

Amendment 53 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region

Catch Level Adjustments, Rebuilding Schedule, and Allocations for Gag

Options Paper

December 2021

Background

The first assessment of the South Atlantic gag stock, through the Southeast Data, Assessment, and Review (SEDAR) process, occurred in 2006. The assessment indicated that the stock was not overfished but was experiencing overfishing (SEDAR 10 2006).

History of Gag Stock Status		
Assessment	Overfished	Overfishing
SEDAR 10 (2006)		X
SEDAR 10 Update (2014)		X
SEDAR 71 (2021)	X	X

In 2014, SEDAR 10 was updated and indicated that gag was not overfished but still undergoing overfishing. In response to the assessment update, the gag total annual catch limit (ACL) was set to 95% of the allowable biological catch (ABC) recommended by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) through Regulatory Amendment 22 to the Snapper Grouper FMP (2015).

The most recent stock assessment for gag, SEDAR 71, was completed in 2021. The terminal year of the assessment is 2019. This assessment used revised estimates for recreational catch from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) based on the Fishing Effort Survey (FES). The results of this assessment indicated that the stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing (Figure 1). The Council's SSC reviewed SEDAR 71 at their April 2021 meeting and determined that the assessment is based on the best scientific information available (BSIA). Gag management measures have been modified through past amendments to end overfishing and better achieve ACLs. These modifications have included changes to the bag limit, minimum size limit, and season length (Appendix A).

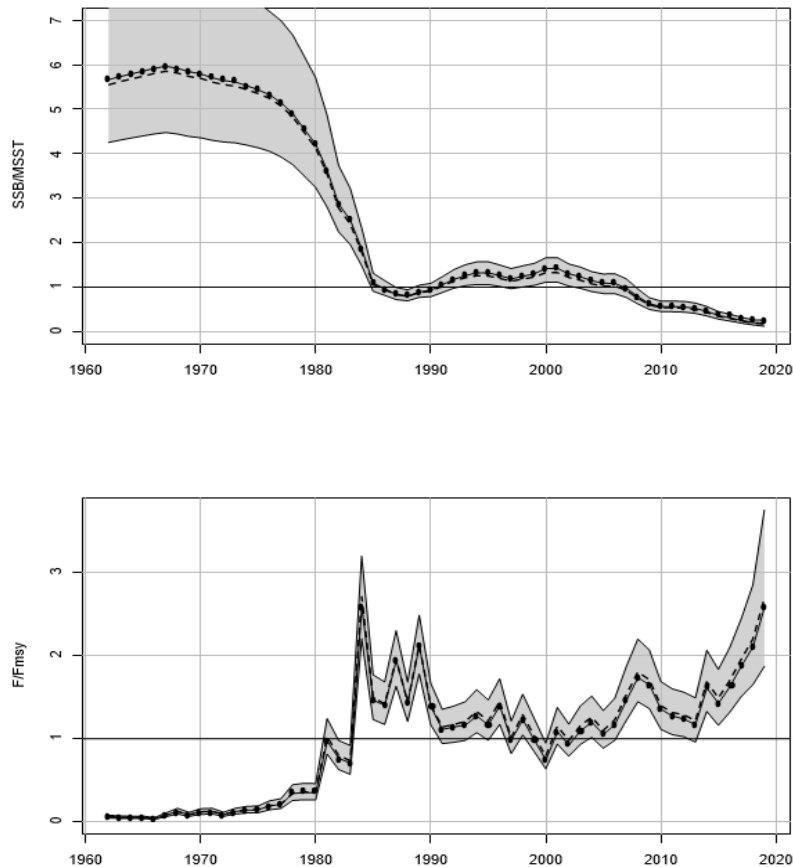


Figure 1. Estimated time series of spawning stock biomass (SSB) and fishing mortality (F) relative to benchmarks. Solid line indicates estimates from base run of the Beaufort Assessment Model; gray error bands indicate 5th and 95th percentiles of the ensemble modeling. Top panel: SSB relative to the minimum stock size threshold (MSST); if less than 1, stock is overfished. Bottom panel: F relative to F_{MSY} ; if > 1 stock is undergoing overfishing. *Source: SEDAR 71 (2021).*

NMFS notified the Council on June 10, 2021, that management action is necessary for gag as the stock is undergoing overfishing and remains overfished. Once the Council is notified that a stock is undergoing overfishing and is overfished, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires the Council and NMFS to end overfishing immediately and

implement a rebuilding plan within two years. NMFS recommended that the Council end overfishing of gag and continue stock rebuilding based on the results of SEDAR 71.

Assessment Link:

http://sedarweb.org/docs/sar/SEDAR_71_SAR_4.19.21_final_withaddendum.pdf

Fishery Overview: https://safmc-shinyapps.shinyapps.io/SA_FisheryDataGag/

The Council reviewed the results of the assessment and the SSC's recommendations for the overfishing limit (OFL) at their June 2021 meeting and initiated a plan amendment to adjust catch levels to end overfishing and rebuild the stock. Under current National Standard 1 guidelines, if a stock can be rebuilt in 10 years or less, then the rebuilding plan may not exceed 10 years. Assessment projections indicated the gag stock can rebuild in 7 years in the absence of fishing mortality; therefore, the rebuilding plan for gag may not exceed 10 years.

During their October 2021 meeting, the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP) reviewed a discussion document reviewing possible management responses to the assessment. The AP had the following general comments:

- *The AP recommended exploring aquaculture of snapper/grouper species*
 - *Raise juveniles up to 1 lbs range, release in estuary with 2 release seasons*
 - *The AP recommends considering what will be needed to remove individuals for aquaculture as well as water quality hazards*
- *Artificial reefs are needed for snapper grouper species*
 - *AP recommends the Council partner with the states to designate artificial reefs as SMZs*
- *AP members note that the gag fishery has been declining in NC, similar to red snapper 10 years ago*
- *The AP recommends creating MPAs in deeper water (near break, 60-80ft)*
- *The AP noted that more research is needed to determine where there are spawning aggregations*
- *The AP felt that continued education needed for best practices*
- *The AP noted that inshore habitat needs to be protected and additionally noted that fishing is occurring in nursery habitat*
- *The AP noted that red snapper are eating juvenile gag*
- *The AP noted that red tide issues may be affecting Florida gag population*
- *The AP expressed concerns identifying between gag and other shallow water grouper (specifically black grouper). They noted that management may need to include the entire aggregate.*
- *The AP is interested in what the Council is planning with regards to holistic management for the shallow water grouper aggregate*
- *The AP noted that an emergency action could be considered to drop commercial limit*

Acceptable Biological Catch and Overfishing Limit

The SSC reviewed the gag stock assessment (SEDAR 71 2021) at their May 2021 meeting. The SSC found that the assessment addressed the terms of reference appropriately, was conducted using the BSIA, was adequate for determining stock status and supporting fishing level recommendations and addressed uncertainty consistent with expectations and available information. The Council requested several different rebuilding projections including 50% and 70% probability of rebuilding under different recruitment scenarios, including recent low recruitment and longer-term modeled recruitment based on spawning stock size. At their October 2021 meeting, the SSC recommended OFL/ABC values based on a 70% probability of rebuilding in 10 years and recruitment based on the spawner-recruit relationship from the SEDAR 71 (2021) (Table 1).

Table 1. South Atlantic gag OFL and ABC recommendations (SSC Meeting Report, October 2021). Note: Commercial and recreational landings are expressed in pounds gutted weight (lbs gw).

OFL RECOMMENDATIONS		
Year	Landings (lbs gw)	Landings (Numbers)
2023	367,235	35,621
2024	494,338	44,843
2025	605,227	52,622
2026	706,366	60,151
2027	808,266	68,072
2028	912,033	75,932
2029	1,011,133	83,028
2030	1,098,379	88,942
2031	1,171,120	93,683
2032	1,230,363	97,454
ABC RECOMMENDATIONS		
Year	Landings (lbs gw)	Landings (Numbers)
2023	175,632	16,925
2024	261,171	23,158
2025	348,352	29,077
2026	435,081	34,954
2027	524,625	41,129
2028	617,778	47,415
2029	711,419	53,422
2030	800,088	58,772
2031	879,758	63,304
2032	948,911	67,043

Snapper Grouper AP Comments/Recommendations :

- *The AP recommends that a 70% probability of rebuilding should be used instead of 50%*

Proposed management changes in this amendment

- Establish a rebuilding plan for gag in the South Atlantic
- Adjust catch levels (acceptable biological catch and annual catch limits) and revise annual optimum yield
- Revise sector allocations
- Consider other changes to management

Objectives for this meeting

- Provide guidance on options for development
- Approve the amendment for scoping

Tentative amendment timing

June 2021	Reviewed SEDAR 71 results and direct staff to begin a plan amendment
October 2021	Advisory Panel review / SSC recommended ABC
December 2021	Review options/scoping paper, provide guidance to staff, and approve the amendment for scoping
January/February 2022	Conduct scoping
March 2022	Review scoping, review preliminary analyses, and provide guidance to staff
April 2022	Advisory Panel review
June 2022	Review modifications to the amendment, select preferred alternatives, and approve for public hearings
August 2022	Conduct public hearings
September 2022	Review public hearing comments and approve all actions
December 2022	Review draft amendment and provide guidance to staff
March 2023	Review final amendment and approval for final review

DRAFT Purpose and Need Statements

Note: This Purpose and Need statement is a draft version and may change, pending Council guidance at the December 2021 meeting.

The *purpose* of this fishery management plan amendment is to establish a rebuilding plan, set an acceptable biological catch, sector allocations, and annual catch limits for South Atlantic gag based on the results of the most recent stock assessment.

The *need* for this fishery management plan amendment is to end overfishing of South Atlantic gag, rebuild the stock, and achieve optimum yield while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse social and economic effects.

Options for Proposed Actions

1. Establish a rebuilding plan for gag

- A rebuilding plan must be established to end overfishing and rebuild the stock of gag in the South Atlantic as a result of the overfished and overfishing status determinations indicated by the SEDAR 71 2021 stock assessment.
- Guidance on how to define the upper (T_{max}) and lower (T_{min}) bounds of a rebuilding schedule are specified in National Standard 1 (NS1) of the National Standard Guidelines.¹
- “ T_{min} means the amount of time the stock or stock complex is expected to take to rebuild to its MSY biomass level in the absence of any fishing mortality. In this context, the term “expected” means to have at least a 50 percent probability of attaining the B_{msy} , where such probabilities can be calculated. The starting year for the T_{min} calculation should be the first year that the rebuilding plan is expected to be implemented.”
- “If T_{min} for the stock or stock complex is 10 years or less, then T_{max} is 10 years.”
- Options for developing a range of alternatives:

Option 1 (No Change). The South Atlantic stock of gag is currently not under a rebuilding plan.

¹ National Standard Guidelines are available at the following web address:
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/laws-and-policies/national-standard-guidelines>.

Option 2. Establish a rebuilding plan with a rebuilding timeframe to equal the shortest possible time to rebuild in the absence of fishing mortality (T_{\min}). This would equal 7 years with the rebuilding period ending in 2030. 2023 would be Year 1.

Note: this option assumes that fishing mortality is zero and discards are eliminated. Therefore, it can be expected that under this scenario rebuilding would take longer than 7 years if discards are assumed to be greater than zero.

Option 3. Establish a rebuilding plan with a rebuilding timeframe to equal T_{\max} . This would equal 10 years with the rebuilding period ending in 2032. 2023 would be Year 1.

Others?

Committee Action:

PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON RANGE OF OPTIONS TO DEVELOP.

2. Revise the gag total acceptable biological catch, annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield

- New ACLs are needed because the SSC recommended new OFL and ABC values. The current gag ACL (734,350 pounds gutted weight) was established in 2015 through Regulatory Amendment 22 to the FMP and was set at 95% of the ABC.
- The current ACL does not include landings estimates using the new Marine Recreational Information Program’s Fishing Effort Survey.
- The Council has specified OY=ACL=ABC for most snapper grouper species. NS 1 guidelines state that although a Council can establish an annual OY, it must establish a long-term OY.
- OFL and ABC recommendations are for landed catch, as discards are estimated elsewhere in the assessment.
- How does the Council wish to specify the total ACLs (pounds or numbers of fish)?
 - The commercial ACL is currently specified in pounds gutted weight (lbs gw).
 - The commercial trip limit is specified in lbs gw.
 - The recreational ACL is currently specified in lbs gw.
 - The projections from the SEDAR assessment include both pounds whole weight (lbs ww) and lbs gw (ABC and OFL recommendations).
- Commercial landings of gag in the South Atlantic averaged 76.6% of the current commercial ACL from 2015-2019. There were no commercial closures (aside from the spawning season closure) from 2015-2019 (Table 2).

Table 2. Commercial landings of gag from 2015-2019 and the percentage of the commercial ACL landed each year.

Year	Landings (lbs gw)	ACL (lbs gw)	ACL %
2019	258,591	347,301	74.5
2018	239,810	335,188	71.5
2017	196,807	318,231	61.8
2016	234,997	297,882	78.9
2015	284,540	295,459	96.3

Source: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/commercial-fishing/southeast-region-annual-catch-limit-acl-monitoring>

Note: ACL is indicative of the Directed Commercial Quota established in Amendment 16 (2009).

- Recreational landings of gag in the South Atlantic averaged 33.1% of the current recreational ACL from 2015-2019. There were no recreational closures (aside from the spawning season closure) from 2015-2019 (Table 3).

Table 3. Recreational landings of gag from 2015-2019 and the percentage of the recreational ACL landed each year.

Year	Landings (lbs gw)	ACL (lbs gw)	ACL %
2019	94,394	348,194	27.1
2018	129,355	348,194	37.1
2017	114,117	331,902	34.4
2016	151,456	312,351	48.5
2015	58,348	310,023	18.8

Source: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/southeast/commercial-fishing/southeast-region-annual-catch-limit-acl-monitoring>

Note : The ACL for these years is based on MRIP CHTS estimates, landings are estimated using this method as well.

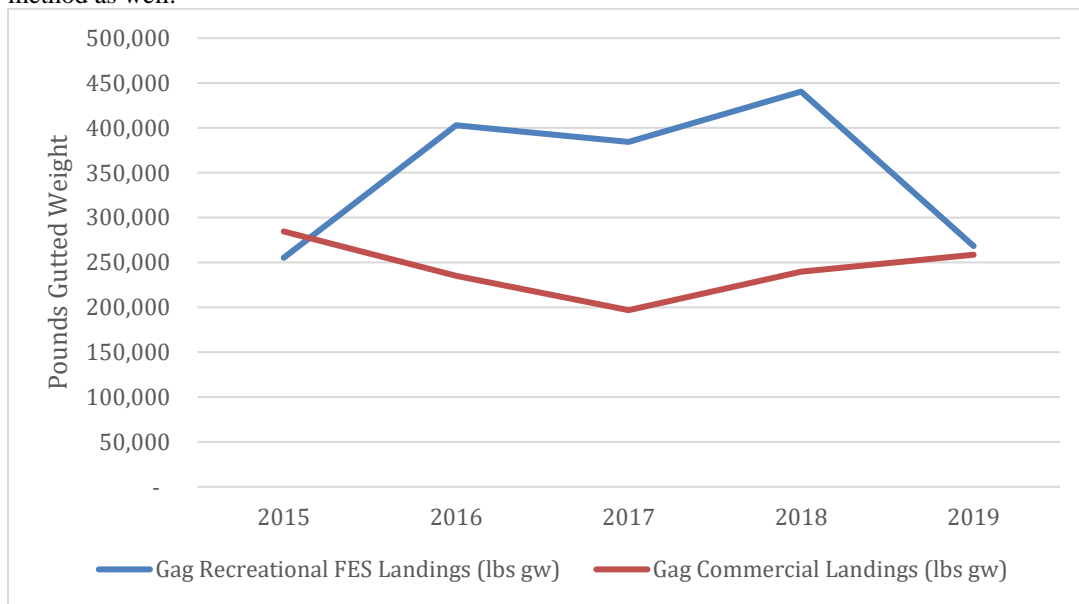


Figure 1: The recreational (MRIP FES) and commercial landings from 2015-2019

Table 4. Total gag ACL and total landings in lbs gw from 2015-2019. Recreational landings incorporated into the total landings are MRIP FES landings.

Year	Total ACL (lbs gw)	Total Landings (lbs gw)
2015	632,700	539,752
2016	637,450	637,939
2017	677,350	581,138
2018	710,600	680,219
2019	734,350	526,842

- Options for developing a range of alternatives:

Option 1 (No Change). The total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for gag are equal to 95% of the current acceptable biological catch (734,350 pounds gutted

weight). The current acceptable biological catch level is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Coastal Household Telephone Survey.

Option 2. Revise the total acceptable biological catch as recommended by the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for gag and set them equal to the updated acceptable biological catch. The updated acceptable biological catch level is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Fishing Effort Survey.

Option 3. Revise the total acceptable biological catch as recommended by the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for gag and set them equal to 95% of the updated acceptable biological catch. The updated acceptable biological catch level is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Fishing Effort Survey.

Option 4. Revise the total acceptable biological catch as recommended by the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for gag and set them equal to 90% of the updated acceptable biological catch. The updated acceptable biological catch level is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Fishing Effort Survey.

Option 5. Revise the total acceptable biological catch as recommended by the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for gag and set them equal to 80% of the updated acceptable biological catch. The updated acceptable biological catch level is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Fishing Effort Survey.

Table 5. ACL, OY, and ABC options.

Option	ABC, total ACL, annual OY	Recreational landings data used
Option 1 (No Action)	ACL=OY=current ABC	MRIP-CHTS
Option 2	ACL=OY=updated ABC	MRIP-FES
Option 3	ACL=OY=95% updated ABC	MRIP-FES
Option 4	ACL=OY=90% updated ABC	MRIP-FES
Option 5	ACL=OY=80% updated ABC	MRIP-FES

Table 6. Total ACL values in pounds gutted weight for each proposed option under Action 2.

	ACL (pounds gw)									
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032*
Option 1**	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350

Option 2***	175,632	261,171	348,352	435,081	524,625	617,778	711,419	800,088	879,758	948,911
Option 3***	166,850	248,112	330,934	413,327	498,394	586,889	675,848	760,084	835,770	901,465
Option 4***	158,069	235,054	313,517	391,573	472,163	556,000	640,277	720,079	791,782	854,020
Option 5***	140,506	208,937	278,682	348,065	419,700	494,222	569,135	640,070	703,806	759,129

*2032 values would remain in place until modified.

**The ACL for Option 1 is inclusive of recreational landings tracked using the MRIP Coastal Household Telephone Survey.

***The ACLs for Options 2 through 5 would be inclusive of recreational landings tracked using the MRIP Fishing Effort Survey.

Snapper Grouper AP Comments/Recommendations :

- *The AP would like the Council to ensure there is some available harvest for both sectors (bycatch fishery). Continued catch is crucial to inform science with fisheries dependent methods*
 - *Closing the fishery could increase mortality*

Committee Action:

- PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON RANGE OF OPTIONS TO DEVELOP.

3. Revise the gag sector allocations and sector annual catch limits

- Allocations need to be reviewed since the recreational landings stream changed in the new assessment. Recreational landings are now estimated using the Fishing Effort Survey method rather than the previous Coastal Household Telephone Survey.
- Sector allocations for gag were implemented through Amendment 16 to the Snapper Grouper FMP (SAFMC 2008) (commercial 51%, recreational 49%) using landings from 1999-2003.
- While not used for gag, an allocation formula was adopted through the Comprehensive ACL Amendment (SAFMC 2011) for unassessed snapper grouper species. The same formula has also been used to allocate the total ACL for some assessed species (e.g., golden tilefish).
- Regulatory Amendment 15 to the FMP established the directed commercial quota to account for gag mortality from commercial trips targeting co-occurring species such as red grouper and scamp following a projected gag closure. The amount subtracted from the commercial ACL to account for this potential mortality (post quota bycatch mortality, or PQBM) was 27,218 lbs gw. The commercial harvest limit from 2015 to present represents the directed quota (commercial ACL – PQBM).
- For Options 2 and 3 below, the total ACL is representative of **Option 3 (ACL=95% ABC)** for Action 2. The revised total annual catch limit includes recreational landings based on the MRIP FES method and reflects stock assessment results of SEDAR 71.
- Options for developing a range of alternatives:

Option 1 (No Change). Retain the current commercial and recreational sector allocations as 51% and 49%, respectively, of the revised total annual catch limit for gag. Apply these percentages to the revised total annual catch limit. The percentages are based on the distribution of landings from 1999 through 2003 and were calculated using a landings dataset that included recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Coastal Household Telephone Survey.

Year	Total ACL lbs gw	Commercial Allocation lbs gw (51%)	Recreational ACL lbs gw (49%)
2023	166,850	85,094	81,757
2024	248,112	126,537	121,575
2025	330,934	168,776	162,158
2026	413,327	210,797	202,530
2027	498,394	254,181	244,213
2028	586,889	299,313	287,576

2029	675,848	344,682	331,166
2030	760,084	387,643	372,441
2031	835,770	426,243	409,527
2032	901,465	459,747	441,718

Option 2. Allocate 53.30% of the revised total annual catch limit for gag to the commercial sector and 46.70% of the revised total annual catch limit for gag to the recreational sector. This allocation is based on landings from 1993 to 2003 using a revised landings dataset that is inclusive of Marine Recreational Information Program Fishing Effort Survey estimates.

Year	Total ACL lbs gw	Total Commercial Allocations lbs gw (53.30%)	Recreational ACL lbs gw (46.70%)
2023	166,850	88,931	77,919
2024	248,112	132,244	115,868
2025	330,934	176,388	154,546
2026	413,327	220,303	193,024
2027	498,394	265,644	232,750
2028	586,889	312,812	274,077
2029	675,848	360,227	315,621
2030	760,084	405,125	354,959
2031	835,770	445,465	390,305
2032	901,465	480,481	420,984

Option 3. Allocate 58.01% of the revised total annual catch limit for gag to the commercial sector and 41.99% of the revised total annual catch limit for gag to the recreational sector. This allocation is based on applying the formula of sector annual catch limit = ((mean landings 2006-2008)*0.5) + ((mean landings 1986-2008)*0.5) to a revised dataset that is inclusive of Marine Recreational Information Program Fishery Effort Survey estimates.

Year	Total ACL lbs gw	Total Commercial Allocation lbs gw (58.01%)	Recreational ACL lbs gw (41.99%)
2023	166,850	96,790	70,060
2024	248,112	143,930	104,182
2025	330,934	191,975	138,959
2026	413,327	239,771	173,556
2027	498,394	289,118	209,276
2028	586,889	340,454	246,435
2029	675,848	392,059	283,789

2030	760,084	440,925	319,159
2031	835,770	484,830	350,940
2032	901,465	522,940	378,525

Others?

Table 7. Allocation options summary for proposed Action 3.

Option	Commercial/recreational allocation	Basis for allocation	Recreational landings used
Option 1 (No change)	51%/49%	Landings distribution 1999-2003	MRIP-CHTS
Option 2	53.30%/46.70%	Landings distribution 1999-2003	MRIP-FES
Option 3	58.01%/49.99%	Allocation formula	MRIP-FES

Note: all options applied to the revised total ACL from previous action.

Committee Action:

PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON RANGE OF OPTIONS TO DEVELOP.

Other Possible Actions:

4. Modify commercial management measures?

- Modifying commercial management measures may be considered to ensure harvest is constrained to the reduced catch levels and that rebuilding occurs during the specified timeframe.
- A PQBM level was used to adjust the commercial ACL to account for dead discards that might occur if the gag fishery closes in-season, but fishermen continue fishing for other shallow-water grouper species that co-occur with gag. SEDAR 71 accounted such discards so and additional modification to the commercial ACL is not needed for proposed action 2.
- The commercial ACL is currently 374,519 lbs gw and the directed commercial quota is 347,301 lbs gw (374,519 lbs gw minus 27,218 lbs gw).

Table 8. A summary of the current gag commercial management measures.

Gag Grouper Commercial Management Measures	
Trip Limit	1,000 lbs gw until 75% of the commercial ACL is met then the trip limit is 500 lbs gw
Commercial Season	May 1 - December 31
Commercial Size Limit	24 inches total length

- According to SEDAR 71, 29% of females were mature at age 4 and average length of 27.9 inches and 63% of females were mature at age 5 and average length of 30.7 inches.
- Gag are protogynous hermaphrodites that change sex from female to male. According to SEDAR 71 the average age of transition is 10.5 years

Table 9. The age, length, and proportion female relationship for gag grouper

Age	Total Length (inches)	Proportion Female
10	39.2	61%
11	40.2	41%
12	41.1	24%
13	41.8	13%

14	42.4	6%
15	42.9	3%
16	43.3	1%

Snapper Grouper AP Comments/Recommendations :

- *The AP recommends increasing minimum size or implementing a slot fishery to protect spawning females*
- *The AP recommended expanding the spawning season closure – extend through May*
 - *It was noted that not much difference has been observed after spawning season closure enacted*
 - *The AP recommended not extending the spawning closure below 28 degrees N. Latitude*
- *The AP would prefer a 250 or 50 lbs gw trip limit versus 0 lbs*
 - *Reducing the trip limit for all shallow water grouper would be detrimental*

Committee Action:

PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON WHETHER THERE SHOULD BE AN ACTION TO CHANGE THE COMMERCIAL MANAGEMENT MEASURES.

- REDUCE THE COMMERCIAL TRIP LIMIT?
- ADJUST SPAWNING SEASON CLOSURE?
 - REGULATORY AMENDMENT 30 EXTENDED THE SPAWNING SEASON CLOSURE OFF OF NC, SC, AND GA THROUGH MAY FOR RED GROUPER.
- OTHERS?

5. Modify recreational management measures?

- Modifying recreational management measures may be considered to ensure harvest is constrained to the reduced catch levels and that rebuilding occurs during the specified timeframe.

Table 9. A summary of the current gag recreational management measures.

Gag Grouper Recreational Management Measures	
Bag Limit	1 fish/person/day within the 3-grouper aggregate
Recreational Season	May 1 - December 31
Recreational Size Limit	24 inches total length

Snapper Grouper AP Comments/Recommendations :

- *The AP recommended expanding the spawning season closure – extend through May*
 - *It was noted that not much difference has been observed after spawning season closure enacted*
 - *The AP recommended not extending the spawning closure below 28 degrees N. Latitude*
- *The AP recommends that there be a permit for the recreational sector*
- *The AP recommends increasing minimum size or implementing a slot fishery to protect spawning females*

Committee Action:

PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON WHETHER THERE SHOULD BE AN ACTION TO CHANGE THE RECREATIONAL MANAGEMENT MEASURES.

- REDUCE RECREATIONAL LIMIT (1 PER PERSON WITHIN THE AGGREGATE? GEAR MODIFICATIONS?)
- ADJUST SPAWNING SEASON CLOSURE?
 - REGULATORY AMENDMENT 30 EXTENDED THE SPAWNING SEASON CLOSURE OFF OF NC, SC, AND GA THROUGH MAY FOR RED GROUPER.
- OTHERS?

6. Modify accountability measures?

- Modifying accountability measures may be considered to prevent landings from exceeding the adjusted sector ACLs and correct for overages if they occur.
- Current accountability measures:

Table 10. A summary of the current commercial and recreational accountability measures.

	In-Season AM		Post Season AM	
	Triggers	AM	Triggers	AM
Commercial	Commercial landings exceed/expected to exceed commercial ACL	Current commercial season closes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial landings exceed/expected to exceed commercial ACL • Total ACL exceeded • Stock is overfished <p><i>*All triggers must be present for AM to occur</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial ACL for the following year reduced by the commercial overage • Commercial season for the following year is reduced by the amount of the commercial overage
Recreational	Recreational landings exceed/expected to exceed recreational ACL	Current recreational season closes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational landings exceed/expected to exceed recreational ACL • Total ACL exceeded • Stock is overfished <p><i>*All triggers must be present for AM to occur</i></p>	<p>Recreational landings are monitored during the following year and if necessary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational ACL for the following year reduced by the recreational overage • Recreational season for the following year is reduced to ensure the recreational ACL is not exceeded

Committee Action:

INCLUDE ACTION TO REVISE THE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES?

Appendices

Appendix A. Management History

Table A-1. The gag amendment history and management changes

Year	Amendment	Management Measure Change
1992	Amendment 4	20-inch TL minimum size, 5 gag bag limit
1999	Amendment 9	24-inch TL minimum size, 2 gag bag limit
2009	Amendment 16	shallow water grouper spawning season closure, established a directed commercial quota, allocations, reduced bag limit to 1 gag
2010	Amendment 17A	non-stainless steel circle hooks required for natural baits north of 28 degrees N. Latitude
2011	Amendment 17B	established aggregate ACLs and AMs
2012	Amendment 24	Removed aggregate ACLs
2013	Regulatory Amendment 15	Reduced commercial quota
2015	Regulatory Amendment 22	Revised ACLs
2016	Amendment 34	Modified AMs for snapper grouper species

Table A-2. The previous management measures and catch levels for South Atlantic gag. Note that for the commercial trip limit is 1,000 pounds gutted weight until 75% of the commercial ACL is met, then the trip limit is reduced to 500 pounds gutted weight.

Management Measures	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
ABC (lbs gw)	805,000	805,000	805,000	666,000	671,000	713,000	748,000	773,000	773,000	773,000	773,000	TBD
Total ACL (lbs gw)	693,000	666,782	666,782	632,700	677,350	710,060	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350	TBD
Total Landings (lbs gw)	532,699	459,110	505,701	342,888	386,453	310,924	369,165	352,985	307,195	TBD	TBD	TBD
Total ACL Overage/Underage	76.9%	68.9%	75.8%	54.2%	57.1%	43.8%	50.3%	48.1%	41.8%	TBD	TBD	TBD
Directed Commercial Quota (lbs gw)	352,940	326,722	326,722	295,459*	297,882*	318,231*	335,188*	347,301*	347,301*	347,301*	347,301*	TBD
Com. Landings (lbs gw)	355,602	380,638	336,254	284,540	234,997	196,807	239,810	258,591	257,071	TBD	TBD	TBD
Com. % ACL	100.8%	116.5%	102.9%	96.3%	78.9%	61.8%	71.5%	74.5%	74.0%	TBD	TBD	TBD
Rec. ACL (lbs gw)	340,060	340,060	340,060	310,023	312,351	331,902	348,194	348,194	348,194	348,194	TBD	TBD
Rec. Landings, "Old" MRIP (lbs gw)	177,097	78,472	169,447	58,348	151,456	114,117	129,355	94,394	50,124	NA	NA	NA
Rec. % of ACL	52.1%	23.1%	49.8%	18.8%	48.5%	34.4%	37.2%	27.1%	14.4%	TBD	TBD	TBD
Rec. Bag Limit (person/day)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	TBD
Rec. Size Limit (inches TL)	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	TBD
Rec. Season	May-Dec	May-Dec	May-Dec	May-Dec	May-Dec	May-Dec	May-Dec	May-Dec	May-Dec	May-Dec	May-Dec	TBD
Rec Allocation	49%	49%	49%	49%	49%	49%	49%	49%	49%	49%	49%	TBD
Com. Trip Limit (lbs gw)	1000/500 (75% ACL)	1000/500 (75% ACL)	1000/500 (75% ACL)	1000/500 (75% ACL)	1000/500 (75% ACL)	1000/500 (75% ACL)	1000/500 (75% ACL)	1000/500 (75% ACL)	1000/500 (75% ACL)	1000/500 (75% ACL)	1000/500 (75% ACL)	TBD
Com. Size Limit (inches TL)	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	TBD
Com. Season	May-Dec	May-Dec	May-Dec	May-Dec	May-Dec	May-Dec	May-Dec	May-Dec	May-Dec	May-Dec	May-Dec	TBD
Com. Allocation	51%	51%	51%	51%	51%	51%	51%	51%	51%	51%	51%	TBD

* Directed Commercial Quota is equal to the commercial ACL – the estimated Post-Quota Bycatch Mortality (27,218 lbs gw)

Appendix B. Accountability Measures

The accountability measures as listed in the Code of the Federal Register.

- Commercial
 - o If commercial landings for gag, as estimated by the SRD, reach or are projected to reach the commercial quota specified in [§ 622.190\(a\)\(7\)](#), the AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to close the commercial sector for gag for the remainder of the fishing year. Applicable restrictions after a commercial quota closure are specified in [§ 622.190\(c\)](#).
 - o If the commercial landings for gag, as estimated by the SRD, exceed the commercial ACL specified in [§ 622.193\(c\)\(1\)\(iii\)](#), and the combined commercial and recreational ACL specified in [§ 622.193\(c\)\(1\)\(iv\)](#), is exceeded during the same fishing year, and gag 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.
- Recreational
 - o If recreational landings for gag, as estimated by the SRD, reach or are projected to reach the recreational ACL, 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 notification, the bag and possession limits for gag in or from the South Atlantic EEZ are zero.
 - o If recreational landings for gag, 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 the species is overfished based on the most recent Status of U.S. Fisheries Report to Congress, and if the combined commercial and recreational ACL specified in [§ 622.193\(c\)\(1\)\(iv\)](#) 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 gag in or from the South Atlantic EEZ are zero.