

Overview

Snapper Grouper Committee

Marina Inn at Grande Dunes
8121 Amalfi Place
Myrtle Beach, SC

September 13-14, 2016

The committee will: (1) receive reports on the status of commercial landings versus the respective ACLs for snapper grouper species; (2) receive a status report on amendments under Secretarial review; (3) discuss and finalize Amendment 37 (hogfish); (4) discuss Amendment 41 (mutton snapper); (5) discuss options for Amendment 43 (red snapper); (6) discuss options for a Vision Blueprint Recreational Amendment; (7) discuss golden tilefish items; (8) discuss possible modifications to black sea bass pot gear; (9) discuss future management actions for red grouper; and (10) discuss other business as appropriate.

1. Status of Landings for Snapper Grouper Species Under ACLs (*Attachment 1*)

The Committee will receive an update on the status of commercial landings for snapper grouper species relative to their ACLs. At their June 2016 meeting, the Council approved only receiving updates on recreational landings during their March and December annual meetings.

COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and take action as necessary.

2. Status of Amendments Approved for Secretarial Review

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

- Regulatory Amendment 25 (Blueline tilefish, Yellowtail snapper & Black sea bass bag limit) – sent to NMFS on 3/4/16
- Regulatory Amendment 16 (BSB pot closure) – sent to NMFS on 3/4/16
- Amendment 36 (Spawngn SMZs)

3. Amendment 37(Hogfish; *Attachments 2a-2c*)

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Amendment 37 was filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on June 10 and the comment period ended on August 1, 2016. At their June 13-17, 2016 meeting, the Council reviewed and approved all actions in Amendment 37 and selected an additional preferred alternative for Action 11 (specification of a recreational season for the Florida Keys/East Florida hogfish stock). The Snapper Grouper Committee will receive a summary from SERO staff of the public comments received during the DEIS comment period (*Attachment 2a*). Myra Brouwer, Council staff, will review changes to the amendment since the June meeting (*Attachment 2b*). The Committee will also review the draft codified text (*Attachment 2c*).

COMMITTEE ACTION: Consider public comment, make any necessary modifications to the amendment, deem the codified text as necessary and appropriate, and approve Amendment 37 for formal review.

4. Amendment 41 (Mutton Snapper; Attachments 3a-3c)

The Committee reviewed the actions and alternatives and preliminary analyses for Amendment 41 at their June 2016 meeting, selected preferred alternatives for all actions, and approved the amendment for public hearings. Public hearings were held in August 2016 via webinar and in-person and comments were solicited from July 18 through August 19. Myra Brouwer, Council staff, will present a summary of the comments received through August 19 and review changes to the document to date. The Council is scheduled to take final action on Amendment 41 during the December 2016 meeting.

COMMITTEE ACTION: Consider public comment, make any necessary modifications to the amendment, and approve all actions.

5. Amendment 43 (Red Snapper; Attachment 4)

In June 2016 the Council instructed staff to prepare an options paper on possible actions to manage red snapper in the South Atlantic and provided a general list of actions to include. Chip Collier, Council staff, will present an overview of options. The Committee should discuss and provide specific guidance on actions and, if possible, ranges of alternatives under each action. In addition, the Committee will discuss possibly requesting that NOAA Fisheries take emergency action to allow limited harvest of red snapper in 2017.

COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and provide guidance to staff on Amendment 43 and consider requesting emergency action.

6. Vision Blueprint Recreational Amendment - Fisheries Seasonality and Retention (Attachment 5)

During its March 2016 meeting, the Council approved a motion directing staff to explore separate amendments addressing seasonality and retention in the snapper grouper fishery. The Snapper Grouper AP discussed this item during their April 2016 meeting and provided recommendations on actions to prioritize. At their June 2016 meeting, the Council instructed staff to prepare separate sector-based amendments, provided a general list of items to include in each, and requested that an options paper aimed at the recreational sector be prepared for discussion. Myra Brouwer, Council staff, will present an overview of the options paper.

COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and provide guidance to staff.

7. Golden Tilefish Items (Attachments 6a-6c)

In June 2016, during discussion of the recent update to the stock assessment for golden tilefish, the Committee requested that staff obtain information on the methodology used in the Mid-Atlantic to assess golden tilefish in that region (*Attachments 6a & 6b*). John Carmichael, Council staff, will present a general summary of that approach and provide a comparison to how golden tilefish are assessed in the South Atlantic. The Committee also provided a series of specific requests to the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) regarding the update assessment. The SSC is scheduled to address the Committee's request at their October 2016 meeting.

Outstanding items pertaining to golden tilefish include changing the fishing year for the hook-and-line component of the commercial fishery (SG AP made motions to this effect in April

& October 2014, and April 2015) and discussing the rationale behind the Council's choice to not tie catch history associated with an unlimited snapper grouper permit to its gear endorsement (either black sea bass pots or golden tilefish longline gear). *Attachment 6c* was provided in the briefing book for the June 2015 meeting, when the Committee was scheduled to discuss this item. Time constraints, however, kept that discussion from taking place. Myra Brouwer, Council staff, will facilitate discussion of these two items.

COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and provide guidance to staff.

8. Modifications to Black Sea Bass Pots (Attachment 7)

Paul Rudershausen, North Carolina State University, delivered a presentation to the Committee (March 2016) and to the Snapper Grouper AP (April 2016) showing results of a study to optimize selectivity of black sea bass pots. The Snapper Grouper AP approved a motion at their April 2016 meeting to recommend that the Council consider modifying the mesh size of pots to 2.25 inches based on results of the NCSU study.

COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and provide guidance to staff.

9. Red Grouper SAFE Report (Attachment 8)

During discussions of the Executive & Finance Committee in June 2016, Council members requested to have information on red grouper available for the September 2016 meeting. The status of the red grouper stock in the South Atlantic is scheduled to be assessed through the SEDAR process (SEDAR 53). The assessment is scheduled to be completed in March 2017, undergo SSC review shortly thereafter, and be presented to the Council in June 2017. The Council usually discusses possible management modifications *after* an assessment has been completed. However, the stock assessment process is lengthy in itself and sometimes revisions are needed after an assessment has undergone review resulting in delayed management action. Therefore, Council members proposed having some discussion about possible management for red grouper ahead of the assessment being completed to minimize the time delay, especially since fishermen have voiced concern about the status of red grouper and have urged the Council to consider changes to how that species is managed. Dr. Mike Errigo, Council staff, will present an overview of the data contained in the Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) report for red grouper to inform discussions on possible modifications to management measures.

COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and provide guidance to staff.

10. Other Business

The Committee will address other items as appropriate.