

Snapper Grouper Committee Report
March 8, 2012
Savannah, GA

The Snapper Grouper Committee met in Savannah on March 8, 2012.

The Committee received reports from SERO and the SEFSC on the status of commercial and recreational landings for species under quota management, respectively. The Committee also received updates from SERO staff on the status of amendments under review, including the Comprehensive ACL Amendment and Amendment 18A. The Committee discussed the fact that the latter was submitted for formal review with the incorrect preferred alternative for Action 6 (Endorsement Transferability). The RA informed the Committee that Action 6 would be disapproved and the Council would have to prepare a new document for submission to implement the correct alternative for endorsement transferability. In addition, the Committee was informed by the RA that Amendment 18A would likely not be implemented by the June 1, the beginning of the black sea bass fishing year. The Committee made the following motions:

MOTION: STAFF PREPARE A DOCUMENT TO ALLOW FOR TRANSFERABILITY OF ENDORSEMENTS AND ADDRESS THE RENEWAL OF ENDORSEMENTS SEPARATELY FROM THE SG PERMIT. BRING THIS TO THE COUNCIL FOR FINAL ACTION AT THE JUNE MEETING

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

*****INTENT IS TO INCLUDE ADDRESSING ISSUE OF RENEWAL OF EXPIRED VS NON-EXPIRED ENDORSEMENTS*****

MOTION: RECOMMEND DEVELOPMENT OF AN EMERGENCY RULE TO DELAY THE OPENING OF THE COMMERCIAL BSB SEASON UNTIL AMENDMENT 18A IS IN PLACE BUT NO LATER THAN JULY 1, 2012

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Regulatory Amendment 12 (Golden Tilefish)

The Committee received an overview from Council staff on Regulatory Amendment 12 and made the following motions:

MOTION: ADOPT ALTERNATIVE 5 UNDER ACTION 1 AS OUR PREFERRED

Action 1. Revise Annual Catch Limit (ACL) and Optimum Yield (OY) for Golden Tilefish

Alternative 5. ACL = OY = yield at 75%FMSY when stock is at equilibrium (625,000 POUNDS WW).

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 UNDER ACTION 2 AS OUR PREFERRED

Action 2. Establish an Annual Catch Target (ACT) for the Golden Tilefish Commercial Sector

Alternative 2. Establish an Annual Catch Target (ACT) for the golden tilefish commercial sector = 90% of the commercial sector ACL. (Preliminary estimate = 158,512 pounds gw)

****The Council's intent is that if the commercial ACT is met, or projected to be met, the commercial fishery would be closed; harvest and possession would be limited to the bag limit and no sale would be allowed*****

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: APPROVE REGULATORY AMENDMENT 12 FOR FORMAL REVIEW BY SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT AS NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: GIVE THE STAFF AND COUNCIL CHAIR EDITORIAL LICENSE TO MAKE CHANGES AND CORRECTIONS TO THE DOCUMENT AND CODIFIED TEXT AS NECESSARY

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Amendment 18B/EA (Golden Tilefish)

The Committee made the following motions pertaining to Amendment 18B:

MOTION: ACCEPT THE IPT'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEW PURPOSE AND NEED

Purpose for Action: The purpose of Amendment 18B is to limit participation in the golden tilefish portion of the snapper grouper fishery through establishment of longline ~~and hook and line~~ endorsements, changes to the fishing year, allocation of the Annual Catch Limit (ACL) between gear groups, AND modifications to golden tilefish trip limits, ~~and updates to the ACL and AMs based on the most recent stock assessment.~~

The actions proposed in this amendment will address issues that have arisen as a result of a more stringent regulatory regime in the South Atlantic region.

Need for Action: The need for action in Amendment 18B is to reduce overcapacity in the golden tilefish portion of the snapper grouper fishery ~~and to update the ACL and other values based on the most recent stock assessment.~~

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: ACCEPT THE IPT'S RECOMMENDATIONS TO CHANGE LANGUAGE IN ACTION, SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 (AS WELL AS SUBALTERNATIVE 2A) AS PREFERRED, AND REMOVE CONSIDERATION OF A HOOK-AND LINE ENDORSEMENT FOR THE GOLDEN TILEFISH FISHERY

Action 1. Limit Participation in the Golden Tilefish Component of the Snapper Grouper Fishery

Alternative 2. Limit golden tilefish effort through a golden tilefish gear endorsement program: Distribute golden tilefish gear specific endorsements for snapper grouper permit holders that qualify under the eligibility requirements stated below. Only snapper grouper permit holders with a golden tilefish longline endorsement or a golden tilefish hook and line endorsement associated with their snapper grouper permit will be allowed to possess golden tilefish.

Sub-alternative 2a (Preferred). Individuals that meet the qualifying criteria for both hook and line and longline endorsements may receive both endorsements.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: GIVE STAFF DIRECTION TO CHANGE THE LANGUAGE IN ACTION 1 TO REFLECT THE COUNCIL'S INTENT TO LOOK AT ESTABLISHING AN ENDORSEMENT PROGRAM FOR THE GOLDEN TILEFISH LONGLINE FISHERY

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: MOVE ACTION 2 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Action 2. Establish Initial Eligibility Requirements for a Golden Tilefish Hook and Line Endorsement

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 3. Establish Initial Eligibility Requirements for a Golden Tilefish Longline Endorsement

MOTION: ADD A NEW SUB-ALTERNATIVE: To receive a golden tilefish longline endorsement, the individual must have an average of 5,000 pounds gw golden tilefish caught (with longline gear) for the best 3 years within the period 2006 through 2010.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: ADD TWO ALTERNATIVES SIMILAR TO ABOVE (ONE WITH 5,000 POUNDS AND ONE WITH 10,000 POUNDS) BUT INCLUDE 2011

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

****GUIDANCE TO POSSIBLY RECONVENE THE GT WORKGROUP BUT PROCEED WITH ESTABLISHING THE ENDORSEMENT PROGRAM*****

MOTION: GIVE EDITORIAL LICENSE TO STAFF TO CLEAN UP ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 5 TO REFLECT THE ADOPTION OF AN ACT IN REGULATORY AMENDMENT 12

Action 5. Allocate Commercial Golden Tilefish Quota Among Gear Groups

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 3 UNDER ACTION 6 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Action 6. Allow for Transferability of Golden Tilefish Endorsements

Alternative 3. A valid or expired hook and line golden tilefish endorsement can be transferred between any two individuals or entities that hold, or simultaneously obtain, a valid or renewable unlimited Federal commercial snapper grouper permit.

Sub-alternative 3a. Transferability allowed upon program implementation.

Sub-alternative 3b. Transferability not allowed during the first 2 years of the program.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 4 UNDER ACTION 6 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Alternative 4. A valid or expired hook and line and longline golden tilefish endorsement can be transferred between any two individuals or entities that hold, or simultaneously obtain, a valid or renewable unlimited Federal commercial snapper grouper permit, regardless of the gear endorsement category.

Sub-alternative 4a. Transferability allowed upon program implementation.

Sub-alternative 4b. Transferability not allowed during the first 2 years of the program.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

****GUIDANCE TO CONSULT WITH PERMITS OFFICE ON APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE FOR TRANSFERABILITY ALTERNATIVES****

****COMMITTEE REITERATES THAT THE LANDINGS HISTORY WOULD REMAIN WITH THE SNAPPER GROUPER UNLIMITED PERMIT****

MOTION: GIVE STAFF DIRECTION TO CHANGE THE TITLE OF ACTION 9 AND EDIT ALTERNATIVES ACCORDINGLY

Action 9. Establish Trip Limits for Fishermen Who Do Not Receive a Golden Tilefish ~~Hook and Line~~ LONGLINE Endorsement

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: CHANGE PREFERRED UNDER ACTION 9 TO ALTERNATIVE 4:

Alternative 4. Establish trip limits of 500 pounds gw for the golden tilefish hook and line fishery for commercial fishermen who do not receive an endorsement in the commercial golden tilefish hook and line fishery. Vessels with longline endorsements are not eligible to fish for this trip limit.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: MOVE ACTION 10 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Action 10. Establish Trip Limits for Fishermen Who Receive a Golden Tilefish Hook and Line Endorsement

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: MOVE ACTION 11 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Action 11. Revise the Annual Catch Limit (ACL) and Optimum Yield (OY) for Golden Tilefish

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: MOVE ACTION 12 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Action 12. Revise Accountability Measures (AMs) for Golden Tilefish

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Amendment 20B (Wreckfish ITQ)

The Committee made the following motion pertaining to Amendment 20B:

MOTION: POSTPONE ACTION ON AMENDMENT 20B UNTIL 2013 OR LATER.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE.

Speckled Hind and Warsaw Grouper (CE-BA 3)

The Committee discussed the approach to be taken regarding possible establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to reduce mortality of speckled hind and warsaw grouper. The Committee provided the following guidance to staff on timing and approach:

DECISION #1. Type of Closures to be evaluated. Evaluate Alternatives 3 and 4:

Alternative 3. Area closures where all bottom fishing is prohibited (same type of MPAs currently in place).

Alternative 4. Temporary area closures that would remain in place until we get an assessment for speckled hind and warsaw grouper and the results indicate some relaxation of regulations is warranted.

DECISION #2. Approaches for developing potential area closures (MPAs) – alternatives are sufficient; directed staff to look at Tortugas and other areas that may be providing protection.

DECISION #3. Guidance on what percentage (of occurrence or habitat) is “appropriate” to be closed. Evaluate alternatives 3, 4 and 5:

Alternative 3. Establish a goal of 20%

Alternative 4. Establish a goal of 30%

Alternative 5. Establish a goal of 40%

DECISIONS #4 & #5 – evaluate 20%, 30%, & 40% and timing/workshops to be discussed at full Council.

National System of MPAs

The Committee received a presentation from George Geiger and Lauren Wenzel on the National System of MPAs. The presentation included background on the program and the benefits that would result from the Council’s participation. The Committee provided guidance to include discussion of possible nomination of protected areas in the South Atlantic during upcoming meetings of the Habitat and Coral Advisory Panels.