

Yellowtail Snapper Background Document for the December 2017 South Atlantic Council Meeting

Landings Data: in pounds whole weight.

South Atlantic Yellowtail Snapper	Year	Rec. Landings (lbs ww)	Com. Landings (lbs ww)	Total Landings (lbs ww)	Total ACL (lbs ww)	% Total ACL	% Rec. ACL	% Com. ACL
	2012	493,409	1,439,586	1,932,995	2,627,796	74%	48%	126%
2013	666,027	1,328,931	1,994,958	3,037,500	66%	46%	83%	
2014	933,760	1,575,956	2,509,716	3,037,500	83%	65%	99%	
2015	791,157	1,691,807	2,482,964	3,037,500	82%	55%	106% ^a	
2016/17*	646,062	1,727,121	2,373,183	3,037,500	78%	45%	108% ^b	

Gulf of Mexico Yellowtail Snapper	Year	Rec. Landings (lbs ww)	Com. Landings (lbs ww)	Total Landings (lbs ww)	Total ACL (lbs ww)	% Total ACL
	2012	5,087	630,984	636,071	725,000	88%
2013	6,991	734,112	741,103	901,125	82%	
2014	21,536	467,941	489,477	901,125	54%	
2015	78,833	507,398	586,231	901,125	65%	
2016/17*	90,345	580,540	670,885	901,125	74%	

Source: SEFSC Commercial and Recreational ACL datasets. Recreational data was post-stratified so Monroe County landings were given to the South Atlantic.

*The fishing season for yellowtail snapper was modified in Regulatory Amendment 25, which took effect on August 12, 2016. For this reason, 2016/2017 fishing season landings are provided. Landings provided in the table are preliminary. When accessed for this report, recreational landings for 2017 were not available for July 2017.

^aIn-season closure for commercial harvest of yellowtail snapper occurred from October 31, 2015 to December 31, 2015 due to meeting the sector ACL.

^bIn-season closure for commercial harvest of yellowtail snapper occurred from June 3, 2017 to July 31, 2017 due to meeting the sector ACL.

Management Delineation:

Yellowtail snapper are a single stock (SEDAR 27, 2013), overlapping South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Councils' jurisdictional border. The South Atlantic Council is apportioned 75% of the yellowtail snapper ACL, and the Gulf Council 25%. This was based on historical landings, split at the jurisdictional boundary between the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Councils using 50% of the catch history from 1993-2008 and 50% of the catch history from 2006-2008.

Stock Status:

According to SEDAR 27, yellowtail snapper are not overfished or experiencing overfishing. The next stock assessment for yellowtail snapper is expected to start in 2018 and be completed by the spring of 2019.

Regulatory Environment:

Fishing year: August 1 – July 31

South Atlantic: South Atlantic yellowtail snapper are managed at a 12-inch TL minimum size limit. There is no commercial trip or vessel limit. There is a 10-fish/person/day within the 10-snapper aggregate bag limit for the recreational sector. The South Atlantic Council's apportionment of the ACL is allocated 52.56% to the commercial sector, and 47.44% to the recreational sector, using 50% of the catch history from 1993-2008 and 50% of the catch history from 2006-2008.

Gulf of Mexico: Gulf yellowtail snapper are managed at a 12-inch TL minimum size limit. There is no commercial trip or vessel limit. There is a 10-fish/person/day within the 10-snapper aggregate bag limit for the recreational sector. The Gulf Council's apportionment of the ACL is managed as a single stock, without sector allocations.

Snapper Grouper Amendment 44 Actions and Alternatives per guidance from the March 2017 South Atlantic Council meeting:

Action 1. Modify the jurisdictional allocation of the acceptable biological catch (ABC) for yellowtail snapper.

Alternative 1. (No Action). The total ABC for yellowtail snapper is split between the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico regions, with 75% of the total ABC allocated to the South Atlantic Region and 25% of the total ABC allocated to the Gulf of Mexico Region.

South Atlantic: The current acceptable biological catch (ABC) for yellowtail snapper is 3,037,500 pounds whole weight (ww).

Gulf of Mexico: The current ABC for yellowtail snapper is 1,012,500 lbs ww.

The jurisdictional allocation is based on the Florida Keys (Monroe County) jurisdictional boundary between the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Councils for yellowtail snapper and was established by using a 50% weighting towards average landings from 1993-2008 + a 50% weighting towards average landings from 2006-2008.

Alternative 2. Remove the jurisdictional allocation of the total ABC for yellowtail snapper and manage the fishery in both the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico as a single unit.

Sub-alternative 2a: Manage jointly.

Sub-alternative 2b: South Atlantic manages the fishery, the Gulf of Mexico delegates authority.

Sub-alternative 2c: Gulf of Mexico manages the fishery, South Atlantic delegates authority.

Sub-alternative 2d: Allow different regional management measures.

Alternative 3. Modify the jurisdictional allocation of the total ABC for yellowtail snapper.

Sub-alternative 3a. Use a 50% weighting towards average landings from 1993-2015 + a 50% weighting towards average landings from 2013-2015.

Sub-alternative 3b. Use a 50% weighting towards average landings from 1995-2015 + a 50% weighting towards average landings from 2013-2015.

Sub-alternative 3c. Use average landings from 2013-2015.

Alternative 4. Allow sharing of the jurisdictional ABC for yellowtail snapper between the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico.

Action 2. Specify a single annual catch limit (ACL) for yellowtail snapper in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico.

Alternative 1 (No action).

South Atlantic: The current total ACL is equal to the jurisdictional ABC. The current total annual catch limit (ACL) is 3,037,500 lbs ww.

Gulf of Mexico: The current total ACL is set at 89% of the jurisdictional ABC. The current total ACL is 901,125 lbs ww.

Alternative 2. Manage the yellowtail snapper fishery in both the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico under a single ACL that is equal to the sum of the total ACL in the South Atlantic and the total ACL in the Gulf of Mexico.

Alternative 3. Manage the yellowtail snapper fishery in both the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico under a single ACL that is equal to the sum of the ACL in the South Atlantic and the jurisdictional ABC in the Gulf of Mexico.

Action 3. Allow adaptive management of annual catch limits (ACLs) and revise or establish sector allocations for yellowtail snapper.

Alternative 1. (No Action).

South Atlantic: The current sector allocations for yellowtail snapper is 52.56% of the total ACL for the commercial sector, and 47.44% of the total ACL for the recreational sector.

The sector allocations were determined using the following equation:

Allocation by sector = (0.5 * catch history) + (0.5 * current trend)

Where catch history is equal to the average landings from 1986-2008 and current trend is equal to average landings from 2006-2008.

Gulf of Mexico: There are no sector specific allocations of the total ACL for yellowtail snapper.

Alternative 2. Remove sector allocations in the South Atlantic. The current recreational and commercial sector ACLs will be combined into one stock ACL.

Alternative 3. Modify sector allocations.

Sub-alternative 3a. Allocate X% of the total ACL to the recreational sector. Allocate X% of the total ACL to the commercial sector. (Based on average landings from 2011-2015)

Sub-alternative 3b. Allocate X% of the total ACL to the recreational sector. Allocate X% of the total ACL to the commercial sector. (Based on average landings from 2006-2015)

Sub-alternative 3c. Allocate X% of the total ACL to the recreational sector. Allocate X% of the total ACL to the commercial sector. (Based on average landings from 2001-2015)

Sub-alternative 3d. Modify the sector allocations of the ACL for yellowtail snapper to the catch history being equal to the average landings from 1986-2015 and the current trend being equal to average landings from 2013-2015.

Alternative 4. Set aside a portion of the total ACL that can be used by either sector as a common pool allocation.

Sub-alternative 4a: 1% of the total ACL becomes a common pool category. The remaining ACL is split between the recreational sector and the commercial sector according to the current allocation.

Sub-alternative 4b: 2.5% of the total ACL becomes a common pool category. The remaining ACL is split between the recreational sector and the commercial sector according to the current allocation.

Sub-alternative 4c: 5% of the total ACL becomes a common pool category. The remaining ACL is split between the recreational sector and the commercial sector according to the current allocation.

Sub-alternative 4d: 10% of the total ACL becomes a common pool category. The remaining ACL is split between the recreational sector and the commercial sector according to the current allocation.

Alternative 5: For the next fishing year, conditionally transfer a certain percentage (Sub-alternatives 5a-5d) of the ACL from a sector that is not landing its ACL to the other sector that is landing at least 90% of its ACL, if the landings of the donating sector are below the minimum landings threshold (Sub-alternatives 5e-5g). The highest landings from the donating sector, based on available finalized data from the five years prior, will be used as criteria to determine if landings are below the minimum landings threshold for a conditional transfer to occur.

Conditional ACL Transfer (MUST CHOOSE ONE):

Sub-alternative 5a. Conditionally transfer 5% of the unadjusted ACL of one sector to the other sector.

Sub-alternative 5b. Conditionally transfer 10% of the unadjusted ACL of one sector to the other sector.

Sub-alternative 5c. Conditionally transfer 15% of the unadjusted ACL of one sector to the other sector.

Sub-alternative 5d. Conditionally transfer 20% of the unadjusted ACL of one sector to the other sector.

Donating sector's ACL Minimum Threshold (MUST CHOOSE ONE), if the donating sector's landings are:

Sub-alternative 5e. less than 50% of its unadjusted ACL.

Sub-alternative 5f. less than 65% of its unadjusted ACL.

Sub-alternative 5g. less than 75% of its unadjusted ACL.

Action 4. Revise the accountability measures for yellowtail snapper.

Alternative 1 (No action).

South Atlantic Accountability Measures (AM)

The current commercial AM is an in-season closure if the commercial ACL is met or projected to be met. The commercial ACL is reduced by the amount of the commercial overage in the following fishing year only if the species is overfished and the total ACL is exceeded.

The current recreational AM is an in-season closure if the recreational ACL is met or projected to be met. A shortening of the recreational season may be triggered if the recreational ACL is exceeded, but only after recreational landings have been monitored for persistence in increased landings. The length of the recreational season is not reduced if the Regional Administrator determines the best available science shows it is not necessary. If a reduction is necessary, the recreational season may be shortened and the recreational ACL reduced in the following fishing year by the amount of the recreational overage only if the species is overfished and the total ACL is exceeded.

Gulf of Mexico Accountability Measure (AM)

If the sum of the commercial and recreational landings, as estimated by the Science and Research Director (SRD), exceeds the stock ACL, then during the following fishing year, if the sum of commercial and recreational landings reaches or is projected to reach the stock ACL, the Assistant Administrator (AA) will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register to close the commercial and recreational sectors for the remainder of that fishing year.

Alternative 2. Implement the Gulf of Mexico AM in the South Atlantic region.

Alternative 3. An in-season closure will not occur until the total ACL is met or projected to be met. Both sectors will close when the total ACL is met.

Alternative 4. An in-season closure for either sector will not occur until the total ACL is met. However, if the landings of one or both sectors are estimated by the SRD to have exceeded the sector ACL then:

Sub-alternative 4a. The AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register, at or near the beginning of the following fishing year, to reduce the length of the fishing season for the commercial sector that year by the amount estimated to prevent that sector's ACL from being exceeded.

Sub-alternative 4b. The AA will file a notification with the Office of the Federal Register, at or near the beginning of the following fishing year, to reduce the length of the fishing season for the recreational sector that year by the amount estimated to prevent that sector's ACL from being exceeded.

Sub-alternative 4c. Implement a trip limit for the commercial sector the following fishing year, if applicable, by the amount estimated to prevent that sector's ACL from being exceeded.

Sub-alternative 4d. Implement a bag limit reduction for the recreational sector the following fishing year, if applicable, by the amount estimated to prevent that sector's ACL from being exceeded.

Alternative 5. The commercial AM will include an in-season closure if the commercial ACL and the available common pool ACL is met or projected to be met. The commercial ACL is reduced by the amount of the commercial overage in the following fishing year only if the species is overfished and the total ACL is exceeded.

The recreational AM will include an in-season closure if the recreational ACL and the available common pool ACL is met or projected to be met. A shortening of the recreational season may be triggered if the recreational ACL and the available common pool ACL is exceeded, but only after recreational landings have been monitored for persistence in increased landings. The length of the recreational season is not reduced if the Regional Administrator determines the best available science shows it is not necessary. If a reduction is necessary, the recreational season may be shortened and the recreational ACL reduced in the following fishing year by the amount of the recreational overage only if the species is overfished and the total ACL is exceeded.

Action 5. Establish a commercial trip limit for yellowtail snapper.

Alternative 1. (No Action). There is no commercial trip limit for yellowtail snapper in the South Atlantic or Gulf of Mexico Regions.

Alternative 2. Establish a commercial trip limit for yellowtail snapper from May 15 to July 31, during the peak spawning months.

Sub-alternative 2a. 500 pounds per vessel per day.

Sub-alternative 2b. 750 pounds per vessel per day.

Sub-alternative 2c. 1,000 pounds per vessel per day.

Alternative 3. Establish a commercial trip limit for yellowtail snapper once 65% of the quota has been harvested.

Sub-alternative 3a. 500 pounds per vessel per day.

Sub-alternative 3b. 750 pounds per vessel per day.

Sub-alternative 3c. 1,000 pounds per vessel per day.

Alternative 4. Establish a commercial trip limit for yellowtail snapper once 70% of the quota has been harvested.

Sub-alternative 4a. 500 pounds per vessel per day.

Sub-alternative 4b. 750 pounds per vessel per day.

Sub-alternative 4c. 1,000 pounds per vessel per day.

Alternative 5. Establish a commercial trip limit for yellowtail snapper once 75% of the quota has been harvested.

Sub-alternative 5a. 500 pounds per vessel per day.

Sub-alternative 5b. 750 pounds per vessel per day.

Sub-alternative 5c. 1,000 pounds per vessel per day.

Alternative 6. Establish a multi-day commercial trip limit for yellowtail snapper.

Sub-alternative 6a. X pounds per vessel per trip on multi-day trips.

Sub-alternative 6b. 3,500 pounds per vessel per trip on multi-day trips.

Sub-alternative 6c. X pounds per vessel per trip on multi-day trips.