

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
SNAPPER GROUPER COMMITTEE
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Ponte Vedra, FL
June 13-14, 2017

The Committee approved minutes from the March 2017 meeting and the agenda. Discussion of yellowtail snapper management was added as an item under Other Business.

Status of Commercial and Recreational Catches versus Quotas for Species under ACLs

NMFS Southeast Regional Office (SERO) staff delivered briefings to the Committee on the status of commercial and recreational landings (Wave 1) relative to the respective ACLs. Under commercial landings, the Committee was alerted to the possible in-season closure for FLK/EFL hogfish once Amendment 37 goes into effect. If it is determined that the vermilion snapper ACL for Season 1 was not landed in its entirety, the agency will roll over the uncaught amount to Season 2. Two species with fixed recreational seasons, blueline tilefish and snowy grouper, exceeded their respective ACLs in 2016. The greater amberjack recreational ACL was exceeded in the past two years.

Status of Amendments under Formal Review

SERO staff updated the Committee on the status of three amendments currently under review:

- Amendment 36: final rule package under review at NMFS headquarters
- Amendment 37: final rule package under review at NMFS headquarters. Approval of this amendment is tied to that of a Gulf amendment that makes the same management boundary changes for hogfish. The agency intends for both amendments to be approved at the same time.
- Amendment 41: proposed rule package and Notice of Availability (NOA) package under review at SERO.

April 2017 Advisory Panel Meeting Summary Report

Kenny Fex, Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Chairman, delivered a summary of the AP's discussions and recommendations during their Spring 2017 meeting. Council staff gave a brief overview of the Fishery Performance Report for red grouper and requested feedback on how to improve future FPRs. A Committee member indicated that, contrary to the information in the red grouper FPR, there is restaurant demand for the species in some areas.

2016 Southeast Reef Fish Survey (SERFS) Report

Dr. Marcel Reichert, South Carolina DNR and SSC Chair, gave a presentation summarizing trends in Catch per Unit Effort (CPUE) of snapper grouper species for 2016 (and prior years) in fishery independent surveys in the South Atlantic region. Overall, CPUE has been declining for the majority of snapper grouper species sampled in the survey, with the exception of red snapper, tomtate, and vermilion snapper. There has been an increase in the mean size of gag and red porgy in recent years. A suggestion was made to include information on location of capture (heat map) to provide a spatial perspective on trends of abundance. Dr. Reichert agreed that this would be informative and would be included in future presentations.

Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 26 (Recreational)

Council staff gave an overview of current actions and alternatives, presented results of preliminary analyses for each action, and recommendations from the Interdisciplinary Plan Team (ITP) and Snapper Grouper AP. The Committee provided the following guidance to staff and made the following motions:

Action 1. Modify the recreational grouper and 10-snapper aggregate bag limits and establish a recreational aggregate bag limit and recreational season for deep-water species

- Separate Action 1 into three actions that would address: (1) species composition, (2) bag limits, and (3) season.
- Add sub-alternative(s) for single-hook requirement
- Remove “only one fish can be from any one species” due to possible increase in discards
- Add alternative that considers a 20 fish maximum limit for all snapper grouper species (excluding tomtate) and retain existing bag limits within the aggregate.
- Add accountability measure that would change (reduce) bag limits for species that continue to exceed their recreational ACLs.
- Consider consistency in seasons (i.e., actions in Amendment 43). Also analyze different options for seasons, i.e., September-December (since May-Aug overlaps with spawning season for some species).

Action 2. Modify the recreational grouper aggregate bag limit and establish a recreational aggregate bag limit for shallow-water grouper species

- Do not consider restriction for “maximum of any one species” due to concern over discards
- Add sub-alternative to Alternative 2 to retain the existing harvest restrictions but modify the aggregate.

Action 3. Modify the 10-snapper and 20-fish recreational aggregate bag limits

- Consider alternative for a 20-fish aggregate where only 10 fish could be species in the current 10-snapper aggregate and 10 fish could be species in the current 20-fish aggregate
- Limit on mutton snapper would remain at 5 fish (as currently proposed in Amendment 41)

MOTION #1: REMOVE ACTION 3 SUB-ALTERNATIVE 2D FROM CONSIDERATION

Sub-alternative 2d. Within the 20-fish aggregate, no more than 5 fish can be of any one species.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Action 4. Modify the seasonal prohibition on recreational harvest and possession of shallow-water groupers

MOTION #2: MOVE ACTION 4 ALTERNATIVE 2 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Alternative 2. Prohibit recreational harvest and possession of shallow-water grouper species (gag, black grouper, scamp, red grouper, yellowfin grouper, yellowmouth grouper, red hind, rock hind, graysby, and coney) seasonally by area:

Sub-alternative 2a. In federal waters off East Florida from the Georgia/Florida state boundary south to the end of the SAFMC's South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's jurisdiction, the closure applies (month) to (month).

Sub-alternative 2b. In federal waters off Georgia and the Carolinas from the Georgia/South Carolina Florida border north to the North Carolina/Virginia border, the closure applies (month) to (month)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

- Retain Alternative 4 but specify area south of 28 degrees:

Alternative 4. Prohibit recreational harvest and possession of black grouper in federal waters off (specify area based on Alternative 2a above)

Sub-alternative 4a. January – March (three months)

Sub-alternative 4b. January

Sub-alternative 4c. February

Sub-alternative 4d. March

Action 7. Reduce the recreational minimum size limit for gray triggerfish in federal waters off East Florida

MOTION #3: SELECT ACTION 7 ALTERNATIVE 2 AS PREFERRED

Alternative 2. Reduce the recreational minimum size limit for gray triggerfish in federal waters off the east coast of Florida to 12 inches FL.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

The Committee did not approve the amendment for public hearings.

Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 27 (Commercial)

Council staff gave an overview of current actions and alternatives, presented results of preliminary analyses for each action, and recommendations from the Interdisciplinary Plan Team (ITP) and Snapper Grouper AP. Staff indicated that actions in the amendment would be re-arranged to better reflect the Vision Blueprint objectives that the actions they address. A Committee member spoke about the possibility of establishing regional allocations to mitigate access issues in the fishery. The Committee briefly discussed that such a modification to the Council's management approach would have to be developed over the long-term and would not be appropriate to include in Regulatory Amendment 27. However, Council members agreed that discussions should be entertained on the topic.

Action 1. Establish a commercial split season for blueline tilefish

The Committee discussed commercial split seasons for blueline tilefish (Action 1) and snowy grouper (Action 3) in conjunction since the two species co-occur and it is desirable to have their seasons aligned. Some Committee members felt that commercial split seasons might not be very effective for these species as they might not necessarily result in availability of product during times of highest demand. In general, blueline tilefish and snowy grouper are important in the beginning of the year when shallow-water groupers are not available due to the 4-month seasonal closure. The Committee agreed that examining the historical distribution of commercial landings for these species by state would be very informative to select an appropriate range of

alternatives for analysis. On the issue of whether it would be best to delay changes in management for blueline tilefish until after the completion of SEDAR 50, some members felt that regional differences in accessibility would remain regardless of the result of the stock assessment and the Council should consider taking action now. In addition, the Committee discussed possibly modifying trip limits and/or implementing step-down(s) once a certain percentage of the ACL has been met. The Committee did not provide specific guidance pending further exploration of the landings distribution in the region.

Action 2. Establish a commercial split season for red porgy and modify commercial retention limit

- Re-number as Action 4
- Include an alternative where the ACL would be split 50/50 during two seasons, January-April and May-December, with rollover of uncaught ACL from season 1 to season 2.
- Examine a range of trip limit alternatives (as suggested by the AP) of 60 fish in season 1 and 120 fish in season 2.

Action 3. Establish a commercial split season for snowy grouper

- Re-number as Action 2
- See discussion under Action 1 above.

Action 4. Establish a commercial split season for greater amberjack

- Re-number as Action 3
- Examine distribution of commercial landings by state since 2007 (similar to blueline tilefish and snowy grouper) and develop split season options.
- Add an alternative to reduce the trip limit (1,000 pounds) and implement a step-down (750-500 pounds) when 75% of the ACL is met or is projected to be met
- Include options for timeframe(s) after which the step-down would not apply.

Action 5. Modify the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper in the second season

- Add alternative for 750-pound trip limit for both seasons with no step-down.

Actions 6. Implement a commercial trip limit for the Other Jacks Complex

- Change alternatives to gutted weight instead of whole weight.

Action 7. Modify the seasonal prohibition on commercial harvest and possession of shallow-water groupers

- Add sub-alternative to Alternative 3 to consider a gag trip limit during April (100-300 lbs).
- Make same modification as in Regulatory Amendment 26 for this action.

MOTION #4: ADD AN ALTERNATIVE TO PROHIBIT COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL HARVEST OF SHALLOW-WATER GROUPER IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC FROM FEBRUARY THROUGH MAY

MOTION FAILS (1 IN FAVOR, 9 OPPOSED, 2 ABSTENTIONS)

MOTION #5: MODIFY ALTERNATIVE 5 AS PRESENTED BELOW

Alternative 5. Prohibit commercial and recreational harvest and possession of red grouper in federal waters off ~~(specify area based on Alternative 2b above)~~ North Carolina and South Carolina

Sub-alternative 5a. January – May (five months)

Sub-alternative 5b. February – May (four months)

Sub-alternative 5c. March – June (four months)

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

NOTE: Intent to include the same alternative in Regulatory Amendment 26 with appropriate modifications.

The Committee provided no further guidance and did not recommend any modifications to Action 8 (Remove the commercial minimum size limits for certain deep-water species) or Action 9 (Reduce the commercial minimum size limit for gray triggerfish in federal waters off east of Florida).

MOTION #6: ADD AN ACTION THAT WOULD REMOVE THE BANGSTICK PROHIBITION OFF SOUTH CAROLINA FOR BOTH SECTORS

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

NOTE: existing regulations on use of bangsticks within Special Management Zones would not be affected.

The Committee did not approve the amendment for public hearings.

Snapper Grouper Amendment 43 (Red Snapper and Recreational Reporting)

The Committee received a presentation from SERO staff on the level of red snapper removals in 2016 and implications for a 2017 season. Based on the level of dead discards relative to the 2016 ABC, a 2017 season will not be possible. The Committee discussed the level of discard mortality that was used in the calculation noting that there were adjustments to the discard mortality rates in the latest stock assessment (SEDAR 41). Dr. Bonnie Ponwith, SEFSC, explained that the previous estimates of discard mortality, those generated during SEDAR 24, were used to convert the estimate of discards to dead discards in order to maintain continuity for the comparison to the ABC. However, the revised discard mortality estimates were also used to explore whether that would result in a significantly lower level of dead discards that would allow a season to take place. While the estimate of dead discards was reduced, the overall removals were still above the projected ABC indicating that a 2017 season would not be possible.

Dr. Marcel Reichert delivered the SSC's recommendations. While the SSC determined the red snapper stock assessment constituted Best Scientific Information Available, the estimates of discards and landings are still too uncertain to track any projected ABC. Therefore, the current projected yields are not useful for management and monitoring. However, the SSC indicated that the current upward trend in fishery-independent catch-per-unit-effort likely reflects an actual increase in the red snapper population. The SSC endorsed the use of an index-based approach to arrive at an ABC for red snapper and made several other recommendations for the Council's consideration.

Council staff gave a presentation on a pilot project to develop a reporting application (app) for the private recreational sector. The project is being developed through the Snook and Gamefish

Foundation in cooperation with the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program. A new Council staff person has been hired to lead the project.

Council staff gave a brief presentation to frame subsequent discussions on options for red snapper management. The presentation focused on possible reasons why projections and limits resulting from red snapper stock assessments seem so far removed from current observations and how to ensure that ACLs reflect current conditions.

The Committee received a presentation from Council staff on an index-based approach to arrive at an experimental quota for red snapper and methods to possibly allow limited harvest while modifying the effort/catch in subsequent years based on the trend in an index. Staff then reviewed options in Amendment 43. The Committee provided the following guidance and made the following motions under the current actions in Amendment 43:

Action 7. Modify or Establish Management Measures for the Commercial Sector to Allow For Restricted Harvest While Ending Overfishing of Red Snapper in the South Atlantic Region.

MOTION #7: ADD ACTION 7 SUBALTERNATIVE 4D TO ALTERNATIVE 4 FOR A 24 INCH SIZE LIMIT.

FAILED FOR LACK OF SECOND

MOTION #8: ADD SUB-ALTERNATIVE FOR A MAXIMUM SIZE LIMIT. (28 TO 32 AND ASYMPTOTIC LENGTH - 36 INCHES)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE (7 IN FAVOR, 3 OPPOSED, 3 ABSTENTIONS)

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Direction to staff:

- Specify gutted weight instead of whole weight in Alternative 3.
- Remove Alternative 5: Prohibit commercial possession and harvest of red snapper in or from South Atlantic EEZ using spearfishing gear.

Action 8. Modify or Establish Management Measures for the Recreational Sector to Allow For Restricted Harvest While Ending Overfishing of Red Snapper in the South Atlantic Region.

MOTION #9: ADD TO ACTION 8 SUB-ALTERNATIVE 3C FOR 2 FISH PER VESSEL PER DAY AND 3D FOR 3 FISH PER VESSEL PER DAY

Alternative 3. Modify the recreational bag limit for red snapper.

Sub-alternative 3a. 1 per person per day

Sub-alternative 3b. 2 per person per day

Sub-alternative 3c. xx per vessel per day

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE (6 IN FAVOR, 3 OPPOSED, 4 ABSTENTIONS)

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #10: REMOVE ACTION 8 SUB-ALTERNATIVES 5D, 5E, AND 5F.

Alternative 5. Establish an allowable snapper grouper fishing area for recreational fisheries that would remain open year-round. Retention of red snapper in any area would be prohibited outside of the open season and fishing for snapper grouper would be allowed seasonally outside the year round fishing area. The snapper grouper fishing area is defined by depth.

Sub-alternative 5a. Establish an allowable snapper grouper fishing area in waters less than 150 feet to remain open to snapper grouper fishing year-round.

Sub-alternative 5b. Establish an allowable snapper grouper fishing area in waters less than 120 feet to remain open to snapper grouper fishing year-round.

Sub-alternative 5c. Establish an allowable snapper grouper fishing area in waters less than 110 feet to remain open to snapper grouper fishing year-round.

Sub-alternative 5d. Establish an allowable snapper grouper fishing area in waters less than 100 feet to remain open to snapper grouper fishing year-round.

Sub-alternative 5e. Establish an allowable snapper grouper fishing area in waters less than 90 feet to remain open to snapper grouper fishing year-round.

Sub-alternative 5f. Establish an allowable snapper grouper fishing area in waters less than 75 feet to remain open to snapper grouper fishing year-round.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #11: REMOVE ACTION 8 ALTERNATIVES 7 AND 8

Alternative 7. Prohibit recreational fishing for, harvest, and possession of all species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit (FMU) year-round in an area based on red snapper discards.

Alternative 8. Prohibit recreational fishing for, harvest, and possession of all species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit (FMU) year-round in an area based on red snapper abundance.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE (8 IN FAVOR, 2 OPPOSED, 1 ABSTENTION)

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Action 9. Establish a Private Recreational Snapper Grouper Permit or Tag Program for Recreational Fishermen to Fish For, Harvest, or Possess Red Snapper in the South Atlantic Region.

Direction to staff: Add option for alternative to include vessel-based permit option.

Direction to staff: Develop a simpler amendment so that a season can be opened in 2018.

Discussions on red snapper management options for red snapper continued on Thursday, June 15, during Full Council. Council staff presented a modified version of Amendment 43 that proposes a single action to specify ACLs for red snapper and allow limited harvest in 2018. The Council approved the motions below:

MOTION #12: APPROVE PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENTS:

Purpose for Action: The purpose of Snapper Grouper Amendment 43 is to revise annual catch limits for red snapper.

Need for Action: The need for the amendment is to prevent overfishing and rebuild the red snapper stock, provide access to the red snapper fishery, and, to the extent practicable, avoid adverse social and economic effects.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #13: APPROVE ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES IN AMENDMENT 43:

Action 1. Revise Annual Catch Limits for Red Snapper in the South Atlantic Region.

Alternative 1 (No action). The commercial and recreational ACLs for red snapper are zero.

However, if NMFS determines that the previous year's estimated red snapper landings and dead discards are less than the ABC, a limited red snapper harvest and possession may be allowed for

the current fishing year and the commercial and recreational ACL values would be determined using the formula established in Amendment 28.

Alternative 2. Remove the process and equation to specify ACL as specified in Amendment 28. Total ACL = 23,623 fish. Sector ACLs are Y and Z (*commercial 30.57% and recreational 69.43% based on weight*)

Alternative 3. Remove the process and equation to specify ACL as specified in Amendment 28. Total ACL = 42,256 fish. Sector ACLs are Y and Z (*commercial 30.57% and recreational 69.43% based on weight*)

Alternative 4. Remove the process and equation to specify ACL as specified in Amendment 28. Total ACL = 42,510 fish. Sector ACLs are Y and Z (*commercial 30.57% and recreational 69.43% based on weight*)

Alternative 5. Remove the process and equation to specify ACL as specified in Amendment 28. Total ACL = 76,041 fish. Sector ACLs are Y and Z (*commercial 30.57% and recreational 69.43% based on weight*)

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Council staff proposed the timing below for development of Amendment 43 to allow for a 2018 red snapper season:

- Council approves alternatives & approves for Public Hearings - June 2017
- Public hearings conducted via webinar in August and in-person meeting at September 2017 Council meeting
- Council final review & approval in September 2017
- Send for formal review week after September 2017 Council meeting

MOTION #14: APPROVE AMENDMENT 43 FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

NOTE: The Council clarified their intent to continue development and consideration of actions in Amendment 43 addressing best fishing practices and other management measures. However, those actions would continue to be developed in a separate amendment.

White Paper on Snapper Grouper For-Hire Limited Entry

Council staff reviewed the white paper and highlighted changes since the March 2017 meeting (addition of permits by FL county superimposed on tourism statistics). In addition, staff reviewed the Snapper Grouper AP comment and recommendations as well as the latest public comments. Committee members offered the comments below during the subsequent discussion:

- Numbering of existing permits would be a minimum step forward. This was also a recommendation from the Snapper Grouper AP.
- Interest in seeing the level of non-compliance with permitting requirements before considering any changes.
- A limited entry program for the for-hire component of the snapper grouper fishery may help professionalize the fishery.

- It is difficult to draw comparisons with how a limited entry system has worked in the Gulf because the dynamics of the for-hire component in the Gulf are very different than those in the South Atlantic.
- Desire to see the charter industry grow and expand and concern that a limited entry program would prevent this.
- Concern that a limited entry system would eventually lead to sector separation.
- The upcoming requirement for electronic reporting for charter vessels is likely a long way from affecting any accountability and law enforcement has no “teeth.”
- The charter industry will likely want to separate itself from the private recreational component of the recreational sector.

The Committee made the following motions:

MOTION #15: DIRECT STAFF TO BEGIN WORKING ON AN AMENDMENT TO ESTABLISH A MORATORIUM ON THE ISSUANCE OF FEDERAL FOR-HIRE SNAPPER GROUPER PERMITS AS OF THE CONTROL DATE OF JUNE 15, 2016.

IT IS THE COUNCIL’S INTENT THAT THE PERMITS MUST REMAIN IN THE FISHERY AND CATEGORY IN WHICH THEY WERE LAST RENEWED PRIOR TO THE JUNE 15, 2016 CONTROL DATE.

CATEGORY - Passenger Capacity Data For Charter Vessels/Headboats Only:

UNINSPECTED VESSEL - “6-PACK”

USCG INSPECTED VESSEL: Specify Passenger Capacity as listed on the USCG Certificate of Inspection, not including Capt. and Crew.

HARDSHIP. DURING DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMENDMENT, THE COUNCIL WILL REVIEW REQUESTS TO BE INCLUDED FROM ANY PERMIT HOLDER THAT OBTAINED A FEDERAL FOR-HIRE SNAPPER GROUPER PERMIT AFTER THE JUNE 15, 2016 CONTROL DATE. APPLICANTS SHOULD INCLUDE DATA FROM A STATE OR FROM NMFS THAT DOCUMENT EFFORT/PARTICIPATION HISTORY IN THE FOR-HIRE SNAPPER GROUPER FISHERY.

APPEALS. AN APPLICATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE WILL BE ESTABLISHED UPON APPROVAL OF THE AMENDMENT TO ASSIST THE NMFS REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR IN HANDLING DISPUTES OVER ELIGIBILITY FOR PERMITS. THE CHARGE OF THE COMMITTEE IS TO MAKE SURE THE CRITERIA PERTAINING TO ELIGIBILITY OR INITIAL ALLOCATION WERE APPLIED TO AN INDIVIDUAL’S APPLICATION IN A CORRECT MANNER; THE COMMITTEE WILL NOT EVALUATE “HARDSHIP” APPLICATIONS. THE COMMITTEE IS TO BE MADE UP OF ONE STATE DIRECTOR (OR HIS DESIGNEE) FROM EACH STATE IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL’S AREA OF JURISDICTION AND THE NMFS REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR, OR HIS DESIGNEE. NOAA GENERAL COUNSEL WILL HAVE A NON-VOTING ADVISORY ROLE ON THE COMMITTEE. ONE NMFS STAFF AND ONE COUNCIL STAFF ARE TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE.

SUNSET. THE MORATORIUM ON ISSUANCE OF FEDERAL FOR-HIRE SNAPPER GROUPER PERMITS WOULD SUNSET 5 YEARS FROM THE DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION UNLESS EXTENDED BY THE COUNCIL.

**SUBSTITUTE MOTION: DIRECT STAFF TO BEGIN WORKING ON AN AMENDMENT TO ESTABLISH A MORATORIUM ON THE ISSUANCE OF FEDERAL FOR-HIRE SNAPPER GROUPEL PERMITS.
BECOMES THE MAIN MOTION.**

**MOTION #16: DIRECT STAFF TO BEGIN WORKING ON AN AMENDMENT TO ESTABLISH A MORATORIUM ON THE ISSUANCE OF FEDERAL FOR-HIRE SNAPPER GROUPEL PERMITS.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL (9 IN FAVOR, 3 OPPOSED)**

Snapper Grouper Fishery Socio-economic Characterization/Portfolio Analysis
This item was postponed for September meeting.

Red grouper stock status

Dr. Erik Williams, SEFSC, delivered a presentation on the results of the red grouper stock assessment (SEDAR 53). The assessment found the stock to be overfished and undergoing overfishing. There has been below average recruitment of red grouper in recent years. The assessment determined that, under the current rebuilding plan, the stock would not rebuild in the specified timeframe (by 2020). Under a hypothetical scenario of $F=0$, the model predicted the stock would not rebuild until 2023.

Discussion on red grouper management continued during the Full Council meeting on June 15. The Council discussed options for addressing the overfishing and overfished determinations for South Atlantic red grouper. Council staff explained that existing projections are based on management starting in 2017. Staff also explained that the Council could request projections based on difference recruitment scenarios.

MOTION #17: REQUEST THAT THE SEFSC PROVIDE RED GROUPEL PROJECTIONS BASED ON MANAGEMENT BEGINNING IN 2018, UNDER BOTH HIGH AND LOW RECRUITMENT SCENARIOS, FOR EXPLOITATION LEVELS OF $F_{REBUILD}$ (75% F_{MSY}) AND F_{MSY}
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

NOTE: The Council will continue discussion on red grouper management during their September 2017 meeting.

Golden Tilefish

The Council discussed management of golden tilefish on June 15. Council staff presented an overview of recent developments pertaining to golden tilefish and options for how to move forward to address overfishing of that stock. Council members reiterated their desire to have the Dirichlet multinomial fitting procedure applied to the golden tilefish assessment. Dr. Ponwith cautioned that comparison of that approach with the robust multinomial approach was done for the red grouper assessment and the resulting differences were very small. She offered this to dispel any notion that a change in the fitting procedure would yield vastly different results. Council members asked whether new catch levels could be phased in as the revised National Standard 1 guidelines allow. Staff clarified that the Council's ABC control rule would first need to be revised (via a plan amendment) in order to utilize that approach; hence, it will not be

feasible to apply it to the upcoming modifications to golden tilefish fishing levels. The Council approved the following motion:

MOTION #18: ESTABLISH THE P* FOR GOLDEN TILEFISH AT 0.45.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #19: REQUEST THAT THE SEFSC APPLY THE DIRICHLET MULTINOMIAL FITTING PROCEDURE TO THE GOLDEN TILEFISH UPDATE ASSESSMENT AND PROVIDE IN TIME FOR SSC REVIEW IN OCTOBER 2017. IN ADDITION, REQUEST PROJECTIONS (FROM THE REVISED ASSESSMENT) AT P* LEVELS OF 0.30, 0.40, 0.45, AND F_{MSY} .
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #20: REQUEST THAT NMFS IMPLEMENT INTERIM MEASURES TO REDUCE OVERFISHING OF GOLDEN TILEFISH BY SETTING THE ACL FOR 2018 AT THE PROJECTED YIELD AT $75\%F_{MSY}$ (323,000 POUNDS GUTTED WEIGHT)
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

ABC Control Rule Modifications

This item was postponed for September 2017 meeting.

Wreckfish ITQ Review

Council staff updated the Committee on the upcoming review of the program. NMFS currently requires that Limited Access Privilege Programs be evaluated periodically (every 7 years). The review of the Wreckfish ITQ program will begin in 2017. While the review process will not result in immediate changes to the program, the evaluation will provide the opportunity to recommend improvements. A proposed outline of the review will be presented to the Snapper Grouper AP and the SSC during their respective meetings in fall 2017. The evaluation would continue to be developed in 2018 with the Council taking final action to approve in SEPTEMBER 2018. The intent is for the review to be conducted in close cooperation with Wreckfish ITQ program participants.

MOTION #21: DIRECT STAFF TO BEGIN DEVELOPMENT OF THE WRECKFISH ITQ REVIEW AND TO MEET WITH ITQ SHAREHOLDERS PRIOR TO THE SEPTEMBER COUNCIL MEETING TO GET THEIR INPUT ON ITQ REVIEW DEVELOPMENT.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Other Business

An item (7) was added to the list under Timing and Tasks pertaining to yellowtail snapper management.

Timing and Task:

MOTION# 22:

1. Compile commercial landings information by state for the last 10 years (2006 to present) for blueline tilefish, snowy grouper, greater amberjack and red porgy to inform possible alternatives for commercial split seasons.
2. Request projections for red grouper for high and low recruitment scenarios with management taking effect in 2018.
3. Request that the SEFSC apply the Dirichlet Multinomial fitting procedure to the golden tilefish update assessment and provide in time for SSC review in October 2017.
4. Request golden tilefish projections from new assessment at P* levels of 0.30, 0.40, 0.45 and F_{MSY} for SSC review in October 2017.
5. Request interim measures to reduce overfishing of golden tilefish.
6. Meet with wreckfish ITQ shareholders prior to September 2017.
7. Send letter to Gulf Council to get input on development of joint amendment to combine ACLs for yellowtail snapper (look at options from South Florida Amendment and Amendment 44).

APPROVED BY COUNCIL