



Update on Snapper Grouper Amendments

October 2026

Note: A summary table of progress towards rulemaking and implementation is in Appendix A.

Submitted

Joint Commercial Logbook Amendment

Purpose of Amendment: To allow submittal of electronic commercial logbooks.

Action Summary: This amendment is being developed jointly with the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council. The amendment modifies the FMPs for South Atlantic Snapper Grouper, Atlantic Dolphin Wahoo, Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Coastal Migratory Pelagics, and Gulf Reef Fish to require commercial logbooks be submitted via electronic reporting forms instead of the currently used paper-based forms.

Development level: Under review. Amendment submitted on February 27, 2024.

Amendment 48 (Wreckfish ITQ Program Modernization)

Purpose of Amendment: The Council finished its second review of the Wreckfish ITQ program in September of 2019. As part of the review there were several recommendations made to modernize the program, which will be addressed in this amendment.

Action Summary: moving away from a paper coupon-based program to an electronic program; fishing season; cost recovery; wreckfish permit requirement; allocation issues; offloading sites and times; and monitoring requirements.

Development Level: Under review. Amendment submitted on December 19, 2024.

Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 36 (Gag and Black Grouper; On-Demand Gear)

Purpose of Amendment: Revise recreational vessel limits for gag and black grouper and specify requirements for on-demand black sea bass pots while transiting through closed areas

Action Summary: Revise the recreational vessel limits for gag and black grouper to be an aggregate bag limit including both species. Revise transit requirements for on-demand black sea bass pots.

Development Level: Final Rule. Changes effective on October 28, 2026.

Abbreviated Framework 5 (Blueline Tilefish)

Purpose of the Amendment: adjust catch levels of blueline tilefish in the South Atlantic based on the most recent stock assessment (SEDAR 92)

Action Summary: Revise ABC, total ACL, and sector ACLs (retaining the current sector allocation)

Development level: Under review. Amendment submitted on February 13, 2026.

Regulatory Amendment 37 (Black Sea Bass Management Measures)

Purpose of the Amendment: Address depleted status of black sea bass in the South Atlantic immediately with management measures aimed at reducing regulatory discards and protecting the spawning stock.

Action Summary: establish recreational and commercial annual catch targets and revise accountability measures, reduce the recreational bag limit, and implementing an annual spawning season closure in February and March for both commercial and recreational sectors.

Development level: Under review. Amendment submitted April 17, 2026.

Under Development

Amendment 61 (Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit Revision)

Purpose of the Amendment: Evaluate whether 14 species currently in the FMU should remain, be removed, or be designated as ecosystem component species. Note: this amendment supersedes an earlier proposed amendment to specify ABCs for unassessed snapper grouper species.

Action Summary: To determine the need for conservation and management of 14 snapper grouper species.

Development level: Post-scoping

Scheduled for Advisory Panel Discussion at the October 2026 Meeting

Snapper Grouper Amendment 44/ Reef Fish Amendment 55 (Yellowtail & Mutton Snapper)

Purpose of Amendment: Respond to the latest stock assessments for yellowtail snapper and mutton snapper (SEDAR 96 and SEDAR 79, respectively). Neither species is overfished nor undergoing overfishing.

Action Summary: Adopt recommended stock OFL and ABCs, adjust the jurisdictional apportionment between the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils, update regional ACLs, and update South Atlantic sector allocations.

Development Level: Public hearings

Amendment 60 (Commercial management measures)

Purpose of the Amendment: The amendment has two main objectives: 1) address issues related to the commercial Snapper Grouper Unlimited (SG 1) permit, and 2) increase commercial trip efficiency.

Action Summary: Revise the 2-for-1 snapper grouper commercial unlimited permit policy; modify trip limits; and revise existing stowage requirements for gear on board.

Development level: Post-public hearings development

Regulatory Amendment 38 (Vessel Limits for Headboats)

Purpose of the Amendment: Modify vessel limits for South Atlantic headboats

Action Summary: establish vessel limits for select snapper grouper species for headboats and adjust catch levels of golden tilefish

Development level: Public Hearings

Regulatory Amendment 39 (Modify Sunsetting of Spawning Special Management Zones)

Purpose of the Amendment: Evaluate sunsetting of Spawning Special Management Zones

Action Summary: Extend sunsetting provision for 3 SSMZs

Development level: Public Hearings

Regulatory Amendment 40 (Re-Opening of Seasonal Nearshore Closed Areas to Black Sea Bass Pots Equipped with On-Demand Gear Retrieval Systems)

Purpose of the Amendment: Evaluate re-opening of seasonal nearshore closed areas to on-demand black sea bass pots

Action Summary: allow pots with on-demand gear to fish in the nearshore seasonal closed areas

Development level: Pre-public hearings development

Appendix A. Rulemaking progress for SAFMC amendments (updated 9/28/26)

Amendment	Council voted final action	Council submitted to NMFS	NOA published (comments due)	Proposed rule published (comments due)	Final rule published	Amendment Approval date	Implementation date
SG Reg 36 (transit and bag limits)	9/20/24	3/31/25	n/a	4/23/26 (5/26/26)	9/28/26	n/a	10/28/26
SG 48 (wreckfish)	6/14/24	12/19/24					
Joint Commercial Electronic Logbook	Sept 2023 SA) Oct 2023 (Gulf)	2/27/2024	11/20/25 (1/20/26)	5/26/26 (6/25/26)		1/22/26	
SG AF 5 (blueline tilefish)	12/12/25	2/13/26	n/a	7/13/26 (8/12/26)		n/a	
SG Reg 37 (black sea bass)	12/12/25	4/17/26	n/a	9/22/26 (10/22/26)		n/a	

Note: Blank cells indicate that the action has not occurred.

Framework Amendments

- The approximate time frame from when Council submits a framework amendment to NMFS and the implementation date is 6-9 months.
- NMFS does not publish an NOA for a framework amendment.
- The public comment period for proposed rules is usually 30 days.

Plan Amendments

- The approximate time frame from when Council submits a plan amendment to NMFS and the implementation date is 9-11 months.
- NMFS publishes an NOA for a plan amendment, followed by the proposed rule.
- The public comment period for proposed rules and amendments (NOA) are usually 30 and 60 days, respectively.