

Impact of Federal Shutdown on SAFMC Amendments and Projects
As of February 27, 2019

Please note that these are anticipated effects. The staffs of the SAFMC and SERO have reviewed each of the amendments and projects below. Amendments/projects not listed below are assumed not to be affected by the Federal shutdown at this point.

Snapper Grouper

Amendment 38 (Blueline Tilefish north of Cape Hatteras) – The SSC was going to review blueline tilefish at the January 25th webinar which was rescheduled and took place February 25. Based on the review the SSC decided not to use the revision assessment to update the ABC recommendation they made after SEDAR 50. As long as the SSC confirms their decision at their April meeting, progress can commence on Amendment 38 at the June Council meeting. If the SSC doesn't provide guidance on development by April, it will be December 2019 before the Council can take up further consideration of this amendment.

Amendment 42 (Sea turtle release gear modifications) – The Council is scheduled to take final action at the March 2019 meeting. SERO has completed the codified text and additional material in the economic section. The analyses for the actions/alternatives and their effects are completed. The Council may take final action on this amendment at the March meeting.

Abbreviated Framework 2 (Vermilion and black sea bass ACL modifications) – implementation will be delayed due to no movement on proposed rule package during the shutdown. The proposed rule was published, and the comment period ends March 6, 2019.

Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 26 (Recreational) – SAFMC edits have been completed. Final reviews have been completed by SERO. It is anticipated the document will be sent in for formal Secretarial review prior to beginning of the March 2019 Council Meeting.

Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 27 (Commercial) – Still has some 508 Compliance issues to be resolved. SAFMC staff were waiting for those to be resolved prior to sending the document in for formal review. However, since these 508 Compliance edits do not change any document text and the edits must be made by SERO staff, the document was formally sent in for Secretarial review on January 24, 2019. SERO is currently working on the rule package.

Regulatory Amendment 29 (Best fishing practices and powerheads) – The Council requested a public hearing document for the March meeting. Sections are populated, and basic analysis completed, but the analysis may need to be expanded in next iteration of the document. It is not clear whether the analysis in the document will be sufficient for the Council to vote to send out for public hearings in Spring of 2019.

Regulatory Amendment 30 (Red grouper) – The Council cannot do much of the work on Action 1 as planned at the March meeting. The postponement of the SSC webinar scheduled for January 25 prevented progress on this action. If the SSC can finish its work on red grouper either before

or at the April meeting, it is likely the Council can take a final vote on the amendment at the June 2019 meeting. This amendment has a statutory deadline of having a new rebuilding schedule in place by September 2019.

Wreckfish ITQ Review – The Council was expecting to have a final document to review. SAFMC staff have been able to work on some additional sections of the document, however they have not yet been reviewed by the entire IPT. Additionally, key sections of the document to be written by SERO staff by January were not completed due to the shutdown. The Council was scheduled to give final approval in June. Most likely final approval will be pushed back to September 2019.

Habitat and Ecosystem

Due to the shutdown, NMFS EBFM Implementation Plan for the South Atlantic Region will not be completed as originally scheduled due to the unavailability of their employees to contribute to the process. The timing of the Habitat and Ecosystem AP was moved back to late May so NMFS will have more time to complete their plan. NMFS will report on deliverables supporting FEP II Implementation Plan at the AP meeting. Given the delay, the Council will not consider this in June, but will in September 2019 when the AP report will be made.

Coral/Shrimp/Golden Crab

Coral 10/Shrimp 11/Golden Crab 10 (Transit and allowable fishing zones) – NMFS was preparing needed, updated maps based on recent coral surveys. They were not completed prior to the shutdown. Before the updated maps can be used, they will need to be reviewed by the GMFMC and SAFMC SSCs. The maps will not be available for the April SSC but could be ready for the October SSC meeting. These maps will be extremely useful in considering boundaries for coral areas as considered in some actions. One option could be to remove the transit provisions for the shrimp fishery from the joint amendment while the maps are being completed. The change in the transit provisions are being considered because fishermen have indicated that many vessels cannot meet the gear stowage requirements when transiting federal waters with shrimp.

Mackerel/Cobia

Amendment 31 (Transfer of Atlantic stock cobia management to the ASMFC) – Final rule was published on February 19, 2019 with an effective date on March 21, 2019.

Framework Amendment 6 (Modification of Atlantic king mackerel trip limits) – Awaiting proposed rule publication by SERO.

Spiny Lobster

Amendment 13 (Florida management and gear modifications) - Awaiting proposed rule publication by SERO.

Dolphin/Wahoo

Dolphin Wahoo Amendment 10 (Dolphin wahoo management issues) - The IPT was unable to meet as scheduled after the December Council meeting due to the shutdown. In an effort to offer suggestions for the actions and alternatives currently under consideration, the IPT did provide limited comments through an email based-review once the government shutdown ended. Some data are available for analysis, however, there is not much new analysis that SAFMC staff can bring to the Council in March that they didn't see in December. However, the Council can continue the discussion on the actions/alternatives at the March meeting, particularly focusing on the ranges of alternatives that is proposed for the newly added items and items that should remain in the amendment if it is sent out for scoping. The development of the amendment is likely to be delayed at least one Council meeting.

(Bullet and Frigate Mackerel White Paper not won't be affected by the shutdown. Was waiting primarily for NOAA GC comments. Those have now been received.)

Generic Amendments

ABC Control Rule – Amendment will be delayed because guidance from the NMFS working group on phase-in and carry-over provisions for ACLs has not yet been provided. There will be at least a 1-month delay on receiving the information which could result in pushing back further work on the amendment by one Council meeting. Scoping was held January 23-24 as planned, although the IPT did not have an opportunity to review the scoping documents.

Recreational Accountability Measures – The IPT was unable to meet as scheduled after the December Council meeting due to the shutdown. Therefore, the IPT was unable to offer additional suggestions for the actions and alternatives currently under consideration. This amendment is likely to be delayed at least one Council meeting. Scoping was held January 23-24 as planned, although the IPT did not have an opportunity to review the scoping documents.

For-Hire Reporting Amendment – Awaiting final rule. Implementation was delayed until April 2019 to coincide with final rule publication with the Gulf's For-Hire Reporting Amendment. Unclear whether this final rule will happen as scheduled. The SAFMC is not doing any additional outreach or training on for-hire reporting until the final rule is published.

Citizen Science

Fishtory Project – Delayed in starting due to lack of transfer of Federal funds.

ASMFC MOU - Implementation is delayed while waiting for NOAA GC review

Advisory Panel Meetings

The Information and Education AP meeting occurred January 29 & 30 as planned. Other APs are not yet affected by the shutdown. The SSC and Snapper Grouper AP will meet in April. The Council will decide at the March 2019 meeting whether the Mackerel Cobia AP needs to meet prior to the June 2019 meeting. If so, the meeting will most likely be done via webinar.

Scientific and Statistical Committee

The SSC webinar scheduled for January 25, to review the MRIP revision assessments in detail, was postponed. Council staff are working to see if it can be rescheduled prior to the March 2019 Council meeting. NMFS staff participation is necessary, as they conducted the assessments and are the only ones who can answer SSC questions. This webinar was an important step toward ensuring the SSC has the information it needs at its April 2019 meeting to provide ABC recommendations based on the revised assessments.

Scoping and Public Hearing Sessions

Scoping sessions occurred via webinar for the ABC Control Rule and the Recreational AM amendments in January as planned. Public hearings for Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 29 (Best fishing practices and powerheads) could occur between the March and June Council meetings if the needed analyses can be completed in time. Otherwise, public hearings for this amendment will have to be postponed until Summer 2019.

Red Snapper 2019 Season

At the December 2018 meeting, the Council notified NMFS SERO that it would be beneficial to fishermen to receive information on the length of the 2019 recreational season as soon as possible, preferably at the March 2019 Council meeting. The idea was for the information on the season to be published sooner than in previous years. SERO is actively working to have the season projections available by the March 2019 meeting. The projections most likely will not be ready for into the BB ahead of the February 15, 2019 posting. However, every attempt is being made to have the projections available for discussion at the March meeting.