



# SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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George Geiger, Chairman  
Duane Harris, Vice Chairman

Robert K. Mahood, Executive Director  
Gregg T. Waugh, Deputy Executive Director

## AGENDA

### Snapper Grouper Committee Meeting

Jekyll Island Club Hotel  
371 Riverview Drive  
Jekyll Island, GA

**Tuesday, March 4, 2008 — 2:30 P.M. to 6:30 P.M.**

**Wednesday, March 5, 2008 — 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 NOON**

1. Approval of Agenda – Mac Currin
2. Approval of December 2007 Meeting Minutes – Mac Currin
3. Amendment 15B (**Attachments 1, 2a-2f, 3 & 4**)
  - A. Overview – Rick DeVactor
  - B. Review Input from Public Hearings – Rick DeVactor
  - C. Committee Action: Review Public Hearing Input and Approve for Secretarial Review – Mac Currin
4. Amendment 16 (Gag and Vermilion) (**Attachments 5 & 6**)
  - A. Overview of Amendment 16 – Gregg Waugh
  - B. Feedback on Post Quota Bycatch Mortality from AP – Jack McGovern
  - C. Committee Action: Provide Guidance and Approve for Public Hearings – Mac Currin
5. Amendment 17 (**Attachments 7a-7c**)
  - A. Overview – Rick DeVactor
  - B. Review Public Input from Scoping – Rick DeVactor
  - C. Committee Action: Review Public Scoping Input and Provide Guidance – Mac Currin
6. Pre-Closure Survey of Proposed MPAs in Amendment 14 (**Attachment 8**) – Dr. Andy David and Stacey Harter, NOAA Fisheries, Panama City Laboratory

7. Gray's Reef Research Area Update (**Attachment 9**) – Becky Shortland, Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary
8. Other Business – Mac Currin
9. Adjourn – Mac Currin

- Attachment 1. Amendment 15B**
- Attachment 2a. Amendment 15B Public Hearing Minutes**
- Attachment 2b. Amendment 15B Comments from the Public**
- Attachment 2c. Amendment 15B Additional Analysis – Economic/Social Effects of Action to Modify Sales Provision**
- Attachment 2d. SEDAR 15 Summary Report – South Atlantic Greater Amberjack**
- Attachment 2e. SEDAR 15 Summary Report – South Atlantic Red Snapper**
- Attachment 2f. SEDAR 15A Summary Report – Mutton Snapper**
- Attachment 3. Summary of Public Comments on Amendment 15B**
- Attachment 4. Amendment 15B Proposed Rule**
- Attachment 5a. Amendment 16 (second briefing book; mailed 2/25/08)**
- Attachment 5b. Amendment 16 Scoping Minutes**
- Attachment 5c. Amendment 16 Scoping Comments**
- Attachment 6. Amendment 16 PQBM Information Distributed to AP Members**
- Attachment 7a. Amendment 17 Options Paper**
- Attachment 7b. Amendment 17 Scoping Minutes (second briefing book; mailed 2/25/08)**
- Attachment 7c. Amendment 17 Scoping Comments (second briefing book; mailed 2/25/08)**
- Attachment 8. Pre-Closure Survey of Proposed MPAs in Amendment 14 Report (second briefing book; mailed 2/25/08)**
- Attachment 9. Gray's Reef Research Area Report (second briefing book; mailed 2/25/08)**
- Attachment 10. Presentations**
- Attachment 11. Comment Letters Concerning Snapper Grouper Issues**

DATE:	<u>8/20/2007</u>
FISHERY:	<u>Snapper Grouper</u>
SUBJECT:	<u>Briefing Materials</u>
STAFF:	<u>DeVictor</u>
SOURCE:	<u>SAFMC</u>

**Snapper Grouper Committee Members:**

- |                    |                          |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Mac Currin (Chair) | Brian Chevront           |
| David Cupka        | Roy Crabtree             |
| George Geiger      | Rita Merritt             |
| Red Munden         | Mark Robson (Vice Chair) |
| Susan Shipman      | Tom Swatzel              |

# OVERVIEW

## Snapper Grouper Committee Meeting

March 4 & 5, 2008  
Jekyll Island Club Hotel  
371 Riverview Drive  
Jekyll Island, GA

The Snapper Grouper Committee needs to: (A) for Amendment 15B, review public hearing comments and approve for submission to the Secretary of Commerce; (B) for Amendment 16, receive a report on the AP's comments on Post Quota Bycatch Mortality (PQBM), provide guidance on Amendment 16 where necessary, and approve for public hearings; (C) for Amendment 17, provide guidance in terms of items to be included in the amendment and range of alternatives; (D) receive a report on a pre-closure survey of proposed MPAs in Amendment 14; and (E) receive a report on the Gray's Reef Research Area.

### **A. Amendment 15B (Attachments 1, 2a-2f, 3 & 4)**

Amendment 15B (**Attachment 1 and 2c**) will update select management reference points for the golden tilefish (*Lopholatilus chamaeleonticeps*) stock; define interim allocations for snowy grouper (*Epinephelus niveatus*) and red porgy (*Pagrus pagrus*); modify sales restrictions; establish a method to monitor and assess bycatch in the snapper grouper fishery; implement measures to minimize the impact of incidental take on sea turtles and smalltooth sawfish; and modify permit renewal and transferability requirements.

The Notice of Availability for the DEIS was published in the Federal Register November 9<sup>th</sup>. Public hearings were held in November and December 2007. Comments are contained in **Attachments 2a & 2b** and summarized by staff in **Attachment 3**. The Council should review the responses drafted by staff contained in the Amendment document on page IV and provide any necessary revisions. The schedule is to approve for submission to the Secretary of Commerce at this meeting.

The draft proposed rule is included as **Attachment 4**. The committee should review, modify as necessary, and approve. Additional economic and social effects analyses of the action to modify sales provision was completed after the briefing book deadline and is included as **Attachment 2c**. The summary reports for South Atlantic greater amberjack, red snapper, and mutton snapper are contained in **Attachments 2d, 2e, and 2f**, respectively.

**REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION:** Review public hearing input, provide any recommendations to the response to comments as drafted by staff, and approve Amendment 15B and the proposed rule for Secretarial review.

**B. Amendment 16 (Attachments 5a-5c and 6)**

Amendment 16 is included as **Attachment 5a** and scoping input as **Attachment 5b & 5c**. The Council is already one month behind the one year schedule outlined in the letter from NMFS in June 2007. Therefore, we need to have this amendment approved for public hearings at this meeting and the committee/Council should specify as many preferred alternatives as possible. The current schedule is for the Council to approve for public hearings at this meeting. Jack McGovern will report on any feedback from the Snapper Grouper AP on the PQBM report that was mailed to them (**Attachment 6**). The amendment schedule is as follows:

March 2008 - Committee/Council review and approve for public hearings

May 2008 – Public hearings held

June 2008 – SSC review; Committee/Council review public input and approve final alternatives

September 2008 – Committee/Council approve final document for formal review

**Note:** The 1-year timeline ends June 2008.

**REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION:** Review AP comments on PQBM analysis, provide guidance where necessary, and approve for public hearing.

**C. Amendment 17 (Attachments 7a-7c)**

Amendment 17 will: (1) Reduce fishing mortality and establish rebuilding plans as appropriate, in addition to establishing MSY and OY, for red snapper, greater amberjack, and mutton snapper; (2) specify ACLs and accountability measures for species undergoing overfishing and for three recently assessed species; (3) remove some species from the fishery management unit, particularly those that have a low occurrence in federal waters; and (4) extend the range of the snapper grouper fishery management plan north through the Mid-Atlantic Council's area of authority. Black sea bass, scup, and golden tilefish will continue with the current boundaries. Further details are outlined in the options paper (**Attachment 7a**). Staff will summarize the comments received from scoping (**Attachments 7b & 7c**).

The schedule for the amendment is as follows:

- Scoping through February 22, 2008.
- Council reviews scoping comments and Options Paper & provides direction to Staff/Team – March 3-7, 2008 meeting in Jekyll Island, GA.
- Scientific & Statistical Committee reviews Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement – June 8-10, 2008 meeting in Orlando, FL.
- Council reviews Options Paper & provides direction to Staff/Team – June 9-13, 2008 meeting in Orlando, FL.
- Council approves Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement for public hearings – September 15-19, 2008 meeting in Orlando, FL.
- Public hearings – October 2008.
- Review informal & public hearing comments and DEIS comments and approve all actions – December 1-5, 2008 meeting in Wilmington, NC.
- Review complete document and approve for formal review by the Secretary of Commerce – March 2-6, 2009 meeting in Savannah, GA.

**REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION:** Review public scoping input and provide guidance in terms of actions and alternatives to be included in the amendment.

**D. Pre-Closure Survey of Proposed MPAs in Amendment 14 (Attachment 8)**

Dr. Andy David and Stacey Harter of NOAA Fisheries (Panama City Laboratory) will present the results of a pre-closure survey of proposed MPAs in Amendment 14 (**Attachment 8**).

**REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION:** Discuss the study and take action as necessary.

**E. Gray's Reef Research Area Update (Attachment 9)**

Becky Shortland of Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary will present an update of a proposed research area within Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary (**Attachment 9**).

**REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION:** Discuss the update and take action as necessary.