



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Trish Murphey, Chair | Jessica McCawley, Vice Chair
John Carmichael, Executive Director

AGENDA

Snapper Grouper Committee

Lumina Holiday Inn
1706 N. Lumina Avenue
Wrightsville Beach, NC 28480

Wednesday, December 4, 2024, 10:30 AM – 3:45 PM

Thursday, December 5, 2024, 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes (September 2024)

Status of Amendments Under Review – NMFS SERO

Snapper Grouper AP Report (Items Not on Agenda) – James Paskiewicz, Snapper Grouper AP Chair

1. Black Sea Bass (Amendment 56) (***AP Report; SSC Report; Attachment 1***)
 - a. Snapper Grouper AP Recommendations – James Paskiewicz, Snapper Grouper AP Chair
 - b. SSC Recommendations – Marcel Reichert, SSC Chair
 - c. Overview – Michael Schmidtke
 - d. **Committee Action:** Provide direction for scoping and amendment development.
2. Management Strategy Evaluation for the Snapper Grouper Fishery (***Attachment 2; AP Report; SSC Report***) – Adrian Hordyk, Blue Matter Science
 - a. Snapper Grouper AP Recommendations – James Paskiewicz, Snapper Grouper AP Chair
 - b. SSC Recommendations – Marcel Reichert, SSC Chair
 - c. **Committee Action:** Review the preliminary findings of the MSE. Discuss any further refinements of management strategies that should be modeled.
3. Assessment Review and Response Planning Discussion for Ongoing Assessments (***Attachment 3***)
 - a. Assessment Review for Blueline Tilefish – Judd Curtis
 - b. Assessment Review and Response Planning for Yellowtail Snapper and Mutton Snapper – Judd Curtis and Myra Brouwer

- c. **Committee Action:** Make any needed modifications to the proposed approach and approve.
4. Stock Risk Ratings for Golden Tilefish, Blueline Tilefish, Red Snapper, Mutton Snapper, and Yellowtail Snapper (*Attachment 4*) – Judd Curtis and Michael Schmidtke
 - a. **Committee Action:** Score the risk attributes and set the stock risk rating for each species.
5. Private Recreational Permit & Education Requirements (Amendment 46) (*Private Angler AP Report; Attachment 5*)
 - a. Private Angler AP Report – Martha Guyas, AP Chair
 - b. Overview – John Hadley
 - c. **Committee Action:** Review AP comments, the decision document, consider preferred alternatives, and provide guidance on further amendment development.
6. Golden Tilefish Stock Assessment (*Attachment 6; SSC Report*)
 - a. SEDAR 89 Assessment Presentation – TBD, NMFS SEFSC
 - b. SSC Recommendations – Marcel Reichert, SSC Chair
 - c. [Fishery Overview](#) – Chip Collier
 - d. **Committee Action:** Review assessment results and consider initiation of an amendment.
7. Commercial Sub-Committee Report (*Attachment 7*) – Jessica McCawley, Sub-Committee Chair
 - a. **Committee Action:** Review the Sub-Committee Report and provide guidance on future Sub-Committee activities.
8. Other Business
 - a. Return 'Em Right Expansion

Adjourn

Committee Members:

Jessica McCawley, Chair

Kerry Marhefka, Vice Chair

Robert Beal

Dr. Carolyn Belcher

Gary Borland

Amy Dukes

LT Tom Pease

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: Scientific and Statistical Committee Meeting October 2024

SG AP Report: Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Meeting October 2024

Private Angler AP Report: Snapper Grouper Private Angler Advisory Panel Meeting
November 2024

Attachment 1: Amendment 56 (Black Sea Bass) Decision Document

Attachment 2: Management Strategy Evaluation Presentation (*will be uploaded to Recent Documents by 11/27/2024*)

Attachment 3: Assessment Review and Response Planning Presentation

Attachment 4: ABC Control Rule Stock Risk Rating Decision Document (*will be uploaded to Recent Documents by 11/27/2024*)

Attachment 5: Amendment 46 (Private Recreational Permitting and Education Requirement)
Decision Document

Attachment 6: SEDAR 89 (Golden Tilefish) Presentation

Attachment 7: Snapper Grouper Commercial Sub-Committee November 2024 Meeting Report

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

OVERVIEW

Snapper Grouper Committee

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

AP Report for Topics Not on the Agenda

Description: The Snapper Grouper AP met on October 15-17, 2024, and discussed additional topics pertaining to the snapper grouper fishery. The AP Chair will deliver the Snapper Grouper AP's recommendations to the Committee on items not covered on the Committee's agenda.

1. 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 and September 2024, the Council had initial discussions about potential management changes that could be considered. In October 2024, the SSC reviewed additional assessment projections of future catch levels under varying sets of assumptions. Also in October 2024, the Snapper Grouper AP discussed potential behavioral responses of the fishery to some of the considered management changes. The SSC Chair will present the SSC's comments on additional projections and recommendations for future catch levels. The AP Chair will present the AP's comments on potential responses of the fishery to management changes. Staff will present an overview of the current amendment timeline and decision points necessary for developing the assessment response.

Committee Action: Review SSC comments, AP comments, and discuss potential management actions and timeline adjustments based on the most recent information.

2. Management Strategy Evaluation for the Snapper Grouper Fishery

Description: The Council is conducting a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) to explore long-term management strategies for the South Atlantic snapper grouper fishery. Staff from Blue Matter Science have taken input from the Snapper Grouper AP and Council to develop potential management strategies to rebuild black sea bass, gag, and red Snapper. The findings from the MSE will be presented and describe which management strategies will help to rebuild these populations.

Committee Action: Review the preliminary findings of the MSE. Discuss any further refinements of management strategies that should be modeled.

3. Assessment Review and Response Planning Discussion for Ongoing Assessments

Description: Three upcoming stock assessments straddle the jurisdictional boundary between the South Atlantic and another region – Mutton Snapper and Yellowtail Snapper have shared jurisdiction with the Gulf of Mexico, and Blueline Tilefish with the Mid-Atlantic – with each of the three species are analytically treated as a single stock. As such, the review of stock assessments for these species needs to be conducted jointly among the Council's

respective SSCs to provide catch-level recommendations for the entire stock. A sub-group approach consisting of representatives from each Council's SSC is proposed for the stock assessment review of these three species. Council staff will provide details on the sub-group approach, logistics, and timing of these assessment reviews.

Council staff will present a proposed management approach for yellowtail and mutton snapper.

Committee Action: Provide guidance and approve the sub-group approach for the joint review of the three stock assessments. Provide guidance on the preferred management approach for yellowtail and mutton snapper.

4. Stock Risk Ratings for Golden Tilefish, Blueline Tilefish, Red Snapper, Mutton Snapper, and Yellowtail Snapper

Description: Under the ABC Control Rule, the Council incorporates an evaluation of how much risk of overfishing it would be willing to accept based on biological, fishery (human interaction), and environmental factors affecting each stock. Input on these factors will be provided ahead of each assessment by the appropriate advisory panel and Scientific and Statistical Committee, and the Council will consider this input in determining the appropriate risk level (conveyed as a Stock Risk Rating of High, Medium, or Low) to apply in the ABC Control Rule. With the recent implementation of the ABC Control Rule, several stocks with assessments underway or recently completed need to have risk ratings determined before the Council considers management actions to adjust ABC levels.

Council staff will provide preliminary risk scores, recommended scores from the AP and SSC, and related information for golden tilefish, blueline tilefish, red snapper, mutton snapper, and yellowtail snapper.

Committee Action: Score the risk attributes and set the stock risk rating for use in the application of the ABC Control Rule for each species.

5. Private Recreational Permit & Education Requirements (Amendment 46) (*Private Angler AP Report; Attachment 5*)

Description: Amendment 46 considers establishing a private recreational permit and education requirement for the South Atlantic snapper grouper fishery. Over multiple meetings, the Council has received input and technical guidance from the Private Recreational Reporting Working Group, Joint Council Workgroup on Section 102 of the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act, and several advisory panels (APs). After reviewing this input, the Council began work on the amendment and approved it for scoping at the December 2022 meeting. Of note at this meeting was also the removal of a reporting component from further consideration in the amendment.

The Council has since further developed Amendment 46, with the amendment being most recently reviewed by the Snapper Grouper Private Angler AP at their November 2024 meeting. The Committee will be provided with summary AP feedback and then Council staff will review a decision document for Amendment 46.

Committee Action: Review AP comments, the decision document, consider preferred alternatives, and provide guidance on further amendment development.

6. Golden Tilefish Stock Assessment

Description: [SEDAR 89](#) included data through 2022 and indicated that the golden tilefish stock in the South Atlantic is not overfished and is fully exploited. SEFSC staff will deliver a presentation on the assessment results to the Committee. In October 2024, the SSC reviewed the stock assessment and developed acceptable biological catch recommendations, pending Council decisions about the stock risk rating. The SSC Chair will deliver the SSC's recommendations. In addition, Council staff will provide a [Fishery Overview](#) of available golden tilefish landings and other pertinent data.

Committee Action: Review assessment results and consider initiation of an amendment responding to the results and SSC recommendations.

7. Commercial Sub-Committee Report

Description: In June 2024, the Council formed the Snapper Grouper Commercial Sub-Committee (Sub-Committee) and tasked it with reviewing the Snapper Grouper Vision Blueprint and developing a list of commercial management topics that require further consideration. The Sub-Committee met in November 2024. The Sub-Committee Chair will present a report of the Sub-Committee meeting and recommendations for future Sub-Committee activities.

Committee Action: Review the Sub-Committee Report and provide guidance on future Sub-Committee activities.

8. Other Business

Return 'Em Right Expansion

Description: Following the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the Open Ocean Trustee Council created the Gulf Spill Restoration project portal to accept restoration project ideas from the public. The submitted project ideas have been narrowed down to ten projects that are being recommended for implementation. One of the recommended projects would expand the "Return 'Em Right" Program, which works to advance the use of best fishing practices, into the south Atlantic and Caribbean regions as well as to other species including highly migratory species, coastal migratory pelagic species, and other species such as flounders, drums, and sea trout. The Council is asked to determine if they would like to provide comments on the proposed expansion.