



# SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201, North Charleston SC 29405

Call: (843) 571-4366 | Toll-Free: (866) SAFMC-10 | Fax: (843) 769-4520 | Connect: www.safmc.net

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

## AGENDA

### **Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel**

Drury Plaza Hotel North Charleston

2934 West Montague

North Charleston, SC 29418

October 27-29, 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.

### **Monday, October 27, 2025, 1:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.**

Welcome and Introductions

Approval of Agenda – Chris Kimrey

Approval of April 2025 AP minutes – Chris Kimrey

Public Comment

#### **1:10 pm – 1:30 pm**

1. Committee Chair Remarks and Council Discussion Update (*Attachments 1a and 1b*) – Jessica McCawley

#### **1:30 pm – 2:45 pm**

2. Updates on Developing Council Actions (*Attachment 2a*) – Mike Schmidtke
  - a. Golden Tilefish Stock Assessment
  - b. Recreational Aggregate Bag Limit
  - c. Headboat Vessel Limit
  - d. Amendment 60 (Commercial Permit and Trip Efficiency)
  - e. Amendment for Joint State-Federal Management of Red Snapper
  - f. Council Workplan Update (*Attachment 2b*)

#### **2:45 pm – 3:00 pm**

3. Update on Florida Exempted Fishing Permit Projects – Jessica McCawley

*NOTE: there is no attachment for this agenda item.*

--- Break ---

**3:15 pm – 5:00 pm**

4. Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation (*Attachment 4*) – Chip Collier

**Tuesday, October 28, 2025, 8:30 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.**

**8:30 am – 10:15 am**

5. Black Sea Bass (Regulatory Amendment 37) (*Attachments 5a and 5b*) – Mike Schmidtke

--- Break ---

**10:30 am – 12:00 pm**

6. Yellowtail Snapper and Mutton Snapper (Amendment 44) (*Attachment 6*) – Allie Iberle

--- Lunch ---

**1:30 pm – 3:00 pm**

7. Blueline Tilefish (*Attachment 7*) – Christina Wiegand
  - a. Annual Catch Levels (Abbreviated Framework 5)
  - b. Discussion Considering Change to Commercial Trip Limit

--- Break ---

**3:15 pm – 3:45 pm**

8. Citizen Science Update (*Attachment 8*) – Julia Byrd

**3:45 pm – 5:00 pm**

9. Discussion About Commercial Trip Limits on Sale of Fish (*Attachment 9*) – Mike Schmidtke

**Wednesday, October 29, 2025, 8:30 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.**

**8:30 am – 10:15 am**

10. Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit Revision (Amendment 61) (*Attachment 10*) – John Hadley

--- Break ---

**10:30 am – 12:00 pm**

11. Additional Updates (*Attachments 11a-11c*)
  - a. Best Fishing Practices – Ashley Oliver
  - b. SEDAR Update – Emily Ott
12. Election of Chair and Vice Chair – Chris Kimrey
13. Other Business

Public Comment

Adjourn

**Committee Members:**

Chris Kimrey, Vice Chair (Acting Chair)  
Vincent Bonura  
Jon Braun  
Gettys Brannon III  
Scott Buff  
Chris Conklin  
Tony Constant  
Jack Cox, Jr.  
Andrew Fish  
Robert Freeman  
Richard Gomez  
Joe Mathews  
Randy McKinley

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

**Attachments:**

- Attachment 1a:** Snapper Grouper Chair Presentation (*available by October 20*)
- Attachment 1b:** June 2025 and September 2025 Snapper Grouper Committee Final Reports
- Attachment 2a:** Update on recent regulation changes and status of amendments (*available by October 20*)
- Attachment 2b:** September 2025 Council Work Plan
- Attachment 4:** Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation Presentation
- Attachment 5a:** Regulatory Amendment 37 (Black Sea Bass) Background Presentation (*available by October 20*)
- Attachment 5b:** Regulatory Amendment 37 (Black Sea Bass) Discussion Document
- Attachment 6:** Amendment 44 (Yellowtail Snapper and Mutton Snapper) Presentation
- Attachment 7:** Blueline Tilefish Discussion Document
- Attachment 8:** Citizen Science Presentation
- Attachment 9:** Commercial Trip Limits Applied to Sale Overview Presentation (*available by October 20*)
- Attachment 10:** Amendment 61 (Fishery Management Unit Revision) Discussion Document
- Attachment 11a:** Best Fishing Practices Presentation
- Attachment 11b:** SEDAR Presentation
- Attachment 11c:** SEDAR Infographics

**Staff Lead:** Mike Schmidtke ([mike.schmidtke@safmc.net](mailto:mike.schmidtke@safmc.net))

# **OVERVIEW**

## **Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel**

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

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

The Snapper Grouper Committee Chair will present a summary of discussions from the June and September 2025 Council Meetings.

**AP Action:** None.

### **2. Updates on Developing Council Actions (*Attachments 2a and 2b*)**

Council staff will provide updates on developing and recently submitted amendments, as well as the overall Council work plan. Staff will provide specific updates on the following projects:

- Golden Tilefish Stock Assessment
- Recreational Aggregate Bag Limit
- Headboat Vessel Limit
- Amendment 60 (Commercial Permit and Trip Efficiency)
- Amendment for Joint State-Federal Management of Red Snapper

**AP Action:** Discuss and provide input, as appropriate.

### **3. Florida Red Snapper Exempted Fishing Permit Research Projects Update**

Jessica McCawley (Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission) will give a verbal update on progress and upcoming activities for the Florida Exempted Fishing Permit research projects.

**AP Action:** None.

### **4. Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation (*Attachment 4*)**

Council and Blue Matter Staff will provide an overview of the Snapper Grouper Management Strategy Evaluation, which is being designed to compare different management scenarios to reduce the number of discards in the recreational fishery. Staff will summarize the previous modeling framework developed by Blue Matter Science, including 132 management scenarios previously evaluated across species (Red Snapper, Gag, Black Sea Bass) and spatial zones. It highlights key results from trade-off analyses comparing spawning biomass, landings, and discard outcomes across management options such as status quo, full retention, and spatial closures. Staff will describe changes to the modeling framework, management objectives, incorporating stakeholder input, and species being considered for inclusion in a recreational aggregate bag limit analysis.

**AP Action:** Discuss species to consider for developing a recreational aggregate bag limit and provide comments on potential management strategies to consider for the analysis.

### **5. Black Sea Bass (Regulatory Amendment 37) (*Attachments 5a and 5b*)**

In June 2025, the Council initiated Regulatory Amendment 37 to enact measures that would more immediately reduce fishing mortality and increase spawning production for black sea bass while awaiting a more comprehensive review of the 2025 SEDAR 76 update stock assessment.

Council staff will present a summary of the process that led to development of this amendment and a discussion document that outlines the amendment actions.

**AP Action:** Recommend preferred alternatives and provide rationale for recommendations.

#### **6. Yellowtail Snapper and Mutton Snapper (SG Amendment 44) (*Attachment 6*)**

Joint Snapper Grouper Amendment 44/Reef Fish Amendment 55 is in response to SEDAR 79 for mutton snapper and SEDAR 96 for yellowtail snapper, where both assessments indicated that the stocks are not overfished or experiencing overfishing. This amendment will set the stock OFL and ABC, split the stock ABC between the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils, set each region's ACL, and update the South Atlantic sector allocations for both species. The Council is in the process of developing alternatives for updating sector allocations and plans to use their Allocation Decision Tool at their December 2025 Meeting.

**AP Action:** Discuss and provide input, as appropriate.

#### **7. Blueline Tilefish (Abbreviated Framework 5) (*Attachment 7*)**

In June 2025, the Council received results from the SEDAR 92 stock assessment for blueline tilefish, which incorporates recreational catch estimates derived using MRIP FES. The Council expressed concern with how the ABC for the portion of the stock that is north of Cape Hatteras, NC, was apportioned between the South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic jurisdictions and requested that staff communicate with the Mid-Atlantic Council to arrange a joint effort to address regional apportionments. At their August meeting, the Mid-Atlantic Council agreed to support the formation of such a joint Council subcommittee but recommended moving forward with the 2026 specifications noting that they were developed through a mutually agreed-upon process and supported by a joint SSC recommendation. In September 2025, the Council initiated Abbreviated Framework 5 for blueline tilefish to implement the SSC recommended catch levels. The Council felt the overall benefit to the fishery of quickly implementing the increased ABC is greater than the potential benefits of waiting for a more prolonged process that would include re-evaluating sector or jurisdictional allocation percentages.

**AP Action:** Discuss and provide input, as appropriate, including an increase to the commercial trip limit.

#### **8. Citizen Science Update (*Attachment 8*)**

Council staff will provide updates on the SMILE, FISHstory, and SAFMC Release projects. These updates will include progress on SMILE as the pilot wraps up and the project works to expand; progress on FISHstory photo classification and validation and Red Snapper length compositions produced through the project; and recent SAFMC Release activities including outcomes from the Sea Grant South Atlantic Release Rodeo and potential updates to the Participant Recognition Program (PRP). The AP will be asked to provide input on new SAFMC Release PRP milestones aimed at recognizing participants, supporting recruitment, and encouraging submissions throughout the year. The following questions may be helpful to think about when providing feedback on the PRP.

- What new milestones do you think would help the PRP meet its goals?
- What kind of milestones would you find exciting? What milestones would bring you back to the project throughout the year?
- How can we engage both frequent and occasional submitters?
- Should we try to implement more submission challenges like the Sea Grant South Atlantic Release Rodeo?

**AP Action:** Discuss and provide input on the SAFMC Release Participant Recognition Program and other projects, as appropriate.

### **9. Discussion About Commercial Trip Limits on Sale of Fish (*Attachment 9*)**

During scoping for Amendment 60 (Commercial Permits and Trip Efficiency), the Council was informed by stakeholders of difficulties selling fish that were commercially caught on days that the local fish house was not open, due to daily commercial trip limits. This led to further Council discussions on the intent and enforcement of trip limits and potential changes that should be considered. Council staff will provide information and questions to facilitate a discussion about AP members' experience with this issue and potential changes that should be considered.

**AP Action:** Discuss and provide input, as appropriate.

### **10. Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit Revision (Amendment 61) (*Attachment 10*)**

The Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit (FMU) currently consists of 55 species, many of which are unassessed or have very low landings. The Council is considering changes to the species composition of the Snapper Grouper FMU through Amendment 61 to streamline ongoing management of the FMU. In doing so, the Council has selected 17 species to further evaluate if there is a continued need for federal conservation and management. These species are misty grouper, margate, sailor's choice, tomtate, white grunt, bar jack, jolthead porgy, knobbed porgy, saucereye porgy, scup, whitebone porgy, banded rudderfish, blackfin snapper, cubera snapper, queen snapper, Atlantic spadefish, and sand tilefish. The Council has indicated that these species may be considered for removal from federal management, which may include removal from the FMU altogether or designating species as ecosystem components. The Council approved this amendment for scoping at their September 2025 meeting.

**AP Action:** Discuss and provide input, as appropriate. The AP will be asked for feedback on potential measures that the Council is considering and insight on fisheries for the species being considered for removal from federal management.

### **11. Additional Updates**

#### **a. Best Fishing Practices (*Attachment 11a*)**

Council staff will provide an overview of the Best Fishing Practices Campaign. A more detailed presentation on the campaign's progress and impact can be found here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKmGzk\\_rFOI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKmGzk_rFOI)

**AP Action:** None.

#### **b. SEDAR (*Attachment 11b and 11c*)**

SEDAR staff will provide an update on SEDAR process change along with an update on recently finished, ongoing, and upcoming SEDAR projects and request volunteers to participate in upcoming SEDAR 106 South Atlantic Gag Grouper Stock Assessment and technical team.

**AP Action:** Individual members can volunteer to participate in SEDAR 106 Stock Assessment and technical team.

### **12. Elect Chair and Vice Chair**

### **13. Other Business**