



THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Snapper Grouper Amendment 60

Commercial Management Measures

Public Hearing Dates and Times

Monday, August 10, 2026, 6pm: North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries Central District Office, 5285 Highway 70 West, Morehead City, NC 28557

Tuesday, August 11, 2026, 6pm: Brunswick County Administrative Building, 30 Government Center Drive NE, Bolivia, NC 28422

Wednesday, August 19, 2026, 6pm: Heckscher Drive Community Club, Inc., 9364 Heckscher Drive, Jacksonville, Florida 32226

Monday, August 31, 2026, 6pm: Online webinar

Wednesday, September 16, 2026, 4pm: Drury Plaza Hotel North Charleston, 2934 West Montague, North Charleston, SC 29418

Registration Link and More Details

<https://safmc.net/public-hearings-and-scoping/>

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<https://safmc.net/>

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Background

In June 2024, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) established a Snapper Grouper Commercial Sub-Committee (Sub-Committee) to begin discussions about ways to improve the commercial sector of the snapper grouper fishery in the South Atlantic. Discussion topics included changes to commercial permits, trip limit flexibility, ways to increase trip efficiency, and promoting exclusive use of commercial permits for harvest of snapper grouper intended for sale. The Sub-Committee met during Council meetings in 2025 and 2026, and their discussions led to initiation and development of Amendment 60 of the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Snapper Grouper FMP).

Why is the Council considering taking action?

Commercial stakeholders have expressed concerns about the stability, longevity, accessibility, and profitability of the commercial snapper grouper fishery. The Council has taken these viewpoints into consideration, as well as Executive Order 14276 – Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness, and developed actions intended to increase accessibility and flexibility in the fishery, while also minimizing closures and other adverse effects on the commercial sector.

Amendment timing

March 2025	Amendment 60 initiated
June 2025	Approval for scoping
July 5 – August 8, 2025	Scoping
September 2025 – June 2026	Amendment development
June 2026	Approval for public hearings
July 27 – September 18, 2026	Public hearings *Written comments received by 5 pm on September 1, 2026, will be included in the summary provided to the Council at the September 2026 meeting
September 2026	Review public comment and consider approval of all actions
December 2026	Final Council approval
2027	NOAA Fisheries rulemaking and implementation *Implementation timing may vary for some actions included in the amendment



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Actions and Alternatives

Actions, alternatives, and notes from Council discussions are abbreviated in this document. For full action language and analyses of effects, reference Draft Amendment 60, provided on the [public hearing webpage](#). Under all actions, Alternative 1 (No Action) describes current regulations being considered for change.

Action 1. Remove the two-for-one requirement for the snapper grouper transferable (SG 1) commercial permit

Purpose of Action: Facilitate transfer of permits in the snapper grouper commercial sector by removing the two-for-one requirement for obtaining a limited access, transferable snapper grouper commercial unlimited (SG 1) permit.

Alternative 1 (No Action). To acquire an SG 1 permit, two SG 1 permits must be exchanged for one new SG 1 permit.

Preferred Alternative 2. To acquire an SG 1 permit, one SG 1 permit must be exchanged for one new SG 1 permit.

Notes

- The SG 1 permit would continue to be a limited access permit, with no additional permits being created. Permits can only be acquired through the transfer of existing permits.
- The Council has discussed the need to facilitate the entry of new and younger participants into the fishery.
- The Council intends to maintain the current number of SG 1 permits, and has noted that an easier transfer process may reduce the number of latent permits (those that are owned but have not reported harvest).



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Action 2. Revise bottom longline gear stowage requirements and species that may be harvested while gear is on board and stowed

Purpose of Action: Provide additional flexibility for commercial fishermen that use bottom longline gear to be able to deploy multiple gears within a trip, improving trip efficiency, while maintaining law enforcement's ability to monitor the gear used to catch snapper grouper species.

Alternative 1 (No Action). A vessel with an SG 1 or SG 2 permit and bottom longline gear on board may only possess the following South Atlantic snapper-grouper species: snowy grouper, yellowedge grouper, misty grouper, golden tilefish, blueline tilefish, and sand tilefish.

Alternatives 2-4. All of Alternatives 2-4 would allow harvest and possession of all snapper grouper species for commercially-permitted vessels with bottom longline gear on board. Harvest using bottom longline gear would still be restricted to snowy grouper, yellowedge grouper, misty grouper, golden tilefish, blueline tilefish, and sand tilefish. However, vessels with bottom longline gear on board may also possess other snapper grouper species that were harvested using gears other than bottom longline, as long as when this harvest occurs, either 1) the bottom longline hooks are not baited, OR 2) bottom longline hooks are stowed off the deck of the vessel. Additionally, vessels that switch to or from bottom longline gear within a trip must fulfill all notification requirements, as set by Alternatives 2-4.

Alternative 2. No additional notification requirement.

Alternative 3. Vessels that intend to switch to or from bottom longline gear on a single trip must communicate their intent to switch gears to the National Marine Fisheries Service using an approved method and before each gear change on that trip.

Alternative 4. Vessel that intend to switch to or from bottom longline gear on a single trip are required to carry an active and approved vessel monitoring system (VMS) on board and send a notification via VMS to the National Marine Fisheries Service before each gear change on that trip.

Notes

- For all alternatives, if multiple gears are used within the same trip, separate entries for each gear type must be recorded in commercial logbooks.



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- Notification or VMS requirements from Alternative 3 or Alternative 4 would only apply to vessels that switch to or from bottom longline gear within a single trip.
 - Examples of commercial trips where these requirements would not apply:
 - Hook and line is the only gear used
 - Bottom longline is the only gear used
 - Hook and line and spearfishing on the same trip

Actions 3-9. Commercial trip limit increases

Actions 3-9 consider commercial trip limit increases for several snapper grouper species. The purpose of each action is to better enable commercial fishermen to harvest the annual catch limit (ACL) for each species. The increased trip limits generally are not projected to result in commercial closures, with some exception of golden tilefish and vermilion snapper (only at the highest trip limits considered).

Action 3. Greater Amberjack

Alternative 1 (No Action). Current trip limit: 1,200 lbs ww or gw for both Season 1 (March through August) and Season 2 (September through February).

Preferred Alternative 2. Increase the commercial trip limit during Season 1 to:

Sub-Alternative 2a. 1,500 lbs gw.

Preferred Sub-Alternative 2b. 1,750 lbs gw.

Sub-Alternative 2c. 2,000 lbs gw.

Preferred Alternative 3. Increase the commercial trip limit Season 2 to:

Sub-Alternative 3a. 1,500 lbs gw.

Preferred Sub-Alternative 3b. 1,750 lbs gw.

Sub-Alternative 3c. 2,000 lbs gw.



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Action 4. Vermilion Snapper

Alternative 1 (No Action). Current trip limit: 1,000 lbs gw for both Season 1 (January through June) and Season 2 (July through December).

Preferred Alternative 2. Increase the commercial trip limit during Season 1 to:

Preferred Sub-Alternative 2a. 1,500 lbs gw.

Sub-Alternative 2b. 1,750 lbs gw.

Sub-Alternative 2c. 2,000 lbs gw.

Preferred Alternative 3. Increase the commercial trip limit during Season 2 to:

Preferred Sub-Alternative 3a. 1,500 lbs gw.

Sub-Alternative 3b. 1,750 lbs gw.

Sub-Alternative 3c. 2,000 lbs gw.

Action 5. Red Porgy

Preferred Alternative 1 (No Action). Current trip limit: 15 fish for Season 1 (January through April) and Season 2 (May through December).

Alternative 2. Increase the commercial trip limit for red porgy during Season 1 to:

Sub-Alternative 2a. 30 fish.

Sub-Alternative 2b. 45 fish.

Alternative 3. Increase the commercial trip limit for red porgy during Season 2 to:

Sub-Alternative 3a. 30 fish.

Sub-Alternative 3b. 45 fish.



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Action 6. Hogfish (Georgia-North Carolina)

Alternative 1 (No Action). Current trip limit: 500 lbs ww

Alternative 2. Increase the commercial trip limit for hogfish to 750 lbs ww.

Alternative 3. Increase the commercial trip limit to 1,000 lbs ww.

Action 7. Red Grouper

Alternative 1 (No Action). Current trip limit: 200 lbs gw; 236 lbs ww.

Alternative 2. Increase the commercial trip limit to 300 lbs gw; 354 lbs ww.

Action 8. Gray Triggerfish

Alternative 1 (No Action). Current trip limit: 1,000 lbs ww.

Alternative 2. Increase the commercial trip limit to 1,200 lbs ww.

Alternative 3. Increase the commercial trip limit to 1,400 lbs ww.

Action 9. Golden Tilefish (hook and line only)

Alternative 1 (No Action). Current trip limit: 500 lbs gw; 560 lbs ww.

Preferred Alternative 2. Increase the commercial trip limit to 600 lbs gw; 672 lbs ww.

Alternative 3. Increase the commercial trip limit to 750 lbs gw; 840 lbs ww.



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Action 10. Require sale of all snapper grouper caught on commercial trips

Purpose of Action: Improve commercial reporting accuracy and professionalize the commercial fleet.

Alternative 1 (No Action). Snapper grouper harvest from commercial trips is not required to be sold, but if sold, it must be sold to a permitted dealer.

Alternative 2. All snapper grouper harvest on commercial snapper grouper trips is required to be sold to a permitted dealer. A commercial snapper grouper trip is a trip on which a vessel that holds either snapper grouper commercial permit (SG 1 or SG 2) either: 1) harvests any snapper grouper species in an amount that exceeds the recreational bag limit for that species, or 2) sells any amount of snapper grouper species that were harvested on that trip.

Notes

- Under **Alternative 2**, this requirement would only apply for species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit. For non-snapper grouper species caught on the same trip, any sale requirements would be determined by the applicable management plan.
 - E.g. If gag and king mackerel are harvested on the same commercial trip, all gag must be sold to a federally-permitted dealer, but king mackerel requirements would be determined by the Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf and Atlantic Region.
- Commercial vessels can still be used as recreational vessels as long as: 1) all harvest of snapper grouper species is within recreational bag limits, and 2) none of the snapper grouper harvested on that trip are sold.



What are your thoughts? The Council wants to hear from you!

The Council wants to hear what you think about these proposed changes.

1. Do you support the Council's preliminary preferred alternatives? Why or why not?

Preliminary Preferred Alternatives

Action 1 – SG 1 permit: Remove the 2-for-1 requirement

Action 3 – Greater amberjack: Increase commercial trip limit to 1,750 lbs gw

Action 4 – Vermilion snapper: Increase commercial trip limit to 1,500 lbs gw

Action 5 – Red porgy: Keep the trip limit of 15 fish

Action 9 – Golden tilefish (hook and line): Increase commercial trip limit to 600 lbs gw

2. Do you think other alternatives should be selected as preferred? If so, why?

3. For actions that do not have a preliminary preferred alternative selected, what should the preferred alternative(s) be? Why that/those alternative(s)?



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How Do I Comment?

Comments must be received by **5:00 PM on Tuesday, September 1, 2026**, for inclusion in the comment summary provided at the September Council Meeting. Comments provided after this date through **5:00 PM on Friday, September 18, 2026**, will be incorporated into the summary ahead of final Council consideration for approval in December 2026. There are several ways that you can submit your comment to the Council including:

Verbal comments during public hearings

Monday, August 10, 2026, 6pm: North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries
Central District Office, 5285 Highway 70 West, Morehead City, NC 28557

Tuesday, August 11, 2026, 6pm: Brunswick County Administrative Building, 30
Government Center Drive NE, Bolivia, NC 28422

Wednesday, August 19, 2026, 6pm: Heckscher Drive Community Club, Inc.,
9364 Heckscher Drive, Jacksonville, Florida 32226

Monday, August 31, 2026, 6pm: Online webinar; register [HERE](#)

Wednesday, September 16, 2026, 4pm (Council Meeting): Drury Plaza Hotel
North Charleston, 2934 West Montague, North Charleston, SC 29418;
Webinar registration information will be provided [HERE](#) by Friday,
August 28, 2026.

Written comments

Written comments may be read and submitted on Amendment 60 using the online public comment form at the following links:

[Submit Comment](#)

[Read Public Comments](#)

Comments by mail

Send comments to: John Carmichael, Executive Director, SAFMC. 4055 Faber
Place Drive, Suite 201. N. Charleston, SC 29405

Comments by fax

843-769-4520