



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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

AGENDA (Revised)

Snapper Grouper Committee

Hilton Garden Inn Outer Banks/Kitty Hawk
5353 N. Virginia Dare Trail
Kitty Hawk, NC 27949

Wednesday, December 10, 2025, 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

- Approve agenda
- Approve minutes (September 2025);
- Update on rulemaking – NMFS SERO
- Exempted fishing permit (EFP) applications briefing – NMFS SERO (applications **not** pertaining to state management of red snapper)
- South Atlantic Red Snapper Research Program update

8:45 am – 9:00 am

1. Commercial Permit and Trip Efficiency (Amendment 60)
 - a. December 2025 Commercial Sub-Committee Report (*Attachment 1*)
 - b. **Committee Action:** Review the Sub-Committee Report

9:00 am – 9:30 am

2. Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) Report (link will be added on December 3) – Chip Collier
 - a. **Committee Action:** Request any changes for the next update.

9:30 am – 12:00 pm

3. Red Snapper Exempted Fishing Permits (*Attachments 3a-3e*)
 - a. Year 1 of FWC's red snapper EFP – Jessica McCawley, Florida FWC
 - b. Update on EFP requests from each state – State representatives
 - c. **Committee Action:** Review and comment on EFP applications

--- Lunch ---

Wednesday, December 10, 2025, 1:30 PM – 3:45 PM

1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

4. Black Sea Bass (Regulatory Amendment 37) (*Attachments 4a-4c*)

- a. Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP) Recommendations (*AP Report*) – Chris Kimrey, AP Chair
- b. Review public hearing comments
- c. Overview
- d. **Committee Action:** Review public comment, draft amendment, and draft codified text. Consider for final approval.

--- Break ---

3:15 pm – 3:45 pm

5. Blueline Tilefish Catch Levels (Abbreviated Framework 5) (*Attachments 5a and 5b*)
 - a. AP recommendations – Chris Kimrey, AP Chair
 - b. Overview – Christina Wiegand
 - c. **Committee Action:** Review the amendment and codified text and consider for final approval.

Thursday, December 11, 2025, 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

8:30 am – 10:00 am

6. Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit Revision (Amendment 61) (*Attachment 6*)
 - a. AP recommendations – Chris Kimrey, AP Chair
 - b. Overview – John Hadley and Allie Iberle
 - c. **Committee Action:** Review scoping and AP comments and provide direction to staff for further development of the amendment.

--- Break ---

10:15 am – 12:00 pm

7. Yellowtail Snapper & Mutton Snapper (Amendment 44) (*Attachments 7a and 7b*)
 - a. AP recommendations – Chris Kimrey, AP Chair
 - b. Allocation Decision Tool (link)
 - c. Overview – Allie Iberle
 - d. **Committee Action:** Review decision document and Gulf Council feedback.

--- Lunch ---

Thursday, December 11, 2025, 1:30 PM – 5:00 PM

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm

8. Management Strategy Evaluations (MSE)
 - a. Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) recommendations (*SSC Report*) – Marcel Reichert, SSC Chair
 - b. Update on Snapper Grouper MSE
 - c. Update on Wreckfish MSE
 - d. **Committee Action:**

2:30 – 3:00 pm

9. Golden Tilefish
 - a. Revised assessment presentation (*Attachment 9*) – Chip Collier
 - b. SSC recommendations – Marcel Reichert, SSC Chair
 - c. **Committee Action:** Consider resuming work on Abbreviated Framework 4 to adjust catch levels.

--- Break ---

3:15 pm – 3:30 pm

- AP Recommendations on Items not on the Agenda (*AP Report*) – Chris Kimrey, AP Chair

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

10. Innovation Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery (*Attachment 10*)
 - a. Overview – Jessica McCawley and Kerry Marhefka
 - b. **Committee Action:** Review initial prioritization of goalposts and principles and discuss next steps.

11. Other Business

Adjourn

Committee Members:

Jessica McCawley, Chair
Kerry Marhefka, Vice Chair
Robert Beal
Carolyn Belcher
Gary Borland
Amy Dukes
Judy Helmey
Dewey Hemilright
Jimmy Hull
Trish Murphey
Lt. Tom Pease
Charlie Phillips
Tom Roller
Robert Spottswood, Jr.
Andy Strelcheck

Attachments:

SSC Reports: Scientific and Statistical Committee Meeting October 2025

AP Report: Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Meeting October 2025 (*available December 3*)

Attachment 1: Commercial Sub-Committee Report (*available at the meeting*)

Attachment 2: Snapper Grouper SAFE Report (*available December 3*)

- Attachment 3a:** Update on Year 1 of FWC's EFP (*available December 3*)
- Attachment 3b:** Red Snapper EFP Application from Florida
- Attachment 3c:** Red Snapper EFP Application from Georgia
- Attachment 3d:** Red Snapper EFP Application from South Carolina
- Attachment 3e:** Red Snapper EFP Application from North Carolina
- Attachment 4a:** Regulatory Amendment 37 (Black Sea Bass) Decision Document
- Attachment 4b:** Regulatory Amendment 37 (Black Sea Bass) Draft Amendment (*available December 3*)
- Attachment 4c:** Regulatory Amendment 37 (Black Sea Bass) Draft Codified Text (*available at the meeting*)
- Attachment 5a:** Abbreviated Framework Amendment 5 (Blueline Tilefish) Draft Amendment (*available at the meeting*)
- Attachment 5b:** Abbreviated Framework Amendment 5 (Blueline Tilefish) Draft Codified Text (*available at the meeting*)
- Attachment 6:** Amendment 61 (Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit Revision) Decision Document
- Attachment 7a:** Amendment 44 (Yellowtail Snapper & Mutton Snapper) Decision Document
- Attachment 7b:** Amendment 44 (Yellowtail Snapper & Mutton Snapper) Draft Amendment
- Attachment 9:** Golden Tilefish Assessment Presentation
- Attachment 10:** Innovation Plan – initial prioritization of goalposts and principles (*available December 3*)

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

OVERVIEW

Snapper Grouper Committee

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

[September 2025 Snapper Grouper Committee Report](#)

1. **Commercial Sub-Committee Report and Amendment 60 (Commercial Permit and Trip Efficiency) (*Attachment 1*)**

Description: In June 2024, the Council formed the Snapper Grouper Commercial Sub-Committee (Sub-Committee) and tasked it with developing a list of commercial management topics that require further consideration. In March 2025, the Council initiated Amendment 60 to consider changes to commercial unlimited (SG 1) permit policies and management measures that would improve commercial trip efficiency. The Sub-Committee will meet on December 8, ahead of the Snapper Grouper Committee meeting. A summary report will be developed following the meeting, and the Sub-Committee Chair will present this report and its recommendations.

Committee Action: Review the Sub-Committee Report and direct staff on actions and alternatives to develop in Amendment 60.

2. **Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluations (SAFE) Report**

Description: Council staff will review updates to the Snapper Grouper SAFE report.

Committee Action: Request any changes for the next update.

3. **State Management of Red Snapper (*Attachments 3a-3e*)**

Description: At the September 2025 meeting, the Council held an informational session on joint state-federal management of Council-managed species. The Council received presentations from Southeast Regional Office, the Gulf Council, the Florida FWCC, and the ASMFC. The Council approved a motion to begin an amendment to implement state management of red snapper. Additionally, state representatives on the Council discussed development of Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) applications to submit to NOAA Fisheries to pilot a state management approach for red snapper. Each state has developed and submitted EFP applications to NOAA Fisheries, which will be presented to the Committee. Additionally, the results of Year 1 of the current EFP that was awarded to Florida to pilot approaches to manage red snapper and reduce snapper grouper discards will also be discussed.

Committee Action: Discuss EFP applications and provide guidance on amendment development and timing.

4. **Black Sea Bass (Regulatory Amendment 37) (*Attachments 4a-4c*)**

Description: In June 2025, the Council initiated Regulatory Amendment 37 to enact measures that would more immediately reduce fishing mortality and increase spawning production for black sea bass while awaiting a more comprehensive review of the 2025 SEDAR 76 update stock assessment. Public comment was accepted from October 20 through November 14, 2025. Public hearing webinars were held on November 3 and November 12,

2025. Council staff will present a decision document summarizing public comment and the draft amendment.

Committee Action: Review public comment and draft amendment. Consider for final approval.

5. Blueline Tilefish (Abbreviated Framework 5) (Attachments 5a and 5b)

Description: In June 2025, the Council received results from the SEDAR 92 stock assessment for blueline tilefish, which incorporates recreational catch estimates derived using MRIP FES. The Council expressed concern with how the ABC for the portion of the stock that is north of Cape Hatteras, NC, was apportioned between the South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic jurisdictions and requested that staff communicate with the Mid-Atlantic Council to arrange a joint effort to address regional apportionments. At their August meeting, the Mid-Atlantic Council agreed to support the formation of such a joint Council subcommittee but recommended moving forward with the 2026 specifications noting that they were developed through a mutually agreed-upon process and supported by a joint SSC recommendation. In September 2025, the Council initiated Abbreviated Framework 5 for blueline tilefish to implement the SSC recommended catch levels. The Council felt the overall benefit to the fishery of quickly implementing the increased ABC is greater than the potential benefits of waiting for a more prolonged process that would include reevaluating sector or jurisdictional allocation percentages. Staff will present a draft amendment document for discussion.

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

6. Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit Revision (Amendment 61) (Attachment 6)

Description: The Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit (FMU) currently consists of 55 species, many of which are unassessed or have very low landings. The Council is considering changes to the species composition of the Snapper Grouper FMU through Amendment 61 to streamline ongoing management of the FMU. In doing so, the Council has selected 17 species to evaluate if there is a continued need for conservation and management. The Council has indicated that these species may be up for removal from the FMU altogether or designated as ecosystem component species.

At the September meeting, the Council reviewed the options for either removing the species or designating them as ecosystem component species with several associated potential measures such as maintaining a reporting requirement and permit requirement or implementing a trip limit. The Council also approved the amendment for scoping, and scoping was conducted in the Fall 2025. At this meeting, the Committee will review an updated decision document, scoping comments, and feedback from the SG AP.

Committee Action: Review scoping and AP comments and provide direction to staff for further development of the amendment.

7. Yellowtail Snapper & Mutton Snapper (Amendment 44) (Attachments 7a & 7b)

Description: The Southeastern stocks of mutton and yellowtail snapper were recently assessed through SEDAR 79 and SEDAR 96 respectively. The stocks for both species are considered a single unit in the Gulf and South Atlantic and therefore catch levels will be modified via a joint amendment with the Gulf, with the Gulf as administrative lead. This amendment will establish the stock OFL and ABC, update jurisdictional apportionment of each stock's ABC between each Council, update regional ACLs, and update the South

Atlantic sector allocations for both species. At their September meeting, the South Atlantic Council reviewed the initial decision document, including feedback from the Gulf Council's August discussion. At this meeting, the South Atlantic Council will review an updated decision document, feedback from the Gulf's November meeting, and SG AP feedback and have the opportunity to make any modifications.

Committee Action: Review the proposed actions and provide feedback.

8. Management Strategy Evaluations (no attachments)

Description: Staff will present updates on ongoing Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) projects for the Snapper Grouper fishery and Wreckfish. Both efforts have advanced substantially since the September Council meeting, including progress on model development, scenario testing, gathering input from stakeholders, and coordination with project partners. The update will outline recent accomplishments, upcoming milestones, and anticipated needs as the work continues.

Committee Action: Provide feedback on the evaluations.

9. Golden Tilefish (*Attachment 9*)

Description: The SEDAR 89: South Atlantic Tilefish stock assessment was reviewed by the SSC in October 2024 and catch levels were recommended to the Council during the December Council meeting. However, during amendment development it was discovered that commercial landings used in the assessment were much higher than quota monitoring estimates for 2018-2022, which affected the base model run and projection estimates. Revised commercial landings estimates were provided and the assessment model was re-analyzed with the corrected data. At their October 2025 meeting, the SSC reviewed, discussed, and provided feedback on the revised assessment (including configurations, projections, and uncertainties). Council staff will brief the Committee on the modifications to the assessment, and the SSC Chair will provide recommendations on behalf of the SSC.

Committee Action: Consider resuming work on Abbreviated Framework 4 to adjust catch levels.

AP Recommendations on Items not on the Agenda (*AP Report*)

Description: The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Chair, Chris Kimrey, will brief the Committee on items the AP discussed during their October 2025 meeting that are outside of the Committee's agenda for this meeting.

Committee Action: Consider the AP's feedback and provide guidance to staff.

10. Innovative Management Approach for the Snapper Grouper Fishery (*Attachment 10*)

Description: The Committee is working on a framework, first introduced during the June 2025 Council meeting, to reset Snapper Grouper fishery discussions and begin progress toward innovative actions that improve the overall fishery. The framework is built around establishing "goalposts" to describe overarching fishery objectives that will help guide individual decisions, agreeing to some basic "principles" and facts to avoid rehashing the same discussions, and developing a series of short, medium, and long-term actions that are achievable given the current science and regulatory challenges. At the September 2025 meeting, the Committee brainstormed ideas for goalposts and principles and conducted preliminary prioritization. At the December 2025 meeting, the Committee will continue to develop the Innovation Plan by reviewing and discussing identified priorities.

Committee Action: Review initial prioritization and modify proposed approach to consider finalizing at the March 20206 meeting.

11. Other Business

Description: Council staff will update the Committee on recent changes to scheduled SEDAR stock assessments.

Committee Action: None.