



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Carolyn N. Belcher, Ph.D., Chair | Trish Murphey, Vice Chair
John Carmichael, Executive Director

AGENDA

Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel

Town and Country Inn
2008 Savannah Highway
Charleston, SC 29407

March 26-28, 2024

Public comment will be solicited at the beginning and at the end of the meeting. Those wishing to comment should indicate such in the manner requested by the Chair, who will recognize individuals to provide comment in-person or on the webinar.

Photo scanning event for FISHstory project: Staff will be ready to scan historic photos contributed to the project throughout the AP meeting.

Tuesday, March 26, 2024, 1:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday, March 27, 2024, 8:30 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Thursday, March 28, 2024, 8:30 A.M. – Noon

Welcome and Introductions

Approval of Agenda – Bob Lorenz

Approval of October 2023 AP minutes – Bob Lorenz

Public Comment

1. Committee Chair Remarks – Jessica McCawley (*Attachments 1a and 1b*)
2. Council Discussion Updates (*Attachment 2a and 2b*)
 - a. Recent/Ongoing Amendments
 - i. Recently Implemented: Amendment 51 (Snowy Grouper), Amendment 52 (Golden Tilefish and Blueline Tilefish), Acceptable Biological Catch Control Rule Amendment
 - ii. Amendment 44 – Yellowtail Snapper
 - iii. Amendment 46 – Private Recreational Permit
 - iv. Amendment 48 – Wreckfish
 - v. Regulatory Amendment 35 – Red Snapper and Release Mortality

- vi. Amendment 54 – Joint Comprehensive Commercial Electronic Logbook Amendment
 - b. Recent Council Discussions
 - i. Commercial Permits
 - ii. Improvements to Southeast For-Hire Integrated Reporting (SEFHIER) Program
 - iii. Limited Access to the For-Hire Component of Recreational Fisheries
 - iv. Red Snapper Discard Research Projects
- 3. Florida Hogfish Fishery Performance Report (**Attachment 3**)
 - a. [Fishery Performance Report Application](#) (*will be updated ahead of the meeting*) – Mike Schmidtke
 - b. AP Discussion – Bob Lorenz
- 4. Vessel Limits for Headboats (**Attachment 4**)
 - a. Overview – Mike Schmidtke
 - b. AP Discussion – Bob Lorenz
- 5. Gag and Black Grouper Recreational Vessel Limits and Black Sea Bass On-Demand Pots (SG Regulatory Amendment 36) (**Attachment 5**)
 - a. Overview – Mike Schmidtke
 - b. AP Discussion – Bob Lorenz
- 6. Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation Update and Input (**Attachment 6**)
 - a. Overview – Blue Matter Science
 - b. AP Discussion – Bob Lorenz
- 7. Scamp/Yellowmouth Grouper (SG Amendment 55) (**Attachment 7**)
 - a. Overview – Allie Iberle
 - b. AP Discussion – Bob Lorenz
- 8. Recreational Seasons for Deep Water Snapper Grouper Species (**Attachment 8**)
 - a. Overview – Mike Schmidtke
 - b. AP Discussion – Bob Lorenz

Election of AP Chair and Vice Chair – Bob Lorenz

- 9. Black Sea Bass Stock Assessment Response (SG Amendment 56) (**Attachment 9**)
 - a. Fishery Overview – Mike Schmidtke
 - b. AP Discussion – AP Chair
- 10. Other Updates:
 - a. Best Fishing Practices Outreach – Ashley Oliver, David Hugo (**Attachment 10a and 10b**)
 - b. SEDAR – Chip Collier
 - c. Citizen Science – Julia Byrd (**Attachment 10c**)

11. Other Business

Public Comment

Adjourn

Staff Lead: Mike Schmidtke (mike.schmidtke@safmc.net)

Attachments:

Attachment 1a: Snapper Grouper Chair Presentation (*will be uploaded to Recent Documents by 3/19/2024*)

Attachment 1b: December 2023 and March 2024 Snapper Grouper Committee Final Reports

Attachment 2a: Update on recent regulation changes and status of amendments (*will be uploaded to Recent Documents by 3/19/2024*)

Attachment 2b: Florida FWC Red Snapper Discard Research Project Presentation

Attachment 3: Florida Hogfish Fishery Performance Report Questions (*will be updated by 3/19/2024*)

Attachment 4: Recreational Vessel Limits for Headboats Discussion Document

Attachment 5: Regulatory Amendment 36 (Gag and Black Grouper Recreational Vessel Limits and Black Sea Bass On-Demand Pots) Discussion Document

Attachment 6: Management Strategy Evaluation Presentation (*will be uploaded to Recent Documents by 3/19/2024*)

Attachment 7: Amendment 55 (Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper) Discussion Document

Attachment 8: Recreational Seasons for Deep Water Species Discussion Document

Attachment 9: Amendment 56 (Black Sea Bass Assessment Response) Discussion Document (*will be uploaded to Recent Documents by 3/19/2024*)

Attachment 10a: Best Fishing Practices Presentation

Attachment 10b: Best Fishing Practices Master Volunteer Program Overview

Attachment 10c: Citizen Science Program Update Presentation

OVERVIEW

Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel

The AP will approve minutes from the April 2023 meeting and the agenda for the October 2023 meeting.

1. Committee Chair Remarks (*Attachments 1a and 1b*)

The Snapper Grouper Committee Chair will present a summary of discussions from the December 2023 and March 2024 Council Meetings.

AP Action: None.

2. Updates (*Attachments 2a and 2b*)

Recent Amendments: Council staff will provide updates on developing and recently submitted amendments.

Council Discussions: Council staff will provide updates on ongoing Council discussions on topics that are not necessarily included in amendments. Florida FWC will present information on their red snapper discard research projects, which are being considered for exempted fishing permits.

AP Action: Discuss and provide input, as appropriate.

3. Florida Hogfish Fishery Performance Report (*Attachment 3*)

With input from the APs, [Fishery Performance Reports](#) (FPRs) have been developed for several South Atlantic species. The intent of the FPRs is to assemble information from AP members' experience and observations on the water and in the marketplace to complement scientific and landings data. The FPRs will be provided to the SSC, the Socio-Economic Panel (SEP), and the Council to assist in their discussions. A benchmark assessment (SEDAR 94) for the Florida hogfish stock is scheduled for completion in 2025.

Using an online application, Council staff will provide an overview of landings trends and other background information. Council staff will also present questions to prompt discussion, including information requests from the SEDAR 94 analytical team. The AP will develop the FPR using the provided questions.

AP Action: Provide information to develop the FPR.

4. Vessel Limits for Headboats (*Attachment 4*)

In March 2024, the Council requested that the Advisory Panel provide general recommendations on how recreational vessels should be applied to headboats. Council staff will review current recreational vessel limits, as well as those being considered in developing amendments.

AP Action: Provide input on how the Council should address recreational vessel limits with respect to headboats, including biological, social, and economic risks and benefits.

5. Gag and Black Grouper Recreational Vessel Limits and Black Sea Bass On-Demand Pots (SG Regulatory Amendment 36) (*Attachment 5*)

Regulatory Amendment 36 considers revising the gag and black grouper recreational vessel limits and revising commercial black sea bass pot requirements to accommodate the use of on-demand black sea bass pots. The Council initiated this amendment in September 2023. Scoping was conducted in February 2024. Council staff will summarize the development timeline and actions considered in this amendment thus far

AP Action: Review actions considered in the amendment, evaluate potential risks and benefits of alternatives, and recommend preferred alternatives for Council consideration.

6. Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation Input (*Attachment 6*)

The Council is conducting a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) to explore long-term management strategies for the South Atlantic snapper grouper fishery. Blue Matter Science will discuss progress thus far and request AP input to further develop the MSE.

AP Action: Review progress made thus far on the MSE and provide input as appropriate.

7. Amendment 55 Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper (*Attachment 7*)

The amendment proposes to establish a Scamp Yellowmouth Grouper Complex in response to SEDAR 68 and establish the following for the complex: stock determination criteria, rebuilding plan, acceptable biological catch, annual catch limits, sector allocations, and accountability measures. In addition, the amendment would reorganize and update the Other South Atlantic Shallow Water Grouper Complex. In March, the Council reviewed a decision document that included an updated set of actions and alternatives and an updated analysis and selected additional preferences. The amendment is scheduled for approval for public hearing in June.

AP Action: Review the amendment and provide feedback on the management measures for the Scamp and Yellowmouth Grouper Complex.

8. Recreational Seasons for Deep Water Snapper Grouper Species (*Attachment 8*)

In March 2024, the Council requested that the Advisory Panel provide recommendations on the timing of seasons for deep water snapper grouper species. Council staff will review the current seasons for deep water species.

AP Action: Provide input on the risks and benefits of current or different timing of the start dates for recreational seasons for deep water species.

9. Black Sea Bass Stock Assessment Response (SG Amendment 56) (*Attachment 9*)

SEDAR 76 included data through 2021 and indicated that the Black Sea Bass stock in the South Atlantic is overfished. The assessment estimated recruitment to be lower than average since 2011 and declining in each of those years. Despite declines in landings over the same period, spawning biomass has also declined, while fishing mortality has increased. Council staff will present the [Fishery Overview](#), which summarizes assessment results and provides preliminary information to consider in developing a management response. Council staff

will also present initial management issues being considered in the development of Amendment 56.

AP Action: Provide input on actions that should initially be considered in the Council's management response to SEDAR 76.

10. Other Updates

Best Fishing Practices (*Attachment 10a and 10b*): Council and Sea Grant staff will provide an update on the upcoming Best Fishing Practices Master Volunteer Program, completed 2024 outreach efforts, and upcoming events.

SEDAR: SEDAR staff will provide an update of recently finished, ongoing, and upcoming SEDAR projects and request volunteers to participate in upcoming stock assessments.

Citizen Science (*Attachment XX*): Council staff will provide information on Citizen Science Program activities. Updates will be given on the 2023-2025 Citizen Science research priorities, the Citizen Science Program's Project Idea Portal, and the SMILE project. Additionally, staff will provide an update on the SAFMC Release Project including 2023 Data Summary highlights and share information on the efforts underway to collect additional historic fishing photos for the FISHstory project and re-launch the project in Zooniverse.

AP Action:

Best Fishing Practices (*Attachment 10a and 10b*): Provide suggestions for improving outreach efforts, focus for 2024-2025 outreach efforts, and identify any upcoming events staff should consider attending.

SEDAR: Individual members can volunteer to participate in upcoming stock assessments.

Citizen Science (*Attachment 10c*): Provide suggestions for any additional opportunities that could be pursued to gather historic photos for FISHstory, ideas to recruit new volunteers when FISHstory re-launches in Zooniverse, and potential FISHstory Validation Team members.

11. Other Business