

Revised Overview

Snapper Grouper Committee

Hilton Wilmington Riverside
301 North Water Street Wilmington, NC
December 4-5, 2012

The Committee will: (A) receive reports from SERO and the SEFSC on the status of commercial and recreational catches versus the respective quotas for snapper grouper species under ACLs; (B) receive a status report from SERO staff on snapper grouper amendments under Secretarial review; (C) receive reports from the Chairs of the Snapper Grouper AP and SSC, respectively; (D) discuss a request of emergency action to increase the ACL and make management adjustments for vermilion snapper; (E) receive an overview of Regulatory Amendment 13, make changes as necessary, approve for formal review, and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate; (F) receive an overview of Regulatory Amendment 15, modify the amendment as appropriate, approve for formal review, and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate; (G) receive an overview of Amendment 28, modify the amendment as necessary, approve for formal review, and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate; (H) receive an overview of Amendment 27, select preferred alternatives, modify the amendment as appropriate, and approve for public hearings; (I) receive a presentation from SERO staff on reorientation of appropriate existing MPAs based on occurrence and habitat to reduce bycatch of speckled hind and warsaw grouper, and provide guidance to staff on alternatives to include in Regulatory Amendment 17; and (J) address issues under Other Business as appropriate.

A. Status of landings for quota-managed snapper grouper species (*Attachments 1a & 1b*)

The Council will receive an update on the status of landings (commercial and recreational) for snapper grouper species under ACLs.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and take action as necessary.

B. Status of Amendments Approved for Secretarial Review

The Committee will receive a status report from SERO staff on the following amendments:

- A. Yellowtail Snapper Temporary Rule by Emergency Action
- B. Regulatory Amendment 12/EA (Golden Tilefish ACL Adjustment)
- C. Resubmittal of Action 4 in Amendment 18A
- D. Amendment 18B/EA (Golden Tilefish)
- E. Amendment 20A (Wreckfish)
- F. Generic Dealer Amendment

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and take action as necessary.

C. SSC and Snapper Grouper AP Reports (*Attachments 2 & 3a*)

The Scientific and Statistical Committee convened in Charleston, SC, on October 23-25, 2012. Items on the SSC's agenda included review of the vermilion snapper (*Attachment*

3b) and red porgy (**Attachment 3c**) updates, evaluation of two methodologies submitted for the SSC's consideration to revise the ABC for wreckfish and application of the ORCS (Only-Reliable-Catch Stocks) methodology to unassessed snapper grouper species addressed in the Comprehensive ACL Amendment. Dr. Luiz Barbieri will present an overview of the SSC's recommendations to the Committee.

The Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel met in Charleston, SC, on November 7-8, 2012. The AP discussed several items including snapper grouper amendments under development. An AP representative will present an overview of the AP's recommendations to the Committee and will be available to speak on behalf of the AP during the meeting.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and take action as necessary.

D. Adjustment to the Vermilion Snapper ACL and management changes

An update to the vermilion snapper stock assessment was completed in 2012. The original benchmark assessment for vermilion snapper was prepared in 2003 through SEDAR 2 and was last updated in 2007. The vermilion snapper stock in the South Atlantic was determined to be neither overfished nor experiencing overfishing. The SSC recommended setting ABC based on projections at $P^*=0.40$ (Table 19 below).

Current ABC = 1,109,000 lbs ww total kills ($P^*=.275$)
= 1,078,000 lbs ww landed catch ($P^*=.275$)

Current ACL = 1,066,000 lb ww (75% F_{MSY})
= 960,361 lb gw (75% F_{MSY})

Allocations = 68% commercial/32% recreational

Commercial ACL = 618,046 lb gw

Recreational ACL = 307,315 lb gw

2012 Commercial landings as of November 19, 2012:

Commercial ACL = 618,046 lb gw

Jan-June: 21.95% over quota and closed on 2/29/12

July-Dec: 62.13% over quota and closed on 9/28/12

Total commercial landings = 875,285 gw

2012 Recreational landings as of November 19, 2012:

Recreational ACL = 307,315 lb gw

Jan-June: 14,127 lb gw; 5% of ACL

(Note: 2011 recreational landings = 64.3% of rec ACL; 84% in 2010)

Proposed ABC from Table 19:

ABC = 1,429,000 (2013) – 1,322,000 (2016) lb ww total kills ($P^*=.40$)

= 1,372,000 (2013) – 1,269,000 (2016) lb ww landed catch ($P^*=.40$)

The proposed ABC values are 294,000 lb ww higher for 2013. The Council is considering emergency action to increase the ACL and reopen the commercial and recreational fisheries. The commercial ACL would increase such that the second season

could reopen. The recreational ACL would also increase and given that the recreational ACL has not been met since established in 2010, the recreational sector could be reopened (Note: The recreational sector has a closed season November-March.).

Table 19. Acceptable biological catch (ABC) in units of 1000 lb whole weight, based on the annual probability of overfishing $P^* = 0.4$. F = fishing mortality rate (per yr), SSB = mid-year spawning stock (1E12 eggs), $Pr(SSB < MSST)$ = proportion of replicates overfished (i.e., SSB below the base-run point estimate of $MSST$), R = recruits (1000 age-1 fish), D = discard mortalities (1000 lb whole weight), and L = landings (1000 lb whole weight). ABC (1000 lb whole weight) includes landings and discard mortalities. Annual ABC s are a single quantity among the 10,000 replicate projections; other values presented are medians.

Year	F	P^*	SSB	$Pr(SSB < MSST)$	R	D(1000 lb)	L(1000 lb)	ABC(1000 lb)
2012	0.544	0.355	6.12	0.25	2926	53	1321	–
2013	0.574	0.4	6.12	0.29	2890	56	1372	1429
2014	0.543	0.4	6.09	0.31	2836	55	1312	1367
2015	0.524	0.4	6.17	0.32	2800	53	1289	1343
2016	0.506	0.4	6.28	0.33	2740	51	1269	1322

New ABC and ACLs for vermilion snapper based on SSC’s ABC recommendation in Table 19 above. Gutted weight determined with conversion factor of 1.11 from commercial logbooks.

Year	ABC ww	ABC gw	Comm ACL gw	Comm ACL Jan-June gw	Comm ACL July-Dec gw	Rec ACL gw
2012	1,078,000	971,171	618,046	315,523	302,523	307,315
2013	1,372,000	1,236,036	840,505	420,252	420,252	395,532
2014	1,312,000	1,181,982	803,748	401,874	401,874	378,234
2015	1,289,000	1,161,261	789,658	394,829	394,829	371,604
2016	1,269,000	1,143,243	777,405	388,703	388,703	365,838

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss requesting emergency action to increase the recreational and commercial ACLs and to reopening the recreational and commercial fisheries. Also, provide guidance on a regulatory amendment to make these changes permanent.

E. Regulatory Amendment 13 (adjustment to ABCs, ACLs, and ACTs for unassessed snapper grouper species to incorporate MRIP estimates; Attachments 4a-4d)

This amendment updates ABCs, ACLs (including sector ACLs), allocations, and ACTs for select unassessed snapper grouper species based on updated Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) numbers. Brian Chevront, Council staff, will present an overview of the amendment.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss, modify as needed, select preferred alternative, approve for formal review, and deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate.

F. Regulatory Amendment 15 (Yellowtail snapper and shallow water groupers; Attachments 5a-5c)

This amendment would adjust the yellowtail ABC, ACLs, and ACT based on the latest stock assessment; modify the fishing year and establish a spawning season closure for yellowtail snapper for the commercial sector; and modify the accountability measure for gag grouper that prohibits harvest and possession of shallow-water groupers (red grouper, black grouper, scamp, yellowmouth grouper, yellowfin grouper, red hind, rock hind, graysby, and coney) when the gag commercial ACL is met or projected to be met. The Comprehensive ACL Amendment established individual ACLs for black grouper and scamp and Amendment 24 did so for red grouper. In addition, the aggregate red grouper-black grouper-gag aggregate ACL was removed through Amendment 24. However, Amendment 16 had established an accountability measure to close the rest of the shallow-water groupers once the gag ACL was met or projected to be met in order to curb bycatch of gag. This regulation is still in effect and there is concern about significant socio-economic impacts. Since these species (and scamp) now have their own ACLs, the Council is proposing removing (or modifying) the AM that closes all shallow-water grouper when the gag commercial ACL is met. This accountability measure been triggered prior to 2012 because the gag commercial ACL was not met prior to 2012. **REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION:** Modify Regulatory Amendment 15 as appropriate, select preferred alternatives, approve for formal review, and deem the codified text necessary and appropriate.

G. Amendment 28 (Red snapper; Attachments 6a-6c)

This amendment would establish regulations to allow harvest of red snapper in the South Atlantic. Red snapper harvest in 2012 was allowed for two consecutive weekends (Fri-Sun) in for the recreational sector and during a 7-day mini-season for the commercial sector. NMFS took action via an Emergency Rule to implement these measures, so no provisions for allowing harvest in 2013 (and beyond) are currently in place. This amendment would put those measures in place and an ACL would be set in 2013. The document contains alternatives to calculate the red snapper ACL and establish a process for allowing limited harvest of red snapper in the future.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Modify Amendment 28 as appropriate, select preferred alternative, approve for formal review, and deem the codified text necessary and appropriate.

H. Amendment 27 (Yellowtail and mutton snapper, Nassau Grouper, Framework Modification and Blue Runner; Attachments 7a & 7b)

This amendment would address management jurisdiction for yellowtail snapper, mutton snapper, and Nassau grouper. Both the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils manage these species in their respective jurisdictions. In 2010, the Gulf Council expressed the desire to transfer management responsibility to the South Atlantic Council for these three species throughout their range in the southeast U.S. Therefore, this amendment includes actions to transfer management authority and address permitting and management issues for yellowtail and mutton snapper. However, the Gulf Council indicated at their October 2012 meeting that they would continue to manage yellowtail and mutton snapper.

The amendment would also include an action to modify the snapper grouper framework process. The intent is to add language to the framework to accomplish adjustments to ABCs, ACLs, and ACTs in a timelier manner.

Finally, the amendment includes an action to address issues with the harvest of blue runner in the mackerel gillnet fishery. The Council was recently made aware that blue runner are incidentally caught by fishermen targeting Spanish mackerel off northeast Florida. Fishermen have been selling their catch of blue runner to federally-permitted dealers. However, blue runner are included in the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management unit and a snapper grouper unlimited permit or a 225 trip-limited permit are required to harvest and sell them. Hence, mackerel fishermen have been harvesting and selling blue runner without possessing the required permit. According to public input, the sale of blue runner can make up to 30% of a fisherman's income. The Council is considering actions in this amendment that would continue to allow mackerel fishermen to harvest and sell blue runner.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Modify the amendment as appropriate, select preferred alternatives, and approve for public hearings.

I. MPAs and HAPCs for speckled hind and warsaw grouper (Attachment 8)

At the September 2012 meeting, the Regional Administrator offered to have his staff give a presentation from on re-orientation of existing MPAs to protect speckled hind and warsaw grouper. The Committee requested that the analysis be based on occurrence of these two species and presence of suitable habitat. Dr. Nick Farmer presented an expanded analysis to the SSC during their October 2012 meeting.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Consider the information provided and provide guidance to staff on alternatives to include in Regulatory Amendment 17.

J. Other Business (Attachments 9 & 10)

The Committee will address items under Other Business as appropriate.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and take action as necessary.