



Update on Snapper Grouper Amendments

October 2023

Amendment 49 (Greater Amberjack)

Purpose of Amendment: Respond to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 59). Greater amberjack are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.

Action Summary: Adopt recommended ABC, adjust total ACL and annual OY, sector allocations (and sector ACLs), consider modifications to minimum size limits, seasonal commercial trip limits, and the April spawning closure, and remove recreational ACT for species managed under the Snapper Grouper FMP. Final actions described in [October 2022 Snapper Grouper AP Amendment Update](#).

Recent Key Events:

- September 2023: Amendment approved (9/18/23).

Amendment 51 (Snowy Grouper)

Purpose of the Amendment: Respond to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 36 Update). Snowy grouper are overfished and undergoing overfishing. The Council is required to adjust catch levels and management measures to end overfishing. Final actions described in [April 2023 Snapper Grouper AP Amendment Update](#).

Recent Key Events:

- August 2023: Amendment approved (8/17/23).

Amendment 52 (Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish)

Purpose of Amendment: Respond to the latest stock assessment for golden tilefish (SEDAR 66). Golden tilefish are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. The amendment would also respond to increased recreational effort on blueline tilefish.

Action Summary: Adjust catch levels and sector allocations for golden tilefish, consider modifications to commercial seasons (longline and hook-and-line) and accountability measures. Adjust the recreational bag limit for blueline tilefish and modify recreational accountability measures. Final actions described in [April 2023 Snapper Grouper AP Amendment Update](#).

Recent Key Events:

- May 2023: Amendment submitted.

Amendment 53 (Gag and Black Grouper)

Purpose of the Amendment: Respond to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 71). Gag are overfished and undergoing overfishing. The Council is required to establish a rebuilding plan and adjust catch levels and management measures to end overfishing. Final actions described in [April 2023 Snapper Grouper AP Amendment Update](#).

Recent Key Events:

- May 2023: Amendment submitted.
- September 2023: Amendment approved (9/8/23).

Regulatory Amendment 35 (Discard Mortality Reduction and Red Snapper Catch Levels)

Purpose of the Amendment: Respond to the latest stock assessment for Red Snapper (SEDAR 73). Red Snapper are overfished and overfishing is occurring, mainly due to the large number of Red Snapper that die after catch and release. Dead discards are a major issue in the snapper grouper fishery as a whole and affect many species within the complex. Final actions described in [April 2023 Snapper Grouper AP Amendment Update](#).

Recent Key Events:

- March 2023: Approved for submission.
- September 2023: Council requested delaying submittal to discuss in December 2023

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 and spawning closure; cost recovery; wreckfish permit requirement; allocation issues; offloading sites and times; and vessel monitoring system requirements.

Recent Key Events:

- June 2023: Creation of a Wreckfish Advisory Group (WAG) and Wreckfish Sub-Committee
- September 2023: Meeting of the WAG and Sub-Committee

Amendment 46 (Private Recreational Permitting)

Purpose of the Amendment: Address deficiencies in recreational data through the creation of a permit requirement for private recreational vessels or anglers. Additionally, considers establishing a required education component to encourage best fishing practices that help reduce discard mortality in the snapper grouper fishery.

Action Summary: This amendment considers establishing a permit and education requirement for anglers or vessels to participate in the private recreational component of the snapper grouper fishery.

Recent Key Events:

- June 2023: Reviewed AP comments and revised amendment. Approved purpose and need statements and revised actions for inclusion in the amendment.

- September 2023: Reviewed AP comments and modified actions and alternatives. Council directed staff to assemble candidates for an ad hoc advisory panel made up of private anglers.

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

Purpose of Amendment: Respond to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 64). Yellowtail snapper are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.

Action Summary: Adopt recommended ABC, adjust jurisdictional allocation between the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Councils, adjust ACLs, and sector allocations (SA only).

Recent Key Events:

- June 2023: Gulf and South Atlantic Councils reviewed actions and alternatives, preliminary analysis and draft amendment.
- September 2023: paused development to allow time for SSCs (SA and Gulf) to reconsider the recommended stock ABC because of MRIP-FES issue and to determine whether the assessment can be re-done with FL State Reef Fish Survey data.

Amendment 55 (Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper)

Purpose of Amendment: Respond to the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 68).

Action Summary: Establish a scamp/yellowmouth grouper complex, remove yellowmouth grouper from the shallow water grouper (SWG) complex, establish catch levels and sector allocations for the new complex, adjust catch levels and sector allocations for the SWG complex.

Recent Key Events:

- June 2023: Council reviewed an initial decision document and gave direction to staff. Additional guidance was needed for the parameters of the rebuilding plan and OFL levels, which is anticipated to be provided at the September 2023 meeting.
- July-August 2023: scoping webinars held July 31- Aug 2, 2023.
- September 2023: Council modified the suite of alternatives for some actions and provided direction to modify the Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper ACL.

Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 36 (Black Sea Bass, Gag, and Black Grouper)

Purpose of Amendment: Consider addition of on-demand pots currently used under an exempted fishing permit as an allowable gear for commercial harvest of black sea bass. Revise recreational bag limits for gag and black grouper.

Action Summary: Add on-demand pots as an allowable commercial gear for black sea bass; revise the bag limits for gag and black grouper to be an aggregate bag limit including both species.

Recent Key Events:

- September 2023: Amendment development initiated.

Comprehensive ABC Control Rule Amendment

Purpose of Amendment: To modify the ABC Control Rule to address flexibility allowed under the MSA and revise how uncertainty and risk tolerance are addressed in setting ABCs.

Action Summary: modify the ABC Control Rule, including specification of scientific uncertainty and management risk components, application of the Control Rule to rebuilding

stocks, criteria and procedures for phase-in of ABC changes, criteria and procedures for carry-over of unused portions of the annual catch limit, and establishment a framework procedure to allow carry-overs. Final actions described in [April 2023 Snapper Grouper AP Amendment Update](#).

Recent Key Events:

- June 2023: Amendment submitted.

Joint Commercial Logbook Amendment

Purpose of Amendment: To provide the authority 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 would modify 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.

Key Events:

- June 2023: Presentation from SEFSC on electronic coastal logbook program.
- July 2023: Public hearings.
- September 2023: SA Council approved for formal review.