



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Trish Murphey, Chair | Jessica McCawley, Vice Chair
John Carmichael, Executive Director

AGENDA

Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel

Crowne Plaza Hotel Charleston

4831 Tanger Outlet Blvd

N. Charleston, SC 29418

April 2-3, 2025

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.

Wednesday, April 2, 2025, 9:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Welcome and Introductions

Approval of Agenda – James Paskiewicz

Approval of October 2024 AP minutes – James Paskiewicz

Public Comment

1. Committee Chair Remarks – Jessica McCawley (9:10 am – 9:30 am) (*Attachments 1a and 1b*)
2. Florida Red Snapper Exempted Fishing Permit Discard Research Projects Update – Jessica McCawley (9:30 am – 9:45 am) (*Attachment 2*)
3. Council Discussion Updates (9:45 am – 10:00 am) (*Attachment 3*)
 - a. Recent/Ongoing Amendments
 - i. Recently Initiated: Commercial Amendment
 - ii. Amendment 46 – Private Recreational Permit
 - iii. For-Hire Limited Access Amendment
 - iv. Amendment 59 – Red Snapper Secretarial Amendment
 - b. Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit Evaluation
4. Citizen Science Update – Julia Byrd (10:00 am – 10:30 am) (*Attachment 4*)

--- Break ---

5. Golden Tilefish Catch Levels (Abbreviated Framework 4) (10:45 am – 11:00 am) (*Attachment 5*)
 - a. Overview – Mike Schmidtke
 - b. AP Discussion
6. Gag Fishery Performance Report and Stock Risk Rating Update (11:00 am – 12:00 pm) (*Attachments 6a and 6b*)
 - a. [Fishery Performance Report Application](#) (*will be updated ahead of the meeting*) – Allie Iberle
 - b. AP Discussion

--- Lunch ---

7. Lines of Communication Run-Through (1:30 pm – 5:00 pm) (*Attachment 7*)
 - a. Overview – Christina Wiegand
 - b. AP Discussion

Thursday, April 3, 2025, 9:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

8. Acceptable Biological Catch Control Rule Stock Risk Rating Recommendation for Black Sea Bass (9:00 am – 9:30 am) (*Attachment 8*)
 - a. ABC Control Rule Risk Rating Overview – Mike Schmidtke
 - b. AP Discussion
9. Black Sea Bass Assessment Response (SG Amendment 56) (9:30 am – 10:30 am) (*Attachment 9*)
 - a. Overview – Mike Schmidtke
 - b. AP Discussion

--- Break ---

10. For-Hire Reporting Amendment (10:45 am – 12:00 pm) (*Attachment 10*)
 - a. Overview – John Hadley/Myra Brouwer
 - b. AP Discussion

--- Lunch ---

11. South Atlantic Spawning Special Management Zones Research (1:30 pm – 2:30 pm) (*Attachment 11*)

--- Break ---

12. Council’s 2023-2027 Research and Monitoring Plan (2:45 pm – 3:45 pm)
 - a. [2023-2027 Research and Monitoring Plan](#) Overview – Chip Collier
 - b. AP Discussion

13. SEDAR Update (3:45 pm – 4:00 pm) – Emily Ott

14. Other Business (4:00 pm – 5:00 pm)

Public Comment

Adjourn

AP Members:

James Paskiewicz, Chair
Chris Kimrey, Vice Chair
Vincent Bonura
Gettys Brannon III
Scott Buff
Chris Conklin
Tony Constant
Jack Cox, Jr.
Andrew Fish
Robert Freeman
Richard Gomez
Joe Mathews
Randy McKinley
Jeff Marinko

Thomas Meeks
Chris Militello
David Moss
Paul Nelson
John Polston
Stephen Ranney
Paul Rudershausen
K.P. Scott
Cameron Sebastian
Haley Stephens
Todd Kellison, Non-Voting Member

Attachments:

Attachment 1a: Snapper Grouper Chair Presentation (*will be uploaded to Recent Documents by 3/26/2025*)

Attachment 1b: December 2024 and March 2025 Snapper Grouper Committee Final Reports

Attachment 2: Florida FWC Red Snapper Discard Research Project Presentation

Attachment 3: Update on recent regulation changes and status of amendments

Attachment 4: Citizen Science Program Update Presentation

Attachment 5: Golden Tilefish Management Presentation (*will be uploaded to Recent Documents by 3/26/2025*)

Attachment 6a: Gag Fishery Performance Report Questions

Attachment 6b: ABC Control Rule Risk Rating Worksheet (*will be uploaded to Recent Documents by 3/26/2025*)

Attachment 7: *Lines of Communication* Presentation

Attachment 8: ABC Control Rule Risk Rating Worksheet (same as **Attachment 6b**; *will be uploaded to Recent Documents by 3/26/2025*)

Attachment 9: Amendment 56 (Black Sea Bass) Discussion Document

Attachment 10: For-Hire Reporting Improvement Amendment Discussion Document

Attachment 11: South Atlantic Spawning Special Management Zones Presentation (*will be uploaded to Recent Documents by 3/26/2025*)

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

OVERVIEW

Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel

The AP will approve minutes from the October 2024 meeting and the agenda for the April 2025 meeting.

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

The Snapper Grouper Committee Chair will present a summary of discussions from the December 2024 and March 2025 Council Meetings.

AP Action: None.

2. Florida Red Snapper Exempted Fishing Permit Discard Research Projects Update (*Attachment 2*)

Jessica McCawley (Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission) will present an update on the red snapper discard research projects being conducted off Florida using exempted fishing permits.

AP Action: None.

3. Council Discussion Updates (*Attachment 3*)

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

AP Action: Discuss and provide input, as appropriate.

4. Citizen Science Update (*Attachment 4*)

Council staff will provide information on Citizen Science Program activities. Updates will be given on the Program's initial evaluation, Citizen Science Project Idea Portal, FISHstory, and SAFMC Release, including 2024 Release data summary highlights.

AP Action: Discuss and provide input, as appropriate.

5. Golden Tilefish Catch Levels (Abbreviated Framework 4) (*Attachment 5*)

In December 2024, the Council initiated an amendment to respond to the results of the SEDAR 89 stock assessment of South Atlantic golden tilefish, which indicated that the stock is not overfished and not experiencing overfishing. In March 2025, the Council directed staff to develop an abbreviated framework to revise golden tilefish catch levels based on the SEDAR 89 assessment and the Scientific and Statistical Committee's (SSC) recommended acceptable biological catch levels. Council staff will present a summary of the abbreviated framework process and the catch levels being considered for implementation.

AP Action: Provide recommendations for the Council on golden tilefish management.

6. Gag Fishery Performance Report and Stock Risk Rating Update (*Attachments 6a and 6b*)

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 for the South Atlantic gag stock is scheduled for completion in 2026.

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 analytical team. Staff will develop the FPR from the AP's discussion.

Council staff will also provide preliminary risk scores and related information for gag. The AP will review this information and provide recommendations and rationale for any necessary updates to the risk scores.

AP Action: Provide information to update the FPR. Recommend stock risk scores and overall risk rating for gag to be used in application of the ABC Control Rule.

7. Lines of Communication Run-Through (*Attachment 7*)

Stakeholder input has always been a fundamental component of the council system. To better ensure stakeholders concerns are heard and addressed, Council staff has begun work to develop a plan for holding stakeholder engagement meetings along the South Atlantic coast, meeting fishermen in their communities. These meetings, now called *Lines of Communication: Conversations with the Council*, will provide an opportunity for Council members to have productive dialogues with fisheries participants. By engaging stakeholders in this more informal setting, Council members will be able to build or improve relationships and increase engagement in the management process. Building and maintaining relationships and momentum for participation in the management. A practice run of the Lines meetings will be held with the AP to get input from fisheries participants on the effectiveness of the meeting design.

AP Action: Discuss and provide input, as appropriate.

8. Acceptable Biological Catch Control Rule Stock Risk Rating Recommendations for Black Sea Bass (*Attachment 8*)

Under the Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) Control Rule, the Council incorporates an evaluation of how much risk of overfishing it should be willing to accept based on biological, fishery (human interaction), and environmental factors affecting each stock. Input on these factors will be provided ahead of each assessment by the appropriate advisory panel and Scientific and Statistical Committee, and the Council will consider this input in determining the appropriate risk level (conveyed as a Stock Risk Rating of High, Medium, or Low) to apply in the ABC Control Rule.

Council staff will provide preliminary risk scores and related information for black sea bass. The AP will review this information and provide recommendations and rationale for any necessary updates to the risk scores.

AP Action: Recommend stock risk scores and overall risk rating for black sea bass to be used in application of the ABC Control Rule.

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

Amendment 56 responds to the most recent stock assessment of black sea bass, included data through 2021 and indicated that the black sea bass stock in the South Atlantic is at very low levels in recent years. Information from the assessment and other recent data potentially useful in developing a management response are summarized in the [Fishery Overview](#). Council staff

will update the AP on recent amendment discussions, and the AP will provide recommendations on management changes being considered.

AP Action: Provide input on draft alternatives that should be considered in the Council’s management response to SEDAR 76.

10. For-Hire Reporting Amendment (*Attachment 10*)

The Council initiated work on an amendment to improve for-hire reporting in June 2024. The purpose of the amendment is to make modifications to the South Atlantic Southeast For-Hire Integrated Electronic Reporting Program and the Southeast Region Headboat Survey to improve the accuracy, precision, and timeliness of landings, discards, fishing effort, and economic data for South Atlantic permitted charter/headboat vessels participating in the snapper grouper, coastal migratory pelagics, and dolphin wahoo fisheries. Through this amendment, the Council wants to improve compliance, adjust reporting requirements, and allow for data validation so the information collected can be used in managing the three fisheries mentioned above. The Council obtained feedback from the newly formed For-Hire Reporting Advisory Panel in late January 2025 and from its Law Enforcement Advisory Panel in early February. Public scoping comments will be solicited this spring, as well as input from the Snapper Grouper, Mackerel Cobia, and Dolphin Wahoo Advisory Panels.

AP Action: Provide feedback on draft actions and alternatives to improve reporting of for-hire data.

11. South Atlantic Spawning Special Management Zones Research (*Attachment 11*)

The AP will receive a presentation on work related to the Spawning Special Management Zones established through Snapper Grouper Amendment 36.

AP Action: None.

12. Council’s 2023-2027 Research and Monitoring Plan

Council staff will present the [2023-2027 Research and Monitoring Plan](#) and request recommendations from the AP on any additional areas of research that should be included or prioritization of research and monitoring tasks.

AP Action: Discuss and provide input, as appropriate.

13. SEDAR Updates

SEDAR staff will provide an update of recently finished, ongoing, and upcoming SEDAR projects.

AP Action: None.

14. Other Business