

**COMMITTEE REPORT
FROM THE SNAPPER GROUPEE COMMITTEE
St. Simons, GA
March 9-10, 2011**

The SAFMC Snapper Grouper Committee met March 9-10, 2011 at St. Simons, GA. The Committee discussed the following items:

Black Sea Bass and Golden Tilefish Issues:

Gregg Waugh, Council Staff, gave the committee an overview of management issues pertaining to black sea bass and golden tilefish and requested guidance on projections for the ongoing SEDAR 25 assessment.

Jack McGovern, SERO Staff, provided an overview of the black sea bass bag limit analysis. The Committee made a series of motions that were subsequently withdrawn or rescinded. The committee discussed adding an action to establish a bag limit for black sea bass under Regulatory Amendment 9.

The Committee made the following motions:

MOTION: ASK THAT THE UPCOMING BLACK SEA BASS ASSESSMENT TAKE A LOOK AT FREBUILD (CONSTANT F) AND CONSTANT CATCH TO REBUILD BY THE END OF 10 YEARS (10-YEAR REBUILDING PERIOD ENDING IN FISHING YEAR 2015/2016)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Regulatory Amendment 11:

The Committee received a presentation from Nick Farmer, SERO staff, on preliminary analyses on the distribution of speckled hind and Warsaw grouper encounters according to various databases. The Committee briefly reviewed the Regulatory Amendment 11 Issues Paper and gave staff guidance on the Purpose and Need. The Committee also provided various alternatives for inclusion in the developing amendment.

The Committee made the following motions:

MOTION: PROVIDE REGULATORY AMENDMENT 11 PRESENTATION AND ISSUES PAPER TO THE SSC FOR THEIR REVIEW AT THEIR APRIL MEETING

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: ESTABLISH ALTERNATIVES FOR BLUELINE TILEFISH BESIDES NO ACTION:

- OPEN BLUELINE TILEFISH IN THE SA IN THE DEEP WATER (SEAWARD OF THE 240 FT DEPTH CONTOUR)

- OPEN BLUELINE TILEFISH OFF NC IN THE DEEP WATER (SEAWARD OF THE 240 FT DEPTH CONTOUR)
- OPEN BLUELINE TILEFISH OFF NC NORTH OF CAPE HATTERAS IN THE DEEP WATER (SEAWARD OF THE 240 FT DEPTH CONTOUR)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: ADD AN ALTERNATIVE TO EXCLUDE BLUELINE TILEFISH FROM THE DEEPWATER CLOSURE SOUTH OF CAPE CANAVERAL

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: INCLUDE AN OPTION TO OPEN THE CLOSED AREA IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC SEAWARD OF 500 FT

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

(INTENT IS FOR CLOSED AREA TO EXTEND FROM 240 TO 500 FT. TRANSIT AND POSSESSION PROVISIONS WOULD NEED TO BE ADDED)

MOTION: ESTABLISH ALTERNATIVES FOR SNOWY GROUPER BESIDES NO ACTION:

- OPEN SNOWY GROUPER IN THE SA IN THE DEEP WATER (SEAWARD OF THE 240 FT DEPTH CONTOUR)
- OPEN SNOWY GROUPER OFF NC IN THE DEEP WATER (SEAWARD OF THE 240 FT DEPTH CONTOUR)
- OPEN SNOWY GROUPER OFF NC NORTH OF CAPE HATTERAS IN THE DEEP WATER (SEAWARD OF THE 240 FT DEPTH CONTOUR)

(CLARIFICATION THAT “OPEN” ENTAILS MAINTAINING THE CURRENT COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL REGS)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: ADD AN ALTERNATIVE TO EXCLUDE SNOWY GROUPER FROM THE DEEPWATER CLOSURE SOUTH OF CAPE CANAVERAL

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Regulatory Amendment 9:

Myra Brouwer, Council Staff, gave the Committee a summary of public hearing comments on Regulatory Amendment 9. The Committee reviewed all actions in Regulatory Amendment 9 and made the following motions:

Action 1. Harvest Management Measures for Black Sea Bass

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 6 AS PREFERRED

Alternative 6. Change the black sea bass fishing year to January-December. Separate commercial ACLs (quotas) for January-June and July-December based on landings from 2006-2009.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 7 AS PREFERRED

Alternative 7. Under Alternatives 3-6, carry over unused portion of commercial ACL quota from first part of fishing year to second portion of season.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: FOR BOTH SECTORS, ANY UNUSED QUOTA AT THE END OF THE 2011 FISHING YEAR, WOULD BE ADDED TO THE FIRST HALF OF THE FOLLOWING FISHING YEAR (STARTING IN JANUARY 2012)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: SELECT SUBALTERNATIVE 12A AS PREFERRED

Sub-Alternative 12a. Implement a March 1-April 30th spawning season closure for black sea bass, would apply to commercial and recreational sectors.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 13 AND ITS SUBALTERNATIVES INTO REGULATORY AMENDMENT 9

Alternative 13. Modify the recreational bag limit for black sea bass

Subalternative 13a. Reduce the recreational bag limit from 15 to 7 black sea bass per person per day.

Subalternative 13b. Reduce the recreational bag limit from 15 to 5 black sea bass per person per day.

Subalternative 13c. Reduce the recreational bag limit from 15 to 3 black sea bass per person per day.

Subalternative 13a. Reduce the recreational bag limit from 15 to 2 black sea bass per person per day.

Subalternative 13a. Reduce the recreational bag limit from 15 to 1 black sea bass per person per day.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 13B (5-FISH PER PERSON BAG LIMIT) AS PREFERRED

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 2. Trip Limits for Vermilion Snapper

MOTION: SELECT NO ACTION (ALTERNATIVE 1) AS PREFERRED

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: ADOPT ALTERNATIVE 3 AS PREFERRED (WITHOUT SUBALTERNATIVE 3A)

Alternative 3 (Preferred). Establish a 1,500 lb gw (1,665 lb ww) commercial trip limit.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION APPROVED

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit (ACL) Amendment:

Myra Brouwer, Council Staff, provided a brief overview of public comments received on the amendment. The Committee reviewed all actions in the amendment and made the following motions:

Action 1: Remove Species from Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit (FMU)

MOTION: MODIFY ALTERNATIVE 4 TO REMOVE MUTTON SNAPPER FROM THE SNAPPER GROUPE FMU ALONG WITH THE OTHER SPECIES IN ALTERNATIVE 4.

Alternative 4 (Preferred). Remove species from the Snapper Grouper FMU with 80% (or greater) of landings in state waters, except mutton snapper and hogfish.

French grunt	Spanish grunt	Yellow jack	Grass porgy	Porkfish
Bluestriped grunt	Sheepshead	Crevalle jack	Black margate	Sailors Choice
Graysby	Schoolmaster	Saucereye porgy	Puddingwife	Margate

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: ADD A NEW ALTERNATIVE 8 TO REMOVE TOMTATE, KNOBBED PORGY, JOLTHEAD PORGY AND WHITEBONE PORGY FROM THE FMU

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: ADD THE NEW ALTERNATIVE 8 AS A PREFERRED (IN ADDITION TO OTHER PREFERRED)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 2: Designate Snapper Grouper Species as Ecosystem Component (EC) Species

MOTION: MOVE ACTION 2 TO THE APPENDIX

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 3: Establish Species Groupings for Snapper Grouper Species

MOTION: CHANGE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE TO ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)

MOTION FAILS

Action 4: Establish an Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) Control Rule for Snapper Grouper Species

MOTION: MODIFY ALTERNATIVE 5 UNDER ACTION 4: FOR ASSESSED SPECIES ESTABLISH ABC BASED ON THE SSC CONTROL RULE. FOR UNASSESSED SPECIES ESTABLISH ABC=MEDIAN LANDINGS 1999-2008 AND

OFL=UNKNOWN UNTIL THE SSC CONTROL RULE IS FULLY APPLIED. MAKE THIS THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 7: Specify Accountability Measures (AMs)/Annual Catch Targets (ACTs) for species in the Snapper Grouper FMU

The committee instructed staff to draft an alternative that would base the trigger for shortening the fishing season on landings trends from the previous five years excluding the maximum and minimum. In addition, the new approach would establish a technical panel to periodically review and evaluate the efficacy of the new approach.

MOTION: DIRECT STAFF TO INCLUDE LANGUAGE TO CLARIFY THAT ADDITIONAL MANAGEMENT MEASURES ARE NOT BEING ESTABLISHED FOR UNASSESSED SNAPPER GROUPE SPECIES IN THIS AMENDMENT
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 10: Specify Accountability Measures (AM) for the Wreckfish Fishery

MOTION: MAKE ALTERNATIVE 2 AN ADDITIONAL PREFERRED.
Alternative 2. For post-season accountability measures, compare recreational ACL with recreational landings over a range of years. For 2011, use only 2011 landings. For 2012, use the average landings of 2011 and 2012. For 2013 and beyond, use the most recent three-year running average.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 12: Specify Jurisdictional Allocations for Black Grouper

MOTION: SPECIFY ACLS FOR BLACK GROUPE AND GAG FOR THREE YEARS. THE ACL ESTABLISHED IN THE THIRD YEAR WOULD STAY IN PLACE UNTIL MODIFIED.
NOTE: INCREASING ACLS ARE CONTINGENT UPON NOT EXCEEDING THE ANNUAL PROJECTED HARVEST LEVEL
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 15: Establish Accountability Measures/Management Measures for Black Grouper

MOTION: REMOVE ALTERNATIVE 6A AS A PREFERRED Subalternative 6a (Preferred). If the recreational sector ACL is exceeded, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the recreational sector ACL in the following season by the amount of the overage.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Possible Action on Yellowtail Snapper

The Committee discussed possibly extending management for yellowtail snapper to the Gulf of Mexico and resulting management implications. NOAA GC will provide guidance on whether permitting issues can be resolved in a manner that would allow action to be taken in the Comp ACL Amendment.

Action 18: Establish Annual Catch Limits (ACL) and Optimum Yield (OY) for Dolphin

MOTION: CHANGE THE PREFERRED TO ALTERNATIVE 3

Alternative 3. ACL = OY = 85% of the ABC.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 19: Establish Accountability Measures for Dolphin

Alternative 2. Specify commercial sector ACTs for dolphin, apply to commercial AM Alternatives 3 and 4.

Subalternative 2a (Preferred). Do not specify a commercial sector ACT.

Subalternative 2b. The commercial sector ACT equals 90% of the commercial sector ACL.

Subalternative 2c. The commercial sector ACT equals 80% of the commercial sector ACL.

MOTION: SELECT AS A PREFERRED FOR THE COMMERCIAL SECTOR ACT = 90% ACL (SUBALTERNATIVE 2B)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: SELECT SUBALTERNATIVE 2A AS PREFERRED.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

PLEASE CLARIFY THE TWO MOTIONS ABOVE

MOTION: MODIFY ALTERNATIVE 3 (After the commercial ACL is projected to be met, all purchase and sale of dolphin is prohibited and harvest and/or possession is limited to the bag limit.) TO CHANGE "ACL" TO "ACT". CHANGE TO "MET OR PROJECTED TO BE MET" *** GUIDANCE TO CHANGE BACK TO ACL FROM ACT.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Alternative 5. Specify recreational sector ACTs for dolphin, apply to recreational AM Alternatives 6-7.

Subalternative 5a. The recreational sector ACT equals 85% of the recreational sector ACL.

Subalternative 5b. The recreational sector ACT equals 75% of the recreational sector ACL.

Subalternative 5c (Preferred). The recreational sector ACT equals sector ACL[(1-PSE) or 0.5, whichever is greater] Council guidance in December was to use the 3-year average (7.0)

MOTION: CHANGE PREFERRED RECREATIONAL AM TO SUBALTERNATIVE 5A (The recreational sector ACT equals 85% of the recreational sector ACL)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: SELECT SUBALTERNATIVE 5C AS THE PREFERRED

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

PLEASE CLARIFY THE TWO MOTIONS ABOVE

Action 20: Establish Management Measures for Dolphin

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 AS PREFERRED (PROHIBIT BAG LIMIT SALES FOR-HIRE VESSELS)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 3 AS PREFERRED (MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT OF 20 INCHES OFF SC)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 21: Establish an Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) Control Rule and ABC for Wahoo

MOTION: FOR DOLPHIN AND WAHOO, PROVIDE GUIDANCE TO THE SSC THAT BASED ON BIOLOGY AND PRODUCTIVITY AND NO OVERFISHING/OVERFISHED STATUS, THE COUNCIL IS COMFORTABLE USING MEAN LANDINGS OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS + 1.0 SD TO SET ABC
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 25: Establish Management Measures for Wahoo

MOTION: TO CALCULATE REDUCTION IN HARVEST FOR WAHOO, USE LANDINGS FOR YEARS 2005-2009 EXCLUDING 2007.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: CHANGE PREFERRED TO ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Other Business:

Two items were brought up under Other Business:

- The state of North Carolina is interested in the Council limiting the use of bangsticks off North Carolina due to concerns over localized depletion of some snapper grouper species. An issues paper will be made available to Council members and staff for future consideration under Comprehensive Ecosystem-based Amendment 3 or another appropriate amendment.
- The committee made the following motion relative to Amendment 21:

MOTION: TERMINATE ALL WORK RELATIVE TO CATCH SHARE DEVELOPMENT IN AMENDMENT 21 (NOTE: CONTINUE ON CATCH SHARE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE GOLDEN CRAB FISHERY AND WRECKFISH)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE