

Amendment 52

to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region

*Catch Level Adjustments and Allocations
for Golden Tilefish*

*Modification to recreational management
of Blueline Tilefish*

Decision Document

March 2022

Background

Golden Tilefish

Current management of South Atlantic golden tilefish is based on an update of SEDAR 25 completed in 2016 with an assessment period of 1962-2014 (SEDAR 2016). This amendment addresses the SEDAR 66

operational assessment for golden tilefish, which was completed in 2020, and includes recreational landings estimates using the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) Fishing Effort Survey (FES). Revised catch levels would be specified based on the

History of Golden Tilefish Stock Status		
Assessment	Overfished	Overfishing
SEDAR 04 (2004)	No	No
SEDAR 25 (2011)	No	Yes
SEDAR 25 Update (2016)	No	Yes
SEDAR 66 (2020)	No	No

Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC)'s recommended acceptable biological catch (ABC) and this most recent assessment.

The Council received the results of the assessment and the SSC's recommendations for the overfishing limit (OFL) and ABC at their June 2021 meeting. The SSC determined the stock is no longer experiencing overfishing, but there is a high degree of uncertainty in the stock status determination since the stock is being fished at or close to maximum sustainable yield (MSY). The Council directed staff to begin work on a plan amendment to adjust catch levels based on the SSC recommendations and SEDAR 66.

An application providing an overview of the golden tilefish fishery, including management history, landings, and assessment information, can be found here: https://safmc-shinyapps.shinyapps.io/SA_FisheryDataTilefish/.

Blueline Tilefish

In the last six years, landings of blueline tilefish in the South Atlantic region have often exceeded the sector and total ACL, and the National Standard Guidelines contain the following language: *If the catch exceeds the ACL for a given stock, or stock complex, more than once in the last four years, the system of ACLs and AMs should be reevaluated and modified if necessary to improve its performance and effectiveness.*

The recreational sector has a four-month season, May 1 through August 31, that was established in 2015 through Amendment 32. The amendment also established a 1 fish per vessel limit during the open season. The bag limit was increased to the current 3 fish per person per day through implementation of Regulatory Amendment 25 in 2016.

The in-season recreational accountability measure currently in place is triggered when recreational landings meet, or are projected to meet, the recreational ACL. The post-season accountability measure is triggered by an overage of the recreational ACL, an overage of the total (commercial and recreational) ACL, and an overfished determination for the stock. If those criteria are met, a payback of the overage and a reduction in next year's fishing season are implemented. These accountability measures have not been triggered for blueline tilefish despite overages of the recreational ACL. The in-season AM has not been triggered due to landings estimates not being available until after the season closes. Overages of the recreational ACL have not been corrected because blueline tilefish are currently not overfished. Hence, the Council intends to re-evaluate the system of accountability measures for the recreational sector and consider modification to recreational management measures.

An application providing an overview of the blueline tilefish fishery, including management history, landings, and assessment information, can be found here: https://safmc-shinyapps.shinyapps.io/SA_FisheryDataBluelineTilefish/

Possible Management Actions in this amendment

Action 1: Revise the golden tilefish total acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield (OY).

Action 2. Revise sector allocations and sector annual catch limits for golden tilefish.

Action 3. Modify golden tilefish commercial management measures.

Action 4. Modify golden tilefish commercial accountability measures.

Action 5. Modify golden tilefish recreational accountability measures.

Action 6. Modify blueline tilefish recreational management measures.

Action 7. Modify blueline tilefish recreational accountability measures.

Objectives for this meeting

- Review scoping comments
- Provide guidance on options for development

Amendment timing

June 2021	Receive SSC comments and recommendations on SEDAR 66
December 2021	Review AP comments and options paper, and approve for scoping
February 2022	Conduct scoping hearings
March 2022	Review scoping comments and provide guidance to staff
June 2022	Review modifications to the amendment, review AP input, select preferred alternatives, and approve for public hearings
July/August 2022	Conduct public hearings
September 2022	Review public comment and approve all actions
December 2022	Review final draft amendment and consider approval for formal review
2023	Regulations effective

Scoping Comments

A scoping document and accompanying presentation were posted on the Council's website on January 18, 2022. The scoping comment period ran from January 18, 2022, through 5 PM on February 4, 2022. Comments were also received online (view comments [HERE](#)). Scoping hearings for Amendment 52 were held via webinar on February 1-3, 2022.

Summary of scoping comments on golden tilefish:

- A number of commentors supported changing the commercial golden tilefish longline season to spread out the catch and not flood the market.
- One commentor noted that opening the commercial fishery in January, during the roughest time, causes a rush to catch fish as fast as possible forcing boats to fish in potentially hazardous weather conditions.
- Commentors generally support revision and increase of golden tilefish ACL.
- A couple commenters supported retaining the current allocation for golden tilefish of 97% commercial 3% recreational.
- Multiple commentors supported the golden tilefish longline sector getting together to discuss a better way to manage this derby fishery, to increase economic value of harvest and professionalize the fishery, and ways to improve safety in the fishery.
- One commentor supported considering a golden tilefish hook and line endorsement since the portion of the commercial ACL allocated to that gear is being caught quicker each year.
- One commentor noted changing the start of the commercial sector seasons for golden tilefish would work for some fishermen but not others.
- One commentor supported increasing the commercial ACL considering the fishery off South Carolina and Cape Canaveral appears to be very healthy with fishermen seeing larges, jumbos, smalls, mediums all mixed together.
- One commentor supports raising the golden tilefish allowable catch considering that off South Carolina frequently catch their trip limit every time.
- One commentor made the following recommendations:
 - use the current formulas to recalculate allocations and implement the conversion at the same time the quotas are updated based on MRIP FES.
 - automate conversions of allocations from MRIP's CHTS currency to MRIP FES during the process to update quotas based on MRIP FES so that status quo in terms of who caches what is maintained as catch levels are updated.
 - if the Council wants to go through an allocation review process using the decision tree that is under development, then they would have time to do that and carefully consider if and how to reallocate.
 - look at ways to improve our recreational data and ways to reduce dead discards.
- One commentor recommended looking into other methods for estimating recreational catch that are more effective at accounting for deepwater species.

Summary of scoping comments on blueline tilefish:

- One commentor recommended the following:
 - manage blueline tilefish to avoid closures so regulatory discards are kept to a minimum.
 - reduce either the recreational bag limit or season to constrain the harvest of blueline tilefish and constrain that catch to their ACL and so they don't get a chance to fish the scientific uncertainty placed by the SSC.

- the Council or SERO demonstrate where these species occur together; just because fishermen go somewhere to catch a snowy grouper and go somewhere to catch blueline tilefish it does not necessarily mean you catch them together.
- look at all available recreational landings and the for-hire e-logbook reports since 2016 to help guide the reduction in the bag limit and or season since blueline tilefish ACL was exceeded in 5 of last 6 years harvesting the buffer between ABC and OFL.
- SERO/RA has the authority and needs to constrain catch now until the Council action can be implemented in 2023 considering blueline tilefish OFL was exceeded in 3 years since 2016 and actions have hurt commercial fishermen north of Cape Hatteras where there is no bycatch.
- One commentor supported putting in limitations to prevent recreational blueline tilefish ACL overages; better tracking of the recreational fishery. He stated the market needs a reliable source of blueline tilefish, which is more affordable than grouper and one of the few fish you can depend on during summertime.
- One commentor recommended there be a very limited recreational blueline tilefish season and accountability measures that take into account all deepwater species being managed and discards.
- A number of commentors noted the recreational blueline tilefish overages in recent years were unacceptable and the fishery needs to be held to the ACL to maintain a healthy stock.
- One commentor noted that Florida already changed their recreational blueline tilefish regulations in state waters to be consistent with federal waters which should address overages that might have been attributed to what was coming out of Florida.
- One commentor recommended determining what is driving trends in fisheries and changes in the way fish are being caught and geographic shifts with fish showing up in difference places than they had in the past.

Draft Purpose and Need Statements

Purpose: The purpose is to revise the acceptable biological catch, annual optimum yield, total annual catch limit and sector allocations for golden tilefish based on the most recent stock assessment. Additionally, the purpose is to consider modifications to management measures and accountability measures for golden tilefish and blueline tilefish.

Need: The need is to achieve optimum yield while balancing biological, social and economic impacts.

COMMITTEE ACTION: REVIEW AND MODIFY AS NEEDED

Acceptable Biological Catch and Overfishing Limit for Golden Tilefish

The SSC reviewed the golden tilefish stock assessment (SEDAR 66 2020) at their April/May 2021 meeting. The SSC found that the assessment addressed the terms of reference appropriately, was conducted using the best scientific information available, was adequate for determining stock status and supporting fishing level recommendations and addressed uncertainty consistent with expectations and available information. The SSC applied the ABC Control Rule and recommended ABCs and OFLs for golden tilefish (Table 1).

Recommendations were in total removals and were adjusted for discards so they are expressed in landings.

Table 1. South Atlantic golden tilefish OFL and ABC recommendations in pounds gutted weight (lbs gw) and numbers of fish (Source: SSC Report May 2021). Note: Any changes to catch levels would be effective in 2023 and the 2026 level would remain in place until modified.

OFL RECOMMENDATIONS		
Year	Landings (lbs gw)	Landings (numbers of fish)
2022	573,000	70,000
2023	562,000	69,000
2024	552,000	68,000
2025	543,000	67,000
2026+	535,000	66,000
ABC RECOMMENDATIONS		
Year	Landings (lbs gw)	Landings (numbers of fish)
2022	418,000	51,000
2023	435,000	53,000
2024	448,000	54,000
2025	458,000	55,000
2026+	466,000	56,000

Options for Proposed Actions

Action 1: Revise the golden tilefish acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield (OY)

Purpose of Action: The SSC recommended a new ABC based on results of SEDAR 66 (2020), and the ABC, total ACL and annual OY must be adjusted accordingly. The ABC cannot be set above the SSC's recommended ABC.

Option 1: (No Action.) The total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for golden tilefish are equal to the current acceptable biological catch (342,000 lbs gutted weight). The current acceptable biological catch is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program's Coastal Household Telephone Survey.

Option 2: Revise the acceptable biological catch and set it equal to the most recent recommendation from the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for golden tilefish and set them equal to the recommended acceptable biological catch. The 2026 acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield would remain in place after 2026 until modified. The recommended acceptable biological catch is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program's Fishing Effort Survey.

Year	ABC (lbs ww)	Annual OY (lbs ww)	Total ACL (lbs ww)
2022	418,000	418,000	418,000
2023	435,000	435,000	435,000
2024	448,000	448,000	448,000
2025	458,000	458,000	458,000
2026+	466,000	466,000	466,000

Option 3: Revise the acceptable biological catch and set it equal to the most recent recommendation from the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for golden tilefish and set them equal to 95% of the recommended acceptable biological catch. The 2026 acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield would remain in place after 2026 until modified. The recommended acceptable biological catch is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program's Fishing Effort Survey.

Year	ABC (lbs ww)	Annual OY (lbs ww)	Total ACL (lbs ww)
2022	418,000	397,000	397,000
2023	435,000	413,250	413,250
2024	448,000	425,600	425,600

Year	ABC (lbs ww)	Annual OY (lbs ww)	Total ACL (lbs ww)
2025	458,000	435,100	435,100
2026+	466,000	442,700	442,700

Option 4. Revise the acceptable biological catch and set it equal to the most recent recommendation from the Scientific and Statistical Committee. Revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for golden tilefish and set them equal to 90% of the recommended acceptable biological catch. The 2026 acceptable biological catch, total annual catch limit, and annual optimum yield would remain in place after 2026 until modified. The recommended acceptable biological catch is inclusive of recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program's Fishing Effort Survey.

Year	ABC (lbs ww)	Annual OY (lbs ww)	Total ACL (lbs ww)
2022	418,000	376,000	376,000
2023	435,000	391,500	391,500
2024	448,000	403,200	403,200
2025	458,000	412,200	412,200
2026+	466,000	419,400	419,400

Discussion:

- Per the guidance provided at 50 CFR §600.310(f)(4)(iv), the Council has chosen to specify optimum yield (OY) for golden tilefish on an annual basis and set it equal to the total ACL.
- SEDAR 66 included landings data using the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) Fishing Effort Survey (FES). A new ACL would be specified based on the SSC's recommended ABCs and the most recent assessment.

Committee Action:

REVIEW RANGE OF OPTIONS UNDER ACTION 1 AND SELECT A PREFERRED TO FACILITATE FURTHER ANALYSIS

Action 2. Revise sector allocations and sector annual catch limits for golden tilefish

Purpose of Action: Sector allocations need to be revised due to the updated total ACL and the change to MRIP FES data.

Option 1: (No Action). Retain the current recreational sector and commercial sector allocations as 3.00% and 97.00%, respectively, of the revised total annual catch limit for golden tilefish.

Tables 2-4 present ACLs based on **Total ACL= recommended ABC, Total ACL=95% recommended ABC, and Total ACL=90% recommended ABC under current allocation percentages (97% commercial sector and 3% recreational)**. Within the commercial sector 25% is allocated to hook and line (HL) sector and 75% to the longline (LL) sector. Recreational ACL in numbers of fish is based on conversion (4.430052 lbs/fish) used in Regulatory Amendment 28 (2012).

Table 2. Sector ACLs based on Total **ACL=ABC** with 97% of the annual catch limit to the commercial sector and 3% to the recreational sector.

Year	Total ACL= ABC	Commercial ACL (lbs gw) (97% of Total ACL)			Recreational ACL (numbers of fish) (3% of Total ACL)
		Total	HL (25%)	LL (75%)	
2022	418,000	405,460	101,365	304,095	2,831
2023	435,000	421,950	105,488	316,462	2,946
2024	448,000	434,560	108,640	325,920	3,034
2025	458,000	444,260	111,065	333,195	3,102
2026+	466,000	452,020	113,005	339,015	3,156

Table 3. Sector ACLs based on Total **ACL=95% ABC** with 97% of the annual catch limit to the commercial sector and 3% to the recreational sector.

Year	Total ACL= 95% ABC	Commercial ACL (lbs gw) (97% of Total ACL)			Recreational ACL (numbers of fish) (3% of Total ACL)
		Total	HL (25%)	LL (75%)	
2022	397,100	385,187	99,275	297,825	2,689
2023	413,250	400,852	103,313	309,937	2,799
2024	425,600	412,832	106,400	319,200	2,882

2025	435,100	422,047	108,775	326,325	2,946
2026+	442,700	429,419	110,675	332,025	2,998

Table 4. Sector ACLs based on Total **ACL=90% ABC** with 97% of the annual catch limit to the commercial sector and 3% to the recreational sector.

Year	Total ACL=90 % ABC	Commercial ACL (lbs gw) (97% of Total ACL)			Recreational ACL (numbers of fish) (3% of Total ACL)
		Total	HL (25%)	LL (75%)	
2022	376,200	364,914	91,229	273,686	2,548
2023	391,500	379,755	94,939	284,816	2,651
2024	403,200	391,104	97,776	293,328	2,730
2025	412,200	399,834	99,958	299,876	2,791
2026+	419,400	406,818	101,704	305,114	2,840

Option 2: Allocate 96.70% of the revised total annual catch limit for golden tilefish to the commercial sector and 3.30% of the revised total annual catch limit for golden tilefish to the recreational sector.

Tables 5-7 present ACLs based on **Total ACL= recommended ABC**, **Total ACL=95% recommended ABC**, and **Total ACL=90% recommended ABC under current allocation percentages (96.7% commercial sector and 3.3% recreational)**.

Table 5. Sector ACLs based on Total **ACL=ABC** with 96.70% of the annual catch limit to the commercial sector and 3.30% to the recreational sector.

Year	Total ACL= ABC	Commercial ACL (lbs gw) (96.7% of Total ACL)			Recreational ACL (numbers of fish) (3.3% of Total ACL)
		Total	HL (25%)	LL (75%)	
2022	418,000	404,206	101,052	303,155	3,114
2023	435,000	420,645	105,161	315,484	3,240
2024	448,000	433,216	108,304	324,912	3,337
2025	458,000	442,886	110,722	332,165	3,412
2026+	466,000	450,622	112,656	337,967	3,471

Table 6. Sector ACLs based on Total **ACL=95% of ABC** with 96.70% of the annual catch limit to the commercial sector and 3.30% to the recreational sector.

Year	Total ACL= 95% ABC	Commercial ACL (lbs gw) (96.7% of Total ACL)			Recreational ACL (numbers of fish) (3.3% of Total ACL)
		Total	HL (25%)	LL (75%)	
2022	397,100	383,996	95,999	287,997	2,958
2023	413,250	399,613	99,903	299,710	3,078
2024	425,600	411,555	102,889	308,666	3,170
2025	435,100	420,742	105,185	315,556	3,241
2026+	442,700	428,091	107,023	321,068	3,298

Table 7. Sector ACLs based on Total **ACL=90% of ABC** with 96.70% of the annual catch limit to the commercial sector and 3.30% to the recreational sector.

Year	Total ACL=90% ABC	Commercial ACL (lbs gw) (96.7% of Total ACL)			Recreational ACL (numbers of fish) (3.3% of Total ACL)
		Total	HL (25%)	LL (75%)	
2022	376,200	363,785	90,946	272,839	2,802
2023	391,500	378,581	94,645	283,935	2,916
2024	403,200	389,894	97,474	292,421	3,003
2025	412,200	398,597	99,649	298,948	3,070
2026+	419,400	405,560	101,390	304,170	3,124

Others?

Discussion:

- The current commercial ACL is 331,740 lbs gw, and the current recreational ACL is 2,316 fish. The commercial annual catch limit is allocated between two gear sectors: 25% is allocated to the hook and line sector and 75% to the longline sector. The recreational ACL in numbers of fish is based on weight conversion (4.430052 lbs/fish) used in Regulatory Amendment 28 (2018).
- Amendment 18B (2012) allocated 25% of the commercial ACL to the hook-and line component and 75% to the longline component. Such an allocation restored access to the resource by hook-and-line fishermen to proportions observed prior to 2006, and during periods when they have historically harvested golden tilefish (late summer to early fall). It was noted that if the hook-and-line component regularly reached its ACL in the future, the Council would consider increasing the allocation.
- The current allocations for the recreational and commercial sectors are 3% and 97%, respectively. These allocation percentages were based on applying the formula of sector annual catch limit = ((mean landings 2006-2008)*0.5)) + ((mean landings 1986-2008)*0.5) to the landings dataset used in Snapper Grouper Amendment 17B that included recreational estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program's Coastal Household Telephone Survey.
- Applying the same allocation method to data used in SEDAR 66, including recreational FES data where applicable, would result in allocations of 96.70% and 3.30% for the commercial and recreational sectors, respectively.

Committee Action:

REVIEW RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES UNDER ACTION 2, MODIFY AS NECESSARY, AND SELECT A PREFERRED TO FACILITATE FURTHER ANALYSIS

Action 3. Modify Golden Tilefish Commercial Management Measures?

Current commercial management measures for golden tilefish.

	Current Commercial Management Measures
Season	Jan 1-Dec 31
Limits	<u>Sector Trip Limits:</u> Longline: 4,000 lbs gw. Hook and Line: 500 lbs gw.
Size Limit	None
Gear Requirements	Dehooking tool required, descending device required onboard vessel, non-stainless steel circle hooks required north of 28° North latitude.

Snapper Grouper AP Input:

- During their [October 2021 meeting](#), the AP discussed changing the start season for hook and line to be different from long line. The suggestions was to change the fishing year for the hook-and-line sector to September or October, or after long line closes.
- During discussion of Regulatory Amendment 28 in April 11-13, 2018 the AP made the following comments:
 - A March 1 start date for the hook-and-line component would coincide with the closure of the longline component and would allow product to be available when groupers are still closed and during Lent.
 - Fishermen in Florida would prefer for the fishing year to begin on September 1 or October 1. Discards of snowy grouper and blueline tilefish were identified as a concern with a fall opening.
 - The Snapper Grouper AP passed a motion unanimously which recommended the Council consider an action that would split the hook and line component into two seasons with a March 1 and September 1 start dates splitting the ACL 50/50.
 - The Council chose Alternative 1 (No Action) over Alternatives 2-4 because the post-season accountability measure for the commercial sector includes a payback of an overage of the commercial sector if the total ACL is exceeded, and, if the fishing years are different, it is hard to know if the total ACL was exceeded. Should the Council choose in the future to adjust the season for the hook and line component of the commercial sector for golden tilefish, the post-season AM would also need to be adjusted.

Committee Action:

PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON ACTION/ALTERNATIVES TO CONSIDER

Action 4. Modify Golden Tilefish Commercial Accountability Measures?

Current commercial accountability measures for golden tilefish:

	In-Season AMs		Post Season AMs	
	Trigger	Accountability Measure	Trigger	Accountability Measure
Option 1 (Status Quo)	Hook and Line Component: landings reach/projected to reach hook and line quota Longline Component: landings reach/projected to reach longline quota	Hook and Line: Component Closes Longline: Component closes.	All commercial landings of golden tilefish, as estimated by the SRD, exceed the commercial ACL -AND- golden tilefish is overfished	Reduction in the commercial ACL for that following fishing year by the amount of the commercial ACL overage in the prior fishing year.

Discussion:

- Commercial landings relative to the commercial ACL for golden tilefish are presented below.

Table 8. Table of past and present commercial landings (lbs gw) and ACLs for golden tilefish.

Com. ACL / Landings	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Com. ACL H&L (gw)	541,295	541,295	114,678	143,872	121,962	131,941	74,445	85,141	87,616	82,935
Com. ACL LL (gw)	Combined	Combined	564,421	389,244	411,367	405,691	227,554	282,676	256,676	248,805
Com. Landings H&L (gw)			144,678	143,872	121,962	131,941	74,445	85,141	87,616	82,279
Com. Landings LL (gw)	517,188	537,946	564,421	389,244	411,367	405,691	227,554	282,676	256,676	242,051
H&L Closure Date	2/17/12	5/5/13	8/29/14	12/8/15		11/29/17	8/14/18	7/23/19	7/23/20	6/1/21
Longline Closure Date			3/5/14	2/9/15	3/15/16	5/19/17	3/25/18	3/14/19	2/18/20; 3/14-23/20	2/10/21; 3/20-3-/21

Committee Action:

PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON ACTION/ALTERNATIVES TO CONSIDER

Action 5. Modify Golden Tilefish Recreational Accountability Measures?

Current recreational accountability measures for golden tilefish:

	In-Season AMs		Post Season AMs	
	Trigger	Accountability Measure	Trigger	Accountability Measure
Option 1 (Status Quo)	If recreational landings of golden tilefish, as estimated by the SRD, reach or are projected to reach the recreational ACL; regardless if the stock is overfished.	Closure of the recreational sector for the remainder of the fishing year <i>unless NMFS determines that no closure is necessary based on the best scientific information available</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recreational landings of golden tilefish, as estimated by the SRD, exceed the recreational ACL golden tilefish is identified as overfished; and the combined commercial and recreational ACL is exceeded in the same calendar year. 	Recreational landings will be monitored for a persistence in increased landings and <i>if deemed necessary</i> , reduce the length of the recreational fishing season and the recreational ACL by the amount of the recreational ACL overage

Discussion:

- Recreational landings relative to the recreational ACLs for golden tilefish are presented below.

Table 9. Table of past and present recreational landings and ACLs for golden tilefish.

Rec. ACL / Landings	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Rec. ACL (# of fish)	3,019	3,019	3,019	3,019	3,019	3,019	2,187	2,316	2,316	2,316
Rec. Landings, "Old" MRIP (# of fish)	3,627	4,143	1,357	3,595	13,010	1,746	3,112	15,638	2,894	2,539

Committee Action:

PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON ACTION/ALTERNATIVES TO CONSIDER

Action 6. Modify blueline tilefish recreational management measures.

Purpose of Action: In the last six years, landings of blueline tilefish in the South Atlantic region have often exceeded the sector and total ACL, and the National Standard Guidelines contain the following language: *If the catch exceeds the ACL for a given stock, or stock complex, more than once in the last four years, the system of ACLs and AMs should be reevaluated and modified if necessary to improve its performance and effectiveness.*

Modify Bag Limit?

Option 1 (No Action). The recreational bag limit for blueline tilefish in the South Atlantic exclusive economic zone is 3 per person per day.

Option 2. Reduce the recreational bag limit for blueline tilefish?

Option 3. Disallow retention of recreational bag limit of blueline tilefish by captain and crew?

Option 4. Modify length of recreational season?

Modify Recreational Season?

Option 1 (No Action). Recreational harvest of blueline tilefish is allowed annually from May 1 to August 31.

Others?

Discussion:

- Effective January 27, 2014, federal rules were amended to allow captains and crew of for-hire vessels with valid Federal South Atlantic Charter/Headboat Snapper Grouper Permits to retain bag limit quantities of all snapper grouper species during the open recreational season.
- During the development of Snapper Grouper Visioning Amendment (SG Regulatory Amendment 26 2019) the Council initially intended to tailor management measures to the group of deep-water species that are most frequently targeted by recreational fishermen in the region. The Council reasoned that creating an aggregate comprised of only these species would facilitate implementing regulations for species that have similar habitat requirements and life histories. However, fishermen's access to these species from different areas of the South Atlantic region is heavily influenced by factors such as distance to fishing grounds and weather. Consequently, management measures such as a recreational season are difficult to implement with the same level of success region-wide. Hence, the Council chose No Action as their preferred alternative.

Committee Action:

PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON ACTION/ALTERNATIVES TO CONSIDER

Action 7. Modify blueline tilefish recreational accountability measures.

Purpose of Action: In the last six years, landings of blueline tilefish in the South Atlantic region have often exceeded the sector and total ACL, and the National Standard Guidelines contain the following language: *If the catch exceeds the ACL for a given stock, or stock complex, more than once in the last four years, the system of ACLs and AMs should be reevaluated and modified if necessary to improve its performance and effectiveness*

Option 1 (No Action). If recreational landings reach or are projected to reach the recreational annual catch limit, to exceed the total ACL, and blueline tilefish is overfished; the recreational harvest will be reduced in the following fishing year. The following year recreational ACL will be reduced by the amount of the recreational ACL overage in the prior fishing year unless National Marine Fisheries Service determines that no closure is necessary based on the best scientific information available.

Option 2. National Marine Fisheries Service will annually announce the recreational fishing season start and end dates in the *Federal Register* and by other methods, as deemed appropriate. The fishing season will start on (date) and end on the date National Marine Fisheries Service projects the recreational annual catch limit will be met.

Option 3. If recreational landings exceed the recreational annual catch limit, reduce the length of the following year's recreational fishing season by the amount necessary to prevent the recreational annual catch limit from being exceeded in the following year, regardless of stock status. However, the length of the recreational season will not be reduced if the Regional Administrator determines, using the best scientific information available, that it is not necessary.

Discussion:

- Landings relative to ACLs for blueline tilefish are presented below.

Table 10. Table of past and present recreational landings and ACLs for blueline tilefish and recreational closures, 2014-2021.

ACLs/ Landings	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Rec. ACL (ww)	111,893	17,791	87,277	87,277	87,277	87,277	116,820	116,820
Rec. Landings, MRIP- CHTS (ww)	95,712	45,323	172,286	153,959	116,597	110,113	392,253	187,825
Rec. Closure date		6/10/15						

Committee Action:

PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON ACTION/ALTERNATIVES TO CONSIDER

Appendix A.

Table A1. Table of past and present ABC, ACLs, landings, and closures for golden tilefish.

Management Measures	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
ABC (gw)	668,000	668,000	668,000	655,000	558,000	558,000	323,000	342,000	342,000	342,000
Total ACL (gw)	625,000	625,000	625,000	625,000	558,000	558,000	323,000	342,000	342,000	342,000
Com. ACL H&L(gw)	541,295	541,295	114,678	143,872	121,962	131,941	74,445	85,141	87,616	82,935
Com. ACL LL (gw)	Combined	Combined	564,421	389,244	411,367	405,691	227,554	282,676	256,676	248,805
Com. Landings H&L (gw)	517,188	537,946	144,678	143,872	121,962	131,941	74,445	85,141	87,616	82,279
Com. Landings LL (gw)			564,421	389,244	411,367	405,691	227,554	282,676	256,676	242,051
Com. Overage/Underage H&L(%) Closure Date	95.5 2/17/12	99.4 5/5/13	106.9 8/29/14	106.3 12/8/15	90.1	97.5 11/29/17	93.8 8/14/18	102.7 7/23/19	105.6 7/23/20	100.8 6/1/21
Com. Overage/Underage LL (%) Closure Date			139 3/5/14	95.9 2/19/15	101.3 3/15/16	99.9 5/19/17	96.8 3/25/18	113.6 3/14/19	103.1 2/18/20; 3/14- 23/20	94.3 2/10/21: 3/20- 30/21
Rec. ACL (# of fish)	3,019	3,019	3,019	3,019	3,019	3,019	2,187	2,316	2,316	2,316
Rec. Landings, "Old" MRIP (# of fish)	3,627	4,143	1,357	3,595	13,010	1,746	3,112	15,638	2,894	2,539
Rec. Overage/Underage (%) Closure Date	120.1	137.2 6/3/13	44.9 6/7/14	119.1 8/11/15	430.9 8/27/16	57.8	142	675	125	110

Appendix B.

Table B1. Table of past and present ABC, ACLs, landings, and closures for Blueline Tilefish.

Management Measures	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
ABC (ww)			224,100	224,100	224,100	224,100	233,968	233,968
Total ACL (ww)			174,798	174,798	174,798	174,798	233,968	233,968
Com. ACL (ww)	112,207	17,841	87,521	87,521	87,521	87,521	117,148	117,148
Com. Landings (ww)	159,300	80,337	100,392	87,558	93,051	95,904	116,563	119,692
Com. Overage/Underage (%)	142.0	450.3	114.71	100.04	106.32	109.58	99.50	102.20
Comm. closure date		4/7/15	6/1/16 Reopened 7/13/16; 8/30/16	7/18/17 Reopened 10/24/17- 11/1/17	8/22/18	7/30/19	8/11/20	8/1/21
Rec. ACL (ww)	111,893	17,791	87,277	87,277	87,277	87,277	116,820	116,820
Rec. Landings, MRIP-CHTS (ww)	95,712	45,323	172,286	153,959	116,597	110,113	392,253	187,825
Rec. Overage/Underage (%)	85.5	254.8	197.40	176.40	133.59	126.16	335.78	160.78
Rec. Closure date		6/10/15						

Note: Prior to 2014 Blueline Tilefish was part of the Deepwater Complex. 2021 Recreational landings are preliminary wave 1-4 MRIP landings. Recreational landings were provided from the Southeast Fisheries Science Center on October 25, 2021 and include both MRIP-CHTS and Southeast Region Headboat Survey landings.