



THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

# Snapper Grouper Amendment 61

Evaluation of the Fishery Management Unit

June 2026

## Background

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

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

Additionally, the Council directed staff to develop a report of annual landings for all unmanaged species, including EC species, from the South Atlantic region. The intent of this report is to monitor landings of unmanaged species in the region and potentially proactively implement management if the need arises. The Council has provided additional guidance for the report to be modeled after a similar report provided to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council<sup>1</sup>.

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

The first version of the South Atlantic Unmanaged Species Landings Report is expected to be available at the September or December 2026 Council meeting.

## **Summary of last meeting (March 2026)**

[March 2026 Snapper Grouper Committee Report](#)

[March 2026 Amendment 61 Decision Document](#)

While initially 17 species were considered in Amendment 61, at the March 2026 meeting the Council narrowed the scope of the amendment to focus on 14 species. The Council also clarified which species may be considered for removal from the FMU and which may be considered for EC species designation or an alternative management approach. In doing so, the Council provided the following direction to staff:

### **SPECIES THAT MAY BE CONSIDERED FOR REMOVAL FROM THE FMU:**

- BAR JACK
- MISTY GROUPE
- SPADEFISH

### **SPECIES THAT MAY BE CONSIDERED FOR ECOSYSTEM COMPONENT SPECIES DESIGNATION OR AN ALTERNATIVE MANAGEMENT APPROACH:**

- OTHER PORGIES COMPLEX (PARTIAL OR TOTAL)
  - SCUP ONLY OPTION
- GRUNTS COMPLEX (PARTIAL OR TOTAL)
  - TOMTATE ONLY OPTION
  - MOVE WHITE GRUNT TO ITS OWN ACL OR SPECIES-SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT AND MOVE THE REST OF THE GRUNTS TO EC OR ALTERNATIVE MANAGEMENT.
- DEEPWATER COMPLEX
  - MISTY GROUPE (WITH OR WITHOUT)
- SPADEFISH

### **SPECIES THAT WILL NOT BE FURTHER CONSIDERED IN AM 61 (will continue to be managed under the Snapper Grouper FMP with no immediate management changes):**

- CUBERA SNAPPER
- QUEEN SNAPPER
- BANDED RUDDERFISH

## **Species being considered in Amendment 61**

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

For these species to be removed from the FMP or designated as EC species, the Council will need to continue to work through the evaluation criteria found in Appendix 1.

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

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

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

## AP Feedback and Recommendations

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

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

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

Consensus Statements:

- The AP noted that there were some Council considerations that are contrary to the AP’s previous or updated recommendations. In particular, the AP felt that misty grouper should remain status quo and be maintained under federal management.
  - The AP consensus for misty grouper is to remain status quo under federal management. The species are long lived and may benefit from federal management.
    - Additionally, Amendment 14, which established eight deepwater Type II marine protected areas to protect a portion of the population and habitat of long-lived deepwater snapper grouper species, specifically lists misty grouper as species targeted by that amendment.
- Regarding potential trip and bag limits for EC species, it was noted that the starting point for potential limits appears to be fairly high, but the AP will further discuss these limits in the fall after additional information is available.

Individual AP member comments:

- An AP member noted that the grunts and spadefish are not important species for Northeast Florida and could be removed from federal management.
- An AP member initially stated that bar jack are important species for the headboat fishery off Florida. Upon further investigation into data for headboat catches, it was later noted that bar jack landings are not as high as initially thought and that the species could be removed from the FMU or designated as an EC species.
- It was also noted that the grunts are an important non-commercial food source. A bait fishery for these species may also develop if management is removed.
- The spadefish fishery off South Carolina occurs primarily in federal waters and removal of federal measures would affect that fishery.

## Potential amendment timeline

**Table 3.** Potential timing for Amendment 61 development.

<b>Timing</b>	<b>Council Action</b>
✓ <b>December 2024</b>	Council began to review species to include in AM 61
✓ <b>September 2025</b>	Reviewed decision document and approved for scoping.
✓ <b>Fall 2025</b>	Snapper Grouper AP review. Scoping conducted (online).
✓ <b>December 2025</b>	Reviewed scoping comments and provided guidance on draft actions and alternatives.
✓ <b>March 2026</b>	Reviewed requested information, draft purpose and need statements, and clarified species to include in the amendment.
✓ <b>April 2026</b>	Snapper Grouper AP review.
<b>June 2026</b>	Review draft purpose and need statements and draft actions and alternatives.
<b>September 2026</b>	Review draft amendment and analyses, select initial preferred alternatives, and approve for public hearings.
<b>Fall 2026</b>	Public hearings.
<b>December 2026</b>	Review public comment and approve all actions.
<b>March 2027</b>	Approve for Secretarial review.
<b>Late 2027 or 2028</b>	Regulation changes effective.

### Objectives for this meeting (June 2026)

- Review Snapper Grouper AP comments.
- Provide feedback on:
  - Revised purpose and need statements,
  - Draft actions and alternatives, and
  - Direction on preparing the amendment for approval for public hearings at the September 2026 meeting.
    - Consider moving approval for public hearings to December 2026 but maintaining final approval in March 2027.

## Draft purpose and need statements

### PREVIOUS draft Purpose for Action

The **purpose** of Amendment 61 is to evaluate species that comprise the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit to better align with obligations and mandates required by the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

### PREVIOUS draft Need for Action

The **need** is to support Executive Order 14276 by prioritizing efficient regulations for species in need of federal conservation and management.

### IPT REVISED draft Purpose for Action

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

### IPT REVISED draft Need for Action

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

### **Council Direction in March 2026:**

Edit the draft purpose and need statements.

- Add a discussion of managing species with the resources that are available.
- Further edit the need statement to include topics in addition to executive orders. Also incorporate the discussion of agency funding priorities and narrowing the scope of species that are managed.

### **Committee Action**

- Discuss the revised purpose and need statements, including whether the statements are reflective of the Council's intent for this amendment.
- Consider approving the purpose and need statements.

**DRAFT MOTION: APPROVE THE PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENTS.**

## Draft actions and alternatives

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

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

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

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

**Sub-alternative 2a.** Bar jack

**Sub-alternative 2b.** Misty grouper

**Sub-alternative 2c.** Atlantic spadefish

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

### AP Comments and Recommendations:

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

### Committee Action:

- Discuss Draft Action 1 and the range of alternatives.

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

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

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

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

- Sub-alternative 2a.** Jolthead porgy
- Sub-alternative 2b.** Knobbed porgy
- Sub-alternative 2c.** Saucereye porgy
- Sub-alternative 2d.** Scup
- Sub-alternative 2e.** Whitebone porgy

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

- Sub-alternative 3a.** White grunt
- Sub-alternative 3b.** Sailor's choice
- Sub-alternative 3c.** Tomtate
- Sub-alternative 3d.** Margate

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

- Sub-alternative 4a.** Misty grouper
- Sub-alternative 4b.** Sand tilefish
- Sub-alternative 4c.** Blackfin snapper

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

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

### **AP Comments and Recommendations:**

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

**Committee Action:**

- Discuss Draft Action 2 and the range of alternatives.

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

**Purpose of the Action:** This action would establish a permit requirement for EC species **currently** in the FMP and **maintain** the commercial and for-hire permit requirements for the species being removed from federal conservation and management but newly designated as EC species in Amendment 61.

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

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

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

#### **AP Comments and Recommendations:**

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

#### **IPT Comments and Recommendations:**

- Existing EC species in the Snapper Grouper FMP do not have a permit requirement.
  - The final rule for the Comprehensive ACL Amendment removed regulations such as annual catch limits, accountability measures, permitting and reporting requirements, trip limits, bag limits, etc. for EC species.
- Need to clarify what permit requirement would exist or if a new permit requirement is required for designated EC species.
  - Need to clarify if it is the Council's intent to bring in existing 5 EC species when discussing the permit requirement.
    - No new permit would be required for private recreational anglers to fish for the newly designated EC species.
  - Some IPT members have serious concerns about requiring limited access commercial permits for EC species. This is one of the more restrictive management measures that can be placed upon a fishery, and it would create an undue burden for species that are deemed as not needing conservation and management.
    - To address this concern, the Council could consider also allowing other existing commercial permits that are open access or creating an open access EC species permit.
- Commercial trip tickets and federal for-hire and commercial logbooks already require reporting for all harvested species.

- Not requiring a permit does not necessarily mean no reporting.
- Some IPT members felt that this action could be contrary to the need statement since it does not reduce regulatory burden or support Executive Order 14276.

**Committee Action:**

- Discuss Draft Action 3 and the range of alternatives.
- Clarify whether it is the Council’s intent to include the 5 existing EC species (bank sea bass, cottonwick, longspine porgy, ocean triggerfish, and rock sea bass) in Draft Action 3 and subsequent actions for trip or bag limits.
- Consider inclusion of open access federal commercial permits to Alternative 2.

## Draft Action 4. Establish an aggregate commercial trip limit for ecosystem component species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan

**Purpose of the Action:** This action would establish an aggregate commercial trip limit for EC species currently in the FMP and the species being removed from federal conservation and management but newly designated as EC species.

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

**Alternative 2.** Establish an aggregate commercial trip limit for ecosystem component species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan.

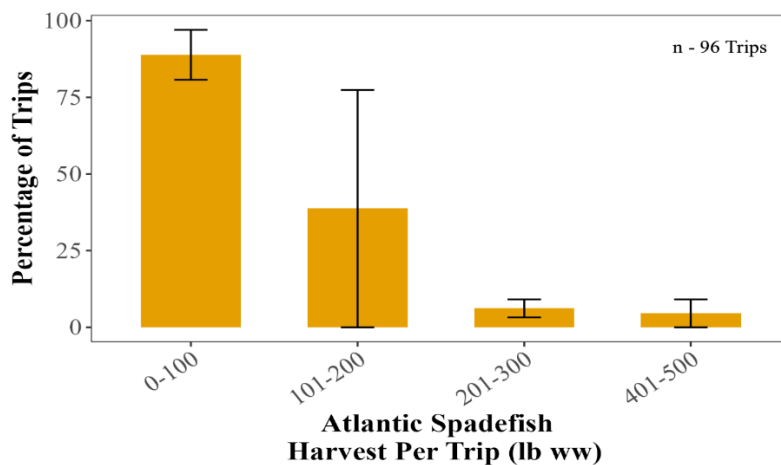
**Sub-alternative 2a.** 1,500 pounds per trip.

**Sub-alternative 2b.** 3,000 pounds per trip.

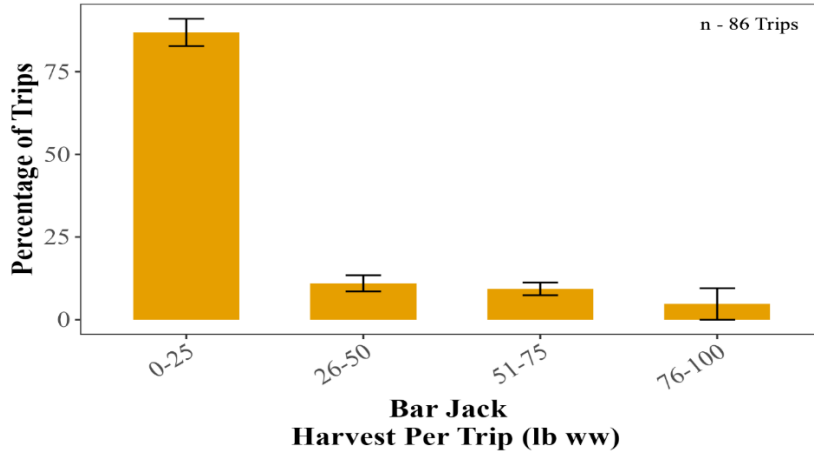
**Sub-alternative 2c.** 4,500 pounds per trip.

### Discussion and preliminary analysis:

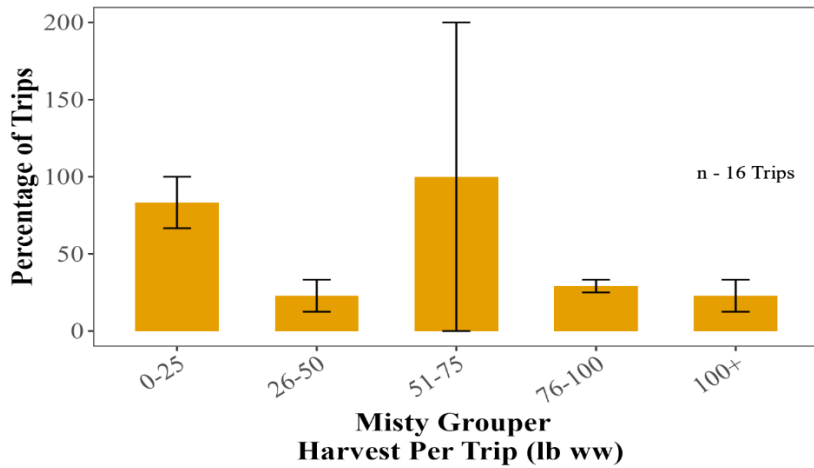
- A preliminary analysis of landings per trip is provided in Figures 1 through 13 below, with a write-up of the analysis in Appendix 2. The data originate from the commercial logbook program and cover commercial trips from 2020 through 2024.
- The majority of trips harvested less than 100 pounds of each species per trip.
- Several species were rarely harvested by the commercial fishery (less than 100 trips) including Atlantic spadefish, bar jack, misty grouper, scup, sailors choice, and tomtate.



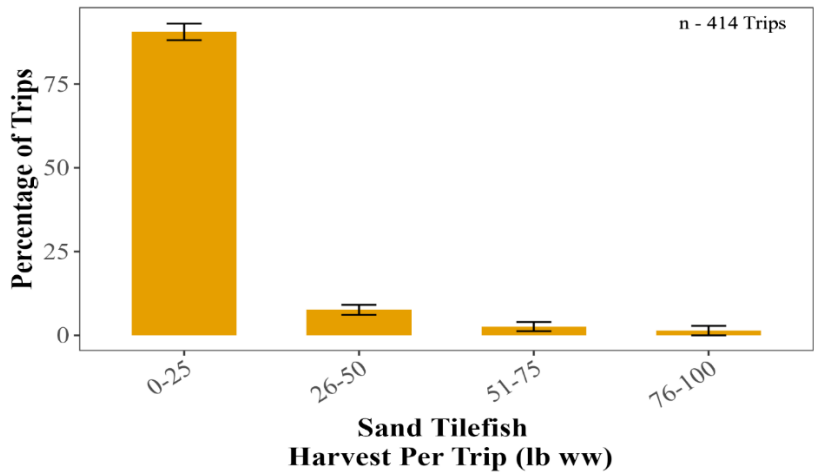
**Figure 1.** Distribution of South Atlantic **spadefish** commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024.



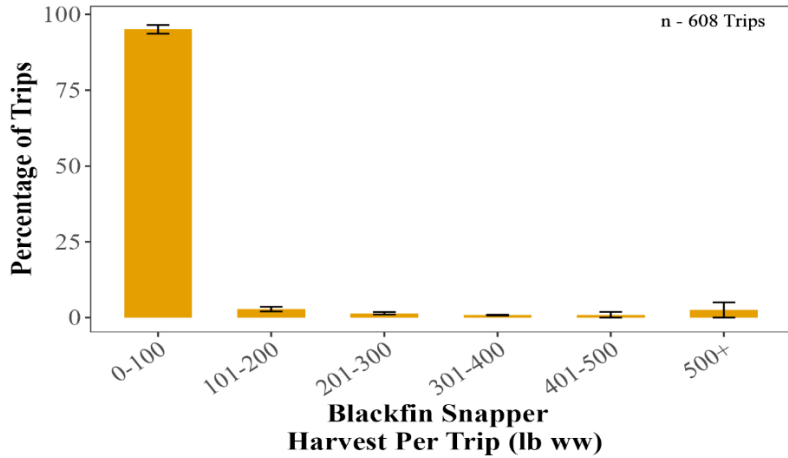
**Figure 2.** Distribution of South Atlantic **bar jack** commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024. The data came from the commercial logbook program.



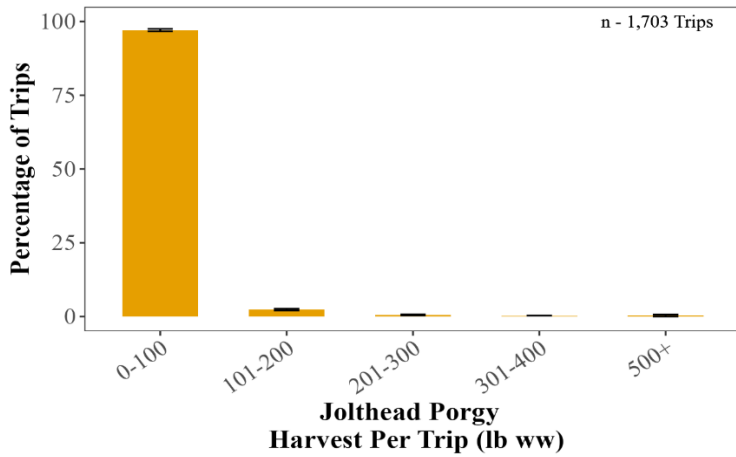
**Figure 3.** Distribution of South Atlantic **misty grouper** commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024.



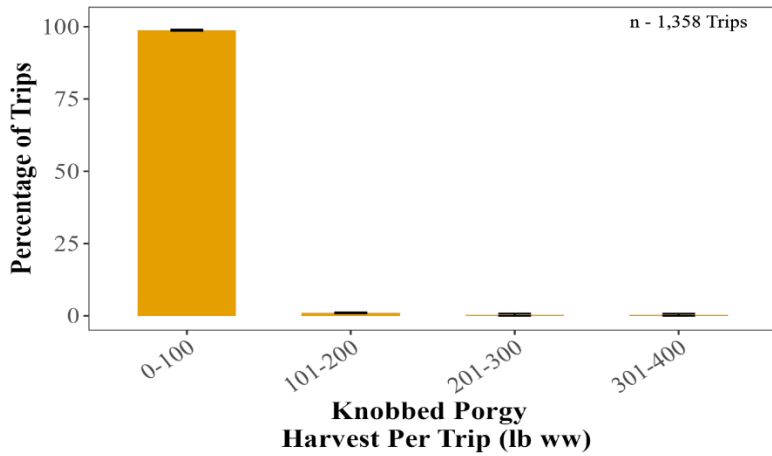
**Figure 4.** Distribution of South Atlantic **sand tilefish** commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024.



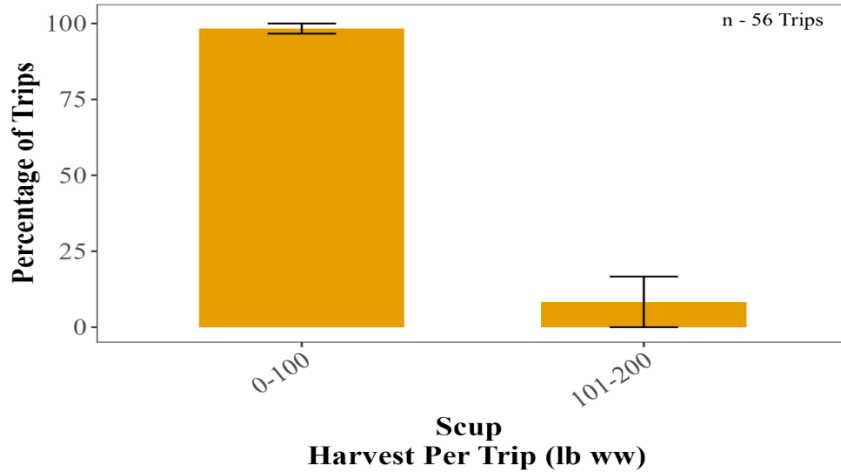
**Figure 5.** Distribution of South Atlantic **blackfin snapper** commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024.



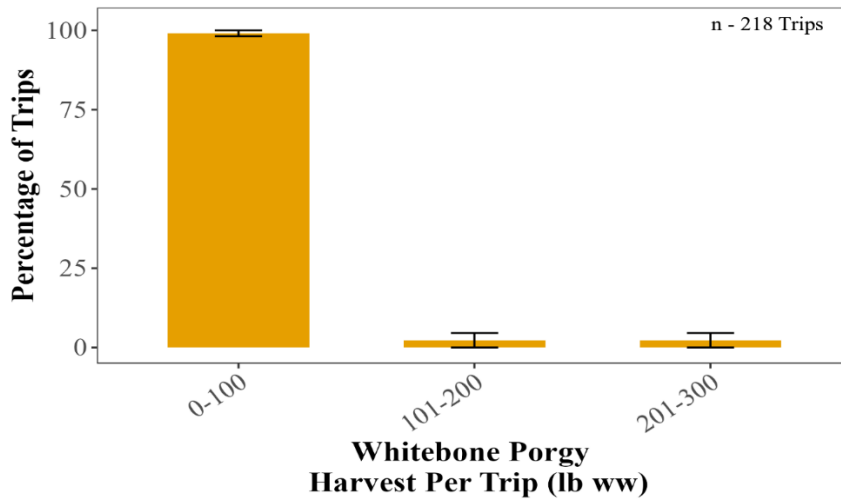
**Figure 6.** Distribution of South Atlantic **jolthead porgy** commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024.



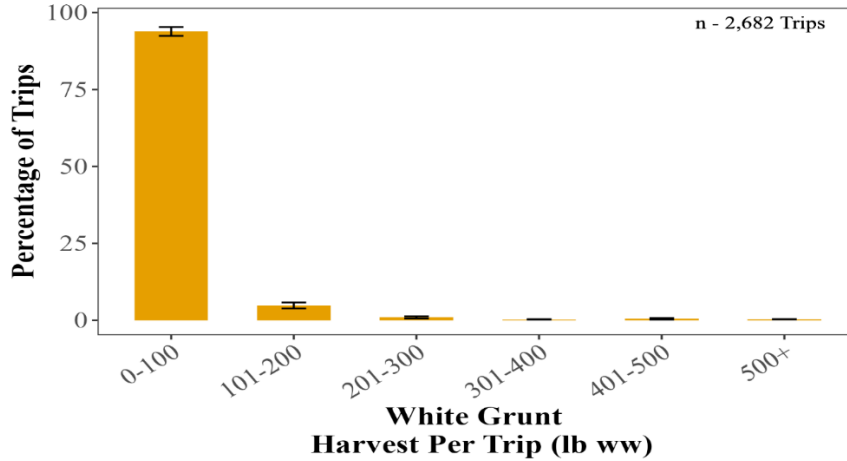
**Figure 7.** Distribution of South Atlantic **knobbed porgy** commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024.



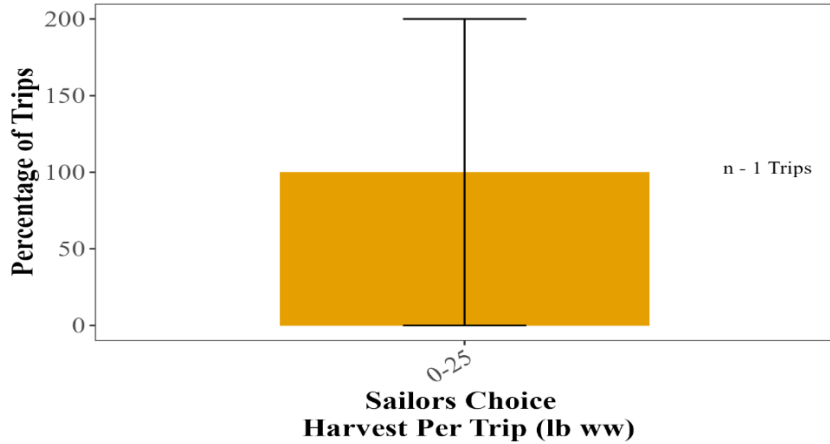
**Figure 8.** Distribution of South Atlantic **scup** commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024.



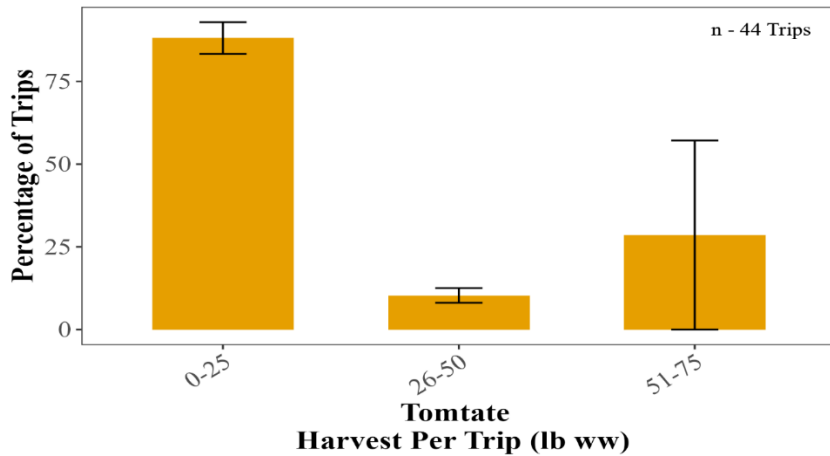
**Figure 9.** Distribution of South Atlantic **whitebone porgy** commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024.



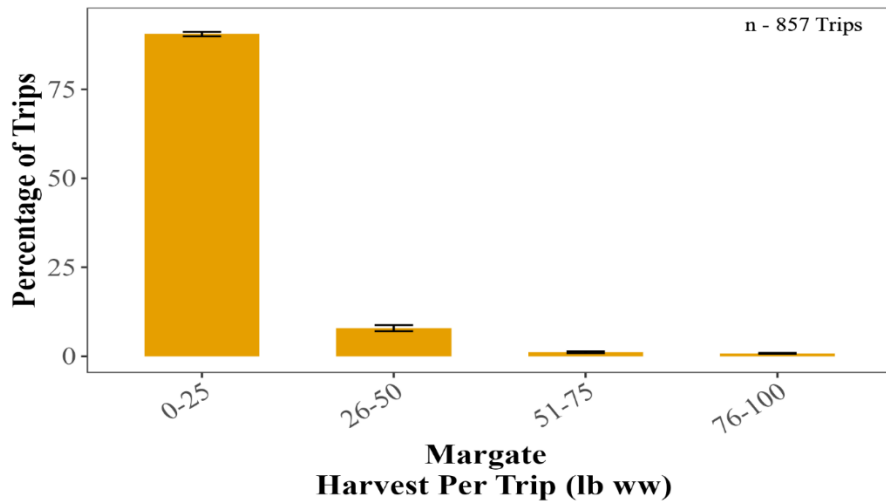
**Figure 10.** Distribution of South Atlantic **white grunt** commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024.



**Figure 11.** Distribution of South Atlantic **sailor’s choice** commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024.



**Figure 12.** Distribution of South Atlantic **tomtate** commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024. The data came from the commercial logbook program.



**Figure 13.** Distribution of South Atlantic **margate** commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024. The data came from the commercial logbook program.

**AP Comments and Recommendations:**

- Regarding potential trip and bag limits for EC species, it was noted that the starting point for potential limits appears to be fairly high, but the AP will further discuss these limits in the fall after additional information is available.

**IPT Comments and Recommendations:**

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

**Committee Action:**

- Discuss Draft Action 4 and the range of alternatives.

## Draft Action 5. Establish an aggregate recreational bag limit for ecosystem component species in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan

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

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

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

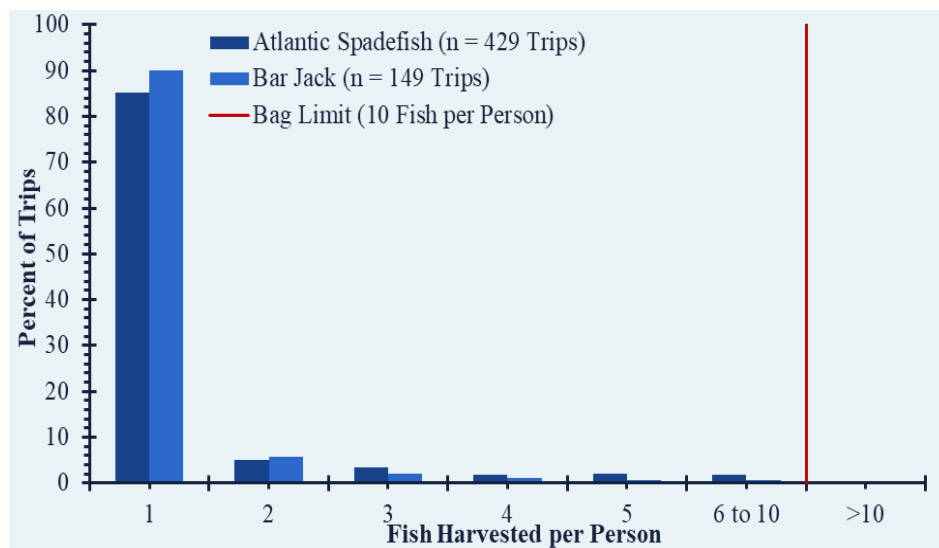
**Sub-alternative 2a.** 20 fish per person.

**Sub-alternative 2b.** 30 fish per person.

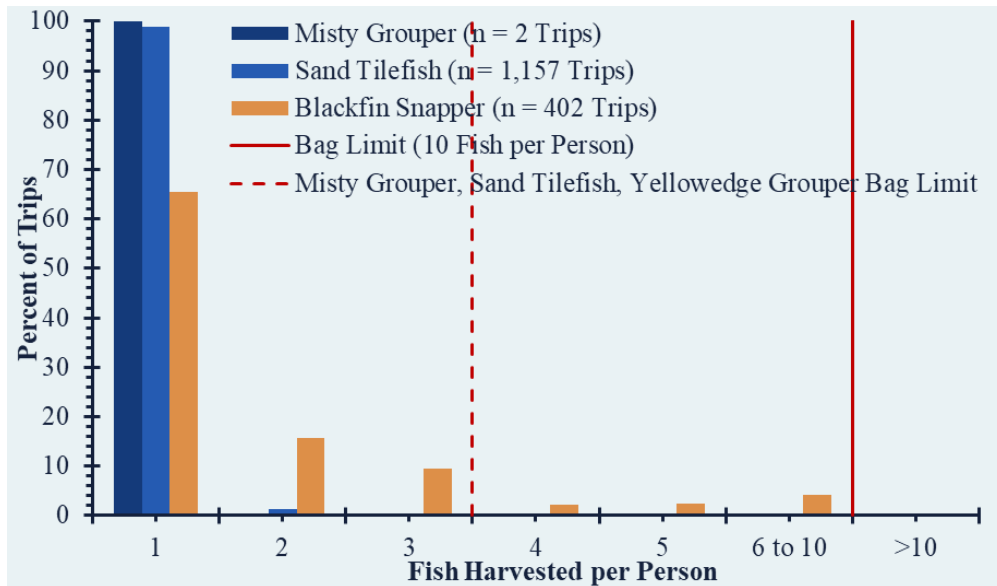
**Sub-alternative 2c.** 40 fish per person.

### Discussion and preliminary analysis:

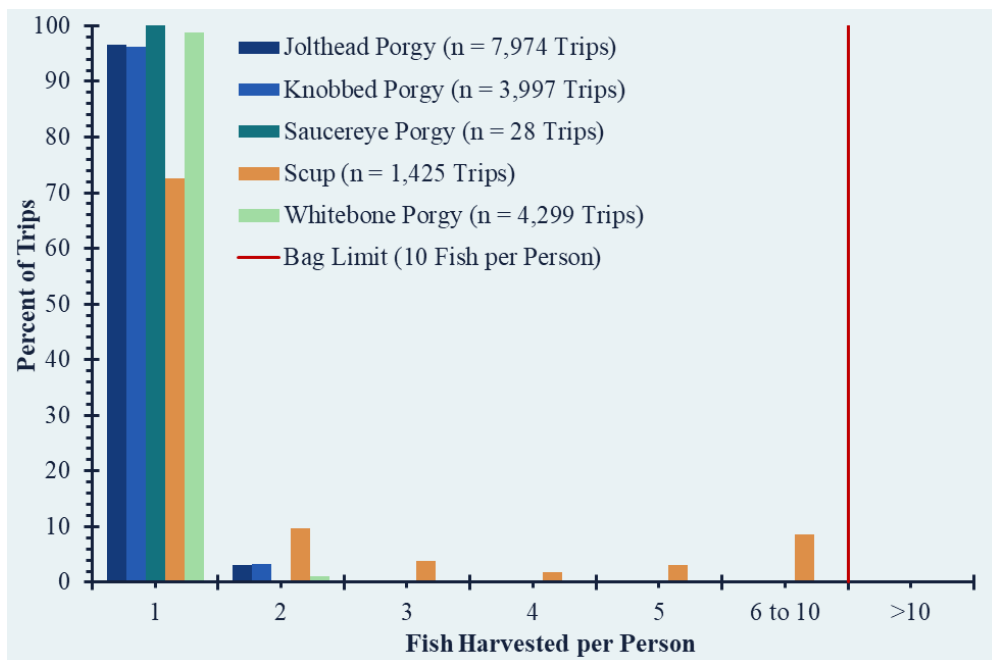
- A preliminary analysis of landings per person is provided in Figures 14 through 17 below, with a write-up of the analysis in Appendix 3. The data came from combined MRIP and Headboat data from 2020 through 2024.
- Several species considered in Amendment 61 were rarely encountered in the dataset over the time series examined. Misty grouper (n = 2) and saucereye porgy (n = 28 trips) had particularly low encounter rates.
- The majority of trips harvested two or fewer fish of each species per trip.



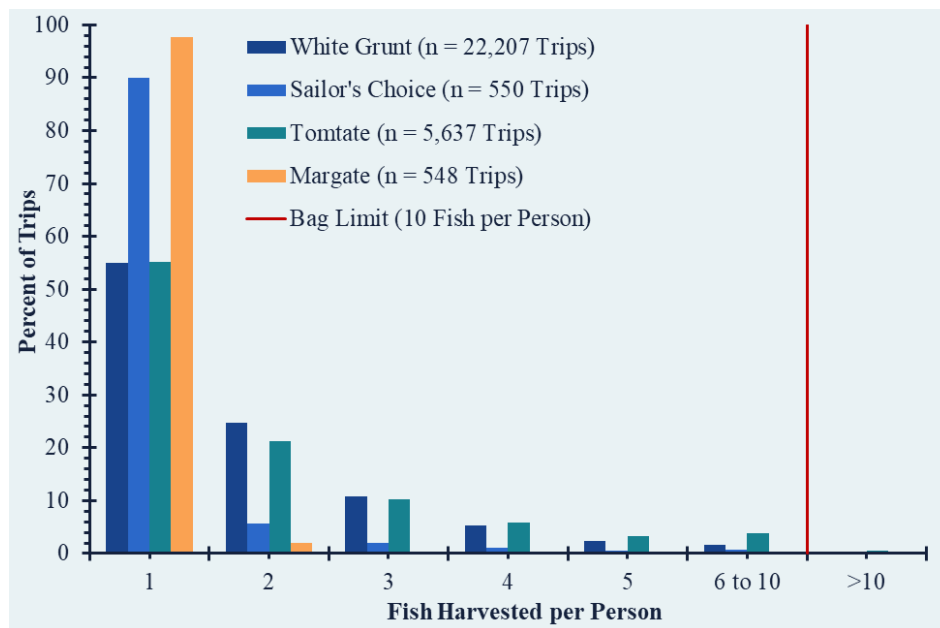
**Figure 14.** Distribution of South Atlantic **spadefish** and **bar jack** harvest per person from 2020 through 2024.



**Figure 15.** Distribution of South Atlantic **Deepwater Complex** (misty grouper, sand tilefish, and blackfin snapper) harvest per person from 2020 through 2024.



**Figure 16.** Distribution of South Atlantic **Other Porgies Complex** (jolthead porgy, knobbed porgy, saucereye porgy, scup, and whitebone porgy) harvest per person from 2020 through 2024.



**Figure 17.** Distribution of South Atlantic Grunts Complex (white grunt, sailor’s choice, tomtate, and margate) harvest per person from 2020 through 2024.

**AP Comments and Recommendations:**

- Regarding potential trip and bag limits for EC species, it was noted that the starting point for potential limits appears to be fairly high, but the AP will further discuss these limits in the fall after additional information is available.

**IPT Comments and Recommendations:**

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

**Committee Action:**

- Discuss Draft Action 5 and the range of alternatives.

**Committee Action:**

- Approve actions for inclusion in Amendment 61

**DRAFT MOTION:** APPROVE ALL ACTIONS, AS REVISED, FOR INCLUSION IN AMENDMENT 61.

- Provide guidance on whether to direct staff to prepare Amendment 61 for approval for public hearings at the September 2026 meeting.
  - Consider moving approval for public hearings to December 2026 but maintaining final approval in March 2027.

## Appendix 1. Evaluation criteria

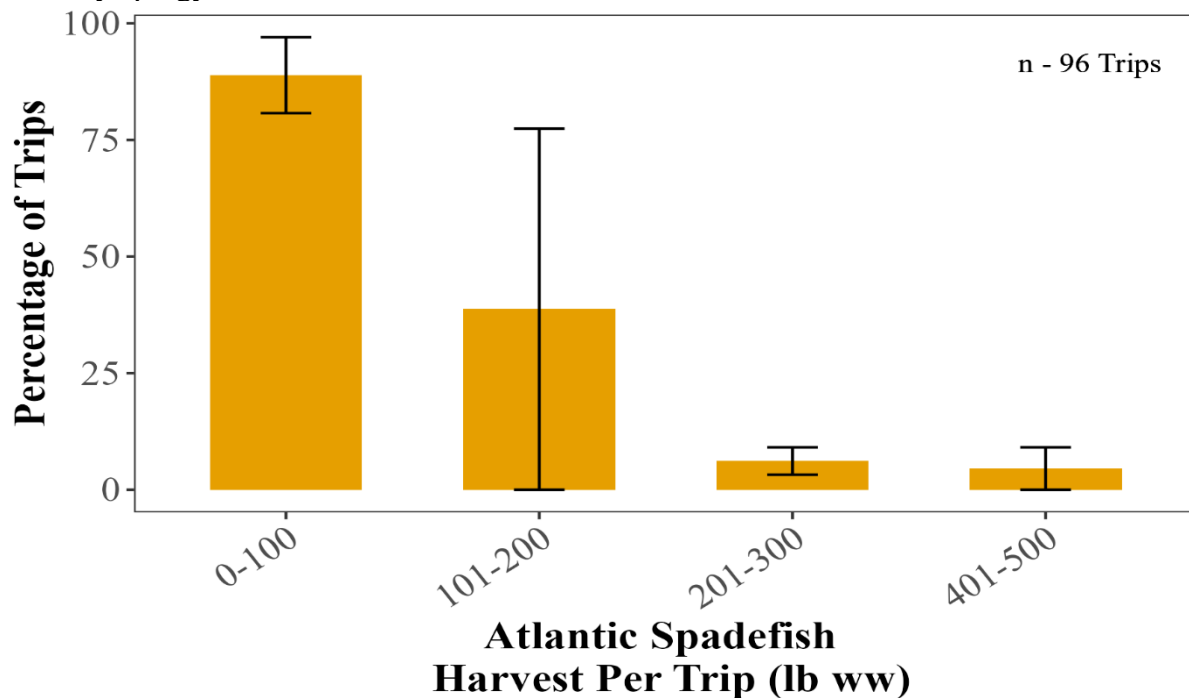
The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) section 302(h)(1) requires that a council prepare a fishery management plan (FMP) for each fishery under its authority that requires conservation and management. Not every fishery requires federal management. Any stocks that are predominately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

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

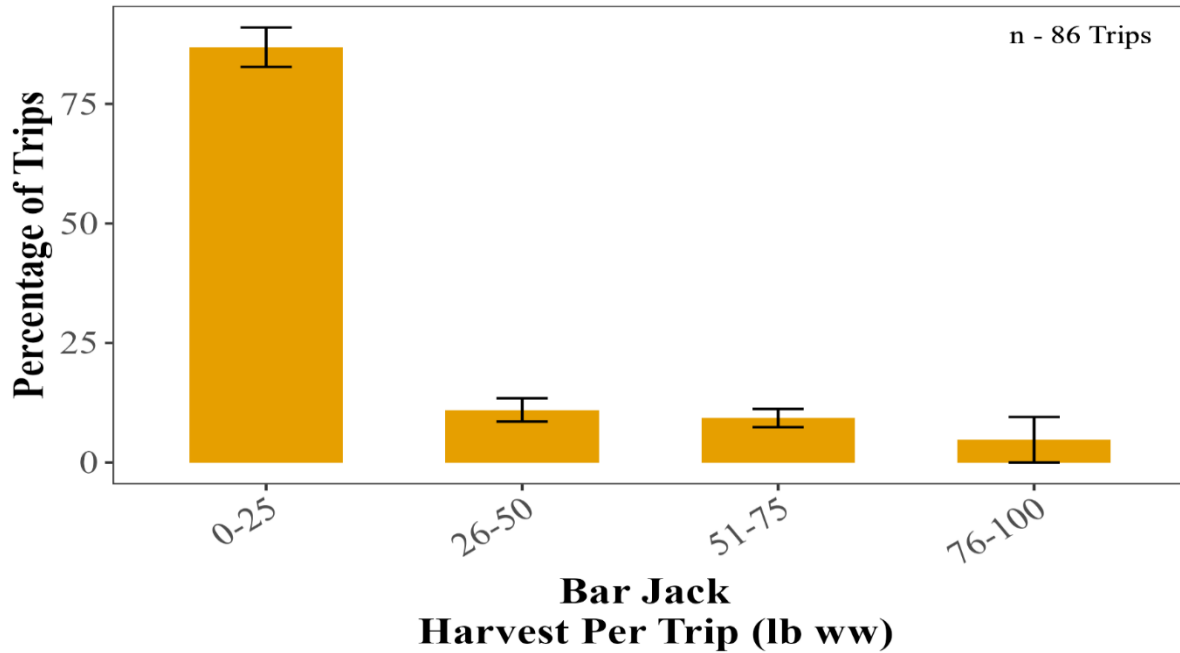
[50 CFR § 600.305\(c\)\(4\)](#): When considering removing a stock from, or continuing to include a stock in, an FMP, Councils should prepare a thorough analysis of factors in [paragraphs \(c\)\(1\)\(i\)](#) through [\(x\)](#) of this section, and any additional considerations that may be relevant to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

## Appendix 2. Commercial trip limit review for selected species in Amendment 61

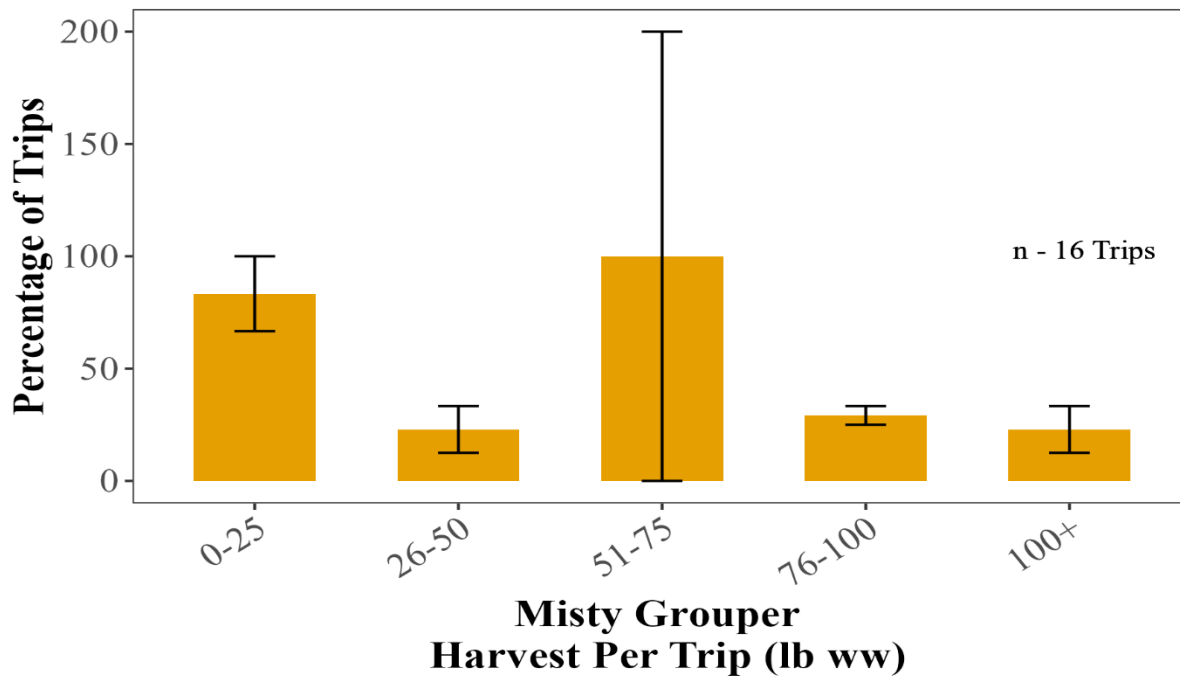
Amendment 61 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 61) is in the process of modifying the commercial trip limit for 23 species. The data needed for trip limit analysis is collected from commercial logbook data. Commercial logbook data was provided from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center in May of 2025. The 2020 through 2024 data were explored and appropriate data bins were chosen. The percentage of trips for the different species being considered in Amendment 61 for the pounds harvested per commercial trip are provided in Figures 1 through 22. However, there were no recent commercial harvest trips for saucereye porgy, therefore, there is no figure for saucereye porgy.



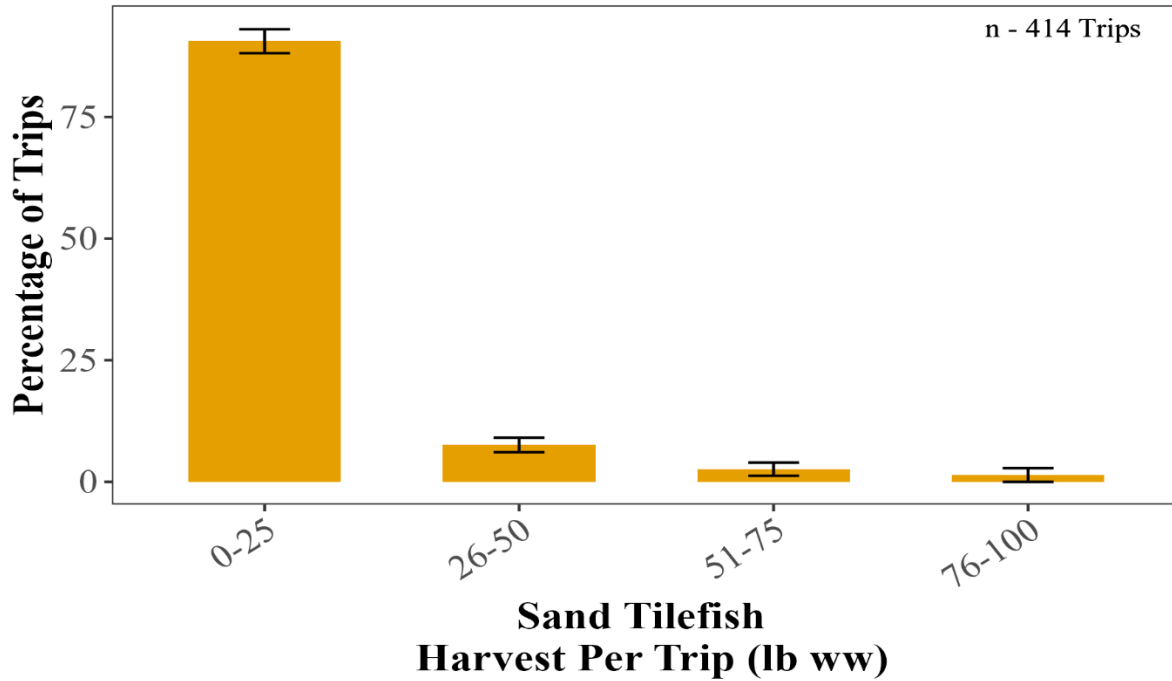
**Figure A-1.** Distribution of South Atlantic spadefish commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024. The data came from the commercial logbook program.



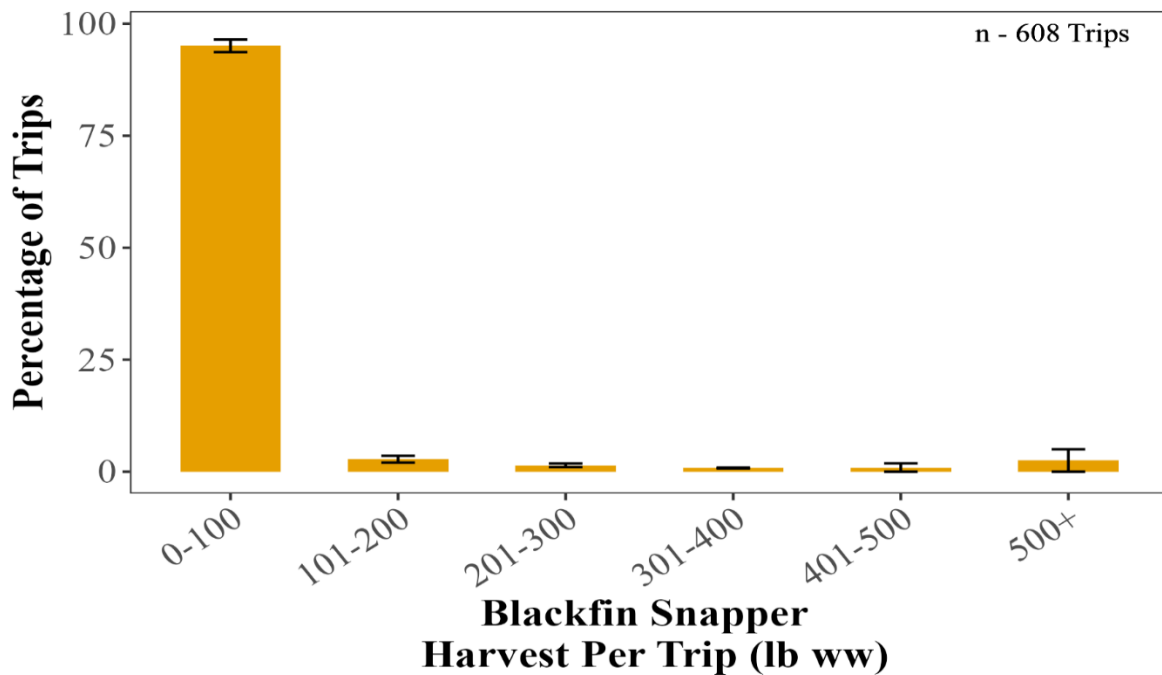
**Figure A-2.** Distribution of South Atlantic bar jack commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024. The data came from the commercial logbook program.



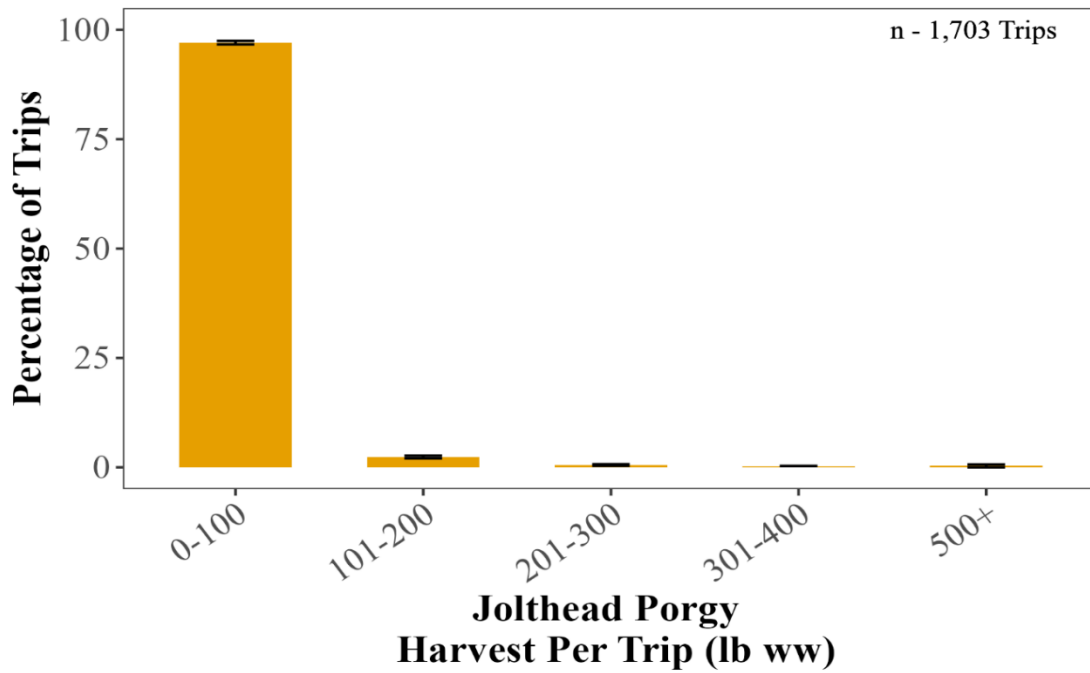
**Figure A-3.** Distribution of South Atlantic misty grouper commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024. The data came from the commercial logbook program.



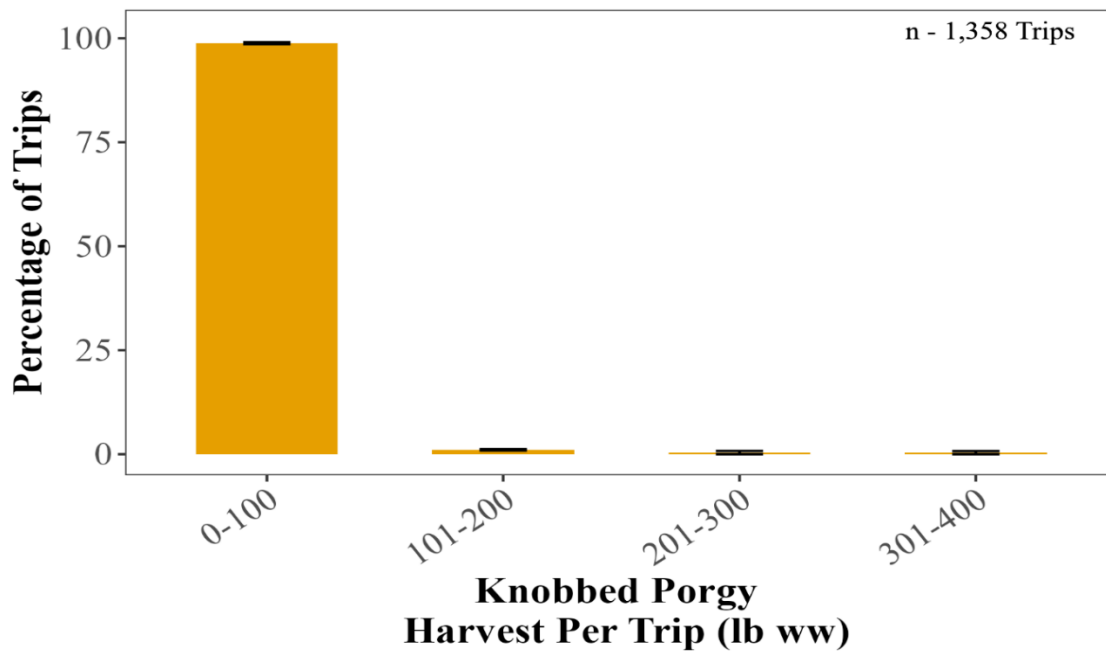
**Figure A-4.** Distribution of South Atlantic sand tilefish commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024. The data came from the commercial logbook program.



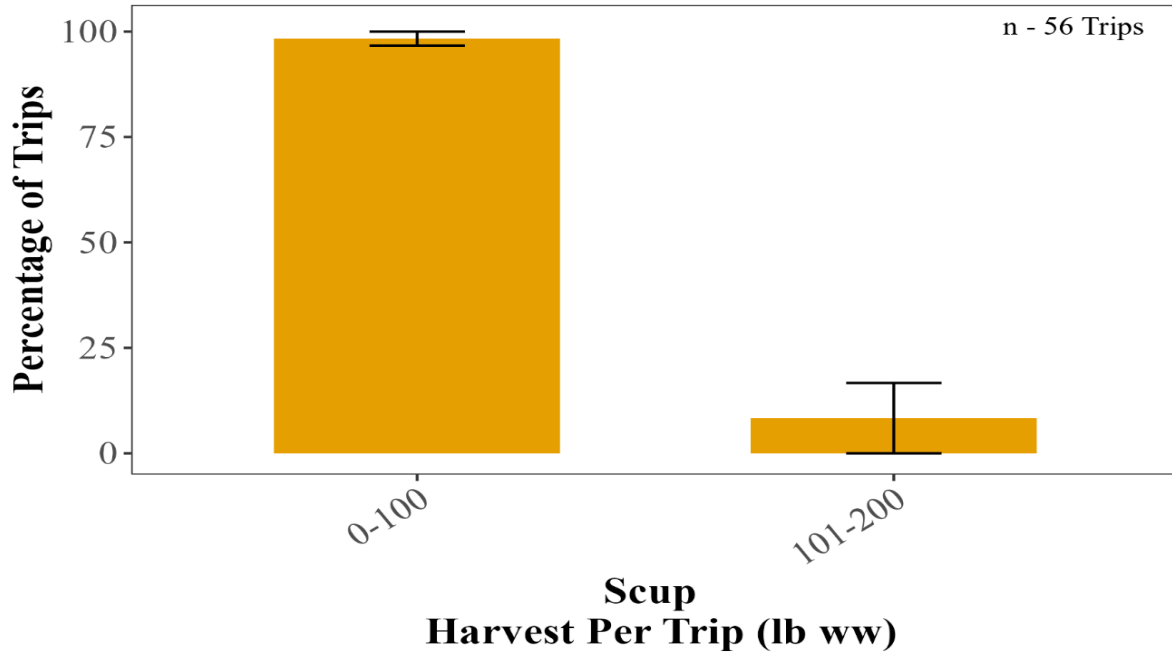
**Figure A-5.** Distribution of South Atlantic blackfin snapper commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024. The data came from the commercial logbook program.



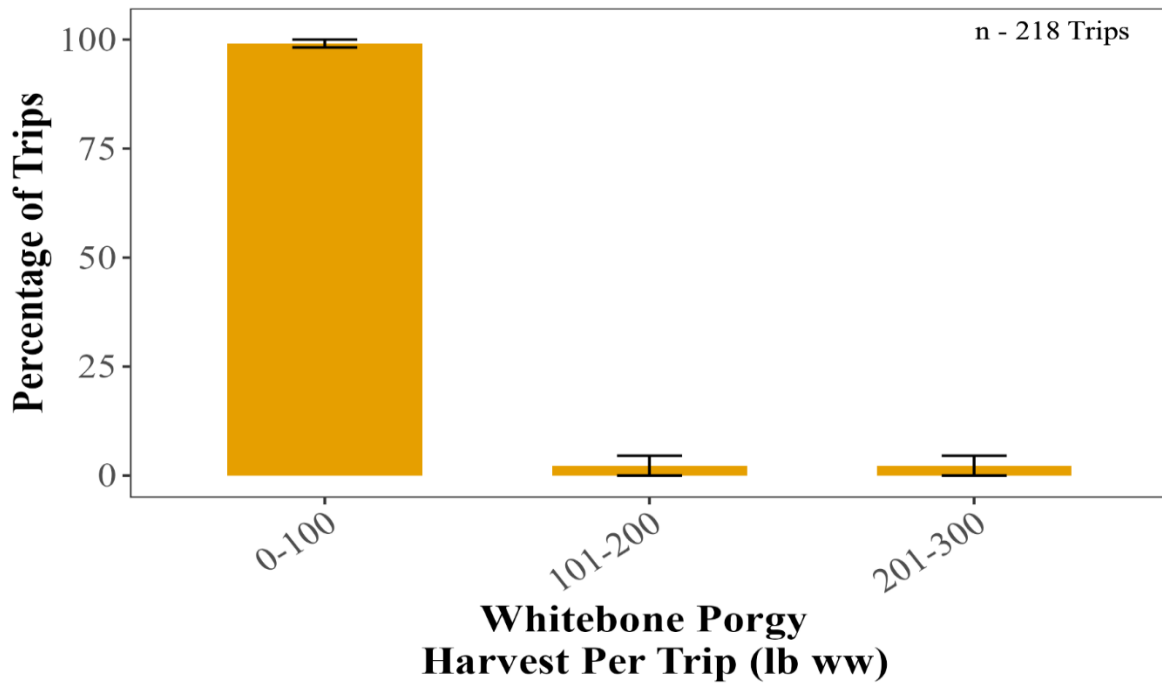
**Figure A-6.** Distribution of South Atlantic jolthead porgy commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024. The data came from the commercial logbook program.



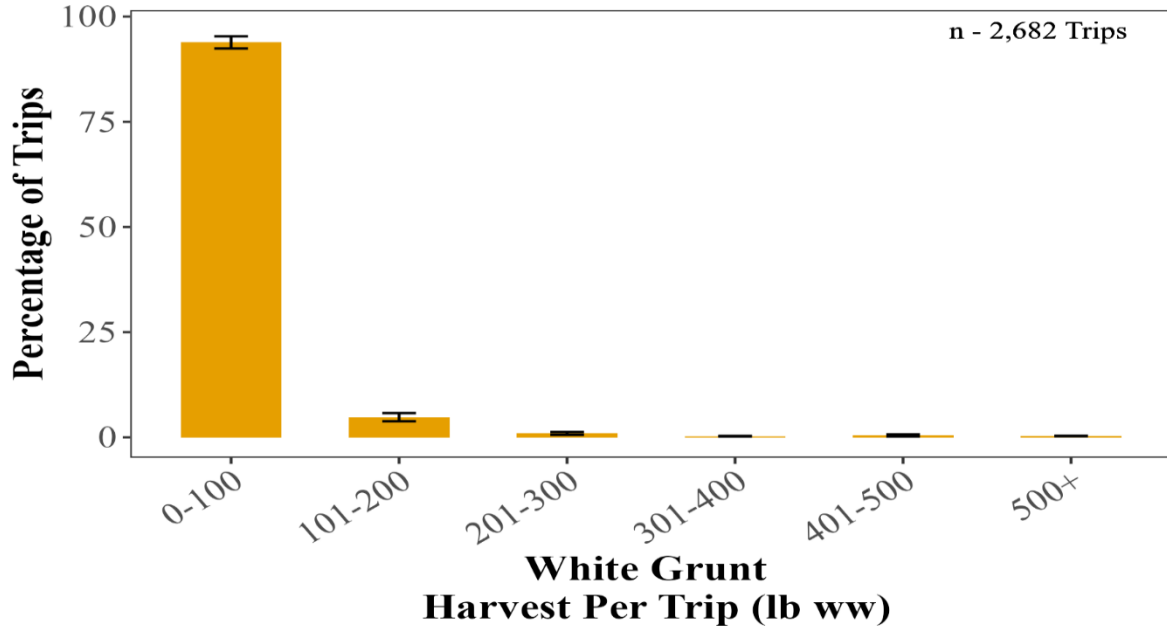
**Figure A-7.** Distribution of South Atlantic knobbed porgy commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024. The data came from the commercial logbook program.



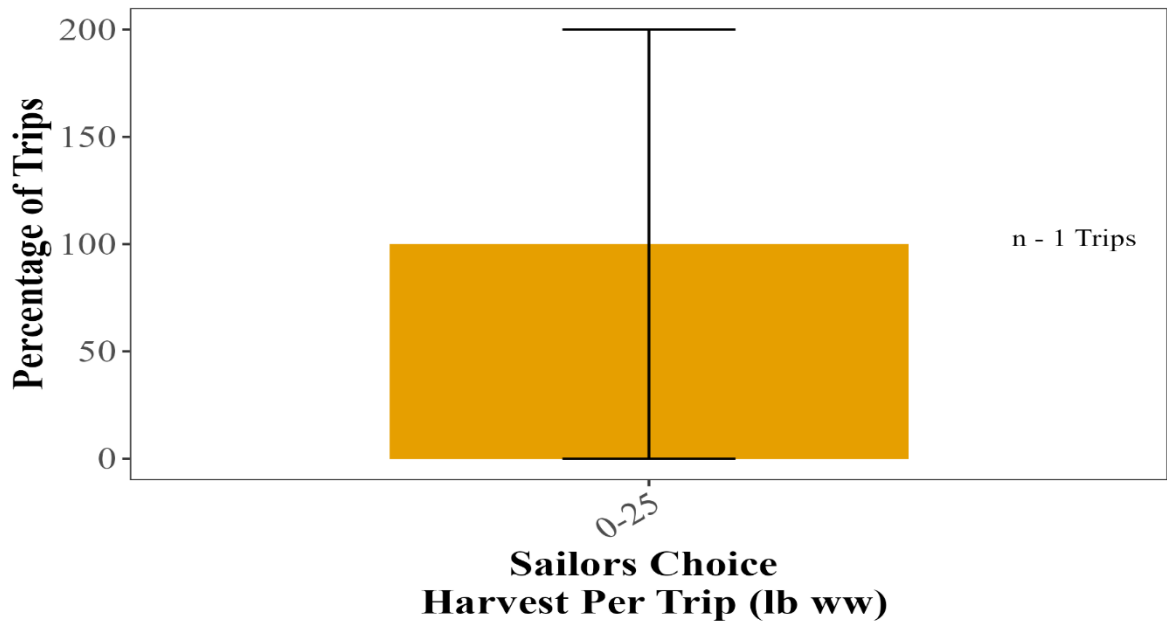
**Figure A-8.** Distribution of South Atlantic scup commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024. The data came from the commercial logbook program.



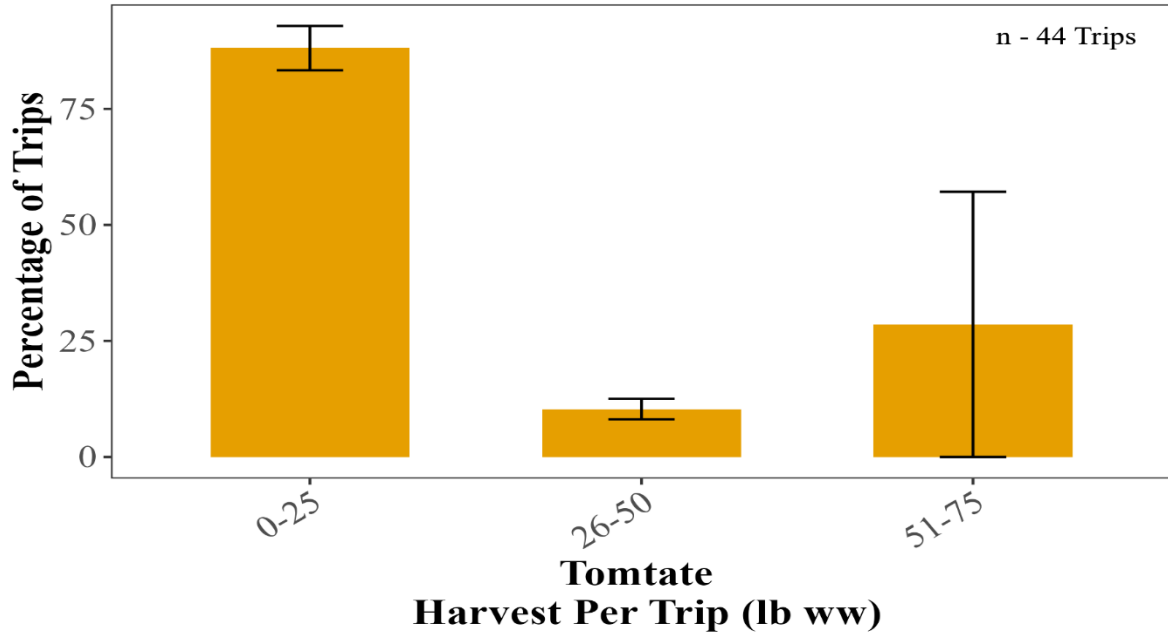
**Figure A-9.** Distribution of South Atlantic whitebone porgy commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024. The data came from the commercial logbook program.



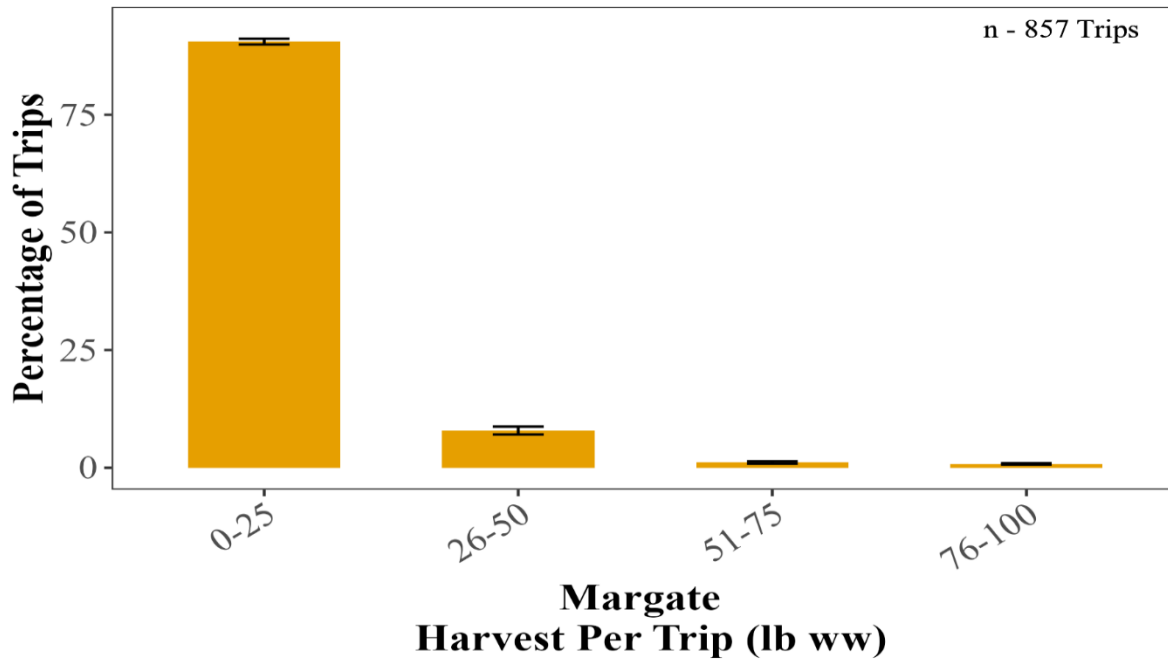
**Figure A-10.** Distribution of South Atlantic white grunt commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024. The data came from the commercial logbook program.



**Figure A-11.** Distribution of South Atlantic sailor’s choice commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024. The data came from the commercial logbook program.



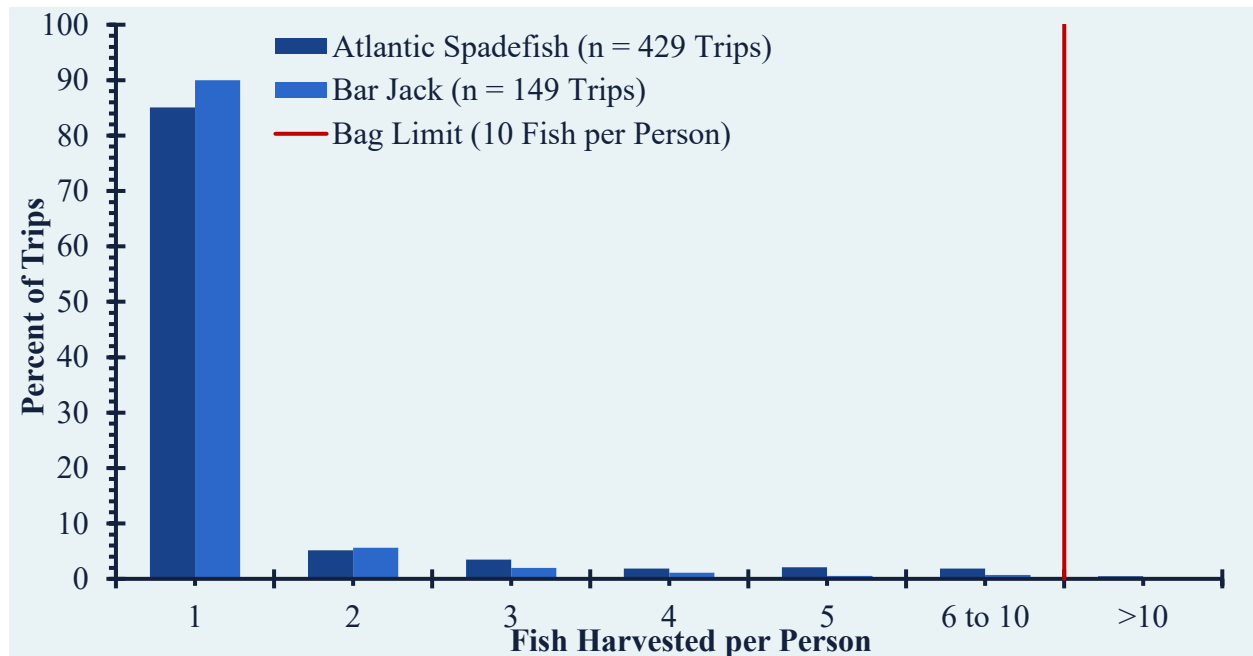
**Figure A-12.** Distribution of South Atlantic tomtate commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024. The data came from the commercial logbook program.



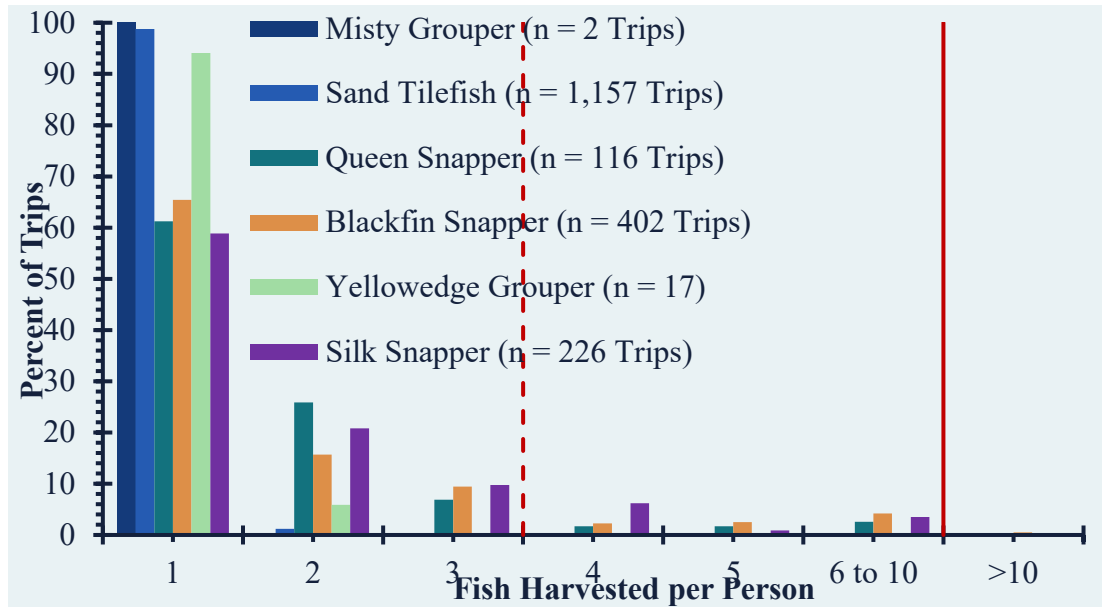
**Figure A-13.** Distribution of South Atlantic margate commercial harvest per trip from 2020 through 2024. The data came from the commercial logbook program.

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

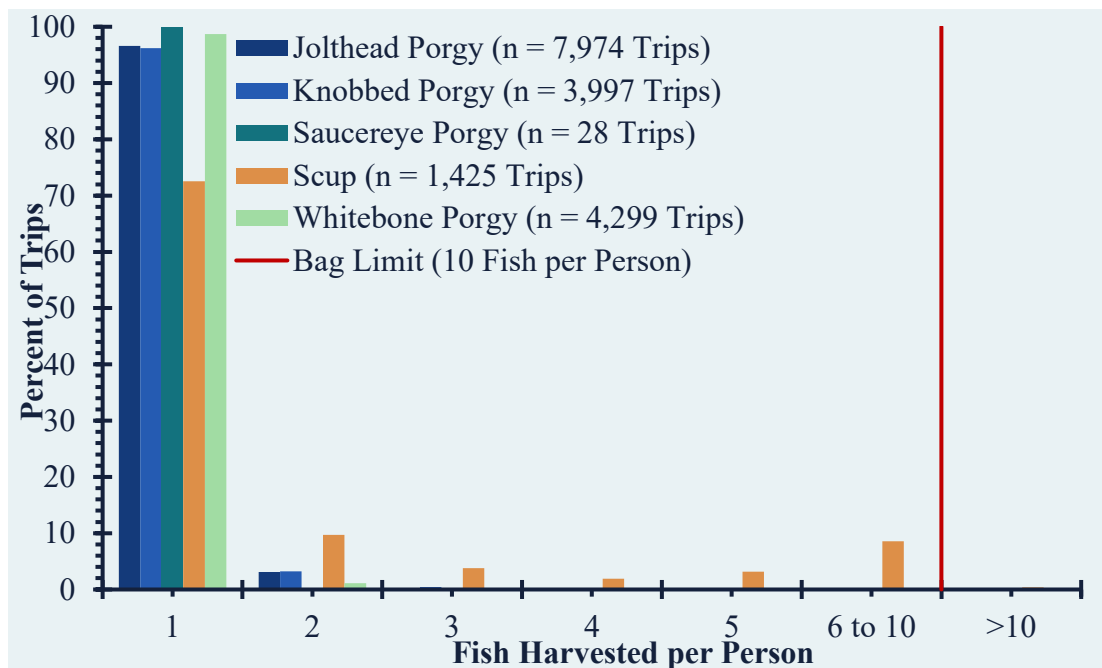
Amendment 61 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 61) is in the process of modifying the bag limit for a range of species. Recreational harvest information needed for bag limit analysis is collected from two different recreational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



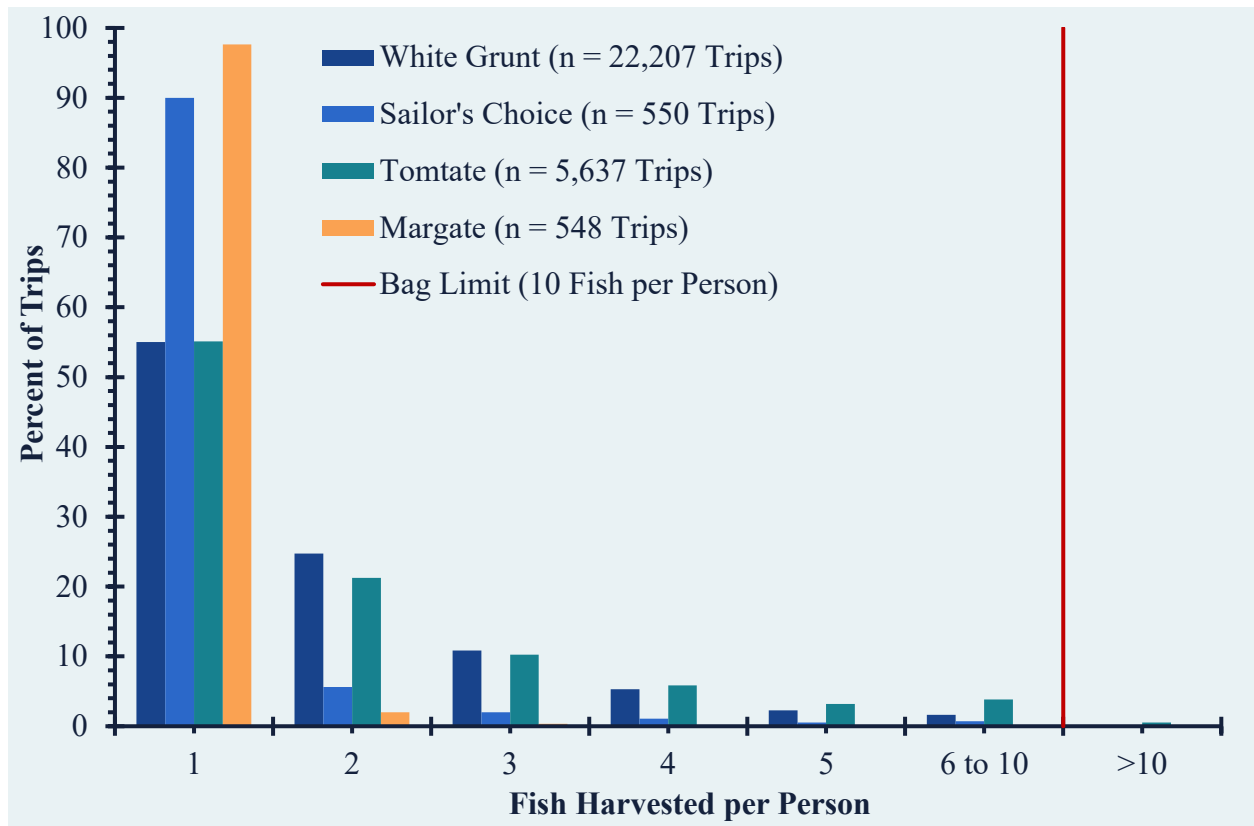
**Figure A-14.** Distribution of South Atlantic spadefish and bar jack harvest per person from 2020 through 2024. The data came from combined MRIP and Headboat data. The red line is the current bag limit of 10 fish per person.



**Figure A-15.** Distribution of South Atlantic misty grouper, sand tilefish, queen snapper, blackfin snapper, yellowedge grouper, and silk snapper harvest per person from 2020 through 2024. The data came from combined MRIP and Headboat data. The red line is the current bag limit of 10 fish per person, however, the dashed red line is the current bag limit for misty grouper, sand tilefish, and yellowedge grouper.



**Figure A-16.** Distribution of South Atlantic jolthead porgy, knobbed porgy, saucereye porgy, scup, and whitebone porgy harvest per person from 2020 through 2024. The data came from combined MRIP and Headboat data. The red line is the current bag limit of 10 fish per person.



**Figure A-17.** Distribution of South Atlantic white grunt, sailor’s choice, tomtate, and margate harvest per person from 2020 through 2024. The data came from combined MRIP and Headboat data. The red line is the current bag limit of 10 fish per person