

FINAL
SUMMARY REPORT
SNAPPER GROUPEL COMMITTEE
SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
Atlantic Beach, NC
December 5-6, 2017

The Committee approved minutes from the September 2017 meeting and the agenda.

Status of Commercial & 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 relative to the respective ACLs.

SERO staff clarified why final 2016 commercial landings for some species were lower than preliminary landings from earlier in the year. Preliminary landings incorporate some expansion for non-, late, and partial reporting. Hence, the final year landings can differ from landings provided earlier in the year due to under and over estimation of these expansions.

SERO staff explained that changes had been recently made to the commercial ACL tracking webpage to document roll-over of uncaught ACL from one season to the next for species under split seasons (vermillion snapper and gray triggerfish).

Some Committee members expressed frustration at the time lag between a fishery closing based on projected landings and its re-opening once final landings reveal a portion of the ACL was not landed. The Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) director stated that the commercial ACL tracking system operates well and is timely as long as dealers submit their reports on time. Subsequently, there was discussion regarding outreach to dealers to encourage timely reporting.

Regarding recreational landings, a request was made to include an individual report on landings of blueline tilefish. In addition, discussion ensued to clarify how the headboat effort trend superimposed on individual species' landings estimates should be interpreted. The trend is not species-specific. A Committee member requested additional information on landings of scamp, which appear too high. SERO staff responded that estimates for charter landings from South Carolina in wave 4 (July/August) were high and accounted for the bulk of the South Atlantic recreational ACL for scamp. The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources is looking further into the issue.

Status of Amendments under Formal Review

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

- Amendment 41 (mutton snapper): The comment period on the Proposed Rule closed on November 27, 2017. SERO is working on the Final Rule package.
- Golden tilefish interim rule: The comment period ended on November 24, 2017. SERO is working on the Final Rule package. The Committee was informed that a lawsuit was filed on the proposed rule on November 29, 2017.
- Amendment 43 (red snapper): The amendment was submitted to NMFS on November 20, 2017. SERO is working on the Proposed Rule package.

Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP) Report

David Moss, AP Chair, delivered a summary of the AP's comments and recommendations on items pertaining to management of the snapper grouper fishery.

Amendment 46 (red snapper, recreational reporting, and powerhead regulation)

Dr. Marcel Reichert, Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Chair, presented an update on the red snapper chevron trap index (no video data) from the Southeast Reef Fish Survey (SERFS). The update included 2017 data.

Council staff delivered an overview presentation including two timelines for amendment development and a recommendation to remove actions addressing red snapper from this amendment since an Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) recommendation will not be available until summer 2018. Committee members discussed possibly increasing the red snapper commercial trip limit. There was reluctance to move forward with such a modification as the intent of the current daily trip limit is to serve as a bycatch allowance and an increase in the trip limit might allow for a directed fishery.

The Committee made the following motions:

MOTION #1: REMOVE ACTIONS 1-8 AND 12 FROM AMENDMENT 46.

1. Revise Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) for Red Snapper in the South Atlantic Region
2. Specify Minimum Stock Size Threshold (MSST) for Red Snapper in the South Atlantic Region
3. Revise Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) for Red Snapper in the South Atlantic Region
4. Establish a Recreational Annual Catch Target (ACT) for Red Snapper in the South Atlantic Region
5. Revise Optimum Yield (OY) for Red Snapper in the South Atlantic Region
6. Establish Closed Areas to Reduce Red Snapper Bycatch and Mortality
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.
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.
12. Revise Accountability Measures and Establish Adaptive Management for Red Snapper in the South Atlantic Region

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #2: REMOVE ALTERNATIVE 4 ACTION 9 FROM AMENDMENT 46

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.

Alternative 4. Require a harvest tag for recreational fishermen to fish for, harvest, or possess red snapper federal waters.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #3: REMOVE SUB-ALTERNATIVE 2B UNDER ACTION 9 FROM AMENDMENT 46.

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.

Alternative 2. Require a federal recreational permit in the South Atlantic Region (federal waters only) for recreational fishermen to fish for, harvest, or possess:

Sub-alternative 2b. snapper grouper species associated with red snapper habitat.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #4: ADD AN ALTERNATIVE IN ACTION 9 FOR A VESSEL PERMIT.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

The Committee provided guidance to staff to revise Action 9 to focus on a snapper grouper permit designed to improve recreational effort estimates that can eventually be used to improve landings estimates. Include all or a sub-set of snapper grouper species.

MOTION #5: REMOVE ACTION 10 FROM AMENDMENT 46.

Action 10. Modify Reporting Requirements for Private Recreational Fishermen.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #6: ADD REVISED ACTION 10 TO AMENDMENT 46.

***DIRECTION TO INCLUDE AN ALTERNATIVE SIMILAR TO ALTERNATIVE 2 THAT APPLIES TO VESSELS INSTEAD OF INDIVIDUAL ANGLERS.

GUIDANCE TO ALSO EXPLORE RENTAL VESSELS & CONSULTATION WITH STATISTICIANS TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON PERCENTAGE OF ANGLERS OR VESSELS TO BE SELECTED FOR REPORTING*

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #7: ADD ALTERNATIVE TO ACTION 11 ALTERNATIVE 4 TO REMOVE CIRCLE HOOK REQUIREMENT FROM A) COMMERCIAL AND B) RECREATIONAL FISHERIES.

Action 11. Require Use of Best Fishing Practices When Fishing for Snapper Grouper Species With Hook-and-Line Gear to Reduce Mortality and Bycatch of Red Snapper.

Alternative 4. Modify requirement for the use of non-stainless-steel circle hooks when fishing for snapper grouper species with hook and line gear north of 28 degrees (approximately 25 miles south of Cape Canaveral, FL). The circle hook requirement applies only to natural baits.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL (2 OPPOSED)

MOTION: ADD SUB-ALTERNATIVE 4F TO ACTION 11 TO REMOVE THE REQUIREMENT FOR CIRCLE HOOKS FOR FEDERALLY PERMITTED VESSELS.

MOTION FAILS

Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 26 (Recreational)

Staff delivered a presentation to recap recent actions the Council has taken on the amendment, point out recommendation from staff/IPT, etc. A second presentation showed seasonal trends in recreational landings by species groupings to inform subsequent discussion on proposed recreational management measures.

The committee made the following motions:

MOTION #8: APPROVE PURPOSE & NEED STATEMENT AS MODIFIED BELOW:

Purpose for Actions

Address recreational stakeholder input to increase access and predictability for the recreational component of the snapper grouper fishery, minimize regulatory discards, and improve regulatory compliance and consistency.

Need for Actions

~~Achieve efficient management~~ **Improve management** of the recreational component of the snapper grouper fishery to achieve optimum yield, while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse socio-economic effects for recreational fishermen in the South Atlantic region.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #9: REMOVE ACTION 1 FROM CONSIDERATION IN REGULATORY AMENDMENT 26

Action 1. Remove sand tilefish from the Deep-Water Complex and revise the annual catch limits, optimum yield, and recreational annual catch target

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #10: REMOVE ALTERNATIVE 2 UNDER ACTION 2 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Action 2. Modify the species composition of the recreational aggregates

Alternative 2. Remove the recreational Snapper Grouper aggregate groupings that are in place in the South Atlantic Region.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #11: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 4 UNDER ACTION 2 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Action 2. Modify the species composition of the recreational aggregates

Alternative 4. Modify existing Snapper Grouper aggregates to establish a Deep-water Species Aggregate, Shallow-water Species Aggregate, and an Other Snapper Grouper Species Aggregate

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #12: INCLUDE AN ALTERNATIVE UNDER ACTION 2 THAT EXCLUDES THE FOLLOWING SPECIES FROM THE OTHER SHALLOW-WATER SPECIES AGGREGATE: BLACK SEA BASS, VERMILION SNAPPER, GREATER AMBERJACK, RED PORGY, AND HOGFISH.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

DIRECTION TO CONTINUE TO EXCLUDE TOMTATE FROM BAG LIMIT SPECIFICATION

DIRECTION TO EXCLUDE RED SNAPPER FROM RECREATIONAL AGGREGATES

MOTION #13: UNDER ACTION 2, ADD AN ALTERNATIVE TO SPECIFY FOUR RECREATIONAL AGGREGATES: DEEP-WATER SPECIES, SHALLOW WATER GROUPERS, SHALLOW-WATER SNAPPERS, & OTHER SHALLOW-WATER SPECIES WITH SUB-ALTERNATIVES FOR THE OTHER SHALLOW WATER SPECIES AGGREGATE TO INCLUDE/EXCLUDE BLACK SEA BASS, RED PORGY, VERMILION SNAPPER, GREATER AMBERJACK, AND HOGFISH.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #14: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 5 UNDER ACTION 2 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 6 UNDER ACTION 2 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

MOTION FAILS

MOTION #15: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 2 UNDER SUB-ACTION 4.1 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Sub-action 4.1. Specify the recreational season for the proposed shallow-water grouper aggregate

Alternative 2. Allow recreational possession of species included in the proposed shallow-water grouper aggregate annually from January 1 through December 31.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #16: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 3 UNDER SUB-ACTION 4.1 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Sub-action 4.1. Specify the recreational season for the proposed shallow-water grouper aggregate

Alternative 3. Maintain seasonal prohibition on recreational possession of shallow-water grouper aggregate annually from January 1 to April 30 north of 28 degrees North latitude. Prohibit recreational harvest and possession? of shallow-water grouper species (gag, scamp, red grouper, yellowfin grouper, yellowmouth grouper, red hind, rock hind, graysby, and coney) (excluding black grouper) south of 28° North latitude (approximately off Palm Bay, Florida):

- Sub-alternative 3a.** January – March (three months)
- Sub-alternative 3b.** February – March (two months)
- Sub-alternative 3c.** February – April (three months)
- Sub-alternative 3d.** February – May (four months)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
 APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #17: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 4 UNDER SUB-ACTION 4.1 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Sub-action 4.1. Specify the recreational season for the proposed shallow-water grouper aggregate

Alternative 4. Maintain seasonal prohibition on recreational possession of shallow-water grouper aggregate annually from January 1 to April 30 north of 28 degrees North latitude. Prohibit recreational harvest and possession? of black grouper in the Exclusive Economic Zone south of 28 degrees north latitude.

- Sub-alternative 4a.** January – March (three months)
- Sub-alternative 4b.** January
- Sub-alternative 4c.** February
- Sub-alternative 4d.** March

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
 APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #18: MOVE SUB-ALTERNATIVES 2E AND 2F UNDER SUB-ACTION 4.2 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Sub-action 4.2. Specify the aggregate bag limit for the proposed shallow-water grouper aggregate

Alternative 2. Specify bag limits for proposed shallow-water grouper aggregate

- Sub-alternative 2e.** Four fish per person per day.
- Sub-alternative 2f.** Four fish per person per day with existing restrictions on gag and black grouper.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
 APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #19: ADD SUB-ALTERNATIVE THAT WOULD SPECIFY A 1 FISH PER PERSON PER DAY FOR RED GROUPER WITHIN THE AGGREGATE

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: ADD SUB-ALTERNATIVE THAT WOULD SPECIFY A 1 FISH PER VESSEL PER DAY FOR RED GROUPER

SUBSTITUTE MOTION FAILS

MAIN MOTION APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #20: ADD SUB-ALTERNATIVE THAT WOULD SPECIFY A 1 FISH PER VESSEL PER DAY FOR RED GROUPER IN THE EEZ NORTH OF THE GA/FL STATE LINE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

DIRECTION TO WORK WITH NOAA GC TO MAKE LANGUAGE CONSISTENT THROUGHOUT THE DOCUMENT REGARDING OPEN VS CLOSED MONTHS WHEN SPECIFYING RECREATIONAL SEASONS

***DIRECTION TO MODIFY ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 5 AS FOLLOWS AND INCLUDE A CLARIFYING NOTE THAT ALTERNATIVES DEPEND ON SELECTION OF PREFERRED UNDER ACTION 2 OF THE AMENDMENT:

Action 5. Specify management measures for the proposed other shallow-water species aggregate

Sub-action 5.1. Specify the aggregate bag limit for the proposed other shallow-water species aggregate

Alternative 2. Specify a 20-fish daily maximum per person per day for the other shallow-water species aggregate. Retain 10 snappers within the aggregate (lane snapper, yellowtail snapper, gray snapper, and cubera snapper) ~~and existing individual species' bag limits (black sea bass, vermilion snapper, greater amberjack, red porgy, mutton snapper, and hogfish).~~

Alternative 3. Specify a 20-fish daily maximum per person per day for the other shallow-water species aggregate where **NO MORE THAN** 10 fish can be gray triggerfish. Retain 10 snappers within the aggregate (lane snapper, yellowtail snapper, gray snapper, and cubera snapper) ~~and existing individual species' bag limits (black sea bass, vermilion snapper, greater amberjack, red porgy, mutton snapper, and hogfish).~~

Alternative 4. Specify a 20-fish daily maximum per person per day for the other shallow-water species aggregate where 10 fish can be gray triggerfish and 10 can be Atlantic spadefish. Retain 10 snappers within the aggregate (lane snapper, yellowtail snapper, gray snapper, and cubera snapper) ~~and existing individual species' bag limits (black sea bass, vermilion snapper, greater amberjack, red porgy, and mutton snapper, hogfish).~~

Alternative 5. Specify a 10-fish daily maximum per person per day for the other shallow-water species aggregate. Retain 10 snappers within the aggregate (lane snapper, yellowtail snapper, gray snapper, and cubera snapper) ~~and existing individual species' bag limits (black sea bass, vermilion snapper, greater amberjack, red porgy, mutton snapper, and hogfish).~~***

MOTION #21: ADD AN ALTERNATIVE:

Alternative x. Specify a 20-fish daily maximum per person per day for the other shallow-water species aggregate. **NO MORE THAN 10 FISH CAN BE** snappers within the aggregate (lane snapper, yellowtail snapper, gray snapper, and cubera snapper) **AND NO MORE THAN 10 FISH OF ANY INDIVIDUAL NON-SNAPPER SPECIES.** RETAIN THE 5-MUTTON SNAPPER LIMIT.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

GUIDANCE TO RETAIN THE 5 MUTTON LIMIT THROUGHOUT ACTION

MOTION #22: UNDER ACTION 5, INCLUDE ALTERNATIVE(S) TO SPECIFY A BAG LIMIT FOR GRAY TRIGGERFISH AND/OR A 10-FISH MAXIMUM OF ANY ONE SPECIES WITHIN THE OTHER SHALLOW-WATER SPECIES AGGREGATE.
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #23: ADD ALTERNATIVE 3 TO ACTION 6 AS SUGGESTED BY THE IPT
Action 6. Specify the aggregate bag limit for the proposed snapper grouper species aggregate

Alternative 3. Specify a 20-fish daily maximum per person maintaining current restrictions for individual species (black sea bass, vermilion snapper, greater amberjack, red porgy, hogfish, wreckfish, mutton snapper, and red snapper) and maintain current aggregate limits (10 snappers; 3 groupers with restrictions for gag, black grouper, snowy grouper, and golden tilefish; and 20 fish of species without a bag limit, excluding tomtate?).

Sub-Alternative 3a. Specify only 10 fish can be gray triggerfish

Sub-Alternative 3b. Specify only 10 fish can be Atlantic spadefish.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 27 (Commercial)

Council staff delivered a presentation to recap guidance provided during the September 2017 meeting, review timing, and objectives for this meeting.

The SSC recommended using the “last three-year average” methodology instead of the Seasonal Auto-Regressive Integrated Moving Average (SARIMA) to project landings and predict season length (included in October 2017 SSC Report). The SSC would like further information on technical details of the analytical methods and suggested receiving a presentation at their spring 2018 meeting, if appropriate.

A Committee member expressed interest in receiving a summary of pertinent commercial landings based on the commercial logbook grid (i.e., “heat map”) in order to provide a more spatially-explicit resolution that can better inform decisions on commercial management measures in this amendment. The SSC also recommends a synthesis of commercial catch with geographical component.

The Committee pointed out discrepancies in the analyses and requested clarification as to why some trip limits scenarios result in earlier projected closures than under higher trip limits, etc. (for example, see Table 5 in Decision Document).

The Committee provided the following motions/guidance:

MOTION #24: APPROVE THE PURPOSE AND NEED AS MODIFIED:

Purpose

The purpose of this amendment is to address commercial stakeholder input to **increased commercial access** enable equitable access for fishermen participating in the snapper grouper fishery **to the snapper grouper fishery**, and to minimize discards.

Need

The need for this amendment is to more efficiently IMPROVE management OF the commercial sector of the snapper grouper fishery to achieve optimum yield, while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse socio-economic effects for commercial fishermen in the South Atlantic Region.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #25: MOVE SUB-ALTERNATIVE 3C UNDER ACTION 1 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX:

Action 1. Establish a commercial split season and modify the commercial trip limit for blueline tilefish

Alternative 3. Retain the January 1 through December 31 commercial fishing year for blueline tilefish in the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone. Modify the commercial trip for blueline tilefish:

Sub-alternative 3c. 100 pounds gutted weight from January 1 through April 30 and 400 pounds gutted weight from May 1 through December 31.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

***DIRECTION TO ACCEPT SUGGESTED EDITS TO ACTIONS/ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTIONS 1-6 & 8 ***

MOTION #26: ADD ALTERNATIVE UNDER ACTION 3 FOR A YEAR-ROUND SEASON WITH TRIP LIMIT SUB-ALTERNATIVES OF 1,000 POUNDS AND 800 POUNDS

Action 3. Establish a commercial split season and modify the commercial trip limit for greater amberjack

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #27: MODIFY ALTERNATIVES 2 AND 3 UNDER ACTION 3 TO REMOVE THE TRIP-LIMIT STEP DOWNS

Action 3. Establish a commercial split season and modify the commercial trip limit for greater amberjack

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #28: ADD SUB-ALTERNATIVES TO ALTERNATIVES 2 AND 3 UNDER ACTION 3 TO CONSIDER A 1,000 POUND TRIP LIMIT IN SEASON 1 AND 800 POUND TRIP LIMIT IN SEASON 2

Action 3. Establish a commercial split season and modify the commercial trip limit for greater amberjack

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

DIRECTION TO STAFF TO ADD TABLES WITH LANDINGS VALUES PRESENTED IN VARIOUS FIGURES THROUGHOUT THE DOCUMENT

MOTION #29: INCLUDE THE ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDED BY THE SNAPPER GROUPER AP FOR GREATER AMBERJACK:

Sub-alternative 2c. Trip limit = 1,000 pounds whole weight in both seasons. A trip limit step-down to 500 pounds whole weight would occur in each season once 75% of the seasonal quota is met or projected to be met. A trip step down would not occur in Season 2 unless 75% of the season's quota is met or is projected to be met on January 31.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #30: ADD ALTERNATIVES TO ACTION 5 FOR COMMERCIAL TRIP LIMITS OF 1,000, 850, AND 700 POUNDS FOR EACH SEASON WITH NO TRIP LIMIT REDUCTIONS

Action 5. Modify the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: MOVE ALTERNATIVES 3 & 4 UNDER ACTION 5 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Action 5. Modify the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper

Alternative 3. Retain the management measures in the first season commercial trip limit and trip limit reduction in Season 1 (January 1 through June 30). For the second Season 2 (July 1 through December 31), change modify the commercial trip limit to 500 lbs gw gutted weight and remove the trip limit step down reduction to 500 lbs gw when 75% of the seasonal quota is met or projected to be met. Any remaining quota from Season 1 transfers to Season 2. Any remaining quota from Season 2 is not carried forward.

Alternative 4. Change Modify the commercial trip limits for both seasons (January 1 through June 30; July 1 through December 31) to 750 lbs gw gutted weight and remove the Season Two trip limit step-down trip limit reduction in Season 2. when 75% of the seasonal quota is met or projected to be met. Any remaining quota from Season 1 transfers to Season 2. Any remaining quota from Season 2 is not carried forward.

MOTION FAILS

MOTION #31: REMOVE ALTERNATIVE 4 UNDER ACTION 5 AND MODIFY ALTERNATIVE 2 TO REMOVE THE TRIP LIMIT REDUCTION

Action 5. Modify the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper

Alternative 2. Retain the commercial trip limit and trip limit reduction in Season 1 (January 1 through June 30). For Season 2 (July 1 through December 31), modify the commercial trip limit to 750 gutted weight and retain the trip limit reduction to 500 gutted weight when 75% of the seasonal quota is met or projected to be met. Any remaining quota from Season 1 transfers to Season 2. Any remaining quota from Season 2 is not carried forward.

Alternative 4. Change Modify the commercial trip limits for both seasons (January 1 through June 30; July 1 through December 31) to 750 lbs gw gutted weight and remove the Season Two trip limit step-down trip limit reduction in Season 2. when 75% of the seasonal quota is met or projected to be met. Any remaining quota from Season 1 transfers to Season 2. Any remaining quota from Season 2 is not carried forward.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

THE COUNCIL CLARIFIED REMOVE STEP-DOWN IN SEASON 2

MOTION #32: ADD ALTERNATIVE 3 TO ACTION 6 AS SUGGESTED BY IPT

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

Alternative 3. Establish a commercial trip limit for the Other Jacks Complex.

Sub-alternative 3a. 500 pounds gutted weight

Sub-alternative 3b. 400 pounds gutted weight.

Sub-alternative 3c. 300 pounds gutted weight

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

DIRECTION TO STAFF TO RE-ARRANGE ACTIONS 6 AND 7, IF NECESSARY, TO CAPTURE THE EXPECTED COMBINED EFFECTS OF SPECIFYING A MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT FOR ALMACO JACK (ACTION 7) AND IMPLEMENTING A TRIP LIMIT FOR THE OTHER JACKS COMPLEX (ACTION 6). BRING THIS ANALYSIS TO THE COUNCIL IN MARCH 2018.

MOTION #33: REMOVE ALTERNATIVES 2, 3 & 4 FROM ACTION 8

Action 8. Modify the seasonal prohibition on commercial harvest and possession of shallow-water groupers

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

INTENT IS TO BE CONSISTENT WITH CHANGES THAT WERE MADE TO THE SAME ACTION IN REGULATORY AMENDMENT 26

Amendment 38 (blueline tilefish)

SEFSC staff delivered a presentation on the blueline tilefish stock assessment (SEDAR 50). Subsequently, the SSC chair presented the SSC's recommendations and concerns regarding the assessment. It was noted that the assessment and corresponding catch level recommendations pertain to the area south of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. Since the South Atlantic Council manages the blueline tilefish resource south of the North Carolina/Virginia border, a recommendation on an ABC that can be applied to the Council's area of jurisdiction is still pending. Representatives of the South Atlantic and Mid-Atlantic SSCs are expected to collaborate to recommend appropriate catch levels for use in management. The Council expects to receive an update on progress towards this goal at their March 2018. A final recommendation on blueline tilefish catch levels for the South Atlantic is expected in June 2018. At that time, the Council will provide guidance to staff on amendment development and timing.

For-Hire Moratorium Amendment

At their June 2017 meeting, the Council approved a motion to direct staff to start work on an amendment that would establish a moratorium on federal snapper grouper for-hire permits. Council staff gave an overview presentation to recap Council guidance to-date on this topic. The Committee began revisions to the draft purpose and need statements in the options paper and subsequently engaged in lengthy discussion. The Committee did not approve this topic for public scoping. The Committee made the following motions, which were not approved:

MOTION: STAFF CONTINUE WORKING ON THE OPTIONS PAPER AND PREPARE A SCOPING DOCUMENT FOR MARCH 2018 MEETING.

MOTION FAILS

MOTION: DIRECT STAFF TO STOP WORK ON THE MORATORIUM AMENDMENT.

MOTION FAILS

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: TABLE DISCUSSION UNTIL SURVEY OF SG FOR-HIRE PERMIT HOLDERS CAN BE CONDUCTED.

MOTION FAILS

GUIDANCE TO STAFF TO PREPARE A SIMPLIFIED VERSION OF THE OPTIONS PAPER (SIMILAR TO WHAT WAS DONE FOR SCOPING DOC FOR AM 43) FOR THE MARCH 2018 MEETING

Red grouper

The SSC Chair delivered the SSC's recommendations on an ABC for red grouper. The SSC reviewed the requested projections at their October 2017 meeting and considered them Best Scientific Information Available and appropriate for management. An amendment (Abbreviated Framework Amendment 1) was developed to implement the revised red grouper catch levels.

MOTION #34: APPROVE SNAPPER GROUPE ABBREVIATED FRAMEWORK AMENDMENT 1 FOR FORMAL SECRETARIAL REVIEW AND DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT AS NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE. GIVE STAFF EDITORIAL LICENSE TO MAKE ANY NECESSARY EDITORIAL CHANGES TO THE DOCUMENT/CODIFIED TEXT AND GIVE THE COUNCIL CHAIR AUTHORITY TO APPROVE THE REVISIONS AND RE-DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Golden Tilefish

Dr. Reichert, SSC Chair, delivered the SSC's recommendations on catch levels for golden tilefish. Dr. Reichert explained that the SSC reviewed the revised assessment at their October 2017 meeting but did not find the revisions acceptable for management. Hence, the SSC's recommendations based on a $P^*=0.30$ for golden tilefish remain in place. An interim rule to specify a golden tilefish ACL for 2018 is currently going through rulemaking and is expected to be effective by January 1, 2018. The Committee discussed amendment development to implement the revised catch levels before the interim rule expires (1 year) and made the following motion:

MOTION #35: DIRECT STAFF TO PREPARE A DRAFT FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT FOR THE MARCH 2018 MEETING TO ADJUST THE GOLDEN TILEFISH ACL AND CONSIDER MODIFICATION TO TRIP LIMITS.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

** INTENT TO APPROVE FOR FINAL REVIEW AT JUNE 2018 MEETING. GUIDANCE TO ADD PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED ACTIONS/ALTERANTIVES TO EXTEND THE SEASON***

Wreckfish ITQ Review & Yellowtail Snapper

The Council will discuss these items at the March 2018 meeting.

Other Business

No items were brought up for discussion.

Timing and Task:

MOTION #36: Direct staff to do the following:

1. Request that SERO analyst deliver a presentation to the SSC at their upcoming meeting on methodology used to conduct analyses for Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 27.
2. Prepare “heat maps” depicting commercial landings of blueline tilefish, snowy grouper, and amberjack based on commercial logbook grid for March 2018 meeting.
3. Conduct/complete analyses for Vision Blueprint Amendments (Regulatory Amendments 26 & 27) for March 2018 meeting.
4. Initiate development of framework amendment to revise catch levels of golden tilefish and consider modifications to management measures.
5. Prepare simplified options paper on for-hire moratorium for March 2018 meeting.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

GUIDANCE TO INCLUDE ITEM TO SG COMMITTEE AGENDA FOR MARCH 2018 MEETING TO DISCUSS MRIP ISSUES

Snapper Grouper Amendment 46

DRAFT Action 10. Modify Reporting Requirements for Private Recreational Fishermen.

Alternative 1 (No Action). There is no reporting requirement for recreational anglers although the Council approved an action which would require owner or operator to complete fishing records if selected by the Science and Research Director (SAFMC 2008).

The current language for private recreational vessel reporting requirements was developed in Amendment 15A (SAFMC 2008), and was approved by the Council and the Secretary of Commerce. However, that requirement is not effective because of issues under the Paperwork Reduction Act. The language states “the owner or operator of a vessel that fishes for or lands South Atlantic snapper grouper in or from the South Atlantic EEZ who is selected to report by the Science and Research Director (SRD) must--

- (1) Maintain a fishing record for each trip, or a portion of such trips as specified by the SRD, on forms provided by the SRD. Completed fishing records must be submitted to the SRD monthly and must either be made available to an authorized statistical reporting agent or be postmarked no later than 7 days after the end of each month. Information to be reported is indicated on the form and its accompanying instructions.
- (2) Participate in the NMFS-sponsored electronic logbook and/or video monitoring reporting program as directed by the SRD.”

It is not known if or when this reporting requirement would become effective.

Alternative 2. Require private recreational anglers to complete electronic logbooks. This would require **selected** (Council to specify % selected based on SSC and other technical input) fishermen with a recreational snapper grouper permit **to report all catch and discards electronically each week** when fishing for or catching species listed in the **Action 9**.

Alternative 3. Promote voluntarily electronic reporting by private recreational fishermen.

Discussion:

Reporting requirements for headboats developed in the Joint South Atlantic/Gulf of Mexico Generic Charter/Headboat Reporting in the South Atlantic Amendment (2013) require headboats to report each trip electronically. A similar amendment requiring electronic reporting for charter boats (South Atlantic For-Hire Amendment) has been approved by the Council and is under review by NMFS.

Alternative 2 specifies selected fishermen to participate in the weekly reporting. It is estimated that less than 1% of the trips are intercepted through MRIP. Therefore, the intercept of a single fish through MRIP will be expanded by a significant amount to account for the trips that are not intercepted. Self-reported logbooks could be used to increase the sample size of numbers of trips reporting. The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council is proposing to require 100% reporting in the for-hire and private recreational fishery for blueline and golden tilefish since they are rare event species. Many species in the snapper grouper fishery management complex are rare event species. Requiring reporting of landings could help to improve the accuracy and precision of the private recreational landings.

Alternative 3 would promote voluntary electronic reporting for private recreational fishermen. Currently, MyFishCount, an electronic reporting program, is piloted in the South Atlantic Region. This program has been well received by fishermen and promoted by private recreational fishing organizations and environmental organizations as an opportunity to improve

upon the current data available for red snapper. In 2018, the system will be expanded to allow reporting for other species managed by the Council.