

Revised Overview

Snapper Grouper Committee

Hilton Wilmington Riverside
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The Committee will: (A) receive reports from SERO on the status of commercial and recreational catches versus the respective ACLs for snapper grouper species; (B) receive a status report from SERO staff on snapper grouper amendments under Secretarial review; (C) receive reports from the Scientific and Statistical Committee and the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel; (D) receive a series of presentations on how the Outreach, Research, and Law Enforcement deliverables included in the *Oculina* Experimental Closed Area Evaluation Plan have been met; (E) receive an overview of the actions and alternatives included in Snapper Grouper Regulatory Amendment 11 that removed the 240-foot closure (*this item will only be addressed if necessary*) and provide guidance to staff; (F) receive reports from Council staff, law enforcement representatives, and SEFSC representatives on outreach, enforcement, and research/assessment activities in the Deepwater MPAs; receive an overview from Council staff on Regulatory Amendment 17; receive detailed reports on relevant research pertaining to existing and candidate MPA sites off each state, as well as the recommendation(s) of the MPA Expert Workgroup as they pertain to each of the sites; and select candidate sites for scoping in January 2014; (G) receive an overview of Regulatory Amendment 16 (black sea bass pot closure) and approve for scoping; (H) review the updated Options Paper/Scoping Document for Amendment 22 and approve for scoping; (I) receive an overview of Amendment 29 (ORCS and gray triggerfish) and approve for public hearings; (J) receive an overview of Amendment 31 (blueline tilefish), review scoping comments, consider requesting emergency action to adjust ABC and fishing levels, and approve for public hearings; (K) receive a status report on Amendment 20 (snowy grouper and mutton snapper) and provide guidance to staff; (L) receive an overview of the Comprehensive Allocation/Accountability Measure Amendment, provide guidance on snapper grouper species, and approve for scoping; and (M) address other business as necessary.

A. Status of landings for quota-managed snapper grouper species (Attachments 1a & 1b)

The Committee will receive an update on the status of landings (commercial and recreational) for snapper grouper species under ACLs.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and take action as necessary.

B. Status of Amendments Approved for Secretarial Review

The Committee will receive a status report from SERO staff on the following amendments:

- A. Amendment 27/EA (Mgmt Authority/Fmwk/Crew Size/Blue Runner) – sent for formal review on 5/23/13.
- B. Regulatory Amendment 14/EA (Multiple Species)

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss and take action as necessary.

C. SSC and Snapper Grouper AP reports (Attachments 2a & 2b)

Dr. Luiz Barbieri, SSC Chair, will summarize discussions and recommendations from the October 24-25, 2013 SSC meeting. Robert Johnson, Chair of the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel, will update the Committee on AP discussions and recommendations obtained during the November 19-20, 2013 meeting.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Take actions as appropriate.

D. Oculina Experimental Closed Area (Attachments 3a-3e)

In April 2004, regulations were implemented through Amendment 13A that extended the bottom fishing restrictions for the *Oculina* Experimental Closed Area (OECA) for an indefinite period. The amendment was developed to address the 10-year sunset provision for the closure of the area to snapper grouper fishing. In addition to extending the closure, the amendment required that the size and configuration of the OECA be reviewed within three years of the implementation date of Amendment 13A and that a 10-year re-evaluation be conducted. The Council also developed an Evaluation Plan to address needed monitoring and research, outreach, and enforcement efforts. The Council approved the OECA Evaluation Plan in March 2005. The Plan contains goals and objectives in three broad areas: Outreach, Law Enforcement, and Research/Assessment.

As part of the OECA Evaluation Plan, the Council established the *Oculina* Evaluation Team (OET) -- comprised of law enforcement representatives, research scientists, resource managers, commercial fishermen, recreational fishermen, outreach experts, and non-governmental organization representatives -- to review and provide recommendations for the ongoing research and monitoring, outreach, and law enforcement components of the Evaluation Plan.

The OET convened in August 21-23, 2006 in Port Canaveral, Florida to:

- Compile up-to-date accomplishments in research and monitoring, information and education projects, and law enforcement strategies and timelines outlined in the OECA Evaluation Plan.
- Review and evaluate the size and configuration of the OECA and provide recommendations to the Council.
- Provide recommendations to assist the Council in their 10-year evaluation of research and monitoring, law enforcement and outreach efforts supporting fishing regulations. The OECA review is scheduled for 2014.

The Committee will receive presentations on outreach efforts (Council staff), law enforcement activities (NOAA OLE, USCG, and FL FWC), and research and monitoring efforts (SEFSC staff) since 2007.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Provide guidance to staff on completion of remaining items from the Evaluation Plan, any necessary changes to the *Oculina* Experimental Closed Area, and any other items as necessary.

E. Regulatory Amendment 11 (Removal of the 240-foot closure; Attachments 4a & 4b)

Council staff will review actions and alternatives in Regulatory Amendment 11. If necessary, the Council may need to re-consider alternatives included in the amendment.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Provide guidance to staff.

F. Regulatory Amendment 17 (MPAs for speckled hind and warsaw grouper; Attachments 5a-5l)

At the September meeting, the Council provided guidance to staff on presentations for the December meeting and on how to structure the actions/alternatives. Presentations on meeting the outreach, law enforcement, and research/assessment needs as outlined in Snapper Grouper Amendment 14 establishing the original 8 MPAs will be given first. The Committee will evaluate the degree to which the needs have been met, which needs remain, and provide guidance to staff on how to proceed.

Council staff will give a brief overview of the actions/alternatives in the draft scoping document for Regulatory Amendment 17. The Committee will then move through consideration of new MPA sites on a state-by-state basis. Presentations will be given on the research/assessment work conducted by the SEFSC and by MARMAP/SEAMAP/SEFIS on each proposed site (e.g., percentage of area mapped, changes in fish abundance over time, habitat type, etc.). Then the Expert Workgroup recommendations will be reviewed and finally the Committee will provide guidance on which sites to include for scoping. The presentations/discussion will begin in North Carolina and work south to Florida.

After discussing the Florida sites, the Committee will provide any additional guidance and approve Regulatory Amendment 17 for scoping; scoping meetings would be held January 21-30, 2014.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Provide guidance to staff on sites to include in the scoping document. Review, revise as appropriate, and approve the scoping document for scoping to be conducted in January 2014.

G. Regulatory Amendment 16 (Black Sea Bass Pot Closure; Attachment 6)

Council staff will review alternatives to address the proposed annual closure of black sea bass pots from November 1 to April 30.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Review, revise as appropriate, and approve for scoping to be held in January 2014.

H. Amendment 22 (Tags to track recreational harvest; Attachment 7)

Council staff will review changes to the Options Paper since the September 2013 meeting and update the Committee on feedback on tag programs from each of the South Atlantic states. The Council had requested that SERO staff provide a presentation on a system that could be set up to conduct a lottery for tag distribution. However, because of delays caused by the government shutdown, SERO staff will provide the presentation at the March 2014 meeting.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Review, revise as appropriate, provide guidance to staff, and approve for scoping to be held in January 2014.

I. Amendment 29 (ORCS and gray triggerfish management; Attachment 8)

At the September 2013 meeting, the Council's guidance was to continue development of Amendment 29, obtain input from the Snapper Grouper AP on proposed ABC values for "Only Reliable Catch Species" (ORCS), and include actions to implement management measures for gray triggerfish. Council staff will review the Amendment 29 Decision Document and any analyses completed to date.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Review, revise as appropriate, and approve for public hearings to be held in January 2014.

J. Amendment 31 (Blueline Tilefish; Attachments 9a & 9b)

The stock assessment for blueline tilefish (SEDAR 32) was reviewed by the SSC in October 2013 and found to be suitable for management. The assessment indicated the stock is overfished and undergoing overfishing. However, the SSC recommended an alternate definition of MSST that, if adopted, would indicate the stock is in fact not overfished and a rebuilding plan would not be necessary. A scoping document was developed and a scoping webinar was held on November 7, 2013. Comments were requested on the scoping document by 5 p.m. on November 20, 2013. Council staff will review the actions and alternatives in the scoping document and provide a summary of the comments received.

The Council is required to end overfishing immediately, and the Committee may want to recommend to the Council that emergency action be sought to affect 2014 landings while the amendment continues to be developed. If the Council requests emergency action to reduce the ACL for 2014, the amendment would need to be submitted for formal review after the June 2014 Council meeting so that regulations are in place prior to January 2015. To meet this timing, the document needs to be approved for public hearings to be held in January 2014.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Discuss whether to recommend that the Council request emergency action, review/revise the amendment as appropriate, and provide guidance on actions and alternatives. Approve for public hearings to be held in January 2014.

K. Regulatory Amendment 20 (Snowy grouper and mutton snapper; Attachment 10)

A standard assessment for snowy grouper was completed in 2013 (SEDAR 36) and was scheduled to be reviewed by the SSC at their October 2013 meeting. Due to delays caused by the government shutdown, however, SEFSC analysts who conducted the assessment were unable to present the assessment to the SSC. The SSC felt that a detailed presentation and discussion were necessary considering this was a 'standard assessment' with no CIE or other peer review prior to the SSC meeting (as was the case with blueline tilefish). Therefore, the SSC postponed review until the April 2014 SSC meeting.

The assessment for mutton snapper is being conducted by the Florida Marine Research Institute and was scheduled for SSC review at the October 2013 meeting. However, issues with recreational data for this species have caused a delay, and the SSC will not be reviewing the assessment until their April 2014 meeting.

Given these delays, the Council will be receiving the SSC review of these two assessments at the June 2014 meeting and could use the new framework procedure, assuming it is approved. Alternatively, the Council could approve a regulatory amendment for public hearings to be held in August 2014.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Provide guidance to staff on timing.

L. Comprehensive Allocations & Accountability Measures Amendment (Attachment II)

At the September meeting, the Council provided guidance to staff on developing a Generic Allocations & Accountability Measures Amendment. The current approach is for the Dolphin Wahoo Committee to provide input for those two species and for the Snapper Grouper Committee to develop recommendations for those species. Council staff will review the draft document and the proposed timing:

Items to be addressed:

- a. Snapper grouper allocations for all species
- b. Dolphin/wahoo allocations
- c. Snapper grouper accountability measures for all species
- d. Golden crab accountability measures

Proposed Timing 2013/14:

- a. Council reviews/modifies scoping document and approves for scoping – December 2013.
- b. Scoping Webinar if EIS – February 2014
- c. Review scoping comments and provide guidance on actions/alternatives to be included – March 2014
- d. Draft Amendment Document: review, modify & select preferred alternatives; approve for public hearings – June 2014
- e. Public hearings – August 2014
- f. Review public hearing comments and modify amendment as necessary; approve all actions – September 2014
- g. Review final amendment and approve for formal review – December 2014
- h. Document submitted to NMFS – December 2014

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: Provide guidance on actions/alternatives for snapper grouper species and timing.

M. Other Business

The Committee will address other business as necessary.

REQUIRED COMMITTEE ACTION: As necessary.