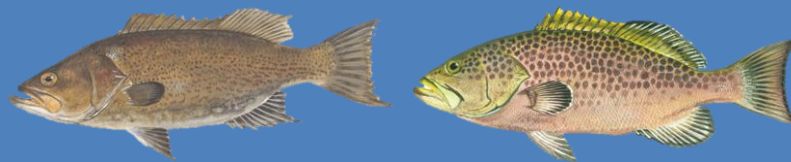


# Amendment 55 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region

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  
December 2023



## Background

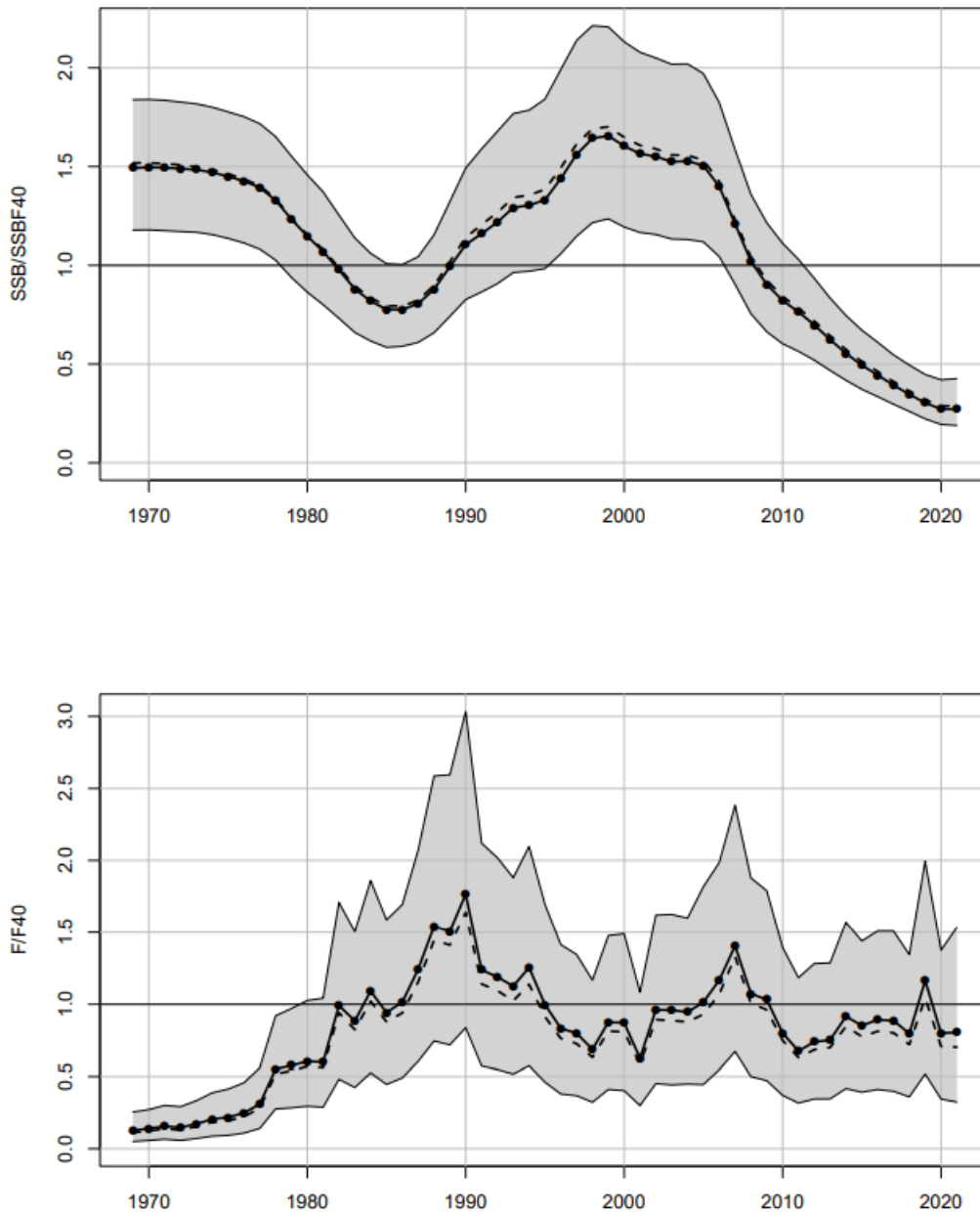
### Stock Assessment Results

The South Atlantic stock of scamp was assessed through the Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) 68 research track assessment in September 2021 (SEDAR 68 [2021]). In 2020, the first stage of the SEDAR 68 data process was a Stock ID Workshop (SEDAR 68 Stock ID Workshop [2020]), which concluded that scamp are very difficult to distinguish from yellowmouth grouper and thus, much of the assessment data likely represent both species in unknown proportions. The SEDAR 68 Stock ID Workshop (2020) recommended that the stock assessment be conducted on both scamp and yellowmouth grouper jointly, with the two species treated as a single complex (hereafter referred to as Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex). In December 2022, the SEDAR 68 operational assessment was

conducted with data through 2021 and considered scamp and yellowmouth grouper a single stock due to identification issues between the two species (SEDAR 68 [2022]). **SEDAR 68 (2022) indicated that the scamp and yellowmouth grouper stock is overfished, but that overfishing is not occurring (Figure 1).** The assessment noted that stock status was driven mainly by poor recruitment, with a pattern of low recruitment in the most recent 10 to 15-year period. This pattern of low recruitment raised the question of a regime shift, which would necessitate re-evaluation of biological reference points for this stock. However, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) considered that there was not enough evidence to determine a regime shift has occurred, primarily referencing criteria developed by Klaer et al. (2015). Since then, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) has requested further SSC discussion on regime shifts and how these could affect management of the snapper grouper fishery.

SEDAR 68 (2021) used a maximum sustainable yield (MSY) proxy with fishing mortality (F) at 30% spawning potential ratio (SPR); however, SEDAR 68 (2022) found MSY to be poorly defined and recommended using an MSY proxy of F40%SPR. In February 2023, the Council requested projections using F30%SPR, as this is the status quo for scamp. In March 2023, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) sent a letter recommending the Council consider using the F40%SPR proxy, noting that retaining F30%SPR would not be consistent with best scientific information available (BSIA) and would contribute to greater than a 50% chance of overfishing.

In January 2023, the SSC determined SEDAR 68 (2022) was consistent with BSIA and the stock assessment was an adequate basis for determining stock status and supporting fishing level recommendations. The Council reviewed the results of SEDAR 68 (2022) at their March 2023 meeting and provided guidance to begin work on a plan amendment. At their April 2023 meeting, the SSC reviewed the results of the SEDAR 68 (2022) and provided catch level recommendations.



**Figure 1.** Top panel: spawning biomass relative to  $SSB_{F40\%}$ . Bottom panel:  $F$  relative to  $F_{40\%}$ . Solid line indicates estimates from the SEDAR 68 (2022) base run; dashed lines represent median values of the Monte Carlo/Bootstrap Ensemble (MCBE) analysis; gray error bands indicate the 5<sup>th</sup> and 95<sup>th</sup> percentiles of the MCBE.

# Acceptable Biological Catch

Acceptable biological catch (ABC) recommendations for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex for 2025 through 2029 (**Table 2**) were based on Scenario 7 ([SEDAR 68 Follow-Up Analysis Presentation, April SSC, Table 6](#)), which is  $F=75\%$   $F_{40\%SPR}$  using the **recent 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. The IPT requested the SSC provide ABC values in landings and discards at their July 2023 meeting (Table 2). The SEFSC provided ABC values in landings and discards in September 2023 (Table 2). Total removals were determined to be allocated as 95% landings and 5% dead discards (Table 2). Methods to determine the ratio of landings to dead discards are detailed in Appendix D.1.2 of the draft amendment.

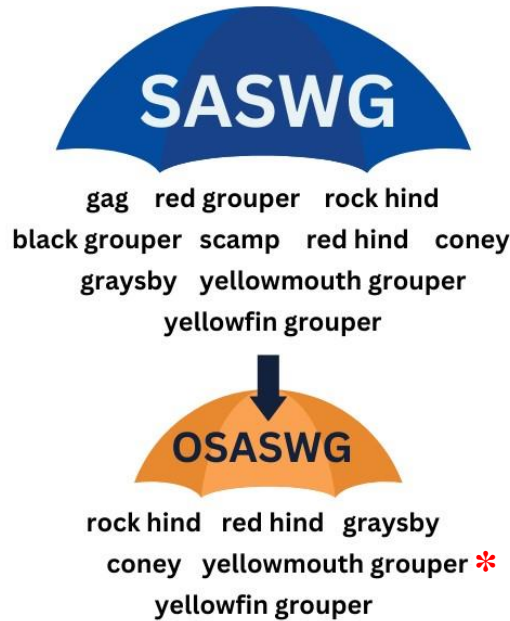
**Table 1.** The SSC’s recommended Status Determination Criteria for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex (deterministic values).

Criteria	Deterministic
Overfished evaluation (SSB/MSST)	0.36
Overfishing evaluation ( $F/F_{MSY \text{ proxy}}$ )	0.91
MFMT ( $F_{MSY \text{ proxy}}$ )	0.28
SSB <sub>MSY</sub> (metric tons)	1503.87
MSST (metric tons)	801.6
MSY (1000 lbs.)	372.28
Y at 75% $F_{MSY}$ (1000 lbs.)	344.83
ABC Control Rule Adjustment	20%
P-Star	30%
SSC recommended $P_{\text{Rebuild}}$	70%
M	0.155
Generation Time	~ 10 years

**Table 2.** 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

# Shallow Water Grouper Refresher



- **South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper (SASWG) complex** = 10 species (gag, black grouper, red grouper, scamp, red hind, rock hind, yellowmouth grouper, yellowfin grouper, graysby, and coney [regulations at 622.2]).
- **The Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper (OSASWG) complex** consists of 6 species (red hind, rock hind, coney, graysby, yellowfin grouper, and yellowmouth grouper).
- **Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex:** This amendment will remove yellowmouth grouper from the OSASWG complex and create the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex based on the catch levels provided by SEDAR 68.

## Objectives for this Meeting (December 2023)

- Review Purpose and Need
- Review actions and alternative language
- Review preliminary analysis

## 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	<b>Review draft document and preliminary analysis and provide additional guidance</b>
March 2024	Review preliminary analysis, select preferreds and approve for public hearings
Spring 2024	Hold public hearings
June 2024	Review public hearing comments and modify document as needed
September 2024	Review and approve all actions, approve for formal review

## Draft Purpose and Need Statements

**Purpose:** The *purposes* of this fishery management plan amendment are to remove yellowmouth grouper from the Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper complex and establish a new Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex. For the new complex, establish stock determination criteria, a rebuilding timeframe, catch levels, sector allocations, and accountability measures based on the results of the SEDAR 68 (2022) stock assessment.

**Need:** The *need* for this fishery management plan 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:

- PROVIDE EDITS AS NEEDED

## Confidentiality and How it is Addressed

### *Confidentiality Concerns*

- Recreational landings of Yellowmouth grouper are confidential from 2014-2022
- Commercial landings of Yellowmouth grouper are confidential from 1986-2022
- When removing yellowmouth grouper from the OSASWG complex and combining yellowmouth grouper landings with scamp landings for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex (**Action 1**), yellowmouth grouper landings can easily be calculated.

*How Confidentiality Concerns Were Addressed (Full details in Appendix D.1.2 in Draft Amendment)*

- To ensure confidentiality, yellowmouth grouper landings were averaged over 3-year bins. The difference between the original confidential landings and the 3-year average was minimized for both sectors.
- The annual estimates of scamp landings and the updated non-confidential yellowmouth grouper landings were then summed by sector to create annual estimates for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

## October SG AP Feedback Overview

- One member suggested a reduced commercial trip limit, similar to gag and red grouper
  - Gag (Amendment 53): 300 lbs gw
  - Red Grouper Regulatory Amendment 30): 200 lbs gw
- Another AP member said it may be hard to set a commercial trip limit *before* the new complex is established and catch levels are put in place.
- One member noted that scamp are hard to catch and are notoriously picky and that he did not think their abundance has declined due to fishing pressure. It was also noted that from the commercial side, scamp and yellowmouth are often lumped together as a single species which supports combining the two into the new complex.



# Proposed Actions

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

### Purpose of Action:

SEDAR 68 (2021 and 2022) assessed the South Atlantic scamp and yellowmouth grouper together due to 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. In addition, the catch levels for the OSASWG complex must be adjusted accordingly.

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** There is no Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex. The Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper complex contains rock hind, red hind, coney, graysby, yellowmouth grouper and yellowfin grouper.

**Alternative 2.** Remove yellowmouth grouper from the Other South Atlantic Shallow water Grouper complex and establish a new Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex. The reorganized Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper complex would contain rock hind, red hind, coney, graysby, and yellowfin grouper.

**Table 3.** Alternatives for the reorganization of the Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper complex and the creation of the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

	Complex/Stock Name	Species
<b>Alternative 1 (No Action)</b>	scamp	scamp ONLY
	Other SA Shallow Water Grouper complex	graysby, coney, red hind, rock hind, yellowfin grouper, yellowmouth grouper
<b>Alternative 2</b>	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 8</b> )	graysby, coney, red hind, rock hind, yellowfin grouper

## Discussion:

- The current commercial and recreational allocation percentages for scamp individually and for the OSASWG complex were developed during the Comprehensive ACL Amendment (Snapper Grouper Amendment 25, 2011) using the following formula:

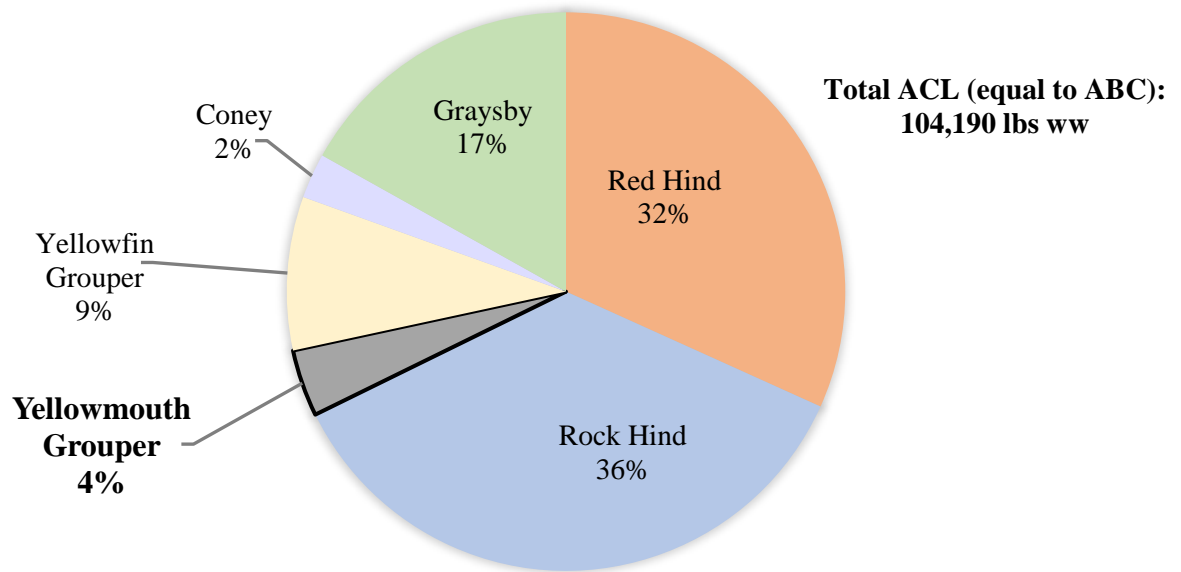
$$(50\% \times \text{average landings from 1986-2008}) + (50\% \times \text{average landings from 2006-2008})$$

- Currently scamp and yellowmouth grouper have very similar management; however, scamp has a separate ACL from the OSASWG complex, which currently contains yellowmouth grouper (**Table 4, Figure 2**).

**Table 4.** Current management measures for scamp and the Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper complex.

Species/Complex	Total ACL (lbs ww)	Spawning Season Closure	Minimum Size limit	Recreational Bag Limit	Commercial Trip Limit
<b>Scamp</b>	335,744	Jan 1 - Apr 30	20 inches total length	3 fish/person aggregate grouper bag limit	none
<b>Other Shallow Water Grouper</b>	104,190	Jan 1 - Apr 30	20 inches total length for Yellowfin and Yellowmouth Grouper Only	3 fish/person aggregate grouper bag limit	none

## OTHER SASWG COMPLEX ABC BREAKDOWN (LBS WW)



**Figure 2.** The ABC/ACL breakdown of the Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper complex. Percentages are portions of the total ACL and do not reflect landings.

### **Committee Action:**

- REVIEW RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES
- SELECT A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

## **2. Establish maximum sustainable yield, maximum fishing mortality threshold, minimum stock size threshold, and equilibrium 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. These include maximum sustainable yield, maximum fishing mortality threshold, minimum stock size threshold, and optimum yield. Options to define the status determination criteria are provided below.

### **2a. Establish the maximum sustainable yield for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.**

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** There is no maximum sustainable yield for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

**Alternative 2.** Establish the maximum sustainable yield proxy at the fishing mortality at 30% of the spawning potential ratio for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

**Alternative 3.** Establish the maximum sustainable yield proxy at the fishing mortality at 40% of the spawning potential ratio for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

### **Discussion: MSY (Maximum Sustainable Yield)**

- SEDAR 68 included analyses using a MSY proxy of  $F_{40\%SPR}$  for the Scamp Yellowmouth Grouper complex and post-assessment analyses used a MSY proxy of  $F_{30\%SPR}$  for the Scamp Yellowmouth Grouper complex.
- The SEDAR 68 Report and SSC (January 2023 report) recommended using a MSY proxy of  $F_{40\%SPR}$  based on scamp and yellowmouth grouper life history and recent literature.
- Currently both scamp and yellowmouth grouper have a an MSY proxy of  $F_{30\%SPR}$ .

### **2b. Establish the maximum fishing mortality threshold for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.**

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** There is no maximum fishing mortality threshold for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

**Alternative 2.** Establish the maximum fishing mortality threshold equal to the maximum sustainable yield proxy of fishing mortality at 30% spawning potential ratio for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

**Alternative 3.** Establish the maximum fishing mortality threshold equal to the maximum sustainable yield proxy of fishing mortality at 40% spawning potential ratio for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

**NOTE: Sub-Action 2b** is dependent on the preferred alternative from **Sub-Action 2a** to establish the MSY/MSY proxy.

**Discussion: MFMT (Maximum Fishing Mortality Threshold)**

- The current MFMT for both scamp and yellowmouth grouper is  $F_{30\%SPR}$ .
- The MFMT would be set equal to the fishing mortality rate that results in the MSY or  $F_{MSY}$  proxy. The SSC recommended MSY proxy of  $F_{40\%SPR}$ .

**2c. Establish the minimum stock size threshold for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.**

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** There is no minimum stock size threshold for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

**Alternative 2.** Establish the minimum stock size threshold equal to the spawning stock biomass at maximum sustainable yield times either one minus the natural mortality or 0.5, whichever is greater, for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

**Alternative 3.** Establish the minimum stock size threshold equal to 75% of the spawning stock biomass at maximum sustainable yield.

**Discussion: MSST (Minimum Spawning Stock Size Threshold)**

- Prior to Regulatory Amendment 21, the MSST for all of the Shallow Water Groupers (including scamp and yellowmouth grouper) was  $SSB_{MSY} ((1-M) \text{ or } 0.5, \text{ whichever is greater})$ . This formula is still used for scamp and yellowmouth grouper.
- SEDAR 68 defined MSST as 75% of  $SSB_{MSY}$  with M estimated at 0.155 for scamp/yellowmouth grouper. Regulatory Amendment 21 changed the MSST for species based on their estimated M (natural mortality rate). It stated that MSST for any species with an M of 0.25 or lower would be 75% of  $SSB_{MSY}$ .

**2d. Establish the equilibrium optimum yield for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.**

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** There is no equilibrium optimum yield for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

**Alternative 2.** Establish an equilibrium optimum yield of 75% of maximum sustainable yield for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

**Alternative 3.** Establish an equilibrium optimum yield of 90% of maximum sustainable yield for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

**Alternative 4.** Establish an equilibrium optimum yield of 95% of maximum sustainable yield for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

**NOTE: Sub-Action 2b** is dependent on the preferred alternative from **Sub-Action 2a** to establish the MSY/MSY proxy.

**Discussion: Equilibrium OY**

- The South Atlantic Council has not typically set equilibrium OY values for the snapper grouper stocks, instead relying on annual OY.
- Optimum yield is the long-term average amount desired from a stock or fishery. Optimum yield is reduced from MSY for the fishery based on relevant economic, social, and ecological factors. **Alternatives 2** through **4** are reduced from MSY at different percentages to account for factors in the fishery that may influence optimum yield.

**Table 5.** Draft alternatives for Sub-Actions 2a (MSY), 2b (MFMT), 2c (MSST), and 2d (Equilibrium OY), defining stock determination criteria for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

	Alternative	MSY (1,000 lbs)	MFMT	MSST (metric tons)	Equilibrium OY (1,000 lbs)
<b>2a</b>	Alternative 1 (No Action)	none	-	-	-
	Alternative 2 (MSY = F <sub>30%SPR</sub> )	416.20	-	-	-
	Alternative 3 (MSY = F <sub>40%SPR</sub> )	372.28	-	-	-
<b>2b</b>	Alternative 1 (No Action)	-	none	-	-
	Alternative 2 (F <sub>MSY</sub> or proxy = F <sub>30%SPR</sub> )	-	0.52	-	-
	Alternative 3 (F <sub>MSY</sub> or proxy = F <sub>40%SPR</sub> )	-	0.28	-	-
<b>2c</b>	Alternative 1 (No Action)	-	-	none	-
	Alternative 2 (SSB <sub>MSY</sub> (1-M) or 0.5)	-	-	601.12	-
	Alternative 3 (75% of SSB <sub>MSY</sub> )	-	-	801.60	-
<b>2d*</b>	Alternative 1 (No Action)	-	-	-	none
	Alternative 2 (75% of F <sub>MSY</sub> )	-	-	-	279.21
	Alternative 3 (90% of F <sub>MSY</sub> )	-	-	-	335.05
	Alternative 4 (95% of F <sub>MSY</sub> )	-	-	-	353.67

\*Note: Alternatives 2 through 4 for Sub-Action 2d are based on an MSY proxy of F<sub>40%SPR</sub>

**Committee Action:**

- REVIEW RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES
- SELECT A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

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

#### Purpose of Action

The results of the SEDAR 68 (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.

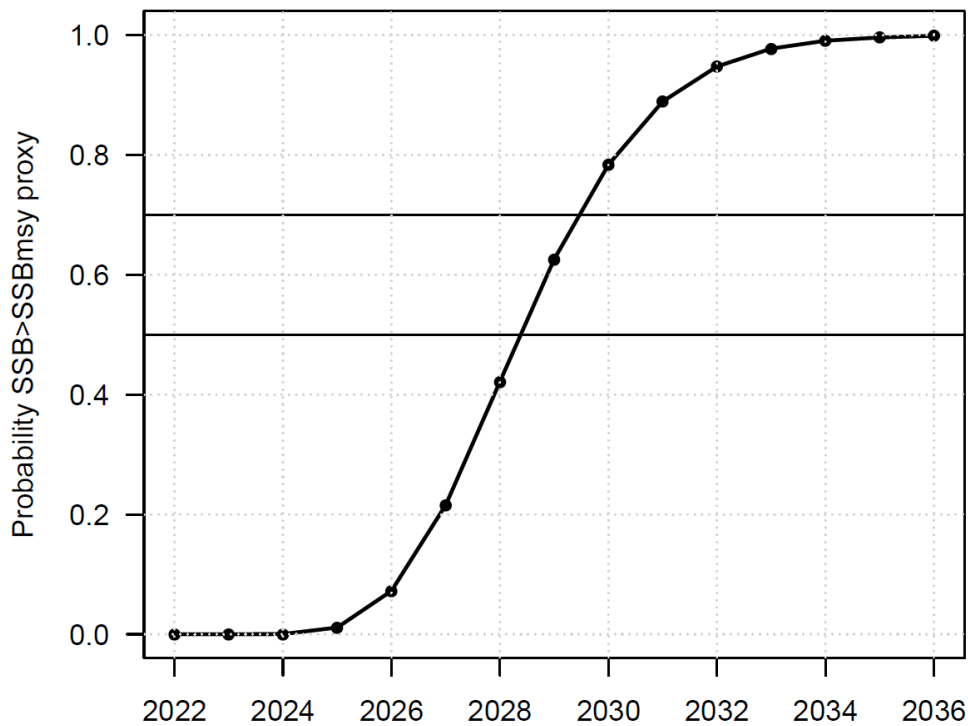
**Alternative 1 (No Action).** There is no timeframe for rebuilding the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

**Alternative 2.** Establish a rebuilding timeframe equal to the shortest possible time to rebuild in the absence of fishing mortality ( $T_{\min}$ ). This would be equal to 5 years with the rebuilding period ending in 2030. 2025 would be Year 1.

**Alternative 3.** Establish a rebuilding timeframe equal to  $T_{\max}$ . This would equal 10 years with the rebuilding period ending in 2035. 2025 would be Year 1.

#### Discussion:

- Rebuilding projections were based on the **long-term average recruitment**.
  - Rebuilding within 10 years ( $T_{\max} = 10$ ) is possible but this is based on long-term average recruitment, which is higher than recent recruitment and assumes that recruitment will recover to previous levels.
- Rebuilding probability
  - Assuming  $F=0$  and long-term recruitment, the stock has a greater than 50% chance of rebuilding by 2029 so  $T_{\max}$  is equal to 10 years (**Alternative 3**).
  - Assuming Year 1 is 2025 and  $F=0$  the stock has a 70% chance of rebuilding in 5 years (**Alternative 2, Figure 2**).



**Figure 3.** Projected probability of rebuilding under scenario 1—fishing mortality rate at  $F = 0$  and long-term average recruitment. The curve represents the proportion of projection replicates for which SSB has reached the replicate-specific SSB<sub>F40%</sub>, with reference lines at 0.5 and 0.7. Source: SEDAR 68OA (2022), Figure 53.

**Committee Action:**

- PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES.
- SELECT PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE



#### 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 (2022). The recommended ABCs from SEDAR 68 (2022) are inclusive of recreational estimates from the MRIP-FES survey.

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** There is no acceptable biological catch or total annual catch limit for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

**Alternative 2.** Establish the acceptable biological catch and set it equal to the recommendation from the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Establish the total annual catch limit for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex and set it equal to the recommended acceptable biological catch. The recommended acceptable biological catch is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Fishing Effort Survey.

**Alternative 3.** Establish the acceptable biological catch and set it equal to the recommendation from the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Establish the total annual catch limit for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex and set it equal to 95% of the recommended acceptable biological catch. The recommended acceptable biological catch is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Fishing Effort Survey.

**Alternative 4.** Establish the acceptable biological catch and set it equal to the recommendation from the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Establish the total annual catch limit for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex and set it equal to 90% of the recommended acceptable biological catch. The recommended acceptable biological catch is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Fishing Effort Survey.

**Table 6.** Alternatives for Action 4 establishing the ABC and total ACL for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

Alternative	ACL (pounds whole weight)				
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Alternative 1 (No Action, no ABC)	n/a				
Alternative 2 (ACL = ABC)	67,450	72,200	75,050	77,900	79,800
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

##### Discussion:

- Alternatives for this action would set the ACL for the **Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex only** *not* the remaining five OSASWG species (red hind, rock hind, coney, graysby, and yellowfin grouper).
- The IPT requested that the SSC provide ABC values in landings and discards at their July 2023 meeting. The SEFSC provided these values in September 2023.
- Overview of ACL usage in the scamp fishery:
  - Commercial sector: harvested an average of 44.9% of commercial ACL from 2012-2022<sup>1</sup>.
  - Recreational sector: harvested an average of 30.9% of recreational ACL from 2012-2022<sup>2</sup>.

### **Committee Action:**

- PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on ACL monitoring data accessed July 17<sup>th</sup> 2023, 2022 landings are preliminary.

<sup>2</sup> Recreational CHTS landings, based on ACL monitoring data accessed July 17<sup>th</sup> 2023, 2022 landings are preliminary.

## **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.

**Alternative 1 (No Action).** There are no sector allocations or sector annual catch limits for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

**Alternative 2.** Commercial and recreational allocations would change each year from 2025-2029, where they would remain in place until modified, based on the total average commercial and recreational landings of scamp and yellowmouth grouper from 2018 through 2022.

**Alternative 3.** Commercial and recreational allocations would change each year from 2025-2029, where they would remain in place until modified, based on the total average commercial and recreational landings of scamp and yellowmouth grouper from 2013 through 2022.

**Alternative 4.** Allocate 63.40% of the total annual catch limit of Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex to the commercial sector and 36.60% to the recreational sector.

**Alternative 5.** Allocate 64.90% of the total annual catch limit of Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex to the commercial sector and 35.10% to the recreational sector.

**Table 7.** Alternatives for allocation percentages under **Action 5.**

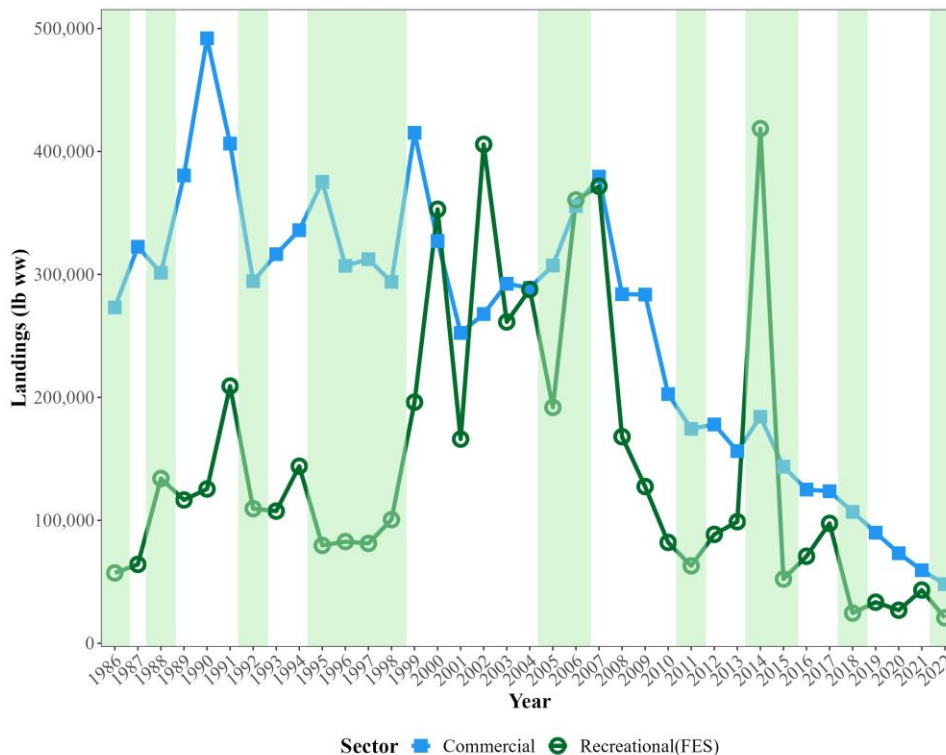
ACL Alternatives	Allocation Alternatives									
	Alternative 1 (No Action)		Alternative 2 Split Reduction (2018-2022)		Alternative 3 Split Reduction (2013-2022)		Alternative 4 Distribution of Landings (2018-2022)		Alternative 5 Distribution of Landings (2013-2022)	
Action 4, Alternative 2 (ACL = ABC)	Commercial	Recreational	Commercial %, (lbs ww)	Recreational %, (lbs ww)	Commercial %, (lbs ww)	Recreational %, (lbs ww)	Commercial %, (lbs ww)	Recreational %, (lbs ww)	Commercial %, (lbs ww)	Recreational %, (lbs ww)
67450 (2025)	none	none	64.90% (43,775)	35.10% (23,675)	63.40% (42,763)	36.60% (24,687)	63.40% (42,763)	36.60% (24,687)	64.90% (43,775)	35.10% (23,675)
72200 (2026)	none	none	63.92% (46,150)	36.08% (26,050)	62.51% (45,132)	37.49% (27,068)	63.40% (45,775)	36.60% (26,425)	64.90% (46,858)	35.10% (25,342)
75050 (2027)	none	none	63.39% (47,574)	36.61% (27,476)	62.04% (46,561)	37.96% (28,489)	63.40% (47,582)	36.60% (27,468)	64.90% (48,707)	35.10% (26,343)
77900 (2028)	none	none	62.90% (48,999)	37.10% (28,901)	61.6% (47,986)	38.40% (29,914)	63.40% (49,389)	36.60% (28,511)	64.90% (50,557)	35.10% (27,343)
79800 (2029)	none	none	62.59% (49,947)	37.41% (29,853)	61.32% (48,933)	38.68% (30,867)	63.40% (50,593)	36.60% (29,207)	64.90% (51,790)	35.10% (28,010)
Action 4, Alternative 3 (95% of ABC)	Commercial	Recreational	Commercial %, (lbs ww)	Recreational %, (lbs ww)	Commercial %, (lbs ww)	Recreational %, (lbs ww)	Commercial %, (lbs ww)	Recreational %, (lbs ww)	Commercial %, (lbs ww)	Recreational %, (lbs ww)
64078 (2025)	none	none	64.90% (41,587)	35.10% (22,491)	63.40% (40,625)	36.60% (23,453)	63.40% (40,625)	36.60% (23,453)	64.90% (41,587)	35.10% (22,491)
68590 (2026)	none	none	63.92% (43,843)	36.08% (24,747)	62.51% (42,876)	37.49% (25,714)	63.40% (43,486)	36.60% (25,104)	64.90% (44,515)	35.10% (24,075)
71298 (2028)	none	none	63.39% (45,196)	36.61% (26,102)	62.04% (44,233)	37.96% (27,065)	63.40% (45,203)	36.60% (26,095)	64.90% (46,272)	35.10% (25,026)
74005 (2029)	none	none	62.90% (46,549)	37.10% (27,456)	61.60% (45,587)	38.40% (28,418)	63.40% (46,919)	36.60% (27,086)	64.90% (48,029)	35.10% (25,976)
75810 (2029)	none	none	62.59% (47,449)	37.41% (28,361)	61.32% (46,487)	38.68% (29,323)	63.40% (48,064)	36.60% (27,746)	64.90% (49,201)	35.10% (26,609)
Action 4, Alternative 4 (90% of ABC)	Commercial	Recreational	Commercial %, (lbs ww)	Recreational %, (lbs ww)	Commercial %, (lbs ww)	Recreational %, (lbs ww)	Commercial %, (lbs ww)	Recreational %, (lbs ww)	Commercial %, (lbs ww)	Recreational %, (lbs ww)
60705 (2025)	none	none	64.90% (39,398)	35.10% (21,307)	63.40% (38,487)	36.60% (22,218)	63.40% (38,487)	36.60% (22,218)	64.90% (39,398)	35.10% (21,307)
64980 (2026)	none	none	63.92% (41,535)	36.08% (23,445)	62.51% (40,619)	37.49% (24,361)	63.40% (41,197)	36.60% (23,783)	64.90% (42,172)	35.10% (22,808)
67545 (2027)	none	none	63.39% (42,817)	36.61% (24,728)	62.04% (41,905)	37.96% (25,640)	63.40% (42,824)	36.60% (24,721)	64.90% (43,837)	35.10% (23,708)
70110 (2028)	none	none	62.90% (44,099)	37.10% (26,011)	61.60% (43,188)	38.40% (26,922)	63.40% (44,450)	36.60% (25,660)	64.90% (45,501)	35.10% (24,609)
71820 (2029)	none	none	62.59% (44,952)	37.41% (26,868)	61.32% (44,040)	38.68% (27,780)	63.40% (45,534)	36.60% (26,286)	64.90% (46,611)	35.10% (25,209)

## Discussion:

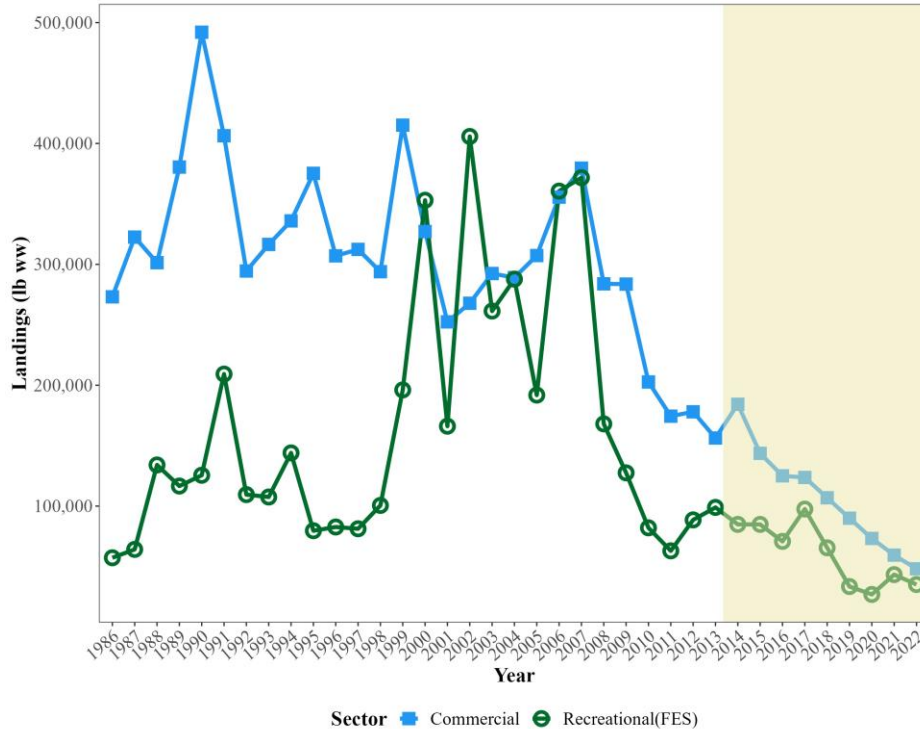
- The current allocation percentages for scamp are **65.34% commercial** and **34.66% recreational**.
- The [Split Reduction method](#) (**Alternatives 2 and 3**) was used to determine gag sector allocations in Amendment 53. The method reduces each sector's landings proportional to a baseline of historic average landings to achieve the updated catch levels.

### Data Smoothing

- In SEDAR 68 (2022), analysts replaced landings estimates with associated uncertainty values greater than 50% with the average of the nearest two years. Several years had PSE values higher than 50% when the data were pulled for analysis (**Figure 2**).
- Because the allocation alternatives only used more recent years of landings, data was smoothed using the SEDAR 68 (2022) method and masked for confidentiality the during this time period (as well as masking for confidentiality). Commercial landings were assumed to represent a census and therefore were only masked for confidentiality. (**Figure 3**).



**Figure 2.** Aggregated annual estimates of scamp and yellowmouth grouper landings from 1986 to 2022, by fishing sector. Light green shading indicates years with PSE values > 50% for recreational landings estimates.



**Figure 3.** Aggregated annual estimates of scamp and yellowmouth grouper landings from 1986-2022, by sector. Yellow shading indicates years where smoothed landings values were used to replace recreational estimates with PSE values >50%.

### Projections:

**NOTE: PROJECTIONS UPDATED FROM DRAFT DOCUMENT**

- Projections (**Tables 9 and 10**) show which wave (single 2-month wave, 6 waves total) the ACL is predicted to be met for each allocation and ACL alternative, per sector.
  - **NOTE:** the No-Action alternative for **Action 5** (allocations) is no allocation so there are no projections for this alternative, it is not a viable alternative.
- For the Split Reduction Allocation alternatives (**Alternatives 2 and 3**), the projections represent when the ACL is projected to be met for each different percentage for each year until 2029.
- In addition, the current SCAMP ONLY allocation percentages (65.34% commercial and 34.66% recreational) were analyzed for each ACL option from **Action 4**.

**Table 8.** Predictions for when the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex ACLs would be met under each allocation and catch level alternative for the recreational sector. Dashes in cell represent a scenario when the ACL is not anticipated to be met.

<b>Recreational Projections</b>										
<b>Allocation Alternatives (Action 5)</b>	<b>Alternative 1: No Allocation</b>		<b>Alternative 2: 35.10%-37.41%</b>		<b>Alternative 3: 36.60%-38.68%</b>		<b>Alternative 4: 36.60%</b>		<b>Alternative 5: 35.10%</b>	
<i>Catch Level Alternative 2 (ACL = ABC)</i>										
<b>ACL (Action 4)</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>
<b>67,450 (2025)</b>	NA	NA	Wave 4	104	Wave 4	108	Wave 4	108	Wave 4	104
<b>72,200 (2026)</b>	NA	NA	Wave 4	114	Wave 4	118	Wave 4	116	Wave 4	111
<b>75,050 (2027)</b>	NA	NA	Wave 4	120	Wave 5	138	Wave 4	120	Wave 4	115
<b>77,900 (2028)</b>	NA	NA	Wave 5	154	Wave 6	212	Wave 5	139	Wave 4	119
<b>79,800 (2029)</b>	NA	NA	Wave 6	203	-	245	Wave 5	165	Wave 4	122
<i>Catch Level Alternative 3 (95% of ABC)</i>										
<b>ACL (Action 4)</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>
<b>64,078 (2025)</b>	NA	NA	Wave 4	99	Wave 4	103	Wave 4	103	Wave 4	99
<b>68,590 (2026)</b>	NA	NA	Wave 4	109	Wave 4	113	Wave 4	110	Wave 4	106
<b>71,298 (2027)</b>	NA	NA	Wave 4	114	Wave 4	118	Wave 4	114	Wave 4	110
<b>74,005 (2028)</b>	NA	NA	Wave 4	120	Wave 5	136	Wave 4	118	Wave 4	114
<b>75,810 (2029)</b>	NA	NA	Wave 5	134	Wave 5	169	Wave 4	121	Wave 4	116
<i>Catch Level Alternative 4 (90% of ABC)</i>										
<b>ACL (Action 4)</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>
<b>60,705 (2025)</b>	NA	NA	Wave 4	94	Wave 4	98	Wave 4	98	Wave 4	94
<b>64,980 (2026)</b>	NA	NA	Wave 4	103	Wave 4	107	Wave 4	105	Wave 4	100
<b>67,545 (2027)</b>	NA	NA	Wave 4	109	Wave 4	112	Wave 4	109	Wave 4	104
<b>70,110 (2028)</b>	NA	NA	Wave 4	114	Wave 4	118	Wave 4	112	Wave 4	108
<b>71,820 (2029)</b>	NA	NA	Wave 4	118	Wave 4	121	Wave 4	115	Wave 4	111

**Table 9.** Predictions for when the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex ACLs would be met under each allocation and catch level alternative for the commercial sector.

<b>Commercial Projections</b>										
<b>Allocation Alternative (Action 5)</b>	<b>Alternative 1: No Action</b>		<b>Alternative 2: 64.90%-62.59%</b>		<b>Alternative 3: 63.40%-61.32%</b>		<b>Alternative 4: 63.40%%</b>		<b>Alternative 5: 64.90%</b>	
<i>Catch Level Alternative 2 (ACL = ABC)</i>										
<b>ACL (Action 4)</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>
<b>67,450 (2025)</b>	NA	NA	21-Aug	112	18-Aug	109	18-Aug	109	21-Aug	112
<b>72,200 (2026)</b>	NA	NA	29-Aug	120	26-Aug	117	28-Aug	119	31-Aug	122
<b>75,050 (2027)</b>	NA	NA	3-Sep	125	30-Aug	121	3-Sep	125	9-Sep	131
<b>77,900 (2028)</b>	NA	NA	10-Sep	132	5-Sep	127	12-Sep	134	18-Sep	140
<b>79,800 (2029)</b>	NA	NA	15-Sep	137	10-Sep	132	18-Sep	140	24-Sep	146
<i>Catch Level Alternative 3 (95% of ABC)</i>										
<b>ACL (Action 4)</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>
<b>64,078 (2025)</b>	NA	NA	15-Aug	106	12-Aug	103	12-Aug	103	15-Aug	106
<b>68,590 (2026)</b>	NA	NA	22-Aug	113	19-Aug	110	20-Aug	111	24-Aug	115
<b>71,298 (2027)</b>	NA	NA	26-Aug	117	23-Aug	114	26-Aug	117	29-Aug	120
<b>74,005 (2028)</b>	NA	NA	30-Aug	121	27-Aug	118	31-Aug	122	5-Sep	127
<b>75,810 (2029)</b>	NA	NA	2-Sep	124	30-Aug	121	6-Sep	128	11-Sep	133
<i>Catch Level Alternative 4 (90% of ABC)</i>										
<b>ACL (Action 4)</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>	<b>ACL Met</b>	<b>Approx. Days</b>
<b>60,705 (2025)</b>	NA	NA	8-Aug	99	5-Aug	96	5-Aug	96	8-Aug	99
<b>64,980 (2026)</b>	NA	NA	14-Aug	105	12-Aug	103	13-Aug	104	16-Aug	107
<b>67,545 (2027)</b>	NA	NA	18-Aug	109	16-Aug	107	18-Aug	109	22-Aug	113
<b>70,110 (2028)</b>	NA	NA	22-Aug	113	19-Aug	110	23-Aug	114	27-Aug	118
<b>71,820 (2029)</b>	NA	NA	25-Aug	116	22-Aug	113	27-Aug	118	30-Aug	121



**Committee Action:**

- PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES.

## **6. 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 1 (No Action).** There are no commercial accountability measures for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

**Alternative 2.** If commercial landings for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex reach or are projected to reach the commercial annual catch limit, the commercial sector will close for the remainder of the fishing year.

If commercial landings for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex exceed the commercial annual catch limit, the total annual catch limit is exceeded, and the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex is overfished, the commercial annual catch limit for the following fishing year will be reduced by the amount of the commercial annual catch limit overage in the prior fishing year.

**Alternative 3.** If commercial landings for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex reach or are projected to reach the commercial annual catch limit, commercial harvest of scamp and yellowmouth grouper is closed for the remainder of the fishing year.

If commercial landings for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex exceed the commercial annual catch limit, regardless of stock status or whether the total annual catch limit was exceeded, the commercial annual catch limit for the following fishing year will be reduced by the amount of the commercial annual catch limit overage in the prior fishing year.

**Table 10.** Alternatives for **Action 6**, establishing commercial accountability measures for the South Atlantic Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

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</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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial ACL is reduced for the following year by the amount of the overage</li> </ul>
<b>Alternative 3</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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial ACL is reduced for the following year by the amount of the overage</li> </ul>

**Discussion:**

- **Alternative 2** represents the current commercial AM for scamp and the OSASWG complex.
- **Alternative 3** represents the recent current *recreational* AM modifications the Council has made for other stocks (such as for gag in Amendment 53).
  - Since the stock is overfished, there is increased potential for a payback to be triggered with this alternative.

## 7. 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 1 (No Action).** There are no recreational accountability measures for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

**Alternative 2.** If recreational landings for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex, reach or are projected to reach the recreational annual catch limit, the recreational sector will close for the remainder of the fishing year.

If recreational landings for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex, exceed the recreational annual catch limit, and the total annual catch limit is exceeded, and the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex is overfished, the length of the following year's fishing season will be reduced by the amount necessary to prevent the recreational annual catch limit from being reached in the following year.

**Alternative 3.** If recreational landings for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex reach or are projected to reach the recreational annual catch limit, the length of the following year's fishing season will be reduced by the amount necessary to prevent the recreational annual catch limit from being exceeded in the following year, regardless of stock status and if the total annual catch limit is exceeded.

**Alternative 4.** If recreational landings for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex reached or are projected to reach the recreational annual catch limit, recreational harvest is closed for the remainder of the fishing year.

If recreational landings for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex exceed the recreational annual catch limit, the length of the following year's fishing season will be reduced by the amount necessary to prevent the recreational annual catch limit from being exceeded in the following year, regardless of stock status and if the total annual catch limit is exceeded.

**Table 11.** Alternatives for **Action 7**, establishing recreational accountability measures for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

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</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>• Total ACL is exceeded</li> <li>• Stock is overfished</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</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
<b>Alternative 4</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

- **Alternative 2** represents the current recreational AM for scamp and the OSASWG complex.
- **Alternative 3 and 4** represent the recent current recreational AM modifications the Council has made for other stocks (such as for gag in Amendment 53).

## Discussion:

- The current recreational AMs for scamp individually and yellowmouth grouper within the OSASWG complex (**Alternative 2**) and **Alternatives 3** and **4** do **not** have a payback provision in the post-season AM but instead the length of the season is reduced, however:

**50 CFR 600.310(g)(3)** states in part, “For stocks and stock complexes in rebuilding plans, the AMs *should* include overage adjustments that reduce the ACLs in the next fishing year by the full amount of the overage, unless the best scientific information available shows that a reduced overage adjustment, or no adjustment, is needed to mitigate the effects of the overage.”

- This section of the CFR strongly recommends the consideration of a payback provision, would the Council like to alter any alternatives or add any additional alternatives to consider a recreational payback in the post-season AM?

## Committee Action:

- PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES.

**8. Revise the total annual catch limit, annual optimum yield, 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 1 (No Action).** The acceptable biological catch limit for the Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper complex (including yellowmouth grouper) is 104,190 pounds whole weight. The total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield are set equal to this acceptable biological catch and are inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Coastal Household Telephone Survey. The commercial annual catch limit is 55,542 pounds whole weight and the recreational annual catch limit is 48,648 pounds whole weight.

**Alternative 2.** The acceptable biological catch limit for the updated Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper complex is 104,190 pounds whole weight. The total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield are 100,151 and are inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Coastal Household Telephone Survey. The commercial annual catch limit is 53,380 pounds whole weight and the recreational annual catch limit is 46,771 pounds whole weight.

**Table 12.** An explanation of the modifications to the Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper complex ACL and sector ACLs. The total and sector ACLs for both alternatives include CHTS recreational estimates. The current commercial allocation is 53.30% and the current recreational allocation is 46.70%.

Alternative	ABC (lbs ww)*	Total ACL=Annual OY (lbs ww)*	Commercial ACL (lbs ww)	Recreational ACL (lbs ww)
Alternative 1 (No Action)	104,190	104,190	55,542	48,648
Alternative 2	104,190	100,151	53,380	46,771

**Discussion:**

- The current commercial (53.30%) and recreational (46.70%) allocation percentages were developed during the Comprehensive ACL Amendment (Snapper Grouper Amendment 25, 2011) using the following formula:

$$(50\% \times \text{average landings from 1986-2008}) + (50\% \times \text{average landings from 2006-2008})$$

- The updated ABC in MRIP-FES units for the OSASWG complex that was previously developed by the Unassessed Stocks Workgroup (2020) was developed using either the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest or ORCS method. The “3<sup>rd</sup> highest” method is no longer considered BSIA, and therefore, the catch levels under this action and alternatives remain in MRIP-CHTS units.
- The SSC previously recommended the OSASWG ABC be revised in the Unassessed Species Amendment; however, the SSC will need to develop a new method for updating ABCs or all the unassessed species and incorporate MRIP-FES recreational estimates.
  - This will likely be presented to the Council in September or December 2024.
- The current allocations will not be modified in this amendment.

**Committee Action:**

- PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON THE RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES.



# Literature Cited

Klaer, N. L., O’Boyle, R. N., Deroba, J. J., Wayte, S. E., Little, L. R., Alade, L. A., & Rago, P. J.(2015). How much evidence is required for acceptance of productivity regime shifts in fish stock assessments: Are we letting managers off the hook? *Fisheries Research*, 168, 49–55. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fishres.2015.03.021>.

## Appendix

### Appendix I. Current Catch Levels and Regulations

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

Regulation	Current Shallow Water Grouper Complex						
	Scamp	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
Yellowmouth Grouper	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 SASWG:

- (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.