

For the reasons set out in the preamble, 50 CFR part 622 is proposed to be amended as follows:

PART 622--FISHERIES OF THE CARIBBEAN, GULF OF MEXICO, AND SOUTH ATLANTIC

1. The authority citation for part 622 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

2. In § 622.187, revise paragraphs (b) (2) (iii), (iv), and (v), and add paragraph (b) (2) (vi) to read as follows:

§ 622.187 Bag and possession limits.

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(b) * * *

Commented [SS1]: S-G Bag limits

(2) * * *

Commented [SS2]: Grouper and tilefish, combined

(iii) No more than one fish may be a golden tilefish;

Commented [SS3]: for (iii), only removed "and"

(iv) No more than two fish may be blueline tilefish.

However, no blueline tilefish may be retained by the captain or crew of a vessel operating as a charter vessel or headboat. The bag limit for such captain and crew is zero; and

Commented [SS4]: for (iv), only added "and"

(v) No more than one fish may be scamp or yellowmouth

Commented [SS5]: Action 7, Sub-Action 7a, Preferred Alternative 3. Scamp/Yellowmouth combined bag limit.

grouper, combined.

(vi) No goliath grouper or Nassau grouper may be

Commented [SS6]: no changes for goliath and Nassau grouper other than to change paragraph designation from (v) to (vi). Needed the prohibited species here to be placed after the species with specific bag limits.

retained.

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3. In § 622.191, add paragraph (a)(16) to read as follows:

§ 622.191 Commercial trip limits.

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(a) * * *

(16) *Scamp and yellowmouth grouper, combined.* Until the applicable commercial ACL specified in § 622.193(i)(1)(i) is reached, 300 **lb** (136 kg), gutted weight. See § 622.193(i)(1)(i) for the limitations regarding scamp and yellowmouth grouper after the applicable commercial ACL is reached.

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4. In § 622.193, revise paragraphs (i) and (j) to read as follows:

§ 622.193 Annual catch limits (ACLs), annual catch targets (ACTs), and accountability measures (AMs).

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(i) *Scamp and yellowmouth grouper, combined* –(1) *Commercial sector.* (i) **If** commercial landings for scamp and yellowmouth grouper, combined, as estimated by the SRD, reach or are projected to reach the applicable commercial ACL, 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

Commented [SS7]: Action 8, Preferred Alternative 3. Commercial trip limit for scamp/yellowmouth grouper.

Commented [SS8]: Action 9, Preferred Alternative 3, Commercial AMs for scamp/yellowmouth grouper.

date of such a notification, all sale or purchase of scamp and yellowmouth grouper is prohibited and harvest or possession of scamp and yellowmouth grouper 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. The commercial **ACL** for scamp and yellowmouth grouper, combined, is 43,772 lb (19,855 kg), round weight, for the 2025 fishing year; 46,147 lb (20,932 kg), round weight, for the 2026 fishing year; 47,572 lb (21,578 kg), round weight, for the 2027 fishing year; 48,997 lb (22,225 kg), round weight, for the 2028 fishing year; and 49,947 lb (22,656 kg), round weight, for the 2029 and subsequent fishing years.

Commented [SS9]: Action 5, Preferred Alternative 2, Commercial ACLs for scamp/yellowmouth grouper

(ii) If commercial landings for scamp and yellowmouth grouper, combined, as estimated by the SRD, **exceed the applicable commercial ACL** specified in paragraph (i)(1)(i) of this section, and regardless of the stock status of either species and whether the total ACL specified in paragraph (i)(1)(iii) of this section is exceeded, then during the following fishing year, the AA will file a

Commented [SS10]: Action 9, Preferred Alternative 3, Commercial AMs for scamp/yellowmouth grouper.

notification with the Office of the Federal Register to reduce the applicable commercial ACL specified in paragraph (i) (1) (i) of this section by the amount of the commercial ACL overage.

(2) *Recreational sector.* If recreational landings for scamp and yellowmouth grouper, combined, as estimated by the SRD, exceed the applicable recreational ACL, and regardless of the stock status of either species, then in the following fishing year, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to reduce the length of the recreational fishing season to ensure that the recreational ACL is not exceeded. On and after the effective date of such a notification, the bag and possession limits for scamp and yellowmouth grouper in or from the South Atlantic EEZ are zero. The recreational ACL for scamp and yellowmouth grouper, combined, is 23,678 lb (10,740 kg), round weight, for the 2025 fishing year; 26,053 lb (11,817 kg), round weight, for the 2026 fishing year; 27,478 lb (12,464 kg), round weight, for the 2027 fishing year; 28,903 lb (13,110 kg), round weight, for the 2028 fishing year; and 29,853 lb (13,541 kg), round weight, for the 2029 and subsequent fishing years.

(3) *Total ACL.* The total ACL for scamp and yellowmouth grouper, combined, is 67,450 lb (30,595 kg), round weight,

Commented [SS11]: Action 10, Preferred Alternative 5, Recreational AMs for scamp/yellowmouth grouper.

Commented [SS12]: Action 5, Preferred Alternative 2, Recreational ACLs for scamp/yellowmouth grouper.

Commented [SS13]: Action 4, Preferred Alternative 2, Total ACLs for scamp/yellowmouth grouper.

for the 2025 fishing year; 72,200 lb (32,749 kg), round weight, for the 2026 fishing year; 75,050 lb (34,042 kg), round weight, for the 2027 fishing year; 77,900 lb (35,335 kg), round weight, for the 2028 fishing year; 79,800 lb (36,197 kg), round weight, for the 2029 and subsequent fishing years.

(j) *Other SASWG combined (including red hind, rock hind, yellowfin grouper, coney, and graysby)* –(1) *Commercial sector.* (i) If commercial landings for other SASWG combined, as estimated by the SRD, reach or are projected to reach the commercial **ACL** of 53,380 lb (24,213 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, 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

Commented [SS14]: Action 11, Preferred Alternative 2, Other SASWG commercial ACL

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 100,151 lb (45,428 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.

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(2) *Recreational sector.* (i) If recreational landings for other SASWG combined, as estimated by the SRD, reach or are projected to reach the recreational ACL of 46,771 lb (21,215 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

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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 100,151 lb (45,428 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.

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Commented [SS17]: Action 11, Preferred Alternative 2, Other SASWG Total ACL.