



# 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

Blockade Runner  
275 Waynick Boulevard  
Wrightsville Beach, NC 28480

**Tuesday, December 6, 2022 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM**

**Wednesday, December 7, 2022 8:30 AM – 3:45 PM**

Approval of Agenda

Approval of September 2022 transcript

Status of Amendments – Rick DeVictor, NMFS SERO

1. Release Mortality Reduction & Red Snapper (SG Reg Amendment 35) (*Snapper Grouper AP Report, Attachments 1a-1c*)
  - a. AP Recommendations – Bob Lorenz, AP Chair
  - b. Sensitivity run of Red Snapper assessment – John Walter, SEFSC
  - c. Overview – Mike Schmidtke
  - d. **Committee Action:** Provide guidance to staff and the IPT for further development of the framework amendment. Consider approval for public hearings.
2. Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation Update (*Snapper Grouper AP Report & SSC Report*)
  - a. AP input – Bob Lorenz, AP Chair
  - b. SSC input – Jeff Buckel, SSC Chair
3. Recreational Permitting & Reporting (SG Amendment 46) (*Attachments 2a-2c*)
  - a. Private Recreational Permitting Advisory Panel report
  - b. Section 102 Workgroup report
  - c. Overview – John Hadley
  - d. **Committee Action:** Provide guidance to staff and the IPT for further development of the amendment. Consider approval for scoping.
4. Gag and Black Grouper (SG Amendment 53) (*Snapper Grouper AP Report, Attachments 3a and 3b*)
  - a. Snapper Grouper AP Recommendations – Bob Lorenz, AP Chair
  - b. Overview – Allie Iberle

- c. **Committee Action:** Review AP feedback and provide guidance to staff, request approval of public hearing approach.
- 4. Snowy Grouper (SG Amendment 51) (*Attachments 4a-4c*)
  - a. Overview – Allie Iberle
  - b. **Committee Action:** Review updates to amendment and rationale for each action, consider approval for final review.
- 5. Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish (SG Amendment 52) (*Attachments 5a-5c*)
  - a. Overview – Roger Pugliese & Myra Brouwer
  - b. **Committee Action:** Review updates to amendment and rationale for each action, consider approval for final review.
- 6. AP recommendations for items not on the agenda (*Snapper Grouper AP Report*) – Bob Lorenz, AP Chair
- 7. Other Business

Adjourn

**Committee Members:**

Jessica McCawley, Chair  
 Kerry Marhefka, Vice-Chair  
 Robert Beal  
 Dr. Carolyn Belcher  
 Mel Bell  
 Chester Brewer  
 Lt. Cameron Box  
 Gary Borland  
 Tim Griner  
 Judy Helmey  
 Trish Murphey  
 Tom Roller  
 Andy Strelcheck  
 Laurilee Thompson  
 Spud Woodward  
 Mid-Atlantic Members: Sonny Gwin, Dewey Hemilright

**Attachments:**

**Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP) Report (October 2022)**

**Attachment 1a:** Regulatory Amendment 35 Decision Document  
**Attachment 1b:** Draft Regulatory Amendment 35 (*available by Nov 30*)

**Attachment 1c:** SEDAR 73 Sensitivity Run (assuming 50% less discards and 100% usage of descending devices) *(available by Nov 30)*

**Attachment 2a:** Private Recreational Permitting Advisory Panel report *(available by Nov 30)*

**Attachment 2b:** Section 102 Workgroup report

**Attachment 2c:** Amendment 46 Options Paper *(available by Nov 30)*

**Attachment 3a:** Draft Amendment 53 (Gag and Black Grouper)

**Attachment 3b:** Amendment 53 (Gag and Black Grouper) Decision Document

**Attachment 4a:** Draft Amendment 51 (Snowy Grouper)

**Attachment 4b:** Amendment 51 (Snowy Grouper) Decision Document

**Attachment 4c:** Amendment 51 Draft Codified Text

**Attachment 5a:** Draft Amendment 52 (Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish)

**Amendment 5b:** Amendment 52 Decision Document

**Amendment 5c:** Amendment 52 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 transcript from the September 2022 meeting and the agenda for the December 2022 Committee meeting.

### **Status of Amendments under formal review – NMFS SERO**

**Description:** The Committee will receive an update on the status of rulemaking for Snapper Grouper Amendment 50 (Red Porgy Catch Levels and Rebuilding). The amendment was formally submitted to NMFS SERO on May 3, 2022.

**Committee Action:** None.

### **1. Release Mortality Reduction & Red Snapper (SG Reg Amendment 35) (*Attachments 1a-1c*)**

**Description:** In September 2021, the Council received results from SEDAR 73 indicating that the South Atlantic red snapper stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing. In September 2022, the Council directed staff to develop Regulatory Amendment 35 with actions addressing red snapper catch levels, prohibition of automatic reels for the recreational sector while fishing for snapper grouper species, and prohibition of more than one hook per line for the recreational sector while fishing for snapper grouper species. The Council also directed staff and to develop an appendix that will describe current Best Fishing Practices outreach and education efforts and potential areas for expansion to more effectively end or prevent overfishing of snapper grouper species. The Council also requested a hypothetical sensitivity run of the SEDAR 73 (South Atlantic red snapper) stock assessment model, under assumptions of a 50% decrease in discards and 100% compliance with descending device usage recommendations. Finally, the Council adjusted the timing of amendment development such that final Council consideration for formal review would occur in March 2023.

The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP) Chair will present comments and recommendations from the AP's October 2022 meeting. The Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) will present results of the requested sensitivity run. Council staff will present a Decision Document describing actions and alternatives as currently developed.

**Required Committee Action:** Provide guidance to staff and the IPT for further development of the framework amendment. Consider approval for public hearings.

- **Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation Update (*AP Report and SSC Report*)**

**Description:** Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) is internationally recognized as best practice for evaluating the performance of alternative management approaches and identifying the mode of management that is most likely to meet the various management objectives of a fishery. The MSE process is designed to support evidence-based decision-making in the face of uncertainty on the status and dynamics of a fishery system. It was developed in response to a common situation where there were conflicting interpretations of a stock assessment process, and there was no clear path for making an informed and transparent management decision. In short, the MSE process involves building a range of

models which span the key uncertainties in the fishery system and using computer simulations to evaluate the performance of alternative management methods against established management objectives. The Council requested staff develop a MSE for the snapper grouper fishery to deal with the long-term management issues that are not addressed in Regulatory Amendment 35.

Stakeholder participation is a fundamental component of the MSE process. Discussions with stakeholders are used to establish the three main areas of the MSE process: 1) Uncertainties in the Fishery System, 2) Feasible Management Options, and 3) Objectives for Evaluating Performance. Stakeholder input and feedback will be primarily obtained from the Snapper Grouper AP. The Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will be updated throughout the process and will have a liaison sit on the technical advisory committee.

The Snapper Grouper AP and SSC were provided an update on the MSE. The Snapper Grouper AP provided great advice on management issues and potential data issues. The SSC also provided comments on uncertainty associated with the models and data in the region. Currently operating models have been developed for Red Snapper and Gag. The modelers will work on further developing the simulating models after communicating with the technical advisory committee.

**Required Committee Action:** None.

## 2. Private Recreational Permitting and Reporting (SG Amendment 46) (*Attachments 2a-2c*)

**Description:** The Council reviewed recommendations from the first meeting of the Snapper Grouper Recreational Permitting and Reporting Advisory Panel (Permitting AP) at its September 2022 meeting. The Council approved the following vision statement and identified a list of additional questions for the Permitting AP to consider.

**Vision Statement:** A permit for the private recreational sector of the South Atlantic Snapper Grouper fishery will facilitate the collection, validation, and analysis of harvest and discard data to improve the catch and effort estimates used for fisheries science and management decision-making.

Additionally, the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils recently convened a meeting of their [joint workgroup](#) to address Section 102: Fishery Management Measures of the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act of 2018 (Modern Fish Act). This workgroup met on October 12, 2022 and developed a series of recommendations for the Councils to consider in future management decisions affecting the recreational sector. Also, the Permitting AP is scheduled to meet November 21, 2022 via webinar and will provide feedback to the Council on the previously identified items regarding private recreational permitting and reporting. After summary updates from the Section 102 Workgroup and AP meetings, Council staff will review an options paper for Amendment 46.

**Required Committee Action:** Review options paper, consider approving Amendment 46 for scoping, and provide guidance to the Permitting AP for their next meeting.

## 3. Gag and Black Grouper (SG Amendment 53) (*Attachments 3a and 3b*)

The SEDAR 71 assessment of gag grouper in the South Atlantic was completed in 2021 and determined the stock to be overfished and experiencing overfishing. During the March 2022 meeting the Council reviewed the scoping comments, provided guidance on the range of actions and alternatives, and selected preferred alternatives where appropriate to facilitate analysis. In June 2022 the Council reviewed the Snapper Grouper AP's feedback and a decision document and directed the IPT to include commercial trip and recreational vessel limit increase alternatives. During the September meeting, the Council revised some of the existing alternatives and added actions to modify recreational black grouper management measure because of concerns over identification issues between the species. During this meeting the Council also approved the amendment for public hearings. Council staff will review an updated decision document, draft amendment and Snapper Grouper AP feedback. **Required Committee Action:** Review decision document, select preferred alternatives, approve public hearing strategy.

**4. Snowy Grouper (SG Amendment 51) (*Attachments 4a-4c*)**

The Council received the results of SEDAR 36 Update at their March 2021 meeting and directed staff to begin work on a plan amendment to revise catch levels and sector allocations. During the March 2022 meeting, the Council reviewed the scoping comments, provided guidance on the range of actions and alternatives, selected preferred alternatives to facilitate analysis, and developed a listed of questions for the Snapper Grouper AP to discuss. In June 2022 the Council reviewed the AP's feedback and approved the amendment for public hearings. Webinar public hearings were held on September 6 and 7. During the September meeting staff summarized comments received during the webinars, and reviewed progress on the amendment. Staff will review an updated decision document and final draft amendment.

**Required Committee Action:** Review draft amendment, draft rationale, and codified text and consider approval for secretarial review.

**5. Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish (SG Amendment 52) (*Attachments 5a-5c*)**

At the September meeting, the Council reviewed public comment and made changes to the amendment. Staff will provide an overview of changes and accompanying analyses and review draft rationale for each action.

**Required Committee Action:** Review draft amendment, draft rationale, and codified text and consider approval for secretarial review.

**6. AP recommendations for items not on the agenda (*Snapper Grouper AP Report*)**

The Snapper Grouper AP met on April 18-20, 2022 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.

**Required Committee Action:** None.

**7. Other Business**