



# SOUTH ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Jessica McCawley, Chair | Mel Bell, Vice Chair  
 Gregg T. Waugh, Executive Director

## AGENDA

### Snapper Grouper Committee

Marriott Hutchinson Island  
 555 NE Ocean Blvd.  
 Stuart, FL

**Tuesday, June 11, 2019 – 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.**

**Wednesday, June 12, 2019 – 8:30 A.M. to 12:00 Noon (Times subject to change)**

Approval of Agenda – Jessica McCawley

Approval of March 2019 Committee minutes – Jessica McCawley

1. Status of Commercial and Recreational Catches versus ACLs – NMFS SERO  
*(Attachments 1a and 1b)*
2. Status of Amendments under Formal Review – NMFS SERO
  - a. Amendment 42 (Sea Turtle Release Gear and Framework Modifications) – sent to NMFS 4/24/19
  - b. Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 27 (Commercial) – sent to NMFS 1/24/19
  - c. Vision Blueprint Regulatory Amendment 26 (Recreational) – sent to NMFS 4/17/19
3. Southeast Reef Fish Survey Update *(Attachment 2)*
  - a. Overview – Dr. Marcel Reichert
  - b. **Committee action:** Take action as appropriate – Jessica McCawley
4. Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel Report *(Attachment 3)*
  - a. Overview – Jimmy Hull
  - b. **Committee action:** Take action as appropriate – Jessica McCawley
5. Scientific and Statistical Committee Report
  - a. Overview – Dr. George Sedberry
  - b. **Committee action:** Take action as appropriate – Jessica McCawley
6. Amendment 38 (Blueline Tilefish; *Attachment 4*)
  - a. Overview – Roger Pugliese
  - b. **Committee action:** Take action as appropriate – Jessica McCawley

7. Update on System Management Plans
  - a. Overview – Dr. Chip Collier
  - b. **Committee action:** Take action as appropriate – Jessica McCawley
8. Options for removing Jacks from the Snapper Grouper FMP (*Attachment 5*)
  - a. Overview – Myra Brouwer
  - b. **Committee action:** Take action as appropriate – Jessica McCawley
9. Regulatory Amendment 33 (Red Snapper Seasons Modifications; *Attachment 6*)
  - a. Overview – Myra Brouwer
  - b. **Committee action:** Review options and provide guidance to staff on amendment content and timing, consider approval for public hearings – Jessica McCawley
10. Regulatory Amendment 29 (Best Fishing Practices & Powerheads) (*Attachments 7a and 7b*)
  - a. Overview – Christina Wiegand
  - b. **Committee action:** Consider public input, select preferred alternatives, and approve all actions – Jessica McCawley
11. Regulatory Amendment 30 (Red Grouper Management Measures) (*Attachments 8a-8c*)
  - a. Overview – John Hadley
  - b. **Committee action:** Review, make modifications as appropriate, and consider approval for formal review – Jessica McCawley
12. Wreckfish ITQ Review (*Attachment 9*)
  - a. Overview – Dr. Brian Chevront
  - b. **Committee action:** Review final draft and provide guidance to staff – Jessica McCawley
13. Economic Performance of the Snapper Grouper Fishery (*Attachment 10*)
  - a. Overview – Dr. Christopher Liese, SEFSC
  - b. **Committee action:** Take action as appropriate
14. Other Business – Jessica McCawley

Adjourn – Jessica McCawley

**Committee Members**

Jessica McCawley, Chair  
 Mel Bell, Vice-chair  
 Anna Beckwith  
 Chester Brewer  
 Kyle Christiansen  
 Chris Conklin  
 Roy Crabtree  
 Tim Griner

Doug Haymans  
Wilson Laney  
LCDR Jeremy Montes  
Steve Poland  
Art Sapp  
David Whitaker  
Spud Woodward  
Mid-Atlantic Liaison: Tony DiLernia, Dewey Hemilright

**Attachments:**

- Attachment 1a:** Status of commercial catches vs. ACLs
- Attachment 1b:** Status of recreational catches vs. ACLs (*in Late Materials folder*)
- Attachment 2:** SERFS update presentation
- Attachment 3:** Snapper Grouper AP Report
- Attachment 4:** Amendment 38 options paper
- Attachment 5:** Options for Removing Jacks from the Snapper Grouper FMP
- Attachment 6:** Regulatory Amendment 33 (Red Snapper Seasons) Options Paper
- Attachment 7a:** Regulatory Amendment 29 Decision Document
- Attachment 7b:** Draft Regulatory Amendment 29
- Attachment 8a:** Regulatory Amendment 30 (Red Grouper) Decision Document
- Attachment 8b:** Draft Regulatory Amendment 30
- Attachment 8c:** Draft Regulatory Amendment 30 Codified Text
- Attachment 9:** Wreckfish ITQ Review – Final Draft
- Attachment 10:** Presentation on the Economic Performance of the Snapper Grouper Fishery (*in Late Materials folder*)

**SSC Report**

**Staff:** Myra Brouwer

# OVERVIEW

## Snapper Grouper Committee

The Committee will approve minutes from the March 2019 meeting and the agenda for the June 2019 Committee meeting.

- 1. Status of Commercial and Recreational Catches for Species under ACLs**  
*(Attachments 1a and 1b)*  
**Description:** National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office (NMFS SERO) staff will update the Committee on the status of commercial and recreational landings of snapper grouper species and species complexes relative to their respective ACLs.  
**Required Committee Action:** None.
- 2. Status of Amendments under Formal Review**  
**Description:** NMFS SERO staff will update the Committee on the status of amendments under review or recently submitted.  
**Required Committee Action:** None.
- 3. Southeast Reef Fish Survey (SERFS) Update** *(Attachment 2)*  
**Description:** Dr. Marcel Reichert will deliver a presentation on the latest observed trends in the fishery-independent SERFS for species in the Snapper Grouper Complex.  
**Required Committee Action:** Take action as appropriate.
- 4. Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (AP) Report** *(Attachment 3)*  
**Description:** The Snapper Grouper AP met in Charleston on April 24-26, 2019. The AP discussed and provided recommendations, as appropriate, on items the Committee approved during their March 2019 meeting. Jimmy Hull, AP Chair, will deliver a summary of the AP's comments and recommendations.  
**Required Committee Action:** Take action as appropriate.
- 5. Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Report**  
**Description:** The SSC met in Charleston on April 9-11, 2019. Dr. George Sedberry will deliver a summary of the SSC's discussions and recommendations on items relevant to the snapper grouper fishery.  
**Required Committee Action:** Take action as appropriate.
- 6. Amendment 38 (Blueline Tilefish; Attachment 4)**  
**Description:** SEDAR 50 was conducted in 2017 as a joint assessment between the South Atlantic Council (SEDAR Lead) with the Mid-Atlantic Council addressing the stock assessment(s) for Atlantic blueline tilefish. The SSC reviewed results of SEDAR 50 at their October 2017 meeting and provided catch level recommendations for blueline tilefish for the area south of Cape Hatteras, NC. As acceptable biological catch (ABC) recommendations that match the jurisdictional boundaries of the Mid- and South Atlantic Councils (boundary at the NC/VA state line) were needed to develop fishing levels and management measures, the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) formed a

workgroup whose task was to determine a suitable approach to obtaining an ABC that would be useable under the existing management structure. In June 2018, the Council reviewed SSC recommendations on setting an ABC for blueline tilefish but development of this amendment was delayed by other priorities. The South Atlantic SSC convened in April 2019 to discuss assessment revisions using the calibrated MRIP landings data and determine if they can be used to generate new ABC recommendations. The SSC did not provide a new ABC recommendation for blueline tilefish.

**Required Committee Action:** Discuss approach to adopt catch levels from SEDAR 50 and provide guidance to staff.

#### 7. Update on System Management Plans

**Description:** The System Management Plan Workgroup has been developing an outreach document on the Spawning Special Management Zones created in Amendment 36. This [Story Map](#) is an interactive outreach tool for the public to learn about the areas protected and the target species, the process to create and review the managed areas, the goals and objectives for the areas, and regulations in the areas. The webpage has not been presented to any advisory panels for their review and input is needed to ensure the outreach material covers appropriate topics and provides enough detail.

**Required Committee Action:** Consider recommending the material be sent to the Snapper Grouper, Law Enforcement, and Information and Education advisory panels for their review.

#### 8. Options for Removing Jacks from the Snapper Grouper FMP (*Attachment 5*)

**Description:** During the March 2019 meeting, the Committee requested information to consider removal of greater amberjack, lesser amberjack, almaco jack, and banded rudderfish from the Snapper Grouper FMP and possibly including in the Coastal Migratory Pelagics FMP. The Committee stated that some of the management measures the Council is currently considering may not be appropriate for the “Jacks” species; hence, the Committee will consider options to address the issue.

**Required Committee Action:** Consider options and provide guidance to staff.

#### 9. Regulatory Amendment 33 (Red Snapper Seasons Modifications; *Attachment 6*)

**Description:** During the March 2019 Council meeting, SERO staff briefed the Council on the projected 2019 red snapper season. As implemented through Amendment 43, the commercial season begins each year on the second Monday in July and the recreational season begins on the second Friday in July. During the open recreational season, harvest is allowed on consecutive weekends, from Friday through Sunday. The Committee discussed possibly modifying the days of the week that are open to recreational harvest starting in 2020, should harvest be allowed, to allow more flexibility in the event of bad weather. In addition, the Council stated their desire to remove the provision that does not allow harvest of red snapper should the predicted opening be three days or fewer.

**Status of Amendment:** The Committee will discuss options to include in a regulatory amendment that could implement changes to the timing and structure of red snapper seasons in the South Atlantic.

**Required Committee Action:** Consider options and provide guidance on amendment content and timing and consider approving for public hearings.

**10. Regulatory Amendment 29 (Best Fishing Practices & Powerheads) (*Attachments 7a and 7b*)**

**Description:** Regulatory Amendment 29 includes actions to implement requirements for descending and/or venting devices, modifications to the circle hook requirement, and consideration of powerhead use in federal waters off South Carolina. At their March 2019 meeting, the Council reviewed a draft public hearing document, selected preferred alternatives, and approved the amendment for public hearings. The Council also requested input from the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel and the Law Enforcement Advisory Panel on the definition of descending devices used in the document. Staff were directed to work with NMFS to develop a research and monitoring plan for descending device usage and work with the SSC to determine how best fishing practices requirements may be considered in future stock assessments. Public hearings were conducted via webinar on April 30 and May 1, 2019. Council staff will provide a summary of public comments and recommendations from Council advisors and review any modifications to the amendment since the March meeting.

**Status of Amendment:** Public comment and recommendations from advisory panels were obtained per the Committee's request. The Council is expected to consider the amendment for final approval in September 2019.

**Required Committee Action:** Review, modify draft amendment as necessary, and approve all actions.

**11. Regulatory Amendment 30 (Red Grouper Management Measures) (*Attachments 8a-8c*)**

**Description:** Regulatory Amendment 30 includes actions to revise the rebuilding schedule, modify the spawning season closure for red grouper only off North and South Carolina, and implement a commercial trip limit for the entire South Atlantic region. At their March 2019 meeting, the Council reviewed the draft amendment, made modifications to the purpose and need statements, and approved all actions.

**Status of amendment:** The amendment has been completed and it is ready for consideration for formal review.

**Required Committee Action:** Review, consider public input, and consider approval for formal review.

**12. Wreckfish ITQ Review (*Attachment 9*)**

**Description:** In June of 2017, the Council directed staff to begin a formal review of the Wreckfish ITQ program in accordance with NMFS guidelines. The review itself will not contain actions and alternatives. It could recommend actions and alternatives for the Council to consider in a future amendment to the FMP. The purpose of the review is to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and whether it is meeting its objectives. Work on the review has been ongoing since 2017. Drafts of the review have been considered by the SEP/SSC and the Law Enforcement and Snapper Grouper APs. The review draft is near completion.

**Status:** The review is completed except for the Council's final comments and recommendations. In September, the Council will review a final document with conclusions and will consider submitting the document for Secretarial review.

**Required Committee Action:** Review the document and provide direction to staff.

**13. Economic Performance of the Snapper Grouper Fishery (*Attachment 10*)**

**Description:** In the fall of 2018, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) released the technical memorandum *Economics of the U.S. South Atlantic Snapper-Grouper Fishery – 2016*. The tech memo provides summary information and economic estimates for the snapper grouper fishery as a whole and for specific Segments of Interest (SOI) that consist of species or groups of species within the snapper grouper management complex. Among the results are estimates of net revenue and net cash flow that are potentially useful for better analyzing the economic effects of fishery management actions on the commercial sector. The Committee will receive a summary presentation from the SEFSC on the methods and major findings from the study.

**Required Committee Action:** Review the document and provide direction to staff.

**Other Business**