



SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Gregg Waugh, Deputy Executive

July 16, 2008

Dr. Roy E. Crabtree
Regional Administrator
NOAA/NMFS Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

Dear Dr. Crabtree:

Pursuant to Section 305(c)(1) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act as reauthorized, the Council is considering a prohibition on harvest and possession of red snapper to be implemented through interim measures. The Council approved the following motion at their June 2008 meeting in Orlando, Florida after reviewing the recent SSC reviewed/approved SEDAR stock assessment, extensive public input received during the scoping process and input from the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel:

“The Council directed staff to develop a letter to the Regional Administrator requesting the regional office develop an interim rule closing harvest of red snapper and implementing the reductions in fishing mortality as specified in the preferred alternatives in Amendment 16 for gag grouper, vermilion snapper, black grouper, and red grouper.” The Council’s intent is that the Interim Rule would be brought before the Council for consideration at the September 2008 meeting.

The Council received notification, in a letter dated July 8, 2008, that the South Atlantic red snapper stock is undergoing overfishing and is overfished and that the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires the Council to prepare a plan amendment or proposed regulations to end overfishing within one year. The proposed interim rule would end overfishing upon implementation. Permanent measures to end overfishing and establish a rebuilding program are being developed in Amendment 17. The Council’s current schedule is to approve Amendment 17 for public hearings at the December 2008 meeting and to review public input and DEIS comments during the March 2009 meeting. If possible, the Council intends to approve for formal review at the March 2009 meeting or at the June 2009 meeting at the latest. This schedule has the document being sent to the Secretary of Commerce in July 2009 at the latest and meets the one-year deadline.

We appreciate your assistance in expediting implementation of this request. If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Bob Mahood.

Sincerely,

George Geiger

George Geiger
Chairman

cc: Council Members & Staff
Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel
Scientific & Statistical Committee
Monica Smit-Brunello, NOAA GC
Phil Steele, Joe Kimmel & Jack McGovern, NMFS SERO
Dr. Bonnie Ponwith & Dr. Tom Jamir, NMFS SEFSC