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THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

Snapper Grouper Amendment 61 Evaluation of the Fishery Management Unit



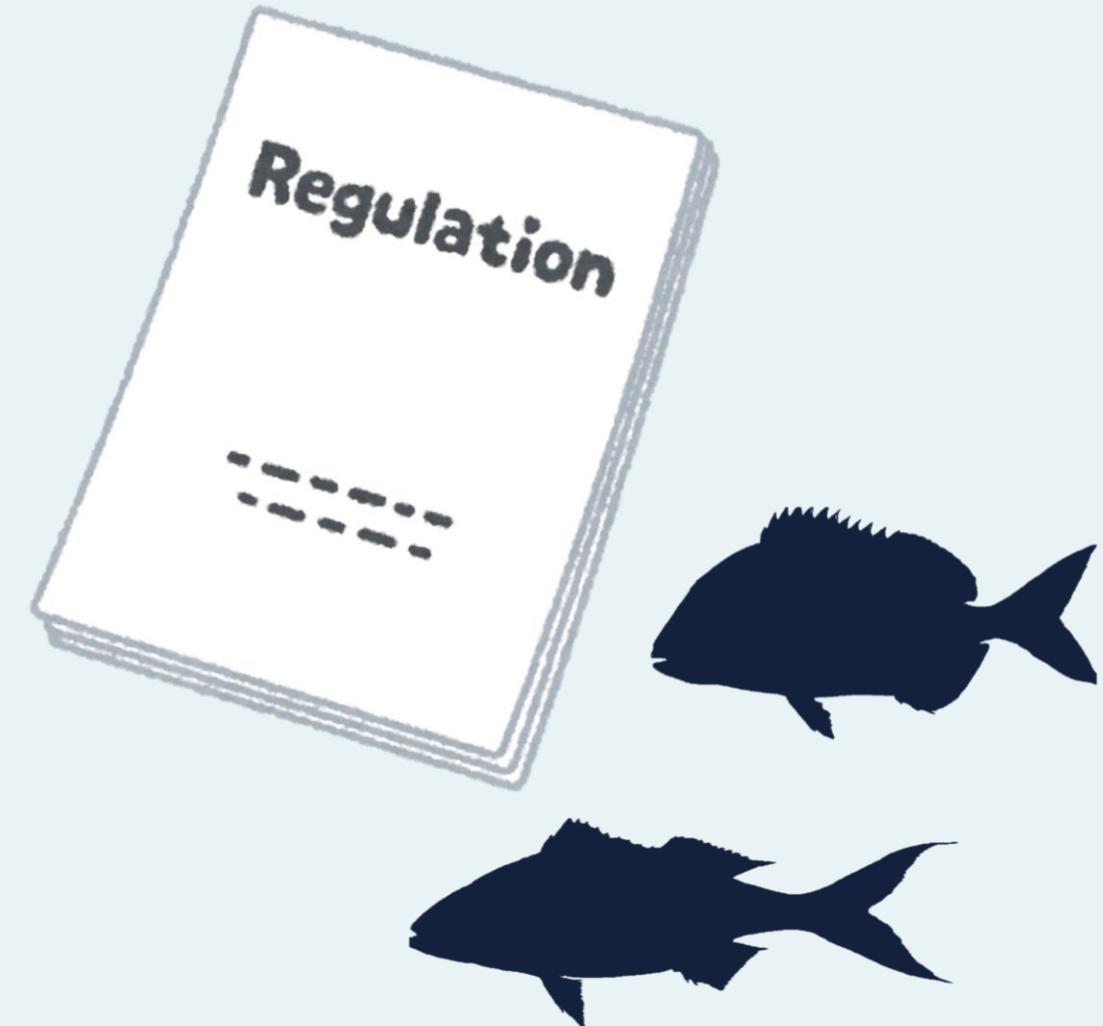
OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES FOR THIS MEETING

- Review provided information.
 - What is the Council considering?
 - What happens when species are removed from federal management?
 - What are ecosystem component (EC) species?
- Provide feedback and recommendations for the Council to consider when evaluating whether to remove 17 species from federal management (either removal from the fishery management unit (FMU) or designate as EC species).



WHAT IS THE COUNCIL CONSIDERING?

- The Council has begun to evaluate the need for **federal management** for **17 Snapper Grouper species**.
- Several Council members have noted that they do not want most of this group of species to be **completely unregulated**.



WHAT SPECIES ARE BEING EVALUATED?

The **17 Snapper Grouper species** being evaluated are:



Atlantic Spadefish



Bar Jack



Misty Grouper



Queen Snapper



Sand Tilefish



Blackfin Snapper



Banded Rudderfish



Cubera Snapper



White Grunt



Tomtate



Sailor's Choice



Margate



Jolthead Porgy



Saucereye Porgy



Knobbed Porgy



Scup



Whitebone Porgy

SPECIES COMPLEXES

- Some of the species being considered make up all or part of **management complexes** that catch levels are tied to.
- **2 species** are not included in a species complex, and have individual catch levels:



**Atlantic
Spadefish**

ACL: 812,478 lbs ww



Bar Jack

ACL: 62,249 lbs ww

SPECIES COMPLEXES

DEEPWATER COMPLEX

Misty Grouper



Queen Snapper



Sand Tilefish



Blackfin Snapper



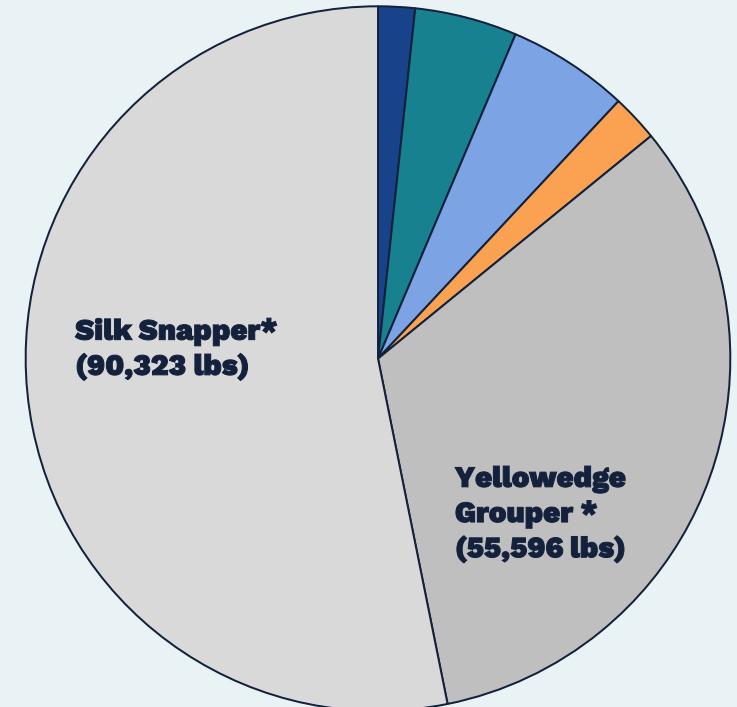
Species in the Deepwater Complex **NOT** being considered for removal:

Yellowedge Grouper

Silk Snapper

Complex ACL: 169,896 lbs

*species not considered for removal in AM 61



Misty Grouper
(2,863 lbs)

Sand Tilefish
(7,983 lbs)

Queen Snapper
(9,466 lbs)

Blackfin Snapper
(3,665 lbs)

SPECIES COMPLEXES

JACKS COMPLEX



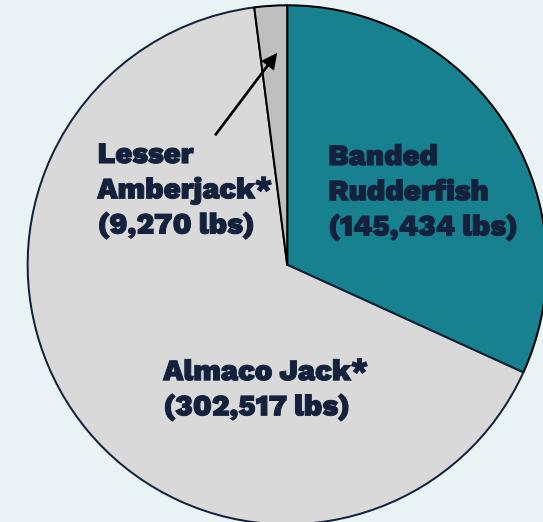
Banded Rudderfish

Species in the Jacks Complex **NOT being considered for removal:**

Almaco Jack
Lesser Amberjack

Complex ACL: 457,221 lbs

***species not considered for removal in AM 61**



SNAPPERS COMPLEX



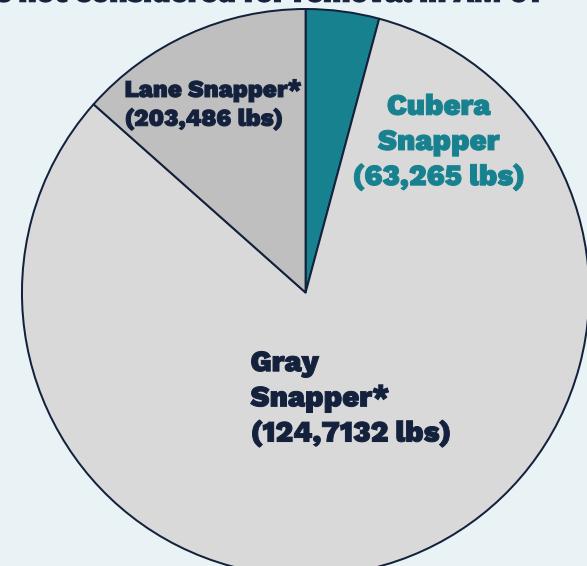
Cubera Snapper

Species in the Snappers Complex **NOT being considered for removal:**

Gray Snapper
Lane Snapper

Complex ACL: 1,513,883 lbs

***species not considered for removal in AM 61**



SPECIES COMPLEXES

GRUNTS COMPLEX

White Grunt



Sailor's Choice



Margate



Tomtate

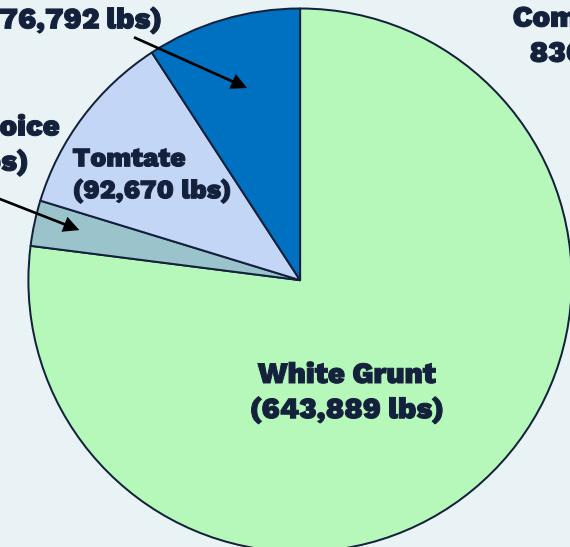


Margate (76,792 lbs)

Sailors Choice
(22,674 lbs)

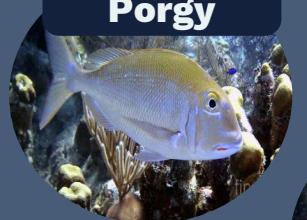
Tomtate
(92,670 lbs)

Complex ACL:
836,025 lbs



PORGIES COMPLEX

Jolthead
Porgy



Saucereye
Porgy



Knobbed
Porgy



Scup



Whitebone
Porgy



Complex ACL:
143,262 lbs

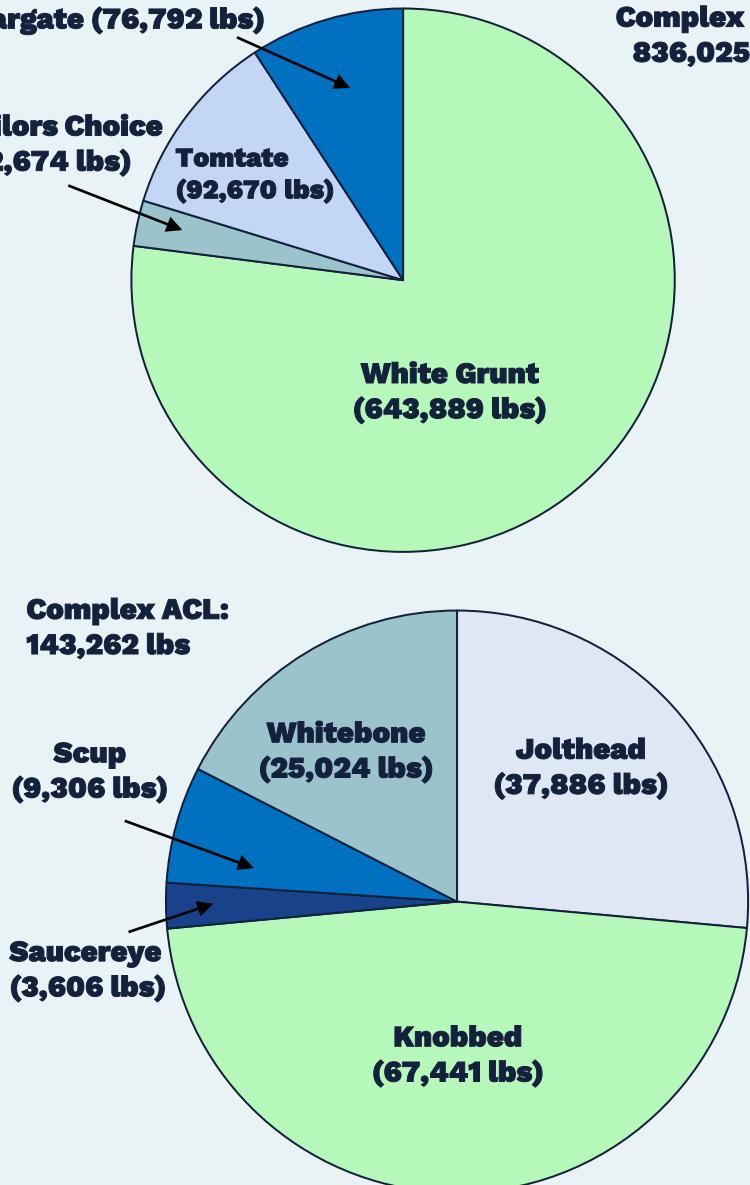
Scup
(9,306 lbs)

Saucereye
(3,606 lbs)

Whitebone
(25,024 lbs)

Jolthead
(37,886 lbs)

Knobbed
(67,441 lbs)



WHAT HAPPENS TO THESE 17 SPECIES?

- If federal management is no longer needed for any of the 17 species being evaluated, the Council is considering either:



Removing some or all the species from the **Fishery Management Unit (FMU)**

OR



Designating them as **Ecosystem Component Species (EC Species)**



SPECIES REMOVAL



- **The Council can consider removing species if they are not in need of federal conservation and management, which depends on whether:**
 - The stock is an important component of the **marine environment**.
 - The stock is **caught** by the fishery.
 - A Fishery Management Plan (FMP) can **improve or maintain the condition of the stock**.
 - The stock is a **target** of a fishery.
 - The stock is important to **commercial, recreational**, or subsistence users.
 - The fishery is important to the Nation or to the regional **economy**.
 - There is a need to **resolve conflict** across user groups.
 - The economic condition of a fishery and whether a FMP can increase **efficiency**.
 - The needs of a **developing fishery**, and whether a FMP can foster growth.
 - The extent to which the fishery is already **adequately managed** by states or other programs, consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act.
- **If these species are removed from the FMU:**
 - All existing federal regulations (possession limits, permit requirements, reporting requirements, ACLs, etc.) would **no longer apply**.
 - **States** would be able to implement regulations for the species that could be extended into federal waters (3-200 miles offshore) if they chose to do so.

ECOSYSTEM COMPONENT SPECIES

- **What are ecosystem component species?**

EC species are stocks that a Council has determined do not require conservation and management, but desire to list in an FMP to achieve ecosystem management objectives.

- **If these species are designated as EC species:**

- Most federal regulations and management measures such as ACLs, restrictive trip or bag limits, and size limits would be removed in federal waters.
- Some non-restrictive measures could remain in place such as **permitting** and **reporting requirements** and there could potentially be **aggregate possession limits** put in place that are relatively non-restrictive.



PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTIONS

Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment (Amendment 25)

- Removed 13 species from the FMP.
 - Selected criteria included species with 95% or greater landings from state waters,
 - Species covered under the Florida Marine Life Species Rule, or
 - Species with no landings.
- Designated six species as ecosystem components.
 - Considered removing these species from the FMP but changed course after receiving public comments in support of designating some species as ECs.
 - No regulations associated with the EC species listing.
 - Listing did prioritize the species for continued data collection and may help with future ecosystem related efforts.

Amendment 27

- Removed blue runner from the Snapper Grouper FMP.
 - Noted that the majority of landings of blue runner (99%) were in waters off of Florida and adequate management was already in place in Florida state waters.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTIONS

Amendment 35

- Removed black snapper, dog snapper, mahogany snapper, and schoolmaster (an EC species) from the FMP.
 - Harvest of the four species was very low from federal waters and in state waters other than Florida.
 - Also noted that species could be or already were adequately managed by the state of Florida.

POTENTIAL COUNCIL ACTION



1) No Action.

- Species remain in the Snapper Grouper FMU. Species will continue to have ACLs, monitoring of ACLs, and other management measures.

2) Remove Species from the FMU.

- Species are removed from the FMU, and federal management measures would no longer apply.
- States would be able to implement management measures that extend in federal waters if they chose to do so.

POTENTIAL COUNCIL ACTION



3) Designate species as Ecosystem Component species.

- This may elevate the importance of these species for data collection and research and monitoring. Other potential measures for ecosystem component species include:
 - 3a)** Do not implement or retain management measures,
 - 3b)** Retain a reporting requirement for these species,
 - 3c)** Retain a permit requirement for landing these species (would likely need to develop an option for a commercial permit that is **not** limited entry), and
 - 3d)** Implement an aggregate trip limit (would need to specify limits per sector and would need to be high/non-restrictive)

4) Other measures?

WHAT INFORMATION DOES THE COUNCIL NEED?

1) Are the species being considered that are of **importance to** your **fishing business** or **region**? Are there species that you think should **remain** under federal management?

2) Are there species being considered that you think should be **removed** from federal management? If so, should these species be **removed from the FMU** altogether or should they be **designated as ecosystem components**?

3) If species are **removed from federal management** but remain as **ecosystem component species** in the Snapper Grouper FMP, what are the AP's thoughts on maintaining or implementing the following:

- **A permit requirement?**
- **A reporting requirement?**
- **A relatively non-restrictive** (i.e., high poundage or high number) **aggregate trip limit?**

Species Considered in Amendment 61

Atlantic Spadefish	Knobbed Porgy
Bar Jack	Saucereye Porgy
Misty Grouper	Scup
Sand Tilefish	Whitebone Porgy
Queen Snapper	White Grunt
Blackfin Snapper	Sailor's Choice
Banded Rudderfish	Tomtate
Cubera Snapper	Margate
Jolthead Porgy	

Next Steps

- The Council has requested to receive an **annual report** of the commercial landings of **unmanaged and current ecosystem component species** in the South Atlantic region.
- **At the December 2025 Council meeting**, the Council will consider comments from the **AP and scoping hearings** to help determine how best to move forward with AM 61.

Timing	Council Action
September 2025	Reviewed decision document and approved for scoping.
Fall 2025	AP input and scoping (online).
December 2025	Review AP input and scoping comments and provide guidance on draft actions and alternatives.
March 2026	Review analyses and draft actions and alternatives.
June 2026	Review draft amendment, select initial preferred alternatives, and approve for public hearings.
Summer 2026	Public hearings.
September 2026	Review public comment and approve all actions.
December 2026	Approve for Secretarial review.
Mid 2026 to Late 2026	Regulation changes effective.