



Bob Lorenz,
AP Chair

2024 June Council
Meeting

THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel

March 2024 Meeting Summary



Recreational Vessel Limits (Including Reg Am 36 and Am 55)

- Prior to discussing recreational vessel limits considered in specific amendments, the AP had a general discussion about application of rec vessel limits to head boats
- AP Recommendation: Consider vessel limit in proportion to number of anglers (e.g. anglers/6) for federally permitted headboats.
 - Headboat businesses depend on anglers' ability to retain fish and allow access for anglers that don't own/can't afford a vessel
 - US Coast Guard certificates of inspection could be useful to define "headboat" (used for Mid-Atl blueline tilefish headboat-specific regulations)

Regulatory Amendment 36 (Gag, Black Grouper, BSB Pots)

Action 1 (Rec Vessel Limits for Gag & Black Grouper)

- Note previous discussion/recommendation about rec vessel limits for headboats
- MOTIONS 1 & 2 in the AP Meeting Summary Report address recreational vessel limits
- Recommendations In Summary: 2 fish aggregate vessel limits for private and charter components; 2 fish/6 passengers up to a maximum of 6-12 fish for headboats

Regulatory Amendment 36 (Gag, Black Grouper, BSB Pots)

Action 2 (Transit Requirements for On-Demand BSB Pots)

- MOTION 3: RECOMMEND ALTERNATIVE 3 (BUOY CAN BE STORED WITHIN THE POT) AS PREFERRED FOR ACTION 2.
- AP members communicated with pot endorsement holders and agreed with supporting their preferred alternative



Amendment 56 (Black Sea Bass Assessment Response)

- AP expressed concern about the data used to describe the recreational sector and potential impacts of the red snapper population on black sea bass
- **RECOMMENDATION: ALIGN THE MINIMUM SIZE LIMITS FOR BLACK SEA BASS IN BOTH SECTORS**
 - Consider a range of 11-12 inches
- Timing and length of the open season is the most critical factor for the rec for-hire component; size/bag limits can be adjusted to prioritize lengthening the season
- Single hook rigs could help reduce the discard rate by slowing catch rates

Amendment 56 (Black Sea Bass Assessment Response)

- Mixed opinions about re-opening the nearshore pot closed area to on-demand pots
 - While this closure was not intended to improve status of BSB (was intended to benefit marine mammals), the recreational for-hire component has benefited from the closure
 - Headboats typically operate within 10 miles to target BSB
 - Possible consideration of re-opening in a way that differs some from previous access
 - Consider how pot locations can be identified and communicated to reduce gear conflicts

Amendment 56 (Black Sea Bass Assessment Response)

- No interest in re-allocation between sectors at this time
- Black sea bass abundance has been notably increasing north of Cape Hatteras, as the South Atlantic stock decreases. Has the stock definition or connectivity between these stocks been assessed recently? Could that have changed?

Amendment 55 (Scamp/Yellowmouth)

Action 6 (Scamp/Yellowmouth Rec Season)

- MOTION 4: RECOMMEND THE COUNCIL DESELECT PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE 2 FOR ACTION 6 AND SELECT ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION) FOR ACTION 6 (REDUCING THE RECREATIONAL SEASON).
- Recreational for-hire businesses need late summer access to the fishery; scamp are important for this component
- The AP questioned the need for additional management measures if the ACL is not currently being met for either species
- With consideration of the timeline restrictions of Amendment 55, the AP suggested that the Council consider separate headboat allocations where appropriate
- The AP had concerns about the number of discards if the season is closed before December 31st

Amendment 55

(Scamp/Yellowmouth)

Action 7 (Scamp/Yellowmouth Rec Retention)

- MOTION 5 is similar to Motion 1, proposing a headboat-specific vessel limit (Action 7b) of 1-4 fish/6 passengers up to a maximum of 8-16 fish per vessel.
- Some interest in a 1 fish/person bag limit (Action 7a), which may reduce harvest enough to not need a vessel limit
- Consensus Recommendation: The AP would prefer to retain recreational access to the fishery from May-December, by reducing the bag limit or establishing a vessel limit instead of reducing the season

Amendment 55 (Scamp/Yellowmouth)

Action 7 (Scamp/Yellowmouth Com Trip Limit)

- Current preferred (Alt 3; 300 lbs gw) may have a negative effect on vessels that take 3-7-day trips
- Concern about whether a 300 lbs gw trip limit would be provide enough economic value to justify a trip
- Some mixed discussion about more lbs/trip versus a potentially shorter season

Other AP Activities & Discussions

Rec Seasons for Deep Water Species

- General support for aligning start dates of deep water species
 - Specifically, noted that golden tilefish & yellowedge grouper (Jan 1) should be aligned with snowy grouper & blueline tilefish (May 1)
- Aligning co-caught species can reduce discard potential
- In developing a cohesive start date, Council should consider the fishery's ability to access deep water species, including the effects on the timing and length of the open season
- NC needs blueline tilefish in late summer (July/August), but not necessarily a longer season
- Consideration of a split season/ACL could allow fairer access for different areas in the region

Other AP Activities & Discussions

- Completed Fishery Performance Report (FPR) for EFL/FLK Hogfish
- MSE Input
- Chair/Vice Chair Elections
 - Chair: James Paskiewicz (FL)
 - Vice Chair: Chris Kimrey (NC)

QUESTIONS?

