



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Melvin Bell, Chair | Stephen J. Poland, Vice Chair
John Carmichael, Executive Director

AGENDA

Snapper Grouper Committee

Town and Country Inn
2008 Savannah Highway
Charleston, SC 29407

Tuesday, September 14, 2021 8:30 am – 5:30 pm

Wednesday, September 15, 2021 8:30 am – 12:00 noon

Approval of Agenda

Approval of June 2021 Minutes

1. Snapper Grouper 2 for 1 Permit Evaluation (*Attachment 1*)
 - a. Overview of Discussion Document – John Hadley
 - b. **Committee Action:** Provide guidance on whether to conduct further evaluation of the limited access program and the timeline for doing so
2. Greater Amberjack (Amendment 49) (*Attachment 2 and AP Report*)
 - a. Overview of Decision Document – Michael Schmidtke
 - b. AP Comments and Recommendations – Jimmy Hull, AP Chair
 - c. **Committee Action:** Review scoping and AP comments and provide guidance on amendment development
3. Snowy Grouper (Amendment 51) (*Attachment 3 and AP Report*)
 - a. Overview of Options Paper – Allie Iberle
 - b. AP Comments and Recommendations – Jimmy Hull, AP Chair
 - c. **Committee Action:** Review options paper and consider approval for scoping
4. Yellowtail Snapper (Amendment 44) (*Attachment 4*)
 - a. Overview of Options Paper – Myra Brouwer
 - b. **Committee Action:** Review options paper and consider approval for scoping
5. Red Snapper Short Term Assessment Response (*Attachment 5*)
 - a. SSC Recommendations – Genny Nesslage
 - b. Overview of Options Paper – Michael Schmidtke
 - c. **Committee Action:** Review options paper and determine management response

6. Wreckfish (Amendment 48) (*Attachment 6*)
 - a. Overview of Decision Document – Christina Wiegand
 - b. **Committee Action:** Provide guidance on amendment development timing
7. Red Porgy (Amendment 50) (*Attachment 7a and 7b*)
 - a. Overview of Decision Document – Myra Brouwer
 - b. **Committee Action:** Select/confirm preferred alternatives and provide rationale
8. Gag Grouper
 - a. NMFS Guidance on Rebuilding Timeframe – NMFS SERO
 - b. **Committee Action:** Provide guidance on rebuilding timeframe options for amendment development
9. Discussion on Vermilion Snapper Trip Limits (*Attachment 8 and AP Report*)
 - a. Overview of Discussion Document – Michael Schmidtke
 - b. AP Comments and Recommendations – Jimmy Hull, AP Chair
10. Fall 2021 Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Meeting Topics – Michael Schmidtke
 - a. **Committee Action:** Review, modify, and approve a list of topics to develop the AP’s agenda for the fall 2021 meeting
11. Updates on South Atlantic Red Snapper Count and Greater Amberjack Count – Myra Brouwer and Chip Collier
12. Exempted Fishing Permit Brief (*Attachment 9*) – Rick DeVictor

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
Steve Poland
Tom Roller
Laurilee Thompson
Andy Strelcheck
Spud Woodward

Mid-Atlantic Members: Dewey Hemilright, TBD

Attachments:

AP Report: Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP) Report – April 2021

Attachment 1: Snapper Grouper 2 for 1 Discussion Document

Attachment 2: Amendment 49 (Greater Amberjack) Decision Document

Attachment 3: Amendment 51 (Snowy Grouper) Options Paper

Attachment 4: Amendment 44 (Yellowtail Snapper) Options Paper

Attachment 5: Red Snapper Options Paper

Attachment 6: Amendment 48 (Wreckfish Decision) Document

Attachment 7a: Amendment 50 (Red Porgy) Decision Document

Attachment 7b: Draft Amendment 50

Attachment 8: Vermilion Snapper Commercial Trip Limit Discussion Document

Attachment 9: Exempted Fishing Permit Application

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

OVERVIEW

Snapper Grouper Committee

The Committee will approve the minutes from the June 2021 meeting and the agenda for the September 2021 Committee meeting.

1. Snapper Grouper 2 for 1 Discussion (*Attachment 1*)

In 1998, Amendment 8 instituted the snapper grouper limited access 2 for 1 permit requirement. This requirement set initial eligibility for commercial snapper grouper permits based on landings and created two commercial permits: a transferable unlimited permit (SG1 permit) and a non-transferable permit limited to 225 pounds of snapper grouper species (SG2 permit). The goal of this amendment was to limit the number of vessels in the fishery and prevent overexploitation of the resource. In 2020, the Council responded to Executive Order (EO) 13921: Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth, identifying the 2 for 1 program as an item to be evaluated and to consider if changes would provide social or economic benefits to the fishery. Staff will present a discussion document describing the program and a preliminary evaluation of its effects. The AP discussed the 2 for 1 program as part of Other Business during its April 2021 meeting, and the AP Chair will be available to provide information on that discussion.

Required Committee Action: Provide guidance on whether to conduct further evaluation of the limited access program and the timeline for doing so

2. Greater Amberjack (Amendment 49) (*Attachment 2 and AP Report*)

In March 2021, the Committee reviewed actions and alternatives and approved Amendment 49 for scoping. Scoping hearings were held on April 14 and 15, 2021 via webinar. The AP also discussed the amendment and developed recommendations at their April 2021 meeting. Staff will provide an overview of scoping comments (included in Attachment 2) and the most recent draft language and analyses by the IPT. The AP Chair will present the AP's comments and recommendations.

Required Committee Action: Review scoping and AP comments and provide guidance on amendment development

3. Snowy Grouper (Amendment 51) (*Attachment 3 and AP Report*)

In March 2021, the Committee received the results of the SEDAR 36 Update, which indicated that the snowy grouper stock in the South Atlantic is overfished and currently experiencing overfishing. The Committee initiated a plan amendment to address snowy grouper catch levels and sector allocations. Staff will present an options paper, and the Committee will consider approving this amendment for scoping.

Required Committee Action: Review options paper and consider approval for scoping

4. Yellowtail Snapper (Amendment 44) (*Attachment 4*)

The Committee discussed the timeline for this amendment that was presented in June 2021 and found it acceptable. The amendment will be jointly developed with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. The Committee directed staff to prepare catch level analyses to be discussed at this meeting and indicated there may be a need to

consider a commercial trip limit. Staff will review options for the South Atlantic including preliminary analyses. The Committee will consider approving this amendment for scoping.

Required Committee Action: Review options paper and consider approval for scoping

5. Red Snapper Short Term Assessment Response (*Attachment 5 and AP Report*)

In June 2021, the Committee received the results of SEDAR 73, which indicated that the red snapper stock in the South Atlantic is not yet rebuilt and is experiencing overfishing. An SSC recommendation for catch levels was not yet available for that meeting. The SSC was scheduled to meet in July to continue discussion of the assessment results and develop recommendations. In anticipation of the July SSC meeting, the Committee directed staff to develop an options paper addressing potential changes to catch levels and sector allocations based on the SSC's recommendations. Dr. Genny Nesslage, SSC Chair, will present the SSC's comments and recommendations. Staff will review options for a management response to the assessment.

Required Committee Action: Review options paper and determine management response

6. Wreckfish (Amendment 48) (*Attachment 6*)

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 Council reviewed preliminary actions and alternatives and comments from the Law Enforcement AP and wreckfish shareholders. Development of this amendment will take significant Council and staff time. Due to concerns about upcoming workload, staff will present several different timelines for development of this amendment for the Council to consider.

Required Committee Action: Provide guidance on amendment development timing

7. Red Porgy (Amendment 50) (*Attachments 7a and 7b*)

Staff will present a Decision Document containing an overview of actions and alternatives in the draft amendment and corresponding analyses. The overview will constitute the public hearing presentation for this amendment. The draft amendment and the Decision Document will be available in the briefing book for this meeting on August 27, 2021 as well as an online comment form for the public to submit comment. In addition, members of the public who wish to provide oral comment to the Council will have the opportunity to do so on Wednesday, September 15, 2021 starting at 4:00 PM.

8. Gag Grouper

In June 2021, the Committee received the results of SEDAR 71, which indicated that the gag grouper stock in the South Atlantic is overfished and experiencing overfishing. The SSC provided recommendations for catch levels that are dependent on the rebuilding timeframe selected by the Committee. Further clarification was needed on legally feasible

rebuilding timeframe options. NMFS will provide this clarification, and the Committee will provide further guidance for staff to continue amendment development.

Required Committee Action: Provide guidance on rebuilding timeframe options for amendment development

9. Discussion of Vermilion Snapper Trip Limits (*Attachment 8*)

On September 16, 2020, NOAA Fisheries announced a temporary emergency rule to increase the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper from 1,000 pounds gutted weight (lbs gw) to 1,500 lbs gw in federal waters of the South Atlantic Region. This temporary rule expired, reverting the trip limit back to 1,000 lbs gw, on March 16, 2021. At the Committee's request, the AP discussed at their April 2021 meeting whether more permanent action should be taken to change the commercial trip limit through an amendment. Council staff will present a summary of the Council's previous request for the temporary rule and landings data since the request was made and the temporary rule enacted. Jimmy Hull, AP Chair, will present the AP's comments and recommendations.

10. Fall 2021 Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Meeting Topics

The Snapper Grouper AP is scheduled to convene in October 2021. Below is a list of proposed topics to develop the AP's agenda:

- Fishery Overviews for Golden Tilefish, Red Snapper, Gag Grouper – recommendations on potential management measures
- Amendment 51 (Snowy Grouper) – overview of proposed actions/alternatives and available analyses
- Amendment 49 (Greater Amberjack) – discussion of additional actions/analyses
- Amendment 44 (Yellowtail Snapper) – overview of proposed actions/alternatives and available analyses
- Gray Triggerfish Fishery Performance Report
- Climate Change Scenario Update
- Amendment updates: Amendment 50 (Red Porgy), Amendment 48 (Wreckfish)
- Citizen Science update: SAFMC Release
- SEDAR?
- 2 for 1 follow up?
- SERFS Update?
- Commercial electronic logbook discussion?

Required Committee Action: Review, modify, and approve a list of topics to develop the AP's agenda for the fall 2021 meeting

11. Updates on Red Snapper and Greater Amberjack Research 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.

12. Exempted Fishing Permit Brief (*Attachment 9*)

NMFS staff will provide an overview of a project to be considered for an Exempted Fishing Permit.

Project Summary: Shark depredation is an emerging issue that is purportedly affecting several non-HMS (snapper-grouper, coastal migratory pelagic, dolphin/wahoo) as well as select HMS (e.g., tunas and billfishes) fisheries in the southeastern US. While the NOAA Office of Sustainable Fisheries recently produced a report on shark depredation in commercial fisheries (i.e., pelagic/bottom/vertical longlines), there have been no attempts to quantify these interactions in recreational fisheries that heavily support the economies of this region. As indicated in the recent HMS AP meeting, these data are sorely needed to characterize the scale of the issue and determine the need for (and types of) mitigation measures. However, characterization of this issue is impossible without stakeholder involvement. Here, the applicants propose a citizen-science based approach to 1) acquire depredation data (composition, frequency, etc.) in the recreational sector via leveraging existing fishing partnerships), and 2) evaluate fishermen perceptions of the issue.