

Amendment 44 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region

Amendment 55 to the Fishery Management Plan for Reef Fish Resources in the Gulf of Mexico

Catch Level Adjustments and Allocations for Southeastern U.S. Yellowtail Snapper



Decision Document

Background

Yellowtail snapper is considered a single stock in the South Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico. It is jointly managed by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (South Atlantic Council) and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council) (together, Councils) under two separate fishery management plans (FMP). An [Interim Analysis](#) was conducted for yellowtail snapper following the benchmark Southeast Data Assessment and Review (SEDAR) 64 stock assessment. [SEDAR 64](#) used data through 2017. Both the South Atlantic Council and the Gulf Council determined that too much time had passed after SEDAR 64 had been completed to address the acceptable biological catch (ABC) guidance they received from the Councils' Scientific and Statistical Committees (SSC) review of SEDAR 64. Therefore, both Councils requested an interim analysis to SEDAR 64 using data

through 2020. The 2022 SEDAR 64 Interim Analysis applied updated landings and discards data for each fleet from 2018 through 2020. Adjusted projections of spawning stock biomass, recruitment, retained yield, updated landings and discards were used to inform the overfishing limit (OFL) and the ABC. The Councils will use this information when they consider the jurisdictional allocation, catch limits, and sector allocations (South Atlantic only). The 2022 SEDAR 64 Interim Analysis estimated that the stock was **not overfished nor undergoing overfishing** as of 2020.

SEDAR 27A (2012) defined the current maximum fishing mortality threshold (MFMT), minimum stock size threshold (MSST), maximum sustainable yield (MSY), and OY for yellowtail snapper.

- MFMT (F30%SPR): 3,072 metric tons (mt) or 6.8 million pounds (mp)
- MSST ((1-M)*SSB30%SPR): 583.6 mt or 1.3 mp.
- OFL (equilibrium MSY) (recommended by Joint SSCs): 4.51 mp (landed catch without discards). 4.61 mp (landings plus dead discards).
- Stock OY (F40%SPR): Varied by Council. Yellowtail snapper is managed under two distinct management plans. Table below shows the differences.

SEDAR 64 defined MFMT as F30%SPR and estimated it to be 0.438 yr⁻¹. MSST is defined as 75% of the spawning stock biomass associated with F30%SPR (0.75*SSBF30%SPR), and is estimated it to be 1,428 metric tons (mt) or 3,148,201 pounds (lb). The current stock optimum yield (OY) is defined as the yield at F_{OY} and is estimated to be 1,497 mt or 3,300,320 lbs. SEDAR 64 also recommended using F30%SPR as a maximum sustainable yield (MSY) proxy.

Criteria	Defining Council	Definition	Amendment	Year Effective
MSST	SAFMC	0.75*SSB _{30%SPR}	SG Reg Am 21	2015
MFMT	SAFMC	F _{30%SPR}	SG Reg Am 15	2014
MSY	SAFMC	F _{30%SPR}	SG Reg Am 15	2014
OY	SAFMC	40% (static) SPR	SG Amendment 11	1999
	GMFMC	90% of GOM MSY or GOM MSY proxy	RF Amendment 48	2022

The current OFL and ABC for yellowtail snapper is based on the 2012 [SEDAR 27A](#) stock assessment. That assessment used landings information that has since been revised by the 2017 SEDAR 64 stock assessment, and then again by the 2022 SEDAR 64 interim analysis. The OFL and ABC, and all subsequent catch level recommendations, proposed in this document are based on the 2022 SEDAR 64 interim analysis. The most recent landings data through the 2020/2021 fishing year will be reviewed by the Councils. Landings from the 2021/2022 fishing year are still considered preliminary as of this publishing.

The OFL and ABC for a stock are recommended by a Council's SSC. Because the yellowtail snapper stock is distributed across two Council jurisdictions (South Atlantic and Gulf), both of the Councils' SSCs met and agreed on a recommendation for the OFL and ABC during a joint SSC meeting in August 2022. The Gulf Council reviewed the SSCs' recommendations

from the 2022 SEDAR 64 interim analysis in August 2022, and the South Atlantic Council reviewed the same in September 2022.

Yellowtail snapper’s recreational landings are currently being tracked using the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) Fishing Effort Survey (FES); however, the current ACL is expressed in units consistent with the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS). This amendment will establish catch levels that include recreational landings estimates in MRIP FES units.

South Atlantic Fishery Overview: https://safmc-shinyapps.shinyapps.io/SA_FisheryDataYellowtailSnapper/

Table 1. Summary of the assessment and amendment milestone history.

Background Overview		
SEDAR History	Stock Status	
Assessment	Overfished	Overfishing
SEDAR 3 (2003)	N	N
SEDAR 27A (2012)	N	N
SEDAR 64 (2020)	N	N
2022 SEDAR 64 Interim Analysis	N	N
Amendment Action Schedule		
SEDAR 64 (2020) Assessment review	October 2020	
Direction to begin joint Amendment	December 2020	
Joint Amendment paused for Interim Analysis Completion	December 2021	
Interim Analysis joint SSC review	August 2022	
Gulf Council Interim Analysis Review	August 2022	
South Atlantic Council Interim Analysis Review	September 2022	

Possible actions in Snapper Grouper (SG) Amendment 44/Reef Fish (RF) Amendment 55

- Modify the OFL, ABC, and jurisdictional allocation of the ABC between the South Atlantic and Gulf regions
- Adjust the South Atlantic total ACL and annual optimum yield (OY)
- Adjust the Gulf ABC buffer to set ACL
- Revise South Atlantic sector allocations and sector ACLs

Objectives for this meeting

- Review actions and alternatives and add any additional actions and alternatives if needed

- Discuss the potential preferred alternative for **Action 1** (jurisdictional allocation) to facilitate progress of analyses.

Tentative amendment timing

August 2022	Joint SSC reviewed Interim Analysis and recommended updated ABC and OFL values, GMFMC reviewed the results of the Interim Analysis and directed staff to resume work on Reef Fish Amendment 55
September 2022	SAFMC Reviewed Interim Analysis and SSC recommendations and directed staff to resume work on Snapper Grouper Amendment 44
June 2023	Both Councils will review decision document/preliminary draft amendment and provide guidance on actions and alternatives. Preferreds can be selected.
September/October 2023	Both Councils review actions and alternatives and draft amendment, select preferreds, and approve for public hearings
November 2023	Conduct public hearings
December 2023	SAFMC consider final approval
January 2024	GMFMC consider final approval

Acceptable Biological Catch

In October 2012, following the SEDAR 27A stock assessment, the Joint SSCs recommended a stock ABC of 4.05 mp for the yellowtail snapper stock (landed catch without dead discards) ([Joint SSC Report](#)).

Following the completion of the 2022 SEDAR 64 Interim Analysis, the Joint SSCs recommended OFL and ABC levels (Table 2).

Table 2. Annual combined (South Atlantic and Gulf) SSC recommended OFLs and ABCs for yellowtail snapper, **based on the 2022 SEDAR 64 Interim Analysis**. Values are in millions of pounds (mp) whole weigh (ww) and in MRIP-FES units.

Year	OFL	ABC
2023	3.922	3.887
2024	3.774	3.749
2025	3.684	3.665
2026	3.625	3.610
2027+	3.584	3.572

Note: ABC was provided by calendar year. Fishing year for yellowtail snapper for both commercial and recreational sectors in both jurisdictions is August 1 through July 31.

While the SSCs provided OFLs and ABCs based on the calendar year, they need to be associated with the fishing year which runs August 1 through July 31. Because the recommended ABC

values decrease over time and the fact the yellowtail stock is not overfished or undergoing overfishing, the IPT decided to associate the calendar year catch limits with the forward fishing year. Meaning, the 2023 recommended catch limits would correspond to the catch limit for the 2023/2024 fishing year.

Purpose and Need Statements

The *purpose* of this fishery management plan amendment is to revise the overfishing limit, acceptable biological catch, the jurisdictional allocation between the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils, South Atlantic annual optimum yield, South Atlantic and Gulf annual catch limits, and South Atlantic sector allocations, for southeastern U.S. yellowtail snapper based on the results of the 2020 SEDAR 64 stock assessment and following 2022 SEDAR 64 Interim Analysis.

The *need* for this fishery management plan amendment is to update existing catch limits and allocations for southeastern U.S. yellowtail snapper to be consistent with the best scientific information available, and achieve optimum yield while minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse social and economic effects.

Committee Action: SUGGEST MODIFICATIONS AS APPROPRIATE

Proposed Actions

1. Modify the yellowtail snapper stock overfishing limit and stock acceptable biological catch and jurisdictional allocation of the stock acceptable biological catch between the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils' Jurisdictions

Purpose of Action

This action will update the overfishing limit and stock acceptable biological catch for southeastern U.S. yellowtail snapper, based on the results of the Scientific and Statistical Committees' review of the 2022 SEDAR 64 Interim Analysis. This action will also divide the Scientific and Statistical Committees' recommended yellowtail snapper acceptable biological catch between the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Councils' jurisdictions. The Councils need to revise the jurisdictional allocation because of the change to the Marine Recreational Information Program's Fishing Effort Survey for estimating and monitoring recreational landings.

Table 3. A summary of the jurisdictional allocations of the stock acceptable biological catch (ABC) for yellowtail snapper, including the basis for the allocation proposed in each alternative.

Alternative	Gulf of Mexico Allocation	South Atlantic Allocation	Basis for Allocation
Alternative 1 (No Action)	25%	75%	(avg landings 1993-2008)*0.5 + (avg landings 2006-2008)*0.5. Recreational landings estimates in MRFSS data units
Alternative 2	25%	75%	Retain current percentages. Allocate ABC in MRIP FES data units
Alternative 3	19%	81%	(avg landings 1993-2008)*0.5 + (avg landings 2006-2008)*0.5. Recreational landings estimates in MRIP FES data units
Draft Alternative 4	16%	84%	Distribution of landings from 2012-2021 (last ten years). Recreational landings estimates in MRIP FES data units

NOTE: For Alternatives 2 through 4 above, recreational landings from Monroe County, Florida, are attributed to the South Atlantic region. Commercial landings are attributed to the location of reporting from the Trip Ticket System.

Table 4. The yellowtail snapper overfishing limit (OFL), stock acceptable biological catch (ABC), and regional ABC allocations for the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic jurisdictions, for all alternatives under **Action 1**. Note: **Alternative 1 (No Action)** is not a viable alternative (not BSIA). 2027/2028 values would remain in effect until modified.

Year	OFL (lb ww)	ABC (lb ww)	Gulf Stock ABC (lb ww)	South Atlantic Stock ABC (lb ww)
Alternative 1 (No Action) Gulf 25%/SA 75% - Current Stock ABC				
2023/2024	4,510,000	4,050,000	1,012,500	3,037,500
2024/2025	4,510,000	4,050,000	1,012,500	3,037,500
2025/2026	4,510,000	4,050,000	1,012,500	3,037,500
2026/2027	4,510,000	4,050,000	1,012,500	3,037,500
2027/2028+	4,510,000	4,050,000	1,012,500	3,037,500
Alternative 2 Gulf 25%/SA 75% - Updated Stock ABC				
2023/2024	3,922,000	3,887,000	971,750	2,915,250
2024/2025	3,774,000	3,749,000	937,250	2,811,750
2025/2026	3,684,000	3,665,000	916,250	2,748,750
2026/2027	3,625,000	3,610,000	902,500	2,707,500
2027/2028+	3,584,000	3,572,000	893,000	2,679,000
Alternative 3 Gulf 19%/SA 81% - Updated Stock ABC				
2023/2024	3,922,000	3,887,000	738,530	3,148,470
2024/2025	3,774,000	3,749,000	712,310	3,036,690
2025/2026	3,684,000	3,665,000	696,350	2,968,650
2026/2027	3,625,000	3,610,000	685,900	2,924,100
2027/2028+	3,584,000	3,572,000	678,680	2,893,320
Draft Alternative 4 Gulf 16%/SA 84% - Updated Stock ABC				
2023/2024	3,922,000	3,887,000	621,920	3,265,080
2024/2025	3,774,000	3,749,000	599,840	3,149,160
2025/2026	3,684,000	3,665,000	586,400	3,078,600
2026/2027	3,625,000	3,610,000	577,600	3,032,400
2027/2028+	3,584,000	3,572,000	571,520	3,000,480

Discussion:

- Alternative 1 (No Action)** would retain the current jurisdictional allocation percentages between the South Atlantic and the Gulf as 75% and 25% of the stock ABC, respectively, that is based on 50% of average landings from 1993-2008 + 50% of average landings from 2006-2008. This formula was applied to landings as of 2011 (when the Councils implemented ACLs) to obtain the current ABC allocation in weight of fish (lb). The allocation formula used recreational landings estimated by MRFSS, which has been since replaced by MRIP, and is no longer considered best scientific information available (BSIA). Therefore, Alternative 1 (No Action) would not be consistent with National Standard 2. Further, the catch limits in **Alternative 1 (No Action)** also do not reflect the outcomes of SEDAR 64, the interim analysis, and the SSC’s OFL and ABC recommendations.
- Alternative 2** retains current jurisdictional allocation percentages between the South Atlantic and the Gulf as 75% and 25% of the ABC, respectively, but applies these

percentages to the **updated stock ABC** based on the 2022 SEDAR 64 Interim Analysis. The new ABC is in MRIP-FES data units, which are considered BSIA. While **Alternative 2** maintains status quo allocation, it incorporates the updated MRIP-FES recreational landings estimates.

- **Alternative 3** uses the **same formula** as **Alternative 1 (No Action)**, but uses **recreational landings estimates that have been converted to MRIP-FES units**, which is considered BSIA. This results in an allocation of 81% to the South Atlantic and 19% to the Gulf. The resulting allocation is applied to the **updated stock ABC**. The new ABC is in MRIP-FES data units. This shift of ABC to the South Atlantic reflects the additional recreational effort and landings that NMFS estimates occurred during this period as reflected in the MRIP-FES data.
- The Gulf Council requested that an additional alternative be included that incorporates the most recent ten years of landings. **Draft Alternative 4** is based on the distribution of landings for 2012 through 2021 and includes recreational landings estimates in MRIP-FES units. This results in an allocation of 84% to the South Atlantic and 16% to the Gulf. The resulting allocation is applied to the **updated stock ABC**. The new ABC is in MRIP-FES data units. **Draft Alternative 4** represents the largest allocation to the South Atlantic and the least to the Gulf of the alternatives considered in this action.
- Any additional alternatives?

Snapper Grouper (April 2023) Feedback:

- The SG AP recommended the South Atlantic Council take a precautionary approach throughout the amendment.
 - Consider the concerns of Gulf fishermen (commercial specifically noted by some AP members)
- The SG AP would like to make sure the season stays open year-round (both sectors)
- Some SG AP members suggested a hybrid alternative between Alternatives. 2 and 4:
 - Gulf: between 16%-25% of the total ACL
 - South Atlantic: between 75%-84% of the total ACL

Reef Fish (January and October 2022) AP Feedback:

- Does not want to give more fish to the Atlantic.
- Gulf fishermen like how the fishery is now.
- Since yellowtail snapper is a Florida species, can SRFS data be applied in future analyses?
- Does not want sector allocations
- Does not want to see a closure
- No commercial trip limits desired

Committee Action:

- REVIEW RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES
- SELECT A PRELIMINARY PREFERRED TO BE REVIEWED BY THE GULF COUNCIL
- PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON ANY ADDITIONAL ALTERNATIVES

2. Revise the total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for yellowtail snapper in the South Atlantic and revise the total annual catch limit for yellowtail snapper in the Gulf of Mexico

2a. Revise the South Atlantic total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield for yellowtail snapper to reflect the new overfishing limit, acceptable biological catch, and jurisdictional allocation of the stock acceptable biological catch limit

Purpose of Sub-Action

The yellowtail snapper total annual catch limit is being revised to incorporate the best scientific information available via the new acceptable biological catch recommendations of the Scientific and Statistical Committees, based on the SEDAR 64 (2020) stock assessment and following 2022 SEDAR 64 Interim Analysis, both of which included updated recreational landings from the Marine Recreational Information Program’s Fishing Effort Survey. The total annual catch limit and annual optimum yield in pounds whole weight that result from each alternative depend on the preferred jurisdictional allocation alternative selected in **Action 1**.

Table 5. A summary of alternatives for **Sub-action 2a**.

Alternative	SA ACL	SA Annual OY
Alternative 1 (No Action)	ACL = current ABC	ABC=ACL=OY
Alternative 2	ACL = updated ABC	ACL = OY = updated ABC
Alternative 3	ACL = 90% of updated ABC	ACL = OY = 90% of updated ABC
Alternative 4	ACL = 95% of updated ABC	ACL = OY = 95% of updated ABC
Alternative 5	ACL = lowest Updated ABC value	OY = lowest Updated ABC value
Alternative 6	F30%SPR at equilibrium	

Table 6. The total South Atlantic ACLs for each alternative for **Sub-action 2a** under each **viable** jurisdictional allocation under **Action 1 (Alternatives 2-4)**. All values are in pounds whole weight.

Alternative	Total ACL (lbs ww)				
	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028+
Current SA ABC (lb ww)	3,037,500	3,037,500	3,037,500	3,037,500	3,037,500
Alternative 1 (No Action)	3,037,500	3,037,500	3,037,500	3,037,500	3,037,500
Action 1, Alternative 2 Updated SA ABC (lb ww) 75%	2,915,250	2,811,750	2,748,750	2,707,500	2,679,000
Action 2, Alternative 2	2,915,250	2,811,750	2,748,750	2,707,500	2,679,000
Action 2, Alternative 3	2,623,725	2,530,575	2,473,875	2,436,750	2,411,100
Action 2, Alternative 4	2,769,488	2,671,163	2,611,313	2,572,125	2,545,050
Action 2, Alternative 5	2,679,000	2,679,000	2,679,000	2,679,000	2,679,000
Action 2, Alternative 6	2,555,728	2,555,728	2,555,728	2,555,728	2,555,728
Action 1, Alternative 3 Updated SA ABC (lb ww) 81%	3,148,470	3,036,690	2,968,650	2,924,100	2,893,320
Action 2, Alternative 2	3,148,470	3,036,690	2,968,650	2,924,100	2,893,320
Action 2, Alternative 3	2,833,623	2,733,021	2,671,785	2,631,690	2,603,988
Action 2, Alternative 4	2,991,047	2,884,856	2,820,218	2,777,895	2,748,654
Action 2, Alternative 5	2,907,251	2,907,251	2,907,251	2,907,251	2,907,251
Action 2, Alternative 6	2,760,186	2,760,186	2,760,186	2,760,186	2,760,186
Action 1, Alternative 4 Updated SA ABC (lb ww) 84%	3,265,080	3,149,160	3,078,600	3,032,400	3,000,480
Action 2, Alternative 2	3,265,080	3,149,160	3,078,600	3,032,400	3,000,480
Action 2, Alternative 3	2,938,572	2,834,244	2,770,740	2,729,160	2,700,432
Action 2, Alternative 4	3,101,826	2,991,702	2,924,670	2,880,780	2,850,456
Action 2, Alternative 5	2,907,251	2,907,251	2,907,251	2,907,251	2,907,251
Action 2, Alternative 6	2,862,415	2,862,415	2,862,415	2,862,415	2,862,415

Snapper Grouper (April 2023) Feedback:

- The AP recommended staying with **Alternative 5**.
- Both sectors would like to see the fishery open as long as possible
- Need to base all decisions off of Action 1, whatever is decided upon for jurisdictional allocations will affect other actions.

2b. Revise the Gulf of Mexico acceptable biological catch buffer to set the total annual catch limit for yellowtail snapper

Purpose of Sub-Action

The yellowtail snapper total annual catch limit is being revised based on the jurisdictional allocation selected in Action 1, and to incorporate the best scientific information available as reflected in the Scientific and Statistical Committees' new acceptable biological catch recommendations, based on the 2022 SEDAR 64 stock assessment and the subsequent 2022 SEDAR 64 interim analysis, which includes updated recreational landings from the Marine Recreational Information Program's (MRIP) Fishing Effort Survey (FES).

NOTE: The annual catch limits in pounds whole weight (Tables 8-10) for each alternative under Action 2 are dependent on the jurisdictional allocation from Action 1.

Alternative 1 (No Action). Retain the current 11% buffer between the Gulf of Mexico's apportionment of the total acceptable biological catch buffer and the total annual catch limit. Use this acceptable biological catch buffer to update the Gulf of Mexico annual catch limit based on the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's jurisdictional allocation of the yellowtail snapper stock acceptable biological catch selected in Action 1. The 11% buffer is based on the calculation of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's Annual Catch Limit/Annual Catch Target Control Rule using Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey landings data from 2008 – 2011.

Alternative 2. Modify the buffer between the Gulf of Mexico's apportionment of the total acceptable biological catch and total annual catch limit using the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's Annual Catch Limit/Annual Catch Target Control Rule using the Marine Recreational Information Program's Fishing Effort Survey data. Use this modified buffer to update the Gulf of Mexico annual catch limit based on the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's jurisdictional allocation of the yellowtail snapper stock acceptable biological catch selected in Action 1. Based on Marine Recreational Information Program Fishing Effort Survey landings data from the 2017/2018 – 2020/2021 fishing years, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's Annual Catch Limit/Annual Catch Target Control Rule recommends an 8% buffer between the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's jurisdictional allocation of the yellowtail snapper stock acceptable biological catch and the Gulf of Mexico annual catch limit.

Alternative 3. Eliminate the buffer between the Gulf of Mexico's apportionment of the total acceptable biological catch and total annual catch limit. The Gulf of Mexico annual catch limit for yellowtail snapper is equal to the updated Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's jurisdictional allocation of the stock acceptable biological catch level in the Marine Recreational Information Program's Fishing Effort Survey data units as calculated in Action 1..

Table 7. A summary of alternatives for **Sub-action 2b.**

Alternative	GOM ACL
Alternative 1 (No Action)	ACL = 89% of current ABC
Alternative 2	ACL = 92% of updated ABC
Alternative 3	ACL = updated ABC

Table 8. Predicted dates when the ACL will be met for Gulf of Mexico yellowtail snapper for each proposed acceptable biological catch buffer to set the annual catch limit (**Action 2**) and each proposed jurisdictional allocation (**Action 1**). Gulf of Mexico yellowtail snapper are managed as stock annual catch limits. All projected dates when ACL will be met are predicted **only if future landings are higher than expected (at the upper 95% confidence interval)**, otherwise no closure is expected for all alternatives and proposed annual catch limits. All ACLs are in lbs ww with the recreational portion being in MRIP-FES.

Action 1, Alternative 2: Gulf 25% / SA 75%					
Action 2	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028+
Alternative 1 (ACL=89% Updated ABC)	ACL not met ACL=864,858	ACL not met ACL=834,153	ACL not met ACL=815,463	ACL not met ACL=803,225	ACL not met ACL=794,770
Alternative 2 (ACL=92% Updated ABC)	ACL not met ACL=894,010	ACL not met ACL=862,270	ACL not met ACL=842,950	ACL not met ACL=830,300	ACL not met ACL=821,560
Alternative 3 (ACL= Updated ABC)	ACL not met ACL=971,750	ACL not met ACL=937,250	ACL not met ACL=916,250	ACL not met ACL=902,500	ACL not met ACL=893,000
Action 1, Alternative 3: Gulf 19% / SA 81%					
Action 2	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028+
Alternative 1 (ACL=89% Updated ABC)	Upper 95%: Jul 25 ACL=657,292	Upper 95%: Jul 17 ACL=633,956	Upper 95%: Jul 12 ACL=619,752	Upper 95%: Jul 8 ACL=610,451	Upper 95%: Jul 6 ACL=604,025
Alternative 2 (ACL=92% Updated ABC)	ACL not met ACL=679,448	Upper 95%: Jul 25 ACL=655,325	Upper 95%: Jul 19 ACL=640,642	Upper 95%: Jul 16 ACL=631,028	Upper 95%: Jul 13 ACL=624,386
Alternative 3 (ACL= Updated ABC)	ACL not met ACL=738,530	ACL not met ACL=712,310	ACL not met ACL=696,350	ACL not met ACL=685,900	ACL not met ACL=678,680
Action 1, Alternative 4: Gulf 16% / SA 84%					
Action 2	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028+
Alternative 1 (ACL=89% Updated ABC)	Upper 95%: Jun 19 ACL=553,509	Upper 95%: Jun 12 ACL=533,858	Upper 95%: Jun 8 ACL=521,896	Upper 95%: Jun 5 ACL=514,064	Upper 95%: Jun 3 ACL=508,653
Alternative 2 (ACL=92% Updated ABC)	Upper 95%: Jun 25 ACL=572,166	Upper 95%: Jun 18 ACL=551,853	Upper 95%: Jun 14 ACL=539,488	Upper 95%: Jun 11 ACL=531,392	Upper 95%: Jun 9 ACL=525,798
Alternative 3 (ACL= Updated ABC)	Upper 95%: Jul 12 ACL=621,920	Upper 95%: Jul 4 ACL=599,840	Upper 95%: Jun 30 ACL=586,400	Upper 95%: Jun 27 ACL=577,600	Upper 95%: Jun 25 ACL=571,520

Discussion:

- **Alternative 1 (No Action)** retains the existing ABC buffer (11%) that was established in the 2013 Reef Fish Framework (GMFMC 2013) and is based in part on MRFSS units. There has never been a yellowtail closure in the Gulf based on this buffer. However, the time series used to calculate the ABC buffer is over ten years old.
- **Alternative 2** uses the Gulf ACL/ACT Control Rule to calculate the ABC buffer. However, it uses a more recent time series of available landings (2017/2018-2020/2021). It also incorporates the current fishing year, which splits the calendar year. This results in an ABC buffer of 9% (Appendix III). This is a reduction from the current buffer of 11% and is due in part to a more recent time series being used in the ACL/ACT Control Rule.
- **Alternative 3** sets the ACL equal to the ABC.

Committee Action:

- REVIEW RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES

3. Revise the South Atlantic yellowtail snapper sector allocations and sector annual catch limits

Purpose of Action

Sector allocations need to be reviewed since the recreational landings estimates changed in the new assessment. Recreational landings are now estimated using data from the Fishing Effort Survey (FES) rather than the Coastal Household Telephone Survey.

Table 9. A summary of alternatives for **Action 3.**

Alternative	Commercial Allocation	Recreational Allocation	Basis for Allocation
Alternative 1 (No Action)	52.56%	47.44%	(avg landings from 1986-2008)*0.5 + (avg landings from 2006-2008)*0.5 using recreational estimates from MRFSS and applied to the UPDATED SA ACL
Alternative 2	40.73%	59.27%	(avg landings from 1986-2008)*0.5 + (avg landings from 2006-2008)*0.5 using recreational estimates from MRIP FES and applied to the UPDATED SA ACL

Table 10. Sector allocation alternatives for **Action 3**. Allocations are shown for each **viable** jurisdictional allocation of **Action 1** with an ACL=South Atlantic ABC (Alternative 2 of **Sub-Action 2a**).

Year	SA Total ACL (lbs ww)	Commercial ACL (lbs ww)	Recreational ACL (lbs ww)
BASED ON 75% SA JURISDICTIONAL ALLOCATION			
Alternative 1 (No Action) Com: 52.56% Rec: 47.44%			
2023/2024	2,915,250	1,532,255	1,382,995
2024/2025	2,811,750	1,477,856	1,333,894
2025/2026	2,748,750	1,444,743	1,304,007
2026/2027	2,707,500	1,423,062	1,284,438
2027/2028+	2,679,000	1,408,082	1,270,918
Alternative 2 Com: 40.73% Rec: 59.27%			
2023/2024	2,915,250	1,187,381	1,727,869
2024/2025	2,811,750	1,145,226	1,666,524
2025/2026	2,748,750	1,119,566	1,629,184
2026/2027	2,707,500	1,102,765	1,604,735
2027/2028+	2,679,000	1,091,157	1,587,843
BASED ON 81% SA JURISDICTIONAL ALLOCATION			
Alternative 1 (No Action) Com: 52.56% Rec: 47.44%			
2023/2024	3,148,470	1,654,836	1,493,634
2024/2025	3,036,690	1,596,084	1,440,606
2025/2026	2,968,650	1,560,322	1,408,328
2026/2027	2,924,100	1,536,907	1,387,193
2027/2028+	2,893,320	1,520,729	1,372,591
Alternative 2 Com: 40.73% Rec: 59.27%			
2023/2024	3,148,470	1,282,372	1,866,098
2024/2025	3,036,690	1,236,844	1,799,846
2025/2026	2,968,650	1,209,131	1,759,519
2026/2027	2,924,100	1,190,986	1,733,114
2027/2028+	2,893,320	1,178,449	1,714,871
BASED ON 84% SA JURISDICTIONAL ALLOCATION			
Alternative 1 (No Action) Com: 52.56% Rec: 47.44%			
2023/2024	3,265,080	1,716,126	1,548,954
2024/2025	3,149,160	1,655,198	1,493,962
2025/2026	3,078,600	1,618,112	1,460,488
2026/2027	3,032,400	1,593,829	1,438,571
2027/2028+	3,000,480	1,577,052	1,423,428
Alternative 2 Com: 40.73% Rec: 59.27%			
2023/2024	3,265,080	1,329,867	1,935,213
2024/2025	3,149,160	1,282,653	1,866,507
2025/2026	3,078,600	1,253,914	1,824,686
2026/2027	3,032,400	1,235,097	1,797,303
2027/2028+	3,000,480	1,222,096	1,778,384

Discussion:

- The Allocation Decision Tree Tool will be used to help the Council consider sector allocations alternatives for the South Atlantic portion of the yellowtail stock.
- The current allocation is based on 50% of average landings from 1986-2008 + 50% of average landings from 2006-2008 using recreational landings estimates from the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey which results in a 52.56% commercial allocation and a 47.44% recreational allocation. **Alternative 1 (No Action)** would apply these percentages to the updated ABC.
- **Alternative 2** would apply the same formula used to determine the sector allocation in **Alternative 1 (No Action)** but would use the recreational landings data informed by MRIP-FES.

Table 12. Predicted dates when the ACL will be met for South Atlantic yellowtail snapper for ACL=ABC (Sub-action 2a) based on each proposed jurisdictional allocation (Action 1) and current sector allocations (Action 3, **Alternative 1 (No Action)**): 52.56% commercial and 47.44% recreational).

SA 75%, Action 2, Alternative 2: ACL = Updated ABC			
Year	SA Total ACL (lb ww)	Commercial	Recreational
2023/2024	2,915,250	ACL not met Upper 95%: Apr 30 ACL=1,532,255	ACL not met Upper 95%: Apr 17 ACL=1,382,995
2024/2025	2,811,750	Jul 27 ACL not met Upper 95%: Apr 25 ACL=1,477,856	ACL not met Upper 95%: Apr 9 ACL=1,333,894
2025/2026	2,748,750	Jul 19 ACL not met Upper 95%: Apr 21 ACL=1,444,743	ACL not met Upper 95%: Apr 4 ACL=1,304,007
2026/2027	2,707,500	Jul 14 ACL not met Upper 95%: Apr 19 ACL=1,423,062	ACL not met Upper 95%: Mar 31 ACL=1,284,438
2027/2028+	2,679,000	Jul 11 ACL not met Upper 95%: Apr 18 ACL=1,408,082	ACL not met Upper 95%: Mar 29 ACL=1,270,918
SA 81%, Action 2, Alternative 2: ACL = Updated ABC			
Year	SA Total ACL (lb ww)	Commercial	Recreational
2023/2024	3,148,470	ACL not met Upper 95%: May 22 ACL=1,654,836	ACL not met Upper 95%: May 5 ACL=1,493,634
2024/2025	3,036,690	ACL not met Upper 95%: May 12 ACL=1,596,084	ACL not met Upper 95%: Apr 26 ACL=1,440,606
2025/2026	2,968,650	ACL not met Upper 95%: May 5 ACL=1,560,322	ACL not met Upper 95%: Apr 21 ACL=1,408,328
2026/2027	2,924,100	ACL not met Upper 95%: May 1 ACL=1,536,907	ACL not met Upper 95%: Apr 17 ACL=1,387,193
2027/2028+	2,893,320	ACL not met Upper 95%: Apr 29 ACL=1,520,729	ACL not met Upper 95%: Apr 15 ACL=1,372,591
SA 84%, Action 2, Alternative 2: ACL = Updated ABC			
Year	SA Total ACL (lb ww)	Commercial	Recreational
2023/2024	3,265,080	ACL not met Upper 95%: Jun 2 ACL=1,716,126	ACL not met Upper 95%: May 14 ACL=1,548,954
2024/2025	3,149,160	ACL not met Upper 95%: May 22 ACL=1,655,198	ACL not met Upper 95%: May 5 ACL=1,493,962

2025/2026	3,078,600	ACL not met Upper 95%: May 16 ACL=1,618,112	ACL not met Upper 95%: Apr 29 ACL=1,460,488
2026/2027	3,032,400	ACL not met Upper 95%: May 11 ACL=1,593,829	ACL not met Upper 95%: Apr 26 ACL=1,438,571
2027/2028+	3,000,480	ACL not met Upper 95%: May 8 ACL=1,577,052	ACL not met Upper 95%: Apr 23 ACL=1,423,428

- Does the Council want additional alternatives that incorporate more recent years of landings?
- Any other alternatives the Council would like to consider?

Snapper Grouper (April 2023) Feedback:

- SG AP recommended retaining the current sector allocations but applying them to the updated ACL.
 - There was commercial and recreational agreement amongst the AP.
- Recreational AP members noted that the recreational sector does not want to lose any allocation.
- The AP noted that boosting the commercial allocation would not be feasible for the fishery to harvest.
 - The commercial sector in South Florida specifically is losing its working waterfront.
 - Some commercial AP members noted that an end of season commercial closure would be okay because that's when the fish are spawning (non-consensus) while other AP members noted that they would not want a closure as a result of shifted allocations.
- Some AP members noted that the Council should not exceed a 50/50 split.

Recap/Official Recommendation: **Action 1:** 80% SA 20% GOM jurisdictional allocation
Sub-action 2a: Alternative 5 (Lowest ABC)
Action 3: Alternative 1 (No Action) retain the current allocation percentages

Committee Action:

- REVIEW RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES

Appendix

Appendix I. Previous Council Action

SAFMC (September 2021):

- Add option for constant catch total ACL that is based upon the year with the lowest recommended ABC.
- Request feedback from the advisory panel(s) on:
 1. potential trip limit during spawning season (May 15 to July 31)
 2. trip limit step down after 75% of ACL is met?
 3. trip limit for part-time fishermen – 500 or 400 pounds?
 4. trip limit for multi-day fishermen – 3,500 lbs per week?
- Take the amendment out for scoping and obtain additional feedback from the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel, Gulf Reef Fish Advisory Panel, and Gulf Council.

Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel (October 2021):

- Clarify that *commercial* landings are allocated based on where they come from whereas *recreational* landings for Monroe County are attributed to the SA.
- **Motion: Recommend retaining current allocation between the SA and Gulf. Adopt constant catch as total ACL for the SA and retain sector allocations for the SA.**
- Don't need to discuss trip limits for this fishery until the commercial ACL is being met in-season for two years in a row.
- Part-time trip limits could make new entry into the fishery difficult.
- Since commercial landings are not reaching the ACL, consideration of multi-day trips is not necessary at this time. Large trips are vessels making several day trips and those vessels should not have a different set of rules than for other vessels (quality of product is lower on longer trips too).

GMFMC Meeting (October 2021):

- Concern over using current jurisdictional allocation formula since landings are “old” and the formula does not account for changes in recent state of nature.
 - Include a couple options:
 - Most recent 10 years
 - 50% of average landings from 2000-2008 and 50% from most recent 10 years
 - *Resulted in same jurisdictional allocation (84% South Atlantic, 16% Gulf)*
- Council discussed also looking at a constant catch scenario derived from stock assessment projection (not based on lowest recommended ABC).
- More information on catch and effort in the SA to come up with options for apportionment. Need more alternatives.

- Concern over swings in recreational landings under FES, especially in recent years.
- No interest in Gulf for trip limits. Would need to look at how dually-permitted vessels would be affected.
- Concern over enforceability of trip limits between regions.

SAFMC Scoping (November 2021):

- The scoping period for possible actions pertaining to the South Atlantic was from October 21 to November 5, 2021. Scoping hearings were held via webinar on November 2 and 3, 2021.
- No comments were received online during the scoping comment period. Three members of the public attended the scoping hearings, and one offered the following for the Councils' consideration:
 - Concern about significant reduction to yellowtail snapper catch levels.
 - Consider managing as a single stock and not splitting the ABC between the Councils. It is genetically a single stock and managing jointly may reduce administrative burden.
 - There is anecdotal evidence of population shifts, possibly related to climate change (have seen the same for mangrove snapper).
- There has also been a significant increase in depredation by sharks.
- These elements combined may be responsible for the perceived decline in the population based on the latest assessment.
- Fishermen are skeptical of landings used in assessment, particularly recreational estimates.

GMFMC Reef Fish AP and Scoping at Council meetings:

- January and October 2022: Reef Fish AP Meetings
 - Does not want sector allocations
 - Does not want to see a closure
- January, April, and October 2022: Council Meetings
 - Does not want sector allocations
 - Does not want to see a closure
 - No commercial trip limits desired

Appendix I. Current Catch Levels and Regulations

Table I-1. Proportion of South Atlantic sector ACLs landed and proportion of total ACL landed for yellowtail in MRFSS for the 2016/2017 – 2020/2021 fishing years under current allocation. The total ACL, commercial ACL, recreational ACL, recreational landings, and commercial landings are in lbs ww.

Fishing Year	Total ACL (MRFSS)	Com. Sector ACL	Com. Landings	Rec. Sector ACL	Rec. Landings (MRFSS)	% of Sector ACL Landed		% of Total ACL (MRFSS) Landed	% of 2027 Total ABC (FES)/75% allocation landed	% of 2027 Total ABC (FES)/84% allocation landed
						Comm ¹	Rec ²			
2016/17	3,037,500	1,596,510	2,423,704	1,440,990	692,957	151.8	48.1	102.6	116.3	103.9
2017/18	3,037,500	1,596,510	1,703,541	1,440,990	513,128	106.7	35.6	73.0	82.7	73.9
2018/19	3,037,500	1,596,510	1,662,102	1,440,990	605,285	104.1	42.0	74.6	84.6	75.6
2019/20	3,037,500	1,596,510	1,435,167	1,440,990	489,686	89.9	34.0	63.4	71.9	64.2
2020/21	3,037,500	1,596,510	1,204,637	1,440,990	508,862	75.5	35.3	56.4	64.0	57.1

¹Commercial allocation = 52.56% ²Recreational allocation = 47.44%

Source: SEFSC Commercial ACL data (September 29, 2021). Recreational SEFSC Recreational ACL data (Accessed September 21, 2021).

Note: The Total ABC (FES) columns show FES landings compared to the lowest proposed South Atlantic ABC (2027) under the highest (84%) and lowest (75%) South Atlantic jurisdictional allocation of the total ABC. Numbers are highlighted in yellow for landings that exceeded current sector allocation or the proposed 2027 South Atlantic ABC under a certain jurisdictional allocation and the current sector allocation.

Table I-2. Gulf yellowtail recreational and commercial landings (lbs ww), recreational landings in MRFSS and MRIP-FES, the recreational ACL in MRFSS, the commercial ACL, total landings using MRFSS and MRIP-FES units, and the total Gulf yellowtail ACL in MRFSS, for the fishing years 2016/2017 – 2020/2021. Only Total Landings (MRFSS) should be compared to the Total ACL (MRFSS) and Total Landings (FES) compared to Total ABC (FES) columns.

Year	Rec. Landings (MRFSS)	Rec. Landings (FES)	Com. Landings	Total Landings (MRFSS)	Total Landings (FES)	Total ACL (MRFSS)	% of Total ACL (MRFSS) landed	% of Total ABC (MRFSS) landed	% of 2027 Total ABC (FES)/ 16% allocation landed	% of 2027 Total ABC (FES)/ 25% allocation landed
2016/2017	118,815	249,512	682,875	801,690	932,387	901,125	89.0	79.2	163.1	104.4
2017/2018	40,495	206,785	589,868	630,363	796,653	901,125	70.0	62.3	139.4	89.2
2018/2019	34,633	104,527	527,112	561,745	631,639	901,125	62.3	55.5	110.5	70.7
2019/2020	8,453	12,348	287,940	296,393	300,288	901,125	32.9	29.3	52.5	33.6
2020/2021	71,836	79,765	212,630	284,466	292,395	901,125	31.6	28.1	51.2	32.7

Source: SEFSC Commercial ACL data (September 29, 2021). Recreational SEFSC Recreational ACL data (Accessed September 21, 2021).

Note: The Total ABC (FES) columns show landings compared to the lowest proposed Gulf ABC (2027) under the highest (25%) and lowest (16%) Gulf jurisdictional allocation of the total ABC. Numbers are highlighted in yellow for landings that exceeded the proposed 2027 Gulf ABC under a certain jurisdictional allocation.

Table I-3. The current Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic commercial and recreational regulations.

Commercial			Recreational		
Size limit	Fishing Season	Trip limit	Size Limit	Fishing Season	Bag Limit
12 in TL	Aug 1 - Jul 31	none	12 in TL	Aug 1 - Jul 31	Aggregate: 10/person/day Bag: 10/person/day

Appendix II. Gulf ACL/ACT Control Rule

ACL/ACT Buffer Spreadsheet v. 4.1		Gulf Yellowtail Snapper		Sector: both		
sum of points	3			Years: 2017/18-2020/21		
max points	7.0		Buffer between ACL and ACT (or ABC and ACL)	Unweighted	8	
Min. Buffer	0	min. buffer	User adjustable	Weighted	8	
Max Unw.Buff	19	max unwt. Buff				
Max Wtd Buff	25	max wtd. buffer	User adjustable			
Component	Element score	Element	Selection	Element result		
Stock assemblage	0	This ACL/ACT is for a single stock.	x	0		
	1	This ACL/ACT is for a stock assemblage, or an indicator species for a stock assemblage				
Ability to Constrain Catch	0	Catch limit has been exceeded 0 or 1 times in last 4 years	x	0		
	1	Catch limit has been exceeded 2 or more times in last 4 years				
		For the year with max. overage, add 0.5 pts. For every 10 percentage points (rounded up) above ACL Not applicable (there is no catch limit)	0.0			
		Apply this component to recreational fisheries, not commercial or IFQ fisheries				
Precision of Landings Data	0	Method of absolute counting		2		
	1	MRIP proportional standard error (PSE) <= 20				
	2	MRIP proportional standard error (PSE) > 20	x			
		Apply this component to commercial fisheries or any fishery under an IFQ program				
Precision of Landings Data	0	Landings from IFQ program		1		
	1	Landings based on dealer reporting	x			
	2	Landings based on other				
Timeliness	0	In-season accountability measures used or fishery is under an IFQ	x	0		
	1	In-season accountability measures not used				

Weighting factor				
	Element weight	Element	Selection	Weighting
Overfished status	0	1. Stock biomass is at or above B_{OY} .	x	0
	0.1	2. Stock biomass is below B_{OY} but at or above B_{MSY} .		
	0.2	3. Stock biomass is below B_{MSY} but at or above MSST.		
	0.3	4. Stock is overfished, below MSST.		
	0.3	5. Status criterion is unknown.		

Figure II-1. Application of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council’s (Gulf Council) Annual Catch Limit/Annual Catch Target (ACL/ACT) Control Rule (GMFMC 2012) for southeastern U.S. yellowtail snapper landed in the Gulf Council’s jurisdiction from the 2017/2018 – 2020/2021 fishing years.

Table II-1. Recreational reference years used for the Gulf of Mexico ACT/ACL Control Rule.

Fishing Year	Comm	Rec	Total
2017/18	589,868	206,785	796,653
2018/19	527,112	104,527	631,638
2019/20	287,940	12,348	300,289
2020/21	212,630	79,765	292,395

Source: SERO ACL Monitoring Database 8/9/2022