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THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

# **Snapper Grouper Amendment 53 Public Hearing**



# HOUSEKEEPING FOR THIS HEARING



The purpose of this hearing is to gather the public's input on the Council's proposed actions and preferred alternatives in Amendment 53. Public input will help shape the Council's final decisions on the amendment.



**FIRST**, I will review the amendment in its entirety



**NEXT**, I will answer any clarifying questions pertaining to this amendment

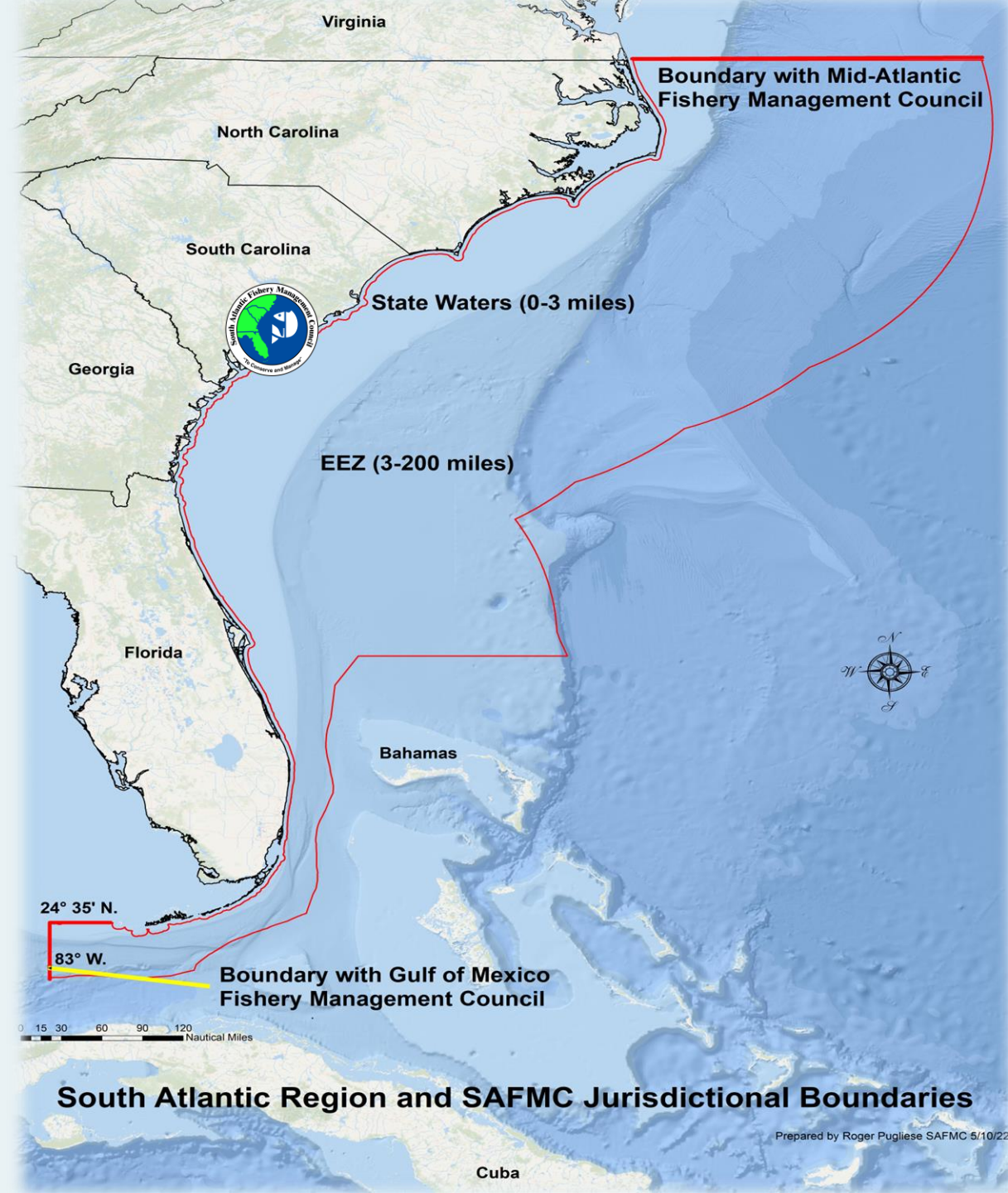


**FINALLY, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY**, a Council member is here to take your comment



# ABOUT THE COUNCIL

- Jurisdiction:
  - Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) ranges from 3-200 miles
  - South Atlantic Region: NC, SC, GA, East Coast of FL
- Council Makeup:
  - recreational and commercial fishermen, state marine agency reps, and federal partners
  - 17 members, 13 voting, 4 non-voting
  - Representatives from each state in the region.
- The Council provides recommendations to NOAA Fisheries



# BACKGROUND



The South Atlantic stock of **gag** was assessed in 2021 through **SEDAR 71**

This assessment indicated that the stock is **overfished** and is **experiencing overfishing**

An approximate **70% decrease** in harvest is needed to achieve catch levels to end overfishing

**Black grouper** was added to this amendment due to concerns over **identification issues**

## HOW IS OVERFISHING DETERMINED?

Overfished Status: The stock biomass is below the minimum stock size threshold (MSST)

Overfishing Status: The rate of fishing is above the maximum fishing mortality threshold (MFMT)

# WHAT CHANGES ARE PROPOSED IN AMENDMENT 53?



**Gag**



**Black Grouper**



Establish a rebuilding plan

Adjust the ABC, total ACL, and OY

Revise sector allocations and ACLs

Establish a recreational vessel limit

Modify the commercial trip limit

Establish a recreational vessel limit

Modify the captain and crew bag limit

Modify the recreational captain and crew bag limit



# WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR AMENDMENT 53?



**January 2023:**  
Public Hearings

**March 2023:**  
Council will review public comment, and approve for formal review

**Mid/Late 2023:**  
Implementation of final rule



**June 2021:** Council reviewed results of SEDAR 71

**February 2022:** Scoping sessions held





# Action 1. Establish a rebuilding plan for gag

## WHY?

- To end overfishing and rebuild the stock in accordance with National Standard 1 of the Magnuson-Stevens Act

## Action 1. Alternatives

Alternative	Rebuilding Timeframe	Terminal Year
Alternative 1 (no change)	0 years	NA
Alternative 2	7 Years	2029
Preferred Alternative 3	10 Years (maximum timeframe)	2032

Under **National Standard 1**, if the stock is projected to rebuild under 10 years in the absence of fishing mortality then the rebuilding plan **may not exceed 10 years**



# **Action 2.** Revise the acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield for **gag**

## **WHY?**

- To incorporate best available science through the new ABC and OFL recommended by the SSC
- To incorporate recreational landings estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program's (MRIP) Fishing Effort Survey (FES)

### **CHTS vs FES RECREATIONAL ESTIMATES**

In 2018 the Coastal Household Telephone Survey (CHTS) was replaced with MRIP's FES method due to the dwindling number of landline phones and decreased survey bias of FES methods

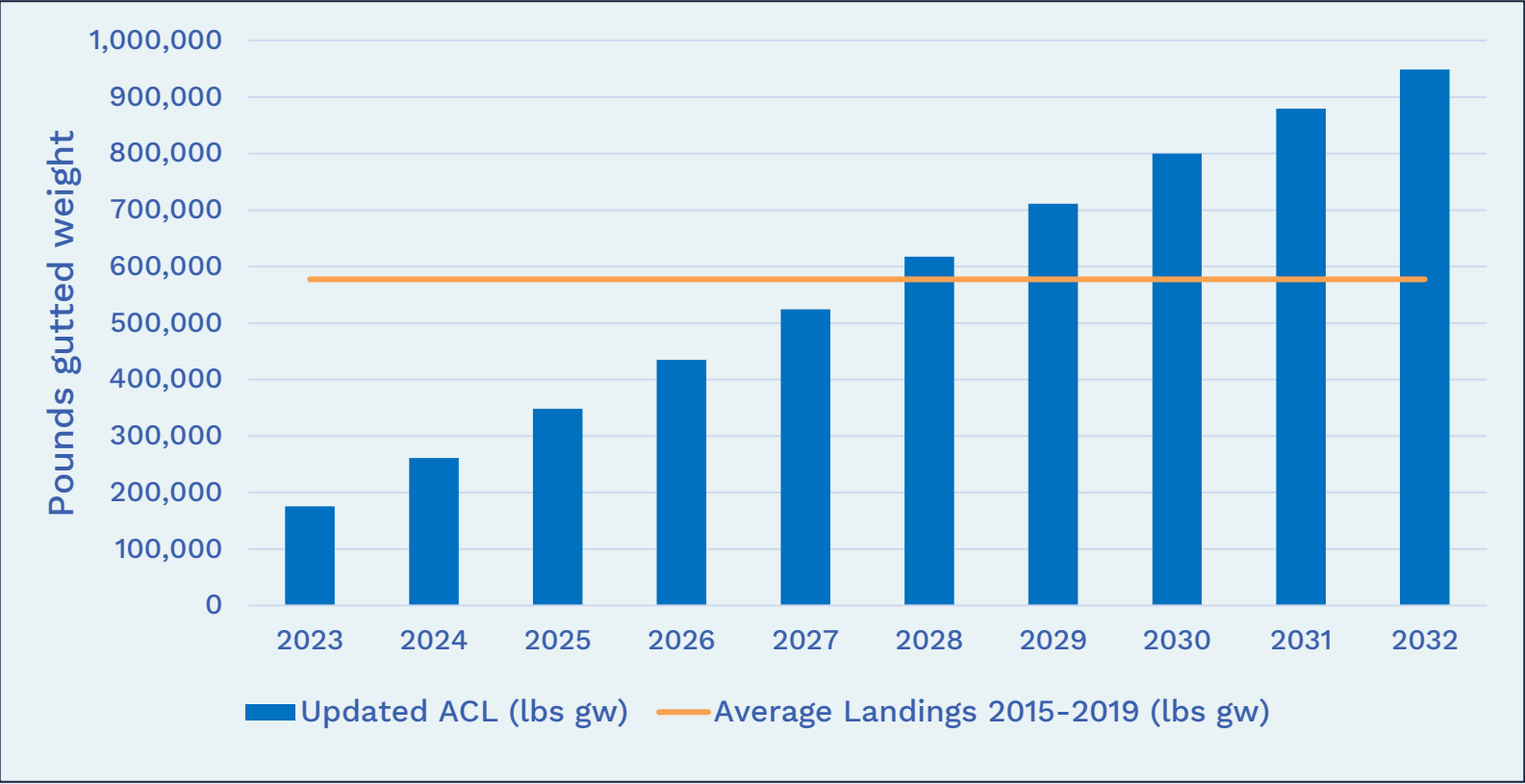


# Action 2. Alternatives



	ACL (pounds gw)									
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032*
Alternative 1	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350	734,350
Preferred Alternative 2	175,632	261,171	348,352	435,081	524,625	617,778	711,419	800,088	879,758	948,911
Alternative 3	166,850	248,112	330,934	413,327	498,394	586,889	675,848	760,084	835,770	901,465
Alternative 4	158,069	235,054	313,517	391,573	472,163	556,000	640,277	720,079	791,782	854,020

# Action 2 Analysis



The comparison of the total gag landings (i.e. commercial and recreational) from 2015-2019 (orange line) and proposed total ACLs (blue) under Preferred Alternative 2 for Action 2.



# Action 3. Revise the **gag** sector allocations and sector annual catch limits

## WHY?

Allocations are being updated to include: Updated catch levels (Action 2) and updated recreational landings estimates

## Action 3. Alternatives

Alternative	Commercial/Recreational Allocation	Basis for allocation
Alternative 1 (No Action)	51.00%/49.00%	Landings distribution 1999-2003 used in Amendment 16 that incorporated CHTS recreational landings
Alternative 2	36.37%/63.63%	Updated landings distribution 1999-2003 incorporating MRIP FES recreational landings
Alternative 3	43.06%/56.94%	Comp ACL Amendment Allocation Formula (0.5*landings from 1986 to 2008)+(0.5*landings from 2006 to 2008).
Preferred Alternative 4		
Sub-alternative 4a	Changes each year depending on initial decrease and subsequent increases	Distribution of commercial and recreational (MRIP FES) landings from 2017-2019
Preferred Sub-alternative 4b	Changes each year depending on initial decrease and subsequent increases	Distribution of commercial and recreational (MRIP FES) landings from 2015-2019

# Example – Preferred Sub-Alternative 4b



## Basis for Allocation:

2015-2019 Average  
Landings by Sector

### Commercial Average Landings 2015-2019

100,000 lbs

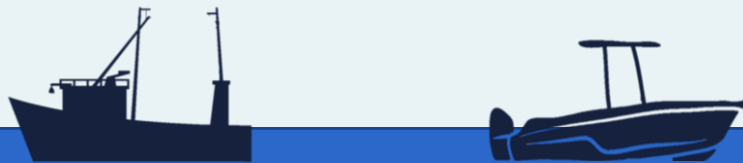
### Recreational Average Landings 2015-2019

200,000 lbs

### Total Average Landings 2015-2019

300,000 lbs





## **Total Landings 2015-2019**

300,000 lbs



## **Updated Harvest Levels**

Year 1: 75,000 lbs

Compared to the 2015-2019 total average landings a **75% reduction** in harvest would be needed to achieve the new catch level in Year 1

## Updated Harvest Levels

Year 1: 75,000 lbs

Compared to the 2015-2019 total average landings a **75% reduction** in harvest is needed



## Year 1 Allocations: Sharing the Initial Reduction

Because of the 75% reduction needed (based on each sector's 5-yr avg) each sector takes a 75% reduction proportional to their 5-year average



Commercial Year 1 ACL: 25,000 lbs (100K lbs – 75K lbs)



Recreational Year 1 ACL: 50,000 lbs (200K lbs – 150K lbs)

This results in an allocation of 33% commercial and 67% recreational

## Year 2 and Throughout the Rebuilding Plan: Splitting the Increase in Pounds

**Year 2 Catch Level = 160,000 lbs**  
**(+85,000 lbs)**

Com: 25,000 lbs + 42,500 lbs = 67,500  
lbs, 42% allocation

Rec: 50,000 lbs + 42,500 lbs = 92,500  
lbs, 58% allocation



**Year 3 Catch Level = 247,000 lbs**  
**(+87,000 lbs)**

Com: 67,500 lbs + 43,500 lbs = 111,000  
lbs, 45% allocation

Rec: 92,500 lbs + 43,500 lbs = 136,000  
lbs, 55% allocation



**Year 4 Catch Level = 333,000 lbs**  
**(+86,000 lbs)**

Com: 111,000 lbs + 43,000 lbs = 154,000  
lbs, 46% allocation

Rec: 136,000 lbs + 43,000 lbs = 179,000  
lbs, 54% allocations



**Year 5 Catch Level = 422,000 lbs**  
**(+89,000 lbs)**

Com: 154,000 lbs + 44,500 lbs =  
198,000 lbs, 47% allocation

Rec: 179,000 lbs + 44,500 lbs = 223,000  
lbs, 53% allocation

# Preferred Sub-Alternative 4b



Year	Commercial ACL (lbs gw)	Commercial Allocation %	Recreational ACL (lbs gw)	Recreational Allocation %
2023	85,326	49%	90,306	51%
2024	128,096	49%	133,075	51%
2025	171,687	49%	176,666	51%
2026	215,051	49%	220,030	51%
2027	259,823	50%	264,802	50%
2028	306,400	50%	311,379	50%
2029	353,220	50%	358,199	50%
2030	397,555	50%	402,534	50%
2031	437,390	50%	442,369	50%
2032	471,966	50%	476,945	50%





# Action 3. Revise the **gag** sector allocations and sector annual catch limits

## Analysis:

Action 3, Preferred Sub-Alternative 4b: 5-year average shared reduction								
Year	Rec. ACL*	Predicted Rec. Landings	Rec. Closure Date	Days Open in Rec. Season	Comm. ACL	Predicted Comm. Landings	Comm. Closure Date	Days Open in Comm. Season
2023	90,306	311,339	Jun 17	47	85,327	231,667	Jun 25	55
2027	264,802		Oct 22	174	259,823		None	245
2032	476,945		None	245	471,966		None	245

# Action 4. Modify the commercial trip limit for gag



## WHY?

To achieve the reduction in harvest needed to constrain catch to the updated commercial ACLs, while maintaining an extended commercial season

## Action 4. Alternatives

Alternatives	Trip Limit
Alternative 1 (No Action)	1,000 lbs gw until 75% of the commercial ACL is met then 500 lbs gw
Alternative 2	200 lbs gw
<b>Preferred Alternative 3</b>	<b>300 lbs gw</b>
Alternative 4	400 lbs gw
Alternative 5	500 lbs gw
Alternative 6	300 lbs gw in 2023, 500 lbs gw in 2026, 1,000 lbs gw in 2027 and thereafter until modified

# Action 4. Modify the commercial trip limit for gag (cont'd)



## Alternative 6.

Alternative 6 was developed based on the years when, according to projections, the commercial ACL would not be exceeded, and therefore would be appropriate to increase the commercial trip limit. Table 10 displays when overages are expected to end under different trip limits.

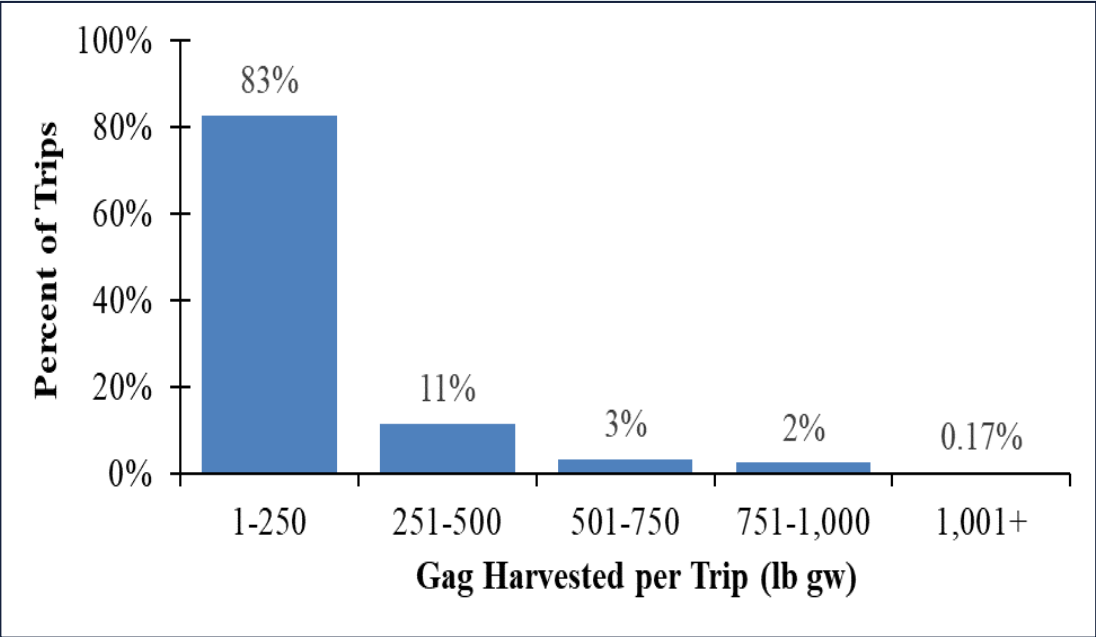
The expected commercial ACL overage expected under the 300 lbs gw trip limit for **Alternative 6** for **Action 4**.

Year	Allocations Alternative	Trip Limit	Commercial ACL Overage? Y/N	Overage %
2023	Split Reduction, 5 yr basis	300 lbs gw	Y	117%
2024	Split Reduction, 5 yr basis	300 lbs gw	Y	45%
2025	Split Reduction, 5 yr basis	300 lbs gw	Y	8%
2026	Split Reduction, 5 yr basis	300 lbs gw	N	-14%
2027	Split Reduction, 5 yr basis	300 lbs gw	N	-29%
2028	Split Reduction, 5 yr basis	300 lbs gw	N	-40%
2029	Split Reduction, 5 yr basis	300 lbs gw	N	-48%
2030	Split Reduction, 5 yr basis	300 lbs gw	N	-53%
2031	Split Reduction, 5 yr basis	300 lbs gw	N	-58%
2032	Split Reduction, 5 yr basis	300 lbs gw	N	-61%

# Action 4. Modify the commercial trip limit for gag



## Analysis:



Year	Alternative	Alternative/Trip Limit	Approximate Date ACL will be Met
2023	Preferred Alternative 3	300 lbs gw	July 15th
2027	Preferred Alternative 3	300 lbs gw	No Closure
2032	Preferred Alternative 3	300 lbs gw	No Closure



# Action 5. Modify the recreational management measures for gag

A flowchart diagram consisting of an orange line that starts from the bottom of the main title, goes down, then left, then down again, then right, then down again, forming a horizontal bar that connects to two blue boxes below.

**Sub Action 5a.** Establish a recreational vessel limit

**Sub Action 5b.** Prohibit the retention by captain and crew



# Sub-Action 5a. Establish a recreational vessel limit for gag

## WHY?

To achieve the reduction in harvest needed to constrain catch to the updated recreational ACLs, while maintaining recreational access

## Sub-Action 5a. Alternatives

Alternative	Recreational Component	Vessel Limit*
Alternative 1 (No Change)	Both	none
Preferred Sub-Alternative 2a	Private Recreational	2 fish/vessel/day
Sub-Alternative 2b	Private Recreational	4 fish/vessel/day
Preferred Sub-Alternative 3a	For-Hire	2 fish/vessel/trip
Sub-Alternative 3b	For-Hire	4 fish/vessel/trip

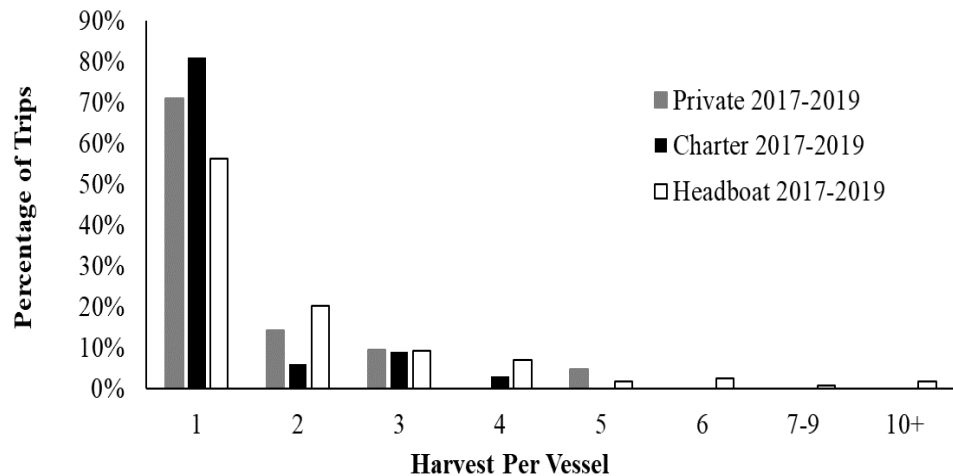
\*not to exceed the daily bag limit of 1 fish per person per day, whichever is more restrictive

# Sub-Action 5a. Establish a recreational vessel limit for gag (cont'd)



## Analysis:

The predicted percent change in landings per trip from the current 1 fish per person per day (pp/day) limit.



Distribution of South Atlantic gag harvested per vessel trip from the two recreational datasets: MRIP FES (n = 21 private trips and 33 charter trips), and SRHS (n= 897 headboat trips).

Action 5 Alternatives	Potential Vessel Limit (# of fish)	Change Private Vessel Landings	Change in Charter Vessel Landings	Change in Headboat Landings
Alternative 1 (No Action)	1 fish pp/day	0%	0%	0%
<b>Pref. Alternative 2</b>	Private Vessel Limit			
Alternative 2a	2 fish per vessel per day	-20%	--	--
Alternative 2b	4 fish per vessel per day	-3%	--	--
<b>Pref. Alternative 3</b>	For-Hire Vessel Limit (Charter and Headboats)			
Pref Alternative 3a	2 fish per vessel per trip	--	-13%	-30%
Alternative 3b	4 fish per vessel per trip	--	0%	-11%



# **Sub-Action 5b. Prohibit the retention of gag by captain and crew**

## **WHY?**

To constrain recreational harvest to the updated catch levels and contribute to rebuilding

## **Sub-Action 5b. Alternatives:**

**Alternative 1 (No Action):** The captain and crew on a for-hire vessel with a Federal for-hire permit may retain the daily bag limit of gag as allowed for each passenger

**Preferred Alternative 2:** The gag bag limit for captain and crew on a for-hire vessel with a Federal for-hire snapper-grouper permit is zero





# **Action 6.** Modify the **gag** recreational accountability measures

## **WHY?**

To prevent recreational landings from exceeding the recreational ACL and correct for overages if they occur

# Action 6. Modify the gag recreational accountability measures

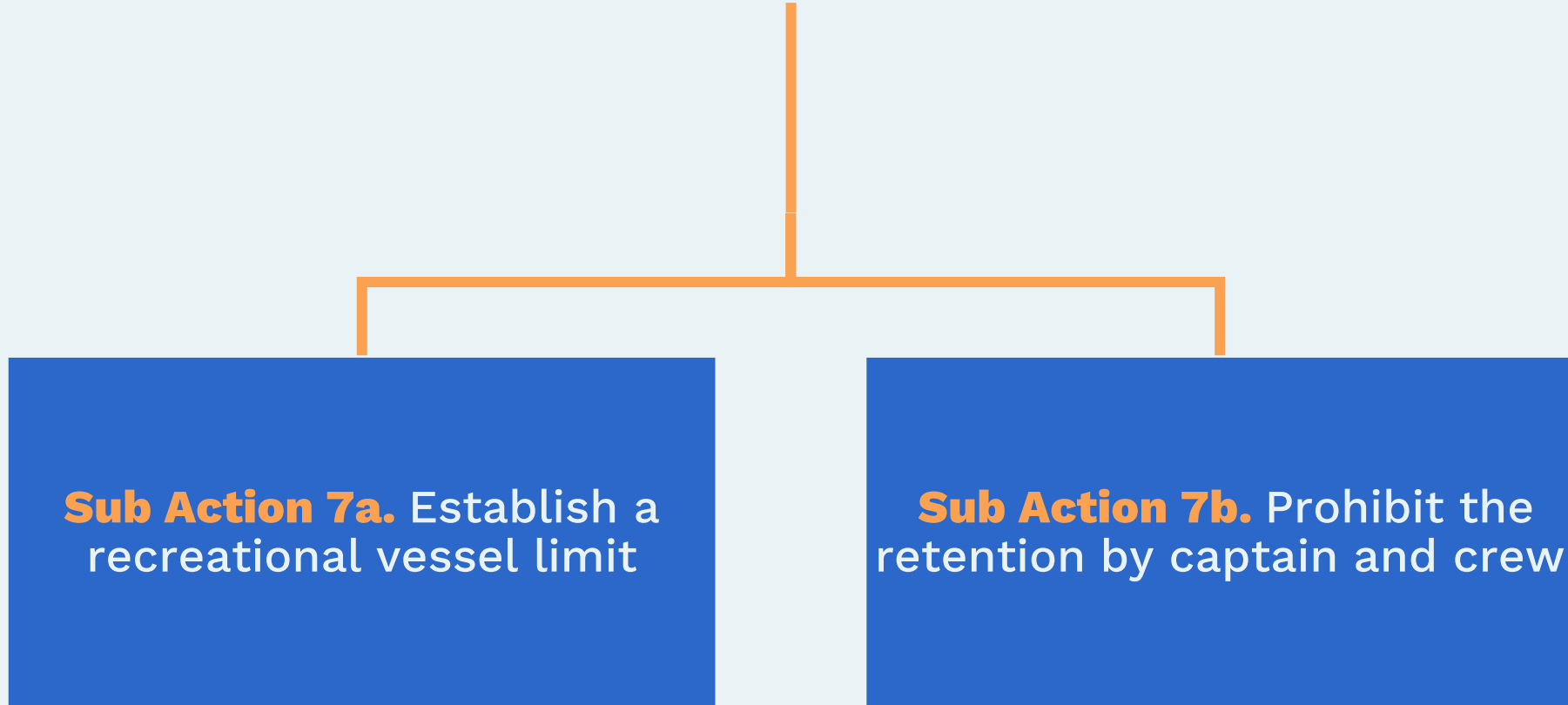


	IN-SEASON AM		POST SEASON AM	
	TRIGGERS	AM	TRIGGERS	AM
ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)	Recreational landings reach/projected to reach recreational ACL	Current recreational season closes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreational landings exceed recreational ACL</li> <li><del>Total ACL exceeded</del></li> <li><del>Stock is overfished</del></li> </ul> <p>*All 3 must occur for AM to take effect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreational ACL for the following year reduced by the recreational overage</li> <li>Recreational season for the following year is reduced by the amount of the recreational overage</li> </ul>
ALTERNATIVE 2	NMFS will annually announce the recreational fishing season start and end dates			
ALTERNATIVE 3	NONE		Recreational landings exceed recreational ACL  *no longer tied to total ACL and stock status	Recreational season for the following year is reduced by the amount necessary to prevent the recreational ACL from being exceeded
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE 4	Recreational landings reach/projected to reach recreational ACL	Current recreational season closes	Recreational landings exceed recreational ACL  *no longer tied to total ACL and stock status	Recreational season for the following year is reduced by the amount necessary to prevent the recreational ACL from being exceeded

REMOVING IN-SEASON, UN-COUPLING RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL POST-SEASON

RETAINING IN-SEASON, UN-COUPLING RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL POST-SEASON

# Action 7. Modify the recreational management measures for **black grouper**





# Sub-Action 7a. Establish a recreational vessel limit for **black grouper**

## WHY?

Because of concerns over identification between gag and black grouper in the recreational sector

## Sub-Action 7a. Alternatives

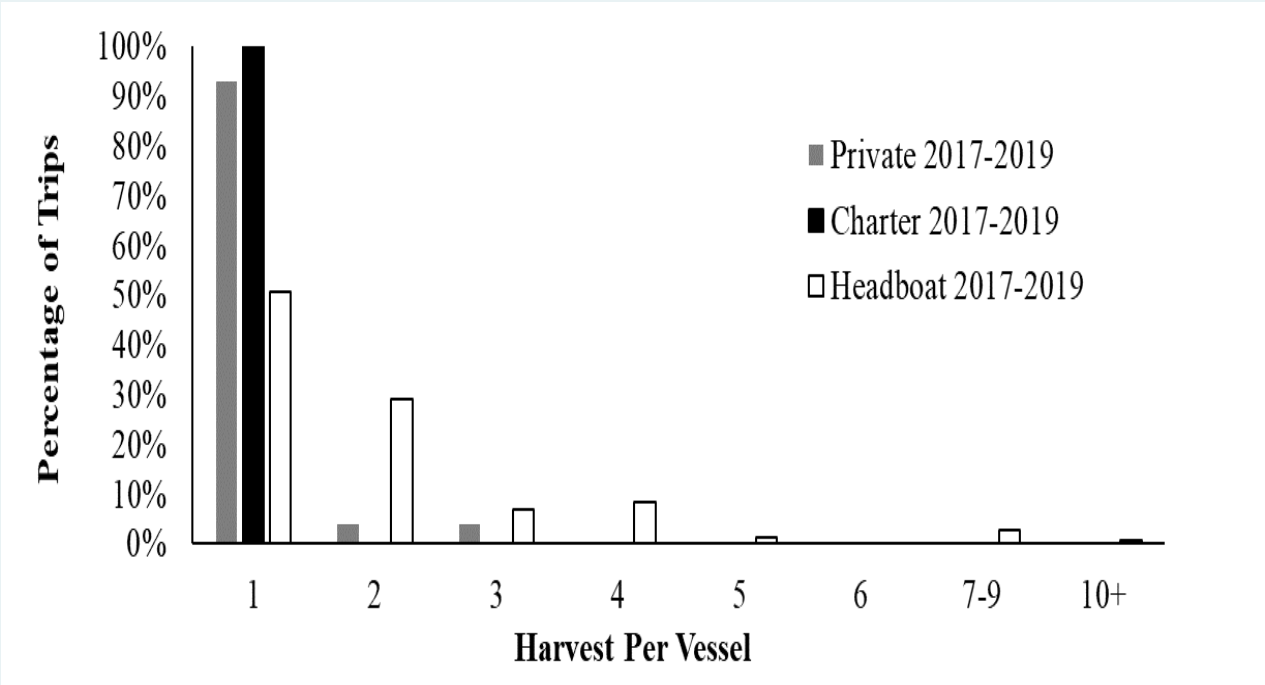
Alternative	Recreational Component	Vessel Limit*
Alternative 1 (No Change)	Both	none
Preferred Alternative 2a	Private Recreational	2 fish/vessel/day
Alternative 2b	Private Recreational	4 fish/vessel/day
Preferred Alternative 3a	For-Hire	2 fish/vessel/trip
Alternative 3b	For-Hire	4 fish/vessel/trip

\*not to exceed the daily bag limit of 1 fish per person per day, whichever is more restrictive



# Sub-Action 7a. Establish a recreational vessel limit for **black grouper** (cont'd)

## Analysis:



Action 7 Alternatives	Potential Vessel Limit (# of fish)	MRIP Private Predicted Change in Landings	For-hire Predicted Change in Landings
Alternative 1 (No Action)	1 fish pp/day	0%	0%
Alternative 2	2 per vessel	-6%	-24%
Alternative 3	4 per vessel	0%	-7%

Year	Percentage of ACL Harvested
2017	52%
2018	73%
2019	19%
2020	49%
2021	44%
5-yr Average	47%



# **Sub-Action 7b. Prohibit the retention of black grouper by captain and crew**

## **WHY?**

Because of concerns over identification between gag and black grouper in the recreational sector

## **Sub-Action 7b. Alternatives:**

**Alternative 1 (No Action):** The captain and crew on a for-hire vessel with a Federal for-hire permit may retain the daily bag limit of black grouper as allowed for each passenger

**Preferred Alternative 2:** The black grouper bag limit for captain and crew on a for-hire vessel with a Federal for-hire snapper-grouper permit is zero







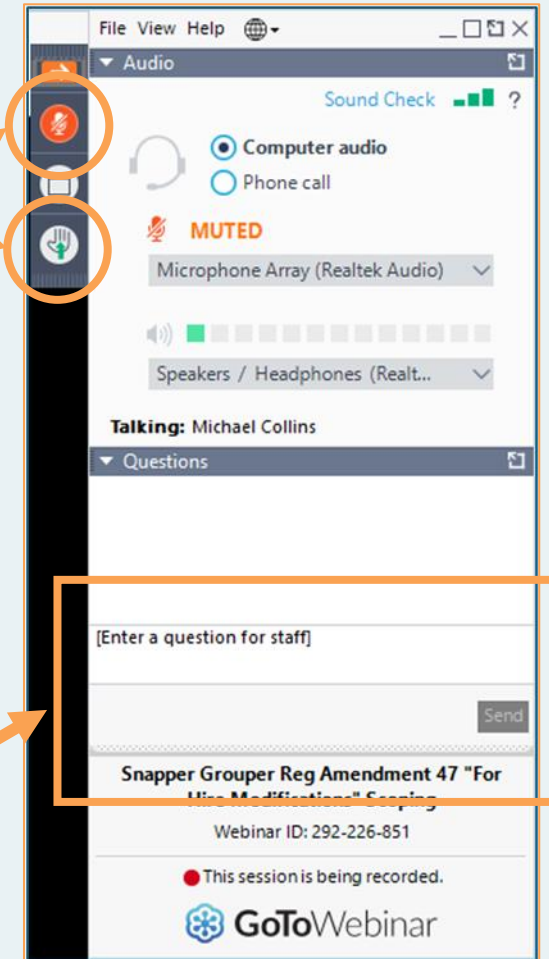
# WEBINAR CONTROLS



If you would like to ask a question or make a comment, click on the hand icon and we will unmute you

After we give you the ability to unmute, you can unmute (or mute) your microphone by clicking the microphone icon. Red is muted, green is unmuted. Please remain muted when not speaking

You can also type a question into the text box

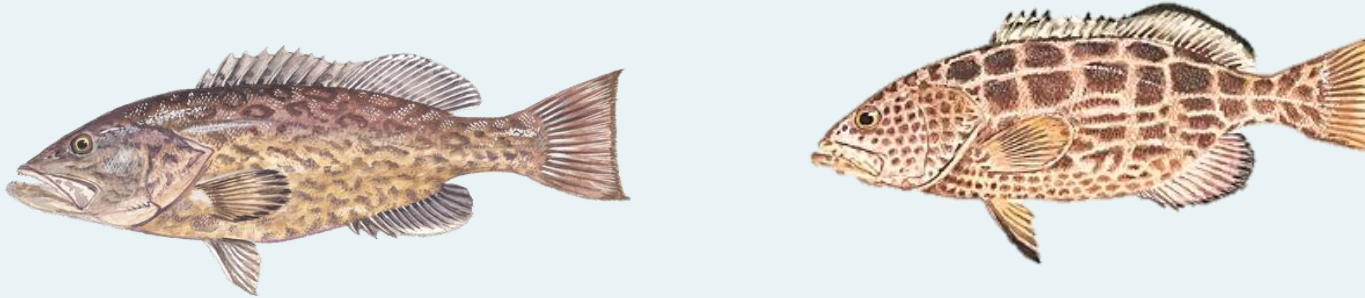




# **CLARIFYING QUESTIONS?**

Any clarifying questions pertaining  
to Amendment 53

# PUBLIC COMMENT



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## Other ways to comment:

1. Through the [Online Comment Form](#) on the Council's website.
2. Through a handwritten submission. Written comments should be addressed to John Carmichael, Executive Director, SAFMC, 4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, N. Charleston, SC 29405. Written comments must be received by February 13, 2023, by 5 p.m.