

# Overview

## Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel

Crowne Plaza  
4381 Tanger Outlet Boulevard  
North Charleston, SC

November 3-4, 2015

### **A. Status of Amendments under Development and Recently Implemented (*Attachment 1*)**

Myra Brouwer will present an overview of recent amendments to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan. The overview includes amendments that are still under development and those that have been recently implemented.

### **B. Update on Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Meeting**

The South Atlantic SSC met in Charleston on October 20-22, 2015. The SSC discussed several topics of interest to the AP including specification of recreational ACLs in numbers of fish instead of pounds, the Council's Citizen Science Project, recreational catch estimates for species that are infrequently encountered in the MRIP survey, and possible revisions to the ABC Control Rule. In addition, as requested by the Council, the SSC will re-evaluate their ABC recommendation for the GA-NC stock of hogfish. Mike Errigo will give the AP an update of SSC discussions and answer questions.

### **C. Amendment 37 (hogfish; *Attachment 2*)**

Actions in Amendment 37 include modifying the Fishery Management Unit for hogfish to specify two stocks in the Council's area of jurisdiction; revising biological benchmarks (Maximum Sustainable Yield, Minimum Stock Size Threshold, Overfishing Level), Acceptable Biological Catch, Annual Catch Limits, Accountability Measures, and recreational Annual Catch Target, as appropriate, for the two stocks; establish a rebuilding plan for the Florida Keys/East Florida stock, and commercial and recreational management measures for each stock. The amendment was approved for scoping in June 2015. Scoping was held via webinar in August 2015. In September 2015, the Council reviewed scoping comments and reviewed actions/alternatives in the document. The Council requested revised projections from FWRI in September due to high recreational landings (recreational sector closed on August 24, 2015). Projections apply to the Florida Keys/East Florida stock as the GA-NC stock's ABC is being set using the ORCS approach. The Council will review the revised projections and provide guidance to staff at the December 2015 meeting. At their September 2015 meeting, the Council requested that the SSC reconsider their ABC recommendation for the GA-NC stock and that a letter be sent to MRIP requesting an evaluation of hogfish landings in 2015.

Myra Brouwer will present an overview of the amendment. The AP should discuss and provide recommendations on proposed actions and alternatives.

**D. Update on October 2015 Council Visioning Workshop (Attachment 3)**

A workshop for Council members was held in Charleston on October 14-15 to continue development of the Vision Blueprint for the Snapper Grouper Fishery. Council staff assisted in facilitating discussions. Council members reviewed results of a survey of Council members aimed at establishing the Council's priority objectives under each of the main goals. Council members also edited the draft Blueprint by moving certain actions into an Appendix for possible consideration at a later time (beyond 2020) and adding new actions based on input received from stakeholders in 2015. In addition, Council members discussed approaches for applying the Blueprint to amendments currently under development, future amendments to the Snapper Grouper FMP, a plan for periodic review of the Blueprint, and the appropriate format for the Vision Blueprint document. Amber will update the AP on the outcomes of the workshop and request AP input on priority action items and amendment ideas based on prioritized actions in the Blueprint.

**E. Regulatory Amendment 25 (blueline tilefish, black sea bass, and yellowtail snapper; Attachment 4)**

At their September 2015 meeting, the Council approved development of Regulatory Amendment 25 to address revisions to blueline tilefish fishing levels and management measures in response to a new ABC recommendation. The amendment would specify the blueline tilefish ABC in the South Atlantic based on various percentages of the coast wide ABC and revise ACLs and OY accordingly. Alternatives are designed to account for landings in the area north of the Council's jurisdiction. In addition, the amendment includes actions to revise existing commercial and recreational management measures for blueline tilefish. Actions to modify the fishing year and commercial accountability measures for yellowtail snapper are also included, as well as an action that would increase the bag limit for black sea bass. Public hearings are being held via webinar in November 2015 and the Council intends to approve the amendment for secretarial review at their December 2015 meeting. Myra will present an overview of the actions and alternatives in the amendment and any analyses completed to date. The AP should discuss and provide recommendations.

**F. Amendment 36 (Spawning SMZs; Attachment 5)**

Amendment 36 proposes using Spawning SMZs to provide additional protection to species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit, including speckled hind and warsaw grouper. The Council reviewed public input and approved the amendment for more public hearings at the June 2015 meeting. A second round of hearings was held August 10-25, 2015. The Council reviewed public comments at their September 2015 meeting and approved all actions with preferred alternatives with the exception of the Sunset Provision. The Council will review the AP comments, choose the remaining preferred alternative(s), and approve all actions in December 2015. The Council is scheduled to approve the amendment for formal review in March 2016. Gregg Waugh will provide an overview of the actions and alternatives in the amendment; Chip Collier will provide an overview of the System Management Plan for Spawning SMZs (Appendix N). The AP should discuss and provide recommendations.

**G. System Management Plan for Deepwater MPAs (Attachment 6)**

The Council is developing a System Management Plan (SMP) to specify the outreach, law enforcement, and monitoring/research projects necessary to effectively monitor and evaluate the existing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Eventually, the SMP will be expanded to encompass all the Council's managed areas, with sections for MPAs, Spawning Special Management Zones (SMZs), SMZs, and Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs). The Council reviewed a draft at the June and September meetings and directed staff to continue work with the goal of having a document ready for the December 2015 meeting. Chip Collier will present an overview of the draft plan. The AP should discuss and provide recommendations.

**H. Update on Joint South Atlantic/Gulf of Mexico Amendment on South Florida Issues (Attachment 7)**

Many items have been moved from the Joint South Florida Amendment to individual Gulf and South Atlantic Council amendments. Gregg Waugh will review the remaining items in the Joint Amendment and discuss the potential timing for any likely action on those remaining items.

**I. Update on ACCSP proposal for electronic reporting for charter fleet**

The Council submitted a proposal to the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP). The proposal has been reviewed by the Operations Committee and the Advisory Committee and received very high marks. The Coordinating Council will make the final funding decision at their November 2, 2015 meeting in St. Augustine, Florida. Mike Errigo will give an update on the proposal.

**J. Charterboat Electronic Reporting Amendment (Attachment 8)**

At the September 2015 meeting, the South Atlantic Council voted to develop a separate amendment for the South Atlantic Council's area. The Gulf Council approved a similar motion at their October 2015 meeting. This separation was approved so the Gulf Council could move forward with trip level reporting and the South Atlantic Council could match the current weekly reporting as required for headboats. In addition, the Gulf Council is considering requiring VMS whereas the South Atlantic Council is not considering VMS. The South Atlantic Council's intent is to approve the amendment for public hearings at the December 2015 meeting, hold public hearings in January/February 2016, review hearing comments and choose any remaining preferences in March 2016, and approve for formal review at the June 2016 meeting. Gregg Waugh will review the amendment and the AP should provide their input for the Council to consider at the December 2015 meeting.

**K. Fishing portfolios of black sea bass pot endorsement holders (Attachment 8)**

Kari MacLauchlin will provide a presentation of information from black sea bass pot endorsement holders on their fishing portfolios, alternatives to the winter pot fishery, and other input obtained during the public comment period and meetings with black sea bass pot fishermen. This presentation was delivered to the Council at the September meeting.

**L. Other Business**

The Committee will address other items as appropriate.