



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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

AGENDA

Snapper Grouper Committee

World Golf Renaissance

500 S. Legacy Trail

St. Augustine, FL 32092

Tuesday, June 9, 2026, 10:15 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Minutes (March 2026) ([March 2026 Snapper Grouper Committee Report](#))
- Update on submitted amendments – NMFS SERO
- Update on exempted fishing permit (EFP) applications – NMFS SERO

10:30 am – 10:45 am

1. Update on Joint SAFMC and MAFMC Sub-Committee on Blueline Tilefish (*Attachment 1*)
 - a. Overview – Michael Schmidtke
 - b. **Committee Action:** None.

10:45 am – 11:00 am

2. Vermilion Snapper Allocations Review Report (*Attachment 2*)
 - a. Overview – John Hadley
 - b. **Committee Action:** Approve the draft allocations review report.

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

3. Wreckfish Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) Program Review (*Attachment 3*)
 - a. Overview – Christina Curtis
 - b. **Committee Action:** Review and approve the Wreckfish ITQ Review draft outline.

--- Lunch ---

1:30 pm – 2:00 pm

- Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP) Report (*AP Report*) – Haley Stephens, AP Vice Chair

2:00 pm – 2:45 pm

- Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Report (*SSC Report*) – Marcel Reichert, SSC Chair

--- Break ---

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

4. Commercial Management Measures (Amendment 60) (*Attachments 4a-4d*)
 - a. Commercial Sub-Committee Report – Jessica McCawley, Sub-Committee Chair
 - b. Trip Limit Analyses Presentation – Dominique Lazarre, NMFS SERO
 - c. Overview – Michael Schmidtke
 - d. **Committee Action:** Consider approval for public hearings.

Wednesday, June 9, 2026, 8:30 A.M. – 3:45 P.M.

8:30 am – 10:15 am

5. Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit Revision (Amendment 61) (*Attachment 5*)
 - a. Overview – John Hadley
 - b. **Committee Action:** Review Snapper Grouper AP feedback and provide direction on development of the amendment. Consider directing staff to prepare the amendment for approval for public hearings at the September 2026 meeting.

--- Break ---

10:30 am – 12:00 pm

6. Headboat Vessel Limits for Snapper Grouper Species (Regulatory Amendment 38) (*Attachment 6a and 6b*)
 - a. Overview – Allie Iberle
 - b. **Committee Action:** Review actions and alternatives.

--- Lunch ---

1:30 pm – 3:45 pm

7. Evaluate Sunsetting of Spawning Special Management Zones (Regulatory Amendment 39) (*Attachment 7*)
 - a. Overview – Allie Iberle
 - b. **Committee Action:** Review actions and alternatives

Thursday, June 10, 2026, 8:30 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.

8:30 am – 9:15 am

8. Yellowtail Snapper and Mutton Snapper (Amendment 44) (*Attachment 8*)
 - a. Overview – Allie Iberle
 - b. **Committee Action:** Review actions and alternatives with coordinating catch levels

9:15 am – 10:00 am

9. Re-opening of Nearshore Seasonal Closed Areas to On-Demand Black Sea Bass Pot Gear and Trip Limit Modification (Regulatory Amendment 40) (*Attachment 9a and 9b*)
 - a. Overview – Myra Brouwer
 - b. **Committee Action:** Review purpose and need and draft actions and alternatives

10:00 am – 10:30 am

10. Black Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) Update (*Attachment 10*) – Chip Collier

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

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

Attachments:

[SAFE Report](#)

AP Report: Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Meeting April 2026

SSC Report: Scientific and Statistical Committee Meeting April 2026

Attachment 1: Joint SAFMC and MAFMC Sub-Committee on Blueline Tilefish May 2026 Meeting Report (*available on 6/3*)

Attachment 2: Draft Vermilion Snapper Allocations Report

Attachment 3: Wreckfish ITQ Review Outline

Attachment 4a: Amendment 60 (Commercial Management Measures) Decision Document

Attachment 4b: Amendment 60 (Commercial Management Measures) Draft Amendment (*available on 6/3*)

Attachment 4c: Snapper Grouper Commercial Sub-Committee April 2026

Attachment 4d: Amendment 60 Analyses Presentation (*available on 6/3*)

Attachment 5: Amendment 61 (Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit Revision) Decision Document

Attachment 6a: Regulatory Amendment 38 (Headboat Vessel Limits) Decision Document

Attachment 6b: Regulatory Amendment 38 (Headboat Vessel Limits) Overview Presentation

Attachment 7: Regulatory Amendment 39 (Spawning SMZs) Decision Document

Attachment 8: Amendment 44 (Yellowtail Snapper & Mutton Snapper) Decision Document

Attachment 9a: Regulatory Amendment 40 (Re-Opening of Seasonal Closure for On-Demand Black Sea Bass Pots and Trip Limit Modification) Decision Document

Attachment 9b: Regulatory Amendment 36 Appendix G – On-Demand EFP Projects Summary Report

Attachment 10: Black Grouper MSE Update Presentation

OVERVIEW

Snapper Grouper Committee

The Committee will approve the minutes from the March 2026 meeting and the agenda for the June 2026 Committee meeting.

March 2026 Snapper Grouper Committee Report

1. Update on Joint SAFMC and MAFMC Sub-Committee on Blueline Tilefish (*Attachment 1*)

Description: This joint sub-committee was formed to provide an opportunity for Council members and SSC representatives from the South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic Councils to discuss allocation considerations for the blueline tilefish stock north of Cape Hatteras and to recommend an approach for future allocations for consideration by both Councils.

The joint subcommittee is comprised of 3 Council members and 1 SSC member from each Council. Staff from both Councils support and facilitate the subcommittee's work. The subcommittee met via webinar on May 1, 2026, to review information and decisions that went into the current jurisdictional allocation and review other ways in which Councils have addressed jurisdictional allocation for other stocks.

Committee Action: None.

2. Vermilion Snapper Allocations Report (*Attachment 2*)

Description: At the March 2026 meeting, the Council reviewed the current sector allocations and recent landings information for Vermilion Snapper. In accordance with the Council's Allocation Review Guidelines, a draft summary allocations report was developed based on the Council's discussion and will be presented to the Council for approval at the June 2026 meeting.

Committee Action: Approve the draft allocations review report.

3. Wreckfish Individual Transferable Quota (ITQ) Review (*Attachment 3*)

Description: At their March 2026 meeting, the Council directed staff to begin work on the next review of the Wreckfish ITQ program. This review will examine how the Wreckfish ITQ program has changed since the last review time period (2012/2013 – 2016/2017 fishing years) and this review time period (2017/2018 – 2024/2025 fishing years) with respect to various social, economic, biological, and administrative factors. Council staff will present a draft outline of the review, including how Snapper Grouper Amendment 48 (ITQ program modernization) will be addressed.

Committee Action: Review and approve the Wreckfish ITQ Review draft outline.

• Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP) Report (*AP Report*) – Haley Stephens, AP Vice Chair

Description: The Snapper Grouper AP met on April 21-23, 2026, and discussed several topics pertaining to the snapper grouper fishery. The AP Vice Chair will present the Snapper Grouper AP's recommendations to the Committee on items not covered on the Committee's agenda. The AP Vice Chair will also report on the AP's comments and recommendations related to Amendment 61 (Fishery Management Unit Revision), Amendment 60 (Commercial Management Measures), and Regulatory Amendment 40.

- **Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Reports (*SSC Report*) –Marcel Reichert, SSC Chair**

The SSC met on April 14-16, 2026, and discussed several topics pertaining to the snapper grouper fishery. The SSC Chair will present the SSC’s recommendations for snapper grouper-related items to the Committee.

- 4. **Commercial Management Measures (Amendment 60) (*Attachments 4a-4d*)**

Amendment 60 considers revisions to the commercial snapper grouper unlimited (SG 1) permit and changes to management measures intended to increase commercial trip efficiency. In April 2026, the Snapper Grouper Commercial Sub-Committee (Sub-Committee) reviewed initial actions and alternatives and directed staff to make additional revisions prior to review of a draft amendment for public hearings in June 2026. SERO staff will present additional trip limit analyses that were requested in April. Council staff will present a decision document describing actions and alternatives. The decision document will also include links to information that was previously presented to the Sub-Committee, for the Snapper Grouper Committee’s reference. The Committee will review actions, alternatives, and recommendations from the Sub-Committee, provide further discussion and direction for amendment development, and consider approval of the amendment for public hearings.
Committee Action: Approve for public hearings.

- 5. **Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit Revision (Amendment 61) (*Attachment 5*)**

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 14 species to further 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 (EC) species.

At the March 2026 meeting, the Council narrowed the scope of the amendment to focus on 14 instead of 17 species and provided direction on the purpose and need statements. Since then, the Snapper Grouper AP reviewed the amendment and provided additional input. At this meeting, the Committee will review feedback from the Snapper Grouper AP and an updated decision document covering the revised purpose and need statements and draft actions.

Committee Action: Review Snapper Grouper AP feedback and provide direction on development of the amendment. Consider directing staff to prepare the amendment for approval for public hearings at the September 2026 meeting.

- 6. **Headboat Vessel Limits for Snapper Grouper Species (Regulatory Amendment 38) (*Attachment 6a and 6b*)**

Description: The Council is exploring per-vessel catch limits for federally inspected and permitted headboats (those carrying more than six passengers) as an alternative to angler-based bag limits for certain snapper grouper species. In March the Council initiated work on this framework amendment, which will propose a “per 6 people” vessel limit for headboats

for gag, black grouper, and scamp/yellowmouth grouper. The Committee will review a decision document including initial action and alternative and purpose and need language.
Committee Action: Review actions and alternatives and draft purpose and need.

7. Evaluate Sunsetting of Spawning Special Management Zones (Regulatory Amendment 39) (*Attachment 7*)

Description: The Council established five Spawning Special Management Zones (SSMZs) in 2017, where fishing for, harvest of, and/or possession of snapper grouper species is prohibited. Three of these SSMZs are natural sites with a sunset on regulations after 10 years, while two artificial-reef SSMZs did not have the sunset provision. The Council intended to use the 10-year period to gather additional information to determine whether the natural sites are functioning as effective spawning areas for the focal species listed in the System Management Plan for the SSMZs. In March, the Council initiated work on a framework amendment to modify the sunset provision for those SSMZs that have the provision. In addition, Regulatory Amendment 39 will provide the Council with the option to change the bounds and management measures assigned to all SSMZs. The Committee will review a decision document including initial action and alternative and purpose and need language.

Committee Action: Review actions and alternatives and draft purpose and need.

8. Yellowtail Snapper and Mutton Snapper (Amendment 44) (*Attachment 8*)

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 Council as administrative lead. This amendment will establish the stock OFL and ABC, update jurisdictional apportionment of each stock's ABC between the Councils, update regional ACLs, and update the South Atlantic sector allocations for both species. At this meeting, the Committee will review a decision document including catch levels for all actions. The initial analysis and public hearing draft is anticipated at the September meeting.

Committee Action: Review actions and alternatives with corresponding catch levels.

9. Re-opening of Nearshore Seasonal Closed Areas to On-Demand Black Sea Bass Pot Gear and Trip Limit Modification (Regulatory Amendment 40) (*Attachment 9a and 9b*)

Description: Regulatory Amendment 40 seeks to: 1) evaluate whether to allow fishing for black sea bass with pots equipped with on-demand retrieval systems (on-demand gear) in nearshore areas that are closed seasonally to protect North Atlantic right whales, and 2) explore whether a reduction to the commercial trip limit for pots is warranted to ensure landings remain at or below the commercial annual catch target proposed in Regulatory Amendment 37 (under review). The Committee will review a Decision Document (*Attachment 9a*) containing feedback from its Snapper Grouper AP, a draft purpose and need, and draft actions and alternatives. A summary report of the EFP projects conducted in the South Atlantic to pilot the use of on-demand gear in the black sea bass pot fishery (*Attachment 9b*) is included for reference.

Committee Action: Review actions and alternatives and draft purpose and need.

10. Black Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) Update (*Attachment 10*)

Description: The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is engaged in an on-going process exploring decision-making approaches alternative to the traditional stock

assessment approach for Southeastern Black Grouper, which contained several complications related to data and information quality leading to the suspension of the last stock assessment (SEDAR 48, 2017). This alternative process was initiated to progress the design and evaluation of multi-indicator management procedures to confront issues of data quality and availability and robustness to ecological uncertainties and is using an MSE framework to evaluate performance of these management procedures in a simulated fishery system. Work on this MSE is nearing completion and will be reviewed by a joint SSC sub-group comprised of Gulf and South Atlantic SSC members in October 2026. The Committee will receive an update on the ongoing progress and upcoming schedule for review.

Committee Action: None.

11. Other Business