternative 2a	<i>Dependent on Sub-Action 7a</i>	<b>private</b>	2 fish (either scamp or YM grouper) <b>PER DAY</b>
	Alternative 2b	<i>Dependent on Sub-Action 7a</i>	<b>private</b>	4 fish (either scamp or YM grouper) <b>PER DAY</b>
	Alternative 3a	<i>Dependent on Sub-Action 7a</i>	<b>for-hire</b>	2 fish (either scamp or YM grouper) <b>PER TRIP</b>
	Alternative 3b	<i>Dependent on Sub-Action 7a</i>	<b>for-hire</b>	4 fish (either scamp or YM grouper) <b>PER TRIP</b>

### Draft Rationale

- The Council considered establishing a recreational vessel limit to further constrain recreational harvest of scamp and yellowmouth grouper to the reduced catch levels.
- After considering the Snapper Grouper APs input on the recreational retention, stakeholder input during public comment, and the projections for the preferred aggregate bag limit alternative, the Council decided that establishing a vessel limit would unnecessarily limit recreational landings, exacerbating adverse social and economic effects, and selected **Alternative 1 (No Action)** as the preferred alternative.

### Committee Action

- REVIEW SELECTED PREFERRED.
- CONSIDER MOVING ACTION TO CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX (F).

**DRAFT MOTION:** MOVE SUB-ACTION 7B TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX.

## 8. Establish an aggregate commercial trip limit for scamp and yellowmouth grouper

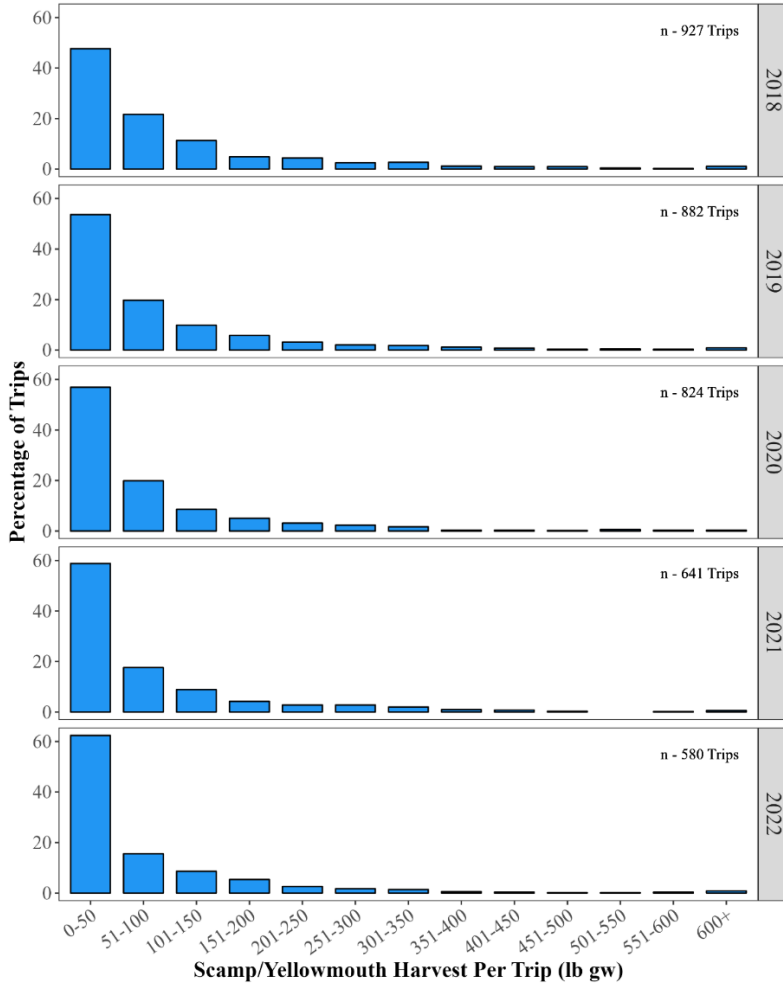
***Purpose of Action:** The Council is considering establishing a commercial trip limit to achieve the reduction in harvest needed to constrain catch to the updated commercial ACLs, while maintaining an extended commercial season.*

Alternative	Trip Limit (lbs gw)
Alternative 1 (No Action)	none
Alternative 2	200 lbs gw
<b>Preferred Alternative 3</b>	<b>300 lbs gw</b>
Alternative 4	400 lbs gw
Alternative 5	500 lbs gw

### Projections

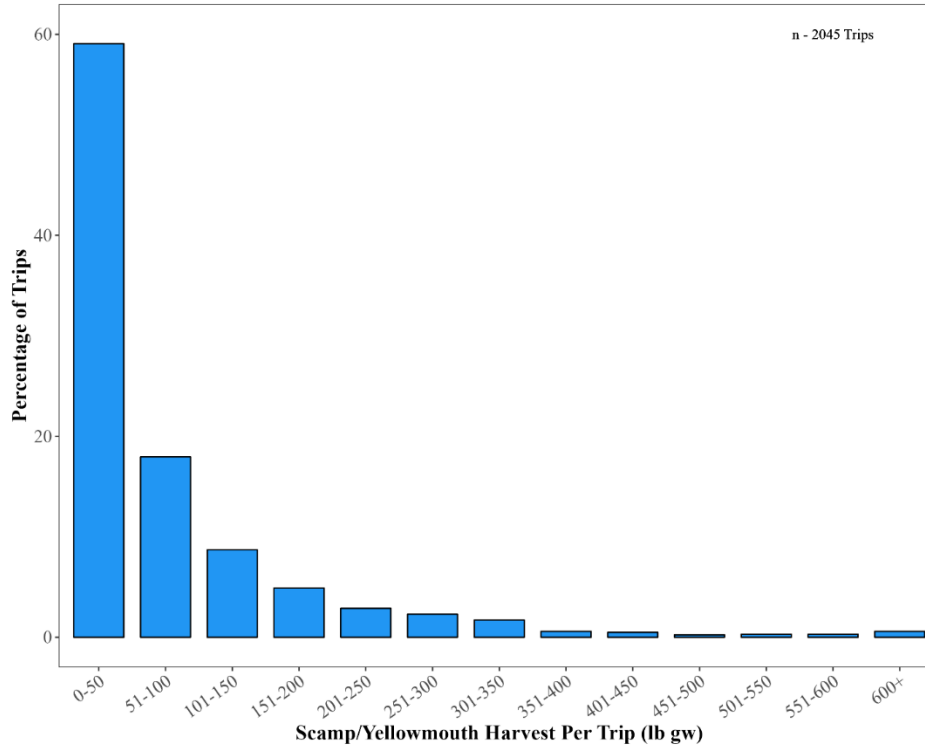
**Table 2.** The Percent reduction in harvest associated with each trip limit alternatives for the commercial sector.

Alternative	% Reduction
Alternative 1: (No Action)	0.00%
Alternative 2: 200 lbs gw	-16.52%
<b>Preferred Alternative 3: 300 lbs gw</b>	<b>-7.96%</b>
Alternative 4: 400 lbs gw	-4.35%
Alternative 5: 500 lbs gw	-2.46%



**Figure 1.** Distribution of scamp and yellowmouth grouper trip harvest between 2018 and 2022, in 50 lbs gw bins.





**Figure 2.** Distribution of scamp and yellowmouth grouper trip harvest between 2020 and 2022, all years combined, in 50 lbs gw bins.

**Table 2.** The approximate date the commercial ACL would be met under each commercial trip limit alternative (Action 8). These projections assume the preferred alternatives from Actions 4 (total ACL) and 5 (allocations), and no change to the fishing season from May 1 to December 31.

Year	Commercial ACL lbs ww	Commercial ACL lbs gw	Alternative 1 (No Action): No Commercial Trip Limit	Alternative 2: 200 lbs gw	<b>Preferred Alternative 3: 300 lbs gw</b>	Alternative 4: 400 lbs gw	Alternative 5: 500 lbs gw
2025	43,775	37,095	21-Aug	28-Sep	<b>3-Sep</b>	27-Aug	25-Aug
2026	46,150	39,108	29-Aug	20-Oct	<b>16-Sep</b>	6-Sep	2-Sep
2027	47,574	40,315	3-Sep	8-Nov	<b>24-Sep</b>	14-Sep	9-Sep
2028	48,999	41,523	10-Sep	9-Dec	<b>3-Oct</b>	22-Sep	17-Sep
2029	49,947	42,328	15-Sep	26-Dec	<b>11-Oct</b>	27-Sep	22-Sep

### Draft Rationale

- The Council decided that limiting the commercial harvest to 300 lbs gutted weight per trip (**Preferred Alternative 3**), increases the likelihood of the scamp/yellowmouth portion of the fishery remaining open and available to consumers for as long as possible while reducing harvest to ensure rebuilding is achieved.

- While the season is projected to close, the Council feels confident that the preferred commercial AM, (Action 9) will help to prevent any commercial overages and correct for them if they occur.
- The 300 lbs trip limit is also consistent with what was set for gag through Amendment 53.

### **Committee Action**

- REVIEW SELECTED PREFERRED.
- REVIEW DRAFT RATIONALE.

## 9. Establish commercial accountability measures for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex

**Purpose of Action:** Accountability measures need to be established for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex to contribute to the rebuilding plan by ensuring that commercial ACLs are not exceeded and to correct for overages if they occur.

Alternative	In-Season AM		Post-Season AM	
	Triggers	AM	Triggers	AM
<b>Alternative 1 (No Action)</b>	No commercial AM for the South Atlantic Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper Complex, retain current AMs for scamp (individually) and yellowmouth grouper (within the OSASWG Complex)			
<b>Alternative 2 STATUS QUO FOR SCAMP/YM</b>	Commercial landings reach or are expected to reach the sector ACL	Current commercial season closes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial landings exceed the commercial ACL</li> <li>• Total ACL exceeded</li> <li>• Stock is overfished</li> </ul> <p><b>*All triggers must be present for AM to occur</b></p>	Commercial ACL is reduced for the following year by the amount of the overage
<b>Preferred Alternative 3 "UN-COUPLED" POST-SEASON</b>	Commercial landings reach or are expected to reach the sector ACL	Current commercial season closes	<p>Commercial landings exceed the commercial ACL</p> <p><b>*Not tied to stock status and total ACL</b></p>	Commercial ACL is reduced for the following year by the amount of the overage

### Draft Rationale

- To achieve rebuilding, the Council felt it was imperative that the commercial AMs be as effective as possible in preventing commercial landings from exceeding the commercial ACL.
- Retaining the current in-season closure would ensure that landings remain at or below the commercial ACL.
- The Council has recently been modifying *recreational* post-season AMs to remove the 3 triggers (total ACL, sector ACL, and stock status), effectively making the AM easier to trigger, reliant only on landings exceeding the ACL. During the March 2024 meeting the Council discussed the need to be consistent between the sectors with regards to AMs, noting

that while this AM may be triggered more easily, **Preferred Alternative 3** provides more equity between the sectors and more long-term benefit to the stock.

### **Committee Action**

- REVIEW SELECTED PREFERRED.
- REVIEW DRAFT RATIONALE.

## 10. Establish recreational accountability measures for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex

***Purpose of Action:** Accountability measures need to be established for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex to contribute to the rebuilding plan by ensuring that recreational ACLs are not exceeded and to correct for overages if they occur.*

Alternative	In-Season AM		Post-Season AM	
	Triggers	AM	Triggers	AM
<b>Alternative 1 (No Action)</b>	No recreational AM for the South Atlantic Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper Complex, retain current AMs for scamp (individually) and yellowmouth grouper (within the OSASWG Complex)			
<b>Alternative 2 STATUS QUO FOR SCAMP/YM</b>	Recreational landings reach or are expected to reach the sector ACL	Current recreational season closes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL</li> <li><b>Total ACL is exceeded</b></li> <li><b>Stock is overfished</b></li> </ul> <p><b>*All triggers must be present for AM to occur</b></p>	Recreational season for the following year is reduced by the amount necessary to prevent the recreational ACL from being exceeded
<b>Alternative 3 “UNCOUPLED”, SEASON REDUCTION PAYBACK</b>	Recreational landings reach or are expected to reach the sector ACL	Current recreational season closes	<p>Recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL</p> <p><b>*Not tied to stock status and total ACL</b></p>	Recreational season for the following year is reduced by the amount necessary to prevent the recreational ACL from being exceeded
<b>Alternative 4 “UNCOUPLED”, ACL PAYBACK</b>	Recreational landings reach or are expected to reach the sector ACL	Current recreational season closes	<p>Recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL</p> <p><b>*Not tied to stock status and total ACL</b></p>	Recreational ACL is reduced for the following year by the amount of the overage
<b>Preferred Alternative 5 NO IN-SEASON, “UNCOUPLED”, SEASON REDUCTION</b>	NONE		<p>Recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL</p> <p><b>*Not tied to stock status and total ACL</b></p>	Recreational season for the following year is reduced by the amount necessary to prevent the recreational ACL from being exceeded

## Draft Rationale

- The Council felt that recreational landings estimates are not timely enough for in-season monitoring, and since projections do not predict the recreational ACL being met in-season the Council felt comfortable selecting a preferred alternative that did not include an in-season closure.
- The Council felt that because the post-season AM under **Preferred Alternative 5** is more likely to be triggered as it is not reliant on the total ACL being exceeded or on stock status, that it would be the most effective in contributing to rebuilding of the scamp and yellowmouth grouper stock complex.

## Committee Action

- REVIEW SELECTED PREFERRED.
- REVIEW DRAFT RATIONALE.

## 11. Revise the total annual catch limit and sector annual catch limits for the Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper complex

**Purpose of Action:** Under Action 1, the Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper complex (OSASWG) would be modified to remove yellowmouth grouper. Therefore, the OSASWG ACL must be updated to remove the portion that was previously allocated for yellowmouth grouper. The ABC and ACL for this complex is currently inclusive of MRIP-CHTS recreational estimates. The ABC would remain the same and the ACL would remain inclusive of MRIP-CHTS recreational estimates. The sector allocation percentages would remain the same.

Alternative	ABC (lbs ww)*	Total ACL (lbs ww)	Commercial ACL (lbs ww)	Recreational ACL (lbs ww)
Alternative 1 (No Action)	104,190	104,190	55,542	48,648
<b>Preferred Alternative 2</b>	<b>104,190</b>	<b>100,151</b>	<b>53,380</b>	<b>46,771</b>

**Note:** The current commercial allocation is 53.30% and the current recreational allocation is 46.70%.

### Draft Rationale

- Because the Council is establishing a new Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex (Action 1) with a catch level that accounts for both species (Action 4), the OSASWG ACL must be modified as to not have multiple catch levels that include landings for yellowmouth grouper.
- In 2020, the Unassessed Stocks Workgroup developed and ABC for the OSASWG complex inclusive of MRIP-FES recreational estimates. The catch levels for each species were developed using both the 3rd highest and Only Reliable Catch Stock (ORCS) methods. The 3rd highest method is no longer considered BSIA.
- The Council acknowledges that the statutory timeline required by the MSA to establish a rebuilding plan for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex, does not allow for the development of an updated ABC for the OSASWG complex as information is not currently available to revise that ABC.
- Considering this, the Council decided that retaining the MRIP-CHTS based ABC, removing the yellowmouth grouper portion of the MRIP-CHTS based OSASWG ACL, and recalculating the MRIP-CHTS based sector ACLs proportional to their current values (**Preferred Alternative 2**) was the most appropriate method of updating the OSASWG catch levels.

### Committee Action

- REVIEW SELECTED PREFERRED.
- REVIEW DRAFT RATIONALE.

## What's Next?

- Consider final approval motion in Full Council.
- The preferred alternative for Action 2c (OY) will lose the “*Committee*” tag after Full Council passes the motion.
- There will be 10 actions with the removal of Actions 6 and 7b (if removed) and subsequent re-numbering.
- Final review and submission.



# Appendix

## Appendix I. Current Catch Levels and Regulations

**Table A-1.** Current regulations for scamp and the shallow water grouper complex.

Regulation	Scamp	Current Shallow Water Grouper Complex					
		Coney	Graysby	Red Hind	Rock Hind	Yellowfin grouper	Yellowmouth grouper
aggregate bag limit	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
bag limit	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
trip limit	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
size limit	20 in TL	NA	NA	NA	NA	20 in TL	20 in TL
Spawning Season Closure	Jan 1 – Apr 30	January 1 – April 30					

**Table A-2.** The species-specific portions of the shallow water grouper complex ACL.

Shallow Water Grouper Complex	ABC lbs ww	ACL lbs ww	Commercial ACL lbs ww (53.30%)	Recreational ACL lbs ww (46.70%)
Red Hind	33,084	33,084	24,350	8,734
Rock Hind	37,493	37,493	22,833	14,660
<b>Yellowmouth Grouper</b>	4,039	4,039	44	3,995
Yellowfin Grouper	9,258	9,258	4,879	4,379
Coney	2,718	2,718	665	2,053
Graysby	17,598	17,598	2,771	14,827
<b>COMPLEX TOTAL</b>	104,190	104,190	55,542	48,648

## Appendix II. Current Accountability Measures

### Commercial

#### Scamp:

- (i) If commercial landings for scamp, as estimated by the SRD, reach or are projected to reach the commercial ACL of 219,375 lb (99,507 kg), round weight, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to close the commercial sector for the remainder of the fishing year. On and after the effective date of such a notification, all sale or purchase of scamp is prohibited and harvest or possession of scamp in or from the South Atlantic EEZ is limited to the bag and possession limits. These bag and possession limits apply in the South Atlantic on board a vessel for which a valid Federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper has been issued, without regard to where such species were harvested, i.e., in state or Federal waters.
- (ii) If commercial landings for scamp, as estimated by the SRD, exceed the commercial ACL, and the combined commercial and recreational ACL of 335,744 lb (152,291 kg), round weight, is exceeded, and scamp are overfished based on the most recent Status of U.S. Fisheries Report to Congress, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to reduce the commercial ACL for that following fishing year by the amount of the commercial ACL overage in the prior fishing year.

#### Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper:

- (i) If commercial landings for other SASWG combined, as estimated by the SRD, reach or are projected to reach the commercial ACL of 55,542 lb (25,193 kg), round weight, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to close the commercial sector for this complex for the remainder of the fishing year. On and after the effective date of such a notification, all sale or purchase of red hind, rock hind, yellowmouth grouper, yellowfin grouper, coney, and graysby is prohibited, and harvest or possession of any of these species in or from the South Atlantic EEZ is limited to the bag and possession limits. These bag and possession limits apply in the South Atlantic on board a vessel for which a valid Federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper has been issued, without regard to where such species were harvested, i.e., in state or Federal waters.
- (ii) If commercial landings for other SASWG combined, as estimated by the SRD, exceed the commercial ACL, and the combined commercial and recreational ACL of 104,190 lb (47,260 kg), round weight, is exceeded, and at least one of the species in other SASWG combined is overfished based on the most recent status of U.S. Fisheries Report to Congress, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to reduce the commercial ACL for that following

fishing year by the amount of the commercial ACL overage in the prior fishing year

## **Recreational**

### **Scamp:**

- (i) If recreational landings for scamp, as estimated by the SRD, reach or are projected to reach the recreational ACL of 116,369 lb (52,784 kg), round weight, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to close the recreational sector for the remainder of the fishing year regardless if the stock is overfished, unless NMFS determines that no closure is necessary based on the best scientific information available. On and after the effective date of such a notification, the bag and possession limits for scamp in or from the South Atlantic EEZ are zero.
- (ii) If recreational landings for scamp, as estimated by the SRD, exceed the recreational ACL, then during the following fishing year recreational landings will be monitored for a persistence in increased landings, and if necessary, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to reduce the length of the recreational fishing season and the recreational ACL by the amount of the recreational ACL overage, if scamp are overfished based on the most recent Status of U.S. Fisheries Report to Congress, and if the combined commercial and recreational ACL of 335,744 lb (152,291 kg), round weight, is exceeded during the same fishing year. NMFS will use the best scientific information available to determine if reducing the length of the recreational fishing season and recreational ACL is necessary. When the recreational sector is closed as a result of NMFS reducing the length of the recreational fishing season and ACL, the bag and possession limits for scamp in or from the South Atlantic EEZ are zero.

### **Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Groupers:**

- (i) If recreational landings for other SASWG combined, as estimated by the SRD, reach or are projected to reach the recreational ACL of 48,648 lb (22,066 kg), round weight, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to close the recreational sector for the remainder of the fishing year regardless if any stock in other SASWG combined is overfished, unless NMFS determines that no closure is necessary based on the best scientific information available. On and after the effective date of such a notification, the bag and possession limits for any species in the other SASWG combined in or from the South Atlantic EEZ are zero.
- (ii) If recreational landings for other SASWG combined, as estimated by the SRD, exceed the recreational ACL, then during the following fishing year recreational landings will be monitored for a persistence in increased landings, and if necessary, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to reduce the length of the recreational fishing season and the recreational ACL by the amount of the recreational ACL overage, if at least one of the species in other SASWG combined is overfished based on the most recent Status of U.S. Fisheries Report to

Congress, and if the combined commercial and recreational ACL of 104,190 lb (47,260 kg) is exceeded during the same fishing year. NMFS will use the best scientific information available to determine if reducing the length of the recreational fishing season and recreational ACL is necessary. When the recreational sector is closed as a result of NMFS reducing the length of the recreational fishing season and ACL, the bag and possession limits for any species in the other SASWG combined in or from the South Atlantic EEZ are zero.