THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Snapper Grouper Amendment 55

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

Decision Document, June 2024

Background

A recent stock assessment (SEDAR 68 OA [2022]) for scamp and yellowmouth grouper indicated that the stock is overfished. Refer to the draft amendment (snapper grouper attachment 2a) for additional background information.

Acceptable Biological Catch

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

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

OFL RECOMMENDATIONS	
Year	**Total Removals (lbs ww)**
2025	97,000
2026	119,000
2027	171,000
2028	227,000
2029	270,000

ABC RECOMMENDATIONS		
Year	**Total Removals (lbs ww)**	**Total Removals (numbers)**
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
Year	**Landings (lbs ww)**	**Dead Discards (lbs ww)**
2025	67,450	3,550
2026	72,200	3,800
2027	75,050	3,950
2028	77,900	4,100
2029	79,800	4,200

Objectives for this Meeting (June 2024)

- Review effects summary for each action and AP input for applicable actions
- Review updated analysis and decision tool
- Select any remaining preferred alternatives (**Action 2d [OY]**, **7a [Recreational Bag limit], and 7b [Recreational Vessel limit]**)
- Approve for public hearings

Tentative Amendment Timing

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

Timeline Reminder: This timeline is going to be tight, but a December final may not leave enough time for rulemaking after the Council submits the final amendment.

Purpose and Need Statements

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

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

Committee Action

- REVIEW THE PURPOSE AND NEED – APPROVED IN MARCH 2024

Proprosed Action and Alternatives

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

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

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

Effects Summary

Tables summarize effects for each alternative. For full details on the biological, economic, social, and administrative effects, see **Attachment 5b (Draft Amendment) Chapter 4.**

	Biological Benefit	Economic Benefit	Social Benefit	Administrative Burden
Alternative 1 (No Action)	**No biological, economic, or social benefit as it is a non-viable option Administrative burden expected since it does not follow BSIA**			
Preferred Alternative 2	Highest biological benefit compared to Alt. 1 (No Action) since it follows BSIA	No direct economic effects expected	not expected to have major social effects but may help alleviate misidentification issues as anglers would no longer need to identify between the species	While this alternative may have higher admin. burden up front, it follows BSIA which would avoid admin burden in the future

Committee Action

- REVIEW SUMMARY OF EFFECTS.
- REVIEW SELECTED PREFERRED.

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

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

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

Sub-Action 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 as the yield when fishing at the fishing mortality rate that produces a spawning potential ratio of 30% for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex

Preferred Alternative 3. Establish the maximum sustainable yield proxy as the yield when fishing at the fishing mortality rate that produces a spawning potential ratio of 40% for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

Sub-Action 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 fishing mortality rate that produces a spawning potential ratio of 30% for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

Preferred Alternative 3. Establish the maximum fishing mortality threshold equal to the fishing mortality rate that produces a spawning potential ratio of 40% for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex.

Sub-Action 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.

Preferred Alternative 3. Establish the minimum stock size threshold equal to 75% of the spawning stock biomass at a fishing mortality of 40%.

Sub-Action 2c Language Change Discussion:

- Previously, Regulatory Amendment 21, which redefined MSST for *select* species, was listed as the rationale behind **Preferred Alternative 3**, however scamp and yellowmouth grouper were not included in those select species. According to the definition of MSST in that amendment however, scamp/yellowmouth grouper natural mortality from SEDAR 68 OA (2022) qualifies for the 75% of SSB_{MSY} definition of MSST.
- SEDAR 68 OA (2022) recommended this MSST definition but labeled it as **75% of $SSB_{F40\%}$** instead of **75% of SSB_{MSY}** so the IPT thought it was better to alter the language to match the assessment. Numerically these two are the same since the preferred MSY is $F_{40\%SPR.}$

Sub-Action 2d. Establish the optimum yield for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex

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

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

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

Alternative 4. Establish an 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 proxy.*

Discussion

- The South Atlantic Council has defined OY values for the snapper grouper stocks, but in the context of setting ACLs has opted to set annual OYs
  .
- OY is the long-term average amount desired from a stock or fishery. OY 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 OY.

Effects Summary

Tables summarize effects for each alternative. For full details on the biological, economic, social, and administrative effects, see **Attachment 5b, (Draft Amendment) Chapter 4.**

NOTE: The effects for Sub-Actions 2a – 2c (MSY proxy, MSST, and MFMT) are very similar. For full details on effects see **Attachment 5b, (Draft Amendment), Chapter 4.**

	Alternative	Biological Benefit	Economic Benefit	Social Benefit	Administrative Burden
2a-c	Alternative 1 (No Action)	**No biological, economic, or social benefit as it is a non-viable option. Administrative burden expected since MSY/MFMT/MSST are required under MSA**			
	Alternative 2	Less benefit because it doesn't follow BSIA	No indirect effects, higher MSY = greater short-term catch which would provide short-term benefit	Not following BSIA may have long-term social effects	Higher admin. burden, not following BSIA
	Preferred Alternative 3	**More benefit – follows BSIA**	**No indirect effects, higher long-term benefits**	**Following BSIA will have long-term social benefit**	**Lower admin. burden, following BSIA**

	Alternative	Biological Benefit	Economic Benefit	Social Benefit	Administrative Burden
2d	Alternative 1 (No Action)	**No biological, economic, or social benefit as it is a non-viable option. Administrative burden expected since OY is required under MSA**			
	Alternative 2	Highest buffer between OY and MSY proxy - highest bio. benefit	Highest buffer - lowest catch levels - lowest econ. benefit	Highest buffer - lowest catch levels - lowest social benefit	No difference in admin. burden as all alternatives would need to establish an OY
	Alternative 3	smaller buffer between OY and MSY proxy - less bio. benefit	Smaller buffer - higher catch levels - higher econ. benefit	Smaller buffer - higher catch levels - higher social benefit	
	Alternative 4	smallest buffer between OY and MSY proxy - least bio. benefit	Smallest buffer - highest catch levels - highest econ. benefit	Smallest buffer - highest catch levels - highest social benefit	

Committee Action

- REVIEW SUMMARY OF EFFECTS.
- SELECT PREFERRED FOR SUB-ACTION 2D.

DRAFT MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE X AS THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR SUB-ACTION 2D.

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

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

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

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.

Effects Summary

Tables summarize effects for each alternative. For full details on the biological, economic, social, and administrative effects, see **Attachment 5b (Draft Amendment) Chapter 4.**

	Biological Benefit	Economic Benefit	Social Benefit	Administrative Burden
Alternative 1 (No Action)	**No biological, economic, or social benefit as it is a non-viable option – rebuilding plan required under MSA for overfished stocks Administrative burden is lower only because it does not establish a rebuilding plan**			
Alternative 2	A shorter rebuilding timeframe would be more biologically beneficial	Would result in more restrictive management measures - lower econ. benefit	Would result in more restrictive management measures - lower social benefit	Same amount of admin. burden since both alternatives establish a rebuilding plan which will require monitoring for success
Preferred Alternative 3	**A longer rebuilding timeframe would be less biologically beneficial**	**Would result in less restrictive management measures - more econ. benefit**	**Would result in less restrictive management measures - more social benefit**	

Committee Action

- REVIEW SUMMARY OF EFFECTS.
- REVIEW SELECTED PREFERRED.

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

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

	ACL (pounds whole weight)				
Alternative	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**	**2029**
Alternative 1 (No Action, no ABC)	n/a				
Preferred 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).

- Overview of ACL usage in the scamp fishery:
  - Commercial sector: harvested an average of 44.9% of commercial ACL from 2012-2022[1].
  - Recreational sector: harvested an average of 30.9% of recreational ACL from 2012-2022[2].

[1] Based on ACL monitoring data accessed July 17th 2023, 2022 landings are preliminary.
[2] Recreational CHTS landings, based on ACL monitoring data accessed July 17th 2023, 2022 landings are preliminary.

Effects Summary

Tables summarize effects for each alternative. For full details on the biological, economic, social, and administrative effects, see **Attachment 5b (Draft Amendment) Chapter 4.**

	Biological Benefit	Economic Benefit	Social Benefit	Administrative Burden
Alternative 1 (No Action)	**No biological, economic, or social benefit as it is a non-viable option – catch levels required under MSA Administrative burden is lower only because it does not establish catch levels**			
Preferred Alternative 2	**Lowest buffer between ABC and ACL - lowest bio. benefit**	**Lowest buffer between ABC and ACL - highest ACL - highest econ. benefit**	**Lowest buffer between ABC and ACL - highest ACL - highest social benefit**	**Lowest buffer between ABC and ACL - ACL most likely to be met and therefore an in-season closure may be needed**
Alternative 3	higher buffer between ABC and ACL - higher bio. benefit	higher buffer between ABC and ACL - lower ACL - lower econ. benefit	higher buffer between ABC and ACL - lower ACL - lower social benefit	Higher buffer between ABC and ACL - ACL less likely to be met and therefore an in-season closure may not be needed
Alternative 4	Highest buffer between ABC and ACL - highest bio. benefit	highest buffer between ABC and ACL - lowest ACL - lowest econ. benefit	highest buffer between ABC and ACL - lowest ACL - lowest social benefit	Highest buffer between ABC and ACL - ACL least likely to be met and therefore an in-season closure may not be needed

Committee Action

- REVIEW SUMMARY OF EFFECTS.
- REVIEW SELECTED PREFERRED.

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.*

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

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

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

Preferred Alternative 2. Commercial and recreational allocation percentages and sector annual catch limits 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 allocation percentages and sector annual catch limits 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

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.

- March 2024:
    - Split Reduction method using the 5-year baseline is more reflective of current conditions (reductions in catch).

- Scamp catch was higher in 2013.

Effects Summary

Tables summarize effects for each alternative. For full details on the biological, economic, social, and administrative effects, see **Attachment 5b (Draft Amendment) Chapter 4.**

	Biological Benefit	Economic Benefit	Social Benefit	Administrative Burden
Alternative 1 (No Action)	**No biological, economic, or social benefit as it would not establish sector ACLs based on the updated ACL from Action 4**			
Preferred Alternative 2	Very similar biological effects as ACL are very similar between alternatives	All ACLs are constraining on harvest **Com:** Highest benefit due to higher ACLs **Rec:** Lower benefit due to lower ACLs	All ACLs are constraining on harvest **Com:** Highest benefit due to higher ACLs **Rec:** Lower benefit due to lower ACLs	Similar administrative burden since both establish an allocation and change each year until modified
Alternative 3		All ACLs are constraining on harvest **Com:** Lower benefit due to lower ACLs **Rec:** Highest benefit due to higher ACLs	All ACLs are constraining on harvest **Com:** Lower benefit due to lower ACLs **Rec:** Highest benefit due to higher ACLs	

Committee Action

- REVIEW SUMMARY OF EFFECTS.
- REVIEW SELECTED PREFERRED.

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

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

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

Discussion

- Currently, scamp and yellowmouth grouper are subject to the shallow water grouper spawning season closure which is from Jan 1 – Apr 30. This closure is ***not*** being modified in any of the alternatives under **Action 6**.

AP Recommendation

MOTION 4: RECOMMEND THE COUNCIL DESELECT PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE 2 FOR ACTION 6 AND SELECT ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION) FOR ACTION 6 (REDUCING THE RECREATIONAL SEASON).
15-0-1ABS
APPROVED BY THE AP (15-0-1ABS)

- One AP member mentioned opening the season in January, noting that spawning activity is not observed during this time and suggested that the spawning season be evaluated for efficacy for all the shallow water groupers.
- It was noted that the headboat and charter industry needs late summer access to the fishery and that scamp is very important for their business.
- Recreational representatives on the AP noted that a more restrictive recreational ACL would be preferable versus reducing the recreational season.
- The AP questioned the need for additional management measures if the ACL is not currently being met for either species.
- With consideration of the timeline restrictions of Amendment 55, the AP suggested that the Council consider separate headboat allocations where appropriate.
- The AP had concerns about the number of discards if the season is closed before December 31st.

Effects Summary

Tables summarize effects for each alternative. For full details on the biological, economic, social, and administrative effects, see **Attachment 5b (Draft Amendment) Chapter 4.**

	Biological Benefit	Economic Benefit	Social Benefit	Administrative Burden
Alternative 1 (No Action)	Season is more likely to close which could increase discards	***2025-2027, harvest is constrained by ACL*** 2028 and onward - Highest econ. benefit, largest number of fishable days	Highest social benefit, largest number of fishable days	Least amount of admin. burden as season modifications would not be needed
Preferred Alternative 2	shorter seasons would not slow the rate of harvest, only confine landings, Little difference between alternatives, both would help avoid closures compared to Alt. 1	***2025-2027, harvest is constrained by ACL*** 2028 and onward - Lowest econ. benefit, smallest number of fishable days	Lowest social benefit, smallest number of fishable days	Same amount of admin. burden as both would need to establish a recreational season
Alternative 3		***2025-2027, harvest is constrained by ACL*** 2028 and onwards - Higher econ. benefit compared to Preferred Alt. 2 since there is an additional month of fishable days	Higher social benefit compared to Preferred Alt. 2 since there is an additional month of fishable days	

Committee Action

- REVIEW SUMMARY OF EFFECTS.
- REVIEW AP RECOMMENDATIONS/FEEDBACK.
- REVIEW SELECTED PREFERRED.

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

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

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

Sub-Action 7a. Modify the recreational bag limit

Alternative 1 (No Action). The recreational bag limit is 3 scamp or 3 yellowmouth grouper per person per day within the 3 fish grouper and tilefish combined aggregate.

Alternative 2. Establish an aggregate complex bag limit of 2 fish (either scamp or yellowmouth grouper combined) per person per day within the 3 fish grouper and tilefish combined aggregate.

Alternative 3. Establish an aggregate complex bag limit of 1 fish (either scamp or yellowmouth grouper combined) per person per day within the 3 fish grouper and tilefish combined aggregate.

Sub-Action 7b. Establish a recreational vessel limit

Alternative 1 (No Action). There is no vessel limit for scamp and yellowmouth grouper.

Alternative 2. Establish a private recreational aggregate vessel limit for scamp and yellowmouth grouper of:

> **Sub-alternative 2a.** 2 fish (either scamp or yellowmouth grouper combined) per vessel per day, not to exceed the daily bag limit, whichever is more restrictive.
>
> **Sub-alternative 2b.** 4 fish (either scamp or yellowmouth grouper combined) per vessel per day, not to exceed the daily bag limit, whichever is more restrictive.

Alternative 3. Establish a for-hire (charter vessel/headboat) recreational aggregate vessel limit for scamp and yellowmouth grouper of:

> **Sub-alternative 3a.** 2 fish (either scamp or yellowmouth grouper combined) per vessel per trip, not to exceed the daily bag limit, whichever is more restrictive.
>
> **Sub-alternative 3b.** 4 fish (either scamp or yellowmouth grouper combined) per vessel per trip, not to exceed the daily bag limit, whichever is more restrictive

Discussion

- The current bag limit allows an angler to retain 3 fish (a combination of scamp, yellowmouth grouper, or any of the other species in the grouper aggregate). The two species are seen as separate under the aggregate bag limit.

- The bag limit under **Alternatives 2** and **3** would add an additional caveat to the grouper aggregate bag limit where an angler could only retain 2 or 1 scamp or yellowmouth grouper respectively. These alternatives would treat the species as a single species within the aggregate and reduce the retention of them within the aggregate – similar to gag or black grouper.

- Regulation Complexity – there are currently 11 different caveats for the 3-grouper aggregate bag limit, adding more will further complicate the bag limit for the fishermen.

- Does the Council want to continue to have alternatives that establish a vessel limit for the private recreational component and the for-hire component (including charter and headboats)?

Projections

Table 2. Proposed recreational bag and vessel limit alternatives and associated percent reduction for each alternative under Sub-Action 7a.

Action	Alternative	Private	Charter	Headboat
Sub-Action 7a	Alternative 1 (No Action): 3 scamp or yellowmouth grouper per angler per day	-	-	-
	Alternative 2: 2 scamp or yellowmouth grouper per angler per day	-18.1%	-18.1%	-0.7%
	Alternative 3: 1 scamp or yellowmouth grouper per angler per day	-28.6%	-28.6%	-6.1%

Table 3. Proposed recreational bag and vessel limit alternatives and associated percent reduction for each alternative (Sub-Action 7b).

Action	Alternative	Private	Charter	Headboat
Sub-Action 7b	Alternative 1 (No Action): No Vessel Limit	-	-	-
	Alternative 2a: 2 fish per vessel limit for **private recreational** vessels; not to exceed the daily bag limit of 3 fish, whichever is more restrictive	-30.0%	-	-
	Alternative 2b: 4 fish per vessel limit for **private recreational** vessels; not to exceed the daily bag limit of 3 fish, whichever is more restrictive	-16.2%	-	-
	Alternative 3a: 2 fish per vessel limit for **for-hire** vessels; not to exceed the daily bag limit of 3 fish, whichever is more restrictive	-	-30.0%	-47.1%
	Alternative 3b: 4 fish per vessel limit for **for-hire** vessels; not to exceed the daily bag limit of 3 fish, whichever is more restrictive	-	-16.2%	-21.5%

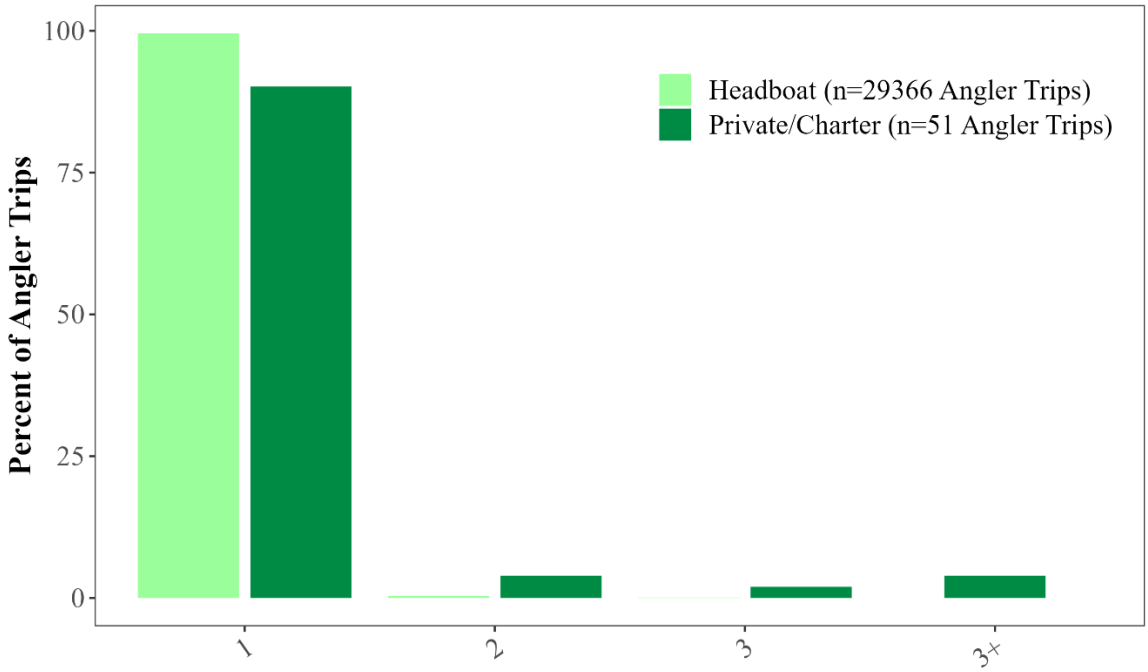

Figure 1. Distribution of scamp and yellowmouth grouper **angler harvest** from dockside intercept and headboat logbook data from 2018-2022, by recreational fleet.

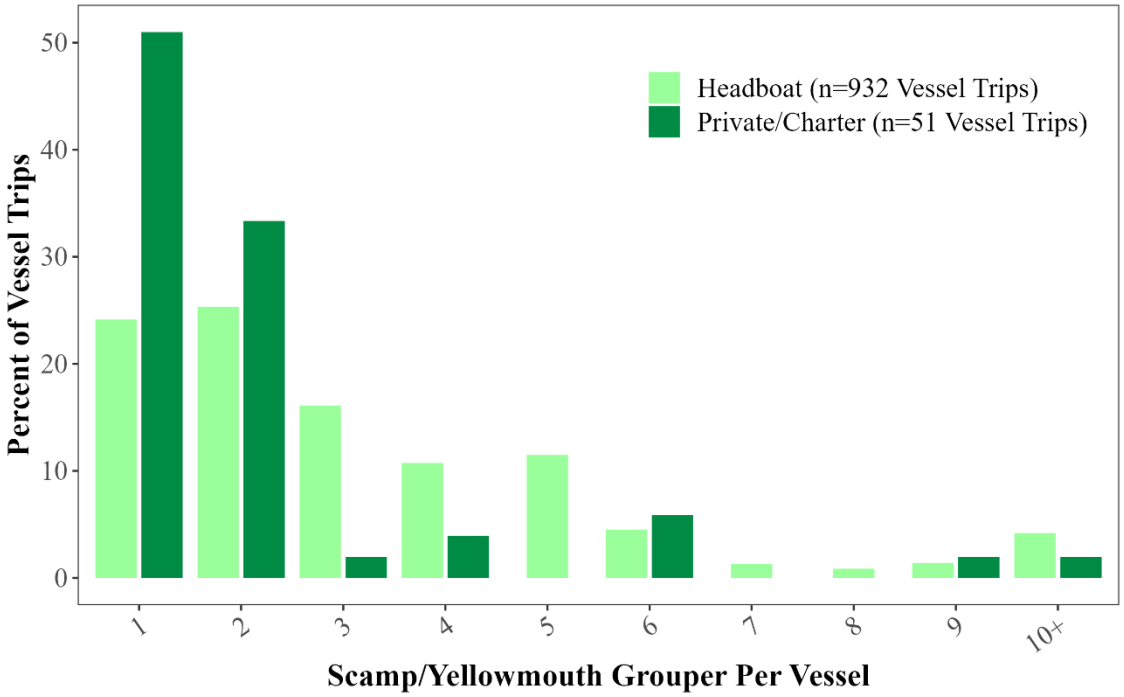

Figure 2. Distribution of scamp and yellowmouth grouper **vessel harvest** from dockside intercept and headboat logbook data from 2018-2022, by recreational fleet.

AP Recommendation

MOTION 5: IF A VESSEL LIMIT IS IMPOSED, RECOMMEND THE COUNCIL ADD AN ALTERNATIVE FOR RECREATIONAL FOR-HIRE VESSELS THAT ARE FEDERALLY INSPECTED AND PERMITTED TO CARRY MORE THAN 6 PASSENGERS, TO HAVE AN AGGREGATE SCAMP AND YELLOWMOUTH GROUPER VESSEL LIMIT OF 1-4 FISH FOR EVERY 6 PASSENGERS ON BOARD, NOT TO EXCEED A MAXIMUM NUMBER OF FISH PER VESSEL PER TRIP, RANGING FROM 8-16 FISH, NOT TO INCLUDE CAPTAIN AND CREW LIMITS.
APPROVED BY AP (15-0-0ABS)

- Some AP members noted that **Alternative 3** (1 fish per person per day) for Action 7a would be preferred.
- Some AP members preferred relying on reducing the bag limit only to constrain harvest instead of establishing a vessel limit.
- **Consensus Recommendation: The AP would prefer to retain recreational access to the fishery from May-December, by reducing the bag limit or establishing a vessel limit instead of reducing the season.**

Effects Summary

Tables summarize effects for each alternative. For full details on the biological, economic, social, and administrative effects, see **Attachment 5b (Draft Amendment) Chapter 4.**

	Alternative	Biological Benefit	Economic Benefit	Social Benefit	Administrative Burden
7a	Alternative 1 (No Action)	Least conservative bag limit - lowest bio. benefit	Same effect as Alt. 2 in 2025 because harvest is constrained by ACL 2026 onward – highest economic benefit	**Angler trip:** highest benefit **Season Length:** least benefit	little difference in alternatives since there is already a bag limit, but admin. burden may increase with a larger bag limits if the ACL is met and season closes
	Alternative 2	More conservative bag limit - more bio. benefit	Same effect as Alt. 1 in 2025 because harvest is constrained by ACL 2026 onward – higher econ benefit than Alt. 3 but lower than Alt. 1	**Angler trip:** less benefit **Season Length:** more benefit	
	Alternative 3	Most conservative bag limit - most bio. benefit	Lowest economic benefit compared to the other alts. for all years	**Angler trip:** least benefit **Season Length:** highest benefit	

	Alternative	Biological Benefit	Economic Benefit	Social Benefit	Administrative Burden
7b	Alternative 1 (No Action)	Less bio. benefit than vessel limit alternatives as vessel limit is more conservative	**2025** – similar effect across all alts.since harvest is constrained to the ACL **2026** – net econ benefit decrease under 2a because it lowers landings under the ACL **2027** – net econ benefit decrease for 2a, 2b, and 3a since they lower landings under the ACL **2028 and onward** – Alt. 1 highest net econ benefit followed by Alt. 2 and 3	**Trip Efficieny:** Highest benefit **Season Length/Stock Benefit:** Lower benefit	Less administriative burden – does not implement a vessel limit
	Alternative 2a-2b (2 fish vessel)	More conservative vessel limit - higher bio. benefit		**Trip Efficieny:** Lowest benefit **Season Length/ Stock Benefit:** Highest benefit	little difference in alternatives since a vessel limit would need to be established for all, but admin. burden may increase with a larger vessel limit if the ACL is met and season closes
	Alternative 3a-3b (4 fish vessel)	Less conservative vessel limit - less bio. benefit		**Trip Efficieny:** Higher benefit than Alts. 2a and 3a **Season Length/Stock Benefit:** Lower benefit than Alt. 2a and 3a	

Committee Action

- REVIEW PROJECTIONS (DECISION TOOL).
- REVIEW SUMMARY OF EFFECTS.
- REVIEW AP RECOMMENDATIONS/FEEDBACK.
- SELECT A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE.

DRAFT MOTION: SELECT PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE X FOR SUB-ACTION 7A.

DRAFT MOTION: SELECT PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE X, SUB-ALTERNATIVE FOR SUB-ACTION 7B.

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

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

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

Discussion

- In March 2024, the Council confirmed that the trip limit should be expressed in pounds gutted weight.

- The suite of alternatives matches the trip limits presented in Amendment 53 (gag and black grouper). In that amendment the Council selected **Alternative 3** as their preferred (300 lbs trip limit).

Projections

Table 4. Percent reduction in harvest associated with each trip limit alternative for the commercial sector.

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

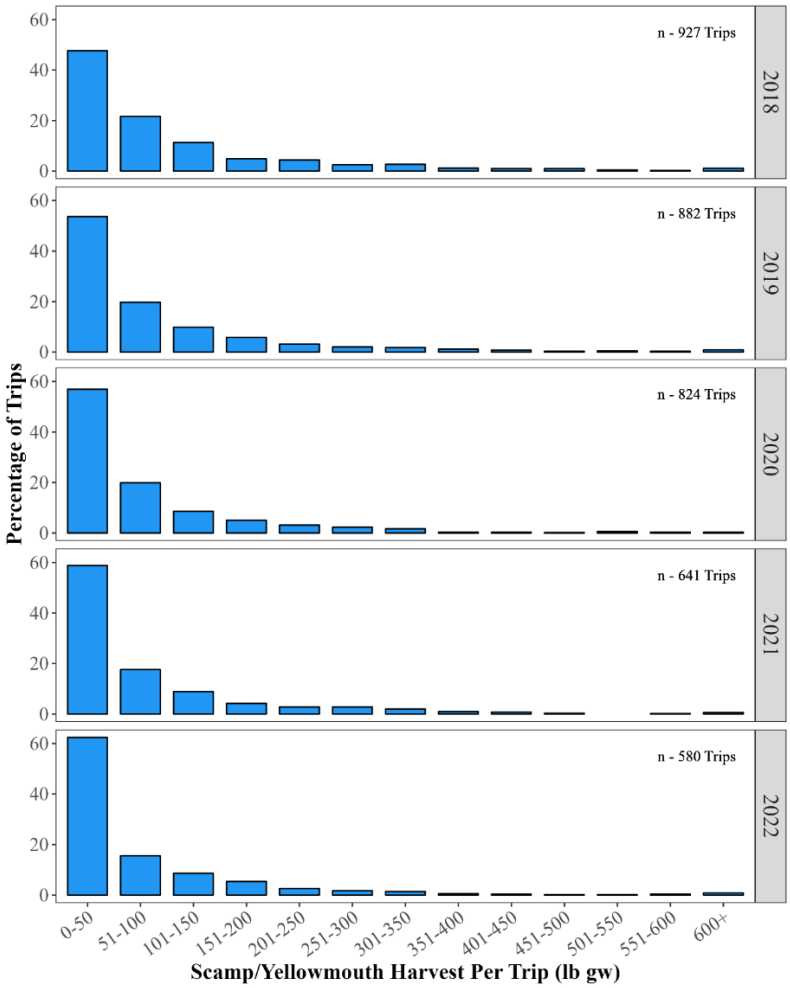

Figure 3. Distribution of scamp and yellowmouth grouper trip harvest between 2018 and 2022, in 50 lbs gw bins.

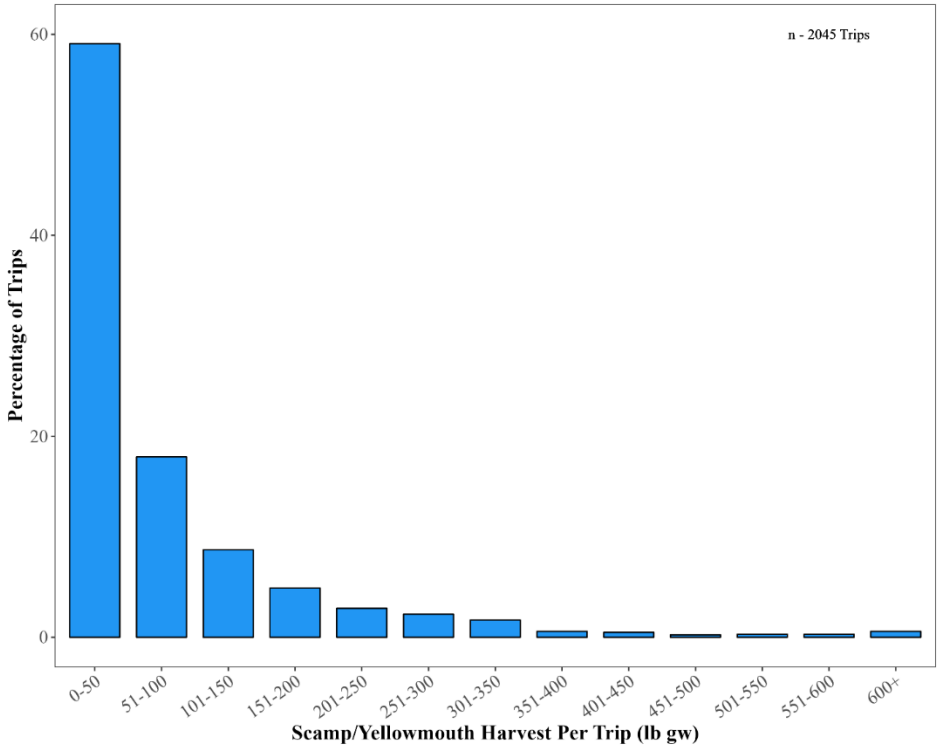

Figure 4. Distribution of scamp and yellowmouth grouper trip harvest between 2020 and 2022, all years combined, in 50 lbs gw bins.

Table 4. The approximate date the commercial ACL is estimated to be met under each commercial trip limit alternative (Action 8). These projections assume the preferred alternatives from Actions 4 (total ACL) and 5 (allocations), and the fishing season from May 1 to December 31.

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

AP Recommendations

Non-Consensus:

- The AP noted that the preferred 300 lbs gw trip limit may have a negative effect on vessels that take 3–7-day trips.

- The AP had concerns about whether a 300 lbs gw trip limit would be viable or economical enough to justify a trip.
- There was discussion on pounds vs season and AP wondered if it would be more important to have more pounds on the trip and a potentially shorter season.

Effects Summary

Tables summarize effects for each alternative. For full details on the biological, economic, social, and administrative effects, see **Attachment 5b (Draft Amendment) Chapter 4.**

	Biological Benefit	Economic Benefit	Social Benefit	Administrative Burden
Alternative 1 (No Action)	Trip limits do not have a direct bio effect as harvest is capped at the ACL least indirect bio. benefit	Highest economic benefit as trip limits are not efficient	**Trip Efficieny:** Highest benefit **Season Length/Stock Benefit:** Lowest benefit	No administrative burden
Alternative 2	Lowest trip limit – higher indirect bio. benefit than Alt. 1 from slowed harvest but lower than other alternatives	Lowest trip limit - lowest potential net revenue and net economic benefit	**Trip Efficieny:** Lowest benefit **Season Length/Stock Benefit:** Highest benefit	Little differences between alternatives as all would establish a trip limit, but admin. burden may increase with a larger trip limit if the ACL is met and season closes
Preferred Alternative 3	Higher trip limit – higher bio. benefit from slowed harvest	Higher trip limit - higher potential net revenue and net economic benefit	**Trip Efficieny:** Higher benefit **Season Length/Stock Benefit:** Lower benefit	
Alternative 4	Highest trip limit - most bio. benefit from slowed harvest	Highest trip limit - highest potential net revenue and net economic benefit	**Trip Efficieny:** Highest benefit of alternatives that establish a trip limit **Season Length/Stock Benefit:** Lowest benefit of alternatives that establish a trip limit	

Committee Action

- REVIEW SUMMARY OF EFFECTS.
- REVIEW AP RECOMMENDATIONS/FEEDBACK.
- REVIEW SELECTED PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE.

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

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

Alternative	In-Season AM		Post-Season AM	
	Triggers	AM	Triggers	AM
Alternative 1 (No Action)	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)			
Alternative 2 ***STATUS QUO FOR SCAMP/YM***	Commercial landings reach or are expected to reach the sector ACL	Current commercial season closes	• Commercial landings exceed the commercial ACL • Total ACL exceeded • Stock is overfished ***All triggers must be present for AM to occur**	Commercial ACL is reduced for the following year by the amount of the overage
Preferred Alternative 3 ***"UN-COUPLED" POST-SEASON***	**Commercial landings reach or are expected to reach the sector ACL**	**Current commercial season closes**	**Commercial landings exceed the commercial ACL** ***Not tied to stock status and total ACL**	**Commercial ACL is reduced for the following year by the amount of the overage**

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).

Effects Summary

Tables summarize effects for each alternative. For full details on the biological, economic, social, and administrative effects, see **Attachment 5b (Draft Amendment) Chapter 4.**

	Biological Benefit	Economic Benefit	Social Benefit	Administrative Burden
Alternative 1 (No Action)	**No biological, economic, or social benefit as it is a non-viable option – AMs are required under MSA Administrative burden is lower only because it does not establish AMs**			
Alternative 2	Lower bio. benefit because the post-season AM is reliant on the total ACL, sector ACL, and stock status	Higher econ. benefit as the post-season AM is less likely to be triggered, reducing the ACL in following season	Higher social benefit as the post-season AM is less likely to be triggered, reducing the ACL in following season	Lower admin. burden as the post-season AM is less likely to be triggered, requiring the ACL to be reduced in the following season
Preferred Alternative 3	**Higher bio. benefit because the post-season is more easily triggered**	**Lower econ. benefit as the post-season AM is more likely to be triggered, reducing the ACL in following season**	**Lower social benefit as the post-season AM is more likely to be triggered, reducing the ACL in following season**	**Higher admin. burden as the post-season AM is more likely to be triggered, requiring the ACL to be reduced in the following season**

Committee Action

- REVIEW SUMMARY OF EFFECTS.
- REVIEW SELECTED PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE.

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

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

Alternative	In-Season AM		Post-Season AM	
	Triggers	AM	Triggers	AM
Alternative 1 (No Action)	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)			
Alternative 2 ***STATUS QUO FOR SCAMP/YM***	Recreational landings reach or are expected to reach the sector ACL	Current recreational season closes	• Recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL **• Total ACL is exceeded** **• Stock is overfished** ***All triggers must be present for AM to occur**	Recreational season for the following year is reduced by the amount necessary to prevent the recreational ACL from being exceeded
Alternative 3 ***"UNCOUPLED", SEASON REDUCTION PAYBACK***	Recreational landings reach or are expected to reach the sector ACL	Current recreational season closes	Recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL ***Not tied to stock status and total ACL**	Recreational season for the following year is reduced by the amount necessary to prevent the recreational ACL from being exceeded
Alternative 4 ***"UNCOUPLED", ACL PAYBACK***	Recreational landings reach or are expected to reach the sector ACL	Current recreational season closes	Recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL ***Not tied to stock status and total ACL**	Recreational ACL is reduced for the following year by the amount of the overage
Preferred Alternative 5 ***NO IN-SEASON, "UNCOUPLED", SEASON REDUCTION***	**NONE**		**Recreational landings exceed the recreational ACL** ***Not tied to stock status and total ACL**	**Recreational season for the following year is reduced by the amount necessary to prevent the recreational ACL from being exceeded**

Alternative 4. If recreational landings for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex reach or are projected to reach the complex 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 complex recreational annual catch limit, the recreational annual catch limit for the complex is reduced for the following year by the amount of the reactional annual catch limit overage, regardless of stock status.

Preferred Alternative 5. If recreational landings for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex exceed the complex recreational annual catch limit, the length of the following year's recreational fishing season for the complex will be reduced by the amount necessary to prevent the recreational annual catch limit for the complex from being exceeded in the following year, regardless of stock status.

Effects Summary

Tables summarize effects for each alternative. For full details on the biological, economic, social, and administrative effects, see **Attachment 5b (Draft Amendment) Chapter 4.**

	Biological Benefit	Economic Benefit	Social Benefit	Administrative Burden
Alternative 1 (No Action)	**No biological, economic, or social benefit as it is a non-viable option – AMs are required under MSA Administrative burden is lower only because it does not establish AMs**			
Alternative 2	Lower benefit than Alt. 3 and 4 as the post-season AM is not as easily triggered (reliant on 3 criteria)	Lower benefit than Preferred Alt. 5 since there was an in-season AM but the post-season AM is not as easily triggered as other alts.	Lower benefit than Preferred Alt. 5 since there was an in-season AM but the post-season AM is not as easily triggered as other alts.	Lower admin. burden than Alts. 3 and 4– need to monitor rec. landings in the current season and implement a closure if needed but the post-season AM is less likely to be triggered
Alternative 3	2nd highest benefit since the post-season AM is a season payback not ACL payback	Lower benefit than Alt. 2 since there is an in-season AM and a post-season AM that is less conservative than Alt. 4	Lower benefit than Alt. 2 since there is an in-season AM and a post-season AM that is less conservative than Alt. 4	2nd highest admin. burden – need to monitor rec. landings in the current season and implement a closure if needed as well as the post-season modification
Alternative 4	Highest biological benefit because it offers the most conservative AM (in-season AM and ACL payback)	Lowest econ. benefit since it has an in-season AM and most conservative post-season AM	Lowest econ. benefit since it has an in-season AM and most conservative post-season AM	Highest admin. burden – need to monitor rec. landings in the current season and implement a closure if needed as well as the post-season ACL reduction
Preferred Alternative 5	**Lowest benefit since there is no in-season AM**	**Highest benefit since there is no in-season AM and the post season is a season reduction not ACL reduction**	**Highest benefit since there is no in-season AM and the post season is a season reduction not ACL reduction**	**Lowest admin. burden since there is no in-season AM**

Committee Action

- REVIEW SUMMARY OF EFFECTS.
- REVIEW SELECTED PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE.

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

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

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

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

Alternative 1 (No Action). The acceptable biological catch for the Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper complex (containing rock hind, red hind, coney, graysby, yellowmouth grouper and yellowfin grouper) is 104,190 pounds whole weight. The total annual catch limit is set equal to this acceptable biological catch and is 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.

Preferred Alternative 2. The acceptable biological catch for the updated Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper complex (contains rock hind, red hind, coney, graysby, and yellowfin grouper, and excludes yellowmouth grouper) is 104,190 pounds whole weight. The total annual catch limit for the updated Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper complex is 100,151 pounds whole weight and is 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.

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% x average landings from 1986-2008)+(50% x 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 3rd highest or ORCS method. The "3rd 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.

- The current allocations will not be modified in this amendment.

Effects Summary

Tables summarize effects for each alternative. For full details on the biological, economic, social, and administrative effects, see **Attachment 5b (Draft Amendment) Chapter 4.**

	Biological Benefit	Economic Benefit	Social Benefit	Administrative Burden
Alternative 1 (No Action)	No biological, economic, or social benefit as it is a non-viable option as it would allow for landings of yellowmouth grouper outside of the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper complex, which accounts for yellowmouth grouper landings			
Preferred Alternative 2	Highest benefit as it accounts for yellowmouth grouper within the complex established in Action 1	Highest benefit as it accounts for yellowmouth grouper within the complex established in Action 1	Highest benefit as it accounts for yellowmouth grouper within the complex established in Action 1	While up-front admin burden is higher, modifying the complex ACL will help prevent future admin burden

Committee Action

- REVIEW RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES.
- SELECT PREFERRED.

DRAFT MOTION: APPROVE AMENDMENT 55, AS MODIFIED, FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS.

What's Next?

- Public hearings will be held – what does the Council want these to look like?
- The IPT will continue work on the draft amendment.
- In September staff will review public comments and the Council will have the opportunity to approve the amendment for final approval.

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.

		Current Shallow Water Grouper Complex					
Regulation	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
COMPLEX TOTAL	104,190	104,190	55,542	48,648

Appendix II. Current Accountability Measures

Commercial

Scamp:

(i) If commercial landings for scamp, as estimated by the SRD, reach or are projected to reach the commercial ACL of 219,375 lb (99,507 kg), round weight, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to close the commercial sector for the remainder of the fishing year. On and after the effective date of such a notification, all sale or purchase of scamp is prohibited and harvest or possession of scamp in or from the South Atlantic EEZ is limited to the bag and possession limits. These bag and possession limits apply in the South Atlantic on board a vessel for which a valid Federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper has been issued, without regard to where such species were harvested, i.e., in state or Federal waters.

(ii) If commercial landings for scamp, as estimated by the SRD, exceed the commercial ACL, and the combined commercial and recreational ACL of 335,744 lb (152,291 kg), round weight, is exceeded, and scamp are overfished based on the most recent Status of U.S. Fisheries Report to Congress, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to reduce the commercial ACL for that following fishing year by the amount of the commercial ACL overage in the prior fishing year.

Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper:

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

(ii) If commercial landings for other SASWG combined, as estimated by the SRD, exceed the commercial ACL, and the combined commercial and recreational ACL of 104,190 lb (47,260 kg), round weight, is exceeded, and at least one of the species in other SASWG combined is overfished based on the most recent status of U.S. Fisheries Report to Congress, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to reduce the commercial ACL for that following

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

Recreational

Scamp:

(i) If recreational landings for scamp, as estimated by the SRD, reach or are projected to reach the recreational ACL of 116,369 lb (52,784 kg), round weight, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to close the recreational sector for the remainder of the fishing year regardless if the stock is overfished, unless NMFS determines that no closure is necessary based on the best scientific information available. On and after the effective date of such a notification, the bag and possession limits for scamp in or from the South Atlantic EEZ are zero.

(ii) If recreational landings for scamp, as estimated by the SRD, exceed the recreational ACL, then during the following fishing year recreational landings will be monitored for a persistence in increased landings, and if necessary, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to reduce the length of the recreational fishing season and the recreational ACL by the amount of the recreational ACL overage, if scamp are overfished based on the most recent Status of U.S. Fisheries Report to Congress, and if the combined commercial and recreational ACL of 335,744 lb (152,291 kg), round weight, is exceeded during the same fishing year. NMFS will use the best scientific information available to determine if reducing the length of the recreational fishing season and recreational ACL is necessary. When the recreational sector is closed as a result of NMFS reducing the length of the recreational fishing season and ACL, the bag and possession limits for scamp in or from the South Atlantic EEZ are zero.

Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Groupers:

(i) If recreational landings for other SASWG combined, as estimated by the SRD, reach or are projected to reach the recreational ACL of 48,648 lb (22,066 kg), round weight, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to close the recreational sector for the remainder of the fishing year regardless if any stock in other SASWG combined is overfished, unless NMFS determines that no closure is necessary based on the best scientific information available. On and after the effective date of such a notification, the bag and possession limits for any species in the other SASWG combined in or from the South Atlantic EEZ are zero.

(ii) If recreational landings for other SASWG combined, as estimated by the SRD, exceed the recreational ACL, then during the following fishing year recreational landings will be monitored for a persistence in increased landings, and if necessary, the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to reduce the length of the recreational fishing season and the recreational ACL by the amount of the recreational ACL overage, if at least one of the species in other SASWG combined is overfished based on the most recent Status of U.S. Fisheries Report to

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

Appendix III. 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.

Appendix IV. 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 A-1**).

- Because the allocation alternatives only used more recent years of landings, data was smoothed using the SEDAR 68 (2022) method and masked for confidentiality during this time period. Commercial landings were assumed to represent a census and therefore were only masked for confidentiality.(**Figure A-2**).

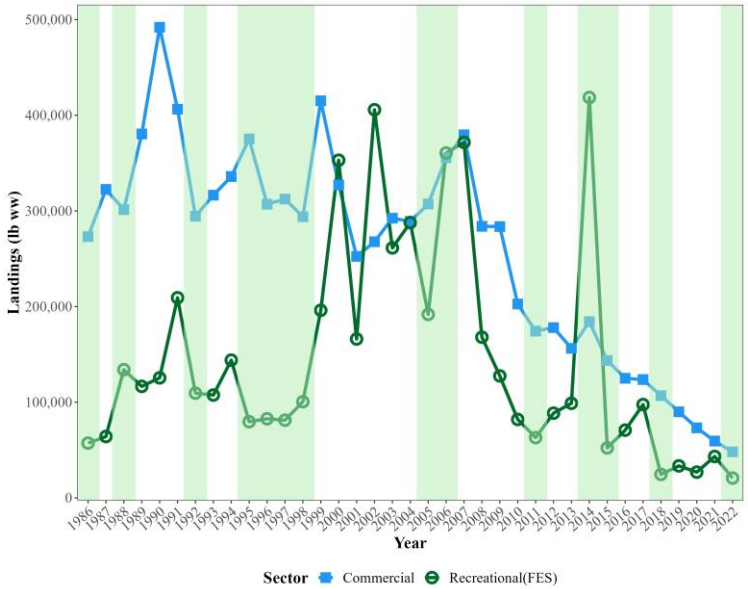

Figure A-1. Aggregated annual estimates of scamp and yellowmouth grouper landings from 1986 to 2022, by fishing sector. Light green shading indicates years with PSE values > 50% for recreational landings estimates.

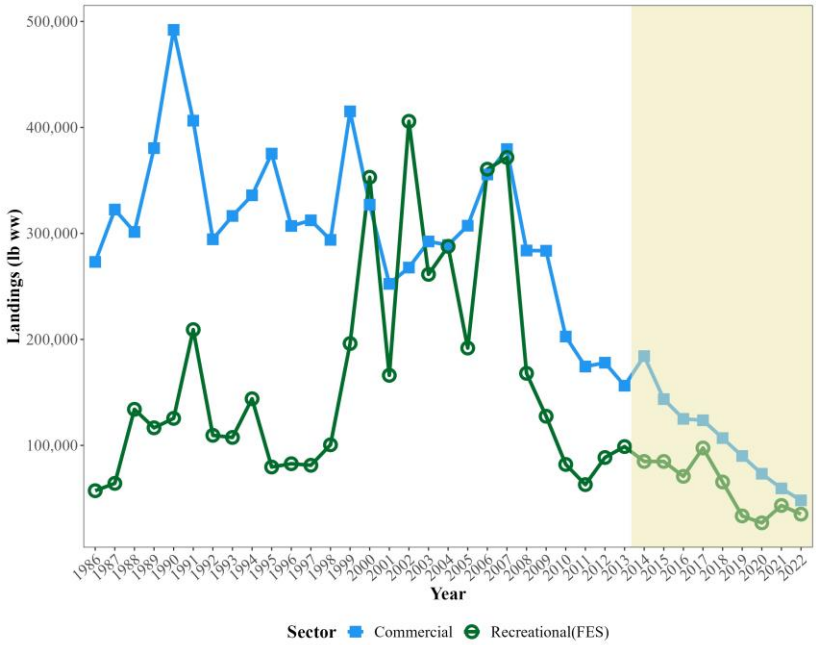

Figure A-2. Aggregated annual estimates of scamp and yellowmouth grouper landings from 1986-2022, by sector. Yellow shading indicates years where smoothed landings values were used to replace recreational estimates with PSE values >50%.