



# 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

Westin Hotel  
110 Ocean Way  
Jekyll Island, GA 31527

**Monday, March 6, 2023, 1:30 PM – 5:00 PM**

**Tuesday, March 7, 2023, 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM**

**Wednesday, March 8, 2023, 8:30 AM – 12:00 Noon**

Approval of Agenda

Approval of December 2022 Transcript

Status of amendments under formal review – Rick DeVictor, NMFS SERO

1. Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) for the Snapper Grouper Fishery (*Attachment I*)
  - a. MSE Presentation – Tom Carruthers and Adrian Hordyk, Blue Matter Science
  - b. **Committee Action:** No action required.
2. Red Snapper 2023 Recreational Season – NMFS SERO
3. Release Mortality Reduction & Red Snapper (SG Amendment 35) (*Attachments 3a-3d*)
  - a. Overview
  - b. Best Fishing Practices Outreach Update – Christina Wiegand
  - c. South Atlantic Red Snapper Project Update – Myra Brouwer
  - d. **Committee Action:** Review public hearing comments and consider for final approval.
4. Recreational Permitting (SG Amendment 46) (*Attachments 4a and 4b*)
  - a. Overview – John Hadley
  - b. **Committee Action:** Review scoping comments and provide guidance on development of the amendment.

5. Scamp/Yellowmouth Grouper Assessment (SEDAR 68) (*SSC Report; Attachments 5a and 5b*)
  - a. Presentation – NMFS SEFSC
  - b. SSC Recommendations – Jeff Buckel
  - c. Management Actions and [Fishery Overview](#) – Chip Collier
  - d. **Committee Action:** Review assessment results and provide guidance to initiate amendment.
  
6. Gag and Black Grouper (SG Amendment 53) (*Attachments 6a-6d*)
  - a. Overview – Allie Iberle
  - b. **Committee Action:** Review public comment and consider for final approval.
  
7. Wreckfish (SG Amendment 48) (*Attachments 7a-7c*)
  - a. Overview – Christina Wiegand
  - b. Cost Recovery Presentation – Jessica Stephen, NMFS SERO
  - c. **Committee Action:** Review and conduct public hearing.
  
8. Approve Topics for Snapper Grouper AP Meeting
  
9. Other Business

Adjourn

**Committee Members:**

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

**Attachments:**

**SSC Report:** SSC Meeting January 20, 2023

**Attachment 1:** Management Strategy Evaluation Presentation (*will be posted by 3/1*)

**Attachment 3a:** Regulatory Amendment 35 (Release Mortality Reduction & Red Snapper)  
Decision Document

**Attachment 3b:** Regulatory Amendment 35 Draft Amendment

**Attachment 3c:** Regulatory Amendment 35 Draft Codified Text

**Attachment 3d :** Regulatory Amendment 35 Public Comment Summary (*will be posted by 3/1*)

**Attachment 4a:** Amendment 46 Scoping Comments Summary

**Attachment 4b:** Amendment 46 (Recreational Permitting) Decision Document

**Attachment 5a:** SEDAR 68 (Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper) Presentation

**Attachment 5b:** Management Actions Needed in Response to SEDAR 68

**Attachment 6a:** Amendment 53 (Gag and Black Grouper) Decision Document

**Attachment 6b:** Amendment 53 (Gag and Black Grouper) Draft Amendment

**Attachment 6c:** Amendment 53 (Gag and Black Grouper) Codified Text (*will be posted by 3/1*)

**Attachment 6d:** Amendment 53 Public Comment Summary

**Attachment 7a:** Amendment 48 (Wreckfish) Decision Document

**Attachment 7b:** Amendment 48 (Wreckfish) Draft Amendment

**Attachment 7c:** Wreckfish Cost Recovery Presentation

**Staff Lead:** Michael Schmidtke ([mike.schmidtke@safmc.net](mailto:mike.schmidtke@safmc.net))

# OVERVIEW

## Snapper Grouper Committee

The Committee will approve the minutes from the December 2022 meeting and the agenda for the March 2023 Committee meeting.

### **Status of Exempted Fishing Permit Requests**

NMFS SERO will present current Exempted Fishing Permits and the timing of projects in the South Atlantic.

**Required Committee Action:** None

### **1. Management Strategy Evaluation for the Snapper Grouper Fishery (*Attachment 1*)**

**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 in fall 2022. 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. Red Snapper 2023 Recreational Season**

NMFS SERO staff will discuss the 2023 red snapper recreational season.

**Required Committee Action:** None.

**3. Release Mortality Reduction & Red Snapper (Regulatory Amendment 35) (*Attachments 3a-3d*)**

**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 December 2022, the Council approved Regulatory Amendment 35 for public hearings. Seven public hearings were held in January 2023 (6 in-person and 1 via webinar).

Staff will present the draft amendment, including a summary of public comment and draft rationale for each action. The Committee will review the draft amendment and draft codified text, finalize preferred alternatives, revise or develop draft rationale, and consider the amendment for final approval.

**Required Committee Action:** Review public comments, select or confirm preferred alternatives, edit or develop draft rationale, and consider approval for formal review.

**4. Recreational Permitting Amendment (SG Amendment 46) (*Attachments 4a and 4b*)**

**Description:** Amendment 46 considers the establishment of a private recreational permit and education component for the South Atlantic snapper grouper fishery. In recent meetings, the Committee 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 the Recreational Permitting and Reporting Technical Advisory Panel. After reviewing this input, the Committee has developed the amendment and approved it for scoping at the December 2022 meeting. Scoping took place in January and February 2023, with webinars on January 30<sup>th</sup> and February 6<sup>th</sup> accompanied by a scoping comment period that ended February 10<sup>th</sup>. Council staff will review scoping comments that were received and a decision document for Amendment 46.

**Required Committee Action:** Review scoping comments and the decision document. Provide guidance on how to further develop the amendment.

**5. Scamp Assessment Results (SEDAR 68) (*SSC Report; Attachments 5a and 5b*)**

SEDAR 68 is a unique assessment that combined catch for Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper. Staff will provide an overview of management changes that are needed to incorporate the results from SEDAR 68 into management. This will be followed by a [Fishery Overview](#) that includes information on the management history, fishery performance report developed by the Snapper Grouper AP, and descriptive graphs of the fishery.

**Required Committee Action:** Review assessment results and provide guidance to initiate amendment.

**6. Gag and Black Grouper (Amendment 53) (*Attachments 6a-6d*)**

**Description:** 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 2022 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 and approved the amendment for public hearings. Webinar public hearings were held January 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. The Council will review public hearing comments and have the opportunity to approve all actions and approve the amendment for final review.

**Required Committee Action:** Review decision document, public hearing comments, consider approval of all actions, and consider for final approval.

#### 7. **Wreckfish (SG Amendment 48) (Attachments 7a-7c)**

**Description:** A review of the Wreckfish ITQ Program was completed in 2019 and included recommendations for improvement, particularly with respect to confidentiality issues and related constraints; moving away from a paper coupon-based program to an electronic program; cost recovery; wreckfish permit requirement; allocation issues; offloading sites and times; and economic data collection. At their September 2022 meeting the Council selected preferred alternatives and approved the amendment for public hearings during the March 2023 meeting. Staff will present a decision document and a draft amendment for the Committee to discuss. Additionally, NMFS will provide a presentation on cost recovery (*Attachment 7c*).

**Required Committee Action:** Review decision document, select preferred alternatives, provide direction to staff as needed.

#### 8. **Approve Topics for Snapper Grouper AP Meeting**

The Snapper Grouper AP is scheduled to convene on April 25-27, 2022. Below is a list of proposed topics to develop the AP's agenda:

- Red Grouper Fishery Performance Report Update
- Management Strategy Evaluation Update and Discussion
- Scamp Fishery Overview
- Amendment 46 (Recreational Permitting)
- Amendment 44 (Yellowtail Snapper)
- Amendment 48 (Wreckfish)
- Review Research Recommendations
- Effects of Space Launches on Fishing Activities
- Amendment Updates: Regulatory Amendment 35 (Red Snapper and Release Mortality Reduction), Amendment 51 (Snowy Grouper), Amendment 52 (Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish), Amendment 53 (Gag Grouper)
- Other Updates: Citizen Science, SEDAR, Climate Change Scenario Planning, Reef Fish Fellowship, SERFS

**Required Committee Action:** Modify list of topics as needed and approve.

#### 9. **Other Business**