

Final Summary Report

Snapper Grouper Committee

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The Snapper Grouper Committee met on March 4-5, 2014, in Savannah, GA.

Status of landings for quota-managed snapper grouper species

The Committee received an update on the status of landings (commercial and recreational) for snapper grouper species under ACLs. The current recreational landings presentation provided by the Southeast Region includes effort data. However, this information is difficult to parse out on timeframes less than one year. Therefore, the Committee requested that effort data be only provided on a yearly basis from now on.

Dr. Jack McGovern gave a presentation on a possible red snapper season for 2014. Dr. McGovern stated the following:

- 2013 data are currently being finalized.
- Data from a study conducted by the state of Florida will be available soon.
- The SEFSC report is expected in May, including the estimate of total removals that will determine whether there will be a season in 2014.

Status of Amendments Approved for Secretarial Review

The Committee received a status report from Dr. McGovern on the following amendments:

- Amendment 27/EA (Mgmt Authority/Fmwk/Crew Size/Blue Runner) – the amendment was approved and regulations became effective on January 27, 2014.
- Regulatory Amendment 14/EA (Multiple Species) – the Council submitted the amendment to NMFS on January 15, 2014. The Proposed Rule package is at NMFS Headquarters and a Proposed Rule is expected to publish soon.
- Emergency Rule (Blueline Tilefish) – the Rule package is under review at the Regional Office and expected to go to NMFS HQ soon. Regulations could be effective in late March or early April. The Rule will be effective for 180 days and can be extended for an additional 186 days.

Oculina Experimental Closed Area Evaluation

Anna Martin, Council staff, briefed the Committee on planned activities to address the 10-year re-evaluation of the Oculina Experimental Closed Area (OECA). The Oculina Evaluation Team was originally going to convene via webinar on February 13, 2014 to initiate discussions on re-evaluation of the OECA. However, the webinar had to be re-scheduled due to weather-related problems. A series of breakout groups to discuss the research, outreach and law enforcement

portions of the Evaluation Plan will be held the week of March 10, 2014. The OECA Evaluation Team's final report will be presented to the Council at their June 2014 meeting.

Regulatory Amendment 16 (black sea bass pot closure)

Myra Brouwer, Council staff, presented an overview of scoping comments received on the amendment during the January 2014 round of hearings. The Committee provided guidance and made the following motions:

MOTION: APPROVE THE IPT'S SUGGESTED EDITS TO THE PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of Regulatory Amendment 16 is to ~~address the balance between ESA-listed whales protection and the socioeconomic impacts imposed on black sea bass pot fishermen initiated by the~~ reconsider the annual November 1 to April 30 prohibition on the use of black sea bass pot gear.

The need for the amendment is to minimize *potential negative* socio-economic impacts to black sea bass pot endorsement holders while maintaining protection for ESA-listed whales in the South Atlantic region.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: AMEND ABOVE MOTION TO STRIKE THE WORD "POTENTIAL" FROM THE NEED STATEMENT FOR REGULATORY AMENDMENT 16

AMENDED MOTION IS MAIN MOTION

MAIN MOTION APPROVED BY COUNCIL

****GUIDANCE TO EXPAND ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION) WITH EXISTING PROVISIONS IN THE ATLANTIC LARGE WHALE TAKE-REDUCTION PLAN (ALWTRP) AND SNAPPER GROUPER AMENDMENT 18A BUT CLARIFY THAT EXISTING MEASURES WOULD STAY IN PLACE****

**** INTENT WOULD BE FOR THE AREA DEPICTED IN ALTERNATIVE 4 TO REMAIN UNCHANGED EVEN IF RIGHT WHALE CRITICAL HABITAT BOUNDARIES CHANGE AS A RESULT OF ITS RE-EVALUATION****

****GUIDANCE TO INCLUDE TIMEFRAME OF NOVEMBER 15 THROUGH APRIL 15 TO THE LANGUAGE OF ALTERNATIVE 4****

MOTION: ACCEPT THE LANGUAGE AND REVISIONS TO ALTERNATIVE 5 AS SUBMITTED BY THE NMFS PROTECTED RESOURCES DIVISION

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: INCLUDE REVISED ALTERNATIVE 6 IN THE DOCUMENT FOR ANALYSIS BUT USE WAYPOINTS TO DELINEATE THE BOUNDARY

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: ADD AN ALTERNATIVE(S) THAT WOULD CLOSE POTS IN WATERS OFF NC:

- FROM NOV 1 TO DEC 15 IN ALL EEZ WATERS OFF NC
- NOV 1 TO DEC 15 IN WATERS SHALLOWER THAN 25 M
- MARCH 15 TO APR 30 IN ALL EEZ WATERS OFF NC
- MARCH 15 TO APR 30 IN WATERS SHALLOWER THAN 25 M

GUIDANCE TO STAFF TO STRUCTURE IN A MANNER THAT WILL FACILITATE ANALYSIS

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: AMEND THE ABOVE MOTION TO INCLUDE SOUTH CAROLINA IN EACH OF THE ALTERNATIVES

AMENDED MOTION BECOMES MAIN MOTION

MAIN MOTION APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 3 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Alternative 3. Prohibit retention, possession, and fishing for black sea bass using black sea bass pot gear, annually, from November 15 through April 15.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: ADD ALTERNATIVES AS SUGGESTED BY THE HUMANE SOCIETY TO REGULATORY AMENDMENT 16 FOR ANALYSIS

1. POT CLOSURE IN PETITIONED RIGHT WHALE CRITICAL HABITAT
2. POT CLOSURE IN SOUTHEAST SEASONAL GILLNET RESTRICTED AREA

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

GUIDANCE TO STAFF TO INCLUDE DISCUSSION ON WHY A POT CLOSURE IS NEEDED IN THE SE REGION VS. THE NE REGION, WHERE POTS/TRAPS ARE NUMEROUS AND THERE ARE LIMITED GEAR RESTRICTIONS*

NOAA GC Update on Amendment 22 (recreational harvest tag program)

NOAA GC is currently developing guidelines that can be applied nationally to determine whether proposed programs fit the criteria of a Limited Access Privilege Program (LAPP). More information is currently needed to determine whether the proposed recreational harvest tag program in Amendment 22 would be considered a LAPP. To that purpose, NOAA GC began by asking a series of questions from each of the state directors. However, it was decided that directors would be contacted directly and more details would be provided to the Committee and the Council at their June 2014 meeting.

Amendment 29 (ORCS & gray triggerfish)

Myra Brouwer, Council staff, provided a summary of public comments received on the amendment during the January 2014 round of hearings. The Committee made the following motions and issued the following guidance under each action:

MOTION: ACCEPT THE IPT'S RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE PURPOSE AND NEED:

The purpose of the actions is to: update the ~~South Atlantic Council's~~ South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (South Atlantic Council) acceptable biological catch (ABC) control rule to incorporate methodology for determining the ABC of "Only Reliable Catch Species" (ORCS); adjust ABCs for the affected species; and establish management measures for gray triggerfish in federal waters of the South Atlantic region.

The need for action is to: specify ABCs for snapper grouper species based on the best available scientific information, ~~adopt the recommendations of the South Atlantic Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) to update the ABC Control Rule and adjust ABCs for "ORCS" based on the revised ABC Control Rule,~~ lengthen the commercial season for gray triggerfish to diminish and/or prevent derby conditions, and ensure that overfishing does not occur pending a new assessment of the gray triggerfish stock in the South Atlantic region.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: ACCEPT THE IPT'S RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE WORDING OF ACTION 1 AND ALTERNATIVE 1:

Action 1. Update ~~Amend~~ the South Atlantic Council's Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) Control Rule

Alternative 1 (No Action). ~~Continue to utilize~~ Utilize the South Atlantic Council's ABC control rule as adopted in the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit (ACL) Amendment to specify ABCs for snapper grouper species.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: ACCEPT THE IPT'S RECOMMENDED EDITS TO ACTION 2, ALTERNATIVE 1.

Alternative 1 (No Action). ~~Do not adjust~~ ABCs for select unassessed snapper grouper species ~~are~~ based on the current ABC Control Rule.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: APPROVE USING A RISK TOLERANCE SCALAR OF 0.70 FOR WHITE GRUNT AND REQUEST THAT THE SSC PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON WHETHER TWO SEPARATE ACLS ARE NEEDED FOR THIS SPECIES
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: ADD AN ACTION TO ESTABLISH ACLs AND INCLUDE A RANGE OF ACL ALTERNATIVES

ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION). $ACL=OY=ABC$

ALTERNATIVE 2. $ACL=OY=0.95*ABC$

ALTERNATIVE 3. $ACL=OY=0.90*ABC$

ALTERNATIVE 4. $ACL=OY=0.80*ABC$

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: ACCEPT THE IPT'S RECOMMENDED EDITS TO THE LANGUAGE OF ACTION 3

Action 3. Modify the measurement method for gray triggerfish and establish a size limit minimum size limit for gray triggerfish

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: ADD AN ALTERNATIVE THAT WOULD ESTABLISH A 14" FL MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT FOR GRAY TRIGGERFISH OFF EAST FLORIDA

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: ADD SUB-ALTERNATIVES TO ALTERNATIVES 2-5 THAT WOULD ALLOW A CHOICE FOR THE MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT TO APPLY TO THE COMMERCIAL AND/OR RECREATIONAL SECTORS

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: RESTRUCTURE ALTERNATIVE 3 TO REMOVE EAST FLORIDA FROM THE ALTERNATIVE:

Preferred Alternative 3. Specify a minimum size limit for gray triggerfish of 12 inches fork length (FL) in federal waters off North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: SELECT NEW ALTERNATIVE 5 AS A PREFERRED: ESTABLISH A 14" FL MINIMUM SIZE LIMIT FOR GRAY TRIGGERFISH OFF EAST FLORIDA.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: APPROVE THE IPT'S SUGGESTED EDITS TO ALTERNATIVES 2 AND 3 UNDER ACTION 4

Alternative 2. Allocate the directed commercial gray triggerfish ACL into two quotas: 50% to the period January 1 through June 30 and 50% to the period July 1 through December 31. Any remaining ACL quota from season 1 would transfer to season 2. Any remaining ACL quota from season 2 would not be carried forward.

Alternative 3. Allocate the directed commercial gray triggerfish ACL into two quotas; 40% to the period January 1 through June 30 and 60% to the period July 1 through December 31. Any remaining quota from season 1 would transfer to season 2. Any remaining quota from season 2 would not be carried forward.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 AS PREFERRED UNDER ACTION 4

Alternative 2. Allocate the directed commercial gray triggerfish ACL into two quotas: 50% to the period January 1 through June 30 and 50% to the period July 1 through December 31. Any remaining quota from season 1 would transfer to season 2. Any remaining quota from season 2 would not be carried forward.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: REMOVE THE SUGGESTED IPT WORDING FROM ALTERNATIVE 3

Alternative 3. Establish a commercial trip limit for gray triggerfish in the South Atlantic region. When 75% of the gray triggerfish commercial ACL is met or is projected to be met, the trip limit is reduced to:

Sub-alternative 3a. 200 pounds

Sub-alternative 3b. 500 pounds

Sub-alternative 3c. 750 pounds

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2, SUB-ALTERNATIVE 2B AS PREFERRED WITH NO STEP-DOWN

Alternative 2. Establish a commercial trip limit for gray triggerfish in the South Atlantic region.

Sub-alternative 2b. 1,000 lbs

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Amendment 32 (Blueline Tilefish)

Gregg Waugh, Council staff, presented an overview the Options Paper for Amendment 32. The Committee made the following motions:

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 AS PREFERRED

Alternative 2. MSY equals the yield produced by F_{MSY} or the F_{MSY} proxy. MSY and F_{MSY} are recommended by the most recent SEDAR/SSC.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: REQUEST THE SSC'S GUIDANCE REGARDING MAINTAINING CATCH LEVELS AT THE YIELD AT $75\%F_{MSY}$ (EQUILIBRIUM) UNTIL THE NEXT STOCK ASSESSMENT

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: DIRECT STAFF TO LOOK AT PROPORTION OF LANDINGS IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC VS. NORTH OF NORTH CAROLINA AND CALCULATE A PERCENTAGE OF THE ACL FOR THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Council staff provided the information that the Committee requested to the Council through the above motion. The Council then made the following motion:

MOTION: ADD AN ALTERNATIVE UNDER ACTION 2 THAT WOULD ESTABLISH THE $ACL = OY = 0.98*ABC$

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

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

Alternative 4. Separate blueline tilefish from the deep-water complex and establish annual catch limits for blueline tilefish. The blueline tilefish $ACL = OY = 80\%ABC$. Specify commercial and recreational ACLs based on existing sector allocations (50.07% commercial and 49.93% recreational). The deep-water complex ACL would remain at current levels with the current blueline tilefish portion removed.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 4 UNDER ACTION 3 (RECREATIONAL ACT) TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Alternative 4. The recreational ACT for blueline tilefish equals 75% of the recreational ACL. Adjust the recreational ACT for the Deep-water Complex to exclude blueline tilefish.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: USE THE MOST RECENT 5 YEARS OF RECREATIONAL LANDINGS TO OBTAIN THE PERCENT STANDARD ERROR (PSE) TO CALCULATE THE RECREATIONAL ACT
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 3 UNDER ACTION 4 (COMMERCIAL AMs) TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Alternative 3. If blueline tilefish commercial landings as estimated by the Science and Research Director reach or are projected to reach the commercial ACL, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to close the commercial sector for the remainder of the fishing year. On and after the effective date of such a notification, all sale or purchase is prohibited and harvest or possession of this species in or from the South Atlantic EEZ is limited to the bag and possession limit. This bag and possession limit applies in the South Atlantic on board a vessel for which a valid Federal commercial or charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic snapper grouper, dolphin wahoo, or golden crab has been issued as appropriate, without regard to where such species were harvested, *i.e.*, in state or Federal waters. Additionally, if the commercial ACL is exceeded, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the commercial ACL in the following fishing year by the amount of the commercial overage.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 3 UNDER ACTION 5 (RECREATIONAL AMs) TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Alternative 3. If blueline tilefish recreational landings, as estimated by the Science and Research Director, exceed the recreational ACL, then during the following fishing year, recreational landings will be monitored for a persistence in increased landings. If necessary, the Regional Administrator shall publish a notice to reduce the length of fishing season and the recreational ACL in the following fishing year by the amount of the recreational overage. The length of the recreational season and recreational ACL will not be reduced if the Regional Administrator determines, using the best scientific information available, that a reduction is unnecessary.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

****GUIDANCE TO ADD LANGUAGE HIGHLIGHTED BELOW TO ACTION 6

Alternative 2. Establish a commercial trip limit for blueline tilefish from January to April of 100 pounds.

Sub-alternative 2a. Establish a commercial trip limit from May onwards of 1,500 pounds until 80% of the ACL is projected to be met. Then reduce the trip limit to 100 pounds for the remainder of the fishing year **UNTIL THE ACL IS MET OR PROJECTED TO BE MET**

Sub-alternative 2b. Establish a commercial trip limit from May onwards of 2,000 pounds until 80% of the ACL is projected to be met. Then reduce the trip limit to 100 pounds for the remainder of the fishing year **UNTIL THE ACL IS MET OR PROJECTED TO BE MET**

Sub-alternative 2c. Establish a commercial trip limit from May onwards of 2,500 pounds until 80% of the ACL is projected to be met. Then reduce the trip limit to 100 pounds for the remainder of the fishing year **UNTIL THE ACL IS MET OR PROJECTED TO BE MET*******

MOTION: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 5 UNDER ACTION 7 (RECREATIONAL MANAGEMENT MEASURES) TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Alternative 5. Modify the recreational bag limit as shown above and modify the AM for the blueline tilefish recreational sector, such that NMFS will annually announce the recreational fishing season start and end dates in the *Federal Register* and by other methods, as deemed appropriate. The fishing season will start on _____ (Council to specify) and end on the date NMFS projects the recreational ACL will be met.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

GUIDANCE TO RETAIN ACTION 8 (ESTABLISH A REBUILDING PLAN) IN THE AMENDMENT UNTIL REGULATORY AMENDMENT 21 ADDRESSES MSST FOR BLUELINE TILEFISH

A. Regulatory Amendment 20 (Snowy grouper)

The Committee reviewed options for Regulatory Amendment 20 and made the following motions:

MOTION: MOVE MUTTON SNAPPER ACTIONS FROM SNAPPER GROUPEE REGULATORY AMENDMENT 20 TO A FUTURE SNAPPER GROUPEE AMENDMENT THAT WOULD INCLUDE ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPED BY THE JOINT COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON SOUTH FLORIDA MANAGEMENT ISSUES.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: ACCEPT THE IPT'S SUGGESTED WORDING FOR PURPOSE AND NEED

Purpose for Action

The purpose of this proposed action is to adjust the Rebuilding Strategy, **ACCEPTABLE** Allowable-Biological Catch (ABC), Annual Catch Limit (ACL), Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), Minimum Stock Size Threshold (MSST), and Optimum Yield (OY), and revise management measures for the snowy grouper component of the snapper grouper fishery. These adjustments address the recent stock assessment results based on data through 2012.

Need for Action

Prevent overfishing and continue rebuilding the stock while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse social and economic effects.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: USE THE NORMAL FRAMEWORK PROCEDURE AND DEVELOP SNAPPER GROUPER REGULATORY AMENDMENT 20 FOR REVIEW AND FINAL APPROVAL AT THE SEPTEMBER 2014 COUNCIL MEETING. HOLD A WEBINAR Q&A AND PUBLIC HEARING IN AUGUST 2014 AND SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING AT THE SEPTEMBER 2014 MEETING.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: MOVE ACTION 1 (REBUILDING SCHEDULE) TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 2, ACTION 2 (REBUILDING STRATEGY) TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX.

Alternative 2. Define a rebuilding strategy for snowy grouper that maintains a constant fishing mortality rate ($F=F_{MSY}$) throughout the rebuilding timeframe. Year 1 remains 2006 and the yield at F_{MSY} and ABC projections will change with each assessment. Retain the requirement of at least a 50% probability of rebuilding the stock to B_{MSY} . ABC would change each year until 20xx; the ABC for 20xx would remain in effect until modified.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 4, ACTION 2 (REBUILDING STRATEGY) AS PREFERRED AND REQUEST THE SSC EVALUATE WHETHER THIS IS SUFFICIENTLY CLOSE TO THE PERCENTAGE FROM THE ABC CONTROL RULE FOR THE COUNCIL TO USE. SPECIFY THAT THE ABC WOULD INCREASE FOR 5 YEARS BEGINNING IN 2015 AND THAT THE 2019 VALUE WOULD REMAIN IN PLACE UNTIL MODIFIED.

Alternative 4. Define a rebuilding strategy for snowy grouper that maintains a constant fishing mortality rate ($F=75\%F_{MSY}$) throughout the rebuilding timeframe. Year 1 remains 2006 and the yield at $75\%F_{MSY}$ and ABC projections will change with each assessment. ABC would change each year until 2015; the ABC for 2019 would remain in effect until modified.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: ADD ALTERNATIVE 3 TO ACTION 3 (ACLs FOR SNOWY GROUPER) WITH ACL EQUAL TO 95%, 90%, AND 80% OF THE ABC

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

GUIDANCE TO INCLUDE OY

MOTION: ADD ALTERNATIVE 9 TO ACTION 4 (COMMERCIAL TRIP LIMITS FOR SNOWY GROUPER) FOR A COMMERCIAL TRIP LIMIT FROM JANUARY 1 UNTIL THE ACL IS MET OR PROJECTED TO BE MET:

9A. 300 POUNDS

9B. 200 POUNDS

9C. 150 POUNDS

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: DIRECT STAFF TO DEVELOP A NEW ACTION WITH AN ALTERNATIVE TO CONSIDER A COMMERCIAL SPLIT SEASON WITH AN EQUAL SPLIT OF THE ACL BETWEEN JAN-APRIL AND MAY-DECEMBER WITH DIFFERENT TRIP LIMITS: 100 POUNDS, 150 POUNDS, AND 200 POUNDS FOR EACH OF THE TWO SEASONS

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 8 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Alternative 8. Establish a 50-pound whole weight (lb ww) commercial trip limit in all areas once 90% of the commercial ACL has been projected to have been met. Clarify whether this applies to all areas or only the area with the 100-pound whole weight (lb ww) trip limit.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: MOVE ALTERNATIVES 2 & 3 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Alternative 2. Establish a 250 pound whole weight (lb ww) commercial snowy grouper trip limit May through August from North Carolina through Georgia; no possession allowed the rest of the year. Retain the 100-pound whole weight (lb ww) commercial trip limit in Florida all year.

Alternative 3. Establish a 300 pound whole weight (lb ww) commercial snowy grouper trip limit May through August from North Carolina through Georgia; no possession allowed the rest of the year. Retain the 100-pound whole weight (lb ww) commercial trip limit in Florida all year.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: **ADD AN ALTERNATIVE TO** ESTABLISH A SNOWY GROUPER COMMERCIAL TRIP LIMIT OF 150 POUNDS FROM JANUARY THRU APRIL AND A 50- OR 100-POUND TRIP LIMIT FROM MAY THRU THE END OF THE YEAR.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: AMEND THE ABOVE MOTION TO ADD “ADD AN ALTERNATIVE TO”.
AMENDED MOTION BECOMES MAIN MOTION
MAIN MOTION APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: ADD A NEW ALTERNATIVE FOR A SNOWY GROUPER COMMERCIAL TRIP LIMIT OF 100 POUNDS JAN THRU APRIL FOR ALL AREAS AND MAY THRU AUGUST FROM NC THRU CAPE CANAVERAL AND SOUTH OF MARATHON, FL:

- A. 200 POUNDS
- B. 250 POUNDS
- C. 300 POUNDS

MAY THRU AUGUST – 100 POUNDS IN THE REST OF THE AREA.
SEPTEMBER THRU THE END OF THE YEAR, OR UNTIL THE ACL IS MET OR PROJECTED TO BE MET, THE TRIP LIMIT WOULD BE SET AT 100 POUNDS.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: MOVE ALTERNATIVES 4-7 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED
APPENDIX

Alternative 4. Establish a 250-pound whole weight (lb ww) commercial snowy grouper trip limit May through August from North Carolina through Cape Canaveral, Florida; no possession allowed the rest of the year. Retain the 100-pound whole weight (lb ww) commercial trip limit south of Cape Canaveral, Florida all year.

Alternative 5. Establish a 300-pound whole weight (lb ww) commercial snowy grouper trip limit May through August from North Carolina through Cape Canaveral, Florida; no possession allowed the rest of the year. Retain the 100-pound whole weight (lb ww) commercial trip limit south of Cape Canaveral, Florida all year.

Alternative 6. Establish a 250-pound whole weight (lb ww) commercial snowy grouper trip limit May through August from North Carolina through Cape Canaveral, Florida and south of Marathon, Florida; no possession allowed the rest of the year. Retain the 100-pound whole weight (lb ww) commercial trip limit south of Cape Canaveral, Florida to Marathon, Florida all year.

Alternative 7. Establish a 300-pound whole weight (lb ww) commercial snowy grouper trip limit May through August from North Carolina through Cape Canaveral, Florida and south of Marathon, Florida; no possession allowed the rest of the year. Retain the 100-pound whole weight (lb ww) commercial trip limit south of Cape Canaveral, Florida to Marathon, Florida all year.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: MOVE ALTERNATIVES 3 & 4 UNDER ACTION 5 (RECREATIONAL BAG LIMIT) TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Alternative 3. Modify the recreational snowy grouper bag limit from 1/vessel/day to 1/person/day May through August and no retention during the rest of the year.

Alternative 4. Modify the recreational snowy grouper bag limit from 1/vessel/day to 1/person/day.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 8 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

Alternative 8. Modify the recreational snowy grouper bag limit as shown above and modify the AM for the snowy grouper recreational sector, such that NMFS will annually announce the recreational fishing season start and end dates in the *Federal Register* and by other methods, as deemed appropriate. The fishing season will start on _____ and end on the date NMFS projects the recreational ACL will be met.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Regulatory Amendment 21 (MSST)

The Committee provided guidance and made the following motions:

MOTION: ACCEPT THE PURPOSE AND NEED AS PRESENTED

The purpose for the action is to modify the definition of MSST for select snapper grouper species with low natural mortality rates.

The need for the proposed action is to prevent snapper grouper stocks with low natural mortality rates from frequently alternating between overfished and rebuilt conditions due to natural variation in recruitment and other environmental factors.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: APPROVE THE IPT'S SUGGESTED EDITS TO ALTERNATIVES AND SUB-ALTERNATIVES UNDER THE PROPOSED ACTION

Alternative 1 (No Action). Retain the current definition of minimum stock size threshold (MSST) for species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit (FMU). For golden tilefish, red grouper, and snowy grouper, MSST equals 75% of SSB_{MSY} . For the remaining species in the snapper grouper FMU, MSST equals $SSB_{MSY} * (1-M$ or 0.5, whichever is greater).

Alternative 2. Change the MSST for select species in the snapper grouper FMU automatically to 75% of SSB_{MSY} . based on the estimation of the natural mortality rate (M) from a peer review report (e.g. a SEDAR stock assessment).

Sub-alternative 2a. Change MSST if the estimation of M is 0.15 or lower based on the estimation of the natural mortality rate (M) from a peer-review report (e.g., a SEDAR stock assessment).

Sub-alternative 2b. Change MSST if the estimation of M is 0.20 or lower based on the estimation of the natural morality rate (M) from a peer-review report (e.g., a SEDAR stock assessment).

Sub-alternative 2c. Change MSST if the estimation of M is 0.25 or lower based on the estimation of the natural morality rate (M) from a peer-review report (e.g., a SEDAR stock assessment).

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: SELECT SUB-ALTERNATIVE 2C AS PREFERRED

Sub-alternative 2c. Change MSST if the estimation of M is 0.25 or lower based on the estimation of the natural morality rate (M) from a peer-review report (e.g., a SEDAR stock assessment).

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: APPROVE SNAPPER GROUPER REGULATORY AMENDMENT 21 FOR SECRETARIAL REVIEW. GIVE STAFF EDITORIAL LICENSE TO MAKE ANY NECESSARY EDITORIAL CHANGES TO THE DOCUMENT AND GIVE THE COUNCIL CHAIR AUTHORITY TO APPROVE THE REVISIONS.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Amendment 33 (transporting of fillets from the Bahamas)

NOTE: Motions made by the Snapper Grouper Committee were discussed and approved by the Council along with those from the Dolphin Wahoo Committee and the Law Enforcement Committee. Refer to the Dolphin Wahoo Final Committee Report for the list of motions that the Council approved for Snapper Grouper Amendment 33.

MOTION: MODIFY THE PURPOSE AND NEED STATEMENTS AS FOLLOWS:

Purpose: The purpose of this management measure is to allow RECREATIONAL fishermen to bring dolphin and wahoo fillets from The Bahamas into the U.S. EEZ AND UPDATE REGULATIONS TO ALLOW RECREATIONAL FISHERMEN TO BRING BACK SNAPPER GROUPER FILLETS FROM THE BAHAMAS INTO THE U.S. EEZ

Need: The management measure is needed to increase the social and economic benefits to RECREATIONAL fishermen by removing impediments to the possession of fish in the U.S. EEZ that were legally harvested in Bahamian waters and the harvest of which would not adversely impact U.S. resources.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

GUIDANCE TO CLARIFY IN DISCUSSION THAT IF FISH ARE SOLD IN THE U.S., IT WOULD CONSTITUTE A VIOLATION OF BAHAMIAN LAW AND THE LACEY ACT WOULD APPLY

MOTION: ADD AN ACTION THAT ADDS LANGUAGE TO THE DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS THAT REQUIRES PASSPORTS BE STAMPED AND DATED TO PROVE THAT VESSEL PASSENGERS WERE IN THE BAHAMAS WHEN HARVESTING SNAPPER GROUPER SPECIES
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: MOVE ACTION 3 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX
Action 3: Establish reporting requirements for vessels bringing fillets of dolphin, wahoo, and snapper grouper species into the U.S. EEZ from The Bahamas.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 UNDER ACTION 4 AS PREFERRED AND ADD CLARIFYING LANGUAGE TO INDICATE THAT SKIN MUST BE INTACT ON THE ENTIRE FILLET.
Alternative 2: Snapper grouper fillets brought into the U.S. EEZ from The Bahamas must have the skin intact.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: MOVE ACTION 6 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX
Action 6. Exempt snapper grouper species harvested lawfully from The Bahamas from the bag and possession limits in the U.S. EEZ.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Generic Accountability Measures Amendment (Snapper Grouper Amendment 34)

The Committee reviewed options and made the following motions:

MOTION: ACCEPT THE PURPOSE AND NEED AS WRITTEN:

Purpose for Action

The purpose for the actions is to: modify the accountability measures for snapper grouper species and golden crab, and adjust sector allocations for dolphin.

Need for Action

The intent of Snapper Grouper Amendment 34, Golden Crab Amendment 9, and Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 8 is to base conservation and management measures upon the best scientific information available, and to prevent unnecessary negative socio-economic impacts that may otherwise be realized in these fisheries and fishing communities, and ensure overfishing does not occur in accordance with the provisions set forth in the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION: ADD THE FOLLOWING ALTERNATIVE TO SNAPPER GROUPER AMENDMENT 34:

Alternative 4. If recreational landings reach or are projected to reach the recreational annual catch limit, National Marine Fisheries Service will file a notification with the

Office of the Federal Register to close the recreational sector for the remainder of the fishing year, unless, using the best scientific information available, the Regional Administrator determines that a closure is unnecessary.

Sub-alternative 4a. If the species is overfished.

Sub-alternative 4b. Regardless of stock status.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

GUIDANCE TO CLARIFY THAT PAYBACK OF AN OVERAGE WOULD APPLY ONLY TO THE AMOUNT ABOVE THE TOTAL ACL*

MOTION: EXEMPT BLACK SEA BASS AND VERMILION SNAPPER FROM THE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURE REVISIONS IN AMENDMENT 34

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

Visioning Project

Amber Von Harten, Council staff, gave the Committee an update of the port meetings that have been held to date and input gathered at those meetings. Five port meetings were conducted in South Carolina with a total of 53 participants representing the commercial, recreational, for-hire, and federal dealer sectors. The main issues discussed at the meetings were: reporting, data collection & research, flexibility in management, reducing discards, regional/sub-regional management, and time/area management.

Data Needs for Economic Efficiency Analysis/Net Benefit Analysis

At their December 2013 meeting, the Council asked the following from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center: Do data exist to support an economic efficiency analysis of current allocations and net benefit analyses of proposed reallocations in the snapper-grouper, coastal migratory pelagics, and dolphin-wahoo fisheries?

Dr. Ponwith briefed the Committee on the SEFSC existing capabilities to address the Council's request. Dr. Ponwith indicated that commercial data are readily available in the form of ex-vessel prices and landings for all species. However, recreational data are only partially available. Dr. Ponwith posed several question to the Committee to better evaluate the type of analyses that could be conducted and provide an estimate of how long the analyses would take. The Committee expressed their desire to have the Socioeconomic Panel of the SSC evaluate the information provided by the SEFSC. The Committee reiterated that allocation issues would not be addressed for the snapper grouper fishery until after the Council has completed their visioning and strategic planning process.

Other Business

There were no items addressed by the Committee.

The Council discussed the following:

- Removal of the circle-hook requirement – the Council stated their intent to review the information on its utility and take appropriate action in the future.
- Restructuring of some of the snapper grouper complexes – the Council stated their intent to address this issue in the near future. The Council has acknowledged the need to re-evaluate the various complexes within the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Unit but indicated they had not yet taken action to address the issue pending the update to the ABC Control Rule and subsequent revisions to the ABCs for data-poor stocks (ORCS).
- Golden tilefish longline endorsements -- the Council discussed the current regulation that disallows individuals with a golden tilefish longline endorsement to fish for golden tilefish with bandit gear after the ACL for the longline sector has been met. The Council reiterated that was indeed their intent when the endorsement program was established in Amendment 18B. NOAA GC suggested that the Council Chair be given the authority to re-deem any clarifying revisions to the regulations.
- Retention of the recreational bag limit by commercial fishermen – The Council expressed concern over allowing retention of the recreational bag limit when the commercial season is closed and intends to consider it in the future.

MOTION: GIVE THE COUNCIL CHAIR THE AUTHORITY TO RE-DEEM ANY CLARIFYING REVISIONS TO THE REGULATIONS FOR THE COMMERCIAL GOLDEN TILEFISH FISHERY.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL