

Overview

Snapper Grouper Committee

The Beach House Hilton Head Island
1 South Forest Beach Drive
Hilton Head Island, SC

September 2015

The committee will: (A) receive reports from SERO on the status of commercial and recreational catches versus the respective ACLs for snapper grouper species; (B) receive a status report from SERO staff on snapper grouper amendments under Secretarial review; (C) receive a report from the SSC Chair regarding fishing level recommendations for blueline tilefish, discuss possible Council action via a framework amendment, and discuss Amendment 38; (D) receive a summary of public comments on Regulatory Amendment 16 (BSB Pots), receive a presentation from Council staff on black sea bass pot endorsement holders' fishing portfolios, make needed changes to the amendment, and approve all actions; (E) receive a presentation on the Southeast Reef Fish Survey; (F) receive a summary of scoping comments on Amendment 37 (Hogfish), make needed changes, and provide guidance to staff; (G) receive a summary of scoping comments on Regulatory Amendment 23 (Golden Tilefish, BSB & Jacks), make needed changes, and provide guidance to staff; (H) review an Options Paper for Amendment 41 (Mutton Snapper) and approve for scoping; (I) receive a summary of public comments on Amendment 36 (Spawning SMZs), make needed changes, and approve all actions; (J) review the Joint South Atlantic and Gulf South Florida Amendment and provide guidance to staff; (K) discuss possible approaches for a 2016 red snapper season; (L) review recommendations from the Oculina Evaluation Team and provide guidance to staff on timing for the next review; (M) receive an update on approaches to monitor recreational harvest of rarely encountered species and provide guidance; and (N) address other business as appropriate.

A. Status of landings for snapper grouper species under ACLs (*Attachments 1a & 1b*)

The Committee will receive an update on the status of landings (commercial and recreational) for snapper grouper species under ACLs.

COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and take action as necessary.

B. Status of amendments approved for secretarial review

The Committee will receive a status report from SERO staff on the following amendments:

- Regulatory Amendment 20 (Snowy) – sent to NMFS 12/2/14
- Regulatory Amendment 22 (Gag & Wreckfish) – sent to NMFS 12/12/14
- SG Am 33/Dolphin Wahoo 7 (Filletts) -- sent to NMFS 5/1/15
- SG Amendment 34 (AMs)/Dolphin Wahoo Am 8 (Allocations) – sent to NMFS 2/27/15
- Blueline tilefish ER request – sent to NMFS 5/6/15

- Amendment 35 (removal of species) – sent to NMFS prior to September 14-18, 2015 meeting

C. Blueline Tilefish (Attachments 2a-2c)

The committee will receive a report from the SSC chair on deliberations during the September 9, 2015 webinar. The SSC will discuss updated projections for blueline tilefish and make an ABC recommendation. The committee will discuss Council action to adopt the ABC recommendation and revise the ACL based on the SSC recommendation and a percentage to account for harvest of blueline tilefish in the area north of the Council’s jurisdiction. The committee will also discuss and provide guidance to staff on development of Amendment 38. An Options Paper for Amendment 38 was provided to the Council in the briefing book for the June 2015 meeting. However, due to timing constraints, the committee did not discuss it. The committee should provide guidance on whether staff should continue development of the amendment.

COMMITTEE ACTION: Revise the ABC and ACL for blueline tilefish based on the SSC’s recommendation and considering harvest that occurs north of the Council’s jurisdiction; approve development of a regulatory amendment to change the ACL for 2016. Provide guidance on amendment development and timing.

D. Regulatory Amendment 16 (Black sea bass pot closure; Attachments 3a-3d)

The committee will receive a summary of public comments on the amendment. Next, Kari MacLauchlin will provide a presentation of information from black sea bass pot endorsement holders on their fishing portfolios, alternatives to the winter pot fishery, and other input obtained during the public comment period and meetings with black sea bass pot fishermen. Brian Chevront, Council staff, will present an overview of the amendment with changes since the June 2015 meeting.

COMMITTEE ACTION: Consider public comment, make changes as needed, select preferred alternatives as needed, and approve all actions.

E. Southeast Reef Fish Survey presentation (Attachment 4)

Dr. Marcel Reichert will present an update on 2014 fishery-independent sampling efforts in the South Atlantic region.

COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and take action as necessary.

F. Amendment 37 (Hogfish; Attachments 5a & 5b)

Amendment 37 includes actions pertaining to the management of hogfish in the South Atlantic region. Actions include specification of two separate stocks; reference points, ABCs, and fishing levels for both stocks; a rebuilding plan for the Florida Keys/East Florida stock; and management measures for both stocks.

A scoping webinar for this amendment was held on August 10, 2015. The committee will receive a summary of scoping comments. Myra Brouwer, Council staff, will present an overview of the amendment.

COMMITTEE ACTION: Consider scoping comments, make changes as needed, and provide guidance to staff on proposed timing.

G. Regulatory Amendment 23 (Golden tilefish, Jacks Complex, and black sea bass bag limit; Attachments 6a & 6b)

Regulatory Amendment 23 includes actions to consider changing the fishing year start date for the hook-and-line sector of the commercial golden tilefish fishery, a commercial trip limit for the Jacks Complex, and an increase in the black sea bass bag limit.

A scoping webinar for this amendment was held on August 10, 2015. The committee will receive a summary of scoping comments. Myra Brouwer, Council staff, will present an overview of the amendment.

NOTE: If the committee decides to develop a regulatory amendment to adjust the blueline tilefish ACL for 2016, work on Regulatory Amendment 23 would be delayed until 2016.

COMMITTEE ACTION: Consider scoping comments, make changes as needed, and provide guidance to staff on proposed timing.

H. Amendment 41 (Mutton snapper; Attachment 7)

At the June 2015 meeting, the Council approved a motion to begin development of Amendment 41 to revise fishing levels for mutton snapper based on the latest stock assessment and to revise management measures. Myra Brouwer, Council staff, will present an overview of the Options Paper.

COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and make changes as necessary and approve for scoping.

I. Amendment 36 (Spawning SMZs; Attachments 8a-8d)

Amendment 36 considers using Spawning SMZs to provide additional protection to species in the snapper grouper fishery management unit, including speckled hind and warsaw grouper. At the June 2015 meeting, the Council approved Amendment 36 for a second round of public hearings. Gregg Waugh, Council staff, will provide an overview of the public comments and review the actions/alternatives.

COMMITTEE ACTION: consider public comments, review document and modify as needed, and approve all actions.

J. Joint South Florida Amendment; Attachment 9)

In June 2015, the South Atlantic and Gulf Councils met jointly and discussed changes to the amendment. The Joint Council meeting did not address all of the committee recommendations so this is an opportunity for the committee to make any necessary changes for the Council to review/modify/approve. Gregg Waugh, Council staff, will present an overview of the changes that were made since June.

COMMITTEE ACTION: review and modify document as needed, choose preferreds as necessary, and provide guidance on timing and development.

K. Red snapper amendment for 2016 season (Attachment 10)

There was no season opening in 2015 because the 2014 total mortality (205,859 red snapper exceeded the 2014 ABC (106,000 red snapper). An even bigger issue is that total mortality (landings + discards) in 2014 was 1,517,671 pounds whole weight, slightly below the MSY of 1,842,000 pounds whole weight. This means we are now removing about what can be removed

on an annual basis! The challenge is how do we convert discards to landings without exceeding the ACL. Gregg Waugh, Council staff, will outline a possible new approach.

COMMITTEE ACTION: review and modify document as needed and provide guidance on timing and development.

L. Oculina Evaluation Team Report (Attachment 11)

Chip Collier, Council staff, will present a summary of the Oculina Evaluation Team comments and recommendations.

COMMITTEE ACTION: discuss, approve, and provide guidance to staff on timing for the next review.

M. Approaches to monitor recreational harvest of rarely encountered species

In June 2015 the committee received a presentation on approaches to improve monitoring of species that are encountered infrequently in the MRIP survey. The committee requested that Council staff discuss the approaches with NMFS staff and determine the feasibility for use in the South Atlantic region. Staffs are holding a conference call on August 25th to discuss.

COMMITTEE ACTION: discuss and provide guidance as appropriate.

N. Other Business

The Committee will address other items as appropriate.