



THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

SG Recreational Permitting and Reporting Technical Advisory Panel Meeting Summary Report, June 2024



Overview of the Tech AP Meeting



- The 5th AP webinar meeting took place on April 9, 2024
- The Tech AP reviewed previous recommendations given revisions that have taken place in the amendment and provided additional technical feedback to the Council.

Action 1. Establish a private recreational permit for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region



Main Points of Discussion: Angler-Based vs. Vessel-Based Permit

- Tech AP recommended vessel-based (Alt. 2).
- Council **preferred**: angler-based (Alt. 3).

Council Question:

- Rental vessels, boat club vessels, and circumstances where a vessel owner may not be present on a vessel.
- Integration of a vessel-based permit with an education requirement.

• Tech AP Comments:

- Unlikely to be a significant concern. Most operate inshore or nearshore; very small percentage of fishing effort towards SG species.
- If the permit is vessel-based, details need to be specified regarding who must obtain the education certificate (e.g., vessel owner? vessel operator? at least one person onboard a permitted vessel?). Potential concern re. the education component.



Action 1. Establish a private recreational permit requirement in the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region

RECOMMENDATION: The AP continues to recommend that a vessel-based permit would be superior to an angler-based permit from a technical perspective, logistical perspective, and for survey design. The net benefits to any subsequent improvements in private recreational catch and effort estimates from a vessel-based permit are likely going to be greater than those resulting from an angler-based permit.



Action 1. Establish a private recreational permit requirement in the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region

Another point Tech AP discussed: exemptions for permitting

- It is not uncommon for angler-based permitting or licensing systems to have multiple exemptions (e.g., seniors, military, youth, etc.) and to not be issued on an annual basis (e.g., lifetime fishing license).
- A vessel-based permit likely avoids exemptions, particularly those that traditionally are granted for angler-based licenses.
- If the Council chooses to proceed with an angler-based permit, the fewer exemptions made, the better: fewer correction factors.
- **RECOMMENDATION:** The Council should consider addressing exemptions for a private recreational permit.



Action 2. Specify the species that would be covered by a private recreational snapper grouper permit

Current Status:

- Council chose **Preferred Alternative 2**: *include any species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit.*

Council Question:

- Is the AP still comfortable with the existing recommendation of Alternative 2?

Tech AP Comments:

- Yes. The Council's preferred alternative is aligned with recommendations from all AP's.
- However, we still need to assess how SRFS fits into this.
- *If different species are selected compared to those selected in Action 2, effort estimation may be compromised. Not having the same standard species across the region could compromise the utility of the permit.*



Action 2. Specify the species that would be covered by a private recreational snapper grouper permit

Council Question:

- Are there ways to specifically improve estimates for deepwater species?
 - a) Would a private recreational permit alone (i.e., with no reporting requirement) likely lead to improvements in estimates for deepwater species?
 - b) Would the deepwater species need their own sampling framework?

Tech AP Comments:

- The permit by itself would provide a modest improvement at best in terms of precision on the recreational effort estimate.
- Making the sampling more efficient (e.g., additional dockside sampling or a dedicated deepwater species sampling program) would likely be needed to significantly improve estimates for these species.

Action 3. Establish an education component in conjunction with a private recreational snapper grouper permit



AND

Action 4. Specify the timing of the education component requirement for the private recreational snapper grouper permit

- **Comments:**
 - **For Action 3, Alternative 2** – the wording is a bit confusing in relation to “*required before initial issuance*”. Consider clarifying and revising this language. Perhaps “*the education component would be required with initial issuance...*”
 - If no reporting requirement is implemented, it is still of value to inform people of the importance of participating in the dockside or mail-based survey. How it is useful and helpful for fisheries management?



Action 3. AND Action 4. (Continued)

- **Comments (continued):**

- Outreach efforts and education materials should explain why this permit is being established. State the benefits of the permit in terms of data collection so permit holders understand the purpose and what could be gained by anglers as well as managers.
- All information on the list that the Council compiled in March 2024 is relevant but is a lot of information. HMS has a compliance guide that the public can download. Something similar to that strategy may be helpful to consider so the education course is not too long.
- If a permit is vessel-based, details need to be specified regarding who must obtain the education certificate.
 - *Vessel owner? Vessel operator? At least one person onboard a permitted vessel?*

Action 5. Establish an exemption to the federal private recreational snapper grouper permit and education requirements based on permitting and education by the states



- **Comments:**

- The criteria for the state-based permits need to match the federal criteria:
 - Need to maintain a common design, ideally across all ocean areas.
 - Even if some states rely on the federal permit while others create their own permit, the common design will allow comparability of estimates across the EEZ since this area will be covered by all permits.
 - Other options where the state and federal requirements are not in alignment may create the need for additional calibrations.



Action 5. Establish an exemption to the federal private recreational snapper grouper permit and education requirements based on permitting and education by the states

- **Potential Concern:**

- Compatibility with SFRS in terms of: (1) species covered, and (2) the type of permit adopted (i.e., angler-based vs. vessel-based).
 - 1) If different species are selected compared to those selected in Action 2, effort estimation may be compromised. Not having the same standard species across the region could compromise the utility of the permit.
 - 2) A vessel-based permit could lead to improvements to SFRS sampling and decrease regulatory burden on anglers. It would be a challenge to update the program but potentially feasible depending on resources.

- **RECOMMENDATION:** The Tech AP would like to add Sub-Alternative 2d to the existing recommendation. The new AP recommendation will be to recommend Alternative 2, Sub-Alternatives 2a, 2b, 2c, and 2d in Action 5.

Questions?

