

SUMMARY REPORT
FROM THE SNAPPER GROUPEE COMMITTEE MEETING
Charleston, SC
December 8-10, 2009

The Snapper Grouper Committee met on December 8-10, 2009, in Atlantic Beach, NC.

1. Presentations

The Committee received the following presentations: SEDAR Updates (Snowy Grouper, Black Sea Bass, and Snowy Grouper) (Dale Theiling), Status of Red Snapper Interim Rule (Dr. Roy Crabtree), Red Snapper Rebuilding Projections (Dr. Erik Williams), SSC Recommendations (Dr. Carolyn Belcher), Impact of Recent Regulations/Closed Area Evaluations (Dr. Nick Farmer), and Review of Public Hearing Comments Pertaining to Amendments 17A and 17B (Rick DeVictor and Kim Iverson) and 18 (Kate Quigley).

2. SEDAR Updates (Snowy Grouper, Black Sea Bass, and Snowy Grouper)

SEDAR Staff presented the Terms of References (showing SSC recommended changes), timelines, and participant list. There was a desire, in terms of the red snapper update, to move the assessment schedule to an earlier date and to appoint panel members that had experience with the assessment for the Gulf of Mexico stock. In terms of the timeline, there was a desire to have the red snapper assessment reviewed by the SSC by the December 2010 Council meeting. There was discussion between SEFSC and SEDAR staff, and it was determined that the schedule would be revised so that the assessment would be available to the SSC for an October 2010 SSC meeting and that the results of the SSC's review would be presented to the Council at the December meeting. In addition, the Committee named individuals for SEDAR staff to contact, during the Council meeting week, for availability to participate as a panel member. The Committee directed SEDAR staff to present the availability of the individuals at Full Council.

The Committee approved the Terms of Reference, timelines (with above-mentioned changes), and a partial participant list.

3. Amendment 17A, Rick DeVictor and Kim Iverson, SAFMC Staff, Dr. Erik Williams, SEFSC Staff, Dr. Carolyn Belcher, SSC Chair,

Dr. Erik Williams presented the most recent red snapper projections completed by the Science Center. These included rebuilding projections of various portions of F_{MSY} incorporating “very high” recruitment in 2006. Dr. Carolyn Belcher presented the SSC recommendations pertaining to Amendment 17A. The SSC had concerns that the analyses and closure alternatives are based on assumptions that indicate possible outcomes that are too optimistic. The SSC was concerned that the model developed by SERO was run assuming 100% compliance and 0% effort shift. The SSC believed that when more realistic assumptions are used, no area-based alternatives would achieve the required decrease in catch in 2010, suggesting larger closed areas may be required. Dr. Nick Farmer presented the range of reductions in red snapper removals expected from the closure alternatives using various assumptions. The Council highlighted that there could be a decrease in effort if fishermen cease fishing or if individuals switch fisheries.

The Committee discussed the implications, including those in terms of economic and social effects, from retaining the current F_{MSY} proxy and from specifying a new one based upon recommendations from the SEDAR Review Panel and SSC. The Committee decided to retain the preferred alternative that would specify a F_{MSY} proxy according to the most recent SEDAR/SSC recommendation; this level is equivalent to that at the $F_{40\%SPR}$ level. However, the Committee directed staff to add rebuilding strategy alternatives based on projections using $F_{30\%SPR}$ as a F_{MSY} proxy and “very high” recruitment.

The Committee received a summary of the public comments received at the hearings. A preferred alternative was chosen for the closure alternatives. NMFS reported that it is unlikely that the DEIS would be filed with EPA before the March 2010 Council meeting. As such, the schedule is for the Council to approve sending the Amendment to the Secretary of Commerce at the June 2010 meeting.

4. Amendment 17B, Rick DeVictor, SAFMC Staff

Council staff provided a summary of the public comments received. The Committee retained the current range of alternatives and the current preferred alternatives. The Committee clarified that the overfished determination in the in-season recreational closure for overfished stocks would be triggered by Status of Stocks Report to Congress. Changes were made to the proposed framework. The Committee voted to send the Amendment to the Secretary of Commerce. The Committee was provided a proposed rule in their briefing material and sent another version via e-mail on December 9th. Additional changes were made to the proposed rule that was e-mailed

based on Committee recommendations and staff comments. Those changes include adding black sea bass and vermilion snapper AMs to the rule as they were not previously included.

(Note: Part of Amendment 18 and the subsequent agenda items were discussed in Full Council.)

5. Amendment 18 – Kate Quigley, SAFMC Staff

Council staff provided a summary of the public comments received. Council staff presented the alternatives in the amendment. The Committee recommends an action be added to the amendment that limits participation in the black sea bass pot fishery using control dates. The details of direction to staff and the team are provided in the motions.

6. Amendment 20 – Kate Quigley, SAFMC Staff

Council staff presented the alternatives in the amendment. The details of direction to staff and the team are provided in the motions. It was decided that a Wreckfish Stakeholder’s Meeting will be held in the first part of 2010.

7. Comprehensive ACL Amendment, Rick DeVictor, SAFMC Staff

Council staff presented the alternatives in the options paper. The details of direction to staff and the team are provided in the motions.

8. Other Business

Direction to Staff/Team:

17A

--Add alternatives and analysis for rebuilding strategy action using F30%SPR and “very high” recruitment

--Specify Alternative 5 as the preferred closure alternative

--Modify the action concerning circle hooks as per the motion. Designate Alternative 2 (with changes outlined in the motion) as the Preferred.

--Write letter to SEFSC requesting a plan on the fishery independent monitoring program and research set-aside.

--Change from “research fishery” to “research set-aside”.

17B

- In all SH/WG alternatives, specify total prohibition on speckled hind and warsaw grouper.
- In the golden tilefish and snowy grouper ACL action, change fishing “year” to “season”.
- Clarify “most recent” for three year running average in Recreational AMs alternatives.
- Clarify that NMFS will project recreational landings to determine closure.
- Clarify that three year running average applies to both recreational AMs.
- Clarify that bag and possession limits of zero affiliated with a recreational closure applies in the South Atlantic on board a vessel for which a valid Federal charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic snapper-grouper has been issued, without regard to where such species were harvested, i.e., in state or Federal waters.
- Remove 9d & e (referring to ecosystem component species and species groupings) from the proposed changes to the framework.
- Retain the use of TAC, in addition to ACLs, in TAC framework. Modify Table 4-25 to this effect.
- Refer to ABCs from the SSC as ABC “recommendations” in #3 in the proposed changes to the TAC framework.
- In Alternative 5b, clarify that at least one of the three species (red grouper, black grouper, and gag) must be overfished (versus all three).
- In Alternative 5a, clarify that the in season AM references a closure.

Comp ACL Amendment

- Add an alternative to the ecosystem component action that would designate EC species if landings are equal to or less than 10,000 lbs.
- Consider setting *Sargassum* as an Ecosystem Component species or specifying an ACL=0.
- Consider a single ACL for some species, especially those with relatively low landings.

The committee approved the following motions:

**MOTION #1: ACCEPT THE TOR FOR BLACK SEA BASS AS MODIFIED BY SSC.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**MOTION #2: ACCEPT THE TOR FOR SNOWY GROUPEr AS MODIFIED BY SSC.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE (STAFF TO CLARIFY LIFE HISTORY ISSUE)**

MOTION #3: APPOINT THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS TO THE SNAPPER GROUPER SEDAR UPDATES

- A. SSC – DR. ANDREW COOPER, DR. MARCEL REICHERT, DR. JOHN BORMAN & CHIP COLLIER**
- B. OBSERVER – DR. FRANK HESTER**

MOTION #4: TABLE MOTION APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION #5: APPOINT THE FOLLOWING AP MEMBERS TO THE SEDAR UPDATES:

- A. TOM BURGESS**
- B. KENNY FEX**
- C. ZACH BOWEN**
- D. BOBBY CARDIN**

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

**MOTION #6: APPOINT THE REMAINING INTERESTED AP MEMBERS AS ALTERNATES (DEBRANGO, HARRIS, AND OSBORNE)
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

MOTION #7: APPROVE THE TOR FOR RED SNAPPER AS MODIFIED BY THE SSC AND ADD THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

- A. INCONSISTENCIES WITH GULF ASSESSMENT**
 - a. NATURAL MORTALITY AND OTHER INCONSISTENCIES**
- B. UNCERTAINTIES –PRESENT AS RANGE NOT A BASE RUN**
- C. REFERENCE POINTS**
- D. APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

MOTION #8: FOR BLACK SEA BASS AND SNOWY GROUPER TOR THE UNCERTAINTIES BE PRESENTED MORE AS A RANGE AND NOT AS A BASE RUN.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION #9: SET THE MSY PROXY = F30%SPR FOR RED SNAPPER AS OUR PREFERRED

**SUBSTITUTE MOTION: NOT CHANGE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FROM F40% TO F30% BUT ADD ANALYSES BASED ON MSY PROXY = F30%SPR AND HAVE COMPLETED FOR REVIEW AT MARCH 2010 MEETING
SUBSTITUTE MOTION APPROVED BY COMMITTEE
MAIN MOTION APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**MOTION #10: MOVE ALTERNATIVE 2 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**MOTION #11: CHANGE THE REBUILDING STRATEGY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE TO #6 (Frebuild).
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**MOTION #12: MOVE REBUILDING STRATEGY ALTERNATIVE 7 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**MOTION #13: MAKE CLOSURE ALTERNATIVE 5 OUR PREFERRED
DISAPPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**MOTION #14: MAKE CLOSURE ALTERNATIVE 4 OUR PREFERRED
MOTION WITHDRAWN**

**MOTION #15: RECONSIDER MOTION ON ALTERNATIVE 5 (MOTION #13)
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**RECONSIDERED MOTION #13: MAKE CLOSURE ALTERNATIVE 5 OUR PREFERRED
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**MOTION #16: ALTERNATIVES 7 & 9 BE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**MOTION #17: SUB-ALTERNATIVE 11A BE OUR PREFERRED
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**MOTION #18: REQUIRE THE USE OF NON-OFF SET, NON-STAINLESS STEEL CIRCLE HOOKS WHEN FISHING FOR SNAPPER GROUPE SPECIES WITH HOOK AND LINE GEAR WITHIN THE EEZ NORTH OF 28 DEGREES AS OUR PREFERRED; IT IS UNLAWFUL TO POSSESS SNAPPER GROUPE SPECIES WITHOUT ALSO POSSESSING NON-OFF SET, NON-STAINLESS STEEL CIRCLE HOOKS; INTENT TO APPLY TO USE OF NATURAL BAITS ONLY.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**MOTION #19: REQUEST THE SEFSC TO PROVIDE A FISHERY INDEPENDENT MONITORING PLAN FOR RED SNAPPER AT OUR MARCH 2010 MEETING
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**MOTION #20: MAKE ALTERNATIVE 2 OUR PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**MOTION #21: REQUEST THE SEFSC TO PROVIDE A FISHERY DEPENDENT MONITORING PLAN FOR RED SNAPPER AT OUR MARCH 2010 MEETING
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

AMENDMENT 17B

**MOTION #22: CLARIFY THAT IN ALTERNATIVES 2-5 IT WAS THE COUNCIL'S INTENT THAT SPECKLED HIND AND WARSAW GROUPE BE CLOSED THROUGHOUT THE EEZ
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**MOTION #23: MOVE TILEFISH ALTERNATIVE 4 TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX
MOTION WITHDRAWN**

**MOTION #24: ADD OVERAGE CORRECTION TO TILEFISH COMMERCIAL QUOTA
MOTION WITHDRAWN**

**MOTION #25: INCLUDE THE 1 SNOWY GROUPE BOAT LIMIT AS PART OF THE AGGREGATE GROUPE BAG LIMIT
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**MOTION #26: APPROVE SENDING SNAPPER GROUPE AMENDMENT 17B TO THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR FORMAL REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION. INTENT TO GIVE STAFF EDITORIAL LICENSE TO ADDRESS NEEDED CHANGES.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**MOTION #27: SEND A LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE ALONG WITH AMENDMENT 17B WHICH INDICATES OUR HAVING MET THE OBLIGATIONS OF MSA BUT TO REITERATE OUR CONCERNS WITH SOME TO THE MANDATES WE ARE REQUIRED TO FOLLOW. ENCOURAGE THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE USE HIS POWER TO SEEK RELIEF FROM CONGRESS IN THIS REGARD AND TO ALLOW MORE FLEXIBILITY DUE TO THESE ECONOMIC IMPACTS.
DISAPPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**MOTION #28: STAFF DRAFT A LETTER TO THE SOC FOR REVIEW AT THE MARCH 2010 MEETING; BASED ON CHAIRMAN HARRIS' COMMENTS [ITEMS TO ADDRESS INCLUDE: ACLS, DATA DELIVERY SYSTEMS, ECONOMIC IMPACTS]
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

NEED TO ADDRESS PROPOSED RULE AT FULL COUNCIL

AMENDMENT 18=====

**MOTION #29: ADD A NEW ACTION TO AMEDMENT 18 THAT INVOKES THE 12/4/08, 10/14/05 AND 4/23/97 CONTROL DATES TO LIMIT PARTICIPATION IN THE BSB POT FISHERY. INTENT TO USE LANDINGS FROM BSB POTS.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

**MOTION #30: MOVE THE REJECTED ALTERNATIVE #7 FOR % REDUCTION OF BSB POTS FROM THE APPENDIX INTO AMENDMENT 18
MOTION WITHDRAWN**

**MOTION #31: ADD AN ALTERNATIVE WHICH WOULD GRANDFATHER THE NUMBER OF TAGS ISSUED AS OF 12/4/08 TO BE REDUCED BY 10%.
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE**

MOTION #32: REMOVE ACTION NUMBER 5 FROM THE AMENDMENT TO THE CONSIDERED BUT REJECTED APPENDIX.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

MOTION #33: ADD A SUB-ALTERNATIVE TO ALTERNATIVES 2, 3 & 4 THAT KEEPS THE 300 POUND TRIP LIMIT WHEN 75% OF THE QUOTA IS TAKEN.

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

AMENDMENT 20

MOTION #34: ADD A SERIES OF ALTERNATIVES THAT WOULD ALLOW TRANSFER OF WRECKFISH SHARES OR ALLOCATIONS

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #35: INCLUDE ACTIONS 6-12 AND ASSOCIATED ALTERNATIVES IN AMENDMENT 20

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

ACTION 6: REDISTRIBUTION OF UNUSED QUOTA SHARE

ACTION 7: COST RECOVERY FEE

ACTION 8: VMS

ACTION 9: OVERAGE (BORROWING) ALLOWANCE

ACTION 10: RESOURCE RENT EXTRACTION

ACTION 11: SUNSET PROVISION APPLIED TO SHARE OWNERSHIP

ACTION 12: REALLOCATION OF WRECKFISH TO NON-ITQ SHAREHOLDERS

COMPREHENSIVE ACL AMENDMENT OPTIONS PAPER

MOTION #36: ADD AN ALTERNATIVE THAT DESIGNATES EC SPECIES IF LANDINGS ARE LESS THAN OR EQUAL TO 10,000 LBS.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL

MOTION #37: MAKE ALTERNATIVE 8 TO ALLOW LONGLINING FOR GOLDEN TILEFISH TO OCCUR IN THE CLOSED AREA AS AN ADDITIONAL PREFERRED.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL