

Snapper Grouper Committee Report
March 5-6, 2013
St. Simons Island, GA

The Snapper Grouper Committee met in St. Simons Island, Georgia, on March 5th and 6th, 2013.

SERO and SEFSC Reports

The Committee received reports from the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) on the status of commercial and recreational landings for snapper grouper species, respectively. The presentations included information on red snapper harvest during the 2012 commercial and recreational openings. The Committee expressed concern about the lack of red snapper recreational landings estimates from NC, SC, and GA. An estimate of recreational landings in Florida was provided, but only counts of red snapper obtained through carcass collection efforts were available for the rest of the South Atlantic states. The SEFSC provided red snapper landings estimates based on the MRIP for discussion under Other Business.

Status of Amendments Under Review

SERO staff provided an update on the status of amendments under review:

- Amendment 28 (red snapper) – the Notice of Availability for the amendment will be published soon. A 60-day comment period will follow. Once the Final Rule publishes, there will be an additional 30-day comment period followed by a 30-day “cooling off” period. It is NMFS intent that there will be some overlap of comment periods; however, it is likely that Amendment 28 will not be implemented in time for a July 2013 opening of red snapper. The Committee indicated that the Council should express their intent to move forward with an opening of red snapper in 2013 as close to the Amendment 28 proposed July openings as possible. In addition, Committee members indicated that NMFS should strive to open red snapper while black sea bass is still open to minimize the amount of discards.
- Amendment 18B (golden tilefish) – the Final Rule for the amendment is expected to publish in the next 2-3 weeks. Regulations may be implemented by the end of April 2013.
- Regulatory Amendment 13 (adjustment of ACLs based on MRIP estimates) – the Proposed Rule package was sent to HQ for review.
- Regulatory Amendment 15 (yellowtail snapper and shallow water groupers) – the Proposed Rule package for this amendment is under review at the SERO.

Extension of yellowtail snapper temporary rule

The yellowtail snapper commercial ACL was increased through emergency action on November 7, 2012. Action to adjust the yellowtail snapper ACL and recreational ACT is being taken through regulatory Amendment 15. However, the latter will not be implemented before the temporary rule expires on May 6, 2013. Hence, the Committee made the following motion:

MOTION: REQUEST THAT NMFS EXTEND THE TEMPORARY RULE FOR YELLOWTAIL SNAPPER FOR AN ADDITIONAL 186 DAYS OR UNTIL REGULATORY AMENDMENT 15 IS IMPLEMENTED.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Snapper Grouper Amendment 30 (VMS)

The Committee received a presentation on VMS from Pat O’Shaughnessy, NMFS Southeast VMS Program Manager. Detailed information on VMS capabilities and requirements was provided as well as cost information. The Committee was also informed that the NMFS VMS account had been expanded in late 2012 to provide funding for electronic monitoring, including electronic logbooks. At the conclusion of the discussion for this amendment, the Committee Chair reminded the Committee that a summary document had been provided to them with a brief description and preliminary results of a pilot project being conducted by the NC Sea Grant to evaluate electronic monitoring (EM) systems on 7 fishing vessels equipped with electric bandit reels.

The Committee made the following motions pertaining to Snapper Grouper Amendment 30:

MOTION: ACCEPT THE PURPOSE AND NEED AS REVISED
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Purpose for Action

Require commercial vessels harvesting snapper grouper stocks in the South Atlantic be equipped with a satellite communications (vessel monitoring system (VMS)) to monitor fishing activities.

Need for Action

Improve the following aspects of snapper grouper stocks.

1. Enforcement. There is a need to reduce illegal fishing activity and improve enforceability of regulations. Increased enforceability of area restrictions is needed to prevent incursions and excessive fishing pressure in protected areas that contain snapper grouper populations and habitat that supports these populations. There is also a need to more accurately track and monitor locations where vessels will land fish, specify harvest composition (e.g., harvest amounts, species), and identify gear possessed onboard.
2. Science. There is a need to have a better understanding of snapper grouper populations by providing specific information on locations where fish are caught, and species composition of retained and discarded fish. VMS could serve as a means of verifying self-reported data.
3. Management. There is a need to improve management efforts by providing fishery managers information that will help them implement regulations with greater biological protection to snapper grouper stocks, and reduced negative long-term socio-economic effects to fishermen and fishing communities. VMS would help to document impacts on the number of trips that would be affected.

Direction to staff: Add explanation in text to document the additional benefits. The Council recognizes there will be negative short-term socio-economic impacts from installing and maintaining VMS units but would have the potential to increase positive economic benefits.

MOTION: IN THE EVENT OF A SYSTEM FAILURE, THAT AN ALTERNATIVE REPORTING METHOD IN THE FORM OF A HAIL IN/HAIL OUT PROCESS BE IMPLEMENTED FOR A MAXIMUM OF 10 DAYS. THIS CAN ONLY HAPPEN ONCE PER YEAR.

DISAPPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: EXPRESS THE COUNCIL'S INTENT THAT THE SAME REGULATIONS IN THE GULF OF MEXICO EEZ FOR VMS WOULD APPLY IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC EEZ.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: ACCEPT THE IPT'S WORDING FOR ALTERNATIVE 2 AND 3 WITH THE INSERTION OF "120 DAYS".

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Alternative 2. Require all commercial snapper grouper fishing vessels with a federal unlimited or trip-limited permit to be equipped with vessel monitoring systems. The purchase, installation, and maintenance of vessel monitoring system equipment must conform to the protocol established by National Marine Fisheries Service in the Federal Register. Purchase of VMS equipment will be reimbursed by the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement from the vessel monitoring system reimbursement account if funding is available. For vessel monitoring system units purchased on or after February 1, 2008, the maximum reimbursement amount for all fisheries is \$3,100 per vessel monitoring system unit. Installation, maintenance (including replacement of unit), and communication costs will be paid for or arranged by the permit holder. All approved units must be installed by a qualified marine technician and activated with National Marine Fisheries Service **no later than 120 days** following the publication of the final rule. An application for renewal or transfer of a commercial vessel permit for South Atlantic snapper grouper will not be considered complete until proof of purchase, installation, activation, and operational status of an approved vessel monitoring system for the vessel receiving the permit has been verified by National Marine Fisheries Service vessel monitoring system personnel

Alternative 3 (Preferred). Only if funding for vessel monitoring system equipment reimbursement is available from the vessel monitoring system reimbursement account, require all commercial snapper grouper fishing vessels with a federal unlimited or trip-limited permit to be equipped with vessel monitoring system. The purchase, installation, and maintenance of vessel monitoring system equipment must conform to the protocol established by National Marine Fisheries Service in the Federal Register. Purchase of vessel monitoring system equipment will be reimbursed by the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement from the vessel monitoring system reimbursement account. For vessel monitoring system units purchased on or after February 1, 2008, the maximum reimbursement amount for all fisheries is \$3,100 per vessel monitoring system unit. Installation, maintenance (including replacement of unit), and communication costs will be paid for or arranged by the permit holder. All approved units must be installed by a qualified marine technician and activated with the National Marine Fisheries

Service **no later than 120 days** following the publication of the final rule. An application for renewal or transfer of a commercial vessel permit for South Atlantic snapper grouper will not be considered complete until proof of purchase, installation, activation, and operational status of an approved vessel monitoring system for the vessel receiving the permit has been verified by National Marine Fisheries Service vessel monitoring system personnel

MOTION: MOVE SUB-ALTERNATIVES 2A AND 3A AND 2B AND 3B TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Sub-alternatives 2a and 3a: VMS requirement only applies to federal trip-limit permit holders

Sub-alternatives 2b and 3b: VMS requirement only applies to federal unlimited permit holders.

MOTION: MOVE SUB-ALTERNATIVES 2C & 3C TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Sub-alternative 2c and 3c: VMS requirement only applies to those federal snapper grouper permit holders when they are commercially fishing for and/or possessing snapper grouper species.

MOTION: MOVE SUB-ALTERNATIVES 2D & 3D TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Sub-alternative 2d and 3d: VMS requirement only for those federal snapper grouper permit holders who have landed X amount of species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit annually.

MOTION: MOVE ALTERNATIVE REQUIRING FOR-HIRE FISHING VESSELS EQUIPPED WITH VMS TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: MOVE SUBALTERNATIVE 5 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

(5) Alternatives that would require all headboat vessels with a federal permit to be equipped with VMS.

MOTION: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 6 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

(6) Alternatives that would require the owner of vessels with a federal permit pay for all costs to be equipped with VMS.

MOTION: APPROVE AMENDMENT 30 FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS AND DEIS REVIEW
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Regulatory Amendment 18 (vermilion snapper and red porgy)

Council staff presented an overview of comments received on Regulatory Amendment 18. The draft amendment was made available to the public via the Council’s website and input was solicited via email. Council staff presented a brief overview of the stock assessment update results for vermilion snapper and red porgy before addressing each of the action in the amendment. The Committee offered the following motions for the Council’s consideration:

MOTION: ACCEPT THE IPT RECOMMENDATION FOR PURPOSE AND NEED
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Purpose for Action

The purpose of Regulatory Amendment 18 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Regulatory Amendment 18) is to revise the vermilion snapper and red porgy ACLs, and the red porgy ACT based on the results of stock assessment updates completed in October 2012. Additionally, Regulatory Amendment 18 would modify commercial and recreational management measures for vermilion snapper to optimize utilization of the resource.

Need for Action

The need for this action is to update ACLs for vermilion snapper and red porgy based on results from recent stock assessment updates, ensure overfishing does not occur, prevent unnecessary negative socio-economic impacts that may otherwise be realized in the snapper grouper fishery and fishing community, and to ensure the use of best available science.

Action 1: Revise the Annual Catch Limit (ACL, including sector ACLs) and Optimum Yield (OY) for Vermilion Snapper.

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 AS OUR PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Alternative 2. Revise ACL (including sector ACLs) for vermilion snapper for 2013 through 2016 as shown below and set $ACL=ABC=OY$. The acceptable biological catch (ABC) and ACL values for 2013 onwards are based on landed catch only; discards are accounted for in specifying the ABC in terms of landed catch and not total kill. The values for 2016 would remain until modified.

Note: The values for Alternative 2 are shown in Table 2.1.1.

Table 2.1.1. ABC/ACLs for 2013-2016 from the recent SEDAR assessment and the South Atlantic Council/SSC-approved ABC control rule.

Year	ABC ww	Total ACL ww	Comm ACL ww	Rec ACL ww
2013	1,372,000	1,372,000	932,960	439,040
2014	1,312,000	1,312,000	892,160	419,840
2015	1,289,000	1,289,000	876,520	412,480
2016	1,269,000	1,269,000	862,920	406,080

Action 2: Modify the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper.

MOTION: ADD NEW ALTERNATIVE 4 TO ACTION 2. FIRST SEASON TRIP LIMIT = 1,500 LBS AND SECOND SEASON TRIP LIMIT = 1,000 LBS. WHEN 75% OF THE COMMERCIAL ACL HAS BEEN MET OR PROJECTED TO BE MET, REDUCE THE COMMERCIAL TRIP LIMIT TO 500 LB GW
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: SELECT NEW ALTERNATIVE 4 AS PREFERRED
DISAPPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: MOVE NEW ALTERNATIVE 4 TO CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: MAKE ALTERNATIVE 3 THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Alternative 3. Reduce the commercial trip limit for vermilion snapper to 1,000 lbs gw (1,110 lbs ww). When 75% of the commercial ACL has been met or projected to be met, reduce the commercial trip limit to 500 lbs gw (555 lbs ww).

Action 3: Modify the commercial fishing seasons for vermilion snapper.

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 1 AS PREFERRED FOR ACTION 3 AND DIRECT STAFF TO ADD ACTION 3 TO REG AM 14 AND ADD ADDITIONAL OPTIONS
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Alternative 1 (No Action). The commercial fishing year for vermilion snapper is split into two seasons of equal duration, each with its own ACL. The first season begins on January 1 and ends on June 30 (6 months). The second season begins on July 1 and ends on December 31 (6 months). The commercial ACL is split equally between the two seasons.

Note: The figures with the new commercial ACLs, assuming Alternative 2 is chosen for Action 1, split by the current seasons (Alternative 1, No Action) are shown in Table 2.3.1.

Table 2.3.1. ABC/ACLs and commercial split season ACLs using the current fishing season for 2013-2016 based on the recent SEDAR assessment and the South Atlantic Council/SSC-approved ABC control rule.

Year	ABC ww	Total ACL ww	Comm ACL ww	Comm ACL Jan-June ww	Comm ACL July-Dec ww
2013	1,372,000	1,372,000	932,960	466,480	466,480
2014	1,312,000	1,312,000	892,160	446,080	446,080
2015	1,289,000	1,289,000	876,520	438,260	438,260
2016	1,269,000	1,269,000	862,920	431,460	431,460

Action 4: Modify the recreational closed season for vermilion snapper.

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 UNDER ACTION 4 AS THE PREFERRED APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Alternative 2. Remove the recreational season closure for vermilion snapper.

Action 5: Revise the Annual Catch Limit (ACL, including sector ACLs), Optimum Yield (OY), and Annual Catch Target (ACT) for Red Porgy.

MOTION: ADD NEW ALTERNATIVE 3 TO ACTION 5.

Revise the ACL (including sector ACLs) for red porgy for 2013 through 2015 as shown below using the $OY=ACL=ABC$ formula established in the Comprehensive ACL Amendment (SAFMC 2011b). The values for 2015 would remain until modified.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: SELECT NEW ALTERNATIVE 3 FOR ACTION 5 AS PREFERRED APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Table 2.5.1. New ABC and ACLs for red porgy based on scenario 6 projection results from Table 24 of the red porgy assessment. Gutted weight determined with conversion factor of 1.04 from commercial logbooks.

Year	ABC ww	Total ACL ww	Comm ACL ww	Rec ACL ww	Rec ACT ww
2013	306,000	306,000	153,000	153,000	109,670
2014	309,000	309,000	154,500	154,500	110,746
2015	328,000	328,000	164,000	164,000	117,555
2016	354,000	354,000	177,000	177,000	126,874
2017	379,000	379,000	189,500	189,500	135,834
2018	401,000	401,000	200,500	200,500	143,718

MOTION: RECOMMEND TO THE COUNCIL THAT REGULATORY AMENDMENT 18 BE SUBMITTED FOR FORMAL REVIEW
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: GIVE STAFF AND THE COUNCIL CHAIR EDITORIAL LICENSE TO MAKE CHANGES TO REGULATORY AMENDMENT 18 AND THE CODIFIED TEXT AND ALLOW THE COUNCIL CHAIR TO DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT AS NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MOTION: APPROVE THE CODIFIED TEXT FOR REGULATORY AMENDMENT 18 AS NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE

Amendment 27

Council staff gave an overview of public comments received on the amendment. The Committee made the following motions pertaining to this amendment:

MOTION: APPROVE CHANGES TO PURPOSE AND NEED AS RECOMMENDED BY IPT
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

The purpose of Amendment 27 is: (1) to establish the South Atlantic Council as the responsible entity for managing Nassau grouper throughout its range including federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico; (2) modify the crew member limit on vessels associated with both a South Atlantic Charter/Headboat Permit for Snapper Grouper, and a South Atlantic Unlimited or 225-Pound Permit for Snapper Grouper (referred to as “dual-permitted” vessels); (3) modify the current restriction on crew retention of bag limit quantities of snapper grouper species; (4) minimize regulatory delay when adjustments to snapper grouper species’ ABC, ACLs, and ACTs are needed as a result of new stock assessments; and (5) address harvest of blue runner by commercial fishermen who do not possess a South Atlantic Snapper Grouper Permit.

Action 1. Extend the South Atlantic Council’s area of jurisdiction for management of Nassau grouper to include the Gulf of Mexico

MOTION: APPROVE THE IPT’S SUGGESTED MODIFICATION TO PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE 2

Preferred Alternative 2: The South Atlantic Council would extend its jurisdictional authority for management of Nassau grouper to include federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Harvest of Nassau grouper in the Gulf of Mexico EEZ *and the South Atlantic EEZ* would continue to be prohibited.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 2. Modify the crew size restriction for dual-permitted snapper grouper vessels

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 3 AS PREFERRED

Alternative 3. Increase the limit to 4 crew members for dual-permitted vessels.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 3. Modify bag limit restriction on snapper grouper species for captain and crew of vessels with a South Atlantic Charter/Headboat Permit for Snapper Grouper

MOTION: APPROVE THE IPT'S WORDING CHANGES TO ALTERNATIVES AND MAKE ALTERNATIVE 2 THE PREFERRED

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Alternative 1 (No Action). Captain and crew of vessels with a South Atlantic Charter/Headboat Permit for Snapper Grouper may not retain bag limit quantities of the following species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit (FMU): gag, black grouper, red grouper, scamp, red hind, rock hind, coney, graysby, yellowfin grouper, yellowmouth grouper, yellowedge grouper, snowy grouper, misty grouper, vermilion snapper, sand tilefish, blueline tilefish, and golden tilefish.

Alternative 2. Remove the snapper grouper species retention restrictions for captains and crew of vessels with a South Atlantic Charter/Headboat Permit for Snapper Grouper.

Alternative 3. Establish a bag limit of zero for captains and crew of vessels with a South Atlantic Charter/Headboat Permit for Snapper Grouper for all species included in the snapper grouper FMU.

Action 4. Modify Section I of the Snapper Grouper FMP Framework procedure

MOTION: SELECT OPTION 2 BELOW AS PREFERRED AND INCORPORATE IN LANGUAGE OF ALTERNATIVE 2 UNDER ACTION 4.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

OPTION 2. Modify Section I of the Snapper Grouper Framework Procedure by adding a new Item #9 (and renumber the existing 9 as 10 and 10 as 11):

9. Adjustments to ABCs, ACLs, and ACTs according to the existing ABC Control Rule(s) and formulas for specifying ACLs and ACTs that have been approved by the Council and that were implemented in a fishery management plan amendment to the FMP. This abbreviated process is authorized as follows:

a. Following the Scientific and Statistical Committee's (SSC's) review of the stock assessment, the Council will determine if changes are needed to ABC, ACL, and/or ACT and will so advise the RA.

b. The Council will first hold a public hearing during the Council meeting during which they will review the stock assessment and the SSC's recommendations. In addition, the public will be advised prior to the meeting that the Council is considering potential changes to the ABC, ACL, and/or ACT and the Council will provide the public the opportunity to comment on the potential changes prior to and during the Council meeting.

- c. If the Council then determines that modifications to the ABC, ACL, and/or ACT are necessary and appropriate, they will notify the RA of their recommendations in a letter with the Council's analysis of the relevant biological, economic, and social information necessary to support the Council's action.
- d. The RA will review the Council's recommendations and supporting information. If the RA concurs that the Council's recommendations are consistent with the objectives of the FMP, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, and all other applicable law, the RA is authorized to implement the Council's proposed action through publication of appropriate notification in the Federal Register, providing appropriate time for additional public comment as necessary.
- e. If the Council chooses to deviate from the ABC control rule(s) and formulas for specifying ACLs and ACTs that the Council previously approved and that were implemented in a fishery management plan amendment to the FMP, this abbreviated process would not apply, and either the framework procedure would apply with the preparation of a regulatory amendment or a fishery management plan amendment would be prepared. Additionally, the Council may choose to prepare a regulatory amendment or a fishery management plan amendment even if they do not deviate from the previously approved ABC control rule(s) and formulas for specifying ACLs and ACTs.

Action 5. Modify placement of blue runner in a fishery management unit and/or modify management measures for blue runner

MOTION: SELECT ALTERNATIVE 2 AS PREFERRED
Alternative 2. Remove blue runner from the Snapper Grouper FMP.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: APPROVE AMENDMENT 27 FOR FORMAL REVIEW
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: GIVE STAFF AND THE COUNCIL CHAIR EDITORIAL LICENSE TO MAKE CHANGES TO AM 27 AND THE CODIFIED TEXT AND ALLOW THE COUNCIL CHAIR TO DEEM THE CODIFIED TEXT AS NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MOTION: APPROVE THE CODIFIED TEXT FOR AMENDMENT 27 AS NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE

Regulatory Amendment 14 (multiple snapper grouper species)

Council staff assisted the Committee with review of actions and alternatives in the Options Paper for this amendment as well as timing. The Committee offered the following motions:

Action 2. Reduce the trip limit for greater amberjack.

MOTION: REMOVE ACTION 2 FROM REGULATORY AMENDMENT 14
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 3. Implement additional regulations to protect mutton snapper during the spawning season.

MOTION: REMOVE ALL ACTIONS/ALTERNATIVES RELATIVE TO MUTTON SNAPPER FROM REGULATORY AMENDMENT 14 AND FORWARD TO THE SOUTH FLORIDA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 4. Change the measurement method for gray triggerfish to have consistency between state and federal waters.

MOTION: ACCEPT THE IPT'S SUGGESTION TO ADD ALTERNATIVE 3:
Alternative 3. Specify the minimum size limit for gray triggerfish in inches fork length (FL) in federal waters off North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and east Florida.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 5. Increase the minimum size limit for hogfish.

The Committee requested to keep this action in Regulatory Amendment 14 but include it for discussion on the South Florida Management Issues Committee agenda.

Action 6. Revise the annual catch limit (ACL), including sector ACLs, optimum yield (OY), and annual catch target (ACT) for black sea bass.

MOTION: MOVE ACTION 6 TO A SEPARATE REGULATORY AMENDMENT
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 7. Modify the fishing year for the black sea bass recreational sector.

MOTION: ADD ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE TO ACTION 7 TO MODIFY THE RECREATIONAL FISHING YEAR FOR BSB TO BEGIN ON MAY 1 AND END ON APRIL 30
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: REQUEST THAT THE SNAPPER GROUPE AP PROVIDE INPUT ON POSSIBLE REGIONAL RECREATIONAL FISHING YEAR START DATES FOR BLACK SEA BASS

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

****GUIDANCE TO STAFF TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE ANALYSIS OF BSB LANDINGS THROUGHOUT THE REGION IN ORDER FOR THE AP TO DISCUSS****

Action 8. Modify the fishing year for the black sea bass commercial sector.

MOTION: ADD AN ALTERNATIVE TO ACTION 8 TO CONSIDER A CLOSED SEASON FOR THE BSB POT FISHERY FROM NOV 15 THROUGH APRIL 15
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: MODIFY ALTERNATIVE 3 UNDER ACTION 8 AS FOLLOWS:
Alternative 3. Open the black sea bass commercial season only to the hook and line sector on JANUARY 1, with a trip limit of 50 pounds. The trip limit ends with the opening of the black sea bass pot season.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: ADD AN ALTERNATIVE TO ACTION 8 TO MODIFY THE COMMERCIAL FISHING YEAR FOR BSB TO BEGIN ON MAY 1 AND END ON APRIL 30
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 9. Modify the recreational bag limit for vermilion snapper.

MOTION: MOVE ACTION 9 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 10 (formerly Action 3 in Regulatory Amendment 18). Modify the commercial fishing seasons for vermilion snapper.

MOTION: REQUEST THAT STAFF DEVELOP A SUITE OF ALTERNATIVES THAT WOULD ASSIGN 100% OF THE ACL INCREASE TO THE SECOND SEASON AND CONSIDER CHANGES TO THE START DATE OF THE SECOND SEASON ON JUNE 1 AND MAY 1
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: REQUEST THAT STAFF DEVELOP A SUITE OF ALTERNATIVES THAT WOULD ASSIGN 25% OF THE ACL INCREASE IN THE FIRST SEASON AND 75% OF THE INCREASE IN THE SECOND SEASON AND CONSIDER CHANGES TO THE START DATE OF THE SECOND SEASON ON JUNE 1 AND MAY 1
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 11 (formerly Action 10 in this amendment). Modify the aggregate grouper bag limit.

MOTION: ACCEPT THE IPT'S RECOMMENDATION TO MODIFY SUB-ALTERNATIVES 2A AND 2B TO INCLUDE CLARIFICATION THAT THE BAG LIMIT FOR BLACK GROUPER WOULD REMAIN ONE FISH.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

HOWEVER...the current regulations state 1 black OR 1 gag can be harvested, not both. If you say you can have 2 gag in the bag limit, does that mean you can have 2 gag AND 1 black or if you keep a black, you can't retain any gag at all? If you allow 2 gag AND 1 black, that potentially increases the retention of black grouper and could affect the catch.

MOTION: ADD AN ALTERNATIVE TO NOT INCREASE THE AGGREGATE BAG LIMIT BUT ALLOW FOR RETENTION OF 2 GAG. MAINTAIN BLACK GROUPER AT 1 FISH WITHIN THAT AGGREGATE.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

The Council may want to consider the following change:

Alternative 2. Maintain aggregate grouper bag limit at three fish.

Sub-alt 2a: Up to two gag are allowed within the aggregate. Possession of gag and black grouper within the same bag limit is not allowed.

Alternative 3. Increase aggregate grouper bag limit to four fish.

Sub-alt 3a: Up to two gag are allowed within the aggregate. Possession of gag and black within the same bag limit is not allowed.

Sub-alt 3b: Only one gag is allowed within the aggregate. Possession of gag and black within the same bag limit is not allowed.

MOTION: ADD AN ALTERNATIVE TO CONSIDER AN ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURE THAT WOULD DECREASE THE BAG LIMIT OF GAG TO 1 FISH THE FOLLOWING SEASON SHOULD THE RECREATIONAL ACL BE EXCEEDED.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

GUIDANCE TO STAFF TO LOOK AT AM FROM GULF

Action 12 (formerly Action 11 in this amendment). Modify the accountability measure for the commercial sector for gag.

MOTION: DIRECT STAFF TO CONDUCT THE NECESSARY ANALYSIS TO ARRIVE AT AN APPROPRIATE DATE TO TRIGGER THE TRIP LIMIT STEP DOWN. ALSO CONSIDER A RANGE OF TRIP LIMIT OPTIONS.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Action 13. Modify the recreational accountability measure for vermilion snapper

MOTION: ADD A NEW ALTERNATIVE 3 THAT RETAINS THE IN-SEASON CLOSURE AUTHORITY BUT REMOVES THE PAYBACK PROVISION

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: MOVE FORWARD WITH CONSIDERATION OF MODIFICATION TO THE VERMILION SNAPPER AM BUT CONSIDER CHANGES TO THE REG PORGY AM IN A FUTURE AMENDMENT

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION: ADD AN ALTERNATIVE THAT TRACKS THE LANGUAGE OF AMS IN AMENDMENT 18 TO THE CMP FMP (PAYBACK ONLY IF THE TOTAL ACL IS EXCEEDED AND THE STOCK IS OVERFISHED)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Regulatory Amendment 16

The Committee reviewed the Options Paper and timing for this amendment and made the following motions:

MOTION: APPROVE DRAFT PURPOSE AND NEED FOR REGULATORY AMENDMENT 16

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

The purpose of Regulatory Amendment 16 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery is to: 1) ameliorate existing derby conditions in the commercial longline sector of the golden tilefish portion of the snapper grouper fishery; 2) lengthen the commercial longline fishing season; and 3) prevent market flooding.

The need for the amendment is to increase safety at sea while promoting biological benefits by distributing fishing effort over a longer period of time, and to promote socio-economic benefits.

The Committee made no changes to the document but requested that staff add more clarifying details to the alternatives. In addition, the Committee offered the following motion for the Council's consideration:

MOTION: REQUEST THAT GOLDEN TILEFISH LONGLINE ENDORSEMENT HOLDERS BE BROUGHT TOGETHER TO DISCUSS LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT OF THE FISHERY ONCE THE ENDORSEMENT PROGRAM HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED AND AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MPAs for Speckled Hind and Warsaw Grouper

Dr. George Sedberry, Chairman of the MPA Expert Workgroup, gave a presentation to the Committee summarizing the recommendations from the Workgroup. In addition, Mr. Mark Brown, a for-hire captain serving on the Workgroup, presented a Minority Report to the Committee. After a lengthy discussion, the Committee offered the following motions for the Council to consider:

MOTION: BRING THE MPA ISSUE BACK TO THE SNAPPER GROUPE COMMITTEE AT THE SEPTEMBER MEETING TO DEVELOP A PURPOSE & NEED AND POTENTIALLY CONSIDER OPTIONS FOR RECONFIGURATIONS AND SPAWNING
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Other Business

Dr. Bonnie Ponwith presented red snapper recreational landings estimates as reported by the MRIP. Committee members expressed concern that the MRIP estimates were not, in their opinion, credible. Also, Committee members expressed concern regarding how the states' count estimates from red snapper carcass drop-offs would be utilized to estimate landings. Dr. Ponwith offered that staffs from the SEFSC and the states convene to review the issue and figure out a way to produce defensible landings estimates with the available information.

The Committee made the following motions:

MOTION: MOVE FORWARD WITH SCHEDULING AN ONLINE OR TELEPHONE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL TO CONSIDER THE NEW ABC AND SETTING ACLS FOR BLACK SEAS BASS SOON AFTER THE STOCK ASSESSMENT UPDATE HAS BEEN REVIEWED BY THE SSC
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Timing and Tasks

MOTION: ADOPT THE TIMING AND TASKS BELOW:

1. SCHEDULE A COUNCIL MEETING VIA WEBINAR OR CONFERENCE CALL BEFORE THE JUNE 2013 MEETING TO DISCUSS ADJUSTMENT TO THE BLACK SEA BASS ABC/ACLs/ACT BASED ON RESULTS OF THE STOCK ASSESSMENT UPDATE. [Note: looking at the afternoon of Monday, May 13th or some day early that week.]
2. REQUEST THAT STAFF COMPILE DATA ON AVERAGE CATCH OF GRAY TRIGGERFISH IN COMMERCIAL LANDINGS.
3. STAFF SHOULD KEEP TRACK OF ANY ACTIONS THE COUNCIL MAY NEED TO CONSIDER IN AN AMENDMENT TO THE SNAPPER GROUPER FMP TO MANAGE GRAY TRIGGERFISH, I.E., TRIP LIMITS AND DIFFERENT LIMITS FOR DIFFERENT SEASONS, ETC.
4. THE SNAPPER GROUPER COMMITTEE WOULD LIKE TO CONSIDER RE-STRUCTURING OF THE SNAPPER GROUPER FMU TO REMOVE JACKS
5. REQUEST THAT THE SNAPPER GROUPER AP PROVIDE INPUT ON REGIONAL ALLOCATIONS FOR BLACK SEA BASS
6. CONDUCT PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR AM 30 IN APRIL/MAY TIMEFRAME [Note: looking at holding first hearing April 23 or 24 in North Charleston while the SG AP is in town for a meeting.]