



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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

AGENDA

Snapper Grouper Committee

Villas by the Sea
1175 Beachview Drive N.
Jekyll Island, GA

Wednesday, March 5, 2025, 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

- Approval of Agenda
 - Approval of Minutes (December 2024)
 - Status of Amendments Under Review – NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office (NOAA SERO)
1. Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit Revision (8:45 am – 10:15am)
 - a. Overview (*Attachment 1*) – Michael Schmidtke
 - b. **Committee Action:** Provide direction to staff on any snapper grouper species that require further evaluation of whether they are in need of conservation and management.

--- Break ---

2. Golden Tilefish Assessment Response (10:30 am – 11:30 am)
 - a. Overview (*Attachment 2*) – Michael Schmidtke
 - b. **Committee Action:** Direct staff on the type of amendment that should be developed and potential actions that should be included for initial consideration. Approve for scoping, if necessary.
3. Commercial Sub-Committee Report (11:30 am – 12:00 pm)
 - a. Summary Report (*Attachment 3*) – Jessica McCawley, Sub-Committee Chair
 - b. **Committee Action:** Provide feedback and guidance for future Sub-Committee activities, as needed.

--- Lunch ---

Wednesday, March 5, 2025, 1:30 PM – 3:45 PM

4. Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) Proxies (1:30 pm – 2:30 pm)
 - a. Presentation (*Attachment 4*) – John Walter, NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center (NOAA SEFSC)

--- Break ---

5. Update on Secretarial Amendment to end overfishing of red snapper in the South Atlantic (Amendment 59) (*Attachment 5*) – NOAA SERO (2:45 – 3:45 pm)

Thursday, March 6, 2025, 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

6. Black Sea Bass (Amendment 56) (8:30 am – 10:00 am)
 - a. Overview (*Attachment 6*) – Michael Schmidtke
 - b. **Committee Action:** Review scoping comments and provide direction for amendment development.

--- Break ---

7. Private Recreational Permit & Education Requirements (Amendment 46) (10:15 am – 11:30 am)
 - a. Overview (*Attachment 7*) – Myra Brouwer
 - b. **Committee Action:** Consider requested IPT feedback and provide guidance on further amendment development.
8. Topics for Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Meeting (11:30 am – 11:45 am)
9. Other Business (11:45 am – 12:00 pm)

Adjourn

Committee Members:

Jessica McCawley, Chair
Kerry Marhefka, Vice Chair
Robert Beal
Carolyn Belcher
Gary Borland
Amy Dukes
Tim Griner
Judy Helmey
Jimmy Hull
Trish Murphey
Lt. Tom Pease
Charlie Phillips
Tom Roller
Robert Spottswood, Jr.
Andy Strelcheck
Mid-Atlantic: Anna Beckwith
Mid-Atlantic: Joe Grist

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Snapper Grouper Management Unit Decision Document

Attachment 2: Golden Tilefish Decision Document

Attachment 3: Commercial Sub-Committee Report (available at the meeting)

Attachment 4: SEFSC Presentation on MSY Proxies

Attachment 5: SERO Presentation on Amendment 59 (Red Snapper Secretarial Amendment)

Attachment 6: Amendment 56 (Black Sea Bass) Decision Document

Attachment 7: Amendment 46 (Private Recreational Permitting and Education Requirement)
Decision Document

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

OVERVIEW

Snapper Grouper Committee

The Committee will approve the minutes from the December 2024 meeting and the agenda for the March 2025 Committee meeting.

1. Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit Revision (*Attachment 1*)

Description: In December 2024, the Council directed staff to compile information to evaluate the species included in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit (FMU). Staff will present information on the evaluation criteria as well as information for all the species in the FMU to facilitate a preliminary discussion of whether any changes to the FMU need to be made.

Committee Action: Provide guidance on species to analyze to determine their need for conservation and management.

2. Golden Tilefish Assessment Response (*Attachment 2*)

Description: In December 2024, the Council initiated an amendment to respond to the results of the [SEDAR 89](#) stock assessment of South Atlantic golden tilefish, which indicated that the stock is not overfished and not experiencing overfishing. Council staff will review potential actions that were previously discussed and provide information on potential amendment timing.

Committee Action: Direct staff on the type of amendment that should be developed and potential actions that should be included for initial consideration. Approve for scoping, if necessary.

3. Commercial Sub-Committee Report (*Attachment 3*)

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 will meet on March 3, ahead of the March 2025 Council meeting. A summary report will be developed following the meeting, and the Sub-Committee Chair will present this report and recommendations for future Sub-Committee activities.

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

4. Presentation on Status Determination Criteria Proxies (*Attachment 4*) – NOAA SEFSC

Description: Technical guidance for several recent stock assessments of South Atlantic snapper grouper species (e.g. scamp/yellowmouth grouper and black sea bass) has recommended changes to the spawning potential ratio (SPR) proxies for maximum sustainable yield (MSY) based on the most recent scientific information. MSY proxies are used for setting status determination criteria and are set by the Council through amendments to the fishery management plan (FMP). The Council has requested a presentation explaining the scientific advice that indicates these changes are necessary and which species' MSY proxies should be changed following this advice. NOAA SEFSC will present information on MSY proxies and their use in management.

Committee Action: None.

5. Update on Secretarial Amendment to end overfishing of red snapper in the South Atlantic (*Attachment 5*) – NOAA SERO

Description: In January 2024, NOAA Fisheries released a draft of [Amendment 59](#) to the Snapper Grouper FMP, which is a secretarial amendment developed to end and prevent overfishing of red snapper in the South Atlantic region. NOAA SERO will present information on this amendment. The Council may develop and submit comments on the proposed management actions to NOAA Fisheries.

Committee Action: None.

6. Black Sea Bass (Amendment 56) (*Attachment 6*)

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 December 2024, the Council directed staff to conduct scoping for the amendment. Online scoping was conducted, and the Council received comments from January 22 – February 6, 2025. Staff will present an overview of the scoping comments, timeline, and potential actions currently being considered in this amendment.

Committee Action: Review scoping comments and provide direction to staff on which actions and alternatives should be included in the development of a draft amendment.

7. Private Recreational Permit & Education Requirements (Amendment 46) (*Attachment 7*)

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.

At the December 2024 meeting, the Council tasked the IPT with modifying the purpose and need of the amendment to encompass laying the groundwork for potential reporting and expansion of private recreational permitting to other fishery management plans. The Council also requested revising the language of alternatives under Action 5 and additional information on how an exemption for Florida would work, as the State Reef Fish Survey has been in place for some time.

Committee Action: Consider requested IPT feedback and provide guidance on further amendment development.

8. Topics for Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Meeting

The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel is scheduled to meet in Charleston, SC, on April 2-3, 2025. Below is a list of proposed topics to develop the AP's agenda:

- Gag FPR Update
- Amendment 56 (Black Sea Bass)

- Golden Tilefish Assessment Response
- Lines of Communication: Conversations with the Council Meeting Run-Through
- Review the Council's Research Plan
- Evaluation of Species' Need for Conservation and Management
- Amendment Update: Amendment 46 (Recreational Permitting and Education Requirements)
- Other Updates: Best Fishing Practices, SEDAR, Citizen Science, Florida Red Snapper EFP Projects

Committee Action: Review the proposed list of AP agenda topics and modify as needed.

9. Other Business

- Discuss development of Council comments for Secretarial Amendment (SG Amendment 59)