



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, North Charleston SC 29405
Call: (843) 571-4366 | Toll-Free: (866) SAFMC-10 | Fax: (843) 769-4520 | Connect: www.safmc.net

Melvin Bell, Chair | Carolyn N. Belcher, Ph.D., Vice Chair
John Carmichael, Executive Director

AGENDA

Snapper Grouper Committee

Westin Hotel
110 Ocean Way
Jekyll Island, GA 31527

Tuesday, March 8, 2022 1:30 PM – 5:00 PM

Wednesday, March 9, 2022 8:30 AM – 3:45 PM

Thursday, March 10, 2022 8:30 AM – 12:00 Noon

Approval of Agenda

Approval of December 2021 Minutes

1. Status of Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) Requests (*Attachment 1*) – Rick DeVictor
2. Release Mortality Reduction Framework (*LE AP Report and Attachments 2a and 2b*)
 - a. Law Enforcement AP input – Captain Scott Pearce, AP Chair
 - b. Presentation on Releases and Release Mortality in the Snapper Grouper Fishery – John Carmichael
 - c. Overview and Summary of Scoping Comments
 - d. **Committee Action:** Consider information presented and provide guidance on further development of the framework amendment.
3. Recreational Reporting/Permitting Amendment (SG Amendment 46) (*Attachments 3a-3c*)
 - a. Private Recreational Workgroup Recommendations – Spud Woodward, Workgroup Chair
 - b. Overview of previous actions considered in Amendment 46 – John Hadley
 - c. **Committee Action:** Consider information presented and provide guidance on information needs and timing of amendment development.
4. Wreckfish ITQ Modernization (SG Amendment 48) (*Attachment 4*)
 - a. Overview – Christina Wiegand
 - b. **Committee Action:** Review the range of actions and alternatives to be analyzed, modify as necessary.

5. Greater Amberjack (SG Amendment 49) (*Attachments 5a and 5b*)
 - a. Overview – Mike Schmidtke
 - b. **Committee Action:** Review decision document and consider approval for public hearings.

6. Red Porgy (SG Amendment 50) (*Attachments 6a-6c*)
 - a. Law Enforcement AP Input – Captain Scott Pearce, AP Chair
 - b. Overview – Myra Brouwer
 - c. **Committee Action:** Review and consider for final approval.

7. Gag (SG Amendment 53) (*SSC Report and Attachments 7a and 7b*)
 - a. SSC Recommendations – Dr. Genny Nesslage, SSC Chair
 - b. Overview and Summary of Scoping Comments – Allie Iberle
 - c. **Committee Action:** Review scoping comments and decision document and provide guidance on actions and alternatives to develop.

8. Snowy Grouper (SG Amendment 51) (*Attachment 8a and 8b*)
 - a. Overview and Summary of Scoping Comments – Allie Iberle
 - b. **Committee Action:** Review scoping comments and decision document and provide guidance on actions and alternatives to develop.

9. Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish (SG Amendment 52) (*Attachment 9*)
 - a. [Fishery Overview for Blueline Tilefish](#) – Chip Collier
 - b. Overview and Summary of Scoping Comments – Roger Pugliese
 - c. **Committee Action:** Review scoping comments and decision document and provide guidance on actions and alternatives to develop.

10. Updates
 - a. 2022 Red Snapper Season (*Attachment 10*) – NMFS SERO
 - b. Updates on Snapper Grouper Holistic Management, Red Snapper Count, and Greater Amberjack Count Projects – Myra Brouwer and Chip Collier

11. Law Enforcement AP input not covered in previous agenda items (*LE AP Report*) – Scott Pearce

12. Approve Topics for Snapper Grouper AP Meeting

13. Other Business

Adjourn

Committee Members:

Jessica McCawley, Chair
 Kerry Marhefka, Vice-chair
 Robert Beal

Dr. Carolyn Belcher
Mel Bel
Chester Brewer
Chris Conklin
LT Robert Copeland
Tim Griner
Judy Helmey
Trish Murphey
Tom Roller
Andy Strelcheck
Laurilee Thompson
Spud Woodward
Mid-Atlantic Members: Sonny Gwin, Dewey Hemilright

Attachments:

LE AP Report: Law Enforcement Advisory Panel (LE AP) Report, February 10, 2022

SSC Report: SSC meeting February 11, 2022 (*In Late Materials*)

Attachment 1: Status of recent EFPs

Attachment 2a: Releases and Release Mortality in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Presentation (*In Late Materials*)

Attachment 2b: Release Mortality Reduction Decision Document

Attachment 3a: Private Recreational Workgroup Report

Attachment 3b: Summary information on the GARFO recreational tilefish permit and reporting, Federal duck stamp, FWC State Reef Fish Survey, and Atlantic HMS recreational permit (*In Late Materials*)

Attachment 3c: SG Amendment 46 Options Paper

Attachment 4: Amendment 48 (Wreckfish ITQ) Decision Document

Attachment 5a: Amendment 49 (Greater Amberjack) Decision Document

Attachment 5b: Draft Amendment 49 (Greater Amberjack)

Attachment 6a: Amendment 50 (Red Porgy) Decision Document

Attachment 6b: Draft Amendment 50 (Red Porgy)

Attachment 6c: Amendment 50 (Red Porgy) Draft Codified Text

Attachment 7a: Amendment 53 (Gag Grouper) Decision Document

Attachment 7b: Amendment 53 (Gag Grouper) Scoping Summary

Attachment 8a: Amendment 51 (Snowy Grouper) Decision Document

Attachment 8b: Amendment 51 (Snowy Grouper) Scoping Summary

Attachment 9: Amendment 52 (Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish) Decision Document

Attachment 10: Red Snapper Preliminary Recreational Landings Presentation

Staff Lead: Michael Schmidtke (mike.schmidtke@safmc.net)

OVERVIEW

Snapper Grouper Committee

The Committee will approve the minutes from the December 2021 meeting and the agenda for the March 2022 Committee meeting.

1. Status of Exempted Fishing Permit Requests (*Attachment 1*)

NMFS SERO will present current Exempted Fishing Permits and the timing of projects in the South Atlantic.

Committee Action: None

2. Release Mortality Reduction Framework (*LE AP Report and Attachment 2*)

In September 2021, the Committee received results from SEDAR 73 indicating that the South Atlantic red snapper stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing. The assessment indicated that the majority of red snapper fishing mortality occurs as release mortality rather than through landings. The Committee intends to address snapper grouper release mortality and implementation of red snapper catch limits from the most recent assessment through a framework amendment. In December 2022, the Committee directed staff to investigate management measures that could reduce encounters with fish that cannot be retained. By implementing a measure to reduce such encounters, the Committee intends to reduce discards of red snapper and other snapper grouper species. The Committee also intends for projected effects of this management change to be considered in the SSC's recommendation for red snapper acceptable biological catch. Preliminary scoping for the framework amendment was conducted in February 2022. The Law Enforcement Advisory Panel (LE AP) discussed this topic at their February meeting, and Chair Capt. Scott Pearce will provide the LE AP's recommendations. Council staff will present data depicting the scale of releases in the snapper grouper fishery, as well as a Decision Document summarizing current information, scoping commentary, and potential next steps in the development of the framework amendment.

Committee Action: Consider information presented and provide guidance on further development of the framework amendment.

3. Recreational Reporting/Permitting Amendment (SG Amendment 46) (*Attachments 3a - 3c*)

At the December 2021 Council meeting, the Committee requested that Amendment 46 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan (FMP) be added to the agenda for discussion in March 2022. Amendment 46 was previously developed in the first half of 2018 and was approved for scoping at the [June 2018 Council meeting](#). Due to time constraints over the Council's workplan and the need to obtain more information on potential approaches for private recreational data gathering, the amendment was never scoped. From 2018 through 2020 staff focused instead on piloting the MyFishCount mobile app and portal. Other related efforts have also been underway, most notably the development of the Private Recreational Reporting Workgroup which has met five times in 2021 and 2022. The briefing materials and summary reports for these meetings can be found on the [Council's website](#).

The Council's Private Recreational Workgroup last met on February 9, 2022 to continue discussing approaches to private recreational reporting and how a recreational permit could be

integrated with existing programs to improve estimates of recreational catch and effort. The Workgroup Chair, Spud Woodward, will provide an update on the group's progress and next steps. Afterwards, Council staff will review Amendment 46 and request direction on how to proceed with the amendment.

Committee Action: Consider information presented and provide guidance on information needs and timing of amendment development.

4. Wreckfish ITQ Modernization (SG Amendment 48) (*Attachment 4*)

A review of the Wreckfish ITQ Program was completed in 2019 and included recommendations for improvement, particularly with respect to confidentiality issues and related constraints; moving away from a paper coupon-based program to an electronic program; cost recovery; wreckfish permit requirement; allocation issues; offloading sites and times; and economic data collection. At their March 2021 meeting the Committee reviewed preliminary actions and alternatives and comments from the Law Enforcement AP (LE AP) and wreckfish shareholders. It was noted that development of this amendment will take significant Council and staff time. As a result, at their September 2021 meeting the Committee recommended Amendment 48 be brought back for review at every other Council meeting, as opposed to every meeting. Staff will present a decision document with updated actions and alternatives for the Committee to discuss and approve for analysis.

Committee Action: Review the range of actions and alternatives to be analyzed, modify as necessary.

5. Greater Amberjack (SG Amendment 49) (*Attachments 5a and 5b*)

In December 2021, the Committee reviewed the draft amendment and directed staff to include additional alternatives related to seasonal commercial trip limits and the April spawning closure. Staff will provide an overview of the draft amendment, which includes the additional alternatives.

Committee Action: Review draft amendment and consider approval for public hearings.

6. Red Porgy (SG Amendment 50) (*Attachments 6a-6c*)

The Committee reviewed draft rationale for preferred alternatives in December 2021. The Committee requested input from the Law Enforcement Advisory Panel (LE AP) regarding the proposed modification to the recreational possession limit and will receive the recommendation from the LE AP Chair. The Committee will review the draft amendment and draft codified text and consider the amendment for final approval.

Committee Action: Review draft amendment and consider for final approval.

7. Gag (SG Amendment 53) (*SSC Report and Attachments 7a and 7b*)

The SEDAR 71 assessment of gag grouper in the South Atlantic was completed in 2021 and determined the stock to be overfished and experiencing overfishing. In June 2021, the Council initiated a plan amendment to rebuild and adjust catch levels for gag grouper. At the December 2021 meeting the Council reviewed the SSC's OFL and ABC recommendations, AP recommendations, and initial options paper. During this meeting the amendment was approved for scoping and scoping sessions were held in February 2022.

Committee Action: Review scoping comments and decision document and provide guidance on actions and alternatives to develop.

8. Snowy Grouper (SG Amendment 51) (*Attachment 8a and 8b*)

The Council received the results of SEDAR 36 Update at their March 2021 meeting and directed staff to begin work on a plan amendment to revise catch levels and sector allocations. After reviewing the options paper and AP comments at the December 2021 meeting, the Council approved the amendment for scoping. Scoping sessions were conducting in February 2022.

Committee Action: Review scoping comments and decision document and provide guidance on actions and alternatives to develop.

9. Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish (SG Amendment 52) (*Attachment 9*)

The SEDAR 66 assessment of golden tilefish in the South Atlantic was completed in 2021 determined the stock to not be overfished and not experiencing overfishing. In June 2021, the Council initiated a plan amendment to adjust catch levels for golden tilefish. At their October meeting, the AP reviewed the assessment, fishery overview, and current regulations and provided input for the Council. The Council, after reviewing the options paper and AP comments on golden tilefish and a SERO discussion document on blueline tilefish at the December 2021 meeting, approved the amendment to cover both golden tilefish and blueline tilefish for scoping. Scoping sessions were conducted in February 2022.

Committee Action: Review scoping comments and decision document and provide guidance on actions and alternatives to develop.

10. Updates

2022 Red Snapper Season (*Attachment 10*)

SERO staff will present preliminary 2020 recreational landings for Red Snapper and other information that will be used to determine the duration of the 2021 recreational season.

Committee Action: None

Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation

In September 2021, the Council directed staff to begin work on an approach to manage the snapper grouper fishery in a more holistic manner. Staff have developed a proposed work plan to address this directive, including potential timeline, participants, budget, and preliminary goals for a project evaluating management strategies for the snapper grouper fishery.

Committee Action: None

Red Snapper and Greater Amberjack Count Projects

Council staff will update the Committee on the status of research projects to obtain abundance estimates for red snapper and greater amberjack.

In 2020, the NMFS Sea Grant Consortium received funding to administer programs to solicit research on red snapper (South Atlantic) and greater amberjack (South Atlantic and Gulf). The goal is to support research that would generate absolute estimates of abundance, with accompanying measures of uncertainty, for these stocks. The intent is for this information to

be used as an “anchor point” for future stock assessments. These are sister projects to the much larger “Great Red Snapper Count” that was conducted in the Gulf of Mexico. Council staff members serve on the Steering Committees for each project and will be providing updates on progress to date for each project.

Committee Action: None

11. Law Enforcement AP input not covered in previous agenda items (LE AP Report)

The AP met on February 10, 2022 and discussed items pertaining to the snapper grouper fishery. The AP Chair will deliver the AP’s recommendations to the Committee.

Committee Action: None

12. Approve Topics for Snapper Grouper AP Meeting

The Snapper Grouper AP is scheduled to convene via webinar on April 18-20, 2022. Below is a list of proposed topics to develop the AP’s agenda:

- Black Sea Bass Fishery Performance Report
- Snapper Grouper Release Mortality Reduction Framework
- Amendment 46 (Recreational Permitting/Reporting)
- Amendment 49 (Greater Amberjack)
- Amendment Updates: Amendment 48 (Wreckfish), Amendment 50 (Red Porgy), Amendment 51 (Snowy Grouper), Amendment 52 (Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish), Amendment 53 (Gag Grouper)
- Other Updates: Citizen Science, SEDAR, Climate Change Scenario Planning, Reef Fish Fellowship
- SERFS Update
- Commercial electronic logbook discussion
- Elect Chair/Vice Chair

Committee Action: Modify list of topics as needed and approve.

13. Other Business