



# SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Carolyn N. Belcher, Ph.D., Chair | Trish Murphey, Vice Chair  
John Carmichael, Executive Director

## AGENDA

### Snapper Grouper Committee

Town & Country Inn and Suites  
2008 Savannah Highway  
Charleston, SC 29407

**Wednesday, September 18, 2024, 1:30 PM – 3:45 PM**

**Thursday, September 19, 2024, 8:30 AM – 12:00 noon**

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes (June 2024)

Status of Amendments Under Review – NMFS SERO

Update on Exempted Fishing Permits (EFP) Red Snapper Projects – FWC

1. Gag and Black Grouper Vessel Limit and On-Demand Gear for Black Sea Bass (Regulatory Amendment 36) (*Attachments 1a-1c*)
  - a. Overview – Michael Schmidtke
  - b. **Committee Action:** Review public hearing comments and consider for final approval.
2. Black Sea Bass (Amendment 56) (*SSC Report & Attachment 2*)
  - a. SSC Recommendations – Marcel Reichert, SSC Chair
  - b. Overview – Michael Schmidtke
  - c. **Committee Action:** Provide direction for scoping and amendment development.
3. Scamp/Yellowmouth Grouper (Amendment 55) (*Attachments 3a-3c*)
  - a. Overview – Allie Iberle
  - b. **Committee Action:** Review public hearing comments and consider for final approval.
4. Topics for Fall AP Meeting – Michael Schmidtke
5. Other Business
  - a. SSC Report on Black Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation

Adjourn

**Committee Members:**

Jessica McCawley, Chair

Kerry Marhefka, Vice-chair

Robert Beal

Dr. Carolyn Belcher

Gary Borland

LT Marisa Kraiss

Tim Griner

Judy Helmey

Trish Murphey

Tom Roller

Robert Spottswood, Jr.

Andy Strelcheck

James Hull, Jr.

Charlie Phillips

Mid-Atlantic Member: Sonny Gwin

**Attachments:**

**SSC Report:** SSC Meeting August 2024

**Attachment 1a:** Regulatory Amendment 36 (Gag, Black Grouper, and Black Sea Bass On-Demand Pots) Decision Document

**Attachment 1b:** Regulatory Amendment 36 (Gag, Black Grouper, and Black Sea Bass On-Demand Pots) Draft Amendment

**Attachment 1c:** Regulatory Amendment 36 (Gag, Black Grouper, and Black Sea Bass On-Demand Pots) Draft Codified Text (*will be posted with Recent Documents by 9/10/2024*)

**Attachment 2:** Amendment 56 (Black Sea Bass) Decision Document (*will be posted with Recent Documents by 9/10/2024*)

**Attachment 3a:** Amendment 55 (Scamp/Yellowmouth Grouper) Decision Document

**Attachment 3b:** Amendment 55 (Scamp/Yellowmouth Grouper) Draft Amendment

**Attachment 3c:** Amendment 55 (Scamp/Yellowmouth Grouper) Draft Codified Text

**Staff Lead:** Michael Schmidtke ([mike.schmidtke@safmc.net](mailto:mike.schmidtke@safmc.net))

# OVERVIEW

## Snapper Grouper Committee

The Committee will approve the minutes from the June 2024 meeting and the agenda for the September 2024 Committee meeting.

### **Update on Exempted Fishing Permits (EFP) Red Snapper Projects**

**Description:** Research projects testing alternative management strategies for reducing releases of red snapper by the recreational sector are being conducted in Florida under federal EFPs. Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission will provide a verbal update on the progress of these research projects.

**Committee Action:** None.

### **1. Gag and Black Grouper Recreational Vessel Limits and On-Demand Gear for Black Sea Bass (Regulatory Amendment 36; *Attachments 1a-1c*)**

**Description:** Regulatory Amendment 36 considers revising the gag and black grouper recreational vessel limits and revising commercial black sea bass pot transit requirements to accommodate the use of on-demand black sea bass pots. In June 2024, the Council approved the amendment for public hearings, which were held via webinar on July 31 and August 1, 2024. Council staff will present the draft amendment using a decision document that outlines actions, alternatives, public comments, and effects analyses.

**Committee Action:** Review public comments, decision document, final draft document, and draft codified text and consider for final approval.

### **2. Black Sea Bass (SG Amendment 56) (*SSC Report & Attachment 2*)**

**Description:** SEDAR 76 included data through 2021 and indicated that the black sea bass stock in the South Atlantic is at very low levels in recent years. In June 2023, the Council reviewed the [Fishery Overview](#) and initiated Amendment 56 to respond to the SEDAR 76 assessment results. In June 2024, the Council requested additional catch projections that incorporated management changes beyond changes to the annual catch limit to be developed by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center and reviewed by the SSC at their August 2024 meeting. The Council also approved the amendment for scoping and directed staff to conduct scoping after the September Council meeting to allow time for SSC review of the additional projections. The SSC met via webinar in August and discussed the additional projections with the analysts, clarifying the assumptions for the requested projections. The SSC is expected to review results of the projections at their October 2024 meeting. The SSC Chair will present the SSC's comments and recommendations from August 2024.

**Committee Action:** Review SSC comments and discuss potential timeline adjustments.

### **3. Scamp/Yellowmouth Grouper (SG Amendment 55) (*Attachments 3a-3c*)**

**Description:** The results of SEDAR 68 were reviewed by the Council in March 2023 and staff were directed to start a plan amendment to reorganize the Other Shallow Water Grouper Complex, establish the new Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper Complex and establish a rebuilding plan, catch levels, allocations and AMs for this new complex. During the June 2024 meeting, staff reviewed a decision document that included an effects summary for each action and AP feedback from the April 2024 Snapper Grouper AP meeting and a decision

tool. The Council selected the remaining preferred alternatives. During the September meeting the Council will review the final draft document, public comment, draft rationale, and codified text and will consider the amendment for final approval.

**Committee Action:** Review public comments, decision document, final draft document, and draft codified text and consider for final approval.

#### 4. **Topics for Fall 2024 AP Meeting**

**Description:** The Snapper Grouper AP is scheduled to convene on October 15-17, 2024.

Below is a list of proposed topics to develop the AP's agenda:

- Red Snapper and Yellowtail Snapper Fishery Performance Reports
- ABC Control Rule Risk Scoring for Golden Tilefish, Blueline Tilefish, Mutton Snapper, Red Snapper, and Yellowtail Snapper
- Management Strategy Evaluation Update and Discussion
- SERFS Presentation
- Stakeholder Engagement Meetings Discussion
- Amendment Updates: Amendment 46 (Recreational Permitting), Amendment 56 (Black Sea Bass Assessment Response)
- Other Updates: Best Fishing Practices, Citizen Science, SEDAR, Red Snapper EFP Projects

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

#### 5. **Other Business**

##### **Black Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation (SSC Report)**

**Description:** The SSC reviewed a presentation from Nature Analytics on a proposed foundation for designing management procedure options for black grouper fisheries in the U.S. Southeast Region. The need for a stock assessment alternative occurred as a result of the termination of the last stock assessment for black grouper (SEDAR 48, 2017), due to a variety of issues that were raised in the data workshop, particularly with regard to the misidentification of black grouper and gag leading to uncertain landings time series data. The presentation provided by Nature Analytics aimed to provide a stock assessment alternative by illuminating a pathway to designing and testing management procedures to ultimately provide management advice for southeastern black grouper.