



Update on Snapper Grouper Amendments

March 2024

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:

- October 2023: Regulations effective (10/26/23).

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:

- January 2024: Regulations effective (1/2/24).

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:

- December 2023: Regulations effective (12/7/23).

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:

- October 2023: Regulations effective (10/23/23).

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:

- December 2023: Council rescinded approval of the amendment.

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:

- December 2023: SG Committee reviews and approves Sub-Committee decisions.
- February 2024: Wreckfish Sub-Committee selects preferred alternatives.
- March 2024: SG Committee reviews and approves Sub-Committee decisions and approves document for public hearings.

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:

- December 2023: Reviewed AP comments, selected preferred alternatives for Actions 1 and 2, and provided direction for amendment development including AP review in the first half of 2024 and that the amendment would not come back for consideration of approval for public hearings until the June 2024 meeting. Also appointed the Private Recreational Ad Hoc Advisory Panel.

- March 2024: Reviewed Law Enforcement AP comments and revised amendment actions.

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:

- December 2023: Motion approved to de-prioritize work on the amendment until after a new assessment is completed that incorporates SRFS 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:

- December 2023: The Council reviewed SG AP feedback, selected preferred alternatives for select actions, and added management actions to the amendment.
- March 2024: The Council reviewed an updated decision document including management actions and an updated analysis and selected several preferred alternatives.

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:

- December 2023: Approved for scoping.
- February 2024: Scoping webinars held February 12-13, 2024.
- March 2024: Reviewed scoping comments and provided direction for further amendment development.

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:

- February 2024: Regulations effective (2/2/24).

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:

- February 2024: Amendment submitted on February 27, 2024.

Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 56 (Black Sea Bass)

Purpose of Amendment: Respond to most recent stock assessment (SEDAR 76).

Action Summary: Establish a rebuilding plan, revise catch levels, consider revision of sector allocations, other black sea bass management measures.

Key Events:

- March 2024: Acceptable biological catch recommendations made by the SSC. Initial discussions about information necessary to evaluate management changes.

Comprehensive Recreational For-Hire Limited Entry Amendment

Purpose of Amendment: To establish limited entry for the for-hire components of the snapper grouper, coastal migratory pelagics, and dolphin wahoo fisheries.

Action Summary: TBD

Key Events:

- December 2023: Amendment development initiated. Additional control dates of December 8, 2023, for for-hire permits and December 5, 2023, for reporting to SEFHIER established.
- March 2024: Council reviewed a discussion document on the existing control date for the for-hire fishery, previous consideration of limited entry in the snapper grouper for-hire fishery, and permit information through 2020.