



# SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Melvin Bell, Chair | Carolyn N. Belcher, Ph.D., Vice Chair  
John Carmichael, Executive Director

## AGENDA

### Snapper Grouper Committee

Key West Marriott Beachside

Key West, FL

Tuesday, June 14, 2022 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

Wednesday, June 15, 2022 8:30 AM – 3:45 PM

Approval of Agenda

Approval of March 2022 transcript

1. Status of Amendments under formal review – NMFS SERO
  - a. Red Porgy Catch Levels and Rebuilding: Amendment 50
  - b. **Committee Action:** The amendment was formally submitted to NMFS SERO on May 3, 2022. No action is necessary from the Committee.
2. Release Mortality Reduction and Red Snapper Catch Levels (SG Reg Amendment 35) (*SG AP Report, SSC Report, and Attachment 1*)
  - a. Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (SG AP) Input – Bob Lorenz, AP Chair
  - b. Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Input – Jeff Buckel, SSC Chair
  - c. Overview of Requested Data and Analyses
  - d. **Committee Action:** Consider information presented and provide guidance on further development of the amendment.
3. Gag (SG Amendment 53) (*Attachments 2a-2c*)
  - a. SG AP Input – Bob Lorenz
  - b. Overview – Allie Iberle
  - c. **Committee Action:** Review decision document and provide guidance on further development of actions and alternatives.
4. Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish (SG Amendment 52) (*Attachments 3a and 3b*)
  - a. Overview – Roger Pugliese & Myra Brouwer
  - b. **Committee Action:** Review decision document, provide guidance on further development of actions and alternatives, and consider approval for public hearings.
5. Snowy Grouper (SG Amendment 51) (*Attachments 4a and 4b*)
  - a. SG AP Input – Bob Lorenz

- b. Overview – Allie Iberle
  - c. **Committee Action:** Review decision document, select preferred alternatives, and consider approval for public hearings.
6. Greater Amberjack (SG Amendment 49) (*Attachments 5a and 5b*)
- a. Overview/Public Hearing Presentation (The public hearing for this amendment will be held during the June 2021 Public Comment Session)
  - b. **Committee Action:** Review decision document, select/confirm preferred alternatives, provide rationale.
7. Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel comments on items not covered (*SG AP Report*) – Bob Lorenz
8. South Atlantic Reef Observer Coverage Expansion (*Attachment 6*) – Scott Leach, NMFS Observer Program Branch Chief
9. Exempted Fishing Permit Brief (*Attachments 7a and 7b*) – Rick DeVictor
10. Other Business

Adjourn

**Committee Members:**

Jessica McCawley, Chair  
Kerry Marhefka, Vice-chair  
Robert Beal  
Dr. Carolyn Belcher  
Mel Bel  
Chester Brewer  
Chris Conklin  
LT Robert Copeland  
Tim Griner  
Judy Helmey  
Trish Murphey  
Tom Roller  
Andy Strelcheck  
Laurilee Thompson  
Spud Woodward  
Mid-Atlantic Members: Sonny Gwin, Dewey Hemilright

**Attachments:**

**SG AP Report (*In Recent Documents*):** Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (SG AP) Report, April 18-20, 2022

**SSC Report:** Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Report, April 25-28, 2022

**Attachment 1 (*In Recent Documents*):** Regulatory Amendment 35 Decision Document (Release Mortality Reduction and Red Snapper)

**Attachment 2a:** Amendment 53 (Gag Grouper) Decision Document

**Attachment 2b:** Amendment 53 Commercial Decision Tool

**Attachment 2c:** Amendment 53 Recreational Decision Tool

**Attachment 3a:** Amendment 52 (Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish) Decision Document

**Attachment 3b:** Amendment 52 (Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish) Draft Document

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

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

**Attachment 5a:** Amendment 49 (Greater Amberjack) Decision Document

**Attachment 5b:** Amendment 49 (Greater Amberjack) Draft Document

**Attachment 6:** SA Observer Coverage Expansion Presentation

**Attachment 7a:** Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) letter

**Attachment 7b:** EFP application

**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 March 2022 meeting and the agenda for the June 2022 Committee meeting.

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

Snapper Grouper Amendment 50 was formally submitted to NMFS SERO on May 3, 2022.

**Committee Action:** None

### **2. Release Mortality Reduction Framework (*SSC Report, SG AP Report, and Attachment 1*)**

In September 2021, the Council received results from SEDAR 73 indicating that the South Atlantic red snapper stock is overfished and experiencing overfishing. The assessment indicated that the majority of red snapper fishing mortality results from release mortality rather than landings. In March 2022, the Council directed staff to compile information that could inform management measures directed at reducing encounters with fish that cannot be retained. By implementing a measure to reduce such encounters, the Committee intends to reduce discards of red snapper and other snapper grouper species. Projected effects of this management change could be considered in the SSC's recommendation for red snapper acceptable biological catch. The Chairs of the Scientific and Statistical Committee and the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (SG AP) will present feedback to the Committee. Council staff will present an overview of information gathered to date.

**Committee Action:** Consider information presented and provide guidance on further development of the framework amendment.

### **3. Gag (SG Amendment 53) (*Attachments 2a-2c*)**

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 April 2022 the SG AP reviewed the amendment and provided feedback.

**Committee Action:** Review decision document, AP feedback, and analysis and provide guidance on actions and alternatives.

### **4. Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish (SG Amendment 52) (*Attachments 3a and 3b*)**

The SEDAR 66 assessment of golden tilefish in the South Atlantic was completed in 2021 and determined the stock to not be overfished and not experiencing overfishing. In June 2021, the Council initiated a plan amendment to adjust catch levels for golden tilefish and in December 2021, approved the amendment for scoping including actions on golden tilefish and blueline tilefish. During the March 2022 meeting the Council reviewed scoping comments and provided guidance on actions and alternatives for golden tilefish and blueline tilefish to be analyzed for development of a public hearing document.

**Committee Action:** Review decision document, provide guidance on further development of actions and alternatives, and consider approval for public hearings.

**5. Snowy Grouper (SG Amendment 51) (*Attachments 4a and 4b*)**

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 list of questions for the SG AP to discuss. In April 2022 the SG AP reviewed the amendment and provided feedback on the Council's questions.

**Committee Action:** Review decision document, AP feedback and draft amendment, select preferred alternatives, and approve the amendment for public hearings.

**6. Greater Amberjack (SG Amendment 49) (*Attachments 5a and 5b*)**

In March 2022, the Committee reviewed the draft amendment and approved the amendment for public hearings. The SG AP received an update and provided feedback in April 2022. Staff will review analyses to date and a public hearing will be held in conjunction with the public comment period on Wednesday, June 15, at 4 PM.

**Committee Action:** Review draft amendment and analyses to date and select preferred alternatives.

**7. Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel input not covered in previous agenda items (*SG AP Report*)**

The SG AP met on April 18-20, 2022 and discussed items pertaining to the snapper grouper fishery. The SG AP Chair will deliver the AP's recommendations to the Committee on items not covered on the Committee's agenda.

**Committee Action:** None

**8. South Atlantic Reef Observer Coverage Expansion (*Attachment 6*)**

Starting in July 2022 the Southeast Observer Program will increase coverage in the South Atlantic Snapper Grouper Fishery to add 550 sea days over the following year. During the expansion, the program expects to increase coverage from 1% to 2.76% (relative to industry effort). This increase will also include expanded coverage to all gear types. The Committee will receive a brief on the program's expansion from Scott Leach, Southeast Observer Program Branch Chief.

**9. Exempted Fishing Permit Brief (*Attachments 7a and 7b*)**

The project involves the testing of Subsea Buoy Retrieval Systems (SBRS) in the commercial black sea bass pot component of the snapper-grouper fishery in federal waters of the South Atlantic. SBRS are an example of innovative gear that store buoys and their retrieval devices at depth. These systems exist in the water column for minutes instead of hours or days as they are activated via acoustic or timed releases only when fishers are present. If granted, the EFP would allow the deployment of modified black sea bass pots in the federal waters of the South Atlantic. The project seeks to build upon previous research and continue to examine the potential usefulness of the modified pot gear in minimizing impacts to protected species.

**10. Other Business**