




UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
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JUL 10 2009

F/SER25:JCM

MEMORANDUM FOR: Bonnie Ponwith, Ph.D.
Director, Southeast Fisheries Science Center

FROM: Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D. 
Regional Administrator

SUBJECT: Data Analyses Request for Amendments 17A and 17B to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region

This memorandum requests data analyses for actions being considered in Amendment 17A and 17B. If possible, I request completion of the request by July 31, 2009.

Amendment 17A

Amendment 17A includes actions to end overfishing and establish a rebuilding plan for red snapper. The amendment specifies a number of rebuilding strategies based on constant fishing mortality projections at $F_{40\%SPR}$, $85\%F_{40\%SPR}$, $75\%F_{40\%SPR}$, and $65\%F_{40\%SPR}$ provided by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) on March 9, 2009. I am concerned these projections do not consider high recruitment that likely occurred in 2005 or 2006. As a result these projections may underestimate the magnitude of expected discards. In addition the yield at target fishing mortality could be higher.

Therefore, I request: (1) New constant fishing mortality projections similar to those provided on March 9, 2009, which incorporates high recruitment that appears to have occurred in 2005 or 2006; (2) an additional constant fishing mortality projection that would rebuild the stock in 35 years, which is the maximum allowable rebuilding time; and (3) a suite of projections using $F_{30\%SPR}$ as this is the status quo proxy for F_{MSY} that needs to be analyzed in Amendment 17A.

Amendment 17A updates status determination criteria for red snapper based on the results of the recent Southeast Data Assessment and Review (SEDAR) stock assessment. I request the SEFSC provide the value for the yield at $F_{45\%SPR}$ as this is the status quo for optimum yield.

Amendment 17B

Amendment 17B includes alternatives to allocate the golden tilefish total allowable catch to the recreational and commercial sectors. Currently, allocation alternatives for the golden tilefish recreational sector are 3%, 4%, and 50% of the total allowable catch. The total allowable catch



for golden tilefish is 336,425 pounds whole weight (300,380 pounds gutted weight). The Council is concerned about using weight to track recreational landings because of the tremendous variability in annual values provided the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS). The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council would like recreational allocation of golden tilefish to be specified in number instead of weight since numbers from MRFSS appears to be more stable. I request the SEFSC identify a conversion factor to convert landings in weight from golden tilefish caught by recreational fishermen to landings in numbers.

During their June 2009 meeting, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) provided acceptable biological catch (ABC) recommendations for gag and vermilion snapper. For gag, the SSC recommended an ABC for 2010 corresponding to 805,000 pounds gutted weight for landings and 18,000 in numbers for dead discards to obtain the P* value of 0.30. For vermilion snapper, the SSC recommended ABC levels interpolated from Tables 3.19 and 3.20 of the SEDAR vermilion assessment workshop report to obtain the P* value of 0.275. For 2010 this corresponds to 1,078,000 pounds whole weight for landings, 31,000 pounds whole weight for dead discards, and 1,109,000 pounds whole weight inclusive of landings and discards. I request the SEFSC provide tables with ABC values for gag similar to what was done for vermilion snapper in the SEDAR assessment.

cc: Dr. Erik Williams
Dr. Tom Jamir