

SUMMARY REPORT
FROM THE SNAPPER GROUPEER COMMITTEE MEETING
Charleston, SC
September 17th & 18th, 2008

The Snapper Grouper Committee met on September 17th and 18th, 2008 in Charleston, SC.

1. *Oculina* Monitoring Report, Kim Iverson, SAFMC Staff

Kim Iverson provided an update on outreach efforts associated with the *Oculina* Bank Experimental Closed Area. A recently added Law Enforcement section of the Council's website was presented to the Committee.

2. ACL Proposed Rule, Gregg Waugh and John Carmichael (SAFMC Staff); Dr. Rick Methot (NOAA Fisheries, NW Science Center)

Gregg Waugh provided an overview of staff's proposed comments on the proposed revision to the guidelines for National Standard 1 (NS1) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Dr. Rick Methot, one of the primary authors of the proposed revisions, provided comments and insights to the issues raised during the Committee's discussion. The Committee provided comments on each of staff's proposed comments. A revised version of the Council's comment letter will be provided at Full Council session for Council approval. The comment letter will be sent in before the September 22nd deadline.

John Carmichael initiated discussion of an ABC Proposed Rule with a presentation. He reported that the SSC would like guidance on the Council's acceptable risk of overfishing. The Council provided guidance in terms of acceptable risk. This information will be provided to the SSC for their deliberations at their December meeting.

3. Amendment 16, Gregg Waugh and Kate Quigley (SAFMC Staff); Dr. Jack McGovern (NOAA Fisheries SERO)

Gregg Waugh and Dr. Jack McGovern provided a summary of comments received on Amendment 16. Kate Quigley presented results of an evaluation of fuel prices and fishing effort. The Committee reviewed actions in Amendment 16 to end overfishing of gag and vermilion snapper. The Committee discussed all the actions and alternatives but did not change their choice of preferred alternatives. The Committee provided direction to staff in terms of various changes that need to be made to the text of the document.

The Committee discussed the vermilion snapper stock assessment; an Assessment Workshop was recently held and a Review Workshop will be held in October. Amendment 16 outlines specific modifications to the vermilion snapper management measures to be taken by the Regional Administrator if the assessment results allow the implementation of less restrictive management measures. The Committee voted to approve the amendment for submission to the Secretary of Commerce.

4. Interim Rule for Red Snapper, Gag, Red Grouper, and Black Grouper, Gregg Waugh (SAFMC) and Dr. Jack McGovern (NOAA Fisheries SERO)

Gregg Waugh provided an overview of red snapper management and the recent stock assessment. Andi Stephens reported on recent changes to the red snapper assessment including projections sent to the Council from the Science Center. Dr. Jack McGovern reviewed the actions in the interim rule.

The Committee voted to move forward with an interim rule for gag, red grouper, and black grouper. The Committee decided to reevaluate an interim rule for red snapper at the December Council meeting. Vermilion snapper was removed for consideration in an interim rule for now pending results of the stock assessment currently underway.

5. Amendment 17, Rick DeVactor (SAFMC)

Amendment 17 will specify Annual Catch Limits (ACL), Annual Catch Targets (ACT), and Accountability Measures (AM) for 10 species undergoing overfishing. The amendment includes other actions including the specification of allocations for some of the species. Rick DeVactor provided staff's recommend plan on specifying these items. The Committee went through the decision document/options paper and provided guidance to staff. Guidance to staff is outlined in detail below.

The committee approved the following motions:

ACL Proposed Rule

**MOTION 1: DIRECT THE SSC, SEFSC AND STAFF TO EVALUATE 25% (RANGE OF 10-50%) PROBABILITY OF OVERFISHING WHEN SETTING THE ABC WITH RESPECT TO OVERFISHING
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

Amendment 16

MOTION 2: MOVE NEW ALTERNATIVE FOR MONROE COUNTY TO APPENDIX A [INTENT TO FULLY EXAMINE IN AMENDMENT 17].

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION 3: RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF AMENDMENT 16 FOR COUNCIL APPROVAL TO BE SENT TO THE SECRETARY FOR FORMAL REVIEW

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Interim Rule

MOTION 4: REMOVE VERMILION SNAPPER AND RED SNAPPER FROM THE INTERIM RULE

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Amendment 17

MOTION 5: IN SNAPPER GROUPER AMENDMENT 17 FOR SPECIES THAT WE DO NOT HAVE AN ALLOCATION FOR AND THAT WE NEED TO ALLOCATE, WE ALLOCATE TO TWO SECTORS (RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL)

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

The committee approved the following direction to staff:

Amendment 16

- 1. NO CHANGE TO GAG MSY (ALT. 2) & OY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES (ALT. 2B)**
- 2. NO CHANGE TO GAG TAC PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (ALT. 2)**
- 3. NO CHANGE TO GAG ALLOCATION PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (ALT. 2)**

[NOTE: COMMITTEE MOTION NOT APPROVED -- MOTION: CHANGE OUR PREFERRED ALLOCATION ALTERNATIVE TO ALTERNATIVE 4 WHICH IS 61% COMMERCIAL AND 39% RECREATIONAL. DISAPPROVED BY COMMITTEE]

- 4. NO CHANGE TO GAG RECREATIONAL & COMMERCIAL SPAWNING SEASON CLOSURE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (ALT. 2)**

[NOTE: COMMITTEE MOTION NOT APPROVED -- MOTION: POSTPONE FINAL ACTION ON AMENDMENT 16 UNTIL DECEMBER. DISAPPROVED BY COMMITTEE]

- 5. MOTION: MOVE NEW ALTERNATIVE FOR MONROE COUNTY TO APPENDIX A [INTENT TO FULLY EXAMINE IN AMENDMENT 17].**

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

- 6. NO CHANGE TO GAG DIRECTED COMMERCIAL QUOTA PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (ALT. 4)**

[NOTE: COMMITTEE MOTION NOT APPROVED -- MOTION: ACCEPT ALTERNATIVE 5 AS A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE. DISAPPROVED BY COMMITTEE]

- 7. NO CHANGE TO GAG RECREATIONAL BAG LIMIT PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (ALT. 7A)**
- 8. NO CHANGE TO VERMILION RA ADJUSTMENTS TO MANAGEMENT MEASURES PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (ALT. 2). DIRECTED STAFF TO ADD THE PERCENTAGE RANGES TO TABLE.**
- 9. NO CHANGE TO VERMILION MSY (ALT. 2) AND OY (ALT. 2B) PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES.**
- 10. NO CHANGE TO VERMILION TAC PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (ALT. 2)**
- 11. NO CHANGE TO VERMILION ALLOCATION PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (ALT. 2)**
- 12. NO CHANGE TO VERMILION DIRECTED COMMERCIAL QUOTA PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (ALT. 2)**
- 13. NO CHANGE TO VERMILION DIRECTED COMMERCIAL QUOTA SEASONAL SPLIT PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (ALT. 3A)**
- 14. NO CHANGE TO VERMILION RECREATIONAL PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (ALT. 5D)**
- 15. NO CHANGE TO BYCATCH PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (ALT. 3).**
- 16. MOTION: RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF AMENDMENT 16 FOR COUNCIL APPROVAL TO BE SENT TO THE SECRETARY FOR FORMAL REVIEW**

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

- 17. DIRECTED STAFF TO MAKE SOME CHANGES TO THE PROPOSED RULE AND BRING IT TO FULL COUNCIL FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL.**

Amendment 17

1. **Include ABC Control Rule Options in Amendment 17.**
2. **Adopt staff's proposed method for specifying ACLs, ACTs, allocations, and accountability measures.**
3. **Bundle the alternatives to provide a conservative and liberal ACT to aid those analyzing the alternatives.**
4. **Remove the MSY and MSST alternatives from the Amendment.**
5. **Move OY alternatives 4 and 5 to Appendix A (75% and 85% of Fmsy). Change the wording of Alternative 6 to "Foy=the sum of the sector ACTs" or something similar.**
6. **Remove consideration of allocations for snowy grouper, speckled hind, warsaw grouper, black sea bass, gag, and vermilion snapper from Amendment 17. The allocation alternatives for the remaining species would be for the commercial and recreational sector. The alternatives would be based (1) landings for 1986-2007), (2) landings for 2005-2007, and (3) equation utilizing both early and later time periods).**
7. **Investigate adding a recreational ACT alternative that would weigh the PSEs from the for-hire and private recreational sector differently.**
8. **Analyze the alternatives in the options paper for deepwater species. Analyze an alternative that allows areas where golden tilefish may be harvested where the bycatch of speckled hind and warsaw grouper would be expected to not occur. Consider an alternative that allows an appropriate level of speckled hind and warsaw grouper bycatch, with appropriate monitoring devices. All possession and retention of deepwater species would be prohibited when this level would be met.**
9. **Outline alternatives to end overfishing of red snapper, based on the Committee's guidance provided at this meeting. Investigate the locations that have the highest levels of red snapper discards. These alternatives will be presented to the Council in December. Also develop alternatives for the other shallow water/mid-shelf species, including extending the shallow water grouper closure in Amendment 16, modifying the bag limits, and implementing a vessel limit. All management alternatives will depend on the range of ACT values.**
10. **Move Alternatives 4b and 4c concerning snowy grouper state/regional allocations to the rejected alternatives appendix. Retain Alternative 4a for detailed analysis but incorporate allocation specified for the Mid-Atlantic Council's jurisdiction with North Carolina and South Carolina.**