

Overview

Snapper Grouper Committee

March 9 & 10, 2011
Sea Palms Resort and Conference Center
5445 Frederica Road
St. Simons Island, GA

The Snapper Grouper Committee needs to: (A) receive a report from SSC chair Dr. Carolyn Belcher; (B) receive a report from Council staff on black sea bass and golden tilefish issues landings; (C) receive an overview of the black sea bass bag limit analysis from SERO staff, approve the analysis and provide guidance to staff on where to include an action to establish a bag limit for black sea bass, as needed; (D) review public hearing comments on Regulatory Amendment 9, modify the document as necessary and approve for formal review by the Secretary of Commerce; (E) receive an overview of Regulatory Amendment 11 from SERO staff, modify the document as necessary and provide guidance on timing; (F) receive a status report from Council staff on Amendment 18A and provide guidance; (G) review public hearing comments on the Comprehensive ACL Amendment, modify as necessary and approve all actions; and (D) receive status reports from SERO and Council staff on Amendments 20, 21, 22 and 24.

Oculina Reports

No research or new outreach activity has taken place.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: None.

A. SSC Report (Attachment 1)

The Socio-economic Panel (SEP) of the Council's SSC met in Charleston on February 15-16, 2011. The SEP reports directly to the SSC. On March 3, 2011, the SSC will hold a conference call to review the SEP's input and discuss additional items. Dr. Carolyn Belcher will provide an overview of the discussions and the SSC's recommendations.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Take action as necessary.

B. Black Sea Bass and Golden Tilefish Issues (Attachments 2a – 2c)

Gregg Waugh, SAFMC Staff, will review the management history of black sea bass including the status of recreational and commercial catches since implementation of Snapper Grouper Amendment 13C in October 2006. A management overview for golden tilefish will also be presented. The Committee should review the black sea bass stock projection information on

page 5 of *Attachment 2b* and provide guidance for use at SEDAR 25. Likewise, the committee should review the golden tilefish stock projection information on page 5 of *Attachment 2c* and provide guidance for use at SEDAR 25.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Take action as necessary.

C. Black Sea Bass Bag Limit Analysis (Attachment 3)

Amendment 17B specified a recreational annual catch limit of 409,000 pounds gutted weight for black sea bass. In January 2011, NOAA Fisheries Service determined that the recreational ACL had been met, and issued a black sea bass fishery closure effective February 12, 2011, through the remainder of the fishing year (May 31, 2011). The Council is considering an alternative to reduce the bag limit as a means to extend the recreational fishing season and prevent a prolonged recreational closure for black sea bass. Jack McGovern, SERO Staff, will provide an overview of the analyses.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Select bag limit alternatives and provide guidance on which amendment should include an action, if needed, to modify the black sea bass bag limit.

D. Regulatory Amendment 9 (Attachments 4a, 4b & 4c)

Regulatory Amendment 9 contains management actions affecting black sea bass, vermilion snapper, gag and greater amberjack. Actions in this amendment pertain mainly to establishment or modification of commercial trip limits for the affected species. The Council approved this amendment for public hearings at their December 2010 meeting and public hearings were held January 31 – February 3 (*Attachment 4a*). The comment period started January 12 and ended February 14. Myra Brouwer, Council Staff, will review public hearing comments (*Attachment 4b*) and provide an overview of the changes to the amendment since the December meeting. The Committee will review the revised Regulatory Amendment 9 document (*Attachment 4c*) and take final action. The draft codified text for the Amendment is *Attachment 4d*.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Review public comments and approve Regulatory Amendment 9 for formal review by the Secretary of Commerce.

E. Regulatory Amendment 11 Issues Paper (Attachment 5)

Regulations implemented through Amendment 17B established a closure seaward of 240 ft (40 fathoms) for deepwater snapper grouper species (snowy grouper, blueline tilefish, yellowedge grouper, misty grouper, queen snapper, and silk snapper). This closure was implemented to protect warsaw grouper and speckled hind for which the current ACL is zero landings. The Council will reconsider whether management of deepwater snapper grouper species can be accomplished without such a closure. Hence, at the December 2010 Council meeting the Committee indicated that staff should initiate development of a Regulatory Amendment in order to analyze possible changes to the deepwater closure implemented through Amendment 17B. Rick DeVictor, SERO staff, will provide an overview of the Issues Paper. Dr. Nick Farmer, SERO staff, will present preliminary analyses to the Committee.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Review Regulatory Amendment 11, modify the document as necessary, and provide guidance to staff on timing for the amendment.

F. Amendment 18A

Council staff is working to incorporate the new actions and alternatives requested at the December 2010 Council meeting. Kate Quigley, Council Staff, will provide an update on the amendment. The Council will review the document at the June Council meeting.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Provide guidance as necessary.

G. Comprehensive ACL Amendment (Attachments 6a, 6b & 6c)

At the December 2010 meeting the Council approved the Comprehensive ACL Amendment for public hearings. Public hearings were held January 31 – February 3 (*Attachment 6a*). The comment period started January 12 and ended February 14. Myra Brouwer, Council Staff, will review public hearing comments (*Attachment 6b*) and provide an overview of the changes to the amendment since the December meeting. The Committee will review the revised Comprehensive ACL Amendment document (*Attachment 6c*) and approve all actions in the amendment. The Committee will review DEIS comments, modify the document if necessary, and approve for formal Secretarial review during the June meeting.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Review public hearing comments, modify the document as necessary and approve all actions.

H. Amendments 20, 21, 22 and 24

Kate Quigley, Council Staff, will provide an overview of the content and status of Amendments 20 & 21 as well as a current timeline for each. Rick DeVactor, SERO staff, will update the Committee on the status of Amendments 22 and 24. Scoping comments were taken on Amendments 21, 22 and 24 during scoping meetings held January 31 – February 3. The Comment period started on January 12 and ended on February 14.

Amendment 20 -- Changes to the Wreckfish ITQ Program -- The amendment has not changed since September 2010.

Amendment 21 (Attachments 7a & 7b) -- Comprehensive Catch Shares Amendment -- Scoping comments are included in the briefing book and will be summarized in June 2011. At that time, the Council will review the current options paper.

Amendment 22 (Attachment 8a & 8b) -- Long-term Management of Red Snapper. Scoping comments are included in the briefing book and will be summarized in June 2011.

Amendment 24 (Attachments 9a – d) -- Red Grouper Rebuilding Plan – This amendment is under a statutory deadline. The Council should approve it for public hearings at the June meeting and approve for submission to the Secretary at the December meeting. SEFSC staff will provide an overview of the new projections.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Provide guidance as necessary.